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NON-CANONICAL NOTCH SIGNALING REGULATES ACTIVATION AND DIFFERENTIATION OF PERIPHERAL CD4+ T CELLS

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Degree Name

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Degree Program

Molecular and Cellular Biology

Year Degree Awarded

Spring 2014

First Advisor

Dr. Barbara A. Osborne

Keywords

Notch, non-canonical, T cell, NF-kB, mTOR, activation, differentiation, cross-talk

Subject Categories

Immunity

Abstract

Cleavage of the Notch receptor via a γ -secretase, results in the release of the active intra-cellular domain of Notch that migrates to the nucleus and interacts with RBP-J_K, resulting in the activation of downstream target genes. This canonical Notch signaling pathway has been documented to influence T-cell development and function. However, the mechanistic details underlying this process remain obscure. In addition to RBP-J_K, the intra-cellular domain of Notch also interacts with other proteins in the cytoplasm and nucleus, giving rise to the possibility of an alternate, RBP-J_K independent Notch pathway. However, the contribution of such RBP-J_K

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independent, "non-canonical" Notch signaling in regulating peripheral T-cell responses is unknown. We specifically demonstrate the requirement of Notch1 for regulating signal strength and signaling events distal to the T-cell receptor in peripheral CD4⁺ T cells. By using mice with a conditional deletion in Notch1 or RBP-J κ , we show that Notch1 regulates activation and proliferation of CD4⁺ T cells independently of RBP-J κ . Furthermore, differentiation towards T_H1 and T_{reg} lineages is also Notch dependent but RBP-J κ independent. Our data provide evidence that non-canonical regulation of these processes likely occurs through NF- κ B. Additionally, we also provide evidence suggestive of cross-talk between Notch and the mTOR pathway. Notch1, but not RBP-J κ , is required for phosphorylation of several substrates directly downstream of mTORC2. Collectively, these striking observations demonstrate that many of the cell intrinsic functions of Notch occur independently of RBP-J κ . This reveals a previously unknown, novel role of non-canonical Notch signaling in regulating peripheral T-cell responses.

Recommended Citation

Dongre, Anushka, "NON-CANONICAL NOTCH SIGNALING REGULATES ACTIVATION AND DIFFERENTIATION OF PERIPHERAL CD4⁺ T CELLS" (2014).

Doctoral Dissertations 2014-current. Paper 74.

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