

## Possible Involvement of Optimally Phosphorylated L-Plastin in Activation of Superoxide-Generating NADPH Oxidase

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The involvement of protein phosphatases in the activation of superoxide ( $O_2^-$ )-generating enzyme in human neutrophils was examined using calyculin A, an inhibitor of protein phosphatase type 1 and 2A. Calyculin A inhibited the phorbol myristate acetate (PMA)- and opsonized zymosan (OZ)-activated  $O_2^-$  generation by human neutrophils. This inhibitory effect of calyculin A on PMA-activated  $O_2^-$  generation was reversed by the addition of KT5926, a specific inhibitor of myosin light chain kinase and  $Ca^{2+}$ /calmodulin-dependent protein kinase II. These results suggest that the addition of calyculin A may cause hyperphosphorylation of some protein(s) that plays a crucial role in the PMA-dependent activation of  $O_2^-$  generating enzyme, and that this protein hyperphosphorylation may be evoked by a KT5926-sensitive kinase or its downstream kinase. Whereas two-dimensional analysis involving  $^{32}P$  revealed that calyculin A caused the hyperphosphorylation of many proteins, KT5926 mainly reduced the calyculin A-induced hyperphosphorylation of a 67 kDa protein in activated neutrophils, suggesting that the hyperphosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein might inhibit the PMA-dependent activation of NADPH oxidase. The 67 kDa cytosolic protein was moderately phosphorylated on the addition of PMA. On the other hand, in the absence of calyculin A, KT5926 inhibited both PMA-induced  $O_2^-$  generation and phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein. Amino acid sequence analysis of peptides derived from the 67 kDa protein revealed that the 67 kDa protein was identical to L-plastin, an actin-bundling protein. We conclude that optimally phosphorylated L-plastin may play some crucial role in the activation of NADPH oxidase.

**Key words:** human neutrophils; L-plastin; NADPH oxidase; phosphatase; phosphorylation.

Abbreviations: fMLP, *N*-formyl-methionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine; PMA, phorbol myristate acetate; OZ, opsonized zymosan.

Neutrophils act as a first defense against invading bacteria or viruses, and are important mediators of the acute inflammatory response. Neutrophils recognize, ingest, and kill microorganisms in phagocytic vacuoles, releasing oxygen intermediates such as  $O_2^-$ ,  $H_2O_2$  and  $OH^-$ . Generation of  $O_2^-$  is catalyzed by NADPH oxidase, which is dormant in resting cells, and consists of membrane-bound and cytosolic components (1, 2). The cytosolic components comprise a 47 kDa protein (p47<sup>phox</sup>), a 67 kDa protein (p67<sup>phox</sup>), a 40 kDa protein (p40<sup>phox</sup>), and rac protein. p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and p40<sup>phox</sup> are phosphorylated during the activation of NADPH oxidase (1, 3, 4). p47<sup>phox</sup> is phosphorylated by several protein kinases (5–10). Phosphorylation of p47<sup>phox</sup> is crucial for translocation of cytosolic components and assembly of the active NADPH oxidase (11–13).

On the other hand, many studies have indicated an important regulatory role for protein serine/threonine phosphatase in a wide variety of cellular functions (14, 15).

The involvement of serine/threonine phosphatase in the activation of NADPH oxidase has been investigated using phosphatase inhibitors. *N*-Formyl-methionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine (fMLP)-activated  $O_2^-$  generation by human neutrophils was enhanced by okadaic acid and calyculin A, inhibitors of phosphatase type 1 and 2A (16–19), while phorbol myristate acetate (PMA)-induced  $O_2^-$  generation was inhibited by these phosphatase inhibitors (18–20). Inversely, these phosphatase inhibitors enhanced the  $O_2^-$  generation activated by suboptimal concentrations of PMA (21). These results suggest that the signal transduction pathway in the PMA-induced activation of NADPH oxidase cannot be explained simply by phosphorylation of p47<sup>phox</sup>. One possible explanation is that the activation of NADPH oxidase requires a balance of phosphorylation and dephosphorylation of some proteins (22–25).

