Wsc1 acts as a piezosensor in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, enhancing glycerol efflux via aquaglyceroporin Fps1 in response to high hydrostatic pressure

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Abstract

The fungal cell wall is the first barrier against diverse external stresses, such as high hydrostatic pressure. This study explores the roles of osmoregulation and the cell wall integrity (CWI) pathway in response to the high pressure in the yeast *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. We demonstrate the roles of the transmembrane mechanosensor Wsc1 and aquaglyceroporin Fps1 in an underlying protective mechanism to avoid cellular rupture under high pressure. The promotion of water influx into cells at 25 MPa, as evident by an increase in cell volume and a loss of the plasma membrane eisosome structure, promotes the activation of Wsc1, an activator of the CWI pathway. The downstream mitogen-activated protein kinase Slt2 was hyperphosphorylated at 25 MPa. Glycerol efflux increases via Fps1 phosphorylation, which is initiated by downstream components of the CWI pathway, and contributes to the reduction in intracellular osmolarity under high pressure. Herein, the elucidation of a cellular pathway that is used as a protective mechanism against high pressure could potentially be translated to mammalian cells and could help to understand cellular mechanosensation and adaptation.

Introduction

Microorganisms encounter a wide variety of extreme environmental conditions, including heat, cold, pH, salinity, oxidants, or nutrient starvation. These stresses are first detected by sensor proteins that trigger the expression of specific genes via intracellular signaling pathways to respond to and overcome a crisis. Eukaryotes are also subjected to physical stresses, including tension, shear forces, and hydrostatic pressure. Mechanosensitive ion channels, found in eukaryotic cells, can directly sense various forms of mechanical forces, notably tension in the surrounding lipid bilayer (Kefauver et al., 2020, Ranade et al., 2015). In mammalian cells, forces are also detected, at the cell surface, through specific classes of integral membrane receptors, such as integrins and cadherins, which transduce stimuli into biochemical signals that initiate adaptive responses (Kechagia et al., 2019, Ladoux & Mege, 2017). Unlike stretching or expansion, hydrostatic pressure acts on cells as a uniform stress and affects all substances and reactions in the cell, according to Pascal's principle. Therefore, it is difficult to identify sensors of high hydrostatic pressure and determine the effects of this pressure on complex intracellular signaling networks. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that cells modify their metabolism, transcription, translation, or post-translational modifications in response to increasing hydrostatic pressure (Abe et al., 1999, Abe, 2021, Bourges et al., 2017, Hodder et al., 2020, Iwahashi,

2015, Mishra et al., 2022, Pattappa et al., 2019).

Human cells also experience high hydrostatic pressures. In joints, cartilage is typically

subjected to hydrostatic pressures between 3–10 MPa (0.1 MPa = 1 bar = 0.9869 atm = 1.0197

kg/cm^2) (Afoke et al., 1987), with a maximum pressure of 18 MPa in the hip joint (Hodge et al., 1989).

In tissue engineering, hydrostatic pressures up to 50 MPa are used as a mechanical stimulus to induce

chondrocyte differentiation (Elder & Athanasiou, 2009, Natenstedt et al., 2015). Furthermore, very

low pressures, in the order of tens of mmHg, have recently received attention as a stimulus for

endothelial tubulogenesis. The loading of endothelial cells with a pressure of 50 mmHg (~ 6.7 kPa)

activates protein kinase C and transiently activates the Ras/ERK pathway as a result of the water

efflux through aquaporin 1 (Yoshino et al., 2020). Microorganisms, such as *Escherichia coli* and

Saccharomyces cerevisiae, also respond to hydrostatic pressure for growth and survival (Abe, 2007a,

Abe, 2021, Aertsen et al., 2005, Marietou et al., 2015, Mota et al., 2013, Yoshino et al., 2020).

High-pressure adaptation mechanisms in deep-sea microorganisms have also received considerable

attention. However, little is known about how microbial cells detect such stimuli and convert them to

intracellular signals.

Although *S. cerevisiae* is not a deep-sea piezophile, it can be used to elucidate the molecular

mechanisms underlying the cell's responses to high hydrostatic pressure by applying basic knowledge

of genetics and protein functions (Abe, 2021). Pressure pretreatment at a sublethal level (50 MPa for 1

h) increased the viability of yeast cells at 200 MPa, which is governed by two stress-induced

transcription factors, Msn2 and Msn4 (Domitrovic et al., 2006). High pressure of 25 MPa generates

superoxide anions in yeast mitochondria, and a strain deficient in superoxide dismutase 1 (Sod1)

shows marked sensitivity to high pressures (Funada et al., 2022). Incubation of yeast cells at 25 MPa

for 5 h resulted in the upregulation of the *DAN/TIR* family mannoprotein genes, which are known to

be induced under hypoxic conditions and at low temperatures (Abe, 2007b). Target of rapamycin

complex 1 (TORC1), an evolutionarily conserved serine/threonine kinase in eukaryotes, was activated

by a pressure of 25 MPa (Uemura et al., 2020). We demonstrated that TORC1 plays a critical role in

maintaining an appropriate glutamine level under high pressure by downregulating the *de novo*

synthesis of glutamine (Uemura et al., 2020). Such evidence indicates that high-pressure stress induces

diverse changes in intracellular processes and that cells survive by adaptively coping with each

change.

The fungal cell wall provides the first barrier against external stresses, such as osmolarity

changes, harmful drugs, microbial enzymes, and mechanical injuries. It is an elastic structure with a

thickness of 50–500 nm and is composed of β1,3-glucan, β1,6-glucan, chitin, and mannoproteins

(Lesage & Bussey, 2006, Levin, 2011, Orlean, 2012). The Young's modulus of the cell wall is

estimated to be between 10 and 100 MPa (Davi et al., 2019, Ma et al., 2005), which is an intermediate

value between that of low-density polyethylene and rubber. The primary mechanical role of the cell

wall is to maintain cell morphology by balancing the tension generated by the turgor pressure, which

is important for polarized cell growth (Bi & Park, 2012, Madden & Snyder, 1998, Pruyne & Bretscher,

2000). During polarized growth, the cell wall is remodeled at the site of bud formation, by balancing

turgor pressure, to allow budding at the risk of cell lysis. In *S. cerevisiae,* cell wall destabilization is

sensed by transmembrane sensors of the WSC family (Wsc1, Wsc2, and Wsc3), as well as Mid2 and

its homolog Mtl1 (Jimenez-Gutierrez et al., 2020, Kock et al., 2015, Levin, 2005, Levin, 2011, Philip

& Levin, 2001), which activate a conserved signal transduction cascade, namely, the cell wall integrity

(CWI) pathway. These sensors have no sequence similarity but share a common structural feature

consisting of a large extracellular domain, transmembrane domain, and short cytoplasmic tail (Kock et

al., 2015, Rodicio & Heinisch, 2010). Their architecture is analogous to that of the mammalian

transmembrane integrins (Elhasi & Blomberg, 2019). Among the five sensor proteins in *S. cerevisiae*,

Wsc1 has been extensively studied both genetically and biophysically (Banavar et al., 2018, Dupres et

al., 2009, Heinisch et al., 2010, Merchan et al., 2004, Neeli-Venkata et al., 2021, Philip & Levin, 2001,

Schoppner et al., 2022). It is unevenly distributed at the cell surface and accumulates at sites of

polarized growth, in patches with an approximate diameter of 200 nm (Heinisch et al., 2010). Heat,

hypoosmotic shock, or treatment with cell wall-damaging agents and α-factor, all of which perturb the

cell wall, are sensed by Wsc1 to transiently activate the CWI pathway (Banavar et al., 2018, Cruz et

al., 2013, Kock et al., 2016, Straede & Heinisch, 2007). The extracellular domain of Wsc1 contains a

serine-threonine-rich (STR) region that is highly mannosylated (Lommel et al., 2004). Atomic force

microscopy (AFM) analysis showed that the STR domain has a nanospring-like structure that expands

and contracts under external pressure, which in turn causes dephosphorylation of the cytoplasmic tail

of Wsc1, transmitting signals downstream (Dupres et al., 2009, Heinisch et al., 2010, Vay et al., 2004).

The cytoplasmic tail of Wsc1 interacts with the GDP/GTP exchange factor Rom2, which subsequently

activates small GTPase Rho1(Philip & Levin, 2001, Vay et al., 2004). Bem2, Sac7, Lrg1, and Bag7 act

as GTPase-activating proteins (GAPs) for Rho1 (Fig. 1)(Martin et al., 2000, Peterson et al., 1994, Schmidt et al., 1997, Schmidt et al., 2002). Rho1 regulates protein kinase C (Pkc1), a serine/threonine protein kinase that is essential for cell wall remodeling (Levin, 2011). Pkc1 then activates three protein kinase-signaling modules that integrate the mitogen-activated protein kinase kinase kinase (MAPKKK) Bck1, redundant mitogen-activated protein kinase kinases (MAPKKs) Mkk1 and Mkk2, and mitogen activated protein kinase (MAPK) Slt2 (Levin, 2011). Slt2 induces the transcription of genes involved in maintaining cell wall integrity and mediates the phosphorylation of aquaglyceroporin Fps1 (Ahmadpour et al., 2016, Levin, 2005, Mollapour et al., 2009). Although the CWI cascade is well characterized (Fig. 1), the exact mode of Wsc1 action in response to different environmental cues is still unclear.

