

Characterization of the yeast *BMH1* gene encoding a putative protein homologous to mammalian protein kinase II activators and protein kinase C inhibitors

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We describe the identification and characterization of the *BMH1* gene from the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The gene encodes a putative protein of 292 amino acids which is more than 50% identical with the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein and proteins isolated from sheep brain which are strong inhibitors of protein kinase C. Disruption mutants and strains with the *BMH1* gene on multicopy plasmids have impaired growth on minimal medium with glucose as carbon source, i.e. a 30–50% increase in generation time. These observations suggest a regulatory function of the *bmh1* protein. In contrast to strains with an intact or a disrupted *BMH1* gene, strains with the *BMH1* gene on multicopy plasmids hardly grew on media with acetate or glycerol as carbon source.

Protein kinase C; Protein kinase II; *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*; 14-3-3 protein

1. INTRODUCTION

The 14-3-3 protein is a soluble acidic protein which is abundantly present in human and bovine brain tissue. This protein, originally identified by two-dimensional gel electrophoresis [1], is an activator of tryptophan 5-monooxygenase and tyrosine 3-monooxygenase in the presence of Ca^{2+} - and calmodulin-dependent protein kinase II [2]. This activation is required for neurotransmitter synthesis [3]. Biochemical analysis showed that the 14-3-3 protein is a dimer consisting of two subunits with a molecular weight between 25 and 32 kDa [4–6]. By reverse-phase chromatography the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein could be resolved into seven polypeptide components [7]. The amino acid sequences of three of these components were determined and appeared to be 75–85% identical [8]. Recently, acidic proteins were isolated from sheep brain which were strong inhibitors of the Ca^{2+} - and phospholipid-dependent protein kinase C [9]. Amino acid sequence analysis indicated that these proteins closely resemble the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein [10]. Recently, a cDNA clone has been isolated encoding a plant homologue of the mammalian 14-3-3 protein [11].

In the present paper we describe the isolation and

analysis of the *BMH1* gene from the yeast, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. This gene encodes a putative protein with a molecular weight of 33 kDa which is more than 50% identical to the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein. The identification of this gene suggests that proteins like the brain 14-3-3 protein are not exclusively present in mammalian brain tissues but also in the evolutionarily distant organism, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. To obtain insight into the physiological function of the *bmh1* protein, we disrupted the *BMH1* gene. In addition, we studied the phenotypes of yeast transformants with the *BMH1* gene on multi- and single-copy plasmids.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Strains, plasmids and culture media

The yeast strains used in this study are listed in Table I. The *Escherichia coli* strain JM107 [12] was used for plasmid amplification. The plasmids pEMBL8 α 10 and pEMBL9 α 10 were obtained by cloning the insert of the λ E1 α 10 phage [13] into the *EcoRI* site of the plasmids pEMBL8 and pEMBL9, respectively [14] (Fig. 1A). The plasmids pEMBL8 α 10EB and pEMBL9 α 10EB were obtained from the latter plasmids by digestion with *BamHI* and self-ligation of the linear molecules. The plasmids YEplac112, YEplac195, YCplac22 and YCplac33 were generous gifts from Dr. Gietz (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Research Triangle Park, NC) [15]. *E. coli* was grown in LB [12]; yeast was grown in either YPD [16] or MY, supplemented as required with histidine (20 mg/l), uracil (20 mg/l) and tryptophan (20 mg/l) [17].

2.2. Nucleic acid manipulations

Plasmid DNA was isolated from *E. coli* using the alkaline lysis method [12]. Plasmid DNA was extracted from yeast by the same

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method after preparation of spheroplasts [16]. Prior to analysis, this plasmid DNA was amplified in *E. coli*. Yeast chromosomal DNA was prepared as described by Sherman et al. [16]. Yeast RNA was isolated according to Schmitt et al. [18].

DNA sequence analysis was conducted by the dideoxy chain termination method [19] using single- or double-stranded DNA of pEMBL8 α 10EB and pEMBL9 α 10EB. Sequences were determined in both directions using oligonucleotide primers.

