



Lysosomal signaling in control of degradation pathways

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Autophagy mediates the (non-)selective bulk degradation of cytoplasm, protein aggregates, damaged organelles and certain pathogens. The endosomal membrane system uses multivesicular bodies (MVBs) to selectively deliver ubiquitinated membrane proteins together with extracellular components into lysosomes. Microautophagy (MA) and chaperone-mediated autophagy (CMA) additionally contribute to the selective delivery of cargo into lysosomes. The coordinated function of these lysosomal degradation pathways is essential to maintain cellular homeostasis. Their activity is controlled by mTOR (mammalian target of rapamycin) signaling and thus coupled to metabolic processes during cell growth. Here, we will discuss how TORC1 on lysosomes and TORC2 at the plasma membrane coordinate the different membrane biogenesis pathways with cargo selection, vesicle transport and fusion with lysosomes in response to intracellular and extracellular cues.

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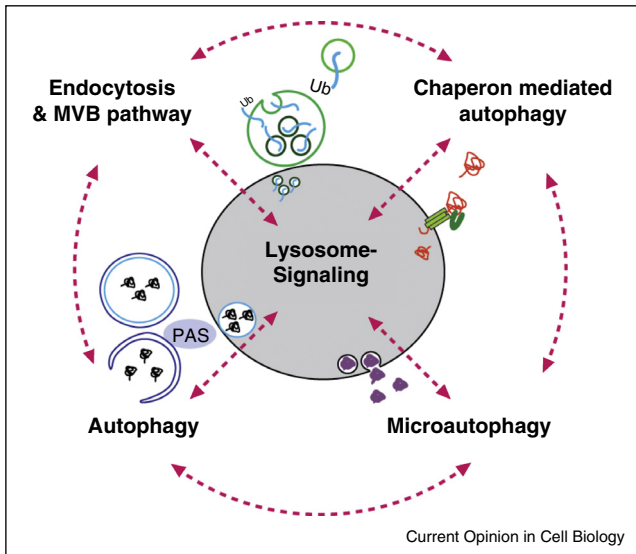
For a long time lysosomal degradation pathways have been considered as means to rid cells of waste products, simply required for the disposal and degradation of intra-cellular and extracellular macromolecules. Today, it has become clear that these catabolic pathways serve a much broader function than originally anticipated, including the regulation of cell signaling, metabolism and degradation of toxic protein aggregates and of damaged organelles as well as pathogen clearance. Their activity is tightly regulated and defects in each of these lysosomal degradation pathways can lead to metabolic disorders, cancer or neuro-degeneration [1,2]. The major goal of this review is to highlight our current understanding of how signaling from lysosomes triggers and coordinates different lysosomal degradation pathways and how they interact to maintain cellular homeostasis and organismal health (Figures 1 and 2).

Different vesicular and non-vesicular pathways target cargo to lysosomes for degradation (Figure 1). Autophagy delivers cytoplasmic material, damaged organelles, invading pathogens and protein aggregates into lysosomes [3]. Extracellular cargo and nutrients, together with components of the plasma membrane, integral membrane proteins and hydrolytic enzymes reach the lumen of lysosomes through the endosomal system via the multivesicular body (MVB) pathway [4]. Together, the MVB pathway and autophagy probably deliver the lion's share of cellular material to lysosomes. In addition, microautophagy (MA) and chaperone mediated autophagy (CMA) deliver cargo selectively into lysosomes [5]. The function of these lysosomal degradation pathways requires complex molecular machineries. The autophagy (ATG)-core machinery and the endosomal sorting complexes required for transport (ESCRT) couple (selective) cargo sorting to elaborate membrane biogenesis reactions to form transport intermediates [6,7]. (Endosomal) MA also relies on the ESCRT machinery for membrane remodeling [8]. Heterotypic membrane fusion of MVBs or autophagosomes with lysosomes (or with each other) finally delivers the cargo into the lumen of lysosomes. Cytoplasmic proteins degraded by CMA take a non-vesicular route into lysosomes and are directly imported across the limiting membrane of lysosomes. We are just beginning to understand how the individual pathways function. Yet, it is unclear how they are triggered and how these processes are coordinated with each other.

