Neuroglobin Is Involved in the Hypoxic Stress Response in the Brain

Lin Shang,1 Dan Mao,2 Zhi Li,3 Xiaoqun Gao,1 and Jinbo Deng3

1Department of Human Anatomy, School of Basic Medicine, Zhengzhou University, Science Road 100, Zhengzhou, 450001 Henan, China
2Department of Traumatology, Zhengzhou Orthopaedic Hospital, Longhai Middle Road 58, Zhengzhou, 450000 Henan, China
3Scientific and Technical Institute of Population and Family Plan, Jingwu Road # 26, Zhengzhou, 450002 Henan, China

Correspondence should be addressed to Xiaoqun Gao; lynns@zzu.edu.cn and Jinbo Deng; dengjinpo@163.com

Received 25 February 2022; Revised 19 April 2022; Accepted 2 June 2022; Published 18 July 2022

Academic Editor: Sanket Kaushik

Copyright © 2022 Lin Shang et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Neuroglobin is an oxygen-binding heme protein expressed predominantly in the brain. Despite many years of research, the exact distribution and expression of neuroglobin in the neocortical development and under mild hypoxia stress still remain unclear. Therefore, we aim to explore the expression of neuroglobin during neocortex expansion and under mild hypoxic stress in vivo.

We used Kunming mice to examine the expression of Ngb protein during neocortex expansion. In addition, we analyzed the density of Ngb-positive neural stem cells using the Image-Pro PLUS (v.6) computer software program (Media Cybernetics, Inc.). Our data indicated that the density of the neuroglobin-positive neurons in mice cerebral cortex displayed a downward trend after birth compared with high expression of neuroglobin in a prenatal period. Similarly, we identified that neurons were capable of ascending neuroglobin levels in response to mild hypoxic stress compared with the no intervention group. These findings suggest that neuroglobin behaves as a compensatory protein regulating oxygen provision in the process of neocortical development or under physiological hypoxia, further contributing to the discovery of novel therapeutic methods for neurological disorders, which is clinically important.

1. Introduction

The globins are widely expressed in many organisms where they display a variety of functions. Hemoglobin (Hb), which consists of two α and two β subunits, is a better known globin presenting not only in the brain but also in different tissues and organs. The expression of Hb α- and β-chains is fundamental for Hb to function, mainly supporting the transport of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood [1]. Meanwhile, altered Hb levels have been detected the neurodegenerative diseases in post-mortem brains, which suggests that Hb functions are not exclusively restricted to the blood but may play multiple roles in health and diseases [2]. Lately, neuroglobin (Ngb), the third member of the globin family, was identified in a wide range of vertebrates. As a crucial molecule in hypoxia-induced signaling, the prospective neuroprotective properties of Ngb have aroused the concern of scholars [3]. Nevertheless, the evidence of Ngb expression in the development of cerebral cortex still remains unclear.

Ngb, an oxygen-binding heme protein, is involved in transporting oxygen and expressed predominantly in the cerebral cortex, hippocampus, thalamus, hypothalamus, and cerebellum of the brain [4]. Previous studies have demonstrated that Ngb, as an endogenous neuroprotective factor, could be triggered by hypoxic stress, contributing to regulating the death or survival of neural cells [5, 6]. Sun et al. [6] found that overexpression of Ngb in vivo could help the brain resist neuronal injury from experimentally induced stroke [7]. Soon after, Ngb has been reported to be a neuroprotective protein that is involved in age-related neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease [8]. In line with these ideas, evidence indicated that Ngb also has neuroprotective effects on a traumatic brain injury mouse model [9]. As we know, the expansion of mammalian neocortex is a hallmark of human evolution [10]. To be more specific,
the development of the mammalian neocortex involves the increased proliferation of a limited number of neural stem cells (NSCs), and the radial migration of NSCs further contributes to the production of cortical neurons [11–14]. Perturbation of any step during the process will give rise to organizational anomalies, leading to severe brain damage [15]. Although accumulated evidence indicated that Ngb acts as an oxygen-dependent neuroprotectant expressed in the brain and exerted antiapoptotic effects, the exact expression sites of Ngb during brain development are still a matter of debate [3, 6, 16]. Some in vitro studies have proved that upregulation of Ngb levels in response to hypoxia in various neuronal cell lines indicates the involvement of Ngb in neuronal response to low oxygen [6, 17–19]. Meanwhile, in vivo investigations have demonstrated that neuronal survival after hypoxia or ischemia decreased by inhibition of Ngb, but enhanced by Ngb overexpression [6, 20, 21]. In addition, Ngb has been considered as a nitrite reductase, further preventing mitochondrial respiration in hypoxia [22]. Fago et al. [23] and Raychaudhuri et al. [24] also pointed out that Ngb may interact with cytochrome c, thus inhibiting the intrinsic apoptotic pathway. However, although these studies have suggested a relationship between Ngb and cerebrovascular diseases, many of which mainly focused on the expression of Ngb in the brain of adult individuals, the specific distribution and function of Ngb in the development of cerebral cortex under mild hypoxia stress remain unclear.

