Research Article
A Lipocalin-Derived Peptide Modulating Fibroblasts and Extracellular Matrix Proteins

Linda Christian Carrijo-Carvalho, 1 Durvanei A. Maria, 1
Janaina S. Ventura, 1 Kátia L. P. Morais, 1 Robson L. Melo, 2
Consuelo Junqueira Rodrigues, 3 and Ana Marisa Chudzinski-Tavassi 1

1 Laboratory of Biochemistry and Biophysics, Butantan Institute, Avenida Vital Brasil 1500, 05503-900 São Paulo, SP, Brazil
2 Center for Applied Toxinology, Butantan Institute, 05503-900 São Paulo, SP, Brazil
3 Department of Orthopedics and Traumatology, Faculty of Medicine, University of São Paulo, 01246-903 São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Correspondence should be addressed to Ana Marisa Chudzinski-Tavassi, amchudzinski@butantan.gov.br
Received 3 January 2012; Revised 23 February 2012; Accepted 15 April 2012

Academic Editor: Yonghua Ji
Copyright © 2012 Linda Christian Carrijo-Carvalho 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.

Lipocalin family members have been implicated in development, regeneration, and pathological processes, but their roles are unclear. Interestingly, these proteins are found abundant in the venom of the Lonomia obliqua caterpillar. Lipocalins are β-barrel proteins, which have three conserved motifs in their amino acid sequence. One of these motifs was shown to be a sequence signature involved in cell modulation. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of a synthetic peptide comprising the lipocalin sequence motif in fibroblasts. This peptide suppressed caspase 3 activity and upregulated Bcl-2 and Ki-67, but did not interfere with GPCR calcium mobilization. Fibroblast responses also involved increased expression of proinflammatory mediators. Increase of extracellular matrix proteins, such as collagen, fibronectin, and tenascin, was observed. Increase in collagen content was also observed in vivo. Results indicate that modulation effects displayed by lipocalins through this sequence motif involve cell survival, extracellular matrix remodeling, and cytokine signaling. Such effects can be related to the lipocalin roles in disease, development, and tissue repair.

1. Introduction

Development and regeneration are processes driven by dynamic regulation of extracellular matrix (ECM). ECM is continuously exposed to physical and chemical injuries, and its composing proteins are continuously synthesized and secreted by fibroblasts, which play a central role in regulation of tissue homeostasis. Thus, in young and healthy tissue there is a balance between ECM deposition and degradation, in a well-organized and regulated process [1, 2].

Dysfunctions in deposition and remodeling of ECM proteins hinder normal tissue repair and are observed in several pathologies, such as chronic wound [3], sclerosis and other fibrotic diseases [4, 5], tendinopathy [6], diabetes [7], renal disease [8], pulmonary disorders [9], and even heart disease [10]. Many of these have involvement of cytokines. In addition, other undesired conditions such as chrono- and photoaging are associated with breakdown and impaired synthesis of ECM proteins, especially collagen [2].

Interestingly, lipocalin levels are particularly elevated in some of these and other pathological states [11–15], as well as in site-specific injuries [16–18]. Furthermore, expression of lipocalins has been associated with regeneration and tissue repair [16–20], metamorphosis [16, 21, 22], pregnancy [23], chondrogenesis [24, 25], and other processes related to embryogenesis and postnatal development [14, 24, 26–28]. These findings suggest those proteins play a special role in morphogenesis. Lipocalin roles may be beyond their particular lipophilic ligand-binding properties, given the broad phylogenetic range and tissue distribution of lipocalins reported in these studies.

