FAP106 is an interaction hub required for stable assembly of conserved and lineage-specific proteins at the cilium inner junction

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Running title: *T. brucei* MIPs

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ABSTRACT

Eukaryotic motile cilia/flagella are conserved organelles important for cell propulsion and fluid flow, typically built around a "9+2" axoneme of nine doublet microtubules (DMTs) encircling a central pair of singlet microtubules. The DMT lumen is lined with an interconnected network of microtubule inner proteins (MIPs), some conserved and others lineage-specific. MIPs augment the tubulin lattice of the DMT, directly impacting stability, fine structure, and motility, thus providing an important source of lineage-specific adaptations. *Trypanosoma brucei* is a flagellated eukaryotic pathogen with distinctive motility that is critical for pathogen transmission and pathogenesis. Prior studies revealed lineage-specific *T. brucei* MIPs, but their identities are unknown. To identify *T. brucei* MIPs, we examined flagellum structure and composition following knockdown of FAP106, a conserved MIP at the inner junction (IJ) connecting A- and B-microtubules of the DMT. FAP106 knockdown resulted in short flagella and defective parasite motility, supporting a role for MIPs in *T. brucei* flagellum stability and motility. Cryogenic electron tomography (cryoET) and quantitative proteomics identified several conserved MIPs and lineage-specific MIP structures and MIP candidate proteins (MCs) that depend on FAP106 for stable assembly. We further demonstrate by knockdown and fitting AlphaFold models to cryoET maps that one of these, MC8, is a newly identified lineage-specific MIP required for normal parasite motility. This work provides an important advance toward elucidating the order of assembly of MIPs at the cilium inner junction and identifies trypanosome proteins specific to these deadly pathogens that represent targets to consider for therapeutic intervention.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Motility characteristics of cilia/flagella differ dramatically between species to accommodate organism-specific motility needs. Recently discovered microtubule inner proteins (MIPs) inside

microtubules are thought to contribute to species-specific motility characteristics but are largely

uncharacterized. The flagellated parasite, *Trypanosoma brucei*, exhibits many unique motility

features considered important for moving through host tissues to cause disease, but identities of

parasite-specific MIPs are unknown. Here, we combine structural biology, mutant analysis, and

quantitative proteomics to identify lineage-specific MIPs in *T. brucei*. We demonstrate that the

conserved MIP, FAP106, is required for motility and stable assembly of several other MIPs,

including trypanosome-specific MIPs required for motility. Our studies advance fundamental

understanding of MIP assembly mechanisms, while identifying parasite-specific proteins as

potential targets for therapeutic intervention.

INTRODUCTION

Cilia (synonymous with eukaryotic flagella) are conserved, microtubule-based structures that

provide motility and signaling functions at the surface of eukaryotic cells. Cilium motility is

required for normal human reproduction, development, physiology, and to combat infection (1).

Motile cilia also drive cell propulsion in eukaryotic pathogens responsible for tremendous human

suffering worldwide (2, 3). Given this broad distribution and central importance to eukaryote cell

biology and human health, understanding structural foundations of cilium assembly and motility

is of broad interest.

43   Most motile cilia are built around a "9 + 2" cylindrical axoneme consisting of nine doublet

microtubules (DMTs) surrounding a central pair of singlet microtubules. Each DMT is comprised

of a complete, 13-protofilament A-microtubule (A-tubule) and a partial, 10-protofilament B-

microtubule (B-tubule), with non-tubulin proteins forming an "inner junction" (IJ) filament that

connects the A- and B-tubules (4, 5). Recent studies have revealed a previously unappreciated,

yet universal feature of motile axonemes, showing that DMTs are not hollow but, instead, are

lined with a highly organized network of interconnected "microtubule inner proteins" (MIPs) (6-

9). Structures inside DMTs had been reported several decades ago in flagellated protozoa (10,

11), but the diversity and ubiquitous distribution of such structures was not recognized until

cryogenic electron tomography (cryoET) enabled high-resolution, 3D structural analysis (8, 12).

Studies in organisms from diverse eukaryotic lineages (13-16) indicate MIPs are present in both

the A- and B-tubules and occur in a regularly repeating pattern along the length of the DMT in

all motile axonemes. Their broad taxonomic distribution indicates MIPs are fundamentally

important for axoneme function and likely were present prior to eukaryote diversification.

Meanwhile absence of regularly spaced MIP structures in non-motile cilia (17, 18) suggests they

are required specifically for motile axonemes. Pioneering work in *Chlamydomonas* and

Tetrahymena demonstrated they can enhance DMT stability and influence beating of the

axoneme (19, 20). MIPs have also been shown to affect tubulin dimer packing and protofilament

spacing (13, 14, 16), axoneme curvature (14, 20, 21), and outer dynein assembly (13, 16, 22).

Nonetheless, many aspects of MIP functions remain poorly understood.

In recent, groundbreaking work, cryogenic electron microscopy (cryoEM) was used to

reconstruct near-atomic resolution structures of the axoneme, thereby allowing *in situ*

identification and atomic modeling of MIPs in *Chlamydomonas*, *Tetrahymena,* and mammals

(13, 16, 21, 23). These studies have expanded opportunities for studying MIP function and

revealed that while some MIPs are conserved across diverse taxa, others represent lineage-

specific adaptations (13, 16, 21, 23). Axonemes of diverse organisms share general architecture

and beating mechanism, and lineage-specific MIPs therefore offer a potential mechanism for

meeting organism-specific motility characteristics (2, 15, 24), such as those presented by

movement of parasitic protozoa through tissues of their human and animal hosts (25, 26).

Identification and analysis of lineage-specific MIPs are therefore of great interest.

African trypanosomes, e.g. *Trypanosoma brucei* and related kinetoplastids, are

flagellated, protozoan pathogens that cause extensive human suffering and limit economic

development in some of the world's poorest regions (27, 28). Trypanosomes also represent

diverse eukaryotic lineages that have proven useful for uncovering novel features of eukaryote

biology (29, 30). *T. brucei* motility exhibits several distinctive features that support movement

through host tissues (15, 31) and is required for pathogenesis (32) and transmission (33). The

T. brucei flagellum has a large and diverse repertoire of MIP structures, including several that

are lineage-specific, particularly in the B-tubule (15). Except for a few conserved examples,

however, proteins comprising most *T. brucei* MIP structures are unknown, representing a critical

knowledge gap in *T. brucei* flagellum assembly and motility.

