Viral manipulation of a mechanoresponsive signaling axis disassembles processing bodies

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Abstract

Processing bodies (PBs) are ribonucleoprotein granules important for cytokine mRNA

decay that are targeted for disassembly by many viruses. Kaposi's sarcoma-associated

herpesvirus is the etiological agent of the inflammatory endothelial cancer, Kaposi's sarcoma,

and a PB-regulating virus. The virus encodes Kaposin B (KapB), which induces actin stress

fibres (SFs) and cell spindling as well as PB disassembly. We now show that KapB-mediated PB

disassembly requires actin rearrangements, RhoA effectors and the mechanoresponsive

transcription activator, YAP. Moreover, ectopic expression of active YAP or exposure of ECs to

mechanical forces caused PB disassembly in the absence of KapB. We propose that the viral

protein KapB activates a mechanoresponsive signaling axis and links changes in cell shape and

cytoskeletal structures to enhanced inflammatory molecule expression using PB disassembly.

Our work implies that cytoskeletal changes in other pathologies may similarly impact the

inflammatory environment.

Importance

For the first time, we demonstrate that processing bodies (PBs), cytoplasmic sites of

RNA decay, are regulated by mechanical signaling events that alter actin dynamics. Using the

overexpression of a viral protein called KapB, known previously to mediate PB disassembly, we

show that actin stress fibers (SFs) and the mechanoresponsive transcription factor, YAP, are

required for PB loss. We also show that other established mechanical signals (shear stress or stiff

extracellular matrix) that lead to the formation of SFs and activate YAP also cause PB

disassembly. This is important because it means that KapB activates, from the inside out, a

pathway that links cell shape to post-transcriptional gene regulation via cytoplasmic PBs.

Introduction

Cells are exposed to a variety of environments and they respond to changes in external force by adjusting internal tension. These mechanical cues can be transmitted to the cell through changes to extracellular contact nodes (focal adhesions) and contractile actomyosin structures to maintain tension homeostasis (Friedland, Lee, and Boettiger 2009; Kong et al. 2009; del Rio et al. 2009; Grashoff et al. 2010; reviewed in Finch-Edmondson and Sudol 2016). Actin stress fibres (SFs) are cytoskeletal structures composed of thick actin bundles, often associated with focal adhesions (Vallenius 2013), that are force-responsive, maintaining cytoskeletal integrity in changing mechanical environments (Burridge and Guilluy 2016). SF formation is coordinated by the GTPase, RhoA; it activates the formin, mammalian diaphanous protein-1 (mDia1) to promote actin filament growth and Rho-associated coiled-coil kinase (ROCK) to promote actomyosin contractility through non-muscle myosin II (Watanabe et al. 1997; Amano et al. 1997; Kimura et al. 1996). These RhoA-effectors act together to promote the formation of contractile and stable actin filaments in response to mechanical and chemical stimuli (Watanabe et al. 1999).

External forces elicit a cascade of signals using actin as force transducers to alter gene expression. Activated serum response factor (SRF) transcription responds to actin polymerization (reviewed in Chai and Tarnawski 2002). SRF activation is negatively regulated by the cytoplasmic concentration of monomeric G-actin (Sotiropoulos et al. 1999). However, inducers of filamentous actin (e.g. active RhoA) deplete G-actin levels leading to SRF nuclear translocation and transcription (Sotiropoulos et al. 1999). A more recent example is the mechanoresponsive transcriptional coactivator Yes-associated protein (YAP), whose activity can be controlled by cell shape and cytoskeletal structure (Dupont et al. 2011; Wada et al. 2011; Halder, Dupont, and Piccolo 2012; Yu et al. 2012). YAP is nuclear and active in response to low cell-cell contact (Zhao et al. 2007), high stiffness of the extracellular matrix (ECM) (Dupont et al. 2011), in shear stress due to fluid flow (K.-C. Wang et al. 2016; Nakajima et al. 2017; Lai and Stainier 2017; H. J. Lee et al. 2017; Huang et al. 2016), or after G-protein coupled receptor (GPCR) activation (Yu et al. 2012). Most of these signals induce the activity of RhoA and promote the formation of SFs, (Noria et al. 2004; Lee and Kumar 2016), implicating actin cytoskeletal structures as requisite intermediates for YAP activation.

Nuclear YAP associates with its coactivators to mediate transcription of genes involved in cell proliferation, differentiation, survival and migration (Halder, Dupont, and Piccolo 2012).

Consistent with this, nuclear YAP is often pro-tumourigenic and drives progression of many

oncogenic traits in a variety of cancers. These include the induction of cell stemness (Panciera et

al. 2016), altered metabolism (C. Yang et al. 2018), cancer cell invasion/vascular remodeling

(Calvo et al. 2013; Liu et al. 2018; Kimura et al. 2020), and altered growth and proliferation

(Kapoor et al. 2014; Zanconato et al. 2015; Jang et al. 2017). Kaposi's sarcoma (KS) is an

endothelial cell (EC) cancer that is strongly linked to Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpesvirus

(KSHV) (Chang et al. 1994; Russo et al. 1996; Zhong et al. 1996; Ganem 1997). KSHV

establishes persistent, life-long infection of its human host, and displays two types of infection,

latent and lytic. In KS, the majority of the tumour ECs are latently infected while lytic replication

is rare; in part, because these cells die as a result of viral replication (Boshoff et al. 1995; Staskus

et al. 1997; Umbach et al. 2010; Speck and Ganem 2010; Arias et al. 2014). That said, during

their short lifetime lytic cells expel progeny virus and secrete large quantities of pro-

inflammatory and angiogenic molecules, making even infrequent lytic replication an important

driver of KS. A key contributor to this secretory phenotype is the constitutively active viral G

protein-coupled receptor (vGPCR), a lytic viral protein (Montaner et al. 2006; Corcoran et al.

2012). Despite the paracrine contributors like vGPCR, the few gene products that are expressed

during the KSHV latent cycle are central for viral tumourigenesis. Many features of *in vivo* KS

are recapitulated by *in vitro* latent infection of primary ECs, or ectopic expression of individual

KSHV latent genes, including enhanced proliferation and an elongated or 'spindled' morphology

characteristic of KS. Spindling is induced by two KSHV latent genes, vFLIP (Grossmann et al.

2006) and Kaposin B (KapB; (Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015)). Spindled cells also

secrete a variety of proinflammatory cytokines and angiogenic factors, to further promote tumour

progression through inflammatory cytokine production (Ensoli 1998; Ciufo et al. 2001; Naranatt

et al. 2003; Grossmann et al. 2006; Ojala and Schulz 2014). However, no information exists to

demonstrate YAP involvement in KSHV latency, despite the fact that the vGPCR has been

shown to activate YAP during KSHV lytic infection (Liu et al. 2015).

One way that KSHV latency promotes the pro-inflammatory and pro-tumourigenic KS

microenvironment is via KapB-mediated disassembly of cytoplasmic ribonucleoprotein granules

called processing bodies (PBs) (Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015). PBs are involved in

many RNA regulatory processes such as RNA silencing, nonsense-mediated decay and mRNA

decay and translational suppression of mRNA (Eulalio, Behm-Ansmant, and Izaurralde 2007,

Horvathova et al. 2017, Tutucci et al. 2018, Wilbertz et al. 2019, Hubstenberger et al. 2017). We

and others have shown that PBs are the major site for the translational suppression or constitutive

decay of human mRNAs that code for potent regulatory molecules such as proinflammatory

cytokines (Franks and Lykke-Andersen 2007; Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015; Vindry

et al. 2017; Blanco et al. 2014). There are ~4500 of these transcripts, all of which bear

destabilizing AU-rich elements (AREs) in their 3'-untranslated regions (3'-UTRs) (Shaw and

Kamen 1986; Shyu, Greenberg, and Belasco 1989; Chen and Shyu 1995; Winzen et al. 1999;

Stoecklin, Mayo, and Anderson 2006; Franks and Lykke-Andersen 2007; Bakheet, Williams,

and Khabar 2006; Bakheet, Hitti, and Khabar 2017). PB abundance and composition is

extremely dynamic and responds to cellular stress (Sheth 2003; Kedersha and Anderson 2007;

Aizer et al. 2008; Takahashi et al. 2011). Specifically, activation of the stress-responsive

p38/MK2 MAP kinase pathway by KapB elicits PB disassembly and prevents constitutive ARE-

mRNA turnover or translation suppression (Winzen et al. 1999; Docena et al. 2010; Corcoran et

al. 2012; Corcoran and McCormick 2015; Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015). This is an

important yet underappreciated regulatory mechanism that fine tunes the production of potent

proinflammatory cytokines and angiogenic factors in KS.

Though PBs are dynamic and stress-responsive, the precise signaling events that lead to

PB assembly or disassembly are not well understood. We showed previously that KapB binds

and activates MK2, which then phosphorylates hsp27, complexes with p115RhoGEF, and

activates RhoA to elicit PB disassembly (Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015; Garcia et

al. 2009; McCormick and Ganem 2005). While it is well-established that RhoA coordinates SF

formation (Ridley and Hall 1992; Watanabe et al. 1999; Schmitz et al. 2000; Hotulainen and

Lappalainen 2006), the precise mechanism of how RhoA promotes PB disassembly is not

appreciated (Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015; Takahashi et al. 2011). In an effort to

better understand the regulation of PB disassembly by KapB and RhoA, we began by targeting

downstream RhoA effectors reported to promote SF formation to determine if the proteins

known to mediate cytoskeletal remodeling were also necessary for PB disassembly. We reasoned

that at some point we would be able to uncouple the signaling events that led to SFs from those

that led to PB disassembly. We were not. We now present data that conclusively shows KapB-

mediated PB disassembly is dependent not only on RhoA, but on cytoskeletal structures,

actomyosin contractility and the presence of the mechanoresponsive transcription transactivator,

YAP. We also present the first evidence of the involvement of YAP in the tumourigenic

phenotypes induced by a KSHV latent gene, KapB. We also extend these studies beyond their

impact on viral tumourigenesis, by determining the mechanical regulation of PB dynamics in the

absence of KapB expression, and show that induced cell contractility, cytoskeletal structures and

active YAP all precede PB disassembly. Using a viral protein from an oncogenic virus, we have

discovered a mechanoresponsive signaling pathway that transduces signals from cell shape and

cytoskeletal structures to YAP to control PBs, post-transcriptional regulators of cellular gene

expression.