Lipocalins are among the most abundant proteins found in the venom of the Lonomia obliqua caterpillar [29, 30].
They are multifunctional proteins with a β-barrel structure, which share three characteristic conserved domains in their primary structure, namely, motifs 1–3 [31, 32]. The involvement of motif 2 in cell modulation displayed by lipocalins has been previously demonstrated through a peptide mapping approach studying a toxin from L. obliqua [33]. In this study, we investigated the effects of a peptide based on this lipocalin motif on human fibroblasts, evaluating the extracellular matrix proteins in vitro and in vivo, mobilization of intracellular calcium, and mediators involved in cell response.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Reagents and Antibodies. Ham’s F-12 culture medium was purchased from Gibco BRL (Grand Island, NY, USA). Fetal bovine serum (FBS) and trypsin-EDTA were from Cultilab (Campinas, SP, Brazil). Vectashield mounting medium was from Vector Laboratories (Burlingame, CA, USA). Monoclonal antibodies to cellular fibronectin, human tenasin, and heat shock protein 47 (HSP47) were from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA). Other mouse IgG antibodies were from Santa Cruz Biotechnologies (Santa Cruz, CA). Alexa Fluor 488 goat anti-mouse IgG antibody was from Molecular Probes (Eugene, OR, USA). FLIPR Calcium 4 Assay Kit was obtained from Molecular Devices (Sunnyvale, CA, USA). All other reagents were supplied by Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA).

2.2. Peptide Synthesis. Lipocalin motif-2-derived peptide (pm2b) [33], with the amino acid sequence YAIGYSCKDYK-paraformaldehyde, 0.2% glutaraldehyde, 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 7.4. Then, slides were washed with PBS and subjected to immunostaining with monoclonal antibody anticalcine fibronectin, anti-HSP47, or anti-human tenasin and secondary antibody Alexa Fluor 488, according to manufacturer’s instructions. Cells were washed and slides mounted with Vectashield. Slides were visualized under fluorescence microscopy (Carl Zeiss, Jena, Germany) by 200x magnification, and ten microscopic fields were analysed. Expressions of procollagen, fibronectin, and tenasin were quantified through morphometric analysis and digital densitometry using an Image System Analyzer (Kontron Electronic 300, Zeiss). Values were normalized to untreated controls.

2.5. Western Blotting. Cells were lysed in RIPA buffer for 20 min at 4°C and centrifuged for 5 min at 21,000 g, to obtain soluble and insoluble extracts. The cell lysate of treated (77 and 230 nM pm2b) and control fibroblasts were subjected to SDS-PAGE, using 30 μg of each protein sample of soluble extracts. Fibronectin and laminin were analyzed using the insoluble extracts. Then, proteins were electrotransferred to nitrocellulose membrane, which was blocked with 1% bovine serum albumin in 20 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4, 0.15 M NaCl, and 0.05% Tween (TBS-T) and incubated in the same buffer with primary antibodies for fibronectin, laminin, collagen type I, HSP47, and GADH as control. Membranes were washed with TBS-T and incubated with secondary antibody conjugated with alkaline phosphatase. Incubation with each antibody was according to manufacturer’s instructions. Nitro blue tetrazolium and 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolylphosphate (NBT/BCIP) substrates were used for immunostaining. Proteins were quantified through digital densitometry using the Image software (National Institutes of Health, USA). Values were normalized to untreated controls.

2.6. In Vivo Treatment. BALB/c mice (20 ± 2 g) were bred at Butantan Institute. Animals had free access to food and water and were in a light-dark cycle of 12 h. Mice were anesthetized with ketamine (75 mg/kg) and xylazine (10 mg/kg) i.p. and had the dorsum shaved. The animals were divided into 2 groups, treated with intradermal injections of a single dose of pm2b (0.2 mL, 1.15 μM, n = 6) or two repeated doses (7 days of interval, n = 4) in a delimited site on the dorsum. Paired controls were injected with the vehicle (saline) in a delimited site on the opposite side in the same animal. Skin fragments of 1 × 1 cm from each site (pm2b-treated and control) were collected in pairs of treated mice in intervals of one, two, and twelve weeks after single treatment, as well as one and twelve weeks after the first dose of repeated treatment. Skin samples were immediately fixed in 10% buffered-formalin for histological procedures.
Mice were euthanized prior to biopsies. All procedures were performed in compliance with the tenets of the Brazilian Society of Laboratory Animal Science (SBCAL/COBEA) and the institutional ethics committee.