We sought to identify *T. brucei* MIPs, with a focus on those that are lineage-specific.

Loss of one MIP often compromises additional MIPs (20, 21, 34, 35), and our strategy was

therefore to identify proteins altered upon disruption of a known MIP. We selected FAP106, a B-

tubule MIP that spans the IJ, interconnects other MIPs in *Chlamydomonas*, *Tetrahymena*, and

mammals (13, 16, 21, 35), and may contact several lineage-specific MIP structures in *T. brucei*

(15). Requirement of FAP106 for IJ or MIP assembly has not been tested in any organism. By

RNAi depletion, we show that *T. brucei* FAP106 is required for parasite motility and normal

flagellum length. CryoET and tandem mass tag (TMT) quantitative proteomics together show

that FAP106 knockdown (KD) results in loss of conserved IJ MIP structures and their

corresponding proteins, as well as additional MIP structures and proteins corresponding to

lineage-specific MIP candidates (MCs). One of these candidates, MC8, was confirmed by

cryoET to be a novel lineage-specific *T. brucei* MIP and is required for normal motility. Together,

our results demonstrate that FAP106 is a critical interaction hub required for stable assembly of

conserved and lineage-specific MIPs at the inner junction. This work advances understanding of

MIP assembly mechanisms and provides insight into parasite-specific MIPs that control *T.*

brucei motility. Because they are not present in the mammalian host, such MIPs are attractive

for consideration as targets for therapeutic intervention in trypanosome infections.

RESULTS

FAP106 is required for parasite motility.

Of eight B-tubule MIPs identified in *Chlamydomonas* (16), only three have clear homologs in *T. brucei*: FAP45, FAP52, and FAP106 (Table 1). The IJ filament proteins, PACRG and FAP20 (4, 5), are also conserved. FAP45 and FAP52 sit adjacent to the IJ and are required for DMT stability (16, 19, 21). FAP106 forms a 'tether loop' structure that spans the inner junction and is interconnected with several other MIPs (13, 16, 21, 35), although the requirement for FAP106 in MIP and IJ assembly has not been tested. We used tetracycline-inducible RNAi (36) to deplete FAP106 in procyclic form cells, hereafter referred to as "FAP106 KD". RNAi knockdown reduced FAP106 mRNA expression by more than 95% (Fig. 1A) without affecting parasite growth rate (Fig. 1B). FAP106 KD parasites did not exhibit any gross morphological defects, although their flagella were shorter than normal (Fig. 1C-E). Notably, despite having a beating flagellum, FAP106 KD parasites rarely exhibited directional motility, even at high cell densities, which typically result in faster directional motility (Fig. 1F-G; Supp. Fig. S1). Thus, FAP106 is critical for normal parasite motility.

FAP106 is required for stable assembly of IJ MIPs and other MIP structures.

To determine whether FAP106 is required for assembly of other MIP structures, we performed cryoET on purified, demembranated flagella from control and FAP106 KD parasites. Most known MIPs assemble with a periodicity of 16, or 48 nm (9, 13-16, 21, 23, 35, 37) and we therefore performed subtomogram averaging to determine the 48-nm repeating unit of the DMT (Fig. 2; Supp. Fig. S2; Movie 1) for comparison to the published structures of the 48-nm repeat from other organisms (13, 16, 21). MIP densities in the A-tubule appeared largely unaffected in the FAP106 KD and, given the position of FAP106 in the B-tubule, we focused our analysis on the B-tubule. Cross-sectional views of the cryoET tomogram show several major B-tubule MIP

densities are missing in the FAP106 KD. Although we do not have sufficient resolution to

identify the corresponding proteins directly, referencing the position of MIPs conserved in other

organisms provides insight. Longitudinal and cross-sectional views (Fig. 2C-D; Movie 1) show

loss of densities corresponding to the 'tether loop' structure of FAP106 in algae and mammals

(13, 16, 21) (Fig. 2B-C, red), consistent with the idea that FAP106 structure is conserved across

species (13). A density corresponding to the expected position of FAP52 (16, 19, 21) appears

largely unaffected in the FAP106 KD (Fig. 2B-D, tan; Movie 1). We did not resolve filamentous

densities corresponding to FAP45 on protofilaments B6-B9 in other organisms (13, 16), but

these protofilaments were heavily decorated in *T. brucei* control cells and relatively devoid of

MIP densities in FAP106 KD (Fig. 2D; Movie 1). Additionally, densities corresponding to the

expected position of the FAP45 N-terminus are reduced in the FAP106 KD (Fig. 2D, orange).

Thus, FAP106 appears to be required for proper assembly of FAP45 but not FAP52.

Interestingly, the FAP106 KD also shows loss of FAP106-associated densities that resemble

FAP210 in other organisms (Fig. 2B, 2D, green; (13, 16, 21, 35)), although *T. brucei* lacks a

clear FAP210 homolog (Table 1). Overall, our results indicate FAP106 is critical for stable

assembly of a subset of B-tubule MIP structures in the vicinity of the IJ.

Beyond known MIP structures defined in other organisms, additional densities reduced

in the FAP106 KD correspond to MIP structures that are absent in one or more other organisms.

These lineage-specific MIP structures include a protruding density on protofilament B8, "MIP

B8", densities attached to protofilament A12, "MIP A12", and a protruding density on

protofilament B5, "MIP B5" (Fig. 2B). A density with location and periodicity similar to MIP B8 is

present in *Tetrahymena* (9, 23, 35, 37), but not in *Chlamydomonas* or mammals (13, 16). MIP

A12 densities (Fig. 2B-C) are not present in *Chlamydomonas* or mammals (13, 16, 21) and

appear more prominent in *T. brucei* than MIP5a and MIP5b located at a similar position in

Tetrahymena (9, 23, 35, 37). A density analogous to MIP B5 is not observed in any other

published structures (9, 13, 16, 23, 35, 37). Thus, FAP106 is required for stable assembly of

universally-conserved, as well as lineage-specific MIPs.

