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1 **Wavelength- and Tissue-dependent Variations in the Mutagenicity of**
2 **Cyclobutane Pyrimidine Dimers in Mouse Skin**

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14 **ABSTRACT**

15 **The cyclobutane pyrimidine dimer (CPD) is a main mutagenic photolesion in DNA**
16 **produced by UVR. We previously studied the wavelength-dependent kinetics of**
17 **mutation-induction efficiency using monochromatic UVR sources and transgenic mice**
18 **developed for mutation assay and established the action spectra of UVR mutagenicity in**
19 **the mouse epidermis and dermis. Here, we further established the action spectra of**
20 **CPD and pyrimidine(6-4)pyrimidone photoproduct formation in the same tissues and in**
21 **naked DNA using the same sources and mouse strain. Quantitative ELISA helped us**
22 **estimate the photolesion formation efficiencies on a molecule-per-nucleotide basis. Using**
23 **these action spectra, we confirmed that the UVR mutation mostly depends on CPD**
24 **formation. Moreover, the mutagenicity of a CPD molecule (CPD mutagenicity) was**
25 **found to vary by wavelength, peaking at approximately 313 nm in both the epidermis**
26 **and dermis with similar wavelength-dependent patterns. Thus, the CPD formation**
27 **efficiency is a main determinant of UVR mutagenicity in mouse skin, whereas a**
28 **wavelength-dependent variation in the qualitative characteristics of CPD molecules also**
29 **affects the mutagenic consequences of UVR insults. In addition, the CPD mutagenicity**
30 **was always higher in the epidermis than in the dermis, suggesting different cellular**
31 **responses to UVR between the two tissues irrespective of the wavelength.**

32

33 INTRODUCTION

34 Ultraviolet radiation (UVR) is genotoxic and can cause mutations and cancers in exposed
35 tissues, such as skin. The genotoxicity of UVR originates from its ability to form specific
36 DNA base photolesions, and the major types of these photolesions are cyclobutane
37 pyrimidine dimers (CPDs) and pyrimidine(6-4)pyrimidone photoproducts (64PPs) (1, 2).
38 Among these photolesions, CPDs cause most of the mutations induced by UVR (3, 4) and are
39 specified by C-to-T base substitutions at dipyrimidine sites, which are called the “UV
40 signature” (5). The molecular mechanism of CPD-mediated mutations is believed to be the
41 following: these mutations are induced via an error-free translesion DNA synthesis (TLS)
42 over a deaminated cytosine-containing CPD, in which cytosine is converted to uracil, or via
43 an error-prone TLS over a cytosine-containing CPD, which is mainly ruled by the A-rule (2,
44 6). However, the mutagenic efficiency of a CPD molecule (CPD mutagenicity) had been
45 difficult to quantify precisely due to the lack of simultaneous quantitative analyses of
46 mutagenicity and photolesion formation in a single system. Recently, we published one such
47 analysis of CPD mutagenicity performed in mouse skin exposed to UVC and UVB using a
48 quantitative ELISA for the determination of the molecular amounts of CPDs (7). In that study,
49 we demonstrated that a CPD produced by UVB results in greater mutagenic consequences in
50 the skin than a CPD produced by UVC.

51 UVR photolesions in DNA are produced through photochemical reactions between
52 adjacent pyrimidine bases (1), and the reaction efficiency varies depending on the wavelength
53 (8–14). However, whether the CPD mutagenicity also varies depending on the wavelength
54 remains unclear. To answer this question, the absolute amounts of CPDs must be evaluated
55 throughout the range of UVR wavelengths. The wavelength-dependent efficiency, namely,
56 the action spectrum, of the formation of UVR photolesions was reported first as an integrated
57 part of the so-called “average DNA spectrum” published by R. B. Setlow, which was a

58 combined action spectrum comprising phage/bacterial lethality and mutagenesis as well as
59 photolesion formation in DNA (15). Since then, the action spectra of photolesion formation
60 in UVR-irradiated DNA, phages, bacteria, mammalian cultured cells and human skin
61 epidermis have been analyzed using chromatographic, immunological and photolesion-
62 specific cleavage methods (8–14, 16–19). These action spectra are largely similar to the
63 absorption spectrum of DNA, which demonstrates that CPDs and 64PPs are produced
64 directly by the absorption of photon energy by DNA. However, most of these spectra are
65 relatively obscure at long UVR wavelengths, such as those in the UVA region (320–400 nm)
66 because they were evaluated using radiation sources with relatively poor resolution at these
67 longer wavelengths (11, 16–19). More seriously, all of these spectra are less informative
68 because their quantification of photolesions, which was mostly based on immunological
69 assays, was not calibrated to absolute amounts of damage. For such a calibration, standard
70 UVR-damaged DNA, whose absolute molecular amounts of photolesions are predetermined,
71 is necessary. We recently developed a standard DNA whose photolesion amounts were
72 quantified by HPLC with electrospray ionization tandem mass spectrometry (HPLC-ESI-
73 MS/MS) and evaluated the absolute amounts of CPDs and 64PPs in mouse skin exposed to
74 UVC and UVB through a quantitative ELISA assisted with the standard DNA (7). In the
75 present study, we used this method to construct high-resolution action spectra of UVR
76 photolesion formation in mouse skin that were calibrated to the absolute molecular amounts.
77 With these spectra, we estimated the wavelength-dependent relationship of photolesion
78 formation and UVR mutagenesis in the mouse skin by coupling with the action spectra of
79 UVR mutagenicity in the skin that we previously established using transgenic mice
80 developed for *in vivo* mutation analysis (20), and further analyzed the mutagenicity of CPD
81 molecules.

82

83 MATERIALS AND METHODS

84 *UVR sources.* For the action spectrum studies, a high-power, high-resolution monochromatic
85 UVR source, the Okazaki Large Spectrograph (OLS) (21), and a 364-nm UVA laser (22),
86 both of which were available at the National Institute for Basic Biology (NIBB; Okazaki,
87 Japan), were utilized. The detailed conditions for mouse irradiation with these sources have
88 been described previously (20). Dosimetry was performed with a silicon photodiode
89 (Hamamatsu Photonics, Hamamatsu, Japan).

90 *Mice, DNA and UVR exposure.* All procedures for the animal experiments, including
91 husbandry, were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees of Tohoku
92 University and the National Institutes of Natural Sciences (NINS) (to which NIBB belongs)
93 and conducted according to the Fundamental Guidelines for Proper Conduct of Animal
94 Experiment and Related Activities in Academic Research Institutions under the jurisdiction
95 of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan and the
96 Regulations for Animal Experiments and Related Activities at Tohoku University and NINS.
97 Transgenic mice harboring λ -phage-based *lacZ* mutational reporter genes (23) were used for
98 all the experiments. The dorsal skin of 8 to 12-week-old mice was depilated with an electric
99 shaver and hair-removal cream (Kracie, Japan) and, three days later, the mice were exposed
100 under anesthesia to monochromatic UVR at 260, 280, 290, 295, 300, 307, 313, 319, 325, 330
101 and 334 nm emitted from the OLS. The spectral half-power bandwidths were ± 2.7 nm at all
102 wavelengths. At wavelengths ≥ 307 nm, appropriate cutoff filters were used to remove stray
103 shorter-wavelength radiations. For the analysis at 364 nm, we utilized the DNA samples
104 obtained from mouse skin exposed to a 364-nm laser in one of our previous studies (22). Calf
105 thymus DNA (Sigma-Aldrich) dissolved to a concentration of 1 mg/ml in a solution
106 consisting of 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0) and 1 mM EDTA was also irradiated at each
107 wavelength of the monochromatic UVR from the OLS in a plastic dish covered with an

108 ND90 quartz filter, which prevented the solution from evaporating out. The OLS conditions
109 and filters used for DNA irradiation were the same as those used for mice. Exposure of the
110 DNA solution to the 364-nm laser was not performed because the laser apparatus had been
111 broken and was no longer available.

