Physiological and transcriptional response of the diatom *Corethron hystrix* under robust

UVR irradiation

Robert W. Read[1], David C. Vuono[1], Iva Neveux[1], Carl Staub[2] and Joseph J. Grzymski[1]

1. Division of Earth and Ecosystem Sciences, Desert Research Institute, Reno, NV

89512, USA

2. Agtron, Inc. 9395 Double R Blvd, Reno, NV 89521, USA

Correspondence: Joseph J. Grzymski, Department of Earth and Ecosystem Sciences,

Desert Research Institute, 2215 Raggio Parkway, Reno, NV 89509, USA.

*E-mail: joeg@dri.edu

Abstract:

A novel close-coupled and wavelength-configurable platform was designed that allows the precise and repeatable in-vitro irradiation of target organisms to determine their metabolic, protective, mutative, and repair mechanisms as a function of varying levels of specific electromagnetic energy. This new platform and an associated method to quantify near real-time electromagnetic induced stress progression in photoautotrophic organisms, provided a methodology to alter the physiological and metabolic functions of cells in a highly controlled manner. *Corethron hystrix* was selected as the target for an in-vitro UVR irradiation period of 6-hours followed by a shielded dark period of 6-hours. Irradiation and dark periods were repeated with energy levels beginning at 0.32 mW/cm^2 and increasing incrementally to 1.59 mW/cm^2. By subjecting the organism to UV induced stress, and observing/recording the physiological and molecular responses at each energy level to both UV induced damage and subsequent repair, we discovered that the cells exhibited a negative linear decrease in the photosynthetic efficiency of photosystem II proportional to UV intensity, corresponding to a large increase in the turnover time of the quinones. Gene expression changes were consistent with UVR induced photosystem II damage with decreased expression of photosystem II reaction center proteins D1, CP43 and CP47. Down-stream metabolic pathways demonstrated mixed expression after UVR irradiation, with strong up-regulation after dark recovery. This ability to alter the physiological, molecular and metabolic makeup of an organism in a highly specific manner is a valuable research and discovery tool in DNA damage research.

Introduction:

Diatoms are microscopic photosynthetic algae that are ubiquitous throughout the surface waters of the oceans (Lohman 1960) and account for roughly 40% of oceanic primary production, or one-fifth of the Earth's total primary production (Falkowski and Raven 2007). Diatoms also play a vital role in the global carbon cycle through their uptake of dissolved CO_2 and subsequent carbon fixation which provides a large proportion of the base for the entire marine food web (Armbrust 2009). Given their global distribution, diatoms have adapted to survive under a variety of environmental conditions (Ligowski et al. 2012; Verde and Prisco 2012; Marchetti et al. 2012). Unfavorable conditions such as nutrient limitation (Allen et al. 2008; Dyhrman et al. 2012; Shrestha et al. 2012; Bender et al. 2014), varying light levels (Domingues et al. 2012; Herbstová et al. 2015) and UV exposure (Wu et al. 2015) are commonplace. The latter is of particular interest because of the damaging effects UV can have on photosynthesis as well as other metabolic pathways.

In phytoplankton, UV exposure can inhibit photosynthesis, based on the relative dose and dose rate (Cullen and Lesser 1991). An inhibition of the photosynthetic rate causes a decrease in the rate of primary production, with consequences in marine ecosystems as well as terrestrial environments. Phytoplankton can also produce protective compounds to combat the deleterious effects of UVR such as mycosporine-like amino acids (MAAs), DNA photolyases and many more undefined compounds (Helbling et al. 1996; Coesel et al. 2009). These compounds have shown promise in reducing the carcinogenic effects of UV irradiation, when added to commercial products such as sunscreen (Berardesca et al. 2012; Emanuele et al. 2013). Furthermore, despite the

tremendous diversity of diatoms, with species estimates ranging from 1×10^4 (Norton et

al. 1996) to 2×10^5 (Allen et al. 2006), few studies have focused on the potential

biomedical applications of bioactive compounds produced by these organisms (Coesel et

al. 2009; Prestegard et al. 2009).

Fluorescence kinetics measurements are a reliable estimator of photosynthetic

electron transport rates and photosystem II health (Kolber and Falkowski 1993) in

photoautotrophic organisms. Fast Repetition Rate Fluorometry (FRRF) has been used to

examine variations in several photosynthetic parameters in relation to light impacts on the

cell (Kolber et al. 1998). Changes in parameters such as the maximum quantum yield of

PSII (Fv/Fm) (Geider et al. 1993; Kolber and Falkowski 1993), the turnover time of

electron transport from QA -> QB (tau1) and QB -> PQ (tau2) (Kolber et al. 1988), and

the functional cross section of photosystem II (σ_{PSII}) -- the effective target size of the

PSII antenna in Å^2 $(quanta)^{-1}$ (Kolber et al. 1998), act as proxies to monitor electron

transport rates and the relative health of photosystem II. Here we use them to monitor the

speed and intensity of photosynthetic damage within the cell. Changes in these

parameters are a function of the dose and dosage rate of absorbed radiation, as this has a

direct impact of the oxidation state of PSII electron transport chain.

In this study, the diatom *Corethron hystrix* (CCMP 308) was subjected to

increasing intensities of UVR energy ranging from 0.32 mW/cm^2 to 1.59 mW/cm^2 using a

custom built UVR emitter array. This gave us the ability to precisely and repeatedly

control and measure damage as a decrease in the photochemical efficiency of PSII using

FRRF. Fv/Fm, sigma/σ_{PSII}, and tau were monitored hourly or bihourly to measure the

UV damage to PSII relative to non-irradiated conditions. Gene expression changes were

also monitored at 0.64 mW/cm^2. Our observations indicate that UV-induced damage to

PSII is a linear function of time/energy irradiation. The changes in gene expression

following UV irradiation and a shielded dark period of 6-hours further demonstrated that

severe damage as well as preliminary repair occurred in response to UV irradiation. This

study thus provides a comprehensive investigation of the physiological and molecular

stress response to UV irradiation using a UV emitter array designed specifically to dose

planktonic phototroph cultures with any desired UVR intensity. These tools and methods

can be used to manipulate organisms that may have value in better understanding how

organisms protect themselves against DNA damage.

