Insights into the Role of P-Bodies and Stress Granules in Protein Quality Control

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ABSTRACT The eukaryotic cell is highly compartmentalized, and contains a variety of both membrane-bound and membraneless organelles. The latter include the cytoplasmic ribonucleoprotein (RNP) granules, known as the processing body (P-body) and the stress granule. These RNP structures are thought to be involved in the storage of particular mRNAs during periods of stress. Here, we find that a mutant lacking both P-bodies and stress granules exhibits phenotypes suggesting that these structures also have a role in the maintenance of protein homeostasis. In particular, there was an increased occurrence of specific protein quality control (PQC) compartments in this mutant, an observation that is consistent with there being an elevated level of protein misfolding. These compartments normally house soluble misfolded proteins and allow the cell to sequester these polypeptides away from the remaining cellular milieu. Moreover, specific proteins that are normally targeted to both P-bodies and stress granules were found to instead associate with these PQC compartments in this granuleless mutant. This observation is interesting as our data indicate that this association occurs specifically in cells that have been subjected to an elevated level of proteotoxic stress. Altogether, the results here are consistent with P-bodies and stress granules having a role in normal protein homeostasis in eukaryotic cells.

KEYWORDS processing bodies; stress granules; protein quality control compartments; protein homeostasis

HE eukaryotic cell is segregated into distinct functional domains by the presence of a variety of both membranebound and membraneless organelles. The former have been extensively studied and include structures like the mitochondria, nucleus, and endoplasmic reticulum. The latter differ fundamentally from these well-characterized compartments in that they lack a limiting membrane (Hyman *et al.* 2014). However, it is likely that they serve similar purposes in the cell. For example, macromolecules participating in a related process can be concentrated in these structures so as to increase reaction efficiencies (Jin et al. 2017). Although several of these membraneless compartments, like the nucleolus and centrosome, have been studied for decades, most have been identified more recently. Many of these structures have been found to exhibit liquid-like properties in the cell and to assemble (and disassemble) rapidly in response to specific environmental signals (Brangwynne et al. 2009, 2011; Weber and Brangwynne 2012; Hyman et al. 2014; Banani et al.

2017). These structures have also been conserved evolutionarily, suggesting that they are likely to have important functions within the eukaryotic cell.

One family of these membraneless compartments includes cytoplasmic granules, like the processing body (P-body) and the stress granule (SG) (Anderson and Kedersha 2002; Buchan 2014; Luo et al. 2018). These structures contain distinct sets of mRNAs and proteins that rapidly coalesce at discrete sites in the cytoplasm in response to specific stress conditions (Thomas et al. 2011). The concentration of these molecules is thought to result in a type of phase transition that produces ribonucleoprotein (RNP) granules in a liquidor gel-like state (Hyman et al. 2014; Banani et al. 2017; Boeynaems et al. 2018). SGs contain proteins important for translation and appear to serve as cytoplasmic repositories for mRNAs that will be translated following the resolution of the ongoing stress (Anderson and Kedersha 2008, 2009; Buchan and Parker 2009). In contrast, the biological activities of the P-body are less clear. These granules were initially identified by the presence of a number of proteins involved in mRNA processing (Bashkirov et al. 1997; Ingelfinger et al. 2002; van Dijk et al. 2002; Eystathioy et al. 2003; Sheth and Parker 2003; Cougot et al. 2004). This includes the 5'-3' RNA exonuclease Xrn1 and components of the primary mRNA

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decapping complex, Dcp1 and Dcp2. These early observations led researchers to propose that P-bodies were sites of mRNA decay (Eulalio et al. 2007a; Balagopal and Parker 2009). However, more recent work suggests that mRNA turnover is not occurring within these cytoplasmic foci. For example, no significant defects in mRNA decay were detected in yeast and mammalian cells that lack P-body foci (Stoecklin et al. 2006; Decker et al. 2007; Eulalio et al. 2007b). In addition, studies with particular decapping mutants indicate that mRNA decay might even be suppressed within P-body foci (Huch et al. 2016; Huch and Nissan 2017). Finally, there is experimental evidence of mRNAs being stored long-term within P-body granules (Arribere et al. 2011; Zid and O'Shea 2014; Hubstenberger et al. 2017; Standart and Weil 2018). As a result, the biological functions associated with the P-body remain to be determined.

P-bodies and SGs have also been found to contain a number of signaling molecules that play key roles in the regulation of cell growth and survival (Arimoto et al. 2008; Tudisca et al. 2010; Kozubowski et al. 2011; Takahara and Maeda 2012; Mitchell et al. 2013; Thedieck et al. 2013; Wippich et al. 2013; Shah et al. 2014). These constituents include many important protein kinases and phosphatases. This association has been shown in several instances to influence the levels or activity of the recruited signaling molecule. For example, the presence in SGs of regulators of a stress-responsive MAPK pathway determines whether cells undergo apoptosis in response to certain stresses (Arimoto et al. 2008). In addition, the recruitment of the budding yeast CK1 protein kinase Hrr25 to the P-body has been shown to be important for the efficient completion of meiosis (Zhang et al. 2018). As a result of these types of studies, it has been suggested that these RNP granules might play a role in the reprograming of specific signaling networks in response to stress (Kedersha et al. 2013; Shah et al. 2014). Therefore, it is essential that we identify the proteins targeted to P-bodies and SGs, and characterize the physiological consequences of this localization.

