

Previous reports have indicated that adding a second enhancer either upstream or downstream of a promoter can modify expression [5,7,16]. To determine the effects of insertion of a second enhancer on gene expression, we compared the luciferase activity in cells transfected with a plasmid containing CMV enhancer alone and a plasmid containing both the CMV and SV40 enhancers. Insertion of the second enhancer resulted in 2.0-fold and 3.6-fold increases in luciferase activity in BeWo and JAR cells, respectively (Fig. 4A and B).

4. Discussion

The expression of genes from cassettes including promoters, PA signals, and enhancers differs between cell lines. Because we are interested in using transgenic techniques to study human placental cells, we compared expression mediated by several different cassettes in BeWo and JAR cells. By systematically evaluating the effects of the regulatory elements in the cassette, we found that gene expression can be controlled to some extent by altering individual components of the expression cassette.

The process of gene expression involves complex biochemical mechanisms. Indeed, we found that the addition of promoter elements, including those from SV40, CMV, and PGK results in the same level of transcriptional activity in BeWo cells, but, in JAR cells, addition of the PGK promoter increased gene expression 11.7-fold over the SV40 or CMV promoter elements. These results suggest that different

transcriptional factors participate in the expression in BeWo and JAR cells. We also show that addition of a second enhancer increases gene expression to different extents in BeWo cells and JAR cells. Similarly, insertion of a second enhancer increased gene expression in one report [7], whereas it did not in another report [5]. The effect of a second enhancer may therefore depend on the specific transcriptional factors involved.

Polyadenylation of coding RNAs is required for RNA stability, efficient nucleocytoplasmic export, and translation. Addition of the PA signal to the 3'-end of a plasmid facilitates the binding of PA-binding proteins to the transcribed mRNA. The binding of PA-binding proteins can allow mRNAs to be transferred from the nucleus to the cytosol. It can also control the stability of transcribed mRNAs [17,18]. This suggests that the effect of a PA sequence on gene expression depends on the type and characteristics of the PA-binding proteins. Indeed, Westwood et al. reported that transcriptional activities differ among PA signals [15]. Similarly, Xu et al. also reported that the effects of insertion of a PA signal on gene expression vary among cell types or tissues [7]. Here, we show that insertion of a PA signal results in differential enhancement of transgene expression in BeWo and JAR cells. It is likely that this is due to different PA-binding proteins in each cell line.

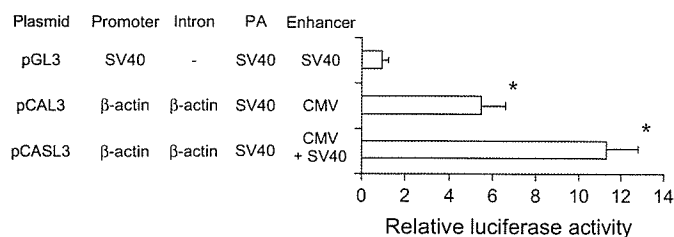
We found that insertion of introns, including intron A and a chimeric intron composed of the β -globin and immunoglobulin introns, increased gene expression in BeWo and JAR cells by 6.9- and 18.4-fold compared to controls, respectively. Several groups have also reported that addition of an intron to a plasmid elevates expression in a transient model, although the extent of the increase differed between cell lines [7,9,13,19]. Previous studies have investigated how inclusion of an intron enhances gene expression. For example, insertion of an intron has been shown to increase the accumulation of cytoplasmic RNA [9]. Another report showed that the binding of RNA polymerase II to promoter element is enhanced by an intron sequence [20]. Thus, regulation of transcription by intron sequences depends not only on the intron elements but also other factors, including promoter elements and transcriptional factors. Therefore, the different effects of introns on transcriptional activities in BeWo cells and JAR cells may be due to the presence of different transcriptional factors in the two cell types. Indeed, previous studies have shown cell-type-specific effects of introns on gene expression [7,19].

There are several systems for controlling gene expression in vitro. For example, promoters whose effects on transcription can be modulated by heavy metals, glucocorticoids, or tetracycline have been used to regulate transgene activity [21–24]. Here, we show that selection of the transcriptional cassette can also influence the level of transgene expression in BeWo and JAR cells. These results may be useful for further studies in these two cell lines.

Acknowledgements

We thank Dr N Koizumi, Mr H Shiohira and Mrs N Kuri-saki for their helpful comments and discussion.

A. BeWo cells



B. JAR cells

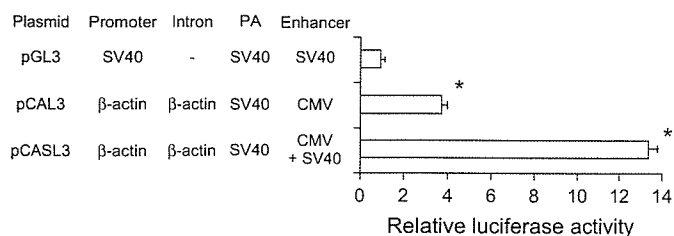


Fig. 4. Effect of second enhancer on transgene in BeWo and JAR cells. BeWo cells (A) or JAR cells (B) were transfected with the plasmid vector containing CMV enhancer alone or both CMV and SV40 enhancers (Table 1) as described in the legend of Fig. 1. After 24 h of culture, the cells were harvested and lysed with a commercially available lysis buffer (LCB). The luciferase activity was measured as described in the legend of Fig. 1. The results represent means \pm SD ($n = 4$) and are representative of at least three independent experiments using at least two independent plasmid preparations. *Significantly different from the pGL-3 control plasmid ($p < 0.05$).

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Journal of Immunological Methods 312 (2006) 94–104

JIM
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Immunological Methods

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Research paper

Centrifugation enhances integrin-mediated transduction of dendritic cells by conventional and RGD-modified adenoviral vectors

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Received 15 December 2005; received in revised form 17 February 2006; accepted 27 February 2006

Available online 31 March 2006

Abstract

The level of antigen loading can impact on the capacity for dendritic cells (DC) to activate T cell responses. Several different approaches to adenoviral (Ad)-based transduction were therefore assessed for their effect on both transgene expression and T cell activation. While a conventional E1(-)/E3Δ Ad vector (Ad/GFP) produced a concentration-dependent expression of GFP, a modified vector expressing Arginine–Glycine–Aspartic Acid (RGD) sequence on its fiber knob (Ad-RGD/GFP) enhanced transgene expression by 9–20-fold at each MOI. The addition of centrifugal force (2000×g) during DC transduction with Ad/GFP also increased expression up to 20-fold. However, combining centrifugation with the Ad-RGD/GFP vector produced no effect on transduction rate and only a 1.5- to 2-fold increase in GFP expression, suggesting overlapping mechanisms of action. Consistent with this, exogenous RGD peptide blocked transduction regardless of the vector used, or the addition of centrifugal force, and transduction was primarily limited to DC expressing the CD51 integrin receptor. Ad vectors expressing ovalbumin (OVA) were used to assess transduced DC for their capacity to activate OVA-specific T cells. We observed a significant relationship between transgene expression and the capacity for T cell activation regardless of whether transgene expression was increased by using a higher MOI, an RGD-modified vector, or by employing centrifugal force. Furthermore, combining these approaches produced synergistic effects on T cell activation. We conclude that RGD-modified vectors and centrifugation both enhance DC transduction by increasing entry via integrin receptors and that the capacity for T cell activation can be optimized by combining approaches to achieve the highest possible level of transgene expression.

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Keywords: Alpha-v; OT-1; Ovalbumin; Green fluorescent protein; Gene therapy; Dendritic cells

Abbreviations: Ad, adenoviral; BM, bone marrow; CAR, coxsackievirus and adenovirus receptor; DC, dendritic cells; MFI, mean fluorescence intensity; MOI, multiplicity of infection; OVA, ovalbumin; RGD, Arg–Gly–Asp.

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1. Introduction

Dendritic cells (DC) are potent antigen-presenting cells responsible for processing and presenting antigen to specific T cells and inducing antigen specific immunity (Adams et al., 2005; Rossi and Young, 2005). Due to their capacity for antigen presentation, DC have been intensely investigated as a tool for vaccinating against

various diseases including cancer (Basak et al., 2002; Basak et al., 2004; Steitz et al., 2005; Nakamura et al., 2005; Salucci et al., 2005). An important determinant that correlates with the magnitude of T cell activation is the efficiency of antigen loading (Bronte et al., 1997). While several methods for loading DC have been studied, the use of viral vectors to deliver antigen transgenes into DC has emerged as one of most promising approaches (Arthur et al., 1997; Gunzer and Grabbe, 2001; Jenne et al., 2001). Transduction of DC by adenoviral (Ad) vectors is one of the most popular and well-tested gene delivery tools that has been used in both animal models and human clinical trials (Sarukhan et al., 2001; Roth et al., 2002; Harui et al., 2004; Wu et al., 2005; Verma and Weitzman, 2005). Uptake and internalization of Ad particles into target cells depends on two distinct receptors. Specific sequences on the fiber knob of the Ad capsid first bind high-affinity coxsackievirus and adenovirus receptors (CAR) on the surface of target cells, and then low affinity $\alpha_v\beta_3$ or $\alpha_v\beta_3$ integrin receptors using RGD motifs expressed on the penton base components of the Ad capsid (Wickham et al., 1993; Nemerow and Stewart, 1999). Despite the efficiency attributed to Ad-based antigen loading, DC do not express CAR receptors and are therefore inefficiently transduced by this Ad-based approach. A variety of strategies have been developed to address this limitation. RGD motifs have been inserted into the fiber knob to increase capsid affinity for integrins expressed by DC (Okada et al., 2001), CD40 ligand has been conjugated to Ad capsids in order to redirect their binding affinity to CD40 receptors expressed on DC (Belousova et al., 2003), and centrifugation has been used to enhance transduction by mechanisms that have yet to be described (Nishimura et al., 2001a,b).

In the current study, we evaluate conventional Ad vectors, RGD-modified Ad vectors, centrifugation, and the combination of these techniques for their impact on antigen loading and the subsequent activation of transgene-specific T cells. The role that integrin receptors play in each of these approaches was investigated by a combination of FACS analysis, to identify populations of DC that express either high or low levels of the $\alpha_v\beta_3$ integrin, and by blocking studies using the addition of exogenous RGD peptides to compete for receptor binding. Ad vectors expressing GFP allowed us to carefully quantitate the magnitude of antigen expression. Finally, the impact of antigen loading on T cell activation was assessed by employing Ad vectors expressing ovalbumin (OVA) and the interaction of OVA-loaded DC with transgenic T cells expressing OVA-specific T cell receptors. Our findings

provide important insight into the application of Ad-based gene therapy for antigen loading.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Mice

Eight- to twelve-week-old male C57BL/6 mice and C57BL/6-Tg (TcraTcrb)1100Mjb mice, expressing transgenic CD8 T cell receptors specific for residues 257–264 of OVA (OT-1 T cells), were purchased from Charles River Laboratories (Wilmington, MA) and The Jackson Laboratories (Bar Harbor, ME), respectively. Animals were housed at the UCLA animal facility with all procedures approved by the UCLA Animal Research Committee.