Results

RhoA effectors controlling SF formation are required for PB disassembly

We previously showed that KapB-mediated PB disassembly required RhoA (Corcoran,

Johnston, and McCormick 2015). In this work, we investigated whether downstream RhoA

effectors known to control SF formation also control PB disassembly. Mammalian diaphanous

protein 1 (mDia1) and Rho-associated coiled-coil kinase (ROCK) are considered the main

coordinators of RhoA-mediated SF formation (Watanabe et al. 1999; Tojkander, Gateva, and

Lappalainen 2012). mDia1 is a formin that promotes actin filament polymerization (Watanabe et

al. 1999). To examine whether mDia1 was required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly, we

designed short hairpin RNAs (shRNAs) to silence mDia1 mRNA. KapB- and vector- expressing

human umbilical vein endothelial cells (HUVECs) were transduced with mDia1-targeting

shRNAs and selected. Silencing efficacy was confirmed with immunoblotting (Fig 1A). PB

analysis was performed using CellProfiler to quantify immunofluorescence images stained for

the hallmark PB-resident protein, Enhancer of mRNA decapping 4 (EDC4), as described in

detail in the methods (J. H. Yu et al. 2005; Kedersha et al. 2008). Knockdown of mDia1

increased PBs in KapB-expressing cells (Fig 1B, D). mDia1-sh1 showed a greater increase in

PBs in comparison to mDia1-sh2 (Fig 1B), and also increased PBs in vector control cells, likely

because mDia1-sh1 reduced protein expression by 90% whereas mDia1-sh2 reduced it by 40-

50% (Fig 1A). To separate how silencing of mDia impacted baseline turnover of PBs from how

silencing impacts KapB-mediated PB disassembly, we calculated the ratio of PBs per cell in

KapB-expressing cells and normalized to PBs per cell in the control. This is important because

this calculation shows whether KapB is still able to disassemble PBs, relative to vector, in the

context of mDia silencing. If the ratio is ≥1 after sh-mDia treatment, it indicates that KapB is no

longer able to disassemble PBs in comparison to the vector control, and that mDia contributes

directly to KapB-mediated PB disassembly. Conversely, if the ratio is ~ 0.4 to 0.6, it indicates

that KapB can still disassemble PBs even in the context of sh-mDia treatment. In this case, we

determined that silencing using both mDia1-sh1 and mDia1-sh2 restored the PB ratio in

KapB:Vector cells to ~1, indicating that the ability of KapB to disassemble PBs is lost after

mDia silencing and that this is a specific effect (Fig 1C). We note that this ratio will be reported

in subsequent figures for every RNA silencing or drug treatment applied to test KapB-mediated

PB disassembly. We also observed that mDia1 silencing did not eliminate SF formation (Fig 1D)

but, instead, increased elongated cells with visible actin SFs across the cell in both vector and

KapB conditions. The visible actin structures may represent different SF subtypes or actin

bundles that compensate for the loss of mDia1 (Hotulainen and Lappalainen 2006).

ROCK promotes SF formation by increasing actin contractility and inhibiting actin severing

activity (Julian and Olson 2014). Chemical inhibition of both isoforms of ROCK, ROCK1 and

ROCK2, with Y-27632 (Ishizaki et al. 2000) restored PBs in KapB-expressing cells and

increased the ratio of KapB:Vector PBs (Fig 2A-C). HUVECs treated with Y-27632 had

scalloped cell edges with minimal actin structure (Fig 2A). Y-27632 did not visibly alter cell

viability during the indicated treatment. To determine whether PB disassembly is dependent on a

single ROCK isoform, both ROCK1 and ROCK2 were knocked down with isoform-specific

shRNAs. Knockdown efficacy was confirmed with immunoblotting (Fig S1). Independent

knockdown of ROCK1 and 2 increased PBs counts in KapB-expressing cells (Fig 2D, F) and

restored the ratio of KapB:Vector PBs counts (Fig 2E). This indicated that both ROCK1 and

ROCK2 can contribute to KapB-mediated PB disassembly. ROCK2 knockdown showed more

robust PB restoration, both in terms of PB counts and PB size, than that seen with ROCK1

knockdown (Fig 2D, F). Quantification of PB counts in control cells for both pan-ROCK

inhibition and ROCK knockdown experiments is reported in Figure S1. While pan-ROCK

inhibition and ROCK1 knockdown treatments both eliminate SFs, ROCK2 knockdown retains

pronounced actin fibres in the cells (Fig 2F). Similar to mDia1 knockdown, this may indicate a

compensatory mechanism to retain cell shape and suggests that only a subset of SFs may be

required for PB disassembly. Taken together, these data show that inhibition of RhoA effectors

that mediate SF formation can reverse KapB-mediated PB disassembly. Put another way, we

have been unable to uncouple KapB-mediated SF formation from KapB-mediated PB

disassembly.

ROCK phosphorylates and activates LimK, which then phosphorylates and inactivates

cofilin, an actin-severing protein (Ohashi et al. 2000). In this way, ROCK promotes SF formation

by inactivating cofilin. To investigate the role of cofilin in KapB-mediated PB disassembly,

shRNAs to knockdown cofilin expression were used (Fig S2). Since ROCK activation results in

less cofilin activity and reduced actin severing, we hypothesized that knockdown of cofilin in

KapB-expressing cells would augment KapB-mediated PB disassembly. Knockdown of cofilin

resulted in elongated cells with more SFs in both control and KapB-expressing cells (Fig S2).

Cofilin knockdown also induced PB disassembly in control cells and aided PBs disassembly in

KapB-expressing cells (Fig S2 B, C). This indicates that inhibition of cofilin elicits PB

disassembly and supports the hypothesis that reducing cofilin activity is one of the reasons that

KapB promotes SF formation and PB disassembly.

G-actin concentration does not influence PB disassembly

Since we could not uncouple the signalling controlling SF formation from PB

disassembly, we investigated whether changes in the concentration of monomeric G-actin,

known to control cellular stress and SRF transcriptional responses (Sotiropoulos et al. 1999;

Chambers et al. 2015), could be controlling PBs. Several studies have shown that increasing the

proportion of filamentous actin decreases the cytoplasmic concentration of monomeric G-actin

(Rasmussen et al. 2010; Bunnell et al. 2011; Chambers et al. 2015). We investigated if our

phenotype, PB disassembly, was controlled by changes in the proportion of monomeric G-actin.

To determine this, cells were treated with drugs known to either decrease or increase the

proportion of monomeric G-actin. Jasplakinolide (Jasp) treatment decreases the G-actin fraction

by facilitating actin nucleation and aberrant polymerization of actin (Bubb et al. 1999).

Conversely, the actin polymerization inhibitor Cytochalasin D (CytD) caps the barbed end of

actin filaments, preventing further elongation of the actin filament and increasing the free G-

actin concentration (Wakatsuki et al. 2001). Jasp treatment, which prevents imaging of actin

structure due to interference with phalloidin (Fig S3C) (Bubb et al. 1999), resulted in an

increased F-actin fraction in HUVECs (Fig S3D). CytD treatment resulted in HUVECs with little

to no filamentous actin structure (Fig S3C). If the level of G-actin is the signal that regulates PB

dynamics, we hypothesized that Jasp, which decreases G-actin levels, would mediate PB

disassembly, while CytD would do the opposite, and promote PB assembly. However, both

treatments increased the PB count per cell (Fig S3A-C); these data indicate that the concentration

of G-actin does not influence PB disassembly, and this is not the mechanism by which actin SF

formation or enhanced activity of RhoA alters PB dynamics. These data are congruent with our

mDia1 and ROCK knockdown experiments that show retention of visible F-actin bundles despite

PB restoration.

$\alpha-$actinin-1 activity promotes PB disassembly

The actinins are primarily known for their role in bundling actin fibres, though in non-

muscle cells, α-actinin-1 and 4 do not mediate actin bundling to the same extent (Pellegrin and

Mellor 2007). α-actinin-4 can, at times, localize to dorsal SFs, but it primarily mediates focal

adhesion turnover and can act as a transcriptional regulator of genes associated with cell

proliferation and differentiation (Honda et al. 1998; Kovac 2010; Honda 2015). α-actinin-1

primarily mediates SF bundling and formation, as well as focal adhesion maturation (Honda et

al. 1998; Kovac 2010). Using immunofluorescence, we observed that the localization of the two

isoforms seen in HUVECs (Fig S4A, B) was consistent with the reported localization and

function, as α-actinin-1 was localized to actin fibres and α-actinin-4 was more diffusely

cytoplasmic and nuclear, with some actin fibre localization (Honda et al. 1998; Kovac 2010).

Since α-actinin-1 associated with SFs in HUVECs and overexpression of α-actinin-GFP has

been shown to localize and reinforce SFs (Edlund, Lotano, and Otey 2001; Jackson et al. 2008),

we asked whether its overexpression would promote PB disassembly. Overexpression of

ACTN1-GFP resulted in elongated ECs with large SFs (Fig S4C). ACTN1-GFP decreased EDC4

puncta per cell, suggesting that enhancing SF bundling and focal adhesion maturation positively

regulates PB disassembly (Fig S4C, D).

Changes in cytoskeletal contractility control PB disassembly

One of the downstream activities of the kinase, ROCK, is to phosphorylate myosin light

chain to induce non-muscle myosin II (NMII)-mediated actomyosin contraction (Mutsuki

Amano et al. 1996). Since ROCK is required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly, we

determined whether functional actomyosin contractility is also required. KapB-expressing cells

were treated with blebbistatin, which inhibits NMII-mediated actomyosin contractility by

maintaining NMII in a conformation that is unable to bind actin filaments (Kovacs et al. 2004).

Treatment of KapB-expressing cells with blebbistatin restored both PBs levels in KapB-

expressing cells, as well as the KapB:Vector ratio of PBs (Fig 3A-C), indicating that

contractility is required for KapB-induced PB disassembly. ECs treated with blebbistatin had

normal actin structure (Fig 3C). Blebbistatin treatment for the indicated time did not visibly

alter cell viability. To determine if contraction would elicit the same phenotype in the absence

of KapB, cells were treated with Calyculin A (CalA), an inhibitor of myosin light chain

phosphatase that promotes NMII phosphorylation and actomyosin contraction (Asano and

Mabuchi 2001). CalA treatment did not visibly alter actin cytoskeletal structure or cell viability.

Inducing contraction with CalA decreased counts of PBs (Fig 3D, E), again consistent with the

hypothesis that actomyosin contractility controls PB disassembly.

Actomyosin contractility impacts cytoskeletal tension in adherent cells with SFs (Katoh

et al. 1998; Tan et al. 2003). Additionally, both Jasp and CytD interfere with cytoskeletal

tension (Rotsch and Radmacher 2000), and both increased PB counts (Fig S3). Since the

mechanoresponsive transcription activator, YAP, is activated by increases to cytoskeletal

tension via actomyosin contractility (Dupont et al. 2011), we explored the role of YAP in KapB-

mediated PB disassembly.

