# PITPβ promotes COPI vesicle fission through lipid transfer and membrane contact formation

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## SUMMARY

Lipid transfer through membrane contact has been implicated to support vesicular transport, but a mechanistic understanding of this process remains to be achieved. Here, examining Coat Protein I (COPI) transport, we find that phosphatidylcholine (PC) with short acyl chains (sPC), which is needed to support COPI vesicle fission, is delivered through membrane contact from the endoplasmic reticulum (ER) to the Golgi complex at sites of COPI vesicle formation. Phosphatidylinositol transfer protein beta (PITPβ) plays a central role in this delivery by not only catalyzing PC transfer, but also forming membrane contact. By combining cell-based studies with reconstitution approaches, we achieve spatial and temporal detail in explaining how sPC delivery occurs. Our findings advance the mechanistic understanding of how membrane contact is needed for vesicular transport in a model pathway and shed new insights into how PITPβ acts.

## INTRODUCTION

Intracellular transport among organellar compartments occurs in two general ways, by membrane-bound carriers or through membrane contacts. A mechanistic understanding of either mode of transport is being achieved, but how these two general mechanisms coordinate with each other has been less clear.

Transport by membrane-bound carriers occurs through conserved steps by major classes of effectors. Coat complexes initiate transport by bending membrane to generate carriers and binding to cargoes for their sorting into these carriers. Subsequently, tether complexes act by docking the transport carriers to their target compartments. Soluble NEM-sensitive associated protein (SNAP) receptors (SNAREs) then complete transport by promoting the fusion of transport carriers with their target compartments. A detailed understanding of how these core transport effectors act, and how they are regulated, is being achieved for model pathways (Brocker *et al*, 2010; Cai *et al*, 2007; Donaldson & Jackson, 2011; McMahon & Boucrot, 2011; Miller & Barlowe, 2010; Mizuno-Yamasaki *et al*, 2012; Pucadyil & Schmid, 2009; Wickner & Schekman, 2008).

How transport occurs through membrane contact is also being elucidated. This mode of transport has been found to play widespread roles in the delivery of lipids among organellar compartments. Multiple classes of proteins have been identified to possess lipid transfer activity. These lipid transfer proteins can also participate in forming membrane contacts. How

these two functions are integrated to achieve lipid transport through membrane contact is being understood in detail (Antonny *et al*, 2018; Cohen *et al*, 2018; Lujan *et al*, 2021; Prinz *et al*, 2020; Reinisch & Prinz, 2021; Saheki & De Camilli, 2017; Venditti *et al*, 2020; Wong *et al*, 2019; Wu *et al*, 2018).

The ER forms contact with multiple organellar compartments through vesicle-associated membrane protein (VAMP)-associated proteins (VAPs) that reside on the ER membrane (Murphy & Levine, 2016). In the case of cholesterol transfer, VAP-A has been found to interact with oxysterol binding protein (OSBP) on the Golgi membrane to form contact between the ER and the trans-Golgi network (TGN). OSBP also possesses sterol transfer activity, and this activity is promoted by the counter-transfer of phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate (PI4P) by OSBP. Through reconstitution studies, a mechanistic understanding of how OSBP couples its functions in lipid transfer and contact formation is being achieved (Mesmin *et al*, 2013).

Studies on vesicle formation by the Coat Protein I (COPI) complex have been advancing a fundamental understanding of how transport carriers are generated (Hsu *et al*, 2009; Jackson, 2014; Lippincott-Schwartz & Liu, 2006; Pucadyil & Schmid, 2009). COPI vesicles act in retrograde transport from the Golgi complex to the endoplasmic reticulum (ER) (Brandizzi & Barlowe, 2013; Lee *et al*, 2004; Suda *et al*, 2017). Early studies identified coatomer, a multimeric complex, as the core components of the COPI complex, and ADP-Ribosylation Factor 1 (ARF1) as the small GTPase that regulates the recruitment of coatomer from the cytosol to the Golgi membrane to initiate COPI vesicle formation (Donaldson *et al*, 1992; Malhotra *et al*, 1989; Serafini *et al*, 1991; Waters *et al*, 1992). Subsequently, a GTPase activating protein (GAP) that acts on ARF1 (known as ARFGAP1) was identified to act not only as a regulator (Cukierman *et al*, 1995), but also as an effector (Yang *et al*, 2002), of COPI vesicle formation.

The late stage of vesicle formation involves membrane fission, which severs the neck of coated buds to release them as coated vesicles. Brefeldin-A ADP-Ribosylation Substrate (BARS) has been identified to promote COPI vesicle fission (Yang *et al*, 2005). Subsequently, lipid-based mechanisms have also been discovered to play a key role (Park *et al*, 2019; Yang *et al*, 2008; Yang *et al*, 2011). COPI vesicle fission has been found to require the sequential actions of phospholipase D2 (PLD2) activity, which converts phosphatidylcholine (PC) to phosphatidic acid (PA), followed by lipid phosphate phosphatase 3 (LPP3) activity, which converts PA to diacylglycerol (DAG) (Park *et al.*, 2019). The critical roles of PA and DAG

require these lipids having short acyl chains, which facilitate the generation of extreme negative membrane curvature needed to drive vesicle fission to completion (Park *et al.*, 2019).

A key question also arises from this recent elucidation. As short PC (sPC) is the precursor of short PA and DAG that are needed for COPI vesicle fission (Park *et al.*, 2019), and PC synthesis occurs in the ER (Vance & Vance, 2004), how is sPC delivered from the ER to sites of COPI vesicle formation at the Golgi to support the fission stage? In this study, we address this mechanistic question by showing that PITPβ acts in both lipid transfer and contact formation for sPC delivery from the ER to sites of COPI vesicle formation at the Golgi to promote COPI vesicle fission.

## RESULTS

### COPI transport requires membrane contact between ER and Golgi

Lipids can be transferred among intracellular membrane compartments in two general ways, by transport carriers or membrane contacts. Thus, we initially sought to determine which mechanism is required for sPC delivery to support COPI vesicle fission. The COPII complex generates transport carriers from the ER for transport to the Golgi (Brandizzi & Barlowe, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2004; Suda *et al.*, 2017). Prolonged inhibition of COPII transport disrupts the Golgi complex (Ward *et al*, 2001). Thus, we sought to inhibit COPII transport for short duration by treating cells pharmacologically with H89, which inhibits COPII transport while allowing the Golgi to remain intact (Lee & Linstedt, 2000). We first confirmed that this treatment inhibited COPII transport, as tracked by the transport of a model secretory protein, VSVG, from the ER to the Golgi (Figure EV1A). We also confirmed that the dose of H89 treatment allowed the Golgi to remain intact (Figure EV1B). We then found that COPI transport was not inhibited by this treatment, as tracked by the transport of a model COPI cargo, VSVG-KDELR, as previously described (Park *et al.*, 2019; Yang *et al.*, 2008; Yang *et al*, 2018; Yang *et al.*, 2005) (Figure 1A).

As the above results suggested that sPC delivery needed to support COPI transport does not require COPII transport, we next examined whether membrane contact between the ER and the Golgi would be required. The ER forms contacts with other organelles through VAMP-associated proteins (VAPs) expressed on the ER membrane (Murphy & Levine, 2016). As VAP-A has been found previously to participate in forming contact between the ER and the Golgi (Mesmin *et al.*, 2013), we initially confirmed by confocal microscopy that a population of VAP-A colocalized with both an ER marker (Sec61β) and a Golgi marker (giantin) (Figure

EV1C). We also confirmed that siRNA against VAP-A (Figure EV1D), using a sequence whose specificity had been previously documented (Nthiga *et al*, 2020), reduced the colocalization of these two markers (Figure 1B). We then found that siRNA against VAP-A inhibits COPI transport (Figure EV1E).

We next examined whether this inhibition could be attributed to impaired sPC delivery by pursuing a functional rescue approach. Lipids can be delivered into cells by incubating them in the culture medium in the presence of albumin (Pinot *et al*, 2014). We had previously taken this approach to deliver specific lipids to the Golgi (Park *et al.*, 2019). We found that the inhibition of COPI transport induced by siRNA against VAP-A was rescued by feeding cells with PC having shorter (2C10), but not longer (2C18), acyl chains (Figure 1C). We also confirmed lipid delivery to the Golgi by tracking a fluorescence-labeled PC fed to cells (Figure EV1F). Furthermore, we found that feeding cells with other major lipids of the Golgi in their shorter form (2C10), such as phosphatidylethanolamine (PE) or phosphatidylserine (PS), did not revert the inhibition in COPI transport (Figure 1D). Thus, the collective results suggested that sPC delivery needed for COPI transport occurs through membrane contact rather than through COPII transport.

**PC transfer by PITPβ acts in COPI transport**

We next sought to identify a lipid transfer protein predicted to be involved. Phosphatidylinositol transfer protein beta (PITPβ) possesses PC transfer activity (Allen-Baume *et al*, 2002), and has been found previously to act in COPI transport (Carvou *et al*, 2010). However, a mechanistic understanding of this role remains to be achieved. We first confirmed that siRNA against PITPβ (Figure EV2A) inhibits COPI transport (Figure EV2B). We also documented the targeting specificity of this inhibition with a rescue experiment (Figure EV2B). Moreover, the catalytic activity of PITPβ is needed, as a catalytic-dead form (C94A) could not rescue the inhibition (Figure EV2B).

We next collected Golgi membrane from PITPβ-depleted cells to analyze PC level. Performing lipidomics, we confirmed that the levels of many PC species were reduced (Figure EV2C). However, this untargeted approach detected few sPC species. As sPCs are much less abundant than the longer PCs, we next pursued a targeted approach by taking into consideration that sPCs are less hydrophobic than longer PCs due to shorter acyl chains. We confirmed that this targeted approach was more sensitive in detecting sPCs, as many species could be detected

at low levels (Figure 2A). We then found that most sPC species were reduced in the Golgi membrane that had PITPβ depleted (Figure 2B).

As PC is an abundant lipid of the Golgi membrane, we next examined whether PITPβ depletion could have generalized effects on the Golgi. Examining Golgi volume, we found that it was not appreciably changed upon PITPβ depletion (Figure 2C). Anterograde transport into (Figure 2D) and out of the Golgi (Figure 2E) were also not affected, as tracked through the itinerary of VSVG. Thus, these results suggested that the quantitative reduction in PC levels induced by PITPβ depletion does not have generalized effects on Golgi structure and function. An additional explanation was suggested by the results of the untargeted lipidomics. As PITPβ depletion led to changes in other Golgi lipids (see Figure EV2C), these changes suggested compensatory mechanism(s) in maintaining Golgi structure and function when PC levels are reduced.

**PITPβ acts in contact formation between the ER and COPI buds at the Golgi**

We next noted that, besides their catalytic activity, lipid transfer proteins have also been found to participate in forming membrane contacts (Antonny *et al.*, 2018; Cockcroft & Raghu, 2018; Cohen *et al.*, 2018; Prinz *et al.*, 2020; Reinisch & Prinz, 2021; Venditti *et al.*, 2020; Wong *et al.*, 2019; Wu *et al.*, 2018). Thus, to determine whether PITPβ possesses this additional capability, we initially performed confocal microscopy using Airyscan, which provides two-fold greater resolution than conventional confocal. We detected a population of PITPβ colocalizing with both Sec61β (ER marker) and giantin (Golgi marker) (Figure 3A). We then found that siRNA against PITPβ reduced the colocalization between these two organelle markers (Figure 3B). Supporting the specificity of this finding, we found that siRNA against PITPβ had no appreciable effect on the colocalization between Sec61β and a marker of the trans-Golgi network (TGN), TGN46 (Figure 3C).