FAP106 is required for assembly of a subset of PACRG subunits into the IJ filament.

The IJ filament is a conserved non-tubulin structure that connects protofilaments A1 and B10 in

organisms with cilia (8, 18). The IJ filament is comprised of PACRG and FAP20 subunits that

alternate each 4nm along the axoneme (4, 5). Interestingly, most organisms have a single hole

in the IJ filament every 96nm, corresponding to one missing PACRG subunit per 96-nm

repeating unit (8, 12, 37). *T. brucei* is unusual in having two holes per 96-nm repeating unit (15)

(Fig. 2E). The function of the IJ hole is not known, nor is the structural basis for the presence of

two holes per 96nm in *T. brucei*. Strikingly, our cryoET data show that loss of FAP106 results in

two additional holes per 48-nm repeat, giving six holes per 96-nm repeat (Fig. 2E). These holes

correspond to loss of every fourth subunit of the IJ filament (light blue in Fig. 2E), which, based

on analogy with *Chlamydomonas* (16), likely corresponds to PACRG.

TMT proteomics identifies novel, lineage-specific MIPs.

To identify proteins corresponding to FAP106-dependent MIP densities, we used tandem mass

tag (TMT) quantitative proteomics to compare the protein composition of purified,

demembranated flagella from control and FAP106 KD parasites. We quantified more than 2500

proteins and only eight of these were significantly reduced in flagella from FAP106 KD parasites

($\geq$2-fold reduced, adjusted p-value $\leq$0.06) (Fig. 3A; Table 2; Supp. Dataset S1). Three proteins

were observed to be increased in the knockdown (Fig. 3A; Supp. Dataset S1) and were not

studied further.

As expected, the protein most reduced in FAP106 KD parasites was FAP106 itself (Fig.

3A; Table 2), confirming efficient knockdown reported by qRT-PCR (Fig. 1A) and loss of

FAP106 protein from the axoneme (Fig. 2). Two other characterized proteins, FAP45 and

PACRG-B, were also reduced in the FAP106 KD (Fig. 3A-B, Table 2). FAP45 was almost 4-fold

reduced in FAP106 KD flagella (Fig. 3A; Table 2), supporting results from cryoET indicating

FAP106 is required for stable assembly of FAP45 into the axoneme (Fig. 2). FAP52 and FAP20

were unaffected (Supp. Dataset S1), further supporting conclusions from cryoET that these

proteins assemble independently of FAP106 (Fig. 2). Notably, *T. brucei* has two PACRG

homologs, PACRG-A and PACRG-B (Table 1), which have been suggested to be functionally

redundant (38, 39). Despite a high degree of similarity, however, PACRG-A and PACRG-B are

readily distinguishable by mass spectrometry and our TMT proteomics analysis shows that only

PACRG-B is lost in the FAP106 KD (Fig. 3A; Table 2; Supp. Dataset S1). Loss of PACRG-B

and not PACRG-A indicates that the extra holes in the FAP106 KD (Fig. 2E) correspond to

missing PACRG-B subunits and demonstrates that PACRG-A and PACRG-B are not redundant.

Based on spacing of IJ subunits, the two IJ holes in control parasites most likely also

correspond to missing PACRG-B.

The identity of proteins corresponding to FAP106-dependent MIP densities that are

lineage-specific (Fig. 2) are unknown. In addition to the known MIPs described above, five

previously uncharacterized proteins were reduced in flagella from FAP106 KD parasites (Fig.

3A; Table 2). One of these proteins (RPC19, Tb927.11.8890) localizes to the nucleus (40),

suggesting it is unlikely to be a MIP. The remaining four proteins (Tb927.10.7120,

Tb927.11.4920, Tb927.11.2770, and Tb927.3.3200), which are kinetoplastid-specific and

localize to the flagellum (Supp. Fig. S3A; (40)), are strong candidates for lineage-specific,

FAP106-dependent MIPs. Importantly, these four proteins were also identified as "MIP

candidates", MC3, MC5, MC8, and MC15, in a completely independent APEX2-based proximity

proteomics analysis as being nearby FAP45 and FAP52 in the B-tubule (Supp. Fig. S4; Supp.

Dataset S2). Identification of these four proteins by independent approaches greatly supports

their potential as novel, kinetoplastid-specific MIPs.

To test the requirement of MC3, MC5, MC8 and MC15 for flagellum structure and

function, we used tetracycline-inducible RNAi to individually knockdown each of these proteins.

Knockdown resulted in loss of the respective proteins (Supp. Fig. S3A) without substantial

effects on parasite growth. Loss of MC5 did not affect parasite motility, while MC3, MC8, and

MC15 are each required for normal motility (Fig. 3C; Supp. Fig. S3B). MC8 KD and MC15 KD

parasites also showed small reductions in flagellum length (Fig. 3D; Supp. Fig. S3C). To ask

whether additional proteins depend on these MCs for assembly into the axoneme, we

performed TMT proteomics on flagella isolated from parasites in which the individual MCs were

knocked down (Supp. Fig. S3D-G; Supp. Dataset S1). These proteomic analyses confirm

significant reduction of each MC in the respective knockdown, but no additional proteins were

lost ($\geq$2-fold reduced, adjusted p-value $\leq$0.06) in any of the four knockdowns (Supp. Fig. S3D-G,

Supp. Dataset S1). Therefore, motility defects in MC3, MC8, and MC15 knockdowns reflect a

requirement for these individual, kinetoplastid-specific proteins in trypanosome motility.

MC8 is a novel, lineage-specific *T. brucei* MIP that comprises the MIP B8 density.

