

Molekulargenetik des Marfan-Syndroms

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Zusammenfassung

Das Marfan-Syndrom (MFS) ist eine autosomal-dominant vererbte Erkrankung des Bindegewebes, die mit Störungen im kardiovaskulären, skelettalen und okulären System einhergeht. Die Prävalenz liegt bei etwa 2-3 auf 10 000 Personen in der Bevölkerung. Die klinische Diagnose des komplexen Syndroms erfolgt nach den Kriterien der Gent-Nosologie. Mutationen im *Fibrillin1*-Gen (*FBN1*), dessen Transkript ein struktureller Bestandteil der extrazellulären Bindegewebsmatrix darstellt, können ursächlich für die Entstehung dieses Syndroms sein. Bis April 2006 sind 601 Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen beschrieben worden (UMD-FBN1: The Universal FBN1-Mutations Database). Das MFS ist gekennzeichnet durch eine starke Variabilität hinsichtlich der phänotypischen Ausprägung. Die vorliegende Dissertation soll dazu beitragen, die genetischen Ursachen der klinischen Heterogenität des MFS aufzuklären und eine Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelation bei betroffenen Patienten zu etablieren. Durch die molekulargenetische Analyse von 192 Index-Patienten mit MFS oder verwandten Störungen konnten 40 zuvor nicht beschriebene und 12 rekurrente Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen identifiziert werden. Diese Studie verdeutlicht, dass die Detektionsrate der *FBN1*-Mutationen von der Sensitivität der Screeningmethode und vor allem von der Auswahl des zu untersuchenden Patientenkollektivs abhängig ist. Eine Auswertung der klinischen Daten im Hinblick auf die identifizierten *FBN1*-Veränderungen konnte signifikante Zusammenhänge zwischen dem Mutationstyp und der Beteiligung einzelner Organsysteme belegen.

Ein zweiter Locus für das MFS (MFS 2; Marfan-Syndrom Typ 2) konnte in die Chromosomenregion 3p25 kartiert werden. Störungen des hier identifizierten *TGFBR2*-Gens (*transforming growth factor-beta receptor type 2*) sind nach gegenwärtigen Schätzungen für 8-15% der Fälle von MFS verantwortlich. Aus diesem Grund wurden 41 Patienten aus unserer Studienkohorte weiterführenden Analysen unterworfen. Das Transmembranprotein *TGFBR2* ist als TGF-β-Rezeptor an der Regulation fundamentaler zellulärer Funktionen beteiligt. Im Rahmen des TGF-β-Signaling besteht eine enge funktionelle Bindung zwischen dem *TGFBR2*- und *TGFBR1* (*transforming growth factor-beta receptor type 1*) -Rezeptor. Die molekulargenetische Analyse am *TGFBR1*- und *TGFBR2*-Gen dieser Patienten erfolgte nach Screening und Ausschluss von *FBN1*-Mutationen. Unsere Arbeitsgruppe konnte zwei *Missense* Mutationen im *TGFBR1*-Gen und 4 *Missense* sowie eine *Nonsense* Mutation im *TGFBR2*-Gen bei sieben Patienten mit klinischem MFS oder Verdachtsdiagnose MFS identifizieren.

Stichworte : Marfan-Syndrom, *FBN1*, Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelation, *TGFBR1*, *TGFBR2*

Abstract

Marfan syndrome (MFS) is an autosomal dominant disorder of the connective tissue mainly affecting the cardiovascular, skeletal and ocular systems. Its prevalence is estimated to be 3:10.000 in the general population. The clinical diagnosis of this complex syndrome is based on the criteria of the Ghent nosology. Mutations in the fibrillin-1 gene (*FBN1*) which is coding for a component of the extracellular matrix can be causative for the syndrome. Until April 2006, 601 mutations have been described in the *FBN1* gene (UMD-FBN1: The Universal FBN1-Mutations Data-base). Marfan syndrome shows a wide phenotypic variability. The present dissertation aims to elucidate the genetic background of the clinical heterogeneity in MFS and accounts for establishing a genotype-phenotype correlation in affected patients. Molecular analysis in the *FBN1* gene of 192 index patients with MFS or related conditions leads to identification of 40 novel and 12 recurrent mutations. Within this study it becomes apparent that the detection rate of the *FBN1* mutations depends on the sensitivity of the screening methods and particularly on clinical selection criteria. Evaluation of the clinical data with regard to the identified *FBN1* mutations revealed significant correlations between the mutation type and the involvement of single organ systems.

A second locus implicated in Marfan syndrome (called MFS 2) was localized to the short arm of chromosome 3 at 3p25. It is currently estimated that alterations of the identified *TGFBR2* gene (*transforming growth factor-beta receptor type 2*) gene could explain 8 to 15 % of the MFS cases. For this reason we investigated further molecular analysis in 41 patients from the initial study cohort. As a TGF- β receptor the transmembrane protein *TGFBR2* is implicated in the regulation of fundamental cellular functions. In the context of TGF- β signaling, *TGFBR2* is functionally linked with the *TGFBR1* receptor (*transforming growth factor-beta receptor type 1*). Molecular analysis of the *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* genes in the patients was undertaken after screening for and exclusion of *FBN1* gene mutations. Our working group was able to identify two missense mutations in the *TGFBR1* gene and four missense as well as one nonsense mutation in the *TGFBR2* gene in seven patients with classical or suspected Marfan syndrome.

Keywords: Marfan syndrome, *FBN1*, Genotype-Phenotype correlation, *TGFBR1*, *TGFBR2*

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1 Einleitung

1.1 Klinisches Bild des Marfan-Syndroms

Im Jahre 1896 beschrieb der französische Kinderarzt Antoine Bernard-Jean Marfan eine 5-jährige Patientin mit überproportional langen Gliedmaßen und Fingern, Überbeweglichkeit der Gelenke und Hochwuchs. Marfan prägte damals den Begriff „Dolichostenomelie“ für die auffallend langen und grazilen Extremitätenknochen seiner Patientin und wurde Namensvater der Erkrankung, die heute als Marfan-Syndrom (MFS) bezeichnet wird.

40 Jahre nach dieser Erstbeschreibung veröffentlichte Marfan eine retrospektive Studie, in der die Daten von über 150 Patienten mit „Dolichostenomelie“ Berücksichtigung finden. [Marfan, 1938]. Seine Fallbeschreibungen konnten zeigen, dass nicht nur skelettale Beeinträchtigungen das klinische Erscheinungsbild des MFS prägen. Im Laufe des 20. Jahrhunderts wurde die Symptomenliste kontinuierlich erweitert: Linsenektopie [Börger, 1914], Aortendissektion [Etter et al., 1943] und Aortendilatation [Baer et al., 1943], Mitralklappenprolaps [Brown et al., 1975] sowie Duralektasie [Pyeritz et al., 1988] sind weitere prominente Merkmale des Marfan-Syndroms.

1931 postulierte Weve aufgrund der Beobachtung, dass vorwiegend mesenchymales Gewebe Beeinträchtigungen aufweist, als Ursache der Erkrankung einen Defekt des Mesoderms. Er führte den Namen *dystrophia mesodermalis congenita, typus Marfanis* ein, der von Apert 1938 zu der heute gültigen Bezeichnung „Marfan-Syndrom“ verkürzt wurde. 1955 erstellte McKusick eine Nosologie für erbliche Erkrankungen des Bindegewebes, in der das MFS eine herausragende Position einnimmt. Er erkannte, dass der Erkrankung ein autosomaler Erbgang zugrunde liegt und spekulierte schon frühzeitig über genetische Pleiotropie als Ursache der starken Variabilität des MFS. Ein knappes Jahrhundert nach der ersten Fallbeschreibung konnte erstmals nachgewiesen werden, dass Veränderungen des Bindegewebsproteins Fibrillin-1 an der Entstehung eines MFS beteiligt sind [Dietz et al., 1991].

