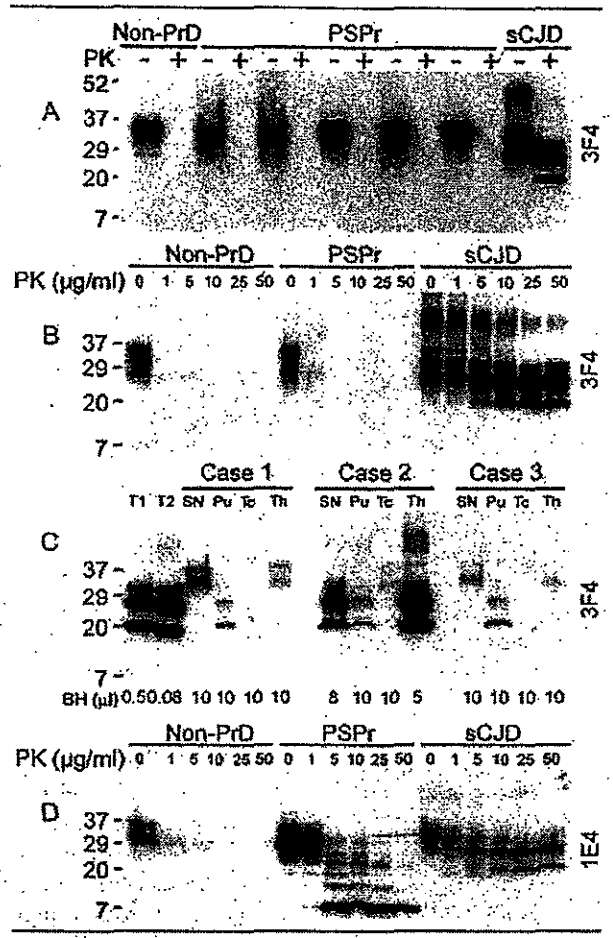

Fig 4. Characterization of prion protein (PrP) in protease-sensitive prionopathy (PSPr). (A) On conventional immunoblots, proteinase K (PK)–resistant PrP is undetectable in nonprion disease control subjects (non-PrD) and PSPr patients, although it is prominent in sporadic Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease (sCJD). (B) PK-resistant PrP from non-PrD and PSPr is not detectable even after treatment with low PK concentrations, but only in sCJD control when probed with the monoclonal antibody 3F4. (C) Subcortical regions of three PSPr cases treated with PK at 50μg/ml before Western blot analysis with 3F4 showed various amounts of PK-resistant PrP in three PSPr cases. Samples from temporal cortex (Tc) were used as controls. (D) When the same samples used in (B) are probed with 1E4, moderately PK-resistant PrP fragments forming a ladder are observed. (A, B, D) Tissues are from the frontal cortex. BH = brain homogenate; Pu = putamen; SN = substantia nigra; T1 = PrPr type 1 control; T2 = PrPr type 2 control; Th = thalamus.

though the bands were much more prominent when probed with 1E4 (see Fig 5B). The abnormal PrP enrichment experiments confirm that, in PSPr patients, there is much less abnormal PrP than in sCJD, and that the proportion of abnormal PrP that is PK resistant is much smaller.

Prion Protein Sedimentation in Sucrose Gradients

After sucrose gradient sedimentation, 30% of the total PrP from the PSPr patients was recovered in fractions 7 to 11 containing large aggregates, whereas these fractions accounted for only 5% of the total PrP in nonprion disease subjects (Figs 6A, B, E). The same fractions contained about 24 and 58% of the total PrP in GSS patients with the A117V mutation and sCJDVV1, respectively (see Figs 6C–E). Also, the percentages of PrP recovered in fractions 2 and 3 differed significantly between PSPr and nonprion disease. PSPr differed from GSS in fractions 7 and 8, and from

