Macropinosome Maturation and Fusion with Tubular Lysosomes in Macrophages

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Abstract. Macropinosomes formed by addition of recombinant macrophage colony-stimulating factor (rM-CSF) to mouse macrophages migrate centripetally and shrink, remaining detectable by phase microscopy for up to 15 min. This longevity allowed us to study how macropinosomes age. Macropinosomes were pulse labeled for 1 min with fixable fluorescein dextran (FDx10f), a probe for fluid phase pinocytosis, and chased for various times. To quantify changes in their antigenic profile, pulse-labeled macropinosomes of different ages were fixed and stained for immunofluorescence with a panel of antibodies specific for the transferrin receptor (TfR), the late endosome-specific, GTP-binding protein rab 7 or lysosomal glycoprotein A (lgp-A), and the percentage of antibody positive, FDx10f-labeled macropinosomes was scored. Some newly formed macropinosomes were positive for TfR, but few were rab 7 or lgp-A-positive. With intermediate chase times (2-4 min), staining for rab 7 and lgp-A increased to >60%, while TfR staining declined. After a long chase (9-12 min), rab 7 staining returned to low levels while lgp-A staining remained at a high level. Thus, macropinosomes matured by progressive acquisition and loss of characteristic endocytic vesicle markers. However, unlike a maturation process, their merger with the tubular lysosomal compartment more nearly resembled the incorporation of a transient vesicle into a pre-existing, stable compartment. Shortly after their formation, FDx10f-labeled macropinosomes contacted and merged with Texas red dextran (TRDx10)-labeled tubular lysosomes. This occurred in two steps: macropinosomes acquired lgp-A first, and then several minutes later the cation-independent mannose-6-phosphate receptor (CI-MPR) and markers of lysosomal content (cathepsin L or pre-loaded TRDx10), all apparently derived from tubular lysosomes. Thus, macropinosome progress through macrophages showed features of both the maturation and vesicle shuttle models of endocytosis, beginning with a maturation process and ending by merger into a stable, resident lysosomal compartment.

The earliest descriptions of pinocytosis noted that pinosomes changed as they aged. Lewis (1931) observed by time-lapse microcinematography that macrophages actively formed large endocytic vesicles containing fluid from the surrounding medium. These pinosomes, later known as macropinosomes, formed at the cell margin, moved centripetally and shrank as they approached the nucleus. Addition of neutral red to the culture medium, a method now known to label acidic organelles, resulted in accumulation of the dye preferentially in older macropinosomes located near the nucleus. Later, Cohn and Benson (1965) found that pinocytosis could be stimulated in murine peritoneal macrophages by calf serum. As phase-bright macropinosomes moved towards the nucleus they became increasingly phase dense, and vesicles containing acid phosphatase "entered into" them. Taken together, Lewis' and Cohn's experiments suggested that macropinosomes gradually acidified and acquired lysosomal hydrolases.

Since then other endocytic organelles have been discovered and characterized. Clathrin-coated vesicles internalize receptor-bound ligand by budding from the plasma membrane and fusing with, or fusing together to become, early endosomes (reviewed by Pearse and Robinson, 1990; Rodman et al., 1990; Wileman et al., 1985). In early endosomes, many ligands dissociate and are sorted away from their receptors (Dautry-Varsat et al., 1983; Mellman et al., 1986), which in some cases return to the cell surface. Some endocytosed material is transferred from early endosomes to late endosomes (reviewed by Pearse and Robinson, 1990; Rodman et al., 1990; Wileman et al., 1985). In early endosomes, many ligands dissociate and are sorted away from their receptors (Dautry-Varsat et al., 1983; Mellman et al., 1986), which in some cases return to the cell surface. Some endocytosed material is transferred from early endosomes to late endosomes (reviewed by Pearse and Robinson, 1990; Rodman et al., 1990; Wileman et al., 1985). In early endosomes, many ligands dissociate and are sorted away from their receptors (Dautry-Varsat et al., 1983; Mellman et al., 1986), which in some cases return to the cell surface. Some endocytosed material is transferred from early endosomes to late endosomes (reviewed by Pearse and Robinson, 1990; Rodman et al., 1990; Wileman et al., 1985).
stituent membrane proteins, their characteristic density when separated by centrifugation, their location in the cell, and their luminal pH.

Recent work from this laboratory has shown that macrophage colony-stimulating factor (M-CSF) 1 stimulates macropinoscytosis in mouse macrophages (Racoosin and Swan- son, 1989, 1992). Like the organelles described by Lewis (1931), these macropinosomes move centripetally, shrink, and after several minutes become undetectable by phase-contrast microscopy. They also exhibit some properties of early and late endosomes.

