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High-throughput Determination of Protein Affinities using Unmodified Peptide Libraries in Nanomolar Scale

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Clemens Schulte¹; Vladimir Khayenko¹; Noah Frieder Nordblom¹; Franziska Tippel², Violetta Peck¹; Amit Jean Gupta²; Hans Michael Maric^{1*}

¹Rudolf Virchow Center; Center for Integrative and Translational Bioimaging; University of 10 Wuerzburg; Josef-Schneider-Str. 2, Germany, 97080 Wuerzburg, Germany

²Nanotemper Technologies GmbH, Flößergasse 4, 81369 Munich, Germany

Transparent Methods

Unless otherwise stated, amino acids and reagents were purchased from either Iris Biotech 15 or Carl Roth. All solvents were purchased from commercial sources and used without further purification.

Automated Solid-Phase Peptide Synthesis

µSPOT peptide arrays(Dikmans et al., 2006) (CelluSpots, Intavis AG, Cologne, Germany) 20 were synthesized using a MultiPep RSi robot (Intavis AG) on in-house produced, acid labile, amino functionalized, cellulose membrane discs containing 9-fluorenylmethyloxycarbonyl-βalanine (Fmoc-β-Ala) linkers (average loading: 131 nmol/disc – 4 mm diameter). Synthesis was initiated by Fmoc deprotection using 20% piperidine (pip) in dimethylformamide (DMF) followed by washing with DMF and ethanol (EtOH). Peptide chain elongation was achieved

- 25 using a coupling solution consisting of preactivated amino acids (aas, 0.5 M) with ethyl 2 cyano-2-(hydroxyimino)acetate (oxyma, 1 M) and *N*,*N′*-diisopropylcarbodiimide (DIC, 1 M) in DMF (1:1:1, aa:oxyma:DIC). Couplings were carried out for 3x30 min, followed by capping (4% acetic anhydride in DMF) and washes with DMF and EtOH. Synthesis was finalized by deprotection with 20% pip in DMF (2×4 µL/disc for 10 min each), followed by washing with
- 30 DMF and EtOH. Dried discs were transferred to 96 deep-well blocks and treated, while shaking, with sidechain deprotection solution, consisting of 90% trifluoracetic acid (TFA), 2% dichloromethane (DCM), 5% H2O and 3% triisopropylsilane (TIPS) (150 µL/well) for 1.5 h at room temperature (rt). Afterwards, the deprotection solution was removed, and the discs were solubilized overnight (ON) at rt, while shaking, using a solvation mixture containing
- 35 88.5% TFA, 4% trifluoromethanesulfonic acid (TFMSA), 5% H₂O and 2.5% TIPS (250 µL/well). The resulting peptide-cellulose conjugates (PCCs) were precipitated with ice-cold ether (0.7 mL/well) and spun down at 2000 \times q for 10 min at 4 °C, followed by two additional washes of the formed pellet with ice-cold ether. The resulting pellets were dissolved in DMSO (250 µL/well) to give final stocks. PCC solutions were mixed 2:1 with saline-sodium
- 40 citrate (SSC) buffer (150 mM NaCl, 15 mM trisodium citrate, pH 7.0) and transferred to a 384-well plate. For transfer of the PCC solutions to white coated CelluSpot blank slides (76×26 mm, Intavis AG), a SlideSpotter (Intavis AG) was used. After completion of the printing procedure, slides were left to dry ON.
- Peptides used for MST measurements were synthesized using a cleavable amide linker. 45 After synthesis, cellulose disks were transferred to 96 deep-well blocks and treated with

sidechain deprotection solution for 3 hrs at rt under agitation. The solution was subsequently transferred to new 96 deep-well plates and 700 µL ice cold ether were added to each well. After ON precipitation of the peptides at -20 °C, the 96 deep-well blocks were centrifuged at 2,000 xG for 30 min and the supernatant (SN) was discarded. After an additional wash with

50 700 µL ice cold ether, peptides were solubilized in MST assay buffer consisting of 1×phosphate-buffered saline (PBS; 137 mM NaCl, 2.7 mM KCl, 10 mM Na2HPO4, 1.8 mM KH2PO4, pH 7.4) with 0.1% Pluronic F-127 (5% solution, Nanotemper Technologies GmbH) and 2 mM reduced L-Glutathione (GSH, Sigma-Aldrich G4251).

