

**KONSTRUKSI, EKSPRESI, DAN UJI POTENSI ENZIM REVERSE TRANSCRIPTASE
MOLONEY MURINE LEUKEMIA VIRUS DALAM *Escherichia coli* BL21 (DE3)
SEBAGAI ALTERNATIF ENZIM KOMERSIAL**

TESIS



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ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Ketergantungan tinggi terhadap reagen RT-PCR impor menjadi kendala dalam pengembangan kemandirian bioteknologi di Indonesia, terutama pada komponen kunci berupa enzim reverse transcriptase (RT). MMLV-RT dikenal memiliki fidelity tinggi dan aktivitas RNase H rendah, sehingga berpotensi dikembangkan sebagai enzim rekombinan untuk aplikasi diagnostik molekuler.

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi ekspresi, optimasi produksi, dan aktivitas biologis enzim RT rekombinan dalam sistem *Escherichia coli* BL21 (DE3) sebagai kandidat pengganti enzim RT komersial.

Metode: Gen sintetik RT hasil optimasi kodon diklon ke dalam vektor pET-21a(+) dan ditransformasikan ke dalam *E. coli* DH5 α dan BL21 (DE3). Ekspresi diinduksi menggunakan IPTG dengan variasi waktu (2–16 jam). Protein dimurnikan menggunakan kromatografi afinitas Ni-NTA dan dianalisis dengan SDS-PAGE. Aktivitas enzim diuji melalui sintesis cDNA dari RNA target yang dikonfirmasi menggunakan PCR, serta dianalisis secara kuantitatif dengan densitometri ImageJ.

Hasil: Konstruksi gen berhasil dikonfirmasi dengan pita DNA ± 1741 bp, dan ekspresi protein menghasilkan pita spesifik $\pm 55,4$ kDa. Yield protein meningkat seiring waktu induksi dengan nilai tertinggi pada 16 jam sebesar 3,4 mg/mL. Enzim rekombinan mampu mensintesis cDNA secara spesifik pada gen β -actin dan ORF1ab SARS-CoV-2. Analisis densitometri menunjukkan aktivitas enzim rekombinan mencapai ± 85 –90% dibandingkan enzim RT komersial.

Simpulan: Enzim RT rekombinan berhasil diekspresikan dengan yield tinggi dan aktivitas biologis yang mendekati enzim komersial, sehingga berpotensi dikembangkan sebagai alternatif enzim reverse transcriptase untuk mendukung kemandirian reagen diagnostik molekuler di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: reverse transcriptase, MMLV-RT, ekspresi protein rekombinan, *Escherichia coli*, RT-PCR, cDNA

ABSTRACT

Background: The high dependence on imported RT-PCR reagents remains a major challenge in achieving biotechnology self-sufficiency in Indonesia, particularly for the key component, reverse transcriptase (RT) enzyme. MMLV-RT is known for its high fidelity and low RNase H activity, making it a promising candidate for recombinant enzyme development in molecular diagnostic applications.

Objective: This study aimed to evaluate the expression, production optimization, and biological activity of recombinant RT expressed in *Escherichia coli* BL21 (DE3) as a potential alternative to commercial RT enzymes.

Methods: A codon optimized synthetic RT gene was cloned into the pET-21a(+) vector and transformed into *E. coli* DH5 α and BL21 (DE3). Protein expression was induced using IPTG with varying induction times (2–16 hours). The recombinant protein was purified using Ni-NTA affinity chromatography and analyzed by SDS-PAGE. Enzymatic activity was assessed through cDNA synthesis from RNA templates followed by PCR amplification and quantitative densitometric analysis using ImageJ.

Results: Gene construction was successfully confirmed by a DNA band of approximately 1741 bp, while protein expression yielded a specific band at ± 55.4 kDa. Protein yield increased with induction time, reaching the highest level at 16 hours (3.4 mg/mL). The recombinant enzyme successfully synthesized cDNA from both β -actin and SARS-CoV-2 ORF1ab targets. Densitometric analysis indicated that the enzymatic activity reached approximately 85–90% compared to commercial RT enzymes.

Conclusion: Recombinant RT was successfully expressed with high yield and demonstrated biological activity comparable to commercial enzymes, indicating its potential as an alternative reverse transcriptase for molecular diagnostic applications and supporting the development of locally produced biotechnology reagents.

Keywords: reverse transcriptase, MMLV-RT, recombinant protein expression, *Escherichia coli*, RT-PCR, cDNA