Title
Nitration of the birch pollen allergen Bet v 1.0101: efficiency and site-selectivity of liquid and gaseous nitrating agents.

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9s19g6x1

Journal
Journal of proteome research, 13(3)

ISSN
1535-3893

Authors
Reinmuth-Selzle, Kathrin
Ackaert, Chloé
Kampf, Christopher J
et al.

Publication Date
2014-03-01

DOI
10.1021/pr401078h

Peer reviewed
Nitration of the Birch Pollen Allergen Bet v 1.0101: Efficiency and Site-Selectivity of Liquid and Gaseous Nitrating Agents

Kathrin Reinmuth-Selzle,†‡ Chloé Ackaert,§∥ Christopher J. Kampf,† Martin Samonig,‡ Manabu Shiraiwa,† Stefan Kofler,‡ Hong Yang, Gabriele Gadermaier,§ Hans Brandstetter,‡ Christian G. Huber,‡ Albert Duschl,‡ Gertie J. Oostingh,†‖ and Ulrich Pöschl*†

†Multiphase Chemistry and Biogeochemistry Departments, Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, Hahn-Meitner Weg 1, 5412 Puch/Salzburg, Austria
‡Department of Molecular Biology, University of Salzburg, Kapitelgasse 4-6, 5020 Salzburg, Austria
§Christian Doppler Laboratory for Allergy Diagnosis and Therapy, Department of Molecular Biology, University of Salzburg, Kapitelgasse 4-6, 5020 Salzburg, Austria
∥Biomedical Sciences, Salzburg University of Applied Sciences, Campus Urstein Süd 1, 5412 Puch/Salzburg, Austria

Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: Nitration of the major birch pollen allergen Bet v 1 alters the immune responses toward this protein, but the underlying chemical mechanisms are not yet understood. Here we address the efficiency and site-selectivity of the nitration reaction of recombinant protein samples of Bet v 1.0101 with different nitrating agents relevant for laboratory investigations (tetraniitromethane, TNM), for physiological processes (peroxynitrite, ONOO−), and for the health effects of environmental pollutants (nitrogen dioxide and ozone, O3/NO2). We determined the total tyrosine nitration degrees (ND) and the NDs of individual tyrosine residues (NDY). High-performance liquid chromatography coupled to diode array detection and HPLC coupled to high-resolution mass spectrometry analysis of intact proteins, HPLC coupled to tandem mass spectrometry analysis of tryptic peptides, and amino acid analysis of hydrolyzed samples were performed. The preferred reaction sites were tyrosine residues at the following positions in the polypeptide chain: Y83 and Y81 for TNM, Y150 for ONOO−, and Y83 and Y158 for O3/NO2. The tyrosine residues Y83 and Y81 are located in a hydrophobic cavity, while Y150 and Y158 are located in solvent-accessible and flexible structures of the C-terminal region. The heterogeneous reaction with O3/NO2 was found to be strongly dependent on the phase state of the protein. Nitration rates were about one order of magnitude higher for aqueous protein solutions (~20% per day) than for protein filter samples (~2% per day). Overall, our findings show that the kinetics and site-selectivity of nitration strongly depend on the nitrating agent and reaction conditions, which may also affect the biological function and adverse health effects of the nitrated protein.

KEYWORDS: Bet v 1.0101, HPLC−MS/MS, tyrosine nitration, nitration sites, air pollution

1. INTRODUCTION

Post-translational modifications such as nitration and oxidation of proteins can occur during inflammation, oxidative stress, and chemical aging under physiological or environmental conditions. Protein nitration has been reported in association with at least 50 different diseases,1,2 and it has been shown to alter the immunogenic potential of food allergens3 and Aeroallergens like Bet v 1.4,5 Numerous studies have suggested that asthma and allergic diseases are enhanced by traffic-related air pollution with high concentrations of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and ozone (O3).6,7 Nitration reactions and related changes in the immunogenicity of Aeroallergens might explain the promotion of allergies by traffic-related air pollution.8 Recently, it has been shown that birch pollen from urban areas had a higher allergenic potential than pollen from rural areas, although the allergen content remained unchanged,9 and ragweed pollen collected along roads with heavy traffic showed a higher allergenic potential compared with pollen collected in remote areas.10 The standard nitrating agent in laboratory studies of protein chemistry is tetraniitromethane (TNM), which selectively nitrates tyrosine residues. The reaction conditions are mild: nitration is performed at neutral pH, low ionic strength, and room temperature.11 The nitration mechanism may either involve ionic species, formed from a partial dissociation of TNM into nitronium ions and nitroformate ions, or radical species.11−13 Under physiological conditions, the reaction of free nitrogen oxide radicals (NO) and superoxide anions (O2−) can form

Received: October 30, 2013
Published: February 11, 2014

© 2014 American Chemical Society
strong oxidizing and nitrating intermediates, such as peroxynitrite (ONOO$^-$), which is also able to nitrate tyrosine residues in proteins, leading to the formation of 3-nitrotyrosine.$^{14-16}$

In a first step, tyrosine is oxidized involving free radical mechanisms in which one-electron oxidants derived from ONOO$^-$ (OH, NO$_2$, and carbonate radicals CO$_3$$^-$) attack the aromatic ring, leading to the formation of a Tyr radical. In a second step, the Tyr radical combines with NO$_2$ to yield 3-nitrotyrosine. Possible side reactions include the formation of protein dimers by cross-linking of Tyr radicals.$^{17-20}$

