

Glycosphingolipid Receptors for *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*

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The binding of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* to glycosphingolipids and to buccal and bronchial epithelial cells was analyzed. Three independently expressed specificities were found by bacterial binding to glycosphingolipids separated by thin-layer chromatography. All strains bound gangliotria- and gangliotetraosylceramide. All but one of the strains bound sialic acid-containing glycosphingolipids and lactosylceramide. The latter two specificities could be separated in that the lactosylceramide binding was retained and the sialic acid binding was suppressed when bovine serum albumin was used as a blocking agent in the thin-layer chromatography assay. The attachment to buccal epithelial cells, like the binding to sialylated compounds and lactosylceramide, was abolished by Formalin treatment of the bacteria, suggesting the importance of these specificities for cell adherence. In contrast, the binding to gangliotria- and gangliotetraosylceramide was retained by nonattaching Formalin-treated bacteria.

Glycoconjugates can serve as receptors for bacterial adhesins (15, 19). Examples of this are the specific recognition of the Gal α 1-4Gal β -disaccharide by uropathogenic *Escherichia coli* (3, 11, 14), of GlcNAc β 1-3Gal by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (1), of NeuAc α 2-3Gal by *E. coli* type S fimbriae (21), and of mannose-containing oligosaccharides and glycoproteins by type 1 fimbriae (6, 24, 29).

Pseudomonas aeruginosa bind to buccal cells (30), to the cilia of nasal turbinate cells (20) and tracheal epithelial cells, to damaged tracheal epithelium (2, 7), and to tracheo-bronchial mucins (27). A recent report concerning the binding of *P. aeruginosa* and *P. cepacia* to glycosphingolipids (GSLs) separated on thin-layer chromatography (TLC) plates concluded that *Pseudomonas* strains bind to gangliotriaosyl- and gangliotetraosylceramide and that the minimal binding unit for these organisms is GalNAc β 1-4Gal (13) (Table 1). Attachment to lactosylceramide- and sialic acid-containing GSLs was not detected. The absence of binding to sialic acid was inconsistent with sugar inhibition studies which demonstrated that *N*-acetylneuraminic acid (NeuAc) inhibited adherence of *P. aeruginosa* to buccal cells (18), to normal and damaged epithelial cells (16, 22), and to tracheo-bronchial mucins (28). In this study, we demonstrate that *P. aeruginosa* also binds to sialic acid-containing GSLs and lactosylceramide and that the binding to sialic acid correlates with adherence to buccal epithelial cells.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Bacteria. Strains 105M and 244NM were mucoid and nonmucoid clinical isolates obtained from the sputum of cystic fibrosis patients at the Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio. Strain 0705 was a mucoid urinary tract isolate. Strains 0979 and 0971 were nonmucoid isolates from sputum samples. Strain PAO 579, a mucoid variant of strain PAO 381, was provided by John Goran, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland. Strain PAO 553 was a spontaneous nonmucoid revertant of strain PAO 579. Mucoid strain 2192

was obtained from Gerald B. Pier, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Mass. Nonmucoid strain PAO 1 (ATCC 15692) was obtained from Michael Vasil, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Denver, Colo. All isolates were maintained on *Pseudomonas* Isolation Agar (Difco Laboratories, Detroit, Mich.) or as lyophilized stock cultures.

For adherence testing, bacterial suspensions were prepared from overnight cultures grown at 37°C without shaking in M-9 medium containing glucose (16). The optical densities of the cultures at 597 nm were determined, and the suspensions were diluted to approximately 2×10^9 CFU/ml.

Bacteria were labeled by overnight growth in 5 ml of M-9 medium in which MgSO₄ was replaced by MgCl₂ and ³⁵SO₄ (100 μ Ci; specific activity, 343 Ci/mmol, Amersham). Cultures were grown with or without shaking, and the cells were collected by centrifugation at $2,500 \times g$ for 10 min. After two washes in 0.01 M phosphate-buffered saline (PBS), pH 7.4, the organisms were resuspended to approximately 10^8 CFU/ml in PBS. The specific activities of the suspensions ranged from 10 to 100 CFU/cpm.

In some studies, the bacterial suspensions were fixed before addition to cells or overlay of TLC plates. For fixation, the bacteria were suspended in PBS containing 0.5% Formalin for 2 to 3 h and washed in PBS before being used in the assays.

Glycosphingolipid extracts and TLC binding assay. Total non-acid glycosphingolipid (GSL) fractions from human meconium (12); from mouse (10), rat (4), rabbit (5), and dog (9) intestinal mucosa; and from guinea pig erythrocytes (23) were screened for binding activity. A brain ganglioside preparation, purified GM₂, and purified GM₁, were obtained from Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, Mo.

