

# The Alzheimer Amyloid Precursor Is Associated with the Detergent-insoluble Cytoskeleton

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**The amyloid  $\beta$ -protein (A $\beta$ P), the main component of neuritic plaques in Alzheimer's disease (AD), is derived by unknown mechanisms from a family of amyloid precursor proteins (APPs). Using a detergent extraction procedure, we have found that in brain and in neural cell lines, 50–90% of APP is bound to detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton. Labeling experiments performed in a C6 glioma cell line indicated that both cell surface and intracellular APPs are associated with the cytoskeleton. This association requires intact microtubules and is modulated by protein phosphorylation and by cell density. These findings suggest that the function of cellular APP, presently unknown, involves the cytoskeleton and particularly microtubules. The dynamic nature of the binding and its dependence on microtubules and protein phosphorylation suggest it as a possible target in AD, where abnormal cytoskeletal structures and protein phosphorylation have been reported. Altered cytoskeletal binding of APP might lead to its aberrant proteolysis and generation of the A $\beta$ P.**

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a common neurodegenerative disorder characterized by the presence of extracellular neuritic plaques, vascular amyloid, and intracellular neurofibrillary tangles in the brains of affected individuals. The major component of the neuritic plaque core is the amyloid  $\beta$ -protein (A $\beta$ P), which is part of at least three distinct amyloid precursor proteins (APPs) containing 770 (APP<sub>770</sub>), 751 (APP<sub>751</sub>), and 695 (APP<sub>695</sub>) amino acids, respectively (Goldgaber et al., 1987; Kang et al., 1987; Robakis et al., 1987; Tanzi et al., 1987, 1988; Kitaguchi et al., 1988; Ponte et al., 1988). Full-length APPs are ubiquitously expressed integral membrane glycoproteins with a large extracellular region, a transmembrane sequence, and a small cytoplasmic domain (Kang et al., 1987; Robakis et al., 1987). In addition, secreted APP forms containing only a portion of the A $\beta$ P sequence have been detected (Esch et al., 1990; Anderson et al., 1991). APPs undergo extensive posttranslational modifications including glycosylation, sulfation, and phosphorylation and on SDS gels appear as a family of proteins migrating between 105 and 140 kDa (Refolo et al., 1989; Schubert et al., 1989; Weidemann et al., 1989; Oltersdorf et al., 1990). The secreted forms have been reported to display growth-promoting activity

and may play a role in blood coagulation (Saitoh et al., 1989; Smith et al., 1990), but the specific biological functions of the transmembrane APPs are not known. The mechanism(s) that generate A $\beta$ P from the full-length APPs, presently unknown, might be clarified by detailed information concerning the cellular function(s) of APP. Recently, we presented immunocytochemical data suggesting a cytoskeletal association for APP epitopes in primary cultures of rat neuroglia (Berkenbosch et al., 1990). Several other intrinsic membrane proteins, including integrins, cadherins, and N-CAM (Pollerberg et al., 1987; Burridge et al., 1988; Nelson et al., 1990) have also been shown to be associated with the cytoskeletal fraction of the cell. These studies have relied on extraction of cell cultures in the presence of nonionic detergents under conditions that stabilized cytoskeletal structures. Proteinaceous structures stabilized by protein-protein interactions resist solubilization by these detergents and thus can be separated from the soluble membranes. Cytoskeletons from erythrocytes (Yu et al., 1973) and junctional complexes (Gorbsky and Steinberg, 1981) have also been isolated using this approach. Using a similar methodology, we demonstrate that APP is associated with the detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton and that this association requires intact microtubules. Furthermore, the cytoskeletal anchorage of APP is modulated by cell density and by protein phosphorylation.

## Materials and Methods

### Cell cultures

The rat C6 glioma cell line (Benda et al., 1968) was obtained from the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC), Rockville, MD. Cultures were seeded at  $1.5 \times 10^4$  cells/mm<sup>2</sup> onto 100 mm plastic tissue culture dishes (Corning) and maintained in Dulbecco's modified Eagle's Medium (DME) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum. Cell density was determined by trypsinizing and counting parallel cultures.

PC12 cells were obtained from the ATCC and were maintained in RPMI 1640 medium supplemented with 10% horse and 5% fetal bovine sera. Neuronal PC12 cultures were obtained as described in Greene and Tischler (1976). Cells were seeded onto collagen-coated plates at a density of  $5 \times 10^4$  cells/mm<sup>2</sup> and after 24 hr were treated with 50 ng/ml  $\beta$ NGF (R. Stach, University of Michigan). The cultures were maintained for 7 d, and the NGF-containing medium was changed every 48 hr.

### Preparation of detergent-soluble and cytoskeletal fractions

Detergent-soluble and -insoluble fractions were prepared by the method of Wilson and Brophy (1989). Cell cultures were washed two times with PBS containing Ca<sup>2+</sup> and Mg<sup>2+</sup> and one time with CSK buffer (Wilson and Brophy, 1989) containing 10 mM 1,4-piperazinediethanesulfonic acid, pH 6.9, 50 mM KCl, 2 mM EGTA, 1 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 2 M glycerol, 1.0 mM phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride (PMSF), 25  $\mu$ g/ml leupeptin, 25  $\mu$ g/ml pepstatin, and 50  $\mu$ g/ml aprotinin. Subsequently, the cultures were extracted for 5 min at room temperature with CSK buffer containing 0.5% Triton X-100 (buffer A). The detergent solution was aspirated off the cultures and centrifuged at room temperature at  $15,000 \times g$  for 10

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min. This supernatant is referred to as the detergent-soluble fraction. The remaining cell residue was scraped off the culture dishes using 2.0 ml per dish of CSK buffer. This material was transferred to a Dounce vessel and homogenized, on ice, with three strokes of a loose-fitting pestle. The homogenate was centrifuged in the cold at  $10,000 \times g$  for 15 min, and the detergent-insoluble pellet was resuspended in 0.25 ml of solubilization buffer containing 50 mM Tris, pH 7.4, 10 mM EGTA, 10 mM EDTA, 100 mM NaCl, 1% SDS, 1 mM PMSF, 25  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  leupeptin, 25  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  pepstatin, and 50  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  aprotinin. The resuspension was passed several times through a 22 gauge needle, boiled for 10 min, and centrifuged at  $15,000 \times g$  at room temperature for 10 min. The supernatant was saved and is referred to as the detergent-insoluble cytoskeletal fraction. Protein determinations were obtained by the Pierce BCA assay (Smith et al., 1985). Some cultures were extracted with TNE buffer containing 50 mM Tris-Cl, pH 8.0, 150 mM NaCl, and 2 mM EDTA in the presence of 0.5% Triton X-100.

