

Cloning and Expression of a cDNA for Mouse Prostaglandin E Receptor EP₃ Subtype*

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A functional cDNA clone for mouse EP₃ subtype of prostaglandin (PG) E receptor was isolated from a mouse cDNA library using polymerase chain reaction based on the sequence of the human thromboxane A₂ receptor and cross-hybridization screening. The mouse EP₃ receptor consists of 365 amino acid residues with putative seven-transmembrane domains. The sequence revealed significant homology to the human thromboxane A₂ receptor. Ligand binding studies using membranes of COS cells transfected with the cDNA revealed specific [³H]PGE₂ binding. The binding was displaced with unlabeled PGs in the order of PGE₂ = PGE₁ > iloprost > PGF_{2α} > PGD₂. The EP₃-selective agonists, M&B 28,767 or GR 63799X, potently competed for the [³H]PGE₂ binding, but no competition was found with EP₁- or EP₂-selective ligands. PGE₂ and M&B 28,767 decreased forskolin-induced cAMP formation in a concentration-dependent manner in Chinese hamster ovary cells permanently expressing the cDNA. Northern blot analysis demonstrated that the EP₃ mRNA is expressed abundantly in kidney, uterus, and mastocytoma P-815 cells and in a lesser amount in brain, thymus, lung, heart, stomach, and spleen.

Eicosanoids comprising various oxygenated metabolites of arachidonic acid such as prostaglandins (PGs)¹ and leukotrienes exert a variety of biological activities for maintenance of local homeostasis in the body (1, 2). These metabolites act on a cell surface receptor specific for each member to exert their actions. Among them, PGE₂ in particular, produces a broad range of biological actions in diverse tissues. PGE₂

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The nucleotide sequence(s) reported in this paper has been submitted to the GenBank™/EMBL Data Bank with accession number(s) D10204.

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¹ The abbreviations used are: PG, prostaglandin; G protein, heterotrimeric GTP-binding protein; IC₅₀, drug concentration to inhibit response by 50%; PCR, polymerase chain reaction; TX, thromboxane; CHO, Chinese hamster ovary.

receptors are pharmacologically subdivided into three subtypes, EP₁, EP₂, and EP₃ (3, 4), and these subtypes are suggested to be different in their signal transduction; they are presumed coupled to stimulation of phospholipase C, and stimulation and inhibition of adenylate cyclase, respectively (4-8). Pharmacological actions of these subtypes have been well characterized, and the EP₃ receptor has been suggested to be involved in inhibition of gastric acid secretion (7), modulation of neurotransmitter release in central and peripheral neurons (9), and inhibition of sodium and water reabsorption in kidney tubulus (8, 10, 11). In spite of this information, none of the receptors has been isolated, and their molecular characterization has been carried out only poorly. Recently we cloned a cDNA for the human TXA₂ receptor (12). Based on its sequence we carried out PCR to amplify a homologous sequence from mouse cDNA and, using this fragment as a hybridization probe, performed homology screening. Analysis of nucleotide sequence and expression of the isolated clone revealed that it encodes the mouse EP₃ receptor. We report here the complete nucleotide and deduced amino acid sequences of this receptor, and its ligand binding and biochemical properties analyzed in several mammalian expression systems. This study will be of help in understanding similarity and divergence of eicosanoid receptors.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES

Materials—M&B 28,767, GR 63799X, butaprost, and SC-19220 were generous gifts from Dr. M. P. L. Caton of Rhone-Poulenc Ltd., Dr. B. M. Bain of Glaxo Group Research Ltd., Dr. P. J. Gardiner of Bayer UK Ltd., and Dr. P. W. Collins of Searle, respectively. [^{α-³²P}] dCTP (3,000 Ci/mmol) and [5,6,8,11,12,14,15-³H]PGE₂ (185 Ci/mmol) were obtained from Du Pont-New England Nuclear. PGE₁, PGE₂, PGD₂, and PGF_{2α} were purchased from Funakoshi Pharmaceuticals (Tokyo, Japan). Iloprost and the [¹²⁵I]-labeled cyclic AMP assay system were obtained from Amersham Corp. Forskolin and 3-isobutyl-1-methylxanthine were from Sigma. Sources of other materials are shown in the text.

Amplification of a Mouse cDNA Fragment Homologous to the Human TXA₂ Receptor by PCR—First strand cDNA was synthesized from mouse lung total RNA by using random hexanucleotides as primers. PCR primers were designed based on the human TXA₂ receptor cDNA sequences corresponding to the putative third and sixth transmembrane domains of the receptor (12). Mouse lung cDNA served as template in 30 cycles of PCR with 1 min of denaturation at 95 °C, 0.5 min of annealing at 60 °C, and 1.5 min of extension at 72 °C on a Zymoreactor (Atto Corp., Tokyo, Japan). A single 418-base pair cDNA fragment was amplified and subcloned into pBluescript SK(+) (Stratagene). A clone isolated (LT3) showed a sequence 78% homologous to the corresponding region of the human cDNA.