To further explore the roles of protein phosphorylation and dephosphorylation in the activation of NADPH oxidase, we examined the effects of calyculin A and various kinase inhibitors on the  $O_2^-$  generation by fMLP-, PMA-

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and OZ-activated neutrophils. In this study, we obtained evidence that optimal phosphorylation of L-plastin may be required for the PMA- and OZ-dependent activation of NADPH oxidase.

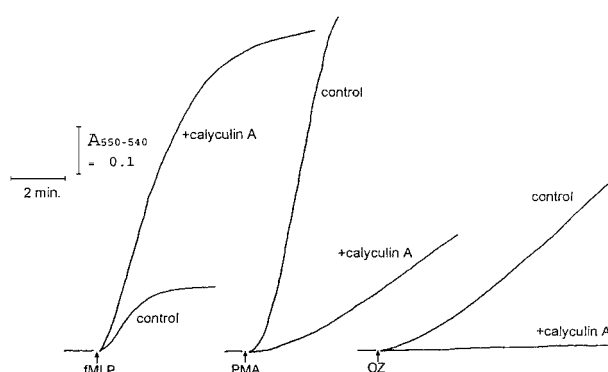
#### EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

**Reagents**—Calyculin A, wortmannin and lysyl endopeptidase were purchased from Wako Pure Chemical Industries (Osaka).  $^{32}\text{P}_i$  was obtained from DuPont NEN. Cytochrome *c* (Type VI), zymosan A and phorbol myristate acetate were obtained from Sigma, St. Louis. Opsonized zymosan was prepared by incubation with freshly prepared human serum at 37°C for 30 min. KT5926, K-252a, staurosporine and herbimycin A were purchased from Kyowa Medex (Tokyo). All other chemicals used were commercial preparations of the highest purity.

**Preparation of Neutrophils**—Human neutrophils were isolated from peripheral blood obtained from healthy volunteers by the dextran sedimentation method, as previously described (26). After lysis of the red cells, the cell suspension was sedimented and resuspended in HEPES-buffered saline (HBS), and then stood at 4°C for 1 h. After the upper layer had been aspirated off, the pellet was suspended in HBS. The isolated leukocyte fraction contained more than 95% of viable neutrophils, as judged on differential staining as previously reported (26).

**Measurement of  $\text{O}_2^-$  Generation**—The rate of  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation was measured at 37°C by recording the reduction of cytochrome *c* as the change in difference absorption between 550 and 540 nm (27) using a dual-beam spectrophotometer (Hitachi, Model 557, Tokyo). The assay mixture comprised 0.1 mM cytochrome *c*, 5 mM glucose and  $1 \times 10^6$  neutrophils in HBS. After the neutrophils had been preincubated at 37°C for 10 min with or without inhibitors,  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation was initiated by the addition of various stimulants, as indicated.

**Protein Phosphorylation of Neutrophils**—Analysis of the protein phosphorylation of neutrophils was performed according to a previous report (28) with slight modifications. Neutrophils were preloaded with  $^{32}\text{P}_i$  at 30°C for 1 h. The  $^{32}\text{P}$ -loaded cells were preincubated with or without inhibitors as above. After preincubation with inhibitors, the cells were stimulated with PMA at 37°C for 2 min. The reaction was terminated with chilled HBS containing 2 mM diisopropyl fluorophosphate, 20  $\mu\text{M}$  leupeptin, 50  $\mu\text{M}$  (*p*-amidinophenyl)methanesulfonyl fluoride hydrochloride, 0.1 M NaF, 10 mM EDTA, 2 mM *N*-ethylmaleimide, 1 mM ammonium molybdate, 1 mM iodoacetate, and 1 mM benzamidine. After precipitation, the cells were suspended in an aliquot of a 0.25 M sucrose solution containing 10 mM Tris-HCl buffer (pH 7.4) and a mixture of protease inhibitors and phosphatase inhibitors. The cells were then disrupted by sonication at 0°C for 20 s. The sonicates were centrifuged at 500  $\times g$  for 15 min at 4°C to remove whole cells and nuclei. The supernatants were then centrifuged at 100,000  $\times g$  for 30 min at 4°C to obtain cytosolic and membrane fractions. After separation of the cytosol and membrane fractions, two-dimensional gel electrophoresis was performed. For the first dimension, nonequilibrium isoelectric focusing was performed in 4  $\times$  100-mm cylindrical 4% polyacrylamide