2.3. Disruption of the *BMH1* gene and transformation of spores

Gene disruption in the diploid strain, YS60, was conducted according to Rothstein [20]. The plasmid pUT332 [21] was digested with *Bgl*II yielding a 1.1 kb fragment containing the *URA3* gene. This fragment was cloned into the *Bgl*II site of the plasmid, pEMBL9 α 10EB (Fig. 1B). This construct with the disrupted *BMH1* gene was digested with *Eco*RI and *Bam*HI and the incubation mixture was used without further purification to transform YS60 by electroporation [22]. Transformants were selected for uracil prototrophy. Sporulation was performed as described [16]. Plasmids were introduced into yeast by electroporation [22].

2.4. Southern and Northern blot analysis

Southern blot analysis was performed as described [12]. The *URA3* probe was obtained by digestion of pUT332 with *Bgl*II followed by isolation of the 1.1 kb fragment by agarose gel electrophoresis and the Gene Clean DNA isolation kit (Bio 101, La Jolla, CA). The *BMH1* probe was obtained by digestion of pEMBL9 α 10EB with *Eco*RI and *Bgl*II and isolation of the 1.5 kb fragment as described above. The probes were labeled with digoxigenine-dUTP and hybridization and detection were performed as suggested by the manufacturer (Boehringer, Mannheim, Germany).

Northern blot analysis was performed as described [12]. The *BMH1* probe was obtained by digestion of pEMBL9 α 10EB with *Bgl*II and *Hind*III and isolation of the 0.3 kb fragment. The probe was labeled with [α -³²P]dCTP (The Radiochemical Center, Amersham, UK) with random priming using a multiprime DNA labeling kit from The Radiochemical Center, Amersham.

2.5. Growth rates

MY growth medium (30 ml) containing 2% (w/v) glucose or 1% (w/v) sodium acetate (pH 5.0) supplemented with histidine was inoculated with an aliquot of an overnight culture of the yeast strain giving an OD at 620 nm of approximately 0.1. Media to culture the strains 2C, 4A, 4C and 8D were supplemented with histidine, uracil and tryptophan. The cultures were incubated at 30°C and at various times the OD at 620 nm was measured. The growth rate was determined using logarithmically growing cells.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Identification of the *BMH1* gene

In a recent study we cloned the *PDA1* gene coding for the E1 α subunit of the pyruvate dehydrogenase complex from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* [13]. Nucleotide sequence analysis revealed an open reading frame upstream from the *PDA1* gene. In Fig. 1A a restriction map of the cloned fragment is shown with the position of the *PDA1* gene and this open reading frame. A search for the EMBL database revealed that the open reading frame encodes a putative protein of 292 amino acids which is more than 58% identical with the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein. Fig. 2 shows the nucleotide sequence of the part of the clone containing the open reading frame and the amino acid sequence of the putative protein encoded by this open reading frame. For comparison

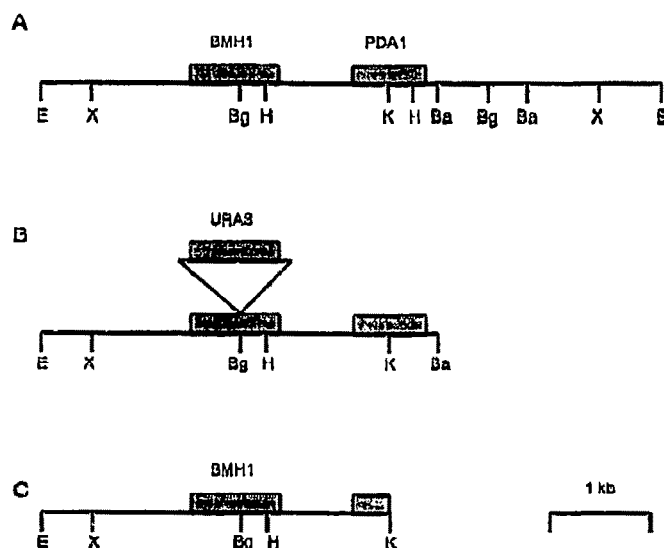


Fig. 1. Restriction map of the DNA fragment containing the *PDA1* and *BMH1* genes. (A) Restriction map of the fragment present in the λ E1 α 10 phage. (B) Disruption of the *BMH1* gene by insertion of the *URA3* gene. (C) The *Eco*RI-*Kpn*I fragment used to clone into the plasmids YCplac22, YCplac33, YEplac 112 and YEplac 195. E, *Eco*RI; X, *Xho*I; Bg, *Bgl*II; H, *Hind*III; Ba, *Bam*HI; K, *Kpn*I.