We next sought to detect membrane contact at even higher resolution by pursuing electron tomography. This analysis further revealed that COPI buds were in closer proximity to ER membranes than the rest of the Golgi membrane (Figure 3D). As this finding suggested that the ER could be contacting the Golgi more specifically at sites of COPI vesicle formation, we next sought further support by pursuing proximity ligation analysis, as this approach provides greater resolution (detecting proteins within 40 nm of each other) than standard confocal microscopy (detecting proteins up to 200 nm from each other). We first found that siRNA against PITPβ reduced the proximity between calnexin (another ER marker) and giantin

(Figure 3E). We then tracked COPI buds through ζ-COP and found that siRNA against PITPβ reduced the proximity between calnexin and ζ-COP even more dramatically (Figure 3F). As control, siRNA against PITPβ did not reduce the proximity between calnexin and TGN46 (Figure 3G). Thus, these findings further supported that PITPβ acts in contact formation between the ER and COPI buds at the Golgi.

To further characterize how PITPβ acts in this role, we next performed a co-precipitation experiment and found that PITPβ associated with VAP-A in cells, and as control, PITPβ had no appreciable interaction with VAP-B (Figure 4A). We then considered that VAPs have been found to interact with binding partners by recognizing an FFAT-like sequence on these partners (Murphy & Levine, 2016). As a sequence in PITPβ conforms to this motif, we mutated this sequence and found that VAP-A could no longer interact directly with PITPβ (Figure 4B). We also found that replacing the endogenous PITPβ with the mutant PITPβ inhibited COPI transport in cells (Figure 4C). This replacement was achieved by performing siRNA against PITPβ followed by rescue using the mutant form. Thus, the results further confirmed a new function for PITPβ, acting to form membrane contact by interacting with VAP-A on ER membrane.

**PITPβ anchors to COPI vesicle fission site through multiple interactions**

As PITPβ is a soluble protein, we next sought insight into how PITPβ anchors to the Golgi membrane for this role. Led by our finding above that had revealed the ER to contact the Golgi at sites of COPI vesicle formation, we screened among the COPI-related components by performing pull down assays using purified proteins. We found that PITPβ could interact directly with coatomer (Figure EV3A), but not with ARF1 (Figure EV3B), ARFGAP1 (Figure EV3C), or BARS (Figure EV3D). To confirm the functional relevance of the detected interaction, we next sought to identify specific residues in PITPβ needed for binding to coatomer. Initially, we generated truncations and identified a region in PITPβ that interacts directly with coatomer (Figure EV3E). As this region contains three di-lysine sequences (Figure EV3E), and coatomer is known to recognize di-lysine sequences, we next mutated the three candidate sites and identified a single site in the truncated PITPβ that is critical for its direct interaction with coatomer (Figure EV3F). We also confirmed that mutating this site prevents the full-length PITPβ from binding directly to coatomer **(**Figure 4D**).** Subsequently, we expressed this mutant in cells, which involved siRNA against PITPβ followed by rescue using the mutant form, and confirmed that COPI transport became inhibited (Figure 4E). We

further noted that the structure of PITPβ predicts that the FFAT-like and the dilysine sequences are not only surface-exposed but also reside at different regions of PITPβ (Figure EV3G). Thus, PITPβ could interact simultaneously with VAP-A on the ER membrane and coatomer on the Golgi membrane for its role as a structural component of membrane contact.

**Contact formation likely occurs during COPI vesicle fission**

We next pursued another line of investigation that shed further insight into how PITPβ participates in membrane contact. We had found previously that short PA and short DAG are needed sequentially for COPI vesicle fission, which involves PLD2 converting sPC to sPA and then LPP3 converting sPA to sDAG (Park *et al.*, 2019). Thus, as PITPβ delivers the precursor of these critical short lipids, we explored the temporal possibility that PITPβ could be acting in membrane contact more specifically during COPI vesicle fission. We initially performed co-precipitation experiments and found that PITPβ interacts with PLD2 in cells. We observed this interaction using tagged proteins transfected into cells (Figure 5A). We also confirmed this interaction by examining endogenous proteins (Figure EV4A). In contrast, PITPβ did not interact with LPP3 (Figure 5B). We also found that PITPβ mutants (FFAT mutant or K178A/K179A mutant), when transfected and expressed at physiologic level, retained interaction with PLD2 (Figure EV4B and EV4C), and thus implicating the interaction with PLD2 to involve a different region of PITPβ than those involved in binding to VAP-A or coatomer.

As PLD2 activity generates PA, we next examined whether PITPβ also interacts with PA. As an initial screen, we performed lipid dot-blot analysis, and found that PITPβ could bind directly PA (Figure 5C). Moreover, to confirm that this interaction occurs in the context of membrane, we next generated liposomes and found that PITPβ only bound to liposomes generated using PA (Figure 5D) and increasing the level of PA in these liposomes led to increased binding (Figure EV4D). We then generated liposomes having a Golgi-like composition of lipids and confirmed that PA was also needed for PITPβ to bind these liposomes (Figure 5E). As control, we found that this binding was not affected when phosphatidylserine, which is also a negative charged phospholipid, was withdrawn from the Golgi-like liposomes (Figure 5E). Thus, PITPβ can anchor to the Golgi by binding not only to protein components (coatomer and PLD2) but also a lipid component (PA) of the Golgi membrane.

Insight into the portion of PITPβ that binds PA comes from a previous study that found a region containing a di-tryptophan (WW) motif to be involved in membrane binding (Shadan

*et al*, 2008). We further note that this region is distinct from the catalytic domain (Figure EV3G), which suggests how PITPβ can anchor to the Golgi membrane and also catalyze PC transfer. Supporting that these two functions involve distinct regions of PITPβ, we found that the catalytic-dead mutant of PITPβ can still bind PA (Figure 5F). The structure of PITPβ further predicts that the region responsible for PA binding would be distinct from those involved in binding to VAP-A and to coatomer (Figure EV3G). Supporting this prediction, we generated a truncated form of VAP-A that cannot bind membrane and found that PITPβ can bind to this form along with coatomer, while also being recruited to PA-containing liposomes (Figure 5G).

We also pursued another line of investigation to further confirm that PITPβ binds to Golgi membrane through PA. COPI vesicle fission involves the sequential activities of PLD2 and LPP3, with the former generating PA and the latter consuming PA (Park *et al.*, 2019). Thus, we examined whether targeting against PLD2 (to reduce PA level at sites of vesicle fission) would reduce the localization of PITPβ at COPI sites, and whether targeting against LPP3 (to increase PA level at sites of vesicle fission) would enhance the localization of PITPβ at these sites. Upon siRNA against PLD2 (Figure EV4E), we found by the proximity ligation assay that PITPβ has reduced proximity to ζ-COP (Figure 5H). Moreover, upon siRNA against LPP3 (Figure EV4F), PITPβ has increased proximity to ζ-COP (Figure 5I). These results not only confirmed the importance of PA for PITPβ to anchor to the Golgi membrane, but also further supported that PITPβ forms membrane contact during the fission stage of COPI vesicle formation.

**Reconstituting lipid transfer and contact formation by PITPβ**

As cell-based studies cannot rule out indirect effects, we next sought to reconstitute lipid transfer using purified components to confirm direct interactions. As done previously to confirm directly lipid transfer through membrane contact (Gong *et al*, 2021; Mesmin *et al.*, 2013), we generated two populations of liposomes, in this case with one having an ER-like composition of lipids, and another having a Golgi-like composition. For the ER liposomes, we attached VAP-A onto the membrane using a previous established approach that involves tagging a protein with 6x-histidine for its attachment to liposomes that contain a nickel-bound lipid (Lee *et al*, 2005). For the Golgi liposomes, we incorporated PA into the liposomal membrane to allow binding by PITPβ. To detect PC transfer from the ER liposomes to the Golgi liposomes, we incorporated NBD-tagged PC and rhodamine-tagged PE into the ER

liposomes. When both fluorescence-tagged lipids reside in the ER liposomes, fluorescence quenching prevents their detection through their respective fluorophores. However, when PC is transferred from the ER liposomes to the Golgi liposomes, dequenching occurs, resulting in both lipids becoming detectable through their fluorophores (summarized in Figure 6A).

We first generated recombinant PITPβ tagged with 6x-histidine to facilitate its purification. We then removed the 6x-histidine tag from recombinant PITPβ after its purification (Figure EV5A) and confirmed that the resulting untagged PITPβ could no longer bind liposomes that contained a nickel-bound lipid (Figure EV5B). Subsequently, when this untagged PITPβ was incubated with ER liposomes and Golgi liposomes, we confirmed contact formation by EM (Figure 6B), and also that PC transfer was reconstituted (Figure 6C). As control, transfer did not occur when VAP-A was not attached to the ER liposomes (Figure 6C). Transfer also did not occur when a catalytic-dead form of PITPβ was used (Figure 6C). In the latter case, we also ruled out that the defect in PC transfer could be attributed to the mutant protein unable to bind the Golgi liposomes, as it bound to these liposomes similarly as the wild-type form (Figure EV5C). PC transfer also did not occur when PA was not incorporated into the Golgi liposomes (Figure EV5D), or when PITPβ binding to VAP-A was disrupted by using a mutant PITPβ with the FFAT-like sequence mutated (Figure EV5E). We also confirmed that contact formation did not result in liposome fusion (Figure EV5F).

We next found that PITPβ preferentially transfers PC having shorter acyl chains (Figure 6D). Another insight came from the consideration that cholesterol transfer from the ER to the Golgi had been found previously to involve the counter transfer of PI(4)P (Mesmin *et al.*, 2013). Thus, when also considering that PITPβ transfers not only PC but also phosphatidylinositol (PI) (Allen-Baume *et al.*, 2002), we next incorporated PI into the Golgi liposomes, and found that sPC transfer from the ER liposomes to the Golgi liposomes was enhanced (Figure 6E). As control, adding PI(4)P to Golgi liposomes did not affect sPC transfer (Figure EV5G). We also confirmed more directly the counter transfer of PI from the Golgi liposomes to the ER liposomes. In this case, we added fluorescence-labeled PI and rhodamine-tagged PE to the Golgi liposomes, and observed dequenching upon PC transfer from the ER to the Golgi liposomes (Figure 6F). Thus, the reconstitution studies not only confirmed the direct roles of PITPβ in catalyzing PC transfer and forming membrane contact, but also revealed that PITPβ preferentially transfers shorter forms of PC, which is enhanced by the counter transfer of PI.

**Confirming PITPβ acts in the fission stage through vesicle reconstitution studies**

We next pursued the COPI vesicle reconstitution system to confirm that PITPβ is required for COPI vesicle fission, which involves the incubation of Golgi membrane with purified factors, as previously described (Park *et al.*, 2019; Park *et al*, 2015; Yang *et al.*, 2008; Yang *et al.*, 2018; Yang *et al.*, 2002; Yang *et al.*, 2005; Yang *et al.*, 2011). We initially found that Golgi membrane contained an appreciable level of PITPβ, and high-stringency salt wash could not reduce this level (Figure 7A). Thus, to collect Golgi membrane depleted of PITPβ, we stably expressed shRNA against PITPβ and then collected Golgi membranes from these cells. Immunoblotting confirmed that Golgi membrane from these cells had reduced PITPβ level (Figure 7B). We then used this PITPβ-depleted Golgi membrane for the reconstitution system and found that COPI vesicle formation was inhibited (Figure 7C). Upon EM examination, we observed the accumulation of buds with constricted necks on the Golgi membrane (Figure 7C). Thus, these results confirmed that PITPβ is critical for the fission stage of COPI vesicle formation.

We also confirmed that vesicle reconstitution using PITPβ-depleted Golgi membrane requires sPC being delivered to the Golgi membrane. For this delivery, we incubated ER liposomes (having sPC and VAP-A on the membrane surface) and PITPβ with the PITPβ-depleted Golgi membrane (Figure 7D). As controls, vesicle formation was not reconstituted when incubation lacked either VAP-A coating the ER liposomes or PITPβ as a purified factor (Figure 7D). Furthermore, when wild-type PITPβ was substituted with mutant forms deficient in binding to coatomer, or catalytic activity, COPI vesicle formation was also not reconstituted (Figure 7D). Thus, the results confirmed not only that PITPβ acts specifically at the fission stage of COPI vesicle formation, but also its dual role in catalyzing PC transfer and forming membrane contact.

