Rapid Upregulation of Orai1 Abundance in the Plasma Membrane of Platelets Following Activation with Thrombin and Collagen Related Peptide

Guilai Liu¹  Guoxing Liu¹  Hong Chen¹  Kousi Alzoubi¹  Anja T. Umbach¹  Meinrad Gawaz²  Christos Stournaras³  Florian Lang¹

¹Department of Physiology, ²Department of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Medicine, Eberhard-Karls-University of Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany; ³Department of Biochemistry, University of Crete Medical School, Heraklion, Greece

Key Words
Cytosolic Ca²⁺ concentration • Rac1 • SOCE • CRP

Abstract
Background: Blood platelets accomplish primary hemostasis following vascular injury and contribute to the orchestration of occlusive vascular disease. Platelets are activated by an increase of cytosolic Ca²⁺-activity ([Ca²⁺]ᵢ), which is accomplished by Ca²⁺-release from intracellular stores and subsequent store operated Ca²⁺ entry (SOCE) through Ca²⁺ release activated Ca²⁺ channel moiety Orai1. Powerful activators of platelets include thrombin and collagen related peptide (CRP), which are in part effective by activation of small G-protein Rac1. The present study explored the influence of thrombin and CRP on Orai1 protein abundance and cytosolic Ca²⁺-activity ([Ca²⁺]ᵢ) in platelets drawn from wild type mice.

Methods: Orai1 protein surface abundance was quantified utilizing CF™488A conjugated antibodies, and [Ca²⁺]ᵢ was determined with Fluo3-fluorescence.

Results: In resting platelets, Orai1 protein abundance and [Ca²⁺]ᵢ were low. Thrombin (0.02 U/ml) and CRP (5 µg/ml) within 2 min increased [Ca²⁺]ᵢ and Orai1 protein abundance at the platelet surface. [Ca²⁺]ᵢ was further increased by Ca²⁺-ionophore ionomycin (1 µM) and by store depletion with the sarcoendoplasmatic Ca²⁺ ATPase inhibitor thapsigargin (1 µM). However, Orai1 protein abundance at the platelet surface was not significantly affected by ionomycin and only slightly increased by thapsigargin. The effect of thrombin and CRP on Orai1 abundance and [Ca²⁺]ᵢ was significantly blunted by Rac1 inhibitor NSC23766 (50 µM).

Conclusion: The increase of [Ca²⁺]ᵢ following stimulation of platelets with thrombin and collagen related peptide is potentiated by ultrarapid Rac1 sensitive translocation of Orai1 into the cell membrane.

G. Liu and G. Liu contributed equally and thus share first authorship; C. Stournaras and F. Lang contributed equally and thus share last authorship.

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Introduction

Platelets accomplish primary hemostasis following vascular injury requiring almost immediate activation. Platelets are activated by an increase of cytosolic Ca\(^{2+}\) activity ([Ca\(^{2+}\)]\(_i\)) [1], which is accomplished by Ca\(^{2+}\) release from intracellular stores and by Ca\(^{2+}\) entry from extracellular space [2]. Ca\(^{2+}\) entry is activated by intracellular Ca\(^{2+}\) store depletion, which is sensed by the stromal interaction molecule 1 (STIM1) [3]. Following store depletion STIM1 activates the pore forming unit of the Ca\(^{2+}\) release-activated channel (CRAC) Orai1 (CRACM1) in the plasma membrane [1, 4-6]. STIM1/Orai1 thus accomplish store-operated Ca\(^{2+}\) entry (SOCE) [7, 8], which is decisive for platelet activation [1, 2, 5, 9]. The increase of [Ca\(^{2+}\)]\(_i\) triggers cytoskeletal reorganization [10] and apoptosis-like phosphatidylserine translocation to the platelet membrane surface [6]. Stimulation of platelets further leads to activation of the small G-protein Rac1 [11-19], which in turn participates in the regulation of actin polymerization [12, 16-18]. Upon activation, Rac1 is translocated to the cell membrane [20].