the amino acid sequence of the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein (η -chain) is included. It is apparent that the putative yeast protein contains several stretches of up to 22 amino acids which are identical to the corresponding parts of the bovine brain protein. These stretches alternate with stretches with less similarity. The yeast protein contains an additional 45 amino acids at its C-terminal end. Comparison of the amino acid sequence of the yeast protein with that of the β - or γ -chain of the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein shows a similar homology (data not shown). Because of the similarity with the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein the open reading frame was named the *BMH1* (brain modulosignalin homologue 1) gene.

Table I
Yeast strains

Strain	Genotype	Source
YS60	<i>Mata/Mata FLO1/flo1 his4-519/his4-519 leu2-3,112/+ trp1-789/+ ura3-52/ura3-52</i>	[13]
T1	<i>Mata/Mata YS60 bmh1::URA3/BMH1</i>	this study
2C	haploid <i>his4-519 ura3-52</i>	this study
4A	haploid <i>bmh1::URA3 his4-519 trp1-789 ura3-52</i>	this study
4C	haploid <i>his4-519 trp1-789 ura3-52</i>	this study
8D	haploid <i>bmh1::URA3 his4-519 ura3-52</i>	this study
22	haploid 4A (YCplac22)	this study
22B	haploid 4A (YCplac22[<i>BMH1</i>])	this study
33	haploid 2C (YCplac33)	this study
33B	haploid 2C (YCplac33[<i>BMH1</i>])	this study
112	haploid 4A (YEplac112)	this study
112B	haploid 4A (YEplac112[<i>BMH1</i>])	this study
195	haploid 2C (YEplac195)	this study
195B	haploid 2C (YEplac195[<i>BMH1</i>])	this study