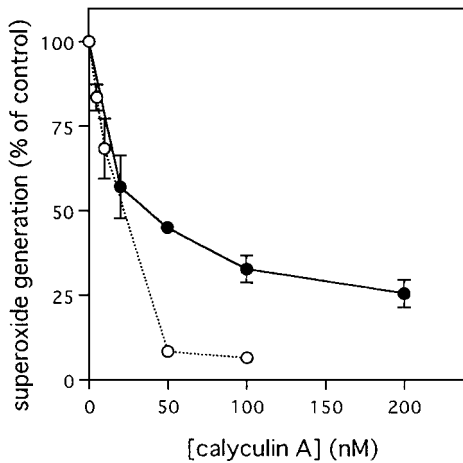
**Fig. 1. Effect of calyculin A on  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation by human neutrophils.** Human neutrophils were preincubated with or without 100 nM calyculin A at 37°C for 10 min. After preincubation, the cells were activated with 1  $\mu\text{M}$  fMLP, 0.1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$  PMA or 1.25  $\text{mg}/\text{ml}$  of OZ. The rate of  $\text{O}_2^-$  release was determined by measuring the reduction of cytochrome *c*. These traces are representative of at least four experiments.

gels containing 8.5 M urea, 2% Nonidet P-40, 1.6% pH 3.5–9.5 Ampholines, and 0.4% pH 2.5–4.0 Ampholines. Electrophoresis in the second dimension was carried out by the Laemmli technique using 12.5% polyacrylamide gels. The gels were stained and autoradiographed with Kodak X-OMAT film. Densitometric analysis was performed with an ATTO densitometer (AE6900-2D, ATTO, Tokyo).

**Protein Sequencing**—The 67 kDa protein, derived from approximately  $5 \times 10^7$  cells was excised from two-dimensional gels (25 gels). Then, *in gel*-proteinase digestion with lysyl endopeptidase was performed according to Kawasaki *et al.* (29). The resulting peptides were purified by reverse phase high performance liquid chromatography on a BioRad RP-318 column (250  $\times$  4.6 mm). The purified peptides were applied to a gas phase peptide sequencer (PPSQ-10, Shimadzu, Kyoto). BLAST (GenomeNet) was used to search the SWISS-PROT protein database.

#### RESULTS

**Effect of Calyculin A on  $\text{O}_2^-$  Generation by Human Neutrophils**—At first, the effect of calyculin A on  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation by human neutrophils was examined. One hundred nM of calyculin A resulted in marked enhancement of fMLP-activated  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation, while PMA- or opsonized zymosan(OZ)-activated  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation was strongly inhibited by calyculin A (Fig. 1). We confirmed that the reduction of cytochrome *c* was inhibited by the addition of SOD (data not shown). These distinct effects of calyculin A were previously reported by several investigators (16–19). The enhancement of calyculin A on fMLP-induced  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation may be explained as follows; calyculin A inhibits the dephosphorylation of  $\text{p}47^{\text{phox}}$ , resulting in the maintenance of the phosphorylation state of  $\text{p}47^{\text{phox}}$ , which delays the termination of NADPH oxidase, while in the absence of calyculin A the phosphorylated  $\text{p}47^{\text{phox}}$  induced by fMLP- was rapidly dephosphorylated within 3 min, as previously suggested by Badwey *et al.* (30). Calyculin A inhibited the  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation by PMA- and OZ-

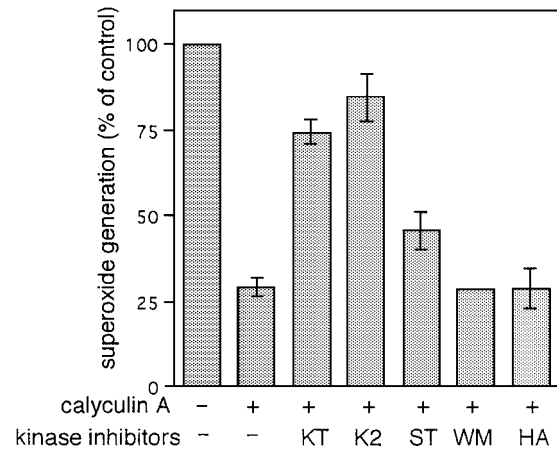


**Fig. 2. Effect of calyculin A on O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation by PMA- and OZ-activated human neutrophils.** Neutrophils were preincubated at 37°C for 10 min with various concentrations of calyculin A, and then activated with 0.1 µg/ml PMA (solid circles) or 1.25 mg/ml OZ (open circles). Each value was obtained by determination of the maximum velocity from cytochrome c reduction rate. The results are expressed as percentages of control values in the absence of an inhibitor. Data values represent the means ± SE for four experiments.