Detergent-soluble and cytoskeletal fractions were prepared from adult Sprague-Dawley rat brain tissue. Whole brains were frozen in liquid nitrogen and crushed to a fine powder using a mortar and pestle. This material was mechanically homogenized, at room temperature, with five strokes of the Potter-Braun homogenizer in 10 vol of buffer A. The homogenate was centrifuged at  $15,000 \times g$  for 30 min, yielding a detergent-soluble supernatant and a detergent-insoluble cytoskeletal pellet. The pellet derived from 2 gm of brain tissue was resuspended in 2.0 ml of Tris/SDS solubilization buffer, passed several times through a 22 gauge needle, and boiled for 10 min. Subsequently, the homogenate was centrifuged at  $15,000 \times g$  for 15 min, and the resulting supernatant is referred to as the detergent-insoluble cytoskeletal fraction.

### Immunochemical reagents

Anti-R1, antiserum directed against amino acids 673–695 of APP<sub>695</sub>, was prepared and used as described (Anderson et al., 1989; Refolo et al., 1989).

Antisera raised against the following proteins were used:  $\beta$ -tubulin 5H1 provided by L. Binder (University of Alabama); mannose-6-phosphate receptor provided by P. Nissley (NIH); gp96 provided by P. Srivastava (Mt. Sinai). Antiserum against actin was obtained from Amersham. Antibodies against glial fibrillary acidic protein (GFAP), neurofilament subunit M, nerve growth factor receptor (NGFR), synapsophysin, and secretogranin B were obtained from Boehringer Mannheim. Anti- $\text{Na}^+/\text{K}^+$ -ATPase was obtained from Cal Biochemicals.

### Immunoblots

Immunoblots were performed as previously described (Anderson et al., 1989). In brief, 100  $\mu\text{g}$  of protein from each sample were loaded per lane and run on SDS-polyacrylamide gels (Laemmli, 1970). Separated proteins were transferred electrophoretically to Immobilon filters (Millipore) that were then pretreated overnight in Tris-buffered saline (TBS; 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, 150 mM NaCl), containing 0.1% Tween 20 and 10% newborn calf serum (NCS). The filters were probed for 1 hr at room temperature, with the appropriate primary antibody diluted in TBS-NCS containing 0.1% Tween 20. Subsequently, the filters were washed for 1 hr with TBS-0.1% Tween and incubated for 1 hr with either an  $^{125}\text{I}$  anti-rabbit or an  $^{125}\text{I}$  anti-mouse (Amersham) secondary antibody, diluted in TBS-NCS. The filters were given a final 1 hr wash in TBS-0.1% Tween and autoradiographed. Signal was quantitated by densitometry.

### Signal quantitation

Signals from each lane, corresponding to 100  $\mu\text{g}$  of loaded protein, were quantitated by soft laser densitometry. Since the total protein content of soluble and cytoskeletal fractions differs, the percentage of total APP in each fraction was determined as follows. The area corresponding to the signal from 100  $\mu\text{g}$  of protein was used to calculate the signal area corresponding to the total protein in each fraction. The percentage of total APP in each fraction was then determined by dividing the signal area of each fraction by the sum of the signal areas of both fractions times 100. Each determination was the average of at least two independent experiments.

### Cell surface labeling

C6 glioma cultures were labeled by the lactoperoxidase-catalyzed iodination using a previously published procedure (Hubbard and Cohn,

1976). Plates containing approximately  $5 \times 10^5$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$  were washed three times with cold PBS containing  $\text{Mg}^{2+}$  and  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ . All subsequent steps were performed between  $4^\circ\text{C}$  and  $10^\circ\text{C}$  to limit the nonspecific internalization of  $\text{Na}^{125}\text{I}$ . Each 100 mm plate received 2.0 ml of PBS ( $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ) containing 1 mCi of  $\text{Na}^{125}\text{I}$  (Amersham). The iodination was initiated by adding 20  $\mu\text{l}$  of a 2 mg/ml solution of lactoperoxidase (Sigma), followed by 20  $\mu\text{l}$  of 0.03% hydrogen peroxide. The reaction was allowed to proceed for 30 min, with the addition of fresh aliquots of lactoperoxidase and hydrogen peroxide every 10 min. At the appropriate time, the plates were washed three times with PBS ( $\text{Mg}^{2+}/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ ) containing 5 mM potassium iodide. The plates were then subjected to extraction in CSK buffer containing 0.5% Triton X-100 (buffer A), followed by preparation of detergent-soluble and cytoskeletal fractions. Trypsinization of labeled cells was performed by incubating cell cultures with 50  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  trypsin in DME without serum, for 30 min at room temperature. At the appropriate time, soybean trypsin inhibitor was added to each plate to a final concentration of 1 mg/ml. Following a 5 min incubation at room temperature, the trypsinized plates were extracted with buffer A as previously described.

### Immunoprecipitations

Radiolabeled cell extracts prepared as described above were used for immunoprecipitations. Each sample containing about  $3 \times 10^6$  of trichloroacetic acid (TCA) precipitable counts was made 1 $\times$  in IL buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.2, 150 mM NaCl, 5 mM EDTA, 0.2% Triton X-100) containing 2 mM PMSF, 20  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  leupeptin, 20  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  pepstatin, and 50  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  aprotinin, and then "precleared" for 30 min at  $4^\circ\text{C}$  using 30  $\mu\text{l}$  of protein A-Sepharose. The precleared samples were incubated at  $4^\circ\text{C}$  overnight, with agitation, in the presence of the appropriate antibodies. Antigen-antibody complexes were recovered by the addition of 30  $\mu\text{l}$  of protein A-Sepharose, followed by incubation, with agitation, at  $4^\circ\text{C}$  for 30 min. The immunoprecipitates were collected by centrifugation and washed three times with 1 $\times$  IL buffer. Laemmli sample buffer, containing 5% 2-mercaptoethanol, was added to the washed beads, and the samples were boiled for 5 min. The samples were resolved by SDS-PAGE (Laemmli, 1970).

### Cell density experiments

Variations in cell density was achieved by two different methods.

*Method 1.* For low-density cultures, C6 cells were seeded in 60 mm plates at a density of  $1.30 \times 10^2$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . After approximately 24 hr, five plates were trypsinized, counted, and found to contain approximately  $3.8 \times 10^2$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . Low-density cultures (10 plates) were sequentially extracted with buffer A as described above, except that the volume of buffer per plate was 0.3 ml.