To identify MIPs corresponding to FAP106-dependent MIP densities, we fit the AlphaFold (41,

42) models of the above MCs into our cryoET structures. AlphaFold prediction of individual

proteins returned low-confidence predictions for MC3, MC5, and MC15, but predicted that MC8

folds into a structure with a high-confidence pyramid-like domain formed by α helices (Fig. 4A),

which fits well into the MIP B8 density (Fig. 4B). To determine whether MC8 in fact corresponds

to the MIP B8 density, we performed cryoET on purified, demembranated flagella from control

and MC8 KD parasites (Fig. 4C-E). Because TMT analysis showed that MC8 is the only protein

lost in the MC8 KD (Supp. Fig. S3F; Supp. Dataset S1), any density altered in the knockdown

must correspond to MC8 itself. The subtomographic average of the 48-nm repeating unit from

MC8 KD axonemes was nearly identical to that of controls except for the absence of the MIP B8

density (Fig. 4C-E). Thus, MC8 is a bona fide, *T. brucei*-specific B-tubule MIP that is required for

normal parasite motility (Fig. 3C; Supp. Fig. S3B). The motility defect of MC8 KD parasites, in

which the only missing protein is MC8, demonstrates importance of lineage-specific MIPs to

flagellar motility.

DISCUSSION

FAP106 knockdown provides insights into MIP assembly mechanisms.

Functional analysis lags behind identification and structural assignment of MIP proteins. Here

we combine functional, structural, and proteomic analysis to demonstrate that the MIP FAP106

is required for motility and is a key interaction hub of the IJ and B-tubule MIP structures. The

role of FAP106 as a key interaction hub is emphasized by our finding that, while FAP106 is

required for stable assembly of FAP45 and lineage-specific MIP proteins MC3, 5, 8, and 15 (Fig.

2; Fig. 3, Fig. 5), loss of these individual proteins does not affect other MIP proteins or

structures (Supp. Fig. 3D-G; Fig. 4; Supp. Dataset S1; (19)). Thus, rather than interdependency,

our results suggest a hierarchical mechanism for B-tubule MIP assembly. FAP106-dependency

of FAP45 and a FAP210 structural homolog suggests that extensive interactions of FAP45 and

FAP210 with the tubulin lattice (13, 16) are relatively weak, while interactions with FAP106 (13)

are critical for stable binding and establishing their periodicity within the 48-nm repeat. This

supports the idea that an important role of MIPs is to enable complex assembly of proteins

along otherwise uniform protofilament polymers of tubulin (14) and suggests that loss of FAP45

and FAP210 in RIB72 mutants (34) may reflect dependency on FAP106 rather than a

requirement for RIB72 directly. Our studies also provide a structural explanation for motility

defects of FAP106 mutants in trypanosomes (Fig. 2), and in sperm from FAP106/ENKUR

mutants in mice (43).

Holes in the IJ filament correspond to missing PACRG-B subunits, indicating

specialization of PACRG paralogs.

PACRG alternates with FAP20 to form the highly conserved IJ filament (4, 5). One of the more

mysterious features of DMTs is a hole in the IJ filament that occurs once per 96-nm repeat in

most organisms and corresponds to a missing PACRG (8, 12, 37). *T. brucei* is unusual in

having two IJ holes per 96-nm repeat, one at the site of NDRC attachment as observed in other

organisms, and one proximal to the NDRC (15). The proximal hole is devoid of external

structures on the DMT (15), suggesting it is dictated by MIP interactions rather than NDRC

attachment, which is proposed for the NDRC hole (44). Our findings support this idea, as loss of

specific MIPs results in extra holes in the IJ filament. Some organisms have multiple PACRG

homologs (23, 38, 45), but the contribution of individual homologs is unknown. It is not known,

for example, if they are distinctly incorporated within a single axoneme or used for specialization

of axoneme function in different cell types or developmental stages. *T. brucei* has two PACRG

homologs, PACRG-A and PACRG-B, which have been suggested to be functionally redundant

(38, 39). Our structural and proteomics data instead support a model in which PACRG-A and

PACRG-B subunits both regularly assemble within each IJ filament, alternating with FAP20 in

turn, and with holes in the IJ filament corresponding to missing PACRG-B, but not PACRG-A

subunits (Fig. 2E). Distinct locations and assembly requirements for PACRG-A and PACRG-B

indicate they play distinct roles in assembly of the IJ. Although PACRG is conserved among

ciliated organisms, the family of PACRG proteins shows substantial heterogeneity in the N-

terminal region that has been shown to interact closely with the DMT lattice in *Chlamydomonas*

(21, 45). Divergent N-termini of PACRG-A versus PACRG-B may contribute to the differential

dependence on FAP106 and their distinct roles in assembly of the IJ.

MC8 is a novel, lineage-specific T. brucei MIP that is required for normal parasite motility.

The growing body of evidence suggests IJ subunits (PACRG and FAP20) and a core set of

conserved MIPs are found in all motile cilia, while other MIPs vary between organisms (13, 15,

16, 21, 23, 35, 37). FAP45, FAP52, and FAP106 represent core B-tubule MIPs while FAP126,

FAP276, and FAP210 are only found in some organisms (Table 1). We demonstrate that MC8 is

a bona fide lineage-specific MIP corresponding to the MIP B8 structure (Fig. 4). Loss of MC8 in

the FAP106 KD (Fig. 2B-2D) is likely due to loss of FAP45, which runs along protofilaments B7-

B8 (13, 16) and contacts FAP106 directly (13). Loss of MC8 compromises motility (Fig. 3C;

Supp. Fig. 3B) without affecting other MIPs (Fig. 4, Supp. Fig. 3F), demonstrating that lineage-

specific MIPs directly impact trypanosome motility. Validation of MC8 as a bona fide *T. brucei*

MIP in the current study, through a combination of mutant analysis, structural, functional, and

proximity proteomics approaches, demonstrates the power of this combined approach for MIP

identification and analysis. Our studies also strongly suggest that MC3, 5, and 15 likewise

correspond to novel, lineage-specific *T. brucei* MIPs. Trypanosome motility is necessary for

virulence in the mammalian host (32) and transmission through the tsetse fly vector (33).