Molecular Cloning by Cross-hybridization—Mouse lung cDNA prepared by an oligo(dT) priming method was size-selected (>1.8 kilobases) and inserted into the EcoRI site of λZAPIII DNA (Stratagene) with EcoRI adaptors (New England Biolabs, Inc.). The 1.9 × 10⁵ clones derived from the cDNA library were screened by hybridization with LT3. Hybridization was carried out at 58 °C in 6 × SSC (900 mM NaCl and 90 mM sodium citrate) containing 5 × Denhardt's solution (0.1% Ficoll, 0.1% polyvinylpyrrolidone, and 0.1% bovine serum albumin) and 0.5% sodium dodecyl sulfate, and filters were washed at 60 °C in 2 × SSC containing 1% sodium dodecyl sulfate. Among several clones hybridizing positively to LT3, we picked up one showing a signal apparently weaker than others and subjected it to further screening. Nucleotide sequencing of the isolated clone (ML64) revealed that it was a partial clone. Using this clone as a hybridization probe, we then screened the cDNA library of mouse mastocytoma P-815 cells for a full-length clone. From 7.2 × 10⁵ clones

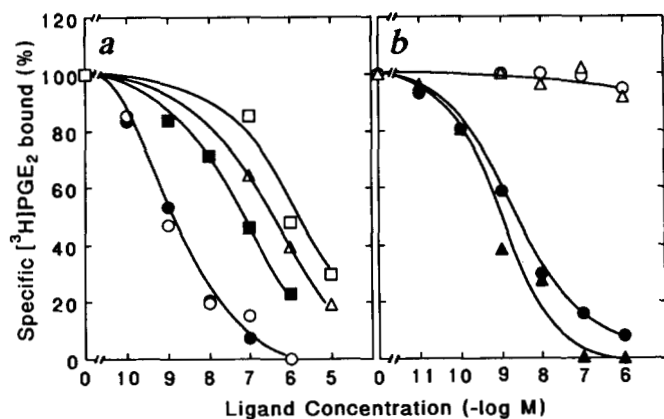


FIG. 2. Binding of [³H]PGE₂ to MP660-transfected COS-1 cell membranes. *a*, displacement of [³H]PGE₂ binding by various prostaglandins. Unlabeled prostaglandins were added to the binding assay mixture at indicated concentrations, and [³H]PGE₂ binding was determined as described under "Experimental Procedures." ○, PGE₂; ●, PGE₁; ■, iloprost; △, PGF_{2α}; and □, PGD₂. *b*, displacement of [³H]PGE₂ binding by subtype-selective PGE analogues. Ligands used are M&B 28,767 (▲), GR 63799X (●), butaprost (△), and SC-19220 (○).

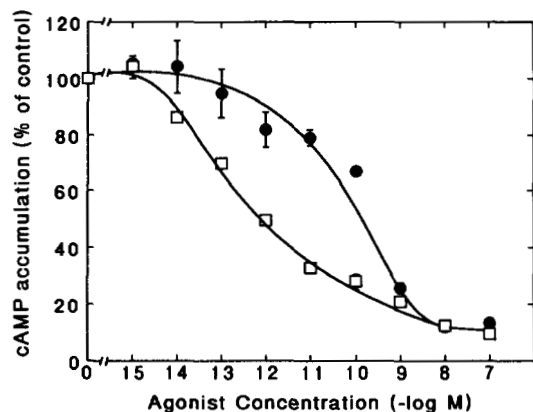


FIG. 3. Inhibition by PGE₂ and EP₃-selective agonist of forskolin-induced cAMP accumulation in CHO cells permanently expressing the EP₃ receptor. CHO cells permanently expressing the EP₃ receptor were incubated with 1 μM forskolin in the presence of the indicated concentrations of PGE₂ (●) or M&B 28,767 (□), and cAMP accumulation was determined as described (19). The incubation buffer contained 1 mM 3-isobutyl-1-methylxanthine. Each point represents the mean ± S.E. of triplicate determinations.

glycosylation sites are seen at the amino-terminal and the second extracellular loop regions, and nine serine and threonine residues at the carboxyl-terminal region as possible phosphorylation sites.

