

学位論文の要旨

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学位論文名 Internal Tandem Duplication Mutations in *FLT3* Gene Augment Chemotaxis to Cxcl12 Protein by Blocking the Down-regulation of the Rho-associated Kinase via the Cxcl12/Cxcr4 Signaling Axis

発表雑誌名 The Journal of Biological Chemistry
289: 31053-31065 (2014)

(巻, 初頁～終頁, 年)

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論文内容の要旨

INTRODUCTION

Internal tandem duplication mutations in the *FLT3* gene (ITD-*FLT3*), which are observed in human acute myeloid leukemia (AML) stem cells, induce the refractory phenotype in patients with AML. Human AML stem cells residing in the endosteal niche of the bone marrow are relatively chemoresistant. ITD-*FLT3* enhance cell migration toward the chemokine Cxcl12, which is highly expressed in the therapy-protective bone marrow niche, providing a potential mechanism underlying the poor prognosis of ITD-*FLT3*⁺ AML. FLT3 inhibitors fail to display significant efficacy as an anti-AML therapy. A recent report demonstrated that Rho-associated kinase (Rock) regulates the proliferation of ITD-*FLT3*⁺ hematopoietic cells.

Cxcl12 regulates Rock activity, but its effects on Rock activity can be either stimulatory or inhibitory depending on the cell type and the time course examined. We aimed to investigate the mechanisms linking ITD-*FLT3* to increased cell migration toward Cxcl12.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ba/F3 cells expressing wild-type *Flt3* or ITD-*Flt3* (N51, N73, and N78) obtained from three different patients with AML were provided by Dr. DG Gilliland of Harvard Medical School. The *in vitro* migration assay was performed as described previously (Blood 105, 3117-3216; 2009). The microarray analyses were performed by Miltenyi Biotec (Auburn, CA). The genes regulated by ITD-*FLT3* and/or Cxcl12 were functionally classified based on the molecular functions and biological process defined by the Gene Ontology terms and the molecular pathways in the KEGG database. The sequences targeting *Rock1* mRNA (NM_009071) for Generation of shRNA were selected using *Bioinformatics-siRNA Designer* on the Clontech website (www.clontech.com). The shRNA oligonucleotides were cloned into the pSingle-tTS-shRNA vector containing neomycin phosphotransferase as a selectable marker (Clontech Laboratories, Mountain View, CA). The data are expressed as the means \pm S.E. of the mean, and statistical significance was evaluated using Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Corp., Seattle, WA) via the two-tailed Student's *t* test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

ITD-*Flt3* mutations (N51 and N78) significantly increased the migration of Ba/F3 cells toward 100 ng/ml Cxcl12 compared with wild-type *Flt3*⁻ Ba/F3 cells during a 24-h period. The superior migration of ITD-*FLT3*-expressing cells was also detected in the presence of a Cxcl12 concentration of 1, 10, 50, or 500 ng/ml. Despite the enhancement in cell migration toward Cxcl12, the *Cxcr4* mRNA and *Cxcr4* protein surface expression levels were consistently lower in ITD-*Flt3*⁺ Ba/F3 cells than in ITD-*Flt3*⁻ cells. Moreover, *Cxcr4* expression was further down-regulated by Cxcl12 in ITD-*Flt3*⁺ cells. Because the ITD-*Flt3*-induced enhancement of cell migration toward Cxcl12 does not appear to be caused by an increase in *Cxcr4* signaling, we examined whether ITD-*Flt3* qualitatively affects the pathways downstream of Cxcl12/*Cxcr4* by

identifying the differentially expressed genes in ITD-*Flt3*⁺ cells compared to ITD-*Flt3*⁻ cells before and after migration toward Cxcl12 via mRNA microarray analysis. Classification of the expression of Cxcl12-regulated genes in ITD-*FLT3*⁺ cells demonstrated that the enhanced migration of ITD-*FLT3*⁺ cells toward Cxcl12 was associated with the differential expression of genes downstream of Cxcl12/Cxcr4, which are functionally distinct from those expressed in ITD-*FLT3*⁻ cells but are independent of the Cxcr4 expression levels. Among these differentially regulated genes, the expression of *Rock1* in the ITD-*FLT3*⁺ cells that migrated toward Cxcl12 was significantly higher than in ITD-*FLT3*⁻ cells that migrated toward Cxcl12. Similar to *Rock1*, the expression of *adducin2*, a downstream effector of *Rock1*, was up-regulated by Cxcl12 in ITD-*Flt3*⁺ (N51) cells. In ITD-*FLT3*⁻ cells, *Rock1* expression and phosphorylation of *Mypt1*, a substrate of Rho kinase, were transiently up-regulated but were subsequently down-regulated by Cxcl12. In contrast, the presence of ITD-*FLT3* blocked the Cxcl12-induced down-regulation of *Rock1* and early *Mypt1* dephosphorylation. Likewise, the *FLT3* ligand counteracted the Cxcl12-induced down-regulation of *Rock1* in ITD-*FLT3*⁻ cells, which coincided with enhanced cell migration toward Cxcl12. *Rock1* antagonists or *Rock1* shRNA abolished the enhanced migration of ITD-*FLT3*⁺ cells toward Cxcl12. Our findings demonstrate that ITD-*FLT3* increases cell migration toward Cxcl12 by antagonizing the Cxcl12-induced down-regulation of *Rock1* expression.