2.2. Cytokines and *in vitro* generation of bone marrow-derived DC (BM-DC)

Recombinant mouse GM-CSF (specific activity $\geq 5 \times 10^6$ units/mg) and IL-4 (specific activity $> 1 \times 10^7$ units/mg) were acquired from Peprotech (Rocky Hill, NJ). BM-DC were generated from murine bone marrow as previously described (Harui et al., 2004). Briefly, BM cells were harvested and depleted of NK, B, T and granulocytes by treatment with a cocktail of mAb (BD Pharmingen, San Diego, CA) and complement (Sigma, St. Louis, MO). DC precursors were cultured overnight in RPMI 1640 (Irvine Scientific, Santa Ana, CA) with 10% heat-inactivated FCS (Omega Scientific, Tarzana, CA), HEPES, 2-ME and Penicillin–Streptomycin (all from Sigma). The next day, adherent cells were removed and the non-adherent population cultured with GM-CSF and IL4 (20 ng/ml of each) for 7–9 days with a media change every 3 days.

2.3. Adenoviral vectors

Four different Ad vectors were used in this study including two first-generation E1(-)/E3 Δ Ad expressing either GFP (Ad/GFP) or OVA (Ad/OVA); and two RGD fiber mutant Ad expressing the same transgenes (Ad-RGD/GFP and Ad-RGD/OVA). All of these vectors have been previously described with Ad-RGD vectors expressing an RGD sequence inserted into the HI loop region of their fiber knob (Mizuguchi et al., 2001; Okada et al., 2003). Ad vectors were propagated in 293 cells, purified by two round of CsCl density centrifugation, dialyzed and stored in -80°C . Viral particle titers were determined spectrophotometrically by the methods of Mittereder et al. (1996) with the

multiplicity of infection (MOI) representing the number of viral particles added per target cell, with approximately 1000 viral particles equivalent to 10 plaque forming unit (pfu) for the Ad/GFP vector. Vectors expressing GFP (Ad/GFP and Ad-RGD/GFP) were employed to assess transduction efficiency, whereas vectors expressing OVA (Ad/OVA and Ad-RGD/OVA) were used to assess the impact of viral transduction on the activation of OVA-specific T cells.

2.4. Transduction of DC with Ad vectors

DC were transduced with Ad vectors as described previously (Harui et al., 2004). Briefly, 2.5 to 5.0×10^5 DC were exposed to a suspension of Ad at different MOI (25 to 250 virus particles per target cell) in 200 μ l of medium containing 100 μ l PBS and 100 μ l RPMI-1640 supplemented with 2% FBS. Co-cultures were incubated for 2 h at 37 °C in either a humidified incubator or in a temperature-regulated centrifuge at $2000 \times g$ (Centrifuge 5415R/Eppendorf, Westbury, NY) according to the protocol described by Nishimura et al. (2001a). An additional 800 μ l of complete media containing GM-CSF and IL-4 (20 ng/ml of each) were then added and cultures incubated for another 48 h before analysis.

2.5. Blocking Ad transduction with exogenous RGD-peptide

In selected experiments, BM-DC (5×10^5) were pre-incubated (4 °C, 60 min) with either 20 μ M or 200 μ M RGD-4C peptide (AnaSpec, San Jose, CA) in order to block $\alpha_v\beta_3$ and $\alpha_v\beta_5$ integrins (Huang et al., 1995). Ad vectors were then added (MOI 1000) and co-cultures incubation with/without centrifugation ($2000 \times g$) at 4 °C for the first 60 min and 37 °C for the second 60 min. Cells were treated with trypsin-EDTA (0.25 mg/ml–1 mM, Invitrogen, Calsbad, CA) for 2 min to eliminate vectors that had not already been internalized and with DNase (Sigma) for 10 min (0.02 mg/ml, 37 °C) to degrade extracellular DNA. Cells were washed and incubated at 37 °C for 48 h with GM-CSF and IL4 (20 ng/ml of each) prior to analysis.

2.6. Measurement of transgene expression and DC phenotype

48 h after transduction, DC were identified by their expression of CD11c (Caltag Laboratories, Burlingame, CA) and their concurrent expression of α_v integrin (CD51, BD Pharmingen) and/or GFP measured by flow

cytometry using a FACScalibur cytometer (Becton Dickinson, San Jose, CA) and FCS Express analysis software (De Novo Software, Ontario, Canada). Cells were gated for CD11c⁺ DC cells and assessed for the percentage of DC that expressed GFP and for the mean fluorescent intensity (MFI) of the transduced subset. The percentage of cells transduced was multiplied by the MFI to obtain an index of total GFP expression. Expression of DC markers on the CD11c population was also assessed using a panel of biotinylated antibodies against MHC I, MHC II, B7.1 and B7.2 in combination with a secondary streptavidin-APC (all from Caltag Laboratories).

2.7. Antigen specific T cell proliferation assay

The capacity for transduced DC to activate transgene-specific T cells was assessed by co-culturing with T cells from OT-1 transgenic mice. DC transduced with either Ad/OVA or Ad-RGD/OVA at MOI 25 and 250, that had been subjected to either centrifugation ($2000 \times g$) or standard culture, were harvested 48 h after transduction. T cells were isolated from lymph nodes of OT-1 mice and the CD8⁺ subset purified by negative depletion using anti-B220, anti-Gr.1, anti-NK1.1 and anti-CD4 mAb and complement. Assays were performed in round-bottomed 96-well culture plate in 200 μ l RPMI 1640 containing 10% FCS and 10^{-4} M 2-ME. OVA-specific CD8⁺ T cells (2×10^5) were co-cultured with transduced DC at DC:T ratios of 1:25, 1:50, and 1:100 for 3 days, then pulsed with 1.25 μ Ci (46.2 kBq) [³H]-thymidine and thymidine incorporation determined 12 h later by liquid scintillation counting.

2.8. Statistical analysis

Data from FACS analyses are represented as the percentage of CD11c⁺ DC (minimum of 5000 total events) expressing fluorescence for a given marker at levels above that of unstained controls and the MFI of the positive population. Proliferation of OT-1 cells is expressed as the mean value \pm S.D. of triplicate cultures with significant differences between groups determined by a 2-tailed Student's *t*-test when *p* were ≤ 0.05 .

3. Results

3.1. Ad-RGD transduce DC more efficiently than conventional Ad

Mouse BM-DC were transduced by either capsid-modified Ad-RGD/GFP or the conventional Ad/GFP to

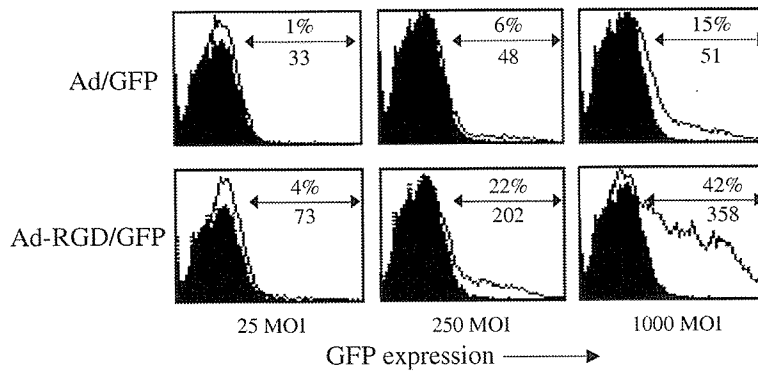


Fig. 1. Transgene expression in DC is enhanced by Ad-RGD/GFP. Mouse BM-DC were harvested after 7–9 days of culture and transduced in vitro in 200 μ l of medium (2% FCS) with either Ad/GFP or Ad-RGD/GFP vectors at MOI of 25, 250 or 1000. After 2 h, cells were resuspended in RPMI-160 medium with 10% FCS, GM-CSF and IL-4 (20 ng/ml of each). GFP expression by CD11c⁺ DC was determined 48 h later by flow cytometry with the percentage of cells expressing GFP and the MFI of the positive population shown for each condition. Representative experiment shown, $n=3$.

evaluate their transduction efficiency at various MOI (25, 250 and 1000). Transgene expression was detected after 48 h by FACS (Fig. 1) Transduction of DC by Ad/GFP resulted in $1 \pm 0.1\%$, $6 \pm 0.5\%$ and $15 \pm 1.0\%$ of the cells being transduced at the different MOI, respectively.

In contrast, transduction employing the Ad-RGD/GFP vector resulted in transduction rates of $4 \pm 1.17\%$, $22 \pm 0.3\%$ and $42 \pm 2.6\%$ at the same MOI. The expression of GFP (MFI) was also significantly higher in DC exposed to Ad-RGD/GFP (73, 202 and 358 at the different MOI)

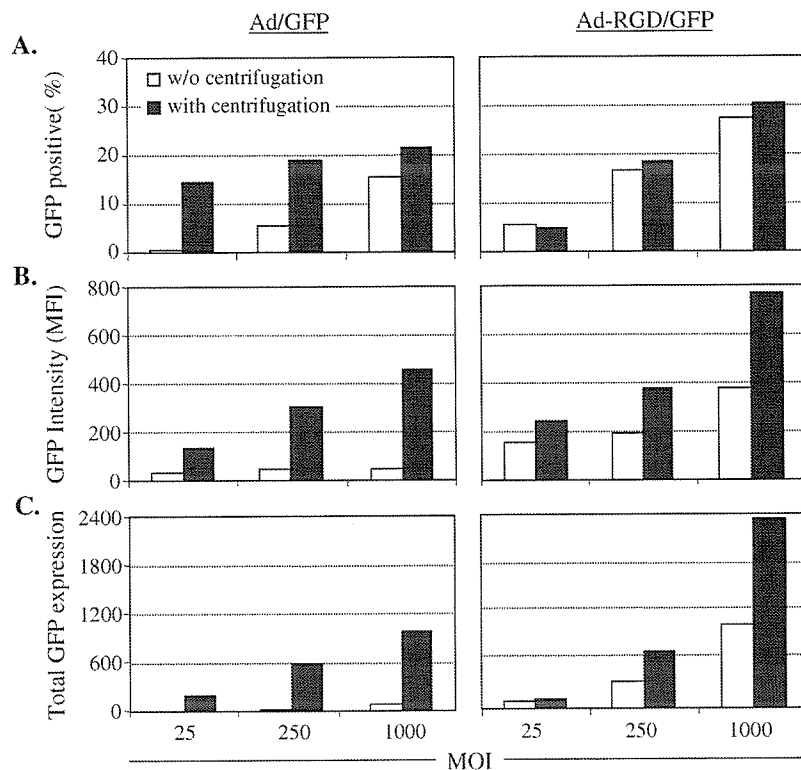


Fig. 2. Enhancement of Ad transduction by centrifugal force. Mouse BM-DC were transduced at different MOI (25, 250 or 1000) with either Ad-GFP or Ad-RGD-GFP, in the presence or absence of centrifugal force (2000 \times g), for 2 h at 37 $^{\circ}$ C. Cells were then cultured for 48 h and GFP expression measured by flow cytometry. A) Percentage of CD11c⁺ DC expressing GFP. B) MFI of GFP expression by transduced DC. C) Total GFP expression (% transduced DC \times MFI) by DC population. Representative experiment, $n=3$.

as compared to cells exposed to Ad/GFP. These results indicate that an Ad-RGD vector can be used to significantly enhance transgene expression by Ad-exposed DC.