2.7. Histological Analysis. Tissue sections of 3 μm thickness were stained with picrosirius red and examined under light microscopy (Carl Zeiss, Jena, Germany) coupled to Kontron 300 System Image Analyzer. Quantitative analysis of collagen...
Figure 2: Extracellular matrix proteins in fibroblast lysate. Primary human fibroblasts were treated with pm2b (77 or 230 nM) and proteins were analyzed after 96 h by western blotting. Data are representative images and expressed as mean ± SEM for duplicate measurements. 

was done from 10 microscopic fields at 200x magnification on flat sections of each biopsy through morphometric analysis and digital densitometry. Data were expressed as percentage of collagen staining to total area and in function of matched controls.

2.8. Calcium Mobilization Assay. Changes in free intracellular calcium concentration were measured by microfluorimetry using the FlexStation 3 (Molecular Devices, Sunnyvale, CA, USA) and FlexStation Calcium Assay Kit, following manufacturer’s instructions. Fibroblasts were seeded at a density of 5 × 10^4 cells per well in black-well plates with clear bottom. Prior to experiments, cells were incubated for 1 h, at 37°C with the calcium kit reagent in serum-free medium. Before measurements, the following treatments were added: ATP (10 μM), thapsigargin (1 μM), and pm2b (80 or 230 nM, immediately and 1 h before). Both the direct effect of pm2b and also its influence on calcium mobilization by thapsigargin were investigated. The inhibitory effect of BAPTA (10 μM, 30 min before) was used as a positive interference control. Fluorescence was measured during 120 s, at 1.52 time intervals. Measurements were obtained as the difference between the peak intensity fluorescence and baseline.

2.9. Flow Cytometry Analysis. Cells were gently washed with PBS and detached with trypsin-EDTA. After addition of FBS 10%, the cells were harvested and washed twice with PBS. Pellets were resuspended in 4% paraformaldehyde and stored at 4°C. Antibody labeling was done according to manufacturer’s instructions at room temperature. Prior to analysis, cells were permeated with 0.1% Triton X-100 for 30 min, incubated for 2 h with the respective antibodies for caspase 3, Bcl-2, Ki-67- MIB-1, cytochrome c (cyt c), IL-1β, CXCR1, CXCR2, IL-6R, or collagen-1 receptor (α2β1), and then incubated with the secondary antibody Alexa Fluor 488 in the dark. Fluorescence-activated cell sorting (FACS) analysis was performed on a FACSCalibur flow cytometer, Becton Dickinson (San Jose, CA, USA). For each sample, at least 10,000 events were acquired and the data were evaluated using the Cell-Quest software.

2.10. Statistical Analysis. The difference among groups was analyzed by one-way or two-way analysis of variance.
3. Results

3.1. Increased Production of ECM Proteins in Fibroblast Culture. To evaluate if pm2b was able to modulate fibroblast response, we assessed if the peptide could interfere with the production of ECM proteins by primary human fibroblasts in culture.

Immunofluorescence results showed that treatment with pm2b induced a significant increase of procollagen, fibronectin, and tenascin, as shown in Figure 1. In comparison to nontreated cultures, pm2b-treated fibroblasts showed almost onefold increase in tenascin (94%) and an increase in 49% of procollagen and 62% of fibronectin. Analysis of collagen type I, fibronectin, and laminin in the cell lysates by western blotting showed a significant increase in all these proteins in cultures treated with the peptide at 70 or 230 nM and a slight increase in HSP47 (Figure 2).