Signaling pathways central for cell growth and survival adjust the flux of cargo and regulate the biogenesis of lysosomal degradation pathways (Figure 2). The most prominent example is mTOR signaling, which integrates signaling from nutrients, growth factors, and energy availability [9]. mTOR exists in two distinct complexes, mTORC1 and mTORC2. They are found in various subcellular locations [10] and fulfill different tasks. Amongst others, mTORC1 signaling on late endosomes (LE)/lysosomes and mTORC2 at the PM and on lysosomes also seem to control cargo selection, membrane biogenesis and trafficking in different lysosomal degradation pathways.

Activation of mTORC1 on the surface of MVBs/lysosomes by Rheb-GTP is a complex multi-step process and additionally requires the RagA-D family of GTPases. They form obligatory dimers (e.g. RagA/C) and in their GTP bound form they recruit mTORC1 to MVBs/lysosomes. Rag-GTP loading is mediated by their guanine exchange factor (GEF), the LE/lysosomal adaptor and

Figure 1



Regulation of lysosomal degradation pathways. Autophagy, endocytosis and the MVB pathway, chaperone mediated autophagy (CMA) and microautophagy (MA) are depicted. Regulation by lysosomal signaling (see also Figure 2) and potential cross-talks are indicated.

MAPK and mTOR activator complex (LAMTOR) also known as Regulator [11–13].

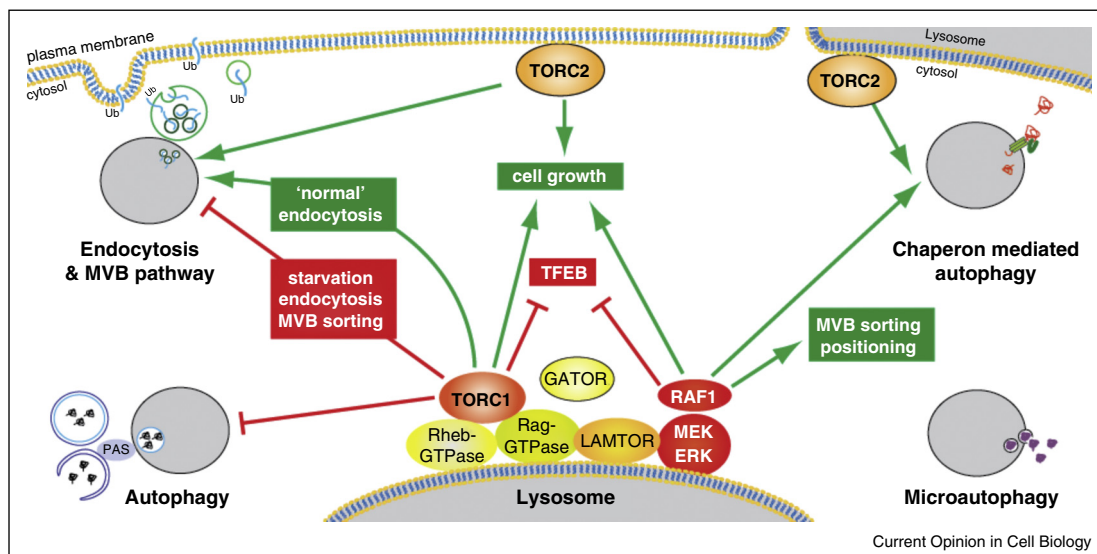
LAMTOR is a pentameric complex that is anchored by one of its subunits to LE/lysosomes [13,14]. The GEF activity of LAMTOR toward the Rag-GTPases and hence mTORC1 activation on lysosomes is regulated

by the interaction with a lysosomal nutrient transporter (SLC38A9) and the v-ATPase [15,16^{••},17^{••}]. In addition, LAMTOR functions as a scaffold complex for ERK signaling in response to growth factors [11,14,18,19]. LAMTOR mediated mTORC1 and ERK signaling control the nuclear translocation of the transcription factor, TFEB [20,21,22]. mTORC1 signaling appears to play the predominate role in regulating the nuclear translocation of TFEB in response to nutrient deprivation or lysosomal stress/dysfunction. The role of ERK signaling in TFEB regulation is less clear. Just as important as the activation of TOR signaling is its inactivation [23[•]]. The Rag-GTPases are inactivated by multisubunit complexes named SEA/GATOR that function as GTPase activating proteins (GAPs) [24^{••},25,26[•],27].

In line with the central role of mTOR and MAPK signaling in cell growth, LAMTOR and GATOR are required for tissue homeostasis *in vivo* and embryonic development [14,19,24^{••},28[•]]. Maybe more surprisingly, LAMTOR also controls several aspects of LE biogenesis. Its function is required for growth factor receptor degradation, lysosomal positioning through transport along microtubules and for the formation of recycling tubes on late LE/lysosomes [19,29,30[•]]. In addition, both LAMTOR and GATOR regulate autophagy. Despite their essential cellular functions and their role in tissue homeostasis, little is known about how LAMTOR and GATOR function, how they are regulated and how they mechanistically contribute to mTORC1 activation on lysosomes.

