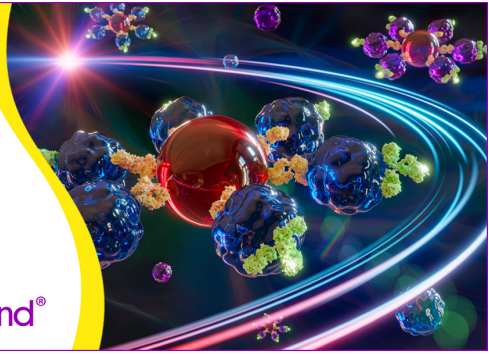


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A Human Lectin, Galectin-3 (ϵ bp/Mac-2), Stimulates Superoxide Production by Neutrophils¹

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A family of soluble animal lectins, galectins, with β -galactoside-binding activity, is gaining increased attention. One member of this family, galectin-3, has been previously designated by this group as ϵ bp, for its IgE-binding activity. On the basis of the saccharide specificity and other biochemical characteristics of ϵ bp, it is possible that this lectin could have an important extracellular modulatory role, functioning through recognition of critical cell surface glycoproteins on many cell types. We present evidence here that recombinant human ϵ bp activates human neutrophils in a dose-dependent manner as demonstrated by superoxide production. The observed activity is dependent on the lectin property of ϵ bp intrinsic to its carboxyl-terminal domain, as it could be inhibited effectively by lactose, a known saccharide ligand of ϵ bp. However, the amino-terminal domain is also necessary for the observed activity, as ϵ bp-C (the carboxyl-terminal domain fragment) is devoid of neutrophil-activating activity, even though it retains the carbohydrate-binding property. Affinity purification of lysates from cell surface-radioiodinated neutrophils revealed two major protein bands of M_r 115,000 and M_r 180,000 that are recognized by ϵ bp and preliminary data suggested that one of these proteins is NCA-160, a human carcinoembryonic Ag-related glycoprotein. This study thus lends further support to our view of an extracellular function for ϵ bp and suggests that this protein has an important role in inflammation and host defense through modulating the function of neutrophils. *The Journal of Immunology*, 1995, 154: 3479–3487.

Animal lectins have been recognized as an important class of proteins that play key roles in a variety of biologic processes. A family of animal lectins, now termed galectins (1, 2), that possess the S-type carbohydrate recognition domain (3) is receiving increased attention, with the most extensively studied members of this family being proteins of 14 kDa and 29 to 31 kDa (reviewed in Refs. 4 and 5). The latter, now known as galectin-3 (1), has been designated as ϵ bp by this laboratory for its IgE-binding activity (6–8) and as Cbp35 (9), Mac-2 (10, 11), L-29 (12, 13), and L-34 (14, 15) by various other groups. The amino-terminal half of the protein consists primarily of tandem repeats and the carboxyl-ter-

minal half shares significant sequence similarities with the 14-kDa lectin (4). The amino acid sequences of galectin-3 in various species have been determined (see references cited above) as well as their carbohydrate specificities (16–19). Although the carboxyl-terminal domain of galectin-3 is known to contain the carbohydrate-binding site, the function of the amino-terminal domain is less well defined. However, we and others have shown that galectin-3 has a tendency to self-associate and this property appears to be critically dependent on the amino-terminal domain (20, 21).

Although galectins are well characterized biochemically, much remains to be learned about their functions. Galectin-3 has a wide tissue distribution and is expressed by many different cell types (22–24). It is found predominantly in the cytoplasm of quiescent fibroblasts but is located in the nucleus of proliferating cells (25), a finding that has led to the suggestion that this lectin may be a component of a growth regulating system. Galectin-3 has been identified as a major non-integrin laminin-binding protein on the surface of macrophages, thus suggesting a role in cell adhesion to extracellular matrices (26). Various studies by several laboratories have associated galectin-3 with tumor transformation and metastasis (27–29), although a more definitive role of this protein in these processes awaits further elucidation.

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Several lines of evidence suggest a role for galectin-3 in inflammation. It was first identified as a macrophage cell surface Ag expressed on thioglycolate-elicited murine macrophages and not on resting macrophages (30). The expression of galectin-3 in human neutrophils was documented in a recent study that also implicated this protein as having a role in IgE-mediated activation of neutrophils (31). Although galectin-3 may have intracellular functions in these inflammatory cells, cumulative data support a possible extracellular role for this protein in inflammation, especially because it is secreted by various cell types (10, 32–34). On the basis of its known saccharide specificity (16, 17), galectin-3 is expected to recognize a spectrum of appropriately glycosylated glycoproteins on the cell surface of a variety of cells. As this lectin behaves bivalently (or multivalently) (20), it has the potential to cross-link these specific cell surface glycoproteins, and thereby modulate the functions of these cells. Because of these known properties of galectin-3, we recently proposed that this protein may be a broad spectrum biologic response modifier (5). In fact, we have shown that galectin-3 recognizes the mast cell high affinity IgE receptor in addition to IgE and that it activates rat basophilic leukemia cells (35).