Recent work indicates that misfolded proteins are also compartmentalized within the eukaryotic cell (Miller et al. 2015b; Sontag et al. 2017). In particular, several model misfolded polypeptides have been found to be sequestered within distinct protein quality control (PQC) compartments (Kaganovich et al. 2008; Specht et al. 2011; Escusa-Toret et al. 2013; Miller et al. 2015a). This segregation presumably removes misfolded proteins from the remaining cellular milieu and thereby prevents unproductive interactions that might otherwise occur. The recognition of this phenomenon represents a major advance in our understanding of the eukaryotic PQC machinery. In Saccharomyces cerevisiae, soluble misfolded proteins have been shown to be targeted to at least two different compartments. The first was originally called the juxtanuclear quality control compartment (JUNQ) because of its proximity to the nucleus (Kaganovich et al. 2008). However, more recent work suggests that this structure is within the nucleus and has renamed it the intranuclear quality control compartment (INQ) (Miller et al. 2015a). The second compartment is characterized by the cytoplasmic foci that form when cells are subjected to particular types of proteotoxic stress. These foci are known by a variety of names including stress foci, quality control bodies (Q-bodies), and cytoQ (Kaganovich *et al.* 2008; Specht *et al.* 2011; Spokoini *et al.* 2012; Escusa-Toret *et al.* 2013; Miller *et al.* 2015a). The precise nature of the relationship between cytoQ and INQ/ JUNQ is not yet clear, but at least one study has suggested that a failure to clear the proteins in the former can result in their subsequent accumulation within the latter (Escusa-Toret *et al.* 2013). The misfolded proteins targeted to these structures are thought to be either refolded or directed to the proteasome for degradation (Sontag *et al.* 2017).

Determining the biological activities associated with P-bodies and SGs remains a key area of interest in this research field. One approach to this issue has been to characterize the cellular defects associated with the loss of one or the other of these granules. For example, yeast mutants defective for P-body formation were found to exhibit a diminished ability to survive during extended periods of quiescence (Ramachandran et al. 2011; Shah et al. 2013). An alternative approach aims to define the biological consequences of losing the granule association of one or more of the proteins known to be present within the P-body, and/or the SG. Studies with the Hrr25 kinase have demonstrated that its association with the P-body serves to shield this protein from degradation within the proteasome (Zhang et al. 2016). Hrr25 variants that fail to localize to these foci are rapidly turned over under conditions that induce P-body formation. Here, we combine these two approaches, and examine the fate of four protein kinases in a yeast mutant that lacks both P-body and SG foci. These enzymes are unusual in that they can associate with both of these granules in the wild-type cell. Interestingly, our data indicate that these four kinases are targeted to INQ/JUNQ in this granuleless mutant, and altogether suggest a potential role for P-bodies and SGs in the control of protein homeostasis in the eukaryotic cell.

Materials and Methods

Yeast strains and growth conditions

Standard methods were employed to generate the yeast strains used in this study. The BY4741 strain was the wild type for all experiments in this report. The *ubp3* Δ and *edc3* Δ strains were obtained from the yeast knockout collection (Open Biosystems). The *edc3* Δ *lsm4* Δ *C* strain was generated by replacing the 3'-end of the *LSM4* gene that encodes the C-terminal half of the Lsm4 protein with the *LEU2* gene, as described previously (Decker *et al.* 2007). The *edc3* Δ *lsm4* Δ *C ubp3* Δ (ELU Δ) strain was generated by disrupting the *UBP3* locus in the *edc3* Δ *lsm4* Δ *C* strain by replacing its coding sequence with the *NAT* gene.

Standard *Escherichia coli* and yeast growth conditions were used throughout. The rich yeast medium, Yeast extract–Peptone–Adenine–Dextrose (YPAD), and the minimal media, yeast minimal (YM) and synthetic complete (SC), have been described previously (Kaiser *et al.* 1994; Chang *et al.* 2004;

Ramachandran and Herman 2010). Unless otherwise noted, all SC media was supplemented with 1% glucose and 1% sorbitol (SCDS), to ensure that P-bodies and SGs remained distinct entities (Shah *et al.* 2016). Cells containing the pESC-URA-Ubc9^{WT} or pESC-URA-Ubc9^{ts} plasmids were grown in SC media containing 2% galactose to induce expression from the relevant *UBC9* locus (Kaganovich *et al.* 2008). Cell cultures were grown with agitation at 30° for the indicated number of days. To induce misfolded protein foci formation, cells were incubated at 37° for 90 min in the presence of 100 μ M of the proteasome inhibitor MG132 (or diluent, DMSO).

Plasmid construction

The plasmids used in this study are listed in Table 1. All genes are expressed from their endogenous promoters, unless otherwise indicated. All GFP-LucDM-NLS constructs were generated from the plasmid p303-ADH-GFP-LuciDM-NLS, kindly provided by the Bukau laboratory (NLS, nuclear localization signal). To generate ADHpro-GFP-LucDM-NLS (pPHY4814, CEN, and HIS3) and ADHpro-GFP-LucDM-NLS (pPHY4816, CEN, and URA3), the ADHpro-GFP-LuciDM-NLS fragment was cut from p303-ADH-GFP-LuciDM-NLS, and inserted into pRS413 and pRS416, respectively, between SacI and XhoI. To generate a nuclear-localized VHL (von Hippel-Lindau), the NLS from this luciferase construct was PCR amplified, and inserted between the N-terminal GFP tag and VHL coding sequence. The GPDpro-Hsp42-Cherry plasmid was a generous gift from the Kaganovich laboratory. The pESC-URA-GFP-UBC9WT and ts plasmids were purchased from Addgene (#20368, #20369). Kinase-defective mutants were generated using the GeneArt site-directed mutagenesis system (Life Technologies).

Fluorescence microscopy

Cells expressing fluorescent protein fusion constructs were grown as indicated, collected by centrifugation, and spotted onto agarose pads on microscope slides as described (Shah et al. 2013; Zhang et al. 2016). Cells were imaged with a ×100/1.45 numerical aperture Plan-Apo objective lens on a Nikon Eclipse Ti inverted microscope (Nikon, Garden City, NY) with an Andor Zyla digital camera and the appropriate Nikon HC filter sets. The scale bar in all figures represents 5 µm. Merged images were created with the ImageJ (National Institutes of Health) software package. All images in a given figure panel were processed in an identical manner with respect to image size and intensity. For quantification of the percent of cells containing foci, the data represent a minimum of three replicates with ≥ 100 cells examined in each. The error bars on the graphs depict SEs. For quantification of the percent colocalization, only cells containing both types of foci were counted, and the data represent two or more independent experiments with a minimum of 100 cells being analyzed in each replicate.

