



Selective stimulatory action of olfactory ensheathing glia-conditioned medium on oligodendroglial differentiation, with additional reference to signaling mechanisms



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ABSTRACT

We examined the effects of conditioned medium from olfactory ensheathing glia (OEGCM) on the differentiation of oligodendrocytes in mixed cultures of early postnatal hippocampi. Differentiation was judged from the numerical density (ND) of cells immunoreactive to 2'3' cyclic nucleotide 3'phosphodiesterase (CNPase) and O4 antibodies. NDs increased according to inverted-U dose–response curves, particularly for CNPase+ cells (9-fold at optimal dilution) and these changes were blocked by inhibitors of ERK1, p38-MAPK, and PI3K. Our results raise the possibility that OEG secreted factor(s) may counteract demyelination induced by trauma, neurodegenerative diseases, and advanced age, and should stimulate novel methods to deliver these factors and/or potentiating chemicals.

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1. Introduction

Olfactory axons may regenerate after sectioning of the fila olfactoria or within the olfactory fiber layer of the olfactory bulb [1,2]. Numerous studies on the potential of the olfactory ensheathing glia (OEG) for the promotion of axonal growth and/or myelination have been reported [3,4]. Although studies have provided evidence for and against the ability of the OEG themselves to myelinate central axons [5–9], few attempts have been made to test OEG as promoters of the differentiation and eventual myelination of oligodendroglial progenitor cells (OPC) (but see [10] for negative results).

The signaling pathways regulating OEG-neuronal and OEG-glia interactions are virtually unknown. This may be partially due to our poor understanding of OEG neurotrophins and other extracellular signals required for survival of neurons and/or

oligodendrocytes [11,12]. Primary OEG are known to produce several trophic factors [13, 14, reviewed in 15], but only nerve growth factor (NGF), neurotrophin-4/5 (NT4/5) and neuregulin are considered to be secreted [13,16]. There is also some uncertainty regarding brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), which is thought to be produced in very small amounts [13,14] but seems to contribute significantly to axonal regeneration of cultured adult CNS neurons [17] and to be involved in OEG-enhanced axon regeneration, even on an unfavorable substrate such as myelin [18].

BDNF has also been described as involved in myelination by a direct action on oligodendrocytes [19]. Indeed, BDNF and its receptor, tropomyosin-related kinase B (TrkB), trigger several well-defined signaling cascades, including the Extracellular Signal-Regulated Kinase 1 (ERK1/MEK1) and the phosphatidylinositol-3 kinase (PI3K) [20,21]. There is also considerable work on p38 mitogen-activated protein kinases (p38MAPK) regulation of oligodendrocyte differentiation under the influence of insulin-like growth factor (IGF-1), or fibroblast growth factor 2 (FGF-2), but not BDNF [22,23].

In this study, we used a medium conditioned by cultured adult OEG (OEGCM) at different dilutions to investigate whether there is a monotonous (increasing or decreasing) change in the numerical density (ND) of cultured perinatal hippocampal cells expressing

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either of two markers of oligodendroglial differentiation: (a) 2'-3' cyclic nucleotide 3'-phosphodiesterase, a protein mediating process outgrowth in OPCs [24,25], and (b) O4 antibody, a marker of gangliosides appearing at the pro-oligodendroblast stage as well as of the late-appearing glycolipids sulfatide and seminolipid [26,27]. To study signaling by OEG soluble factors, we used inhibitors for the ERK1, p38MAPK and PI3K signaling pathways.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Animals

Animal care was according with recommendations of the Sociedade Brasileira de Neurobiologia e Comportamento (Brazilian Society for Neurobiology and Behavior), and was approved by the Committee for the Use of Experimental Animals of our institution (CEUA IBCCF Protocol number 020).

2.2. Isolated cultures of olfactory ensheathing cells

OECs were collected and purified following our modification of a protocol previously described by [28]. Briefly, the olfactory nerve layer was removed and dissociated with a solution of 0.01% ethylene diamine tetraacetic acid (EDTA; Invitrogen, USA) [29,30]. After the removal of fibroblasts, astrocytes and oligodendrocytes by adhesion as in [28], the cells were plated onto laminin-coated (40 µg/mL, Sigma) 24-well cell plates in complete DMEM/F12 medium.

The cells were maintained in 5% CO₂ at 37 °C, and the medium was changed every second day. After the cell culture had reached about 75% confluence (three weeks), the conditioned medium (OEGCM) was collected, filtered through a 0.2 µm membrane pore, aliquoted and stored at –70 °C until use.

