Julia KOVAL,
National Aviation University, Kyiv

THE ROLE OF OXYGEN IN TERMS OF AEROBIC METABOLISM

We all know that for breathing and exercising our body needs oxygen. There are two types of respiration: aerobic and anaerobic. In this response I am going to determine the term of aerobic respiration and its main functions in the process of Aerobic Metabolism.

First of all, Aerobic Respiration is a series of chemical reactions that take place mostly inside mitochondria in the cell. This is also an exothermic process because it releases energy. It is the main source for energy for cells.

Glucose + Oxygen -> Carbon dioxide + Water – formula for aerobic respiration, where -> is the process of releasing energy.

The difference between aerobic and anaerobic respiration is that first one requires oxygen to be happening. The main roles of aerobic metabolism are:

Glycolysis, which is the process in which the cytoplasm of a cell breaks down glucose into lactate. Lactate, which is created during glycolysis, enters the Krebs cycle (also known as the citric acid cycle) in the mitochondria, where the hydrogen is oxidized to form of electron donors for the respiratory chain. Respiratory Chain, meaning that energy is released as electron donors are moved through the mitochondria's respiratory chain. In this process, oxygen acts as the last electron acceptor.

In essence, aerobic respiration emerges as an indispensable process reliant on oxygen, predominantly executed within mitochondria. Beyond being an exothermic reaction, it stands as the primary source of cellular energy.

Glycolysis, the Krebs cycle, and the respiratory chain collectively orchestrate this intricate process, underlining the nuanced interdependence of cellular functions.

Moreover, aerobic metabolism is considered more efficient compared to anaerobic processes for several reasons:

1. Aerobic metabolism utilizes oxygen for the complete oxidation of glucose and other organic compounds, resulting in the release of significantly more energy compared to anaerobic processes. This

allows the organism to generate more ATP (adenosine triphosphate), the primary energy carrier in the cell.

2. During aerobic metabolism, glucose is completely broken down into CO2 and H2O, natural byproducts that are harmless to the organism. In contrast, anaerobic metabolism, which produces lactic acid or alcohol, places less burden on the metabolic waste removal system.

During aerobic activity, the body utilizes fats and glucose as sources of energy, increasing oxygen consumption. This contributes to optimizing the function of the cardiovascular system, enhancing cardiorespiratory fitness, and improving blood circulation. As a result, athletes engaged in regular aerobic activities may exhibit significantly better physical endurance and have a lower risk of cardiovascular diseases compared to those leading sedentary lifestyles.

Furthermore, the optimal functioning of aerobic metabolism influences not only physical endurance but also overall health and mental well-being. Regular training in aerobic sports improves mood, reduces the risk of depression and anxiety, and increases endorphins – the happiness hormones, providing a sense of satisfaction and emotional upliftment.

Overall, aerobic respiration is an essential process reliant on oxygen, occurring primarily in mitochondria cells. This exothermic reaction releases energy and works as the primary cellular energy source. Key stages include glycolysis, the Krebs cycle, and the respiratory chain, with oxygen acting as the final electron acceptor. This process divides aerobic from anaerobic respiration, emphasizing the important role of oxygen in cellular energy extraction. Aerobic metabolism is not only efficient in terms of energy production but also contributes to increased physical endurance and overall well-being.

Науковий керівник: Микола Величенко,
старший викладач