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1 TAG TTT TTC CTA TTT TCA AAA TTG AGA GCG CAA GCA AGT GAG
  TER
43 AAG AAA AAG CAA GTT AAA GAT AAA CTA AAG ATA AAA ATG TCA
  y Met Ser
  b Met Gly
85 ACC AGT CGT GAA GAT TCT GTG TAC CTA GCC AAG TTG GCT GAA
  y Thr Ser Arg Glu Asp Ser Val Tyr Leu Ala Lys Leu Ala Glu
  b Asp Arg Glu Gln Leu Leu Gln Arg Ala Arg Leu Ala Glu
127 CAG GCC GAA CGT TAT GAA GAA ATG GTC GAA AAC ATG AAG ACT
  y Gln Ala Glu Arg Tyr Cln Glu Met Val Glu Asn Met Lys Thr
  b Gln Ala Glu Arg Tyr Asp Asp Met Ala Ser Ala Met Lys Ala
167 GTT GCC TCC TCT GGC CAA GAG TTG TCG GTC GAA GAG CGT AAT
  y Val Ala Ser Ser Gly Gln Glu Leu Ser Val Glu Glu Arg Asn
  b Val Thr Glu Leu Asn Glu Pro Leu Ser Asn Glu Arg Asn
211 TTG TTG TCT GTT GCT TAT AAG AAC GTT ATT GGT GCT CGT CGT
  y Leu Leu Ser Val Ala Tyr Lys Asn Val Ile Gly Ala Arg Arg
  b Leu Leu Ser Val Ala Tyr Lys Asn Val Ile Gly Ala Arg Arg
253 GCC TCT TGG AGA ATT GTT TCT TCT ATT GAG CAA AAG GAG GAG
  y Ala Ser Trp Arg Ile Val Ser Ser Ile Glu Gln Lys Glu Glu
  b Ser Ser Trp Arg Val Ile Ser Ser Ile Glu Gln Lys Thr Met
295 TCC AAG GAG AAG TCC GAA CAC CAG GTC GAG TTG ATT TGT TCG
  y Ser Lys Glu Lys Ser Glu His Gln Val Glu Leu Ile Cys Ser
  b Ala Asp Gly Asn Glu Lys Lys Leu Glu Lys Val Lys Ala
337 TAC CGT TCG AAG ATT GAG ACC GAA CTA ACT AAG ATC TCC GAC
  y Tyr Arg Ser Lys Ala Glu Thr Glu Leu Thr Lys Ile Ser Asp
  b Tyr Arg Glu Lys Ile Glu Lys Glu Leu Glu Thr Val Cys Asn
379 GAT ATT TTG TCC GTG CTA GAC TCC CAC TTA ATT CCA TCA GCC
  y Asp Ile Leu Ser Val Leu Asp Ser His Leu Ile Pro Ser Ala
  b Asp Val Leu Ala Leu Leu Asp Lys Phe Leu Ile Lys Asn Cys
421 ACC ACT GGC GAG TCC AAG GTT TTC TAC TAT AAG ATG
  y Thr Thr Gly Glu Ser Cys Val Phe Tyr Tyr Lys Met
  b Asn Asp Phe Gln Tyr Glu Ser Lys Val Phe Tyr Leu Lys Met
457 AAG ATG GAC TAC CAC CGT TAT TTG GCT GAA TTT TCT AGT GGC
  y Lys Gly Asp Tyr His His Arg Leu Ala Glu Phe Ser Ser Gly
  b Lys Gly Asp Tyr Tyr Arg Tyr Leu Ala Glu Val Ala Ser Gly
499 GAT GCT AGA GAA AAG GCC ACA AAC GCC TCT TTA GAA GCA TAC
  y Asp Ala Arg Glu Lys Ala Thr Asn Ala Ser Leu Glu Ala Tyr
  b Glu Lys Lys Asn Ser Val Val Glu Ala Ser Glu Ala Ala Tyr
541 AAG ACC GCT TCT GAA ATT GCC ACC ACA GAG TTA CCC CCA ACT
  y Lys Thr Ala Ser Glu Lys Ala Thr Thr Glu Leu Pro Phe Thr
  b Lys Glu Ala Phe Glu Ile Ser Lys Glu His Met Gln Pro Thr
583 CAC CCA ATC CGT CTA GGT TTC GGT CTT AAC TTC TCT GTC TTC
  y His Pro Ile Arg Leu Gly Leu Ala Leu Asn Phe Ser Val Phe
  b His Pro Ile Arg Leu Gly Leu Ala Leu Asn Phe Ser Val Phe
625 GAA ATT CAA AAG TCT CCA GAC AAA GCC TGC CAT TTG TAT TAT
  y Tyr Tyr Glu Ile Gln Asn Ser Pro Asp Lys Ala Cys His Leu
  b Tyr Tyr Glu Ile Gln Asn Ala Pro Glu Lys Ala Cys Leu Leu
667 CGC AAG CAA GCT TTT GAC GAC GCT ATT GCT GAG TTG GAC ACT
  y Arg Lys Gln Ala Phe Asp Asp Ala Lys Ala Glu Leu Asp Thr
  b Ala Lys Gln Ala Phe Asp Asp Ala Lys Ala Glu Leu Asp Thr
709 CTG TCT GAA GAA TCA TAC AAA GAT AGC ACA CTT ATC ATG CAA
  y Leu Ser Glu Glu Ser Tyr Lys Asp Ser Thr Leu Ile Met Gln
  b Leu Asn Glu Asp Ser Tyr Lys Asp Ser Thr Leu Ile Met Gln
751 CTG CTA AGG GAC AAT TTA ACC TTA TGG ACT TCA GAC ATG TCC
  y Leu Leu Arg Asp Asn Leu Thr Leu Phe Thr Ser Asp Met Ser
  b Leu Leu Arg Asp Asn Leu Thr Leu Phe Thr Ser Asp Gln Gln
793 GAG TCC GGT CAA GCT GAA GAC CAA CAA CAA CAA CAA CAT
  y Glu Ser Gly Gln Ala Glu Asp Gln Gln Gln Gln Gln His
  b Asp Glu Glu Ala Gly Glu Gly Asn
835 CAG CAA CAG CAG CCA CCT GCT GCC GCC GAA GTG AAG CAC CAA
  y Gln Gln Gln Gln Pro Pro Ala Ala Ala Glu Val Lys His Gln
877 AGT AAG TAT TCT GAT AAA TCT AAA GAG AAA TTA CTA AAA AAA
  y Ser Lys Tyr Ser Asp Lys Ser Lys Glu Lys Leu Leu Lys Lys
919 AGA AAA AAA AAA GAA CGA GGG TGT AAT AAT TTG TAG TTC ATT
  y Arg Lys Lys Lys Glu Arg Gly Cys Asn Asn Leu TER
961 ATT GCA ATT ATA TAT CTA TAT CTA TAT ATG TAT ATA ACA TTA
1003 ACA TGT GCA TGT ACA CAC GTA ATC GCG CGT GTA CAT GTC TAT
1045 ATG TGT TAC TAC TAC TAT ACT GTT TTG ACG TGT ATG TTT ATT
1087 TAT CTC TCT TCT GAT TCC TCC ACC CCT TCC TTA CTC AAC CGG
1129 GTA AAT GTC GCA TCA TGA CTC CCG ACA ATA ATC CCC TCT GGT
1171 ATA CGC AGA AGC AAC TTT AGC TTC TTA ACG GCA AGA ACT TTT
1213 TTA TGT TTG TCG CAC CAC CTG TAT CTT CAC AAA AGT TGG ATA CAG
1255 CAA TAA GAA AGG AAA CCA CAT TTG TGC CA 1283

