

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Phox homology (PX) domain, a new player in phosphoinositide signalling

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Phosphoinositides are key regulators of diverse cellular processes. The pleckstrin homology (PH) domain mediates the action of PtdIns(3,4) P_2 , PtdIns(4,5) P_2 and PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 , while the FYVE domain relays the pulse of PtdIns3 P . The recent establishment that the Phox homology (PX) domain interacts with PtdIns3 P and other phosphoinositides suggests another mechanism by which phosphoinositides can regulate/integrate multiple cellular events via a spectrum of PX domain-containing proteins.

Together with the recent discovery that the epsin N-terminal homologue (ENTH) domain interacts with PtdIns(4,5) P_2 , it is becoming clear that phosphoinositides regulate diverse cellular events through interactions with several distinct structural motifs present in many different proteins.

Key words: endosomes, membranes, phosphoinositide-binding domains, protein traffic, signal transduction.

INTRODUCTION

Phosphoinositide (PI) metabolism

Cellular membranes, composed primarily of lipids and proteins, not only serve as structural manifolds that demarcate the cell from its extracellular milieu and compartmentalize its interior into discrete functional organelles but also participate in the regulation of many cellular processes. While the functions of a myriad of membrane proteins, such as signalling receptors and ion channels, have been well studied, it is increasingly recognized that the lipid constituents of the membrane are also involved in many regulatory events [1]. PI is a collective term for PtdIns and its phosphorylated derivatives (Figure 1) [2–6]. PtdIns contains a 1D-*myo*-inositol phosphate group linked to diacylglycerol. The D-*myo*-inositol head group of PtdIns contains five hydroxy groups (at positions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6), three of which (at positions 3, 4 and 5) are known to be targets of phosphorylation. These positions may be reversibly phosphorylated singly, doubly (in various combinations) or triply, yielding a myriad of PtdIns derivatives: PtdIns3 P , PtdIns4 P , PtdIns5 P , PtdIns(3,4) P_2 , PtdIns(3,5) P_2 , PtdIns(4,5) P_2 and PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 . Among the eight PI species known in eukaryotic cells, PtdIns is most abundant and its concentrations can be 10–20-fold higher than those of PtdIns4 P and PtdIns(4,5) P_2 , which are present at comparable levels. Among the singly phosphorylated PIs, PtdIns4 P is the most abundant (90–96%), while PtdIns3 P and PtdIns5 P each make up approx. 2–5%. PtdIns(4,5) P_2 is the most abundant (representing > 99%)

of the doubly phosphorylated PIs, while PtdIns(3,4) P_2 and PtdIns(3,5) P_2 exist at levels that are approx. 500-fold lower than that of PtdIns(4,5) P_2 . The cellular levels of triply phosphorylated PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 vary dramatically in response to both external and internal regulation and can be up-regulated to levels comparable with those of PtdIns(3,4) P_2 and PtdIns(3,5) P_2 . Generally, PtdIns(3,4) P_2 , PtdIns(4,5) P_2 and PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 are enriched in the plasma membrane [7–11], whereas PtdIns3 P is enriched in the endosomal compartments [12].

PIs are now known to regulate many biological processes, including cell proliferation, cell survival, differentiation, signal transduction, cytoskeleton organization and membrane trafficking [2,4–6,13,14]. The regulation of their activities and the mechanisms of their actions have therefore been the subject of much investigation. The activities of specific PIs are regulated by controlling their levels in the cell, which is achieved by intricate networks of proteins that control their synthesis, transport and degradation.

Lipid kinases

PI synthesis is regulated by PI kinases and phosphatidylinositol phosphate (PIP) kinases (PIPKs), and PI degradation is governed by lipid phosphatases, while their transport is mediated by PtdIns transfer proteins (PITPs). The hydroxy groups at positions 3, 4 and 5 on the inositol ring can be phosphorylated by the lipid kinases: PtdIns 3-kinases (PI3Ks), PtdIns 4-kinases (PI4Ks),

Abbreviations used: AP180, adaptor protein 180; ARF, ADP-ribosylation factor; ALK, activin-like receptor; ARNO, ARF nucleotide binding site opener; BTK, Bruton's tyrosine kinase; CALM, clathrin assembly lymphoid myeloid leukaemia protein; CISK, cytokine-independent survival kinase; CPY, carboxypeptidase Y; DPAP A, dipeptidyl aminopeptidase A; EEA1, early endosome autoantigen 1; EGF, epidermal growth factor; ENTH, epsin N-terminal homologue; FANCA, Fanconi anaemia protein A; GAP, GTPase-activating protein; GEF, guanine nucleotide exchange factor; GFP, green fluorescent protein; GRP1, general receptor for phosphoinositides-1; HIP, huntingtin interacting protein; Hrs, hepatocyte growth factor-regulated tyrosine kinase substrate; HS1, haemopoietic-specific protein 1; HS1BP3, HS1 SH3 domain binding protein; IL, interleukin; I-1 RCP, imidazole-1 receptor candidate protein; MAP, mitogen-activated protein; MDC protein, metalloprotease, disintegrin, cysteine-rich protein; MTM1, myotubularin; MTMR, myotubularin-related protein; PDGF, platelet-derived growth factor; PDK1, phosphoinositide-dependent kinase 1; PH, pleckstrin homology; PI, phosphoinositide; PI3Ks, PtdIns 3-kinases; PI4Ks, PtdIns 4-kinases; PI5Ks, PtdIns 5-kinases; PIP, phosphatidylinositol phosphate; PIPK, PIP kinase; PITPs, PtdIns transfer proteins; PKB, protein kinase B; PLC, phospholipase C; PLD, phospholipase D; PX, Phox homology; PXA, PX domain-associated; PXX, PX domain-containing protein kinase; SARA, Smad anchor for receptor activation; SM domain, SNX1–Mvp1p domain; SDPs, SM domain proteins; SH, Src homology; SHIP, SH2 domain-containing inositol 5-phosphatase; SKIP, skeletal muscle and kidney-enriched 5-inositol phosphatase; SNARE, soluble N-ethylmaleimide-sensitive fusion protein attachment protein receptor; SNX, sorting nexin; TGF, transforming growth factor; VHS, Vps27p/Hrs/Stam.

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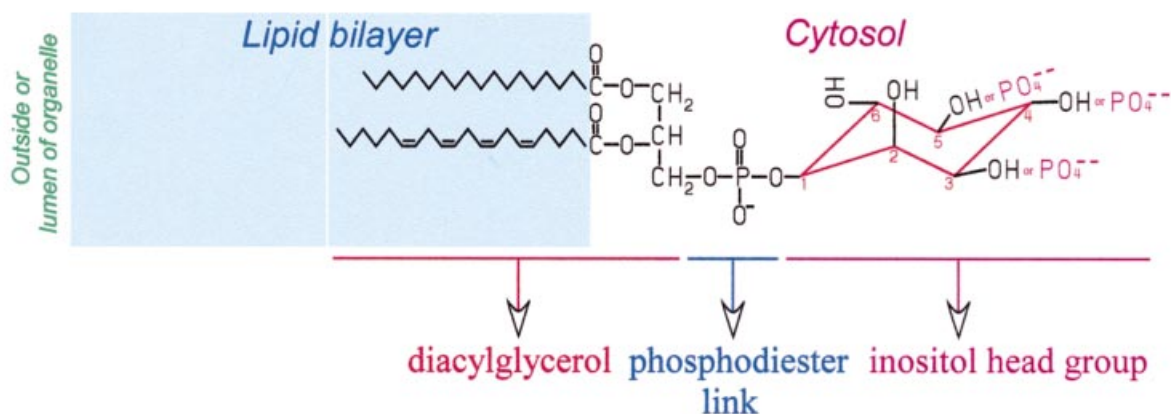


Figure 1 Chemical structure of PIs

As indicated, the hydroxy groups at positions 3, 4 and 5 of the inositol ring can be reversibly phosphorylated singly, doubly (in various combinations) or triply to give rise to various species of PIs.

Table 1 Summary of mammalian lipid kinases

| Lipid kinase | Isoforms | Number of residues | Regulatory subunits | Major substrates | Yeast homologues | GenBank® accession number |
|--------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| PI3K | | | | | | |
| Class IA | p110 α | 1068 | p85 α , p55 α | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ | | P42336 |
| | p110 β | 1070 | p50 α , p85 α/β | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ | | P42338 |
| | p110 δ | 1044 | p55 γ | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ | | O00329 |
| Class IB | p110 γ | 1101 | p85 α , p55 α | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ | | P48736 |
| Class II | PI3K-C2 α | 1686 | | PtdIns4P, PtdIns? | | NP_002636 |
| | PI3K-C2 β | 1634 | | PtdIns4P, PtdIns? | | O00750 |
| | PI3K-C2 γ | 1448 | | PtdIns4P, PtdIns? | | O75747 |
| Class III | Vps34 | 887 | p150/Vps15p | PtdIns | Vps34p | NP_002638 |
| PI4K | | | | | | |
| Class II | PI4KII α | 479 | | PtdIns | YJL100w | AJ303098 |
| | PI4KII β | 481 | | PtdIns | | AF411320 |
| Class III | PI4KII α | 2041 | | PtdIns | Stt4p | D83538 |
| | PI4KII β | 816 | Frequenin?/Frq1p | PtdIns | Pik1p | D84667 |
| PI5K | PIKfyve | 2052 | | PtdIns3P, PtdIns | Fab1p | NP_035216 |
| PIPK | | | | | | |
| Class I | PIP5K α | 549 | | PtdIns4P, PtdIns3P? | Mss4p | NP_003548 |
| | PIP5K β | 546 | | PtdIns4P, PtdIns3P? | | NP_032873 |
| | PIP5K γ | 661 | | PtdIns4P, PtdIns3P? | | AB006916 |
| Class II | PIP4K α | 406 | | PtdIns5P, PtdIns3P | | NP_005019 |
| | PIP4K β | 416 | | PtdIns5P, PtdIns3P | | NP_003550 |
| | PIP4K γ | 420 | | PtdIns5P, PtdIns3P | | AF030558 |

PtdIns 5-kinases (PI5Ks) and PIPKs (Table 1) [2,5,6]. Three classes of PI3Ks have been identified based on their primary structure, regulation and substrate specificity. Class I PI3Ks can produce PtdIns3P, PtdIns(3,4)P₂ and PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ and are regulated by receptor tyrosine kinases and G-protein-coupled receptors; class II PI3Ks can generate PtdIns3P and PtdIns(3,4)P₂ and contain Phox homology (PX) and C2 domains at their C-terminal regions; and class III PI3Ks phosphorylate mainly PtdIns to produce PtdIns3P. Class III PI3Ks are generally thought to be responsible for the generation of the majority of PtdIns3P. The yeast Vps34p is a class III PI3K and is essential for the trafficking of hydrolytic enzymes from the late Golgi to the vacuole [15]. In mammalian cells, class III PI3K (Vps34p

homologue) is likely to be involved in spatial regulation of target molecules, since it is specifically recruited on to or activated in the endosomes [16], and its activation depends on a 150 kDa (p150) adaptor that is homologous to yeast Vps15p [17]. Two classes (type II and type III) of PI4Ks have been molecularly described that use PtdIns as substrate to produce PtdIns4P. The recently cloned 55 kDa PI4KII α and PI4KII β (which are 56% identical) represent type II PI4Ks [18,19]. Type III PI4Ks are represented by the 230 kDa PI4K α , which is homologous to yeast Stt4p, and the 92 kDa PI4K β , which is homologous to yeast Pik1p [2]. PIKfyve/p235, the mammalian homologue of yeast Fab1p, is a known PI5K that may use PtdIns and PtdIns3P to produce PtdIns5P and PtdIns(3,5)P₂ respectively [5,20–23].

