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Identification of PI^{AI} alloantigen domain on a 66 kDa protein derived from glycoprotein IIIa of human platelets

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Incubation of platelets with chymotrypsin leads to the exposure of fibrinogen receptors and to the appearance of a 66 kDa membrane component on the surface of platelets. Both glycoprotein IIIa (GP IIIa) and a 66 kDa component were precipitated from detergent extracts of solubilized, surface radiolabeled chymotrypsin-treated platelets by human anti- PI^{AI} antisera. Moreover, the presence of the PI^{AI} antigen was identified on GP IIIa (but not on GP IIb) and on a 66 kDa protein by means of immunoblot procedures using platelet Triton X-114 extracts and these purified proteins. Anti- PI^{AI} antiserum did not recognize GP IIIa on the surface of intact (untreated) platelets nor the 66 kDa protein on the surface of chymotrypsin-treated platelets of PI^{AI} -negative individuals. The present data demonstrate directly that the 66 kDa protein is derived from GP IIIa and contains the PI^{AI} alloantigen.

Introduction

The PI^{AI} antigen, which is detected on the platelet surface in 98% of the population [1], is the most critical platelet alloantigen in the development of post transfusion purpura and in neonatal alloimmune thrombocytopenic purpura. The majority of patients with these syndromes have been shown to be PI^{AI} negative and to have anti- PI^{AI} antibodies in their plasma [2–4].

The PI^{AI} antigen has been shown to be expressed on glycoprotein IIIa [5–8]. Kunicki and

Aster [9] and Kunicki et al. [10] reported that genes controlling expression of GP IIb/GP IIIa and PI^{AI} antigen activity are most likely not identical and that thrombasthenic platelets are phenotypically PI^{AI} null because they lack the glycoprotein carrier (GP IIIa) upon which these alloantigenic determinants are normally expressed. Similar observations were reported by Van Leeuwen et al. [11].

Our previous studies have demonstrated that treatment of platelets with chymotrypsin or pronase leads to the exposure of fibrinogen receptors [12] and to the appearance of a 66 kDa platelet membrane component on the surface of platelets [13]. We observed a direct correlation between the exposure of a 66 kDa protein and enhanced fibrinogen-induced platelet aggregation and fibrinogen binding to proteolytically-treated platelets [13].

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In order to further investigate the origin of the 66 kDa protein, we studied the interaction of human anti-PI^{AI} antisera with membrane components of proteolytically-treated platelets and with isolated components of platelet membranes. Our study indicates that the PI^{AI} antigen domain resides on a 66 kDa protein which is derived from GP IIIa by limited proteolysis.

Materials and Methods

1. *Collection of blood.* Blood was taken from healthy individuals who signed informed consent forms approved by Institutional Human Experimentation Committee. PI^{AI}-negative donor was kindly provided by Dr. M. Dahlke, American Red Cross, Philadelphia, PA.

2. *Isolation of platelet suspensions.* Platelets, from blood freshly collected in the anticoagulant acid-citrate dextrose, were washed by the method of Mustard et al. [14] and suspended in Tyrode albumin (0.35%) solution (pH 7.35). Chymotrypsin-treated platelets were prepared as previously described [12,13]. In brief, suspensions of washed platelets (10^9 platelets/ml) were incubated with 500 μ g chymotrypsin per ml (Grade 1S, Sigma Chemical Company, St. Louis), for 45 min at 37°C in the presence of prostaglandin E₁ (10^{-6} M). The chymotrypsin was inhibited with PMSF (25 μ mol/ μ mol enzyme) and eliminated by extensive washing of the platelets in Tyrode solution.

3. *Antisera.* Anti-human platelet membrane antisera were raised in rabbits by injecting platelet membranes isolated from intact platelets or from platelets treated with chymotrypsin or pronase [13]. These antisera blocked fibrinogen-induced platelet aggregation and ¹²⁵I-fibrinogen binding to platelets.

Anti-human PI^{AI} antisera were kindly supplied by Dr. R. Aster, Blood Center of Southeastern Wisconsin, Milwaukee, WI (serum from patient W.), and by Dr. M. Dahlke, American Red Cross, Philadelphia, PA (serum from patient J.). The contamination with antibodies reacting with HLA antigens was insignificant. The IgG fractions of the antisera were prepared by Bio-Rad DEAE-Affi-Gel-Blue column chromatography or ammonium sulfate precipitation. Fab fragments were prepared by papain digestion as described previ-

ously [13]. Anti-human GP IIb antiserum raised in rabbits was kindly supplied by Dr. J.J. Sixma (University Hospital, Utrecht, The Netherlands). Antisera to GP IIIa were raised in our laboratory. The rabbits were injected intradermally with 50 μ g antigen emulsified in complete Freund's adjuvant. The same doses of antigen, suspended in complete Freund's adjuvant, were given during booster injections made every second week.

