β-Actin mRNA Localization Is Regulated by Signal Transduction Mechanisms

Vaughan M. Latham, Jr., Edward H. Kislauskis, Robert H. Singer, and Anthony F. Ross
Department of Cell Biology, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Massachusetts 01655

Abstract. β-actin mRNA is localized in the leading lamellae of chicken embryo fibroblasts (CEFs) (Lawrence, J., and R. Singer. 1986. Cell. 45:407-415), close to where actin polymerization in the lamellipodia drives cellular motility. During serum starvation β-actin mRNA becomes diffuse and non-localized. Addition of FCS induces a rapid (within 2-5 min) redistribution of β-actin mRNA into the leading lamellae. A similar redistribution was seen with PDGF, a fibroblast chemotactic factor. PDGF-induced β-actin mRNA redistribution was inhibited by the tyrosine kinase inhibitor herbimycin, indicating that this process requires intact tyrosine kinase activity, similar to actin filament polymerization and chemotaxis. Lysophosphatidic acid, which has been shown to rapidly induce actin stress fiber formation (Ridley, A., and A. Hall. 1992. Cell. 790:389-399), also increases peripheral β-actin mRNA localization within minutes. This suggests that actin polymerization and mRNA localization may be regulated by similar signaling pathways. Additionally, activators or inhibitors of kinase A or C can also delocalize steady-state β-actin mRNA in cells grown in serum, and can inhibit the serum induction of peripherally localized β-actin mRNA in serum-starved CEFs. These data show that physiologically relevant extracellular factors operating through a signal transduction pathway can regulate spatial sites of actin protein synthesis, which may in turn affect cellular polarity and motility.

In chicken embryo fibroblasts (CEFs), β-actin mRNA is localized near the leading edge of the cell in a region referred to as the lamella, in contrast to other specific mRNAs such as that for tubulin or vimentin (Lawrence and Singer, 1986), or total cellular mRNA, as visualized with probes for poly(A) (Taneja et al., 1992). Sorting of actin mRNAs appears to be highly specific, since mRNA for different isoforms of actin have been shown to be differentially localized within a common cytoplasm (Hill and Gunsing, 1993; Kislauskis et al., 1993). While the precise role of actin mRNA localization is not defined, a growing body of evidence showing intracellular sorting of mRNAs in a variety of cell types indicates that modulation of the sites of synthesis of specific proteins is an important component of gene expression (for review see Kislauskis and Singer, 1992; Wilhelm and Vale, 1993). In cells such as fibroblasts, which respond to chemotactic stimulation, actin filament formation in the leading lamella plays a vital role in the extension of the leading edge during cell motility (Wang, 1984). It has been suggested that the asymmetric distribution of β-actin mRNA functions to support the polarity of the cell, through restricted spatial distribution of actin protein synthesis, which is necessary for directional movement (Lawrence and Singer, 1986).

How cells regulate mRNA localization is not known. Peripheral localization of β-actin mRNA does not require ongoing protein synthesis (Sundell and Singer, 1990) and is mediated by an interaction between β-actin mRNA and the actin-based cytoskeletal framework (Sundell and Singer, 1991). Since signal transduction mechanisms mediate the functionally related events of growth factor stimulation; cytoskeletal reorganization and directional cellular motility (Ullrich and Schlessinger, 1990; Cross and Dexter, 1991; Schlessinger and Ullrich, 1992), the localization of β-actin mRNA may also be responsive to these signals.

