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Title:	An intrinsically disordered pathological prion variant Y145Stop converts into self-seeding amyloids via liquid-liquid phase separation
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Keywords:	An intrinsically disordered pathological prion variant Y145Stop amyloids
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Citation:	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America, 118(45).
Abstract:	<p>Biomolecular condensation via liquid-liquid phase separation of intrinsically disordered proteins/regions (IDPs/IDRs) along with other biomolecules is proposed to control critical cellular functions, whereas aberrant phase transitions are associated with a range of neurodegenerative diseases. Here, we show that a disease-associated stop codon mutation of the prion protein (PrP) at tyrosine 145 (Y145Stop), resulting in a truncated, highly disordered, N-terminal IDR, spontaneously phase-separates into dynamic liquid-like droplets. Phase separation of this highly positively charged N-terminal segment is promoted by the electrostatic screening and a multitude of weak, transient, multivalent, intermolecular interactions. Single-droplet Raman measurements, in conjunction with an array of bioinformatic, spectroscopic, microscopic, and mutagenesis studies, revealed a highly mobile internal organization within the liquid-like condensates. The phase behavior of Y145Stop is modulated by RNA. Lower RNA:protein ratios promote condensation at a low micromolar protein concentration under physiological conditions. At higher concentrations of RNA, phase separation is abolished. Upon aging, these highly dynamic liquid-like droplets gradually transform into ordered, β-rich, amyloid-like aggregates. These aggregates formed via phase transitions display an autocatalytic self-templating characteristic involving the recruitment and binding-induced conformational conversion of monomeric Y145Stop into amyloid fibrils. In contrast to this intrinsically disordered truncated variant, the wild-type full-length PrP exhibits a much lower propensity for both condensation and maturation into amyloids, hinting at a possible protective role of the C-terminal domain. Such an interplay of molecular factors in modulating the protein phase behavior might have much broader implications in cell physiology and disease.</p>
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