Phosphorylation of Conserved Serine Residues Does Not Regulate the Ability of mosXe Protein Kinase to Induce Oocyte Maturation or Function as Cytostatic Factor

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Abstract. Expression of the mosXe protein kinase is required for the normal meiotic maturation of Xenopus oocytes and overexpression induces maturation in the absence of other stimuli. In addition, mosXe functions as a component of cytostatic factor (CSF), an activity responsible for arrest of the mature egg at metaphase II. After microinjection of Xenopus oocytes with in vitro synthesized RNA encoding either wild-type mosXe or kinase-inactive mosXeR90°, both proteins are phosphorylated exclusively on serine residues and exhibit essentially identical chymotryptic maps. Since the phosphorylated kinase-inactive mosXeR90° protein was recovered from resting oocytes that have not yet begun to translate endogenous mosXe, this indicates that the major phosphopeptides of mosXeR90° are phosphorylated by a preexisting protein kinase present in resting oocytes, and are not the result of autophosphorylation. The results presented here also indicate that the mosXe protein does not undergo significant phosphorylation at unique sites during oocyte maturation.

If the biological activity of mosXe were regulated by phosphorylation, a site of regulatory phosphorylation would most likely be conserved among mos proteins of different species. Site-directed mutagenesis was used to construct 13 individual serine-alanine mutations at conserved residues (3, 16, 18, 25, 26, 57, 71, 76, 102, 105, 127, 211, and 258). These 13 mutants were analyzed for their abilities to induce oocyte maturation and to function as CSF. Results obtained with the mosXeR90° mutant revealed that serine-105 is required for both maturation induction and CSF activity, even though serine-105 does not represent a major site of phosphorylation. All of the remaining serine-alanine mosXe mutants induced oocyte maturation and exhibited CSF activity comparable with the wild type. These results demonstrate that none of the conserved serines examined in this study function as regulatory phosphorylation sites for these biological activities. Peptide mapping of the remaining mosXe mutants identified serine-3 as a major phosphorylation site in vivo, which is contained within the chymotryptic peptide MPSIPPVVERF.

The reversible phosphorylation of proteins is a key regulatory mechanism involved in biological processes such as growth factor signal transduction and cell cycle control. The consequences of inappropriate phosphorylation are exemplified by the many oncogenes that encode protein kinases (for reviews see Hunter and Cooper, 1986; Cantley et al., 1991; Hunter, 1991; Freeman and Donoghue, 1991). The v-mos oncogene and its cellular homolog, c-mos, encode proteins with intrinsic serine/threonine protein kinase activity (Maxwell and Arlinghaus, 1985; Hannink and Donoghue, 1985; Singh et al., 1986; Yew et al., 1991).

Several observations demonstrate that the protein kinase encoded by the Xenopus c-mos gene (mosXe) plays an obligatory role in the meiotic maturation of oocytes. By blocking synthesis of the mosXe protein with antisense oligonucleotides, Sagata et al. (1988) showed that expression of mosXe was required for normal oocyte maturation induced by progesterone. Other experiments demonstrated that microinjection of in vitro synthesized mosXe RNA into immature oocytes could induce maturation in the absence of progesterone (Freeman et al., 1989; Sagata et al., 1989a). Translation of mos is also required for progression from meiosis I to meiosis II, both in murine oocytes (O'Keefe et al., 1989) and also Xenopus oocytes (Kanki and Donoghue, 1991). Furthermore, the mosXe protein constitutes an essential component of cytostatic factor (CSF) (Watanabe et al., 1989; Sagata et al., 1989b), which is responsible for maintaining unfertil-

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1. Abbreviations used in this paper: CSF, cytostatic factor; GVBD, germinal vesicle breakdown; MBS-H, modified Barth's solution.

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ized eggs in a state of metaphase II arrest (Meyerhof and Masui, 1979).

*Xenopus* oocyte maturation is accompanied by a two- to threefold increase in protein phosphorylation (Maller et al., 1977). Recently, several protein kinases have been shown to be activated during maturation. For example, the p34\(^{cd2}\) kinase (Gautier et al., 1989; Dunphy and Newport, 1989), S6 kinase (Erikson et al., 1987), and microtubule-associated protein kinase (Gotoh et al., 1991) increase in activity during maturation. Moreover, each of these enzymes is itself regulated by phosphorylation by other protein kinases. Phosphorylation of p34\(^{cd2}\) occurs on threonine and tyrosine residues and appears to exert both activating and inhibitory effects on its kinase activity (Dunphy and Newport, 1989; Gautier et al., 1989; Gould and Nurse, 1989; Labbe et al., 1989; Morla et al., 1989; Solomon et al., 1990; Lee et al., 1991). S6 kinase II is known to be activated via phosphorylation by microtubule-associated protein kinase in vitro (Sturgill et al., 1988), and phosphorylation of threonine and tyrosine residues in microtubule-associated protein kinase correlates with its activation in vivo (Ray and Sturgill, 1988; Anderson et al., 1990).

