

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Synapsin-1 and tau reciprocal O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation sites in mouse brain synaptosomes

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O-linked N-acetylglucosamine (O-GlcNAc) represents a key regulatory post-translational modification (PTM) that is reversible and often reciprocal with phosphorylation of serine and threonine at the same or nearby residues. Although recent technical advances in O-GlcNAc site-mapping methods combined with mass spectrometry (MS) techniques have facilitated study of the fundamental roles of O-GlcNAcylation in cellular processes, an efficient technique for examining the dynamic, reciprocal relationships between O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation is needed to provide greater insights into the regulatory functions of O-GlcNAcylation. Here, we describe a strategy for selectively identifying both O-GlcNAc- and phospho-modified sites. This strategy involves metal affinity separation of O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides,  $\beta$ -elimination of O-GlcNAcyl or phosphoryl functional groups from the separated peptides followed by dithiothreitol (DTT) conjugation (BEMAD), affinity purification of DTT-conjugated peptides using thiol affinity chromatography, and identification of formerly O-GlcNAcylated or phosphorylated peptides by MS. The combined metal affinity separation and BEMAD approach allows selective enrichment of O-GlcNAcylated peptides over phosphorylated counterparts. Using this approach with mouse brain synaptosomes, we identified the serine residue at 605 of the synapsin-1 peptide, <sup>603</sup>QASQAGPGR<sup>612</sup>, and the serine residue at 692 of the tau peptide, <sup>688</sup>SPVSGDTSR<sup>698</sup>, which were found to be potential reciprocal O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation sites. These results demonstrate that our strategy enables mapping of the reciprocal site occupancy of O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation of proteins, which permits the assessment of cross-talk between these two PTMs and their regulatory roles.

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## INTRODUCTION

The addition of an O-linked N-acetylglucosamine (O-GlcNAc) is a dynamic post-translational modification (PTM) of serine and threonine residues of nuclear and cytoplasmic proteins that is recognized as a key regulatory process involved in nuclear transport, transcription and translation, signal transduction, cytoskeletal reorganization, proteasomal degradation and apoptosis.<sup>1</sup> The regulatory O-GlcNAcylation process, which is catalyzed by coordinated actions of O-GlcNAc transferase and O-GlcNAc amidase, is reversible and often reciprocal with serine and threonine phosphorylation at the same or nearby residues.<sup>2</sup> The dynamic interplay between O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation and their regulatory mechanisms in signaling, transcription and chronic disease

have been extensively reviewed by Hart *et al.*<sup>3</sup> More recently, Mishra *et al.* hypothesized that phosphorylation could be a prerequisite for O-GlcNAcylation and that tyrosine phosphorylation has a role in the interplay between serine/threonine O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation.<sup>4</sup>

Various enrichment strategies for isolating O-GlcNAcylated peptides coupled with mass spectrometry (MS) techniques have been used to map O-GlcNAc sites. These methods include GlcNAc-binding lectin wheat germ agglutinin (WGA) affinity purification,<sup>5,6</sup> enzymatic labeling of protein O-GlcNAc with N-azidoacetylglucosamine, chemical attachment of a biotin tag followed by affinity purification and ETD MS to identify O-GlcNAc sites,<sup>7</sup> and selective enrichment of O-GlcNAcylated peptides using BEMAD or biotin

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pentylamine tagging followed by affinity chromatography and MS analysis.<sup>8</sup> Despite such technical advances for O-GlcNAcylated protein identification and O-GlcNAcylation site mapping, the study of the dynamics between O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation has been limited owing to the technical difficulty of selectively co-isolating both forms. Hence, non-destructive, highly selective methods for the efficient isolation and detection of PTMs would provide valuable insights into the fundamental roles of O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation in cellular processes.

Here, we describe a method for the isolation, concurrent identification and quantification of O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated proteins. This method is based on the separation of O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides using TiO<sub>2</sub> affinity chromatography, removal of O-GlcNAc and phosphate groups by  $\beta$ -elimination, conjugation with normal dithiothreitol (DTT; d0-DTT) or isotopically labeled DTT (d6-DTT), and isolation of DTT-conjugated peptides by thiol affinity chromatography. The isolated peptides are then identified and quantified by MS. Using this method, we investigated the concurrent transitory PTM events between O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation. Furthermore, we mapped potential reciprocal PTM sites on synapsin-1 and tau peptides isolated from mouse brain synaptosomes.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Isolation of mouse synaptosomes

