

Analysis of Peripherin/RDS Gene for Japanese Retinal Dystrophies

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Abstract: We studied 133 Japanese patients with retinal dystrophies to detect peripherin/RDS (retinal degeneration slow) gene defects. The patients analyzed included 52 with autosomal dominant retinitis pigmentosa, 36 with autosomal recessive retinitis pigmentosa, 3 with simplex retinitis pigmentosa, 12 with cone-rod dystrophy, 5 with rod-cone dystrophy, 3 with vitelliform macular dystrophy (Best's disease), 4 with macular dystrophy, 2 with cone dystrophy, 2 with fundus flavimaculatus, 2 with fundus albipunctatus, and 12 with retinitis pigmentosa with macular degeneration as well as 40 unrelated normal persons. Three exons of the peripherin/RDS gene cut into 150–200 base-pair fragments were amplified by polymerase chain reaction and screened by single-strand conformation polymorphism. The DNA fragments with any suspected variations were directly sequenced. Eight point mutations were detected. Among them, two missense mutations at codons 304 and 338 result in an amino acid substitution of glutamine for glutamic acid and aspartic acid for glycine, respectively. However, they were not cosegregated with the diseases, and these mutations were also commonly found in normal controls. For these controls, the proportion of transversion from G to C at codon 304 (GAG→CAG) and transition from G to A at codon 338 (GGC→GAC) were 0.192 ± 0.045 and 0.173 ± 0.053 , respectively. Our results suggest that a peripherin/RDS gene mutation might be rare in Japanese patients. **Jpn J Ophthalmol 1998;42:186–192.** © 1998 Japanese Ophthalmological Society

Key Words: DNA polymorphism, macular dystrophy, peripherin/RDS, retinal dystrophy, retinitis pigmentosa.

Introduction

The peripherin/RDS (retinal degeneration slow) gene located on the short arm of chromosome 6 consists of 3 exons and 346 amino acid residues. It codes for the photoreceptor-specific glycoprotein expressed in the disc membranes of photoreceptor outer segments of both rods and cones. The glycoprotein is considered to be important to the structural stability of the rim of outer segments.^{1–3} Several mutations of one or a few base pairs resulting in deletion, insertion, or a missense mutation in the peripherin/RDS gene have been identified. These mutations give striking variations of retinal dystrophies such as au-

tosomal dominant retinitis pigmentosa (ADRP), butterfly-shaped pigment dystrophy of the fovea, autosomal dominant retinitis punctata albescens, macular dystrophy, cone-rod dystrophy, and fundus flavimaculatus.^{4–18} In addition, digenic retinitis pigmentosa because of mutations of the unlinked peripherin/RDS and *ROM1* genes has been found,¹⁹ in which only double heterozygotes develop retinitis pigmentosa.

The purpose of the present study is to identify peripherin/RDS gene defects in Japanese patients with ADRP and other retinal dystrophies.

Materials and Methods

We analyzed 133 unrelated Japanese patients with retinal dystrophies, including 52 with ADRP, 36 with autosomal recessive retinitis pigmentosa (ARRP), 3 with simplex retinitis pigmentosa (RP), 12 with cone-rod dystrophy, 5 with rod-cone dystrophy, 3

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Table 1. Primer Sequences and Polymerase Chain Reaction Conditions

