Assembly and Localization of the U1-specific snRNP C Protein in the Amphibian Oocyte

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Abstract. To study the intranuclear localization of the U1-specific snRNP C protein and its assembly into U1 snRNPs, we injected transcripts encoding a myc-tagged C protein into amphibian oocytes. The distribution of protein translated from the injected RNA was essentially the same in continuous and pulse-label experiments. In both cases the C protein localized within the germinal vesicle in those structures known to contain U1 snRNPs, namely the lampbrush chromosome loops and hundreds of extrachromosomal granules called snurposomes. Oocytes were also injected with an antisense oligodeoxynucleotide that caused truncation of U1 snRNA at the 5' end. In these oocytes, myc-tagged C protein localized normally in the germinal vesicle and could be immunoprecipitated together with truncated U1 snRNA. These experiments suggest that the C protein can enter the germinal vesicle on its own and there associate with previously assembled U1 snRNPs. In transfected tissue culture cells, the myc-tagged C protein localized within the nucleus in a speckled pattern similar to that of endogenous U1 snRNPs.

The small nuclear ribonucleoproteins (snRNPs)

The functions of snurposomes are still obscure. Because B snurposomes and the actively transcribing loops of the lampbrush chromosomes share such a variety of splicing components, these two structures may be related in some way. Among the (nonexclusive) possibilities are that B snurposomes serve as sites for (a) preassembly of spliceosome components destined for the loops, (b) storage of snRNPs used later in embryogenesis, (c) recycling of splicing components, and (d) splicing probably occur simultaneously under many conditions in the nucleus, even though the two processes are not obligately linked (Pan and Prives, 1988; Tsvetkov et al., 1992).

In the amphibian germinal vesicle (GV), splicing components are also found in hundreds to thousands of extrachromosomal granules called snurposomes (Gall and Callan, 1989; Wu et al., 1991). Three types, designated A, B, and C snurposomes, can be distinguished on the basis of morphology and molecular composition. A and B snurposomes are ~1–4 μm in diameter, whereas Cs vary from as small as 1 μm to giant structures 20 μm in diameter. The A snurposomes contain only U1 snRNA and associated proteins; so far, they have been identified in GVs of the newt Notophthalmus, but not in Xenopus. B snurposomes are generally the most abundant. They are known to contain the five splicing snRNAs, several snRNP proteins, at least one essential non-snRNP splicing factor (SC35), and hnRNP proteins. The composition of the Cs is problematic. They stain more or less uniformly with antibodies directed against the Sm proteins and against the trimethylguanosine cap found on most snRNAs. Nevertheless, in situ hybridization of splicing snRNAs is limited to small internal inclusions (our own unpublished observations).

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ments originally assembled on the loops, or (d) splicing itself.

One approach to understanding the relationships among the various snRNP-containing structures in the GV is to follow the incorporation of newly synthesized splicing components into these structures by microscopic techniques. If, at the same time, the assembly of snRNPs or larger complexes is followed biochemically, some idea about sites of assembly can be gained. To this end we have studied the U1-specific snRNP C protein in the GV. We synthesized myc-tagged transcripts from a cDNA clone of the C protein and injected these into newt and Xenopus oocytes. We then followed the incorporation of the newly synthesized C protein into various nuclear structures by immunofluorescence. We also demonstrated that new C protein can associate with pre-existing U1 snRNPs within the nucleus. For comparison, we examined the localization of newly synthesized C protein in somatic cells after transfection with the cDNA clone.

Materials and Methods

Isolation of the snRNP C cDNA

The snRNP C cDNA was isolated from a lambda ZAP expression library made from Xenopus laevis ovary mRNA (Tafuri and Wolff, 1990). The snRNP C coding region was one of two open reading frames in a clone selected for its ability to bind RNA. After conversion of the lambda phage to the corresponding Bluescript SK(−) phagemid, designated p2, the entire insert was sequenced by the dideoxy chain termination method (Sanger et al., 1977). The identity of the snRNP C coding region was determined by a sequence homology search in the GenBank database. We also demonstrated that new C protein can associate with pre-existing U1 snRNPs within the nucleus. For comparison, we examined the localization of newly synthesized C protein in somatic cells after transfection with the cDNA clone.

in vitro Transcription

Plasmid pCMX was linearized at a unique BamHI site downstream of the poly A tail. Capped in vitro transcripts were produced from the T7 promoter. snRNAs were made as described by Hamm et al. (1989). snRNAs were hybridized at 65°C for 12 h with 32P-labeled antisense probes in high SDS buffer (Church and Gilbert, 1984). Membranes were washed once for 15 min in 1X SSC (0.15 M NaCl, 0.015 M Na citrate, pH 7.0), 0.5% SDS, followed by two 15-min washes in 0.2X SSC, 0.5% SDS at 65°C, and exposed while moist to X-ray film for 1-2 h at room temperature.