SJL mice (Jackson Labs, Bar Harbor, ME, USA) were anesthetized and killed by cervical dislocation. The hippocampus and cortex were removed and immediately stored at 4 °C in the homogenization medium (0.075 M sucrose, 0.225 M sorbitol, 1 mM ethylene glycol tetraacetic acid, 0.1% fatty acid-free bovine serum albumin and 10 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4). The tissue was homogenized with 10–15 strokes in a glass homogenizer. Homogenates were centrifuged to remove unbroken cells (1000 g, 5 min, 4 °C). The supernatants were collected by centrifugation at 4 °C and 12 000 g for 10 min. The pellet contains mitochondria and synaptosomes. The pellet was resuspended in medium B (5 mM potassium phosphate, 0.32 M sorbitol, pH 7.5) and centrifuged at 4 °C and 12 000 g for 10 min. The pellet was resuspended in 2 ml of medium B and then added to 14 ml of a two-phase mixture (the final concentrations of 6.4% (w/w) Dextran T500, 0.32 M sorbitol, 6.4% (w/w) polyethylene glycol, 5 mM potassium phosphate and 0.1 mM EDTA, pH 7.8). After 20 inverting of the tube, the two-phase was centrifuged at 4 °C and 1500 g for 1 min. At this step, the upper phase contains synaptosomes, which was added to medium A (1 mM potassium EDTA, 10 mM Tris-HCl and 0.32 M sucrose pH 7.4). Synaptosomes were obtained by centrifugation at 4 °C and 5500 g for 5 min.<sup>9</sup>

### In-solution digestion of proteins

Proteins isolated from mouse brain synaptosomes were dissolved in 8 M urea and reduced with 10 mM DTT for 1 h at room temperature (RT), followed by alkylation with 30 mM iodoacetamide for 30 min at RT in the dark. Proteins were digested with sequencing grade-modified trypsin (Promega, Madison, WI, USA) at a concentration of 1:50 (w/w) overnight at 37 °C. Peptides were desalted on a C18 Sep-Pak cartridge (Waters Corp., Milford, MA, USA).

### Separation of O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides using a TiO<sub>2</sub> affinity column

A TiO<sub>2</sub> affinity column (GL Sciences, Torrance, CA, USA) was prewashed with 20  $\mu$ l buffer A (0.5% TFA in 80% ACN) and then equilibrated with 20  $\mu$ l buffer B (0.4% TFA and 25% lactic acid or acetic acid in 60% ACN). A mixture of O-GlcNAcylated (TAPT (O-GlcNAc)STIAPG) and phosphorylated (TAPT(phospho)STIAPG) synthetic peptides (Invitrogen, St. Louis, MO, USA) in 150  $\mu$ l buffer B was loaded onto the column. Following sample loading, the column was centrifuged at 1000 g for 4 min, and the flow-through fraction was saved. The column was then washed with 20  $\mu$ l buffer B by centrifugation at 3000 g for 1 min followed by 20  $\mu$ l buffer A, and the flow-through fractions were again saved. All the flow-through fractions containing O-GlcNAcylated peptide were combined. Phosphorylated peptide was eluted with 50  $\mu$ l 5% NH<sub>4</sub>OH by two rounds of centrifugation at 1000 g for 3 min, followed by centrifugation with 50  $\mu$ l 30% ACN at 1000 g for 3 min. Both flow-through and elution fractions were desalted with a C18 Sep-Pak cartridge (Waters Corp.), which was prewashed with 100% ACN and equilibrated with 0.1% acetic acid in H<sub>2</sub>O. The pH of the samples was adjusted to below 3.0 by adding 10% formic acid (FA), and samples were then loaded onto C18 columns. The columns were washed with 0.1% acetic acid, and the peptides were eluted with 80% ACN in 0.1% acetic acid in H<sub>2</sub>O. Each eluate was evaporated in a Speed-Vac concentrator (Labconco, Kansas City, MO, USA). The peptides were reconstituted in Solvent A (2% ACN and 0.1% FA in H<sub>2</sub>O) for MS analysis.

### BEMAD reaction

Dried peptides were  $\beta$ -eliminated and subjected to BEMAD via resuspension in 90  $\mu$ l 90% MeOH, 0.25 M Ba(OH)<sub>2</sub>, and 10 mM d0- or d6-DTT (Cambridge Isotope Laboratories, Andover, MA, USA), and the reaction mixture was incubated at 45 °C for 2 h. The reaction was quenched by adding 0.3 M H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub> (pH 5.0). Peptides were dried, cleaned using a C18 Sep-Pak cartridge (Waters Corp.) and dried in a Speed-Vac (Labconco).

