On the Mechanism of Inactivation and ATP-Dependent Reactivation of Rat Liver Tyrosine Aminotransferase

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(Z. Naturforsch. 32c, 777 — 780 [1977]; received June 13, 1977)

Tyrosine Aminotransferase, Regulation of Enzyme Activity, Enzyme Interconversion, Phosphorylation/Dephosphorylation, Gluconeogenesis

The mechanism of in vitro inactivation and ATP-dependent rapid reactivation of rat liver tyrosine aminotransferase by a membrane-bound system from rat liver and kidney cortex and the nucleotide specificity of this process was investigated using partially purified tyrosine aminotransferase as a substrate. Adenosine 5'-triphosphate (ATP) could be replaced by guanosine 5'-triphosphate (GTP), whereas inosine 5'-triphosphate (ITP) was less effective. During reactivation \( [\gamma-\text{32P}]\text{ATP} \) was incorporated into the enzyme and not excorporated by incubation of the labeled enzyme with excess non-radioactive ATP. Inactivation of labeled tyrosine aminotransferase by a particulate fraction led to a decrease protein-bound radioactivity concomitant with an increase of \( [\text{32P}] \) orthophosphate. This points to a phosphorylation and dephosphorylation mechanism in the regulation of tyrosine aminotransferase activity.

As previously reported, tyrosine aminotransferase from crude rat liver extracts is rapidly inactivated in the presence of rat liver particulate fractions. This inactivation is counteracted by ATP. Addition of ATP to inactivated tyrosine aminotransferase in the presence of particulate fractions led to a rapid reactivation of the enzyme. In order to gain further insight into the mechanism of the above system, rat liver tyrosine aminotransferase was partially purified; the dependence of this process on Mg\(^{2+}\) and ATP and the \( \text{32P} \)-incorporation from \( [\gamma-\text{32P}]\text{ATP} \) were studied.

**Materials and Methods**

Male Sprague Dawley rats (250 — 300 g) were kept on a 50% protein diet (Altromin C 1001) in a room illuminated between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Tyrosine aminotransferase was partially purified, the dependence of this process on \( \text{Mg}^{2+} \) and ATP and the \( \text{32P} \)-incorporation from \( [\gamma-\text{32P}]\text{ATP} \) were studied.

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phosphates, pH 6.5, 1 mM EDTA, 1 mM dithiothreitol, 2 mM 2-oxoglutarate and 0.2 mM pyridoxal phosphate) and chromatographed on Sephadex G 200 (Pharmacia).

Radioactivity was measured in a Packard Tricarb 3385. Because of the short half-life of $^{32}$P, the cpm were corrected to the value at the time of preparation of $^{32}$P-labeled tyrosine aminotransferase. $^{32}$P-radioactivity in the eluates of chromatography on G 200 was measured in fractions of 0.7 ml after addition of 20 ml Aquasol (NEN) and thermal equilibration. For the measurement of protein-bound $^{32}$P-radioactivity the specimens were diluted with an equal volume of ice-cold 10% trichloroacidic acid and filtered through filter discs (Membranfilter Göttingen, 0.1 µm mesh) and the residue was washed with additional trichloroacidic acid.

**Results and Discussion**

Rat liver tyrosine aminotransferase of crude liver homogenates can be rapidly inactivated by incubation at 37 °C. Addition of kidney cortex homogenates enhances this inactivation, though the specific activity of tyrosine aminotransferase in this organ is approximately 160 times less than in liver. Addition of 1 mM ATP together with an ATP-regenerating system abolishes the inactivation at pH 8.1. The inactivation of partially purified tyrosine aminotransferase by the nuclear fraction (N) from kidney cortex was dependent on the amount of added particulate protein (Fig. 1). To investigate the specificity of the protective effect of trinucleotides, soluble liver extracts containing tyrosine aminotransferase were incubated at 37 °C with the 33 000 x g sediment from kidney cortex and various concentrations of nucleotide triphosphates: GTP protected as well as ATP, but in the presence of 5 mM ITP, 20% of tyrosine aminotransferase activity in the supernatant was lost after 90 min.

As previously reported, protection against inactivation at suboptimal levels of ATP could be significantly improved by 10 µM cAMP or cGMP. The inactivation of tyrosine aminotransferase in soluble liver extracts by the light mitochondrial fraction (L) from rat liver. 13.3 mg protein of the L-fraction, 30 mm tyrosine. A — A 0.5 mM ATP, A — A 1.0 mM ATP, # — # 2 mM ATP, O — O 5 mM ATP added as indicated by arrow.