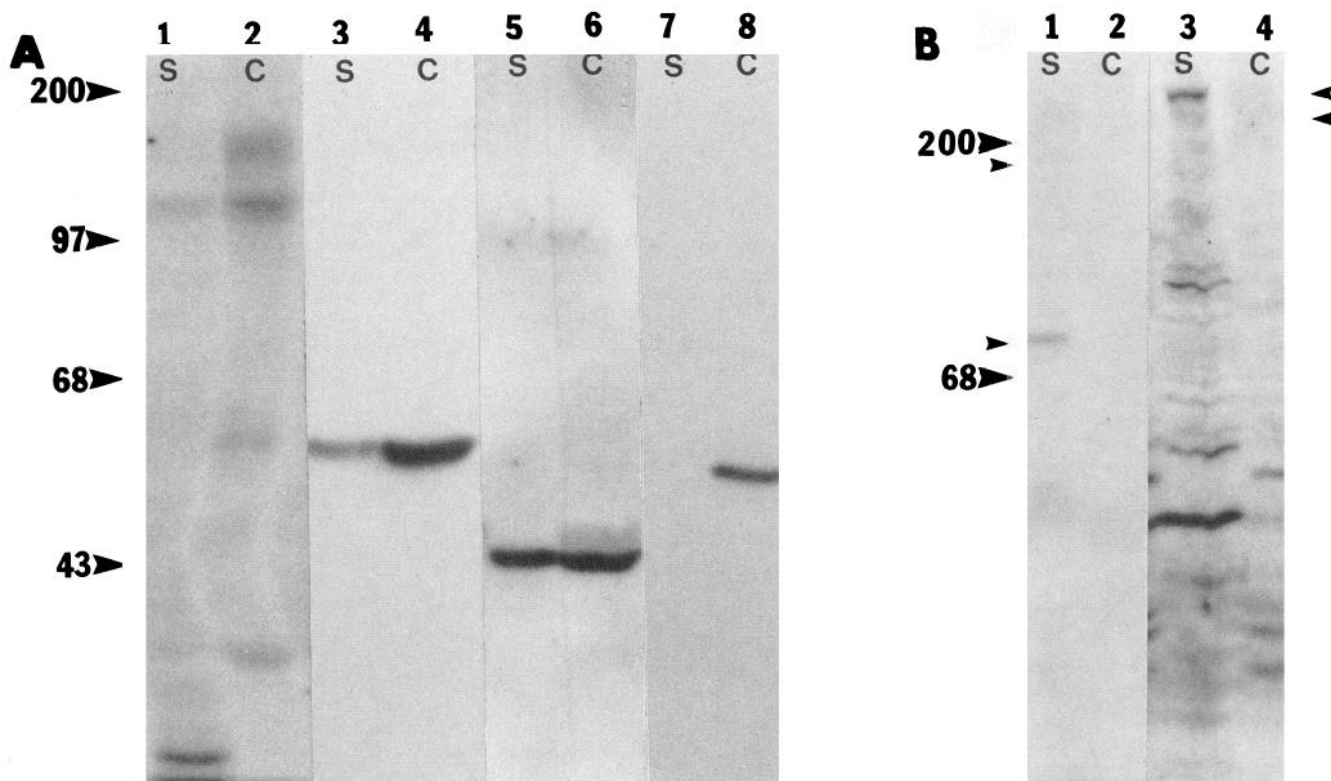
For high-density cultures, C6 cells were seeded onto 100 mm plates at an initial density of  $1.9 \times 10^3$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . These cultures were maintained as described above for 5 d. At this time, the cultures were counted and found to have approximately  $6.3 \times 10^3$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . Five plates of these cultures were extracted with 2.0 ml/plate of buffer A. The detergent-to-protein ratio for the extraction of both high- and low-density cultures was about 5:1.

*Method 2.* For low-density cultures, C6 cells were seeded onto 60 mm plates at 50 cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . These cultures were maintained in DME/10% fetal calf serum for 4 d, at which time they contained  $6 \times 10^2$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . Ten low-density plates were extracted sequentially with 0.5 ml of buffer A.

High-density cultures were obtained by seeding 100 mm plates at  $8 \times 10^2$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . The cultures were maintained for 4 d, at which time their density was approximately  $7 \times 10^3$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ . Five high-density cultures were extracted sequentially with 2.0 ml of buffer A. The detergent to protein ratio for both the high- and low-density cultures was approximately 5:1.

### Pharmacological studies

Experiments designed to measure the effects of cytoskeleton destabilizers were initiated by treating high-density C6 cultures ( $6 \times 10^3$  cells/ $\text{mm}^2$ ) for 1 hr at  $37^\circ\text{C}$ , with  $10^{-5}$  M concentrations of either colchicine, nocodazole, or cytochalasin B (Sigma). Control cultures were treated under identical conditions with 0.003% dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO). At the appropriate time, the cultures were extracted with buffer A, and detergent-soluble and cytoskeletal fractions were prepared as described above.



**Figure 1.** Immunoblot analysis of detergent-soluble and -insoluble fractions prepared from C6 glioma cell cultures. Cell fractions were prepared from high-density cultures ( $5 \times 10^5$  cells/mm<sup>2</sup>) in buffer A, as described in Materials and Methods. *A*, Immunoblots containing detergent-soluble (S) or -insoluble (C) fractions were probed with antisera against the following proteins: APP, lanes 1 and 2;  $\beta$ -tubulin, lanes 3 and 4; actin, lanes 5 and 6, and GFAP, lanes 7 and 8. *B*, Detergent-soluble (S) or -insoluble (C) fractions were probed with anti-Na<sup>+</sup>/K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase (lanes 1 and 2) or anti-mannose-6-phosphate receptor (lanes 3 and 4) antisera. The small arrowheads next to lane 1 indicate the positions of the Na<sup>+</sup>/K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase  $\alpha$ -subunit (160 kDa) and  $\beta$ -subunit (75 kDa). The positions for the mannose-6-phosphate receptor at about 250 kDa (Kiesse et al., 1987) are indicated by the small arrowheads next to lane 4. For more details, see Materials and Methods.

High-density C6 cultures were treated, for 1 hr at 37°C, with either  $10^{-6}$  M or  $10^{-5}$  M concentrations of the protein kinase C inhibitor staurosporine (Boehringer Mannheim). Control cultures were treated with 0.01% DMSO. Cells were extracted with buffer A, and soluble and cytoskeletal fractions were prepared.

In experiments designed to measure the effects of phorbol ester, low-density cultures ( $4 \times 10^2$  cells/mm<sup>2</sup>) were treated with 100 ng/ml phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA; Sigma) for either 5 or 20 min at 37°C. Control cultures were treated with 0.005% DMSO for 20 min. Cells were extracted as described above.