3.2. Centrifugation increases transduction efficiency and transgene expression by DC

We also evaluated the use of centrifugal force as an approach for enhancing the transduction of DC (Nishimura et al., 2001a,b). Centrifugation at $2000\times g$ increased both the percentage of DC transduced and the level of transgene expression, and effects were observed to some degree with both the Ad/GFP and Ad-RGD/GFP vectors (Fig. 2). At MOI 25–1000, centrifugation with Ad/GFP increased transduction efficiency by 1.4- to 2-fold and resulted in $14.7\pm 0.3\%$, $19.0\pm 2.9\%$ and $21.6\pm 2.5\%$ of DC expressing GFP (Fig. 2A). The combination of centrifugation with the Ad-RGD/GFP vector resulted in only a ~ 1.1 -fold increase in the percentage of transduced DC (Fig. 2A). While the effect on transduction efficiency was only significant when centrifugation was combined with Ad/GFP, the GFP expression level (MFI) significantly increased when centrifugation was employed with either vector. Centrifugation enhanced GFP expression by

4- to 77-fold when employed with Ad/GFP and 2- to ~ 9 -fold when combined with Ad-RGD/GFP (Fig. 2B). When transduction rate and GFP expression were multiplied to give an overall index of GFP expression, total GFP expression was enhanced 12- to 88-fold by combining centrifugation with Ad/GFP and 1.4- to 2.3-fold by combining centrifugation with Ad-RGD/GFP (Fig. 2). Despite the small impact on GFP expression by the Ad-RGD, the combination of Ad-RGD/GFP with centrifugation still provided the most efficient approach for loading DC with the transgene antigen.

3.3. RGD peptide inhibits Ad-mediated transduction

The finding that centrifugation dramatically increased the transduction frequency when combined with the conventional Ad/GFP vector, but had only modest effects when combined with the modified Ad-RGD/GFP vector suggested that both approaches might be competing for the same binding sites. To evaluate whether centrifugation enhanced transduction by increasing Ad binding to $\alpha_v\beta_3$ or $\alpha_v\beta_5$ integrins, we added exogenous RGD synthetic peptide (RGD-4C) as a specific and competitive inhibitor of this pathway. When 20 μM and 200 μM of RGD peptides were added to the medium

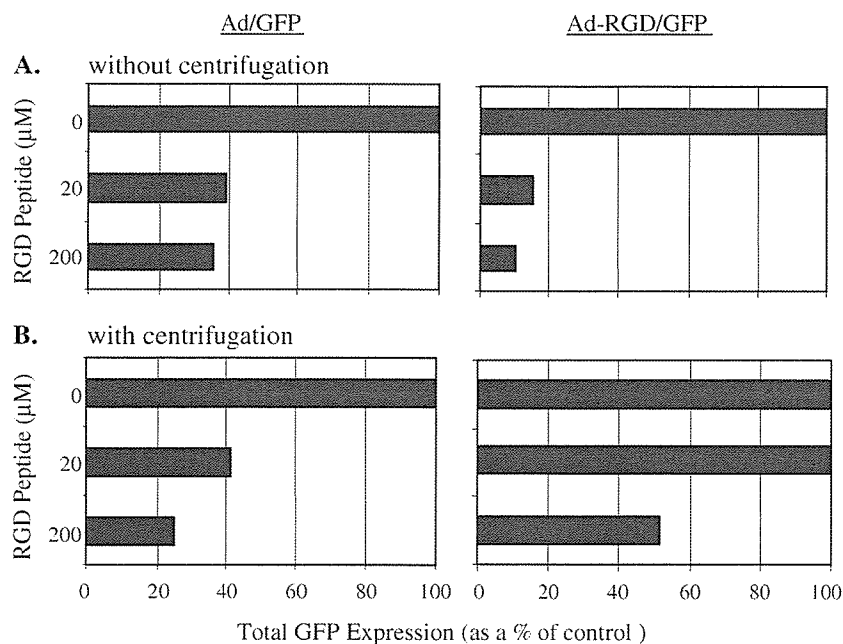


Fig. 3. RGD peptide blocks transduction. Mouse BM-DC were incubated with the RGD-4C peptide (20 μM and 200 μM) at 4 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ for 1 h prior to transduction with Ad/GFP or Ad-RGD/GFP (MOI 1000) for 2 h in the presence or absence of centrifugal force ($2000\times g$). GFP expression was determined by flow cytometry 48 h later. A) Total GFP expression (% transduced DC \times MFI) produced by Ad-GFP and Ad-RGD/GFP presented as a percentage of control expression in the absence of blocking peptide. B) Total GFP expression (% transduced DC \times MFI) produced by Ad-GFP and Ad-RGD/GFP when combined with centrifugation and presented as a percentage of control expression in the absence of blocking peptide. Representative experiment, $n=3$.

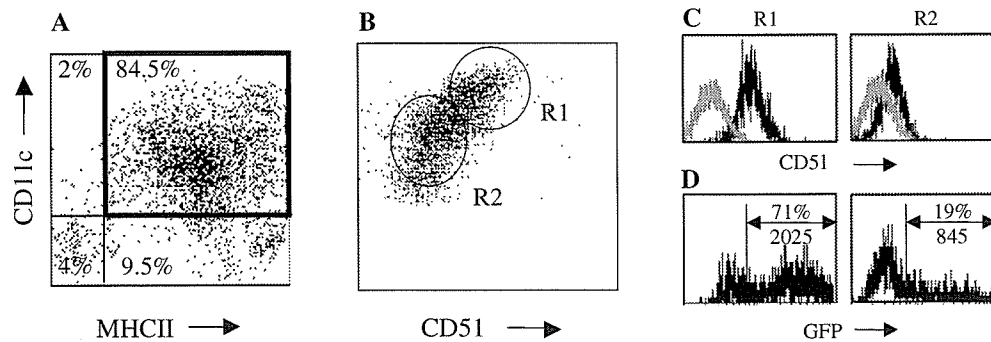


Fig. 4. DC transduction is restricted primarily to the subset of cells expressing high levels of CD51. Cells from the bone marrow-derived cultures were harvested after 7 days GM-CSF and IL-4 and transduced (2 h, 37 °C) with Ad-RGD/GFP (MOI 1000) in the presence of centrifugal force (2000 \times g), followed by culture for an additional 48 h. A) Within the bone marrow-derived cultures, 80–90% of the cells were typical BM-DC as defined by the concurrent expression of both CD11c and MHC II. B) BM-DC, defined by their expression of CD11c, were examined for their expression of CD51 by flow cytometry. C) Cells were then gated into two populations, one expressing high levels of CD51 (R1) and one expressing low levels of CD51 (R2). D) GFP expression was then independently analyzed on the CD51 high (R1) and CD51 low (R2) DC subsets as a measure of the susceptibility of these two subpopulations to transduction by Ad-RGD/GFP. Representative experiment, $n=8$.

prior to Ad infection, total GFP expression was reduced by 60.8% and 64.4% in the setting of transduction with Ad/GFP alone, and by 84.7% and 89.7% in cultures

containing Ad-RGD/GFP, respectively (Fig. 3A). Similarly, when transduction was performed in the setting of centrifugation, addition of RGD peptides at the same

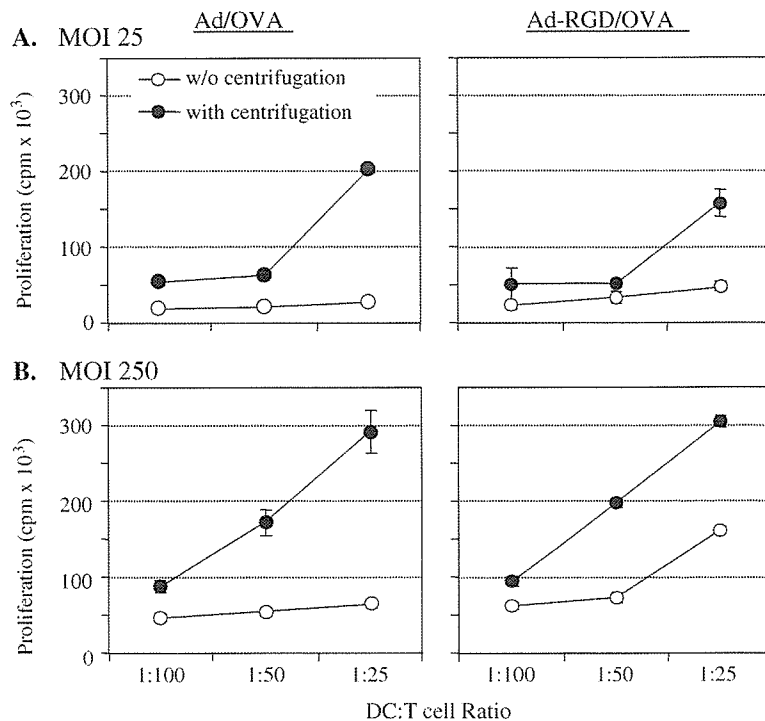


Fig. 5. The capacity for Ad-transduced DC to stimulate transgene-specific T cells depends upon the type of vector, the MOI and the presence or absence of centrifugation. BM-DC were harvested after 7 days of culture and transduced at a MOI of either 25 (A) or 250 (B) with either Ad/OVA or Ad-RGD/OVA in the presence or absence of centrifugal force (2000 \times g). DC were harvested 48 h later and co-cultured for 3 days at multiple DC:T cell ratios (1:25–1:100) with 2×10^5 OVA specific CD8⁺ T cells purified from the lymph nodes of OT-1 mice. Cultures were pulsed with 1.25 μ Ci (46.2 kBq) [³H]-thymidine and cells harvested 12 h later for determination of proliferation by liquid scintillation counting. Results are the mean \pm S.E. of triplicate cultures. Representative experiment, $n=3$.

concentrations resulted in a decrease in GFP expression by 58.6% and 75.1% with Ad/GFP and by 0.5% and 48.00% with Ad-RGD/GFP, respectively (Fig. 3B). As such, RGD peptides competitively inhibited transduction by both of these vectors alone, as well as the enhancement observed when combined with centrifugation, suggesting common mechanisms of action.