Auch heute noch ist das Marfan-Syndrom prominentestes Mitglied der mittlerweile einige hundert Mitglieder umfassende Familie der Bindegewebserkrankungen. Vorherrschend sind Manifestationen, die das kardiovaskuläre, skelettale und okuläre System betreffen, aber auch Integument, Lunge, Dura, Faszien, Skelettmuskel und Fettgewebe können beeinträchtigt sein [Pyeritz, 2000].

Das autosomal-dominant vererbte Syndrom tritt ohne ethnische oder geografische Präferenz mit einer Prävalenz von 2-3 auf 10 000 in der Bevölkerung auf. Ca. 25-30 % der Fälle sind sporadisch und reflektieren das Auftreten von Neumutationen.

Der lebensbedrohlichste Aspekt, der die Lebenserwartung ohne medikamentöse bzw. chirurgische Behandlung auf etwa 32-35 Jahre beschränkt, sind die kardiovaskulären Manifestationen: Fortschreitende Dilatation der Aortenwurzel und der aszendierenden Aorta mit resultierender Aortenaneurysmabildung und damit der Gefahr von Dissektion und Ruptur stellen die häufigste Todesursache eines unbehandelten MFS dar. Weitere Komplikationen können sich u.U. durch Ektasie der Pulmonalarterie mit folgender Pulmonal- bzw. Trikuspidalklappeninsuffizienz ergeben. Erkrankungen der Mitralklappen können als frühes Stadium der kardiovaskulären Manifestation angesehen werden und münden häufig in Mitralinsuffizienz.

Das Skelettsystem kann durch eine Vielzahl charakteristischer Abnormalitäten beeinträchtigt sein: 60 % der Patienten weisen eine Skoliose auf [Sponseller et al., 1995]. Hochwuchs, Dolichocephalie, Arachnodaktylie, Dolichostenomelie und Deformationen des Brustbeins (Pectus carinatum / excavatum) sind typische Erscheinungsformen des MFS, ebenso schlaffe Ligamente, Überbeweglichkeit der Gelenke und Protusio acetabuli [Pyeritz et al., 2000].

Zwei Drittel der betroffenen Patienten leiden unter meist bilateraler Linsenektopie [Mammenee, 1981]. Eine Vielzahl der Erkrankten weist ferner eine starke Myopie auf. Bei MFS-Patienten besteht ein generell erhöhtes Risiko der spontanen Netzhautablösung.

Die durchschnittliche Lebenserwartung der Betroffenen mit MFS konnte durch den Einsatz von β -Blockern [Shores et al., 1994], Routine-Vorsorgeuntersuchungen und prophylaktischen Aortenwurzelersatz [Gott et al., 1999] stark verbessert werden und entspricht dann nahezu der normalen.

Das Marfan-Syndrom wird aufgrund der hohen Variabilität und der altersabhängigen Ausprägung oft nicht rechtzeitig bzw. korrekt diagnostiziert. Diese Problematik resultierte 1986 in der Erstellung einheitlicher Diagnostik-Richtlinien in Form der von internationalen Experten erstellten Berlin-Nosologie [Beighton et al., 1988]. Im Jahre 1996 führte eine Überarbeitung dieser Richtlinien, die nun auch die Ergebnisse molekularer Untersuchungen einbeziehen, zu der heute gültigen Gent-Nosologie [DePaepe et al., 1996], s. 1.2.

1.2 Die Gent-Nosologie

Die Diagnose eines MFS kann gestellt werden, wenn Hauptkriterien in zwei Organsystemen erfüllt sind und ein drittes Organsystem beteiligt ist.

A) Skelettales System:

Hauptkriterien (erfüllt, wenn vier Manifestationen vorliegen)

- Kielbrust
- operationsbedürftige Trichterbrust
- Armspanne / Körperlänge > 1,05
- Positives Handgelenk und Daumenzeichen
- Skoliose > 20° oder Wirbelgleiten
- Streckfähigkeit der Ellenbogengelenke <170°
- Plattfuß durch mediales Verschiebung des Innenknöchels
- Protusio acetabuli

Nebenkriterien

- leichte Trichterbrust
- Gelenküberbeweglichkeit
- hoher schmaler Gaumen mit Zahnengstand
- typische Physiognomie (Dolichocephalie, Malarhypoplasie, Enophthalmus, Retrogenie, abfallende Lidachsen)

Eine Beteiligung des Skelettsystems liegt vor, wenn mindestens 2 Manifestationen des Hauptkriteriums oder 1 Manifestation des Hauptkriteriums und 2 Nebenkriterien vorhanden sind.

B) Okuläres System:

Hauptkriterien

- Linsenluxation oder -subluxation (ectopia lentis)

Nebenkriterien

- abnorm flache Kornea
- vergrößerte axiale Länge des Augapfels
- hypoplastische Iris oder hypoplastischer Ziliarmuskel mit eingeschränkter Miosis

Das okuläre System ist beteiligt, wenn mindestens 2 Nebenkriterien beteiligt sind.

C) Kardiovaskuläres System:

Hauptkriterien

- Dilatation der Aorta ascendens mit oder ohne Aortenisthmusstenose, mindestens den Sinus valsalvae betreffend.
- Dissektion der Aorta ascendens

Nebenkriterien

- Mitralklappenprolaps
- Dilatation der Aorta pulmonalis (Auftreten vor dem 40ten Lebensjahr)
- Verkalkung des Mitralklappenringes (unter 40 Jahren)
- Dilatation oder Dissektion der Aorta descendens oder der Bauchaorta (unter 50 Jahren)

Das Kardiovaskuläre System ist beteiligt, wenn mindestens 1 Haupt- oder 1 Nebenkriterium erfüllt ist.

D) Pulmonales System:

Nebenkriterien

- Spontanpneumothorax
- apikale blebs

Das pulmonale System ist beteiligt, wenn 1 Nebenkriterium erfüllt ist.

E) Haut und Integument Nebenkriterien

- Striae atrophicae
- rezidive Hernien

F) Dura:

Hauptkriterien

- lumbosakrale durale Ektasie

Eine Beteiligung der Dura liegt vor, wenn das Hauptkriterium erfüllt ist.

G) Familienanamnese/ Genetik

Hauptkriterien

- ein Verwandter 1.Grades, der die diagnostischen Kriterien erfüllt
- Vorliegen einer dokumentierten krankheitsverursachenden Mutation im *FBN1*-Gen
- Nachweis eines gekoppelten FBN-1 Haplotyps

Trotz sorgfältig definierter Richtlinien wird die Differentialdiagnose „Marfan-Syndrom“ sowohl durch das altersabhängige Auftreten der Symptome als auch die inter- und intra-variable Ausprägung erschwert. Ein Großteil der Merkmale des MFS überlappt zudem mit den Phänotypen anderer Bindegewebserkrankungen oder ist in der Allgemeinbevölkerung weit verbreitet (Gelenküberbeweglichkeit, Skoliose, Mitralklappenprolaps etc.). In zunehmenden Maße gewinnt deshalb heute die Gendiagnostik an Bedeutung.