## Results

### *APP is associated with the detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton of brain and cell cultures*

To investigate further the cytoskeletal association of APP, we extracted cell cultures and brain tissue with detergent-containing buffers. This methodology has been used extensively for the identification of integral membrane proteins bound to the cytoskeleton, including gP130, gP180, gP85, and E-cadherin (Lehto, 1983; Tarone et al., 1984; Bourguignon et al., 1985; Nelson et al., 1990). Cultures of the rat glioma cell line C6 (Benda et al., 1968) were extracted with CSK buffer containing the non-ionic detergent Triton X-100 (buffer A; see Materials and Methods). Fractionation with this buffer yields a detergent-soluble fraction, containing most of the cytosolic and membrane-associated proteins, and a detergent-insoluble, cytoskeletal residue (Brown et al., 1976; Osborn and Weber, 1977; Sheetz, 1979).

This procedure has been shown to preserve the structural integrity of the major cytoskeletal elements, for example, microfilaments, microtubules, and intermediate filaments (Schliwa and Van Blerkom, 1981; Wilson and Brophy, 1989). Immunoblots of the soluble fraction and the cytoskeletal residue were probed with anti-R1 antibody, which is directed against the cytoplasmic domain of all APP forms (Anderson et al., 1989; Refolo et al., 1989). Figure 1*A* (lanes 1 and 2) shows that in C6 cells two APP species are detected at about  $M_r$  110 and 140 kDa and that both of these forms are associated with the cytoskeleton. Quantitation of the signals shown in Figure 1 (see Materials and Methods) indicated that approximately 85% of the total APP was found in the cytoskeletal residue. To verify the quality of our cytoskeletal preparations, we stained our blots with antisera against the following proteins: (1)  $\beta$ -tubulin, a component of the microtubules (Geiger, 1983); (2) actin, a component of microfilaments (Geiger et al., 1983); and (3) GFAP, a component of intermediate filaments (Steinert and Roop, 1988). As shown in Figure 1 (lanes 3–8), GFAP was found only in the insoluble residue, indicating that the extraction buffer maintains the integrity of the intermediate filaments (Lazarides, 1980). As expected, actin was equally distributed between soluble and insoluble fractions, while tubulin was found predominantly in the cytoskeletal fraction (Wilson and Brophy, 1989). To exclude the possibility that the cytoskeletal fractions were contaminated by intrinsic membrane proteins, we determined the partitioning

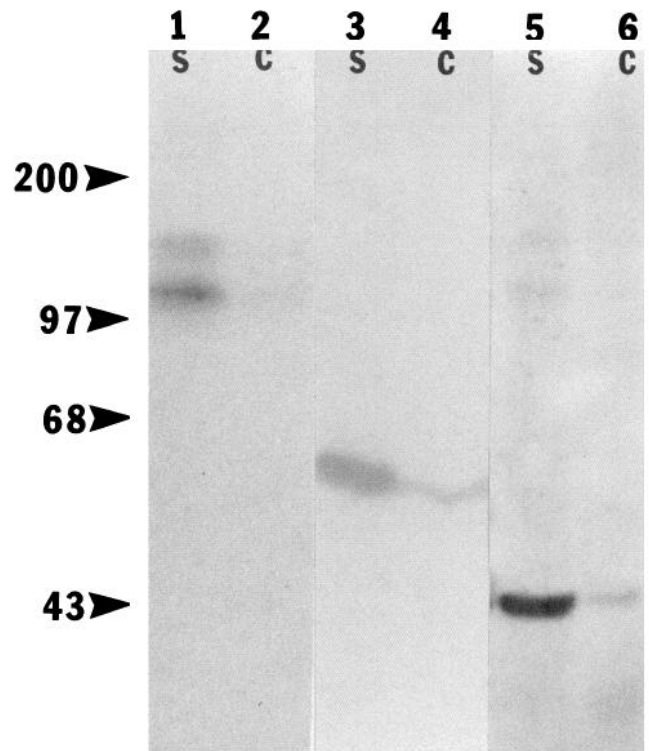
of Na<sup>+</sup>/K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase, a well-characterized integral plasma membrane protein (Quigley and Gotterer, 1969), and mannose-6-phosphate receptor, a membrane protein located predominantly in the Golgi apparatus and lysosomes (Willingham et al., 1983; Geuze et al., 1984). It can be seen in Figure 1B that both of these proteins were found solely in the soluble fraction. Our results indicate that APP is associated with the detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton of a glial cell line under conditions that completely extracted other integral membrane proteins. To examine further the effects of our extraction conditions on the cytoskeletal association of APP, C6 cultures were extracted with TNE buffer (see Materials and Methods) in the presence of 0.5% Triton X-100. Extraction with this buffer also disrupts the cytoskeleton as it solubilizes most of the tubulin and actin (Fig. 2, lanes 3–6). Under these conditions, more than 95% of the APP was found in the soluble fraction (Fig. 2, lanes 1 and 2), in agreement with the suggestion that the detergent-insoluble APP reflects its association with the intact cytoskeleton.

To determine if APP is associated with the cytoskeleton of neuronal cells, we prepared Triton X-100 soluble and insoluble extracts from PC12 cells grown in the presence of NGF (Greene and Tischler, 1982). Figure 3 (lanes 1 and 2) shows that more than 50% of the total APP was found in the detergent-insoluble fraction. In the same preparations, greater than 95% of the 160 kDa neurofilament subunit (NFM), a component of the neuronal cytoskeleton (Liem et al., 1978), was found in the detergent-insoluble fraction, while tubulin was distributed between the soluble and cytoskeletal fraction (Fig. 3, lanes 3–6). Furthermore, the NGFR, an intrinsic plasma membrane protein (Chao et al., 1986); synaptophysin, a membrane protein present in synaptic vesicles (Sudhof et al., 1987); and chromogranin B, found in secretory dense vesicles (Settleman et al., 1985); were extracted into the detergent-soluble fraction (Fig. 3, lanes 7–12). These data demonstrate that a significant percentage of the total APP is associated with the detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton of neuronal PC12 cells, under conditions that other integral membrane- or vesicle-associated proteins are extracted in the soluble fraction.

Detergent-soluble and -insoluble fractions were also prepared from rat brain. Approximately 35% of the total APP remained in the cytoskeletal residue after extraction with buffer A (Fig. 4, lanes 1 and 2). In the same preparations, greater than 95% of GFAP and NFM were found in the cytoskeletal residue (Fig. 4, lanes 3–6), while both Na<sup>+</sup>/K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase and synaptophysin were found in the soluble fraction (Fig. 4, lanes 7–10). These data demonstrate that a significant fraction of total brain APP is associated with detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton.

