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Secretory phospholipases A₂

Makoto Murakami^a, Ichiro Kudo^{a,*}, Keizo Inoue^b

^a Department of Health Chemistry, School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Showa University, 1-5-8, Hatanodai, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 142, Japan

^b Department of Health Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Tokyo, 7-3-1, Hongo, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113, Japan

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1. Introduction

Phospholipase A₂ (PLA₂) plays a crucial role in diverse cellular responses including phospholipid digestion and metabolism, host defence, and signal transduction. PLA₂ also provides precursors for eicosanoid generation when the cleaved fatty acid is arachidonic acid, or for platelet-activating factor (PAF) formation when the *sn*-1 position of the phosphatidylcholine contains an alkyl ether linkage. Recent advances in molecular and cellular biology have enabled us to understand the molecular nature, possible function and regulation of each PLA₂ isozyme. Mammalian tissues and cells generally contain more than one enzyme, each of which is regulated independently and performs distinct functions. Cytosolic PLA₂ (cPLA₂) and two types of secretory PLA₂s (type I and type II) are most the well characterized PLA₂s amongst a still expanding large family of mammalian PLA₂s. Here we focus on recent studies of secretory isozymes of PLA₂. In particular, we emphasize accumulating information on the possible participation of type II PLA₂ in eicosanoid generation and other cellular functions.

2. Classification and structural features of mammalian secretory PLA₂s

The first mammalian isoform of PLA₂ to be identified was pancreatic PLA₂. Subsequently, mammalian pancreatic PLA₂ as well as a number of secretory PLA₂s

* Corresponding author.

isolated from snake venoms have been well characterized mechanistically and structurally. Traditionally, these secretory PLA₂s have been further subdivided into two main groups (type (group) I and type II) based on their primary structures (Dennis, 1994; Heinrikson et al., 1977). Snake venom PLA₂s from Elapidae and Hydrophidae species are called type I, and the others from Crotalidae and Viperidae species are type II PLA₂. Pancreatic PLA₂ has structural similarities to snake venom type I PLA₂s, and thus, is now termed a mammalian type I PLA₂. As shown in a later section, a wide variety of cells secrete another PLA₂ which has similar structural characteristics to snake venom type II PLA₂. Although the terms 'sPLA₂' ('s' signifying 'secretory') or 'non-pancreatic PLA₂' have often been used in the last few years to describe this PLA₂ (Clark et al., 1991), we employ the term mammalian type II PLA₂ rather than sPLA₂ based on accepted nomenclature and the fact that this enzyme is often detected as a membrane-bound enzyme without detectable secretion.

All secretory PLA₂s possess a similar molecular mass of about 14 kDa, and require the presence of submillimolar to millimolar concentrations of Ca²⁺ for effective hydrolysis of substrate phospholipid at an optimum pH of 8.0–9.0. When purified phospholipid is used as a substrate, type I PLA₂ hydrolyzes both phosphatidylcholine and phosphatidylethanolamine at almost equal rates, whereas type II PLA₂ hydrolyzes phosphatidylethanolamine or phosphatidylserine in preference to phosphatidylcholine and phosphatidylinositol (Kudo et al., 1993).

Structurally, type I and type II PLA₂s contain highly conserved amino acid residues and sequences characteristic of all secretory PLA₂s sequenced to date: (i) an α -helical amino-terminal segment containing the lipophilic residues Leu², Phe⁵, and Ile⁷; (ii) a Ca²⁺-binding loop with the typical glycine-rich sequence Tyr²⁵-Gly-Cys-X-Cys-Gly-X-Gly-Gly-X-X-X-Pro³⁷ and the Asp⁴⁹ residue; (iii) an active site His⁴⁸ residue as well as Tyr⁵², Tyr⁷³, and Asp⁹⁹ residues; and (iv) common spacing of 12 of 14 cysteine residues. Type I PLA₂s possess characteristic half-cysteines at residues 11 and 77 that are missing in type II PLA₂s, whereas type II PLA₂s have a unique half-cysteine at residue 50 and an extension of several amino acid residues at the carboxy terminus, which ends in a half-cysteine. Further, type I PLA₂s have an extra segment called the 'elapid loop' (residues 54–56), which is absent from type II PLA₂s (Hayakawa et al., 1988; Kramer et al., 1989; Seilhamer et al., 1989). The homology between the amino acid sequences of type I and type II PLA₂s in the same species is about 30% (Fig. 1). The refined three-dimensional crystal structure of human type II PLA₂ indicates that this enzyme is much closer to *Crotalus atrox* type II PLA₂ than to bovine pancreatic

