ty in maintaining adequate voltage control of the large, highly infolded oocyte membrane with a two-microelectrode voltage clamp, and the changes in the time course of Na⁺ channel inactivation that we have observed could have been obscured by the inappropriately slow inactivation of the Na⁺ channels expressed in Xenopus oocytes (5).

The physiological significance of modulation of Na⁺ channel activity in brain neurons by PKC is unknown. Types II and IIA Na⁺ channels are preferentially localized in axons, whereas types I and III Na⁺ channels are preferentially localized on neuronal cell bodies in vivo (21). Reduction and prolongation of Na⁺ currents mediated by type II and IIA Na⁺ channels in axons may alter the threshold for initiation of a conducted action potential and the frequency of action potential generation, and similar effects on Na⁺ channels in nerve terminals may be expected to alter neurotransmitter release. Reduction of Na⁺ currents by activation of PKC may also protect neurons against episodes of hyperexcitability. Further studies of the modulation of Na⁺ channel function by PKC will be necessary to critically assess these possible physiological effects.

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ward Na⁺ currents does not make the voltage homogeneous throughout the length of the neurites of cultured rat brain neurons but does improve the quality of the recorded Na+ currents by preventing regenerative activity. Solutions for cell-attached and excised patch recording from CNaIIA-1 cells con-tained 150 mM KCl, 10 mM NaCl, 1.5 mM CaCl₂, 2 mM MgCl₂, 1 mM EGTA, 5 mM Hepes, KOH to pH 7.4 in the bath and 150 mM NaCl, 5 mM KCl, 1.5 mM CaCl₂, 1 mM MgCl₂, pH 7.4 in the recording pipette. All recordings were performed at room temperature (approximately 22°C). Peptide inhibitors of protein kinase A [cAMP-dependent protein kinase inhibitor (PKI) 5-24, Peninsula Labs] and of PKC were dissolved in 150 mM KCl before microinjection. PMA, DOG, and OAG were dissolved in dimethyl sulfoxide at concentrations of 10, 8.33, and 8.33 mM, respectively, and stored at -20° C until use. The pseudosubstrate site inhibitor peptide of PKC was a gift of K. Meier and E. G. Krebs. PMA was obtained from Calbiochem. All other chemicals were obtained from Sigma.

CNaIIA-1 cells are Chinese hamster ovary cells 13. (CHO-K1, American Type Culture) that have been stably transfected by calcium phosphate precipita-tion [D. Chen and H. Okayama, *Mol. Cell. Biol.* 7, 2745 (1987)] with the plasmid pZem228/SP6 containing the coding sequence for the rat brain type IIA Na⁺ channel α subunit under control of the mammalian metallothionein promoter. pZem228/ SP6 is a variant of Zem228 [C. Clegg et al., J. Biol. Chem. 262, 13111 (1987)] and contains the neo gene, conferring G418 resistance. Transfected cells were maintained in RPMI (Gibco), 10% fetal calf serum (Hyclone), and G418 (200 μ g/ml) (Gibco). The type IIA Na⁺ channel sequence contains the natural leucine at position 860, which confers a normal voltage dependence of activation and inactivation (5, 6). Transfected cells express large voltagedependent Na⁺ currents (4 to 25 nA). CNaIIA-1

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Establishment of the Mesoderm-Neuroectoderm Boundary in the Drosophila Embryo

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A gradient of the maternal morphogen dorsal establishes asymmetric patterns of gene expression along the dorsal-ventral axis of early embryos and activates the regulatory genes twist and snail, which are responsible for the differentiation of the ventral mesoderm. Expression of snail is restricted to the presumptive mesoderm, and the sharp lateral limits of this expression help to define the mesoderm-neuroectoderm boundary by repressing the expression of regulatory genes that are responsible for the differentiation of the neuroectoderm. The snail gene encodes a zinc finger protein, and neuroectodermal genes that are normally restricted to ventral-lateral regions of early embryos are expressed throughout ventral regions of snail - mutants. The formation of the sharp snail border involves dosage-sensitive interactions between dorsal and twist, which encode regulatory proteins that are related to the mammalian transcription factors NF-kB and MyoD, respectively.

