

Evidence for binding of the ectodomain of amyloid precursor protein 695 and activated high molecular weight kininogen

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Abstract

To identify ligands that bind to the N-terminal portion of human amyloid precursor protein (APP), we sought binding partners for a fragment of the ectodomain of human APP695 (sAPP₆₉₅T). The probe bound to fragments of high molecular weight kininogen (HK) in rat cortical membrane preparations in vitro. Laser confocal microscopy indicated that APP and HK colocalize near cerebral blood vessels, in the neuropil, and in many neurons of rat brain. sAPP₆₉₅T bound to human activated kininogen (HKa) ($K_d = 0.3 \pm 0.1$ nM), but not to inactivated or low molecular weight kininogen. Binding was specific for the light chain sequence of HKa. Biotinylated human HKa also bound to sAPP₆₉₅ ($K_d = 0.3 \pm 0.5$ nM). sAPP₆₉₅ and HKa form tight complexes in solution that can be coimmunoprecipitated. These results support the hypothesis that forms of APP and kininogen can interact in brain tissue. Considering the implications of APP in neurite outgrowth, the APP–HKa interaction could modulate neurogenesis. © 2002 Elsevier Science B.V. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Amyloid precursor protein; Activated high molecular weight kininogen; Light chain of high molecular weight kininogen; Neuron; Binding

1. Introduction

Interest in the amyloid precursor protein (APP) began when it was shown to be the progenitor of beta-amyloid (A β). This peptide is present in plaques in the brains of Alzheimer's patients. Proteolysis of APP yields potentially toxic peptides, including A β 1–40 and A β 1–42. It also yields the soluble

neurotrophin, sAPP [1–4]. This secretory product is nearly identical to the ectodomain of APP. APP is found in the cerebellum (dentate nucleus), cerebral cortex (layers III and V), hippocampus (pyramidal cell layer), and corpus callosum [5]. It is expressed in many brain cells including endothelial and meningeal cells, glia, astrocytes and neurons [6–9] and other cells [2]. In addition, sAPP is found in serum, plasma, and cerebrospinal fluid [10–13].

APP is a monotopic multifunctional transmembrane glycoprotein [14]. Many studies have sought APP binding proteins because it is felt that if two proteins interact with one another, they are probably involved in related cellular functions [15]. The C-terminal cytoplasmic domain of APP interacts with G-proteins [16], suggesting that it is a plasma membrane receptor. This domain also binds to APP-binding protein 1 (APP-BP1) [17], a cytoplasmic protein that is needed to move cells through the S–M checkpoint of their growth cycle [18]. The cytoplasmic tail of APP has also been shown to interact with several neuronal proteins such as FE65 [19], X11 α [20], mDAB1 [21] and PAT1 [22]. Functions for these interactions have been proposed but not proven [23].

The ectodomain of APP was shown to tightly bind to extracellular matrix components, including collagen [24],

Abbreviations: HK, high molecular weight kininogen; HKa, activated high molecular weight kininogen; LK, low molecular weight kininogen; APP, amyloid precursor protein; APP₆₉₅T, truncated amyloid precursor protein isoform 695; A β , amyloidogenic peptide; sAPP, soluble amyloid precursor protein; PVDF, polyvinylidene difluoride; PAGE, polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis; DTT, dithiothreitol; HRP, horseradish peroxidase; PBS, phosphate-buffered saline; ELISA, enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay; TBST, Tris-buffered saline containing 0.05% TWEEN; CAPS, (3-[cyclohexylamino]-1-propanesulfonic acid) buffer; BB, binding buffer; BBT, binding buffer containing 0.05% TWEEN

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heparin sulfate proteoglycans [25–27] and laminin [28,29]. This specific adherence may play a role in the establishment of neurites and [2,30] may help APP function as a regulator of neuronal-cell or cell-matrix interactions [31]. To detect other APP-binding proteins we used a portion of the ectodomain of APP₆₉₅ as our probe.

sAPP has both neuronal and non-neuronal functions (for reviews see Refs. [1–4]). The neuronal functions of sAPP include promotion of synaptogenesis and neurite outgrowth, regulation of synaptic plasticity, long-term potentiation, and neuroprotective effects [2]. The mechanisms by which sAPP mediates these neuronal effects remain unclear. Work from Saitoh's group [32] showed that specific sequences in sAPP could stimulate neurite outgrowth in tissue culture and improve memory when injected into the brains of living rats. This suggests that sAPP binds to a receptor or other proteins to mediate these effects. However, none of these proteins have been identified.

Hence, we sought proteins from rat cortex membrane preparations that bind to a biotinylated ectodomain fragment of an isoform of sAPP, sAPP₆₉₅, predominantly found in neurons. We chose it because we wished to avoid re-detection of proteases involved in blood clotting. The interaction of soluble forms of APP₇₅₁ and APP₇₇₀ with proteases has been well studied [31]. APP₆₉₅ lacks the Kunitz Protease Inhibitor Domain and should not bind or inhibit proteases. Our preliminary studies [33] indicated that sAPP₆₉₅ can bind to a form of kininogen (HK) from rat membrane preparation in vitro.

HK is a multifunctional glycoprotein that undergoes complex proteolytic processing to yield activated kininogen (HKa) and the vasoactive nonapeptide, bradykinin [34–37]. HK plays a role in blood coagulation and angiogenesis. It down-regulates endothelial cell proliferation and migration [36] and binds to negative surfaces in a Zn⁺⁺-dependent fashion [38]. It is present in the brain in endothelial cells, meningeal cells, glia, astrocytes and neurons [39–41]. Li et al. [39] stressed the point that its functions in the brain are unknown.

HKa binds to membrane surfaces and receptors. HKa contains a histidine-rich region (domain 5) that interacts with the urokinase receptor and prevents the receptor from binding to vitronectin [35]. Domain 5 is also responsible for the anti-adhesive action of HKa on neutrophils [42–44] and endothelial cells [38,45,46]. The precursor of HK, HKa, has been shown to bind to proteins such as ferritin [47], thrombospondin [48], gC1q receptor [49], and heparin [50,51]. The physiological functions of these interactions are uncertain. Aggregated A β has been reported to bind to HK and play a role in the conversion of HK to HKa [52], producing high levels of HKa in the cerebrospinal fluid of Alzheimer's patients [53].

Here we provide evidence that the ectodomain of human sAPP₆₉₅ binds to the light chain of human HKa in a direct and specific manner. The results also indicate that forms of APP and HK colocalize in rat brain.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Materials

Human HKa was purchased from Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO, or from their suppliers, Enzyme Research Laboratories, South Bend, IN. HK was purchased either from Enzyme Research Laboratories, or from Athens Research and Technology, Athens, GA. LK was purchased exclusively from Athens Research and Technology. Mouse monoclonal antibodies to either the light (C11C1) or heavy chain of HK were obtained from QED Bioscience, San Diego, CA, or, BioDesign International, Saco, ME. Monoclonal anti-APP m22C11 and polyclonal antibodies to peptides 44–63 and 99–126 of human APP were obtained from Chemicon, Temecula, CA. A C-terminal rabbit anti-APP polyclonal antibody, R1736, was a gift from Dr. Dennis Selkoe at Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School. Monoclonal antibody to protein tyrosine kinase [p-Tyr (Py20)] was obtained from Santa Cruz Biotechnology Inc., Santa Cruz, CA. A preparation of sAPP₆₉₅ prepared in a different strain of *Pichia pastoris*, using a different signal sequence [54] was a gift from Dr. Ikuroh Ohsawa from Japan. APP₆₉₅ cDNA was a gift from Dr. Dennis Selkoe.

