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Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2d31q5bj

Journal
The Journal of cell biology, 104(3)

ISSN
0021-9525

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Publication Date
1987-03-01

DOI
10.1083/jcb.104.3.635

Peer reviewed
Multiple Influences of a Heparin-binding Growth Factor on Neuronal Development

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Abstract. Heparin-binding growth factor-2 (HBGF-2; also known as basic fibroblast growth factor) is mitogenic for most anchorage-dependent cells. It is shown here that HBGF-2 stimulates cell-substratum adhesion and neurite extension in the sympathetic nerve cell line PC12. When HBGF-2 is adsorbed to artificial extracellular matrices consisting of heparin or chondroitin sulfate, it causes the formation of cellular aggregates or circles of cells, respectively. HBGF-2 is also a nerve cell survival molecule, for it potentiates the survival of primary cultures of embryonic chick ciliary ganglion cells but not of embryonic neural retina cells. Finally, a series of synthetic peptides from the HBGF-2 sequence is described that selectively alter the biological effects of HBGF-2. The amphiphilic nature of one of these peptides is discussed with respect to its ability to stimulate cell adhesion.

A variety of molecules have been described that can alter the differentiation and survival of cultured nerve cells. These include nerve growth factor (NGF), laminin-like molecules (7, 21, 25, 31), S100β (24), a ciliary ganglion survival factor (5, 36), purpurin (43, 44, 46), and a 12,300-D protein that supports the survival of embryonic chick sensory neurons (6). In addition, gangliosides (35) and several other low molecular weight molecules can promote the differentiation and survival of cultured cells. To date only three of these trophic molecules have been fully sequenced: NGF (2), S100β (24), and purpurin (Berman, P., P. Gray, E. Chen, M. LaCorbiere, F. Esch, and D. Schubert, manuscript submitted for publication).

In addition to the above trophic molecules, at least two low molecular weight heparin-binding mitogens have been purified to homogeneity from the central nervous system. The first is a 16,000-D protein with a pI of 5.8 (51) and the second is a basic 16,400-D protein (16) whose activity was initially described by Armelin (3). The primary structures of both have been recently determined (16, 17). Because these proteins are structurally distinct but similar in size and heparin-binding activity to purpurin, a nerve cell survival and adhesion molecule from the chick neural retina (46), the effect of the basic pituitary heparin-binding growth factor (the term HBGF-2 according to the nomenclature of Lobb et al. (30) is used here; also known as basic fibroblast growth factor) on nerve cell survival, adhesion, and differentiation was assayed in primary and clonal cell cultures. It will be shown that HBGF-2 causes nerve cell adhesion and differentiation, that it promotes the survival of some but not all classes of neurons, and that it induces simple social interactions between cells. Synthetic peptides derived from the HBGF-2 sequence have been developed which can alter each of these events.

Materials and Methods

Cells and Cultures

PC12 cells, clone H, were obtained from Dr. H. Hatanaka, Mitsubishi-Kasei Institute, Tokyo (20) and grown on tissue culture plastic in 10% FCS plus 5% horse serum. Neural retina tissue was separated from the pigmented epithelium of 8-d leghorn chick embryos and incubated in Hepes-buffered DME with 0.5% (wt/vol) crude trypsin (Nutritional Biochemical Corp., Cleveland, OH) for 20 min at 37°C. The cells were then rinsed three times with DME and placed in polylysine-coated tissue culture dishes with or without the indicated growth factors. The ciliary ganglion survival assay was performed as described (5, 14). Briefly, 35-mm tissue culture dishes (Falcon Labware, Becton, Dickinson & Co., Oxnard, CA) were precoated with 2 ml of a polyornithine solution (100 μg/ml in 0.15 M borate, pH 8.5) overnight at 4°C. The dishes were washed twice with DME and seeded with 5,000 cells from 8-d embryonic chick ciliary ganglion per dish in DME plus 10% FCS and the test compound. 24 h later cultures were assayed for viable cells either by direct visual count under phase contrast microscopy or with the use of 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5 diphenyl tetrazolium bromide (33). The data are presented as the percent of the surviving input cells.