Therefore, identification of novel, trypanosome-specific MIPs provides attractive targets to

consider for treatment of devastating diseases caused by these pathogens.

Model for assembly of the IJ

Our work provides an important advance toward elucidating the order of MIP assembly and

supports the following model for IJ assembly (Fig. 5). FAP20 binds every 8 nm, together with at

least a subset of PACRG, to form the IJ filament and this occurs independently from assembly

of FAP52 (21) and FAP106 (this work). FAP52 binds every 16 nm, independently of the IJ

filament (4) and FAP106 (this work), and may connect the IJ filament to the B-tubule via

FAP276 or other analogous structure (21, 35). FAP106 also binds every 16 nm, independently

from FAP52 (21), bridging the A- and B-tubules directly and serving as a critical guidepost for

assembling additional MIPs such as FAP45 and FAP210 (this work). Although FAP52 and

FAP106 bind regularly within each 48-nm repeat, their connections to other MIPs differ every 16

nm. Despite apparent contacts between FAP52 and other IJ MIPs (13, 16, 21, 35), assembly of

IJ MIPs in *Chlamydomonas* is largely unaffected by loss of FAP52 (21). Thus, while FAP52 and

FAP106 form contacts with each other and other IJ MIPs, they assemble independently from

one another, and FAP106 appears to be more critical for assembly of additional B-tubule MIPs.

Going forward, as additional MIPs are identified, particularly those that are lineage-specific,

application of combined proteomics, cryoEM, and mutant analysis, as done here, will be

necessary to completely define MIP assembly mechanisms and to yield a full understanding of

their contribution to flagellum function.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

***Trypanosoma brucei* culture**

Procyclic *T. brucei brucei* (strain 29-13) (46) were cultivated in SM medium (47) supplemented

with 10% heat-inactivated fetal bovine serum (FBS) at 28°C with 5% CO_2.

In situ tagging

mNeonGreen and APEX2-tagged cell lines were generated in the 29-13 background by C-

terminal tagging (40) with pPOTv6-puro-puro-mNG or pPOTv7-blast-blast-APEX2-3xHA,

respectively. pPOTv7-blast-blast-APEX2-3xHA contains the same APEX2-3xHA tag as in (48).

For MC3-NG, a transient CRISPR-Cas9 system (49) was used to tag both alleles. See Supp.

Table S2 for list of primers.

Tetracycline-inducible knockdown

Constructs for tetracycline-inducible knockdown were designed using RNAit (50) and cloned

into p2T7-177 (36). See Supp. Table S2 for list of primers. NotI-linearized plasmids were

transfected into 29-13 (FAP106 KD) or the corresponding MC-NG tagged cell lines (MC KDs)

using established methods (47). Clonal lines were generated by limiting dilution. Knockdown

was induced by growing cells in the presence of 1 µg/mL tetracycline (Tet) for at least 3d.

Control parasites were grown in the presence of tetracycline for comparison to the respective

KDs. For growth curves, cells were counted with a Beckman Coulter Z1 particle counter and

diluted daily to a concentration of 1e6 cells/mL, in triplicate.

qRT-PCR

Quantitative real-time PCR (qRT-PCR) was performed as previously described (51) with the

following modifications. FAP106-specific primers were designed using RNAit (50). Analyses

were performed in duplicate on three independent RNA preparations and values were

normalized to RPS23 (52). See Supp. Table S2 for list of primers.

Motility analyses

Cells were grown to ~1e6 cells/mL and loaded into polyglutamate-coated motility chambers (32)

sealed with Vaseline. 30s videos were acquired under dark-field illumination at ~40 frames per

second (fps) using a Hamamatsu ORCA-Flash 4.0 camera on a Zeiss Axio Imager A2 inverted

microscope with an EC Plan-Neofluar 10x/0.3 objective lens and Zen 2.6 Pro software. At least

five videos were collected for each independent biological replicate. Single cell tracking and

mean squared displacement were performed in MATLAB as previously described for fluorescent

parasites (32). For 'high density' motility analyses, cells were grown to ~1e7 cell/mL, then

diluted in conditioned medium to ~1e6 cells/mL and analyzed as above.

Purification of demembranated flagella (detergent-extracted flagellum skeletons)

Detergent extraction was done to demembranate flagellum skeletons, essentially as described

(15). Briefly, cells were washed in Dulbecco's PBS (DPBS), resuspended in Extraction buffer

(20 mM HEPES, pH 7.4, 1 mM $MgCl_2$, 150 mM NaCl, 0.5% NP40, 2x Sigmafast EDTA-free

protease inhibitor cocktail) for 15 min at room temperature, followed by depolymerization of

subpellicular microtubules with 1 mM $CaCl_2$ on ice for 30 min. Detergent-extracted flagellum

skeletons were pelleted at 1500 rcf for 10 min at 4°C.

Flagellum length measurements

For measurements of purified flagella, detergent-extracted flagellum skeletons were prepared

as described above and phase contrast images were acquired on a Zeiss Axioskop II

microscope with a Plan-Apochromat 63x/1.4 objective lens using Axiovision software. For

measurements of the paraflagellar rod (PFR) in detergent-extracted cytoskeletons, cells were

washed in Dulbecco's PBS (DPBS) and allowed to adhere to glass cover slips for 10 min. Cover

slips were rinsed to remove unattached cells, then extracted with PEME buffer (100 mM PIPES,

2 mM EGTA, 1 mM MgSO$_4$, 0.1 mM EDTA, pH 6.8) + 1% IGEPAL CA-630 (NP40) + 2x

Sigmafast EDTA-free protease inhibitor cocktail for 10 min. Cover slips were fixed in methanol

at -20°C for 10 min, allowed to dry, then rehydrated in DPBS for 15 min. Cover slips were

blocked in DPBS + 8% normal donkey serum + 2% bovine serum albumin then incubated in

rabbit anti-PFR2 (53) primary antibody diluted 1:1000 in blocking solution, followed by donkey

anti-rabbit Alexa 594 secondary antibody diluted 1:1500 in blocking solution. Cover slips were

mounted in Vectashield containing DAPI and images were acquired on a Zeiss Axioskop II

fluorescence microscope with a Plan-Apochromat 100x/1.4 objective lens and Axiovision or Zen

3.5 Pro software. Flagellum lengths were measured in Fiji using the freehand line tool and

analyzed in GraphPad Prism.

