

# Activation of NADPH Oxidase Complex by ISA Virus Nucleoprotein Overexpression: Alteration of SUMO-1 Protein Levels a Consequence of Cellular Oxidative Stress

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## Abstract

The pathogenic mechanism of the infectious salmon anemia virus (ISAv) remains unknown. One methodological approach for solving this unknown is to understand the roles of each viral component separately. Therefore, the present study evaluated the viral nucleoprotein (NP) of ISAv to establish effects to reactive oxygen species (ROS) production and SUMOylation profile balance. Salmon head kidney-1 cells transfected with NP evidenced a strong respiratory burst activation and the genic induction of p47phox, SOD, GLURED, and Bad. Additionally, NP-transfected VERO cells showed alteration in the profile of SUMOylated proteins. Notably, pharmacological inhibition of the NADPH oxidase complex through apocynin blocked ROS production and high NP-mediated cellular ROS levels. These results suggest that the ISAv NP alone can trigger, in transfected cells, a strong production of ROS (able to

hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid (10 mM; pH 7.0), sodium bicarbonate (1 mg/mL), gentamicin (20 µg/mL; Gibco), and 10% fetal bovine serum (Hyclone, GE Healthcare Life Sciences, USA). Transfection kinetics considered 8, 16, and 24 h. Parallel experiments included co-stimulation with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (100 µM; Merck, USA) or with the pharmacological inhibitor apocynin (1 µM) [12]. Cell viability was >95% for all experimental cultures. At each sampling time-point, mRNA or protein was extracted and analysed.

#### NP transfection

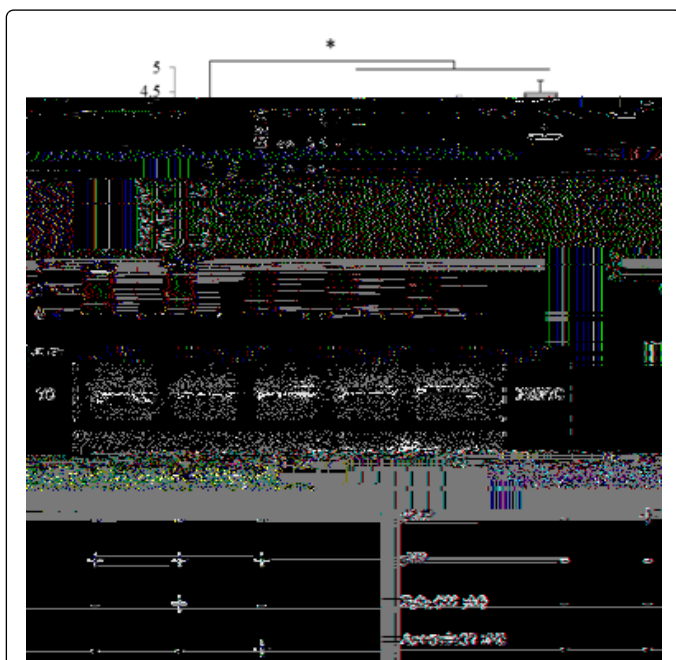
SHK-1 and VERO cells were respectively seeded onto 12 and 6-well plates. SHK-1 cells were incubated at 16°C in 10% L-15 supplemented by 10% fetal bovine serum and 1% antibiotics (penicillin/streptomycin). VERO cells were incubated at 37°C in a humid atmosphere (5% CO<sub>2</sub>) and in DMEM supplemented with 10% fetal calf serum and 1% antibiotic (penicillin/streptomycin). Both cell lines were incubated 24 h before transfection (80% confluence).

Cells were transfected with the pGFP-N1-NP plasmid (SHK-1=1000 ng cells; VERO=2500 ng cells) using Lipofectamine 2000 (Invitrogen,

## Results

### NP increases p47phox expression

First, NP was overexpressed in SHK-1 cells (Figure 1), and expression levels were then determined *via* RT-qPCR (Table 2) and Western blot for p47phox (Figure 2), detoxifying oxidative stress genes, and molecular markers involved in apoptosis



**Figure 1:** SUMO protein expression profiles. (Top) Lane 1: VERO cell line (negative control). Lane 2: VERO cells transfected with pEGFP-N1. Lane 3: VERO cells transfected with pEGFP-N1-NP. Lane 4: VERO cells transfected with pEGFP-N1 in the presence of  $H_2O_2$  (100  $\mu$ M). Lane 5: VERO cells transfected with pEGFP-N1 in the presence of apocynin (10  $\mu$ M). (Bottom) Load control using HSP70. Gene expressions were normalized against HSP70 and are shown relative to the mean expression of non-transfected cells (Line 1). Each bar represents the mean  $\pm$  SE of triplicate samples. \* $P < 0.05$  versus non-transfected cells. The results are representative of three independent experiments.