2.3. Hippocampus mixed cell cultures

Hippocampus cell cultures were prepared following modifications of a protocol previously described by [31]. Briefly, four 0 to 2-day-old (postnatal; P0–P2) Wistar rats were decapitated, their brains removed and the hippocampus dissected. Dissociated filtered cells were plated on poly-L-lysine-coated (PLL, 100 µg/ml) glass coverslips at a final density of 10⁴ cells/coverslip. The cells were maintained in complete NB27 – Neurobasal medium A (Life Technologies) containing 2% B27 supplement (Life Biotechnology), termed (NB27, positive control) plus 2 mM L-glutamine, penicillin (50 mg/ml) and streptomycin (50 U/ml), or under either of the following conditions: DMEM/F12 + 10% FBS only (negative control) or NB27 containing OEGCM dilutions (1:1; 1:3; 1:5; 1:10, and 1:20), in a 5% CO₂ atmosphere at 37 °C for 72 h. After this period, the cultures were fixed with 4% PF, washed with PBS, and stored in this solution at 4 °C until processing for immunofluorescence.

2.4. Inhibition of survival signaling pathways in hippocampal cells

Once the optimal dilution of OEGCM (1:5) for maintenance of hippocampal cells was established, three well-known inhibitors

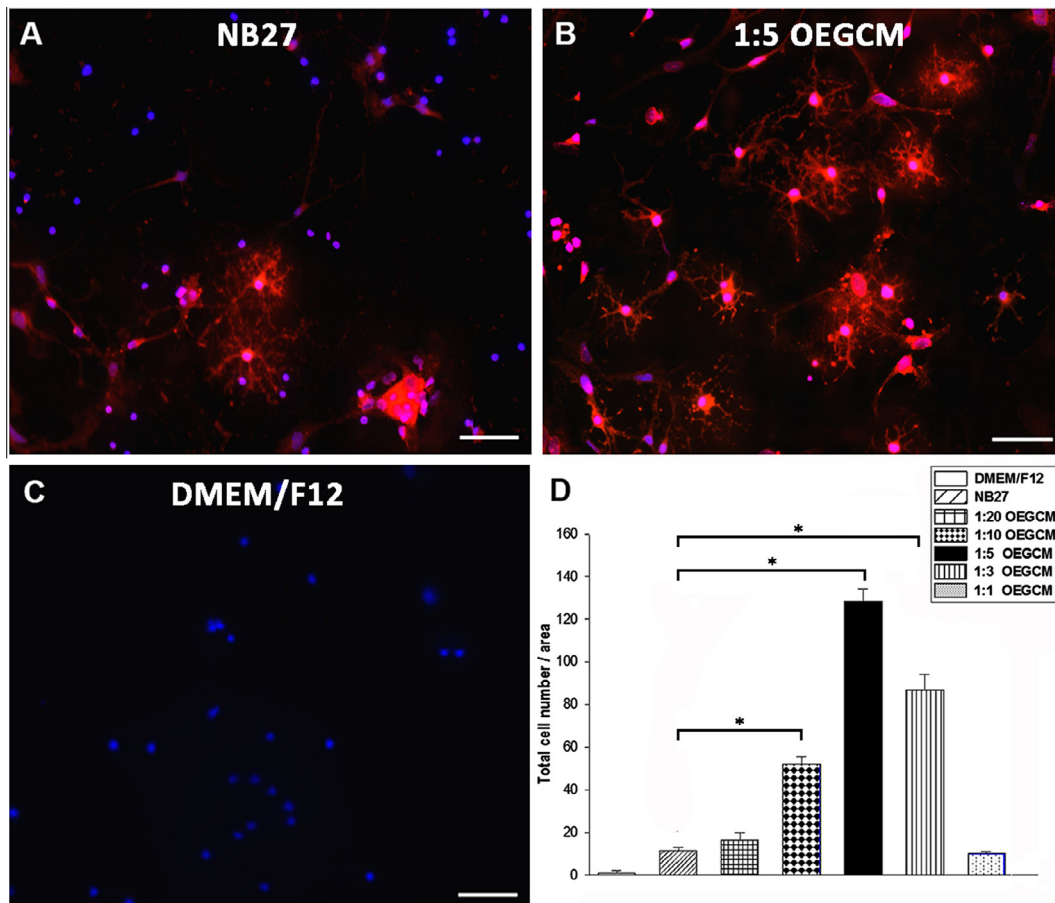


Fig. 1. OEG conditioned medium (OEGCM) increases the ND of CNPase-positive oligodendroglia in early postnatal hippocampal cultures, after 3 days of treatment. (A) Culture maintained in NB27; (B) treatment with 1:5 OEGCM; (C) culture in DMEM/F12; (D) quantification in all groups. Secondary antibody labeled with Alexa 594 (also in Fig. 2), nuclei stained with DAPI (all figures). Observe the inverted-U dose–response pattern, with maximal mean response (9× baseline) at 1:5 OEGCM. One-way ANOVA, Bonferroni test (treatment vs. culture in NB27), **p* < 0.05. ND = numerical density. Scale bar = 50 µm.