rat	type I PLA ₂	AVWQFRNMIKCTIPGSDPLREYNNYGCYGLGGSGTPVDDLDRCCQTHDHCYNQAKKLESCFKFLID
rat	type II PLA ₂	SLLEFGQMIL-FKTKGRADVSYGFYGCCHCGVGGRGSPKDATDWCCVTHDCCYNRLEKRG-C-----
human	type II PLA ₂	NLVNPHRMIL-LTTGKEAALSFGYGCCHCGVGGRGSPKDATDRCCVTHDCCYKRLEKRG-C-----
human	type I PLA ₂	AVWQFRNMIKCVIPGSDPFLEYNNYGCYGLGGSGTPVDELDKCCQTHDNCYDQAKKLDSCFKFLID

NPYTNTYSYKCSGNVITCSDKNDCESFICNCDRQAAICFS--KVPYNKEYKDLDTKKHC
GTKFLTYKFSYRGGQISCSTNQDSCRKQLCQCDKAAAECPARNKKSYSYSLKYQFY-PNKFCKGKTPSC
GTKFLSYKFSNSGSRITCA-KQDSCRSQLCECDKAAATCFARNKTTYNKKYQYY-SNKHCRGSTPRC
NPYTHYSYSCSGSAITCSSKNKECEAFICNCDRNAAICFS--KAPYNKAHKNLDTKKYQCS

Fig. 1. Comparison of the amino acid sequences of type I and type II PLA₂s of human and rat.

type I PLA₂ (Werry et al., 1991). The exon-intron structures of the genes for type I and type II PLA₂s closely resemble each other, indicating that these molecules are members of an evolutionarily conserved family (Kramer et al., 1989; Seilhamer et al., 1986). The 5'-flanking region of the type II PLA₂ gene contains cAMP-responsive and interleukin (IL)-6-responsive elements, suggesting that type II PLA₂ is transcriptionally regulated by transmembrane stimuli including those which elevate cAMP levels and several proinflammatory cytokines (Crowl et al., 1991).

3. Physiological and pathological functions of secretory PLA₂s

3.1. Type I PLA₂

PLA₂ present in pancreatic juice is classified as type I PLA₂ and its main role is in the digestion of phospholipids in food (Heinrikson et al., 1977). Type I PLA₂ is first synthesized as a preproenzyme and processed to an inactive proenzyme, which is further converted into the active form by proteolytic cleavage (De Haas et al., 1968; Peterson et al., 1974). It has become clear that type I PLA₂ is also distributed in non-digestive organs such as the spleen and lung (Tojo et al., 1988), although its function in these tissues is unclear.

Recently, type I PLA₂ has been reported to act as a kind of cytokine/growth factor in several cell lines, such as vascular smooth muscle cells and fibroblasts, where it can regulate proliferation, chemotaxis, and lipid mediator generation by interacting with a specific binding site on the cell surface (Arita et al., 1991; Hanasaki and Arita, 1992). Only the mature form of type I PLA₂ is active on this receptor; the corresponding proenzyme and type II PLA₂ are both ineffective. The type I PLA₂ receptor has recently been cloned. This receptor is a 180-kDa type I transmembrane protein with an NH₂-terminal cysteine-rich domain, a fibronectin type II domain, eight repeats of a carbohydrate recognition domain, and transmembrane and cytoplasmic domains. The structure of this receptor is related to the macrophage mannose receptor (Ishizaki et al., 1994; Lambeau et al., 1994). The NH₂-terminal region including the putative carbohydrate recognition domain is responsible for binding type I PLA₂ ($K_d = 1\text{--}10\text{ nM}$), despite the fact that type I PLA₂ is not a glycoprotein. This is the first demonstration of a function for an apparently unrelated to its phospholipid-hydrolyzing activity. The receptor cloned by Lambeau et al. (1994) differs from that cloned by Ishizaki et al. (1994) in that it also binds human type II PLA₂ ($K_d = 0.8\text{ nM}$) tightly.