### Thiol affinity chromatography

Thiopropyl sepharose 6B beads (GE HealthCare Life Sciences, Pittsburgh, PA, USA) were suspended with de-gassed high-pressure liquid chromatography (HPLC)-grade H<sub>2</sub>O. The swelled beads were transferred onto spin columns and washed seven times with 500  $\mu$ l de-gassed H<sub>2</sub>O. Dried DTT-labeled peptides were suspended with 600  $\mu$ l TBS-EDTA (20 mM Tris, 150 mM NaCl and 1 mM EDTA, pH 7.5), mixed with activated Thiopropyl sepharose beads and incubated at RT for 4 h while rotating. After incubation, beads were washed seven times with 500  $\mu$ l TBS-EDTA and then incubated with elution buffer solution (20 mM free DTT in TBS-EDTA) at RT for 1 h before collecting the eluent. The elution fraction was acidified with 10% FA, desalted with a C18 Sep-Pak cartridge and dried in a Speed-Vac concentrator (Labconco). The sample was stored at –80 °C until use.

### Mass spectrometry analysis

Synthetic peptides were analyzed on an Agilent 6430 triple quadrupole mass spectrometer (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA, USA) coupled with an Agilent 1200 nano-HPLC interfaced with the HPLC-chip spray system. The peptides were resuspended in solvent A (0.1% FA in water) and separated on the HPLC-chip column, ZORBAX 300SB-C18 (5  $\mu$ m, 160 nl enrichment column and 75  $\mu$ m  $\times$  150 mm analytical column) with a linear gradient of 0–40% solvent B (0.1% FA in ACN) for 20 min at a flow rate of 300 nl min<sup>-1</sup>. The

spray voltage was set to 1.9 kV and the temperature of nitrogen drying gas was set to 325 °C in the positive ion mode. Full scan range was set from 300 to 1700 *m/z* and the scan time was set to 500 ms.

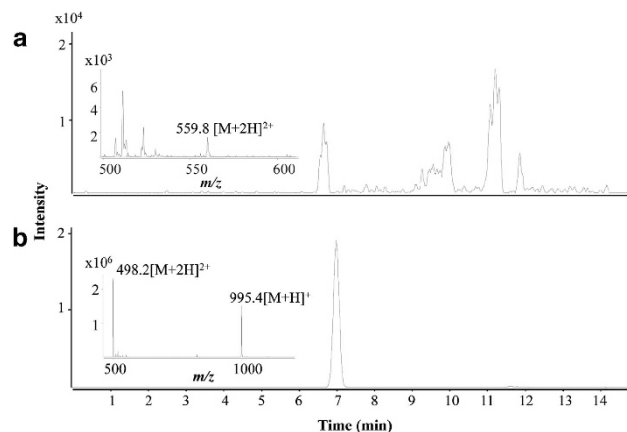
Thiol-enriched peptides were resuspended in 50  $\mu$ l solvent A (2% ACN, 0.1% FA in H<sub>2</sub>O), and 5  $\mu$ l of the sample was analyzed by MS with a house-packed 75  $\mu$ m (inner diameter micro-capillary)  $\times$  10-cm C<sub>18</sub> column with a 2–38% gradient of solvent B (98% ACN, 0.1% FA in H<sub>2</sub>O) for 90 min at a flow rate of 300 nl min<sup>-1</sup>. MS spectra were recorded on an LTQ-velos (Thermo Fisher Scientific, San Jose, CA, USA) interfaced with a nano-HPLC system (Easy nLC, Thermo Fisher Scientific). Standard MS conditions were a spray voltage set to 1.9 kV and a heated capillary temperature of 325 °C. Full scans were acquired in the LTQ analyzer at 400–1400 *m/z*, and the LTQ was operated in a data-dependent mode with one survey MS scan followed by five MS/MS scans on the five most intense ions. Tandem mass spectra were analyzed using the Sorcerer-SEQUEST search engine. The search was performed using the Uniprot database for *Mus musculus* (mouse, 10090), with carbamidomethyl as a fixed modification and variable parameters set for oxidation of methionine and DTT-derivatized peptides including mass increases of 136.25 Da (d0-DTT) and 142.25 Da (d6-DTT) for serine and threonine. We also allowed for a mass increase of 120.25 Da (d0-DTT) and 126.25 Da (d6-DTT) for cysteine.

