

Klaus Aktories (Ed.)

Bacterial Toxins

**Tools in Cell Biology
and Pharmacology**

Laboratory Companion

With 42 Figures



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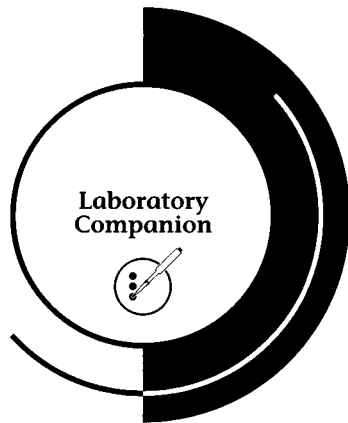
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Preface

Remarkable progress has been made in the field of bacterial protein toxins: the molecular mechanisms of several toxins (e.g., clostridial neurotoxins and cytotoxins) whose modes of action were obscure until recently, have been elucidated during the last years. This progress in “cellular and molecular toxinology” not only provides insights into the mode of action of important virulence factors and pathomechanisms of diseases, but also has a major impact on the understanding of regulation and mechanisms of eukaryotic cell functions which are disturbed by the toxins. These spectacular advances mainly depend on a bidirectional approach: cell biological methods are successfully applied for elucidation of the molecular mechanisms of bacterial toxins and, on the other hand, the bacterial toxins are used as powerful, extremely valuable tools to unravel mechanisms in molecular cell biology.

The reasons for using toxins as tools are evident. First, they are very potent agents, a fact which is often based on their enzymatic activity (e.g., clostridial neurotoxins, which act as endoproteases, are the most potent agents known). Second, the high selectivity and specificity of the toxins are most important for their use as tools. Cell selectivity may be due to specific receptor binding (e.g., selectivity of neurotoxins). The high specificity of action depends on the extremely specific recognition of target proteins. Finally, bacterial protein toxins seem to be maximally efficient agents. In most cases the toxins strike the eukaryotic cell at a crucial site indicating modification of “important” eukaryotic components or signaling pathways. Therefore, the toxins are excellent tools to recognize the biological importance of a cellular component, or the biological significance of a signal pathway altered by the toxins.

This book is intended to establish and facilitate the use of bacterial protein toxins as tools in cell biology and pharmacology. The volume provides a review and an update of recent developments in the field of those bacterial protein toxins which are most often used as cell biological and pharmacological tools. Moreover, the volume gives detailed methodological protocols and advice for application of the toxins, and is intended to introduce these bacterial protein toxins as cell biological tools to a broad audience of scientists. Therefore, it was decided to have for each toxin or toxin family one chapter as a special review to give the general properties of the toxins, and up to three

additional chapters which focus on methodological aspects of toxin usage. Seven toxins or toxin families are covered by this volume. These include the "classical" G-protein-ADP-ribosylating toxins cholera toxin and pertussis toxin, which are established tools to study signal transduction processes (chapters 1-4). Properties and application of C3-like transferases, which specifically ADP-ribosylate Rho proteins, are described in chapters 5-7. Chapters 8-11 deal with the actin-ADP-ribosylating toxins, which are the most effective agents to depolymerize cellular F-actin and to inhibit actin polymerization. The Rho-glucosylating *C. difficile* toxins, whose molecular mechanism has been elucidated only recently, are discussed in chapters 12 and 13. Reviews of recent studies on the basic properties of clostridial neurotoxins and their application in cell and neurobiology are given in chapters 14 to 16. Chapters 17 and 18 describe in detail the general properties, new developments and methodological aspects of pore-forming toxins. In chapter 19, the application of bacterial protein toxins as transporting tools is discussed and application protocols are given. Finally, chapter 20 is a brief safety guide, which should help to deal with general problems in handling of biological toxins.

Last not least, I would like to thank all the authors for their outstanding effort. I am convinced that their excellent contributions will inspire research in the field of protein toxins and facilitate the use of toxins as tools in biological sciences.

