Functional Studies of P-glycoprotein in Inside-out Plasma Membrane Vesicles Derived from Murine Erythroleukemia Cells Overexpressing MDR 3

PROPERTIES AND KINETICS OF THE INTERACTION OF VINBLASTINE WITH P-GLYCOPROTEIN AND EVIDENCE FOR ITS ACTIVE MEDIATED TRANSPORT*

(Received for publication, April 20, 1994, and in revised form, August 16, 1994)

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Active [3H]vinblastine (VBL) transport (efflux) was documented for inside-out plasma membrane vesicles from murine erythroleukemia cells (MEVCR-6) resistant to vinca alkaloids and overexpressing MDR 3 P-glycoprotein (P-gp) 80-fold. Uptake of [3H]VBL at 37 °C by these inside-out vesicles, but not right-side-out vesicles or inside-out vesicles from wild-type cells, was obtained in the form of a rapid, initial phase (0–1 min) and a second phase (31 min). The rapidity of each phase correlated with relative P-gp content among different MEVCR cell lines. The initial MDR-specific phase was temperature- and pH-dependent (optimum at pH 7), osmotically insensitive, and did not require ATP. The second MDR-specific phase was temperature-dependent, osmotically sensitive, and strictly dependent upon the presence of ATP (K_m = 0.37 ± 0.04 mg/mL). Although other triphosphate nucleotides were partially effective in replacing ATP, the nonhydrolyzable analogue ATPyS (adenosine 5′-O-(thiotriphosphate)) was ineffective. This time course appears to represent tandem binding of [3H]VBL by P-gp and its mediated transport, with the latter process representing the rate-limiting step. In support of this conclusion, both binding and transport were inhibited by verapamil, quinidine, and reserpine, all known to be inhibitors of photoaffinity labeling of P-gp, but only transport was inhibited by C219 anti-P-gp antibody or orthovananate. Although the rate of transport of [3H]VBL was 7-7.5-fold lower than the rate of binding (V_max = 104 ± 15 pmol/min/mg protein, K_m = 1.5 – 2 x 10^6 mol^-1·mg^-1) to P-gp, each phase exhibited saturation kinetics and values for apparent K_m and V_max for each process were approximately the same (215 ± 35 and 195 ± 30 nm). Intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL was almost completely eliminated by high concentrations of nonradioactive VBL, suggesting that simple diffusion does not contribute appreciably to total accumulation of [3H]VBL in this vesicle system. This could be at least partially explained by the fact that these inside-out vesicles under the conditions employed did not maintain a P-gp mediated pH gradient. However, ATP-dependent, intravesicular accumulation of osmotically sensitive [3H]VBL occurred against a substantial permeant concentration gradient in both a time- and concentration-dependent manner consistent with an active, saturable process.

Multidrug resistance is a phenomenon in which the acquisition of resistance by tumor cells to a cytotoxic agent concurrently results (1–6) in resistance to other cytotoxic agents that are structurally dissimilar. One common form of multidrug resistance seen both in rodent and human tumor cells is a consequence (1–12) of overexpression of one or more homologs of a membrane glycoprotein, P-glycoprotein (P-gp), that is associated with ATP-dependent egress of these cytotoxic drugs from drug-resistant tumor cells. Although most studies of multidrug resistance have focused (7–12) on model tumor cell systems in vitro, there is also evidence of its manifestation in model systems in vivo (13, 14) and in neoplastic disease in patients (15, 16). A considerable number of studies have been carried out on both the biochemical properties of P-gp (1–12) and on the molecular genetics related (1–12) to its gene expression in multidrug-resistant cells. These studies have identified P-gp as a member of a family of ATP-binding membrane transporters found in a variety of procaryotic and eucaryotic cells. Despite these very detailed and informative studies, the precise mechanism by which P-gp mediates multidrug resistance is not fully understood. In fact, a number of controversies have recently emerged (17–24) with regard to the nature of the mechanism, the interaction of P-gp with ATP, and the putative role of P-gp as a direct mediator of outward transport.