2.2. Preparation of secreted human recombinant sAPP₆₉₅ in *P. pastoris*

2.2.1. DNA manipulation and expression

DNA manipulations were performed as described in Ref. [55]. APP cDNA comprising nucleotides – 2 to 2358 in expression vector pORFex13 [56] was a gift from Dr. Dennis Selkoe. DNA encoding the sequence from leu¹⁸ to lys⁶¹³ of human APP₆₉₅ was amplified by PCR. The following primers were used: 5'-CTGGAGCTACCCACTGAT-3' (sense) and 5'-CTTCAAGTAGTAGTTTTTACT-3' (antisense). The DNA fragment was gel-purified using a GeneClean II (Bio 101) kit, then cloned into the *Pml* 1 site of the pPICZ α B expression vector (Invitrogen), downstream of the *P. pastoris* alcohol oxidase (AOX1) promoter. The DNA of the cloned vector was sequenced to confirm that the insert was in frame with the α -factor secretion signal and the C-terminal tag. To transform *P. pastoris*, 10 μ g of DNA were linearized with *Pme* I, mixed with *P. pastoris* strain SMD1168 (Invitrogen), and electroporated. Expression was induced by exposure to methanol for 29 h as described in the Invitrogen instruction manual.

2.2.2. Purification and biotinylation

After induction, the culture supernatant (200 ml) was filtered to remove any residual particles, and then loaded on a 5 ml heparin-Sepharose column (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). The column was washed with 0.01 M sodium phosphate buffer, pH 7 until no protein was detected in the outflow. Then a 100 ml, 0–2 M linear NaCl gradient in 0.01 M sodium phosphate pH 7 buffer was applied to the column. The sAPP₆₉₅ content of the fractions was monitored by

Western blot analysis using monoclonal anti-APP antibody m22C11 and polyclonal antibody R1736. Fractions containing either sAPP₆₉₅ or sAPP₆₉₅T were pooled, lyophilized and re-analyzed by SDS-PAGE. The C-terminal sequence of sAPP₆₉₅T was obtained using a Procise C sequencer at the Mayo Protein Core facility, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN. The sequence we obtained, DDVLNTM, is identical to amino acids 498–505 of APP₆₉₅. The biological activity of sAPP₆₉₅ and sAPP₆₉₅T was confirmed in neurite outgrowth assays [32,57,58]. Purified sAPP₆₉₅T was biotinylated using the Calbiochem kit, following procedures stated in the manufacturer's instruction manual. Commercial human HKa was biotinylated in the same way.

2.3. Blotting procedures

For dot blot analyses, samples were diluted in 20 mM sodium phosphate, 0.15 M NaCl [binding buffer (BB)]. Five-microliter aliquots were spotted on nitrocellulose transfer membranes (NitroBind, MSI Micron Separations Inc.) and allowed to air-dry. Non-specific binding sites were blocked with SuperBlockTM Blocking Buffer in TBS (Pierce). Blots were washed three times with 20 mM Tris, 136 mM NaCl, and 0.1% Tween-20 (TBST) pH 7.6. The blots were then incubated with either biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T or biotinylated HKa for 2 h at room temperature in 3% nonfat dry milk solution. Then, the membrane was incubated with a 1:40,000 dilution of avidin-horseradish peroxidase (avidin-HRP) (Sigma) in 3% nonfat dry milk for 2 h at room temperature. The membrane was washed with TBST. Bound probe was detected with a chemiluminescent substrate (ECL, Amersham Pharmacia Biotech) by fluorography using Fuji RX film.

For ligand blotting, proteins were subjected to 10% SDS-PAGE by the Laemmli method [59] or wherever indicated to “Blue Native” gel electrophoresis [60,61]. Following electrophoresis, the gels were blotted onto polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) membranes (Millipore) overnight at 4 °C in 10 mM CAPS buffer (3-[cyclohexylamino]-1-propanesulfonic acid), pH 11, 10% methanol. Subsequently, the membrane was blocked with 3% nonfat dry milk for 2 h at room temperature, washed three times with TBST and incubated with biotinylated probe in 3% nonfat dry milk for 2 h at room temperature. The membrane was washed three times in TBST and incubated with a 1:40,000 dilution of avidin-HRP (Sigma) for 2 h at room temperature. In some cases, blots were incubated with monoclonal antibodies to either APP (m22C11) or HK (heavy chain) followed by secondary HRP-conjugated anti-mouse antibody (Amersham Pharmacia Biotech). Bound probe was detected as described for dot blots.

2.4. Preparation of rat brain membrane fractions

Membrane fractions were prepared from rat brain cortex by the procedure of Cohen et al. [62]. All procedures were

performed at 4 °C. Briefly, whole rat brain cortices from female Wistar rats (150–200 g) were homogenized with 10 volumes/gram wet weight of tissue in isolation medium A (0.32 M sucrose, 0.001 M MgCl₂, 0.05 mM CaCl₂, 1 mM NaHCO₃) containing CompleteTM (Boehringer Mannheim) protease inhibitor cocktail tablets. The homogenate was centrifuged for 10 min at 1475 × g. The pellet was resuspended in isolation medium A and centrifuged again for 10 min at 755 × g. The combined supernatants were centrifuged for 10 min at 17,300 × g. The resulting “high-speed” supernatant was decanted and the pellet was resuspended in 3 ml/g of original tissue weight in isolation medium B (0.32 M sucrose, 1 mM NaHCO₃). This pellet was homogenized and layered on top of a step gradient composed of 6 ml each of 1.2, 1.0 and 0.85 M sucrose. The gradient was centrifuged for 120 min at 100,000 × g. Fraction 1 formed a band at the interface of the 1.0 and 1.2 M sucrose layers, fraction 2 between 0.85 and 1.0 M, and fraction 3 pelleted below the 1.2 M cushion. These fractions were separated and stored at –80 °C.

2.5. Protein purification and N-terminal sequencing

The fractions were treated with Triton-X-100 (0.005%) and subjected to 4–8% gradient “Blue Native” gel electrophoresis [60,61]. A ligand blot was performed and the sAPP₆₉₅T-binding bands were excised from the gel and eluted in 25 mM Tris-HCl, 192 mM glycine, 0.1% SDS buffer. The eluted proteins were dialyzed against water at 4 °C, lyophilized and dissolved in water. To determine the N-terminal sequence, the eluted proteins were subjected to SDS-PAGE (NOVEX), then blotted on to PVDF membranes using a CAPS buffer at pH 11. The protein bands of interest were excised and loaded on an Applied Biosystems (Foster City, CA) ABI-477A sequencer. Sequencing analysis was performed as recommended by Applied Biosystems.

2.6. ELISAs

To quantitate binding, wells of microtiter plates (Maxi-Sorb, Nunc) were incubated with sAPP₆₉₅, HKa, or HK in BB overnight at 4 °C. Wells were washed using a standard procedure, (three times with BB containing 0.05% Tween-20 (BBT) and three times with water). Subsequently, the wells were blocked with 3% milk solution for 1 h at 37 °C, and washed again. Biotinylated probe diluted in BB was added to each well for 2 h at room temperature. The solution was removed and washed by the standard procedure. Avidin-HRP (Sigma) at a 1:100,000 dilution was added to each well. After 2 h at room temperature, the solution was removed and the wells were washed again as described. Binding was detected with 0.2 ml per well of peroxidase substrate solution (5 mM Tris, 0.1 mM CaCl₂, pH 7.5, 0.01% H₂O₂, and 0.5 mg of *O*-phenylenediamine). The reaction was stopped by the addition of 25 µl of 3 M sulfuric acid and optical density

readings at 492 nm were recorded using an ELISA reader from Bio-Tech Instruments, Winooski, VT.

All ELISAs were optimized to minimize the variance and maximize the signal to background ratio. The average error of the mean was $\pm 7\%$. The extent of binding to wells coated with HKa or sAPP₆₉₅ forms was at least eight times the binding to wells containing no protein other than casein. In the absence of probe, binding was negligible either in the presence or absence of HK, HKa or sAPP₆₉₅.

2.7. Proteolytic processing of HK

HK (1.5 mg/ml) was incubated with plasma kallikrein (1 µg/mg of HK) in 0.1 M Tris–HCl, 0.15 M NaCl, pH 8.1, for 0–120 min at room temperature. At the indicated times, aliquots containing 2 µg of HK cleavage products were immediately treated with $2 \times$ SDS–Laemmli buffer [59] containing 0.2 M DTT, boiled to inactivate kallikrein and analyzed by 10% SDS-PAGE and ligand blotting. For the dot blot analysis, aliquots containing 0.6 µg of reaction products were removed and the reaction was stopped with 10 mM benzamidine, 1 mM EDTA and 0.2 M DTT. The data was analyzed using the image analysis software SigmaScan Pro.