Table 2 Summary of mammalian lipid phosphatases

Among the MTMRs, the amino acid sequences in the catalytic domains of MTMR5/SBF1 (GenBank® accession number = AAC39675) and MTMR8 [203] are altered, suggesting that they do not have catalytic activities and are therefore not included. Although Inp51p/Sjl1p also contains a Sac1p-homologous domain, it is not functional, while those in Inp52p/Sjl52p and Inp53p/Sjl53p are functional. MTMR3 is also known as FYVE-DSP1, and MTMR4 is also known as FYVE-DSP2. PIP₃, PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃; PIPP, proline-rich inositol polyphosphates-phosphatase.

| Lipid phosphatase | Isoforms | Number of residues | Major substrates | Yeast homologues | GenBank® accession number |
|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 3-Phosphatases | PTEN | 403 | PtdIns3P, PtdIns(3,4)P ₂ , PtdIns(3,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | Tep1p | O00633 |
| | MTM1 | 603 | PtdIns3P | YJR110w | Q13496 |
| | MTMR1 | 662 | PtdIns3P | | Q13613 |
| | MTMR2 | 643 | PtdIns3P | | Q13614 |
| | MTMR3 | 1198 | PtdIns3P | | NP_066576 |
| | MTMR4 | 1195 | PtdIns3P | | NP_004678 |
| | MTMR6 | 661 | PtdIns3P | | AF406619 |
| | MTMR7 | Partial | PtdIns3P | | AF073482 |
| 4-Phosphatases | Sac1 | 587 | PtdIns3P, PtdIns4P, PtdIns(3,5)P ₂ | Sac1p, Fig4p | AF251186 |
| | Type I | 938 | PtdIns(3,4)P ₂ , PIP ₃ ? | | U26398 |
| | Type II | 924 | PtdIns(3,4)P ₂ , PIP ₃ ? | | U96922 |
| 5-Phosphatases | SKIP | 448 | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | Inp51p/Sjl1p, Inp54p | NP_057616 |
| | OCRL protein | 901 | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | | Q01968 |
| | 5-Phosphatase II | 1017 | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | | T42384 |
| | SHIP1 | 1190 | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | | U39203 |
| | SHIP2 | 1258 | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | | Y14385 |
| | Synaptojanin 1 | 1575 | PtdIns3P, PtdIns4P, PtdIns5P, PtdIns(3,5)P ₂ , PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | Inp52p/Sjl2p | 043426 |
| | Synaptojanin 2 | 1248 | PtdIns3P, PtdIns4P, PtdIns5P, PtdIns(3,5)P ₂ , PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | Inp53p/Sjl3p | 055207 |
| | Pharbin | 647 | PtdIns(3,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | | AF226683 |
| | PIPP | 1001 | PtdIns(4,5)P ₂ , PIP ₃ | | BAA90553 |

Finally, two classes of PIPKs are known: the 68 kDa PIP5K(α , β and γ) that uses PtdIns4P to generate PtdIns(4,5)P₂ and the 53 kDa PIP4K(α , β and γ) that phosphorylates PtdIns3P and PtdIns5P to produce PtdIns(3,4)P₂ and PtdIns(4,5)P₂. It is noted that some of these lipid kinases are regulated by small GTPases. Both PI4K β and PIP5K α have been shown to be recruited on to the Golgi and activated by ADP-ribosylation factor (ARF)1 [24,25], while the recruitment of PIP5K α on to the plasma membrane is mediated by ARF6 [26]. Rab5 has been shown to regulate recruitment of class I (p110 β -p85 α) and class III (Vps34-p150) PI3Ks on to clathrin-coated vesicles and early endosomes respectively [16].

Lipid phosphatases

Lipid phosphatases that remove phosphate groups at specific positions on the phosphorylated inositol head group are divided into three major categories based on their ability to hydrolyse 3-, 4-, or 5-phosphorylated PIs (Table 2) [6,27–29]. PtdIns 3- and 4-phosphatases are characterized by the CXXXXXR consensus motif in the catalytic domain, whereas type II PI 5-phosphatases contain two conserved motifs [WXGDXXR and PXW(C/T)DRXLW; where single-letter amino-acid notation has been used] that are located approx. 60 amino acids apart in the catalytic core region of approx. 300 residues. PI 3-phosphatases include the tumour suppressor PTEN, myotubularin (MTM1), myotubularin-related proteins (MTMR1, MTMR2, MTMR3, MTMR4, MTMR6, and MTMR7) and Sac1. Two types of PtdIns 4-phosphatases are known to down-regulate PtdIns(3,4)P₂. Type II PI 5-phosphatases that can catalyse the hydrolysis of PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ and possibly other 5'-PIs form a family of five subgroups: the skeletal muscle and kidney-enriched 5-inositol phosphatase (SKIP); GTPase-activating protein

(GAP)-containing inositol 5-phosphatases ('GIPs') which have two members (the OCRL protein and 5-phosphatase II); Src homology (SH)2 domain-containing inositol 5-phosphatases (SHIPs) which have two members (SHIP1 and SHIP2); Sac1p-containing inositol 5-phosphatases ('SCIPs'), which include synaptojanin 1 and synaptojanin 2; and proline-rich domain-containing inositol 5-phosphatases that include pharbin and PIPP (proline-rich inositol polyphosphates-phosphatase). In addition, multiple isoforms of each of the phosphatases exist to refine the regulatory process. For example, synaptojanin 2, a Sac1 homology domain-containing 5-phosphatase, has at least eight isoforms [30,31].

Other regulators

In addition to these enzymes that regulate PI metabolism, PIs are also substrates for other enzymes, such as phospholipase C (PLC) and PtdIns-directed phospholipase D (PLD) [32,33]. These proteins not only alter the levels of membrane PIs, but at the same time convert the PIs into soluble inositol polyphosphates and diacylglycerol that can act as second messengers. In addition, regulation of membrane trafficking and inositol lipid signalling also involves two closely related PtdIns/phosphatidylcholine transfer proteins (PITP α and PITP β) [34,35]. In yeast, the major PITP is represented by Sec14p which is important for trafficking from Golgi to the plasma membrane [36,37]. These proteins, as the name implies, have the ability to transfer specific phospholipids such as PtdIns and phosphatidylcholine between membrane compartments. PITPs may also facilitate the phosphorylation of PtdIns by presenting these lipids to appropriate lipid kinases. The synthesis of PtdIns3P, PtdIns4P, PtdIns(4,5)P₂ and PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ has been reported to be stimulated by the action

of PITPs. In addition, three other proteins (retinal degeneration B β , Nir2 and Nir3) also contain the PITP domain, but their physiological roles in PI metabolism remain to be established [38,39].

Physiological relevance of PI metabolism

Maintenance of the delicate balance of different types of PIs in the cell is central towards facilitating their roles as critical signals for diverse processes. The importance of the proper regulation of PI levels is highlighted by the presence of several abnormalities that are associated with mutations in the enzymes responsible for their metabolism. For example, human Lowe oculocerebrorenal syndrome is associated with mutations in the OCRL-1 gene [40]. Mutations in PTEN have been discovered in many tumours [28,41], while mutations in the MTM1 gene have been shown to cause the muscle disease X-linked myotubular myopathy [27]. Charcot-Marie-Tooth type 4B, an autosomal recessive demyelinating neuropathy with myelin outfoldings, is caused by mutations in the gene encoding MTMR2 [42]. Another example is the lethal neurodegenerative disease in the *vibrator* mice which results from reduced levels of PITP α [43,44]. The importance of PI turnover is also exemplified by synaptojanin 1 knockout mice which accumulated clathrin-coated vesicles [45].

KNOWN MECHANISMS OF PI-MEDIATED ACTIONS

Action of PIs

In addition to their roles as precursors for secondary messengers generated by PLC and PI-specific PLD, as well as local modulators of lipid compositions of membranes, the major underlying mechanism by which PIs regulate cellular processes is via their ability to serve as site-specific membrane signals to affect the intracellular localizations and/or biological properties of effector proteins (or protein complexes). An increasing number of PI-binding motifs with specific lipid binding specificities and affinities have been identified (Figure 2) [3,5,6,13,14,46,47], including the FYVE domain [48], the pleckstrin homology (PH) domain [49,50], the epsin N-terminal homologue (ENTH) domain [51,52] and the PX domain [53]. An interesting observation is that the PH domain can coexist with either the FYVE or the PX domain in the same protein, while the coexistence of the PX and the

FYVE domains has not been encountered. The ENTH domain has not been found to coexist with any of the other three domains and is always present at the extreme N-terminus. It will be of interest to investigate the relationship between PH and FYVE (or PX) domains in terms of spatial regulation and functional activities in proteins containing both domains. Other domains, such as C2 domains and some SH2 domains, have also been shown to interact with PIs [54,55].

The FYVE domain

The term FYVE domain is derived from the first letters of the four proteins first identified to contain it: Fab1p, YOTB, Vac1p and EEA1 [48]. The FYVE domain of human early endosome autoantigen 1 (EEA1) was first defined as a motif responsible for binding exclusively to PtdIns3P [56–59]. As a subclass of double zinc-finger domains, the FYVE domain is composed of 60–80 amino acids, including eight conserved cysteine residues (characteristic of the zinc-finger) and a cluster of basic residues surrounding the third and fourth cysteine residues: R(R/K)HHCRXCG (characteristic of the FYVE domain). These eight conserved cysteine residues co-ordinate binding of the FYVE domain with two zinc atoms. The FYVE domain is conserved throughout evolution, being present in yeast, worm, fly and mammals. More than 30 mammalian proteins containing the FYVE domain have been identified [13,60]. The interaction of some of these proteins, including mammalian EEA1, hepatocyte growth factor-regulated tyrosine kinase substrate (Hrs), Rabenosyn-5, endofin, Rabip4, and the yeast Vac1p/Pep7p, Vps27p, Fab1p and Pib1p, with PtdIns3P via the FYVE domain has been verified by *in vitro* binding studies [5,13,56,58,61–63]. Only the FYVE domain of endofin and yeast Pib1p is by itself sufficient for endosomal association [63,64], EEA1 and Hrs are targeted to the endosomes via the concerted action of the FYVE domain and/or Rab5-binding domain and coiled-coil domain respectively [65–67].

