Nitric oxide/cyclic guanosine monophosphate-mediated growth cone collapse of dentate granule cells

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Controlling axon and dendrite elongation is critical in developing precise neural circuits. Using isolated cultures of dentate granule neurons, we established an experimental system that can simultaneously monitor the behaviors of axonal and dendritic outgrowth. Our previous study shows that axons and dendrites respond differentially to manipulated cyclic adenosine monophosphate signaling, but we report here that cyclic guanosine monophosphate exerts similar effects on axons and dendrites; that is, both axonal and dendritic growth cones collapsed after activation of cyclic guanosine monophosphate signaling. In addition, nitric oxide donor-induced growth-cone collapse was prevented by the inhibition of cyclic guanosine monophosphate signaling, and this effect again did not differ between axons and dendrites. Thus, unlike cyclic adenosine monophosphate, cyclic guanosine monophosphate modulates extending axons and dendrites in a similar manner. NeuroReport 17:661–665 © 2006 Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

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Introduction
During neural development, neurites take precisely defined routes and come into contact with proper target nerve cells, thereby establishing the functional neural network. This process involves the guidance of neurites, that is, axons and dendrites. Axons and dendrites are both tipped with motile growth cones that decide the direction to extend by reading extracellular guidance signals [1,2]. To elucidate the mechanisms underlying the network formation, it is, therefore, essential to analyze the outgrowth of both axons and dendrites, yet most studies have investigated either axons or dendrites, simply because of the lack of appropriate experimental procedures to assess both simultaneously. Very little comprehensive information, therefore, is available to compare axonal and dendritic outgrowth.

We recently established an experimental system to cultivate isolated granule cells prepared from the dentate gyrus, which allows simultaneous monitoring of axons and dendrites [3]. Using this system, we disclosed that, within a single cell, the axon and dendrites differ in the regulation of cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) levels in growth cones as well as in the responsiveness to cAMP and also that cAMP differentially modulates growth cone responses to the repellents glutamate and Sema3F [3]. Such striking axo-dendritic disparity suggests that cAMP may be critical in shaping the axo-dendritic polarity of a granule cell.

In the present work, we focus on the cyclic guanosine monophosphate (cGMP) signaling cascade, which is activated by nitric oxide (NO). Immunoreactivity against NO synthase (NOS), an enzyme involved in the production of NO, is prominent in CA3 stratum lucidum and stratum oriens, the subfields where hippocampal mossy fibers, the axons of granule cells, terminate. The subgranular zone and the inner third of the molecular layer in the dentate gyrus are also NOS positive, and some types of hilar cells express NOS [4]. It appears plausible, therefore, that neurite outgrowth of dentate granule cells is subject to tight regulation by the diffusible molecule NO. We thus started this work by examining the effect of NO, an upstream of cGMP signaling, on axonal and dendritic growth cones.

Methods
Reagents
We used S-nitroso-N-acetyl-D,L-penicillamine (SNAP, Dojindo Laboratories, Kumamoto, Japan), 8-bromo guanosine cyclic monophosphate sodium salt (8-Br-cGMP, Calbiochem, La Jolla, California, USA), 6-anilino-5,8-quinolinequinone
(LY83583, Calbiochem), and 3-(5′-hydroxymethyl-2′-furyl)-1-benzyl indazole (YC-1, Sigma, St Louis, Missouri, USA). NOC13 was synthesized according to Hrabie et al. [5]. All reagents were bath-applied to cultures at 37°C in a humidified 5% CO2 and 95% air atmosphere.

Primary cultures of dentate granule cells
Dispersed cultures of granule cells were prepared from postnatal day 3 Wistar/ST rats (SLC, Shizuoka, Japan) as previously described [3], according to the National Institutes of Health guidelines for laboratory animal care and safety. The hippocampal formation was dissected out from hypothermized animals, and the subicular complex and the Ammon’s horn were removed in ice-cold Gey’s balanced salt solution. The remaining dentate gyrus was trypsinized and triturated. Neurons were plated onto 13-mm-φ cover slips coated with poly-L-lysine (Sigma) at a cell density of 5.0 × 104 cells/cm2 in 50% Neurobasal/B-27 (Life Technologies, Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA) and 50% astrocyte-conditioned medium at 37°C in a humidified 5% CO2 and 95% air atmosphere. Culture medium was replaced 24 and 72 h after plating with astrocyte-conditioned medium-free Neurobasal/B-27, supplemented with 2 µM cytosine-D-arabino-furanoside (Sigma). Cultures were assayed on day 4 in vitro.

Growth-cone collapse assay
After a 96-h incubation, cultures were treated with the NO donors NOC13 and SNAP or the cGMP-relative reagents YC-1 and 8-Br-cGMP, and immediately fixed for 20 min at 37°C in buffer [60 mM piperazine-1,4-bis (2-ethanesulfonic acid), 25 mM N-2-hydroxyethyl piperazine-N′-2-ethane sulfonic acid, 10 mM ethylene glycol-bis (β-aminoethyl ether), 2 mM MgCl2, pH 6.9] containing 4% paraformaldehyde, 0.25% glutaraldehyde (Nacalai Tesque, Kyoto, Japan), 0.1% Triton X-100, 10 µM Taxol (Sigma) and 1.3 µM phalloidin (Sigma) [6]. In some experiments, cells were pretreated with LY83583 for 30 min, and then SNAP was coapplied for another 30 min before fixation.