To gain further insights into the biological functions of Ngb in the development of cerebral cortex, in the current study, Kunming mice were used for examining the expression of Ngb protein during neocortex expansion and under mild hypoxia stress, helping to better understand the role of Ngb in the development of central nervous system. Further, these results may have significant implications in the physiology and pathology of the brain and may contribute to the discovery of novel therapeutic methods for neurological disorders, which is clinically important.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Animals and Study Design. Kunming mice were obtained from Laboratory animal center of Henan Province, China, and had free access to food and water. All animals were maintained according to the guidelines approved by Animal Care and Use Committee of Henan University. The animals were housed in climate-controlled quarters with a 12-hour light/dark cycle. Embryonic or postnatal offspring were produced from timed pregnancies. E referred to embryonic day, and E0 meant the day of vaginal plug in mated females. Postnatal day was represented by P, and P0 was defined as the first 24 hours after birth. Mice were grouped according to the following ages: E16, E18, P1, P3, P7, P14, P30, P90, P180, and P360. From E16 to P360, a total of 126 Kunming mice were used in this study. Each group contained at least ten mice.

Mild hypoxia in was imitated with burden swimming exercise. Briefly, Kunming mice were randomly assigned to the control group and experiment group at age P120. Control mice were fed conventionally without any interventions. Experimental mice were subjected to adaptable swimming exercises for two days in advance, and nonswimming mice were excluded. Then, burden swimming exercise was conducted with mice carrying a load of 5% of their body weight. Weight-loaded swimming training was executed in a cylinder (100 × 60 cm) with a smooth inner wall, which was filled with water (the water depth according to the size of the mice, so that it cannot touch the bottom of the container, and water temperature maintained at 26 ± 2°C). Weight-loaded swimming exercise was done in a quiet environment for up to one hour, and mice were sacrificed under sodium pentobarbital anesthesia immediately.

To get the samples of embryonic mice and at specific stages, pregnant dams were anesthetized and fetuses at E16 and E18 were harvested by cesarean section. The brains were carefully separated and fixed with 4% w/v paraformaldehyde in 0.1 M phosphate buffer (pH 7.2) at 4°C. In addition, from P1 to P360, postnatal mice (without mild hypoxia stress treatment) were anesthetized and perfused transcardially with 4% paraformaldehyde, and brains were fixed with the same fixative. Similarly, the brain samples from the mild hypoxia stress group (both control and weight-loaded swimming exercise group) were isolated and were fixed in the fixative for 24 hours at 4°C and processed for immunofluorescence.

2.2. Immunocytochemistry. One of the most distinct characteristics in the development of the cerebral cortex is the structure of lamination [25]. Typically, the neocortex has six layers, known as layers I to VI in an inside-out manner. Layer I consists of axons and dendritic tufts, and newborn neurons migrate through the IZ and ultimately give rise to laminae II to VI [26]. Coronal sections of mice brains were deparaffinized and were rinsed in 0.01 M phosphate buffer and preincubated in 5% normal goat serum for 30 minutes. The slices were incubated with primary antibodies at 4°C overnight. Antibodies to detect Neuroglulin (sc-22001) and Nestin (SC-33677) were from Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc. (Santa Cruz, CA). Sox2 (AB97995) was purchased from Abcam (Cambridge, UK). Moreover, anti-NeuN (MAB377B) was obtained from Merck Millipore (Massachusetts, USA). Then, the sections were incubated with secondary antibodies for 3 hours at room temperature after multiple washes in 0.01 M phosphate buffer. Alexa Fluoro 568 donkey anti-goat IgG (A11055), Alexa Fluoro 488 donkey anti-rabbit IgG (A10042), and Alexa Fluoro 488 donkey anti-mouse (A21202) were obtained from Invitrogen (Carlsbad, USA). Then, cover slips were mounted under 65% glycerol with 1:60,000 4',6-diamidino-2-phenylindole (DAPI) for counterstaining. Slices were photographed with an epifluorescence microscope (BX61, Olympus, Tokyo, Japan) under rhodamine, fluorescein isothiocyanate, or ultraviolet filter sets. High-quality sections were imaged using a laser confocal microscope (FV1000, Olympus, Tokyo, Japan), using separate scans at 568 nm (red) and 488 nm (green).