3.2. Type II PLA₂

Type II PLA₂ is widely distributed in a variety of mammalian tissues and cells, although its levels of expression are rather variable (Kudo et al., 1993). The enzyme is synthesized in a precursor form containing a signal sequence and then processed to a mature enzyme during translocation from the cytosolic to luminal side of the endoplasmic reticulum (Kramer et al., 1989). Unlike type I PLA₂, type II PLA₂ is not synthesized as a zymogen. This indicates that type II PLA₂ is present intracellularly in a

latent form and is maintained in this inactive form by some unknown mechanism. Notably, type II PLA₂ is incapable of eliciting hydrolysis of phospholipids found in the plasma membranes of intact cells (Kudo et al., 1993). This might be due to the preferential substrate specificity of type II PLA₂ toward phosphatidylethanolamine or phosphatidylserine, which are exclusively distributed in the inner leaflet of the bilayer membrane. In some cells, such as neutrophils, type II PLA₂ exists in a 'latent form', whose activity is negligible if purified phospholipid vesicles are used as a substrate but becomes detectable after low pH treatment (Hara et al., 1993; Wright et al., 1990). Another unique feature of type II PLA₂ is its high affinity for heparin (Horigome et al., 1987). This association may be mediated by a cluster of basic amino acid residues present in type II PLA₂. The heparin-binding domain appears to be separate from the active site based upon immunochemical studies with epitope-specific monoclonal antibodies (Murakami et al., 1988).

One of the most abundant sources of type II PLA₂ is platelets. Rat platelets have an extraordinarily high content of type II PLA₂ in α -granules relative to other types of cells in rats or the same cells in other animal species. This platelet enzyme is secreted upon stimulation with thrombin (Horigome et al., 1987). Secretion of type II PLA₂ is also detected in rabbit platelets, but hardly detectable with platelets from mouse, guinea pig, or human (Mizushima et al., 1989). Release of type II PLA₂ from human platelets is detectable when autoclaved *E. coli* is used as a substrate; use of this substrate provided a more sensitive measurement of activity than purified phospholipid suspensions (Kramer et al., 1989). Several lines of evidence have revealed that thromboxane A₂ generation by activated human platelets is exclusively mediated by cPLA₂, but not by type II PLA₂ (Riendeau et al., 1994; Bartoli et al., 1994). Therefore, the role of type II PLA₂ in platelets is still unclear. Nevertheless, activation of platelets *in vivo* results in a transient increase in plasma type II PLA₂, which disappears fairly rapidly from circulation. This rapid clearance of type II PLA₂ from blood is due to a rapid association of type II PLA₂ with liver cells and vascular endothelial cells via heparan sulfate proteoglycan on the cell surface (Murakami et al., 1989). As discussed below, this observation suggests that platelet-derived type II PLA₂ might affect cellular function of liver cells or endothelial cells at foci of thrombosis.

The constitutive expression of type II PLA₂ is detectable in tissues such as spleen, thymus, intestine, tonsil, liver, and bone marrow (Aarsman et al., 1989; Kramer et al., 1989; Ono et al., 1988; Verger et al., 1982). This distribution demonstrates the association of type II PLA₂ with organs related to inflammatory responses. Indeed, constitutive expression of type II PLA₂ is found in inflammatory effector cells, such as neutrophils, macrophages, and mast cells (Wright et al., 1990; Hidi et al., 1993; Murakami et al., 1992a). In intestine, type II PLA₂ is localized in paneth cells, which play a role in anti-microbial defense by the small intestine (Senegas-Balas et al., 1984). In liver, type II PLA₂ is preferentially distributed in Kupffer cells (Inada et al., 1991). These findings strongly suggest that type II PLA₂ may be involved in inflammatory responses and in host defense mechanism.