2.8. Coimmunoprecipitations

Reaction mixtures (0.5 ml) contained 0.5 µg of sAPP₆₉₅, 0.5 µg of sAPP₆₉₅T and 1 µg of HKa, in classical phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) (137 mM NaCl, 2.7 mM KCl, 4.3 mM Na₂HPO₄·7H₂O, 1.4 mM KH₂PO₄, pH 7) with Complete™ (Boehringer Mannheim) protease inhibitor cocktail. Samples were cleared for 2 h with 20 µl of Protein G PLUS-agarose (Santa Cruz Biotechnology). Indicated antibodies were added, and the reaction mixtures were rocked at 4 °C for 2 h. Aliquots (20 µl) of Protein G PLUS-Agarose were added and the immunocomplexes were adsorbed by rocking the mixture at 4 °C for 2 h. The beads were collected by centrifugation for 10 s in the microcentrifuge and the supernatants were aspirated. The beads were washed two times with RIPA buffer (150 mM NaCl, 1.0% NP-40, 0.5% sodium deoxycholate, 0.1% SDS, 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0) and three times with PBS. The immunoprecipitates were solubilized in 30 µl aliquots of $2 \times$ Laemmli sample buffer [59] containing 8% SDS. Aliquots (5 µl) of the supernatants were subjected to 10% SDS-PAGE and immunoblot analyses.

2.9. Colocalization

Adult rat brain was perfused with saline, fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde, post-fixed overnight, sectioned at 40 µm on a vibratome and microwaved for antigen recapture. Sections were blocked in 3% sheep serum/0.1% Triton X-100 in PBS for 1 h. Blocked sections were incubated at 4 °C overnight with primary antibodies (polyclonal anti-APP 1:1000, monoclonal anti-kininogen light chain 1:200, or both). After rinsing, secondary antibody (either anti-mouse FITC 1:200

and/or anti-goat—Alexa 546 1:500) were added for 2 h at room temperature and rinsed. As negative controls, some sections lacked primary antibody, or lacked antigen recapture, or were stained with a 1:300 dilution of monoclonal antibody against alpha-dystroglycan (Upstate Biotechnology, Inc.). Sections were covered with Fluoromount G (Southern Biotechnology Assoc.) and viewed at $630 \times$ on a Leica laser scanning confocal microscope. To avoid bleed-through from one channel to the other, each channel was scanned separately. Each photo shown represents the average of eight sequential scans.

3. Results

3.1. sAPP₆₉₅T binds to fragments of HK in rat brain membranes in vitro

Recombinant forms of human APP₆₉₅ were purified from a protease deficient strain of *P. pastoris* as described in Materials and methods and by the following groups: in Refs. [54,63,64]. The yeast secreted a full-length 95 kDa (sAPP₆₉₅) and a truncated 68 kDa form (sAPP₆₉₅T). C-terminal analysis revealed it to be truncated at amino acid 505 (see Materials and methods). Both forms stimulated neurite outgrowth from rat neuronal B103 cells [32,57,58]. A preparation of highly purified sAPP₆₉₅T was biotinylated for use as the probe in binding studies.

This probe bound tightly to proteins from subfractions of rat brain membranes. The binding proteins were partially purified from the subfractions by “Blue Native” gel electrophoresis. Two clusters of binding proteins (“I” and “II”) were detected (Fig. 1A). Each cluster was eluted. Each retained its ability to bind to sAPP₆₉₅T. No sequences were obtained from cluster “I”. Therefore, only sAPP₆₉₅T binding to eluted cluster “II” is shown in Fig. 1B Cluster “II” was subjected to SDS-PAGE. Its two main components (α and β) have apparent molecular weights of 73 and 44 kDa as shown in Fig. 1C. Their N-terminal peptide sequence was obtained. In both cases, the sequence was “NNATFYFKID.” A nearly identical sequence, “NNHTFYFKID,” is present at amino acid 293–302 of rat HK (Medline accession number 87137465). A cartoon of the likely structure of the HK fragments is shown in Fig. 1D. The cartoon is based on their molecular weights as estimated from their mobility, and the location of the sequence determined above. These inferred structures are predominantly composed of HK light chain sequence. The results suggested that APP or sAPP might bind to HK or HKa in rat brain. This is why we wished to determine if the two proteins colocalize in the brain.

3.2. APP and HK colocalize in rat brain

Rat frontal cortex and hippocampus were double-labeled with a monoclonal anti-HK (light chain) antibody that recognizes both HK and HKa, and an N-terminal polyclonal

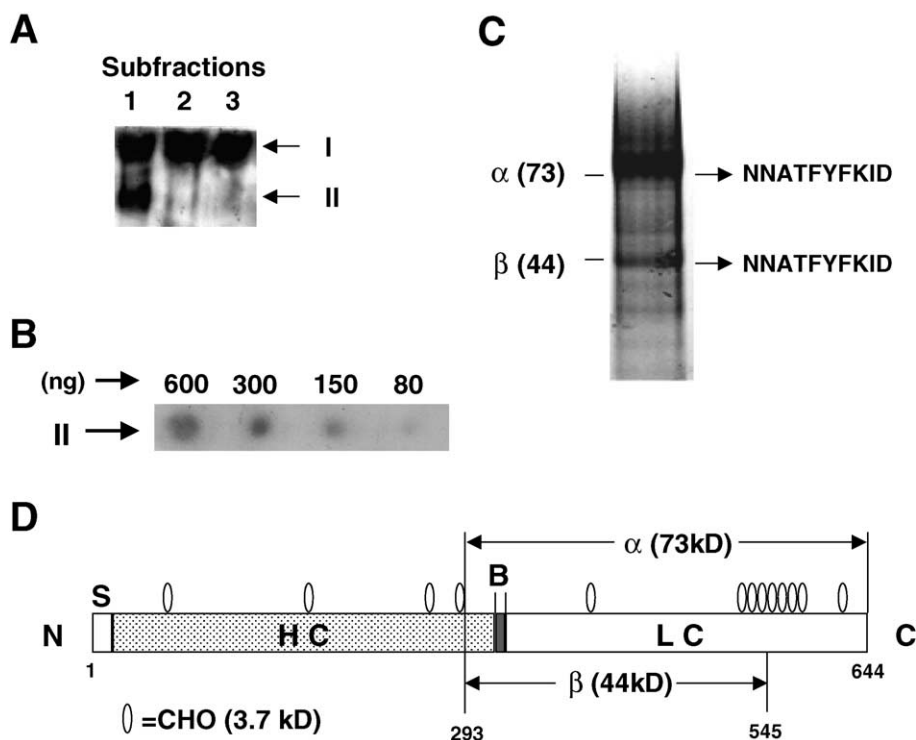


Fig. 1. sAPP₆₉₅T binds to fragments of HK in rat brain membrane subfractions in vitro. (A) Proteins from rat brain subfractions that binds sAPP₆₉₅T. Rat brain was homogenized and subjected to sucrose gradient centrifugation as described in Materials and methods. Subfraction 1 banded at the interface between 1.0 and 1.2 M sucrose; subfraction 2 between 0.85 and 1.0 M. Subfraction 3 pelleted below the 1.2 M cushion. Five micrograms of each were subjected to “Blue Native” gel electrophoresis [60,61]. The proteins were transferred to a PVDF membrane and a ligand blot was performed using 10^{-8} M biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T. Protein bands “I” and “II” of subfraction 1 were excised, eluted and further analyzed for sAPP₆₉₅T binding activity. (B) Binding of sAPP₆₉₅T to eluted cluster “II”. Protein from eluted cluster “II” was spotted on a nitrocellulose membrane at the indicated concentrations and probed for binding to 10^{-8} M biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T. (C) Components of mixture “II” contain kininogen fragments. Eluted proteins from mixture “II” were subjected to 4–12% gradient gel electrophoresis (NuPAGE Bis–Tris). The bands indicated as “ α ” and “ β ” were excised and subjected to N-terminal sequencing as described in Materials and methods. (D) Model of kininogen fragmentation. “N” is amino-terminus, “S” is signal sequence, “B” is bradykinin sequence, “HC” is heavy chain, “LC” is light chain and “C” is carboxy-terminus. The “CHO” represents potential N- or O-linked glycosylation sites. The total apparent mass of oligosaccharide residues was estimated by subtraction of the inferred mass of the protein sequence (73 kDa) from the apparent mass of the glycosylated protein (120 kDa) on the gel. The average mass per oligosaccharide (3.7 kDa) was estimated by dividing the inferred oligosaccharide mass (48 kDa) by the number of potential glycosylation sites, 13.

anti-APP antibody that recognizes all isoforms of APP and sAPP. These were viewed by laser scanning confocal microscopy.