POLYCLONAL ANTIBODY TO SNAIL (sna) (1) was prepared against a sna protein made in Escherichia coli (2). The bacterial protein contains 287 amino acid residues and lacks 102 NH2-terminal residues present in the native sna protein. The resulting antibody (3) was used to monitor sna expression during embryogenesis (Fig. 1). The protein was detected by

the onset of cleavage cycle 14, and, by the middle of cycle 14, its distribution appeared to coincide with the presumptive mesoderm (Fig. 1A). The borders of the sna pattern were sharp in lateral regions (arrow) and at the boundary between the presumptive mesoderm and posterior midgut invagination (PMG) (arrowhead). Expression persisted in the differentiating mesoderm throughout the formation of the ventral furrow (Fig. 1B) and the initial phases of germ-band elongation (Fig. 1C). After germ band elon-

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tion. Staining is restricted to the invaginated mesoderm. (**D**) Ventral view of an embryo after the completion of germ-band elongation. Staining of *sna* is no longer detected in the mesoderm, but is seen in neuroblasts. (**E**) Higher magnification view of an embryo in the middle of cycle 14 stained with an antibody to *twi*. The protein is distributed in a steep gradient, which sharply diminishes in the presumptive neuroectoderm (arrow). The arrowheads show the steepest point of the *twi* gradient, with at least a twofold reduction in the level of protein in successive nuclei. (**F**) Similar to the embryo shown in (E), except that it was stained with a mixture of anti-*sna* and anti-*twi* antibodies. This photograph shows the *sna* pattern. (**G**) The same embryo as in (F), photographed to show both *sna* and *twi* expression. Ventral nuclei that express both proteins stain yellow. The arrow indicates green-staining nuclei, which express only the *twi* protein and lack *sna*, indicating the limits of the *sna* border. Expression of *twi* can be seen in at least four nuclei beyond the *sna* pattern. See (E).

gation, expression was lost in the ventral mesoderm but reappeared later in all neuroblasts as they segregated from the neuroectoderm (Fig. 1D). In contrast to an earlier report (1), our antibody does not detect *sna* protein in the cytoplasm of differentiating neurons.

The sna expression pattern is similar, but not identical, to the *twist* (*twi*) pattern (4-6). Whereas sna RNAs and proteins are only transiently expressed in the presumptive mesoderm, *twi* expression persists well after the time when *sna* products are no longer detected and continues during the initial periods of muscle differentiation (5). Sustained expression of *twi* suggests that it might be important in mesoderm differentiation. In contrast, the transience of the *sna* pattern suggests involvement only in the initiation of the mesodermal pathway. This distinction is not evident in the mutant phenotypes of *sna* or *twi* embryos, which display similar losses of the mesoderm and its derivatives (6, 7).

Double-staining studies indicated that the twi and sna expression patterns overlap but do not coincide. Expression of twi was not restricted to the presumptive mesoderm but was seen to be graded and extended into the ventral neuroectoderm (Fig. 1E, arrow). In contrast, the sna pattern showed a sharp on-off border in the same lateral regions (Fig. 1F) and appeared to coincide with the presumptive mesoderm. Double-labeling experiments revealed that sna expression ends abruptly at the steepest point of the twi gradient, where there is at least a twofold reduction in the level of protein (Fig. 1G).

To determine the roles of twi and sna in the differentiation of the neuroectoderm, we examined the expression of lethal of scute (T3) and rhomboid (rho) in wild-type and mutant embryos. T3 is contained within the achaete-scute gene complex (AS-C) and encodes a helix-loop-helix regulatory protein that is important for the differentiation of neuroblasts within the neuroectoderm (8-10). T3 transcripts were initially detected in ventral-lateral regions of precellular embryos, and during gastrulation these transcripts were distributed in a series of seven pair-rule stripes that quickly evolved into 14 hemistripes (Fig. 2A). In sna- mutant embryos, the T3 pattern was expanded so that expression extended throughout ventral regions that normally form the mesoderm. Thus, sna appeared to restrict T3 expression to ventral-lateral regions of wild-type embryos.

