

FIG. 2 Pulse-chase analysis of HIV-1/III_B proteins in the presence of protease inhibitors. Individual cultures of chronically infected CEM/III_B cells were treated with 100 μM each of compounds 1–4 (Comp 1–4), or pepstatin A (Pep) (with control sample (Con) containing 1% DMSO) for 1 h in serum-free, methionine-free Minimum Essential Medium (MEM) before a 20 min pulse-labelling period with [³⁵S]methionine (100 μCi ml⁻¹, 1,100 Ci mmol⁻¹). Labelled cultures were washed twice with ice-cold PBS and then chased with MEM containing 100 μM inhibitor, a 100-fold excess of methionine (1.5 mg ml⁻¹), and 10% fetal bovine serum for 0, 1.5 and 3 h. Cells were collected at each time point by centrifugation and then lysed in 0.02 M Tris-HCl buffer, pH 7.5, 0.15 M NaCl, 0.001 M EDTA, 0.5% Triton X-100, 0.1% SDS. [³⁵S]methionine-labelled HIV-specific proteins were immunoprecipitated using pooled AIDS patient sera. Antigen-antibody complexes were recovered with IgG-Sorb (The Enzyme Center, Boston) as previously described³⁰. Proteins were resolved by electrophoresis on SDS-polyacrylamide gels (10% polyacrylamide) and visualized by autoradiography. Immunoprecipitated HIV-1 proteins in control (Con) lanes were *env* gp160, Pr55^{gag} and p24. Protein relative molecular mass (K) markers are shown.

and >100 μM. From the standpoint of potential therapeutic applications, this differential inhibition of the viral and mammalian aspartic proteases is a desirable property in that such compounds might demonstrate low toxicity *in vivo*. Indeed, no overt cytotoxicity, as determined by trypan blue staining of uninfected CEM cells, was observed for compounds 1–4 at concentrations as high as 100 μM over a 48-h period (data not shown). Studies are underway to assess the effect of these inhibitors on virion morphology. □

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Structure and evolution of a human erythroid transcription factor

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VERTEBRATE erythroid cells contain a tissue-specific transcription factor referred to as Eryf 1 (ref. 1), GF-1 (ref. 2) or NF-E1 (ref. 3), for which binding sites are widely distributed in the promoters and enhancers of the globin gene family^{1–3}, and of other erythroid-specific genes^{9,10}. Aberrant binding of the human factor to a mutant site has been implicated in one form of hereditary persistence of fetal haemoglobin (HPFH; ref. 2). The complementary DNAs for both the chicken cEryf 1 (ref. 11) and mouse mEryf 1 (ref. 12) encoding genes have recently been cloned. We report here the cloning of the cDNA for the human Eryf 1 encoding gene. The central third of the hEryf 1 cDNA, containing two 'finger' motifs, is almost identical to that of chicken or mouse. The amino- and carboxy-terminal thirds of the human protein are similar to those of mouse, but are strikingly different from the corresponding domains in chicken. The evidence indicates that these erythroid regulatory factors evolved from a common precursor composed of two distinct kinds of repeated domains, which subsequently evolved at greatly different rates.

Several independent hEryf 1 clones were isolated by screening a human bone marrow cDNA library with a cDNA clone of the chicken Eryf 1 encoding gene (ref. 11). The largest insert obtained was 1,513 nucleotides (nt), which by northern analysis (Fig. 1a) hybridizes to a predominant 1,550-nt message in K562 total-cell RNA, and to a 1 kilobase (kb) message in chicken erythrocyte RNA; this message was not observed in RNA isolated from nonerythroid cells, consistent with results previously reported using as a probe the chicken or mouse cDNA^{11,12}.

The human and chicken cDNA clones were transcribed *in vitro* and the RNAs translated in a rabbit reticulocyte lysate in the presence of [³⁵S]methionine. The protein generated from the human clone migrates with a relative molecular mass (M_r) of ~49,000 (49K) when analysed by SDS-PAGE (data not shown) consistent with the size reported for the human protein purified from K562 cells (50K; ref. 12). The *in vitro* translation products were used in a gel mobility-shift assay (Fig. 1b). A specific complex is formed when lysate primed with RNA from the hEryf 1 clone (H) is added to DNA oligomers containing an Eryf 1 binding site derived from either the chicken (lane 1) or human (lane 2) β-globin enhancers. The complex is identical in mobility to a specific complex formed in the presence of K562 nuclear extract (lanes 5–12). The translation product from the cEryf 1 clone shows identical binding specificity (C).