Fps1 is under the control of the CWI pathway (Ahmadpour et al., 2016, Laz et al., 2020). In yeast, when the cell wall is damaged, water flows into the cell driven by the osmotic pressure difference between the inside and outside of the cell. To cope with this stress and prevent osmolysis, yeast cells activate Fps1 to expel glycerol and eliminate osmotic pressure differences (Tamas et al., 1999). The opening and closing of Fps1 is a complex process mediated by protein phosphorylation involving several signaling pathways. First, MAP kinase Hog1 is activated in response to hyperosmotic stress and phosphorylates the T231 residue of Fps1, resulting in Fps1 closure (Ahmadpour et al., 2016). Hog1 negatively regulates this channel by displacing the Fps1-activating proteins Rgc1 and Rgc2, thereby causing Fps1 closure (Lee et al., 2013). Second, it is known that the open state of Fps1 requires phosphorylation by Ypk1, a target of TORC2-dependent protein kinase (Muir et al., 2015). Third, Fps1 is known to promote opening by another MAP kinase, Slt2, which phosphorylates the S537 residue of Fps1 (Muir et al., 2015).

To date, the effects of high hydrostatic pressure in yeast cells have not been studied with a focus on osmoregulation and the CWI pathway. Remarkably, while imaging wild-type *S. cerevisiae* cells, minor cell swelling was observed after high-pressure incubation at 25 MPa. This suggests that high pressure may facilitate the influx of water into the cell or damage the cell wall allowing an influx of water. This observation led us to study high-pressure signaling, with a focus on water influx, turgor pressure, the CWI pathway via Wsc1, and aquaglyceroporin Fps1 (Fig. 1). We believe that our study contributes important information on the signaling events triggered by the application of high-pressure and the resulting molecular mechanisms that help the cell to cope with it.

Results

Wsc1 is required for efficient cell growth under high pressure.

The growth of any *S. cerevisiae* strain depends on tryptophan availability. Tryptophan-prototrophic wild-type strains (e.g., BY4742) grew at 25 MPa with a doubling time of 5 h, whereas tryptophan auxotrophic strains (e.g., YPH499) showed growth deficiency at this pressure (Abe & Horikoshi, 2000, Abe & Minegishi, 2008). Therefore, BY4742 was used as a parental strain throughout the study. Based on the previous studies (Jimenez-Gutierrez et al., 2020, Kock et al., 2015, Levin, 2005, Levin, 2011, Philip & Levin, 2001), we hypothesized that any of the five sensor proteins, Wsc1–3, Mid2, and Mtl1, could detect hydrostatic pressure changes, either directly or as a damage to the cell wall, and activate the CWI pathway to allow for high-pressure growth. Cells were cultured in synthetic complete (SC) medium at an OD_{600} of 0.01 for 48 h, under atmospheric pressure (0.1 MPa) or 25 MPa. Unless otherwise specified, the high-pressure growth test was carried under these conditions throughout the study. We found that the *wsc1Δ* mutant exhibited a moderate growth defect at 25 MPa, whereas the other mutants grew as efficiently as the wild-type cells (Fig. 2A). The result suggests that Wsc1 plays a primary role in high-pressure growth. To test the possibility that high pressure could impair the cell wall, we examined the effect of the cell wall-stressing agent caspofungin, a β-glucan synthase inhibitor (Kurtz & Douglas, 1997), on cell growth. We found that the drug inhibited cell growth more effectively under high pressure than under atmospheric pressure, with an IC_{50} of 17.5 and 9.7 ng/mL at 0.1 and 25 MPa, respectively (Fig. 2B). These results suggest that high pressure additively impairs the cell wall with caspofungin.

Wsc1 is characterized by an N-terminal extracellular cysteine-rich domain (CRD), followed by a glycosylated STR domain, a single transmembrane domain, and a C-terminal cytoplasmic tail, which is considered to be the mechanosensory region (Fig. 1). The CRD and STR domains detect structural changes in the cell wall (Dupres et al., 2009, Heinisch et al., 2010). An alanine substitution of eight cysteines in the CRD of Wsc1 had a marginal effect on high-pressure growth ability, whereas deletions of the STR and the entire N-terminal region caused sensitivity to high pressure (Fig. 2C). These results suggest that the STR of Wsc1 can detect structural changes in the cell wall caused by high pressure.

Single-molecule AFM results indicated that Wsc1 assembles in patches as large as 200 nm

on the plasma membrane, thereby enhancing transduction of the CWI signaling pathway (Dupres et al.,

2009, Heinisch et al., 2010). Wsc1 assembles at the tips and bud necks where cells undergo polar

growth, and endocytosis is essential for their polarity (Piao et al., 2007). To determine the effect of

high pressure on the distribution of Wsc1, we observed the localization of Wsc1-GFP before and after

culturing the cells at 25 MPa. Cells were observed after depressurization. As previously reported (Piao

et al., 2007, Wilk et al., 2010), Wsc1-GFP localized mainly to bud tips, but also to the plasma

membrane of mother cells as patchy structures, and possibly to late endosomes as punctate structures

and vacuoles (Fig. 2D). High pressure enhanced vacuolar degradation of Wsc1, which was

characterized by increased vacuolar GFP signals, while maintaining the bud tip localization (Fig. 2D).

The polarized distribution of Wsc1 to bud tips requires endocytosis (Piao et al., 2007, Wilk et al.,

2010). The Wsc1 mutant, in which the NPF sequence at the C-terminal tail was replaced by AAA, and

a mutant strain lacking Sla1, a component of actin- and clathrin-based endocytic machinery, exhibited

a uniform distribution of Wsc1 within the plasma membrane (Piao et al., 2007). Although these

mutants are sensitive to caspofungin, they grow normally in its absence (Piao et al., 2007).

Wsc1$^{NPF>AAA}$-GFP was present throughout the plasma membrane (Fig. 2D) and Wsc1$^{NPF>AAA}$ -GFP

expressing cells grew as efficiently as the wild-type cells at 25 MPa (Fig. 2D). Therefore, we suggest

that Wsc1 is required for efficient cell growth under high pressure but does not need to be exclusively

localized to the bud tips.

Wsc1 is a potential high-pressure sensor that transmits pressure signals to the CWI pathway.

To address the role of Wsc1 as a high-pressure sensor, we focused on the downstream effector Rom2

during high-pressure growth. The Wsc1 C-terminal cytoplasmic domain residue, Y303, is critical for

its interaction with Rom2 (Vay et al., 2004). Both the disruption of *ROM2* and the Wsc1-Y303A

mutation, which interferes with the Wsc1–Rom2 interaction, resulted in growth defects at 25 MPa (Fig.

3A). Among the four Rho1 GAP genes, deletions in *BEM2, SAC7*, and *LRG1* caused growth defects at

25 MPa to varying degrees (Fig. 3A). The expression of GTP-bound active forms of Rho1-F35L or

Q68H failed to restore the high-pressure sensitivity of the *rom2*Δ mutant (Fig. 3B), suggesting that the

association of Rho1 with Rom2 is critically important for high-pressure growth. The expression of the

constitutively active form of Pkc1-R398P allowed the *rom2*Δ mutant to grow efficiently at 25 MPa

(Fig. 3B). Disruption of *PKC1*, *BCK1* or *SLT2* resulted in severe high-pressure sensitivity, whereas

only disruption of *MKK1* and not *MKK2* caused moderate high-pressure sensitivity (Fig. 3C).

Therefore, we suggest that Wsc1 acts as a piezosensor that detects hydrostatic pressure changes via

alteration of the cell wall structure and may convert pressure signals into the CWI pathway.

210   To further validate this hypothesis, the phosphorylation of Slt2 was examined in response to

high pressure. Remarkably, the phosphorylation of Slt2 increased in a pressure-dependent manner (Fig.

