

## Original Article

# Regulation and function of nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ in inflammation and cancer

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Received April 27, 2012; accepted May 15, 2012; Epub May 25, 2012; published June 30, 2012

**Abstract:** The nuclear translocation and accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  represents an important mechanism regulating transcription of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent pro-inflammatory and anti-apoptotic genes. The nuclear accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  can be induced by post-induction repression in stimulated cells, inhibition of the CRM1-dependent nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  export by leptomycin B, and by the inhibition of the 26S proteasome. In addition, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is constitutively localized in the nucleus of human neutrophils, likely contributing to the high rate of spontaneous apoptosis in these cells. In the nucleus, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  suppresses transcription of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent pro-inflammatory and anti-apoptotic genes, representing an attractive therapeutic target. However, the inhibition of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent genes by nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is promoter specific, and depends on the subunit composition of NF $\kappa$ B dimers and post-translational modifications of the recruited NF $\kappa$ B proteins. In addition, several recent studies have demonstrated an NF $\kappa$ B-independent role of the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ . In this review, we discuss the mechanisms leading to the nuclear accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  and its nuclear functions as potential targets for anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer therapies.

**Keywords:** I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , NF $\kappa$ B, nuclear protein transport, gene transcription

## Introduction

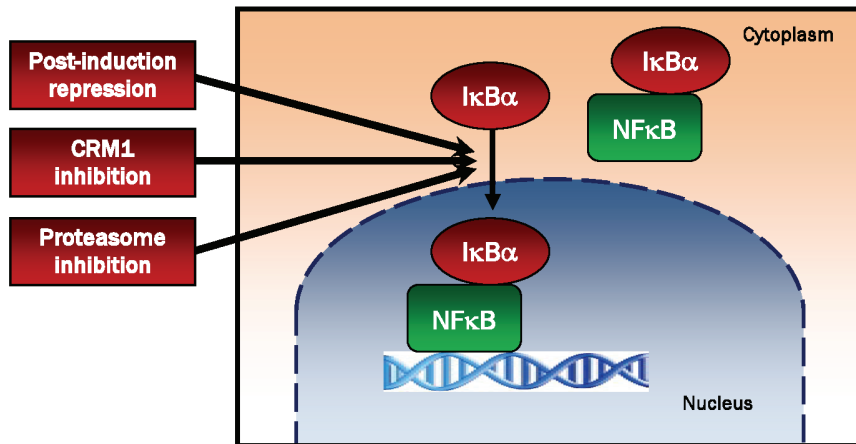
I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is a critical regulator of the transcription factor NF $\kappa$ B, which induces expression of a wide range of genes involved in immune and inflammatory responses, cell proliferation and apoptosis [1-5]. Deregulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  cellular levels and localization results in a variety of diseases, including chronic inflammatory disorders and many types of cancer and leukemia [6-15]. Even though I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  has been originally discovered as a cytoplasmic inhibitor of NF $\kappa$ B, it is now clear that it has important nuclear functions as well.

NF $\kappa$ B proteins form homodimers or heterodimers consisting of p65 (Rel-A), p50, p52, c-Rel, and Rel-B [16-20]. In the classical model of NF $\kappa$ B activation, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  inhibits NF $\kappa$ B activity by masking the nuclear localization signals (NLS) of NF $\kappa$ B dimers and retaining them in an inactive state in the cytoplasm. Following cell stimulation by extracellular stimuli, including inflammatory cytokines, bacterial and viral products, apoptotic signals, and other forms of cellular stress, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is phosphorylated at serine resi-

dues 32 and 36 through a cascade of inducible protein kinases that involve I $\kappa$ B kinase (IKK), ubiquitinated, and selectively degraded by the 26S proteasome [21-26]. This results in unmasking of the NLS of the NF $\kappa$ B dimers, which then translocate to the nucleus and stimulate transcription of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent pro-inflammatory and anti-apoptotic genes. Studies have shown that individual NF $\kappa$ B dimers bind various  $\kappa$ B sites with differential affinity, which is affected by differences in the affinity of each dimer for the  $\kappa$ B site, the ability to interact with associated transcription factors and inhibitors, chromatin environment, and by the post-translational modifications of NF $\kappa$ B proteins [27-32].