Protein analysis

Protein samples were prepared for western blotting by a glass bead lysis method, separated on a 10% SDS-polyacrylamide

gel, and transferred to nitrocellulose membranes as described previously (Budovskaya *et al.* 2002, 2004). The membranes were probed with the appropriate primary and secondary antibodies, and immunoreactive bands were detected using the Supersignal chemiluminescent substrate (Pierce Chemical, Rockford, IL). The samples were normalized with respect to total cell equivalents to avoid the fluctuations in the levels of specific proteins that have been observed upon the entry into stationary phase. The primary antibodies used were: anti-mCherry (mCh), Biovision (5993) and anti-GFP, Roche (11841460001). The secondary anti-rabbit and anti-mouse HRP-linked antibodies were from GE Life Sciences (NA934V and NA931V, respectively).

Stationary-phase viability assays

Cells were grown in YM-glucose minimal medium for the indicated number of days, collected by centrifugation, and resuspended in water at a concentration of five OD_{600} units/ml (Chang *et al.* 2004; Ramachandran *et al.* 2011). Fivefold serial dilutions of these cell suspensions were then spotted onto plates containing the same medium and incubated at 30° for 3 days.

Data availability

Strains and plasmids are available on request. The authors affirm that all data necessary for confirming the conclusions of this article are presented within the article, figures, and tables.

Results

Generation of a strain defective for the formation of both P-bodies and SGs

To generate a strain deficient for both P-body and SG formation, we combined mutations that affect each granule individually. Yeast mutants containing a deletion of EDC3, $edc3\Delta$, and a truncation of LSM4, $lsm4\Delta C$, have been found to be specifically defective for P-body formation (Figure 1A) (Decker et al. 2007). EDC3 encodes the decapping enhancer, Edc3, and LSM4 encodes an Sm-like protein, Lsm4, that is a constituent of two heptameric complexes in eukaryotic cells (Parker 2012; Didychuk et al. 2018). One of the latter is cytoplasmic and involved in mRNA decay, and the second is nuclear and part of the U6 small nuclear RNP (Didvchuk et al. 2018). The *lsm4* Δ *C* allele encodes a truncated form of Lsm4 that lacks a C-terminal domain predicted to be intrinsically disordered (Decker et al. 2007; Reijns et al. 2008). These mutations were combined with a deletion of the UBP3 locus that encodes a ubiquitin protease that we have shown is required for SG formation (Figure 1A) (Nostramo and Herman 2016; Nostramo et al. 2016). This triple mutant, $edc3\Delta$ $lsm4\Delta C ubp3\Delta$, is referred to as the ELU Δ strain for the remainder of this report.

We used fluorescence microscopy to assess the localization of a number of P-body and SG reporters in the ELU Δ strain. The P-body markers examined were Dcp1, Dcp2, Hrr25, the scaffolding protein Pat1, and the RNA helicase Dhh1 (Eulalio

Table 1 Plasmids used in this study

Plasmid name	Relevant details	Source
pPHY3486	DCP2-GFP in pRS413 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY3648	PAT1-GFP in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY3661	PAB1-GFP in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY3736	HRR25-GFP in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY3778	CDC28-GFP in pRS406	Laboratory collection
pPHY3782	PBP1-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY3966	HOG1-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY4030	NUP49-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY4081	KIN28-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY4067	FPK1-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY4076	pESC-URA-GFP-UBC9WT	Addgene
pPHY4077	pESC-URA-GFP-UBC9ts	Addgene
pPHY4083	KSS1-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY4106	EDC3-mCh in pRS403	Laboratory collection
pPHY4130	FRK1-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	Laboratory collection
pPHY4211	PBP1-GFP in pRS406	Laboratory collection
pPHY4711	GPDpro-CBK1-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4712	GPDpro-CBK1-mCh in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4720	FUS3-mCh in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4721	PBS2-mCh in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4841	PBS2-K389M-mCh (PBS2-KD-mCh) in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4776	DCP1-mCh in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4777	DHH1-GFP in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4787	ADHpro-GFP-LucDM-NLS in pRS303 (CEN, HIS3)	Bukau laboratory
pPHY4813	ADH2pro-GFP-VHL in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4814	ADHpro-GFP-LucDM-NLS in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4816	ADHpro-GFP-LucDM-NLS in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4884	CDC28-mCh in pR406 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4901	GPDpro-VHL-mCh in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4903	GPDpro-GFP-NLS-VHL in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4904	GPDpro-HSP42-Cherry in pRS316 (<i>CEN, URA3</i>) (provided by Ravid lab; pTR1163)	Kaganovich laboratory (DK160)
pPHY4934	PBS2-CFP in pRS413 (CEN, HIS3)	This study
pPHY4941	GPDpro-PBS2-GFP-Full length (1–668) in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4942	GPDpro-PBS2-GFP-1-185 in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4943	GPDpro-PBS2-GFP-1-320 in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4944	GPDpro-PBS2-GFP-183-320 in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4945	GPDpro-PBS2-GFP-183-668 in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study
pPHY4946	GPDpro-PBS2-GFP-320-668 in pRS416 (CEN, URA3)	This study

et al. 2007a; Balagopal and Parker 2009; Zhang et al. 2016). The SG reporters were the poly(A)-binding protein, Pab1, and the Pab1-binding protein Pbp1 (Kedersha et al. 2005; Buchan and Parker 2009; Buchan et al. 2011). These tagged reporters were typically present as a diffuse fluorescence throughout the cytoplasm in wild-type cells during the log phase of growth (Figure 1A). As noted previously, Hrr25 was also present at the bud neck and the spindle pole body at this time (Kafadar et al. 2003; Lusk et al. 2007; Shah et al. 2014). Each reporter was subsequently found to be concentrated in its appropriate granule after 1 day of growth in the supplemented minimal medium (Figure 1, A and B). In contrast, none of the reporters were found in cytoplasmic foci in ELU Δ cells (Figure 1, A and B). These results were not due to diminished levels of the reporters as western analysis indicated that near-normal levels of each tagged protein were present in the ELU Δ strain (Figure 1C). It should also be noted that each reporter was properly localized to its respective granule in the mutant defective for the assembly of the

other. P-body reporters were properly localized in $ubp3\Delta$ cells and SG reporters in the $edc3\Delta$ $lsm4\Delta C$ mutant (Figure 1A). These results are consistent with our previous work indicating that the assembly of each of these granules is independent of the other (Shah *et al.* 2013). Altogether, these results suggested that both P-body and SG formation are defective in the ELU Δ strain.