Aimed Locus	Primer Sequence	Annealing Temperature (°C)	Length of Fragment (bp)
Exon 1-1	Sense: 5'-GGGAAGCAACCCGGACTACA-3' Antisense: 5'-CAGAATTATTCATCACATCG-3'	50	197
Exon 1-2	Sense: 5'-TTCCTGAAGATTGAACTCCG-3' Antisense: 5'-TAGCCAGGTACGGCTTCAGC-3'	52	182
Exon 1-3	Sense: 5'-TATGCCAGATGGAAGCCCTG-3' Antisense: 5'-TCTTCATGAAACACCTGCCA-3'	52	190
Exon 1-4	Sense: 5'-AGTACTACCGGGACACAGAC-3' Antisense: 5'-TCTGACCCAGGACTGGAG-3'	52	194
Exon 2-1	Sense: 5'-AAGCCCATCTCCAGCTGTCT-3' Antisense: 5'-TCGTAACTGTAGTGTGCTGA-3'	52	162
Exon 2-2	Sense: 5'-CCCTGCATCCAGTATCAGAT-3' Antisense: 5'-TTACCTCTACCCCCAGCTG-3'	50	200
Exon 3-1	Sense: 5'-TAAATCTCCTCTCCCACCAC-3' Antisense: 5'-CGGCACGCTCTTCTCCAGCA-3'	50	182
Exon 3-2	Sense: 5'-AGAGCGAGAGCGAGGGCTGG-3' Antisense: 5'-GCCCTGCCAGCTTCTTCA-3'	52	182
Exon 3-3	Sense: 5'-TGCCGGAGACCTGGAAGGCC-3' Antisense: 5'-TGGGGCCTGGCCTGCGCCTG-3'	62	203
Exon 3-4	Sense: 5'-CCAGGTGGAAGCCGAGGGCG-3' Antisense: 5'-GGAGATTCAGACTTTCGGAG-3'	62	203

with vitelliform macular dystrophy (Best's disease), 4 with macular dystrophy, 2 with cone dystrophy, 2 with fundus flavimaculatus, 2 with fundus albipunctatus, and 12 with RP with macular degeneration, as well as 40 unrelated normal persons.

Sample Preparations

Genomic DNAs were extracted from leukocytes of peripheral blood. Exons 1 and 3 of the peripherin/*RDS* gene were cut into four fragments, and exon 2 was cut into two fragments. These were amplified by PCR (polymerase chain reaction) with a pair of primers at each condition of amplification (Table 1).⁵

Analyses by Single Strand Conformation Polymorphism

The DNA fragments were screened using two kinds of single strand conformation polymorphism (PCR-SSCP).²⁰ For non-radioisotopic (RI)-SSCP, aliquots of PCR products (3–5 µL) were mixed with 2 vol. of formamide sample buffer (95% formamide, 20 mM ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA), 0.05% bromophenol blue, 0.05% xylene cyanol, 10 mM NaOH), heated at 94°C for 15–20 minutes, and applied on a nondenaturing 8% acrylamide gel containing 10% glycerol (gel size: 10 × 10 × 0.1 cm, 10 lanes). Electrophoresis was done at 300 V, 45 mA, for 3 hours using 1 × Tris-borate/EDTA electrophoresis buffer (TBE) under running water in the cold

room (4°C). The gel was stained by silver stain (PlusOne™, Pharmacia Biotech, A.B., Uppsala, Sweden). For RI-SSCP, the primers labeled with [γ -³²P] adenosin 5'-triphosphate (ATP) were used for PCR. The 2 µL of PCR products were mixed with 2 µL of formamide sample buffer (95% formamide, 20 mM EDTA, 0.05% bromophenol blue, 0.05% xylene cyanol, and 10 mM NaOH), heated at 94°C for 3 minutes, and applied on a nondenaturing 6% acrylamide gel containing 10% glycerol (gel size: 33 × 30 × 0.04 cm, 48 lanes). Electrophoresis was done at 1300–1500 V, 50–64 mA for 2–3 hours using 1 × TBE with an aluminum plate attached to one side of the glass plates. The gel was dried on filter paper and then exposed to x-ray film at –80°C for 1–12 hours with an intensifying screen.