3.4. The enhanced transduction resulting from the use of Ad-RGD and/or centrifugation occurred primarily in DC expressing high levels of α_v integrins

We next used a FACS-based analysis to determine the characteristics of the cells that were transduced by the RGD-Ad vector alone or in combination with centrifugation. Out of the entire bone marrow-derived culture, 80–90% of the cells expressed CD11c and MHC II, identifying them as typical BM-DC (Fig. 4). Only 22–30% of these CD11c⁺ BM-DC expressed high levels of α_v (CD51^{bright}) (Fig. 4, R1), whereas 68–70% of BM-DC expressed only low levels of α_v (CD51^{dim}) (Fig. 4, R2). Within these two subsets, defined by their bright or dim expression of CD51, GFP expression (MFI) was 2025 ± 27.8 within CD51^{bright} DC but only 845 ± 31 within CD51^{dim} DC, again suggesting that transduction by Ad-RGD alone, or in combination with centrifugation, works primarily via an integrin-dependent pathway. Consistent with this, the effects of RGD blocking peptide were also primarily on the CD51^{bright} DC subset (data not shown).

3.5. Expression of MHC and activation markers on transduced DC

The expression of activation markers MHCI, MHCII, B7.1 and B7.2 on DC transduced with Ad/GFP or Ad-RGD/GFP, under standard conditions or in conjunction with centrifugation, was analyzed by FACS. There were no remarkable changes in the expression of these DC activation/maturation markers, although a slight and isolated increase in the expression of MHC I was observed when DC were transduced with Ad-RGD/GFP. Centrifugation did not enhance the expression of any of these markers.

3.6. Use of an Ad-RGD vector alone, and/or with centrifugation, significantly enhances the capacity for DC to activate transgene specific T cells

Ad vectors encoding OVA were used to evaluate the functional consequences that these different modes of transduction had on the capacity for DC to stimulate

OVA-specific T cells obtained from OT-1 transgenic mice. DC were transduced with Ad/OVA or Ad-RGD/OVA at MOI 25 (Fig. 5A) or MOI 250 (Fig. 5B), with/without centrifugation, cultured 48 h and then added to wells containing CD8⁺ OT-1 cells. The magnitude of T cell stimulation was dose dependent with respect to both vectors. DC transduced at MOI 250 induced ~6-fold higher levels of T cell proliferation than did DC transduced at MOI 25 when the Ad-RGD/OVA vector was used and 2–4-fold higher levels of proliferation were noted in the setting of the Ad/OVA vector. However, a significant enhancement was also detected when DC transduced with vectors alone were compared to DC transduced in combination with centrifugation. T cell activation was also more pronounced when DC were transduced with Ad-RGD/OVA as compared to Ad/OVA, and the enhancement due to centrifugation was most prominent when combined with the Ad/OVA vector as compared to the Ad-RGD/OVA vector (Fig. 5A,B).

3.7. Transgene expression correlates with antigen specific T cell stimulation

Finally, in order to study the inter-relationship between transgene expression and transgene-specific T

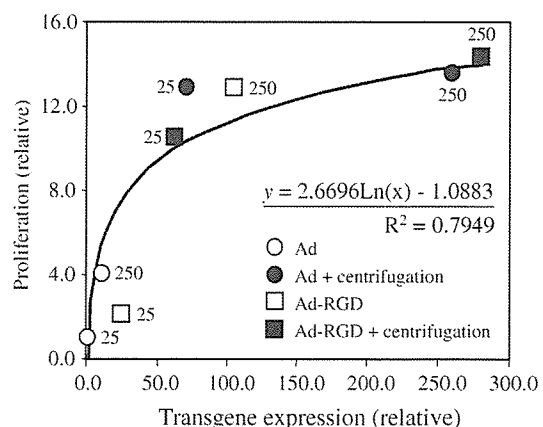


Fig. 6. The expression of transgene antigens by DC correlates with their capacity to activate transgene-specific T cells. BM-DC were transduced with Ad/GFP or Ad-RGD/GFP (MOI 25 or 250 as indicated in the figure), in the presence or absence of centrifugation, and total GFP expression (% transduced DC \times MFI) determined relative to the subset of DC transduced with Ad/GFP MOI 25 alone. Similarly, BM-DC were transduced with Ad/OVA or Ad-RGD/OVA (MOI 25 or 250 as indicated in the figure), in the presence or absence of centrifugation, and their capacity to stimulate the proliferation of OT-1 cells (DC/T cell ratio of 1:50) determined relative to the subset of DC transduced with Ad/OVA MOI 25 alone. Data was pooled from two sets of gene expression assays and two sets of T cell stimulation assays and the mean values evaluated for a correlation between transgene expression and T cell proliferation by a logarithmic regression analysis [$y = \ln(x) + b$].

cell activation, we pooled results from two sets of assays in which DC were either transduced with GFP-expressing vectors to measure antigen loading or the same DC were transduced with OVA-expressing vectors to measure T cell activation (Fig. 6). All results within a given assay were normalized so that the activity produced by the conventional Ad/GFP vector, in the absence of centrifugation, was assigned a value of 1. The enhancement observed by either increasing the MOI, by employing an Ad-RGD vector, or by combining with centrifugation, was calculated as a ratio of the measured activity to that produced by the Ad/GFP vector alone. A direct comparison between the impact of these techniques on antigen expression and on T cell activation yielded a highly significant logarithmic relationship ($R^2=0.795$; Fig. 6).

4. Discussion

The magnitude of antigen loading is an essential factor in determining the capacity for DC to activate immune responses (Bronte et al., 1997). Ad-based gene therapy has provided an important approach for enhancing the antigen-presenting activity of DC and for targeting their subsequent stimulatory activity against defined tumor antigens (Basak et al., 2002; Basak et al., 2004; Reichardt and Brossart, 2004; Jeras et al., 2005; Wu et al., 2005). However, DC lack expression of CAR, the primary Ad receptor (Okada et al., 2003). To address this obstacle, a number of Ad vectors with modified capsids, such as an Ad5/Ad35 chimera vector or fiber-modified Ad-RGD vectors have been designed (Okada et al., 2001; Slager et al., 2004). With respect to the Ad-RGD vector, it was hypothesized that placing an additional RGD binding sequence on the fiber knob would enhance the capacity for viral particles to bind DC. The RGD motif is normally expressed only on the penton base, where it is sterically hindered in its ability to interact with the $\alpha_v\beta_3$ and/or $\alpha_v\beta_5$ integrins expressed on target cells (Reynolds et al., 1999; Mizuguchi et al., 2001). As such, expression of an additional RGD motif on the fiber knob not only increases the number of binding sites but the direct interaction with cell surface integrins.

Since the α_v integrin molecule (CD51) dimerizes with both β_3 and β_5 , CD51 expression was used as an overall measure of RGD binding receptors (Brossart et al., 1997; Okada et al., 2003; Varnavski et al., 2003). Tagging CD51 with a fluorescent labeled monoclonal antibody also allowed us to differentiate BM-DC into two populations, one CD51^{bright} and the other CD51^{dim}. Finally, the availability of soluble RGD peptides

allowed us to block this cell surface receptor and evaluate its role in the transduction process. Using these approaches, we examined both Ad-RGD vectors and centrifugation for the mechanisms by which they enhance DC transduction. By employing matching Ad and Ad-RGD vectors that expressed GFP we were able to directly measure both the frequency of Ad transduction and the level of transgene expression (Fig. 1). Compared to Ad/GFP, infection with Ad-RGD/GFP resulted in a 9 to 20-fold increase in total transgene expression, effects which were observed regardless of the MOI examined. The Ad-RGD/GFP vector increased both the transduction efficiency (by 3- to 4-fold) as well as the magnitude of transgene expression (by 2 to 7-fold). As previously suggested, we hypothesized that this enhancement was directly related to the capacity for this vector to bind integrins expressed on the surface of the DC.

It has been reported that the addition of centrifugal force (centrifugation) during transduction increases viral entry when human DC (Nishimura et al., 2001a,b), monocytes or macrophages (Mayne et al., 2003) are employed as targets. Little is known about the exact mechanisms by which centrifugation works and we hypothesized that it might have an additive or even synergistic effect when combined with the Ad-RGD vector. Indeed, we found that centrifugation increased overall transgene expression by DC when combined with either conventional or Ad-RGD vectors (Fig. 2). However, the magnitude and pattern of the enhancement was not the same in each case. Combining centrifugation with the Ad/GFP vector dramatically increased both the number of transduced cells and their level of expression, reaching maximal values very similar to that obtained using the Ad-RGD vector alone. In contrast, combining centrifugation with Ad-RGD/GFP had almost no effect on the number of transduced cells and only a modest effect on the level of transgene expression. We interpreted these results to indicate that both of these approaches, placing an extra RGD motif on the fiber knob and adding centrifugal force, might be acting through the same pathway—increasing the interaction of RGD motifs with cell surface integrin receptors.

Several approaches were used to evaluate this hypothesis. RGD peptides inhibited both baseline levels of transgene expression produced by the Ad and Ad-RGD vectors, as well as their augmentation by centrifugation (Fig. 3). Interestingly, the effects produced by soluble RGD peptides were not as dramatic when used to block Ad-RGD transduction in the setting of centrifugation. This might be interpreted in two

different manners. First, the effects were still dose dependent and it is possible that higher concentrations of RGD peptide would have led to complete blockade. This would suggest that the combination of centrifugal force and the expression of RGD sequences on the fiber knob result in a significant increase in the avidity of their interaction with surface integrins. Alternatively, if RGD peptides fail to completely block transduction in this setting, it would suggest that a component of viral entry is integrin independent.

To address this question by another approach, we next analyzed transgene expression by the CD51^{bright} and CD51^{dim} subpopulations of DC. As shown in Fig. 4, when CD11c⁺ DC cells were transduced by the Ad-RGD/GFP vector in combination with centrifugation, GFP expression by CD51^{bright} DC was ~5 times higher than that by the CD51^{dim} population, suggesting that the enhancement in gene expression under these circumstances was primarily α_v integrin-specific. Similar result was observed when this approach was used to examine transduction by the conventional AdV alone, or when combined with centrifugation (data not shown).

It has also been reported that Ad-RGD mediated transduction leads to activation of mouse DC resulting in enhanced MHC class and co-stimulatory expression (Hirschowitz et al., 2000; Korst et al., 2002; Salucci et al., 2005). To compare the activation status of DC transduced with conventional Ad and Ad-RGD, in the presence or absence of centrifugation (MOI 1000), we examined their expression of several activation/maturation markers—MHCI, MHC II, B7.1 and B7.2 by FACS. No dramatic changes in the expression of these molecules were detected. Results similar to ours have been reported by others (Nishimura et al., 2001a,b), suggesting that other factors or technical features, other than the transduction process itself, may account for the activation that others have reported.

As antigen presenting cells, DC play an important role in the activation of antigen specific T cells and the induction of cellular immunity. Therefore, by employing OVA-expressing vectors, we examined these different transduction techniques for their effects on T cell activation. DC transduced with the Ad-RGD/OVA vector induced superior activation of OVA specific T cells compared to the results observed after using the Ad-OVA vector (Fig. 5). In an analogous manner, the addition of centrifugation further increased the magnitude of antigen specific T cell responses. However, the relationship between the effects on antigen loading and T cell activation was logarithmic, with T cell activation reaching a plateau with only minor increases in proliferation despite further increases in antigen expression. These

findings suggest that T cell activation becomes relatively antigen dose independent after an optimal level of antigen exposure (Miller et al., 2003; Herrera et al., 2002; Okada et al., 2001). In this respect it is interesting to note that increasing the viral load of a conventional Ad vector by 10-fold (MOI 25 versus 250) had only modest effects on increasing T cell stimulation and was far from optimal. However, optimal T cell activation was reached by either combining centrifugation with a conventional Ad vector or by increasing the dose of the Ad-RGD vector alone. While combining the Ad-RGD vector with centrifugation significantly increased antigen loading, this combination had relatively little impact on boosting T cell activation. Thus, we propose that for optimizing antigen presentation *in vitro*, the use of an RGD vector or the combination of a conventional Ad vector with centrifugation might produce similar results. However, when considering the direct administration of these vectors *in vivo* the RGD-Ad vector may have a significant advantage (Worgall et al., 2004).