112 *DNA damage assay.* The mice were sacrificed immediately after UVR exposure to excise
113 the irradiated skin area. After the DNA metabolic activities in the excised skin section were
114 inactivated by incubation at 55°C for 5 min, the epidermis of the skin section was separated
115 from the dermis with thermolysin, and the epidermal and dermal genomic DNA was isolated
116 from each tissue (24). The absolute amounts of CPDs and 64PPs in the DNA were
117 determined quantitatively based on the number of molecules per nucleotide using a recently
118 developed ELISA-based method calibrated with the standard UVR-exposed DNA (7) whose
119 photolesion amounts were predetermined by HPLC-ESI-MS/MS (24). The ELISA was
120 performed with monoclonal antibodies specific to CPDs and 64PPs, TDM-2 and 64M-2,
121 respectively, and the color development reactions were assayed at 450 nm using a Sunrise
122 microplate reader (Tecan, Austria), as described previously (7).

123 *Action spectra of UVR mutagenicity in mouse skin.* We previously analyzed the action
124 spectra of mutation induction (mutagenicity) in mouse skin by determining dose-response
125 kinetics of increases in mutant frequencies (MFs) in the epidermis and dermis after exposure
126 to UVR; in these analyses, the MFs of the *lacZ* transgene were evaluated using the transgenic
127 mice mentioned above (20). In the present study, these data were utilized for quantitative
128 evaluation of the efficiency with which photolesions induce mutations in the skin.

129

130 **RESULTS**

131 **Dose-response kinetics of photolesion formation in mouse skin**

132 The depilated dorsal skin of groups of mice was exposed to a series of doses of
133 monochromatic UVR at select wavelengths from 260 to 364 nm, and the mice were sacrificed
134 immediately to estimate the amounts of photoinduced CPDs and 64PPs in the epidermis and
135 dermis of their exposed skin sections. Solutions of naked DNA were also exposed to several
136 doses of monochromatic UVR at the same wavelengths except 364 nm. The photolesion
137 amounts were evaluated on a molecule-per-nucleotide basis through a quantitative ELISA
138 calibrated with standard UVR-damaged DNA, and the results were plotted to reveal the dose-
139 response kinetics (Fig. 1). Regression lines for these dose-response kinetics were estimated to
140 deduce the amounts of each photolesion formed by a unit dose of UVR at each wavelength,
141 namely, slopes of the induction of photolesion formation, under the premise that the y -
142 intercept is null ([photolesion amount] = a *[UVR dose]). Some data points at higher doses
143 were excluded from the estimation because they deviated largely from the estimated
144 regression line and showed lower amounts than expected. Those excluded points for 64PP
145 were outside of the lesion amount range that was reliably quantifiable using the standard
146 DNA for calibration (≤ 50 molecules per 10^6 bases) (7), whereas the points for CPD were
147 expected to show more than 300 lesions per 10^6 bases with the regression analysis, which
148 appears to be a limit for the reliable estimation of CPD amounts using the quantification
149 method as reported previously (7). The slopes estimated for 64PP at wavelengths greater than
150 325 nm were not used for further analysis because significant increases in 64PP were not
151 observed at these wavelengths (Fig. 1b, c). Regression analyses confirmed the significance of
152 all the regressions (ANOVA, $p < 0.001$ for all except the followings: epidermal CPD at 260
153 nm, $p = 0.00102$; epidermal and dermal 64PP at 325 nm, $p = 0.031$ and 0.0033 , respectively;
154 and dermal CPD at 334 nm, $p = 0.0024$) except those for 64PP at wavelengths greater than
155 325 nm.

156

157 **Action spectra of UVR photolesion formation in mouse skin**

158 Based on the slopes obtained from the regression analyses shown in Fig. 1, action spectra of
159 the efficiency of UVR photolesion formation in naked DNA and in mouse epidermis and
160 dermis were estimated (Fig. 2a and Fig. S1a, see Supporting Materials). The efficiencies of
161 photolesion formation were highest and paralleled one another at wavelengths from 260 to
162 290 nm in DNA and the epidermis whereas a peak appeared at 295 nm in the dermis. The
163 decreased efficiencies at the shorter wavelengths in the dermis would have resulted from less
164 efficient transmission of the shorter-wavelength UVR through the epidermal layer (19, 26).

165 The action spectra of CPD formation were nearly identical among the epidermis,
166 dermis and DNA at wavelengths longer than 295 nm, whereas those of 64PP formation
167 differed between DNA and the two skin tissues in the same wavelength region (Fig. 2b).
168 Although most of these action spectra diverged at wavelengths shorter than 295 nm (Fig. 2b),
169 the differences between the epidermis and dermis would reflect UVR protection by the
170 epidermal layer at these wavelengths (19, 26). The almost identical action spectra of CPD and
171 64PP formation obtained for the two skin tissues in the longer wavelength range indicate the
172 efficient transmittance of 300-nm or longer UVR photons through the epidermal layer of
173 mouse skin, which was previously reported for human skin (19, 27, 28), confirming the poor
174 protection by the epidermis against the long-wavelength UVR included in the UVB and UVA
175 ranges. The different action spectra of 64PP formation between DNA and the skin tissues
176 indicate that 64PP formation is less efficient in naked DNA than in cellular DNA in the skin
177 tissues at wavelengths between 300 and 320 nm (Fig. 2b, 64PP). Although the efficiencies of
178 64PP formation were comparable between DNA and the epidermis at wavelengths shorter
179 than 295 nm, this observation might be a coincidence because the epidermal cornified layer
180 should attenuate UVR at these shorter wavelengths (19, 26–28). This attenuation effect is
181 clearly evidenced by the action spectra of CPD formation (Fig. 2b, CPD), which showed less

182 efficient CPD formation in the epidermis than in DNA, revealing the protection ability of the
183 cornified layer against short-wavelength UVR. Thus, the protection against 64PP formation
184 by the epidermal cornified layer would have negated the more efficient 64PP formation in the
185 epidermis, resulting in the similar efficiencies in 64PP formation.

186 The efficiencies of CPD formation were always higher than the efficiencies of 64PP
187 formation throughout the wavelengths examined, and the differences appeared to become
188 greater as the wavelength increased until 64PP formation decreased to barely detectable
189 levels at 325 nm (Fig. 2a). The difference in the efficiencies of CPD and 64PP formation in
190 the skin tissues was relatively constant between 260 and 300 nm, as shown by the molecular
191 ratios of 64PPs to CPDs in Fig. 2c (*ca.* 0.2 and 0.1 for the epidermis and dermis, respectively).
192 The smaller ratios in the dermis than in the epidermis may reflect less efficient 64PP
193 formation in the former, which might have resulted from some difference in the cellular DNA
194 structures between the two tissues that could affect 64PP formation. From 300 nm, the
195 difference in the efficiencies of CPD and 64PP formation accelerated as the wavelength
196 increased (Fig. 2c), suggesting a mechanistic difference in photolesion formations between
197 the shorter and longer wavelength ranges. The profile of photolesion formation in naked
198 DNA was slightly different from those in the skin: the difference in the efficiencies of CPD
199 and 64PP formation started increasing from a shorter wavelength of 290 nm, but the
200 acceleration of the difference was weaker than those of the skin (Fig. 2c).

201

202 **Comparison of action spectra of photolesion formation and mutagenesis**

203 The action spectra of CPD and 64PP formation in mouse skin were compared with the action
204 spectra of mutation induction (mutagenicity) by UVR that we had previously analyzed with
205 the same UVR sources used in the present study (20) (Fig. 3, see also Fig. S1b). The action
206 spectra of the mutagenicity closely paralleled the CPD formation spectra in both the

207 epidermis and dermis at 295 nm and longer wavelengths, but did not parallel the 64PP
208 formation spectra at wavelengths longer than 300 nm, which indicates that CPD is most
209 likely the photolesion contributing to UVR mutagenesis, confirming previous studies (3, 4).
210 On the other hand, the mutagenicity of 64PP was not supported by the action spectrum
211 analysis shown here. The disagreements between damage and mutagenicity spectra at
212 wavelengths shorter than 295 nm may reflect the gradational production of CPDs along the
213 skin depth in this short-wavelength range (27), which is discussed in the Discussion section.

