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MEMBRANE MODIFICATION IN THE FORMATION OF CHANNELS, CHANNEL SIZE, EXTERNAL CONDITIONS, AND THE ROLE OF MECHANICAL FACTORS

MEMBRANA O‘TISH KANALLARI HOSIL BO‘LISHIDAGI MEMBRANA MODIFIKATSIYASI, KANAL O‘LCHAMI, TASHQI SHAROITLAR VA MEXANIK OMILLARNING ROLI

МОДИФИКАЦИЯ МЕМБРАНЫ ПРИ ФОРМИРОВАНИИ КАНАЛОВ, РАЗМЕР КАНАЛА, ВНЕШНИЕ УСЛОВИЯ И РОЛЬ МЕХАНИЧЕСКИХ ФАКТОРОВ

Davronjon Abduvokhidov[1]
[1]Institute of Fundamental and Applied Research, National Research University TIIAME, Junior researcher

Mukhammadali Niyozaliev[2]
[2]Department of Physics, National University of Uzbekistan, Master's student

Zulfizar Toshpo‘latova[3]
[3]Laboratory of Experimental Biophysics, Centre for Advanced Technologies,

Khamza Toshov[4]
[4]Department of Chemistry, National University of Uzbekistan, PhD

Turgunboev Shavkatjon Shuhratjon ogli[5]
[5]Fergana state university, PhD, associate professor

Jamoliddin Razzokov[6]
[6]Institute of Fundamental and Applied Research, National Research University TIIAME, director

Abstract

The formation of membrane transition channels is associated with various external conditions, mechanical forces, and changes in membrane structure. This article analyzes the formation of channels in membranes under the influence of electric fields, the significance of channel size, and other factors. A deeper understanding of these processes may lead to new approaches in cell biology and medicine.

Annotatsiya

Membrana o‘tish kanallari hosil bo‘lishi turli tashqi sharoitlar, mexanik kuchlar va membrana tuzilishining o‘zgarishi bilan bog'liq. Ushbu maqolada elektr maydoni ta'sirida membranada kanallarining shakllanishi, kanal o‘lchamining ahamiyati va boshqa omillar tahlil qilinadi. Bu jarayonlarni chuqur o‘rganish hujayra biologiyasi va tibbiyotda yangi yondashuvlarga olib keladi.

Аннотация

Формирование переходных каналов мембраны связано с различными внешними условиями, механическими силами и изменениями в структуре мембраны. В данной статье анализируется формирование каналов в мембранах под воздействием электрических полей, значимость размера канала и другие факторы. Глубокое изучение этих процессов может привести к новым подходам в клеточной биологии и медицине.

Kalit so‘zlar: *Membrana o‘tish kanallari, elektr maydoni, mexanik kuchlar, kanal o‘lchami.*
Ключевые слова: *Переходные каналы мембраны, электрическое поле, механические силы, размер канала.*
Key words: *Membrane transition channels, electric field, mechanical forces, channel size.*

INTRODUCTION

Membrane pore formation is a dynamic and multifaceted process that plays a crucial role in various biological, biophysical, and medical applications. Moreover, the integrity of the cell membrane is essential for maintaining cellular homeostasis, as it regulates the transport of ions, molecules, and nutrients between the intracellular and extracellular environments [1]. Understanding these influences is vital for comprehending how cells respond to external stimuli, adapt to environmental changes, and regulate critical processes such as signal transduction, nutrient uptake, and waste removal. One of the primary factors influencing pore formation is the composition and structure of the membrane itself. These modifications, whether naturally occurring or experimentally induced, can significantly impact the membrane's propensity to form pores under stress or stimulation [2]. External conditions, such as pH, ion concentration, and temperature, also play a significant role in determining the likelihood and characteristics of pore formation. Changes in the surrounding environment can affect the electrostatic interactions between membrane components, leading to alterations in membrane tension and permeability. For example, fluctuations in pH can influence the ionization state of membrane lipids and proteins, thus affecting their interaction and the membrane's overall stability. Mechanical factors, including membrane tension, shear forces, and compression, are also critical determinants of pore formation. These forces can arise from the cell's interaction with its environment, mechanical stress, or the action of external agents such as physical probes or applied pressure [3]. By examining these factors, we can gain deeper insights into the mechanisms governing pore formation and the implications for cellular physiology, biophysical research, and potential applications in fields such as drug delivery, gene therapy, and biotechnology. [4]. Cells undergoing processes like endocytosis, exocytosis, and vesicle trafficking utilize controlled pore formation to facilitate the exchange of molecules between compartments. In medical applications, controlled pore formation techniques such as electroporation are employed to introduce therapeutic agents, such as drugs or genetic material, into target cells, enhancing the efficiency of treatments for various diseases. Such an understanding is crucial for developing innovative strategies to manipulate membrane permeability, whether for therapeutic purposes, improving industrial processes, or advancing research in cellular and molecular biology [5].