Current debate about the mechanism by which endocyto
tosed material is transported through the endocytic pathway centers around two models (Helenius et al., 1983). In the vesicle shuttle model, early endosomes, late endosomes and lysosomes exist as stable, functionally distinct organelles. Newly formed endocytic vesicles fuse with and deliver their contents into the early endosome. Next, vesicles budding from the early endosome recycle to the cell surface or deliver part of that compartment's content into the late endosome. Movement from the late endosome to the lysosome would occur in a similar fashion. Alternatively, in the maturation model, newly internalized vesicles fuse together to form a
cient early endosomes that, by a remodeling process, mature progressively into late endosomes, then lysosomes. Accord-
ingly, the identity of any individual endocytic compartment is transient. Stoorvogel et al. (1991) and Dunn and Maxfield (1992) showed that early endosomes mature into late endosomes. Other supporting evidence for the two models has been recently reviewed (Griffiths and Gruenberg, 1991; Murphy, 1991).

Although the two models seem distinct, they have in com-
mon the interaction between stable and transient populations of vesicles. In the vesicle shuttle model, the transport vesicles are transient and the compartments are stable. In the maturation model, the compartment identity is transient, but the vesicles they interact with and that modify them can be considered stable. Viewed in this way, intermediate models become conceivable.

Here, we consider the changes in macropinosomes in light of the current debate about organelle traffic. Does the macro-
pinosome conform to the definitions of endosomes? Does it mature from one type of endosome to another, or retain a singular identity? We describe the aging process by immu
nolabeling macropinosomes of different ages with antibi-
dies directed against resident endocytic organelar mem-
brane proteins. Our results show that, at early times after formation, macropinosomes behave as maturing endocytic compartments. However, after maturation into a late endo-
some-like compartment, macropinosomes appear to merge with, rather than mature into, the macrophage tubular ly-
sosomal compartment. These observations thus favor a hy-
brid of both proposed models of transport along the endo-
cytic pathway.

**Materials and Methods**

**Cell Culture**

Macrophages were obtained from bone marrow extruded from the femurs

1. Abbreviations used in this paper: CI-MPR, cation-independent mannose-
6-phosphate receptor; GS, goat serum; M-CSF, macrophage colony-stimu-
lator factor; RS, Ringer's solution; TIR, transferrin receptor.

of female C3H/He mice (Charles River Labs, Wilmington, MA) and cul-
tured as previously described (Racoosin and Swanson, 1989). Cells were
harvested from tissue culture dishes 6 d after the beginning of the bone mar-
row cell culture and plated in wells of 24-well cluster dishes (Costar, Cam-
bridge, MA) onto 12 mm glass coverslips at a density of 7.5-10 x 10^6 cells
per well. Plated cells were cultured overnight in DME + 10% heat-
inactivated FBS + 100 U per ml pen-strep (DME-10F; Gibco BRL, Gaithers-
burg, MD). Experiments were performed the following day. Some experi-
ments included recombinant-macrophage-colony-stimulating factor
(rM-CSF; gift of Genetics Institute, Cambridge, MA), at a concentration of
3,000 U/ml.

**Microscopy**

For fluorescent labeling of early endocytic compartments (pulse, no chase), macropinosomes on coverslips were washed three times with Ringer's solution (RS, 155 mM NaCl, 5 mM KCl, 2 mM CaCl_2, 1 mM MgCl_2, 2 mM NaH_2PO_4, 10 mM Hapes, and 10 mM glucose, pH 7.2) + 0.2% BSA (RB; Sigma, St. Louis, MO) at 37°C, and then dishes containing the coverslips were placed in a circulating water bath at 37°C. Next, macropinosomes were incubated for 1 min with RB containing 1.2 mg/ml fixable fluorescein dextran, M_w 10,000 (FDx10F; Molecular Probes, Eugene, OR) + rM-CSF. At the end of the pulse, cells were placed on ice and washed three times with ice-cold RS. Cells were then fixed at room temperature for 1.5 h using a paraformaldehyde-lysine-periodate fixative (Mallan and Nakane, 1974; final concentration: 20 mM MES, 70 mM NaCl, 5 mM KCl, 70 mM lysine-HCl, 5 mM MgCl_2, 2 mM EGTA, 10 mM NaOAc, 3.7% parafor-
maldehyde, 4.5% sucrose). Next, cells were washed three times with TBS; (20 mM Tris-HCl, 150 mM NaCl, pH 7.5 + 4.5% sucrose) and mounted on glass slides for microscopy in a solution of 90% glycerol, 10% phosphate buffer, and 1 mg/ml phenylendiamine (final concentrations).

To label both the tubular lysosomal compartment (Swanson et al., 1987), and the macropinosomes, macropinosomes were rinsed in RB, and then were incubated for 30 min at 37°C in DME-10F containing 1 mg/ml FDx10F or 0.5 mg/ml Texas red-labeled dextran, M_w 10,000 (TRDx10; Molecular Probes). Cells were washed three times with RB at 37°C, and then further incubated in DME-10F for 1 h in the absence of fluorescent probes. This labeled the lysosomes. Next, cells were washed three times in RB, placed in a 37°C waterbath, and then pulsed for 1 min with RB containing 0.2 mg/ml FDx10F + rM-CSF. Immediately after the pulse, cells were washed 3 times rapidly with RB, then chased in RB + rM-CSF for various times.

