

Aug 01, 2025 Version 1

Dopaminergic neuron differentiation V.1

DOI

dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.3byl4q8yovo5/v1

Khaja Mohieddin Syed^{1,2}, Oriol Busquets^{3,2}, Frank Soldner^{3,2}, Dirk Hockemeyer^{1,2}

¹University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA;

²Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP) Collaborative Research Network, Chevy Chase, MD, 2081;

³Albert Einstein College of Medicine, 1301 Morris Park Ave., Bronx, NY 10461, USA.



Oriol Busquets

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

OPEN  ACCESS



DOI: dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.3byl4q8yovo5/v1

Protocol Citation: Khaja Mohieddin Syed, Oriol Busquets, Frank Soldner, Dirk Hockemeyer 2025. Dopaminergic neuron differentiation. **protocols.io** <https://dx.doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.3byl4q8yovo5/v1>

License: This is an open access protocol distributed under the terms of the **Creative Commons Attribution License**, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited

Protocol status: Working

We use this protocol and it's working

Created: January 09, 2024

Last Modified: August 01, 2025

Protocol Integer ID: 93189

Keywords: ASAPCRN

Funders Acknowledgements:

Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP)

Grant ID: ASAP-000486

Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP)

Grant ID: ASAP-024409

Abstract

This protocol has been used to differentiate dopaminergic neurons from hPSC adapted to feeder free culture systems.

Protocol overview

- A. Plate preparation
- B. Media recipes
- C. Dopaminergic neuron differentiation

Attachments



Dopaminergic neuron ...

64KB

Materials

| Item | Vendor | Catalog number |
|--|----------------------|----------------|
| DMEM/F12 | Gibco | 11320033 |
| mTESR-plus Medium | StemCell Tech | 100-0276 |
| Neurobasal medium | Gibco | 21103049 |
| N2 supplement | Gibco | 17502048 |
| B27 supplement without vitamin A | Gibco | 12587-010 |
| L-Glutamine | Sigma | G8450 |
| Penicillin-Streptomycin | Gibco | 15140122 |
| Y-27632 Dihydrochloride Rock inhibitor | ToCris | CD0141 |
| DPBS (No calcium, No magnesium) | Cytiva | SH30028 |
| Accutase | Innovative Cell Tech | AT104 |
| Matrigel | Corning | 354230 |
| Laminin | R&D Systems | 3400-010-02 |
| Poly-L-Ornithine | Sigma | P3655 |
| LDN | Stemgent | 04-0074 |
| SHH C25II | R&D Systems | 1845-SH-100 |
| SB431542 | SelleckChem | S1067 |
| CHIR99021 | ToCris | 4423 |
| GDNF | PeProtech | 450-10 |
| BDNF | PeProtech | 450-02 |
| Dibutyryl-cAMP (Bucladesine) | SelleckChem | S7858 |
| Sodium L-Ascorbate | Sigma | A40-34 |
| TGFβ3 | R&D Systems | 8420-B3-005 |
| DAPT | Tocris | 2634 |



Plate preparation

1 Plate preparation:

Note

This protocol has been used to differentiate dopaminergic neurons from hPSC adapted to feeder free culture systems. Our version of the protocol has been adapted from [Kim et al. 2021; Cell Stem Cell 28, 343–355 e5, February 4, 2021](#) and [Piao et al. 2021; Cell Stem Cell 28, 217–229 e7, February 4, 2021](#).

Note

We have used two alternative protocol variants with minor modifications which will be outlined at the respective steps as **SP** (Soldner Protocol) and **HP** (Hockemeyer Protocol).