214

215 **Molecular mutagenicity of CPDs in mouse skin**

216 To estimate the wavelength dependence of the mutagenicity of a CPD molecule (CPD
217 mutagenicity) in the mouse epidermis and dermis, wavelength-dependent increases in the MF
218 of the *lacZ* transgene per unit dose of UVR, which had been evaluated in each tissue in our
219 previous study (20), were divided by the number of CPD molecules produced in a *lacZ* gene
220 (assumed to be 6000 bases), which were deduced from the data obtained with the quantitative
221 ELISA (Fig. 1a, b). The calculation was performed at every wavelength examined, and the
222 results were plotted (Fig. 4a). The CPD mutagenicity changed in a wavelength-dependent
223 manner with similar patterns in the epidermis and dermis, which exhibited an increase
224 between 295 and 330 nm with a peak at approximately 313 nm. Interestingly, CPD
225 mutagenicity was always higher in the epidermis than in the dermis. The ratios of CPD
226 mutagenicity in the epidermis to that in the dermis are relatively constant (2.55 ± 0.81) at all
227 the wavelengths examined except 260 nm (Fig. 4b). The large error in the CPD mutagenicity
228 ratio at 260 nm resulted from the small amount of CPDs in the dermis that was close to the
229 detection limit of the ELISA.

230

231 **Amount of photolesions for the induction of MIS responses**

232 Although UVR induces mutations and increases MF in the skin genome, UVR doses larger
233 than a certain amount trigger a remarkable response in the epidermis that the MF increase
234 stops and levels off to a constant MF (20, 29). This response is called “mutation induction
235 suppression” (MIS), which is thought to be an epidermis-specific response related to
236 apoptosis and hyperplasia (30). Because the minimum doses for induction of the MIS
237 response at the wavelengths examined here were previously evaluated (20), the minimum
238 amounts of CPDs and 64PPs necessary to induce the MIS response were estimated using data
239 obtained in the present study and plotted to examine their wavelength dependency (Fig. 5).
240 The estimated amounts of photolesions required to induce MIS exhibited variations among
241 wavelengths, especially did the amount of CPDs, increasing remarkably in the range of 295–
242 334 nm. The increases in 64PPs appeared to be relatively small, but their fold changes were
243 comparable to those for CPD. Thus, the photolesion amounts showed notable differences
244 among wavelengths when the MIS response starts. It does not appear that the amount of
245 CPDs or 64PPs alone is the determinant to trigger the MIS response.

246

247 **DISCUSSION**

248 **Action spectra of UVR photolesion formation**

249 Previous studies on the action spectra of the formation of UVR photolesions were performed
250 mainly for CPDs using *in vitro* systems such as DNA solutions (9, 11, 13, 14) and
251 suspensions of bacteria (10) and mammalian cultured cells (8, 12, 16, 18), although some of
252 these studies were also focused on 64PPs (11–14). Similar studies have also been performed
253 *in vivo* using human skin (17, 19), but these analyses were performed for CPD formation
254 alone using UVR sources with a relatively poor wavelength resolution in the UVA region. In
255 the present study, we established the action spectra of photolesion formation in the skin *in*

256 *vivo* for both CPDs and 64PPs with a high wavelength resolution into the UVA range and
257 comparable action spectra of photolesion formation in DNA *in vitro*.

258 The efficiency of photolesion formation in the epidermis was constant for both CPDs
259 and 64PPs at wavelengths from 260 to 290 nm. The same trend was also observed for the
260 action spectra of DNA (Fig. 2a, DNA and Epidermis), which was surprising because the
261 absorption spectrum of DNA peaks at approximately 260 nm. Because photolesion formation
262 is initiated by photon absorption by relevant molecules, its action spectrum would be
263 expected to peak at the same wavelength as the absorption spectrum. Although this
264 unexpected observation might result from some artificially imposed experimental conditions,
265 such as the concentration of DNA exposed to UVR, which might have been relatively too
266 high (1 mg/ml) in the present study for homogeneous photon absorption in the DNA solution
267 at these short wavelengths, some photochemical and biochemical interactions may be
268 involved. Similar trends of the flat efficiencies in the short-wavelength region were
269 detectable in some previous action spectrum studies (8, 9, 11, 13) and were actually observed
270 in a previous photochemical study (31). The flat spectra suggest that the yield of photolesions
271 is not proportional to the absorption coefficients of DNA in this short wavelength range.
272 Photoreversal reactions of photolesions, which have been actually observed for CPDs (32,
273 33), could partly contribute to the observation.

274 On the other hand, we observed a peak at 295 nm in the action spectra of both CPD and
275 64PP formation in the dermis (Fig. 2a, Dermis). The peak can be explained by the epidermal
276 layer preventing the penetration of UVR at wavelengths shorter than 295 nm into the dermis.
277 Similar observations have been reported for human skin (17, 19); the action spectra for CPD
278 formation in the epidermis showed peaks at approximately 300 nm. In human skin, the upper
279 differentiated cell layers are thought to function as UVR barriers because the human

280 epidermis is multicell-layered and much thicker than the mouse epidermis, which usually
281 consists of one or two cell layers.

282

283 **Difference in 64PP formation spectra between DNA and skin**

284 We noticed a difference in the action spectra of 64PP formation between naked DNA and
285 mouse skin tissues in contrast to the almost identical action spectra of CPD formation
286 between them except at shorter wavelengths (Fig. 2b). At wavelengths between 300 and 313
287 nm, for which protection by skin layers is almost negligible (19, 27, 28), the efficiencies of
288 64PP formation in the skin were several-fold higher than those in naked DNA, which
289 indicates that 64PP forms more easily in skin DNA, *i.e.*, in cellular DNA, than in naked DNA
290 dissolved in water when the midrange UVR is used. Because the similarly or less efficient
291 64PP formation at the short wavelengths in the skin would have resulted from the previously
292 mentioned UVR attenuation by the upper layers of skin, the higher 64PP formation efficiency
293 in cellular DNA than in naked DNA could be expanded to the short UVR range. Higher
294 efficiencies of photolesion formation in cellular DNA than in naked DNA were also observed
295 in a previous study (34). Although the cause of the different 64PP formation efficiencies
296 between cellular and naked DNA is currently unknown, some differences in their DNA
297 structures might have affected the 64PP formation efficiency. It is known that the distribution
298 of 64PP formation in cellular DNA, which takes a chromatin structure with histone proteins,
299 is not uniform and differs from that in naked DNA (35), and that differences in base stacking,
300 which shows variability depending on the DNA duplex conformation, significantly affect the
301 efficiency of UVR photolesion formation, particularly the formation of 64PPs (36, 37).

302 At 313 nm, the situation was reversed. At longer wavelengths, in contrast to the sharp
303 decreases in 64PP formation efficiency in skin tissues, the decrease in the efficiency in naked
304 DNA became gradual, which resulted in a higher efficiency in naked DNA at 325 nm (Fig. 2b,

305 64PP). Similar wavelength-dependent 64PP formation in naked DNA was observed
306 previously (13). Because UVR at these wavelengths converts 64PPs to Dewar valence
307 isomers (13, 38, 39), the gradual decrease in the 64PP formation efficiency may indicate less
308 efficient isomerization in naked DNA than in cellular DNA. Actually, the rigidity and/or
309 strandedness of the backbone structure of DNA, which could vary by chromosomal
310 conformation, affects the yield of Dewar isomers from 64PPs (40, 41). The accelerated
311 decreases in 64PP formation efficiency in the skin tissues compared with naked DNA (Fig.
312 2b, c) confirm the efficient conversion of 64PPs to Dewar isomers in cellular DNA suggested
313 in previous studies at these longer wavelengths (12, 38, 42).