One of the first genes induced following NF $\kappa$ B activation is I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , since I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  promoter also contains the NF $\kappa$ B binding region [33-35]. This newly synthesized I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  can then enter the nucleus, remove NF $\kappa$ B from gene promoters, and transport NF $\kappa$ B proteins back to the cytoplasm [36-39]. This feedback regulation by post-induction repression represents a crucial regula-

## Regulation and function of nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$



**Figure 1.** Schematic representation of the main mechanisms inducing the nuclear translocation and accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ . The nuclear translocation and accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  can be induced by the post-induction repression in stimulated cells [36-39], by blocking the nuclear export of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  by CRM1 inhibition [54-61], and by the inhibition of the 26S proteasome [69-71].

tory mechanism terminating NF $\kappa$ B activation during persistent stimulation, and limiting the NF $\kappa$ B response. Loss of this negative feedback regulation as well as increased degradation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  have been associated with increased NF $\kappa$ B activation in inflammatory diseases as well as in numerous types of cancer and leukemia [6-10].

### Regulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ nuclear transport and accumulation

#### *Sequences determining the nuclear localization of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$*

I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is the most abundant and best-characterized member of the I $\kappa$ B protein family that currently consists of nine I $\kappa$ B proteins: I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , I $\kappa$ B $\beta$ , I $\kappa$ B $\epsilon$ , Bcl-3, I $\kappa$ B $\zeta$ , I $\kappa$ BNS, I $\kappa$ Bh, and the precursor proteins p100 and p105. All I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  proteins are characterized by ankyrin repeat domain (ARD), enabling I $\kappa$ B proteins to form complexes with NF $\kappa$ B dimers and bind other proteins. The I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  molecule consists of three main regions: N-terminal region where the inducible phosphorylation and ubiquitination occur, the ARD, and an acidic C-terminal sequence that is important for basal degradation of free I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  [4, 5, 20, 40]. Even though I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  does not contain the classical nuclear localization sequence (NLS; KK/RXK/R), and its small size (37 kD) would allow a simple diffusion through the nuclear pore complex (NPC), I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is transported to the nucleus by an active transport mediated by a nuclear import sequence localized within the ARD of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  [41-43].

The nuclear export of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is facilitated by two

nuclear export signals (NES) located at the amino terminus (N-NES) [44-47] and carboxyl terminus (C-NES) [37, 38]. The nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  export is mediated by the NES receptor CRM1, also known as exportin 1, which belongs to the karyopherin  $\beta$  family and shares sequence homology in the Ran-GTP binding domain with members from this family [48, 49]. In unstimulated cells, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  continuously shuttles between the nucleus and the cytoplasm [38, 44]. However, in most cells, the nuclear export of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is dominant over its import, resulting in the cytoplasmic localization of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ .

The nuclear translocation and accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  can be induced by three main mechanisms: by the post-induction repression in stimulated cells, by inhibition of the nuclear export of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , and by the proteasome inhibition (**Figure 1**).

#### *Induction of nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ accumulation by post-induction repression*

In continuously stimulated cells, the newly synthesized I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  translocates to the nucleus, dissociates NF $\kappa$ B dimers from gene promoters and transports them back to the cytoplasm, thus terminating transcription [36-39]. This feedback regulation by post-induction repression represents a crucial mechanism terminating NF $\kappa$ B activation during persistent stimulation. Impaired post-induction repression may result in a persistent activation of NF $\kappa$ B and increased cell survival. Blocking the nuclear export of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  by CRM1 inhibitors increases the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation, suppresses NF $\kappa$ B activity and in-

duces apoptosis, representing an attractive therapeutic target.

### *Induction of nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ accumulation by CRM1 inhibition*

Leptomycin B (LMB) is a specific inhibitor of the nuclear protein export that interferes with the interaction between NES and CRM1 by covalently binding to a cysteine residue in the central domain of CRM1 [50-52]. It has been discovered in 1983 as a potent anti-fungal antibiotic produced by *Streptomyces* [53]. However, since then, LMB has been extensively used to study the nuclear-cytoplasmic shuttling of CRM1-binding proteins, including I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  [54-57]. Studies from our laboratory have shown that in stimulated human leukocytes, LMB induces nuclear accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  by inhibiting I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  nuclear export, resulting in the inhibition of NF $\kappa$ B activity, and increased leukocyte apoptosis [57-61]. Even though LMB possesses strong antitumor and anti-inflammatory properties [62, 63], its toxicity prevents it from being clinically useful [64, 65]. However, using high-content screening technologies and medicinal chemistry approaches based on modifying LMB, several recent studies identified novel selective nuclear export inhibitors (NEI) that maintain the high potency of LMB but are better tolerated [66-68]. These new NEIs have the potential to inhibit the constitutive activity of NF $\kappa$ B in cancer cells and chronic inflammatory disorders by increasing the nuclear levels of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ .

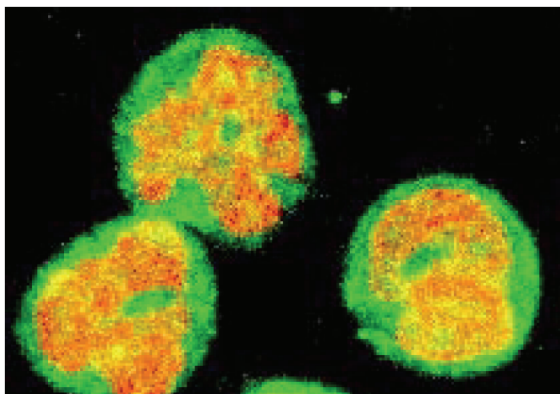
### *Induction of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ nuclear accumulation by the proteasome inhibition*

We have shown that in addition to the post-induction repression and by blocking the nuclear export of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  by the CRM1 inhibition, the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation can be induced by the proteasome inhibition (**Figure 1**) [69-71]. Bortezomib (Velcade, PS-341) and other 26S proteasome inhibitors have been developed to inhibit the cytoplasmic degradation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , thus inhibiting the NF $\kappa$ B signaling in cancer cells [72-75]. However, studies from our laboratory have shown that bortezomib, MG132, MG115 and other proteasome inhibitors inhibit NF $\kappa$ B activity by an additional mechanism that consists of inducing the translocation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  from the cytoplasm to the nucleus in prostate and ovarian cancer cells, HeLa cells, leukemia HL-60 cells, monocytic cells and chronic T cell

leukemia Hut-78 cells [69-71]. The proteasome inhibition-induced nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation is dependent on *de novo* protein synthesis, since cycloheximide (CHX) completely blocks the proteasome-induced nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  translocation [69]. This lack of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  nuclear translocation in response to the proteasome inhibition in CHX-treated cells could be explained by two mutually non-exclusive mechanisms. In the first model, treatment with CHX might prevent resynthesis of a protein that is otherwise necessary for the proteasome inhibition-induced nuclear translocation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , but has a short half-life; thus, treatment with CHX would significantly decrease its level. Alternatively, the proteasome inhibition-induced nuclear translocation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  may require that the cellular (cytoplasmic) level of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  increases above certain threshold level. When cells are treated with CHX, *de-novo* synthesis of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is inhibited, and I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  never reaches this threshold level, even after the degradation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is blocked by the proteasome inhibition. Similar mechanism has been suggested to account for the proteasome inhibition induced nuclear accumulation of glucocorticoid receptor and the varicella-zoster virus DNA binding protein ORF29p [76-78]. This model is also supported by previous studies that used cells transfected with constructs expressing I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  and demonstrated that when I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is over-expressed, it localizes in the nucleus [79-81]. Since bortezomib has been approved by FDA for the treatment of multiple myeloma and is being tested in clinical trials as a combination therapy to treat other cancers as well [82-85], understanding the mechanism how it induces the nuclear translocation and accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  may lead to the development of more specific and effective therapies in the future.

