

CHAPTER

Siderocalins

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Abstract

Siderocalin (Lipocalin 2), first identified as a neutrophil granule component, is also found in uterine secretions, in serum and synovium during bacterial infection and secreted from epithelial cells in response to inflammation or tumorigenesis. Siderocalin is a potent bacteriostatic agent in vitro and, when knocked-out in mice, confers a remarkable susceptibility to bacterial infection in the absence of any other phenotype. However, Siderocalin lacked any precise function until specific, high-affinity ligands were identified: bacterial ferric siderophores. Siderophores, small-molecule iron (III) chelators, are synthesized, secreted and reabsorbed by microorganisms in a competition to obtain iron, a scarce resource in the environment, and have been linked to virulence, though through previously undefined mechanisms. Siderocalin employs degenerate molecular recognition machinery to bind to two distinct families of siderophores: the catecholate siderophores of enteric bacteria and the mycobacterial carboxymycobactins. Siderocalin therefore functions as an anti-bacterial component of innate immune responses by sequestering iron away from invading pathogens; pathogens use siderophores that escape Siderocalin capture to help establish virulence. However, the limited pattern of Siderocalin siderophore specificity, the use of alternate or modified siderophores by bacteria and the possible existence of other siderophore-binding lipocalins ('siderocalins') clearly demonstrates that the battle for virulence is ongoing. Siderocalin may also have pleiotropic activities, having been implicated in diverse cellular processes such as apoptosis and differentiation.

Siderocalin

Lipocalin 2 (Lcn2), first identified as a lipocalin in neutrophil granules,¹⁻³ has been referred to by various names by various groups, reflecting the many contexts in which it has been found, including: neutrophil gelatinase-associated lipocalin (NGAL), human neutrophil lipocalin (HNL), 24p3, superinducible protein 24 kD (SIP24), uterocalin, *neu*-related lipocalin (NRL), α_2 -microglobulin-related protein and, most recently, Siderocalin.⁴ The last appellation ties the protein to its established ligands and a specific function, rather than some subset of its expression pattern or the chromosomal location of its gene, and is thus our preferred label. Human Siderocalin (NGAL, HNL), while also expressed by epithelial cells in response to inflammatory signals, is released from neutrophil granules as a 25 kiloDalton (kD) monomer, a 46 kD disulfide-linked homodimer and a disulfide-linked heterodimer with gelatinase-B (matrix metalloproteinase 9 (MMP-9)).^{5,6} There is a single N-linked oligosaccharide site on Siderocalin and a single, conserved internal disulfide bond shared by many lipocalins. The rat ortholog (NRL) was originally identified as a protein highly overexpressed in *neu*-induced mammary

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Table 1. Sequence identities between Siderocalin and its nearest neighbor lipocalins

	Human Siderocalin	Rat Siderocalin	Murine Siderocalin	Human Lcn12	Human PDS	Murine Lcn12	Human HC	Chicken Ex-FABP	Quail Q83
Human Siderocalin	100	62	60	35	34	28	23	20	20
Rat Siderocalin		100	81	34	32	29	<20	20	20
Murine Siderocalin			100	31	31	28	<20	20	22
Human Lcn12				100	29	56	<20	28	<20
Human PDS					100	28	23	21	21
Murine Lcn12						100	<20	<20	<20
Human HC							100	<20	<20
Chicken Ex-FABP								100	86
Quail Q83									100

Identities between likely orthologs are in **bold**; pair-wise identities between human C8 γ , human Lcn1 and all the remaining lipocalins above are all less than 20%. Only the closet PDS sequence is shown as a representative of the family. Candidate siderocalins are underlined.

cancers;⁷ the murine ortholog (24p3, Sip24, uterocalin) was identified as a protein induced in response to various proliferative signals⁸ and is highly expressed in uterine luminal fluids and by epithelial cells.⁹ Human-mouse-rat Siderocalin pair-wise sequence identities are 60% or greater (Table 1) with marked conservation of calyx residues;⁴ no other obvious orthologs have been identified so far. An equine lipocalin, also named uterocalin (on the basis of its presence in uterine secretions) or P19,¹⁰ shows only weak sequence homology to Siderocalin (16% to 18% pair-wise identity to the three orthologs).

Siderocalin has been implicated in processes as diverse as apoptosis^{11,12} and kidney cell differentiation^{13,14} and, like most lipocalins, is thought to modulate these cellular processes by binding to ligand(s) and interacting with specific cell-surface receptors. Evidence for mammalian cell-surface Siderocalin receptors has been reported in two different systems,^{11,13} though they remain uncharacterized, but the interaction with a third receptor, megalin (an extracellular matrix component), has been more fully characterized.¹⁵ Megalin, a member of the low density lipoprotein family,¹⁶ also interacts with lactoferrin^{17,18} and other lipocalins: retinol binding protein, α_1 -microglobulin/Hc, mouse major urinary protein and odorant binding protein.^{19,20} Megalin binds Siderocalin in a ligand-independent manner and can mediate its cellular uptake,¹⁵ though the physiological role of this interaction remains speculative.

