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High-Throughput Assessment of Developmental Stages of NSCs via Promoter-Reporter Assay System Using Recombinant Lentiviruses

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Abstract

Many drugs and chemicals currently available have not been fully evaluated for their toxic effects on the developing brain. Expensive and low-throughput *in vivo* studies are still being used to evaluate developmental neurotoxicity (DNT). Thus, there is a need to develop an *in vitro* assay system which is economically feasible and high-throughput. Among various cellular models used for *in vitro* assay, human neural stem cells (NSCs) are highly desired due to their ability to self-renew and differentiate into neurons, astrocytes and oligodendrocytes. *In vitro* assessment of developmental stages (proliferation and differentiation) of human NSC is highly important to predict the *in vivo* effect of various chemicals on developing brain. However, conventional *in vitro* assay uses immunofluorescence staining to monitor changes in cell morphology and neural cell-specific biomarkers which can either be inaccurate or cumbersome. Therefore, we have developed an *in vitro* promoter-reporter assay system to monitor the proliferation and differentiation of NSCs using recombinant lentiviruses. Four NSC-specific biomarkers can be monitored by infecting NSCs with recombinant lentiviruses such as synapsin1 for neuron differentiation, glial fibrillary acidic protein (GFAP) for astrocyte differentiation, myelin basic protein (MBP) for oligodendrocyte differentiation, and SOX2 for self-renewal.