

^{31}P -NMR study of pig intestinal brush-border membrane structure: effect of zinc and cadmium ions

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Abstract. ^{31}P -NMR experiments on intact pig small intestine brush-border membrane vesicles (BBMV) and detergent-solubilized membranes gave direct insights into the organization of the phospholipids (PL) and their interaction with zinc and cadmium ions. Various endogenous PL were identified from well resolved BBM micelle spectra. These experiments revealed a strong interaction of Zn^{2+} and Cd^{2+} with the negatively charged phosphatidylinositol and phosphatidylserine. In BBM micelles, a progressive time-dependent PL degradation occurred in the absence of ions and indicated the presence of active phospholipases. The presence of zinc inhibited the degradation process whereas cadmium had the opposite influence. ^{31}P spectra of BBMV were carefully characterized. Neither zinc nor cadmium affected the PL bilayer structural organization. A degradation of PL, monitored by the increase of the inorganic phosphate (P_i) signal, also occurred in vesicles but to a lesser extent than in micelles. A 2/3 internal, 1/3 external PL asymmetry was observed in the absence and presence of ions.

Key words: ^{31}P -NMR – Phospholipid – Zinc – Cadmium – Brush-border membrane vesicles

Introduction

A wide variety of biological and model membranes have been investigated using phosphorus Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) experiments to get information about the dynamic and structural properties of the phospholipids (PL) (Seelig 1978; Cullis and De Kruijff 1979; Smith and Ekiel 1984). In particular, such experiments have been used to study the role of metallic cations in the structure and function of biomembranes. These cations are able to specifically change the PL polar head group conformation (Roux and Bloom 1990 and references herein) and induce a phase transition of PL in model membranes (Hope and Cullis 1980).

Among these ions, zinc, a major trace element, plays a critical role in membrane structure (Bettger and O'Dell 1981). Zinc ions have a protective effect against lipid peroxidation, which causes membrane distortion (Chvapil et al. 1972). The membrane stabilizing effect of zinc has been attributed to specific interactions of the cation with functional groups of intrinsic components of the plasma membrane, such as membrane proteins and PL (Chvapil 1976).

In the present study, we have used ^{31}P -NMR experiments to investigate interactions of zinc with the PL component of the pig intestinal membrane. The choice of the intestinal brush-border membrane (BBM) is justified by its specific role in zinc metabolism: the luminal membrane is the first physiological barrier for dietary zinc and the main site of zinc homeostasis (Cousins and Failla 1980). The cation has also been shown to strongly interact with this membrane (Hoadley and Cousins 1988; Watkins et al. 1989) and to extensively bind pig small intestine brush-border membrane vesicles (BBMV) (Tacnet and Ripoché 1990).

On the other hand, it has been shown that cadmium, a toxic homologue of zinc and a potent competitive inhibitor of intestinal zinc uptake (Tacnet et al. 1990), has the same affinity for the vesicular Zn^{2+} binding sites as zinc itself (Tacnet and Ripoché 1990). Thus, we studied and compared the effects of both cations on the intestinal membrane structure.

A first set of experiments were devoted to BBM in micelles (obtained by Triton X100 solubilization of BBMV) in order to characterize the endogenous PL signals and to observe their changes upon addition of Zn^{2+} and Cd^{2+} ions. Then, metal ion effects were studied on intact BBMV, the phosphorus spectrum of which monitors the lipid organization in membranes.

Materials and methods

Brush-border membrane vesicles (BBMV)

The brush-border membrane was isolated from pig jejunum epithelial cells according to the modified Kessler

procedure (Kessler et al. 1978) as previously described (Mg^{2+} replacing Ca^{2+}) (Tacnet et al. 1990). Resulting vesicles are relatively homogeneous with respect to size (from freeze fracture pictures, a mean diameter of 200 ± 6 nm ($n=1946$) was measured, data not shown) and remain right side out oriented to more than 90% (Klip et al. 1979). The intravesicular medium contained 100 mM mannitol, 10 mM N-2-hydroxyethylpiperazine-N'-2-ethanesulfonic acid (Hepes) adjusted to pH 7.4 with KOH.