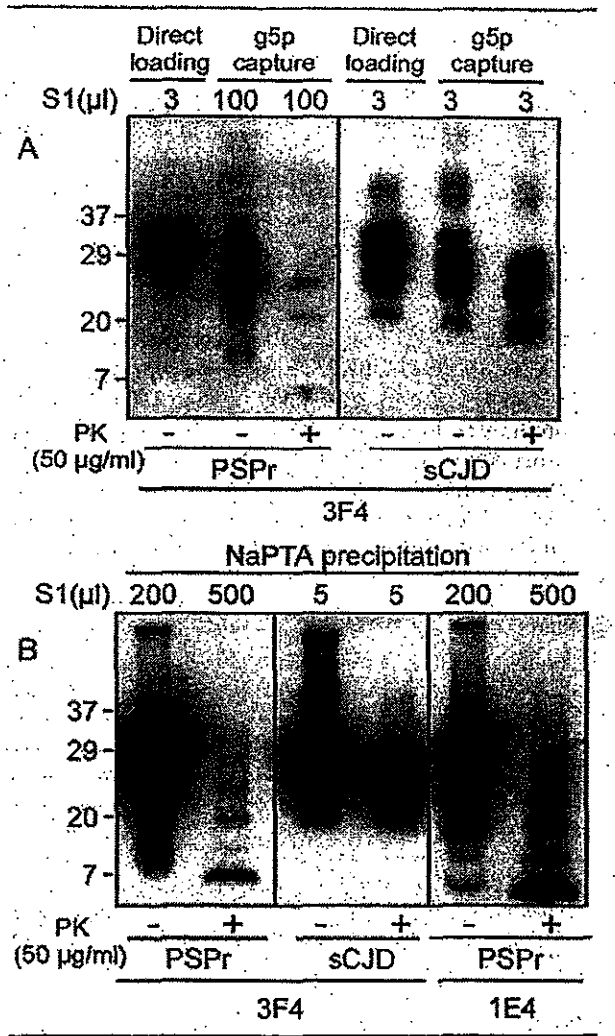

Fig 5. Capture by g5p (A) and sodium phosphotungstate (NaPTA) (B) of prion protein (PrP) from protease-sensitive prionopathy (PSPr) and sCJDMM1 (sporadic Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease). Probing with 3F4 or 1E4 after stripping. The same ladder of proteinase K (PK)–resistant PrP as in Figure 4D is detectable in PSPr preparations after heavy loading of the gel. S1 = supernatant of brain homogenate obtained after low-speed centrifugation (1,000g for 10 minutes).