The mos\(^{90}\) protein kinase induces oocyte maturation through an unknown mechanism that involves the activation of maturation-promoting factor (Sagata et al., 1989a; Freeman et al., 1991). Activation of maturation-promoting factor is known to involve changes in the phosphorylation state of its two subunits, the p34\(^{cd2}\) protein kinase and the cyclin B proteins (for review see Pines and Hunter, 1990; Maller, 1990; Freeman and Donoghue, 1991). The mos\(^{90}\) protein itself undergoes phosphorylation during oocyte maturation (Sagata et al., 1988; Watanabe et al., 1989). In addition, the kinase activity of the mos\(^{90}\) protein is required for both maturation-promoting activity and CSF activity as demonstrated by the absence of these activities in the kinase-inactive mutant mosw\(^{90}\), in which the lysine residue in the ATP binding site has been substituted with arginine (Freeman et al., 1989, 1990). Hyperphosphorylated forms of the mos\(^{90}\) protein have been observed in mature eggs (Watanabe et al., 1989; Sagata et al., 1989b), and dephosphorylation of mos\(^{90}\) was recently shown to precede the degradation of mos\(^{90}\) that occurs shortly after egg activation (Watanabe et al., 1991).

In this work we have used peptide mapping to characterize the phosphorylation state of the mos\(^{90}\) protein. In addition to examining the wild-type mos\(^{90}\) and kinase-inactive mosw\(^{90}\) proteins, we have also examined 13 individual serine\(\rightarrow\)alanine mutants affecting potential phosphorylation sites. Our results suggest that the mos\(^{90}\) protein does not undergo significant phosphorylation at unique sites during oocyte maturation. Moreover, our results demonstrate that none of the conserved serines examined in this study function as regulatory phosphorylation sites for either the induction of oocyte maturation or its ability to function as CSF. Peptide mapping of the various serine\(\rightarrow\)alanine mos\(^{90}\) mutants also identified serine-3 as a major phosphorylation site in vivo.

**Materials and Methods**

**Microinjection of RNA and Metabolic Labeling of Xenopus Oocytes**

Fully grown (stage VI) oocytes were manually dissected from the ovaries of female *Xenopus* (obtained from Xenopus I, Ann Arbor, MI) and incubated at 18°C in modified Barth's solution (MBS-H; 10 mM Hepes, pH 7.4, 88 mM NaCl, 2.4 mM NaHCO\(_3\), 1 mM KCl, 0.82 mM MgSO\(_4\), 0.41 mM CaCl\(_2\), 0.33 mM Ca(NO\(_3\)\(_2\)), 0.1 mM MgCl\(_2\), and 0.1 mM each of penicillin and streptomycin). Healthy oocytes were microinjected with 50 nl of in vitro transcribed RNA (1-2 mg/ml) and then incubated at room temperature either in MBS-H alone, or MBS-H containing 0.5 mM cGMP (\(^{32}\)P)cysteine or 20 mCi/ml \(^{32}\)Porthophosphate. In some experiments, oocytes were labeled by microinjection with 50 nl of \(^{32}\)Porthophosphate (150-740 mCi/ml) (see fig. 1). Oocytes were scored for germinal vesicle breakdown (GVB) by the appearance of a white spot in the pigmented animal pole (Merriam, 1971). Oocytes were fixed in 5% TCA and dissected to confirm GVB. For progesterone treatment, oocytes were incubated in MBS-H containing 15 \(\mu\)M progesterone.

**Construction of mos\(^{90}\) Mutants and In Vitro Transcription of RNA**

The pSF64/pol(yA) vectors (Promega Biotec, Madison, WI) containing the mos\(^{90}\) coding sequence and the mosw\(^{90}\) sequence were described elsewhere (Freeman et al., 1989). Site-directed mutagenesis resulting in ser\(\rightarrow\)ala substitutions at codons 3, 16, 18, 25, 26, 57, 71, 76, 102, 105, 127, 211, and 258 was performed as described (Zoller and Smith, 1983; Kunke, 1985) using oligonucleotides ranging in size from 20 to 26 nucleotides. Reaction fragments containing the mutated DNAs were sequenced and then subcloned into the corresponding region of the wild-type mos\(^{90}\)poly(A) plasmid. In in vitro transcription reactions yielding 5'-capped and polyadenylated RNAs were carried out as described (Melton, 1987). The integrity of the RNAs was analyzed by electrophoresis and by in vitro translation using rabbit reticulocyte lysate (Amersham Corp., Arlington Heights, IL).

**CSF Assays**

CSF assays were performed essentially as described previously (Freeman et al., 1990). Ovulation was induced by injecting frogs with 200 IU of pregnant mare serum gonadotropin (Calbiochem-Behring Corp., San Diego, CA) 5-7 d before injection of 600 IU human chorionic gonadotropin (Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO). Eggs were collected into MR solution (5 mM Hepes, pH 7.8, 100 mM NaCl, 2 mM KCl, 1 mM MgCl\(_2\)-6H\(_2\)O, 2 mM CaCl\(_2\)) for 12 h after injection with human chorionic gonadotropin and fertilized in vitro. After the fertilized eggs rotated animal pole up, they were dejellied in 2% cysteine and cultured in MR containing 6% Ficoll before microinjection. Two-cell embryos were microinjected in the animal pole of one blastomere with 30 nl of RNA (1-2 mg/ml) just before completion of the first cleavage.