Tissue Culture Transfection

For transfection of the myc-snRNP C fusion construct into tissue culture cells, the coding region of pCMX and the poly A tail of NO38 were cloned into pCMX (Unesono et al., 1991). HeLa cells were grown in MEM supplemented with 10% FCS. One day before transfection, 5 X 10^6 cells were placed in 10-cm petri dishes containing acid-etched coverslips. Transfections were made by the calcium phosphate precipitation method (Ausubel et al., 1987). DNA precipitates were left on the cells overnight, which were then washed in PBS, covered with fresh medium, and allowed to recover for 24 h.

Cells on coverslips were fixed and permeabilized according to Fu and Maniatis (1990) except that methanol replaced acetone in the permeabilization step. After fixation, cells were washed in 70% ethanol, and transferred to PBS. Immunofluorescent staining was performed as described by Wu et al. (1991).

Microscopy

Microscopes and filter combinations used for phase contrast, DIC (Nomarski), fluorescence, and confocal laser scan microscopy are described in Wu et al. (1991).

Antibodies

mAb 9E10 recognizes a 10-amino acid peptide in the human c-myc protein (Evan et al., 1985). mAb Y12 recognizes the Sm epitope found on several snRNPs (Lerner et al., 1981). Human serum 361 is known to immunoprecipitate U1 snRNPs (D. Wassarman, unpublished observation).

Results

Isolation and Characterization of a Xenopus cDNA Encoding the U1 snRNP C Protein

We have isolated a Xenopus laevis cDNA clone that encodes...
the U1-specific snRNP C protein. The snRNP C coding region was found as one of two open reading frames in a lambda ZAP clone derived from a "baby ovary" cDNA library (Tafuri and Wolfe, 1990). Sequencing of the entire insert and a subsequent search in the GenBank data base showed that one of the two open reading frames coded for the Xenopus homologue of the human snRNP C protein. The 480-bp coding region showed 80% identity to the human cDNA (Sillekens et al., 1988) with a corresponding 92% identity on the protein level (Fig. 1).

Like its human counterpart, the Xenopus C protein contains a putative zinc finger cys-cys/his-his motif (Berg, 1988) near the amino terminus. The zinc finger is necessary for binding of the C protein to the U1 snRNP (Nelissen et al., 1991). Consistent with this finding, there are no amino acid differences between the Xenopus and human proteins in the zinc finger region (Fig. 1).

**Construction of myc-snRNP C Fusions**

To study the intranuclear transport and localization of the C protein we wanted to inject in vitro synthesized transcripts encoding the C protein into newt and Xenopus oocytes and follow the translation products by immunofluorescence and immunoblotting. To distinguish newly synthesized from endogenous C protein we tagged the C protein with a 10-amino acid sequence derived from the human c-myc gene. The resulting fusion protein could then be detected with mAb 9E10 specific for the myc tag (Evan et al., 1985).

Four in-frame constructs were made that contained the C protein cDNA fused to an oligonucleotide encoding either a single myc tag or six tandem tags. Two constructs had the tags at the amino terminus, two at the carboxy terminus.

To increase the stability of the RNAs after injection into oocytes, the 3' end of our constructs consisted of the 3' untranslated region and poly A tail of the Xenopus NO38 cDNA (Peculis and Gall, 1992). In vitro transcripts of all constructs were made, the RNAs were translated either in vitro, or in vivo after injection into oocytes, and the resulting fusion proteins were detected by immunoblotting and by immunofluorescence of cytological preparations. In oocytes the two amino-terminal myc fusions accumulated in the GV, as shown by immunoblotting of GV proteins, but neither could be detected on the chromosomes or other cytological structures in spread preparations of GV contents (data not shown). Presumably, therefore, the proteins were in the soluble phase of the GV. Both carboxy-terminal fusions showed strong signals on immunoblots of GV proteins and on immunofluorescently stained cytological preparations. The construct with a single myc tag had a calculated molecular mass of 18.9 kD, that with six tags a mass of 29 kD. On gels, both constructs showed slightly larger apparent molecular masses of 24 and 33 kD, respectively. A similar discrepancy between calculated and apparent molecular weight has also been observed for the human snRNP C protein and is believed to be caused by posttranslational modifications of the protein (Sillekens et al., 1988). For all subsequent studies we used construct pCMA, which has six tags at the carboxy terminus (Fig. 2).