In addition, proteins can be modified in the atmosphere when exposed to pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO$_2$) and ozone (O$_3$). Laboratory and field studies showed that proteins were efficiently nitrated upon exposure to gas mixtures of NO$_2$ and O$_3$ or polluted urban air (summer smog).$^{21}$ The heterogeneous reaction of the protein with the gaseous reactants O$_3$ and NO$_2$ was found to form nitrated and oxidized products as well as protein degradation and aggregation products.$^{22}$ Recent studies found a higher nitrination degree (ND) when the protein was pretreated with O$_3$. The conclusion of these studies was that the nitrination reaction of proteins with O$_3$ and NO$_2$ proceeds through long-lived reactive oxygen intermediates (ROIs).$^{23}$ The protein first reacts with O$_3$ and forms a ROI, most likely Tyr radicals, which can persist over extended periods of time. In a second step, the ROI reacts with NO$_2$ resulting in the formation of 3-nitrotyrosine residues. This two-step mechanism, including an oxidation step and an NO$_2$ addition step, is comparable to the nitrination mechanism of ONOO$^-$. In the case of ONOO$^-$, the oxidants for the first step are CO$_3$$^-$ radicals and oxo-metal complexes or, to a lesser extent, OH and NO$_2$ radicals, while for the heterogeneous reaction with the gaseous components O$_3$ is the oxidizing agent. The second step in both cases is the addition of either exogenous or endogenous NO$_2$. Again, the dimerization of Tyr radicals competes with the formation of 3-nitrotyrosine.

The recombinant protein Bet v 1.0101 has a molecular mass of 17.44 kDa and consists of 159 amino acids including seven tyrosine (Tyr) residues: Y5, Y66, Y81, Y83, Y120, Y150, and Y158. The 3-D structure of Bet v 1.0101 is shown in Figure 1.

In the presented study, we address the efficiency and site-selectivity for the reaction of recombinant Bet v 1.0101, simply termed Bet v 1 hereafter, with the standard laboratory reagent for protein nitration (TNM) and two naturally occurring nitrating reagents, that is, ONOO$^-$ mimicking inflammation and oxidative/nitrosative stress and O$_3$ in combination with NO$_2$ mimicking air pollution effects. High-performance liquid chromatography coupled to diode array detection (HPLC-DAD) analysis of intact protein samples and amino acid analysis (AAA) of hydrolyzed protein samples were utilized to determine the total tyrosine ND in nitrated Bet v 1 samples.$^{24,25}$ Additionally, HPLC coupled to tandem mass spectrometry (MS/MS) analysis of tryptic peptides was used to elucidate reaction mechanisms and site-specific nitration patterns.$^{26,27}$ Further insights into protein modification were obtained by HPLC coupled to high-resolution mass spectrometry (HR-MS) analysis.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Protein Production and Purification

Bet v 1 was expressed in E. coli during an incubation time of 4 h at 37 °C and purified as previously described$^{28}$ with minor modifications. The natural origin of the protein is Betula verrucosa, and the origin of the recombinant is E. coli (strain BL21 (DE3)). The clone’s accession numbers are Genbank X15877 and Uniprot P15494. The cell pellets were dissolved in 25 mM imidazole buffer containing 0.1% Triton-X100, pH 7.4, including one tablet of EDTA-free protease inhibitor (no. 04 693 132 001, Roche). Thereafter, the cells were frozen and thawed three times, and DNase digestion was followed by acid salt precipitation overnight. Three subsequent purification methods were used: hydrophobic interaction chromatography (HIC), ion exchange chromatography (IXE), and size-exclusion chromatography (SEC). After every purification step, the fractions were loaded on an SDS-gel, and only the purest fractions were pooled and used for the next steps. The yield of the expression and purification of Bet v 1.0101 is ~50 mg Bet v 1 per liter culture. The concentration of working solution (after purification) is 1 mg/mL. The buffer is a salt-free 10 mM PO$_4$ buffer with pH 7.4.
Nitrination with TNM
Bet v 1 was nitrated as previously described. In brief, TNM (T25003-5 G, Sigma-Aldrich) was dissolved at a concentration of 0.5 M in MeOH and added to the protein solutions (1 mg mL⁻¹, 10 mM Na₂HPO₄, Carl Roth, Karlsruhe, Germany) to yield TNM/tyrosine molar ratios of 30/1, 15/1, 5/1, and 1/1. By adding additional amounts of MeOH, the final MeOH concentrations were kept constant for each molar ratio. Reaction mixtures were stirred for 60 min at room temperature (RT). The reaction was stopped by centrifugation through an Amicon centrifugal device with a 10 kDa cutoff membrane (Merck Millipore, Cork, Ireland).

Nitrination with ONOO⁻
Samples containing Bet v 1 were rebuffered in a 50 mM NH₄HCO₃ buffer (pH 7.8), with or without the addition of 0.1 mM diethylenetriamine pentaacetic acid (DTPA) (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) to a final allergen concentration of 1.0 mg mL⁻¹, as previously described. Sodium peroxynitrite (Cedarlane, Ontario, Canada) was added, after being thawed on ice, to yield ONOO⁻/Tyr molar ratios of 30/1, 15/1, 5/1, and 1/1. Different reaction conditions were tested: reaction times of 15 and 100 min, temperatures of 4 °C and RT, and the presence or absence of DTPA. The reaction was stopped by centrifugation through an Amicon centrifugal device with a 10 kDa cutoff membrane. The half life of ONOO⁻ under physiological conditions is <1 s, complicating the determination of the actual ONOO⁻ concentrations to which proteins are exposed. Peroxynitrite is stable under alkaline aqueous solutions, but it decomposes at a lower pH, where the peroxynitrite anion is protonated and forms peroxynitric acid (ONOOH), which can form hydroxyl radicals (OH) and nitrogen dioxide radicals (NO₂). Accordingly, the reaction is more difficult to control than the nitration reaction using TNM. The experimental conditions are listed in the Supporting Information (Table S1).