2.3. Statistical Analysis. The density of Ngb positive neural stem cells was analyzed using the Image-Pro PLUS (v.6) computer software program (Media Cybernetics, Inc.). All quantitative data are expressed as the mean values ± SD of at least
Figure 1: Continued.
three independent experiments. The density of Ngb-positive cells were graphed using GraphPad Prism 6.0 (GraphPad Software, USA), and significant differences were determined by one-way ANOVA or fitting curve. The regression equation was calculated with the following formula: \( Y = -123.1X + 2206.4X^2 - 12629X + 24933 \) \( (R^2 = 0.9945) \) in the neocortex II-IV layers, and the formula \( Y = 19.921X^3 - 285.43X^2 + 617.06X + 4518.6 \) \( (R^2 = 0.8291) \) was used in the neocortex V-VI layers. A probability value of \( p < 0.05 \) was used as the criterion for statistical significance.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Expression of Neuroglobin Protein in Cortical Neural Stem Cells during Neocortex Expansion

To better understand the distribution and development regulation of Ngb in mouse neocortex expansion, we evaluated Ngb expression in cortical neural stem cells. Ngb immunolabeling was detectable in the cytoplasm of intermediate zone (IZ), subventricular zone (SVZ), and ventricular zone (VZ) at E16. Both SVZ and VZ had relatively high levels of neuroglobin-positive cells, while the IZ had lower levels (Figure 1(a)). Meanwhile, we found that Ngb colocalized with Sox2, the marker of neural stem cells, in the cytoplasm of SVZ at E16, supported a potential role of Ngb in NSC migration, proliferation, and neurogenesis (Figure 1(b)). At E18, NSCs could be identified in the cytoplasm of IZ and cortical plate (CP) of the mouse brain, and Ngb expression was readily demonstrable in almost all NSCs (Figures 1(c) and 1(g)–1(i)). Gradually, neural stem cells in the neocortex increased with the birth of the mice, and most of the NSCs expressed Ngb at P3 (Figure 1(d)). At P7, the neural stem cells continued to migrate upwards and were widely distributed in the neocortex. Interestingly, nearly half of the neural stem cells in the neocortex weakly expressed or not expressed Ngb protein (Figure 1(e)). Notably, Ngb-immunoreactive cells were barely observed in the NSCs at P30 (Figures 1(f) and 1(j)–1(l)). In brief, there was a strong correlation between Ngb immunoreactivity and NSCs. Ngb immunoreactivity was detectable in the cytoplasm of NSCs in the SVZ of the brain neocortex at E16, and Ngb levels were the highest in the NSCs at E18. Then, the number of Ngb-positive neural stem cells dropped gradually in the process of upmigration of the neocortex from the ependymal layer. Eventually, the NSCs showed little or no Ngb immunostaining at P30.