3D). Slt2 is under the control of the CWI signaling pathway, which is responsible for maintaining cell

wall homeostasis (Levin, 2005, Martin et al., 2000). Thus, hyperphosphorylated Slt2 may modulate

the transcription of downstream genes through phosphorylating its substrates under high pressures. To

test this possibility, we analyzed the effect of high pressure on the localization of Swi4, one of the

downstream transcription factors of Slt2. Wild-type cells that express Swi4-GFP were incubated with

15 µg/mL nocodazole in a YPD medium for 2 h at 0.1 MPa to induce cell cycle arrest in the G_2/M

phase (Kim et al., 2010) when most of the Swi4-GFP was present in the cytoplasm. Synthetic

Complete (SC) medium was not used in this analysis because nocodazole was ineffective in arresting

the cell cycle even at higher concentrations (our unpublished observation). Cells were then cultured

for 5 h at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. We found that the percentage of cells with Swi4-GFP migrating from

the cytoplasm to the nucleus was higher at 25 MPa (46%, n > 300) than at 0.1 MPa (17%, n > 300)

(Fig. 3E). Furthermore, cells lacking Swi4 or Swi6 showed marked high-pressure sensitivity (Fig. 3F).

These results support our model, which shows that high pressure activates the CWI pathway.

High pressure facilitates water influx into the cells.

While conducting this study, we noticed that the wild-type cells were moderately swollen after

incubation at 25 MPa. To validate this further, we examined whether the distribution of eisosomes was

affected by pressure. Eisosomes, peripheral membrane protein complexes located on the cytoplasmic

side of membrane compartments occupied by Can1 (MCC), are membrane invaginations composed of

furrows of approximately 50 nm in depth and 300 nm in length (Douglas & Konopka, 2014, Lanze et

al., 2020, Sakata et al., 2022). If the cell swells and the plasma membrane undergoes stretching under

high pressure, the membrane invaginations should disappear. To verify this, we observed cells

co-expressing the low-affinity tryptophan permease Tat1-GFP as a plasma membrane marker (Ishii et

al., 2022, Suzuki et al., 2013) and an eisosome resident protein, Nce102-mCherry, after cultured at 25

or 50 MPa. At 0.1 MPa, Nce102-mCherry was localized to the plasma membrane in a patchy pattern

characteristic of eisosomes (Fig. 4A). Notably, after high-pressure culture at 25 or 50 MPa, Nce102-mCherry was evenly distributed within the plasma membrane (Fig. 4A). This was partially suppressed by the presence of 1 M sorbitol (Fig. 4A). When the co-localization of Tat1-GFP and Nce102-mCherry was examined at the cell surface, Pearson's correlation coefficient (PCC) increased with incubation time at 25 MPa (Fig. 4B), confirming the even distribution of Nce102 under high pressure. Similar increases in PCC with Tat1 were found for Pil1 and Sur7, another two eisosome-associated proteins, but not as pronounced as for Nce102 (Fig. 4B). These results suggest that the influx of water into the cells after high-pressure incubation results in tension in the plasma membrane.

Therefore, we quantitatively analyzed the effect of high pressure on cell volume, which was calculated by measuring the cell diameter using Tat1-GFP as the plasma membrane marker. We found that the cell volume increased 1.2-fold after incubation at 25 MPa for 1 or 3 h, suggesting that water influx occurred under high pressure (Fig. 4A, B). The degree of cell swelling was comparable even at 50 MPa, a pressure at which cell division stops. To verify pressure-induced cell swelling, we examined the effects of 1 M sorbitol addition on cell volume under high pressure. As expected, 1 M sorbitol suppressed the high pressure-induced increase in cell volume (Fig. 4B).

The yeast cell wall is composed of the mannoproteins, β1,3- and β1,6-glucan, and a small amount of chitin, cross-linked to form elastic higher-order complexes (Lesage & Bussey, 2006). Calcofluor white (CFW) is a chitin binding agent that causes cell wall injury. In the *cwh41Δ* mutant, hypersensitivity to CFW is associated with cell wall abnormalities such as reduced levels of β1,6-glucan (Ram et al., 1994). CFW inhibits the assembly of enzymes that connect chitin to β1,3-glucan and β1,6-glucan. If high pressure causes cell wall injury, we hypothesized that sensitivity to CFW may be enhanced. To validate this, we cultured cells at 0.1 or 25 MPa in the presence of various concentrations of CFW in YPD medium. SC medium was not used in this analysis because cells were substantially resistant to CFW in this medium (our unpublished observation). Although cell growth was not inhibited at 0.1 MPa with 20 μg/mL CFW, it was significantly inhibited at 25 MPa (Fig. 5A) at a lower concentration of 10 μg/mL CFW, suggesting that a high pressure enhances cell sensitivity to CFW due to an increased accessibility of the drug to chitin. Although chitin was not quantified in the cell wall after a high-pressure incubation, there was no noteworthy transcriptional upregulation of the chitin synthetic genes at 25 MPa (Abe, 2007b). High-pressure enhanced CFW

susceptibility was a mild change compared to the effects observed upon *CWH41* gene disruption (Ram

et al., 1994). Thus, we assume that a high pressure of 25 MPa exerts a mild and possibly reversible

perturbation of cell wall integrity, resulting in an influx of water into the cell.

In growing yeast cells, turgor pressure is estimated to be 0.5–1.5 MPa due to the influx of

water driven by the osmotic gradient (Atilgan et al., 2015, Minc et al., 2014, Mishra et al., 2022,

Schaber et al., 2010). The turgor pushes the cell membrane, expanding the cell wall. Using an

osmometer, the osmotic pressure of the SC medium was found to be 255 ± 0 mOsm/kg (n = 3), which

corresponds to 0.588 MPa (nearly 0.6 MPa). Assuming that the turgor pressure of the cells was 1.0

MPa, the intracellular osmotic pressure was 1.6 MPa. Thus, the water potentials of the SC medium,

turgor pressure, and cells were –0.6, 1.0, and –1.6 MPa, respectively. Applying 1.0 MPa pressure to

the cell culture (i.e., the water potential of the SC medium will be 0.4 MPa) caused a water influx into

the cells until the turgor pressure rose to 2.0 MPa. Hence, the cell wall was subjected to twice the

turgor pressure even at 1.0 MPa compared to 0.1 MPa. This situation is similar to the exposure of cells

to hypoosmotic solutions. Even at external hydrostatic pressures above 1.0 MPa (e.g., 25 MPa), there

is no net water influx because there is no hydrostatic pressure difference between the inside and

outside of the cell, according to Pascal's principle. Thus, a turgor pressure of 2 MPa was maintained

throughout the incubation at 25 MPa. Eventually, the cell was at a higher risk of rupture under high

pressure. Furthermore, if the cell wall is physically injured by high pressure, the risk of rupture is

dramatically increased. To cope with this crisis, cells would prevent water influx by expelling glycerol,

the major osmolyte in yeast, to reduce internal osmotic pressure. Therefore, we focused on the

regulation of intracellular glycerol levels under high hydrostatic pressure.

Aquaglyceroporin Fps1-mediated glycerol efflux is required for high-pressure growth.

Under hyperosmotic conditions, yeast cells synthesize or retain high concentrations of glycerol to

maintain their osmotic balance (Blomberg, 2022, de Nadal & Posas, 2022, Hohmann, 2002).

Intracellular glycerol concentration is partially regulated by Fps1, an aquaglyceroporin on the plasma

membrane. Fps1 closes when extracellular osmolarity is high and opens when it is low, to expel

glycerol and prevent cell rupture (Ahmadpour et al., 2016, Beese et al., 2009, Lee et al., 2013, Luyten

et al., 1995, Muir et al., 2015). The growth of the *fps1Δ* mutant in SC medium was found to be

comparable to that of the wild-type strain at 0.1 MPa but was markedly sensitive at 25 MPa (Fig. 5B).

The addition of 1 M sorbitol to the medium restored the growth of the *fps1*Δ mutant to the wild-type

level, at 25 MPa (Fig. 5B). Disruption of the glycerol synthase genes *GPP1* or *GPD1* increased, albeit

partially, the high-pressure growth ability of the *fps1*Δ mutant (Fig. 5C). Furthermore, a single deletion

of *GPP1* enhanced high-pressure growth in the wild-type strain, although deletion of other glycerol

biosynthetic genes had no promotive effect (Fig. 5C).

Next, we analyzed the intracellular and extracellular glycerol concentrations. Wild-type and

*fps1*Δ cells in SC medium were incubated at 0.1 MPa and 25 MPa for 24 h, starting with an initial

OD_{600} of 0.1. Upon analyzing these cells, we found that the intracellular glycerol concentration in

wild-type cells decreased markedly after high-pressure culture, whereas more glycerol accumulated

extracellularly (Fig. 5D). By contrast, *fps1*Δ cells had a 3-fold higher intracellular glycerol

concentration than wild-type cells, which remained unchanged even after high-pressure culture (Fig.

5D). Thus, we concluded that wild-type cells expelled glycerol via Fps1 to cope with the high-pressure

induced excess water influx.

