

A negative regulatory function for the protein tyrosine phosphatase PTP2C revealed by reconstruction of platelet-derived growth factor receptor signalling in *Schizosaccharomyces pombe*

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Abstract We have exploited reconstitution in the fission yeast *Schizosaccharomyces pombe* to investigate how activation of phospholipase C γ (PLC γ) by the platelet-derived growth factor- β receptor (PDGF β R) is regulated by the SH2 domain-containing protein tyrosine phosphatase PTP2C (also known as SHP-2). When co-expressed in *S. pombe*, PTP2C abolished PDGF β R autophosphorylation as well as its ability to phosphorylate and activate PLC γ . Inhibition of PDGF β R signalling by PTP2C appears specific insofar that PTP1C, a close homologue of PTP2C, does not suppress activation of either PDGF β R or PLC γ . Surprisingly, an inactive PTP2C mutant (C459S), which dephosphorylates neither PDGF β R nor PLC γ , remains fully effective as an inhibitor of [3 H]inositol phosphate generation indicating that negative regulation is at least in part independent of catalytic activity. This contrasts with PLC γ activation by c-Src which, although blocked by active PTP2C, is not inhibited by the mutant PTP2C C459S. These observations indicate that in addition to a reported positive role relaying trophic signals, PTP2C can also exert a negative effect on the PDGF β R and its signalling to PLC γ .

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Key words: *Schizosaccharomyces pombe*; Phospholipase C γ ; Platelet-derived growth factor β receptor; Protein tyrosine phosphatase 1C; Protein tyrosine phosphatase 2C

1. Introduction

To mediate changes in cellular growth and differentiation, many trophic factors activate cell surface receptors by promoting subunit dimerisation and autophosphorylation at intracellular tyrosine residues. These provide high-affinity binding sites for src homology 2 (SH2) and the phosphotyrosine binding (PTB) domains within a set of signalling proteins which include the regulatory subunit of phosphatidylinositol 3'-kinase (p85 of PI3K), phospholipase C γ (PLC γ), the GTPase-activating protein (GAP) of p21^{ras}, Src family tyrosine kinases, as well as adapter proteins such as SHC and the p21^{ras}-activating complex GRB2/SOS. These effector targets are then tyrosine phosphorylated and/or enzymatically activated leading to changes in cellular phosphorylation state and production of a range of second messenger molecules which together elicit an appropriate biological response [1–3]. Despite considerable progress in our mechanistic understanding of these events, one major outstanding question is how signalling from the receptor is terminated. Since tyrosine phosphorylation plays a central role in signal propagation it is

however likely that protein tyrosine phosphatases (PTPs) play a key role in the process of down-regulation.

Over 75 PTPs have so far been identified and these can be categorised structurally into transmembrane and intracellular molecular species [4,5]. One class of intracellular PTPs possesses tandem SH2 domains within their N-terminus and appears to play a key role regulating signal transduction by cell surface receptors [6]. PTP1C (also known as SHP-1, HCP, SH-PTP1, SHP) for instance, is expressed predominantly in hematopoietic cells and suppresses responsiveness to IL3, steel factor, erythropoietin as well as mediating inhibition of several immunological signalling systems [6–12]. This is consistent with genetic evidence from two mouse mutants, *motheaten* and *viable motheaten*, where mutations within PTP1C result in excessive erythropoiesis and severe immune dysregulation [13,14]. PTP2C (also known as SHP-2, Syp, PTP1D and SH-PTP2) is a second member of the SH2 domain subfamily and is expressed widely in many tissues [15–20]. PTP2C interacts with activated PDGF, EGF, HER2-neu and *c-kit* receptors as well as with insulin receptor substrate-1 [19–24] although surprisingly, this PTP appears to play a positive role mediating mitogenic signalling [25–27]. This also appears consistent with genetic analysis of the closely related *drosophila* gene *corkscrew* which acts upstream of Raf to transduce essential signals from the receptor tyrosine kinase *torso* during embryonic development [28,29]. What remains less clear from these studies however, are the targets of PTP2C catalytic activity and whether dephosphorylation of tyrosine residues could play a negative regulatory role in receptor-linked signalling.