After antigen recapture, anti-HK (light chain) antibody heavily decorated the basal laminae surrounding some of the larger blood vessels (Fig. 2A, left). To mark basal laminae, an antibody against alpha-dystroglycan was employed. It reliably decorated all basal laminae within these brain sections, both with and without antigen recapture (data not shown). Because antigen recapture was necessary to expose the kininogen epitope, some of the kininogen signal may have gone undetected. The antibody also labeled the pial surface of the brain (not shown). Anti-APP labeled many of the same sites (Fig. 2A and B, middle).

A set of neuronal cell bodies was labeled with anti-HK (light chain) (Fig. 2C, left). These were predominantly larger cells that appeared to be pyramidal neurons. There was occasional staining of the neurites of these cells. Lighter diffuse labeling of neuropil was also detected. Anti-APP intensely labeled the cell bodies and proximal dendrites of

larger neurons (Fig. 2C, middle). The cells with large nuclei (probably glia) are also labeled with both anti-APP and anti-HK. These findings are in consonance with reports that kininogen [39,40] and APP [6–9,65] are expressed in large neurons and glia.

When the left and middle panels in Fig. 2 were overlaid, striking colocalization of the two antibodies was observed around blood vessels, in neuronal and glial cell bodies and in small punctate spots within the neuropil (Fig. 2A, B and C, right). However, anti-APP did not always colocalize with anti-HK. Colocalization was observed only on discrete portions of basal laminae and perivascular regions (Fig. 2A and B, right). Neurons were found which were positive only for anti-HK (light chain) staining. Others were positive only for anti-APP staining (data not shown). These results suggest that some, but not all, of the tissue pools of HK and APP are colocalized within $1\ \mu$ of each other. However, colocalization studies cannot easily differentiate between proximity, presence in a multicomponent complex, and direct interaction.

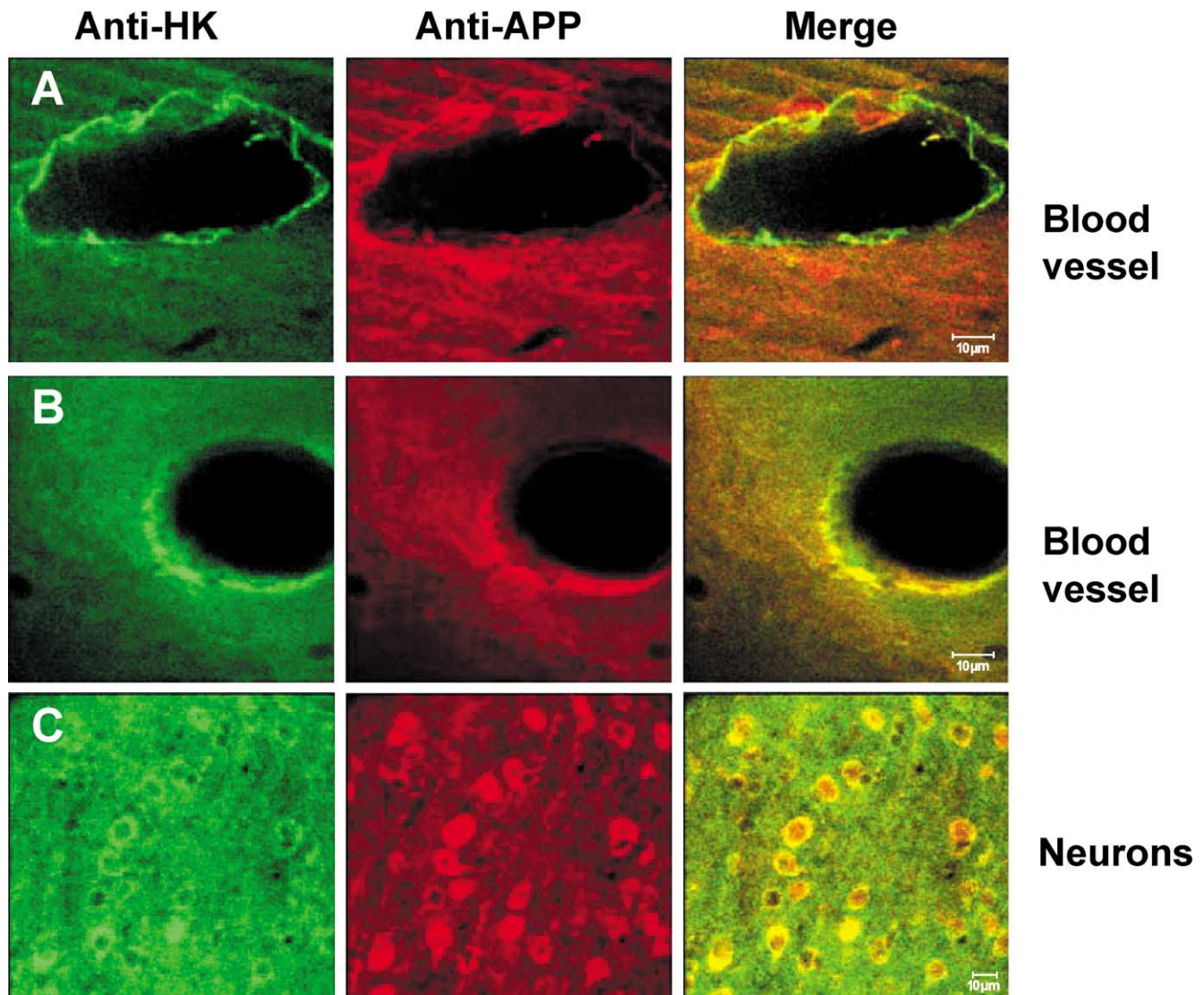


Fig. 2. Colocalization of APP and HK in adult rat frontal cortex using confocal microscopy. A and B are immunostained regions in the vicinity of blood vessels. C is an immunostained layer of frontal cortex, showing colocalization of staining in neuronal cell bodies and neuropil. The green images shown in the left panels are immunostained for kininogen, as described in Materials and methods. The red images shown in the middle panels are immunostained for APP. Those in the right panels represent overlays. Yellow color appears at sites of colocalization.

3.3. Interaction between human sAPP₆₉₅ and HKa is direct and specific *in vitro*

Evidence for direct binding can come from analysis of mixtures of pure proteins. To evaluate binding, we employed a variety of assays, including dot blot, ligand blot, and coimmunoprecipitation. As shown in Fig. 3A, sAPP₆₉₅T exhibited an ability to bind native HKa in dot blots but much less ability to bind to native HK. Binding to LK could not be detected. The light chain amino acid sequence, 428–644, is present in HKa and HK, but absent in LK [66], suggesting that an HK light chain sequence is required for sAPP₆₉₅T binding.

The observed difference in binding of sAPP₆₉₅T to HK and HKa (Fig. 3A) might be caused by artifactual differences in their commercial preparations. To eliminate that

possibility, we measured binding to the same HK preparation, before, during and after its conversion to HKa (Fig. 3B). The amount of sAPP₆₉₅T binding was quantitated with the help of the accompanying standardization (Fig. 3C). A 5-fold increase in binding capacity was observed during the first 15 min of treatment with kallikrein. This confirms the idea that the difference between HK and HKa binding observed in Fig. 3A is due to their structure.