**Fig. 2.** Inactivation and ATP-dependent reactivation of partially purified tyrosine aminotransferase by a light mitochondrial fraction (L) from rat liver. 10.2 mg protein of the L-fraction and 0.4 U tyrosine aminotransferase were incubated at 37 °C. After 30 min 2.5 mM ATP, 30 mM acetylphosphate and 3 U acetokinase were added.

**Fig. 3.** Mg$^{2+}$-dependence of the ATP-dependent reactivation of partially purified tyrosine aminotransferase. 10.2 mg protein of the L-fraction and 0.4 U tyrosine aminotransferase were incubated at 37 °C. After 30 min 2.5 mM ATP, 30 mM acetylphosphate and 3 U acetokinase were added.

Other experimental conditions as in Fig. 2. A — A without Mg$^{2+}$, O — O with 1 mM Mg$^{2+}$.
fraction (L) could also be prevented by the addition of 20 mM fluoride.

Partially purified tyrosine aminotransferase inactivated by a light mitochondrial fraction (L) from rat liver required for complete reactivation at least 5 mM ATP (Fig. 2) or 1 mM ATP and an ATP-regenerating system (acetylphosphate and aceto-kinase).

Mg$^{2+}$-ions are necessary for optimal ATP-mediated reactivation of rat liver tyrosine aminotransferase. As shown in Fig. 3, addition of 1 mM Mg$^{2+}$ stimulated the ATP-dependent reactivation of the enzyme by rat liver particles. This makes an effect of ATP as a complexing agent unlikely and points to a possible role of the nucleotide as a phosphate donor. It is also consistent with the fact that adenylyl-(β,γ-methylene)-diphosphonate (AMP-PCP), an ATP-analog which cannot provide a phosphate group for phosphorylation, failed to inhibit inactivation or to promote reactivation in the presence of rat liver or kidney particles.

To obtain more direct evidence for this mechanism, 18.1 units of tyrosine aminotransferase were first inactivated in the presence of a rat liver light mitochondrial fraction (L) and then reactivated in the presence of 0.095 mM PLP and 4.8 mM ATP. After centrifugation (100 000 × g for 30 min) all soluble components of the sample were applied to Sephadex G 200. The fractions containing both activity and protein-bound $^{32}$P-radioactivity were pooled and rechromatographed on Sephadex G 200 (Fig. 4).

![Rechromatography of $^{32}$P-labeled tyrosine aminotransferase on Sephadex G 200](image)

**Fig. 4.** Rechromatography of $^{32}$P-labeled tyrosine aminotransferase on Sephadex G 200. Enzyme activity was determined in the presence of 4.38 mM tyrosine. Experimental conditions are indicated under "Materials and Methods". ○—○ radioactivity; ●—● tyrosine aminotransferase activity.

### Table I. Characterization of $^{32}$P-labeled tyrosine aminotransferase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretreatment</th>
<th>Time [min]</th>
<th>Activity [U/sample]</th>
<th>cpm/sample after acid precipitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I * Incubation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 4.8 mM ATP</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 0.095 mM PLP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II * Incubation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ L-Fraction</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1646</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Differently labeled tyrosine aminotransferase was used in experiments I and II.

As shown in Table I, most of the protein-associated radioactivity is trichloroacidic acid-insoluble, pointing to a covalent linkage to the enzyme.

A possible adsorption of [$γ$-$^{32}$P]ATP to tyrosine aminotransferase can be excluded, because even after 70 min of incubation in the presence of 5 mM unlabeled ATP the trichloroacidic acid-insoluble portion of radioactivity remained unchanged. Only during tyrosine aminotransferase inactivation by a rat liver light mitochondrial fraction did the trichloroacidic acid-insoluble radioactivity decrease concomitant with an increase of trichloroacidic acidsoluble radioactivity. The release of protein-bound $^{32}$P together with a decrease in tyrosine aminotransferase activity points to a protein phosphatase activity in the light mitochondrial fraction.

It is concluded that hepatic tyrosine aminotransferase activity is subject to regulation by chemical modification. The fully active enzyme is obtained by ATP or GTP-dependent phosphorylation in the presence of a particle-bound kinase; inactivation occurs as a result of dephosphorylation catalyzed by an enzyme of the light mitochondrial fraction. The interconversion of tyrosine aminotransferase by a protein kinase/phosphatase system is possibly under hormonal control.

This investigation was supported by grants from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. The Stiftung Volkswagenwerk provided us with the scientific equipment.

The assistance of Prof. Dr. K. Decker and Dr. G. Weiss in the preparation of this manuscript is gratefully acknowledged.