MEMBRANE MODIFICATION AND ITS ROLE IN PORE FORMATION

Membrane modification refers to the changes in the composition, structure, and organization of the cell membrane, which can significantly impact the process of pore formation. The cell membrane's ability to form pores is heavily influenced by the types of lipids, proteins, and other molecules present, as well as how these components interact with each other [6]. Understanding how modifications in these components affect pore formation is crucial for comprehending how cells adapt to various physiological and environmental conditions. The lipid bilayer is the fundamental structural component of the cell membrane, composed mainly of phospholipids with varying fatty acid chains, cholesterol, and other lipid molecules. The composition and arrangement of these lipids determine the membrane's fluidity, thickness, and overall stability, which in turn influence the likelihood and characteristics of pore formation. The degree of saturation in the fatty acid chains of phospholipids plays a critical role in membrane fluidity. Saturated fatty acids have straight chains that pack tightly together, resulting in a more rigid and less permeable membrane. In contrast, unsaturated fatty acids contain one or more double bonds, introducing kinks in the chains that prevent tight packing, thus increasing membrane fluidity. Membranes with a higher proportion of unsaturated fatty acids are more prone to pore formation, as the increased fluidity makes it easier for lipids to reorganize and form transient or permanent pores. Cholesterol is another important component that modulates membrane fluidity and stability. At physiological temperatures, cholesterol interacts with phospholipid tails, making the membrane more rigid and less permeable. However, cholesterol can also prevent the membrane from becoming too rigid at lower temperatures, maintaining an optimal level of fluidity [7].