**Intranuclear Localization of snRNP C Fusion Protein**

Capped in vitro transcripts of pCMA were injected into Notophthalimus oocytes. The translation products were followed at various times after injection by immunofluorescence of cytological preparations and by immunoblots of GV proteins. Positions at which they differ, in the middle and carboxy-terminal regions, are underlined. A putative zinc finger cys-cys/his-his motif is shown in bold face. The ClaI restriction site, used to fuse the snRNP C encoding region to the myc tags, is also shown in bold face. These sequence data are available from EMBL/GenBank/DDBJ under accession number X63892.

**Figure 1.** Nucleotide sequence of the Xenopus U1 snRNP C gene and its conceptual amino acid translation. The amino-terminal portion of the molecule is identical in the human and Xenopus proteins. Positions at which they differ, in the middle and carboxy-terminal regions, are underlined. A putative zinc finger cys-cys/his-his motif is shown in bold face. The ClaI restriction site, used to fuse the snRNP C encoding region to the myc tags, is also shown in bold face. These sequence data are available from EMBL/GenBank/DDBJ under accession number X63892.

**Figure 2.** Diagram of the insert in plasmid pCMA. Sequences encoding 6 concatenated myc epitopes are fused to the 3' end of the snRNP C cDNA, followed by the 3' untranslated region of NO38 (Peculis and Gall, 1992). The whole construct is inserted in BlueScript KS(−) downstream of the phage T7 promoter. Linearization of pCMA with BamHI allows in vitro synthesis of runoff transcripts from the T7 promoter.
The intranuclear distribution of endogenous U1 snRNPs was demonstrated in control, uninjected oocytes by staining with human serum 361, which specifically immunoprecipitates U1 snRNPs (D. Wasserman, unpublished observation). Serum 361 stained chromosome loops and the three types of snurposomes (Fig. 5; see also Wu et al., 1991). It consistently gave strong staining of A snurposomes, moderate staining of B snurposomes, and weak staining of C snurposomes.

To show that the intranuclear distribution of the myc-snRNP C fusion protein was not due to the myc tag alone, two additional myc constructs, one encoding the Xenopus nucleolar protein NO38, and one containing a fragment of pyruvate kinase cDNA fused to the SV-40 nuclear localization signal were injected as controls. As expected from earlier experiments (Peculis and Gall, 1992), the translation products of these two constructs accumulated in the GV, NO38 in the nucleoli and pyruvate kinase in the soluble nucleoplasm. Both patterns were clearly distinguishable from that of the myc-snRNP C protein.

Assembly of myc-snRNP C Fusion Protein into U1 snRNPs

To further characterize the transport and accumulation of C protein in the GV, we tested whether newly synthesized myc-snRNP C fusion protein was assembled into intact snRNPs. Total snRNPs were immunoprecipitated from GV extracts of injected and uninjected Xenopus or Notophthalmus oocytes and assayed for the fusion protein by immunoblotting with mAb 9E10. The immunoprecipitations were made with the anti-Sm mAb Y12 (Lerner et al., 1981). These experiments showed that the majority of the myc-snRNP C protein was coprecipitated with the total snRNPs, suggesting that a large fraction of it was properly assembled into intact snRNPs (Fig. 6). The minor fraction of unprecipitated myc-snRNP C protein which remained in the supernatant in these experiments (Fig. 6, lane 5) could represent protein that had not been assembled into snRNPs, or could result from inefficient immunoprecipitation of assembled snRNPs by mAb Y12.

The immunoprecipitation experiments and the control injections suggest that the myc tag does not significantly interfere with the assembly of the fusion protein into intact snRNPs and the normal localization of these snRNPs within the GV.

