

An SH3 domain-mediated interaction between the phagocyte NADPH oxidase factors p40^{phox} and p47^{phox}

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Abstract The phagocyte NADPH oxidase is activated during phagocytosis to produce superoxide, following assembly of a membrane-integrated cytochrome *b*₅₅₈ with cytosolic proteins, p47^{phox}, p67^{phox} and p40^{phox}, each containing Src homology 3 (SH3) domains. While both p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} are indispensable for the oxidase activity, role of p40^{phox} remains obscure. Here we study interaction between p40^{phox} and p47^{phox} by two independent methods, a two-hybrid system in the yeast and an *in vitro* binding assay using purified proteins. The present results show that the interaction is mediated via binding of the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} to a C-terminal proline-rich region of p47^{phox}. This proline-rich region is also the target for binding of p67^{phox}, and the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} can inhibit the binding of the C-terminal one of p67^{phox} to p47^{phox}.

Key words: NADPH oxidase; SH3 domain; Proline-rich region

1. Introduction

The phagocyte NADPH oxidase is dormant in resting cells, and activated during phagocytosis to catalyze the one-electron reduction of molecular oxygen in conjunction with oxidation of NADPH to generate superoxide (O₂^{•−}), a precursor of microbicidal oxidants [1,2]. The importance of the oxidase to host immunity is evident from that recurrent severe infection occurs in patients with chronic granulomatous disease (CGD) whose phagocytes are deficient in superoxide production [3].

Activation of the NADPH oxidase involves assembly of cytochrome *b*₅₅₈, a membrane-integrated flavocytochrome comprising gp91^{phox} and p22^{phox}, with cytosolic proteins such as p47^{phox}, p67^{phox} and the small G-protein Rac (Rac1 and/or Rac2) [1,2]. The factors that reside in the cytosol of resting cells, upon activation translocate to the membrane to form a complex with cytochrome *b*₅₅₈ [1,2]. The translocation of p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} requires interaction between p47^{phox} and cytochrome *b*₅₅₈; p47^{phox} carries p67^{phox} into an active oxidase complex where the cytochrome provides a docking site [4,5].

Both p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} contain two Src homology 3 (SH3) domains. The domain is present in many signaling proteins and known to mediate interactions via binding to pro-

line-rich regions in target proteins [6,7]. Current evidence indicates that SH3 domains function in assembly of the NADPH oxidase factors [8–11]. An SH3 domain of p47^{phox} appears to be critical for interaction with cytochrome *b*₅₅₈; it binds to the C-terminal cytoplasmic domain of p22^{phox} but fails to interact with a mutant p22^{phox} carrying Pro¹⁵⁶Gln substitution in a proline-rich region, which is found in a patient with CGD [8,10]. On the other hand, the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} is involved in binding to p47^{phox} [9–11].

The protein p40^{phox} containing an SH3 domain was originally identified as one that tightly associates with p67^{phox} in resting phagocytes [12–14], but its role is poorly understood. Although p40^{phox} as well as p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} seems to translocate to the membrane upon cell stimulation depending on the presence of cytochrome *b*₅₅₈ [13], the NADPH oxidase activity can be reconstituted without p40^{phox} under cell-free activation conditions [15,16], suggesting that p40^{phox} may play a role in modulation of the activity. A recent study using the yeast two-hybrid system has shown that the C-terminal portion of p40^{phox} but not its SH3 domain is involved in association with p67^{phox}, and that a region containing the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} can interact with p47^{phox} [17]. Little is, however, known about interaction between p40^{phox} and p47^{phox}, including the question which site of p47^{phox} is responsible for the binding to p40^{phox}.