Finally, cells were washed with RS at 37°C and fixed, and coverslips were prepared for microscopy as described above.

For immunofluorescence of pulse-labeled macropinosomes, macropinosomes in RB were pulse labeled for 1 min with 1.2 mg/ml FDx10F + rM-
CSF as described above, and then chased in RB without FDx10F for 0, 2, 4, 6, 5, 9, and 12 min. Alternatively, where noted, cells were preincubated in RB containing rM-CSF for 5 min before the FDx10F pulse-chase regi-
men. At the end of the assay, macrophages were placed on ice, washed with ice-cold RS, and then fixed for 1.5 h at room temperature. For immu
nolabeling, cells were washed three times in TBS, and then permeabi-
lized for 20 s in methanol at -20°C. Next, cells were washed three times with TBS + 2% heat-inactivated goat serum (TBS-5S; Gibco BRL), fol-
lowed by an overnight incubation at 4°C with primary antibody diluted with TBS-5S to the appropriate concentration. The primary antibodies used in this study are listed in Table 1. Macrophages were then washed three times with TBS-5S, and then incubated with either Texas red-conjugated goat anti-rabbit IgG or anti-rat IgG secondary antibodies (Cappel/Organon Teknika, Durham, NC), for 2-4 h at 37°C. Finally, cells were washed with TBS-5S and mounted for microscopy. In control experi-
ments, secondary antibodies failed to label macrophages when primary anti-
body were omitted.

The double-immunolabel macrophages, cells were washed three times with RB, placed in a 37°C waterbath, and then were incubated for 5 min with RB containing rM-CSF. At the end of the growth factor incubation, cells were washed with cold RS on ice, and then fixed, washed, and perme-
meabilized as described above. Next, cells were incubated overnight at 4°C in a mixture of primary antibodies diluted with TBS-5S. In experiments com-
promising the distribution of TBR and IgG, anti-IgG-B antibody was used instead of anti-IgG-A antibody. In each case, the mixture contained primary antibodies made in rat and in rabbit; subsequently, fluorescein isothiocyanate-labeled anti-rat (TAGO, Burlingame, CA) and Texas red-
labeled anti-rabbit secondary antibodies (Cappel/Organon Teknika) were used.

To quantify antibody-positive macropinosomes for the FDx10F pulse-
labeling study, cells were viewed using an Axioskop (Carl Zeiss, Ober-
Table I. Antigenic Markers for Endocytic Organellar Proteins

| Antigen     | Antibody                        | Reference                          |
|-------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| TfR         | R17 217.1.3                     | Lesley et al., 1984 (American Type Culture Collection) |
| rab 7       | Affinity-purified rabbit antiserum | Chavrier et al., 1990               |
| CI-MPR      | Affinity-purified rabbit antiserum | MacDonald et al., 1989             |
| lgp-A       | Rat mAb                          | Rabinowitz et al., 1992            |
| lgp-B       | Rabbit antiserum                 | Granger et al., 1990               |
| Cathepsin L | Affinity-purified rabbit antiserum | Dong et al., 1989                  |

Racoosin and Swanson, Germany equipped for phase-contrast optics and for epifluorescence, using Texas red and fluorescein filter sets. Using a 100x objective lens, 35 to 50 macroinosomes (in 20 to 40 cells) were examined for each time point. Each quantitative experiment was performed in entirety at least three times. An FDx10f-labeled vesicle was considered a macroinosome if it was also phase-bright. Next, the corresponding antibody-labeled image was examined using a Texas red filter set, and the macroinosome was scored positive if it labeled uniformly with Texas red. Macropinosomes only partially labeled with antibodies were scored as negative. Pulse-labeling experiments were repeated at least three times for each antibody. Double-immunolabeling experiments were scored similarly, except that antibody-labeled vesicles were first checked for coincidence with a phase-bright vesicle, then were checked for the other antibody. All micrographs were taken using T-MAX 3200 film (Eastman Kodak, Rochester, NY) at ASA 1600 or 3200.

Results

Pulse Labeling of Macropinosomes

Addition of rM-CSF to macrophages previously starved of the growth factor stimulated the formation of phase-bright macroinosomes. They formed most often at the cell margin, and shrank as they moved centripetally (Racoosin and Swanson, 1992). To follow the changes that occurred after their formation, we labeled macroinosomes by incubating macrophages briefly in medium containing rM-CSF and fixable fluorescein dextran (FDx10f), a probe for fluid-phase pinocytosis (Fig. 1). FDx10f-labeled, phase-bright macroinosomes (> 1-μm diam) occurred at both the margins and the interior of the cell. FDx10f also labeled smaller pino- somes (Fig. 1 b) that, in contrast to macroinosomes, were not phase bright.

