

Tunicamycin inhibits the initiation of DNA synthesis stimulated by prostaglandin $F_{2\alpha}$ in Swiss mouse 3T3 cells

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Tunicamycin, an inhibitor of the asparagine-linked protein *N*-glycosylation, blocks the initiation of DNA synthesis in Swiss 3T3 cells stimulated by prostaglandin $F_{2\alpha}$ alone or with insulin. This effect is exerted only when tunicamycin is added from 0 to 8 h after stimulation and it decreases the rate of entry into S phase. Blocking of labeled sugar incorporation to proteins occurs regardless of the time of $PGF_{2\alpha}$ stimulation. In contrast tunicamycin does not inhibit protein synthesis. These results suggest that *N*-glycoprotein synthesis early during the prereplicative phase is an important event controlling the mitogenic action of $PGF_{2\alpha}$.

Swiss 3T3 cell; Prostaglandin $F_{2\alpha}$; Tunicamycin; DNA synthesis; Lag phase

1. INTRODUCTION

Mammalian cell proliferation involves the expression of a reproducible program of signals and intracellular events which precede the onset of DNA replication [1–3]. Postranslational protein modifications have been shown to be involved in the regulation of cell division [4]. The *N*-glycosylation of newly synthesized proteins plays an important role in controlling embryonic development, cell differentiation and proliferation [5–14].

N-Glycosylation involves several metabolic steps leading to the formation of the dolichol core oligosaccharide and its transference to the nascent polypeptide chains [15]. Tunicamycin (TM) inhibits the first step of the *N*-glycosylation process [16] and thereby alters many cellular processes [5–11].

Cultured Swiss mouse 3T3 cells have provided a useful model system to study the mechanisms that regulate proliferation [17]. These cells can be arrested in the G_0/G_1 phase of the cell cycle upon serum deprivation or when allowed to become confluent [2,3]. Addition to such cultures of serum or a variety of growth factors, including prostaglandin $F_{2\alpha}$ ($PGF_{2\alpha}$), stimulates the initiation of DNA synthesis after a constant lag phase of 14–15 h [2,3]. The rate of entry into S phase follows apparent first-order kinetics and can be quantified by a rate constant K [18,19].

Here we show that in confluent resting Swiss mouse 3T3 cells stimulated by $PGF_{2\alpha}$ without or with insulin, TM inhibits the initiation of DNA synthesis, only if

added within the first 8 h after mitogenic induction. Nevertheless, TM does reduce the incorporation of [^{14}C]glucosamine and [3H]mannose into total cellular protein at any time after stimulation. These results suggest that *N*-glycoprotein synthesis early during the lag phase plays an important role in the mitogenic response of $PGF_{2\alpha}$.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Cell culture, initiation of DNA synthesis assay and determination of rate constant for entry into S phase

Cell culture, conditions for the assay of DNA synthesis, labeling with [methyl- 3H]thymidine and autoradiography were performed as previously described [19]. The value of the rate constant K for entry into S phase was calculated as before [19].

2.2. Glucosamine, mannose and leucine incorporation

Cells were plated as for the assay of DNA synthesis [19]. For sugar labeling, the culture medium was removed and the cells were washed twice with 2.0 ml of serum-free medium minus glucose pre-warmed to 37°C. The cells then received 2.0 ml of the same medium containing the different stimuli and were labeled with 25 μM [^{14}C]glucosamine (1 $\mu Ci/ml$) and 50 μM [3H]mannose (2.5 $\mu Ci/ml$) as indicated. For protein synthesis, stimulated cultures were exposed to [3H]leucine (2.5 $\mu Ci/ml$). Thereafter, cells were processed and radioactivity was counted as described before [13].

2.3. Materials

$PGF_{2\alpha}$ was the generous gift of Dr. John Pike, Upjohn Co. All remaining chemicals were purchased from Sigma. D-[2- 3H]mannose (10–20 Ci/mmol), D-[N- ^{14}C]glucosamine hydrochloride (250–350 mCi/mmol), L-[4,5- 3H]leucine (130 Ci/mmol) and [methyl- 3H]thymidine (18 Ci/mmol) were from the Radiochemical Center Amersham.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Tunicamycin inhibition of DNA synthesis

The effect of TM on the initiation of DNA synthesis

Abbreviations: $PGF_{2\alpha}$, prostaglandin $F_{2\alpha}$; TM, tunicamycin.