Table 2. Mutations Identified in the Present Study

Exon	Codon	Nucleotide	Amino acid
		Wild→Mut	Wild→Mut
1	98	CTG→TTG	Leu→Leu
	106	GTC→GTT	Val→Val
	189	TCC→TCT	Ser→Ser
	266	GGT→GGA	Gly→Gly
3	303	AGC→AGT	Ser→Ser
	304	GAG→CAG	Glu→Gln
	338	GGC→GAC	Gly→Asp
	3' noncoding region	1294 ^a	C→T

^aNucleotide position. Leu: leucine, Val: valine; Ser: serine; Gly: glycine; Glu: glutamic acid; Gln: glutamine; Asp: aspartic acid.

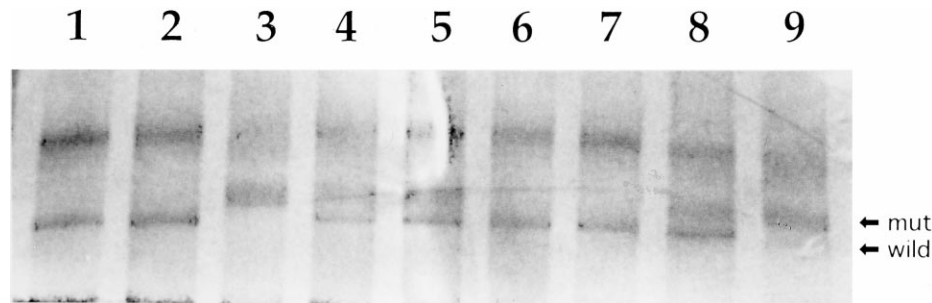


Figure 1. The 8% acrylamide gel electrophoretic pattern of the fragments of exon 1-3 of peripherin/*RDS* by non-RI-single strand conformation polymorphism. The upper band coincides with transition from C to T in the third nucleotide position of codon 106. No substitution of amino acid takes place. The lower band is the wild type. Lanes 1, 2, 6, and 7 are homozygous of wild type; 3 and 9 are homozygous of mutant alleles; and 4, 5, and 8 are heterozygotes.

DNA Sequencing

The DNA fragments suspected of any mutations by PCR-SSCP were directly sequenced by Taq Dye Deoxy Terminator using Gene Scanner, Fluorescent Fragment Analyzer (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA).

Analyses by Restriction Enzyme

To calculate the frequencies of codon 304 and 338 mutations among the patients and normal controls, DNA fragments containing these codons were digested by restriction enzyme, where codon 304 mutation (GAG→CAG) is a recognition site of *Mva* I and codon 338 mutation (GGC→GAC) is the site of *Hga* I.

Statistical treatments²¹

The proportion, p , of substitution of the nucleotide and standard deviation (SD) were calculated by the following formulas:

$$p = (W/M + 2 \times M/M) / N$$

and

$$SD = \sqrt{p(1-p)/2N},$$

where W refers to wild and M to mutant allele at the codon. W/M is the number of heterozygotes of mutant and wild allele. M/M is the number of homozygotes of the mutant allele. N is the total number of individuals investigated. Significance between patients and normal controls for substitution of nucleotide was analyzed by a test of proportions.

Results

Eight kinds of mutations were detected (Table 2) by sequencing of the fragments. However, they were not cosegregated with the disease, although amino acids were substituted.

Figure 1 shows the electrophoretic pattern of the 190 base-pair fragments of exon 1-3 of the peripherin/*RDS* gene by non-RI-SSCP. The mutant band coincided with a transition from C to T at codon 106 (GTC→GTT, Val106Val).

Figure 2 shows electrophoretic fragment patterns of exons 3-1 as analyzed by RI-SSCP, where mutant bands were detected. The mutant bands were coin-