GSLs were separated on aluminium-backed silica gel Si60 HPTLC plates (E. Merck AG, Darmstadt, Federal Republic of Germany) by using chloroform-methanol-water (60:35:8, vol/vol/vol). One plate was sprayed with 1% anisaldehyde or copper acetate for chemical detection (12), and duplicate plates were tested for bacterial binding as previously described (3) with slight modifications. The TLC plates were immersed in 0.15% polyisobutylmetacrylate (P28; Röhm, Darmstadt, Federal Republic of Germany) in diethylether

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TABLE 1. Glycosphingolipids discussed in this paper and their capacities to bind *P. aeruginosa* strains on TLC plates

No. ^a	Glycosphingolipid	Binding to <i>P. aeruginosa</i> :		
		Krivan ^b	244NM ^c	0705M
1	Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer(h) ^d	-	+	-
2	GalNAcβ1-4Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	+	+	+
3	Galβ1-3GalNAcβ1-4Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	+	+	+
4	Galα1-4Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	-	-	-
5	Galα1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	ND ^e	-	-
6	NeuAcα2-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	-	+	-
7	Galβ1-3GalNAcβ1-4Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	-	+	-
	3			
	NeuAc2			
8	NeuAc2-3Galβ1-4GlcNAcβ1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	ND	+	-
9	Galβ1-3GlcNAcβ1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	ND	-	-
10	Galβ1-3GlcNAcβ1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	ND	-	-
	4			
	Fuca1			
11	Galβ1-3GlcNAcβ1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	ND	-	-
	2 4			
	Fuca1 Fuca1			
12	GalNAcα1-3GalNAcβ1-3Galα1-4Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	-	-	-
13	GalNAcβ1-3Galα1-4Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	-	-	-
14	GalNAcα1-3Galβ1-4GlcNAcβ1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	-	-	-
	2			
	Fuca1			
15	Galβ1-4GlcNAcβ1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	ND	-	-
	3			
	Fuca1			
16	Fuca1-2Galβ1-4GlcNAcβ1-3Galβ1-4Glcβ1-1Cer	ND	-	-
	3			
	Fuca1			

^a 1, Lactosylceramide; 2, asialo-GM₂; 3, asialo-GM₁; 4, globotriaosylceramide; 5, isoglobotriaosylceramide; 6, GM₃; 7, GM₁; 8, sialylparaglobosid; 9, lactotetraosylceramide; 10, Le^a pentaglycosylceramide; 11, Le^b hexaglycosylceramide; 12, Forssman glycolipid; 13, globoside; 14, A-hexaglycosylceramide; 15, X-pentaglycosylceramide; 16, Y-hexaglycosylceramide.

^b Reference 13.

^c Strain 244NM showed the same binding pattern as strains 105M, O979, O971, 2192, PAO553, PAO579, and PAO-1.

^d Cerh, Hydroxylated ceramide.

^e ND, Not done.

hexane (1:1, vol/vol) for 1 min and dried overnight at room temperature. The plates were treated with 0.5 or 1% gelatin in PBS for 2 h and overlaid with 0.5×10^6 to 1.0×10^6 cpm of ³⁵S-labeled bacteria per ml (approximately 10^8 CFU/ml). Alternatively, the plates were treated with a 1% suspension of bovine serum albumin (BSA). After a 2-h incubation at room temperature, the plates were rinsed five times with PBS, air dried, and exposed to RX-100 film (Fuji) at room temperature for the indicated times.

The mobilities of the individual GSLs were compared with those of standards, the structures of which were confirmed by gas chromatography, mass spectrometry, and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy (4, 5).

Adherence assays. Human buccal epithelial cells were collected from a healthy, male, nonsmoking volunteer by scraping the buccal epithelium with a premoistened cotton-tipped swab. The cells were suspended in 5 ml of PBS and washed with PBS three times by centrifugation at $500 \times g$ for 10 min. The cells were trypsinized by resuspension in PBS containing 2.5 to 5 μg of trypsin (Sigma) per ml and incubation for 30 min at 37°C. The trypsinized cells were washed three times with PBS and adjusted to a concentration of 2×10^5 cells per ml (29).

Tracheal cells were obtained by brushing the bronchial epithelium of 10 patients undergoing diagnostic bronchoscopy. The cells were suspended directly in PBS with or without 1% Histofix (Histolab AB, Göteborg, Sweden) and

washed three times by centrifugation at $200 \times g$ for 10 min. The cells were suspended in PBS to approximately 10^5 /ml. Cell samples that contained primarily denuded, nonciliated cells were excluded from this study, as we were primarily interested in adherence to cilia. No bacteria were observed on the cilia of the cells before the assay, and few cells displayed ciliary activity.