## DISCUSSION

Our results advance the understanding of how lipid transfer through membrane contact supports vesicular transport by elucidating in mechanistic detail how this process is needed in a model pathway. Led by our previous finding that sPC is the precursor of short forms of PA and DAG that are needed for COPI vesicle fission (Park *et al.*, 2019), we initially find that sPC is delivered from the ER to the Golgi through membrane contact rather than through COPII transport. We then find that PITPβ plays a central role in this delivery by not only providing the PC transfer activity, but also participating in forming membrane contact. As PITPβ is not known to act in membrane contact, our findings achieve a new understanding of how PITPβ

acts. Furthermore, whereas PITPβ is known to catalyze both PC and PI transfer, we achieve a new understanding of this role by revealing that both PC and PI transfers are involved in the case of sPC delivery for COPI transport, with PC transfer from the ER to the Golgi enhanced by the counter transfer of PI from the Golgi to the ER.

Because cell-based studies cannot distinguish direct versus indirect effects, we have also pursued reconstitution approaches to confirm how PITPβ acts. The combined results from cell-based and reconstitution approaches have enabled us to achieve a high level of spatial and temporal resolution in explaining how sPC is delivered through membrane contact to promote COPI vesicle fission. Spatially, our results reveal an unusual way that a membrane contact can be formed. Rather than two membrane compartments participating in contact formation, a compartmental membrane can also contact a budding carrier for lipid delivery. Temporally, our results reveal that this membrane contact likely occurs during vesicle fission. By having sPC being targeted to COPI buds rather than the Golgi membrane more broadly, and having this delivery to occur at a specific stage of COPI vesicle formation, our findings reveal how these rare lipids can accumulate to relevant levels to support COPI vesicle fission.

On the broader level, we note that lipid transfer through membrane contact has been suggested to support vesicular transport, but the precise stage of transport that requires such delivery has been unclear. Our study addresses this basic question by showing that, in the case of COPI transport, sPC transfer through membrane contact is needed for the fission stage.

## METHODS

**Chemicals, and lipids.** The following reagents were obtained: guanine nucleotide triphosphate (GTP) (10106399001) and protease inhibitor cocktail (P2714) from Sigma-Aldrich, H89 dihydrochloride (sc-3537) and Protein G PLUS-agarose (sc-2002) from Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Ni-NTA agarose from Qiagen (30210), and glutathione Sepharose bead from GE healthcare (GE17-0756-01). Lipids were obtained from Avanti Polar Lipid: dioleoyl phosphatidylcholine (DOPC, 850375), dioleoyl phosphatidylethanolamine (DOPE, 850725), dioleoyl phosphatidylserine (DOPS, 840035), dioleoyl phosphatidic acid (DOPA, 840875), Cholesterol (700000), Sphingomyelin (860587), dioleoyl diacylglycerol (DODAG, 800811), dioleoyl phosphatidylinositol (DOPI, 850149), 18:1 phosphatidylinositol-4 phosphate [PI(4)P, 850151], 2C10:0 PC (850325), 2C10:0 PS (840036), 2C10:0 PE (850700), 18:1-12:0 nitrobenzodiazole (NBD)-PC (810133), 14:1-6:0 NBD-PC (810122), 18:1-12:0 NBD-PA

(810176), Egg Liss Rhodamine PE (810146), Topfluor-PI (810187), 18:1 DGS-NTA (790404), and 15:0-18:1(d7) PC (791637).

**Proteins, and membranes.** Purifications of coatomer, ARF1, ARFGAP1, BARS, and Golgi membrane have been described previously(Fowler *et al*, 2016). His tagged PITPβ, BARS, and VAP-A (8-212) in pET-15b were expressed in BL21 cells with isopropyl β-D-1-thiogalactopytanoside (IPTG) induction. Cells were lysed in buffer [20 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4, 200 mM NaCl, 1% Triton X-100, 1 mM dithiothreitol (DTT), and 10% glycerol] containing protease inhibitor cocktail and then subjected to centrifugation. The resulting supernatant was subjected to purification using a Ni-NTA column. PITPβ and proteins fused to glutathione S-transferase (GST) were subcloned into pGEX-4T3 and then expressed in BL21 cells with IPTG induction. Cells were lysed followed by centrifugation, and then the supernatant was subjected to purification using Glutathione Sepharose beads.

**Antibodies.** Mouse antibodies against β-COP (M3A5), VSVG (BW8G65), PLD2, and rabbit antibodies against ARF1, ARFGAP1, ζ-COP have been previously described (Park *et al.*, 2019; Park *et al.*, 2015; Yang *et al.*, 2011). The following antibodies were obtained: monoclonal antibody against PITPβ (kind gift from Dr. Shamshad Cockcroft, University College London); anti-HA epitope (3724S), and 6xhis epitope antibodies (9991S) from Cell Signaling; antibodies against GFP (sc-9996), VAP-A (sc-293278), calnexin (sc-46669), and β-actin (sc-47778) from Santa Cruz Biotechnology; antibodies against anti-GM130 (610822) from BD Transduction Laboratories: mouse anti-LPP3 (ab52581) and rabbit anti-giantin (ab80864) antibodies from Abcam; rabbit anti-TGN46 (PA1-1069) and anti-ST6GAL1 (PA5-106647) antibodies from Invitrogen. Secondary antibodies were obtained from Jackson ImmunoResearch Laboratories, and they include horseradish peroxidase (HRP) conjugated Goat Anti-Mouse IgG (H+L) (115-035-003), HRP conjugated Goat Anti-Rabbit IgG (H+L) (111-035-003), HRP conjugated Goat Anti-Mouse IgG Light chain specific(115-035-174), HRP conjugated Goat Anti-Rabbit IgG Light chain specific(211-032-171), Cy3-conjugated Goat anti-Mouse IgG (H+L) (115-165-003), Alexa Fluor 488-conjugated Goat Anti-Rabbit IgG (H+L) (111-545-003), and Alexa Fluor 647-conjugated Goat Anti-Rabbit IgG(H+L) (111-605-003).

**Plasmid, siRNA, and shRNA.** Plasmids encoding for PLD2 in pCGN, HA tagged LPP3 in pcDNA3.1, VSVG (ts045) in pcDNA3.1, and VSVG(ts045)-KDELR in pROSE have been described(Gutierrez-Martinez *et al*, 2013). PITPβ in pEGFP-C1 was a gift from Dr. Shamshad

Cockcroft (University College London). PITPβ was subcloned to pET-15b, pcDNA 3.1, and pGEX-4T3 using PCR. Mutant forms of PITPβ were generated using QuickChange II Site-Directed Mutagenesis (Agilent). VAP-A (104447) and VAP-B (104448) in pEGFP-C1 and mEmerald-tagged Sec61β in pEGFP-C1 (90992) were obtained from Addgene. VAP-A(8~212) was subcloned to pET-15b using PCR. The following siRNA sequences were used against targets: PITPβ (5'-ACGGAUAUUUACAAACUUCCA-3'), VAP-A (5'-CCUGAGAGAUGAAGGUUUA-3'), PLD2 (5′-GGACAACCAAGAAGAAAUA-3′), LPP3 (5′-GGGACUGUCUCGCGUAUCA-3′)(Carvou *et al.*, 2010; Nthiga *et al.*, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2019). Targeting sequence against PITPβ for shRNA expression (5'-CCGGCCATGTTCTGTTCAGGAGTATCTCGAGATACTCCTGAACAGAACATGGTTT TTTG-3') was synthesized (VectorBuilder).

**Cells.** HeLa cells (ATCC), certified as free of mycoplasma contamination, were cultured in Dulbecco's modified essential medium (Welgene) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum (Hyclone), 10 mM HEPES (Gibco) and antibiotics. Transfection of DNA plasmids was performed using GenJet (SignaGen Laboratories). Transfection of siRNA was performed using PepMute (SignaGen Laboratories). Stable expression of shRNA against PITPβ was established by transduction with lentiviral vector followed by puromycin selection.

**In vivo transport assays.** Quantitative assays that track COPI and COPII transport in cells have been described previously (Park *et al.*, 2015; Yang *et al.*, 2018). Briefly, HeLa cells were transfected with VSVG(ts045) or VSVG(ts045)-KDELR to track COPII or COPI transport, respectively. For COPII transport, VSVG(ts045) was synchronized at the ER by incubating cells at 40°C for 6 hours and then released by shifting the temperature to 32°C. Cells were fixed at different time points using 4% paraformaldehyde for 10 minutes and then stained using antibodies against giantin (1:500) and VSVG (1:5). For transport at the TGN, VSVG(ts045) was synchronized at the TGN at 20°C for 3 hours and then released by shifting the temperature to 32°C. Cells were fixed at different time points and stained using antibodies against TGN46 (1:200) and VSVG (1:5). For COPI transport, VSVG(ts045)-KDELR was synchronized at the Golgi by incubating cells at 32°C for 6 hours, and then released by shifting the temperature to 40°C. Since 40°C prevents the exit of VSVG(ts045)-KDELR from the ER, this allows one round of retrograde transport from the Golgi to the ER to be assessed. For functional lipid rescue of COPI transport, a lipid of interest (final concentration, 125 μM) was mixed with DOPC (1:1, molar ratio). The lipid mixture was dried using nitrogen gas and then dissolved in

2 ml of pre-warmed culture medium containing bovine serum albumin (BSA) (25 μM). To introduce the lipid to the cells, the lipid-containing medium was incubated with cells for 6 hours before synchronizing VSVG(ts045)-KDELR at the Golgi. Cells were fixed at different time points and then stained using rabbit anti-giantin (1:500) and mouse anti-VSVG (1:5) antibodies. Cells were imaged using Zeiss LSM900 confocal microscopy with Airyscan confocal package containing a Plan-Apochromat 63x objective, Zeiss URGB (488, 561, and 647 nm) laser lines, and Zen 3.8 confocal acquisition software. Images were merged using Image J, and analyzed using MetaMorph 7.7 (MDS Analytical Technologies). Scale bars were generated using Zen 3.8 software.

**Examination of the membrane contacts.** Membrane contacts between ER and the Golgi were assessed by two approaches. One approach involves confocal microscopy. Cells were transfected with Emerald-Sec61β using GenJet for 3 days. After fixation using 4% paraformaldehyde, cells were incubated with antibody against giantin to track this cis-Golgi, or against TGN46 to track the TGN, or ζ-COP to track sites of COPI vesicle formation at the Golgi. Imaging used LSM900 Airyscan confocal microscopy followed by quantitation using MetaMorph 7.7 software. Another approach involves the proximity ligation assay (PLA), which used the DUOlink PLA kit (Sigma Aldrich) according to manufacturer's protocol. Briefly, cells were permeabilized with 0.05% saponin for 20 minutes and then stained using antibody that tracks the ER (calnexin, 1:300), the Golgi (giantin, 1:500), the TGN (TGN46, 1:200), or COPI sites at the Golgi (ζ-COP, 1:300) at 4°C for overnight. Cells were then incubated with oligonucleotide-conjugated secondary antibody at 37°C for 1 hour, followed by incubation with the ligation solution, which contains ligase and circular oligonucleotide, for 30 minutes. The signals of polymerized oligonucleotides were then amplified by incubating the cells with amplification solution containing polymerase at 37°C for 100 minutes. PLA signal was acquired by confocal microscopy and quantified using Image J.

**Immunoprecipitation and GST pulldown.** For immunoprecipitation, cells were lysed with lysis buffer (20 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4, 200 mM NaCl, 1% Triton X-100 and protease inhibitor). After centrifugation at 17,000 x g for 15 minutes, the supernatant fraction was incubated with protein G agarose bead that had been loaded with antibody at 4°C for 2 hours. Beads were rinsed three times using lysis buffer and subjected to SDS-PAGE followed by western blotting. For in vitro pulldown assays, recombinant GST fusion proteins were expressed in bacteria (BL21 cells) using IPTG induction. The cells were lysed using lysis buffer and centrifuged at

4,000 x g for 15 minutes. The supernatant fraction was then incubated with glutathione Sepharose bead (17075601, GE healthcare). GST fusion proteins on beads were incubated with soluble recombinant proteins at 25°C for 2 hours in reaction buffer (25 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4, 50 mM KCl, 2.5 mM $Mg(OAc)_2$, 1 mM DTT, and 0.1% Triton X-100). Beads were washed twice using reaction buffer and then subjected to SDS-PAGE followed by western blotting.