Adhesion Assays

To assay cell-substratum adhesion, PC12 cells were metabolically labeled with [3H]leucine (5 μCi/ml) in DME plus serum for 15 h. The cells were washed three times with Hepes medium containing 0.3% BSA, (Calbiochem-Behring Corp., San Diego, CA), and 0.2-ml aliquots were pipetted into 35-mm Petri dishes to which HBGF-2 had been adsorbed. At the indicated times the dishes were swirled 80 times, the medium was aspirated, and the remaining attached cells were dissolved in 3% Triton X-100 and their isotope content was determined. The data are plotted as the fraction of input cells (radioactivity) that adhered at the indicated time. Variations between duplicates were <5%.

1. Abbreviations used in this paper: HBGF-2, heparin-binding growth factor; NGF, nerve growth factor.
HBGF-2-binding Assay

The HBGF-2 used in all experiments was purified as described by Esch et al. (16) and was a chromatographically pure 16,400-D protein. 100-150 pmol of HBGF-2 were iodinated by the lactoperoxidase method (50). The iodinated growth factor was purified by heparin-sepharose affinity chromatography and the peak of radioactivity eluting with 2 M NaCl was used in all studies. The specific activity of the iodinated growth factor was >100,000 cpm/ng. The ~251-HBGF-2 was stored at 4°C and was stable for 2 wk.

To assay ~251-HBGF-2 binding, PC12 cells were seeded at high density (1-2 × 10⁵ cells/well) in 48-miniwell dishes that had been precoated with polylysine. The following day the cells were washed twice with binding buffer (F12 medium, 25 mM Hepes, pH 7.5, 0.2% gelatin) and incubated in 200 µl of the same buffer. ~251-HBGF-2 was then added to the cells in a total volume of 10 µl. Both total and nonspecific binding were determined in quadruplicate or sextuplet wells. The cells were incubated for the indicated times at 4°C and the reaction was terminated by three washes with binding buffer. Cells were solubilized with 200 µl of 1% Triton X-100 in water and an aliquot was removed and counted on a β-counter. Nonspecific binding to the cells, as determined by the inhibition of ~251 binding by 4 µg of HBGF-2, was <20% of the total binding.

Preparation of Artificial Matrix

An artificial matrix was created to assay the ability of substratum bound HBGF-2 to influence the morphological differentiation of PC12 cells. Poly-L-lysine (Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO) was incubated at 50 µg/ml overnight in 35-mm tissue culture dishes (Falcon Labware). The dishes were washed twice with water and incubated overnight with either heparin (porcine intestinal mucosa, Grade 1, Sigma Chemical Co.) or chondroitin sulfate A (Miles Laboratories, Inc., Elkhart, IN) at 200 µg/ml. The following day the dishes were washed twice with water and incubated in serum-free N2 medium (10).

Table 1. Synthetic Fragments of HBGF-2

| Peptide | Fragment | Sequence | Peptide | Charge | Inhibition of HBGF-2 binding | Stimulation of adhesion |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|--------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| A       | [Tyr10] (1-10)OH | PALPEDGGSY | A       | -2     | NS                          | 40                     |
| B       | [Tyr9] (30-50)NH₂ | FFLRIHPDGDRVGVREKSQLP | B       | +1     | 11 NS                       | NS                     |
| C       | [Tyr10] (69-87)NH₂ | YANRYLAMKEGRLLASKY | C       | +3     | NS                          | NS                     |
| D       | (106-115)NH₂ | YRSRKYSWY | D       | +4     | 60 NS                       | 80                    |
| E       | (1-24)NH₂ | PALPEDGGSGAPPPGFHDPKRLY | E       | +1     | 12 NS                       | 230                   |
| F       | (24-68)NH₂ | YCKNGGFKLRIHPDGDRVGVREKSQLP | F       | +3     | 60 NS                       | 450                   |
| F¹      | [Tyr25] (25-68)NH₂ | YKNGGFKLRIHPDGDRVGVREKSQLP | F¹      | +3     | 95 NS                       | 450                   |
| G       | [Tyr10] (73-87)NH₂ | YLANRYLAMKEGRLLASKY | G       | +2     | NS                          | NS                     |
| H       | (121-146)NH₂ | TQYYKLyPCTGPQKAILFLPMSAKS | H       | +5     | NS                          | NS                     |
| I       | (16-24)NH₂ | HFKDLPKRLY | I       | +3     | 12 NS                       | 20                    |
| J       | (36-39)NH₂ | PDGR | J       | +1     | 5 NS                         | -                      |
| K       | (30-39)NH₂ | FFLRIHPDGDR | K       | +2     | 6 NS                         | NS                     |
| K¹      | (32-39)NH₂ | LRIHPDGDR | K¹      | +2     | 5 NS                         | NS                     |
| M       | (32-53)NH₂ | LRIHPDGDRVGVREKSQLP | M       | +2     | NS                          | NS                     |
| N       | (93-120)NH₂ | FFPERLESNNYNTYRSYKSSWVALK R | N       | +5     | 82 NS                       | 480                   |
| N¹      | (103-120)NH₂ | YNTYRSYKSSWVALK R | N¹      | +6     | 80 NS                       | 460                   |

