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Sapientiae



Thesis
Obsequium



Regulation of p75^{NTR} Trafficking by Neurotrophins in the NSC-34 Motor Neuron Cell Line

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“The product of mental labor - science - always stands far below its value, because the labor-time necessary to reproduce it has no relation at all to the labor-time required for its original production”

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

“The most heated defenders of a science, who cannot endure the slightest sneer at it, are commonly those who have not made very much progress in it and are secretly aware of this defect”

Georg C. Lichtenberg (1742-1799)

CHAPTER 1: NEUROTROPHINS, NEUROTROPHIN RECEPTORS AND SIGNALING MECHANISMS VIA ENDOSOMAL TRANSPORT 1

1.A General Introduction	2
1.A.1 The Neurotrophic Hypothesis.....	2
1.A.2 Diverse Roles Of Neurotrophins	3
1.A.3 Current Progress In Neurotrophin Receptor Trafficking.....	3
1.A.4 Neurotrophin Signaling Is Regulated By Intracellular Transport.....	4
1.A.5 Significance Of Understanding Neurotrophin Receptor Trafficking In Motor Neurons.....	4
1.A.6 Aims	5
1.B Neurotrophins	6
1.B.1 Nerve Growth Factor (NGF)	6
1.B.2 Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) And Neurotrophins 3 - 4 (NT-3-4)	7
1.B.3 Synthesis And Secretion Of Neurotrophins.....	7
1.C Neurotrophin Receptors.....	10
1.C.1 Tyrosine Kinase Receptor Family (Trk's)	11
1.C.2 Alternative Splicing Of Trk Receptors	11
1.C.3 Extracellular Splice Variants	13
1.C.4 Intracellular Splice Variants	13
1.C.5 The p75 Neurotrophin Receptor	14
1.C.6 p75 Splice Variant And Homologue Receptors	15
1.C.7 Neurotrophin Receptors And Ligand Specificity.....	16
1.C.8 Neurotrophin Receptor Interactors.....	17
1.C.9 Ligand Promiscuity Of p75 ^{NTR}	20
1.D Neurotrophin Receptor Signaling.....	23
1.D.1 Tyrosine Kinase Mediated Signaling.....	23
1.D.2 p75 ^{NTR} Signaling	26
1.D.3 Summary	29
1.E Neuronal Membrane Dynamics	30
1.E.1 General Overview Of Endocytosis.....	30
1.E.2 Macropinocytosis.....	31
1.E.3 Clathrin Mediated Endocytosis.....	31
1.E.4 Caveolin Mediated Endocytosis	33
1.E.5 Clathrin And Caveolin Independent Coated Pit Formation.....	34
1.E.6 Identification Of Endosomal Compartments	34
1.E.7 Dynamic Regulation Of Endocytosis	35
1.E.8 Summary	35
1.F Endocytosis And Signaling: An Evolving Partnership.....	36
1.F.1 Receptor Internalization Mechanisms	37
1.F.2 The Signaling Endosome Hypothesis.....	39
1.F.3 Signaling Endosome Components	41
1.F.4 Alternative Models Of Retrograde Signal Propagation.....	42
1.F.5 Unbounded Receptor Model	44
1.F.6 Wave Propagation Model.....	44
1.F.7 Signaling Effector Model	46
1.F.8 Summary.....	47
1.G Motor Neuron Cell Line Clones in Research.....	48
1.G.1 Existing Motor Neuron Cell Lines.....	48
1.G.2 Current Uses For Motor Neuron Cell Lines	49
1.G.3 NSC-34 Motor Neuronal Characteristics.....	50
1.G.4 Morphological Comparison Between NSC-34 Cells and Primary Motor Neuron Cultures ..	52
1.H Concluding Remarks	56

