REVIEW

The importance of ATP in the immune system of molluscs

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Abstract

Molluscs rely on an innate immune system for defence against infection. Invading organisms are phagocytosed by circulating hemocytes and neutralised by a combination of hydrolytic enzymes and the production of reactive oxygen species. Phagocytosis, the central feature of the molluscan innate immune system, is an energy-demanding process as a consequence of actin polymerisation which requires a constant supply of ATP. Adenylate kinase, shown to couple local ATP supply and actomyosin assembly in macrophage cell lines, may play a similar role in molluscan hemocytes. Hemocyte conformational changes and chemotaxis are regulated via protein kinase C which is phosphorylated in response to bacterial lipopolysaccharide. ATP utilisation in protein kinase cascades is thought to be quite significant. The vast majority of the ATP required to support cellular functions in animal cells is generated via the mitochondrial electron transport chain. Disruption of this process with antimycin A resulted in a 50 % decrease in ATP levels in Haliotis midae hemocytes which also exhibited reduced phagocytic activity. Phosphoarginine and arginine kinase are thought to play a role in invertebrates that is similar to phosphocreatine and creatine kinase in vertebrates, by supplying additional ATP during periods of high energy demand. The energetically-expensive processes associated with the molluscan innate immune system, such as chemotaxis, phagocytosis, formation and acidification of the phagolysosome, are severely compromised by abiotic stresses such as elevated water temperature and pollutants, reflecting the fine balance that must be maintained to ensure sufficient ATP is available for both general metabolism and the immune response.

Key Words: ATP; Mollusca; immune response; energy demand

Introduction

The phylum Mollusca includes at least 100,000 living species, making it one of the most diverse groups of animals with members occurring in almost every ecosystem on earth. Not only does this group of animals colonise both terrestrial and aquatic habitats, they occur in extreme environments such as hot thermal vents and cold seeps. Many molluscan species are considered seafood delicacies, while others are an important source of bioactive compounds, used to manufacture jewellery and are an intermediate host of human pathogens. Since aquaculture of commercially important molluscan species has grown worldwide, and is likely to extend to additional species as a source of pharmaceuticals, it is becoming increasingly vital that the molluscan immune system

Corresponding author. Vernon Coyne Department of Molecular and Cell Biology University of Cape Town Rondebosch, 7700, South Africa E-mail:<u>vernon.coyne@uct.ac.za</u> is characterised with regard to its structure, function and regulation. It is well documented that high density monoculture results in increased stress and enhanced susceptibility to infectious disease in farmed molluscs (Malham *et al.*, 2003; Harding, 2004; Reddy-Lopata *et al.*, 2006; Hooper *et al.*, 2007; Gestal *et al.*, 2008; Costa *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, it is becoming increasingly evident that climate change and environmental pollution significantly affect the health status of molluscs (Cherkasov *et al.*, 2007; Anestis *et al.*, 2008; Ivanina *et al.*, 2008).

The molluscan innate immune system, which includes both a cellular and humoral component, has been well described by Sokolova (2009). Circulating hemocytes are integral to the molluscan immune system, being responsible for infiltration, aggregation, encapsulation, cytotoxic reactions and phagocytosis of foreign particles (Hooper *et al.*, 2007; Gestal *et al.*, 2008). Ingested pathogens are neutralised by a hemocyte-mediated oxidative burst which generates reactive oxygen species (ROS) that extensively damage the macromolecular

