Supporting Information

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SI Text

Protein Expression and Sample Preparation. The published expression and purification procedures (1) were modified to increase the yield and to control aggregation of the purified WSK3. The yield was increased by approximately tenfold to \approx 200 mg/liter by using the Marley protocol and growth at 15 °C (2). After growth at 37 °C in LB media containing 10 μ g/ml kanamycin to an OD₆₀₀ of 0.6, the culture was concentrated fourfold into M9 media with ¹⁵N-(NH₄)₂SO₄ and 1% glucose for ¹⁵N-labeled WSK3, or $15N-(NH_4)_2SO_4$ and 0.4% $13C$ -glucose for $15N$, $13C$ -labeled WSK3. Because reasonable spectral resolution could be achieved with 15N- or 15N,13C-labeled samples, deuterium labeling was not attempted. The cultures were grown at 15 °C for 2 h before induction with 1 mM IPTG. Induction was continued for 5 days at 15 °C. Cells were lysed by sonication, and the soluble extract, obtained after centrifugation at 370 kg for 30 min, was immediately subjected to ion-exchange chromatography using 50 ml Q-Sepharose Fast Flow (GE Healthcare) resin. The WSK3 eluting with 350 mM KCl was essentially pure, but produced poor NMR spectra because of higher-order soluble aggregation (as determined by size-exclusion chromatography). To prepare tetramer samples, WSK3 was diluted to ≤ 0.4 mg/ml in 0.1% trifluoroacetic acid (TFA, used as a counter ion), and reversephase chromatography was performed by using a C4 column. WSK3 was eluted with about 50% acetonitrile in 0.1% TFA, and acetonitrile was then completely removed by evaporation under a stream of nitrogen gas. The resultant solution was further diluted tenfold with water before lyophilization. The lyophilized samples were then dissolved in 95% H_2O and 5% D₂O. The pH was measured at 4.5 by using an Orion 98–63 microelectrode (Thermo Electron). For measuring the effects of ionic strength, KCl or NaCl solution was titrated directly into the NMR tubes.

Dynamic Light Scattering (DLS). DLS was performed by using a DynaPro plate reader and analyzed with Dynamics software (Wyatt Technology). Aliquots of NMR samples, taken directly from the NMR tubes without dilution and with stepped dilution, were measured. The scattering data were processed by using the regularization analysis protocol in the Dynamics software. Representative WSK3 autocorrelation graph and regularization plots for radius and diffusion coefficient distributions are shown in [Fig. S1.](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF1) The dominating population has a diffusion coefficient of 5.1×10^{-11} m²/s and a hydrodynamic radius of ≈ 52 Å.

Circular Dichroism (CD). CD analysis was performed by using a Jasco Model J-810 spectrophotometer and analyzed by using the CDSSTR algorithm at the DICHROWEB server (3, 4). The far-UV CD spectrum of WSK3 was measured at a concentration of 26 μ g/ml. A CD spectrum of WSK3 is depicted in [Fig. S3,](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF3) showing a highly helical structure.

Details of NMR Experiments. NMR measurements were recorded on Bruker Avance 600, 700, and 800 MHz spectrometers with Topspin 1.3 software (Bruker Instruments). All spectrometers were equipped with cryogenic triple-resonance probes with *z* axis pulsed field gradients. NMR pulse sequences from the Topspin sequence library, including HNCO, HNCA, HNCACB, and CBCACONH for sequential assignment, HCCH-TOCSY for side chain assignment, 3D ¹⁵N- and ¹³C-filtered or -edited NOESY for distance constraints, TROSY-IPAP for residual dipole coupling $(5, 6)$, HSQC-based R_1 and R_2 sequences for ¹⁵N relaxation parameters, HSQC-based CPMG method for R_2