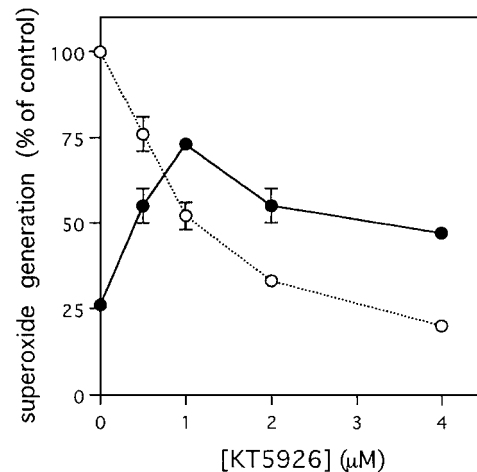
activated neutrophils in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 2). In the absence of calyculin A, neutrophils generated 60.9 ± 2.9 and 41.2 ± 7.9 (mean ± SE for 15 and 4 experiments, respectively) nmol O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>/min/10<sup>7</sup> cells in response to PMA and OZ, respectively. These results suggest that inhibition of the dephosphorylation of some protein(s) prevents the PMA- and OZ-induced activation of NADPH oxidase. Suzuki *et al.* reported that dephosphorylation of cofilin, an actin-binding protein, may be involved in the OZ-induced activation of NADPH oxidase (22). However, cofilin dephosphorylation did not occur during the PMA-induced activation of NADPH oxidase by PMA (22). Therefore, we examined the mechanism of the inhibitory effect of calyculin A on PMA-activated O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation.

**Antagonistic Effects of Kinase Inhibitors on Calyculin A-Dependent Inhibition of O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> Generation by Neutrophils—**Next, we attempted to antagonize the inhibitory effect of calyculin A with kinase inhibitors such as KT5926, K-252a, staurosporine, wortmannin and herbimycin A. KT5926 and K-252a effectively restored the calyculin A-induced inhibition of O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation by PMA-activated neutrophils (Fig. 3). Staurosporin partially restored the calyculin A-dependent inhibition. Wortmannin and tyrosine kinase inhibitor herbimycin A were not effective. Among these kinase inhibitors, which were effective as to antagonization of the inhibition by calyculin A, KT5926 is a specific myosin light chain kinase and Ca<sup>2+</sup>/calmodulin-dependent protein kinase II inhibitor, whereas K-252a exhibits a broad inhibitory spectrum (31–33). Therefore, we focused on the KT5926-dependent antagonization of the inhibitory effect of calyculin A. KT5926 also restored the calyculin A-induced inhibition of O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation by OZ-activated neutrophils (data not shown).

Whereas the inhibitory effect of calyculin A was reversed by KT5926 as an antagonist, in the absence of calyculin A, KT5926 inhibited the PMA-activated O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>