Materials and Methods:

Cell Cultures

Corethron hystrix was grown at a maintenance temperature of 14 ºC under 12:12 L:D at

an illumination of ~40 µmol photons m^{-2} s^{-1} using white LEDs. Although 14 ºC was the

recommended temperature for in-vitro studies, *Corethron hystrix* has a much wider

known temperature range. Duplicate cultures were grown in L1 medium (Guillard and

Hargraves 1993), prepared with 0.2 µm filtered surface seawater from the Gulf of Maine

(NCMA). Chlorophyll pigment extraction was accomplished in 90% acetone at -20 ºC for

17 hours, under zero light conditions. Following extraction, fluorescence of each sub-

sample was measured using a 10AU Fluorometer (Turner Designs, Sunnyvale, CA,

USA), and chlorophyll concentrations were calculated. Cell counts were determined

using a Sedgewick chamber under bright light. Specific growth rates of replicates in the

cultures were estimated from the log-linear portion of growth curves constructed from

chlorophyll a fluorescence and cell counts obtained under non-irradiating conditions.

During the UVR irradiation experiments chlorophyll a measurements and morphological

cell counts were also collected bihourly in order to observe how these values were

affected by UVR.

Photosynthetic Kinetics

Fv/Fm, sigma, and tau measurements were monitored using a FRRF (Soliense, Inc).

Cell cultures, in duplicate, were subjected to either bright white light only at ~ 40 µmol

m^{-2} sec^{-1} (control condition) or a combination of bright white light (~ 40 µmol m^{-2} sec^{-1})

and UVR irradiation ranging from 0.32 mW/cm^2 to 1.59 mW/cm^2 (experimental

condition). This was accomplished using a custom-built emitter platform (Lumenautix

Inc., Reno, NV; Fig. 1). The overall experimental period consisted of both control and

experimental conditions running for six hours, followed by a dark no light period of six

hours.

NEST Configurable Emitter Array

The NEST array is comprised of multiple discrete solid-state emitters operating in

two categories, VIS and UV connected to a control unit (Supplemental Text). The NEST

emitter control unit is a custom designed four-channel isolated direct current analog

power supply designed specifically to provide temperature stable and highly regulated

clean DC power to each of the four emitter channels of the NEST emitter array. The

output is regulated and temperature compensated for constant current DC – this allows

precise control and stability of light output. Voltage and current are output for power

adjustment and monitoring of each channel and each channel is limited to the LED output

safe area of operation. The NEST array consists of surface mount technology LEDs.

Visible LEDs are blue (3), red (3) and white (6) and the UV emitters (3). For this work

only the UV and white LEDs were used. The white LED color temperature is 3985K and

the output can vary between 4 and 380 µmol m^{-2} sec^{-1}.

The platform is close-coupled and wavelength-configurable (Fig. 1). It is designed

to allow the precise and repeatable incremental in-vitro irradiation of target organisms to

determine their metabolic, protective, mutative, and repair properties as a function of

varying levels of specific electromagnetic energy. The platform is flexible and can be

configured to emit Infrared, specific narrow-band VIS, PAR, UV, or combinations

thereof. The energy categories can be adjusted incrementally and independently to affect

organism behavior and biological functions, stress the organism to evoke specific

physiological responses or cause DNA / RNA mutations.

Net UVR organism exposure was reported from the emitter array's gross output

after subtracting attenuation from surface reflection, transmittance, absorption, and

diffusion of the quartz glass container and seawater. This attenuation was approximately

25% of the gross emitter output. Data was collected every hour for UVR energy

intensities of 0.32 and 0.64 mW/cm^2. At higher doses of 0.96 - 1.59 mW/cm^2,

measurements were collected every 30 minutes. Raw data was processed and plotted

using the ggplot2 package in the R environment (Wickham 2009). Rate constants for both

Fv/Fm and sigma were calculated using a linear regression model within R.

Illumina sequencing and Gene Expression analysis

After photosynthetic kinetic measurements were made, total RNA was extracted

in duplicate from cells in the mid-exponential phase of growth directly after UVR

irradiation (experimental and control cultures), as well as directly after a dark recovery

period of six hours (experimental and control cultures), using the Ambion ToTALLY

RNA kit (Life Technologies, Grand Island, NY, USA). The same experimental and

control cultures in duplicate were used during both harvesting periods. These extractions

produced approximately ~10-12 µg of total RNA from each pellet. Samples were sent for

sequencing at the Biodesign Institute at Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ, USA).

Library preparation was fully automated and performed using the Apollo 324 liquid

handling platform. Illumina HiSeq Sequencing yielded 2x100 bp paired-end reads.

Raw sequencing reads were uploaded to the sequencing read archive (NCBI

accession: SRP091884, SRX2255404) and inspected using Fastqc (Andrews 2009) to

determine quality, ambiguous read percentage and relative amount of sequence reads.

Illumina RNA sequencing resulted in an average of 19.4 million raw reads per cDNA

library with an average quality score of Q38 (Supplementary Table S1).

Raw Sequencing reads were trimmed using the sequence trimming program

Trimmomatic with the following options: Remove any Illumina adapter, cut off the end

of any read where the quality score falls below 10, use a sliding window of 5 to cut and

trim any base where the average quality score falls below 32 for that window and only

keep trimmed reads with a minimum length of 72. (Bolger et al. 2014). De-novo

transcript assembly was accomplished in Velvet (Zerbino and Birney 2008). Optimal k-

mer selection, as well as read coverage cutoff selection, was determined by the

VelvetOptimiser (Gladman and Seemann). Velvet-constructed contigs were assembled

into full-length transcripts using the Oases transcriptome assembler, with a minimum

transcript length of 150 base pairs (Schulz et al. 2012). Raw sequences were aligned to

the assembled transcripts by Bowtie2 (Langmead and Salzberg 2012). Abundances of

mapped sequence reads were calculated using eXpress (Roberts and Pachter 2012),

providing the estimated count of reads that mapped to each individual assembled

transcript. Estimated counts from eXpress were normalized and gene expression was

calculated using the algorithm of DESeq2 (Love et al. 2014). Transcripts were considered

differentially expressed if their associated $\log_2$ fold changes were significant at a $p<0.01$,

based on the Wald test of DESeq24 (Love et al. 2014). Based on our experimental design,

differential expression was compared between the UVR+white light irradiated cells

(experimental treatment – in duplicate) and bright white light only cells (control

treatment – in duplicate), directly after the six hour UVR irradiation ended and also after

a six hour dark period.