### *Induction of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ nuclear accumulation by UV light*

Interestingly, a recent study by Tsuchiya et al suggested that I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  translocates into the nucleus and associates with the nuclear IKK $\beta$  also in response to UV radiation and other types of oxidative stress [86]. However, in contrast to the proteasome inhibition or to the increased nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation induced by the CRM1 inhibition, this UV light-induced nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  translocation does not result in the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation and inhibition of NF $\kappa$ B activity. On the contrary, the UV light-induced nuclear translocation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is followed by I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  degra-

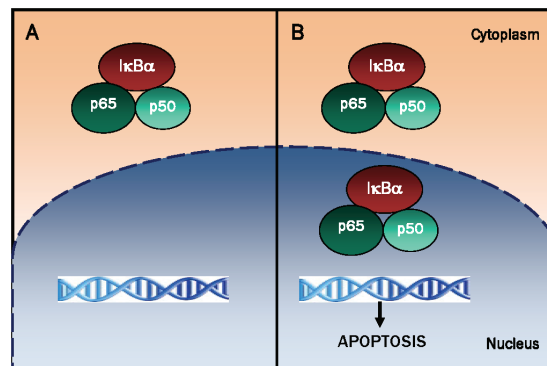


**Figure 2.** Confocal immunofluorescence microscopy of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in human neutrophils. Resting human neutrophils were fixed and analyzed by confocal laser scanning microscopy using anti-I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  antibody and FITC-conjugated secondary antibody (green fluorescence) as described [97]. DNA was visualized with propidium iodide (red fluorescence). The figure illustrates the nuclear localization of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in human neutrophils and overlap of the DNA and FITC-I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  staining (yellow).

ation and activation of NF $\kappa$ B [86].

*Constitutive nuclear localization of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in human neutrophils*

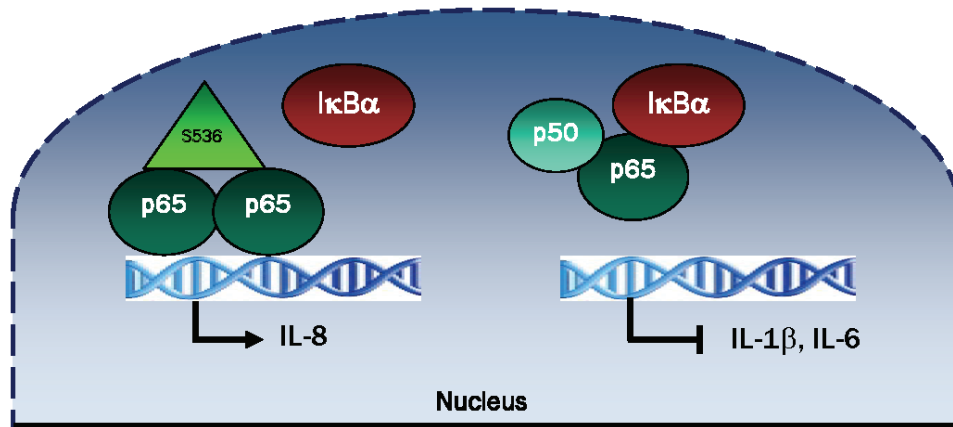
In most resting unstimulated cells, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is localized in the cytoplasm and by binding to NF $\kappa$ B dimers, it inhibits their nuclear translocation [1-3, 87]. In contrast, in human neutrophils (polymorphonuclear leukocytes), majority (more than 60%) of the total cellular I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is localized in the nucleus (**Figure 2**) [88]. Interestingly, neutrophils are cells that have one of the shortest live spans in the body. They circulate in the blood and in the absence of infection, they undergo apoptosis within 24 hours after the release from bone marrow [89, 90]. Even though the NF $\kappa$ B subunits p50 and p65 are present in the nucleus of resting neutrophils as well [88, 91], the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  prevents NF $\kappa$ B activation by binding to nuclear p65 NF $\kappa$ B [57]. In response to neutrophil stimulation with lipopolysaccharide (LPS) or pro-inflammatory cytokines, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is phosphorylated by the enzymes of the IKK complex and degraded by the proteasome both in the cytoplasm and in the nucleus [57, 92]. However, compared to macrophages and other inflammatory cells, the extent of NF $\kappa$ B activation in human neutrophils is considerably lower [93, 94], and this is associated with a decreased production of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent pro-



**Figure 3.** Proposed model of NF $\kappa$ B regulation by nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in human neutrophils. A, In most unstimulated cells, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is localized in the cytoplasm, and by binding to NF $\kappa$ B dimers, it prevents their translocation to the nucleus and NF $\kappa$ B-dependent transcription. B, In human neutrophils, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is localized predominantly in the nucleus [57, 88]. However, the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in the neutrophils associates with NF $\kappa$ B p65 and p50 subunits in the nuclear matrix [97], thus suppressing transcription of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent genes and inducing neutrophil apoptosis.

inflammatory cytokines [95, 96]. Interestingly, this high nuclear accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in resting cells is unique to human neutrophils, since in mouse neutrophils, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is localized mainly in the cytoplasm (unpublished data).