Lipocalins usually function through the ligands they bind and it is the shape of the lipocalin calyx, and the chemical character of the residues lining the calyx, that are the primary determinants of ligand specificity. [Equine uterocalin, for instance, displays a predicted calyx that is quite distinct in character from Siderocalin; therefore, it is unlikely that equine uterocalin has an analogous ligand specificity or function.] However, some of these putative lipocalin functional assignments have been made on very indirect or circumstantial evidence, without determining the actual molecular mechanisms or ligands involved. For instance, the name 'lipocalin', referring to the lipophilic character of the stereotypical calyx, is reflected in the measurable affinity many family members have for simple fatty acids or retinoids, though many studies have failed to show that such interactions are specific and not due to trivial, non-specific, hydrophobic interactions. The term 'lipocalin' itself can be misleading, as a number of family members have now been shown to have distinctly polar calyces and/or bind preferentially to non-lipid or -lipophilic ligands.

Siderocalin was initially proposed to have immunomodulatory activity by binding and clearing lipophilic inflammatory mediators,²¹ such as the neutrophil chemoattractant tripeptide N-formyl-Met-Leu-Phe.^{22,23} However, the initial three-dimensional structures of human Siderocalin, determined by x-ray crystallography²⁴ and NMR,²⁵ revealed that the calyx is shallower (only about 15Å deep) and broader (approximately 20Å wide at the brim) than is typical of most lipocalins and is also uncharacteristically lined with polar and positively-charged residues. The Siderocalin calyx is highly sculpted, with three prominent pockets (#1, #2 & #3) outlined by the position of the side-chains of three positively-charged calyx residues (Arg81, Lys125 and Lys134).²⁴ The incompatible nature of the Siderocalin calyx, together with binding data showing millimolar dissociation constants,^{24,26} led to the conclusion that Siderocalin does not specifically bind N-formylated tripeptides or other proposed hydrophobic ligands,²⁴ leaving its physiological function in question.

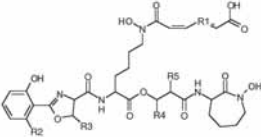
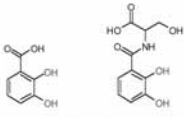
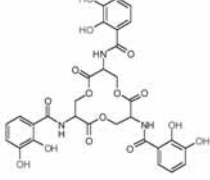
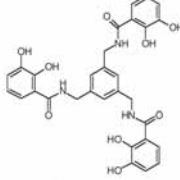
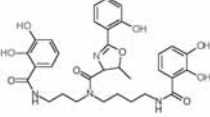
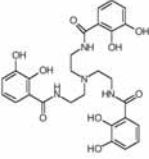
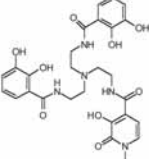
The initial crystallographic analysis of Siderocalin, using baculovirus-expressed protein, did show the presence of what was likely a fatty acid in the calyx that could be, surprisingly, displaced by sulfate.²⁴ This weakly-bound bound fatty acid, modeled as n-capric acid (NCA), likely represented a serendipitous ligand co-purified with Siderocalin, as has been seen in the structures of other lipocalins.²⁷ Distinct from the typical fatty acid-binding lipocalins, the carboxyl moiety of the fatty acid bound in the deepest pocket (#2) in the Siderocalin calyx, with the aliphatic tail trailing outwards. However, paralleling the difficulty in identifying 'true' lipocalin ligands, the low affinity, small size relative to the calyx volume and poor overall shape/chemical compatibility of the fatty acid strongly argued that this compound was also not a physiologically-relevant ligand.

Siderocalin Ligands

Building on the unexpected observation that Siderocalin co-purifies with a dark red chromophore when expressed in bacteria, our laboratory identified bacterial ferric siderophores as candidate Siderocalin ligands. A 'siderophore' is defined as a low molecular weight, virtually ferric-specific chelator involved in iron acquisition. Microorganisms secrete siderophores in a competition to scavenge scarce environmental iron in a receptor-dependent manner.²⁸⁻³¹ Siderophores can be divided into three broad classes depending on the chemistry of chelation: hydroxamates, phenolates/catecholates or α -hydroxycarboxylates—though other liganding chemistries can be used (Tables 2-5). Siderophore affinities for iron (III) can exceed 10^{50} M^{-1} .

Subsequent biophysical studies show that Siderocalin tightly binds (1) the catecholate-type ferric siderophore of enterobacteria, enterochelin (Ent; also known as enterobactin; $K_D = 0.4 \text{ nM}$ at 22°C),⁴ (2) a panel of related catecholate-type siderophores³² and (3) the soluble, mixed catecholate/hydroxamate carboxymycobactin siderophores of *Mycobacterium smegmatis* and *M. tuberculosis* (CMB-S and CMB-T; Table 2).³² Complex structures⁴ show that Siderocalin binds ferric Ent (FeEnt) and related siderophores by intercalating the side-chains of the three positively-charged calyx residues (Arg81, Lys125 and Lys134; Fig. 1) between the three

