



Review

CD28 Costimulatory Molecule – Expression, Structure and Function

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Abstract. T cell activation is a key event in triggering an antigen specific immune response of the organism. The process is induced primarily by the signal generated by direct interaction of a T cell receptor with an antigen bound to the major histocompatible complex on an antigen-presenting cell (APC). Although the signal is critical in exciting immune response, an additional, costimulating signal is required. The major second signal is generated by interaction of the CD28 molecule expressed on most T lymphocytes with its natural ligands CD80 and CD86 located on APCs. The signal excited by CD28 triggering involves multiple second-messenger cascades, leading to the activation of transcription factors and finally results in cell proliferation, cytokine production, and the generation of effector functions. The importance of CD28-delivered costimulatory signals was proven in experiments with CD28-deficient mice. T cells from these mice exhibited an impaired pattern of cytokine secretion and defects in T cell-dependent antibody production. Certain forms of immunopathology might result from the aberrant regulation of CD28 expression.

Key words: T cell activation; CD28 molecule; costimulation.

CD28 Expression and Structure

In 1970 a two-signal model of lymphocyte activation was proposed by BRETSCHER and COHN¹⁰, who suggested that T cell receptor (TCR) occupancy alone is an insufficient stimulus to excite T cell differentiation and effector functions. T cell activation requires the recognition of an antigen/major histocompatible complex (MHC) located on antigen-presenting cells (APCs) by TCR, although an additional, costimulatory signal is required to excite complete T cell activation, resulting in proliferation and cytokine secretion (Fig. 1). Triggering of TCR/CD3 alone in the absence of a costimula-

tory signal not only fails to induce immune response, but may also lead to a state of hyporesponsiveness or anergy^{36, 61}.

CD28 is known to be the major costimulatory molecule, and it has been identified as a 44 kDa homodimeric or monomeric⁵ transmembrane glycoprotein expressed on CD3⁺ immature thymocytes, all CD3⁺ thymocytes, 95% of CD4⁺ and approximately 50% CD8⁺ T cells^{43, 44}, on $\gamma\delta$ T cells^{53, 84}, plasma cells⁵⁰, and on human foetal, but not adult, peripheral blood natural killer (NK) cells⁶². A variant of the CD28 molecule was recently reported on a subpopulation of human peripheral blood NK cells³¹. Ligation of CD28 costimulates

