



Protein kinase C regulates glucose uptake and mRNA expression of glucose transporter (GLUT) 1 and GLUT8 in lactating bovine mammary epithelial cells

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the role of protein kinase C (PKC) in regulating glucose uptake in lactating bovine mammary epithelial cells. The cells were cultured and treated with different concentrations of phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA) and/or an inhibitor of PKC, LY294002. The results showed that PMA treatment significantly stimulated the glucose uptake of the cells, whereas the glucose uptake by the cells treated with the lowest and the highest amounts of PMA and/or LY294002 respectively did not show a significant difference. Consistently, the mRNA expression of glucose transporter (GLUT) 1 and GLUT8 showed a similar pattern of increase under the treatments of PMA. Furthermore, when the cells were pretreated with LY294002, the increase in glucose uptake and GLUT1 and GLUT8 expression were decreased by PMA in a dose-dependent manner. These results demonstrate that PKC is involved in the regulation of glucose uptake by GLUT1 and GLUT8, and this function may work at least partly through upregulation in the expression of GLUT1 and GLUT8.

Key words: glucose transporter, mammary epithelial cell, protein kinase C

Short Communication

Glucose is an important substrate and energy source in milk synthesis. Large amounts of glucose are required to sustain lactation (Ant et al., 2006). Glucose is taken up from the blood stream by mammary secretory epithelial cells (MEC) through facilitated glucose

transporters (GLUT) mainly GLUT1 and possibly GLUT8 (Zhao et al., 2013).

Protein kinase C (PKC) is an important signaling molecule that modulates a variety of cellular processes such as secretion, gene expression, proliferation, differentiation, and muscle contraction (Ishizuka et al., 1984). In addition, it is well known that PKC is a key regulator in glucose uptake in a variety of cells (Watson and Esslinger, 1998; Osada et al., 2000; Luiken et al., 2001). However, whether PKC regulates glucose uptake in MEC is not known. Expression of PKC proteins increases in human mammary epithelial tissue from puberty to prenanally (Wells et al., 2000). Activation of PKC enhances proliferation and survival (Rossoni et al., 2000) and plays an important role in prolactin-induced milk protein synthesis in mouse (Wang et al., 2000). Furthermore, changes in PKC expression or activity have been observed during mammary carcinogenesis (Vrtre et al., 2000). Therefore, PKC may also be an important regulator in regulating glucose uptake in MEC. The objective of the current study was to determine the role of PKC in regulation of glucose transport and glucose transporter gene expression in lactating bovine mammary epithelial cells (BMEC).

The lactating MEC were isolated, characterized, and cultured as previously described (Zhao et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2013). The cells were starved with serum-free medium for 24 h and then treated with different concentrations of PMA (0, 1, 10, and 100 nM) or phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA) (10 nM) plus LY294002 (0, 1, 10, and 100 nM) for 24 h. LY294002 is an inhibitor of PKC (for 24 h) and LY294002 (100 nM) plus LY294002 (100 nM) for another 24 h. The difference in glucose content in the culture media before and after the treatments determined by an enzymatic colorimetric glucose oxidase/peroxidase assay method (Tiffany et al., 2000) and normalized by total cell protein content was considered as the net glucose uptake (Kors et al., 2000).

Received September 10, 2013.
 Accepted April 10, 2014.
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Total RNA extracted from mammary epithelial cells was used to isolate total RNA from the cells. The first strand of cDNA was synthesized using a reverse transcription kit (Takara, Tokyo, Japan). The mRNA abundance of *GLUT1* and *GLUT8* was analyzed by quantitative reverse transcription using primers as described before (Zhao et al., 2013). The relative mRNA levels of each gene were calculated using the $2^{-\Delta\Delta CT}$ method where ΔCT is the threshold cycle number and normalized to β -actin mRNA in the same sample.

Data were analyzed by one-way ANOVA using software version 16.0 (SPSS, Chicago, IL) and Duncan's multiple range tests were used for multiple comparisons. The experiment was performed with three replicates and repeated three times using pooled cells isolated from Holstein lactating cows. Data from representative experiment is reported here. Significant differences were considered at $P < 0.05$.

In this study, we used a β -adrenergic agonist and an inhibitor to study the role of β -adrenergic stimulation in regulation of glucose uptake and GLUT expression in mammary epithelial cells. Phorbol myristate acetate (PMA), which has been widely used in biomedical research to activate protein kinase C (PKC) (Goswami et al., 2007; Ouellet et al., 2010). Because of its structural similarity to one of the natural β -adrenergic agonists of PKC, isoproterenol (ISO), compared with the control group, PMA treatment of mammary epithelial cells with and without ISO significantly increased the cellular glucose uptake ($P < 0.05$), whereas the glucose uptake in the cells treated with either the lowest concentration (0.1 μ M) or the highest concentration (100 μ M) of ISO did not show a significant difference ($P > 0.05$).

In addition, when mammary epithelial cells were treated with a pan- β -adrenergic inhibitor, alprenolol (ALP), the concentrations of ISO (0.1 μ M and 10 μ M) before treatment with PMA significantly inhibited glucose uptake was significantly inhibited by ALP at a concentration of 10 μ M or higher ($P < 0.05$). These results demonstrate a regulatory role of β -adrenergic stimulation in glucose transport in mammary epithelial cells, consistent with previous observations in adipocytes and intestinal cells (Hill et al., 2000; Auer et al., 2001; Chen and Arrant, 2003).

