

Short communication

Inhibitory effect of 4-(2-aminoethyl)-benzenesulfonyl fluoride, a serine protease inhibitor, on PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression

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Received 29 May 2006; received in revised form 22 September 2006; accepted 26 September 2006

Available online 10 October 2006

Abstract

Endoplasmic reticulum stress contributes to several diseases such as neurodegenerative disorders and diabetes. In the previous report, we found that phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase (PI3K) down-regulation is important for inducing CHOP expression, an endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced transcription factor. In the present study, we investigated the effect of 4-(2-aminoethyl)-benzenesulfonyl fluoride (AEBSF), a serine protease inhibitor, on PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression. We found that AEBSF completely inhibited PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression at both mRNA and protein levels. It is suggested that AEBSF is an important drug from a pharmacological point of view and the results may have important implications for understanding endoplasmic reticulum stress-related diseases.

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Keywords: 4-(2-Aminoethyl)-benzenesulfonyl fluoride (AEBSF); Phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase (PI3K); CHOP; Endoplasmic reticulum stress

1. Introduction

Recent evidence has suggested that neurodegenerative disorders and diabetes are involved in the disruption of endoplasmic reticulum function (Katayama et al., 1999; Imai et al., 2001; Kaufman, 2002). In response to endoplasmic reticulum stress, unfolded proteins accumulate and aggregate in the endoplasmic reticulum, resulting in activation of the unfolded protein response (Mori, 2000). Several growth factors promote cell survival by activating phosphatidylinositol-3-OH kinase (PI3K) (Burgering and Coffey, 1995; Dudek et al., 1997). One of the downstream targets of PI3K is a serine/threonine kinase, Akt/protein kinase B (PKB). Increasingly, evidence has suggested that the PI3K/Akt pathway is involved in endoplasmic reticulum stress. Endoplasmic reticulum stress down-regulates Akt activation and insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) reduces endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced apoptosis in insulinoma cells (Srinivasan et al., 2005). We recently showed that Akt is inac-

tivated by endoplasmic reticulum stress in the L929 fibroblast cell line (Hyoda et al., 2006). Moreover, we found that inactivation of PI3K induced expression of CHOP, a transcription factor known to be induced by endoplasmic reticulum stress (Hyoda et al., 2006). These observations suggest that the PI3K/Akt pathways play an important role in endoplasmic reticulum stress. Recently, serine protease has been suggested to be involved in endoplasmic reticulum stress related diseases (Ye et al., 2000; Okada et al., 2003). However, the signaling mechanisms of PI3K inactivation-induced CHOP expression are unclear. Thus, in the present study, we investigated the mechanisms of PI3K inactivation-induced CHOP expression. We found that serine protease-inhibitor, AEBSF (Kazmirowski, 1971), inhibited these processes.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Materials and reagents

Tunicamycin and thapsigargin were obtained from Wako Pure Chemical Ltd. (Japan). 2-(4-Morpholinyl)-8-phenyl-4H-1-benzopyran-4-one (LY294002), wortmannin and 4-(2-aminoethyl)-

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benzenesulfonyl fluoride (AEBSF) were purchased from SIGMA (St. Louis, MO).

2.2. Cell culture

Mouse fibroblast L929 cells were maintained in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM) supplemented with 10% (v/v) heat-inactivated fetal calf serum and antibiotics (100 units/ml penicillin G and 100 µg/ml streptomycin; GIBCO BRL) at 37 °C in humidified 5% CO₂, 95% air. L929 cells were transferred to a serum-free medium before the Western blotting.

2.3. Reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) analysis

Total RNA was isolated using TRI Reagent (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO). RT-PCR was performed as described previously (Hosoi et al., 2002). Precisely, cDNA was synthesized from total RNA by reverse transcription using 100 U of Superscript Reverse Transcriptase (Invitrogen) and Oligo (dt)_{12–18} primer (Invitrogen) in a 20 µl reaction mixture containing Superscript buffer (Invitrogen), 1 mM dNTP mix, 10 mM dithiothreitol (DTT), and 40 U of RNase inhibitor. Total RNA and Oligo (dt)_{12–18} primer were incubated at 70 °C for 10 min prior to the reverse transcription. After incubation for 1 h at 42 °C, RT reaction was terminated by denaturing the Reverse Transcriptase enzyme for 15 min at 70 °C. For PCR amplification, 1.2 µl of cDNA was added to 12 µl of a reaction mix containing 0.2 µM of each primer, 0.2 µM of dNTP mix, 0.6 U of Taq polymerase, and reaction buffer. PCR was performed in a DNA Thermal Cycler (GeneAmp® PCR System 9700). The following primers were used: CHOP upstream, 5'-ccc tgc ctt tca cct tgg-3'; CHOP downstream, 5'-ccg ctc gtt ctc ctg ctc-3'; glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH) upstream, 5'-aaa ccc atc acc atc ttc cag-3'; and GAPDH downstream, 5'-agg ggc cat cca cag tct tct-3'. The PCR products (10 µl) were resolved by electrophoresis in an 8% polyacrylamide gel in TBE buffer. The gels were stained with ethidium bromide and then photographed under ultraviolet light. cDNA for GAPDH and CHOP were amplified for 18 (94 °C 1 min, 57 °C 1 min, 72 °C 1 min) and 20 (94 °C 1 min, 60 °C 1 min, 72 °C 1 min) cycles, respectively, and these PCR reactions were run separately. These cycle numbers were chosen based on a preliminary study determining the linear range of amplification for each respective molecule. To compare the expression of mRNAs in the different experimental groups, the amount of mRNA in each structure studied was estimated as the ratio of CHOP/GAPDH.