**Lipid dot blot.** Purified lipids (200 nmol) were dissolved in chloroform:methanol:50 mM hydrochloric acid (HCl):ponceau S (250:500:200:2, v/v/v/v), spotted on the nitrocellulose membrane (10600002, GE healthcare) and then dried for 1 hour in dark room. After blocking with 3% BSA in TBS (30 mM Tris-HCl pH7.4, 100 mM NaCl) for 2 hours, the membrane was incubated with recombinant PITPβ (1 µg/ml) overnight at 4°C. The membrane was washed three times using TBST buffer (30 mM Tris-HCl pH7.4, 100 mM NaCl, 0.05% Tween-20) and then probed by immunoblotting.

**Liposome binding assay.** Liposomes were generated using a mixture of pure lipids. To mimic the Golgi composition, the mixture was: DOPC (50%), DOPE (10%), Cholesterol (17%), Sphingomyelin (8%), DOPS (7%), DOPI (6%), DOPA (1%), and DODAG (1%). To mimic the ER composition, the lipid mixture was: DOPC (70%), DOPE (25%), and DOPS (5%). For simplified liposomes, the mixture was: lipids of interest (30%) and DOPC (70%). Lipid mixture (200 µg) was evaporated using $N_2$ gas and then resuspended in 200 µl of reaction buffer (25 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4, 50 mM KCl, 2.5 mM $Mg(OAc)_2$) for hydration at room temperature (RT) overnight and then passed through a 400 nm filter membrane in a mini-extruder (Avanti Polar Lipids). Liposome binding studies were performed by incubating liposomes (20 µg) with 1 µM of soluble recombinant protein of interest in 100 µl of reaction buffer (25 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.4, 50 mM KCl, 2.5 mM $Mg(OAc)_2$) at room temperature for 30 minutes, followed by centrifugation at 200,000 x g at 4°C for 30 minutes. The pellet and supernatant fractions were then assessed by SDS-PAGE followed by western blotting to assess the membrane-bound versus the soluble fraction, respectively.

**Assessing Golgi volume.** HeLa cells were fixed using 4% paraformaldehyde for 10 minutes and then stained using antibody against GM130 (1:1000). For 3D imaging of Golgi, Z-stack images of Golgi were acquired by Zeiss LSM900 confocal microscopy with 240 nm Z-stack size. Image stacks were concatenated and analyzed using Image J.

**Electron tomography of cryo-fixed cell samples.** A cell slurry (cells resuspended in 20% BSA/PBS) was transferred to B-type planchettes (3 mm) and rapidly frozen with a Leica EM ICE high-pressure freezer (Leica Microsystems). The frozen specimens were freeze-substituted in anhydrous acetone containing 2% osmium tetroxide ($OsO_4$) at -80°C for 72 hours in an AFS2 machine (Leica Microsystems). After being slowly warmed to RT over 48 hours, samples were rinsed with 100% acetone three times to remove excess $OsO_4$. Cell pellets were separated from planchettes and gradually infiltrated into Embed-812 resin (14120, Electron Microscopy Sciences) in a dilution gradient (10%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100% in acetone) over 2 days. The samples in 100% resin were polymerized at 60°C overnight. For electron tomography analysis, serial-section ribbons were collected on copper slot grids (150-200 nm) and post-stained. The ribbons were sandwiched between two layers of formvar film and coated with 15 nm gold particles (Ted Pella). Tilt series from ±60 at 1.5° intervals were collected in the brightfield transmission electron microscopy (TEM) mode with a 200-kV Tecnai F20 intermediate voltage electron microscopy (Thermo Fischer). Tilt series around two orthogonal axes were acquired from each section. The IMOD (University of Colorado Boulder) software package was used for tomography reconstruction as described previously(Mai & Kang, 2017; Toyooka & Kang, 2014).

**Reconstitution of COPI vesicle formation.** Reconstitution of COPI vesicle formation was performed as previously described with minor modification (Park *et al*, 2016). Briefly, salt-washed (3 M KCl) Golgi membrane (100 µg) was pelleted by centrifugation at 17,000 x g at 4°C for 30 minutes. The pellet containing Golgi membrane was resuspended using 1 ml of washing buffer (25 mM HEPES-KOH pH 7.4, 3 M KCl, 2.5 mM $Mg(OAc)_2$, 1 mg/ml soybean trypsin inhibitor), followed by incubation on ice/water for 5 minutes, and then incubated with myristoylated ARF1 (6 µg/ml), ARFGAP1 (6 µg/ml), BARS (3 µg/ml), coatomer (6 µg/ml), and GTP (2 mM) at 37°C for 30 minutes in 300 µl of reaction buffer (25 mM HEPES-KOH pH 7.4, 50 mM KCl, 2.5 mM $Mg(OAc)_2$, 1 mg/ml soybean trypsin inhibitor, 1 mg/ml BSA, and 200 mM sucrose). After the incubation, centrifugation was performed at 17,000 x g at 4°C for 30 minutes to pellet Golgi membrane. Centrifugation was then performed on the supernatant at 200,000 x g using TLA120.2 rotor at 4°C for 30 minutes to pellet vesicles. The level of reconstituted COPI vesicles was determined by western blotting using antibody against β-COP. For PITPβ rescue experiments, recombinant PITPβ (18 µg/ml) was added along with the purified protein factors during the incubation.

**Reconstitution of lipid transfer and contact formation.** The reconstitution system was performed similar to that described previously(Gong *et al.*, 2021; Mesmin *et al.*, 2013), with slight modifications. In brief, ER-like (donor) liposomes ($L_a$, 64% DOPC, 21% DOPE, 6% DGS-NTA, 5% DOPS, 2% Rhodamine and 2% NBD labeled PC with different chain length; $L_a$ (PI), 44% DOPC, 21% DOPE, 20% DOPI, 6% DGS-NTA, 5% DOPS, 2% Rhodamine and 2% NBD-PC) and Golgi-like (acceptor) liposomes ($L_b$, 53% DOPC, 18% cholesterol, 11% DOPE, 8% sphingomyelin, 5% DOPS, and 5% DOPA; $L_b$ (PI) 33% DOPC, 20% DOPI, 18% cholesterol, 11% DOPE, 8% sphingomyelin, 5% DOPS and 5% DOPA; $L_b$ (PI(4)P) 33% DOPC, 20% PI(4)P, 18% cholesterol, 11% DOPE, 8% sphingomyelin, 5% DOPS and 5% DOPA) were prepared. To directly track PI transport from Golgi liposomes to ER liposomes, Golgi-like (donor) liposome ($L_b$, 51% DOPC, 18% cholesterol, 9% DOPE, 8% sphingomyelin, 5% DOPS, 5% DOPA, 2% Rhodamine-PE and 2% Topfluor-PI) and ER-like (acceptor) liposome ($L_a$, 66% DOPC, 23% DOPE, 6% DGS-NTA and 5% DOPS) was prepared. ER-like liposomes (20 μg) were then incubated with 2 μM of 6x his tagged VAP-A (aa 8-212) at RT for 30 minutes. For lipid transfer and contact formation, donor liposomes (10 μg) were incubated with acceptor liposomes (3 μg) at 37°C in the presence of recombinant PITPβ (1 μM) in which 6x his tag was cleaved. Lipid transfer from donor liposome to acceptor liposome was measured by fluorescence signal of NBD-tagged lipid or Topfluor-tagged lipid using Synergy H1 microplate reader (Excitation: 463 nm and Emission: 536 nm).

**Visualizing liposomes in the lipid transfer assay.** The ER-like liposome ($L_a$, 66% DOPC, 21% DOPE, 6% DGS-NTA, 5% DOPS, and 2% Rhodamine-PE), Golgi-like liposome ($L_b$, 51% DOPC, 18% cholesterol, 11% DOPE, 8% sphingomyelin, 5% DOPS, 5% DOPA, and 2% NBD-PA) and positive control liposomes for fusion ($L_c$, 96% DOPC, 2% Rhodamine-PE and 2% NBD-PA) were prepared. ER-like liposomes (10 μg) were then incubated with 2 μM of 6x his tagged VAP-A (aa 8-212) at RT for 30 minutes. For contact formation, VAP-A attached ER-like liposomes were then incubated with Golgi-like liposomes (10 μg) in the presence of recombinant PITPβ (1 μM) for 5 minutes at RT. Liposomes were subsequently imaged using Zeiss LSM900 confocal microscopy and JEOL JEM-1011 electron microscopy.

**Lipid analysis of Golgi membrane by untargeted lipidomics.** Golgi membrane was extracted using a modified Folch method as previously described (Matyash *et al*, 2008). Briefly, 200 μl of methanol and 600 μl of Methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) containing SPLASH lipidomix internal standard mixture (Avanti Polar Lipids) were added into 350 μg of Golgi

sample. After mixing for 1 hour, 200 µl water was added for phase separation followed by centrifugation at 13,000 rpm for 10 minutes. The upper organic phase, MTBE solution containing the lipid extracts, was collected and dried with nitrogen gas. The dried lipid extracts were stored at 4ºC and then resuspended in 150 µl of isopropyl alcohol/acetonitrile/water (65:30:5 v/v/v) for UPLC-$MS^E$ analysis, which used the same amount of internal standard lipid such as 1-pentadecanoyl-2-oleoyl(d7)-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (15:0-18:1(d7) PC) in SPLASH Lipidomix internal standard mixture. The extracted lipids were analyzed using a Waters Synapt G2 HDMS mass spectrometer (Waters), which was operated on the MassLynx 4.1 software and coupled to the AQUITY UPLC system. The chromatographic separation was performed on a CSH C18 AQUITY UPLC column (1.7 µm, 2.1 mm × 100 mm; Waters) with the mobile phases A and B, which consisted of acetonitrile/water (60:40, v/v) and 2-propanol/acetonitrile (90:10, v/v), with 0.1% formic acid and 10 mM ammonium formate. The buffer for mobile phase B was mixed for 3 hours to fully dissolve. The flow rate and injection volume were 0.4 ml/min and 5 µl, respectively. The gradient of mobile phase B was as follows: 0 min, 40%; 2 min, 43%; 2.1 min, 50%; 12 min 54%; 12.1 min, 70%; 18 min, 98%; 18.1 min, 40% and 20 minutes, 40%. The total chromatographic separation runtime was 20 min. We prepared a pooled QC sample at the beginning of the study and aliquots of the same pooled QC sample were used for the entire study. QC samples were measured first and last, and for every six samples. The all ion fragmentation spectra were obtained in positive-ion modes of ESI source. The MS conditions were optimized as follows; i.e., the capillary voltages were 3 kV and 1 kV, the cone voltage was 40 V, the source temperatures were 140°C, and the acquisition mass range of m/z was 50-1200 for positive ionization modes. The high-energy MS spectra were acquired alternatively with the low-energy $MS^E$ spectra in UPLC/MSE analysis. The collision energy used for acquiring the high-energy and low-energy MS spectra were 35 and 6 eV, respectively. The high-energy MS spectra provided information on lipid structures. Lipids were annotated using MS-DIAL version 5.1.230429 (Tsugawa *et al*, 2015). Relative value of each lipid was calculated and visualized as Heatmap using Morpheus software (Broad institute).

