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Structure and regulation of SH2 domain from mouse SH2B1 β

By:

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Abstract

SH2B1 is a member of an adaptor protein family that contains two other proteins (SH2B2 and SH2B3), which regulate signalling pathways initiated by hormones such as insulin and leptin. As a result of alternative splicing of mRNA, four SH2B1 isoforms have been identified (α 765> δ 724> γ 682 > β 670), that differ in their C-terminus downstream of the SH2 domain. The SH2 domain binds to the phosphorylated tyrosine site of receptor tyrosine kinases (RTKs) and causes kinase activation. Additional to the conserved domains of SH2B1 (DD, PH, and SH2), more than 50% of the protein sequence is intrinsically disordered (unstructured region) including the C-terminal tail. The function of the C-terminal diversity is poorly understood. Mouse SH2B1β isoform tail contains a tyrosine residue (Y649), and we hypothesised that pY649 might bind to the tethered SH2 domain and therefore regulate its activity.

The NMR structure of the SH2 domain was calculated using the semi-automated CYANA (version 3.98.5) software. The structure calculation worked, although it required significant manual intervention, including correction of some the automated chemical shift assignments. A new validation method (ANSURR) was applied to check the reliability of the calculated structures, and it is demonstrated that additional hydrogen bond restraints are required to make the rigidity of the structure match experimental data. Phosphorylation using Fer kinase of a construct that includes the SH2 domain and the downstream 45 residues of the intrinsically disordered tail of β, including Y649, caused problems because unexpectedly, Y624 was phosphorylated more rapidly than Y649 and the protein aggregated. We therefore mutated Y624 to Phe. Y624F SH2c was successfully phosphorylated by Fer kinase. ¹⁵N HSQC spectra confirmed a binding between pY649 and the pY pocket of the SH2 domain, and identified a new binding pocket in SH2 domain for residues C-terminal of pY. Surprisingly, the affinity between the phosphorylated C-terminus and SH2 was so weak that it could be outcompeted by phosphate in the buffer. The binding affinity between a phospho-tyrosine peptide derived from the C-terminal tail to the SH2 domain was measured using NMR titration. The revealed low affinity was outcompeted with the preferred JAK2 ligand as shown by HSQC spectra. These results provide some new hypotheses about the function of the Cterminal tail of SH2B1β.

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Abbreviation

Amino acid

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Chapter 1 Introduction and study aims

1.1 Signal transduction

In multicellular organisms, cells are able to receive and respond to a wide range of extracellular signals to control their biological activities during their development. The communication system uses extracellular signals (e.g hormones and growth factors), which are normally processed and integrated with other signalling molecules, and carry signals between different cells to provide highly specific and effective communication (Alberts et al, 2015; Schlessinger and Ullrich, 1990).

Eukaryotic cells have a range of signal transmission systems to convert an extracellular signal into an intracellular response. The principal systems are intracellular receptors exemplified by lipophilic hormones which travel via simple diffusion through the plasma membrane; and cell surface receptors which are divided into three classes based on their transduction mechanism: ligand-gated ion channels; G-protein-coupled receptors; and enzyme-coupled receptors (Alberts et al, 2015) .

The fundamental mechanism in enzyme-coupled receptors is that the extracellular signalling molecule (ligand) as a first messenger binds to a specific transmembrane receptor, which acts as signal transducer to convert the extracellular ligand-binding event into an intracellular response via creation of a series of downstream signalling molecules called second messengers. The activation of this system is mainly regulated by the phosphorylation of a set of specific intracellular proteins (Alberts et al, 2015; Blume-Jensen and Hunter, 2001). Important members of the enzyme-coupled receptor family are tyrosine kinase receptors and tyrosine kinase associated receptors, which are exemplified by the insulin receptor and the JAK/STAT receptor, respectively. There are fifty-eight known human receptor tyrosine kinases (RTKs) incorporated into twenty sub-families (Lemmon and Schlessinger, 2010). RTKs regulate critical cellular processes such as proliferation, differentiation, cell survival and metabolism (Blume-Jensen and Hunter, 2001).

The insulin receptor switches from an inactive to active state upon ligand binding. The modular structure of the insulin receptor consists of two extracellular subunits that act as a binding site for the insulin hormone, and two transmembrane domains connected to two intracellular receptor subunits (receptor tyrosine kinase domain) that are linked via disulphide bonds inside the cell. Binding of insulin to the extracellular subunits induces a conformational change of the transmembrane domains, which is followed by rearrangement and activation of the intracellular subunits that stimulate their tyrosine kinase activity. This transmits the signal by cross autophosphorylation of tyrosine residues on one subunit by the kinase on the opposite subunit (Van Obberghen et al., 2001). Phosphorylation of tyrosine residues creates binding sites for a number of cytoplasmic proteins such as an adaptor protein named receptor-bound protein 2 (Grb2) as shown in Figure 1.1. This protein contains an SH2 domain (Src-homology 2), which recognizes the phosphorylated tyrosine pY plus about three downstream residues (pYXNX), and two N and C terminal SH3 domains (Src-homology 3) which recruit and bind to a second adaptor protein Son of Sevenless (Sos) via its proline-rich region. Sos then activates Ras by exchanging GDP to GTP, which initiates a kinase cascade leading to phosphorylation of transcription factors (Holgado-Madruga et al., 1996; Skolnik et al., 1993).

Figure 1.1. An overview diagram of the insulin signalling pathway, taken from Cell Signalling Technology. The diagram shows the downstream signaling proteins; GRB2 which binds to SOS to activate Ras, IRS which recruits PI3K, Grb2 and SH2B1, and small adaptors proteins Nck, Crk and Fyn.

Unlike tyrosine kinase receptors, the Janus kinase/signal transducers and activators of transcription (JAK/STAT) signalling system adopts a simpler mechanism to transfer signals from outside to inside cells, without having a receptor with intrinsic kinase activity. Instead of that the autophosphorylation of the intracellular receptor and cytoplasmic proteins occurs by an associated JAK, Figure 1.2. The receptor dimerises after binding to an extracellular ligand, then JAK starts to phosphorylate a number of tyrosine residues on the receptor to recruit a set of SH2-containing proteins called STATs. The bound STAT proteins are subsequently phosphorylated by JAKs, then dimerise, and dissociate to relocate to the nucleus where they take part in transcriptional activation and gene expression (Schindler et al, 2007).

Both systems, either the protein receptor kinase or associated with protein kinase, have similar recognition mechanisms which rely on phospho-tyrosine sites together with about three to four adjacent amino acids.

Figure 1.2. Schematic of JAK-STAT signalling pathway. The activated JAKs self-phosphorylate (P) and phosphorylate their associate receptor (P), and recruits STATs which in advance phosphorylate and form a dimer. The diagram is taken from (Dodington, Desai, & Woo, 2018).

1.2 Specificity in intracellular signal transduction

RTK intracellular signalling molecules are mostly proteins and function together to transfer signals that are received by the cell surface receptors into an intracellular response via a series of signalling adaptors (signalling pathway) thus achieving the specific target response.

Theoretically an activated signalling molecule could interact directly with its downstream targets and those targets would be activated only by their upstream signal. However in eukaryotic cells signalling molecules exist in the cytoplasm as a big number of molecules that have relatively broad substrate specificities (e.g SH2 domains) as mentioned in previous examples. This can create problems in specificity, and increase the likelihood of cross-talk between different pathways.

In multicellular organisms in such situations, evolution creates levels of complexity in intracellular communication to achieve the specificity in biological response. One effective strategy is adding extra proteins or polypeptides that interact weakly with several of the existing proteins and modulate the signal, until the required specificity has been obtained (Alberts et al, 2015). Such mechanism appears noticeably in most signalling pathways which have a set of auxiliary proteins that are called adaptor proteins, and another set termed as scaffold proteins (Pawson and Scott, 1997).

Scaffolds are big proteins with no enzymatic activity that are able to form protein complexes by binding to a number of signalling molecules and bringing them together close to their cognate receptor or substrates. Increasing the local concentration (assembly of protein complexes) leads to selective rapid sequential activation thus making the signal transduction more precise and effective (Shaw and Filbert, 2009; Pawson and Scott, 1997).

Insulin receptor substrate 1 (IRS-1) is a scaffold in the insulin signalling pathway, Figure 1.1. It contains a pTyr-binding domain (PTB) that recognizes the phosphorylated motif (NPXY) in the transmembrane region of the receptor (Mardilovich et al., 2009). The C-terminal and the central regions of IRS-1 have more than 20 potential phosphorylation sites on both serine and tyrosine. Phosphorylation of these residues creates binding motifs recognised by a number of signalling proteins in the cytoplasm including PI3K and Grb2. Besides that, IRS-1 contains an N-terminal pleckstrin homology domain (PH) which binds to phospholipid within the plasma membrane.

Adaptor proteins on the other hand comprise two or more small interacting domains that help in the formation of complex groups of interacting signalling proteins. Each module binds to a particular motif in another target protein (e.g peptide sequence) or lipid in the plasma membrane, bringing together protein complexes and thus enhancing specificity (Pawson and Scott, 1997).

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Figure 1.1 shows a number of adaptor proteins in the insulin signal transduction pathway such as noncatalytic region of tyrosine kinase (Nck) and Crk proteins: both contain SH2 and SH3 domains, and bind to a range of additional proteins to modulate the signalling pathway, whereas Fyn adaptor protein contains one additional tyrosine kinase domain, and phosphorylation of target proteins by Fyn creates additional sites for recognition by SH2 domains (Sorokin et al., 1998; Latreille et al., 2011; Sun et al., 1996).

1.3 Src Homology 2 B adaptor (SH2B) system

The main class of proteins that contribute to signalling processes inside cells are adaptor proteins. The cell uses a number of these proteins, in order to achieve an appropriate response (Maures et al., 2007). One of these adaptors is Src homology 2 B family proteins (SH2B), which are implicated in variant signalling pathways mediated via JAK tyrosine kinases as well as receptor tyrosine kinases. The SH2B family contains at least three members: SH2B1, SH2B2 and SH2B3, which have been found in different signal transduction pathways, Figure 1.3.

As other classical adaptor proteins it contains multiple binding domains to mediate proteinprotein interactions and lacks intrinsic enzymatic activity. The domains within the SH2B protein sequences serve as adaptors that link certain phosphorylated receptor tyrosine kinases and receptor-associated tyrosine kinases, such as the insulin receptor and Janus kinase family on the one hand (Riedel et al., 1997; Maures et al., 2007), and permit specific interactions with cytoplasmic proteins on the other hand.

The SH2B members are present in mammals, such as human, mice and rat, and insects such as *Drosophila melanogaster* (Song et al., 2010). SH2B1 is widely expressed in mammals and conserved in *Drosophila*, but the expression of SH2B2 and SH2B3 are restricted to insulin sensitive and hematopoietic tissues, respectively (Ahmed and Pillay, 2001; Moodie et al, 1999; Rui et al., 1997). The extensive expression of SH2B1 suggests the functionally important role of these proteins.

1.4 Sequence comparison between SH2B family members

The SH2B family members share similar structure of three domains: an N-terminal dimerization domain (DD), a central pleckstrin homology domain (PH), and a C-terminal Src homology 2 (SH2) domain, as illustrated in Figure 1.3. The SH2 domain is a common feature of cytoplasmic proteins that bind to phospho-tyrosine sites, while PH domains typically recognize phosphatidylinositides within the cell membrane. In addition, the N-terminal domain of SH2B members mediates homo-dimerization and hetero-dimerization (Maures et al., 2007).

In between the independently folded domains, there are long unstructured regions that work as flexible linkers. Those linkers have a big diversity in the sequence length and amino acid type in between the family members. However they contain numbers of proline-rich regions, polar residues (such as Ser, Thr, Gln and Asn) and small amino acids (such as Ala and Gly). Also they contain a number of Tyr residues such as Tyr⁴³⁹ and Tyr⁴⁹⁴ which are conserved in SH2B1 isoforms, and may contribute to the function of its nearby domains, eg by being potential phosphorylation sites (O'Brien et al., 2003).

SH2B1 and SH2B2 proteins are highly structurally related in the C-terminal SH2 domain with 80% identity but are less similar in both PH domain and N-terminal DD region with 58% and 33% identities, respectively. In contrast, the percentage of similarities between SH2B1 and SH2B3 in the SH2 domain is 72% and in the PH domain is 40% (Nelms et al*.*, 1999).

As a result of alternative splicing of mRNA at the last gene exons, the genes of SH2B1 and SH2B2 generate variant isoforms (Yousaf et al., 2001; Li et al., 2007), whereas no isoform has been discovered yet for SH2B3 protein. The defined isoforms for SH2B1 protein are α , β , γ , and δ (Yousaf et al., 2001). The sequence of these isoforms is identical until Gln631, while the big diversity in between them presents in their carboxyl tail, which is discussed in more detail below. This provides each variant with a unique carboxyl terminus, which may affect the nearby SH2 domain binding specificity or affinity (Rui, 2014; Nelms et al., 1999). In addition, SH2B2 has two isoforms, α and β , which differ in the end of the β isoform which is generated with a truncated C terminal SH2 domain, Figure 1.3.

Although there are strong sequence similarities between them, SH2B2 shows much higher affinity and stimulation to the insulin receptor than SH2B1 (Ahmed and Pillay, 2001), forming different responses to the same specific signal. Moreover the SH2B family members share a similar structural characteristic (SH2 domain) to bind to phosphorylated receptor and kinases, however they show different binding preference: SH2B1 has been reported to interact with phosphorylated Tyr813 in Jak2, whereas SH2B2 binds with the phosphorylated Tyr1158 at the activation loop of insulin receptor (Ahmed et al*.*, 1999; Maures et al., 2007) as a consequence of their oligomeric state. On the other hand SH2B3 has a different function as negative moderator in many signalling pathways such as haematopoiesis and in endothelial cells (Devallière and Charreau, 2011). These observations indicate that SH2B family members (SH2B1, SH2B2, and SH2B3) have functional diversity in cell signalling, not necessarily overlapping or redundant roles.

Figure 1.3. A schematic diagram of the SH2B family members SH2B1, SH2B2, and SH2B3 for Mouse. Schematics were drawn on the basis of the protein sequence in uniprot (identifier number SH2B1/Q91ZM2, SH2B2/Q9JID9, SH2B3/O09039). The SH2B1 isoforms (α, β, γ, and δ) and SH2B2 β isoforms are shown. The diagram shows sequences to scale. The boxes indicate the domains within the structure: dimerization domain (DD) in blue, pleckstrin domain (PH) in yellow, scr homology 2 domain (SH2) in green, proline rich sequences in orange, and NLS (nuclear localization sequence) and NES (nuclear export sequence) both in grey. The Y symbols above the sequence represent potential phosphorylation sites. The amino acid length for each protein is shown. The red labelled Tyrosines are the unique residue at the C terminal tail differing between SH2B1 isoforms. The black labelled Tyrosines are the conserved residue in all SH2B members.

1.5 The expression, structure and function of SH2B1 protein

In mammals, SH2B1 cytoplasmic protein is expressed in the central nervous system and peripheral tissues such as brain, liver and skeletal muscle. At the molecular level, neuronal SH2B1 was indicated to control the leptin signalling pathway and indirectly influence insulin sensitivity (Ren et al., 2005; Maures et al., 2007). In support of that, it was proven that the deletion and/or mutation of neuronal SH2B1 genes in mice caused leptin resistance and obesity as well as insulin resistance as a consequence of obesity. Moreover, knockout of peripheral SH2B1 genes leads to insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes regardless of obesity (Maures et al., 2007, Morris et al*.*, 2008).

To understand more about the function of the protein, the structure features of the protein should be highlighted. As mentioned before, SH2B1 consists of well characterised domains: a DD domain (62 amino acids); a PH domain (110 amino acids); and an SH2 domain (99 amino acids). As well as linkers in between the domains there are a number of tyrosines (eight residues), numerous serines and threonines that are potential phosphorylation sites, plus proline rich sequences (Zhang et al., 2008), Figure 1.3.

In additional to the classical recruitment function of SH2B1 protein as an adaptor to connect a number of proteins to the activated receptor, it has been described as a regulator of activation of receptor tyrosine kinase and non-tyrosine kinase receptors. Although SH2B1 is a cytoplasmic protein (Ren et al., 2005), it has been shown to shuttle between cytoplasm and nucleus (Maures et al., 2007). SH2B1 is a part of the interaction communication pathways, and it is not present in unicellular organisms (Maures et al., 2007).

1.5.1 Src Homology 2 domain (SH2)

The SH2 region is a common domain in cytoplasmic signalling proteins, and it is normally involved in tyrosine kinase signalling pathways. The recruitment of SH2B1 is dependent on mediation by the SH2 domain (527-625 a.a) which is regulated by engaging with tyrosine phosphorylation motifs of the activated target receptor kinase.

From the crystal structure of SH2B1 SH2 domain (5w3r), the fold has been described as a core anti-parallel β-sheet (βB, βC, βD/βD') followed by two anti-parallel small β-strands (βE and βF), all confined between two α-helices (αΑ and αB) with the long C-terminus close in space to the N-terminus. In the middle of the carboxyl tail there is a small β-sheet (βG). The N terminal small β-strand (βA) links to αA (Hu and Hubbard, 2006). In addition, the β-strands are linked to each other and to the α-helix via long loops that have a key function in ligand binding at the EF and BG loops as shown in Figure 1.4.

The ability to bind phosphorylated tyrosine residues is common to all SH2 domains as there is 35% identity between all domains (Marengere and Pawson, 1994). However, all SH2 domains do not bind equally (binding affinity and binding residues) to pTyr-containing sequences. In some way, SH2 domains show selectivity for the particular tyrosine phosphorylated residues that they will engage.

The SH2 domain of SH2B1 contains two functional binding regions: a region that recognises pTyr of the target kinase, and a second site that recognises a specific sequence immediately downstream of the pY which is mostly hydrophobic (Bradshaw and Waksman, 2003). The phospho-tyrosine binding cavity of SH2 is built from positive residues: Arg⁵⁵⁵ is the basic conserved residue for recognition of the negatively charge phosphate group (Hu and Hubbard, 2006). Mutation of this critical residue leads to stripping the SH2B1 protein from its ability to bind to phosphotyrosine. This domain has a major role in the adaptor function of the whole SH2B1 protein as discussed below.

Figure 1.4. Ribbon diagram of SH2B1 SH2 domain based on crystal structure (5w3r) and generated via Pymol program. The α and β helixes are shown in magenta color and the β- strands (βA, βB, βC, βD/βD', βE, βF, and βG) in blue, with the linkage loops in grey, e.g EF and BG.

1.5.1.1 The functional importance of SH2 domain

SH2B1 acts as a linker based on SH2 domain to connect the upstream activated receptor to downstream cytoplasmic signalling, and thus couple a selective group of protein signalling complexes to enhance the catalytic activity of its selectively bound kinase (Maures et al, 2007). As the SH2 of SH2B1 protein has different binding partners, it suggests its adaptor role in different signalling pathways. RTKs are the common substrates for SH2 of SH2B1 (O'Brien et al*.*, 2003; Li et al*.*, 2007).

JAK2 is a tyrosine kinase that mediates leptin signalling by binding to activated cytokine receptors (receptor of long isoform leptin, LERPb). JAK2 recruits to the receptor after activation by associating with its cytokine substrate (growth hormones or leptin), which consequently stimulates a conformational change of JAK2, thus promoting its autophosphorylation on multiple tyrosine sites. Neuronal SH2B1 is found to upregulate a leptin signalling pathway through its SH2 which attaches to $pTyr^{813}$ of activated JAK (Morris & Rui, 2009; Li et al., 2007). On the other hand SH2B1 uses its SH2 domain to bind to IRS1 and IRS2, thus recruiting IRSs to the bound JAK2 which in consequence facilitates the phosphorylation of IRSs by JAK2. Phosphorylated residues on IRSs are used as binding sites for other cytoplasmic signalling proteins. Forming JAK2-SH2B1-IRS complexes is able to enhance the downstream PI3-kinase pathway. The binding site of the SH2B SH2 domain for JAK2 and JAK3 of the cytokine receptor-associated kinase has been identified at $pTyr^{813}$, but the docking point with JAK1 is unknown.

SH2B1 functions as a positive regulator in leptin signalling using multiple mechanisms. First, SH2 of SH2B1 by itself is able to activate Jak2 kinase; the binding between SH2 and JAK2 at $pTyr⁸¹³$ helps to stimulate the activation of JAK2 as a result of its conformation change. Second, the high affinity between SH2 of SH2B1 and either JAK2 or IRSs prevents JAK2/IRS dephosphorylation as result of blocking the Tyr residue. Third, the strong interaction protects both JAK2 and IRSs from binding with the SH2 domain of inhibitory factors such as suppressor of cytokine signalling (SOCS) or protein tyrosine phosphatase (PTP), respectively (Rui et al., 2000). Finally the leptin-stimulated phosphorylation of IRSs is enhanced by stabilising the formation of a complex of JAK2-IRSs through SH2B1 protein.

A study by Li et al., 2007 indicates that mutation of Arg⁵⁵⁵ to Glu in SH2 domain of SH2B1, or deletion of the SH2 domain in SH2B1, are enough to disrupt the leptin signalling pathway.

Figure 1.5. Leptin signalling pathway via long isoform leptin of receptor (LEPRb). The diagram is taken from (Li et al., 2007) and shows molecular interaction model of SH2B1 protein through the signalling pathway in the absence and presence of ligand. a). A basal condition in absence of leptin where there is a non-domain interaction with inactive JAK2. b) A stimulation condition in the presence of leptin where there are interactions with active JAK and IRSs thus enhancing downstream signalling. Interaction of SH2B1 with IRSs works to prevent IRSs from dephosphorylation via protein tyrosine phosphatase (PTP). PI3-kinase is phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase signaling pathway, and P is a phosphate group.

SH2B1 protein has a role in regulation of glucose homeostasis, as it is a key player or enhancer in insulin signal transduction, through activation of the insulin receptor (Duan et al., 2004). Binding of insulin to the extracellular α subunit of insulin receptor changes its conformation, and brings the intracellular tyrosine kinase domains (β subunit) close enough to phosphorylate each other, and thus create a direct docking site to the SH2 domain of SH2B1, $pTyr^{1158}$. The insulin receptor possesses a kinase activity, which is stimulated via binding to SH2B1 protein. Therefore receptor substrate 1 & 2 (IRS) proteins bind by their phosphotyrosine binding domains (PTB) to activated insulin receptor. As a consequence of binding IRS 1 and 2 to the activated IR, they are phosphorylated on a number of their Tyr residues which also become attachment points for the SH2 domains of SH2B1 and other downstream kinases such as IRSs with phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase signalling pathway, and Shc with mitogen activated protein kinase (MAPK) as shown in Figure 1.6 (Fritsche et al., 2008; Morris et al., 2009). Binding SH2B1 to IRS 1 or 2 protects them from dephosphorylation on tyrosines, thereby strengthening the IRS protein mediated pathway.

SH2B1 proteins promote insulin sensitivity via enhancing the insulin receptor catalytic activity which sequentially activates the downstream signalling of insulin receptor.

Figure 1.6. A model of the insulin signalling pathway. The diagram is taken from Morris et al*.*, 2008 and displays the activation of IR in response to binding of insulin. The IR starts to recruit SH2B1 via its SH2 domain and IRS 1 and 2 which are phosphorylated and bind to another SH2B1. PTP is protein tyrosine phosphatase, P is a phosphate group, PI3-kinase is phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase, Shc is transforming protein, MAPK is mitogen activated protein kinase.

1.5.2 Pleckstrin homology domain (PH)

Cytoplasmic signalling proteins need to be anchored to the intracellular membrane surface to be close to their interacting or targeting receptors, which are localized in the plasma membrane. Therefore such proteins often contain a domain or membrane anchor that attaches it to the cell membrane, such as the pleckstrin homology domain (PH) (Lemmon, 2007).

At least 61% of studied PH domains are able to interact with membrane phospholipids, and thus target the protein to the plasma membrane (Lenoir et al., 2015). SH2B1 protein is found to contain a PH domain in the middle of the sequence (267-376 a.a), which is predicted to be a lipid binding domain. The method of using a PH domain to localise the SH2B1 protein onto the membrane to be close to the targeting transmembrane receptor is a very reasonable strategy, as it makes the searching and the binding of SH2 domain to the activated receptor fast and robust (Williamson, 2012). Supporting that, it was proven that SH2B1 protein is anchored to the membrane in nerve growth factor (NGF/TrkA) signalling; this membrane association is mostly mediated by the PH domain (Rui et al, 1999b).

Moreover this domain (PH) could have an adaptor function, as the Rui et al., 2000 study indicates that PH with other amino acid regions located in 410 to 555 in SH2B1 protein are essential for the interaction with inactive JAK2. This would have the effect of increasing the protein concentration around the target receptor, which helps to make the binding action via its SH2 domain to the activated receptor rapid and robust.

Furthermore Duan et. al, 2004a suggest that the PH SH2B1 domain could mediate the binding of SH2B1 protein to non-phosphotyrosine regions of IRS 1 and 2, as its deletion impairs the formation of the SH2B1-IRS complex. Both domains SH2 and PH bind independently to IRS proteins, however both domains are required for the full interaction.

A recent study of the function of PH SH2B1 domain (Flores et al., 2019) indicates that in vivo, the PH domain has an essential role in regulation of energy balance and glucose homeostasis, while in vitro the PH domain is able to change the cellular distribution of SH2B1β isoforms, and in PC12 cells the PH domain stimulates NGF neurite outgrowth. However the exact mechanism of PH domain function needs more investigation.

Figure 1.7 illustrates the structure of PH domain of SH2B1 protein as predicted using the Phyre2 structure prediction program (Kelley et al., 2016), and it is close to the NMR structure of the PH domain of SH2B2 protein (Koshiba et al., 1997).

Figure 1.7. The structure of the SH2B1 PH domain of SH2B1. a) The predicted 3D structure of PH domain of SH2B1 using Phyre2 bioinformatics tool. The structure of the SH2B1 PH domain is displayed by PyMol software; the domain consists of two antiparallel β-sheets formed from five β-strands terminating with a C-terminal αhelix. The rainbow colour shows the colour from the N to the C terminus in dark blue to red. b) Ribbon of the NMR structure of PH domain of SH2B2 protein, taken from Koshiba et al., 1997.

1.5.3 Dimerization domain (DD)

Dimerization is a common physical interaction in related proteins which is important for protein-protein interaction and is often seen in transducing signals for regulation (Klemm et al., 1998). SH2B1 is able to dimerise as a homodimer with self-isoforms or a heterodimer with other isoforms such as SH2B2 (51% identity) by mediation of the amino terminal domain (24 to 85 a.a) which has been described as a phenylalanine zipper(Nishi et al., 2005). The topology of the SH2B1 dimerisation domain has been described as a U bisecting region and identified as two α helices (α A and α B) linked by a small β-turn, Figure 1.8.

The functional consequence of SH2B1 dimerization was indicated to promote JAK2 activation leading to enhanced downstream signalling in either the presence or absence of the activating ligand. It was proven that SH2B1 binds weakly at two binding sites (269-410 a.a and 410-555 a.a, which includes the DD sequence and PH domain) to inactive JAK2. Therefore increasing the number of SH2B1 around inactive JAK2 as a result of lower affinity binding between them

enables the SH2 domain to bind strongly to JAK2 when it is phosphorylated (Rui et al., 2000).

SH2B1 homo and hetero-dimerization was found to increase the autophosphorylation of JAK2s, which suggests that a SH2B1 dimer promotes the dimerization of bound JAK2, and thus stimulates the transactivation event (Nishi et al., 2005). On the other hand, Maures, et al., 2007 show that a single SH2B1 is effective to enhance the activation of bound JAK2, therefore the N terminal dimerization event of SH2B1 works to stabilise the active state of JAK2. The same idea can be applied to the activation of IR via dimerization of SH2B1, as dimerisation of SH2B1 leads to insulin signalling stimulation by catalysis of IR auto-phosphorylation, decreases the de-phosphorylation of IR, and increases the formation of the complex of IR with IRS 1 and 2.

Figure 1.8. The structure of dimerization domain of SH2B1 protein. a) Model of the dimerization domain DD of SH2B1 was generated by Phyre2 bioinformatics modelling tool. The molecule is displayed using Pymol program with rainbow colour; the colour from the N to the C terminus in dark blue to red. b). Predicted structure of dimer state of SH2B1 DD domain via MODELLER program and the crystal structure of SH2B2 DD domain illustrating the amino acid components, green color represents one molecule while pink color represents the other one. Figure taken from Nishi et al., 2005.
1.5.4 Non-domain regions (linkers in between domains)

Residues and specific sequence motifs in interdomain linkers may contribute to the function of their linked functional domains or have independent adaptor function which is associated with their intrinsically disordered nature.

SH2B1 has eight tyrosines and multiple serine and threonine residues in linkers that are potential phosphorylation sites (Figure 1.3). The conserved tyrosine 439 and 494 (YXXL) are able to be phosphorylated by JAK 1 and 2, also the phosphorylation of these residues is stimulated via their targeting the tyrosine kinase receptor, therefore providing a binding site for other SH2 containing proteins (O'Brien et al., 2003; Riedel et al., 1997). Moreover Ser⁹⁶ is phosphorylated by mitogen activated protein kinase (MAPK) which could be another binding site (Rui et al., 1999). The function of the posttranslational modification of these residues is still unknown.

There are a number of proline rich sequences in the linker regions as shown in Figure 1.3. These polypro regions are likely substrates for SH3 domain-containing molecules. As an example the proline sequence in between SH2 and PH domains is predicted to bind to SH3 of Grb2 protein which has a role in the signalling pathway of NGF (Qian et al., 1998).

SH2B1 is present mainly in the cytoplasm, and was shown to shuttle to the nucleus. SH2B1 contains a nuclear localization segment (NLS) (KLKKR 152) which is mainly required for its nuclear translocation. Furthermore, it contains a nuclear export signal (NES) (GERWTHRFERLRLSR234). These two regions in between DD and PH domains are conserved in all SH2B1 variants as shown in Figure 1.3. The possible explanation for the nuclear cytoplasmic shuttling of SH2B1 and the presence of the NLS and NES in its sequence has been suggested to be for nucleocytoplasmic function such as transcriptional activation or repression in and/or out of the nucleus (Maures et al., 2009; Chen and Carter-Su, 2004).

1.5.5 Unique Carboxyl sequences of SH2B1 isoforms

The diversity in the C-terminal region (after Gln631) provides each spliced variant of SH2B1 (α, β, γ, and δ) with a unique carboxyl terminus in sequence length and residue type. Alternative splicing events of mRNA play an essential role in formation of proteomic and functional diversity in multicellular organisms (Blencowe, 2006). However the actual functional difference between multiple isoforms of SH2B1 has not yet been investigated.

In brain all four isoforms are found to regulate body weight through energy synthesis and glucose metabolism. On the other hand, one study (Pearce et al., 2014) showed that the β isoform is sufficient to enhance nerve growth factor-induced neurite outgrowth of PC12 cells, whereas the α isoform doesn't have this enhancement ability.

Early studies (Yousaf et al., 2001; Nelms et al., 1999) showed that the SH2B1 variants are expressed widely in cells. In mouse, expression of α and δ isoforms is mostly coupled, in lung, spleen, kidney, thymus and skeletal muscle with a prominence of δ over α in brain and early embryo, while α is more abundant than δ in testis. Moreover, β and γ variants are expressed in pairs in ovary, heart and testis with predominantly β expression, with minimum expression for both variants in other tissues such as lung, brain, thymus, and skeletal muscle (Figure 1.9). Also the distribution of SH2B1 variants in different cells is unalike, as shown by the Doche et al*.*, 2012 study, which shows that the expression of α and δ is mainly in the brain, while the expression of β and γ is ubiquitous.

As a result of these observations it was suggested there is a possible contribution or similarities in function between α and δ, and β and γ. Yousaf et al*.,* 2001 suggested that the expression of SH2B1 isoforms depends on an alternative splicing mechanism that is present in different cells. The transcription of the four isoforms from exon 1 until the first 168 nucleotides of exon 7 is identical, however the 3' end of exon 7 produces different variants as a result of alternative splicing.

Figure 1.9. Agarose gel of distribution of SH2B1 variants (a, β, γ, and δ) in different mouse tissues. Fragment size of each isoform is; (α 185 bp , β 258 bp , γ 338 bp , δ 238 bp), the gel is taken from Yousaf et al., 2001. The tested mouse tissues are: (from the right) brain, liver, heart, lung, spleen, testis, ovary, kidney, embryo, skeletal muscles, and thymus. The size of the marker is in base pairs.

Moreover a recent study (Joe et al., 2017) proved the contribution of the C terminal tail of α isoform to restrict the ability of the SH2B1 to shuttle through the nucleus, and to inhibit other enhancement abilities such as autophosphorylation of NGF receptor TrkA and phosphorylation of Akt. The difference in function of SH2B1 isoforms is mostly due to their distinct carboxyl termini, thus highlighting the main sequence features can help to understand their functional differences.

In mice and rat, the unique C-terminus of SH2B α and β contains a tyrosine residue, Tyr⁷⁵³ and Tyr⁶⁴⁹, respectively, which may provide sites for signalling molecules which interact uniquely with one isoform, and was suggested to be a site of phosphorylation that may influence the interaction of the adjacent SH2 domain with activated receptor Tyr kinases (Nelms et al., 1999). The phosphorylation of Tyr⁷⁵³ at the C terminus of α isoform is able to inhibit the function of the rest of the protein (Joe et al., 2017). The C-terminal sequence RSTSRDP⁶³⁹ in the α isoform is similar to the Raf binding sequence for 14-3-3 proteins. Moreover, the sequence PDASSTLLP658 in the β isoform at the C-terminus resembles the binding motif of 14- 3-3 proteins in the C-terminus of the insulin-like growth factor substrate I (Craparo et al., 1997).

