

The functional studies of amyloid fibrils and their toxicity

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B.AppSc. (Hons.)

A thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in the

School of Chemistry and Physics

The University of Adelaide



January 2015

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	x
DECLARATION.....	xii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	xiii
Abbreviations.....	xiv
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Protein folding.....	3
1.3 Amyloid fibril formation.....	4
1.4 Structure of amyloid fibrils.....	6
1.5 Diseases associated with amyloid fibrils.....	7
1.6 Protein quality system.....	12
1.7 Purpose of the study.....	14
1.8 Linkage between Publications.....	15
2 SEVI, the semen enhancer of HIV infection along with fragments from its central region, form amyloid fibrils that are toxic to neuronal cells.....	16
2.1 Abstract.....	16
2.2 Introduction.....	18
2.3 Experimental Procedures.....	21
2.3.1 Predictions of amyloidogenic regions.....	21
2.3.2 Peptide synthesis.....	21
2.3.3 Amyloid fibril formation and Thioflavin T (ThT) fluorescence assay.....	21
2.3.4 Transmission electron microscopy.....	22
2.3.5 Circular Dichroism (CD) spectroscopy.....	22
2.3.6 Cell toxicity assays.....	22
2.3.7 Cell viability.....	23
2.4 Results.....	24
2.4.1 SEVI is predicted to have two distinct amyloidogenic regions.....	24
2.4.2 SEVI peptide fragments PAP248-271 and PAP257-267 form amyloid fibrils.....	28
2.4.3 SEVI and its fibrillar fragments PAP248-271 and PAP257-267 are toxic to PC 12 cells	33
2.5 DISCUSSION.....	40
2.6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	43
3 SEVI and its fragment help HIV-1 attach to host cells via coreceptors CCR5 and CXCR4.....	44

3.1	Abstract.....	44
3.2	Introduction.....	46
3.2.1	The HIV epidemic.....	46
3.2.2	Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).....	47
3.2.3	HIV structure	48
3.2.4	Sexual transmission of HIV	49
3.2.5	Replication strategy for HIV-1	50
3.3	Materials and Methods.....	53
3.3.1	Virus Stocks	53
3.3.2	Cell culture.....	53
3.3.3	Affinofile cell assays.....	53
3.3.4	Effect of SEVI on viral infectivity	54
3.3.5	Cytotoxicity assays	54
3.3.6	MTT assay	54
3.4	Results.....	55
3.4.1	SEVI and its fragments are not toxic to JC 53 cells.....	55
3.5	Discussion	59
3.6	Acknowledgement	61
4	The extracellular molecular chaperone, Clusterin inhibits fibril formation and suppresses cytotoxicity associated with the SEVI peptide.....	62
4.1	Abstract.....	62
4.2	Introduction.....	64
4.2.1	Intracellular quality control mechanisms	66
4.2.2	Extracellular quality control mechanisms	72
4.2.3	Function of clusterin	77
4.3	Experimental Methods	81
4.3.1	Fibril formation	81
4.3.2	Thioflavin T binding assay	81
4.3.3	Transmission electron microscopy.....	82
4.3.4	Cellular Toxicity	82
4.3.5	MTT assay	82
4.4	Results.....	84
4.4.1	Fibril formation of SEVI with varying concentration of clusterin.....	84
4.4.2	The effect of clusterin to preformed SEVI fibrils	88