Furthermore, we found that in mammary epithelial cells, the main glucose transporters expressed in the mammary gland (Zhao et al., 2013) are primarily *GLUT1* and *GLUT8*. In the presence of PMA, the expression of *GLUT1* and *GLUT8* in mammary epithelial cells was significantly increased the mRNA expression of *GLUT1* and *GLUT8* in mammary epithelial cells ($P < 0.05$). These observations are in line with the report

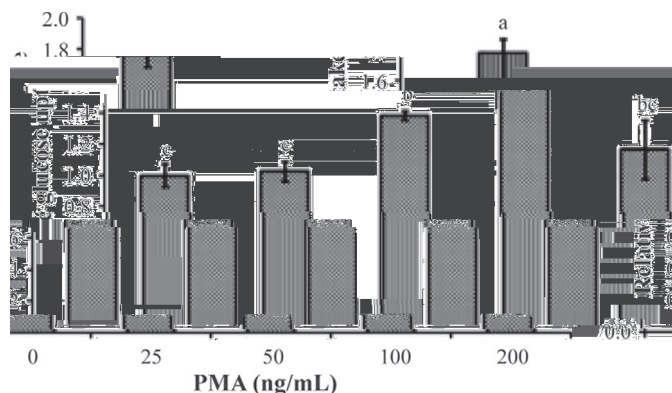


Figure 1. Glucose uptake in mammary epithelial cells treated with different concentrations of phorbol myristate acetate (PMA). The glucose uptake in the control cells without treatment is assigned a value of 1.0. Values with different letters are significantly different ($P < 0.05$). Error bars indicate the standard error.

that *GLUT1* mRNA levels were increased by activation of β -adrenergic stimulation in mammary epithelial cells (Arrant et al., 2003) and suggest that the β -adrenergic stimulation of glucose uptake in mammary epithelial cells may be mediated by enhanced expression of *GLUT1* and *GLUT8*. In addition, *GLUT8* mRNA was higher at 100 μ M of ISO compared with 0 μ M ($P < 0.05$), whereas no difference was seen in *GLUT1* expression between these two groups ($P > 0.05$), similar to the glucose uptake the ISO-induced *GLUT1* expression in mammary epithelial cells was significantly inhibited by ALP at a concentration of 10 μ M or higher ($P < 0.05$), whereas the ISO-induced *GLUT8* expression was significantly inhibited by ALP at a

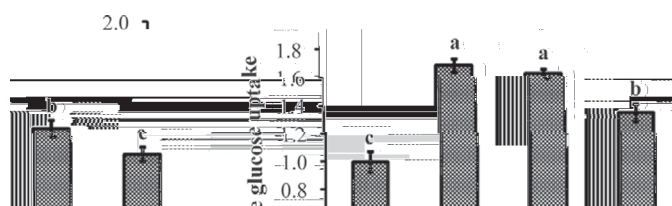
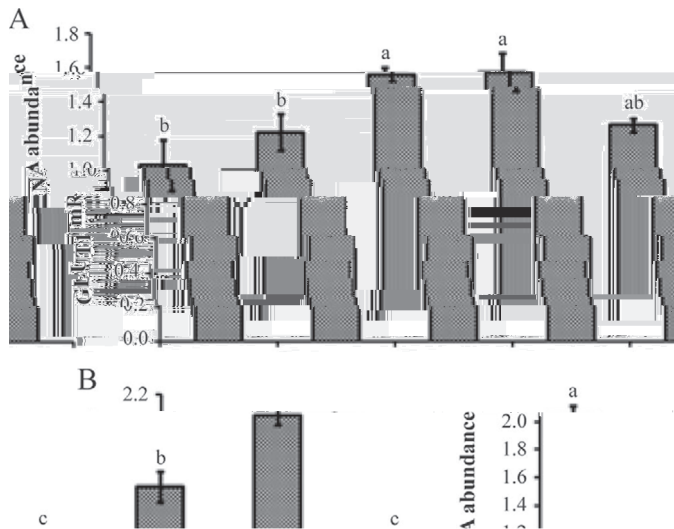
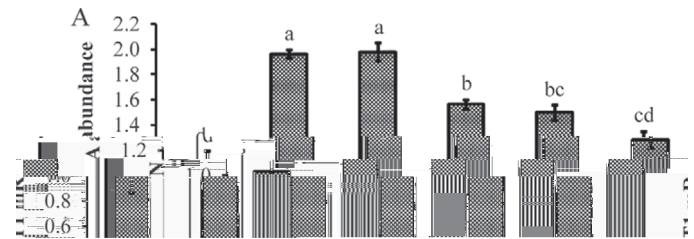


Figure 2. Effect of alprenolol (ALP), an inhibitor of protein kinase C, on phorbol myristate acetate (PMA)-induced glucose uptake in mammary epithelial cells. Cells were incubated in media with different concentrations of PMA (0, 10, 100 ng/mL) and ALP (0, 10 μ M) for 30 min and then treated with or without PMA. The glucose uptake in the group without PMA and ALP treatment is assigned a value of 1.0. Values with different letters are significantly different ($P < 0.05$). Error bars indicate the standard error.



We cannot rule out the possibility that may stimulate Lu^{2+} uptake by the mechanisms other



than enhanced *GLUT* mRNA expression as others have reported that insulin stimulates glucose uptake in T-4 adipocytes by increasing the GLUT protein content in the total cell homogenate, moreover the translocations of GLUT1 and GLUT4 as others have reported and GLUT in rat adipocytes (Tandaert et al., 1997; Otani et al., 1997; Watson and Essin, 1997) and GLUT in rat intestinal cells (Jen and Arrington, 1997) were observed in the regulated glucose transport. Therefore it is possible that insulin may also regulate protein translation translocation or transport kinetics of GLUT in T-4 to enhance glucose uptake. In summary this study provided evidence that insulin may play a role in the regulation of glucose uptake and expression of *GLUT1* and *GLUT8* in T-4.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Journal of Dairy Science Vol. 97 No. 7, 2014

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