**Lipid analysis of sPCs by targeted lipidomics.** Golgi membrane (6 mg) was dissolved in 3 ml of methanol:chloroform (2:1, v/v) containing SPLASH Lipidomix internal standard mixture (Avanti Polar Lipids). After adding 1 ml of chloroform and 1.3 ml of 0.1 M of HCl, the mixture was centrifuged at 1,500 x g for 10 minutes. The lower phase containing lipids was collected and evaporated using nitrogen gas, and then reconstituted in methanol chloroform solution (9:1, v/v). PC species were detected by UHPLC coupled electrospray ionization tandem mass

spectrometry using an AB Sciex 6500+ Q-trap mass spectrometer system operated in negative ionization/multiple reaction monitoring mode. Lipids were separated by hydrophilic-interaction chromatography using a Luna® 3um NH2, 2 x 100 mm column (Phenomenex Inc) and detected using lipid species specific precursor/product ion pairs. The column was equilibrated using solvent A (93% acetonitrile, 7% dichloromethane and 2 mM ammonium acetate). Samples were eluted using a gradient with solvent A and solvent B (50% acetonitrile, 50% water, 2 mM ammonium acetate pH 8.2) as follows: 0-0.01 min: 0-10% of solvent B, 0.01-9 min: 10-50% of solvent B, 9-10.1 min: 50-100% of solvent B, and 10.1-12.5 min: 100% of solvent B, at a flow rate of 0.6 ml/min. PC species were detected in negative ionization mode as their acetate adducts. Peaks were identified, integrated and reported using AB Sciex OS-Multiquant software. Integrated peak areas for the individual PC species were normalized to the phosphatidylcholine internal standard. Relative value of PC species was calculated and visualized as Heatmap using Morpheus software (Broad institute).

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## Author contributions

**Kunyou Park:** Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Validation; Visualization. **Sungeun Ju:** Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Validation; Visualization. **Hyewon Choi:** Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Validation. **Peng Gao:** Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation. **Geul Bang:** Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation. **Jung Hoon Choi:** Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation. **Jiwon Jang:** Conceptualization; Formal Analysis; Investigation. **Andrew J. Morris:** Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation. **Byung-Ho Kang:** Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal Analysis; Funding acquisition; Investigation. **Victor W. Hsu:** Conceptualization; Formal Analysis; Funding acquisition; Investigation; Project administration; Supervision; Visualization; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing. **Seung-Yeol Park:** Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal Analysis; Funding acquisition; Investigation; Project administration; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing.

## Disclosure and competing interest statement

The authors declare no competing interests.

## FIGURE LEGENDS

**Figure 1. COPI transport requires membrane contact.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m., with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$, *** $p<0.001$, ns (non-significant) $p>0.05$.

**A,** COPI transport assay assessing the effect of 20 μM H89 treatment. Quantitation is shown on right, n=3. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG-KDELR (red) and giantin (green), bar=10 μm. **B**, Airyscan confocal microscopy examining the effect of siRNA against VAP-A on the colocalization of an ER marker (Sec61β) and a Golgi marker (giantin). Quantitation is shown on left, n=3. Representative images are shown on right, Sec61β (green), giantin (red), bar=10 μm. **C,** COPI transport assay assessing the effect of siRNA against VAP-A followed by functional lipid rescue by feeding cells with different lengths of PC. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG-KDELR (red), giantin (green), bar=10 μm. Quantitation is shown on right, n=4. **D,** COPI transport assay assessing the effect of siRNA against VAP-A followed by functional lipid rescue by feeding cells with short forms of PE or PS. Quantitation is shown on right, n=3. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG-KDELR (red) and giantin (green), bar=10 μm.

**Figure 2. Characterizing the effects of PITPβ depletion on the Golgi.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: ns $p>0.05$.

**A,** Level of different PC species as assessed by targeted lipidomics, n=3. PC species are categorized based on their total acyl chain length and unsaturations. **B,** Reduction of PC levels in Golgi membrane upon PITPβ depletion as assessed by targeted lipidomics, n=3. PC species are categorized based on their total acyl chain length and unsaturations. **C,** Assessing Golgi volume upon PITPβ depletion by 3D analysis, n=3. **D,** Transport assay assessing the effect of PITPβ depletion on the arrival of a model secretory cargo, VSVG, to the Golgi from the ER. Quantitation is shown on right, n=3. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG (red) and giantin (green), bar=10 μm. **E,** Transport assay assessing the effect of PITPβ depletion on the transport of VSVG from the Golgi to the plasma membrane. Quantitation is shown on right, n=3. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG (red) and TGN46 (green), bar=10 μm.

**Figure 3. PITPβ promotes contact between the ER and COPI buds on the Golgi.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$, ** $p<0.01$, ns $p>0.05$.

**A,** Colocalization of PITPβ with ER marker (Sec61β) and Golgi marker (giantin) as assessed by confocal microscopy using Airyscan, PITPβ (blue), Sec61β (green), giantin (red). A representative image is shown in upper left panel, bar=10 μm. An inset is shown in upper right panel with arrow heads highlighting PITPβ colocalizing with both Sec61β and Giantin. A reconstruction of the region highlighted by the arrow heads in the inset is shown in lower left panel. Line scan along the dotted line in the inset is shown in the lower right panel. **B,** The effect of siRNA against PITPβ on the colocalization of an ER marker (Sec61β) and a Golgi marker (giantin) as assessed by confocal microscopy using Airyscan. Quantitation is shown on right, n=6. Representative images are shown on left, bar=10 μm. Arrow heads highlight areas of colocalization. **C,** Airyscan confocal microscopy examining the effect of siRNA against PITPβ on the colocalization of an ER marker (Sec61β) and a TGN marker (TGN46). Representative images are shown on left, bar=10 μm. Arrow heads highlight areas of colocalization. Quantitation is shown on right, n=4. **D**, EM tomography analysis of COPI buds at the Golgi showing close proximity to ER membrane. A representative tomographic image slice is shown in upper left panel with arrow heads pointing to COPI buds, bar=200 nm. 3D reconstruction of the Golgi, COPI buds, and ER elements is shown in lower left panel. Quantitation is shown on right, comparing distance between COPI buds and ER membranes versus distance between Golgi cisternal margins and ER membranes, n=3. **E,** Proximity ligation assay examining the effect of siRNA against PITPβ on the proximity between calnexin and giantin, n=5. **F,** Proximity ligation assay assessing the effect of PITPβ depletion on the colocalization of calnexin and ζ-COP, n=5. **G,** Proximity ligation assay examining the effect of siRNA against PITPβ on the proximity between calnexin and TGN46, n=4.

**Figure 4. PITPβ interacts with VAP-A and coatomer.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$, ns $p>0.05$.

**A,** Co-precipitation experiment assessing the association of transfected GFP-tagged VAP isoforms with endogenous PITPβ in cells, n=6. **B,** Pulldown experiment using purified components to assess the effect of mutating dilysine motifs in PITPβ on its direct interaction with coatomer, n=5. **C,** COPI transport assay assessing the effect of mutating the FFAT motif in PITPβ. Quantitation is shown on right, n=5. Representative confocal images are shown on left, with VSVG-KDELR colored in red and giantin colored in green, bar=10 µm. **D,** Pulldown experiment using purified components to confirm a specific dilysine motif in full-length PITPβ is critical for its direct interaction with coatomer, n=5. **E,** COPI transport assay assessing the effect of mutating dilysine sequences in PITPβ. Quantitation is shown on right, n=5. Representative confocal images are shown on left, with VSVG-KDELR colored in red and giantin colored in green, bar=10 µm.

**Figure 5. Characterizing additional PITPβ interactions.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$, *** $p<0.001$.

**A,** Co-precipitation experiment assessing the association of transfected HA-tagged PLD2 with transfected GFP-tagged PITPβ in cells, n=5. **B,** Co-precipitation experiment assessing the association of transfected HA-tagged LPP3 with transfected GFP-tagged PITPβ in cells, n=5. **C,** Dot blot analysis revealing that PITPβ binds directly to PC: PC, phosphatidylcholine; PA, phosphatidic acid; PS, phosphatidylserine; PE, phosphatidylethanolamine; Chol, cholesterol; SM, sphingomyelin; DAG, diacylglycerol; PI(4)P, phosphatidylinositol 4-phosphate, n= 4. **D,** Liposome binding study involving PITPβ incubated with liposome containing different lipids as indicated, n=5. Pellet (P) fraction contains membrane-bound PITPβ, while supernatant (S) fraction contains soluble PITPβ. **E,** Liposome binding study involving PITPβ incubated with Golgi-like liposomes, either having the full lipid composition or lacking a particular lipid as indicated, n=3. Pellet (P) fraction contains membrane-bound PITPβ, while supernatant (S) fraction contains soluble PITPβ. **F,** Dot blot analysis revealing that the catalytic mutant of PITPβ binds directly to PC. **G,** PITPβ can bind simultaneously to PA-containing liposomes, coatomer, and soluble VAP-A, n=3. **H,** Proximity ligation assay examining the effect of siRNA against PLD2 on the proximity between PITPβ and ζ–COP, n=4. **I,** Proximity ligation assay examining the effect of siRNA against LPP3 on the proximity between PITPβ and ζ–COP, n=4.

**Figure 6. Reconstitution of lipid transfer and contact formation by PITPβ.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$, *** $p<0.001$, ** $P<0.01$, * $P<0.05$.

**A,** Schematic of the in vitro reconstitution system; $L_a$, donor liposome with ER-like composition of lipids. $L_b$, acceptor liposome with Golgi-like composition of lipids. 6x his-tagged VAP-A was attached to $L_a$ liposomes through nickel-bound lipids. Lipid transfer and contact formation were initiated by adding PITPβ and then measuring the fluorescence signal of NBD-PC over time. **B,** EM examination confirming the formation of membrane contact among liposomes in the lipid transfer assay, n=4. Representative images of liposomes having contact or not are shown, bar= 200 nm. **C,** PC transfer requires the catalytic activity of PITPβ, n=5. **D,** PITPβ preferentially transfers PC with shorter acyl chains, n=5. **E,** PC transfer by PITPβ is enhanced by incorporating PI into acceptor ($L_b$) liposomes, n=5. **F**, Direct tracking of PI transfer by PITPβ by using a fluorescent form of PI (Topfluor-PI). Schematics of experimental design is shown on the left. Confirmation of PI transfer from the Golgi liposomes to the ER liposomes using Topfluor-PI is shown on the right, n=6.

**Figure 7. COPI vesicle reconstitution confirming PITPβ acts in vesicle fission.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$, *** $p<0.001$, ns $p>0.05$.

**A,** Western blotting assessing the release of PITPβ from Golgi membrane upon salt wash using 3M KCl, n=4. **B,** Western blotting assessing the depletion of PITPβ from Golgi membrane by treating cells with shRNA against PITPβ, n=4. **C,** The COPI vesicle reconstitution system was performed. Left panel shows quantitation of vesicle formation, n=5. Right panels show representative EM images of bud accumulation on the Golgi membrane when depleted of PITPβ. Multiple images are shown, with lower magnification shown above and higher magnification shown below. bar=50 nm **D,** Depletion of PITPβ from Golgi membrane that inhibits COPI vesicle formation is rescued when ER-like liposomes (200 μM) that contain sPC and VAP-A (2 μM) are added along with wild-type PITPβ, but not when mutant forms that cannot interact with coatomer (KK mut) or is defective in catalytic activity (C94A) is added, n=4.

## SUPPLEMENTARY FIGURE LEGEND

**Figure EV1. COPI transport requires membrane contact.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$.

**A,** COPII transport assay assessing the effect of 20 μM of H89 treatment. Quantitation is shown on right, n=3. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG (red) and giantin (green), bar=10 μm. **B,** Confocal microscopy showing the Golgi remains intact when cells were treated with 20 μM of H89 for 3 hours. Representative images examining the distribution of GM130, a Golgi marker, is shown, bar=10 μm. **C,** Confocal microscopy assessing the colocalization of VAP-A with an ER marker (Sec61β) and a Golgi marker (giantin), bar=10 μm. **D,** Efficacy of siRNA against VAP-A as assessed by western blotting of whole cell lysate. β–COP level confirmed similar levels of lysate examined. **E,** COPI transport assay assessing the effect of siRNA against VAP-A. Quantitation is shown on right, n=4. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG-KDELR (red), giantin (green), bar=10 μm. **F,** Delivery of NBD-labeled PC to the Golgi upon its feeding to cells, as confirmed by confocal microscopy. Representative images of NBD-PC (green) colocalizing with giantin (red) are shown below, bar=10 μm. Quantitation of this colocalization over time is shown above.