Complete sequence:

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
PALPEDGGSG APFPDHGPDP KRLYKCNNGF FRLRIHPDGDRVGVREKSQLP IKLQLQAEEER GVWSKGVCA NRYLAMKEGRLLASKY
90 100 110 120 130 140 146
RLLASKCVDTECFFERLESNNYNTYRSYKSSWVALK R TQYYKLyPCTGPQKAILFLPMSAKS

Peptides were synthesized as described in Materials and Methods and tested for their ability to block HBGF-2 binding and to stimulate adhesion. To determine the effect of the peptides on HBGF-2 binding, PC12 cells were incubated for 10 min at 4°C in the presence of the indicated synthetic peptides, followed by the addition of ~251-HBGF-2. The amount of HBGF-2 binding was determined as in Materials and Methods and the data represented as the percent inhibition of the binding by the peptides relative to the control cultures. Peptides were used at 100 µg/well. To assay the stimulation of cellular adhesion by synthetic peptide fragments of HBGF-2, the indicated peptides were adsorbed to plastic petri dishes at 300 µg/35-mm culture dish. All of the input peptides, except J, adhered to the plastic as determined by HPLC or protein analysis. The adhesion of input cells after 1-h incubation was determined as in Fig. 2 and presented as the percent stimulation relative to neutral petri dish surfaces where 6-8% of the input cells adhered. All experiments were repeated at least three times with similar results. NS, not significant. A, amphiphilic.

Figure 1. Displacement of cell-associated ~251-HBGF-2 by pituitary HBGF-2. PC12 cells were incubated with 4 ng/ml of ~251-HBGF-2 and increasing concentrations of unlabeled HBGF-2 for 2 h at 4°C. The binding was performed as described in Materials and Methods. 10% of the input ~251-HBGF-2 bound to the cells in the absence of other peptides.
Peptide Synthesis

All HBGF-2 peptides were prepared by solid phase methods (34) using the methylbenzhydrylamine resin. The exception was the [Tyr-(1-10)OH fragment that was made with a N*-Boc-(2,6-dichlorobenzyl) tyrosine coupled chloromethyl resin (28). The synthetic products were purified by gel filtration, ion-exchange, and partition chromatography as described elsewhere (29). Fragments F and F1 were also purified by preparative HPLC. The purified products had the correct amino acid composition and the purity ranged from 90 to 98% by HPLC analysis.

Results

HBGF-2 Binding to Cells

HBGF-2 is mitogenic for essentially all of the anchorage-dependent cultured cells on which it has been tested, suggesting that it interacts with a relatively common cell surface receptor. To determine if HBGF-2 can bind to nerve cells, HBGF-2 was labeled with 125I and its ability to bind to the NGF-responsive PC12 cell line assayed. 125I-HBGF-2 binds to PC12 cells in a time dependent manner, with maximum binding occurring at 2 h. Fig. 1 shows that the binding of 125I-HBGF-2 is inhibited by the unlabeled molecule with 50% displacement at \( \approx 7 \) pmoi/well \( (3.5 \times 10^{-8} \text{ M}) \). The iodinated HBGF-2 is as mitogenic as the native molecule for endothelial cells. Neither NGF nor the heparin binding adhesion molecule N-CAM (12) competes with HBGF-2 for binding to the cell surface when tested at 5 \( \mu \text{g/ml} \). These results suggest that the HBGF-2-cell surface interaction may require an interaction of the growth factor with a cell surface heparin or heparan sulfate proteoglycan.

