

# cDNA encoding the chicken ortholog of the mouse *dilute* gene product

## Sequence comparison reveals a myosin I subfamily with conserved C-terminal domains

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Received 20 July 1992; revised version received 11 September 1992

We report the cDNA-deduced primary structure of the chicken counterpart of the murine *dilute* gene product, a member of the myosin I family. Comparison of the chicken and mouse sequences reveals a distinct pattern of domains of high and low sequence conservation. An internal deletion of 25 amino acids probably reflects differential mRNA processing. Compared with other myosin heavy chain molecules, sequence similarity is highest with the *MYO2* gene product of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The *MYO2* protein, implicated in vectorial vesicle transport, is homologous to the *dilute* protein over practically its entire length. In addition, the C-terminal domain of the *dilute* protein is highly similar to a putative glutamic acid decarboxylase sequence cloned from mouse brain. Alternatively, this closely related clone might represent an isoform of the *dilute* protein derived from a second gene, potentially involved in genetic conditions related to *dilute*.

*Dilute*; Myosin heavy chain; Glutamic acid decarboxylase; Cytoskeleton; Vesicle transport; Synapse

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The formation and functioning of synaptic contacts between neurons involve a variety of motility events. For example, the migration and navigation of growth cones and the establishment of synapses, or the tightly controlled exocytosis and recycling of neurotransmitter vesicles demand efficient and highly organized mechanisms of intracellular transport and membrane trafficking. Identification of the underlying molecular machinery is therefore essential for an understanding of the ontogeny and functioning of the nervous system.

To identify new protein components of the neuronal synapse, we have screened brain cDNA libraries with antisera raised against synaptic plasma membranes [1]. One of the clones isolated in these experiments has turned out to be the chicken counterpart of the recently characterized protein that is defective in the mouse *dilute* mutations [2]. The *dilute* protein is a member of the myosin I family, a group of proteins presumed to drive the movement of membranes along actin filaments [3]. The *dilute* mutation impairs the formation of dendritic processes of melanocytes, and most mutated alleles (*dilute-lethal*) also produce a neurological defect, suggest-

ing a role for this protein in the formation or functioning of cellular processes [2].

Comparison between the chicken and mouse sequences defines a pattern of domains with high or low sequence conservation. Sequence comparison of the *dilute* protein with other proteins identifies two other gene products with which it shares sequence similarity in its C-terminal domain, with implications regarding its possible function and the molecular nature of related mutations.

### 2. EXPERIMENTAL

A partial chicken *dilute* cDNA, *dilute*-8.6, was isolated from a brain cDNA library by immunoscreening as described [1]. Its sequence was extended by two rounds of rescreening with 5'-terminal cDNA fragments as hybridization probes. Sequencing was carried out in both directions by the chain termination method. Northern blotting was performed as described [1].

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

High amino acid sequence similarity (90% overall identity) and practically identical length identify the protein encoded by our cDNA with high likelihood as the chicken ortholog of the mouse *dilute* gene product (Fig. 1), which is a member of the myosin heavy chain (type I) family. Northern blot analysis detects an mRNA of ~7.5 kb at high abundance in chicken forebrain, but not in liver and muscle (Fig. 2).