4.4.3	Clusterin inhibits the toxicity of SEVI to PC 12 cells	90
4.5	Discussion	92
4.5.1	The effect of clusterin on the aggregation and fibril formation of SEVI	92
4.5.2	Clusterin inhibits the toxicity of SEVI to cells	94
4.6	Acknowledgements	95
5	Amyloid fibrils formed by bovine milk α_2 -casein are toxic to PC-12 cells	96
5.1	ABSTRACT	96
5.2	INTRODUCTION	98
5.2.1	Casein Amyloid formation	99
5.2.2	Casein micelle structure and functions	101
5.2.3	Caseins as molecular chaperones	103
5.2.4	Amyloid fibrils and EGCG	104
5.3	MATERIALS AND METHODS	106
5.3.1	Purification of α_{s1} and α_{s2} casein from α_s -casein	106
5.3.2	Thioflavin T binding	106
5.3.3	Transmission Electron Microscopy	106
5.3.4	Cellular toxicity of α_{s2} -casein	107
5.3.5	MTT assay	108
5.4	RESULTS	109
5.4.2	Effects of EGCG on α_{s2} -CN amyloid fibrils formation	114
5.5	DISCUSSION	119
5.5.1	Inhibition of fibril formation by α_{s2} -CN by EGCG	120
5.6	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	121
6	Conclusions	122
6.1	Future directions	124
6.1.1	Cytotoxicity of SEVI to PC 12 cells	124
6.1.2	The effect of clusterin <i>in vivo</i>	124
6.1.3	The effect of SEVI fragments on viral infection	125
6.1.4	Mechanism of toxicity of α_{s2} -CN	125
6.1.5	The effect of on α_{s2} -CN viral infection	126
6.1.6	The effect of on α_{s2} -CN tissue mammary glands	126
7	References	128

List of Tables

Table 1-1: Human neurodegenerative diseases associated with the deposition in brain tissue of amyloid fibril aggregates (Chiti and Dobson, 2006, Taylor et al., 2002).....	9
Table 1-2: Human non- neuropathic diseases associated with amyloid fibril deposits (Chiti and Dobson, 2006).....	10
Table 4-1: Alternative names given to clusterin (Jenne and Tschopp, 1992).....	76

List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Schematic diagram of protein folding and misfolding.	2
Figure 1.2: The difference between amorphous and amyloid fibrillar aggregation.	4
Figure 1.3: Schematic representation of the possible mechanism of formation of amyloid fibrils by a globular protein.	5
Figure 1.4: Scheme of cross- β structure of a mature amyloid fibril with a densely packed two- layer β -sheet structure.	7
Figure 1.5: Molecular model of an amyloid fibril derived from cryo-EM analysis of SH3 domain fibrils (center).	12
Figure 2.1: Amyloidogenic propensity of SEVI.	27
Figure 2.2: Characterization of SEVI and its fragments after incubation at 37 °C with shaking at 700 rpm.	31
Figure 2.3: Far-UV CD spectra of 0.25 mg/mL of the peptides.	33
Figure 2.4: Concentration-dependent cytotoxicity of native (prefibrillar) and fibrillar SEVI.	35
Figure 2.5: Concentration-dependent cytotoxicity of native and fibrillar SEVI, PAP248-271 and PAP257-267 to CACO-2 cells.	37
Figure 2.6: Concentration-dependent cytotoxicity of native and fibrillar α_{s2} -casein (0.5 mM) to CACO-2 cells.	39
Figure 3.1: Phylogenetic tree of HIV and SIV. Figure from Kuiken (1999).	48
Figure 3.2: The HIV genome and virion. Adapted from (Kuiken, 1999).	49
Figure 3.3: Schematic overview of the HIV-1 replication cycle. Figure from Engelman and Cherepanov (2012).	51
Figure 3.4: Concentration-dependent cytotoxicity of SEVI (●) and PAP248-271 (■) to JC 53 cells.	56