Macropinosomes of Different Ages Exhibit a Changing Profile of Endocytic Vesicle Membrane Proteins

Macropinosomes have features of both early and late endosomes (Racoosin and Swanson, 1992). Previously endocytosed fluorescein-labeled transferrin is sorted from macroinosomes early after their formation, and previously endocytosed diI-labeled acetylated low-density lipoprotein stays within the macroinosome as it is transported to the lysosome for degradation. We next asked if, after their formation, macroinosomes acquire membrane proteins characteristic of other endocytic compartments. Macropinosomes were pulse labeled with medium containing FDx10f+ rM-CSF for 1 min, and then were washed rapidly and chased for increasing times in the absence of probe and in the continuing presence of rM-CSF. Cells were then fixed and prepared for immunolabeling with one of several antibodies (Table I). Three of the antibodies used were directed against the muri ne transferrin receptor (TfR), the ras-like GTP-binding protein, rab 7, and the lysosomal glycoprotein lgp-A; these markers are characteristic of early endosomes (Yamashiro et al., 1984), late endosome (Chavrier et al., 1990), and lysosomes (Chen et al., 1985), respectively. After a 1-min

Figure 1. Macrophages incubated in medium containing fluorescent dextran and M-CSF form fluorescent, phase-bright macroinosomes. Macrophages cultured on glass coverslips were incubated at 37°C for 1 min in medium containing 1.2 mg/ml fixable fluorescein dextran (FDx10f) and 3,000 U/ml M-CSF. Cells were then chilled rapidly on ice, washed with cold buffer lacking FDx10f, fixed, and prepared for microscopy. Phase-contrast (a) and fluorescence (b) micrographs were taken of the same cells. Phase-bright, fluorescent macroinosomes are indicated with arrowheads. Smaller FDx10f-labeled micropinosomes evident in b (punctate fluorescence) are not phase-bright. Bar, 5 μm.
Figure 2. Macropinosomes of different ages label with antibodies against different endocytic vesicle membrane proteins. Macropinosomes were pulse labeled by incubating macrophages with medium containing 1.2 mg/ml FDx10f and 3,000 U/ml rM-CSF for 1 min at 37°C, washed rapidly at the same temperature, and then chased at 37°C in the absence of FDx10f, but in the continuing presence of rM-CSF for 0 (a–c), 4 (d–f), or 9 (g–i) min. Cells were then rapidly chilled and fixed.

Next, macrophages were incubated with monoclonal rat anti-mouse TfR (a, d, and g), rabbit anti-recombinant rab 7 (b, e, and h), and monoclonal rat anti-mouse lgp-A (c, f, and i). Macropinosomes were then incubated with Texas red-labeled goat anti-rat or -rabbit secondary antibody and prepared for microscopy. For each lettered panel, the Texas red antibody-labeled image is above the FDx10f-labeled macropinosome. Note that shortly after their formation, macropinosomes are labeled with antibodies against transferrin receptor (a and a'), 4 min later, against rab 7 (e and e'), and 9 min later, lgp-A (i and i'). Bar, 1 μm.

pulse without chase, some macropinosomes labeled with anti-TfR antibody (Fig. 2, a and a') but not with anti-rab 7 (Fig. 2, b and b') or anti-lgp-A (Fig. 2, c and c'). When cells were chased for 4 min, we observed many macropinosomes labeled with anti-rab 7 (Fig. 2, e and e'), but anti-TfR staining was diminished (Fig. 2 d and d, and see below); in addition, some macropinosomes labeled with anti-lgp-A. After a 9-min chase, more macropinosomes labeled with anti-lgp-A (Fig. 2, i and i'), and fewer labeled with anti-rab 7 (Fig. 2, h and h) or anti-TfR (Fig. 2, g and g'). These results indicated that after formation, macropinosomes acquired, and then lost specific membrane markers for organelles in the endocytic pathway.

Preparations such as those shown in Fig. 2 were then quantified. FDx10f-labeled macropinosomes that were homogeneously labeled with the test antibody were scored as positive (Fig. 3 A). The percentage of rab 7- and lgp-A-positive macropinosomes increased early and concurrently. The percentage of rab 7-positive macropinosomes then decreased while lgp-A staining increased. After 10 min, there were very few rab 7-positive macropinosomes.

Unexpectedly, the quantitative analysis of TfR labeling did not support the initial morphological impression. The percentage of TfR-positive macropinosomes (Fig. 3 A, top) was low and relatively constant throughout the time course, indicating that only a small number of new macropinosomes contained TfR, and that TfR did not recycle from the macropinosome. As this data was also inconsistent with our earlier observation of fluorescein-labeled transferrin movement through macropinosomes and with the double-labeling experiments (see below), we considered that TfR traffic might be variable during the first few minutes of M-CSF treatment. TfR trafficking has been shown to be altered by growth factors, and M-CSF causes TfR redistribution to the cell surface of bone marrow–derived macrophages (Lokeshwar and Lin, 1990). We therefore asked if preincubation with rM-CSF followed by a pulse-chase protocol would restore a TfR traffic more consistent with earlier observations. Macrophages were preincubated for 5 min in medium containing rM-CSF before performing a pulse-chase experiment. This resulted in a higher percentage of TfR-positive macropinosomes that then decreased with chase time (Fig. 3 B). The
With increasing age, macropinosomes progressively acquire and lose endocytic vesicle membrane proteins. Macrophages prepared as described in Fig. 2 were examined using phase-contrast and epifluorescence microscopy. (A) The fraction of FDx10f-labeled macropinosomes labeled with antibody against TfR (top), rab 7 (middle), or lgp-A (bottom), were scored for each chase time. (B) Macrophages were incubated for 5 min in RB-containing rM-CSF only, and then were pulsed with FDx10f and chased as described above. Cells were then labeled with the anti-TfR antibody and scored. Experiments were performed at least three times for each antibody; the average of these experiments ±SD is displayed in the graph.