**Immunoprecipitations**

Metabolically labeled and \(^{32}\)P-labeled oocytes were rinsed twice in MBS-H and then transferred to a 1.5-mI tube containing 3-5 \(\mu\)l/oocyte of ice-cold lysis buffer (8.5 mM Tris-HCl, pH 6.8, 1% NP-40, 150 mM NaCl, 50 mM \(\beta\)-glycerophosphate, 10 mM NaF, 5 mM EDTA, 2 mM DTT, 2 mM ATP, 2 mM sodium pyrophosphate, 2 mM EGTA, 1 mM NaVO\(_4\), 10 \(\mu\)g/ml aprotinin, 2 \(\mu\)g/ml leupeptin, 10 \(\mu\)M pepstatin A). Oocytes were manually lysed, and the lysates were clarified by centrifugation at 10,000 g for 5 min. Cytosolic fractions were preadsorbed with 30-80 \(\mu\)l of a 50% (vol/vol) suspension of protein A-Sepharose/lysis buffer for 25 min at 4°C. After centrifugation in a microfuge for 3-5 min, the supernatants were collected and incubated with 5-10 \(\mu\)l of COOH-terminal antipeptide serum (anti-mos\(^{90}\) serum) (Freeman et al., 1990) for 2 h at 4°C. Immune complexes were collected with protein A-Sepharose as described above, layered onto 1 ml of lysis buffer containing 10% sucrose, and then pelleted for 10 min at 2,500 g. The pellets were washed two-three times with lysis buffer and analyzed by 15% SDS-PAGE and autoradiography.

**Peptide Mapping**

Two-dimensional phosphopeptide mapping was performed as described by others (Hunter and Sefton, 1980). The mos\(^{90}\) proteins were eluted from acrylamide gels and digested twice, each time with 10 \(\mu\)g \(\alpha\) chymotrypsin (Worthington Biochemical Corp., Freehold, NJ), for 10-14 h and then 2-4 h. Peptides were separated in the horizontal direction by electrophoresis in pH 8.9 buffer (1% ammonium carbonate) for 23 min at 1 kV. Separation in the vertical direction was by chromatography in a system of n-butanol, water, pyridine, and acetic acid (75:60:50:15, [vol/vol]). Phosphoamino
acid analysis was performed by electrophoresis in two dimensions (pH 1.9 and 3.5) as previously described (Cooper et al., 1983).

Secondary protease digestions of chymotryptic phosphopeptides was performed as follows. Phosphopeptides were recovered from TLC plates and eluted from the cellulose with a solution of 88% formic acid, acetic acid, and water (5:16:180, [vol/vol]). The eluate was then lyophilized and the dry phosphopeptides were resuspended in 50 mM ammonium bicarbonate. Protease digestions were carried out for 4 h at 37°C with 5 μg proline-specific endopeptidase (ICN Biomedicals, Inc., Irvine, CA). The reaction products were analyzed by electrophoresis and chromatography as described above.

Results

Phosphorylation of the Kinase-inactive mosxp(R90) Protein Is Indistinguishable from that of the Wild-Type mos² Protein

Progesterone treatment of Xenopus oocytes stimulates the synthesis and phosphorylation of the mos² protein (Watanabe et al., 1989). Matured eggs contain additional phosphorylated forms of the mos² protein that are not present in maturing oocytes before GVBD (Watanabe et al., 1989; Sagata et al., 1989b; data not shown).

If some of the phosphate on mosxe is the result of autophosphorylation, then a kinase-inactive mutant of mos² should lack these phosphorylations. To analyze the extent of mos² autophosphorylation, we compared the phosphorylation pattern of mos² to that of mosxp(R90), a mutant protein that contains a lysine-to-arginine substitution in the canonical ATP-binding domain. The mosxp(R90) protein is biologically inactive when expressed in oocytes (Freeman et al., 1989, 1990), and an analogous mutation in the v-mos protein abolishes its transforming and in vitro kinase activities (Hannink and Donoghue, 1985; Singh et al., 1986).

Endogenous mos² protein is translated from maternal mRNA during meiotic maturation and, therefore, exists at undetectable levels in stage VI oocytes in the absence of hormonal stimulation (Sagata et al., 1989a; Watanabe et al., 1989). Consequently, intermolecular phosphorylation of mosxp(R90) protein by endogenous mos² protein would not be expected to occur in resting stage VI oocytes.

Both mos² and mosxp(R90) proteins were phosphorylated in microinjected oocytes (Fig. 1 a); however, only oocytes injected with wild-type mos² RNA underwent meiotic maturation. Both proteins were phosphorylated to a similar extent during a 1-h labeling period (Fig. 1 a, lanes 1 and 3). However, when oocytes were labeled for a longer time (corresponding to the time required for GVBD in 100% of the wild-type mos²-injected oocytes) the incorporation of radioactive phosphate into the wild-type mos² protein was much greater than the incorporation into the mosxp(R90) protein (Fig. 1 a, lanes 2 and 4). This was probably not because of a change in the labeling efficiency during maturation since the pools of orthophosphate and nucleoside triphosphates have been shown to vary by <13% during meiotic maturation (Maller et al., 1977). Moreover, this was not because of an increase in the amount of mos² protein relative to mosxp(R90) protein as shown by [35S]methionine labeling (data not shown).