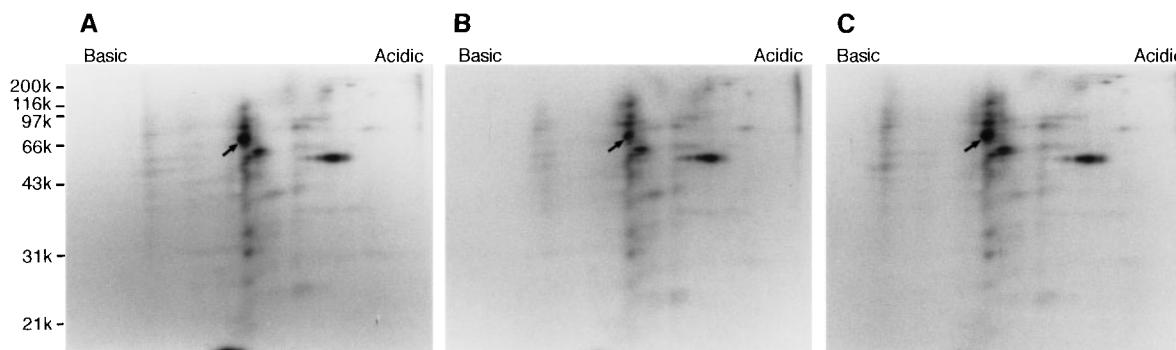


**Fig. 3. Antagonism of calyculin A-induced inhibition of O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation by kinase inhibitors.** After incubation with 100 nM calyculin A plus DMSO (-), 1 µM KT5926 (KT), 1 µM K-252a (K2), 50 nM staurosporine (ST), 10 µM wortmannin (WM), or 1.74 µM herbimycin A (HA) for 10 min, neutrophils were stimulated with 0.1 µg/ml PMA. Each value was obtained by determination of the maximum velocity from cytochrome c reduction rate. The results are expressed as percentages of control values in the absence of an inhibitor. Data columns represent the means ± SE for three to six experiments.



**Fig. 4. Effects of KT5926 and calyculin A on O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation by human neutrophils.** Neutrophils were treated with various concentrations of KT5926 in the presence (solid circles) or absence (open circles) of 100 nM calyculin A for 10 min, and then activated with 0.1 µg/ml PMA. Each value was obtained by determination of the maximum velocity from cytochrome c reduction rate. The results are expressed as percentages of control values in the absence of an inhibitor. Data values represent the means ± SE for three experiments.

generation in a dose-dependent manner. The inhibitory effect of 100 nM calyculin A on O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation was optimally reversed by the addition of 1 µM KT5926 (Fig. 4). On the other hand, when the effects of various concentrations of calyculin A on the PMA-activated O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation were examined, for which the concentration of KT5926 was fixed at 1 µM, O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generating activity was maximum with 100 nM calyculin A (data not shown). Therefore, we hypothesized that there is some protein whose phosphorylation has optimal state for the activation of NADPH



**Fig. 5. Reduction of hyperphosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein by KT5926.**  $^{32}\text{P}$ -loaded neutrophils were incubated with 100 nM calyculin A (A), 100 nM calyculin A plus 1  $\mu\text{M}$  KT5926 (B), or 100 nM calyculin A plus 10  $\mu\text{M}$  wortmannin (C) for 10 min, and then acti-

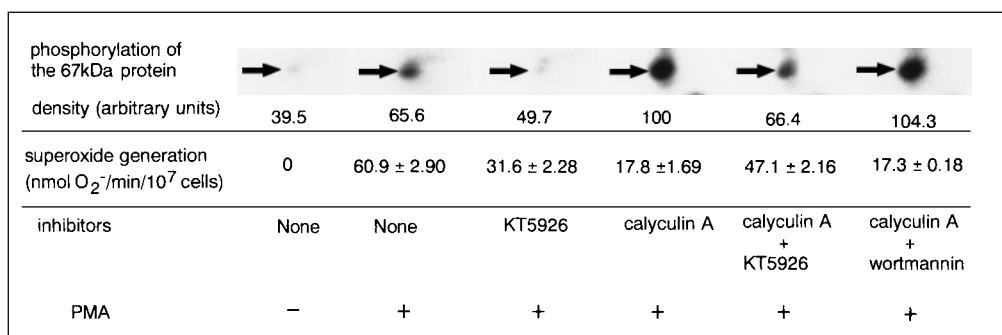
vated with 0.1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$  PMA at 37°C for 2 min as described under "EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES." A portion of the cytosol fraction was subjected to two-dimensional electrophoresis and autoradiography. The arrow in each photograph indicates the 67 kDa protein.

oxidase. In other words, such a protein(s) in an inactive form is phosphorylated to give rise to an active form and further hyperphosphorylated to provide another inactive form.