4. *Iodogen-catalyzed ¹²⁵I-iodination* of intact and chymotrypsin-treated platelets was performed according to Tuszynski et al. [15].

5. *SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis* was performed according to the method of Laemmli [16] in 7.5% polyacrylamide slab gels. The gels were stained for protein with Coomassie brilliant blue, destained in 10% acetic acid, alcohol, dried in vacuum and exposed to Kodak X-Omat R film with DuPont Cronex Lighting Plus intensifying screens for approx. 24 h and developed using a Kodak X-Omat developer.

6. *Immunoblotting.* Completed gels were transferred electrophoretically (6 V/cm for 15 h at 4°C) onto nitrocellulose paper for staining with specific antibody. The transfer buffer contained 25 mM Tris, 192 mM glycine, pH 8.2, 20% v/v methanol [17]. For Amido Black staining, completed transfers were incubated in 0.1% Amido Black in 45% methanol, 10% acetic acid and destained in water. For antibody staining, they were incubated at 20°C on a rocker as follows: 5 min in 0.15 M NaCl, 0.01 M Tris-glycine (pH 8.3), which was the buffer used throughout; 5 min in 0.15% gelatin (Fisons, Loughborough, U.K.) in buffer; 1–2 h in gelatin containing first antibody (IgG or serum); 20 min in several changes of buffer to remove excess first antibody; 1 h in 30 μ l peroxidase-conjugated goat anti-rabbit IgG (Cappel Laboratories, Chester, PA); 20 min in several changes of buffer to remove second antibody; 5 min in substrate solution (10 mg 4-chloro-1-naphthol dissolved in 3 ml methanol and added to 47 ml buffer containing 30 vol. H₂O₂). All volumes were 5–10 ml, the minimum to ensure uniform wetting of the paper. Sensitivity was of the order of 25 ng.

7. *Immunoprecipitation of ¹²⁵I-labeled platelet proteins* by anti-platelet membrane antibodies was performed according to the method of Kessler [18]

with previously described modifications [13,19].

8. *Purification of glycoprotein IIb and glycoprotein IIIa.* Platelet suspensions were prepared from 48 units of outdated platelets. Subsequently, these platelets were lysed with glycerol in the presence of proteolytic enzyme inhibitors, according to Barber and Jamieson [20]; the membrane fractions were isolated by means of sucrose gradient centrifugation. An aliquot (2 ml) of platelet membrane-suspension (3 mg protein/ml) was extracted with Triton X-114 at a final concentration of 1% [21]. GP IIb and GP IIIa were separated in the Triton X-114 phase. Final separation of GP IIb and GP IIIa was achieved by means of preparative SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. GP IIb and GP IIIa bands were cut from the gel and eluted electrophoretically into SDS electrode buffer (pH 8.3), containing 0.1% SDS [22]. The yield of GP IIb and GP IIIa from 1 unit of blood was approx. 100 and 200 μg per 10^{11} platelets, respectively.

9. *Purification of a 66 kDa platelet membrane component.* Platelet suspensions prepared from 12 units of fresh blood were treated with chymotrypsin as described above. The remaining GP IIb and GP IIIa and the newly formed 66 kDa component were extracted with Triton X-114 at a final concentration of 1%. Final separation of a 66 kDa component was achieved by means of preparative SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis [13]. The recovery of 66 kDa component was approx. 50 μg per 10^{11} platelets from 1 unit of blood.