#### *Both cell surface and intracellular APP are bound to the cytoskeleton*

It has been reported that a fraction of the total cellular APP is on the cell surface (Weidemann et al., 1989). In addition, recent evidence suggested that a substantial amount of APP is located intracellularly (Berkenbosch et al., 1990; Catterucia et al., 1990). To determine if cell surface APP is associated with the cytoskeleton, C6 glioma cell cultures were labeled at the cell surface using lactoperoxidase/Na<sup>125</sup>I followed by extraction with buffer A and immunoprecipitation of the labeled APP. It can be seen in Figure 5 that cell surface labeling resulted in the detection of only one APP isoform at 140 kDa, suggesting that at least a fraction of this protein is on the cell surface. In addition, most of the cell surface 140 kDa APP was associated with the cyto-

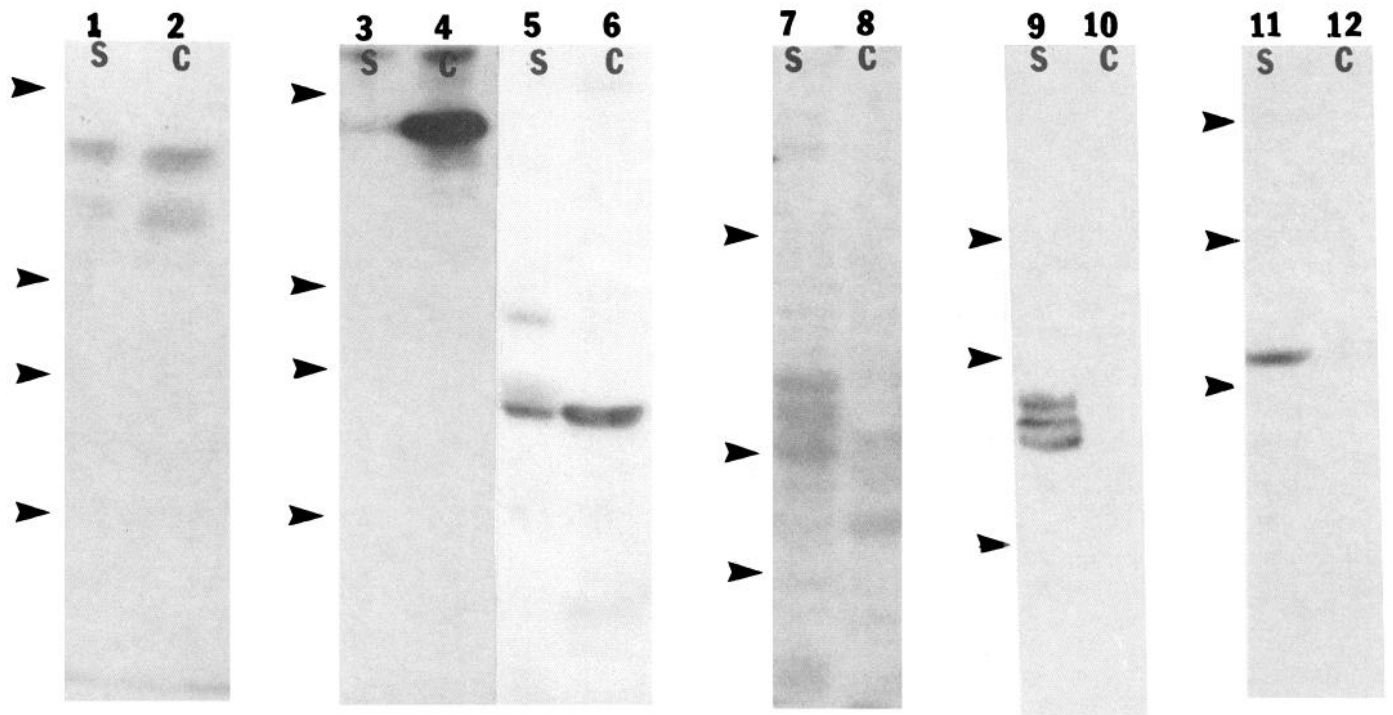


**Figure 2.** Immunoblot analysis of detergent-soluble (S) or -insoluble (C) fractions prepared in TNE buffer from C6 glioma cells (see Materials and Methods). Filters were stained with the following antisera: Anti-APP, lanes 1 and 2; anti- $\beta$ -tubulin, lanes 3 and 4; and anti-actin, lanes 5 and 6.

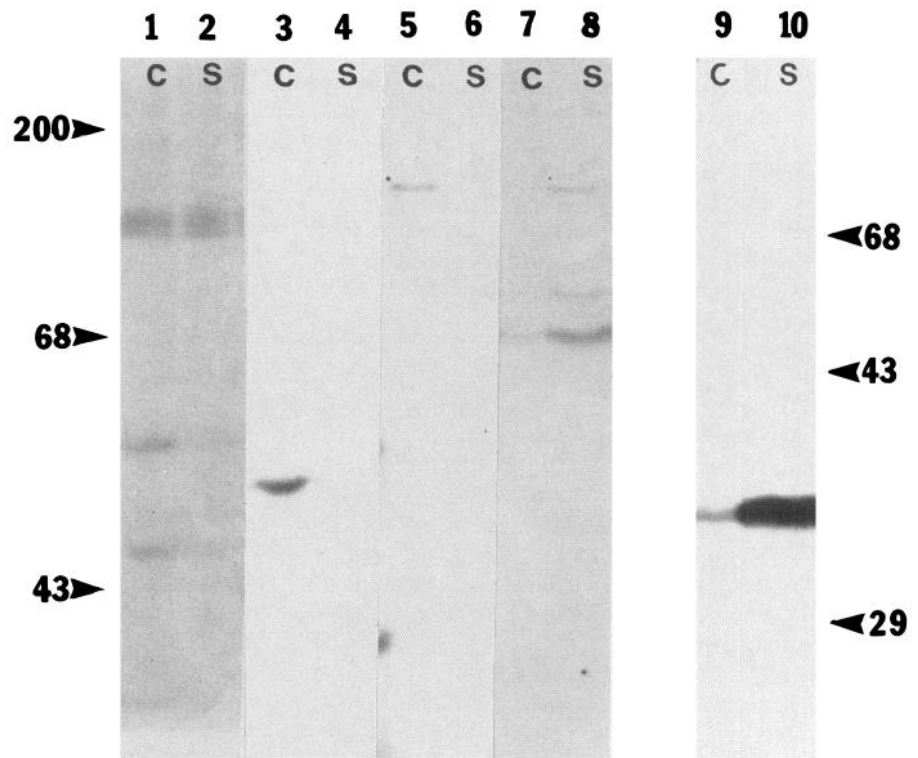
skeletal residue, while gp96, a cell surface integral membrane protein (Maki et al., 1990), was found almost exclusively in the soluble fraction. Treatment of our cultures with trypsin resulted in the degradation of the <sup>125</sup>I-labeled APP, confirming its cell surface localization (Fig. 5, lanes 7 and 8). Since only the 140 kDa band appears on the cell surface, we assume that the cytoskeletally associated 110 kDa APP is intracellular. These results suggest that both cell surface and intracellular APPs are associated with the cytoskeleton.

