

## Regulation of adaptor protein GIT1 in platelets, leading to the interaction between GIT1 and integrin $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$

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### Abstract

GIT1 is an adaptor protein, which links signaling proteins to focal adhesion, thereby regulating cytoskeletal reorganization. Platelets undergo dynamic cytoskeletal reorganization during platelet activation, for which a large number of adaptor proteins are required. However, there has been no report of GIT1 in platelets. We found that GIT1 was abundantly expressed in platelets and underwent tyrosine phosphorylation downstream of integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , which was inhibited by the Src kinase inhibitor PP2. Furthermore, GIT1 constitutively associated with  $\beta$ PIX, a guanine nucleotide exchange factor (GEF) for Rac. The GIT1/ $\beta$ PIX complex associated with  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , concomitantly with GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation. Moreover, both GIT1 and  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  rapidly translocated to the cytoskeletal fraction during platelet aggregation, which was not observed in the absence of aggregation. These results suggest that tyrosine phosphorylation of GIT1 by Src kinases may regulate cytoskeletal reorganization downstream of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  by bringing the Rac GEF  $\beta$ PIX to the vicinity of the integrin.

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Platelets play a critical role in physiological hemostasis and pathological thrombus formation. Platelet activation is an integrated process involving subendothelial matrix proteins, including collagen and laminin, and soluble agonists such as thrombin, ADP, and thromboxane  $A_2$  [1]. These agonists bind to their receptors in platelets and generate inside-out activation signals, which result in activation of integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ . Activation of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  by ‘inside-out’ signals leads to binding of fibrinogen and platelet aggregation. In turn, clustering of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  as a consequence of engagement of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  by fibrinogen mediates ‘outside-in’ signals that stimulate tyrosine phosphorylation of  $\beta_3$  integrin tail [2] and activation of a Src-based signaling cascade [3] that involves Syk [4,5], SLP-76 [6], and PLC $\gamma$ 2 [7,8]. These outside-in signals have been shown to be essential

for platelet spreading (lamellipodia formation) on fibrinogen [3,7,8].

Adaptor proteins play important roles in transducing both inside-out and outside-in signals in platelets. Adaptor proteins lack intrinsic activity, yet possess a range of modular domains that facilitate protein–protein and protein–lipid interactions. A large number of adaptor proteins have been described in platelets, including LAT, SLP-76, Grb2, Gab2 [9], SLAP-130, Cas [10], and recently identified Dok1/2 [11]. Some of these adaptor proteins undergo tyrosine phosphorylation, which results in creation of new-binding sites for signaling molecules.

An adaptor protein, GIT1 (G protein-coupled receptor kinase interacting protein 1) is a multidomain protein that has an N-terminal ARF GTPase-activating protein (ARF-GAP) domain, three ankyrin (ANK) repeats, a Spa2-homology domain (SHD), a coiled-coil domain and a paxillin-binding site (PBS) [12]. GIT1 is a GTPase-activating protein for the ADP-ribosylation factor family of small GTP-binding proteins [13], and also regulates cytoskeletal

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reorganization by serving as an adaptor to link signaling proteins to distinct cellular locations. GIT1 tightly forms complex with  $\beta$ PIX (p21-activated kinase interacting exchange factor), which is a guanine nucleotide exchange factor for Rac, a small GTP-binding protein [14]. By binding to molecules having distinct cellular localizations, such as paxillin/Hic-5, liprin- $\alpha$ , or shank, the GIT/PIX complex can be transiently localized to many parts of the cell, including focal adhesions, membrane ruffles, intracellular vesicles, regulating cell motility, lamellipodia formation, and vesicular transport [15–18]. GIT1 has been reported to undergo tyrosine phosphorylation during cell spreading on extracellular matrix by the tyrosine kinases Src and FAK [19–21]. However, a role of GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation for cellular responses has not been elucidated to date.