of signaling pathways related to cell survival were tested. These inhibitors (Cell Signaling, USA) were: LY294002, inhibitor of PI3K; SB203580, inhibitor of p38MAPK; and PD98059, inhibitor of ERK1, used at either 10 or 50 μM final concentrations. The cultures were maintained in 5% CO_2 at 37 $^\circ\text{C}$ for 48 h and fixed with 4% PF, washed with PBS and stored in this solution at 4 $^\circ\text{C}$ until processing for immunofluorescence.

2.5. Immunocytochemistry

Fixed cells on coverslips were processed for anti-CNPase (monoclonal mouse IgG, 1/100 ascitic fluid, Sigma–Aldrich, cat#C5922) according to [32], whereas for O4 (monoclonal mouse IgM, hybridoma, kindly donated by Dr. Adan Aguirre, SUNY – Stony Brook) we followed [33]. After that, the coverslips were washed with PBS/Triton or PBS and incubated with appropriate species- or subclass-specific secondary antibodies conjugated to Alexa Fluor 488 or 546 (1:500, Life Technologies) for 2 h at room temperature. Coverslips were mounted on glass slides with *n*-propyl gallate (Sigma–Aldrich).

2.6. Cell counts and statistical analysis

For cell counts, image mosaics containing 100 images/coverslip (14.33 mm^2 total area/coverslip), were obtained with an epifluorescence microscope (AxioImager M2, Carl Zeiss) and digital images were generated by AxioVision[®] Imaging software (Carl Zeiss). The graphs show the ND, i.e., the mean number in 3 exper-

iments of cells positive for a specific marker in 10 fields (about 1.4 mm^2).

Data are expressed as mean \pm standard error of the mean (SEM). Statistical evaluation was performed by One-way ANOVA followed by Bonferroni post-test for multiple comparisons (GraphPad Prism, version 5.0.0.288). Differences were considered statistically significant for $P < 0.05$.

3. Results

3.1. OEGCM increases the numerical density of CNPase-positive cells in neonatal hippocampal cultures

Previous studies employing cultures generated from the embryonic rat spinal cord plated on OEG showed that oligodendrocyte process extension was rather poor, perhaps due to a lack of secreted factors [10]. Since some growth factors, such as BDNF, have a regionally specific effect on oligodendrocytes [34], we approached this question by employing a different culture system and using conditioned medium to determine whether putative OEG-secreted trophic factors changed the differentiation potential of early postnatal hippocampal OPCs. First, we evaluated whether OEGCM was able to increase the number of cells reactive for CNPase, a marker of oligodendroglial lineage cells from the progenitor stage up to the mature oligodendrocyte [25,24,35,36]. As shown in Fig. 1, the addition of OEGCM from 1:10 to 1:3 increased significantly the ND of CNPase-positive cells, with a peak at 1:5 (9 times the ND of NB27 medium only).

