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CONFORMATIONAL CHANGE OF THE RAT ODORANT-BINDING PROTEIN UPON ODORANT BINDING

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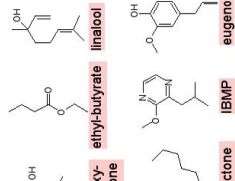
Introduction

Odorant binding proteins (OBPs) are small abundant soluble proteins which participate in peri-receptor events of olfaction and vertebrate olfaction. They are thought to transport hydrophobic odorant molecules through the sensillum lymph or the aqueous nasal mucus, respectively, in order to reach membrane receptors embedded in the membrane of olfactory neurons.

OBPs belong to the **lipocalin superfamily**. Although members of this family display usually less than 20% sequence identity, all conserved folding pattern, an 8-stranded β -barrel flanked by a α -helix at the C-terminal end of the polypeptide chain. The β -barrel defines a **central apolar cavity**, called **calyx**, whose role is to bind and transport hydrophobic odorant molecules.

OBPs have been identified in a variety of species. When different subtypes occurred in a same animal species, OBPs were thought to be specially tuned towards distinct chemical classes of odorants.

We report the **binding properties** for several odorants and the **structural conformational change** upon ligand binding of the rat **OBP-1F**, heterologously secreted using the yeast *Pichia pastoris*.

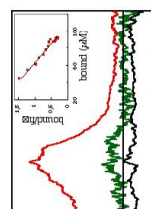


In addition to IBMP, a model odorant systematically used in OBPs studies, the tested odorants were chosen among molecules largely used in the food industry, exhibiting different odors and persistence and belonging to different chemical classes.

Local structure of the odorants in the binding experiments

Conformational change

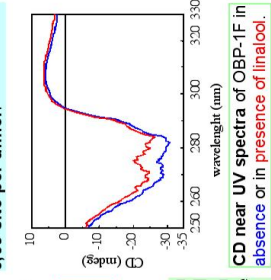
UV difference spectroscopy, OBP-1F shown to undergo a conformational change upon odorant binding. The measurement is sensitive to the conformational change and depends on ligand affinity. The position of the spectral properties originated from side-chain shift.



UV difference spectra of OBP-1F with and without ligands. The x-axis is wavelength (nm) from 270 to 350. The y-axis is molar ellipticity. Curves are shown for OBP-1F alone (black), OBP-1F with linalool (red), OBP-1F with IBMP (green), and OBP-1F with eugenol (blue). An inset shows a magnified view of the 300-350 nm region.

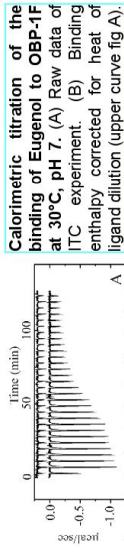
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When added to OBP-1F, odorants induced various spectral shifts originated from the protein. The Scatchard plot of the spectroscopic data gave a binding stoichiometry of 1.05 ± 0.09 site per dimer.

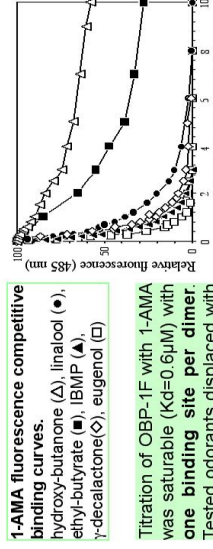


Tyrosine titration showed that two residues were affected by ligand binding and that one of the six tyrosines could never be titrated even after alkaline denaturation. According to the modelled 3D structure, the residues whose pK shifted upon ligand binding could be Y20 and Y78. The untitrated residue could be Y38 because of its location in a deep crevice and the presence of two H-bonds.

Determination of thermodynamic parameters



Eugenol binding was saturable with about one apparent site per dimer, as indicated by the abscissa of the inflection point.



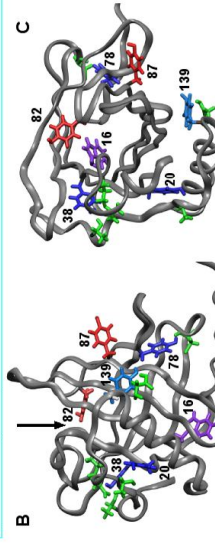
Titration of OBP-1F with 1-AMA was saturable ($K_d=0.6\mu M$) with one binding site per dimer. Tested odorants displaced with different ability the fluorescent probe 1-AMA. The measured half-maximal values (IC_{50}) allowed to calculate an apparent dissociation constants (K_{obs}) in the micromolar range for the 4 most active odorants, and an order of magnitude smaller for ethyl-butylate and hydroxy-butanone.