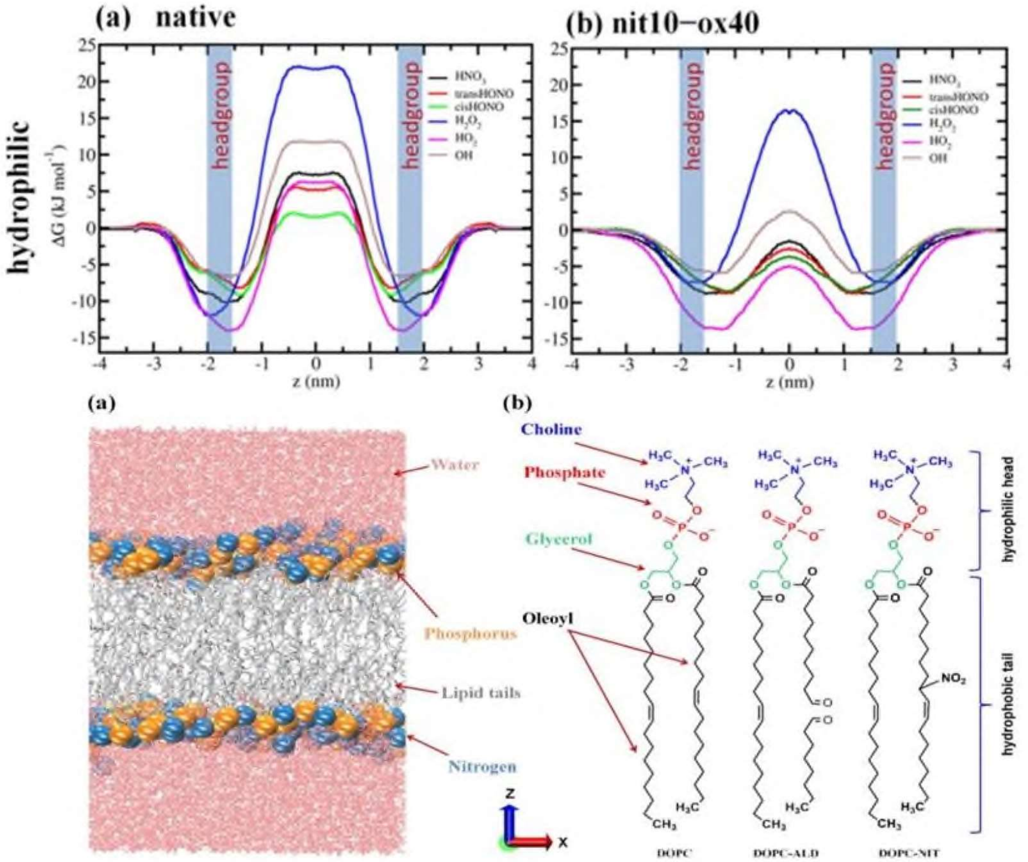

Figure1. Free energy profiles (FEPs) of the hydrophilic RONS, across the native and modified phospholipid bilayers (PLBs). Native DOPC PLB, with P and N atoms illustrated as larger beads for clarity. (b) Schematic depiction of the DOPC lipid molecule in its native, oxidized (DOPC-ALD), and nitrated (DOPC-NIT) states. Reprinted/adapted with permission from Ref.[8]. 2023, The Authors.

Cholesterol-rich domains, often referred to as "lipid rafts," can influence pore formation by creating microenvironments that either facilitate or hinder the process, depending on their organization and interaction with other membrane components. The charge and polarity of phospholipid head groups also affect membrane behavior. For example, phosphatidylcholine (PC) is a neutral phospholipid that contributes to membrane stability, while phosphatidylserine (PS) carries a negative charge and is more likely to participate in interactions with positively charged ions or molecules [9]. These electrostatic interactions can create localized regions of instability, promoting pore formation under certain conditions. Proteins embedded within the lipid bilayer, such as integral and peripheral membrane proteins, play a crucial role in maintaining membrane structure and function. These proteins can influence pore formation through their interactions with lipids and other proteins, as well as through their own structural changes. Many transmembrane proteins span the entire lipid bilayer, and their movement or conformational changes can induce localized stress on the membrane, leading to pore formation [10]. The distribution of lipids and proteins across the inner and outer leaflets of the membrane is often asymmetrical, which can affect pore formation. For example, the outer leaflet may have more glycosphingolipids, while the inner leaflet is enriched in phosphatidylserine (PS) and phosphatidylethanolamine (PE). Membrane modification refers to the changes in the composition, structure, and organization of the cell membrane, which can significantly impact pore formation. [6].

EFFECT OF PORE SIZE ON MEMBRANE PERMEABILITY AND CELLULAR OUTCOMES

Pore size is a critical factor that determines the permeability of the membrane and the nature of molecules that can pass through it. Pores can range from small, transient openings that allow selective ion passage to larger, more stable structures capable of permitting the movement of macromolecules [11]. Nano-pores are small pores with diameters ranging from 0.5 to 2 nanometers. These pores allow the selective passage of small ions, water molecules, and certain metabolites while preventing the movement of larger molecules. Many ion channels in biological membranes operate as nano-pores, regulating the movement of ions such as sodium (Na^+), potassium (K^+), calcium (Ca^{2+}), and chloride (Cl^-**)**. The selective permeability of these channels is essential for maintaining cellular homeostasis, generating electrical signals in nerve and muscle cells, and facilitating intracellular communication. Aquaporins are specialized protein channels that form nano-pores, allowing the rapid and selective transport of water molecules across the membrane. This process is critical for regulating water balance in cells and tissues, particularly in organs such as the kidneys and plant roots. These temporary pores allow for the rapid exchange of small molecules and ions, enabling cells to adapt to fluctuating environmental conditions. Macro-pores are larger openings, typically greater than 2 nanometers in diameter, which can allow the passage of larger molecules, such as proteins, nucleic acids, and even entire organelles in some cases [12].