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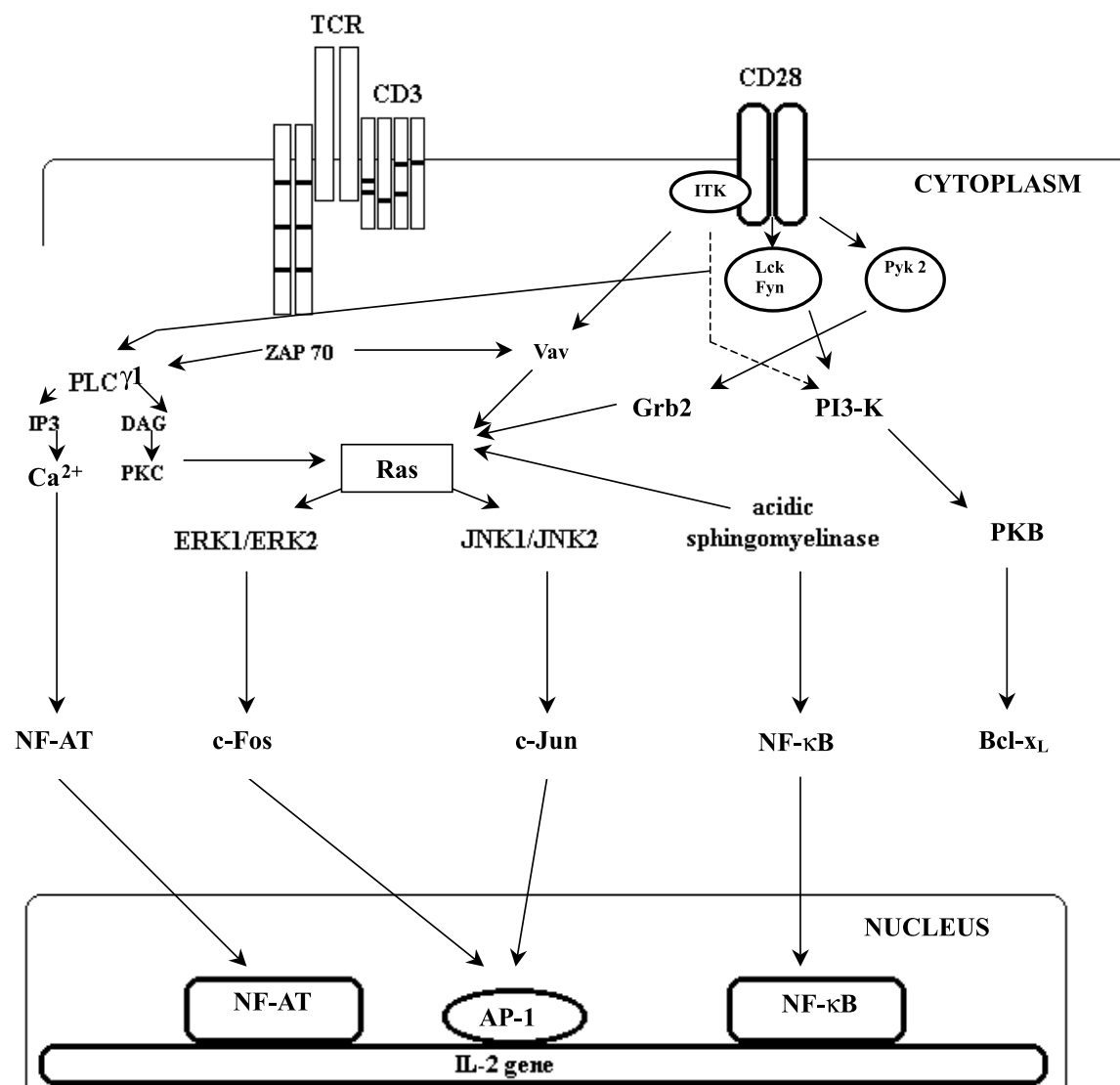


Fig. 1. Molecules involved in signal transduction in activated T cells (modified from ALEGRE¹)

T cell proliferation, generation of cytotoxic lymphocytes, and cytokine production (IL-1 α ¹⁶, IL-2²⁶, IL-3³⁴, IL-4⁸⁹, IL-5²⁸, IL-6⁵⁷, IL-10⁹⁴, IL-13⁵⁹, TNF- α , GM-CSF, LT⁸⁵, IFN- γ ⁶³, CSF-1¹⁷). In addition, costimulation through the CD28 molecule improves T cell survival, both through the increased IL-2 secretion and the ability to up-regulate Bcl-x $_L$ ^{7, 71}.

CD28 expression on cell surface was described to be constant, although LINSLEY et al.⁵⁶ showed that CD28 stimulation with phytohemagglutinin (PHA), monoclonal antibody (mAb) 9.3 (anti-CD28 mAb) or B7.1-transfected Chinese hamster ovary cells caused a marked reduction of CD28 mRNA levels within 4 h and by 24 h after stimulation had returned to initial levels. Also, the addition of B7⁺ cells to cultured T cells resulted in a decrease of CD28 expression after 12 to

24 h of stimulation, returning to the starting level after 48 h. The transient down-regulation of CD28 expression described above could be associated with ligation-stimulated CD28 receptor endocytosis, occurring via clathrin coated pits, which are directed to lysosomes for proteolytic degradation or recycling to the cell surface. There is evidence that phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase (PI3-K) is implicated in ligation-stimulated CD28 endocytosis, since point mutation studies at tyrosine¹⁷³ (Tyr) site of the CD28 molecule, known as the region for PI3-K binding, negatively affected the ability of endocytosis¹⁵.

The mature CD28 molecule consists of 202 amino-acids and its 134 amino-acid extracellular region contains a single disulphide-linked IgV-like domain. The extracellular tail of the CD28 receptor possesses the

hexapeptide motif MYPPPY, essential for its counter-receptor binding⁶⁸. The CD28 41-amino-acid cytoplasmic tail contains four tyrosine residues, which can be phosphorylated upon activation. Of special interest is the Tyr¹⁷³ included within a consensus sequence motif YNMN which when phosphorylated, forms a binding site for the SH2 domain of PI3-K⁹⁴ and Grb 2 adaptor protein⁷⁶.