In conclusion, our results demonstrated that Ad vectors with an RGD-modified viral capsid targets cell surface integrin receptors and efficiently transduce DC to produce high levels of transgene expression. The addition of centrifugation during the transduction process can further enhance antigen loading. The concentration-dependent inhibition of transduction by soluble RGD peptides and the selective transduction of CD51^{bright} target cells that occurs when either Ad-RGD vectors alone or in combination with centrifugation are employed, strongly suggest that both of these approaches work by increasing interaction with cell surface integrins. Finally, there appears to be a logarithmic relationship between antigen loading and the capacity for transduced DC to activate T cell responses. Simply increasing the dose of a conventional Ad vector has a relatively minor impact on T cell activation when compared to either combining this approach with centrifugation, or replacing the Ad vector with an Ad-RGD vector. Either of these approaches might be used to optimize *in vitro* loading of DC, while the use of an Ad-RGD vector may have unique advantages when considering their application *in vivo*.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Tobacco-Related Disease Research Program of California (SKB, 10KT-0086); the American Lung Association of California (SKB) and the Cancer Research Program, California Department of Health Services (MDR, #TTP1019), Human Gene medicine seed Grant UCLA (SKB). The

Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center/UCLA provided core facilities for flow cytometry and cell sorting.

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SHORT COMMUNICATION

Adenovirus serotype 35 vector-mediated transduction into human CD46-transgenic mice

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We previously demonstrated that systemic administration of adenovirus serotype 35 (Ad35) vectors to mice does not mediate efficient transduction in organs, probably because expression of the mouse analog of the subgroup B Ad receptor, human CD46 (membrane cofactor protein), is limited to the testis. Here, we describe the *in vitro* and *in vivo* transduction characteristics of Ad35 vectors by using homozygous and hemizygous human CD46-transgenic (CD46TG) mice, which ubiquitously express human CD46. An Ad35 vector more efficiently transduced the primary dendritic cells and macrophages prepared from CD46TG mice than those from wild-type mice. *In vivo* transduction experiments demonstrated that CD46TG mice are more susceptible to Ad35 vector-mediated *in vivo* transduction

than are wild-type mice. In particular, homozygous CD46TG mice, which express higher levels of CD46 in the organs than hemizygous CD46TG mice, tend to exhibit higher transduction efficiencies after intraperitoneal administration than hemizygous CD46TG mice. Intraperitoneal administration of Ad35 vectors resulted in efficient transduction into the mesothelial cells of the peritoneal organs in homozygous CD46TG mice. These results indicate that an Ad35 vector recognizes human CD46 as a cellular receptor in CD46TG mice. However, the *in vivo* transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors in CD46TG mice are much lower than those of conventional Ad5 vectors in wild-type mice.

Gene Therapy (2006) 13, 1118–1126. doi:10.1038/sj.gt.3302749; published online 16 March 2006

Keywords: adenovirus serotype 35 vector; human CD46; human CD46-transgenic mice; receptor; biodistribution

The human adenoviruses (Ads) comprise a group of 51 serologically distinct viruses.^{1,2} Among them, Ad vectors widely used for gene therapy are based on Ad serotype 5 (Ad5), which belongs to subgroup C. Adenovirus serotype 5 vectors have several attractive features as gene delivery vehicles; for example, they have noteworthy *in vivo* transduction efficiency and transduction ability into both proliferating and non-proliferating cells. In addition, Ad5 vectors can be grown to high titer, and large stretches of foreign DNA can be inserted into the Ad5 vector genome.

However, recent studies have revealed several disadvantages associated with the clinical use of Ad5 vectors. One disadvantage is the high prevalence of adult humans (>50%) who produce neutralizing antibodies to Ad5.^{3,4} Pre-existing neutralizing antibodies prevent Ad vectors from transducing cells *in vivo*.⁵ Furthermore, Ad vector preimmunization in mice has been demonstrated to significantly increase vector-mediated liver toxicity on re-exposure.⁶ Therefore, pre-

existing immunity to Ad5 vectors greatly hampers the *in vivo* application of Ad5 vectors. Inefficient transduction with Ad5 vectors of cells lacking expression of a primary receptor for Ad5, coxsackievirus and adenovirus receptor (CAR), is also highly problematic. Several important target cells for gene therapy, including hematopoietic stem cells,⁷ dendritic cells (DCs)⁸ and malignant tumor cells,⁹ express low levels of CAR.

To overcome these drawbacks of Ad5 vectors, several groups (including ours) have developed Ad vectors composed of other human Ad serotypes, such as Ad serotype 7a,¹⁰ 11^{4,11} and 35,^{12–15} and Ads of animal origin, such as chimpanzee,¹⁶ bovine,¹⁷ mouse¹⁸ and ovine.¹⁹ Among these non-Ad5 vectors, those composed of human Ad11 and Ad35, which belong to subgroup B, are highly promising as gene transfer vectors for the following reasons. First, Ad11 and Ad35 are serotypes least neutralized by serum from healthy human blood donors: less than 20% of serum samples are positive for anti-Ad11 and -Ad35 neutralizing antibodies.¹⁴ Second, human subgroup B Ads, including Ad11 and Ad35, recognize human CD46 (membrane cofactor protein) as a cellular receptor,^{20,21} although Ads belonging to subgroups A, C, D, E and F use CAR as a primary receptor. CD46 is a single-chain type I transmembrane glycoprotein that is ubiquitously expressed in all cells (except erythrocytes) in humans, suggesting that human sub-

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Received 29 September 2005; revised 19 January 2006; accepted 21 January 2006; published online 16 March 2006

group B Ads can infect almost all human cell types, regardless of CAR expression. We previously demonstrated that Ad35 vectors show broad tropism toward human cells,^{12,13,22} including CAR-negative cells, because of the ubiquitous expression of CD46. Furthermore, CD46 expression is highly upregulated in human malignant tumor cells,^{23,24} suggesting that these cells would be suitable targets for Ad35 vector-mediated transduction.

Adenovirus serotype 35 vectors exhibit efficient transduction in a variety of human cells *in vitro*. In contrast, systemic administration of Ad35 vectors into mice mediates low levels of transduction efficiencies in organs.^{13,14} The refractoriness of mice to Ad35 vectors would be owing to the expression pattern of CD46 in this host. Whereas CD46 is ubiquitously expressed in humans, expression of mouse CD46 is limited to the testes. In addition, mouse and human CD46s are only 46% similar.²⁵ These differences indicate that the conventional mouse is not a suitable small animal model for characterization of Ad35 vector-mediated *in vivo* transduction. A small animal model in which the transduction properties of Ad35 vectors can be characterized appropriately is essential to estimate the efficiency of Ad35 vector-mediated transduction in humans.

In the present study, to evaluate the *in vivo* transduction properties of Ad35 vectors in an animal model that ubiquitously expresses CD46 (as do humans), we administered Ad35 vectors intravenously and intraperitoneally into homozygous and hemizygous human CD46-transgenic (CD46TG) mice, which have a human CD46 gene inserted into the mouse genome. Our results indicate that CD46 acts as an attachment receptor for Ad35 after *in vivo* administration, but the transduction efficiencies in organs were lower than we had expected.

First, Western blot analysis was performed to examine human CD46 expression levels in the organs of homozygous and hemizygous CD46TG mice. As shown in Figure 1, human CD46 was ubiquitously expressed in all organs examined of homozygous and hemizygous CD46TG mice. In particular, amounts of CD46 were higher in the liver, spleen, lung and kidney than in other organs. CD46 expression patterns in CD46TG mice mimicked those observed in humans, which were reported previously,²⁶ and homozygous CD46TG mice expressed CD46 more abundantly than hemizygous mice. CD46 expression in the liver, spleen and diaphragm of homozygous mice was 3.2, 3.7 and 3.2 times that, respectively, in these organs of the hemizygous mice. We also confirmed that human CD46 expression levels in the primary hepatocytes, splenocytes and thymocytes of the homozygous mice were similar to, or lower than, those in human cultured cell lines (human hepatoma and leukemia lines; data not shown). Flow cytometric and Western blotting analysis failed to detect CD46 expression in the erythrocytes of our CD46TG mice (data not shown), although detectable levels of CD46 were expressed in the erythrocytes of some CD46TG mice lines used in other studies.^{27,28}

Next, we performed *in vitro* transduction of an Ad35 vector into bone marrow-derived dendritic cells (mBM-DC) and peritoneal macrophages prepared from CD46TG and wild-type mice. Recently, the potential utility of Ad35 vectors as vaccine vectors has been proposed,^{29,30} and DC and macrophages are considered