As a step for understanding the role of p40^{phox}, we focused on interaction between p40^{phox} and p47^{phox}, since p47^{phox} seems to play a central role in assembly of the NADPH oxidase factors. The present results obtained by two independent methods, the two-hybrid system and an *in vitro* binding assay using expressed proteins, indicate that the interaction is mediated via binding of the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} to a C-terminal proline-rich region of p47^{phox}, a region which is also the target for the p67^{phox} binding.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Two-hybrid experiments

The vectors and strains used for two-hybrid experiments were obtained from Clontech Lab., Inc. (CA, USA). The multiple cloning sites of pGAD424 and pGBT9 were modified so that the inserts from glutathione *S*-transferase (GST) fusion plasmids (pGEX-2T, Pharmacia Biotech) can be readily transferred in correct orientation and reading frames. Human cDNAs encoding the N-terminal (amino acid residues 1–167), SH3 (amino acid residues 168–233) and C-terminal domains (amino acid residues 234–339) of p40^{phox} were amplified from differentiated HL60 RNAs by RT-PCR and cloned into the *Bam*HI and *Eco*RI sites of the modified GAL4 activation domain vector, pGAD424g. The obtained plasmids were named pGAD::p40-N, pGAD::p40-SH3 and pGAD::p40-C, respectively. A mutant p40-SH3 carrying Trp²⁰⁷Arg substitution was made by

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Abbreviations: CGD, chronic granulomatous disease; SH3, Src homology 3; GST, glutathione *S*-transferase; MBP, maltose binding protein

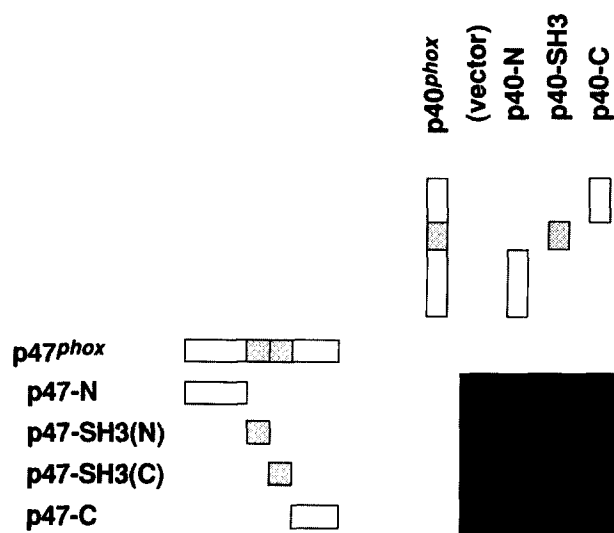


Fig. 1. Interaction of $p40^{phox}$ with $p47^{phox}$ analyzed by the yeast two-hybrid system. The yeast strain HF7c was cotransformed with pairs of recombinant plasmids pGAD424 and pGBT9, the former encoding the indicated domain of $p40^{phox}$ fused to the GAL4 activation domain and the latter encoding the indicated domain of $p47^{phox}$ fused to the GAL4 DNA-binding domain. All the possible pGAD424 and pGBT9 plasmid pairs were tested for the His⁺ phenotype. The structure of domains and intact proteins is schematically illustrated. Shaded boxes indicates SH3 domains. (vector) indicates the cloning vector used as a negative control.

PCR-directed mutagenesis and ligated to pGAD424g to yield pGAD::p40-SH3(W207R). Human cDNAs encoding N-terminal (amino acid residues 1–153), SH3(N) (amino acid residues 154–219), SH3(C) (amino acid residues 223–286), and C-terminal domains (amino acid residues 286–390) of $p47^{phox}$ were transferred from corresponding GST-fusion constructs [8] to the modified GAL4 DNA-binding domain vector, pGBT9g, thereby constructing pGBT::p47-N, pGBT::p47-SH3(N), pGBT::p47-SH3(C) and pGBT::p47-C, respectively. Deletion mutants of pGAD::p47-C, namely p47- Δ PI1, p47- Δ PI2 and p47- Δ PI3, were lacking amino acid residues 299–346, 360–390, and 341–368, respectively. The domains of $p47^{phox}$, N-terminal (amino acid residues 1–153), (SH3)₂ (amino acid residues 154–286) and C-terminal domains (amino acid residues 286–390), were also transferred from corresponding GST-fusion constructs [8] to pGAD424g, constructing pGAD::p47-N, pGAD::p47-(SH3)₂ and pGAD::p47-C, respectively. Similarly, from the corresponding inserts of pGEX-2T (H.S., unpublished), four plasmids for human $p67^{phox}$ were constructed, namely pGBT::p67-N (amino acid residues 1–232), pGBT::p67-SH3(N) (amino acid residues 228–291), pGBT::p67-IS (amino acid residues 291–450) and pGBT::p67-SH3(C) (amino acid residues 445–516). The C-terminal SH3 domain of $p67^{phox}$ was also ligated to pGAD424g, constructing pGAD::p67-SH3(C). These plasmids were used following the confirmative DNA sequencing.

