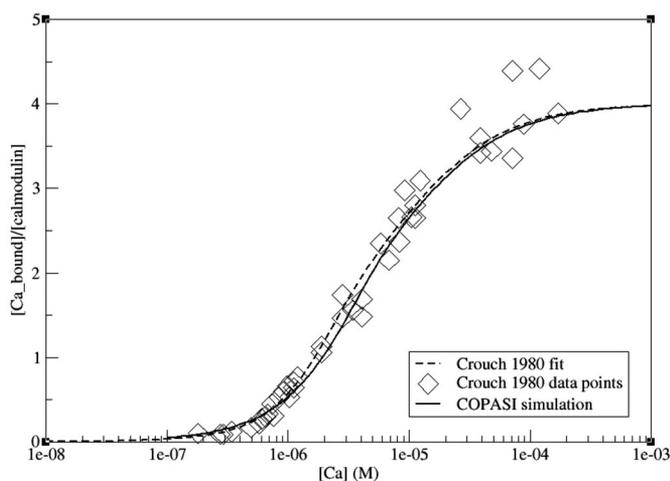


## Corrections

**BIOCHEMISTRY.** For the article “An allosteric model of calmodulin explains differential activation of PP2B and CaMKII,” by Melanie I. Stefan, Stuart J. Edelstein, and Nicolas Le Novère, which appeared in issue 31, August 5, 2008, of *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* (105:10768–10773; first published July 31, 2008;

10.1073/pnas.0804672105), the authors note that incorrect versions of Figs. 3 and 4 were inadvertently incorporated during the final stages of production. The correct figures, as submitted with the original manuscript, and their legends, appear below.

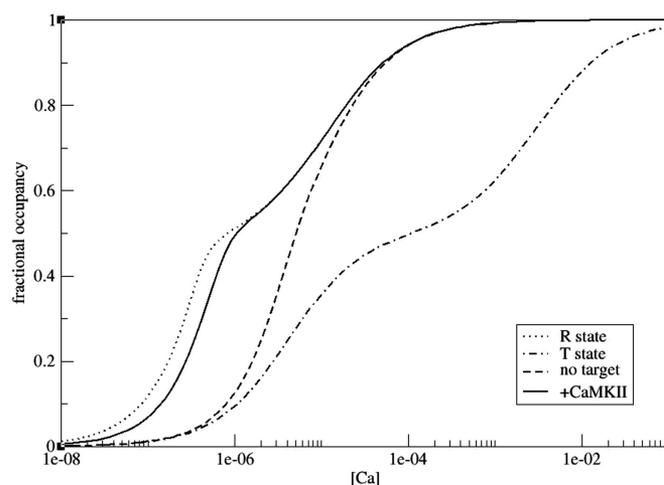


**Fig. 3.** Comparison between simulation results and experimental results reported by Crouch and Klee (16). Moles of calcium bound per mole of calmodulin are shown as a function of calcium concentration. Diamonds, data points measured by Crouch and Klee; dashed line, curve used in Crouch and Klee to fit experimental data points; solid line, steady-state results of simulations at different initial calcium concentrations. Calmodulin concentration was  $2 \times 10^{-7}$  M.

[www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.0810309105](http://www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.0810309105)

**MEDICAL SCIENCES.** For the article “Normal ovarian surface epithelial label-retaining cells exhibit stem/progenitor cell characteristics,” by Paul P. Szotek, Henry L. Chang, Kristen Brennand, Akihiro Fujino, Rafael Pieretti-Vanmarcke, Cristina Lo Celso, David Dombkowski, Frederic Preffer, Kenneth S. Cohen, Jose Teixeira, and Patricia K. Donahoe, which appeared in issue 34, August 26, 2008, of *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* (105:12469–12473; first published August 18, 2008; 10.1073/pnas.0805012105), the authors note that the following should be added to the Acknowledgments: “P.P.S. and H.L.C. were supported by Massachusetts General Hospital/National Institutes of Health (NIH) T32 Training Program in Cancer Biology Grant 2T32CA071345-11. David T. MacLaughlin and P.K.D. were funded by Brigham and Women’s Specialized Program of Research Excellence (SPORE) Grant 5P50CA105009-03, Harvard Stem Cell Institute Grant DP-0010-07-00, and NIH/National Cancer Institute Grant 5R01CA017393-33.”