Nitrination with O₃/NO₂
Bet v 1 was exposed to O₃/NO₂ mixtures. For details on the experimental setup and conditions used to investigate the nitrination efficiency of Bet v 1 at varying relative humidity (RH) and protein phase state, we refer to Supporting Information Section S3, Table S2, and Figure S1. In brief, the heterogeneous reaction between Bet v 1 and gaseous reactants was studied using protein-loaded (precleaned) syringe filters, which were exposed to O₃/NO₂ mixtures at different RH. Additionally, the homogeneous reaction of the dissolved protein and the reactants was studied by bubbling O₃/NO₂ directly through an aqueous solution of Bet v 1.

Bradford Assay and Bicinchoninic Acid Assay
The approximate protein concentration was determined against a standard curve made with native Bet v 1 using the Bradford assay and with the bicinchoninic acid (BCA, BCA-1 KT, Sigma-Aldrich) assay using a bovine serum albumin (BSA) protein standard obtained from Sigma Aldrich.

Amino Acid Analysis
The samples were analyzed by AAA using the Pico-Tag method (Waters, Milford, MA) according to the manufacturer’s instructions, as detailed in Selzle and Ackaert et al. In brief, the protein samples were analyzed by reversed-phase HPLC on a HP110 system (Hewlett-Packard, San Jose, CA) after total hydrolysis and phenylisothiocyanate derivatization. Data were collected using the Chemstation software. Total NDs were calculated based on the quantification of tyrosine and 3-nitrotyrosine derivatives.

HPLC–DAD Analysis
The protein solutions were analyzed using an HPLC–DAD system (Agilent Technologies 1200 series), as previously described.

HPLC–MS/MS Analysis
Tryptic peptides were analyzed using an HPLC–Q-TOF instrument (Agilent Technologies 1200 series coupled to Agilent Technologies 6520 Accurate-Mass Q-TOF) as previously described and detailed in the Supporting Information Section S1.

The individual nitrination degree (NDᵢ) of a specific Tyr residue (Y) is defined as the intensity of the nitrated peptide divided by the sum of the intensities of the nitrated and unmodified peptides as described elsewhere. The calculation of NDᵢ was based on the observation that the ionization efficiencies for unmodified and nitrated synthesized peptides were found to be similar with a mean difference of 0.17 ± 0.12 (arithmetic mean ± standard deviation, n = 3; see Table S3 in the Supporting Information). Thus, (semi)quantitative information about the site selectivity of the nitrination reaction could be obtained. The overall ND was calculated from the NDᵢ data by summing the NDᵢs and dividing the sum by the Tyr coverage and the number of Tyr residues per molecule and showed a good correlation with alternative methods.

For the identification of the nitrination sites, exemplary MS/MS spectra are shown in Figures S2–S9 in the Supporting Information for each nitrating agent. The Figures include peptide sequence, precursor mass, charge state, MH⁺ error, and search engine scores. In some cases, the distinction of the nitrination site in the mononitrated peptide YNYVIEGGPGDT-LEK (AA 81–95) was not possible due to equal scores for Y81 and Y83. The signals at m/z 278.1 (b₂ for unmodified Y81 and b₄⁻H₂O for modified Y81) and m/z 321.1 (b₂ for nitrated Y81 and b₄⁻H₂O for nitrated Y83) could not be attributed unambiguously. The MS/MS spectra were reviewed manually for the presence of the immonium ions of tyrosine (m/z 136.1) and nitro-tyrosine (m/z 181.1). Distinction of the mononitrilation of Y81 or Y83 was possible in the case of sufficient spectra information and different scores.

HPLC–HR-MS Analysis
The protein solutions were separated with a capillary HPLC system (Model UltiMate3000, Dionex Benelux), and high-resolution (HR) mass analysis was performed with an Orbitrap mass spectrometer (Model Exactive, ThermoFisher Scientific) under optimized conditions, as previously published. The mass spectra were analyzed using the data evaluation software Xcalibur (Thermo Scientific) and the implemented deconvolution tool Xtract. For isotopically unresolved mass spectra, the software ProMass (ThermoFisher Scientific) was utilized to calculate the average molecular mass of the intact protein. Analysis of the intact protein by HPLC–HR-MS was used to elucidate modifications of the protein by detection of molecular masses. It allowed relative quantification of the unmodified protein, different nitrination states of the protein, and other modifications, for example, oxidation, degradation, and aggregation. For details, see the Supporting Information Section S2.
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The nitration efficiency and site-selectivity of recombinant Bet v 1 nitrated by different nitrating agents was studied in a total of 118 experiments. Bet v 1 was nitrated in aqueous solution by TNM, ONOO\(^-\), and \(O_3/NO_2\), and heterogeneously via exposure of Bet v 1 filter samples to gaseous \(O_3/NO_2\) mixtures. For the water-soluble nitration products, we determined total NDs averaged over all tyrosine residues in the protein and site-specific NDs of individual tyrosine residues (ND\(_Y\)) in the protein by different chromatographic techniques: HPLC-DAD and HPLC-HR-MS of intact proteins, HPLC-MS/MS of tryptic peptides, and AAA of hydrolyzed samples. In Table 1 exemplary tryptic peptides derived from the HPLC-MS/MS analysis are shown. The Tyr residues are located at the following peptides: Y5 (GVFNYETTSVIPAAR), Y66 (YVK or ISFPEGFPFK), Y81 + Y83 (YNYSVIEGGPIGDTLEK), Y120 (YHTK), and Y150 + Y158 (AVESYLLAHSDAYN).