All the possible pairs between the pGAD and pGBT plasmids were cotransformed into competent yeast HF7c cells with *HIS3* and *lacZ* reporter genes using a modified lithium-acetate method [18]. Following the selection for Leu⁺ and Trp⁺ phenotype, transformants were tested for their ability to grow on plates lacking histidine. These indicator plates were supplemented with 10 mM 3-aminotriazole to suppress the background growth due to leaky expression of *HIS3* gene in HF7c cells. Activation of *lacZ* reporter was examined by the filter assay according to the manufacturer's recommendation.

For the competitive two-hybrid assay, cDNA encoding the C-terminal SH3 domain of $p67^{phox}$ was cloned into a newly constructed activation domain vector pGAF (T.I., unpublished), a derivative of pGAD424g carrying *URA3*, instead of *LEU2*, as the selection marker, to obtain pGAF::p67-SH3(C). To express the SH3 domain of $p40^{phox}$ as the competitor, its cDNA fragment was cloned into the *Mlu*I site, but not the conventional cloning sites, of pACT2, a high-expression type activation domain vector (Clontech Lab., Inc., CA, USA), to

obtain pACTA::p40-SH3. This construct directs the expression of the SH3 domain fused to an intact nuclear localization signal and a part of the GAL4 activation domain, which shows no transcription activation. The plasmids pGBT::p47- Δ PI1 and pGAF::p67-SH3(C) were cotransformed with pACT2 or pACTA::p40-SH3 into Y187z strain (T.I., unpublished), a *ura3* derivative of Y187. Following the selection of triple transformants for Trp⁺, Ura⁺ and Leu⁺ phenotype, the activation of *lacZ* reporter was examined by the filter method.

2.2. In vitro binding assay using purified proteins

The maltose binding protein (MBP) fusion expression vector pMAL-c2 (New England BioLab, MA, USA) was also modified in its multiple cloning site to facilitate the transfer of inserts from pGEX-2T plasmids. The modified vector, pMAL-c2g, was used for the expression of the three regions of $p40^{phox}$. Expressed proteins were purified using amylose resin (New England BioLab, MA, USA). The individual domains of $p47^{phox}$ were expressed as GST fusion proteins and purified using glutathione Sepharose beads (Pharmacia Biotech) as described previously [8]. The purified GST fusion proteins were subjected to 9% SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis and transferred to nitrocellulose membrane. Following the blocking with non-fat dry milk, the filters were incubated with MBP fusion proteins and washed as described previously [8]. Then, the washed filters were probed with anti-MBP antibody (New England BioLab, MA, USA), and the complex was detected using secondary anti-mouse IgG antibodies conjugated with peroxidase (Sigma) and a POD immunostain kit (Wako, Osaka, Japan) according to the manufacturer's instructions.

3. Results and discussion

In the present study on interaction between $p40^{phox}$ and $p47^{phox}$, we first used a two-hybrid system in the yeast. Fuchs et al., using the system, have recently shown that the region containing the SH3 domain of $p40^{phox}$ and its adjacent regions (amino acids 146–260) is involved in interaction with $p47^{phox}$, leaving the target on the latter unclear [17]. To clarify whether the interaction requires the SH3 domain itself or its adjacent regions, we prepared a construct comprising solely the SH3