#### 3.2. Expression of Neuroglobin Protein in Neurons during the Development of Cerebral Cerebral

In the present study, Ngb labeling combined with NeuN was applied to observe the changes of Ngb-positive neurons during cerebral cortical development. At E16, the majority of Ngb-positive neurons were presented in the cortex plate and subcortical plate and were less expressed in the shallow cortical, IZ, and other parts of the cerebral cortex (Figure 2(a)). At P1, Ngb-immunoreactive neurons were detectable in all cortical layers, especially highly expressed in laminae V and VI (Figure 2(b)). Apparently, Ngb-positive cells increased in layers II to VI consistent with the migration of the neurons at P3, and it was clear that the Ngb protein was generally expressed in the cytoplasm of the neurons under the oil microscope (Figures 2(c) and 2(k)–2(m)). Because the stratification of the neocortex had basically formed at P7, the boundaries among each stratum were easy to be identified. Specifically, small tight-knit neuronal soma was seen in laminae II to IV, whereas larger neurons were stained in layers V and VI (Figure 2(g)–2(i)). In the meantime, strong Ngb-immunoreactive neurons were detected close to the molecular layer in layer II-IV, while neurons near the deep cortical layer showed moderate Ngb labeling (Figures 2(g)–2(j)). Moreover, in laminar V to VI, Ngb-positive neurons are strongly expressed near the shallow cortical and weakly expressed in the VZ (Figures 2(g)–2(j)). At P14, the laminated structure of the neocortex had fully formed, and Ngb-positive neurons showed cytoplasmic staining in all layers of the neocortex (Figure 2(d)). The lamination of the neocortex has entered its mature stage at P30, and the layers were easy to be distinguished between II-IV and V-VI according to the different sizes of the aligned Ngb-positive neurons.
Figure 2: Continued.
We also conducted double-immunofluorescence for Ngb and NeuN at P90, P180, and P360 and found that the expression of Ngb labeled neurons has not changed much even though the laminated structure of the neocortex has stabilized (Figures 2(e) and 2(f)).

3.3. Changes of the Ngb-Positive Neuron Density at Different Ages during Cortical Development Process. To get a further understanding of the changes in Ngb-positive neurons during the development of the cortical, samples from different time points at laminae II-IV (during P1 and P360) and at layer V-VI (during E16 and P360), which were easy to be distinguished, were selected to make a comparison. The number of Ngb-positive neurons per unit area in the cortical was measured by using Image-Pro Plus 6.0, while the correlation between each group was analyzed by using GraphPad Prism 6.0. Our present data revealed that, at layers II-IV, the number of Ngb-positive neurons per unit area was the highest at P1 (14665 ± 2983 cells/mm²). Then, the number continuously dropped to 2108 ± 444 cells/mm² at P14, and the density fluctuation of the Ngb-positive neurons tends to a stable level (Figure 3(a)). From birth to P14, the number of Ngb-positive neurons per unit area was remarkably decreased at each time point compared with the previous time point (P < 0.01), and the density of Ngb-positive neurons showed no significant difference from P14 to 1 year (Figure 3(a)). Furthermore, we found that, at layers V-VI, the number of Ngb-positive neurons per unit area gradually climbed from E16 and reached the peak at P1 and then declined, till it leveled off after P14 (Figure 3(b)). To be more specific, there was an apparent increased number of the Ngb-positive neurons from E18 to P1 (P < 0.01). However, the density of the Ngb-positive neurons displayed a downward trend from P1 to P3 (P < 0.01), and the labeled cells decreased rapidly from P7 to P14 (P < 0.01). Finally, we found no evidence that the density of the Ngb-positive neurons changed after P14 till 1 year (Figure 3(b)). These results suggest that Ngb protein was highly expressed in neurons of the mouse cortex before birth and was gradually decreased after the birth.