At 8 h post-transfection, p47phox expression was strongly increased and was nearly tripled at 24 h post-transfection. In the presence of  $H_2O_2$ , p47phox expression increased by 400%, but in the presence of apocynin, transcripts returned to basal levels (Table 2). Prior research revealed pro-apoptotic markers and oxygen radical detoxifiers modulated during viral infection. Therefore, the effects of NP overexpression on these transcripts were assessed. At 8 h post-transfection, the following results were observed: p47phox expression was

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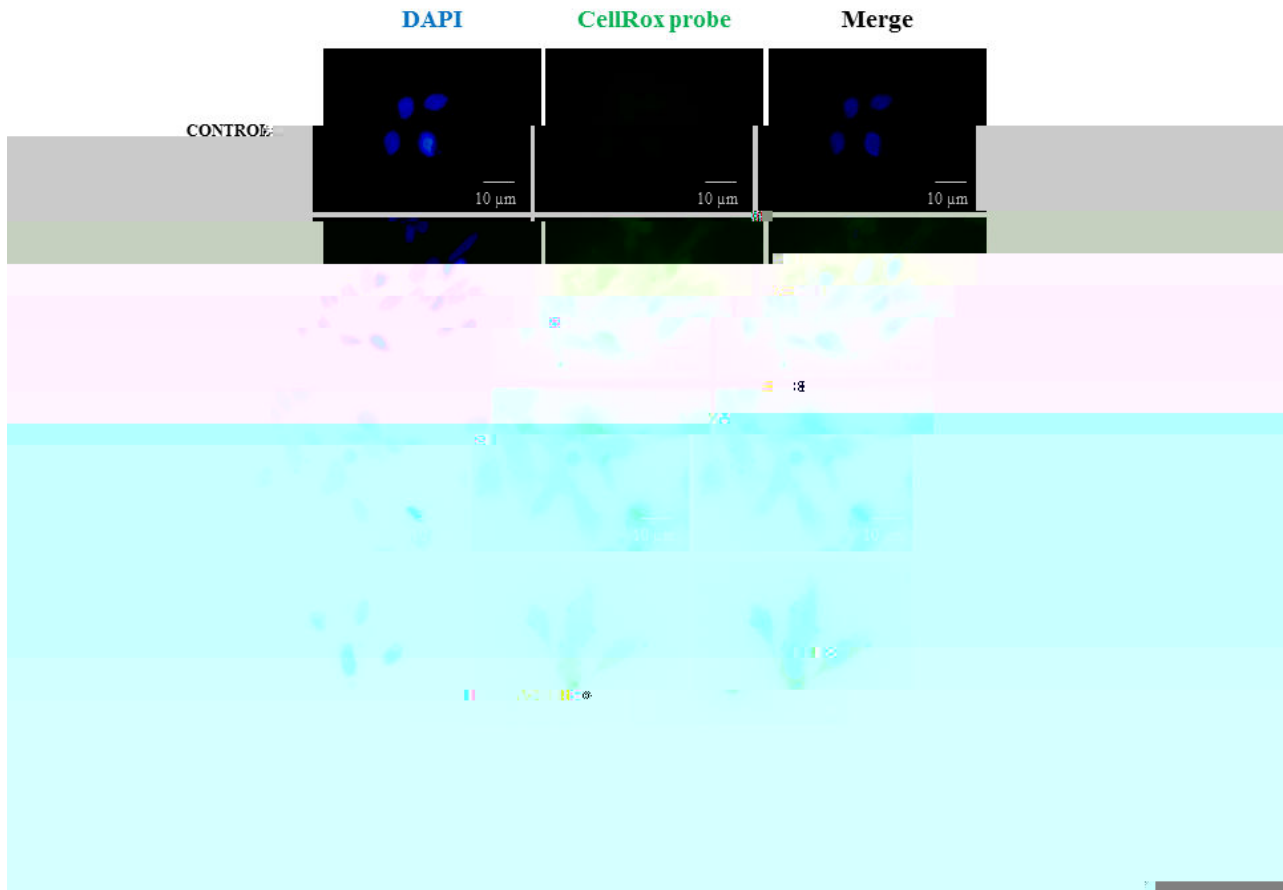
of a foreign protein resulted in a 7% decrease in the SUMOylation signal level (Lane 2), a decrease that was much more drastic (47%) in NP-transfected cells (Lane 3). These findings are likely the consequence of a robust imbalance cellular ROS levels, as apparently mediated by NP. In cells transfected with NP and incubated with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>, the SUMOylation signal level slightly intensified (57%; Lane 4), while blocking of NADPH oxidase complex activity strongly increased the SUMOylation signal level (91%; Lane 5). These analyses strongly suggest that NP can modify cellular SUMOylation levels, apparently by increasing NADPH oxidase activity (Figure 3).

#### NP increases NADPH-mediated ROS production

To corroborate the strongly suggested capacity of NP to modulate the NADPH oxidase complex, with consequent ROS increases and SUMOylation profile changes, the effect of NP on ROS production in the absence/presence of apocynin was assessed. Oxidative stress in SHK-1 cells was detected and quantified using the CellROX reagent, a fluorogenic probe. The obtained results showed a robust fluorescent signal that was higher in cells transfected with NP than with H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> (Figure 4). In contrast, SHK-1 cells treated with apocynin had weakly decreased fluorescent signals in the cytoplasm. These results substantiate the ability of NP to activate the NADPH complex, a producer of cellular ROS.

#### 4. Discussion

Orthomyxoviridae viruses have been extensively studied due wide reaching impact on public health. Nevertheless, essential aspects of the infection mechanisms of these viruses remain unknown. Therefore, any insights contribute a valuable contribution towards the development of tools/strategies for the containment/eradication of these pathogens, including ISA. Considering the scarcity of cellular



**Figure 4** Suggests the imbalance in cellular SUMO activity.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, ISAV infection induces an NP-mediated induction of genes encoding for NADPH oxidase components, pro-apoptotic markers, and ROS detoxifier components in SHK-1 cells. Moreover, NP was able to post-translationally modify the cellular protein profile, acting as an oxidative stressor in fish cells.

## Acknowledgments

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