#### *The cytoskeletal association of APP is modulated by cell density*

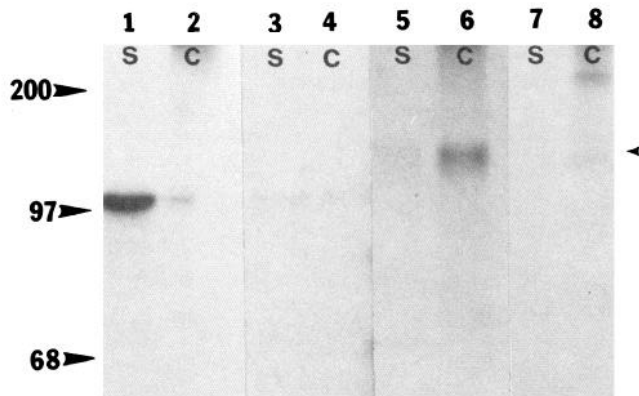
Previous studies have shown that increased cell-cell contact induces the reorganization of cytoskeletal elements, including ankyrin and fodrin complexes linked to integral membrane proteins such as E-cadherin (Marchesi, 1985; Nelson and Lazarides, 1985; Nelson et al., 1990). These cytoskeletal reorganizations may be reflected in the changes of the distribution of several integral membrane glycoproteins between the detergent-soluble and detergent-insoluble cytoskeletal fractions (Nelson and Veshnock, 1987). To examine the effects of cell density on the cytoskeletal association of APP, we prepared fractions from C6 cell cultures of varying cell density. Variations in cell density were achieved by two different methods (as described in Materials and Methods). Results obtained from method 1 showed a significant increase in the amount of cytoskeletal APP with increasing cell density. At low density, approximately 50% of the total APP was bound to the cytoskeleton, while at high density this value was more than 85% (Fig. 6A). Using method



**Figure 3.** Immunoblots of detergent-soluble (*S*) or -insoluble (*C*) fractions prepared from neuronal PC12 cells in buffer A. Filters were stained with the following antisera: Anti-APP, lanes 1 and 2; anti-NFM, lanes 3 and 4; anti-tubulin, lanes 5 and 6; anti-NGFR, lanes 7 and 8; anti-synaptophysin, lanes 9 and 10; and chromogranin B, lanes 11 and 12. The arrowheads indicate the positions, from top to bottom, of molecular mass markers in kDa as follows. Lanes 1 and 2: 200, 97, 68, 43; lanes 3–6: 200, 97, 68, 43; lanes 7 and 8: 200, 97, 68; lanes 9 and 10: 68, 43, 29; lanes 11 and 12: 200, 97, 68. NGFR in lane 7 migrates between *M*<sub>r</sub> 95 and 120.



**Figure 4.** Immunoblots of detergent-soluble (*S*) or -insoluble (*C*) fractions prepared from rat brain in buffer A. Filters were stained with the following antisera: Anti-APP, lanes 1 and 2; anti-GFAP, lanes 3 and 4; NFM, lanes 5 and 6; anti-Na<sup>+</sup>/K<sup>+</sup>-ATPase, lanes 7 and 8; anti-synaptophysin, lanes 9 and 10. Arrowheads indicate the position of the molecular mass markers in kDa.



**Figure 5.** Immunoprecipitations of detergent-soluble (S) or -insoluble (C) samples prepared in buffer A from C6 glioma cultures. Cell surface proteins were labeled with  $^{125}\text{I}$ , and samples from control (lanes 1, 2, 5, and 6) or trypsin-treated (lanes 3, 4, 7, and 8) cultures were immunoprecipitated with either anti-gP96 antisera (lanes 1–4) or anti-APP antisera (lanes 5–8). The small arrowhead indicates the position of the 140 kDa APP band. For details, see Materials and Methods.

2, a similar trend was observed; at low density the level of cytoskeletal APP was approximately 60%, while at high density this value increased to approximately 90% (Fig. 6B). Thus, in C6 cultures, the level of cytoskeleton-associated APP is modulated by cell density.

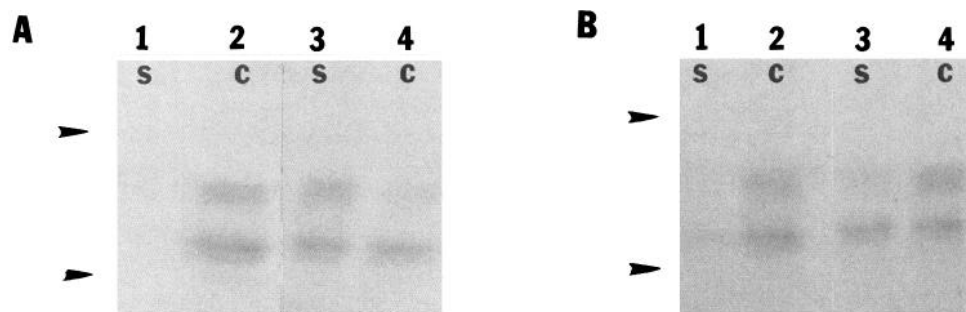
#### *The cytoskeletal association of APP requires intact microtubules*

To assess the role of specific cytoskeletal elements in the association of APP with the cytoskeleton, colchicine or nocodazole, which disrupt microtubules (Kirschner, 1978; Cassimeris et al., 1986), and cytochalasin B, which disrupts microfilaments (Weihsing, 1976), were tested for their effects on the cytoskeletal distribution of APP in C6 cells (Fig. 7A). Treatment with colchicine decreased the amount of APP in the detergent-insoluble fraction from approximately 85% to 20% of the total APP (Fig. 7A, lanes 3 and 4). Nocodazole reduced the amount of detergent-insoluble APP to approximately 40% and therefore gave results

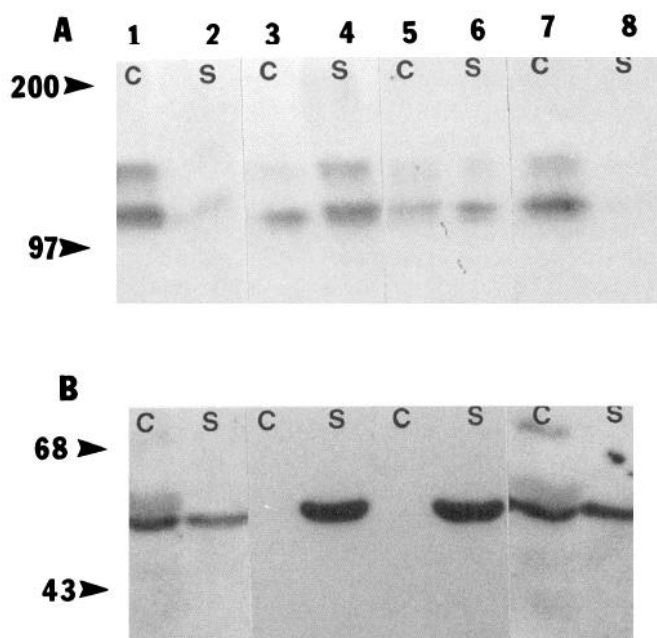
qualitatively similar to colchicine (Fig. 7A, lanes 5 and 6). In contrast, the microfilament destabilizer cytochalasin B did not affect the distribution of APP (Fig. 7A, lanes 7 and 8). As expected, treatment with either of the microtubule destabilizers resulted in a significant increase in the amount of detergent-soluble  $\beta$ -tubulin (Fig. 7B), while treatment of cells with the microfilament destabilizer resulted in a large increase in the levels of detergent-soluble actin (data not shown). These results demonstrate that the association of APP with the cytoskeleton depends on the integrity of the microtubule network but does not depend on intact microfilaments.