Maintenance of the normal growth and morphology of cells in culture is dependent on the continued presence of serum in the medium, in part due to the presence of serum growth factors (Ross et al., 1974; Pledger et al., 1982). Serum starvation induces cells to enter a quiescent phase of the cell cycle (Pardee, 1974), which is characterized by a decrease in the expression of the β-actin gene (Pardee et al., 1978). Serum starvation also causes a reduction in the number of actin stress fibers, focal adhesions, and a decrease in the amount of polymerized actin in the cell periphery (Ridley and Hall, 1992). Subsequent reintroduction of either serum or of growth factors such as PDGF, results in the transient expression of cytoskeletal actin genes (Greenberg and Ziff, 1992).
The mechanism by which growth factors induce cell proliferation and chemotaxis is becoming more defined. For PDGF, a potent fibroblast proliferative (Pledger et al., 1982) and chemotactic factor (Seppe et al., 1982; Senior et al., 1983), receptor binding is followed by dimerization, activation of tyrosine kinase activity and subsequent generation of second messenger molecules that propagate the cellular responses (see Heldin and Westmark, 1990). Recent work suggests that the ras protein acts as a transducer of the receptor would be an important advance in understanding the linkage of mRNA localization with a growth factor response (see Heldin and Westermark, 1990). The regulation of \( \beta \)-actin mRNA localization by growth factors may also be important in the maintenance of cellular polarity and directional motility.

**Materials and Methods**

**Culture and Fixation of Chick Embryo Fibroblasts**

Fibroblast cells were isolated from breast muscle tissue of 12-d chick embryos as described (Lawrence and Singer, 1986). Cells were plated onto either 10-cm culture dishes or gelatin-coated coverslips as a density of \( 6 \times 10^5 \) cells/ml. Cultures were grown at 37°C in MEM supplemented with 10% FCS in an atmosphere of 95% air/5% CO\(_2\). For serum starvation, cells were grown to 60% confluence on coverslips and either used directly or serum starved for 24 h. Before treatment cultures were rinsed in HBSS and incubated in MEM with or without (indicated in figure legend) 10% FCS supplemented with 10% air/5% CO\(_2\). For serum starvation, cells were grown to 60% confluence on coverslips and either used directly or serum starved for 24 h. Before treatment cultures were rinsed in HBSS and incubated in MEM with or without (indicated in figure legend) 10% FCS supplemented with 10% air/5% CO\(_2\). For serum starvation, cells were grown to 60% confluence on coverslips and incubated in DME for 24 h. For in situ hybridization, cells were grown on coverslips for 2 d and were fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde in PBS for 10 min at room temp following growth factor or pharmacological treatments (see below). Cells were stored in 70% ethanol at 4°C for several days, and then processed for in situ hybridization.

**Growth Factor and Pharmacological Treatments**

CEF cultures were grown to 60% confluence on coverslips and either used directly or serum starved for 24 h. Before treatment cultures were rinsed in HBSS and incubated in MEM with or without (indicated in figure legend) 10% FCS supplemented with 10% air/5% CO\(_2\). For serum starvation, cells were grown to 60% confluence on coverslips and incubated in DME for 24 h. For in situ hybridization, cells were grown on coverslips for 2 d and were fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde in PBS for 10 min at room temp following growth factor or pharmacological treatments (see below). Cells were stored in 70% ethanol at 4°C for several days, and then processed for in situ hybridization.

**Detection of \( \beta \)-Actin mRNA by In Situ Hybridization**

Probes. Oligonucleotide probes were prepared as described (Taejea and Singer, 1990). Eight oligonucleotide probes specific to chick \( \beta \)-actin mRNA were synthesized and end labeled with digoxigenin-dUTP. Digoxigenin-labeled nick-translated probes were prepared as described (Sundell and Singer, 1990). The cDNA probe used was a 1.38-kb segment (nucleotide 95-1477) of a full-length \( \beta \)-actin cDNA probe (Cleveland et al., 1980). For each coverslip, 5 ng of each oligonucleotide (40 ng total), or 20 ng for the nick-translated probe, were hybridized with 40 \( \mu \)g Escherichia coli tRNA and 40 \( \mu \)g sonicated salmon sperm DNA for the oligonucleotide probes and 20 \( \mu \)g of each for the nick-translated probe. Dried probes were resuspended in 15 \( \mu \)l 100% formamide, and combined with 15 \( \mu \)l hybridization buffer (4X SSC, 0.4% BSA, and 20% dextran sulfate).