Phylogenetic sequence conservation is distributed

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MSFEVGRWCYPHKLGWIGAEVKNFNDGKYHLELQLEDEIVSVDTKDLNNDKQSLPLLRNPPILEATEDLSLSYLNPAVLHAIKQRYSQ	96	ym
MAASELYTKYARVWIPDPEEVWKSALLK-DYKPGDKVLQRLLEEGKDL-ETCL-DPKTKELPLRNPDLVGFENDLTALSYLHEPAVLHNLKVRFD	95	md
	95	cd
LN-IYTYSGIVLIATNPFDRVDQLYTQDMIQAYAGKRRGELEPHLFAIAEEAYRLMKNDKQNTIVVSGESGAGKTVSAKYIMRYFASVEEENSATVQH	195	ym
SKLIYTYCGIVLVAINPYEQL-PIYGEDIINAYSQNMGMDDPHIFAVAEAYKQARDERNQSIIVSGESGAGKTVSAKYAMRYFATV-SGSASEA-	190	cd
VMSETEQKILATNPIMEAFGNAKTRNDNSSRFGKYLEILFDKDTSIGARIRTYLLERSRLVYQPIERNYHIFYQLMAGLPAQTKEELHLTDASDYF	295	ym
NVEEKVLASNPIMESIGNAKTRNDNSSRFGKYLEIGFDKRYRIIGAMRTYLLKSRVYFQAEERNYHIFYQLCASAALPEFKTLRLGNANYFH	286	md
	286	cd
YMNQGGDTKINGIDDAKEYKITVDALTYGITKETQHQIFKILAALLHIGNIEIKKTRNDA-SLSADEPHKLACELLGIDAYHFAKWVTKQIITRSEK	394	ym
YTKQGGSPVIDGIDDAKEMVNTROACTLLGISDSYQMGIFRILAGILHLGNVEFASRSDSCAIPPKHDPLTIFCDLMGVDEEMAHNLCHRKLATATET	386	md
	386	cd
IVSNLNYSOALVAKDSVAKFIYSALFDWLVENINTVLCNPVNDQISSIFGVLDIYGFHEFEKNSFEQFCINYANEKLQQEFNQHVFKLEQEEYVKEEIE	494	ym
YIKPISKLHAINARDALAKHIYANLFNWIVDHYNKAL-HSTVK-QH-SFIVGLDIYGFETFEINSFEQFCINYANEKLQQFNMHVFKLEQEEYVKEEIP	483	md
	483	cd
WSFIEFNQNPQCIDLITENKLGILSLDDEESRLPAGSDESWTQKLYQT-LDKSPTNKVFSKPRFGQTKFIVSHYALDVAYDVEGFIEKNRDTVSDGHLEVL	593	ym
WTLIDFYDNQPCINLIEAKMGVLDLDEECKMPKGSDDTHAQKLYNTHLNKCA-LFEKPRLSNKAFFIKHFADKVEYQCEGFLEKNKDTVYEEQIKVL	580	md
	580	cd
KASTNETLI-NILEGLEKAACKLEEAKKLELEQA-GSKKPGPIRTVN-RKPTLGSMTKQSLIELMNTINSTNVHYIRCIPNADKEAWQFONLMVLS	687	ym
KSSKKFKLLPELFQDEEKASPTSATPSGRVPLSRTPVKPAKARPGQTSKEHKKTVGHQFRNSLHLLMETLNATTPHYVRCIKPNDFKFPFTFDEKRAVQ	679	md
	680	cd
QLRACGVLETIRISCAGFSPRWTFEEFVLRYYILIPHEQWDLIFKKKETTEEDIISVVKMILDATVKDKSKYQIGNTKIFFKAGMLAYLEKLRNKMNS	787	ym
QLRACGVLETIRISAAGFSPRWTYQEFFSRVRLM-KQKDVLSDRKQTC-KNVLEKLILDKDKYQFGKTKIFFRAGQVAYLEKIRADKLRAA	769	md
	770	cd
IVMIQKKIRAKYYRKQYLQISQAIKYLQNNIKGFIIRQRVNDEMKNVNCATLLQAAAYRGHSIRANVSVLRITITNLQKKIRKELKQRQLKQEHYNAAYTI	887	ym
CIRIQTIRGHLMRKKYMRRAAIIQRYVRGHQARCYATFLRRTRAAIIQKFRMYVYRKRYQCMRDATIALQALLRGYLVNRYKQMLREHKSIII	869	md
	870	cd
QSKVRTFEPSSRFLRTKKDVTYVQSLIRRAAQRKLKQKADAKSVNHLKEVSYKLENKVIELTQNLASKVKENKEMTERIKELQVQ-VEESAKLQETLE	987	ym
QKHVRGHLARVHYHRTLKAIVYLQCCYRRMMAKRELKKLIEARSVERYKKLHIGLENKIMQLQRKIDEQNKYKSLEKMNLEITYSTETEKLRSDVE	969	md
	970	cd
NMKKEHLIDIDNQSKDMELQKTIENNLQSTEQTLKDAQLELEDVMVQKHDELKEESKKQLEELEQTKKTLVEYQTLNGDLQNEVKSLEKIEARLQTAM	1084	ym
RLRMSEEEAKNATNRVLSLQEEIAKLKELHQT-QTEKKTIEEMADKYKHETEQLVSELKEQNTLLKTEKEELN-RII-HDQAKEITETMEKKLVEETKQ	1066	md
	1067	cd
SLGTVTTSVLPQTPLKDVMMGGGASFNMMLE-NSDLS-PNDLNLKSRSTPSSGNHIDSLVDRENGVNATQINEELYRL	1163	ym
LELDLNDER:RYQNLLNEFSRLERYDDLKDEMMLMYSIPKPGHKRTDSTHSSNESEYTFSSIEAEADLPLRMEEPSEKKAPLMSFLKLQKRVTELE	1166	md
	1167	cd
MELRDEQT-PGHRKNPSNQSSLESDSNYPSSIS-TSEIGDTEALQVVEEIGIEKAAMDVTFLKLQKRVRELE	71	mg
LM VF S Q R S KS ME D	1263	ym
QEQKSLQDELDRKEEQALRAKAKEEERP-PIRGAELEYESLKRQELESENKKLKNELNELQKALTETRAPEVTAPGAP-AYRVLLDQLTSVSEEEVVRK	1264	md
QERKKLQAQLEKQDQSKKQVEQQINGLDVDQDADTAYNSLKRQELESENKKLKNDELNLNGVADQAMQDNSTHSSPDSYSLNQLKLANEELVVRK	171	mg
D R A A	1363	ym
EEVLIILRSQVSKQEAITQPKEDKNTMTDSTILLEDVQMKDKGEIAQAYIGLKETNRLLESQVSKSHENELESIRGEIQSLKEENNRQQLLAQNLQ	1364	md
EEALIILRTQIMNADQRRLSGKNMFPNINARTSWPNSKHYVDQDAIEAYHGVQCTNRLLEAQLQAQSLSEHEEEVEHLKAQVEALKEEMDIQQQTFQCOTLL	271	mg