2.4. Western blotting analysis

Western blotting was performed as described previously (Hosoi et al., 2004). Cells were washed with ice-cold PBS and lysed in a buffer containing 10 mM HEPES–NaOH (pH 7.5), 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM EGTA, 1 mM Na₃VO₄, 10 mM NaF, 10 µg/ml aprotinin, 10 µg/ml leupeptin, 1 mM phenylmethyl sulfonyl fluoride (PMSF) and 1% NP-40 for 20 min. The lysates were centrifuged at 20,630 g for 20 min at 4 °C, and the

supernatants were collected. The samples were boiled with Laemmli buffer for 3 min, fractionated by SDS-PAGE, and transferred at 4 °C to nitrocellulose membranes. The membranes were incubated with anti-phospho-Akt (Ser473: Cell Signaling; 1:1000), anti-Akt (Cell Signaling; 1:1000), anti-phospho-eIF2α (Ser51: Cell Signaling; 1:1000), anti-XBP-1 (Santa Cruz; 1:500) and anti-CHOP (Santa Cruz; 1:500) antibodies and then with anti-horseradish peroxidase-linked antibody. Peroxidase was detected by chemiluminescence using an ECL system (Amersham).

2.5. Statistics

Results were expressed as means ± S.E.M. Statistical analysis was performed with Student's *t*-test.

3. Results

3.1. Effect of AEBSF on endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced CHOP expression

Endoplasmic reticulum stress has been shown to activate activating transcription factor 6 (ATF6). When unfolded proteins accumulate in the endoplasmic reticulum, full length ATF6 is cleaved to release its cytoplasmic domain, which enters the nucleus and acts as a transcription factor. ATF6 is processed by serine protease, site-1 protease (S1P) (Ye et al., 2000). The cytoplasmic domain of ATF6 has been reported to induce CHOP expression (Yoshida et al., 2000). AEBSF is a potent serine protease inhibitor, which acts by sulfonylation of the serine residue at the active site (Markwardt et al., 1974). Recently, AEBSF has been reported to inhibit activation of ATF6 by inhibiting S1P (Okada et al., 2003). Thus, we examined whether AEBSF blocks endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced CHOP expression. The dosage used for AEBSF treatment was determined according to the previous reports (Okada et al., 2003; Nakanishi et al., 2005). L929 cells were treated with AEBSF 1 h before inducing endoplasmic reticulum stress. Endoplasmic reticulum stress was induced by tunicamycin or thapsigargin. As shown in Fig. 1A, we observed an inhibition of endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced CHOP expression in AEBSF-treated cells. These results suggest that serine proteases such as S1P are involved in endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced CHOP expression.

3.2. Effect of AEBSF on PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression

In the previous study, we found that AKT activation is down-regulated in response to endoplasmic reticulum stress in the L929 cell line (Hyoda et al., 2006). Moreover, treatment with PI3K inhibitor alone induced CHOP expression (Hyoda et al., 2006). However, the mechanism(s) of PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression is unknown. Endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced CHOP expression has been reported to be mediated through PERK-eIF2α, IRE1-XBP1 and serine protease S1P-ATF6 pathway (Scheuner et al., 2001; Harding et al., 2000; Yoshida et al., 2000; Oyadomari and Mori, 2004). Thus, we examined the possible involvement of serine proteases in PI3K inhibitor-induced

CHOP expression. AEBSF was treated 1 h before PI3K inhibitors (LY294002 and wortmannin) and then analyzed for CHOP expression. RT-PCR analysis was performed to investigate