CONCLUSION

ITD-*FLT3* mutations modulate Cxcl12/Cxcr4 signaling pathways via a functionally distinct mechanism from that of wild-type *Flt3*, and these mutations augment chemotaxis toward Cxcl12 by blocking the down-regulation of *Rock1* expression. The dual roles of *Rock1* in aberrant proliferation and migration toward Cxcl12 as a functional effector of ITD-*FLT3* suggest that *Rock1* plays a crucial role in the resistant phenotype by modulating the interaction between ITD-*FLT3*⁺ AML cells and the bone marrow microenvironment, in addition to regulating AML cell proliferation. In this regard, antagonizing *Rock1* may represent an additional approach to the treatment of patients with AML harboring ITD-*Flt3*.

論文審査及び最終試験又は学力の確認の結果の要旨

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学位論文審査委員	主査 副査 副査	浦野 健 原田 守 熊倉 俊一



論文審査の結果の要旨

急性骨髄性白血病（以下、AML）は成人期発症の急性白血病の約75%、小児期発症の急性白血病の約25%を占める。AMLの20-30%で見られる遺伝子異常、*FMS-like tyrosine kinase 3* 遺伝子内の縦列重複 (internal tandem duplication)(以下、ITD-*FLT3*) を有する患者群は治療抵抗性で極めて予後不良である。申請者らのグループは近年、骨髄での造血幹細胞の維持などに必須の役割を果たすケモカイン CXCL12 に誘導され、またその受容体 CXCR4 を介して、ITD-*FLT3* を有する細胞が遊走亢進することを見出した。今回申請者は、CXCL12 などのケモカインやサイトカインを供給して、幹細胞、血球、リンパ球の生存・増殖・分化を支持する特別な微小環境である骨髄ニッチが治療抵抗性の温床ではないかと考え、ITD-*FLT3* により増強される CXCL12 による遊走能を司る実働分子の同定を含めヒト ITD-*FLT3* を発現させたマウス白血病細胞株を用いて詳細に検討した。

- 1) CXCR4 の細胞表面での発現および CXCL12 による細胞内カルシウム動員アッセイから、ITD-*FLT3* が増強する CXCL12 への遊走は CXCL12・CXCR4 シグナルの量的増加ではないことを明らかにした。
- 2) mRNA マイクロアレイの結果および文献的考察から、Rho-associated kinase 1 (ROCK1、以下 Rho キナーゼ) が ITD-*FLT3* が増強する CXCL12 への遊走の実働分子ではないかと考えた。そして、ITD-*FLT3* により Rho キナーゼの mRNA レベルおよびタンパク質レベルが増加することを確認した。また、CXCL12 刺激により Rho キナーゼ の発現は低下するが、ITD-*FLT3* は CXCL12 のその効果を阻害した。
- 3) Rho キナーゼの発現阻害および阻害剤添加により、ITD-*FLT3* を有する細胞の CXCL12 への遊走は阻害された。

以上の結果より、Rho キナーゼの制御により ITD-*FLT3* を有する細胞の CXCL12 への遊走を阻害することが示された。Rho キナーゼ阻害剤は、他の効用ですでに臨床で使用されており、AML の新しい治療法の開発候補の発見として臨床的に重要な意義がある。

最終試験又は学力の確認の結果の要旨

申請者は、Rho キナーゼの制御により ITD-*FLT3* を有する白血病細胞の治療抵抗性を解除できる可能性を示した。しっかりとした基礎研究データを基にした臨床的に意義ある重要な研究成果であり、関連知識も豊富で、かつ質疑応答も的確で学位授与に値すると判断した。(主査：浦野 健)

申請者は、ヒト ITD-*FLT3* を発現させたマウス白血病細胞株を用いて、ITD-*FLT3* 陽性白血病細胞が、ケモカインとその受容体である CXCL12/CXCR4 シグナル系により骨髄ニッチへの移動が促進されるという新たな治療抵抗性機序を明らかにした。質疑応答も的確で関連分野の知識も豊富であり、学位授与に値すると判断した。(副査：原田 守)

申請者は、白血病に認められる ITD-*FLT3* 遺伝子変異の細胞遊走能に与える効果を検討し、同変異は、ケモカインによる細胞の遊走を増強すること、更にその効果は、Rho キナーゼの発現調整を介してもたらされることを明らかにした。関連知識も豊富であることから学位授与に値すると判断した。(副査：熊倉俊一)