Structural basis of wedging the Golgi membrane by FAPP pleckstrin homology domains

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The mechanisms underlying Golgi targeting and vesiculation are unknown, although the responsible phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate (PtdIns(4)P) ligand and four-phosphate-adaptor protein (FAPP) modules have been defined. The micelle-bound structure of the FAPP1 pleckstrin homology domain reveals how its prominent wedge independently tubulates Golgi membranes by leaflet penetration. Mutations compromising the exposed hydrophobicity of full-length FAPP2 abolish lipid monolayer binding and compression. The trafficking process begins with an electrostatic approach, phosphoinositide sampling and perpendicular penetration. Extensive protein contacts with PtdIns(4)P and neighbouring phospholipids reshape the bilayer and initiate tubulation through a conserved wedge with features shared by diverse protein modules.

Keywords: Golgi trafficking; membrane recognition; NMR spectroscopy; PH domain; phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate

INTRODUCTION

Our 303 pleckstrin homology (PH) domains generally bind to phosphoinositides (PIs) or proteins (Lemmon, 2008). Their functional assignment is compromised by our lack of solved structures of PH domains that bind to monophosphorylated PIs, or of other proteins in complex with phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate (PtdIns(4)P), which is the most abundant monophosphorylated PI. This phospholipid is enriched in the trans-Golgi network (TGN) and recruits a family of four-phosphate-adaptor protein (FAPP)-related proteins through its PH domains (Levine & Munro, 2002; Wang et al, 2003; Sudhahar et al, 2008). These proteins move membrane components from tubular Golgi protrusions to the plasma membrane by reshaping the bilayer and working with Arf1 and PI 4-kinases (Levine & Munro, 2002; Godi et al, 2004; Vieira et al, 2005, 2006; D’Angelo et al, 2007).

The FAPP1 and FAPP2 proteins are closely related homologues that target the TGN by binding to PtdIns(4)P. They contain PH domains that are 88% identical, and FAPP2 also contains a glycolipid transfer protein-like domain (Lin et al, 2000; Godi et al, 2004). The principles that determine Golgi interactions by FAPP modules could apply to diverse PtdIns(4)P-binding proteins (Sudhahar et al, 2008). In mammalian cells, the FAPPs exemplify a set of Golgi-bound proteins, including ceramide transfer protein and oxysterol binding protein 1. Insights into their membrane recognition mechanism might illuminate the working of PtdIns(4)P-binding motifs in the distinct folds of adaptor protein AP-1 (Mills et al, 2003; Wang et al, 2003), Bem1p (Stahelin et al, 2007), EpsinR (Hirst et al, 2003), SdcA (Weber et al, 2006), SdcC (Ragaz et al, 2008) and SdcM (Brombacher et al, 2009), and might also shed light on how other cellular membranes are manipulated by the action of diverse protein modules, including BAR (Bin/Amphiphysin/Rvs) domains.

Here, we report nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR)-based solution structures of the free, micelle- and PtdIns(4)P-bound FAPP1-PH domain, the wedge of which is shown to be responsible for initiating membrane tubule formation. The basis of its multifarious lipid specificity and penetration into the bilayer leaflet is revealed, and the mechanism responsible for initiating membrane tubulation by PH domains is presented.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The FAPP1-PH domain structure was solved by triple resonance NMR methods (Fig 1; supplementary Table S1 online), revealing a pronounced hydrophobic protrusion from the β1–β2 hairpin. The protrusion of the free state is encircled by an expansive...
basic surface (supplementary Fig S1 online) that does not bind detectably to inorganic phosphate, suggesting the need for a more specific partner (supplementary Fig S2 online). Interactions mediating membrane association were identified by adding micelles composed of dodecylphosphocholine (DPC) and CHAPS (3-[(3-cholamidopropyl)-dimethylammonia]-1-propane sulphonate). The entire β1–β2 loop showed chemical shift perturbations (CSPs), the largest of which occurred in the Trp 8, Thr 9 and Tyr 11–Trp 15 resonances (Fig 2A; supplementary Table S3 online). Together, this reveals an unprecedented burial of a wedge that spans residues Thr 9–Gly 16. The complexed structure was calculated by HADDOCK using 10 paramagnetic relaxation enhancement distance restraints, a flexible zone defined by the CSPs and refinement in water (Table 1; supplementary Table S3 online). The long axis of FAPP1-PH inserts at an angle of 159.26 ± 4.01°, leaving the distal termini exposed. Together with an orthogonal twist of 251.74 ± 13.63°, this defines the orientation of the protein on the micelle. The protein–micelle interface buries 914 ± 173 Å² and involves structural rearrangements in the penetrant β1–β2 loop (Fig 2; supplementary Table S3 online). An array of hydrogen bonding interactions are populated with 5–6 proximal DPC headgroups (Table 1). The Asn 10, Thr 9 and Gly 16 (Fig 3; supplementary Fig S4 online). Together, those exhibiting medium or large chemical shift changes but undetectable or insignificant PREs are shown on the surface in aqua or blue, thus defining the region experiencing conformational changes on insertion. CSPs, chemical shift perturbations; DPC, dodecylphosphocholine; FAPP, four-phosphate-adaptor protein; PC, phosphocholine; PH, pleckstrin homology; PREs, paramagnetic relaxation enhancements.