In situ Hybridization. Cells stored in 70% ethanol at 4°C were rehydrated with PBS supplemented with 5 mM MgCl\(_2\) and 0.5% Triton X-100 for 10 min. Prior to hybridization, coverslips containing cells were incubated in 50% formamide, 2X SSC and 5 mM Na\(_2\)HPO\(_4\), pH 7.0 for 70 min at room temp. The coverslips were placed cell side down on parafilm containing 30 \( \mu \)l of formamide/hybridization buffer containing the appropriate probes and incubated overnight at 37°C in a humidified chamber. After hybridization, coverslips were washed for 30 min at 37°C in 10 ml coplin jars containing 50% formamide, 2X SSC, followed by three 10-min washes in 1X SSC at room temp with gentle agitation. After equilibration in buffer 3 (150 mM NaCl and 100 mM Tris-Cl, pH 7.5) for 1 min, cells were incubated in 30 \( \mu \)l of buffer 1 plus 1% BSA containing a 1:250 dilution of anti-digoxigenin/alkaline phosphatase conjugate (Boehringer Mannheim Biochemicals, Indianapolis, IN) at 37°C for 30 min. Cells were washed twice for 15 min at room temperature in buffer 1 followed by equilibration in buffer 3 (100 mM Tris-Cl, pH 9.5, 100 mM NaCl, 50 mM MgCl\(_2\)) for 1 min at room temp. Cells on coverslips were then transferred to a six-well tissue culture dish containing 2 ml of mitroblue tetrazolium/bromochloro-indolyl phosphate solution (3 mg NBT and 2 mg BCIP in 10 ml of buffer 3). The color development was monitored at room temperature using a water immersion objective and stopped by the addition of water when sufficient reaction product was observed (30-60 min).

**Quantitation of \( \beta \)-Actin mRNA Localization**

After in situ hybridization, coverslips were viewed by bright field microscopy and scored for the percentage of cells showing \( \beta \)-actin mRNA localization. Cells were scored as having localized \( \beta \)-actin mRNA if at least 80% of the signal was concentrated over leading lamellae, an area comprising \( \sim \)25% of the cell area. Random fields of cells under low power were selected, from at least two separate coverslips per condition, and all cells in the field were scored. Approximately 400 cells per coverslip were counted. Replicates were averaged and data plotted as percent of cells showing peripheral localized \( \beta \)-actin mRNA or converted to the ratio of the percent of treated cells showing localized mRNA to untreated controls. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the statistical significance of the treated vs. control cells. Additionally Tukey HSD analysis (Miller, 1981) was used to determine significance of each concentration of each treatment.

**Isolation of RNA and Northern Blotting**

Total cellular RNA was isolated from confluent 10 cm plates of CEFs following the method of Xie and Rothblum (1991). Cells were rinsed with PBS and lysed directly on the plates with 1.6 ml of a solution of (water-saturated phenol, 4 M guanidinium thiocyanate, 25 mM sodium citrate pH 7.0, and 2 M NaOAc, pH 4.0, in a ratio of 1:13:0.0) plus 720 \( \mu \)l of 0.5 M-mercaptoethanol per 100 ml. The lysate was mixed, and combined with 0.16 ml of chloroform/isooamyl alcohol (24:1) and vortexed. The solution was kept on ice for 15 min, centrifuged at 12,000 \( \times \)g for 20 min at 4°C, and RNA was precipitated from the aqueous phase with an equal volume of isopropanol at -20°C for 1 h. Agarose gel electrophoresis and Northern blotting was car-
ried out using standard procedures. β-actin mRNA was detected with β-actin cDNA labeled with digoxigenin by random priming (Boehringer Mannheim Biochemicals).

**Detergent Extractions**

10-cm plates of semi-confluent cultures were rinsed with PBS and then 1 ml of cold CSK buffer (0.3 M sucrose, 0.1 M KCl, 5 mM MgCl₂, 10 mM Pipes, pH 6.9, 2 mM EGTA, 2 mM PMSF, 2 mM vanadyl complex, 1 mg/ml leupeptin, and 1 mg/ml trypsin inhibitor) for 1 min. The cells were then exposed to 1 ml CSK supplemented with 0.5% Triton at 4°C for the indicated time. This extraction buffer was then removed (extracted fraction) and the remaining cytoskeletal material scraped in 0.5 ml CSK buffer plus Triton (retained fraction). The extracted and retained fractions were vortexed, extracted on ice for 15 min, and clarified by centrifugation at 5000 g for 30 s. The supernatants were extracted, ethanol precipitated, and the RNA pellet rinsed with 70% ETOH. Agarose gel electrophoresis and Northern blot detection was performed as described above.