YAP is required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly

To determine if YAP was involved in KapB-mediated PB disassembly, we expressed

shRNAs targeting YAP in KapB-expressing HUVECs to assess whether the altered levels of

YAP impacted PB disassembly. Immunoblotting confirmed knockdown efficiency of YAP (Fig

4A). Knockdown of YAP resulted in elongated HUVECs with mostly cortical actin fibres (Fig

4D). These cells displayed increased PBs in KapB-expressing cells (Fig 4B-D). In the context of

YAP knockdown, the KapB:Vector ratio of PBs counts was restored, indicating that YAP is

required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly (Fig 4C) and suggesting that KapB is activating a

mechanoresponsive signalling axis to elicit PB disassembly via YAP.

We next investigated the steady-state protein level and localization of YAP in KapB-

expressing cells. KapB-transduced HUVECs showed increased levels of nuclear YAP and total

YAP in some experiments, though the ratio of nuclear:cytoplasmic YAP was not markedly

increased (Fig S5A-B). When YAP is phosphorylated by LATS, it is sequestered in the

cytoplasm and transcriptionally inactive (Zhao et al. 2007). While YAP has multiple

phosphorylation sites, phosphorylation at serine 127 is the most potent LATS-mediated

phosphorylation site that promotes cytoplasmic distribution of YAP (Zhao et al. 2007). To

investigate the phosphorylation status of YAP in KapB-expressing cells, levels of P(S127)-YAP

and total YAP were measured by immunoblot. In KapB-expressing cells, there was a decrease in

the ratio of P(S127)-YAP to total YAP that may suggest YAP is more active when KapB is

expressed (Fig S5B). In some experiments, we observed an increase in total steady-state levels of

YAP by immunoblotting, corroborating the small increase in total YAP intensity seen by

microscopy (Fig S5A-B). Although increases in total YAP may suggest that YAP turnover is

blocked or decreased by KapB, these increases are not accompanied with the expected strong

decrease in phosphorylated YAP or an increase in percent of total YAP found in the nucleus, as

in (Pavel et al. 2018).

We next asked if active YAP can interact with TEAD and other transcription factors to

elicit changes in gene expression in KapB-expressing cells (Vassilev et al. 2001). We used a

TEAD-element luciferase assay to assess if canonical YAP transcription was activated. As a

positive control, we used YAP 5SA, a version of YAP that is unable to be phosphorylated and

inactivated by the inhibitory kinase LATS (Zhao et al. 2007) and is thus considered

constitutively active. YAP 5SA robustly activated the TEAD element-containing firefly

luciferase reporter (Fig S5C). KapB did not induce the transcription of the TEAD element-

containing firefly luciferase reporter (TEAD-Fluc; Fig S5C). Further, KapB did not increase

steady-state mRNA levels of common YAP target genes CTGF, CYR61 and ANKRD1 by RT-

qPCR, although these genes were elevated by YAP 5SA (Fig S5D). These data indicate despite

the observation that YAP may be more abundant in KapB-expressing cells, canonical YAP

targets are not upregulated.

We wondered if YAP activation could elicit PB disassembly in the absence of KapB

expression. To this end, we transduced HUVECs with YAP 5SA. YAP 5SA-expressing cells

contained few, thick actin fibres (Fig 5A) and displayed decreased number of PBs per cell,

indicating that YAP 5SA elicited disassembly of PBs (Fig 5A, B). We also confirmed that we

could stain PBs in control cells with antibodies for more than one PB resident protein (EDC4,

Dcp1a and DDX6) and that when YAP 5SA was expressed, loss of PB puncta was observed for

each of these staining conditions (Fig 5 A-F). KapB-mediated PB disassembly correlates with

increases in stability and levels of ARE-mRNA (Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015;

McCormick and Ganem 2005). To examine whether YAP 5SA-mediated PB disassembly elicits

the same changes in ARE-mRNAs, we used a luciferase assay we previously established to

measure the luminescence of an ARE-containing firefly luciferase reporter (Corcoran,

Khaperskyy, and McCormick 2011). In this assay, as previously shown in Corcoran, Johnston,

and McCormick (2015), KapB increased level of firefly luminescence indicating enhanced

stability or translation of its RNA transcript (Fig 5C). However, despite also inducing

pronounced PB disassembly, YAP 5SA did not increase Fluc luminescence significantly more

than the control construct (Fig 5C). This points to a divergence of KapB and active YAP

outcome. Although PB disassembly is induced by the expression of both YAP 5SA and KapB,

active YAP increases the transcriptional activation of genes CTGF, CYR61 and ANKRD1 while

KapB does not; conversely, KapB enhances the stability of ARE-mRNAs while active YAP does

not.

We wondered if PB disassembly did not require YAP to transactivate transcription of its

canonical genes. To better understand this mechanism, we transduced HUVECs with another

YAP construct called YAP 6SA (Fig 6). YAP 6SA contains the same mutations as 5SA; in

addition, it cannot be phosphorylated by AMPK at serine 94 (Mo et al. 2015). This

phosphorylation event is essential for its interaction with TEAD; therefore, the S94A mutation

renders YAP 6SA transcriptionally inactive (Mo et al. 2015, Zhang et al. 2017). We observed

that unlike YAP 5SA or KapB, YAP 6SA did not appear to elongate cells, suggesting that actin

dynamics were unaffected, as in Pavel et al. (2018). Compared to YAP 5SA which caused

pronounced PB disassembly, YAP 6SA failed to alter PB levels compared to vector controls (Fig

6B). This was confirmed by staining PBs with antibodies for two different resident proteins,

DDX6 and EDC4 (Fig 6A).

YAP activators disassemble PBs

Since overexpression of constitutively active YAP 5SA leads to disassembly of PBs, we

wanted to determine whether other stimuli that activated endogenous YAP could do the same.

We tested various upstream mechanical signals described to activate YAP for their ability to

elicit PB disassembly: shear stress, low cell confluence and high ECM stiffness (Nakajima et al.

2017; Lee et al. 2017; Noria et al. 2004; Zhao et al. 2007; Dupont et al. 2011). For the first, we

subjected HUVECs to shear stress by fluid flow (shear forces of 2 and 10 dyn/cm^2) and PBs were

examined via immunofluorescence using antibodies to both EDC4 and DDX6. Both treatments

showed prominent cell elongation, stress fibre formation, and resulted in robust PB disassembly

of both EDC4-positive and DDX6-positive puncta (Fig 7A, B). To test if cell confluence

regulates PB levels, HUVECs were seeded at low, medium and high densities. Cells at low

confluence are reported to have active YAP and we predicted PBs would disassemble; however,

the low-density monolayer displayed more PBs per cell then those at medium and high densities

(Fig 7C, D). To test the impact of collagen stiffness on PB disassembly, HUVECs were plated on

coverslips coated with increasing densities of collagen (0 to 64 μg/ cm^2). While collagen density

does not perfectly reproduce matrix stiffness as it does not differentiate the effect of matrix

stiffness from increasing collagen-binding sites, increasing collagen densities do correlate with

increased matrix stiffness (Yang, Leone, and Kaufman 2009; Lee et al. 2014; Joshi, Mahajan,

and Kothapalli 2018). As collagen density increased, PBs decreased (Fig 7E, F). Notably, as

collagen density increased, only slight increases in visible actin fibres were noted (Fig 7E),

suggesting the tested range of stiffness was small and should be expanded in future studies.

Taken together, these data indicate that PB disassembly occurred in response to mechanical

stimuli known to require RhoA and altered cytoskeletal structures to activate YAP (shear stress

and increased ECM concentration) (Zhao et al. 2012; Huang et al. 2016; Lee and Kumar 2016;

Moreno-Vicente et al. 2018). Again, our model points to the importance of actin SF formation as

a requisite precursor to PB disassembly irrespective of YAP activation status.

358   Shear stress mediated PB disassembly requires YAP

YAP responds to external forces that induce active RhoA, actin SFs, and pronounced cell

elongation; in short, the typical behaviour of ECs in response to the mechanical shear stress that

is produced by fluid flow. However, how YAP responds to shear stress is controversial (Wang et

al. 2016; Huang et al. 2016; Lee et al. 2017; Nakajima and Mochizuki 2017). To verify YAP

activation by continuous, unidirectional fluid flow in our system, HUVECs subjected to 2 and 10

dyn/cm^2 of shear stress were lysed and used for immunoblotting for P(S127)-YAP and total

YAP. Shear stress decreased the ratio of phospho-YAP/YAP in both conditions, suggesting a

higher proportion of active YAP (Fig 8A). To assess if YAP was required for PB disassembly in

response to shear stress, HUVECs transduced with YAP-targeting shRNA were subjected to 10

dyn/cm² shear stress. PBs disassembled in cells treated with a non-targeting shRNA when

subjected to shear stress (Fig 8B, C), consistent with earlier experiments (Fig 7A, B). When YAP

was reduced by shRNA expression, ECs exposed to shear stress had more PBs than static growth

control cells (Fig 8B, C). YAP knockdown also reduced the cells ability to form SFs, with many

cells displaying highly cortical phalloidin staining and fewer actin fibres across the cell (Fig 8C).

Therefore, YAP is required to disassemble PBs after KapB is expressed and also in response to

shear stress.

Recently, an important connection has emerged between YAP and autophagy. Active

YAP was previously shown to upregulate the transcription of Armus, a Rab7-GTPase activating

protein required for autophagosome fusion with the lysosome, the final step in the autophagic

pathway (Totaro et al. 2019, Carroll et al. 2013). Moreover, stimuli that promote active YAP

activate autophagic flux by inducing the transcription of TEAD-responsive genes that regulate

actomyosin, including ACTNB and MYOII (Pavel et al. 2018). These data showed that actin and

myosin modulate the trafficking of key autophagy proteins (such as Atg16L1 and Atg9A) that

are required for autophagosome formation and that this process is a downstream effect of YAP

activation and YAP 5SA (Pavel et al. 2018).