Counterreceptors

At present two natural ligands for CD28 on APCs, B7.1 and B7.2, have been identified, although recent studies indicate the existence of another molecule, B7h, being the member of the B7 family of molecules¹⁸. The genes for B7 family members are localized to 3q13.3-3q21³⁰. The structure of the B7 molecule family comprises a single IgV-like domain and a single IgC2-like domain within their extracellular parts. Studies on the amino-acid sequence revealed the presence of SQDXXXELY domain within B7.1, and B7.2, but not in the B7h molecule.

B7.1 is expressed on activated B cells, T cells, macrophages and dendritic cells, whereas B7.2, also expressed on activated T and B cells, is constitutively present on resting monocytes⁴. These studies could indicate that B7.2 is probably the major initial ligand for CD28 during T cell activation. However, functional data has indicated that B7.1 seems to be the more potent ligand for the CD28 molecule in terms of activation⁷⁵.

B7.1 (CD80)

B7.1 (CD80) was first described in 1981 by YOKOCHI et al.⁹³ as a B cell activation molecule recognized by anti-BB-1 mAb and identified as a natural ligand for the CD28 molecule³³. The mature form of B7.1 was found to exist as a transmembrane monomeric glycoprotein consisting of 262 amino-acids with a molecular weight of 60 kDa. The molecule was identified to consist of two extracellular disulphide-linked Ig-like domains, a transmembrane domain and a short, 19-amino-acid cytoplasmic tail. PEACH et al.⁶⁸ identified by site-directed mutagenesis within the IgV-like domain of B7.1 11-amino-acids responsible for receptor binding. Furthermore, similar corresponding residues were established in the B7.2 structure. Additionally, mutagenesis of several conserved ABED β -sheet face in the IgC-like domain of B7.1 completely stopped receptor binding⁶⁹.

B7.2 (CD86)

Structurally, B7.2, of 70 kDa weight shares homology to B7.1. Its cytoplasmic tail contains three putative residues for protein kinase C (PKC), indicating that B7.2 is involved in signaling function in APCs. Recently HÖLLSBERG et al.⁴¹ provided evidence, that human T lymphocytes may also express a hypoglycosylated form of B7.2. The hypoglycosylated form of B7.2 expressed on T lymphocyte could be responsible for providing a negative regulatory signal and, thus, down-regulating immune response.

B7 homologue

Although this molecule shares similarity with other members of the B7 family, it does not contain the unique sequence SQDXXXELY possessed by B7.1 and B7.2. Moreover, B7 homologue (B7h) does not bind to CD28 nor CTLA-4, but is identified as a ligand for the novel costimulatory molecule ICOS.

The B7h expression pattern differs from that of B7.1 and B7.2. B7h was established to be expressed constitutively on B cells and its expression is up-regulated upon activation in B cells, monocytes, dendritic cells as well as on lung and heart^{13, 18}. B7h seems to provide costimulatory signals to T cells previously activated through the CD28/B7.1-B7.2 pathway in the context of professional APCs¹³.

CD28⁺ T lymphocytes

The importance of CD28-delivered costimulatory signals was proven in experiments with CD28 deficient mice. CD28^{-/-} mice have demonstrated pronounced immune deficiency, and while T cell development and cytotoxic T lymphocyte generation is normal in these mice⁷⁸, their peripheral T cells display impaired lymphokine secretion after stimulation with lectin concanavalin A. Further studies have extended these results by demonstrating that superantigen responses are impaired in CD28 knock-out mice⁶⁰. These findings were consistent with previous studies that indicated a requirement for the CD28 : B7 interaction to achieve maximal mitogen-initiated activation⁸⁵.

Additionally, studies performed by AZUMA et al.⁵ demonstrated that, upon optimal stimulation conditions, the CD8⁺/CD28⁻ cells showed poor proliferative response, which was not reversible by exogenous IL-2. The humoral immune responses in these CD28 deficient mice were also defective. FERGUSON et al.²⁵ demonstrated that CD28-deficient mice exhibited lower le-

vels of certain isotypes of immunoglobulins and, furthermore, germinal centres were not formed in response to immunization.