**Figure 3.** With increasing age, macropinosomes progressively acquire and lose endocytic vesicle membrane proteins. Macrophages prepared as described in Fig. 2 were examined using phase-contrast and epifluorescence microscopy. (A) The fraction of FDx10f-labeled macropinosomes labeled with antibody against TfR (top), rab 7 (middle), or lgp-A (bottom), were scored for each chase time. (B) Macrophages were incubated for 5 min in RB-containing rM-CSF only, and then were pulsed with FDx10f and chased as described above. Cells were then labeled with the anti-TfR antibody and scored. Experiments were performed at least three times for each antibody; the average of these experiments ±SD is displayed in the graph.

The time course of macropinosome labeling with rab 7 was not altered by M-CSF preincubation (data not shown). Taken together, the quantitative data suggest a model in which macropinosomes are initially TfR-positive early endosomes, and then are remodeled into late endosomes (TfR negative, rab 7 and lgp-A positive). As rab 7 labeling decreases, the macropinosome may be further modified by the continued addition of lgp-A.

**Table II. Fraction of Macropinosomes Containing More Than One Endocytic Membrane Marker**

|       | TfR   | rab7  | lgp-A/B |
|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| TfR   | 0/159 | 4/152 |         |
| rab 7 | 0/152 | 1/159 | 78/163  |
| lgp-A/B| 2/169 | 63/164|         |

Macrophages were treated as described in Fig. 5. Double antibody–labeled macropinosomes were scored positive if a phase-bright macropinosome labeled with one antibody was also labeled with the other antibody. The data represents the combined results of two experiments.

* Indicates the number of TfR-positive macropinosomes/total rab 7-positive macropinosomes counted.

† Stained with anti-lgp-B.

‡ Stained with anti-lgp-A.

Quantitative analysis of these results (Table II) showed that nearly every TfR-positive macropinosome lacked both rab 7 and lgp-B. Likewise, neither rab 7-positive nor lgp-B-positive macropinosomes labeled with anti-TfR antibody. Thus, recycling of TfR from the macropinosome was complete before the organelle acquired rab 7 and lgp A or B.

**Macropinosome Fusion with Tubular Lysosomes**

Previous studies showed that the lysosomal compartment in murine bone marrow–derived macrophages exists as an extended, interconnected network, and that it can be labeled by incubating cells in medium containing probes for fluid-phase pinocytosis, such as Lucifer yellow (Swanson et al., 1987) and HRP (Heuser, 1989). In addition, dil-labeled acetylated low-density lipoprotein, a fluorescent ligand for the macrophage scavenger receptor, labels macropinosomes (Racoosin and Swanson, 1992), and eventually reaches a tubular compartment.

To determine when macropinosomes fuse with the tubular lysosomal compartment, we prelabeled tubular lysosomes by pinocytosis of Texas red–labeled dextran, M, 10,000 (TRDx10; 30-min pulse, 1-h chase), then pulse-labeled macropinosomes with FDx10f + rM-CSF followed by chases for increasing times. We then determined when the two fluorescent markers labeled the same macropinosome. Fig. 5 shows the corresponding distributions of FDx10f (Fig. 5, a, c, and e) and TRDx10 (Fig. 5, b, d, and f). Immediately following double immunolabeling reveals distinct distributions of endocytic vesicle membrane proteins

If FDx10f-labeled macropinosomes of different ages bear different endocytic membrane proteins, it follows that macropinosomes containing TfR should not also have rab 7 or lgp-A. Moreover, many rab 7–positive macropinosomes should also contain lgp-A. To test this, we examined phase-bright macropinosomes of rM-CSF–treated macrophages immunolabeled with combinations of antibodies. TfR-positive macropinosomes (Fig. 4, a and c) were positive for neither rab 7 (Fig. 4 b) nor lgp-B (used instead of anti-lgp-A; Fig. 4 d). In contrast, some rab 7–positive macropinosomes were lgp-A-positive (Fig. 4 f). It is also noteworthy that lgp-A–positive tubular structures were never labeled with antirab 7 antibodies (Fig. 4 e); a result consistent with the observation that macropinosomes lose rab 7 labeling before the contents of tubular lysosomes are transferred to macropinosomes (see below).