314

315 **Difference in action spectra between CPD and 64PP formations**

316 The action spectra of CPD and 64PP formation were quite similar at wavelengths up to 290
317 nm (DNA) or 300 nm (skin) but increasingly diverged as the wavelength increased further
318 (Fig. 2a, Fig. 3), although the diversion in naked DNA was smaller than that in the skin. 64PP
319 formation was hardly detectable at wavelengths longer than 325 nm, probably due to an
320 energy barrier for 64PP production (31) and efficient conversion to Dewar isomers by UVR
321 (12, 13, 38) at these longer wavelengths. In contrast, the decrease in the efficiency of CPD
322 formation was alleviated in the UVA1 range (340–400 nm) and still detectable at
323 wavelengths up to 364 nm. At wavelengths shorter than 300 nm, CPDs and 64PPs are
324 produced mainly through a similar initial photochemical excitation of pyrimidine bases to a
325 singlet state (31), which would have resulted in similar action spectra of formation for these
326 photolesions although their formation efficiencies are different with a relatively constant ratio
327 in each tissue or naked DNA (Fig. 2c). However, the following photochemical reactions for
328 the production of CPDs and 64PPs are different because $\pi\pi^*$ and charge-transfer excited
329 states are involved, respectively (31). The latter process has a large energy barrier for the

330 production of 64PPs, which could decrease the production efficiency at wavelengths longer
331 than 290 nm, as observed for the thymidine polynucleotide (dT)₂₀ (31). The tailing of CPD
332 formation spectra in the UVA range would reflect a photochemical reaction process different
333 from the singlet $\pi\pi^*$ excitation, which is another charge-transfer excited state called
334 “collective excitation” that occurs in double-stranded DNA at a very low efficiency but with
335 low photon energies, in contrast to $\pi\pi^*$ excitation (43, 44), and is thus detectable only at low-
336 energy wavelengths such as those in UVA1. Little or no detection of 64PPs/Dewar isomers
337 and low but significant production of CPDs in the UVA region have actually been observed
338 for DNA, cells and skin tissues in studies with polychromatic UVR sources (45–48).

339 We observed relatively constant molecular ratios between CPDs and 64PPs at
340 wavelengths up to 290 (naked DNA) or 300 nm (skin DNA): 5- to 10-fold more CPDs
341 compared with 64PPs (Fig. 2c). This difference is a greater than those reported in one of our
342 previous studies performed with HPLC-ESI-MS/MS (*ca.* 3-fold more CPDs) for naked and
343 cellular DNA using conventional UVC and UVB sources (34). In another study, however, we
344 observed a 64PP/CPD ratio of 0.07 in UVB-irradiated naked DNA, which was used as the
345 standard UVR-damaged DNA for our quantitative ELISA, with the same mass spectrometry-
346 based method and reported the formation of 5- to 10-fold or more CPDs than 64PPs in UVB-
347 or UVC-exposed mouse skin with the ELISA (7). Similar 64PP/CPD ratios have also been
348 observed for the quantum yields of both photolesions in a photochemical study with (dT)₂₀
349 (31). In addition, we noticed consistently lower 64PP/CPD ratios in the dermis than in the
350 epidermis irrespective of the UVR source in the UVC and UVB ranges (Fig. 2c) (7), which
351 suggests less efficient 64PP formation in the dermis than in the epidermis because the CPD
352 formation efficiencies are comparable between these tissues (Fig. 2b). The conformation of
353 nuclear DNA in dermal fibroblasts might be less susceptible to 64PP formation than that in
354 epidermal keratinocytes.

355

356 **Similarities and differences in action spectra between photolesion formation and**
357 **mutagenicity**

358 The damage formation action spectra paralleled the mutagenicity spectra for CPD but not that
359 for 64PP in both the epidermis and dermis at wavelengths of 295 nm or longer (Fig. 3). At
360 shorter wavelengths, however, substantial differences appeared between the spectra: mutation
361 inducibility was less efficient than photolesion formation. This difference could result from
362 the ability of the cornified/epidermal layers to prevent the transmission of these short
363 wavelengths (19, 26–28), which would cause a gradient in photolesion distribution with less
364 photolesion content at deeper regions of skin tissues, as observed previously (27). In this
365 situation, heavily damaged cells would be eliminated by apoptosis or some other cell-killing
366 mechanisms, whereas less-damaged cells would survive to reconstitute the damaged skin
367 tissue. In our analysis, the mutations in UVR-exposed skin areas were assayed 4 weeks after
368 irradiation, and thus, only the less-damaged surviving cells would have contributed to the
369 mutagenicity spectra, resulting in mutagenic efficiencies that were lower than photolesion
370 formation efficiencies in the short wavelength range. On the other hand, because skin layers
371 are transparent to UVR at wavelengths longer than 300 nm (19, 27, 28), the distribution of
372 photolesions would be largely homogeneous among cells throughout each skin tissue,
373 resulting in similar action spectra between CPD formation and mutagenicity at these longer
374 wavelengths (Fig. 3).

375 The action spectra of 64PP formation were quite different from the mutagenicity
376 spectra not only at the shorter wavelengths but also in the longer-wavelength UVR region
377 (Fig. 3), which suggests a poor contribution of 64PPs to UVR-induced mutagenesis, at least
378 in the skin of wild-type mice that were used in the present study. Although several studies
379 reported some contributions of 64PP to UVR mutagenicity (49–51), these mutagenicities

380 were detected in some particular situations, such as in a mutagenic adaptive response (49, 51)
381 and/or DNA repair deficiency (49–51). 64PPs are removed rapidly from the UVR-damaged
382 mammalian genome by DNA repair (52, 53), whereas CPDs are slowly or hardly removed
383 from mammalian cells and the skin (52–55). In fact, under repair-proficient, ordinary
384 conditions, CPDs are major photolesions that induce UVR-specific mutations (3, 4). These
385 studies indicate that the mutagenicity of 64PP should depend on the repair proficiency and
386 emerge under defective photolesion removal. Because we used repair-proficient mice in the
387 present study, it is not surprising that the action spectra supported CPD dominance in UVR
388 mutagenicity.

389

390 **Wavelength dependence of CPD mutagenicity**

391 Because we assessed that CPDs but not 64PPs mainly contribute to mutagenicity in normal
392 skin, the molecular mutagenicity of CPD in mouse skin has been estimated based on the
393 action spectra of CPD formation and that of mutagenicity established in our previous studies
394 (20) and found to exhibit a similar wavelength-dependent variation in both the epidermis and
395 dermis, with a peak at approximately 313 nm (Fig. 4a). The mutagenicity of CPD depends on
396 combinations of dimerized pyrimidines: cytosine-containing CPDs are mutagenic and
397 produce UV-signature mutations (2, 5), whereas cyclobutane thymine dimers rarely induce
398 mutations in cultured cells and skin (2). Moreover, among cytosine-containing CPDs, those
399 formed in the 5'-TCG-3' sequence are known to be most mutagenic (56) due to their
400 exceptionally high tendency for cytosine deamination in the CPD (57, 58). Cytosine
401 deamination in CPDs produces uracil-containing CPDs that can induce C-to-T mutations via
402 TLS. In addition, the distribution of mutation recoveries among dipyrimidine-containing
403 triplet sequences shows a wavelength-dependent variation especially at the 5'-TCG-3'
404 sequence, which shifts the mutation spectrum between the “UV signature” and “UVA

405 signature” (56). The 5’-TCG-3’ sequence includes a CpG motif, which is the target sequence
406 of DNA methylation, an epigenetic DNA modification specific to vertebrate genomes (59). It
407 is known that the frequency of CPD formation at the CpG motif varies depending on its
408 methylation status and the wavelength of incident UVR (60–63): UVB and/or sunlight UVR
409 preferably produce CPDs at dipyrimidine-associated, methylated CpG sites in contrast to
410 UVC (60, 61, 63). Thus, mutagenic subclasses of CPDs, mostly cytosine-containing, CpG-
411 associated CPDs, are produced in a wavelength-dependent manner, which leads to the
412 wavelength-dependent variation in the mutation signature (56) and CPD mutagenicity
413 observed in this study. We previously reported that exposure to UVB produced CPDs with a
414 higher molecular mutagenicity in mouse skin than exposure to UVC (7). The present study
415 confirmed this result and characterized the profile of CPD mutagenicity more precisely as a
416 unique wavelength-dependent pattern that peaks at approximately 313 nm (Fig. 4a). Because
417 the wavelength-dependent patterns are quite similar between the epidermis and dermis, the
418 mechanisms of CPD-mediated mutagenesis should be common in both tissues.