Neutrophils play a crucial role in host defense through their bactericidal activities. The production of active oxygen species such as the superoxide anion (O_2^-) is an essential event and these reactive oxygen derivatives contribute to microbial killing. To establish a role for galectin-3 in inflammation and to further test the above-mentioned hypothesis, we studied the effects of this protein on the function of neutrophils. As an initial step, O_2^- production by human neutrophils exposed to recombinant human ebp was analyzed. Here we report that ebp is in fact capable of inducing human neutrophils to produce O_2^- . The activity was dependent on the lectin function of ebp because it was inhibited by saccharide ligands of the protein. Moreover, the activity requires also the presence of the amino-terminal domain, as the carboxyl-terminal domain fragment, which contains the lectin part, was inactive.

Materials and Methods

Reagents

Cytochrome *c* (Type III), cytochalasin B, FMLP, and PMA were obtained from Sigma Chemical Co. (St. Louis, MO). Collagenase (*Achromobacter iophagus*) and SOD³ were from Boehringer Mannheim (Indianapolis, IN). Recombinant human ebp was produced in *Escherichia coli* and purified as previously described (20) and stored in PBS (10 mM sodium phosphate and 0.15 M NaCl, pH 7.2) containing 10% (v/v) glycerol at -85°C . Endotoxins were not detectable in the concentrated stock of the recombinant protein, by using a commercial kit (*Limulus* amoebocyte lysate, Pyrogen, BioWhittaker, Walkersville, MD). On the basis of results obtained with the positive control, it was determined that the endotoxin level was less than 16.8 pg/ml in the solution containing 60

$\mu\text{g/ml}$ ebp, which is the highest concentrations of ebp used in stimulation of neutrophils. The carboxyl-terminal domain fragment of ebp (ebp-C) was prepared by digesting recombinant ebp with collagenase as described previously (20). ^{125}I -labeled ebp was prepared by using the chloramine-T method (36). The sp. act. of the radiolabeled protein was typically approximately 7×10^8 $\mu\text{Ci/mmol}$.

Preparation of human neutrophils

Human polymorphonuclear leukocytes were purified from peripheral blood of healthy volunteers by dextran sedimentation and Ficol-Paque (Pharmacia LKB, Uppsala, Sweden) density gradient centrifugation as described (37). The purity of the preparations was routinely $>95\%$, as assessed by Wright-Giemsa staining.

Radioligand binding assay

Binding of radiolabeled ebp to human neutrophils was performed by mixing human neutrophils (5×10^5 cells) with ^{125}I -labeled ebp (0.42 pmol) in 120 μl of binding buffer (RPMI 1640 containing 20 mM HEPES, 0.3% BSA, and 0.1% sodium azide), pH 7.2. In some experiments, various concentrations of saccharides or unlabeled ebp were added. After incubation at 4°C for various time periods, 50- μl aliquots of the mixture were layered on 200 μl of dibutyl phthalate in 400- μl polyethylene microfuge tubes, which were subsequently centrifuged in a Beckman microfuge E (Beckman Instruments, Fullerton, CA) for 2 min. The tips of the microfuge tubes containing the cell pellets were then sliced off and counted in a gamma counter.

Assay of superoxide formation

O_2^- production by neutrophils was monitored by the well-established cytochrome *c* assay (38). This assay is based on the reduction by O_2^- of ferric cytochrome *c* to ferrous cytochrome *c*, resulting in an absorbance change at 550 nm. This reduction is inhibitable by SOD. Two different methods were used and both were performed at 37°C . In the first method, a double-beam spectrophotometer (Uvikon 810, Kontron, Zürich, Switzerland) with an electrically controlled temperature regulator was used. Human neutrophils ($2.5 \times 10^6/\text{ml}$), suspended in 750 μl of PBS containing 0.5 mM MgCl_2 , 0.8 mM CaCl_2 , and 7.5 mM glucose, pH 7.4, were placed in both sample and reference cuvettes. Both cuvettes also contained cytochrome *c* (75 μM) and cytochalasin B (5 $\mu\text{g/ml}$). The reference cuvette also contained 60 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ of SOD. After preincubation for 5 min, the stimulants were added to both cuvettes and the absorbance change at 550 nm was monitored.

In the second method, samples were placed in 96-well plates, the absorbance change was monitored with a kinetic microplate reader (ThermoMax, Molecular Devices, Menlo Park, CA), and the data were analyzed by using enzyme kinetic software (Softmax version 2.01) as described (39). The constituents of each assay mixture were the same as described above, except that the volume of each reaction was reduced to 250 μl . The O_2^- -generating activity, expressed as maximal rate, was calculated by using a molar extinction coefficient of $20.5 \times 10^3 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$ and a light path of 0.6 cm as previously described (39). As the concentrated ebp stock contained glycerol, controls containing appropriate concentrations of glycerol were also included. At the concentrations tested, glycerol did not induce O_2^- release.

For the demonstration of the inhibition of ebp activity by saccharides, aliquots of 0.5 M solutions of lactose, galactose or arabinose were added to both the sample and reference cuvettes to a final concentration of 20 mM after full activation of O_2^- production had been induced by ebp. In other experiments, ebp or FMLP, a known activator of neutrophils was mixed with serially diluted solutions of lactose, galactose, or arabinose and the mixtures were added to the neutrophil suspensions.