Note

It is important to start the differentiation from pristine, undifferentiated feeder free cultures. For more details consult: <https://doi.org/10.17504/protocols.io.b4mcqu2w>

- 1.1 **Matrigel/Geltrex coating:** Prepare matrigel/geltrex (1:30) in cold DMEM/F12 or DPBS in a 15 ml tube as described by the manufacturer. Coat each well with 1-1.5 ml (6 well plate size) or 0.5 ml (12w plate size) of solution and incubate at 37 °C incubator for at least 00:30:00 to 1 hour. 30m
- 1.2 **Laminin coating:** Prepare laminin (2 µg/ml) in cold DPBS and coat each well of a 6-well plate with 1.5ml laminin solution (2 µg/ml) and incubate Overnight at 37 °C . 1h
- 1.3 **Poly-L-Ornithine (PLO) + Fibronectin (F) + Laminin (L) coating:** Prepare PLO (15 µg/ml) in sterile water and coat each well with 0.5-1 ml making sure it covers the entire surface. Incubate at 37 °C for 06:00:00 to overnight. The day after, wash each well with sterile water 4 times and add a new solution with fibronectin (1 µg/ml) and laminin (2 µg/ml) (in water) and incubate Overnight at 37 °C . Do not let the wells dry. 12h
- 1.4 **Poly-L-Ornithine (PLO) + Laminin (L) coating:** Prepare PLO (15 µg/ml) in sterile water and coat each well of a 12-well plate with 0.5-1 ml making sure it covers the entire 12h



surface. Incubate at 37 °C for 06:00:00 to overnight. The day after, wash each well with sterile water 2 times and add a new solution with laminin (2 µg/ml) (in cold DPBS) and incubate Overnight at 37 °C . Do not let the wells dry.

Media Preparation

2 Media recipes:

- 2.1 **Media A:** Neurobasal media + N2 supplement (1% vol/vol) + B27 supplement without vitamin A (2% vol/vol) + L-Glutamine (2 mM) + Penicillin-Streptomycin (100U/ml) + SHH (200 ng/ml) + CHIR99021 (0.7 µM) + LDN (250 nM) + SB431542 (10 µM).
- 2.2 **Media B:** Neurobasal media + N2 supplement (1% vol/vol) + B27 supplement without vitamin A (2% vol/vol) + L-Glutamine (2 mM) + Penicillin-Streptomycin (100U/ml) + SHH (200 ng/ml) + CHIR99021 (7.5 µM) + LDN (250 nM) + SB431542 (10 µM).
- 2.3 **Media C:** Neurobasal media + N2 supplement (1% vol/vol) + B27 supplement without vitamin A (2% vol/vol) + L-Glutamine (2 mM) + Penicillin-Streptomycin (100U/ml) + CHIR99021 (7.5 µM).
- 2.4 **Media D:** Neurobasal media + B27 supplement without vitamin A (2% vol/vol) + L-Glutamine (2 mM) + Penicillin-Streptomycin (100U/ml) + BDNF (20 ng/ml) + GDNF (20 ng/ml) + Ascorbic acid (200 µM) + Dibutyryl-cAMP (0.5 mM) + TGFβ3 (1ng/ml) + CHIR99021 (3 µM).
- 2.5 **Precursor splitting media:** Neurobasal media + B27 supplement without vitamin A (2% vol/vol) + L-Glutamine (2 mM) + Penicillin-Streptomycin (100U/ml) + BDNF (20 ng/ml) + GDNF (20 ng/ml) + Ascorbic acid (200 µM) + Dibutyryl-cAMP (0.5 mM) + TGFβ3 (1ng/ml).
- 2.6 **Maturation media:** Neurobasal media + B27 supplement without vitamin A (2% vol/vol) + L-Glutamine (2 mM) + Penicillin-Streptomycin (100U/ml) + BDNF (20 ng/ml) + GDNF (20 ng/ml) + Ascorbic acid (200 µM) + Dibutyryl-cAMP (0.5 mM) + TGFβ3 (1ng/ml) + DAPT (10 µM).