periments were acquired typically with complex time domain size of 1024 (direct observation dimension) \times 32–80 (filter dimension) \times 256 (indirect observation dimension). The mixing times were 60 ms and 120 ms for ¹⁵N-edited NOESY and 150 ms for ¹³C-edited NOESY. The intersubunit NOE connectivity was determined by using a ¹³C-edited, ¹³C/¹⁵N-filtered 3D NOESY pulse sequence and a mixture of 1:1 molar ratio of $^{13}C/^{15}N$ uniform labeled and unlabeled WSK3. For RDC measurements, an anisotropic sample was prepared by using stretched 5% uncharged acrylamide gel following a published method (7). RDC data were acquired with $2,048 \times 512$ complex data points to ensure accurate measurements of resonance frequencies. Longitudinal and transverse relaxation rate constants, R_1 and R_2 , and the steady-state ¹⁵N-[¹H} NOE of the backbone amide ¹⁵N were measured at 14.1 and 16.5 T by using 4-, 2.5-, and 3-s relaxation delays, respectively. R_1 was recorded by using 11 delay values: 0.01, 0.1, 0.2, 0.3, 0.5, 0.7, 1.0, 1.5, 2.0, 3.0, and 5.0 s. *R*₂ was recorded by using 12 delay values: 0.016, 0.032, 0.064, 0.096, 0.128, 0.160, 0.192, 0.256, 0.320, 0.480, 0.768, and 1.280 s. The steady-state $^{15}N-[1H]$ NOE was measured with and without ^{1}H saturation in an interleaved fashion. Proton saturation was achieved by using a train of 120° high-power pulses separated by 5 ms for the duration of 3 s. The *R*² dispersion measurements were carried out at 16.5 T and 10 °C by using the relaxationcompensated, constant-time, Carr–Purcell–Meiboom–Gill (CPMG) sequence (8, 9) with the following 10 CPMG field strengths (ν_{CPMG}): 33.33, 66.67, 100.00, 133.33, 200.00, 266.67, 333.33, 400.00, 500.00, and 666.67 Hz. The reference spectrum was acquired without the CPMG period. A relaxation delay of 2.5 s was used.

dispersion measurements, and DOSY for the determination of the translational diffusion constant, were used without modification or with only minor modifications. Triple-resonance ex-

NMR Data Processing and Analyses. NMRPipe (10) and Topspin were used to process all NMR data. Autoassign (11) and Sparky (12) were used to aid the resonance assignments. Backbone angles were predicted from chemical shifts by using the semiempirical method implemented in TALOS (13) in the NMRPipe software package.

The 3D structure was determined by using backbone angular constraints derived from chemical shifts and distance constraints obtained from 3D 15N- and 13C-filtered and -edited NOESY data, as well as the hydrogen bonding restraints and N-H residual dipolar coupling restraints for residues where these constraints were accurately measured. Initial NOE cross-peak assignments and structure calculations were carried out by using CYANA 2.1 (14, 15). An in-house script was used to assist the NOE assignments manually by matching the unassigned NOE peaks from the CYANA output with the resonance assignment table. As a standard protocol, NOE assignments and structure calculations were iterated such that the calculated preliminary structures were used to correct restraint violations and to reduce assignment ambiguities until a self-consistent solution to the entire dataset was obtained. Xplor-NIH (16) was then used to calculate and refine the structures with and without the RDC restraints. In this process, additional long-range distance restraints were assigned manually on the basis of the structures calculated in the previous iteration step. The refined structures were analyzed by using MOLMOL (17) and Procheck-NMR (18). Structural statistics are given in [Table S1.](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=ST1)

The likely formation of several intra- and intersubunit salt

bridges has been revealed by the analyses of the refined solution structure of WSK3. [Tables S2 and S3](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=ST2) list the key NOE distance constraints in support of the conclusions. Examples of NOE cross-peaks from different regions in the protein are given in [Fig.](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF5) [S5](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF5) to illustrate the quality of the 3D NOESY spectra used for generating the distance restraints. More complete residue pairing for the 415 long-range NOE constraints is depicted in [Fig.](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF6) [S6](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF6)*C*.

NMR Diffusion Measurements. To determine the dominating oligomerization state of the protein contributing to the observed NMR signals, translational diffusion coefficients were measured by using diffusion-weighted NMR spectroscopy for the very same NMR samples used for the structure determination. Based on the Stokes law and the Sutherland–Einstein relationship between the diffusion coefficient and the frictional coefficient, a hydrodynamic radius, R_{H} , can be estimated by using R_{H} = $k_B T/6\pi\eta DF_p$, where k_B is the Boltzmann constant, *T* the absolute temperature, η the viscosity, *D* the diffusion coefficient, and F_p the Perrin shape correction factor (19, 20). [Fig. S2](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF2) depicts the DOSY spectra of WSK3 and water at 30 °C. Only a single diffusion coefficient is associated with the protein peaks. The measured diffusion coefficients are $(2.1 \pm 0.2) \times 10^{-9}$ m²/s for H₂O and $(5.8 \pm 0.6) \times 10^{-11}$ m²/s for WSK3. The latter is in excellent agreement with the major population in the distribution determined by DLS. The estimated F_p values for water and for the WSK3 monomer and tetramer are 1.00, 1.09, and 1.00, respectively. By using water diffusion as an internal reference, it can be concluded that the effective hydrodynamic radius of the diffusing WSK3 particle is 49–51 Å, corresponding to a hydrodynamic molecular volume of $(4.9 \pm 1.2) \times 10^5$ Å³ for a monomer of cylindrical symmetry or $(5.4 \pm 1.3) \times 10^5 \text{\AA}^3$ for a tetramer of cylindrical symmetry after accounting as usual for hydration $(21-24)$.