Southern blots of chicken or human genomic DNA were probed with the corresponding cDNA clones (Fig. 1c), which hybridize predominantly to a single restriction fragment, or to two smaller fragments. In addition, the human cDNA clone hybridizes most strongly to the same chicken genomic restriction fragments as does the chicken cDNA clone (arrows), which indicates that the two cDNAs represent the same, most probably

single-copy, gene. Additional fainter bands are observed in the genomic DNA of both species and could represent other, more distantly related, genes.

The nucleotide sequence and deduced amino-acid sequence of the hEryf 1 cDNA is presented in Fig. 2. It contains a single open reading frame (M_r 42,995) of sufficient size to encode the observed *in vitro* translation product. The amino-acid sequence of hEryf 1 is 86% identical to the mouse protein. The central part of the molecule contains a repeated 'finger' motif of the form Cys-X-Asn-Cys-X₄-Thr-X-Leu-Trp-Arg-Arg-X₃-Gly-X₃-Cys-Asn-Ala-Cys that is also found twice in the mouse and chicken proteins.

We have used a quantitative comparison matrix analysis¹³ to map the repeated sequences within these proteins (Fig. 3a). The location of the tandem finger domains is seen in the self-comparison matrices of both the chicken and human sequences. The human protein has a longer N-terminal region preceding the finger domains and lacks the distal zone of oligoglycine and oligoproline repeats present in the chicken sequence between residues 225 and 299. Both the chicken and the human Eryf 1 sequences contain a second system of long internal repeats, among the first 50 and last 50 residues of the proteins. In the human sequence, however, there appears to be a third copy centered around residues 135-180. Detailed analysis of this second system of repeats (Fig. 3b) reveals that in addition to the tandem finger domains, the human protein contains three divergent copies of an approximately 94-residue sequence. The modular structure of hEryf 1 is summarized in Fig. 3c.

A comparison matrix for chicken versus human Eryf 1 (Fig. 3a) illustrates that these sequences are clearly related colinearly in their respective tandem finger domains, as well as less markedly in their C-terminal regions. Traces of the second repeat system are even evident in this intersequence comparison. But a multiple alignment using all three proteins (Fig. 4) indicates

TABLE 1 Rates of nucleotide substitution in the erythroid transcription factor gene: comparison with other genes

| Coding sequence | Synonymous rate | Nonsynonymous rate |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Erythroid factor: | | |
| complete sequence | 4.15 (0.44) | 0.449 (0.06) |
| N-terminal domain | 3.35 (0.54) | 0.673 (0.10) |
| finger domain | 4.85 (0.95) | 0.068 (0.04) |
| C-terminal domain | 5.42 (0.13) | 0.537 (0.13) |
| Histone H4 | 6.13 (1.32) | 0.027 (0.03) |
| Histone H2B | 3.59 (0.69) | 0.076 (0.04) |
| Haemoglobin alpha | 3.94 (0.60) | 0.56 (0.09) |
| Haemoglobin beta | 2.96 (0.46) | 0.87 (0.11) |
| Mammalian average | 4.65 (2.06) | 0.88 (0.75) |

The codon alignments used to compute the rates are based on the amino-acid sequence alignments in Fig. 4. Rates are expressed as the number of substitutions per site per 10^9 years (standard errors are in parentheses) and different mammalian orders are assumed to have diverged 80 million years ago. The rates for the Eryf 1 gene sequence were computed according to Li *et al.*¹⁴; all other rates were taken from Table 2 (ref 14). The N-terminal, finger and C-terminal domains in the human and mouse proteins correspond to nucleotides 1-588, 589-951 and 952-1239 in the coding sequences of their respective mRNAs. The nonsynonymous rate of substitution for chicken and human finger domains was 0.129×10^{-9} (with a standard error of 0.003×10^{-9}) based on a divergence time of 270 million years ago. Meaningful rates for the N- and C-terminal regions could not be determined owing to their much greater divergence¹⁴.

that there are several large deletions in the N-terminal region of the chicken sequence, as well as additional minor deletions in the C-terminal domain.