The structure of the inserted state was modelled by using paramagnetic relaxation enhancements obtained by incorporating 5- and 14-doxyl spin-labelled phosphocholine into the micelle. The backbones of Thr 9, Asn 10, Tyr 11, Leu 12, Thr 13 and Gly 14 were inserted into the hydrophobic interior on the basis of NH signal broadening, as were the side chains of Trp 8, Asn 10, Trp 15 and Gly 16 (Fig 3; supplementary Fig S4 online). Together, this suggests intimate encounters that position the nearby canonical PI pocket inside the interfacial zone of the membrane.

The isolated FAPP1-PH domain was added to palmitoyl-oleoyl-phosphatidylcholine (POPC) membranes and was found to be necessary and sufficient to induce tubule formation when PtdIns(4)P was present (Fig 4A; supplementary Movie S1 online), recapitulating the PtdIns(4)P-dependent tubulation activity of full-length FAPP2 (Cao et al, 2009). In light of the assigned FAPP2 function, the Thr 11–Leu 12 wedge extremity in the conserved PH domain of full-length FAPP2 was mutated to GG and EE sequences to remove penetrant hydrophobic bulk and introduce repulsive force, respectively. The surface pressure assay involved injecting FAPP2 into monolayers composed of POPC and 2% PtdIns(4)P (Fig 4B). Insertion of wild-type protein increased the surface pressure until a critical concentration when lipid removal began, presumably reflecting a bilayer budding or reshaping process. The
GG mutant still interacted, but its insertion was compromised by an order of magnitude and no lipid removal was detected. As predicted, the EE mutation abolished binding, insertion and removal. Neither mutant full-length protein could tubulate the membrane sheets (supplementary Fig S5 online), indicating that membrane penetration by an intact wedge is required. We note that a number of mutations have been reported in human FAPP1-PH sequences by the Cancer Genome Anatomy Project, and these substitutions could affect various interactions and structural features; for example, the Y11D mutation would be predicted to impair membrane wedging and TGN traffic.

Table 1 | Intermolecular restraints and interactions, which are present in at least 25% of the ensemble of structural models of FAPP1-PH docked with DPC micelles

| Residue number | PRE | CSP Hydrogen bonds | Hydrophobic contacts |
|----------------|-----|--------------------|---------------------|
|                |     |                    |                     |
| Trp 8          | NcH | 0.06               | 0                   | 0                   | 8                   |
| Thr 9          | *   | 0.08               | 5                   | 0                   | 7                   |
| Asn 10         | NδH | 0.03               | 5                   | 0                   | 7                   |
| Tyr 11         | *   | 0.26               | 5                   | 1                   | 62                  |
| Leu 12         | NH  | 0.37               | 0                   | 11                  | 85                  |
| Thr 13         | NH  | 0.08               | 0                   | 11                  | 20                  |
| Gly 14         | NH  | 0.08               | 0                   | 8                   | 0                   |
| Trp 15         | NcH | 0.16               | 0                   | 8                   | 0                   |
| Gln16          | NcH | 0.03               | 0                   | 0                   | 9                   |

CSP, chemical shift perturbation; DPC, dodecylphosphocholine; FAPP, four-phosphate-adaptor protein; PH, pleckstrin homology.

*Paramagnetic relaxation enhancements could not be recorded owing to broadening of these resonances in the micelle complex.