Hemolymph



Fig. 1 Diagrammatic summary of ATP involvement in phagocytosis of a foreign body by a generalised molluscan hemocyte. Energy-requiring processes are depicted by red arrows, while energy-generating processes are represented by blue arrows. The boxed question marks indicate processes that occur in macrophages and which may hypothetically occur in molluscan hemocytes as a consequence of the similarity between the cell types and conservation of function. PLA2, phospholipase A2; cPLA2, Ca²⁺-dependent phospholipase A2; iPLA2, cytosolic, Ca²⁺-independent phospholipase A2; ERK, extracellular signal-regulated kinase; PKC, protein kinase C (ERK and PKC regulate phagocytosis in macrophages by inducing arachidonic acid production through activation of iPLA2 and cPLA2 isoforms; García-García and Rosales, 2002); P2X7, P2X7 receptor (expressed by monocytes, including macrophages); S1P, sphingosine-1-phosphate (a phosphorylated lipid produced by sphingosine kinase (SP kinase) which is proposed to open a channel or transporter, allowing ADP to enter the phagosome lumen and be converted to ATP by adenylate kinase (\blacktriangle). The ATP binds to the luminal domain of P2X7(\dashv), causing the receptor to transmit a signal across the membrane to activate the actin-assembly machinery on the cytoplasmic side of the phagosome; model proposed by Kuehnel *et al.*, 2009a); ETC, electron transport chain.

components of the pathogenic organism (Goedken and De Guise, 2004; Tiscar and Mosca, 2004; Sokolova, 2009; Donaghy *et al.*, 2010). The oxidative burst is catalysed by membrane bound NADPH oxidase that converts molecular oxygen to superoxide anion which is dismutated to hydrogen peroxide (Buggé *et al.*, 2007). Hydrogen peroxide is a source of other toxic ROS such as hydroxyl radicals and singlet oxygen, and is a substrate for myeloperoxidase which it converts to hypochlorous acid (Murphy and DeCoursey, 2006; Terahara and Takahashi, 2008; Buggé *et al.*, 2007). In addition to the toxic effect of ROS, phagocytosed microorganisms are attacked by a variety of lysosomal enzymes, such as lysozyme, β glucuronidase, acid and alkaline phosphatase, lipase and aminopeptidase, following the formation of the phagolysosome (Gestal *et al.*, 2008; Sokolova, 2009).

It is not the aim of this review to describe the innate immune system of molluscs in detail, but rather to consider the importance of ATP as an essential component of the molluscan immune system (Fig. 1).

Energy production in animal cells

Animal cells derive energy from mitochondria through oxidative phosphorylation, a process in which electrons are passed along a series of carrier molecules called the electron transport chain (ETC), generating the vast majority of the ATP required to

support cellular functions (Watabe and Nakaki, 2007). The electrons are initially generated from NADH and FADH₂ and ultimately transferred to molecular oxygen (Miyazaki et al., 2003). The mitochondrial outer membrane is freely permeable to small molecules and ions, while the convoluted, invaginated inner membrane is rich in cardiolipin, is impermeable to most small molecules and ions, including H⁺, and includes the enzymes responsible for oxidative phosphorylation, the co-factor coenzyme Q (ubiquinone Q), the F_0F_1 -ATP synthase and some carrier proteins (Sas *et al.*, 2007). The matrix, bordered by the inner membrane, contains the mitochondrial DNA, chaperones, peptidases and a variety of enzymes that function in different metabolic pathways, including the citric acid cycle, fatty acid oxidation and the urea cycle. The mitochondrial ETC consists of several enzyme complexes and cofactors (designated complexes I-IV, the last enzyme is often referred to as complex V); I: NADH ubiquinone reductase, II: succinate ubiquinone reductase, III: ubiquinol cvtochrome c reductase. IV: cvtochrome c oxidase (COX), V: F_1F_0 -ATP synthase (Sas *et al.*, 2007). Energy generated by the passage of electrons down the ETC creates a proton gradient across the membrane that drives ATP synthase to produce ATP from ADP. The synthesized ATP is used for energy-requiring reactions in the matrix and exported to the cytoplasm by the adenine nucleotide translocator in exchange for cytosolic ADP (Miyazaki et al., 2003).

ATP and the molluscan immune system

Immune cells require a constant supply of energy for basic housekeeping and specific immune functions (Buttgereit *et al.*, 2000). The latter includes migration, phagocytosis and cytotoxicity (Krauss *et al.*, 2001). Consequently, immune stimulation results in increased biochemical activity and thus a greater demand for ATP, while processes crucial for specific immune functions are rapidly impaired when immune cells are deprived of energy.