55 Preparative Peptide Synthesis

Standard solid phase peptide synthesis with Fmoc chemistry was applied, shortly, 2 chlorotrityl resin (1.6 mmol/g) was swollen in dry DCM for 30 min., then, the desired aa (1eq) and the orthogonally protected Boc-Gly-OH (1eq) with 2 eq. of dry N,N-Diisopropylethylamine (DIEA) were added to the resin slurry. Boc-Gly-OH was added to 60 reduce resin loading to prevent aggregation of the growing peptide chain. After ON reaction,

- the resin was capped with MeOH and washed with DCM and DMF. Deprotection and conjugation cycles followed, where 20% pip solution in DMF was used to remove the Fmoc protecting group, and after washes the peptide chain was elongated by adding aa (3eq.) with oxyma (3eq.) and DIC (3eq.). Coupling efficiency was monitored by measuring the
- 65 absorption of the dibenzofulvene–pip adduct after deprotection. The peptides were cleaved from the resin using a cocktail of 82.5% TFA, 5% phenol, 5% $H₂O$, 5% thioanisole, 2.5% 1,2ethanedithiol for 4 h at rt. The peptides were precipitated in ice-cold ether and then purified with high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) and analysed by liquid chromatography-mass spectrometry (LCMS).
- 70

Protein Labeling

The protein construct of gephE (residues 318-736) was generated as previously described(Maric et al., 2014). Labeling with Alexa Fluor[™] 647 NHS-Ester (Succinimidylesther) was achieved using a labelling kit (Invitrogen, A37573) according to the 75 manufacturer's instructions. Labeling with Red-Maleimide 2nd generation was achieved using a labelling kit (Nanotemper, MO-L014) according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Preparation of Mouse Tissue Lysates

- Whole mouse brains were obtained from C57BL/6J mice at >4 weeks of age and 80 immediately flash frozen in liquid N_2 . Tissue of mRFP-gephyrin knock-in animals of 1 year of age (provided by Christian Specht, IBENS, Paris) was processed the same way. Before lysis, whole mouse brains were weighted and cut into four pieces along the coronal and sagittal axis. For preparation of one lysate, two diagonally opposite pieces were transferred into a 1.5 mL reaction tube (Sarsted). Lysis was carried out on ice in 400 µL RIPA lysis buffer (150 mM
- 85 NaCl, 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH=8), 1% Nonident P-40 substitute, 0.5% DOC, 0.1% SDS (all v/v)), to which Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (5 mM end concentration) and 1 mini tablet of ROCHE complete protease inhibitor per 10 mL was added immediately before use, by hand crushing the brain material with a hand pestle in a 1.5 mL reaction tube. Lysis was completed by 1 min sonification on ice with a Sartorius Labsonic M Sonificator at 20% amplitude with
- 90 care to avoid heating the suspensions. Finally, Lysates were centrifuged for 15 min at 17,200×g and 4 °C. The SN was subsequently collected, transferred to a new 1.5 mL reaction tube, flash frozen in liquid N_2 and stored at -80 °C until use.

Microarray Binding Assay

- 95 µSPOT slides were blocked by incubation with 2.5 mL 2% (w/v) IGG free bovine serum albumin (BSA) in PBS for 60 min at ~50 rpm and RT. Afterwards, slides were incubated with gephE or FL-geph at the desired concentration in 0.1% BSA in 1 \times PBS for 30 min before slides were washed with 6×2.5 mL 1×PBS for 5 min. To label proteins for detection, the slides were incubated with 2.5 mL of a 1:10,000 diluted primary antibody (anti-gephyrin
- 100 (3B11, SynapticSystems) in 0.1% BSA in 1×PBS for 30 min, after which the slides were washed with 6×2.5 mL 1×PBS for 5 min. Afterwards, the slides were incubated with a secondary HRP-coupled Anti-mouse antibody (31430, Invitrogen) in 0.1% BSA in 1×PBS for 30 min, after which the slides were washed with 6×2.5 mL 1×PBS for 5 min. Peptide binding was detected through chemiluminescent detection (Lowest Sensitivity, 10s exposure time)
- 105 after application of 200 µL of SuperSignal West Femto Maximum Sensitive Substrate (Thermo Scientific) per slide using a c400 imaging system (Azure). Fluorescent detection (Cy3 channel, 700 V PMT, 25 µm pixel size, L5 latitude) as shown in Supplementary Figure 2 A was done using a Typhoon FLA 7000 scanner-based detection system (GE Healthcare).