Phosphoamino acid analysis of the mosxp(R90) and mos² proteins revealed only phosphoserine (Fig. 1 b). To compare the phosphorylation patterns in more detail, immunoprecipitated mosxp(R90) and mos² proteins were subjected to proteol-
they were not the result of autophosphorylation. These peptides are designated as chymotryptic peptides No. 1-5, as shown in the right panel of Fig. 2. The yield of peptide No. 5 was quite variable and usually low, although it is quite evident on the maps in Fig. 2.

Although trypsin is more often used for peptide mapping, our choice of chymotrypsin was influenced by previous peptide mapping experiments of the v-mos protein, in which chymotrypsin was found to yield superior maps to trypsin (Papkoff et al., 1982).

**Mutagenesis of Conserved Serine Residues in mos**

Effects on Maturation-Inducing Activity

There are many examples of protein kinases that are regulated by phosphorylation, and the regulatory phosphorylation sites are often conserved. A well-studied example is the effect of phosphorylation on the kinase activity of the members of the src family of tyrosine protein kinases (Hunter and Cooper, 1986). Another example is the conservation of a tyrosine residue in p34<sup>cdc2</sup>, that when phosphorylated inhibits kinase activity (Gould and Nurse, 1989). Since the mos proteins from several different species (Xenopus, human, mouse, and chicken) can all function to induce Xenopus oocyte maturation (Yew et al., 1991), we hypothesized that some of the biologically significant phosphorylation sites might be conserved.

In the mos protein, there are 10-serine residues (S3, S16, S18, S25, S57, S102, S105, S127, S211, and S258) that are also conserved in the human, mouse, and chicken mos proteins (Fig. 3). To analyze the importance of these residues, we individually mutated the codon for each conserved serine to an alanine codon. We also constructed three additional serine-alanine mutations in mos at positions where the serine was present in three out of four species of mos protein (S26, S71, and S76). To examine these mutants for biological activity, in vitro synthesized RNA encoding either a mutant mos protein or the wild-type protein was microinjected into stage VI Xenopus oocytes (Table I). The injected oocytes were then monitored for GVBD. In these ex-

![Figure 2. Chymotryptic phosphopeptide maps of mos<sup>xER90</sup> and mos<sup>x</sup>. The mos<sup>x</sup> and mos<sup>xER90</sup> proteins described in Fig. 1 (labeled for 8 h) were recovered from the polyacrylamide gel, oxidized with performic acid, and then digested with chymotrypsin. Phosphorylated peptides were separated on TLC plates by electrophoresis in the horizontal direction and by chromatography in the vertical direction, as indicated. In the mixed sample, an approximately equal number of cpm from the mutant and wild type were used. x indicates the location of the origin. Phosphopeptides were detected by autoradiography with an intensifying screen for 9 d.](https://jcb.rupress.org/)
Table I. Biological Activity and Phosphopeptide Pattern of mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} ser-al\textasteriskcentered Mutants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} mutant</th>
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<th>CSF activity</th>
<th>Chymotryptic peptides</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Number of oocytes</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>A3</td>
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<td>A258</td>
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<td>94</td>
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(GVBD assays) Oocytes were microinjected with 50 nl (1-2 mg/ml) of in vitro synthesized RNA encoding either the wild-type mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein or one of the 13 ser-al\textasteriskcentered mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} mutants. GVBD was scored by the appearance of a white spot at the animal pole and confirmed by fixation with 5% TCA and manual dissection. (CSF activity) One blastomere of cleaving two-cell embryos was injected with 30 nl (1-2 mg/ml) of in vitro synthesized RNA encoding either the wild-type mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein or one of the 13 ser-al\textasteriskcentered mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} mutants. For each RNA, 10 fertilized embryos were injected just as the first cleavage furrow was forming, ~1.3 h after fertilization. After ~4 h, embryos were scored for cleavage arrest of the injected blastomere. A + indicates that at least 7/10 injected blastomeres displayed at least partial cleavage arrest, and a - indicates that none of the injected blastomeres underwent cleavage arrest. See legend to Fig. 7 for further details. (Chymotryptic peptides) Chymotryptic phosphopeptide maps were prepared for each of the ser-al\textasteriskcentered mutant proteins as described in Materials and Methods. The peptide maps for each mutant were compared to those of the wild-type mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein.

