Edinburgh Research Explorer

Pancreatic PYY but not PPY expression is responsive to short-term nutritional state and the pancreas constitutes the major site of PYY mRNA expression in chickens

Citation for published version:

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

Link:
Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer

Document Version:
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Published In:
General And Comparative Endocrinology

General rights
Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy
The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.
Pancreatic PYY but not PPY expression is responsive to short-term nutritional state and the pancreas constitutes the major site of PYY mRNA expression in chickens

Angus M.A. Reid a,b, Peter W. Wilson a, Sarah D. Caughey a, Laura M. Dixon b, Rick B. D'Eath b, Victoria Sandilands c, Timothy Boswell d, Ian C. Dunn a

School of Biology, Newcastle University, NE1 7RU, England, United Kingdom
SRUC Avian Science Research Centre, Auchincruive, KA6 5HW, Scotland, United Kingdom
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Edinburgh EH9 3JG, Scotland, United Kingdom
Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh, EH25 9RG, Scotland, United Kingdom

1. Introduction

Peptide YY (PYY) is one of three known members of the PP-fold family of proteins, along with neuropeptide Y (NPY) and pancreatic polypeptide (PPY) (Cerda-Reverter and Larhammar, 2000). The structure and function of the PYY gene is relatively well-documented in mammals (Batterham and Bloom, 2003; McGowan and Bloom, 2004; Ueno et al., 2008); however, very little transcriptional work has been reported in avian species. This is due to the lack of a gene sequence, despite early elucidation of the peptide sequence (Conlon and Oharte, 1992) and relatively high conservation of the peptide (Blomqvist et al., 1992). The most recent chicken genome build – Gallus_gallus-5.0, GenBank accession GCF_000002315.4 – erroneously annotated a predicted PYY gene sequence at position KQ795831.1: 13,290–14,841 (Ensembl) but this is in fact the chicken PYY gene, encoding pancreatic polypeptide (Nata et al., 1993). The first articles evidencing the true chicken PYY mRNA sequence were recently published (Aoki et al., 2017; Gao et al., 2017) but these disagree on the transcriptional start and termination sites. Issues in definitively characterising the transcript may be due to homology with the other PP-fold gene family members and regions of high GC content, a feature of PYY genes across taxa (e.g. human PYY mRNA (NM_004160.5) region 940–1020 = 77.8% GC content, lizard PYY (XM_003222643.3) region 400–444 = 71.1% GC).

In vertebrates, peripheral PYY is purported to act as a satiety factor released from the gastrointestinal tract after feeding to curb appetite via afferent vagal Y-receptors or directly within the arcuate nucleus of the hypothalamus (Batterham and Bloom, 2003; Batterham et al., 2002; Simpson et al., 2012; Ueno et al., 2008). PYY-expressing neurones also exist in the brain in mammals and fish, however some contention exists as to the relative levels of PYY expression in different tissues and their functional significance. In goldfish for example, central PYY is reported to be more highly expressed than intestinal PYY and is upregulated in satiety, in contrast to observations for other vertebrates including other fish (Murashita et al., 2009; Wall and Volkoff, 2013). Discrete populations of PYY-expressing cells have been identified throughout the brain (Bottcher et al., 1985; Cerda-Reverter et al., 2000) and
digestive system (Ekblad and Sundler, 2002; El-Salhy et al., 1983), so opposing or unrelated roles for PYY expressed from distinct regions might account for inconsistencies in whole-tissue measurements, along with interspecific variation and differences in satiety state. In tetrapods at least, the accepted dogma is that peripheral PYY acts as an anorectic factor released from the intestine after meals to curb food intake and modulate gastrointestinal function, whereas central PYY has a functionally opposite orexigenic effect (McGowan and Bloom, 2004; Ueno et al., 2008).

Distinct binding preferences and tissue distributions of several Y-receptors (Dumont et al., 1998; Keire et al., 2002; Larhammar, 1996) allude to the broad range of biological functions attributed to central and peripheral PP-fold peptide activity. Discrete ligand expression and variable receptor specificity conferred by proteolytic processing of ligands (Cerda-Reverter et al., 2000; Mentlein et al., 1993) likely further facilitate diverse and dynamic endocrine and paracrine roles for PP-fold peptides in vivo. Chicken PYY is known to differ in primary structure to mammalian PYY, resulting in anomalous cleavage of the signal peptide and an elongated 37-residue ligand apparently impervious to proteolysis by DPP4 (Conlon and Oharte, 1992). This theoretically restricts posttranslational variability of receptor specificity and implies the possibility of alternative modes of PYY action in the chicken (and perhaps across avian species) but the biological implications of proteolysis are not comprehensively understood for any species. Since chicken PYY remains under-studied, describing the tissue distribution and nutritional state-responsiveness of its expression is a priority to inform future studies investigating the precise biological roles of PYY in birds.

