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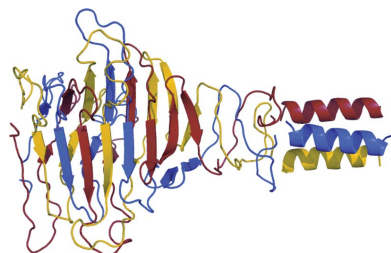
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Structures of two truncated phage-tail hyaluronate lyases from *Streptococcus pyogenes* serotype M1

The crystal structures of truncated forms of the *Streptococcus pyogenes* phage-encoded hyaluronate lyases HyIP2 and HyIP3 were determined by molecular replacement to 1.6 and 1.9 Å resolution, respectively. The truncated forms crystallized in a hexagonal space group, forming a trimer around the threefold crystallographic axis. The arrangement of the fold is very similar to that observed in the structure of the related hyaluronate lyase HyIP1. The structural elements putatively involved in substrate recognition are found to be conserved in both the HyIP2 and HyIP3 fragments.

1. Introduction

Hyaluronic acid (HA) is an important biological polymer that is found in the extracellular matrix and connective and epithelial tissues of higher animals (Necas *et al.*, 2008). HA is composed of a linear repetition of β -1–4-linked *N*-acetylglucosamine (GlcNAc) and *D*-glucuronic acid (GlcUA) subunits. The bacterial enzymes involved in the degradation of HA, hyaluronidases, are thus important virulence factors and have gathered particular interest given their critical role during pathogenesis (Hynes *et al.*, 2000). In terms of their enzymatic mechanisms, hyaluronidases are divided into ‘true’ hyaluronidases of eukaryotic origin that cleave the glycosidic β -1–4 linkage using a substrate-assisted acid–base catalytic mechanism (Markovic Housley *et al.*, 2000) and hyaluronate lyases of bacterial origin that hydrolyze the same linkage *via* a β -elimination mechanism (Jedrzejewski *et al.*, 2002; Fig. 1a). At the primary sequence level, the CAZy classification (Cantarel *et al.*, 2009) places the eukaryotic hyaluronidases into glycoside hydrolase family 56 and the bacterial hyaluronate lyases into polysaccharide lyase families 6, 8 and 16, the last family being exclusively comprised of streptococcal bacteriophage and prophage members.

Pathogenic bacteria such as *Streptococcus pyogenes* (group A streptococcus) produce an outer HA capsule in order to help to evade the human immune system (Cunningham, 2000). Phages that have co-evolved with these bacteria have acquired a hyaluronate lyase within their tail fibres to enable them to traverse the outer capsule during the infection process. In the genome sequence of serotype M1 *S. pyogenes* strain SF370 three prophage sequences have been localized (Ferretti *et al.*, 2001) and each codes for a hyaluronate lyase. We have previously reported the full-length structure of one of these hyaluronate lyases, HyIP1 (Smith *et al.*, 2005), and in this article we describe the crystal structures of truncated forms of the remaining two prophage-encoded hyaluronidases HyIP2 and HyIP3.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Molecular biology and protein purification

The full-length coding sequences of HyIP2 (AAK33900.1) and HyIP3 (AAK34249.1) were amplified from *S. pyogenes* SF370 (ATCC 700294) genomic DNA. The PCR products were cloned into expression vector pET28a (Novagen) on an *Nde*I–*Xho*I fragment for