Although platelets undergo dynamic cytoskeletal reorganization upon activation and a number of adaptor proteins are required for platelet activation, the role of GIT1 in platelet activation has not been elucidated to date. In this study, we demonstrate that GIT1 is constitutively associates with the Rac GEF  $\beta$ PIX, and the complex associates with integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , concomitantly with GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation. We propose that GIT1 may recruit the Rac GEF  $\beta$ PIX in the vicinity of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , regulating lamellipodia formation downstream of integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ .

## Materials and methods

**Antibodies and reagents.** Rhodocytin was kindly donated by Prof. Takashi Morita (Meiji Pharmaceutical University, Tokyo, Japan). Goat anti-GIT1 antibody, rabbit anti- $\beta$ PIX antibody, mouse anti-integrin  $\beta_3$  antibody were from Santa Cruz (CA, USA). Mouse anti-phosphotyrosine antibody (4G10) was obtained from Millipore (MA, USA). Mouse anti-GIT1 antibody was from Becton–Dickinson. (NJ, USA). Gly-Arg-Gly-Asp-Ser (GRGDS) peptide was purchased from Peptide Institute (Osaka, Japan). Thrombin receptor agonist peptide: TRAP (Ser-Phe-Leu-Leu-Arg-Asn: SFLLRN peptide) was from Bachem Biochemica (Heidelberg, Germany). Convulxin was obtained from Pentapharm (Basel, Switzerland). Fibrinogen was purchased from Sigma–Aldrich (St. Louis, USA). PP2 and Syk inhibitor were from Calbiochem (Bad Soden, Germany).

**Platelet preparation.** Venous blood from healthy drug-free volunteers was taken into 10% sodium citrate. This study was approved by the Ethical Committees in University of Yamanashi and informed consent was provided according to the Declaration of Helsinki. Washed human platelets were obtained by centrifugation as previously described [22]. Washed platelets were resuspended in modified Tyrode buffer [22] at a cell density of  $1 \times 10^9$ /ml or  $5 \times 10^8$ /ml.

**Immunoprecipitation and Western blotting.** Washed human platelets ( $1 \times 10^9$ /ml) were incubated with or without 1 mM GRGDS peptide, 10  $\mu$ M PP2 (a Src kinase inhibitor), 10  $\mu$ M Syk inhibitor, 10  $\mu$ M indomethacin, or 100 nM wortmannin at 37 °C. Then, they were stimulated by 100  $\mu$ M TRAP, 250 ng/ml convulxin, or 50 nM rhodocytin for indicated durations of time. Reactions were terminated by addition of 2 $\times$  ice-cold lysis buffer containing 2% nonidet P-40 [22]. Platelet lysates were pre-cleared and detergent-insoluble debris was cleared as described [22]. GIT1,  $\beta$ PIX, or integrin  $\beta_3$  was immunoprecipitated by addition of anti-GIT1,  $\beta$ PIX, or integrin  $\beta_3$  antibody together with protein G. Precipitated proteins were separated by 8% sodium dodecyl sulfate–polyacrylamide gel (SDS–PAGE), electrotransferred, and Western blotted by the indicated antibodies.

**Platelet adhesion assay.** Tissue culture plates (10 cm) were coated with 200  $\mu$ g/ml fibrinogen or phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) at 4 °C overnight. After washing twice with PBS, the plates were blocked with 1% bovine serum albumin in PBS for 2 h at room temperature and washed twice with modified Tyrodes buffer before incubation with 500  $\mu$ l washed platelets ( $5 \times 10^8$ /ml) at 37 °C for 1 h. Five hundred microliters of 2 $\times$  ice-cold lysis buffer was added to the plates without removing unbound platelets. Immunoprecipitation and Western blotting were performed as described above.

**Platelet subcellular fractions.** Human washed platelets ( $1 \times 10^9$ /ml) were stimulated by 100  $\mu$ M TRAP in the presence or absence of 1 mM GRGDS. Reactions were terminated by addition of 2 $\times$  ice-cold lysis buffer containing Triton X-100 instead of NP-40. The cytoskeleton fraction (CS) was isolated by centrifugation of the lysate at 15,000g for 10 min. The membrane skeleton fraction (MS) was separated from the resultant supernatant by centrifugation at 100,000g for 3 h with a Himac CS 100 FX (Hitachi Koki Co., Tokyo, Japan). The pellets (CS and MS) were solubilized with 1 $\times$  SDS sample buffer. For analysis of cytosol fraction (CY), the final supernatant was solubilized with 4 $\times$  SDS sample buffer. The proteins were separated by 8% SDS–PAGE. GIT1 and integrin  $\beta_3$  in each fraction was detected by Western blotting.