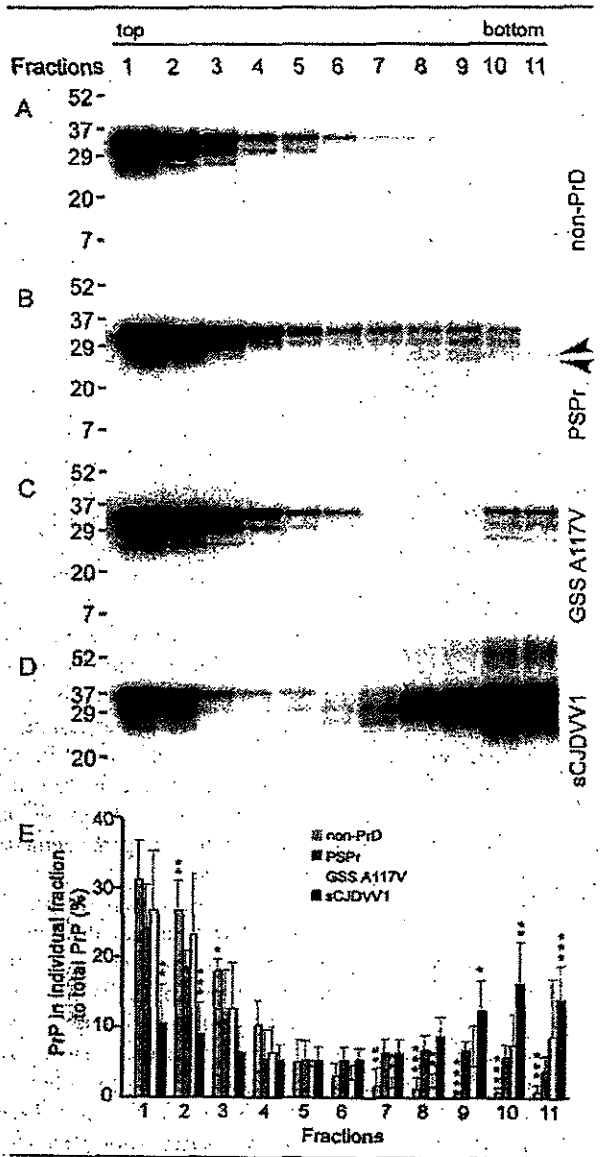

Fig 6. Prion protein (PrP) profiles in sucrose gradient sedimentation. (A) Nonprion disease (non-PrD); (B) protease-sensitive prionopathy (PSPr); (C) Gerstmann–Sträussler–Scheinker disease (GSS) with the A117V mutation (GSSA117V); (D) sCJDVV1; (E) PrP distribution in the fractions plotted as percentages of the total PrP. Although the amounts of PrP from PSPr are similar to those of non-PrD subjects in fractions 1 and 4 to 6, they differ significantly in fractions 2, 3, and 7 to 11, and also clearly differ from GSSA117V in fractions 7 and 8 and sCJDVV1 in fractions 1, 2, and 9 to 11. PSPr fractions 8 to 11 also have a distinctive low double band (B, arrowheads*) not present in the fractions from non-PrD, GSS, and sCJDVV1. n = 6 for non-PrD* (green bars); *n = 6 for PSPr* (red bars); *n = 3 for GSS* (yellow bars); *and n = 7 for sCJDVV1* (blue bars). Vertical bars *refer to standard deviations.* Asterisks *denote PrP fractions from non-PrD, GSS, and sCJDVV1 that by statistical analysis are significantly different from corresponding PSPr fractions.* $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.

sCJD in fractions 1, 2, and 9 to 11 (see Fig 6E). In addition to the quantitative differences, the electrophoretic profiles of the high-molecular-weight aggregates from PSPr also differed from those of nonprion disease, GSS, and sCJDVV1 subjects: the lower band was double in PSPr but single in other conditions (see Figs 6A–D). Comparable data were obtained after gel filtration fractionation, which demonstrated that PrP aggregates exceeding 2,000kDa were more abundant in PSPr than in nonprion disease control subjects but much fewer than in sCJD (data not shown).

Discussion

We report 11 patients affected by a disease that involves abnormal PrP and has homogeneous and distinctive features (Table 2). Based on several lines of evidence, we argue that these features allow for the separation of this condition from all known forms of human prion disease. First, the abnormal PrP associated with this disease is predominantly, and in several brain regions almost exclusively, sensitive to protease or PrPs, and the PK-resistant PrP isoform or PrPr has a distinctive electrophoretic profile. The high sensitivity to PK and the distinctive electrophoretic profile of the abnormal PrP clearly distinguish these cases from each of the five subtypes of sCJD and from sporadic fatal insomnia (sFI), the known human sporadic prion diseases.[1] For example, compared with sCJDMM1, the most common and typical sCJD,[2] these cases have 16 times less total abnormal PrP, and the fraction of the total abnormal PrP that is PK resistant is nearly 4 times less. Furthermore, the ladder-like electrophoretic profile of the PrPr associated with this condition has not been observed in either sCJD or sFI, all of which instead are characterized by the presence of the well-known PrPr type 1 or 2.[1] When present, the traditional PrPr, commonly called *PrP27-30*, was located in subcortical regions and was of type 1, another combination not observed in sporadic human prion diseases.[1] Second, these cases are also homogeneous as for the PrP coding genotype because they are all homozygous for valine at codon 129 of the PrP gene, the site of a common methionine/valine polymorphism.[28] Valine homozygosity in white individuals is the rarest 129 genotype, being found only in 12% of people.[28] The sCJD subtypes associated with valine homozygosity, sCJDVV1 and sCJDVV2, have been well characterized and differ from these cases phenotypically and for the characteristics of the abnormal PrP.[1] Third, the pattern of PrP immunostaining and the presence of structures with the features of poorly formed plaques that we observed in the cerebellum are to our knowledge unprecedented. Lastly, the clinical presentation and initial course that prominently features relatively slow cognitive deterioration, occasional gait impairment, and incontinence has evoked the diagnoses of normal pressure hydrocepha-

Table 2. **Summary of Protease-Sensitive Prionopathy Common Features**

Mean Age at Onset (range), yr	Mean Duration (range), mo	Clinical Presentation	Histopathology	PrP IHC	Abnormal PrP	Family History	PrP Genetics
62 (48-71)	20 (10-60)[a]	Cognitive decline (8/11)[b] and mood/behavioral changes (7/11)[b]	Minimal spongiform degeneration with vacuoles larger than typical CJD, and minimal astrogliosis	Intense staining with distinct target pattern in cerebral gray matter; and dot pattern in cerebellar molecular layer	Minimal amount of PK-resistant PrP forming a ladder-like pattern on Western blot	Dementia (8/10)[b] Dementia with age at onset < 61 yr (2/4)[b]	Valine homozygosity at codon 129 No mutation in the PrP gene coding region

[a]One patient alive after 23-month duration and one dead 7 months from onset for other causes excluded. [b]Positive cases/total number of cases. PrP = prion protein; IHC = immunohistochemistry; CJD = Creutzfeldt–Jakob disease; PK = proteinase K.

lus, diffuse Lewy body disease, or frontotemporal dementia, whereas prion disease was suspected only at a later stage based on the relatively short duration.