1.3 Pathophysiologie des MFS

1.3.1 Das *FBN1*-Gen

Die lang gehegte Vermutung, dass Defekte des Elastins oder Kollagens für das MFS verantwortlich sein könnten, wurden 1986 durch die Entdeckung eines neuen extrazellulären Matrix-Proteins verworfen [Sakai et al., 1986]. Sowohl immunohistologische Strategien als

auch zeitgleich durchgeführte Kopplungsanalysen führten hierbei 1991 zur Identifizierung des Fibrillin-1 Gens [Lee et al., 1991, Kainulainen et al., 1990, Kainulainen et al., 1991]. Die erste bekannte Mutation in zwei unverwandten Patienten mit MFS konnte ebenfalls schon 1991 charakterisiert werden [Dietz et al., 1991].

Das Gen für Fibrillin-1 (*FBN1*) liegt auf dem langen Arm des Chromosom 15 (15q15-q21.1). Es umfasst knapp 235 kb (International Human Genome Sequencing Consortium NC_000015) und ist in 65 Exons unterteilt. Die mRNA kodiert mit einer Größe von 9749 bp Nukleotiden und einem *open reading frame* von 8613 Nukleotiden ein 2871 Aminosäuren umfassendes Protein. Die nicht translatierten 5' und 3'-Regionen betragen 134 bzw. 1002 Nukleotide [NCBI: NM_000138.2 GI:24430140].

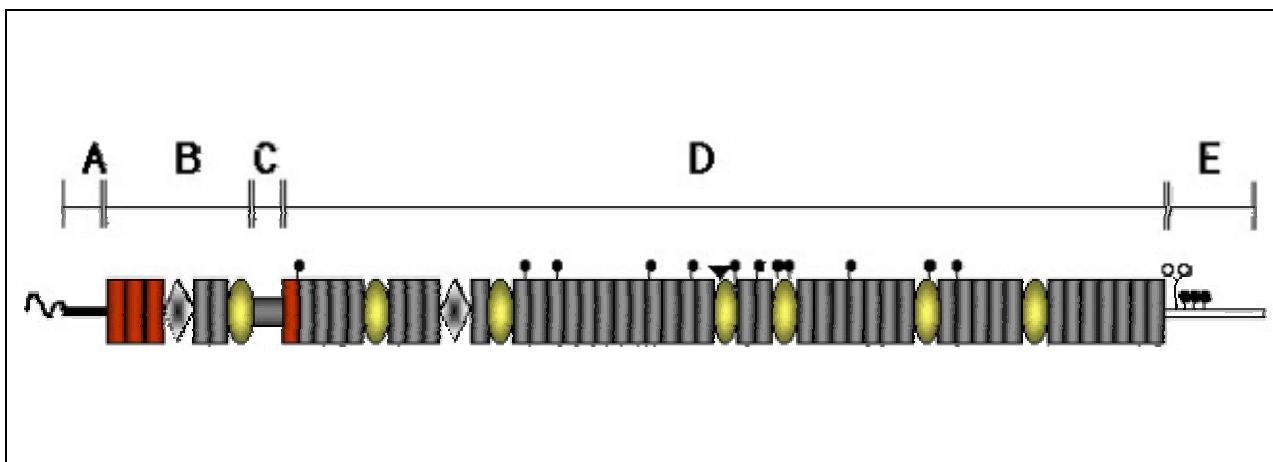
Die Promoter-Region ist bisher wenig charakterisiert. *Upstream* von Exon 1 befinden sich 3 alternativ gespleißte Exons, die nicht translatiert werden [Biery et al., 1999]. Sequenzvergleiche zwischen Mensch, Maus und Schwein belegen eine ausgeprägte Konservierung dieser GC-reichen Region und deuten auf das Vorhandensein regulatorischer Elemente. Bis auf eine CpG-Insel fehlen jedoch konventionelle Sequenzeinheiten z.B. TATA oder CCAAT-Boxen.

Das menschliche Genom verfügt neben *FBN1* über zwei weitere homologe Fibrillin-Gene: *FBN2* (MIM 121050; Genlokus: 5q23-q31) und *FBN3* (MIM 608529; Genlokus 19p13.3-13.2.). Die Übereinstimmung ihrer Peptidsequenzen schwankt innerhalb der betrachteten Motive zwischen 19 % und 80 % [Robinson et al., 2000]. Fibrillin-1 wird schon in der embryonalen Phase der Gastrulation exprimiert und lässt sich im Gewebe von Erwachsenen als Hauptform nachweisen. Die Fibrillin-2 Expression ist größtenteils auf fötales Gewebe beschränkt und das Protein kann nur noch zu einem geringen Anteil in postnatalen Geweben nachgewiesen werden [Zhang et al., 1995; Charbonneau et al., 2003]. Auch Fibrillin-3 wird hauptsächlich in fötalem Gewebe exprimiert [Corson et al., 2004]. Mutationen im *FBN2*-Gen sind verantwortlich für die kongenitale kontrakturale Arachnodaktylie (Beals-Hecht-Syndrom). Störungen im *FBN3*-Gen konnten bis jetzt noch keiner Krankheit zugeordnet werden.

1.3.2 Das Fibrillin-1 Protein

Fibrillin-1 unterliegt der starken evolutionären Konservierung zwischen den Spezies, sodass von einer kritischen biomechanischen Funktion ausgegangen werden muss. Das humane Fibrillin-1 wird als ca. 350 kDa große Glykoprotein synthetisiert und unterliegt weiteren

posttranslationalen Modifikationen. Sowohl Amino- als auch carboxyterminal erfolgt eine proteolytische Spaltung, bevor die Integration als reifes 320 kDa Protein in die extrazelluläre Matrix (ECM) erfolgt [Milewicz et al., 1995]. 14 % des Glykoproteins bestehen aus Cystein, ein Drittel hiervon liegt in der freien reaktiven Sulphydryl-Form vor. Fibrilline sind ubiquitär in den verschiedenen Bindegewebstypen verteilt. Als integrale Bestandteile von extrazellulären Filamenten, die einen Durchmesser von etwa 10 nm aufweisen und als Mikrofibrillen bezeichnet werden, können sie sowohl in elastischen als auch nicht-elastischen Gewebstypen vorliegen [Sakai et al., 1986; Zhang et al., 1994]. Immunohistologische Untersuchungen mit monoklonalen Antikörpern belegen das Vorkommen in Haut, Blutgefäßen, Perichondrium (Knorpelhaut), Sehnen, Knorpel, Muskeln, Lunge, Niere, Cornea und dem Ziliarkörper des Auges [Sakai et al., 1986]. Profibrillin lässt sich in fünf strukturelle Bereiche (Domäne A-E) unterteilen (s. Abb.1):