419 In summary, the present study confirmed that CPD is a major mutation-causing
420 photolesion throughout the UVR region from 260 to 364 nm. The efficiency of CPD
421 formation is proportionally correlated with the efficiency of mutation induction as directly
422 evidenced in Fig. 3. Thus, UVR mutagenicity appears to be determined mainly by the CPD
423 formation efficiency. However, the wavelength-dependent variation in the mutagenicity of a
424 CPD molecule shown in Fig. 4a reveals that the quality of CPD, such as its base composition
425 and locating sequence context, can also influence UVR mutagenicity, although this
426 contribution is relatively minor. Thus, both the formation efficiency and the molecular quality
427 of CPD affect the wavelength dependence of the UVR-induced mutation.

428

429 **Different CPD mutagenicities between the epidermis and dermis**

430 Although the wavelength dependence in the epidermis and dermis shows parallel patterns,
431 CPD mutagenicities are always higher in the epidermis than in the dermis (Fig. 4a) and
432 constantly 2- to 3-fold higher at wavelengths longer than 260 nm (Fig. 4b). Similar
433 differences were observed in our previous study with conventional UVC and UVB lamps (7).
434 The lower mutagenicity in the dermis might suggest more efficient DNA repair, which is,
435 however, inconsistent with previous studies (64–66), which supported a superiority of the
436 epidermis in CPD removal. The UVR-damaged epidermis shows rapid tissue turnover, such
437 as the MIS response, inducing extensive apoptosis followed by hyperplasia with active
438 proliferation of less-damaged, surviving keratinocytes (30, 67), which would result in
439 mutation fixation mediated through the TLS of CPDs remaining in the surviving cells.
440 Although the cellular kinetics in the dermis after UVR insults have not been clarified, the
441 following interesting observation was reported: partial or local elimination of dermal
442 fibroblasts by laser or toxin does not induce cell proliferation or repopulation from
443 surrounding areas but rather encourages the remaining fibroblasts to extend their cell
444 membrane into the depleted regions without changing their location to maintain the cellular
445 networks in the dermis (68). If the same response does occur after UVR insult, such active
446 cell proliferation in the epidermis would not be expected in the dermis, which would result in
447 fewer mutations in the dermis than in the epidermis, as observed in the present study.

448 We previously reported that the epidermis exhibits the MIS response after an exposure to
449 high doses of UVR. In this response, the dose-dependent increase in the MF stops and
450 plateaus at a constant level (plateau MF) above a certain UVR dose (20, 29). The plateau MF
451 varies depending on the wavelength of the UVR, peaking at 313 nm with a similar pattern as
452 the wavelength dependence of CPD mutagenicity observed in this study (20). However, the
453 wavelength-dependent variation in the plateau MF cannot be explained by that of CPD
454 mutagenicity alone because their degrees of variation are fairly different (roughly 20-fold vs.

455 5-fold, respectively). Although the remaining variation in the plateau MF can be explained by
456 the different number of CPDs produced at each wavelength when the MIS response is
457 induced (Fig. 5), the CPD numbers do not appear to determine the timing of the response.
458 Other wavelength-dependent UVR sensors that induce extensive apoptosis in the epidermis
459 should trigger the MIS response.

460

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466

467 **SUPPORTING MATERIALS**

468 Figure S1 can be found at DOI: xxxx-xxxxxx.s1.

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676 **Figure legends**

677

678 **Figure 1.** Dose-response kinetics of DNA photolesion formation by monochromatic UVR. (a,
679 b) Dose-dependent formation kinetics of CPDs (a) and 64PPs (b) in the epidermis (open
680 circles) and dermis (open diamonds) in mouse skin after irradiation. Each data point was
681 derived from a single mouse. The colored points (red and blue for the epidermis and dermis,
682 respectively) were used for regression analysis (dotted lines) to evaluate the slopes of the
683 photolesion formation kinetics (shown equations). (c) Dose-dependent formation kinetics of
684 CPDs (open circles) and 64PPs (open diamonds) in naked DNA after irradiation. Each data
685 point was derived from a single DNA sample. The colored points (red and blue for CPDs and
686 64PPs, respectively) were used for regression analysis (dotted lines) to evaluate the slopes of
687 the photolesion formation kinetics (shown equations). The amounts of the photolesions were
688 evaluated through a quantitative ELISA using specific monoclonal antibodies for each
689 photolesion and standard UVR-damaged calibration DNA.

690

691 **Figure 2.** Wavelength dependence of UVR photolesion formation. (a) Action spectra of the
692 formation of CPDs (circle) and 64PPs (triangle) in DNA (black) and the mouse epidermis
693 (red) and dermis (blue). The error bars show the standard errors. (b) Comparisons of the action
694 spectra of the formation of each photolesion shown in (a) among naked DNA and skin tissues
695 in a single graph. (c) Wavelength dependence of molecular ratios of 64PPs to CPDs formed in
696 DNA and skin tissues.

697

698 **Figure 3.** Comparison of the action spectra between photolesion formation and mutagenesis in
699 the mouse skin. The action spectra of CPD (red) and 64PP (blue) formation in each mouse
700 tissue, epidermis and dermis, are overlaid in a single graph along with the action spectra of

701 mutagenicity (black) normalized at 300 nm. The mutagenicity data were derived from Ikehata
702 *et al.* (20).

703
704 **Figure 4.** Molecular mutagenicity of CPD in mouse skin. (a) Wavelength dependence of the
705 mutagenicity of a CPD molecule (CPD mutagenicity) in the mouse epidermis (red) and dermis
706 (blue). (b) Wavelength dependence of the ratio of CPD mutagenicity in the epidermis to that in
707 the dermis. This dependence was calculated from the data in (a).

708
709 **Figure 5.** Estimation of the ability of UVR photolesions to induce the MIS response. The
710 minimum amounts of CPDs (red) and 64PPs (blue) necessary to induce the MIS response were
711 determined at the wavelengths used for the analysis by deducing from the minimum MIS
712 doses in the epidermis reported previously (20).