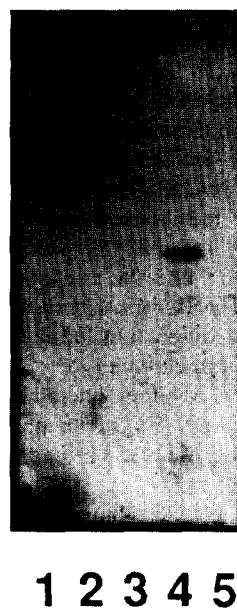


Fig. 2. In vitro interaction between $p40^{phox}$ and $p47^{phox}$. The four domains of $p47^{phox}$ expressed as GST fusion proteins and GST were subjected to SDS-PAGE, and transferred to a nitrocellulose filter: GST-p47-N (lane 1), GST-p47-SH3(N) (lane 2), GST-p47-SH3(C) (lane 3), GST-p47-C (lane 4) and GST (lane 5). The filter was subsequently overlaid with the SH3 domain of $p40^{phox}$ fused to MBP as a probe.

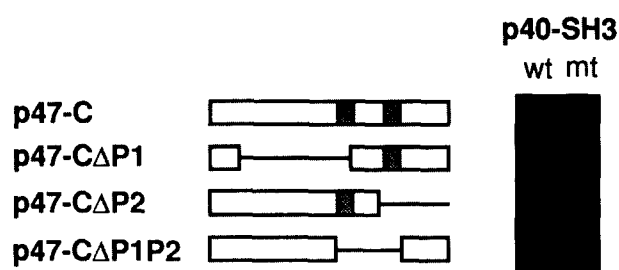


Fig. 3. Mapping of the p40^{phox} SH3 domain binding site on p47^{phox}. The vector pGAD424 encoding wild-type SH3 domain of p40^{phox} (wt) or its mutant carrying the Trp²⁰⁷Arg substitution (mt) was co-transformed into yeast strain HF7c with the vector pGBT9 encoding the C-terminal portion of p47^{phox} (p47-C) or its deletion mutants (p47-ΔP1, p47-ΔP2, or p47-ΔP1P2). All the possible pGAD424 and pGBT9 plasmid pairs were tested for the His⁺ phenotype. The structure of p47-C and its derived proteins is schematically illustrated. Proline-rich regions are indicated by shaded boxes.

domain of p40^{phox} (amino acids 168–233) as well as those of the N-terminal and C-terminal domains, and fused them to the activation domain of GAL4 on the vector pGAD424g to obtain pGAD::p40-SH3, pGAD::p40-N and pGAD::p40-C, respectively. On the other hand, for mapping the responsible region of p47^{phox}, the protein was divided into N-terminal, the N-terminal SH3, the C-terminal SH3 and C-terminal domains, each of which was fused to the DNA-binding domain of GAL4 on the pGBT9g vector to construct pGBT::p47-N, pGBT::p47-SH3(N), pGBT::p47-SH3(C) and pGBT::p47-C, respectively. All the possible pairs between the pGAD::p40 and pGBT::p47 plasmids were introduced into competent HF7c cells and tested for activation of *HIS3* reporter gene. As shown in Fig. 1, the strain bearing both pGAD::p40-SH3 and pGBT::p47-C, but not other combinations, grew on the plate lacking histidine. The activation of *lacZ* reporter was confirmed by the filter assay (data not shown). These results indicate that the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} mediates interaction with p47^{phox} via binding to the C-terminal portion.

To confirm that the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} directly interacts with the C-terminal portion of p47^{phox}, we expressed and purified all the domains of both proteins, and used them for an in vitro binding assay: the four domains of p47^{phox} fused to GST were transferred to membrane and probed with the three domains of p40^{phox} tagged with MBP. When the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} was used as a probe, a positive interaction was detected only with the C-terminal portion of p47^{phox} (Fig. 2). On the other hand, the other two domains of p40^{phox} did not interact with any portions of p47^{phox} (data not shown). These results were in complete agreement with the two-hybrid data described above, and we thus conclude that direct binding of the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} to the C-terminal portion of p47^{phox} mediates interaction between these two proteins, but other domains or portions are not involved in the interaction.

