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Mic10 oligomerizes to bend mitochondrial inner membranes at cristae junctions.
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Zusammenfassung des wissenschaftlichen Inhalts

(Prof. Dr. Michael Meinecke)

Mitochondrien, die Kraftwerke der Zelle, werden von zwei Lipidmembranen umgeben. Insbesondere die Innenmembran zeichnet sich durch eine komplexe, stark gefaltete Struktur aus. Die Aufrechterhaltung dieser Morphologie, die in allen Organismen, vom Einzeller bis zum Menschen identisch ist, ist von elementarer Bedeutung für die Zelle. Der Verlust der Feinstruktur der Innenmembran ist oft ein erstes Signal für die Einleitung des programmierten Zelltods, der Apoptose. Biologische Membranen streben in der Regel einen energetisch günstigen, möglichst wenig deformierten Zustand an und die molekularen Mechanismen welche die mitochondriale Innenmembran in ihre normale Form zwingen waren bisher rätselhaft.

Einem Team um Michael Meinecke ist es nun gelungen, dass Protein zu identifizieren, welches maßgeblich für die Struktur der Innenmembran verantwortlich ist. In der Arbeit von Barbot et al. zeigen die Autoren, dass hochreines Mic10, ein Protein der mitochondrialen Innenmembran, in der Lage ist, Membranen zu deformieren. Die Topologie von Mic10 in der Innenmembran erinnert an einen Keil, der auf der einen Seite der Membran eine größere Oberfläche einnimmt und so zur Membrankrümmung führt. Es konnte weiterhin gezeigt werden, dass eine Oligomerisierung von Mic10 die Grundlage der Membran deformation darstellt und dass diese Aktivität von Mic10 für die Ausbildung einer normalen Feinstruktur der Innenmembran essenziell ist. Mit einer Mischung aus biophysikalischen, biochemischen und zellbiologischen Methoden gelang den Autoren außerdem ein großer Schritt in Richtung synthetische Biologie indem sie künstliche Membranstrukturen mit Mitochondrienähnlichkeit erzeugten.
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Mic10 Oligomerizes to Bend Mitochondrial Inner Membranes at Cristae Junctions

Highlights

- MICOS core subunit Mic10 induces high degrees of curvature in model membranes
- Mic10 forms homo-oligomers via two glycine-rich motifs
- Oligomerization of Mic10 is a prerequisite for membrane bending
- Membrane bending by Mic10 is necessary for cristae junction formation in mitochondria

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In Brief

The mitochondrial inner membrane displays a complex architecture with tubular cristae invaginations and narrow openings, termed cristae junctions. Barbot et al. and Bohnert et al. show that the inner membrane protein Mic10 forms large oligomers and induces membrane curvature to orchestrate the formation of cristae junctions in mitochondria.
Mic10 Oligomerizes to Bend Mitochondrial Inner Membranes at Cristae Junctions

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SUMMARY

The mitochondrial inner membrane is highly folded and displays a complex molecular architecture. Cristae junctions are highly curved tubular openings that separate cristae membrane invaginations from the surrounding boundary membrane. Despite their central role in many vital cellular processes like apoptosis, the details of cristae junction formation remain elusive. Here we identify Mic10, a core subunit of the recently discovered MICOS complex, as an inner mitochondrial membrane protein with the ability to change membrane morphology in vitro and in vivo. We show that Mic10 spans the inner membrane in a hairpin topology and that its ability to sculpt membranes depends on oligomerization through a glycine-rich motif. Oligomerization mutants fail to induce curvature in model membranes, and when expressed in yeast, mitochondria display an altered inner membrane architecture characterized by drastically decreased numbers of cristae junctions. Thus, we demonstrate that membrane sculpting by Mic10 is essential for cristae junction formation.