### Nitrination with TNM

Figure 2 summarizes the results of the nitration of Bet v 1 in aqueous solution with different amounts of TNM. Increasing the molar ratio of TNM over tyrosine (TNM/Y) resulted in increasing NDs for the soluble fraction of the intact protein, with NDs ranging from 23.6 to 72.3% (Figure 2a). All three methods used to determine the ND in Bet v 1 (AAA, HPLC-DAD, HPLC-MS/MS) were found to agree well within the measurement uncertainties.

Figure 2b shows ND\(_Y\) as a function of TNM/Y, derived from the relative quantification of unmodified and nitrated peptides by HPLC-MS/MS. (For details, see Supporting Information S1.) The amino acid sequence coverage was (64.5 ± 1.7)% (arithmetic mean ± standard deviation), and four of seven tyrosine residues in Bet v 1 were detected. The peptides containing Y5, Y66, and Y120 could not be detected in any of the runs. In particular, Y66 and Y120, which are located at short peptides, were difficult to identify reliably due to insufficient spectra information. Y83 and Y81 were the most preferred nitration sites, and Y83 was found in the nitrated state only, even at low total ND (Table 2). Hydroxylation of tyrosine or phenylalanine or the oxidation of methionine was not observed in the HPLC-MS/MS analysis. HPLC-HR-MS results also show an increasing number of nitro groups added to the protein at increasing TNM/Y ratios (mass shift \(\Delta m = 45 \text{ Da}\)). Additionally, oxidation, which is...
detected by $\Delta m = 16$ Da, could be observed. (For details, see Table S4 in the Supporting Information.) The sample with the lowest ND was also found nitrosylated ($\Delta m = 29$ Da). Shifts in nominal masses were attributed to the modifications based on literature data.31

Bet v 1 contains a hydrophobic cavity28,32 in which the peptide containing Y81 and Y83 is located (Figure 1b). Attraction of the hydrophobic nitrating agent TNM as well as the stabilization of tyrosyl radicals by hydrophobic environments33 may explain why the preferred nitration site is Y83, which is also a key residue for the binding specificity of the hydrophobic pocket.28 Lipidic plant mediators and amphipilic compounds such as steroids, cytokinins, and flavonoids act as ligands for the hydrophobic cavity, suggesting a transport or storage function of Bet v 1.28,34 Recently, a glycosylated flavonol (quercetin-3-O-glycosid, Q3OS) has been shown to be a natural ligand of Bet v 1.35 It is yet to be studied if a nitration of Y83 (or Y81) might alter the binding specificity of the hydrophobic pocket or its binding capacity.

**Nitration with ONOO$^-$**

The nitration of Bet v 1 with ONOO$^-$ in aqueous solution resulted in the NDs shown in Figure 3a. Again, total NDs were determined by AAA, HPLC−DAD, and LC−MS/MS and are plotted as a function of the molar ratio of ONOO$^-$ over tyrosine (ONOO$^-$/Y). Results of AAA and HPLC-DAD were consistent, whereas HPLC−MS/MS analysis showed slightly lower NDs. This may be due to unselective degradation of Bet v 1 during the reaction with ONOO$^-$ prior to protein digestion (see discussion later). The ONOO$^-$ reaction was studied by varying reaction time, reaction temperature, and the addition of a chelator (DTPA) to prevent the reaction of ONOO$^-$ with metal ions, such as iron or copper.14 Higher NDs were observed for short reaction times (15 min), low temperatures (4 °C), and with the addition of DTPA (Table S1 in the Supporting Information). The ND$_{max}$ did not exceed 0.5, which is ~70% of the ND$_{max}$ for TNM. Modified sites with a level of modification <2% or with a not calculable level of modification are not shown in Figure 3. (For details, see Table S5 in the Supporting Information.) ONOO$^-$/Y molar ratios are approximate values due to the fast decomposition of ONOO$^-$.

ND$_Y$ was found to vary strongly under the different reaction conditions, indicating a complex mixture of reaction products. (For details, see Table S5 in the Supporting Information.) For reasons of simplicity, HPLC−MS/MS results were averaged over all experimental conditions, as illustrated in Figure 3b (arithmetic mean ± standard error of the mean (SEM), n = 8). The observed nitration pattern differed from that of TNM-nitrated Bet v 1, especially with regard to the peptide YNYSVIEGGPDITLKE, containing Y81 and Y83. The most efficiently nitrated tyrosine residue was Y150 located at the

---

**Table 2. Specific Nitration Degrees for Individual Tyrosine Residues Determined by LC−MS/MS for Nitration in Aqueous Solution by TNM (ND = 26%), ONOO− (ND = 25%), and O$_3$/NO$_2$ (ND = 20%) and for the Heterogeneous Reaction with O$_3$/NO$_2$ (ND = 4%)**

| Tyr position | secondary structure | TNM ND$_Y$ (%)$^b$ | ONOO− ND$_Y$ (%)$^c$ | O$_3$/NO$_2$ ND$_Y$ (%)$^d$ | O$_3$/NO$_2$ ND$_Y$ (%)$^e$ |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Y5           | $\beta$-strand      |                    |                        |                             |                             |
| Y66          | $\beta$-strand      |                    |                        |                             |                             |
| Y81          | $\beta$-strand      | 18 ± 5             | 20 ± 9$^f$            | 12 ± 4$^f$                  | 2 ± 2                       |
| Y83          | $\beta$-strand      | 100 ± 0            |                        |                             |                             |
| Y120         | $\beta$-strand      |                    |                        |                             |                             |
| Y150         | $\alpha$-helix      | 4 ± 0.1            | 57 ± 16                | 5 ± 1                       | 0 ± 0                       |
| Y158         | coil                | 0 ± 0              | 6 ± 8                  | 20 ± 1                      | 49 ± 12                     |