Protein Tyrosine Kinases Involvement in the CD28 Signaling Pathway

The signal derived after CD28 stimulation induces recruitment of several cytoplasmic protein tyrosine kinases (PTKs) including the Src family kinases p56^{lck} and p59^{lyn} 2, 42, the Tec family kinase Itk/EMT^{44, 48}, and the proline-rich tyrosine kinase 2 (Pyk2)⁸⁶. Tyrosine phosphorylation represents one of the earliest events in CD28 signaling.

The p56^{lck}-dependent pathway leads to the phospholipase Cγ (PLCγ) activation and a further increase in calcium concentration, whereas the p56^{lck} kinase-independent cascade leads to substrate p110 phosphorylation, which corresponds to the p110 catalytic subunit of PI3-K⁵⁸.

The Tec family protein kinase Itk/EMT is associated with the cytoplasmic domain of CD28 and becomes phosphorylated upon CD28 ligation. Tyrosine phosphorylation of Itk/EMT occurs in the absence of Lck activation and, downstream, leads to phosphorylation of guanine nucleotide exchange factor Vav³.

It is plausible that Itk/EMT could be involved in the p56^{lck}-independent cascade because Itk/EMT becomes activated in the absence of p56^{lck} and may cause PI3-K activation⁴⁸. The consequence of the PTK induction mentioned above is phosphorylation of the tyrosine residues within the CD28 cytoplasmic domain, critical for interaction with PI3-K. Studies performed *in vitro* conditions revealed that p56^{lck} is involved only in Tyr¹⁷³ phosphorylation. Itk/EMT phosphorylates all 4 tyrosine residues (Tyr¹⁷³, Tyr¹⁸⁸, Tyr¹⁹³, and Tyr²⁰⁰)⁴⁸. TSUCHIDA et al.⁸⁶ recently reported that the member of the focal tyrosine kinase family Pyk2 kinase also became tyrosine-phosphorylated upon CD28 and TCR ligation. The phosphorylation of the kinase at its Tyr⁴⁰² has been established as a critical event for the further association with other signaling molecules, such Grb2/Sos complex, or Src kinases²², thus linking the kinase to the GTPase Rho signaling pathway⁷².

PI3-K – the Role in the CD28 Signaling Pathway

PI3-K exists as a heterodimer of 85 and 110 kDa polypeptides³⁹ with dual specificity both as a lipid and a protein serine kinase²¹. The mentioned enzyme is

known to play a pivotal role in the alternative inositol phospholipid metabolic pathway, and as a consequence of its activity. Phosphorylation of membrane phosphatidylinositol lipids results in the generation of D-3 phosphoinositide lipids:

- phosphatidylinositol phosphate (PtdIns(3) P),
- phosphatidylinositol bisphosphate (PtdIns(3,4) P₂),
- phosphatidylinositol trisphosphate (PtdIns(3,4,5) P₃)⁸⁸.

It has been proven, that CD28 couples to PI3-K by studies demonstrating that CD28 ligation with B7.1 resulted in an increased concentration of PtdIns (3, 4, 5) P₃ in Jurkat cells^{90, 91}. Later UEDA et al.⁸⁷ observed a similar effect after B7.2 or anti-CD28 mAb ligation in these cells. The functional importance of PI3-K recruitment for CD28-dependent costimulation is still unclear, although the functional significance of the association was proven in studies with murine T cell hybridomas with point mutation site in Tyr¹⁷³, which were not able to produce IL-2 after CD28 ligation⁶⁶. Additionally, there are reports that PI3-K, indirectly via D-3 phosphoinositides, activates protein kinase B (PKB) after CD28 ligation⁶⁷. This protein plays a pivotal role in cell-death prevention by the phosphorylation of the death-promoting protein BAD, resulting in survival factor – Bcl-x_L activation²⁰.