Table 2. Siderophores demonstrated to bind to Siderocalin^{32,44}

Compound (references)	Organism(s)	Structure	Comments (K _a for Fe(III))
Carboxymycobactins	mycobacteria		soluble form of the lipophilic mycobactins (shorter acyl chain plus a carboxylate) R1 = (-CH ₂) ₁₋₉ R4 = -CH ₃ or -H
2,3-Dihydroxybenzoate (DHBA) and Serine-DHB (82)	<i>Brucella abortus</i> (DHBA (83))		biosynthetic intermediates or breakdown products of Ent; three molecules together bind one iron
Enterochelin (Ent; Enterobactin) (84, 85)	enterobacteria		tris-catecholate; three DHBA groups coupled through amide linkages to a tri-serine, trilactone backbone; primary siderophore of many enterobacteria (10 ⁵²)
MECAM (86)	synthetic Ent analog		less-hydrolyzable Ent analog, differing only in the backbone
Parabactin (87)	<i>Paracoccus</i>		similar to Ent; oxazoline group replaces one phenolate; different backbone (~10 ⁵⁰)
TRENCAM (86)	synthetic Ent analog		less-hydrolyzable Ent analog, differing only in the backbone
TREN-3,2-HOPO (86)	synthetic cepabactin analog		Related to cepabactin, with one hydroxypyridinone (HOPO) ring; the complex with iron is therefore charged -2

catecholate rings of FeEnt, generating a novel hybrid of ionic (Ent is uncharged, but FeEnt carries a net -3 charge³³ delocalized over the molecule⁴) and cation- π interactions, where the interacting groups are interlaced, cation-catecholate-cation-catecholate, in a cyclically-permuted manner around the iron atom.⁴

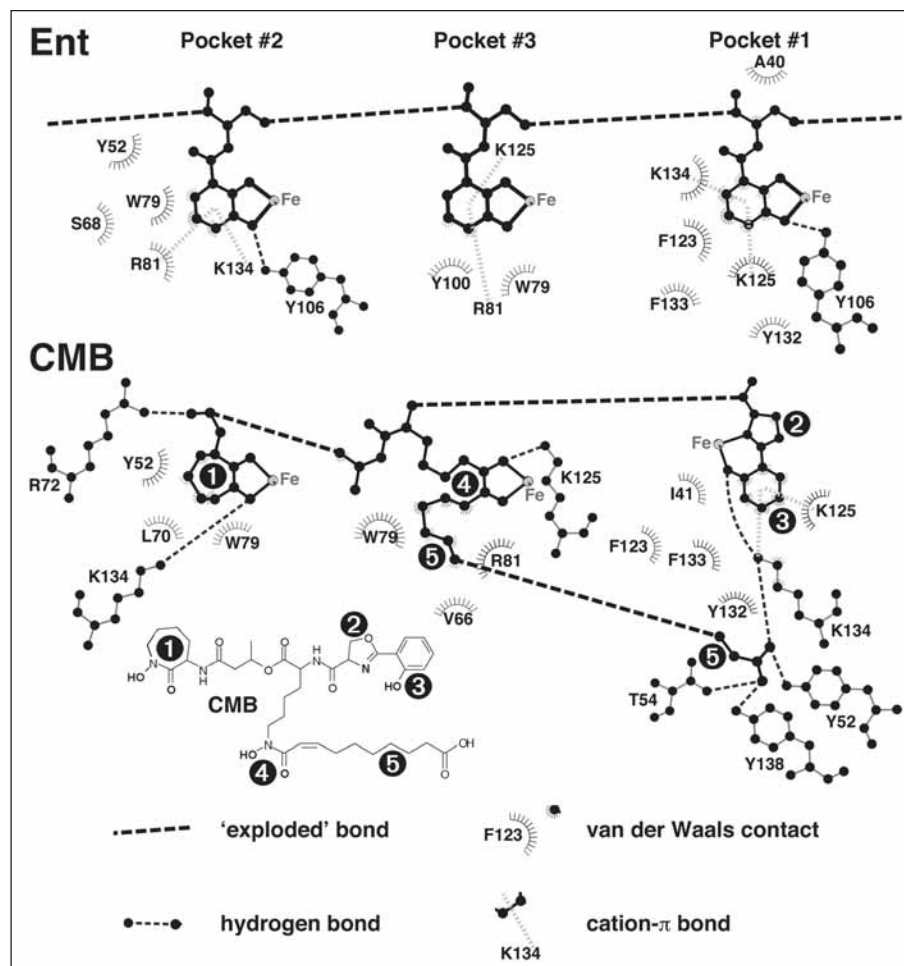
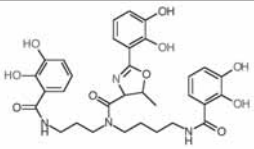
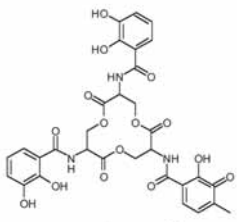
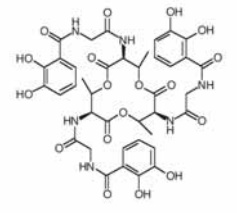
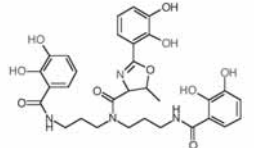
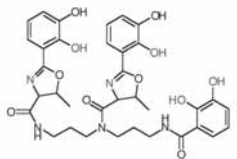
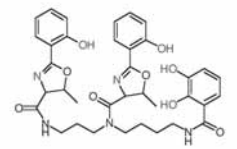


Figure 1. 'Exploded' LIGPLOT¹¹³ representations of the interactions between Siderocalin and Ent (*top*) or CMB-S (*bottom*), with bond types shown as indicated. Representations have been exploded to isolate the protein–ligand interactions in each pocket: #1, on the right; #2, on the left; and #3, in the middle. The chemical structure of the predominant CMB variant observed in the CMB-S crystal structures is also shown; CMB substituent groups (1, the cyclic hydroxamate; 2, the oxazoline; 3, the phenolate; 4, the linear hydroxamate; 5, the fatty acid tail) are numbered on the chemical structure and the corresponding parts of the LIGPLOT diagram for clarity.