## RESULTS

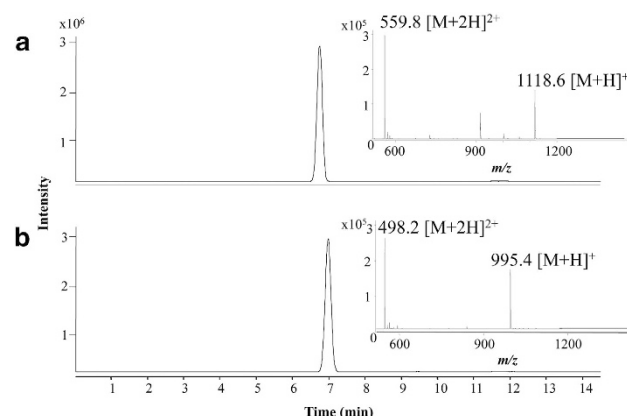
### Metal affinity chromatographic separation of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides

We first evaluated the performance of several different metal affinity matrices (TiO<sub>2</sub>, IMAC and ZrO<sub>2</sub>/TiO<sub>2</sub>) for the separation of *O*-GlcNAcylated (TAPT(**O-GlcNAc**)STIAPG) and phosphorylated (TAPT(**phospho**)STIAPG) synthetic peptides. Peptide separation efficiency was assessed by measuring Liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry (LC-MS) peptide elution profiles. The TiO<sub>2</sub>-column was found to provide better peptide separation efficiency than other metal affinity matrices (data not shown). Therefore, we sought to further optimize conditions for TiO<sub>2</sub>-column separation of the retentate fraction (phosphopeptides) and the flow-through fraction (*O*-GlcNAc peptides) for the subsequent BEMAD reaction.

Figure 1 shows an LC/MS profile of the *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide (Figures 1a, M + 2H, 559.6) and the phosphorylated peptide (Figures 1b, M + 2H, 498.2) isolated from the TiO<sub>2</sub>-column separation with a lactic acid sample loading/binding buffer. The peak area of extracted ion chromatogram of the *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide was much less than the level of the phosphorylated peptide. Moreover, the LC/MS profile of the *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide fraction showed multiple peaks eluted at the late chromatographic gradient condition, indicating that the C18 sample clean-up did not completely remove the acid and other unknown impurities. We also found that owing to its high viscosity and acidity, the lactic acid present in the column-binding buffer interfered with the BEMAD reaction for the flow-through fraction (containing the *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide). Replacing lactic acid with acetic acid in the sample loading/binding buffer improved the *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide recovery (Figure 2).



**Figure 1** Separation of synthetic peptides using TiO<sub>2</sub> affinity chromatography with a lactic acid sample loading/binding buffer. (a) Extracted ion chromatogram of the TiO<sub>2</sub>-column flow-through fraction, with the inset showing the doubly charged peptide ion (*m/z*, 559.8) corresponding to the *O*-GlcNAcylated synthetic peptide (TAPT(**O-GlcNAc**)STIAPG). (b) Extracted ion chromatogram of the TiO<sub>2</sub>-column retentate fraction, with the inset showing singly (*m/z*, 995.4) and doubly (*m/z*, 498.2) charged peptide ions corresponding to the phosphorylated synthetic peptides (TAPT(**phospho**)STIAPG).



**Figure 2** Separation of synthetic peptides using TiO<sub>2</sub> affinity chromatography with an acetic acid-binding buffer. (a) Extracted ion chromatogram of the TiO<sub>2</sub>-column flow-through fraction, with the inset showing singly (*m/z*, 1118.6) and doubly (*m/z*, 559.8) charged peptide ions corresponding to the *O*-GlcNAcylated synthetic peptide (TAPT(**O-GlcNAc**)STIAPG). (b) Extracted ion chromatogram of the TiO<sub>2</sub>-column elution fraction, with the inset showing singly (*m/z*, 995.4) and doubly (*m/z*, 498.2) charged peptide ions corresponding to the phosphorylated peptides (TAPT(**phospho**)STIAPG). The ratio between the two peptides was 1:1.