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**Fig. 4.** Increased affinity of calmodulin for calcium in the presence of a target protein. Upper dotted line, *R* state only; lower dotted/dashed line, *T* state only; dashed line, combined *R* and *T* states in the absence of target; solid line, combined *R* and *T* states in the presence of CaMKII. All lines are steady-state results of simulations at different initial calcium concentrations. Calmodulin concentration was  $2 \times 10^{-7}$  M.

# An allosteric model of calmodulin explains differential activation of PP2B and CaMKII

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**Calmodulin plays a vital role in mediating bidirectional synaptic plasticity by activating either calcium/calmodulin-dependent protein kinase II (CaMKII) or protein phosphatase 2B (PP2B) at different calcium concentrations. We propose an allosteric model for calmodulin activation, in which binding to calcium facilitates the transition between a low-affinity [tense (*T*)] and a high-affinity [relaxed (*R*)] state. The four calcium-binding sites are assumed to be nonidentical. The model is consistent with previously reported experimental data for calcium binding to calmodulin. It also accounts for known properties of calmodulin that have been difficult to model so far, including the activity of nonsaturated forms of calmodulin (we predict the existence of open conformations in the absence of calcium), an increase in calcium affinity once calmodulin is bound to a target, and the differential activation of CaMKII and PP2B depending on calcium concentration.**

allostery | synaptic plasticity | calcium binding | cooperativity | conformational transition

Activity-dependent changes in synaptic strength (1) have long been used as a paradigm to study learning and memory (reviewed in ref. 2). Calcium signaling is a key factor in both long-lasting increases [known as long-term potentiation (LTP)] and long-lasting decreases [long-term depression (LTD)] in synaptic strength. According to a model first proposed by Lisman (3), the coordinated activity of a pair of neurons leads to a large increase in calcium levels in the postsynaptic neuron and an increase in synaptic strength, whereas the activity of only one of the two neurons results in more moderate postsynaptic calcium levels and, consequently, a reduction in synaptic strength. Calcium entering the postsynaptic neuron through NMDA receptors and voltage-operated calcium channels and from the endoplasmic reticulum activates calmodulin. Activated calmodulin may bind to calcium/calmodulin kinase II (CaMKII) and increases its activity (4–6). Active CaMKII enhances the function of AMPA receptor channels by phosphorylating the GluR1 subunit (7). It also mediates an increase of AMPA receptor delivery to the postsynaptic membrane (8). These roles are consistent with reports implicating CaMKII in some forms of learning and memory (9). In contrast, lower amounts of calcium in the postsynaptic neuron will cause calmodulin to activate PP2B, leading to activation of protein phosphatase 1 and a subsequent reduction of CaMKII activity (reviewed in ref. 10). It remains to be explained, however, how calmodulin performs this dual function dependent on calcium levels.

Calmodulin is a ubiquitous regulatory protein that binds four calcium ions (11, 12). It is a single polypeptide chain of 148-aa residues (13) and can adopt two distinct conformations: in the absence of calcium, its EF hands typically adopt an inactive, compact (closed) form (14). When bound to four calcium ions, they are found in an open active form (15).

A variety of models for calmodulin activation and action have been used in the past. Each of these models reflects some properties of calmodulin and is reasonably applicable in contexts in which only these properties are relevant. However, none of these models can satisfactorily account for all of the observed properties of calmodulin such as cooperativity of calcium bind-

ing and different affinities for different calcium-binding sites (16), activation of targets by unsaturated calmodulin (17, 18), and increased affinity for calcium upon binding to targets (18–20). We propose an alternative model, based on a biophysical description of the conformational transitions. Originally applied to oligomeric proteins with symmetric identical subunits (21), this approach can also be adapted to a single polypeptide chain with multiple binding sites. The resulting generalized allosteric model of calmodulin can reconcile different properties of calmodulin, including differential activation of PP2B and CaMKII, residual activation of CaMKII at low calcium concentration, differences between the binding sites in terms of calcium affinity, and the existence of active and inactive conformations.

**Allosteric Model of Calmodulin.** In our model, calmodulin can exist in two different states, the active open [relaxed (*R*)] state and the inactive closed [tense (*T*)] state. Each of these states can bind four calcium ions (Fig. 1). When no calcium is bound, the *T* state prevails, because its free energy is lower than that of the unbound *R* state. Consecutive binding of calcium ions, however, progressively stabilizes the *R* state until the free energy of the *R* state is lower than that of the *T* state, so the *R* state is favored.