Cation- π bonds in proteins are interactions between the positive charge of lysine or arginine side-chains and the quadrupole moment associated with the delocalized π -electrons of an aromatic functional group such as tryptophan, tyrosine or phenylalanine.³⁴ These interactions are seen in the binding of phosphotyrosine to an SH2 domain (for example, see ref. 35, where an arginine and a lysine interact with a phosphotyrosine-containing peptide). However, in SH2 complexes the actual aromatic ring remains uncharged. The nature of Siderocalin/siderophore interactions, where the siderophore is centered in the Siderocalin calyx making multiple, direct, polar interactions, clearly demonstrates specificity and cannot be the result of serendipity. Unusually, though, the FeEnt ligand makes few other stabilizing interactions with the protein, allowing it to wiggle around in the calyx, and fails to fill all of the calyx sub-pockets

Table 3. Siderophores predicted to bind to Siderocalin, based on similarities to known Siderocalin ligands and characterized elements of the recognition mechanism

Compound (references)	Organism(s)	Structure	Comments (K _a for Fe(III))
Agrobactin (88)	<i>Agrobacterium tumefaciens</i>		similar to parabactin (~10 ⁵⁰)
Brucebactin (89)	<i>Brucella abortus</i>	(uncharacterized, but thought similar to enterochelin)	phenolate/catecholate-type
Cepabactin (90)	<i>Burkholderia cepacia</i>		similar to Ent; an uncharged hydroxypyridinonate (HOPO) group replaces one phenolate, reducing overall charge of iron complex to -2
Corynebactin (91)	<i>Corynebacterium diphtheriae</i>		similar to Ent, with a tri-threonine, trilactone backbone; opposite chirality to Ent (91)
Fluvibactin (92)	<i>Vibrio fluvialis</i>		similar to parabactin
Vibriobactin (93)	<i>Vibrio cholerae</i>		similar to parabactin; vs. Ent: oxazoline groups replace two phenolate groups; different backbone
Vulnibactin (94)	<i>Vibrio</i>		similar to vibriobactin, Ent

completely.^{4,32} This behavior, suggesting that the calyx is optimized for some other ligand/s, lead to the search for other potential Siderocalin siderophore ligands, culminating in the discovery that CMBs also bind while yet many other siderophores do not.³²

Siderocalin	
human	--SDLIPAPPLSKVPLQQNFQDNQFQGGKYYVVLGAGN-AILREDKDPQKMYATIYELKEDKSY
rat	--QNLIPAPPLISVPLQPGFWTERFQGRWFVVLGAGN-AVQKERQSRFTMYSTIYELQEDNSY
murine	--QNLIPAPSLLTVPDQFSDQFQGRWYVVLGAGN-AVQKTEGSFTMYSTIYELQENNSY
Lcn12	
human	KVLQAQTPTPLPLPPMQSFQGNQFQGEWFLGLAGN-SFRPEHRALLNAFTATFELSDGGRF
murine	QILESQISAMSGFPQMTSFQSDQFQGEWFLGLADN-TFRREHRALLNFFTTLFELKEKSQF
Ex-FABP	
Q83	-----HTEAAATVPDRS-----EVAGKWIYVALASNTDFFLREKGMKMMMARISFLGEDEL
	-----HAKAAATVPDRS-----EIAGKWIYVALASNTDFFLREKGMKMMMARISFLGEDEL
C8 γ	
	-----ASPISTIQKANFDAQFAGTWLLVAVGSA-----GRAEATTLHVAPQGTAMA
Lcn1	
human	AVSLGLIAALQAHHLLASDEEIQDVSGTWYKAMTVDFEPEMNLSEVTPMTLTLEGGNLEA
Siderocalin	
human	NVTSVLFK--KKCDYWIRTFVPGCQPGFTLGNIKSYPLTSYLVRVSTNYQHAMVFFKK
rat	NVTSILVRG--QGCYRWIRTFVPSRPGQFTLGNIHSYPQIQSYDVQVADTDYDQFAMVFFQK
murine	NVTSILVRDQDQGCYRWIRTFVPSRAGQFTLGNMHRYPQVQSYNVQVATTDYDQFAMVFFRK
Lcn12	
human	EVWNAMTRG--QHCDTWSYVLIPAAQPGQFTVDHG-VEPGADREETRVDSDYTQFALMLSR
murine	QVTNSMTRG--KHCNTWSYTLIPATKPGQFTDRNRGSGPGADRENIQVIETDYITFALVLSLR
Ex-FABP	
Q83	EVSYAAPSP--KGCWKWETTFKKTSDDGELY-----YSEAEKTEVLDTDYKSYAVIFATR
	KVSYAVPKP--NGCRKWETTFKKTSDDGELY-----YSEAEKTEVLDTDYKSYAVIYATR
C8 γ	
	VSTFRKLDG---ICWQVRQLYGDVGVLGRFLQAR---GARGAVHVVAETDYQSFAVLYLER
Lcn1	
human	KVTMLTISGR---CQEVKAVLEKTEPGKYT-----ADGGKHVAYIIRSHVKDHYIFYCEG
Siderocalin	
human	VSQNYREYKITLYGRKELTSELKENFIRFSKYLGLPENHIVFPVPIDQCIDG-----
rat	TSENKQYFKVTLYGRTKGLSDELKERFVSFAKSLGLKDNIVFSVPTDQCIDNV-----
murine	TSENKQYFKITLYGRKELSPELKERFTRFAKSLGLKDDNIIFSVPDQCIDN-----
Lcn12	
human	HTSRLAVLRISLLGRSWLLPPGTLDFICLGRAQGLSDDNIVFPDVTGNMVLQACWAVGTG + 46 residues
murine	QTSSQNITRVSLGRNWLSHKTIKFICLTRTQNLTKDNFLFPDLSDWLPDPQVC-----
Ex-FABP	
Q83	VKDGRTHMMRLYSRSREVSPTAMAIFRKLARERNYDEMVAVLPSQECSVDEV-----
	VKDGRTHMMRLYSRSPEVSPAATAIFRKLARERNYDEMVAVLPRQEECTVDEV-----
C8 γ	
	AG----QLSVKLYARSLPVSDSVLSGFEQVRQEAHLTEDQIFYFPKYGFCEAADQFHVLEDEV
Lcn1	
human	ELHGKPVRGVKLVGRDPKNNLEALEDFEKAAGRLSTESILIPRQSETCSPGSD-----

