

# Measuring changes in cellular metabolism by monitoring extracellular acidification and oxygen consumption in real-time

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- CLARIOstar® with atmospheric control unit (ACU) provides a key element in an open-flow respirometry system
- OCR and ECA measured simultaneously in real-time under physiologically relevant atmospheric conditions

## Introduction

Dysregulation of cellular energy metabolism is a common factor in a variety of disorders including diabetes and obesity as well as cancer to name a few. The current technologies used to assess mitochondrial function via extracellular acidification (ECA) and oxygen consumption rate (OCR) are often designed in such a way that they ignore the impact of  $O_2$  concentration on cellular bioenergetics.

Here we describe the implementation of the CLARIOstar with ACU in conjunction with advanced phosphorescent dyes to measure  $O_2$  consumption and glycolytic flux in an open-flow respirometry system. This system enables measurement of respiration rate at steady state, where  $O_2$  supplied equals  $O_2$  consumed. The phosphorescent oxygen and pH probe (Cayman Chemical) combined with the CLARIOstar and ACU provides a 'push button' multiplexed system with the potential for monitoring additional cell health outcomes. Experiments can be performed under user defined  $[O_2]$ , using either adherent cells or cell suspensions where relevant, with throughput comparable to existing technologies.

from experimental samples are subtracted from controls to calculate respiration rate.

## Materials & Methods

- Phosphorescent oxygen and pH probe (Cayman Chemical)
- CLARIOstar with ACU (BMG LABTECH)
- Black, clear bottom, 96-well plates (Greiner)
- H9C2 cells and HepG2 cells
- Other reagents from commercially available sources

The indicated cell types were plated at a density of  $7 \times 10^4$  cells/well. Reagent preparation, cell seeding, instrument set up, and assay protocols were all performed as indicated in kit literature.

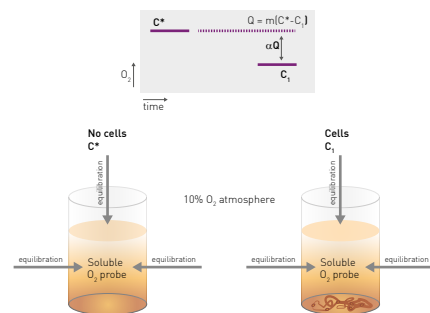
For dose-response experiments, serial dilutions of antimycin A were prepared in DMSO to create a 10 point half-log dilution series with a maximum concentration of  $10 \mu M$  (final DMSO concentration = 0.01%).

The measurement settings are also provided in the CLARIOstar test protocol, available at:

[www.bmg-labtech.com/cayman/](http://www.bmg-labtech.com/cayman/)

The test protocol includes use of onboard reagent injectors to add control compounds. Oligomycin is used to decrease OCR and increase ECA. FCCP is used to increase OCR. These control compounds are included in the test kit.

## Assay Principle



**Fig. 1:** Open-flow in a 96-well plate. Respiration rate is calculated from the indicated formula where  $Q$  = respiration (nmols  $O_2$ /min/well),  $m$  = linear diffusion rate of  $O_2$  from gas phase to liquid phase,  $C^*$  = zero respiration wells at steady state,  $C_1$  = experimental sample wells at the same time point.

Open-flow respirometry is a useful, physiologically relevant approach that allows for the measurement of mitochondrial respiration rates at dynamic steady-state oxygen concentrations<sup>1,2</sup>. To improve throughput, this system was translated to a 96-well plate format. This requires the use of at least 2 negative control wells that exhibit zero respiration (Figure 1). Results