In contrast, twi appeared to exert a weak positive effect on T3 expression. There was a delay of at least 30 min in the time when T3transcripts could first be detected in twiembryos, as compared with wild-type embryos (11). By the onset of gastrulation, there was a partial derepression of the T3pattern in ventral regions of twi- embryos, but this was less dramatic than that seen in sna mutants (Fig. 2, B and C). It is possible that this weak derepression is indirect and mediated by sna because there is a marked reduction in the amount of sna transcripts in twi⁻ embryos (Fig. 2, D and H). These results suggest that one way in which twi initiates the mesodermal pathway is by enhancing the expression of sna, which in turn blocks the activities of genes that direct alternative pathways of development.

Further support for this view stems from studies with the *spitz* group gene *rho*, which encodes a putative transmembrane protein that participates in the differentiation of the mesectoderm (see below) and a subset of ventral epidermal cells from the neuroectoderm (12, 13). As with T3, the initial *rho* pattern appeared to be delimited by the *sna* border. When *rho* transcripts were first de-

Fig. 2. T3 and sna RNAs in wild-type and mutant embryos. Whole-mount preparations of embryos were hybridized with sna, $T\hat{3}$, or mixtures of both DNA probes, and their corresponding RNAs were visualized histochemically (30). All embryos are at similar stages, spanning from the middle of cleavage cycle 14 through cellularization and are oriented with anterior to the left. (A) Wild-type embryo hybridized with a T3 probe. This embryo is undergoing the transition from a 7- to 14-stripe pattern. These hemistripes are sharply restricted to ventrolateral regions running along both sides of the embryo (only one side can be seen in this photograph). (B) A sna⁻ embryo that is oriented somewhat more ventrally than those shown in (A) and (C) (31). T3 expression extends throughout ventral regions that normally give rise to the mesoderm. (C) A twi- embryo showing slight ventral derepression of the T3 pattern (31). Expression is significantly weaker than in wildtype embryos at comparable stages. (D) Wild-type embryo showing the sna RNA pattern. (E) Wildtype embryo simultaneously hybridized with T3and sna probes. The T3 hemistripes appear to abut the sna border. (F) Higher magnification of an embryo similar to the one shown in (E). (G) Higher magnification of a wild-type embryo hybridized with the T3 probe alone. Each hemistripe includes about five to six cells, which appear to extend from the sna border in the doubly labeled embryo shown in (F). (H) A twi- embryo hybridized with a sna probe. There are ventral gaps in the pattern. Expression is substantially reduced as compared to that in the wild-type embryo shown in (D). The embryos shown in (E)and (H) were stained in the same experiment.

tected in a wild-type embryo, they were distributed in two broad, ventral-lateral bands that extended along the length of the embryo (Fig. 3A). In sna^- embryos, these bands expanded to include ventral regions that normally form the mesoderm (Fig. 3B). There was a delay and partial expansion of *rho* expression in *twi*⁻ embryos (11).

The sna gene might exert a direct repressive effect on T3 and tho expression because



both genes appeared to abut the *sna* border (Fig. 2, E through G, and Fig. 3, C through E). For T3, each ventral-lateral hemistripe included five to six cells and extended about five cells beyond the *sna* domain in embryos labeled with both probes (Fig. 2, E through G). The faintly expressing cells between the *tho* and *sna* domains (Fig. 3, C and E) probably correspond to the most ventrally located row of *tho*-expressing cells (Fig.



Fig. 3. RNAs encoded by tho and sna in wild-type and mutant embryos. All embryos are at cellular blastoderm stages and are oriented with anterior to the left and dorsal up. (A) Wild-type embryo hybridized with a rho probe (32). At this time, rho is expressed in two nearly uniform ventrolateral bands that extend along the length of the embryo. Expression includes most of the presumptive ventral neuroectoderm (12). (**B**) A sna⁻ embryo hybridized with a *tho* probe. There is a dramatic increase of expression in the ventral cells that normally form mesoderm. (C) Wild-type embryo hybridized with a mixture of sna and the probes. (D) Higher magnification of a wild-type embryo hybridized with a *tho* probe. The re-duced amounts of staining in the

most ventral expressing cells could account for the apparent gap between the *sna* and *rho* patterns indicated by the arrow in (C) and (E). (E) Higher magnification of the embryo shown in (C).