We have reported recently use of the fission yeast *Schizosaccharomyces pombe* to reconstitute PDGF β receptor (PDGF β R)- and c-Src-mediated phosphorylation and enzymatic activation of PLC γ [30]. In studies reported here we extend these findings to assess the role of PTP2C in this pathway.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Strains, media and plasmid constructs

The host strain for *S. pombe* transformation, and the procedure for protoplast transformation were as described [30]. The bacterial strain for routine work was JM101TR (*supE*, *thi*[−], *src*:*tn10*, *recA* Δ (*lac-proAB*), [*F'*, *traD36*, *proAB*, *lacIZ* Δ M15]) and standard media were used throughout. As described previously [30,31], cDNAs encoding rat PLC γ 2 cDNA, wild-type and K602A point mutated mouse PDGF β receptor, as well as human c-Src were subcloned into the thiamine-repressible *S. pombe* expression vectors pREP3, pREP4 and pREP7, respectively. In the appropriate host strain Sp31 (*h*⁺ *leu1-32* *ura4-D18* *ade6-704* *his5-303*) these vectors allow independent selection in media lacking leucine (pREP3), uracil (pREP4) or histidine (pREP7). Human Csk and where indicated Src cDNAs were expressed from the

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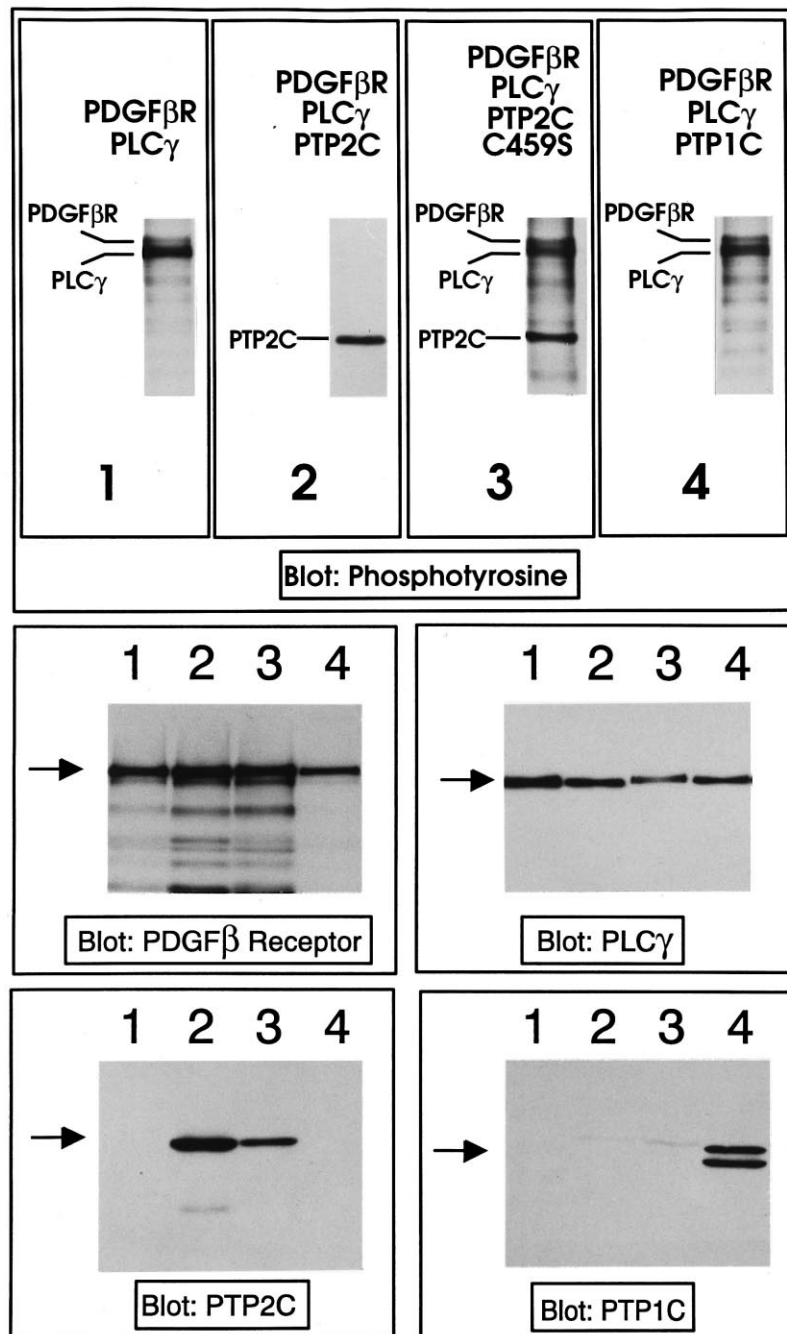