CHAPTER 2: MATERIALS AND METHODS.....	57
2.A Materials	58
2.A.1 Cell culture, media supplements and growth factors	58
2.A.2 Tissue culture plastic and glassware	58
2.A.3 Fluorescent dyes and compounds.....	58
2.A.4 Primary and secondary antibodies	59
2.A.5 Protein chromatography.....	63
2.A.6 Chemical reagents, kits and compounds.....	63
2.A.7 Data analysis.....	63
2.B Methods.....	63
2.B.1 Mammalian cell culture	63
2.B.2 Adhesion matrix for cell culture	64
2.B.3 Cell viability assays measuring effects of low serum media conditions.....	65
2.B.4 Cell viability assays measuring the effects of neurotrophins	65
2.B.5 Retinoic acid and BDNF treatment of cell cultures	65
2.B.6 Acid phosphatase hydrolysis assay	66
2.B.7 Annexin-V-FITC apoptosis assay	66
2.B.8 Purification of antibodies.....	67
2.B.9 Conjugation of antibodies to fluorescent compounds.....	67
2.B.10 Fluorescence Activated Cell Sorting (FACS) flow cytometry	68
2.B.11 FACS analysis of neurotrophin binding on antibody binding	68
2.B.12 Cell lysate preparation and Western Blot analysis.....	69
2.B.13 p75 ^{NTR} internalization and pharmacological inhibition of endocytosis	69
2.B.14 Immuno-endocytosis assays	70
2.B.15 Phase contrast microscopy	72
2.B.16 Confocal microscopy	72
CHAPTER 3: OPTIMIZATION OF NSC-34 CULTURE AND DIFFERENTIATION	74
3.A Introduction	75
3.B Culture, Maintenance and Differentiation of NSC-34 cells	77
3.B.1 Optimization of NSC-34 cell culture conditions	77
3.B.2 Analysis of cell survival rates in serum-supplemented and defined media.....	80
3.B.3 Effects of serum-supplemented and defined media on cell subtype	80
3.B.4 Effect of media on cell size and neurite extension in long term cultures	82
3.B.5 Effects of long term RA treatment in NSC-34 cells.....	85
3.B.6 Optimization of culture growth matrix for glass coverslips	87
3.B.7 Long-term culture in serum free media.....	88
3.C Discussion	90
CHAPTER 4: CHARACTERIZATION OF NSC-34 CELLS FOR THE USE IN NEUROTROPHIN RECEPTOR TRAFFICKING STUDIES	95
4.A Introduction	96
4.B Analysis of Cell Membrane and Cytosolic Markers	97
4.B.1 FACS and Immunofluorescence screening.....	97
4.B.2 Western Blot analysis of neurotrophin receptors and endogenously expressed neurotrophins	98
4.B.3 Effects of Culture Media on Neurotrophin Receptor Expression	104
4.C Physiological responses of NSC-34 cells to neurotrophins.....	106
4.C.1 Effect of exogenous neurotrophins on NSC-34 cells	106
4.C.2 Analysis of neurotrophin induced cell death	108

4.D. Neurotrophin receptor interactions with receptor specific antibodies	112
4.D.1 Effects of neurotrophins on binding of p75 ^{NTR} , TrkB, TrkC and Sortilin	112
4.D.2 Effects of p75 ^{NTR} antibodies on NGF induced apoptosis	114
4.D.3 Time-lapse internalization of p75 ^{NTR}	116
4.D.4 Time-lapse internalization of TrkB	118
4.D.5 Effects of k252a on neurotrophin receptor internalization	118
4.E Discussion	120
CHAPTER 5: EXOGENOUS NEUROTROPHINS REGULATE THE SUB-CELLULAR FATE OF P75^{NTR}	127
5.A Introduction	128
5.B Internalization of p75^{NTR} in the presence of neurotrophins	129
5.B.1 p75 ^{NTR} internalization rates are altered in the presence of exogenous neurotrophins.	129
5.B.2 p75 ^{NTR} associates with GT1b on the cell membrane but is internalized via clathrin mediated endocytosis.	132
5.B.3 p75 ^{NTR} associates with clathrin HC and transferrin positive endocytic carriers.	134
5.B.4 Inhibition of clathrin-mediated endocytosis prevents p75 ^{NTR} internalization in the presence of BDNF and NT-4, but not NGF and NT-3.	137
5.C p75^{NTR} endosomal trafficking dynamics	139
5.C.1 NGF and NT-3, but not BDNF and NT-4 decrease lysosomal targeting of p75 ^{NTR}	139
5.C.2 p75 ^{NTR} enrichment of EEA-1 positive endosomes is dependent on NGF and NT-3, but not BDNF and NT-4.	144
5.C.3 NGF and NT-3 reduce p75 ^{NTR} recycling to the plasma membrane.	148
5.D Discussion	153
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS	158
6.A Discussion	159
6.A.1 Neurotrophin Biology	159
6.A.2 The NSC-34 cell line as a motor neuron model	160
6.A.3 Neurotrophin receptor trafficking	162
6.A.4 Is there a distinct p75 ^{NTR} signaling endosome?	164
6.B Future Prospects	167
APPENDIX	169
Appendix 1: Mapping of MLR antibodies binding domains to p75^{NTR}	170
REFERENCES:	I