We have analysed the nucleotide substitution rates in the human and mouse messenger RNA sequences (Table 1). The synonymous (phenotypically silent) rate of nucleotide substitu-

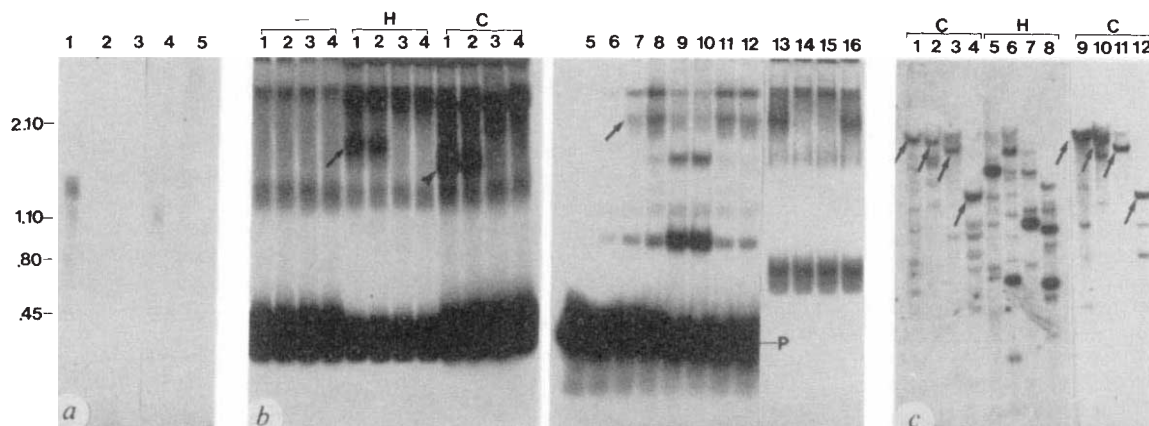


FIG. 1 Characterization of human Eryf 1 cDNA. *a*, Northern analysis using a human Eryf 1 cDNA clone as a probe. Blots contained: lane 1, 40 μ g K562 total-cell RNA; lane 2, 40 μ g H9 (a human T-cell line) total-cell RNA; lane 3, 2 μ g poly(A)-selected RNA from human brain. Lanes 4 and 5 contained 30 μ g total-cell RNA isolated from 9-day embryonic chicken erythrocytes or brain tissue, respectively. β -actin mRNA was detected in all lanes (data not shown). *b*, Gel mobility-shift assays using *in vitro* translation products of the Eryf 1 cDNA clones. Labelled (35 S)methionine translation products and unlabelled oligonucleotide probes were used (lanes 1-4 and 13-16) to avoid detection of endogenous Eryf 1 in the lysate. Probes: Ch1 (lane 1) contains a strong Eryf 1 binding site derived from the chicken β -globin enhancer¹¹; Hm3 (lane 2) and Hm2 (lane 3) contain sequences from the human β -globin enhancer; only Hm3 binds strongly to Eryf 1 (ref 1). The Ch2 probe (lane 4) does not contain an Eryf 1 binding site (unpublished data). Probes (0.4 pmol) were incubated with unprimed lysate (-), or lysate primed by either hEryf 1 RNA (H) or cEryf 1 RNA (C). The cEryf 1-DNA complex is of faster mobility, consistent with the smaller size of the chicken protein (38K, refs 1, 11). To compare the *in vitro* translation product with hEryf 1 (lanes 5-8), 32 P end-labelled Ch1 probe (P) was incubated with (0, 0.5, 1.0

or 2 μ l, respectively) of K562 cell nuclear extract before electrophoresis. Lanes 9 and 10 are as in lane 8 except that a 20-fold or 40-fold excess of Ch1 oligomer was included. In lanes 11 and 12, similar amounts of the nonspecific Ch2 oligomer were used. Lanes 13-16 were run on the same gel as lanes 5-12 for direct comparison: labelled hEryf 1 translation product was incubated with unlabelled Ch1, Hm2, Ch2 and Hm3, respectively. Arrows indicate the hEryf 1-DNA complex; the arrowhead shows the cEryf 1-DNA complex. *c*, Southern analysis. Chicken (C) or human (H) genomic DNA (10 μ g per lane) was digested with *Sac*I, *Bam*H1, *Eco*R1 or *Pst*I (left to right); blots were probed with labelled hEryf 1 (lanes 1-8) or cEryf 1 DNA (lanes 9-12). Arrows indicate the predominant restriction fragments which are detected by both probes in chicken DNA.

METHODS. A human bone marrow cDNA library in λ gt11 was constructed from mRNA derived from a single adult male (Clontech), and hybridized to a cEryf 1 cDNA probe in $2 \times$ SSC, 0.1% SDS at 55 $^{\circ}$ C. For northern blots RNA was electrophoresed on formaldehyde gels; blots were hybridized and washed¹⁹ at 65 $^{\circ}$ C (lanes 1-3) or 55 $^{\circ}$ C (lanes 4-5). DNA blots were hybridized at 42 $^{\circ}$ C in 50% formamide, 10% dextran sulphate, 1% SDS and 1 M NaCl, and washed in $2 \times$ SSC, 1% SDS at 60 $^{\circ}$ C.