Quantitative analysis of these results (Table II) showed that nearly every TfR-positive macropinosome lacked both rab 7 and lgp-B. Likewise, neither rab 7-positive nor lgp-B-positive macropinosomes were labeled with anti-TfR antibody. Thus, recycling of TfR from the macropinosome was complete before the organelle acquired rab 7 and lgp A or B.
Figure 4. Double immunolabeling of macrophages reveals distinct distributions of endocytic vesicle membrane proteins on macropinosomes. Macrophages were incubated for 4.5 min at 37°C with medium containing rM-CSF, and then fixed and labeled with mixtures of antibodies against TF and rab 7 (a and b); TF and lgp-B (c and d); and rab 7 and lgp-A (e and f), and fluorescent anti-Ig secondary antibodies. Corresponding areas of cells are marked with an asterisk. Macropinosomes labeled with the anti-TF antibody do not label with either anti-rab 7 or anti-lgp-B (a and c). In contrast, macropinosomes sometimes label with both anti-rab 7 and -lgp-A antibodies (e and f). Bar, 1 μm.

A 1-min pulse of FDx10f, macropinosomes formed near the cell periphery (Fig. 5 a) did not contact TRDx10-labeled tubular lysosomes (Fig. 5 b). 4 min after the 1-min pulse, tubular lysosomes (Fig. 5 d) appeared to wrap around the macropinosome (Fig. 5 c). After a 9-min chase (Fig. 5, e and f) the two probes coincided. Taken together with the result that lgp-A was delivered to macropinosomes as early as 3 min after formation (see Fig. 3, lgp-A graph), this delayed entry of TRDx10 into macropinosomes suggested that lysosomal membrane proteins were delivered to macropinosomes before lysosomal contents.

An lgp-A–labeled Macropinosome Intermediate May Precede Complete Fusion with Tubular Lysosomes

Macropinosome fusion with lysosomes appeared to occur in two steps. Tubular lysosomes prelabeled by pinocytosis by FDx10f (Fig. 6, b and d) also labeled with anti lgp-A (Fig. 6, a and c). However, some lgp-A–positive macropinosomes were surrounded by an FDx10f-labeled tubular compartment yet did not contain FDx10f (Fig. 6, a and b, arrowheads). Other macropinosomes were doubly labeled (Fig. 6, c and d, arrowheads). Although the age of macropinosomes could not be estimated in this experiment, their heterogenous labeling with FDx10f and lgp-A indicated a transient condition of the macropinosome in which lgp-A had been transferred from tubular lysosomes but lysosomal contents had not. Alternatively, there may be an lgpA-positive intermediate compartment, lacking lysosomal content markers, that interacts with macropinosomes before the lysosomes do.

We next determined the time course of fusion between FDx10f-labeled macropinosomes and lysosomes, using various markers for late endocytic compartments. These included TRDx10 as a lysosome content marker, an antibody directed against the late endosome–specific cation-independent mannose-6-phosphate receptor (CI-MPR), and an antibody against the major excreted protein of mouse transformed fibroblasts (Dong et al., 1989), that is identical to the lysosomal enzyme cathepsin L and displays a tubular distribution in bone marrow–derived macrophages (data not shown). The kinetics indicated that lgp-A delivery from lysosomes and/or the trans-Golgi network into macropinosomes preceded delivery of the other markers of lysosomes and CI-MPR (Fig. 7). Notably, the kinetics of association of TRDx10, cathepsin L, and CI-MPR with macropinosomes were similar, although the percentage of antibody- or TRDx10-positive macropinosomes at the 12-min chase period varied from 32% for CI-MPR to 83% for TRDx10. We speculate that the low percentage of CI-MPR–positive macropinosomes indicated that at steady-state, CI-MPR receptors were associated mostly with other types of vesicular compartments. Indeed, throughout our experiments, anti-CI-MPR–labeled mostly small vesicular compartments and only occasionally (∼15–20% of cells) labeled lgp-A–positive...
Figure 5. Macropinosomes fuse with pre-labeled tubular lysosomes. The tubular lysosomal compartment was labeled by endocytosis of TRDx10 as described in Materials and Methods. Macrophages were then incubated for 1 min in medium containing 1.2 mg/ml FDx10f and rm-CSF, and then chased for 0 (a and b), 4 (c and d), or 9 (e and f) min in warm medium lacking FDx10f but containing rm-CSF. After these incubations, cells were fixed at 37°C, and prepared for microscopy. a, c, and e are fluorescein images; b, d, and f are Texas red images. Arrowheads mark corresponding areas of cells. Fusion of a macropinosome with a tubular lysosome is seen in e and f, as indicated by TRDx10 labeling within the FDx10f-labeled macropinosome. Bar, 2 μm.