PC12 Cell-Substratum Adhesion

Cell-substratum adhesiveness plays a critical role in the initiation of neurite outgrowth in many types of cultured cells and on the rate of neurite outgrowth of all cultured nerve cells (see, for example, 26, 41, 42). To determine if substratum-bound HBGF-2 alters the adhesiveness of PC12 cells to an adhesive neutral surface, low density exponentially dividing PC12 cells were labeled overnight with [3H]leucine, plated on petri dish surfaces that had been coated with 30 pmol of HBGF-2, and the percent of input cells that adhered to the HBGF-2 substratum were assayed as a function of time. Fig. 2 A shows that HBGF-2 stimulates the adhesion of PC12 cells relative to the petri dish surface alone. The concentration dependence of this adhesion is shown in Fig. 2 B. The half maximal rate of adhesion to HBGF-2 is at a HBGF-2 concentration of 10 pmol/35-mm petri dish. The glycosaminoglycans heparin and heparan sulfate block the adhesion of PC12 cells to HBGF-2, but chondroitin sulfate is ineffective. There is some specificity with respect to the ability of heparin to inhibit adhesion, for heparin is only marginally effective in inhibiting the adhesion of PC12 cells to laminin and fibronectin (1; Schubert, D., unpublished observation). HBGF-2 is therefore an adhesion protein for nerve cells and it is effective in causing adhesion in the picomole range.

To understand which parts of the primary sequence of HBGF-2 are responsible for promoting the HBGF-2-cell in-

Figure 2. Stimulation of cell-substratum adhesion by HBGF-2. The adhesion of isotopically labeled PC12 cells to HBGF-2-coated surfaces was determined as described in Materials and Methods. (A) Adhesion of PC12 cells to substrata containing 30 pmol of HBGF-2 as a function of time. (X) Petri dish alone; (open circles) HBGF-2; (open squares) HBGF-2 plus 200 \( \mu \text{g/ml} \) of chondroitin sulfate; (open triangles) HBGF-2 plus 200 \( \mu \text{g/ml} \) of heparan sulfate. (B) Concentration dependence of adhesion. Petri dishes were coated with the indicated concentrations of HBGF-2 and the percent of input cells adhered determined after 1 h.
teraction, 100 µg/ml of each synthetic peptide (Table I) was added to the culture dishes containing HBGF-2 bound to the substratum before the addition of cells. Of the 16 peptides tested, none blocked the adhesion of PC12 cells to HBGF-2. However, several did slightly stimulate the rate of adhesion over a period of 1 h. Since it is possible that the synthetic peptides adhere to the substratum during the course of the assay and promote cell-substratum adhesion rather than block it, the longer synthetic peptides were adsorbed to the surface of petri dishes and assayed for their ability to stimulate cell adhesion. Table I shows that the amphiphilic 24–68 sequence (peptides F and F) and the peptide sequence between residues 93 and 120 (peptide N) are very effective at stimulating cell-substratum adhesion. Charge and amphiphility alone is not, however, responsible for the stimulation of adhesion, for the highly positively charged and amphiphilic peptide H (residues 121–146) does not stimulate adhesion. Except for the NH₂-terminal (residues 1–24) peptide, the other peptides are ineffective. These data suggest that although peptides F and N block the binding of HBGF-2 to cells, they do not interfere with substratum-bound HBGF-2-cell adhesion because they are rapidly adsorbed to the substratum themselves and promote adhesion.

Morphological Differentiation of PC12 Cells

When NGF is added to exponentially dividing PC12 cells, they respond by the extension of neurites (Fig. 3 B). PC12 cells also respond to HBGF-2 by extending neurites (Fig. 3 C). The concentration of HBGF-2 required to give the maximum rate of neurite extension is ~25 pM (Table II), and there is no alteration in the response if concentrations 50-fold higher are used. Neurite outgrowth continues for several days in the presence of HBGF-2 and, as with NGF, is reversible when the growth factor is removed. At lower concentrations of HBGF-2 neurite outgrowth ceases after a few days and the neurites retract (Table II). Repeated addition of HBGF-2 allows neurite outgrowth to continue for up to a week and it ceases only when the cell density becomes high, leading to cell detachment.

