

RESEARCH ARTICLE

S100b Induces Expression of Myoglobin in AP β Treated Neuronal Cells *In Vitro*: A Possible Neuroprotective Mechanism

Maria E. Clementi^{1,*}, Beatrice Sampaolese¹ and Bruno Giardina^{1,2}

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Abstract: Background: In this study, human neuroblastoma cells (IMR32) treated with Amyloid Beta Peptide (AP β), were used as model to evaluate the molecular basis of protective role of S100b, a neurotrophic factor and neuronal survival protein, highly expressed by reactive astrocytes close to amyloid deposition in the cortex of Alzheimer's patients. The aim of this work is to value the effect of S100b on ROS production in cells treated with Amyloid Beta Peptide and the subsequent influence on globin gene expression.

Method: In this study we investigated the effect of S100b on ROS production and on globin gene expression in human neuroblastoma cells (IMR32) treated with Amyloid Beta Peptide (AP β).

Results: Our results have shown that at nanomolar concentrations, S100b protects cells against AP β mediated cytotoxicity and the protective mechanism could be related, almost in part, to the control of ROS production through an over expression of Myoglobin gene.

Conclusion: In light of our results, we speculate that over-expression of the Myoglobin gene could be read as a possible attempt of the cell to increase the scavengers of reactive oxygen species (ROS).



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1. INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is one of the most common neurodegenerative disease characterized by the accumulation in the brain of patients, due to misfolding of the protein Amyloid Beta (AP β), a peptide of 42 amino acids. Another important pathogenetic event in AD is the relevant oxidative stress; it is well known in fact that AP β can insert into the lipid bilayer and initiate lipid peroxidation and oxidative damage to proteins and other molecules.

In this complex pathogenetic network recent observations have shown that, during the early stages of AD, microglia produces numerous pro-inflammatory molecules (such as IL1 and S100b) whose expression is highly modulated by reactive astrocytes in close proximity of beta-amyloid deposits; in fact our recent results showed that S100b exerts a protective role interfering with some AP β -mediated apoptotic events [1]. In present study we examined the effect of S100b on IMR32, a human neuroblastoma cellular line, treated with Amyloid beta peptide as model of Alzheimer Disease. In particular, we investigated the role of this neuroprotective

effector on ROS production and on expression of some globin gene expression with particular regard to neuroglobin (Ngb), myoglobin (Mb) and cytoglobin (Cygb). The choice of the three globins, particularly neuroglobin, has been suggested by recent experimental works where emerges their neuroprotective role against the damage to neurons and brain as they work as scavengers of reactive oxygen species (ROS), and as molecules involved in signal transduction neuroprotective pathways.

In this short paper, we reported preliminary but relevant data, evidencing as S100b defends neuron by ROS production induced by beta amyloid peptide, and increases the expression of Mb but not of Ngb and Cygb. We have assumed that this effect may be considered a defensive attempt of the neurons by using the Mb as a scavenger of reactive oxygen species and speculate that, in a similar manner to hemoglobin [2], Myoglobin can bind to AP β to enhance its aggregation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Cellular Culture and Treatments

Human neuroblastoma IMR32 cells were grown in minimum essential medium supplemented with 10% heat inactivated fetal bovine serum, 100 IU/ml penicillin, and 100 μ g/ml streptomycin, and cultured at 37°C in an atmosphere

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of 5% CO₂ in air. Cell differentiation was induced by 1 mM dibutyryl cAMP and 2.5 μ M 5-bromodeoxyuridine (Sigma, St. Louis, MO, USA), which were added to the culture medium three times per week, starting from the day after plating. After a week, the differentiated cells were plated at an appropriate density according to each experimental procedure (25.000 cells for ROS detection and 1000000 cells for RNA isolation).