February 1997

Klaus Aktories

A note on the layout of this book:

In order to facilitate the use of this book as a methodological source for your bench work, a wide page format has been chosen. Due to the type of durable binding used, the book has the advantage of lying flat on your bench top for convenient use. In addition, a wide margin leaves room for your own notes and provides some key notes and pictograms to assist you in finding the relevant information:

a pipette symbol marks the start of a step by step protocol section, a grey bar runs down the margin of the whole protocol section



this symbol draws your attention to potential hazards and safety suggestions



comments on the key steps in methodology are highlighted by a key symbol



a "good idea" symbol marks useful hints for optimization of methodology



this pictogram indicates discussions of alternative approaches



the tool indicates troubleshooting guides that should help you in finding out what could or did go wrong and in solving and avoiding problems



suggestions for monitoring quality and reliability of the experimental procedure are highlighted by the magnifying glass



Contents

CHAPTER 1. Cholera Toxin: Mechanism of Action and Potential Use in Vaccine Development

G.-F. ZHANG, W. A. PATTON, J. MOSS and M. VAUGHAN	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Molecular Aspects of Cholera Toxin Action	2
1.2.1 Structure and Relationship to Other Toxins	2
1.2.2 Toxin Entry into Cells and Events Leading to Pathogenesis	3
1.2.3 Enzymology of Cholera Toxin	4
1.2.4 <i>In Vitro</i> Stimulation of Cholera Toxin Activity by ARF	5
1.3 Practical Aspects of Cholera Toxin Use	5
1.3.1 Vaccine and Vaccine Development	5
1.3.2 Cholera Toxin as a Molecular Tool	7
1.4 Summary	8

CHAPTER 2. Cholera Toxin and *Escherichia coli* Heat-labile Enterotoxin: Biochemical Methods for Assessing Enzymatic Activities

W. A. PATTON, G.-F. ZHANG, J. MOSS and M. VAUGHAN	15
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 General Information on CT, LT, ARF and Reagents	16
2.2.1 Sources, Purification, and Activation of CTA and LTA	16
2.2.2 Sources and Purification of ARF	17
2.2.3 Reagents and Materials	19
2.2.4 Stock Solutions	19
2.3 Assay 1: The G_{sa} Assay	20
2.3.1 Additional Reagents and Materials Required	20
2.3.2 Protocol	21
2.4 Assay 2: The Agmatine Assay	22
2.4.1 Additional Reagents and Materials Required	22
2.4.2 Protocol	23
2.5 Assay 3: Auto-ADP-ribosylation Assay	24
2.5.1 Additional Reagents and Materials Required	24
2.5.2 Protocol	24

2.6	Assay 4: NAD Glycohydrolase Assay	25
2.6.1	Additional Reagents and Materials Required.	25
2.6.2	Protocol	25
2.7	Comments and Considerations	26
2.7.1	Appropriate Controls and Analysis of Data	26
2.7.1.1	Controls	26
2.7.1.2	Data analysis	26
2.7.2	Interfering Substances, Troubleshooting, and Assay Optimization	26
2.7.2.1	Interfering substances	26
2.7.2.2	Troubleshooting	27
2.7.2.3	Assay optimization	27
2.7.3	Consideration for the Use of ARF	28
2.7.3.1	Lipid/Detergent and Nucleotide Requirements	28
2.7.3.2	Development of other Assay Conditions	29

CHAPTER 3. Pertussis Toxin

C. LOCHT and R. ANTOINE	33	
3.1	Introduction	33
3.2	Genetic Regulation of Pertussis Toxin Production	34
3.3	Biogenesis of Pertussis Toxin	35
3.4	Receptor-binding and Translocation	36
3.5	ADP-ribosyltransferase Activity and Enzyme Mechanism	38
3.6	Biological Activities and Role of Pertussis Toxin in Pathogenesis	41

CHAPTER 4. Pertussis Toxin as a Cell Biology Tool

B. NÜRNBERG	47	
4.1	Introduction	47
4.2	Pertussis Toxin as a Tool to Modify Cellular Functions	48
4.2.1	Cell Culture of <i>Bordetella pertussis</i>	48
4.2.2	Source of Pertussis Toxin and Preparation of Solution	48
4.2.3	Treatment of Mammalian Cell Cultures with Pertussis Toxin	49
4.3	Pertussis Toxin as a Tool to Study Cellular Components	50
4.3.1	Activation of Pertussis Toxin for in <i>in vitro</i> ADP- ribosylation	50
4.3.2	Preparation of Cell Homogenates and Fractions	51
4.3.3	ADP-ribosylation of Membrane Proteins by Pertussis Toxin	51
4.3.4	ADP-ribosylation of Proteins by Pertussis Toxin	54
4.3.5	Preparation of Samples for SDS-PAGE	55
4.3.6	Cleavage of ADP-ribose from G α Subunits	56
4.4	SDS-Gel Electrophoresis	57
4.5	Reagents and Chemicals	57