Fig. 1. PTP2C blocks tyrosine phosphorylation of the PDGFβR and PLCγ upon co-expression in *S. pombe*. Co-expression of PDGFβR, PLCγ2 and PTP2C or PTP1C in the fission yeast *S. pombe*. Western blot analysis was performed using crude homogenates prepared from yeast cells grown under inducing conditions for 18 h and expressing the mouse PDGFβR and rat PLCγ2 either alone (box/lane 1) or together with human PTP2C (box/lane 2), the inactive mutant PTP2C C459S (box/lane 3), or human PTP1C (box/lane 4). Samples were analysed using antibody specific for either phosphotyrosine, the PDGFβR, PLCγ2, PTP2C or PTP1C as indicated. The positions of immunoreactive proteins are indicated by arrows whereas bands corresponding to tyrosine phosphorylated PDGFβR, PLCγ and PTP2C are labelled where these are detectable. Phosphotyrosine boxes 1–4 represent the same exposure of the same Western blot with identical protein loading and are directly comparable. All antibodies failed to reveal immunoreactive bands in untransformed cells (see also [30]).

S. pombe adh promoter by subcloning into plasmids allowing selection in medium lacking leucine (pART1-leu), uracil (pART1-ura) or adenine (pART1-ade). PTP2C and PTP1C cDNAs were kindly provided by Dr. S.-H. Shen (Biotechnology Research Institute, Montreal, Quebec, Canada) and the coding sequences isolated as *Bam*HI-*Acc*I and *Cla*I-*Nru*I fragments, respectively, and subcloned into the *ade6*⁺ vector pREP5. The catalytically inactive PTP2C point mutation C459S was constructed following using the mutagenic oligonucleotide CCAATTCCAGCACTAGAGTGCACCACGACC.

2.2. Yeast culture and sample handling

The growth, harvesting and homogenisation of yeast cells, as well as the labelling of yeast phosphoinositides using [³H]inositol and subsequent isolation of [³H]inositol phosphates, were all performed exactly as we reported previously [30]. Western analysis was also exactly as described [30] using antibodies from the following sources: c-Src (N16; Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc., Basel, Switzerland), Csk (Transduction laboratories, Nottingham, UK), PTP2C (C-18; Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc., Basel, Switzerland), PTP1C (#P17320;

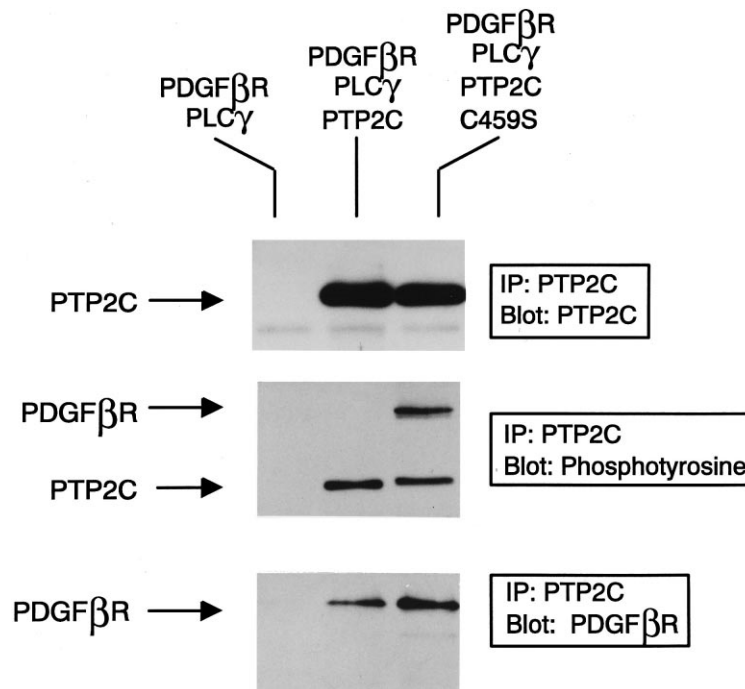


Fig. 2. PDGF β R co-immunoprecipitates with PTP2C from *S. pombe*. Lysates from yeast cells co-expressing the PDGF β R and PLC γ 2 either alone or together with PTP2C or mutant inactive PTP2C C459S were subjected to immunoprecipitation using an antibody against PTP2C and protein A/G-Sepharose. Samples were analysed by Western blotting with antibodies specific for PTP2C, phosphotyrosine or PDGF β R as indicated. The positions of PDGF β R and PTP2C are indicated by arrows. Note that the PDGF β R is dephosphorylated only when coprecipitated with active PTP2C.