Figure 2. Unmodified CLUSTALW¹¹⁴ alignments of the sequences of Siderocalin with other potential siderocalins. Dots indicate positively-charged residues with side-chains extending into the calyx, based on either direct structure determinations, homology or homology modeling; dashes indicate gaps introduced to maximize homology.

Though considerably different in structure (Table 2), CMBs bind in the same position in the Siderocalin calyx, though filling the calyx sub-pockets and crevices more completely and making more extensive interactions with the protein (Fig. 1). The CMB 2-hydroxyphenyloxazoline group is positioned in pocket #1, the cyclic hydroxamate group is positioned in the upper part of pocket #2 and the linear hydroxamate occupies pocket #3. The fatty acid tail curls under the

rest of the siderophore, crossing from pocket #3 into pocket #1, positioning the carboxylate group into the bottom of pocket #2. Interestingly, the CMB carboxylate essentially superimposes on the carboxylate group of the NCA ligand in the original crystal structure of baculovirus-expressed Siderocalin²⁴ and likely explains the retention of a fatty acid through purification. Lysines 125 and 134 participate in cation- π bonds to the CMB hydroxybenzoyl moiety completely analogous to those in Ent, with the hydroxybenzoyl of CMB superimposing almost identically onto the FeEnt catecholate in pocket #1. Therefore, the common element that is recognized by Siderocalin in both complexes is the highly-polarized phenyl ring of one iron chelating group sitting in what is thus revealed as likely the key binding pocket, #1, between Lys125 and Lys134.

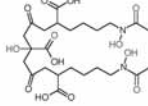
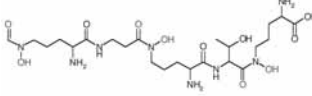
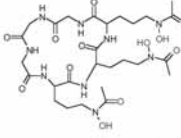
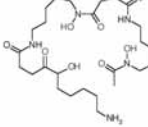
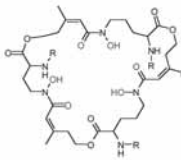
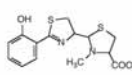
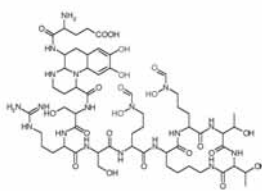
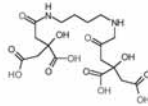
Siderocalin, Siderophores, Iron and Disease

What is the relevance of binding bacterial siderophores in a mammalian context? Iron is required by virtually all living things.³⁶ Within the body, the majority of iron is bound up in hemoglobin, though several proteins bind iron directly. Transferrin transports iron between cells and is normally 30 to 40% iron-saturated in the serum.³⁷ Iron is stored intracellularly in complex with ferritins.³⁸ Lactoferrin is a potent bacteriostatic agent, first discovered in milk, that is also released from neutrophil granules at sites of inflammation, directly inhibiting the growth of infecting pathogens by sequestering iron.^{39,40} It has long been thought that the body generally lowers available iron in response to both infection and cancer in order to slow or stop the growth of pathogens and tumors.^{40,41} The observation that giving iron supplements to patients with bacterial infections worsens their condition^{40,41} demonstrates the scarcity of free iron in the body, with a serum concentration estimated to be as low as 10^{-24} M,⁴² and the efficiency of iron sequestration as an antibiotic.⁴⁰ Pathogenic genera whose growth is stimulated by iron supplementation during infection in vertebrate hosts include: *Candida*, *Cryptococcus*, *Pneumocystis* and *Rhizopus* (Fungi); *Entamoeba*, *Leishmania*, *Naegleria*, *Plasmodium*, *Toxoplasma* and *Trypanosoma* (Protozoa); *Bacillus*, *Clostridium*, *Corynebacterium*, *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium*, *Staphylococcus* and *Streptococcus* (Gram-positive bacteria); and *Acinetobacter*, *Aeromonas*, *Alcaligenes*, *Campylobacter*, *Chlamydia*, *Ehrlichia*, *Enterobacter*, *Escherichia*, *Klebsiella*, *Legionella*, *Neisseria*, *Pseudomonas*, *Salmonella*, *Shigella* and *Yersinia* (Gram-negative bacteria).⁴¹