Indeed, a large amount of type II PLA₂ has been detected at various inflamed sites and in the plasma of patients with rheumatoid arthritis or septic shock, as well as in experimental animal models of inflammation (Chang et al., 1987; Hara et al., 1988;

Kramer et al., 1989; Seilhamer et al., 1989; Vadas and Pruzanski, 1986). It should be emphasized that type II PLA₂ is an 'inducible' isoform of PLA₂ which arises in response to various inflammatory stimuli. When cells such as chondrocytes, vascular smooth muscle cells, hepatocytes, astrocytes, or renal mesangial cells are incubated with proinflammatory cytokines, such as tumor necrosis factor (TNF) α , IL-1 or IL-6, endotoxin, or cAMP-elevating reagents, gene expression of type II PLA₂ is induced, and newly generated PLA₂ protein is released into the extracellular fluid (Crowl et al., 1991; Nakano et al., 1990; Nakazato et al., 1991; Oka and Arita, 1991). Anti-inflammatory glucocorticoids and the anti-inflammatory cytokine, transforming growth factor- β , both suppress the gene expression of type II PLA₂ (Nakano and Arita, 1990; Schalkwijk et al., 1992). Furthermore, induced expression and secretion of type II PLA₂ is associated with generation of prostaglandins (PGs). PG generation occurring in parallel with de novo synthesis of type II PLA₂ progresses slowly extending over hours, and is thereby distinguished kinetically from thromboxane A₂ generation by activated platelets or PGD₂ generation by IgE/antigen-stimulated mast cells, both of which occur within a few minutes and are accompanied by cPLA₂ activation in response to an increase in cytosolic Ca²⁺ concentration (Kramer et al., 1993; Nakatani et al., 1994). It is of interest that stimulators or repressors of type II PLA₂ expression overlap with those of prostaglandin endoperoxide synthase (PGHS)-2, an inducible isoform of cyclooxygenase that is definitively required for ligand-initiated slowly progressing PG biosynthesis (Murakami et al., 1994; Reddy and Herschman, 1994).

A relationship between type II PLA₂ expression and cytokine-stimulated PG generation has been demonstrated in human umbilical endothelial cells (HUVEC) and in rat liver BRL-3A cells (Murakami et al., 1993a; Suga et al., 1993). After stimulation with TNF α , these cells produce PGI₂ and PGE₂, respectively, over a period of hours. In these cells, newly synthesized type II PLA₂ arising in response to stimulation with TNF α is not secreted into the medium but rather is retained on cell surface via binding to heparan sulfate proteoglycan. PG generation by these cells is suppressed not only by type II PLA₂ inhibitors, including a neutralizing antibody, but also by 'washing out' of cell surface-associated type II PLA₂ by treatment of cells with heparin or with heparinase/heparitinase. Furthermore, exogenously added type II PLA₂ is captured on heparan sulfate proteoglycan on cell surface and augments TNF α -initiated PG generation. Barbour and Dennis (1993) reported that transfection of mouse macrophage cell line with antisense RNA specific for type II PLA₂ reduced the expression of type II PLA₂ and was accompanied by a diminution of PGE₂ generation elicited by lipopolysaccharide and PAF. Thus, type II PLA₂ associated with the cell surface in a heparin-washable pool appears to be crucial in initiating PG generation by cells stimulated with certain agonists. Because heparan sulfate proteoglycan is ubiquitously expressed on most of mammalian cells, the balance of 'secreted' and 'membrane-associated' forms of type II PLA₂ may depend on the amount of heparan sulfate expressed on the cell surface and the amount of type II PLA₂ generated. Alternatively, heparan sulfate, having a high affinity for type II PLA₂, may be more abundant in endothelial cells or hepatocytes than in cells which secrete the enzyme.

The ability of type II PLA₂ to elicit eicosanoid generation in target cells is dependent on the presence of particular co-stimulators. As mentioned above, exogenously added

type II PLA₂ consistently fails to elicit eicosanoid generation in intact cells. In contrast, cells primed or elicited by certain agonists, such as A23187-treated neutrophilic leukemia cells, IgE/antigen-primed mast cells, and TNF α -stimulated HUVEC and hepatoma cells, respond to type II PLA₂ with generation of more PGs than that elicited by each agonist alone (Hara et al., 1991; Murakami et al., 1991a, 1993a; Suga et al., 1993). Similarly, administration of type II PLA₂ into the hind paw of rats with adjuvant arthritis causes severe exacerbation of edema response which is not observed in normal rats (Murakami et al., 1990). These results indicate that some pathological conditions may be required in order for type II PLA₂ to exhibit a progressive effect on the inflammation. Injection of a monoclonal antibody that neutralizes type II PLA₂ activity into rats with carrageenan-induced pleurisy significantly reduces the pleural exudate volume and the intrapleural leukocyte number (Kakutani et al., 1994). This observation further supports notion that type II PLA₂ is important in the inflammatory reaction.

