

## Structural characterisation of mitochondrial complex IV assembly factors

Maghool, Shadi<sup>1</sup>; Formosa, Luke E<sup>2</sup>; G. Cooray, N. Dinesha<sup>3</sup>; Stroud, David A<sup>4</sup>; Aragão, David<sup>5</sup>; Ryan, Michael T<sup>2</sup>, and Maher, Megan J<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*School of Chemistry and The Bio21 Molecular Science and Biotechnology Institute, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Australia*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Biomedicine Discovery Institute, Monash University, Clayton 3800, Australia*

<sup>3</sup>*Department of Biochemistry and Genetics, La Trobe Institute for Molecular Science, La Trobe University, Melbourne 3086, Australia.*

<sup>4</sup>*Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and The Bio21 Molecular Science and Biotechnology Institute, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3010, Australia.*

<sup>5</sup>*Diamond Light Source, Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Didcot, UK*

*shadi.maghool@unimelb.edu.au*

Cytochrome *c* oxidase or mitochondrial respiratory chain complex IV catalyses the transfer of electrons from cytochrome *c* in the intermembrane space, to molecular oxygen in the matrix and therefore contributes to the proton gradient that drives mitochondrial ATP synthesis. Complex IV dysfunction is a significant cause of human mitochondrial disease. Complex IV requires the incorporation of three copper ions, heme *a* and heme *a*<sub>3</sub> cofactors for the assembly and activity of the complex. Complex IV assembly factors are required for subunit maturation, co-factor incorporation and stabilization of intermediate assemblies of complex IV in humans. Loss-of-function mutations in several genes encoding complex IV assembly factors have been shown to result in diminished complex IV activity and severe pathologic conditions in affected infants [1].

Our study focuses on two mitochondrial complex IV assembly factors, Coa6 and Coa7, that are located in the intermembrane space of mitochondria and contain intramolecular disulfide bonds. Coa6 binds copper with femtomolar affinity and has been proposed to play a role in the biogenesis of the Cu<sub>A</sub> site of complex IV [2,3]. The W59C pathogenic mutation in Coa6 does not affect copper binding or import of the protein into mitochondria but affects the maturation and stability of the protein [3]. The precise role of Coa7 in the biogenesis of complex IV is not completely understood. However, patients with Coa7 pathogenic mutations suffer from mitochondrial diseases owing to complex IV deficiency. This presentation will describe the crystal structures of the Coa7 and Coa6 (wild-type and the W59C mutant) proteins and implications for their roles in complex IV assembly and function.

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