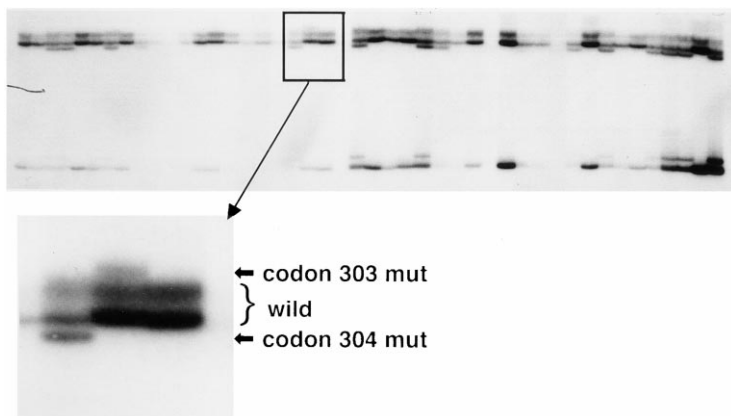


Figure 2. The 6% acrylamide gel electrophoretic pattern of the fragments of exon 3-1 by RI-single strand conformation polymorphism, where all lanes are patients except the four rightmost lanes. Codon 303 and 304 mutations were identified by direct sequencing of the patient's exons. The upper band coincides with the mutant codon 303, and the lower band is codon 304. The lower band was observed in many patients.

cided with the transition from C to T of codon 303 (AGC→AGT, Ser303Ser) and transversion from G to C of codon 304 (GAG→CAG, Glu304Gln). Transition from G to A of codon 338 (GGC→GAC, Gly338Asp) was also detected.

Figure 3 shows the sequencing around codons 304 and 338 and the agarose gel pattern of DNA fragments digested by restriction enzyme—*Mva* I for codon 304 and *Hga* I for codon 338. These two mutations were also found in the normal controls in spite of the substitution of amino acid.

Table 3 shows the frequencies of the transversion from G to C at codon 304 and transition from G to A at codon 338 among the patients and normal controls. There were no significant differences in the proportion of the substitution of nucleotide between patients and normal controls in both codons.

The conservation of the amino acid of codons 304 and 338 among human,³ bovine,²² mouse,²³ rat,²⁴ and feline species (cat)²⁵ was compared (Figure 4). Although the amino acid of codon 304 was well conserved, codon 338 in humans was different from other mammals and interestingly showed a high fre-

quency of the mutation to the amino acid, Asp.(D), of other mammals.

Discussion

Several mutations in the peripherin/*RDS* gene cause retinal dystrophies. Various phenotypes are manifested by these mutations from macular dystrophies to RP. Now more than 25 distinct mutations in the peripherin/*RDS* gene have been found in patients with ADRP and other retinal dystrophies all over the world.⁴⁻¹⁸ Most cases are diagnosed as ADRP, but some mutations are found in patients with macular dystrophy, vitelliform macular dystrophy, fundus flavimaculatus, and so on. In the USA, approximately 5-6% of patients with nonrhodopsin ADRP have a defect in the peripherin/*RDS* gene.²⁶ In Japan, five point mutations in five families have been reported: Cys214Ser mutation in ADRP,¹⁴ Asn244Lys mutation in ADRP with bull's eye,¹⁵ Asn244His mutation in cone-rod dystrophy,¹⁶ Arg172Trp mutation in macular dystrophy,¹⁷ and Tyr184Ser mutation in cone-rod dystrophy.¹⁸