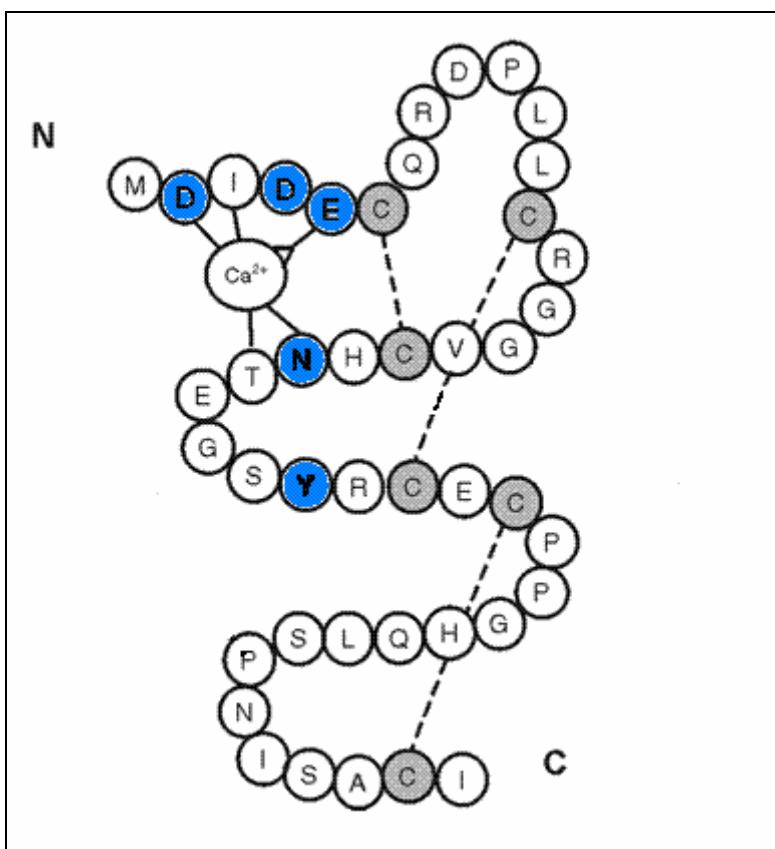


Schema nach Pereira et al. 1993, Hum Mol Genet, 2:961-968

Abb. 1: Schematische Darstellung von Profibrillin. Signal-Peptid (gewellte Linie); kalziumbindene (cb) EGF-like Module (graue Rechtecke); EGF-like Module (rote Rechtecke); TGF- β 1-like Module (gelbe Ovale); Hybrid Module (Rauten); Amnioterminal Region A (schwarzer Balken); Prolinreiche Region C (Quadrat); Carboxyterminale Region E (Weißer Balken) mit zwei Cysteinresten (weiße Punkte); Putative Glycolysierungs-Positionen (schwarze Punkte); Potenzielle Zell-Anbindungsposition (schwarzes Dreieck).

Die größte Region, die nahezu 75 % des Proteins ausmacht, besteht aus sich wiederholenden Einheiten, die eine Homologie zu dem humanen EGF-Wachstumsfaktoren (*human epidermal growth factor*; MIM #131530) aufweisen. Repetitive EGF-like Module sind sowohl in Transmembran- als auch löslichen Proteinen der ECM weit verbreitet. Proteine dieser Superfamilie sind an einer Vielzahl von zellulären und physiologischen Prozessen der Zelle beteiligt, u. a. bei der Ausbildung von Strukturen der ECM, bei Adhäsionsvorgängen, Rezeptor-Liganden-Interaktionen, Zellproliferation, Zelldetermination uvm. [Lin et al., 2001]. Profibrillin enthält insgesamt 47 EGF-like Motive. Charakteristisch für diese Module sind

sechs hoch konservierte Cysteinreste, die untereinander Disulfidbrückenbindungen eingehen und zur unabhängigen Faltung eines Moduls beitragen (s.Abb.2).



Schema nach Smallridge et al. 2003, J Biol Chem. 278(14):12199-206.

Abb. 2: Schematische Darstellung eines cbEGF-like Motivs. Fibrillin-1 enthält 43 dieser Module mit jeweils ca. 42 Aminosäureresten. Die sechs Cysteinreste des Moduls bilden drei Disulfidbrückenbindungen in der Folge 1-3, 2-4, 5-6 aus. CbEGF-like Module enthalten außerdem eine Konsensusregion für Kalziumbindung: D/N-X-D/N-E/Q-Xm-D/N*-X n-Y/F (wobei m und n variabel sein können und * eine Position für potentielle beta-hydroxylierung anzeigt).

43 der EGF-like Repeats besitzen eine Konsensus-Sequenz für Kalziumbindung und werden daher als cb (*calcium-binding*) EGF-like Motive bezeichnet. Die Kalziumbindung ist für die Funktionalität und strukturelle Integrität des Proteins von großer Bedeutung: Sowohl Protein-Protein Interaktionen, Reifungsprozesse, als auch Stabilisierung des Fibrillins gegenüber proteolytischen Abbauprozessen sind nicht zuletzt von der korrekten Einbindung der Kalziummoleküle abhängig [Reinhardt et al., 1996, Reinhardt et al., 2000, Reinhard et al., 1997]. Ein weiteres Motiv des Fibrillin-1 Proteins erhielt seinen Namen aufgrund der Homologie zu dem *latent transforming growth factor-β1 binding* Protein. Diese TGF-β1-like Module enthalten jeweils acht Cysteinreste mit einem internen Cluster von drei aufeinander folgenden Cysteinresten und nehmen in der reifen Form eine globuläre Struktur ein. Sieben TGF-β1-like Module liegen in den Domänen B und D des Fibrillin-1 Proteins vor. Das vierte TGF-β1-like

Motiv beinhaltet eine RGD-Sequenz (Arginin-Glycin-Asparaginsäure), die als Erkennungssequenz zur Zelladhäsion für Proteine aus der Integrin Familie dient. *In-vitro* Studien konnten schon früh die Zellanbindung von Fibrillin-1 über integrin α und integrin β nachweisen [Pfaff et al., 1996; Sakamoto et al., 1996].

Eine weitere strukturelle Einheit wird repräsentiert durch die Mischform aus einem EGF-like und einem TGF- β -like Modul: Das zweifach vorkommende „Hybrid Motiv“ des Fibrillin verfügt in Abschnitt B über 9 Cysteinreste, in Abschnitt D über 8 Cysteinreste.

Der N- als auch der C- terminale Bereich, sowie der prolinreiche Abschnitt im Bereich C des Proteins weisen keine Homologie zu anderen bekannten Proteinen auf.

Bereich A enthält Exon 1 mit dem Startcodon Methionin. Es kodiert für das Signal-Peptid, welches die Konsensus-Sequenz RX(K/R)R \downarrow für die proteolytische Spaltung des N-terminalen Propeptids enthält [Reinhardt et al., 1996]

Exons 2-10 gehören zum Bereich B des Proteins. Hier sind drei nicht kalziumbindene EGF-like Repeats angeordnet, die von zwei cbEGF-like Motiven gefolgt werden. Ein Fibrillin-spezifisches Hybrid-Motiv und das erste TGF- β 1-like Motiv schließen sich an.

Bereich C (Exon 10) zeichnet sich durch einen ungewöhnlich hohen Prolingehalt (42 %) aus. Möglicherweise dient diese 58 Aminosäure umfassende Region als molekularer „Anker“, der die dreidimensionale Struktur der Fibrillen stabilisiert [Yin et al., 1995].

Der Bereich D umfasst mit Exon 11-63 die weitaus größte Domäne und enthält 2240 Aminosäuren, die in 49 cysteinreichen Wiederholungseinheiten gruppiert sind. Hierzu gehören ein nicht kalziumbindenes EGF-like Motiv, 41 cbEGF-like Repeats, sechs TGF- β 1-like Motive und ein Hybrid-Motiv.