This ligand specificity therefore suggests a role for Siderocalin in innate immune responses: a neutrophil granule protein, secreted in response to infection or inflammation, that sequesters iron, as ferric siderophore complexes, away from microbial pathogens, thus limiting their growth and virulence. Siderocalin complements the activity of lactoferrin by binding ferric siderophore complexes rather than iron directly.⁴ Siderocalin is an acute phase protein, whose serum concentration can be used clinically to differentiate between bacterial and other types of infections.⁴³ During inflammation, concentrations of Siderocalin can increase to levels, with concentrations approaching 20 to 30 nM in the serum, adequate to presumably bind all available iron as ferric siderophore complexes.⁴³ In direct support of this hypothesis, Siderocalin is a potent bacteriostatic agent in vitro against *E. coli* cultured in iron-limiting conditions,⁴ functioning specifically through its affinity for FeEnt, and, when the Siderocalin gene is knocked-out, renders mice unable to fend off infections by virulent strains of *E. coli*.⁴⁴

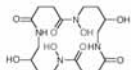
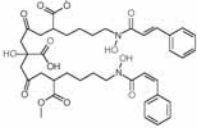
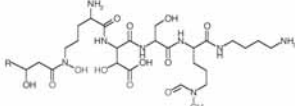
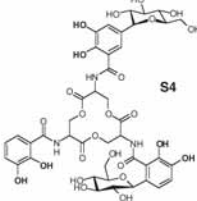
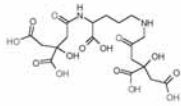
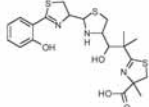
Siderocalin's binding properties may also contribute to the explanation of the association of certain siderophores with virulence. The pathogenesis islands of many bacteria (including species of *Yersinia*, *Shigella*, *Klebsiella*, *Salmonella* and *Neisseria*) encode proteins either associated with siderophore synthesis or uptake.⁴⁵⁻⁵¹ Biosynthesis of the siderophores aerobactin⁵¹ (Table 4) or yersiniabactin⁴⁵ (Table 5), for instance, contributes to virulence for many bacteria. We have shown in qualitative binding assays that Siderocalin has no appreciable affinity for aerobactin⁴ or pyochelin³² (Table 4)—therefore, because of its similarity to pyochelin, Siderocalin very likely has limited affinity for yersiniabactin as well. These siderophores may thus confer virulence by allowing these bacteria to evade Siderocalin-mediated iron sequestration. This hypothesis poten-

Table 4. Siderophores demonstrated not to bind to Siderocalin^{32,44}

Compound (references)	Organism(s)	Structure	Comments (K _a for Fe(III))
Aerobactin (51)	enterobacteria		citrate-based hydroxamate type; virulence factor for pathogenic enteric bacteria (ColV encoded; ~10 ²³)
Exochelins (95, 96)	mycobacteria		peptide-based; linear hydroxamate-type
Ferrichromes (97)	<i>Microsporium</i> , <i>Trichophyton</i> and <i>Aspergillus</i>		hydroxamate-type; cyclic peptides of ornithine derivatives and Gly, Ser or Ala (~10 ³⁰)
Ferrioxamines (98, 99)	<i>Actinomyces</i>		linear trihydroxamate-type yeast siderophores (~10 ³²)
Fusarinines (Fusigens) (100, 101)	<i>Fusarium</i> , <i>Paecilomyces</i> and <i>Aspergillus</i>		linear or cyclic trihydroxamates
Protocatechuic acid (3,4-dihydroxybenzoic acid)	<i>Bacillus anthracis</i>		substituent of anthrachelin
Pyochelin (102)	<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> , <i>Burkholderia cepacia</i>		salicylate-based
Pyoverdin (also pyoverdine, pseudobactin) (103)	Pseudomonads		contains a dihydroxyquinoline chromophore, a variable peptide chain of 6 to 12 residues, and a dicarboxylic acid amide 'side-chain' (~10 ³²)
Rhizoferrin (104)	Zygomycetes		citric acid-based polycarboxylate

tially explains the conundrum^{30,52} of why production of a second, seemingly less efficient siderophore (aerobactin), one with a considerably lower affinity for iron (III) than Ent, would

Table 5. Siderophores predicted not to bind to Siderocalin, based on similarities to demonstrated nonbinding siderophores and characterized elements of Siderocalin recognition mechanism