**Results**

**Serum, PDGF and LPA Induce β-Actin mRNA Localization**

To determine pathways affecting mRNA localization the distribution of β-actin mRNA was monitored as a function of stimulation with serum, growth factors, and treatment with pharmacological agents which act on these signaling mechanisms. In situ hybridization with specific DNA probes showed that in CEFs cultured under normal growth conditions (10% FCS), β-actin mRNA was highly localized to the cell periphery in >30–35% of the cells (see Fig. 2, A, B, and D, solid circles). That 30–35% of cells in a population had localized mRNA at any given time, may have resulted from a steady-state equilibrium between localized and nonlocalized mRNA. Supporting this are our observations (below) that the percentage of cells scored as having localized β-actin mRNA can be significantly increased with long-term exposure to chemotactic factors and significantly decreased by serum starvation.

To first establish a baseline of localization in the absence of serum, cells were incubated in serum-free DME for 24 h and β-actin mRNA distribution monitored (Fig. 1 A). Serum starvation reduced the total percentage of cells exhibiting peripheral β-actin mRNA approximately threefold to 12.5% of total (Figs. 1 A and 2, A, B, and D). These cells appeared to be less polarized than cells grown continuously in serum (Fig. 1, A and E). Readdition of MEM containing 15% FCS resulted in a marked increase in cells with peripheral β-actin mRNA (Fig. 1, B–D). An increase was noted after 1–2 min, and at 10 min after serum addition the percentage of cells exhibiting peripheral β-actin mRNA had approximately doubled, to 20–25% of total (Fig. 2 B). By 3 h after serum addition, the level of β-actin mRNA localization approached that of normal cells (Fig. 2 B).

Serum starvation is known to cause cells to enter a quiescent phase of the cell cycle and to reduce β-actin gene expression (Greenberg and Ziff, 1984), and consequently results in a lowered steady-state level of mRNA. To determine if the localization of mRNA by serum stimulation represented newly synthesized mRNA, levels of total cellular β-actin mRNA were monitored throughout the serum starvation and stimulation. Northern analysis showed that after 24 h in serum-free conditions the level of cytoplasmic β-actin mRNA was ~37% of control levels (Fig. 3, lanes 1 and 2). Readdition of 15% serum resulted in an increase in β-actin mRNA levels (Fig. 3). However, no significant increase in cytoplasmic β-actin mRNA was seen until 60 min after serum stimulation (Fig. 3, lane 4), indicating that the observed changes in β-actin mRNA distribution, which occurs within 2–5 min, were due to relocalization of preexistent, diffusely distributed mRNA.

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**Phosphorylation Pathways Affect β-Actin mRNA Localization**

It has been shown that the intrinsic tyrosine kinase activity of the PDGF receptor is essential for stimulation of mitogenesis (Escobedo et al., 1988) and chemotaxis (Westmark et al., 1990). To determine if the signaling pathway for mRNA localization also requires a functional tyrosine kinase, cells were exposed simultaneously to PDGF and herbimycin, an inhibitor of tyrosine phosphorylation (Uehara et al., 1986), and β-actin mRNA distribution was monitored. As shown in Fig. 4 B, herbimycin inhibited the PDGF-induced increase in mRNA localization (P = 0.031). Moreover, herbimycin inhibited the steady-state localization significantly (P = 0.02) (Fig. 5 E), and also was the most effective inhibitor of serum stimulation (P = 0.021) (Fig. 4 A). This suggests that localization of β-actin mRNA requires an intact tyrosine kinase to induce and maintain localization, and that growth
Figure 1. The effect of serum starvation and stimulation on β-actin mRNA localization. CEFs were serum starved for 24 h and stimulated with 15% FCS in MEM for 0 (A and E), 30 min (B and F), 60 min (C), or 6 h (D). β-actin mRNA was visualized by in situ hybridization as described in Materials and Methods using nick-translated probes. Note the relatively diffuse staining in the serum-starved cells (A), and the gradual increase in localized mRNA and number of cells with peripherally localized β-actin mRNA (some of which are arrowed) in the serum-stimulated cells (B-D). E and F show higher magnification images of cells serum starved (E), and stimulated for 30 min after serum starvation (F); note the diffuse staining in E and the shift to lamellar staining in F (arrow). Bars, (A-D) 25 μm, (E and F) 10 μm.