Cultures were triple-stained with rhodamine phalloidin and anti-tau-1 and anti-MAP-2 antibodies. Briefly, fixed cells were blocked with 2% goat serum for 60 min, followed by an overnight 4°C incubation with primary antibodies against tau-1 (1:2000, mouse monoclonal, MAB3420, Chemicon, Temecula, California, USA) and MAP-2 (1:1000, rabbit, AB5622, Chemicon). They were then incubated with rhodamine phalloidin (1:40, R-415, Molecular Probes, Eugene, Oregon, USA) and the fluorescein-conjugated secondary antibodies anti-mouse IgG Alexa-488 (1:400, A-11001, Molecular Probes) and anti-rabbit IgG Alexa-594 (1:400, A-11046, Molecular Probes) for 5 h at room temperature. Fluorescence signals were visualized with an ORCAII cooled CCD camera (Hamamatsu Photonics, Hamamatsu, Japan) equipped with a Nikon ECLIPSE TE300 inverted microscope and a 40 × objective. Images were analyzed with a Hamamatsu AQUACOSMOS system.

We scored cells that did not come into contact with adjacent cells and had one longest, tau-1-positive, MAP2-negative axon and a few tau-1-negative, MAP2-positive dendrites. Owing to these strict criteria, about 50% of cells were discarded before data analysis. Growth-cone collapse was judged on the basis of phalloidin images (Fig. 1); that is, a growth cone was considered ‘collapsed’ if it had less than two filopodia and lamellipodia smaller than 10 µm2 [3]. As for dendrites, we only analyzed terminals that were not overlapped onto neighboring protrusions within a cell of interest. Data are presented as the mean percentage (± SEM) of collapsed growth cones to the total number.

Results
As NOS is present in large amounts in the area where the axons and dendrites of dentate granule cells travel in vivo [4], it is feasible that NO regulates the network development of granule cells. Using primary cultures of granule cells, we first examined the response of axonal and dendritic growth...
cones to NO-releasing reagents. Axons and dendrites were identifiable by tau-1 immunoreactivity; that is, the former was always tau-1-positive on day 4 in vitro (Fig. 1). Time-lapse analysis revealed that both axonal and dendritic growth cones were highly motile and spontaneously alternated between collapsed and uncollapsed states. On average, 60–80% of growth cones were collapsed at any given time under naïve conditions in culture, and this value did not differ between axons and dendrites.

Treatment with NOC13 and SNAP for 30 min increased the percentage of collapsed growth cones, and the sensitivity to these reagents was almost equal between axons and dendrites (Figs 1 and 2a, c). NOC13 and SNAP have different chemical structures and different mechanisms for NO generation. We therefore believe that it is NO released by these reagents that induced the collapse of growth cones. We sought to examine the time course of growth cone responses to the NO donors (Fig. 2b and d). A significant collapse of axonal growth cones occurred 30 min after treatment with NOC13 and SNAP, whereas dendritic collapse was already evident at 10 min and maintained for another 20 min. In both axons and dendrites, the growth cone collapse was spontaneously reverted even in the prolonged presence (60 min) of NOC13 and SNAP (data not shown).

NO exerts its physiological effects dependent or independent of the activation of soluble guanylyl cyclase (sGC), an enzyme that produces cGMP [7,8]. To investigate whether NO-induced growth-cone collapse requires the cGMP signaling pathway, we applied 1 µM LY83583, an antagonist of sGC, for 30 min and, subsequently, together with SNAP for 30 min. LY83583 prevented SNAP-induced collapses of both axons and dendrites (Fig. 3a). Interestingly, the sGC activator YC-1 and the cGMP analog 8-Br-cGMP per se increased collapsed growth cones in a concentration-dependent manner (Fig. 3b). Therefore, activation of cGMP signaling is sufficient to induce growth cone collapse. The efficacy of YC-1 and 8-Br-cGMP did not differ between axons and dendrites (Fig. 3b).

**Discussion**

NOS is expressed in large amounts in the dentate gyrus [4] and, thus, NO naturally has multiple actions on dentate granule cells. For example, NO is involved in synaptic plasticity at perforant path-dentate granule cell synapses [9] and contributes to adult neurogenesis in dentate gyrus [10]. We have shown now that immature neurites of granule cells are also responsive to NO.
Several reports indicate that NO affects growth-cone behaviors. The effect of NO is various, depending on the neuron types. NO slows down the axon extension of snail B5 neurons with filopodia elongation [11], induces collapse of axonal growth cones of Xenopus retinal ganglion cells [12] and abolishes chemorepellent-induced turning responses of Xenopus spinal growth cones [13]. NO is also involved in the neuritogenesis of rat pheochromocytoma PC12h cells [14] and retinal axon arborization in the Xenopus visual system [15]. We have shown that neurites of dentate granule cells collapse in response to exogenous NO. Importantly, we monitored both axons and dendrites in the same cells and found that the NO effect on axons and dendrites was almost equivalent in its potency as well as cGMP dependency.

We previously found that spontaneous or Sema3F-induced collapse of axonal and dendritic growth cones is enhanced and prevented, respectively, by the activation of cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3]. As for cGMP, it is reported that growth cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by increasing cellular cGMP levels [16], whereas apical cones of chick dorsal root ganglion neurons are collapsed by cAMP signaling [3].

In conclusion, axonal and dendritic growth cones of dentate granule cells collapse when exposed to exogenous NO. Activation of cGMP signaling is likely to be necessary and sufficient for this NO effect. It is significant that, unlike cAMP, the NO/cGMP action did not show any marked contrast between axons and dendrites. Given that in Xenopus spinal neurons the ratio of cAMP to cGMP activities determines the turning behavior of extending axons [20], a combination of the biphasic cAMP action and the monotonic cGMP action on axonal and dendritic outgrowth of granule cells could embody a fine tuning of the dentate circuit development.

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References