PYY was originally identified in the chicken (Kimmel et al., 1975) and is known to be predominantly expressed in the pancreas in vertebrates (Ekblad and Sundler, 2002; Gao et al., 2017). PYY is relatively well-characterised as a satiety hormone, with increased circulating PYY observed within minutes to hours after feeding in avian (Johnson and Hazelwood, 1982) and mammalian (Asakawa et al., 2003) models. Exogenous PYY was also shown to reduce food intake in a dose-dependent manner after intraperitoneal administration in mice (Asakawa et al., 2003), however no such peripheral injection studies have been carried out for avian PYY.

Defining the roles of PP-fold family members is important for understanding energy balance and growth in vertebrate species. This includes domestic fowl, for which there is a need to understand appetite regulation so that management of birds used for human food production might be optimised to maximise efficiency and ameliorate welfare concerns, such as restricted feeding in breeding meat-type birds (De Jong and Guemene, 2011). The few studies carried out on avian PYY have mostly involved application of exogenous PYY peptide and demonstrated an orexigenic effect of centrally-administered PYY (Ando et al., 2001; Kuenzel et al., 1987) and digestion- and growth-regulating effects of PYY applied systemically in vivo (Coles et al., 2001, 1999). Recent results from peripheral PYY administration and transcriptional measurements in feeding studies support the conserved role of intestinal PYY as an anorectic satiety factor in chickens (Aoki et al., 2017). Although PYY is traditionally considered an intestinal peptide, there is growing evidence that pancreas-derived PYY is important in regulation of digestion and satiety. Interesting ontogenic and regional gradients of pancreatic expression of PYY and PPY have been demonstrated in mammals (Ekblad and Sundler, 2002; El-Salhy et al., 1983; Sandström and El-Salhy, 2002). Functional regulation of PYY expression has not yet been described in birds. In order to improve knowledge of peripheral control of satiety in birds and enable comparisons to be drawn when establishing conserved and divergent roles for PP-fold family peptides across taxa, we investigate in this study the tissue distribution of PYY and PPY mRNAs in the chicken and the effects of nutritional state on their expression, particularly in the pancreas.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Sequence derivation

2.1.1. Avian PYY and PPY

The large amount of high-throughput sequencing information from the chicken (Gallus gallus) available in the sequence read archive (SRA) (Leinonen et al., 2011b) was mined to derive a contiguous mRNA sequence for chicken PYY. Relevant experiments were identified by using appropriate search terms at the European Nucleotide Archive (Leinonen et al., 2011a). Data files were then probed for PYY mRNA sequence using the known chicken PYY peptide sequence (AAB24283.1) as a query in tblastn (NCBI). Short read sequences of interest were downloaded in FASTA format and read into GAP (Bonfield and Whitwham, 2010) for alignment. The process was iterative and as each new consensus was built the SRA files were re-interrogated using nucleotide BLAST until no further 3’ or 5’ extension was obtained. The final consensus sequence was analysed for open reading frames using ExPasy Translate (Gasteiger et al., 2003) and likely signal peptide cleavage sites using SignalP (Petersen et al., 2011).

For confirmation of the cDNA 5’ end in chicken, rapid amplification of CDNA ends (RACE) was completed using the Roche 2nd generation 5’/3’ RACE kit as per the manufacturer’s protocol and LightRUN Sanger sequencing (GATC Biotech) was employed to sequence the product. A similar data-mining process was followed for quail (Coturnix coturnix) PYY. This was only to increase confidence in inference to the evolving structures of vertebrate PYY and no further characterisation was carried out for quail PYY. The chicken PYY gene sequence was already definitively known (NM_204786.1) (Nata et al., 1993).

2.2. Animal experiments

Each animal experiment was approved by the Roslin Institute Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body or SRUC Animal Ethical Committee, and compliant with UK Home Office legislation.

2.2.1. Distribution of expression of PYY and PPY across chicken tissues

In order to assess the distribution of expression of PYY and PPY in chicken tissues, four Ross 308 broilers raised in standard conditions were killed at 42 d and a broad range of tissue samples was collected.