One methodological approach that has yielded meaningful information on the function of P-gp in a variety of cell types incorporates membrane vesicle technology. Such studies of P-gp utilized mixed populations of inside-out versus right-side-out plasma membrane vesicles (25–30) or populations enriched (31, 32) for inside-out vesicles. Some particularly innovative approaches have recently been described. One utilized enriched inside-out plasma membrane vesicles containing P-gp derived from yeast cells (33) or their secretory vesicles (34) stably transfected with mouse mdr 3 cDNA. The other reconstituted (35) the hamster P-gp homologue of mouse MDR 3 P-gp in artificial proteoliposomes. All of these studies documented temperature-
dependent, osmotically sensitive intravesicular accumulation of one or more of the multidrug-resistant related cytotoxic agents that appeared to be dependent upon ATP hydrolysis. They also showed that the intravesicular accumulation of these cytotoxic drugs was perturbed by a multidrug resistance modulator, namely VP, or by an anti-P-gp antibody. Although highly informative, the above studies provided little or no direct evidence for P-gp-mediated active transport in the form of concentrative accumulation of these agents in an osmotically active intravesicular fraction. In the studies described here, we applied membrane vesicle technology to an examination of the function of P-gp in murine erythroleukemia (MEL) cells overexpressing only MDR 3. The methodology employed was similar to that we had used for our earlier studies (35) of ATP-dependent efflux of folate compounds in inside-out plasma membrane vesicles from L1210 cells. In addition to our own characterization of this process, using [3H]VBL as the per- meant, we provide kinetic evidence for a delineation of the rate of binding to P-gp from the rate of intravesicular accumulation and show within the same time-course experiment that both events did appear to occur in parallel with the latter process being the rate-limiting step. We also obtained direct evidence for active P-gp-mediated efflux by demonstrating that intravesicular accumulation of osmotically active [3H]VBL occurs against a concentration gradient in these vesicles. To ade- quately address this issue, we believed that it was first nec- essary to 1) determine the degree of purity and sidedness (in- side-out versus right-side-out) of the membrane vesicle preparation, 2) quantitate the inside-out intravesicular volume per unit of plasma membrane protein, and 3) delineate the osmotically active fraction of ATP-dependent intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL from the non-osmotically active fractions of [3H]VBL associating specifically (P-gp) or nonspecifically with the vesicles. Earlier studies (25–34) did not adequately address this issue in that only some, but not all, of these measurements were actually carried out. The results of our studies are described below. A preliminary report of these studies was recently presented (37) in abstract form. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES Cell Growth and Isolation—Multidrug-resistant and parental MEL cells for vesicle preparations were obtained as ascitic suspensions from cyclophosphamide-treated (100 mg/kg 1 day prior to implant) BDF2F1 hybrid (C57BL x DBA/2b) mice following adaption to growth in DBA/2b mice. Mouse bearing multidrug-resistant cells were treated twice weekly with the maximum tolerated dose of VCR. Parental MEL cells (strain SC-9) and VCR-resistant MEL cells used in these studies were derived from a VCR-resistant MEL cell line (MEL/V3–17) obtained from Dr. June L. Biedler. Parental and resistant MEL cells were also grown as suspension cultures in a-minimal essential medium’s F-12 (50,51) by partitioning of [14C]methylamine between the intervesicular aqueous phase and the intravesicular aqueous phase using ECL. Other Analytic Procedures—Proton gradients (ApH) were measured by recording differential pH changes during transport and cloning by limiting dilution.

Northern Blot Analyses—Poly(A)+ RNA was extracted from MEL cells on an oligo(dT) column and evaluated for its integrity by a previously reported (38) procedure. An aliquot of the same RNA was analyzed by Northern blotting using trunctaced mouse mdr 1 and mdr 3 cDNA (39) as a probe (generously provided by Dr. Philippe Gros, McGill University, Montreal, Canada) and normalized to γ-actin RNA content with a hu- man γ-actin probe, FCD-2-actin (40). Labelling of each probe was by random priming (Random Primers DNA labelling kit, Boehringer Mannheim) using [γ-32P]dCTP (3000 Ci/mol) and 100 μg of insert. The hybridization signals were monitored by autoradiography and (or) quantitated by means of a Betagen 903 Blot analyzer (Betagen) connect- ing for nonspecific background in a parallel blank blot.

