Synopsis of Original Research Paper

Regulation of hyaluronic acid production via cAMP signal

Yoshihiro Ishikawa, Utako Yokoyama

Yokohama City University Graduate School of Medicine

Hyaluronic acid is a kind of mucopolysaccharide and exists abundantly as extracellular matrix in skin, article, lens and other organs. Skin folding as seen with aging is shown to be related to a decrease in the content of hyaluronic acid in skin. Supplemental uptake of hyaluronic acid and addition to cosmetic ointment as well as direct skin injection of hyaluronic acid itself have been commonly employed. Further, in the treatment of article inflammation or lens injury, hyaluronic acid has been used widely in medicine. It has been known that stimulation of G protein-coupled receptors is necessary to produce hyaluronic acid, leading to increased cell migration or proliferation. However, the exact molecular mechanism of this signal transduction in cells has remained undetermined. We have investigated the molecular mechanisms of hyaluronic acid production through cAMP signal in our laboratory. We have demonstrated that the activation of cAMP signal is essential and resulting increase in hyaluronic acid synthase enzyme expression follows. Because cAMP is produced by adenylyl cyclase, a membrane-bound enzyme that is activated by Gs protein, leading to the conversion of ATP to cAMP, it is necessary to investigate the molecular mechanisms of adenylyl cyclase activation that leads to increased hyaluronic acid production. Adenylyl cyclase enzyme has many isoforms, from type I to IX, which show distinct tissue distribution and biochemical properties. Because the hyaluronic acid production has been best demonstrated in vascular smooth muscle cells in our laboratory, we examined adenylyl cyclase isoforms that are responsible for hyaluronic acid production. We also examined the effect of stimulating these adenylyl cyclase isoforms in an isoform-specific manner using forskolin derivatives that have increased specificity to these isoforms. We also examined the effect of overexpressing adenylyl cyclase isoforms in these cells to explore changes in intracellular cell signaling as well as changes in hyaluronic acid production. Accordingly, we found that specific isoforms of adenylyl cyclase are more responsible for hyaluronic acid production and thus cell migration thereafter, and that these isoforms play an important role in not only hyaluronic acid production, but regulating vascular function such as vasodilatation or endothelial thickening. Our results have indicated that it is important to understand the role of each adenylyl cyclase to regulate hyaluronic acid production. Pharmacological stimulation of a specific isoform of adenylyl cyclase may enable us to enhance the production of hyaluronic acid specifically. Development of such specific stimulator of adenylyl cyclase may be used in the treatment of conditions where decrease in hyaluronic content is involved. Indeed, our results have suggested that such strategy is pharmacologically feasible.