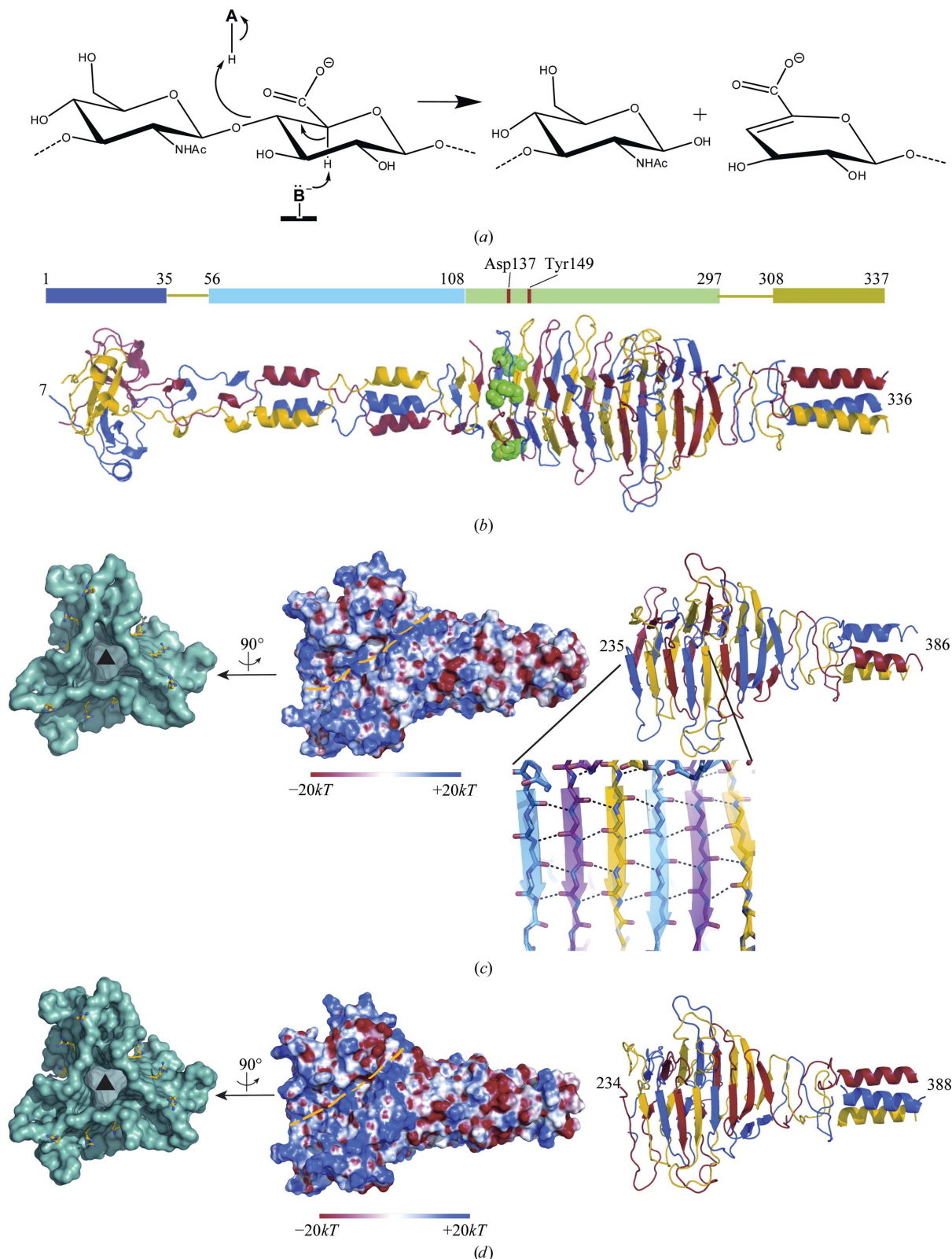


Figure 1

(a) Scheme of the reaction catalyzed by bacterial hyaluronate lyases such as HylP1, HylP2 and HylP3. (b) Structure of the full-length HylP1 trimer with catalytic residues Asp137 and Tyr149 highlighted as green spheres and associated delineations of the various domains of HylP1, *i.e.* the N-terminal mixed globular α/β region (1–35, dark blue), the segmented α -helical coiled-coils region (56–108, light blue), the extended right-handed triple-stranded β -helix to residue 297 (light green) and the C-terminal α -helical region (308–337, dark green). Traces of the different monomers that conform the trimer are represented in blue, red and yellow. (c, d) Cartoon and electrostatic surface representations of the truncated forms of (c) HylP2 and (d) HylP3. The dashed yellow path on the electrostatic surfaces represents the putative binding groove for the HA polymer. The front-end view of the trimer surface (coloured in cyan) displays conserved arginine ladders (shown in ball-and-stick representation) that are likely to be involved in binding the negatively charged HA substrate. The electrostatic surfaces were calculated with APBS (Baker, 2004) and represented with PyMOL (DeLano, 2002).

Table 1

Data-collection and refinement statistics.

Values in parentheses are for the high-resolution outer shell.