The four different binding sites are designated *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D* (*A* and *B* on the N-terminal domain, *C* and *D* on the C-terminal domain, with no sequential order being implied within the domains). Each of the states and each of the reactions is explicitly modeled, with distinct dissociation constants and *R* to *T* transition probabilities for each of the sites (Fig. 2). The constant *L* describes the equilibrium between both states when no calcium ion is bound:  $L = [T_0]/[R_0]$ . If *L* is very large, most of the protein exists in the tense state in the absence of calcium. If *L* is small (close to one), the *R* state is nearly as populated as the *T* state. The constants  $c_A$ ,  $c_B$ ,  $c_C$ , and  $c_D$  describe the ratio of dissociation constants for the *R* and *T* states for each site:  $c_i = K_i^R/K_i^T$ . If *c* is one, both *R* and *T* states have the same affinity for calcium. The *c* values also indicate how much the equilibrium between *T* and *R* states changes upon calcium binding: the smaller *c*, the more the equilibrium shifts toward the *R* state.

The formula for fractional occupation of an allosteric protein in the absence of allosteric effectors (21) can be generalized to describe nonequivalent calcium-binding sites. In the case of four binding sites, the generalized expression is:

$$\bar{Y} = 0.25 \frac{\sum_i \left( \alpha_i \prod_j (1 + \alpha_j) \right) + L \sum_i \left( c_i \alpha_i \prod_j (1 + c_j \alpha_j) \right)}{\prod_i (1 + \alpha_i) + L \prod_i (1 + c_i \alpha_i)}, \quad [1]$$

Author contributions: M.I.S. and N.L. designed research; M.I.S. and N.L. performed research; M.I.S. and S.J.E. analyzed data; and M.I.S., S.J.E., and N.L. wrote the paper.

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Data deposition: The model reported in this paper has been deposited in the BioModels database, [www.ebi.ac.uk/biomodels](http://www.ebi.ac.uk/biomodels) (accession code MODEL9885984404).

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for  $\bar{Y}$  in which only the  $R$  state is considered (using data from ref. 25 in the presence of skMLCK, where it can be assumed that calmodulin exists mostly in the  $R$  state). There are thus four constraints that can be used to restrict parameter space. We used the calcium concentration at  $\bar{Y} = \frac{1}{2}$  and at  $\bar{Y} = \frac{1}{4}$  from the experimental literature to obtain eight equations that depend on  $K_i^R$  values. The eight equations are listed in SI.

To avoid the problem of local minima, we resorted to systematic sampling of parameter space and generated a script that tested all possible combinations of  $K_i^R$  values within a broad range. A detailed description of this can be found in SI. The resulting values are  $K_A^R = 8.32 \times 10^{-6}$  M,  $K_B^R = 1.66 \times 10^{-8}$  M,  $K_C^R = 1.74 \times 10^{-5}$  M, and  $K_D^R = 1.45 \times 10^{-8}$  M.

**Kinetic Simulations.** Although Eq. 1 provides a general formula for calcium saturation in the case of four nonequivalent binding sites in the absence of allosteric effectors, the situation becomes less tractable in the presence of two competing allosteric activators (CaMKII and PP2B, in this case), especially at low calcium concentrations, where initial calcium concentration can differ significantly from free calcium concentration at steady state. Moreover, our intention was to provide an accurate model of calmodulin activation, which can serve as a basis for more complex models of signaling networks within the postsynaptic density (PSD). Both these concerns can be met by formulating the model as a system of reactions for kinetic simulations.

Every reaction was split into a separate forward and backward reaction. The full model comprises 352 reactions: 32 reactions describing calcium binding to the target-free  $T$  state, 32 reactions describing the corresponding dissociation events, 64 reactions describing calcium binding to and dissociation from the target-free  $R$  state, 32 reactions describing transitions between the  $R$  and  $T$  states, 32 reactions describing the binding and dissociation of CaMKII, another 32 reactions describing the binding and dissociation of PP2B, and 128 reactions describing calcium binding to and dissociation from CaMKII- or PP2B-bound calmodulin. A complete list of reactions can be found in SI.