The ELU Δ strain exhibits a diminished chronological life span

We and others have shown previously that granules, in addition to P-bodies and SGs, are induced as yeast cells begin to enter stationary phase (Narayanaswamy *et al.* 2009; Shah *et al.* 2014; Rabouille and Alberti 2017). Here, we tested whether three of these novel structures were able to form normally in the ELU Δ strain. Each of these foci were identified originally by the presence of a specific set of protein kinase constituents. The Novel 1 granules contain Frk1 and Kin28, Novel 2 contain Fpk1 and Kss1, and Novel 3 contain



Figure 1 The ELU Δ strain is deficient for the formation of both P-bodies (PBs) and stress granules (SGs). (A and B) The localization of PB and SG proteins in strains defective for the assembly of PBs (*edc3* Δ *lsm4* Δ C, EL Δ), SGs (*ubp3* Δ), or both (ELU Δ). The wild-type (WT) and indicated deletion strains were grown in SC media containing 1% glucose and 1% sorbitol at 30°, and analyzed by fluorescence microscopy during log phase and after day 1 of growth. The strains expressed the indicated GFP- or mCh-tagged reporters for PBs (Hrr25 and Dcp1) or SGs (Pab1 and Pbp1). The fraction of cells with foci is indicated for each mutant at day 1. Bar, 5 μ m. (B) The localization of the additional PB markers—Pat1, Dcp2, and Dh1—was assessed in WT and ELU Δ cells on day 1. Bar, 5 μ m. (C) Cell extracts were prepared from log phase and day 1 cultures of the strains described in (A), and the levels of the indicated tagged proteins were assessed by western blotting. The Dcp1 protein band is indicated by the arrow.

Hog1 (Shah *et al.* 2014). For each, we found that the fraction of cells containing foci, and the kinetics of foci formation, were similar in ELU Δ and wild-type cells (Figure 2A). Therefore, although the mutations present in the ELU Δ strain disrupt P-body and SG formation, they did not affect the assembly of at least these three cytoplasmic granules in yeast cells.

Previous work from our laboratory has indicated that mutants defective for P-body or SG formation exhibit a diminished ability to survive long-term in stationary phase (Ramachandran *et al.* 2011; Shah *et al.* 2013; Nostramo *et al.* 2016). Stationary phase is a quiescent growth phase that yeast cells enter when deprived of certain essential nutrients (Werner-Washburne *et al.* 1993; Herman 2002; Gray *et al.* 2004). The time that a yeast strain is viable in stationary phase has been deemed its chronological life span (CLS) (Longo *et al.* 2012). Here, we tested whether the ELU Δ strain might also display a decreased CLS. For this study, the indicated strains were grown in minimal medium for 7 or 14 days, and the number of cells surviving at these times was determined. We found that the CLS of the ELU Δ strain was less than that associated with either the *ubp3* Δ or the



Figure 2 The ELU Δ strain exhibits a diminished chronological life span. (A) Wild-type (WT) and ELU Δ cells expressing mCherry (mCh)-tagged markers for three previously identified protein granules—termed Novel 1, Novel 2, and Novel 3—were grown in SCDS medium at 30°, and analyzed for foci formation on days 1 and 5. The fraction of cells with foci is indicated for the day 5 time point. Bar, 5 μ m. (B) WT, *edc3* Δ *lsm4* Δ C (EL Δ), *ubp3* Δ , and ELU Δ cells were grown for up to 14 days in minimal medium and serial dilutions of the cultures were plated to minimal medium at the indicated times. The plates were examined after 2–3 days at 30° to assess cell survival and thus the chronological life span of each strain.

 $edc3\Delta lsm4\Delta C$ mutants (Figure 2B). It should be noted that an independent study found that an $edc3\Delta lsm4\Delta C$ strain exhibited an extended CLS (Huch *et al.* 2016). However, we did not observe this here or elsewhere with other mutants defective for P-body formation (Ramachandran *et al.* 2011; Shah *et al.* 2013). Moreover, a recent study found that P-body formation is partially restored in the $edc3\Delta$ $lsm4\Delta C$ strain following the entry into stationary phase (Rao and Parker 2017). The presence of P-bodies at this time could explain the modest CLS defect observed for this mutant. In all, the results here are consistent with the absence of both granules having a more significant effect on the CLS than the loss of either single RNP structure alone.

Kinases that localize to both P-bodies and SGs are present in novel foci in the ELU Δ strain

One of the primary reasons for generating the ELU Δ strain was to test how the absence of these RNP granules would affect the localization of proteins that are associated with both of these structures. In a previous study, we identified four protein kinases that were localized to both P-bodies and SGs (Figure 3, A and B) (Shah *et al.* 2014). These four enzymes are the cyclin-dependent protein kinase Cdc28, the mitogen-activated protein kinase Fus3, the Ndr/LATS family member Cbk1, and the MAPK kinase Pbs2. Therefore, we assessed the localization of each kinase in wild-type, *edc3* Δ *lsm4* Δ *C*, *ubp3* Δ , and ELU Δ cells at the indi-

cated times. Complete results are shown for Cdc28 but similar observations were made with each of the four protein kinases. Cdc28 was found to be in foci in all strains after 3 or 6 days of growth in the supplemented minimal medium (Figure 3C). This was expected for the wild type, and the two mutants that are specifically defective for the formation of either P-bodies ($edc3\Delta$ $lsm4\Delta C$) or SGs (*ubp3* Δ). However, we also found that Cdc28 was still in foci in the ELU Δ strain that lacks both of these RNP structures (Figure 3C). The fraction of ELU Δ cells with these Cdc28 foci was very similar to that observed for the wild-type strain although the kinetics of foci appearance were delayed in this mutant. Similar results were seen with each of the other three kinases: Cbk1, Fus3, and Pbs2; all were present in foci in ELU Δ cells as they approach stationary phase (Figure 3D). Moreover, these foci appear to be the same structures as we observed strong colocalization between Cdc28 and Pbs2 in the ELU Δ mutant (Figure 3E). Therefore, these four protein kinases remain associated with foci even though ELU Δ cells appear to lack both P-bodies and SGs.