The α variant contains two interesting C-terminal motifs: the sequence NXXY⁷⁵⁴ is similar to the NPXY motif of insulin receptor which is recognized by the phosphoserine binding (PTB) domain of IRS1 proteins (Eck et al., 1996). Also, the SFV⁷⁵⁶ motif is similar to the recognition motif of PDZ domains S/TXV that has been described in a number of regulatory and signalling molecules (Harrison, 1996). Moreover, α , γ and δ isoforms have additional proline-rich sequences located at the C-terminus which is a possible attachment point to other SH3 containing signalling systems. The carboxyl terminus of the δ isoform carries two additional sequences that are similar to nuclear localization sequences (KRRR 678 and KRGKRKRKR 700) which may indicate its role in gene expression, also it contains serine/tryptophan rich sequences (Yousaf et al., 2001).

In addition, it was demonstrated in different studies that the insulin receptor contains a number of docking sites for SH2B1: the γ-isoform interacts with the insulin receptor activation loop β domain at Tyr¹¹⁴⁶ (Nelms et al., 1999), whereas the α-isoform interacts with the insulin receptor activation loop at pTyr¹¹⁵⁸, pTyr¹¹⁶², and pTyr¹¹⁶³ (Morris et al., 2008). The β-isoform has been reported to bind to activate JAK2 in response to hormones and cytokines (Rui and Carter-Su, 1999).

The existence of unique motifs at the C terminal tail supports the hypothesis of the recruitment function of these tails to specific proteins for signalling assemblies; also the phosphorylation of tyrosine residues in the C terminus of α is suggested to prevent the protein from entering the nucleus and enhancing the NGF signalling pathway (Joe et al., 2017). Although the sequences of SH2B1 isoforms are well-known, the function of the C-terminal diversity is poorly understood.

Figure 1.10. The Carboxyl-terminal amino acid sequence of SH2B1 isoforms α, β, γ, and δ (in mouse) with the length of each variant. The protein sequence until Gln/Q 631 is conserved in all isoforms (grey highlighted). Yellow highlights Tyr (649-753) residues; and the underlined bold sequences are unique to α and β isoforms. The blue highlighted sequences are present only in the δ variant. The motifs in boldface (NXXY and SFV) are identified only in α. Pro-rich sequences are indicated by a waved underline in α and $γ$ and a Ser-Trp in δ is indicated in double underline. The GenBank accession numbers are: mouse α (AF421138), mouse β (AF020526), mouse γ (AF421139), mouse δ (AF380422).

1.6 Roles of intrinsically disordered regions (IDRs) in signalling proteins

The majority of proteins in eukaryotic cells are made up from both structured and unstructured regions (Van Der Lee et al., 2014). Polypeptide segments of proteins that are defined as intrinsically disordered are characterized by their amino acid or sequence composition: less complexity of sequence, low ratio of poly-hydrophobic sequences (I, L, and V) and aromatic residues (F, Y, and W), big number of charged and polar amino acids, and lower content of cysteine and asparagine residues (Babu, 2016; Habchi et al*.*, 2014). The lack of bulky hydrophobic amino acids in the sequence of IDRs, which are order-prompting residues, means that there is no need to prevent the unfavorable interactions with water, thus these sequences lack a stable and defined 2D/3D structure at least *in vitro* under physiological conditions. Regions exhibiting intrinsically disordered properties in proteins are located mainly in between structured domains, and/or at the N and C terminal regions of the protein with sequence length 30 residues or more (Babu, 2016). Alterations or mutations within the disordered segments often lead to developmental diseases in humans (Uversky et al., 2008), as their function is mostly complementary to the structured region of the proteins.

Beside the classical function of IDRs to link different structured parts of the protein, IDR segments are abundant in regulatory proteins that are involved in signal transduction as essential components in signalling machinery. The importance of IDR segments comes from their molecular assembly function, as they contain binding sites or short sequence motifs, which mediate weak interactions with other proteins and thus modulate the formation of signalling protein complexes, thereby increasing specificity and improving the regulation of signalling pathways. Moreover due to their conformational change, they are able to bind to different targeting proteins (Mittag et al., 2010).

Furthermore the intrinsically disordered regions are often regulated via posttranslational modification of accessible sites within IDRs (Bah et al., 2015; Trudeau et al*.*, 2013). An example of regulation controlled by IDRs is autoinhibition. The mechanism is adopted by auxiliary multidomain proteins that are involved in signal transduction to turn them off when not activated, in order to not cause havoc in the cell by stopping unwanted or abnormal activities. The autoinhibition occurs as a result of intramolecular interaction between the binding site (e.g phosphorylated tyrosine) within the IDR with the functional structured part of the protein in order to block activator binding sites (Trudeau et al., 2013).

Such regulatory interactions have been characterised in many signalling proteins, as shown in Figure 1.11. Src kinases contain a C-terminal kinase domain, and N-terminal SH2 and SH3 domains. The inactive kinase (under basal conditions) is repressed via two intramolecular interactions; the SH2 domain interacts with a C-terminal phosphorylated tyrosine, while the SH3 domain interacts with a poly-proline sequence located in between kinase and SH2 domains. Both interactions work to stabilise the inactive conformational state of the kinase by restructuring the kinase active site. The repressed state is disturbed when one or both domains bind their preferred external ligands, thus releasing the kinase to its active state (Lim, 2002).

A similar autoinhibition model appears to be adopted by SH2B1 α isoform via intramolecular interaction with a C terminal tyrosine 753. The phosphorylation of Tyr⁷⁵³ is able to repress the nucleocytoplasmic function of the protein by stopping nuclear cycling (Joe et al., 2017). Mutation of this residue Tyr753 restores the protein's ability to cycle through the nucleus, although the exact interactions involved in the inhibitor mechanism are still unclear.

Figure 1.11. Schematic illustration of the autoinhibition mechanism of Src-kinase protein. The schema shows two states of inactive and active Src-kinase; the kinase under basal conditions is repressed by intramolecular interactions involving the SH2 and SH3 domains, whereas intermolecular interactions release the kinase to be in active condition. The schema is taken from Lim, 2002. P in red is the phosphorylated tyrosine, and red square is polyproline sequences.

IDRs are able to adopt different conformation states, which are both flexible and dynamic. This property makes disordered segments useful for regulatory functions. That is because IDRs enable fast association because the interaction is often intramolecular, and IDRs are exposed and therefore have few orientational limitations; and due to the large degree of mobility, IDRs enable fast dissociation, which is clearly an advantage for signal transduction since speed is often more important than strong affinity (Williamson, 2012).

In addition it is commonly observed that IDRs, either for the whole region or for a short distinct segment within IDRs, undergo ordering transitions upon binding to partners. Preformed structural elements work as conformational selection to permit intermolecular contact with specific partners, exposure of a specific phosphorylation site, or to stabilize the active conformation state in weak transient binding (Trudeau et al., 2013; Mittag et al., 2010).

1.7 Study aims

This thesis describes an investigation into the structure and function of the C-terminal SH2 domain of mouse SH2B1, in particular into interactions with the intrinsically disordered Cterminus of the $β$ isoform. As mentioned in section 1.5, SH2B1 isoforms ($α$, $β$, $γ$, and $δ$) share the same known functional structured domains (N-DD-PH-SH2-C), however there is a big diversity in sequence length and residue type in the carboxyl tail of each isoform (Figure 1.10). Despite the good knowledge about the sequence of SH2B1, there is very little understanding about the function of the intrinsically disordered C-terminus of the different isoforms.

The investigation reveals that SH2B1 β isoform C-terminal tail of mice contains a phosphorylatable amino acid, Y649. This observation raises the question of whether the phosphorylation of this tyrosine has a regulatory role in the activation of the nearby SH2 domain, most obviously a role in autoinhibition. To contribute to understanding the selfregulation mechanism of SH2B1 β isoform we aimed to

1. Optimise the protein expression and the purification to obtain a good concentration of labelled sample of SH2 with the C-terminal tail of β (160 residues) and SH2 protein (118 residues), to aid NMR studies.

2. Phosphorylate the Tyr139 at the C terminal tail of the SH2c in *vitro* by an activated kinase to study the intramolecular interaction upon binding of the phosphorylated tyrosine with SH2 domain using NMR spectroscopy.

3. Measure the binding affinity between the C-terminal phospho-tyrosine ligand and SH2 domain using NMR titration experiments, as sequence analysis for the C-terminal tail of β isoform reveals that it differs from the ideal SH2 high-affinity ligand in JAK2 (O'Brien et al., 2003), and based on that it is expected to bind with only low affinity.

4. Conduct an outcompeting experiment based on titrating the bound SH2-C terminal peptide with JAK2 ligand, because the high effective concentration for the weak binding of the intramolecular partner does not replace the low concentration of the favourable interaction of the intermolecular partner, thus binding of a C-terminal phosphorylated peptide is predicted to be readily outcompeted by a high-affinity external kinase ligand.

5. The C-terminal long tail of β (45 residues), which is intrinsically disordered, may undergo disorder to order transition upon binding pY to the N terminal SH2 pY pocket for additional support of the weak intramolecular binding by conformational change. This hypothesis was not studied because of unexpected low protein concentration which was not enough to achieve a complete chemical shift assignment.

6. This thesis aims to study the possibility of using automated software (FLYA/CYANA) for a completely automatic NMR structure determination of SH2 protein by a student, and demonstrate the value of the *Accuracy of NMR Structure using Random Coil Index and Rigidity* (ANSURR) method in guiding restraint improvement.

Chapter 2 Materials and Methods

The methods and reagents for various techniques used are given below; any changes employed are described in the relevant sections. All chemicals and reagents used were of analytical grade and purchased from Sigma Aldrich, Novagen, BIO-RAD and Thermo Fisher Scientific. Restriction enzymes and NEBuilder HiFi DNA assembly master mix were obtained from New England Biolabs. All solutions were made using Milli-Q water purified using the Milli-Q system from Millipore. Growth media were made following the lab protocols, using distilled water and sterilized by autoclaving or filtration through 0.2 µM or 0.45 µM filters.

2.1 Culture Media

Table 2.1. Growth medium recipe.

Table 2.2. M9 Minimal media recipe

Table 2.3. Trace elements recipe.

The pH of the solution adjusted to 8.0, and subsequently added EDTA 500 mg. Then pH was re-adjusted to 8.0 and lastly added 375 mg from FeSO4.7H2O. Finally the final volume was adjusted to 100 mL and autoclaved.

2.2 Bacterial Strains and Expression Vectors

Escherichia coli strains were used: NEB 5-alpha competent cells for high efficiency transformation and BL21 (DE3) for all protein expression (MBP-His-SH2, His-SH2 short protein sequence, His-SH2 long protein sequence, SH2c, and SH2c Y114F). Plasmids used were pET expression vector (6880 bp) which was given and designed by Dr Mesnage's lab (Figure 2.1), and pET-15b (5708 bp) plasmid from GenScript (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.1. pET *E. coli* Vector Map, 6880 bp, showing the location of restriction sites, coding site and origins of replication and translation. The plasmid was designed with N-terminal 6xHis-MBB-TEV tag.

Figure 2.2. pET-15b *E. coli* Vector Map, 5708 bp, illustrating the location of restriction sites, coding regions and origins of replication and translation. The vector includes a N-terminal 6xHis tag.

2.3 Transformation of bacterial strains

E. coli was transformed by adding 5 µl of plasmid (20 to 25 ng/µl) to 50 µl of competent cells. The mixture was incubated on ice for 30 mins before a heat shock in water bath at 42°C for 10 to 30 sec. The culture was placed on ice for 5 mins, then 950 µl SOC medium was added to the mixture followed by an hour incubation shaking at 37°C. 50 µl and 100 µl were taken from the mixture and plated on agar plates containing 50 μg/ml ampicillin. The plates were incubated at 37°C overnight.

2.4 DNA methods

2.4.1 Plasmid amplification, purification and sequencing

NEB 5-alpha *E. coil* competent cells were transformed and plated on Amp-agar (table 2.1) followed by incubation overnight at 37℃. For plasmid amplification, one colony was used to inoculate 10 ml of Amp-LB (table 2.1) which was incubated with overnight shaking at 37℃. QIAprep Spin Miniprep Kit from QIAGEN was used to purify plasmids from 10 ml overnight cultures by following the manufacturer's protocol except that in the final step, the plasmid was eluted with 30 μl of distilled water instead of elution buffer.

20 µl of the resultant plasmid stock (30 ng to 50 ng/µl) was sent to eurofins Genomics for sequencing. The sequencing was done either in both or one directions, using forward T7 promoter and pET reverse primer. The resulting data was visualized and analysed with SnapGene software.

2.4.2 Restriction digestions of DNA

The pET-MBP-His plasmid (6880 bp) was digested with a pair of digestion enzymes: either NcoI and BamHI to insert MBP-His-SH2 gene, or BamHI and XbaI to insert one of the following genes; His-SH2 short protein, His-SH2 long protein, and SH2c.

The restriction digestion was done in a total volume reaction of 50 µl following recommended manufacturer's protocol. Two reaction mixtures were prepared each one containing: 12 µl DNA (20 to 50 ng/µl), 2.5 µl 10 \times NEBuffer 3.1 in final concentration 1 \times , 1 µl of NcoI or XbaI restriction enzyme in one reaction and 1 µl of BamHI restriction enzyme in the second reaction (one unit/50 µl reaction), and 9.5 µl distilled water to make total volume 25 µl for each reaction. 5 µl from each reaction was taken as control samples and from the remaining mixture 20 µl from each reaction was mixed to make 40 µl final volume of complete digest sample. The digestion reaction was carried out at 37°C in a water bath for 30 mins to 1 hour.

2.4.3 Agarose gel electrophoresis (analytical method)

Agarose gel electrophoresis was used to fractionate DNA fragments according to length. Linearized plasmids were identified by 1% agarose gel (recipe given in table 2.4). Each 5 µl of samples were mixed with 1 µl of UView[™] 6 \times loading dye. The DNA samples were run on 1% agarose gel alongside 6 µl of DNA marker (4 µl of dH₂O, 1 µl of UView^{™ 6} > loading dye, and 1 µl of 1 kb DNA ladder from New England BioLabs). Gel was electrophoresed at 110 V for an hour in in $1\times$ TAE running buffer and visualized under 254 nm UV light.

Table 2.4. Agarose Gel and Buffer recipe.

2.4.4 Purification of DNA fragments from Agarose gel

Linear DNA fragment bands within the 1% agarose gel were cut with a scalpel under UV light. The gel slices were transferred into a pre-weighed Eppendorf tube. For 100 μg of the gel slice, 100 μL binding buffer was added. The purification was done using GeneJET Gel Extraction Kit according to the manufacturer's instructions. Incubation of the mixture was done at 60°C until the agarose slice was completely melted. The sample-buffer mixture was pipetted onto a silica membrane column and the column was incubated at room temperature for 1 minute. The DNA was spun down to bind it to the membrane. The flow-through was discarded. 500 μl washing buffer was added to the column. The column was spun down to remove the impurities. The DNA was eluted with 30 μ l water. The concentration of extracted linear plasmids was measured at 260 nm using a Nano-Drop Lite Microlitre Spectrophotometer.

2.4.5 Design of homologous overlapping gBlock Gene

The SnapGene software was used to design and generate the g.Block overlapping fragments. The target gene sequence of the SH2 domain of SH1B1 β (Homo species*, Q9NRF2*), SH2 of SH1B1 β (Mouse species, *Q91ZM2*), SH2 with the C terminal tail of SH1B1 β (Mouse species, *Q91ZM2)* were taken from http://www.uniprot.org/uniprot. After that Codon Optimization Tool in Integrated DNA Technologies web was used to optimise codon usage of the obtained genes for *E. coli* to express. pET-MBP-His (6880 bp) plasmid was used as a template to create two matched homology overlapping sequences at each end of the target gene.

The same strategies were followed to design three g.Block constructs for SH2 domain as shown in Figures 2.4, 2.6, and 2.7, and one for SH2 domain with the C terminal sequence of SH2B1 β isoform Figure 2.8. The details of each g.Block gene sequences are discussed in Chapter 3.

The first overlap sequence at the 5' end started from the first restriction site with \sim 33 bp backward; while the second overlap at the 3' end started from the second restriction site with ~33 bp forward that results in a g.Block overlapping fragment, as shown in Figures 2.3 and 2.5, gray coloured sequences. At the end of the g.Block gene and before the second restriction site start, a stop codon (TAA) was added, and a few nucleotides codon for more residues were added before the Trp residue at the start of the SH2 gene; (Gly, Tyr, Pro) in the first SH2 construct, and (Gly, Ser) in the second SH2 construct, as linker. However those extra residues were not added to the third SH2 construct and to the SH2 with C terminal sequence construct. The total length of g.Block genes are shown in Figures 2.4, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.8. All g.Block genes were ordered from Integrated DNA Technologies.

Figure 2.3. The DNA sequence of the first SH2 g.Block designed 379 bp. The Figure shows N terminal and C terminal homology DNA sequences in grey (36 bp backward and 33 bp forward); SH2 protein sequence in orange; a linker DNA sequence in light purple (GYP); a stop codon red; also shows the restriction enzyme sites for NcoI and BamHI.

Figure 2.4. Schematic drawing of the first SH2 g.Block gene construct, 379 bp.

Figure 2.5. The DNA sequence of the second SH2 g.Block designed, 443 bp. The Figures shows N terminal and C terminal homology DNA sequences in grey (33 bp backward and 33 bp forward), Ribosome Binding Sequence in green, Linker-His6-Linker-SH2 protein sequence in orange; a linker DNA sequence in light purple; 6xHistidine tag in light blue, a start and stop codon in red; also shown is the restriction enzyme sites for NcoI and BamHI.

Figure 2.6. An overview map of the second SH2 (short protein) g.Block construct without the MBP tag.

Figure 2.7. An overview map of the third SH2 construct (long protein) 461 pb with the extra DQPLSGYP at N terminus and PSQ at C terminus of the g.Block.

Figure 2.8. Schematic drawing of the SH2 g.Block construct with C terminal tail of SH2B1 β isoform, 586 bp.

2.4.6 Ligation by Gibson assembly

The plasmid was digested with a pair of desired restriction enzymes and then the g.Block gene was designed with overlapping sequences. After that the linear plasmid with the designed gene were ligated using the Gibson assembly method following the lab manual (Gibson et al., 2009).

The conditions of the ligation of g.Block genes with the linearised plasmid were specified by the supplier. The number of pmols of insert and vector for optimal assembly were calculated based on the length and weight of the fragments by using a formula in https://www.neb.com/protocols/2012/12/11/gibson-assembly-protocol-e5510.

Following the manufacturer's protocol, the pellet of g.Block fragments was re-suspended with 50 μ l distilled water to a final concentration of 10 ng/ μ l. After that, the linearised plasmid was ligated with the designed g.Block by Gibson assembly in molar ratio 1:3 of vector to insert. As an example of the assembly calculation, the SH2 g.Block fragment, 379 bp in 10 ng/µl concentration, is 0.0409 pmols. The linear pET-MBP-His vector (50 ng), at a concentration of 7.9 ng/ μ l for 6869 bp, is 0.011 pmol. A 3× excess of insert is 0.033 pmol which is 0.8 μ l ~1 μ l. The ligation reaction was carried out in 12 μ l final volume: 6 μ l vector (7.9 ng/ μ l), 1 μ l insert (10 ng/ μ I) and 5 μ I NEBuilder HiFi DNA assembly master mix. The assembly reaction was incubated at 50°C for one hour. During the incubation the overlapping g.Block of the SH2 gene was ligated with the linearised plasmid via the action of three enzymes: a 5ʹ exonuclease, a DNA polymerase and a DNA ligase as provided in the kit, Figure 2.9. After the incubation time, 5 µl from the mixture was transformed into 50 µl of NEB 5-alpha competent cells.

Figure 2.9. An overview diagram for Gibson assembly method shows 1. Target DNA gene designed with overlapped sequences at both ends (A) which match with sequences of plasmid at both ends (B), the plasmid digest with desired restriction enzyme before starting the assembly reaction. 2. Gibson assembly reaction into the provided kit which include linear plasmid, target DNA gene, and enzymes for Gibson assembly reaction; exonuclease T5 chews from 5' to 3' ends the DNA ends exposing the homologous sequences in blue and red (digestion), Phusion DNA polymerase extends the DNA from the 3 ends (annealing), and Taq ligase start to ligate the nicks (ligation). 3. Final result from Gibson assembly a full assembled DNA. The diagram is taken from www.international.neb.com.

2.5 Protein methods

2.5.1 Protein expression and extraction

BL21 (DE3) *E. coli* cells were transformed with plasmids containing the target gene and were plated onto agar media supplemented with ampicillin, Agar-Amp table 2.1. Following overnight incubation at 37°C, a single colony was picked off and inoculated in 10 ml Amp-LB.

The 10 ml starter culture was used to inoculate 1 L autoclaved medium (LB or M9 media, recipe given in tables 2.2 and 2.1) supplemented with 1 ml ampicillin (100 mg/1ml) followed by incubation at 37°C, 250 rpm until the optical density reached ~0.6 au at 600 nm which was checked by spectrophotometer. Then, protein expression was induced by adding 0.5 mM of Isopropyl β-D-1-thiogalactopyranoside (IPTG) from a 1 M stock solution. After that, the culture was incubated overnight at 25°C and the cells were harvested by 10 mins centrifugation at 18,000 g, at 4°C. Cell paste from overnight culture was suspended in 20 ml lysis buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8, 50 mM NaCl with one Mini EDTA-free Protease Inhibitor tablet and DNase 1). The cells were disrupted by sonication via ultrasound on ice for 6×30 seconds at 16 microns amplitude with 60 sec breaks in between, then the extract was centrifuged at 45,000 g, for 30 mins at 4°C.

2.5.2 Protein purification

2.5.2.1 Immobilized metal affinity chromatography

A nickel Nitrilotriacetic Acid (Ni-NTA) Agarose column was used to purify the overexpressed fusion proteins with His tag. The Ni-NTA column (15 ml resin in 5.0×20 cm column) was equilibrated with washing buffer (40 mM imidazole, 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.5-8, containing 150 mM NaCl) by washing with three times the column volume. Then the supernatant (~20 ml) was applied to the column and washed with the same washing buffer (\approx 100 ml). Wash fractions (3 ml) were collected at a flow rate of 2 ml/min by an ÄKTAprime Plus system. The elution was collected after applying the elution buffer to the column (300 mM imidazole, 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.5-8, containing 150 mM NaCl), then the elution fractions were collected in 3 ml fractions with a flow rate 3 ml/min. The optical density was measured at 280 nm to identify the protein-containing fractions. The washing and elution fractions which showed higher optical density were run on 16% SDS-PAGE.

2.5.2.2 Protease cleavage

Cleavage of overexpressed fusion proteins (His₆-MBP-TEV-SH2, the first SH2 construct) by TEV

(Tobacco Etch Virus which was expressed and purified in Dr Mesnage's lab) protease (1.2 mg/ml) was done with different ratios of protease to protein (1:20, 1:50 and 1:100) in buffer (10 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8, 5 mM DTT and 5% glycerol). The protease reaction was incubated at room temperature overnight or an hour at 30°C. A 16% SDS gel was used to analyse the cleavage of tagged fusion proteins ($His₆-MBP-TEV-SH2$) by the protease.

2.5.2.3 Amylose affinity chromatography

An 8 ml Amylose resin packed in a PD-10 column was used to isolate MBP fusions after cleavage of His₆-MBP-TEV-SH2 proteins with TEV protease. The column was equilibrated in washing buffer (0.2 M NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8), after applying the sample. After that the column was washed with 15 ml washing buffer, then the elution was performed with elution buffer (0.2 M NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8, and 10 mM maltose). The elution fractions were collected in 2.5 ml fractions.

2.5.2.4 Dialysis method

6 M guanidine hydrochloride was used to dissolve the cell pellet from 500 ml growth. Dialysis tubing (VivaspinTM column 10 kDa MWCO) was cut to the appropriate length (~14 cm). After that, in order to remove the glycerol, the tubing was placed in water for half an hour. The tubing was clipped off at the bottom and the solution was then transferred into it. Then the tubing was clipped off from the top and placed in a beaker containing 1 litre of 50 mM KH₂PO₄, pH 7.4. The beaker was placed in the fridge with a magnetic stirrer. After two hours, the buffer (50 mM KH2PO4, pH 7.4) was changed and left stirring for three days with change of buffer after every 24 hr. After three days, the mixture into the tube was poured off into a centrifuge tube and was spun at 18,000 g at 4℃ for 20 minutes in a Beckman Avanti J-251 Ultra centrifuge. Then the supernatant and pellet were run on an SDS gel**.**

2.5.2.5 Size exclusion chromatography

Gel filtration was used to separate proteins based on their size (analysis and quantitation of

monomer, dimers, trimers, and higher order aggregates for proteins). The gel filtration columns used were: Superdex 200 10/300 or Superdex[™] 75 10/300 (GE Healthcare). Before injecting the sample, the columns were washed with the same applied buffer (table 2.5). The gel filtration experiments were performed in different buffer as explained in chapter 3 at flow rate 0.5-1 ml/min using ÄKTA purifier system and ÄKTAprime Plus system. The gel filtration fractions based on the peaks were run in a 16% SDS gel**.**

Table 2.5. Gel Filtration Applied Buffer.

2.6 Protein biochemistry

2.6.1 Protein concentrating and buffer exchange

A vivaspin™ ultrafiltration column (10 kDa MWCO) was used to exchange the buffer and concentrate dilute protein samples. Firstly, the spin column was washed with Milli-Q water by centrifugation. The large volume samples were reduced to the desired concentration or to approximately 1 ml or less in order to exchange the buffer, then the wanted buffer was added and the sample concentrated again to remove unwanted buffer.

2.6.2 Protein quantification and molecular weight

All theoretical extinction coefficients and molecular weights shown in table 2.6 were calculated from the amino acid sequences by ExPASy web. These values were used for the quantification of proteins at A280nm by NanoDrop UV-Vis spectrophotometers according to the Beer-Lambert Law. Also these values were used to optimise the buffer's pH during the purification procedures.

Table 2.6. Physical and Chemical Parameters of Proteins.

2.7 Protein analytical methods

2.7.1 SDS PAGE (sodium dodecyl sulphate polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis)

SDS-PAGE was used to confirm the molecular size of the expressed protein as shown in table 2.6, using 16% resolving and 4% stacking gel acrylamide gels. The gel was prepared with ~4 cm resolving gel and ~2 cm stacking gel. Plates were sealed with tape to prevent the gel from leaking and the assembled plates were fixed in the gel apparatus. 10 ml of 16% resolving gel was prepared (recipe in table 2.7). The poured gel was left for the polymerization. Isopropanol was poured to level the resolving gel. After polymerization of resolving gel, 4 ml of 4% stacking gel was prepared (recipe in table 2.7). The gel was poured into the plates, and a suitably sized

comb was inserted. 15 μ l of samples were taken and mixed with 5 μ l of 4×SDS loading buffer (table 2.8); then the samples were boiled at 95℃ for a minute. 4 µl of pre-stained SDS PAGE marker (250 to 10 kDa from Thermo Fisher) was used as size indicators. 20 μl of samples were loaded into the gel with the help of a micropipette. The gel was electrophoresed for approximately an hour at constant voltage of 180 in $1\times$ running buffer, after which the gel was removed and placed in instant blue stain with shaking for 15 minutes.

Table 2.7. SDS PAGE Layers recipe.

Table 2.8. SDS PAGE Buffers recipes.

2.7.2 Mass spectrometry

≥ 20 μl of protein samples were sent to MS facility for analysis by ESI MS (Electro-Spray Ionization Mass Spectrometry) to determine the protein molecular weight.

ETD MS (Electron Transfer Dissociation Mass Spectrometry) was used to analyse the phosphorylation sites on proteins (SH2c and SH2c Y114F) by the trypsin digestion analytical method. ~20 ul of protein samples were run in 16% SDS PAGE gel, followed by staining in InstantBlue dye for 1 h. The relevant bands were cut to small pieces and proteins digested into peptides prior to identification by ETD MS. The process involved destaining the gel pieces, reduction and alkylation followed by trypsin digestion of the proteins and extraction of the peptides from the gel pieces following the manufacture's protocol. The extracted peptides were evaporated overnight in a speedvac to be ready next day to dissolve in suitable buffer, then the analysis by ETD MS was carried out by Adelina Martin in the MS facility.

2.7.3 Bioinformatic analysis

MUSCLE alignment tool (Multiple Sequence Comparison by log Expectation) in https://www.ebi.ac.uk/Tools/msa/muscle/ web was used for multiple sequence alignment of proteins in order to detect the similarity and difference between applied sequences. The protein sequence alignment tool was applied to add extra residues at the N and C termini of SH2 protein by aligning its sequence with other SH2-containing proteins as shown in chapter 3.

2.8 Protein phosphorylation

Group-based Prediction System 3.0 web service was used to predict the phosphorylation site with its cognate protein kinase (Xue et al., 2008). Fer Kinase (from ProQinase) was predicted to be a good enzyme to phosphorylate Tyrosine 139 in the C terminus of SH2 SH2B1 β protein. The phosphorylation of Y139 in the C terminus of SH2c and mutant SH2c Y114F were done through incubation of the kinase with protein in ratio 1:5 for 8 hrs at 30℃ with shaking in reaction buffer: 70 mM HEPES-NaOH pH 7.5, 3 mM MgCl₂, 3 mM MnCl₂, 3 μ M Naorthovanadate, 1.2 mM DTT, 50 µg/ml PEG₂₀₀₀₀, 1% DMSO, 5 mM ATP. During the incubation time of SH2c Y114F protein, 1 mM DTT was added to the sample every hour. After that the phosphorylated sample was subjected to buffer exchange to be in a suitable buffer for the subsequent NMR experiment. The phosphorylation of Y139 was identified and confirmed by ¹⁵N HSQC spectra, ESI and ETD MS.

2.9 NMR (nuclear magnetic resonance) methods

2.9.1 NMR sample

The NMR samples of SH2 protein were prepared in 90% $H₂O/10% D₂O$, or 99.9% D₂O in 50 mM potassium phosphate pH 6, containing 1 mM TSP (trimethylsilyl propanoic acid), or in 90% H2O/10% D2O in 50 mM Tris and 50 mM NaCl pH 6, 1mM TSP. Also the NMR samples of the non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c and SH2c Y114F proteins were set in two buffers; 90% H₂O/10% D₂O in 100 mM potassium phosphate pH 6-7, with 1 mM TSP or 90% H₂O/10% D₂O in 50 mM Tris and 50 mM NaCl pH 6, 1mM TSP. The protein samples used were uniformly 15 N-labelled; 13 C, 15 N-labelled; and unlabelled.

NMR spectra were obtained for NMR structure determination from ~1 mM double labelled protein in a 5 mm Shigemi tube (300 µl sample). In the case of protein-ligand complexes and other NMR studies, NMR spectra were obtained from a double labelled protein (~1 mM to \sim 0.06 mM) in a normal 5 mm NMR tube (500 µl sample).

2.9.2 NMR measurement and processing

NMR measurements were recorded on a Bruker spectrometer operating at a proton frequency of 800 MHz at 298K. Spectrometers were controlled by a UNIX workstation running Topspin software for data processing. The data was transferred to LINUX and processed with Felix2007 for spectral analysis.

The chemical shift of ¹H was referenced to an internal TSP signal, and ^{15}N and ^{13}C chemical shifts were referenced indirectly to 1 H by calculation from their gyromagnetic ratios. Standard 2D and 3D pulse sequences were provided in pulse sequence libraries from the NMR spectrometer manufacturer. 1D ¹H and 2D ¹⁵N HSQC spectra were collected before every 3D experiment to assess folding, aggregation, stability, and ligand binding or detect unstructured regions of sample.

2.9.3 Backbone assignment (semi-automated)

Backbone assignments of the SH2 protein, and the non-phosphorylated and the phosphorylated SH2c and SH2C Y114F proteins in different buffer were obtained following the same procedures. The backbone resonances of ¹HN, ¹⁵NH, ¹³CO, ¹³Cα and ¹³Cβ of isotopically labelled protein were assigned using the standard triple resonance spectra listed in table 2.9. All of these spectra collected based on non-uniform sampling to speed up data acquisition. The name of the backbone experiment which listed in table 2.9 shows from where the polarization was transferred, there is no frequency information was obtained for the atoms in brackets. The subscripts show the residue number correlated. For example in HNCA spectrum, HN_i to C α_{i-1} means the HN (i) of a residue correlates to the C α of the previous residue (i-1), and in square brackets $[C\alpha_{i-1}]$ weaker correlations are obtained.

Table 2.9. Standard Triple Resonances NMR spectra.

Acquisition parameters are the same for the backbone spectra of; SH2, non-phosphorylated SH2c, and non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c Y114F double labelled proteins in different buffers which are listed in table 2.10.

The NMR resonance signals observed in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectra were picked and numbered systematically using the automatic numbering in Felix2007, to use as a starting point for manual peak picking. In each HN strip, the chemical shift of each HN peak was aligned with the backbone triple resonance spectra to assign the chemical shift of their associated CO, Ca , and Cβ nuclei, to identify their corresponding residues. Peak picking and matching was done manually using Felix2007 after adjusting the referencing using a macro, as explained in Chapter 4.

Table 2.10. Experimental parameters for multidimensional NMR spectra used to assign backbone of SH2, non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c and SH2c Y114F; and to assign sidechain and structure of SH2 protein. The spectrometer frequency was 800 MHz ¹H. Nuc: nuclei recorded, Sw: spectra width, TD: size of fid, Acq: acquisition time.