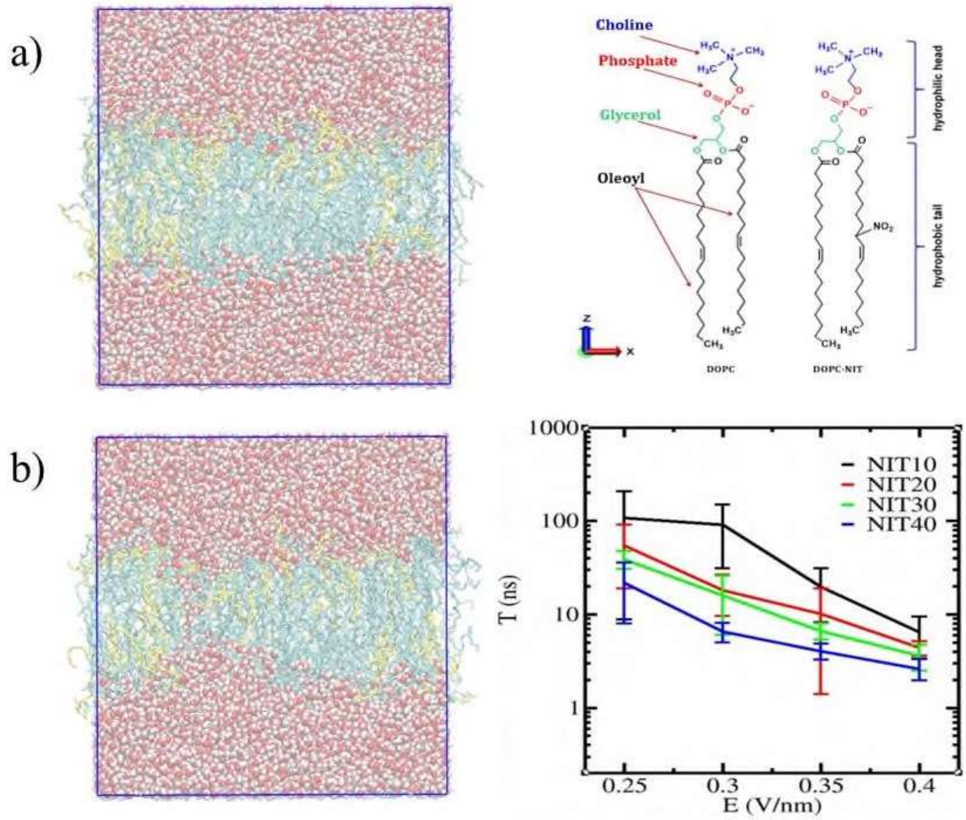

Figure 2. Snapshots capturing the pore formation process, extracted from the MD trajectory: (a) at 0 ns, (b) 38.96 ns. Schematic illustrations of the native DOPC and nitrated DOPC (DOPC-NIT). Dependence of the pore formation time on the electric field. Reprinted/adapted with permission from Ref.[13] 2024, The Authors.

For instance, during apoptosis, certain proteins increase membrane permeability by forming larger pores, enabling the release of cytochrome c and other pro-apoptotic factors [14]. Pore size is a determining factor in the permeability and functionality of cell membranes. While nano-pores facilitate selective ion and water transport, macro-pores can lead to significant changes in cellular integrity, often resulting in cell death. Understanding how pore size influences membrane behavior is crucial for applications in biotechnology, medicine, and fundamental cell biology [11].