The structural basis for the FYVE domain to interact with PtdIns3P has been studied [68]. The crystal structure of the yeast Vps27p FYVE domain has been determined at 1.15 Å resolution (where 1 Å = 0.1 nm) [69]. Vps27p is the proposed yeast homologue of the mammalian Hrs. The Vps27p FYVE domain consists of a pair of double-stranded antiparallel β -sheets (β 1– β 2 and β 3– β 4) that are stabilized by the two tetrahedrally coordinated zinc ions followed by a C-terminal α -helix (see Figure 5). The characteristic cluster of basic residues is located on the β 1-strand and the following β -turn and, together with a conserved arginine residue in the β 4-strand, forms a defined basic pocket for interaction with the negatively charged 1,3-bisphospho-*myo*-inositol head group of PtdIns3P. The shallow groove that forms the PtdIns3P binding site is too small for PtdIns(4,5)P₂ or PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ and is incompatible with other PIs, such as PtdIns4P, thereby accounting for the binding specificity of the motif. In addition, hydrophobic residues preceding the first β -strand are predicted to form a hydrophobic loop for interaction with the membrane. The crystal structure of the *Drosophila* Hrs FYVE domain in tandem with the Vps27p/Hrs/Stam (VHS) domain at 2 Å resolution has also been defined and the FYVE domain has a structure similar to that of Vps27p. In addition, it suggests a homodimer model for PtdIns3P binding [70]. The solution structure of the PtdIns3P-bound FYVE domain of EEA1 has been defined by heteronuclear NMR analysis, which suggests a multistep binding mechanism [71,72]. The first event involves non-specific insertion of the hydrophobic loop (preceding the β 1-strand) into the lipid bilayer. This weak interaction with the membrane opens the binding site for PtdIns3P in the

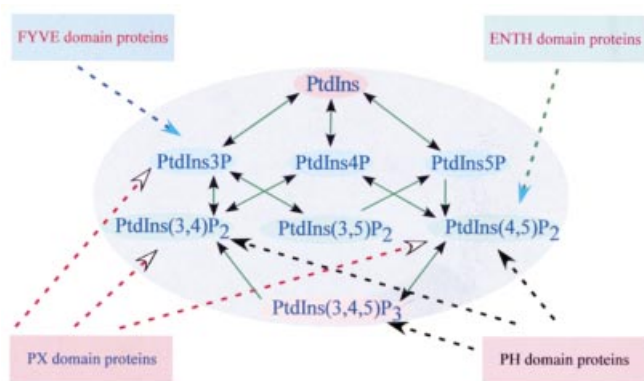


Figure 2 Summary of PI-interacting domains

The PI species that are targeted by the various PI-binding domains are indicated. The relationship between these PIs is indicated. Conversions between different PIs are catalysed by various lipid kinases (see Table 1) and phosphatases (see Table 2).

basic pocket, allowing specific interaction with PtdIns3P. Ligation of PtdIns3P then induces a global structural change, resulting in stable interaction with the PtdIns3P-enriched membrane.

Many FYVE domain proteins also contain other domains, such as protein kinase, lipid kinase, phosphatase, Smad-binding, C₂H₂ finger or VHS, PH, RUN (RPIP8, UNC-14 and NESCA) or Rho guanine nucleotide exchange factor (GEF) domains, suggesting that they may regulate diverse cellular processes in response to interaction with PtdIns3P [13,60]. The FYVE domain in this diverse array of proteins is thought to function as a membrane-targeting motif that specifically recognizes PtdIns3P so that proteins containing them are selectively recruited to the correct cellular compartment for activity and/or as a regulatory domain to control their functional activities. Many of the characterized FYVE domain proteins have been localized to early endosomes, suggesting that they may be involved in membrane traffic in the endocytic pathway. Indeed, several yeast FYVE proteins, including Vps27p, Vac1p and Fab1p, have been shown to regulate post-Golgi endosomal traffic [5,73], while EEA1 and Rabenosyn-5 have been shown to play roles in endosome fusion [62,65,74]. A recent study that investigated the distribution of two copies of the FYVE domain of Hrs tagged to a green fluorescent protein (GFP) reporter has revealed that this fusion protein is enriched in early endosomes and inner membrane folds of multivesicular bodies, supporting the hypothesis that the FYVE domain does indeed serve as a membrane-targeting module [12]. Other observations in support of this hypothesis include the establishment that the EEA1 FYVE domain is essential for its endosomal localization and the stabilization of its interaction with the small GTPase Rab5 [65]. Mutations of the EEA1 FYVE domain have been found to result in the mislocalization of the protein concomitant with a loss of function of the protein. The same finding has been reported for Smad anchor for receptor activation (SARA), which is involved in the transforming growth factor (TGF) β signalling pathway [75]. Endofin, a SARA-related protein, is associated with the early endosome via its FYVE domain-mediated interaction with PtdIns3P [63]. However, not all FYVE domain proteins are dependent on the FYVE domain for their association with the endosomal membranes, and not all FYVE domain proteins have obvious functions in membrane trafficking. Firstly, the FYVE domain of Hrs is inefficient at targeting the protein to the endosomes and tandem FYVE domains are required [12]. The FYVE domain of Hrs has in fact been shown in one study not to be the motif responsible for the intracellular distribution of the protein. Instead, the 100 amino acid residues at the C-terminus of Hrs are responsible for determining its subcellular localization [76]. The FYVE domain of Rabip4 is neither necessary nor sufficient for endosomal targeting; the endosomal targeting of Rabip4 is mediated instead by its RUN domain [61]. Similarly, Vps27p is not dependent on the FYVE domain for its membrane association even though an intact FYVE domain is required for its function [77]. Fgd1, a GEF for Rho family members whose mutations are associated with the inherited disease faciogenital dysplasia, also appears to be independent of the FYVE domain for its localization [78]. In addition, this protein is not localized in endosomes but in the plasma membrane and the Golgi complex. Frabin (Fgd1-related F-actin-binding protein) is not localized in endosomes but co-localizes with F-actin beneath the plasma membrane [79]. Other FYVE domain proteins that are not restricted to endosomes include double FYVE-containing protein 1 ('DFCP1'), which is found in cytoplasmic vesicles, the endoplasmic reticulum and the Golgi apparatus [80], and PIKfyve, which co-localizes mainly with the Golgi apparatus and late endosomes [81]. A protein with two tandem FYVE domains

(i.e. TAF1, for Tandem FYVE Fingers-1) has recently been shown to localize to the Golgi in a manner that is independent of either of its two FYVE domains [82]. Instead of a targeting role, it seems that the FYVE domains in these cases may execute a regulatory role on the functional activities of these proteins, possibly via conformational changes or protein-protein interactions upon their interaction with PtdIns3P.

The PH domain

The PH domain was first identified as a region of sequence homology of approx. 100–120 amino acid residues that is duplicated in the platelet protein kinase C substrate pleckstrin [49,50]. It was later found to be present in a multitude of proteins involved in diverse processes, including cellular signalling [in protein kinases, such as protein kinase B (PKB)/Akt, phosphoinositide-dependent kinase 1 (PDK1), and Bruton's tyrosine kinase (BTK)], cytoskeletal organization [in spectrin and α -actinin], and membrane trafficking [in GEFs such as Vav, ARF nucleotide binding site opener (ARNO), general receptor for phosphoinositides-1 (GRP1)/cytohesin-1] and in GTPases (such as dynamin) [6,14,49,50]. The PH domain has been shown to be a binding motif for PIs. This is reflected by the need of many PH domain-containing proteins for membrane association in order to function. The PH domain is composed of approx. 100–120 residues, but there is limited sequence similarity between PH domains of different molecules. They are defined instead by a conserved tertiary structure. The alignment of multiple sequences from PH domains has been used to identify features common among PH domains. These include seven blocks of sequences that correspond to secondary structural elements, a similar distribution of charged and hydrophobic residues and five highly conserved residues [83].

In contrast with FYVE domains, PH domains show a broad range of PI-binding specificities [4,84]. Four major groups of PH domains have been classified [85,86]. The group I PH domains have high affinity for PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ and are present in BTK, Ras GAP1 and GRP1. The PH domain of BTK binds to PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ with high affinity [87], and this interaction serves both to target the protein to the plasma membrane as well as to activate the kinase activity [88]. As an ARF6GEF, GRP1 binds preferentially to PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ through its PH domain. PH domains of group II have preferential affinities for PtdIns(4,5)P₂, and are represented by PLC δ . Group III PH domains, as represented by those in PKB/Akt, PDK1 and dual adaptor for phosphotyrosine and 3'-phosphoinositides ('DAPP1') [89], bind to both PtdIns(3,4)P₂ and PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃. GRP1 homologues, such as ARNO and cytohesin-1, also contain PH domains that bind PtdIns(3,4)P₂ and/or PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ *in vitro* [90,91]. The fourth group of PH domains, represented by that of dynamin, have low affinity for PIs. In addition, a recent report has identified other novel PH domains with specificities for PtdIns(3,4)P₂ (TAPP1 and TAPP2, for tandem PH-domain-containing protein 1 and 2 respectively), PtdIns4P (FAPP1, for phosphoinositol-four-phosphate adaptor protein 1), PtdIns3P (PEPP1, for phosphoinositol-three-phosphate-binding PH-domain protein 1), and PtdIns(3,5)P₂ (Centaurin- β 2) through *in vitro* binding assays [84].

The three-dimensional structures of at least eight PH domains have been determined by X-ray and/or NMR methods [14]. Studies of the PH domains of β -spectrin, pleckstrin-1, dynamin-1, PLC δ , BTK and others have revealed that the three-dimensional structures of PH domains are highly conserved. The PH domain folds into a core consisting of seven β -strands that form two sandwiched β -sheets (β 1– β 4 and β 5– β 7) followed by a C-terminal

α -helix. The phospholipid binding surface is usually formed by conserved residues in the β 1- and β 2-strands and the intervening loop (the β 1– β 2 loop). The basic residues in the β 1- and β 2-strands and the β 1– β 2 loop, conserved in groups I, II and III but not group IV PH domains, play a key role in interaction with PIs. In fact, a motif termed putative PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 binding motif ('PPBM') has been mapped to the β 1- and β 2-strands and the β 1– β 2 loop and consists of Lys-Xaa-Sma-Xaa_{6–11}-Arg/Lys-Xaa-Arg-Hyd-Hyd (where Xaa is any amino acid, Sma is an amino acid with a small side-chain, and Hyd is a hydrophobic amino acid) [92]. Furthermore, group I PH domains contain a relatively larger loop with more basic residues linking the β 1- and β 2-strands. The loops linking other β -strands are likely to be involved in PI interaction. The loops connecting β -strands are highly variable in length and sequence, thereby accounting for diverse specificities and affinities for PI binding by the different PH domains. For example, structural studies of the recognition of PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 by the PH domain of GRP1 reveal that this specificity is also conferred by two additional β -strands inserted between β 6 and β 7 of the PH domain [93,94].