2.9.4 Asstools: backbone assignment

The assignment of the spin systems to residues within the protein sequence was completed via the program Asstools (Reed et al., 2003). The program builds up a sequence of matching spin systems using a Monte Carlo simulated annealing method. It works by comparing chemical shifts from a spin system to preceding chemical shifts from all other spin systems, as explained in Chapter 4. Also it matches the carbon chemical shifts (Cα, Cβ, and Co) of spin system to amino acid types. Asstools performs 30 iterative separate runs. In each one, initially spin systems are randomly assigned to a residue in the protein sequence and scores are calculated for the chemical shift matches of self and preceding residue. Also scores are computed for chemical shift similarity of assigned residue type and characteristic random coil amino acid shifts. Each run is done iteratively as assignments are randomly swapped and then scores calculated until a stable score is obtained for three following iterations. Once all runs completed, the output is collated to produce a spin systems list which corresponding to each residue in the protein sequence. Any assignment produced from at least 27 out of the 30 runs is taken as correct. Remaining assignments were then completed by manual inspection of the spectra.

2.9.5 Manual sidechain assignment for SH2 protein

The backbone resonances for ¹HN, ¹⁵NH, ¹³CO, ¹³Cα and ¹³Cβ of SH2 protein (118 a.a) were assigned using standard triple resonance 3D NMR spectra. The peak lists of these spectra had been already picked manually in the previous manual backbone assignment.

The majority of the aliphatic sidechain peaks were picked and lists prepared manually. HBHAcoNH, HCcoNH and HCcoNH 3D NMR spectra were used to obtain the resonances of the aliphatic carbons and their associated protons, α and β , α , β , and γ protons, and C α , C β , and Cγ, respectively. These spectra were picked manually in Felix2007 after adjusting the referencing of ^{15}N , ^{13}C , ^{1}H with ^{15}N HSQC, and an assigned manual peak list was prepared. HCCH COSY and HCCH TOCSY 3D NMR spectra were used for more information about sidechain protons which are linked to aliphatic carbons.

The remaining resonances, mainly the aromatic sidechains of Trp, Tyr, and Phe, were assigned from ¹H-¹H through-space connectivity information in the 2D ¹H ¹H NOESY spectra, supported by 2D ¹H ¹H TOCSY. In the case of Trp, to assign ε , ζ , η protons which have chemical shifts close together, 1 H- 1 H TOCSY and 1 H 1 H NOESY spectra were used, and the peaks were picked automatically as before. Because of the similar chemical shifts of aromatic ring protons (δ, ε) of Phe residues which prevented the selective observation of each, 2D HBCBCGCDHD and HBCBCGCDCE spectra were used to detect the aromatic ring protons, to connect throughbond the aliphatic resonances (C_β) , which were identified in backbone assignment, to sidechain protons, then these protons were used to assign carbons of aromatic rings in ^{13}C HSQC, peaks picked manually and peak lists prepared. The name of NMR spectra with their acquisition parameters which are used to assign aliphatic and aromatic sidechain resonances are listed in table 2.10.

2.10 CYANA (combined assignment and dynamics algorithm for NMR applications): assignment and structure determination

CYANA automated computational approach (version 3.98.5) with independent programs was used to calculate the 3D NMR structure of SH2 SH2B1 protein (Güntert, 2004). The resonance assignment and structure calculations were based on a set of multidimensional NMR spectra and the amino acid sequence as experimental initial input data.

CYANA calculation was performed on a Linux cluster system. The structure calculation was done with the additional independent programs Felix2007, TALOS-N, and CNS as plug in. All CYANA assignment and calculation was done for residues 1-118 of SH2 as specified in the init.cya macro file. A complete CYANA calculation comprises the following steps.

2.10.1 Peak picking and formatting

After processing 2D and 3D NMR spectra which are listed in table 2.10, referencing and

frequency matching all spectra were adjusted manually in Felix2007, then an automated peak picking algorithm of Felix2007 was applied to pick all peaks, thus the peak positions and intensities are identified. The resulting raw peak lists are reformatted to be in XEASY format (with consistent naming of the peak lists according to the experiment type).

2.10.2 Automated complete resonance assignments for SH2 protein

The FLYA routines within CYANA macro, CALC.cya (under the subdirectory demo/flya), were used to obtain the complete resonance assignment, which required as input data a number of multidimensional NMR spectra including the peak lists for backbone, sidechain and NOE experiments as listed in table 2.10 with acquisition parameters, along with the amino acid sequence of the SH2 protein.

The initial chemical shift assignments generate an ensemble of the chemical shift values for each ¹H, ¹³C, and ¹⁵N nucleus. This ensemble is obtained by 20 independent runs of the GARANT algorithm which uses different seed values for the random number generator. The GARANT algorithm works based on the knowledge of the amino acid sequence, the magnetization transfer pathways and the experimental given peaks to match between the peaks expected (Bartels et al., 1997). The result of the completed runs is an ensemble of 20 raw chemical shift assignments for the complete protein. In all calculations the defined tolerance values of 0.03 ppm for ¹H and 0.4 ppm for ¹³C and ¹⁵N chemical shifts, are used for the matching of peaks with identical assignments. In the ensemble for 1 H, 13 C, and 15 N spin the highly populated chemical shift values are calculated and then selected as the consensus chemical shift value to represent the automated resonances assignment. A number of output files is produced after the assignment calculation as listed in table 2.11.

The resulting resonance assignments require greater manual intervention for errors before proceeding with structure determination due to incomplete data and degeneracy of aliphatic chemical shifts. The manual checking had been done according to previous semi-manual backbone assignments and the assigned manual sidechain peak lists.

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Table 2.11. FLYA calculation output files for the SH2 resonance assignments with their description.

2.10.3 Automated NOE assignment and structure calculation

The CYANA structure calculation goes through sequential cycles of automatic NOE assignment, restraint generation, structure calculation, and validation (Güntert, 2004; Schmidt & Güntert, 2013; Herrmann et al., 2002).

The SH2 structure calculation was performed using CYANA macro CALC.cya (under subdirectory demo/auto), based on the amino acid sequence, the chemical shift assignment, unassigned 3D NOESY peak lists (shown in table 2.10), and the dihedral angle restraints obtained from chemical shifts. The CYANA calculation parameters including the number of initial and final structures, number of steps, shift tolerance values of each nuclei in ppm are specify in a macro script, Figure 5.2.

In CYANA the automated NOE assignment and structure calculation are combined in seven sequential cycles of automated NOE assignment, and followed by a final structure calculation. Automatically NOESY cross-peaks are assigned based on the complete chemical shift assignments and unassigned experimental NOE peak lists within the defined tolerance values. 1 H-¹H distance restraints were derived from 13 C and 15 N edited HSQC NOESY spectra which is the main source of structural information to determine the NMR structure. In these experiments the ¹³C and ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum is extended into a third dimension which is NOE. Each cross peak arises from an NOE between two protons that possess dipolar coupling. These NOEs are created when protons exchange magnetization in a distance dependant fashion during the mixing time. A signal is only observed if the distance between the protons is less than about 5\AA . The ¹⁵N NOESY detects NOEs to NH from any other proton in the molecule, whereas the ¹³C NOESY detects NOEs to CH groups.

The correctness of expected possible NOE assignments is calculated as three probabilities based on the agreement between the given chemical shift values and the experimental peak position, the consistency with an initial 3D structure of the preceding cycle, and networkanchoring, as descried in Chapter 4.

The resulted structure from a given cycle is used in the following cycle as guide the NOE assignments, except for cycle 1, the precision of the structure generally improve in each subsequent cycle. In the first two cycles of the CYANA calculation, constraint combination criterion is used to medium- with long-range distance restraints to decrease the effect of erroneous distance restraints on the calculated structure. The CYANA structure calculation is executed using a standard protocol based on simulated annealing driven by molecular dynamics simulation in torsion angle space. The automated NOESY assignment and structure calculation are followed by a final structure calculation which is generated from an ensemble. A number of output files is produced after each cycle as listed in Table 2.12.

Automated NOESY assignment followed by structure calculation with CYANA does not require manual intervention during cycles, and is based on previously determined chemical shift assignments which permit starting the NOE assignment and structure calculation process directly from the NOESY spectra.
Table 2.11. CYANA structure calculation output files.

To generate better defined and more rigid structures, explained in chapter 5, further CYANA structure calculations were performed using a list of hydrogen bonds predicted from the previous CYANA calculation as additional input constraints. The obtained hydrogen bonds included in the list were required to be consistent with small values of amide proton temperature coefficient (Baxter & Williamson, 1997).

2.11 Structure constraints

2.11.1 Backbone dihedral angles

After the chemical shift assignments have been completed, dihedral angle restraints for the backbone φ and ψ angles are generated using the program TALOS-N (Torsion Angle Likelihood Obtained from Shift and Sequence Similarity) (Shen & Bax, 2013). The idea of this program is to use the given backbone chemical shifts and sequence information to make quantitative predictions for the protein backbone angles ϕ , ψ , and sidechain χ^1 . The program searches a database constructed using high resolution crystal structures, then compares their secondary shifts with HN, NH, CO, Hα, Cα, and Cβ chemical shifts of a given protein. Data from each residue (type and chemical shifts) and its two neighbours are compared to those in the database to select the 10 best matches for φ and ψ. Matches that indicate consistent values for ϕ and ψ and χ^1 are classified as good. Their average and standard deviation are used as predictions. When matches are inconsistent no predictions are made for the central residues and these residues are subsequently declared ambiguous and were not used. TALOS-N also classifies some residues as mobile based on the small values of their secondary chemical shifts. These were also not used.

2.11.2 Amide proton temperature coefficients (hydrogen bonds)

The correlation between amide proton temperature coefficients and hydrogen bonds was used to predict the donor hydrogen bonds in the loops (Baxter & Williamson, 1997), and also to confirm the existence of hydrogen bonds that were taken from CYANA structure.

A 1 mM SH2 protein sample was prepared in 90% H2O/10% D2O in 100 mM potassium phosphate pH 6 in a Shigemi NMR tube. 1 mM TSP in the sample served as the reference for ¹H chemical shifts. ¹⁵N HSQC spectra were recorded at 5° intervals from 283 K to 303 K on a Bruker 800 MHz spectrometer. ¹⁵N HSQC spectra of the temperature series were processed, then picked within Felix2007 and assigned. Acquisition parameters of HSQC spectra were copied from the HSQC spectrum of SH2 that was used for the backbone assignment. The fitting program performed a least-squares minimization of a linear equation to the chemical shift versus temperature data, and the NH temperature coefficients were obtained from the gradient of the best-fit line, shown in Chapter 4.

2.12 CNS (crystallography and NMR system) recalculation and refinement

Structure re-calculations (100 structures) and refinement in explicit solvent were carried out using CNS. CNS uses a simulated annealing protocol involving a number of stages to produce a set of structures (Brünger et al., 1998).

The standard annealing protocols was used with protein-allhdg parameters. Firstly, a linear string of amino acids of the SH2 protein sequence was taken, along with constraints files using CYANA NOEs assignment, dihedral angles and hydrogen bonds. The atoms movement was simulated by increasing the temperature to around ~5000 K with reducing Van der Waals energy to permit free movement through conformational space, thus not being restrained by local energy. After that gradually the temperature was decreased to ~25 K to 0 K, and then Van der Waals forces were applied slowly, thus movement simulated by the dynamics of torsion angles. That caused reducing the atoms velocity, and hence gradually restrained them into low energy conformations. The total energy of each structure calculated by its violations of an average sum of the experimentally restraints and expected molecular properties, e.g bond lengths and angles, and Van der Waals interactions. A minimised average structure was generated by refinement in explicit solvent. Therefor all 100 calculated structures were refined through an energy minimisation procedure in explicit solvent via the AMBER force field using CNS. During the whole procedure same experimentally restraints were used. Of the ~100 refined structures, a group of 20 lowest energy and which also show a good ANSURR score were taken to represent the protein ensemble.

2.13 ANSURR (accuracy of NMR structures using random coil index and rigidity) validation method

The accuracy of the calculated NMR structures of SH2 were measured by the ANSURR method (Fowler et al., 2020). The ANSURR method evaluates the accuracy of NMR protein structures based on two measurements: the correlation score and the RMSD score. This measuring method combines the matching between the local rigidity from backbone chemical shifts (predicted by Random Coil Index) and the local rigidity from the computed NMR structure (by Floppy Inclusions and Rigid Substructure Topography (FIRST)) into a correlation score which measures the accuracy of the secondary structure, whereas a RMSD score between FIRST and RCI assesses the accuracy of the overall rigidity.

The ANSURR method was applied to follow the accuracy improvement in the final ensemble structure derived from CYANA structure calculations, then the re-calculated and refined structures calculated using the CNS program, and combining with the structure total energy to select the final ensemble.

2.14 Protein binding and dynamics

2.14.1 Protein titration

In order to investigate the binding between SH2 protein and the C terminal tail of β isoform, and obtain the affinity, a series of titrations were carried out using a uniformly $15N$ labelled SH2 protein and unlabelled (GDRC(pY)PDASST) ligand. The unlabelled phospho-tyrosine peptide was synthesized using the sequence in the region of Tyr139 at the C-terminal end of SH2B1 β isoform (mouse). The concentration of the protein and unlabelled ligand were determined using 1D NMR spectra by comparison to the TSP concentration in the NMR sample which was 0.2 mM, before starting the titration.

The C terminal peptide (from GenScript) was 11 residues long including a phosphate group attached to Tyrosine, and the ligand was dissolved in the same buffer as the protein (50 mM Tris pH 6, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT) to make a 3 mM stock solution. Ligand titrations was carried out on 0.08 mM protein in 50 mM Tris pH 6, 50 mM NaCl buffer containing 1 mM TSP. Ligand addition was carried out by mixing the free protein sample with a series of ligand concentrations in ratios as listed in Table 2.13.

The series of ¹⁵N HSQC spectra were recorded on a Bruker spectrometer operating at a proton frequency of 800 MHz at 298 K, and processed in Felix2007. Acquisition parameters of HSQC spectra were copied from the HSQC spectrum of SH2 protein that was used for the backbone assignment. The extent of binding of ligands to SH2 protein was determined by monitoring the change in chemical shifts of $15N$ HSQC spectra. The chemical shift changes (CSP) were followed over the HSQC series and then plotted separately against ligand concentration for every assigned residue. The plots of chemical shift changes were further analysed to measure the binding affinity as explained in chapter 6. The weighted average of amide chemical shift differences for each residue was calculated using equation 6.1.

Table 2.12. The titration calculation of SH2 with C terminal ligand, based on y =[v3(c1-c3)]/(c2 c1)], c1 is the required ligand concentration to be added to get desired ligand in mM, c2 is the concentration of ligand stock in mM, v3 is volume of NMR sample in μl, c3 is the previous concentration of ligand present in the NMR sample, y is the final ligand addition to sample.

2.14.2 Outcompeting experiments

JAK2 ligand (FTPDpTyr¹⁴⁸ELLTEN) from GenScript was dissolved in the same buffer as the protein-ligand complex (50 mM Tris pH 6, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT) to make a 0.5 mM stock solution.

The outcompeting NMR experiments were performed by titrating the complex of SH2-Cterminal peptide (0.08 mM protein and 0.2 mM ligand) with a series of concentrations of unlabelled synthetic JAK2 ligand peptide in five titration points up to a final JAK peptide concentration of 0.02 mM, as shown in table 2.14. The outcompeting binding was monitored via chemical shift changes arising upon binding using $15N$ HSQC spectra, its acquisition parameters were copied from the HSQC spectrum of SH2 that was used for the backbone assignment.

Table 2.13. The outcompeting of SH2-C terminal peptide with JAK ligand, based on y =[v3(c1 c3)]/(c2-c1)], c1 is the required ligand concentration to be added to get desired ligand in mM, c2 is the concentration of ligand stock in mM, v3 is volume of NMR sample in μl, c3 is the previous concentration of ligand present in the NMR sample, y is the final ligand addition to sample.

Chapter 3 Protein construct, production, purification and phosphorylation

This chapter focuses mainly on the production of high quality protein samples for nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) studies such as 3D structure determination and ligand screening. The production of good quality and quantity protein sample is dependent on the solubility and stability of the protein which is influenced by its native fold. The protein needs to be stable as a monomeric molecule for prolonged NMR measurements, and should ideally be uniformly labelled with the stable isotopes 13 C and 15 N.

Effective strategies for protein production are based on optimising a number of factors: identification of the best boundaries of the target protein; designing the protein construct; cloning the gene construct into the optimal expression vector using an appropriate assembly method; analytical scale expression of tagged protein using T7 based *Escherichia coli* systems; and solubility screening. Once the tagged protein is expressed in good quantity, the affinity tag enhances the efficiency of the purification procedure and thus results in sufficient purity levels of protein for NMR studies. This chapter describes the testing and optimisation of these steps.

This chapter describes the expression of several different constructs. Initial experiments concentrated on the consensus SH2 domain sequence from SH2B1. This proved to be unstable and not well folded, so a slightly longer version was produced and behaved much better. These constructs are referred to here as SH2. The chapter then describes expression of the SH2 domain together with the rest of the C-terminal sequence from the β isoform, which is referred to as SH2c.

Also in this chapter, optimization of enzymatic phosphorylation of the wild type SH2c protein and the mutant SH2c Y114F by Fer kinase enzyme are discussed in detail. The phosphorylation of SH2c protein was monitored via ESI MS, and the phosphorylated site defined via ETD MS. Also the phosphorylation of mutant protein was checked by ESI MS and the phosphorylated site was confirmed by 2D NMR analytical method based on changes in chemical shift. Two phosphorylateable tyrosine sites by Fer kinase were identified at the C terminal of SH2c protein: 114 and 139 which correspond to 624 and 649, respectively, in the full length protein sequence SH2B1 β isoform.

3.1 Optimising gene construct, expression and purification of SH2-MBP fusion protein

3.1.1 SH2-MBP fusion protein: gene design and expression

A plasmid suitable for expression of the SH2 domain of mouse SH2B1 (residues 527-625*)* was designed and built based on a pET system (6880 bp) (Figure 2.1).The plasmid was modified in Dr Mesnage lab and it is unpublished. This expression plasmid was used because it has an Nterminal histidine tag sequence followed by a maltose binding protein (His₆-MBP). The MBP tag should help to enhance the solubility of its fusion protein partner and the His $_6$ sequence is used as an affinity tag in the purification stage (Kapust and Waugh, 1999; Schmitt et al., 1993).

The complete digestion of the pET (6869 bp) vector by the restriction enzyme pair NcoI and BamHI to remove 11 bp and generate a linearised plasmid was done as described in section 2.4.2, and confirmed by a 1% agarose gel (Figure 3.1). The linearized plasmid was purified using a GeneJET Gel Extraction Kit with a good yield of around 10 ng/µl.

The SH2 domain synthetic gene was ligated into the linearised plasmid using the Gibson assembly method (Gibson et al., 2009). It was designed as a g.Block SH2 gene (379 bp) with overlapping ends and was built via SnapGene software as shown in Figure 2.3. This designed g.Block gene was cloned successfully into the linearised protein expression pET plasmid (6869 bp) using the Gibson assembly method. The complete ligation of the plasmid with the target gene to create pET-1 (7183 bp) was verified through Sanger sequencing carried out by Eurofins Genomics (Figure 3.2).

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The complete construct of the pET-1 expression system (7183 bp) was transformed into *Escherichia coli* BL21 (DE3) to overexpress the fusion protein (His₆-MBP-TEV-SH2, 55kDa).

Figure 3.1. Agarose gel of the digestion of pET (6880 bp). Lane 1: Low MW marker DNA shown in kb; lane 2: plasmid cut with BamHI (6880bp); lane 3: plasmid cut with NcoI (6880 bp); lane 4: uncut pET plasmid; lanes 5-8: lanes 5, 6, 7, 8: plasmid cut with both BamHI and NcoI (6869 bp).

Figure 3.2. The first gene construct of the SH2 protein. Top. Map of pET-1 plasmid with inserted SH2 g.Block in between NcoI and BamHI (7183 bp). Bottom. The amino acid sequence of SH2 protein including the N-terminal small tag GYP in red (101 a.a).

The expression of His₆-MBP-tagged SH2 protein (55 kDa) was tested at 25° C and 37 $^{\circ}$ C with different induction times and IPTG concentrations, as explained in section 2.5.1. Cells were grown in 1L LB media to reach an OD_{600} of 0.6, then induced with 0.5 mM or 1 mM IPTG. Samples of cultures which were incubated at 37°C were collected after 3 hours, and at 25°C were collected after overnight induction.

To analyse samples for the presence of soluble proteins, the cell lysates of bacterial cultures

were subjected to centrifugation, then the pellet was resuspended in lysis buffer (200 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8, DNase). The resuspended pelleted cells were sonicated for a short period then centrifuged at high speed. The resulting supernatant which contained the soluble cell fraction including the target protein was screened and analysed by 16% SDS PAGE after adding the loading buffer and heating samples at 60°C for a minute.

Comparison of the gel band intensities showed there was protein expression of $His₆$ -MBP-TEV-SH2 (55 kDa) at both temperatures with different IPTG concentrations, however there was slightly more soluble protein production at low temperature (25°C overnight with 0.5 mM IPTG) than other conditions (Figure 3.3).

Although good expression of the fusion protein was obtained by induction with 0.5 mM IPTG at 25℃ overnight, the His₆-MBP (43 kDa) on its own is produced at least to the same level or slightly higher than the fusion protein which is most likely because secondary structure on the mRNA weakens ribosome binding and leads to termination of translation. The quantity of the expressed protein in inclusion bodies was not screened as the concentration of the soluble protein was good.

Figure 3.3. SDS PAGE showing the overexpression of fusion protein (His-MBP-TEV-SH2, 55 kDa) in the soluble supernatant at 25°C and 37°C. From right to left, lane 1 M shows the MW markers indicated in kDa. Lanes 2 and 3: expression at 25°C with 0.5 mM and 1mM IPTG overnight; lanes 4, 5: expression at 37°C with 0.5 mM and 1mM IPTG for 3 hrs. 43 kDa is the expected size of His-MBP-TEV tag expression.

3.1.2 Purification of SH2-MBP fusion protein

As the first step of protein purification, an amylose column (8 ml) was used to purify the overexpressed soluble His₆-MBP tagged SH2 proteins from the cell extract. The supernatant was applied to the column which was equilibrated in buffer containing 200 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8. The column was washed with the same buffer and elution was performed with 200 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8 with 10 mM maltose buffer. The collected washing and elution fractions showed higher optical density analysed in SDS-PAGE, Figure 3.4. As shown in the gel there was a quantity of fusion proteins and MBP tag bound to the column (Figure 3.4, lane 3), while some of the fusion proteins present in the unbound material flowed through without binding to the column (Figure 3.4, lanes 1, 2).

Figure 3.4. SDS-PAGE gel of purification of fusion His-MBP-SH2 protein with amylose column and cleavage reaction of fused proteins with TEV protease. Lanes 1 and 2 unbound fractions from amylose column; lane 3 concentration of elution fractions of amylose column with buffer (200 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8 with 10 mM maltose). Cleavage reaction of fusion protein (His-MBP-TEV-SH2, 55kDa) with TEV protease in ratio: lane 4, 1:10, lane 5, 1:50, lane 6, 1:100. Lane 7 TEV enzyme 27 kDa. Fusion protein 55 kDa, His-MBP tag 43 kDa, SH2 protein 12 kDa.

TEV protease is a site-specific endo-protease that cuts between Gln and Ser in the recognition sequence GluAsnLeuTyrPheGlnSer, which was used to cleave the His-MBP tag of the SH2 fusion protein. The cleavage reaction of fusion protein (55 kDa) with TEV protease was tested in different ratios of protease to protein (1:10, 1:50, 1:100) at 30°C for 1h.

In order to measure the efficiency of tag cleavage, samples were extracted before and after cleavage treatment and run in SDS-PAGE. Comparison of gel band intensities revealed similar levels of cleavage (> 85%) of fusion proteins in the samples (1:10) and (1:50) ratio protease to protein in 200 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8, 1 mM DTT buffer (Figure 3.4, lanes 4, 5). Moreover, there was less than 15% of fusion proteins that were un-cleavable.

After the cleavage reaction, to separate $His₆$ -MBP tag, TEV protease and the remaining fusion protein from SH2 protein, a Ni-NTA column was employed. The TEV protease is His-tagged, so all proteins except the cleaved SH2 should appear in the elution, with only the cleaved SH2 appearing in the run-through and wash. The cleavage sample was applied to a Ni-NTA (10 ml) column which had been equilibrated and washed with 50 mM Tris pH 8, 500 mM NaCl. The elution was performed with the same buffer with the addition of 500 mM imidazole. Both washing and elution fractions were mixed and concentrated to run in SDS-PAGE for analysis (Figure 3.5, lanes 1, 2, 3). It was noticeable in SDS-PAGE that about 50% of the fusion proteins and MBP tag appeared in the unbound fractions with SH2 protein. Moreover a quantity of SH2 protein existed in the elution fractions.

It therefore seems likely that there is an unexpectedly strong interaction between the MBP tag and the SH2 that prevents proper cleavage and separation. The His₆-MBP tag (pI 5.3) and fusion proteins (pI 5.8) are defined as acidic according to their isoelectric point values, while the SH2 protein by itself with a pI of 9 is a basic protein. Because of the big difference between the pI values of the His₆-MBP tags and fusion proteins compared to the SH2 protein, a strong electrostatic interaction may be occurring in buffer at pH 7-8 with low salt concentration, which may explain the unexpected binding after cleavage of the fusion protein.

To weaken the strong electrostatic interaction between the two molecules (SH2 and His $_{6}$ -MBP tag or SH2 and fusion protein) and thereby separate them by using gel filtration, an experiment was performed with high salt concentration. The sample (1 ml, 1-4 mg/ml) was applied to a Superdex[™] 75 10/300 size exclusion column. The GF experiment was performed in 0.5 M NaCl with 50 mM Tris pH 8 buffer at flow rate 1 ml/min using the ÄKTA prime plus system.

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As shown on the GF trace in Figure 3.5, there were two peaks eluted. The peak fractions were analysed by SDS-PAGE. The first one, in the void volume, corresponds to aggregate containing fusion protein (55 kDa), His $_6$ -MBP tag (43 kDa) and aggregated SH2 proteins (12 kDa). The second peak corresponds to a molecular weight about 40 kDa and also contains the His-MBP tag. Unfortunately, SDS-PAGE gel analysis revealed most of the desired 12 kDa material is present in the first peak in aggregates (Figure 3.5, lanes 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Figure 3.5. SDS gel of Ni purification and gel filtration purification of cleavage fusion protein (His6-MBP-SH2). Right. Lane 1, cleavage of fusion proteins with TEV enzyme; lane 2, Ni column unbound fraction, lane 3, Ni column elution fraction, lane 4, GF loaded sample, lane 5, GF fraction 3, lane 6 GF fraction 16, lane 7 GF fraction 17, lane 8 GF fraction 18. Lane 9 GF fraction 19. 55 kDa fusion protein, 43 kDa MBP tag, 27 kDa TEV enzyme, 12 kDa SH2. Left. Gel filtration trace of cleavage fusion protein purification performed in 0.5 M NaCl with 50 mM Tris pH 8 buffer, the SDS gel is taken from previous SDS gel 3.4.

As the high salt concentration was not enough to separate the two molecules and to reduce the possible electrostatic attraction, an attempt was made to reduce the His $_6$ -MBP tag solubility to minimum via performing the gel filtration experiment with buffer at a pH that is close to its pI value (5.03) with a high salt concentration to minimize the electrostatic interaction between the molecules. The GF experiments were performed with buffers 0.5 M NaCl with 50 mM Tris pH 5.6. As a consequence of reducing the pH of the buffer to 5.6, most of the His₆-MBP tags and fusion proteins were aggregated and came in the first GF peak with SH2 proteins. On the other hand, the concentration of the salt was no help to separate the SH2 proteins from the MBP tag as shown in an SDS-PAGE gel (Figure 3.6).

Because of the strong interaction between the SH2 protein and cleaved His6-MBP tag or fusion protein after the expression which caused a co-purification, a new expression system was generated for the SH2 gene with N terminal Histidine tag and without the MBP tag.

Figure 3.6. The gel filtration purification of cleavage fusion protein (His₆-MBP-SH2) at 0.5 M NaCl. Left. The gel filtration trace in buffer 0.5 M NaCl 5.6 pH (injected sample 1.5 ml/ 2.7 mg/ml). Right. The fractions of GF; lane 1, peak1 (55 kDa, 43 kd MBP, 12 kd SH2); lane 2, peak 2; lane 3, peak 3; lane 4, peak 4.

3.2 Optimising gene construct, expression and purification of Histidine tagged SH2 protein

3.2.1 Histidine tagged SH2 protein without MBP tag: gene design and expression

The construct for the MBP fusion had no suitable restriction enzyme digestion sites to allow a simple removal of the MBP and keep the N-terminal Histidine tag. Therefore it has been decided to remove the complete $His₆-MBP-TEV-SH2$ insert, and insert a new SH2 sequence with a His $_6$ tag, again using the Gibson assembly method.

To remove the MBP tag from the pET-1 plasmid (7183 bp), the best selected restriction enzymes were XbaI and BamHI to perform a double digestion in CutSmart buffer. Similar

restriction digestion procedures were followed to cut the pET-1 plasmid with those enzymes and remove the His $_6$ -MBP-TEV tag (1541 bp), however the digestion also removed the essential DNA sequence of the Ribosome Binding Sequence which was included in the g.Block. The size of the resultant linear plasmid (5642 bp) was confirmed in a 1% agarose gel as shown in Figure 3.7. According to the agarose gel result half of the plasmid was double digested (5742 bp) and the rest was single cut (7183 bp), probably because of inefficient cutting by the BamHI enzyme as shown in the control BamHI cut (lane 3, Figure 3.7). However, the concentration of the double cut purified plasmid (γ 18 ng/ μ l) was enough to do the ligation.

A second SH2 gene g.Block (443 bp) was designed via SnapGene software, Figure 2.5, and ordered as a synthetic DNA sequence. Gibson assembly worked efficiently to subclone the linearized plasmid (5642 bp) with a new g.Block SH2 gene. The sequence of the resulting plasmid pET-2 (6016 bp) was confirmed by sequencing by Eurofins Genomics, Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.7. 1% agarose gel of the digestion of pET-1 plasmid (7183bp). Lane 1: DNA MW markers. Lane 2: uncut pET-1 plasmid; Lane 3: plasmid cut with BamHI (7183bp); Lane 4: plasmid cut with XbaI (7183 bp); Lanes 6 and 7: plasmid cut with both BamHI and XbaI enzymes. Expected fragment sizes are shown on the right.

Figure 3.8. The second construct of SH2 protein. Top. Map of the pET-2 plasmid with the inserted mouse SH2 gene (6016 bp). Bottom. The amino acid sequence of the Histidine tagged SH2 protein consists of the N-terminal sequence of the KI histidine tag sequence followed by a small GS linker in red. The SH2 domain sequence including the tag consists of 109 a.a.

The pET-2 plasmid was transformed into BL21 (DE3) cells for protein expression. A good level of protein expression was demonstrated in the first attempt with the MBP fusion, thus similar conditions were applied to express the His $_6$ -SH2 protein (12 kDa), by induction with 0.5 mM IPTG at 25°C overnight. The protein expression was screened first in the collected supernatant. The initial expression of $His₆-SH2$ produced a quantity of soluble protein as

homo-oligomers as shown in Figure 3.9, lanes 1, 2 and 3.

Figure 3.9. SDS-PAGE gel showing the soluble expression of His $_6$ -SH2 protein and the purification of His $_6$ -SH2 proteins by Ni-NTA column. Lane 1, 2, and 3 are the expression of soluble SH2 following induction with 0.5 IPTG at 25°C overnight. Lanes 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 are elution fractions with buffer (300 mM imidazole, 50 mM Tris pH 8, 300 mM NaCl). Expected sizes are 12 kDa SH2 as a monomer, 24kDa is dimer of SH2, and 72kDa is hexamer of SH2. MW of proteins are displayed in kDa.

In order to check the concentration of the His $_6$ -SH2 proteins in the pellet, the obtained pellet from 500 ml growth at 25℃ overnight was dialysed for three days as described in section 2.5.2.4. After dialysis for 3 days, the resulting supernatant and the pellet were run on an SDS-PAGE gel. As shown in the gel (Figure 3.10), there is a big concentration of monomer of SH2 proteins in the supernatant (lanes 1 and 2) and the pellet (lanes 3 and 4). A high concentration of expressed protein accumulated into inclusion bodies (in the obtained supernatant and pellet) is normally related to instability of the protein in solution, possibly due to being fully or partly misfolded and thus aggregated.

Figure 3.10. SDS-PAGE gel analysis of His₆-SH2 pellet dialysis. Lanes 1 and 2 are the supernatant. Lanes 3 and 4 are the pellet: the final dialysis of SH2 in 50 mM KH₂PO₄, pH 7.4 at 4°C; monomer 12 kd. MW of proteins is shown in kDa. The SDS gel shows that cells pellet contained a good concertation of monomer SH2.

3.2.2 Purification of the Histidine tagged SH2 protein without MBP

After expression of the second protein construct in good quantity, a Ni-NTA column was used to purify the overexpressed His₆-SH2 protein (12 kDa). \sim 20 ml of the supernatant from 1 Liter culture was applied to the column (10 ml Ni-NTA resin), then it was washed with buffer A (50 mM Tris pH 7.4, 200 mM NaCl, 40 mM imidazole) and the flow-through was collected, followed with eluting bound proteins with buffer B (50 mM Tris pH 7.4, 200 mM NaCl, 300 mM imidazole) and fractions were collected. The elution fractions showing higher optical density in the fraction collection trace were analysed in SDS-PAGE (Figure 3.9, lanes 4-13). On SDS-PAGE gel the eluted fractions were seen to form homo-oligomers (dimer and hexamer) in high concentration.