CryoET

CryoET grids and detergent-extracted flagellum skeletons were prepared essentially as

described (15). Briefly, 2e8 log phase cells were harvested and washed twice in DPBS.

Flagellum skeletons were prepared as described above, resuspended in 100 ul Extraction buffer

and spun over a 30% sucrose cushion in Extraction buffer without NP40 at 800 rcf for 5 min at

4°C. 100-150 µL of flagellum skeletons were collected from the upper fraction, washed once

with 700 ul Extraction buffer, and once with 1 mL Extraction buffer without NP40. Flagellum

skeletons were resuspended in Extraction buffer without NP40 and vitrified on quantifoil grids

with 5nm fiducial gold beads.

With *SerialEM* (54), tilt series were collected in a Titan Krios instrument equipped with a

Gatan imaging filter (GIF) and a post-GIF K3 direct electron detector in electron-counting mode

with parameters listed in Table S1. Frames in each movie of the raw tilt series were aligned,

drift-corrected, and averaged with *Motioncor2* (55). The micrographs in each tilt series were

aligned and reconstructed into 3D tomograms by either weighted back projections (WBP, for

sub-tomographic averaging) or simultaneous iterative reconstruction technique (SIRT, for

visualization and particle picking) using the *IMOD* software package (56). The contrast transfer

function (CTF) was determined by *ctffind4* (57) and corrected with the *ctfphaseflip* program (58)

of *IMOD*.

Sub-tomogram averaging, visualization and modeling

4x binned SIRT reconstructed tomograms were further processed by IsoNet (59) to improve the

contrast for particle picking. Because of their distinct features, radial spokes were picked as

particles to represent the centers of 96nm axonemal repeat units. These particles for 96 nm

repeat units were subject to three rounds of rough alignments with PEET (7, 60). The particle

coordinates for 48-nm repeat units were generated from the coordinates of the aligned particles

for 96-nm repeat units. While keeping all coordinates for 96-nm repeat units, extra coordinates

for 48-nm repeat units were added unidirectionally from the 96-nm-repeat-units coordinates in a

distance of 48nm along the axonemal axis. PEET alignments were performed on the particles of

48-nm repeat units to generate the final maps. In Summary, the sub-tomographic averages of

flagellar components from four datasets were generated from the following number of particles:

1014 particles from 20 tomograms of Control dataset 1, 728 particles from 18 tomograms of

FAP106 KD dataset, 1936 particles from 52 tomograms of MC8 KD dataset, and 538 particles

from nine tomograms of Control dataset 2. The cryoET sub-tomographic averaged maps have

been deposited in the Electron Microscopy Data Bank under the accession codes EMD-28802,

EMD-28803, EMD-28804, and EMD-28805, for FAP106 KD, Control 1, MC8 KD, and Control 2,

respectively. The resolution of each sub-tomographic average was calculated by

calcUnbiasedFSC in *PEET* based on the 0.143 FSC criterion (Supp. Fig. S2).

UCSF ChimeraX (61) was used to visualize reconstructed tomograms and sub-

tomographic averages. For surface rendering with UCSF ChimeraX, maps were first low pass

filtered to either 20Å or 30Å.

Model prediction of MC8 was performed by AlphaFold Colab (41, 42). AlphaFold

predicted model of MC8 was superimposed into our averaged density with the molmap and

fitmap functions in UCSF ChimeraX.

TMT labeling and quantitative proteomics

Detergent-extracted flagellum skeletons were prepared from 2e8-4e8 log phase cells as

described above. After detergent extraction and depolymerization of subpellicular microtubules,

the pellet of flagellum skeletons was washed in Extraction buffer without NP40 and solubilized in

100 μl 8M urea, 100 mM Tris, pH 8 for 15 min at room temperature. Samples were centrifuged

at full speed for 15 min to pellet any insoluble material. The supernatant was diluted with 100

mM Tris, pH 8 to a final concentration of 2M urea and precipitated with 20% ice-cold

trichloroacetic acid (TCA) on ice overnight. The sample was centrifuged at full speed for 30 min

at 4°C and washed twice with -20°C acetone. The TCA-precipitated pellets were dried and

stored at $\leq$-20°C.

Sample Digestion: Protein pellets were resuspended with digestion buffer (8M urea, 0.1M Tris-

HCl pH 8.5). Each sample was normalized by absorbance at 280 nm and 25μg was aliquoted

for the digestion. Samples were reduced and alkylated via sequential 20-minute incubations

with 5 mM TCEP and 10 mM iodoacetamide at room temperature in the dark. Carboxylate-

modified magnetic beads (CMMB) also known as SP3 (62) and ethanol (50% final

concentration) were added to each sample to induce protein binding to CMMB beads. CMMB

beads were washed three times with 80% ethanol and then resuspended with 18ul of 100 mM

TEAB. Protein samples were digested overnight with 1ul of 0.1µg/ul LysC (Promega) and 2ul of

0.4µg/ul trypsin (Pierce) at 37 °C.

TMT Labeling and CIF Fractionation: 9ul of 100% acetonitrile were added to each sample to a

final concentration of 30% (v/v). Then the TMT labels were resuspended with 100% acetonitrile.

25ug of each sample was labeled using TMT6plex (Thermo Fisher Scientific) and the four

labeled samples of each set (two independent biological replicates each of control and

knockdown) were pooled. The pooled samples were fractionated by CMMB-based Isopropanol

Gradient Peptide Fractionation (CIF) method (63) into six fractions before mass spectrometry

(MS) analysis.