Southern Blot Analyses—Genomic DNA from parental and resistant (MEL/VCR-6) frozen cell pellets was prepared (41) and digested with EcoRI. The DNA was separated by electrophoresis through a 0.8% agarose gel and transferred to Nytran (Schleicher & Schuell). MDR 1 and 3 cDNA probes, hybridization, and labeling procedures were the same as that used above.

Immunoblotting Procedure—Plasma membrane preparations were electrophoresed (42) on a 2.5% polyacrylamide gel and transferred to nitrocellulose using a Bio-Rad Trans-Blot cell (42). Western blotting was performed using the C-219 monocular antibody (Centoctor) at a concentra- tion of 10 μg/ml as the primary antibody, and anti-mouse horserad- ish peroxidase-IgG conjugated antibody (Sigma) at a 1:3000 dilution as the secondary antibody (43). The blots were exposed to Hyperfilm after incubation with enhanced chemiluminescence (ECL) reagents (Amer- sham Corp.). Differences in P-gp expression levels were quantitated using a Stratagene 7000 densitometer. Western blots with anti-MDR 1 and anti-MDR 3 isoform-specific antibodies (38, 44), which were gener- ous gifts from Doctors J. Crop and P. Gros, were done at 1:100 and 1:500 dilutions, respectively. Goat anti-rabbit horseradish peroxidase- IgG conjugated antibody was used at a 1:4000 dilution and visualized as above using ECL.

Plasma Membrane Vesicle Preparation—The procedure employed for inside-out vesicles has been described in detail (36) as a modification of the method of Marin et al. (45), which was originally adapted (36) to L1210 cells by us in accordance with the review by DePierre and Kar- novsky (46). Vesicles were stored in transport buffer (100 mM MOPS, pH 7, 125 mM, sucrose and 5 mM MgCl2) on ice until used. Approximately 1 million of inside-out vesicles were prepared from parental or multidrug-resistant cells, containing 100% sidedness in this orientation, which was 1.6 ± 0.3 μl/μg protein (n = 4) as determined by a standard proce- dure (47). Vesicles that were 100% in the right-side-out plasma mem- brane orientation were prepared from either parental or multidrug-resistant cells. These were corrected for nonspecific absorption of L3H1VBL to the vesicle surface and to the filter, by a (5 s) incubation of vesicles at 0 °C with [3H]VBL and processing these and the L3H1VBL in transport medium alone by filtration. Each time point was carried out in duplicate, and graphed data points represent an average of at least three separate determinations done on different days.

Other Analytic Procedures—Proton gradients (ApH) were measured (50, 51) by partitioning of [14C]methylamine between the intervesicular and intravesicular (47) space. Any gradient in protons maintained by vesicles overexpressing P-gp would be decreased by 2- to 2.5-fold by the addition of nonosmotically active 0.5 pg/ml as the primary antibody, and anti-mouse horserad- ish peroxidase-IgG conjugate (Sigma) at a 1:3000 dilution as the sec- ondary antibody (43). The blots were used to expose Hyperfilm after incubation with enhanced chemiluminescence (ECL) reagents (Amer- sham Corp.). Differences in P-gp expression levels were quantitated using a Stratagene 7000 densitometer. Western blots with anti-MDR 1 and anti-MDR 3 isoform-specific antibodies (38, 44), which were gener- ous gifts from Doctors J. Crop and P. Gros, were done at 1:100 and 1:500 dilutions, respectively. Goat anti-rabbit horseradish peroxidase- IgG conjugated antibody was used at a 1:4000 dilution and visualized as above using ECL.