RESULTS

Mic10 Induces High Degrees of Membrane Curvature in Model Membranes

Depletion of Mic10, a core subunit of the MICOS complex, leads to a massive loss of CJs and abnormal cristae structures (Alkhaja et al., 2012; Harnet al., 2011; Hoppins et al., 2011; von der Malsburg et al., 2011). To investigate this protein and its role in Cj formation, we expressed and purified S. cerevisiae Mic10 from E. coli to homogeneity (Figure 1B). Mic10 was solubilized in n-Dodecyl o-D-maltoside (DDM) and integrated into large unilamellar vesicles (LUVs) using a detergent-mediated reconstitution protocol (Meinecke et al., 2006). Reconstitution success was monitored by flotation assays (Figures 1C and 1D), and membrane integration of the protein was confirmed by subsequent carbonate extraction (Figure 1E). Interestingly, when compared to flotation patterns of empty LUVs, Mic10-containing

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Furthermore, we identified vesicles and larger membrane structures with diameters between 10 and 30 nm (Figure 2A). These structures showed broad structural changes in membrane morphology, we used electron microscopy on LUVs (Figure 2A). By comparing the fractionation patterns of flotated BAR and Tim23 (Figure 2A), we could observe that flotated Mic10 showed large-scale changes in membrane morphology in bulk, we used dynamic light scattering (DLS) to measure the vesicle size distribution in response to different treatments. Only LUVs with incorporated Tim23 showed large-scale shifts in the vesicle size distribution (Figure 2B), as compared to different treatments. Only LUVs with incorporated Tim23 showed large-scale shifts in the vesicle size distribution (Figure 2B). In addition, flotated Mic10-containing liposomes from bottom layers showed more pronounced size distribution shifts than those from upper layers (Figure S1B). Similar changes could be observed with vesicles incubated with endophilin BAR domain (Figure S1C). To analyze if changes in membrane morphology can be directly correlated with changes in membrane curvature in model membranes with rather different physical properties.

To directly analyze Mic10-induced changes in membrane morphology, we used electron microscopy on LUVs (Figure 2A). Mic10-containing vesicles showed broad structural changes in LUV membrane morphology. We repeatedly observed tubular membrane structures with diameters between 10 and 30 nm (Figure 2A). Furthermore, we identified vesicles and larger structures with internal tubular membrane structures, where the diameter of the tubes was between 15 and 25 nm (Figures S1A and 4D). No significant membrane deformation was observed with Mic10 concentrations below 200 nM, with empty vesicles, LUVs that had undergone a reconstitution protocol in the absence of protein, or LUVs with incorporated Tim23 (Figure 2A). To confirm that Mic10 induced changes in membrane morphology in bulk, we used dynamic light scattering (DLS) to measure the vesicle size distribution in response to different treatments. Only LUVs with incorporated Mic10 showed large-scale shifts in the vesicle size distribution (Figure 2B). In addition, flotated Mic10-containing liposomes from bottom layers showed more pronounced size distribution shifts than those from upper layers (Figure S1B). Similar changes could be observed with vesicles incubated with endophilin BAR domain (Figure S1C). To analyze if changes in membrane morphology can be directly correlated with changes in membrane curvature in model membranes with rather different physical properties.
Mic10 Spans the IM in a Hairpin Topology and Forms Homo-oligomers

To unravel the molecular mechanism by which Mic10 induces membrane curvature, we first set out to determine its membrane topology. The C terminus of Mic10 has been shown before to be located to the IMS, but different views exist on the number of transmembrane segments within Mic10 (Alkhaja et al., 2012; Harner et al., 2011; von der Malsburg et al., 2011). To experimentally map the topology, we used site-directed labeling of cysteine mutants with subsequent weight shift analysis (Voeltz et al., 2006). We designed cysteine mutants that would allow us to distinguish between the two possible topologies upon labeling (Figure S2A). These constructs were expressed in yeast cells, mitoplasts were generated from purified mitochondria, and the membrane-impermeable reagent maleimide PEG (2 kDa) was added. Mitoplast integrity was tested by proteinase K digestion of several marker proteins (Figure S2B). As confirmed by weight shifts in SDS gels, cysteines at the N terminus (Figure 3A lane 9) and at the C terminus (Figure 3A lane 12) were efficiently labeled, whereas a cysteine at position 62 was not (Figure 3A lane 6). Controls showed that the outer membrane, but not the IM, was partially permeable for maleimide PEG (Figure S2C lanes 2, 4, 6, 8) and that all constructs could be labeled after mitoplasts were opened with SDS (Figure 3A lanes 5, 8, 11). We conclude that Mic10 contains two transmembrane domains and spans the IM with a hairpin topology (Figure 3B).