For NMR experiments, BBMV were centrifuged at $28\,000 \times g$ and the pellets were then suspended in a small volume of the above buffer to obtain a protein concentration of around 60 mg/ml. Protein concentrations were determined by the Bio Rad protein assay according to Bradford (1976) with bovine serum albumin as standard. 400 μl of vesicle suspension ($\text{H}_2\text{O} : \text{D}_2\text{O}$, 80 : 20) were injected into 5 mm NMR tubes. The final mixture pH was equal to 7.2.

Brush-border membrane (BBM) micelles

BBMV were centrifuged at $28\,000 \times g$. The pellet was then suspended in 400 μl of a 100 mM mannitol, 50 mM Hepes buffer, pH 7.4 containing 1 mM EDTA in order to chelate paramagnetic species and thus increase the NMR spectral resolution. Protein concentration in the pellet was 25 mg/ml. 10% Triton X100 (weight/volume) was added to the vesicular suspension. Micelles thus obtained were eluted on a Sephadex G25M column (Pharmacia), previously equilibrated in a 100 mM mannitol, 50 mM Hepes, 0.1 mM EDTA buffer pH 7.4. 400 μl of micellar eluate (5 mg protein/ml) containing 20% D_2O was injected into 5 mm NMR tubes.

Exogenous phospholipids (PL)

Triton X100-solubilized exogenous PL used for spectral assignment were prepared in the 100 mM mannitol, 50 mM Hepes, 0.1 mM EDTA buffer containing 4% Triton X100 (weight/volume). Egg yolk phosphatidylcholine (PC) was purchased from Avanti Polar Lipids, Birmingham, USA; egg yolk phosphatidylethanolamine (PE) was purchased from Sigma Chemical Company, St Louis, USA; bovine brain phosphatidylinositol (PI), phosphatidylserine (PS) and sphingomyelin (SM) were obtained from Koch-Light Laboratories LTD, Bucks, England.

NMR experiments

121.5 MHz ^{31}P -NMR experiments were performed on a Bruker MSL 300 spectrometer at 20°C with a two level proton decoupling. BBMV phosphorus spectra were recorded using a $(\pi/2-\tau-\pi-\tau)$ dipolar echo sequence with a $\pi/2$ pulse length of 4 μs , a refocusing delay τ of 20 μs and a dwell time of 10 μs . BBM micelle phosphorus spectra were acquired using single pulse experiments with a dwell

time of 62 μs . 4 000 scans per Free Induction Decay (FID) were usually accumulated. Chemical shifts were measured relative to external phosphoric acid. PL concentrations were estimated with respect to an external reference spectrum of a known concentration of inorganic phosphate. Zinc and cadmium were added as ZnCl_2 and CdCl_2 .

The effect of the paramagnetic probe tempamine (2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine-1-oxyl-4-amine, Molecular Probes, Eugene, USA), frequently used as a spin label in Electron Spin Resonance experiments (Daveloose et al. 1983; Morse 1985) and in some NMR experiments (Seigneuret et al. 1990), was quantified on both exogenous PL micelles and intact BBMV. Preliminary experiments revealed that tempamine significantly broadened the charged PL signals such as PI and PS, and weakly affected the resonance of free inorganic phosphate in solution. As regards BBMV, tempamine was used to detect eventual distinct pools of compounds accessible to the paramagnetic probe.

Results and discussion

^{31}P -NMR study of BBM micelles

Phosphorus spectra of BBM micelles ([1, -1] ppm region of Fig. 1, 1A, 2A, 3A) display three major peaks (90% of the total signal) and one minor resonance. From signal area, micelle PL concentration was estimated to be around 2 mM. According to standard chemical shift data (Dennis and Plückthun 1984), the three major resonances correspond to different PL species. Signal assignment was achieved by adding various detergent solubilized exogenous PL (see Methods): PE, PI, PS, SM, and PC. For example, addition of PC micelles increases the highfield resonance. In summary and with respect to the decreasing chemical shifts, the three main signals are assigned to the following lipids: 1) 0.28 ppm: PE + SM; 2) 0.13 ppm: PI + PS; 3) -0.37 ppm: PC. The minor resonance exhibits a chemical shift value of -0.14 ppm, corresponding to a large variety of phosphoryl compounds (Dennis and Plückthun 1984), and was not identified. An inorganic phosphate (P_i) resonance is also detected at 2.2 ppm, a value which corresponds to the P_i chemical shift at a pH of 7.4 (Prigent et al. 1980) in agreement with our experimental conditions.