Corethron hystrix is not well annotated at the current time. Therefore, to increase

our understanding of gene expression changes for a select set of pathways, the model

centric diatom *Thalassiosira pseudonana* was used as a homolog. For each pathway of

interest, the entire annotated pathway was downloaded from the Kyoto Encyclopedia of

Genes and Genomes (KEGG) (Kanehisa and Goto 2000; Kanehisa et al. 2013). *C. hystrix*

transcripts from our de-novo assembly were in-silica translated and compared to *T.*

pseudonana proteins using HHsearch, which is part of the HH-suite software package

(Remmert et al. 2012). Using hidden Markov model alignments from HHsearch allowed

for the discovery of any homologous proteins based on protein-protein homology (Soding

2005). Translated transcripts were considered homologs if there was a >90% probability

of the translated transcript being a homolog to the *T. pseudonana* protein. For each

pathway tested, translated transcripts mapping to a homolog were sometimes one of

several isoforms. To maintain consistent mapping between homologs, transcript isoforms

were binned by functional annotation after translation.

In most cases, up and down regulation variation between isoforms was small,

making expression patterns more evident. However, in other cases, transcript isoform

variation was higher, where transcripts for the same functional annotation but different

loci were both up and down regulated. Because *C. hystrix* doesn't have an annotated

genome, binning by functional annotation produces an expression overview for the

homolog, which accounts for transcriptional variability. Binned isoforms were visualized

with a box and whisker plot using the ggplot2 package (Wickham 2009). The line in the

box represents the median $\log_2$ fold change when combining all the isoforms. The hinges

are the 1st and 3rd quartile.

Results:

Chlorophyll A and Cell Counts under laboratory conditions

Corethron hystrix grew at rate of 0.37 doublings per day based on chlorophyll a

concentration (Fig. S1a); this was consistent with microscopic cell counts, which

produced a growth rate of 0.392 doublings per day (Fig. S1b). Under UV light of

different intensities, chlorophyll a content remained relatively constant during the six-

hour UVR irradiation period (Fig. S2). However, light microscopy revealed

morphologically altered cells in the UVR exposed cultures compared to control cultures.

The percentage of morphologically intact cells was fairly constant for the lower UVR

intensity levels (0.32 - 0.64 mW/cm^2), with a small decrease during the last two hours at

0.64 mW/cm^2 (Fig. S3). However, higher intensities (0.96 - 1.59 mW/cm^2) caused a

pronounced decrease in the amount of morphologically intact cells, especially during the

last two hours of UVR irradiation (Fig. S3).

Photosystem II

Photosynthesis is often illustrated using a simplified diagram called the Z

Scheme, with the first major complex being photosystem II. To monitor the changes in

photosystem II during exposure to UVR irradiation from a custom built UV emitter (Fig.

1), photosynthetic kinetic measurements were recorded for *C. hystrix* using FRRF (Fig.

2). There were several parameters produced by the FRRF. First, Fv/Fm measures the

maximum quantum yield of PSII (Fig. 2A) (Geider et al. 1993; Kolber and Falkowski

1993). Fv/Fm is a dimensionless parameter but represents how efficiently absorbed

photons are used for electron flow (Suggett et al. 2009). Higher values of Fv/Fm often

indicate greater efficiency and low values indicate lower efficiency. A second parameter,

sigma is a proxy for the functional cross section for photosystem II and is roughly

proportional to the PSII antenna size, or the number of chlorophyll molecules per

photosystem II reaction center (Fig. 2B) (Mauzerall 1986; Oxborough et al. 2012).

Fv/Fm decreased in a linear manner with the rate of decay increasing with

intensity (Supplementary Tables S2-S7). Conversely, sigma increased in a linear manner

with increasing intensity although at the higher intensities there was a drop in the rate as

photosynthesis becomes severely inhibited (Supplementary Tables S2-S7). Overall, UVR

had a powerful effect on the fluorescence kinetics of PSII, especially at the higher UVR

intensities (0.96 - 1.59 mW/cm^2, measured at 285 nm) (Fig. 2, S4-S8). For example,

sigma increased only 15% over the entire irradiation period at the lowest UVR intensity

of 0.32 mW/cm^2, with the largest increases evident after 3 hours under irradiation (Fig

S4, Supplementary Table S3). In comparison, at 0.96 mW/cm^2, we observed a similar

15% increase in sigma within the first 2 hours of UVR irradiation, with a total increase in

sigma of approximately 56% over the irradiation period (Fig. S6, Supplementary Table

S5). Furthermore, UVR intensities of 0.96 mW/cm^2 and 1.28 mW/cm^2 had very strong

and similar responses. The rate of change of sigma for each of these two treatments was

almost identical and approximately 44% faster than the rate of change observed at 0.64

mW/cm^2 (Supplementary Table S2) and 72% faster than the rate observed at 0.32

mW/cm^2. At the highest intensity of 1.59 mW/cm^2, the rate of change for sigma was

slower than the rate at 0.96 mW/cm^2 and 1.28 mW/cm^2, likely because of extreme

damage to the photosynthetic reaction centers. We also observe the photosynthetic

efficiency at 0.64 mW/cm^2 after 4 hours is approximately the same as the as it is at 1.59

mW/cm^2 after roughly 2.5 hours. Together these results demonstrate the ability of our

light engine to directly manipulate photosynthetic efficiency and target physiological

states based on UVR exposure.