Das carboxyterminale Ende (Exon 64-65) ist eine zwischen Fibrillin-1 und Fibrillin-2 hoch konservierte Region. Dieser Umstand legt nahe, dass hier eine spezifische funktionelle Bedeutung vorliegt [Zhang et al., 1994]. Es enthält neben zwei paarweise angeordneten Cyteinresten die tetrabasische Erkennungssequenz (RKRR \downarrow) die eine extrazelluläre Spaltung durch die Enzyme der PACE (*Paired basic Amino acid Cleaving Enzyme*) Familie ermöglicht [Milewicz et al., 1995; Raghunath et al., 1999; Lönnqvist et al., 1998].

Fibrillin-1 enthält zudem 14 Bindungsmotive für eine N-Glykosylierung. Diese Bindungsmotive befinden sich hauptsächlich in der D-Domäne. Diese werden, wenn auch nicht vollständig, im Rahmen der posttranslationalen Prozessierung des Profibrillins modifiziert. Innerhalb der konservierten Region des C-terminalen Endes befindet sich weiterhin ein Asparaginrest, der einer β -hydroxylierung unterliegt [Glanville et al., 1994].

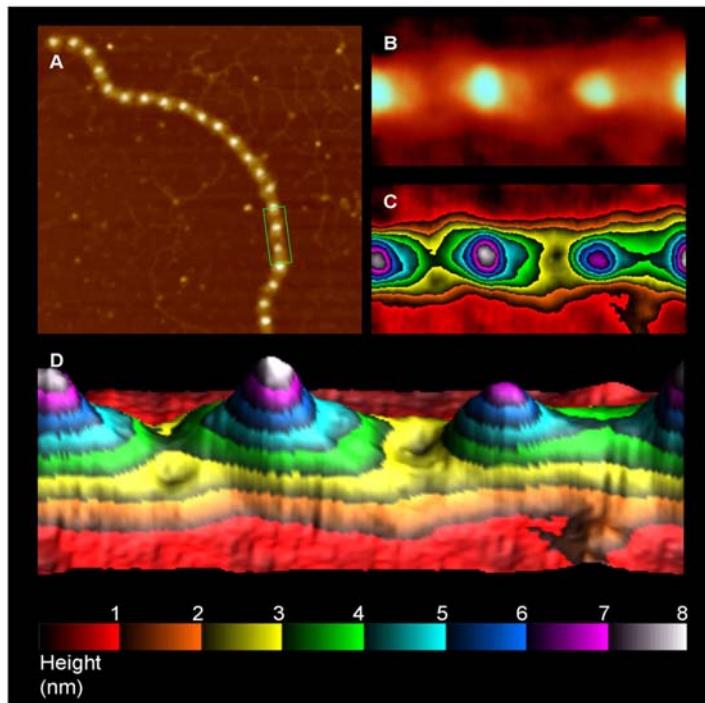
1.3.3 Fibrilline als Komponenten der Mikrofibrillen

Fibrilline werden sehr wahrscheinlich als fadenförmige Monomere in die extrazelluläre Matrix abgesondert. In einem kontinuierlichen Prozess bilden sich aus ihnen übergeordnete supramolekulare Strukturen, die als „Mikrofibrillen“ bezeichnet werden. In dem elastischen Gewebe z. B. der Aorta, Lunge, Haut, in elastischem Knorpel oder in den Sehnen können die 10-12 nm (\varnothing) Mikrofibrillen als mechanisches Gerüst für die Anlagerung von Tropoelastin dienen. Studien belegen die hochaffine Kalziumunabhängige Anbindung von Fibrillin-1 Fragmenten der Bereiche Exon 18-25, Exon 24-30, Exon 16-17 an Tropoelastin, sowie eine Transglutaminase-abhängige Vernetzung im zentralen Bereich des Proteins [Rock et al., 2004; Kielty et al., 2005]. In elektronenmikroskopischen Aufnahmen reifer Elastinfasern erscheinen Mikrofibrillen vornehmlich in der Peripherie des amorphen Elastinkerns angeordnet [Mecham et al., 1995; Rock et al., 2004]. Mikrofibrillen lassen sich jedoch ebenfalls in Gewebstypen nachweisen, die kein Elastin exprimieren, z. B. in den Zonularfasern des Auges. [Ashworth et al., 2000].

Immunohistochimische und biochemischen Studien belegen das Vorkommen weiterer Komponenten der Mikrofibrillen, die ebenfalls in Reifungs- und Stabilisierungsprozessen involviert sein könnten [Zhang et al 1994, Kielty et al., 2002, Kielty et al., 2005]. Je nach untersuchten Gewebstypus variiert die Art bzw. Zusammensetzung der beteiligten Komponenten. Sehr häufig ist das *microfibril-associated glycoprotein-1* (MAGP-1) mit den Mikrofibrillen der verschiedenen Gewebstypen assoziiert. *In vitro* konnte dessen kalzium-abhängige Bindung mit dem N-terminus des Fibrillins nachgewiesen werden. Humanes MAGP-1 verfügt darüber hinaus über eine Matrix-bindende Domäne und kann mit Tropoelastin interagieren, so dass über eine verknüpfende Funktion in elastischem Gewebe spekuliert wird. [Kielty et al., 2005].

Weitere Komponenten, die zusammen mit Mikrofibrillen isoliert werden können sind nachfolgend aufgeführt [Cain et al., 2006]: MFAPs (*microfibril-associated protein-1, 3, 4*); LTBPs (*latent transforming growth factor beta binding protein-1, 2, 3 und 4*); MAGP-2; Fibulin-1, 2 und 5; Proteoglykane (Decorin, Biglycan, Versican); und Kollagen VI, VIII und XVI. Derzeit kann keine Aussage darüber getroffen werden, ob die mit Mikrofibrillen assoziierten Moleküle als integrale Komponenten vorliegen oder inwieweit ihre Anwesenheit oder aber auch der Verlust dieser Moleküle die Struktur, Flexibilität und auch Funktion von Mikrofibrillen beeinträchtigen könnte.

Die Bildung der übergeordneten Strukturen ist nur in Ansätzen aufgeklärt. In Zellkulturassays lässt sich die spontane Bildung von Fibrillin-Dimeren unter der Bildung von stabilisierenden Disulfidbrückenbildung innerhalb weniger Minuten bis Stunden nach Sekretion beobachten [Kielty et al., 2002]. Nach wenigen Tagen bildet sich ein typisches Netzwerk von Fibrillen aus. Nach einigen Wochen erscheinen die Mikrofibrillen als charakteristische fadenförmige Strukturen mit ca. 56 nm perlenförmigen Abschnitten (*beads-on-a-string*) (s. Abb. 3).