LC-MS Acquisition and Analysis: Fractionated samples were separated on a 75uM ID x 25cm

C18 column packed with 1.9µm C18 particles (Dr. Maisch GmbH) using a 140-minute gradient

of increasing acetonitrile and eluted directly into a Thermo Orbitrap Fusion Lumos mass

spectrometer where MS spectra were acquired using SPS-MS3. Protein identification was

performed using MaxQuant (64) v 1.6.17.0. against a user assembled database consisting of all

protein entries from the TriTrypDB (65) for *T. brucei* strain 927 (version 7.0). Searches were

performed using a 20 ppm precursor ion tolerance. TMT6plex was set as a static modification

on lysine and peptide N terminal. Carbamidomethylation of cysteine was set as static

modification, while oxidation of methionine residues and N-terminal protein acetylation were set

as variable modifications. LysC and Trypsin were selected as enzyme specificity with maximum

of two missed cleavages allowed. 1% false discovery rate was used as a filter at both protein

and PSM levels. Statistical analysis was conducted with the MSstatsTMT Bioconductor package

(66). Raw proteomic data have been deposited to the Mass Spectrometry Interactive Virtual

Environment (MassIVE) under accession ID MSV000090661.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Daniel Velez-Ramirez for technical assistance with APEX2 proximity proteomics and

Simon Imhof for helpful discussions. We also thank Astra Bryant for assistance with high speed

microscopy and Jiayan Zhang for assistance with cryoET. Funding was provided by NIH grants

AI052348 (K.L.H.), GM071940 (Z.H.Z), and GM089778 (J.A.W). KJ was supported by the

Beckman Scholars Program (Beckman Foundation). We acknowledge the use of resources in

the Electron Imaging Center for Nanomachines supported by UCLA and grants from NIH

(S10RR23057 and S10OD018111) and NSF (DBI-1338135 and DMR-1548924).

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. FAP106 is required for parasite motility. 29-13 (Ctrl) and FAP106 knockdown

(FAP106 KD) parasites were grown in the presence of tetracycline to induce knockdown. (*A*)

qRT-PCR analysis of FAP106 mRNA levels. Graph shows the mean $\pm$ standard deviation from

three independent biological replicates. (*B*) Cumulative growth curve shows the mean cell

density vs time $\pm$ standard deviation from three independent biological replicates. (*C*) Histogram

shows the length distribution of purified, demembranated flagella. Inset shows a representative

phase contrast image. (*D*) Histogram shows the distribution of flagellum lengths as measured by

anti-paraflagellar rod (PFR) immunofluorescence microscopy in detergent-extracted

cytoskeletons. Inset shows a representative image of detergent-extracted cytoskeletons with

PFR in red. (*E*) Graph shows the mean $\pm$ standard deviation of flagellum lengths in *C* (Phase

Contrast) and *D* (anti-PFR). Phase contrast: Ctrl = 22.0 $\pm$ 2.5 µm, FAP106 KD = 19.0 $\pm$ 3.1 µm;

anti-PFR: Ctrl = 17.6 $\pm$ 2.7 µm, FAP106 KD = 14.2 $\pm$ 3.2 µm. N=50 flagella for each (*F*) Motility

tracks of individual parasites. (*G*) Mean squared displacement of parasites tracked in *F*. Dotted

lines indicate the upper and lower bounds of the standard error of the mean. Ctrl N=489;

FAP106 KD N=675. Data from an independent biological experiment are shown in Supp. Fig.

S1.

Figure 2. FAP106 is required for stable assembly of IJ MIPs and other MIP

structures. Demembranated flagella were purified from 29-13 (Ctrl) and FAP106 knockdown

(FAP106 KD) parasites grown in tetracycline to induce knockdown. Structure of the 48-nm

repeat of the DMT was obtained by cryoET, with subtomographic averaging. Densities are

colored according to the legend and based on similarity to published structures (13, 16, 21). (*A*)

Schematic illustrating a cross-section of the '9+2' axoneme and paraflagellar rod (PFR) viewed

from flagellum tip to base. Adapted from (67). Enlarged panel shows a single DMT, with A- and

B-tubules indicated (A_t, B_t) and protofilaments numbered. FAP106 (red) and the inner junction

filament (IJ) comprised of alternating PACRG (blue) and FAP20 (purple) are colored for

reference. Viewing angles shown in *C-E* are indicated. (*B*) Cross-sectional view of the DMT.

Colored densities indicate structures reduced or missing in FAP106 KD compared to Ctrl. (*C*

and *D*) Longitudinal views of the DMT. Viewing angles are indicated in *A, inset*. The 48-nm

repeat is indicated. Note that *T. brucei* has a structure similar to FAP210 of *Chlamydmonas*

(green) despite not having a clear FAP210 homolog (Table 1). (*E*) Longitudinal views of the

DMT, showing the IJ filament. Viewing angles are indicated in *A, inset.* The 48-nm repeat is

indicated. Black arrowheads indicate the position of the single hole found within each 48-nm

repeat in Ctrl DMTs. FAP20 and PACRG subunits are colored according to the legend, with

holes corresponding to missing PACRG-B subunits, as suggested by TMT proteomics (Figure

3).

Figure 3. TMT proteomics identifies novel, lineage-specific MIP candidates. (*A*)

Demembranated flagella were purified from 29-13 (Ctrl) or FAP106 KD parasites grown in

tetracycline to induce knockdown. Volcano plot shows significance (-$\log_{10}$ Adjusted P-value) vs.

relative abundance ($\log_2$ Fold-Change) for all proteins quantified by TMT proteomics. Relative

abundance is calculated as FAP106 KD/Ctrl. Results are from two independent biological

samples. Proteins that met the filtering criteria (2-fold decrease, adjusted P-value $\leq$0.06; Table

2; Supp. Dataset S1) are indicated by red dots. Labels indicate known proteins (red text) and

putative MIP candidates (green text). Asterisks indicate proteins that were independently

identified as putative B-tubule MIP candidates in a separate proximity labeling approach (Supp.