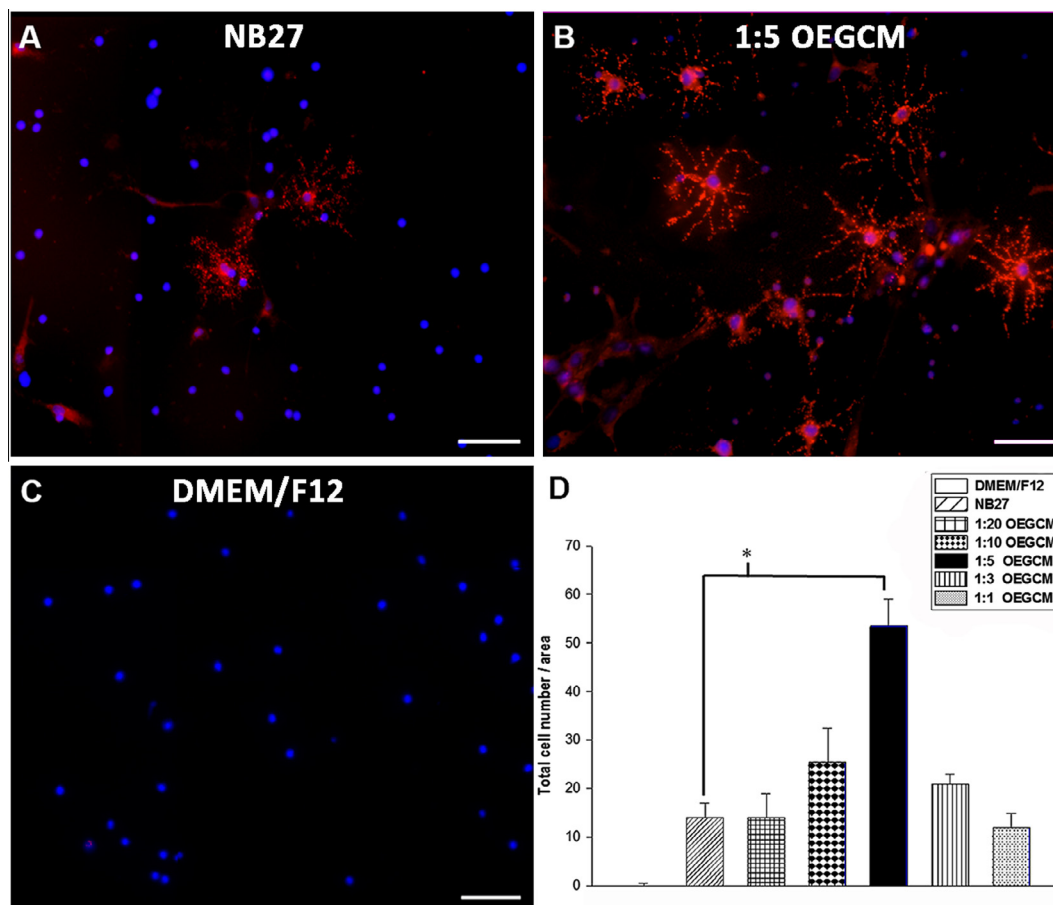


Fig. 2. OEGCM increases the ND of O4-positive oligodendroglia in cultures, as in Fig. 1. Culture conditions in A–C, fluorophores, and as in Fig. 1. Observe in D a similar trend of dose–response as in Fig. 1, but a less-marked mND increase (maximal mean response = 1.8 \times baseline) and a significance level reached only at 1:5 OEGCM. Statistics and abbreviations as in Fig. 1. Scale bar = 50 μm .

3.2. OEGCM increases the numerical density of O4-positive cells in neonatal hippocampal cultures

The majority of oligodendrocytes (OLs) are generated postnatally and pass through a series of phenotypic stages from immature to mature myelin-forming cells [36]. The progression along the OL-specific lineage can be characterized by the appearance of the O4 antigen [37]. Therefore, we investigated whether trophic activities secreted by OEG were able to increase the number of cells reactive for O4 antibody. As shown in Fig. 2, the addition of 1:5 OEGCM (in

NB27 medium) increased the ND of O4-positive cells by 2.4 times (Fig. 2B and D); One-way ANOVA (Fig. 2A and D).

3.3. OEGCM effects on CNPase-positive OPCs/OLs are mediated through PI3K, ERK1 and p38MAPK signaling pathways in neonatal neural hippocampal cultures

Several trophic factors have been reported to induce differentiation and survival through activation of signaling transduction pathways, such as the PI3-K and/or the mitogen-activated protein