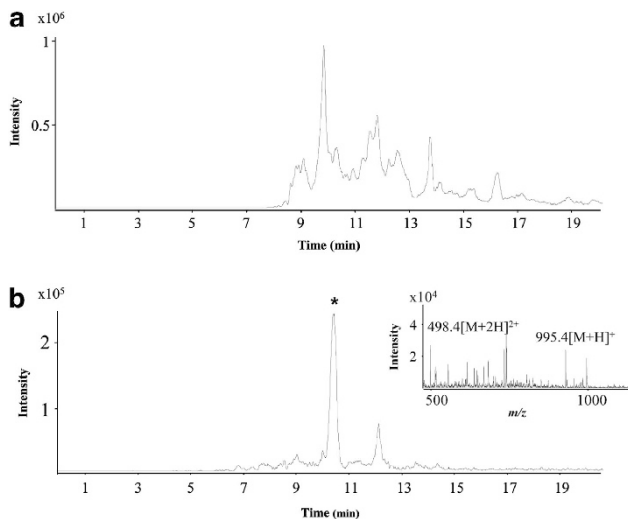
### Selective enrichment of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated synthetic peptides in a complex peptide mixture

With the acetic acid modifier, we further evaluated the TiO<sub>2</sub>-column for selective isolation of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated synthetic peptides in a complex peptide mixture. Equal amounts of *O*-GlcNAcylated and

phosphorylated synthetic peptides (1 pmol each) were mixed with 400  $\mu$ g trypsin-digested peptides obtained from mouse brain synaptosomal proteins. After separation of the peptide mixtures using the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -column, the retentate and flow-through fractions were analyzed by selected ion monitoring for both the *O*-GlcNAcylated ( $M + 2H$ , 559.6) and phosphorylated ( $M + 2H$ , 498.2) peptides using a triple quadrupole mass spectrometer. We detected only the phosphorylated peptide (Figure 3b) but not the *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide (Figure 3a). However, when the flow-through and retentate fractions were processed with the BEMAD reaction, labeled with d0-DTT and d6-DTT, and purified using thiol affinity chromatography, we detected both d0-DTT-labeled phosphorylated peptide (Figure 4a) and d6-DTT-labeled *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide (Figure 4b). Their corresponding ions (peptide masses), phosphorylated peptide ( $M + H$ , 1051.4) and *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide ( $M + H$ , 1057.4) (Figure 4c) were detected with an equal intensity (expected ratio of 1:1) with a mass difference of 6 Da. These results indicate that the *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides present in the complex mixture were well separated and selectively enriched through the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -column separation and thiol affinity chromatography.

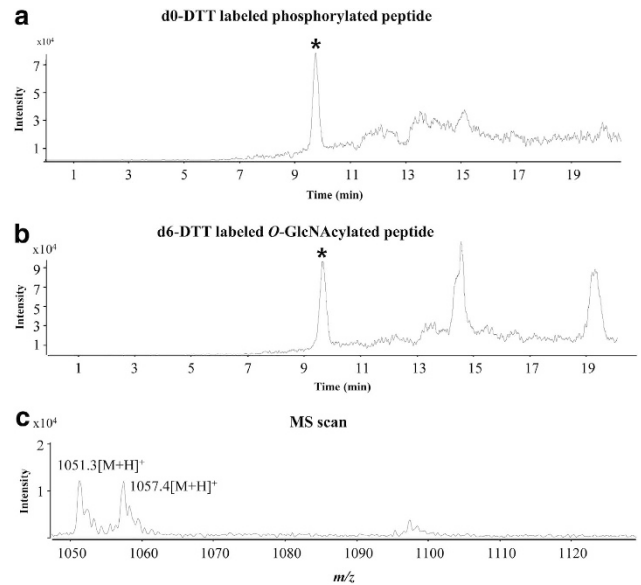
### Concurrent identification and quantification of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated sites of synapsin-1 and tau proteins in mouse brain synaptosomes

Next, we attempted to identify *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated site modifications of cytoplasmic and nuclear

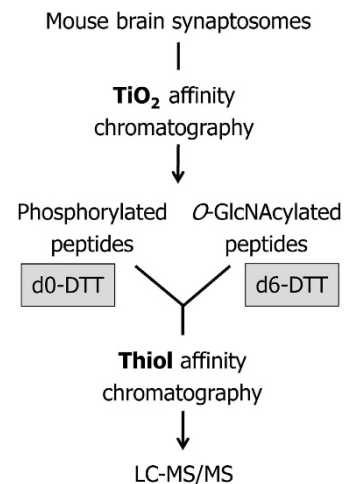


**Figure 3** Detection of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides in a complex peptide mixture (synaptosome) via  $\text{TiO}_2$  affinity enrichment using an acetic acid-binding buffer. (a) LC/MS trace of the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -column flow-through fraction of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides (1:1 ratio) in a complex peptide mixture. (b) LC/MS trace of the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -column retentate fraction of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides (1:1 ratio) in a complex peptide mixture. Extracted ion chromatogram of the phosphorylated peptide (marked with an asterisk), with the inset showing singly ( $m/z$ , 995.4) and doubly ( $m/z$ , 498.2) charged peptide ions corresponding to the phosphorylated peptides (TAPT (phospho)STIAPG).