factor stimulation of localization occurs through a tyrosine kinase signal transduction pathway.

To determine if other intracellular phosphorylation pathways influence normal peripheral β-actin mRNA localization, CEFs were treated with a variety of well characterized kinase activators or inhibitors and β-actin mRNA distribution was monitored. TPA, a potent activator of protein kinase C (Castagna et al., 1982), induced a rapid (within 15 min), dose-dependent delocalization of β-actin mRNA (P = 0.02, Fig. 5 B). In contrast, 4-phorbol 12,13 diacetate, which is
Figure 2. Stimulation of β-actin mRNA localization. Serum-starved CEFs were treated with PDGF (50 ng/ml) (A), or 10% FCS (B), or LPA (200 ng/ml) (D), for each time point. In C, PDGF treatment was for 18 h at each concentration on CEFs grown continuously in 10% serum. The β-actin mRNA localization was visualized and quantitated by in situ hybridization using β-actin oligonucleotide probes as described in Materials and Methods. Each data point represents mean plus or minus the standard error of at least two coverslips and for A, B, and D, and are plotted as the percentage of cells with peripherally localized β-actin mRNA vs. time. For C, the ratio of percentage of treated cells with peripherally localized β-actin mRNA to that of untreated controls is plotted vs. concentration. Solid circles (●) indicate the percentage localization of a parallel set of coverslips grown continuously in serum with no serum starvation.

Figure 3. Northern blot analysis of β-actin mRNA levels in serum-starved and serum-stimulated cells. Confluent 10-cm plates of CEFs were serum starved as in Fig. 1, and β-actin mRNA quantitated by Northern blot as described in Materials and Methods. Bands representing β-actin were scanned and quantified on a β-scanner (Bio-Rad Laboratories, Cambridge, MA). Lane 1, control cells not serum starved; lanes 2–5, 24 h serum starvation with 0 min (lane 2), 30 min (lane 3), 60 min (lane 4), and 6 h (lane 5) after addition of 15% FCS. Ratios of bands are as follows: lanes 1, 1.0; lane 2, 0.37; lane 3, 0.41; lane 4, 0.90; lane 5, 1.8. Positive pole is on the top.

Figure 4. Effect of pharmacological agents on the induction of β-actin mRNA localization by serum and PDGF. (A) Serum-starved CEFs were incubated in 10% FCS/MEM for 90 min (control), and simultaneously treated with 1 μM TPA, 100 μM forskolin, 1 μM K252b, and 875 nM herbimycin before fixation. β-actin mRNA localization was visualized and quantitated by in situ hybridization, using β-actin oligonucleotide probes as described in Materials and Methods. Each data point represents the mean plus or minus the standard error of at least two coverslips. (B) Effect of tyrosine kinase inhibitor herbimycin, on the PDGF-induced increase in β-actin mRNA localization. Serum-starved CEFs were treated for 3 h with 50 ng/ml PDGF alone, or PDGF and 875 nM herbimycin. Note that herbimycin completely abolishes PDGF-induced stimulation of β-actin mRNA localization.