2.2.2. Effects of short-term nutritional state on expression of PYY and PPY

Chicks from the 22nd generation of a pedigree broiler-layer hybrid line were reared under standard lighting (14 L:10 D) and temperature (26 °C ambient) conditions in one pen with ad libitum access to food until 10 days of age when they were separated into two experimental group pens (n = 12 per group) to balance sex and body weight. A second group of chicks from the 22nd generation of a pedigree broiler-layer hybrid line were reared under standard lighting (14 L:10 D) and temperature (26 °C ambient) conditions in one pen with ad libitum access to food until 10 days of age when they were separated into two experimental group pens (n = 12 per group) to balance sex and body weight. Ad libitum access to food was maintained until removal of food from both groups at 14 days of age, 2 h before lights-on. This was followed either by reintroduction of food after 3.5 h (ad libitum group, AL) or by maintenance of fasting conditions for a further 7–8 h prior to euthanasia (fasted group, F).

2.2.3. Effects of long-term nutritional state on expression of PYY and PPY at several timepoints after feeding

The general approach in testing different dietary regimes was based on a previously-described study (Dunn et al., 2013b). Broiler
2.2.4. Roles of gut fill and nutrient uptake

Broiler breeders were reared under standard conditions in floor pens with commercial food restriction to achieve the breeding company’s performance objectives (Aviagen, 2007) until 11 weeks of age when birds were ranked and randomised on the basis of body weight into one of three experimental groups, evenly distributed among individual cages in 3 replicate rooms. Following a 5-day cage acclimatisation period, birds were fed either ad libitum (AL, n = 24), continued commercial restriction (FR, n = 24) or commercial restriction plus 15% (w/w) dry ispaghula husk powder, (IH, n = 24) for a further 2.5 days before cull by anaesthetic overdose. Samples of 40–100 mg were taken from the pancreas and snap-frozen on dry ice. Individuals from each treatment were evenly distributed between and within each dissection day and processing batch to avoid confounding bias. Groups were balanced for body weight, and sex was taken into account in statistical analyses. Material from a later replicate experiment, excluding the ispaghula weight, and sex was taken into account in statistical analyses.

2.3. Design of oligonucleotide primers and probes

See Table 1 for details of primers and probes used in this study. Novel primers were designed using Primer 3 (Rozen and Skaletsky, 2000; Untergasser et al., 2012) to amplify chicken PPY (NM_204786.1), 14-3-3 protein zeta (YWHAZ) (NM_001031343.1), NADH:ubiquinone oxidoreductase subunit A1 (NDUFA1) (NM_001302115.1) and derived chicken PYY (Fig. 1) mature mRNA sequences. Primers for quantification of lamin B receptor (LBR) as a reference gene were previously described (Dunn et al., 2013). All oligonucleotides were sourced from Sigma-Aldrich (UK).

2.4. Preparation of cDNA

Total RNA was isolated from tissue homogenised in TRIzol reagent (Invitrogen) using the Direct-zol RNA Kit (Zymo Research) to manufacturer's specifications, including in-column DNase treatment. Reverse transcription of 1 μg total RNA per sample was performed using the High Capacity Reverse Transcription Kit (Applied Biosystems) according to manufacturer's guidelines and the product volume adjusted to 110 μl per sample.

2.5. Quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR)

All qPCR assays employed Brilliant III Ultra-fast SYBR Green qPCR Mastermix and the MX3000p qPCR System with Maxpro software (Agilent Technologies) according to the manufacturers’ guidelines and as described previously (Whenhamp et al., 2015). Briefly, 10 μl SYBR mix, 8 μl cDNA product, 0.4 μl 20 μM forward primer, 0.4 μl 20 μM reverse primer, 0.3 μl 1/500 rox reference dye solution and 0.9 μl H2O were mixed for each 20 μl reaction. Thermal conditions were consistent for all assays: 50 °C; 120 s, 95 °C; 120 s, (40 cycles of 95 °C; 15 s, 60 °C; 30 s), then 95 °C; 60 s, 60 °C; 30 s, 95 °C; 15 s. Apparent reaction efficiency ranged between 90–105%, as determined by analysis of the standard dilution curve. Samples were distributed between and across plates to avoid confounding bias from plate effects. Each assay was developed by selection from several possible primer pairings; a mock qPCR reaction subjected to the aforementioned qPCR thermal profile was run for each prospective primer pair. Normal PCRs using Faststart reagents (Roche) and a standard PCR thermal profile (95 °C; 240 s, (40 cycles of 95 °C; 30 s, 58 °C; 30 s, 72 °C; 30 s), then 72 °C; 420 s) were also run for each prospective pair. Paired qPCR and normal PCR products were analysed together by visualisation after agarose gel electrophoresis. For each gene, the highest-amplifying reaction lacking visible primer-dimer and infidelity signals determined selection of the primer pair to be used for qPCR. Amplicons from the selected primer pairings’ normal (Faststart) PCRs were isolated using the Qiaquick Gel Extraction Kit (Qiagen) and bidirectionally sequenced using LightRUN Sanger sequencing (GATC Biotech) to confirm identity. Standard curve samples of known concentration were prepared by nanodrop measurement and serial dilution of these stock amplicon samples. LBR, YWHAZ and NDUFA were chosen as reference genes due to their reliability in previous avian studies (Olias et al., 2014) and quantified as above. Normalisation was achieved by using the geometric mean of some combination of LBR, YWHAZ and NDUFA expression values, or the LBR value alone where YWHAZ and NDUFA were not measured, as a division factor for the gene of interest expression value. For the expression distribution analysis (Section 3.2), differences in transcriptional activity between tissues (which could adversely affect the quantitation of gene expression) were