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 - NEURONAL PROPERTIES AND MARKERS OF NSC-34 CELL LINE	54
TABLE 1 - NEURONAL PROPERTIES AND MARKERS OF NSC-34 CELL LINE	55
TABLE 2.1 - LIST OF PRIMARY ANTIBODIES AND WORKING DILUTIONS.	60
TABLE 2.2 - LIST OF PRIMARY ANTIBODIES AND WORKING DILUTIONS.	61
TABLE 3 - LIST OF FLUORESCENT SECONDARY ANTIBODIES AND WORKING DILUTIONS.	62
TABLE 4 - LIST OF HRP AND ALKALINE PHOSPHATASE CONJUGATED SECONDARY ANTIBODIES AND WORKING DILUTIONS.	62
TABLE 5 - PMT GATE SETTINGS FOR CELL MEMBRANE AND NUCLEAR MARKER EMISSION.	73
TABLE 6 - PMT GATE SETTINGS FOR FLUID-PHASE MARKER EMISSION.	73

TABLE OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1- THE PROCESSED AND UNPROCESSED MONOMERIC FORM OF NEUROTROPHINS.	9
FIGURE 1.2 - SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF TRK AND P75 ^{NTR} STRUCTURAL ISOFORMS.	12
FIGURE 1.3 - NEUROTROPHIN INTERACTIONS WITH THEIR RECEPTORS.	18
FIGURE 1.4 - SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF RECEPTOR INTERACTORS AND P75 ^{NTR} ALTERNATE LIGANDS.	22
FIGURE 1.5 - TRK RECEPTOR-MEDIATED SIGNALING PATHWAYS.	24
FIGURE 1.6 - P75 ^{NTR} -MEDIATED SIGNALING PATHWAYS.	27
FIGURE 1.7 - BIOSYNTHETIC AND RECYCLING ROUTES AND THE ENDOSOMAL NETWORK.	32
FIGURE 1.8 - NEUROTROPHIN RECEPTOR INTERNALIZATION.	38
FIGURE 1.9 - THE RETROGRADE "SIGNALING ENDOSOME" MECHANISM.	40
FIGURE 1.10 - THE SIGNALLING ENDOSOME.	43
FIGURE 1.11 - ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF RETROGRADE NEUROTROPHIN SIGNALING.	45
FIGURE 1.12 - MORPHOLOGICAL COMPARISON BETWEEN CULTURED PRIMARY EMBRYONIC MOTOR NEURONS AND NSC-34 CELLS.	53
FIGURE 2.1 - SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF APOPTOSIS ASSAY TIMELINE.	67
FIGURE 2.2 - SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF LIVE AND FIXED IMMUNOENDOCYTOSIS ASSAY TIME LINE.	71
FIGURE 3.1 - GROWTH MEDIA ASSOCIATED MORPHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF NSC-34 CELLS.	79
FIGURE 3.2 - EFFECTS OF SERUM SUPPLEMENTED AND DEFINED MEDIA ON CELL SURVIVAL.	81
FIGURE 3.3 - ANALYSIS OF NSC-34 CELL SUBTYPES IN SERUM SUPPLEMENTED AND DEFINED MEDIA.	83
FIGURE 3.4 - CELL BODY SIZE AND NEURITE PROCESS QUANTIFICATION.	84
FIGURE 3.5 - RETINOIC ACID INDUCED NSC-34 DIFFERENTIATION.	86
FIGURE 3.6 - OPTIMISATION OF CULTURE SUBSTRATE MATRIX FOR GLASS COVERSLIPS.	89
FIGURE 3.7 - LONG-TERM CULTURE OF DIFFERENTIATED NSC-34 CELLS.	91
FIGURE 4.1 - FACS SCREENING OF NSC-34 CELLS.	99
FIGURE 4.2 - IMMUNOFLUORESCENCE OF MOTONEURONAL MARKERS EXPRESSED BY NSC-34 CELLS.	100
FIGURE 4.3 - WESTERN BLOT ANALYSIS OF NEUROTROPHIN RECEPTORS AND INTRACELLULAR TRANSPORT PROTEINS.	101