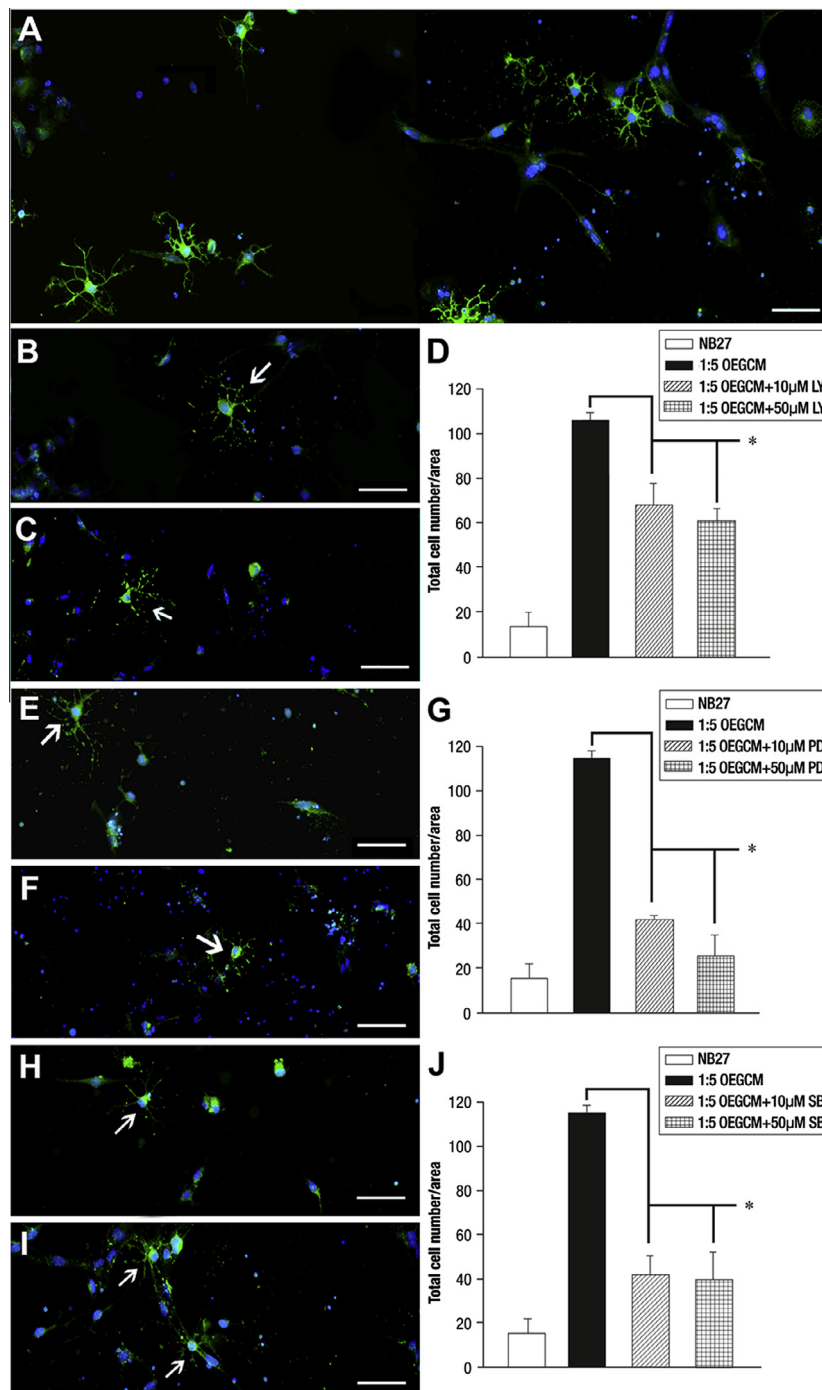


Fig. 3. The augmenting effect of OEGCM on CNPase + cells depends on the PI3K, and more markedly on the ERK1 and p38MAPK pathways. (A) Culture treated with 1:5 OEGCM for 2 days; (B and C) as in A plus 10 μ M (B) or 50 μ M (C) LY 294002; (E and F) as in A plus 10 μ M (E) or 50 μ M (F) PD98059; (H and I) as in A plus 10 μ M (H) or 50 μ M (I) SB203580; (D, G and J) quantification of ND after use of signaling inhibitors. Observe that cultures treated with inhibitors (small panels, arrows) show cells with apparently smaller processes than cells in the untreated culture. Statistics and abbreviations as in Fig. 1. Scale bar = 50 μ m.

kinases, including the ERK1/MEK1 and the p38MAPK. In order to evaluate if these pathways are activated by OEGCM, the hippocampal cells were cultured for 2 days in the presence of LY294002, a PI3K inhibitor; or in the presence of PD98059, a known inhibitor for the ERK1/MEK1; or in the presence of SB203580, a p38MAPK inhibitor; and then reacted with an anti-CNPase antibody. Fig. 3 shows that addition of 10 μ M (68 ± 9 , Fig. 3B and D) or 50 μ M LY294002 (61 ± 5 , Fig. 3C and D) decreased the ND of CNPase-positive cells from differentiated hippocampal progenitors maintained in the presence of OEGCM for 48 h when compared to differentiated oligodendrocyte lineage cells in the absence of the inhibitor (105 ± 3 ; Fig. 3A). The same phenomena were observed after addition of 10 μ M (38 ± 2 , Fig. 3E and G) or 50 μ M PD98059 (23 ± 9 , Fig. 3F and G); or after the addition of 10 μ M (38 ± 8 , Fig. 3E and G) or 50 μ M SB203580 (36 ± 11 , Fig. 3F and G), showing a reduction of the ND of CNPase-positive cells from hippocampal progenitors after 48 h when compared to differentiated oligodendrocyte-lineage cells in NB27 + 1:5 OEG (105 ± 3 ; Fig. 3A).