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oligonucleotide name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Sequence (5'–3')</th>
<th>qPCR target accession &amp; amplicon length</th>
<th>Application(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PYY-ARR1</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>TTACATCAACCTGGTACGCC</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYY-ARR3</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>TCAGACACGACAGGCATCATC</td>
<td>112bp</td>
<td>PCR, 5'/RACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYY 02 Primer F</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>TCTCAACAGCTGCTCCAGAG</td>
<td>NM_204786.1</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYY 03 Primer R</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>CTTTCGCGGCACTCCAGCC</td>
<td>860bp</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYY-GSP2</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>GATGGGCTGCACTGACACT</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5'/RACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PYY-GSP3</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>TGACACGGCAGCTAATGAGCC</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5'/RACE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWHAZ_F</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>GTTCAGAAGAATCAACGAGG</td>
<td>NM_001303433.1</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWHAZ_R</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>GGGCTCTGCTTGGTATGACCT</td>
<td>223bp</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBR-F</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>GGTTGGTGTTCTATTCTGAC</td>
<td>NM_001303432.1</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBR-R</td>
<td>Primer</td>
<td>GTCTCAACGGCCGAGAAGA</td>
<td>800bp</td>
<td>PCR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR_PYY-Ish1</td>
<td>Probe</td>
<td>TGCTCCCGCTCCCATACCCAGGCTGGTACGAGGTTGATGATTAAT</td>
<td>ISH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AR_apP_Yish1</td>
<td>Probe</td>
<td>TGCTACAGCTGAGGTTCTGGTCCGTCAGGGTGCTGTTGATAAGGCGGATG</td>
<td>ISH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6. In situ hybridisation

All *in situ* hybridisation was performed using a standardised protocol and reagents as described previously (Meddle et al., 2007). Briefly, purified radiolabelled (35S dATP-tailed) oligonucleotide probes specific to mRNAs of interest (see Table 1) were incubated overnight with fixed 15 µm tissue sections on polylysine-coated slides. Slides were then exposed in autoradiographic emulsion for 14 days before development and fixation and subsequently counterstained with haematoxylin and eosin.

2.7. Statistical analyses

One-way or two-way ANOVA was initially employed to ascertain statistical significance of differences between group means. Log transformation was used to approximate normality of residual values where necessary. Where residual values could not be approximated to normal by log transformation, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H test was used. Where appropriate, variables were used as blocking factors in analyses and balanced across batches to avoid introduction of confounding biases. Results for ANOVA are presented as the F-ratio (F), with subscript information on the degrees of freedom between and then within means, and the probability value (p). Differences between individual groups were assigned using least-significant differences. Results for the H test are presented as the H statistic (H) and probability value (p). Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was determined for suspected correlative relationships, with results presented as the rho value (r_s), with degrees of freedom in brackets, and the exact probability value (p). Probability values of 0.05 or less were considered statistically significant. All statistical analyses were performed using Genstat 13 (VSN International).

3. Results

3.1. Sequence information

3.1.1. Chicken and quail PYY

Files with successful outcomes for chicken preproPYY and quail preproPYY are listed in Table 2 and were principally from intestine and brain samples. The mRNA sequence derived from assembly of short reads for chicken preproPYY included the entire putative translated region (90aa), the stop codon, 74bp of putative 5’ untranslated region (UTR) and 73bp of putative 3’ UTR (Fig. 1). Sequencing of the chicken PYY 5’ RACE product and qPCR amplicon (submitted to GenBank, accessions MF455302 & MF455303) confirmed the sequence of the translated region and suggested that the 5’ UTR is 38bp. The assembly of short reads for quail preproPYY mRNA included the entire putative translated region and short

accounted for by using the yield of RNA per mg tissue as a multiplication factor for genes of interest and reference genes prior to comparison.

and the probability value (p). Differences between individual groups were assigned using least-significant differences. Results for the H test are presented as the H statistic (H) and probability value (p). Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was determined for suspected correlative relationships, with results presented as the rho value (r_s), with degrees of freedom in brackets, and the exact probability value (p). Probability values of 0.05 or less were considered statistically significant. All statistical analyses were performed using Genstat 13 (VSN International).