Several mechanisms by which the association of PH domains with PIs influences cellular activities have been proposed [6,14,46]. Firstly, the PH domains are proposed to be important for the recruitment of proteins to cellular membranes. The PH domain in PDK1 is thought to be important in co-localizing it with PKB/Akt at the plasma membrane for the phosphorylation and full activation of PKB/Akt [95]. For BTK, a protein involved in the B-cell maturation pathway, the PH domain is found to be important in targeting the protein to the plasma membrane for its activating phosphorylations [96,97]. The importance of PI binding for BTK function is reflected by the association of mutations in the BTK PH domain, which result in impaired binding to PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 , with the inherited B-cell defect X-linked agammaglobulinaemia in humans and a similar X-linked immunodeficiency in mice [3,98,99]. The PH domain of GRP1 is important for its targeting to membrane ruffles where ARF6 is enriched [100]. The PH domain of ARNO, when expressed as a fusion protein with GFP, has been shown to mediate translocation to the plasma membrane upon stimulation, supporting a role for membrane targeting via the PH domain in this protein [101]. In addition, the PH domain has also been proposed to have a direct stimulatory action on protein activity upon association with PIs [88]. Experiments performed on PKB/Akt have led to the suggestion that PI binding and membrane recruitment can induce a conformational change in the protein so that it may be phosphorylated by PDK1 [102,103]. The PH domain in GEFs, such as Vav, is also suggested to be involved in stimulating GEF activity via association with PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 [104].

The ENTH domain

The ENTH domain was identified as a region of approx. 140 residues conserved in several proteins involved in endocytosis and/or cytoskeletal organization, such as epsin 1, epsin 2, epsin 3, adaptor protein 180 (AP180), clathrin assembly lymphoid myeloid leukaemia protein (CALM) and the yeast Sla2p, Ent1p, Ent2p, Ent3p, Ent4p, yAP180A and yAP180B [51,52]. The ENTH domain is usually located at the N-terminus. Recently, it was established that the ENTH domain of epsin, AP180 and CALM interacts selectively with PtdIns(4,5) P_2 [105,106], suggesting that one of the roles of PtdIns(4,5) P_2 in endocytosis [107–109] is to function as docking sites for ENTH domain-containing proteins. The tertiary structures of the ENTH domains of epsin [110] and CALM [105] have been resolved. The

epsin ENTH domain consists of eight α -helices while that of CALM consist of ten α -helices, the first seven of which superimpose on those of epsin. The PtdIns(4,5) P_2 binding site on CALM is a surface-positive patch with the phosphates of PtdIns(4,5) P_2 perched on the tips of the side chains of three lysine residues (Lys²⁸, Lys³⁸ and Lys⁴⁰) and one histidine residue (His⁴¹), and is present in the α 1- and α 2-helices and the loop in-between these two helices. This KX₉KX(K/R)(H/Y) binding motif is present in other members of the AP180 family but not in epsins, suggesting that epsins have a different binding structure. Indeed, the binding site for PtdIns(4,5) P_2 in epsins has been mapped to Arg⁸, Arg⁶³, Lys⁷⁶ and possibly His⁷³. Arg⁸ is present in the non-structured region preceding the first α -helix, Arg⁶³ is located in the α 3-helix, and His⁷³ and Lys⁷⁶ are located in the α 4-helix. Huntingtin interacting protein (HIP)1 was identified by its ability to interact with huntingtin [111], the product of the Huntington disease gene [112], while HIP1R is a widely expressed protein related to HIP1 [113–115]. Interestingly, both HIP1 and HIP1R contain N-terminal ENTH domains harbouring the K(X)₉KX(K/R)(H/Y) PtdIns(4,5) P_2 motif and are structurally homologous to Sla2p, which is involved in the actin cytoskeleton and endocytosis in yeast [116], suggesting that the interaction of HIP1 and HIP1R with PtdIns(4,5) P_2 may provide spatial/functional regulation of huntingtin. In addition, it suggests that HIP1, HIP1R and possibly huntingtin itself may also co-ordinate cytoskeletal organization in relation to endocytosis [114].

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PX DOMAIN

The PX domain averaging 100–120 amino acids was first identified through analysis of two of the cytosolic components of the NADPH oxidase, p47^{phox} and p40^{phox} [53]. These two proteins show significant sequence identity in the first ~120 residues at their N-terminal regions. Database searches with this region revealed a spectrum of other proteins also containing this conserved domain. Due to the presence of a polyproline motif (PXXP) in the middle of the PX domain that is characteristic of SH3 domain binding motifs, it was speculated that some PX domains may be interacting partners of SH3 domain proteins.

Our interest in the PX domain began with the report on the identification of sorting nexin (SNX)1, a protein that binds the lysosomal targeting signal of the epidermal growth factor (EGF) receptor and enhances its degradation [117]. A search of databases with the SNX1 sequence revealed a region of 83 amino acids showing approx. 30% identity with Mvp1p, a suppressor of Vps1 mutants deficient in trafficking of carboxypeptidase Y (CPY) to the vacuole. The region shared by SNX1 and Mvp1p [which we termed the SNX1–Mvp1p domain (SM domain)] was suggested to be a membrane-targeting domain responsible for interaction with other proteins. Using the SM domain to search both the expressed sequence tag and protein databases, we have uncovered approx. 16 novel proteins or SM domain proteins (SDPs), including SDP1 (SNX9), SDP3 (SNX3), SDP7 (SNX16) and SDP8 (SNX12). At about the same time, several groups reported the identification of SNX2–SNX15 [118–122]. Our recent database searches have revealed an additional 12 members (SNX18–SNX29) of the sorting nexin family (Figures 3 and 4).

THE PX DOMAIN EXISTS IN DIVERSE PROTEINS

Although present in a diverse range of proteins, the PX domain-containing proteins can be loosely divided into three subclasses (Figure 3). Within the first category are small proteins in which the PX domain itself represents more than half of the polypeptide and these include SNX3, SNX10, SNX12, SNX22, SNX23,

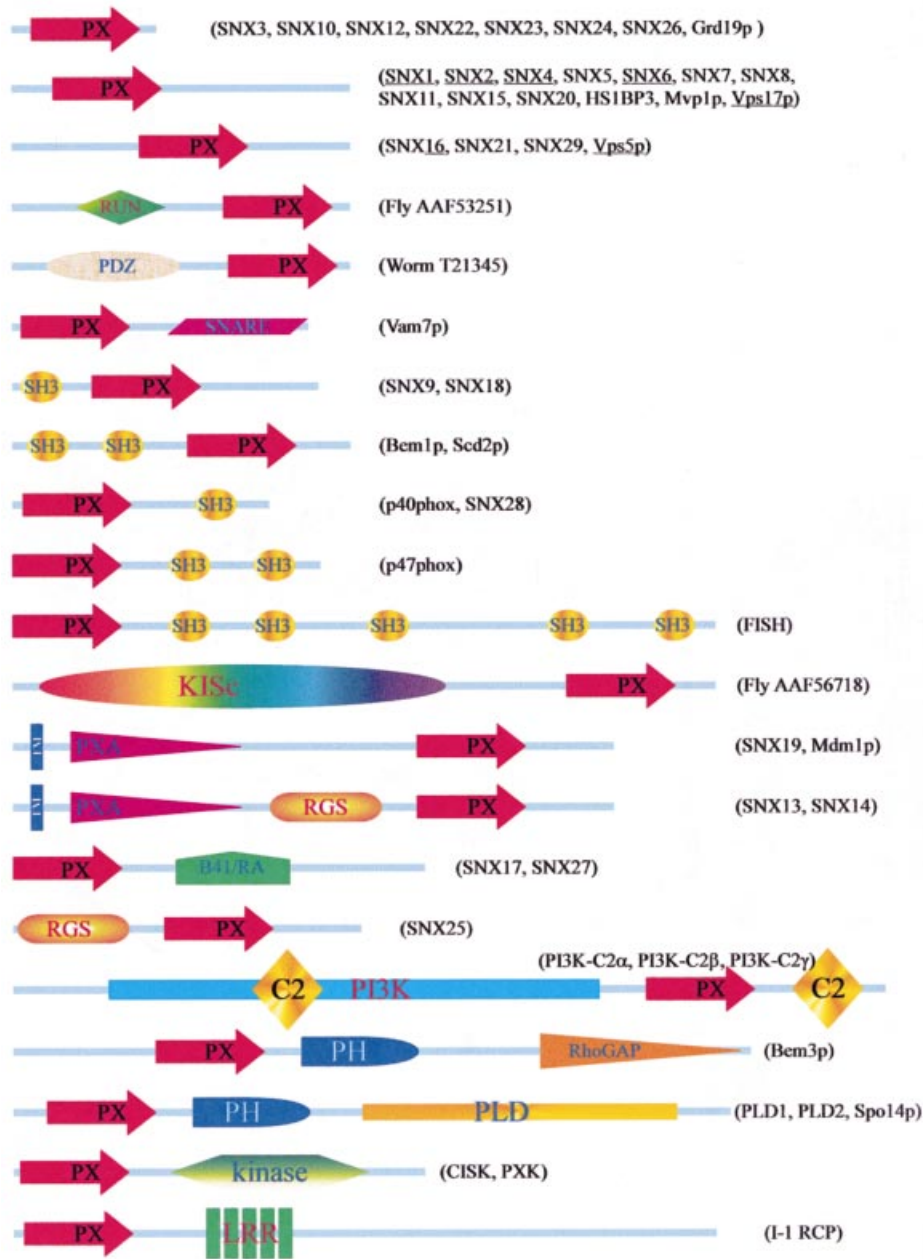


Figure 3 Summary of diverse PX domain-containing proteins

The schematic frameworks of various PX domain-containing proteins are indicated. The proteins of subclass II (see the text) that are predicted to contain coiled-coil regions are underlined.