To examine the connection between YAP and autophagic flux as it pertains to PB

disassembly, we used immunofluorescence to stain for the autophagy marker, LC3, which forms

puncta that represent autophagosomes (Fig S6). YAP5SA-expressing cells did not have more

LC3 puncta than vector controls, and LC3 puncta did not increase after treatment with

Bafilomycin A1 (an inhibitor of lysosomal acidification and autophagosome-lysosome fusion,

Mauvezin and Neufeld, 2015) (Fig S6C). The lack of LC3 puncta increase in YAP 5SA-

expressing cells after Bafilomycin A1 treatment could mean that autophagy is not increased. It

could also mean that autophagic flux and degradation are both increased, LC3 is degraded

rapidly and LC3 puncta fail to accumulate. The latter interpretation is most consistent with

previous reports which showed that YAP 5SA enhances autophagic flux (Pavel et al. 2018) and

promotes autophagosome-lysosome fusion (Totaro et al 2019). We also observed that YAP 5SA

increased the transcription of Armus, involved in activation of Rab7 for autophagosome-

lysosome fusion, while KapB did not (Fig S6E). To determine if enhanced autophagic flux and

accelerated autophagosome turnover caused by YAP 5SA contributes to PB disassembly, we

treated YAP 5SA-expressing cells with Bafilomycin A1 to block the final autophagy step, and

stained for PBs (Fig S6C, D). We observed that Bafilomycin A1 did not restore PBs in YAP

5SA-expressing cells (Fig S6C, D). This suggests the possibility that autophagy is not the

primary mechanism required for PB disassembly induced by YAP 5SA, and that other inputs or

factors are also involved.

Taken together with our analysis of KapB-mediated PB disassembly, these data suggest

that when KapB is expressed, it turns on mechanoresponsive signals that endothelial cells use to

withstand mechanical forces like shear, in the absence of an external stimulus. The outcome of

both scenarios is YAP-dependent disassembly of cytoplasmic PBs.

Discussion

In this manuscript, we have used a viral protein from an oncogenic virus to uncover the

relationship between cytoplasmic PBs and the mechanical regulation of actin SF formation. We

present data to support the existence of a mechanoresponsive pathway that links actin SFs,

actomyosin contractility, and the transcription transactivator YAP to the disassembly of PBs and

show that this pathway is hijacked by KapB during KSHV latency. Our major findings are as

follows. i) KapB-mediated PB disassembly requires actin SF effectors ROCK1/2 /mDia1 and is

enhanced by loss of the actin-severing protein, cofilin. ii) KapB-mediated PB disassembly is

reversed when blebbistatin is used to inhibit actomyosin contractility or after knockdown of the

mechanoresponsive transcription transactivator, YAP. iii) In the absence of KapB, we can induce

PB disassembly when we promote the formation of actin SFs, actomyosin contractility, and YAP

activity using overexpression of α−actinin-1 (promotes actin bundling into SFs and increases

cytoskeletal tension (Jackson et al. 2008)), Calyculin A (inhibits myosin light chain phosphatase

to promote actomyosin contraction (Asano and Mabuchi 2001)), or overexpression of active

YAP (YAP 5SA). Exposure of endothelial cells to the external forces created by shear stress or a

stiff extracellular matrix also induces PB disassembly in the absence of KapB. iv)

Overexpression of transcriptionally inactive YAP (YAP 6SA) fails to disassemble PBs,

indicating that YAP's role as a transcription transactivator is important for its ability to promote

PB disassembly. Together, these data show for the first time, that PBs disassemble in response to

mechanical signals that transduce external forces from outside the cell to the actin cytoskeleton

and that this is a pathway used by endothelial cells to regulate gene expression in response to

diverse stimuli. Moreover, this work also highlights the remarkable pizzazz used by viruses to

hijack cellular pathways. In this case, we reveal that the viral protein KapB taps into this

mechanoresponsive pathway to trigger mechanical changes to cytoskeletal structures and

downstream effectors that would normally respond to force, thereby inducing PB disassembly

from within the cell, rather than from without.

During the process of actin polymerization, the monomeric form of actin, globular actin

(G-actin), aggregates in groups of three subunits or more to nucleate an actin filament, which

extends into filaments via addition of further G-actin monomers through ATP-dependent

polymerization (reviewed in Pollard 2016). 10 to 30 actin filaments (F-actin) bundle together

into SFs, primarily using the α-actinin family for crosslinking (Small et al. 1998; Cramer,

Siebert, and Mitchison 1997; Lazarides and Burridge 1975; Pellegrin and Mellor 2007). SFs with

periodic distribution of actin-crosslinking proteins and non-muscle myosin II (NMII) are

contractile structures (Katoh et al. 1998; Tan et al. 2003), but not all actin SFs function equally in

this regard. For any structure to be able to generate tension, it must be tethered at the ends. Of the

types of SFs (ventral SFs, dorsal SFs and transverse arcs; (Small et al. 1998)), ventral SFs are

attached at both termini to the extracellular matrix (ECM) through focal adhesions and contain

NMII, which imparts a contractile phenotype (Hotulainen and Lappalainen 2006; Small et al.

1998; Vallenius 2013). Dorsal SFs are attached through focal adhesions but do not contain NMII,

and thus are not contractile (Small et al. 1998; Vallenius 2013). However, dorsal SFs are thought

to work in concert with transverse arcs, which contain NMII but are not attached to focal

adhesions, to mediate cellular contractility.

Several features of our data suggest that the structures that are important for KapB-

mediated PB disassembly must be contractile and cause cytoskeletal tension. When both mDia1

and ROCK2 were silenced in KapB-expressing cells (Fig 1, 2), visible actin bundles are still

apparent despite PB restoration in both contexts. This suggests that not all SF subtypes are

required for our phenotype. In addition, blebbistatin treatment of KapB-expressing cells

dramatically restored PBs; these data suggest that PB disassembly requires actin-mediated

contractility rather than merely structural support (Fig 3). Furthermore, overexpression of α-

actinin and shear stress increase cell stiffness (Lee et al. 2006; Jackson et al. 2008) and both

treatments induced PB disassembly (Fig S4, Fig 7), reinforcing the correlation between

increasing cell tension and PB disassembly. Finally, our data show that YAP is required for PB

disassembly (Figs 4, 5, 8). YAP is mechanoresponsive; it becomes active when tension-forming

actin structures are induced by external forces e.g. focal adhesion engagement by stiff ECM

(Dupont et al. 2011; Sugimoto et al. 2018). As YAP activation and PB disassembly both rely on

RhoA-induced cytoskeletal contractility, any activator of YAP that induces cytoskeletal tension

through RhoA should mediate PB disassembly. Our data supports this notion, as shear stress

forces and increasing collagen density both cause PB disassembly in the absence of KapB, while

low confluence does not (Fig 7). We also know that GPCRs ($G_{11/12}$ and $G_{q/}11$) activate YAP in a

RhoA-dependent manner (Yu et al. 2012) and LPA treatment or overexpression of KSHV-

derived constitutively active vGPCR (both activate $G_{11/12}$) both induce PB disassembly (Corcoran

et al. 2012; Corcoran and McCormick 2015). These findings support the conclusion that PB

disassembly requires the formation of contractile actin structures like those associated with YAP

transactivation responses.

KSHV is an oncogenic virus associated with the endothelial neoplasm, Kaposi's sarcoma

(KS). Cells within the KS lesion display latent KSHV infection, proliferate abnormally, spindle,

and release many pro-inflammatory and pro-tumourigenic mediators into the microenvironment.

KapB expression alone recapitulates two of these key features, cell spindling and pro-

inflammatory mediator production that results from enhanced stability of ARE-containing

cytokine mRNAs that would normally shuttle to PBs for constitutive turnover (Corcoran,

Johnston, and McCormick 2015). Our previous work showed that both phenotypes utilize KapB

activation of the stress-responsive kinase, MK2, and the downstream activation of the GTPase

RhoA (Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015; Corcoran and McCormick 2015). We also

showed that the lytic vGPCR protein mediates PB disassembly and the concomitant stabilization

of ARE-mRNAs, while more recently ORF57 has been also reported to disrupt PBs (Corcoran et

al. 2012; Sharma et al. 2019). The observation that KSHV encodes at least three separate gene

products sufficient to drive PB disassembly suggests that PB disassembly is beneficial for some

aspect of the infectious cycle. Further research is required to definitively address how PBs

influence the KSHV infectious cycle and the fate of infected cells.

We and others observed that the presence or absence of PB punctae visible by

microscopy directly correlates with the stability of ARE-mRNAs (Corcoran, Johnston, and

McCormick 2015; Vindry et al. 2017; Blanco et al. 2014). We predicted that YAP- mediated PB

disassembly would also promote ARE-mRNA stability. Indeed, several YAP-target genes

contain ARE elements in their 3'UTR, including CTGF and ANKRD1 (Shen and Stanger 2015;

Bakheet, Hitti, and Khabar 2017). Shear forces also cause YAP-dependent PB disassembly and

have previously been shown to upregulate many genes containing ARE-mRNAs (Vozzi et al.

2018; Bakheet, Hitti, and Khabar 2017). However, in our studies overexpression of constitutively

active YAP (YAP 5SA) disassembled PBs but did not increase stability of an ARE-containing

firefly luciferase reporter (Fig 5) (Corcoran, Khaperskyy, and McCormick 2011)). This may be

due to different functional responses for different classes of AU-rich elements. Our ARE-

containing luciferase reporter contains the AU-rich sequence derived from the 3'-UTR of GM-

CSF, categorized in Cluster 5, whereas canonical YAP genes CTGF and ANKDR1 are in

Clusters 1 and 2, respectively (Bakheet, Hitti, and Khabar 2017). This discrepancy may also

result from the dual function of PBs as sites of translational suppression as well as RNA decay,

supported by observations that PBs decreases do not always correlate with decreased mRNA

turnover (Eulalio, Behm-Ansmant, and Izaurralde 2007, Horvathova et al. 2017, Tutucci et al.

2018, Wilbertz et al. 2019, Hubstenberger et al. 2017).

Data presented herein clearly implicate a requirement for YAP in the PB disassembly

phenotype that is induced by KapB and by the external force, shear stress (Fig 4, 8). However,

the precise connection between YAP and PB disassembly is unclear. What we do know is that

despite the clear reliance on YAP for PB disassembly, KapB does not increase expression of

canonical YAP-regulated transcripts (Fig S5). Our data also show small increases in total YAP

and small decreases in the ratio of phosphorylated/total YAP; however, the ratio of

nuclear:cytoplasmic YAP is not markedly altered (FigS5). Taken together, these data suggested a

model whereby PB disassembly was independent of YAP's role as a gene transactivator and

YAP nuclear translocation. However, we found that overexpression of YAP 6SA, which is

unable to act as a transcription transactivator, fails to cause PB disassembly (Fig 6), indicating

that this transcription induction function of YAP is required for its role in regulating PB

dynamics. In the discussion that follows, we describe our working model (Fig 9) for how YAP

may promote PB disassembly.