Phagocytosis, the core of the molluscan innate immune system, is an energy-requiring process (Wu et al., 2009). Phagocytosis is initiated when a foreign target is recognised and bound by a hemocyte (Hughes et al., 1991; Wu et al., 2009), in activation of actin-dependent resulting cytoskeletal changes (Kuiper et al., 2008). Actin polymerisation is considered to be primarily responsible for the formation of pseudopod protrusions around the target, as well as events that occur during early phagocytosis, including ruffle formation, membrane delivery, closure of the phagocytic cup and movement of the newly formed vesicles through the cellular cortex (Kuiper et al., 2008). Stockinger et al. (2006), using a scintillation proximity assay to study lysosome-phagosome interactions in vitro, showed that lysosome ATP. phagosome fusion required actin polymerisation, calmodulin, other cytosolic factors and an absence of Ca^{2+} . Indeed, a continuous supply of ATP is required for F-actin polymerisation from G-actin, and to maintain the activity of nonmuscle myosin ATPases that assist in actin and

membrane recruitment, and provide motor activity around the phagocytic cup (García-García and Rosales, 2002; Kuiper *et al.*, 2008). In fact, Kuiper *et al.* (2008) propose that phagocytosis poses a formidable challenge to cellular energy homeostasis as a consequence of the significant requirement for ATP to power the actomyosin-based micromechanical events associated with this process.

Adenylate kinase

The molluscan innate immune system relies on recognition of conserved structures associated with pathogen-associated microorganisms, termed molecular patterns (PAMPs). Lipopolysaccharides (LPS), an essential component of the outer membrane of Gram-negative bacteria, is a PAMP that elicits a strong immune response in molluscs (Araya et al., 2010; Costa et al., 2009; Hannam et al., 2010). Once hemocytes detect PAMPs, they move towards the attractant by a process called chemotaxis (Hooper et al., 2007). Interleukins and related cytokines are small proteins called chemokines that regulate the effector phase of the immune response (Ottaviani et al., 1995; Tiscar and Mosca, 2004; Hooper et al., 2007). IL-1α-, IL-1β-. IL-2-, IL-6- and TNF-α-like molecules have been isolated from the hemocytes of two fresh water snails Planorbarius corneus and Viviparus ater (Ottaviani et al., 1995). The study showed that IL- 1α , IL-2 and TNF- α played a role in hemocyte motility, phagocytosis and the induction of nitric oxide synthase. Similarly, Mytilus galloprovincialis hemocytes were shown to contain IL-8, and recombinant human (rh)IL-8 induced conformational changes and chemotaxis in the mussel hemocytes (Ottaviani et al., 2000). Changes in cell shape induced by rhIL-8 were generated via protein kinase A and C pathways, leading to reorganisation of actin microfilaments. Mouse RAW 264.7 and J774A.1 macrophage cell lines exposed to either serum or sphingosine-1-phosphate (S1P), the inducing component in serum, were found to rapidly accumulate extracellular ATP that coincided with actin assembly (Kuehnel et al., 2009b). The ATP was synthesised by adenylate kinase from ADP released from the cells within 3 sec of exposure to S1P. The ATP pool increased within 5 sec to levels sufficient for activation of the ATP receptor P2X7R which links ATP-dependent signalling to the actin assembly machinery (Kuehnel et al., 2009b). van Horssen et al. (2009), using embryonic fibroblasts from knockout mice lacking major ATP-ADP exchange enzymes, showed that adenylate kinase-1 plays a significant role in providing ATP for cytoskeletal functions. Thus, adenylate kinase is a coupling factor between local ATP supply and regulation of actomyosin assembly and other molecular motor behaviour, which is central to cell shape changes and cell motility (Dzeja and Terzic, 2009). Besides a study by Moraga and Tanguy (2000) which showed that adenylate kinase is a molecular biomarker of sensitivity or resistance to the pesticides atrazine and isoproturon in the Pacific oyster Crassostrea gigas, there have been no studies to date regarding adenylate kinase from

molluscan hemocytes. Since molluscan granulocytes strongly resemble vertebrate monocytes and macrophages both in structure and function (Sokolova, 2009), it is highly likely that adenylate kinase plays a similar role in the molluscan immune system as that elucidated in mouse macrophage cell lines and thus warrants further investigation.