The elution fractions were concentrated and injected onto a gel filtration column under buffer

condition 300 mM NaCl and 50 mM Tris pH 8. Based on the analytic SDS-PAGE gel, the first peak contained homo-hexameric SH2 proteins, the second peak contained homo-dimeric SH2 proteins. However, there was no monomeric SH2 proteins in any peak as revealed in SDS-PAGE (Figure 3.11). It is clear the soluble protein resulting from unfolded monomer associated into stable homo-oligomers.

Figure 3.11. The gel filtration purification of the His tagged SH2 protein. Top. The trace of the gel filtration in buffer 300 mM NaCl and 50 mM Tris pH 7.4. Bottom. The GF peaks; lane 1, peak 1 (72 kDa hexamer SH2), lane 2, peak 2 (24 kDa dimer SH2); lane 3, peak 3; lane 4, peak 4; lane 5, peak 5; lane 6, peak 6; lane 7, peak 7; lane 8, peak 8.

According to the physical and the chemical properties of the SH2 proteins, the SH2B1 SH2 domain is expected to be a stable independent folding unit and function as a monomer (Hu et al., 2006). Despite this, the results from the first and second protein expression demonstrate that the overexpressed SH2 protein tends to bind to its cleavage tag (His6-MBP) or forms homo-oligomers causing co-purification as shown in the purification, which implies that the solubility of the SH2 protein is less than expected. Based on the previous observation the SH2 domain boundaries were investigated, and thus whether the start and end of the construct should be altered.

3.2.3 Histidine tagged SH2 protein with extra terminal sequence: gene design and expression

A sequence alignment of the SH2 domain with other adaptor and scaffold containing SH2 proteins showed there are N-terminal and C-terminal matching sequences outside the standard domain boundaries (Figure 3.12). Although the aligned N terminal region preceding the SH2 domain is less well conserved than the C terminal sequences, it seems important for the stable folding of the intact SH2 domain. The defined boundaries of the classical SH2 domain comprise residues 527-625 (in Uniprot) which are somewhat smaller than the full folded domain revealed by Pascal et al., 1994, and Hu and Hubbard, 2006. The paper reporting the crystal structure used a construct with additional residues at both ends with no explanation of the reason for the extension, although it does look like the extensions form an integral part of the protein structure and are thus required for correct folding and stability. Therefore a new g.Block (461 bp) was constructed to contain additional terminal residues to the sequence of the SH2 domain (519-628); eight at the N terminus (DQPLSGYP) and three at the C terminus (PSQ), as shown in Figure 2.13.

Figure 3.12. ClustalW2 amino acid sequence alignment of SH2 SH2B1 (Mouse, *Q91ZM2*) with scaffold and adaptor proteins. Yellow highlighted residues show the N and C termini of the classical SH2 domain (boundaries), and the red highlighted sequences shows the matching additional sequences between SH2 SH2B1 and other proteins. Each protein sequence is defined by entry name in Uniprot and the N and C terminal boundaries of the SH2 domain. Homo.DAPP1|Q9UN19 is dual adaptor for phosphotyrosine and 3-phosphotyrosine and 3 phosphoinositide (residues 35-129), Homo.STAP1|Q9ULZ2 is signal-transducing adaptor protein 1 (residues 177- 280), Homo.CLNK|Q7Z7G1 is cytokine-dependent hematopoietic cell linker (residues 309-419), Homo.SH3BP2|P78314 is SH3 domain-binding protein 2 (residues 457-555), Rat.Grab7|Q9QZC5 is growth factor receptor-bound protein 7 (residues 434-530), Mus.Shc1|P98083 is SHC-transforming protein 1 (residues 484- 575), Mus.sh2b1|Q91ZM2 is SH2B adapter protein 1 (residues 527-625).

Restriction digestion of the pET-2 plasmid (6016 bp) was performed as before using BamH1 and Xba1 restriction sites (Figure 3.7), which removed 374 bp including the ribosome binding site (RBS) and His₆ sequence which were added to the designed g.Block. The target gene was ligated into a linearized plasmid in between the restriction sites using the Gibson method, then the complete DNA sequence of plasmid pET-3 (6043 bp) was checked by Eurofins Genomics as shown in Figure 3.13.

 $His₆-SH2$ protein with additional terminal sequences (14 kDa) was overexpressed from the pET-4 plasmid using *E. coli* BL21 (DE3) cells. Following the optimal conditions as shown in the first attempt for protein expression and extraction, the initial expression yield of soluble His $_{6}$ -SH2 protein at 25°C with 0.5 M IPTG overnight was good as shown in the SDS-PAGE (Figure 3.14, lane 1). 15N ,13C doubled labelled tagged SH2 proteins were overexpressed in 1 Liter M9 minimal media following the protocol of Marley et al., 2001 for NMR study.

Figure 3.13. The third construct of the His tagged SH2 protein. Top. Map of pET-3 plasmid with inserted mouse SH2 gene (6043 bp). Bottom. The amino acid sequence of the tagged SH2 protein consists of: the N-terminal histidine tag in red, at the N-terminus, and the C-terminal extra residues underlined. The total His₆-SH2 sequence is 118 amino acids.

Figure 3.14. 16% SDS-PAGE gel of the supernatant of His₆-SH2 protein expression, and purification fractions by Ni column. Lane 1, SH2 protein expression 14 kDa with 0.5 mM IPTG, at 25 °C overnight. The purification of His6-SH2 protein by Ni-NTA column: lane 2, unbound materials; lanes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 elution fractions with buffer 300 mM imidazole. Monomer His₆-SH2 is 14 kDa.

3.2.4 Purification of Histidine tagged SH2 protein with extended terminal sequence

~ 20 ml of supernatant from 1 Liter culture was loaded onto a 20 ml Ni-NTA column to purify the histidine tagged proteins (14 kDa). Good concentrations of proteins were eluted with 50 mM Tris pH 7.5, 200 mM NaCl, and 300 mM imidazole. Purity of protein in the elution fractions was above 80% as estimated using SDS-PAGE (Figure 3.15).

The elution fractions were concentrated to 10 ml and injected onto a Superdex 200 10/300 size exclusion column. The GF experiment was performed in 200 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 7.5, 2 mM DTT buffer at flow rate 1 ml/min using the ÄKTA prime plus system. As shown on the GF trace a single peak was obtained containing the target protein (14 kDa) in Figure 3.15, and protein purity was above 99% as shown in SDS-PAGE. Because this protein behaved much better than the previous shorter constructs, it was used in all subsequent experiments.

Figure 3.15. The gel filtration purification of the double labelled SH2 protein. Left. The trace of gel filtration performed in 300 mM NaCl, Tris buffer, at pH 7.5. Right. The 16% SDS-PAGE gel of GF fractions: Marker (10-250 kDa), lanes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 peak1 fraction His6-SH2 14 kDa.

3.3 Optimising DNA construct, expression and purification of SH2 protein with the C terminal tail

3.3.1 SH2 with C terminal tail of SH2B1 β isoform: gene design and expression

A construct of the SH2 domain followed by the C terminus of the mouse SH2B1 β isoform (residues 519-670) was constructed as a DNA gBlock with N and C terminal overlap nucleotide sequences (586 bp) (Figure 2.8).

The gene segment encoding the SH2 domain with the C terminal tail of SH2B1 β (SH2c) was inserted into a linearised pET-2 plasmid, created by digestion with XbaI and BamHI, using the Gibson method. The complete DNA sequence of SH2c (pET-4, 6169 bp) was confirmed by Sanger sequencing from Eurofins Genomics (Figure 3.16). Similarly, a gene segment encoding the Y114F mutant SH2c protein was ordered from GenScript to be inserted into pET-15b, Figure 3.17.

His₆ tagged SH2c and SH2c Y114F proteins were overexpressed from plasmids pET-4 and pET-15b respectively using BL21 (DE3) cells, following the same procedure that was used to express SH2 protein described above. A culture of 1 Liter was grown at 25°C overnight after induction with 0.5 mM IPTG. The harvested cells were resuspended in lysis buffer, then cells were lysed using sonication and centrifugated at high speed. Soluble protein was screened by SDS-PAGE (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.16. Construct of pET-4 expression vector and amino acid sequence of SH2 with C terminus of SH2B1 β isoform. Top. Map of pET-4 plasmid with inserted SH2 with C terminus of mouse SH2B1 β gene (6169 bp). Bottom. The amino acid sequence of SH2c protein consists of: the N-terminal histidine tag in red, the sequence of SH2 domain with the C terminal tail of SH2B1β; the total His-SH2c sequence is 160 a.a. Cysteine residues at the tail are highlighted in light blue. The C-terminal end of SH2B1 β sequence is underlined. Tyrosine 114 and 139 residues are highlighted in yellow.

Figure 3.17. Construct of pET-15b expression vector and amino acid sequence of mutant SH2 with C terminus Y114F. Top. Map of pET-15b plasmid (5.7 kb) where the mutant SH2c Y114F gene was inserted in between BamHI and XbaI sites. Bottom. The amino acid sequence of SH2c Y114F: N terminal tag in red; mutant residue yellow highlighted (Y114F). Total sequence of SH2c Y114F is 160 a.a.

Figure 3.18. 16% SDS-PAGE gel for supernatant of His₆ SH2c protein expression and purification of fractions by Ni column. SH2c protein expression (expected 18 kDa) with 0.5 mM IPTG, at 25 °C overnight. The purification of His₆-SH2c proteins by Ni-NTA column: lane 1, molecular weight markers; lane 2, unbound materials; lanes 3, 4, 5, 6, washing fractions with 40 mM imidazole, and lanes 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 elution fractions with buffer containing 300 mM imidazole.

3.3.2 Purification of SH2 with C terminus of SH2B1 β (SH2c) and mutant SH2c Y114F

The overexpressed SH2c and mutant SH2c Y114F were purified in two steps as before. First a 20 ml Ni-NTA column was used to purify the histidine tagged proteins (18 kDa) from 1 Liter culture. High concentrations of proteins were eluted with 50 mM Tris pH 8, 200 mM NaCl, and 300 mM imidazole. As shown in Figure 3.19 the purity of protein was estimated to be above 80%.

After that for the second purification round the elution fractions were concentrated to 10 ml and injected onto a Superde 200 10/300 gel filtration size column. The GF experiment was performed in 200 mM NaCl, 50 mM Tris pH 8, 2 mM DTT buffer at flow rate 1 ml/min using the ÄKTA prime plus system. As shown in Figure 3.19 on the GF trace a single peak was obtained containing the target protein (18 kDa), and SDS-PAGE indicates the purity of the protein was above 99%.

Figure 3.19. The gel filtration purification of the double labelled wild type and mutant SH2c protein. Left: The trace of gel filtration performed in 300 mM NaCl, Tris pH 8, 2 mM DTT. Right. The 16% SDS-PAGE gel of GF fractions: Marker (10-250 kDa), lanes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 peak1 fractions histidine tagged SH2c 18 kDa (monomer).

3.4 Phosphorylation with activated Kinase

3.4.1 Phosphorylation of the wild type SH2c and mutant SH2c Y114F

In order to phosphorylate Tyr139 in the C terminal tail of SH2c protein, Group-based Prediction System 3.0 database was used to identify phosphorylation sites and define the corresponding kinase for a particular phosphorylation event (Xue et al., 2008). A number of kinases were predicted to phosphorylate Tyr139 at the C terminus of the protein, however Fer kinase showed a higher prediction score value (7.2) than other kinases meaning more probability that the residue is phosphorylated. Moreover although there were a number of phosphorylation sites at the C terminal tail of SH2c, Fer kinase was predicted to be specifically able to phosphorylate Tyr139 and no other potential sites. Fer kinase (ProQinase) was therefore used to carry out the phosphorylation in the reaction buffer which was recommended from the supplier, however the incubation time was optimised to obtain sufficient quantities of phosphorylated proteins.

The phosphorylation of Tyr139 in the C terminus of SH2c was done through incubating the Fer kinase with protein in ratio 4:100 at 30°C with shaking in reaction buffer; 70 mM HEPES-NaOH pH 7.5, 3 mM MgCl₂, 3 mM MnCl₂, 3 μ M Na-orthovanadate, 1.2 mM DTT, 50 μ g/ml PEG₂₀₀₀₀, 1% DMSO, 5 mM ATP, withdrawing samples at different time intervals (0, 2, 4, 6, and 8 hrs) to check the phosphorylation by mass spectrometry. During the incubation time, there was a clear precipitation after 6 hrs which rapidly increased after 8 hrs.

The mutant SH2c Y114F protein was phosphorylated with Fer kinase for 5 hrs using the same conditions as the wild type protein, adding 2 mM DTT every hour during the incubation time. A sample was taken every hour (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) to follow the phosphorylation by MS.

3.4.2 Monitoring the phosphorylation by Mass spectrometry

The protein phosphorylation was followed during the incubation time by analysing the

samples through ESI MS (Electro-Spray Ionization Mass Spectrometry) for a quantitative analysis of the extent of phosphorylation and to achieve a complete or maximum protein phosphorylation. Moreover Electron Transfer Dissociation Mass Spectrometry (ETD MS) was used for identification of distinct phosphorylation sites after subjecting the protein to trypsin digestion and investigation of each peptide fragment. All samples analysed via ETD MS were extracted from 16% SDS gels that were corresponding to protein bands.

3.4.2.1 Phosphorylation of SH2c

ESI MS spectrum data of all analysed samples which were incubated at 30°C for 2 and 4 hrs showed two observed peaks (18090 Da and 18170 Da), Figure 3.20 (a), which mostly corresponded to wild type SH2c proteins (18092 Da). As known from the protein sequence there are three cysteine residues in the C terminal tail (133, 138 and 154) which can potentially be oxidised during the phosphorylation. Therefore the first peak at 18090 Da is expected to be oxidised protein as it has decreased in mass by 2 Da due to a disulphide bond formation. Although cysteine residues were reduced by adding 1.2 mM of DTT in the phosphorylation buffer, the presence of Mn^{2} ions in the same buffer greatly decreased the stability of DTT (Charrier & Anastasio., 2012; Getz et al., 1999). Reducing the concentration of DTT in the reaction buffer caused cysteine residues to be oxidised rapidly and form a disulphide bond within the C terminal tail of SH2c protein.

In addition the second peak in the MS trace as shown in Figure 3.20 (a) corresponds to the phosphorylated oxidised SH2c protein (expected mass 18170 Da). The molecular weight of the protein increased by 80 Da due to the phosphorylation of one residue and at the same time lost 2 Da because of forming a disulphide bond between a pair of cysteine residues.

The phosphorylation of SH2c protein was followed in samples which were incubated at 30°C for 0, 2, and 4 hrs by ESI MS. The last two samples (6 and 8 hrs) could not be analysed as all of the protein precipitated. The phosphorylation reaction took several hours to go to completion. It is expected that the oxidisation of protein increased during the incubation time, which led to formation of a cross disulphide bond between two oxidised cysteines at the tail which may affect the stability of the protein and cause precipitation.

b

10 20 30 40 50 60 KIHHHHHHDQ PLSGYPWFHG MLSRLKAAQL VLEGGTGSHG VFLVRQSETR RGEYVLTFNF 70 80 90 100 110 120 QGKAKHLRLS LNEEGQCRVQ HLWFQSIFDM LEHFRVHPIP LESGGSSDVV LVSYVPSQRQ 130 140 150 160 QGREQAGSHA GVCEGDRCYP DASSTLLPFG ASDCVTEHLP c

Figure 3.20. MS analysis of SH2c protein sample phosphorylated at 30°C with Fer kinase. a) ESI MS trace of intact phosphorylated SH2c protein after 4 hrs of incubation time at 30°C. b) Summary table of ETD MS results of the trypsin digested SH2c that was phosphorylated at different incubation times; 0, 2, 4, 6, and 8 hrs. c) The amino acid sequence of SH2c protein showing the possible cleavage sites (K and R) by Trypsin enzyme.

To provide molecular details about which residue was phosphorylated, all samples incubated at 30°C for 0, 2, 4, 6, and 8 hrs were checked by ETD MS after extracted from the SDS gel. Figure 3.20 (c) shows there are thirteen possible cleavage sites in the sequence of the SH2c protein, and thus around thirteen peptides expected to be identified. The result of ETD MS shows that between 6 and 8 peptides were identified in each sample, which means in total the achieved sequence coverage for SH2c protein was varying between 55 to 65% in samples, Figure 3.20 (b).

According to the ETD MS analysis, in all samples the peptides containing Tyr114 (V96-R120) and Tyr139 (C138-P160) were detected. Tyr114 in the unstructured part of SH2 domain was phosphorylated more rapidly than Tyr139 as identified in samples 2, 4 and 6 however Tyr139 was phosphorylated after 8 hrs, Figure 3.20 (b). This was a surprise, because Fer kinase was chosen because it is expected to phosphorylate Tyr139 much faster than Tyr114.

The formation of a disulphide bond within the C terminus of SH2c protein seems to happen faster than the phosphorylation. In the protein sequence, Tyr139 comes after Cys138, thus it is possible that the oxidation of of Cys138 early, forming a disulphide bond with another Cysteine residue (Cys 133 or 154), might hide Tyr139 and make it not easily accessible to be phosphorylated by Fer kinase.

It is surprising that Tyr114 at the end of the SH2 domain was the preferentially phosphorylated residue. There was considerable precipitation of the protein after phosphorylation of Tyr114. It is likely that pTyr114 may create a binding site for another SH2 domain, that would start early and increase during the incubation time leading it to form large molecular assemblies and cause protein aggregation.

3.4.2.2 Phosphorylation of SH2c Y114F

The problems with the unexpected phosphorylation of Tyr114, and the precipitation of the phosphorylated protein, led us to create the Y114F mutant which cannot be phosphorylated at residue 114. The phosphorylation of mutant SH2c Y114F protein at 30°C for 5 hrs (0, 1, 2,

3, 4, and 5) was monitored by ESI MS spectrometry.

In the MS spectrum of the 0 hr sample there were unexpectedly two peaks with different molecular weight (18946 Da and 19130 Da), Figure 3.21. The expected mass of the mutant protein is 17935 Da. The extra mass does not correspond to anything recognizable.

The two peaks were detected before starting the incubation and therefore presumably relate to the un-phosphorylated mutant protein. During the incubation time for 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 hrs, phosphorylation of an amino acid was detectable in both peaks, as both signals increased their mass by 80 Da (18946 to 19026 Da, 19130 Da to19210 Da).

Moreover the level of protein phosphorylation compared with the non-phosphorylated protein in MS traces can be estimated from the relative intensities of the peaks. According to Figure 3.21, the level of phosphorylated protein increased gradually, while there was a significant decrease in the corresponding peaks for un-phosphorylated proteins. It can therefore be concluded that the phosphorylation was successful, even there is no explanation for the observed extra masses.

In summary, the samples analysed by MS showed that there was an increase in phosphorylation with time clearly visible once oxidation of the disulphide bonds had been prevented, by adding more DTT during the incubation time of the phosphorylation reaction. However the MW of observed peaks were different than the actual MW of SH2c Y114F protein (17935 Da) by 1011 and 1195 Da.

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Figure 3.21. ESI MS spectrum analysis of phosphorylated SH2c Y114F protein samples at 30°C for 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 hrs. In the MS trace the un-phosphorylated proteins are denoted by green boxes, while the phosphorylated proteins are surrounded by red boxes. Peaks 1 and 2 refer to the detectable peaks for the unphosphorylated proteins. MS traces from the top to the bottom represent the result coming from the same protein sample at different incubation times 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 hrs, respectively.
3.4.3 Checking the phosphorylation by 15N HSQC NMR

3.4.3.1 Phosphorylation of SH2c Y114F

2D ¹⁵N HSQC spectra were used for identification of distinct phosphorylation sites in the mutant protein. The double labelled SH2c Y114F protein was phosphorylated using a ratio of 4:100 kinase to protein for 6 hrs by Fer kinase as before. A high concentration of protein was used for the phosphorylation (1.5 mM) to overcome the loss of protein during the phosphorylation, and thus to end with good quantity of phosphorylated protein for NMR. Most of the protein was lost during the phosphorylation and buffer exchange, and 0.06 mM of protein was obtained. The loss may be due to dimerization of protein as a result of forming cross disulfide bonds, or after the phosphorylation of the tyrosine at the tail.

¹⁵N HSQC spectra of phosphorylated and un-phosphorylated SH2c Y114F proteins were assigned in 100 mM potassium phosphate pH 6, 2 mM DTT, 10% D₂O, 2 mM TSP. The weighted average chemical shift change $(^{15}N$ and 1H) of the phosphorylated and un-phosphorylated protein was calculated using equation 6.1 to identify the phosphorylation of Tyr139 by changes in its chemical shift.

According to Figure 6.3 (a) in chapter 6 the weighted average shift change in the chemical shift of Tyr139 backbone NH was approximately $\Delta \delta$ = 0.1 ppm and slightly less to neighbouring residues (137, 141, 142, and 143), upon phosphorylation of Y139 by Fer kinase. As explained in Section 6.1.2 the observed chemical shift changes verified the phosphorylation of Tyr139, but not the binding to the phospho-tyrosine pocket in the SH2 domain. Huang et al., 2020, and Bienkiewicz et al., 1999 indicate that the phosphorylation of Tyr induces a small downfield shift for the backbone amide. The shift change is small because of the distal position of the hydroxyl group (OHη) of Tyr which binds covalently to the phosphate (PO₄³⁻) group, thus does not have a big impact on the backbone amide shift.

In summary, the SH2 and the SH2c protein were produced and purified, and the SH2c was phosphorylated using Fer kinase. Unexpectedly, phosphorylation was faster at Tyr114 than at Tyr139, even though Fer kinase was selected because it should phosphorylate faster at Tyr139. For NMR analysis, it is preferred to use a protein that was free from problems of phosphorylation at Tyr114, and so the SH2c Y114F mutant was prepared. Phosphorylation of SH2c and SH2c Y114F both produced large amounts of precipitation. In part this is thought to be due to oxidation of the cysteines and formation of intermolecular disulphide bridges. This oxidation could be slowed by addition of extra DTT, but was nor prevented. It may also be due to the phosphorylation of Tyr114 producing a recognition site for a second SH2 domain, leading to formation of dimers and further aggregates.

Chapter 4 Chemical shift assignment of SH2 protein

This chapter discusses two methods of NMR signal assignment: a manual interactive method and an automatic computational method (CYANA). Chemical shift assignment is the process of assigning the signals observed in a number of NMR spectra to specific nuclei in the protein sequence. Chemical shift assignment is useful for at least three important things. It provides structural information in the form of dihedral angle restraints, for example using the program TALOS-N. It is the essential first step in protein NMR structure determination, because it provides the basis for the assignment of NOEs to generate distance restraints. It is also essential for interpretation of chemical shift perturbation mapping. For all of these, it is important that the assignment should be as complete and as accurate as possible. One of the questions addressed in this chapter istherefore which method provides a more complete and accurate assignment. For the automated assignment, the program CYANA was used (Güntert, 2004; Herrmann et al., 2002). This program was written by Peter Güntert, mostly while working in the group of Prof Wüthrich, and is one of the most popular methods for automated assignment. It feeds into the FLYA program, which is the leading program for automated resonance assignment.

This chapter describes how the chemical shift assignments were used to produce a dihedral angle restraint file. It also describes the generation of another set of structure restraints, namely hydrogen bonds. As discussed in the next chapter, hydrogen bonds are important restraints for improving the rigidity of NMR structures. There are two main ways of generating hydrogen bond lists from NMR data. The most secure method uses measurements of the *J* coupling across hydrogen bonds, known as ${}^{3h}J_{NC}$ (Cornilescu et al., 1999). The coupling constant is typically of the order of 1 Hz, which means that for most proteins, transverse relaxation is sufficiently efficient that signals from this coupling are too small to be seen. The other way of generating hydrogen bond lists is to look at predicted regular secondary structure, and add restraints by hand to ensure typical hydrogen bonding patterns, which need to be supported by NOEs. This is generally seen as a justifiable procedure, even if not fully evidenced by experimental data. In this chapter, the use of amide proton temperature coefficients as a way of producing hydrogen bond restraints was explored. The defined donor hydrogen bond residue data were used as supplemental information for subsequent structure calculation.

All spectral data for SH2 assignment and structure calculation were collected from a 1 mM double labelled SH2 protein sample in 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer in 10% D_2O or 100% D2O at pH 6. The NMR experiments were performed on a Bruker 800 MHz spectrometer at 298 K. The spectral data was transferred to LINUX computers and processed with Felix2007 for analysis.

4.1 Manual resonance assignment

4.1.1 Sequential assignment of backbone resonances

The backbone resonances of ¹HN, ¹⁵N, ¹³C', ¹³C α , H α and ¹³C β of SH2 protein were assigned using the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum and 3D standard triple resonance spectra (HNCO, HNCACO, HNCA, CBCACONH, and HNCACB with HBHACONH). The sets of nuclei correlated in these spectra, and acquisition parameters of each backbone spectrum are shown in table 2.10.

The ¹H, ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum is an NMR experiment that shows ¹H-¹⁵N correlations for directly bonded nuclei. It should therefore contain one peak for each backbone amide (except for the N terminus which is an amine, and prolines which have no amide proton), plus peaks for other sidechain NH that exchange slowly enough, ie tryptophan, glutamine, asparagine, and arginine Hε. The auto-peak picking function in Felix2007 detected 106 out of 118 backbone amide signals of His $_6$ tagged SH2 protein (excluding sidechain amide signals). There are 5 prolines in SH2, so one would expect 112 signals, with some of the N-terminal His-tag signals overlapped.

Two main methods were used for the signal assignment. The first was to set up the Felix program so that it displays a set of backbone spectra based on the same amide H and N frequencies, as shown in Figure 4.1. This makes it easy to identify likely sequential pairs manually, with the cursors linked between windows. Different spin systems can be loaded manually for comparison. The group of backbone nuclei associated with a certain amide is called a spin system, therefore the amide number in ^{15}N HSQC is the spin system number, table 4.1. The second was the use of the Asstools program (Reed et al., 2003), which is based on a Monte-Carlo simulated annealing method as described in detail in section 2.9.4. Following Asstools run, sequential matches were checked manually. At that point, spin systems can be deleted if they are clearly not backbone resonances or are a minor species; assignments can be removed or changed if in error (eg an incorrect pCα/Cα assignment); and sequence-specific assignments can be fixed within the program. Asstools is then run again until a self-consistent set of assignments is produced. Figure 4.1 shows a typical example of a set of triple resonance spectra. The final assignment list is shown in Table 4.1.

Figure 4.1. Representative slices of triple resonance backbone spectra as displayed in Felix2007 showing the backbone spin system of residue T49 (HN, N, Cʹ, Cα, Cβ) and pCʹ, pCα, pCβ of preceding residue E48. NH peak of T49 in 15N HSQC spectra was aligned with others triple resonances spectra to assign the chemical shift of its associated Co, Cα, Cβ nuclei. Each slice is labelled with spectrum name on the top, and signals in different spectra which are assigned to the same nucleus are labelled with the same dashed line colour. 15N: ¹⁵N dimension (ppm), HN: 1 H dimension (ppm), 13C: 13 C dimension (ppm).

In the ¹⁵N HSQC, 103 of the 106 amide signals were assigned straightforwardly to their backbone resonances. The remaining three spin systems were assigned to Trp17, Gln61 and His81. The amide signals for these three were visible with low intensity in ^{15}N HSQC spectra but their corresponding backbone resonances were not identified in the triple resonance spectra. However, the corresponding backbone resonances of Trp17, Gln61 and His81 residues were identified in the spin system of the following residue and confirmed later on in the sidechain assignment, as shown in Figure 4.2. The amide proton of Trp17 has an unusually high field chemical shift (5.57 ppm, Table 4.1). NMR spectra are typically processed with a convolution difference window function, which removes the water signal very effectively (Waltho and Cavanagh, 1993). It also reduces the intensity of signals that are close in chemical shift to the water resonance, and it is likely that the Trp17 signal has been affected in this way, explaining its low intensity.

With these three added in, the final SH2 polypeptide backbone resonance assignment was complete except for the amide resonance of Gly20 and the N terminal linker (Lys¹-Ile²). It is common for the signals from residue 2 in a protein to be weak or missing. One of the His₆ tag residues was missing, which could be due to overlap with another His-tag signal or possibly to intermediate chemical exchange or fast exchange with solvent (Englander et al., 1992).

All amide sidechain peaks in $15N$ HSQC were excluded from the backbone assignment. The sidechain signals of Asn (Nδ-Hδ2) and Gln (Nε-Hε2) are characteristic because they form pairs with different proton chemical shifts and the same nitrogen chemical shifts (cross-peak), and were not identified in the triple resonance spectra. Also, Nε-Hε groups of Arg were defined because the Nε chemical shift is outside the spectral region and is therefore aliased, and identified by changing the spectral width (SW) in ^{15}N HSQC spectra. Ne-He sidechain peaks of Trp17 and Trp83 appeared in the bottom left corner of ¹⁵N HSQC spectra around 10 ppm, as shown in Figure 4.2.

The final sequential assignment of SH2 backbone resonances showed that in total 95% of backbone resonances for non-proline residues 9 to 118 were assigned (96% of ¹H, 96% of ¹⁵N, 96% of Cα, 94% of Cβ, 92 % of Cʹ), the missing signals being due to Trp17, Gly20, Gln61, and His81 (Table 4.1).

Figure 4.2. ¹H,¹⁵N HSQC spectrum of SH2 (double labelled sample) recorded at pH 6 and 298 K. Right, ¹H ¹⁵N HSQC shows the low intensity peaks (W17, Q61, H81). Left, ¹H ¹⁵N HSQC shows the backbone resonances of SH2 indicated by sequence number and residue name. Red circle peaks and green labelled peaks illustrate the sidechain NHE of Arg and NHε of Trp, respectively, which were assigned by NOESY spectra. The top right corner contains the sidechain amide (Nε-Hε2 of Gln, Nδ-Ηδ2 of Asn) peaks (crosspeaks) which are labelled based on NOESY assignment, and other nearby amide backbone peaks. N: ¹⁵N dimension (ppm), H: ¹H dimension (ppm).

Table 4.1. Output spin systems of SH2 protein from the Asstools backbone assignment program. The first column shows the residue number, the second column is the residue name, the third column is the spin system number, the following lines are spin system nuclei (HN, N, cα, pcα, pcα, cβ, pcβ, cʹ, pcʹ), respectively, where HN, N, cα, cβ, cʹ are nuclei of the same residue and pcα, pcβ, pcʹ nuclei of the preceding residue.

4.1.2 Sidechain assignment

The majority of methyl and methylene aliphatic resonances were assigned manually using HBHAcoNH, CcoNH, and HCcoNH spectra. The assignment process typically started from the known backbone chemical shift assignments of Cα and Cβ and used these to correlate and identify the aliphatic carbon sidechain atoms (Cγ and Cδ) in CcoNH spectra (which correlate the sidechain carbons to the N and H of the following residue), then detected their associated protons (Hα, Hβ, Hγ, and Hδ) in HBHAcoNH and HCcoNH spectra, as shown in Figure 4.3.

In total ~80% of the sidechain assignment (663 nuclei) was completed manually for SH2 protein residues 9 to 118 using a number of 2D and 3D NMR spectra. The nuclei correlated in each experiment and acquisition parameters of the NMR spectra used in the sidechain resonance assignment are shown in Table 2.12. The complete sidechain assignment relies on a combination of aliphatic and aromatic sidechain resonances.

Figure 4.3. An example of slices from N HSQC, HNCA, CcoNH, HBHAcoNH, and HCcoNH NMR spectra used for aliphatic sidechain assignment. The slices for residue S70 were used to obtain the corresponding aliphatic resonances of the preceding residue L69. Resonances are labelled and signals in different spectra which were assigned to the same nucleus are linked with the same dash line colour. $15N:$ ^{15}N dimension (ppm), $1H:$ ^{1}H dimension (ppm), $13C:$ $13C$ dimension (ppm).

A number of nuclei beyond CHγ including the terminal methyl of Met and methylene of Lys residues were not observed according to the previous method likely because of poor signal dispersion and frequency degeneracies. Moreover Trp17, Gln61 and His81 residues were sequentially correlated to aliphatic resonances using HBHAcoNH, CcoNH, HCcoNH spectra as they were assigned from the preceding residue. However because of their low intensity they were not useful to assign the sidechain of their preceding residues (Pro16, Phe60, and Gln80). Likewise the aliphatic sidechain of Gln10, Tyr15, His19, His97, Ile99, and Val115 residues were not obtained as the following residue is Pro or the missing Gly20, including the last residue Q118.

Because more than 80% of aliphatic sidechain proton resonances had been assigned from the previous experiments, the assignment of the sidechain amide resonances of Gln, Asn and Arg residues was straightforward. ¹⁵N NOESY spectra were used to assign the the signal groups of Nδ-Hδ2 of Asn, Nε-Hε2 of Gln and Nε-Hε of Arg in 15N HSQC spectra using the advantage of knowing the correlated intra residue protons, Figure 4.4. Using these assignments, all amide sidechain groups were identified except for the amide groups of Asn72 and Gln118 which did not appear in $15N$ HSQC. In addition, NH ϵ 2 of Gln10 could not be correlated to any other intraresidue protons, and thus was not assigned.

Figure 4.4. An example of slices from ¹⁵N HSQC and ¹⁵N NOESY NMR spectra used to assign NH sidechain resonances. The slices for residue Q46 are shown connecting through bond the NHε2 aliphatic resonance to intraresidue nuclei in ^{15}N NOESY spectra. Signals are labelled in each spectra with residue name and nuclei type, the same nuclei are linked with the same dashed line colour. 15N: ¹⁵N dimension (ppm), and 1H: ¹H dimension (ppm).

Aromatic residues compose 16% of the SH2 protein sequence following the His-tag (18 residues), most of them in the folded part as shown in the secondary structure prediction from TALOS-N, Figure 4.11. The aromatic resonances were identified and assigned using ¹³C HSQC, HBCBCGCDHD, and ¹³C NOESY aromatic spectra.