FIGURE 4.4 - ANALYSIS OF NEUROTROPHIN RECEPTOR EXPRESSION IN DEFINED GROWTH MEDIA.....	105
FIGURE 4.5 - EFFECTS OF NEUROTROPHINS ON NSC-34 AND NSC-34D CELL SURVIVAL.	107
FIGURE 4.6 - ANALYSIS OF NGF INDUCED CELL DEATH WITH ANNEXIN-V APOPTOTIC STAIN.....	109
FIGURE 4.7 - ANALYSIS OF NT-3 INDUCED CELL DEATH.....	110
FIGURE 4.8 - ANALYSIS OF BDNF AND STAUROSPORINE INDUCED CELL DEATH.	111
FIGURE 4.9 - BINDING OF P75NTR, TRKB, TRKC AND SORTILIN ANTIBODIES IN THE PRESENCE OF NEUROTROPHINS.	113
FIGURE 4.10 - EFFECTS OF P75NTR ANTIBODIES ON NGF INDUCED APOPTOSIS.....	115
FIGURE 4.11 - TIME-LAPSE LIGAND DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT INTERNALIZATION OF P75NTR.	117
FIGURE 4.12 - TIME-LAPSE LIGAND DEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT INTERNALIZATION OF TRKB.....	119
FIGURE 4.13 - EFFECTS OF K252A ON NEUROTROPHIN RECEPTOR INTERNALIZATION.....	121
FIGURE 5.1 - INTERNALISATION KINETICS OF P75NTR FOLLOWING NEUROTROPHIN TREATMENT.....	131
FIGURE 5.2 - GT1B ASSOCIATES WITH P75NTR ON THE PLASMA MEMBRANE BUT IS NOT INTERNALIZED WITH THE RECEPTOR.....	133
FIGURE 5.3A - P75NTR COLOCALISATION WITH CLATHRIN-HC.	135
FIGURE 5.3B - P75NTR COLOCALISATION WITH TRANSFERRIN.....	136
FIGURE 5.4 - SELECTIVE INHIBITION OF P75NTR VIA CLATHRIN-MEDIATED ENDOCYTOSIS COMPLETELY PREVENTS BDNF AND NT-4, BUT NOT NGF AND NT-3 MEDIATED P75NTR INTERNALIZATION.	138
FIGURE 5.5A - LYSOSOMAL TARGETING OF P75NTR IS INFLUENCED BY NEUROTROPHINS.....	140
FIGURE 5.5B - LYSOSOMAL TARGETING OF P75NTR IS INFLUENCED BY NEUROTROPHINS.....	141
FIGURE 5.5C - LYSOSOMAL TARGETING OF P75NTR IS INFLUENCED BY NEUROTROPHINS.....	142
FIGURE 5.5D - LYSOSOMAL TARGETING OF P75NTR IS INFLUENCED BY NEUROTROPHINS.....	143
FIGURE 5.6A - ENRICHMENT OF P75NTR IN EEA1 POSITIVE ENDOSOMES.....	145
FIGURE 5.6B - ENRICHMENT OF P75NTR IN EEA1 POSITIVE ENDOSOMES.....	146
FIGURE 5.6C - ENRICHMENT OF P75NTR IN EEA1 POSITIVE ENDOSOMES.....	147
FIGURE 5.7A - NEUROTROPHINS REDUCE THE RECYCLING OF P75NTR BACK TO THE PLASMA MEMBRANE.....	150
FIGURE 5.7B - NEUROTROPHINS REDUCE THE RECYCLING OF P75NTR BACK TO THE PLASMA MEMBRANE.....	151
FIGURE 5.7C - NEUROTROPHINS REDUCE THE RECYCLING OF P75NTR BACK TO THE PLASMA MEMBRANE.....	152
FIGURE 5.8 - SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF P75NTR INTERNALIZATION AND TRAFFICKING IN NSC-34 CELLS.....	155
FIGURE A1 - MAPPING OF MLR ANTIBODY BINDING EPITOPES OF P75NTR.....	171