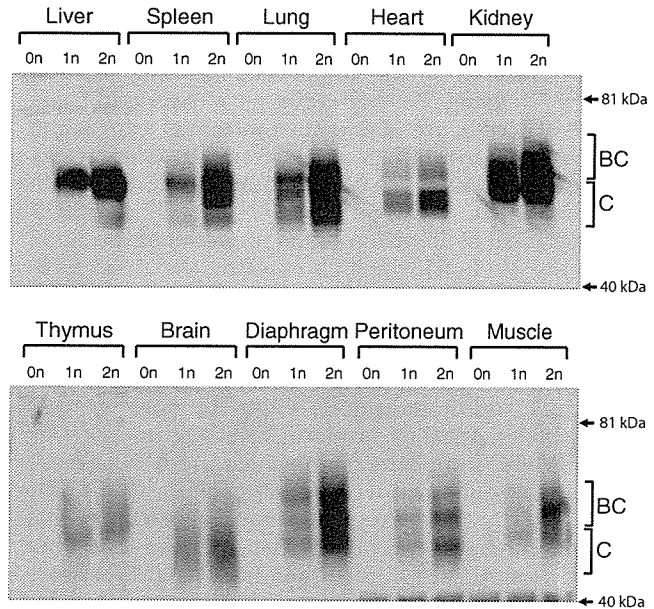


Figure 1 Human CD46 expression in organs harvested from CD46TG mice. The protein samples were prepared from wild-type mice (0n), hemizygous CD46TG mice (1n) and homozygous CD46TG mice (2n). The molecular masses of marker proteins (kDa) and approximate positions of the two major isoforms of the CD46 proteins (BC and C isoforms) are indicated on the right. CD46TG mice were produced as follows. Spermatozoa were dispersed from the epididymis of mature (>12 weeks old) B6D2F1 male mice into 400 μ l of TYH medium⁵⁰ and were frozen in liquid nitrogen immediately after dilution with TYH medium to 1×10^7 /ml. The bacterial artificial chromosome DNA carrying human CD46 (5 μ g/ml in TE) (GenomeSystems Inc., St Louis, MO, USA) was added to thawed sperm after purification by using the Large-Construct Kit (Qiagen, Valencia, CA, USA). The mixture was incubated for 5 min at room temperature and then diluted with 9 volumes of 12% PVP-HCZB. Metaphase II oocytes for microinjection were prepared from B6D2F1 female mice, as described previously.⁵¹ These oocytes were maintained in potassium simplex optimized medium (kSOM) under mineral oil equilibrated in 5% (v/v) CO₂ in air at 37°C until use. For microinjection, sperm heads were aspirated into a pipette attached to a piezoelectric pipette-driving unit, and a sperm head was injected into each oocyte, as described previously.⁵¹ After injection, the eggs were incubated in kSOM until two-cell stage, and were transferred to ICR pseudo-pregnant foster mothers. CD46TG mice were detected among the pups born by using genomic PCR as described previously.⁴⁰ After backcrossing to the C57Bl6 background for more than five generations, homozygous CD46TG mice were obtained by mating hemizygous mice. Homozygous CD46TG mice were identified by mating CD46TG mice with wild-type mice. For Western blotting analysis, organs collected from wild-type mice (C57Bl6, female, 5 weeks old, obtained from Nippon SLC Co. Ltd, Shizuoka, Japan) and CD46TG mice (female, 5 weeks old) were homogenized in phosphate-buffered saline containing 1% Triton-X, 2 mM EGTA and proteinase inhibitor cocktail (1 mM PMSE, 1 μ g/ml pepstatin and 1 μ g/ml leupeptin). After centrifugation of the homogenates, the supernatants (7.5 μ g protein per sample) underwent nonreducing sodium dodecyl sulfate-12.5% polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, and the separated proteins were transferred to a nitrocellulose membrane. After blocking of nonspecific binding, CD46 was detected with anti-CD46 rabbit serum (1:5000; kindly provided by Dr T Seya, Hokkaido University, Japan), followed by incubation in the presence of peroxidase-labeled anti-rabbit antibody (1:6000). Signals on the membrane were visualized and analyzed as described previously.⁵²

to be ideal targets for immunotherapy using Ad35 vector-based vaccines. Bone marrow-derived dendritic cells³¹ and peritoneal macrophages³² were prepared as

described previously. An Ad35 vector that expresses green fluorescence protein (GFP), Ad35GFP, was prepared by means of an improved *in vitro* ligation method^{22,33,34} using 293-E1B cells as a packaging cell line. 293-E1B cells are stable transformants expressing Ad35E1B proteins, which were generated by transfection of pEF-Ad35E1B into 293 cells and after selection with G418 (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, USA). pEF-Ad35E1B was constructed by insertion of the fragment of the Ad35 genome (bp 1911–3413), which contains the Ad35 E1B-55 K gene, into pEF/myc/nuc (Invitrogen). The plaque-forming unit (PFU)-to-particle ratios of Ad35GFP in 293-E1B cells was 1:66.

Flow cytometric analysis showed that mBM-DC from hemizygous and homozygous CD46TG mice express considerable amounts of human CD46 (Figure 2a): 47% of the mBM-DC from hemizygous mice and 87% of those from homozygous mice were CD46-positive (% of M1-gated). Transduction experiments demonstrated that Ad35GFP mediated more efficient transduction in mBM-DC from CD46TG mice than from wild-type mice (Figure 3a). Ad35GFP at a dose of 3000 vector particles (VP)/cell successfully transduced about 42% of the mBM-DC from the hemizygous CD46TG mice and 83% of those from homozygous mice. In contrast, only 3.8% of the mBM-DC from wild-type mice were positive for GFP expression, a rate that is only slightly above background level. In addition, mean fluorescence intensity data revealed that the mBM-DC from CD46TG mice were more susceptible to Ad35 vector than those from wild-type mice. Similar results were obtained for peritoneal macrophages. Human CD46 was expressed in 20% of the peritoneal macrophages from hemizygous CD46TG mice and in 41% of those from homozygous animals (Figure

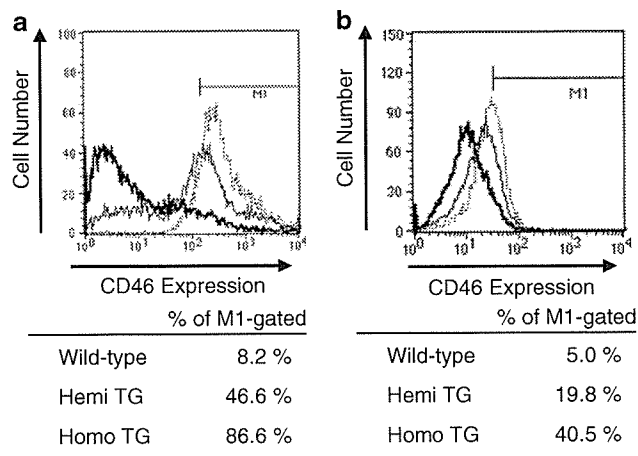


Figure 2 CD46 expression in (a) bone marrow-derived dendritic cells (mBM-DC) and (b) peritoneal macrophages from wild-type mice and CD46TG mice. Thick lines, thin lines and dotted lines represent cells from wild-type mice (C57Bl6, 5 weeks old), and hemizygous (Hemi TG, 5–6 weeks old) and homozygous (Homo TG, 5–6 weeks old) CD46TG mice, respectively. Bone marrow-derived dendritic cells and peritoneal macrophages were incubated with fluorescein isothiocyanate-conjugated anti-human CD46 antibody (E4.3; Pharmingen, San Diego, CA, USA) after incubation with anti-Fc γ RIII/III monoclonal antibody (2.4G2; Pharmingen) to block nonspecific binding of the anti-human CD46 antibody. After being washed thoroughly, 10⁴ stained cells were analyzed using a FACSCalibur (Becton Dickinson, Tokyo, Japan) and CellQuest software (Becton Dickinson).

2b). Infection by Ad35GFP resulted in 10% GFP-positive macrophages from hemizygous CD46TG mice and in 20% GFP-positive macrophages among those from homozygous transgenic mice. In contrast, the macrophages from wild-type mice were refractory to Ad35 vector-mediated transduction (Figure 3b). These results indicate that human CD46 expression greatly increases the transduction efficiency of Ad35 vector in mouse primary cells and that the *in vitro* transduction efficiency of Ad35 vector depends on CD46 expression density.

The refractoriness of mBM-DC and macrophages from wild-type mice also suggests inefficient interaction between the RGD motif in the penton base of Ad35 vector and α v-integrins on the cells. The hypervariable RGD loop in the penton base of the Ad35 vector is supposed to be shorter than that of conventional Ad5 viruses because the RGD loop of Ad11 (55 amino acids), the sequence of which is identical to that of Ad35, is shorter than that of Ad2 (74 amino acids).³⁵ It suggests that α v-integrins on the cell surface might be less easily accessible to the RGD motif in the penton bases of Ad35 viruses, compared with Ad5 vectors. Conventional Ad5 vectors transduce to varying degrees via interaction

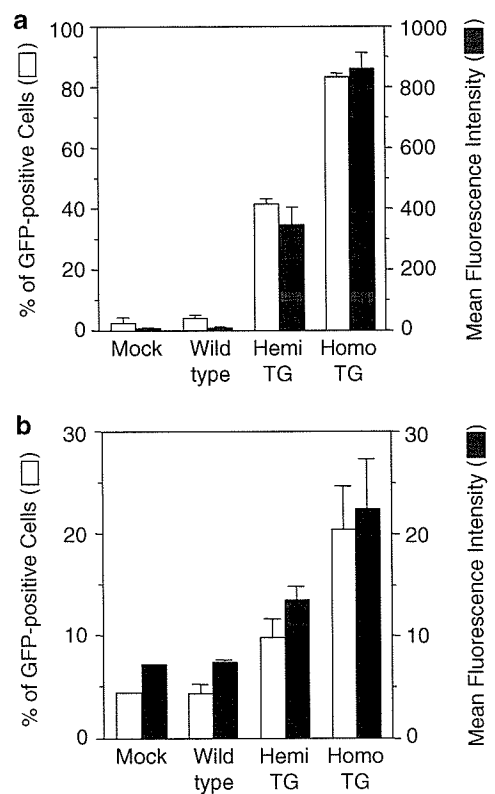


Figure 3 Ad35 vector-mediated green fluorescence protein (GFP) expression in (a) bone marrow-derived dendritic cells (mBM-DC) and (b) peritoneal macrophages prepared from wild-type mice and CD46TG mice. Open bars represent percentages of cells positive for GFP, and closed bars indicate mean fluorescence intensity. Bone marrow-derived dendritic cells (5×10^5 cells/well) and peritoneal macrophages (2×10^5 cells/well) prepared from wild-type mice and hemizygous (Hemi TG) and homozygous (Homo TG) CD46TG mice were seeded into 12-well plates the day before transduction. The cells were then transduced with Ad35GFP at 3000 VP/cell for 1.5 h. After a total of 48 h of incubation, GFP expression in cells was evaluated by flow cytometric analysis. The results are represented as mean \pm s.d. ($n = 3$).

between the RGD motif in the penton base and α v-integrins, even in the absence of the primary receptor for Ad5, CAR.³⁶

Next, to assess the *in vivo* transduction properties of Ad35 vectors in CD46TG mice, we intravenously and intraperitoneally administered an Ad35 vector that expressed luciferase (Ad35L). Ad35L was prepared in the same way as Ad35GFP. The PFU-to-particle ratio of Ad35L in 293-E1B cells was 1:625. Intravenous administration of Ad35L to hemizygous and homozygous CD46TG mice increased the transduction efficiencies for the liver, lung and kidney over those in wild-type mice. In contrast, no apparent increase in luciferase production occurred in the spleen or thymus of CD46TG mice (Figure 4a). There were no clear differences in the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors between the homozygous and hemizygous mice, except in the case of liver.