Serine-105 Is Not a Major Site of Phosphorylation

The mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein is phosphorylated to approximately the same level as the mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein in pre-GVBD oocytes. During longer labeling periods, the wild-type protein becomes phosphorylated to a greater extent than the mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein (data not shown), because of maturation of the wild-type mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} -injected oocytes. To compare the phosphorylation pattern of mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} to that of wild-type mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}, we prepared two-dimensional chymotryptic phosphopeptide maps of each protein (Fig. 4). Oocytes were microinjected with either mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} or mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} RNA and labeled with [\textsuperscript{32}P]orthophosphate until the mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}-injected oocytes underwent GVBD. The wild-type and mutant proteins were purified by immunoprecipitation and digested with chymotrypsin. All of the major phosphopeptides in the wild-type mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein were also present in the mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein. Thus, under these conditions, phosphorylation of the mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein occurs at the same sites as in the wild-type mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} protein suggesting that serine-105 is not a significant phosphorylation site in mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}.

The chymotryptic peptides No. 1-4 are observed as in the

Figure 4. Chymotryptic phosphopeptide maps of mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} and mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}. Oocytes microinjected with the mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} and mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} RNAs were incubated in MBS-H containing [\textsuperscript{32}P]orthophosphate until mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}-injected oocytes reached 100% GVBD. Note that the mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}A105\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered}-injected oocytes did not undergo maturation. The phosphorylated mos proteins were purified by immunoprecipitation with anti-mos\textsuperscript{\textasteriskcentered} serum and 12.5% SDS-PAGE. The proteins were recovered from the gel and digested with chymotrypsin. The resultant phosphopeptides were separated on TLC plates by electrophoresis in the horizontal direction and by chromatography in the vertical direction, as indicated. In the mixed sample, an approximately equal number of cpm from the mutant and wild type were used. x indicates the location of the origin. Phosphopeptides were detected by autoradiography with an intensifying screen for 6 d.

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Figure 5. Chymotryptic phosphopeptide maps of mos<sup>xe(A3)</sup> and mos<sup>xe</sup>. Oocytes microinjected with the mos<sup>xe</sup> and mos<sup>xe(A3)</sup> RNAs were incubated in MBS-H containing [32P]orthophosphate until the injected oocytes reached 100% GVBD. The phosphorylated mos proteins were purified by immunoprecipitation with anti-mos<sup>xe</sup> serum and 12.5% SDS-PAGE. The proteins were recovered from the gel and digested with chymotrypsin. The resultant phosphopeptides were separated on TLC plates by electrophoresis in the horizontal direction and by chromatography in the vertical direction, as indicated. In the mixed sample, an approximately equal number of cpm from the mutant and wild type were used. x indicates the location of the origin. Phosphopeptides were detected by autoradiography with an intensifying screen for 7 d.

maps shown in Fig. 2. However, the yield of peptide No. 5 was very low, although it was faintly visible on all of the original autoradiograms of the maps shown in Fig. 4. The variable yield of peptide No. 5 is most easily explained as the consequence of chymotrypsin digestion at a secondary cleavage site. The maps in Fig. 4 also contain an additional labeled spot, No. 6, which is most likely because of contaminating [32P]orthophosphate. It is possible that the chymotryptic peptide containing serine-105 was not resolved or recovered using the conditions employed here. However, this relatively hydrophilic chymotryptic peptide is predicted to be the only peptide that is positively charged, even when maximally phosphorylated. As further proof that serine-105 is not a major phosphorylation site, we found that tryptic phosphopeptide maps of the mos<sup>x°</sup> and mos<sup>xe</sup> proteins were also identical (data not shown).

Identification of Serine-3 as a Major Site of Phosphorylation

To identify the origin of the mos<sup>xe</sup> phosphopeptides, we compared chymotryptic phosphopeptide maps of each mutant to that of the wild-type protein. Only mos<sup>xe(A3)</sup> exhibited a phosphorylation pattern different from that of mos<sup>xe</sup>, as shown in the maps presented in Fig. 5. The peptide map of mos<sup>xe(A3)</sup> lacked chymotryptic peptides No. 1 and No. 2, which were present in the map of wild-type mos<sup>xe</sup>. Since the mutant and wild-type proteins differ by only a single residue, we reasoned that peptides No. 1 and No. 2 were likely to be related by containing serine-3. The predicted chymotryptic peptide containing serine-3 has the sequence MPSPIPVERR. The mobility of peptide No. 1 was altered after redigestion with trypsin (data not shown), as expected if trypsin cleaves after the arginine residue in chymotryptic peptide No. 1. The mobility of peptide No. 2 was not altered after redigestion with trypsin (data not shown), indicating that it arises from chymotrypsin cleavage at a secondary site within peptide No. 1. Since chymotrypsin cleaves with a probability of 4% after arginine (Keil, 1987), the most likely assignment of chymotryptic peptide No. 2 is MPSPIPVER. This assignment is also consistent with the relative mobilities of peptides No. 1 and No. 2 observed here.