3D). Additional experiments were done with the regulatory gene single minded (sim), which encodes a helix-loop-helix protein that plays a key role in the differentiation of the mesectoderm (14, 15). The sim gene also abuts the sna border and is expressed in sna⁻ embryos (11, 16, 17). Thus, T3, rho, and sim all appear to obey the sna border.

Both dorsal (dl) and twi gene activities are required for the proper establishment of the sna border. Expression of sna was severely reduced in twi- embryos (Fig. 2H), and in dl^- embryos there was a complete failure to activate either twi or sna (5, 6). Dosagesensitive interactions occur between dl and twi (7). The dl^{-}/dl^{+} heterozygotes displayed normal viability at 25°C, but double heterozygotes (dl⁻/+,twi⁻/+) showed variable lethality, which became progressively more severe at elevated temperatures. When $dl^{-}/+$ mothers were mated with $twi^-/+$ males at 25°C, only 20% of the expected number of twi⁻/+ heterozygotes survived, and the lethal embryos showed defects in mesoderm formation similar to those observed in twi mutants (7). On the basis of analysis of twi and sna expression in the double heterozygotes, it appears that the lethality is due to a marked reduction in the limits of both twi and sna expression (Fig. 4). The most consistent defects were narrower ventral-lateral limits of expression and gaps in the pattern



Fig. 4. Expression of *twi* and *sna* in $dl^{-/+}$,*twi*^{-/+} double heterozygotes. Embryos were collected from a mating of $dl^{-/+}$ females and *twi*^{-/+} males and grown at 25°C (31). The embryos were stained with mixtures of antibodies to *twi* and *sna*, and are oriented with anterior to the left. (A) Ventral view of a gastrulating embryo showing *twi* expression in green. The lateral limits of expression are reduced and there is a significant reduction near the cephalic furrow (arrows). There is no indication of a ventral furrow, which is seen in comparable wild-type embryos. (B) Lateral view of a precellular embryo showing *twi* staining. There is reduced expression near the region of the presumptive cephalic furrow (arrowheads). (C) The same embryo as in (A), showing *sna* expression in red. As seen for *twi*, the lateral limits are severely reduced, and there is a loss of expression near the cephalic furrow. (D) The same embryo [as in (B)] showing *sna* expression. The arrowheads indicate a region where *sna* expression is lost, which corresponds to the site of reduced *twi* staining.

Fig. 5. Summary of the role of dl in defining the mesoderm-neuroectoderm boundary. The two circles represent cross sections of a precellular (A) and a cellular blastoderm-stage embryo (B), which contains a total of 72 cells in its circumference. The gradient of nuclear dl protein extends from the ventral surface to the lateral midline. A dose-dependent threshold response to dl initiates the expression of *twi*, and then dl and *twi* act in



concert to specify a somewhat steeper gradient of twi than is observed for dl (19). The twi protein pattern ends about five cells beyond the limits of the presumptive mesoderm (indicated by the solid diagonal lines in the diagram). The dl and twi gradients specify sharp borders of *sna* expression, which in turn represses regulatory genes active in the presumptive mesectoderm and neuroectoderm, including T3, *tho*, and *sim*.

in anterior regions near the cephalic furrow (Fig. 4, A and C). The embryo shown in Fig. 4, A and C, is undergoing gastrulation, but there is a failure of ventral furrow formation. Normally, the sna pattern includes a band ~18 cells wide along the ventral midline (see Fig. 1B), but, in this mutant embryo, the sna domain is only ~ 10 cells wide (Fig. 4C). Double heterozygotes that contained more than ten sna-expressing cells usually displayed ventral furrows, whereas embryos expressing fewer than eight or nine cells failed to invaginate. This situation is reminiscent of gastrulation in sea urchins, where ingression of a minimal threshold number of cells is required to provide sufficient local force for the invagination of the vegetal plate (18).