Analyses of WSK3 Chemical Shifts. The C_{α} chemical shift is predictive of the backbone torsion angle and, hence, the secondary structure. It is thus of interest to compare the chemical shifts of WSK3 in this study with the corresponding values of KcsA in the literature (25). Despite the very different sample conditions for the KcsA and WSK3 NMR measurements (50 °C in detergent micelles for KcsA versus 20 °C in water for WSK3), the C_{α} chemical shifts of the corresponding residues in the two proteins are quite similar. [Fig. S4](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF4) shows C_{α} chemical shift correlations between WSK3 and KcsA. Similarly strong correlations also exist for the backbone N and C'. Although the correlation between backbone amide proton (HN) chemical shifts of the two proteins is not as strong, the HN chemical shift range for WSK3 and KcsA is similar. Most of the WSK3 HN resonances are concentrated between 7.82 and 8.45 ppm, yielding a 0.63-ppm spread. Most of the KcsA HN peaks clustered between 7.60 and 8.25 ppm, yielding a 0.65-ppm spread. Despite the narrow range, both KcsA and WSK3 are largely helical, as confirmed by the CD data.

Analyses of WSK3 Dynamics. The ¹⁵N relaxation parameters and $15N-[1H]$ NOE were analyzed qualitatively by using the reduced spectral density mapping method (26, 27) and quantitatively by using the extended model-free approach (28). A ¹⁵N-¹H internuclear bond distance of 1.02 \AA and an ¹⁵N chemical shift

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anisotropy of 172 ppm were used, in agreement with the NMR dynamics analysis of KcsA (29). Together, these values account for bond librations prevailing in the solid states (30, 31). The experimental R_2/R_1 ratios, and the *J* (0), $J(\omega_N)$, and $J(0.87\omega_H)$ values (with ω_N and ω_H denoting the ¹⁵N and ¹H Larmor angular velocities) obtained from the reduced spectral density mapping analysis (27) of the data shown in Fig. 4 *A*–*C*, are depicted in [Fig.](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF9) [S9.](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF9) In agreement with the ¹⁵N R_1 and R_2 profile, the R_2/R_1 ratios and *J*(0) values are low and highly heterogeneous, and the $J(0.87\omega_H)$ values are high, as compared with typical globular protein values. Assuming isotropic global diffusion, the estimates for the global correlation time, τ_m , are 5.3 ns from R_2/R_1 ratio (32) and 3.8 ns from $J(0)$ (33) . Clearly, these estimates are inadequate for a \approx 45-kDa tetramer at 20 °C, be it spherical or of lower symmetry. Exchange domination of R_2 or $J(0)$ has been ruled out experimentally (no τ_{cp} -dependence of CPMG) and by the field-dependence of R_2 or $\tilde{J}(0)$, both of which are larger at 14.1 T than at 16.5 T, whereas the opposite trend would be expected from the ω^2 dependence of fast conformational exchange contributions (34). Thus, the unusual values of the experimental relaxation parameters must be related to complex dynamics, notably nanosecond slow motions, affecting the entire WSK3 backbone. In this case, the R_2/R_1 -based (or $J(0)$ -based) determination of the global diffusion tensor is no longer appropriate, and other means must be used.

As discussed in the main text, multiple lines of experimental evidence suggest tetramer prevalence in the WSK3 sample. Chill *et al.* (29) studied the detergent-solubilized KcsA tetramer with ¹⁵N spin relaxation methods; the global correlation time, τ_m , was set to 38 ± 2.5 ns at 50° C. Scaling this number by $45.5/120$ (the denominator corresponds to the average molecular mass of the KcsA/detergent aggregates) and further by 1.2 [corresponding to a typical 1.2-fold increase in τ_m per 10 °C temperature decrease (35)] leads to 25 ns at 20 °C. This agrees with τ_m of \approx 23 ns for a sphere having a molecular mass of 45.5 kDa.