The Cβresonances, which were identified previously in the backbone assignment, were linked through-bond to detect the sidechain δ aromatic ring protons in 2D HBCBCGCDHD spectra (Yamazaki et al., 1993). After that, these assigned δ protons were analyzed to assign their associated δ carbons from the aromatic rings in ¹³C HSQC aromatic spectra as shown in Figure 4.5. Based on this method all CHδ of aromatic rings were identified except for Phe 42, despite overlapping of Phe and Tyr signals. Moreover Cδ1 of Trp and Cδ2 of His residues in ¹³C HSQC spectra were readily identified as negative peaks because they are not attached to carbon atoms in the ring. This was used to differentiate these Cδ and assign them through the link to the defined δ1 proton.

Figure 4.5. An example of slices from ¹⁵N HSQC, CBCACONH, HBCBCGCDHD, and ¹³C HSQC aromatic NMR spectra used for CHδ aromatic sidechain assignment. The slices for residue Y15 are shown connecting through bond the Cβ aliphatic resonance to Hδ using HBCBCGCDHD, then using 13 C HSQC aromatic spectra to obtain its corresponding Cδ resonance. Resonances are labelled in different spectra with residue name and nuclei type; the same nuclei are linked with the same dashed line colour. $15N: 15N$ dimension (ppm), 1H: ¹H dimension (ppm), 13C: 13C dimension (ppm).

In addition, the chemical shift statistics in BMRB databases (http://www.bmrb.wisc.edu) show that the average chemical shift of a number of aromatic sidechain carbons have a bigger variance than others, which was used to distinguish between them in 13 C HSQC aromatic spectra. The knowledge of the chemical shift average of aromatic sidechain carbons was a useful working basis to define which group of signals belong to which aromatic carbons of particular residue types in ¹³C HSQC spectra, as shown in Figure 4.6. For example, the average chemical shifts of Cζ2 and Cη2 of Trp, Cε1 of His and Cε of Tyr residues are different from other aromatic carbons which helped to differentiate their peaks in 13C HSQC spectra. After assignment to residue type, these signals were assigned to a particular residue, partly on the basis of intramolecular NOEs in ^{15}N NOESY or ^{13}C NOESY spectra to known protons.

In $¹⁵N$ HSQC HN ϵ 1 of Trp signals were assigned by employing the NOEs between these peaks</sup>

and the defined chemical shifts of H β and H δ in ¹⁵N NOESY. Also for confirmation these amide protons (Hε1 of Trp in ¹⁵N HSQC spectra) correlated to Hδ1 and Hζ2 protons in 2D ¹H ¹H NOESY spectra (Figure 4.7). This assignment method could not be applied to assign Hδ1 and Hε2 of His because of overlapped signal.

Figure 4.6. Left; ¹³C HSQC spectrum for aromatic reisudes of SH2. Red colour shows the nuclei expected to have negative intensity in constant time ¹³C spectra because of the number of carbon atoms attached, while black colour peaks indicate the positive carbons. The blue dash box are surrounded groups of carbon peaks that have distinguishable chemical shifts, Trp:Cζ2, Tyr:Cε, Trp:Cη2, His:Cε1. 1H: ¹H dimension (ppm), 13C: ¹³C dimension (ppm). Right; Typical range of values for chemical shifts from different aromatic residues shown in dashed boxes, taken from biological magnetic resonances bank (BMRB) databases.

Figure 4.7. Representative slices of amide sidechain assignment spectra. The slices for residue W83 are shown, indicating NOEs connecting through space between amide sidechain proton and nearby aromatic ring protons. Resonances are labelled in different spectra with residue name and nuclei type; the same nuclei are linked using the same dashed line colour. $15N:$ $15N$ dimension (ppm), $1H:$ $1H$ dimension (ppm).

In a similar way, the overlapped peaks of Cε3 and Cζ3 of Trp, and Cε and Cζ of Phe residues, which typically have very similar carbon chemical shift values, could be distinguished on the basis of strong NOEs to identified protons in 13C NOESY.

In proteins, the two Hδ protons of Tyr and Phe are in different environments and can therefore appear as two signals. The same is true for the Hε pair, and for the attached carbons. The actual appearance in NMR spectra depends on the rate of 180° flips around the Cβ/ Cγ/ Cζ axis. When the flip rate is slow compared to the chemical shift difference, two sets of peaks are seen, while when the flip rate is fast, they average to give a single observed signal (Wüthrich et al., 1975). In SH2, all the pairs of Phe and Tyr aromatic protons are in fast exchange and have a single averaged shift. The manual resonances assignment of the backbone and sidechain nuclei are listed in appendix A.

4.2 Automated resonance assignment

One of the aims of this work was to compare the shift assignments done manually and by automated methods. The automatic resonance assignment calculation was done by the GARANT algorithm (Güntert, 2009; Bartels et al., 1997) within the CYANA program. The required input files consist of the protein sequence and a set of experimental NMR peak lists from multidimensional spectra as listed in Table 2.12.

The peak picking was performed manually for ^{15}N HSQC, ^{13}C HSQC, ^{13}C HSQC aromatic, HNCO, HNCACO, HNCA, CBCACONH, HNCACB, HBHAcoNH, CcoNH, HCcoNH and HBCBCGCDHD spectra, whereas an automatic peak-picking algorithm in Felix2007 was applied over all the diagonal cross peak spectra (HCCH-TOCSY, HCCH-COSY, ¹H ¹H NOESY, ¹⁵N NOESY, and ¹³C NOESY and 13C NOESY aromatic).

After the peak lists were prepared, the automated resonance assignment calculation for SH2 was done using a standard automated chemical shift assignment script CALC.cya within CYANA version 3.98.5. A number of nuclei were excluded from the calculation as they are difficult to detect as they have fast exchange with solvent, such as Cζ2 of Arg, NHζ of Lys, Hγ of Thr and Hγ of Ser.

The automated chemical shift assignment was performed in two steps, following the recommended procedure (Güntert, 2004): an ensemble of chemical shift assignments was computed followed by combining the resultant raw chemical shift assignments into a single consensus resonance list. The ensemble of chemical shift assignments was obtained from 20 runs of the GARANT algorithm, in which the iteration size for one generation was 100. Each independent run started from the same experimental peak lists but using a different random seed value, and optimised the match between observed peaks and expected peaks based on the knowledge of the amino acid sequence and the magnetization transfer pathways in the spectra used (Bartels et al., 1997). The matching was done with the recommended tolerance values of 0.03 and 0.4 ppm for the 1 H dimension and for the 13 C and 15 N dimensions, respectively.

A scoring function estimates the match between measured and expected peaks, to distinguish between correct and incorrect resonance assignments. The score incorporates the essential features of a correct resonance assignment such as the presence of expected peaks in the spectra used, the positional alignment of peaks that originate from the same atoms, and the statistical agreement of the assigned resonance frequencies with a chemical shift database assembled from the known resonance assignments of many proteins (Güntert, 2003). A good assignment should have a score \geq 80%.

4.2.1 Peak picking

The identification of the NMR signals in multidimensional spectra is referred to as peak picking and is the first step to analysis of NMR spectra. The extent to which the peak picking, whether manual or automatic, yielded the expected number of peaks was measured by comparing the number of the experimentally observed peaks in each peak list with the theoretical expected peak number, which was predicted from matching the knowledge of the primary structure and the magnetisation transfer pathway in the spectra used, as explained in López-Méndez and Güntert, 2006.

Any peak picking, whether manual or automated, has to be able to distinguish noise and artifacts from peaks, and should have some way of dealing with overlapping peaks. It is difficult to make these distinctions automatically. Therefore a manual inspection was done to remove noise from the peak lists and make some judgement about strongly overlapping peaks. Nevertheless the total number of measured peaks in the peak lists was much higher than the number of expected peaks for most of the automated picked spectra, as shown in Figure 4.8. The discrepancy is particularly marked for NOESY spectra. This is because for many of the triple resonance spectra the number of peaks per residue is limited, and they are all expected to have a similar intensity. However in NOESY spectra, there is a much larger dynamic range of peak intensity, and it is therefore necessary to set the threshold much lower in order to catch all the genuine peaks, which results in a large increase in the number of noise peaks detected. For the HCCH-TOCSY spectrum although the automated peak picker found fewer observed peaks than predicted as shown in Figure 4.8, the overlooked peaks happened mostly because of abundant cross-peak overlap especially near the diagonal, and incomplete magnetization transfer in the spectra for the longer aliphatic sidechains (Bax et al., 1990; Ikura et al., 1991). On the other hand, in the manually picked spectra of the backbone and the nondiagonal aliphatic sidechains, the number of measured peaks was almost the same or slightly higher than the number of expected peaks (Figure 4.8). This is because the backbone and the simple aliphatic sidechain spectra have less signal overlap and are more sensitive (Bax et al., 1993).

The effectiveness of peak picking was reflected in the percentage of predicted peaks that could be assigned. It was observed that more peaks were missing in the automatically picked spectra due to the imperfections of the automated peak picking algorithm and the difficulties of analysing spectra with a large number of overlapped signals. However a high percentage of assigned peaks were obtained for most of the spectra which were picked using conventional manual methods (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.8. Number of observed peaks and expected peaks that could be assigned in automated resonance assignment of SH2. The number of peaks expected is based on the amino acid sequence and the ideal magnetization transfer pathway (López-Méndez and Güntert, 2006), and in the NOESY spectra the peaks expected are all ¹H-¹H distances shorter than 4.5 Å in the CYANA reference structure (random.pdb). Measured peaks are blue bars and expected peaks are grey bars. The aliphatic and aromatic peak lists of 13C HSQC and 13C NOESY were combined into one list.

Figure 4.9. Number of expected peaks and assigned peaks of each NMR spectrum that were used for automated resonance assignment of SH2. The number of expected peaks is based on the amino acid sequence and the ideal magnetization transfer pathway (López-Méndez and Guntert, 2006), and in the NOESY spectra the peaks expected are all ¹H-¹H distances shorter than 4.5 Å in the CYANA reference structure (random.pdb). The percentage on the top of the bar represents the predicted peaks that could be assigned. Expected peaks in grey bars and assigned peaks in orange bars.

4.2.2 Automated resonance assignment by CYANA

A complete automated resonance assignment was obtained for SH2 (1-118 a.a, 1441 atoms). Overall ~ 76% of assigned atoms were scored highly confident (strong) as they were assigned within the tolerance values. The majority of the strong assigned nuclei came from backbone and aliphatic sidechain resonances (Figure 4.10). The automated chemical shift assignment is listed in appendix A.

The accuracy of the automated consensus chemical shifts was assessed by comparison with the resonance assignment obtained by conventional methods, excluding resonances that were not assigned manually. It has been suggested that \geq 90% of completeness in resonance assignment is required before proceeding with NOESY assignment and structure calculation, in order to have confidence in the structure calculation (Güntert, 2003). A consensus chemical shift assignment was considered to agree with the reference assignment if the two corresponding chemical shift values differed by less than 0.03 ppm for 1 H and 0.4 ppm for 13 C and $15N$.

99% of the automated backbone chemical shift assignments (1 H_N, 15 N, 13 C_o, ${}^{13}C_{\alpha}$ and ${}^{13}C_{\beta}$) of SH2 (9-118 a.a) were considered to agree with the reference assignment. The only resonances that were not assigned correctly are the amide chemical shifts of Trp17 and Gln61, which are two of the four resonances that had missing signals (but assigned H and N) in the manual assignment. In addition the amide resonances of Gly20 and backbone resonances of Pro16 could not be confirmed whether they were assigned correctly as they were missing in the reference assignment.

For aliphatic methyl and methylene sidechain groups, the agreement between automated assignments and reference assignments was 97%. The differences to the reference assignment were caused by the exchange of resonance assignments within a residue; this permutation is less likely to affect the automated derived structure than a completely wrong assignment or an exchange of assignments between different residues.

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The automated method succeeded in assigning most of the backbone and aliphatic sidechain resonances correctly because their assignment was based on number of pair related spectra which gave a redundancy among different spectra. The abundance of multiple peaks for a given atom helped to lower the degree of ambiguity by allowing cross checking during the automatic calculation even when a few expected peaks were missing.

On the other hand, most of the NOE-based chemical shift assignments did not match with the reference assignment. This includes the amide sidechains of Arg, Asn and Gln, and the methyl groups of aromatic ring: only 53% of them were assigned correctly (agreed with manual assignment) as their assignment basically relies on NOEs.

The automated assignment of those nuclei depends on the quality of the information content of the NOE input data, which was incomplete according to the number of assigned peaks, resulting from failure of the automated peak picking algorithm to deal with complex spectra. In addition, the assignment of missing true peaks could be replaced with wrong assignments coming from noise and artefacts in the NOE peak lists. CYANA continues to check and refine its assignments during the course of structure calculations, and it is possible that some of these incorrect assignments would have been corrected. On the other hand, the accuracy of the automated structure calculation relies heavily on the accuracy of the first iteration of the structure calculation, which in turn depends on the accuracy of the initial set of assignments (Güntert and Buchner, 2015). It is therefore important that the assignments should be as correct as possible before the start of the structure calculation. SH2 is a small protein with sharp signals and relatively little overlap. It also has only a small number of signals missing, presumably because of exchange processes. One would therefore expect that automated methods would handle SH2 better than most other proteins. It can be concluded that automated assignments should always be checked manually before proceeding to structure calculation. A comparison of automated resonance assignment and reference assignment is presented in appendix A.

Figure 4.10. An overview graphic of CYANA assignment for SH2 residues 1-118, using manual assignment as a reference. On the top are the residue and residue name. In general, light colours indicate less confident assignments and dark colours illustrate strong assignments; blue color indicates no reference assignment available, green color shows assignment by CYANA agreed with reference assignment within defined tolerance value, red color shows the assignments that do not agree with reference assignment, the black color represents the assignments that were found in reference assignment but not assigned by CYANA. The row labelled displays for each residue: HN on the left and H α in the center, and N, C α , C' shows for each residue, from left to right, the N, C α , and C' assignments. The next rows show the side-chain assignments: in the center the heavy atom assignment and hydrogen atoms to the left and right. In branched side-chains, the row is divided into upper and lower.

4.3 Additional structural restraints

4.3.1 Dihedral angles

Most of the structural restraints used for the structure calculation come from NOEs, and are discussed in Chapter 5. Here, the additional restraints on dihedral angles and hydrogen bonds are discussed.

Restraints for the backbone ϕ , ψ and the sidechain χ^1 angles of SH2 were generated by TALOS-N (Shen and Bax., 2013). The program uses the given backbone chemical shifts (HN, NH, CO, Hα, Cα, and C β) with sequence information to make quantitative predictions for the protein backbone angles ϕ and ψ , also χ^1 sidechain torsion angles.

The backbone dihedral angles ϕ and ψ were predicted for SH2. 93 out of 118 residues were classified as strong or generous as their matches show consistent values for ϕ and ψ . These reliable restraints were applied as dihedral restraints for the structure calculation and refinement. TALOS generates a standard deviation for the predicted angle. In the structure calculation, this value was used to produce upper and lower bounds for the angle. However, residues for which their matches were inconsistent, and were therefore classified by TALOS as Warn or Dynamic, were eliminated from the list.

The sidechain dihedral angles χ^1 were obtained for 54 residues and were employed as additional restraints in the structure calculation.

TALOS-N gives the secondary structure classification of the amino acids of a protein from the given backbone chemical shifts. The secondary structure prediction for SH2 showed a central β sheet consisting of three long β strands (β 2, 3, and 4) followed by two short strands (β 5 and 6), the β sheet being located between N and C terminal α helices (α 1 and 2). In addition to that there are two small β strands at the N and the C terminus of the protein (β 1 and 7). Also there are a number of long loops connecting the structured regions of the protein (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11. Secondary structure of SH2 as predicted by TALOS-N. The secondary structure resulting per-residue likelihood estimates are displayed; aqua for beta-strand and red for alpha-helix. Below the sequence are the secondary structure elements based on TALOS-N prediction. Above the sequence is the numbering of the amino acid sequence of SH2 protein.

4.3.2 Chemical shift temperature coefficients

Chapter 5 describes structure calculations of SH2. During the course of the calculations, the results were analysed using a new program, ANSURR (Fowler et al., 2020) which compares the rigidity of the resulting structure to the experimental rigidity as measured by a modified Random Coil Index calculation (Berjanskii and Wishart, 2005). This comparison indicated that the structures generated were too floppy and lacked restraints. This is a very typical problem with NMR structure calculations, and does not indicate any specific problems with the SH2 structure calculation, but presented an opportunity to investigate whether the accuracy of the structure could be improved by addition of extra restraints, in particular hydrogen bonds. This section discusses how hydrogen bond restraints could potentially be generated from the measurement of amide proton temperature coefficients.

Studies carried out by the Williamson lab (Baxter & Williamson, 1997; Tomlinson & Williamson, 2012) have shown that amide temperature coefficients (that is, the change in chemical shifts of amide protons as a result of change in temperature) are a useful guide to hydrogen bonding. They defined a cutoff of -4.5 ppb/K, and concluded that amide protons with a temperature coefficient more positive than -4.5 ppb/K have a high probability of being involved in intramolecular hydrogen bonding. This measure defines the amide group involved in the hydrogen bond, but does not identify the group that it forms a hydrogen bond to. Chapter 5 investigates how such restraints can be applied: here the identification of amide protons that match the criterion is discussed.

Intramolecular hydrogen bonds between the amide backbone and carbonyl groups were investigated for non-proline residues of SH2 by chemical shift temperature coefficients. The temperature coefficients of amide protons were calculated from a series of ¹⁵N HSQC spectra at 288, 293, 298, and 303K, at pH6. Spectra were referenced to TSP in 1D spectra at each temperature. For measuring the NH chemical shift at each temperature the HSQC cross peaks were picked in Felix2007. After that, a straight line was fitted to the chemical shift versus temperature data by least squares minimisation, and the NH chemical shift temperature dependence was calculated as the gradient of that line. The fitted data plot is displayed in Figure 4.12.

103 out of 105 backbone amide protons of SH2 showed a linear temperature dependence. The exceptions were Gly20 and Trp17, which could not be observed. Most of the amide temperature coefficients are negative (ie, the chemical shift value decreases as the temperature is raised), which is related to the predominately down field shift of hydrogen bonded amide protons (Baxter and Williamson, 1997). Positive temperature coefficient values were observed for Gln61 and Leu69 residues. The NH coefficient experimental data of SH2 is presented in Table 4.2.

Amide protons were defined as donors if they have chemical shift coefficient above -4.5 ppb/K as discussed in Baxter and Williamson, 1997. Sixty-five amide protons have temperature gradients greater than -4.5 ppb/K and thus were considered to be potential hydrogen bond donors, Table 4.2. Many of those residues are part of regular secondary structures according to TALOS-N, Figure 4.11. Residues Leu25, Lys26, Ala27, Ile87, and Asp89 are expected to be located at the N-terminal end of an α helix, as shown in Figure 4.11 and 4.13. They have temperature coefficients that are more negative than -4.5 ppb/K, implying that they are not involved in hydrogen bonds. The first four amides in an α -helix are not hydrogen bonded to carbonyls in the helix, although they may be hydrogen bonded to sidechain oxygens forming an "N-cap" motif (Richardson and Richardson, 1988). This result therefore usefully defines the N-terminal ends of the helices. Residues Gln46, Ala64, His66, Arg68, Leu71 and Trp83 are within β strands but have coefficients more negative than -4.5 ppb/K so are less likely to be involved in hydrogen bonding. The geometry of β strands implies that for the outer strands of a sheet, every other residue points out from the sheet and therefore is not involved in hydrogen bonding. In most cases, these results therefore confirm the topology of the sheet and which direction the outer strands are pointing, which is explained in detail in chapter 5. The most interesting result was that the temperature coefficient data predicted several hydrogen bonded donor residues in loops and in the Cterminal unstructured region of the protein (Figure 4.13).

Residue	$\Delta \delta / \Delta T$ ppb/K	Residue	$\Delta \delta / \Delta T$ ppb/K	Residue	$\Delta \delta / \Delta T$ ppb/K	
D9	-7.31	R50	-6.05	187	-5.11	
Q10	-7.35	R51	-6.59	F88	-2.60 yes	
L12	-3.18 yes	G52	-5.79	D89	-4.91	
S13	-5.81	E53	-4.31 yes	M90	-2.87 yes	
G14	-4.83	Y54	-3.66 yes	L91	-3.60 yes	
Y15	-2.27 yes	V ₅₅	-3.44 yes	E92	-1.66 yes	
F18	-1.32 yes	L56	-2.00 yes H93		-2.09 yes	
H19	-3.86 yes	T57	-1.49 yes	F94	-1.29 yes	
M21	-6.81	F58	-4.15 yes	R95	-1.32 yes	
L22	-1.80 yes	N59	-3.42 yes	V96	-2.65 yes	
S23	-6.32	F60	-2.49 yes	H97	-3.49 yes	
R24	-2.85 yes	Q61	1.78 yes	199	-4.53	
L ₂₅	-5.78	G62	-0.38 yes	L101	-8.18	
K26	-6.58	K63	-6.59	E102	-6.98	
A27	-4.96	A64	-6.97	S103	-3.44 yes	
A28	-2.83 yes	K65	-3.24 yes	G104	-2.41 yes	
Q29	-0.69 yes	H66	-7.29	G105	-5.55	
L30	-2.39 yes	L67	-2.10 yes	S106	-8.14	
V31	-3.53 yes	R68	-5.31	S107	-3.83 yes	
L32	-0.92 yes	L69	1.82 yes	D108	-5.42	
E33	-0.52 yes	S70	-2.54 yes	V109	-3.82 yes	
G34	-9.09	L71	-8.10	V110	-2.85 yes	
G35	-0.44 yes	N72	-2.37 yes	L111	-7.94	
T36	-7.53	E73	-2.09 yes	V112	-6.37	
G37	-5.26	E74	-1.95 yes	S113	-7.61	
S38	-2.39 yes	G75	-3.46 yes	Y114	-3.52 yes	
H39	-2.98 yes	Q76	-3.44 yes	V115	-3.61 yes	
G40	-4.47	C77	-4.27 yes	S117	-3.27 yes	
V41	-2.97 yes	R78	-3.04 yes	Q118	-7.12	
F42	-3.31 yes	V79	-3.22 yes			
L43	-2.53 yes	Q80	-8.93			
V44	-2.11 yes	H81	-5.66			
R45	-0.49 yes	L82	-2.79 yes			
Q46	-4.82	W83	-6.56			
S47	-0.76 yes	F84	-2.85 yes			
E48	-10.39	Q85	-4.32 yes			
T49	-1.58 yes	S86	-0.96 yes			

Table 4.2. Amide chemical shift temperature dependences for SH2 protein. Yes indicates that the residue displayed coefficient > -4.5 ppb/K, thus is predicted to be involved in a backbone hydrogen bond as a donor.

D9:hn	$Q10:$ hn	L12:hn	S13:hn	G14:hn	Y15:hn	F18:hn	H19:hn	M21:hn	L22:hn
agga	\mathcal{P}	θ	ϕ_{ϕ}	appo	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	⊶ം ക	θ	$\mathcal{P}^{\mathcal{O}}$	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$
S23:hn	R24:hn	L25:hn	K26:hn	A27:hn	A28:hn	Q29:hn	$L30:$ hn	V31:hn	L32:hn
agga	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$	aaaa	agas	aaaa	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$	0000	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$	θ	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$
E33:hn	G34:hn	G35:hn	T36:hn	G37:hn	S38:hn	H39:hn	G40:hn	V41:hn	F42:hn
$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	$\mathcal{P}_{\varnothing}$	0000	\mathcal{A}_{φ}	agas	$\theta \rightarrow \theta \rightarrow \theta$	θ	aaas	θ	θ
L43:hn	V44:hn	R45:hn	Q46:hn	S47:hn	E48:hn	T49:hn	R50:hn	R51:hn	G52:hn
$\theta \rightarrow \theta$	$\overset{\circ}{\circ} \overset{\circ}{\circ} \overset{\circ}{\circ}$	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	aaas	0000	Ø. Ø.	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	app	$\mathcal{P}^{\mathcal{A}}$	agas
E53:hn	Y54:hn	V55:hn	L56:hn	T57:hn	F58:hn	N59:hn	F60:hn	Q61:hn	G62:hn
aaaa	θ	θ	$\overset{\circ}{\circ}\overset{\circ}{\circ}\overset{\circ}{\circ}$	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	$\sigma_{\phi\phi}$	θ	$\theta \rightarrow \theta \rightarrow \theta$	$\circ\!\!-\!\!-\!\!-\!\!-\!\!$	0000
K63:hn	A64:hn	K65:hn	H66:hn	L67:hn	R68:hn	$L69:$ hn	$S70:$ hn	L71:hn	N72:hn
$\theta \rightarrow \theta \rightarrow \theta$	app	θ	aga	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	aaas	$_{\Theta\cdot\Theta\cdot\Theta\cdot\Theta}$	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$	Q, Þ	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$
E73:hn	E74:hn	G75:hn	Q76:hn	C77:hn	R78:hn	V79:hn	Q80:hn	H81:hn	L82:hn
$\theta \rightarrow \theta \rightarrow \theta$	$_{\sigma\sigma\sigma\phi}$	θ	θ	aaas	θ	θ	$\mathcal{A}_{\mathcal{A}}$ Ŕ	agas	θ
W83:hn	F84:hn	Q85:hn	S86:hn	I87:hn	F88:hn	D89:hn	M90:hn	L91:hn	E92:hn
agga	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$	θ	0000	appo	$\theta \rightarrow \theta \rightarrow \theta$	oppo	$\overset{\circ}{\circ}$	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	കക്ക
H93:hn	F94:hn	R95:hn	V96:hn	H97:hn	I99:hn	L101:hn	E102:hn	S103:hn	G104:hn
$_{\sigma\sigma\sigma\phi}$	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	$_{\rm \sigma \sigma \sigma}$	$\circ\circ\circ\circ$	θ	aggo	PRA	aaaa	θ	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$
${\rm G}105{:}\rm{hn}$	S106:hn	S107:hn	D108:hn	V109:hn	V110:hn	L111:hn	V112:hn	S113:hn	Y114:hn
aaaa	ago	θ	app	θ	$\theta \rightarrow \theta$	\mathcal{P}	\mathcal{P}	$\mathcal{P}^{\mathcal{A}}$	θ
V115:hn	S117:hn	Q118:hn							
θ	θ	aga							

Figure 4.12. Dependence of chemical shift on temperature for backbone amide protons of SH2. The best fit lines are identified from which the temperature coefficient was obtained. On each graph, the x-axis displays the temperature range from 283 K to 303 K with 5° intervals, and the y-axis spans 0.8 ppm with a tick mark interval of 0.2 ppm.

Figure 4.13. NH temperature coefficients (ppb/K) of SH2. The amide temperature coefficient data are plotted against residue number. The red line represents the -4.5 ppb/K cut-off value which was used as an indicator for whether the amide proton is involved in intramolecular hydrogen bonding. The temperature coefficient values above the cut-off (-4.5 ppb/K) are likely hydrogen-bond donors, and below are not hydrogen bonded. Below the residue number at the bottom is the secondary structure prediction based on TALOS-N. The green bars are residues in α helix and black bars are residues in β strands which have coefficients < -4.5 ppb/K.

Chapter 5 NMR structure determination of SH2

This chapter describes in detail the NMR structure determination of the SH2 domain. Here different procedures to calculate the NMR protein structure using an automated method are proposed, and new validation criteria for structure accuracy are presented. The structure calculation was carried out in four stages: automated NOESY assignment and structure calculation using the CYANA program; structure re-calculation and refinement by the Crystallography and NMR system (CNS) program; the selection of the ensemble structure; and the structure validation. The NOE statement sets up the database for distance restraints such as interproton distances. Figure 5.1 illustrates the general flow-chart of the NMR structure determination of SH2. CYANA is the most popular method for automated structure calculation (using the FLYA routines within CYANA). Up till now, at Sheffield, structure calculations have always been carried out by a laborious manual assignment of NOESY spectra followed by iterative calculations, checking structure restraints at each stage. This project had the aim of calculating the structure of the SH2 domain, and doing it using the CYANA automated method, as a way of testing whether this automated method works, specifically when used by someone who has had no previous experience of structure calculation. This was the first time that CYANA had been used in the lab.

A set of structure calculation attempts were executed using the CYANA (3.98.5) program based on automated NOE assignment. The methodology of CYANA structure calculation is described in general terms. The output from CYANA is a set of unrefined structures, plus the final set of restraints derived from the calculations. The obtained output restraints (NOEs and dihedral restraints) from the CYANA structure calculation were then combined with the temperature coefficient data described in the previous chapter, to generate an extra H-bond restraint list. This H-bond list was refined by four subsequent rounds of calculations in CYANA (calculation rounds 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Figure 5.1) based on analysis of the preceding calculation, including the use of the ANSURR program described below, to improve the resulting structure. The success of the CYANA structure calculations is documented here.

The NMR structure of SH2 was then recalculated and refined in explicit solvent using the

Crystallography and NMR system (CNS) program using the final set of restraints from the CYANA calculations. After that, two set of 20 structures were selected on the basis of the ANSURR analysis score (a new method, discussed here) and another set based on the total energy. For the final selection, both a good ANSURR score and a low total energy was required, to select the final ensemble structures and to represent the NMR structure for SH2.

Finally the geometric validation of the final SH2 structures was assessed according to conventional measurements of structure accuracy such as Ramachandran distribution and the RMSD among the ensemble structures. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the success and problems of these calculations.

Figure 5.1. A general scheme of the NMR structure calculation for SH2 protein. The flow-chart is divided into four stages.

5.1 Overview of CYANA automated NOESY assignment and structure calculation

The overall CYANA structure calculation consists of seven connected cycles of automated NOESY assignment and structure calculation using torsion angle dynamics driven simulated annealing procedures (Güntert, 2004). These iterative cycles are followed by a final cycle of structure calculation using only unambiguous distance restraints, with all remaining unassigned NOE peaks set aside and not used in the calculation. Initially each cycle starts from 100 conformers with random values of torsion angles, and each conformer is calculated with 10000 steps of torsion angle dynamics. After that, the 20 conformers are selected which have the lowest target function value, to represent the final structure as a bundle (Güntert et al., 2015). From each CYANA cycle, a number of output files is generated which contain the resulting NOE assignments and the calculated structures (cycleNo.noe, cycleNo.upl, cycleNo.ovw, cycleNo.pdb). The content of these files is explained in Section 2.10.3. The information is transferred onto the subsequent cycles through the bundle of structures resulting from the preceding cycle, which is used as a guide to the next NOE assignments. Other than that, the same input data are used in every cycle of structure calculation as specified in the CYANA documentation (Güntert, 2004).

The algorithm for automated NOESY assignment is executed on the basis of a probabilistic framework. There are a number of filtering criteria applied within the structure calculation cycles (Güntert et al., 2015). In the beginning of each cycle, consistency checking criteria are applied to measure the agreement between peak positions as listed in NOESY peak lists and their given corresponding chemical shift values within tolerance ranges as specified in CYANA macros. As a consequence of the agreement, one or more initial assignments is created for each individual NOESY cross peak. A Gaussian probability value (*Pshifts*) is used to express the fitting or matching quality between the input data of the peak position and the chemical shift values. All NOESY peaks with one unique initial assignment are treated as unambiguous distance restraints (Güntert, 2004). In contrast, NOESY peaks with more than one assignment give rise to ambiguous upper distance restraints, and because most NOE peaks cannot be assigned unambiguously just on the basis of chemical shift information, more filtering criteria are applied.

Assessment criteria evaluate each initial assignment possibility according to its presence in other symmetry related positions, and based on assignment possibilities of other cross peaks between the same or adjacent residues (network-anchoring) without relying on the 3D structure, and compatible with the short range covalent distance restraints. The probability from network anchoring (*Pnetwork*) has a big impact in the first cycle of CYANA structure calculation as no structure-based criteria can be applied yet. Overall the network anchoring functions initially to lower the ambiguity of NOE cross peak assignments.

After that, each initial assignment possibility for ambiguous NOESY cross peaks is assessed based on the agreement probability with the 3D ensemble structures from the preceding cycle (*Pstructure*). This probability function calculates the number of conformers in the structure bundle where the distance is shorter than the upper bound, with an acceptable value of violation which is set high in the early cycles and decreases to almost zero in the last one. The first CYANA cycle is excluded here as no preliminary structure is generated yet, thus *Pstructure* = 1.

Only assignment possibilities for which the combined probability of the three previous weighting factors is higher than a defined threshold are acceptable, and are retained to use in subsequent steps to generate distance constraints, as described in Equation 5.1. Any NOESY assignments that fail this test are eliminated from the assignment list as false NOESY cross peaks. In addition, upper distance bounds are calibrated according to the volume of NOE cross peaks which are extracted from NOESY peak lists.

 $P_{total} = P_{shifts} \times P_{network} \times P_{structure} \ge P_{min}$ (Equation 5.1)

In the first cycle for structure determination before applying the 3D structure bundle based filtering for the NOE assignments, there is a big chance for false distance restraints to be selected from the noise and artifact peaks in the input peak lists. Therefore a constraint combination criterion is implemented in the first two cycles of CYANA to eliminate structural distortion that arises from erroneous NOE assignments (Herrmann et al., 2002a). The constraint combination consists of making random sets of two or more distance restraints, and requiring that at least one member of each set be satisfied. The aim is to reduce the risk that incorrect restraints will distort the structure calculation, while still allowing correct restraints to operate. The restraints combination thus helps to lower the impact of erroneous distance restraints on the resulting structure (Güntert, 2003).

After that, the resultant distance restraints are used to calculate an ensemble of structures, which are then added to the input data for the following structure calculation cycle, calculated using simulated annealing with torsion angle dynamics. In the final cycle of structure calculation the NOE assignments are taken from cycle 7 and then an additional filtering is applied to ensure that every NOE has one assignment to a single pair of hydrogen atoms, otherwise it is discarded from the input for the structure calculation.