Although these cases can be easily distinguished from sporadic prion diseases, some of their features such as overrepresentation of PrPs and the multiple PK-resistant PrP fragments, have been reported in GSS.[4] However, all cases of GSS reported to date are associated with a mutation in the coding region of the PrP gene or immediately adjacent to it.[4] None of these cases carried such mutation. Moreover, the ladder-like, PK-resistant, PrP fragments observed in our cases are preferentially detected with 1E4 but not with 3F4, which obviously separates these cases from GSS carrying the multiple PK-resistant PrP fragments. In a recent study, we observed that although 1E4 and 3F4 have adjacent epitopes along human PrP residues 97-112, their accessibility to these epitopes is different because of different neighboring N-terminal residues.[29] It is possible that the 1E4 selectively detected PK-resistant PrP fragments have N-terminal starting sites that are different from those of the well-characterized PrPr types 1 and 2. The earlier evidence clearly indicates that this condition differs from GSS, although the possibility that it represents the long-sought sporadic form of GSS remains to be excluded. Six of the 10 patients with obtainable pedigree had a family history of dementia that cannot be ignored, yet none carried a mutation in the PrP gene ORF. Therefore, at least in some cases, a causative mutation may be located outside the ORF of the PrP gene, a condition never observed in human prion diseases.[1]

All these considerations argue that the 11 patients were affected by a novel condition involving the PrP that cannot be classified within the spectrum of currently known human prion diseases. We suggest the designation of PSPr to emphasize a major distinctive feature (see Table 2).

Compared with other human prion diseases, PSPr is not exceedingly rare, because it accounts for about 3% of all sCJD and 16% of all valine homozygous CJD accessioned by the National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center during the same time period as these 11 patients, making PSPr about as common as some of the well-known sporadic prion diseases (such as sCJDMM2, sFI, and sCJDVV1).[2] Furthermore, because the clinical presentation and the duration of PSPr often do not point to the diagnosis of prion disease, some cases of PSPr may currently be classified within the group of non-Alzheimer's dementias and not be investigated further. Should this be the case, PSPr may be more common than this study suggests.

The small amount of PrPr associated with PSPr and the finding that about 76% of the detectable abnormal PrP is PK sensitive not only hinders the diagnosis but also has implications concerning origin, pathogenicity, infectivity, and classification of PSPr.

The discovery of PrPs has opened a new chapter in prion diseases.[11–15] The demonstration that PrPs forms smaller aggregates than the PrPr counterpart,[16] and that apparently it is competent to convert PrP^C to PrPr in vitro, as well as to seed the polymerization of recombinant PrP into amyloid,[17,18] suggests that PrPs shares defining features with PrPr. However, the pathogenetic mechanisms of PrPs in the absence of PrPr and, therefore, the nature of the prion diseases associated with PrPs currently remain conjectural.

Prion diseases associated with PrPs, in the presence of minimal or no PrPr, have been modeled and studied in detail in a variety of transgenic (Tg) mouse lines carrying mouse homologues of human PrP gene mutants or overexpressing PrP^C.[12,30–33] Two Tg mouse models appear relevant to these cases.

In the first model, Tg mice expressing high levels of mouse PrP carrying the P101L mutation, the mouse equivalent of the human P102L mutation associated with a GSS phenotype,[4,34,35] spontaneously developed a neurodegenerative process characterized by SD and prion plaque formation. After inoculation, they transmitted a disease phenotypically similar to P101L-mutated Tg mice but not to wild-type mice. As in our cases, the affected mice had PrPs but no, or minimal amounts of, PrPr, indicating that PrPs can be associated with a prion disease that is under certain condi-

tions transmissible and has a histopathological phenotype displaying general features of prion diseases.[12]

In the second model, Tg mice carrying the P101L mutation were inoculated with brain homogenate from patients affected by a subtype of GSS P102L characterized by the exclusive presence of an approximately 8kDa PK-resistant fragment reminiscent of the approximately 6kDa fragment observed in small amounts in our cases. The inoculated Tg mice remained largely asymptomatic, but at histological examination, they displayed PrP plaques and had minimal amounts of PrPr.[33] They failed to transmit the disease to wild-type mice, but inoculation to P101L-mutated mice resulted in the formation of PrP plaques in the absence of clinical disease.