The analysis in Fig. 4 supplies further evidence for the role of light chain sequences as binding sites. HK was treated with plasma kallikrein under the same conditions as described in Fig. 3B, then subjected to SDS-PAGE and binding analysis. Coomassie staining (Fig. 4A) revealed that HK was converted to heavy chain, transient light chain intermediate and light chain. Tayeh et al. [67] reported

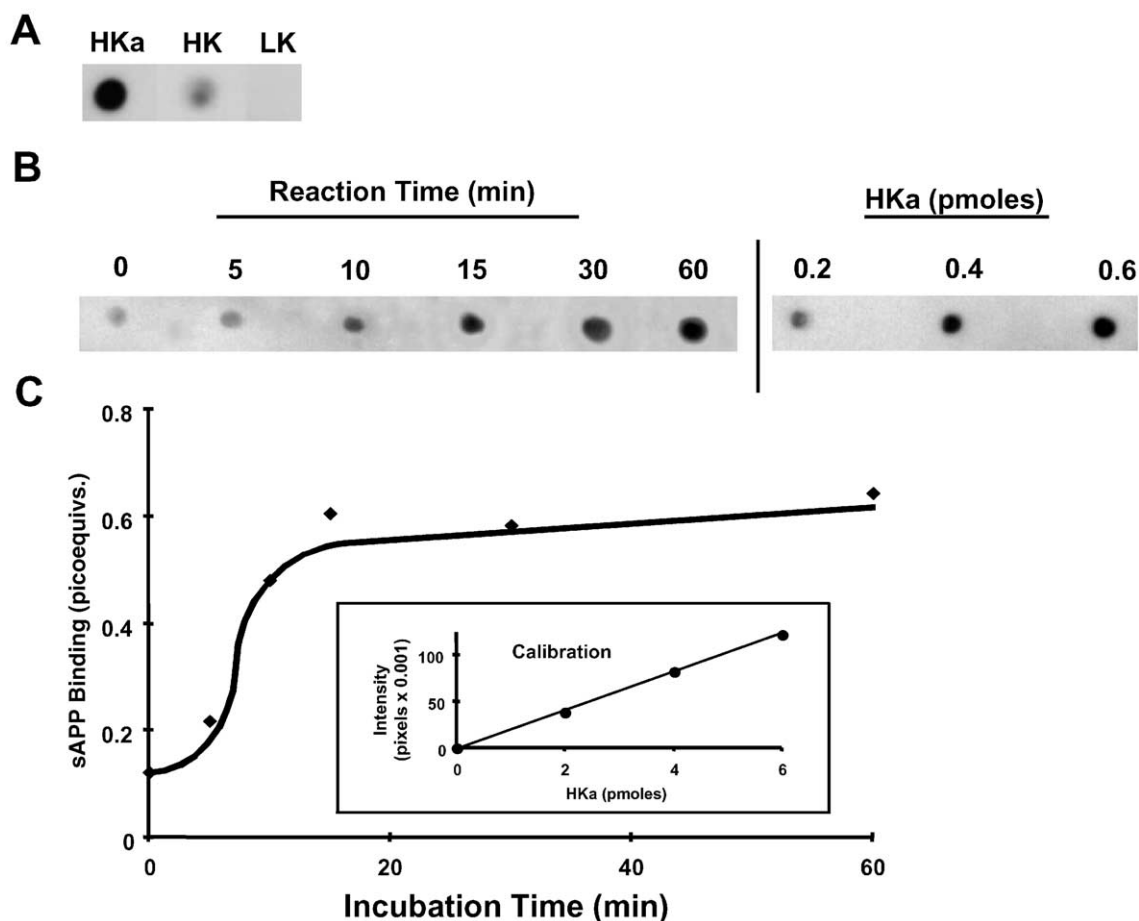


Fig. 3. Interaction of human HK forms with recombinant human sAPP₆₉₅T. (A) sAPP₆₉₅T binds to HK forms. Samples containing 0.3 μ g of human HKa, HK, or LK were spotted on a nitrocellulose membrane. Binding of 10^{-8} M biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T to the blots was detected as described in Materials and methods. (B) Effect of plasma kallikrein treatment on sAPP₆₉₅T binding. Human HK (1.5 mg/ml) was incubated with kallikrein (1 μ g/mg of HK) at pH 8.1 and room temperature. At times indicated, aliquots containing 0.6 μ g of reaction products were stopped with 10 mM benzamide, 1 mM EDTA and 0.2 M DTT. The samples were spotted on a nitrocellulose membrane and probed with 10^{-8} M biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T. For the calibration curve samples containing the indicated concentrations of human HKa were spotted on a nitrocellulose membrane in the presence of 0.2 M DTT and probed with 10^{-8} M biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T as described in Materials and methods. (C) Effect of plasma kallikrein treatment on binding of sAPP₆₉₅T to HK cleavage products. This was determined by densitometric analysis of dot blots in (B). Inset: calibration curve. Band intensities were expressed as picoequivalents of HKa. A picoequivalent is the amount of intensity obtained (as pixels) from binding of sAPP₆₉₅T to 1 pmol of HKa under the described conditions. The experiment was repeated at least three times and representative results are shown.

similar results and identified the intermediate band as a mixture of two C-terminal fragments of HK.

A blot of an identical gel was probed for sAPP₆₉₅T binding and the staining was calibrated with the accompanying standards (Fig. 4B). A quantitation of the results is presented in Fig. 4C. During the first 30 min, all binding to HK disappeared. This corresponded to the disappearance of HK itself (Fig. 4A). The heavy chain did not bind to sAPP₆₉₅T. By 30 min, essentially all the binding was produced by light chain intermediate and product. By 2 h, the bulk of binding could be attributed to the light chain. This was 3-fold greater than that of the original HK. During the period from 30 to 120 min, little effect was observed on total binding. This occurred in spite of the conversion of intermediate to end product, suggesting that the available light chains of intermediates and products bound to sAPP₆₉₅T with roughly equal capacity.

The binding of thrombospondin to HK forms during kallikrein treatment exhibited a similar specificity [48].

We next evaluated the possibility that HK binding was qualitatively different from HKa binding with ELISAs. As shown in Fig. 5, biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T bound to HKa in a saturable fashion at low concentrations. At higher concentrations, a further non-saturable element of the binding was evident (data not shown). On the other hand, binding to HK was a linear function of probe concentration at all concentrations tested. sAPP₆₉₅T binding to HKa was 10-fold that of HK at 1 nM and 2.5-fold at 6 nM. These ratios are similar to those obtained from dot blot analyses (Fig. 3). We calculated an apparent K_d of 0.3 ± 0.1 nM by regression analysis. A similar apparent K_d of 0.3 ± 0.05 nM was obtained when the binding was done in reverse (biotinylated HKa to unlabeled sAPP₆₉₅) (data not shown).