To determine which part of the HBGF-2 molecule is responsible for the induced neurite outgrowth, the synthetic peptides were examined for their ability to block HBGF-2 induced neurite outgrowth. Only peptides F and F (Table I)

### Table II. HBGF Titration on Neurite Outgrowth

| HBGF (pM) | Days |
|-----------|------|
| 500       | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    |
| 250       | +    | +    | +    | +    | +    |
| 100       | +    | +    | +    | +    | +    |
| 50        | +    | +    | +    | +    | +    |
| 25        | +    | +    | +    | -    | -    |
| 10        | +    | +    | -    | -    | -    |
| 5         | +    | -    | -    | -    | -    |
| 2.5       | +    | -    | -    | -    | -    |
| 1         | -    | -    | -    | -    | -    |

Cells were plated on polylysine-coated dishes in N₂ medium and HBGF added at the indicated concentrations. The presence of neurites was scored on the following days in at least 200 cells. A plus sign indicates that at least half of the cells within population had neurites >1 cell diameter (20 µm).
of residues 24–68 block the HBGF-2-induced neurite outgrowth (Fig. 3 D). None of the other synthetic peptides has any obvious effect on the HBGF-2-induced morphological differentiation of the PC12 cells when tested at concentrations up to 200 μg/ml, nor do any of the peptides cause neurite outgrowth when added directly to the culture medium or when adsorbed to the culture dish substratum before plating of the cells.

HBGF-2-induced neurite formation is completely blocked by 100 μg/ml of heparin but not by chondroitin sulfate. Neurite formation induced by NGF on polylysine surfaces is also reduced in the presence of 100 μg/ml heparin or heparan sulfate but not completely eliminated as it is in the case of HBGF-2. In both cases the cells round up and become more phase bright, but neurites are still present in over 70% of the cells grown in NGF but in <5% of cells with HBGF-2. The amphiphilic peptide F (residues 24–68) does not block NGF-induced neurite outgrowth.

HBGF-2-induced Supracellular Assemblies

Basement membranes can dramatically effect the morphological differentiation of a tissue (see, e.g., reference 9). If culture conditions could be devised where basement membrane-like structures influence the type of cell–cell interactions seen in vivo, then it may be possible to gain some insight into the chemistry of the cell-basement membrane interactions that are responsible for these events. Since HBGF-2 can bind heparin it is probable that it is associated with heparin-rich basement membranes and therefore may influence cells that interact with that membrane. To construct artificial basement membranes on the substrata of culture dishes, tissue culture dishes were first coated with poly-L-lysine and then with either chondroitin sulfate or heparin. HBGF-2 was added to some of the dishes overnight and the dishes were washed extensively. The effect of these different substrata on the cells was then assayed. Fig. 4 shows that in the absence of HBGF-2, cells on both heparin (Fig. 4 A) and

Figure 4. Effect of artificial matrices on cellu-
lar interactions. PCI2 cells were plated upon
the surfaces indicated below at 1 × 10^5
cells/35-mm culture dish and photographed
4 d later. The cell diameter is ~20 μm.
These experiments have been repeated at
least 12 times with similar results. A detailed
kinetic and ultrastructural analysis of circle
formation will be presented elsewhere.
(A) Chondroitin sulfate. (B) Chondroitin sulfate
plus HBGF-2. (C) Chondroitin sulfate plus
HBGF-2 plus 100 μg/ml of peptide F. (D)
Heparan sulfate. (E) Heparan sulfate plus
HBGF-2. (F) Heparan sulfate plus HBGF-2
plus peptide F.
chondroitin sulfate (Fig. 4 D) have a round, phase-bright morphology, and that the cells on heparin tend to form chains. However, in the presence of substrate-bound HBGF-2 or HBGF-2 added to the dishes directly, the arrangement of the cells on the culture dish changes dramatically. Cells plated on a matrix of chondroitin sulfate and HBGF-2 form circles consisting of 10–30 cells (Fig. 4 B). This process apparently takes place via the movement of cells over the substratum since the cells are randomly distributed over the dish 5 h after plating. HBGF-2 is only slightly mitogenic for PC12 cells (5 ± 2% increase in cell number over control after 3 d). In contrast to cells plated on chondroitin sulfate and HBGF-2, cells on the heparin HBGF-2 matrix form tight aggregates that are loosely attached to the substratum (Fig. 4 E). NGF adsorbed to these substrates causes the formation of some circles on chondroitin sulfate and modest neurite outgrowth. NGF on heparin causes very few aggregates to form. Although NGF produces changes in cellular behavior similar to those caused by HBGF-2, the latter is much more effective.