Activators of Orai1 include thrombin and collagen related peptide (CRP) [21, 22]. Thrombin has further been shown to up-regulate Orai1 expression by stimulating Orai1 translation [23]. The present study explored whether thrombin and collagen related peptide were able to modify Orai1 protein abundance in the platelet membrane within 2 minutes, i.e. in a time period too short for synthesis of novel protein. As a result, Orai1 protein abundance was upregulated by thrombin and collagen related peptide within 2 min, an effect highly sensitive to Rac1.

Materials and Methods

Mice
All animal experiments were conducted according to the German law for the welfare of animals and were approved by the authorities of the state of Baden-Württemberg. Experiments were performed with blood platelets isolated from wild type C57/B6 mice mice. The mice had free access to water and control chow (Ssniff, Soest, Germany).

Preparation of mouse platelets
Platelets were obtained from 10- to 12-week-old mice of either sex. The mice were anesthetized and 800 µl blood was drawn from the retro-orbital plexus into tubes with 300 µl acid-citrate-dextrose buffer before the mice were sacrificed due to the large volume of blood drawn [21, 22]. Platelet rich plasma (PRP) was obtained by centrifugation at 260 g for 5 minutes. Afterwards PRP was centrifuged at 640 g for 5 minutes to pellet the platelets. Where necessary apyrase (0.02 U/ml; Sigma-Aldrich) and prostaglandin I\(_2\) (0.5 µM; Calbiochem) were added to the PRP to prevent activation of platelets during isolation. After two washing steps the pellet of washed platelets was resuspended in modified Tyrode-HEPES buffer (pH 7.4, supplemented with 1 mM CaCl\(_2\)). Where indicated, thrombin (0.02 U/ml, Roche, Basel, Switzerland), collagen related peptide (CRP, kindly provided by R.Farndale, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK), Ca\(^{2+}\) ionophore ionomycin (1 µM, Sigma, Germany), sarcoendoplasmatic Ca\(^{2+}\) ATPase inhibitor thapsigargin (1 µM, Molecular Probes), Rac 1 inhibitor NSC23766 (50 µM, Tocris Bioscience, UK) were added [24, 25].

Orai1 surface protein abundance
Orai1 surface expression was analyzed in platelets by flow cytometry. Washed platelets were incubated with thrombin or CRP for 2 min and subsequently fixed with 1% paraformaldehyde for 30 min on ice. After rinsing three times, platelets were incubated for 60 minutes (37°C) with Orai1 rabbit anti–mouse antibody (Abcam) [26], washed once in Tyrode buffer, and stained in 1:250 diluted CF\(^{488}\)A-labeled anti–rabbit secondary antibody (Sigma, USA) for 30 minutes (37°C). Samples were immediately analyzed on a FACS Calibur flow cytometer (BD Biosciences).
Calcium measurements

For the measurement of the intracellular Ca\(^{2+}\) concentration the platelet preparation was washed once in Tyrode buffer (pH 7.4), stained with 3 µM Fluo-3AM (Biotium, USA) in the same buffer and incubated at 37°C for 30 minutes. Following the indicated experimental treatment, fluorescence was measured at an excitation wavelength of 488 nm and an emission wavelength of 530 nm utilizing a BD FACSCalibur (BD Biosciences, Heidelberg, Germany) [27].

Statistical analysis

Data are provided as means ± SEM; \(n\) represents the number of independent experiments. All data were tested for significance using ANOVA with Tukey’s test as post-test or unpaired student’s t-test as appropriate. Results with \(p<0.05\) were considered statistically significant.

