Invited Review

Novel insight into current models of NADPH oxidase regulation, assembly and localization in human polymorphonuclear leukocytes

T. Kobayashi and H. Seguchi

Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, Kochi Medical School, Kochi, Japan

Summary. We review herein the definition of the NADPH oxidase-activating site in human neutrophils and eosinophils, together with the new biochemical findings of the assembly of NADPH oxidase components and the signal transduction for the activation of NADPH oxidase. The activation of this enzyme is associated with multiple interrelated signaling pathways. Upon cell stimulation, the second messengers act on the assembly of NADPH oxidase components. The cytosolic components are first phosphorylated, and then associated with the membrane components. Small GTP-binding proteins and cytoskeletal components also participate in the activation of the NADPH oxidase. The cytochemical findings demonstrate that the superoxide generated by NADPH oxidase activity is initially localized in distinct types of intracellular granules, and not at the plasma membrane as previously believed. Thus, the assembly of NADPH oxidase components possibly occurs at the limiting membrane of the intracellular compartments. The oxidant-producing compartments mobilize and become associated with the plasma membrane upon cell stimulation with soluble stimulants, or fuse to phagosomes upon stimulation with particulate stimulants. Accordingly, superoxide is released to the extracellular space and into phagosomes in proportion to the oxidant-producing intracellular granule association with the plasma membrane and with the phagosomal membrane, respectively.

Key words: Cytochemistry, Degranulation, Eosinophils, NADPH oxidase, Neutrophils, Secretory granules, Superoxide

Introduction

Neutrophils and eosinophils play an essential role in the host defense against invading pathogens. They possess an enzymatic complex, the NADPH oxidase,

Offprint requests to: H. Seguchi, Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, Kochi Medical School, Kohasu, Okoh-cho, Nankoku, Kochi 783-8505, Japan. Fax: (0888)80-2304. e-mail: seguchih@kochi-ms.ac.jp

which is able to catalyze the one-electron reduction of molecular oxygen to superoxide (O2-). Several reviews regarding NADPH oxidase activity based on the biochemical findings have been published in the last decade, discussing the mechanism of NADPH oxidase activation, and the definition of structure, function and assembly of NADPH oxidase components (Rossi, 1986; Cross and Jones, 1991; Morel et al., 1991; Bokoch, 1994, 1995a; Umeki, 1994; Edwards and Watson, 1995; Henderson and Chappel, 1996; Wojtaszek, 1997). While these biochemical studies undoubtedly represent major achievements, it is clear from cytochemical investigations that additional levels of complexity exist in the modulation of the NADPH oxidase complex in vivo (Robinson and Badway, 1995). Recently, the in vivo superoxide-producing site has been elucidated in human polymorphonuclear leukocytes using enzyme cytochemical methods. The aim of this review is to provide a novel insight into current models of NADPH oxidase regulation, assembly and localization in human polymorphonuclear leukocytes by re-evaluating the cytochemical and the biochemical data available.

Signaling pathways for NADPH oxidase activation

Both soluble and particulate stimuli elicit a complex array of signal transduction upon the activation of NADPH oxidase in human phagocytes. This activation requires continuous contact between the cell and the stimulus; removal of the stimulus deactivates the oxidase, which is reactivated by a second exposure to the stimulus (Chanock et al., 1994). The cell surface receptors for platelet-activating factor (PAF), complement 5a (C5a), interleukin-8 (IL-8), leukotriene B₄ (LTB₄) and, N-formyl-L-methionyl-L-leucyl-L-phenylalanine (fMLP) are linked to guanosine 5'-triphosphate (GTP)-binding proteins (Birnbaumer et al., 1990; Boulay et al., 1990; Bourne et al., 1990; Gerard and Gerard, 1991; Honda et al., 1991; Strosberg, 1991; Thomas et al., 1991; Helmreich and Hofmann, 1996), which participate in the activation of phospholipase A₂ (PLA₂), phosphoinositide-specific phospholipase C (PLC) and phospholipase D (PLD) as well as

phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase (PI3 kinase) and tyrosine protein kinase (Cockcroft, 1992; Thelen and Wirthmueller, 1994; Bokoch, 1995b; Divecha and Irvine, 1995). The phospholipases, in turn, generate bioactive phospholipids as second messengers for signal transduction. The signaling pathways leading the activation of NADPH oxidase in neutrophils involve activation of PLC and PLD, which is triggered by the binding of agonists to specific receptors, mediated by a heterotrimeric GTP-binding protein, at the plasma membrane. Diacylglycerol (DG) and inositol 1,4,5triphosphate (InsP₃) are generated from the breakdown of phosphatidylinositol 4,5-bis phosphate (PtdInsP₂) by the activated PLC. DG is also produced from phosphatidic acid (PA) which is generated from phosphatidylcholine by the activated PLD which participates particularly in the regulation of the respiratory burst (McPhail et al., 1993). PLD has been demonstrated to be localized in secretory vesicles and to mobilize to the plasma membrane in human neutrophils upon cell stimulation (Morgan et al., 1997). Binding of InsP₃ to Ca²⁺ stores induces the release of Ca²⁺ to the cytosol (Clapham, 1995). The Ca²⁺ stores have been identified two regions of high Ca²⁺ concentration in human neutrophils, one towards the center of the cell, the other under the plasma membrane, on the cell periphery (Pettit et al., 1997). Ca²⁺ and DG activate protein kinase C which phosphorylates the cytosolic components of NADPH oxidase (Morel et al., 1991; Cockcroft, 1992; Rhee and Bae, 1997). Protein kinase C changes the subcellular distribution (Deli et al., 1987; Dekker and Parker, 1994). Protein kinase C represents a group of isoforms (Hug and Sarre, 1993). Human neutrophils express five protein kinase C isoforms (α , β_I , β_{II} , δ and ζ). Stimulation with opsonized zymosan is considered to result in the translocation of protein kinase C isoforms to the plasma membrane (β_{II} , δ and ζ) and granule fractions (δ and ζ). This redistribution promotes the participation of the protein kinase C isoforms in regulatory mechanisms involved in NADPH oxidase assembly/activation through phosphorylation of p47phox (Sergeant and McPhail, 1997). PA is also considered to participate in the activation of NADPH oxidase through phosphorylation of p47phox by PA-activated protein kinase which is different from protein kinase N, protein kinase C, p21(Cdc42/Rac)-activated protein kinase and mitogen-activated protein (MAP) kinase (Waite et al.,

The activation of PI3-kinase located upstream of protein kinase C in the signaling cascade arising from fMLP receptors is considered to be necessary for the fMLP-induced respiratory burst (Ding and Badwey, 1994; Ahmed et al., 1995; Vlahos et al., 1995). Phosphatidylinositol 3,4,5-triphosphate (PIP₃) produced PI3-kinase is involved in the signaling cascade stimulated by fMLP in neutrophils (Stoyanov et al., 1995; Kular et al., 1997). Tyrosine protein kinase also participates in the activation of NADPH oxidase (Gomez-Cambronero et al., 1989; Nasmith et al., 1989;

Berkow and Dodson, 1990; Grinstein et al., 1990; Naccache et al., 1990; Yamaguchi et al., 1995a; Ptasznik et al., 1996), and is considered to be required for the recruitment of PI3-kinase to the plasma membrane (Vossebeld et al., 1997), since the PI3-kinase has been demonstrated to contain a 110 kDa catalytic subunit and an 85 kDa regulatory subunit which contains an SH2 domain that can bind to tyrosine-phosphorylated proteins (Carpenter et al., 1990; Cantley et al., 1991). Furthermore, coupling of the src-related tyrosine protein kinase Lyn to the PI3-kinase is possibly involved in the signaling pathway for NADPH oxidase activation (Ptasznik et al., 1996).