Furthermore, we observed the ultrastructure of cells by transmission electron microscopy

(TEM) and found that wild-type cells did not show any significant changes in cell morphology and the

cell wall structure after incubation at 25 MPa (Fig. 6). Interestingly, 20–40% of *fps1*Δ cells had

sharply ruptured cell walls, without any abnormalities in their intracellular structures at 25 MPa (Fig. 6,

arrows). It is likely that the cell walls were weakened by increased turgor pressure due to glycerol

accumulation under high pressure and were broken off during sample preparation using the sandwich

freezing method (Yamaguchi et al., 2021a, Yamaguchi et al., 2021b).

Fps1 opening is likely regulated by Slt2 via phosphorylation during high-pressure cultures.

The upstream regulators of Fps1 were analyzed to determine the mechanism by which cells regulate

Fps1 in response to high pressure. Previous studies have indicated that Hog1 is a negative regulator of

Fps1 opening, whereas Ypk1 and Slt2 are positive regulators (Fig. 1)(Ahmadpour et al., 2016, Lee et

al., 2013, Muir et al., 2015). To determine which kinases are involved in the regulation of the Fps1 in

response to high pressure, we examined the high-pressure growth ability of the *fps1*Δ mutant

expressing Fps1-T231A (Hog1 target site) or S537A (Slt2 target site) at 25 MPa. We found that the

Fps1-S537A strain showed high sensitivity, whereas the Fps1-T231A strain grew at 25 MPa as well as

the wild-type strain (Fig. 7A). We examined the phosphorylation of Fps1 using western blotting and

observed a high-molecular-weight band of Fps1-3HA, the intensity of which increased slightly (2.2 ±

0.3-fold, n = 3) with increasing pressure at 25 MPa (Fig. 7B). As expected, the high molecular weight

band of Fps1-3HA disappeared in cells expressing Fps1-S537A (Fig. 7B).

To clarify the importance of Slt2, we examined the effect of deletion of *SLT2* on

high-pressure growth and found that the *slt2Δ* mutant was highly sensitive to high pressure (Fig. 3C,

7C). Furthermore, this defect was completely rescued by the addition of 1M sorbitol (Fig. 7C). Thus,

the high-pressure sensitivity of the *slt2Δ* mutant was due to excess water influx, at least in part, due to

its inability to open Fps1 and expel glycerol. To verify whether the high-pressure sensitivity of the

slt2Δ mutant was due to reduced Fps1 activity, we introduced an *FPS1-Δ11* plasmid into the *slt2Δ*

mutant. Fps1-Δ11 lacks amino acid residues 217–230, adjacent to the Hog1 phosphorylation site, T231,

essential for its closure. Thus, Fps1-Δ11 is constitutively active in expelling glycerol because of the

lack of Hog1-mediated channel closure (Tamas et al., 2003). We found that Fps1-Δ11 efficiently

rescued the high-pressure sensitivity of the *fps1Δ* mutant and partially rescued that of the *slt2Δ* mutant

(Fig. 7D).

Ypk1 is required for growth under high pressure, independent of the regulation of Fps1.

Fps1 is also phosphorylated by Ypk1 for its activation, depending on TORC2 signaling (Muir

et al., 2015). We found that the disruption of *YPK1* caused a severe defect in cell growth at 25 MPa,

demonstrating the importance of Ypk1. (Fig. 7E). Ypk1 is phosphorylated by multiple protein kinases

such as Fpk1/Fpk2 (Rispal et al., 2015), Pkh1/Pkh2 (Roelants et al., 2002, Roelants et al., 2004,

Roelants et al., 2010), and TORC2 (Leskoske et al., 2017, Muir et al., 2015, Roelants et al., 2004)(Fig.

1). To infer which kinases are required for high-pressure growth via phosphorylation of Ypk1, we

examined the effect of alanine substitutions for S51/S57 residues (Fpk1/Fpk2 target sites for Ypk1

inactivation), T504 residue (Pkh1/Pkh2 target site for Ypk1 activation), and S644/T662 residues

(TORC2 target sites for Ypk1 activation) on cell growth under high pressure (Fig. 1). While cells

expressing Ypk1-S51A-S71A grew as efficiently as wild-type cells at 25 MPa, those expressing

Ypk1-T504A or S644A-T662A showed severe growth defects under the pressure (Fig. 7E). Thus, it is

possible that Pkh1/Pkh2 and/or TORC2 phosphorylate Ypk1 in response to high pressure. As shown in

Fig. 4, cells swelled after high-pressure incubation and the eisosome structure disappeared. This raises

the possibility that Slm1, localized in the eisosome, is released by high pressure and eventually binds

to and activates TORC2, ultimately phosphorylating Ypk1 (Fig. 1)(Berchtold et al., 2012, Riggi et al.,

2018). To test this hypothesis in our preliminary experiments,

Lsp1-mCherry/Slm1-GFP-co-expressing and Avo3-3×mCherry/Slm1-GFP-co-expressing strains were

constructed, and any alterations in the colocalization of each strain under high pressure were observed

using confocal laser microscopy. Avo3 and Lsp1 are components of TORC2 and the eisosome,

respectively (Babst, 2019, Eltschinger & Loewith, 2016). We found that the colocalization of

Lsp1-mCherry and Slm1-GFP decreased after cell incubation at 25 MPa, whereas that of

Avo3-3×mCherry and Slm1-GFP appeared to increase, suggesting TORC2 activation (Fig. S1A).

Furthermore, phospho-Ypk1 was detected using a rabbit monoclonal antibody for phospho-PKC (pan)

(zeta Thr410) (190D10), which reacts with the phosphorylated T504 residue, and after incubation at

25 MPa for 3 h, its phosphorylation level increased 7-fold. (Fig. S1B).

To test whether phosphorylation of Fps1 by Ypk1 is required for high-pressure growth, the

effect of phosphorylation site mutations was examined. Residue S570 of Fps1 is majorly

phosphorylated by Ypk1, while the phosphorylation of residues S181 and S185 has also been reported

(Fig. 1, (Muir et al., 2015)). Both the Fps1-S570A-substituted and S181A-S185A-S570A

triple-substituted strains grew as well as the wild-type strain (Fig. 7F). Consistent with this result, the

electrophoretic mobility of the alanine substitution mutants Fps1-S570A-3HA,

Fps1-A181A-S185A-3HA, and Fps1-A181A-S185A-S570A-3HA remained unaffected (Fig. 7B).

Thus, Ypk1 is unlikely to phosphorylate Fps1 in response to high pressure.

Discussion

Based on the coincidental observation that cells swell moderately under high pressure, the importance

of glycerol efflux by Fps1 and its regulation via the CWI pathway became the focus of this study. We

propose the presence of a high-pressure signaling system mediated by the stress sensor Wsc1 (Fig. 8).

In our model, high hydrostatic pressure promoted water influx into yeast cells, resulting in increased

turgor pressure, which in turn expanded the cell walls and activated Wsc1. Since the wsc1Δmid2Δ

double deletion mutant can only survive on osmotic support (Philip & Levin, 2001), Mid2 in particular

and the three other sensor proteins as well may have overlapping functions. It is interesting to note that

the water influx caused by the physical force of increased hydrostatic pressure was similar to that of

hypoosmotic stress. A high pressure of 25 MPa may also cause some perturbation to the cell wall, as

suggested by the observation that sensitivity of cells to CFW was enhanced under high pressure (Fig.

5A). This could be interpreted as the increased accessibility of CFW to chitin as a result of the

modification of cell wall. Since high hydrostatic pressure has little effect on covalent binding (Chen et

al., 2017), it is unlikely that the β1,3-glucan or β1,6-glucan networks are cleaved by high pressure.

Rather, we suspect that pressure may have a greater effect on the levels of cell wall mannoproteins.

Our previous DNA microarray results showed that transcription of genes encoding for the major cell

wall mannoprotein Cwp1 was markedly reduced under 25 MPa; instead, the *DAN/TIR* family

mannoprotein genes, which are typically induced under hypoxic conditions (Abramova et al., 2001),

were dramatically enhanced (Abe, 2007b). Although their protein levels have not been examined, the

composition of mannoproteins may change with high pressure, and eventually, cell wall elasticity may

change. It remains possible that high pressure directly causes a conformational change in Wsc1,

enhancing its interaction with Rom2. Once the CWI pathway is activated, Slt2 kinase phosphorylates

the aquaglyceroporin Fps1. Phosphorylation of Fps1 promotes its opening, allowing cells to expel

glycerol and adjust the osmotic pressure balance across the plasma membrane (Fig. 5). The *gpp1Δ*

mutant, which is partially defective in glycerol synthesis, grew slightly better at 25 MPa than the

wild-type strain. Therefore, a lower intracellular glycerol concentration may be advantageous for yeast

growth under high-pressure conditions. The role of Slt2 in growth under high pressure is not limited to

the activation of Fps1, but also the phosphorylation of Swi4/Swi6 and the induction of transcription of

many downstream genes. This seems justified by the fact that loss of *SWI4* or *SWI6* causes severe

high-pressure sensitivity (Fig. 3F).