Membrane curvature induction often depends on clustering or oligomerization of proteins. While Mic10 is part of a large hetero-oligomeric complex, it has been proposed that the protein itself might form homo-oligomers in the IM (Harner et al., 2011). Mic10 has two highly conserved elongated GxxGxG motifs in its two transmembrane domains (Figure 3C) (Alkhaja et al., 2012). Such glycine-rich motifs are known to be crucial for helix-helix packing and transmembrane domain oligomerization in lipid bilayers (Russ and Engelman, 2000). Mic10 oligomers could be detected on denaturing gels after solubilization of the protein in DDM (Figure 3D lane 2) and were obvious after western blot analysis of these samples (Figure 3D lane 3). Mic10 solubilized in mild detergents also clearly showed a range of oligomers after blue native (BN) electrophoresis (Figure 3E). Subsequently, we performed FRET ( Förster resonance energy transfer) experiments of Mic10 reconstituted into liposomes (Figure 3F). We could detect efficient FRET signals when two different fractions of fluorescently labeled protein (Mic10-Alexa-488 [donor] and Mic10-Alexa-568 [acceptor]) were incorporated, confirming that Mic10 molecules are in close proximity in biological membranes.

After confirming the oligomerization deficiency of Mic10G50/52A, we proceeded to analyze the ability of the mutant to sculpt membranes. Liposomes containing Mic10G50/52A displayed flotation patterns similar to empty vesicles and Tim23-containing LUVs (Figures S3A and S3B). When integrated into LUVs, the mutant failed to induce membrane curvature as assessed by electron microscopy (Figure 4D). Moreover, such proteoliposomes did not show broad changes in their vesicle size distribution as measured by DLS (Figure 4E). This clearly shows that Mic10’s membrane bending activity crucially depends on its ability to oligomerize.

**DISCUSSION**

Mic10’s hairpin topology and the ability to form homo-oligomers is reminiscent of the membrane-deforming reticulons and Yop1p/Dp1 proteins, which are crucial to generate tubular ER (Hu et al., 2008; Shibata et al., 2009; Voeltz et al., 2006). Based on these striking similarities, we hypothesize that the two transmembrane domains of Mic10 adopt an asymmetric wedge shape in the IM. This topology would allow the protein to occupy a larger surface toward the intermembrane space side of the IM and thereby generate curvature. Interestingly, with 24 amino acids, the N-terminal transmembrane domain is predicted to
A

Liposomes
Liposomes + Mic10
Liposomes + DDM
Liposomes + Tim23

B

Liposomes
Liposomes + Mic10
Liposomes + DDM
Liposomes + Tim23

C

Lipid
Protein
Merged

GUV
GUV + Mic10
GUV + Tim23

D

(legend on next page)
be unusually long. To avoid a hydrophobic mismatch, this helix might span the IM angularly and thereby account for an asymmetric wedge topology.