SNX24, SNX26 and yeast Grd19p. Proteins in the second subclass contain longer flanking sequences but lack other known motifs and include SNX1, SNX2, SNX4, SNX5, SNX6, SNX7, SNX8, SNX11, SNX15, SNX16, SNX20, SNX21, SNX29, haemopoietic-specific protein 1 (HS1) SH3 domain binding protein (HS1BP3) and yeast Vps5p, Vps17p and Mvp1p. The flanking sequences of some of the subclass II proteins are predicted to form coiled-coil structures (such as SNX1, SNX2, SNX4, SNX6, SNX16, Vps5p and Vps17p). In addition to the presence of a single copy of the PX domain, proteins in the third category contain other characterized domains, such as the SH3 domain (SNX9/SH3PX1, SNX18, SNX28, p40^{phox}, p47^{phox},

FISH, Bem1p and Scd2p), the PI3K domain (PI3K-C2 α , PI3K-C2 β , and PI3K-C2 γ), both the PH and PLD domains (PLD1, PLD2 and yeast Spo14p), the protein kinase domain [cytokine-independent survival kinase (CISK) and PX domain-containing protein kinase (PXX)], the soluble *N*-ethylmaleimide-sensitive fusion protein attachment protein receptor (SNARE) domain (Vam7p), the regulator of G-protein signalling (RGS) domain (SNX25), both the PX domain-associated (PXA) and transmembrane domains (SNX19 and Mdm1p), the transmembrane, PXA and RGS domains (SNX13 and SNX14), the B41 domain (SNX17 and SNX27), both the PH and RhoGAP domains (Bem3p), Leu-rich repeats [imidazoline-1 receptor

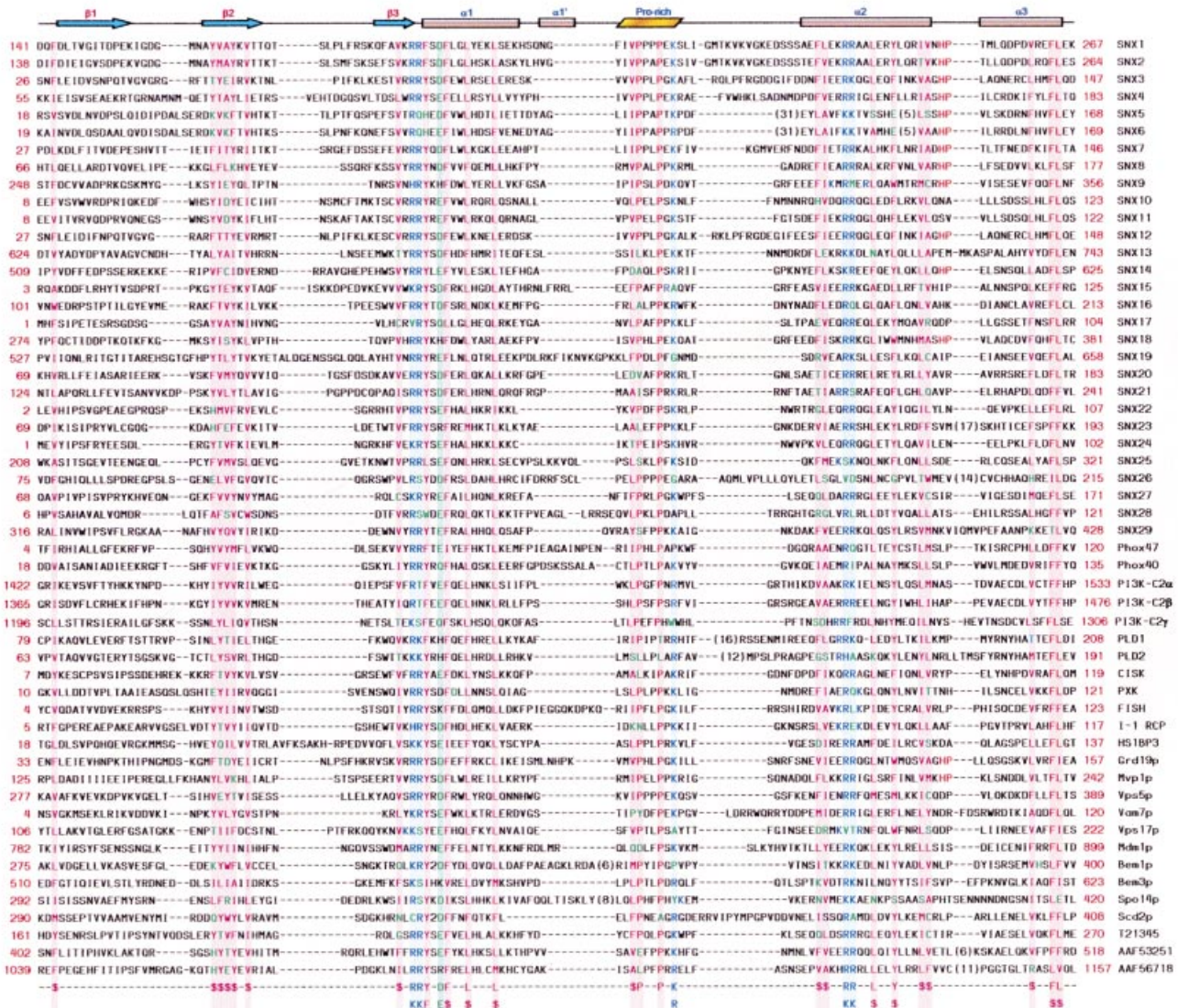


Figure 4 Alignment of amino acid sequences of various PX domains

The amino acid sequences of the PX domains of various proteins are aligned. The name of each protein is indicated on the right. The secondary structure of the PX domains is indicated on the top. Conserved hydrophobic residues are shown in pink, while conserved basic residues are shown in blue. Highly conserved residues (FL) are shown in red. The accession number is shown at the bottom, in which \$ stands for hydrophobic residues. The numbers located in-between residues indicate the numbers of residues not shown. The GenBank® accession numbers are as follows: SNX1, Q13596; SNX2, O60749; SNX3, O60493; SNX4, O95219; SNX5, AF121855; SNX6, AF121856; SNX7, AF121857; SNX8, AF121858; SNX9, AF121859; SNX10, AF121860; SNX11, AF121861; SNX12, AF171229; SNX13, AB018256; SNX14, AY044865; SNX15, Q9NRS6; SNX16, P57768; SNX17, Q15036; SNX18, AAK82415; SNX19, AF395843; SNX20, AF395844; SNX21, AF395845; SNX22, AY044653; SNX23, AY044654; SNX24, AY044655; SNX25, AY044656; SNX26, AY044864; SNX27, AY044866; SNX28, AF399754; SNX29, AF399755; Phox47, XP_016956; Phox40, Q15080; P13K-C2 α , NP_002636; P13K-C2 β , O00750; P13K-C2 γ , O75747; PLD1, Q13393; PLD2, AF035483; CISK, AAG34115; PXX, AF399753; FISH, NP_032044; I-1 RCP, AAC33104; HS1BP3, NP_067404; Grd19p, Q08826; Mvplp, AAG67884; Vps5p, Q92331; Vam7p, P32912; Vps17p, S60994; Mdm1p, NP_013603; Bem1p, P29366; Bem3p, P32873; Spo14p, S38103; Scd2p, P40996; *Caenorhabditis elegans* T21345; Fly AAF53251; and Fly AAF56718.

candidate protein (I-1 RCP)], the RUN domain (fly AAF53251), the PDZ domain (worm T21345), and the kinesin domain (fly AAF56717). The multidomain proteins may exhibit the most diverse range of functions.

THE PX DOMAIN AS A NOVEL MOTIF FOR INTERACTION WITH PIs

Despite its identification 5 years ago and its presence in many proteins implicated in diverse biological processes, the physio-

logical function of the PX domain was only revealed by several independent studies published recently [123–128]. During our biochemical and cell biological characterization of SNX3, we found that it is enriched in the early endosome and intermediates involved in transport from the early to the recycling endosome. The observation that its endosomal association was abolished by treatment with wortmannin, an inhibitor of PI3Ks [6,129], suggests that its endosomal targeting is dependent on the continuous generation of 3'-PIs. This observation prompted us to investigate the molecular mechanism underlying this 3'-PI-dependent endosomal association of SNX3. Our studies revealed

that the PX domain of SNX3 is capable of directly interacting with PtdIns3P but not other PIs. Furthermore, SNX7 and SNX16 were similarly shown to interact preferentially with PtdIns3P. In addition, we observed that overexpression of SNX3 causes a clustering of endosomal compartments (early endosomes marked by EEA1, recycling endosomes marked by transferrin receptor, and late endosomes marked by syntaxin 7). Importantly, this endosomal clustering effect of SNX3 was abolished by mutations in the PX domain that prevented its endosomal targeting. These observations suggest that the PX domain of SNXs and other proteins functions as a novel motif for direct interaction with PtdIns3P for membrane targeting and/or regulation of functional activities [127].

SNAREs are a superfamily of proteins involved in late stages of vesicle docking and fusion. Yeast Vam7p is a 25 kDa synaptosome-associated protein ('SNAP-25')-like SNARE involved in docking and fusion at the vacuoles. One unique property of Vam7p that is not shared by other known SNAREs is the presence of a PX domain in its N-terminal portion, and previous studies have shown that its PX domain is important for its function [130]. In a recent study, it was shown that endosomal/vacuolar association of Vam7p is dependent on continuous production of PtdIns3P, because inactivation of Vps34p (the major PI3K in yeast) results in redistribution of Vam7p to the cytosol [123]. A direct interaction between PtdIns3P and the PX domain of Vam7p was also established. This study suggests that the PX domain of Vam7p mediates its targeting to the vacuolar membrane via selective interaction with PtdIns3P.

The concept that the PX domain is a PI-binding module was independently shown by two other studies investigating the mechanisms of action of two components (p40^{phox} and p47^{phox}) of the NADPH oxidase complex, a key defensive component of neutrophils [124,125]. It was revealed that the PX domains of p40^{phox} and p47^{phox} interact specifically with PtdIns3P and PtdIns(3,4)P₂ respectively. In another study, the PX domain of class II PI3K was shown to interact specifically with PtdIns(4,5)P₂ [126]. The PX domain of CISK was independently shown to bind PtdIns(3,5)P₂, PtdIns(3,4,5)P₃ and, to a lesser extent, PtdIns(4,5)P₂ [128]. These six independent studies firmly establish that the PX domain is a structural motif that interacts with PtdIns3P, PtdIns(3,4)P₂ and PtdIns(4,5)P₂, and possibly other PIs. The diverse PX domain-containing proteins are thus potential effectors of various PIs and a novel mechanism for PIs to regulate various cellular events has been uncovered.