However, there is a clear difference in the cellular responses to hypoosmotic stress and

pressure stress. For example, when cells that have been cultured in 1 M sorbitol medium are exposed

to hypoosmotic stress, by rapidly transferring them to a 0.1 M sorbitol medium, the response occurs

within 5 min, after which the phosphorylation level of Ypk1 and the activation levels of the HOG and

CWI pathways return to a steady state (Dunayevich et al., 2018, Muir et al., 2015, Riggi et al., 2018).

By contrast, in response to high hydrostatic pressure, the phosphorylation of Ypk1 does not change

within 5 min (unpublished observation), and phosphorylation of Ypk1 and Slt2 occurs after

approximately 3 h. Our high-pressure application was not as abrupt as an osmotic downshock and did

not modify the medium composition. Therefore, high-pressure application may be analogous to the

addition of low concentrations of cell wall synthesis inhibitors, such as caspofungin. Unlike cell wall

inhibitors, however, pressure does not introduce any substance into the system but simply affects the

interactions and equilibria between pre-existing components.

To answer the question of whether an increase in cell volume occurs during pressurization or

after depressurization, we introduced a high-pressure chamber with pressure-resistant optical windows

(Syn Cop., Kyoto, Japan) into an inverted microscope. Cells were placed on the optical window,

pressurized after the lid was tightened, and images were taken *in situ* during incubation at 25 MPa.

However, the variation in cell diameter during pressurization was so large that very small changes

could not be detected with any significant difference.

Our TEM observations suggest that the physical damage to the cell wall at 25 MPa was not

severe. If 24 h of incubation at 25 MPa caused significant damage to the cell wall, the cells should

rupture and die. However, this was not the case for either the wild-type strain or *fps1Δ* mutant.

Visualized in TEM images of *fps1Δ* cells, the cell wall ruptured sharply after a high-pressure

incubation (Fig. 6). This observation may be due to the localized weakening of the cell wall by

increased turgor pressure due to glycerol accumulation in the *fps1Δ* cells. Thus, they were likely

ruptured during TEM sample preparation by the sandwich freezing method (Yamaguchi et al., 2021a,

Yamaguchi et al., 2021b). However, the percentage of cell wall breaks in the *fps1Δ* strain after the

strain was incubated at 25 MPa varied by region on the copper disk, on which *fps1Δ* cells were placed,

as described in Materials and methods, and could not be quantitatively analyzed. In a pioneering study

by Perrier-Cornet et al., *S. fibuligera* cells were observed in a high-pressure optical chamber up to an

extreme pressure of 250 MPa, with a survival rate of 50% (Perrier-Cornet et al., 1995). They reported

a 10–15% reduction in cell volume after 10 min at 250 MPa and a 25% reduction in volume after

maintaining the pressure for another 15 min (Perrier-Cornet et al., 1995). An ultrahigh pressure of 250

MPa causes disruption of the membrane structure and protein denaturation; thus the intracellular

material leaks out of the cell, resulting in cell contraction (Perrier-Cornet et al., 1995). However, in our

study, we focused on cellular adaptation to mild pressure stress at 25 MPa, which permits cell growth.

A pertinent question is whether Wsc1 undergoes a direct conformational change, due to high

pressure, to transmit signals downstream, or whether the expansion of the cell wall, due to water influx,

activates Wsc1 indirectly, allowing for subsequent signaling. Using single-molecule AFM, Dupres et

al. demonstrated that Wsc1 behaves like a linear nanospring that is capable of resisting high

mechanical forces and responding to cell surface stress (Dupres et al., 2009). Recently, Neeli-Venkata

et al. reported the formation of large clusters of the surface protein Wsc1 at sites where forces were

applied to yeast cell walls (Neeli-Venkata et al., 2021). Wsc1 acts as a bona fide mechanosensor and

activates pathways that reinforce the cell wall (Neeli-Venkata et al., 2021). Owing to technical

difficulties in AFM of observing in a closed vessel under high pressure, it is currently not possible to

analyze pressure-induced structural changes in Wsc1 by AFM.

Although this study showed the importance of Ypk1 kinase in high-pressure growth (Fig. 7E),

it did not provide evidence that Ypk1 regulates the opening of Fps1 by phosphorylation (Fig. 7F).

Rather, alanine substitutions at Ypk1 residues, phosphorylated by TORC2 and Pkh1/Pkh2 kinases,

prevented high-pressure growth (Fig. 7E). TORC2-Ypk1 regulates polarization of the actin

cytoskeleton and sphingolipid biosynthesis (Kamada et al., 2005, Rispal et al., 2015, Roelants et al.,

2011, Tabuchi et al., 2006). Thus, the regulation of sphingolipid synthesis or actin organization may be

important for high-pressure adaptation. Indeed, high pressures stiffen membrane lipid bilayers

(Matsuki et al., 2013, Winter, 2002), which may adversely affect membrane protein functions,

membrane fusion, or membrane trafficking. Furthermore, hypoosmotic stress causes the

depolymerization of the actin cytoskeleton (Gualtieri et al., 2004). To cope with these pleiotropic

effects of high pressure, yeast cells may activate Fps1 via the CWI pathway to expel glycerol and

avoid cell rupture, promote sphingolipid synthesis via the TORC2-Ypk1 pathway to maintain

membrane homeostasis, and regulate actin cytoskeleton organization. Therefore, the regulation of

sphingolipid synthesis and actin cytoskeleton via the TORC2-Ypk1 pathway is an interesting research

target for understanding the physiological responses to high hydrostatic pressure in yeast.

Our previous studies have shown that defects in *TRP1*, *TAT2*, TORC1-EGOC, or poorly

characterized genes such as *EHG1/MAY24* cause severe high-pressure sensitivity (Abe & Horikoshi,

2000, Abe & Minegishi, 2008, Kurosaka et al., 2019, Uemura et al., 2020). On the contrary, the

defects in the CWI pathway and Fps1 shown in this study caused relatively mild sensitivity to

high-pressure. This is probably because the former defects cause impaired nutrient uptake or aberrant

glutamine accumulation under 25 MPa, resulting in rapid growth arrest after pressurization, whereas

the latter defects are due to an inability to prevent water influx under high pressure, which causes the

negative effects on growth to progress slowly. Yeasts possess two types of aquaporins, Aqy1 and Aqy2.

However, both alleles are nonfunctional in experimental strains derived from S288C, such as strain

BY4742 (Sabir et al., 2017). Therefore, the water influx into the cell when exposed to hypoosmotic or

high hydrostatic pressure stress is thought to be mainly due to passive diffusion across the plasma membrane lipid bilayers. Passive diffusion of water across the lipid bilayer is much slower than water flux through aquaporins. This could explain why the effects of high-pressure stress are relatively mild. The Σ1278b strain and the naturally occurring *S. cerevisiae* strains have functional *AQY* alleles (Laize et al., 1999). Therefore, the effects of hypoosmotic and high-pressure stress in these strains could be more severe than in the experimental strains. The osmotic pressure of the SC medium was 255 mOsm/kg, which corresponds to 127.5 mM NaCl. When it rains, the ambient osmotic pressure drops to near zero, exposing naturally occurring yeasts to greater hypoosmotic stress. Exposure to high hydrostatic pressure under such low osmotic pressure would pose a threat to their survival.

Meanwhile, the ambient osmotic pressure is isotonic for human and other animal cells. Therefore, excessive water influx due to high water pressure loading, as observed in yeast in this study, would not occur. However, when human endothelial cells are subjected to a pressure of 50 mmHg (~6.7 kPa), which corresponds to a transient increase in blood pressure during exercise, water is extruded from the cell via aquaporin 1, causing cell contraction and plasma membrane deformation (Yoshino et al., 2020). Consequently, protein kinase C is activated via the G protein-coupled receptor and phospholipase C, which in turn activates the Ras/ERK pathway, ultimately leading to the formation of complex tubular vascular structures (Yoshino et al., 2020). Since aquaporins are channels, if the water potential is equivalent inside and outside the cells, no water efflux should occur even when the pressure is 50 mmHg. However, because the pressure is very weak, the pressure applied at different sites in a single cell may be different, and water may be extruded through aquaporins at lower-pressure sites.