Results

The present study addressed the influence of thrombin and collagen related peptide on Orai1 protein abundance in the platelet cell membrane and platelet cytosolic Ca\(^{2+}\) concentration. As illustrated in Fig. 1, exposure of murine blood platelets for 2 minutes to thrombin (0.02 U/ml) or collagen related peptide (5 µg/ml) was followed by a marked increase of Orai1 protein abundance in the plasma membrane. Considering the rapidity of Orai1 appearance in the platelet plasma membrane, the effect was most likely due to translocation of preformed Orai1 protein into the plasma membrane. The increase of Orai1 protein abundance was paralleled by an increase of Fluo-3 fluorescence reflecting increase of cytosolic Ca\(^{2+}\) activity ([Ca\(^{2+}\)]\(_i\)).
In theory, the effect of thrombin and collagen related peptide on Orai1 protein abundance in the plasma membrane could have resulted from a stimulating effect of increased [Ca\(^{2+}\)] on fusion of Orai1 containing intracellular vesicles with the plasma membrane. To test this possibility, [Ca\(^{2+}\)] was increased in additional experiments by treatment of the platelets with the Ca\(^{2+}\) ionophore ionomycin. As illustrated in Fig. 2, treatment of murine platelets with ionomycin (1 µM) was followed by the expected increase of [Ca\(^{2+}\)], but did not significantly
modify the Orai1 abundance in the platelet plasma membrane. Thus, increase of \([\text{Ca}^{2+}]_i\) alone did not explain the ultrarapid increase of Orai1 protein abundance in the cell membrane.

The effect of thrombin and collagen related peptide on Orai1 protein abundance in the plasma membrane could further have resulted from a stimulating effect of intracellular store depletion on Orai1 insertion into the plasma membrane. To test this possibility, the intracellular stores were depleted in additional experiments by treatment of the platelets with the sarcopodoplasmatic \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) ATPase inhibitor thapsigargin. As shown in Fig. 3, treatment of murine platelets with thapsigargin (1 \(\mu\)M) was followed by the expected increase of \([\text{Ca}^{2+}]_i\), due to emptying of intracellular stores, and slightly, but significantly, increased the Orai1 abundance in the platelet plasma membrane.

In order to test whether upregulation of Orai1 abundance in the platelet plasma membrane involved the small G-protein Rac1, additional experiments were performed elucidating the effect of thrombin and collagen related peptide in the presence of the Rac1 inhibitor NSC23766 (50 \(\mu\)M), added 1 h prior to the administration of thrombin and collagen related peptide. As illustrated in Fig. 4A-D, the effect of thrombin and collagen related peptide on

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**Fig. 4.** Effect of thrombin and collagen related peptide on Orai1 protein abundance in the platelet cell membrane and platelet cytosolic \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) concentration in absence and presence of Rac inhibitor NSC23766. A,B,C. Original histogram overlays of anti-Orai1 fluorescence in platelets isolated from wild type mice without (grey shadows) and with (black lines) the presence of 50 \(\mu\)M Rac inhibitor NSC23766 prior to (A) and following a 2 min treatment with 0.02 U/ml thrombin (B) or 5 \(\mu\)g/ml collagen related peptide (C). D. Arithmetic means \(\pm\) SEM (n = 4) of the anti-Orai1 fluorescence (arbitrary fluorescence units) in murine platelets without (white bar) and with (black bar) the presence of 50 \(\mu\)M Rac inhibitor NSC23766 prior to and following a 2 min treatment with thrombin (0.02 U/ml) or collagen related peptide (CRP, 5 \(\mu\)g/ml). E,F,G. Original histogram overlays of Fluo-3 fluorescence in platelets isolated from wild type mice without (grey shadows) and with (black lines) the presence of 50 \(\mu\)M Rac inhibitor NSC23766 prior to (E) and following a 2 min treatment with 0.02 U/ml thrombin (F) or 5 \(\mu\)g/ml collagen related peptide (G). H. Arithmetic means \(\pm\) SEM (n = 4-6) of Fluo-3 fluorescence (arbitrary fluorescence units) in murine platelets without (white bars) and with (black bars) the presence of 50 \(\mu\)M Rac inhibitor NSC23766 prior to and following a 2 min treatment with thrombin (0.02 U/ml) or collagen related peptide (CRP, 5 \(\mu\)g/ml). ***(P<0.001) indicates statistically significant difference to absence of thrombin and CRP, ##(p<0.01) and ###(p<0.001) indicate statistically significant difference to absence of Rac inhibitor NSC23766.
Orai1 protein abundance in the platelet plasma membrane was blunted in the presence of Rac1 inhibitor NSC23766. The blunted thrombin- and CRP-induced increase of Orai1 protein abundance in the platelet plasma membrane in the presence of Rac1 inhibitor NSC23766 was paralleled by a blunted thrombin- and CRP-induced increase of \([\text{Ca}^{2+}]\), (Fig. 4E-H), an observation pointing to the functional significance of ultrarapid Orai1 recruitment to the plasma membrane.