$^a$The reported data are arithmetic mean values and standard errors for two to four replicates, as specified in the table footnotes. Results of exemplary HPLC−MS/MS measurements are shown and represent only the specified reaction conditions. $^b$Reaction in aqueous solution with TNM/Y = 1 with a reaction time of 60 min, n = 4 (analytical replicates). $^c$Reaction in aqueous solution with ONOO−/Y = 5 with a reaction time of 15 min (experiment 16 + 17, Table S1 in the Supporting Information), n = 2 (experimental replicates). $^d$Reaction in aqueous solution with 100 ppb O3 and 100 ppb NO2 with a reaction time of 17 h (experiment 11, Table S2 in the Supporting Information), n = 4 (experimental replicates). $^e$Heterogeneous reaction of protein on filter with 230 ppb O3 and 230 ppb NO2 with a reaction time of 48 h (experiment 16, Table S2 in the Supporting Information), n = 4 (experimental replicates). $^f$Y81 and Y83 not clearly distinguished.
peptide AVESYLLAHSDAYN, that is, for all reaction conditions. Four to five of seven tyrosine residues could be identified with an amino acid sequence coverage of (68.2 ± 2.9)% (arithmetic mean ± standard deviation). Tyrosine residues Y5 and Y120 could not be detected in any of the runs, and Y66 could not be quantified reliably because the measured modified peptide (ISFPEGFFKYVK, one missed cleavage, see Table 1) could not be compared with an unmodified peptide with the same sequence. The nitration potentially induced a missed cleavage for this peptide during digestion. However, some Y66 was found in hydroxylated (+OH) and in nitrated form (+NO2). Hydroxylation of tyrosine and oxidation of methionine were also detected to a minor extent. (For details, see Table S5 in the Supporting Information.)

Intact protein analysis by HPLC–HR-MS indicated the addition of nitro-, nitroso-, and hydroxy-groups to the protein as well as mixtures of the three modifications. (For details, see Table S6 in the Supporting Information.) Table S7 in the Supporting Information shows the relative abundances of unmodified (monoisotopic mass 17429 Da), oxidized, nitrated, degraded (fragments with molecular masses below 17 kDa), and other Bet v 1 signals in the mass spectra, comparing the reactions at 4 °C and at room temperature (~22 °C). Protein degradation was very prominent for ONOO−/Y = 30 at room temperature (~85%), whereas at 4 °C, the other protein signals (>17.5 kDa) were the most relevant. These other signals were attributed to more complex reaction products with masses between the one of unmodified Bet v 1 and twice its molecular weight (aggregation products of degraded fragments, multiple combinations of different modifications).

For ONOO− nitration, Y150 was found to be a preferred nitration site of Bet v 1, which can be tentatively explained by the high solubility accessibility of Y150 (~25%). This indicates a facilitated reaction of ONOO− with solvent-exposed tyrosine residues even at low concentrations. In addition, the negatively charged ONOO− is not expected to enter the hydrophobic cavity similarly to sulfate ions, which stay at the protein surface. The tyrosine residue Y150 is located in the C-terminal region of Bet v 1, which is supposed to be important for epitope binding and is also part of a T-cell epitope and might thus be particularly relevant for changes in the allergic potential of the protein.

Nitration with O3/NO2
Nitration of Bet v 1 with O3/NO2 was performed in aqueous solution and heterogeneously via reaction of filter samples to gaseous O3/NO2 at different levels of RH, and the results are summarized in Table S2 in the Supporting Information and illustrated in Figure 4a.

The NDs observed upon exposure of filter samples did not exceed 2–4% at 45–92% RH but increased to ~6% under condensing conditions (>98% RH). In aqueous solution, the ND reached ~22%. Accordingly, the nitration rates for the filter samples of (semi)solid protein (ND ≈ 2% per day) were about one order of magnitude lower than that for the aqueous protein solution (ND ≈ 20% per day). This can be explained by a decrease in viscosity and an increase in diffusivity going from (semi)solid protein on filter to an aqueous solution and described well by the kinetic multilayer model of aerosol surface and bulk chemistry, as detailed in the Supporting Information (Section S4).

Figure 4. Nitration degrees for Bet v 1 exposed to ozone and nitrogen dioxide (O3/NO2) plotted against exposure time: (a) Total nitration degrees (ND) determined by HPLC–DAD for different types of samples and reaction conditions; data points and error bars represent the arithmetic mean values and standard errors of four experiments with filter samples and two experiments with liquid samples, respectively. The dashed lines and the gray shaded area show the results of kinetic model simulations, as indicated in the Figure and detailed in the Supporting Information (Section S4). The black dotted line represents the maximum ND for Bet v 1 based on the assumptions used in the model simulations. (b) Site-specific nitration degrees (NDy) determined by LC–MS/MS for filter samples exposed to 230 ppb of O3/NO2 at a relative humidity of 92%.

Intact protein analysis by HPLC–HR-MS of experiments exposing Bet v 1 on filters to gaseous O3/NO2 showed that in contrast with the ND the relative abundance of oxidized protein decreased with increasing RH. (See the Supporting Information Section S5.)

Analysis of the tryptic peptides indicated Y83 and Y158 to be the preferred sites for the nitration of Bet v 1 on filters for different reaction times (Figure 4b). For Y83, we observed a slight decrease at reaction times up to 48 h. This might be due to enhanced degradation and will be studied in more detail in follow-up studies. In addition, we observed high levels of oxidation at Y158 for short reaction times (for details, see Table S8 in the Supporting Information), supporting the assumption of ROIs to be involved in the first step of the nitration reaction.