A potential explanation for the above observations is that the foci in ELU Δ cells might still be P-body or SG-related structures that lack the constituents examined here. If so, we would expect these kinases to be directed to foci by the same underlying machinery in wild-type and ELU Δ cells. To test this possibility, we determined the sequence elements within Pbs2 that were important for foci localization. The Pbs2 protein consists of three distinct domains: an



Figure 3 Protein kinases that localize to P-bodies and stress granules (SGs) are present in novel foci in the ELU Δ strain. (A and B) Cdc28 and Cbk1 were present in both P-body and SG foci. Cells expressing the indicated reporters were grown in SC medium containing 1% glucose and 1% sorbitol (SCDS) for 3–4 days at 30°. Fluorescence microscopy was then used to assess the colocalization of Cdc28-GFP [(A) 3 days] or Cbk1-mCh (mCherry) [(B) 4 days] with the P-body markers Edc3-mCh (A) and Hrr25-GFP (B), or the SG reporter Pbp1-mCh. The percent colocalization is indicated in the merged image; see *Materials and Methods* for more details. (C) Cdc28 was present in foci in the ELU Δ strain. The indicated strains were grown for \leq 6 days in the rich medium yeast extract–peptone–adenine–dextrose and Cdc28-GFP foci formation was assessed by fluorescent microscopy. The percentage of cells with foci is indicated for each strain at day 6. (D) Cbk1, Fus3, and Pbs2 were also localized to foci in the ELU Δ strain. Wild-type (WT) and ELU Δ cells expressing the indicated protein kinase reporters were examined by fluorescence microscopy after 4 days of growth in SCDS medium at 30°. (E) Cdc28 and Pbs2 were present in the same foci in ELU Δ cells. WT and ELU Δ cells expressing Cdc28-mCh and Pbs2-CFP were grown in SCDS at 30° for 5 days before being analyzed by fluorescence microscopy. The white arrows point out foci containing both reporters and the percent colocalization is indicated. Bar, 5 μ m.

N-terminal domain (NTD), a central domain that is predicted to be intrinsically disordered (IDD), and a C-terminal protein kinase domain (Figure 4A). We assessed the subcellular localization of a series of GFP-tagged truncation products of Pbs2 (Figure 4B). These studies demonstrated that the kinase domain was both necessary and sufficient for foci localization in wild-type cells (Figure 4B). Neither the NTD nor the IDD was required for Pbs2 foci formation. This kinase domain fragment was also shown to colocalize efficiently with reporters for both P-bodies and SGs (Figure 4C). Thus, the kinase domain of Pbs2 was recruited to P-bodies and SGs in wild-type cells in a manner similar to that of the full-length protein. We next tested whether the kinase activity of Pbs2 was required for foci localization. For these studies, we generated a kinase-defective version of Pbs2 (Pbs2^{KD}) where a critical lysine residue within the active site, K389, was replaced with a methionine (Reiser *et al.* 2000). We found that this Pbs2^{KD} variant was less efficiently targeted to foci than the wild-type protein in control cells (Figure 4, D and E). This result was consistent with Pbs2 kinase activity being important for its normal association with P-bodies and SGs. In contrast, the Pbs2^{KD} variant was found to be localized to foci as well as the wild-type protein in ELU Δ cells (Figure 4, D and E). Thus, Pbs2 kinase activity was not required for foci localization in this mutant, suggesting that there are different Pbs2



Figure 4 The kinase activity of Pbs2 is required for its localization to foci in wild-type (WT) but not ELU Δ cells. (A) The domain structure of Pbs2. The N-terminal domain (NTD) is shown in white, the central domain containing an intrinsically disordered region (IDD) is shown in orange, and the C-terminal kinase domain is in black. The blue asterisk indicates the lysine residue at position 389 within the active site that is altered in the kinase-defective variant. (B) WT cells expressing the indicated GFP-tagged Pbs2 constructs under the control of the GPD promoter were grown for 1 or 5 days, in SC medium containing 1% glucose and 1% sorbitol (SCDS) at 30°. Foci formation was analyzed by fluorescence microscopy (left) and the percentage of cells containing foci was quantified (right). (C) The Pbs2 kinase domain was localized to both P-bodies and stress granules (SGs). Fluorescence microscopy was used to assess the colocalization between GFP-tagged versions of the indicated Pbs2 constructs, and the P-body or SG reporters Edc3 and Pbp1, respectively. The strains were grown to day 5 in SCDS medium as in (B) prior to analysis. The percent colocalization is indicated in the merged images. (D and E) WT and ELU Δ cells expressing the WT Pbs2, Pbs2^{WT}, or the catalytically inactive variant Pbs2^{KD} were grown for 1 or 5 days in SCDS medium at 30°. Foci formation was then assessed by fluorescence microscopy (D) and the percentage of cells with foci is shown in the graph (E). Bars, 5 μ m.

determinants necessary for foci association in wild-type and ELU Δ cells. Altogether, these data are consistent with the possibility of the Pbs2 foci in ELU Δ cells being structures distinct from P-bodies and SGs.