CHAPTER 5. <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> ADP-ribosyltransferase C3	
K. AKTORIES and G. KOCH	61
5.1 Introduction	61
5.2 The Family of C3-like Transferases	61
5.3 Modification of Rho Proteins by C3-like Transferases . . .	62
5.4 Characterization of the <i>C. botulinum</i> C3 ADP-Ribosyl- transferase Reaction	64
5.5 Factors Affecting ADP-ribosylation by C3	65
5.6 C3-Transferases in Cell Biology and Pharmacology	65
CHAPTER 6. <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> C3 Exoenzyme and Studies on Rho Proteins	
C. D. NOBES and A. HALL	71
6.1 Introduction	71
6.2 Purification of Recombinant C3 Transferase from <i>Escherichia coli</i>	71
6.2.1 Purification of Recombinant GST-C3	72
6.2.2 Recovery of Cleaved C3 Transferase	73
6.2.3 Dialysis and Storage.	74
6.2.4 Determination of Protein Concentration and Assay of Activity.	74
6.3 Preparation of Swiss 3T3 Cells	74
6.4 Microinjection of C3 Transferase	75
6.5 Fixation and Staining of Cells	76
6.6 C3 Protein Inhibits LPA-stimulated Stress Fibre Assembly and Focal Adhesion Clustering.	77
6.7 Timecourse of Focal Adhesion Breakdown	80
6.8 Alternative Delivery of C3 Transferase	81
6.9 Conclusion	81
6.10 Reagents and Chemicals	81
CHAPTER 7. Preparation of <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> C3 Exoenzyme and Application of ADP-ribosylation of Rho Proteins in Biological Systems	
Y. SAITO and S. NARUMIYA	85
7.1 Introduction	85
7.2 Expression and Purification of Recombinant C3 Exoenzyme	86
7.3 ADP-ribosylation Reaction	87
7.4 Application of C3 Exoenzyme in Biological Systems	89

**CHAPTER 8. Actin-ADP-ribosylating Toxins:
Cytotoxic Mechanisms of *Clostridium botulinum* C2 Toxin
and *Clostridium perfringens* Iota Toxin**

K. AKTORIES, P. SEHR and I. JUST	93
8.1 Introduction	93
8.2 <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> C2 Toxin	93
8.3 Other actin-ADP-ribosylating Toxins	94
8.4 Actin as the Substrate for ADP-ribosylation	95
8.5 Model for the Cytopathic Effects of Actin- ADP-ribosylating Toxins	98

**CHAPTER 9. Purification, Activation and Endocytosis
of Botulinum C2 Toxin**

I. OHISHI	103
9.1 Introduction	103
9.2 Assay Method for the Toxin	103
9.3 Purification Procedures for the Two Components of C2 Toxin	105
9.3.1 Preparation of Culture Medium	106
9.3.2 Preparation of Inoculum and Incubation	106
9.3.3 Ammonium Sulfate Fractionation	106
9.3.4 Adsorption and Elution on Calcium Phosphate Gel	106
9.3.5 CM-Sephadex Column Chromatography; Separation of Components II from I	107
9.3.6 Gel Filtration of Component II on Sephacryl S-300	107
9.3.7 DEAE-Sephadex Chromatography of Component I	107
9.3.8 Hydroxyapatite Chromatography of Component I	108
9.3.9 Gel Filtration on Sephacryl S-300	108
9.3.10 Storage of the Two Purified Two Components of C2T	108
9.4 Activation of Component II	109
9.5 Endocytosis of Two Nonlinked Protein Components in Cultured Cells	110
9.5.1 Preparation of Polyclonal Antibodies for Two Components of C2 Toxin	111
9.5.2 Purification of IgG Specific for Each of the Components I and II by Affinity Chromatography	112
9.5.3 Visualization of the Two Components Bound to Cultured Cells by Indirect Immunofluorescence Labeling	112
9.5.4 Cell Culture and Indirect Immunofluorescence Labeling of Cell-Bound Component II	113
9.6 Reagents and Chemicals	115

CHAPTER 10. The Role of the *Clostridium botulinum* C2 Toxin as a Research Tool to Study Eucaryotic Cell Biology