Since some of the synthetic peptides that influence HBGF-2 binding also block the morphological differentiation of PC12 cells by HBGF-2, the peptides were assayed for their ability to inhibit the morphological changes caused by HBGF-2 bound to the two glycosaminoglycans. Of the peptides tested (Table I) only the amphiphatic 24–68 sequence (peptide F) blocks both circle formation on chondroitin sulfate and aggregate formation on heparin (Fig. 4, C and F). Peptide N (residues 93–120) causes the cells to become very flat, and, in the presence of soluble HBGF-2, grow long neurites, but it does not block HBGF-2-induced formation of circles on chondroitin sulfate or aggregate formation on heparin.

**Cell Viability**

Two populations of embryonic nerve cells were used to assay the effect of HBGF-2 on cell viability: 8-d embryonic chick ciliary ganglion and neural retina cells. The embryonic ganglion cells normally die within 24 h in the absence of added trophic factors (see, e.g., references 14, 32) while the viability of the embryonic neural retina cells declines with a half-life of 3 d (43). To test the effect of HBGF-2 on the survival of both cell populations, the cells were dissociated and plated in DME containing either 10% FCS (ciliary ganglion) or serum-free medium (neural retina cells) in the presence or absence of HBGF-2. Viable cell number was determined at 24 h (ciliary ganglion) or at 1-d intervals (neural retina cells). Fig. 5 A shows that HBGF-2 did not alter the survival rate of dissociated neural retina cells. Purpurin, a cell survival molecule for neural retina cells, was added to some dishes as a positive control. Fig. 5 B shows that HBGF-2 supported the survival of 8-d embryonic ciliary ganglion cells at a half maximal effectiveness of ~5 pM HBGF-2. These data show that HBGF-2 affects the survival of dissociated ciliary ganglion cells but not that of neural retina cells from the same age embryo. When the ability of all the synthetic peptides to block the effect of HBGF-2 on ciliary cell survival was examined, only the amphiphilic HBGF-2 peptide F of residues 24–68 was effective.

**Discussion**

The above data show that HBGF-2 has several diverse effects on nerve cells in culture. These include increasing the rate of cell substratum adhesion (Fig. 2), the stimulation of neurite formation (Fig. 3), increased cell survival of ciliary nerve cells in primary cultures (Fig. 5), and, when adsorbed to artificial extracellular matrices, the ability to cause the formation of circles of cells or the formation of cell aggregates, depending upon the composition of the matrices (Fig. 4). When a series of synthetic peptides derived from the HBGF-2 sequence were examined for their ability to block its biological effects, an amphiphilic peptide of HBGF-2...
Several other proteins have been described that prolong the survival of neurons in culture. The best studied are NGF (27), a 12,300-D protein from pig brain (6), and a ciliary ganglion neurotrophic factor (5) that is similar if not identical to purpurin, a 20,000-D protein that inhibits the death in culture of both embryonic neural retina and ciliary ganglion cells (43, 46). HBGF-2 is a protein mitogen for most anchorage-dependent primary cultures (4) and there has been a recent report that it increases the survival of cells in primary cultures of rat hippocampus (53). Fig. 5 shows that HBGF-2 has the ability to promote the survival of cultured embryonic chick ciliary ganglion cells but not chick neural retina cells. In contrast purpurin, an eye derived molecule, promotes the survival of both populations (46). HBGF-2 therefore shows some cell-type specificity with respect to enhancing nerve cell survival. Both HBGF-2 and purpurin increase cell-substratum adhesion and laminin, an exceptionally potent adhesion promoting molecule, also causes nerve cell survival (7).