Transduction Laboratories, Nottingham, UK), PLC γ 2 (C-19; Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Inc., Basel, Switzerland) and phosphotyrosine (4G10; Upstate Biotechnology, Inc., Lake Placid, USA). Antibodies specific for the mouse PDGF β receptor and a second antibody recognising PLC γ 2 were kindly supplied by Professor L.T. Williams (University of California, San Francisco, CA) and Professor Y. Homma (Fukushima Medical College, Japan), respectively. Antibody binding was detected using horseradish peroxidase (HRP)-conjugated second antibody (Bio-Rad laboratories, Glatbrugg, Switzerland) or protein A/G-HRP (Pierce, Zurich, Switzerland) and ECL detection (Amersham, Zurich, Switzerland).

2.3. PTP2C and PLC γ 2 immunoprecipitation

Crude homogenates were prepared and 200 μ l aliquots mixed with 800 μ l of ice-cold buffer L (1% NP40, 20 mM Tris-HCl, 150 mM NaCl, 50 mM NaF, 1 mM Na₃VO₄, 10 mM sodium pyrophosphate, 1 mM EDTA, 5 mM benzamidine, 10 μ g/ml aprotinin, 10 μ g/ml of leupeptin, 10 μ g/ml of chymostatin and 1.0 mM PMSF at pH 7.5) followed by incubation on ice for 1 h. For immunoprecipitation samples were centrifuged at 100 000 \times g for 30 min and 800 μ l of cleared lysate incubated with 20 μ l of PTP2C or 10 μ l of PLC γ 2 specific antibody (as above) overnight at 4°C with mixing after which time 100 μ l of a 1:1 (v/v) mix of protein A Sepharose and protein G Sepharose (50% w/v; Pharmacia Biotech., Uppsala, Sweden) was added and incubated for a further 2 h on ice with mixing. Beads were then sedimented by centrifugation and washed three times in 1.0 ml of buffer L followed by resuspension in 100 μ l of SDS-PAGE sample buffer and heating at 95°C for 5 min.

3. Results

3.1. PTP2C dephosphorylates the PDGF β R and PLC γ

We have reported previously that mammalian PLC γ 2 co-expressed with the PDGF β R in *S. pombe* becomes tyrosine phosphorylated and enzymatically activated to generate [³H]inositol phosphates from prelabelled endogenous yeast membrane phosphoinositides [30]. It is of note that upon ex-

pression in *S. pombe* the PDGF β R appears to be constitutively active and insensitive to further stimulation with PDGF [30]. Using this system we have now investigated the regulatory actions of the human SH2 domain-containing protein tyrosine phosphatase PTP2C. When expressed in *S. pombe* PTP2C is immunodetectable as a protein of 68 kDa and has no apparent effect on the levels of co-expressed PDGF β R or PLC γ 2 (Fig. 1). The presence of PTP2C does however, abolish completely PDGF β R-dependent autophosphorylation as well as tyrosine phosphorylation of PLC γ 2 (Fig. 1). Under these conditions the only protein undergoing extensive tyrosine phosphorylation in these cells is PTP2C itself. Immunoprecipitation experiments confirm the molecular identity of PTP2C as the major phosphoprotein under these conditions (Fig. 2) and is consistent with growth factor-dependent tyrosine phosphorylation of PTP2C reported previously in mammalian cells [19–22]. Dephosphorylation of the PDGF β R by PTP2C reflects tight interaction between these components as indicated by strong co-immunoprecipitation (Fig. 2). This contrasts with PLC γ 2 which is not detectably precipitated using PTP2C antibody (not shown).