STRUCTURAL BASIS FOR PX DOMAIN-MEDIATED INTERACTION WITH PIS

As seen from the alignment of the amino acid sequences of the majority of the known mammalian PX domain proteins and selected PX domain proteins from other species (Figure 4), the PX domain consists of several subdomains with conserved hydrophobic residues in which several (at least five) conserved basic residues are distributed. The solution structure of the PX domain of p47^{phox} has recently been resolved to adopt a novel fold [131]. The secondary structure and the structural basis for the PX domain of Vam7p to interact with PtdIns3P and the lipid bilayer have also been investigated by NMR spectroscopy. The PX domain is generally organized into a flat and compact shape consisting of three β -strands followed by three α -helices (Figure 5). The three β -strands form an antiparallel β -sheet. There is another α -helix (tentatively referred to as $\alpha 1'$ here) downstream of $\alpha 1$ -helix in some proteins (such as p47^{phox}) but not others (such as Vam7p and SNX3). Two of the five basic residues of the PX domain are present in the most conserved

RR(F/Y)(S)(D/E)F motif located in the $\beta 3$ - $\alpha 1$ region. The other two conserved basic residues are located in the $\alpha 2$ -helix. The conserved basic residues [particularly those in the RR(F/Y)(S)(D/E)F motif] are predicted to form a basic binding pocket for interaction with the negatively charged phosphate groups of PIs. Located in-between the $\alpha 1$ -helix (or $\alpha 1'$ -helix) and the $\alpha 2$ -helix is a conserved proline-rich motif (Hyd-Pro-p-Hyd/p-Pro-Xaa-Bas; where Hyd is a hydrophobic residue and Bas is a basic residue). This represents a conserved SH3 domain-binding motif. The hydrophobic loop between the proline-rich motif and the $\alpha 2$ -helix is implicated in interactions with the membrane. Thus the membrane targeting of the PX domain not only relies on the direct specific interaction of the basic pocket with the head group of PtdIns3P but also on non-specific hydrophobic interaction of the hydrophobic loop (in-between the proline-rich motif and the $\alpha 2$ -helix) with the membrane.

The NMR structural studies of PX domains have been complemented by site-directed mutagenesis studies. The most conserved motif in the PX domain, RR(F/Y)S(D/E)F, was found to be very sensitive to mutations. Point mutations within this region in most PX domains, including those in Vam7p, SNX3, p40^{phox} and p47^{phox}, were found to significantly reduce/abolish the interaction with PIs and membrane targeting [123–125,127]. Mutations of other basic residues have also been shown to affect PI binding.

The existence of a proline-rich motif within most PX domains is an interesting feature, because the proline-rich motif might potentially mediate interaction with SH3 domains or other related domains. In the resolved structure of the PX domain of human p47^{phox}, the proline-rich motif is positioned on the surface of the compact structure and is readily exposed for interaction with other proteins. In fact, the PX domain of p47^{phox} has been shown to interact selectively with the second, but not the first, SH3 domain in its C-terminal region [131]. Moreover, a PX-domain-containing protein (HS1BP3) has been identified by virtue of its interaction with the SH3 domain of HS1 [132]. Whether this interaction is mediated by the proline-rich motif in the PX domain remains to be determined.

DIVERSE FUNCTIONS OF PX DOMAIN-CONTAINING PROTEINS

Since the PX domain is present in diverse proteins involved in many different biological processes, it is reasonable to speculate that PIs may regulate (spatially, temporally and/or functionally) these events via interaction with the PX domains in these proteins (Figure 6). In addition to events that are described in more detail (see below), it has also been shown recently that SNX5 may interact with Fanconi anaemia protein A (FANCA) via a region downstream of the PX domain [119]. It thus seems possible that SNX5 may regulate the distribution and/or functional activity of FANCA and other proteins belonging to the eight complementation groups involved in Fanconi anaemia, because FANCA has been shown to exist in a complex with Fanconi anaemia proteins C, G and F [133]. I-1 RCP is a PX domain protein that was identified using antisera directed against candidate receptor proteins to screen a cDNA library, and could be a functional component of the imidazoline-1 receptor [134]. Additionally, SNX2 has recently been shown to interact with human formin-binding protein 17 ('FBP17'), which contains a C-terminal SH3 domain and an N-terminal CDC15 ('cell division cycle 15') homologous domain [135].

Membrane traffic

The discovery that the FYVE domain is a PtdIns3P-binding module has attributed the role of PI3Ks in traffic to FYVE

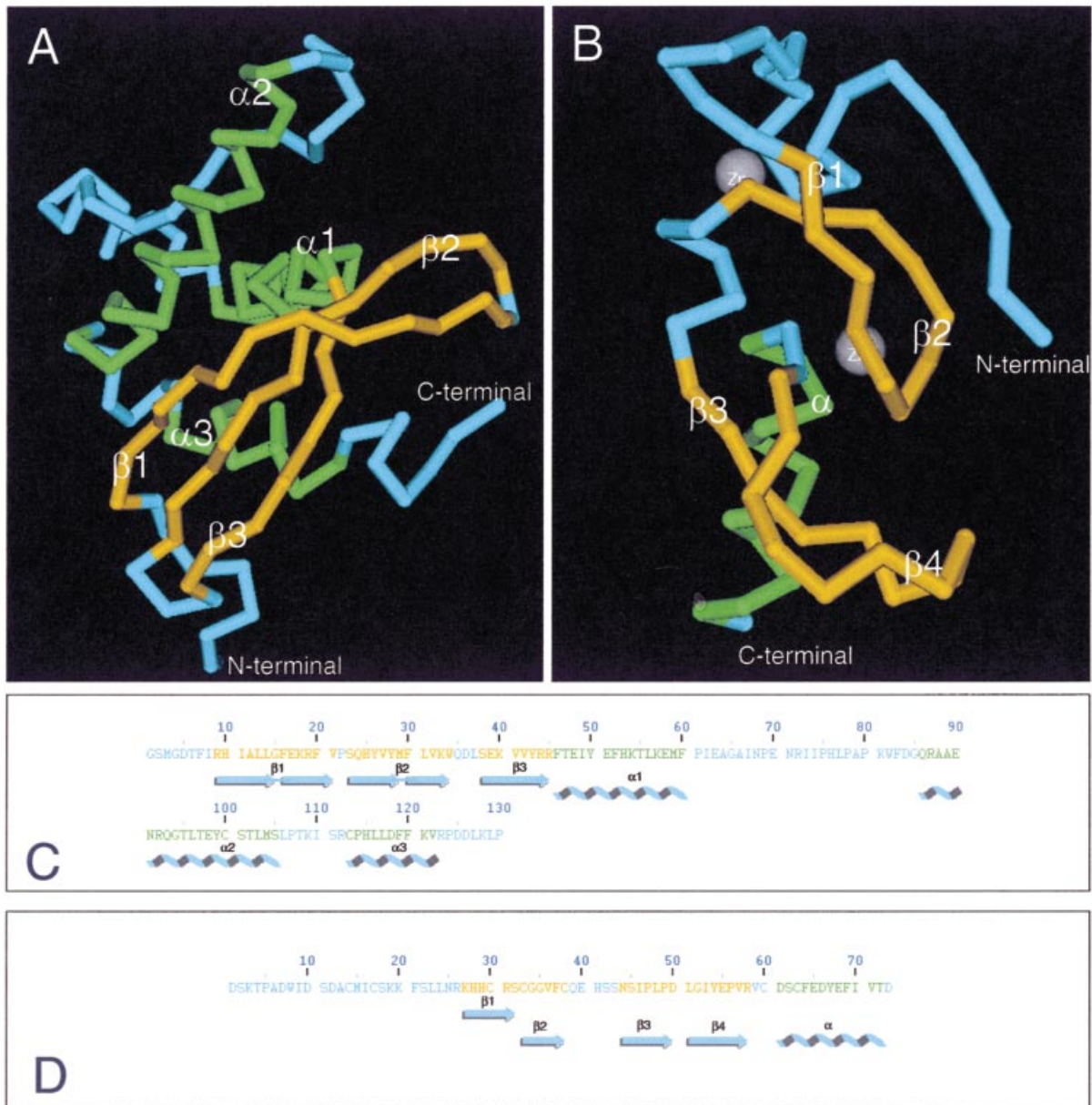


Figure 5 Secondary and tertiary structures of the PX domain of p47^{phox} and the FYVE domain of Vps27p

The secondary and tertiary structures of the PX domain of p47^{phox} (Molecular Modelling Database Id, 16715; Protein Data Bank Id, 1GD5) and the FYVE domain of Vps27p (Molecular Modelling Database Id, 10336; Protein Data Bank Id, 1VFY) are retrieved from the National Center for Biotechnology and Information structure at <http://www3.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Entrez/> and viewed using the Cn3D 3.0 program (with the Style setting at Neighbor). **(A)** Tertiary structure of the PX domain of p47^{phox}. **(B)** Tertiary structure of the FYVE domain of Vps27p. **(C)** Secondary structure of the PX domain of p47^{phox}. **(D)** Secondary structure of the FYVE domain of Vps27p. Dark yellow and green represent regions adopting β -strands and α -helices respectively, while the connecting regions are shown in light blue. As shown, the PX domain consists of three β -strands followed by three α -helices, whereas the FYVE domain consists of four β -strands followed by an α -helix. As discussed in the text, the PH domain consists mainly of seven β -strands followed by an α -helix, whereas the ENTH domain is mostly composed of 7–10 α -helices that form a solenoid structure. In all cases, the PI binding sites are mainly composed of positively charged residues that interact with the phosphate groups of PIs.

domain proteins [5,13,57,60]. Most of the FYVE proteins identified so far act at the docking and fusion stages of membrane transport. For example, EEA1, the prototypical FYVE domain protein, functions as a tethering molecule to regulate endosomal docking and fusion [136]. Hrs and yeast Vac1p and Vps27p have also been shown to interact with the SNARE machinery to mediate membrane docking and fusion [73,137,138]. On the other hand, PI3Ks have also been shown to play a role in cargo sorting and vesicle formation, suggesting that there are other

PtdIns3P effectors in addition to the FYVE proteins [139,140]. The identification of the PX domain as another module for interaction with PIs suggests that some of these PX domain-containing proteins, such as the SNXs, may meet this requirement to function as adaptors and/or cargo sorters.