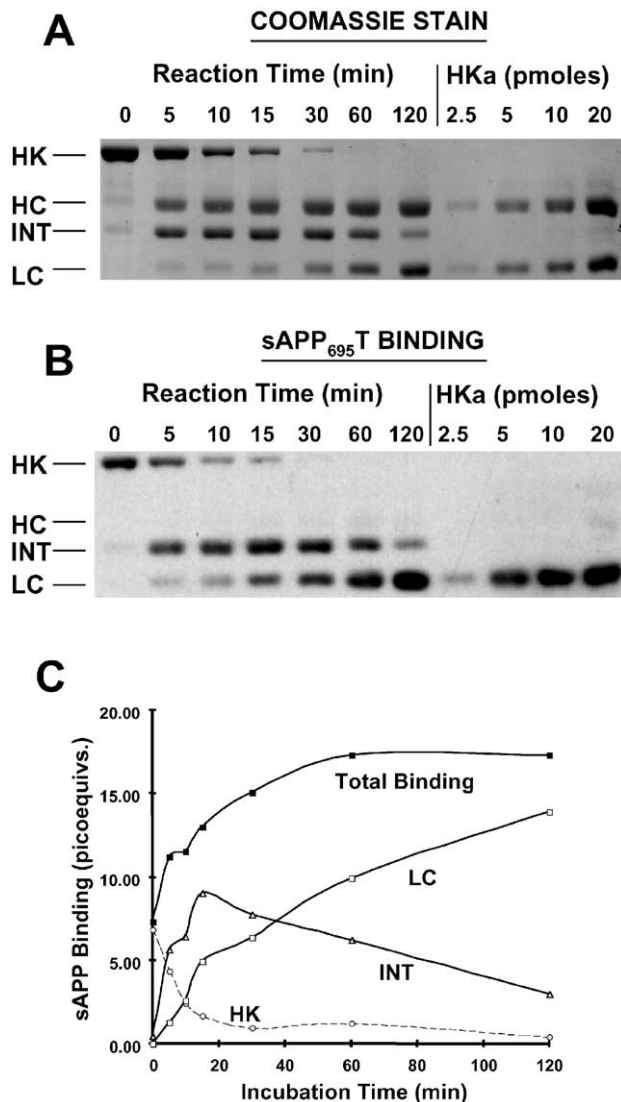


Fig. 4. SDS-PAGE analysis of human HK cleavage by plasma kallikrein. (A) Coomassie stain. Human HK (1.5 mg/ml) was incubated with kallikrein (1 μ g/mg of HK) at pH 8.1 at room temperature. At times indicated, aliquots containing 2 μ g of HK cleavage products were stopped, subjected to 10% SDS-PAGE and Coomassie stained to visualize bands. The positions of HK, heavy chain (HC), light chain containing intermediate (INT) and light chain product (LC) are indicated. The indicated amounts of human HKa standards were also subjected to SDS-PAGE. (B) sAPP₆₉₅T binding to the HK cleavage products. A duplicate of the gel described in (A) was subjected to 10% SDS-PAGE. The gel was blotted on a PVDF membrane. A ligand blot was performed, using 10^{-8} M biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T. Bound biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T was detected with avidin-HRP as described in Materials and methods. (C) Progress curves for the processing of HK. These were determined by densitometric analysis of the ligand blot shown in (B). Band intensities were expressed as picoequivalents of HKa. "Total Binding" is the sum of values for "HK", "INT" and "LC". The experiment was repeated at least three times and representative results are shown.

3.4. HKa binds equally well to sAPP₆₉₅, sAPP₆₉₅T and biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T

The observed binding of biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T to HKa could be the result of either the attached biotin group or an

artifact caused by truncation of sAPP₆₉₅. A common way to eliminate these possibilities is to compare the potency of inhibition ($[I]_{50}$) by compounds to the K_d of the probe. Fig. 6 shows that the binding of biotinylated probe was inhibited by addition of unlabeled sAPP₆₉₅T and by unlabeled sAPP₆₉₅ from two different sources. One of these is full-length sAPP₆₉₅ purified as described in Materials and methods. The other is from a different strain of *P. pastoris*, using a different promoter and purified in a different way [54]. The inhibition curves for the three unlabeled preparations overlapped. The $[I]_{50}$ s for the three preparations (0.1–1 nM) were not significantly different from the apparent K_d of biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T or from each other. The purity of the sAPP₆₉₅ preparations (greater than 95% in each case) is shown in the inset to the figure. Labeled sAPP₆₉₅T was slightly less mobile than its unlabeled form. Binding was also inhibited 50–70% by coating wells that contained HKa with unlabeled sAPP₆₉₅T before initiating the binding reaction (data not shown).

3.5. HKa and sAPP₆₉₅ coimmunoprecipitate

In the assays described above, reactions were performed with one binding partner fixed on a substratum and the other biotinylated. In the experiment described in Fig. 7, sAPP₆₉₅, sAPP₆₉₅T and HKa were in solution and were not labeled. Aliquots were immunoprecipitated with a monoclonal anti-APP (m22C11), anti-HKa (heavy chain) monoclonal anti-

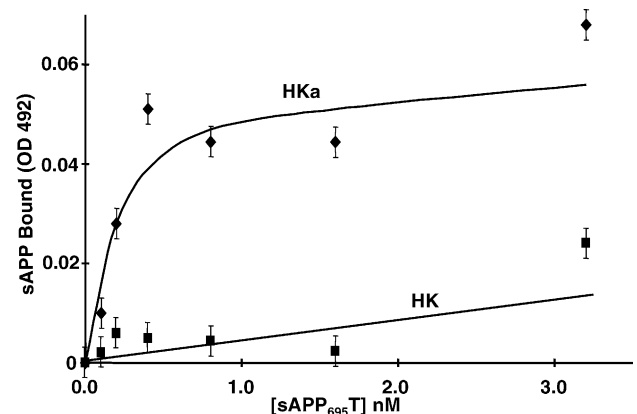


Fig. 5. Effect of human recombinant sAPP₆₉₅T concentration on binding to human HKa and HK. The wells of microtiter plates were coated with 0.2 ml of either 20 μ g/ml HKa or HK (see Materials and methods). The coated wells were incubated with the indicated concentrations of biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T. Bound biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T was measured at OD 492 nm after wells were treated with avidin-HRP and HRP substrate solution. Background readings were obtained for the indicated biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T concentration in wells coated with no HK or HKa. These background values were subtracted from the total binding values obtained from wells coated with either HK or HKa to obtain net binding. Each value was obtained at least in duplicate, on six different occasions and representative results are shown. Error bars reflect mean standard deviations of $\pm 7\%$. A least squares fit of the data to a rectangular hyperbola was determined by regression analysis using Sigma Plot software. The apparent K_d for sAPP₆₉₅T binding to HKa was determined to be 0.3 ± 0.1 nM ($R^2 = 0.90$).

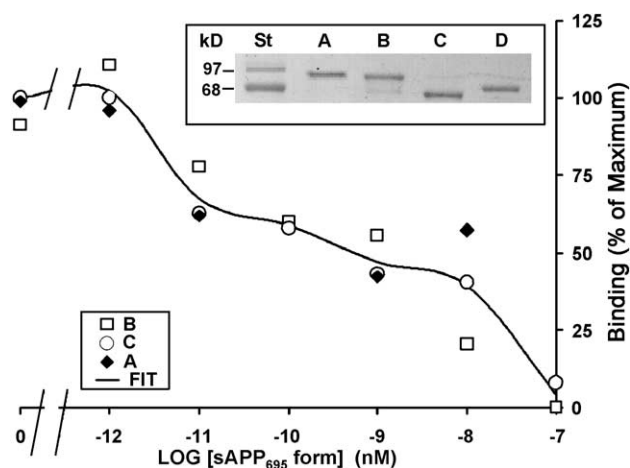


Fig. 6. Effect of unlabeled sAPP₆₉₅ forms on binding. Microtiter wells were coated with HKa (10 µg/ml), then incubated with biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T (10⁻⁸ M) in the presence of one of the following unlabeled proteins at the indicated concentrations (A) sAPP₆₉₅ (Ohsawa et al. in Ref. [54]), (B) sAPP₆₉₅, and (C) sAPP₆₉₅T. "Fit" represents the best-fit curve for all the data points. Binding values were obtained by correcting for background as described in Fig. 5. To obtain the percentage of maximal binding, the binding values were divided by the value at zero inhibitor added, then multiplied by 100. Each value was obtained at least in triplicate. Inset: SDS-PAGE of sAPP₆₉₅T samples. One microgram each of (A) sAPP₆₉₅ (Ohsawa et al. in Ref. [54]), (B) sAPP₆₉₅, (C) sAPP₆₉₅T, and (D) biotinylated-sAPP₆₉₅T were subjected to 10% SDS-PAGE and Coomassie stained to visualize bands.

body, no antibody, or irrelevant monoclonal antibody (anti-tyrosine kinase). Anti-HK (light chain) antibody was a poor immunoprecipitant and no results were obtained. As shown in Fig. 7A (lane 1) immunoprecipitates prepared using m22C11 contained the expected full-length (95 kDa) and truncated (68 kDa) sAPP₆₉₅. They were also present when immunoprecipitates were prepared with anti-HKa heavy chain (lane 2). They were barely detectable in control lanes (lanes 3–5). As shown in Fig. 7B, immunoprecipitates probed with anti-HKa (heavy chain) contained the expected 95 kDa two-chain form of HKa (lane 7). The 95 kDa form also immunoprecipitated when m22C11 (lane 6) was employed. It was not brought down by irrelevant antibody (lane 9) or other controls (lanes 8 and 10). When this band was subjected to SDS-PAGE under reducing conditions, its molecular weight shifted to 55 kDa (data not shown). This was expected since the 95 kDa HKa is converted to heavy (55 kDa) and light (43 kDa) chains upon reduction. Bands were also detected at 29 kDa. These are not shown because they also appeared when only secondary antibody was used. The results indicate that sAPP₆₉₅ and HKa form relatively tight complexes in solution.