In contrast, transduction efficiencies of Ad35L in the liver, spleen and kidney of CD46TG mice after intraperitoneal administration were much higher than those after intravenous administration (Figure 4b). Intraperitoneal injection into homozygous mice led to transduction efficiencies in the liver and kidney that were 83 and 271 times that after intravenous administration, respectively. Furthermore, even larger differences in transduction efficiency occurred between CD46TG mice and wild-type mice after intraperitoneal injection. Luciferase production from the liver, kidney and diaphragm of homozygous mice was 536, 492 and 83 times, respectively, that of wild-type mice. Comparison of the homozygous and hemizygous mice demonstrated that after intraperitoneal administration of vector, the homozygous mice appeared to be more susceptible to Ad35 vectors. Transgene expression levels in the liver and diaphragm of homozygous mice were 6.8 and 5.5 times, respectively, those of the hemizygous mice. The increased transduction efficiencies in the homozygous mice are probably owing to their increased levels of CD46 expression (Figure 1). These results indicate that CD46TG mice are more susceptible to Ad35 vectors than wild-type mice. However, the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors in CD46TG mice after both intraperitoneal and intravenous injection were much lower than those of conventional Ad5 vectors in wild-type mice.¹³ Luciferase production in the liver and spleen by Ad35 vectors intravenously administered to homozygous CD46TG mice was approximately 20 000 and 57 times lower, respectively, than that from Ad5 vectors administered intravenously to wild-type mice at the same dose as for the Ad35 vector in the present study (Ad5 vector-mediated luciferase expression levels in wild-type mice at a dose of 1.5×10^{10} VP/mouse after intravenous administration: liver, 2266 pg/mg protein; spleen, 0.893 pg/mg protein; kidney, 0.768 pg/mg protein; heart, 2.13 pg/mg protein; lung, 0.252 pg/mg protein).¹³

Next, to compare the fate of Ad35 vectors after *in vivo* administration to wild-type versus CD46TG mice, we used real-time PCR at 48 h post-administration to measure the amounts of Ad35L genomic sequences that had accumulated in various organs. After intravenous administration to CD46TG mice, the vector DNA in the sampled organs of CD46TG mice (except for liver) exceeded that in those of wild-type mice (Figure 5a). In addition, homozygous mice appeared to take up higher amounts of Ad35L than hemizygous mice. For example,

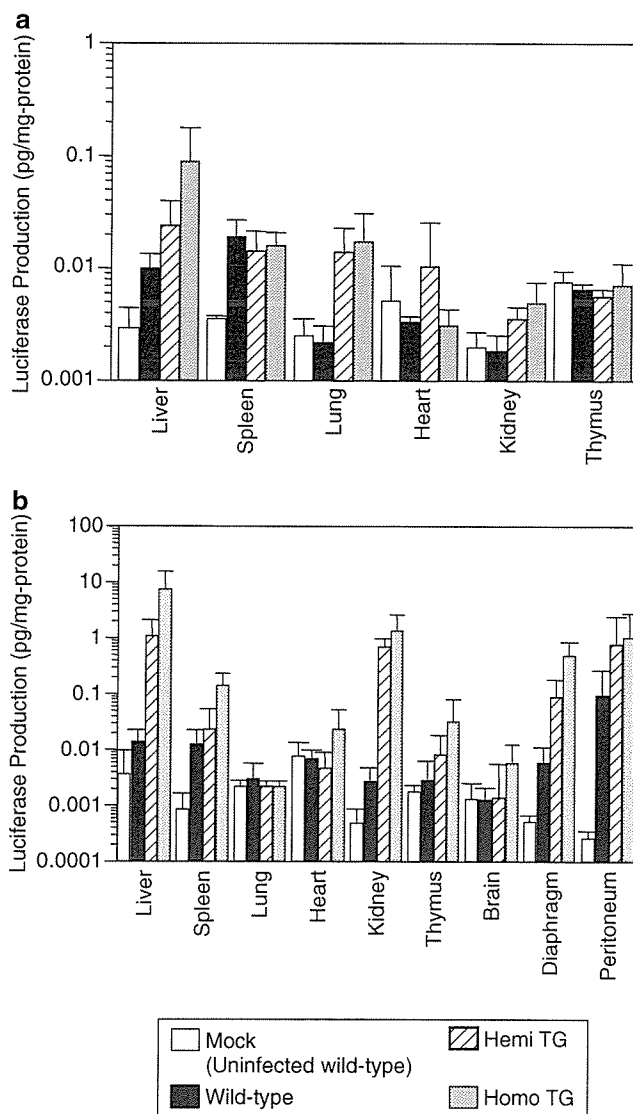


Figure 4 Luciferase production in CD46TG and wild-type mice after intravenous and intraperitoneal administration of Ad35L. (a) Luciferase production after intravenous administration of the vector. (b) Luciferase production after intraperitoneal administration. Ad35L (1.5×10^{10} VP) was administered to wild-type mice (C57Bl6, 5 weeks old) and hemizygous (Hemi TG, 5–6 weeks old) and homozygous (Homo TG, 5–6 weeks old) CD46TG mice. After 48 h, the organs were harvested and homogenized as described previously,⁵³ and luciferase production was measured by a luminescence assay system (PicaGene 5500; Toyo Inki, Japan). The data are represented as mean \pm s.d. ($n=4$, intravenous administration; $n=6$, intraperitoneal administration).

Ad35 vector quantities in the spleen, which contained the most Ad35 vector DNA among the organs tested, of hemizygous and homozygous mice were 8 and 69 times, respectively, that in wild-type mice. In contrast, Ad35 vector DNA did not accumulate to high levels in the liver of CD46TG mice. Moreover, these quantities were similar, or slightly lower than, those in other organs of CD46TG mice, even though liver is well known to be a predominant organ for sequestration of Ad5 vectors administered intravenously to mice.^{37,38}

After intraperitoneal injection, Ad35L was accumulated more efficiently in the liver, kidney, peritoneum

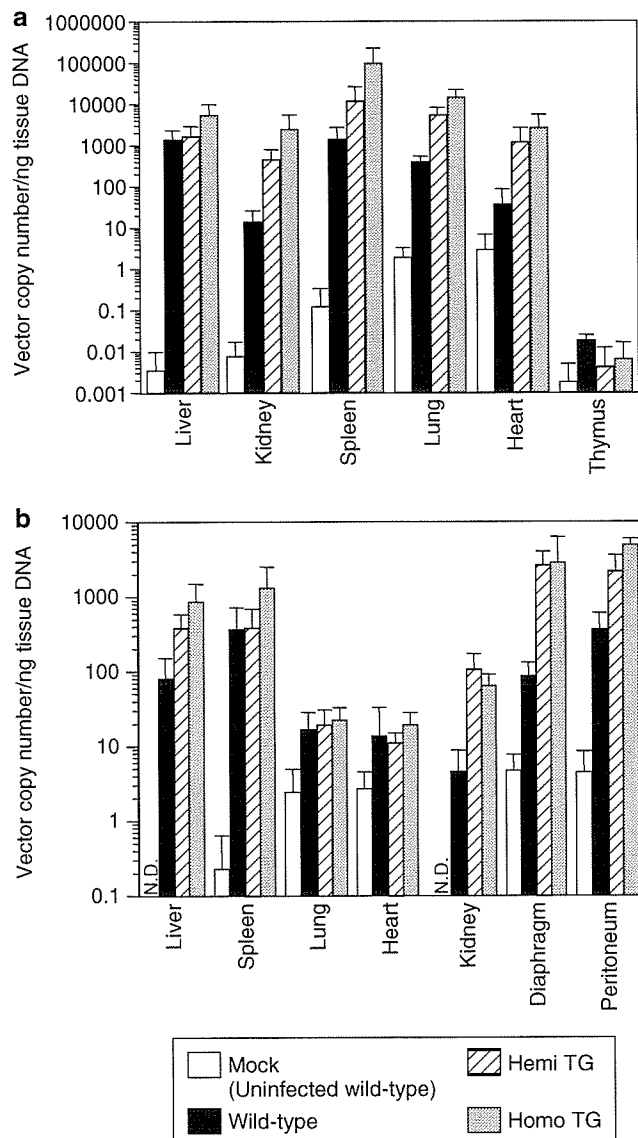


Figure 5 Tissue distribution of viral DNA in CD46TG and wild-type mice after intravenous and intraperitoneal administration of Ad35L. (a) Ad35L vector DNA detected in organs after intravenous administration. (b) Ad35L vector DNA detected in organs after intraperitoneal administration. Ad35L (1.5×10^{10} VP) was administered to wild-type mice (C57Bl6, 5 weeks old) and hemizygous (Hemi TG, 5–6 weeks old) and homozygous (Homo TG, 5–6 weeks old) CD46TG mice. After 48 h, the organs were harvested, and total DNA including viral DNA was extracted from the tissues after proteinase K digestion, and 25 ng samples of total DNA were subjected to quantitative real-time PCR, as described previously.²² The data are represented as mean \pm s.d. ($n = 4$).

and diaphragm of CD46TG mice than in those of wild-type mice (Figure 5b). The quantities of vector DNA in the liver and kidney of homozygous CD46TG mice were 11 and 14 times, respectively, those of wild-type mice. Furthermore, Ad35 vector DNA tended to be accumulated more efficiently in the liver, spleen, peritoneum and diaphragm of the homozygous mice than in those of the hemizygous mice. In addition, low levels of viral DNA were detected in the lung and heart, which are not directly accessible to intraperitoneally injected Ad35L from the injection point, with no significant difference

between CD46TG mice and wild-type mice in the amounts that were detected. The data on the *in vivo* transduction efficiencies and viral DNA accumulation indicate that Ad35 vectors administered *in vivo* use human CD46 in CD46TG mice. In both intravenous and intraperitoneal dosing experiments, the total amounts of Ad35 vector DNA recovered from wild-type mice were lower than those from CD46TG mice. The decreased recovery of Ad35 vector DNA from wild-type mice could be due to its degradation in phagocytic cells, such as liver Kupffer cells. We speculate that the absence of human CD46 expression in organs results in decreased infection of the organs and increased uptake of Ad35 vector by phagocytic cells, leading to degradation of Ad35 vector DNA. In the previous study, we demonstrated that Ad35 vectors predominantly were taken up by liver nonparenchymal cells (endothelial and Kupffer cells) after intravenous administration in wild-type mice, and that the internalized Ad35 vector DNA was degraded rapidly.¹³

Finally, to examine the types of cells that Ad35 vectors transduce in CD46TG mice, we performed X-gal staining of the peritoneal organs after intraperitoneal administration of Ad35LacZ, an Ad35 vector expressing β -galactosidase (dose, 7.5×10^{10} VP/mouse). The vector was prepared by means of an improved *in vitro* ligation method^{22,33,34} using pAdMS18 and pHMCMV6-LacZ. pAdMS18 was constructed by ligating oligonucleotides encoding I-CeuI/SwaI/PI-SceI into the *PacI* site of pFS2-Ad35-7.¹² pHMCMV6-LacZ was generated by cloning the *Escherichia coli* β -galactosidase gene derived from pCMV β (Clontech, Palo Alto, CA, USA) into the multicloning site of pHMCMV6.³⁴ The PFU-to-particle ratio of Ad35LacZ in 293-E1B cells was 1:315.

The peritoneal organs (liver, kidney and peritoneum) were efficiently transduced with Ad35LacZ (Figure 6a–f). However, X-gal staining of liver and kidney sections revealed that mainly the mesothelial cells on the surface of the liver and kidney were transduced; few deeper cells were transduced (Figure 6g–j). These results indicate that after injection, Ad35 vectors directly access the mesothelial cells of these organs, leading to efficient transduction.