Several PX domain-containing proteins (such as Mvp1p, Grd19p, Vps5p/Grd2p and Vps17p) in yeast have been characterized to function in protein traffic. The late Golgi compartment of yeast is involved in traffic to both the surface and to the

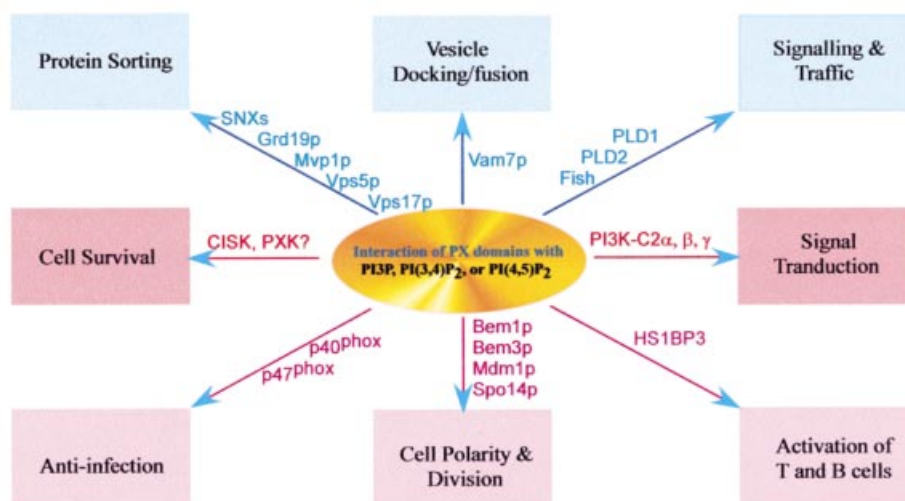


Figure 6 Diverse cellular functions regulated by interactions of PIs with PX domain-containing proteins

vacuole via endosomes. It contains several integral membrane proteins [dipeptidyl aminopeptidase A (DPAP A), Kex2p, Kex1p and Vps10] whose Golgi retention depends on continuous retrieval from endosomes to the Golgi. The *Mvp1* gene was isolated as a multicopy suppressor of dominant-negative *vps1* mutations [141]. Both Vps1p (a dynamin-like GTPase) [142,143] and Mvp1p are involved in sorting proteins in the late Golgi for delivery to the vacuole. Since Mvp1p co-localizes with Vps1p in the Class E endocytic compartment of Vps27 mutant cells, they could also participate in sorting events in endosomes for proteins destined for the vacuoles and/or proteins destined for retrieval back to the late Golgi. Grd19p was identified from mutants which show defective retrieval of a chimaeric protein (A-ALP, which consists of the cytoplasmic domain of DPAP A fused to the transmembrane and luminal domains of alkaline phosphatase) that behaves like DPAP A [144]. Grd19p consists essentially of a PX domain. Similar to Mvp1p and Vps1p, Grd19p is also localized to the Class E compartment and is suggested to be a component of the retrieval machinery by direct interaction with certain late Golgi proteins, such as DPAP A, at pre-vacuolar endosomal structures [144]. Grd19p is also important for retrieval of Kex2p, but not Vps10p, and therefore does not play a role in sorting soluble enzymes to the vacuole. Vps17p, identified using mutants where 95% CPY was secreted [145], is found in a membrane fraction that also contains Vps5p/Grd2p, a homologue of human SNX1 [146]. Similarly to Vps17p, Vps5p/Grd2p was identified as a protein responsible for normal traffic to the vacuole, and a defective Vps5p results in the secretion of CPY with Vps10p being mis-delivered to and rapidly degraded in the vacuole. Vps5p/Grd2p was also independently identified in the aforementioned screen for defective endosome-to-Golgi transport of A-ALP [147]. Furthermore, Vps17p and Vps5p were shown to exist with Vps26p, Vps29p and Vps35p in a protein complex referred to as retromer, which is involved in the retrieval of Golgi proteins, such as Vps10p and Kex2p, from pre-vacuolar endosomes [148]. Human orthologues of Vps26p, Vps29p and Vps35p have recently been identified and are known to form a complex with SNX1 [149].

Isolated by its ability to bind the lysosomal targeting signal of the EGF receptor, SNX1 is found to be present in endosomal

structures which also contain the EGF receptor following ligand-induced internalization [117]. Overexpression of SNX1 dramatically decreases the half-life of the EGF receptor, suggesting that it may be involved in trafficking from endosomes to the lysosome. Recently, yeast two-hybrid screens using Hrs have identified SNX1 as an interacting protein. Hrs and the EGF receptor compete for the same binding site on SNX1 and overexpression of Hrs or its SNX1 binding domain inhibited ligand-induced degradation of the EGF receptor, suggesting that Hrs may modulate lysosomal traffic of the EGF receptor by sequestering SNX1 [150]. In addition to its presence in a protein complex containing Vps26, Vps29 and Vps35 [149], SNX1 has also been shown to oligomerize [151] and/or interact with other sorting nexins, such as SNX2, SNX4, SNX6 and SNX15, but not SNX3 [118,120,121]. The significance of these interactions remains to be investigated. SNX1, SNX2, SNX4 and SNX6 have been shown to interact with several members of the receptor tyrosine kinase family, such as the EGF receptor, the platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF) receptor, the insulin receptor and the long form of the leptin receptor, while SNX15 interacts preferentially with the PDGF receptor. In addition, SNX2, SNX4 and SNX5, but not SNX1 and SNX3, have been shown to interact strongly with the type II TGF- β receptor. Interaction with activin-like receptor (ALK)5 has been shown for SNX2 and SNX6. Only SNX2 has been shown to interact with ALK4. So far, interaction of SNXs with ALK2 and ALK3 has not been reported.

The selective interaction of SNX15 with the PDGF receptor is dependent on the presence of its PX domain [121]. Overexpression of SNX15 disrupts the organization of endosomes, resulting in the appearance of large amorphous structures containing markers of the early endosome, the late endosome and the lysosome. However, it does not affect the localization of a marker of the recycling endosome. The appearance of these abnormal structures affects the recycling of both *trans*-Golgi network 38 kDa protein ('TGN38') and furin from the endosomes to the *trans*-Golgi network, resulting in their mislocalization. Furin is the endopeptidase responsible for the processing of PDGF and insulin receptors into their mature forms. Overexpression of SNX15 therefore decreases the appearance of mature forms of insulin

and PDGF receptors [121,152]. Taken together, these results suggest an involvement of SNX15, and possibly also SNX1, SNX2, SNX4 and SNX6, in the sorting of various proteins in the early endosome for delivery to the late endosome and the *trans*-Golgi network.

SNX3 is similarly enriched in the early endosome and also in intermediates involved in transport from the early to the recycling endosome, although it does not interact with SNX1, SNX2, SNX4, SNX6 or SNX15. Micro-injection of anti-SNX3 antibodies affects the transport of transferrin receptor from the early to the recycling endosome. Although overexpression of SNX3 and SNX15 both led to the formation of abnormal endosomal structures [127,152], only the structures induced by SNX3, but not by SNX15, contain components of the recycling endosome, suggesting that these two SNXs could mediate two distinct pathways from the early endosome. Our current hypothesis is that SNX3 is involved in traffic from the early to the recycling endosome. Although more detailed analysis is necessary, it seems likely that SNXs are potentially important components of the sorting machinery of the endocytic pathway and combinatory use of different members of this family may regulate the traffic of different proteins at distinct sites along the endosomal pathway.

P-selectin is a transmembrane domain protein stored intracellularly in platelets and endothelial cells, and is translocated to the surface to mediate interaction with leucocytes upon activation [153]. Interaction of SNX17 with the cytoplasmic domain of P-selectin was recently demonstrated, indicating that SNX17 may regulate the traffic and/or function of P-selectin [154].

In addition to their roles in cargo sorting and selective traffic in the endosomes, PX domain-containing proteins may also regulate docking and fusion of transport vesicles with the acceptor compartment. A role of the PX domain of Vam7p, which functions as a SNARE of the vacuole, has been shown [123,130].

Cell signalling and/or cell survival

In a study designed to identify novel mediators of interleukin (IL)-3-dependent survival mechanisms in haematopoietic cells, CISK (identical to SGK3, the serum- and glucocorticoid-induced protein kinase 3) was characterized [155,156]. It contains an N-terminal PX domain followed by a kinase domain. CISK can be activated *in vitro* by PDK1 and *in vivo* in response to signals triggering the activation of PI3Ks. The kinase domain of CISK shows more than 50% identity with PKB/Akt and is capable of phosphorylating both BAD (Bcl-xL/Bcl-2 associated death promoter) and the transcription factor FKHRL1 (forkhead drosophila homologue rhabdomyosarcoma like 1), substrates of PKB/Akt, leading to the suggestion that CISK may act in parallel with PKB/Akt. In contrast with the PH domain-mediated targeting of PKB/Akt to the plasma membrane, CISK is distributed to endosomal structures in a PX domain-dependent manner, suggesting that CISK is involved in different but complementary signalling pathways. The PX domain of CISK has been shown to interact with PtdIns(3,4) P_2 , PtdIns(3,4,5) P_3 and, to a lesser extent, PtdIns(4,5) P_2 [128].

PX domains are also present in proteins involved in phosphorylation and hydrolysis of phospholipids. The first of these and probably the most extensively studied are the PI3Ks, which have been implicated in the regulation of diverse cellular processes by phosphorylation of the 3'-OH of PIs [2,157,158]. All three members of class II PI3Ks (also called the CPK class) have a PX domain located in their C-terminal region in-between the catalytic domain and the C2 domain (Figure 3). It is highly possible that PIs execute regulatory effects over class II PI3Ks via their

interaction with the PX domain, although the PX domain seems not to be important for subcellular targeting of PI3K-C2 α [159]. Recent studies suggest that class II PI3Ks may couple PI metabolism to membrane traffic [160].

Both isoforms of mammalian PLD (PLD1 and PLD2) contain a PX domain in their N-termini as does the yeast PLD1 (Spo14p) [161,162]. PLDs have been implicated in a wide variety of cell processes ranging from vesicle trafficking via interaction with ARFs to cell signalling through activation of mitogen-activated protein (MAP) kinase cascades. The PX domain has not been shown to be important for many activities of PLDs, since removal of this domain does not disrupt its catalytic activity or its interaction with ARF. It remains, however, possible that physiological regulation of PLDs may be dependent on the interaction of PIs with the PX domain. For instance, the PX domain of PLD1 can be phosphorylated by protein kinase C in the loop between the first and second α -helices [163]. This phosphorylation may regulate the PX domain-PI interaction, which in turn controls the membrane association and/or function of the enzyme.

FISH is a protein containing an N-terminal PX domain followed by five SH3 domains. It was isolated due to its phosphorylation in Src-transformed fibroblasts or by treatment with several growth factors, which activate members of the Rho family of small GTPases and cause changes in the actin cytoskeleton. It is possible that FISH might be involved in signalling by tyrosine kinases [164]. SNX9 (or SH3PX1) contains a single SH3 domain followed by a PX domain, and has been shown to interact with the cytoplasmic domain of the metalloprotease disintegrins MDC9 and MDC15 (where an MDC protein is a metalloprotease, disintegrin, cysteine-rich protein), which exhibit diverse functions in the cell. It is possible that interaction of PIs with SNX9/SH3PX1 may influence the intracellular transport, processing and/or signalling of MDC9 and MDC15 [165].