In the model-free approach, the global motion of the protein, τ_m , and the effective local motion of the observed probe, τ_e , are assumed to be decoupled because $\tau_e \ll \tau_m$. The local ordering and (axial) magnetic frames are implicitly collinear. This yields the following simple spectral density (36):

$$
J(\omega) = S^2 \tau_m / (1 + \tau_m^2 \omega^2) + (1 - S^2) \tau_e' / (1 + \tau_e'^2 \omega^2), \quad [1]
$$

where $S²$ denotes the square of a generalized order parameter and $1/\tau_e = 1/\tau_m + 1/\tau_e \approx 1/\tau_e$. When Eq. 1 cannot fit the data, the extended model-free spectral density (28), which allows for a slow local motion associated with S_s^2 and τ_s , and a fast local motion associated with S_f^2 and τ_f , is used. All of the dynamic modes involved are assumed to be decoupled. The form of this spectral density is given by ref. 28:

$$
J(\omega) = S_f^2[S_s^2 \tau_m/(1 + \omega^2 \tau_m^2) + [1 - S_s^2] \tau_s'(1 + \omega^2 \tau_s'^2)]
$$

+
$$
[1 - S_f^2] \tau_f'(1 + \omega^2 \tau_f'^2)
$$
 [2]

Often a reduced form of Eq. 2 is used by setting τ_f to zero. In this case the independent variables in the data-fitting process include S_s^2 , τ_s , and S_f^2 , with τ_m determined separately as outlined above. We used this form of Eq. **2** as implemented in the program DYNAMICS (37).

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Fig. S1. Dynamic light scattering of WSK3. (*a*) Autocorrelation of the scattering intensity (blue dots) as a function of time. The magenta curve is the theoretical fitting using regularization analysis. (*b* and *c*) The resulting size distribution is plotted as a function of hydrodynamic radius (*b*) and diffusion coefficient (*c*). In this particular sample, 84% of the mass is associated with $R \approx 47$ –62 Å (weighted average = 52 Å), in excellent agreement with the NMR diffusion measurements of the tetramer population. The minor population with hydrodynamic radius of ~150 Å is probably from loosely associated trimers (or higher oligomers) of the tetramers.

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Fig. S2. Determination of oligomerization state of WSK3 in water by NMR diffusion measurements. Two-dimensional diffusion-weighted DOSY spectra of WSK3 were acquired at 30 °C with water suppression. A 1D reference spectrum is shown on the top. The *Inset* shows the diffusion of water in the same sample and under the same experimental conditions but without water suppression. The vertical axis is the diffusion coefficient, D, on a logarithmic scale.

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Fig. S3. CD spectrum of WSK3. An α -helical content of \approx 75–80% was estimated by using the CDSSTR algorithm. This is similar to the 70% helical content estimated by NMR analysis.

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Fig. S4. Comparison of C_a chemical shifts of unmutated residues in WSK3 at pH 4.5 with those of the corresponding residues in KcsA monomer at pH 4.2 (a) and KcsA tetramer at pH 6.0 (*b*). The KcsA chemical shift data were taken from BMRB Entry No. 7428 and No. 15853. The red lines are linear regression of the data, yielding a correlation coefficient of 0.98 and 0.95, and slopes of 1.08 \pm 0.03 and 1.06 \pm 0.05 in *A* and *B*, respectively.

A C

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Fig. S5. Examples of 3D NOE connectivity from different regions in WSK3. (*A*) 15N-edited 3D NOESY strip plots for residues in the outer helix (H4, E5, R6), pore helix (D43, A44, I45, W46), selectivity filter (T54, V55, G56), and inner helix (A77, G78, I79). Several interresidue NOE cross-peaks are labeled to the left of the strips, whereas the intraresidue cross-peaks are not labeled. The spectral region from 5 to 6.8 ppm is excluded. The amide ¹⁵N chemical shift for each slice is indicated on the top of the strips, and the amide proton chemical shift is indicated at the bottom of each slice.