Compound (references)	Organism(s)	Structure	Comments (K_a for Fe(III))
Alcaligin (105)	<i>Bordetella pertussis</i> and <i>bronchiseptica</i>		endomacrocyclic dihydroxamate; three molecules together bind two irons (M_2L_3) ($\sim 10^{24}/10^{18}$)
Anthrachelin (106)	<i>Bacillus anthracis</i>	(uncharacterized, but based on protocatechuic acid)	phenolate/catecholate-type
Nannochelin (107)	myxobacteria		citrate-based, cinnamoyl; variant of aerobactin; dihydroxamate siderophore
Ornibactins (108)	<i>Burkholderia cepacia</i>		linear hydroxamate-hydroxycarboxylate (R = C4, C6, C8)
Salmochelins (53)	<i>Salmonella enterica</i> ; uropathogenic <i>E. coli</i>		Ent with glucose adducts
Staphyloferrin (109, 110)	<i>Staphylococcus</i>		citric acid-containing polycarboxylate; lysine backbone
Yersiniabactin (111, 112)	<i>Yersinia</i>		related to pyochelin

contribute to virulence. In support of this supposition, the relative susceptibility of Siderocalin-KO versus wild-type mice to *E. coli* infection is only apparent with bacterial strains unable to synthesize aerobactin; strains that can secrete aerobactin do equally well in culture in the presence or absence of added Siderocalin or in in vivo infections.⁴⁴ Infections with *Staphylococcus aureus* also show no difference in wild-type versus knock-out mice in terms of outcome, consistent with the utilization of siderophores (including staphyloferrin, Table 5) that are predicted to evade Siderocalin binding on the basis of structural homology to siderophores (rhizoferrin, Table 4) that demonstrably do not bind.³² *Salmonella* and uropathogenic strains of *E. coli* are also able to modify Ent by glucosylation⁵³ yielding the salmochelins (Table 5), siderophores that would also be predicted not to bind Siderocalin because of significant steric clashes in the calyx.

However, Siderocalin-mediated anti-mycobacterial responses may be limited by the high selectivity of Siderocalin for particular CMB isoforms, in terms of fatty acid tail length, shown by the structural analysis of Siderocalin/CMB complexes.³² While Siderocalin may be able to tolerate binding of CMB variants plus or minus one or perhaps two methylene groups in the fatty acid moieties from the optimum, though likely with significant concurrent reductions in affinity, it seems unlikely that Siderocalin could accommodate the extremes of the reported CMB-T/S spectrum (Table 2), at least while retaining the overall ligand orientation seen in the co-crystal structures. Therefore, CMB variation may reflect mycobacterial responses to Siderocalin-mediated defenses, evidenced by the obvious success of mycobacteria as human pathogens.

Siderocalin-mediated anti-bacterial responses through siderophore sequestration does not, *a priori*, require interactions with receptors. Therefore, the existence of Siderocalin receptors suggests that the anti-bacterial iron depletion function of Siderocalin may not be its sole physiological role.

Siderocalin and MMP-9

MMP-9 is a member of the matrix metalloproteinase family (multi-domain, zinc endopeptidases) that includes matrilysin (MMP-7), the collagenases (MMP-1, MMP-8 and MMP-13), the stromelysins (MMP 3, 10, 11 and 12), the gelatinases (-A, MMP-2 and -B, MMP-9) and a membrane associated MMP (MMP-14). MMP-9 efficiently cleaves gelatin, elastin and types V and X collagen, components of the extracellular matrix.⁵⁴ All members of the family share a homologous catalytic domain, containing the active-site zinc and are synthesized as inactive proenzymes. A cysteine in the propeptide coordinates the zinc, inactivating the proenzyme; the proenzyme can be activated *in vitro* through the addition of organomercurials and *in vivo* by plasma kallikrein.⁵⁵ MMP activity is regulated through control of the conversion of proenzyme to active enzyme and by the tight, non-covalent binding of 'tissue inhibitors of metalloproteinases' (TIMPs; ref. 56). Studies have shown that overexpression of MMPs (particularly MMP-9) can be correlated with tumor invasiveness and metastasis.⁵⁷⁻⁶² The only demonstrated consequence of a Siderocalin/MMP-9 association is a slight acceleration of the direct activation of promatrix metalloproteinases through a non-physiological pathway.⁶³ There is no noncovalent component to Siderocalin/MMP-9 association,³² suggesting that the interaction may be serendipitous (murine Siderocalin lacks the corresponding cysteine and is not known to associate with MMP-9). It is also hard to imagine a functional link between Siderocalin's affinity for siderophores and the sequence-specific protease activity of MMP-9.