The relative PL concentrations determined from the three major resonance areas are 42% (PE + SM), 26% (PI + PS) and 32% (PC), (average values over the three experiments shown in Fig. 1, 1A, 2A, 3A). The proportions of PE vs SM on the one hand, and PS vs PI on the other hand, were obtained by chemical analysis (Geurts Van Kessel et al. 1977; Christon et al. 1989): HPLC of BBM phospholipids gave a PL composition of 31% PE, 6.5% SM, 25% PS, 6.5% PI and 31% PC. A comparable PL composition was reported in rabbit jejunum (Barsukov et al. 1986) and in pig ileum (Christiansen and Carlsen 1981).

As a control, the time-dependence of the BBM micelle spectrum in the absence of metal ions is shown in Fig. 1,

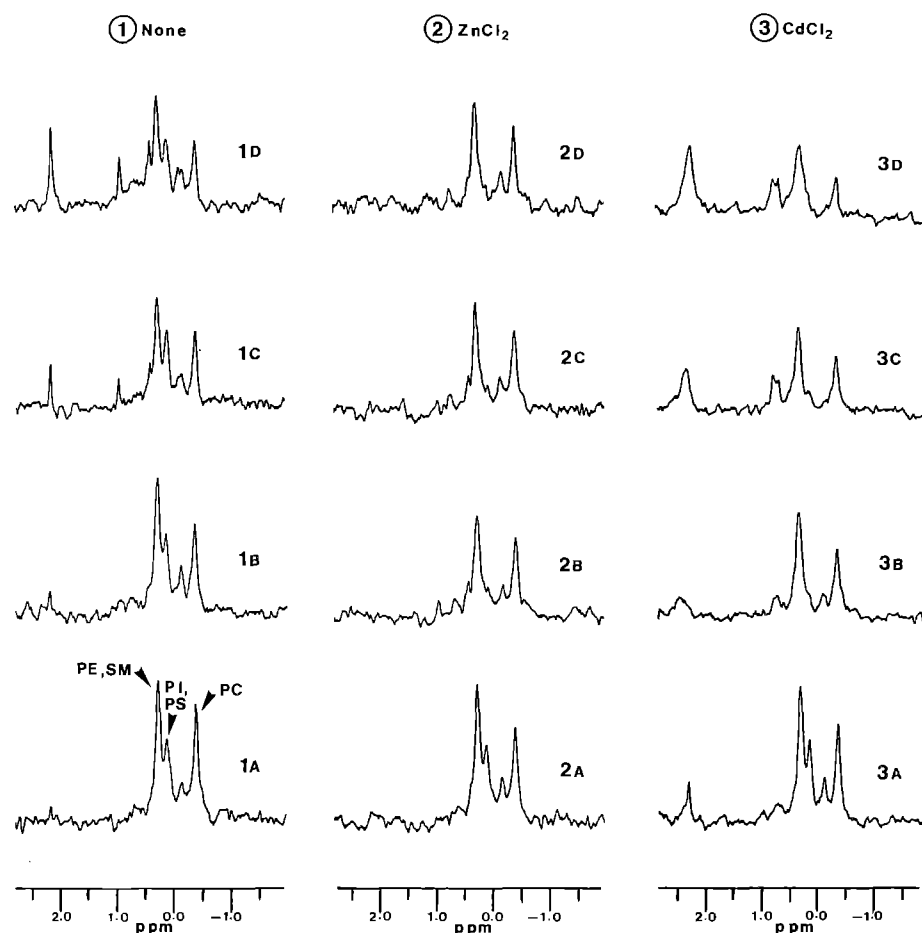


Fig. 1. ^{31}P -NMR spectra of Triton X100-solubilized BBMV. 1) BBM micelle spectra without any cation added. 2) BBM micelle spectra before and after Zn^{2+} addition. 3) BBM micelle spectra before and after Cd^{2+} addition. A, B, C, D: Spectra recorded 3.5 h (A), 7 h (B), 14 h (C) and 21 h (D) after the beginning of the acquisition. ZnCl_2 or CdCl_2 were added after the first spectrum. Temperature of experiment was 20°C .