**Effect of Calyculin A on Protein Phosphorylation—**Next, we identified the protein(s) that was hyperphosphorylated in the presence of calyculin A and whose hyperphosphorylation was inhibited on the addition of KT5926. In the presence of calyculin A, many proteins in the cytosol and membrane fractions prepared from resting neutrophils were heavily phosphorylated (data not shown). It is well-known that wortmannin is an inhibitor of not only PI3 kinase but also myosin light chain kinase (34, 35). Therefore, it is expected that the target kinases of calyculin A and wortmannin may overlap. Since KT5926 but not wortmannin restored the calyculin A-dependent inhibition of  $\text{O}_2^-$  generating activity, it may be useful to analyze the phosphorylation state in the presence of KT5926 as compared to that in the presence of wortmannin.

It should be noted that the calyculin A-induced hyperphosphorylation of cytosolic 67 kDa protein (Fig. 5, arrows) in PMA-activated neutrophils was markedly reduced by KT5926. Several proteins (31 kDa and 34 kDa at similar positions corresponding to the first dimension

position of the 67 kDa protein) were slightly dephosphorylated on the addition of KT5926 in addition to the 67 kDa protein. Whereas dephosphorylation of these proteins was also observed on the addition of wortmannin, phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein was only observed in the presence of KT5926. In the absence of calyculin A, phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein was enhanced on the addition of PMA, and this PMA-dependent enhancement of phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein was reduced by KT5926. The degree of PMA-induced phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein in the absence of calyculin A was very similar to that in the presence of both calyculin A and KT5926 (Fig. 6). On the basis of the results obtained on dye-staining, there was no difference in the protein content of the 67 kDa protein in the cytosol fractions prepared from neutrophils treated with these inhibitors (data not shown). These results suggest that whereas optimal phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein is required for activation of PMA-induced  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation, hyperphosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein by calyculin A may cause inhibition of  $\text{O}_2^-$  generation by PMA-activated neutrophils. Calyculin A also induced the hyperphosphorylation of many membrane proteins, and there was almost no difference in protein phosphorylation between membrane fractions prepared from PMA-acti-



**Fig. 6. Effect of calyculin A, KT5926 and/or wortmannin on  $^{32}\text{P}$ -incorporation into the 67 kDa protein.**  $^{32}\text{P}$ -Loaded neutrophils were preincubated with or without 100 nM calyculin A, 1  $\mu\text{M}$  KT5926 and/or 10  $\mu\text{M}$  wortmannin, and then activated with 0.1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$  PMA as described under "EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES." As a con-

trol, cells were treated with 0.1% DMSO alone. A portion of the cytosolic fraction was subjected to two-dimensional electrophoresis and autoradiography. The arrow in each photograph indicates the 67 kDa protein. The relative level of  $^{32}\text{P}$ -incorporation into the 67 kDa protein was determined by densitometric analysis.

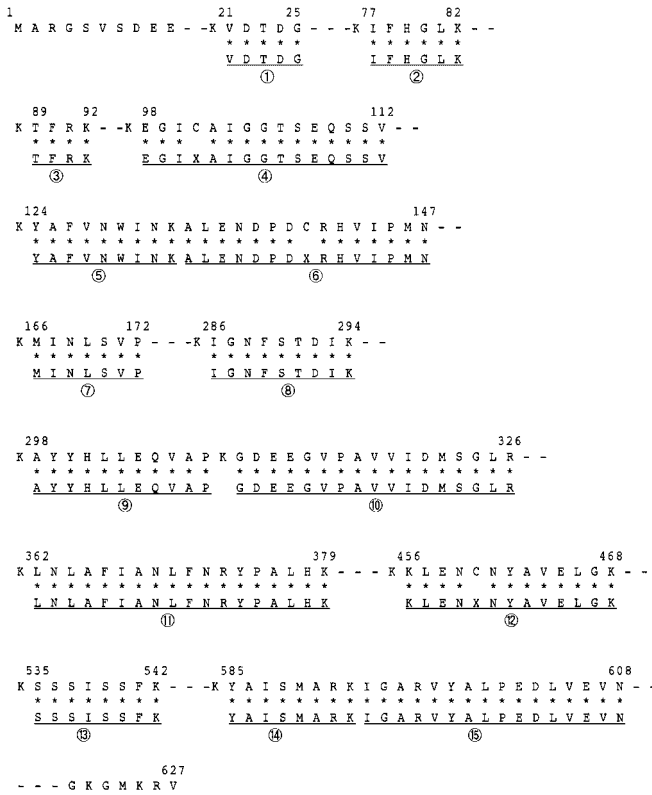


Fig. 7. Alignment of the sequences of 15 peptides derived from the 67 kDa protein with the amino acid sequence of human L-plastin. The asterisks indicate the identical amino acids in the peptides and human L-plastin. X denotes an unidentified amino acid.

vated neutrophils treated with calyculin A alone, and with both calyculin A and KT5926 (data not shown).