In addition, membrane curvature generation is often dependent on the clustering of proteins, and consistently we find that the ability of Mic10 to oligomerize is a requirement for membrane curvature generation. Membrane curvature generation is often dependent on the clustering of proteins, and consistently we find that the ability of Mic10 to oligomerize is a requirement for membrane curvature generation.
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sculpting in vitro and CJ formation in vivo. The fact that oligomers of Mic10 give rise to highly curved membranes is in accordance with physical considerations of membrane deformation. The energy cost per membrane area of creating a curved tubular or spherical structure can be calculated using the classical Canham-Helfrich, and Evans theory (Canham, 1970; Helfrich, 1973) by \( E_{\text{bending}} = \frac{k_BT}{4} \), where \( k \) is the bending rigidity of the membrane and \( r \) and \( l \) are the tube radius and length, respectively. For soft fluid membranes, the bending rigidity was measured to be \( \sim 10 \text{ kBT} \) (Evans and Rawicz, 1990). Although the kinetic parameters of Mic10 oligomerization are unknown, the free energy of association for other proteins with glycine-rich motifs, like glycophorin A, were measured to be \( \sim 15 \text{ kBT} \) (Fleming et al., 1997). Assuming a comparable value for Mic10, oligomer formation could easily account for the energetic cost of membrane deformation.

In sum, our results demonstrate that Mic10 shapes the IM at CJs. Membrane structures induced by Mic10 have dimensions similar to wild-type CJs in vivo, but do not fully resemble wild-type IM architecture. This is in agreement with Mic10 being part of a multi-subunit complex and that IM morphology is not only defined by CJs but also by cristae tips, which are formed or stabilized by FosFt-ATPase dimers (Davies et al., 2012; Strauss et al., 2008). Possibly interplay of both MICOS and the FosFt-ATPase is necessary to form normal cristae morphology in vivo, with high membrane curvature regions at CJs and cristae apexes (Hoppins et al., 2011; Zick et al., 2009).

**EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURES**

**Liposome Preparation and Detergent-Mediated Reconstitution**

The lipids L-α-phosphatidylethanolamine (Lē-PC), 1,2-dioleoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphoethanolamine (DOPE), and cardiolipin (CL) were purchased from Avanti Polar Lipids (Alabaster). LUVs composed of L-α-PC/DOPE/cardiolipin with a molar ratio 70/15/15 were prepared by performing freeze-thaw cycles and subsequent extrusion through a 100 nm diameter polycarbonate filter (Whatman). Purified Mic10 was reanimated by dialyzing against 0.05% DDM, 100 mM NaCl, 10 mM Tris (pH 8.0) (buffer F) and added to LUVs presolubilized in buffer R. Proteoliposome formation was achieved by using detergent adsor- bent Bio-Beads SM-2 (Bio-Rad).

**Electron Microscopy of LUVs**

Proteoliposome samples were spotted on carbon-coated grids (Agar Scientific) and stained with 5% (v/v) uranyl acetate solution. Electron microscopic imaging was performed with a Zeiss EM 1011 transmission electron microscope equipped with a Gatan Orius 1000 CCD camera.

**Giant Unilamellar Vesicle Preparation**

GUVs were prepared as described before (Girard et al., 2004). Briefly, GUVs were generated based on the electroformation technique described by Angelesova (Angelova and Dimitrov, 1986). Preformed proteoliposomes were resuspended in low-salt buffer (5 mM NaCl, 10 mM HEPES/Tris (pH 7.4)) to a final lipid concentration of 0.5 mg/ml. One-microliter droplets were deposited on indium tin oxide (ITO)-coated glass slides. The proteoliposomes were partially dehydrated for 2 hr in a desiccator under saturated vapor pressure of a saturated KI solution. A GUV generation chamber was assembled by separating two ITO-coated slides by 600 μl of a 300 mM glucose solution and a thin rubber spacer. For electroformation, an AC electric field was generated by a pulse generator connected to the slides. The field was applied for 3 hr across the chamber and incremented continuously from 20 mV to 1.1 V at 12 Hz frequency. Finally, the AC frequency was lowered to 4 Hz at 2 V for 30 min. This leads to detachment of the vesicles from the glass slides. GUVs were carefully collected and used immediately for visualization.

**FRET Assay**

ASC mono-cysteine mutants of Mic10WT and Mic10G50/52A were labeled in a denatured state with Alexa-Fluor-488 (A488) and -568 (A568) maleimide fluo-rophores from Life Technologies as donor and acceptor pair in 25 molar excess. Unilamellar vesicles were formed as described above. Equal amounts of both fluorophore-labeled proteins were incorporated into liposomes using 0.5% DDM and Bio-Beads in 15:1 Bio-Beads/DDM ratio. For control samples with only one fluorophore, the protein concentration was adjusted by addition of the specific protein without cysteine mutation. Final liposome concentration was 1 mg/ml.