We also used comparative transcriptomics to evaluate the expression response of

C. hystrix photosystem II transcripts to UV irradiation (0.64 mW/cm^2 UVR intensity). To

monitor *C. hystrix* gene expression in the context of specific pathways, our reads were in-

silica translated and mapped to the proteins from the ubiquitous model centric diatom

Thalassiosira pseudonana, as the majority of its cellular pathways are at least partially

annotated by KEGG (Kanehisa and Goto 2000; Kanehisa et al. 2013). There were 22

photosystem II transcripts that were differentially expressed directly after UVR

irradiation (Fig. 3). Most (19/22, 86%) transcripts, after in-silica translation, mapped to

photosynthetic *T. pseudonana* photosystem II homologs that demonstrated little variation

in their fold changes, indicating a strong and coordinated transcriptional response (Fig. 3,

Supplementary Table S8). The majority of the photosystem II associated transcripts

(20/22, 90%) were down regulated, including the reaction center core D1 protein and

reaction center core antenna proteins CP43 and CP47, correlating with decreases in the

photosynthetic efficiency. Moreover, in-silica translated transcripts mapping to water

splitting cytochrome c550 and photosystem II PsbU proteins were also strongly down

regulated.

Reoxidation of the Electron Acceptors

Tau 1 or the fast rate constant approximates the turnover time for an electron to

reduce the primary quinone acceptor, QA (Falkowski and Raven 2007). Tau 2 or the slow

rate constant, measures the turnover time for an electron to reduce the secondary

plastoquinone acceptor, QB (Falkowski and Raven 2007). Results show that tau 1

increases as energy increases (Fig. 2C). There was very little change in tau 1 during the

first 2.5 hours for any dose of UVR irradiation. After 2.5 hours, turnover time began to

increase for the larger UVR doses: 0.96, 1.28, and 1.59 mW/cm^2 (Fig. 2). Overall, tau 1

turnover time increased from 26.61 µs at 0.32 mW/cm^2 to 1114.0 µs at 1.28 mW/cm^2 --

an approximately 42x increase (Supplementary Table S9). At the highest UVR energy

(1.59 mW/cm^2), tau 1 turnover time initially followed the same trend as 1.28 mW/cm^2.

However, there was a significant decline in the turnover time after 5 hours (Fig. 2C,

Supplementary Table S9), likely because photosynthesis had become severely inhibited.

Tau 2 reacted similarly to tau 1 during UVR irradiation, although turnover time

for tau 2 was much longer, on the order of seconds instead of microseconds (Fig. 2D).

For the first two hours of irradiation, there was no significant change in the turnover rate

for tau 2 (Fig. 2D). After 2.5 hours, tau 2 increased with each successive increase in

UVR energy, with the exception of 1.59 mW/cm^2, which decreased after 5 hours, similar

to the behavior of tau 1 for the same treatment (Fig. 2D, Supplementary Table S10).

Together, tau 1 and tau 2 again demonstrate the ability of our emitter to induce

certain physiological states based on set doses and dosage rates. For example, the

turnover time for both tau 1 and tau 2 at 5 hours under a UVR intensity of 0.64 mW/cm^2

was the same as the turnover time for 1.28 mW/cm^2 at just 2 hours of irradiation. Also,

doubling the UVR energy cut the time in half for tau 1 and 2 to reach specific turnover

times -- a 1:1 ratio.

Comparative transcriptomics for the supplemental electron transport portion of

the Z scheme are similar to the observations regarding photosystem II expression. There

were 14 transcripts related to supplemental electron transport, most of which are a

functional subunit of the cytochrome b6 complex with the "Pet" moniker. Differential

expression of the 14 transcripts show 11 decreased in abundance and 3 increased,

illustrating that there is a coordinated down-regulation of the supplemental electron

genes. This is consistent with kinetic analysis where we see an increase in tau 1 and tau 2

turnover times for the 0.64 mW/cm^2 UVR intensity.

Photosystem I

Photosynthetic kinetic measurements for photosystem I are not reported in this

study. However, gene expression measurements were conducted to see what photosystem

I genes were specifically altered during UVR irradiation (Fig. 3). There were 13

photosystem I related transcripts; 12 of them decreased in abundance compared to non-

irradiated samples after UVR irradiation. Included in these 12 transcripts are six variants

of *psaB*, a main photosystem I reaction center protein. Each one of them was strongly

decreased in abundance compared to the control samples.

Other Metabolic Pathway Expression

Fine control of the glycolytic regulation in plants is accomplished by 3 main

genes: hexokinase, phosphofructokinase and pyruvate kinase (Plaxton 1996). From the

glycolysis pathway, there were 33 differentially expressed in-silica translated transcripts

mapping to 12 homologous *T. pseudonana* proteins. The majority of the translated

transcripts mapping to homologous proteins phosphofructokinase, phosphoglycerate

kinase and enolase decreased in abundance directly after UVR irradiation (Fig. 4,

Supplementary Table S11). The hexokinase homolog did not map to any translated

transcript hits in our data. The expression for the rest of the glycolytic transcripts was

mixed with up and down regulated transcripts, however; the slight majority of transcripts

were increased in abundance directly after UVR irradiation.

The TCA cycle, the second phase of carbohydrate catabolism, is an important

source of the cellular reducing agent NADH, which helps generate the proton gradient

that is critical for the production of ATP through electron transport (Nelson and Cox

2005). For this pathway, we observed 47 differentially expressed in-silica translated

transcripts mapping to 10 homologous proteins in the TCA cycle (Supplementary Table

S12). The rate limiting step of the TCA cycle, Isocitrate Dehydrogenase, did not have

homologous proteins currently identified in *T. pseudonana*. We used Blastx against the

non-redundant protein database to identify a single possible Isocirate Dehydrogenase

transcript in our dataset, however it was not significantly differentially expressed. The

overall expression of the TCA cycle was mixed with approximately the same number of

up and down-regulated transcripts: 22 transcripts (46.8%) increased in abundance while

25 (53.2%) decreased (Fig. 5, Supplementary Table S12). Moreover, we observed that

homologs near the end of the TCA cycle, such as succinate dehydrogenase, fumarate

hydratase and malate dehydrogenase produced mixed expression as well (Fig. 5).

The Calvin-Benson-Bassham (CBB) cycle, a light independent pathway

necessary for CO_2 reduction, also produced mixed gene expression changes when

sampled after UVR irradiation (Nelson and Cox 2005) (Fig. 6, Supplementary Table

S13). There were homologs to 13 of 16 proteins identified in KEGG, with 95 total

transcript variants (Supplementary Table S13). The large subunit of RuBisCO mapped to

17 in-silica translated transcripts which were the isoforms of 4 gene loci (Supplementary

Table S13). The overall expression of the 17 RuBisCO transcripts was mixed, although

the majority of them were decreased in abundance (12/17 transcripts) (Fig. 6).