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3.2. Disruption of the *BMH1* gene

To obtain information on the function of the *BMH1* gene we made disruption mutants. To this end, the *URA3* gene was cloned into the *Bgl*II site of the *BMH1* gene (Fig. 1B). Subsequently, the diploid strain, YS60, was transformed with a 4.7 kb *Eco*RI–*Bam*HI fragment containing the disrupted *BMH1* gene and yielded the uracil prototrophic transformant, T1. A proper integration of the *URA3* gene was confirmed by Southern blot analysis. In an *Xho*I digest of chromosomal DNA isolated from transformant T1 an extra 6 kb fragment hybridized to the *BMH1* probe in addition to the 5 kb fragment detected in DNA isolated from YS60 (data not shown). Similarly, a 6 kb fragment hybridized to the *URA3* probe. Similar results were obtained using *Hind*III digests of DNA isolated from T1 and YS60 (data not shown).

To investigate the effect of disruption of the *BMH1* gene, T1 was sporulated. Dissection of ten asci always yielded four viable spores with 2:2 segregation of uracil auxotrophy, indicating that the *BMH1* gene is not required for growth on rich media. For further studies non-flocculating and leucine prototrophic spore cultures were selected: 2C (*BMH1 ura3 his4*), 8D (*bmh1::URA3 ura3 his4*), 4C (*BMH1 trp1 ura3 his4*) and 4A (*bmh1::URA3 trp1 ura3 his4*). These spores were analyzed by Southern blot analysis as described above and the expected fragments hybridized to the *BMH1* and *URA3* probes (data not shown).

3.3. Transformation with the *BMH1* gene on multicopy plasmids

To study the effect of the *BMH1* gene on multicopy plasmids, a 3.2 kb *Eco*RI–*Kpn*I fragment containing the *BMH1* gene (Fig. 1C) was cloned into the multicloning site of the yeast/*E. coli* shuttle plasmids, YEplac112 and YEplac195. As a control, the same fragment was cloned into the centromeric yeast/*E. coli* shuttle plasmids, YCplac22 and YCplac33. The constructs with the *BMH1* gene on the YEplac195 and YCplac33, as well as the corresponding parent plasmids, were used to transform the strain 2C (*BMH1 ura3 his4*) to uracil prototrophy. The constructs with the YEplac112 and YCplac22 plasmids, as well as the parent plasmids, were used to transform the strain 4A (*bmh1::URA3 trp1 ura3 his4*) to tryptophan prototrophy. During all yeast transformations normal transformation frequencies were observed suggesting that the presence of the *BMH1* gene

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Fig. 2. Nucleotide and predicted amino acid sequence of the *BMH1* gene and comparison with the amino acid sequence of the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein (η -chain). The predicted amino acid sequence starts with the first methionine codon in the open reading frame. Amino acids present in both the putative yeast protein and in the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein are shaded. y, predicted amino acid sequence of the yeast protein; b, amino acid sequence of the bovine brain protein [7].