Treatment of neutrophils with collagenase-digested ebp

A total of 7.5 μg of ebp was mixed with 1.5 U/ml collagenase and the mixture was either added immediately to the neutrophil suspensions or first incubated at 37°C for 6 h before adding to the neutrophil suspensions. In some experiments, the solution of collagenase (3 U/ml) was denatured by heating at 100°C for 5 min before being added to ebp. The mixture was then further incubated at 37°C for 6 h.

³ Abbreviations used in this paper: SOD, superoxide dismutase; CEA, carcinoembryonic Ag; ebp-C, carboxyl-terminal domain of ebp; NCA, nonspecific cross-reacting Ag.

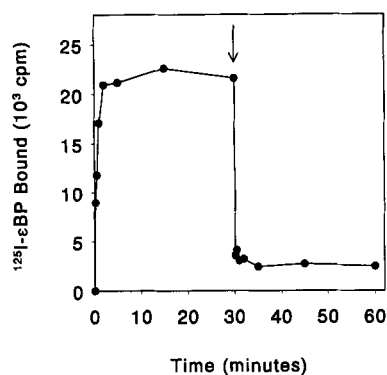


FIGURE 1. Time course of ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp binding to neutrophils. Human neutrophils (5×10^5) were incubated with ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp (3.5 nM) for the indicated time periods at 4°C . Bound ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp was determined as described in *Materials and Methods*. The arrow denotes the time of the addition of lactose to a final concentration of 25 mM. The values represent the means of duplicate measurements. Similar results were obtained in three separate experiments.

Affinity purification of neutrophils cell surface glycoproteins that are recognized by ϵbp

Affinity purification of radioiodinated cell surface proteins. Human neutrophils were radioiodinated on the cell surface as described (35, 40). The cells were lysed and the proteins that are recognized by ϵbp were affinity purified by a previously described procedure (35) with some modifications. Briefly, the lysate ($50 \mu\text{l}$ of 5×10^7 cells/ml) was incubated with ϵbp -sepharose beads ($50 \mu\text{l}$) in the presence or absence of 100 mM lactose for 3 h at 4°C . The bound proteins were eluted by the SDS-PAGE sample buffer and analyzed by 10% PAGE under reducing conditions (41), followed by autoradiography.

Immunoblotting analysis of affinity-purified proteins. Human neutrophils were ruptured by a freeze-thaw cycle and centrifuged, and the pellet was then extracted with a buffer containing 1% Triton X-100 as described (42). The solubilized membrane proteins were added to ϵbp -Sephacose 4B and the bound proteins were subsequently eluted as described above. The isolated proteins were resolved by SDS-PAGE and transferred to nitrocellulose membrane by electroblotting (43). The blots were incubated with polyclonal anti-CEA Ag IgG (Dako Corp., Carpinteria, CA; 1:500 dilution) for 3 h at 4°C , followed by the addition of goat anti-rabbit IgG conjugated to alkaline phosphatase (Zymed Laboratories, San Francisco, CA; 1:2000 dilution) for 30 min at room temperature. The blots were then developed with a chemiluminescence protein detection kit (Western-Light, Tropic, Bedford, MA) by following the manufacturer's instructions.

Results

Binding of ϵbp to human neutrophils

As an initial step in assessing the effects of ϵbp on the function of neutrophils, we tested the binding of recombinant human ϵbp to human neutrophils. Figure 1 shows that when ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp was added to human neutrophils, there was rapid binding of the radiolabel to the cells with the reaction being completed within 2 min. The binding of ϵbp to the neutrophils was dependent on its lectin function, as the binding was nearly completely reversed upon addition of lactose, which is known to bind ϵbp (Fig. 1).

To further assess the nature of the lectin-carbohydrate interaction in the binding of ϵbp to neutrophils, the effects

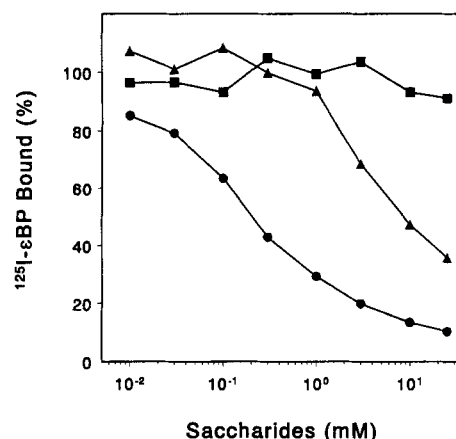


FIGURE 2. Inhibition by saccharides of ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp binding to neutrophils. Human neutrophils (5×10^5) were incubated with ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp (3.5 nM) at 4°C for 30 min in the presence of various concentrations of saccharides (lactose, galactose, and arabinose). Bound ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp was determined as described in *Materials and Methods*. The percent bound ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp was calculated on the basis of binding without saccharide as being 100%. The values represent the means of duplicate measurements. Similar results were obtained in two separate experiments. ●—●, lactose; ▲—▲, galactose; ■—■, arabinose.

of various saccharides, including lactose, galactose, and arabinose, were evaluated quantitatively. Affinity of these saccharides for ϵbp is known to be lactose \gg galactose \gg arabinose (20, 44). As shown in Figure 2, lactose inhibited the binding of ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp in a dose-dependent manner, with an IC_{50} of 0.2 mM. Galactose was less effective with an IC_{50} of 9.1 mM. The relative inhibitory activity of lactose and galactose approximates their relative affinity for ϵbp (20). As expected, arabinose was ineffective.