These mouse models and now our cases raise issues with the definition of prion diseases. Currently, it is unclear whether PSPr is transmissible because time-consuming transmissibility experiments to different lines of Tg mice and in vitro PrP replication are still ongoing. Should PSPr not be transmissible, the question is whether it is a prion disease. A similar question can be raised for GSS, of which to date only one subtype has been shown to be consistently transmissible.[4] The issue is further compounded by the recent evidence that amyloid β, the pathogenic peptide of Alzheimer's disease, has the propensity to replicate after inoculation into susceptible Tg mice in a conformation-dependent fashion reminiscent of prions.[36] These findings appear to blur the once tight association of prion diseases and transmissibility. It may be more practical to apply the label of prion diseases to all conditions in which the PrP is abnormal and appears to play a central role in the pathology, as in all prion diseases known to date and in PSPr.[37] In contrast, one might reserve the qualification of transmissible to those prion diseases that can be transmitted to recipients expressing relatively normal amounts of wild-type PrP.[36]

The finding that several PSPr patients had first-degree relatives diagnosed with dementia necessitates a search for an underlying genetic cause. In AD, the discovery of mutations outside the gene of the amyloid precursor protein (the central protein in AD, as PrP is in prion diseases) has provided a wealth of information regarding pathogenetic mechanisms of AD.[38] Similarly, the discovery of a mutation outside the PrP gene ORF capable of generating a prion disease may greatly expand our understanding of pathogenetic mechanisms and the role of PrP in prion diseases.

Supported by the NIH grants AG14359 and AG08702, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CCU 515004), and the Britton Fund to P.G.; NIH Grant NS049173 to C.S.; and the CJD Foundation to W.Q.Z.

Drs J. McGeehan and G. Kneale kindly provided g5p. Drs J. Hedreen, L. S. Honig, C. S. Calder, L. P. Goldstick, and W. Longstreth helped in obtaining the cases. P. Scalzo and D. Kofskey provided skillful histological and immunohistochemical preparations. B. Chakraborty assisted in the preparation of the manuscript and illustrations.

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一般的名称	乾燥濃縮人アンチトロンビンIII		研究報告の公表状況	Cell 2008; 134: 757-768	公表国 アメリカ	
販売名 (企業名)	①ノイアート（ベネシス） ②ノイアート静注用1500単位（ベネシス）					

研究報告の概要

（in vitroでのPMCA増幅によりPrP^{Sc}の異常折り畳み構造が種の壁を超えて伝播し感染性プリオンが生成）
プリオンは異常な折り畳み構造のたん白（PrP^{Sc}）のみから構成される今までにない感染性病原体であり、細胞プリオン蛋白（PrP^{C}）にその異常構造を蔓延させることにより疾患が伝播する。プリオンが有する重要な特質はその種の壁であり、種の壁があることによって1つの種のプリオンは限られた数の別の種にしか感染を起こすことができない。ここで我々は、in vitroにおけるPMCA(protein misfolding cyclic amplification）増幅によって、PrP^{Sc}異常折り畳み構造が種の間で伝播し感染性プリオンが生成されることを報告する。マウスPrP^{Sc}と混合させることによって異常折り畳みが起こったハムスターPrP^{C}は、野生型ハムスターに対して感染性を有する新規なプリオンを生成した。同様の結果は、反対の方向でも得られた。PMCA増幅を繰り返すとin vitro産生プリオンの順応が起こるが、そのプロセスは、in vivoでの連続継代の際に観察される株の安定化を暗示させるものであった。我々の結果から、PMCAが種の間の伝播を調査するための価値のあるツールであることが示された。また、種の壁と株の生成がPrPの異常折り畳み構造の蔓延によって決定されることが示唆された。

使用上の注意記載状況・その他参考事項等

代表としてノイアート（献血）の記載を示す。
2. 重要な基本的注意
(1) 略
1) 略
2) 現在までに本剤の投与により変異型クロイツフェルト・ヤコブ病（vCJD）等が伝播したとの報告はない。しかしながら、製造工程において異常プリオンを低減し得るとの報告があるものの、理論的なvCJD等の伝播のリスクを完全には排除できないので、投与の際には患者への説明を十分行い、治療上の必要性を十分検討の上投与すること。