Plasma Membrane Vesicle Preparation—The procedure employed is similar to that used in our prior studies (36) on ATP-dependent efflux of folates analy- logues by L1210 cell plasma membrane vesicles. Twenty-μl aliquots of vesicles (50–70 μg of membrane protein) were preincubated for 30 s at 37 °C with 10 mM ATP and 30 μl of transport buffer with or without a regenerating system (51) in siliconized glass tubes. The reaction was started by the addition of [3H]VBL and ATP to the tubes containing regenerating system and the addition of [3H]VBL alone to tubes without regenerating system. After the required time interval, the reaction mixture was di- luted with 9 ml of ice-cold medium, the vesicles collected by filtration in HAWP 0.45 μm filters (Millipore) pretreated with VBL and washed three times with the same buffer. After the filters dried, they were placed in scintillation fluid for radioactive counting. The data generated were corrected for nonspecific absorption of [3H]VBL to the vesicle surface and to the filter, by a (5 s) incubation of vesicles at 0 °C with [3H]VBL and processing these and the (3H]VBL in transport medium alone by filtration. Each time point was carried out in duplicate, and graphed data points represent an average of at least three separate determinations done on different days.

RESULTS

Isolation and Characterization of Multidrug-resistant MEL Cells—Northern blot analysis of mRNA from MEL/VCR cells strain S-9, Ref. 53 (MEL/VCR: 0.2–6) with mdr 1- and mdr 3-specific cDNA probes at various stages of selection showed
Membrane marker analysis of the same plasma membrane preparation from MEL/VCR-6 cells following disruption by dilution in H$_2$O (see “Experimental Procedures”) and revesiculation showed (data not given) that the reformed vesicles were almost 100% in the right-side-out orientation.

Possible complications associated with the contribution to total intravesicular accumulation of influx of [H]VBL in the 40–50% of the vesicle preparation derived from MEL/VCR-6 cells remaining right-side-out were avoided during the course of these studies because of other properties of MEL/VCR. Similar to other tumor cells (55) in some cases, tumors exist with the buffer used that contained 50 mM of available protons. To do this, we measured the partitioning of [13C]methylamine between the intervesicular and intravesicular space during incubation of 100 nm of the amine with the inside-out vesicle preparation from MEL/VCR-6 cells in transport buffer with and without ATP and found that it never exceeded unity (data not shown). We also controlled for partitioning of the amine in the right-side-out vesicle compartment by the same procedure. Finally, with a 100% right-side-out preparation derived from the same cell line we obtained the same result (unity).

**ATP Dependence for Intravesicular Accumulation of [H]VBL—**The results given in Fig. 3A for a typical time course for [H]VBL uptake in vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cell show that little uptake was observed at 0 °C either in the presence or absence of 5 mM ATP. In contrast, rapid uptake occurred at 37 °C in the presence of ATP. Also, uptake at this temperature was bimodal with respect to time. The rate was much faster initially but was 7–7.5-fold lower after 30 s of incubation. Although only the time course for one concentration (70 nm) used in this experiment is shown, the same bimodal time course was obtained (data not shown) at higher or lower concentrations of [H]VBL. In the absence of ATP, uptake at 37 °C exhibited only a rapid initial phase with cessation of uptake after 1 min. Under the assumption (see following sections) that the complex time course obtained in the presence of ATP represented specific binding to P-gp followed by P-gp-mediated internalization of [H]VBL into the intravesicular compartment, we determined the actual rate of P-gp binding of [H]VBL. This was obtained by subtracting the complex time course for [H]VBL from that of total uptake (9.8 ± 1.5 pmol/min/mg protein) was the same in the presence or absence of ATP. In addition, VRP, as well as QND and RSP (data not shown), were potent inhibitors of this initial uptake, while the addition of 10 μM VBL virtually eliminated uptake. As shown in Fig. 4, after the rapid, initial period of uptake, ATP-dependent uptake of [H]VBL was linear with time over the 1–10 min interval of incubation employed. Again, essentially no uptake of [H]VBL occurred with these vesicles in the absence of ATP (Fig. 4A) beyond the first 30 s of incubation. Also, there was no significant vesicular accumulation of [H]VBL at 37 °C by inside-out vesicles derived from wild-type MEL cells (Fig. 4A) or right-side-out vesicles derived from MEL/VCR-6 cells (data not shown). Other data are also shown (Fig. 4B) in this figure on the inhibition by VP of ATP-dependent uptake of [H]VBL at 37 °C. In addition to the reduction in the slope of the 1–10 min time course obtained in the presence of 10 μM VP, the back-extrapolation of the time course to the origin shows a down-
FIG. 2. Western blot analyses of P-gp in plasma membrane from wild-type and multidrug-resistant MEL cells. Plasma membrane was solubilized in detergent prior to SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. A, blot of wild-type and resistant MEL cells with C219 antibody. B, blot of wild-type MEL cells and MEL/VCR-0.2 and MEL/VCR-6 cells with anti-MDR 1 and anti-MDR P-gp antibodies. Detection of antibody-specific signals was by enhanced chemiluminescence (ECL) detection. The figure depicts the results of typical analyses.

