ABSTRACT

This invention provides methods and diagnostic kits for identifying and characterizing toxic compounds. These methods and diagnostic kits measure transcription or translation levels from genes linked to native eukaryotic stress promoters, especially those of mammals. The kits and methods of this invention utilize at least one stress promoter from each of the following groups: redox stress, DNA stress, protein stress and energy/ionic stress. The invention also provides methods and diagnostic kits for identifying and characterizing compounds that are toxic to specific organs, such as skin and the eye, as well as for each of the individual stresses indicated above. The methods and diagnostic kits of this invention yield information concerning the action of a compound on a subcellular level. This information may be utilized to design antitoxins to compounds found to be toxic and in active drug design.

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