Protein kinase C

As mentioned earlier, conformational changes and chemotaxis were initiated by rhIL-8 via protein kinase A and C pathways in M. galloprovincialis hemocytes (Ottaviani et al., 2000). Protein kinase C (PKC) has also been detected in hemocytes from the gastropod snail Lymnaea stagnalis and found to be phosphorylated (activated) in response to challenge with bacterial LPS (Walker and Plows, 2003). Besides PKC activation, LPS has been shown to activate both MAPK/ERK kinase (MEK) and extracellular-signal regulated kinase (ERK), resulting in phagocytosis of Escherichia coli by L. stagnalis hemocytes (Plows et al., 2004). Thus, in accordance to the classical MAP kinase pathway, PKC phosphorylates Ras which activated phosphorylates Raf1, which in turn phosphorylates MEK which subsequently activates ERK (García-García and Rosales, 2002; Plows et al., 2004; Lacchini et al., 2006). In addition to phagocytosing invading pathogenic microorganisms, parasites too large to engulf are encapsulated by hemocytes which adhere to and spread over the invading organism and adjacent cells (Walker et al., 2010). A model proposed by Walker et al. (2010) to explain the signalling pathway leading to encapsulation of a foreign body by L. stagnalis hemocytes, includes a requirement for phosphorylated PKC and focal adhesion kinase during hemocyte adhesion and spreading. Phosphorylated PKC is also required for activation and engagement of integrin which is integral to hemocyte adhesion and spreading. Because protein kinase cascades amplify signals by serially phosphorylating target kinases, it is likely that ATP utilization in phosphorylation reactions is quite significant (Krauss et al., 2001). Phorbol myristate acetate (PMA), a synthetic analogue of diacylglycerol which can activate PKC (Costa et al., 2009), has been shown to induce a rapid increase in oxygen consumption (oxidative burst) in neutrophils and lymphocytes (Krauss and Brand, 2000). Similarly, PMA induced oxidative activity has been reported in hemocytes from the common periwinkle Littorina littorea (Gorbushin and lakovleva, 2007), the freshwater snail Biomphalaria glabrata (Yoshino and Humphries, 2008), the disk abalone Haliotis discus discus and the spiny top shell Turbo cornutus (Donaghy et al., 2010). Although the exact cause of this phenomenon is unclear, Krauss et al. (2001) suggest that activated kinases such as PKC can control energy flow in the mitochondria of lymphocytes. In support of this hypothesis, PMA induction of oxidative activity in hemocytes from H. discus discus and T. cornutus is thought to originate mostly from the mitochondria since incubation carbonyl with cyanide-ptrifluoromethoxyphenylhydrazone, which uncouples

mitochondrial oxidative phosphorylation, resulted in strong inhibition of the oxidative activity (Donaghy *et al.*, 2010).

Mitochondrial respiratory chain

A cDNA microarray investigation of gene expression in hemocytes from immune-stimulated Haliotis midae identified two ETC genes, namely cytochrome b and cytochrome c oxidase III, which were differentially expressed in comparison to unstimulated abalone hemocytes (Arendze-Bailey, unpublished). The role of these genes, and thus the electron transport system, in the abalone immune response was investigated by specifically inhibiting cytochrome b with antimycin A and measuring hemocyte immune parameters in vivo (van Rensburg and Coyne, 2009). Antimycin A inhibits succinate oxidase and NADH oxidase, as well as mitochondrial electron transport between cytochrome b and c1 (Park et al., 2007) by blocking electron flow in the Q-cycle of complex III (Raha et al., 2000). The level of ATP in H. midae hemocytes treated with antimycin A decreased by more than 50% of the ATP levels present in control cells (van Rensburg and Coyne, 2009). Furthermore, the study showed that phagocytosis of FITC-labelled Vibrio anguillarum was significantly reduced in H. midae hemocytes exposed to antimycin A for 2 h as opposed to PBS, indicating the importance of the mitochondrial respiratory chain in the immune response of the abalone due to increased metabolic needs of the cell during immune-stimulation.