Fig. S3; Supp. Dataset S2). (*B*) Cross-sectional view of the DMT as viewed from the flagellum

tip, showing the positions of MIP structures lost in FAP106 KD as observed by cryoET (Fig. 2),

with known MIPs colored. A- and B-tubules are indicated (A_t, B_t) and protofilaments are

numbered. (*C*) Motility analysis showing mean squared displacement of 29-13 (Ctrl) and MC KD

parasites from $\geq$2 independent biological replicates. Dotted lines indicate the upper and lower

bounds of the standard error of the mean. Ctrl N=1761; MC3 KD N=627; MC5 KD N=753; MC8

KD N=709, MC15 KD N=751. Individual replicates are shown in Supp. Fig. S3B. (*D*) Detergent-

extracted cytoskeletons were prepared from the indicated KD parasites or their respective

mNeonGreen (NG)-tagged parental cell lines (Ctrl). Graph shows the mean $\pm$ standard

deviation of flagellum lengths as measured by anti-PFR immunofluorescence microscopy. MC3-

NG (Ctrl) = 19.9 $\pm$ 2.3 µm, MC3 KD = 19.3 $\pm$ 1.8 µm; MC5-NG (Ctrl) = 18.9 $\pm$ 2.4 µm, MC5 KD =

19.1 $\pm$ 2.3 µm; MC8-NG (Ctrl) = 19.6 $\pm$ 2.9 µm, MC8 KD = 18.0 $\pm$ 2.5 µm, MC15-NG (Ctrl) =

18.4 $\pm$ 2.1 µm, MC15 KD = 16.7 $\pm$ 2.6 µm. N=50 flagella for each, except N=45 flagella for

MC15-NG.

Figure 4. MC8 is a novel, lineage-specific *T. brucei* MIP that comprises the MIP B8

density. (*A*) AlphaFold prediction for MC8 (41, 42), colored according to confidence. Box

indicates high-confidence region modeled in *B*. (*B*) MC8 AlphaFold prediction modeled into MIP

B8 cryoET density. (*Left*) Cross-sectional view of the DMT, with the MIP B8 density colored

aqua. (*Middle, Right*) Enlarged view of MIP B8 density with AlphaFold prediction shown in aqua.

Viewing angle shown in *Right* panel is indicated by the dashed line in *Middle* panel. (*C-E*)

Demembranated flagella were purified from 29-13 (Ctrl) and MC8 knockdown (MC8 KD)

parasites grown in tetracycline to induce knockdown. Structure of the 48-nm repeat of the DMT

was obtained by cryoET, followed by subtomographic averaging. (*C*) Cross-sectional view of the

DMT with MIP B8 density colored in aqua. (*D* and *E*) Longitudinal views of the DMT. Viewing

angles and colors are as indicated in Fig. 2.

Figure 5. FAP106 is required for motility and stable assembly of conserved and lineage-

specific MIPs at the inner junction. Normal parasite motility relies on FAP106 as a critical

interaction hub for assembly of MIPs at the inner junction (IJ). Cross-sectional and longitudinal

views of the DMT are illustrated. Conserved IJ MIPs PACRG-A, FAP20 and FAP52 assemble

independently of FAP106, however PACRG-B does not stably assemble into the IJ filament

without FAP106. The B-tubule remains intact and connected to the A-tubule at the IJ, despite

loss of multiple IJ MIPs. FAP106 is also critical for stable assembly of the conserved MIP,

FAP45, and a FAP210-like protein (modeled as filaments based on published structures (13, 16,

21)), as well as several novel, lineage-specific MIPs.

Table 1. Known B-tubule MIPs

Chlamydomonas	Mammals	*Tetrahymena*	*Trypanosoma*
†PACRG	PACRG	TTHERM_00446290; TTHERM_00499310; TTHERM_00499570	Tb927.3.2310; Tb927.9.9940
†FAP20	CFAP20	TTHERM_00418580	Tb927.10.2190
FAP45	CFAP45	TTHERM_001164064	Tb927.8.4580
FAP52	CFAP52	TTHERM_01094880	Tb927.11.7560
FAP106	ENKUR	TTHERM_00137550; TTHERM_00370750	Tb927.11.4880
FAP210	CFAP210	TTHERM_00643530	*
FAP126	Flattop		
FAP276	CFAP276		
FAP90			
FAP112			
	EFCAB6		
			Tb927.11.2770 (MIP B8, this study,‡)

*Possible analogous structure present, but no clear sequence homolog

†FAP20 and PACRG form the IJ filament

‡Corresponding structure was called 'MIP3c' in (15) but our current study suggests this structure is distinct from MIP3c (FAP45).

Table 2. Proteins significantly reduced in FAP106 KD flagellum skeletons by TMT proteomics

Gene	Gene ID	Fold Reduction	Adjusted P-value	Protein Localization	Function
FAP106	Tb927.11.4880	24.02	0.0011	Flagellum	B-tubule MIP
FAP45	Tb927.8.4580	3.95	0.0035	Flagellum	B-tubule MIP
PACRG-B	Tb927.9.9940	2.77	0.0576	Flagellum	IJ filament
MC5	Tb927.11.4920	13.74	0.0003	Flagellum	MIP candidate*
MC3	Tb927.10.7120	3.44	0.0044	Flagellum	MIP candidate*
MC8	Tb927.11.2770	2.81	0.0111	Flagellum	MIP candidate*
MC15	Tb927.3.3200	1.95	0.0177	Flagellum	MIP candidate*
RPC19	Tb927.11.8890	2.99	0.0055	Nucleus	RNA polymerase

*Identified by independent APEX2-based proximity proteomics of known B-tubule MIPs (see Supp. Dataset S2)

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Movement

A_t   B_t   FAP106 KD   A_t   B_t

B_t

A_t

48 nm repeat   48 nm repeat

FAP20   ⎤   FAP20   ⎤
PACRG-A   ⎬ IJ filament   PACRG-A   ⎬ IJ filament
PACRG-B   ⎦   PACRG-B   ⎦
FAP45   FAP45
FAP52   FAP52
FAP106   FAP106
MIP B8   ⎤   MIP B8   ⎤
FAP210-like ⎬ Lineage-specific MCs   FAP210-like ⎬ Lineage-specific MCs
MIP A12   ⎮   MIP A12   ⎮
MIP B5   ⎦   MIP B5   ⎦