To identify a ligand for this receptor, MP660 was expressed in COS-1 cells, and membranes of the transfected cells were subjected to binding assays using various radioactive PGs. Among the PGs tested, [³H]PGE₂ specifically bound to the membranes. Scatchard analysis of this binding yielded a dissociation constant (K_d) of 2.9 nM, which agrees well with that previously reported on binding of [³H]PGE₂ to canine renal medullary membranes (26). The average density of binding sites in three experiments was 770 fmol/mg of protein of the transfected COS cell membranes. Specificity of this binding is shown in Fig. 2*a*. The binding of [³H]PGE₂ was inhibited by unlabeled PGs in the order of PGE₂ = PGE₁ > iloprost, a PGI₂ analogue > PGF_{2α} > PGD₂. This characteristic of binding specificity was in good agreement with the PGE receptor previously characterized in various tissues (26, 27). Because PGE receptor is pharmacologically subdivided into three

receptor subtypes, EP₁, EP₂, and EP₃, with different agonist and antagonist profiles (4), we further characterized the specificity of this [³H]PGE₂ binding using ligands specific for PGE receptor subtypes. As shown in Fig. 2*b*, among various PGE analogues, only EP₃-specific agonists, GR 63799X and M&B 28,767, specifically competed for the [³H]PGE₂ binding with equal potency, and they were more potent than PGE₂ itself. On the other hand, no competition was found at all with either an EP₁-specific antagonist, SC-19220, or an EP₂-specific agonist, butaprost. [³H]PGE₂ did not bind to membranes of untransfected cells. These results established that MP660 encodes the EP₃ subtype of PGE receptor.

Possible association of the EP₃ receptor with inhibition of adenylate cyclase has been indicated (4). We tested this possibility by permanently expressing the cDNA in CHO cells and examining response of the cells to PGE analogues. As shown in Fig. 3, the transfected CHO cells showed a dose-dependent decrease to PGE₂ in forskolin-induced cellular cAMP accumulation. M&B 28,767, an EP₃-specific agonist, also inhibited forskolin-induced cAMP synthesis and was more potent than PGE₂ (IC₅₀ of M&B 28,767 = 1×10^{-12} M; IC₅₀ of PGE₂ = 1×10^{-10} M). This potency of PGE₂ correlates well with that found in canine kidney and rat uterine membranes (11, 28). Either agonist alone did not increase cAMP accumulation. We also examined phosphatidylinositol turnover in the transfected CHO cells. Addition of up to 1 μM M&B 28,767 revealed no significant increase in inositol phosphate content over the basal levels (data not shown). These results demonstrated that the EP₃ receptor is coupled exclusively to inhibition of adenylate cyclase.

The mouse EP₃ and human TXA₂ receptors (12) are significantly similar in size and show highly homologous amino acid sequences, especially in the putative seven-transmembrane segments except segments I and V (Fig. 4). The most highly conserved regions are segment VII and that spanning the latter half of segment IV to the first 12 amino acids in the second extracellular loop (from Leu-165 to Phe-184), 63.6 and 80.0% homology, respectively. As in the human TXA₂ receptor, there is no Asp in the third transmembrane segment of the EP₃, a residue which is presumed to bind the amino group of ligands in the adrenergic receptors (29). Furthermore, Arg-309 in the EP₃ is equivalent to Arg-295 in the TXA₂ receptor, which are located at the position analogous to Lys-296 of bovine rhodopsin in the seventh transmembrane segment. The latter amino acid residue was assigned for retinal attachment in the rhodopsin molecule (30). These structural features may reflect the acidic nature of the ligand for the prostanoid receptors. EP₃ receptor has the two potential phosphorylation sites by cAMP-dependent protein kinase (31) in the first cytoplasmic loop, which may be relevant to the finding that [³H]PGE₂ binding is affected by cAMP-dependent phosphorylation in brain membranes (32).

Poly (A)⁺ RNAs were prepared from various mouse tissues and hybridized with the *EcoRI/BamHI* fragment of MP660 (Fig. 5). A positive band was seen at 2.3 kilobases in a number of tissues in which PGE₂ has pharmacological effects and/or specific binding sites (4). Another hybridizing band was detected at an estimated mRNA size of 7.0 kilonucleotides in kidney, uterus, brain, and mastocytoma P-815 cells. Identity of this latter band is not known at present. The tissue most highly expressing EP₃ mRNA was kidney in which PGE₂ exerts an inhibitory effect on sodium and water reabsorption by inhibiting adenylate cyclase via G_i (8, 33). A significant band was also observed in stomach, suggesting that the receptor we cloned is indeed involved in inhibition of histamine-induced gastric acid secretion in this tissue (7). This analysis

FIG. 4. Comparison of the amino acid sequences of the mouse EP₃ receptor and the human TXA₂ receptor. The amino acid sequences of the mouse EP₃ (upper) and the human TXA₂ receptor (lower) are aligned to achieve the maximal homology. Asterisks indicate exact matches between the two sequences. Hyphens show deletions of the amino acid residues when compared between the two sequences.