The discrepancy in the magnitude of values between both measurements was likely due to the complexity of the indirect measurement of the fluorescence assay. The value of IC_{50} provide only apparent constants, only useful to classify ligands tested in the same experimental conditions.

Molecular modeling



Sequences alignment of OBP-1F with lipocalins having a known 3D structure and a sequence homology over 30% with OBP-1F. Colored residues: conserved residues, cysteines and tyrosines less or not conserved. Boxes: conserved secondary structures. PDB codes: 1ESP, hamster aphrodisin; 1BJ7, bovine lipocalin allergen Bos d 2; 1A3Y, porcine OBP-I; 1MUP, mouse major urinary protein; 1EW3, equine lipocalin allergen Equ c 1.



OBP-1F monomer 3D-structure model derived from 1EP5 coordinates. Lateral and front views (with a 90° rotation on the x-axis between each other). Arrow indicates the opening of the putative binding site and the point of view C. Numbers are relative to tyrosine and tryptophane positions in the sequence. No tyrosyl side-chains are oriented within the binding site shaped within the β -barrel except Y82 present at its opening. Two tyrosines (Y82, Y87) display their hydroxyl group free to the solvent whereas the other four are buried and involved in one (Y20, Y78, Y139) or two (Y38) H-bonds with neighbouring residues. Tryptophane 16 is located at the opposite side of the opening.

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Binding

Thermodynamic parameters obtained by ITC and fluorescence measurements were carried out at 30°C, pH 7. Dashes indicate impossibility of measurement.

Odorants	ΔH (kJ/mole)	ΔS (J/mole.K)	K_{obs} (10^4)
Hydroxy-butanone	-34.1 ± 1.4	-2	0.09
Ethyl-butylate	-64.8 ± 0.7	-96.0	0.11
γ-decalactone	-42.7 ± 0.8	-19.6	0.08
Linalool	-35.3 ± 0.9	4.2	0.33
IBMP	-63.1 ± 1.1	-86.4	0.33
Eugenol	-63.1 ± 1.1	-86.4	0.33

K_{obs} and K_{obs}^{app} association constant determined by ITC experiments; K_{obs}^{app} apparent dissociation constant determined by fluorescent experiments.

The affinity constants of OBP-1F were found to be in the micromolar range, as observed for other vertebrate OBPs.

The binding stoichiometry for the odorant-OBP-1F interaction did not reach one site per dimer, except for IBMP, as observed in many cases. It can be explained by the presence of inactive proteins or by the occupation of binding sites by ligands tightly bound onto OBP, not removed during purification process.

Odorant affinities should be correlated to their molar weight or size which appeared to be a major selective criterion for recognition among the structural features of odorants in response of olfactory system observed at different levels.

The Gibbs free energy of each interaction was similar for all odorants. Differences of ΔH and ΔS suggests that particular conformational and different interactions occur within the binding site.

Conclusion

Possible properties of the tyrosines in OBP-1F according to the modelled 3D structure. Bold numbers indicate conserved residues. Dashes indicate undetermined values.

Tyrosine	location	H-bond state	pK with
20	strand A	buried	O-HThr146
38	strand B	buried	H-NArg36 O-HThr152
78	strand E	buried	H-O-Cys48
82	strand E	exposed	none
87	strand F	exposed	none
139	α helix	intermediate	O-HGlu138

The single binding site, model supported by ITC, fluorescence and difference spectroscopy assays, was postulated to be in one of the two β -barrels of the OBP-1F dimer.

The distance between the binding site and the affected residues suggests that the side chain shifts, shown by UV spectra, are independent of the ligand proximity. They are induced by a conformational change, not limited to the environment of the reported residues which are far from the binding site, but a more wide rearrangement of the OBP-1F backbone.

The conformational change correlated with binding of odorant molecule, could be involved by a mechanism hampering uptake of a second odorant by the other hydrophobic pocket for the dimeric rat OBP-1F, through a subunit cross-link. The simulation with molecular dynamics of odorant docking in the protein should allow to understand the molecular mechanism of ligand binding onto OBP-1F.

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