Stock solution of AP β peptide was solubilised in DMSO according to the manufacturer's instructions and stored at -80°C . In the previous studies [3] these conditions have been shown to lead to the predominance of the soluble monomeric form of this peptide. Human recombinant S100b was solved in minimum essential medium, filtered and stored at -20°C . S100b (5 nM) was added to the cultures 12 hr before exposure to AP β (10 μ M). The cells were then incubated for 24 h before different experimental procedures. In all experiments, DMSO was added to cell cultures at the same concentrations present in the beta amyloid peptide solutions. The concentrations of AP β peptide and S100b are chosen by previous time-course studies (data not shown).

2.2. Detection of ROS

The detection of ROS was performed after staining cells with DCFDA Cellular ROS Detection Assay Kit. Briefly, cells treated with different experimental conditions, were grown in 96-well microplate with 25,000 cells per well and treated successively with 2',7'-dichlorofluorescein diacetate (DCFDA) that is converted, by oxidation, to the fluorescent molecular DCF. DCF was then quantified using a CytoFluor Multi-well Plate Reader, with 485 nm excitation and 538 nm emission filters.

2.3. RNA Isolation and Semi-quantitative PCR

Total RNA was isolated with PureLink RNA mini Kit (Life technologies) and the elimination of any genomic DNA was performed by on-column DNase treatment. RNA concentration was evaluated by spectrophotometric reading at 280 and 260 nm. Total RNA was used for first strand cDNA synthesis with SCRIPT cDNA Synthesis Kit and Oligo-dT, as random primer (Jena Bioscience). The PCR was performed according to the manufacturer's instructions. The following primer sequences were used for amplification:

GAPDH forward 5'-AACGGATTTGGTCGTATTG-3',

GAPDH reverse 5'-GGAAGATGGTGATGGGATT-3' (208 bp);

Myoglobin forward 5'-GGGTCTGATCTCGTGTAGCC-3',

Myoglobin reverse 5'-CCAAACCATGCAGAACACAG-3' (199 bp);

Neuroglobin forward 5'-CAGGAAGGTGATGCTCGTGA-3',

Neuroglobin reverse 5'-GTAGAGTTGGCTCCAGGCAG-3' (217 bp) and

Cytoglobin forward 5'- CCAACTGCGAGGACGTG-3',

Cytoglobin reverse 5'-ACTGGCTGAAGTACTGCT-3'(81 bp)

PCR products were then analysed by 1.5 % agarose gels electrophoresis. Image acquisition from gels and quantitative

elaboration was carried out by Bio-Rad Quantity One software. Band density of PCRs have been developed in relative percentage, with that of the housekeeping gene considered as control.

2.4. Myoglobin Preparation and Cell Treatment

Horse heart Myoglobin was dissolved in phosphate buffered saline (PBS, 100 mM, pH 7.4), reduced by adding sodium dithionite and purified on a Sephadex G-25 column. The concentration of the ferrous Myoglobin (Mb) generated was calculated from the absorbance of the Soret band at 494 nm. Mb solution was filtered through 0.2 μ m and diluted in essential medium supplemented at the opportune concentrations. The Mb solution was added to cellular cultures at different concentrations (0.5, 1, 5 and 10 μ M) simultaneously with beta amyloid peptide (10 μ M). The ROS measurements were performed 24 h afterward.

2.5. Statistical Analysis

The data were analysed by one-way ANOVA, followed by post hoc Newman-Keul test for multiple comparison among group means, using a Prism TM computer program (Graph-Pad, San Diego, CA, USA), and differences were considered statistically significant if $P < 0.01$. All results are presented as the mean \pm S.E.M. of at least eight different experiments.