FIG. 3 Amino-acid sequence analyses. *a*, Protein comparison matrices. Program CMPSEQ84 (ref. 13) was used to compute the comparison matrices with a window of 53 residues using the PAM250 matrix²⁰ for scoring. A plotting threshold corresponding to a chance occurrence of $\leq 10^{-3}$ was used throughout; the highest-scoring diagonals (corresponding to the tandem finger domains) achieved scores with chance probabilities of the order of 10^{-20} . A chance probability of 0.53×10^{-10} was obtained by this method for the most significant internal repeats in *Xenopus* transcription factor IIIA (ref. 21). Grid marks correspond to 50 amino-acid intervals; numbering is relative to the initiator methionine of either cEryf 1 (1-304) or hEryf 1 (1-413). The significance of the internal repeats in the chicken, human and mouse proteins was confirmed using intrasequence RELATE analysis²⁰; the scores (in s.d. units) for the self-comparisons were 15.0, 10.9 and 9.8, respectively (scores of ≥ 3.0 are diagnostic of internal duplication). *b*, Human erythroid factor: alignments of internal repeats. A new dynamic programming method²² was used to optimally align the two sets of internal repeats in the human sequence. To analyse the second repeat system, the N-terminal region (residues 1-195) was split into two sub-sequences which were simultaneously aligned with the C-terminal region (residues 320-413), sequences which were simultaneously aligned with the C-terminal region (residues 320-413). Schematic diagram of repeated sequence organization based on the analyses in panels *a* and *b*. The symbols C..C refer to the locations of cysteine subsequences in the 'finger' domains. The boxed plus signs (+) indicate positive charge clusters (as defined in reference 23) corresponding to residues 232-253 and 287-317 in the human and mouse sequences. The chicken sequence also has corresponding positive charge clusters associated with the C-terminal regions of its 'finger' repeats (data not shown).

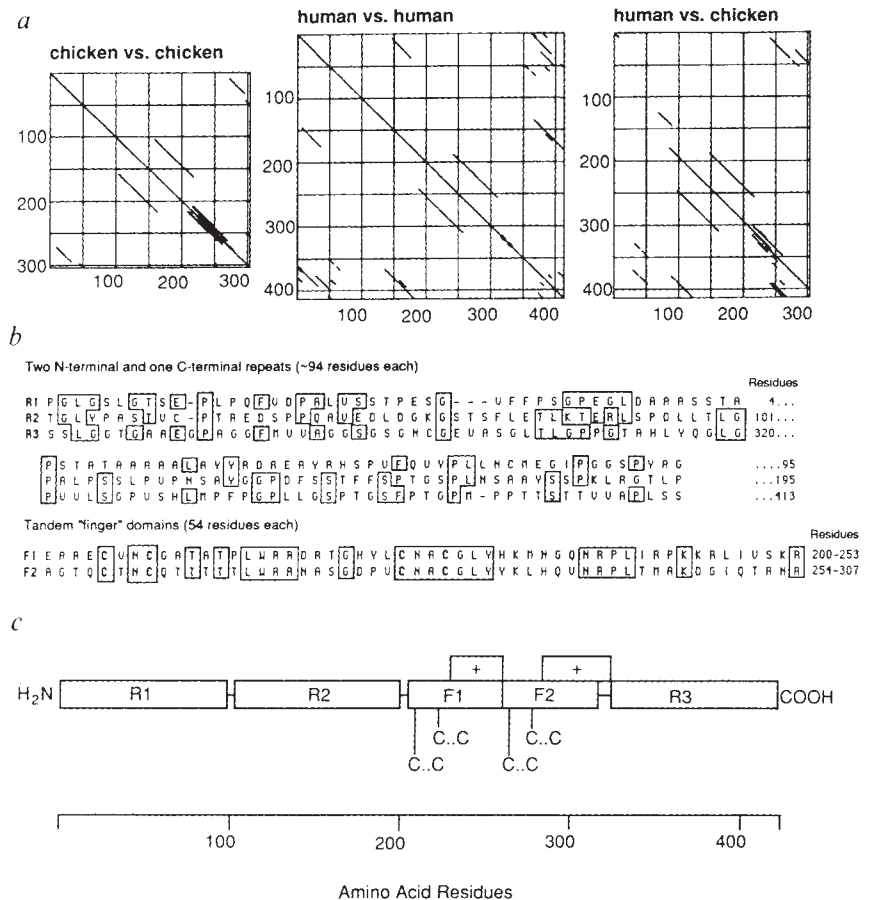


FIG. 4 All three sequences were simultaneously aligned²² using appropriate weights²⁴ to control for the greater pairwise similarity of the human and mouse sequences. Tandem finger domains are underlined. Numbering corresponds only to the human and mouse proteins. Single-letter amino-acid code is used.