The phosphorylation of p47<sup>phox</sup> is known to be a key step in the activation of NADPH oxidase. The effect of calyculin A on the phosphorylation of p47<sup>phox</sup> in the membrane fraction of PMA-activated neutrophils was compared in the presence and absence of calyculin A. In the presence of calyculin A, the phosphorylation state of p47<sup>phox</sup> in the membrane fraction was not correlated with the activation of NADPH oxidase (data not shown).

**Protein Sequence Analysis of the 67 kDa Protein**—To clarify whether or not the p67 kDa protein is p67<sup>phox</sup>, we examined the anti-p67<sup>phox</sup> antibody reactive spot by means of Western blotting after two-dimensional gel electrophoresis. The 67 kDa protein was well separated from the immunoreactive spot of p67<sup>phox</sup> (data not shown).

To identify the 67 kDa protein, we determined its amino acid sequence. Proteolytic fragments of the 67 kDa protein were prepared by *in gel*-digestion with lysyl endopeptidase and subsequent fractionation by high performance liquid chromatography. The peptides obtained (Fig. 7) were analyzed by the automated Edman degradation method. Fifteen individual peptides were found to align with human L-plastin (36). It was noted that no other sequence except for that of L-plastin was obtained, indicating that the 67 kDa protein spot contained only L-plastin.

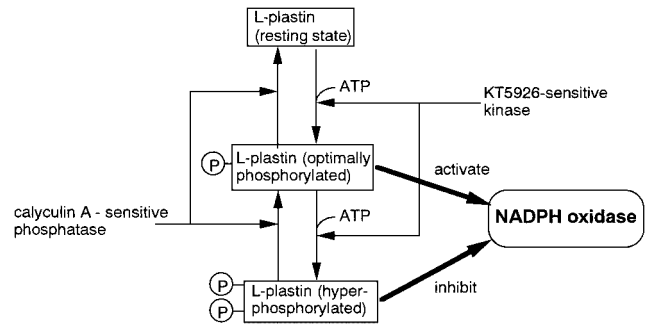


Fig. 8. Schematic representation of the role of L-plastin in the activation of NADPH oxidase. Whereas L-plastin is not phosphorylated in resting cells, PMA activates directly or indirectly a KT5926-sensitive kinase, which causes the phosphorylation of L-plastin. Optimally phosphorylated L-plastin may play some important role in the PMA-dependent activation of NADPH oxidase. The addition of calyculin A results in the inhibition of L-plastin phosphatase, which causes the hyperphosphorylation of L-plastin. Hyperphosphorylated L-plastin may be inactive in the activation of NADPH oxidase.

DISCUSSION

The phosphorylation and dephosphorylation cycles for key proteins are very important in many signal transduction pathways. In order to clarify the role of the phosphorylation and dephosphorylation cycles in the activation of NADPH oxidase we examined the effect of calyculin A on the O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> and PMA-dependent activation of human neutrophils. Calyculin A inhibited the PMA- and O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup>-induced activation of NADPH oxidase in a dose-dependent manner. We hypothesized that some protein(s), which plays a key role in the activation of NADPH oxidase, may be hyperphosphorylated by calyculin A through the inhibition of phosphatase, type 1 or 2A. Therefore, using various kinase inhibitors, we antagonized the calyculin A-induced inhibition of O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> generation by PMA-stimulated neutrophils. K-252a and KT5926 effectively restored the inhibition by calyculin A. While K-252a can inhibit a variety of protein kinases (33), KT5926 is reported to inhibit myosin light chain kinase and Ca<sup>2+</sup>/calmodulin-dependent protein kinase II selectively (31, 32). The finding that KT5926 inhibited the PMA-stimulated activation of NADPH oxidase in the absence of calyculin A also suggests that KT5926-sensitive kinase or its downstream kinase may phosphorylate some protein that plays a key role in PMA-induced activation of NADPH oxidase.