3. RESULTS

Starting from our recent paper [1] where the effect exerted by S100b on modulation of apoptotic genes in IMR32 treated with beta amyloid peptide was evidenced, in this context we investigated the role of stress oxidative in this model of Alzheimer Disease. Since reactive oxygen species production has been strongly implicated in the patho-physiology of these neurodegenerative disorders, in this paper the ROS measurement is reported for IMR32 in different experimental conditions. It is evident, see Fig. (1) that exposure of neuroblastoma cells with beta amyloid peptide (10 μ M) significantly

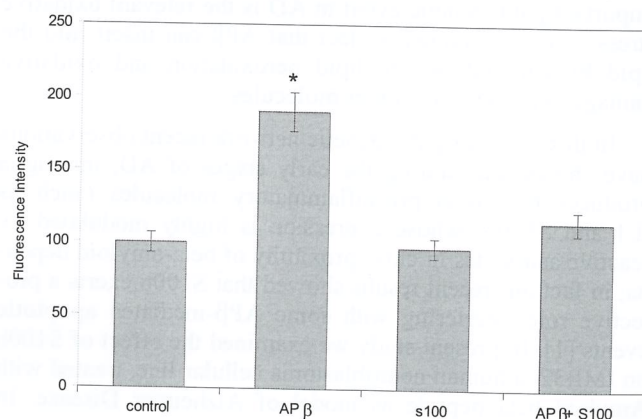


Fig. (1). ROS production (expressed as Fluorescence Intensity) in IMR32 cells treated with beta amyloid peptide (AP β), with S100b and with both S100b and AP β . Human recombinant S100b (5 nM) was added to the cultures 12 hr before exposure to AP β (10 μ M) and successively all the cells were incubated for 24h before the ROS detection. All values indicate means \pm S.E. of eight independent experiments: significantly different from cells untreated: * $P < 0.01$.

cantly ($P < 0.01$) increases (of $90\% \pm 10\%$) production of ROS whereas a 12 hr of pretreatment with S100b (5 nM) defends the cells by oxidation processes showing ROS values similar to the control. To note that the treatment with S100b alone does not modify the control values. Because the expression of Neuroglobin, Myoglobin and Cytoglobin genes in neurons is likely to act as a scavenger of reactive species, as well as a signal transduction molecule involved in neuroprotective pathways, we investigated the expression of these three globins in neuroblastoma cells treated with S100b and beta amyloid peptide. As evident (see Fig. 2) neither Ngb and Cygb are expressed (panel B and C respectively) while the expression of Myoglobin (panel D) seems to be length to the presence of S100b. In particular, while the

RNA for Mb is blank for cells treated with beta amyloid peptide alone, such as in the controls, the presence of S100b stimulates significantly ($P < 0.01$) the expression of this gene reaching an increase of $100\% (\pm 10\%)$. To value the effective role of Mb on reactive oxygen species production, we tested the effect of different concentrations of this hemoprotein on IMR32 treated with beta amyloid peptide (see Fig. 3). As is evident, treatment with Myoglobin keeps ROS values lower than cells treated with Amyloid beta peptide alone in a dependent-dose manner, reaching a significant protective effect to a $5 \mu\text{M}$. It must also underline that higher concentrations of Mb are toxic on cell culture (data not shown), according to literature data [4].