Despite the disruptions in the *twi* and *sna* patterns seen in $dl^-/+,twi^-/+$ heterozygotes, they displayed the same relative limits of expression observed in wild-type embry-

4 OCTOBER 1991

os. For example, the twi pattern was graded, with progressively less protein expressed beyond the sharp sna border (Fig. 4, A and C). As in the wild-type embryo, a twofold reduction in the level of twi protein correlated with a sharp on-off border of sna expression. Moreover, there was a disproportionate reduction in twi expression in the presumptive cephalic furrow (Fig. 4B). Staining of twi was reduced in this region, and there was a dramatic loss of sna expression (Fig. 4, B and D). These results suggest that dl and twi may act in concert to establish the full lateral limits of twi expression and the sharp sna borders (Fig. 5). According to this model, dl activates twi, and the initially low amounts of twi protein in lateral regions are enhanced through a positive autofeedback mechanism (19). The catastrophic narrowing of the twi pattern observed in dl,twi double heterozygotes might be caused by reduced levels of twi protein that are below the critical threshold required for autoregulation.

We have presented evidence that sna establishes a sharp boundary between the presumptive mesoderm and neuroectoderm by repressing the expression of regulatory genes (T3 and rho) responsible for the differentiation of neuroectodermal derivatives, including neuroblasts, glial cells, and ventral epidermis (Fig. 5). The expression patterns of several neurogenic genes, such as *Delta* (20), suggest that they might also obey the sna border.

The lateral limits of sna expression may be determined by cooperative interactions between the shallow dl gradient and the steeper twi gradient (Fig. 5). The sna gene encodes a zinc finger protein (6) that might function as a direct transcriptional repressor. There is evidence that repression by sna could be relatively direct: the slight derepression of T3 and rho observed in twiembryos correlates with reduced expression of sna. Moreover, there are ventral expansions of the T3 and rho patterns in $dl^{-}/$ +,twi⁻/+ heterozygotes, which correlate with the severity in the reduction of sna expression (11). However, the coexpression of T3 and sna in neuroblasts suggests that this repression might involve a second regulatory factor, such as dl, that is active only in early embryos.

Small amounts of *twi* protein in the presumptive neuroectoderm may define cell fate. This situation would be analogous to the functional redundancy provided by low amounts of the *bicoid* morphogen and the gap protein *hunchback* in regulating *Kruppel* expression in central regions of the embryo (21). Alternatively, this expression may be a fortuitous consequence of the way in which the *twi* promoter responds to the *dl* concentration gradient. The finding that *sim* expression is abolished and *T3* reduced in *twi*, *sna* double mutants (11, 17) supports the view that *twi* is important for the differentiation of the mesectoderm and neuroectoderm.

There are numerous examples of dosagesensitive interactions between genes involved in a common developmental pathway, including sex determination and neurogenesis. The reduction in the lateral limits of twi and sna expression observed in $dl^{-}/+twi^{-}/+$ double heterozygotes could be the result of two distinct transcription factors acting on a common target gene. The dl gene is a member of the rel family of DNA binding proteins (22), whereas twi contains a helix-loop-helix motif (23). Specific *dl* and *twi* binding sites may be present in essential control regions of the twi and sna promoters. The two proteins may interact to mediate cooperative binding to DNA or, alternatively, may activate transcription through synergistic contacts with the transcription complex (24).

We propose that sna allows twi to function as a mesodermal determinant by repressing the expression of sim (16), AS-C (10), E(spl) (25), and other regulatory genes responsible for the differentiation of the mesectoderm and neuroectoderm. In sna embryos, ventral cells that normally form mesoderm now express the wrong regulatory genes, and consequently follow an alternative fate.

Note added in proof: Similar results on the role of sna in mesoderm formation have been obtained (25a).

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- Preparative quantities of the sna peptide were isolat-ed from SDS-polyacrylamide gels and used for im-munization of a guinea pig (Pocono Farms, PA). The serum was diluted 1:200 in phosphate-buffered

In their mathematical model of the cyclin

and maturation promotion factor (MPF)

system, Norel and Agur (1) note that oscil-

lations occurred if the degradation of cyclin

had saturable kinetics but not if the reaction was first order with respect to cyclin. One might ask whether this saturability is mathematically necessary for oscillation, or

whether the investigators just did not find

the right parameters for the first-order case.

