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ScienceDirect
Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications 366 (2008) 174–179
BBRC
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Localization of mouse mitochondrial SIRT proteins: Shift of SIRT3 to nucleus by co-expression with SIRT5

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Received 13 November 2007
Available online 3 December 2007

Abstract

Yeast silent information regulator 2 (SIR2) is involved in extension of yeast longevity by calorie restriction, and SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 are mammalian homologs of SIR2 localized in mitochondria. We have investigated the localization of these three SIRT proteins of mouse. SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 proteins were localized in different compartments of the mitochondria. When SIRT3 and SIRT5 were co-expressed in the cell, localization of SIRT3 protein changed from mitochondria to nucleus. These results suggest that the SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 proteins exert distinct functions in mitochondria. In addition, the SIRT3 protein might function in nucleus.

Keywords: SIRT3; SIRT4; SIRT5; Intramitochondrial localization; Localization shift

Silent information regulator 2 (SIR2) is the enzyme that catalyzes NAD^+-dependent protein deacetylation and produces nicotinamide and *O*-acetyl-ADP-ribose [1,2], and is localized in nucleus [3]. In yeast, lifespan is prolonged in low glucose condition [4,5], but such lifespan extension is abolished by SIR2 gene disruption [6], suggesting that SIR2 plays an important role in determining yeast longevity. In mammals, there are seven SIR2 homologs, SIRT1–7 [7]. However, it remains unclear whether SIRTs mediate lifespan extension by calorie restriction.

Human SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 proteins are known to be localized in mitochondria [7,8]. Mouse SIRT4 was previously shown *in vivo* to ADP-ribosylate glutamate dehydrogenase and down-regulate its activity in pancreatic islets, inhibiting amino acid-stimulated insulin secretion [9]. On the other hand, recent studies have demonstrated that human SIRT3 deacetylates acetyl-CoA synthetase 2 in mitochondrial matrix *in vitro* [10,11]. Human SIRT5 has been shown to have weak deacetylase activity *in vitro* [12]. However, the function of SIRT3 and SIRT5 *in vivo* is still unknown.

Although human SIRT4 and SIRT5 proteins have been reported to localize in mitochondria, precise localization of these proteins is unknown. Regarding SIRT3, localization of SIRT3 protein has been reported to differ in mouse and human, in mitochondrial inner membrane in mouse [13] and in mitochondrial matrix in human [14]. Furthermore, there has been no report on the interaction of the three SIRT proteins known to be localized in mitochondria.

In the present study, we determined localization of mouse SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 proteins in COS7 cells in different compartments of mitochondria: inner membrane, matrix, and intermembrane space. In addition, we demonstrate that localization of SIRT3

Abbreviations: SIR2, silent information regulator 2; MTS, mitochondrial targeting signal; NLS, nuclear localization signal; GAPDH, glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase; PNS, post-nuclear supernatant; PHB, prohibitin; ER, estrogen receptor.

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0006-291X/$ - see front matter © 2007 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.
doi:10.1016/j.bbrc.2007.11.122

protein in COS7 cells changes from mitochondria to nucleus when co-expressed with SIRT5. We also address the regulatory mechanism of SIRT3 localization by a mutagenesis study of the putative mitochondrial targeting signal (MTS) and nuclear localization signal (NLS).

Materials and methods

Antibodies. The antibodies used for confocal microscopic analysis and Western blot analysis included anti-myc (Santa Cruz Biotechnology), anti-FLAG (Sigma), anti-hsp60 (BD Biosciences), anti-calnexin (Stressgen), anti-glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH) (Santa Cruz Biotechnology), anti-cytochrome *c* (Cell Signaling), and anti-laminA/C (Cell Signaling).

Plasmid construction. The expression vector for SIRT3-myc, SIRT4-myc, SIRT4-FLAG, and SIRT5-FLAG was constructed as follows. The coding region of SIRT cDNAs was cloned by PCR using mouse liver cDNA. The PCR fragments were subcloned into the pcDNA3.1/myc-His A expression vector (Invitrogen) or the pFLAG-CMV-5a expression vector (Sigma). SIRT3nu and SIRT3mt mutants were constructed by overlap extension PCR method [15] using pcDNA3.1/myc-His-SIRT3 plasmid as the template.

Cell culture and transfection. COS7 cells were maintained in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (Sigma) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (Gibco) in an atmosphere of 5% CO_2 at 37 °C. DNA transfection was performed according to the manufacturer's instructions using FuGene6 Transfection Reagent (Roche). One microgram of plasmid DNA was transfected to COS7 cells in a 3.5-cm dish.