The arachidonic acid (AA) generated by activated PLA₂ serves as a second messenger in the stimulation of the NADPH oxidase in neutrophils (Bromberg and Pick, 1983; Maridonneau-Parini and Tauber, 1986; Lu and Grinstein, 1990; Aebischer et al., 1993; Forehand et al., 1993; Henderson et al., 1993; White et al., 1993; Ely et al., 1995) and in eosinophils (Aebischer et al., 1993). The 85 kDa cytosolic PLA2 (cPLA2) possesses a high specificity for phospholipids that contain sn-2arachidonate (Suga et al., 1990) and is considered to be translocated under elevated intracellular calcium levels into membranes where the substrate phospholipids are available (Channon and Leslie, 1990; Clark et al., 1991; Kramer et al., 1991; Lin et al., 1993; Nalefski et al., 1994). Sequence data have shown that the calciumbinding site of cPLA₂ is homologous to that of protein kinase C, which also translocates to the membrane upon elevation in intracellular calcium level (Channon and Leslie, 1990; Clark et al., 1991; Kramer et al., 1991; Wijkander and Sundler, 1992). This calcium elevation is an essential step in the signaling between the receptors such as the fMLP receptor and NADPH oxidase (Foyouzi-Youssefi et al., 1997). The microtubule associating protein (MAP) kinase cascade is a signaling pathway common to many polymorphonuclear leukocyte stimulants (Thompson et al., 1994). It has been recently shown that the cPLA2 is activated by several protein kinases. That is, Ras, Raf (Avruch et al., 1994) and MEK kinase (MAP kinase kinase kinase) activated by the stimulation with opsonized zymosan through tyrosine kinase, activate ERK kinase (MAP kinase kinase) which then stimulates a MAP kinase family; ERKs. The activated ERKs finally stimulate cPLA2 (Hazan et al., 1997). The involvement of tyrosine kinase in the activation of the MAP kinase cascade has been demonstrated in human neutrophils stimulated with various agonists such as concanavalin A, lipopolysaccharide, PAF, colony-stimulating factor and tumor necrosis factor α (Duci et al., 1994; Nahas et al., 1996). In addition, both PA and DG generated by PLD are known to induce cPLA2 activity through the activation of protein kinase C linked to MAP kinase (Bauldry and Wooten, 1997; Nixon et al., 1997). cPLA2 has, however, been reported to be phosphorylated also through a MAP kinase-independent pathway (Waterman and Sha'afi, 1995). The generated AA containing free COO groups is considered to facilitate insertion into the membrane or may be a requirement for the interaction with the protein components to affect NADPH oxidase activity (Henderson and Chappell, 1996). It should be noted that protein phosphatases participate in the activation of NADPH oxidase (Gay et al., 1997). For example, the hyperphosphorylated p47^{phox} by protein serine/ threonine phosphatase loses the ability to activate NADPH oxidase (Yamaguchi et al., 1995b), and tyrosine protein phosphatase (Walton and Dixon, 1993) also inhibits the activation (Le Cabec and Maridonneau-Parini, 1995). Furthermore, it is proposed that an increase in intracellular cAMP concentration activates protein kinase A which in turn negatively regulates the signaling pathway of NADPH oxidase at the downstream of protein kinase C (Mitsuyama et al., 1993).

Assembly of NADPH oxidase components

NADPH oxidase is activated by the translocation of the cytosolic components to the membrane components upon cell stimulation. The schematic diagram for the assembly of these components in current models of NADPH oxidase is shown in Figure 1.

Cytochrome b₅₅₈, a membrane factor of the NADPH oxidase (Segal et al., 1978), is a heterodimer consisting

of a gp91phox and a p22phox (Huang et al., 1995) which are transmembrane proteins (Nakamura et al., 1988; Imajoh-Ohmi et al., 1992). These subunits are noncovalently associated with each other (Parkos et al., 1987), and are present in membranes in a molar ratio of 1:1 (Wallach and Segal, 1996). The gp91^{phox} has been reported to possess the binding sites for FAD and NADPH (Kleinberg et al., 1989; Segal et al., 1992) and to function as the NADPH oxidase-associated H+ channel (Demaurex et al., 1993) which is activated by AA (Henderson et al., 1995, 1997). The heme in cytochrome b₅₅₈ is thought to be bound to either two p22phox molecules or to one p22phox molecule and a histidine from gp91phox (Chanock et al., 1994). This p22phox is thought to be considered as the terminal component of the respiratory-burst electron transport system (Umeki, 1994).

Five types of proteins (p40^{phox}, p47^{phox}, p67^{phox}, p21-rac and Rap1A) have been so far known to be classified as the cytosolic factors. p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} have been reported to be associated to each other (Nauseef, 1993; Finan et al., 1994) and exist as a complex that very likely involves at least one additional cytosolic protein (Iyer et al., 1994; McPhail, 1994; Uhlinger et al., 1994). The three cytosolic phox proteins (p40^{phox}, p47^{phox} and p67^{phox}) are presently considered