EXTERNAL CONDITIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON MEMBRANE PORE FORMATION

External conditions such as pH, ion concentration, and osmotic pressure play a significant role in influencing membrane stability and the likelihood of pore formation. These factors can affect the membrane's charge distribution, fluidity, and overall structural integrity, making it more or less susceptible to pore formation. Understanding how these external conditions interact with the membrane is crucial for gaining insights into cellular adaptability and responses to environmental changes [15]. The pH of the surrounding environment can have a profound impact on the charge distribution and ionization state of membrane lipids and proteins, leading to alterations in membrane stability and permeability. The membrane's surface is often negatively charged due to the presence of phospholipids such as phosphatidylserine (PS) and phosphatidylinositol (PI). At acidic pH levels (low pH), the protonation of these negatively charged groups reduces electrostatic repulsion between lipid molecules, leading to tighter packing and a more stable membrane. Conversely, at higher pH levels (alkaline conditions), deprotonation increases the negative charge on the membrane surface, resulting in increased electrostatic repulsion, membrane thinning, and enhanced susceptibility to pore formation. Membrane proteins often contain amino acid residues with pH-sensitive side chains that can alter their charge state in response to changes in pH. These changes can induce conformational shifts, which, in turn, affect protein-lipid interactions and create localized regions of instability in the membrane. These regions become potential sites for pore formation, particularly when external stimuli are present. The concentration of ions in the surrounding medium can significantly influence the transmembrane potential, which is a driving force for pore formation. Changes in ion concentration can modify the electrochemical gradient across the membrane, leading to alterations in membrane tension and permeability. These divalent cations play a vital role in stabilizing the membrane by binding to negatively charged phospholipid head groups, effectively neutralizing their charge and promoting tighter lipid packing. A decrease in Ca^{2+} or Mg^{2+} concentrations results in reduced stabilization, making the membrane more prone to pore formation. In contrast, an influx of these ions can increase membrane rigidity, reducing the likelihood of spontaneous pore formation. The balance of K^+ and Na^+ ions is crucial for maintaining the resting membrane potential. An imbalance, such as an increase in extracellular K^+ concentration, reduces the transmembrane potential, thereby destabilizing the membrane and facilitating pore formation. Conversely, increased Na^+ levels can enhance electrostatic interactions with the membrane's surface, potentially inhibiting pore formation. Osmotic pressure, driven by differences in solute concentration across the membrane, can generate water flow that exerts mechanical stress on the membrane, contributing to pore formation. In a hypotonic environment, water influx leads to cell swelling and increased membrane tension, making the membrane more susceptible to pore formation. Conversely, in hypertonic conditions, water efflux causes cell shrinkage and membrane invagination, which may also result in pore formation, particularly when accompanied by other stress factors [16].

MECHANICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING MEMBRANE PORE FORMATION

Mechanical forces, such as membrane tension, shear stress, and compression, significantly impact the structural integrity of the membrane and its ability to form pores. These forces can arise from interactions with the external environment, cellular processes, or the application of external stimuli, and they play a crucial role in determining the dynamics of pore formation. Membrane tension refers to the mechanical stress exerted on the membrane due to external forces or internal pressure. Increased membrane tension can lead to lipid reorganization and the formation of pores [17]. When a membrane is subjected to external pressure or compression, the lipid bilayer's structure is disturbed, leading to pore formation. This effect is often observed during physical trauma or in cells subjected to mechanical stress, such as muscle cells during contraction. Stretching forces, such as those experienced by cells in tissues undergoing deformation (e.g., skin, lung, or muscle cells), can cause the membrane to expand and thin out. This thinning effect reduces the energy barrier for pore formation, making the membrane more susceptible to the initiation of pores. Mechanical factors, including membrane tension, shear stress, and compression, play a significant role in modulating pore formation by inducing structural changes in the membrane. These forces act in concert with chemical and environmental factors to regulate membrane permeability and adaptability [18].

CONCLUSION

Membrane pore formation is a dynamic and multifaceted process that plays a crucial role in various biological, biophysical, and medical applications. Moreover, the integrity of the cell membrane is essential for maintaining cellular homeostasis, as it regulates the transport of ions, molecules, and nutrients between the intracellular and extracellular environments. In conclusion, membrane pore formation is a dynamic and regulated process governed by a complex interplay of chemical, physical, and mechanical factors. A deeper understanding of these mechanisms will pave the way for innovative applications in diverse fields, ultimately contributing to advancements in biomedical technology, drug delivery, and cellular biology.

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