Phosphoarginine and arginine kinase

glycolysis Although and oxidative phosphorylation are the main pathways for energy generation, cells and tissues have other mechanisms for energy production and storage. For example, phosphagen molecules, such as phosphocreatine (PCr), can act as a temporary buffer during high-demand periods (Cloutier and Wellstead, 2010). Since phagocytosis is such an energy intensive process (Kuiper et al., 2008), a PCr buffer is thought to be crucial for coping with a sharp increase in energy demand since the conversion of one molecule of PCr to creatine (Cr) regenerates one molecule of ATP from ADP without contribution from other cellular subsystems (Cloutier and Wellstead, 2010). Indeed, PCr was found to decrease by 40 % in phagocytosing macrophages, indicating that between 1.5 to 2 times more ATP is macrophages consumed by engaged in phagocytosis (Loike et al., 1979). Clearly, ATP generation via this reaction is limited by the amount of available PCr, which can be replenished if the energetic state (ATP/ADP) is favourable. The enzyme creatine kinase catalyses the conversion of PCr to Cr (Kuiper et al., 2008; Cloutier and Wellstead, 2010). The importance of creatine kinase in maintaining PCr levels, and thus a reservoir of phosphate for ATP synthesis in macrophages, is supported by the observation that both actin and creatine kinase-B (CK-B) are simultaneously recruited to the sites of action during the early phases of particle ingestion (Kuiper et al., 2008).

Creatine kinase, PCr and Cr occur predominantly in vertebrates, but have also been identified in a polychaete Chaetopterus variopedatus, some annelids. echinoderms, hemichordates, urochordates and sea urchin sperm (Wyss and Kaddurah-Daouk, 2000; Pineda and Ellington, 2001; Suzuki et al., unpublished data). Invertebrates have been found to possess a variety of other phosphorylated guanidino compounds and their corresponding kinase, including phosphoarginine (arginine kinase, AK), phosphoglycocyamine (glycocyamine kinase), phosphotaurocyamine (taurocyamine kinase). phospholombricine (lombricine kinase) and phosphohypotaurocyamine (hypotaurocyamine kinase), which play а physiological role that is similar to PCr in vertebrates (Wyss and Kaddurah-Daouk, 2000; Uda *et al.*, 2006). AK is the most widely distributed phosphagen kinase among the invertebrates (Suzuki et al., 2003; Uda et al., 2006). AK genes have been sequenced from a variety of molluscs, including the gastropods *Conus novaehollandiae* (Safavi-Hemami *et al.*, 2010), *Littorina fabalis* (Kemppainen *et al.*, 2010), *Turbo cornutus* (Suzuki et al., 1997), Haliotis madaka (Suzuki and Furukohri, 1994) and Biomphalaria glabrata (Fukunaga et al., unpublished data), the bivalves Ensis directus (Compaan and Ellington, 2003), Pholas orientalis (Wong and Chew, 2009b), Meretrix lyrata (Wong and Chew, 2009a), Calyptogena kaikoi (Uda et al., 2008) and C. gigas (Suzuki et al., unpublished data), and the cephalopods Octopus vulgaris (Suzuki et al., unpublished data) and Nautilus pompilius (Suzuki et al., unpublished data). Clearly, investigation of the role of AK and phosphoarginine in generating sufficient ATP for driving phagocytosis in molluscan hemocytes would be important in furthering our understanding of this energetically expensive process. In support of this point, microarray analysis of gill tissue from Crassostrea virginica challenged with the protozoan parasite Perkinsus marinus showed increased expression of a putative AK gene in comparison to uninfected control oyster samples (Wang et al., 2010).