Taking together these observations, we concluded that type II PLA₂ may attack phospholipids in plasma membranes at certain stages of cell activation. Such 'membrane rearrangement' might be induced by some cell stimulators, such as proinflammatory cytokines. Although the precise mechanisms underlying the rearrangements are not yet fully understood, these stimulators may modify the asymmetric distribution of plasma membrane phospholipids, resulting in a translocation to the outer leaflet of amino phospholipids, which are better substrates for type II PLA₂. Alternatively, the ability of type II PLA₂ to elicit PG synthesis might be coupled to simultaneous induction of PGHS-2, to which type II PLA₂-derived arachidonic acid might be supplied. It is also possible that type II PLA₂ may function as a ligand that stimulates arachidonic acid metabolism through binding to a specific receptor, as in the case of type I PLA₂.

Several investigations have indicated the importance of PLA₂ in degranulation. The classical PLA₂ inhibitors, *p*-bromophenacyl bromide and mepacrine, suppress exocytosis of histamine from activated mast cells (McGivney et al., 1981). They also prevent neurotransmitter release from neuronal cells and chromaffin cells (Moskowitz et al., 1982; Frye and Holtz, 1985). In addition, the PLA₂ activator mellitin, as well as some snake venom PLA₂s, cause dose-dependent degranulation of mast cells (Wang and Teng, 1990). Indeed, histamine release from rat peritoneal mast cells induced by IgE/antigen, A23187, compound 48/80 or substance P is effectively suppressed by type II PLA₂-specific inhibitors (Murakami et al., 1991b, 1992b). This suggests that type II PLA₂ may play an important role in steps common to the process of degranulation induced by various secretagogues. After activation of mast cells, type II PLA₂ is expressed transiently on the cell surface and eventually secreted into the medium (Murakami et al., 1992b). The interaction of type II PLA₂ from heparan sulfate might have an important role in association/dissociation of the enzyme with the plasma membrane, and thus, in the regulation of degranulation. We assume that membrane-associated type II PLA₂ acts on the plasma membrane in an autocrine or paracrine manner to generate some lipid-derived fusogenic molecules (e.g., fatty acids, lysophospholipids or their derivatives) which trigger membrane fusion and lead to progression or enhancement of fusion between the plasma membrane and secretory granules (Karli et al., 1990).

When mast cells are exposed to purified type II PLA₂ at concentrations equivalent to those associated with severe inflammation, a significant release of histamine is induced

(Murakami et al., 1993b). The ability of type II PLA₂ to induce histamine release is inhibited by tyrosine kinase inhibitors, by antibodies or chemicals that block the activity of type II PLA₂, and by heparin or an antibody recognizing the heparin-binding domain of type II PLA₂. This indicates the importance of both the catalytic domain and the heparin-binding domain of type II PLA₂. Furthermore, these results show that supplementation of quiescent mast cells with exogenous type II PLA₂ allows the cells to bypass the degranulation process.

Type II PLA₂ cannot directly degrade the phospholipids in intact bacterial membranes to manifest anti-microbial activity. In contrast, type II PLA₂ decreases the viability of microorganisms in combination with a neutrophil-derived protein called bactericidal permeability increasing protein (BPI) (Elsbach and Weiss, 1988; Wright et al., 1990). When BPI is included in the reaction mixture, phospholipids of intact bacteria are hydrolyzed by type II PLA₂. BPI does not merely pave the way for PLA₂ since there is a high degree of specificity in the interaction between BPI and the enzyme. Thus, type I PLA₂ is unresponsive to BPI. The clusters of basic residues in the NH₂-terminal region may account in part for the ability of type II PLA₂ but not type I PLA₂ to act on BPI-treated bacterial membranes. The synergistic action of type II PLA₂ with BPI, both of which are secreted from neutrophils, may be important for host defense against bacteria at the initial stages of infection.

Activation of type II PLA₂ is also observed in tissues undergoing ischemia. The breakdown of endogenous phosphatidylethanolamine by type II PLA₂, which is detected during incubation of rat heart homogenates, is accelerated markedly by ischemic treatment of the tissue (Kikuchi-Yanoshita et al., 1993).

4. Novel secretory PLA₂s

Recently, two cDNAs encoding novel secretory PLA₂s have been cloned (Chen et al., 1994a, b). Although these enzymes are secreted when each cDNA is transfected into mammalian cells, and exhibit PLA₂ activity at alkaline pH in the presence of millimolar Ca²⁺, they have several unique features as follows.