Fig 3 | Ptdlns(4)P docking to the FAPP1-PH structure. (A) The PI binding pocket of the protein is coloured according to the extent of CSPs induced by the addition of an eightfold excess of C₆-Ptdlns(4)P. (B) The docked headgroup and the hydrogen bonds are indicated in yellow and dashed lines, respectively. Ligand-binding residues are labelled and shown as sticks. CSPs, chemical shift perturbations; FAPP, four-phosphate-adaptor protein; PH, pleckstrin homology; PI, phosphoinositide.

Fig 4 | FAPP-PH independently tubulates membrane sheets. (A) Membrane sheets composed of POPC and Ptdlns(4)P (98:2 mol%) spontaneously formed dynamic ~10 μM-diameter tubules on injection of wild-type FAPP1-PH (1 mg/ml), as monitored in real time by differential interference contrast microscopy (supplementary Movie S1 online). (B) Surface pressure changes (ΔΠ) induced in POPC and Ptdlns(4)P (98:2 mol%) lipid monolayers after injection of full-length FAPP2 with Thr 11–Leu 12 replaced with GG and EE sequences as well as wild-type protein at the concentrations indicated, with the latter control as described previously (Cao et al, 2009). The ΔΠ of the monolayer was recorded after protein injection into the subphase every 5 min. The isotherm was normalized to the initial established Π (~30 mN/m). FAPP, four-phosphate-adaptor protein; PH, pleckstrin homology; POPC, palmitoyl-oleoyl-phosphatidylcholine; Ptdlns(4)P, phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate; wt, wild type.
headgroup based on NMR data (supplementary Table S4 online) helped to predict that the 4-phosphate is positioned by the Lys 7 residue, whereas the 1-phosphate orients near His 70 and Asn10. This facilitates parallel insertion of the $b_1$–$b_2$ loop and lipid acyl chains (Fig 3B). The 5- and 6-OH groups of the FAPP1-PH ligand were positioned by Trp 8, whereas the 2- and 3-OH groups abut Thr 9, Phe 20, Tyr 29 and Phe 71. Proximal residues including Arg 18 act to enhance the overall electropositivity that attracts the protein to acidic membranes.

FAPP1-PH does not bind exclusively to PtdIns(4)P. Soluble PtdIns(4,5)P2 and PtdIns(3,5)P2 also interact with the canonical PI binding site by the same assay, inducing large CSPs, especially in $b_7$, that suggest a modified binding orientation and slightly higher affinity (supplementary Fig S6 online). However, this could simply reflect the greater attraction of polyphosphorylated PIs to the exposed basic surface in the absence of a bilayer context. Indeed, earlier studies show a twofold weaker association of FAPP1-PH with PtdIns(4,5)P2 over PtdIns(4)P-containing vesicles, the latter of which are bound with a $K_D$ of 230 nM (Stahelin et al, 2007). To explore further the electrostatic effects, acidic lipids including C6-PtdSer were introduced and were found to stabilize insertion into PtdIns(4)P-containing micelles (supplementary Fig S7 online). The length of the PI chains also significantly affected the affinity, with the $C_p$-PtdIns(4)P/DPC micelles being bound by FAPP1-PH better by an order of magnitude than C6-PtdIns(4)P/DPC micelles. Both stabilizations were evidenced by larger CSPs and by shifts of the interactions towards the slow exchange regime (supplementary Fig S3 online), indicating slower off rates. Other influences on TGN-localized activity of FAPPs include myristoylated Arf1, a cytosolic factor that interacts reversibly with the PH domain and membranes, thus influencing its GTPase activity and regulating PI 4-kinase (Levine & Munro, 2002; Godi et al, 2004).

Together, this suggests a model whereby the FAPP1-PH domain is recruited stepwise to the TGN by several concerted interactions. Nonspecific electrostatic attraction dips a wedge into the leaflet. This hydrophobic keel allows the protein to diffuse upright over the lipid bilayer, sampling PIs until PtdIns(4)P is recognized in the bilayer leaflet. This concentrates oriented FAPP molecules at PtdIns(4)P pools in the TGN, compressing the membrane and favouring local positive curvature. On reaching a critical protein concentration the bilayer buds spontaneously, yielding a tubule that grows rapidly. Although subsequent events such as tubule fission and vesicle delivery might rely on the recruitment of further factors, this defines the minimal machinery needed to initiate membrane tubulation at the TGN.