3.2. Increased Production of Collagen In Vivo. Since the peptide treatment induced a change in the content of ECM proteins in vitro, we assessed whether if pm2b was also able to increase the amount of collagen in vivo in the mice dermis (Figure 3). Interaction of pm2b treatment and the collagen content was statistically significant (two-way ANOVA, \( P < 0.05 \)), either if it was lower than that observed in vitro. Treatment with a single dose induced a mean increase of local collagen fibrils in about 10%, while with two repeated doses the mean increase was 15% (Figure 3(a)). With a single dose, the higher difference to controls was observed 7 days after treatment. The ratio between treated area and control dropped along the time. Interestingly, in the group treated with 2 doses of pm2b, the collagen increase lasted for 3 months (Figure 3(b)).

3.3. Calcium Mobilization. Increase of intracellular calcium in fibroblasts was observed by using ATP or thapsigargin (Figure 4). As expected, pretreatment with BAPTA abolished
shown in Figure 5(b), increases in CXCR1 and IL-6R were suppressed caspase-3 and upregulated Bcl-2 and Ki-67. As IL-1α
In both conditions, there was a slight increase in the observed only with 1% FBS. On the other hand, cyt c was
in a prosurvival response. As seen in Figure 5(a), pm2b
in apoptosis, antiapoptosis, and proliferation, resulting
a synergistic modulation of mediators involved
showed di
medium were analyzed. Either treated or nontreated cultures
investigated showed no direct e
the action of thapsigargin. On the other hand, the peptide
investigated showed no direct effect on intracellular calcium
mobilization. In addition, it did not seem to interfere with
the action of thapsigargin.

3.4. Modulation of Mediators Involved in Cell Viability and
Inflammation. To investigate the mechanisms underlying
fibroblast responses induced by pm2b, a set of mediators
expressed by the cells in 1% and 10% FBS-supplemented
medium were analyzed. Either treated or nontreated cultures
showed different responses in these two conditions. pm2b
promoted a synergistic modulation of mediators involved
in apoptosis, antiapoptosis, and proliferation, resulting
in a prosurvival response. As seen in Figure 5(a), pm2b
suppressed caspase-3 and upregulated Bcl-2 and Ki-67. As
shown in Figure 5(b), increases in CXCR1 and IL-6R were
observed only with 1% FBS. On the other hand, cyt c was
exclusively upregulated in 10% FBS-supplemented medium.
In both conditions, there was a slight increase in the α2β1 expression, but not statistically significant. CXCR2 and
IL-1β were markedly increased in both culture conditions.

| Positive cells (%) | Cont 10% FBS | pm2b 10% FBS | Cont 1% FBS | pm2b 1% FBS |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Casp3             |             |             |             |             |
| Cyt c             |             |             |             |             |
| Bcl-2             |             |             |             |             |
| Ki-67             |             |             |             |             |

| Positive cells (%) | Cont 10% FBS | pm2b 10% FBS | Cont 1% FBS | pm2b 1% FBS |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| a2β1              |             |             |             |             |
| CXCR1             |             |             |             |             |
| CXCR2             |             |             |             |             |
| IL-6R             |             |             |             |             |
| IL-1β             |             |             |             |             |

Figure 5: Differential expression of mediators involved in cell viability (a), cytokine and receptors (b). Fibroblasts were cultured with pm2b (230 nM) for 72 h with 10% or 1% FBS and analyzed by FACS. Data are expressed as mean ± SEM for triplicate measurements. ***P < 0.01, **P < 0.01, *P < 0.05 versus controls. ### P < 0.01, ***P < 0.01, **P < 0.05 versus controls with 10% FBS.

4. Discussion

It is well known that morphogenesis and other physiological processes consist in a chain of events regulated by cross-talk signaling between ECM cells, receptors, and signaling factors [34]. However, lipocalin roles in these processes are not clearly understood. Regardless of many reports describing lipocalins as biomarkers of diseases [11] and others that correlate high lipocalin expression levels with stress conditions [35] and injury [16, 17], little is known about the biological activities of these multifunctional proteins and how they can modulate tissue and cell responses.

Lipocalins are classically recognized as carriers of lipophilic molecules. However, outgrowing data on the literature have indicated they are more than that. Some authors have suggested lipocalin motifs should play important roles in the structure pattern and functional properties of these proteins [31, 32, 36]. Bioinformatic analysis and peptide mapping indicated motif 2 is implicated in cell modulation and suggested it is a sequence signature with a role in cell survival [33]. However, its possible effects in fibroblasts were not known.