報告企業の意見	今後の対応
in vitroでのPMCA増幅によりPrP^{Sc}の異常折り畳み構造が種の壁を超えて伝播し感染性プリオンが生成されるとの報告である。 これまで血漿分画製剤によってvCJD、スクレイピー及びCWDを含むプリオン病が伝播したとの報告はない。しかしながら、万一vCJD感染者の血漿が本剤の原料に混入した場合には、製造工程においてプリオンを低減し得るとの報告があるものの、製剤から伝播する可能性を完全には否定し得ない。そのため、弊社の血漿分画製剤の製造工程におけるTSE感染性低減に関する検証実験を加速し、自社データを早期に取得し、工程評価を行い、必要に応じて工程改善を実施する予定である。	本報告は本剤の安全性に影響を与えないと考えるので、特段の措置はとらない。

Cell

Crossing the Species Barrier by PrP^{Sc} Replication In Vitro Generates Unique Infectious Prions

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DOI 10.1016/j.cell.2008.07.030

SUMMARY

Prions are unconventional infectious agents composed exclusively of misfolded prion protein (PrP^{Sc}), which transmits the disease by propagating its abnormal conformation to the cellular prion protein (PrP^{C}). A key characteristic of prions is their species barrier, by which prions from one species can only infect a limited number of other species. Here, we report the generation of infectious prions by interspecies transmission of PrP^{Sc} misfolding by in vitro PMCA amplification. Hamster PrP^{C} misfolded by mixing with mouse PrP^{Sc} generated unique prions that were infectious to wild-type hamsters, and similar results were obtained in the opposite direction. Successive rounds of PMCA amplification result in adaptation of the in vitro-produced prions, in a process reminiscent of strain stabilization observed upon serial passage in vivo. Our results indicate that PMCA is a valuable tool for the investigation of cross-species transmission and suggest that species barrier and strain generation are determined by the propagation of PrP misfolding.

INTRODUCTION

Prion diseases also known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) are infectious neurodegenerative diseases affecting the brain of humans and several species of mammals (Collinge, 2001). Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) is the most common TSE in humans, and scrapie in sheep, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, and chronic wasting disease (CWD) in cervids are the most prevalent prion diseases in animals. Unlike conventional infectious microorganisms, the TSE agent appears to be devoid of genetic material and instead composed exclusively by a misfolded form of the prion protein (PrP^{Sc}) (Prusiner, 1998). PrP^{Sc} has the unprecedented ability to replicate in the body by inducing the misfolding of the cellular form of the prion protein (PrP^{C}).

One of the characteristics of the agent responsible for prion diseases is its ability to infect some species and not others (Hill and Collinge, 2004; Moore et al., 2005). This phenomenon is known as species barrier. Even between close species, the species barrier is manifested as an incomplete attack rate and a prolongation of the time it takes for animals to develop the clinical disease when injected with another species' infectious material (Hill and Collinge, 2004). Primary interspecies transmission is usually not very efficient, and it takes a long time for the prion replication process to reach the point at which full-blown clinical disease appears. After sequential passages, the PrP^{Sc} in the new host adapts, resulting in a shortage of the incubation period and stabilization of the new strain (Hill and Collinge, 2004).

Compelling evidence indicates that the species barrier is largely controlled by the sequence of PrP (Moore et al., 2005). Unfortunately, we cannot predict the degree of a species barrier simply by comparing the prion proteins from two species. The barrier has to be measured by experimental studies in animals. These studies are long and costly, and in the case of the human species barrier, the studies have to be done with experimental models, the validity of which is not absolutely guarantied. Evaluation of the species barrier is of tremendous medical importance for risk assessment and to implement regulatory measures to avoid spreading of diseases (Moore et al., 2005). At this time, the epidemiological evidence suggests that among animal TSEs only cattle BSE has been transmitted to humans, generating a variant form of CJD (vCJD) (Will et al., 1996). It is unlikely that sheep scrapie is a concern for humans, because the disease has been described for centuries and no increased prevalence of human prion diseases has been found in scrapie-endemic areas (Caramelli et al., 2006; Hunter, 1998). However, the appearance of "atypical" strains of scrapie, as well as the known transmission of BSE to sheep, has generated new concerns of human infections with sheep-derived material (Buschmann and Groschup, 2005; Hunter, 2003). Similarly, the possibility that some of the newly identified animal prion diseases, such as CWD, could be transmitted to humans cannot be ruled out at the present time (Williams, 2005; Xie et al., 2005).