Results

Fig. 1 shows the autoradiogram of SDS-polyacrylamide gels of immunoprecipitates of surface ^{125}I -radiolabeled intact and chymotrypsin-treated platelets with the use of anti-human platelet membrane antisera and anti- PI^{Al} antisera obtained from two patients with post-transfusion purpura. It can be seen that anti-human platelet membrane antisera precipitated GP IIb and GP IIIa from intact platelets. On the other hand, the immunoprecipitates obtained from chymotrypsin-treated platelets contained GP IIb, GP IIIa and a 60 kDa component. Human anti- PI^{Al} antisera immunoprecipitated GP IIIa from intact platelets, whereas both GP IIIa and a kDa protein were immunoprecipitated from chymotrypsin-treated platelets. Both

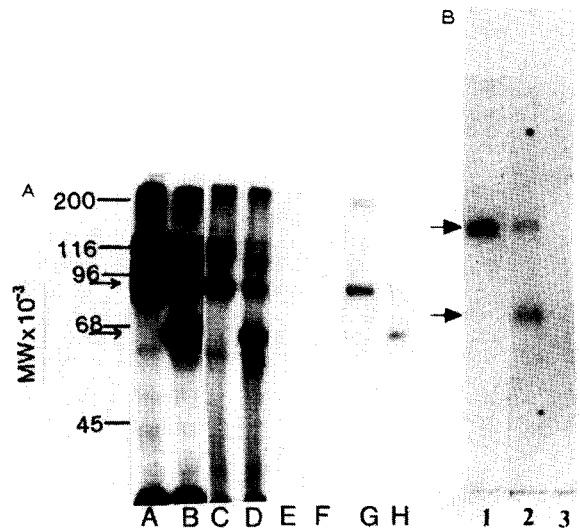


Fig. 1. Autoradiograms showing immunoprecipitation of GP IIIa and a 66000 M_r protein from platelets using human anti- PI^{Al} and anti-human platelet membrane antibodies. (A) Aliquots (10 μl) of detergent solubilized, surface radiolabeled intact and chymotrypsin-treated platelets were incubated with 10 μl of antibody. The immune complexes were precipitated with 100 μl of *Staphylococcus aureus*, solubilized in 1% Triton X-100 and 0.2% SDS and applied without reduction on 7.5% gels for SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. Molecular weight markers are shown on the left. Each sample was analysed in duplicate. A. Total surface protein pattern of intact platelets; B. total surface protein pattern of chymotrypsin-treated platelets; C. immunoprecipitate of intact platelet extracts using rabbit anti-platelet membrane antiserum; D. immunoprecipitate of chymotrypsin-treated platelet extracts using anti-platelet membrane antiserum; E and F. control immunoprecipitates using nonimmune rabbit serum and human IgG, respectively; G. immunoprecipitate of intact platelet extracts using anti- PI^{Al} IgG obtained from the serum of patient W.; H. immunoprecipitate of chymotrypsin-treated platelet extracts using anti- PI^{Al} IgG from patient W. Top arrow indicates position of GP IIIa and bottom arrow indicates position of 66000 M_r protein. (B) The same procedure for radiolabeling and immunoprecipitation were followed as described in (A) above. 1. Immunoprecipitate of radiolabeled intact platelet extracts using anti- PI^{Al} serum from patient J. 2. Immunoprecipitate of radiolabeled chymotrypsin-treated platelet extracts using anti- PI^{Al} serum from patient J. 3. Control immunoprecipitate of radiolabeled chymotrypsin-treated platelet extracts using non-immune-human serum. Top arrow indicates the position of GP IIIa and the bottom arrow indicates the position of the 66 kDa protein.

autoradiograms (Figs. 1A and 1B) show the pattern of migration of membrane proteins in the non-reduced system. In the reduced system, the mobilities of GP IIIa and the 60 kDa component

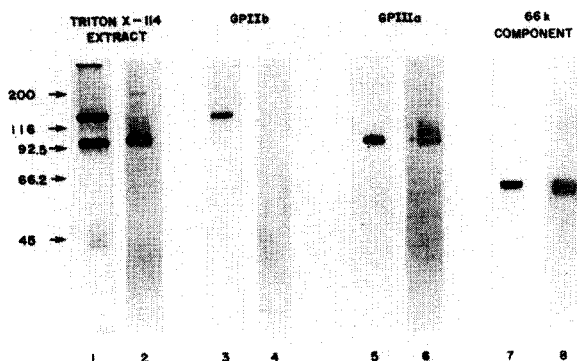


Fig. 2. Identification of PI^{AI} antigen on GP IIIa and 66 kDa components by means of purified protein. Aliquots of 20 μ l of Triton X-114 extracts of human platelet membranes, purified GP IIb, purified GP IIIa and purified 66 kDa component were subject to SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis according to Laemmli [16] in a nonreduced system. The concentration of protein in each sample amounted to 80–100 μ g/ml. Each sample was run in duplicate. After electrophoresis, the gels were either stained with Coomassie blue or the bands were transferred to nitrocellulose paper and stained with antibody as described in Materials and Methods. Lanes 1, 3, 5, 7 show the Coomassie blue protein staining pattern of the following: Triton X-114 extract of platelet membranes, purified GP IIb, purified GP IIIa, and 66000 M_r component, respectively. Numbers 2, 4, 6, 8 indicate immunoblots of the same material stained with anti- PI^{AI} IgG obtained from patient J. The molecular weight markers: myosin (200 kDa), β -galactosidase (116 kDa), phosphorylase (92.5 kDa), bovine serum albumin (66.2 kDa) and ovalbumin (45 kDa) are indicated by the arrows.