FRET measurements were carried out using a Hitachi F-7000 fluorometer. Excitation wavelength was set to 493 nm (for FRET-pair and A488-labeled Mic10 control) and 574 nm (for FRET-pair and A568-labeled Mic10 control) for emission scans. Emission was recorded between 470 nm and 700 nm at 60 nm/min.

**Topology Experiments**

Maleimide PEG 2 kDa (Sigma Aldrich) modification experiments were performed on isolated swollen mitochondria (mitoplasts), which were successfully obtained by washing with 20 mM Tris (pH 7.4) buffer. The samples were incubated with only 5 mM maleimide PEG 2 kDa per 20 μg mitochondria either with or without 2% SDS at 25 °C, 2 hr, 600 rpm. The reactions were stopped by incubating with 25 mM DTT for 30 min. The labeling success was monitored by SDS-PAGE and subsequent western blotting.

**Electron Microscopy of Yeast Cells**

For electron microscopy, the yeast cells were grown at 30°C in liquid SGG medium (0.5 g/l yeast extract, 6.7 g/l yeast nitrogen base, 2 g/l -His dropout mix (Sherman, 2002), 30 ml/l glycerol, 1 g/l glucose) and harvested in the logarithmic growth phase. The yeast cells were fixed for 20 min in 1.5% potassium permanganate as previously described (Erdmann et al., 1989) and post- stained with 1% uranyl acetate for 2 hr. After dehydration in a graded ethanol series, the cells were embedded in epoxide resin (Agar 100; Plano). Ultrathin sections were examined using a Philips CM 120 transmission electron microscope (FEI Europe).

**Statistical Analysis**

Error bars for DLS data and analysis of the mitochondrial IM structure represent the standard error of the mean (SEM). DLS data were obtained from at

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**Figure 4. Mic10 Oligomerization Occurs through Glycine-Rich Motifs and Is a Prerequisite for Membrane Curvature Induction and Normal Cristae Junction Formation**

(A) Gel-filivered Mic10 mutants (as indicated) analyzed by SDS-PAGE with western blotting.

(B) Mic10 solubilized in DDM and analyzed by blue native electrophoresis with Coomassie brilliant blue staining.

(C) FRET signals of Mic10G50/52A incorporated into LUVs. Mic10 acceptor labeled with Alexa-488 A and Mic10 donor labeled with Alexa-568 D.

(D) Electron micrographs of negatively stained LUVs with incorporated Mic10WT (left) and Mic10G50/52A (right) (scale bars, 100 nm).

(E) Size distribution of LUVs with incorporated Mic10WT (left) and Mic10G50/52A (right) analyzed by dynamic light scattering. Error bars represent SEM.

(F) Representative electron microscopy images of yeast cells (top panel/ scale bars, 1 μm) (indicated genetic background) and mitochondrial ultra-structures (bottom panel/ scale bars, 200 nm).

(G) Quantification of cristae junctions per mitochondrion as detected in cell section. Error bars represent SEM.

(H) Quantitative evaluation of the inner mitochondrial membrane ultra-structure as detected in cell sections (wild-type and changed inner membrane structure as depicted in Figure S4).
least three independent experiments. Each experiment is averaged over at least 20 repetitive measurements.

Analysis of yeast mitochondrial ultra-structure was made from the following:

Mic10WT, 275 mitochondrial sections in 101 cell images; Mic10Δ + Mic10WT, 459 mitochondrial sections in 138 cell images; Mic10Δ + Mic10ΔGOSS, 473 mitochondrial sections in 166 cell images; Mic10Δ, 459 mitochondrial sections in 138 cell images.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Supplemental Information includes Supplemental Experimental Procedures, and four figures and can be found with this article online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2015.04.006.

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