Title	Excitation functions and yields of ⁸⁷ Y and preparation of a ⁸⁷ Sr generator
Sub Title	
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Publisher	共立薬科大学
Publication year	1979
Jtitle	共立薬科大学研究年報 (The annual report of the Kyoritsu College of Pharmacy). No.24 (1979.) ,p.91- 92
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	抄録
Genre	Technical Report
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=AN00062898-00000024- 0091

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Excitation Functions and Yields of ^{87m}Y and Preparation of a ^{87m}Sr Generator*

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The advantages of generators for the production of ^{87m}Sr have been attracted considerable interest. Its 2.81 hr half-life and a monoenergetic gamma-ray of 388 keV with 17.5 per cent internal conversion make it a ideally suited radionuclide for *in vivo* studies of calcium metabolism by the absence of any suitable radionuclide of calcium. Recently it was pointed out by Chandra et al. that ¹⁶⁷Tm is significantly better for bone scanning than ^{87m}Sr on the basis of detectable photons for a given absorbed radiation dose to the patient. It should be emphasized, however, that the properties of strontium are in many respects similar to those of calcium and may therefore be used not only as bone scanning agent but as tracers, with limitations, for some of the physiological processes in which calcium is normally involved.

In order to maximize the yield of ${}^{87m}Y \rightarrow {}^{87}Y$ and minimize the yields of other undesirable radionuclide, it is necessary to measure the excitation functions of ${}^{87m}Y$ and possible contaminants. Among the radionuclides from ³He and ⁴He bombardment of Rb target, ${}^{85m}Y$ has a 2.7 hr half-life and decays to ${}^{85}Y$ which in turn with a 5.0 hr half-life to ${}^{85m}Sr$. Therefore ${}^{85m}Y$ may pose a problem if it is not eliminated, although it has not been reported in the past.

Finely ground rubidium chloride of 2.0×2.0 cm² a surface density of 2.35 mg/cm² was melted on iron foils (15.38 mg/cm²) and encapsuled in alminium foils (4.50 mg/cm²). About ten to fifteen of these targets were stacked on a brass target-holder with water cooled pipes.

Bombardment of the Rb target was carried out with a 0.5 μ A beam 40 MeV ³He particles from the IPCR cyclotron, or a 0.3 μ A beam of 60 MeV ⁴He particles from the NIRS cyclotron. The duration of the bombardment 30 and 40 min, respectively. A Q-magnet and a collimator situated in front of the target reduced the spread in width of beam ca. 1.5×1.5 cm². The beam current was measured with a beam current integrator.

About an hour after the bombardment the targets were measured with an intrinsic Ge detector (Princeton Gamma-Tech Inc.) coupled to a 4096-channel analyzer. This system had a 1.98 keV resolution (FWHM) at 1.33 MeV and a peak-to-Compton ratio of 32:1. The detector was absolutely calibrated using a set of IAEA γ -ray standard sources. The principal photopeaks of nuclide were followed in order to determine the half-life and confirm the identity of the nuclides. The detad time losses were always less than 10%.

^{*} 本報告は Int. J. appl. Radiat. Isotopes (in press). に発表。

No. 24 (1979)

The bombardment of RbCl with 40 MeV ³He produced ^{85m}Y, ^{86m}Y, ^{87m}Y and ⁸⁸Y by the (³He, xn) reactions. ^{86m}Y and ⁸⁸Y decay to stable strontium ⁸⁶Sr and ⁸⁸Sr, respectively. This means that for the ⁸⁷Y-^{87m}Sr generator which keep yttrium effectively on an anion-exchanger resin, ^{86m}Y and ⁸⁸Y cause no problem. The thick-target yield of ⁸⁵Rb (³He, 3n) ^{87m}Y reactions was 100 μ Ci/ μ Ahr at ³He bombarding energy of 40 MeV. In our estimation, however, ^{85m}Y contamination in ^{87m}Y was 69% an hour after the end of the bombardment. On the other hand, the thick-target yield of ^{87m}Y with E α =60MeV went up to 3.1 mCi/ μ Ahr. However, the radionuclidic impurity of ^{85m}Sr in ^{87m}Sr, which was calculated from the level of ^{85m}Y produced simultaneously with ^{87m}Y, also increased at ⁴He bombarding energies above 35 MeV. Consequently in order to eliminate the ^{85m}Sr content of the final preparation, the energy of the incident ⁴He particle should be controlled at 35 MeV. ^{87m}Sr yield at 35 MeV normalized to target weight 133 mg was 1.7 mCi/ μ Ahr, which is sufficient quantities to carry out radiopharmaceutical studies.