INQ/JUNQ, cytoQ, SGs, and P-bodies are distinct subcellular compartments

Since P-bodies and SGs can form in conditions that also result in proteotoxic stress, we set out to test whether the four kinases discussed above might be associated with a PQC compartment in ELU Δ cells. However, before we could assess this possibility, it was important to ensure that P-body and SG reporters were not normally associated with these structures, and vice versa, under the experimental conditions used here. Therefore, we examined a variety of reporters for the INQ/JUNQ and cytoQ compartments, and several examples of these analyses are shown in Figure 5. The studies presented took advantage of a destabilized version of the luciferase enzyme (LucDM) from Photinus pyralis that has been shown to associate with both of these PQC compartments (Gupta et al. 2011; Specht et al. 2011). The particular GFP-LucDM-NLS reporter used here contains an NLS and was found to be predominantly targeted to INQ/JUNQ (Figure 5A) (Miller et al. 2015a). As a marker for cytoQ, we used Hsp42 fusion proteins that contained either an mCh or eCitrine fluorescent tag (Specht et al. 2011). The microscopy was performed after cells containing the appropriate reporters were shifted from 30 to 37° for 90 min in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor MG132. Both INQ/JUNQ and cytoQ were readily visible in cells after this experimental regimen. Our results confirmed previous work indicating that there is a very close association between the INQ/JUNQ compartment and the nucleus, and that cytoQ and INQ/JUNQ are distinct compartments in the cell (Figure 5A) (Miller et al. 2015a; Sontag et al. 2017). Importantly, we found no significant colocalization between markers for these two PQC compartments and reporters associated with either P-bodies or SGs; the level of colocalization was typically < 2% (Figure 5, B and C). We did note that SGs were sometimes detected in the vicinity of cytoQ (\sim 10–20% of cells with both types of foci), but the physiological significance of this localization is not yet clear. Thus, these data indicated that P-bodies, SGs, cytoQ, and INQ/ JUNQ are all separate compartments within the yeast cell.

Cdc28 and the other protein kinases localize to the INQ/JUNQ compartment in cells exposed to a proteotoxic stress

To determine the identity of the Cdc28 compartment in ELU Δ cells, we examined the localization of a GFP-Ubc9^{ts} reporter that has been used to study protein homeostasis in eukaryotic cells (Kaganovich *et al.* 2008; Brielle *et al.* 2015). This protein is a thermolabile variant of the *S. cerevisiae* small ubiquitin-like modifier ligase Ubc9, which has been shown to misfold at temperatures > 33° (Betting and Seufert 1996). Although this reporter can associate with both cytoQ and INQ/JUNQ when misfolded, it accumulates predominantly within the latter when proteasome activity is also inhibited (Kaganovich

et al. 2008; Specht *et al.* 2011). Here, we assessed the colocalization of Cdc28 and GFP-Ubc9^{ts} in the ELU Δ mutant, and control strains that contain P-bodies and/or SGs.

As observed previously, GFP-Ubc9ts puncta were readily apparent in cells incubated at 37° in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor MG132 (Figure 6A). These PQC foci were less abundant in wild-type cells grown at 30° or when cells contained the wild-type Ubc9 protein at either temperature (Figure 6A) (Kaganovich et al. 2008). Interestingly, we found that the Cdc28 foci in ELU Δ cells were coincident with these INQ/JUNQ structures (Figure 6B). Complete colocalization between the Cdc28-mCh and GFP-Ubc9ts reporters was observed in these studies. Similar results were obtained for Fus3 and Pbs2 with the INQ/JUNQ reporter, GFP-LucDM-NLS, described above (Figure 6B). Finally, Pbs2 also exhibited significant colocalization with a third reporter for the INO/JUNO compartment, GFP-VHL-NLS (Figure 6B) (Kaganovich et al. 2008; Specht et al. 2011). The mammalian VHL protein is a component of the VHL tumor suppressor complex and is unstable in the absence of the ElonginBC subunits of this complex (Ivan and Kaelin 2001; McClellan et al. 2005). Altogether, these results demonstrated that the protein kinase colocalization was not specific to a particular INQ/JUNQ reporter. Instead, these observations indicated that this suite of four protein kinases was associated with a well-characterized PQC compartment in cells where P-body and SG assembly is abrogated.

However, this colocalization was not unique to the ELU Δ mutant as Cdc28 was also associated with the INQ/JUNQ compartment in the three isogenic control strains: $ubp3\Delta$, $edc3\Delta$ lsm4 ΔC , and the wild type. In each case, Cdc28 exhibited a significant degree of colocalization with GFP-Ubc9ts under conditions that induce INQ/JUNQ formation (incubation at 37° with proteasome inhibition) (Figure 6C). The presence of INQ/JUNQ foci is consistent with an accumulation of the misfolded protein in these cells and thus of an elevated level of proteotoxic stress (Sontag et al. 2017). In contrast, Cdc28 was found to colocalize predominantly with the SG marker, Pbp1, when these control strains were grown at 30° (Figure 3A; see below). One interpretation of these data is that Cdc28 is sensitive to the PQC conditions in the cell and is prone to misfold, and be targeted to INQ/JUNQ, when protein homeostasis is perturbed. In this vein, it is important to reiterate that Cdc28 was present in discrete foci in the ELU Δ mutant at 30° in the absence of INQ/JUNQ reporter expression (Figure 3C). Moreover, we found that Cdc28 was also targeted to novel foci when ELU Δ cells that had been grown for 1 day at 30° were shifted to 37° for 90 min in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor MG132 (Figure 6D). This protein kinase is not normally found in foci at this stage of growth (see Figure 3C). In wild-type cells, Cdc28 was found to be localized normally to SGs and P-bodies following a similar shift to 37° with proteasome inhibition (Figure 6E). In all, these data indicated that $ELU\Delta$ cells may be subject to an elevated level of proteotoxic stress that in turn results in the association of Cdc28 with the INQ/JUNQ compartment.