Adaptor Proteins Involved in the CD28-Dependent p21^{ras} Cascade

Grb2 molecule

Phosphorylated form of CD28 acts as a target for the p85 regulatory subunit of PI3-kinase binding, but it also uses the same pYMN motif to recruit a second intracellular protein, Grb2. Mutation of Tyr¹⁹¹ within the pYMN motif of CD28 markedly disrupts Grb2 binding to the CD28 cytoplasmic domain⁷⁶. However, the Grb2 SH2 domain binds to CD28 with 10–100-fold less intensity than PI3-K, suggesting the importance of the latter enzyme in the CD28 signaling pathway⁷⁰. CD28 cross-linking with anti-CD28 mAb, but not with natural ligand, could induce association between the phosphorylated form of the molecule with Grb2 and tyrosine phosphorylation of p36 (Grb2-associated molecule)⁷⁶. Grb2-complexed guanine nucleotide exchange factor, activated by Pyk2 kinase upon CD28 ligation⁸³, is responsible for converting p21^{ras} to active stage and, thus, acts as an important link of CD28 through the p21^{ras}-dependent signaling pathway to MAP kinase activation⁷⁶.

Studies performed by NUNES et al.⁶⁴ showed that CD28 ligation with its counterreceptors additionally resulted in tyrosine phosphorylation of p62, the unique protein for the CD28 signaling pathway, which is able to interact with the Grb2 SH2 domain only under *in vitro* conditions. The p62 GAP-associated protein phosphorylation was found to be regulated by residues 182–202 in the CD28 cytoplasmic domain, but not upon TCR/CD3 stimulation⁴⁹. The above-mentioned domain in the CD28 cytoplasmic compartment is involved in IL-2 production, because deletion of amino-acids 193–202 in the CD28 C-terminal tail resulted in the lack of IL-2 production in murine T cell hybridomas⁶⁵. Therefore, this could suggest a close correlation between p62 activation and IL-2 production upon CD28 stimulation.

Vav

Stimulation via CD28 antigen results in guanine nucleotide exchange factor Vav phosphorylation and this process is regulated by residues 173–181 within the cytoplasmic domain of CD28⁵¹. Studies performed by NUNES et al.⁶⁴ indicated that anti-CD28 mAb was able to excite Vav and p36 phosphorylation and further p21^{ras} cascade activation. Guanine nucleotide exchange factor Vav is known to be involved in c-Jun amino-terminal kinase (JNK) activation⁵⁵ and, moreover, the phosphorylated form of Vav possesses the ability to create a complex with SLP-76 molecule by its Tyr¹¹³ and Tyr¹²⁸ residue binding. Vav overexpression enhances nuclear factor activity in an activated T cell and induces CD28-mediated IL-2 promoter activity, instead SLP-76 leads to activation of AP-1 transcription factors and enhances nuclear factor activity. The synergy between these molecules may be the integration signal point derived from TCR and CD28 during the regulation of IL-2 gene expression²³.

CD28-Induced Sphingomyelinase-Ceramide Pathway

CHAN and OCHI¹⁹ provided evidence that CD28 costimulatory molecule is also coupled to the sphingomyelin-ceramide pathway by demonstrating, that anti-CD28 mAb-treated T cells were able to generate ceramide after sphingomyelin hydrolysis. Moreover additional incubation with C6 ceramide analogue resulted in rapid (within 30 min) IL-2 mRNA stabilization.

Further studies on the molecular mechanisms of the above-mentioned reaction revealed that CD28 as well as cell-permeable ceramide analogue can activate a se-

ronine/threonine p21-activated kinase (PAK), which was established to be up-stream activated by GTP-bound Rac or CDC42. Subsequently, it appeared that MEKK1 is the substrate for PAK in CD28-stimulated T cells, which upon CD28 engagement becomes phosphorylated at its N-terminal domain^{8, 45}. Activation of the PAK/MEKK1 signaling cascade resulting in augmentation of JNK activity, is followed by its translocation to the nucleus and subsequent activation of c-Jun transcription factor⁴⁰.

A number of reports indicate that ceramide could be a mediator of CD28-induced costimulatory signals, regulating programmed cell death³⁵. It seems to be plausible that three G-protein-coupled MAP kinase cascades result in activation of JNK, ERK and p38. The integration of the signals is required for the determination of death or proliferation of the cells²⁴. Indeed, studies performed by XIA et al.⁹² on PC12 pheochromocytoma cells showed that parallel JNK and p38 kinases with ERK kinase inhibition appears to be critical for apoptosis induction.