The  $k_{on}$  for calcium binding was assumed to be the same for all four binding sites and both states, because it can be assumed to be controlled only by calcium and calmodulin diffusion and size (random exploration). Different affinities were represented by different  $k_{off}$  values.

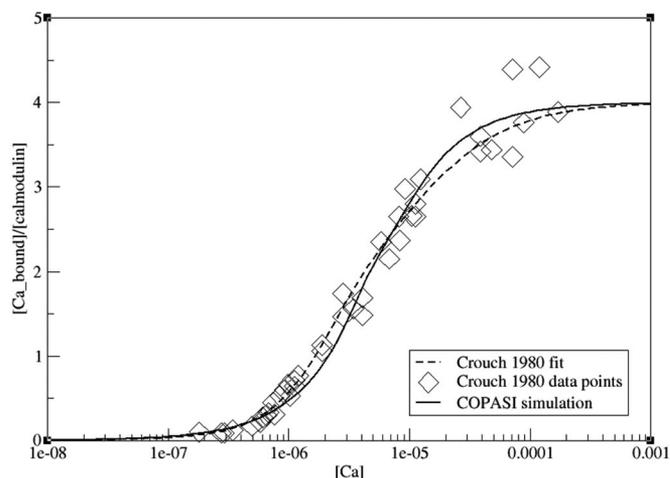
Simulations were run by using the parameter-scan facility of the simulator COPASI (27).

**Comparison of Calcium-Binding Curve to Experimental Results.** Our model reproduces experimental measurements of calmodulin binding to calcium. Fig. 3 compares the outcome of our simulation with results reported by Crouch and Klee (16). [For more figures comparing the simulation outcome with data reported by Peersen *et al.* (25) and Porumb (30), refer to SI.]

Apparent sequential association constants obtained by fitting a version of the Adair equation (43) to our model are listed in Table 1. A comparison to association constants reported in the experimental literature about calmodulin (16, 18, 28–30) shows that our association constants lie within the range of experimentally determined values.

**Activity of Various Forms of Nonsaturated Calmodulin.** By calculating the equilibrium constant for the transition between  $R$  and  $T$  states for calmodulin species that are bound to one or more calcium ions, one can see what fraction of calmodulin is active under steady-state conditions.

For instance, the relation between the  $R$  and  $T$  states for calmodulin with exactly two calcium ions bound is given by  $(R_2/T_2 = 1/(Lc^2 \approx 3))$ . Similarly, without any calcium bound, there are more than  $20,000\times$  more calmodulin molecules in the  $T$  than



**Fig. 3.** Comparison between simulation results and experimental results reported by Crouch and Klee (16). Moles of calcium bound per mole of calmodulin are shown as a function of calcium concentration. Diamonds, data points measured by Crouch and Klee (16); dashed line, curve used in Crouch and Klee to fit experimental data points; solid line, steady-state results of simulations at different initial calcium concentrations. Calmodulin concentration used was  $2 \times 10^{-7}$  M.

in the  $R$  state. With one calcium ion bound, there are still  $\approx 80\times$  more calmodulin molecules in the  $T$  than in the  $R$  state. The equilibrium shifts toward the  $R$  state when two or more calcium ions are bound: with three calcium ions bound, there is  $\approx 800\times$  as much calmodulin in the  $R$  state as in the  $T$  state, and when fully saturated, there are nearly 200,000 calmodulin molecules in the  $R$  state for each calmodulin molecule in the  $T$  state. The shift of equilibrium from  $T$  to  $R$  state with three or more calcium ions bound can also be seen from the free energy diagram (see Fig. 1).

**Altered Affinity for Calcium if Calmodulin Is Bound to a Target.** It has been reported (18–20) that the apparent affinity of calmodulin for calcium increases if calmodulin is bound to a target. To reproduce this effect, we simulated calcium binding to  $2 \times 10^{-7}$  M calmodulin at varying calcium concentrations in the absence of target and in the presence of CaMKII. We also performed simulations on two reduced models, representing only the  $R$  state or only the  $T$  state of calmodulin, respectively. Results are shown in Fig. 4. The fractional occupancy curve illustrates how, with increasing calcium concentration, the calmodulin population shifts from mostly  $T$  state to mostly  $R$  state, with the corresponding affinities for calcium. The presence of target further

**Table 1. Apparent sequential association constants (molar) for our model, and comparison to the models of Crouch and Klee (16), Porumb (30), and to other experimental reports (18, 28–30) and data reviews (28)**