We have tried to check for other mutations in the

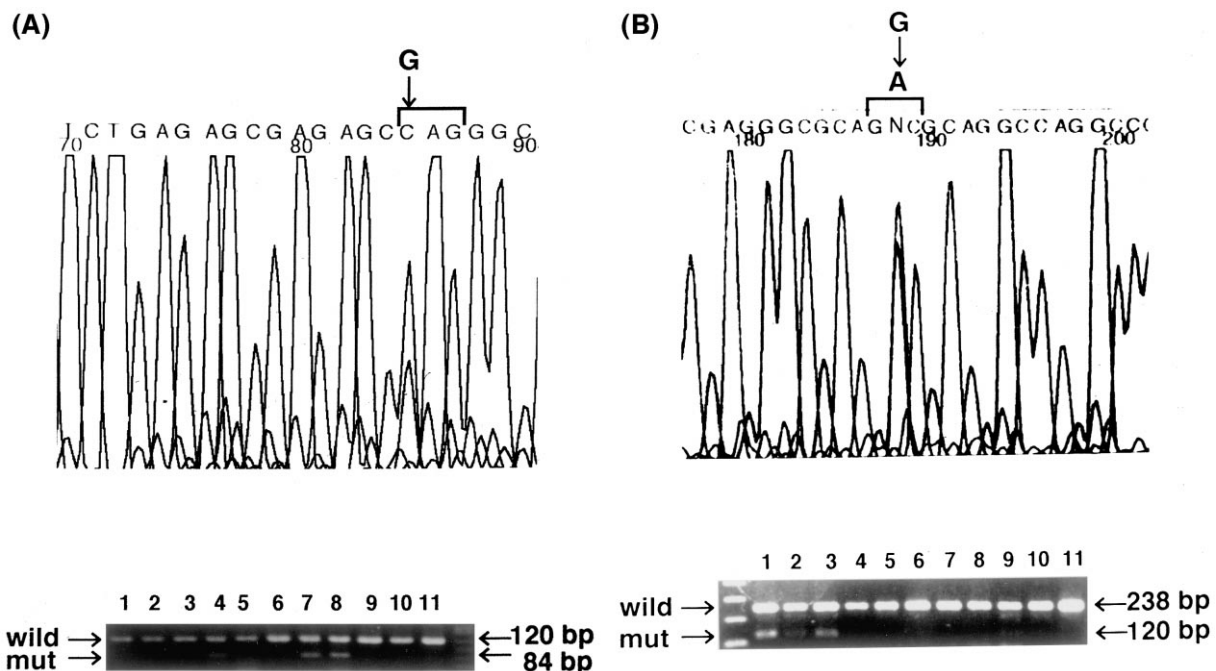


Figure 3. Nucleotide sequences and detection by restriction enzyme. (A) Glu304Gln(GAG→CAG). The upper side shows the heterozygous transversion from G to C by direct sequencing. The lower side shows a 2% agarose gel electrophoretic pattern after *Mva* I digestion. All lanes are patients. Lanes 4, 7, and 8 are heterozygotes for the mutant allele of codon 304. (B) Gly338Asp(GGC→GAC). The upper side shows the heterozygous transition from G to A. The lower side shows 2% agarose gel electrophoretic pattern of fragments cut by *Hga* I digestion. Lanes 1, 2, and 3 are heterozygotes, and the others are homozygotes of wild type on codon 338.

Table 3. Frequency of Glu304Gln and Gly338Asp Mutation in the Patients and Normal Controls

Codon	Genotype	Number (%) of Patients	Number (%) of Controls	Total Number (%)
304	<i>G/G</i>	50 (62.5)	25 (64.1)	75 (63.0)
	<i>G/C</i>	29 (36.3)	13 (33.3)	42 (35.3)
	<i>C/C</i>	1 (1.3)	1 (2.6)	2 (1.7)
	Total	80 ^a (100)	39 (100)	119 (100)
	Proportion of transversion ^b from G to C	31/160	15/78	46/238
		0.194 ± 0.031	0.192 ± 0.045	0.193 ± 0.026
338	<i>G/G</i>	30 (63.8)	17 (65.4)	47 (64.4)
	<i>G/A</i>	17 (36.2)	9 (34.6)	26 (35.6)
	<i>A/A</i>	—	—	—
	Total	47 ^c (100)	26 (100)	73 (100)
	Proportion of transition ^b from G to A	17/94	9/52	26/146
		0.181 ± 0.040	0.173 ± 0.053	0.178 ± 0.032

ADRP: autosomal dominant retinitis pigmentosa; ARRP: autosomal recessive retinitis pigmentosa.

^aADRP 38, ARRP 23, retinal dystrophies 19.

^bThere is no significant difference in the proportion between patients and normal controls.