FIG. 3. Time course for uptake of [3H]VBL by inside-out vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells. Vesicles were incubated with 70 nM [3H]VBL in transport buffer for the times indicated. A, initial and later linear phases of uptake of [3H]VBL by vesicles at 37 °C and 0 °C in the presence and absence of ATP. B, the true rate of the initial phase of uptake of [3H]VBL. Additional experimental details are provided in the text. Data are an average of three experiments. Standard error of the mean = ±10%.

ward dislocation. Such a result is consistent with the effect of VRP on the rapid, initial phase of uptake of [3H]VBL shown in Fig. 3B. In contrast, the effect of C219 antibody is quite different (Fig. 4B). Although there was a reduction in the slope of the time-course plot for [3H]VBL uptake in its presence, there was no downward dislocation of the back-extrapolated time-course plot. We also observed during these studies that measurement of [3H]VBL uptake during longer term incubations of these inside-out vesicles were not possible either because of the instability of the vesicles or the accumulation of inhibitory end products of the regenerating system.

Other data were obtained in experiments measuring uptake of [3H]VBL at 37 °C by inside-out vesicles in different concentrations of sucrose, which modulates intravesicular volume. These data, given in Fig. 5, show that uptake of [3H]VBL obtained within 30 s of incubation was unaffected by differences in sucrose concentration and, thus, was osmotically insensitive, while a portion of the uptake of [3H]VBL measured after 2 min of incubation or beyond (data not shown) was osmotically sensitive. Moreover, in the absence of ATP, no osmotically sensitive fraction of [3H]VBL uptake could be demonstrated (data not shown). Thus, consistent with the other data already presented, these results would appear to identify the rapid initial phase of the uptake time course at 37 °C as a binding event and the slower, latter phase as mediated intravesicular accumulation (transport).

Kinetics of ATP and [3H]VBL Concentration Dependences—Since rate measurements constant with time could be derived for both initial and later phases in the presence of ATP, a valid kinetic analysis of these phases of uptake was possible. The effect of different ATP concentrations on the rate of osmotically active uptake (second phase) of [3H]VBL (external concentration = 50 nM) by inside-out membrane vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells is shown in Fig. 6. The response curve given shows saturation kinetics in the concentration range of 0-5 mM ATP. From the double-reciprocal plot of these data also given in the figure, a single saturable component was derived with an apparent Kd of 0.37 ± 0.4 mM and Vmax of 3.2 ± 0.5 pmol/min/mg protein.

The results of other experiments showed (data not given) that ATP could be replaced by either GTP or CTP as an activator of intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL. However, in this case, these other triphosphonucleotides when added at 1 mM were only one-fourth as active as ATP. We also showed that the same concentration of ATP was without effect as an activator of intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL but was an inhibitor (IC50 = 0.7 mM) of ATP-dependent accumulation. Similarly, orthovanadate was a potent inhibitor (IC50 = 7 nM) of ATP-dependent intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL.