3.2. PTP2C blocks PDGF β R-dependent PLC γ activation

To assess the functional consequences of suppressing PDGF β R and PLC γ 2 tyrosine phosphorylation, we measured generation of [³H]inositol phosphates from prelabelled yeast cells [30]. Consistent with a critical role for tyrosine phosphorylation in this signalling pathway, PTP2C co-expression inhibits the generation of [³H]inositol phosphates to near basal levels as observed when PLC γ 2 is co-expressed with the inactive PDGF β R mutant, K602A (Fig. 3). To test the importance of PTP2C catalytic activity in the inhibition of

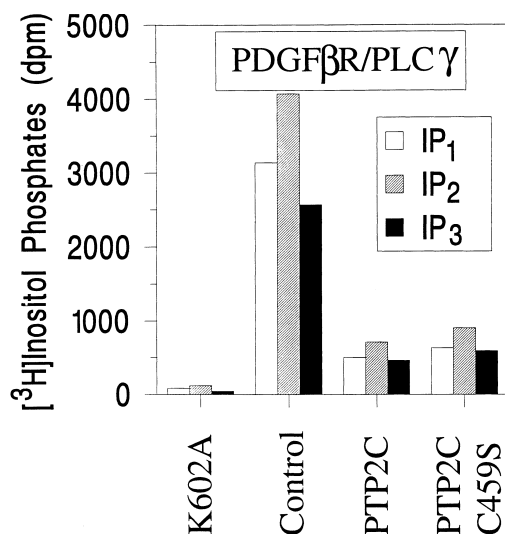


Fig. 3. PTP2C and inactive mutant PTP2C C459S block PLC γ 2 enzymatic activation by PDGF β R. *S. pombe* expressing the PDGF β R and PLC γ 2 either alone or together with PTP2C or the inactive mutant PTP2C C459S (as indicated) were grown under inducing conditions in the presence of [3 H]inositol for 18 h. Cells were extracted with CHCl₃-CH₃OH-HCl and [3 H]inositol phosphates isolated by anion-exchange chromatography. Radioactivity eluting as [3 H]IP₁, [3 H]IP₂ and [3 H]IP₃ is shown as disintegrations per minute (dpm) and is derived from a 6 ml yeast cell culture. PDGF β R catalytically inactivated by point mutation (K602A) fails to co-express PLC γ 2 tyrosine phosphorylation in fission yeast [30] and demonstrates background production of [3 H]inositol phosphates. Bars represent the means of duplicate determinations and data are representatives of four separate experiments.

PDGF β R and PLC γ 2 activation state we constructed the catalytically inactive point mutant C459S. As expected, this mutant is unable to dephosphorylate either PDGF β R or PLC γ 2 (Fig. 1). Surprisingly however, PTP2C C459S remains fully effective as an inhibitor of PLC γ 2 enzymatic activation (Fig. 3). As with wild-type PTP2C, the C459S mutant readily co-immunoprecipitates with the PDGF β (Fig. 2). Together, these observations demonstrate that PTP2C is able to block PDGF β R-linked signalling to PLC γ 2 but that this inhibition does not necessarily depend on tyrosine dephosphorylation.

3.3. PTP2C blocks PLC γ phosphorylation and activation by *c*-Src

To investigate further the negative regulatory role of PTP2C, we next analysed its influence on the ability of *c*-Src to stimulate PLC γ 2 tyrosine phosphorylation and enzymatic activation [30]. For this study we constructed a yeast strain in which *c*-Src, Csk, PLC γ 2 and PTP2C are all expressed in the same cell. The presence of each of these proteins was confirmed by Western blotting (Fig. 4). The distribution of phosphotyrosine-containing proteins (Fig. 4) shows that, in contrast to the results obtained with PDGF β R, *c*-Src or Csk enzymatic activity does not result in detectable tyrosine phosphorylation of PTP2C, nor does PTP2C alter the net level of *c*-Src tyrosine phosphorylation or indeed, *c*-Src enzymatic activity (not shown). Despite this, PTP2C is active in reversing the Src-induced tyrosine phosphorylation of PLC γ 2, and as shown in Fig. 5, also abolishes hydrolysis of endogenous *S. pombe* [3 H]inositol-containing phospholipids. As expected, co-expression of the catalytically inactivated mutant PTP2C C459S is unable to prevent *c*-Src-dependent PLC γ 2

tyrosine phosphorylation (Fig. 4). Interestingly, PTP2C C459S is tyrosine phosphorylated suggesting that Src and/or Csk can actually modify PTP2C but that when catalytically active this PTP is able to autodephosphorylate (Fig. 4). As anticipated, although in contrast to our observations with PDGF β R described above, catalytically inactive PTP2C C459S does not inhibit the ability of PLC γ 2 to generate [3 H]inositol phosphates (Fig. 5) from prelabelled *S. pombe* membranes.