Preliminary Recovery

In contrast to the results seen directly after UVR irradiation and cellular damage,

transcripts in the three auxiliary metabolic pathways greatly increased in abundance after

dark recovery (Fig. 3-6, Supplementary Tables S14-S17). Approximately 90% of the in-

silica translated transcripts that mapped to homologous glycolytic, TCA and CBB cycle

pathway homologs increased their abundance, even after a short dark recovery period of

6 hours. Those transcripts produced large $\log_2$ fold changes, with several greater than $\log_2$

of 7. Moreover, several photosynthetic transcripts were observed to reverse their

expression after six hours of dark recovery.

Discussion:

Controlled laboratory studies describing the impact of UV on phytoplankton have

the potential to improve our understanding of the photosynthetic damage and repair. To

develop a controlled laboratory methodology for studying the impacts of UVR on

photosynthetic and metabolic pathways, we developed a UV light emitter to deliver

repeatable doses at a high resolution across a wide spectrum of intensities. As a proof of

concept test of our emitter array, we selected a cosmopolitan open-ocean diatom, of

which members of its genus are found in the Southern Ocean where UV intensity is high

due to ozone depletion. For example, during the spring, pennate and centric diatoms

comprise a large portion of the Southern Ocean biomass, and the genus *Corethron* is one

of the top four genera (Vincent 1988). We chose the diatom *Corethron hystrix* for our

study.

Growth Rate and Cell Morphology

The growth rate for laboratory grown *C. hystrix* under normal photosynthetically

active radiation (PAR, ~40 μmol m^{-2} s^{-1}) conditions was similar to published values for

several diatoms under analogous light levels (Gilstad and Sakshaug 1990). Higher level

plants that can maintain chlorophyll levels during UVR irradiation may have a higher

tolerance to UVR stress, as they are able to more efficiently transfer their excitation

energy into photosystem II reaction center proteins (Bornman and Vogelmann 1991;

Greenberg et al. 1997). During the 6 hour UVR irradiation experiment, total chlorophyll a

did not change at any level of UVR irradiation. There was no significant increase in cell

growth over the irradiation period. However, chloroplast morphology was altered at UVR

irradiation levels of 0.64-1.59 mW/cm^2 with the largest decreases in intact chloroplasts

occurring during the last two hours of irradiation. Morphological alterations consisted of

jagged chloroplasts that migrated toward the center of the cell, which could be a response

similar to the "chloroplast clumping" phenomenon seen in other organisms as a form of

UV protection (Sharon et al. 2011).

Photosynthetic Kinetics and Gene Expression

384   We used 285nm UVR irradiation (12nm FWHM; 0.32-1.59 mW/cm^2), which

allowed us to manipulate the dose and rate of photosystem II damage in an approximately

linear fashion by fine adjustments to the output. Photosystem II damage was affected by

both intensity and time under irradiation in our study: damage from the highest UVR

irradiation treatments ultimately resulted in a loss of photosynthetic function – Fv/Fm

becomes approximately zero (Fig. 2A, S4-S8). There was an inverse correlation of sigma

and Fv/Fm for all doses of UVR in this study, with sigma increasing and Fv/Fm

decreasing as damage accumulated (Fig. 2 AB, S4-S8). The observed decrease in Fv/Fm

is likely caused by UVR directly damaging photosystem II reaction centers causing a

decrease in the energy transfer between its reaction center proteins. We hypothesize that

the corresponding increase in sigma may be an environmental adaption to the extreme

conditions. Under these conditions, chlorophyll molecules may be funneling their

excitation energy away from the damaged reaction centers and into the remaining

functional reaction centers, thus increasing the energy transfer of those intact reaction

centers.

399   We observed that UVR intensity begins to have a significant effect on the

photosynthetic efficiency and energy transfer by 3 hours at the 0.32 mW/cm^2 dose. At

this point, it is likely that the repair system responsible for photosystem II damage has

been overwhelmed and cannot keep up with the damage that is occurring to the reaction

centers, thus we see an increase in sigma and decrease in Fv/Fm. At higher irradiations

(0.96 – 1.28 mW/cm^2), the increase in energy transfer is much faster, perhaps because

more reaction centers are being irrevocably damaged and at a quicker pace. This leaves

more excitation energy for the chlorophyll molecules to pass on to the functional reaction

centers. We observed a noticeable decrease in sigma as the experimental period ends for

both 0.96 and 1.28 mW/cm^2, which possibly indicates that the majority of the reaction

centers have been damaged or that chlorophyll can no longer funnel their excitation

energy through the functional reaction centers (i.e., a loss of photosynthetic function).

This also may correlate to the slower increase in energy transfer at the highest irradiation

of 1.59 mW/cm^2 compared to 0.96 and 1.28 mW/cm^2. The damage may be so intense at

that irradiation that the chlorophyll molecules cannot funnel their energy into the

functional reaction centers as efficiently as they do at the lower irradiations. We also

observed that our emitter array linearly allows us to specifically set dose and dosage rate

to reach a certain physiological state, as evidenced by the culture irradiated at 1.59

mW/cm^2 reaching a photosynthetic efficiency in roughly half the time it would have

taken a culture irradiated at 0.64 mW/cm^2. This would allow future applications to

determine whether molecular changes under a fast damage rate are the same as those

changes under a more gradual damage rate. Moreover, at very quick damage rates, certain

metabolites may be produced by the cell that would not be observed at slower rates of

damage.

Low Fv/Fm measurements often signal a decrease in the efficiency of

photosynthesis (i.e., dynamic photoinhibition), as seen in the coccolithophorid *Emiliania*

huxleyi due to high photon flux densities (Critchley 2000; Ragni et al. 2008).