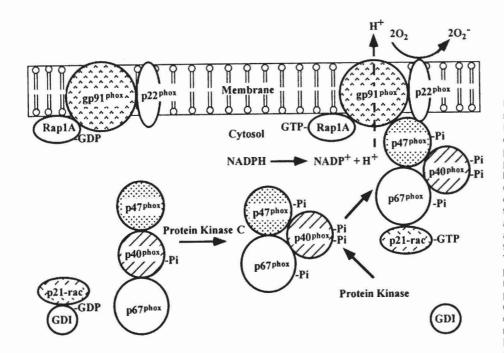


Fig. 1. A schematic diagram showing the assembly of NADPH oxidase components. A cytosolic triphox consisting of p40phox, p47phox and p67phox is phosphorylated by protein kinases, followed by the conformational change upon cell stimulation. This triphox is then associated with p22phox and gp91phox which are located at the membrane, resulting in the production of superoxide. The two small GTP-binding proteins (Rap1A and p21-rac) regulate the oxidant generation. p21-rac located in a cytosolic complex with Rho GDP dissociation inhibitor (GDI) in resting cells, is released from RhoGDI upon cell stimulation, and is then associated with the p67phox. Rap1A associated tightly with cytochrome b₅₅₈ is a regulator of O2 formation and functions as the final activation switch involving direct physical interaction with the cytochrome b₅₅₈



to translocate en bloc and to become associated with cytochrome b₅₅₈ upon cell stimulation. First this trimeric phox complex alters its own conformation: in resting cells p40phox is inserted between p67phox and p47phox, and upon cell stimulation a conformational change occurs, resulting in the exclusion of p40phox and the direct contact between p47phox and p67phox (Wientjes et al., 1993; Ito et al., 1996; Tsunawaki et al., 1996; Sathyamoorthy et al., 1997; Fuchs et al., 1995, 1996, 1997). The p47^{phox} of the trimeric phox complex is then translocated to the membrane where it is associated with cytochrome b_{558} via multiple binding regions, including the sites on $gp91^{phox}$ and $p22^{phox}$ (DeLeo et al., 1995; Adams et al., 1997). Concerning the interaction between p47phox and p22phox, the SH3 domain of p47phox is thought to bind to proline-rich sequences in p22phox (Leto et al., 1994). The p67^{phox} regulates the transfer of electrons from NADPH for reduction of flavin, and the p47^{phox} controls the electron flow between flavin and the heme groups (Cross and Curnutte, 1995), or serves merely as an adaptor protein to enhance the binding of other cytosolic components to the oxidase complex (Freeman and Lambeth, 1996).

Low molecular weight GTP-binding proteins (Rap1A and p21-rac) are known to participate in the activation of NADPH oxidase. In resting cells the p21rac is located in a cytosolic complex with an inhibitory protein, Rho GDP dissociation inhibitor (GDI), which prevents nucleotide exchange on the p21-rac. Upon cell activation, the p21-rac is released from RhoGDI possibly by biologically active lipids including AA, PA and phosphatidylinositol. The p21-rac is then associated with the p67phox. The interaction between p67phox and p21rac is essential for translocation of the cytosolic trimeric phox proteins and activation of the NADPH oxidase (Bokoch, 1994, 1995a; Prigmore et al., 1995; Kreck et al., 1996; Leusen et al., 1996; Nishimoto et al., 1997). This p21-rac is classified into two types of proteins: Rac1 and Rac2. In human cells, Rac2 is the main p67phox-interacting GTPase (Dorseuil et al., 1996). Rap1A which is tightly associated with cytochrome b₅₅₈ is a regulator of O_2 formation and functions as the final activation switch involving direct physical interaction with cytochrome b₅₅₈ (Quinn et al., 1989; Maly et al., 1994; Gabig et al., 1995). Recently, p125ras GTPactivating protein has been reported to be related to signaling pathway resulting in the activation of NADPH oxidase (Duci et al., 1996).

The phosphorylation of the cytosolic factors is essential for the activation of NADPH oxidase (Heyworth et al., 1989). Both p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} are phosphorylated by protein kinase C during cell stimulation (El Benna et al., 1994, 1996, 1997; Park et al., 1997; Sergeant and McPhail, 1997). On the other hand, the phosphorylation of p40^{phox} is under the control of a different kinase pathway from that of the phosphorylation of p47^{phox} (Fuchs et al., 1997). In addition, several protein kinases, including PA-activated protein kinase, have been suggested to phosphorylate

p47phox and to be involved in the activation of NADPH oxidase (McPhail et al., 1995; Yamaguchi et al., 1996; Waite et al., 1997). The phosphorylation of the cytosolic factors is thus necessary to change their conformation to facilitate the assembly of NADPH oxidase complex (Jesaitis et al., 1986; Segal et al., 1996; Fuchs et al., 1997). The dynamics of the cytoskeletal components are essential for the activation of NADPH oxidase. The p21rac has been reported to bind tubulin and to be required for actin assembly (Xu et al., 1994; Best et al., 1996), indicating that the cytoskeleton may participate in the activation of NADPH oxidase (Woodman et al., 1991; Wiles et al., 1995). Cofilin, a 21-kDa phosphoprotein, is also considered to participate in the continual polymerization and depolymerization of F-actin, and to give rise to the oscillatory pattern of H_2O_2 production (Heyworth et al., 1997).