**Figure EV2. Further characterizing the effects of PITPβ depletion.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: ** $p<0.01$, ns $p>0.05$.

**A,** Efficacy of siRNA against PITPβ assessed by western blotting of whole cell lysate. β-actin level confirmed similar levels of lysate examined. **B,** COPI transport assay measuring the effect of siRNA against PITPβ and rescue using either wild-type or catalytic dead (C94A) form. Representative confocal images are shown on left, VSVG-KDELR (red) and giantin (green), bar=10 μm. Quantitation is shown on right, n=7. **C,** Untargeted lipidomics to examine effect of PITPβ depletion on Golgi lipid levels. Results of 3 independent samples are shown as heat maps; PC (phosphatidylcholine), PE (phosphatidylethanolamine), PS (phosphatidylserine), SM (sphingomyelin), DG (diacylglycerol), TG (triacylglycerol), CE (Cholesteryl ester), and Cer (ceramide).

**Figure EV3. Further characterizing how PITPβ binds to coatomer and VAP-A.**

**A-D,** Pulldown experiments using purified components to assess whether PITPβ interacts directly with coatomer (tracked through β-COP), ARF1, ARFGAP1, and BARS, n=5.

**E,** Pulldown experiment using purified components to identify the region in PITPβ critical for its direct interaction with coatomer, n=5. **F,** Pulldown experiment using purified components to identify a specific dilysine motif in truncated PITPβ critical for its direct interaction with coatomer, n=5. **G,** Highlighting regions in PITPβ responsible for binding to coatomer (dilysine motif), binding to VAP-A (FFAT motif), binding to membrane (WW motif), and the catalytic domain (C94).

**Figure EV4. Further characterizing additional interactions of PITPβ.**

**A,** Co-precipitation assay showing the association of endogenous PITPβ with endogenous PLD2. n=4. **B,** Co-precipitation assay showing the association of transfected GFP-tagged PITPβ (FFAA mut), expressed at physiologic level, with transfected HA-tagged PLD2, n=4. **C,** Co-precipitation assay showing the association of transfected GFP-tagged PITPβ (K178A/K179A), expressed at physiologic level, with transfected HA-tagged PLD2, n=4. **D,** PITPβ binding to liposomes that contain increasing level of PA, n=3. **E,** Efficacy of siRNA against PLD2 assessed by western blotting of whole cell lysate, with β–COP level confirming similar levels of lysate examined, n=4. **F,** Efficacy of siRNA against LPP3 assessed by western blotting of whole cell lysate, with β–COP level confirming similar levels of lysate examined, n=4.

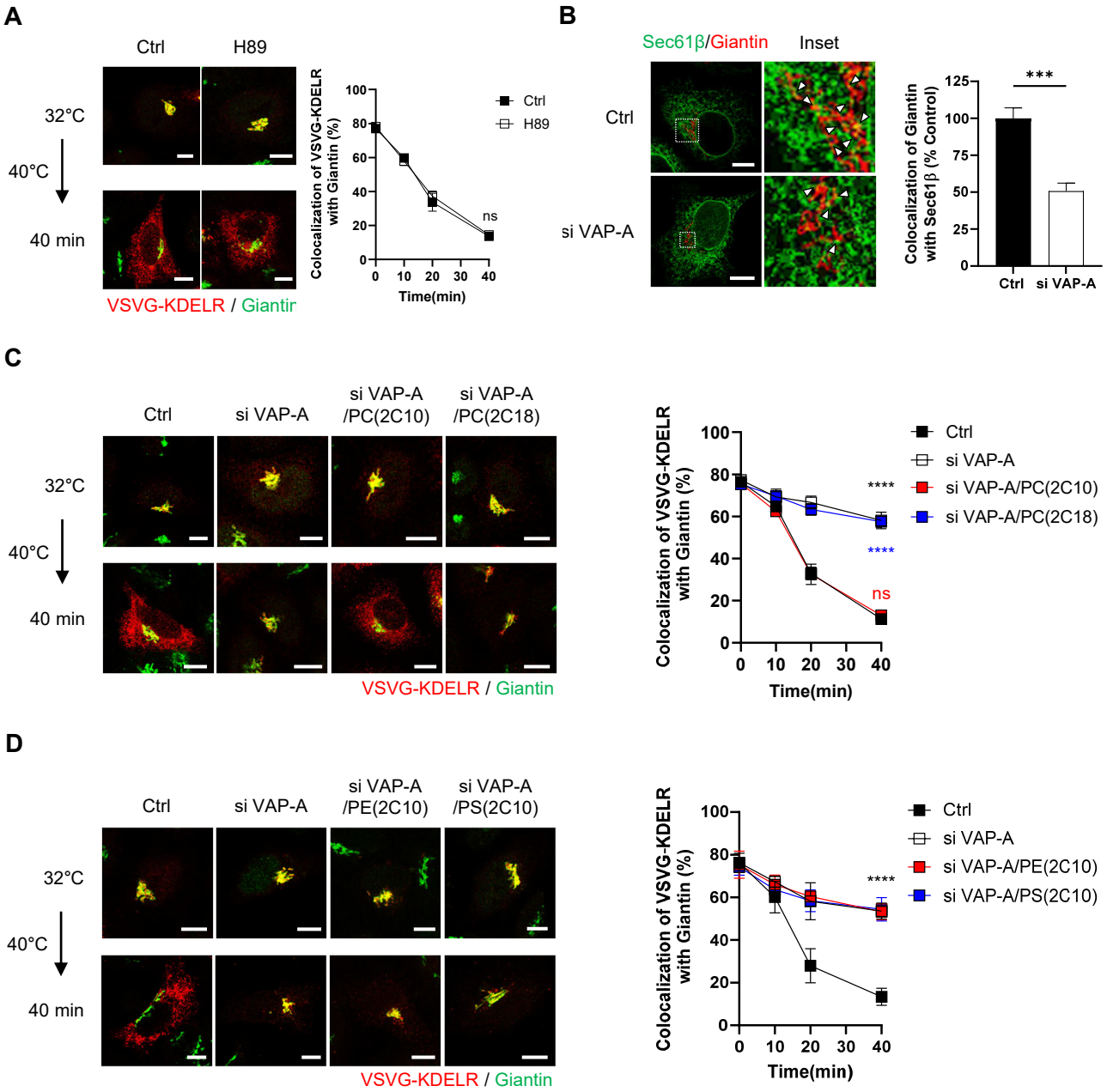
**Figure EV5. Further characterizing lipid transfer and contact formation by PITPβ.**

Quantitative data are shown as mean ± s.e.m, with the number of independent experiments indicated. Statistics was performed using the two-tailed student *t*-test: **** $p<0.0001$, ** $p<0.01$, ns $p>0.05$.

**A,** Thrombin-mediated cleavage of the 6x histidine tag from recombinant PITPβ, n=3. **B,** Liposome binding study examining forms of PITPβ, as indicated, binding to forms of liposomes, as indicated, n=3. **C,** Liposome binding study involving PITPβ forms, as indicated, incubated with Golgi-like liposomes, n=4. Pellet (P) fraction contains PITPβ on membrane, while supernatant (S) fraction contains soluble PITPβ. **D,** Reconstitution of lipid transfer and contact formation revealing that PC transfer by PITPβ requires PA incorporated into acceptor ($L_b$) liposomes, n=5. **E,** Reconstitution of lipid transfer and contact formation revealing that PC transfer by PITPβ requires its FFAT-like motif, n=3. **F**, Confocal microscopy showing that membrane contacts formed by liposomes in the lipid transfer assay do not induce membrane fusion, n=4. $L_a$ was marked by rhodamine-tagged lipid (red) and $L_b$ was marked by NBD-tagged lipid (green). Incubation with PITPβ did not result in fusion, which would result in

yellow-appearing liposomes. As positive control of liposome fusion, $L_c$ has both rhodamine-tagged lipid (red) and NBD-tagged lipid (green), resulting in yellow-appearing liposomes. Representative images are shown, bar= 2 μm. **G,** Reconstitution of lipid transfer and contact formation revealing that PC transfer by PITPβ is not affected by PI(4)P incorporated into acceptor ($L_b$) liposomes, n=4.