These steps are described in detail in papers from Güntert et al. It is worth adding that the CYANA program itself comes with little documentation, meaning that it is not straightforward to work out what the program is doing, whether the input is correct, and what the output files mean.

5.2 Initial structure calculation attempt by CYANA

5.2.1 Data requirements

The automated NOE assignment followed by structure calculation of SH2 protein was executed using a standard CYANA macro (version 3.98.5) CALC.cya in the demo folder under the auto directory. A first calculation was done using minimum basic conformational constraint data (distances and dihedral angles) to check the reliability of the NOESY cross peak assignment from unrefined NOE peak lists, as the NMR structure calculation primarily depends on distance information (Braun, 1987).

The required input data listed in the CYANA macro for the structure calculation are illustrated in Figure 5.2, and consist of the protein amino acid sequence, a complete chemical shift
assignment list, experimental NOE peak lists from multidimensional spectra, and dihedral angles as conformational constraints from the TALOS-N program (external source).

```
peaks := C13NOESY.peaks,N15NOESY..peaks,C13NOESYaro.peaks # NOESY peak lists in XEASY format
prot := Chemical_shifts.prot :: example a name is not a name of chemical shift list(s)
Restraints := Diherdal_angles.aco # additional (non-NOE) restraints
tolerance := 0.04, 0.03, 0.45 # shift tolerances: H, H', C/N', C/N
#calibration_constant:=6.7E5,8.2E5,8.0E4 # calibration constants, automatic if empty
structures := 100.20 = 100.20 \qquad # number of initial, final structures
steps := 10000 # number of torsion angle dynamics steps
randomseed := 434726 # random number generator seed
```
noeassign peaks=\$peaks prot=\$prot autoaco

Figure 5.2. CYANA macro file (*CALC.cya*) for automated NOE assignment and structure calculation. The macro script specifies the defined parameters and the input data for the combined calculation run. The first three lines show the input data lists; the 3D NOESY spectra lists of C13 NOESY for aliphatic residues, N15 NOESY, and C13 NOESY for aromatic residues, chemical shifts list (*Chemical_shifts.prot*), and torsion angle restraints (*Dihedral angles.aco*). The following lines (4th, 6th, 7th,and 8th) detail the defined parameters; the tolerance values for the chemical shift matching is 0.04 ppm for 1H dimension, 0.03 ppm for 15N or 13C bound 1H dimension, 0.45 ppm for both dimensions 15N or 13C. The calculation started with 100 conformers generated from random torsion angle values, and then 20 conformers which have lowest target function value represent the final structure. Each conformer is generated after 10000 torsion angle dynamics steps. The random number generator for random torsion angle values and initial velocities for torsion angle dynamics is set with a seed value of 434726. The *noeassign* command is used on the above specified peak and chemical shift lists, and *autoco* is used for the automatic generation of torsion angle restraints to favour regions of the Ramachandran plot.

Identification of NOE signals in the multidimensional spectra was done automatically as described in section 4.2.1 using the automated peak picking algorithm in Felix2007, however this time before peak picking, the contouring level was decreased to pick more low intensity peaks. That was because it was clear from the CYANA automated resonance assignment (section 4.2.1) that lots of peaks were missing from NOE spectra mainly because of strong peak overlap and missing low intensity peaks. This observation confirmed the fact that the automated peak picking algorithm does not function well with complex spectra with a large dynamic range such as NOESY (Güntert, 2009). The experimental NOESY peak lists for SH2 structure calculation: ^{15}N NOESY, ^{13}C NOESY for aliphatic atoms, and ^{13}C NOESY for aromatic atoms, were sorted in XEASY format which contains peak positions and volumes.

Because the main structural restraints for the CYANA structure calculation are upper distance restraints derived from automated NOE assignment, this requires the knowledge of proton chemical shifts from which the NOEs are generated (Vögeli et al., 2016). Therefore as input requirement data the chemical shift values of SH2 were assigned automatically by CYANA (3.98.5) using refined and unrefined peak lists, as explained in detail in Chapter 4, section 4.2.2. The automated resonance assignments were then manually corrected according to the resonance assignments made manually using interactive methods before they were used as input data for the automated NOESY assignment and structure calculation. The majority of the automated chemical shift assignment is correct which helps to reduce the ambiguity of cross peak assignment, although it did include a large number of noise and artefact signals in the NOESY peak lists. Tests made at this stage showed that it is highly beneficial to impose manual corrections on the automated NOE assignments, as this significantly reduced the number of incorrect assignments made.

In addition, dihedral angle restraints (ϕ and ψ) were generated according to the given backbone chemical shifts in the SH2 protein using the TALOS-N program, described in detail in Section 4.3.1. The TALOS-N predicted angles (listed in pred.tab) were converted into torsion angle restraints using a CYANA macro (TalosAngleRestraints.cya) to use as input restraints complementary to the NOE distance restraints for the NMR structure calculation. The macro reads the 93 pairs of dihedral angles (φ and ψ) that are classified as strong or generous. Error values are given a default value of double the standard deviation listed by TALOS-N (Cartwright, 2015). The predicted dihedral angles of proline residues were excluded from the CYANA torsion angles list, even for those classified as strong, namely 98, 100 and 116.

5.2.2 Results of the first structure calculation

Seven iteration cycles of automated NOESY assignment followed with structure calculation were carried out using the input data sets as described in the above section. The information for the first CYANA structure calculation for SH2 protein is summarised in Table 5.1, including the NOE assignment details of each individual cycle.

The automated calculation was applied using raw NOESY peak lists. From all selected NOESY peaks (38959), from first towards last cycles, between 10.3% and 8% were assigned and converted to upper distance restraints, and then used for the structure calculation.

As a consequence of applying additional criteria for NOE assignment, which depend on the 3D structures calculated from the preceding cycle, there was a big decrease in average number of possible assignments per cross peak from about 5 in cycle 1 to 1.9 in cycle 2 and continued to cycle 6 with only just over one. Moreover applying more filtering criteria has an impact on the total number of unambiguously assigned NOESY peaks, which reduced from 2927 in cycle 1 to 1556 in cycle 7. In the final cycle, 1560 unambiguous NOEs were defined, comprising 20.8% of upper long range distances with 69.9% and 9.3% of short and medium ranges distances, respectively, as shown in Table 5.1.

The average target function value of CYANA quantifies the agreement between the given constraints and the calculated structure (Güntert, 2003; Vögeli et al., 2016). In this structure calculation for SH2 protein the presence of a high number of artifact peaks in the input peak lists is revealed in a big value of target function for the three early cycles of the calculation. although there was a notable decrease in the target function for the 20 lowest energy conformers starting from cycle 4 towards the final cycle with 5.59 \AA^2 (Table 5.1). The precision of the SH2 structure determination in the form of the root mean square deviation (RMSD) average values of backbone and heavy atoms within the final bundle conformers started to improve gradually from cycle 1 to subsequent cycles as the criteria for accepting assignments and NOE constraints were implemented in advanced cycles of the calculation. Although cycle 2 showed good convergence within the bundle of structures, a slightly better defined bundle of structures appeared in the folded part of the protein (18-97 a.a) in cycle 3 and continued to achieve convergence, with the last cycle having a RMSD 0.96 Å and 1.50 Å for the backbone and sidechain respectively. The progress of the NMR structure determination of SH2 protein during the CYANA cycles is shown in Figure 5.3.

A reasonable Ramachandran distribution resulted from the final bundle of structures for SH2; 75.8% of residues in the most favoured, 22.4% in additional allowed regions, 0.8% in generously allowed regions and 0.9% in disallowed regions. By comparison to good

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structures, this is however still poor.

Table 5.1. Summary table of structure calculation for SH2 protein, based on automated NOESY assignment using CYANA 3.98.5. The first half of the table was created with the cyanatable command and shows results of each cycle obtained with raw NOESY peak lists for SH2 protein, with absolute values. The second half of the table was generated with cyanatable -lp command and shows the obtained result of each cycle with percentage values. Both tables present the same data comprising one column for each CYANA cycle (1 to 7) with the final cycle of structure calculation. The important numbers that assess the outcome of the structure determination of SH2 are surrounded in red.

Figure 5.3. The progress of the NMR structure determination of SH2 protein obtained by CYANA program in seven iterative cycles of automated NOESY assignment followed by structure calculation. The ensemble structure shows the 20 conformers that have the lowest residual target function values for each cycle (1 to 7) including the final bundle structure (overlay 1-118 a.a). Structures overlayed are displayed using Pymol program with rainbow colour; the colour from the N to the C terminus in dark blue to red for clarity of the individual helices and strands. Number on the left-bottom of each structure refers to CYANA cycle number from 1-7.

5.2.3 Reliability of the first structure calculation

The conventional criteria that are normally used to measure the accuracy of the calculated NMR structure such as low value of the backbone root mean square deviation within the final ensemble structure (RMSD), small number of restraint violations, and small value of the total energy of structure are less informative with the automated structure calculation method that discards ambiguous NOESY restraints (Schmidt et al., 2013; Güntert, 2003). Other assessment criteria for CYANA results that are established and discussed in Herrmann et al. 2002b allow checking the reliability of the calculated structure on the basic of automated NOESY assignment.

The first general criterion is to check the percentage of the unassigned cross peaks, which should not exceed 20% among all input NOEs peak lists through CYANA cycles. As shown in Table 5.1, between 89% and 92% of NOE peaks were discarded across CYANA cycles in the first structure calculation. The percentage of unassigned cross peaks indicates that the peak list contains a big number of artifact peaks. This is expected because no manual inspection was applied to remove the noise peaks from the peak list. In retrospect, it would have been better to manually remove more of the obvious noise and artefact peaks before starting CYANA, and probably to raise the contour threshold slightly to eliminate some of the noise peaks.

The second important criterion is the average residual target function value of the first and the last CYANA cycles which should be below the acceptable value for NMR structure < 250 $\rm \AA^2$ and < 10 $\rm \AA^2$, respectively. In this structure calculation the target function value of cycle 1 is high: about 3211 \AA^2 , which mostly reflects a severe inconsistency in between the experimental constraints data and the first calculated structure. On the other hand the target function value of the final cycle is 5.59 \AA^2 , well in the range below the limiting value, which reveals that the final calculated structure fulfils the conformational constraints input data.

Furthermore it has been shown that the ability to obtain a correctly folded structure in the initial cycle of the structure calculation has a big impact on the accuracy of the final calculated structure using automated NOESY assignment (Güntert, 2003). The importance of achieving convergence in the first cycle of the structure calculation comes from the fact that each subsequent cycle depends on the obtained 3D structure from the preceding cycle, excepting cycle 1. Therefore inconsistent NOE peaks with the obtained 3D structure of the previous cycle will remain unassigned also in the following cycle, and thus the correctly folded structure should appear in the first cycle as a consequence of assigning all essential NOE peaks.

The CYANA calculation result of SH2 protein shows that the quality of NOE assignment based on the given input data was not sufficient to achieve convergence in cycle 1 because the average RMSD of the backbone atoms (of the well-structured part) between the individual conformers to their mean coordinates is 5.59 Å. The big RMSD value for cycle 1 is above the acceptable range ($<$ 3 Å) and indicates insufficient or incomplete input data to build a correct structure in the initial cycle. Again this is likely to be due to a large number of noise and artefact peaks in the initial peak list.

Although the final ensemble structure looks well-defined with a small RMSD value for backbone atoms within the bundle of conformers (~ 1 Å), there is a large distribution of conformations in loop regions and the N and the C terminal unstructured part of the protein, Figure 5.2. That was expected as there are not enough distance restraint data to characterise these ill-defined regions (Rosato et al., 2013).

Another criterion to evaluate the quality of the automated CYANA calculation is the RMSD drift between the mean atom coordinates of the first and the last cycles for the backbone atoms of the structured region of the SH2 protein. This is 3.3 \AA which is slightly above the acceptable value of < 3 Å (Herrmann et al., 2002a).

In conclusion, the ensemble produced by this first set of CYANA calculations looks reasonable (but not good). It would clearly have been preferable in hindsight to clean up the NOE peak list before presenting it to CYANA.

5.3 Set of structure calculations by CYANA

5.3.1 Input data

The initial attempt to calculate the NMR structure of SH2 using constraints obtained from automated structure calculation (and manual chemical shift assignments) did not succeed to achieve convergence in the first cycle, and thus resulted in unsatisfactory final ensemble structures. In the CYANA macro for structure calculation (CALC.cya) there is an option to add an extra constraints list obtained from an external source. Using additional constraints such as hydrogen bonds with the other input data used in the first CYANA calculation (section 5.3) can be sufficient to achieve good convergence in the first cycle of the structure calculation. As discussed above, the resultant structure from cycle 1 is the key for subsequent cycles driven by 3D structure-based assignment, thus finding the correct fold in this cycle is important for the structure calculation to result in a correct structure (Güntert, 2004).

To create a list of hydrogen bond restraints, a direct identification approach was followed in the 2nd and 3rd CYANA structure calculations. This method was based on reported hydrogen bonds generated from the CYANA structure calculation. CYANA lists H-bonds in the final.ovw file that are found in more than 30% of the final calculated ensemble structures. Rounds 2 and 3 of CYANA calculations therefore added these backbone H-bonds iteratively to the input restraints list.

Furthermore an indirect identification method was introduced in the $4th$ CYANA structure calculation based on inferring residues which are likely to form backbone H-bonds in regular secondary structure, using the final 3D structural models from the preceding 3rd CYANA calculation. A number of residues located on the β strands of the protein were predicted to form backbone hydrogen bonds with nearby residues on adjacent strands. The new hydrogen bonds were added to the H-bond list as extra restraints for the following structure calculation. Figure 5.4 shows all the expected hydrogen bonds in the NMR structure of the SH2 protein, shown as a secondary structure diagram which was derived on the basis of the final 3D bundle of structures (final.pdb) of the 3rd CYANA structure calculation.

Finally, a temperature coefficient method was used to confirm the final H-bond list, to determine whether obtained hydrogen bonds from CYANA calculations agreed with the temperature coefficient data or not. Only the residues that have a temperature coefficient value more positive than -4.5 ppb/K were included in the final CYANA calculation as the extra constraints list. Also the reported hydrogen bonds from CYANA calculation were added to the input restraints list if they were found in more than 90% of final ensemble structures in cases of absent temperature coefficient support evidence. The identification procedure to create extra restraints from H-bonds as a part of NMR structure determination for SH2 protein is shown in Figure 5.1.

Before adding the obtained hydrogen bond list from direct and indirect methods to the CYANA structure calculation, CYANA macro Hbonds.cya was used to generate a pair of upper (2 Å to 3 Å range) and lower (1.80 Å to 2.70 Å range) distance constraints for the given atoms. After that, hydrogen bond upper and lower distance restraints lists were added to the next CYANA structure calculation for SH2 protein as additional restraints with the other input as used in the first CYANA calculation: amino acid sequence of SH2 protein, chemical shift values obtained from manual resonance assignment, multidimensional NOE peak list, dihedral angles list, and upper and lower hydrogen bonds list.

Figure 5.4. A secondary structure bead diagram of SH2 protein. The 2D schema is drawn based on the 3D final structure from the 3rd CYANA structure calculation. Thin arrows display the hydrogen bond between the NH and the CO of the backbone groups, red arrows the H-bonds removed from the 5th CYANA calculation, big bars and arrow represent α-helices and β-strands, respectively.

5.3.2 Results of structure calculations

From the first CYANA structure calculation which was completed as explained above without input H-bond restraints, twenty-one residues were reported to form hydrogen bonds in more than 30% of structures of the final ensemble. All residues were confirmed by temperature coefficient data to be likely to be involved in backbone hydrogen bonds. The obtained Hbonds were used in the following calculation ($2nd CYANA$) as an additional input list. A similar procedure was followed to find out more hydrogen bonds after the second CYANA structure calculation, and an extra new seven residues forming backbone hydrogen bonds were listed in the output final.ovw file. These new predicted H-bonds were used in the next structure calculation (3rd CYANA).

In the fourth CYANA structure calculation another indirect identification method was introduced to find out more residues participating in intramolecular hydrogen bonding. From the final 3D bundle structures of the preceding structure calculation (3rd CYANA), residues in the β strand polypeptide chains running alongside each other are expected to be linked by hydrogen bonds between their backbone NH and CO groups. Figure 5.5 shows an example of the NH group of Arg 45 pointed to the CO group of Val 55. Although these residues run alongside each other, there were not enough distance restraints to form hydrogen bonds between them during the CYANA calculation. A further fifteen H-bonds were predicted to make in total 43 pairs of upper and lower H-bond distance restraints, which were added to the input data of the 4th CYANA structure calculation.

Adding hydrogen bond restraints to the structure calculation forces the CYANA program to significantly restrict the conformational freedom of the resulting structure using the input Hbonds. Furthermore those H-bond restraints were assigned on the basis of indirect experimental data where there is a chance for incorrect assignment. Therefore the last structure calculation was carried out with more caution to avoid introducing bias in the final CYANA structure. To end the structure calculation, the final 5th CYANA calculation was completed as before but with only using the highly confident hydrogen bonds that were found in more than 90% of the final ensemble structures of the preceding calculation.

The final H-bond restraints list obtained from CYANA calculations is in agreement with the temperature coefficient data (> -4.5 ppb/K). However in addition, V112 and Q80 were reported to form backbone hydrogen bonds with G40 and R68, respectively, because they were found in more than 90% of the final structures in the ensemble, which means it is highly likely that they are genuinely present. These residues were included in the H-bond restraints list although they do not have supporting experimental evidence from the temperature coefficient data. The original analysis of temperature coefficients in proteins (Baxter and Williamson, 1997) found exceptions to the -4.5 ppb/K rule, so this is acceptable. In total the final list of H-bond restraints which were used in the final 5th CYANA structure calculation contained 38 pairs of upper and lower H-bond distance restraints. Out of sixty-eight residues suggested to contribute to backbone hydrogen bond interaction as a donor by the temperature coefficient method, 53% of them were identified from the CYANA structure calculations and used in the calculations. The information of backbone hydrogen bond donors from temperature coefficient data and their defined acceptor atoms from CYANA calculations is listed in Table 5.2.

Figure 5.5. 3D structures of SH2 protein resulting from the first CYANA structure calculation displayed using Pymol shows backbone atoms (N, Cα, Co) of residues in SH2 protein. The circled region (black dashes) focusses on an example of hydrogen bond interaction between backbone amide NH and carboxyl CO of Arg 45 and Val 55 atoms with distance measurements predicted from the secondary structure. N and C letters denote the N and C termini of the protein.

Table 5.2. Secondary structural data for the hydrogen bonds in the SH2 protein structure. Yes/No indicate whether temperature cofficient data (T/C) suggests the backbone amide proton is a hydrogen bond donor or not. Hydrogen bonds restraints used in CYANA calculations (CYANA1, CYANA2, CYANA3, and CYANA4) are listed in final.ovw, or predicted from the secondary structure from a previous calculation as in CYANA4. In the CYANA calculation 5, the H-bond restraints are the only ones that used from the final.ovw of the 4th calculation.

5.3.3 Evaluation of CYANA structure calculations

As discussed in Schmidt et al., 2013 and Güntert, 2003, a number of assessment criteria are established to assess the success of CYANA structure calculations: the total number of discarded NOE peaks, the average target function of the first and last cycle, the RMSD radius value of the first cycle, and the RMSD drift value.

Through CYANA structure calculations (CYANA 2^{nd} , 3^{rd} , 4^{th} , and 5^{th}) the majority of input NOE peaks were unassigned: the percentage of discarded peaks (between 90% to ~92%) is much higher than the acceptable number (< 20%) of total NOE peaks (Güntert, 2004). This indicates that the unrefined NOE peak lists contained many more artifact peaks than real peaks, which can be avoided if a manual intervention is applied to remove noise and artifact peaks. In addition, rejecting a big number of cross peaks could indicate imperfections of the experimental NMR input data in term of error in picked or inaccurately positioned peaks. This will cause inconsistency between the input cross peaks and the given chemical shift values within the defined tolerance ranges.

Figure 5.6 (a) shows in all CYANA calculations the number of assigned NOE peaks in cycle 1 was almost the same, then started to reduce in subsequent cycles because of applying more criteria for accepting cross peaks. On the other hand as a consequence of adding more input restraints data in the 2^{nd} , 3^{rd} , 4^{th} and 5^{th} calculations the total number of assigned NOE peaks in the final cycle increased between 7% to 9% comparing with the first CYANA calculation which was completed without H-bond restraints. Assigning more NOEs in the final cycle led to a slight increase in the percentage of the long range upper distance restraints in the final structure, Figure 5.6 (b). That means that adding more input restraint data to the CYANA structure calculation supports the CYANA program in assigning more NOE peaks, and was therefore a useful step.

No substantial change occurred to the overall target function value of the first cycle in all CYANA structure calculations, which was higher than the reasonable starting value > 250 \AA^2 . The presence of larger number of noise and artifact peaks in the input lists is very likely to be the origin of the big value of the target function in the early cycles. However, the overall target function value of the final cycle for all structure calculations was within the acceptable average range < 10 $\rm \AA^2$, which reveals that the resultant final structure of all calculations meets the conformational constraint data.

Achieving convergence in the first cycle is important as discussed earlier in Section 5.3.3, as it has a big impact on the accuracy of the final calculated structure using automated NOESY assignment. In all calculations there was a slight decrease in the RMSD value from the mean coordinates of the backbone in cycle 1, however the decrease was not enough to achieve the optimal convergence, as the RMSD is still above 3 Å, Figure 5.6 (c). In all calculations the RMSD radius reduced towards the last cycle to end with a small average value within the final structure ensemble (between 0.96 \AA and 0.36 \AA), however this value cannot serve as indicator for the structure quality as it reflects the precision not the accuracy. Figure 5.5 (d) indicates that the RMSD drift value started to decrease with using more restraints in the input data, to achieve 2.13 Å in the last CYANA calculation as it should be (<3 Å). Using additional hydrogen bond constraints as input helped to improve the overall convergence in the last cycle but is still not enough to achieve comparable convergence in the early cycles.

The Ramachandran statistics of the last structure calculation for SH2 protein comparing with the first calculation showed a good improvement in terms of increasing the percentage of residues in most favoured regions from 75.8% to 80.9% and decreasing the percentage of residue in generously allowed and disallowed regions from 1.7% to 0.1% as illustrated in Figure 5.7. Fowler et al., 2020 concluded that Ramachandran quality is a good measure of the accuracy of NMR structures, suggesting that including of hydrogen bond restraints has produced a significant improvement in the resulting structures.

Figure 5.6. Evolution of characteristic parameters for NMR structures in seven cycles with the final cycle of CYANA structure calculation for SH2 protein. (a) The percentage of the total number of assigned NOE peaks. (b) the percentage of the upper long distance restraints from the total assigned NOE. (c) the backbone average RMSD drift to mean (calculated as the RMSD between the mean coordinates of the bundle of conformers after first cycle and each following cycle). (d) the RMSD drift value between each cycle and the final cycle.

80.9% in most favored regions 18.9% in additionally allowed regions 0.1% in generously allowed regions 0.0% in disallowed regions

Figure 5.7. Ramachandran plot shows distribution of phi (ϕ) and psi (ψ) dihedral angles for the residues in the final ensemble structures of SH2 protein. On the left is the 1st CYANA 1 structure calculation, and on the right is the final 5th CYANA structure calculation.

5.4 Structure determination and refinement by CNS

5.4.1 Input data

Standard simulated annealing calculations (such as those carried out by CYANA) aim to fold the protein into the correct fold, and get as close as possible to the correct structure. The force fields used in these calculations are aimed at rapid calculation, and at using the experimental data to guide the calculation to produce structures as quickly as possible. They are not designed to produce energetically good protein structures. Thus for example, CYANA uses torsion angle dynamics and does not permit changes to bond lengths or bond angles. It does not include any terms for coulombic interactions or hydrogen bonds, and there is no van der Waals attraction term, simply a van der Waals repulsion to prevent atoms from overlapping. All of this means that one should not expect the structures produced directly from CYANA to look like geometrically good proteins, and indeed they do not. The energies calculated by CYANA are essentially restraint violations (plus van der Waals overlaps etc) which means the free energies are always positive. Clearly this does not represent "real" proteins. It is well established (Ikeya et al., 2016) that in order to produce good structures, it is important to use more realistic force fields. In particular, recent work (Fowler et al., 2020) emphasises that NMR structures are a joint optimisation of experimental restraints and geometrical factors; and that because NMR produces relatively a small number of fairly imprecise restraints, the knowledge-based geometrical terms are very important to produce accurate structures. Hence it is important to optimise the structures from CYANA in more realistic force fields. In particular it is important to optimise the structures using explicit solvent in the simulations, to get hydrogen bonds more realistic. This requires the addition of a large number of water molecules to the system and therefore makes the calculations much more lengthy. It also produces completely different energetics, because the energies tend to be dominated not by the restraint violation terms but by factors such as bond energy and coulombic terms (Linge et al., 1999). The energies are more realistic, and in particular are usually negative, as they should be for a folded protein.

The structure calculation for SH2 and the following refinement procedure in solvent were

performed using crystallography and NMR system program (CNS) based on a simulated annealing and restrained molecular dynamics protocol (Brünger et al., 1998). Using CNS program to re-generate SH2 structures expands the option of adding more restraints such as sidechain dihedral angles which are restricted when using CYANA software.

Structures were re-calculated and refined in subsequent rounds using a collection of restraints data: a list of unambiguous NOE distances, backbone and sidechain dihedral angles, and hydrogen bonds. The full set of unambiguous NOESY restraints derived from the last 5th CYANA structure calculation were used. In total 1667 distance restraints comprises: 68.7 % of short-range, 11.4 % of medium-range, and 19.9 % of long-range, Figure 5.8. These NOE upper distance lists were converted to be in XPLOR format to use in CNS calculation, by cyana2cns.cya macro. 0 0 20 40 60 80 100 ire
nt:
dr

Figure 5.8. Distribution of NOE distance restraints for each SH2 residue from the last 5th CYANA structure calculation. From the bottom to the top; short-range (intra-residue, white), medium-range (dark grey), and longrange (black).

In addition, Section 4.3.1 discussed in detail the dihedral angle prediction for SH2 from the TALOS-N program. A script within TALOS-N software, talos2xplor.com, was used to read unambiguous φ and ψ angles (classified by TALOS as strong and generous) which are listed in pred.tab and convert them to torsion angle restraints. 93 pairs of angle restraints were converted to XPLOR format for the structure calculation; the values of ϕ and ψ were set as their actual predicted values from TALOS-N and their widths were set to either 20° or double of the predicted standard deviation (DPHI and DPSI), whichever is the largest value (Cartwright, 2015). In addition TALOS-N reported χ^1 sidechain torsion angles which are listed in predChi1.tab. From these predicted angles, fifty-four unambiguous angles were added as further information to the previous torsion angles list.

The hydrogen bond restraints list consists of 38 hydrogen bonds between backbone NH-CO groups that were used as input in the last 5th CYANA calculation. Residues T49, Y54, E73, E74 and Q76 are suggested by the temperature coefficient method to be involved in backbone hydrogen bonded interactions as donors. Those residues are not reported from previous CYANA structure calculations or the structural model, therefore their acceptor partners are still not defined. Because they are located on loops they should be treated with some caution due to the inherent ambiguity in the assignment of the hydrogen bond acceptor. In this case one could consider generating ambiguous restraints for these amides, for example a short distance to any oxygen atom in the protein, or (more simply) to any oxygen atom within the same loop. Thus they can be given multiple possibilities in the assignment of nearby hydrogen bond acceptors.

The final torsion angle restraints set contained 147 angles comprised of 93 pairs of backbone angles and 54 sidechain angles. Moreover the full hydrogen bond restraints set consists of 43 bonds: the five bonds discussed above from loops, written as ambiguous restraints to acceptor oxygens within the same loop, additional to the 38 H-bonds located in the regular secondary structure regions.

5.4.2 Re-calculation and refinement results

One hundred NMR structures of SH2 were generated using CNS. Those structures have various overall energy values ranked in order of increasing total energy shown in Figure 5.9 (a); from 775 kcal/mol to more than 10000 kcal/mol. The higher value of the total energy is mainly caused by distance and dihedral restraint violations. This is a fairly typical profile for an NMR structure calculation, in that most of the structures have fairly similar energy, with only the final four or so having significantly higher energy, indicating a problem in the calculation.

The subsequent widely used procedure is to select the lowest total energy structures from the calculated structures and refine them in explicit solvent against a full force field to minimize the energy (Linge et al., 2003). There is no general consensus on how to select the most appropriate structures for refinement (Spronk et al., 2004). The general assumption is that the structures with the lowest energy from simulated annealing have the fewest restraint violations and so are likely to be good starting points for refinement.

Therefore all 100 structures from the CNS simulated annealing calculation were taken and refined in explicit solvent. As shown in Figure 5.9 (b), there is a strong correlation between the total energy of the structures before and after the refinement. Significantly, the two highest energies before refinement (not shown in Figure 5.9) are the only two structures to refine to a structure with an overall positive energy, again indicating a problem in the initial structure calculation. However as shown in Figure 5.9 (a), not all of the lowest energy structures prior to refinement are the lowest energies after refinement. For example structure No.51 does not have a particularly low total energy before the refinement, but after refining in solvent it is the second lowest total energy structure. The important conclusion that it is more reliable to refine all calculated structures.

Figure 5.9. The total energies of 100 structures calculated using crystallography and NMR system program (CNS). (a) shows the total energy for each structure before and after the refinement. Blue bars indicate the total energy of structure before the refinement, ranked in order of increasing overall energy level. Grey bars represent the total energy of the structures after refining in explicit solvent. Red bars are the 20 lowest total energy structures after the refinement. (b) represents the correlation between the total energy of the structures before and after the refinement (structures with positive energy are un-refined and structures with negative energy are refined in water); the last two models unrefined and refined (which have total energy >10000 kcalmol) are excluded from the plot and the calculation. The trendline of the best fit (in red dash line), the Pearson correlation coefficient (r value), and the p-value are shown. A significant correlation is indicated by p < 0.05.

5.4.3 Analysis of the structures

The accuracy of the NMR structures of SH2 were measured by the *Accuracy of NMR structures using random coil index and rigidity* (ANSURR) method, recently developed in Sheffield, which is the first measuring method comparing the input backbone chemical shifts data with the calculated NMR structure. As explained in Fowler et al., 2020, the ANSURR method evaluates the accuracy of NMR protein structures based on two measurements: the correlation score and the RMSD score. This measuring method combines the matching between the local rigidity from backbone chemical shifts (predicted by Random Coil Index) and the local rigidity from the computed NMR structure (by Floppy Inclusions and Rigid Substructure Topography (FIRST)) into a correlation score which measures the secondary structure, whereas a RMSD score between FIRST and RCI assesses the overall rigidity. Initially this method was used to follow the accuracy improvement in the final ensemble structure derived from CYANA structure calculations, and then the re-calculated and refined structures calculated using the CNS program.

ANSURR score was calculated for the final 20 conformers for each CYANA structure calculation (1^{st} , 2^{nd} , 3^{rd} , 4^{th} , and 5^{th}). As shown in Figure 5.10, there is a continuing significant improvement in ANSURR score with adding more restraints in CYANA structure calculations including the last $5th$ calculation where fewer hydrogen bonds restraints were used. The RMSD and correlation scores are ranked centile scores comparing to all NMR structures in the PDB, meaning that a structure as good as the median PDB structure has a score of 50%, and the maximum possible is 100. The ANSURR score is the sum of the RMSD and correlation scores, and therefore has a maximum possible value of 200.

There is an increase in the overall rigidity of the ensemble structure (RMSD score) while adding more restraints, and also with removing a number of un-confident restraints to avoid introducing bias in the final resulting structure. Moreover the improvement in the correlation score carried into the last CYANA calculation even though the final ensemble structures were computed with fewer restraints. As shown in Figure 5.4, five out of six of the H-bonds removed in the 5th CYANA structure calculation are formed between residues located on the

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middle or at the end of β strands. These H-bonds seem to force the secondary structure to be too organised, and removing them returns flexibility to the secondary structure as measured by RCI which explains the significant increase in the correlation score of the last calculation, as shown in Figure 5.11. That means that in this case, adding more restraints enhanced the overall rigidity of the structure but it did not make it more accurate.

In addition the ANSURR scores were calculated for all 100 re-generated structures and 94 solvent-refined structures, and are shown in Figure 5.10. There is an overall improvement in ANSURR score for structures after refining in solvent which derives from increases in both the correlation and RMSD scores. There is no big change in the correlation score for structures before and after the refinement, because in general refined structures in explicit solvent did not display any major changes in protein fold, and thus no major change in the secondary structure. On the other hand there is a large increase in the RMSD score for structures after refining in explicit solvent due to the big improvements in hydrogen bonding which works to rigidify the whole protein structure (Linge et al., 2003).

Figure 5.10. ANSURR analysis of structure calculations by CYANA and CNS. The sample size of each CYANA calculation consists of the final 20 structures of SH2; CYANA 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.The last two points of the boxplot consist of 100 structures of the unrefined structures (6) and 94 refined structures (7) from CNS (four of the structures did not refine and two are clearly wrong). The middle line in each box shows the median. The ANSURR score is the sum of RMSD and correlation scores and therefore runs from 0 to 200.

Figure 5.11. An example for ANSURR analysis of structure 5 from the 4th and the 5th CYANA calculations. In all the plots the blue line indicates the predicated flexibility calculated by RCI and the orange line represents the predicated flexibility computed by FIRST. In the top of each plot are the structure's number and name, the measured RMSD and correlation scores by ANSURR. The secondary structure shows in each plot on the top as red bars (for α-helix) or blue bars (for β-strand). The black and the purple dash boxes surrounded same residues area (H39-T36, V41-N59, and F60-K63) as an example where there is a change or difference in the predicted flexibility (by RCI) from removing those H-bonds in the 5th CYANA calculation.

