

Kinetworks™ Analysis of the Phosphoproteome During Frog Oocyte Maturation

Steven Pelech^{1,2}, Gordon Cheung², Harry Paddon², Xiaoqing Shi², Bradley Stith³ and Hong Zhang¹

¹Kinexus Bioinformatics Corporation, Vancouver, B.C. Canada; ²Brain Research Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada; ³Department of Biology, University of Colorado, Denver, CO, United States



Abstract

A large burst in total protein phosphorylation occurs during *Xenopus laevis* oocyte meiotic maturation near the time of germinal vesicle breakdown (GVBD) due to the activation of a gamut of protein kinases. We undertook the systematic analysis of over 200 human phosphorylation sites in the frog oocyte system using the Kinetworks™ KPSS phospho-site profiling services available from Kinexus (www.kinexus.ca). These services employ immunoblotting screens with highly validated antibodies against conserved phosphorylation sites. Immunoreactive signals were successfully detected for 87 phosphorylation sites in 63 known phosphoproteins. Following GVBD, 50 of these phosphorylation sites exhibited 2-fold or more enhanced phosphorylation signals, whereas 6 other phosphorylation sites under went greater than 50% reductions when compared to immature oocytes. The simultaneous tracking of large numbers of phosphoproteins in the frog oocyte system should reveal novel inter-relationships between these proteins and facilitate the mapping of signal transduction networks that regulate cell cycle transition through M-phase.

Introduction

With completion of the sequencing of the genomes of human and other species, the most challenging and fruitful biomedical research endeavor of this decade will be the mapping of cell signalling systems and establishing their linkages to normal and disease related processes. Over 518 human protein kinases are responsible for the phosphorylation of as many as 100,000 sites in most proteins. But only a few thousand phosphorylation sites have been identified to date. Therefore, our knowledge of the architecture of protein kinase signalling networks is extremely rudimentary, but the application of systems biology approaches should uncover the true complexity of these networks. To this end, Kinexus has tested more than 2500 commercial antibodies for the accurate and quantitative detection of protein kinases, phosphatases and their phosphoprotein substrates in our commercial Kinetworks™ immunoblotting services. The conversion of an oocyte into a fertilizable egg is one of the first developmental steps in sexual reproducing organisms. Like most animals, oocytes from frogs are blocked at the beginning of prophase of the first meiotic cell division. Progesterone or insulin treatment can initiate resumption of meiotic maturation of frog oocytes with the breakdown of the nuclear envelope [also known as germinal vesicle breakdown (GVBD)] occurring about 4-6 h later. Near the time of GVBD, there is a burst of phosphorylation of hundreds of proteins. However, very few of these proteins have been characterized. There are many parallels with the regulation of meiosis and mitosis, including the activation of cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK1). Therefore, knowledge of M phase regulation in the frog oocyte is likely to be extremely relevant to our understanding of mitosis in human tumour cells. In this preliminary study, we used 346 human phospho-site antibodies to discover phosphorylation changes that accompany *Xenopus laevis* oocyte maturation.

Materials & Methods

Total cell lysates were prepared from African clawed frog *Xenopus laevis* oocytes treated with and without 10 µM progesterone for up to 7 hours. Oocytes were washed with ice-cold PBS, scrapped in lysis buffer [20 mM Tris, 20 mM β-glycerophosphate, 150 mM NaCl, 3 mM EDTA, 3 mM EGTA, 1 mM Na₂VO₄, 0.5% Nonidet P-40, 1 mM dithiothreitol, 1 mM PMSF, 2 µg/ml leupeptin, 4 µg/ml aprotinin and 1 µg/ml pepstatin A] and sonicated for 15 sec. Cell debris was removed by centrifugation at 100,000 rpm for 30 min at 4°C. Protein concentration was determined by the Bradford assay. For each Kinetwork™ analysis, 350 µg of total protein were resolved on a 13% single-lane mini-SDS-polyacrylamide gel, and transferred to a nitrocellulose membrane. Using a 20-lane multiblotter, the membrane was incubated with different mixtures of up to 3 antibodies per lane that react with specific phospho-sites in proteins of distinct molecular masses. After further incubation with a mixture of relevant HRP conjugated secondary antibodies, the blots were developed using ECL and signals were quantified using Quantity One software (Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA). Detailed information and protocols of the Kinetworks™ analysis have been published [Pelech et al. (2003) Methods in Molecular Medicine Series: Cancer Cell Signaling Kinetworks™ protein kinase multiblot analysis, (D. Terrian, ed.) vol. 218, 99-111 Humana Press] and can also be found at the Kinexus Bioinformatics Corp. website (www.kinexus.ca).