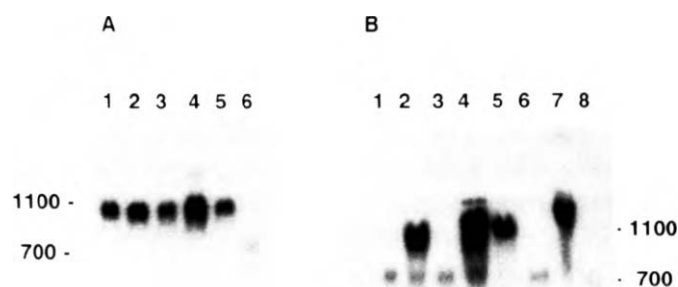


Fig. 3. Northern blot analysis. RNA was extracted from the yeast strains indicated and 30 μ g was used for Northern blot analysis using the labeled 0.3 kb *Bgl*II–*Hind*III fragment of the *BMH1* gene as probe. (A) lane 1, 33; lane 2, 33B; lane 3, 195; lane 4, 195B; lane 5, 2C; lane 6, 8D. (B) lane 1, 22; lane 2, 22B; lane 3, 112; lane 4, 112B; lane 5, 2C; lane 6, 4A; lane 7, 4C; lane 8, 8D.

on multicopy plasmids is not lethal to the yeast cells. From each transformation one transformant was selected after verification that these transformants indeed contained the expected plasmids. The genotypes of the various yeast transformants are summarized in Table I.

3.4. RNA levels

To verify the expression of the *BMH1* gene in the various strains, Northern blot analyses were performed. A single hybridizing band corresponding to RNA of approximately 1,100 nucleotides was observed in the *BMH1* strains, 2C and 4C, when an internal fragment of the *BMH1* gene, i.e. the 0.3 kb *Bgl*II–*Hind*III fragment, was used as hybridization probe (lanes 5 of Figs. 3A and 3B for strain 2C; lane 7 of Fig. 3B for strain 4C). This band was not detected in RNA isolated from the strains 8D and 4A containing a disrupted *BMH1* gene (Fig. 3A, lane 6 and Fig. 3B, lane 8 for strain 8D; Fig. 3B, lane 6 for strain 4A). This observation indicates that the gene disruption effectively blocks transcription of the *BMH1* gene. In the strains with a disrupted *BMH1* gene a weak hybridization was observed with RNA of approximately 700 nucleotides. However, this band was absent when the 1.5 kb *Eco*RI–*Bgl*II fragment, containing the N-terminal part of the *BMH1* gene, was used as hybridization probe. With this probe the same RNA of approximately 1,100 nucleotides was detected in all strains with an intact *BMH1* gene (data not shown). In RNA isolated from transformants of the strain 2C with the centromeric plasmid YCplac33 (strain 33) or with this plasmid containing the *BMH1* gene (strain 33B), the hybridization band at approximately 1,100 nucleotides was detected (Fig. 3A, lanes 1 and 2). Transformation of 2C with the multicopy plasmid YEplac195 containing the *BMH1* gene (strain 195B) resulted in an approximately 4-fold increase in the level of RNA hybridizing to the *BMH1* probe (Fig. 3A, lane 4). This was not observed in transformants containing the parent plasmid YEplac195 (strain 195; Fig. 3A, lane 3). Similarly, transformation of 4A with the centromeric plasmid YCplac22 containing the *BMH1* gene (strain 22B)