Confocal microscopy. Fluorescence microscopic analysis was performed as described previously [16]. Briefly, COS7 cells transfected with SIRT expression plasmids were fixed and labeled with anti-myc monoclonal IgG and Alexa488-conjugated anti-mouse IgG (Molecular Probes) or anti-FLAG polyclonal IgG and Cy3-conjugated anti-rabbit IgG (Sigma). Fluorescent images were taken and analyzed using a confocal laser microscope (LSM510 META; Carl Zeiss).

Fractionation of post-nuclear supernatant. Fractionation of post-nuclear supernatant was performed as described previously [17]. Twenty micrograms of plasmid DNA was transfected to COS7 cells in a 10-cm dish. The transfected cells were harvested and disrupted in isotonic buffer (PBS containing 0.2 M mannitol, 0.07 M sucrose, and 1 mM EDTA) containing protease inhibitors (Complete, EDTA Free; Roche) with potter homogenizer, followed by centrifuged at 800*g* at 4 °C for 10 min to obtain post-nuclear supernatant (PNS). PNS was centrifuged at 10,000*g* at 4 °C for 10 min to obtain the mitochondria-enriched precipitate fraction. The supernatant was centrifuged at 100,000*g* at 4 °C for 30 min to separate the microsome-enriched precipitate and supernatant fractions. The subcellular fractions were separated by SDS–PAGE and then analyzed by Western blotting.

Alkaline treatment of mitochondria. Mitochondria were prepared from the COS7 cells expressing each SIRT protein, and treated with 100 mM Na_2CO_3 in 10 times volume of mitochondria suspension for 1 h on ice. The reaction mixtures were centrifuged at 100,000*g* at 4 °C for 30 min to separate the precipitate and supernatant fractions. The fractions were subjected to SDS–PAGE followed by Western blot analysis.

Submitochondrial fractionation. The mitochondria were treated with either H_2O or 2% TX-100 in 10 times volume of mitochondria suspension on ice for 1 h, and then treated with 50 μg/ml trypsin on ice for 1 h. The reaction mixtures were separated by SDS–PAGE and then analyzed by Western blotting.

Subcellular fractionation using digitonin. The transfected COS7 cells were harvested and lysed with PBS containing 2% digitonin. The cell lysate was centrifuged at 800*g* at 4 °C for 10 min to obtain nucleus-enriched insoluble and soluble fractions. The fractions were separated by SDS–PAGE and then analyzed by Western blotting.

Results and discussion

Distinct localizations of SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 in mitochondria

To determine the intracellular localization of mouse SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 proteins, expression plasmid encoding each of these SIRT proteins fused with myc tag or FLAG tag at the C terminus was transfected into COS7 cells. The SIRT proteins were stained with anti-myc antibody or anti-FLAG antibody and its intracellular localization was examined using confocal microscopy (Fig. 1A). All three images of SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 proteins merged well with that of MitoTracker Red, a marker of mitochondria, indicating that all of these SIRT proteins are localized in mitochondria. Cell fractionation was then performed using cells transfected with the SIRT expression plasmids. PNS of the cells was centrifuged and fractionated into the mitochondria-enriched low-speed precipitate (P1), the microsome-enriched high-speed precipitate (P2), and the supernatant (S) fractions (Fig. 1B). All of the three SIRT proteins were found in the P1 fraction as was hsp60 protein, a marker of mitochondria, affirming their localization in mitochondria.

To clarify localization of the three SIRT proteins in mitochondria, mitochondrial fraction prepared from COS7 cells expressing each of the SIRT proteins was treated with Na_2CO_3 and centrifuged. SIRT3 protein was detected in the precipitate fraction, while SIRT4 and SIRT5 proteins were detected in the supernatant fraction, indicating that SIRT3 protein is integrated into either mitochondrial outer or inner membrane and that SIRT4 and SIRT5 are soluble and not membrane proteins (Fig. 1C). After treating the mitochondrial fractions with either H_2O or TX-100, the fractions were treated with trypsin. When mitochondria are treated with H_2O, the mitoplast can be obtained. SIRT3 and SIRT5 proteins were digested with trypsin in both H_2O- and TX-100-treated mitochondria but were not digested in untreated mitochondria (Fig. 1D), indicating that these proteins are localized either in intermembrane space or in inner membrane. In contrast, SIRT4 was digested only in the TX-100-treated mitochondria. Taken together, these results indicate that SIRT3, SIRT4, and SIRT5 proteins are localized in inner membrane, matrix, and intermembrane space, respectively, in mitochondria. In human, SIRT3 protein was reported to localize in mitochondrial matrix [14]. Since mouse SIRT3 protein lacks a region corresponding to the N-terminal 142-amino acid residues of human SIRT3 protein, the region could be critical in determining localization in mitochondria. In addition, the function of SIRT3 might differ in humans and mice.

SIRT3 is localized in nucleus when co-expressed with SIRT5

We then examined localization of these three mitochondrial SIRT proteins when two of them were co-expressed in