Abstract

Neurotrophins are a family of growth factors necessary for the development and maintenance of the nervous system. They produce their effects through receptor mediated signaling mechanisms that are highly regulated by sophisticated intracellular transport networks. The impairment of intracellular trafficking of neurotrophins in motor neurons has been identified as one possible factor in the development of motor neuron diseases, but remains inadequately studied. Aided by advances in imaging technology and the development of more powerful and sensitive detection tools for *in-vitro* studies, the dynamics of intracellular transport of neurotrophins are beginning to be unraveled. However, a primary limiting factor in the study of neurotrophin-transport dynamics in motor neurons has been the lack of alternative and easily available *in-vitro* systems able to substitute the often difficult and costly primary motor neuron cultures.

The aim of this project was to develop a suitable motor neuron model using the NSC-34 cell line for the study of receptor mediated trafficking events through endosomal transport pathways. Successful evaluation and characterization of NSC-34 cells for motor neuron specific markers would result in the investigation of the p75 neurotrophin receptor (p75^{NTR}) trafficking pathways in the presence of exogenous neurotrophins, with a variety of confocal imaging techniques.

Chapter 3 describes the optimisation of NSC-34 cell culture conditions through media modification and the development of a suitable growth substrate matrix, which significantly improved cell adhesion, differentiation and the ability to culture the cells for extended time periods in serum free conditions. Quantitative measurements of cell proliferation, culture viability, cell-body size and neurite length are described to highlight the increased value of the cell line for long-term culture and experiments examining a broad range of issues relevant to motor neurons.

In Chapter 4, multiple experimental approaches were used to extensively screen the NSC-34 cell line for the presence of motor neuron-specific markers, neurotrophin receptors and proteins involved in regulation of endosomal transport. This characterization established the presence of a developing motor neuron-like neurotrophin receptor profile (p75^{NTR}, TrkB and TrkC), a genetic marker of developing motor neurons, cholinergic markers, proteins regulating transport within the endosomal pathway, and additional proteins previously shown to directly interact with neurotrophin receptors, including sortilin, and the lipid raft associated ganglioside GT1b. Furthermore, evidence is provided that NSC-34 cells undergo apoptosis in response to exogenous nerve growth factor (NGF) or neurotrophin-3 (NT-3), but not brain derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) or neurotrophin-4 (NT-4). In addition characterization of mouse specific p75^{NTR} antibodies is presented to establish their suitability for internalization studies without altering the binding of exogenous neurotrophins to the receptor.