The mechanisms responsible for the high nuclear accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in resting human neutrophils are not understood. There are two possible scenarios. In the first model, the high nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation is the result of an increased nuclear import that is dominant over the nuclear export in human neutrophils. In the second model, the high nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  level could be caused by the intranuclear binding of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ . This hypothesis is supported by our results indicating that the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  associates with the components of the nuclear matrix in human neutrophils [97]. Our study showed that a further increase of the nuclear accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in the neutrophils increases caspase-3 activity and accelerates neutrophil apoptosis [57]. Thus, it seems likely that the high nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation in human neutrophils represents one of the underlying mechanisms responsible for the high rate of spontaneous apoptosis in these cells (**Figure 3**). Since neutrophil apoptosis plays a critical role in the inflammatory response that characterizes sepsis, acute lung injury (ALI), and other inflammatory



**Figure 4.** Schematic representation of the regulation of IL-8 transcription by S536 p65 and nuclear IκBα in LPS-stimulated human macrophages. In LPS-stimulated human macrophages, the IL-8 promoter is occupied predominantly by S536 phosphorylated p65 homodimers, which do not bind to IκBα. Consequently, the IL-8 expression is not inhibited by the LMB-induced nuclear IκBα [60]. In contrast, the gene promoters of IL-1β and IL-6 are occupied by p65/p50 heterodimers, and their transcription is repressed by the LMB-induced nuclear IκBα [60].

disorders [98-102], a better understanding of the mechanisms regulating the nuclear accumulation and function of IκBα in the neutrophils will contribute to the development of safer therapies for ALI, sepsis, and other neutrophil-mediated inflammatory disorders.

#### Nuclear IκBα function

##### *NFκB-dependent function of the nuclear IκBα*

The subunit composition of NFκB dimers determines their affinity for IκBα. *In vitro*, IκBα preferentially binds to p50/65 heterodimer and p65 homodimer, while binding to p50 homodimer is substantially weaker [103-108]. However, even though IκBα can bind to 50 homodimers, it does not inhibit their *in vitro* DNA-binding activity. The *in vitro* interaction between IκBα and p65 has a very low dissociation rate resulting in an extremely high affinity and explaining the long half-life observed for the bound IκBα *in vivo* [109-112]. The precise mechanisms, by which the nuclear IκBα removes NFκB dimers from the target genes *in vivo* are insufficiently understood. Kinetic studies in living cells indicate a dynamic equilibrium between the promoter-bound and free NFκB dimers [113]. According to this model, the dissociating NFκB dimers may be immediately bound by the free IκBα present in the nucleus. In addition, a most recent study using stopped-flow fluorescence and NMR analysis indicates that the removal of NFκB from promoter DNA is a two-step process [111].

First, IκBα forms a ternary complex with NFκB-DNA, and subsequently, the negatively charged PEST domain of IκBα would displace DNA and dissociate NFκB from the promoter [111]. *In vivo*, several additional mechanisms are likely to be involved in the termination of NFκB activity. These mechanisms include termination of NFκB activation by p65 phosphorylation/dephosphorylation and acetylation, which regulate affinity for IκBα, nucleosome remodeling and the nuclear degradation of p65 NFκB by the associated proteasome [114-121].

Studies from our laboratory have demonstrated that the recruitment of IκBα to NFκB-dependent promoters is genes specific [60, 61, 70]. In LPS-stimulated human macrophages, the newly synthesized nuclear IκBα induced by post-induction repression is recruited to TNFα, IL-1β, and IL-6 gene promoters, resulting in the transcriptional suppression of these genes [60]. In contrast, the nuclear IκBα is not recruited to IL-8 promoter and the IL-8 expression is not inhibited by the LMB-induced nuclear IκBα [60]. *In vivo*, the IL-8 promoter is occupied predominantly by p65 NFκB homodimers phosphorylated on serine 536 [60]. Interestingly, this modification was shown to inhibit p65 binding to IκBα *in vitro* [119]. These studies indicate that the genes occupied by S536 phosphorylated p65 homodimers are not inhibited by the nuclear IκBα (**Figure 4**). IKKα, IKKβ and IKKε can phosphorylate p65 on serine 536 [122-127]. However, it is not clear at present whether this phos-