proteins in mouse brain synaptosomes. The isolated proteins were trypsinized, and the resulting tryptic peptides were separated into phosphorylated and *O*-GlcNAcylated fractions using the  $\text{TiO}_2$ -column and labeled with d0-DTT and d6-DTT, respectively (Figure 5). Mixed d0/d6-DTT-labeled peptides were enriched with thiol affinity chromatography and then analyzed by liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry. By searching a sequence database, we identified peptide sequences of both synapsin-1 and tau showing potential reciprocal sites between *O*-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation. andem MS spectra of the synapsin-1 peptide sequence

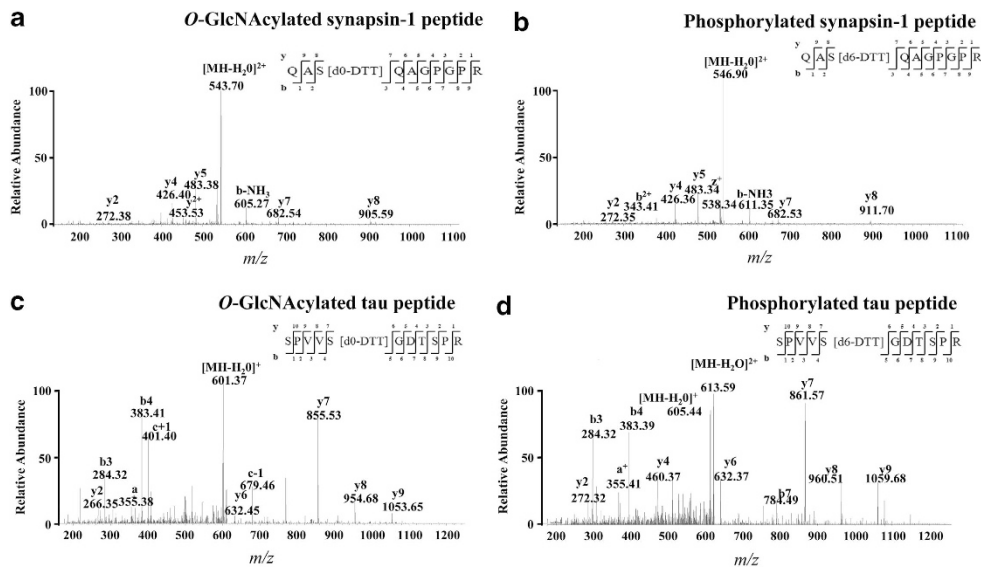


**Figure 4** Selective enrichment of *O*-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated synthetic peptides in a synaptosome sample via BEMAD followed by thiol affinity chromatography. (a) LC/MS trace of d0-DTT-conjugated phosphorylated peptide. (b) LC/MS trace of d6-DTT-conjugated *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide. (c) MS trace of singly charged d0-DTT-labeled phosphorylated peptide ( $M + H$ , 1051.4) and d6-DTT-labeled *O*-GlcNAcylated peptide ( $M + H$ , 1057.4).



**Figure 5** Experimental workflow for concurrent identification of phosphorylated and *O*-GlcNAcylated peptides.





**Figure 6** Tandem spectra of d0-DTT- and d6-DTT-labeling of synapsin-1 and tau peptides. (a) Tandem spectrum of d0-DTT- and (b) d6-DTT-labeling at the Ser<sup>605</sup> residue of the synapsin-1 peptide  $^{603}\text{QASQAGPGPR}^{612}$ . (c) Tandem spectrum of d0-DTT- and (d) d6-DTT-labeling at the Ser<sup>692</sup> residue of the tau peptide  $^{688}\text{SPVSGDTSR}^{698}$ . All corresponding a-, b- and y-ion series are assigned.