We have obtained a synthetic peptide with amino acid sequence based on the lipocalin motif 2, found in Lopap—an insect lipocalin from the L. obliqua caterpillar [37]. Lopap was previously shown to have a direct effect on endothelial cells increasing the surface expression of cell adhesion molecules, triggering IL-8 and nitric oxide release, and displaying antiapoptotic activity [36–40]. The peptide reproduced the effects observed with the whole protein, exhibiting an antiapoptotic activity in endothelial cells and neutrophils, which is dependent on nitric oxide synthase activity [33].

Herein, results demonstrate the peptide can modulate mediators favoring a prosurvival response, with suppression of caspase 3—a key proapoptotic enzyme, and up-regulation of the antiapoptotic protein Bcl-2, as well as the proliferation marker Ki-67. Other studies have also attributed to lipocalins roles in cell survival in different cell lineages [41–43], which support the hypothesis of a common property among lipocalins. This effect can be important for the lipocalin roles in several developmental and repairing processes, for protective response to stress, as well as for their possible involvement in many diseases.

Interestingly, pm2b treatment increased ECM proteins in vitro and in vivo. Fibroblasts are metabolically active cells which major function is the production of ECM components [1]. Our findings suggest for the first time a lipocalin role in ECM modulation. This finding brings new insights to understanding the involvement of lipocalins in the pathophysiology of diseases involving ECM deposition/remodeling defects. The difference in the amount of collagen increase induced by pm2b in vitro and in vivo may be due to collagen degradation by matrix metalloproteinases or either the peptide dose used and its stability in the tissue. Ki-67 is absent in resting cells and present during all phases of cell cycle, but otherwise its role in ribosomal RNA synthesis [44] may be related to the increase in synthesis activity observed in fibroblasts.
Fibroblast modulation by pm2b was shown to involve cytokine signaling favoring a proinflammatory response. Besides the previously reported modulation of IL-8 by Lopap [39], results showed the induction of the IL-8 receptors. Expression of the chemokine receptor CXCR1 was increased only in serum-deprived cultures, while expression of its paralog CXCR2 was increased no matter the assay condition. IL-8 and its receptors are known to have an autocrine role paralog CXCR2 was increased no matter the assay condition. However, the mechanisms by which Lopap and derived peptide trigger cell responses have to be investigated. As results show, it does not seem to involve changes in calcium transients.

To our knowledge, this is the first report of lipocalins modulating fibroblasts and ECM proteins, which could be directly implicated to their roles in morphogenesis and tissue homeostasis. The involvement of growth factors and cytokines in development and repairing process is well described [49]. However, lipocalins may be also considered as important players in these processes. Therefore, the mechanisms by which these proteins can trigger cell modulation have to be carefully investigated. Understanding the effects of these proteins can open perspectives for their use in prognosis and treatment of many dysfunctions involving wound healing, tissue remodeling, and cell death.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by Brazilian agencies: Financiadora de Estudos e Projetos (FINEP), Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP, CAT/CEPID), Conselho Nacional de Pesquisa e Desenvolvimento (CNPq), and INCT-TOX-CNPq/FAPESP program. L. C. Carrijo-Carvalho, J. S. Ventura, and K. L. P. Morais held scholarships from FAPESP. L. C. Carrijo-Carvalho is a Postdoctoral Fellow from CAT/CEPID-FAPESP (2010/00600-0).

References

[1] R. J. McAnulty, “Fibroblasts and myofibroblasts: their source, function and role in disease,” International Journal of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 666–671, 2007.

[2] G. J. Fisher, J. Varani, and J. J. Voorhees, “Looking older: fibroblast collapse and therapeutic implications,” Archives of Dermatology, vol. 144, no. 5, pp. 666–672, 2008.