The nitration pattern for the heterogeneous reaction, that is, preference of Y158 and Y83 or Y81 (Table 2), was similar to the pattern observed for nitration by O3/NO2 in aqueous solution. This suggests similar reaction pathways for both types of reactions. Y158 is located at the C-terminus of the Bet v 1 molecule within a coil structure motif. Because coil structures...
belong to the most flexible parts of a protein, Y158 might have an increased probability for heterogeneous nitration because hydration dynamics occur fastest in lower-order structures. Y83 and Y81 are located at the hydrophobic cavity and might be a preferred site due to a stabilization of tyrosyl radicals in hydrophobic environments and because most of the reactive nitrogen compounds are hydrophobic gases.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we analyzed the reaction products of the birch pollen allergen Bet v 1 nitrated with the standard laboratory reagent for protein nitration (TNM) and two naturally occurring nitrating reagents, that is, ONOO⁻ mimicking inflammation and oxidative/nitrosative stress and O₃/NO₂ mimicking air pollution effects. The results of this study show that both the efficiency and specificity of the protein nitration depend on the nitrating agent and the reaction conditions. TNM was found to be the most efficient nitrating reagent, yielding ND values up to 70%. ONOO⁻ and O₃/NO₂ yielded ND values up to ~50 and ~20%, respectively, with substantial amounts of side products from protein oxidation and degradation. Nitration rates were about one order of magnitude higher for aqueous protein solutions (~20% per day) than for solid or semisolid protein samples (~2% per day). Thus, the allergenic potential of pollen and air particulate matter might be particularly enhanced under humid summer smog conditions, for example, in polluted tropical megacity regions. The preferred reaction sites include tyrosine residues with high solvent accessibility or within a hydrophobic environment. Modification of the binding specificity of the hydrophobic pocket of Bet v 1 by nitration of Y83 and modification of the C-terminal helix crucial for epitope binding by nitration of Y150 and/or Y158 might be particularly relevant for changes in the allergenic potential of the protein.

ASSOCIATED CONTENT

S Supporting Information

Experimental setups used for the exposure of Bet v 1 to O₃/NO₂ mixtures. Exemplary MS/MS spectra of tryptic Bet v 1 peptides. Experimental conditions for ONOO⁻- and O₃/NO₂-exposed Bet v 1 samples. MS intensities of nitrated and unmodified synthetic peptides of Bet v 1. Masses of Bet v 1 nitrated with TNM to different degrees detected with LC–HR-MS. LC–MS/MS analysis of Bet v 1 nitrated by ONOO⁻. Masses of Bet v 1 nitrated with different amounts of ONOO⁻ detected with LC–HR-MS. Intact protein analysis by HPLC–HR-MS Bet v 1. Reaction of Bet v 1 on filters and in aqueous solution with O₃/NO₂ at different reaction times. Triplicate LC–MS/MS analysis of Bet v 1. Protein digestion and HPLC–MS/MS analysis. HPLC–HR-MS analysis of intact Bet v 1.0101. Experimental details for the nitration of Bet v 1 using O₃/NO₂ mixtures. Kinetic model simulations. Detailed discussion of the results for heterogeneous and homogeneous nitration of Bet v 1. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Author

*E-mail: u.poschl@mpic.de. Tel/Fax: +49-6131-305-6201/6019.

Author Contributions

K.R.-S. and C.A. contributed equally.

Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was funded by the Max Planck Society (MPG) and the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): P22236-B13. K.R.-S. is supported by the Max Planck Graduate Center – Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (MPGC - JOGU). C.A. is supported by the doctoral college 'Immunity in Cancer and Allergy'. G.G. was supported by the Christian-Doppler Research Association, Biomay, Vienna, Austria, and Land Salzburg. K.R.-S., C.J.K., M.S., and U.P. gratefully acknowledge support from M. O. Andreae.