3.4. PTP1C is unable to dephosphorylate PDGF β R or its signalling to PLC γ

As a measure of specificity of PTP2C action, we assessed the regulatory actions of the PTP2C homologue PTP1C which is immunodetectable in yeast extracts as a doublet at 68 kDa and 66 kDa (Figs. 1 and 4). In mammalian cells PTP1C runs as a protein of \sim 68 kDa and we assume that the smaller of the two bands detected in yeast is a consequence of N-terminal degradation as the monoclonal antibody used for Western analysis recognises a peptide from the PTP1C C-terminal. In contrast to observations with PTP2C, when PTP1C was co-expressed together with PDGF β R and PLC γ 2, there is no detectable decrease in tyrosine phosphorylation of either component (Fig. 1). Also unlike PTP2C, PTP1C is not detectably tyrosine phosphorylated by the PDGF β R (Fig. 1). Consistent with PTP1C inactivity against PDGF β R-dependent tyrosine phosphorylation, PTP1C was totally ineffective as an inhibitor of yeast phosphoinositide hydrolysis by activated PLC γ 2 (data not shown). This does not reflect synthesis of inactive enzyme in *S. pombe* as PTP1C co-expression with *c*-Src substantially reduces both tyrosine phosphorylation (Fig. 4) and activation of PLC γ 2 (not shown). Furthermore, as observed with PTP2C, PTP1C enzymatic activity is also evident by the complete reversal of Src-dependent tyrosine phosphorylation of multiple endogenous yeast proteins (Fig. 4).

4. Discussion

Fission yeast provides a convenient host in which to reconstitute interactions between mammalian signalling molecules [30,32–35]. Furthermore, since tyrosine phosphorylation appears not to be a feature of signal transmission in yeast and proteins containing the SH2 motif responsible for binding phosphotyrosine have not been identified, investigation of the mechanisms underlying tyrosine kinase-linked signalling is free from interfering endogenous yeast proteins. We have described previously activation of PLC γ in fission yeast in response to phosphorylation by both receptor (PDGF β R) and non-receptor (*c*-Src) tyrosine kinases [30] and in the present report we extend our findings to include the regulatory actions of the SH2-containing phosphatase PTP2C. Although most of the evidence to date indicates a positive signalling role for PTP2C (see Section 1), specific targets for PTP2C catalytic activity *in vivo* have not been identified and the question of whether tyrosine dephosphorylation by PTP2C plays a regulatory role in signalling remains unresolved. This is the question we have begun to address using the fission yeast. The principal conclusions of the present study are: (i) PTP2C acts selectively to dephosphorylate the PDGF β R but not *c*-Src; (ii) PTP2C dephosphorylates PLC γ modified by the PDGF β R and *c*-Src and blocks hydrolysis of endogenous inositol-containing phospholipids; (iii) the catalytically inactive