were decreased, whereas that of GP IIb was increased. (The apparent molecular weight of the 60 kDa component in a reduced system corresponds to 66000 and we refer to the component in the text as the 66 kDa component.)

In order to directly identify the antigen reacting with the antibody, immunoblotting experiments were carried out. First, purified GP IIb, GP IIIa and the 66 kDa component were analyzed. Fig. 2 shows gels stained with Coomassie blue and the nitrocellulose transfers of these gels stained with anti- PI^{AI} IgG. Both GP IIIa and 66 kDa component contained the PI^{AI} antigen, while GP IIb did not. The GP IIb was transferred onto the nitrocellulose paper since it was detected by Amido Black and by rabbit anti-GP IIb antiserum (data not shown). Moreover, when samples of 125 I-labeled platelet membranes were analyzed, all of the counts corresponding to 125 I-GP IIb (and 125 I-GP IIIa)

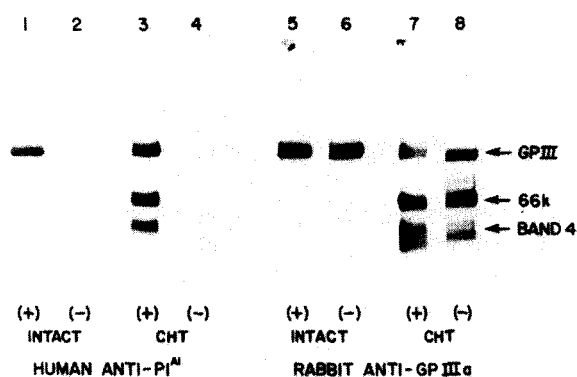


Fig. 3. Identification of PI^{AI} antigen in Triton X-114 extracts of intact or of chymotrypsin-treated platelets of PI^{AI} positive and PI^{AI} negative individuals. Whole platelet lysates (samples 3 and 7) or Triton X-114 extracts (all other samples) were fractionated by SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and resolved proteins were transferred to nitrocellulose paper: lanes 1, 3, 5, 7 represent material obtained from PI^{AI} -positive platelets and lanes 2, 4, 6, 8, material from PI^{AI} -negative platelets. Extracts of intact platelets were shown in lanes 1, 2, 5, 6, and those of chymotrypsin-treated platelets in lanes 3, 4, 7, 8. Lanes 1–4 were stained with human anti- PI^{AI} antiserum and lanes 5–8 with rabbit anti-GP IIIa antiserum. Sample 1 is identical with sample 5, 2 with 6, 3 with 7 and 4 with 8. (+) and (–) indicate PI^{AI} -positive and -negative platelets, respectively. Intact and CHT refer to untreated and chymotrypsin-treated platelets, respectively. For other explanations, refer to Fig. 2.

were recovered on the nitrocellulose transfers of the gel (results not shown). However, GP IIb could not be detected by the anti- PI^{AI} antiserum.

Fig. 3 shows that immunoblotting with anti-GP IIIa antiserum or anti- PI^{AI} antiserum of Triton X-114 extracts of intact or chymotrypsin-treated platelets obtained from a PI^{AI} -positive subject, we detected the presence of both GP IIIa and the 66 kDa component. However, only by means of the anti-GP IIIa serum were these components detectable on the platelet surface of PI^{AI} -negative individuals; anti- PI^{AI} antiserum did not recognize either of these components. In extracts of chymotrypsin-treated platelets, both anti- PI^{AI} antiserum and rabbit anti-GP IIIa antiserum also recognized a fragment smaller than 66 kDa component, which was presumably also derived from GP IIIa (Band 4). In addition, rabbit anti-GP IIIa antiserum recognized a low molecular weight fragment which was not reactive with anti- PI^{AI} antibody.