Numerous studies have shown that there is a relationship between cellular adhesion and division, and it is likely that these observations can be extended to cell survival. Folkman and Moscona (19) showed that small changes in cell shape, which is directly influenced by cell-substratum adhesion, have large effects upon the probabilities of initiating DNA synthesis. The more spread a cell the greater the likelihood of DNA synthesis (see also 37). There is also a correlation between cell shape and physiology. When cells that are anchorage dependent for growth (49) are placed in suspension culture they rapidly become arrested in the G1 phase of the cell cycle (38) and RNA and protein synthesis is rapidly decreased (8, 18). They eventually die (18, 19). It has been argued that these phenotypic changes may be due to differences in nutrient transport between more and less spread cells (22). Since (a) HBGF-2 only stimulates mitosis in substrate attached cells, (b) HBGF-2 does not stimulate DNA synthesis when a HBGF-2-responsive cell line is cultured in suspension (47), and (c) HBGF-2 promotes the adhesion of cells (Fig. 2), it follows that one of the mechanisms that mediates the effects of HBGF-2 may be to increase cell-substratum adhesion and therefore cell spreading. The efficiency of this interaction is dictated by the composition of the extracellular matrix.

Components of the extracellular matrix can influence the migration and differentiation of juxtapositioned cells (see reference 9 for a review). Within the nervous system the role of extracellular matrix components such as heparan sulfate is only recently becoming appreciated. In addition to HBGF-2, several other molecules bind specifically to heparin and heparan sulfate. These include purpurin (46), N-CAM (12, 13), the well characterized basement membrane component laminin (7, 15), and fibronectin (11). The heparin binding fragment of laminin alone promotes nerve cell survival and neurite outgrowth (15). A neurite promoting activity, thought to be laminin, has also been isolated from an extracellular macromolecular complex containing heparan sulfate proteoglycan (25). In addition myelination is initiated by Schwann cell interactions with a nerve cell surface heparan sulfate proteoglycan (39). These data suggest that the interactions between the extracellular environment and cell surface heparan sulfate proteoglycans have profound effects within the developing nervous system. Since most of the molecules that can bind heparin and heparan sulfate are released from cells, it is likely that they are localized within the matrix. Thus one of the functions of heparin binding may be to keep the secreted molecule near its cell of origin via entrapment in the matrix. Once in the matrix molecules such as HBGF-2 may support cell adhesion, cell survival, and direct neurite outgrowth. Upon release from the matrix they become potent mitogens.

It has been reported elsewhere that HBGF-2 causes neurite extension in PC12 cells and that there is spontaneous retraction of neurites after 6 d, even in the continued presence of HBGF-2 (52). In these experiments, substantially greater concentrations of HBGF-2 were required to cause neurite outgrowth than those reported here and there was no indication of the purity of their protein. Since we do not observe that the neurites retract in the continued presence of HBGF-2 except when the cultures became very dense, it is possible that contaminants in the HBGF-2 preparations of Togari et al. (52) were adversely effecting the cells. In addition, the cultures described here were maintained in polylysine-coated substrata and serum-free N2 media as opposed to serum-containing media. Serum tends to reduce cell-substrate adhesion and cause neurite retraction (45). It is clear, however, that while NGF and HBGF-2 both affect neurite outgrowth in PC12 cells, their effects are not identical. There are, for example, differences in neurite morphology between HBGF-2- and NGF-induced cells, for those caused by HBGF-2 are more straight than those made by NGF (Fig. 3). Moreover, the maximum rate of neurite outgrowth and neurite arborization are somewhat lower in HBGF-2-treated cultures relative to those exposed to NGF. It is likely that NGF and HBGF-2 share a subset of events that leads to neurite elongation, but that not all of the chemistry involved is identical. As suggested before (52), this situation is analogous to that with cAMP, which can mimic the short term effects of NGF but not all of its long term effects (42).

The experiments showing that HBGF-2 can affect cell-cell interactions in culture (Fig. 4) suggest that it may play a role in morphogenesis. Although the mechanisms involved in the formation of circles of cells or cellular aggregates are not known, it is likely that they involve the ability of HBGF-2 to modulate the adhesive properties of cells to the substratum. As initially outlined by Steinberg (48) in his differential adhesion hypothesis, changes in the relative adhesiveness of cells to each other and to their environment can have profound effects on the topological distribution of cells within a "closed" system. The combination of HBGF-2 and glycosaminoglycans must influence the adhesiveness of the PC12 cells such that on heparin they are less adhesive to the substratum than to themselves (aggregate formation), on the glycosaminoglycans alone they adhere more tightly to the substratum (single attached cells), and on the combination of chondroitin sulfate and HBGF-2 they have an intermediate adhesiveness to each other and the substratum (circle formation).