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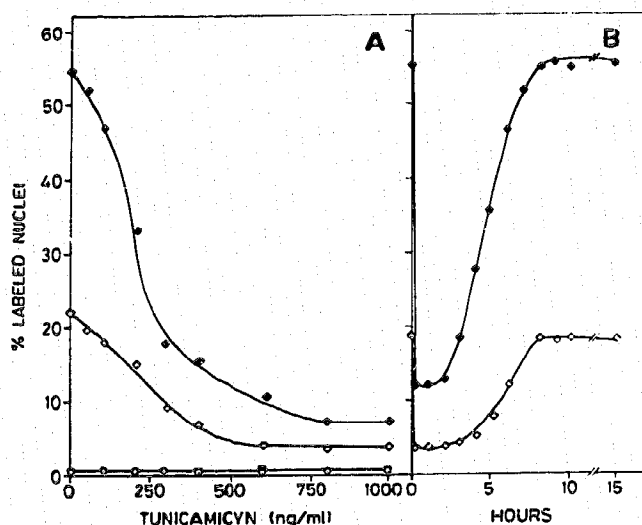


Fig. 1. (A) Effect of TM on the stimulation of DNA synthesis by PGF_{2α} (300 ng/ml) without or with insulin (60 ng/ml). (◇), PGF_{2α} plus TM; (◆), PGF_{2α} plus insulin and TM; (○), TM; (□), TM plus insulin. (B) Effect of TM (250 ng/ml) added at different times after PGF_{2α} (300 ng/ml) without or with insulin (60 ng/ml) on the stimulation of DNA synthesis. (◇), PGF_{2α} with TM; (◆), PGF_{2α} with insulin plus TM. Cultures were labeled for autoradiography from 0 to 28 h after additions as indicated in Materials and Methods.

is shown in Fig. 1A. PGF_{2α} (300 ng/ml) added to confluent resting Swiss 3T3 cells stimulates the initiation of DNA synthesis, resulting in 20% of labeled nuclei after 28 h (Fig. 1A). Insulin (60 ng/ml) which is non-mitogenic in these cells [17] enhances the stimulation of PGF_{2α}, by increasing the labeled index up to 50%. TM (50–1000 ng/ml) alone or with insulin had no effect on the initiation of DNA synthesis but when added with PGF_{2α} or PGF_{2α} plus insulin it inhibited the mitogenic response (Fig. 1A).

TM (250 ng/ml) added at different times after PGF_{2α} alone or with insulin markedly inhibits the initiation of DNA synthesis only within the first 2 h of mitogenic induction. Addition of TM at later times resulted in a progressive loss of its effect (Fig. 1B). It disappeared when TM was added at 8–13 h after stimulation, and the labeling index obtained was similar to that observed in the absence of TM (Fig. 1B).

Stimulation of Swiss 3T3 cells by PGF_{2α} (300 ng/ml) increases the value of the rate constant K for cellular entry into S phase after a lag of 15 h (Fig. 2A). Insulin only potentiates the effect of PGF_{2α} by increasing the value of K . TM (250 ng/ml) added with PGF_{2α} alone or with insulin reduced the value of K without changing the length of the lag phase (Fig. 2A,B). In contrast, TM added at 8 or at 13 h after stimulation did not alter the rate of entry into S phase (Fig. 2A,B).

3.3. Effect of tunicamycin on [¹⁴C]glucosamine, [³H]mannose and [³H]leucine incorporation

The effect of PGF_{2α} minus or plus insulin in the incor-

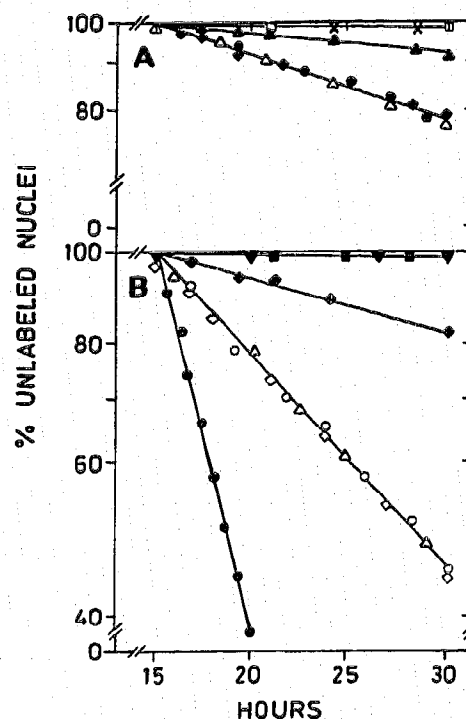


Fig. 2. Kinetics of entry into S phase stimulated by PGF_{2α} (300 ng/ml) without or with insulin (60 ng/ml) and in the absence or presence of TM (250 ng/ml). (A) (×), no addition ($K = 0.05$); (□), insulin ($K = 0.06$); (△), PGF_{2α} ($K = 1.3$); (▲), PGF_{2α} plus TM added at 0 h ($K = 0.3$); (◆), PGF_{2α} plus TM added at 8 h ($K = 1.4$); (●), PGF_{2α} plus TM added at 13 h ($K = 1.5$). (B) (▼), TM ($K = 0.05$); (■), TM plus insulin ($K = 0.05$); (△), PGF_{2α} with insulin ($K = 5.3$); (◆), PGF_{2α} with insulin and TM added at 0 h ($K = 1.2$); (○), PGF_{2α} plus insulin and TM added at 8 h ($K = 5.4$); (◇), PGF_{2α} plus insulin and TM added at 13 h ($K = 5.4$); (●), fetal calf serum ($K = 24.0$). K values are given in 10^{-2} h. In all cases the duration of the lag phase was 15 h. Labeling procedures as in Fig. 1.