Localization of the snRNP C Protein after Cycloheximide Treatment

If U1 snRNPs are moving from one intranuclear compartment to another, their movement might be detected more easily after a pulse of newly synthesized protein than during continuous synthesis. Therefore, protein synthesis was inhibited by transferring the oocytes to a medium containing cycloheximide at various times after CMA injection. Subsequently, the distribution of newly synthesized myc-snRNP C fusion protein was monitored by immunoblotting and immunofluorescence. In this experiment, the same distribution of the fusion protein was observed in control and cycloheximide-treated oocytes. The intensity of stain, however, was markedly reduced in the cycloheximide-treated oocytes, as was the amount of fusion protein detectable on immunoblots (data not shown). The cycloheximide experiment suggests that there is little or no transport of the myc-snRNP C fusion protein from one intranuclear organelle to another during the time course of this experiment.

Nuclear Transport of the snRNP C Protein

The import of most snRNPs into the nucleus, including U1, is dependent on preassembly of proteins and snRNA in the cytoplasm, with several proteins unable to enter the nucleus on their own (Andersen and Zieve, 1991). Pulse label and fractionation experiments of tissue culture cells suggest, however, that the C protein can enter the nucleus independently in somatic cells (Feeney et al., 1989). To study the nuclear transport of the C protein in oocytes, we carried out experiments in which the endogenous U1 snRNA was truncated at its 5' end by injection of the antisense oligodeoxyribonucleotide (oligo) Ula (Pan and Prives, 1988, 1989). 2–12 h later, CMA was injected, and the localization of
Figure 4. Distribution of the snRNP C protein. Spread GV contents from Notophthalmus oocytes prepared at 9 (a and b), 18 (c and d), 36 (e and f) and 60 (g and h) h after injection of CMA. (a, c, e, and g) Differential interference contrast (DIC) and (b, d, f, and h) immunofluorescence images in the fluorescein channel of the same region stained with mAb 9E10 to show the distribution of the myc-snRNP C fusion protein. (a and b) At 9 h after injection only weak labeling of C snurposomes (C) is seen. (c and d) 18 h after injection, B snurposomes (B) and lambrush chromosome loops show first signs of labeling, which subsequently increases (e and f) until maximal labeling is reached 60 h after injection (g and h). The multiple nucleoli remain unlabeled throughout. DIC (i) and immunofluorescent (j) images of a C snurposome with two attached B snurposomes (arrows) 40 h after injection of CMA. The two B snurposomes show maximal labeling, whereas the C snurposome has already decreased somewhat in intensity. Phase contrast (k) and immunofluorescent (l) images of the giant loops (GL) found on chromosome 2. These loops do not accumulate the C protein (they also fail to label with anti-snRNP antibodies and in situ hybridization probes against U snRNAs). N, nucleolus. Bar, 10 μm.
newly synthesized myc-snRNP C fusion protein was monitored by immunoblotting and immunofluorescence. The cleavage of U1 snRNA was simultaneously followed by Northern blots. It has been shown previously that U1 snRNA truncated at the 5' end cannot enter the nucleus, because the trimethylguanosine cap is required for nuclear migration (Hamm et al., 1990).

As expected from earlier studies (Pan and Prives, 1988, 1989; Tsvetkov et al., 1992), the injection of the Ula oligo caused rapid cleavage of U1 snRNA, with no detectable resynthesis for up to 65 h (Fig. 7). During this time, immunoblots showed that the nuclear accumulation of the CMA translation product proceeded as in control oocytes that had not received the Ula oligo (data not shown). The intranuclear distribution of the myc-snRNP C protein was similar in control and oligo-injected oocytes (Fig. 8). The only difference observed by immunofluorescence was less intense labeling of chromosome loops in oocytes injected with the oligo.

Because the myc-snRNP C fusion protein presumably entered the GV as free protein, yet showed the same intranuclear localization as in controls, we wanted to know whether it was associated with the truncated, inactive U1 snRNA. We immunoprecipitated U1 snRNPs from newt or Xenopus oocytes injected with CMA, using mAb 9E10 directed against the myc tag. Some oocytes had been preinjected with the Ula oligo to truncate the U1 snRNA. The immunoprecipitated material was then tested for full-length vs. truncated U1 snRNA by Northern blots (Fig. 9). As a control, all splicing snRNPs were immunoprecipitated from comparable oocytes using mAb Y12. In these experiments both truncated (AU1) and full-length U1 snRNAs were immunoprecipitated by mAb 9E10 (Fig. 9, lanes 2 and 3 respectively), demonstrating that the myc-snRNP C fusion protein was associated in the GV with truncated U1 snRNA. The control immunoprecipitations with mAb Y12 showed that U1 snRNPs from single GVs of Notophthalmus isolated from control oocytes, or oocytes injected 15 or 65 h previously with the antisense Ula oligo (αU1a). The blot was probed simultaneously for U1 and U6 snRNAs. The oligo injection converts U1 snRNA to a truncated form (ΔU1), which is stable within the GV for at least 65 h. U6 is unaffected by injection of the Ula oligo.
snRNPs with truncated U1 snRNA contained the usual complement of Sm proteins B and D (Fig. 9, lanes 4 and 5).