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MEFVALGGPDAGSPTP-FPD-----EAGAF-----GLGGGERTEA----- chicken
MEFPGLGSLGTSEPLPQFVDPALVSSPTESGVFFPSGPEGLDAAAASSTAPSTATAAAAAAL human
MDFPGLGALGTSEPLPQFVDSALVSSPDSTGFFSSGPEGLDAAASSTSPNAATAAASAL mouse
  10 20 30 40 50 60

-----GGLLASYPSPGRVSLVP-----WA-DTGTGTLPQWVPPATQMEPPH-
AYYRDAEAYRHSPVFQVYPLLNCMEGIPGGSPYAGWAYGKTLGYPASTVCPTRDSSPPQA
AYYREAEAYRHSPVFQVYPLLNSMEGIPGGSPYASWAYGKTLALYASTVCPSPHEDAPSQA
  70 80 90 100 120

-----YLELLQPPRGSPHPSSGPLL-----PL
VEDLDGKGSTSFLTLKTERLSPDLLTLGALPSSLPVNSAYGGPDFSSTFFSPTGSP
LEDQEGKSNNTFLDTLKTERLSPDLLTLGALPASLPVTSAYGGADFPSPFFSPTGSP
  130 140 150 160 170 180

SSGP-----PPCEARECVNCGATATPLWRRDGTGHYLCNACGLYHRLNGONRP
NSAAYSPPKLRGTLPPEARECVNCGATATPLWRRDRGTGHYLCNACGLYHKMNGONRP
SSAAYSPPKFGHSLPLAPCEARECVNCGATATPLWRRDGTGHYLCNACGLYHKMNGONRP
  190 200 210 220 230 240

LIRPKRLLVSKRAGTVCNCSNCTSTTTLWRRSPMGDPVCNACGLYKLVHVNRP LTRKD
LIRPKRLLVSKRAGTVCNCSNCTSTTTLWRRNAGDPVCNACGLYKLVHVNRP LTRKD
LIRPKRMLVSKRAGTVCNCSNCTSTTTLWRRNAGDPVCNACGLYKLVHVNRP LTRKD
  250 260 270 280 290 300

GIOTRNRKVSSKGGKRRPP---GGNPSATAGGGAPMGGGDPSPM-PPPPPPAAAPPQS
GIOTRNRKASGKGGKRRSSSLGGTGAEEGAGGFVVAGSGSGNCGEVAAGLTLGPPGT
GIOTRNRKASGKGGKRRSNLAGAGAAEGPAGGFVVAGSSSGNCGEVAAGLALGTAGT
  310 320 330 340 350 360

DALY-ALGPVVLG---HFLPF-----GNSGGFFGGGAGGYTAPPGLSPQI--
AHLVQGLGVPVLSGPVSHLMPFPGLLGSPTTSPFTGPAPTTSSSTVIAPLSS
AHLVQGLGVPVLSGPVSHLMPFPGLLGSPTTSPFTGPAPTTSSSTVIAPLSS
  370 380 390 400 410
  
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evolutionary constraints which this implies (demonstrated also in Table 1) may reflect changes in the nature of the other components with which they could interact. Alternatively, there may be less stringent requirements for conservation of these domains, compared to the DNA-binding domain. It may be relevant that the human cDNA, though active, is less efficient than the chicken clone in a transient transactivation assay carried out in nonerythroid chicken cells (unpublished data). □

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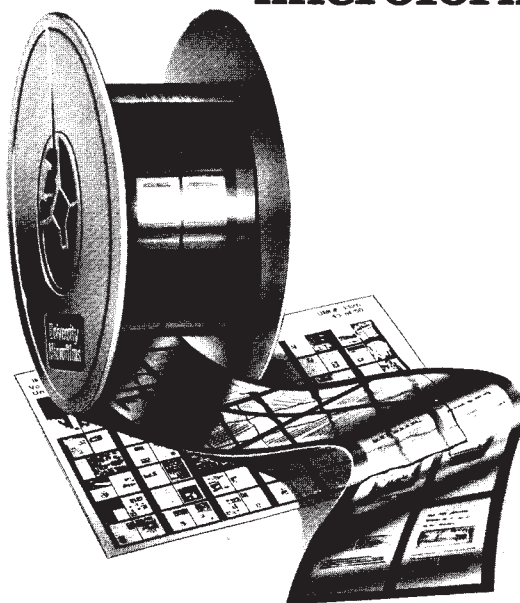
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