3.4. The Expression of Neuroglobin Protein in Neurons under a Physiological Hypoxia Environment. Previous studies documented that hypoxia played a vital physiological role in embryonic processes [27, 28]. Compared with the partial oxygen pressure conditions after birth, the fetus has to cope with the low oxygen uterine environment during the fetal development [29]. Therefore, various strategic adaptations, such as a rise in heart rate and elevated hemoglobin concentration, were presented by fetuses to guarantee adequate oxygen supply in an oxygen-deficient environment [30]. To determine whether there were any changes of neuroglobin protein levels between prenatal and postnatal of the mice, samples at E16, E18, and P1 were observed by using Ngb and NeuN double-label immunofluorescence staining, and the variation of the Ngb-positive neurons per unit area at layers V-VI was evaluated simultaneously. Present data pointed that the Ngb-positive neurons per unit area showed no significant difference between E16 and E18 at layer V-VI, while the number of double-label cells was increased obviously from E18 to P1 (P < 0.01) (Figure 3(c)).
Figure 3: Continued.
3.5. Mild Hypoxia Stress Induced the Expression of Ngb-Positive Neurons in the Cortex. Accumulated evidence indicated that hypoxia is not only involved in various normal developmental procedures but also affected different pathological processes [31]. Nevertheless, studies have been shown that Ngb could be activated in adult rat brains in response to hypoxic preconditioning, and inhibition of Ngb expression led to a prominent reduction of neuronal survival after hypoxia [6, 17]. Here, the expression of Ngb-positive neurons in the cortex under the mild hypoxia stress was detected by using double-label immunofluorescence staining. Four-month-old Kunming mice were randomly assigned to the control group and hypoxic stress group. The intervention group was subjected to weight-loaded swimming exercise, while the control group was fed conventionally without any intervention. Our data illustrated that the number of Ngb-positive neurons in cortex showed remarkable increase in the burden swimming exercise group compared with the control group (Figures 3(e) and 3(f)). Similarly, laminae II-IV and layer V-VI were considered the target area, and the statistical difference between the two groups was measured by comparing the number of double-labeled cells per unit area in the cortex. The results demonstrated that the density of Ngb-positive neurons at layers II-IV and V-VI in mild hypoxic stress group presented a significant increase compared with the blank group (\(P < 0.01\)). Scale bar = 25 \(\mu\)m in both (a) and (b). \(P < 0.01\).

The fitting curve between the neuroglobin positive neuronal density \(Y\) and age was calculated with the following formula: \(Y = -123.1X^3 + 2206.4X^2 - 12629X + 24933\) \((R^2 = 0.9945)\). The number of Ngb-positive neurons per unit area was the highest at P1, then, the number continuously dropped at P14, and the density fluctuation of the Ngb-positive neurons tends to a stable level. From P1 to P14, the number of Ngb-positive neurons per unit area was remarkably decreased at each time point compared with the previous time point, and the density of Ngb-positive neurons showed no significant difference from P14 to 1 year \((n = 60, \quad **P < 0.01)\). The density of the Ngb-positive neurons displayed a downward trend from P1 to P3, and the labeled cells decreased rapidly from P7 to P14 \((n = 60, \quad **P < 0.01)\). Four-month-old Kunming mice were randomly assigned to the control group and hypoxic stress group. The intervention group was subjected to weight-loaded swimming exercise, while the control group was fed conventionally without any intervention. (a) Ngb (red) and NeuN (green) immunofluorescence double labeling staining in mouse neocortex in the control group. (b) The expression of Ngb-positive neurons in mouse cortex under the mild hypoxia stress. (c) The density of Ngb-positive neurons at layers II-IV and V-VI in mild hypoxic stress group presented significant increase compared with the blank group \((**P < 0.01)\). Scale bar = 25 \(\mu\)m in both (a) and (b). \(P < 0.01\).
and oxygen deficiency is known to cause neuron injury further leading to occurrence of various nervous system diseases [36]. It is well known that neuroglobin shares similar characteristics with hemoglobin that cope with cerebral hypoxia in diving mammals by either facilitating oxygen supply or protecting from reactive oxygen species [1, 37–39]. In the present research, the expression of neuroglobin was studied in much detail on the protein level during cortical development and under mild hypoxic stress, further explaining the neuroprotective role of Ngb in both physiological and exercise hypoxia conditions in mouse corticogenesis.

Although Ngb presents in a wide range of vertebrates, the expression levels are quite different in various types of tissues. Evidence indicated that Ngb was expressed mainly at high oxygen consumptions sites within the retina, such as the inner segments of photoreceptor cells, and the concentration of it in the retina was much higher than in the brain due to the huge oxygen demands in the retina [40, 41]. Furthermore, Ngb transcripts could be found in all regions of the brain, but the majority of them were detected in the hypothalamic region of the mouse brain and were contrasted by the lower expressions of Ngb in the hippocampus, cerebral cortex, and cerebellum, which raised the issue of distinct Ngb functions in different expressing areas [5, 16]. Our data illustrated that the number of Ngb-positive neurons per unit area was the highest at P1 and then declined, till it leveled off after P14 at laminae II-IV and layers V-VI, and the density of the Ngb-positive neurons at layers II-IV was higher than that at layers V-VI in the early postnatal days. These findings provided critical information that the oxygen demand reached a peak at P1 during the development of cortex, then along with the descent of oxygen consumption for each layer of the cerebral cortex, the density of the labeled cells was dropped gradually. At P14, the features of six laminas presented completely, so the oxygen demand tends to a stable level, and the number of Ngb-positive neurons seems unchanged after P14. Briefly, the results revealed that Ngb potentially acted as a repository for oxygen and bonded with oxygen at a high partial pressure of oxygen (pO2), while dissociated with oxygen at a lower level of pO2, maintaining the normal cell functions in the process of cortex development.