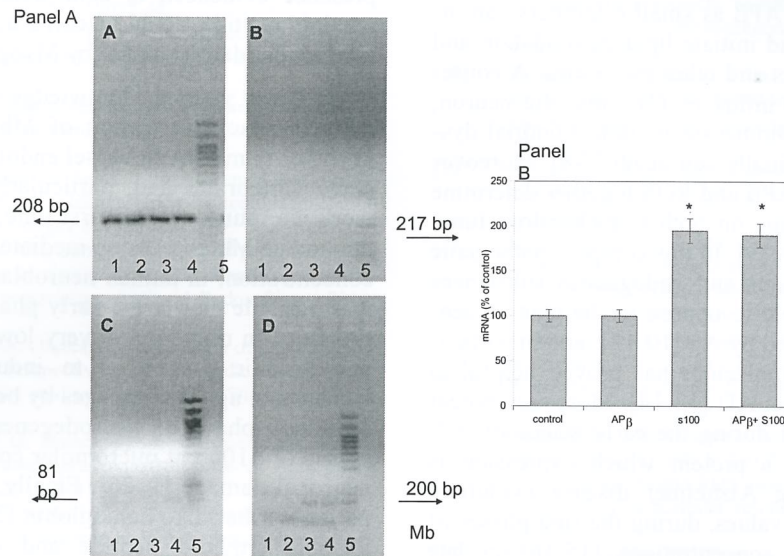


Fig. (2). Panel A. Agarose gels representing mRNA expression levels for GAPDH (A), NgB (B), Cyt (C) and Mb (D) genes in IMR32 cells. Legend of lines: 1) Cell untreated, 2) Cells treated with AP β , 3) Cells treated with S100b, 4) Cells treated with AP β and S100b, 5) markers. In detail: human recombinant S100b (5 nM) was added to the cultures 12 hr before exposure to AP β ($10 \mu\text{M}$). All the cells were incubated, after treatments for 24h before RNA isolation. Panel B. The density of the gel bands for Mb was divided by that of the GAPDH (housekeeping gene) and expressed as percent of the control band density. Results are from eight independent experiments. Significantly different from controls * $P < 0.01$.

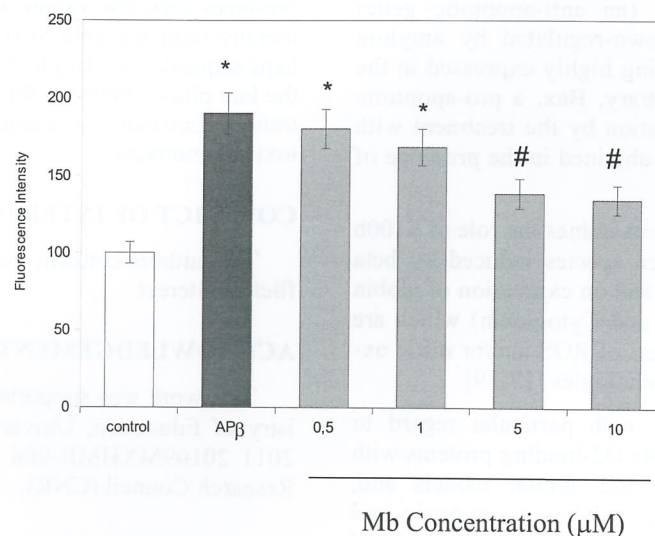


Fig. (3). ROS production (expressed as Fluorescence Intensity) in IMR32 cells treated with AP β ($10 \mu\text{M}$) and in the presence of different concentrations of Myoglobin (0.5, 1, 5 and $10 \mu\text{M}$). The Mb solution was added to cellular cultures simultaneously with AP β and incubated for 24 h before the ROS measurement. All values indicate means \pm S.E. of eight independent experiments: significantly different from cells untreated: * $P < 0.01$ and respect to cells treated with AP β alone # $P < 0.01$.

4. DISCUSSION

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is an irreversible neurodegenerative disorder affecting mainly individuals over the age of 65. It is characterized clinically by progressive dementia and histopathologically, by the presence of extracellular deposits of senile plaques consisting of amyloid fibrils, intracellularly neurofibrillary tangles and neuronal cell loss [5]. The molecular mechanisms of AD has been identified as a protein misfolding disease due to the accumulation of abnormally folded amyloid beta protein (A β), a peptide of 1-42 amino-acids, which deposits in dense formations known as senile plaques or neuritic plaque in the brain.