5.4.4 Ensemble structure selection and validation

The initial step in the structure validation is to select a set of models from a large number of calculated structures to represent the NMR structure. Typically the structure selection is applied to unrefined structures on the basis of their total energy or the size of the experimental violated restraints (Spronk et al., 2004). After that the selected set of structures are carried through a sequential refining procedure to represent the final NMR structure.

As was shown earlier there is a correlation between the total energy of structure before and after the refinement, however all calculated structures were refined in explicit solvent to achieve more accuracy in the final structure selection. In order to select the final set of ensemble structures from the 94 solvent-refined structures to represent the final SH2 NMR structure, two validation criteria were considered: ANSURR score and total energy. Structures 99 and 100 were excluded from the structure selection as they have large total energy.

As explained previously ANSURR analysis is an indicator of structure accuracy, hence the ANSURR score was measured for all solvent-refined structures. ANSURR scores are rank percentile scores measured against all NMR structures in the PDB, and are the sum of RMSD and correlation scores. Figure 5.12 shows that in general all refined structures have ANSURR score above the average. A score of 200 is the maximum possible, and a score of 50 for either RMSD or correlation is achieved by the median PDB structure. All solvent-refined structures displayed correlation score higher than the median, whereas relatively few structures (14 out of 94) exhibited RMSD score above the median. Fowler et al., 2020 showed that β -sheet structures tend to have worse RMSD scores than helical structures. However this still means that the SH2 structure has a poorer RMSD structure (ie, it is too floppy) than the median NMR structure.

Structures were sorted on the basis of their ANSURR score and the 20 best refined structures, which have highest ANSURR scores above 130, are displayed in Figure 5.13. It is not necessary for those structures to have the lowest total energy.

Figure 5.12. ANSURR analysis for solvent-refined structures. Each score is displayed against the number of the refined structure. (a) Correlation score, (b) RMSD score, and (c) summed ANSURR score.

It is shown in Fowler et al., 2020 that the total energy of a structure is a good measurement to estimate its accuracy. Furthermore the total energy of a structure reflects the size of the restraint energy as it contributes to the experimental restraints, thus a structure with low energy tends to be more accurate because it means having a better fit to the experimental input data (Spronk et al., 2004). However if no manual intervention is applied to check or remove violated restraints after each structure calculation, the total energy of refined structures is expected to be higher than the acceptable average.

Because there is no obvious correlation between the total energy of the solvent-refined structures and their ANSURR score, another 20 ensemble refined structures were selected based on their total energy to compare with the first ensemble models which were selected on the basis of their ANSURR score, as shown in Figure 5.13. The two sets of ensembles were taken to further quality assessment.

There is a confirmed strong relationship between the structure accuracy and the geometrical quality, such that the structures with the best backbone geometry also tend to be the most accurate (Fowler et al., 2020). Thus Ramachandran analysis was applied for both ensemble models whether based on total energy or ANSURR score, to act as an independent validation of whether either selection criterion has genuinely improved structure accuracy. The 20 ensemble models with the highest ANSURR score have better overall Ramachandran distribution than the ensemble models with the lowest total energy, calculated both as means of good percentage of residues in favoured region, and as low percentage of residues in generously allowed and disallowed regions, as illustrated in Figure 5.14.

Lastly the final ensemble NMR structures for SH2 protein were chosen based on a combination between the two validation criteria: a small number of structures were selected as they have both low total energy and good ANSURR scores, shown in Figure 5.13.

Figure 5.13. Performance of ANSURR score against total energy of refined structure. Red circles show the structures with both a good ANSURR score and low total energy. The 20 lowest energy structures are surrounded with a purple dash square, and the 20 structures with highest ANSURR scores are surrounded by a green dash square.

Figure 5.14. Ramachandran distribution plot of φ and ψ angles for the best 20 selected ensemble structural models; left the plot of the 20 ensemble structures that have the best ANSURR score, right the plot of the 20 ensemble structures that have lowest total energy. Residues in red letters are in the generously allowed and disallowed regions.

5.4.5 Validation of the NMR ensemble structure

The final ensemble NMR structures for SH2 protein consist of four models; 1, 5, 9, and 17, Figure 5.13. Those models converged to a similar folded structure.

In general the structures have similar number of total energy and violated restraints. Typically, computed models from an NMR structure calculation are not in complete agreement with the input experimental data due to a range of different reasons such as the presence of different conformations of the same protein in solution (Nabuurs et al., 2004). However in this study where the NMR structure of SH2 protein was determined using an automated NOE assignment and structure calculation with no manual inspection applied to check for inconsistent and incompatible experimental restraints, the disagreement is higher than the average case. Therefore the NOE and dihedral angle energies are the highest among the other parameters. The total energy average of the ensemble with a breakdown of the energies are presented in table 5.3.

The structure accuracy is related strongly to its geometrical quality, thus the validation of the final ensemble structures was checked by Ramachandran analysis. PROCHECK-NMR (Laskowski et al., 1996) was used to generate the Ramachandran plot for each residue in the ensemble structures of SH2 as shown in Figure 5.15 where the average breakdown of residues shows the proportion mentioned on the bottom of the plot. The Ramachandran distribution diagram shows the majority of residue backbone angles are located in favourable regions, while one residues does not. Although about 86% of all residues are in the favourable allowed region, the average quality of the ensemble structures is still below the ideal percentage (> 90%) which represent a good structure. However, it is worth noting that the Ramachandran distribution for this ensemble is better than that for either the good ANSURR ensemble or the low energy ensemble, which in turn are better than the entire ensemble. This provides a good indication that this strategy is a promising way to select good structures from the ensemble.

The positional uncertainty in the molecular coordinates in the final ensemble is represented as the coordinate RMSD value. It is known that NMR protein structures calculated in solution due to their internal dynamics are expected to adopt variant conformations around the correct average (Spronk et al., 2004). Although the precision of the ensemble structure is not necessarily a good method to measure the structure quality (Zhao & Jardetzky, 1994), however a good quality of NMR structure is expected to have low RMSD value. Fowler et al., 2020 found a good correlation between ANSURR score and RMSD precision. In this study where all distance restraints were derived from automated NOE assignment (no manual intervention), the precision of the ensemble is an important measure of structure quality.

The RMSD average of the final ensemble models from the mean for the backbone and sidechain atoms of the structured region of the protein (18-97 a.a) are 0.817 Å and 1.314 Å, respectively. The overall precision of the ensemble is on average, the precision breakdown (backbone and sidechain) of each residue in the sequence of SH2 protein shown in Figure 5.16, a and c. It is clear in Figure 5.16 the big variation in RMSD of the backbone and sidechain atoms appeared at the N and the C termini, additional to slight variation at the big loop connecting βI strand to βII strand, which adopted different folds due to their flexibility in the protein structure and due to the lack of NOEs and hydrogen bond restraints. Although the other regions of the protein have good precision. The NMR structural statistics of the average ensemble models are presented in Table 5.3.

Figure 5.15. Ramachandra distribution plot of φ and ψ angles for the SH2 final ensemble structures. Residues in red letters are in the generously allowed and disallowed regions.

Figure 5.16. The geometrical properties of the final NMR ensemble structure of the SH2 protein. (a) and (c) show histograms of the RMSD deviations from mean coordinates of the backbone-chain in black bars and the sidechain in grey bars, the numbers on the bottom are protein sequence. (b) and (d) illustrate a schematic diagram
 for the predicted secondary structure and the average accessibility along the protein sequence which is represented for each residue as shading. Red boxes surround the most variable parts of the protein according to RMSD. Graphs were generated by PROCHECK-NMR program. gure 5.16. The geometrical properties of the final NMR ensemble structure of the SH2 prote

Table 5.3. NMR statistics for the final ensemble structures for SH2 protein.

5.5 Comparison between NMR and crystal structures

Overall the final NMR structural models of SH2 are well packed into an average well defined structure, Figure 5.18, a. The average secondary structure of the ensemble consists of a central β sheet; three long antiparallel strands (I V41-Q46, II Y54-F60, and III K63-N72), followed by two antiparallel small strands (IV G75-V79 and V L82-F84), all surrounded by two α helices (I 24R-32L and II 87I-V96), Figure 5.15. Moreover the fold of the protein agrees well with the TALOS-N secondary structure prediction as shown in chapter 4, Figure 4.11.

A comparison between the resultant NMR structure of (mouse) SH2 protein and the existing crystal structure of (human) SH2 domain 5w3r.pdb (Hu et al., 2006) allows us to conclude that the structures have mostly a very similar fold. The extra residues at the C and N terminal ends of SH2 protein look to form an integral part of the protein structure as they are close to each other in space and are thus required for correct folding and stability. Also there are a number of residues different between the protein sequences of those two structures including the N terminal tags, which are displayed in the sequence alignment in Figure 5.18. When superimposed by the regular regions of the secondary structure (S23-H97 to S533-H607), the RMSD between the backbone atoms of the NMR and the crystal structures is 1.569 Å, as shown in Figure 5.18, b.

The obvious difference between the two structures appears as low precision in long loops (between β strands β1-β2 (Q46-Y54), β3-β4 (N72-G75), and β4-β5 (V79-L82)) and the beginning of the unstructured C terminal tail (I99-V109) as they are poorly defined in the NMR structure. Also there is a slightly variation at the end part of the first α helix and β strand which in the crystal structure are one residue longer than in the NMR structure, whereas the end of the third β strand in the NMR structure is slightly longer than the crystal structure. Analysis of the ANSURR calculation for this ensemble suggests that the NMR structures in general are too floppy than the expected RCI measure, as shown in the flexibility plots produced by ANSURR for each structure in the final ensemble in Figure 5.17. In other words, it is likely that the NMR structure for this loop is incorrect and is missing one or more restraints (possibly a hydrogen bond), which could markedly improve the accuracy of this loop.

Figure 5.17. ANSURR analysis of each refined structure (1, 5, 9, and 17) in the NMR final ensemble for the SH2 domain. In all the plots the plue line indicates the predicated flexibility calculated by RCI and the orange line represents the predicated flexibility computed by FIRST. In the top of each plot are the measured RMSD and correlation scores by ANSURR, and the structure's number. The secondary structure shows in each plot on the top as red bars (for α-helix) or blue bars (for β-strand).

Figure 5.18. A comparison of the final NMR structure of SH2 with the crystal structure. (a) Superimposition of the final SH2 ensemble structures consisting of four refined structures (1, 5, 9 and 17). The magenta colour represents the low precision regions of the protein. (b) Superimposition of the average of the ensemble NMR structure with the crystal structure (5w3r.pdb) after removing the N terminal tag from both proteins. Dark blue is the crystal structure, and grey is the NMR structure. (N) N-terminal and (C) C-terminal, both conformers are overlaid using the backbone atoms (N, Cα, and Co). The structure superimposition was created by PyMol. The bottom is the ClustalW sequence alignment of SH2 protein of two species; mouse is the SH2 protein of the NMR structure (118 a.a) and homo (human) is the SH2 protein of the crystal structure (628 a.a). Residue numbers are shown on the top or bottom along the protein sequence. The grey highlighted residues are the N terminal tags and the different residues between the two sequences. The yellow highlighted residue is the mutated residue in the protein sequence of the crystal structure.

5.6 Discussion

The NMR structure determination framework presented in Figure 5.1 was used to produce an NMR structure ensemble that has quite good RMSD and a good Ramachandran distribution. ANSURR of the final ensemble shows that both RMSD and correlation scores are above the median, and thus that the structure is good compared to the average NMR structure. However, the final NMR structure of SH2 is slightly different from the reference crystal structure (5w3r) especially in one loop, and more floppy than it should be as proven from ANSURR score. The difference between those two structures is the most commonly pinpointed variation between NMR and crystal structures (Fowler et al., 2020), which are the loops and the unstructured regions.

The first procedure in the NMR structure determination was the CYANA structure calculations. The importance of the CYANA calculation is mainly the NOE assignments produced by CYANA, which were used in the next calculation procedures.

As discussed earlier in this chapter the key of success in the CYANA structure calculation is obtaining the correct fold structure in the first cycle, because the obtained structure in cycle 1 depends on the NOE distances derived from the automated NOE assignment. The initial NOE assignment relies basically on the agreement between the input data as the first filtering criterion imposed before the introduction of other features such as network anchoring and constraints combination. For a successful NMR structure calculation based on automated NOE assignment with no manual intervention, arguably it is the quality of the input data which is critical. Therefore two input data should be checked carefully for consistency: the chemical shift assignments and the NOE peak lists.

In this study the experimental spectra which were used for assignment and the NOE spectra which were used in the structure calculation were checked for chemical shift referencing. However there was no further checking for the consistency between the input data, such as the obtained chemical shift values and the peak positions in the peak lists, to be sure they are matching within the tolerance defined values. Also the presence of a large number of noise

peaks in the peak list reduced their quality and interfered with the real peaks. In hindsight, it would have saved a lot of time to remove many weak signals from the NOE peak list.

For the chemical shifts, a complete and accurate list of at least 90% completeness is required for reliable automated NOE assignment by CYANA. As mentioned in Güntert, 2004 the CYANA algorithm can overcome a big number of incomplete chemical shifts (whether wrong or missing). It is however important to note that some peaks are more important than others. Missing assignments are not important for chemical shifts which contribute to only a small number of NOEs, but there are a small number of essential chemical shifts that can cause a significant distortion in the resulted structure, such as the chemical shifts of protons in aromatic rings which are involved in lots of NOEs. In our study the assignment of the aromatic rings was incomplete with a number of other residues which make in total < 80% of the resonance assignment completed.

It is not realistic to achieve a good NMR structure with only one CYANA run, unless a complete chemical shift assignment and very high quality of peak lists are used, which is hard to reach from real experimental data. The CYANA structure calculation should be repeated until the CYANA performance meets the recommended validation criteria by improving the quality of the input data (chemical shifts and peak lists).

Moreover increasing the weight of the relative conformational constraints in each CYANA calculation may restrict the structure to fit the input data, however as shown in this study, that will not help to correct the NOE assignment in the first cycle as those restraints data will be used just for structure calculation not during the automated NOE assignment.

Furthermore available software for automated NOE assignment and structure calculation such as CYANA can minimize the manual intervention, but not cancel it. In this study no manual inspection was applied to check the resulted automated NOE assignment from the CYANA calculation nor remove the violated restraints, which were used in the next calculation and refinement procedures. The assignments were checked manually before using CYANA, and a number of errors in the CYANA assignment were corrected by forcing it to use the manual assignments.

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Although the resulting NMR structure for the SH2 protein is clearly still too floppy (from the ANSURR analysis), it is not essentially wrong but still needs further improvement. In particular, it would be ideal to find further restraints for the loop connecting β -strands 1 and 2.

Chapter 6 NMR study of the interaction between the SH2 domain and the C terminal tail

This chapter focuses on the interactions between the intrinsically disordered C-terminal tail of SH2B1 β isoform and the SH2 domain that precedes it, to examine whether this interaction is likely to have a biological function. Because the tail contains a tyrosine (Tyr139) that is suggested to be phosphorylated in *vivo* by KinasePhos web tool (Huang et al., 2005), the study concentrates on the effect of phosphorylation of Tyr139, mainly using NMR.

The first approach was to detect interactions between the SH2 domain and the tethered $pY139$ on the basis of the induced chemical shift changes observed in $15N$ HSQC spectra recorded from the labelled protein under non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated states. Also the changes in the chemical shift were used to determine the bound ligand location.

The second approach was NMR titration experiments of SH2 protein with a synthetic Cterminal peptide [GDRCpTyrPDASST]. The experiments involved repeated ¹⁵N HSQC measurements with serial additions of ligand stock to the protein sample. The valuable information extracted from the titration experiments were CSPs which were used to identify the residues involved in the binding interaction with the C terminal titrated ligand, and to provide information about the affinity of the interaction.

The determined 3D NMR structure of SH2B domain which was described in chapter 5 was used to map the interacting residues based on CSP data upon binding to the tethered pTyr139 site and to the free C-terminal ligand. These results were used to characterise the location of those residues and understand the recognition mechanism of SH2 domain in both cases.

6.1 Characterisation of protein-tethered pTyr139 ligand interaction

The tagged SH2c Y114F mutant protein (160 a.a) was expressed as a ^{15}N and ^{13}C labelled protein as described in Chapter 3. The phosphorylation of Tyr139 at the C-terminus of the SH2c was done using Fer Kinase enzyme as it was predicted by Group-based Prediction System 3.0 database to be able to phosphorylate this site (Xue et al., 2008) as explained in Section 3.3.

After that the backbone resonance assignments of the double labelled unphosphorylated SH2c and phosphorylated SH2c proteins including the downstream 45 residues of intrinsically disordered tail were assigned using the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum and the standard triple resonance NMR spectra HNCO, HNCACO, HNCA, CBCACONH, and HNCACB. The sequential backbone assignment method which was explained previously in Chapter 4 to assign SH2 protein was followed to assign ¹HN, ¹⁵N, ¹³C', ¹³Cα, and ¹³Cβ backbone nuclei of the unphosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c proteins. The processing of the spectra, chemical shift referencing and peak picking were performed in Felix2007. The sets of nuclei correlated in these spectra, and acquisition parameters of each backbone spectrum of the non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated proteins, are shown in table 2.10.

All observed NH signals in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectra were picked and systematically numbered in Felix2007. After that each 1 H- 15 N signal was analysed and correlated to its local group of backbone nuclei (Cα, Cβ, Cʹ, pCα, pCβ and pCʹ) which is referred to as a spin system in the triple resonance spectra. Then each obtained spin system was matched up with its neighbouring spin system and with the residue type in the protein sequence using simulated annealing in the Asstools program (Reed et al., 2003). In the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum, the observed cross-peaks of amide side-chains were identified as they are not correlated to nuclei in the triple resonance spectra, and so were excluded from the backbone assignment. In total for SH2c protein, 144 out of 160 residues are expected to be identified and assigned, excluding the N-terminal tag residues and eight proline residues.

The backbone resonances of the two proteins were obtained in two different buffers: 100 mM potassium phosphate, 2 mM DTT and 10% D₂O at pH 7 (preferred buffer for NMR study as it is non-protonated buffer; Kozak et al., 2016) and 50 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT and 10% D₂O at pH 7.

The backbone amide chemical shifts of non-phosphorylated SH2c and the phosphorylated SH2c (pTyr139) protein were assigned and compared, to confirm the likely phosphorylation site of Tyr139 at the C-terminus of the SH2c protein, and study the expected interaction between the SH2 domain to the tethered phospho-tyrosine 139 site. The study was based on analysis of the ¹H and ¹⁵N chemical shift perturbations of the SH2c proteins in ¹⁵N HSQC spectra. CSP or induced chemical shift changes occur as result of interaction or conformational change (Zuiderweg, 2002; Williamson, 2013).

The bound ligand location is defined based on chemical shift changes. The weighted averages of the chemical shifts of the backbone nuclei $(^{1}H, ^{15}N)$ were calculated using the following equation which is described in Williamson, 2013:

$$
\Delta \delta_{HN} = \sqrt{(\Delta \delta H)^2 + (0.14 \times \Delta \delta N)^2}
$$
 (Equation 6.1)

in which ΔδH is the change in chemical shift of the amide proton, ΔδN is the change in the amide nitrogen chemical shift, and 0.14 is an average weighting factor for the ^{15}N shift comparing to ¹H shift. The Δδ chemical shifts of ¹H and ¹⁵N for each observed residue in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectra are shown in Appendix B.

6.1.1 Backbone resonance assignments of the labelled SH2c Y114F in phosphate buffer

The backbone assignments of the non-phosphorylated SH2c protein (\approx 1 mM) were obtained in 100 mM potassium phosphate, 2 mM DTT and 10% D_2O at pH 7. In the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum 142 amide signals were observed and assigned to their specific residue in the protein sequence by identifying its corresponding backbone nuclei using the triple resonance experiments.

The amide signals of residues Trp17 and Gly20 were missing. The absence of Trp17 is most likely due to its unusually high field HN chemical shift, as discussed in Chapter 3. The absence of Gly20 may be due to intermediate chemical exchange or fast exchange with solvent (Englander and Mayne, 1992). In addition the amide peaks for Gln61 and His81 appeared in low intensity in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum and their corresponding backbone resonances were not assigned in the triple resonance spectra. However the corresponding backbone resonances of Trp17, Gly20, Gln61 and His81 were assigned from the spin system of the following residue. In total the backbone assignment was complete for SH2c protein in phosphate buffer at pH 7 except for amide resonances of residues: N-terminal tag, Trp17 and Gly20, Figure 6.1. The backbone amide signals of the downstream 45 residues of the intrinsically disordered tail (from V115 to L159) appeared in a cluster around 8.3 ppm in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum that is compatible with the expected distribution of NMR chemical shifts for random coil (Gibbs et al., 2017; Cornilescu et al., 1999).

Figure 6.1. ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectrum of the labelled SH2c protein in 100 mM phosphate buffer at pH7. a) The full ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectrum and, b) An expansion for the overlapped crowded region which is surrounded by the green dashed box. The assignments of the backbone amide resonances are labelled by residue type and sequence number in black, the side chain amide peaks of Asn and Glu residues are surrounded by a red dashed box, and the sidechain resonances of Trp residues are shown in blue.

The phosphorylation of Tyr139 at the C-terminus of the labelled SH2c was performed as explained in Section 3.3, and about 60 μM of phosphorylated protein in 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer at pH 7 was obtained. The low concentration of the protein sample was due to precipitation during the phosphorylation experiment, and losses during buffer exchange in order to remove unwanted components that were used during the phosphorylation reaction which may affect the quality of the NMR spectra.

Figure 6.2 shows an overlay of the ^{15}N HSQC spectra of non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c proteins which were recorded in identical conditions in phosphate buffer. The majority of the amide signals were in similar positions. Therefore for those peaks where no shift changes were observed, their assignments were copied from the previous assignment of the non-phosphorylated protein. On the other hand there were a number of peaks slightly shifted and a few new peaks. For those peaks, triple resonance spectra were used to assign their backbone resonances. Because of the low concentration of the phosphorylated protein sample, there were six unassigned residues: Q10, W17, G20, T36, E102 and S103. In total, 138 observed backbone amide peaks in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum were assigned to their correlated residue in the protein sequence.

In both backbone assignments of the non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated proteins, due to the low quality of CBCACONH and HNCACB spectra most of the Cβ resonances were not assigned, however the HNCO and HNCA spectra were more sensitive hence \sim 96% of HN, ¹N, Cα, and Cʹ were assigned.

Figure 6.2. Overlaid ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectra of the non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c proteins in phosphate buffer at pH7. a) The full ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectrum, and b) *A*n expansion for the overlapped region which is surrounded by the grey dashed box. The assignments of the backbone amide resonances of the shifted and new residues are labelled by residue type and sequence number in black. The red spectrum is the non-phosphorylated protein, and the blue spectrum is the phosphorylated protein.

6.1.2 Analysis of the interaction of the SH2 with the tethered ligand (pY139) in phosphate buffer

The Δδ chemical shift changes of backbone amide resonances of the SH2c proteins that were obtained under unphosphorylated and phosphorylated states were calculated using equation 6.1. Figure 6.3 shows there are a number of residues exhibiting Δδ chemical shift changes above the estimated threshold (0.015 ppm). $\Delta \delta$ chemical shifts are listed in appendix B.

The largest shift change occurred for Tyr139 around $\Delta \delta \simeq 0.1$ ppm. The limited chemical shift perturbation is consistent with the general observation for the phosphorylation of Tyr which leads to a small downfield shift for the backbone amide, because of the distal position of the hydroxyl group (OHη) of Tyr which is attached covalently to the phosphate (PO₄³⁻) group, and thus does not have a big impact on the backbone amide shift (Theillet et al., 2012). The phosphorylation of Tyr does not cause a large perturbation of the backbone amide resonances, whereas it does induce a big downfield chemical shift for the aromatic CHε resonances (Δδ 0.3 to 3 ppm) (Huang et al., 2020; Bienkiewicz et al., 1999).

Moreover there were perturbations for the nearby residues: R137, D141, A142, and S143 (Figure 6.3), because the phosphorylation does not just induce chemical shift changes of the modified residue itself but also the neighbouring residues due to changes in the local environment of Tyr139 (Huang et al., 2020). These observations verified the result of the Mass spectrometry analysis for the phosphorylation of Tyr139, as explained in Chapter 3.

As a consequence of the Tyr139 phosphorylation there was expected to be an interaction between pTyr139 and the positive phosphate-binding pocket residues in the SH2 domain, however there were no observed chemical shift changes in the component residues of the binding pocket (Hu et al., 2003; Waksman et al, 1992), although there were small shifts (Δδ ~ 0.03) for residues Arg50 and Arg95, shown in Figure 6.3. Arg50 is one of the residues that is situated within the active loop binding site (which connects strand β1 to β2), and is known not to have direct interactions with the phospho-tyrosine. It is hydrogen bonded to the sidechain of S47 which interacts directly with the phosphate group of the phospho-tyrosine (McKercher et al., 2017). However there is no observed phospho-tyrosine interaction for residue S47 as shown in Figure 6.1.

The lack of interaction between pY139 and the SH2 binding pocket was a surprise. It is more likely that because the sequence of the C-terminal tail of SH2c ($pY^{139}XXA^{142}$) differs from the ideal SH2 high-affinity ligand (pYXXL/I, JAK2), it is therefore expected to bind with only low affinity (O'Brien et al., 2003; Hu et al., 2003; McKercher et al., 2017). The presence of phosphate ions in the protein sample at high concentration (100 mM potassium phosphate) may be saturating the positive phosphate-binding pocket in the SH2 domain, thus preventing the pTyr139 from fully binding. The missing interactions with the phosphate binding site may be why it compensated for the loss of interaction by binding to Arg50.

In addition there were observed shift changes for residue F114 (Δδ 0.07 ppm) and its nearby primary sequence residues V112, S113 and V115 (Figure 6.3). TALOS-N secondary structure prediction result for SH2 protein shows that residue F114 part of a small β strand at the Cterminus of the SH2 domain, Figure 6.3. One of the possible consequences of pTyr139 competing with the phosphate ions to bind to the positive binding pocket in the SH2 domain is increasing the mobility of the tail which in turn may have caused a conformational change for the fulcrum point of the C terminal tail.

The chemical shift change results reveal that there was a successful phosphorylation of the Tyr139 at the C-terminus of SH2c, but there was no full binding between the tethered phospho-tyrosine 139 site and the phosphate-binding pocket in the SH2 domain. Instead it binds weakly in a different orientation.

Figure 6.3. The chemical shift changes of the SH2c in phosphate buffer at pH 7. a) The changes in the chemical shift of ¹H and ¹⁵N of the non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c proteins were compared, the chemical shift perturbations are plotted versus residue type and number. Bars coloured in accordance to their classification of chemical shift change as: largest shift (Δδ > 0.1 ppm, red), medium shift (0.05 < Δδ < 0.07 ppm, purple) and small shift (0.03 < $Δδ$ < 0.02 ppm, green). The estimated threshold is the blue dashed line (0.015 ppm). b) Mapping the NMR chemical shift changes of ¹H and ¹⁵N onto the 3D structure of SH2 domain, b) the front and c) the back faces of the SH2 domain (180° rotated view). A scheme of the C-terminal tail of the SH2c protein (V96-P160 a.a) corresponding to the residue type and number are shown below the 3D structure. Residues Y¹³⁹PDA are the expected C-terminal ligand that binds to SH2 domain. The underlined residues are the hydrophobic patch residues (LLPF¹⁴⁹). The green and purple labelled residues (VSF¹¹⁴V) are the shifted residues which are part of SH2 domain. TALOS-N predicts short β -sheet stretches for residues 109-111 and 114-115.

6.1.3 Backbone resonance assignment of SH2c Y114F in Tris buffer

To remove all the phosphate ions that may be saturating the phosphate-binding pocket in the SH2 domain, thus possibly preventing the binding to the phospho-tyrosine site, the protein sample's buffer was exchanged to 50 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT and 10% D_2O at pH 7. After that the backbone sequential assignments of SH2c were obtained based on the labelled non-phosphorylated protein using previous assignments made with triple resonance spectra.

Excluding the proline and the N-terminal tag residues, 132 out of a possible 144 were assigned in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum to their sequential backbone resonances in the triple resonance spectra (Figure 6.4). A number of residues remain unassigned in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum: D9, W17, G20, M21, S23, T36, E48, R50, Q61, H81, S103, and S106. That is mostly because of the low quality of the triple resonance spectra in Tris buffer; as commented above for the phosphate spectra, the HNCO and HNCA spectra were more sensitive than the CBCACONH and HNCACB spectra. Therefore 92% and 87% were assigned for the chemical shift of the C α and the Cʹ, respectively, whereas only 53% of the Cβ resonances were assigned.

To compare the obtained 1 H- 15 N assignments for the non-phosphorylated protein with the backbone assignments of the phosphorylated SH2c protein in Tris buffer, the same labelled phosphorylated SH2c protein sample which was used previously to assign its backbone resonances in phosphate buffer was used, and the sample's buffer was exchanged to 50 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT and 10% D_2O at pH 7. During the buffer exchange ~20 μ M of the protein concentration was lost, and the remaining 40 μM double labelled protein was used to assign the backbone resonances using 3D triple resonance experiments.

Out of 144 expected residues for the phosphorylated protein, 111 residues were assigned in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum (Figure 6.5). Due to the low concentration of the protein, 30 residues were unassigned: D9, Q11, L12, S13, G14, W17, G20, M21, S23, R24, T36, F42, S47, E48, R50, Q61, C77, F84, D89, S103, G104, S106, S107, V112, S113, F114, V115, H129, E134, G135, R137, A142, and S144.

In total the backbone resonances of the SH2c pTyr139 were assigned in Tris buffer: 77% of ¹HN and ¹⁵N, 69 % of Cα, 58 % of C', whereas the most of Cβ resonances were not assigned.

Figure 6.4. ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC assignments of the non-phosphorylated SH2c protein in Tris buffer at pH7. a) The full ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectrum, and b) An expansion for the overlapped region which is surrounded by the grey dashed box. The backbone amide resonance assignments are labelled in black. The sidechain resonance assignments of Trp residues are labelled in blue. The sidechain amide peaks of Asn and Glu residues are surrounded by a red dashed box. The red dash ovals are surrounded the sidechain amide peaks of Arg residues.

Figure 6.5. ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC assignments of the phosphorylated SH2c protein in Tris buffer at pH7. a) The full ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectrum, and b) An expansion for the overlapped region which is surrounded by the purple dashed box. The resonance assignments are labelled in black, whereas the sidechain amide peak assignments of the Trp residues are labelled in blue. The sidechain peaks of Asn and Glu residues are surrounded by a red dashed box.

6.1.4 Analysis of the binding interaction of the SH2 with the tethered ligand (pY139) in Tris buffer

Although there were a number of missing residues in the assignment of the phosphorylated SH2c, due either to the low protein concentration or to the interaction with pY139, the reminding 77% assigned residues were enough to compare with the assignment of the nonphosphorylated SH2c Y114F protein.

The $\Delta\delta$ chemical shift of ¹H-¹⁵N between the non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated states of SH2c proteins were calculated using equation 6.1. Residues that have Δδ shift above the calculated mean plus standard deviation (threshold 0.09) were analysed, and coloured in accordance to their classification of chemical shifted range (Figure 6.6.a). Note the different y axis scale compared to Figure 6.3, implying much stronger interactions than were seen in phosphate buffer, and confirming our hypothesis that phosphate in the buffer can compete with the pY-binding site interaction. Δδ chemical shifts are listed in appendix B.

The largest chemical shift changes ($Δδ > 0.3$) were observed for Tyr139 and its neighbours D136 and C138 at the C-terminal tail of SH2c protein. The strong downfield shift for the backbone amide of the Tyr139 is not just due to the phosphorylation of Tyr itself (because in phosphate buffer, the changes around Y139 are much smaller) but more likely to arise from the binding to the phosphate-binding pocket in the SH2 domain, which is also verified by the chemical shift changes in neighbouring residues.

Figure 6.6.a shows that residues Q46, T49, R51, G52, E53, and Y54 displayed chemical shift changes $Δδ > 0.1$ ppm. These residues are located in the loop that connects strands $β1$ and β2. Mapping those residues onto the 3D structure of SH2 domain reveals that they are clustered within the phosphate-binding pocket and probably have a significant role in the interaction with the phosphate group of tethered pTyr139. Moreover residues L22, A27, Q29, and G34 were shifted mostly because of the indirect interaction or conformational change upon the binding to the pTyr139.

In addition, the amide signals of residues L69 and F88 exhibited Δδ CSP above the estimated threshold, as was the NHε1 sidechain of W17 (Δδ 0.09 ppm). According to the data mapped onto the 3D structure in Figure 6.6.b and c those residues are situated on the back of the SH2 domain. These residues do not interact with the pY ligand in classical SH2 interactions. A typical SH2 ligand has the sequence motif $pYx\varphi\varphi$ where φ is a hydrophobic residue (JAK2 has the sequence $p\text{Tyr}^{148}$ ELLT), and the hydrophobic residue at Y+3 interacts with a hydrophobic pocket adjacent to the pY pocket, but separated by a peptide strand that crosses the binding site (Fig. 6.3.b). The SH2c sequence is pTyrPDASSLLPF, and so does not have large hydrophobic residues at Y+3. It does however have hydrophobic residues at Y+6, Y+7 and Y+9, and it is possible for the peptide chain to reach around the back of SH2 and make contact with L69, F88 and W17 sidechains.