# Fig. 1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40 min
VSVG-KDELR / Giantin
Colocalization of VSVG-KDELR with Giantin (%)
Time(min)
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si VAP-A/PC(2C10)
si VAP-A/PC(2C18)
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D
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32°C
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40 min
VSVG-KDELR / Giantin
Colocalization of VSVG-KDELR with Giantin (%)
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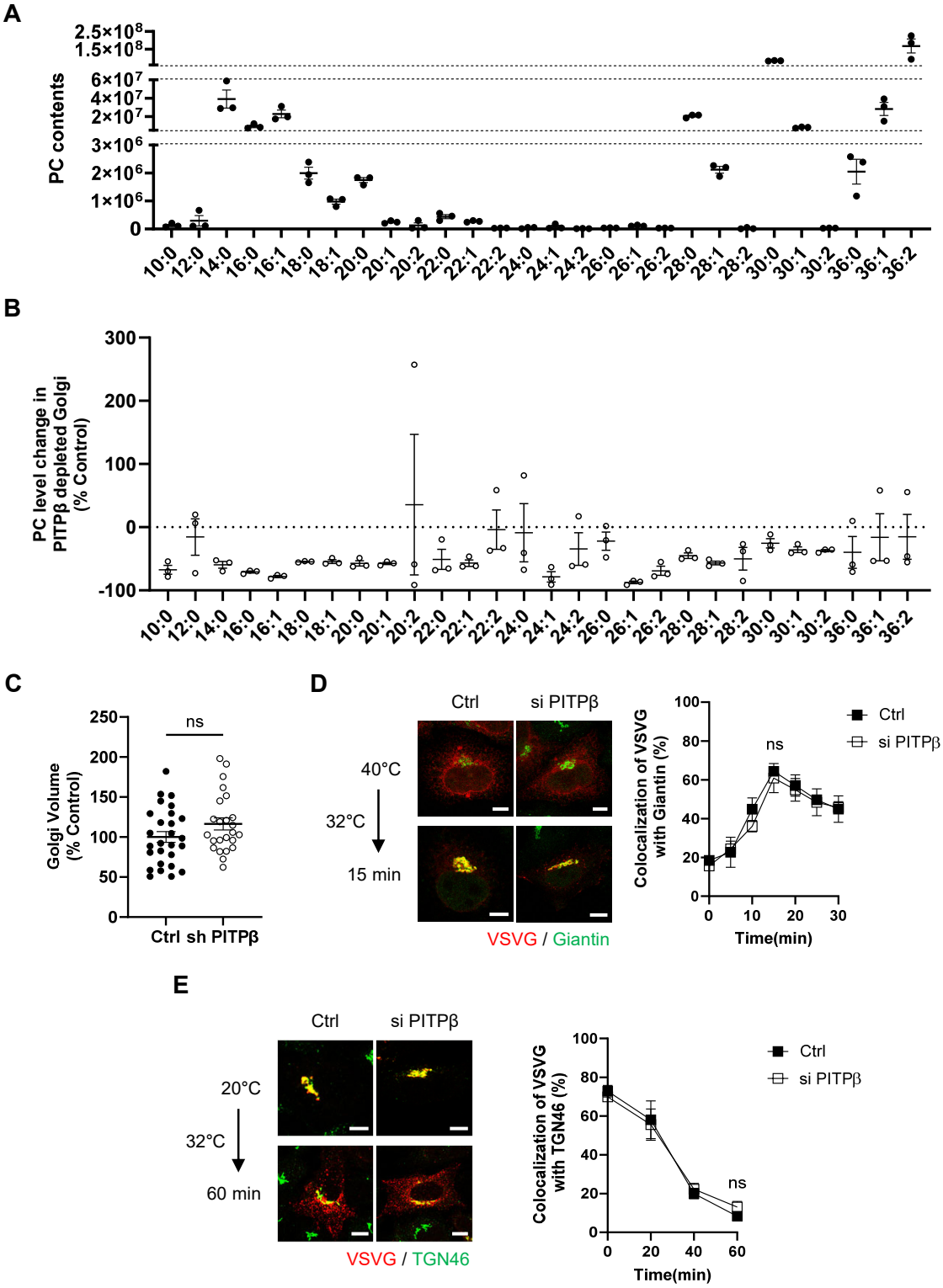
# Fig. 2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B
PC level change in PITPβ depleted Golgi (% Control)
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200
100
0
-100
10:0 12:0 14:0 16:0 16:1 18:0 18:1 20:0 20:1 20:2 22:0 22:1 22:2 24:0 24:1 24:2 26:0 26:1 26:2 28:0 28:1 28:2 30:0 30:1 30:2 36:0 36:1 36:2
C
Golgi Volume (% Control)
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200
150
100
50
0
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Ctrl sh PITPβ
D
Ctrl
si PITPβ
40°C
32°C
15 min
VSVG / Giantin
Colocalization of VSVG with Giantin (%)
100
80
60
40
20
0
ns
0 10 20 30
Time(min)
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E
Ctrl
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20°C
32°C
60 min
VSVG / TGN46
Colocalization of VSVG with TGN46 (%)
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Time(min)
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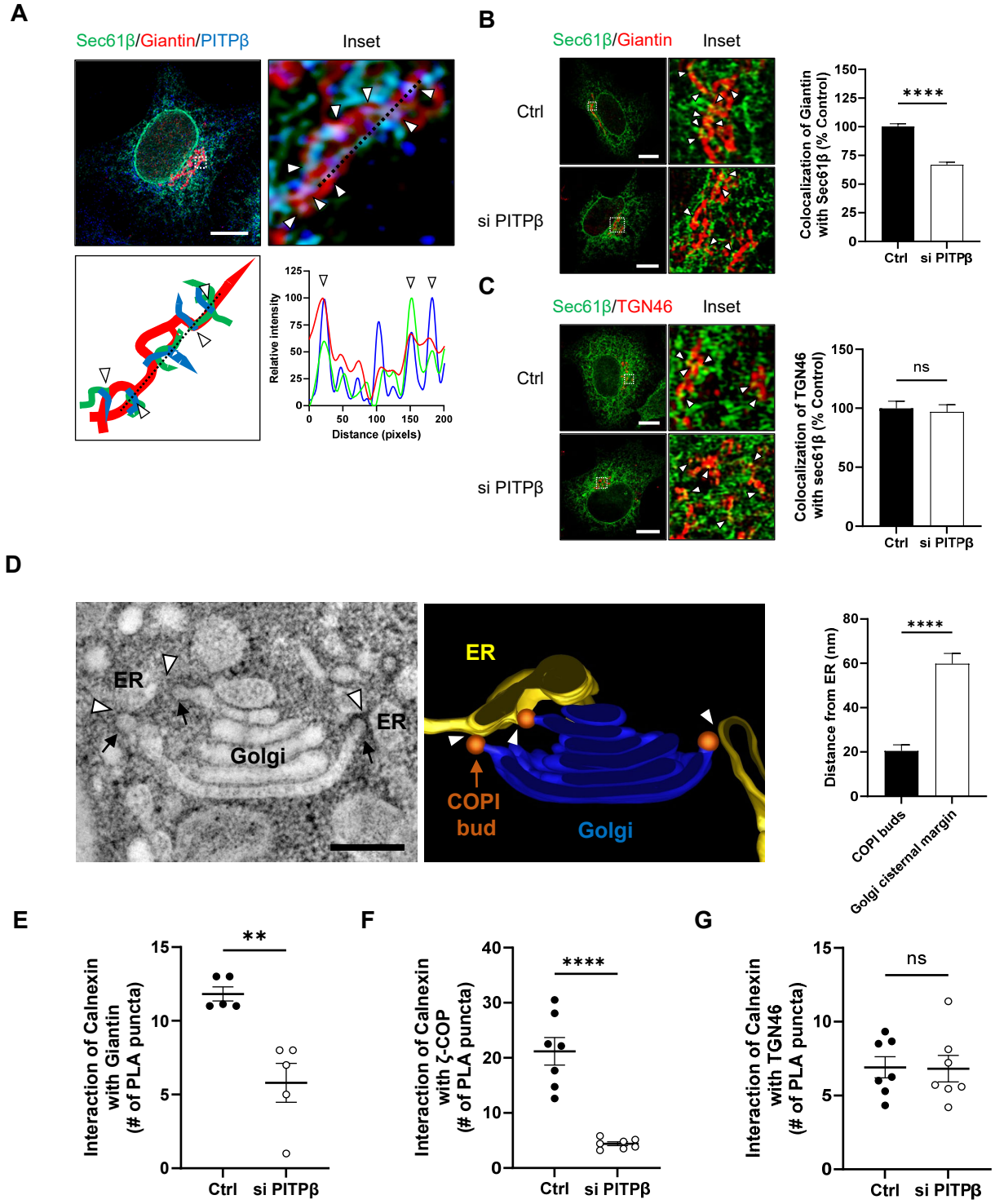
# Fig. 3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D
ER
Golgi
ER
ER
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Golgi
Distance from ER (nm)
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E
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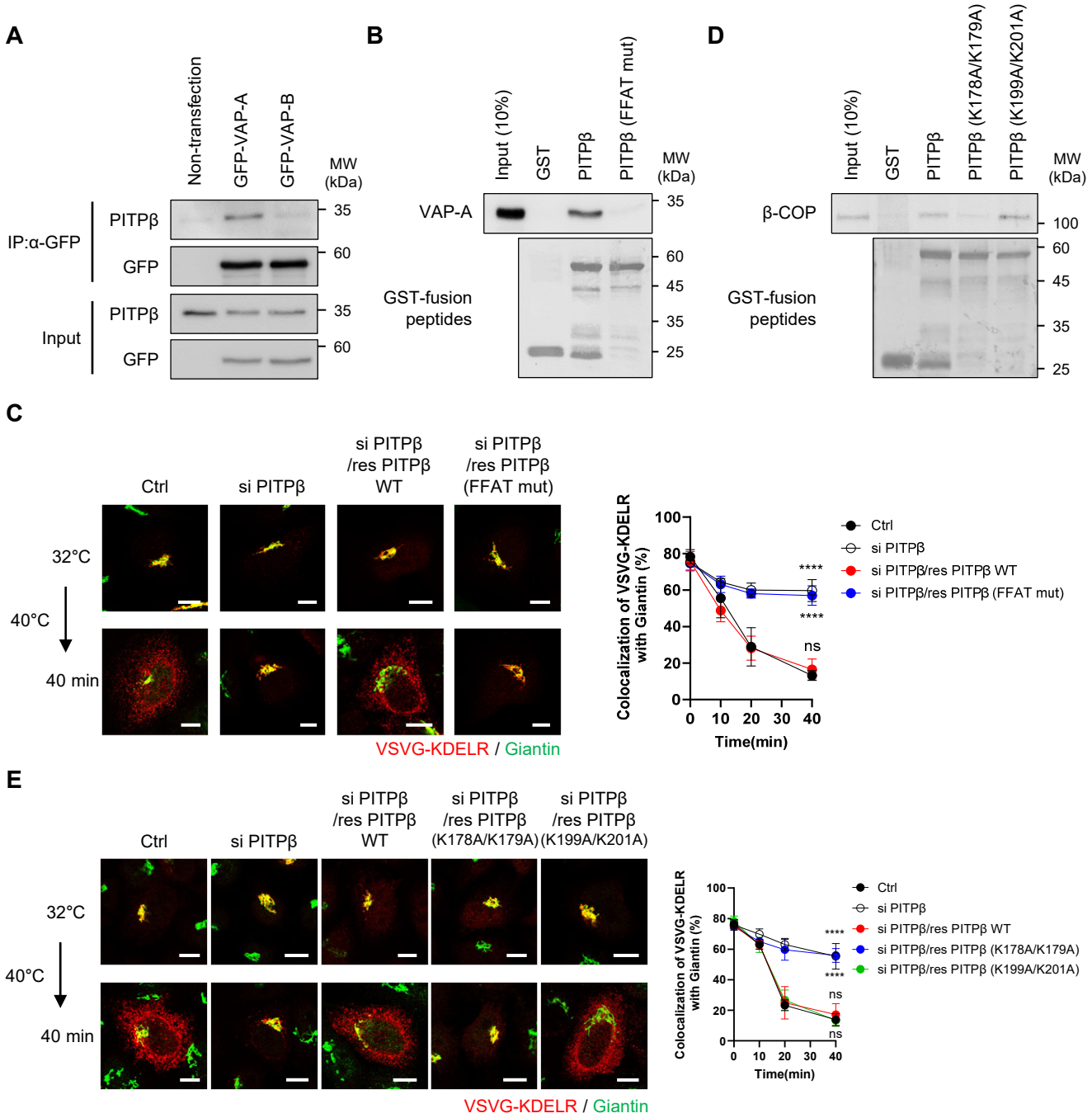
# Fig. 4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MW (kDa)
VAP-A
GST-fusion peptides
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Input (10%)
GST
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PITPβ (K178A/K179A)