Fig. 1a

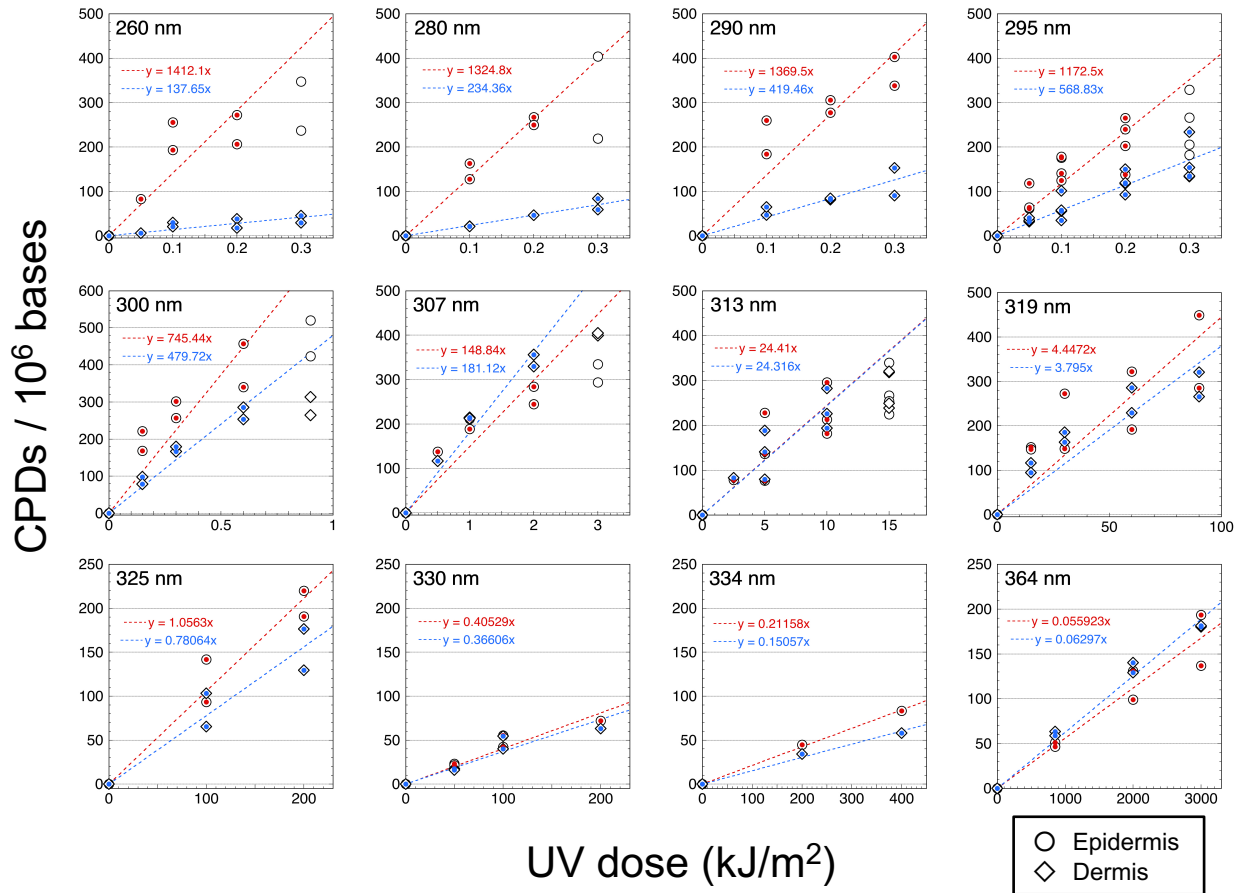


Fig. 1b

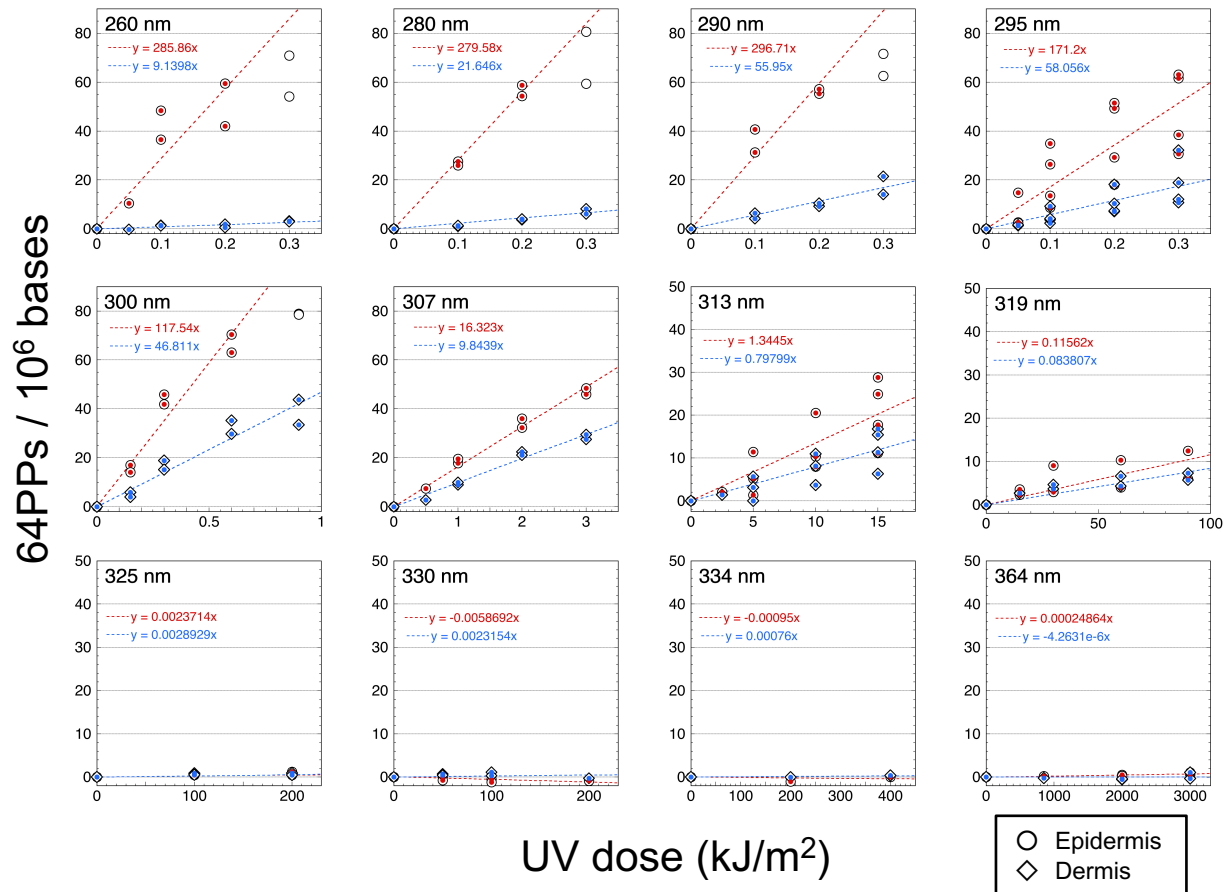


Fig. 1c

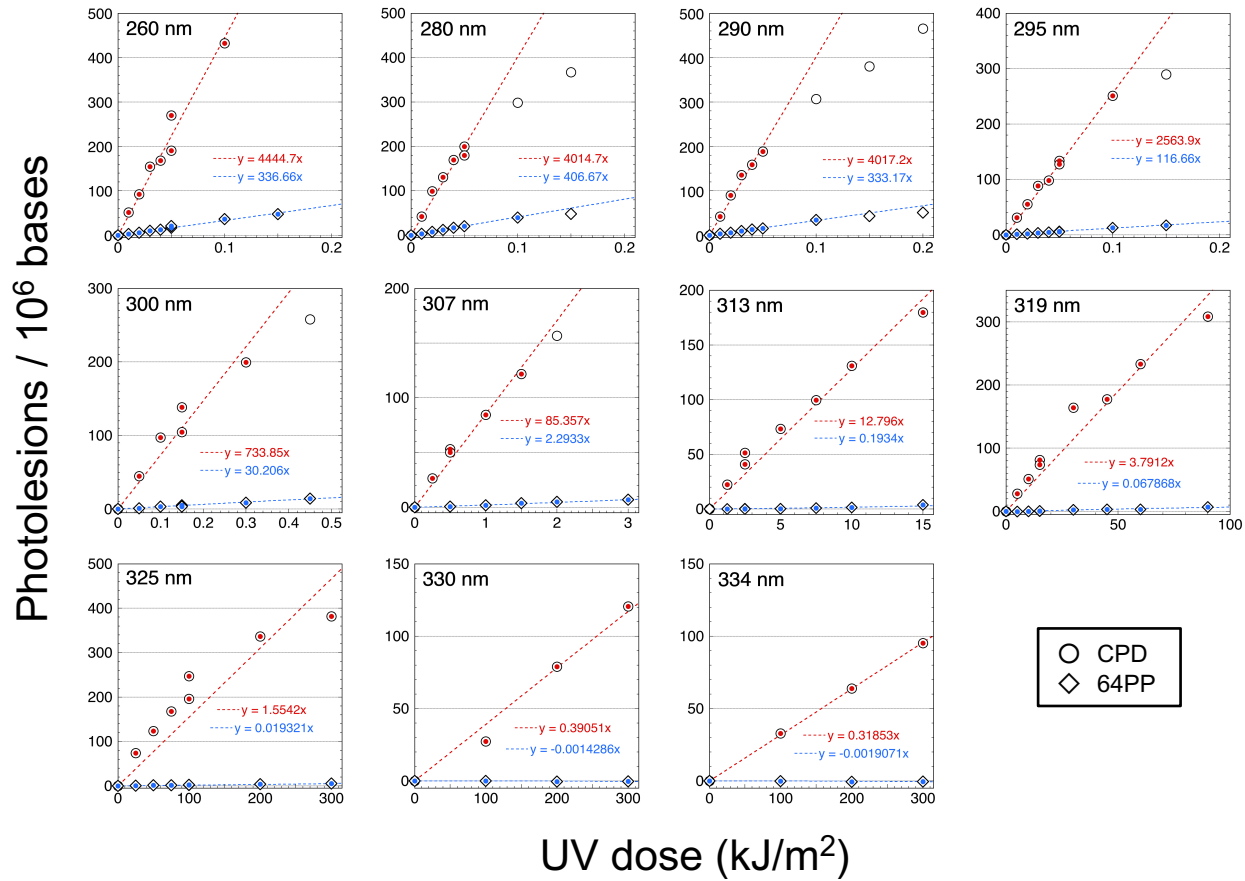