The 'third' isoform of secretory PLA₂ (Chen et al., 1994a), expressed mainly in heart and to a lesser extent in lung, contains neither the elapid loop characteristic of type I PLA₂ nor the six amino acid C-terminal extension characteristic of type II PLA₂. In addition, this newer form of PLA₂ has only 12 of the 14 cysteines found in both type I and type II PLA₂s and, therefore, lacks at least one of the seven characteristic disulfide bonds. The amino acid sequence of the human enzyme shows 30 and 40% identity to human type I and human type II PLA₂, respectively. This third isoform hydrolyzes phosphatidylcholine and phosphatidylethanolamine more efficiently than phosphatidylinositol.

The 'fourth' isozyme is also unique. It contains 16 instead of 14 cysteines which distinguishes it from type I and type II PLA₂s (Chen et al., 1994b). Moreover, Ile⁹, which is highly conserved in all of the secretory PLA₂s, is replaced by valine. This fourth PLA₂ is similar to type II PLA₂ in that it lacks the elapid loop and the Cys¹¹-Cys⁷⁷ disulfide bridge, and possesses a C-terminal six amino acid tail. Thus, this

fourth isoform may represent a new subtype of type II PLA₂. The transcript for the fourth isozyme is abundant in testis but not in other tissues. This enzyme hydrolyzes phosphatidylinositol in preference to phosphatidylcholine and phosphatidylethanolamine.

5. Conclusion

Although in comparison to those of cPLA₂ the physiological functions of secretory PLA₂s are poorly understood, there is accumulating evidence that mammalian tissues may contain more than one PLA₂, each of which may be regulated independently by a number of stimulants including cytokines and other factors found in the tissue microenvironment (Table 1). Most importantly, secretory PLA₂s can behave as hormones or cytokines by affecting the function of neighboring cells. This is unlike cPLA₂ which can only regulate arachidonate metabolism in a single cell. In this regard, the role of secretory PLA₂s could be to amplify or spread the primary responses initiated by intracellular PLA₂s to neighboring cells. Recent studies have revealed that particular cytokines can regulate the expression and function of each step in the biosynthetic pathway of the arachidonic cascade; not only the initial enzyme cPLA₂, but the intermediate enzyme PGHS-1 and PGHS-2, and the terminal PG synthase (Murakami et al., 1994, 1995). Hence, more caution should be exercised in interpreting the results of studies of stimulus-initiated modification of eicosanoid production as simply being consequences of changes in expression of several enzymes participating in each step of the post-receptor arachidonic acid cascade. Nonetheless, since PLA₂ regulates the initiation of arachidonic acid metabolism and represents one of the rate-limiting steps of

Table 1

Characteristics of two well characterized secretory PLA₂s (types I and II) and cPLA₂

PLA ₂	Type I	Type II	cPLA ₂
Molecular weight	14 000	14 000	85 000
Origins			
Mammalia	pancreatic juice	exudate fluid in inflamed sites; inflammatory cells	cytosol of various cells
Non-mammalia	snake venom (Elapidae, Hydrophiidae)	snake venom (Crotalidae, Viperadae)	not detected
Substrate specificity	PE = PC	PE > PC	PE and PC bearing arachidonoyl residue
Ca ²⁺ requirement	mM	mM	μM
Possible function in mammalia	digestion of phospholipids in food; proliferative effect on cells	inflammation; tissue damage; degranulation; destruction of bacterial membrane	receptor-coupled arachidonate release
Unique characteristics	biosynthesized as inactive proenzyme and processed to mature enzyme by proteolytic cleavage	induction of gene expression by inflammatory cytokines; high affinity for heparin	translocation to membrane in a Ca ²⁺ -dependent manner; activation by phosphorylation

PE, phosphatidylethanolamine; PC, phosphatidylcholine.

this cascade, an understanding of the molecular nature, regulation of expression and function of each PLA₂ is of particular importance in understanding its universal roles in the maintenance of host homeostasis. Furthermore, as the products generated by the PLA₂ reaction are potentially proinflammatory, the stimulus- and rate-related regulation of PLA₂s may be beneficial or detrimental depending upon the intensity and duration of their activation by cellular perturbations.

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