Previously, some QPCR and Western blot data indirectly showed that low-level Ngb presented in early stages of mouse cerebral development, and steady ascent from E19 to P1 and further on to adults subsequently [16, 35]. Additionally, Greenberg et al. [42] have proved that Ngb is expressed early in both human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) and SVZ neuronal precursors in the course of neuronal differentiation. Here, we found that Ngb protein showed the highest expression levels in the cytoplasm of cortical NSCs at E18, and was negatively presented in cortical NSCs at P30. Meanwhile, consistent with the radial migration of the neurons, Ngb labeled cells increased in layers II to VI that at P3, supporting the idea that the Ngb levels were associated to maturational stage of the neocortex and migration of the neurons [35, 43]. Of note, our findings indicated that strong Ngb-immunoreactive neurons were detected close to the molecular layer in layers II-IV, while neurons near the deep cortical layer showed moderate Ngb labeling. Moreover, Ngb-positive neurons strongly are expressed near the shallow cortical and weakly expressed in the VZ in laminar V to VI. This phenomenon revealed that Ngb may be involved in the oxygen supplying and consuming process during the migration of neurons. Videlicet, the Ngb-immunoreactive cells were expressed abundantly in primary neurons; however, the oxygen was consumed during the migration of the neurons, leading to the downregulation of the Ngb protein in the neuronal radial migration process.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the increased density of Ngb-positive neurons in the cortex under mild hypoxic stress might be related to the neuroprotective functions of the Ngb in oxygen deficiency conditions. Our results suggest that neuroglobin behaves as a compensatory protein regulating oxygen provision in the process of neocortical development or under physiological hypoxia. And it is significant for us to obtain the discovery of novel therapeutic methods for neurological disorders. However, our study still has some limitations including limited data. Future works need to collect more data and make a more thorough analysis.

Abbreviation

Ngb: Neuroglobin
NSCs: Neural stem cells
IZ: Intermediate zone
SVZ: Subventricular zone
VZ: Ventricular zone
CP: Cortical plate.

Data Availability

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding authors on reasonable request.
Conflicts of Interest

All authors claim that there are no conflicts of interest.

References

[1] P. Ascenzi, S. Gustincich, and M. Marino, “Mammalian nerve globins in search of functions,” IUBMB Life, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 268–276, 2014.

[2] R. Russo, S. Zucchelli, M. Codrich, F. Marcuzzi, C. Verde, and S. Gustincich, “Hemoglobin is present as a canonical α2β2 tetramer in dopaminergic neurons,” Biochimica et Biophysica Acta, vol. 1834, no. 9, pp. 1939–1943, 2013.

[3] T. Burmester, B. Weich, S. Reinhardt, and T. Hankeln, “A vertebrate globin expressed in the brain,” Nature, vol. 407, no. 6803, pp. 520–523, 2000.

[4] J. T. Trent, R. A. Watts, and M. S. Hargrove, “Human neuroglobin, a hexacordinate hemoglobin that reversibly binds oxygen,” The Journal of Biological Chemistry, vol. 276, no. 32, pp. 30106–30110, 2001.

[5] K. B. Hota, S. K. Hota, R. B. Srivastava, and S. B. Singh, “Neuroglobin regulates hypoxic response of neuronal cells through Hif-1α- and Nrf2-mediated mechanism,” Journal of Cerebral Blood Flow and Metabolism, vol. 32, no. 6, pp. 1046–1060, 2012.

[6] Y. Sun, K. Jin, X. O. Mao, Y. Zhu, and D. A. Greenberg, “Neuroglobin is up-regulated by and protects neurons from hypoxic-ischemic injury,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, vol. 98, no. 26, pp. 15306–15311, 2001.