Binding assays using fluorescently labelled gephyrin were performed similarly, without 110 antibody staining. Peptide binding was detected through fluorescence detection (60 µm resolution, 10s exposure time) on a c400 imaging system (Azure).

For on-chip peptide competition assays, gephE was preincubated with either peptide **1a** or **1b** in 0.1% BSA in PBS for 30 min on ice before being put on an array slide.

Binding intensities were evaluated using FIJI including the Microarray Profile addon 115 (OptiNav). After background subtraction of the mean greyscale value of the microarray surface surrounding the spots, raw greyscale intensities for each position were obtained for the left and right side of the internal duplicate on each microarray slide. The standard deviation (STDEV) between both sides was obtained using formula (1).

$$
STDEV = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})}{n}}
$$
 (1)

with

 n The total number of data points

 \bar{x} The mean intensity value

120

Afterwards, the raw spot intensities and corresponding STDEVs were normalized to the most prominent spot within the region of interest on the array. Data normalization for representation of a heatmap as in Figure 5 A, B, C was performed lane-wise, while normalization as in Supplementary Figure 2 B was performed to the average of all 15 125 wildtype-sequence peptides due to the comparably low spot intensity (Supplementary Figure 2 A).

Temperature Related Intensity Change (TRIC) Assays

An assay buffer consisting of 1x PBS (pH 7.4), 2 mM L-Glutathione reduced (GSH) and 0.1 130 % Pluronic F127 was used for all experiments. Before the measurements, all peptides were solubilized in assay buffer to an end concentration of 500-700 µM. The unlabelled control peptide NND1 was dissolved in the same buffer to a concentration of 4 µM. A HAMILTON STARlet system was used for liquid handling.

For single dose measurements, peptides were first diluted from the stock solution into assay 135 buffer to a 1:1 dilution in a conventional 384-microwell plate. In a second step, peptides were

mixed with the preincubated (1h at 4°C) target complex-containing solution consisting of gephE and NN1D-Alexa647, resulting in a final concentration of 20 nM and 10 nM respectively. This step took place in a Dianthus 384-microwell plate, in which the measurements were performed.

- 140 For 12-point affinity measurements, peptide solutions were first pre-diluted 1:1 in assay buffer, from which 0.5-fold dilutions were prepared in assay buffer in a standard 384-well plate. 15 µl of these dilutions were then mixed with 5 µl of target complex-containing assay buffer in a Dianthus 384-well plate, resulting in a final concentration of 5 nM gephE-NN1D-Alexa647 complex.
- 145 After the Dianthus 384-well microplates were loaded with the peptide and gephyrin-NN1D-Alexa647 complex, they were equilibrated for 16h at 4 °C and subsequently centrifuged for 30 sec at 1000×g immediately before starting the measurement in the Dianthus NT.23PicoDuo. The system was set to 25°C as set temperature. The samples were first measured for 1 sec without heating and for 5 sec with the IR-laser turned on. The two optical
- 150 systems in Dianthus were used in parallel, resulting in an overall measurement time of ~30 min per plate. Measured fluorescence values collected are displayed as relative fluorescence, where the fluorescence obtained at ambient temperature is normalized to one, and as normalized fluorescence (F_{nom}) which describes the ratio between fluorescence values (F1) after and the fluorescence values (F0) prior to IR laser activation and is typically
- 155 given in ‰. K_i values were obtained by applying a Hill-fit to a plot of F_{norm} vs. ligand concentration to determine an EC_{50} value, which was subsequently used to calculate the corresponding Kⁱ value (Formula 2 and 3).