phorylation occurs before p65 binds to DNA or after, as a part of the preinitiation complex assembly. In this context, both IKK $\alpha$  and IKK $\beta$  were shown to be recruited to the promoters of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent as well as NF $\kappa$ B-independent genes [128-132], and could phosphorylate the promoter-bound p65, resulting in a prolonged transcription and decreased binding to the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ . Furthermore, the strength of the *in vivo* nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ -p65 NF $\kappa$ B interaction might be influenced by the DNA sequence of  $\kappa$ B response elements in the regulatory regions of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent genes. This would be consistent with studies demonstrating that a single nucleotide can influence the recruitment of specific NF $\kappa$ B dimers and the required cofactors for efficient gene transcription [133, 134].

In addition, the regulation of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent transcription by the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  depends on the subunit composition of NF $\kappa$ B complexes. Our studies indicate that in the chronic T cell leukemia Hut-78 cells, the expression of NF $\kappa$ B-dependent anti-apoptotic genes cIAP1 and cIAP2 is inhibited by the bortezomib-induced nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , while expression of Bcl-2 is not suppressed [70]. Analysis of the *in vivo* binding of NF $\kappa$ B proteins to cIAP and Bcl-2 promoters by chromatin immunoprecipitation showed that NF $\kappa$ B p65 and p50 subunits are recruited to cIAP1 and cIAP2 promoters, whereas the Bcl-2 promoter is occupied only by NF $\kappa$ B p50. Thus, these data suggest that cIAP1 and cIAP2 promoters associate with NF $\kappa$ B p65/50 heterodimers and this binding and transcription are inhibited by the bortezomib-induced nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ . In contrast, Bcl-2 promoter is occupied predominantly by NF $\kappa$ B p50/50 homodimers and its transcription is not inhibited by I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ .

### *NF $\kappa$ B-independent function of the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$*

The nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  not only regulates NF $\kappa$ B binding to NF $\kappa$ B-responsive promoters and NF $\kappa$ B-dependent transcription, but it also physically interacts with different repression elements including nuclear co-repressors, and histone acetyltransferases and deacetylases (HDACs), resulting in transcriptional repression [132, 135]. In resting cells, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  together with HDACs are recruited to the promoters of Notch target genes correlating with transcriptional repression, whereas in response to NF $\kappa$ B activation, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is released from the chromatin, resulting in Notch-dependent transcriptional activation [136, 137]. In addition, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  negatively regu-

lates HIV-1 expression by directly binding to the HIV-encoded Tat protein, resulting in the nuclear export and cytoplasmic sequestration of the HIV transactivator [138]. According to this study, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  acts as a potent repressor of HIV-1 transcription by inhibiting both NF $\kappa$ B and Tat transacting factors, which are major players in the transcriptional activation and elongation of HIV-1 transcripts [138].

### Conclusion

The studies carried out within the last decade clearly demonstrated that in addition to the cytoplasmic retention of NF $\kappa$ B dimers in unstimulated cells, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  has important functions in the nucleus as well. Nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  is involved in the regulation of numerous pro-inflammatory and anti-apoptotic NF $\kappa$ B-dependent genes as well as NF $\kappa$ B-independent genes through its interactions with HDACs and other transcriptional co-regulators. The nuclear translocation and accumulation of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  can be induced by the post-induction repression in stimulated cells, by blocking the nuclear export of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  by CRM1 inhibitors, and by the proteasome inhibition. A better understanding of the mechanisms regulating the nuclear shuttling of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  in stimulated cells, I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  nuclear translocation and accumulation in response to the proteasome inhibition and the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$  accumulation in resting human neutrophils could lead to the development of new therapies aimed at the inhibition of NF $\kappa$ B activity by increased nuclear localization of I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ . In addition, an important future goal will be to analyze the *in vivo* NF $\kappa$ B post-translational modifications, and DNA and NF $\kappa$ B subunit preferences of the nuclear I $\kappa$ B $\alpha$ , since they might hold a key to more specific anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer therapies.

### Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (GM079581), National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (AI085497), and St. John's University.

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