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Title: 1,3-Diketone-Modified Nucleotides and DNA for Cross-Linking with Arginine-Containing Peptides and Proteins

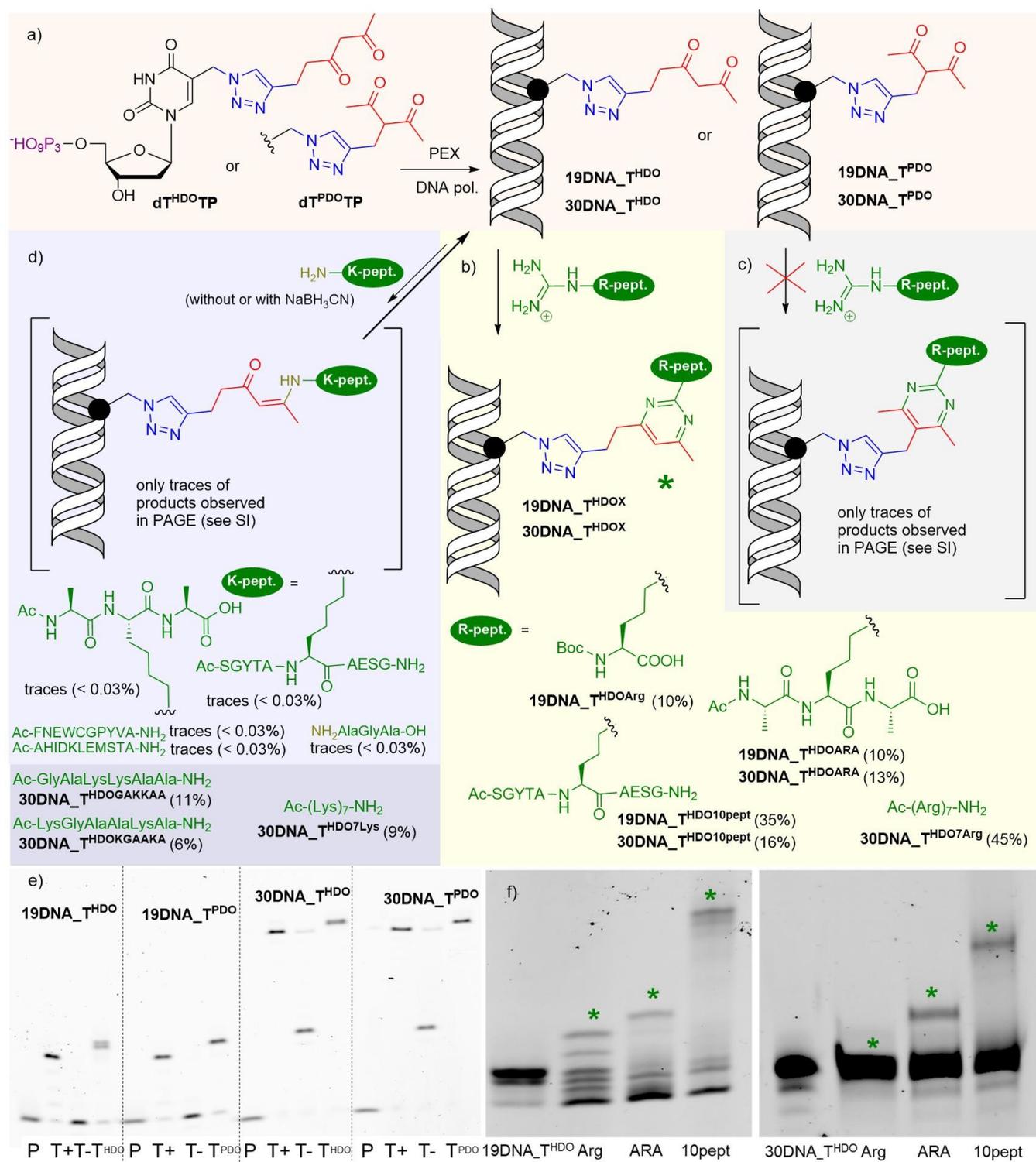
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Then we approached the ultimate goal of this study, to test the reactivity of the HDO-modified DNA (**19DNA_T^{HDO}** and **30DNA_T^{HDO}**) with proteins. Following our previous work,^[15] we used bovine serum albumin (BSA) as a negative control of a protein containing 26 Arg which does not interact with DNA, GST-tagged core domain of p53 protein (GSTp53CD)^[24] as an example of a DNA-binding protein containing arginine but not in the proximity to the modification in the binding site,^[25] and finally a set of Arg-rich histones (H2A, H2B, H3.1 and H4) that strongly bind DNA and their arginines participate on the interaction with DNA. Unlike the model-studies with peptides (that required a large excess of Arg-containing peptides to observe any cross-linking), the cross-linking reactions were performed using 5 equiv. or even 1 equiv. (SI, Figure S11 and S14) of the corresponding proteins. A simple kinetic study of the reaction of **30DNA_T^{HDO}** with histone H4 showed that the maximum conversion is reached within 7-23 h whereas longer times lead to significant decomposition (SI, Figure S17). Therefore the reactions were performed for 18 h either in NaHCO₃ buffer (pH 10, as used for the model-studies) or in more physiologically relevant NaHCO₃ (pH 8.5) or KHCO₃/HEPES (pH 8.5) buffers. In all cases denaturing SDS-PAGE analysis confirmed the formation of covalent adducts of **19DNA_T^{HDO}** or **30DNA_T^{HDO}** with the histones in conversions of 24-35% (for 5 equiv. of protein) or 12-27% (for 1 equiv. of protein) (Figure 2b, Figure S11, S14, S15 in SI). The identity of the covalent DNA-protein conjugates with H2A, H2B and H4 was also confirmed by SDS-PAGE with protein staining (PageBlue™) and by HPLC-MS analysis using electrospray ionization^[26] (Figures S33-35 in SI). The irreversibility of the cross-link was proved by successive reaction with hydroxylamine which did not cleave the cross-linked products (Figure S13 in SI).^[18] On the other hand, no cross-linked conjugates were observed in reactions with BSA or GSTp53CD and only traces of products were observed in the case of cross-linking reactions of branched **30DNA_T^{PDO}** with histones (Figure S16 and S19 in SI).