[3] J. P. Hodde and C. E. Johnson, “Extracellular matrix as a strategy for treating chronic wounds,” American Journal of Clinical Dermatology, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 61–66, 2007.

[4] H. Ihn, “Scleroderma, fibroblasts, signaling, and excessive extracellular matrix,” Current Rheumatology Reports, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 156–162, 2005.

[5] T. A. Wynn, “Cellular and molecular mechanisms of fibrosis,” Journal of Pathology, vol. 214, no. 2, pp. 199–210, 2008.

[6] G. Riley, “Chronic tendon pathology: molecular basis and therapeutic implications,” Expert Reviews in Molecular Medicine, vol. 7, no. 5, pp. 1–25, 2005.

[7] E. Black, J. Vibe-Petersen, L. N. Jorgensen et al., “Decrease of collagen deposition in wound repair in type 1 diabetes independent of glycemic control,” Archives of Surgery, vol. 138, no. 1, pp. 34–40, 2003.

[8] R. L. Chevalier, B. A. Thornhill, M. S. Forbes, and S. C. Kiley, “Mechanisms of renal failure and progression of renal disease in congenital obstructive nephropathy,” Pediatric Nephrology, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 687–697, 2010.

[9] S. Rutschow, J. Li, H. P. Schultheiss, and M. Pauschinger, “Myocardial proteases and matrix remodeling in inflammatory heart disease,” Cardiovascular Research, vol. 69, no. 3, pp. 646–656, 2006.

[10] S. Xu and P. Venge, “Lipocalins as biochemical markers of disease,” Biochimica et Biophysica Acta, vol. 1482, no. 1-2, pp. 298–307, 2000.

[11] E. A. Thomas, S. M. Laws, J. G. Sutcliffe et al., “Apolipoprotein D levels are elevated in prefrontal cortex of subjects with Alzheimer’s disease: no relation to apolipoprotein E expression or genotype,” Biological Psychiatry, vol. 54, no. 2, pp. 136–141, 2003.

[12] A. L. Hemdahl, A. Gabrielsen, C. Zhu et al., “Expression of neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin in atherosclerosis and myocardial infarction,” Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology, vol. 26, no. 1, pp. 136–142, 2006.

[13] K. Mori and K. Nakao, “Neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin as the real-time indicator of active kidney damage,” Kidney International, vol. 71, no. 10, pp. 967–970, 2007.

[14] J. Yang and M. A. Moses, “Lipocalin 2: a multifaceted modulator of human cancer,” Cell Cycle, vol. 8, no. 15, pp. 2347–2352, 2009.

[15] H. J. Kim, H. J. Je, H. M. Cheon et al., “Accumulation of 23 kDa lipocalin during brain development and injury in Hyphantria cunea,” Insect Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, vol. 35, no. 10, pp. 1133–1141, 2005.

[16] M. G. Gaujard, S. Do Carmo, E. Martinez et al., “ApoD, a glia-derived apolipoprotein, is required for peripheral nerve functional integrity and a timely response to injury,” Glia, vol. 58, no. 11, pp. 1320–1334, 2010.

[17] S. Petta, C. Tripodo, S. Grimaudo et al., “High liver RBP4 protein content is associated with histological features in patients with genotype 1 chronic hepatitis C and with nonalcoholic steatohepatitis,” Digestive and Liver Disease, vol. 43, no. 5, pp. 404–410, 2011.

[18] P. Spreyer, H. Schaaf, G. Kuhn et al., “Regeneration-associated high level expression of apolipoprotein D mRNA in endoneurial fibroblasts of peripheral nerve,” EMBO Journal, vol. 9, no. 8, pp. 2479–2484, 1990.

[19] R. J. Playford, A. Belo, R. Poulos et al., “Effects of mouse and human lipocalin homologues 24p3/lcn2 and neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin on gastrointestinal mucosal integrity and repair,” Gastroenterology, vol. 131, no. 3, pp. 809–817, 2006.