Dopaminergic neuron differentiation

1h 35m

- 3 Day 0: Dissociate hPSCs using accutase (00:10:00 - 37 °C). Quench dissociation by diluting the accutase solution with mTeSR-plus media + 10 µM Y-27632 and collect the cells into a 15ml conical tube. Spin the cells down at 105 rcf for 00:05:00 . Remove the supernatant, resuspend the cells in mTeSR-plus media + 10 µM Y-27632 and count them.

15m



- 3.1 **SP:** Plate the cells at 400-600k/cm² in media A + 10 µM Y-27632 onto geltrex coated plates (adjust cell number to the plate size being used).
- 3.2 **HP:** Plate the cells at 400-600k/well in a 6-well plate in mTeSR-plus + 10 µM Y-27632 onto matrigel coated plates.
- 4 Day 1-3: Change the media - media A (change daily or every other day as necessary).
- 5 Day 4 and day 6: Change the media- media B (change daily or every other day as necessary).
- 6 Day 7 and Day 9: Change the media - media C (change daily or every other day as necessary).
- 7 Day 10: Change the media - media D.
- 8 Day 11: Passage #1. Dissociate cells using accutase (approximately  00:10:00 -  37 °C but longer incubations may be necessary to properly detach the cells). Quench dissociation by diluting the accutase solution with 1 ml/well media D + 10 µM Y-27632. Collect cells in 15ml conical tubes and spin them down at  300 rcf -  00:05:00 . Remove the supernatant, resuspend the cell in media D + 10 µM Y-27632.
- 8.1 **SP:** Count the cells and plate them at 800k/cm² in media D + 10 µM Y-27632 onto PLO+F+L coated plates.
- 8.2 **HP:** Split 1:2 in precursor splitting media + 10 µM Y-27632 onto laminin-coated plates.
- 9 Day 12-15: Change the media - maturation media (change daily or every other day as necessary).
- 10 Day 16: Passage #2. Dissociate cells using accutase (approximately  00:10:00 -  37 °C but longer incubations may be necessary to properly dissociate collect the cells). Quench dissociation by diluting accutase with 1 ml/well precursor splitting media + 10 µM Y-27632. Collect the cells in 15 ml conical tubes and spin them down at

15m

15m



300 rcf - 00:05:00 . Remove the supernatant, resuspend the cell in precursor splitting media + 10 μ M Y-27632 and count them.

- 10.1 **SP:** Plate the cells at 800k/cm² in precursor splitting media + 10 μ M Y-27632 onto PLO+F+L coated plates.
- 10.2 **HP:** Plate the cells at >1 million cells per well of 12-well plate in maturation media + 10 μ M Y-27632 onto PLO+L coated plates.
- 11 Day 17-24: Change the media - maturation media (change daily or every other day as necessary).
- 12 Day 25: Passage #3.
- 12.1 **SP:** Dissociate cells using papain solution (00:30:00 - 37 °C). Inactivate papain solution using ovomucoid trypsin inhibitor (10mg/ml). Collect your cells in 15 ml conical tubes and spin them down at 300 rcf - 00:05:00 . Remove the supernatant, resuspend the cells in maturation media + 10 μ M Y-27632 and count them. Plate the cells at 200-300k/cm² in maturation media + 10 μ M Y-27632 onto PLO+L+F coated plates. 35m
- 12.2 **HP:** Dissociate cells using accutase (approximately 00:10:00 - 37 °C is the usual standard but longer incubations may be necessary to properly detach the cells). Quench accutase by adding maturation media + 10 μ M Y-27632. Collect your cells in 15 ml conical tubes and spin them down at 300 rcf - 00:05:00 . Remove the supernatant, resuspend the cells in maturation media + 10 μ M Y-27632 and count them. Plate the cells at >1 million cells per well of 12-well plate in maturation media + 10 μ M Y-27632 onto PLO+L coated plates. 15m
- 13 Day >26: Change media to maturation media (perform media changes every 2-3 days). Cells can be maintained in this media for several months or until experiment.