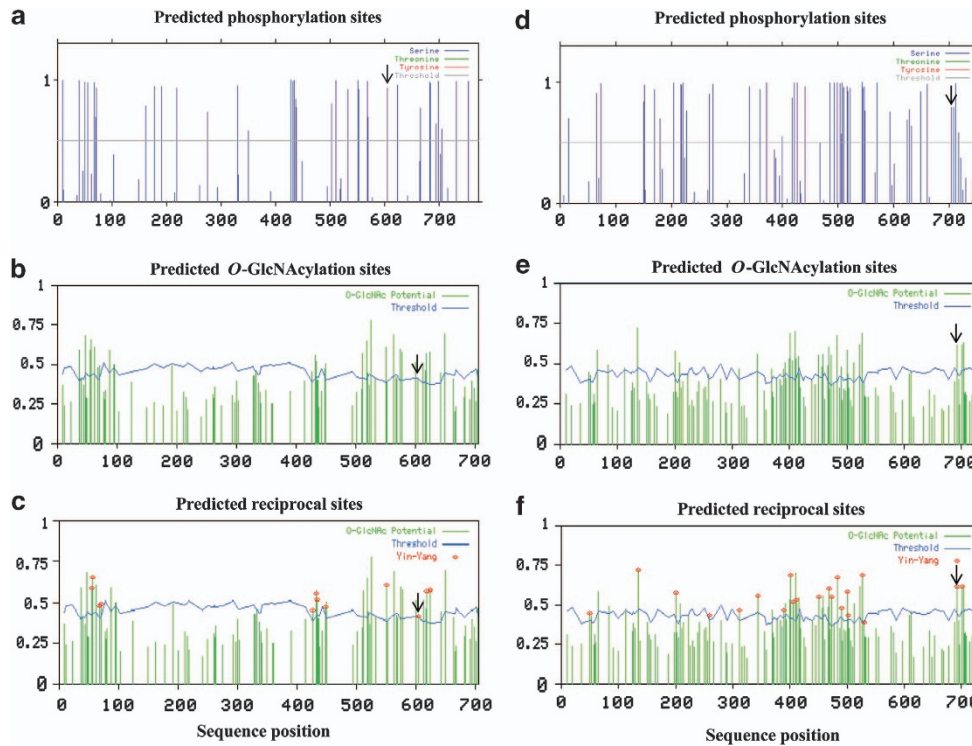
$^{603}\text{QASQAGPGPR}^{612}$  showed that the Ser<sup>605</sup> residue was conjugated with either d0-DTT (Figure 6a) or d6-DTT (Figure 6b), indicating that this residue was formerly modified by either phosphorylation or O-GlcNAcylation, respectively. We also identified the Ser<sup>692</sup> residue of a tau peptide  $^{688}\text{SPVSGDTSR}^{698}$ , and its tandem MS spectra clearly indicated that this residue was modified by either O-GlcNAcylation (Figure 6c) or phosphorylation (Figure 6d). These results were further confirmed by an O-GlcNAcylation prediction tool (dbOGAP, <http://cbsb.lombardi.georgetown.edu/OGAP.html>)<sup>10</sup> and a phosphorylation prediction tool (NetPhos 2.0 server, <http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/NetPhos>).<sup>11</sup> The Ser<sup>605</sup> residue of synapsin-1 was predicted to be a site of both phosphorylation (prediction score, 0.933) (Figure 7a) and O-GlcNAcylation (prediction score, 0.4188) (Figure 7b), and it also appeared to be a potential reciprocal site (Figure 7c) based on the results of another prediction tool (YinOYang 1.2, <http://www.cbs.dtu.dk/services/YinOYang>).<sup>12</sup> Using the same prediction tools, the Ser<sup>692</sup> residue of the tau peptide  $^{688}\text{SPVSGDTSR}^{698}$  was also predicted to be a site of phosphorylation (prediction score, 0.792) (Figure 7d) and O-GlcNAcylation (prediction score, 0.6152) (Figure 7e), as well as a potential reciprocal site (Figure 7f).

## DISCUSSION

Recent advances in techniques for enriching O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides followed by identification of either site modification on ser/threonine residues by MS analysis have facilitated studies of the fundamental roles of protein O-GlcNAcylation in cellular processes. Despite the importance of the reciprocal relationship between protein O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation in nuclear transport, transcription and translation, signal transduction, cytoskeletal reorganization, proteasomal degradation and apoptosis,<sup>3</sup> a

reliable method for concurrently identifying O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation is needed to enhance our knowledge of key regulatory post-translational dynamics in cellular processes. This report describes our strategy for concurrently identifying O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides in a quantitative manner using TiO<sub>2</sub>-column enrichment and BEMAD methods. Although this strategy is similar to that used to identify O-GlcNAcylated proteins,<sup>8</sup> we implemented combined metal affinity chromatography and BEMAD approaches to concurrently enrich O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides and thereby map the two PTMs at the same time.