In other experiments, the [3H]VBL concentration dependence values for the rate of initial and later phases of ATP-dependent intravesicular accumulation of this vinca alkaloid at 37 °C were obtained with inside-out vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells. The two concentration-response curves obtained in the presence of 1 mM ATP are presented as a double-reciprocal plot in Fig. 7. In each case, a single saturable component was delineated. The values for Vmax derived from this data were 104 ± 15 pmol/min/mg protein for the initial phase and 14.3 ± 1.8 pmol/min/mg protein for the later, osmotically active phase. Interestingly, the value for Kd for putative (initial phase) binding and apparent Kd for transport were approximately the same, 195 ± 30 and 215 ± 35, respectively.

pH Dependence for Putative Binding of [3H]VBL to P-gp—The initial rate of accumulation of [3H]VBL by MEL/VCR-6-derived vesicles at 37 °C was determined at several different pH values. The initial rate was measured with 29 nM [3H]VBL as permeant in the presence and absence of 5 mM ATP and regenerating system. The data are given in Fig. 8 and show a single optimum for binding at pH 7 with substantial reduction in the rate of binding at higher or lower pH. The same pH optimum and profile were obtained (data not shown) for this uptake phase in the absence of ATP.

Evidence for Osmotically Sensitive Intravesicular Accumulation of [3H]VBL Against a Concentration Gradient—In the experiments described above, reproducible measurements of in-
FIG. 4. Time course for uptake of [3H]VBL by inside-out vesicles from wild-type MEL and MEL/VCR-6 cells. The data depict the second of two linear phases of uptake with 70 nM [3H]VBL for each cell type in the presence and absence of ATP. A, comparison of the time course for uptake of [3H]VBL ± ATP in vesicles derived from wild-type and resistant cells. B, comparison of the effects of VRP and C219 antibody. Additional experimental details are provided in the text. Data are an average of three experiments. Standard error of the mean = <±15%.

FIG. 5. Osmotic sensitive and insensitive uptake of [3H]VBL by inside-out vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells. Uptake of [3H]VBL at an external concentration of 1 μM was measured at 37 °C over different times in the presence of varying concentrations of sucrose. Additional experimental details are provided in the text. Standard error of the mean is <±12% for three separate experiments.

FIG. 6. Kinetics of ATP concentration dependence for intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL (second phase) by inside-out vesicles prepared from MEL/VCR-6 cells. The rate of [3H]VBL uptake at 37 °C beyond the first minute was determined at different concentrations of ATP. Inset, double-reciprocal plot of the concentration-response data. The concentration of [3H]VBL was 50 nM in three separate experiments. Additional experimental details are provided in the text. Standard error of the mean = <±13%.

travesicular volume and sidedness and the osmotically active fraction of [3H]VBL associated with inside-out vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells were readily obtained. With all of these parameters in place, we were able to quantify from the difference in ATP-dependent and -independent uptake the concentration of osmotically sensitive [3H]VBL within the inside-out vesicle compartment. The data shown in Fig. 9 represent calculations of the distribution ratio (intravesicular/ extravesicular) in concentration of [3H]VBL with respect to
but also a commensurate downward dislocation of the plot in ATP hydrolysis. In this context, we also evaluated the effects of VBL in the same figure. In the case of orthovanadate, however, VRP, QND, and RSP there was an effect on the slope of the relation to the origin similar to that shown for nonradioactive concentration found to markedly affect proton gradients in mitochondria. Higher concentrations of CFCCP and of 2,4-DNP were not employed as they appeared to effect the binding of [3H]VBL to P-gp as also indicated by the downward dislocation of the time-course plots (data not shown). We also showed that an inhibitor of H+/K+ exchange, nigericin, was a strong inhibitor of intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL. However, this inhibition was obtained (data not shown) in the absence of K+.

In this case, a downward dislocation of the time-course plot occurred, as in the case of VRP, QND and RSP in addition to a reduction of slope, suggesting as well an interaction at the level of [3H]VBL binding.

**FIG. 9.** Time and concentration dependence for ATP-dependent internalization of osmotically active [3H]VBL by inside-out vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells. The data are presented as the distribution ratio (inside/outside) for osmotically active [3H]VBL with respect to time (A) and concentration (B). The osmotically active fraction of intravesicular [3H]VBL was determined from a comparison of ATP-dependent and non-ATP-dependent uptake at the indicated time and concentrations of [3H]VBL. Additional experimental details are given in the text. The data are an average of three separate experiments. Standard error of the mean = <±12%.

**FIG. 10.** Effect of various compounds on ATP-dependent intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL by inside-out vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells. The individual compounds were added at the concentrations indicated in the figure. See text for additional details. The data are an average of three separate experiments. Standard error of the mean = <±14%.