Much less is known about the mechanism resulting in TORC2 signaling at the PM, but TORC2 can be

Figure 2



Schematic presentation of lysosomal signaling complexes and their roles in lysosomal degradation pathways.

activated in response to membrane stress and contributes to endocytosis and autophagy [31]. The balance between mTORC2 and the phosphatase PHLPP1 has been shown recently to control Akt signaling on lysosomes which impacts on CMA [32*].

Overall it appears that cargo transport via the MVB pathway, MA/CMA and autophagy can be triggered by the modulation of lysosomal mTOR signaling. How TOR signaling orchestrates and triggers the activity of lysosomal degradation pathways is not clear.

Autophagy. Macro-autophagy (hereafter autophagy) engulfs cytoplasmic cargo inside a double-membrane organelle (Figure 1). These so-called autophagosomes form *de novo* at the preautophagosomal structure (PAS). Typically, there is a single PAS near or at the vacuolar membrane in yeast and autophagosomes are formed throughout the cytoplasm of mammalian cells at so far undefined sites. Autophagy is induced by various cellular stresses, including nutrient limitation, the accumulation of misfolded proteins (aggrephagy), defective mitochondria (mitophagy), damaged DNA as well as invading pathogens (xenophagy). While starvation-induced autophagy sequesters bulk cytoplasm in autophagosomes in a rather unspecific manner [33], it has become clear that autophagy can be highly selective with regard to the cargo material that is captured within autophagosomes.

Autophagy proceeds through a continuous maturation process with several defined steps: first, induction; second, isolation membrane nucleation; third, isolation membrane expansion coupled to cargo capture; fourth, isolation membrane closure and finally, fusion with the lytic compartment. During starvation, mTORC1 inactivation is required for the induction of autophagy.

The autophagic machinery consists of at least 36 genes (Atg1–Atg36) that contribute to one or more steps of the process. The precise mechanism of action of the autophagic machinery is largely enigmatic. Seventeen of the 36 Atg genes comprise the autophagic core machinery that is essential for most types of autophagy [34]. The core machinery can be subdivided into several functional groups [6]. Among these, the Atg1/ULK1 kinase complex is essential for the induction of autophagy [35]. The Atg1/ULK1 kinase complex is under the control of mTORC1 and regulates the traffic of the transmembrane protein Atg9 in small, possibly Golgi-derived vesicles to and from the PAS, the site of autophagosome biogenesis. Atg6/Beclin and Atg14 are part of the PI3K complex I (composed of the Vps34, Vps15, Atg14 and Beclin subunits), required for vesicle nucleation at the PAS [36,37]. The molecular mechanisms of PAS assembly are still unclear. Finally, the Atg8 and Atg12 ubiquitin-like conjugation systems are essential for isolation membrane expansion and closure. Atg8-family proteins are conjugated to

phosphatidylethanolamine, a process mediated by Atg3 and Atg7 [38]. Atg12 is conjugated to Atg5 [39]. The Atg12–Atg5 conjugate subsequently interacts with Atg16 to support isolation membrane elongation and closure [40]. During selective types of autophagy, receptor proteins simultaneously interact with cargo material and Atg8-family proteins on the isolation membrane and thereby confer selectivity to autophagosome formation [41].

Once their biogenesis is complete, mature autophagosomes fuse either directly with lysosomes or first with MVBs to form amphisomes [42] that later fuse with lysosomes. Inside lysosomes, autophagic cargo is degraded and amino acids, lipids and glucose are transported across the vacuolar membrane back to the cytoplasm where they are recycled by cellular metabolism. Autophagy cooperates with the Ubiquitin Proteasome System (UPS) in the degradation of cytosolic proteins to supply amino acids to the cell [43,44]. How autophagy cooperates with other lysosomal degradation pathways is less clear.