MODEL: YAP promotes autophagy to cause PB disassembly (Fig 9). Several studies link

YAP with the regulation of the catabolic process of autophagy, though many of these are

contradictory and suggest YAP-mediated autophagy control is cell type and context-dependent

(Song et al. 2015; Liu et al. 2017; Pei et al. 2019; Totaro et al. 2019, Pavel et al 2018). Totaro et

al. provided evidence that YAP promotes autophagic catabolism by promoting the expression of

Armus, a Rab7-GTPase activating protein that is required to mediate the fusion of

autophagosomes with lysosomes in the final degradative step of autophagy (Totaro et al. 2019).

In addition, stimuli that activate YAP promote autophagic flux by inducing the transcription of

TEAD-responsive genes that regulate actomyosin, including ACTNB and MYOII (Pavel et al.

2018). These data showed that actin and myosin modulate the trafficking of key autophagy

proteins (such as Atg16L1 and Atg9A) that are required for autophagosome formation and that

this process is a downstream effect of YAP activation (Pavel et al. 2018). These data also show

that YAP 5SA promotes autophagic flux while YAP 6SA does not, consistent with YAP-

dependent autophagy upregulation requiring YAP transcriptional responses. This emerging

connection between YAP and autophagy suggests that the latter is a mechanoresponsive process;

this is also supported by other studies wherein endothelium exposed to unidirectional shear stress

upregulates autophagy (Liu et al. 2015; Yao et al. 2015; Wang et al. 2018; Das et al. 2018, Hardy

et al. 2017). These data are also consistent with new data from our group showing that PB

disassembly mediated by KapB requires autophagy, as knockdown of a canonical autophagy

gene (Atg5) or treatment with Bafilomycin A1 restored PBs (Robinson et al. 2021). However,

YAP 5SA-mediated PB disassembly was not restored by Bafilomycin A1 treatment (Fig 5 -

Figure Supplement 1). This difference may be due, in part, to the higher levels of Armus

expression in YAP 5SA-expressing cells compared to KapB-expressing cells (Fig S6). This

would imply that although both YAP 5SA and KapB enhance autophagic flux, only YAP 5SA

also accelerates the final degradative step of autophagy (Fig 9).

PBs are sites where innate immune factors congregate that are disrupted by most viruses

during infection (Burdick et al. 2010; Li et al. 2012; Ostareck, Naarmann-de Vries, and

Ostareck-Lederer 2014; Burgess and Mohr 2015; Cuevas et al. 2016; H. Wang et al. 2016; Lumb

et al. 2017; Balinsky et al. 2017; Núñez et al. 2018; Ng et al. 2020). Indeed, KSHV encodes three

separate proteins that all induce PB disassembly, suggesting this event is central to viral

persistence (Corcoran et al. 2012; Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015; Sharma et al.

2019). PBs are likely playing an as yet undefined and underappreciated role in regulating innate

antiviral responses. YAP is also an unappreciated negative regulator of innate immune signaling

pathways. YAP blocks the ability of the innate immune kinase, TBK1, a downstream effector for

several innate signaling pathways, to associate and activate its substrates (Zhang et al 2017). In

so doing, YAP blocks downstream induction of interferons and increases viral replication (Zhang

et al. 2017). However, this feature of YAP is independent of its ability to act as a transcriptional

transactivator (Zhang et al. 2017). Based on our data that show YAP 5SA causes PB disassembly

while YAP 6SA does not, we think it most likely that KapB-induced PB disassembly requires the

transcription transactivation function of YAP. We also speculate that KapB-induced PB

disassembly, like active YAP, favours viral replication and survival and is promoted by KSHV in

order to reshape subsequent antiviral innate immune responses.

In this manuscript, we describe the surprising convergence of two previously unrelated

yet essential regulators of cellular gene expression – the mechanoresponsive transactivator YAP

and cytoplasmic PBs, known sites of AU-rich cytokine mRNA decay. We show that PB

disassembly is mechanoresponsive; external forces that change cell shape and tension-forming

cytoskeletal structures cause PB disassembly in a YAP-dependent manner. This discovery was

made courtesy of the unique KSHV protein, KapB, and provides yet another example of how

viruses have evolved surprising ways to manipulate their host and ensure their survival. In this

case, KapB induces, from the inside out, a mechanoresponsive pathway to cause PB

disassembly. Future study will untangle how these related mechanoresponsive events are induced

by KSHV to better promote viral replication.

Materials and Methods

Antibodies, Plasmids and Reagents

The antibodies used in this study can be found in Table S1. The plasmids used in this study can be found in Table S2. Forward and reverse shRNA sequences were selected from the TRC Library Database in the Broad Institute RNAi consortium. YAP target shRNAs in pLKO.1 were obtained from Dr. C. McCormick (Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada). Sequences for all shRNA oligonucleotides used for cloning are listed in Table S3. Cloning of shRNAs was conducted according to the pLKO.1 protocol (Addgene 2006). YAP 6SA was subcloned into pLJM1 by PCR amplification using primers (For: 5'-CGTAACCGGTATGGATCCCGGGCA-3', Rev: 5'-CTGATAAGTCGACAACCACTTTGTACAAGAAAGTTG-3') designed to remove the V5 tag and insert a stop codon as well as 5' AgeI and 3' SalI restriction enzyme sites. The chemical inhibitors used in this study can be found in Table S4.

Cell Culture

Human embryonic kidney 293T and 293A cells (HEK-293T/A, ATCC, Manassas, Virginia, US) and human cervical adenocarcinoma cells expressing a tetracycline-inducible repressor (HeLa Tet-Off, Clontech, Mountain View, California, US) were cultured in Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium (DMEM, Gibco, Carlsbad, California, US) supplemented with 10% heat-inactivated fetal bovine serum (Gibco), 100 U/mL penicillin, 100 μg/mL streptomycin, and 2 mM L-glutamine (Gibco). Pooled human umbilical vein endothelial cells (HUVECs, Lonza, Basel, Switzerland) were cultured in endothelial cell growth medium 2 (EGM-2, Lonza)). For HUVEC passaging, tissue culture plates were precoated for 30 min at 37°C with 0.1% (w/v) porcine gelatin (Sigma, St. Louis, Missouri, US) in 1X PBS (Gibco). All cells were routinely tested for mycoplasma by PCR method.

Transfection for Lentivirus Production

HEK-293T cells at 70-80% confluence were transfected using 3.3 μg of the target lentiviral construct, 2 μg pSPAX2 and 1 μg pMD2.G with 1 mg/mL polyethyenimine (PEI, Sigma) in serum-free DMEM. After 5 to 6 h, media was replaced with antibiotic-free DMEM containing 10% FBS and 2 mM L-glutamine (Gibco). Transfected cells were incubated for 48 h at 37°C to allow lentivirus production. The supernatant media containing viral particles was harvested and filtered through a 0.45 μm polyethersulfone (PES) filter (VWR, Randor, Pennsylvania, US) and aliquoted. Virus was stored at -80°C until use.

Lentiviral Transduction

Lentivirus was supplied into wells of plated HUVECs in EGM-2 supplemented with 5 μg/mL hexadimethrine bromide (polybrene). After 24 h incubation, cells were selected with either 5 μg/mL blasticidin (Sigma) for 96 h, replacing the media and antibiotic at 48 h, or 1 μg/mL puromycin (Sigma) for 48 h. Following selection, HUVEC medium was replaced with EGM-2 without selection for at least 24 h recovery before further use. Lentivirus was titrated to ensure no significant changes in cell viability from non-targeting control.

Immunofluorescence

Immunofluorescence was performed as described previously (Corcoran, Johnston, and McCormick 2015). Briefly, cells were grown on coverslips (no. 1.5, Electron Microscopy Sciences, Hatfield, Pennsylvania, US). Following treatment, coverslips were fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde (PFA, Electron Microscopy Sciences) in PBS at 37°C for 10 min, permeabilized with 0.1% Triton-X100 (Sigma) in 1X PBS for 10 min at RT, and blocked in 1% Human AB serum (blocking buffer, Sigma) in 1X PBS for 1 h at RT. An exception to this is samples being prepared for staining endogenous LC3, which were fixed and permeabilized in ice-cold methanol prior to blocking. Coverslips were then incubated with diluted primary antibody in blocking buffer overnight at 4°C in a humidified chamber. After primary antibody incubation, coverslips were washed with 1X PBS and then incubated in fluorescently-tagged secondary antibody diluted in blocking buffer for 1 h at RT. If applicable, coverslips were stained with Phalloidin-conjugated Alexa-Fluor 647 (Invitrogen, 1:100) in 1X PBS for 1.5 h. Coverslips were mounted onto microscope slides (FisherBrand, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, US) using Prolong Gold Antifade Mounting Media (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, California, US). For coverslips that were used for EDC4 puncta quantification, the following modifications to immunofluorescence were made: (1) Prior to permeabilization, coverslips were stained with wheat germ agglutinin (WGA) Alexa-647 conjugate (Invitrogen, 1:400) in 1X PBS for 10 min at RT. (2) Following secondary antibody incubation, coverslips were stained with 4',6-Diamidino-2-Phenylindole (DAPI, Invitrogen, 1:10,000) in 1X PBS for 5 min.

Confocal imaging was performed on the Zeiss LSM 880 Confocal Microscope (Charbonneau Microscopy Facility, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada) at the 63X oil objective. CellProfiler imaging was performed on the Zeiss AxioImager Z2 (CORES facility,

Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada) or Zeiss AxioObserver (Charbonneau Microscopy

Facility, University of Calgary) at the 40X oil objective.

Quantification of Processing Bodies Using CellProfiler Analysis

CellProfiler (cellprofiler.org) is an open source software for high-content image analysis

(Kamentsky et al. 2011) and was used to develop an unbiased method for quantifying changes to

PB dynamics. The pipeline used for quantifying PBs was structured as follows: To detect nuclei,

the DAPI image was thresholded into a binary image. In the binary image, primary objects

between 30 to 200 pixels in diameter were detected and defined as nuclei. Cells were identified

as secondary objects in the WGA image using a propagation function from the identified nuclei,

which determined the cell's outer edge. Using the parameters of a defined nucleus and cell

border, the cytoplasm was then defined as a tertiary object. The EDC4 channel image was

enhanced using an "Enhance Speckles" function to identify distinct puncta and eliminate

background staining. The cytoplasm image was then applied as a mask to the enhanced puncta

image to ensure quantitation of only cytoplasmic puncta. EDC4 puncta were measured in the

cytoplasm of cells using a 'global thresholding with robust background adjustments' function as

defined by the program. The threshold cut-off for identified EDC4 puncta remained constant

between all experiments with identical staining parameters. Puncta number per cell, intensity and

locations with respect to the nucleus were measured and exported as .csv files and analyzed in

RStudio. A template of the RStudio analysis pipeline is attached in Appendix A. Data was

represented as fold change in EDC4 puncta count per cell normalized to the vector puncta count.