## Results and discussion

### *GIT1 is tyrosine-phosphorylated downstream of $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ in platelets*

Since there has been no previous report addressing the presence of GIT1 in human platelets, we initially investigated whether GIT1 is present in platelets. We demonstrated the presence of GIT1 in both murine and human platelets as well as in rat testis as previously reported [23] (Fig. 1A). It has been reported that GIT1 is tyrosine-phosphorylated in growing NIH 3T3 fibroblasts, and the phosphorylation is increased following cell spreading on fibronectin [19]. We next examined whether GIT1 undergoes tyrosine phosphorylation upon platelet activation, by way of immunoprecipitation and Western blotting for phosphotyrosine. Both thrombin receptor agonist peptide (TRAP) and convulxin, a specific agonist for the collagen receptor glycoprotein (GP) VI, induced tyrosine phosphorylation of GIT1 at 30 s–2 min, which was maintained until 5 min after stimulation (Fig. 1B). Since not only inside-out signals from GPVI or thrombin receptor, but also subsequent outside-in signals from integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  activate tyrosine kinases, we next investigated whether GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation occurs downstream of GPVI, thrombin receptor, and/or the integrin. Pretreatment of platelets with GRGDS before stimulation blocks fibrinogen binding to  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , thereby inhibiting outside-in signals downstream of the integrin, but not inside-out signals from the agonist receptors. GRGDS completely inhibited tyrosine phosphorylation of GIT1 induced by TRAP, convulxin, or the snake toxin rhodocytin that generates tyrosine kinase-dependent signals through recently identified c-type lectin-like receptor 2 (CLEC-2) [24] (Fig. 1C). These findings suggest that GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation is located in the process of outside-in signals downstream of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , but not in the process of inside-out signals downstream of thrombin receptor, GPVI, or CLEC-2. This is a charac-