I. L. SIMPSON 117

10.1 Introduction 117

10.2 Identifying Potential Uses 118

10.3 Isolation and Purification 120

10.4 C2 Toxin as a Research Tool 121

10.4.1 Binding Step 121

10.4.2 Internalization Step 122

10.4.3 Intracellular Step 123

CHAPTER 11. Probing the Actin Cytoskeleton by *Clostridium botulinum* C2 Toxin and *Clostridium perfringens* Iota Toxin

K. AKTORIES, U. PREPENS, P. SEHR, and I. JUST 129

11.1 Introduction 129

11.2 Effects of *Clostridium botulinum* C2 Toxin in Intact Cells. 130

11.2.1 Treatment of Intact Cells with *Clostridium botulinum* C2 Toxin 130

11.2.2 Effects of C2 on the Microfilament System. 131

11.2.2.1 Visualization of the Microfilament System with FITC-phalloidin 131

11.2.2.2 Quantitative Determination of F-actin Depolymerization 131

11.2.3 Detection of C2-catalyzed ADP-ribosylation in Intact Cells 133

11.2.3.1 Direct Method by Metabolical Labeling. 133

11.2.3.2 Quantification of ADP-ribosylated Actin. 133

11.2.4 Controls of the *in vivo* Effects of C2 Toxin. 134

11.3 ADP-ribosylation of Actin 134

11.3.1 ADP-ribosylation of Actin in Cell Lysates 134

11.3.2 ADP-ribosylation of Skeletal Muscle α -Actin to Study Actin Functions 135

11.3.3 ADP-ribosylation of Skeletal Muscle α -Actin for Microinjection 136

11.3.4 Troubleshooting. 138

11.4 Reagents and Chemicals 138

CHAPTER 12. *Clostridium difficile* Toxins

M. THELESTAM, I. FLORIN and E. CHAVES-OLARTE

12.1 Introduction 141

12.2 Molecular Characteristics of the Toxins 142

12.3 Cellular Effects of the Toxins 143

12.3.1 Actin Cytoskeleton is the Toxin Target. 144

12.3.2 The Receptor for ToxA Contains Galactose 144

12.3.3 The Toxins Act Intracellularly after Endocytosis 144

12.4	Molecular Mode of Action of the Toxins	145
12.4.1	<i>C. difficile</i> Toxins Modify Rho Proteins	145
12.4.2	<i>C. difficile</i> Toxins are Glucosyltransferases	146
12.5	Biological Consequences of Toxin Action on Cells	147
12.5.1	In Cultured Cells	147
12.5.2	In Animal Models	148
12.6	Relationship of the <i>C. difficile</i> Toxins to Other Large Clostridial Cytotoxins	150
12.7	Conclusions and Perspectives for the Future	151

CHAPTER 13. *Clostridium difficile* Toxin B as a Probe for Rho GTPases

I. JUST, J. SELZER, F. HOFMANN and K. AKTORIES	159	
13.1	Introduction	159
13.2	Purification of Toxin A and Toxin B	160
13.3	Glucosyltransferase Activity of Toxin B	161
13.3.1	Glucosylation in Cell Lysates	162
13.3.2	Glucosylation of Recombinant Rho Proteins or Membranous Fractions	163
13.3.3	Glucosylation of Recombinant GTPases for Microinjection	163
13.4	Toxin B Action on Intact Cells	164
13.4.1	Treatment of Intact Cells with Toxin B	164
13.4.2	Assessment of the Extent of Glucosylation	164
13.4.2.1	Differential Glucosylation by Toxin B	165
13.4.2.2	ADP-Ribosylation of Rho by <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> Exoenzyme C3	165
13.5	Toxin B a Tool in Cell Biology	166
13.6	Reagents and Chemicals	167

CHAPTER 14. Clostridial Neurotoxins

G. SCHIAVO and C. MONTECUCCO	169	
14.1	The Origin of Clostridial Neurotoxins	169
14.2	Structure of Clostridial Neurotoxins	170
14.3	Mechanism of Action of Clostridial Neurotoxins	174
14.3.1	Cell Binding	174
14.3.2	Internalization and Membrane Translocation	175
14.3.3	Intracellular Activity	176
14.3.3.1	VAMP/Synaptobrevin	178
14.3.3.2	SNAP-25	179
14.3.3.3	Syntaxin	179
14.3.3.4	Target Recognition	180
14.4	Clostridial Neurotoxins and the Blockade of Neurotransmitter Release	181
14.5	Biomedical Applications of Clostridial Neurotoxins	182
14.5.1	Safety Warnings	182