PGER	MASMWAPHEHSAEHSNLSSTTDDCGSVSVAFPIITMMVTGFVGNALAMLLVSRYSRRRESKR	61
TXAR	MWPNGSSLGPCFRPTNITLERRLIASPWFAASFCVVGLASNLLALSULA-GARQGSHT	59
PGER	KKSFLLCIGWLALTDLVGQLLTSPPVILVYLSQRRWEQLDPSGRCLCTFFGLTMTVFLGSSSL	122
TXAR	RSSFLTFLCGLVLTDFLGLLVGTIVVVSQHAALFEWHAVDPGRCRLCRFMGVMMIFFLGSLPL	120
PGER	LVASAMAVERALAIRAPHWYASHMKTRATPVLLG-VWLSVLAFAFALLPVLGVGRYSVQWPQT	182
TXAR	LLGAAMASERYLGITRPFSPRPAVASQRRRAWTVGLVWAAALALGLLPLLGVGRYTVQYPGS	181
PGER	WCFISTGPGAGNETDPAREPGSVAFASAFACLGLLALVVTFACNLATIKALVSRCKRAKAASV	243
TXAR	WCFLTLG-----AESGDVAFGLLFSMLGGLSVGLSFLLLNTVSVATLCHVYHGQEAQAQ	233
PGER	QSSAQWGRITTETAIQLMGIMCVLSCVSPLLIMMLKMFNQMSVEQCKTQMGKEKECNFSF	304
TXAR	QRPRD---SEVENMAQLLGINVVASVCWLPPLLVFIAQTVLRNPPAMPSPAGQLSRTE-KEL	291
PGER	LIAVRLASLNQILDWPVYLLLRKILLRKFCQIRDHTNYASSSTSLPCPGSSALMWSQDLER	365
TXAR	LIYLRVATWNQILDWPVYILFRRRAVLRRL-QPRLSTRPRSLSLQPQLTQRSGLQ	344

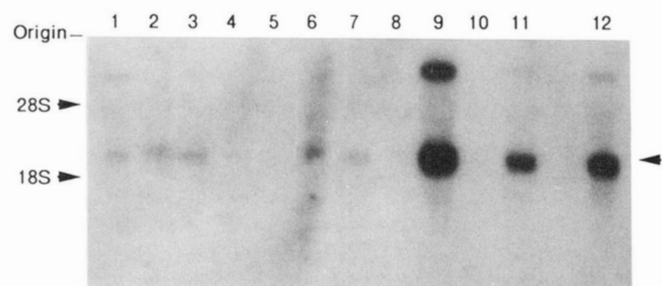


FIG. 5. Northern blot analysis of RNAs isolated from various mouse tissues and P-815 cells. Poly(A)⁺ RNAs were isolated from the tissues listed below and a cell line, and 10 μg of RNA was applied in each lane except that 5 μg was used for P-815 cells. Hybridization analysis was carried out using the 1,072-base pair EcoRI-BamHI fragment excised from clone MP660 as a probe, as described under "Experimental Procedures." Lane 1, brain; lane 2, thymus; lane 3, lung; lane 4, heart; lane 5, liver; lane 6, stomach; lane 7, spleen; lane 8, ileum; lane 9, kidney; lane 10, testis; lane 11, uterus; lane 12, P-815 cells.

also showed that the uterus expressed the mRNA much higher than most tissues. It is known that PGE₂ exerts contractile response in uterine smooth muscle. The EP₃ receptor we found may mediate this contractile action. Uterine contraction has been observed as a side effect of several EP₃ agonists used as gastric anti-secretory prostanoid drugs (34). The EP₃ receptor was also expressed in heart, lung, thymus, and spleen. Although PGE₂ causes inhibition of sympathetic neurotransmitter release in some of these tissues (35), major functions of this receptor remain to be investigated. Our results also showed that EP₃ mRNA is significantly expressed in brain. The exact function of this receptor in this tissue is again not known at present. On the other hand, EP₃ mRNA was not detectable in testis, and little was found in liver and ileum. In summary, we present here the complete amino acid sequence of the mouse EP₃ subtype PGE receptor and provide direct proof that this receptor functionally couples to adenylate cyclase in an inhibitory manner. This work will contribute to our understanding on individual functions for three subtypes of PGE receptors and facilitate cloning of other members of eicosanoid receptors.

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