Chaperone-mediated autophagy (CMA) is a pathway for delivery of substrates into the lysosomes that does not involve vesicular intermediates, in contrast to autophagy (Figure 1). CMA substrates contain a pentapeptide (KFERQ-like) motif that is recognized by the chaperone heat shock cognate protein 70 (Hsc70). Binding to Hsc70 mediates the translocation of substrates into the lysosomal lumen, which requires the oligomerisation of the lysosomal receptor lysosome-associated membrane protein type 2A (Lamp2A) [45]. CMA can also modulate, compete and cooperate with the UPS for the degradation of short-lived proteins [46]. Thus, CMA plays a central role in the control of protein homeostasis and appears to be regulated by the lysosomal mTORC2/PHLPP1/Akt signaling axis [32*].

The multivesicular body (MVB) pathway transports endocytic and biosynthetic cargo into lysosomes (Figure 1). Endocytic cargo includes nutrient transporters, growth-factor receptor–ligand complexes, lipids and extracellular material and pathogens. The majority of these substances are not degraded but recycled back to the PM; only a small portion is delivered into lysosomes. Diverting membrane components into lysosomes requires stringent selection mechanisms that are coupled to MVB biogenesis. MVBs are specialized endosomes that are filled with small intraluminal vesicles (ILVs) with a defined diameter (25 nm in yeast, 50 nm in mammalian cells). The ILVs are the defining feature of these otherwise morphologically pleiotropic endocytic organelles. Only membrane proteins and lipids that are sorted into ILVs will be degraded inside lysosomes.

The significance of the MVB pathway was first appreciated when the activated epidermal growth factor receptor

(EGFR) was detected inside ILVs on its way into lysosomes [47]. Since then, it became clear that endocytosis and the MVB pathway contribute to the regulation of numerous cellular signaling pathways and determine how cells sense, respond and adapt to extracellular cues.

The down-regulation of the activated EGFR begins at the PM. Ligand binding not only activates mitogenic (Ras-RAF-MAPK) and pro-survival (Akt) signaling, but also results in ubiquitination of the activated receptor. Ubiquitin acts as the molecular tag that links the activated EGFR to the endocytic machinery. Ubiquitination and endocytosis of the activated EGFR are well-characterized processes [48]. In contrast, the events and molecular mechanisms leading to the ubiquitination and endocytosis of most membrane proteins, including the majority of nutrient transporters, are not clear.

On endosomes, only ubiquitinated membrane proteins enter the MVB pathway. All non-ubiquitinated membrane proteins are recycled back to the PM or to the Golgi. The biogenesis of MVBs is initiated by key effectors of the small GTPase Rab5 on early endosomes (EE), including the PI3K complex II (composed of the Vps34, Vps15, Vps38 and Beclin) [49,50]. In turn, phosphatidylinositol 3-phosphate (PI(3)P) and ubiquitinated membrane proteins [51] initiate the recruitment of the ESCRT machinery to endosomes, which coordinates sorting of ubiquitinated membrane proteins with MVB biogenesis [52–54]. ESCRT-0, ESCRT-I and ESCRT-II directly bind to ubiquitinated membrane proteins, while ESCRT-III and Vps4 drive membrane-remodeling reactions that result in ILV biogenesis [55,56]. At the end of this process, the ESCRT machinery has sorted all ubiquitinated membrane proteins from the limiting membrane of MVBs into ILVs.

Also cytoplasmic proteins can be selectively packaged into ILVs in a process termed endosomal microautophagy (MA) in yeast and mammalian cells. In mammalian cells MA not only requires the ESCRT system, but also Hsc70, which mediates cargo selectivity. Hsc70 bind to endosomal membranes and interacts with cytoplasmic proteins containing KFERQ-motifs (similar to CMA) and thereby helps to package them into ILVs [8]. In the yeast *Schizosaccharomyces pombe*, a specific receptor (Nbr1) mediates the sorting of two cytosolic hydrolases via the ESCRT dependent MVB pathway into lysosomes [57].

Before MVBs can fuse with lysosomes, they mature from EE into LE, which requires a series of defined steps. These include first, switching from Rab5 to Rab7; second, conversion of PI(3)P to PI(3,5)P₂; third, acidification and finally, changes in fusion specificity. At the end of this complex process, LE/MVBs are filled with cargo-laden ILVs, carry Rab7, PI(3,5)P₂ and specific tethering (CORVET, HOPS) complexes and defined SNAREs (e.g. Stx7, Stx8, VTI1b

and Vamp7) to promote fusion with lysosomes [4]. How these maturation steps are timed and regulated to prevent premature fusion with lysosomes is not well understood.

EE, recycling endosomes and MVBs contribute to autophagy, either as a membrane source of phagophore growth [58] or later when mature autophagosomes fuse with MVBs to form amphisomes [42] before they reach lysosomes. How these processes are regulated and whether amphisome formation is the default pathway to target autophagosomes to lysosomes is not clear.