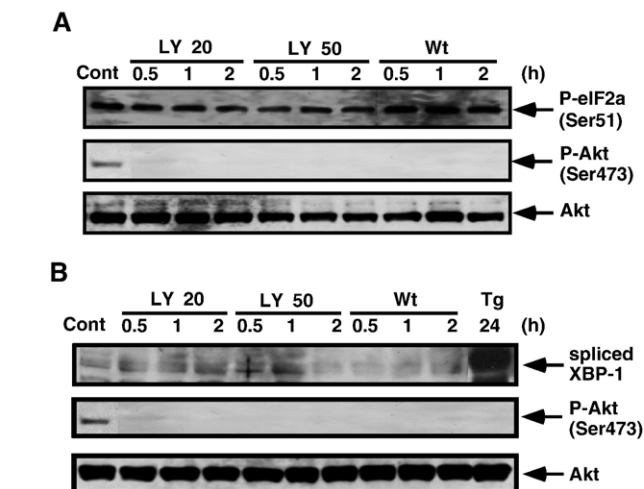
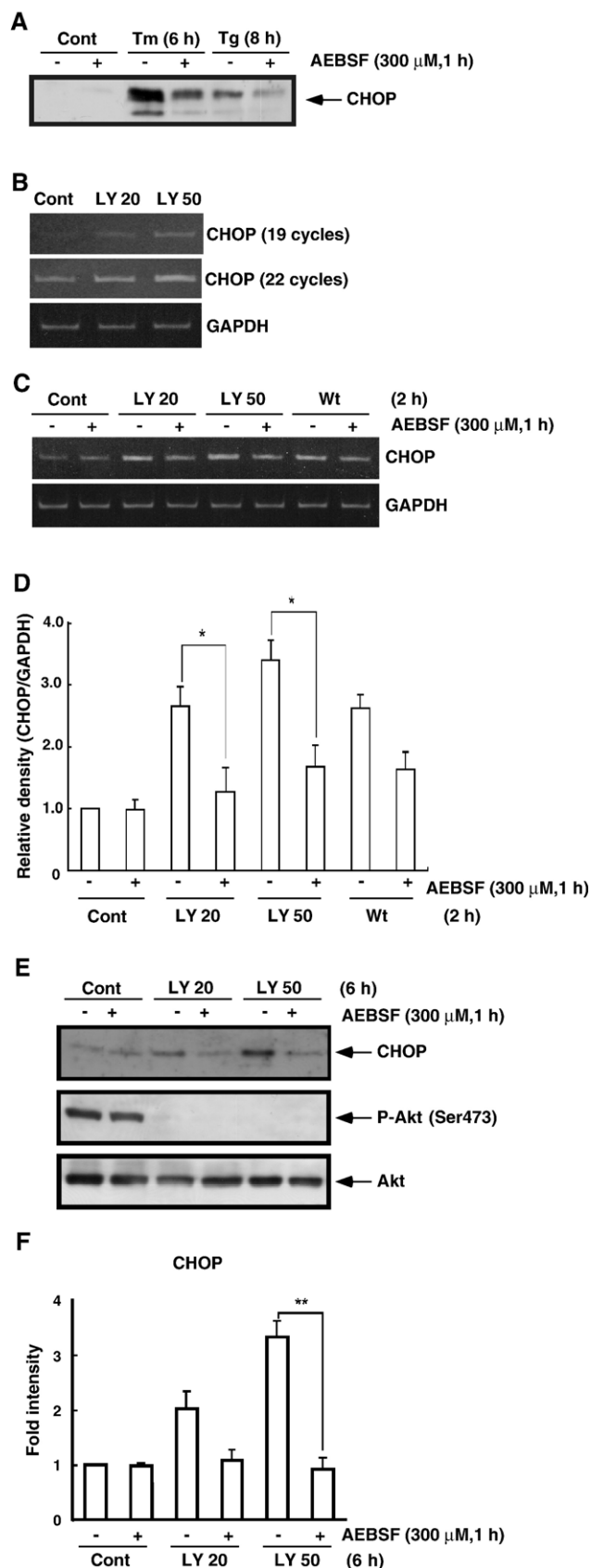


Fig. 2. PI3K inhibitor did not affect eIF2 α phosphorylation or XBP-1 translation. L929 cells were treated with LY294002 (LY, 20–50 μ M), wortmannin (wt, 500 nM) and thapsigargin (Tg, 3 μ M) for the indicated times, respectively. A. Phospho-eIF2 α (Ser51), phospho-Akt (Ser473) and Akt were detected by Western blotting. B. Spliced XBP-1, phospho-Akt (Ser473) and Akt were detected by Western blotting.