For the adherence assay, 200 μl of bacterial suspension was mixed with 200 μl of cells, and the mixture was centrifuged at $400 \times g$ for 10 min. After a 30-min incubation at 37°C, the mixture was resuspended and washed with 2 ml of PBS three times. The final cell pellet was suspended in 100 μl of PBS. The number of bacteria was counted on 30 to 40 cells by direct observation at a magnification of $\times 400$ by using differential interference contrast (Nikon), and the results were expressed as the average number of bacteria per cell.

RESULTS

Binding to GSLs. The binding of *P. aeruginosa* strains to isolated GSLs on TLC plates is shown in Fig. 1 and Table 1. In agreement with previous studies (13), receptor-active components were identified as gangliotetraosyl- and gangliotriaosylceramide (Fig. 1, lanes 2 and 5).

Additional binding specificities of the organisms were, however, observed. *P. aeruginosa* 105M bound to sialylated

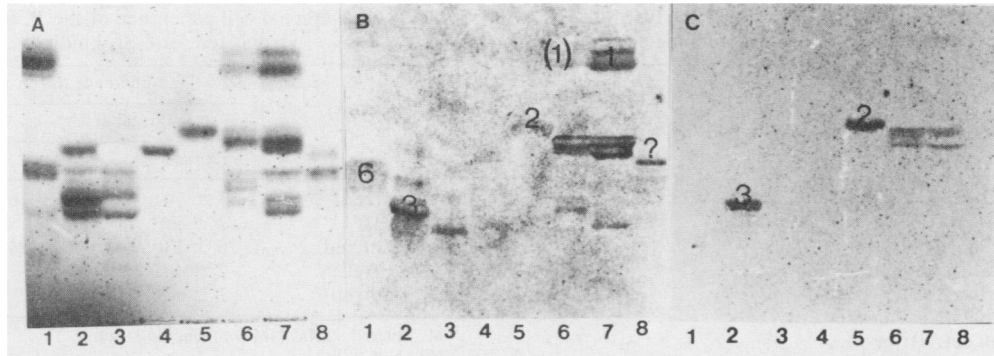


FIG. 1. Binding of *P. aeruginosa* strains to GSLs separated on thin-layer chromatograms by using chloroform-methanol-water (60:35:8). Lanes: 1, human meconium monosialylated GSLs; 2, neutral GSLs of mouse colon epithelium; 3, neutral GSLs of human meconium blood group B, Le, Se; 4, globoside; 5, neutral GSLs of guinea pig erythrocytes; 6, neutral GSLs of dog intestinal mucosa (blood group X-Y type); 7, neutral GSLs of dog intestinal mucosa (blood group A-H type); 8, neutral GSLs of mouse colon (nonepithelium). (A) Chemical detection (anisaldehyde). (B) Autoradiogram of strain 105M. (C) Autoradiogram of strain O705M. The numbers in the chromatograms refer to those in Table 1, column 1. The autoradiographs are 3-day exposures.

GSLs (Fig. 1, lane 1, and Fig. 2A, lanes 1, 2, 3, and 8) in the tri- to heptasaccharide regions. The strong binding to GSLs in the brain ganglioside fraction (lane 2), GM₁ (lane 3), and GM₃ (lane 1), and sialylparagloboside (lane 8) indicated that 105M had a broad specificity for sialic acid residues on glycoconjugates.

The same binding pattern was observed for the eight strains of *P. aeruginosa* specified in footnote *b* of Table 1. *P. aeruginosa* 0705M bound only to gangliotriaosyl- and gangliotetraosylceramide but not to the sialic acid-containing GSLs (Fig. 1C, lane 1).

Binding to a GSL migrating in the three-sugar region was observed in two different GSL preparations from dog intestinal mucosa (Fig. 1, lanes 6 and 7). In this region, only isoglobotriaosyl- and globotriaosylceramide have been detected (9). Strains 105M and 244NM bound to the trihexosylceramide region in the dog sample, as did 0705M. The strains did not bind pure globotria- or isoglobotriaosylceramide (data not shown). The binding in this region is therefore

probably due to other, minor components present in these GSL preparations.

The strains 105M and 244NM, but not 0705M, also reacted with a GSL in the dihexosyl region from dog intestine, identified as lactosylceramide. This lactosylceramide contains phytosphingosine and hydroxy fatty acids (Fig. 1, lane 7) (8, 9, 24).

The use of BSA as a blocking agent in the TLC assay suppressed the binding to sialic acid but left the lactosylceramide binding intact (Fig. 3, Table 2).