Figure 6. Igp-A-labeled macropinosomes fuse incompletely with pre-labeled tubular lysosomes. The macrophage tubular lysosomal compartment was labeled as described in Fig. 5, except that FDx10f was used as the fluorescent marker. Next, cells were incubated for increasing times in medium containing rm-CSF, and then were washed and fixed at 37°C. Macrophages were then labeled with antibody against Igp-A, followed by a Texas red-labeled secondary antibody. (a and c) Igp-A-labeled images; (b and d) The corresponding FDx10f-labeled tubular lysosomal image. Note that Igp-A labels much of the FDx10f-labeled tubular compartment, but that the Igp-A-labeled macropinosomes do not always contain FDx10f (compare a and b, arrowheads, with c and d). Bar, 2 μm.
Figure 8. Macropinosomes mature and merge with tubular lysosomes. The horizontal axis indicates the time-dependent acquisition and loss of endocytic membrane proteins (horizontal bars), as the macropinosome merges into the tubular lysosomal compartment. Tubular lysosomal membrane (Igp A/B, hatched outline) appears in macropinosomes early, and the contents of the tubular lysosomes (small, closed circles) arrive later. The origin of the rab 7 is not known, but could occur by vesicle-mediated delivery or by direct insertion of rab 7 into macropinosome membrane from the cytosol.

Figure 7. Delivery of Igp-A to macropinosomes precedes delivery of other lysosomal or late endosomal markers. The tubular lysosomal compartment was pre-labeled with TRDx10 (second panel) or was not pre-labeled with fluid-phase markers (first, third, and fourth panels). Macropinosomes were then pulse labeled and chased, as described in Fig. 2. Macrophages were then extracted and labeled with anti-CI-MPR (fourth panel), or -cathepsin L (third panel) antibodies. Antibody- and TRDx10-positive macropinosomes were then scored as described for Fig. 3. Three time course experiments were performed for each antibody or TRDx10 and are displayed as the average percentage for each time point ±SD. The graphs for TRDx10, cathepsin L, and CI-MPR are compared with the anti-Igp-A results of Fig. 3.

Discussion

The macropinosome has the size and longevity needed to follow the progress of an individual vesicle through the endocytic pathway. A newly formed macropinosome begins as an early endosome derived from the plasma membrane, rapidly matures into a late endosome, and then merges completely into the tubular lysosomal compartment. The merger is gradual, in that lysosomal membrane arrives first, and lysosomal content is transferred later. As it moves toward the nucleus and shrinks, the macropinosome interacts with the tubular lysosomal compartment, receiving lysosomal membrane proteins Igp A and B. Approximately 9 to 12 min after formation, the contents of macropinosomes and tubular lysosomes mix (Fig. 8). Macropinosome movement through the endocytic pathway thus exhibits features of both the vesicle shuttle and maturation models of endocytosis, in that it initially acts as a maturing vesicle, but then merges with the stable lysosomal compartment.

The Macropinosome as Early Endosome

According to the two models of endocytosis, early endosomes either are formed from the fusion of nascent macropinosomes (Murphy, 1991), or preexist in the cell as stable organelles (Griffiths and Gruenberg, 1991). The de novo formation of macropinosomes containing TfR is consistent with the first model (maturation). Approximately 35% of the newly formed macropinosomes in macrophages pre-incubated with rm-CSF contained TfR. Subsequently, the number of TfR-positive macropinosomes decreased, presumably due to receptor recycling. This is consistent with previous work showing that fluorescein-labeled transferrin is present in 1/3 of nascent macropinosomes, and then is recycled (Racoosin and Swanson, 1992). Both approaches show that older macropinosomes lack both transferrin receptors or fluorescein-labeled transferrin and therefore have matured from an early endosome into a later-stage endosome.

The apparent recycling of transferrin and its receptor indicates that macropinosomes interact with cytoplasmic proteins that mediate recycling. Two ras-like GTP-binding proteins, rab 4 and rab 5, have recently been associated with early endosomes (van der Sluijs et al., 1991; Chavrier et al., 1990). Rab 5 was shown to be essential for vesicle fusion with early endosomes in an in vitro assay (Gorvel et al., 1991), and transfection of cultured cells with genes encoding mu-
tant rab 5 (Bucci et al., 1992) or rab 4 (van der Sluijs et al., 1992) proteins disrupted correct cycling of the transferrin receptor. We labeled macrophages with affinity-purified anti-rab 5 antibody (a gift of Dr. Marino Zerial, EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany), and observed a fine punctate labeling in cytoplasm, with no labeling of macropinosomes (data not shown). This suggests either that rab 5 does not associate with macropinosomes or that its association is too slight to detect by our methods or by that antibody. We have not yet attempted localization of rab 4.

The Macropinosome as Late Endosome

The appearance of rab 7-positive, TRR-negative macropinosomes (Figs. 3 and 4) represented maturation from an early endosome to a late endosome. rab 7 has been localized in normal rat kidney cells to endocytic compartments that immunolabel with antibody against the CI-MPR (Chavrier et al., 1990), and is therefore thought to be a marker for late endosomes. In our studies, however, the kinetics of rab 7 labeling were different from CI-MPR-labeling kinetics; that is, rab 7 labeling of macropinosomes was greatly diminished before significant anti-CI-MPR labeling. Despite our inability to double-label macrophages with the two rabbit-derived antibodies, we observed that anti-rab 7 never labeled tubulovesicular organelles, whereas anti-CI-MPR-labeled tubules occasionally. Otherwise, both antibodies produced a punctate labeling of small and indistinct vesicles. Our observations of CI-MPR in some tubular structures and in the oldest macropinosomes indicates that it resides in a very late compartment of endocytosis. The labeling kinetics observed with anti-rab 7 were more consistent with the known properties of late endosomes, i.e., somewhere between early endosomes and lysosomes.