The effect of unlabeled ϵbp on the binding of radiolabeled ϵbp was then evaluated. Interestingly, addition of unlabeled ϵbp resulted in dose-dependent increased binding of ^{125}I -labeled ϵbp to the neutrophils instead of inhibition (Fig. 3). Maximal binding of radiolabeled ϵbp was reached with ϵbp at $1 \mu\text{M}$ and the binding then declined as the concentrations of the unlabeled ϵbp increased. When the data were converted to the total ϵbp bound to neutrophils, a dose-response curve was generated that indicated increased binding as the concentration of ϵbp increases (Fig. 3).

Induction of human neutrophil O_2^- production by ϵbp

Purified human neutrophils were treated with recombinant human ϵbp at $1 \mu\text{M}$ ($30 \mu\text{g/ml}$) in the presence or absence of cytochalasin B. Figure 4A shows that, in the presence of cytochalasin B, ϵbp caused prompt release of O_2^- without a notable lag time (curve a). The initial burst of O_2^- release, which continued for approximately 5 min, was followed by a slower release that lasted for more than an hour

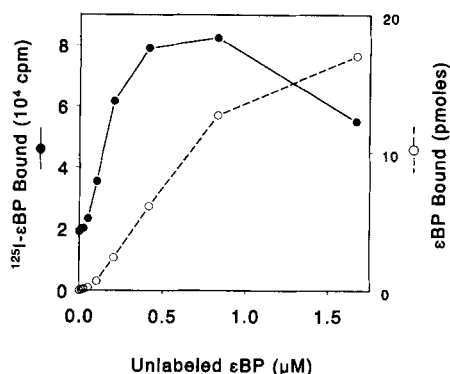


FIGURE 3. Effect of addition of various amounts of unlabeled ϵ bp on 125 I-labeled ϵ bp binding to neutrophils. Human neutrophils (5×10^5) were incubated with 125 I-labeled ϵ bp (3.5 nM) at 4°C for 30 min in the presence of various amounts of unlabeled ϵ bp (0.1 to 1.7 μM). Bound 125 I-labeled ϵ bp was determined as described in *Materials and Methods* (closed circles). The total amounts of bound ϵ bp is also shown (open circles), which was calculated from the percentage of 125 I-labeled ϵ bp bound and the concentrations of total ϵ bp present in the mixture. The values represent the means of duplicate measurements. Similar results were obtained in two separate experiments.

(data not shown). Cytochalasin B was necessary for maximal stimulation, as in its absence there was a lag time of greater than 1 min for the O_2^- release to be observed and the rate of O_2^- release was much slower (Fig. 4A, curve b). Although not shown, cytochalasin B by itself is incapable of inducing O_2^- production. The adjuvant role of cytochalasin B for the ϵ bp activity is consistent with the well documented effect of this agent on neutrophil activation caused by various stimulants (45, 46).

The effect of ϵ bp concentration (10 to 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$) on O_2^- production by human neutrophils was then tested. As shown in Figure 4B, recombinant human ϵ bp functioned in a dose-dependent manner. The effect of ϵ bp reached a maximal level at a concentration of 1.5 μM (45 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$), and half-maximal effect was observed at 0.7 μM (22 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$). No significant effect was observed at ϵ bp concentrations less than 0.33 μM (10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$). Although not shown, FMLP, a well known activator of neutrophils, was included for comparison and the maximal activity of ϵ bp was found to be approximately 25% of that of FMLP (both in the presence of cytochalasin B).

Effect of saccharides on ϵ bp-induced O_2^- production

We next tested whether the activity of ϵ bp is dependent on its lectin function. As before, three saccharides (lactose, galactose and arabinose) were used in an inhibition assay. In the first set of experiments, human neutrophils were exposed to 1 μM (30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$) of ϵ bp for approximately 2 min, until the maximum rate of O_2^- generation was achieved, and then lactose or arabinose was added to a