Eosinophils show a similar, although in some ways more potent, oxidative burst and hence generate more O₂- than neutrophils (DeChatelet et al., 1977; Yamashita et al., 1985; Petreccia et al., 1987). The eosinophils possess membrane-bound cytochrome b₅₅₈, cytosolic p47phox, p67phox, p40phox and p21-rac. The amounts of these components are greater in eosinophils than in neutrophils. Upon activation, p47phox, p67phox and p40phox are translocated to the membrane, but larger amounts of these components are translocated in eosinophils compared to those in neutrophils. Km values of activated oxidase for NADPH are almost the same in both leukocytes, indicating that oxidase components are likely to be very similar in both eosinophils and neutrophils (Miyamoto et al., 1994; Someya et al., 1997).

Biochemical localization of NADPH oxidase components

In an early study using an advantageous method for subcellular fractionation of human neutrophils, the b-cytochrome component of NADPH oxidase was reported to be in the membrane of the specific granules of unstimulated neutrophils and that stimulus-induced fusion of these granules with the plasma membrane results in translocation of the cytochrome (Borregaard et al., 1983).

Human neutrophils contain a heterogenous population of intracellular granules. The identification and the characterization of the granules and their contents have been investigated over the past decades using biochemical and cytochemical methods (Bainton, 1973, 1993; Bainton et al., 1987; Borregaard et al., 1990, 1993a,b; Kjeldsen et al., 1993; Kjeldsen, 1995; Sengeløv, 1996; Sengeløv et al., 1995; Borregaard and Cowland, 1997; Gullberg et al., 1997). These granules are now classified into five distinct types: (i) defensin-positive azurophil granules, (ii) defensin-negative azurophil granules, (iii) specific granules, (vi) gelatinase granules, and (v) secretory vesicles (Borregaard and Cowland, 1997). It has been so far reported that the

cytochrome b₅₅₈ is localized at the membrane of gelatinase granules and secretory vesicles in addition to specific granules (Bjerrum and Borregaard, 1989; Jesaitis et al., 1990; Calafat et al., 1993; Kjeldsen et al., 1992, 1994). In quantitative studies using cytochrome b₅₅₈ as the marker for membrane-bound components of NADPH oxidase, it appeared that the major part of this cytochrome b₅₅₈ co-sediments with markers for specific granules, gelatinase granules and secretory vesicles, and only a small amount of the cytochrome b₅₅₈ co-localizes with the plasma membrane (Bjerrum and Borregaard, 1989). In addition, the specific granule fraction containing cytochrome b₅₅₈ has been reported to possess the greater part of total NADPH oxidase activity (Clark et al., 1987). These findings indicate that NADPH oxidase complex is not fundamentally localized in the plasma membrane but in the intracellular granules. In human neutrophils, 85% of cytochrome b₅₅₈ is localized in specific granules and gelatinase granules, while the remaining 15% is localized in secretory vesicles (Bjerrum and Borregaard, 1989). However, the secretory vesicles, in comparison with specific granules and gelatinase granules, may play an important role as stores of membrane proteins that are easily mobilized to the cell surface during stimulation by inflammatory mediators in early neutrophil activation (Borregaard et al., 1990; Sengeløv et al., 1993), indicating that the secretory vesicles have a principal role in the production of O₂- by NADPH oxidase.

Immunocytochemical localization of NADPH oxidase components

In situ localization of NADPH oxidase components has been identified using the immunocytochemical method. Electron microscopy revealed that cytochrome b₅₅₈ in human neutrophils is localized in intracellular granules which also contain lactoferrin, being, thus, specific granules (Ginsel et al., 1990; Jesaitis et al., 1990). It has also been reported that phagocytosing human neutrophils exhibit cytochrome b₅₅₈ localized in the phagosomal membrane adjoining the bacterial cell wall (Jesaitis et al., 1990). However, the p22phox of NADPH oxidase is not localized at the plasma membrane of the resting neutrophils in cryosections (Ginsel et al., 1990). In human eosinophils, the p22phox is localized over a large population of small cytoplasmic granules, most of which are situated between the specific granules which are not labeled by the antibody against p22phox. This antibody does not yet label the plasma membrane of the resting eosinophils (Ginsel et al., 1990). The cytochrome b₅₅₈ was also shown to be localized in secretory vesicles in human neutrophils and in albumin-containing vesicles in eosinophils under electron microscopic observation (Calafat et al., 1993). Indirect immunofluorescence study also showed that a distinct granular staining of the cytoplasm is seen for cytochrome b₅₅₈ in human neutrophils (Johansson et al., 1995). These studies did not eliminate the existence of the cytochrome b₅₅₈ on the plasma membrane. The mobilization of intracellular granules is considered to differ according to the granular type (Wright et al., 1977). It should be noted that, as compared to other intracellular granules, an intracellular store of NADPH oxidase can be easily mobilized even under the simple stress condition of density gradient centrifugation, and that such mobilization may result in the expression of cytochrome b₅₅₈ on the plasma membrane (Calafat et al., 1993).