[20] A. Kawahara, A. Hikosaka, T. Sasado, and K. Hirotta, “Thyroid hormone-dependent repression of α1-microglobulin/bikunin precursor (AMBP) gene expression during amphibian metamorphosis,” Development Genes and Evolution, vol. 206, no. 6, pp. 355–362, 1997.

[21] K. Yamauchi, H. A. Takeuchi, M. Overall, M. Dziadek, S. L. A. Munro, and G. Schreiber, “Structural characteristics of
bullfrog (Rana catesbeiana) transhyretin and its cDNA. Comparison of its pattern of expression during metamorphosis with that of lipocalin," *European Journal of Biochemistry*, vol. 256, no. 2, pp. 287–296, 1998.

[23] F. Stewart, M. W. Kennedy, and S. Suire, “A novel uterine lipocalin supporting pregnancy in equids,” *Cellular and Molecular Life Sciences*, vol. 57, no. 10, pp. 1373–1378, 2000.

[24] F. D. Cancetta, B. Dozin, B. Zerega, S. Cermelli, and R. Cancetta, “Ex-FABP: a fatty acid binding lipocalin developmentally regulated in chicken endochordal bone formation and myogenesis,” *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta*, vol. 1482, no. 1-2, pp. 127–135, 2000.

[25] A. Pagano, P. Giannoni, A. Zambotti et al., “CALβ, a novel lipocalin associated with chondrogenesis and inflammation,” *European Journal of Cell Biology*, vol. 81, no. 5, pp. 264–272, 2002.

[26] D. Sanchez, M. D. Ganfornina, and M. J. Bastiani, “Developmental expression of the lipocalin Lazarillo and its role in axonal pathfinding in the grasshopper embryo,” *Development*, vol. 121, no. 1, pp. 135–147, 1995.

[27] C. Gentili, G. Tutolo, B. Zerega, E. Di Marco, R. Cancetta, and F. D. Cancetta, “Acute phase lipocalin Ex-FABP is involved in heart development and cell survival,” *Journal of Cellular Physiology*, vol. 202, no. 3, pp. 683–689, 2005.

[28] Z. Li, V. Kozh, and Z. Gong, “Localized rbp4 expression in the yolk syncytial layer plays a role in yolk cell extension and early liver development,” *BMC Developmental Biology*, vol. 7, article 117, 2007.

[29] M. E. Ricci-Silva, R. H. Valente, I. R. León et al., “Immunochemical and proteomic technologies as tools for unravelling toxins involved in envenoming by accidental contact with Lononoma obliqua caterpillars,” *Toxicon*, vol. 51, no. 6, pp. 1017–1028, 2008.

[30] A. B. G. Veiga, J. M. C. Ribeiro, J. A. Guimarães, and I. M. B. Francischetti, “A catalog for the transcripts from the venomous structures of the caterpillar Lononoma obliqua: identification of the proteins potentially involved in the coagulation disorder and hemorrhagic syndrome,” *Gene*, vol. 355, no. 1-2, pp. 11–27, 2005.

[31] D. R. Flower, A. C. T. North, and T. K. Attwood, “Structure and sequence relationships in the lipocalins and related proteins,” *Protein Science*, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 753–761, 1993.

[32] D. R. Flower, “The lipocalin protein family: structure and function,” *Biochemical Journal*, vol. 318, no. 1, pp. 1–14, 1996.

[33] A. M. Chudzinski-Tavassi, L. C. Carrijo-Carvalho, K. Waisman, S. H. P. Farsky, O. H. P. Ramos, and C. V. Reis, “A lipocalin sequence signature modulates cell survival,” *FEBS Letters*, vol. 584, no. 13, pp. 2896–2900, 2010.

[34] T. Rozario and D. W. de Simone, “The extracellular matrix in development and morphogenesis: a dynamic view,” *Developmental Biology*, vol. 341, no. 1, pp. 126–140, 2010.