Vacuolar-type ATPases

Once the invading organism has been engulfed by hemocytes and a phagosome has formed, phagolysosome biogenesis is the next step in the phagocytic process where the phagosome fuses with a lysosome containing various hydrolases that degrade the molecular components of the phagocytosed organism (Steinberg et al., 2007). Fusion between the phagosome and lysosome requires actin polymerisation and thus ATP (Stockinger et al., 2006). The internal pH of the phagolysosome becomes acidic in order for the hydrolytic enzymes to function effectively. Acidification of the phagolysosome to a pH of less than 5.5 is accomplished by the action of vacuolartype ATPases (V-ATPases) which use energy generated from ATP hydrolysis to move protons across the phagolysosome membrane (Garin et al. 2001; Steinberg et al. 2007; Clarke et al. 2010). V-ATPase is a multi-subunit enzyme that occurs in all

eukaryotes. However, there is only one published study of a molluscan V-ATPase to date. Huvet et al. (2004) used suppression subtractive hybridisation to investigate differential gene expression in resistant (R) and susceptible (S) *C. gigas* progeny to determine the genetic basis for the S oysters' increased summer mortality rate. One of the cDNA clones characterised from the subtracted library that was significantly up-regulated in R ovsters compared to the S progeny possessed sequence similarity to a V-ATPase from *Caenorhabditis elegans*. Interestingly, *v-atpase* mRNA levels in mantle-gonad tissue sampled from R progeny challenged with the bacterial pathogen Vibrio splendidus were seven-fold lower than v-atpase mRNA levels in samples from unchallenged R oysters, possibly reflecting hemocyte migration from the location of the sampled tissue to the site of bacterial infection (Huvet et al., 2004).

Stress and ATP

The importance of ATP with regard to the molluscan immune system is reflected by the many studies conducted to elucidate the effect of abiotic conditions on the defence response of various commercially important marine shellfish. Gametogenesis in bivalves is induced by elevated water temperatures which coincide with increased summer mortalities of the Pacific oyster C. gigas. This is thought to be due to depression of the immune system as a consequence of depleted energy reserves. Delaporte et al. (2006) showed that the adenylate energy charge decreased significantly during gametogenesis in C. gigas, and that this coincided with inhibition of key immune parameters such as the phagocytic and adhesive capacity of the oyster hemocytes. Similarly, phagocytosis and hemolymph antimicrobial activity decreased in post-spawning C. gigas due to depleted energy reserves as a consequence of spawning which is induced by elevated water temperatures (Li *et al.*, 2010). The polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon pollutant phenanthrene was shown to have an immunosuppressive effect on the immune system of the Great Scallop Pecten maximus by reducing hemocyte membrane stability, phagocytic and cytotoxic activity possibly due to disruption of cell metabolism and ATP production (Hannam et al., 2010). Indeed, elevated water temperature has been shown to enhance the deleterious effect of the trace metal pollutant cadmium on mitochondrial enzymes of C. virginica, including the ETC, resulting in an energy deficiency (Ivanina et al., 2008) which would be expected to compromise the animal's immune system.

Concluding remarks

A great deal of progress has been made in characterising the innate immune system of molluscs over the past decade. Much of our understanding of the molluscan immune system at the molecular level has been extrapolated from information obtained from model invertebrates such as the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster* and evolutionary conservation of the innate immune system in vertebrates. However, many gaps remain regarding our understanding of the role that ATP plays in the molluscan immune system. Our ability to address the importance of ATP in the immune system of molluscs will rely on a systems biology approach which will involve genomic, transcriptomic, proteomic and metabolomic characterisation of the molluscan immune system, which in turn, will require a holistic understanding of the physiology of these animals. Such an approach is essential given the centrality of ATP as the energy currency of the cell and the importance of maintaining a balanced energy budget to ensure survival of the animal in its habitat.

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