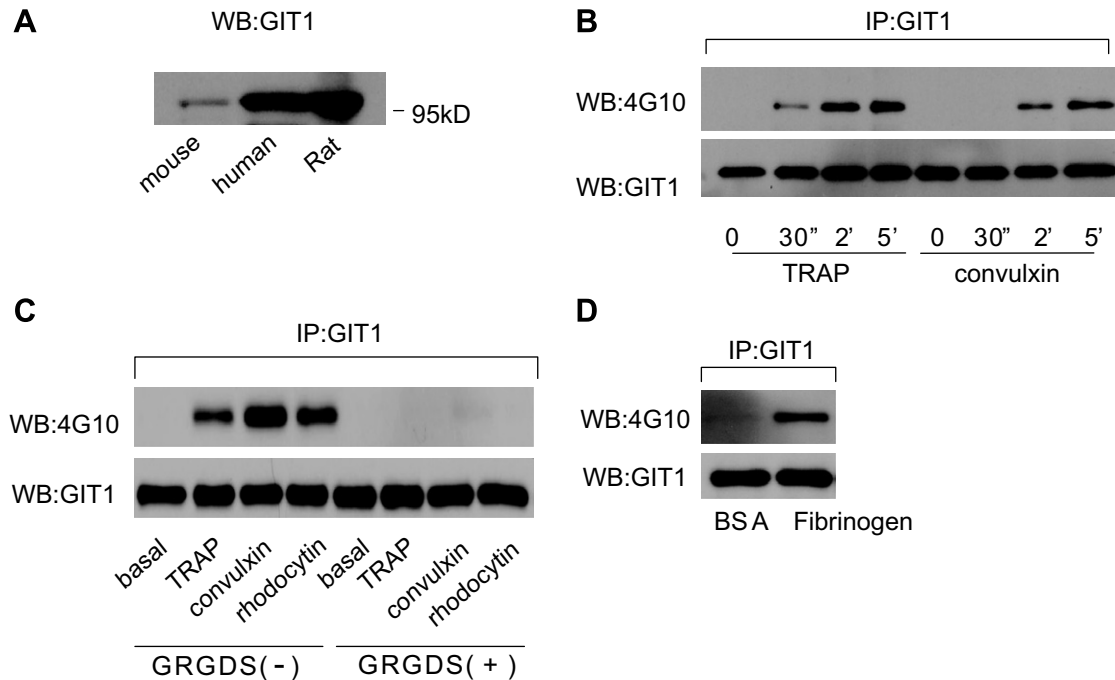


Fig. 1. GIT1 is tyrosine-phosphorylated depending on platelet aggregation. (A) Whole cell lysates of human platelets, murine platelets, and rat testis were separated by 8% SDS-PAGE, electrotransferred, and blotted with anti-GIT1 antibody. (B) Washed human platelets stimulated with 100  $\mu$ M TRAP or 250 ng/ml of convulxin. At indicated time points, the reactions were terminated by addition of 2 $\times$  lysis buffer. GIT1 was immunoprecipitated and immunoblotted with anti-phosphotyrosine antibody (4G10) or anti-GIT1 antibody. (C) Washed human platelets were preincubated with or without GRGDS (1 mM), and then stimulated with TRAP (100  $\mu$ M), convulxin (250 ng/ml), or rhodocytin (50 nM) for 2 min. GIT1 was immunoprecipitated and immunoblotted with anti-phosphotyrosine antibody (4G10) or anti-GIT1 antibody. (D) Five hundred microliters of washed human platelets ( $5 \times 10^8$ /ml) were seeded on fibrinogen-coated plates for 1 h at 37  $^{\circ}$ C. The same amount of 2 $\times$  ice-cold lysis buffer was added to the plates without removing unbound platelets. GIT1 was immunoprecipitated and immunoblotted with anti-phosphotyrosine antibody (4G10) and anti-GIT1 antibody. The data were representative of at least two experiments.

teristic unique to GIT1, as most of the signaling molecules including Syk, SLP-76, and PLC $\gamma$ 2, undergo tyrosine phosphorylation downstream of both the integrin and GPVI, with the exception of LAT, which is not phosphorylated downstream of the integrin [1].

To further confirm tyrosine phosphorylation of GIT1 downstream of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , we utilized immobilized fibrinogen that generates outside-in activation through the integrin without inside-out activation mediated by agonist receptors. Immobilized fibrinogen stimulated tyrosine phosphorylation of GIT1, further confirming that GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation is mediated by  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  (Fig. 1D). Since we could induce GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation more steadily by soluble agonists than by immobilized fibrinogen, we used TRAP to simulate platelets in the experiments, hereafter.

#### *GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation is dependent on Src kinases*

The contributions of Src kinases and Syk to GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation were evaluated, as both kinases are crucial in generating activation signals downstream of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ . The Src kinase inhibitor PP2, but not Syk inhibitor, almost completely inhibited an increase in GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation (Fig. 2). Combination of PP2 and Syk

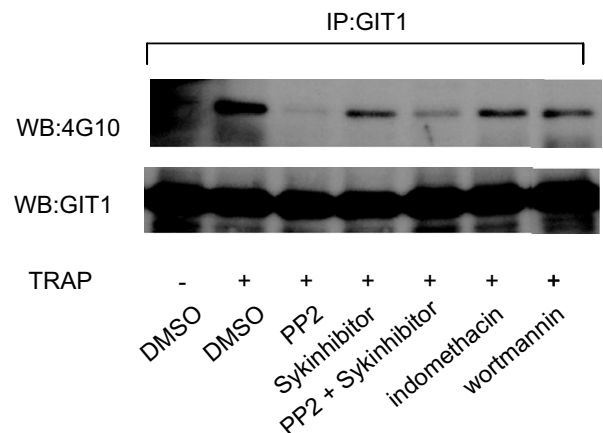


Fig. 2. Phosphorylation of GIT1 is dependent on Src kinases. Washed human platelets were preincubated with DMSO, 10  $\mu$ M PP2, 10  $\mu$ M Syk inhibitor, PP2 plus Syk inhibitor, 10  $\mu$ g/ml indomethacin, or 100 nM wortmannin. Then, they were stimulated with 100  $\mu$ M TRAP for 3 min before the reactions were terminated by addition of 2 $\times$  lysis buffer. GIT1 was immunoprecipitated and immunoblotted with anti-phosphotyrosine antibody (4G10) or anti-GIT1 antibody. The data were representative of at least two experiments.