Conclusion

Hydrostatic pressure is a thermodynamic variable that merely affects the equilibrium or rate of chemical reactions, without introducing any components into preexisting systems. One of the main research targets of high-pressure bioscience and biotechnology is to reveal the mechanism by which proteins form stable three-dimensional structures by analyzing the cavities and fluctuations inside the molecules by spectroscopic and thermodynamic measurements under high pressure (Maeno & Akasaka, 2015, Silva et al., 2006, Winter, 2019). On the other hand, in the food industry, ultra-high pressures of several hundred MPa are used as an alternative to heating for sterilization of food

products and for food processing (Aganovic et al., 2021). In previous studies, experiments were

carried out under equilibrium conditions. Therefore, the results were observed a sufficiently long time

after pressurization. However, our study aimed to elucidate the molecular mechanisms by which living

cells recognize mild "high pressures" of a few tens of MPa and how they adapt to the new

environments by modifying their complex intracellular metabolism and gene expression. Pressure

affects all molecules and cellular reactions according to Pascal's principle, but the effects vary not only

with the magnitude of the applied pressure but also with the duration of the pressurization. Therefore,

the effects of high pressure on the complex metabolic processes of living cell systems cannot be

generalized. We believe that the full picture of pressure effects will be revealed by applying the

extensive knowledge of yeast cell biology and sophisticated molecular genetic tools to advanced

transcriptomics, proteomics, and metabolomics studies, which could potentially be translated to

mammalian cells and help improve cellular health under normal and stress conditions.

Materials and methods

Yeast strains and media

The parental wild-type strain BY4742 and deletion mutants were used in this study (Table 1). Strains

DL376 (*pkc1Δ*) and DL100 (the parental strain of DL376) were kindly provided by Dr. David Levin of

Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine through Dr. Hidetoshi Iida of Tokyo Gakugei

University (Levin & Bartlett-Heubusch, 1992). The two strains were transformed with YCplac22

(*TRP1, CEN*) to provide tryptophan prototrophy. Cells were grown in SC medium or YPD medium at

25 °C under 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa (Abe & Minegishi, 2008). The SC medium contained 0.67% yeast

nitrogen base without amino acids (Becton, Dickinson and Company, MD, USA), 2% D-glucose, 20

μg/mL methionine, 90 μg/mL leucine, 30 μg/mL isoleucine, 40 μg/mL tryptophan, 20 μg/mL histidine,

30 μg/mL lysine, 20 μg/mL methionine, 50 μg/mL phenylalanine, 30 μg/mL tyrosine, 20 μg/mL

arginine, 100 μg/mL aspartic acid, 100 μg/mL glutamic acid, 400 μg/mL serine, and 200 μg/mL

threonine. YPD medium contains 1% Bacto yeast extract (Becton, Dickinson and Company), 2%

Bacto peptone (Becton, Dickinson and Company), and 2% D-glucose.

High-pressure cell culture

For most experiments examining growth efficiency under high pressure, growing cells in shaking

culture were diluted in SC or YPD medium to an OD_{600} of 0.01. The diluted cells were transferred to sterile 2.2-mL tubes and sealed with Parafilm™ (Bemis Corp., Neenah, WI, USA). The tubes were placed in a 500-mL high-pressure chamber (Abe & Minegishi, 2008) and subjected to 25 MPa at 25 °C for 48 h. After depressurization, cell growth was evaluated by measuring OD_{600} using a PD-303 spectrophotometer (Apel, Kawaguchi, Japan). Here, $OD_{600} = 1.0$ corresponds to 1.65×10^7 cells/mL in our device setup.

Generation of plasmids and mutant strains

The plasmids used in the present study are listed in Table 2. Polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based site-directed mutagenesis was performed using the appropriate primers. The primer sequences will be disclosed upon request. Homologous recombination, using pJT6 (GFP, *HIS3*) and pJT601 (mCherry, *URA3*), was used to tag genes in the yeast genome with GFP and mCherry, respectively (kind gifts from Dr. Jiro Toshima of Tokyo University of Science, (Kawada et al., 2015)). Plasmids encoding HA-Rho1 (SP333; *LEU2, CEN*), HA-Rho1^{F35L} (SP335; *LEU2, CEN*), and HA-Rho1^{Q68H} (SP336; *LEU2, CEN*) were kindly provided by Dr. Satoshi Yoshida of Waseda University (19339687). pBSK-*SFK1*-3×mCherry-*CaURA3* was kindly provided by Dr. Takuma Kishimoto of Hokkaido University Graduate School of Life Science (Kishimoto et al., 2021). To generate Avo3-3×mCherry strain, a DNA fragment encoding a *C*-terminal domain of Avo3 was amplified by PCR and was inserted into pBSK-*SFK1*-3×mCherry-*CaURA3* of which *SFK1* gene had been removed. The resulting plasmid was linearized by digestion with *Eco*RV and introduced into the wild-type strain harboring *SLM1*-GFP in the genome.

Western blotting

Whole-cell extract preparation was performed as previously described (Ishii et al., 2022). Briefly, 1.65 $\times 10^8$ cells were collected by centrifugation, serially washed with 10 mM NaN_3, 10 mM NaF and lysis buffer A (50 mM Tris-HCl, 5 mM EDTA, 10 mM NaN_3, and Complete™ EDTA-free tablet; Roche Diagnostics, Mannheim, Germany), and disrupted with glass beads at 4 °C. Unbroken cells and debris were removed by centrifugation at $900 \times g$ for 5 min, and purified lysates were treated with 5% (w/v) Sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS) and 5% (v/v) 2-mercaptoethanol at 37 °C for 10 min. Whole-cell extract preparation to detect phospho-Slt2 was performed as previously described (Wilk et al., 2010)

with some modifications. Yeast cells amounting to 5×10^7 in SC medium were treated with 255 mM

NaOH–1% 2-mercaptoethanol on ice for 15 min, then 6% trichloroacetic acid (TCA) was added and

cells were kept on ice for another 15 min. The cell pellet was collected after centrifugation at 15,000 $\times$

g for 5 min, washed with 1 M Tris-HCl (pH 6.8), and was treated with a sample buffer (65 mM Tris

[pH6.8], 2% SDS, 10% Glycerol, 100 mM DTT, 0.002% BPB) to denature proteins at 95 °C for 5 min.

The supernatant after centrifugation at 15,000 $\times$ g for 5 min was used for western blotting. Whole-cell

extract preparation to detect phospho-Ypk1was performed as previously described (Roelants et al.,

2011) with some modifications. Yeast cells amounting to 1.65×10^7 were collected by centrifugation

at 6,000 $\times$ g for 1 min. After removing the supernatant, the cell pellet was frozen in liquid nitrogen and

was treated with 150 µL of 1.85 M NaOH–7.4% 2-mercaptoethanol for 15 min on ice. Then, 150 µL

of 50% TCA was added to the cell suspension to precipitate proteins on ice for 10 min. After removing

the supernatant, the proteins were washed twice with acetone and were denatured with the sample

buffer at 95 °C for 5 min. Proteins were separated by SDS-PAGE and transferred to Immobilon PVDF

membranes (EMD Millipore, Billerica, MA, USA). The membrane was incubated for 1 h with

antibodies. The following antibodies were used: a monoclonal antibody for HA (Medical & Biological

Laboratories Co. Ltd., Nagoya, Japan), a rabbit polyclonal antibody for Adh1 (Rockland

Immunochemicals, Inc., Gilbersville, PA, USA), a rabbit polyclonal antibody for Pma1 (Usami et al.,

2014), a mouse monoclonal antibody for Slt2 (cat. no. sc-133189, Santa Cruz Biotechnology, TX,

USA), a rabbit monoclonal antibody phospho-p44/42 MAPK (Erk1/2, Thr202/Tyr204; cat no. 4376,

Cell Signaling Technology, MA, USA) to detect phospho-Slt2, a rabbit polyclonal antibody for Ypk1

(a kind gift from Dr. Mitsuaki Tabuchi of Kagawa University), and a rabbit monoclonal antibody for

Phospho-PKC (pan) (zeta Thr410) (190D10) (cat. no. 2060, Signaling Technology) to detect

phospho-Ypk1. The membranes were washed and incubated for 30 min with horseradish

peroxidase-conjugated goat anti-rabbit IgG (GE Healthcare Bio-Sciences, NJ, USA). Labeling was

performed using an enhanced chemiluminescence (ECL) select kit (GE Healthcare Bio-Sciences). The

chemiluminescence signals were detected in an ImageQuant LAS4000 mini (GE Healthcare Life

Sciences, NJ, USA)

Image collection and analyses on confocal laser microscope

Cells expressing GFP- or mCherry-tagged proteins were imaged using a confocal laser microscope

(FV-3000) equipped with an objective lens UPLAPO60XOHR (NA 1.5) (Olympus, Co. Ltd., Tokyo,

Japan). To determine the cell volume, cells were assumed to be spheres or ellipsoids. Using Tat1-GFP

as a cell membrane marker (Ishii et al., 2022), cross-sectional images of > 100 cells cultured under

each condition were acquired. CellSens software (Olympus, Co. Ltd) was used to mark Tat1-GFP as a

circle or ellipse, and the radius (r μm) or long (a μm) and short radii (b μm) were calculated. For

spheres, the volume (μm^3) was approximated by V = $4/3\pi*r^3$, and for ellipsoids, $V = 4/3\pi*a*b^2$.