Enzyme cytochemical localization of NADPH oxidase activity

In situ localization of enzyme activity in cells and tissues can be achieved by enzyme cytochemical analyses. Several cytochemical methods have been reviewed to detect NADPH oxidase activity (Karnovsky, 1994; Robinson and Badwey, 1995). Two distinct types of the methods, the cerium method and the DAB/Mn²⁺ method, have been mainly employed to detect the localization of NADPH oxidase activity in human phagocytes under the electron microscope. The cerium method, developed by Briggs et al. (1975), has contributed towards the visualization of the NADPH oxidase-activating site in cells. The enzymatic reaction is as follows: O₂- generated by NADPH oxidase activity is dismutated to form hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂). Cerium ion (Ce3+) reacts with H2O2 to form cerium perhydroxide (Ce(OH)2OOH) which is the electron-dense precipitate observed under the electron microscope. The usefulness of the cerium-based cytochemical method has been evaluated elsewhere (Robinson and Karnovsky, 1983a,b; Hardonk et al., 1985; Van Noorden and Frederiks, 1993; Kobayashi et al., 1997, 1998a). Using this method it appears that the NADPH oxidaseactivating sites are restricted to the plasma membrane and phagosomes in the phagocytizing human neutrophils attached onto coverslips (Briggs et al., 1975). In addition, it has been demonstrated that the oxidantproducing sites are localized on the cell surface and within intracellular vesicles in coverslip-attached cells (Robinson and Batten, 1990) stimulated with phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA), a protein kinase C activator (Nishizuka, 1986) and NADPH oxidase activator (Robinson et al., 1985), under scanning laser reflectance confocal microscope (Robinson and Batten, 1989a-c; Halbhuber et al., 1996). In the case of phagocytizing neutrophils suspended in appropriate buffers, not attached onto coverslips, the enzyme reaction sites are detected on the part of the plasma membrane engulfing the particles and on the phagosomal membrane, but not on the free surface of the plasma membrane (Ohno et al., 1982a). The oxidantreaction product is localized at the contact surface between adjoining neutrophils in suspension stimulated with PMA or lectin, and on the whole surface membrane in these cells stimulated with digitonin or A23187 (Ohno et al., 1982a,b; Hirai et al., 1991).

The DAB/Mn²⁺ method was originally developed to detect O₂-producing sites in neutrophils (Briggs et al., 1986; Steinbeck et al., 1992, 1993). The enzymatic reaction is as follows: diaminobenzidine (DAB) is oxidized by Mn³⁺ which is formed from Mn²⁺ by the oxidization with O2. The oxidized DAB then reacts with osmium ions to form electron-dense insoluble polymers. Using this DAB/Mn²⁺ method it has been demonstrated that O2 generation is associated with the plasma membrane and the endocytic vacuoles formed by the invagination of the plasma membrane in coverslipattached neutrophils stimulated with zymosan or PMA (Briggs et al., 1986). While it has been reported that O₂ generation is restricted to the vesicular membrane in coverslip-attached cells stimulated with PMA (Steinbeck et al., 1993), these previous studies indicate that the activating sites of NADPH oxidase in cells are altered by different conditions of cell incubation and stimulants.