Discussion

The main objective of this study was to map the PI^{AI} antigen on proteolytic products of GP IIIa obtained when human platelets are treated with chymotrypsin. The results of these experiments demonstrate that the PI^{AI} antigen is present on a 66 kDa membrane component, produced by the action of chymotrypsin on the platelet surface. These experiments provide definitive evidence that the 66 kDa component is a product of proteolytic digestion of GP IIIa. The parallel between the reactivity of rabbit anti-membrane serum and anti- PI^{AI} IgG demonstrates the predominant immunogenicity of GP IIIa among platelet membrane glycoprotein. In agreement with other reports [23], we determined that the GP IIb molecule did not contain PI^{AI} alloantigen.

Fig. 3 shows the presence of two chymotryptic fragments that had lower molecular weight than 66 kDa component. One of these fragments (Band 4; Fig. 3) could correspond to a radioactive band (M_r 55 000) detected by Peerschke and Collier [24] with chymotrypsin. In our own experimental system, using platelets digested with chymotrypsin for 45 min, this band was not observed by immunoprecipitation followed by SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and autoradiography. At present, it is difficult to explain the discrepancy obtained by the two methods.

Our data demonstrate that PI^{AI} antigen resides on a 66 kDa fragment of GP IIIa. Kunicki and Aster [5] have demonstrated previously the stability of PI^{AI} to chymotrypsin; however, the chymotrypsin digestion fragments of GP IIIa were not isolated by these authors. Deglycosylation of human platelet GP IIIa was also found to have no effect on the PI^{AI} alloantigen (Newman, Martin and Kahn; quoted in Ref. 25). It can be speculated that PI^{AI} deficiency may represent a variance in the specific amino acid sequence in GP IIIa of PI^{AI} -negative individuals. The GP IIIa present on PI^{AI} -negative platelets showed the same pattern of chymotrypsin digestion as did GP IIIa present on PI^{AI} -positive platelets. The presence of PI^{AI} antigen did not affect the reactivity of GP IIIa degradation products with anti-GP IIIa antibody raised in rabbits. Complete characterization of the PI^{AI} antigen domain can be achieved by fur-

ther proteolytic digestion of the 66 kDa molecule and characterization of its fragments. While our studies were in progress, Kieffer et al. [23] reported that a component that migrated with an apparent molecular weight of 58 kDa in non-reduced system reacted in an immunoblot procedure with anti- PI^{AI} antiserum. This 58 kDa component was absent in normal platelets but it was present in platelets pretreated with chymotrypsin. It is possible that this fragment corresponds to that described by us [13].

In our previous work [13], we demonstrated that a 66 kDa protein was present on the surface of chymotrypsin-treated platelets, but not on the surface of intact (unstimulated) platelets. As we increased the concentration of chymotrypsin in the pre-incubation mixture, the appearance of the 66 kDa component correlated with the enhanced fibrinogen-induced aggregation of chymotrypsin-treated platelets. We hypothesized at that time, but did not prove, that the 66 kDa protein may contain a fibrinogen binding site. This issue is still unclear for the following reasons: monoclonal antibodies named 123 [26] and A_2A_9 [27], both of which inhibit the fibrinogen-induced aggregation of ADP-stimulated intact and chymotrypsin-treated platelets, do not immunoprecipitate the 66 kDa protein from digests of SDS-denatured, chymotrypsin-treated platelets. It is possible that these monoclonal antibodies may not recognize the 66 kDa protein in a SDS-denatured state. Since these monoclonal antibodies bind identically to intact ((unstimulated) and to ADP-stimulated platelets [27,28] it may be that they bind to sites near, but not directly at, the fibrinogen binding site. Our most recent findings show that antibodies (antisera and IgG) developed in rabbits against the human 66 kDa component purified from chymotrypsin-treated platelets completely inhibited the fibrinogen-induced aggregation of ADP-stimulated platelets [29].

The data regarding the effect of anti- PI^{AI} antibody on the function of human platelets are inconsistent. Schreiber et al. [30] described complement-mediated induction of platelet release reaction induced by anti- PI^{AI} antibody. On the other hand, Van Leeuwen et al. [31] observed that anti-Zw^a antibodies (which appear to be identical with anti- PI^{AI} antibodies) were able to inhibit the ADP- and

collagen-induced platelet aggregation and ^{125}I -fibrinogen binding to ADP-stimulated platelets. Our data shows that the Pl^{Al} antigenic site is located in the 66 kDa derivative of the GP IIIa molecule. Further investigation is necessary to demonstrate conclusively whether this domain of GP IIIa is also involved directly in the binding of fibrinogen.

Acknowledgments

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