Siderocalin and an Alternate Iron Delivery Pathway in Mammals

Yang and coworkers¹³ have shown that murine Siderocalin, in a murine tissue culture system, also acts as an iron delivery protein, acting in concert with transferrin to convert mesenchymal progenitors into tubular epithelium, forming kidney nephrons. The effect is dependent upon iron bound by Siderocalin as a complex with a chromophore—a mammalian 'siderophore'. Murine Siderocalin also apparently recycles through sub-cellular compartments distinct from the intracellular trafficking of transferrin. Passage through low-pH intracellular compartments correlates with release of iron. The murine and rat orthologs are expected to have a similar ligand specificity to human Siderocalin (experimentally confirmed for murine Siderocalin⁴⁴) as the majority of residues lining the calyx and approaching the ferric siderophore ligands are conserved or conservatively substituted between murine, rat and human Siderocalin.⁴ Therefore, the expectation is that the mammalian 'siderophore' will turn out to be something similar to one of the high-affinity bacterial siderophore ligands of Siderocalin, probably more CMB-like, as these latter compounds are clearly more calyx-complementary—thus likely better representing the 'ideal' Siderocalin ligand. If mammals do synthesize siderophores that are used to shuttle iron or act as growth factors, Siderocalin may participate in a wide variety of cellular processes by playing a role in regulating their transport, thus potentially explaining

Siderocalin's association with tumorigenesis and apoptosis. However, these effects could alternatively be directly mediated by Siderocalin/receptor interactions, either ligand-dependent or -independent.

Other 'Siderocalins'?

While degenerately binding both Ent-like siderophores and CMBs, Siderocalin fails to bind to many bacterial siderophores and essentially all types of fungal siderophores.³² Therefore, the narrow range of Siderocalin siderophore specificity leaves many holes in this potent innate immune defence, raising the question of whether there are other siderophore-binding proteins or peptides with complementary specificities. Siderocalin is the first non-bacterial siderophore-binding protein characterized and currently the only Ent-binding protein where the protein/ligand interactions have been clearly delineated. Therefore, initial attempts to identify other non-bacterial siderophore-binders have focused on lipocalins related to Siderocalin.³² Typical of the lipocalin family, sequence identities rapidly plummet as the alignments move from the Siderocalins themselves (Table 1). A number of neighboring lipocalins are readily eliminated as having characterized functions or ligands that preclude siderophore binding: the prostaglandin D₂ synthases (PDS)⁶⁴ and human HC (also known as α_1 -microglobulin),⁶⁵ a lipocalin associated with IgA that binds heme and heme-breakdown products.⁶⁶ However, candidate siderophore-binding lipocalins ('siderocalins') that display the hallmark features of the Siderocalin calyx associated with siderophore binding, a triad of positively-charged side-chains, are identifiable.³²

Murine lipocalin 12 is found in seminal fluid,⁶⁷ but little else is known about its function; its human ortholog has only been identified through analysis of the human genome sequence.⁶⁸ Simplistic homology modelling of Lcn12 reveals a triad of positively charged side-chains in the murine Lcn12 calyx (two in human Lcn12) arranged analogously to Siderocalin. The next most-related candidate siderocalins are the highly-homologous proteins chicken Ex-FABP⁶⁹ and quail Q83.⁷⁰ Ex-FABP is expressed during chicken embryo development in hypertrophic cartilage, muscle fibers and granulocytes and is also a component of egg whites. In chondrocyte and myoblast cultures, Ex-FABP expression is induced by inflammatory agents and inhibited by anti-inflammatory agents. Q83 is a protein strongly induced in *v-myc*-transformed avian fibroblasts, though no specific candidate ligands or functions have been proposed. The NMR structure of Q83⁷⁰ again shows a triad of positively-charged amino acids in the calyx (conserved in Ex-FABP) very reminiscent, in arrangement and character, of the key siderophore-binding residues of Siderocalin. This arrangement is also echoed in the calyx of an even more distantly-related lipocalin, C8 γ ,⁷¹ a well-studied member of the complement cascade and the subject of high-resolution crystallographic analyses.⁷² However, preliminary binding and crystallographic analyses fail to convincingly demonstrate specific interactions between C8 γ and any of the siderophores tested,³² showing that calyx elements beyond positively-charged residues may be necessary for siderophore binding. Direct siderophore binding studies of the other candidate siderocalins, Lcn12, Ex-FABP and Q83 have yet to be reported.

Yet another lipocalin, Lcn1 (tear lipocalin, von Ebner's Gland protein), a lipocalin even more distantly removed in sequence space, is also functionally a siderocalin, broadly inhibiting the growth of bacteria and fungi through ferric siderophore sequestration, though the nature of the recognition mechanism has yet to be elucidated and where the measured dissociation constants, in the millimolar range, are surprisingly weak.⁷³ The structure of Lcn1,⁷⁴ though containing several disordered sections that limit the conclusions, shows no immediately recognizable structural similarity to Siderocalin in the calyx. Lcn1/siderophore complexes also have yet to be reported. It even possible that there are siderophore-binding peptides; the structure of Hepcidin,⁷⁵ an anti-bacterial and -fungal peptide hormone,⁷⁶ involved in regulating iron homeostasis through interactions with ferroportin,⁷⁷ also displays a triad of positively-charged side-chains (Arg16, Lys18 and Lys24) on its concave surface almost superimposable on the positively-charged, ligand-interacting calyx residues of Siderocalin.

Consideration of all these possibilities requires that proposals to use siderophores and siderophore analogs as therapeutics, either as antibiotics^{78,79} or, through the bound iron, as oxygen radical scavengers in various clinical settings, such as the treatment of ischemia associated with congestive heart failure,⁸⁰ will need to be tempered by the possibility that endogenous siderophore-binding specificities will limit, defeat or confound such approaches.

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