Changes in cell volume due to high-pressure incubation were measured by acquiring images at 0.1

MPa, immediately after depressurization. Colocalization of Lsp1-mCherry with Slm1-GFP or

Avo3-3×mCherry with Slm1-GFP was analyzed in more than 50 cells from three independent

experiments using cellSens software and represented by the Pearson colocalization coefficient. An

IX70 epifluorescence inverted microscope (Olympus, Co. Ltd.) was used for imaging.

Determination of glycerol concentration

Culture medium containing cells of 1.0 OD$_{600}$ (1.65×10^7 cells) was centrifuged at $6,000 \times g$ for 1 min

to separate the supernatant and cell pellet. The cell pellet was dissolved in 100 μL of sterilized

deionized water and the mixture was heated at 95 °C for 10 min. After cooling, the mixture was

centrifuged at $21,500 \times g$ for 10 min to collect the supernatant. Glycerol concentrations in the samples

were determined using a glycerol colorimetric assay kit (item no. 10010755, Cayman Chemical

Company, MI, USA) with an appropriate dilution.

Measurement of osmotic pressure

The osmotic pressure of SC medium was measured using a Fiske 210 osmometer (Advanced

Instruments, MA, USA).

Transmission electron microscopy observation

Samples for TEM observation were prepared as described previously (Yamaguchi et al., 2021a,

Yamaguchi et al., 2021b), with modifications. Cells cultured at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa for 24 h in the SC

medium were briefly centrifuged at $760 \times g$ following depressurization, and less than 1 μL of the cell

suspension was sandwiched between two copper disks (3 mm diameter) that had been

prehydrophilized. The copper disks were then sandwiched between reverse-acting tweezers and

dropped into a coolant for quick freezing. An isopentane : ethanol (4:1) mixture cooled with liquid

nitrogen to a sherbet-like consistency (approximately –130 °C) was used as the coolant. The copper

disks were immediately transferred to liquid nitrogen, cracked open, and then transferred to a fixing

solution cooled with liquid nitrogen. Ethanol containing 2% glutaraldehyde and 1% tannic acid was

used as a fixing solution. The samples in the fixing solution were kept at –80 °C for 48 h, –20 °C for 2

h, 4 °C for 2 h, and finally returned to room temperature, in that order. Cells on copper disks were

immersed in dehydrated ethanol for 30 min thrice and then overnight. Propylene oxide : resin (Agar

low viscosity resin LV, cat. no. R1078, Agar Scientific Ltd, Essex, UK) mixture was used for resin

replacement of the samples, with the following mixing ratios in sequence; 1 : 0 (30 min, twice), 2 : 1

(1 h, once), 1 : 2 (1 h, once), 0 : 1 (overnight, once). The resin-substituted samples were allowed to

solidify for 24 h at 60 °C. Ultrathin sections of 70 nm thickness were then prepared using an Ultracut

E ultramicrotome (Reichert-Jung, Austria). The sections were stained with EM Stainer (cat no. 336,

Nissin EM, Tokyo, Japan) for 30 min and lead stain (Sigma-Aldrich, MO, USA) for 30 min. The

samples were observed using a transmission electron microscope JEM-2100 (JEOL, Tokyo, Japan)

equipped with a thermionic electron emission electron gun (LaB6 filament) at an acceleration voltage

of 100 kV.

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Author contributions

Takahiro Mochizuki: Conceptualization and investigation, Toshiki Tanigawa: Conceptualization and

investigation, Seiya Shindo: Investigation, Momoka Suematsu: Investigation, Yuki Oguchi:

Investigation, Tetsuo Mioka: Cooperation, Yusuke Kato: Cooperation, Mina Fujiyama: Investigation,

Eri Hatano: Investigation, Masashi Yamaguchi: Cooperation, Hiroji Chibana: Cooperation, Fumiyoshi

Abe: Conceptualization; supervision; writing – original draft, review and editing.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

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Table 1. Strains used in this study

Strains	Genotype	Source or reference
BY4742	*MATα his3Δ1 leu2Δ0 lys2Δ0 ura3Δ0*	(Brachmann et al., 1998)
16672	*wsc1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
11161	*wsc2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
16255	*wsc3Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
15241	*mid2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
14653	*mtl1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
14700	*rom1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
15280	*rom2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
16152	*bem2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
14225	*sac7Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
13937	*lrg1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
12390	*bag7Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
DL100	*MATa his4 leu2-3,112 trp1-1 ura3-52 can1*	(Siliciano & Tatchell, 1984)
DL376	*pkc1Δ::Leu2* in DL100	(Levin & Bartlett-Heubusch, 1992)
11328	*bck1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
12487	*mkk1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
12112	*mkk2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
10993	*slt2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
TMY1482	*SWI4-GFP::HIS3* in BY4742	This study
12739	*rlm1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
16109	*swi4Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
14131	*swi6Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
AFY7	*PIL1-mCherry::URA3* in BY4742	(Ishii et al., 2022)
MSY1	*NCE102-mCherry::URA3* in BY4742	This study
MSY17	*SUR7-mCherry::URA3* in BY4742	This study
11531	*fps1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
11446	*gpp1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
10199	*gpp2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
13718	*gpd1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
11751	*gpd2Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)
TTY146	*fps1Δ::HphMX6 gpp1::kanMX4* in BY4742	This study
TTY147	*fps1Δ::HphMX6 gpd1::kanMX4* in BY4742	This study
TTY108	*SLM1-GFP::HIS3 LSP1-mCherry::URA3* in BY4742	This study
TTY113	*SLM1-GFP::HIS3 AVO3-3×mCherry::URA3* in BY4742	This study
14976	*ypk1Δ::kanMX4* in BY4742	(Winzeler et al., 1999)

Table 2. Plasmids used in this study

Plasmid	Description	Source or reference
pUA35	3HA *URA3 CEN*4	Laboratory stock
pTM35	*GFP URA3 CEN*4	Laboratory stock
YEplac181	*LEU2 2 μ*	(Gietz & Sugino, 1988)
YCplac22	*TRP1 CEN4*	(Gietz & Sugino, 1988)
pRS313	*HIS3 CEN6*	(Sikorski & Hieter, 1989)
pTAT1-GFP	*TAT1*-GFP driven by its own promoter in pRS313	This study
pMB1	*WSC1*-3HA driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pMB23	*WSC1*-3HA-Y303A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pMB74	*WSC1*-3HA-N344A-P345A-F346A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pSS21	*WSC1*-GFP driven by its own promoter in pTM35	This study
pMB80	*WSC1*-3HA-N344A-P345A-F346A driven by its own promoter in pTM35	This study
SP333	HA-*RHO1* driven by its own promoter *LEU2 CEN*	(Yoshida et al., 2009)
SP335	HA-*RHO1*-F35L driven by its own promoter *LEU2 CEN*	(Yoshida et al., 2009)
SP336	HA-*RHO1*-Q68H driven by its own promoter *LEU2 CEN*	(Yoshida et al., 2009)
pME29	*PKC1* driven by its own promoter in YEplac181	This study
pME30	*PKC1*-R398P driven by its own promoter in YEplac181	This study
pTNK5	*FPS1* driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK8	*FPS1*-T231A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK9	*FPS1*-S537A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK10	*FPS1*-S570A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK22	*FPS1*-S181A-S185A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK23	*FPS1*-S181A-S185A-S570A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK15	*FPS1*-Δ11 driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pSS10	*FPS1*-3HA driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pSS26	*FPS1*-3HA-S537A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pSS12	*FPS1*-3HA-S570A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pSS16	*FPS1*-3HA-S181A-S185A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pSS14	*FPS1*-3HA-S181A-S185A-S570A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pSS6	*YPK1* driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK11	*YPK1*-S51A-S71A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK7	*YPK1*-T504A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTNK14	*YPK1*-S644A-T662A driven by its own promoter in pUA35	This study
pTM102	pBSK (+) -*SFK1*-3×mCherry	(Kishimoto et al., 2021)
pJT6	GFP *HIS3*	(Kawada et al., 2015)
pJT601	mCherry *URA3*	(Kawada et al., 2015)

 Figure legends

Fig. 1. Schematic representation of the CWI pathway in *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. Five cell wall

sensor proteins are depicted. Upon cell wall stress, Wsc1 first clusters at the cell surface. Binding of

the GDP/GTP exchanging factor, Rom2, to the cytoplasmic tail of Wsc1 activates the small GTPase,

Rho1. Rho1-GTP activates the protein kinase C, Pkc1, which activates a conserved mitogen-activated

protein kinase (MAPK) cascade. The cascade consists of Bck1 (MAPKKK), Mkk1/Mkkk2

(MAPKKs), and Slt2 (MAPK). Phosphorylated Slt2 translocates into the nucleus and promotes cell

cycle progression through the SBF complex and transcription of genes encoding cell wall proteins by

Rlm1. Slt2 also phosphorylates aquaglyceroporin, Fps1, and promotes Fps1 opening to expel glycerol.