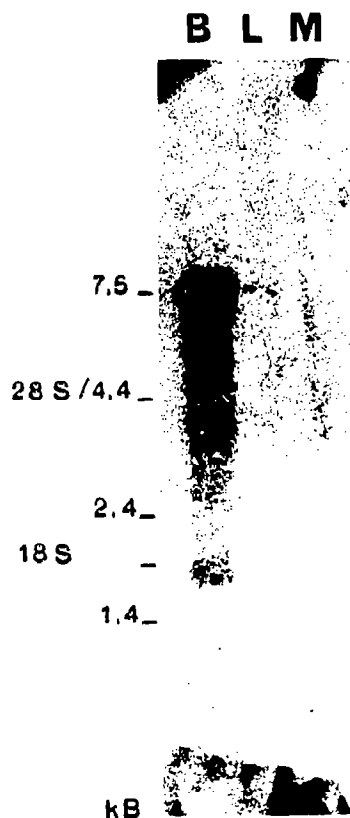


Fig. 2. RNA blot analysis. 10  $\mu$ g of poly(A)<sup>+</sup> RNA from chicken forebrain (B), liver (L) and muscle (M) were resolved on a 1% agarose gel, transferred to a nylon membrane and hybridized with the cDNA of clone *dilute*-8.6 (which represents the C-terminal coding sequence and the 3' untranslated sequence; cf. legend to Fig. 1) labelled by nick-translation. The positions of DNA (in kb) and rRNA molecular size standards are given at the left margin.

central domains (amino acids 1–1,040, including the putative calmodulin-binding and coiled-coil domains that both molecules also seem to have in common), similarity to the *MYO2* protein (42% identity) is substantially higher than to any other myosin heavy chains (not shown). Moreover, there is sequence conservation in the C-terminal domains. A stretch between amino acids 1,686 and 1,767 of the *dilute* sequence has 44% identity with the *MYO2* sequence, whereas the rest of the *MYO2* sequence can be aligned with lower similarity (21% identity; Fig. 1).

However, the sequence most closely related to the *dilute* protein that was found in the database aligns to almost the complete C-terminal domain with 57% identity. This is a cDNA from mouse brain that was described as an isoform of glutamic acid decarboxylase (GAD), based on immunological evidence and GAD activity of bacterial extracts expressing its  $\beta$ -galactosidase fusion protein [5]. Thus, the *dilute* protein might be a chimeric molecule with an enzyme moiety fused to

a myosin head domain, analogous to the *Drosophila ninaC* gene product [6]. In this case, it might be functionally linked to the biosynthesis of the neurotransmitter, GABA, which plays roles as a signal molecule and a trophic factor inside and outside of the nervous system [7]. However, this putative GAD sequence is completely unrelated to all the other GADs that have been cloned, and also unrelated to other pyridoxal phosphate-dependent decarboxylases (dopa decarboxylase, histidine decarboxylase, tryptophan decarboxylase) which share sequence similarity among each other and with GAD [8–10]. In particular, the clone of Huang et al. [5], and likewise the C-terminal *dilute* domain, lack the tetrapeptide consensus sequence, NPHK, of the pyridoxal phosphate binding site.

Alternatively, whatever the functional properties of the C-terminal domain may be, the clone isolated by Huang et al. [5] could be an incomplete cDNA of an isoform of the *dilute* protein derived from a second gene. It will be of great interest to see whether its sequence can be extended further upstream to encode a full-length *dilute* homolog. The existence of multiple genes encoding proteins similar to *dilute* would offer explanations for other genetic conditions related to *dilute* which have a similar phenotype (*ashen*, *leaden*) or suppress it (*dilute suppressor*) [2,11,12].

**Acknowledgements:** This work was supported by the Fonds der Chemischen Industrie. B.L. was supported through a predoctoral fellowship from the Evangelisches Studienwerk Villigst. M.W.K. is a Heisenberg Fellow of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

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