REFERENCES

(1) Abello, N.; Kerstjens, H. A. M.; Postma, D. S.; Bischoff, R. Protein Tyrosine Nitration: Selectivity, Physicochemical and Biological Consequences, Denitration, and Proteomics Methods for the Identification of Tyrosine-Nitrated Proteins. J. Proteome Res. 2009, 8 (7), 3222–3238.
(2) Greenacre, S. A. B.; Ischiropoulos, H. Tyrosine nitration: Localisation, quantification, consequences for protein function and signal transduction. Free Radical Res. 2001, 34 (6), 541–581.
(3) Untersmayr, E.; Diesner, S. C.; Oostingh, G. J.; Selzle, K.; Pfaller, T.; Schultz, C.; Zhang, Y. Y.; Krishnamurthy, D.; Starkl, P.; Knittelfelder, R.; Forster-Waldl, E.; Pollak, A.; Scheiner, O.; Poschl, U.; Jense-Jarolim, E.; Duschl, A. Nitrination of the Egg-Allergen Ovalbumin Enhances Protein Allergenicity but Reduces the Risk for Oral Sensitization in a Murine Model of Food Allergy. PLoS One 2010, 5 (12), e14210.
(4) Gruithuijsen, Y. K.; Grieshaber, I.; Stocklinger, A.; Tischler, U.; Fehrenbach, T.; Weller, M. G.; Vogel, L.; Vieths, S.; Poschl, U.; Duschl, A. Nitrination enhances the allergenic potential of proteins. Int. Arch. Allergy Immunol. 2006, 141 (3), 265–275.
(5) Karle, A. C.; Oostingh, G. J.; Mutschlechner, S.; Ferreira, F.; Lackner, P.; Bohle, B.; Fischer, G. F.; Vogt, A. B.; Duschl, A. Nitrination of the Pollen Allergen Bet v 1.0101 Enhances the Presentation of Bet v 1-Derived Peptides by HLA-DR on Human Dendritic Cells. PLoS One 2012, 7 (2), e31483.
(6) D’Amato, G.; Cecchi, L.; Bonini, S.; Nunes, C.; Annesi-Maesano, I.; Behrendt, H.; Liccardi, G.; Popov, T.; van Cauwenberge, P. Allergenic pollen and pollen allergy in Europe. Allergy 2007, 62 (9), 976–990.
(7) Shiraiwa, M.; Selzle, K.; Pöschl, U. Hazardous components and health effects of atmospheric aerosol particles: reactive oxygen species, soot, polycyclic aromatic compounds and allergic proteins. Free Radical Res. 2012, 46 (8), 927–939.
(8) Pöschl, U. Atmospheric aerosols: Composition, transformation, climate and health effects. Angew. Chem., Int. Ed. 2005, 44 (46), 7520–7540.
(9) Bryce, M.; Drews, O.; Schenk, M. F.; Menzel, A.; Estrella, N.; Weichenmeier, I.; Smulders, M. J. M.; Buters, J.; Ring, J.; Gorg, A.; Behrendt, H.; Traidl-Hoffmann, C. Impact of Urbanization on the Proteome of Birch Pollen and Its Chemotactic Activity on Human Granulocytes. Int. Arch. Allergy Immunol. 2010, 151 (1), 46–55.
(10) Ghiani, A.; Aina, R.; Asero, R.; Bellotto, E.; Citterio, S. Ragweed pollen collected along high-traffic roads shows a higher allergenicity than pollen sampled in vegetated areas. Allergy 2012, 67 (7), 887–894.
(11) Bruce, T. C.; Gregory, M. J.; Walters, S. L. Reactions of tetrtnitromethane 0.1. Kinetics and mechanism of nitration of phenols by tetrtnitromethane. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 1968, 90 (6), 1612–1619.
(12) Jewett, S. W.; Bruce, T. C. Reactions of tetrtnitromethane-mechanism of reaction of tetrtnitromethane with pseudo acids. Biochemistry 1972, 11 (18), 3338–&.
(13) Isaacs, N. S.; Abed, O. H. The mechanism of aromatic nitration by tetrynitrone. Tetrahedron Lett. 1982, 23 (27), 2799−2802.
(14) Beckman, J. S.; Beckman, T. W.; Chen, J.; Marshall, P. A.; Freeman, B. A. Apparent hydroxyl radical production by peroxynitrite-implications for endothelial injury from nitric-oxide and superoxide. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 1990, 87 (4), 1620−1624.
(15) Ischiropoulos, H.; Zhu, L.; Chen, J.; Tsai, M.; Martin, J. C.; Smith, C. D.; Beckman, J. S. Peroxynitrite-mediated tyrosine nitration catalyzed by superoxide-dismutase. Arch. Biochem. Biophys. 1992, 298 (2), 431−437.
(16) Ischiropoulos, H. Protein tyrosine nitration—An update. Arch. Biochem. Biophys. 2009, 484 (2), 117−121.
(17) Rani, R. Nitric oxide, oxidants, and protein tyrosine nitration. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 2004, 101 (12), 4003−4008.
(18) Arasimowicz-Jelonek, M.; Floryszak-Wieczorek, J. Understanding the fate of peroxynitrite in plant cells - From physiology to pathophysiology. Phytochemistry 2011, 72 (8), 681−688.
(19) Rani, R.; Peluffo, G.; Alvarez, M. N.; Naviliat, M.; Cayota, A. Unraveling peroxynitrite formation in biological systems. Free Radical Biol. Med. 2001, 30 (5), 463−488.
(20) Szabo, C.; Ischiropoulos, H.; Rani, R. Peroxynitrite: biochemistry, pathophysiology and development of therapeutics. Nat. Rev. Drug Discovery 2007, 6 (8), 662−680.
(21) Franze, T.; Weller, M. G.; Niessen, R.; Pöschl, U. Protein nitration by polluted air. Environ. Sci. Technol. 2005, 39 (6), 1673−1678.
(22) Shiraiwa, M.; Selzle, K.; Yang, H.; Sosedova, Y.; Ammann, M.; Pöschl, U. Multiphase Chemical Kinetics of the Nitrination of Aerosolized Protein by Ozone and Nitrogen Dioxide. Environ. Sci. Technol. 2012, 46 (12), 6672−6680.
(23) Shiraiwa, M.; Sosedova, Y.; Rouviere, A.; Yang, H.; Zhang, Y. Y.; Abbatt, J. P. D.; Ammann, M.; Pöschl, U. The role of long-lived reactive oxygen intermediates in the reaction of ozone with aerosol particles. Nat. Chem. 2011, 3 (4), 291−295.