	Our model	Crouch and Klee (16)	Porumb (30)	Reported range
$K_1$	$4.7 \times 10^5$	$3 \times 10^5$	$2.0 \times 10^5$	$1.16 \times 10^5$ – $1.7 \times 10^6$ <sup>*</sup>
$K_2$	$3.7 \times 10^5$	$8.6 \times 10^5$	$8.9 \times 10^5$	$1.4 \times 10^5$ – $8.9 \times 10^5$ <sup>†</sup>
$K_3$	$1.5 \times 10^5$	$1.2 \times 10^5$	$3.2 \times 10^4$	$2.86 \times 10^4$ – $2.9 \times 10^6$ <sup>‡</sup>
$K_4$	$3.7 \times 10^4$	$4.5 \times 10^4$	$1 \times 10^5$	$1.7 \times 10^3$ – $1.12 \times 10^5$ <sup>§</sup>

Constants were obtained by fitting the simulation result with an Adair-type equation (43) as used, for instance, by Crouch and Klee (16) and Porumb (30).

<sup>\*</sup>Ref. 28.

<sup>†</sup>Ref. 30.

<sup>‡</sup>Ref. 18.

<sup>§</sup>Ref. 29.



the fact that targets act as allosteric activators, drawing the equilibrium toward the high-affinity *R* state.

Note that a simple model based on thermal equilibrium has been proposed before (50), although based on sequential bindings of calcium. Furthermore, the author did not try to estimate parameters using experimental information or to validate the model.

**Model Characteristics.** The association constants we determined from the simulation result by fitting it with an Adair-type equation (43) are the observable sequential association constants for the first, second, third, and fourth binding events. It is important to note, however, that our model does not assume a fixed order for calcium binding to the different binding sites. Rather, because the first calcium ion can bind to any one of four binding sites in either state,  $K_1$  is a combination of the microscopic  $K_i^R$  and  $K_i^T$  values for each of the sites in each of the states. The apparent sequential dissociation constants used in our model follow an Adair-type (43) framework as used, for instance, by Crouch and Klee (16) and Porumb (30). They are, in principle, Adair constants, except for a slight difference in nomenclature:  $K_2$  according to Adair (43) corresponds to  $K_1 \times K_2$  according to Crouch and Klee (16) and Porumb (30), and so on.

It is important to note that the conformation of calmodulin which we call the *T* state is not necessarily exactly identical to the reported *apo* structure (14) of calmodulin. Rather, the *T* state represents a collection of structures that may differ somewhat in the conformation of the calcium-binding sites, but whose overall structure resembles that of *apo* calmodulin. The existence of an ion-bound form that resembles the *apo* conformation has recently been established (51). Likewise, the *R* state is a collection of structures that resemble the reported open structure of active calmodulin (52, 53). Asymmetric forms of calmodulin with one lobe in an open state and one head in a closed state have been

reported in the presence of some targets (54). However, the binding mechanism of these targets differs from that of CaMKII and PP2B, where both lobes bind to the target.

**Lisman Hypothesis.** The model proposed here explains how different amounts of calcium can trigger the activation of PP2B or CaMKII and thus provides support for the Lisman hypothesis (3) on a molecular level. The question of how different frequencies of calcium signals lead to differential activation of PP2B or CaMKII is not addressed in the model. It has been suggested, however, that, at least under some conditions, high frequencies of calcium input result in high local concentrations of calcium, whereas low calcium frequencies result in moderate local calcium concentrations in the spine (44, 55, 56). In addition, calcium frequency has a direct impact on CaMKII, because of the requirement for two adjacent subunits to be active for auto-phosphorylation at threonine residue 286, which confers sustained activity (57–59). Other factors the model does not account for include variations in the subcellular localization of PP2B (reviewed in ref. 60) and CaMKII (61) and the inhibitory effect of PP2B on CaMKII (reviewed in ref. 10). The latter effect, if included, would increase the window of calcium concentrations at which PP2B is preferably activated, enhancing the distinction between PP2B and CaMKII activation. We believe, however, that our model provides a valid and useful biophysical basis on which to develop further models of synaptic plasticity mechanisms.

**Note added in proof (64).** Experimental support for our equilibrium model of calmodulin function has been recently published by Gsponer *et al.*

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