4. Discussion

In this study we demonstrated for the first time that OEGCM can influence early postnatal hippocampal progenitor cells toward an oligodendroglial phenotype.

Although young neurons, as judged by β III-tubulin immunoreactivity, were about 15 times more numerous in NB27 medium (not shown) than cells labeled with the general oligodendroglial marker, CNPase, the change in CNPase+ cells after OEGCM treatment at optimal dilution for only 2 days was marked.

This could not be attributed to exhaustion of neuron generation in early postnatal life in the hippocampus. Indeed, the behavior of progenitors in the CA1 and CA3 subfields changes with age. In fact, the percentages of neurons and oligodendrocytes differentiated from cultured neurospheres are about equal from both of these subfields at P4, although oligodendrocytes exceed neurons by 4 to 8-fold at P12 [38]. Additionally, our results from the use of specific inhibitors indicate that the effects of OEGCM on oligodendrocyte progenitors are mediated by the PI3K, ERK1, and p38MAPK pathways.

Several soluble factors affect oligodendrocyte differentiation, such as Neurotrophin 3 (NT3) [39], BDNF [40], and ciliary neurotrophic factor (CNTF) [41]. Other factors, implicated predominantly in myelination proper, are fibroblast growth factor (FGF) [42] and insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1) [43]. However, this proposed specialization is not absolute, since, for instance, FGF-2 is a mitogen for OPCs in the pro-oligodendrocyte or late progenitor stage (O4+, galactocerebroside-negative) [44]. Furthermore, IGF-1 can promote proliferation, survival and differentiation of OPCs [45].

PI3K is a master regulator that can be activated by growth factors and cytokines, which have been extensively studied by Vanhaesebroeck's group [46] in a variety of animal models and cell systems, but not including oligodendrocytes or involving their more important growth factors, with the possible exception of a PDGF. Our use of LY294002, an inhibitor of PI3K, resulted in reduction of the number of CNPase+ cells in vitro. There is evidence indicating that PI3K/Akt is a crucial pathway for the proliferation, differentiation and survival of OPCs [45,47]. Furthermore, inhibition of the lipid phosphatase PTEN (phosphatase and tensin homolog deleted on chromosome 10), an inhibitor of the PI3K/Akt pathway, potentiates IGF-1 effects by increasing proliferation of OLPs in a concentration-dependent manner [48]. Nevertheless, we have no information on the presence of IGF-1 in OEGCM, although this factor has been reported to be present in OEG by immunocytochemistry [49].

The kinase p38MAPK was initially described as involved in the regulation of inflammatory cytokine biosynthesis [50]. However, its description as colocalized with CNPase in normal brain white matter provided a clue to its involvement in cell growth and survival [51]. The participation of p38 MAPK in Schwann myelination [52] and in morphological differentiation of OPCs [22,53] has been clearly demonstrated. Therefore, we can attribute the reduction of CNPase+ cells that we observed, and an apparent shrinkage of their processes, to the use of SB 203580, an inhibitor of p38MAPK α and β [54].

The role of the ERK1 signaling pathway in the oligodendrocyte lineage was described in proliferation, process extension [55,56], and cytokine-induced oligodendrocyte death [57]. Thus, it is reasonable to consider that the use of the ERK1 inhibitor may have contributed to the reduction of the number of CNPase+ cells, counteracting the beneficial effects of OEGCM addition. It has been shown that ERK1/2 are important regulators of oligodendroglial progenitor and early progenitor stages, and can mediate specific stimulatory effects of BDNF on myelin protein expression in the basal forebrain oligodendrocytes [20]. In addition, inhibition of ERK1 in cultures of OPC was accompanied by the inhibition of their differentiation [58] and process extension [59].

To conclude, the importance of this study resides in raising the possibility that a factor or, most probably, multiple factors secreted by OEG might be used in order to counteract demyelination induced by trauma, neurodegenerative diseases, and advanced age. Additionally, because OEG is located in relatively accessible route to the brain, our results may stimulate the development of novel methods to deliver these factors and/or potentiating chemicals.

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