Schema nach Kielty, C. M. et al. J Cell Sci 2002;115:2817-2828

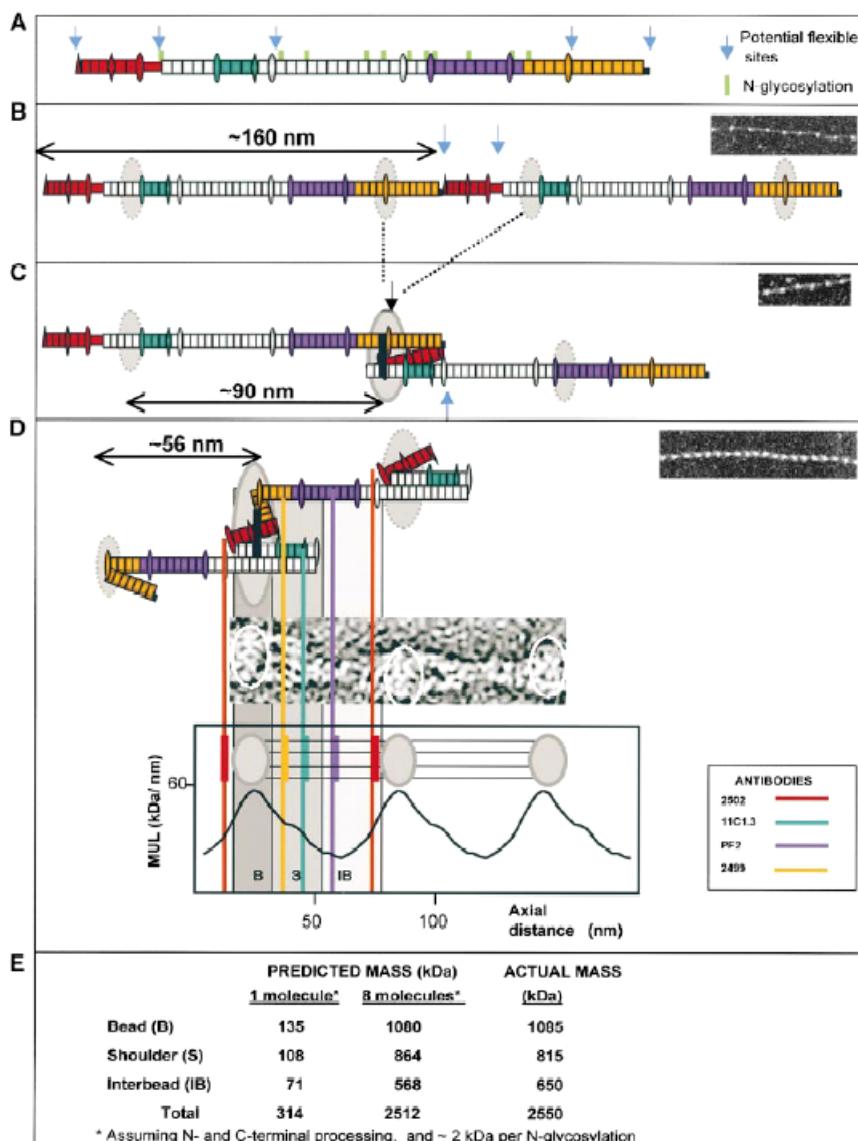
Abb.3: *Tapping mode atomic force microscopy (TMAFM) isolierter fibrillin-reicher Mikrofibrillen.* Typische perlenschnurartige Struktur von Mikrofibrillen. Aufnahme im „Tapping-Mode“ eines Rasterkraftmikroskops mit entsprechenden Vergrößerungen der *beads-on-a-string* Strukturen.

Im Gewebe erfolgt abschließend die Bündelung der reifen Mikrofibrillen. Dieser Vorgang benötigt meist einen längeren Zeitraum (Monate). Die typische perlenschnurartige Struktur ist jetzt zumeist nicht mehr vorhanden.

Die Ausbildung der Mikrofibrillen *in vivo* ist weiteren regulierenden Prozessen unterworfen. Eine wichtige Rolle bei dem zeitlichen Verlauf der Konformationsbildung des Proteins aber auch bei der N-Glykosylierung, scheinen intrazelluläre Chaperone einzunehmen [Wallis et. Al., 2003; Ashworth et al., 1999]. Zu den Interaktionspartnern an der Zelloberfläche zählen vor allem die Integrine $\alpha v\beta 3$ und $\alpha 5\beta 1$ [Bax et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2004]. Der korrekte Einbau in die ECM ist darüber hinaus von der zellgesteuerten proteolytischen Spaltung durch Furin an den N- und C-Termini abhängig [Raghunath et al., 1999; Ritty et al., 1999].

1.3.4 Alignment von Fibrillin-1: Das Hinged Model

Ungeklärt ist ebenfalls die genaue Anordnung der Fibrilline innerhalb der Mikrofibrillen. Verschiedene Darstellungstechniken (Rasterkraft- und transmissionselektronenmikroskopie, Elektronentomografie usw.), Antikörperstudien sowie *Microfibril Extension Studies* deuten auf eine parallele *head-to-tail* Orientierung hin, die in nachfolgendem *molecular hinge* Modell (Abb. 4) schematisch dargestellt wird [Baldock et al., 2001].



Schema nach Kielty et al 2002, Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci.:207-17

Abb.4.: Schematische Darstellung des Hinged Model. Darstellung der möglichen Faltung der Fibrillin Moleküle innerhalb der perlenförmigen Struktur (*Bead*). (A) Einzelnes Molekül mit erfolgter NH₂- und COOH-terminalen Prozessierung. N-Glykosylierungspositionen sind mit Pfeilen gekennzeichnet. Antikörper-Epitope sind farbig dargestellt (Rot, 2502; Blau/Cyan, 11C1.3; Purpur, PF2; Orange, 2499). (B-D) Schrittweise Faltung von Fibrillin-1 Molekülen, die über einen Zwischenschritt mit Faltung an den Terminen und der Prolin-reichen Region etwa auf 1/3 der Länge reduziert werden (C) und abschließend eine energetisch günstige $\sim 56 \text{ nm}$ Form einnehmen (D). Massenverhältnisse weisen auf 8 Moleküle pro *Bead* hin. Die Bindungen werden über Transglutaminase-Querverbindungen stabilisiert.

1.3.5 Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen

Bis Februar 2006 sind knapp 601 Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen beschrieben worden (UMD-FBN1 mutations database; <http://www.umd.be/LSDB.html>). Diese sind nahezu gleichmäßig über die kodierenden Regionen des gesamten Gens verteilt. Komplexe Rearrangements sind statistisch unterrepräsentiert, bis heute sind nur 3 größere Deletionen beschrieben worden, die mit dem Verlust mehrerer Exons einhergehen [Liu et al., 2001; Kainulainen et al., 1992].

In den Exons 57 (TGF- β 1-like #7) und 65 (C-terminales Ende) sind Mutationen statistisch eher unterrepräsentiert, während in den Exons 13 (cbEGF-like #4), 26 (cbEGF-like #12) und 27 (cbEGF-like #13) die Mutationsfrequenz überproportional hoch ist [Boileau et al., 2005]

Die überwiegende Mehrheit aller bekannten Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen sind auf Einzel-nukleotidsubstitutionen zurückzuführen ($504/601 = 84\%$). Insgesamt 72% (361/504) der Substitutionen beeinträchtigen die zahlreichen EGF-like Module des Proteins. Etwa ein Drittel dieser Mutationen ($213/504 = 42\%$) beeinflusst dabei die Struktur des Proteins durch die Substitution eines Cysteins oder durch die Kreation eines neuen Cysteinrestes.

Von den identifizierten kleinere Insertionen oder Deletionen ($97/601 = 16\%$) führen fast alle zum frühzeitigen Abbruch der Proteinsynthese durch Generation eines frühzeitigen Stoppkodons (*PTC*; *premature termination codon*). Zusammen mit den identifizierten *Nonsense* Mutationen ($n = 68$) bilden diese Stoppmutationen ca. 25% (150/601) aller Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen.

Etwa 12 % (69/601) aller Mutationen beeinträchtigen die konservierten Regionen der Exon/Intron Übergänge und werden als Spleißmutationen eingeordnet.