'Relative EDC4 Puncta/Cell (KapB/Vector)' demonstrates the KapB puncta count divided by

vector puncta count, a ratio that was calculated within each treatment group for each biological

replicate.

Protein Electrophoresis and Immunoblotting

Cells were lysed in 2X Laemmli buffer (20% glycerol, 4% SDS, 120 mM Tris-HCl),

between 150 to 300 μL, depending on cell density. Lysates were homogenized with a 0.21-gauge

needle, and supplemented to contain 0.02% (w/v) bromophenol blue (Sigma) and 0.05 M

dithiothreitol (DTT, Sigma), then heated at 95°C for 5 min. 7.5 or 12% TGX Stain-Free SDS-

polyacrylamide gels (BioRad) were cast according to the instructions of the manufacturer and 5

to 15 μg of total protein were subjected to SDS gel electrophoresis using 1X SDS running buffer

(25 mM Tris, 192 mM Glycine, 0.1% SDS). Precision Plus Protein All Blue Prestained Protein

Standards (BioRad, Hercules, California, US) was used as a molecular weight marker. After

electrophoresis, gels were UV-activated using the ChemiDocTouch (BioRad) Stain-Free Gel

setting with automated exposure for 45 s. The protein was transferred to low-fluorescence

polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) membranes (BioRad) on the Trans-Blot Turbo Transfer

System (BioRad) according to the instructions of the manufacturer. Following transfer, total

protein amounts on membranes were imaged on the ChemiDocTouch using the Stain-Free

Membrane setting with automated exposure. Membranes were then blocked using 5% BSA

(Sigma) in 1X TBS-T (150 nM NaCl, 10 mM Tris, pH 7.8, 0.01% Tween-20) for 1 h at RT.

Primary antibody was diluted in 2.5% BSA in 1X TBS-T. Membranes were incubated in

primary antibody solution overnight at 4°C with rocking. The following day, membranes were

washed 3 times for 5 min in 1X TBS-T. Membranes were incubated with the appropriate

secondary antibody, conjugated to horseradish peroxidase (HRP) for 1 h at RT. Membranes were

washed 4 times for 5 min in 1X TBS-T. Clarity™ Western ECL Blotting Substrate (BioRad) was

mixed at a 1:1 ratio and applied to the membrane for 5 min. Chemiluminescent signal was

imaged on ChemiDocTouch Chemiluminescence setting. Band intensity was quantified using

ImageLab software (BioRad), normalizing to total protein.

Filamentous and Globular Actin Fractionation

Actin stabilization and depolymerization buffer recipes were obtained from Rasmussen et

al. (2010) and protocol was adapted from "G- Actin / F-Actin In Vivo Assay Kit," (n.d.). Briefly,

following treatment, HUVECs were lysed in 100 μL actin stabilization buffer (0.1M PIPES, pH

= 6.9, 30% glycerol, 5% DMSO, 1mM MgSO4, 1mM EGTA, 1% Triton X-100, 1mM ATP,

protease inhibitor) for each well of a confluent 6-well dish. Lysates were homogenized with a

21-gauge needle, incubated at 30°C for 10 min, and centrifuged at 350 xg for 5 min to remove

cell debris. Supernatant was then transferred to a 600 μL thick-walled centrifuge tube (Beckman,

California, US) and subjected to 100,000 xg ultracentrifugation for 1 h. Following

ultracentrifugation, the supernatant (G-actin) was mixed with 25 μL 5X SDS sample buffer (0.25

M Tris-Cl, pH = 6.8, 10% SDS, 50% glycerol, 0.5 M DTT and 0.25% bromophenol blue) and

incubated at 95°C for 5 min. The pellet from ultracentrifugation (F-actin) was mixed with ice-

cold 100 μL actin depolymerization buffer (0.1 M PIPES, pH = 6.8, 1mM MgSO4, 10mM

CaCl2, 5 μM Cytochalasin D). The F-actin fraction was then mixed with 25 μL 5X SDS sample

buffer and incubated at 95°C for 5 min. Samples were subjected to protein electrophoresis and

immunoblotting using antibodies for β-actin.

Quantitative Reverse-Transcriptase Polymerase Chain Reaction (qRT-PCR)

Cells were lysed in 250 μL RLT buffer (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany) and RNA was

extracted using the RNeasy Plus Mini kit (Qiagen) according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Complementary DNA (cDNA) was synthesized from 1 μg of total RNA using the qScript cDNA

SuperMix (QuantaBio, Hilden, Germany) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Real-

time quantitative PCR with SsoFast EvaGreen qPCR MasterMix (BioRad) was used to quantify

the fold-change in mRNA abundance. Relative fluorescence was quantified using CFX Connect

(BioRad). All qRT-PCR primers efficiencies were between 90-110% in HUVECs and sequences

are found in Table S5.

Luciferase Assay for TEAD Transcriptional Activity

HEK-293A cells were seeded in antibiotic-free DMEM at 75,000 cells/well. Mixtures of

500 ng of the target construct (pcDNA (Vector), pcDNA-KapB (KapB), p1XFLAG or

p2XFLAG-YAP 5SA), 450 ng 8X-GTIIC luciferase reporter, 50 ng TREX-Renilla luciferase

reporter and 3 μL FuGENE HD Transfection Reagent (Promega, Madison, Wisconsin, US) were

transfected into HEK-293A cells. After 36 h, DMEM containing only 2 mM L-glutamine

(starvation media) was supplied to the cells. Twelve hours after addition of starvation media,

cells were lysed in 200 μL passive lysis buffer (Promega) and luciferase activity was assayed

using the Dual-Luciferase Reporter Assay System (Promega) according to the manufacturer's

instructions. Luminescence was measured using the GloMax Luminometer (Promega).

Luciferase Assay for Stability of mRNA with AU-Rich Elements

This technique is described in Corcoran, Khaperskyy, and McCormick (2011). Briefly,

Hela-Tet Off cells were seeded in antibiotic-free DMEM at 100,000 cells/well. Mixtures of 900

ng of the target construct (pcDNA (Vector), pcDNA-KapB (KapB), p1XFLAG or p2XFLAG-

YAP 5SA), 90 ng TREX-Firefly ARE luciferase, 10 ng TREX-Renilla luciferase and 3 μL

FuGENE HD Transfection Reagent (Promega) were transfected into Hela Tet-Off cells. After 36

h, 1 μg/mL doxycycline was supplied to the cells to inhibit further transcription of each reporter.

Twelve hours after addition of doxycycline, cells were lysed in 200 μL passive lysis buffer

(Promega) and luciferase activity was assayed using the Dual-Luciferase Reporter Assay System

(Promega) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Luminescence was measured using the

GloMax Luminometer (Promega).

Collagen-Coating for Altering Matrix Stiffness

728   Coverslips (no. 1.5, Electron Microscopy Sciences) were coated with a dilution series (0

729 to 64 μg/cm^2) of rat-tail collagen-1 (Gibco) in 0.02 M acetic acid for 4 h at RT. Slides were

730 sterilized with UV irradiation and washed with 2 times with sterile 1X PBS prior to seeding

731 cells.

Unidirectional Fluid Flow for Endothelial Cell Shear Stress

A parallel-plate flow chamber was used to expose ECs to shear stress. The system was

described in detail in Gomez-Garcia et al. (2018). Briefly, cleaned, unfrosted microscope slides

(Cole-Parmer, Vernon Hills, Illinois, US) were coated for 4 h at RT with rat-tail collagen-1

(Gibco) in 0.02 M acetic acid for a resultant 8.3 μg/cm^2 collagen density. Slides were sterilized

with UV irradiation and washed 2 times with sterile 1X PBS. HUVECs were seeded at a density

of 350,000 cells/slide and cultured for 24 h. Forty-five mL of EGM-2 supplemented with dextran

(Spectrum Chemical, New Brunswick, New Jersey, US) for a resultant 3 cP viscosity was added

to the stock media bottle. The stock media bottle was connected with the associated tubing and

pulse dampener. Slides with seeded cells were inserted onto the flow chamber, a gasket

(Specialty Manufacturing, Calgary, Canada) was added, and the system was sealed shut and

attached to the flow loop following the outlet of a pulse dampener. The rate of fluid flow was

started at 0.3 L/min and doubled every 15 min until final flow rates of 0.6 L/min and 2.7 L/min

were reached, corresponding to shear stress rates of 2 and 10 dyn/cm^2. Following 21 h, cells were

removed and immediately fixed for immunofluorescence or lysed for immunoblotting.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was performed in GraphPad Prism 8.0 software. Significance was

determined using a ratio paired t-test or repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). One-

tailed ratio paired t-tests were applied in comparisons specifically examining PB restoration in

KapB-expressing cells as a directional hypothesis. In all other comparisons, two-tailed ratio

paired t-tests were applied. Significance was determined at $p = 0.05$. Each biological replicate

for CellProfiler quantification consisted of 6 images of each treatment in a given experiment,

counting approximately 100 to 200 cells per treatment.

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Acknowledgements

We would like to sincerely thank the members of the Corcoran lab for helpful discussions about

this work. We would like to thank Dr. Craig McCormick (Dalhousie University) for helpful

discussions on this manuscript and his lab for plasmids, expertise and invaluable advice. ELC

was supported by a Killam predoctoral scholarship, an NSERC CGS-M scholarship, and a Nova

Scotia Graduate scholarship. Operating funds to support this work derive from an NSERC

Discovery grant RGPIN-2015-04882 to JAC.

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1285 **Competing Interests**

1286 The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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 Figure Legends

 Figure 1: The RhoA-effector mDia1 is required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly. KapB-

 and vector- expressing HUVECs were transduced with shRNAs targeting mDia1 (shDIA1-1,

 shDIA1-2) or with a non-targeting (shNT) control and selected. In parallel, cells were fixed for

 immunofluorescence or lysed for immunoblotting. (A) One representative immunoblot of three

 independent experiments stained with mDia1-specific antibody is shown. (B, C) Fixed cells were

 stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. (B) The number of EDC4 puncta per

 cell was quantified and normalized to the vector NT control within each replicate. (C)

 CellProfiler data was used to calculate the ratio of EDC4 puncta counts in KapB-expressing cells

 versus the vector control for each treatment condition. (D) Representative images of cells stained

 for PB-resident protein EDC4 (green), KapB (blue), and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate

 area shown in the EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm. Statistics were determined

 using ratio paired t-tests between control and experimental groups; error bars represent standard

 deviation; n=3 independent biological replicates; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$.