inhibitor did not result in further inhibition of the phosphorylation compared with PP2 alone (Fig. 2). These findings suggest that GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation is almost

dependent on Src kinases. We further investigated whether the secondary feedback agonist, thromboxane A<sub>2</sub> and the second messenger pathway, PI3-kinase regulate tyrosine phosphorylation of GIT1. Thromboxane A<sub>2</sub> and PI3-kinase play a role in potentiation of activation signals mediated through both inside-out and outside-in pathway. Fig. 2 showed that the cyclooxygenase inhibitor indomethacin and the broad-spectrum inhibitor of PI3-kinase wortmannin had only marginal inhibitory effect on GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation. Importantly, these inhibitors did not inhibit platelet aggregation induced by TRAP (data not shown). These findings, taken together, suggest that GIT1 is tyrosine-phosphorylated downstream of integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  by Src kinases.

*GIT1 forms complex with  $\beta$ PIX and associated with integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  concomitantly with GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation*

Recent study indicated that GIT1 forms oligomers with the Rac GEF  $\beta$ PIX and the oligomers are recruited to focal complexes regulating cytoskeletal dynamics [12]. We examined whether GIT1 associates with  $\beta$ PIX in platelets by immunoprecipitation and Western blotting. GIT1 constitutively associated with  $\beta$ PIX, irrespective of platelet stimulation with TRAP or  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  blockade by GRGDS (Fig. 3A).

Further, GIT1/ $\beta$ PIX complex associated with  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  during platelet aggregation, which was inhibited by GRGDS (Fig. 3A). The interaction between GIT1/ $\beta$ PIX complex and  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  appears to be dependent on outside-in signaling downstream of  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  and may be mediated by phosphorylation of GIT1 and/or  $\beta_3$ . However, another signaling molecule may be required for association between GIT1/ $\beta$ PIX complex and  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , since both GIT1/ $\beta$ PIX and  $\beta_3$  lack a phosphotyrosine-binding motif.

We next examined the subcellular distribution of GIT1 and integrin  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  in relevance to cytoskeletal reorganization. The platelet cytoskeleton contains two actin filament-based components. One is the cytoplasmic actin filaments (cytoskeleton fraction) that fill the cytoplasm and mediate contractile events. The other is the membrane skeleton (membrane skeleton), which coats the plasma membrane and regulates the membrane contours and stability. Upon platelet aggregation, it has been reported that  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  associated with cytoplasmic actin [25]. As was reported previously, integrin  $\beta_3$  existed in the cytosol and membrane cytoskeletal fraction and then, translocated to the cytoskeleton fraction during platelet aggregation, which was completely inhibited under non-aggregating conditions (Fig. 3B). GIT1 was detected mainly in membrane cytoskeleton fractions in the resting state. Concomitantly with