[35] S. Do Carmo, L. C. Levros Jr., and E. Rassart, “Modulation of apolipoprotein D expression and translocation under specific stress conditions,” *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta*, vol. 1773, no. 6, pp. 954–969, 2007.

[36] A. C. T. North, “Three-dimensional arrangement of conserved amino acid residues in a superfamily of specific ligand-binding proteins,” *International Journal of Biological Macromolecules*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 56–58, 1989.

[37] C. V. Reis, S. A. Andrade, O. H. P. Ramos et al., “Lopap, a prothrombin activator from Lononoma obliqua belonging to the lipocalin family: recombinant production, biochemical characterization and structure-function insights,” *Biochemical Journal*, vol. 398, no. 2, pp. 295–302, 2006.

[38] A. M. Chudzinski-Tavassi, M. Schattner, M. Fritzten et al., “Effects of Lopap on human endothelial cells and platelets,” *Haemostasis*, vol. 31, no. 3–4, pp. 257–265, 2001.

[39] M. Fritzten, M. P. A. Flores, C. V. Reis, and A. M. Chudzinski-Tavassi, “A prothrombin activator (Lopap) modulating inflammation, coagulation and cell survival mechanisms,” *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications*, vol. 335, no. 2, pp. 517–523, 2005.

[40] K. Waismam, A. M. Chudzinski-Tavassi, L. C. Carrijo-Carvalho, M. T. Fernandes Pacheco, and S. H. P. Farsky, “Lopap: a non-inflammatory and cytotoxic molecule in neutrophils and endothelial cells,” *Toxicon*, vol. 53, no. 6, pp. 652–659, 2009.

[41] P. Berman, P. Gray, E. Chen et al., “Sequence analysis, cellular localization, and expression of a neuroretina adhesion and survival factor,” *Biochemical Journal*, vol. 391, no. 2, pp. 441–448, 2005.

[42] M. Taniike, I. Mohri, N. Eguchi, C. T. Beuckmann, K. Suzuki, and Y. Urade, “Perineuronal oligodendrocytes protect against neuronal apoptosis through the production of lipocalin-type prostaglandin D synthase in a genetic demyelinating model,” *Journal of Neuroscience*, vol. 22, no. 12, pp. 4885–4896, 2002.

[43] Z. Tong, X. Wu, D. Ovharenko, J. Zhu, C. S. Chen, and J. P. Kehrer, “Neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin as a survival factor,” *Biochemical Journal*, vol. 206, no. 3, pp. 624–635, 2006.

[44] J. Bullwinkel, B. Baron-Lühr, A. Lüdemann, C. Wohlenberg, J. Gerdes, and T. Scholzen, “Ki-67 protein is associated with ribosomal RNA transcription in quiescent and proliferating cells,” *Journal of Cellular Physiology*, vol. 206, no. 3, pp. 624–635, 2006.

[45] A. Li, M. L. Varney, J. Valasek, M. Godfrey, B. J. Dave, and R. K. Singh, “Autocrine role of interleukin-8 in induction of endothelial cell proliferation, survival, migration and MMP-2 production and angiogenesis,” *Angiogenesis*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 63–71, 2005.

[46] L. A. Madge and J. S. Pober, “A phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase/Akt pathway, activated by tumor necrosis factor or interleukin-1, inhibits apoptosis but does not activate NFκB in human endothelial cells,” *The Journal of Biological Chemistry*, vol. 275, no. 20, pp. 15458–15465, 2000.

[47] H. Ellingsgaard, J. A. Ehse, E. B. Hammar et al., “Interleukin-6 regulates pancreatic α-cell mass expansion,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 105, no. 35, pp. 13163–13168, 2008.

[48] R. Gillitzer and M. Goebeler, “Chemokines in cutaneous wound healing,” *Journal of Leukocyte Biology*, vol. 69, no. 4, pp. 513–521, 2001.

[49] S. Werner and R. Grose, “Regulation of wound healing by growth factors and cytokines,” *Physiological Reviews*, vol. 83, no. 3, pp. 835–870, 2003.