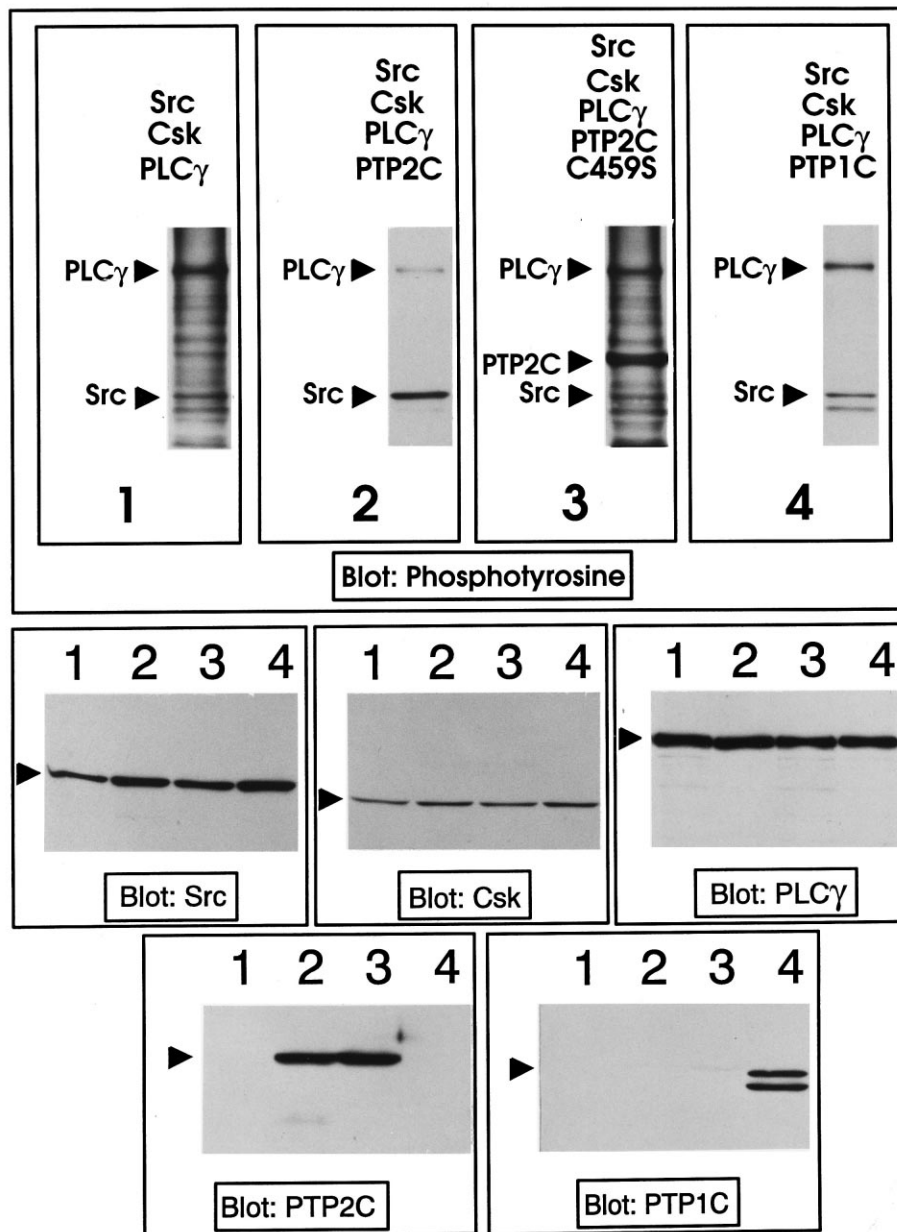


Fig. 4. PTP2C inhibits PLC γ tyrosine phosphorylation by c-Src. Co-expression of c-Src, Csk, PLC γ 2 and PTP2C or PTP1C in *S. pombe*. Western blot analysis was performed using crude homogenates prepared from yeast cells grown under inducing conditions for 18 h and expressing human c-Src, human Csk and rat PLC γ 2 either alone (box/lane 1) or together with human PTP2C (box/lane 2), inactive mutant PTP2C C459S (box/lane 3), or human PTP1C (box/lane 4). Extracts were probed using antibodies specific for either phosphotyrosine, Src, Csk, PLC γ , PTP2C or PTP1C. The positions of immunoreactive proteins are indicated by arrow heads whereas bands corresponding to tyrosine phosphorylated PLC γ , Src and mutant inactive PTP2C are labelled where these are detectable. Phosphotyrosine boxes 1–4 represent the same exposure of the same Western blot with identical protein loading and are directly comparable. All antibodies failed to reveal immunoreactive bands in untransformed cells (see also [30]).

mutant PTP2C C459S also inhibits PLC γ activation by PDGF β R but not by c-Src; and (iv) PTP1C does not regulate PDGF β R signalling revealing distinct substrate preferences for these two enzymes within the intracellular environment of fission yeast.