Results

Treatment of Stage VI oocytes individually dissected from the frog ovaries with progesterone or insulin results in GVBD approximately 4 to 6 hours later. GVBD is evident by the appearance of a light coloured spot in the dark animal hemisphere of the oocyte as depicted in Figure 1.

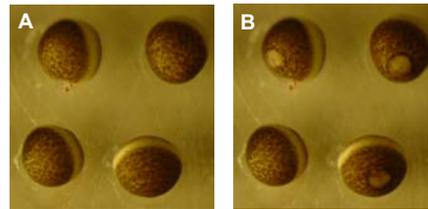


FIGURE 1. Germinal vesicle breakdown during *Xenopus laevis* oocyte maturation. Light microscopic images of frog oocytes about 4.5 h (Panel A) and 5 h (Panel B) after addition of 10 µM progesterone.

Extracts from immature and GVBD positive frog oocytes were separately fractionated and analyzed using 5 standard Kinetworks™ phospho-site screens (i.e. KPSS 1.3, 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0) as well as several Kinetworks™ custom screens. Figure 2 shows examples of the Kinetworks™ immunoblots of the immature and GVBD positive frog oocyte lysates. In addition to the detection of at least 15 known phosphoproteins, the KPSS 1.3 screen also revealed reduced phosphorylation of 11 unknown cross-reactive phosphoproteins and increases in the phosphorylation of another 9 unknown proteins associated with oocyte maturation.

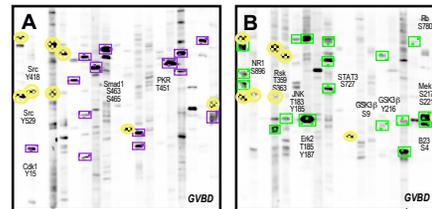


FIGURE 2. Kinetworks™ KPSS 1.3 phospho-site analysis of lysates from immature (Panel A) and GVBD positive (Panel B) frog oocytes. Phosphoproteins that revealed either a reduction or increase in immunostaining in the GVBD positive oocytes are boxed with purple or green, respectively. Some of the phosphoproteins that showed no change in immunostaining are circled in yellow.

The results from the various Kinetworks™ standard and custom screens with a panel of 346 commercial phospho-site antibodies sourced from 8 different suppliers are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Quantification of immunoreactivity signals for known target phosphoproteins with appropriate molecular masses following SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. The human amino acid number designations for the phosphorylation sites are provided in Column 2, and the number of different phospho-site antibodies tested for each site is shown in Column 3. The intensity of the immunoreactive signals for the target protein bands have been presented as counts per minute (cpm). Column 6 shows the percent change in immunoreactive signal intensity associated with induction of oocyte maturation within 1 hour after GVBD.



Conclusions and Future Directions

1. Many of the known human phosphorylation sites are present in the frog, and they are regulated during oocyte maturation.
2. The phospho-site antibodies cross-reacted with over two hundred as yet unidentified phosphoproteins in the frog oocyte, and the phosphorylation states of many of these were also altered during oocyte maturation. The availability of phospho-site antibodies against these phosphoproteins could facilitate their purification and identification by mass spectrometry.
3. The ability of Kinetworks™ analyses to track large panels of phosphoproteins will permit elucidation of possible relationships between these phosphoproteins in the future with oocyte maturation time course experiments in the absence and presence of diverse protein kinase inhibitors.

Acknowledgements - This work was supported in part by a grant from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research.