Another important pathogenetic event in AD is a relevant oxidative stress [6]; in fact A β as small oligomers can insert into the lipid bilayer and initiate lipid peroxidation and oxidative damage to proteins and other molecules. A consequence of this event is the influx of Ca²⁺ into the neuron, resulting in the loss of ion homeostasis, mitochondrial dysfunction, synapse loss and finally cell death [7-8]. Moreover it is well evidenced which A β and ROS together determine an intracellular direct damage on both mitochondrial function and mitochondrial DNA [9]. In this complex pathogenic network, numerous exogenous and endogenous substances are being individuated as able to oppose to the neurodegenerative mechanisms generated by A β [10-12]; and in particular the use of antioxidant molecules has proved helpful to slow the onset of dementia in AD [13-14]. Moreover, recent observations evidenced that during the early stages of AD, microglia produces S100b a protein which expression is carefully modulated during Alzheimer disease evolution, increasing from nanomolar values, during the first phases of pathology, to micromolar concentrations [15-16] in late phases of AD.

The role of S100b in AD was investigated in our recent study where we showed that this neurotrophic factor protects, at nanomolar concentration, cells against A β mediated cytotoxicity. The protective mechanism seems to be related to the effect on bcl-2 (an anti-apoptotic gene) expression, which is highly down-regulated by amyloid beta peptide treatment, while being highly expressed in the presence of S100b. On the contrary, Bax, a pro-apoptotic gene, resulted in to down-regulation by the treatment with S100 as compared to the results obtained in the presence of A β .

In this light, the present paper examines the role of S100b on production of reactive oxygen species induced by beta amyloid peptide on IMR32 cells and on expression of globin genes (Neuroglobin, Myoglobin and Cytoglobin) which are considered as inducible scavengers of ROS and/or nitric oxide (NO) in neurodegenerative pathologies [17-19].

Mammalian globins in fact, with particular regard to Neuroglobin are hypoxia-inducible O₂-binding proteins with neuroprotective effects in cell and animal models and, though were identified firstly in relation to hypoxic and ischemic injury [20], subsequent investigations have pointed to a possible connection with Alzheimer's disease [21]. The mechanism underlying heme-protein protective action is unknown, although several possibilities have been proposed,

suggesting an oxygen storage similar to myoglobin in muscles; however, the low concentrations (in micromolar range) of globin expression in brain tissues suggests a more persuasive role of scavengers by free radicals [22].

Our results evidenced that the presence of S100b at nanomolar concentration, reduces ROS production in cells treated with beta amyloid peptide which, according to previous report, induces a significant presence of reactive oxygen species [23]. The study of the possible correlation between ROS production and the expression of heme-globin RNA, highlighted that neither Neuroglobin and Cytoglobin are inducible in this model of AD, while Myoglobin appears modulated by the presence of S100b. Hence the lower ROS presence evidenced in cells treated with S100b and beta amyloid peptide, could be correlated with an increase in cellular antioxidant potential by Myoglobin.

In recent years the knowledge on the extra muscular and extra cardiac localization of Mb has been evidenced by Myoglobin mRNA in vessel endothelium, liver and brain of some vertebrates and, particularly, in fishes [24]. In this work we found, for the first time, a new mechanism of induction of Mb expression mediated by S100b, at nanomolar concentration, in human neuroblastoma cellular line. Thus, it is possible that in the early phase of AD, when S100b is produced in microglia at very low values, the effect of this neurotrophic protein is to induce protective molecular mechanism against damages by beta amyloid. Instead in the advanced phase of neurodegenerative pathology, the increase of S100b at micromolar concentration contributes to neuronal damage [1, 25]. Finally, it is possible also to hypothesize that, like hemoglobin [2, 19] Mb could also bind to beta amyloid peptide and co-localizers in amyloid plaques.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the present study, we would like to propose the following scenario: in the early phases of AD, S100b produces very low values which could induce Mb synthesis, thereby reducing able to reduce the oxidant injury and perhaps sequestering Amyloid Beta Peptide molecules. While in the late phases both S100b and Mb at more elevated concentration contribute to accelerate the aggregation and neurotoxic phenomena.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that this article content has no conflict of interest.

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PATIENT'S CONSENT

Declared None.

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Current Aging Science

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