As described above, the secretory vesicles among the heterogeneous population of intracellular granules relate to early neutrophil activation. Borregaard et al. (1987) were the first to report biochemically that this compartment contains alkaline phosphatase (ALPase) activity and is mobilized to the plasma membrane much more readily than any identified granule subset and has kinetics of up-regulation to the membrane similar to those reported for a variety of receptor proteins. The ALPase-containing compartments have been enzyme-cytochemically demonstrated to be short rod-shaped organelles distributed dispersely throughout the cytoplasm (Kobayashi and Robinson, 1991; Takizawa

and Robinson, 1993), that rapidly undergo a dramatic reorganization upon cell stimulation with either a chemoattractant fMLP or PMA, and exhibit an unusual exocytotic pathway in that these small organelles fuse to form elongated tubular structures before their association with the plasma membrane (Kobayashi and Robinson, 1991; Cain et al., 1993; Fernández-Segura et al., 1995). ALPase activity has been reported to be localized in the Golgi complex, and the secretory granules, referred to as the secretory vesicles, to be located near the Golgi complex (Kobayashi and Robinson, 1991), indicating that the secretory granules are produced through the Golgi complex and are hence essentially intracellular in origin, in spite of the fact that it has been reported that albumin is contained in this compartment indicating that it is endocytic in origin (Borregaard and Cowland, 1997). Recently, it appears that the sites of active NADPH oxidase are in an intracellular compartment (Fig. 2) possessing ALPase activity, and not at the plasma membrane in PMA-stimulated human neutrophils suspended in appropriate buffer using the DAB/Mn²⁺ method, and that these organelles are intracellular in origin, as can be demonstrated using exogenously added ferritin particles as a marker for endocytosis (Fig. 3). These oxidant-producing granules have been further demonstrated to fuse directly with the plasma membrane or to fuse to form larger intracellular vesicles which then become associated with the plasma membrane (Seguchi et al., 1997; Kobayashi et al., 1998b). It has also been shown that oxidant-producing sites are restricted to the tubular compartment similar to

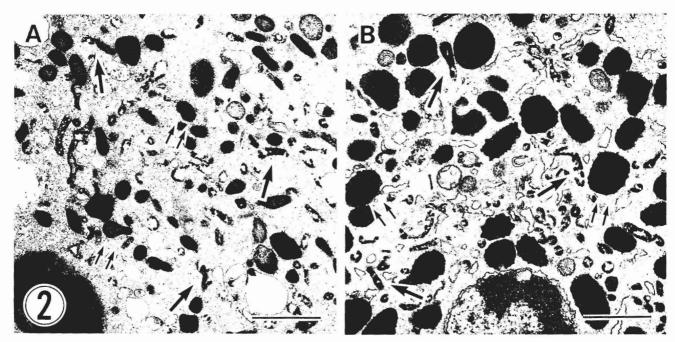


Fig. 2. Electron micrographs showing the intracellular compartments possessing NADPH oxidase activity in human neutrophils (A) and eosinophils (B) stimulated with PMA. The cytochemical reaction was done using the cerium-based method. The oxidant is localized in smaller intracellular compartments (arrows) compared to specific granules (double arrows) in both cells. Bars :1 μ m.

tubular structures of the secretory granules in prefixed cells stimulated with PMA (Kobayashi and Seguchi, 1994; Kobayashi et al., 1999). In human neutrophils phagocytizing human IgG-coated latex beads, intracellular compartment showing NADPH oxidase activity has been reported to gather around the phagosomes and fuse to the phagosomal membranes, but not to the plasma membrane (Seguchi et al., 1997; Kobayashi et al., 1998b). This finding indicates that exocytosis of O2-producing granules is essential to carry reactive oxygen species to the extracellular space or into the lumen of phagosome, as it has been suggested that oxidase activity may be influenced by degranulation (Wymann et al., 1987; Suchard and Boxer, 1994). These investigations demonstrate clearly that the sites of activation of NADPH oxidase are not at the plasma membrane, but at the intracellular compartment, and that O_2 is released from stimulated neutrophils through exocytosis of an oxidant-producing intracellular granule, indicating that the intracellular granule is not merely a site where cytochrome b₅₅₈ is reserved and delivered to the plasma membrane.

In human eosinophils little is known about the electron microscopical localization of the NADPH oxidase-activating site. We have found that the oxidant-producing site is restricted to the intracellular compartment in PMA-stimulated cells in suspension (Fig. 2). This structure, smaller than the specific granules, excludes exogenously-added ferritin particles, indicating that this is intracellular in origin (Fig. 3). The

oxidant-producing compartment in eosinophils, like that in neutrophils, is associated with the plasma membrane upon stimulation with PMA, while this structure accumulates around phagosomes and is associated with the limiting membrane of the phagosomes resulting in the release of O2⁻ into the lumen of the phagosomes (Seguchi et al., 1997).

The intracellular dynamics of the NADPH oxidaseconveying granules are illustrated as a schematic diagram in Figure 4.