Figure 5. Effect of structurally similar to TPA but biologically inactive (Blumberg, 1981), had little effect on β-actin mRNA distribution (P = 0.45, Fig. 5 B). In addition, activation of protein kinase A by forskolin also delocalized β-actin mRNA within 15 min (P = 0.016, Fig. 5 A), while an inactive analog, forskolin, 1, 9-dideoxy did not (P = 0.439, Fig. 5 A). K252b, an inhibitor of protein kinases C and A also delocalized β-actin mRNA (P = 0.026, Fig. 5 C). Finally, cordycepin (3'deoxyadenosine), which decreases cellular ATP levels (Zieve et al., 1987), rapidly delocalized β-actin mRNA (Fig. 5 D). These agents also inhibit the induction of β-actin mRNA localization in serum starved-cells after serum readdition for 90 min (Fig. 4 A). Both the delocalization of mRNA in cells grown in serum and the inhibition of mRNA localization after serum readdition occur at the same concentrations of these kinase inhibitors or stimulators (Figs. 4 A and 5, A–E). All of these data illustrate the acute sensitivity of β-actin mRNA localization to agents which alter cellular phosphorylation levels.

Localized and Delocalized β-Actin mRNA Are Bound to the Cytoskeleton

One model for the mechanism of action of the drugs which delocalize β-actin mRNA, would be a release of mRNA from its anchoring site and subsequent passive diffusion to a nonlocalized state. An established method for determining cytoskeletal associations involves treating cells with a mild, nonionic detergent and monitoring the partitioning between detergent soluble and insoluble phases (Lenk et al., 1977; Osborn and Weber, 1977; Taneja et al., 1992). Evidence from several other systems, including Vg 1 mRNA in oocytes.
The kinase stimulating agents delocalize fl-actin mRNA by dendrocytes (Ainger et al., 1993), indicating that localized tractability of the mRNA relative to untreated cells (Fig. 6). delocalized fl-actin mRNA, there was no change in the extracted, a majority of this mRNA remained associated with the cytoskeleton (Fig. 6), consistent with earlier reports (Bonneau et al., 1985; Singer et al., 1989). When cells were treated with forskolin under conditions which markedly releasing it from the cytoskeleton, an increase in the detergent extractability of fl-actin mRNA would result. When ce...
of exposure to serum (Greenberg and Ziff, 1984), no increase in total cytoplasmic levels of β-actin mRNA was found until 60 min following stimulation of serum-starved cells. However, there was a reproducible and significant increase in β-actin mRNA localization within 5–10 min of exposure to either serum, PDGF, or LPA. This means that all of the components necessary for localization are present in the cytoplasm, precluding models of localization which require transcription to precede the localization. This is also supported by previous work showing that ongoing or steady-state localization in spreading cells is not affected by actinomycin, an inhibitor of transcription (Sundell and Singer, 1991).

How might chemotactic factors affect mRNA distribution? The induction of β-actin mRNA localization by PDGF and inhibition by herbimycin indicates that localization is a downstream event from both PDGF receptor activation and induction of its tyrosine kinase activity. This is consistent with receptor mutant studies which have shown that most cellular effects of PDGF, including actin reorganization and chemotaxis, require intact tyrosine kinase activity (Escarbedo et al., 1988; Westermarch, 1990). One reported effect of PDGF and other growth factors is activation of ras-GTP (Gibbs et al., 1990; Satoh et al., 1990), which then initiates either cell division through activation of raf (Moodie et al., 1993) or chemotaxis through activation of rac and rho (as seen by increased actin polymerization, focal adhesions and stress fibers) (Ridley et al., 1992, Ridley and Hall, 1992). LPA can also induce activation of rho (Thai et al., 1989). The ability of both LPA and PDGF to induce β-actin mRNA localization, suggests that this localization may possibly be through rho and rac as well. LPA induces β-actin mRNA relocalization, however, slightly faster than PDGF, peaking at ~10 min after stimulation and then decreasing, in contrast to PDGF which rises more slowly and continues to increase for at least 3 h. This suggests that PDGF and LPA may possibly be operating through different pathways. LPA has been reported to have actions in fibroblasts besides rho-GTP activation, such as activation of the stimulatory G protein of phospholipase C and the inhibitory G protein of adenylyl cyclase (van Corven et al., 1989), release of intracellular Ca²⁺ stores (van Corven et al., 1989; Jalink et al., 1990), and stimulation of arachidonic acid release (van Corven et al., 1989). All of these reported effects of LPA occur at concentrations 100-fold higher than the concentration that induces β-actin mRNA localization (200 ng/ml) with the exception of calcium release. Although an increase of intracellular calcium is reported at similar LPA concentrations that induce localization of β-actin mRNA, the increases occur within seconds after treatment and they decay within 2–3 min (Jalink et al., 1990). In addition, treatment of CEFs with varying concentrations of calcium ionophore A23187 had no effect or caused an inhibition of β-actin mRNA localization (data not shown).