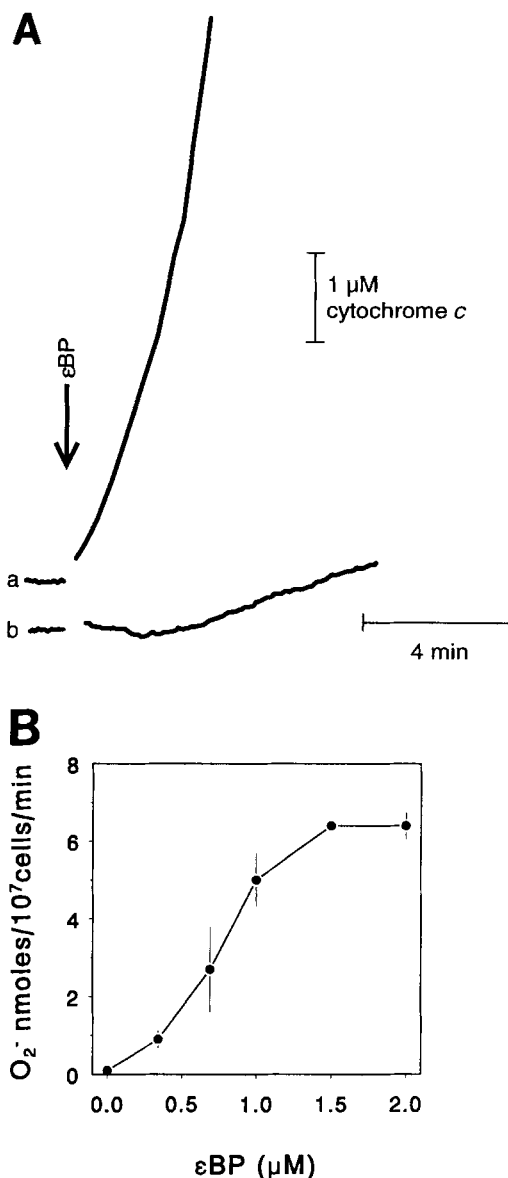


FIGURE 4. A: The release of superoxide from human neutrophils induced by ϵ bp. Human neutrophils ($2.5 \times 10^6/\text{ml}$) were suspended in 0.75 ml of PBS (pH 7.4) containing 0.5 mM MgCl_2 , 0.8 mM CaCl_2 , and 7.5 mM glucose and cytochrome c in the presence or absence of cytochalasin B. SOD was added to the reference cuvette. The mixture was preincubated at 37°C for 5 min before the addition of ϵ bp (final concentration of 1 μM ; 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$). The absorbance change at 550 nm was recorded with a double-beam spectrophotometer. Curve a, with cytochalasin B; curve b, without cytochalasin B. B: Effect of ϵ bp concentration on superoxide production by human neutrophils. Neutrophils ($2.5 \times 10^6/\text{ml}$) in 0.25 ml of PBS (pH 7.4) containing 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ cytochalasin B, 75 μM cytochrome c, 0.5 mM MgCl_2 , 0.8 mM CaCl_2 , and 7.5 mM glucose were preincubated for 5 min at 37°C in 96-well plates. The control samples also contained SOD. Serially diluted solutions of ϵ bp were added to each well, the absorbance change at 550 nm was monitored with a kinetic microplate reader, and the readings were converted to the rate of O_2^- generation. The data points represent means \pm SD of three experiments.

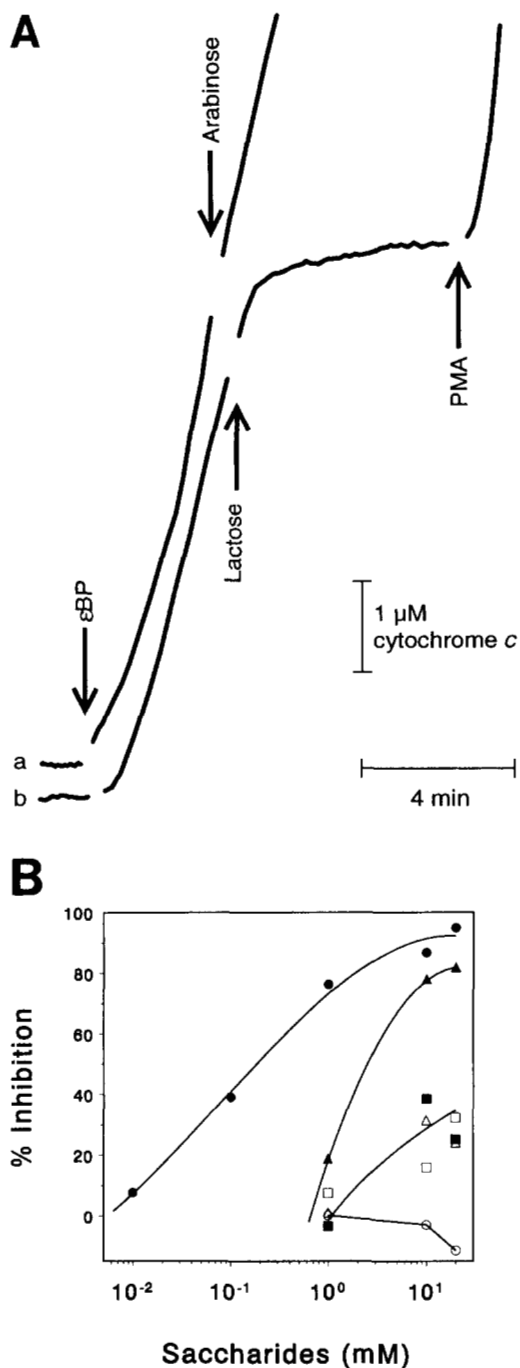


FIGURE 5. A: Inhibition of ϵ bp-induced superoxide production by saccharides. Following the addition of ϵ bp to neutrophils as described in Figure 4A, lactose or arabinose was added, to a final concentration of 20 mM, at the time points indicated by arrows. To the samples that received lactose, PMA was subsequently added to a final concentration of 0.2 μ g/ml, and the absorbance change at 550 nm was recorded. Similar results were obtained in three separate experiments. B: Effect of saccharide concentration on ϵ bp-induced superoxide production by human neutrophils. The indicated concentrations of saccharides were added to the neutrophil suspensions prepared as described in Figure 4B. The mixtures were incubated for 5 min at 37°C in 96-well plates. Subsequently, ϵ bp or FMLP was added

final concentration of 20 mM. As shown in Figure 5A, O_2^- release diminished within 1 min after addition of lactose but was not affected by addition of arabinose. To the group that received lactose, subsequent addition of PMA induced rapid O_2^- release, indicating that lactose did not affect the O_2^- -producing NADPH oxidase or neutrophil cellular function. The fact that arabinose had no effect indicates that lactose inhibition was mediated by inhibition of ϵ bp and was not due to nonspecific effects such as osmolarity changes.