	HylP2	HylP3
Data processing		
Space group	<i>P</i> _{6₃22}	<i>P</i> _{6₃22}
Unit-cell parameters (Å, °)	<i>a</i> = <i>b</i> = 50.8, <i>c</i> = 219.0, α = β = 90, γ = 120	<i>a</i> = <i>b</i> = 49.5, <i>c</i> = 241.2, α = β = 90, γ = 120
Molecules in ASU	1	1
Resolution range	30.0–1.60 (1.66–1.60)	30.0–1.90 (1.97–1.90)
<i>R</i> _{merge}	0.069 (0.172)	0.028 (0.261)
<i>I</i> / <i>σ</i> (<i>I</i>)	41.9 (13.1)	36.7 (2.9)
Completeness	91.2 (93.2)	90.0 (51.0)
Redundancy	4.4 (4.9)	16.3 (11.8)
Refinement statistics		
Resolution range (Å)	109.76–1.60	19.58–1.90
<i>R</i> _{cryst}	0.212	0.189
<i>R</i> _{free}	0.258	0.241
No. of protein atoms	1169	1283
No. of solvent atoms	200	101
R.m.s.d. bonds (Å)	0.021	0.020
R.m.s.d. angles (°)	1.717	1.846
Mean <i>B</i> value (Å ²)		
Protein atoms	17.1	33.9
Solvent atoms	29.8	36.7
Ramachandran statistics† (%)		
Preferred regions	96.5	97.9
Allowed regions	2.8	2.1
Outliers	0.7	0.0
PDB code	2wh7	2wb3

† Calculated using validation options in *Coot*.

HylP2 and an *NdeI*–*Bam*HI fragment for HylP3. N-terminal His₆-tagged versions of HylP2 and HylP3 were produced in *Escherichia coli* BL21 (DE3) cultures harbouring the expression vectors following the protocol described in Smith *et al.* (2005) and purified using Ni²⁺-affinity chromatography and gel filtration. Pure protein samples were concentrated to 20 mg ml⁻¹ and buffer-exchanged into 10 mM HEPES pH 7.4, 50 mM CaCl₂ prior to structural studies.

2.2. X-ray crystallography

HylP2 and HylP3 protein samples were initially screened at 291 K using Crystal Screens 1 and 2 (Hampton Research). Using the hanging-drop vapour-diffusion method, 1 µl screen solution was mixed with 1 µl protein solution and placed on a well containing 0.5 ml mother liquor. Initial hits were further optimized and good diffracting crystals were prepared in 2 M NaCl, 10% (w/v) PEG 6000 for HylP2 and 0.2 M MgCl₂, 0.1 M Tris–HCl pH 8.5, 30% (w/v) PEG 4000 for HylP3. MPD (2-methyl-2,4-pentanediol) was incorporated into the mother liquor at a concentration of 15% (v/v) to improve crystal quality and as a cryoprotectant. In both cases, hexagonal plates were harvested in rayon-fibre loops and bathed in cryoprotectant solution prior to flash-freezing in liquid nitrogen. Diffraction data were collected on European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) beamline ID14-1 at a wavelength of 0.934 Å and a temperature of 100 K using an ADSC CCD Q210 detector. The HylP2 data were integrated using *DENZO* (Minor *et al.*, 2006) and reduced with *SCALEPACK* (Minor *et al.*, 2006). The HylP3 data were integrated with *MOSFLM* (Leslie, 1992) and reduced with *SCALA* from the *CCP4* suite of programs (Collaborative Computational Project Number 4, 1994). Both the HylP2 and HylP3 structures were solved by molecular replacement using *Phaser* (Storoni *et al.*, 2004). The HylP1 structure (PDB code 2c3f; Smith *et al.*, 2005) was identified as the closest available molecular-replacement search module using *BLAST* (Altschul *et al.*, 1990). HylP2 was solved using

this model. The refined HylP2 model (PDB code 2wh7) was then used to solve the HylP3 structure. Model building was carried out with *ARP/wARP* (Perrakis *et al.*, 1999). Water molecules were added to the model automatically using *Coot* (Emsley & Cowtan, 2004) and checked manually. All manual corrections to the model were made with *Coot* (Emsley & Cowtan, 2004).