Figure 5 The protein quality control compartments, the intranuclear quality control/juxtanuclear quality control compartment (INQ/JUNQ) and CytoQ, are distinct from P-bodies (PBs) and stress granules (SGs). (A) INQ/JUNQ and CytoQ are distinct compartments in yeast cells. Wild-type cells were grown to day 1 in SC medium containing 1% glucose and 1% sorbitol (SCDS) at 30°, and then shifted to 37° for 90 min in the presence of 100 μ M of the proteasome inhibitor MG132. The localization of the indicated reporters was then assessed by fluorescence microscopy. GFP-LucDM-NLS is a marker for INQ/JUNQ, Hsp42-mCherry (mCh) for CytoQ, and Nup49-mCh for the nuclear envelope. (B) PBs, SGs, and CytoQ are all distinct compartments in the yeast cytoplasm. Colocalization between the indicated reporters was assessed by fluorescence microscopy in wild-type cells after 1 day of growth in SCDS medium at 30°. Hsp42-eCitrine is a reporter for CytoQ, and Edc3-mCh and Pbp1-mCh are reporters for PBs and SGs, respectively. (C) PBs, SGs, and INQ/JUNQ are distinct compartments in the yeast cell. Wild-type cells expressing the indicated reporters were grown for 1 day in SCDS medium at 30°. The cells were then shifted to 37° for 90 min in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor MG132, prior to being examined by fluorescence microscopy. Bars, 5 µm.

Cells lacking P-bodies and SGs exhibit potential defects in protein homeostasis

The observed sequestration of misfolded proteins into specific subcellular locales provides us with a means to assess the state of protein homeostasis in living cells (Miller *et al.* 2015b; Sontag

et al. 2017). Specifically, this insight can be gained by monitoring changes in the number and/or size of these PQC compartments. Therefore, we assessed the frequency of INQ/JUNQ foci formation in the ELU Δ mutant and the appropriate control strains. It is important to note here that a PQC defect has been detected previously in the *ubp3* Δ mutant (Oling *et al.* 2014) (see below). For these studies, we examined strains expressing the GFP-Ubc9ts reporter after a 90 min incubation at 30° in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor MG132. Under these conditions, the wild-type control exhibited a low basal level of INQ/JUNQ foci formation (1.6%; Figure 7, A and B). The fraction of $edc3\Delta$ $lsm4\Delta C$ cells with foci was similar to the wild type (0.3%). Consistent with the afore-mentioned PQC defect, we found that $\sim 13\%$ of $ubp3\Delta$ cells contained a notable INQ/JUNQ focus. Importantly, this number was found to increase by more than twofold again in the ELU Δ strain (27.3%; Figure 7, A and B). This latter result suggested that the loss of P-bodies had a negative impact, either directly or indirectly, upon the PQC system of cells that were already lacking SG foci. At 37°, the fraction of cells with GFP-Ubc9^{ts} foci was similar for the $ubp3\Delta$ and ELU Δ strains (Figure 7, A and B). In a separate experiment with the wild-type Ubc9 reporter, we also observed a twofold increase in foci formation from 16.4% in the $ubp3\Delta$ mutant to 38.4% in the ELU Δ strain. In this latter instance, the cells were examined after a 90 min incubation at 37° in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor MG132. Collectively, these data suggested that there may be PQC defects associated with the ELU Δ strain, and that P-bodies and SGs might therefore have a role in the maintenance of normal protein homeostasis within the eukaryotic cell.

Discussion

We are interested in identifying the biological activities associated with the RNP granules known as the P-body and SG. The work here extends these efforts by examining the phenotypes associated with a yeast mutant that is defective for the assembly of both of these RNP structures. These analyses provided a number of valuable insights. First, we demonstrated that it is possible to generate a mutant that is defective for the formation of P-bodies and SGs. Both types of RNP foci were largely absent from ELU Δ cells at times when these structures are typically abundant in the wild type. Second, we found that this ELU Δ mutant was viable and that it exhibited a near-normal growth rate on standard yeast media. However, this mutant did display a diminished ability to survive during the stationary phase of growth. This survival is often referred to as the CLS of this yeast. Third, we found that proteins that typically associate with both P-bodies and SGs in wild-type cells are instead found in a recently described PQC compartment in ELU Δ cells. This compartment, known as INQ or JUNQ, has been shown to house soluble misfolded proteins in cells that have been exposed to proteotoxic stress (Kaganovich et al. 2008). Fourth, we found that the frequency of INQ/JUNQ foci formation was elevated in ELU Δ cells relative to the wild type and other controls. The



Figure 6 The protein kinases that localize to both P-bodies and stress granules (SGs) in wild-type (WT) cells are instead associated with the intranuclear quality control/juxtanuclear quality control (INQ/JUNQ) compartment in ELUA cells. (A) WT cells expressing the GFP-tagged, galactose-inducible Ubc9^{WT} or Ubc9^{ts} proteins were grown in SC medium containing 2% galactose at 30°, and then shifted to 37° (where indicated) in the presence of the proteasome inhibitor, MG132, for 90 min. The cells were then analyzed by fluorescence microscopy. (B) The Cdc28, Fus3, and Pbs2 enzymes are associated with the INQ/JUNQ compartment in ELUA cells. ELUA cells expressing the indicated reporters were grown as in (A) before being examined by fluorescence microscopy. The percentage of colocalization is indicated where appropriate in the merged image. GFP-Ubc9^{ts}, GFP-LucDM-NLS, and GFP-VHL-NLS are all reporters for the INQ/JUNQ compartment. See the text for additional details. (C) Cdc28 colocalization with the GFP-Ubc9^{ts} reporter was assessed in the WT, *ubp3*Δ, and *edc3*Δ *lsm4*ΔC control strains as described in (B). (D) WT and ELUΔ cells expressing Cdc28-mCherry (mCh) were grown at 30° for 1 day in 2% galactose and then shifted to 37° in the presence of MG132 for 90 min. (E) WT cells expressing Cdc28-GFP, and either mCh-tagged Edc3 or Pbp1, were grown for 1 day in SC medium containing 1% glucose and 1% sorbitol at 30°, and then shifted to 37° in the presence of MG132 as in (D). Cells containing both -mCh and -GFP foci were counted, and the percentage of these cells displaying foci colocalization is indicated. Bars, 5 μ m.