#### *The cytoskeletal association of APP is modulated by protein phosphorylation*

Protein phosphorylation plays a major role in the regulation of cytoskeletal protein interactions (Vallee, 1980; Huang et al., 1984; Sihang et al., 1985; Baudier et al., 1987; Cianci et al., 1988; Husain-Chisti et al., 1988), and protein kinases have been implicated in the phosphorylation of APP (Gandy et al., 1988; Buxbaum et al., 1990). Consequently, we examined the relationship between protein kinase activity and the amount of APP associated with the detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton. Extracts were prepared from C6 cultures grown in the presence of staurosporine, a potent inhibitor of protein kinase C, tyrosine kinase, and protein kinase A (Tamaoki et al., 1986; Nakano et al., 1987). As shown in Figure 8A, staurosporine decreased the levels of the cytoskeleton-associated APP in a concentration-dependent manner. At  $10^{-5}$  M staurosporine, approximately 25% of the total APP was found in the detergent-insoluble fraction, compared to greater than 85% in the control extracts, while at  $10^{-6}$  M there was no difference compared to the control. Treatment of low-density C6 cultures with PMA, which stimulates protein kinase C (Huang, 1989), resulted in an increase in the amount of APP associated with the cytoskeletal fraction. At 100 ng/ml PMA, the level of cytoskeleton-associated APP increased after 5 min from the control level of 50% to more than 70%. After 20 min of PMA treatment, the level of cytoskeletal APP increased to approximately 90% of the total (Fig. 8B). Taken together, these data indicate that stimulation of protein kinase activity increases the amount of cytoskeletal APP, while inhibition of this activity reduces the amount of cytoskeletal APP.



**Figure 6.** Changes in cell density modulate the levels of cytoskeletal APP. *A*, Method 1: C6 cultures were seeded at  $1.3 \times 10^2$  cells/mm $^2$  and maintained for the required time until they reached the appropriate density, determined by trypsinizing and by counting sister cultures. Low-density cultures were obtained 1 d after plating and contained  $4 \times 10^2$  cells/mm $^2$  (lanes 3 and 4). High-density cultures were obtained 5 d after plating and contained  $6.3 \times 10^3$  cells/mm $^2$  (lanes 1 and 2). *B*, Method 2: low-density cultures were seeded at 50 cells/mm $^2$  and maintained for 4 d, at which time they contained  $6 \times 10^2$  cells/mm $^2$  (lanes 3 and 4). High-density cultures were seeded at  $8 \times 10^2$  cells/mm $^2$  and maintained for 4 d, at which time they contained  $7 \times 10^3$  cells/mm $^2$  (lanes 1 and 2). At the appropriate density, cultures were extracted with buffer A, and detergent-soluble (S) or -insoluble (C) fractions were analyzed by Western blots using anti-APP antiserum.

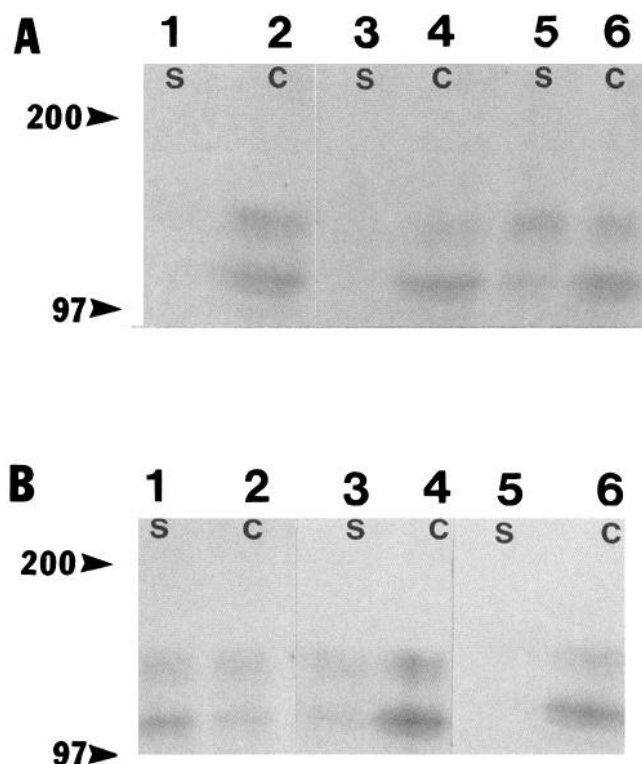


**Figure 7.** The effects of cytoskeleton destabilizers on the levels of cytoskeletal APP. *A*, High-density cultures ( $6 \times 10^3$  cells/mm<sup>2</sup>) were treated for 1 hr with  $10^{-5}$  M concentrations of either colchicine, nocodazole, or cytochalasin B. Control cultures were treated with 0.003% DMSO. Cells were extracted with buffer A, and detergent-insoluble (C) or -soluble (S) proteins were analyzed using anti-R1 antiserum. *Lanes 1* and *2*, control; *lanes 3* and *4*, colchicine; *lanes 5* and *6*, nocodazole; and *lanes 7* and *8*, cytochalasin B. *B*, Same cell extracts as in *A* probed with anti- $\beta$ -tubulin.

## Discussion

The results presented here demonstrate that APP is associated with the detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton of brain and of neuronal and glial cell lines. In a glial cell line, we found that both cell surface and intracellular APPs are associated with the cytoskeletal residue. Moreover, this association requires intact microtubules and is modulated by both cell density and protein phosphorylation.