Cooperation of lysosomal degradation pathways takes place at many different levels. Recently it has become clear that endocytosis of growth factor receptors and nutrient transporters not only occurs upon ligand binding under nutrient rich conditions, but is coordinated with a more prominent autophagic response upon TORC1 inactivation and/or nutrient limitation. Withdrawal of interleukin-3 results in endocytosis of several nutrient transporters (GLUT1, LAT1, Transferrin-Receptor and LDL-Receptor) and their subsequent lysosomal degradation via the MVB pathway [59,60]. Serum starvation induces endocytosis of the inactive EGFR, which, once on endosomes, contributes to the induction of autophagy by activation of the PI3K complex I [61]. In response to starvation, mTORC1 and ERK inactivation also promotes the nuclear translocation of MiT/TFE transcription factors (MITF, TFEB and TFE3). They induce the transcription of genes required for endo/lysosomal biogenesis and autophagy core components and thereby activate the so-called Coordinated Lysosomal Expression and Regulation (CLEAR) gene network [22,62]. In addition ZKSCAN3 and other transcriptional responses are critical to transcriptionally regulate the magnitude of autophagy [63]. Translating this transcriptional response into an efficient boost of lysosomal activity requires ongoing protein synthesis during nutrient limitation. In yeast this is achieved by massive starvation-induced endocytosis and membrane protein degradation in lysosomes via the MVB pathway. This supplies intracellular amino acids sufficient for continuous protein synthesis to boost the catabolic activity of lysosomes for the efficient degradation of autophagic cargo. In this way, starvation-induced endocytosis and autophagy cooperate to enter a stable G1/G0 quiescent state and thereby ensure cell survival upon nutrient limitation [64**]. Additionally, MA could use the ESCRT machinery during MVB biogenesis for the selective degradation of cytoplasmic proteins [8]. Overall, it is becoming clear that the MVB pathway plays a central role in cellular homeostasis that is coordinated with the larger autophagic response to starvation [64**], but the underlying molecular mechanisms have not been identified.

It is obvious that the catabolic activity of lysosomes is a prerequisite for the efficient function of each lysosomal degradation pathway and that most lysosomal degradation

pathways also deliver lysosomal enzymes and thereby, at least in part, contribute to lysosomal biogenesis.

Several key regulators of the endosomal system and autophagy also function in both pathways. Phosphatidylinositol-3-Phosphate (PI(3)P) is essential for the biogenesis of EE, MVBs and autophagosomes [36]. The PI3K complex I is required in the early steps of autophagy for the recruitment of essential autophagic proteins [65]. On endosomes, PI(3)P is generated by the PI3K complex II [66,67]. Essential effectors of the MVB pathway (ESCRT complexes) bind to PI(3)P on endosomes [49]. Similarly PI(3,5)P₂ is required for both autophagy and endosomal maturation [68,69]. Mounting evidence suggests that key regulators of endosomal transport contribute essentially to the biogenesis and/or the transport of autophagosomes. Prominent examples are Rab5 and Rab7, which have clearly defined functions in the endo-lysosomal system but additionally are required for autophagy [70–72] and/or the biogenesis of lysosomes. The same is true for their down-stream effectors such as different tethering complexes and SNAREs (e.g.: Vamp7, 8, Stx13, 17) that regulate fusion with lysosomes [73].

The ESCRT machinery itself was also found to be required for later steps in autophagy, possibly by regulating the formation of functional amphisomes and/or their fusion with lysosomes [74,75]. Alix, for instance, is a protein that associates with the ESCRT machinery and is required for MVB biogenesis and also interacts with Atg12–Atg3 of the autophagic core machinery. CMA can be activated to compensate for impaired autophagy via the up regulation of Lamp2a and changes in the abundance of lysosomal Hsc70 [76]. In turn, CMA down regulation is compensated by enhanced autophagy activity [77]. There are many more examples, but clear molecular mechanisms have been provided only for few.

Conclusion

In the past years it has become clear that lysosomal signaling controls lysosomal degradation pathways. The next challenge will be to gain mechanistic insight and more comprehensive understanding of how these processes engage with each other and are coordinated to ensure cellular homeostasis and prevent pathological changes. New insight may provide ideas and novel targets for therapeutic intervention and for the treatment of human diseases driven by defects in lysosomal signaling and degradation pathways.

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