**DISCUSSION**

Our results would appear to clarify the notion (4–11) of P-gp as a direct mediator of active, outwardly directed flux of, at least, the vinca alkaloids in multidrug-resistant cells. They provided evidence for binding of [3H]VBL to P-gp and transport occurring tandemly as distinctly separate events during association of this agent with inside-out plasma membrane vesicles derived from MEL/VCR-6 cells expressing murine MDR 3 with the latter step representing the rate-limiting step. This evidence is based upon results that delineated a rapid osmotically insensitive phase and a slower internalization phase of uptake of [3H]VBL by these vesicles that were MDR-specific. The former and the latter were markedly perturbed by the addition of VRP, QND, and RSP, but only the latter phase was perturbed by the addition of C219 anti-P-gp antibody and orthovanadate to the reaction system. The relative potency of VRP, QND, and RSP as inhibitors of the initial, rapid phase of uptake is similar to that shown (56–61) for their ability to competitively displace photoaffinity labels from P-gp during its detection by SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. Although mediated transport of [3H]VBL rather than its putative binding to P-gp was rate-limiting to net intravesicular accumulation, the value derived for apparent Kd for transport was very similar to the value derived for Kd for binding. Finally, the addition of a high concentration of nonradioactive VBL to the reaction system essentially eliminated both binding and transport phases of [3H]VBL uptake by these vesicles. This would appear to suggest that virtually all of the intravesicular accumulation of [3H]VBL was mediated by a saturable process and that in comparison there is very little simple diffusion of [3H]VBL into these inside-out vesicles from MEL/VCR-6 cells. The data are presented as the distribution ratio (inside/outside) for osmotically active [3H]VBL with respect to time (A) and concentration (B). The osmotically active fraction of intravesicular [3H]VBL was determined from a comparison of ATP-dependent and non-ATP-dependent uptake at the indicated time and concentrations of [3H]VBL. Additional experimental details are given in the text. The data are an average of three separate experiments. Standard error of the mean = <±12%.
out vesicles. We also have derived a value for the second-order rate constant, $k_{obs}$, for this initial uptake phase and find it is in the range of $1.5-2 \times 10^5 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$. This value is clearly in the range of that expected for what is most likely a very complicated binding reaction between two highly complex structures such as VBL and P-gp.

Our ability to kinetically delineate separate rates for binding of [3H]VBL and its subsequent transport has allowed us to evaluate more incisively those factors that have been shown (4–7) to modulate the net accumulation of this agent in these vesicle systems. For instance, it was of interest to note that while apparent binding and transport of [3H]VBL were markedly temperature-dependent, only the latter exhibited any ATP dependence. Therefore, findings obtained here and elsewhere (26, 27, 31–33) showing that ATP could not be replaced in these inside-out vesicle systems by analogues such as ATPyS can now be interpreted in terms of a requirement by the transport (translocation) process per se, but not binding, for ATP hydrolysis. The same can be said for the well described (26, 27, 31–33) effect of the ATPase inhibitor, orthovanadate, and the anti-P-gp C219 antibody, which do not appear to affect binding or accumulation of [3H]VBL in some multidrug-resistant cells. In addition to the above, our findings do tend to eliminate passive diffusion as contributing to intravesicular accumulation, an essential feature of a "pH model," this might merely reflect the absence of a significant pH or electrochemical gradient in this vesicle system. The lack of an appreciable effect of protonophores on transport was consistent with these findings. Clearly, further studies will be necessary on this issue before firm conclusions can be drawn. One obvious explanation for the diversity in results from studies that address this issue may be related to the different methodologies employed, and to the different pharmacologic and electrochemical properties and (or) lipophilicity of the various cytotoxic drugs that were used in each case.

Acknowledgments—We appreciate the generosity of Doctors Philipe Gros and James Croop in providing the murine MDR 1 and MDR 3-specific molecular and immunologic probes. We also very much appreciate the useful suggestions pertaining to the molecular genetics aspects of these studies and other helpful comments of Dr. K. V. Scotto and Dr. Martin Dembo.

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