Fig. 2a

a

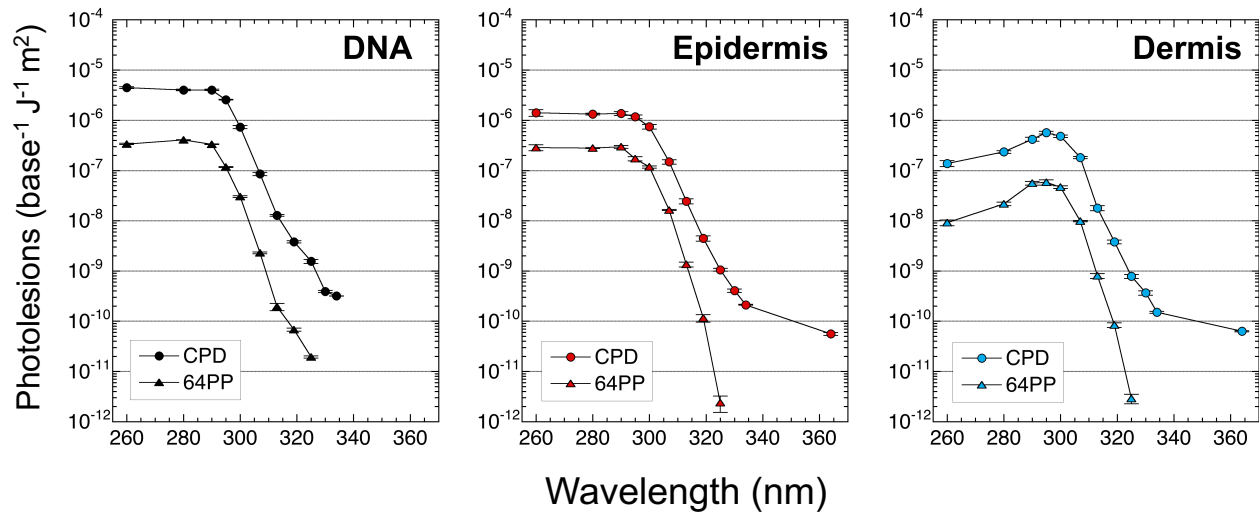


Fig. 2b

b

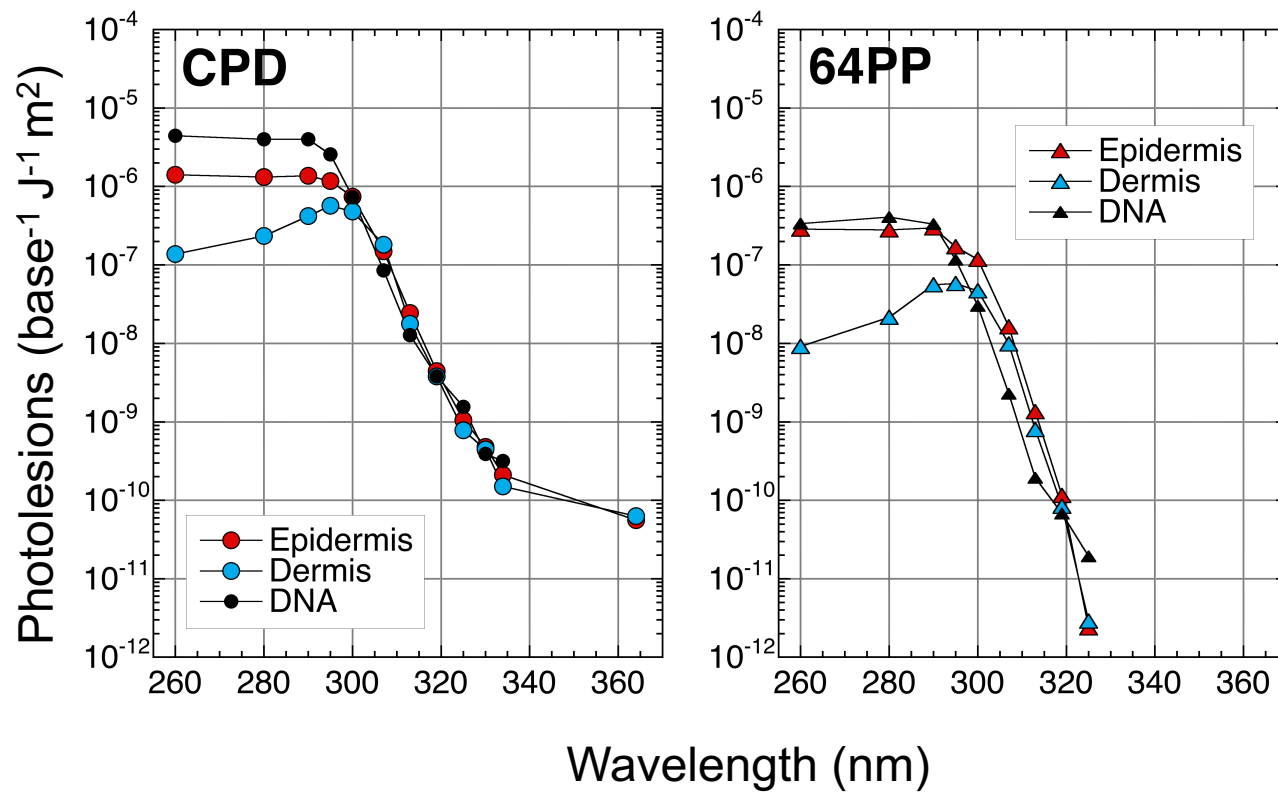


Fig. 2c

c

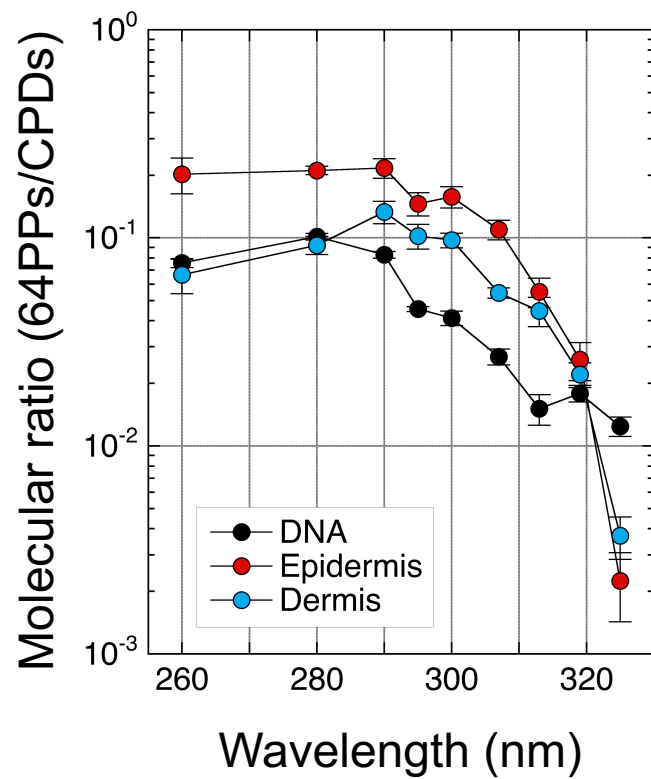