PITPβ (K199A/K201A)
MW (kDa)
β-COP
GST-fusion peptides
100
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Ctrl
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32°C
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40 min
VSVG-KDELR / Giantin
Colocalization of VSVG-KDELR with Giantin (%)
Time(min)
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si PITPβ/res PITPβ WT
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40 min
VSVG-KDELR / Giantin
Colocalization of VSVG-KDELR with Giantin (%)
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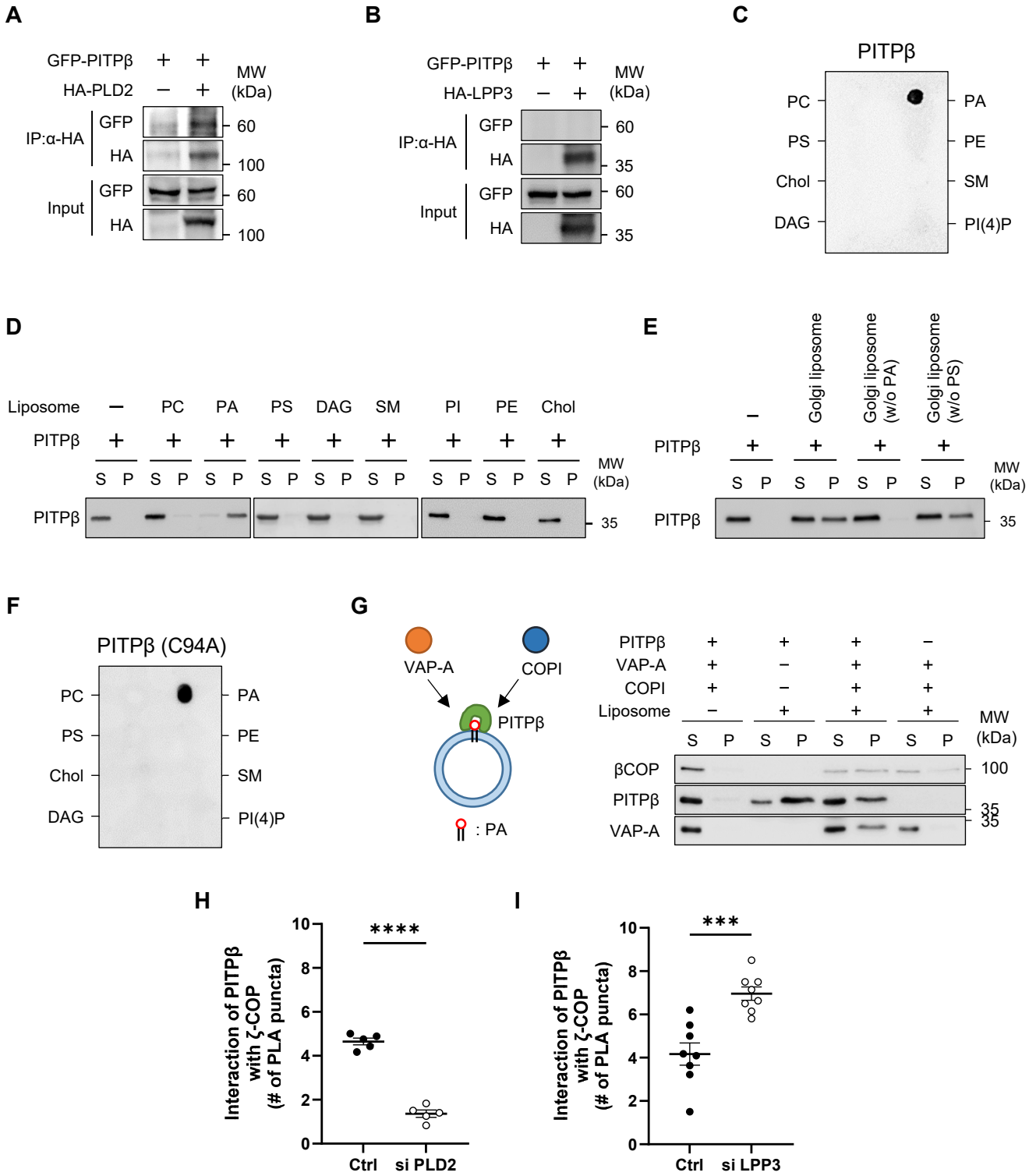
# Fig. 5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Liposome − PC PA PS DAG SM PI PE Chol
PITPβ + + + + + + + + +
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PITPβ
35
E
− Golgi liposome Golgi liposome (w/o PA) Golgi liposome (w/o PS)
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S P S P S P S P
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Interaction of PITPβ with ζ-COP (# of PLA puncta)
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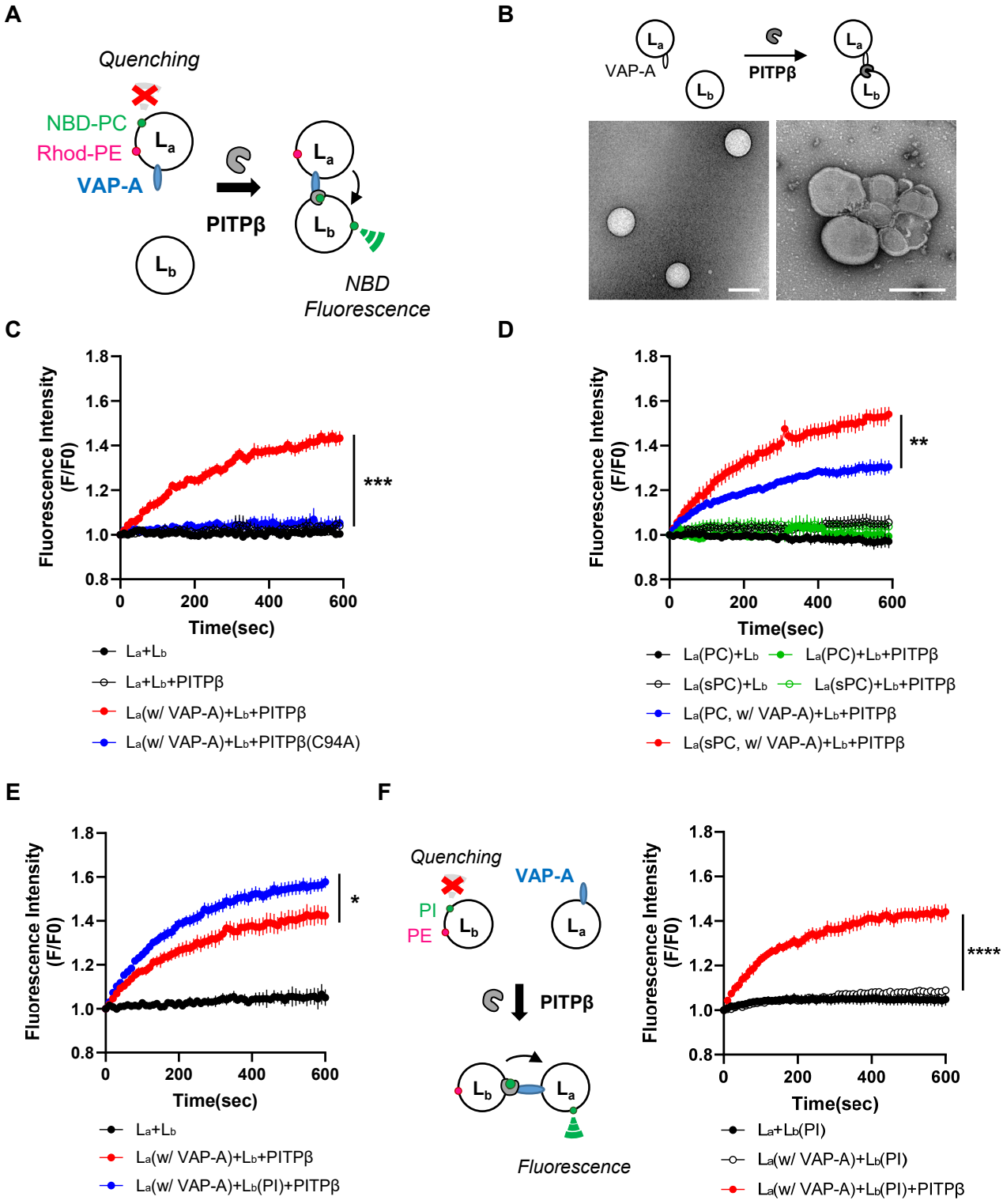
# Fig. 6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Time(sec)
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La+Lb
La+Lb+PITPβ
La(w/ VAP-A)+Lb+PITPβ
La(w/ VAP-A)+Lb+PITPβ(C94A)
D
**
La(PC)+Lb
La(PC)+Lb+PITPβ
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F
Quenching
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VAP-A
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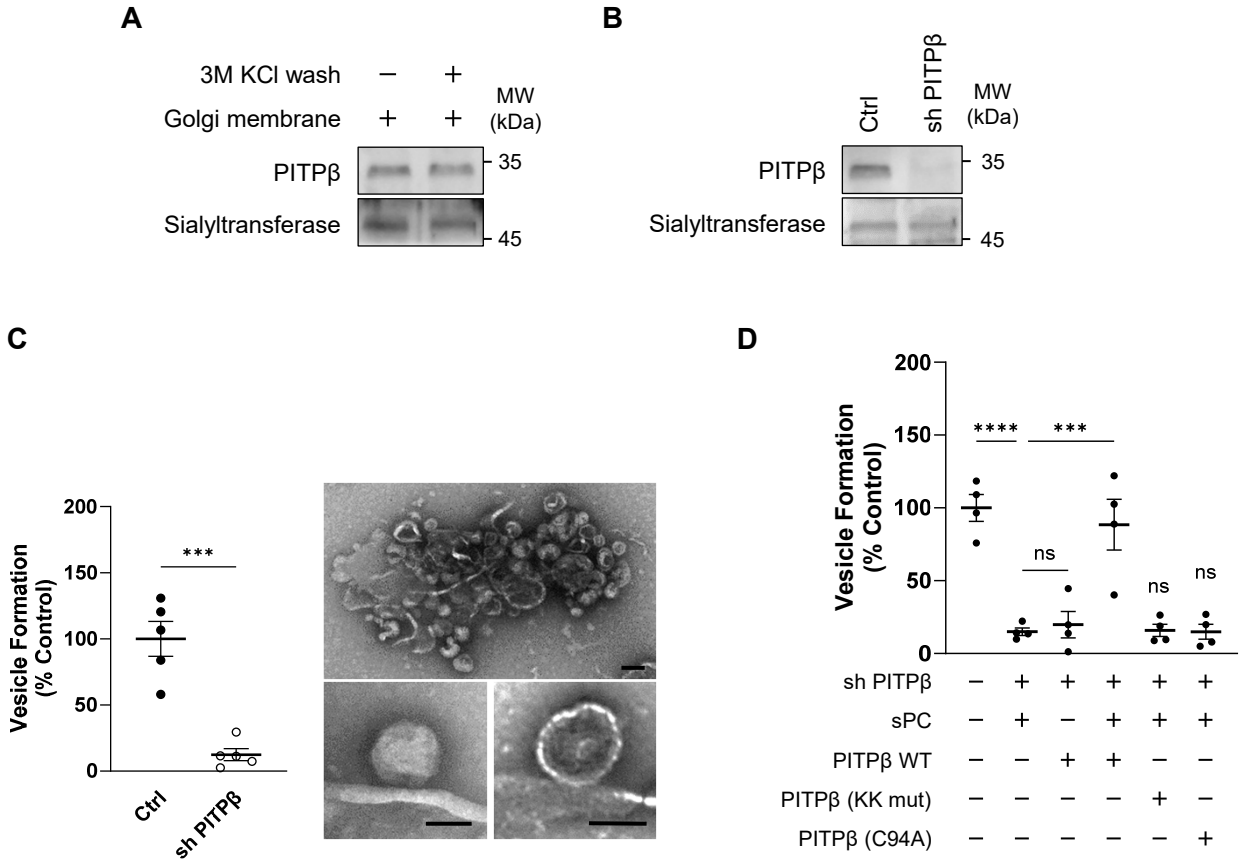
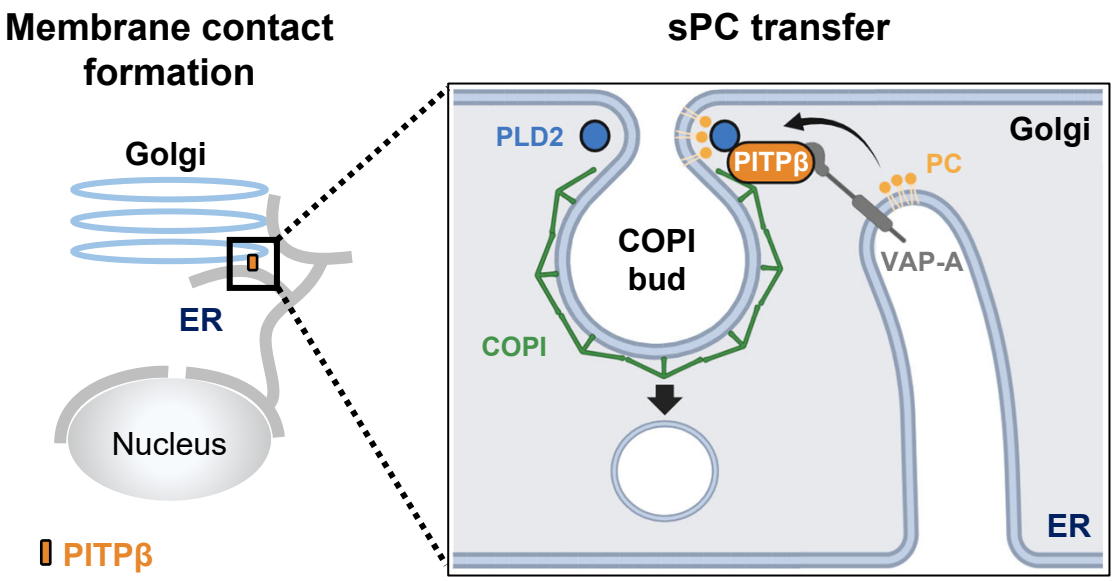
****
La+Lb(PI)
La(w/ VAP-A)+Lb(PI)
La(w/ VAP-A)+Lb(PI)+PITPβ

**Fig. 7**


A
3M KCl wash
Golgi membrane
MW (kDa)
PITPβ
Sialyltransferase
35
45
B
Ctrl
sh PITPβ
MW (kDa)
PITPβ
Sialyltransferase
35
45
C
Vesicle Formation (% Control)
200
150
100
50
0
***
Ctrl
sh PITPβ
D
Vesicle Formation (% Control)
200
150
100
50
0
****
***
ns
ns
ns
sh PITPβ
sPC
PITPβ WT
PITPβ (KK mut)
PITPβ (C94A)

## Graphical abstract