

BCH 4053 Summer 2001 Chapter 9 Lecture Notes

Membrane Composition

- Membranes are composed of lipids and proteins
- Lipids provide the organizational backbone
- Proteins provide most of the specific functional features of membranes

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Lipid Aggregate Structures

- The hydrophobic effect is the main factor causing lipids to aggregate
- Aggregation can take several forms
 - Monolayers
 - Micelles
 - "Reverse" micelles
 - Bilayers
 - (See Figure 9.2)

As lipid molecules aggregate, there is a repulsion between neighboring polar head groups, particularly those with a net charge. In fatty acid salts, this repulsion causes the head groups to occupy the maximum area possible, which is a sphere, so the micelles of fatty acid salts are spherical. For phosphoglycerolipids with two hydrocarbon chains, the cross-sectional area of the two chains is large enough that the head group repulsion is minimized, and the aggregates form sheet-like structure instead.

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Lipid Aggregate Structures, con't.

- Micelles are characterized by a "critical micelle concentration" (CMC)
 - This is the concentration of monomer in equilibrium with the micelle
- The CMC decreases as the hydrophobic part of the molecule gets larger (i.e. as MW increases)
- Detergents that form such micelles are used to disrupt membrane and protein structures
 - See Figure 9.3

Lipid Aggregate Structures, con't.

- Bilayer structures wrap to form "vesicles", which can be unilamellar or multilamellar.
- Unilamellar structures are called liposomes.See Figure 9.4
- Liposomes are stable and can be "purified", creating structures with different contents inside and outside
- Liposomes serve as good models for membranes
- Liposomes have been used for drug delivery to specific locations

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Early Membrane Models

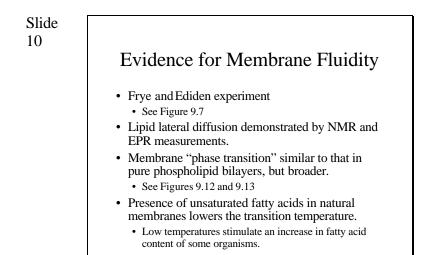
- Lipid bilayer structure was postulated early
 Ouantity of lipid in red cell membrane would form a
 - Quality of lipid in red cen inclusion would form a monolayer about twice the area of the cell surface
 Electrical and permeability properties of membrane
 - Electrical and permeability properties of memoral were similar to those of artificial lipid bilayers
 - Electron micrographs showed a sandwich-like structure with low electron density in the middle, high on the edges, about the width of two lipid molecules
- Early models had proteins associating with polar surface groups of the bilayer

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The Fluid Mosaic Model

- S. J. Singer and G. L. Nicolson
- The phospholipid bilayer is the organizational feature
- Proteins are imbedded in the bilayer like **mosaics** in a tile
- The hydrocarbon region of the bilayer is in a **fluid** or **liquid crystalline** state
- Proteins and lipids are free to rotate and move laterally
 - See Figure 9.6

Both monolayers and liposome bilayers have been used as models to study permeability of various substances across the bilayer and other properties related to natural membranes.



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Membrane Asymmetry

- Lateral asymmetry
 - Lipids can sometimes aggregate to form "phase separations" (See Figure 9.8)
 - Some proteins might cluster because of selfassociation (as for **bacteriorhodopsin** in *Halobacterium halobium*—Fig. 9.9) Some may aggregate through interaction with cytoplasmic proteins.

Membrane Asymmetry, con't.

- Transverse asymmetry
 - Protein asymmetry first demonstrated for **glycophorin**, a major red cell glycoprotein (See Figure 9.14)
 - Lipid asymmetry is also demonstrated for most membranes (See Figure 9.10)
- Rate of lipid "flipping" is slow, but does occur. "Flippases" can accelerate the flipping rate. (See Figure 9.11)

Frye and Edidin used fluorescent labeled antibodies to bind specifically to membrane proteins. Antibodies for human cell antigens had a red fluorescent tag. Antibodies for mouse cell antigens had a green fluorescent tag. When human and mouse cell hybrids were produced, one could visualize under the microscope the half of the membrane coming from each. After a short time, though, the fluorescent labels mixed. However, if the cells were cooled to low temperature, the lateral diffusion was greatly slowed.

In intact erythrocytes, trypsin will only digest the amino terminal section of glycophorin, and protein reagents will only react with the amino terminal section. In erythrocyte membrane fragments, both the amino terminal section and the carboxyl terminal section can react with the reagents. Most membrane glycoproteins are found in the plasma membrane of cells and have the carbohydrate residues on the external face.

While flipping of proteins is unlikely to occur, the flipping of lipids does occur slowly, perhaps on the order of days. Some still incompletely understood process must account for the continued asymmetry of lipids—otherwise they would equilibrate with equal concentrations on both surfaces. Differential rates of synthesis on the two surfaces, and differential binding of lipids to asymmetrically aligned proteins might partly account for the difference.

Classes of Membrane Proteins

- Singer and Nicolson model postulated two classes of membrane proteins:
 - Integral (intrinsic) proteins
 - Peripheral (extrinsic) proteins
- A newer class called "lipid-anchored proteins.

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Peripheral Proteins

- Not strongly bound to the membrane
- Can be dissociated with salt or chelating agents, perhaps mild detergent.
- Association is through polar interactions with polar head groups of lipids and external portions of integral proteins.