[7] Y. Sun, K. Jin, A. Peel, X. O. Mao, L. Xie, and D. A. Greenberg, “Neuroglobin protects the brain from experimental stroke in vivo,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, vol. 100, no. 6, pp. 3497–3500, 2003.

[8] Y. Sun, K. Jin, X. O. Mao et al., “Effect of aging on neuroglobin expression in rodent brain,” Neurobiology of Aging, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 275–278, 2005.

[9] S. Zhao, Z. Yu, G. Zhao et al., “Neuroglobin-overexpression reduces traumatic brain lesion size in mice,” BMC Neuroscience, vol. 13, no. 1, p. 67, 2012.

[10] P. Rakic, “Evolution of the neocortex: a perspective from developmental biology,” Nature Reviews. Neuroscience, vol. 10, no. 10, pp. 724–735, 2009.

[11] J. H. Lui, D. V. Hansen, and A. R. Kriegstein, “Development and evolution of the human neocortex,” Cell, vol. 146, no. 1, pp. 18–36, 2011.

[12] V. Borrell and I. Reillo, “Emerging roles of neural stem cells in cerebral cortex development and evolution,” Developmental Neurobiology, vol. 72, no. 7, pp. 955–971, 2012.

[13] M. Betizeau, V. Cottay, D. Patti et al., “Precursor diversity and complexity of lineage relationships in the outer subventricular zone of the primate,” Neuron, vol. 80, no. 2, pp. 442–457, 2013.

[14] T. Sun and R. F. Hevner, “Growth and folding of the mammalian cerebral cortex: from molecules to malformations,” Nature Reviews. Neuroscience, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 217–232, 2014.

[15] E. Taverna, M. Gotz, and W. B. Huttner, “The cell biology of neurogenesis: toward an understanding of the development and evolution of the neocortex,” Annual Review of Cell and Developmental Biology, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 465–502, 2014.

[16] A. Fabrizius, D. Andre, T. Laufs et al., “Critical re-evaluation of neuroglobin expression reveals conserved patterns among mammals,” Neuroscience, vol. 337, pp. 339–354, 2016.

[17] G. Shao, K. R. Gong, J. Li et al., “Antihypoxic effects of neuroglobin in hypoxia-preconditioned mice and SH-SY5Y cells,” Neurosignals, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 196–202, 2009.

[18] M. Emara, N. Salloun, and J. Allalunis-Turner, “Expression and hypoxic up-regulation of neuroglobin in human glioblastoma cells,” Molecular Oncology, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 45–53, 2009.

[19] R. Schmidt-Kastner, M. Haberkamp, C. Schmitz, T. Hankeln, and T. Burmester, “Neuroglobin mRNA expression after transient global brain ischemia and prolonged hypoxia in cell culture,” Brain Research, vol. 1103, no. 1, pp. 173–180, 2006.

[20] A. A. Khan, Y. Wang, Y. Sun et al., “Neuroglobin-overexpressing transgenic mice are resistant to cerebral and myocardial ischemia,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, vol. 103, no. 47, pp. 17944–17948, 2006.

[21] X. Wang, J. Liu, H. Zhu et al., “Effects of neuroglobin overexpression on acute brain injury and long-term outcomes after focal cerebral ischemia,” Stroke, vol. 39, no. 6, pp. 1869–1874, 2008.

[22] M. Tiso, J. Tejero, S. Basu et al., “Human Neuroglobin Functions as a Redox-regulated Nitrite Reductase,” The Journal of Biological Chemistry, vol. 286, no. 20, pp. 18277–18289, 2011.

[23] A. Fago, A. J. Mathews, L. Momens, S. Dewilde, and T. Brittain, “The reaction of neuroglobin with potential redox protein partners cytochrome b5 and cytochrome c,” FEBS Letters, vol. 580, no. 20, pp. 4884–4888, 2006.

[24] S. Raychaudhuri, J. Skommer, K. Henty, N. Birch, and T. Brittain, “Neuroglobin protects nerve cells from apoptosis by inhibiting the intrinsic pathway of cell death,” Apoptosis, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 401–411, 2010.

[25] F. Polleux, C. Dehay, and H. Kennedy, “The timetable of laminar neurogenesis contributes to the specification of cortical areas in mouse isocortex,” The Journal of Comparative Neurology, vol. 385, no. 1, pp. 95–116, 1997.