We suggest that the cytoskeletal association of the APPs reflects specific protein interactions that are required to fulfill the biological function(s) of these proteins. There are many examples of integral membrane proteins that are functionally associated with the cytoskeleton. For example, the epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR) has been found tightly associated with the detergent-insoluble cytoskeleton of a human carcinoma cell line A432 (Landreth et al., 1985). The association of the EGFR with the cytoskeleton is believed to be important for ligand-stimulated autophosphorylation and internalization (Landreth et al., 1985). Another example for the functional significance of the cytoskeletal association of an integral membrane protein is the cell adhesion molecule cadherin E (uvomorulin), which modulates cell–cell interactions by forming specific sites of contact (junctional complexes) with the cytoskeletal proteins ankyrin and fodrin (Marchesi, 1985; Nelson and Lazarides, 1985; Nelson et al., 1990). In addition, recent studies indicate that the integrins, a family of cell surface glycoproteins, participate in cell–cell or cell–substratum interactions by linking cells to the substratum or to other cells via specific complexes with the cytoskeleton (Buck and Horwitz, 1987; Hynes, 1987; Burn et



**Figure 8.** *A*, Effects of the protein kinase C inhibitor staurosporine on cytoskeletal APP. High-density cultures ( $6 \times 10^3$  cells/mm<sup>2</sup>) were treated for 1 hr with either  $10^{-5}$  M or  $10^{-6}$  M staurosporine (Boehringer Mannheim). Control cultures were treated with 0.01% DMSO. Cells were extracted with buffer A, and detergent-soluble (S) or -insoluble (C) proteins were analyzed by Western blots using anti-R1. *Lanes 1* and *2*, control fractions; *lanes 3* and *4*,  $10^{-7}$  M staurosporine; *lanes 5* and *6*,  $10^{-6}$  M staurosporine. *B*, Effects of phorbol ester on the cytoskeletal APP. Low-density cultures ( $3 \times 10^2$  cells/mm<sup>2</sup>) were treated with 100 ng/ml of PMA for either 5 min (*lanes 3* and *4*) or 20 min (*lanes 5* and *6*). Control cultures were treated with 0.005% DMSO for 20 min (*lanes 1* and *2*). Cells were extracted and analyzed as in *A*.

al., 1988). These complexes are mediated by the cytoplasmic domain of the  $\beta$ -integrin, mutation of which disrupted the adhesion function of the integrins (Hayashi et al., 1990). Therefore, the cytoskeletal association of the cell surface APP may reflect its function as a cell–cell or cell–substratum adhesion molecule. These suggestions are further supported by recent experimental results indicating that APP may participate in cell adhesion events (Schubert et al., 1989; Breen et al., 1991).

The significance of the cytoskeletal association of the intracellular APP is less clear. However, the selective disruption of microtubules disrupted the cytoskeletal association of the intracellular APP. Depolymerization of microtubules results in the dispersal of cellular organelles including the Golgi apparatus, lysosomes, and the endoplasmic reticulum (Kelly, 1990). Since a fraction of the intracellular pool of APP will be located in these organelles, the effects of microtubule disruptors on APP detergent solubility might be the indirect result of this dispersal. An alternative hypothesis is that APP itself is physically anchored to microtubules, either directly or through some intermediary factors such as the microtubule-associated proteins. This association is likely to occur via the 47 amino acid C-terminal domain of APP, which is predicted to lie within the cytoplasm and therefore to be available for interaction with cytoskeletal proteins.

Recent experimental evidence suggests that a significant fraction of the intracellular APP is located in vesicles (Van Nostrand et al., 1989; Catterucia et al., 1990; K. Sambamurti and N. K. Robakis, unpublished observations) and, in neurons, undergoes fast axonal transport (Koo et al., 1990). The microtubule network has been shown to play a major role in intracellular vesicular protein transport, including fast axonal transport (Grafein and Forman, 1980; Kelly, 1990). It is therefore plausible that intracellular APP is located in transport vesicles that are associated with the microtubule network, and in fact would link transport vesicles to microtubules.

The relative amount of the total APP bound to the cytoskeleton increases with increasing cell density *in vitro*. Increased contact among cells induces a number of cellular changes including development of cell polarity, reorganization of the cytoskeletal elements, synapse formation, and clustering of membrane proteins (Nelson and Lazarides, 1985). In addition, it has been shown that cell density may affect the stability of microtubules (Pepperkok et al., 1990). Therefore, the modulation of the cytoskeletal APP by cell density might be part of this reorganization and may suggest that APP plays a role in the cellular changes induced by cell density. Variations in the cytoskeletal association of APP may occur in the brain in response to changes in cell density, due to neuronal loss, that accompany the aging process.

Protein phosphorylation plays a major role in the regulation of cytoskeletal protein interactions including those of neurofilaments and microtubule-associated proteins (Vallee, 1980; Cianci et al., 1988; Husain-Chisti et al., 1988). In addition, protein kinase C has been implicated in the control of junctional complexes and on the anchoring of  $\alpha_6$ -integrin subunit to the cytoskeleton (Burn et al., 1988; Shaw et al., 1990). The dependence of the cytoskeletal association of APP on protein kinase C activity suggests that phosphorylation of APP itself (Oltersdorf et al., 1990) or of cytoskeletal protein(s) is required for the cytoskeletal anchoring of APP. Phosphorylation is believed to be the physiological mechanism regulating the interaction of other proteins to the cytoskeleton (Shaw et al., 1990) and may play a similar role for APP.

An important problem in understanding the pathophysiology of AD is the elucidation of the mechanisms that generate A $\beta$ P. This peptide, which has been shown to be neurotoxic in primary cell cultures (Yankner et al., 1990), may arise from the aberrant proteolysis of APP as a result of abnormal posttranslational modifications (Warren et al., 1987) or intracellular trafficking. The normal trafficking and posttranslational processing of APP may require its association with the microtubules. Disruption of this process may lead to aberrant proteolytic processing and the production of amyloidogenic fragments of APP. This suggestion is supported by recent data indicating that disruption of the microtubule network results in decreased rates of transport and altered proteolytic processing of several other proteins, including cathepsin D (Scheel et al., 1990). Recently, an amino acid change in the transmembrane region of APP has been shown to segregate with familial AD (Goate et al., 1991). It would be interesting to determine whether this mutation interferes with the cytoskeletal association of APP. Recent evidence suggests that protein phosphorylation modulates the proteolysis of APP (Buxbaum et al., 1990). Since protein phosphorylation also modulates the levels of cytoskeletally associated APP, it is tempting to speculate that cytoskeletally anchored APP may provide a unique substrate for proteolysis. Recent studies show

that, in AD brain, there is abnormal phosphorylation of cytoskeletal proteins, including tau, and low levels of protein kinase C (Grundke-Iqbal et al., 1986; Kosik et al., 1986; Cole et al., 1988; Bancher et al., 1989).

These observations raise the possibility that, in AD, abnormal protein phosphorylation alters the cytoskeletal association of APP and thereby triggers the events that lead to the production of A $\beta$ P. Whether or not this hypothesis proves true, our results present a novel conceptual framework in which to analyze the biological function and pathological degradation of APP.

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