Photoinhibition is typically caused by environmental stressors such as too high or low

intensities of photosynthetically active radiation (PAR), adverse temperatures, and water

limitation. Our decreased Fv/Fm measurements after UVR irradiation appear to mimic

photoinhibition, which is likely due to direct damage to PSII by UVR. We collected

transcriptomic data after 6 hours of UVR at the intensitiy of 0.64 mW/cm^2 to explore the

molecular changes undergone by the cell. As stated above photosynthetic efficiency is

strongly decreased for UVR intensities of 0.64 – 1.59 mW/cm^2. Photosystem II is known

to be the most sensitive part of the photosynthetic system to UVR irradiation, especially

the oxygen evolving complex (Post et al. 1996; Szilárd et al. 2007). Transcriptomic

analysis shows that oxygen evolving complex genes, *psbO* and *psbQ*, mapped to

transcripts that decreased in abundance. *PsbO* codes for a photosystem II oxygen-

evolving enhancer protein and *psbQ* codes for a photosystem II oxygen-evolving

enhancer protein 3.

Furthermore, it is highly likely that there was other reaction center damage, as the

D1 protein and the aromatic tyrosine electron donors were previously shown to be

sensitive to UV irradiation (Vass et al. 1996; Bouchard et al. 2006). D1 is one of two

main reaction center proteins, while tyrosine amino acids are part of the donor side of

photosystem II absorbing energy at 285nm, thus making them a possible target for UVR

irradiation (Vass et al. 1996). Transcriptome changes demonstrate that the D1 reaction

center protein, encoded by the *psbA* gene, decreased in abundance during UVR

irradiation compared to non-irradiated cells. It has been determined that the overall

changes in the expression of *psbA* differ based on the specific organism (Surplus et al.

1998; Huang et al. 2002), however, the decrease in abundance of our *psbA* transcripts

during UVR was similar to the changes produced by *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Surplus et al.

1998). Other reaction center proteins, such as the CP47 chlorophyll apoprotein which

along with its sister protein CP43 channel the energy from the light harvesting complexes

to the reaction center core, (Falkowski and Raven 2007) also displayed large decreases in

abundance after UVR irradiation. Previously, it was observed that both CP47 and CP43

expression levels decreased in the cyanobacteria *Spirulina platensis* during UVR

irradiation (Rajagopal et al. 2000), and our observations were consistent with that study.

This result also lends credence to the hypothesis that the functional cross section of PSII

increases because of damage to reaction center proteins and the re-allocation of energy

transfer to functional centers.

Tau is a proxy for the turnover time for the photosystem II reaction center (Kolber

et al. 1988). Both tau 1 and tau 2 turnover times increase significantly at UVR

irradiations of 0.64-1.59 mW/cm^2 (Fig. 2CD). This is likely because the plastoquinones

QA and QB are directly susceptible to UVR damage (Melis et al. 1992). Our data also

illustrate that turnover time is inversely correlated higher intensities (Fig. S4-S8, Tables

S3-S7, S9 & S10). With turnover times increasing to $1 - 1.5$ seconds in certain cases

(Fig. 2D), these long reoxidation times likely have a detrimental effect on photosynthesis,

thus explaining the almost complete loss of photosynthetic function at higher intensities

of UVR.

Transcriptome analysis of supplemental photosynthetic electron transport genes

corresponds with our photosystem II expression analysis, as the majority of the

transcripts were down-regulated compared to the control samples. Most of the translated

transcripts in this subset of data mapped to homologous cytochrome b6-f complex

proteins. There are 4 major subunits that make up the cytochrome b6-f complex in algae

(Pierre et al. 1995). We discovered in our data that both of the heme-bearing subunits of

the cytochrome b6-f complex were strongly down-regulated after UVR irradiation. We

didn't have any homologous hits to the other two cytochrome b6-f subunits, however, the

other supplemental photosynthetic electron genes, such as *petF* and *petH*, were also

decreased in abundance compared to the non-irradiated control samples.

The final stage of the photosynthetic light reaction is characterized by

photosystem I. Photosystem I isn't directly affected by UVR irradiation, and is more

resistant to environmental stressors such as high-light levels (Teramura and Ziska 1996;

Zhang et al. 2016). However, due to interaction between photosystem II and photosystem

I during photosynthesis, UVR irradiation will unavoidably have an effect on photosystem

I as well. We didn't measure any kinetic data for photosystem I, however; because of the

correlation between the kinetic data and photosystem II expression, our transcriptional

analysis provided some insight into the health of photosystem I. All 13 in-silica translated

transcripts from photosystem I, mapping to four *T. pseudonana* homologs, decreased in

abundance during UVR irradiation. One transcript, *psaB* which codes for photosystem I

P700 chlorophyll a apoprotein A2, had 6 variants with very similar abundance changes.

PsaB binds hydrophobically to *psaA* to form the major reaction center of photosystem I

(Falkowski and Raven 2007). The decreased abundance in *psaA*, a core reaction center

protein, likely indicates that the entire photosystem I reaction center complex was down-

regulated, correlating with the other photosystem I and II genes.

Other Metabolic Pathway Expression

UVR irradiation is known to cause other metabolic gene expression changes in

higher level plants (Jenkins 2009). We determined the gene expression changes for the

CBB cycle, the TCA cycle, and the glycolytic cycle. The glycolytic cycle is the first

phase in the catabolism of cellular carbohydrates (Nelson and Cox 2005). The TCA

cycle, the second phase of catabolism, is an important source of the cellular reducing

agent NADH, which helps generate the proton gradient that is critical for the production

of ATP through electron transport (Nelson and Cox 2005). Finally, the CBB cycle

performs carbon fixation for the cell, which provides the carbon skeletons necessary for

carbohydrate catabolism. In our study, glycolysis, the TCA cycle and the CBB cycle

produced a mixed gene expression pattern with many up and down regulated transcripts

directly after UVR irradiation. There are likely a variety of causative factors behind this

mixed pattern of expression including the susceptibility of certain enzymes to UV, as

well as direct transcriptomic regulation of certain enzymes which could in turn influence

the regulation of the entire pathway.