Es sind nur sehr wenig rekurrente Mutationen bekannt. Ca. 90 % aller identifizierten Mutationen sind „einzigartige“ Mutationen, die nur bei dem betroffenen Individuum und ggf. bei ebenfalls betroffenen verwandten Familienmitgliedern nachgewiesen werden können. Fast alle bekannten rekurrenten Mutationen beeinträchtigen typischerweise eine CpG-Insel.

Grundsätzlich lassen sich 3 Klassen von Mutationen unterscheiden, die unterschiedliche Auswirkungen auf Deposition, Stabilität und Funktionalität des Fibrillin-1 haben können:

PTC Mutationen und *Nonsense* Mutationen resultieren häufig in *nonsense-mediated mRNA-decay* oder führen zur Expression eines verkürzten Moleküls. Häufig wird das Transkript synthetisiert, der Einbau in die Extrazelluläre Matrix erfolgt jedoch nicht oder stark vermindert [Schrijver et al., 2002]. Der quantitative Verlust von Fibrillin-Molekülen in der

ECM führt sehr wahrscheinlich zum Verlust der strukturellen Integrität. Der Schweregrad des Effektes scheint abhängig von der relativen Transkriptmenge des betroffenen Allels und von der Qualität des exprimierten mutierten Produktes.

Die Auswirkungen der häufigen *Missense* Mutationen sind schwierig vorherzusagen, da nur wenig über die funktionellen Aufgaben des Fibrillins bekannt ist. Vor allem ein „dominant-negative Effekt“ des mutagenen Fibrillins wurde für die Pathologie des MFS verantwortlich gemacht [Aoyama et al., 1993; 1994; 1995]. Substitutionen, die intra- oder intermolekulare Disulfidbrücken beeinträchtigen, Sequenzveränderungen konservierter Bindungsregionen oder auch zusätzliche Cysteinreste beeinträchtigen wahrscheinlich vor allem die Protein-konformation. Die Interaktion eines solchermaßen mutierten Monomers mit dem Wildtyp bewirkt dann die strukturelle Störung der Mikrofibrillen. Inwieweit Fibrillin-1 durch die beschriebenen *Missense* Mutation in anderen Funktion beeinträchtigt wird, ist häufig jedoch unklar. Bis jetzt konnten erst wenige Studien dazu beitragen, einige der funktionellen Auswirkungen auf molekularer Ebene zu erfassen. Hierzu gehören z. B. fehlerhafte Transportmechanismen [Whiteman et al., 2003], verminderte Sekretion in die ECM [Schrijver et al., 1999] oder erhöhte Protease-Suszeptibilität [Booms et al., 2000, Vollbrandt et al., 2004].

Die Spleißmutationen bilden eine weitere Gruppe von Genveränderungen, deren Auswirkungen auf molekularer Ebene ohne entsprechende Untersuchungen schwer abzuschätzen sind. Es besteht die Möglichkeit, dass fehlerhaftes Spleißen ein frühzeitiges Stoppkodon aktiviert, so dass die entsprechende Mechanismen der vorzeitigen mRNA Degradation greifen können. Spleißmutationen können jedoch ebenfalls zu *in-frame* Deletionseignissen oder Insertionsereignisse führen, deren Produkte in der Regel stabil sind. *Pulse chase* Analysen von Fibroblastenzellkulturen, belegen, dass bei *Exon-skipping* eine normale Transkription erfolgen kann, der Einbau der veränderten Proteine in die ECM jedoch stark vermindert ist [Liu et al., 1996].

Die Detektionsraten von *FBNI*-Mutationen bei Patienten mit Marfan-Syndrom schwanken beträchtlich. So erreichten die zwischen 1992 und 2001 durchgeföhrte Studien im Mittel einen Wert weit unter 50 %. Einige wenige aktuelle Studien konnten Detektionsraten um die 90 % erreichen, bilden aber nach wie vor eine Ausnahme [Loeys et al., 2004; Katzke et al., 2002; Bigin et al., 2004]. Sowohl die Sensitivität der Screeningmethode, als auch die

Auswahl des zu untersuchenden Patientenkollektivs können diesen Wert stark beeinflussen, trotzdem bleiben zumeist 25 % - 35 % der Fälle molekulargenetisch ungeklärt.

1.3.6 Bekannte Genotyp-Phänotyp Korrelationen

Es sind bisher wenige Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelationen für das MFS beschrieben worden. Der Grund hierfür liegt in der starken Variabilität der phänotypischen Ausprägung, die nicht alleine durch die große Anzahl der Mutationen und deren Heterogenität erklärt werden kann. Betroffene ein und derselben Familie weisen häufig eine unterschiedliche Ausprägung auf, und auch der Vergleich zwischen nicht verwandten Merkmalsträgern rekurrenter Mutationen legt den Schluss nahe, dass noch unbekannte *genetic modifiers* an der Pathogenese beteiligt sein müssen. Derzeit können einige wenige, eher generelle Zusammenhänge beschrieben werden:

- Mutationen, die durch Deletionen, Insertionen oder Spleißfehler den *inframe* Verlust oder Zugewinn zentraler Regionen bewirken, sind zumeist mit einem schweren Beeinträchtigung des Patienten assoziiert [Robinson et al., 2002].
- Mutationen, die einen vorzeitigen Stopp und somit den raschen mRNA-Abbau des mutierten Transkriptes zur Folge haben, können mit milden Verlaufsformen assoziiert sein [Dietz et al., 1993; Tynan et al., 1993; Hayward et al., 1994; Nijbroek et al., 1995].
- Individuen, die Träger einer Mutation sind, die die C-terminale Prozessierung verhindern, weisen vornehmlich skelettale Manifestationen auf. [Milewicz et al., 1995].
- Der Austausch von Aminosäuren mit funktioneller Signifikanz (z.B. Cystein-Substitution in der konservierten Regionen der EGF-Module) scheint überwiegend in eine typische Verlaufsform zu münden [Robinson et al., 2002].
- Die Ausprägung ektopischer Linsen ist signifikant häufiger bei Mutationsträger, deren Veränderung mit einer Cystein-Substitution einhergeht [Loeys et al., 2002; Biggin et al., 2004; Rommel et al., 2005].
- Ein Hot Spot für Mutationen in der Region von Exon 24-32 ist assoziiert mit einer besonders schweren Verlaufsform des Syndroms [ter et al., 2005]. (s. a. neonatales MFS 1.4.1.)
- Substitutionen solcher Reste, die keine offensichtliche funktionelle Signifikanz aufweisen können in phänotypisch milderer Verlaufsform münden oder Krankheitsvarianten hervorrufen die im nachfolgenden Abschnitt näher beschrieben werden (Typ-1 Fibrillinopathien).