Conclusion and consideration

In the present review new insights have been discussed into current models of NADPH oxidase assembly and regulation and localization in human polymorphonuclear leukocytes. Multiple signaling pathways which may interrelate with each other exist in the activation of NADPH oxidase. The assembly of the NADPH oxidase components induced by these signals is also a complex issue. The simplest view of O₂ release is that the various components of NADPH oxidase complex are brought into juxtaposition at the plasma membrane. However, we emphasize herein that the situation is more complex as the intracellular compartments in human neutrophils and eosinophils are considered to be the site where cytosolic components are associated with the membrane components of NADPH oxidase. Accordingly, O2- accumulates initially in the intracellular compartments. O2 is further released into

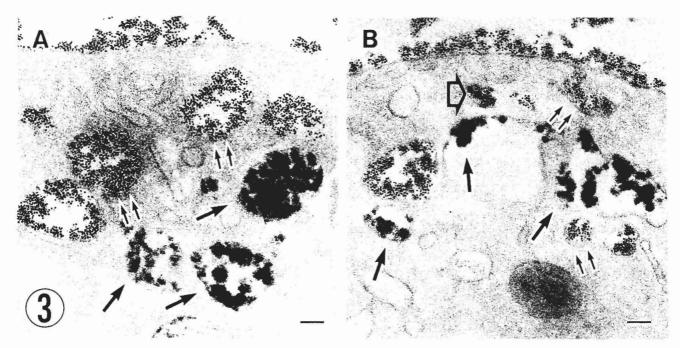


Fig. 3. Electron micrographs showing localization of oxidant and cationized ferritin particles added exogenously in human neutrophils (A) and eosinophils (B) stimulated with PMA. There is no mixing of the oxidant-positive vesicles (arrows) and the cationized ferritin-loaded endocytic structures (double arrows). Intracellular vesicles containing both oxidant reaction and ferritin particles (open arrow) indicating that the oxidant-producing compartments fuse with the endocytic vesicles. Note that free cell surface shows no oxidant reaction. Bars: 0.1 μm.

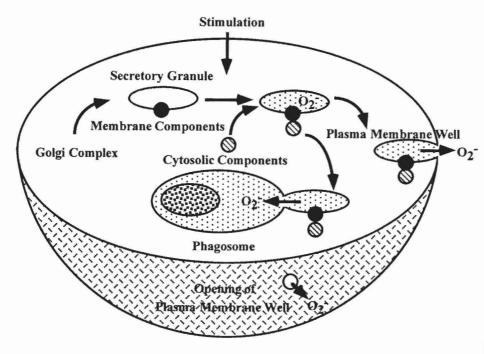


Fig. 4. A schematic diagram showing intracellular dynamics of secretory granules possessing NADPH oxidase activity in human polymorphonuclear leukocytes. Upon cell stimulation, cytosolic components of NADPH oxidase are associated with the membrane components localized at the limiting membrane of the secretory granules. Accordingly, superoxide is released into this lumen. The oxidant-producing granules are associated with the plasma membrane to form plasma membrane well. Superoxide is then released extracellularly from the opening of this structure. In another case, the secretory granules are associated with phagosomal membrane, releasing superoxide into the phagosomal lumen.



the extracellular space and phagosome in proportion to how the oxidant-producing intracellular granule is associated with the plasma membrane and the phagosomal membrane, respectively. The present view coordinates with the previous investigations: degranulation is essential to NADPH oxidase activity (Wymann et al., 1987; Suchard and Boxer, 1994), the production of O₂- occurs in phagosome (Johansson et al., 1995) where the oxidase substrate, NADPH, is transported to this vicinity prior to oxidation of targets (Liang and Petty, 1992), the lag period before the onset of the respiratory burst represents the time necessary for degranulation (Suchard and Boxer, 1994), and the priming could, in part, be a result of a translocation of intracellular membranes containing constituents of NADPH oxidase to the plasma membrane (Sengeløv et al., 1995).

Concerning the signal transduction, one of the possible explanations of the signaling pathways for the activation of NADPH oxidase is that cPLA₂, PLD, protein kinase C or other effectors may translocate, under the elevation of intracellular calcium level, to the limiting membrane of the oxidant-producing intracellular compartment followed by the assembly of NADPH oxidase components, although there are still many questions that need to be elucidated before the intracellular machinery that triggers the activation of the

NADPH oxidase is fully understood. Analyses of the intracellular dynamics of NADPH oxidase components and the investigations of the signaling pathways from the cell surface receptor to the oxidant-producing intracellular compartments will contribute to elucidate the mechanisms of NADPH oxidase activation.

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