 Figure 2: The RhoA-effector ROCK is required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly. (A-C)

 KapB- and vector- expressing HUVECs were treated with 10 ⌈M Y-27632 or water control for 4

 h and fixed for immunofluorescence. (A) Representative images of cells stained for PB-resident

 protein EDC4 (green), KapB (blue), and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate area shown in

 the EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm. (B, C) Fixed cells were stained for

 CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. (B) The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was

 quantified and normalized to the vector NT control within each replicate. (C) CellProfiler data

 was used to calculate the ratio of EDC4 puncta counts in KapB-expressing cells versus the vector

 control for each treatment condition. (D-F) KapB- and vector- expressing HUVECs were

 transduced with shRNAs targeting ROCK1 and ROCK2 (shROCK1-1, shROCK1-2, shROCK2-

 1, shROCK2-2) or with a non-targeting (shNT) control and selected. Cells were fixed for

 immunofluorescence. (D, E) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the

 methods. (D) The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was quantified and normalized to the vector

 NT control within each replicate. (E) CellProfiler data was used to calculate the ratio of EDC4

 puncta counts in KapB-expressing cells versus the vector control for each treatment condition.

1320   (F) Representative images of cells stained for PB-resident protein EDC4 (green), KapB (blue),

1321   and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate images shown in EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar

1322   represents 20 μm. Statistics were determined using ratio paired t-tests between control and

1323   experimental groups; error bars represent standard deviation from n=3 independent biological

1324   replicates except shROCK1-2, (n=2); * = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01 .

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Figure 3: Actomyosin contractility controls PB disassembly. (A-C) KapB- and vector-

expressing HUVECs were treated with 10 $\lceil$M blebbistatin to inhibit actomyosin contractility or

DMSO for 30 min and fixed for immunofluorescence. (A, B) Fixed cells were stained for

CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. (A) The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was

quantified and normalized to the vector NT control within each replicate. (B) CellProfiler data

was used to calculate the ratio of EDC4 puncta counts in KapB-expressing cells versus the vector

control for each treatment condition. (C) Representative images of cells stained for PB-resident

protein EDC4 (green), KapB (blue), and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate area shown in

the EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm. (D, E) Untransduced HUVECs were treated

with 5 nM Calyculin A (CalA) to stimulate actomyosin contraction or DMSO for 20 min and

fixed for immunofluorescence. (D) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed

in the methods. EDC4 puncta per cell were quantified and normalized to the DMSO control

within each replicate. (E) Representative images of cells treated with 5 nM CalA and stained for

PB-resident protein EDC4 (green) and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate area shown in the

EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm. Statistics were determined using ratio paired t-

tests between control and experimental groups; error bars represent standard deviation; n=3 (A,

B) and n=5 (D) independent biological replicates; * = p < 0.05.

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Figure 4: YAP is required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly. KapB- and vector-

expressing HUVECs were transduced with shRNAs targeting YAP (shYAP-1, shYAP-2) or with

a non-targeting (shNT) control and selected. In parallel, cells were fixed for immunofluorescence

or lysed for immunoblotting. (A) One representative immunoblot of three independent

experiments stained with YAP-specific antibody is shown. (B-D) Fixed cells were stained for

CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. (B) The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was

quantified and normalized to the vector NT control within each replicate. (C) CellProfiler data

was used to calculate the ratio of EDC4 puncta count in KapB-expressing cells to the vector

control for each treatment condition. (D) Representative images of cells stained for PB-resident

protein EDC4 (green), KapB (blue), and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate area shown in

the EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm. Statistics were determined using ratio

paired t-tests between control and experimental groups; error bars represent standard deviation;

n=3 independent biological replicates; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p < 0.001$.

1357

Figure 5: Active YAP elicits PB disassembly. (A, B, D-F) HUVECs were transduced with

YAP 5SA-expressing and empty vector lentivirus and selected. Cells were fixed for

immunofluorescence. (A) Representative images of cells stained for PB-resident protein EDC4

(green) and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate area shown in the EDC4 (zoom) panel.

Scale bar represents 20 μm. (B) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in

the methods. The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was quantified and normalized to the vector

control. (C) HeLa Tet-Off cells were seeded and co-transfected with an ARE-containing Firefly

luciferase (Fluc) reporter plasmid, a Renilla luciferase (Rluc) reporter plasmid lacking an ARE,

and either a KapB, YAP 5SA expression plasmid or vector controls. At 36 h post-transfection,

transcription was terminated with doxycycline treatment for 12 h. Fluc and Rluc activity was

measured. Data is normalized to vector control within each replicate. Graphs show the ratio of

Fluc to Rluc, independent Fluc values and independent Rluc values, respectively. (D-F)

Representative images of cells stained for (D) DDX6 (red), DCP1a (green) and DAPI (blue), (E)

DDX6 (red), EDC4 (green) and DAPI (blue), and (D) DDX6 (red), YAP (green) and DAPI

(blue). Boxes indicate area shown in the zoom panels. Scale bar represents 20 μm. Statistics

were determined using ratio paired t-tests between control and experimental groups (B) or

repeated measures ANOVA (C); error bars represent standard deviation; n=3 independent

biological replicates; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$.

1376

Figure 6: YAP transcriptional activity is required for PB disassembly. HUVECs were

transduced with YAP 5SA-, YAP 6SA- or vector-expressing lentivirus and selected. Cells were

fixed for immunofluorescence. (A) Representative images of cells stained for EDC4 (red),

DDX6 (green) and DAPI (blue). Boxes indicate area shown in the zoom panels. Scale bar

represents 20 μm. (B) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the

methods. CellProfiler was used to count nuclei, EDC4 puncta and DDX6 puncta. In RStudio

analysis, puncta with ≥ 60% correlation (mean correlation in vector control) between EDC4 and

DDX6 (PBs) were counted and normalized to number of nuclei per condition. PB counts were

normalized to vector control within each replicate.

1386

Figure 7: YAP Inputs Mediate PB Disassembly. (A, B) HUVECs were seeded onto collagen-

coated microscope slides and exposed to shear stress of 2 dyn/cm², 10 dyn/cm² or no shear (static

control) for 21 h. Cells were fixed and stained for immunofluorescence. (A) Representative

images of cells stained for PB-resident proteins EDC4 (green) and DDX6 (blue), as well as F-

actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate area shown in EDC4 (zoom) and DDX6 (zoom) panels.

Scale bar represents 20 μm. (B) CellProfiler was used to count nuclei, EDC4 puncta and DDX6

puncta. In RStudio analysis, puncta with ≥ 70% correlation (mean correlation in vector control)

between EDC4 and DDX6 (PBs) were counted and normalized to number of nuclei per

condition. PB counts were normalized to static control within each replicate. (C, D) HUVECs

were split and seeded at a high-, medium- and low-density, cultured for 48 h and fixed for

immunofluorescence. (C) Representative images of cells stained for the PB-resident protein

EDC4 (green) and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate images shown in EDC4 (zoom)

panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm. (D) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as

detailed in the methods. The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was quantified and normalized to

the high confluence condition. (E, F) Coverslips were coated for 4 h with 0 to 64 μg/cm² of

collagen. HUVECs were grown for 72 h on coated coverslips and fixed for immunofluorescence.

(E) Representative images of cells stained for PB-resident protein EDC4 (green), DDX6 (blue)

and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate images shown in EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar

represents 20 μm. (F) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the

methods. The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was quantified and normalized to the 0 μg/mL

collagen-coating condition. Statistics were determined using repeated measures ANOVA (A, B)

or Pearson's correlation co-efficient (C); error bars represent standard deviation (A, B) and 95%

confidence interval of line of best fit (slope is significantly non-zero, p = 0.014) (C); n=3

independent biological replicates; * = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01.

1411

Figure 8: YAP is required for EDC4 puncta disassembly in HUVECs subjected to shear

stress. (A) HUVECs were seeded onto collagen-coated microscope slides and exposed to shear

stress of 2 dyn/cm^2, 10 dyn/cm^2 or a static control for 21 h. Cells were lysed for immunoblotting.

One representative immunoblot and quantification of three independent experiments stained with

P(S127)-YAP- and YAP-specific antibody is shown. P(S127)-YAP and YAP protein levels in

each condition were normalized to total protein. All treatments were normalized to static control

within each replicate. (B, C) HUVECs were transduced with shRNAs targeting YAP (shYAP-2)

or with a non-targeting (shNT) control and selected. Cells were seeded onto collagen-coated

microscope slides and exposed to shear stress of 10 dyn/cm^2 or no shear (static control) for 21 h.

Cells were fixed and stained for immunofluorescence. (B) CellProfiler was used to count nuclei

and EDC4 puncta. In RStudio analysis, EDC4 puncta were normalized to number of nuclei per

condition. EDC4 puncta counts were normalized to static control. (C) Representative images of

cells stained for PB-resident protein EDC4 (red), DDX6 (green) and DAPI (blue). In parallel,

separate coverslips were stained for F-actin (phalloidin). Boxes indicate area shown in the EDC4

(zoom) panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm. Statistics were determined using repeated measures

ANOVA (A); error bars represent standard deviation (A) ; n=4, except 2 dyn/cm^2 (n=3) (A) and

n = 2 (B, C) independent biological replicates; * = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01.

1429

Figure 9: KapB activates a mechanoresponsive pathway from within the cell rather than

without to mediate PB disassembly. (A) Cells respond to external mechanical force by

activating their structural support network, the actin cytoskeleton. The GTPase RhoA and its

downstream effectors coordinate this response, bundling actin filaments into stress fibers (SFs),

enhancing actomyosin contractility and increasing adhesion to the underlying matrix to help

withstand force-induced membrane deformation. Together, these actin-based responses increase

cytoskeletal tension and elicit the dephosphorylation and nuclear translocation of the

mechanoresponsive transcription activator YAP where it collaborates with other transcription

factors to induce TEAD-responsive genes. We present data to support the existence of a

mechanoresponsive pathway that links actin SFs, actomyosin contractility, and the transcription

transactivator YAP to the disassembly of PBs. The viral protein KapB taps into this

mechanoresponsive pathway, triggering mechanical changes and forming contractile cytoskeletal

structures that would normally respond to force, thereby inducing PB disassembly in a YAP-

dependent manner, from within the cell, rather than from without. Both KapB and stimuli that

activate YAP cause PB disassembly. (B) Both KapB and active YAP have been shown to

upregulate autophagic flux (Robinson et al. 2021; Pavel et al. 2018); however, YAP 5SA also

accelerates autophagosome-lysosome fusion by upregulating the Rab7-GTPase activating

protein, Armus, while KapB does not increase Armus transcription. In our model, upregulated

autophagic flux contributes PB disassembly mediated by both YAP 5SA and KapB.