Attachment to epithelial cells. The adherence characteristics of the *P. aeruginosa* strains are shown in Table 3. Strains 105M (mucooid) and 244NM (nonmucooid) adhered to the buccal cells, but strain 0705M was less adherent. Bacteria were evenly distributed over the surfaces of the buccal cells (Fig. 4A). Fixation of the bacteria with Formalin reduced this adherence. There was no difference in the binding between mucooid and nonmucooid organisms (Table 3) or between nontrypsinized and trypsinized buccal epithelial

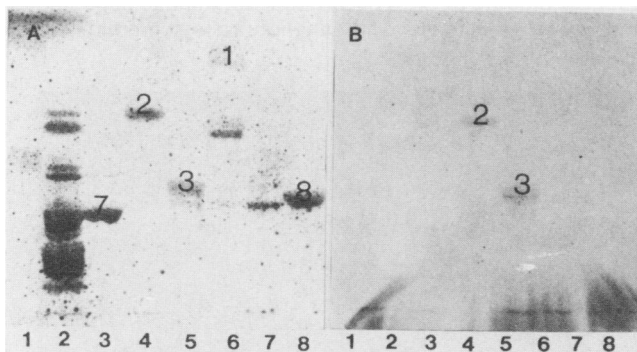


FIG. 2. Binding of unfixed and Formalin-fixed strain 105M to acidic and neutral GSLs separated on thin-layer chromatograms by using chloroform-methanol-water (60:35:8). Lanes: 1, human meconium acidic GSLs; 2, brain gangliosides; 3, GM₁; 4, neutral GSLs of guinea pig erythrocytes; 5, neutral GSLs of mouse colonic epithelium; 6, neutral GSLs of dog intestinal mucosa; 7, neutral GSLs of human meconium blood group B, Le, Se; 8, sialylparagloboside. (A) Autoradiogram of unfixed strain 105M. (B) Autoradiogram of Formalin-fixed strain 105M. The numbers in the chromatograms refer to those in Table 1, column 1. The autogradiographs are 4-day exposures.

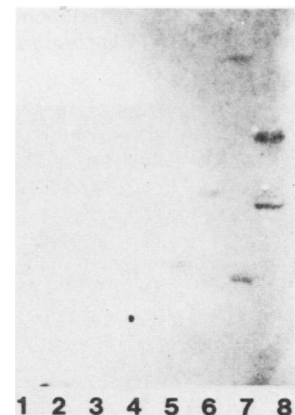


FIG. 3. Binding of *P. aeruginosa* 105M to acidic and neutral GSLs when the TLC plate was treated with 1% BSA instead of 1% gelatin before overlay with radiolabeled bacteria. Lanes: 1, brain gangliosides; 2, GM₁; 3, human meconium acidic GSLs; 4, sialylparagloboside; 5, neutral GSLs of mouse colonic epithelium; 6, neutral GSLs of guinea pig erythrocytes; 7, neutral GSLs of human meconium blood group B, Le, Se; 8, neutral GSLs of dog intestinal mucosa, blood group X-Y type. The autoradiograph is a 10-day exposure.

other can be expressed separately by *P. aeruginosa*. They thus are likely to be due to interactions with adhesins of different specificities.

The attachment to buccal epithelial cells followed the sialic acid and lactosylceramide binding but not the binding to gangliotria- and gangliotetraosylceramide. This was consistent with previous studies showing that adherence of *P. aeruginosa* to buccal cells may be inhibited by sialic acid (18, 22). In contrast, the binding to bronchial epithelial cells, although weak, did not follow the lactosylceramide- and sialic acid-binding activity. It could be a function either of the gangliotria- and gangliotetraosylceramide-binding activity or of as yet unidentified receptor specificities.

Several components on the bacterial surface have been proposed to act as adhesins, e.g., the alginate capsule of mucoid strains and the fimbriae (2, 7, 13, 17, 20, 22, 27, 30). In this study, the binding properties did not correlate with the presence or absence of the alginate. In preliminary experiments, the purified pili were shown to bind the lactosylceramide, the gangliotria- and gangliotetraosylceramide, and the triglycosylceramide from the dog intestinal mucosa, but not the sialic acid-containing GSLs (N. R. Baker, Abstr. Annu. Meet. Am. Soc. Microbiol. 1989, B-225, p. 68).

The independently expressed binding specificities may contribute at different stages of the infectious process. *P. aeruginosa* are a significant cause of infections in the respiratory tracts of compromised patients. Clinical studies of patients with cystic fibrosis have suggested that the *P. aeruginosa* present during the initial stages of infection are nonmucoid. Such strains expressed three binding specificities. For example, the sialic acid recognition may contribute to colonization of the upper respiratory tract by attachment to buccal cells. The binding to the ganglioseries GSLs may mediate attachment to bronchial cells and there, in analogy with *E. coli* causing urinary tract infections, induce the inflammatory response which accounts for the symptoms of infection and the local damage to the mucosa (26).

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