3. Results

3.1. Sequence information

3.1.1. Chicken and quail PYY

Files with successful outcomes for chicken preproPYY and quail preproPYY are listed in Table 2 and were principally from intestine and brain samples. The mRNA sequence derived from assembly of short reads for chicken preproPYY included the entire putative translated region (90aa), the stop codon, 74bp of putative 5’ untranslated region (UTR) and 73bp of putative 3’ UTR (Fig. 1). Sequencing of the chicken PYY 5’ RACE product and qPCR amplicon (submitted to GenBank, accessions MF455302 & MF455303) confirmed the sequence of the translated region and suggested that the 5’ UTR is 38bp. The assembly of short reads for quail preproPYY mRNA included the entire putative translated region and short

accounted for by using the yield of RNA per mg tissue as a multiplication factor for genes of interest and reference genes prior to comparison.

and the probability value (p). Differences between individual groups were assigned using least-significant differences. Results for the H test are presented as the H statistic (H) and probability value (p). Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was determined for suspected correlative relationships, with results presented as the rho value (r_s), with degrees of freedom in brackets, and the exact probability value (p). Probability values of 0.05 or less were considered statistically significant. All statistical analyses were performed using Genstat 13 (VSN International).

3. Results

3.1. Sequence information

3.1.1. Chicken and quail PYY

Files with successful outcomes for chicken preproPYY and quail preproPYY are listed in Table 2 and were principally from intestine and brain samples. The mRNA sequence derived from assembly of short reads for chicken preproPYY included the entire putative translated region (90aa), the stop codon, 74bp of putative 5’ untranslated region (UTR) and 73bp of putative 3’ UTR (Fig. 1). Sequencing of the chicken PYY 5’ RACE product and qPCR amplicon (submitted to GenBank, accessions MF455302 & MF455303) confirmed the sequence of the translated region and suggested that the 5’ UTR is 38bp. The assembly of short reads for quail preproPYY mRNA included the entire putative translated region and short

accounted for by using the yield of RNA per mg tissue as a multiplication factor for genes of interest and reference genes prior to comparison.
extensions into the 5’ and 3’ UTRs but only the translated product is reported (Fig. 1).

3.2. Distribution of expression of PYY and PPY across chicken tissues

Profiles of the distributions of PYY and PPY in chicken across several tissues are detailed in Fig. 2. Of particular note, we observed that the pancreas is the major site of PYY transcription and that the major site of gastrointestinal PYY expression is around the distal jejunum. High pancreatic compared to intestinal expression was clear upon scrutiny of in situ hybridised sections (Fig. 3), which also confirmed that PPY is expressed at a considerably higher level than PYY in the chicken pancreas but is not obviously expressed in the intestine. Interestingly, the pancreas yielded more RNA than any other tissue per unit weight, and yield differed significantly between tissue types (F_{17,51} = 4.69, p < 0.001).

3.3. Functional expression

3.3.1. Regional pancreatic distribution of PYY and PPY expression and the effect of short-term nutritional state

Neither pancreatic PYY (F_{1,22} = 0.02, p = 0.898) nor PPY (F_{1,22} = 0.15, p = 0.706) expression was dependent on the region of the pancreas sampled in young chicks (2wk) but both were greater in the pancreas splenic end than the duodenal end in adolescent birds (12wk) (PYY, F_{1,7} = 13.03, p = 0.009; PPY, F_{1,7} = 6.57, p = 0.037). PYY expression was positively correlated with PPY expression in both 2wk (r_s (45) = 0.506, p < 0.001) and 12wk (r_s (14) = 0.782, p < 0.001) birds. PYY expression was responsive to...
short-term nutritional state independent of sex, being significantly higher in the pancreas of satiated (AL) birds compared to those experiencing short-term food restriction (F) (H = 0.768, p = 0.006) (Fig. 4a) however pancreatic PPY expression did not differ between these groups (H = 0.75, p = 0.386) (Fig. 4b). Results in this section were corroborated by in situ hybridisation (Fig. 3).

3.3.2. Effect of long-term nutritional state on expression of PYY and PPY at several timepoints after feeding

The three dietary groups in the long-term nutritional experiment were balanced for bodyweight at six weeks of age (see Section 2.2.3) but the average bodyweight for the group fed ad libitum (AL, 3065 ± 65 g) was over double those of the morning-fed restricted (Ram, 1202 ± 18 g) and evening-fed restricted (Rpm, 1215 ± 14 g) groups at cull (12wk).