In the present study, we assessed the *in vitro* and *in vivo* transduction properties of Ad35 vectors by using homozygous and hemizygous human CD46TG mice, a small animal model in which human CD46 is expressed with human-like tissue specificity. Human CD46 serves as a cellular receptor for not only subgroup B Ads but also several human pathogens, including measles virus, human herpes virus 6 and two types of bacteria.³⁹ Therefore, CD46TG mice already have been used in several studies, which have reported that replication of the pathogens and inflammatory responses occur in CD46TG mice after exposure to the pathogens, demonstrating the utility of CD46TG mice as animal models (note that for study of measles virus, the alpha/beta-interferon receptor gene is usually knocked out with insertion of the human CD46 gene).^{28,40,41} In addition, in most of the CD46TG mice lines used in these studies, including in our present study, expression of human CD46 is driven by the human CD46 promoter, not the promoter of a ubiquitously expressed gene, leading to a pattern of CD46 expression similar to that in humans.^{27,28,40} This conservation of the expression pattern is another advantage of using CD46TG mice as an animal model.

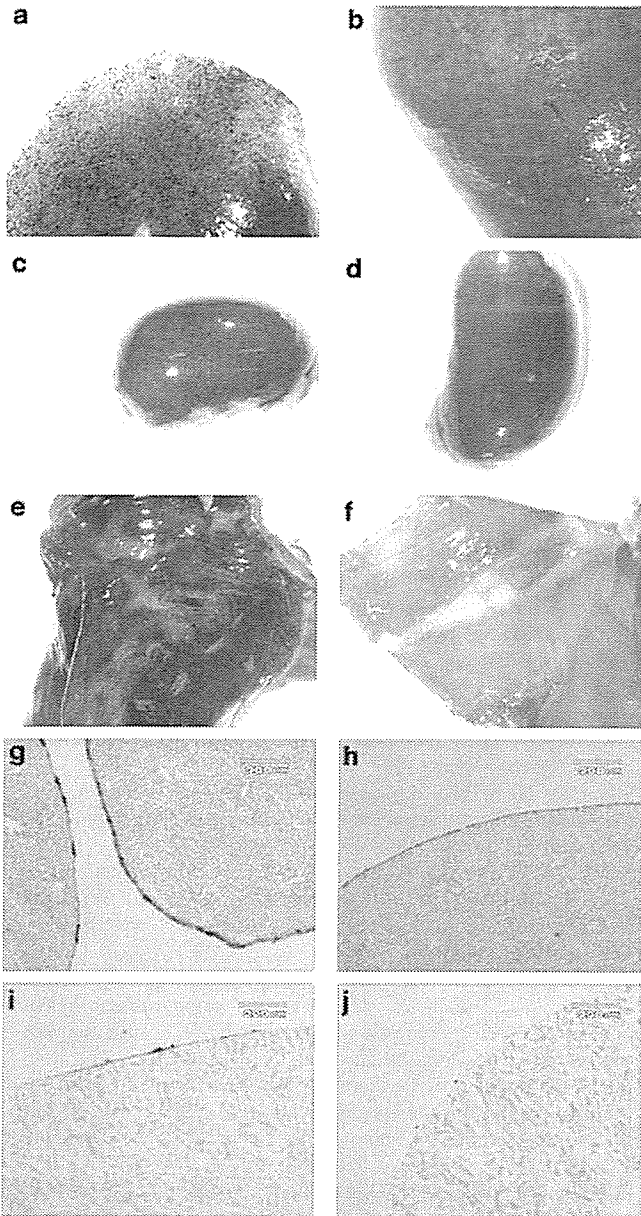


Figure 6 X-gal staining of the peritoneal organs of homozygous CD46TG mice receiving β -galactosidase-expressing Ad35 vectors. (a) Liver, (c) kidney, (e) peritoneum, (g) liver and (i) kidney sections from homo TG mice injected with Ad35LacZ. (b) Liver, (d) kidney, (f) peritoneum, (h) liver and (j) kidney sections from mock-infected homo TG mice. Ad35LacZ was injected intraperitoneally into homozygous CD46TG mice at a dose of 7.5×10^{10} VP/mouse. At 2 days postadministration, the organs were recovered after perfusion with 0.5% glutaraldehyde solution and then fixed and stained as described previously⁵⁴ by using 0.5% glutaraldehyde instead of 4% paraformaldehyde. For X-gal staining of liver and kidney, 10 μ m sections were cut, fixed with 0.5% glutaraldehyde, and stained as described previously.⁵⁵

In vivo transduction experiments using CD46TG mice showed that Ad35 vectors mediated higher transduction efficiencies in CD46TG mice than wild-type mice, indicating that Ad35 vectors recognize human CD46 as an attachment receptor on *in vivo* application. However, the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors in CD46TG mice were much lower than expected. Addition of human CD46 expression to mouse primary cells greatly

enhanced Ad35 vector-mediated transduction (Figure 3). Our previous study demonstrated that the transduction activities of Ad5 and Ad35 vectors were nearly equivalent in human cultured cell lines,¹³ which express high levels of CD46. These results suggest that, in cells expressing sufficient CD46, the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors could be similar to those of Ad5 vectors. Therefore, we had expected that the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors in CD46TG mice would greatly increase to levels comparable to those of Ad5 vectors. However, the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors in the organs of homozygous CD46TG mice after intravenous administration were approximately 20- to 20 000-fold lower than those of conventional Ad5 vectors at the same dose (1.5×10^{10} VP/mouse) in wild-type mice.¹³ Why the *in vivo* transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors in CD46TG mice were lower than expected remains to be clarified. One possibility is that Ad35 vectors administered to CD46TG mice cannot access the human CD46 that is expressed on the cells. Human CD46 primarily is expressed on the basolateral surfaces of polarized epithelial cells,^{42,43} and measles virus preferentially infects cells from their basolateral, rather than apical, sides.⁴⁴ Anatomical barriers such as the tightness between the basal membrane and extracellular matrix might impair the access of Ad35 vectors to the human CD46 on the basolateral cell surface. Another possibility is that an unidentified receptor or co-receptor for Ad35 is expressed in humans but not in CD46TG mice. Segerman *et al.*⁴⁵ suggest that there are two different receptors in human cells for subgroup B Ads. Interaction between Ad35 vectors and blood components (blood cells or serum proteins) might also inhibit Ad35 vector-mediated transduction after intravenous administration. In particular, the soluble form of human CD46, which is found in normal human serum,⁴⁶ might block infection by Ad35 vectors. However, preincubation of Ad35 vectors with serum or blood cells recovered from CD46TG mice did not reduce the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors *in vitro* (data not shown). Further evaluation is necessary to clarify whether studies using CD46TG mice appropriately evaluate the transduction properties of Ad35 vectors. Currently, we are examining the transduction properties of Ad35 vectors in non-human primates, which express CD46 in all organs. The findings should greatly help us to understand characteristics of Ad35 vector-mediated transduction, including the validity and utility of CD46TG mice as model animals for Ad35 vectors.

The fiber shaft of Ad35 lacks the KKTK (Lys-Lys-Thr-Lys) motif, which is located in the fiber shaft of Ad5 and is considered to bind to heparan sulfate,⁴⁷ and its absence may partly explain the lower transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors than Ad5 vectors. Smith *et al.*⁴⁷ demonstrated that amino-acid substitution of the KKTK motif dramatically decreased the transduction efficiencies of Ad5 vectors in the mouse liver, whereas ablation of CAR- and integrin-binding sites did not significantly reduce the transduction efficiency of Ad5 vectors in the liver; these findings indicate a potential role for heparan sulfate binding in Ad5 vector-mediated liver transduction. In addition, we reported that replacement of the Ad5 fiber shaft with the Ad35 shaft, in addition to the ablation of CAR and integrin binding, decreases Ad5 transduction efficiencies in the liver.⁴⁸ Heparan sulfate

binding may be a more crucial determinant for Ad vector-mediated *in vivo* transduction of mice, especially in the liver, than binding to primary receptors (CAR for Ad5 and CD46 for Ad35), irrespective of Ad5 or Ad35 vectors.

Homozygous CD46TG mice, which express CD46 more abundantly than hemizygous CD46TG mice, seem to be more susceptible to Ad35 vectors than hemizygous mice (Figure 4). Our *in vitro* transduction experiments that used primary cells from CD46TG mice also demonstrated that mBM-DC and peritoneal macrophages derived from wild-type mice were refractory to Ad35 vectors, but high-level CD46 expression in cells from CD46TG mice increased the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors (Figure 3). Together, these results indicate that CD46 expression levels are a crucial factor in Ad35 vector-mediated transduction. Anderson *et al.*⁴⁹ reported a similar result, in which the transduction efficiencies of the chimeric Ad5F35 vector, which is an Ad5-based vector containing an Ad35 fiber shaft and knob, increased progressively with CD46 expression density in a panel of CHO cells stably expressing CD46.⁴⁹ Together, these findings suggest that Ad35 vectors can be a potent and selective platform for transduction into tumor cells expressing high levels of CD46, because human malignant tumor cells (including primary tumor cells) express CD46 more abundantly than nontransformed human cells.^{23,24} Engineered measles viruses, which enter cells efficiently via CD46, exhibit selective oncolytic activity by exploiting the difference in CD46 expression levels between ovarian cancer cells and nontransformed cells.²³

Transduction efficiencies of intraperitoneal-administered Ad35 vectors were >10-fold higher in homozygous CD46TG mice than in wild-type mice (Figure 4). In particular, peritoneal organs, such as the liver, kidney, peritoneal wall and diaphragm, were transduced efficiently. X-gal staining experiments demonstrated that efficient transduction occurred mainly in the mesothelial cells of the liver and kidney (Figure 6). In contrast, noteworthy luciferase production after intraperitoneal administration of Ad35 vector was not detected in the lung or heart, which are distant from the peritoneal cavity. Few LacZ-positive cells were found in the interior of the liver and kidney. These results indicate that after intraperitoneal injection, a portion of the Ad35 vector dose efficiently infects the mesothelia of tissues via CD46 on the surface of the organ, leading to efficient transduction. Another fraction of the dose, which is probably exuded into the bloodstream from the peritoneal cavity, likely poorly transduces the tissues of CD46TG mice. Using quantitative real-time PCR, we confirmed that Ad35 vector DNA was present in the blood after intraperitoneal injection (data not shown).

In summary, we demonstrated that Ad35 vectors used the human CD46 expressed in CD46TG mice as an attachment receptor after *in vivo* administration. CD46TG mice are more susceptible to Ad35 vector-mediated transduction than wild-type mice, but the transduction efficiencies of Ad35 vectors in CD46TG mice were much lower than those of conventional Ad5 vectors.¹³ As a next step, evaluation of Ad35 vector-mediated transduction in non-human primates, which ubiquitously express CD46 (as do humans), is necessary to assess the validity and utility of CD46TG mice as small animal models for Ad35 vectors.

Acknowledgements

We thank Ms Tomomi Sasaki, Ms Tsukasa Nakano and Ms Kimiyo Akitomo for their technical assistance. We also thank Dr Naoki Okada (Kyoto Pharmaceutical University, Kyoto, Japan) for his help in the preparation of bone marrow-derived DCs. This work was supported by grants for Health and Labour Sciences Research from the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare of Japan, and by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research on Priority Areas (B).

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