To prove that both chymotryptic peptides No. 1 and No. 2 contain serine-3, we redigested the two peptides with proline-specific endopeptidase (Yoshimoto et al., 1980). As shown in Fig. 6, digestion of either chymotryptic peptide No. 1 (B) or peptide No. 2 (F) yielded two new phosphopeptides. Mixing of the secondary digestion products from peptides No. 1 and No. 2 revealed that the two sets of new peptides (labeled with arrowheads A and B) were identical (see panel D). Digestion of either chymotryptic peptide No. 1 or 2 with proline-specific endopeptidase should yield a peptide of the sequence MPSP, which most likely corresponds to peptide B. If only partial digestion were obtained with proline-specific peptidase, then both chymotryptic peptides No. 1 or No. 2 would also yield a peptide of the sequence MPSP, which most likely corresponds to the peptide A. Note that because proline-specific peptidase requires an amino acid at the −3 position (Yoshimoto et al., 1980), the cleavage products SP or SPIP are not expected.

The secondary digestions with proline-specific peptidase clearly show that chymotryptic peptides No. 1 and No. 2 are related by a common sequence containing a phosphorylated serine residue. The fact that both peptides No. 1 and No. 2 are absent from the chymotryptic peptide map of the mos<sup>xe(A3)</sup> protein confirms that this phosphorylated serine is in fact serine-3.

Although these data clearly indicate that serine-3 is a major phosphorylation site, mutation of this residue does not affect the ability of mos<sup>xe(A3)</sup> to induce oocyte maturation (Table I).

Cytostatic Factor Activity of mos<sup>xe</sup>Serine-Alanine Mutants

The mos<sup>xe</sup> protein has recently been identified as an essential component of cytostatic factor (Sagata et al., 1989b), an
activity thought to be responsible for inducing metaphase arrest at meiosis II in a mature egg (Meyerhof and Masui, 1979). To test the serine-alanine mos- mutants for CSF activity, we microinjected in vitro synthesized RNA encoding wild-type mos- RNA, or RNAs encoding each of the 13 serine-alanine mutants. As shown in Table I, all but one of the serine-alanine mutants induced CSF arrest similar to wild type. The mos- A105 mutant failed to arrest cleavage of injected blastomeres. A similar result was observed when blastomeres were injected with RNA encoding the kinase-inactive mutant mos- R90. Representative photomicrographs of embryos injected with wild-type mos- RNA, CSF arrest was reproducibly observed in all cases except for the mos- R90 mutant (Fig. 7, R90) and the mos- A105 mutant (Fig. 7, A105).

These results indicate that of the 13 most highly conserved serine residues in mos-, only serine-105 is essential for CSF activity. Since serine-105 was also essential for the induction of oocyte maturation, this indicates a complete correlation in these mutants between induction of oocyte maturation and CSF activity. In addition, these data indicate that although serine-3 represents a major phosphorylation site, phosphorylation at this residue is not required for the CSF activity of mos-.

Discussion

The mos- protein kinase is phosphorylated during oocyte maturation. Moreover, hyperphosphorylated forms of the mos- protein appear at or soon after GVBD (Watanabe et al., 1989; data not shown), as indicated by retarded electrophoretic mobility on SDS-PAGE. After egg activation, the mos- protein is first dephosphorylated and then rapidly degraded (Watanabe et al., 1989). Together, these results suggest the possibility that mos- activity may be regulated by phosphorylation.

In matured Xenopus eggs, the mos- protein constitutes only ~0.001% of the total soluble protein (Watanabe et al., 1989). Because of this low level of expression, we overexpressed the mos- protein by microinjecting oocytes with in vitro synthesized mos- RNA. Microinjection of ~100 ng of mos- RNA results in a 10-20-fold overexpression of the protein relative to the endogenous level found in progesterone matured oocytes (Sagata et al., 1989a; Freeman et al., 1990). When analyzed by SDS-PAGE, the overexpressed phosphorylated mos- protein comigrates with the phosphorylated species of the endogenous mos- protein (data not shown). Thus, although we have been unable to recover sufficient amounts of phosphorylated endogenous mos- protein for peptide mapping, it would appear that overexpressed mos- protein is phosphorylated similarly to endogenous mos- protein.

Phosphoamino acid analysis of the endogenous mos- protein from matured oocytes revealed only phosphoserine. This is consistent with the phosphoamino acid content of the v-mos protein isolated from mos- transformed NIH-3T3 cells (Papkoff et al., 1982).

We have found that the kinase-inactive mos- protein
Figure 7. Assays of mos⁸ mutants for CSF activity. CSF activity was assayed by microinjection of in vitro synthesized RNA into cleaving two-cell embryos. Photomicrographs of representative embryos are presented for each of the RNAs assayed. Additional experimental details are contained in Materials and Methods and the legend to Table I. Bar, (R90) As a negative control, RNA encoding the kinase inactive mos⁸(R90) mutant was assayed, shown in the upper left photomicrograph. (wild type) As a positive control, RNA encoding wild-type mos⁸ was assayed, shown in the middle two photomicrographs of the top row. These two photomicrographs were chosen to depict the range of CSF arrest that was observed. This ranged from arrest at the two-cell stage, resulting in noncleavage of half of the embryo, to arrest at the 16–32-cell stage, resulting in multiple large uncleaved blastomeres which are clearly visible. (A105) This was the only ser⁶-ala mutant that was negative for CSF activity, as shown in the upper right photomicrograph. (Other ser⁶-ala mutants) The remaining ser⁶-ala mutants all displayed CSF activity, as shown in the three lower rows of photomicrographs. Bar, 1 mm.