Of the 16 synthetic peptides that cover the entire sequence of the HBGF-2 molecule, only peptides D (residues 106-
F (residues 24–68), and N (residues 93–120) inhibit the binding of \( ^{125}\text{I}-\text{HBGF-2} \) to cells (Table I), while peptides F, N, and E (NH\(_{2}\)-terminal 24 residues) stimulate cell-substratum adhesion (Table I). All of these peptides have a net positive charge at neutrality and peptide F has two internal amphiphilic or \( \beta \)-sheet sequences. An amphiphilic or \( \beta \)-sheet sequence is one that causes a segregation of hydrophobic and hydrophilic residues when the secondary structure is formed. This can occur when the peptide has alternating hydrophobic and hydrophilic residues. Such peptides can form stable \( \beta \)-sheet structures so that the hydrophobic amino acids project above and the hydrophilic below the plane of the peptide. Amphiphilic \( \beta \)-sheets should interact strongly with cellular membranes, for the hydrophobic residues should interact with the hydrophobic aspect of the membrane, whereas the hydrophilic residues should interact with the cell surface glycoproteins or aqueous environment. Peptide hormones with amphiphilic secondary structures interact strongly with cell membranes and this interaction is critical for their biological activities (23). A study of both natural and synthetic peptides suggested that most amphiphilic peptides with a net charge of \( >+2 \) interact with cells and promote adhesion (40). In contrast the common polycations such as polylysine and polyornithine must have a net charge of \(+10\) or more to mediate adhesion (33). The data presented here are only in partial agreement with these conclusions. Of the three HBGF-2 sequences that block \( ^{125}\text{I}-\text{HBGF-2} \) binding to cells or promote cell-substratum adhesion when adsorbed to a plastic surface, only one contains amphiphilic sequences; two have a net charge of \( >+2 \). The NH\(_{2}\)-terminal peptide E, residues 1–24, has a net charge of \(+1\) and no alternating hydrophobic and hydrophilic residues. It promotes cell adhesion but is relatively ineffective in blocking HBGF-2 binding. Peptide F (residues 24–68) contains two amphiphilic sequences, Leu-Arg-Ile-His-Asp and Asp-Pro-His-Ile-Lys-Leu-Gly, and has a net charge of \(+3\). The last biologically active peptide N (residues 93–120) has a charge of \(+5\), but no amphiphilic sequence. However, neither charge nor amphiphilic secondary structure, nor the combination of the two is sufficient to cause adhesion. Peptide H (residues 121–146) has a net charge of \(+5\) and an amphiphilic series of residues, GIN-Tyr-Lys-Leu-Gly-Pro-Lys and Gly-Pro-Gly, but it is totally inactive in promoting cell-substratum adhesion or blocking the binding of HBGF-2 to cells. These data suggest that peptides F and N have unique sequences that allow them to both block HBGF-2 binding and promote cellular adhesion. The receptors for these sequences must be on many cell types for they stimulate the adhesion of most cell types (unpublished observation). This is not surprising since a HBGF-2 is mitogenic for most cell types in primary culture. How is it possible, however, that peptides F and N both block HBGF-2 binding to cells but that only peptide F can block the biological responses of cells to HBGF-2? It is probable that peptide N is either more rapidly degraded or has a relatively low affinity for the cell surface HBGF-2 binding site. It may also adsorb nonspecifically to the surface of cells or the substratum during the long term (4–2 d) duration of the biological assays and therefore not compete effectively with the higher affinity binding of HBGF-2. In contrast, the \( ^{125}\text{I}-\text{HBGF-2} \) binding assay only takes 2 h and the nonspecific adsorption may be relatively less. Clearly more work is required to understand the details of the HBGF-2–cell interaction, but the use of the synthetic peptides described above should allow for a better understanding of this interaction at the cell surface. These peptides should also prove useful in vivo for elucidating the possible role of HBGF-2 in neuronal development.

We thank Drs. T. Hunter, S. Hagleoua, P. Maher, and M. LaCorbiere for their comments on the manuscript and Nancy Goodnight for its preparation. We are also indebted to Dr. Marston Manthorpe for help with the ciliary ganglion survival assay and Dr. H. Hatanaka for the PC12 cell line. This work was supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health.

Received for publication 1 October 1986, and in revised form 20 November 1986.

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