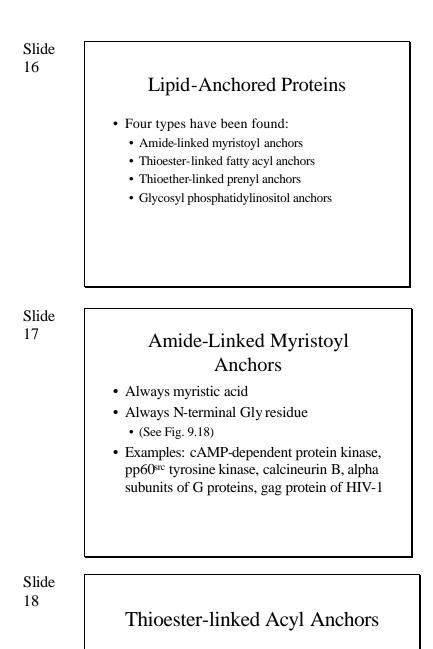
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Integral Membrane Proteins

- Imbedded in the lipid bilayer, with hydrophobic association with the lipid hydrocarbon chains
- Can only be removed from the membrane with organic solvents or detergents
- Pure protein in absence of detergent is insoluble
- Can be transmembrane, or can face only one side of membrane
- Glycophorin (Fig. 9.14), bacteriorhodopsin (Fig. 9.15), maltoporin (Fig. 9.16) are examples

Determination of the structure of integral membrane proteins has been more difficult than for globular proteins, but methods of obtaining crystals of membrane complexes has begun to yield x-ray structures.

Some proteins span the membrane with only a single helix (glycophorin), some have several helices that traverse the membrane several times (bacteriorhodopsin), some form beta-barrel like structures (maltoporin). For many membrane proteins the sequence but not the structure is known, but efforts have been made to predict which parts of the protein might be imbedded in the membrane by looking for stretches of hydrophobic amino acids that could form an alpha helix with an apolar surface.



- Broader specificity for lipids myristate, palmitate, stearate, oleate all found
 - (See Fig. 9.18)
- Examples: G-protein-coupled receptors, surface glycoproteins of some viruses, transferrin receptor triggers and signals

Slide 19 Thioether-linked Prenyl Anchors Prenylation refers to linking of "isoprene"-based groups Always Cys of CAAX (C=Cys, A=Aliphatic, X=any residue) Isoprene groups include farnesyl (15-carbon, three double bond) and geranylgeranyl (20-carbon, four double bond) groups See Fig. 9.19 Examples: yeast mating factors, p21^{ras} and nuclear lamin

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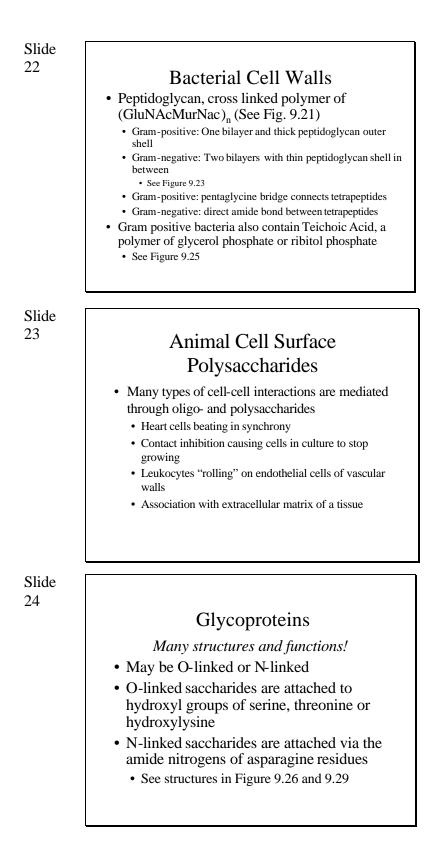
Glycosyl Phosphatidylinositol Anchors

- GPI anchors are more elaborate than others
- Always attached to a C-terminal residue
- Ethanolamine link to an oligosaccharide linked in turn to inositol of PI
 - See Figure 9.20
- Examples: surface antigens, adhesion molecules, cell surface hydrolase

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Lipid Anchors are Signaling Devices

- Recent evidence indicates that lipid anchors are quite transient in nature
- Reversible anchoring and de-anchoring can control (modulate) signalling pathways
- An example is Ras, a GTP binding protein involved in growth regulation, and in which mutations are responsible for some cancers.
 - See box Page 278



Slide 25 O-linked Saccharides of Glycoproteins Function in many cases is to adopt an extended conformation These extended conformations resemble "bristle brushes" Bristle brush structure extends functional domains well above the membrane surface See Figure 9.27

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N-linked Oligosaccharides

Many functions known or suspected

- Oligosaccharides can alter the chemical and physical properties of proteins
- Oligosaccharides can stabilize protein conformations and/or protect against proteolysis
- Cleavage of monosaccharide units from Nlinked glycoproteins in blood targets them for degradation in the liver - see Figure 9.30

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Proteoglycans

- Glycoproteins whose carbohydrates are mostly glycosaminoglycans
- Found in extracellular matrix
- Variety of functions in binding cells together in tissues, communicating between cells, cushioning in joints, etc.
- Don't worry about details of structure, but recognize names as belonging to this class