Refinement cycles were performed with *REFMAC* (Murshudov *et al.*, 1997). Diffraction data statistics and refined model parameters are shown in Table 1. Structural figures were drawn with *PyMOL* (DeLano, 2002). Coordinates and diffraction data have been deposited in the Protein Data Bank under codes 2wh7 and 2wb3 for HylP2 and HylP3, respectively.

3. Results and discussion

Samples of full-length HylP2 and HylP3 produced crystals suitable for X-ray analysis after one month of crystallization time. These crystals belonged to space group *P*_{6₃22, with a *c*-axis dimension (HylP2, *c* = 219 Å; HylP3, *c* = 241 Å) that was less than half of that observed for the HylP1 crystals (*c* = 586 Å). This length reduction along the *c* axis indicated a significant truncation in the crystallized proteins. HylP1 (Smith *et al.*, 2005) models containing the N- and C-terminal portions of the structure were then used to solve the structure of HylP2 by molecular replacement (Fig. 1*b*). Crystals of HylP2 were found to contain the C-terminal domain of the protein comprising residues Asn235–Leu386. The model of HylP2 was refined to an *R*_{cryst} of 0.21 (*R*_{free} = 0.26) using data to 1.6 Å resolution and was subsequently used to solve the structure of HylP3. HylP3 was also found to crystallize as a C-terminally truncated protein, in this case containing residues Thr234–Leu388. The HylP3 model was refined to an *R*_{cryst} of 0.19 (*R*_{free} = 0.24) using data to 1.9 Å resolution. As anticipated from the sequence similarity to HylP1 (HylP1, HylP2 and HylP3 share about 80% sequence identity with each other), the final refined models display an overall r.m.s.d. of 0.4 Å between each other. Statistics for data collection and refinement are given in Table 1.}

The HylP2 and HylP3 fragments crystallized with one molecule in the asymmetric unit, forming a trimer around the threefold crystallographic axis. The trimers are constructed using an extensive inter-chain hydrogen-bond network that involves approximately 80% of the protein residues. Each monomer contributes about 2100 Å² of accessible surface area (15% of the total surface area) to the formation of the trimer interface (Figs. 1*c* and 1*d*). The largest section of this interface (HylP2 residues Asn235–Ser322, HylP3 residues Thr234–Leu329) is formed by the intertwined interaction of β-strands contributed from each monomer in a sequential way. This interaction results in large and concave β-sheets that cover each face of the triangular-shaped tube. The fold is further stabilized by the packing of hydrophobic residues (mainly leucine and isoleucine) inside the central core. The structures then continue with a short stretch of antiparallel β-sheets (HylP2 residues Gly326–Lys350, HylP3 residues Leu329–Ala351) that each monomer forms on its own. This region is followed by a loosely structured region at the C-terminal side that ends with a triple α-helical bundle (HylP2 residues Lys373–Leu386, HylP3 residues Ala373–Leu388).

The catalytic residues in HylP1 are likely to be Asp137 and Tyr149 and these residues are located at the N-terminal end of the central β-sheet (Fig. 1*b*). In the truncated forms of HylP2 and HylP3 the residues forming the catalytic dyad are not present but the rest of the structural features putatively involved in the recognition of HA are reiterated in the structures of HylP2 and HylP3. Thus, in both frag-

ments a ladder of arginine side chains spaced about 14 Å was observed that may be involved in binding the carboxylate moieties of the glucuronic acid subunits of HA (Figs. 1c and 1d). The central groove containing the arginine ladder is edged by several loops that display residues with double conformations, indicating local disorder that might in turn be connected to substrate binding. The length of these central cavities in HylP2 and HylP3 and the superposition with the full-length fold of HylP1 also suggest the accommodation of HA substrates with up to eight glucuronic acid-*N*-acetyl glucosamine repeats; this is in agreement with activity studies on HylP1, in which the enzyme cleaves HA in an *endo* fashion, releasing mainly Δ 4,5-unsaturated hyalurono-hexasaccharides and Δ 4,5-unsaturated hyalurono-octasaccharides (Smith *et al.*, 2005).

The structural solution of the HylP2 and HylP3 proteins sheds light on a class of hyaluronate lyase which has evolved both a structural role as part of a phage-tail fibre, as well as an enzymatic role, to aid the transition of a bacteriophage through the outer HA capsule of *S. pyogenes*.

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