^cADRP 18, ARRP 10, retinal dystrophies 19.

peripherin/*RDS* gene causing various retinal dystrophies. Our results were inconclusively lower. Although transitions have been detected for codon 338 and transversions for codon 304, none of these cosegregated with the disease. There was the same frequency of mutation in the patients and controls, suggesting spontaneity of instability of these codons. These codons also appear not to be vital for the proper function of the gene.

Other candidate genes may also be implicated for these retinal dystrophies. These candidate genes include the rhodopsin gene, of which the mutations were associated with the disease in four families²⁷⁻³⁰ in Japa-

nese ADRP patients in the past, and genes at chromosomes 7q31-q35,^{31,32} 7p15.1-p13,³³ 8p11-q21,³⁴ 17p13,³⁵ and 19q13.4³⁶ in ADRP; 1q31-q32.1,³⁷ β -cGMP-PDE (phosphodiesterase) gene (4p16.3),³⁸ α -cGMP-PDE (5q31.2-q34),³⁹ and α -cGMP-gated channel⁴⁰ in ARRP; and at chromosome 11q13 in Best's disease.⁴¹ For these patients, therefore, another candidate gene must be analyzed to determine if mutations are responsible for these heterogeneous retinal dystrophies. In the present study, although we attached much importance to clinical diagnosis for patients with retinal dystrophies except ADRP and ARRP, the patients with affected relatives in three or more

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                304                                338
                ↓                                ↓
RDS_HUMAN      301:SESEGWLLLEKSVPETWKAFLESVKKLGKGNQVEAEGAGAGQAPEAG
RDS_BOVINE     300:CESEGWLLLEKSVPETWKAFLESVKKLGKGNQVEAEGEDAGQAPAAG
RDS_MOUSE      301:CESEGWLLLEKSVPETWKAFLESFKKLGKSNQVEAEGADAGPAPEAG
RDS_RAT        301:CESEGWLLLENSVSETWKAFLESFKKLGKSNQVEAEAADAGQAPEAG
RDS_CAT        299:CESEGWLLLEKSVSETWKAFLESLLKLGKSNQVEAEGADAGQAPEAG
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Figure 4. Conservation of amino acid of codons 304 and 338 of the peripherin/*RDS* gene in human, bovine, mouse, rat, and feline species. Although the amino acid of codon 304 was well conserved, codon 338 in humans was different from other mammals. Interestingly, Gly338Asp (G338D) mutation in humans showed the same amino acid as other mammals. Asterisks show homologous amino acid in the species compared.

consecutive generations, which show strongly autosomal dominant inheritance, might have been selected and analyzed separately.

On the DNA polymorphism in the peripherin/*RDS* gene, three sequence alterations giving rise to amino acid substitutions at codons 304, 310, and 338 have also been reported,⁴² where the proportion of the transversion from G to C at codon 304 was 0.51 in normal controls and 0.58 in ADRP patients. The transition from A to G at codon 310 was 0.53 in normal controls and 0.45 in ADRP patients, and transition from G to A at codon 338 was 0.59 in the normals and 0.70 in ADRP patients. These values were higher than that of the present study. We did not find the mutation at codon 310 in the 30 patients randomly selected, although the substitutions at codons 304 and 338 were found in relatively high frequencies. Because three mutations are for both normal and affected ADRP patients, it appears that substitution in these codons could not be used to determine predisposition to retinal dystrophy. However, it might be useful in studying racial differences. For example, frequency of polymorphism in the rhodopsin gene varies for Japanese and Americans. The transition from A to G at nucleotide (nt) position 269 in the 5' noncoding region, the transition from G to A at nt position 5145 in the 4th intron, and transversion from C to A at nt position 5321 in the 3' noncoding region were 0.57, 0.36, and 0.05, respectively, in Japanese.⁴³ In the Americans⁴⁴ these values were 0.14, a few, and 0.13, respectively. These facts may therefore be useful for studying Japanese anthropological origin.

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