Subsequent confocal microscopy examination focusing on p75^{NTR} trafficking in Chapter 5 revealed that internalization and intracellular transport of this receptor is regulated by exogenous neurotrophins at the cell surface where ligand binding and internalization occur, and in endosomal compartments where the bulk of receptors and ligands are targeted to their specific destinations. Evidence is provided showing that p75^{NTR} internalization is altered in the presence of NGF, NT-3, or NT-4, but not BDNF, and the receptor is diverted into non-clathrin mediated endosomal pathways in response to NGF but not BDNF. Immunofluorescence confocal microscopy suggests that p75^{NTR} recycles to the plasma membrane in a Rab4 GTPase dependent manner in the absence of neurotrophins. Addition of neurotrophins diverted p75^{NTR} from the recycling Rab4 positive pathway, into EEA-1 positive sorting endosomes in the presence of NGF or NT-3, or lysosomal degradation in the presence of BDNF or NT-4.

This study clearly demonstrates the suitability of the NSC-34 cell line as an alternate in-vitro system for the study of motor neuron biology, particularly the study of neurotrophin receptor trafficking. Taken together the results represented in this study suggest for the first time, that the fate of the p75^{NTR} receptor depends on which neurotrophin is bound. These findings have important implications for understanding the dynamic mechanisms of action of p75^{NTR} in normal neuronal function, and may also offer further insight into the potential role of neurotrophins in the treatment of neurodegenerative diseases.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge or belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.



Dusan Matusica

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MATUSICA, D., FENECH, M. P., ROGERS, M. L. & RUSH, R. A. (2007) Characterization and use of the NSC-34 cell line for study of neurotrophin receptor trafficking. *Journal Of Neuroscience Research*. 86, (3):553-65

MATUSICA, D., ROGERS, M. L. & RUSH, R. A. (Submitted) NSC-34 cells: enhanced differentiation and adhesion increases value as a motor neuron cell line.

MATUSICA, D., ROGERS, M. L. & RUSH, R. A. (Submitted) NGF and NT-3, but not other neurotrophins, prevent trafficking of p75^{NTR} to lysosomes in NSC-34 cells.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ab	Antibody
Akt	Serine/threonine kinase / protein kinase B
BDNF	Brain derived neurotrophic factor
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
CNS	Central nervous system
DMEM	Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium
DMSO	Dimethyl sulfoxide
DRG	Dorsal root ganglia
EE	Early endosome
EEA-1	Early endosomal antigen 1
ER	Endoplasmic reticulum
ERK	Extracellular signal-regulated kinase
FADD	Factor associated death domain
FAP-1	Fas associated phosphatase 1
HB9	Homeobox gene 9
IgG	Immunoglobulin
LE	Late endosome
MAP	Mitogen-activated protein
MAPK	Mitogen-activated protein kinase
MC-192	Monoclonal antibody against rat p75 receptor
MEK	MAPK kinase / ERK kinase
MLR-2	Monoclonal antibody a
mRNA	messenger ribonucleic acid
MVB	Multi-vesicular body
NaCl	Sodium chloride
NADE	p75-associated cell death executor
NF-1	Neurofibromatosis-1
NF- κ B	Nuclear factor κ B
NGF	Nerve growth factor
NRAGE	Neurotrophin receptor interacting melanoma associated antigen homolog
NRIF	Neurotrophin receptor interacting factor
NT-3	Neurotrophin-3
NT-4	Neurotrophin-4
p75 ^{NTR}	p75 neurotrophin receptor
PC-12	Pheochromocytoma-12 cells
PI3K	Phosphatidyl inositol-3 kinase
PNS	Peripheral nervous system
Rab4	Rab 4 GTPase protein
Ras	Ras GTPase protein kinase
REX	Receptor external domain
RIP	Ribosome inactivating protein
RIP ¹	Receptor interacting protein
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
rRNA	Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
SC-1	Schwann cell factor 1

SDS-PAGE	Sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
SE	Sorting endosome
TGN	Trans-Golgi network
TNF	Tumour necrosis factor
TRAD	TNF receptor associated death domain
Trk	Tropomyosin receptor kinase
Western Blot	Immunoblot