In conclusion we designed and synthesized novel 1,3-diketone-linked dNTPs and showed that they are good substrates for KOD XL polymerase in PEX reactions to construct reactive DNA probes. The HDO moiety reacts with arginine to form a stable aromatic pyrimidine ring and the covalent adducts are stable toward hydrolysis. The reaction of **DNA_T^{HDO}** with Arg-containing peptides proceeded only in presence of large excess of the peptide, whereas the reactions with Lys-containing peptides gave mostly just traces of products because the enamine-adducts were unstable and prone to hydrolysis. The reactivity of DNA bearing the branched PDO group (**DNA_T^{PDO}**) with Arg-containing peptides was much lower giving only traces of the conjugation products. Reactions of **DNA_T^{HDO}** with Arg-containing DNA-binding proteins (histones) proceeded in good conversions even in 1:5 or 1:1 ratio, due to the proximity effect. Thus we have complemented the toolbox of reactive substituents for DNA cross-linking with a new Arg-specific reactive group. The approach and nucleotide building blocks can be now applied in construction of reactive DNA probes for cross-linking to Arg-containing DNA-binding proteins, for synthesis of stable DNA-peptide or DNA-protein conjugates,^[4,5] as well as for post-synthetic labelling of DNA.^[6]

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Keywords: DNA • proteins • bioconjugations • cross-linking reactions • nucleotides • DNA polymerases

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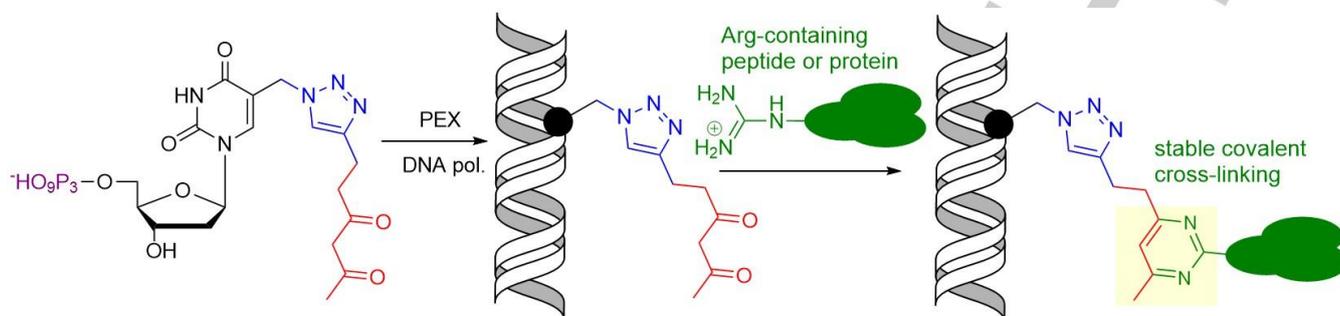
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