$$
K_{i} = \frac{K_{d}}{2 - \gamma} \cdot \left(\frac{EC_{50}}{\left[T\right]_{t}} - \frac{K_{d}}{2 - \gamma} - \frac{\left[C\right]_{t}}{2} - \gamma \right)
$$
(2)

with

$$
\gamma = \frac{[T]_t + [C]_t + K_d - \sqrt{([T]_t + [C]_t + K_d)^2 - 4[T]_t [C]_t}}{2[C]_t} \tag{3}
$$

and

- $[T]_t$ The total final concentration of the unlabelled target (gephE) in the assay
- $[C]_t$ The total final concentration of fluorescent tracer (NN1D) in the assay that forms a complex with the target and is replaced by an unlabelled peptide ligand
- K_d The K_d between the fluorescent tracer and the target from a direct binding affinity measurement
- EC_{50} The EC₅₀ obtained from titrating an unlabelled peptide ligand against the preformed complex of target and tracer

160

To provide a measure for the robustness of the dose response fits, the signal to noise ratio (S/N) was calculated from the signal amplitude of each fit and the residual values of all datapoints (Formula 4).

$$
S/N = \frac{Signal Amplitude}{STDEV(Residuals)}
$$
 (4)

165 In the case of single dose measurements, the area response including all measured datapoints of the TRIC traces was considered instead of the F_{norm} value at a given timepoint. Here, the average area between the TRIC curve of the peptide ligand and the respective reference (no competitor peptide) is considered. Analysis of single-dose assays starts with the assignment of reference groups. A reference group designates a group of wells that are

- 170 all referenced together. In other words, the ligands within one reference group are compared to the same designated set of reference wells (wells with target protein but without ligand added). Next, the area between the traces obtained from all wells containing a reference sample are compared to one another. That results in a number of $((n^2-n)/2)$ areas, where n denotes the number of references. From these area values the mean reference area for that
- 175 reference group is calculated. This procedure is repeated for all reference groups to yield their respective reference areas. The hit threshold is calculated in the following way (Formula 5):

$$
Hit\ Threshold = m + z \cdot MAD \tag{5}
$$

with

 m Median of all reference group areas in the assay

User-defined Z-score factor (7 in this study)

MAD Median absolute deviation of all reference group areas in the assay

- 180 Next, for each ligand well (that contains ligand and labeled target) the area between the TRIC trace of that well to all reference wells in the same reference group is calculated and averaged to yield a mean signal area value for that well. If multiple wells were measured per ligand (in this screen a duplicate was measured) the area values per well are averaged to yield an average area per ligand. If this ligand-specific signal area exceeds the hit threshold,
- 185 the ligand is considered a hit, provided that the software did not identify other issues like ligand-induced fluorescence quenching or aggregation. Furthermore, the area between individual repeats for each ligand, the ligand area, is calculated. This area will indicate whether a given ligand yields a reproducible signal. From all relevant areas for one ligand, reference area, signal area and ligand area the software calculates a signal quality value that
- 190 is generally a very robust measure for the signal-to-noise that is obtained for a given ligand. This signal quality is calculated in the following way (Formula 6).

 = ̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅ (̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅ + ̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅̅) 2 (6)

Supplemental Figure 1: Fluorescently labelled geph displays unspecific binding. Related to Figure 1. (A) Normalized binding intensities of Alexa647-labelled geph to GlyR β-200 derived peptides in µSPOT format. Note that for a certain peptide sequence $(414$ DLRSNDFSIVGSLPR⁴²⁸), the binding intensity of fluorescently labelled WT geph is comparable to the binding intensity of two non-binding variants of gephE (F330A and P713E). (B) unlabelled gephE does not exhibit unspecific binding. Here, the relative binding intensity of WT geph is the highest overall, followed by F330A and P713E.

Supplemental Figure 2: Binding assays with mRFP-geph within tissue lysates from knock-in animals. Related to Figure 1 and 5. Tissue of mRFP-geph knock-in animals of 1 year of age provided by C Specht, IBENS, Paris was used directly on arrays. (A) raw readout of a microarray slide not treated with geph (upper panel) and treated with tissue lysate, 210 containing geph fused to mRFP (lower panel). Note that autofluorescence of certain peptides

in observed, while additional, geph-specific signal can be seen in the lower panel. (B) Shown are intensity values of point-mutated variants normalized to the corresponding wild-type sequence (GlyR β⁴¹⁴DLRSNDFSIVGSLPR⁴²⁸) displayed as a heatmap. Higher spot intensity corresponds to preferential binding, *vice versa*. Spots that showed autofluorescence in (A) 215 are marked in green.