14.5.2	Purification of Clostridial Neurotoxins	182
14.5.3	Functional Assay of Clostridial Neurotoxins	183
14.5.3.1	<i>In vitro</i> Assay of Clostridial Neurotoxins	184
14.5.3.2	Use in Cell Biology	184
14.6	Therapeutic Uses of Botulinum Neurotoxins	185
14.7	Concluding Remarks	185
14.8	Chemicals	186

CHAPTER 15. Isolated Nerve Terminals as a Model System for the Study of Botulinum and Tetanus Toxins

J. BLASI, E. LINK and R. JAHN	193	
15.1	Introduction	193
15.2	Clostridial Neurotoxins: How Do They Work?	193
15.3	Model Systems for the Study of Toxin Action	196
15.3.1	Bioassay	197
15.3.2	Neuromuscular Junction Preparations	197
15.3.3	Synaptic Preparations Derived from the Autonomic Nervous System	198
15.3.4	Invertebrate Neurons	198
15.3.5	Primary Cultures of CNS Neurons	198
15.3.6	Endocrine Cells in Culture and Endocrine Cell Lines	199
15.3.7	Synaptosomes from Mammalian Brain	199
15.4	Practical Considerations	201
15.4.1	Sources for Clostridial Neurotoxins	201
15.4.2	Precautions	201
15.4.3	Preparation of Synaptosomes	202
15.4.4	Monitoring Release of Neurotransmitter	204
15.4.5	Poisoning of Synaptosomes	207
15.4.6	Subfractionation of Synaptosomes	210
15.5	Relevant Chemicals	211

CHAPTER 16. Clostridial Toxins and Endocrine Secretion: Their Use in Insulin-Secreting Cells

J. LANG, R. REGAZZI and C. .B. WOLLHEIM	217	
16.1	Exocytosis of Insulin from the Pancreatic β -cell	217
16.1.1	Introduction	217
16.1.2	Regulated Exocytosis	218
16.1.3	The SNARE Hypothesis of Exocytosis	219
16.1.4	Application of the SNARE Hypothesis to Insulin Exocytosis	220
16.1.5	Role of Ca^{2+} and Rab3A in Insulin Exocytosis	221
16.2	Permeabilization of Insulin-secreting Cells	222
16.2.1	General Remarks	222
16.2.2	Material Required	224
16.2.3	Solutions	224
16.2.4	Final Working Buffers	225

16.2.5	Experimental Outline	225
16.2.5.1	General Procedure	225
16.2.5.2	Determination of SLO Concentrations	226
16.2.5.3	Cell Culture	226
16.2.6	Cell Permeabilization and Exocytosis Assay	226
16.2.7	Troubleshooting	228
16.2.7.1	Cell Detachment	228
16.2.7.2	Insufficient or No Response to Ca^{2+}	228
16.3	Transient Cotransfection Assay for Exocytosis	228
16.3.1	General Remarks	228
16.3.2	Material Required	230
16.3.3	Solutions	230
16.3.4	Procedure	230
16.3.5	Troubleshooting	231
16.3.5.1	Insufficient Gene Expression	231
16.3.5.2	Considerable Variability in the Expression Levels between the same of Different Plasmids	232
16.4	Tetanus Toxin as a Tool for Studying the Role of VAMPs in Exocytosis	232
16.4.1	Introduction	232
16.4.2	General Considerations	232
16.4.3	Specific Considerations for the Study of Insulin-Secreting Cells	233
16.4.4	Practical Approach	233
16.4.4.1	Material Required	233
16.4.4.2	Solutions Required	234
16.4.4.3	Preparation of Neurotoxins	234
16.4.4.4	Detailed Procedure	235
16.4.5	Troubleshooting	236
16.4.5.1	TeTx Does not Inhibit Exocytosis	236
16.4.5.2	No Cleavage of VAMPs	237
16.5	The Use of Other Clostridial Neurotoxins for the Study of Exocytosis	237
16.6	Reagents and Chemicals	237