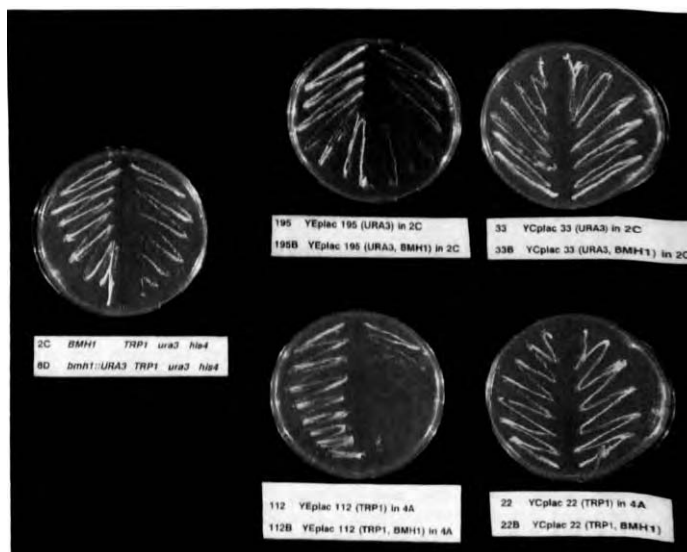


Fig. 4. Growth of the yeast strains on MY plates with acetate as carbon source. Strains were plated on MY plates containing 2% (w/v) acetate supplemented with histidine. Photos were taken after a 7 day incubation at 30°C. The medium used for strains 2C and 8D was supplemented with histidine, uracil and tryptophan.

resulted in restoration of the level of RNA hybridizing to the *BMH1* probe (Fig. 3B, lane 2). This was not observed in transformants containing the parental plasmid YCplac22 (strain 22; Fig. 3B, lane 1). Transformation of the spore 4A with the *BMH1* gene on the multicopy plasmid YEplac112 (strain 112B) resulted in an elevated level of RNA hybridizing with the *BMH1* probe (approximately 5-fold). This was not observed after transformation of the spore 4A with the YEplac112 plasmid (strain 112; Fig. 3B, lane 3). In conclusion, these results indicated that no *BMH1* mRNA was found in the disruption mutants and that the transformants with a multicopy plasmid contained elevated levels.

3.5. Growth on glucose and acetate

The properties of the strains obtained in this study were further investigated by growing them on various growth media. In Table II the generation times of the various strains relative to that of strain 33 are listed for growth on MY, i.e. a minimal medium with glucose as carbon source. The strains with one or two copies of the *BMH1* gene, i.e. strains 22B, 33, 33B and 195, have nearly equal generation times. On the other hand, strains lacking an intact copy of the *BMH1* gene, i.e. strains 22 and 112, and strains with the *BMH1* gene on a multicopy plasmid, i.e. strains 112B and 195B, grew slower (generation times 1.3- to 1.6-fold longer). As shown in Fig. 4, the strains with the *BMH1* gene on a multicopy plasmid (112B and 195B) hardly grew on plates containing minimal medium with acetate as carbon source. The other strains, both with an intact or a disrupted *BMH1* gene, grew normally. Growth of the

strains with the *BMH1* gene on a multicopy plasmid (112B and 195B) in liquid medium containing acetate indicated that the generation time of these two strains was approximately 5-fold longer than that of the other strains. No obvious difference was observed in generation times between strains with an intact or a disrupted *BMH1* gene. The strains 112B and 195B also hardly grew on media with glycerol as carbon source (data not shown).

4. DISCUSSION

The 14-3-3 protein is a soluble acidic protein which is abundantly present in mammalian brain tissues, i.e. it represents up to 1% of soluble brain proteins [4]. Within brain tissue the protein is mainly present in neurons and is subject to axonal transport [5]. By immunohistochemical methods this protein was also detected in other tissues, e.g. adrenal medulla and intestine, although at a much lower concentration [23]. In more recent studies the 14-3-3 protein was resolved into seven polypeptide components [7,8] and the amino acid sequence of three of these components was shown to be 75–85% identical. Northern blot analysis indicated that these three forms are expressed abundantly in bovine brain. One of the forms, the γ -chain, was expressed exclusively in the brain, whereas the two other forms, the β - and η -chains, were also expressed to some extent in other tissues [8]. In this study we identified a gene in the yeast *S. cerevisiae* which codes for a putative protein that is very similar to the 14-3-3 protein. Previously, we have shown that this gene is localized on chromosome V [13]. Comparison of the putative yeast protein with the bovine brain η -, β - and γ -chains indicates that these proteins are 51, 54 and 52% identical, respectively. The yeast protein contained stretches of up to 22 amino acids which were completely identical to the corresponding parts of the bovine brain protein. These stretches alternate with