To determine whether the myc-snRNP C fusion protein had interacted nonspecifically with other splicing snRNPs in the GV, the Northern blots were rehybridized with probes for the other splicing snRNAs (Fig. 9). Whereas mAb Y12 immunoprecipitated U1-U6 snRNAs, including the truncated U1, mAb 9E10 precipitated only the full-length and truncated forms of U1, suggesting that the myc-snRNP C fusion protein interacted only with the U1 snRNP in the GV.

Localization of the snRNP C Protein in Somatic Cells

It has been known for some time that snRNP components are distributed in a speckled pattern in interphase nuclei (Lerner et al., 1981; Spector, 1984, 1990). Depending on the cell type, the fixation protocol, and the antibody probe, the immunofluorescence pattern can be somewhat variable, ranging from numerous discrete areas of stain with a low background to a relatively diffuse staining of the nucleus with only a few stronger patches (Fu and Maniatis, 1990; Carmo-Fonseca et al., 1991a,b; Carter et al., 1991; Spector et al., 1991). The relationship of the nuclear speckles observed in somatic cells to the A, B, and C snurposomes of the amphibian GV is not known.

To study the intranuclear localization of the myc-snRNP C fusion protein in somatic cells, we transfected HeLa cells with a plasmid expressing the entire CMA coding region. The cells were grown on coverslips, fixed with formaldehyde, and stained simultaneously with mAb 9E10, which stains only the fusion protein, and with serum 361, which stains both the fusion protein and endogenous U1-specific proteins. Thus, in the transfected cells, regions stained by mAb 9E10 must also be stained by 361, although the converse would not necessarily be true. In fact, within a given transfected nucleus, the two stains were colocalized (Fig. 10, b and c), demonstrating that new snRNP C protein is found wherever there are U1 snRNPs. Nucleoli were unstained in all cases.

Figure 9. Xenopus oocytes were injected with the Ula oligo (αU1a +), RNA encoding the myc-snRNP C protein (CMA +), or the oligo and subsequently the RNA. snRNPs from hand-isolated GVs were immunoprecipitated with mAb 9E10 (lanes 1-3), mAb Y12 (lanes 4 and 5), or no antibody (lane 6), the snRNAs extracted with phenol/chloroform, and electrophoresed on a 10% acrylamide/8 M urea gel. The RNAs were transferred to a GeneScreen filter, and probed for U1, U2, U4, and U6 snRNAs. mAb 9E10 reacts with the myc tag in the myc-snRNP C fusion protein. Because mAb 9E10 precipitates both truncated (lane 2) and full-length U1 snRNA (lane 3), we conclude that the fusion protein can interact in the GV with the truncated RNA, presumably by exchange into previously assembled U1 snRNPs. mAb Y12 recognizes the Sm epitope and precipitates all major snRNAs (lane 5, but data not shown for U5 snRNA). Because it also precipitates the truncated version of U1 snRNA in injected oocytes (lane 4), Sm proteins are presumably associated with the truncated RNA. The presence of full-length U1 in lane 4 is probably due to poor injection of the oligo into one of the oocytes in this sample. Because mAb 9E10 immunoprecipitates poorly, extracts from 30 GVs were used with this antibody compared with five GVs with mAb Y12. In addition, the autoradiographic exposure for lanes 1–3 was twice that for lanes 4–6. Comparable results were obtained when the experiment was performed on Notophthalmus oocytes.
Discussion