205

Supplemental Figure 3: In-situ on-chip peptide neutralization validates binding specificity. Related to Figure 1. gephE binding to on-chip peptides corresponding to either 220 the GlyR $β$ subunit (A) and the GABA_AR $α3$ subunit (B) was neutralized using peptides in solution, corresponding to either the GlyR β subunit (FSIVGSLPRDFELC, **1a**) and the GABAAR α3 subunit (FNIVGTTY, **1b**). Note that to achieve neutralization of the GlyR β subunit, 200 uM of the corresponding peptide were necessary, while the GABAAR subunits derived peptide could be neutralized using only 2 µM of the same peptide. Values are 225 presented as n=2 with array internal STDEV.

Supplemental Figure 4: Exhaustive screening of peptide libraries in solution using TRIC. Related to Figure 3. (B-C) Bar graph showing area values for each peptide measured (see Supplementary Table 3 and 4 for peptide sequences corresponding to the GlyR β (B) 230 and GABAAR α 3 (C) subunit respectively and area values for each data point). Residues delimiting the peptides on-chip are represented on the x-axis. Hits are highlighted in dark red alongside corresponding peptide sequences with the respective binding motifs in bold. Note that only peptides bearing an 420 FSIVG 424 or 395 FNIVG 399 (GlyR β and GABA_AR α3 subunit respectively) were identified as binders. In addition to binders and non-binders, peptides 235 classified as not reproducible or potential hits are highlighted. Values are presented as n=1-6 with corresponding STDEV if applicable.

Supplemental Figure 5: Area response of reference and control measurements with unlabelled tracer. Related to Figure 3. Violin plot showing the distribution of reference 240 measurements with no competitor peptide (n=8) and positive controls with unlabelled tracer (n=22) averaged over both 384-well plates used in single dose measurements.

Supplemental Figure 6: Overview of all full positional scan TRIC data points. Related to Figure 5. Dose responses of 15mer peptides corresponding to variants of the core binding 245 motif of the GlyR β subunit against geph were done in a high-throughput TRIC setup. The core binding motif is marked in red, with the variable position marked in bold. Refer to supplemental table 6 for starting concentrations and $K₁$ values.

Supplemental Figure 7: Comparison of gephE/GlyR β subunit binding in µSPOT and 250 **TRIC. Related to Figure 5.** (A) A full positional scanning library was probed with recombinant gephE in microarray format. Shown are intensity values of point-mutated variants normalized to the corresponding WT sequence (GlyR β ³⁹²DLRSNDFSIVGSLPR⁴⁰⁶) displayed as a heatmap. Higher spot intensity corresponds to preferential binding, *vice versa*. (B) The Kⁱ values of a peptide library corresponding to the GlyR β subunit 255 $(414$ DLRSNDFSIVGSLPR⁴²⁸), varied to every proteogenic amino acid within the FSIVG core binding motif, were determined in a TRIC displacement approach. Note that for peptides exhibiting a close to WT binding intensity in uSPOT format a K_i value could be determined in TRIC format.

260 Supplemental Tables

Supplemental Table 1: Overlapping peptide library corresponding to GlyR β in µSpot. Related to Figure 1. Peptide sequences are given with their delimiting residue numbers alongside the relative binding intensity and STDEV obtained for 50 nM of gephE and 3% of mouse brain lysate containing native geph.

Supplemental Table 2: Overview of overlapping GABAAR α3 peptide library in µSpot. Related to Figure 1. Peptide sequences are given with their delimiting residue numbers alongside the relative binding intensity and STDEV obtained for 20 nM of gephE and 6% of mouse brain lysate containing native gephyrin.

Supplemental Table 7: Purity of µSPOT peptides synthesized with C-terminal Rink amide linker. Related to Figure 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Concomitant cleavage and deprotection afforded soluble peptides which were analysed by LCMS. Protecting group by-products were not separated prior to analysis, and major impurities were identified by LCMS to be truncated sequences.

Supplemental References

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