1B, 1C and 1D. A progressive decrease of PL signals is observed and accompanied by an increase of the P_i resonance and the appearance of lysoPL peaks (-0.12 , 0.41 and 0.95 ppm). The PC resonance is first affected (Fig. 1, 1B), then the (PE+SM) signal is altered (Fig. 1, 1C) and lastly, the (PI+PS) resonance decreases (Fig. 1, 1D). These results reflect a continuous PL degradation achieved by various enzymes known to hydrolyze PL (Subbaiah and Ganguly 1970; Verger et al. 1982; Ehle et al. 1985; Gassama-Diagne et al. 1989), particularly in the presence of detergent (El-Sayed and Roberts 1985). The presence of increasing lysoPL and P_i signals indicates that these enzymes achieve a large and non-specific hydrolysis of BBM phospholipids, which could be more precisely analysed by biochemical techniques such as TLC.

Figure 1, 2B and 3B shows the phosphorus spectra of BBM micelles after addition of 1.5 mM ZnCl_2 and CdCl_2 respectively. In both cases, the (PI+PS) resonance is totally broadened beyond detection whereas a slight increase of the (PE+SM) and PC linewidth is observed. Such an effect on the (PI+PS) signal after addition of either Zn^{2+} or Cd^{2+} was also obtained on a mixture of reconstituted PL micelles, where the percentage of each exogenous PL mimics the endogenous composition (data not shown). These results indicate a strong electrostatic interaction of both Zn^{2+} and Cd^{2+} only with the negatively charged PL.

In the presence of Zn^{2+} ions, time-dependence of the BBM micelle signal (Fig. 1, 2C and 2D) shows that no further change of the spectrum observed in Fig. 1, 2B occurs after the addition of zinc: (PE+SM) and PC signals remain unchanged. While the detailed investigation of the enzymatic activities involved is not the concern of the present study, ^{31}P -NMR data unambiguously reveal the complete efficiency of high ZnCl_2 concentrations in preventing PL hydrolysis. In contrast, the presence of Cd^{2+} ions induces a marked PL alteration during the same time interval (Fig. 1, 3C and 3D). In addition, the PL degradation achieved in the presence of Cd^{2+} ions is three times greater than in the absence of ions (compare the P_i signal area in spectra 1D and 3D of Fig. 1). The chemical shifts of the resulting PC and PE lysoderivatives (0.65 and 0.75 ppm) are slightly different from that obtained in the absence of ion.

^{31}P -NMR spectra of BBM micelles gave a direct insight on zinc and cadmium effects on PL: both ions exhibit the same interaction with the negatively charged PL and exert opposite effects on the enzymatic PL degradation.

^{31}P -NMR study of BBMV

In the absence of Zn^{2+} or Cd^{2+} ions, BBMV phosphorus spectra (Fig. 2, 1A, 2A and 3A) exhibit a well known