In the same vein, one might ask whether the degradation of MPF must have saturable

kinetics (as assumed) and whether the auto-

catalytic term for the formation of MPF

must be of order greater than 1 with respect

lyzing the effect of reaction order on stabil-

ity, following Higgins (2). Let M and C

denote the concentrations of active MPF

and cyclin, respectively, and \dot{M} and \dot{C} the

These questions can be answered by ana-

Mathematical Analysis of a Model of the

Technical Comment

Mitotic Clock

saline, 1% bovine serum albumin, 0.5 M NaCl, 0.1% Tween-80, and was used to stain wholemount preparations of formaldehyde-methanolfixed embryos (28). The protein was visualized using a tetramethyl rhodamine isothiocyanate-conjugated antibody to guinea pig (Jackson Immunoresearch, Bethesda, MD) diluted in the same staining buffer. Staining of twi was done with a rabbit antibody provided by S. Roth et al. (29), and visualized with a fluorescein isothiocyanate-conjugated secondary antibody (Jackson Immunoresearch). Fluorescence microscopy was done with a Nikon Optiphot microscope, and photographs were taken with Kodak Kodachrome film (Asa 64).

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- 31. The following mutant alleles were used in this study: twist, ID96 (29); snail, IIG05 (6); and dorsal, dl-8 (29).
- 32. The *rho* probe used for whole-mount hybridizations corresponded to a 2.5-kb Eco RI restriction fragment from a cDNA (provided by E. Bier).
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and rates of removal:

$$\dot{M} = F_M - R_M$$
 and $\dot{C} = F_C - R_C$

Then, for example, $\partial M/\partial M = \partial F_M/\partial M \partial R_M / \partial M$. Let ϕ_{MX} and ρ_{MX} be the orders of reaction for F_M and R_M , respectively, with respect to X, for example,

$$\phi_{MM} = (M/F_M)(\partial F_M/\partial M)$$

Then, because $F_M = R_M$ and $F_C = R_C$ at the critical point,

$$\partial M/\partial M = (F_M/M)(\phi_{MM} - \rho_{MM})$$

and Eqs. 1 and 2 become

$$(\phi_{MM} - \rho_{MM})(\phi_{CC} - \rho_{CC}) - (\phi_{MC} - \rho_{MC})(\phi_{CM} - \rho_{CM}) > 0 \qquad (3)$$

and

and

$$\frac{F_M}{M}(\phi_{MM} - \rho_{MM}) + \frac{F_C}{C}(\phi_{CC} - \rho_{CC}) > 0$$
(4)

In the Norel and Agur model, $\rho_{\rm MC}$ = $\phi_{CM} = \phi_{CC} = 0$, and $\phi_{MC} = \rho_{CM} = 1$; so Eqs. 3 and 4 become

$$(\phi_{MM} - \rho_{MM})\rho_{CC} < 1 \tag{5}$$

and

$$(\phi_{MM} - \rho_{MM}) > \frac{MF_C}{F_M C} \rho_{CC}$$
(6)

SCIENCE, VOL. 254

rates of change in these concentrations. For a closed trajectory around a single critical point [that is, a point (M,C) where M = C= 0], the Poincaré theorem requires

$$(\partial \dot{M}/\partial M)(\partial \dot{C}/\partial C) - (\partial \dot{M}/\partial C)(\partial \dot{C}/\partial M) > 0$$
(1)

at the critical point. A sufficient condition for instability at the critical point is

$$\partial M / \partial M + \partial C / \partial C > 0 \tag{2}$$

These equations can be restated in terms of orders and rates of reaction at the critical point, the order of reaction with respect to X being defined as $(X/V)(\partial V/\partial X)$, where V is the reaction rate. So defined, reaction order may depend on concentration and must be evaluated at the critical point for our present purposes. The rates of change of M and C in the Norel and Agur model are the differences between rates of formation

to MPF.

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