It is of note that although experiments in mammalian cells have indicated a positive signalling role for PTP2C [25–27], our observations in *S. pombe* are in agreement with recent reports showing that purified PTP2C dephosphorylates PDGF β R immunoprecipitated from activated mammalian cells [36] and that it displays substrate specificity for phospho-

peptides corresponding to the C-terminal of the PDGF β R [37,38]. Negative control of the PDGF β R is also consistent with the slowed dephosphorylation of a point mutated PDGF β R (Y1009F) unable to interact with PTP2C following cellular stimulation [36]. Significantly, recent experiments using fibroblasts derived from mice homozygous for a targeted mutation in PTP2C also reveal negative regulatory control of PDGF β R tyrosine phosphorylation as well as its downstream signalling to MAP kinase activation [39]. Together, these observations indicate that in addition to mediating positive signals underlying trophic responses in some cells, PTP2C can

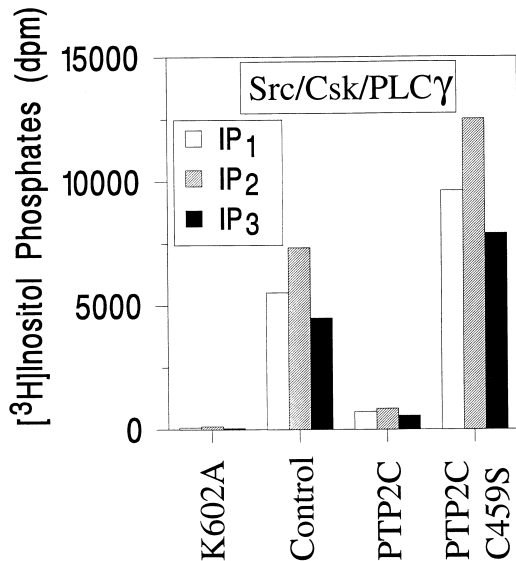


Fig. 5. PTP2C, but not inactive mutant PTP2C C459S, blocks PLC γ activation by Src. *S. pombe* expressing human c-Src, human Csk and rat PLC γ 2 either alone (Control) or together with PTP2C or inactive mutant PTP2C C459S (as indicated) were grown in the presence of [3 H]inositol for 18 h. Cells were extracted with CHCl₃-CH₃OH-HCl and [3 H]inositol phosphates separated by anion-exchange chromatography. Radioactivity eluting as [3 H]IP₁, [3 H]IP₂ and [3 H]IP₃ is shown as disintegrations per minute (dpm) and is derived from a 6 ml yeast cell culture. PDGFR catalytically inactivated by point mutation (K602A) and co-expressed with PLC γ 2 is shown to demonstrate background [3 H]inositol phosphate generation. Bars represent the means of duplicate determinations and data are representatives of four separate experiments.

also mediate feedback inhibition of receptor tyrosine kinase activation and suppress coupling to a subset of effector targets.

One surprising result emerging from our studies was that a catalytically inactive PTP2C point mutant (C459S) was fully effective at inhibiting PDGFR-dependent activation of otherwise highly phosphorylated PLC γ 2. This contrasts with PTP2C C459S inactivity against PLC γ 2 tyrosine phosphorylated and activated by c-Src suggesting an action at the level of the PDGFR. Consistent with this, the PDGFR but not PLC γ 2 co-immunoprecipitated with PTP2C C459S. One potential mechanism accounting for blockade of inositol phosphate generation is a competitive inhibition by PTP2C C459S of productive interaction of PLC γ 2 with the PDGFR. This may be expected as SH2 domains within PTP2C and PLC γ appear to bind adjacent and potentially overlapping phosphotyrosine residues (Tyr1009, Tyr1021) within the C-terminal of the PDGFR [21,40–43]. Consistent with this model, EGF receptor mutations lacking C-terminal residues crucial for PLC γ interaction fail to mediate enzymatic activation of PLC γ despite its extensive tyrosine phosphorylation [44,45]. Moreover, binding of GAP and the p85 subunit of PI3K to the PDGFR were shown recently to silence signalling to PLC γ activation [46]. Coincident interactions between the PDGFR and a subset of effector targets including GAP, PI3K and PTP2C may therefore block effective receptor interaction with PLC γ and thus inhibit its enzymatic activation.

In summary, although PTP2C and its *drosophila* homologue corkscrew appear to play a role mediating positive trophic signals, our observations in *S. pombe* indicate that PTP2C

may also have a negative regulatory action inhibiting the activated state of the PDGFR itself as well as suppressing coupling to a subset of downstream effector targets.

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