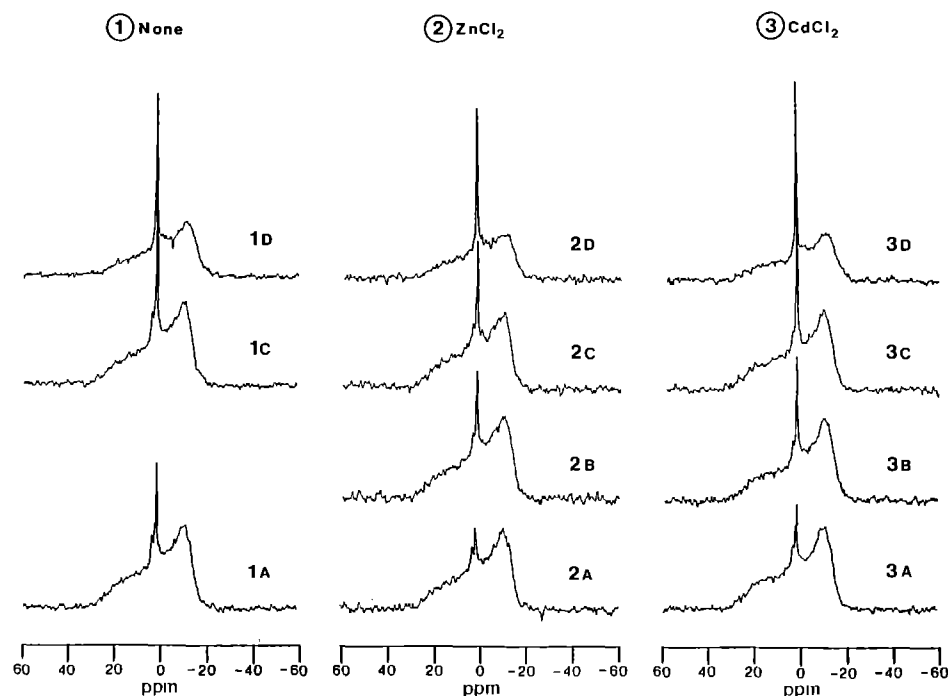


Fig. 2. ^{31}P -NMR spectra of intestinal BBMVs. 1) BBMVs spectra without any cation added. 2) BBMVs spectra before and after Zn^{2+} addition. 3) BBMVs spectra before and after Cd^{2+} addition. A, B, C, D: Spectra recorded 2 h (A), 4 h (B), 12 h (C) and 14 h (D) after the beginning of the acquisition. ZnCl_2 or CdCl_2 were added after the first spectrum. (B: 1 mM final ion concentration; C: 2 mM final ion concentration; D: addition of 50 mM tempamine). Temperature of experiment was 20°C .

axially symmetric powder pattern characteristic of PL bilayer structures (Cullis and De Kruijff 1979). Vesicle PL concentration was estimated to be 25 mM. The chemical shift anisotropy (CSA) of the PL bilayer signal is about 35 ppm. Two isotropic resonances superimposed on the large bilayer signal are also detected. Signal integration indicates that the BBM phospholipids in the bilayer represent more than 90% of the total phosphorus signal.

Similar isotropic resonances were also observed in the phosphorus spectra of BBM isolated from rabbit intestine (Vallet-Strouve et al. 1985) and rat kidney (Elgavish and Elgavish 1985), and it was suggested that the high-field signal could be due to rapid tumbling PL (inverted micelles or small vesicles). The following experiments enable us to precisely identify the isotropic resonances of pig intestinal BBMVs.

First, for accurately measuring their chemical shifts, echo spectra were recorded by using a longer refocusing delay and a longer dwell time (1 ms and 62 μs respectively, instead of 20 μs and 10 μs). These conditions lead to the disappearance of the bilayer signal (the transverse relaxation time of which is less than 1 ms) and to a better resolution. The highfield isotropic resonance is located at 2.05 ± 0.05 ppm (average over the three experiments shown in Fig. 2, 1A, 2A and 3A) and thus corresponds to P_i ions at $\text{pH} = 7.25 \pm 0.05$ (Prigent et al. 1980). The low-field peak exhibits a chemical shift of 3.75 ppm, similar to that obtained for phosphoryl-ethanolamine or phosphoryl-serine (Dennis and Plückthun 1984).

In a second experiment, the time-dependence of the BBMVs phosphorus signal was investigated as in the case of BBM micelles. The spectrum 1C shown in Fig. 2, recorded 12 hours after the first acquisition (Fig. 2, 1A), indicates that during this time interval, the bilayer structure is conserved whereas the P_i signal intensity is in-

creased by a factor of 2. According to the data obtained for BBM micelles, P_i increase results from PL degradation due to the presence of active enzymes. Other degradation compounds such as lysoPL are not detected probably because these amphiphilic compounds remain anchored in the bilayer so that their resonances cannot be distinguished from the main signal.