The major experimental variables were dietary treatment (treatment) and time after feeding (time). Some gene expression analyses revealed a significant treatment by time interaction (treatment time). Results of a preliminary assay on a treatment- and time-balanced subset of samples from the long-term nutritional state experiment (see Section 2.2.3) showed that pancreatic expression of PYY was indeed statistically significantly higher than intestinal expression across all treatment groups and time-points (F1,47 = 175.1, p < 0.001). Intestinal PYY expression did not exhibit fluctuation throughout the day (F3,33 = 1.04, p = 0.387) comparable to that seen for pancreatic PYY expression, which did fluctuate through the day in the same subset (F3,33 = 5.28, p = 0.004). There was also a significant treatment by time interaction (F6,33 = 3.29, p = 0.012) for pancreatic PYY expression, whereas intestinal PYY expression exhibited no such interaction (F6,33 = 1.13, p = 0.368). Pancreatic and intestinal PYY expression were not obviously correlated (r_s (47) = 0.129, p = 0.097). These results informed a subsequent exclusion of intestinal samples and the pancreas was then analysed in a greater number of individuals (Fig. 5).

Pancreatic PYY differed significantly between treatments (F2,176 = 8.69, p < 0.001) and timepoints (F3,176 = 4.18, p = 0.007) when all data are analysed together. Several significant differences in pancreatic PYY expression between timepoints within groups were detected for AL and Ram, but not Rpm treatments (Fig. 5a). Pancreatic PPY differed significantly between treatments.

![Fig. 3. In situ hybridisation of 15 μm tissue sections. Jejuno-ileal boundary (JI), pancreas head (duodenal end) and pancreas tail (splenic end) tissue sections from two adolescent (12wk) broiler breeders, demonstrating expression of PYY (upper panels) and PPY (lower panels) by hybridisation with gene-specific oligonucleotide probes (see Table 1).](image1)

![Fig. 4. Pancreatic PYY but not PPY expression responds to short-term nutritional state. Normalised relative mean (±SEM) PYY (a) and PPY (b) expression in the pancreas of satiated (ad libitum fed) and fasted (11 h fast) broiler-layer hybrid birds at 2 weeks of age. The number of individuals in each group is indicated within bars. Statistical significance is indicated (**ANOVA p < 0.001).](image2)
Pancreatic PYY Expression

ANOVA

Factor   p-value
Treatment <0.001
Time   0.0007
Treatment.xtime  0.462

(a)

Normalised relative PYY expression (arbitrary units)

Time after feeding (h)

16 18 17
16 18 17
16 18 17
16 18 17

ab ab ab ab
abc abc abc abc
abc abc abc abc

AL
Ram
Rpm

Pancreatic PPY Expression

ANOVA

Factor   p-value
Treatment <0.001
Time   0.426
Treatment.xtime  0.331

(b)

Normalised relative PPY expression (arbitrary units)

Time after feeding (h)

16 18 17
16 18 17
16 18 17
16 18 17

d d d d
d d d d
d d d d
d d d d

AL
Ram
Rpm

3.3.3. Roles of gut fill and nutrient uptake

Pancreatic PYY expression was significantly reduced in broiler breeders under long-term food restriction versus those re-fed ad libitum for 2.5 days and lower in food-restricted birds with additional dietary fibre, compared to those without, to an extent approaching statistical significance (Fig. 6).

4. Discussion

The close agreement of our 5’ RACE product sequencing with 2017 data from Aoki et al. provides convincing evidence that the transcriptional start site (TSS) for chicken PYY is approximately 38bp upstream of the translational start codon. It was noted that the 5’ extremity of the sequence published by Gao et al. (Gao et al., 2017) is most likely a product of mis-priming during amplification or sequencing, since bases 1–64 and 10–64 are 97% and 100% identical to the complement of a later segment of the sequence (bases 332–395), respectively. Removing this likely erroneous
ceptible to DPP4 cleavage and PYY 3-36 does not occur naturally in mammals. DPP4 is inhibited (Unniappan et al., 2006). The primary structure of PYY from various species indicates that the C-terminal segment brings this sequence into agreement with our observations and those of Aoki et al. (2017), so it can be concluded that the 5’UTR for chicken PYY is approximately 38-39nt in length and the likely TSS is at genomic position chrlun_NT_464349v1:4497 (galGal5).