We next tested the dose dependency of various saccharides. In these experiments, the effects of these sugars on O_2^- induction by FMLP were also included. As shown in Figure 5B, lactose inhibited the activity of ϵ bp in a dose-dependent fashion with an IC_{50} of 0.18 mM. The specificity of lactose inhibition in this case was supported by its lack of any effect on FMLP-induced O_2^- release. Galactose was much less effective than lactose with an apparent IC_{50} of 2.5 mM. However, galactose at 10 mM also inhibited FMLP-induced O_2^- production, indicating that this saccharide might have a nonspecific inhibitory activity on neutrophils. Arabinose also inhibited ϵ bp-induced O_2^- release at 10 mM, although it did not show any inhibition at 1 mM. Similarly to galactose, the inhibitory activity of this saccharide at high concentrations appears to be nonspecific as it also inhibited FMLP-induced O_2^- production. It is to be noted also that the partial inhibition by arabinose is unique to this experimental condition, as no inhibition was detected in the experiment described in Figure 5A, in which the saccharide was added after a maximal rate of O_2^- production was already reached.

Amino-terminal domain requirement for ϵ bp activity

We and several other groups have previously shown that the amino-terminal domain of ϵ bp can be digested by collagenase (14, 20, 21, 47, 48). Because, in our view, the amino-terminal portion is critical for the function of ϵ bp (see Discussion), we tested the effect of collagenase digestion on the activity of ϵ bp by incubating ϵ bp with collagenase as described in Materials and Methods, before addition to the neutrophils. Table I shows that ϵ bp was nearly quantitatively inactivated after the collagenase treatment. Incubation of ϵ bp in the buffer alone or in the presence of heat-denatured collagenase did not have a significant effect. To exclude the possibility that the effect of collagenase treatment is due to the action of the collagenase directly on neutrophils, a mixture of ϵ bp and collagenase was added to the neutrophils without previous

to a final concentration of 1 μ M (30 μ g/ml) and 0.1 μ M, respectively, and the absorbance change was recorded and used to calculate the percent inhibition. The data points represent means of three experiments. ● and ○, lactose; ▲ and △, galactose; ■ and □, arabinose; closed symbols, ϵ bp; open symbols, FMLP.

Table 1. Effect of collagenase on O_2^- -inducing activity of ϵ BP and FMLP^a

Treatment	Superoxide Production (% of Control)	
	ϵ bp (1 μ M)	FMLP (0.1 μ M)
None	100	100
Stimulant incubated with PBS	92	84
Stimulant incubated with collagenase	4	93
Stimulant incubated with heat-denatured collagenase	94	89
Mixture of stimulant and collagenase without preincubation	100	99
Stimulant heated at 100°C	3	94

^a ϵ BP and FMLP were treated with collagenase as described in *Materials and Methods* and tested for O_2^- induced as described in Figure 4. The results are representative of three experiments.

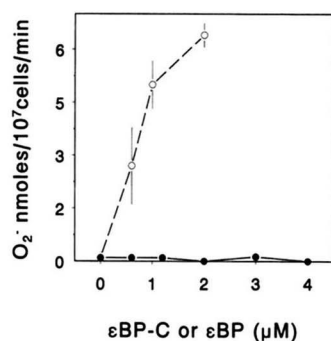


FIGURE 6. Comparison between ϵ bp and ϵ bp-C on induction of superoxide production by neutrophils. To human neutrophil suspensions prepared as described in Figure 4B were added various concentrations of ϵ bp or ϵ bp-C. The rate of O_2^- generation was estimated by measuring the absorbance change at 550 nm as described in Figure 4B. The data points represent means of three experiments. \circ - - - \circ , ϵ bp; \bullet — \bullet , ϵ bp-C.

incubation. The initial rate of O_2^- production induced by ϵ bp was not affected by such a treatment. As a specificity control, the effect of collagenase treatment on the O_2^- -inducing activity of FMLP was analyzed. As shown in Table I, collagenase treatment did not have any effect on the activity of FMLP.

To definitively prove that the ϵ bp activation of neutrophils requires the intact amino-terminal domain, the carboxyl-terminal domain of ϵ bp (ϵ bp-C) was tested for superoxide production exactly as described above. As shown in Figure 6, ϵ bp-C in the concentration range of 0.6 to 4 μ M (10 to 60 μ g/ml) did not induce neutrophil activation, whereas ϵ bp in the same experiment was active between 0.5 and 2 μ M.