3.6. Binding occurs at physiological pH and NaCl concentration

As shown in Fig. 8A, the observed pH profile (Fig. 8A, I) indicates an apparent pH optimum between 6 and 7 and a

secondary peak at pH 5. However, the extent of HKa desorption from wells is directly dependent on the pH (Fig. 8A, II). After correction for this dependency (Fig. 8A, III) an optimum near pH 5 and a shoulder at pH 6 and 7 becomes apparent. This suggests the capability for binding at either extracellular or endosomal pH. As shown in Fig. 8B, binding to HKa was optimal at physiological ionic strengths, unaffected by hypertonic NaCl, but lessened at hypotonic NaCl. Binding was inhibited 70% in the presence of 0.2 M dithiothreitol (DTT), but unaffected by 5 and 10 µM EDTA, EGTA, Ca²⁺, Mg²⁺, or Mn²⁺ (data not shown). Binding was also unaffected by 5 and 10 µM Zn²⁺ (data not shown), indicating that binding of sAPP₆₉₅T to HKa is not Zn²⁺-dependent. Not all proteins that bind to HK/HKa require the presence of Zn²⁺.

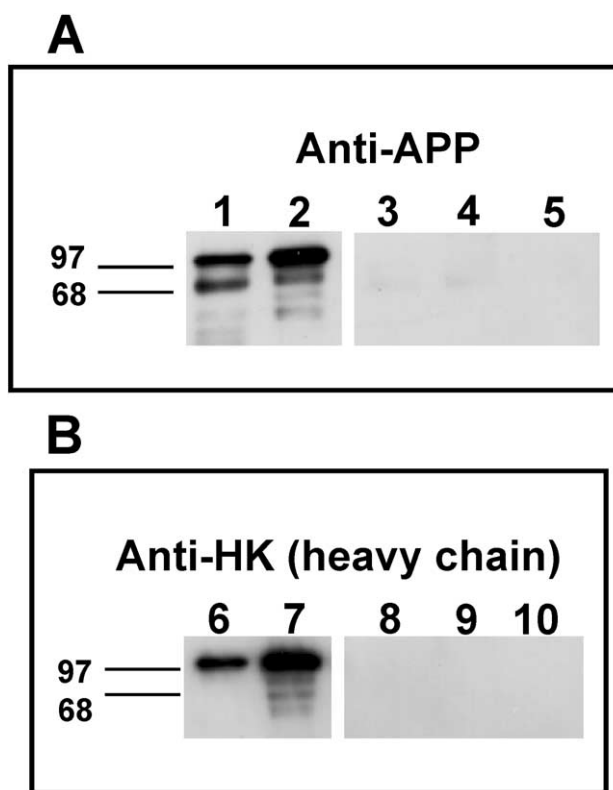


Fig. 7. Coimmunoprecipitation of a mixture of sAPP₆₉₅, sAPP₆₉₅T and HKa. As described in Materials and methods, a mixture containing 0.5 µg sAPP₆₉₅, 0.5 µg sAPP₆₉₅T, and 1 µg of HKa were mixed and immunoprecipitated with antibodies and Protein G beads. The coated beads were washed, solubilized in SDS sample buffer and subjected to 10% SDS-PAGE. Lanes contained extracts derived from immunoprecipitates prepared with the following antibodies: lane 1, monoclonal anti-APP antibody (2.5 µg); lane 2, monoclonal anti-HK (heavy chain) antibody (5 µg); lane 3, no antibody; lane 4, monoclonal anti-p-Tyr antibody (1 µg). The sample in lane 5 contained PBS buffer, but no sAPP₆₉₅, sAPP₆₉₅T, HKa or antibody. It was treated with Protein G like the samples in lanes 1–4. Lanes 6–10 contained immunoprecipitates identical to those in lanes 1–5 that were loaded on a separate gel. The immunoprecipitated proteins were analyzed by Western blot using either monoclonal anti-APP (A) (lanes 1–5), or monoclonal anti-HK (heavy chain) antibody (B) (lanes 6–10). The experiment was repeated on three different occasions and representative gels are shown.

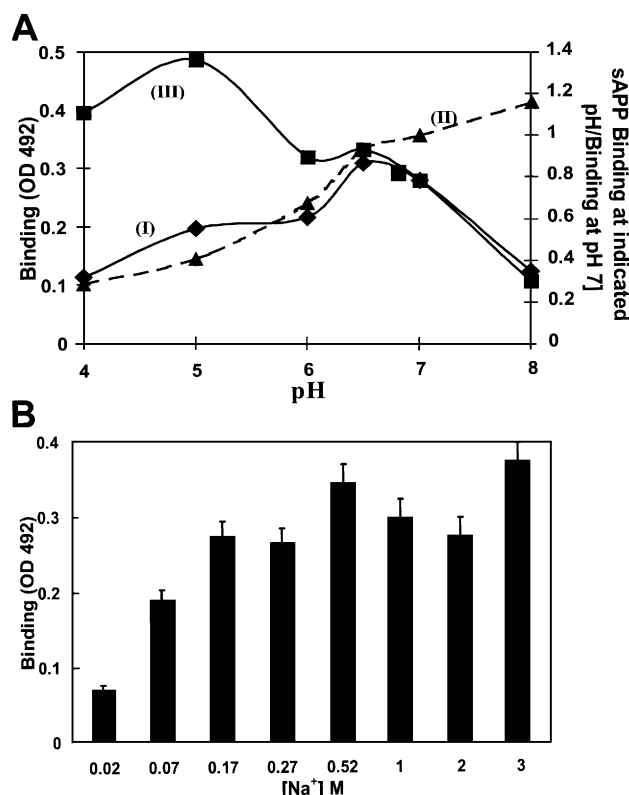


Fig. 8. Effect of pH and NaCl concentration on binding. In each case, the probe was 10^{-8} M biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T and the wells were coated with 10 μ g/ml HKa as described in Materials and methods. The readings obtained in wells that were not coated with HKa were subtracted from the total. Each value was obtained at least in triplicate, on two different occasions and then averaged. Error bars reflect mean standard deviations of $\pm 7\%$. The bars were omitted from (Fig. 8A) to avoid figure clutter. (A) pH profile. Microtiter wells coated with HKa were incubated with biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T. The probe was diluted in one of the following buffers: 20 mM sodium acetate buffer, 0.15 M NaCl pH 4, 5 or 6; or BB adjusted to either pH 6.5, 7 or 8. The results are shown in (I). To account for the effects of pH on HKa desorption, coated wells were first incubated at the indicated pH for 2 h at room temperature then washed and assayed for binding at pH 7. Values obtained at each pH treatment were divided by the value obtained at pH 7. The ratios are shown in (II). The calculated values shown in (III) were normalized for HKa binding to wells at pH 7 by dividing the observed values in (I) by the ratios in (II). (B) NaCl effects. To test the effects of NaCl concentration on binding of sAPP₆₉₅T to HKa, wells coated with HKa were incubated with probe at the indicated NaCl concentrations. No effect of NaCl concentrations on HKa desorption was observed.

Binding of HK to ferritin [47] and HK to thrombospondin [48] have not been reported to be Zn^{2+} -dependent

4. Discussion

Our results provide good evidence for the following conclusions: (a) forms of APP and HK colocalize in rat brain near large cerebral blood vessels and in a set of neurons. (b) sAPP₆₉₅ and HKa directly interact with each other in a specific and saturable manner in vitro.