Anti-infection mediated by neutrophils and other professional phagocytic cells

NADPH oxidase in neutrophils and other phagocytic cells is responsible for the generation of superoxide (O_2^-) as the precursor to other reactive oxygen species (such as hydrogen peroxide) involved in defence against bacterial and fungal infection [153,166]. This defence machinery is composed of several components including p22^{phox}, p40^{phox}, p47^{phox}, p67^{phox} and gp91^{phox}. The importance of the NADPH oxidase complex in anti-infection is evidenced by the fact that mutations in or loss of function of any one of these proteins lead to chronic granulomatous diseases [167,168]. At the resting stage, only p22^{phox} and gp91^{phox} (forming the transmembrane electron carrier flavocytochrome b_{558}) are associated with membranes of the surface, endocytic structures and/or phagosomal compartments, while the other components are found in the cytosol. Among the cytosolic components, p40^{phox} contains one SH3 domain, whereas p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} contain two SH3 domains. In addition, p40^{phox} and p47^{phox} contain a PX domain in their N-terminal regions (Figure 3). The C-terminal region of p47^{phox} contains many sites for phosphorylation. p40^{phox}, p47^{phox} and p67^{phox} form a cytosolic complex through several intermolecular interactions mediated by SH3 domains and proline-rich motifs [169–172]. Upon stimulation, this cytosolic complex is delivered to membranes and interacts with gp91^{phox}-p22^{phox} to form an active enzymic complex mediating the generation of superoxide. Phosphorylation of p47^{phox} is important for translocation of this complex to the membrane and for activation of the oxidase [173,174]. Phosphorylation by protein kinase C may cause conformational

changes in p47^{phox}, which presumably allow its SH3 domain to interact with a proline-rich motif in p22^{phox} [153]. NADPH oxidase activity is also under the control of the small GTPases Rac2 and, to a lesser extent, Rac1. Their GTP-bound activated forms interact directly with p67^{phox} (residues 170–199) and p21(Cdc42Hs/Rac)-activated kinase ('PAK'), which in turn phosphorylates p67^{phox} residues adjacent to the Rac-binding site [175]. Recently, *in vitro* binding and mutational studies of the PX domain of p47^{phox} have shown that the second SH3 domain is able to interact with the proline-rich motif within its N-terminal PX domain [131]. It is tempting to speculate that phosphorylation of p47^{phox} changes the conformation of the protein by disrupting this intramolecular interaction, so that other interactions [such as its PX domain interaction with PtdIns(3,4)P₂ and its SH3 domain interaction with the proline-rich motif in membrane p22^{phox}] that mediate membrane targeting of the cytosolic complex could occur.

The membrane recruitment of the cytosolic p40^{phox}–p47^{phox}–p67^{phox} complex and activation of the enzyme are regulated by PI3K activity. The mechanism has, however, remained elusive. Two recent papers have shown that PI3Ks might regulate this process through the two effectors (p40^{phox} and p47^{phox}) of the cytosolic complex [124,125] via their PX domain-mediated interaction with PIs. The PX domains of p40^{phox} and p47^{phox} bind to PI3P and PtdIns(3,4)P₂ respectively, and these lipid–protein interactions result in membrane targeting of the cytosolic complex and activation of the NADPH oxidase. The importance of this lipid–protein interaction is highlighted by the observation that a point mutation (Arg⁵⁷ → Gln) in the PX domain of p40^{phox} abolishes interaction with PI3P, which in turn abolishes the membrane targeting of p40^{phox}. In addition, a point mutation of the conserved Arg⁴² in the PX domain of p47^{phox}, giving a mutant protein which cannot bind PtdIns(3,4)P₂, is associated with chronic granulomatous disease [168]. It is possible that the inability to bind PIs due to a point mutation in the PX domain is one molecular basis for the development of the disease. Although the mechanism of how two different PIs [p40^{phox} interaction with PtdIns3P and p47^{phox} interaction with PtdIns(3,4)P₂] co-ordinate/regulate the assembly of the NADPH oxidase complex on specific membranes needs further investigation, it is obvious that the PX domains of p40^{phox} and p47^{phox} could provide spatial clues and/or activation signals for this process.

Activation of T- and B-cells

HS1 is a 486-residue protein expressed in haemopoietic and lymphoid lineage cells [176] and becomes tyrosine phosphorylated upon activation of antigen receptors in both T- and B-cells. It may participate in antigen receptor signalling through interaction with Lck in T-cells [177] and with Syk and Lyn in B-cells [178]. T- and B-cells deficient in HS1 are defective in activation-mediated proliferation [179]. HS1 has also been shown to bridge growth-factor-receptor-bound protein 2 ('Grb2') to Lck in T-cells [180] and to participate in activation-triggered apoptosis of B-cells [181]. In addition, HS1 has been implicated in the signalling cascades of IL-5 receptors [182], Fc receptors [183] and erythropoietin receptors [184]. HS1 may thus participate in activation, differentiation and apoptosis of haemopoietic and lymphoid lineage cells. HS1 contains several interesting features and has a 37-amino-acid motif repeated four times in tandem at the N-terminus, a proline-rich motif, and a C-terminal SH3 domain. HS1 is a major substrate phosphorylated by tyrosine kinases during T- and B-cell activation and has been reported to translocate into the nucleus in a kinase-dependent

manner [181]. HS1BP3 is a widely expressed 396-residue protein identified by its capability to interact with the SH3 domain of HS1 [132]. HS1BP3 contains an N-terminal PX domain followed by an acidic region, a basic region, a leucine zipper and several proline-rich motifs in the C-terminus. Overexpression of mutant HS1BP3 lacking an intact PX domain and the C-terminal region in T-cells results in a strong inhibition of anti-CD3 ϵ antibody-induced IL-2 production, suggesting that HS1BP3 may be involved in T-cell activation in a PX domain-dependent manner. Based on the discovery that the PX domain functions as a PI-binding motif, one possible function of HS1BP3 could be to target HS1 to the membrane for its interaction with antigen receptors and/or tyrosine kinases in T- and B-cells. Once tyrosine-phosphorylated, HS1 may translocate to the nucleus to modulate other downstream effects. Whether membrane targeting of the HS1–HS1BP3 complex is triggered by activation of the antigen receptors or occurs constitutively will be an interesting issue to address. Whatever the case, the interaction of HS1BP3 with a major substrate of tyrosine kinases associated with antigen receptor-mediated activation in T- and B-cells indicates that this PX domain protein may be an important regulator of signalling cascades during the activation of T- and B-cells.

Cell polarity and cytoskeleton

In budding yeast, cell polarization occurs during vegetative growth and during the mating process [185]. The PX domain protein Bem1p is involved in the establishment of polarity during both processes. Originally identified by a screen for mutants defective in bud formation [186], Bem1p has a similar domain structure as p47^{phox}, but in reverse order, with two N-terminal SH3 domains followed by a C-terminal PX domain (Figure 3). Scd2p is the fission yeast homologue of Bem1p [187]. Screens for synthetic lethality or two-hybrid interaction with Bem1p have identified Cdc24p and Bem2p [188], which act as a GEF and putative GAP respectively for Rho-type GTPase Cdc42p. Cdc24p, Cdc42p and Bem2p have also been shown to be required for bud emergence [189–191]. In addition, Bem1p has been shown to interact with a number of other proteins (such as Ste20p, Ste5p, Ste11p, Ste7p and Fus3p) that are involved in the signalling cascade initiated by binding of mating pheromones with surface receptors [192–194]. Bem1p also interacts with the apparently functionally redundant SH3 domain-containing proteins Boi1p and Boi2p [195]. While Boi1p and Boi2p are shown to be involved in bud emergence, their exact role remains unclear. However, their fission yeast homologue Pob1p is essential for cell elongation and separation and may recruit proteins required for formation of the cell wall [196]. Recently it has been suggested that the function of Bem1p (Scd2p) may be to concentrate proteins involved in cell polarity establishment and signalling kinases to discrete sites, facilitating polarization and the Ste20p-mediated MAP kinase signalling cascade [187,192,197]. Bem3p, isolated as a multicopy suppressor of Bem2p, contains a PX domain in the middle of the protein and a RhoGAP domain toward the C-terminus that is capable of stimulating the hydrolysis of GTP on Cdc42p [198,199]. Another PX domain protein involved in the process of cell polarity is Mdm1p, which was identified from studies of mutants defective in the inheritance of nuclei and mitochondria into developing daughter cells [200]. Mdm1p shows some identity with vimentin and epidermal keratin, and readily assembles into 10 nm filaments [201]. Mutations in the PX domain of Mdm1p cause loss of inheritance of nuclei and/or mitochondria [202]. Interestingly, Mdm1p also contains a PXA domain, observed to be present in some of the PX domain proteins (SNX13, SNX14 and SNX19). However,

the function of this domain has not yet been established. Perhaps it is required for protein–protein interaction and/or filament formation. In summary, interaction of PIs with the PX domains of at least three proteins (Bem1p, Bem3p and Mdm1p) could potentially co-ordinate the establishment of cell polarity, bud emergence and/or inheritance of organelles.

CONCLUSIONS

The establishment of the PX domain as a novel PI-binding module has revealed a large number of proteins that can potentially act as effectors of various PIs. In contrast with the FYVE domain, which specifically interacts with PtdIns3P, the PX domain is more like the PH domain in that it displays broader substrate specificity. Collectively, the PH, FYVE, ENTH and PX domain-containing proteins probably account for several hundreds of the proteins in mammalian cells. In addition, as many of these proteins can interact with other proteins to form functional complexes and/or relay signalling cascades, we may speculate that thousands of proteins are potentially regulated directly or indirectly by various PIs. The molecular mechanisms determining the spatial distribution/production of different PIs in the membrane will need more investigation. One obvious possibility is that regulation of the spatial distribution and/or activation of various lipid kinases and phosphatases will determine the spatial concentrations of different PIs, although it is also possible that different PIs may have some intrinsic properties of segregating with specific membrane compartments or micro-domains. Additionally, an interesting question is whether individual PI-interacting proteins have unique modes of spatial and temporal recruitment on to particular membrane domains or whether all PI-binding proteins sharing the same motif are recruited in a similar manner to the same membrane domain. The regulation of the biochemical properties of PI-interacting domains by other structural domains within the same protein or by other proteins may add additional layers for controlling these PI-binding proteins. The mechanisms that govern the spatial and temporal recruitment of various PI-interacting proteins in relation to trafficking, signalling and other events will thus be one of the important focuses for future investigation. The diverse cellular processes that are regulated and/or executed by these PI-interacting proteins and their associates may share some common principles in the mechanism of action in addition to refined loops of regulation specific for each particular case. Understanding the common pathways that regulate the metabolism of PIs and the shared molecular mechanisms underlying the action of these PI-interacting proteins, in conjunction with detailed biochemical, functional and mechanistic studies of each of these PI-interacting proteins, will provide additional and comprehensive insights into the molecular events underlying multiple cellular processes.

Note added in proof (received 8 November 2001)

Two recent studies [204,205] have further confirmed the conclusion that the PX domain is a PI-interacting motif. The crystal structure of the p40^{phox} PX domain bound to PtdIns3P has been resolved, revealing that the PX domain embraces the 3-phosphate of PtdIns3P with a positively charged pocket [206].

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