Metal affinity chromatography utilizing TiO<sub>2</sub>, IMAC or ZnO<sub>2</sub> enriches phosphorylated peptides through chelating phosphate groups at the immobilized divalent cation. As a result, peptide mixtures can be separated into column retentate and flow-through fractions, with the retentate fraction mostly containing phosphorylated peptides and the flow-through fraction mostly containing O-GlcNAcylated peptides and other non-phosphorylated peptides. Out of the three different types of metal affinity chromatographic columns, we found that TiO<sub>2</sub>-based column chromatography affords the most efficient separation between phosphorylated and O-GlcNAcylated peptides. As lactic acid in the TiO<sub>2</sub>-based column chromatography interfered with the DTT conjugation reaction onto the peptides, we replaced the acid modifier with acetic acid. A major benefit of using acetic acid for peptide separation is that the acid can be easily removed from the flow-through fraction by simple vacuum evaporation. We also found that DTT conjugation to the peptide mixtures in the flow-through fraction reduced the sample complexity by isolating a subset of peptides, thereby enhancing O-GlcNAcylated peptide detection. As the BEMAD reaction also affects cysteine-containing peptides in the flow-through fraction, however, perchlorate



**Figure 7** Prediction of phosphorylation, O-GlcNAcylation and reciprocal sites for synapsin-1 and tau. (a) Predicted phosphorylation sites and (b) O-GlcNAcylation sites of synapsin-1. Prediction scores of phosphorylation and O-GlcNAcylation for Ser<sup>605</sup> (marked by an arrow) were >0.5, and (c) the serine residue was identified as a potential reciprocal site (Ying-Yang score of 0.5). The horizontal line indicates the threshold (0.5) for modification potential, and the vertical lines show the potential phosphorylation and O-GlcNAcylation sites for the serine residue in the synapsin-1 peptide. (d) Predicted phosphorylation sites and (e) O-GlcNAcylation sites of tau. Prediction scores of phosphorylation and O-GlcNAcylation for Ser<sup>692</sup> (marked by an arrow) were greater than 0.7 and (f) the serine residue as identified as a potential reciprocal site (Ying-Yang score of 0.6).

oxidation of the cysteine residues may reduce the co-purification of cysteine-containing peptides with O-GlcNAcylated peptides.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, we successfully demonstrated that the TiO<sub>2</sub>-column enrichment/BEMAD reaction enables the reciprocal site mapping of synapsin-1 and tau proteins in mouse brain synaptosomes. By mapping O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated sites on synapsin-1, we identified that Ser<sup>605</sup> in the synapsin-1 peptide sequence <sup>603</sup>QASQAGPGR<sup>612</sup> is both phosphorylated and O-GlcNAcylated. These findings are consistent with previous studies in which O-GlcNAcylation of a specific serine residue was found to modulate its regulatory function.<sup>13</sup> Several research groups, including that of Jovanovic *et al.*, report that this neuronal protein regulates synaptic vesicle trafficking through a reciprocal process between phosphorylation and dephosphorylation of specific synapsin-1 sites,<sup>14–16</sup> and this particular serine residue is reported to be a potential reciprocal site involved in regulating hippocampal synaptic plasticity.<sup>17</sup> We also identified that Ser<sup>692</sup> in the tau peptide sequence <sup>688</sup>SPVVS<sup>698</sup>GDTS<sup>698</sup> is a potential reciprocal site in mouse brain synaptosomes. Interestingly, concurrent alterations of tau O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation have been found to be involved in impaired brain glucose uptake/metabolism.<sup>18</sup>

In conclusion, we demonstrated that a combined TiO<sub>2</sub> affinity separation and BEMAD method allows selective enrichment of O-GlcNAcylated and phosphorylated peptides, which permits the assessment of potential cross-talk between these two PTMs and their regulatory roles. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first systematic assessment of specific serine reciprocal site occupancy of O-GlcNAcylation and phosphorylation of synapsin-1 and tau in mouse brain synaptosomes. Future studies can provide further validation of their functional roles in the pathogenesis of various human diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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*Author contributions:* The manuscript was written through contributions of all authors. All authors have given approval to the final version of the manuscript.

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