Fig. 3

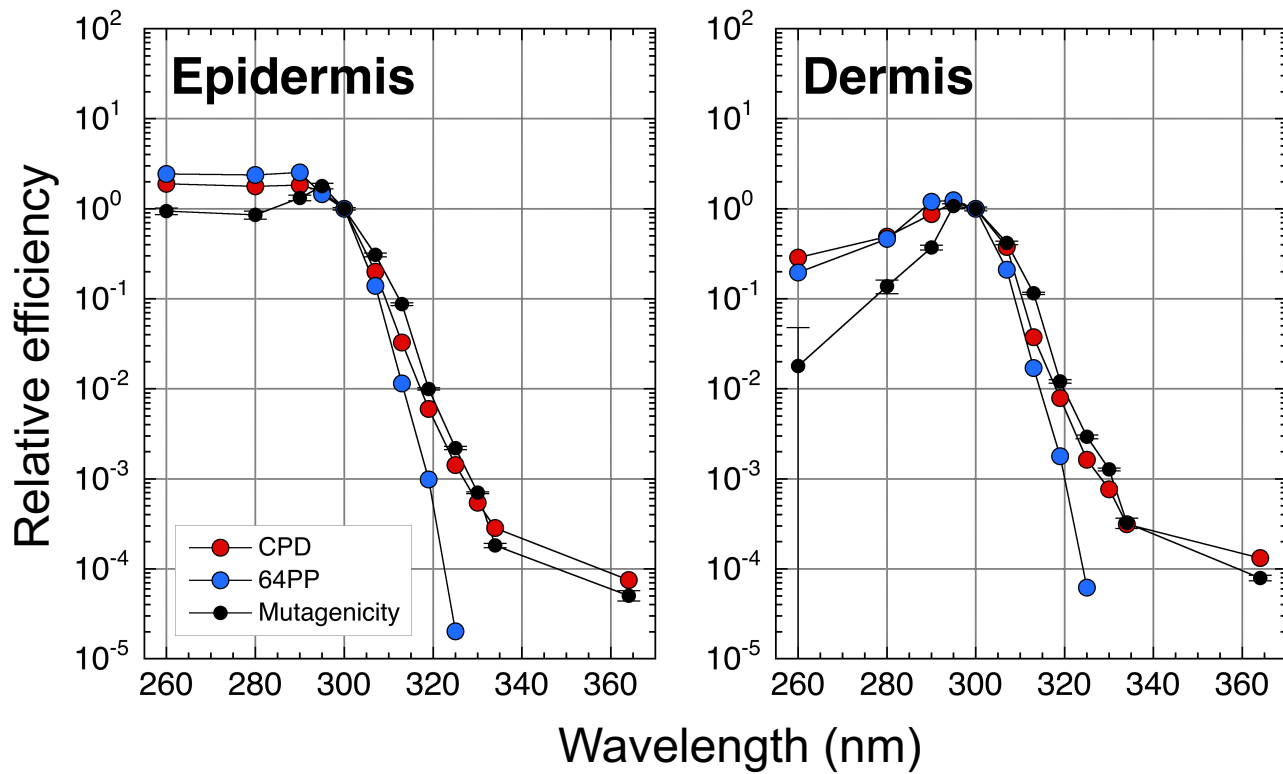
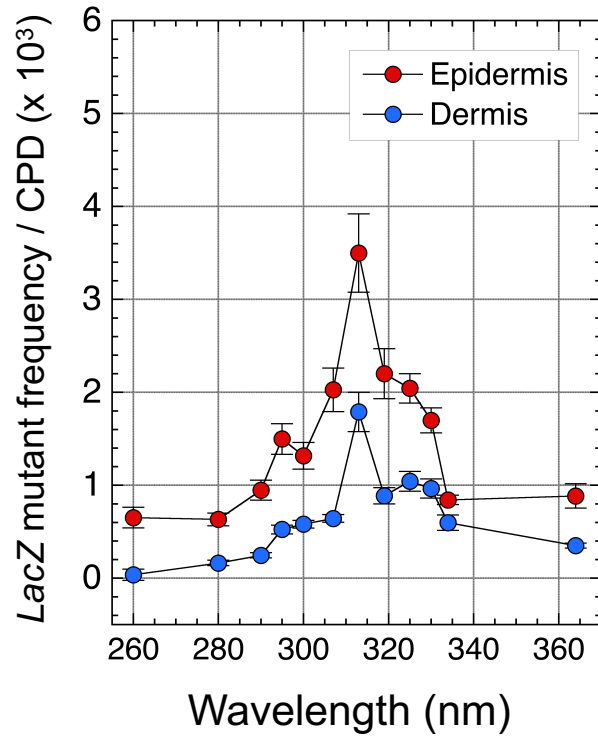


Fig. 4

a



b

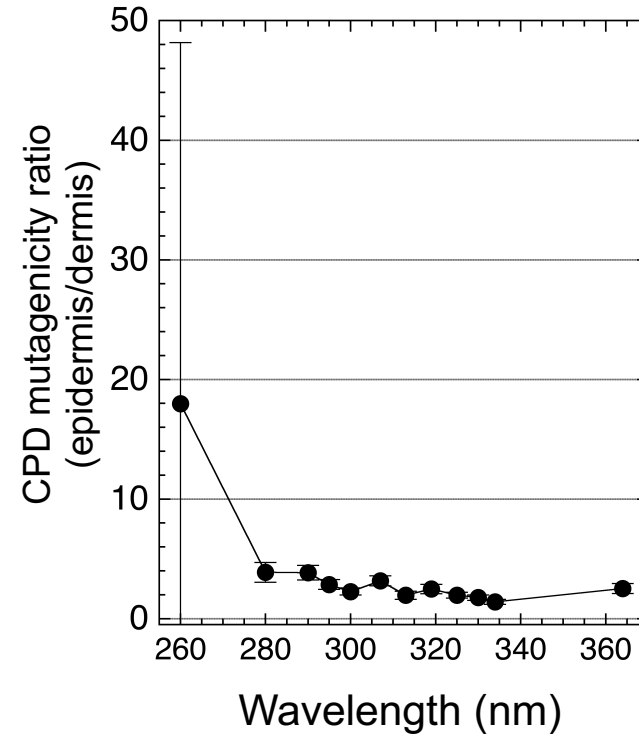


Fig. 5