The structure of chicken PYY ligand differs from mammalian PYY, offering a unique opportunity to study the evolution of the ligand in tetrapods, and the effects of proteolytic cleavage on receptor specificity and action in vivo. Mammalian PYY1-36 undergoes cleavage to PYY3-36 by the action of dipeptidyl peptidase IV (DPP4). This reaction apparently confers the anorexigenic effect of PYY1-36 via the Y1 receptor in goldfish (Boey et al., 2007; Ramracheya et al., 2016). Rat PYY3-36 has been shown to lack anorexigenic effects in higher vertebrates more closely related to mammals.

Normalised relative mean pancreatic PYY expression in 12-week-old broiler breeder chickens subject to short-term ad libitum fed (AL), restricted (FR) or diluted (isocaloric restriction with 15% (w/w) ispaghula husk) (IH) diets for 2.5 days. The number of individuals in each group is indicated within bars. Statistical significance by one-way ANOVA is indicated (**p < 0.07, *p < 0.05, ***p < 0.001).

Fig. 6. Roles of gut fill and nutrient uptake on Pancreatic PYY expression. Normalised relative mean pancreatic PYY expression in 12-week-old broiler breeder chickens subject to short-term ad libitum fed (AL), restricted (FR) or diluted (isocaloric restriction with 15% (w/w) ispaghula husk) (IH) diets for 2.5 days. The number of individuals in each group is indicated within bars. Statistical significance by one-way ANOVA is indicated (**p < 0.07, *p < 0.05, ***p < 0.001).

d to be functionally opposite (as classically attributed to NPY). Furthering previous work (Bromee et al., 2006; Gao et al., 2017; He et al., 2016; Holmberg et al., 2002; Lundell et al., 2002; Salaneck et al., 2000) to comprehensively define the roles and receptor preferences of avian PYY might offer insight into the evolution of PYY action in higher vertebrates more closely related to mammals.

The distribution of chicken PYY expression is different from mammals, with intestinal transcripts most abundant around the mid- to distal jejunum whereas peak mammalian intestinal PYY expression is thought to be in the distal ileum and large intestine (Miyachi et al., 1986; Pezeshki et al., 2012). Normalisation to reference genes suggested pancreatic expression is in fact higher than the intestinal peak in chickens and we surmise that the relatively high transcriptional activity of the pancreas (see Section 3.2) might have concealed the extent of PYY expression without reference gene normalisation. Incidentally, we also quantified PYY expression by qPCR across a tissue panel of a genetically distinct commercial brown layer line (Lohmann Classic) and found agreement between the distributional landscapes of PYY in broilers and layers, with the pancreas being the most prominent source of PYY mRNA (layer data not shown). The identification of the pancreas as the major site of PYY expression in chickens is contrary to the dogma that PYY is primarily of intestinal origin, but in keeping with recently-published chicken data (Gao et al., 2017). This is interesting because the first identified action of mammalian PYY was to regulate pancreatic function (Tatemoto, 1982), and since then PYY has been shown to mediate glucose homeostasis by paracrine activity in pancreatic islets (Boey et al., 2007; Ramracheya et al., 2016). In fact, specific targeting to the Y2 receptor—which seems to enhance the satiety effect of PYY in mammals—is dependent on processing of PYY1-36 to PYY3-36 by DPP4, but an orthologous cleavage is not known to exist for avian PYY1-37. These distinct capacities of the ligand raise further questions about the possible tissue of origin-dependence of PYY action in vivo and additional work is needed to investigate the precise effects of PYY on energy homeostasis in birds.

PYY and PPY expression levels were not dependent on the region of the pancreas sampled in young chicks (2wk), however both were significantly more highly expressed in the tail (splenic) than the head (duodenal) region of the pancreas in more mature birds (12wk), evidencing an ontogenic change in regional distribution of pancreatic PP-fold peptide expression in chickens. Ontogenic changes in expression levels of these peptides across many tissues have been identified in rats (El-Salhy et al., 1983; Sandström and El-Salhy, 2002), but the conservation and significance of these changes is poorly understood. Gradient distribution of pancreatic expression has also been noted in rats (Ekblad and Sundler, 2002) in which PYY and PPY were inversely correlated, in contrast to our findings in chickens where their gradients are directly correlated, at least at adolescence. Although we were unable to positively identify specific cell types expressing PP-fold peptide mRNA in chicken, we note that our results are in keeping with the observation of greatest islet abundance in the pancreas splenic half in mammals, and the association of PP-fold peptide synthesis with islets in vertebrates (Wang et al., 2013).