CHAPTER 17. Pore-forming Toxins

S. BHAKDI, A. VALEVA, I. WALEV, U. WELLER and M. PALMER . . .	241	
17.1	Origin of Pore-forming Toxins (PFTs)	241
17.2	Evolution of the PFT Field	241
17.3	Relationship to Other Toxins	242
17.4	Molecular Mechanism of Action	243
17.4.1	Binding	243
17.4.2	Oligomerization	244
17.4.3	Pore formation	245
17.5	Cell-biological Effects	246
17.5.1	Cell-biological Effects Resulting from Ion Fluxes	246
17.5.1.1	Reactions Governed by Flux of Monovalent Ions	246
17.5.1.2	Reactions Triggered by Ca^{2+} Influx	247

17.5.2	Reactions not Recognizably Governed by Flux of Ions through Toxin Pores	247
17.5.2.1	Short Circuiting of G-protein-dependent Signalling Pathways	247
17.5.2.2	Proteolytic Shedding of Membrane Proteins	248
17.6	Pathogenic Aspects	248
17.7	Purification Protocols	249
17.7.1	Purification of Staphylococcal Alpha-Toxin	249
17.7.2	Purification of Streptolysin O	251
17.8	Application of PFTs as Tools in Research	252
17.9	Reagents and Chemicals	254

CHAPTER 18. Application of Alpha-toxin and Streptolysin O as Tools in Cell Biological

G. AHNERT-HILGER and U. WELLER	259	
18.1	Permeabilized Cells: an Approach to Study Intracellular Processes	259
18.2	Alpha-Toxin and Streptolysin O as Tools in the Study of Secretory Processes	260
18.2.1	Biological Activity	260
18.2.1.1	Assay to Compare Biological Activity of Various Pore-Forming Toxins Using Rabbit Erythrocytes	261
18.2.2	Assay for Exocytosis in Permeabilized Cells	263
18.3	Regulation of Vesicular Transmitter Transporters in Permeabilized Cells and Synaptosomes	266
18.3.1	Catecholamine Uptake into SLO-Permeabilized PC 12 Cells	266
18.3.2	Acidification of Small Synaptic Vesicles in SLO-Permeabilized Synaptosomes	267
18.4	Reagents and Chemicals	270

CHAPTER 19. Toxins as Transporting Tools

S. OLSNES, O. KLINGENBERG, R. MUÑOZ, P. Ø. FALNES and A. WIEDLOCHA	273	
19.1	Introduction	273
19.2	Diphtheria Toxin	273
19.2.1	Toxin-resistant Cell Mutants	274
19.2.2	Receptor for Diphtheria Toxin	275
19.2.3	Translocation of the Toxin	276
19.2.4	Further Requirements for Translocation	276
19.2.5	Formation of Cation Channels	277
19.3	Pseudomonas Exotoxin A	278
19.4	Non-cytocidal Toxins with Intracellular Sites of Action	279
19.5	Methods to Assess Translocation	280

19.6	Example of Translocated Peptides and Proteins	283
19.7	Limitations and Possibilities of the System	285
19.8	Methods	286
19.8.1	<i>In vitro</i> Transcription and Translation	286
19.8.2	SDS-PAGE	287
19.8.3	Cell Culture	288
19.8.4	Cell Binding and Translocation Assay	288
19.8.5	Expression in Bacteria and Purification of Recombinant Proteins	288
19.8.6	<i>In vitro</i> Farnesylation	289
19.8.7	Analysis of <i>in vivo</i> Farnesylation	289
19.8.8	Triton X-114 Partitioning of Farnesylated Proteins	290

**CHAPTER 20. A Brief Guide to the Safe Handling
of Biological Toxin**

A. B. MAKSYMOWYCH and L. L. SIMPSON 295

20.1	Introduction	295
20.2	Preventive Measures	295
20.3	Containment	296
20.3.1	Containment Procedures	296
20.3.2	Containment Facilities	296
20.3.3	Containment within the Laboratory and beyond the Laboratory	296
20.4	Disposal	298
20.5	Decontamination	298
20.6	Emergency Intervention	299
20.7	Resources	300
20.8	Conclusion	300

Subject Index 301

Abbreviations

The following is a list of the most common abbreviations used throughout the book.