In plants, glycolytic regulation has been shown to often be dependent on the

tissue, as well as the external environment (Plaxton 1996). Phosphofructokinase,

important for fine control of glycolysis, mapped to two translated transcripts which

significantly decreased during UVR irradiation (Plaxton 1996). Phosphofructokinase is

the first committed step in the glycolysis pathway, and one of the major regulators of the

glycolytic pathway (Nelson and Cox 2005). The regulation of phosphofructokinase is so

important, in fact, that it can oftentimes overrule the regulatory roles of the other

glycolytic enzymes (Usenik and Legiša 2010). In fact, it has been observed that the

repression of a phosphofructokinase isoform can largely repress glycolysis and increase

the movement of glucose of through the pentose phosphate pathway, in order to increase

nucleotide production after UV induced DNA damage (Franklin et al. 2016). Like the

TCA cycle, the in-silica translated transcripts that mapped to homologs near the end of

the cycle (phosphoglycerate kinase – enolase), decreased in abundance after UVR

irradiation. Nonetheless, the slight majority of transcripts are increased directly after

UVR irradiation, possibly to try and keep a basal level of active glycolytic flux.

The TCA cycle also plays an important part in cellular respiration. In higher plant

species, such as *Arabidopsis thaliana*, previous research has shown UVR irradiation can

cause a mixed expression profile for the TCA pathway (Kusano et al. 2011; Cavalcanti et

al. 2014). Our data also illustrate a mixed expression pattern for the TCA cycle after

UVR irradiation. The first reaction in the TCA cycle, catalyzed by citrate synthase, was

strongly decreased during UVR irradiation with a single transcript variant. Moreover, it

was previously shown in plants that enzymes near the end of the TCA cycle reduced their

expression after UVR irradiation (Cavalcanti et al. 2014). For our experiment, the last

three enzymes in the cycle produced a mixed expression pattern.

Like TCA and glycolysis, the CBB cycle expression was mixed during UVR

irradiation. The CBB cycle is broken up into 3 main stages for the overall assimilation of

CO_2 fixation within the cell (Nelson and Cox 2005). The first stage is the fixation of CO_2

into 3-phosphoglycerate, which is catalyzed by the protein RuBisCO. RuBisCO is the

most abundant protein on Earth due the large amount needed by all plants for CO_2

fixation, and accounts for > 99.5% of inorganic carbon assimilated by primary producers

(Raven 2009; Raven 2013). Our data demonstrated a mixed expression pattern for the in-

silica translated transcripts mapping to the RuBisCO homolog, though the majority were

decreased in abundance compared to non-irradiated cells. Previous research on higher

order plants demonstrated that UVR irradiation caused a large decrease in the activity and

expression of RuBisCO when compared to control samples in pea leaves (Strid et al.

1990; Mackerness et al. 1999). Similar RuBisCO decreases were also observed in

jackbeen leaves (Choi and Roh 2003).

The second stage of the CBB cycle involves the reduction of 3-phosphoglycerate

to glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate (Nelson and Cox 2005). Expression for this stage was a

mix of up-regulated and down-regulated transcripts, with the phosphoglycerate kinase

homolog mapping to 2 translated transcripts that decreased in abundance, and the

glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate homolog mapping to 1 translated transcript that decreased

and 2 that increased in abundance.

The final stage of the CBB cycle involves the regeneration of RuBisCO. Several

enzymes are responsible for this process, including sedoheptulose-bisphosphatase, which

is an enzyme unique to the plastids. Sedoheptulose-bisphosphatase has no homolog in

non-photosynthetic organisms, and likely plays a key role in the regulation of the carbon

flux in the CBB cycle (Raines et al. 1999). There were 3 translated transcripts that

mapped to the sedoheptulose-bisphosphatase homolog, all of them significantly increased

in abundance over control levels (Supplementary Table S13). Possibly the cell is working

to regenerate the available pools of RuBisCO, which were likely decreased due to UVR

irradiation.

Preliminary Recovery

After 6 hours of recovery in dark conditions, several photosynthetic transcripts

reversed their expression and displayed large increases in abundance compared to the

non-irradiated samples (Supplementary Table S14). This may indicate that the cell is

actively trying to repair certain aspects of its UV damaged photosynthetic clusters in

order to continue to survive. For example, transcripts that code for photosystem II psbV

and psbU proteins were part of the group that increased in abundance. These are extrinsic

proteins that help stabilize the photosystem II and the electron transfer (Roose et al.

2007). Both also have a large role in oxygen evolution, a major byproduct of the water

splitting reaction. As previously mentioned, the water splitting complex is a major target

of UVR irradiation (Post et al. 1996; Szilárd et al. 2007), thus possibly making it a

primary repair point. Homologous transcripts that were part of the cytochrome b6/f

complex or maintained roles in photosynthetic electron transport were also increased in

abundance after night recovery. The largest change in abundance was displayed by a PetF

transcript, which codes for the photosynthetic ferredoxin protein. In fact all of the

increased transcripts, which when translated map to cytochrome b6/f or photosynthetic

electron transport proteins, were part of the Pet family of genes. This may indicate that

the cells are trying to restart and repair electron transport before light begins to re-

energize the photosynthetic system. In summary, increased gene expression of may be a

cellular mechanism to restore the lost metabolic activity during UVR irradiation, a

necessary survival method.

Still, the majority of the photosystem I and II transcripts are significantly

decreased (Supplementary Table S14). In some cases UVR damage can be so

detrimental that certain species become more susceptible to permanent photosynthetic

damage, thus making the amount of recovery for the cell negligible (Neale et al. 1998;

Fritz et al. 2008). Our kinetic data support this notion as the photosynthetic efficiency and

turnover time of the organism are consistent for the first hour and a half, irrelevant of

energy intensity, as repair mechanisms mitigate the UVR induced damage (Fig. 2).

However, after an hour and a half at the highest intensities, and later at the lower

intensities, the repair system has possibly become overwhelmed and cannot keep up with

the increasing cell damage, thus there are large changes in electron transport rate and

turnover time. The absence of transcripts with increased abundance that map to

photosystem I and II genes may indicate that photosynthesis has become permanently

photoinhibited or *C. hystrix* has a very slow recovery rate. Different species employ

different repair mechanisms, and this may be a consequence of that (Bischof et al. 2006).