is also phosphorylated on serine residues when expressed in oocytes. Two-dimensional phosphopeptide maps of the mos⁸(R90) protein from resting oocytes and the mos⁸(R90) protein from post-GVBD oocytes are essentially identical, demonstrating that the major phosphopeptides do not result from autophosphorylation. In addition, it is clear that the hyperphosphorylation of mos⁸ at GVBD does not involve additional phosphorylations at new sites. However, we cannot rule out the possibility that the wild-type mos⁸ protein could phosphorylate itself at the same sites phosphorylated on mos⁸(R90) by other protein kinases. We have only recently detected a very low level of in vitro autophosphorylating activity in mos⁸ immune complexes from mature oocytes consistent with the results of Yew et al. (1991). However, due to the inefficient labeling of mos⁸ in vitro, we have not been able to compare the peptide maps of the in vitro and in vivo phosphorylated mos⁸ proteins. We also cannot rule out the possibility that a small amount of endogenous mos⁸ protein
is present in immature oocytes and is able to phosphorylate the mos<sup>ser3</sup> protein in trans; however, we (unpublished data) and others (Sagata et al., 1989a; Watanabe et al., 1989) have been unable to detect mos<sup>ser</sup> protein in oocytes before progesterone treatment.

Our results suggest that all of the major phosphorylations on mos<sup>ser</sup> are catalyzed by an unidentified protein kinase which is active in immature oocytes. Since no new major sites of phosphorylation are used during maturation, this poses the question of why a slower electrophoretic species of hyperphosphorylated mos<sup>ser</sup> should appear during oocyte maturation. The most likely explanation would be an increase in the stoichiometry of phosphorylation. For example, molecules which are singly phosphorylated at either serine-3 or an unidentified serine (corresponding to the unidentified chymotryptic peptides No. 3 or No. 4) may become doubly phosphorylated at two sites. However, since mutation of serine-3 does not inactivate the ability of the mos<sup>ser105</sup>(A105) mutant to either induce oocyte maturation or function as CSF, the appearance of the hyperphosphorylated mos<sup>ser</sup> species most likely has little functional significance except to reflect the overall increase in protein phosphorylation that accompanies oocyte maturation. A significant increase in protein phosphorylation is known to occur in maturing oocytes (Maller et al., 1977) and several proteins have been shown to undergo maturation-specific phosphorylations (Lohka et al., 1987; Cicirelli et al., 1988; Cooper, 1989). It should be noted that since no quantitative assays presently exist for mos<sup>ser</sup> protein kinase activity, we cannot rule out the possibility that phosphorylation at serine-3 could affect its specific activity, leading to quantitative rather than qualitative effects on maturation induction or CSF activity.

In this work, we have found that all but one of the most highly conserved serine residues within the various mos proteins were dispensable for the maturation-inducing and CSF activities of mos<sup>ser</sup>. However, the mos<sup>ser105</sup>(A105) mutant was completely inactive in these biological assays. The mos<sup>ser105</sup>(A105) mutant protein was stably expressed and phosphorylated in microinjected oocytes. However, we did not detect any differences in the chymotryptic peptidemaps of the mos<sup>ser105</sup>(A105) protein compared with the wild-type mos<sup>ser</sup> protein. It is likely that serine-105 is a structurally important residue and not a site of phosphorylation given its close proximity to a glutamate residue (glutamate-109) that is highly conserved among known protein kinases (Hanks et al., 1988). Work from another laboratory (Okazaki et al., 1991) has demonstrated that deletion of the NH<sub>2</sub>-terminal 50 amino acids of mos<sup>ser</sup> has no effect on either its maturation-inducing or CSF activities. This is consistent with our results that mutagenesis of the NH<sub>2</sub>-terminal serine residues S3, S16, S18, S25, and S26, has no effect on the biological activity of mos<sup>ser</sup>

This work identifies serine-3 as a major in vivo site of phosphorylation. Serine→alanine mutagenesis at this residue removes both chymotryptic peptides No. 1 and No. 2. That both of these peptides contain serine-3 was shown by secondary digestions with proline-specific peptidease which yielded identical phosphopeptide products. We have not yet identified the phosphorylated serine residue(s) responsible for chymotryptic peptide No. 3 and No. 4. However, it is clear that these phosphopeptides do not arise from phosphorylation at any of the 13 conserved serine residues examined in this work. We would suggest that this additional phosphorylation(s) is not likely to be of biological significance. In this work, we have examined all serine residues conserved in at least three out of the four species of mos protein: Xenopus, chicken, human, and mouse. Other investigators have demonstrated that mos proteins from diverse organisms are biologically active in Xenopus oocytes (Yew et al., 1991). Thus the phosphorylation(s) giving rise to chymotryptic peptides No. 3 and No. 4 must be species-specific. If this additional phosphorylation is of biological significance, one would have to argue that a key regulatory site used in Xenopus mos<sup>ser</sup> is not conserved in the other mos species even though they are also biologically active when expressed in Xenopus oocytes.