5-HT	5-hydroxytryptamine
ACh	acetylcholine
ACTSK	actin cytoskeleton
ADP	adenosine diphosphate
ARF	ADP-ribosylation factor
ATP	adenosine triphosphate
BFA	brefeldin A
BHI	brain-heart infusion
BME	2-mercaptoethanol
BoNT	botulinum neurotoxin
BSA	bovine serum albumin
C2T	botulinum C2 toxin
CB	cellubrevin
CNT	clostridial neurotoxin
CPE	cytopathogenic effect
CROP	combined repetitive oligopeptides
CT	cholera toxin
CTL	cytotoxic T lymphocyte
DEPC	diethyl pyrocarbonate
DMPC	dimyristoylphosphatidylcholine
DT	diphtheria toxin
DTT	dithiothreitol
EDIN	epidermal differentiation inhibitor
EDTA	ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
EF-2	elongation factor 2
ER	endoplasmic reticulum

ETA	exotoxin A from <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>
EXAFS	X-ray absorption fine structure
FCS	fine calf serum
FGF	fibroblast growth factor
GABA	γ -aminobutyric acid
GDI	guanine nucleotide dissociation inhibitor
GDP	guanosine diphosphate
GDS	guanine nucleotide dissociation stimulator
GERL	Golgi-endoplasmic reticulum-lysosome
GPI	glycophosphoinositol
GST	glutathione S-transferase
GTP	guanosine triphosphate
GTPase	guanosine triphosphatase
HIC	hydrophobic interaction chromatography
HlyA	<i>E. coli</i> hemolysin
HT	hemorrhagic toxin
ICE	interleukin converting enzyme
IL	interleukin
IMAC	immobilized-metal-ion-affinity chromatography
IPTG	isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactopyranoside
LDCV	large dense core vesicles
LF	lethal factor
LPA	lysophosphatidic acid
LT	<i>E. coli</i> heat-labile enterotoxin
MHC	major histocompatibility class
NAD	nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide
NMJ	neuromuscular junction
NSF	<i>N</i> -ethylmaleimide-sensitive factor
PA	protective antigen
PAGE	polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
PBS	phosphate-buffered saline
PDGF	platelet-derived growth factor
PFT	pore-forming toxins
PGE ₂	prostaglandin E ₂

PLD	phospholipase D
PMSF	phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride
PT	pertussis toxin
RBL	rat basophilic leukemia
RTX	repeats in toxin
SDS-PAGE	sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electro- phoresis
SDS	sodium dodecyl sulfate
SLMV	synaptic-like microvesicles
SLO	streptolysin O
SNAP-25	synaptosomal-associated protein of 25 kDa
SNAPs	soluble NSF attachment proteins
SNARE	SNAP receptor
SSV	small synaptic vesicles
t-SNARE	target SNAP receptor
TCA	trichloroacetic acid
TeNT	tetanus neurotoxin
TeTx	tetanus toxin
Tox A	toxin A
Tox B	toxin B
UDP-Glc	uridine diphosphate glucose
UDP-GlcNAc	uridine diphosphate <i>N</i> -acetylglucosamine
v-SNARE	vesicle SNAP receptor
VAMP	vesicle-associated membrane protein (= synaptobrevin)

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CHAPTER 1

Cholera Toxin: Mechanism of Action and Potential Use in Vaccine Development

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1.1 Introduction

Cholera results from an intestinal infection with the pathogenic bacterium *Vibrio cholerae* that causes a debilitating, and even deadly, diarrhea. Successful treatment of cholera requires effective rehydration with solutions of glucose and salts (Kaper *et al.*, 1995). Administration of antibiotics decreases the duration of disease (Kaper *et al.*, 1995); vaccines are only partially effective. Koch, who first described *Vibrio cholerae* as the causative agent of cholera, suggested that it was a toxin-mediated disease (Koch, 1884). Over a half-century later, the existence of cholera toxin (CT) was demonstrated in cell-free culture filtrates (De, 1959; Dutta *et al.*, 1959); a decade later, purification of the protein toxin was achieved (Finkelstein and LoSpalluto, 1969). Since then, it has been found that CT is just one member of a family of bacterial toxins that are ADP-ribosyltransferases, which catalyze transfer of the ADP-ribose portion of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD) to a nucleophilic acceptor (Moss and Vaughan, 1988a,b; Burnette, 1994; Merritt and Hol, 1995). CT specifically modifies arginine, either free or as part of a protein. In all cells, including intestinal epithelial cells, the major substrate is the guanine nucleotide-binding subunit of the stimulatory regulator of adenylyl cyclase, G_{sa} (Moss and Vaughan, 1988b). ADP-ribosylation of arginine-201 in G_{sa} (Robishaw *et al.*, 1986) leads to persistently high intracellular levels of cAMP (Moss and Vaughan, 1988b), perhaps other effects on arachidonate metabolites (Peterson *et al.*, 1994; Reitmeyer and Peterson, 1990), and the massive fluid and electrolyte flux that are characteristic of cholera (Kaper *et al.*, 1995).