When cells are stressed, tension is applied to the plasma membrane, causing the loss of the eisosome,

a plasma membrane invaginating structure. Slm1/Slm2 localized in the eisosome migrate to TORC2.

Consequently, TORC2 is activated and phosphorylates Ypk1. Phosphorylated Ypk1 also

phosphorylates Fps1, positively regulating glycerol efflux. The phosphorylation sites, kinases, and

functional motifs in major proteins used in this study are outlined below. CRD (8C), cysteine-rich

domain (C27, C49, C53, C69, C71, C86, C90, and C98); STR, serine/threonine-rich domain (111–265

amino acid residues); NPF motif, N344-P345-F346.

Fig. 2. Wsc1 is required for growth under high pressure. (A) Wild-type and mutant cells were cultured

in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa for 48 h with an initial $OD_{600} = 0.01$. Unless otherwise specified,

the high-pressure growth test was carried under this condition throughout the experiments. (B)

Wild-type cells were cultured in SC medium containing various concentrations of caspofungin at 0.1

MPa or 25 MPa. The IC_{50} values were derived from the plots. (C) Cells with mutations in the

extracellular domain of Wsc1 were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. (D). Wild-type cells

expressing Wsc1-GFP or Wsc1$^{NPF>AAA}$-GFP were cultured at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa for 3 h and were

observed under a confocal laser microscope immediately after depressurization. (E) *wsc1Δ* cells

expressing Wsc1 or Wsc1$^{NPF>AAA}$ were cultured at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. Data are presented as mean ±

standard deviation of three independent experiments.

Fig. 3. CWI pathway is activated by high pressure. (A) Mutant strains, with various defects in the CWI

pathway, were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. (B) *rom2Δ* cells expressing Rho1 or

Pck1 derivatives were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. (C) Mutant strains, with various

defects in the CWI pathway, were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. Note that strains

DL100 and DL376 harboring YCplac22 (*TRP1, CEN*) were used to examine the *PKC1* deficiency

(left). (D) Wild-type cells were cultured in SC medium under various pressure conditions for 3 h. Slt2

and phosphorylated Slt2 (P-Slt2) were detected by western blotting using specific antibodies. The

relative intensities, P-Slt2/Adh1 and Slt2/Adh1, were quantified in an ImageQuant LAS4000 mini. (E)

Wild-type cells expressing Swi4-GFP were incubated with 15 µg/mL nocodazole for 2 h at 0.1 MPa.

The cells were then cultured for another 5 h at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa and were observed after

depressurization. The percentages of cells with Swi4-GFP in the nucleus in more than 300 cells are

shown. (F) Mutant strains were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. Data are presented as

mean ± standard deviation of three independent experiments.

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Fig. 4. High pressure causes cell swelling and loss of the eisosome structure. (A) Wild-type cells

co-expressing Tat1-GFP (plasma membrane marker) and Nce102-mCherry (eisosome marker) were

cultured in SC medium at 0.1, 25 or 50 MPa for 3 h and were observed under a confocal laser

microscope after depressurization. Cross-section images are shown. (B) Cells co-expressing Tat1-GFP

and Nce102-mCherry, Pil1-mCherry or Sur7-mCherry were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25

MPa for 1 h or 3 h. Pearson's correlation coefficient (PCC) was obtained for cell surface images from

63 cells in three independent experiments. (C) Changes in cell volume when cultured under high

pressure. Cells were cultured at 0.1, 25 or 50 MPa for 1 h or 3 h in SC medium with or without 1 M

sorbitol. The cell volume was calculated from the cell diameter of more than 300 cells after

depressurization in three independent experiments.

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Fig. 5. Glycerol efflux via Aquaglyceroporin Fps1 is required for high-pressure growth. (A) The CFW

sensitivity is enhanced under high pressure. Wild-type cells were cultured in SC medium with or

without CFW at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. (B) Wild-type and *fps1Δ* cells were cultured in SC medium with

or without 1 M sorbitol at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. (C) Mutants defective in glycerol synthesis were

cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. (D) Measurement of intracellular and extracellular

glycerol levels after incubating cells at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa for 24 h with an initial $OD_{600} = 0.1$.

Glycerol levels were quantified using a Glycerol assay kit. Data are presented as mean ± standard

deviation of three independent experiments.

1024

1025   Fig. 6. Ultrastructure of the cells observed by transmission electron microscopy. Wild-type and *fps1Δ*

1026   cells were cultured at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa for 24 h, and after depressurization, the samples were

1027   subjected to rapid freezing using the sandwich method. In *fps1Δ* cells, the points of cell wall breakage

1028   are indicated by arrows. Scale bars, 1.0 μm

1029

Fig. 7. Slt2-dependent phosphorylation of Fps1 is required for growth under high pressure. (A) The

Fps1 phosphorylation-site mutants were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. (B)

Electrophoretic mobility of Fps1-3HA and its mutant forms was analyzed by western blotting. Cells

were cultured at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa for 3 h and whole cell extracts were prepared. The arrowhead

indicates a higher-molecular weight band of phospho-Fps1 (P-Fps1). The relative intensities,

P-Fps1/Pma1 at 0.1 MPa and 25 MPa, were quantified in an ImageQuant LAS4000 mini. (C)

Wild-type and *slt2Δ* cells were cultured in SC medium with or without 1 M sorbitol at 0.1 MPa or 25

MPa. (D) *fps1Δ* and *slt2Δ* cells expressing constitutively active Fps1-Δ11 were cultured in SC medium

at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa. Data are presented as mean ± standard deviation of three independent

experiments. (E) The Ypk1 phosphorylation-site mutants were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or

25 MPa. (F) The Fps1 phosphorylation-site mutants were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25

MPa.

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Fig. 8. Model depicting Wsc1-dependent high-pressure signaling pathway in yeast. When pressure is

applied to the cell, an excessive influx of water into the cell occurs. Perturbation of the cell wall by

high pressure causes further water influx and the cell is at risk of rupture. To prevent this, Wsc1

detects cell wall stretching and activates the CWI pathway. Once the CWI pathway is activated, Slt2

kinase phosphorylates aquaglyceroporin Fps1. Phosphorylated Fps1 promotes its opening, which

allows cells to expel glycerol, adjusting the osmotic pressure balance across the plasma membrane.

TORC2-Ypk1 pathway is independent of the regulation of Fps1 under high pressure.

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Fig. S1. TORC2-mediated Ypk1 phosphorylation by high pressure. (A) High pressure causes

dissociation of a fraction of Slm1 from the eisosomes and its migration to TORC2. Wild-type cells

co-expressing Slm1-GFP and Lsp1-mCherry, or those co-expressing Slm1-GFP and Avo3-3×mCherry,

were cultured in SC medium at 0.1 MPa or 25 MPa for 5 h. The cells were observed by confocal laser

microscopy immediately after depressurization. Colocalizations were analyzed in more than 50 cells

from three independent experiments using the cellSens software and represented by the PCC. (B) High

pressure promotes the phosphorylation level of Ypk1. Ypk1 and phosphorylated Ypk1 were detected

from whole cell extracts by western blotting, using antibodies for Ypk1 and phospho-PKC (pan) (zeta

Thr410) (190D10), respectively. The relative intensities, P-Ypk1/Adh1 and Ypk1/Adh1, were

quantified in an ImageQuant LAS4000 mini.

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Fig. 1. Mochizuki *et al.*

Fig. 2. Mochizuki *et al*.

Fig. 3. Mochizuki *et al*.

Fig. 4. Mochizuki *et al.*

Fig. 5. Mochizuki *et al.*

0.1 MPa, 24 h

Wild type	*fps1*Δ

25 MPa, 24 h

Wild type	*fps1*Δ

Fig. 6. Mochizuki *et al.*

Fig. 7. Mochizuki *et al.*

Atmospheric pressure

H_2O

Fps1

Wsc1

Cell wall

PM

TORC2   Slm1/2   Eisosome

Ypk1

→ Sphingolipid synthesis

→ Actin organization

? → Endocytosis

High pressure

Dan1

Cwp1 ?

H_2O

Glycerol

Wsc1

Cell wall

Fps1

PM

Membrane tension

Rom2 m2

Slt2

Nucleus   SBF complex

Swi4 Swi6

Fig. 8. Mochizuki *et al*.

Fig. S1. Mochizuki *et al*.