The wedge is highly conserved across the FAPP family of PH domains, including the ceramide transfer protein and oxysterol binding protein relatives, suggesting that they all tubulate the Golgi membrane by the same general mechanism (Fig 5).
Moreover, similar β1–β2 loop elements are found in other PH domains that target multiply phosphorylated PIs in other membranes (DiNitto & Lambright, 2006; Lemmon, 2007). Comparison with structures of the latter type reveals that the 4-phosphate orientation is maintained, although the 1-phosphate position is shifted to where it can be bound by their conserved (K/R/XR) sequences. This motif is supplanted by a QXR motif in the FAPP family, which instead engages phosphocholine headgroups. In contrast to the parallel insertion of the PtdIns(4)P acyl chains and the inserted β1–β2 hairpin loop in FAPP1, a more perpendicular orientation of PtdIns(4,5)P2, PtdIns(3,4)P2, and PtdIns(3,4,5)P3 headgroups is seen in crystal structures of other PH domains. Nonetheless, all of the PH domains of Akt, ARNO, DAPPP1, dynamin, Grp1 and TAPP1 present exposed hydrophobicity at their β1–β2 hairpin tips, with flanking glycine and basic residues positioned to support analogous dynamic insertions into their plasma membrane destinations.

The PH wedge mechanism provides a basis for understanding diverse PtdIns(4)P-binding proteins. An exposed cluster of basic and hydrophobic residues is also presented by AP-1 for binding PtdIns(4)P in the Golgi membrane (Heldwein et al., 2004). The ENTH domain of the clathrin adaptor EpsinR instead utilizes an inducible amphipathic helix to bind PtdIns(4)P and insert into the Golgi membrane (Miller et al., 2007). Recently, Legionella pneumophila proteins were discovered to bind to PtdIns(4)P during host cell infection, and all three proteins—namely SdcA (Weber et al., 2006), SidC (Ragaz et al., 2008) and SidM (Brombacher et al., 2009)—possess largely helical domains that suggest unique functions. Analogous wedge motifs have also been proposed for proteins, including those with F-bar domains that interact with the plasma membrane (Wang et al., 2009). Thus, the FAPP mechanism might illuminate how diverse membrane surfaces are manipulated and possibly sensed by a range of different protein folds presenting hydrophobic wedges to insert into bilayers.

METHODS

Expression and purification. A human FAPP1-PH construct containing a C94S substitution was expressed in Escherichia coli by using a pGEX-6P-1 vector (Amersham Biosciences, Piscataway, NJ, USA) in M9 media supplemented with 15NH4Cl and 13C-glucose. The FAPP2 cDNA was subcloned into a pGEX-6P-1 vector (Amersham Biosciences, Piscataway, NJ, USA) to the 15N-labelled PH domain (200 μM) and by standardizing NH intensities to those induced by spiking with unlabelled dipalmitoyl phosphocholine (Avanti, Polar Lipids, Alabaster, AL, USA) to the 15N-labelled PH domain (200 μM) and by standardizing NH intensities to those induced by spiking with unlabelled dipalmitoyl phosphocholine (Avanti, Polar Lipids).

Structural calculations. The conformational space of the FAPP1-PH structure was sampled by restrained Cartesian molecular dynamics, with 100 apo conformers being generated per iteration. The final set of structures were refined in explicit water, and the 20 lowest energy structures were selected and analysed with Crystallography and NMR System (Brunger et al., 1998). The PtdIns(4)P:PH complex was calculated using AUTODock4 (Morris et al., 1998; supplementary information online). The DPC:PH complex was calculated by HADDOCK (Dominguez et al., 2003; Dancea et al., 2008). A total of 10 paramagnetic relaxation enhancements restrained the distances between the micelle centre and the respective NH groups to 0–20 Å, with CSPs defining the flexible zone. The top 200 models were ranked according to their experimental energies, and statistics derived from the 20 best were reported.

Membrane sheet and monolayer assays. Membrane sheet tubulation and lipid monolayer surface pressure assays were performed as described previously (Cao et al., 2009). Droplets of mixed lipid stock solution consisting of POPC (Avanti Polar Lipids) and PtdIns(4)P (Matreya, Pleasant Gap, PA, USA) were spotted on coverslips, dried and rehydrated. A 5 μl solution of FAPP1-PH protein (1 mg/ml) was added and images recorded by DIC microscopy on a Zeiss Axioplan 2 microscope (Carl Zeiss Microimaging, Jena, Germany). Monolayer assays were performed by injecting a chloroform solution of POPC and PtdIns(4)P into the subphase, solvent evaporation and stepwise injection of the specified FAPP2 concentrations into the subphase after equilibration.

Supplementary information is available at EMBO reports online (http://www.emboreports.org).

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.
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