(24) Selzle, K.; Ackaert, C.; Kampf, C.; Kunert, A.; Duschel, A.; Oostingh, G.; Pöschl, U. Determination of nitration degrees for the birch pollen allergen Bet v 1. Anal. Bioanal. Chem. 2013, 405 (27), 8943−9.
(25) Yang, H.; Zhang, Y. Y.; Pöschl, U. Quantification of nitrotyrosine in nitrated proteins. Anal. Bioanal. Chem. 2010, 397 (1), 879−886.
(26) Walcher, W.; Franze, T.; Weller, M. G.; Pöschl, U.; Huber, C. G. Liquid- and gas-phase nitration of bovine serum albumin studied by LC-MS and LC-MS/MS using monolionic columns. J. Proteome Res. 2003, 2 (5), 534−542.
(27) Zhang, Y. Y.; Yang, H.; Pöschl, U. Analysis of nitrated proteins and tryptic peptides by HPLC-chip-MS/MS: site-specific quantification, nitration degree, and reactivity of tyrosine residues. Anal. Bioanal. Chem. 2011, 399 (1), 459−471.
(28) Koffer, S.; Asam, C.; Eckhard, U.; Wallner, M.; Ferreira, F.; Brandstetter, H. Crystallographically Mapped Ligand Binding Differences in High and Low IgE Binding Isosomers of Birch Pollen Allergen Bet v 1. J. Mol. Biol. 2012, 422 (1), 109−123.
(29) Floris, B.; Piersma, S. R.; Yang, G.; Jones, P.; Neve, R. Interaction of myeloperoxidase with peroxynitrite. Eur. J. Biochem. 1993, 215 (3), 767−775.
(30) Mohr, J.; Swart, R.; Samonig, M.; Bohm, G.; Huber, C. G. High-efficiency nano- and micro-HPLC - High-resolution Orbitrap-MS platform for top-down proteomics. Proteomics 2010, 10 (20), 3598−3609.
(31) Farley, A. R.; Link, A. J. Identification and Quantification of Protein Posttranslational Modifications: Elsevier Academic Press: San Diego, 2009; Vol. 643, pp 725−763.
(32) Gajhede, M.; Osmer, P.; Poulsen, F. M.; Ipsen, H.; Larsen, J. N.; van Neerven, R. J. J.; Schou, C.; Lowenstein, H.; Spangfort, M. D. X-ray and NMR structure of Bet v 1, the origin of birch pollen allergy. Nat. Struct. Biol. 1996, 3 (12), 1040−1045.
(33) Turko, I. V.; Murad, F. Protein nitration in cardiovascular diseases. Pharmacol. Res. 2002, 45 (4), 619−634.
(34) Markovic-Housley, Z.; Degano, M.; Lamba, D.; von Roepenack-Lahaye, E.; Clemens, S.; Susani, M.; Ferreira, F.; Scheiner, O.; Breiteneder, H. Crystal structure of a hypoallergenic isoform of the major birch pollen allergen Bet v 1 and its likely biological function as a plant steroid carrier. J. Mol. Biol. 2003, 325 (1), 123−133.
(35) Seutter von Loetzen, C.; Hoffmann, T.; Hartl, M. J.; Schweimer, K.; Schwalb, W.; Rösch, P.; Hart-Spiegelhaue, O. Secret of the major birch pollen allergen Bet v 1: identification of the physiological ligand. Biochem. J. 2014, 457 (3), 379−390.
(36) Jahn-Schmidt, B.; Radakovic, A.; Lüttikopf, D.; Scheurer, S.; Vieths, S.; Ebner, C.; Bohe, B. Bet v 1142−156 is the dominant T-cell epitope of the major birch pollen allergen and important for cross-reactivity with Bet v 1-related food allergens. J Allergy Clin. Immunol. 2005, 116 (1), 213−219.
(37) Hecker, J.; Diethers, A.; Schulz, D.; Sabri, A.; Plum, M.; Michel, Y.; Mempp, M.; Ollert, M.; Jakob, T.; Blank, S.; Braren, I.; Spilner, E. An IgE epitope of Bet v 1 and fagales PR10 proteins as defined by a human monoclonal IgE. Allergy 2012, 67 (12), 1530−1537.
(38) Shiraiwa, M.; Ammann, M.; Koop, T.; Pöschl, U. Gas uptake and chemical aging of semi-solid organic aerosol particles. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA 2011, 108 (27), 11003−11008.
(39) Mikhailov, E.; Vlasenko, S.; Martin, S. T.; Koop, T.; Pöschl, U. Amorphous and crystalline aerosol particles interacting with water vapor: conceptual framework and experimental evidence for restructuring, phase transitions and kinetic limitations. Atmos. Chem. Phys. 2009, 9, 9491−9522.
(40) Koop, T.; Bookhold, J.; Shiraiwa, M.; Pöschl, U. Glass transition and phase state of organic compounds: dependency on molecular properties and implications for secondary organic aerosols in the atmosphere. Phys. Chem. Chem. Phys. 2011, 13 (43), 19238−19255.
(41) Shiraiwa, M.; Pfirang, C.; Pöschl, U. Kinetic multi-layer model of aerosol surface and bulk chemistry (KM-SUB): the influence of interfacial transport and bulk diffusion on the oxidation of oleic acid by ozone. Atmos. Chem. Phys. 2010, 10 (8), 3673−3691.
(42) Zhang, L. Y.; Yang, Y.; Kao, Y. T.; Wang, L. J.; Zhong, D. P. Protein Hydration Dynamics and Molecular Mechanism of Coupled Water-Protein Fluctuations. J. Am. Chem. Soc. 2009, 131 (30), 10677−10691.
(43) Garland, R. M.; Yang, H.; Schmid, O.; Rose, D.; Nowak, A.; Achtew, P.; Wiedensohler, A.; Takegawa, N.; Kita, K.; Miyazaki, Y.; Kondo, Y.; Hu, M.; Shao, M.; Zeng, L. M.; Zhang, Y. H.; Andreatta, M. O.; Pöschl, U. Aerosol optical properties in a rural environment near the mega-city Guangzhou, China: implications for regional air pollution, radiative forcing and remote sensing. Atmos. Chem. Phys. 2008, 8 (17), 5161−5186.
(44) Moreland, J. L.; Gramada, A.; Buzko, O. V.; Zhang, Q.; Bourne, P. E. The Molecular Biology Toolkit (MBT): a modular platform for developing molecular visualization applications. BMC Bioinf. 2005, 6.
(45) Xu, D.; Zhang, Y. Generating Triangulated Macromolecular Surfaces by Euclidean Distance Transform. PLoS One 2009, 4 (12), e8140.