On occasional peptide maps, a number of minor chymotryptic phosphopeptides were observed, including the labeled peptide No. 5. The occurrence of minor phosphopeptides is best illustrated in the right hand map shown in Fig. 5. The yield of these minor peptides was variable and also dependent upon excellent recovery of radio-labeled protein throughout the peptide mapping procedure. Because of the failure of proteases, especially chymotrypsin, to cleave with absolute specificity, most of these minor phosphopeptides probably represent partial or secondary digestion products. For instance, several of the minor phosphopeptides are absent in the map of mos<sup>ser105</sup> (Fig. 5, left panel) and presumably represent peptides containing serine-3. However, unlikely though it seems, we cannot rule out the possibility that one or more minor phosphopeptides may be biologically significant.

One potential criticism of our experimental approach concerns the fact that endogenous mos<sup>ser</sup> protein would have been expressed and recovered together with any of the 12 biologically active serine→alanine mutant mos<sup>ser</sup> proteins. This could have been avoided by first microinjecting oocytes with an antisense mos<sup>ser</sup> oligonucleotide to inhibit endogenous mos<sup>ser</sup> expression (Sagata et al., 1988; Freeman et al., 1990). For a number of technical reasons, including the large numbers of oocytes required to recover sufficient radiolabeled mos<sup>ser</sup> protein for peptide mapping, we chose not to attempt to eliminate endogenous mos<sup>ser</sup> expression in these experiments. As discussed previously, microinjection of RNA leads to expression of mutant mos<sup>ser</sup> proteins at levels 10-20-fold compared with endogenous mos<sup>ser</sup>. This means that in peptide maps of the biologically active serine→alanine mos<sup>ser</sup> mutants a maximum of 5-10% of the recovered protein may represent endogenous mos<sup>ser</sup> protein. This level of contamination would not affect any of the results reported here.

The phosphorylation of the mos<sup>ser</sup> protein might regulate its ability to induce CSF arrest. Previous studies demonstrated that the half-life of the mos<sup>ser</sup> protein from matured eggs is significantly greater than its half-life in pre-GVBD oocytes (Watanabe et al., 1989). In addition, there is evidence that mos<sup>ser</sup> phosphorylation may be necessary to enhance or preserve CSF activity. During normal maturation, CSF activity is detected only after GVBD, rising in conjuncion with the transition into the second meiotic metaphase (Meyerhof and Masui, 1979). In metaphase egg extracts, CSF activity can be enhanced as well as sustained by the addition of phosphate inhibitors and ATP (Shibuya and Masui, 1988; Moses and Masui, 1990). Interestingly, the mos<sup>ser</sup>
protein in CSF extracts is also directly modified by these agents; the abundance of mos protein does not change but the apparent molecular mass of the protein increases, presumably because of hyperphosphorylation (Sagata et al., 1989b). In the work reported here, we observed a strict correlation between the ability of different serine→alanine mutants to induce oocyte maturation and to function in CSF assays. Taken together, these arguments strongly suggest that phosphorylation is not involved in converting a pre-GVBD CSF-inactive form of mos into a post-GVBD CSF-active form. In this regard, it was recently shown that the overexpressed mos proteins from pre-GVBD oocytes and from post-GVBD oocytes possess similar CSF activities (Kanki and Donoghue, 1991), although such assays do not address whether the mos protein from pre-GVBD oocytes may undergo additional phosphorylation in the injected blastomeres.

In addition to its other activities, it should be noted that mos translation is required for progression from meiosis I to meiosis II, both in Xenopus oocytes (Kanki and Donoghue, 1991) and murine oocytes (O'Keefe et al., 1989). For technical reasons, the work presented in this study has not addressed whether phosphorylation of mos protein (possibly even at serine-3) may be required for its activity to promote progression from meiosis I to meiosis II.

There are five serine-proline motifs present in mos that could act as potential sites of p34<sup>cdc2</sup> phosphorylation, although none of these fit the more rigorous Ser-Pro-X-Lys/Arg consensus sequence (Moreno and Nurse, 1990). Three of these serines (S3, S16, and S26) were mutated in this study and found not to be required for the maturation inducing or CSF activities of mos. We have demonstrated that serine-3 is a major phosphorylation site in mos. However, it seems unlikely that this residue is phosphorylated in vivo by p34<sup>cdc2</sup> since phosphorylation of this site occurs in both the mos<sup>S3R</sup> and mos<sup>S3A</sup> mutants that fail to induce oocyte maturation or activate MPF.

It has long been a matter of speculation whether phosphorylation may regulate the activity of mos with respect to the initiation of meiotic maturation or its ability to function as CSF. Our results indicate that significant phosphorylation at unique sites in the mos protein does not occur during maturation and are not likely to be catalyzed by p34<sup>cdc2</sup>. In addition, the major phosphorylations of mos can occur in the absence of autophasorylation. Finally, phosphorylation of conserved serine residues does not appear to regulate the ability of mos to induce oocyte maturation or function as CSF.

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