We tried to identify the proteins that were hyperphosphorylated by calyculin A, but were not hyperphosphorylated in the presence of both calyculin A and KT5926. Two-dimensional gel electrophoresis of phosphoproteins revealed that many proteins were hyperphosphorylated on the addition of calyculin A. However, the calyculin A-induced hyperphosphorylation state of the 67 kDa cytosolic protein of PMA-activated neutrophils was clearly reduced by KT5926. In addition to the 67 kDa protein, the calyculin A-induced hyperphosphorylation of several other cytosolic proteins was slightly reduced on the addition of KT5926. Whereas dephosphorylation of these proteins was also observed on the addition of wortmannin, dephosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein was

only observed in the presence of KT5926. In the absence of calyculin A, PMA rapidly phosphorylated this 67 kDa protein, but the extent of phosphorylation was markedly lower than that in the presence of calyculin A. In the absence of calyculin A, KT5926 markedly reduced the PMA-induced phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein, coinciding with the KT5926-dependent inhibition of  $O_2^-$  generation. These results suggest that PMA-induced phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein, which is catalyzed by a KT5926-sensitive kinase, is required for the activation of NADPH oxidase. The hyperphosphorylated 67 kDa protein, which is provoked by the inhibition of calyculin A-sensitive phosphatase, prevents the PMA-induced activation of NADPH oxidase. KT5926 may reduce the calyculin A-induced hyperphosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein to the same level as that induced by PMA alone, resulting in the restoration of calyculin A-induced inhibition of NADPH oxidase. Therefore, the optimal phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein may be indispensable for the PMA-stimulated activation of NADPH oxidase (Fig. 8).

Analysis of the amino acid sequences of 15 peptides derived from the 67 kDa protein clearly indicated that the 67 kDa protein is L-plastin, an actin-bundling protein (37). A variety of agents are capable of stimulating L-plastin phosphorylation in leukocytes, including IL-1, IL-2, tumor necrosis factor, lipopolysaccharide, IL-8, immune complexes and PMA (20, 36, 38–43). Jones and Brown (44) proposed that L-plastin plays an important role in cell adhesion and phagocytosis. In the present paper, we propose that L-plastin plays a key role in the PMA-dependent activation of NADPH oxidase. This is the first report suggesting a role for L-plastin on the activation of NADPH oxidase. It has been reported that the PMA-induced activation of NADPH oxidase is coupled with phosphorylation of the 67 kDa protein, which is not p67<sup>phox</sup> (45). Judging from our present data, this 67 kDa protein may be identical to L-plastin. On the other hand, several reports (46–51) suggested that NADPH oxidase activity could be modulated by cytoskeletal elements. Shinomiya *et al.* (40) reported that the phosphorylation site(s) of mouse L-plastin may be located in the N-terminal region(s) (serine 5 or serine 7), but they failed to determine which serine residue (Ser-5 or Ser-7) was phosphorylated. Jones *et al.* reported that the phosphoserine at position 5 is the major site of phosphorylation in L-plastin (52). We failed to determine the N-terminal sequence of the 67 kDa protein, so it remains unclear which sites of L-plastin were phosphorylated in the presence or absence of calyculin A. We are now going to explore the hyperphosphorylation site(s) in L-plastin by tandem mass spectrometry.

Furthermore, it will be of interest to determine how phosphorylated L-plastin interacts with NADPH oxidase components or the upstream components of the NADPH oxidase activation pathway. Immunoprecipitates prepared with anti-p47<sup>phox</sup> polyclonal antibodies contained p67<sup>phox</sup>, but not L-plastin (data not shown). We failed to prove any interaction with p67<sup>phox</sup> or p47<sup>phox</sup> with L-plastin in neutrophils treated with PMA or various inhibitors. Therefore, we suspect that L-plastin plays an important role in the PMA-dependent activation of NADPH oxidase through the modulation of other molecule(s).

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