**Discussion**

The present observations reveal that thrombin and collagen related peptide within 2 min increased Orai1 protein abundance at the platelet surface, an effect presumably in large part due to translocation of preformed channel protein from intracellular vesicles into the cell membrane. The increase of Orai1 protein abundance in the cell membrane substantially augments the increase of cytosolic \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) activity ([\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)]). The present study further shed light on the mechanism underlying the ultrarapid translocation of the Orai1 channel protein into the platelet plasma membrane. Somewhat surprisingly, increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)] by \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) ionophore ionomycin did not significantly modify the Orai1 protein abundance in the cell membrane. Store depletion by treatment with the sarcoendoplasmatic \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) ATPase inhibitor thapsigargin only slightly, but significantly, increased Orai1 protein abundance in the cell membrane. Depletion of intracellular \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) stores is well known to activate STIM1 [28], the sensor of the \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) content in the sarcoendoplasmatic reticulum [29]. Upon store depletion STIM1 activates Orai1 [30, 31]. In view of the small effect of store depletion on Orai1 abundance STIM may further slightly trigger Orai1 translocation into the cell membrane. However, the increase of Orai1 protein abundance at the platelet surface following stimulation with thrombin is apparently in large part accomplished by mechanisms other than store depletion or subsequent increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)]. The observations following inhibition of the small G-protein Rac1 with Rac1 inhibitor NSC23766 suggests the involvement of Rac1 in the translocation of Orai1 into the platelet plasma membrane.

Activation of Orai1 and subsequent increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)] is pivotal for platelet activation with thrombus formation and platelet apoptosis with phosphatidylserine translocation to the cell surface [6]. To the extent that Rac1 activity enhances Orai1 abundance and thus augments \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) entry and increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)], the small G-protein participates in the tuning of platelet activation. Orai1 and STIM1 are essential for full platelet activation [5, 29, 32] and up-regulation of Orai1 amplifies platelet activation and hemostasis [33]. The up-regulation of Orai1 thus contributes to the known impact of Rac1 on platelet activation and apoptosis [11-19].

\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) entry could be accomplished by further mechanisms in addition to Orai1 [34]. The mechanisms include TMEM16F, a \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)-activated, \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)-permeable channel with scramblase activity [35] and by the nonselective transient receptor potential (TRP) cation channels TRPC3 and TRPC6, which primarily increase \(\text{Na}^{+}\) entry leading to increase of cytosolic \(\text{Na}^{+}\) activity, reversal of \(\text{Na}^{+}/\text{Ca}^{2+}\) exchange and thus increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)] [35]. Those mechanisms are, however, not able to maintain normal platelet function, as lack of Orai1 leads to a severe bleeding disorder [5].

Orai1 protein abundance in the plasma membrane is of pathophysiological significance, as stimulation of platelet degranulation, adhesion and aggregation by increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)], contributes to development of thrombosis [1]. Increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)], following Orai1 activation further triggers phospholipid scrambling of the cell membrane with translocation of phosphatidylserine to the platelet surface [35-38]. Along those lines enhanced Orai1 activity with subsequent increase of [\(\text{Ca}^{2+}\)], contributes to the pathophysiology of acute thrombotic occlusion following atherosclerotic plaque rupture [38, 39].

In conclusion, activation of blood platelets by thrombin and collagen related peptide involves ultrarapid Rac1 sensitive translocation of Orai1 into the platelet plasma membrane. The translocation of Orai1 amplifies \(\text{Ca}^{2+}\) entry and thus platelet activation.
Disclosure Statement
The authors of this manuscript state that they have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Acknowledgements
The study was supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft KFO 274, and Open Access Publishing Fund of Tuebingen University.
We do confirm that the funder had played no role in study design, collection, analysis and interpretation of data, writing of the report and in the decision to submit the article for publication.

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