Activation of the PLC γ Pathway

PLC γ cleaves a membrane phosphoinositide to active second messengers: diacylglycerol (DAG) and 1,4,5-trisphosphate inositol (IP₃). Increase of IP₃ concentration within the cellular compartment results in a rise in intracellular calcium, while DAG activates PKC. These two signals synergize to induce IL-2 gene transcription. Another three phosphoinositides, namely PtdIns, PtdIns(4)P and PtdIns (4,5)P₂, after PI3-K triggering become phosphorylated in the 3rd position of the inositol ring, but they are not the substrates for PLC⁷⁷. Further mobilization of intracellular calcium activates calmodulin-dependent phosphatase calcineurin. The latter may lead to an alteration of the cytoplasmic component of nuclear factor-activated T cells (NF-AT^C), allowing it to move into the nucleus, where it combines with nuclear component (NF-AT^N) and two proteins: Jun and Fos. This NF-AT complex binds to a response element of IL-2 enhancer.

The way of CD28 coupling to PLC γ seems to be distinct from that related with TCR because of the inositol phospholipid (InsP) production and increase in Ca²⁺ concentration after CD28 engagement, since it was enhanced by pretreatment with phorbol myristate acetate (PMA), while InsP levels and Ca²⁺ mobilization signals after TCR crosslinking were suppressed by PMA⁵².

Nuclear Events Mediated by CD28 Molecule

SU et al.⁸² investigated phorbol ester, Ca^{2+} ionophore on TCR and CD28 stimulation on JNK1 and JNK2 activation. They found that integration of the two pathways occurs at the level of JNK activation and that CD28 costimulation significantly increased JNK activation (approximately 28-fold).

More recently, SHIN and HAN⁸⁰ demonstrated on leukemic Jurkat T cells that the c-Jun promoter contains binding sites for transcription factors, e.g. MEF2 and AFT. Point mutation at these binding sites resulted in strongly reduced CD28 induction of c-Jun promoter in Jurkat cells. Moreover, additional pretreatment with acidic sphingomyelinase inhibitor prompted completely inhibited c-Jun promoter activation, whereas wortmannin, the PI3-K inhibitor, did not influence promoter induction. The above report indicates that CD28 signaling leads to c-Jun promoter induction and the activation of factors binding to MEF2 and ATF sites utilizing the acid sphingomyelinase pathway, but not PI3-K.

CD28-Mediated Cytokine Production

There is a large body of data showing that CD28 signaling pathway is involved in IL-2 gene transcription. CD28 stimulation induces activation of NF- κ B transcription factor, which constitutively exists as an inactive dimeric complex anchored in the cytoplasm by two inhibitory proteins, I κ B α and I κ B β ⁸¹. Activation of NF- κ B is controlled by the targeted phosphorylation and subsequent degradation of I κ B. Studies performed on a mutated form of I κ B α indicated the probable sites of phosphorylation at serine-32 or serine-36 within the inhibitory protein¹¹. The active NF- κ B dimers move to the nucleus, bind to target DNA elements, and activate the transcription of genes encoding proteins involved in immune responses⁶. Accessible reports indicate that the CD28 signaling pathway induces down-regulation of I κ B inhibitory proteins and enhances c-Rel⁵¹, NF- κ B1, and Rel A translocation into the nucleus¹². Additionally, the CD28 signal mediates rapid degradation particularly of I κ B β , rather than I κ B α ^{37, 38}, which both need to be previously phosphorylated by mitogen-activated kinases^{38, 47}. SHAPIRO et al.⁷⁹ showed that CD28 responsiveness is also influenced by a composite element containing CD28 responsive element (CD28RE) and NF-IL2B AP-1 within the IL-2 promoter. The latter was found as the integration point of two separate signaling pathways activated upon TCR

and CD28 stimulation. Moreover, the NF-IL2B AP-1 site was shown to bind c-Rel transcription factor within CD28RE after CD28 activation.

Aberrant expression of CD28 costimulatory molecule contributes to pathophysiology in several neoplastic⁷³, autoimmune⁴⁶, and infectious diseases¹⁴, as well as in patients after liver transplantation³². Further phenotypical and function studies on the CD28 costimulatory pathway might contribute to the development of new prophylactic and therapeutic approaches⁷⁴.

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