The U1-specific snRNP C Protein

Cell fractionation and immunoprecipitation experiments have shown that the C protein is a specific constituent of U1 snRNPs (Lelay-Taha et al., 1986; Bringmann and Lührmann, 1986). The *Xenopus* cDNA isolated by us encodes a protein with 92% sequence identity to the human C protein (Sillekens et al., 1988). Both the *Xenopus* and human proteins contain a cys-cys/his-his motif at the amino terminus that could form a zinc finger (Berg, 1988). In vitro assembly experiments have shown that the putative zinc finger region is important for the binding of the human protein to U1 snRNPs (Nelissen et al., 1991). Consistent with the functional significance of this region, the *Xenopus* and human sequences are identical for the first 67 amino acids, including all of the putative zinc finger region. We found that myc-C fusion proteins with either one or 6 myc tags at the amino terminus accumulated in the GV, but did not localize in structures known to contain U1 snRNPs. The myc tag may have affected the formation or stability of the zinc finger itself, or it may have interfered sterically with binding of this region to an attachment site on the U1 snRNP. By contrast, myc-C fusion proteins with the tag at the carboxy terminus accumulated in the GV and localized on specific intranuclear structures.

Localization and Assembly of the C Protein

Within the GV the myc-tagged C protein was detectable by immunofluorescence in the lambrush chromosome loops and in the snurposomes, structures known from earlier studies to contain U1 snRNPs (Wu et al., 1991). Conversely, immunofluorescent staining was not seen in structures that lack U1 snRNPs, such as the nucleoli, chromomeres, axial granules, and certain specific loops. When other myc-tagged constructs were injected into the oocyte, entirely different patterns of localization were observed (Roth and Gall, 1989; Peculis and Gall, 1992).

Immunoprecipitations confirmed that most of the newly synthesized C protein was associated with intact U1 snRNPs. We conclude, therefore, that the myc-tagged fusion product behaved normally in the GV in the sense that it was incorporated into U1 snRNPs and its intranuclear distribution was similar to that of endogenous U1 snRNPs.

A similar conclusion can be drawn about the behavior of myc-tagged C protein in transfected cells. In this case, the C protein localized in the nucleus in a punctate pattern identical to that of endogenous U1 snRNPs (Fig. 10).

Kinetics of Organelle Labeling

Although it is relatively easy to follow the bulk movement of newly synthesized C protein from the cytoplasm into the GV, and to determine that it is assembled into intact snRNPs, it is difficult to predict the immunofluorescent staining patterns expected for individual nuclear organelles. These patterns will depend on several factors, including (a) how the newly synthesized protein enters the GV and whether it can exchange with protein in preexisting snRNPs, (b) whether and how rapidly snRNPs are moving from one organelle to another, (c) whether any of the organelles are essentially storage granules with little or no turnover, and (d) whether experimental overproduction of a protein disturbs the nor-
nal distribution. The situation in an oocyte, which grows slowly over weeks with little morphological change except size, differs from that in rapidly dividing tissue culture cells, where one expects the distribution of old and new protein to be identical after one or two cell doublings.

With these considerations in mind, one can examine the immunofluorescence patterns in the GV at various times after injection of transcripts. There was a general rise in the intensity of fluorescence over the course of an experiment, consistent with the increasing amount of newly synthesized protein detectable in the GV by immunoblots (Figs. 3 and 4). Beyond this, there were changes in the relative intensity of different structures. In general, C snurposomes labeled first, followed by the chromosome loops and B snurposomes. The A snurposomes also labeled, but in an inconsistent manner from experiment to experiment. Among these structures, the chromosome loops and B snurposomes together account for the great majority of fluorescence (Wu et al., 1991).

If the differences in relative intensity were due to movement of U1 snRNPs between components, the effect should be accentuated in a pulse–label experiment. We therefore carried out the cycloheximide experiment, in which protein synthesis was shut down ~3–8 h after injection of the transcript. In this case, the overall level of fluorescent staining was reduced, reflecting less newly synthesized protein, but the pattern of labeling was similar to that in the experiments without cycloheximide. That is, C snurposomes labeled first, followed by loops and B snurposomes.