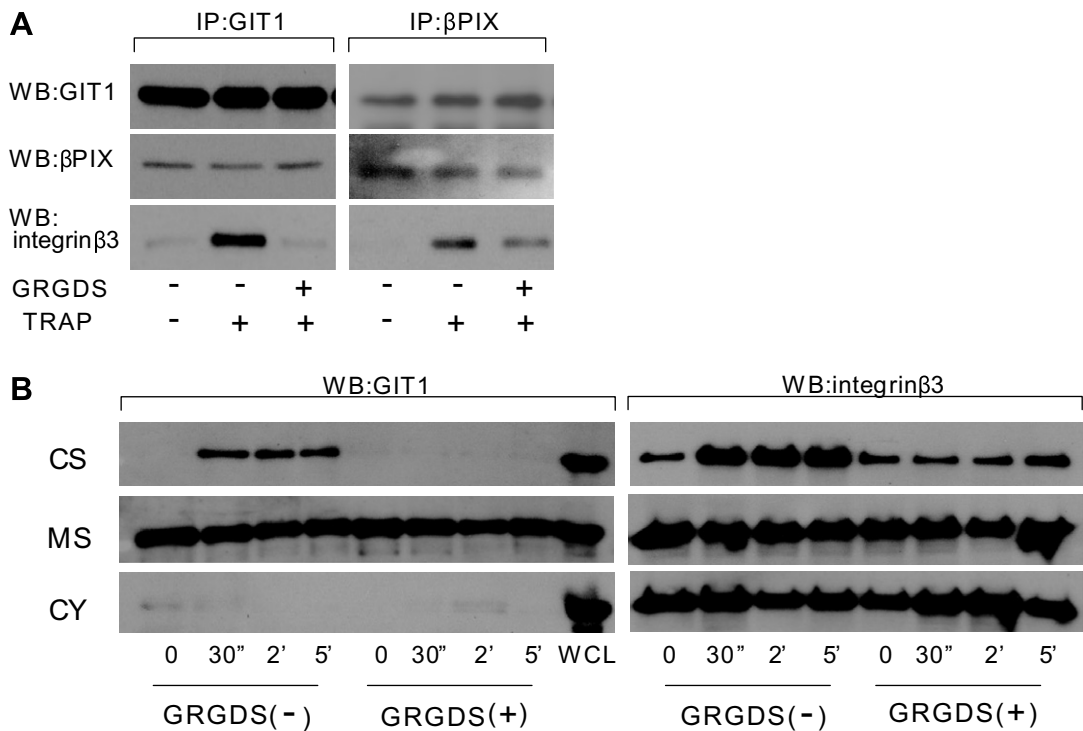


Fig. 3. GIT1/ $\beta$ PIX complex associated with  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  and translocated to the cytoskeleton fraction depending on platelet aggregation. (A) Washed human platelets were preincubated with or without GRGDS (1 mM), and then stimulated with TRAP (100  $\mu$ M) for 2 min. Reactions were terminated by the addition of an equal volume of 2 $\times$  lysis buffer. GIT1,  $\beta$ PIX, and integrin  $\beta_3$  were immunoprecipitated, separated by SDS-PAGE, and blotted with the indicated antibodies. (B) Washed human platelets were preincubated with or without GRGDS (1 mM), and then stimulated with TRAP (100  $\mu$ M) for various time periods as indicated. Reactions were terminated by addition of 2 $\times$  ice-cold lysis buffer containing Triton X-100. Cytoskeleton fraction (CS), membrane skeleton fraction (MS), and cytosol fraction (CY) were separated as described in Materials and methods. The proteins were separated by SDS-PAGE. GIT1 and integrin  $\beta_3$  in each fraction was detected by Western blotting. WCL indicates whole cell lysates. The data were representative of at least three experiments.



integrin  $\beta_3$ , GIT1 rapidly translocated to the cytoskeleton fraction after platelet aggregation, which was completely inhibited by GRGDS (Fig. 3B). These findings are in agreement with the finding that GIT1 associated with  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$  depending on platelet aggregation, when GIT1 undergoes tyrosine phosphorylation. Translocation of GIT1 to cytoskeleton fraction also suggests a role of GIT1 for cytoskeletal reorganization during platelet aggregation.

These data, taken together, suggest that GIT1 constitutively forms complex with  $\beta$ PIX and the complex is associated with  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , depending on platelet aggregation and GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation by Src kinases. We speculate that GIT1 tyrosine phosphorylation leads to recruitment of the Rac GEF  $\beta$ PIX to  $\alpha_{IIb}\beta_3$ , thereby promoting lamellipodia formation through Rac activation downstream of the integrin. Alternatively, it may be possible that the complex inhibits lamellipodia formation due to inhibition of Rac activity by GIT1 ARF-GAP activity [26]. Further investigation is required for addressing this issue.

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