Finally, in a third experiment, a paramagnetic tempamine solution (50 mM final concentration) was added to the sample tube at the end of the last acquisition (Fig. 2, 1D) to try to discriminate distinct pools of PL and/or P_i . Addition of tempamine does not affect the P_i resonance and leads to a 35% decrease of the bilayer signal intensity. Further addition of tempamine does not modify the spectrum. The interpretation of these data is quite difficult since although we observed a weak paramagnetic effect of tempamine on the P_i resonance in solution (see Materials and methods) we also observed that the constant increase of the P_i signal due to lipid degradation still occurs during the acquisition-time. Consequently, we cannot distinguish, in these conditions, the internal or external P_i compartments. As regards the PL signal, our data could indicate an asymmetry in the distribution of PL and be related to the highly asymmetrical PL distribution found in BBM enterocytes (Barsukov et al. 1986; Patton JS, personal communication). PL asymmetry can be explained by the important fraction of glycolipids present at the external cell surface of intestinal BBM (Forstner and Wherrett 1973; Christiansen and Carlsen 1981). The asymmetry could be also related to the protein composition of the BBMVs: the majority of proteins are external components of the membrane (Louvard et al. 1975).

Taking into account the above results and our prior data relative to BBM micelles, it appears that neither of

the two isotropic peaks is consistent with a signal of PL in micelles or very small vesicles. Therefore, the extended bilayer is the only structural organization detected for the endogenous PL of BBMV.

Figure 2, 2B and 3B shows the BBMV phosphorus spectra after addition of 1 mM ZnCl_2 and 1 mM CdCl_2 respectively. Whatever the cation added, the initial CSA value (35 ppm) is conserved. Further addition of zinc or cadmium ions (2 mM final ion concentration) and time-evolution (over 12 h) (Fig. 2, 2C and 3C) do not change this result. This indicates that no vesicle fusion, leading to the formation of larger species, occurs (Burnell et al. 1980). It has been also previously shown by freeze fracture analysis that ZnCl_2 does not promote any aggregation of BBMV (Watkins et al. 1989). In our vesicular system, neither Zn^{2+} nor Cd^{2+} ions induce a lipid phase transition such as the change from a bilayer to a hexagonal (H_{II}) phase observed on PS model membranes in the presence of Ca^{2+} (Hope and Cullis 1980).

However, time-dependence of the ^{31}P -NMR spectra in the presence of zinc and cadmium reveals that the intensity of the highfield isotropic resonance progressively increases. Accurate chemical shift measurements (performed by spin echo experiments mentioned above), clearly indicate that, as in the absence of added cations, P_i ions are the only source of the highfield resonance enhancement. The relative increase of the P_i signal (with respect to the first acquired spectrum) is similar for both Zn and Cd ions and close to that obtained in the absence of added ions. Comparison of these results with the data of BBM micelles indicates that PL degradation occurs to a much lower extent in BBMV than in micelles. Two explanations are possible: 1 – The bilayer organization is less favorable for enzyme attack. 2 – Various endogenous divalent cations able to influence the enzyme activities are still present in the BBMV sample whereas, in order to obtain high resolution, EDTA was added to the BBM micelle sample (see experimental section). Another difference with BBM micelles is that no protective zinc effect against PL alteration was observed in BBMV. This could be due to the lower zinc/PL concentration ratio used in BBMV experiments. As observed in the absence of added ions, the presence of tempamine leads to a 35% decrease of the bilayer signal and apparently does not affect the P_i resonance (Fig. 2, 2D, 3D).

Our data indicate that whereas Zn^{2+} and Cd^{2+} strongly interact with endogenous PI and PS, they neither affect the PL bilayer organization nor induce the appearance of other PL structures such as micelles, inverted micelles, small vesicles or hexagonal phases. Our data also show that the PL concentration is probably larger in the inner than in the outer monolayer. This can be related to our previous report showing a zinc binding asymmetry in pig jejunum brush-border (Tacnet and Ripoche 1990).

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