Cholera toxin and the very similar (in structure and mechanism of action) heat-labile enterotoxin from *E. coli* (LT-1 or LT, which is responsible for the syndrome of traveler's diarrhea) have been widely applied as molecular tools to facilitate understanding of signalling systems. Examples of molecules besides G_{sa} that were identified because of work on CT are the ADP-ribosylation factors (ARFs), now known to play a critical role in intracellular vesicular transport (Moss and Vaughan, 1995), and the mammalian ADP-ribosyltransferases (Zolkiewska *et al.*, 1994). As more is learned about CT structure and biochemistry, modified or mutant CT and LT molecules are being gen-

action of cholera toxin

erated for use as targeting molecules to direct covalently attached ligands to specific cells, or as adjuvants for use in vaccine development (Holmgren *et al.*, 1994). This chapter is a review of recent studies on CT and LT structure, mode of cell entry, mechanism of action, and their use as tools in biochemical studies.

1.2 Molecular Aspects of Cholera Toxin Action

1.2.1 Structure and Relationship to Other Toxins

related toxins

Cholera toxin and *E. coli* heat-labile enterotoxins, members of the AB₅ family of toxins (Burnette, 1994; Merritt and Hol, 1995) consist of a single catalytic A subunit and five B subunits (Spangler, 1992). Another oligomeric toxin is pertussis toxin (PT), a secretory product of *Bordetella pertussis* (for review and primary references, see Moss and Vaughan, 1988b; Burnette, 1994; Merritt and Hol, 1995). CT, LT, and PT are ADP-ribosyltransferases that use NAD as an ADP-ribose donor and α subunits of the heterotrimeric guanine nucleotide-binding (G) proteins as an acceptor (Moss and Vaughan, 1988b). CT and LT ADP-ribosylate an arginine (Robishaw *et al.*, 1986) in G_{sa}, causing its activation (Gill and Meren, 1978; Johnson *et al.*, 1978; Northup *et al.*, 1980), whereas PT ADP-ribosylates a cysteine in G_{ai}, resulting in uncoupling from its receptors (Bokoch *et al.*, 1983, 1984; West *et al.*, 1985). Diphtheria toxin (DT) from *Corynebacterium diphtheriae* and the closely related exotoxin A (ETA) from *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* are also ADP-ribosylating toxins, but are monomeric proteins that ADP-ribosylate elongation factor 2 (EF-2), leading to inhibition of protein synthesis and cell death (Wilson and Collier, 1992).

structure of cholera toxin

CT is an oligomeric protein of 84 kDa composed of one A subunit (CTA, approx. 29 kDa) and five B (CTB, approx. 11.6 kDa) subunits (Ohtomo *et al.*, 1976). CTA is synthesized as a single protein that is later proteolytically nicked to produce two polypeptides (Mekalanos *et al.*, 1979), CTA₁ and CTA₂, which remain covalently linked by a single disulfide bond near the carboxyl end of CTA₁. Both the proteolytic cleavage, in a short sequence between the two cysteines, and reduction of the disulfide bond are required for generation of active CTA₁ (Mekalanos *et al.*, 1979, Tomasi *et al.*, 1979). Both CT and LT holotoxins have a "doughnut-shaped" pentameric B subunit into which amino acids of the A₂ subunit are anchored (Spangler, 1992). One face of the B subunit contains five binding sites for ganglioside G_{M1} (Sixma *et al.*, 1991), the cell-surface binding site for CT and LT. Each binding site is composed (for the most part) of residues from a single individual monomer, but binding to G_{M1} occurs only when CTB is in the pentameric form (Fishman, 1982). CTB anchors the holotoxin to the membrane in an orientation such that the G_{M1} binding sites face and interact with the membrane, whereas the portion of CTA that does not penetrate the center of the B pentamer is above the opposite face of the pentamer (Sixma *et al.*, 1991, 1993).