Growth factor signaling has been shown to be influenced by protein kinase activity (Cook and McCormick, 1993; Wu et al., 1993), an observation which illustrates the considerable cross-talk that occurs between cellular signaling pathways. Some of the effects of cAMP and PKA pathways have been shown to be opposite of that of growth factors whose receptors are tyrosine kinases, such as the effect of cAMP on insulin-stimulated glycogen and triacylglycerol formation (Cohen, 1992) and on PDGF-induced mitogen-activated protein kinase (Graves et al., 1993). In this study we found that activation of both kinases A and C (by forskolin and TPA respectively) inhibited the relocalization of β-actin mRNA in serum-stimulated cells and caused delocalization of mRNA in cells grown in normal growth conditions. The inhibitory effect of these kinases on other PDGF-induced events is downstream of the receptor tyrosine kinase (Heldin et al., 1989; Graves et al., 1993), however beyond this the targets are not known. Activation of ras by PDGF is effected through several intermediate proteins (Lowenstein et al., 1992; Li et al., 1994; Chardin et al., 1993). It is possible that one or more of these receptor-associated molecules is a target for these kinases.

TPA and forskolin have been reported to induce changes in the actin cytoskeleton (Sobue et al., 1988; Lomri and Marie, 1990; Goldman and Abramson, 1990; Perrin et al., 1992). The similarity in the responsiveness of both the mRNA and actin filaments raises the possibility that alterations of phosphorylation delocalize β-actin mRNA by depolymerizing actin filaments. However phallloidin staining of forskolin or TPA-treated cells showed no change in the actin cytoskeleton during the time-course which induced delocalization of β-actin mRNA (not shown). In addition, forskolin did not change the partitioning of β-actin mRNA between detergent soluble and cytoskeletal fractions, with the majority of the mRNA remaining associated with the cytoskeleton. Depolymerization of actin filaments by cytochalasin D results in both delocalization of β-actin mRNA (Sundell and Singer, 1990) and the release of most poly (A) mRNA from the cytoskeleton (Ornelles et al., 1986; Taneja et al., 1992). Therefore forskolin delocalized mRNA is not freely diffusible or released from the cytoskeleton.

Induction of tyrosine kinase activity by PDGF or induction of other kinases may lead to phosphorylation of a protein(s) required for the maintenance of localization. Specific targets of protein kinases could either be motor molecules which move the mRNA or cytoskeletal proteins which anchor the mRNA once it reaches the lamella. Several RNA binding proteins have been shown to be regulated by phosphorylation (see Hershey, 1989). In chick fibroblasts the proximal 3' untranslated region of the β-actin mRNA contains a cis-acting localization sequence (Kislauskis et al., 1993), which supports the idea that specific protein(s) bind to this region and mediate peripheral localization by interacting with the cytoskeleton. Results presented here suggest that these protein(s) may be phosphoproteins. This will aid in the purification, identification, and characterization of the role of these proteins in mRNA sorting.

The modulation of mRNA sorting by growth factors has implications in a wide variety of cellular processes. These include the establishment of both short and long range morphological and physiological effects. The polarity of cells could be effected by asymmetric signals impinging on the cell surface which result in a concomitant asymmetry of protein synthesis. A gradual reorientation of protein synthesis, a mechanism of protein sorting, would change the cells to a stable polarized phenotype. Additionally, cells capable of motility could use the same signals to transiently change direction of migration by supply of specific proteins to the...
leading edge without the need for new transcription. Ultimately, the physiological role of spatially directed protein synthesis may be an important component of these processes.

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