Plasmalogenase activities in neuronal perikarya, astroglia, and oligodendroglia isolated from bovine brain

Robert V. Dorman, Arrel D. Toews, and Lloyd A. Horrocks

Department of Physiological Chemistry, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210

Abstract

Plasmalogenase (EC 3.3.2.-, 1-alk-1'-enyl-2-acyl-


phosphorylethanolamine aldehydehydrolase) activities were assayed with the plasmalogens in dispersed myelin as the substrate. The activities were 6.7 μmoles/mg protein per hr in oligodendroglia from white matter, and 1.1 and 0.6 for astroglia and neuronal perikarya from gray matter. Myelin had no plasmalogenase activity. Thus, both the normal catabolism of myelin plasmalogens and the accelerated hydrolysis of plasmalogens in demyelination is probably carried out by oligodendroglial plasmalogenase.

Supplementary key words

ethanolamine plasmalogens. phospholipase. myelin. demyelination

Ethanolamine plasmalogens are the major phospholipid component of central nervous system (CNS) white matter and myelin (1). The CNS plasmalogenase (EC 3.3.2.-), the enzyme that hydrolyzes the vinyl ether linkage of the plasmalogen molecule, is concentrated in white matter, but not in myelin (2), and the activity of plasmalogenase parallels myelination (3). Thus, the oligodendroglia may provide the catabolic activity necessary for the turnover of the plasmalogens associated with myelin. In order to test this hypothesis, we assayed plasmalogenase activities in neuronal perikarya, astroglial, and oligodendroglial fractions derived from adult bovine brain.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

Tissues

Whole adult bovine brains were obtained from the Coil Meat Packing Co., Columbus, OH. The brains were excised within 30 min of death and immediately placed on ice for transport (30 min). The tissues were kept at 4°C throughout the isolation procedure. White matter and gray matter were carefully separated.

Cell Preparations

The oligodendroglial fractions were prepared from 25-30 g of white matter by Method B of Fewster, Blackstone, and Ihrig (4) using nylon mesh sieves of 760, 452, 333, and 130 μm pore size. Neuronal perikarya and astroglial fractions were prepared from 10-15 g of bovine gray matter by the method of Blomstrand and Hamberger (5, 6). The cell-enriched fractions were washed with 10 volumes of cold Hank’s balanced salt solution and a small portion of each fraction was removed for microscopy. The remaining cells were centrifuged at 1,000 g for 10 min, then resuspended and dispersed in 50% glycerol–1% sodium bicarbonate 1:1 (v/v). The dispersions were used for plasmalogenase and protein (7) assays.

Plasmalogenase

The source of the added plasmalogens for the assays was myelin, which was isolated and purified from 10–15 g of bovine white matter according to Toews, Horrocks, and King (8). The purified myelin was sonicated in 0.1 M glycylglycine-HCl buffer, pH 7.4, containing 0.05% Tween 20 to give a suspension containing myelin plasmalogens at a concentration of 4.0 mM. A mixture of 1.0 ml of the myelin suspension and 1.0 ml of the dispersed cell frac-
TABLE 1. Plasmalogenase activity in neuronal perikarya, astroglia, and oligodendroglia isolated from bovine brain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cell Type (n)</th>
<th>Activity (mean)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuronal perikarya (3)</td>
<td>0.38, 0.22, 1.20 (0.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Astroglia (2)</td>
<td>1.42, 0.73 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oligodendroglia (3)</td>
<td>6.60, 6.69, 6.87 (6.72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results are expressed as pmol of plasmalogens hydrolyzed/mg protein per hr. Neuronal perikarya and astroglia were prepared from bovine gray matter and the oligodendroglia were prepared from bovine white matter. Cell suspensions had no plasmalogenase activity because blank incubations without the cell dispersions had no activity of astroglia. Plasmalogenase activities in neuronal and astroglial fractions are probably not due to oligodendroglial contamination because the former cells have a substantial turnover of plasmalogens (11–14).

Increased metabolic activities, required for the development and maintenance of myelin, have been found in the oligodendroglia when compared to neurons and astroglia. Deshmukh, Glynn and Pieringer (15) found that galactosyl diglyceride synthesis was about 20-fold greater in oligodendroglia from rat white matter when compared to neuronal perikarya. Also, the incorporation of fatty acids into lipids occurred at a much faster rate in the oligodendroglia, with the greatest incorporation corresponding to the period of myelination (16), and cerebroside sulfotransferase was 8-fold more active in isolated oligodendroglia than in neurons (17).

The oligodendroglia appear to contain the plasmalogenase enzyme necessary for the normal turnover of the ethanolamine plasmalogens associated with myelin. The rapid turnover of ethanolamine plasmalogens in the CNS (1, 18) cannot be accounted for by phospholipase A$_2$ activity, since phospholipase A$_2$ is least active with plasmalogens as the substrate and plasmalogenase has less activity with the decylated plasmalogen than with the intact plasmalogen (20). The counterpart of phospholipase A$_2$ for plasmalogens is plasmalogenase (10), which is probably responsible for most of the turnover of plasmalogens in the CNS.

The concentration of plasmalogenase activity within the oligodendroglia is also consistent with an oligodendroglial location for increased plasmalogenase activities associated with demyelinating conditions. Demyelination of the CNS, as reported by Ansell and Spanner (2) and McMartin, Horrocks, and Koestner (21), was accompanied by activation of plasmalogenase in the areas of demyelination. The evidence presented here suggests that the oligodendroglia are the CNS cells most capable of supplying the increased plasmalogenase activities seen during demyelination of the CNS. It is most probable that the activation of the plasmalogenase activity within the oligodendroglia is a necessary step in the pathogenesis of white matter injury that results in the destruction of myelin and lysis of the oligo-
dendroglia. An activation of the plasmalogenase will increase the production of the lyso compound, 2-acyl-
-sn-glycero-3-phosphorylethanolamine. Since in white matter most of the fatty acids that are potential pro-
taglandin precursors are esterified at the 2-position of the ethanolamine plasmalogens (22), a subsequent hydrolysis of the lyso compound by a lysophospholipase (10) will increase the potential for pro-
taglandin synthesis and tissue inflammation.

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