stretches with less identity (Fig. 2). The identification of a yeast gene coding for a putative protein with homology to the 14-3-3 protein indicates that proteins like the 14-3-3 protein are not exclusively present in mammalian tissues, but can also be found in evolutionarily distant organisms like *S. cerevisiae*.

The observation that yeast contains a gene coding for a protein homologous to the 14-3-3 protein raises questions about the physiological function of this class of proteins. The protein isolated from bovine brain acts as an activator protein during the activation of tyrosine 3-monooxygenase and tryptophan 5-monooxygenase by Ca^{2+} - and calmodulin-dependent protein kinase II [3]. These two oxygenases are involved in neurotransmitter synthesis. Recently, proteins were isolated from sheep brain which were strong inhibitors of protein kinase C [9,10] and were more than 90% identical to the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein. At the moment it is still unclear whether this class of proteins is actually involved in regulation of neurotransmitter synthesis or protein kinase C function in vivo. Recently, a gene was identified in *S. cerevisiae* coding for a protein which is very similar to the mammalian protein kinases C [24]. In addition, protein kinase C activity was detected in yeast homogenates [25]. In this respect it is of interest that the bovine brain 14-3-3 protein contains a pseudo substrate site for protein kinase C, i.e. the sequence Gly-Ala-Arg-Arg (amino acids 54–57), which may play a key role in the inhibition of protein kinase C [26]. This same amino acid sequence is also present in the putative yeast *bmh1* protein (amino acids 55–58 in Fig. 2), suggesting that the yeast protein may be involved in regulation of protein kinase C.

In an initial attempt to obtain insight into the physiological function of the *bmh1* protein we made disruption mutants lacking an intact *BMH1* gene and made transformants with the *BMH1* gene on multicopy plasmids. We could show by Northern blot analysis that the disruption mutants completely lacked the mRNA of approximately 1,100 nucleotides hybridizing to the *BMH1* probe and that transformants with the *BMH1* gene on multicopy plasmids had an increased level of this RNA (Fig. 3). Whether this increased transcription resulted in an elevated level of the *bmh1* protein is not yet known. However, we did show that the strains with the *BMH1* gene on multicopy plasmids grew slower than the corresponding wild-type strains on minimal medium containing glucose (Table II) and grew very poorly on media with acetate or glycerol as sole carbon source (Fig. 4). Strains lacking an intact *BMH1* gene grew slower than the corresponding wild-type strains on media containing glucose. This indicates that one or two copies of the *BMH1* gene is optimal for growth, suggesting that the *BMH1* gene has a regulatory function in vivo. However, its exact role is still unknown and a possible effect of the *bmh1* protein on protein kinase C or other protein kinases has still to be proven. On the

Table II
Growth rates in minimal medium containing glucose

Strain	Copies of <i>BMH1</i> gene	Relative generation time ^a
22	0	1.4 ± 0.1 (n=3) ^b
22B	1	1.1 ± 0.1 (n=4)
112	0	1.4 ± 0.1 (n=4)
112B	multiple	1.6 ± 0.2 (n=4)
33	1	1.0 (n=4)
33B	2	1.1 ± 0.1 (n=4)
195	1	1.1 ± 0.1 (n=4)
195B	multiple	1.3 ± 0.1 (n=3)
2C	1	1.0 ± 0.2 (n=3)
8D	0	1.4 ± 0.3 (n=4)

^a The generation time was determined in each individual experiment relative to the generation time of strain 33, i.e. 2.8 ± 0.8 h (n=4).

^b mean ± S.D.

n, number of experiments

other hand, the observations made in this study offer possibilities for future research to unravel the physiological function of the putative *bmh1* protein and other members of this class of proteins.

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