

Characterization of hERG (CHO cells) on Nanion's Port-a-Patch®

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Summary

The hERG gene (KCNH2) encodes a potassium ion channel responsible for the repolarizing I_{Kr} current in the cardiac action potential (Sanguinetti et al., 1995).

Abnormalities in this channel may lead to either Long QT Syndrome (LQT2) (with loss-of-function mutations) or Short QT syndrome (with gain-of-function mutations), both potentially fatal cardiac arrhythmia, due to repolarization disturbances of the cardiac action potential.

Given the importance of this channel in maintaining cardiac function, it has become an important target in compound safety screening.

A large range of therapeutic agents with diverse chemical structures have been reported to induce long QT syndrome. These include antihistamines (e.g. Terfenadine), gastrointestinal prokinetic agents (e.g. Cisapride) and others.

In this report we present data that were collected on the Port-a-Patch®. Cells (CHO permanently expressing hERG, supplied by Millipore) were tested. Current amplitudes, IVs and cisapride as well as quinidine dose response curves were analyzed.

Results

Figure 1 shows current responses of an individual cell to a typical hERG voltage protocol. Potentials were stepped from the holding potential (-80 mV) for 500 ms to +40 mV followed by a 500 ms step to voltages ranging from -120 mV to +40 mV (20 mV steps), before stepping back to holding.

Figure 2 shows the corresponding normalized current-voltage relation. The averaged mean current of the cells was 510.59 ± 73 pA at 40mV (n=41).

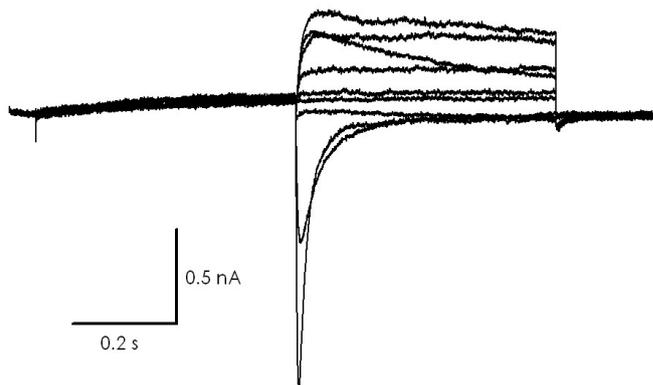


Figure 1: Representative current responses of an individual cell to a hERG IV voltage protocol (for details see text above).

Application Note

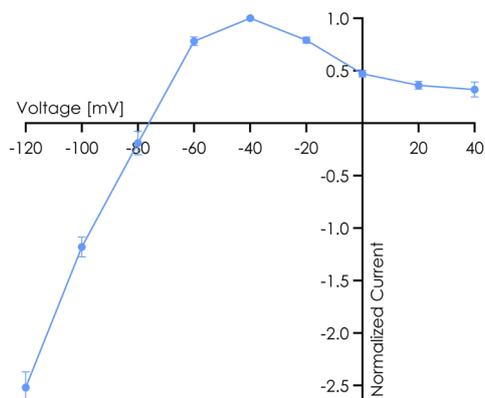


Figure 2: Average normalized current-voltage relationship (n=10, holding potential -80 mV. The error bars depict the standard error of the mean).

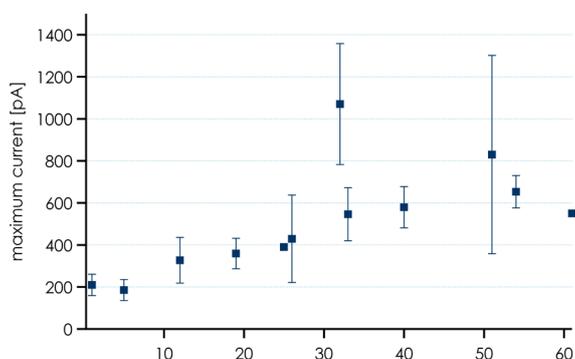


Figure 3: Development of the peak current at -40 mV over time after thawing of the cells. Each day between three and five cells were measured.

Since cell lines permanently expressing hERG sometimes have rather small currents it was tested whether the culturing time after thawing had an effect on the current amplitudes. As visible in Figure 3, the maximum current amplitude was rather variably, both within a day and over the whole period. Remarkably is the continuous increase of the peak current over the experimental time frame.

Methods

Cells

CHO stably expressing hERG were supplied by Millipore.

Cell culture

Cells were cultured and harvested according to Nanion's standard cell culture protocol.

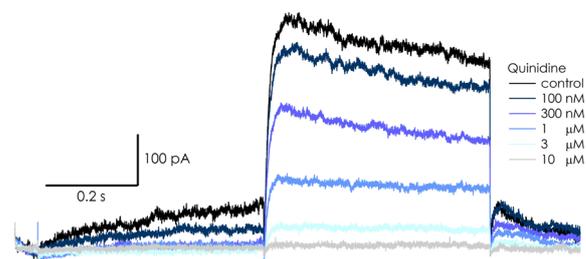


Figure 4: Raw current traces in the presence of increasing concentrations of quinidine.

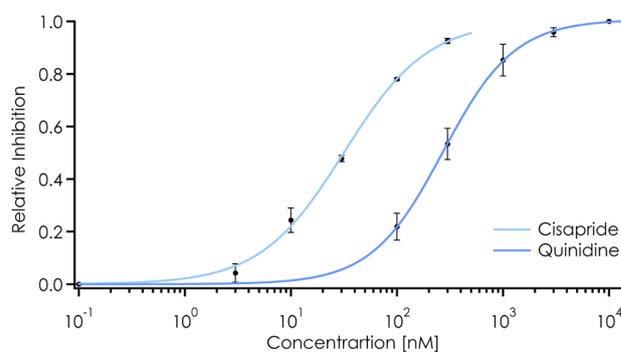


Figure 5: Full quinidine and cisapride dose response curves.

With Nanion's External Perfusion System also cumulative dose-response curves were collected for quinidine and cisapride. Raw current responses in the presence of different quinidine concentrations are shown in Figure 4. Average dose-response curves for quinidine and cisapride are shown in Figure 5. From these, IC_{50} s of 267 ± 68 nM and 31.5 ± 6.2 nM were determined for quinidine and cisapride, respectively.

Electrophysiology

Whole cell patch clamp recordings were conducted according to Nanion's standard procedure for the Port-a-Patch®. Currents were elicited using a voltage step from a holding potential of -80 mV to +40 mV for 500 ms followed by a step to the test potential for 500 ms and back to holding. Voltage protocols were elicited every 20 s.