Our search for sAPP₆₉₅ binding proteins in rat cortex membrane preparations led to the detection and isolation of

putative kininogen fragments. Their identification was based, in part, on their N-terminal amino acid sequence. The same sequence was obtained from two fragments of cluster “II” (Fig. 1C). It was 90% identical to a 10-amino acid sequence present near the end of the heavy chain of rat HK (amino acid 293–302). We also inferred from this sequence and their estimated molecular weights that the fragments were predominantly comprised of HK light chain. Data from this in vitro binding experiment implied that APP could bind to HK in rat brain.

To gather more evidence for this idea, we performed colocalization studies in rat brain using confocal laser microscopy. The confocal microscopy studies in Fig. 2 indicate that antibody reactive forms of APP and HK are close to each other on specific cerebral extracellular matrices, in some neurons and near some large blood vessels. Colocalization studies in rat brain using transmission electron microscopy showed that in some neurons, HK and APP can be as close as 5 nm (data not shown). These colocalization studies support the idea of an interaction. However, with these techniques, it is very difficult to differentiate between mere proximity, presence in multiprotein complexes and direct binding.

We then performed direct binding studies in vitro. The tight binding of the sAPP₆₉₅T probe to human HKa (Figs. 3–6) and of the HKa probe to sAPP₆₉₅ (data not shown) indicated that human sAPP₆₉₅ and HKa can form direct binding complexes. Since binding was shown on ELISA plates, dot blots, ligand blots and by coimmunoprecipitation from solution, the evidence for this seems robust. Coimmunoprecipitation of mixtures of the two (Fig. 7) eliminated the possibility that the binding was induced by effects of the substratum on either binding partner. Inhibition of biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅T by three different non-biotinylated sAPP₆₉₅ forms (Fig. 6) suggested that neither biotinylation nor truncation of the probe produced artificial binding sites on sAPP₆₉₅. The apparent K_d for the sAPP–HKa interaction is 0.3 ± 0.1 nM determined either by sAPP₆₉₅ binding to HKa or HKa binding to sAPP₆₉₅. This is 1000-fold tighter than the binding of the HKa light chain domain 5 to urokinase receptors [35] and that of the binding of HK to negative surfaces [68]. It is also tighter than the binding of HK to endothelial cells [69] and other reported HKa–protein interactions [48–51,70].

Most biologically significant interactions are specific. HK is a large multifunctional protein composed of a 362-amino acid heavy chain, a nine-residue bradykinin domain and a 255-amino acid light chain [66]. Some functions of HK have been mapped to specific protein domains [34]. To begin to determine which region of HK contains the APP ectodomain binding site, we performed the specificity studies shown in Figs. 3 and 4. LK, a protein that lacks the light chain of HK [66] but is otherwise identical to it, did not exhibit detectable binding to sAPP₆₉₅. This is another indicator that ectodomain binding sites are contained within the light chain of HK. Further evidence is shown in Fig. 4. The light chain-containing intermediates and the light chain product, pro-

duced during plasma kallikrein processing of HK, bound sAPP₆₉₅T. These results suggest that APP may target domain 5-dependent functions of HK. Similar interactions of the light chain of HK with other proteins such as ferritin [47], thrombospondin [48], gC1q receptor [49], urokinase receptor [35], and heparin [50,51] have been reported.

The specificity of the interaction also suggests structural constraints. HKa, but not HK, bound tightly in a saturable fashion to the probe (Figs. 3, 4 and 5). We could not detect saturable binding to HK even though it contains the entire light chain (Fig. 5). This suggests that specific binding sites for sAPP₆₉₅ may be masked or inaccessible in HK. They apparently become available after HK conversion to HKa. HK undergoes conformational changes when bradykinin is released, further exposing the binding sites on its light chain [71–73]. HK is viewed as a reservoir of bradykinin [34]. It can also be viewed as a reservoir for HKa. Binding of APP to HK forms could be regulated by the amount of proteolytic processing of HK.

Our results support the idea that the sAPP₆₉₅–HKa interaction has physiological functions since colocalization of the two proteins is found in both cellular and extracellular sites in the rat brain, and that binding is specific and saturable with a low K_d occurring at physiological pH and ionic strength. When two proteins interact with each other with such high specificity, it very likely that they are involved in the same or related cellular functions [15]. The Van Broekhoven group [23], discussed the importance of binding partners of APP. These are implicated in neuronal APP functions. They noted that proteins that interact with

APP may help to elucidate the physiological function and relevance of APP.

APP and HK each serve and share many functions as discussed in the Introduction. The physiological role of APP in the brain is still being assessed. At the present time, the function of HKa in the brain is unknown [39]. However, the role of HKa in angiogenesis is well documented [35]. We speculate that APP–HKa interaction could modulate neurogenesis since they both are involved in adhesion. APP facilitates neuronal adhesion while HKa (but not HK) inhibits adhesion of endothelial cells during angiogenesis. A tentative hypothesis of the APP–HKa interaction in neurons is shown in Fig. 9. This hypothesis is based on the role played by HKa in endothelial cells [35] (Fig. 9A). HKa can bind to the urokinase receptor (uPAR) on endothelial cells [45]. The urokinase receptor also binds to vitronectin with high affinity [74] promoting adhesion. Both vitronectin and HKa bind to the same site on uPAR [35]. HKa competes for binding with uPAR in the presence of vitronectin, thus displacing vitronectin from uPAR. This eventually leads to inhibition of adhesion of cells to vitronectin, thereby inhibiting angiogenesis [35]. Recent studies in our lab have shown that sAPP binds with high affinity to vitronectin (Das et al., unpublished results). Using the same analogy as shown in Fig. 9A, we hypothesize that HKa and vitronectin compete for binding to sAPP and possibly also membrane-bound APP in neurons (Fig. 9B). When vitronectin binds APP, it promotes neuronal adhesion, and when HKa binds APP, it prevents adhesion thereby modulating neurogenesis. Further studies have to be carried out to determine if this hypothesis is true.

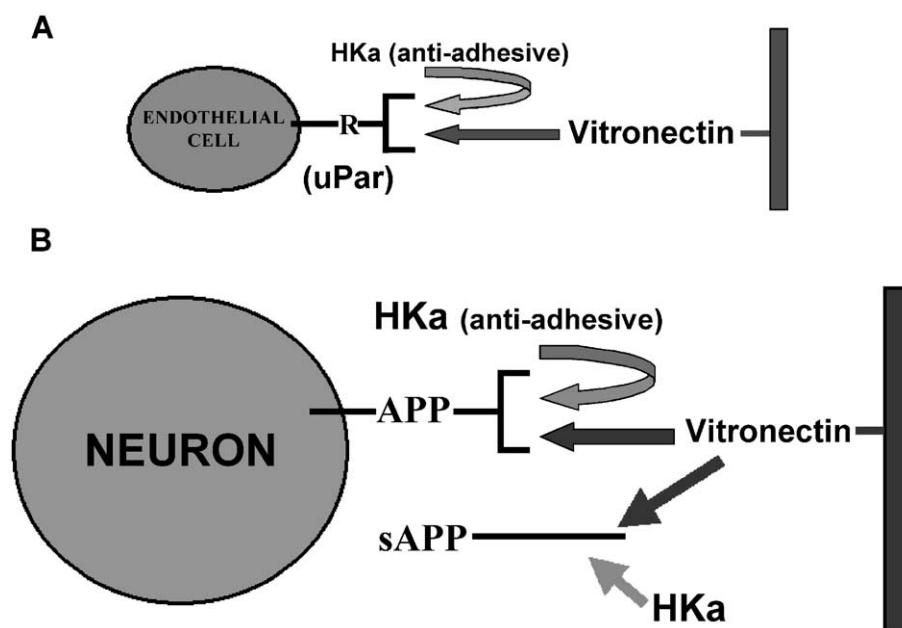


Fig. 9. Model of APP–HKa interaction. (A) Role of HKa in endothelial cells. The urokinase receptor (uPAR) participates in the control of cell adhesion and modulates angiogenesis [35]. Both HKa and vitronectin are known to compete for binding to uPAR. When vitronectin is bound to uPAR, it promotes cell adhesion, whereas bound HKa results in anti-adhesion. (B) Possible role of HKa in neurons. In this tentative hypothesis, vitronectin and HKa are pictured as competing for binding to sAPP or membrane-bound APP using the same analogy as shown in the endothelial cell in (A).

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