The dynamic regulation of pancreatic PYY (but not PPY) expression under short-term fasting and re-feeding suggests that pancreatic PYY may act as a short-term satiety signal in chickens, whereas PPY likely does not. Under long-term quantitative restriction of broiler-breeders with feeding once per day, the pattern of pancreatic PYY expression throughout the day was dependent on hunger/satiety level, as inferred by considering time until and since feeding, and whether the birds were active or sedentary for periods following feeding. To this end, birds fed a commercial restricted daily ration in the morning (Ram) experienced peak expression around seven hours after feeding which diminished within 16 h, whereas...
no acute increase in PYY expression was detected in birds fed the same ration in the afternoon (Rpm). This is possibly because afternoon-fed birds were in a state of low energy expenditure (sleep) soon after feeding and therefore have different immediate energy requirements. In humans, the duration of gastrointestinal hormonal response to feeding is attenuated during sleep (Soffer et al., 1997) and a similar attenuation could explain the apparent stability of PYY in the Rpm group of the long-term nutritional state experiment. The interaction of time of feeding and satiety hormone response is an interesting phenomenon which demands further study. The broiler breeder-type chickens used here are routinely food restricted in commercial production, leading to welfare concerns over hunger, and altering the time of feeding might offer a relatively easy management step to improve welfare. The comparative reduction in pancreatic PYY expression in food restricted birds was not attenuated by addition of dietary fibre (ispaghula husk) to the restricted ration, suggesting that pancreatic PYY expression is responsive to nutrient uptake, not merely physical gut fill. It is known that inclusion of small amounts of insoluble fibre aids digestibility in chickens (Hetland et al., 2003), but in this case birds fed relatively large amounts of ispaghula husk expressed pancreatic PYY at an almost–significantly lower level than restricted counterparts. This is possibly an artefact of the reduced speed with which birds consumed their ration or a negative effect of mucilaginous ispaghula husk on digestibility.

The relative abundance and functional regulation of pancreatic PYY leads us to conclude that the pancreas is likely to be the major source of circulating PYY in chickens and that future studies of the roles of peripheral PPV and PYY in the energy balance of chickens should therefore focus on the pancreas. We have demonstrated that regional distribution of pancreatic PYY and PYY expression alters with age, and that pancreatic PYY expression is responsive to short-term nutritional state and is upregulated in satiety whereas PYY expression seems dependent on longer-term energy status. These proposed roles are contrary to the historical implication of PYY as simply a short-term satiety factor in chickens (Johnson and Hazelwood, 1982). It is noteworthy that the antibody used to quantify PYY was developed before the discovery of PYY (Tatemoto, 1982), meaning that possible cross-reactivity could not be assessed. It must however be conceded that the data herein represent only mRNA expression of chicken PYY and PYY, which might exhibit lagged response relative to expulsion of pancreatic peptide stocks or otherwise misrepresent the peptide output of expressing cells. The fluctuation of PYY in the AL group of the long-term nutritional state experiment (Section 2.2.3) implies that PYY expression is capable of significant short-term change, but this seems dependent on birds’ longer-term energy status. Additional work is therefore required to assess further the responsiveness of circulating chicken PYY and PYY peptides to feeding, and the effects of peripheral administration of exogenous PYY and PYY individually. Such work would be particularly valuable if it could complement characterisation of central PP-fold peptide activity. The unique attributes of avian PYY compared to mammalian PYY – namely exemption from DPP4 digestion and the chicken’s distinctive dynamic expression – suggest that a comprehensive understanding of avian PP-fold peptide expression will contribute to the wider appreciation of the evolving roles of this family of molecules in higher vertebrate food intake and metabolism.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our thanks to Laurence Baker, Krysta Morrissy, Jessica Martin, Laura Beeson and Nasir Mukhtar for help in collection of samples. Sincere thanks are also extended to the staff of the National Avian Research Facility (NARF) in Edinburgh and the Monogahna Science Research Centre in Ayr, for their expert help with animal husbandry and other practicalities. Debts of gratitude are owed to Paul Hocking and Graeme Robertson for foundation and early maintenance of the broker-layer hybrid line (Section 2.2.2) and to Valerie Bishop for her expert advice on in situ hybridisation.

Angus Reid is supported by a BBBSRC EastBio Doctoral Training Partnership grant and University of Edinburgh scholarship. Animal work was funded by BBBSRC grant ‘Investigating how the type and quantity of food affect foraging behaviour and the neural circuits controlling feeding in broiler breeder chickens’ (BB/L000199/1) and the Roslin Institute strategic programme grant (BB/ J004316/1). SRUC is supported by the Rural & Environmental Science & Analytical Services Division of the Scottish Government.

References

Decreased expression of the satiety signal receptor CCKAR is responsible for increased growth and body weight during the domestication of chickens. Am. J. Physiol. Endocrinol. Metab. 304, E909–E921.