It is not known how rab 7 associates with macropinosomes. Rab proteins are modified by the covalent addition of fatty acid moieties that permit membrane association (for review see Magee and Newman, 1992). Anti-rab 7 labeling of macropinosomes ranged from a lightly punctate image to a more homogenous labeling (data not shown). In addition, sometimes small rab 7-positive vesicles that lacked FDX10f appeared to be closely associated with FDX10f-labeled macropinosomes (Fig. 2), indicating that rab 7 associates with small vesicles that then fuse with maturing macropinosomes. Alternatively, rab 7 may insert directly into macropinosomes.

Increased staining for rab 7 coincided with that for lgp-A, and many macropinosomes could be double-labeled with antibodies against these proteins. Organelles with similar protein profiles have been observed by Rabinowitz et al. (1992), in murine peritoneal macrophages. These organelles were tubulovesicular, and could be labeled by endocytosis of BSA-coated colloidal gold (BSA-gold, 8-min incubation followed by a 22-min chase). The compartments that were filled with BSA-gold also labeled with antibodies against endocytic membrane proteins LAMP-1 and -2 (lgp-A and -B), CI-MPR, macropsalin, and rab 7. In addition, anti-LAMP-2 and -CI-MPR were within tubular regions of the compartment. In the present work anti-lgp-A and anti-CI-MPR (data not shown) labeled both macropinosomes and tubular lysosomes, whereas anti-rab 7 did not label tubular lysosomes. Therefore, bone marrow-derived macrophages do not appear to contain a rab 7-positive tubular compartment like that seen in the peritoneal macrophages. Instead, the compartment is more like the tubulovesicular lysosomal compartment in interferon-γ-activated murine peritoneal macrophages, that contains both LAMP-1 and cathepsin D (Harding and Geuze, 1992).

Merger of the Macropinosome into the Tubular Lysosomal Compartment

In contrast to their initial behavior, older macropinosomes merge with, rather than mature into, the tubular lysosomal compartment. FDX10f-labeled macropinosomes fused with lysosomes in a stepwise process, first becoming lgp-A positive, and then acquiring the lysosomal contents. These results are analogous to those of Harding and Geuze (1992), who showed that phagosomes containing heat-killed Listeria rapidly fuse with a tubulovesicular lysosomal compartment. Close association between lgp-A-positive tubular lysosomes and FDX10f-labeled macropinosomes (Figs. 5 and 6) indicates that the lysosomal glycoprotein is delivered via an incomplete fusion event that permits lateral membrane movement but not transfer of lysosomal contents. There is precedent for this in the work of Wang and Goren (1984). They showed that following phagosome–lysosome fusion in macrophages, a small fluorescent dye selectively entered phagosomes hours before a larger fluorescent dye, even though both had previously been loaded together into lysosomes. Their result supports the idea that fusion between lysosomes and phagosomes, or between lysosomes and macropinosomes occurs initially without complete transfer of lysosomal contents, perhaps by the existence of porelike structures connecting the two compartments. Later, as pores increase in size, lysosomal contents would be transferred. Transient interactions between lysosomes and macropinosomes were described by Willingham and Yamada (1978) in a process they named pirananalysis. By time-lapse video microscopy, they observed discrete lysosomes repeatedly engaging and fragmenting the macropinosome. It is not known if other organelles communicate in this way, by transient and incomplete fusion with only partial mixing of contents; but if they did, many molecular sorting problems could be avoided.

Macropinosome Progression Shows Features of Both Maturation and Vesicle Shuttle Models

Macropinosome progress through the macrophage begins as a maturation process and ends as a shuttling process. Early on, a morphologically stable organelle, the macropinosome, changes its antigenic profile with age; that is, it matures. The stable, tubulovesicular lysosomal compartment interacts early and continuously with this maturing macropinosome, which merges into this compartment, rather than being molded independently into a similar one. That is, macropinosomes do not extend into tubules before joining the tubular lysosomes. Indeed, we have seen no evidence of a tubular endosomal compartment (Marsh et al., 1986; Hopkins et al., 1990; Tooze and Hollinshead, 1991). We therefore distinguish the later stages of macropinosome progress from maturation, in that we find a small vesicle shuttling into a morphologically stable, and highly plastic, preexisting compartment. We suggest that the two models of endocytosis...
represent the extremes of a continuum, and that progression along the endocytic pathway is essentially a single process with variability in the relative size and stability of the interacting vesicles. A participating organelle may be considered stable or transient by the degree that it retains its defining characteristics (size, shape, content, or antigenic profile) after interacting with other organelles. Although our studies with variability in the relative size and stability of the intercytosis also change first by a maturation process and later by merging into a stable terminal compartment.

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