## Instrument settings

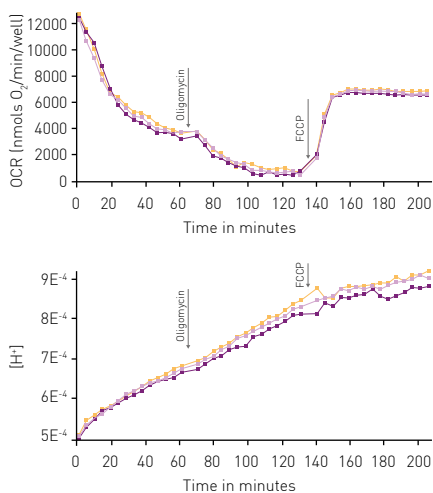
	MitoXpress® Xtra	pH-Xtra™
Optic settings	Time-resolved fluorescence, Top optic	
	Excitation: Ex TR	
	Dichroic: LP TR	
	Emission: 645-20	Emission: 615-18
	Multichromatic (4)	
	Integration settings	
	Integration window 1	
	Start: 30 $\mu s$ , Time: 30 $\mu s$	Start: 100 $\mu s$ , Time: 100 $\mu s$
Integration window 2		
Start: 70 $\mu s$ , Time: 30 $\mu s$	Start: 300 $\mu s$ , Time: 100 $\mu s$	
General settings	Settling time: 0.2 s	
	Number of flashes per well: 100	
Kinetic settings	Number of cycles: 60	
Atmospheric control	Cycle time: 280 s	
	Temperature: 37 °C	
	Oxygen: 10 %	
Injections	Volume: 5 $\mu l$ , pump speed: 430 $\mu l/s$	
	1 (Oligomycin): injection cycle 20	
	2 (FCCP): injection cycle 40	



Calculation of ECA and OCR were performed in MARS, BMG LABTECH's data analysis software. A data analysis template is available at the web address indicated above. Subsequent analysis of dose-response and Z' data were also performed in MARS.

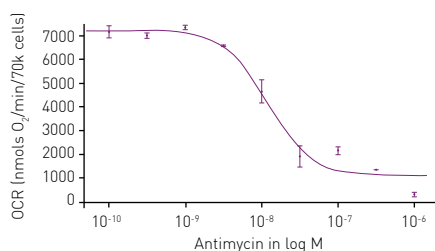
## Results & Discussion

When the phosphorescent oxygen and pH probes are used with the CLARIOstar with ACU, real-time changes in ECA and OCR can be observed (Figure 2). After an initial 20 min equilibration, a steady-state signal for OCR can be observed. The expected changes in OCR and ECA in response to control compounds are also observed following their injection for the triplicate samples displayed.



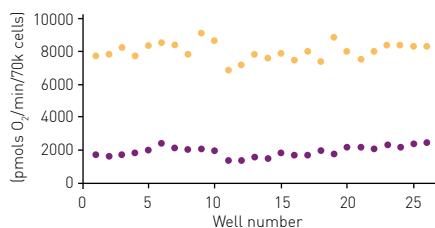
**Fig. 2:** Simultaneous measurement of OCR and [H<sup>+</sup>] in response to oligomycin and FCCP. OCR and ECA was measured for H9C2 cells using the adherent cell protocol. Arrows indicate injection of oligomycin and FCCP, respectively. The first 40 minutes of the OCR trace is indicative of plate equilibration to the oxygen environment and should not be used as respiration data.

As an example of the capabilities of this test for compound screening a dose response to the known mitochondrial inhibitor antimycin A was prepared. Figure 3 shows the anticipated concentration dependent effect of antimycin A on OCR. From this plot an IC<sub>50</sub> = 120.8 nM is determined. Similar results can be obtained for ECA analyses [data not shown].



**Fig. 3:** Oxygen consumption in 10% O<sub>2</sub> environment. Duplicate wells containing HepG2 cells were treated with the indicated concentrations of antimycin A. Following equilibration baseline OCR could be calculated. The effect of Antimycin exhibits a response that conforms to a 4-parameter fit ( $r^2=0.97574$ ).

Finally, we calculated the Z' statistic for this assay (Figure 4). The value of above 0.59 is indicative of an excellent assay that is well suited to screening purposes.



**Fig. 4:** OCR Z-prime data. Baseline OCR data from vehicle (●) treated HepG2 cells was compared with the OCR data from the same cells following injection of 10 µg/mL oligomycin (●).

## Conclusion

The phosphorescent oxygen and pH probe [Cayman Chemical] and the CLARIOstar with ACU provide a robust and efficient means of measuring cellular bioenergetics at [O<sub>2</sub>] that are physiologically relevant. Additional utility can be derived from the ability to easily use non-adherent cells and to perform additional multiplexing to examine additional cellular responses.

## References

1. Cole R.P. *et al* (1982) Mitochondrial function in the presence of myoglobin *J. Appl. Physiol.* 53, 1116-1124
2. Hoffman, D.L. *et al* (2007) Response of mitochondrial reactive oxygen species generation to steady-state oxygen tension: implications for hypoxic cell signaling *Am. J. Heart. Circ. Physiol.* 292, H101-108