To further investigate the nature of the interaction, we introduced a mutation into the SH3 domain of p40^{phox}, causing replacement of Trp-207 by Arg. This tryptophan residue is the most conserved one in SH3 domains [19], and it directly interacts with a proline of target peptides [20,21]. The equivalent mutations (substitution of Arg or Leu for Trp) in Src and Crk result in loss of function [22,23]. The mutant p40^{phox} SH3 domain carrying the Trp²⁰⁷Arg substitution failed to interact with the C-terminal portion of p47^{phox} (Fig. 3), indicating that the interaction occurs in a manner common to those via SH3

domains. As is well established, targets of SH3 domains are proline-rich regions and the minimal requirement is a Pro-Xa-Xa-Pro motif [20]. In the C-terminal portion of p47^{phox}, the motif exists in stretches of Pro³⁴¹-Gly-Pro-Gln-Ser-Pro-Gly-Ser-Pro³⁴⁹ and Pro³⁶¹-Gln-Pro-Ala-Val-Pro-Pro-Arg-Pro³⁶⁹. To determine which is involved in interaction with the SH3 domain of p40^{phox}, we made three constructs: a p47-C lacking the former stretch (p47-ΔP1); without the latter (p47-ΔP2); deleting both (p47-ΔP1P2). Two-hybrid assays were performed using these constructs (Fig. 3). All of the p47^{phox} fusion proteins that interacted with the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} shared a common proline-rich stretch of Pro³⁶¹-Gln-Pro-Ala-Val-Pro-Pro-Arg-Pro³⁶⁹, indicating that the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} binds the C-terminal proline-rich region of p47^{phox}.

The C-terminal portion of p47^{phox} seems to be not only the target of p40^{phox} but also that of p67^{phox}. Binding assays in vitro have shown that the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} interacts with this portion of p47^{phox} [9,10]. To verify that the interaction occurs in vivo, we carried out two-hybrid experiments. The DNA-binding domain of GAL4 on the pGBT9g

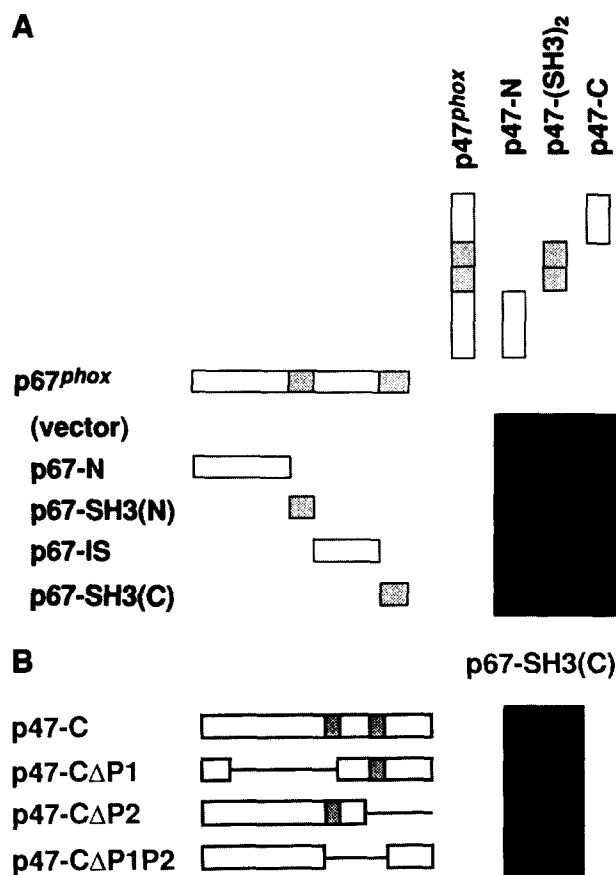


Fig. 4. Interaction of p67^{phox} with p47^{phox}. (A) The four domains of p67^{phox} expressed as fusion with the GAL4 DNA-binding domain were tested for interaction with the three portions of p47^{phox} fused to the GAL4 activation domain, in yeast HF7c cells. (B) Various deletion mutants of the p47^{phox} C-terminal portion (p47-C), as fusion with GAL4 DNA-binding domain, were tested for interaction with the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} (p67-SH3(C)) fused to the GAL4 activation domain, in yeast HF7c cells. Interactions between proteins are demonstrated by histidine-independent growth. The structure of domains and intact proteins is schematically illustrated. Shaded boxes indicate SH3 domains (A) or proline-rich regions (B). (vector) indicates the cloning vector used as a negative control.