The absence of a clear-cut progression of label from one structure to another, and the fact that the labeling pattern was essentially the same with continuous and pulse label, suggested that the newly synthesized C protein might enter all U1 snRNPs more or less simultaneously. In other words, there might be exchange of new for old C protein in intact U1 snRNPs in the GV, as was shown to occur in vitro when human C protein was incubated with intact U1 snRNPs (Nelissen et al., 1991). To test this possibility, an antisense oligo that causes truncation of U1 snRNA was injected, and 2–12 h later transcripts for the C protein were injected. When the GV contents were immunoprecipitated with mAb 9El0 against the myc tag, newly synthesized C protein was coprecipitated with truncated U1 snRNA. Earlier experiments with the Ula oligo (Pan and Prives, 1988, 1989; Prives and Foukal, 1991; Tsvetkov et al., 1992) showed that truncation of U1 snRNA is complete within ~30 min, the oligo itself degrades with a half-life of ~10 min, and there is no significant synthesis of new U1 snRNA during the ensuing 1–2 d. There is presumably no pool of free U1 snRNA in the oocyte, and even if there were free U1 snRNA in the cytoplasm, it could not enter the nucleus after truncation (Hamm et al., 1990). Thus we feel confident that all of the truncated U1 snRNA in the GV was present in preassembled U1 snRNPs from the beginning of the experiment. This being the case, newly synthesized C protein must have entered the GV on its own, as shown earlier by Feeney et al. (1989) for tissue culture cells. Once inside the GV, the new C protein exchanged with old C protein present in U1 snRNPs; or it entered U1 snRNPs in the GV that lacked C protein at the beginning of the experiment. In either case, the new C protein would be associated with truncated U1 snRNA. This pathway for entry of new C protein into the GV would explain why all structures that contain U1 snRNPs became labeled more or less simultaneously and why there was little difference between continuous and pulse–label experiments except in total amount of label. The differences between structures in rates of labeling could be caused by differences in accessibility of U1 snRNPs for exchange.

The antisense injection experiments raise another question about accumulation of the C protein in the nucleus. Under normal circumstances the C protein is restricted to the nucleus, yet it has no obvious nuclear localization signal of the type described for SV-40 large T antigen, nucleoplasm, or other nuclear proteins (reviewed in Dingwall and Laskey, 1991). Because of its small size (29 kD) the C protein may be able to diffuse through the nuclear pores (Paine et al., 1975). Once inside the nucleus, it may remain because of its association with U1 snRNPs.

C Snurposomes

Although most of our observations on the intranuclear distribution of newly synthesized C protein are consistent with a simple exchange of new for old C protein in each of the nuclear organelles, the labeling of C snurposomes was more complex. C snurposomes are bipartite structures, consisting of a matrix and one or more inclusions of various sizes (Callan and Gall, 1991; Gall, 1992). In situ hybridization shows that splicing snRNAs are limited to the inclusions (unpublished), even though the matrix stains strongly with mAb Y12 against Sm proteins and mAb K121 against the trimethylguanosine cap of snRNAs (Gall and Callan, 1989; Wu et al., 1991). Human serum 361, which reacts with the C protein, stains the entire C snorposome weakly (Wu et al., 1991). Thus we did not expect to see much accumulation of C protein in the C snurposomes in the injection experiments. However, the C snurposomes were the first structures detectable by immunofluorescence and they remained as bright as the loops and B snurposomes during the first 24–48 h. After that time, the C snurposomes sometimes lost label relative to the loops and B snurposomes. These results suggest the possibility that some of the C protein that enters the GV passes first through the C snurposomes. Because the myc-tagged C protein is clearly in the matrix of the C snurposomes, which has little or no U1 snRNA, it may occur as free protein in this organelle. In another study involving the intranuclear localization of newly synthesized NO38, normally a strictly nucleolar protein, some deletion constructs exhibited strong labeling of the C snurposomes (Peculis and Gall, 1992). Although these observations are at present fragmentary, they hint that C snurposomes may play some role in the distribution of proteins within the nucleus.

A Snurposomes

The snRNP composition of A snurposomes is simpler than that of B's or C's. Of the splicing components for which we have tested, they contain only U1 snRNA and associated proteins (Wu et al., 1991). We were, therefore, surprised by the inconsistent labeling of these organelles with the myc-tagged C protein. Our assessment of the A snurposomes was complicated by the fact that they can vary greatly in number and size, and can be morphologically indistinguishable from B snurposomes (Wu et al., 1991). It is thus possible that we confused A and B snurposomes in some preparations where they were equally labeled. A and B snurposomes can be dis-
tistinguised unequivocally in control GV's by the brighter staining of A's with human serum 361, which specifically recognizes U1 snRNPs. Unfortunately, this serum recognizes the C protein, and gave the same staining pattern as the anti-myel antibody in GV's from injected oocytes. Thus it could not be used to distinguish A and B snurposomes in the injection experiments. We can conclude that newly synthesized C protein enters A snurposomes, but beyond this, our observations do not suggest a specific role for these structures.

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