Figure 3.5: SEVI average enhancement (n=3) of HIV-1 infection of JC 53 cells by R5- (ADA (●), YU-2 (▼), JRCSF (◆), X4 (HXB2 (■)), and dual (89.6 (▲)) viruses.	57
Figure 3.6: Average enhancement (n=3) of HIV-1 infection of JC 53 cells by R5- (ADA (●), YU-2 (▼), JRCSF (◆), X4 (HXB2 (■)), and dual (89.6 (▲)) viruses in the presence of varying concentrations of amyloidogenic PAP248-271.	58
Figure 4-1: A schematic representation of the protein folding and off-folding pathway.	65
Figure 4-2: The protein quality control network involves the actions of many molecular chaperones to assist the folding of proteins into their native conformations to prevent misfolding of proteins.	67
Figure 4-3: The ubiquitin–proteasome pathway.	69
Figure 4-4: A schematic representation of mechanism for the chaperone action of clusterin to prevent the amorphous aggregation of target proteins.	79
Figure 4-5: Effect of clusterin on fibril formation of 2 mg/mL SEVI at varying concentrations of clusterin incubated at 37° C for two days at pH 7.0.	84
Figure 4-6: TEM of the effect of different concentrations of clusterin on SEVI fibril formation.	87
Figure 4-7: The effect of clusterin on pre-formed SEVI.	89
Figure 4-8: The TEM micrographs of clusterin on pre-formed SEVI incubated at 37° C for two days at pH 7.2.	90
Figure 4-9: Effects of clusterin on cytotoxicity of SEVI (2mg/mL).	91
Figure 5.1: Molecular model showing structure of casein micelle.	99
Figure 5.2: Schematic representation of the formation of a casein micelle.	102
Figure 5.3: The structure of EGCG.	105
Figure 5.4: Concentration-dependent toxicity of α_{s2} -CN in both the native and fibrillar forms.	109

Figure 5.5: Time-dependent toxicity of pre-incubated α_{s2} -CN.....	111
Figure 5.6: Electron micrographs of α_{s2} -CN (5 μ M) after A 24 h, B 48 h, C 96 and D 144 h incubation at 50°C, showing fibril formation. <i>Scale bar</i> , 1 μ m.....	113
Figure 5.7: The time-dependent fluorescence analysis of fibril formation by α_{s2} -CN in the presence and absence of EGCG.....	115
Figure 5.8: Electron micrographs of α_{s2} -CN with varying concentration of EGCG. α_{s2} -CN (50 μ M) with (A) 0.05 μ M, and (B) 2 μ M EGCG after 144 h incubation.....	116
Figure 5.9: Effect of EGCG on α_{s2} -CN induced PC-12 cell toxicity.....	117

ABSTRACT

Amyloid fibrils are a form of highly ordered, β -sheet protein structure found in many sites in the body. Fibril formation occurs when intermediates along the protein-folding pathway irreversibly enter the off-folding pathway to form highly ordered amyloid fibrils. Amyloid fibril formation is of considerable research interest because of its intimate association with a wide range of debilitating diseases, including Alzheimer's, Huntington's and Parkinson's diseases and type II diabetes. Recently, it has been found that amyloid fibrils enhance human immunodeficiency virus (HIV-1) infection. Semen contains a fibril forming component that significantly increases the ability of HIV-1 to infect cells. This component is associated with peptide fragments of prostatic acid phosphatase and has been termed semen-derived enhancer of viral infection (SEVI). SEVI acts at the virus entry stage and only boots infectivity when the peptide has folded into highly structured arrays of amyloid fibrils. The work presented in this thesis describes the broader roles of SEVI in HIV-1 infection including its toxicity to neuronal and epithelial cells as well as the toxicity of α_{s2} -casein (milk fibril forming protein). Firstly, the amyloidogenic regions of SEVI are identified by the use of computer algorithms. Accordingly, these regions were synthesised to examine their individual fibril-forming propensity. Fragments from the central regions formed fibrils of similar morphology to SEVI at physiological pH and temperature. Fibril formation was assessed via thioflavin T assay, circular dichroism spectrometry and transmission electron microscopy (TEM). In this study the toxicity of SEVI and its amyloidogenic fragments to neuronal and epithelial cells was investigated. SEVI and its fragments were toxic to neuronal cells but not to confluent epithelial cells.

Secondly, the coreceptors used by SEVI and its amyloidogenic fragments are identified. HIV enters the cell by the interaction of glycoprotein (gp) 120 envelope with the cellular

differentiation (CD) 4 protein and secondary coreceptors. Affinofile assays showed that SEVI and its fragments use CCR5 and CXCR4 secondary coreceptors to enhance HIV-1 entry to the host cells. Additionally the ability of clusterin to inhibit fibril formation by SEVI was investigated. Clusterin inhibited fibril formation by SEVI in a concentration dependent manner thereby inhibiting the cytotoxicity associated with the fibrils.