pGAF **pACTΔ-p40-SH3**

pGAF::p67-SH3(C) **pACT2**

pGAF::p67-SH3(C) **pACTΔ-p40-SH3**

Fig. 5. In vivo inhibition of p67^{phox} binding to p47^{phox} by the SH3 domain of p40^{phox}. The plasmids pGBT::p47-CAP1 and pGAF::p67-SH3(C) (or pGAF) were cotransfected with pACT2 or pACTΔ::p40-SH3 into Y187z strain, a *ura3* derivative of Y187. Following the selection of triple transformants for Trp⁺, Ura⁺ and Leu⁺ phenotype, the activation of *lacZ* reporter was examined by the filter method.

vector was fused to the N-terminal portion, the N-terminal SH3 domain, the portion between both SH3 domains (inter-SH3 portion) and the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} to obtain pGBT::p67-N, pGBT::p67-SH3(N), pGBT::p67-IS and pGBT::p67-SH3(C), respectively. All the possible pairs between the pGBT::p67 and pGAD::p47 plasmids were tested for activation of the HIS3 reporter gene. Only the strain bearing both pGBT::p67-SH3(C) and pGAD::p47-C showed the His⁺ phenotype (Fig. 4A). Thus the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} interacts with the C-terminal portion of p47^{phox} in vivo as well as in vitro. We next pinpointed the target region on p47^{phox}. As shown in Fig. 4B, strains that grew without histidine all expressed both the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} and, as a part of the fusion protein, a proline-rich stretch of Pro³⁶¹-Gln-Pro-Ala-Val-Pro-Pro-Arg-Pro³⁶⁹ on p47^{phox}. This indicates that the target of p67^{phox} is the C-terminal proline-rich region of p47^{phox}, which is consistent with that determined by in vitro binding assays [9,10]. It should be noted that this region was also responsible for binding of p40^{phox} (Fig. 3).

The finding that the same region on p47^{phox} is recognized by the p40^{phox} SH3 domain and by the C-terminal one of p67^{phox} suggests that the two SH3 domains compete with each other in binding to p47^{phox}. To test this possibility, we designed an in vivo competition assay, in which the effect of the overexpressed SH3 domain of p40^{phox} on the interaction between p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} was examined using the yeast two-hybrid system. The interaction between the two was readily detected by *lacZ* reporter activation in the presence of control plasmid pACT2, whereas it was severely impaired when the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} was overexpressed from pACTΔ::p40-SH3 (Fig. 5). Thus the SH3 domain of p40^{phox} can inhibit, probably by competition, the binding of the C-terminal one of p67^{phox} to the proline-rich region of p47^{phox}.

Interaction between p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} in stimulated phagocytes is considered to play a crucial role in forming an active NADPH oxidase complex, since p47^{phox} is indispensable for translocation of p67^{phox} to the membrane where cytochrome *b*₅₅₈ resides [4]. Our in vivo data (Fig. 4), as well as those obtained in vitro [10], suggest that the interaction is solely mediated via binding of the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} to the C-terminal proline-rich region of p47^{phox}. The importance of the C-terminal SH3 domain is also sup-

ported by the finding that p67^{phox} deleting this domain fails to restore oxidase activity in Epstein-Barr virus-transformed B lymphocytes that lack p67^{phox} [24]. As shown in this study, the p40^{phox} SH3 domain recognizes and binds the same region on p47^{phox} as the C-terminal SH3 domain of p67^{phox} does. Competition between p40^{phox} and p67^{phox} in binding to p47^{phox} may modulate the NADPH oxidase activity.

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