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Fig. S5 *continued*. (B) ¹³C-edited 3D NOESY slices at the Pro C δ , Ile C β , and Phe/Tyr C β regions. The assigned NOE cross-peaks of P34, P42, P62, I39, I45, I79, F82, F93, Y57, and Y61 are indicated by connecting lines. The spin pairs associated with these and other NOE cross-peaks and the number of intra-subunit distance restraints for individual residues are summarized in [Figs. S6](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF6)*c* and S7.

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Fig. S5 *continued***.** (*C*) Several representative slices from 13C-edited and 13C- and 15N-filtered 3D NOESY collected on a 1:1 mixture of unlabeled protein and ¹³C and ¹⁵N uniform labeled protein. Slices depicting L89 Ca at 57.0 ppm, Asp C_B at 42.6 ppm, Ala Ca at 53.0 ppm, Arg C₈ or Lys Ce at 40.7 ppm and 43.3 ppm, Glu C γ at 33.0 ppm, and Gln C β at 28.1 ppm are shown. These are intersubunit NOE cross-peaks as labeled.

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Fig. S6. Long-range intra- and intersubunit NOE connectivity was determined by using heteronuclear isotope-edited and isotope-filtered 3D NOESY experiments with uniformly 13C/15N-labeled samples and with 1:1 mixtures of 13C/15N-labeled and unlabeled samples. (*a*) Examples of intersubunit NOE cross-peaks between W46 and R68. (*b*) Corresponding distance restraints depicted on the determined structures (only two adjacent subunits in the tetramer are shown). (*c*) Connectivity plot summarizing intrasubunit long-range NOEs (black) and intersubunit long-range NOEs (red). Note that each point in *C* can represent more than one NOE cross-peak. For example, the red point at the crossing between W46 and R68 represents 5 NOE restraints shown in *a* and *b*. It should also be noted that whereas all arginine backbone resonances in WSK3 are unambiguously assigned, the arginine side-chain peaks are overlapped. The ambiguity in the assignment of the peaks shown in *a* and *b* was reduced in the iterative structure calculation, in which additional intersubunit NOE cross-peaks, including D43-T64, I45-T64, and I45-K69, have been unambiguously assigned in the intersubunit filtered NOESY.

 Δ

Fig. S7. Total number of intrasubunit distance restraints is plotted based on distance range (*a*) and individual residues (*b*). In *b*, intraresidual, short-range, medium-range, and long-range constraints are marked with white, light gray, dark gray, and solid black bars, respectively. The intersubunit long-range NOEs are depicted in [Fig. S6](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/data/0805501105/DCSupplemental/Supplemental_PDF#nameddest=SF6) and are not included in this figure.

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Fig. S8. Comparison of the pore profiles between WSK3 and KcsA (PDB ID code 1K4D). (*a*) Surface rendering of the channel and pore profile. The program HOLE (38) was used to generate the profiles. WSK3 and KcsA are shown in surface rendering, with the front subunit removed for display clarity. The pore radius is classified into categories of small (red), medium (green), and large (blue). (*b*) Plot of pore radius as a function of the ''*z*'' coordinate along the pore axis for WSK3 (black) and KcsA (red). Notice that both intracellular entrance ($z \approx 1$ –30 Å) and the selectivity filter ($z \approx 10$ Å) have a significantly larger radius in WSK3 than in KcsA. A larger selectivity filter radius might render the filter impermeable to K^+ .

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Fig. S9. Qualitative analysis of WSK3 dynamics. Backbone ¹⁵N R_2/R_1 ratio and the reduced spectral density function values *J*(0), *J*(ω_N), and *J*(0.87 ω_H) are calculated from the dynamics data shown in Fig. 4 *a*–*c*. The relaxation data were acquired at 20 °C and at 14.1 T (circles) and 16.5 T (squares).

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Table S1. NMR and refinement statistics for WSK3 tetramer structures

*RDCs for 1 H_N- 15 N.

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†Pairwise r.m.s.d. was calculated among the 20 refined structures.

‡Calculated over the helical regions of the tetramers (4–30, 44–53, 69–96).

§Calculated over the entire sequence of the tetramers.

Table S2. Intersubunit long-range NOE constraints and related salt bridges identified in the WSK3 structures

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Table S3. Intrasubunit NOE constraints and related salt bridges identified in the WSK3 structures

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Table S4. Comparison of experimental and best-fitting dynamics data between WSK3 and the cytoplasmic region of KcsA

* The KcsA data are taken from figure 5 and table 1 of ref. 29.

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