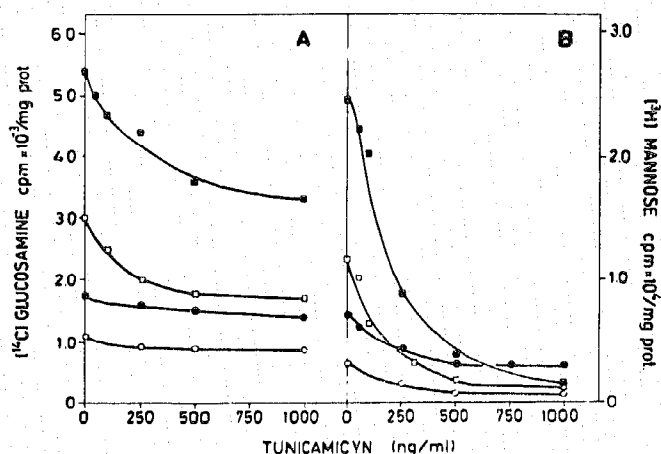


Fig. 3. Effect of TM on [¹⁴C]glucosamine and [³H]mannose incorporation stimulated by PGF_{2α} (300 ng/ml) alone or with insulin (60 ng/ml). (□), PGF_{2α} plus TM; (■), PGF_{2α} plus insulin and TM; (●), insulin plus TM; (○), TM. Cells were radioactively labeled as indicated in Materials and Methods.

Table I

Comparison of TM effect on DNA synthesis, [^3H]mannose and [^3H]leucine incorporation at different times of the lag phase upon stimulation by $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ minus or plus insulin

Additions	A Labeled nuclei (%)	B [^3H]Mannose cpm/mg prot. ($\times 10^4$)	C [^3H]Leucine cpm/mg prot. ($\times 10^4$)
none	0.5	1.4	8.4
$\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$	22.6	8.4	13.3
$\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ + TM	22.9	2.9	12.9
$\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ + insulin	55.1	12.6	15.6
$\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ + insulin + TM	54.3	4.3	15.7

Cells were stimulated by $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ (300 ng/ml) without or with insulin (50 ng/ml). TM (250 ng/ml) was added at different times after stimulation: (A) initiation of DNA synthesis from 9 to 28 h; (B) incorporation of [^3H]mannose from 9 to 14 h; (C) [^3H]leucine incorporation, from 0 to 5 h. Measurements were as indicated in Materials and Methods.

poration of [^{14}C]glucosamine and [^3H]mannose into total cellular proteins is shown in Fig. 3. Addition of $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ (300 ng/ml) increases the incorporation of [^{14}C]glucosamine and [^3H]mannose into acid-precipitable material. Insulin had a small effect on the incorporation of these sugars but together with $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ enhances it. TM added at 50–1000 ng/ml reduces the incorporation of either [^{14}C]glucosamine and [^3H]mannose stimulated by $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$, insulin or $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ with insulin (Fig. 3). Also TM (250 ng/ml) added from 9 to 14 h after $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$, minus or plus insulin inhibited the incorporation of [^3H]mannose, without affecting the initiation of DNA synthesis. In contrast, TM addition from 0 to 5 h to stimulated cells did not block [^3H]leucine incorporation into cellular proteins (Table I).

4. DISCUSSION

Previous findings indicated that N' -glycoproteins synthesis plays an important role in the control of cell division [11,14]. The division of Burkitt lymphoma cells can be arrested by TM in G_0G_1 phase of the cell cycle [11]. TM removal enables these cells to synthesize three major N' -glycoproteins prior to their entry into S phase [11]. Also TM reduces the proliferation and DNA polymerase α_2 activity in neuroblastoma cells [20]. Other results show that division of exponentially growing Swiss 3T3 cells can be reversibly blocked by TM [10]. In contrast, TM did not affect the division of polyoma 3T3 and SV40 W138 transformed cells, but it caused cytotoxicity and changes in their agglutinability [10]. In addition, it has been shown that TM inhibits the initiation of DNA synthesis in quiescent Swiss 3T3 cells stimulated by serum [14].

Other evidence reveals that TM treatment of a variety of cells decreases the presence and/or alters the properties of many N' -glycoproteins, some of them due to increased sensitivity to proteolytic degradation [21].

This includes surface membrane receptors for growth factors [22], hormones [7,8] or neurotransmitters [21], as well as fibronectin [23] or proteins participating in cell fusion [9].

Here we have shown that TM inhibits the initiation of DNA synthesis in Swiss 3T3 cells stimulated by $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ alone or with insulin. The effect of TM is accompanied by a decrease of [^{14}C]glucosamine and [^3H]mannose but not [^3H]leucine incorporation into total cell proteins indicating that it is probably due to the blockage of the N' -glycosylation process and not of protein synthesis. Furthermore, TM inhibits the rate of entry into S phase only when added within the first 8 h of the lag phase regardless of blocking sugar incorporation at any time after stimulation. Thus it appears that N' -glycoprotein synthesis early in the lag phase is a crucial event to regulate the initiation of DNA synthesis induced by $\text{PGF}_{2\alpha}$ and possibly by other mitogens. The identification of these N' -glycoproteins, is the framework of our future research.

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