increased prevalence of this PQC compartment is consistent with there being a defect in the maintenance of normal protein homeostasis in this mutant. Altogether, these data suggest that P-bodies and SGs may contribute to PQC in eukaryotic cells during certain periods of stress. This potential role for P-bodies and SGs in PQC was supported by two different lines of evidence. The first arose from an analysis of four protein kinases, including Cdc28, that associate with both P-bodies and SGs in yeast cells (Shah *et al.* 2014). This localization is somewhat unusual as most



Figure 7 ELU Δ cells lacking P-bodies and stress granules (SGs) exhibit a potential defect in protein homeostasis. The frequency of intranuclear quality control/juxtanuclear quality control (INQ/JUNQ) compartment foci formation was elevated in the ELU Δ strain. Wild-type (WT), *ubp3* Δ , and ELU Δ cells expressing the GFP-tagged, galactose-inducible Ubc9^{ts} reporter were grown in 2% galactose at 30°. The proteasome inhibitor MG132 was then added to a final concentration of 100 μ M, and the cells were incubated at either 30 or 37° for 90 min before being analyzed by fluorescence microscopy. A graph showing the fraction of cells with GFP-Ubc9^{ts} foci is shown in (A) and representative microscopy images are shown in (B).

constituents are found primarily in one granule or the other. Interestingly, we found that these enzymes were still located within discrete puncta in ELU Δ cells and that these structures appeared to correspond to INQ/JUNQ foci. These results are significant as Cdc28 was found to associate with this PQC compartment in wild-type cells that were subject to a proteotoxic stress (see Figure 6). One interpretation of this latter result is that these protein kinases are prone to misfold and be targeted to INQ/JUNQ when protein homeostasis is per-

turbed. Therefore, the localization to INQ/JUNQ in ELU Δ cells could be an indication that the PQC system is compromised in some way in this mutant.

The second line of evidence came from a study of INQ/ JUNQ foci formation in particular yeast mutants. Specifically, we found that $ubp3\Delta$ cells lacking SGs exhibited a PQC defect that was exemplified by an increase in INQ/JUNQ foci formation relative to the wild type. This defect was further exacerbated by the introduction of mutations that disrupt P-body formation (Figure 7). These studies therefore suggest that both SGs and P-bodies might be involved in normal protein homeostasis. However, it is important to note here that a prior study suggested different underlying reasons for the PQC defects observed with the $ubp3\Delta$ mutant (Oling et al. 2014). One suggestion by Oling et al. was that Ubp3 might facilitate proteasomal degradation by removing the ubiquitin that adorns the misfolded proteins present within INQ/ JUNQ. Ubp3 is a member of a family of ubiquitin proteases that remove ubiquitin moieties from specific sets of protein substrates (Baker et al. 1992). Therefore, the PQC defects observed with the $ubp3\Delta$ mutant could be due to the loss of SGs and/or to other activities associated with Ubp3 protease function. Although further studies are required to determine the relative contributions of each of these pathways, we do want to note here that Ubp3 catalytic activity is required for SG assembly, and that Ubp3 is physically associated with SGs in both yeast and human cells (Wang et al. 2012; Takahashi et al. 2013; Nostramo and Herman 2016; Nostramo et al. 2016).

The manner in which these RNP granules could influence protein homeostasis remains to be determined. One possibility suggested by the results here is that specific sets of proteins might be stabilized by their association with P-bodies and SGs during particular types of stress. A failure to associate with these RNP granules could lead to the misfolding and subsequent localization of these proteins to a PQC compartment, like INQ/JUNQ. Alternatively, the four protein kinases examined here could be misfolded prior to their association with P-bodies or SGs. In this case, these RNP granules would be functioning very much like the PQC compartments discussed here by sequestering particular sets of improperly folded polypeptides. However, it is important to note that none of the model misfolded proteins examined to date have been found at P-bodies or SGs to any significant degree (Figure 5) (Sontag et al. 2017). We have also found that a thermolabile version of Cdc28 was targeted to novel foci and did not associate with P-bodies when cells were shifted to an elevated temperature that induces misfolding (S. Xing and P. K. Herman, unpublished results). Finally, the effects on PQC in ELU Δ cells could be more indirect and due to a secondary consequence of losing these RNP granules, or to other defects associated with the mutations used here (Oling et al. 2014). Determining which of these models best explains the data here will clearly require further study.

In summary, the work here points to a potential role for P-bodies and SGs in the maintenance of protein homeostasis. Although such an activity has not yet been ascribed to P-bodies, a number of studies have alluded to a potential role for SGs in PQC. For example, recent work has found that Ubc9ts and other misfolded proteins are associated with a small fraction of SGs in mammalian cells that have been treated with a heat stress (Mateju et al. 2017). However, this study suggested that the presence of these misfolded proteins alters the physical state of these RNP granules and that cells appear to have developed mechanisms to prevent this accumulation of misfolded protein. In addition, it has been reported that an extreme heat stress can trigger the formation of SG-like structures in yeast that contain aggregates of misfolded proteins (Cherkasov et al. 2013). Finally, particular chaperone proteins have been found to be associated with SG foci in both yeast and mammalian cells (Walters et al. 2015; Mateju et al. 2017). These observations, together with the studies here, suggest that P-bodies and SGs could play an active role in POC during exposures to particular types of stress. This possibility is intriguing as recent work has identified links between these RNP granules and human proteinopathies, like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, that appear to be caused by defects associated with the protein folding apparatus (Li et al. 2013; Aguzzi and Altmeyer 2016; Feng et al. 2018; Klaips et al. 2018). This potential connection highlights the importance of defining the precise roles that P-bodies and SGs might have in the maintenance of protein homeostasis in eukaryotic cells.

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