In summary, Δδ chemical shift mapping data suggests that SH2 domain binds weakly to the pTyr139 using a similar binding interface to other known SH2 domains, however it reveals a unique interface that contains hydrophobic interactions involving residues after pTyr139, at positions Y+6 to Y+9, as shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6. The chemical shift changes of the SH2c Y114F upon binding to tethered pY139 in Tris buffer at pH 7. a) The changes in the chemical shift of ¹H and ¹⁵N of the non-phosphorylated and phosphorylated SH2c protein in Tris buffer at pH7 were compared. The chemical shift perturbations are plotted versus residue type and number. Residues were coloured in accordance to their classification of chemical shifted range to: small (0.09 < Δδ < 0.13 ppm, green), medium (0.2 > Δδ > 0.25 ppm, purple) and large (Δδ > 0.3 ppm, red). b) Mapping the chemical shift changes upon binding to pY139 C terminal onto the 3D NMR structure of the SH2 domain. The front face of the protein shows the phosphate binding pocket (Q46, T49, R51, G52, E53, and Y54), c) The back face of the protein (180° rotated view) shows the hydrophobic interface (W17:NHε1, L69, and F88). A scheme of the C-terminal tail of the SH2c protein (V96-P160 a.a) corresponding to the residue type and number are shown below the 3D structure. The SH2 domain is in grey, and the C terminal tail (N-CEGDRCY¹³⁹PDASSTLLPFGAS-C) is in black. pY refers to the phospho-tyrosine binding pocket and H refers to the hydrophobic binding pocket. The green and purple parts are residues that showed small or medium CSP, respectively.

6.2 Characterisation of protein interaction with a C-terminal peptide GDRCpTyrPDASST

The synthetic C-terminal phospho-ligand was titrated into the double labelled SH2 protein, to confirm the binding model of the SH2 domain to the tethered phospho-tyrosine 139 site at the C-terminal tail, investigate the structural changes upon the binding to the ligand, and determine the equilibrium dissociation constant of the binding interaction.

6.2.1 Backbone resonance assignments of the double labelled SH2 protein in Tris buffer

The amide backbone resonances of the SH2 protein were assigned in 50 mM Tris, 50 mM NaCl, 2 mM DTT and 10% D_2O at pH 6. The amide resonance assignments were based on the previous SH2 assignments in phosphate buffer at pH 6, because from the overlaid ¹⁵N HSQC spectra almost all the peaks in the $15N$ HSQC spectrum displayed identical chemical shifts, however for the slightly shifted peaks, HNCA and HNCO spectra were used to assign and confirm them.

Excluding the N-terminus and proline residues, 100 out of 105 possible amide resonances in the ¹⁵N HSQC spectrum were assigned to their residues in the protein sequence (Figure 6.7.a). The unassigned residues were W17, G20, E48, Q61, and L111. Residues E48 and Q61 already displayed very low intensity peaks when they were assigned in the phosphate buffer, and residues W17 and G20 were missing.

All sidechain amide groups of Arg residues, except R51, were assigned using HCcoNH and ¹⁵N NOESY spectra.

Figure 6.7. ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC assignments of the labelled SH2 protein in Tris buffer at pH6. a) The full ¹H-¹⁵N HSQC spectrum. The resonance assignments are labelled in black, the sidechain amide peak assignments of the Trp residues are labelled in green, and Arg sidechain peaks are in red. The sidechain peaks of Asn and Glu residues are surrounded by a red dashed box. b) Overlay of NMR titration experiments of ¹⁵N HSQC spectra of 0.08 mM SH2 domain, showing the ¹H-¹⁵N perturbations upon addition of the C terminal ligand.

6.2.2 Analysis of the binding interaction of the SH2 with C-terminal ligand

Unlabelled phospho-tyrosine peptide (11 residues, GDRCpTyrPDASST) was synthesized using the sequence in the region of Tyr139 at the C-terminal end of SH2B1 β isoform (mouse).

The 1 H and 15 N chemical shift perturbation of the labelled SH2 upon interaction with the C terminal phospho-peptide was monitored through ¹⁵N HSQC spectra (Fig 6.7.b). Spectra of SH2 protein (0.08 mM) were recorded in the absence and presence of the ligand, and it was titrated with unlabelled phospho-peptide (3 mM) in molar ratio increases up to a final protein to peptide ratio of 1:2.5. In total eleven titration points were obtained for each amide peak, and the ligand was added to a final concentration of 0.2 mM, to achieve close to saturation of the protein binding site, table 2.13.

As observed in the overlaid ¹⁵N HSQC spectra shown in Figure 6.7.b, upon addition of the phospho-peptide, most of the chemical shift perturbations of the SH2 signals were in the fast exchange regime. The CSP of each peak in ¹⁵N HSQC spectra was recorded. A number of peaks shifted gradually upon binding to the ligand or as a consequence of the conformational change induced by the binding. This gradual change allowed for tracking the chemical shift changes for each amide resonance from free to ligand-bound states of the SH2 protein, thus allowing a transfer of assignments without the need for further experiments to assign new peaks.

The weighted average of amide chemical shift differences for each residue was calculated using equation 6.1, and the $Δδ$ chemical shifts of each observed residue in ¹⁵N HSQC spectra are shown in appendix B. Residues that have $\Delta \delta$ CSP value above the calculated mean plus standard deviation (threshold 0.04) were analysed, and were coloured in accordance with their classification of chemical shifted range, Figure 6.8.a.

As shown in Figure 6.8.a the largest chemical shift perturbation was observed for residue R24 ($Δδ ~ 0.3$ ppm) which is located at the beginning of helix $α1$, also there were shifts for the amide side-chain (HNε) of this residue during the titrations (Δδ 0.08 ppm) (Figure 6.7.b). These changes imply an interaction of the HN and Nε of R24 with the phospho-tyrosine C-terminal peptide. As shown in Waksman et al., 1992, Waksman et al., 1993, and Hu et al., 2006, residue R24 forms a hydrogen bond between the non-terminal nitrogen (N ε) and the phosphate oxygen of the pTyr, and another hydrogen bond between the terminal nitrogen (N) and the aromatic ring of the pTyr of JAK2 peptide. Thus the CSP for R24 is entirely consistent with the binding of pTyr in the normal SH2 binding pocket.

In addition there were medium $1H-15N$ CSP values detected for the corresponding residues that are situated at the active binding loop that connects strands β1 to β2: Q46, S47, R50, R51, E53 and Y54. In the absence of ligand, this loop is known to be in an open conformational state, whereas in the ligand-bound state its conformation changes to cover and bind to the phosphate group. Some residues in this loop such as S47 are known to have a hydrogen bond with the phosphate group of the pTyr as revealed in the crystal structure of the complex of SH2 domain with JAK2 ligand (McKercher et al., 2018). Moreover the chemical shift of the sidechain of R78 (HNε) was perturbed during the titrations (Δδ 0.1 ppm) (Figure 6.7.b), which suggests that a new sidechain NHε interaction occurred for this residue with the phosphotyrosine peptide. As shown in Figure 6.8.b these residues are located in the active binding loop site with R24 and are clustered within the binding pocket and are key components of the phosphate-binding pocket of SH2 domain.

H19, L22, A27, and Q29 displayed a small to medium chemical shift change. These residues are all close to R24. As a consequence of the dual interactions between R24 and the phosphotyrosine ligand, their chemical shifts can be explained from the conformational changes induced by complex formation.

On the other hand slight perturbation was observed for residue L67 which is likely due to interactions with the amino acids C-terminal to the pTyr139 of the peptide; whereas the shifts for L69 are mostly related to the conformational change. As shown in Figure 6.8.a, residues L101, E102 and S103 with L82 were among the residues that undergo changes in 1 H- ${}^{15}N$ chemical shift upon binding. These residues are the components of the second binding pocket of SH2 which is a hydrophobic patch that includes charged residues (Figure 6.8.b). These

residues, which create the hydrophobic patch, orientate the molecules for complex formation by interactions with residue Y+3 (Ala⁺³) to pTyr in the peptide.

Figure 6.8. The chemical shift changes of SH2 upon addition of C-terminal phospho-tyrosine ligand. a) The perturbations in the chemical shift of ¹H and ¹⁵N of the SH2 protein upon binding to the C-terminal ligand are plotted versus residue type and number. Residues were coloured in accordance with their classification of chemical shifted range to: small (0.04 < Δδ < 0.06 ppm, green), medium (0.07 > Δδ > 0.14 ppm, purple) and large (Δδ > 0.34 ppm, red). b) Mapping the NMR chemical shift perturbations onto the 3D NMR structure of SH2 domain, including the amide sidechain of Arg24 and Arg78. The front face of the SH2 domain shows the phosphate binding pocket (pY) and the hydrophobic binding pocket (A^{*3}) .

6.2.3 Estimation of the dissociation constant (Kd) by NMR titration

The dissociation constant (K_d) for the binding of the SH2 domain to the C-terminal ligand was derived from the chemical shift perturbations (Δδ) of SH2 during the NMR titration experiments. To measure the K_d the changes in chemical shift of SH2 domain with increasing concentration of the phospho-peptide were defined by the following equation (6.2) where P and L are the free protein and the free ligand concentrations, respectively, and PL is the concentration of protein-ligand complex.

$$
P + L \xrightarrow[K_d]{} PL \qquad \text{(Equation 6.2)}
$$

Observations of the shifted residues in Figure 6.7 show the binding interactions of SH2 domain with the ligand were in the fast limit on the chemical shift timescale, which is the regime expected for weak interactions (Zuiderweg, 2002; Williamson, 2013). In this situation the ratio of free to ligand-bound protein at any titrated point, n, is proportional to the chemical shift change between the free protein (δ_i) and the complete ligand-bound state (δ_f), as shown in the following equation (6.3)

$$
\Delta \delta_n / \Delta \delta_{\text{max}} = [PL]/[P]_n \qquad \text{(Equation 6.3)}
$$

in which $\Delta\delta_n$ is the chemical shift difference between free and bound protein at titration point n, Δδ_{max} is the maximum chemical shift change which corresponds to (δ_f - δ_i), and [PL]/[P]_n is the concentration ratio of the ligand-bound protein to the total protein.

The equilibrium dissociation constant is measured by connecting the known values of the protein concentration $[P]_n$ and the ligand concentration $[L]_n$ at titrated point (n) to each other by equation (6.4)

$$
\Delta \delta_n = \Delta \delta_{\text{max}} / 2 [(1 + K_d / [P]_n + [L]_n / [P]_n) - \{(1 + K_d / [P]_n + [L]_n / [P]_n)^2 - 4[L]_n / [P]_n\}^{1/2}]
$$
 (Equation 6.4)

Equation (6.4) was used to fit $\Delta \delta_n$ values against the known ligand and protein concentration by non-linear least squares to measure the K_d and $Δδ_{max}$ values of the binding. The fitting saturation curve was applied using the Solver module in Excel program, (Harris, 1998).

6.2.3.1 Kd of the C-terminal ligand binding

The Δδ chemical shift changes of ¹H and ¹⁵N (ppm) of 100 amino acid residues of SH2 were plotted against the total concentration of the ligand (mM) to obtain saturation curves (Figure 6.9). A non-linear least square algorithm with the given total protein concentration was used to determine the K_d and $\Delta\delta_{\text{max}}$ values.

The best fit K_d value was obtained by averaging the individual K_d values of a set of eight selected residues: H19, S23, L25, A28, Q29, V31, L67, and S103. Those residues were chosen as they displayed the best saturation curves (Figure 6.10). The NMR titration data for the binding of SH2 domain to the C-terminal phospho-peptide reveals an average dissociation constant (K_d) of \sim 0.3 mM, as expected from the observed fast chemical shift changes. This is a weak binding for an SH2/pY binding interaction, but is expected because the sequence of the peptide does not correspond well to the consensus SH2 ligand sequence, in particular because it does not possess a large hydrophobic residue at pY+3.

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	V ₅₅	L56	T57	F58	N59	F60	G62	K63	A64
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Figure 6.9. ¹H and ¹⁵N chemical shift perturbations of individual SH2 residues upon titration with C-terminal peptide. Δδ ¹H-¹⁵N CSP were observed for 11 titration points. The y-axis shows the chemical shift of Δδ ¹H-¹⁵N nuclei (0.0-0.04 ppm), and the x-axis is the C terminal ligand concentration (0-0.2 mM). Eight residues were selected to measure the average binding affinity that displayed the best fitted saturation curves.

Figure 6.10. Binding affinity of selected residues of SH2 domain with addition of C-terminal ligand. The dissociation constant K_d for each residue was calculated by fitting the ¹H-¹⁵N chemical shift perturbations of residues: H19, L25, S23, A28, A29, L67, V31, and S103. (∎ observed CSP, ---- calc)*.*

Table 6.1. The dissociation constant K_d values of a set of eight selected residues. Estimated error for the average K_d value is \pm 0.1, which is the standard deviation of the resulting ensemble of the K_d values.

6.2.4 Competing binding between the C-terminal ligand and JAK2 ligand

A recent study (Joe et al., 2017) shows the phosphorylation of tyrosine 753 at the C terminus of SH2B1 α isoform regulates the function of the whole protein, although the regulation mechanism is still unclear. According to that it has been hypothesised that the binding ability of the SH2 domain of SH2B1 β isoform is repressed via binding to the tethered C terminal phospho-tyrosine 139, but that the repressed state of SH2 is disrupted by outcompeting with its high affinity substrate, Janus kinase 2 (JAK2) peptide. This hypothesis is built on the fact that the binding affinity of SH2-JAK2 (K_d 0.320 μ M) (McKercher et al., 2018) is \sim 1000 times stronger than the estimated binding affinity for C-terminal peptide (K_d 300 μ M).

To test the hypothesis of competitive binding between the C-terminal ligand (GDRCpTyr¹³⁹PDASST) and the JAK2 ligand (FTPDpTyr¹⁴⁸ELLTEN) to the SH2 domain, an outcompeting binding experiment was performed. The complex of SH2-C-terminal peptide (0.08 mM protein and 0.2 mM ligand) was titrated with unlabelled synthetic JAK2 ligand peptide (0.5 mM stock) in five titration points up to the final JAK peptide concentration of 0.02 mM, Table 2.14. The concentration of the C terminal peptide was ten times more than the JAK2 peptide. The outcompeting binding was monitored via chemical shift changes arising upon binding using ¹⁵N HSQC spectra (Figure 6.11). There were gradual shifts and disappearances for a number of peaks upon binding to the JAK2 ligand or as a consequence of the conformational change. This does not provide a quantitative estimate of the affinity of the JAK2 ligand, but it does show that it is capable of displacing the C-terminal peptide and that the affinity is at least ten times stronger than the affinity for C-terminal peptide.

As proven in different studies, SH2 domain has a two-pronged mechanism of phosphotyrosine peptide recognition. First, the N-terminal phosphate binding pocket in which both ligands (C-terminal and JAK2) are expected to compete for similar residues or to bind to similar residues within the active binding site. Second, the C-terminal binding pocket which is known to bind to the third residue after pTyr, however due to the diversity in the sequence C-terminal to pTyr of both peptides, they are expected to bind differently to residues that are situated within the binding site.

The crystal structure of the complex of SH2 domain with JAK2 ligand reveals that residues R24, R45 and R68 create the positively charged recognition site of the phosphate-binding pocket, as their sidechains are hydrogen bonded to the phospho-tyrosine (McKercher et al., 2018). In addition to that, the phosphate group is stabilised via a limited hydrogen bonding network involving residues S47, E48, and T49, which are located within the active binding loop that connects strand β1 to β2, as shown in Figure 6.12. Thus, recognition of the phosphate group involves the same interactions for both ligands.

On the other hand, previous observations of CSP upon binding SH2 to C-terminal ligand reveal there were slightly different mechanisms to recognise and bind to the phospho-tyrosine. The CSP data of R24 with other residues on the active binding loop site (Q46, S47, R50, R51, E53, Y54) suggest these are residues involved in the interaction with the phospho-tyrosine. Furthermore the positively changed sidechain interaction of R45 and R68 with the phosphate group which are found in the SH2-JAK2 complex are replaced by the sidechains of R24 and R78 in the SH2-C terminal complex.

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The differences in the phospho-tyrosine binding interface of SH2 for the two peptides was used to prove competitive binding between the C-terminal and JAK2 peptides. Residues R45 and T49 are involved in binding with the phosphate group in JAK2 but not in C-terminal. Also those residues can be identified easily in the $15N$ HSQC spectrum as they appear in a well separated region of the spectrum, thus allowing for tracking their chemical shift changes upon outcompeting binding. As shown in Figure 6.11, the amide signals of R45 and T49 displayed down-field and up-field shifts, respectively, upon binding to the JAK2 ligand. The shift changes of these signals demonstrates that the JAK2 ligand successfully outcompetes C-terminal. In other words, JAK2 binds more strongly than C-terminal, and binding of JAK2 is likely to be able to displace the bound C-terminus *in vivo*, especially in the presence of phosphate in solution. As shown the high concentration of phosphate ions in the NMR sample saturated the pY binding pocket in the non-phosphorylated SH2 domain; and for the phosphorylated protein, even though the phosphorylation of Tyr139 happened, the phosphate ions were able to outcompete the pY139 binding, which is expected to have weak affinity as discussed before.

It is expected that the conserved residues such as R45 within the active binding pocket in the SH2 domain participate in the phosphate binding, suggesting that the recognition of pTyr will be conserved among SH2 domains. However the observed results indicate that the binding of the phosphate group via the phosphate-binding pocket is controlled by the diversity of the ligand sequence. Therefore the sequence of the phospho-tyrosine peptide is not just critical to account for differing affinities of SH2 domain toward substrates, but also controls the binding orientation of pTyr into the binding cavity in SH2 domain. R45 can be considered as the center and base of the binding pocket, due to the dual hydrogen bonding to the oxygens of the phosphate group.

Figure 6.11. Overlaid ¹⁵N HSQC spectra of competition experiments of SH2-C terminal complex upon addition of the JAK2 ligand. The ¹H-¹⁵N chemical shift perturbations show expansions of R45 and T49 upon binding to JAK2 ligand, surrounded by grey dashed boxes.

Figure 6.12. Crystal structure of the complex of SH2 domain and the phosphate group in JAK2 peptide (5w3r) as illustrated in McKercher et al., 2018. a) The SH2 domain components are labelled in black. b) An expansion of the phosphate binding pocket showing residues (R24, S47, E48, T49, R45, and R68, coloured by elements) that are involved in interaction with the phosphate group of Tyr in JAK2 peptide, with measured distance in yellow dash lines. The positively charged sidechains of Arg residues are coloured in pink by elements. The red and orange coloured molecule is the phosphate group of Tyr.

6.3 Discussion

In this study it has been demonstrated that SH2 domain binds to the phospho-tyrosine of the tethered C-terminal tail and phospho-tyrosine in the C-terminal peptide via the phosphatebinding pocket, with some differences in residues involved or cooperating in phosphate binding.

The initial binding interaction studies were carried out in phosphate buffer. A surprising observation in these studies was that there appeared to be very little interaction between the pY and the SH2 phosphate binding pocket. The amino acid sequence of the C-terminus does not match the consensus binding sequence for SH2 domains, but the pY is tethered to the SH2 domain, so it was expected that there would be significant interaction, because of the intramolecular nature of the binding. However, very little binding was observed in 100 mM phosphate buffer. When the buffer was changed, using Tris instead of phosphate, a significant interaction was observed, matching the expected interaction. It therefore appears that 100 mM phosphate is able to compete successfully with the binding of the C-terminal tail. The physiological concentration of phosphate in eukaryotic cells is approximately 2.1 mM, (Xu et al., 2019). It is concluded that the binding of the C-terminal tail of SH2B1 β isoform to the SH2 domain is finely tuned so that in physiological phosphate the tail binds to the SH2 domain but can be easily displaced by consensus ligands such as JAK.

The NMR titration results indicate that SH2 domain follows a similar mechanism to those seen for other SH2 domains to bind to the phospho-tyrosine peptide via a two-pronged model. SH2 domain recognises and binds the phospho-peptide via two binding pockets: the N-terminal phosphate-binding pocket and the C-terminal hydrophobic pocket. According to CSP data residues R24, Q46, S47, R50, R51, E53, and Y54 are clustered within the N terminal binding site and involved in the interactions with the phosphate group of Tyr in the peptide, whereas residues L82, L101, E102, and S103 are situated within the C terminal binding site and create hydrophobic network interactions with Ala⁺³ which is a small hydrophobic residue. As shown in Figure 6.8.b the C-terminal peptide crosses the front of the central β sheet of the SH2 domain.

On the other hand the observations from binding the SH2 domain to tethered pTyr139 reveal a different mechanism of binding to the phospho-tyrosine peptide. As shown in Figure 6.6, more residues that are situated within the active binding site participate in the binding interaction with the phosphate group or affected by conformational change such as T49 and G52. Residues R24, S47 and R50 were not assigned in the complex, and thus it is not clear if they bind to the phosphate group of the tethered pTy139. Other residues (Q46, R51, E53, Y54), which displayed CSP values above the threshold, are clustered within the phosphate binding site in the SH2 domain.

Although the binding of SH2 domain to the phosphate group of the tethered pTyr139 site is similar, in that the phosphate binds to the same residues, there is a different hydrophobic binding interface which consists of residues L69, F88 and sidechain NHE1 of W17. Moreover there were no shifts for residues L82, L101, and E102 (S103 is unassigned), which are the components of the hydrophobic pocket as shown in the titration result for the SH2 domain with the C-terminal peptide.

By contrast, the binding of the synthetic C-terminal peptide GDRCpTyr¹³⁹PDASST does seem to affect the 'consensus' binding residues, namely the phosphate binding site and the hydrophobic patch that includes residues L101, E102 and S103. In other words, the synthetic peptide binds in the consensus position, but the full-length tethered C-terminal tail does not. An obvious difference between these two ligands is that the full-length tail contains several hydrophobic amino acids that come immediately after the C-terminal end of the synthetic ligand. Therefore it has been proposed that residues L69, F88 and NHε1 οf W17 interact with one or more of the extended hydrophobic residues ($Y^{139}PDA^{142}SSTLLPF$) at the C-terminal tail (Figure 6.3), which are not found in more standard SH2 ligands. A number of studies have identified that the only residues that contact SH2 domains are the pTyr with the following three residues in the peptide (Bradshaw and Waksman, 2003). However, the normal β Cterminus only has alanine at Y+3, which is not a large enough residue to interact properly with the hydrophobic pocket. The existence of the different binding mechanism of SH2 to the extended amino acids after the tethered pTyr139 indicates an important role for the diversity of the tail residue type. It has been proposed that the extended hydrophobic tail of the β isoform $(L^{+7}, L^{+8}, F^{+10})$ forms a different recognition motif, which causes the C-terminal tail to fold round the 'side' of SH2 and contact a hydrophobic region on the 'back' face (Figure 6.6).

Chapter 7 General discussion and future work

The SH2B1 protein is found in several signal transduction pathways including those downstream of leptin and insulin, which highlights its functional importance as well as its importance as a therapeutic target involved in specific diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.

This thesis focuses on studying the structure and the intramolecular regulation model of the SH2 domain of SH2B1 β. The structural study used the SH2 domain as a model system to investigate the possibility of solving the solution protein structure using the automatic structure calculation program CYANA, with the new promising validation method ANSURR.

Although SH2B1 isoforms share the same common functional and structural domains, there is less known about the function of the intrinsically disordered C-termini, which is where the different isoforms differ. Characterisation of the biological role of the C-terminal tail will provide greater understanding of the functional diversity of the isoforms. Our investigation shows that the C-terminus of the β isoform contains a phosphorylatable tyrosine which may carry a biological function when it is phosphorylated, because it binds to the nearby SH2 domain and therefore inactivates it, and the binding is outcompeted by a preferred phosphotyrosine ligand, which displaces the C-terminal tail and creates a functional binding site.

7.1 Expression of monomeric SH2 protein

Initial experiments described in Chapter 3 attempted to express the SH2 protein using the consensus boundaries of an SH2 domain, as defined in Uniprot. The protein was expressed with and without an MBP tag, however our results proved that this version of the protein is unstable and not well folded, and thus tends to form homo-oligomers. Addition of a few residues at the C and N termini of the consensus SH2 sequence, based on sequence alignment with other SH2-containing proteins, led to the expression of a monomeric and well behaved protein. The extra residues at the both ends look to form an integral part of the protein structure and are thus required for correct folding and stability. Our structure, presented in Chapter 5, confirms this, as does the crystal structure.

7.2 Determination of the NMR structure of SH2 using fully automatic software

Once the protein had been assigned (Chapter 4), the NMR structure of SH2 protein was determined following an established framework as shown in chapter 5. Using available software for automated structure calculation can reduce the human intervention but does not eliminate it. The automated structure calculation relies basically on the quality of the input data, specifically both the complete chemical shifts list and the NOE peak lists.

Although the CYANA algorithm can handle incomplete chemical shift assignments, it still requires approximately 90% complete chemical shift assignment for reliable automated NOE assignment. That is because an almost complete and accurate chemical shift assignment is critical in NOE assignment as any assignment errors or gaps cause distortion in the resulting structure. In this case a manual intervention is needed.

The automated chemical shift assignment for SH2 protein was obtained firstly using FLYA, then it was checked by manual assignment, in order to create a list with a higher percentage of correct assignments, as discussed in Chapter 4. The automated backbone assignment was nearly correct, but the sidechain assignment had a number of errors. These results highlight the importance of manually checking all assignments before proceeding to the structure calculation.

Beside a complete chemical shift assignment, a good NOE peak list with a low number of noise peaks is required as well for an accurate NOE assignment. Here the second limitation is NOE peak lists as they contained a big number of unreal peaks, such as noise and spectral artifacts, which may interfere with the real peaks or possibly replace missing assignments during NOE assignment by CYANA. In this case it was hard to remove noise peaks from the experimental NOE data, which led to CYANA having problems to achieve a good NMR structure. Therefore a new framework was established based on repeating CYANA calculations, and then using the CYANA output restraints with additional hydrogen bonds derived from temperature coefficients to add more H-bond restraints to subsequent calculations. The additional constraints in each CYANA calculation improved the resulting structure.

A new validation method for structure accuracy called ANSURR was used to check the calculated structure. This method which was created by Nicholas Fowler in our lab, is based on making a relationship between the calculated structure and the experimental data. The resultant structure was checked in every stage throughout the calculations: CYANA runs, CNS calculation, and water refinement. ANSURR scores showed improvement in the resultant structure at each stage. At the end ANSURR scores were combined with the total energy of the structure to select the final ensemble of structures that represent the NMR structure of the SH2 domain. This may be a useful general method for producing a better NMR ensemble.

7.3 Phosphorylation of SH2c and mutant SH2c Y114F by activated kinase

The phosphorylation by Fer kinase targeted tyrosine 139 at the C-terminal tail of SH2c protein. There were two limitations while doing the phosphorylation: an unexpectedly rapid phosphorylation of tyrosine 114 at the end of the SH2 domain, and oxidation of cysteines residues in the C-terminal tail which leads to the formation of disulphide bonds and caused protein precipitation, as described in chapter 3. The oxidation of cysteines results from reducing the DTT concentration in the reaction buffer due to the presence of Mn^{2} ions.

To overcome those limitations, tyrosine 114 was mutated to phenylalanine, and to compensate for the loss of DTT, more DTT was added every hour during the incubation time. Addition of more DTT during the incubation was still not enough to overcome the rapid oxidation of cysteines, therefore the protein still formed disulphide bonds and precipitated. Despite the loss of protein, phosphorylated protein was obtained at low concentration but in adequate amounts for NMR studies.

7.4 The self-regulation mechanism of SH2B1 β protein

It has been hypothesised that the SH2 protein might be inhibited by weak interaction with its tethered phospho-tyrosine site 139 at the C-terminus of the β isoform, and that the autoinhibited state might be disrupted by an outcompeting interaction with good ligands such as JAK2. To investigate the hypothesis two procedures are needed; demonstrate an intramolecular interaction between the SH2 and pTyr139, and measure the binding affinity to compare with the preferred ligand.

As explained in chapter 6, our results indicate that SH2 domain binds to pTyr139 at the Cterminal tail via the phosphate-binding pocket. The intramolecular interaction was outcompeted by phosphate ions in the buffer, which suggests a very weak binding affinity. The C-terminal tail of the β isoform does not contain the typical hydrophobic residue 3 residues after the pY, but it does contain hydrophobic residues 7, 8 and 10 residues after the pY, which weakens the binding. On the other hand there was a remarkable result in Chapter 6 showing that there is a new binding interface for SH2 consisting of L69, F88 and NHε1 of W17, which may interact with the extended hydrophobic residues after pY139 (N----GDRCpTyr139PDASSTLLPFGASD----C).

Furthermore titration of SH2 protein with a short C-terminal phospho-tyrosine peptide without the extended region (GDRCpTyr¹³⁹PDASST) reveals the expected SH2 binding behaviour to the phospho-tyrosine ligand with slightly different cooperating residues in both pockets: binding to the phosphate group via the N-terminal phosphate binding pocket, and binding to a hydrophobic residue at the C-terminal hydrophobic pocket. The estimated binding affinity between the SH2 and C-terminal peptide was shown to be weak (~300 μM) compared to the binding affinity to the preferred ligand JAK2 (~0.320 μM). Binding to the fulllength C-terminal peptide will be stronger, meaning that the weak binding of the C-terminal tail prevents binding of the SH2 domain to unphosphorylated JAK2.

7.5 Future work

7.5.1 Further investigations

7.5.1.1 Prevention of precipitation of the SH2c Y114F protein during phosphorylation

To obtain a high quantity of phosphorylated protein sample and do further investigations, the protein precipitation during the phosphorylation needs to be stopped.

As explained in Chapter 3 the three cysteine residues at the C-terminus were reduced by adding 1.2 mM DTT into the phosphorylation buffer during the phosphorylation. Even with adding more DTT during the incubation time, still the presence of Mn^{2} ions in the kinase buffer greatly decreased the stability of DTT. Reducing the concentration of DTT in the reaction buffer caused cysteine residues to be oxidised and form a cross disulphide bond with another cysteine residue, sequentially reducing the stability of the protein and causing precipitation.

It is possible that this problem could be removed by using TCEP instead of DTT, which has an advantage over DTT that it is not affected by Mn^{2+} ions in the buffer which might consequently lead to stopping the protein precipitation. Another option would be to mutate cysteine residues to Alanine to avoid problems arising from DTT reduction and oxidation.

Obtaining a good quantity of protein sample is required to obtain a good NMR spectrum which is needed for further studies, such as to make a complete chemical shift assignment of SH2c while binding to pY139 and using the assignment to find out if the C-terminal sequence undergoes a disorder to order transition upon binding SH2 to pY139; and to define which residues interact with the C-terminal ligand using NOEs.

7.5.1.2 Measurement of the exact Kd

Investigation of the binding of SH2 domain to the phospho-tyrosine of tethered C-terminal peptide, described in Chapter 6, reveals that the phosphate group of the tethered pTyr139 site binds to the phospho-binding pocket in SH2 domain similarly to other SH2 domains, however the extended hydrophobic tail of the β isoform (L⁺⁷, L⁺⁸, F⁺¹⁰) forms a different recognition motif, which causes the C-terminal tail to fold round the 'side' of SH2 and contact a hydrophobic region on the 'back' face, which is a new pocket.

The binding affinity between the phospho-tyrosine C terminal ligand and SH2 domain is expected to be weak as it is outcompeted by phosphate ions in the buffer. However the exact Kd should be measured and compared with the affinity of the preferred ligand JAK2, by using a long pY C-terminal ligand including the bulky hydrophobic sequence $(L^{+7}, L^{+8}, F^{+10})$.

7.5.2 New proposals

7.5.2.1 Cysteine residues at C-terminal tail may have a role in dimerization via forming cross disulphide bonds

It has been hypothesised that the phosphorylated tyrosine 139 might interact with its own SH2 domain, as an internal regulatory mechanism. There was a remarkable observation described in Chapter 6, which is that the phosphorylation of Tyr139 is strongly dependent on the redox state of the solution. There are three cysteines close together in the C-terminal end of the β isoform (C133, C138 and C154), and our results suggest that the tyrosine only gets phosphorylated when the cysteines are reduced. This could be a novel regulatory mechanism for SH2B1 function (β isoform), which needs to be investigated.

7.5.2.2 Possible function for the phosphorylated Tyr114 at the end of SH2

In Chapter 3 our results show surprisingly that Tyr114 at the end of the SH2 domain was

phosphorylated rapidly, even though it does not look like a consensus sequence for Fer kinase. There was considerable precipitation of the protein after phosphorylation of Tyr114. It has been speculated that pTyr114 may create a binding site for another SH2 domain, that would start early and increase during the incubation time leading it to form large molecular assemblies and cause protein aggregation. In vivo, phosphorylation of Tyr114 could possibly produce protein dimerization, which is known to be important for example for binding and activating JAK2.

These comments suggest that Tyr114 may be phosphorylated *in vivo* (Huang et al., 2005), thus it may have a key function. This observation needs to be studied further.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Comparison table between the manual chemical shifts (Ref) and the automated CYANA chemical shifts values (Shift) of SH2 protein, the differences in chemical shift > 0.3 ppm are highlighted. Green highlighted shifts are the un-matched chemical shifts of amide sidechain of Arg, Asn, Gln. Grey highlighted shifts are the un-matched chemical shifts of aromatic sidechain of Tyr, Phe, Trp, His. Blue highlighted shifts are the amide chemical shifts. Purple highlighted shifts are un-matched chemical shifts of aliphatic sidechain of Leu. Dev is Ref-Shift, Extent is number of runs were completed to assign nuclei in FLYA, inside is the percentage of chemical shift value from independent runs which agree with the consensus shift value ,within the defined tolerance values. Inref is the percentage of shift value from 10 independent runs of FLYA which agree with the reference chemical shift value within the defined tolerances values. Total number of automated assigned shifts: 1441, out of them 1088 are strong.

Appendix B

NMR chemical shift changes table of SH2Bc Y114F and SH2 upon binding to tethered pY139 and free C-terminal ligand.