Identification of neutrophil cell surface glycoproteins that are recognized by ϵ bp

We next proceeded to identify neutrophil cell surface proteins that are recognized by ϵ bp and thus are potentially

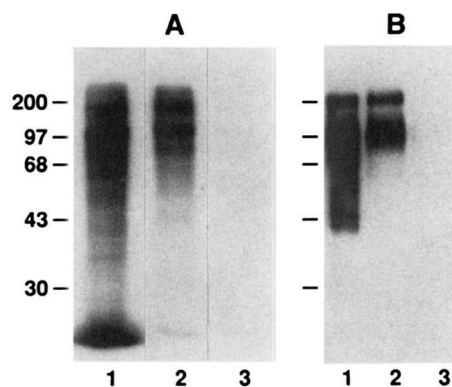


FIGURE 7. Analysis of human neutrophil cell surface proteins that are recognized by ϵ bp. A: SDS-PAGE analysis of 125 I-labeled protein. Human neutrophils were radioiodinated, the cell lysates were mixed with ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B and the bound proteins were eluted and analyzed by 10% PAGE and autoradiography. Lane 1, total cell lysate; lane 2, proteins bound to ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B; lane 3, proteins bound to ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B in the presence of lactose. The numbers on the left margin denote the positions of m.w. markers ($\times 10^{-3}$). B: Immunoblotting analysis of neutrophil membrane proteins recognized by ϵ bp. Human neutrophil membrane proteins were extracted and mixed with ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B. The bound proteins were subjected to immunoblotting analysis with anti-CEA Abs. Lane 1, total membrane protein extract; lane 2, proteins bound to ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B; lane 3, proteins bound to ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B in the presence of lactose.

involved in the ϵ bp-induced neutrophil activation. Human neutrophils were cell surface radioiodinated, the cell lysate was mixed with ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B, and the affinity-purified proteins were analyzed by SDS-PAGE. Lane 1 of Figure 7A is the profile of the total cell surface radioiodinated proteins, which showed several major bands accompanied by many minor bands. In contrast, a much simpler pattern consisting of two major bands, of M_r 115,000 and 180,000, and some minor bands, were found in the affinity-purified material (lane 2). The lectin function of ϵ bp is critical for its binding of these proteins, as the binding was diminished in the presence of lactose (lane 3).

Existing information in the literature suggests that neutrophil CEA-related NCA-160 (CD66) carries an oligosaccharide sequence well recognized by ϵ bp (see *Discussion*). We therefore tested whether NCA-160 is one of the major proteins recognized by ϵ bp, by immunoblotting analysis with anti-CEA Abs which are known to cross-react with NCA-160. Consistent with a previous report (49), the Abs detected a number of proteins in the neutrophil cell lysate (Fig. 7B, lane 1). In contrast, only two bands were detected in the protein material recovered from ϵ bp-Sepharose 4B, an upper band of M_r 180,000 and a lower broad band of M_r 105,000 (lane 2). Based on the apparent m.w. and the reactivity to anti-CEA Abs, we concluded that the

upper band could be NCA-160. The binding of these proteins by *ebp* is also dependent on lectin-carbohydrate interactions, as it was inhibited by lactose (lane 3).

The possibility that cross-linkage of NCA on the neutrophil cell surface can induce superoxide production was tested. Rabbit anti-CEA antiserum or control serum (both at 1:50 dilution) was added to human neutrophils and the superoxide production was determined in the same manner as that described for *ebp*. In the presence of cytochalasin B, anti-CEA antiserum caused significantly higher superoxide production as compared with the control serum (mean \pm SD from a triplicate experiment: 3.78 ± 0.24 vs 0.2 ± 0.02 nmol/ 10^7 cells/min). As in the case for *ebp*, the effect of the antiserum is critically dependent on cytochalasin B, as in its absence, the antiserum induced negligible superoxide production.

Discussion

A major conclusion of this work is that human *ebp*, a β -galactoside-binding lectin, is capable of binding to and activating human neutrophils. First, we showed that *ebp* bound rapidly to the surfaces of human neutrophils and the binding was dependent on the lectin function of this protein, as it could be inhibited completely by its known saccharide ligands. Second, we demonstrated that *ebp* induced O_2^- production by neutrophils in a dose-dependent manner. The dose-response curve of *ebp*-induced O_2^- production paralleled that of the binding of *ebp* to neutrophils (Fig. 3 vs Fig. 4B). The O_2^- -inducing activity of *ebp* is also critically dependent on its lectin function as shown by the saccharide inhibition study. Furthermore, the amino-terminal domain of *ebp* is essential, as previous treatment with collagenase, which is known to digest the amino-terminal portion of *ebp*, abolished its O_2^- -inducing activity. In addition, *ebp*-C, the carboxyl-terminal domain fragment that contains the lectin part, is inactive. Third, our initial effort has identified two major *ebp*-binding cell surface glycoproteins. Finally, the fact that the O_2^- -inducing activity could be inhibited by various saccharides in a fashion that matches the known affinity of these agents to *ebp* and the fact that the activity was sensitive to the collagenase treatment strongly support the idea that the observed activity is intrinsic to *ebp* and not due to any possible contamination.