Lastly, work detailing the toxicity of fibrils formed by milk protein α_{s2} -casein is presented. α_{s2} -Casein forms fibrils spontaneously under physiological conditions. These fibrils have been found in *corpora amylacea*, an amyloid condition that infrequently develops within the mammary tissue of cows. The use of cell toxicity assays show that fibrils formed by α_{s2} -casein were toxic to pheochromocytoma (PC) 12 cells. Furthermore, the use of Thioflavin T assay and TEM showed that a polyphenol epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), a component found in green tea extracts, inhibits fibril formation by α_{s2} -casein. Previous research has found that, EGCG can reduce fibril formation and cellular toxicity of various fibril-forming proteins. EGCG has also been shown to inhibit SEVI enhancement of HIV infection in a manner dependent on the ability of EGCG to disrupt SEVI fibril formation, providing proof of principle for the potential of anti-fibril agents as inhibitors of HIV infection.

DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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31st January 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor John Carver, you have been amazing. I will forever be grateful for your dedication, support and supervision over the past four years. Being in the Carver laboratory was a blessing because of you. You have a good heart and pray that God blesses everything you do.

I would also like to thank my co supervisor, Ian Musgrave, a man who is always happy, thank you for your help. It has been a great pleasure and honour working under your direction and supervision over the past four years.

Special thanks to Drs Yanqin Liu, Daniella Williams and Antonio Calabrese and the rest of Carver Laboratory team, Katy, Nick and Ranzhao for your technical assistance and the positive influence. Your support and friendship has been invaluable.

To my family, my man and kids, thank you for your support, believe and allowing me the opportunity to fulfil my dream. You have been a source of strength and I will forever love you. I look forward to spending more quality time with you.

To my late Papa and Mama, I am proud and forever thankful for what you have done for me. Thank you for your sacrifices so that I can have better education. I believe I have made you proud. I will always love you and may souls rest in peace. Thanks also to my two sisters Mosarwana and Kerapetse and my brother Outlwile for unconditional love and encouragement.

Finally, thanks be to God who gives victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. This work has been possible because of your grace, mercies and blessings.

Abbreviations

α_{s2} -CN	alpha _{s2} -casein
κ -CN	kappa-casein
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CACO-2	epithelial colon carcinoma cells
CA	<i>corpora amylacea</i>
CA	caspid
CCR5	C chemokine receptor 5 (R5)
CXCR4	CXC chemokine receptor 4 (X4)
CD4	cluster of differentiation
CD	circular dichroism
CLI	complement-lysis inhibitor
CMA	chaperone-mediated autophagy
CMV	cytomegalovirus
CSF	cerebrospinal fluid
DNA	deoxy ribonucleic acid
DMEM	Dulbecco's modified eagle medium
DMSO	dimethyl sulfoxide

EGCG	(-)-epigallocatechin-3-gallate
Env	envelope
ER	endoplasmic reticulum
ERAD	endoplasmic reticulum-associated protein degradation
FPLC	fast protein liquid chromatography
gp	glycoprotein
HIV	human immune virus
HPLC	high performance liquid chromatography
HSPs	heat-shock proteins
LAMP2A	lysosome-associated membrane protein type-2A
MA	matrix
MTT	3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide
NC	nucleocapsid
PAP	prostatic acid phosphatase
PC12	pheochromocytoma-12
PCD	protein conformational disorders
PCP	<i>Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia</i>
PR	protease
QTOF2	quadruple time of flight

RCM _K -CN	reduced and carboxymethylated kappa-casein
RNA	ribonucleic acid
RT	reverse transcriptase
SAP	serum amyloid P component
SD	standard deviation
SEVI	semen-derived enhancer of viral infection
TEM	transmission electron microscopy
ThT	thioflavin T
UV	ultraviolet