[26] C. Haushalter, B. Schuhbaur, and P. Dolle, “Meningeal retinoic acid contributes to neocortical lamination and radial migration during mouse brain development,” Biology Open, vol. 6, pp. 148–160, 2017.

[27] S. L. Dunwoodie, “The role of hypoxia in development of the mammalian embryo,” Developmental Cell, vol. 17, no. 6, pp. 755–773, 2009.

[28] L. Fajersztajn and M. M. Veras, “Hypoxia: from placental development to fetal programming,” Birth defects research, vol. 109, no. 17, pp. 1377–1385, 2017.

[29] K. Okazaki and E. Maltepe, “Oxygen, epigenetics and stem cell fate,” Regenerative Medicine, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 71–83, 2006.

[30] B. S. Richardson and A. D. Bocking, “Metabolic and circulatory adaptations to chronic hypoxia in the fetus,” Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology. Part A, Molecular & Integrative Physiology, vol. 119, no. 3, pp. 717–723, 1998.

[31] J. Pouyssegur and J. Lopez-Barneo, “Hypoxia in health and disease,” Molecular Aspects of Medicine, vol. 47, pp. 1–2, 2016.

[32] L. De Filippis and D. Delia, “Hypoxia in the regulation of neuronal stem cells,” Cellular and Molecular Life Sciences, vol. 68, no. 17, pp. 2831–2844, 2011.

[33] K. R. Francis and L. Wei, “Human embryonic stem cell neural differentiation and enhanced cell survival promoted by...
hypoxic preconditioning,” *Cell Death & Disease*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. e22, 2010.

[34] B. Haines, M. Demaria, X. Mao et al., “Hypoxia-inducible factor-1 and neuroglobin expression,” *Neuroscience Letters*, vol. 514, no. 2, pp. 137–140, 2012.

[35] N. Hummler, C. Schneider, A. Giessl et al., “Acute hypoxia modifies regulation of neuroglobin in the neonatal mouse brain,” *Experimental Neurology*, vol. 236, no. 1, pp. 112–121, 2012.

[36] P. E. Bickler and P. H. Donohoe, “Adaptive responses of vertebrate neurons to hypoxia,” *The Journal of Experimental Biology*, vol. 205, no. 23, pp. 3579–3586, 2002.

[37] G. Shao, C. Y. Gao, and G. W. Lu, “Alterations of hypoxia-inducible factor-1 alpha in the hippocampus of mice acutely and repeatedly exposed to hypoxia,” *Neurosignals*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 255–261, 2005.

[38] T. Zhu, L. Zhan, D. Liang et al., “Hypoxia-inducible factor 1alpha mediates neuroprotection of hypoxic postconditioning against global cerebral ischemia,” *Journal of Neuropathology and Experimental Neurology*, vol. 73, no. 10, pp. 975–986, 2014.

[39] G. W. Lu, X. Y. Cui, and B. M. Zhao, “Alteration of oxygen consumption and energy metabolism during repetitive exposure of mice to hypoxia,” *Neurochemical Research*, vol. 24, no. 5, pp. 625–628, 1999.

[40] M. Schmidt, A. Giessl, T. Laufs, T. Hankeln, U. Wolfrum, and T. Burmester, “How does the eye breathe?,” *The Journal of Biological Chemistry*, vol. 278, no. 3, pp. 1932–1935, 2003.

[41] A. Bentmann, M. Schmidt, S. Reuss, U. Wolfrum, T. Hankeln, and T. Burmester, “Divergent distribution in vascular and avascular mammalian retinas links neuroglobin to cellular respiration,” *The Journal of Biological Chemistry*, vol. 280, no. 21, pp. 20660–20665, 2005.

[42] B. Haines, X. Mao, L. Xie et al., “Neuroglobin expression in neurogenesis,” *Neuroscience Letters*, vol. 549, pp. 3–6, 2013.

[43] C. Schneider, G. Krischke, W. Rascher, M. Gassmann, and R. Trollmann, “Systemic hypoxia differentially affects neurogenesis during early mouse brain maturation,” *Brain Dev*, vol. 34, no. 4, pp. 261–273, 2012.