We also found that the binding of radiolabeled *ebp* was potentiated by the addition of increased concentrations of unlabeled *ebp*. This result is not surprising as we and others have previously noted cooperativity in binding of *ebp* to IgE (20) and laminin (21). We have proposed that *ebp* has a tendency to form noncovalent dimers or oligomers, through self-association, when present above a threshold concentration (20). Furthermore, this property is dependent on the amino-terminal domain of the protein (20). The *ebp*-C also bound to human neutrophils in a carbohydrate-dependent manner but did not exhibit the coopera-

tive binding noted for *ebp* (data not shown). The fact that the dose-response curve of O_2^- induction by *ebp* matches that of *ebp* binding, and that *ebp*-C is inactive in O_2^- induction, strongly suggests that *ebp* self-association is also pertinent to the observed neutrophil activation. This in turn implies that cross-linkage of appropriately glycosylated cell surface glycoconjugates by *ebp* may be involved in neutrophil activation induced by this lectin. The involvement of cross-linkage of cell surface receptors in cellular activation is in keeping with current views on the initiation of transmembrane signaling in leukocytes (50).

As the activity of *ebp* is dependent on its lectin function, it is likely to be related to this protein's recognition of cell surface glycoconjugates that may be involved in neutrophil activation pathways. Our results are consistent with the concept that activation of neutrophils can be achieved through protein-carbohydrate interactions, as previously supported by the activity of Con A in stimulating O_2^- production by neutrophils (51). Importantly, however, unlike Con A, *ebp* is an endogenous animal lectin and therefore may well play a role in the activation of neutrophils. At the concentrations that stimulate superoxide production, *ebp* induces negligible myeloperoxidase release (less than 5% of that induced by FMLP; data not shown).

The glycoproteins on the cell surface of neutrophils that are recognized by *ebp* need to be more fully characterized. We have suspected that *ebp* might bind to NCA-160, a CEA-related glycoprotein, on the basis of the following information: NCA-160 carries carbohydrate groups Lewis^x and sialyl Lewis^x (49) and sialyl Lewis^x-containing lactosaminoglycan isolated from human neutrophils also carries paralacto-*N*-neohexaose (52), an oligosaccharide sequence well recognized by *ebp* (19). We have shown that one of the major *ebp*-binding glycoproteins is NCA-160 and have obtained preliminary data suggesting that cross-linkage of NCA by anti-CEA Abs on neutrophils, in the presence of cytochalasin B, can indeed lead to superoxide production. These two observations suggest that aggregation of NCA-160 by *ebp* may be important for neutrophil activation. However, additional investigations are necessary for firmly establishing the involvement of NCA-160 in *ebp*'s induction of superoxide production by neutrophils. It has been reported that cross-linking of NCA on neutrophils with anti-CEA Abs induce cell aggregation but not NADPH oxidase activation (53). However, those experiments were performed in the absence of cytochalasin B and oxygen consumption was measured instead of superoxide production. It should also be noted that NCA seem to appear on the surface of neutrophils after the cells have degranulated. Therefore, *ebp*'s activation of neutrophils through these Ags may occur only in those cells that are undergoing degranulation, perhaps triggered by other stimulants.

Recently, Sato and Hughes (54) reported that *ebp* recognizes three major glycoproteins of molecular masses of

92, 125, and 180 kDa in thioglycolate-elicited mouse peritoneal macrophages. Whether any of these proteins are species homologues of those we identified on neutrophils is unknown at this time. Previously, Rosenberg et al. (55) identified two glycoproteins (98 kDa and 70 kDa) as the major protein ligands recognized by ebp in human colon carcinoma cells. One of the proteins was subsequently found to contain a domain that is highly homologous to the macrophage scavenger receptor cysteine-rich domain (56). We have also shown that on the cell surface of rat mast cells, the high affinity IgE receptor is the major glycoprotein recognized by ebp (35). Therefore, it appears that ebp is likely to recognize different sets of glycoproteins in different cell types. Consequently, it becomes increasingly apparent that ebp may have a broad spectrum of functions mediated by recognition of a wide range of glycoproteins.

Our findings suggest an extracellular function for ebp that may be either physiologic or pathologic. The requirement for relatively high concentrations of ebp, however, deserves further comment. Although ebp lacks a classical signal sequence, exocytosis of this lectin from a number of cell types has been well documented (10, 32, 33). Furthermore, ebp is known to be present at relatively high concentrations (e.g., >135 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ (21)) in the cytosol of various cell types. Therefore, it is possible that under the influence of certain specific stimuli, or in the event of cell injury, a burst release of cytosolic ebp may occur, resulting in a transient high local concentration of this lectin.

Recently, Truong et al. (31) reported that human neutrophils express ebp and that IgE immune complexes activate neutrophils, possibly through ebp expressed on the cell surface, because the process can be inhibited by a monoclonal anti-ebp Ab. Whether IgE-mediated activation of neutrophils involves the same pathway as does the direct activation of neutrophils by ebp reported herein remains to be determined. The fact that neutrophils contain ebp and may also release this protein suggests that ebp may activate this cell type in an autocrine or paracrine fashion. Moreover, ebp is expressed by a variety of cell types including many inflammatory cells (5, 11, 31, 57). Therefore, situations in which this lectin, derived from a particular cell type, may act on neighboring neutrophils could be envisioned. As neutrophils are a key cell type involved in inflammation and host defense, it is possible that endogenous soluble lectins, such as ebp, may play an important role by modulating the function of neutrophils. We have previously shown that ebp can activate mast cells, probably through cross-linking of the IgE receptor (35). The finding that ebp can also activate neutrophils suggests that ebp may have wide-ranging effects in a variety of physiologic and pathologic processes.

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