1449

Figure S1: The RhoA-effector ROCK is required for KapB-mediated PB disassembly,

knockdown confirmation and vector data. (A) KapB- and vector- expressing HUVECs were

treated with 10 μM Y-27632 or water control for 4 h and fixed for immunofluorescence. Fixed

cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. The number of EDC4

puncta per cell was quantified and normalized to the vector control. Vector control data is

shown. (B, C) KapB- and vector- expressing HUVECs were transduced with shRNAs targeting

ROCK1 and ROCK2 (shROCK1-1, shROCK1-2, shROCK2-1, shROCK2-2) or with a non-

targeting (shNT) control and selected. In parallel, cells were lysed for immunoblotting or fixed

for immunofluorescence. (B) One representative immunoblot of three independent experiments

stained using ROCK1- and 2-specific antibodies. (C) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler

analysis as detailed in the methods. The number of EDC4 puncta per cell was quantified and

normalized to the vector NT control within each replicate. Vector control data is shown.

Statistics were determined using a ratio paired t-test between control and experimental groups;

error bars represent standard deviation; n=3 independent biological replicates; * = p < 0.05.

1464

Figure S2: Cofilin knockdown augments KapB-mediated PB disassembly. KapB- and

vector- expressing HUVECs were transduced with shRNAs targeting cofilin (shCFN-1, shCFN-

2) or with a non-targeting (shNT) control and selected. In parallel, cells were fixed for

immunofluorescence or lysed for immunoblotting. (A) One representative immunoblot of three

independent experiments stained using a cofilin-specific antibody. (B, C) Fixed cells were

stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. (B) The number of EDC4 puncta per

cell was quantified and normalized to the vector NT control within each replicate. (C)

CellProfiler data was used to calculate the ratio of EDC4 puncta counts in KapB-expressing cells

versus the vector control for each treatment condition. (D) Representative images of cells stained

for PB-resident protein EDC4 (green), KapB (blue), and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate

the area of the field of view that is shown in EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar represents 20 μm.

Statistics were determined using a ratio paired t-test between control and experimental groups;

error bars represent standard deviation; n=3 independent biological replicates; * = p < 0.05.

1478

Figure S3: G-actin concentration does not control PB disassembly. (A, B, C) HUVECs were

treated with 1 μM Jasp (polymerizes actin and decreases monomeric G-actin), 1 μg/μL CytD

(actin depolymerization to increase monomeric G-actin) or a DMSO control for 30 min. (A, B)

Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. The number of

EDC4 puncta per cell was quantified and normalized to the DMSO control. (C) Representative

images of cells stained for PB-resident protein EDC4 and F-actin (phalloidin). Actin is not seen

in Jasp panel due to Jasp-mediated interference with phalloidin staining (Bubb et al. 1999). Scale

bar represents 20 μm. Statistics were determined using a ratio paired t-test between control and

experimental groups; error bars represent standard deviation; n=3 independent biological

replicates. (D) Representative immunoblot of filamentous and globular actin fractions separated

by ultracentrifugation as detailed in the methods from HUVECs treated with DMSO, 0.5 or 1.0

μM Jasp. * = p < 0.05, ** = p < 0.01.

1491

Figure S4: α-actinin-1-overexpression mediated SF formation and PB disassembly.

HUVECs were fixed and stained with antibodies for (A) α-actinin-1 and (B) α-actinin-4. (C, D)

HUVECs transduced with recombinant lentiviruses expressing GFP-tagged α-actinin-1 (ACTN-

GFP) or a GFP control were selected and fixed for immunofluorescence. (C) Fixed cells were

stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. The number of EDC4 puncta per cell

was quantified and normalized to the vector GFP control. (D) Representative images of cells

stained for PB-resident protein EDC4 (false-coloured green), ACTN-GFP (false-coloured blue),

and F-actin (red, phalloidin). Boxes indicate images shown in EDC4 (zoom) panel. Scale bar

represents 20 μm. Statistics were determined using a ratio paired t-test between control and

experimental groups; error bars represent standard deviation; n=3 independent biological

replicates; * = p < 0.05.

1503

Figure S5: KapB does not activate canonical functions of YAP. (A, B) KapB- and vector-

expressing HUVECs were lysed for immunoblotting or fixed for immunofluorescence. (A)

Representative immunoblots and quantification of immunoblotting for P(S127)-YAP-, YAP- or

KapB-specific antibody are shown. Several immunoblots are shown to illustrate variation in

KapB-mediated changes in P-YAP and YAP. Protein levels in each condition were normalized to

total protein. All treatments were normalized to vector control within each replicate. (B)

Representative images of cells stained for YAP. Scale bar represents 20 μM. (C) HEK-293A

cells were co-transfected with a firefly luciferase (Fluc) reporter plasmid with a YAP-responsive

TEAD promoter element, a TREX-renilla luciferase (Rluc) reporter plasmid, and overexpression

constructs for either a KapB, YAP 5SA or vector control. At 36 h post-transfection, cells were

starved in serum-free DMEM for 12 h, lysed and Fluc and Rluc activity was recorded. Data is

normalized to vector control. Graphs show the ratio of Fluc to Rluc, independent Fluc values and

independent Rluc values, respectively. (D) HUVECs were transduced with recombinant

lentiviruses expressing KapB, a constitutively active version of YAP (YAP 5SA) or an empty

vector control, selected and lysed for total RNA. qRT-PCR analysis of steady state mRNA levels

of canonical YAP-regulated genes CTGF, ANKRD1 and CYR61 was performed, and was

normalized to steady state HPRT-1 mRNA levels. Statistics were determined using repeated

measures ANOVA; error bars represent standard deviation; n=3 independent biological

replicates; * = $p < 0.05$, ** = $p < 0.01$.

1523

Figure S6: YAP 5SA-mediated PB disassembly is not dependent on autophagy. YAP 5SA-

and vector- expressing HUVECs were treated with 10 nM BafA1 or DMSO control for 30 min

and fixed for immunofluorescence. (A,B) Fixed cells were stained for LC3 puncta analysis as

detailed in the methods. (A) Representative images of cells stained for LC3 (white) and DAPI

(blue). Boxes indicate the area of the field of view that is shown in LC3 (zoom) panel. Scale bar

represents 20 μm. (B) The number of LC3 puncta per cell was quantified in each condition.

(C,D) Fixed cells were stained for CellProfiler analysis as detailed in the methods. (C)

Representative images of cells stained for DDX6 (red), YAP (green) and DAPI (blue). Boxes

indicate the area of the field of view that is shown in DDX6 (zoom) panel. Scale bar represents

20 μm. (D) The number of DDX6 puncta per cell was quantified and normalized to the vector

control within each replicate. (E) HUVECs were transduced with recombinant lentiviruses

expressing KapB, a constitutively active version of YAP (YAP 5SA) or an empty vector control,

selected and lysed for total RNA. qRT-PCR analysis of steady-state mRNA levels of the Rab7-

GTPase activating protein, Armus, was performed, and was normalized to steady state HPRT-1

mRNA levels. Statistics were determined using a two-way ANOVA with multiple comparisons

between control and experimental groups; error bars represent standard deviation; n=3

independent biological replicates; ** = $p < 0.01$, *** = $p<0.001$.

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1544 **Supplementary Files**

1545 **Supplementary File 1:** Table detailing antibodies used in this study, including species, target,

1546 source, use and dilution.

1547

1548 **Supplementary File 2:** Table detailing plasmids used in this study, including name, use, source,

1549 bacterial selection cassette and mammalian selection cassette.

1550

1551 **Supplementary File 3:** Table detailing shRNA sequences used in this study.

1552

1553 **Supplementary File 4:** Table detailing drug treatments used in this study, including name, use,

1554 source, concentration and duration of treatment.

1555

1556 **Supplementary File 5:** Table detailing qRT-PCR primers used in this study, including target,

1557 sequence, melting temperature, and reference.

1558

1559 **Source Code**

1560 **Source Code 1**: CellProfiler pipeline used to enumerate puncta from epifluorescent microscopy

1561 images of HUVECs stained for Hedls puncta; co-stained with DAPI and WGA.

1562

1563 **Source Code 2**: CellProfiler pipeline used to enumerate puncta from confocal microscopy

1564 images of HUVECs subjected to shear stress stained for Hedls and DDX6 puncta.

1565

1566 **Source Code 3**: CellProfiler pipeline used to enumerate puncta from confocal microscopy

1567 images of HUVECs subjected to shear stress stained for Hedls puncta.

1568

1569 **Source Code 4**: CellProfiler pipeline used to quantify intensity in nucleus and cytoplasm from

1570 epifluorescent microscopy images of HUVECs stained for YAP protein; co-stained with DAPI

1571 and WGA.

1572

1573 **Source Code 5**: CellProfiler pipeline used to enumerate puncta from epifluorescent microscopy

1574 images of HUVECs stained for LC3 puncta; co-stained with DAPI.

1575

1576 **Source Code 6:** Template RStudio code used for analysis of CellProfiler output from Source

1577 Code 1. Annotations provided within code.

1578

1579 **Source Code 7:** Template RStudio code used for analysis of CellProfiler output from Source

1580 Code 2. Annotations provided within code.

1581

1582 **Source Code 8:** Template RStudio code used for analysis of CellProfiler output from Source

1583 Code 3. Annotations provided within code.

1584

1585 **Source Code 9:** Template RStudio code used for analysis of CellProfiler output from Source

1586 Code 4. Annotations provided within code.

1587
1588

A

Fold Change in
EDC4 Puncta/Cell

**

p = 0.005

DMSO   1 µM Jasp

B

Fold Change in
EDC4 Puncta/Cell

*

p = 0.026

DMSO   1 µg/µL CytD

C

DMSO   1 µM Jasp   1 µg/µL CytD

EDC4

Actin

D

DMSO   0.5 µM Jasp   1.0 µM Jasp
F   G   F   G   F   G

β−Actin

A DMSO | 10 nM BafA1
Merge | LC3 (zoom) | Merge | LC3 (zoom)

Vector

YAP 5SA

B

LC3 Puncta/Nuclei

Vector | YAP5SA | Vector | YAP5SA
DMSO | BafA1

C DMSO | 10 nM BafA1
Merge | DDX6 (zoom) | Merge | DDX6 (zoom)

Vector

YAP 5SA

D

Fold Change in DDX6 Puncta/Cell

*** p < 0.001
** p = 0.003

Vector | YAP 5SA | Vector | YAP 5SA
DMSO | BafA1

E

Fold Change in Armus expression levels (normalized to HPRT-1)

p = 0.117

Vector | KapB | YAP 5SA | YAP 6SA