CHOP transcripts. We obtained linear relation for CHOP induction between 19 through 22 cycles of PCR (Fig. 1B). Thus, we selected 20 cycles to investigate CHOP transcripts. We observed an increase in CHOP transcripts by PI3K inhibitors. This increase was completely inhibited by AEBSF (Fig. 1C,D). Protein levels of CHOP expression were also completely inhibited by AEBSF (Fig. 1D,E). PI3K inhibitor inhibited basal levels of phosphorylated AKT (Fig. 1D), indicating effective inhibition of PI3K–AKT pathway. On the other hand, we observed neither eIF2 α phosphorylation nor spliced XBP1 translation in PI3K inhibitor-treated cells (Fig. 2). Therefore, these results suggest that serine protease is involved in PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression.

4. Discussion

PI3K is involved in many cellular events such as regulation of cell growth, proliferation, survival, differentiation, and cytoskeletal changes. One of the characteristic targets of PI3K is the protein kinase AKT. Increasing evidence has suggested that death-promoting stimuli lead to deactivation of AKT. *N*-methyl-D-aspartate excitotoxicity, vascular stroke, and nitric oxide and hydrogen

Fig. 1. AEBSF suppressed PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression. L929 cells were pretreated with AEBSF (300 μ M) for 1 h and then stimulated with LY294002 (LY, 20–50 μ M), wortmannin (wt, 500 nM), tunicamycin (Tm, 3 μ g/ml) and thapsigargin (Tg, 3 μ M) for the indicated times, respectively. A. CHOP was detected by Western blotting. B. Linear relation for CHOP induction between 19 through 22 cycles of the RT-PCR. C. RT-PCR analysis was performed using specific primers for CHOP and GAPDH. D. The amounts of CHOP mRNA are expressed as the ratio of densitometric measurements of the samples to the corresponding GAPDH internal control. Values are presented as means \pm S.E.M. for three separate experiments. E. CHOP, phospho (Ser473)-Akt and Akt were detected by Western blotting. F. Densitometric analysis was performed using image analyzing software. The expression levels were expressed as fold intensity compared with the control treated group. Values are presented as means \pm S.E.M. ($n=3$ /group). * $P<0.05$, ** $P<0.01$ (statistically significant difference between LY and LY+AEBSF).

peroxide lead to deactivation of AKT (Luo et al., 2003). Moreover, endoplasmic reticulum stress inhibits AKT activation (Srinivasan et al., 2005; Hyoda et al., 2006). Thus, deactivation of AKT is a physiologically important event in various disease states. We have reported that inhibition of PI3K, the activator of AKT, induces CHOP expression, an endoplasmic reticulum stress responsive apoptotic transcription factor (Hyoda et al., 2006). Endoplasmic reticulum stress-induced CHOP expression has been reported to be mediated through PERK-eIF2 α , IRE1-XBP1 and serine protease S1P-ATF6 pathway (Scheuner et al., 2001; Harding et al., 2000; Yoshida et al., 2000; Oyadomari and Mori, 2004). However, the molecular mechanism(s) of PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression are unknown. In the present study, we found for the first time that serine protease inhibitor AEBSF inhibited PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression. On the other hand, we did not observe eIF2 α activation nor XBP1 induction in PI3K inhibitor treated cells (Fig. 2). Therefore, PERK-eIF2 α or IRE1-XBP1 pathways may not be involved in PI3K inhibitor-induced CHOP expression. Thus, these results suggest that PI3K/AKT deactivation-induced CHOP expression is predominantly mediated through AEBSF sensitive serine protease. More detailed pharmacological role of AEBSF in respect to endoplasmic reticulum stress will be needed to analyze in the future study.

Serine protease has been reported to be involved in the initiation of DNA damage-induced apoptosis (de Bruin et al., 2003). Moreover, serine protease mediates apoptosis-like cell death and phagocytosis under caspase-inhibiting conditions (Egger et al., 2003). We observed complete inhibition of PI3K deactivation-induced CHOP expression by serine protease inhibitor. CHOP is an apoptotic transcription factor, and is induced by endoplasmic reticulum stress. Thus, it is possible that PI3K deactivation-induced CHOP expression may result in cell death. As CHOP induction may mediate serine protease, it is suggested that serine protease is involved in these processes. Cerebral deposition of amyloid β -protein (A β) is a critical feature of Alzheimer's disease, and A β has been reported to induce endoplasmic reticulum stress (Nakagawa et al., 2000). Interestingly, AEBSF has been shown to inhibit A β production in neural cells (Citron et al., 1996). It is suggested that AEBSF is an important drug from a pharmacological point of view and the results may have important implications for understanding endoplasmic reticulum stress-related diseases.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research from the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, Japan and by Mochida Memorial Foundation for Medical and Pharmaceutical Research.

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