Metabolic recovery, based on the transcriptomic results, was evident as all three

of the pathways tested were strongly up-regulated after dark recovery (Fig. 4-6, S15-

S17). The median $\log_2$ fold change for every homolog of the three pathways was

significantly increased in abundance compared to the non-irradiated control, except for

the large subunit of RuBisCO. Taken as a whole, these results indicate a coordinated

transcriptomic response to up regulate necessary metabolic survival genes after intense

UVR irradiation. These metabolic enzymes provide the energy the cells need to duplicate

and survive, and indicate an active recovery response. Without these enzymes, the cell

will most certainly face a quick demise.

Conclusions:

Our custom emitter array produced morphological, physiological and molecular

responses with extremely high resolution and reproducibility. We demonstrate based on

C. hystrix physiological measurements, that with our emitter array we were able to

directly manipulate the speed and strength of photosynthetic damage based on the

specific applied UVR energy intensities. We can also induce metabolic expression

changes, which could change the entire metabolome of organisms. This ability to study

specific physiological and metabolic responses over a large spectrum of UVR intensities

could in the future provide further insights into UV induced damage and repair cycles in

other complex organisms. It also allows us to test many types of organisms under UV

stress conditions to identify those that are less susceptible to UV damage. These

organisms that are well adapted to high UV fluxes may contain novel mechanisms or

compounds that are used to alleviate damage, which could increase our understanding of

the diseases resulting from DNA damage.

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Figure Legends

Figure 1: Schematic of custom built UVR emitter array. The numbers in the legend to the

left of the diagram correspond to the specific component of our setup.

Figure 2: **A:** Fv/Fm as a measure of the maximum quantum yield of PSII. **B:** Sigma as a

proxy for functional cross section and effective target size of the PSII antenna in $Å^2$

$(quanta)^{-1}$. **C**: Tau 1 turnover time. During every hour at 0.32 mW/cm^2 and 0.64 mW/cm^2,

and every half hour at 0.96-1.59 mW/cm^2 the tau 1 turnover time was calculated using

Fast Repetition Rate Fluorometry (FRRF). Irradiation time is on the x-axis with the

turnover time in μs on the y-axis. **D**: Tau 2 turnover time. During every hour at 0.32

mW/cm^2 and 0.64 mW/cm^2, and every half hour at 0.96-1.59 mW/cm^2 the tau 2 turnover

time was calculated using Fast Repetition Rate Fluorometry (FRRF). Irradiation time is

on the x-axis with the turnover time in μs on the y-axis. Note the drop in turnover time at

1.28 and 1.59 mW/cm^2.

Figure 3: Box and whisker plot for *T. pseudonana* photosynthetic homologs. Log$_2$ fold

changes directly after UVR irradiation are represented in the left figure – labeled "Day" –

while log$_2$ fold changes after six-hour dark recovery – labeled "Night" – are represented

in the figure to the right. The line within the box is the median of the log$_2$ fold changes

for that specific homolog. The hinges are the 1st and 3rd quartile. The upper whisker starts

from the hinge and ends at the highest value that is within 1.5 * inter-quartile range of the

hinge. The lower whisker extends form the hinge to the lowest value that is within 1.5 *

inter-quartile range. The x-axis is consistent between both figures, therefore some

homologs (e.g. cytochrome c6 – directly after UVR irradiation; photosystem II CP47 –

after dark recovery) will have missing data in their specific figure, as there were no

differentially expressed translated transcripts mapping to that homolog during that time.

Figure 4: Box and whisker plot for *T. pseudonana* glycolysis homologs. Log_2 fold

changes directly after UVR irradiation are represented in the left figure – labeled "Day" –

while $\log_2$ fold changes after six-hour dark recovery – labeled "Night" – are represented

in the figure to the right. The line within the box is the median of the $\log_2$ fold changes

for that specific homolog. The hinges are the 1st and 3rd quartile. The upper whisker starts

from the hinge and ends at the highest value that is within 1.5 * inter-quartile range of the

hinge. The lower whisker extends form the hinge to the lowest value that is within 1.5 *

inter-quartile range. The x-axis is consistent between both figures, therefore some

homologs (e.g. phosphoglucomutase – directly after UVR irradiation) will have missing

data in their specific figure, as there were no differentially expressed translated

transcripts mapping to that homolog during that time.

Figure 5: Box and whisker plot for *T. pseudonana* TCA homologs. Log_2 fold changes

directly after UVR irradiation are represented in the left figure – labeled "Day" – while

$\log_2$ fold changes after six-hour dark recovery – labeled "Night" – are represented in the

figure to the right. The line within the box is the median of the $\log_2$ fold changes for that

specific homolog. The hinges are the 1st and 3rd quartile. The upper whisker starts from

the hinge and ends at the highest value that is within 1.5 * inter-quartile range of the

hinge. The lower whisker extends form the hinge to the lowest value that is within 1.5 *

inter-quartile range. The x-axis is consistent between both figures, therefore some

homologs (e.g. 2-oxoglutarate dehydrogenase E1 – directly after UVR irradiation) will

have missing data in their specific figure, as there were no differentially expressed

translated transcripts mapping to that homolog during that time.

Figure 6: Box and whisker plot for *T. pseudonana* CBB Cycle homologs. Log_2 fold

changes directly after UVR irradiation are represented in the left figure – labeled "Day" –

while log_2 fold changes after six-hour dark recovery – labeled "Night" – are represented

in the figure to the right. The line within the box is the median of the log_2 fold changes

for that specific homolog. The hinges are the 1st and 3rd quartile. The upper whisker starts

from the hinge and ends at the highest value that is within 1.5 * inter-quartile range of the

hinge. The lower whisker extends form the hinge to the lowest value that is within 1.5 *

inter-quartile range. The x-axis is consistent between both figures, therefore some

homologs (e.g. ribose 5-phosphate isomerase A – directly after UVR irradiation) will

have missing data in their specific figure, as there were no differentially expressed

translated transcripts mapping to that homolog during that time.

Figure #1.

① Emitter Control Unit
② Configurable Emitter Array
③ Quartz Organism Container
④ Incubator
⑤ Orbital Platform
⑥ Fast Repetition Rate Fluorometer
⑦ Data Collection / Processing System

Figure #2.

Figure #3.

Figure #4.

Figure #5.

Figure #6.