1.4 Typ-1 Fibrillinopathien

Mutationen im Fibrillin-1 Gen können zu Krankheiten führen, die mit einer nur begrenzten Auswahl oder zusätzlichen klinischen Manifestationen des typischen MFS einhergehen. Zu den sog. Typ-1 Fibrillinopathien gehören nachfolgend aufgelistete Syndrome:

1.4.1 Neonatales MFS (nMFS)

Das neonatale Marfan-Syndrom repräsentiert die lebensbedrohlichste Form des Syndroms und ist charakterisiert durch zusätzliche Manifestationen, die seltener bei der klassischen Verlaufsform auftreten. Typischerweise wird das nMFS frühzeitig, also bereits bei der Geburt oder in der frühen Kindheit diagnostiziert. Die Symptome umschließen Mitralklappen- bzw. Trikuspidalinsuffizienz, kongestive Herzinsuffizienz, Lungenemphysem, Gelenkkontrakturen, dysplastische Ohren (*crumpled ears*) und lockere Haut. Diese schwerwiegenden Beeinträchtigungen führen meist innerhalb des ersten Lebensjahres zum Tod [Booms et al., 1999]. Die primäre Todesursache des nMFS - im Gegensatz zur klassischen Form, bei der unbehandelte Patienten infolge progressiver Aortendilatation an Aortendissektion bzw. Aortenruptur versterben - ist das kongestive Herzversagen [ter et al., 2005]

1.4.2 Weil-Marchesani-Syndrom (WMS) – MIM #277600

Zu den Symptomen des autosomal-dominanten WMS (vgl. MIM #277600 autosomal-rezessive Form) gehören Minderwuchs, Brachdyktylie und charakteristische Augenanomalien in Form von Sphärophakie, Myopie, Glaukom und ektopischen Linsen. Die Linsen erscheinen ungewöhnlich rund und fehlgebildet. Da ektopische Linsen eine der Hauptmanifestationen des Syndroms darstellen, wurde schon früh spekuliert, dass Fibrillin-1 als Kandidatengen in Frage kommen könnte. [Wirtz et al., 1996]. Immunhistochemische Untersuchungen belegten die verminderte Anfärbung von Fibrillin in relevanten Fasern des Auges. Derzeit ist nur eine FBN-1 Mutation charakterisiert, die mit dem Syndrom cosegregiert. Hierbei handelt es sich um eine 24 bp-inframe Deletion in Exon 41 [Faivre et al., 2003].

1.4.3 Shprintzen-Goldberg syndrome (SGS) -MIM #182212

Das Shprintzen-Goldberg-Syndrom konnte 1996 mit der Mutation C1223Y im *FBN1*-Gen assoziiert werden. [Sood et al., 1996]. Das Syndrom ist charakterisiert durch Kraniosynostose, marfanoiden Habitus und einem Spektrum mehr oder weniger ausgeprägter skelettaler, neurologischer und kardiovaskulärer Symptome inklusive Bindegewebsanomalien. Derzeit sind weltweit 37 Patienten mit SGS beschrieben worden [Robinson et al., 2005]. Die Diagnostik dieser Multisystemerkrankung erfolgt klinisch durch die charakteristische Kombination der Symptome. Der damals 7-jährige Träger der heterozygoten Mutation C1223Y zeigte die okulären, skelettalen und kardiovaskulären Merkmale eines Marfan-Syndroms aber auch Hypotonie, Skaphocephalie mit Kraniosynostose, niedrig ansetzende, dysplastische Ohren, hyperelastische Haut, Rektusdiastase und mentale Retardierung.

1.4.4 Ektopische Linsen, familiäre Form –MIM #129600

Patienten mit autosomal dominant ektopischen Linsen weisen wenig oder keine typischen skelettalen und kardiovaskulären Manifestationen des MFS auf. Die erste mit ektopischen Linsen assoziierte Mutation im *FBN1*-Gen (E2447K) wurde in einer britischen Familie mit 3 betroffenen Familienmitgliedern identifiziert [Kainulainen et al., 1994]. Der beschriebene Phänotyp umfasste milde skelettale Symptome, jedoch keinerlei kardiovaskulären Merkmale. Bei drei weiteren nicht verwandten Familien konnte die rekurrente *Missense* Mutation R240C nachgewiesen werden [Korkko et al., 2002; Comeglio et al., 2002; Ades et al., 2004]. Interessanterweise erfolgte die Erstbeschreibung von R240C bei einem Patienten mit klassischem MFS [Loeys et al., 2001]. Dieser Umstand verdeutlicht, dass sehr wahrscheinlich weitere genetische Faktoren an der Genese von Fibrillinopathien beteiligt sein müssen.

1.4.5 MASS Syndrom -MIM #604308

Das MASS-Syndrom (*mitral valve, aorta, skeleton, skin*) stellt eine Form des atypischen Marfan-Syndroms dar, das mit klassischen Manifestationen einhergeht, ohne dass die Kriterien voll erfüllt werden. Hierzu gehören lange Extremitäten, Thoraxdeformationen, Striae atrophicae, Mitralklappenprolaps und geringfügig ausgeprägte Dilatation der Aortenwurzel.

1993 konnte eine *Nonsense* Mutation im *FBNI*-Gen bei einem Patienten mit diesem Phänotyp charakterisiert werden [Dietz et al., 1993].

1.4.6 Weitere atypische Manifestationen

Isolierte Skelettale Manifestationen / Marfanoides Skelettalsyndrom

In einem Patienten mit Hochwuchs, Pectus carinatum, Skoliose, Arachnodaktylie und Pes Planus wurde die *FBNI*-Mutation R2726W identifiziert, die innerhalb der Familie segregierte [Milewicz et al., 1995]. Bei allen sechs betroffenen Mitglieder konnte Hochwuchs ohne Beteiligung des okulären oder kardialen Systems nachgewiesen werden. Eine weitere Mutation (R1170H) wurde bei einer Patientin mit isolierten Hochwuchs, Arachnodaktylie und Dolichostenomelia beschrieben [Hayward et al., 1994]. R1170H konnte später ebenfalls in einem Patienten mit skelettalen Manifestationen und Mitralklappenprolaps identifiziert werden. [Montgomery et al., 1998]

1.5 Ein zweiter Genort für das MFS

Im Jahre 1993 stellte sich erstmals die Frage, ob ein zweiter Genort für das MFS existiert. In einer französischen Großfamilie mit Marfan-typischer Symptomatik wurde durch *Linkage-Analyse* *FBNI* als Genort ausgeschlossen [Boileau et al., 1993]. Dieser Umstand schürte eine jahrelang anhaltende Diskussion über die vermeintliche genetische Heterogenität des MFS [Collod et al., 1994; Boileau et al., 1995; Dietz et al., 1995].

Im Jahr 2004 konnte bei einem japanischen Patienten mit Marfan-Syndrom eine *de-novo* Chromosomen-Rearrangement mit Bruchpunkt an 3p24.1 und einhergehender Störung des dort lokalisierten *TGFBR2*-Gens (*transforming growth factor-beta receptor type 2*, MIM # 190182) nachgewiesen werden. Die Arbeitsgruppe identifizierte im Anschluss an diese Entdeckung die Mutation 1524G>A (Q508Q/Spleißmutation) bei den Mitgliedern der zuvor beschriebenen französischen Familie, deren Phänotypen (autosomal-dominante Aortendilatation und typische skelettale Beteiligung) mit dem betroffenen Allel assoziiert werden konnten [Mizuguchi et al., 2004]. Im Laufe der Studie wurden weitere Mutationen im *TGFBR2*-Gen von unverwandten Patienten mit dem sog. MFS Typ II identifiziert. Während bei diesen Patienten nahezu alle klassischen Beteiligungen des kardiovaskulären und skelettalen Systems vorliegen können, sind okuläre Beeinträchtigungen hier jedoch selten,

wenn nicht sogar ausgeschlossen. Die Gent Kriterien für MFS sind in den allermeisten beschriebenen Fällen mit MFS Typ II jedoch erfüllt.

Im Jahre 2005 wurde darüber hinaus ein neues Syndrom identifiziert, das ebenfalls mit Mutationen im *TGFBR2*- aber auch *TGFBR1*-Gen (*transforming growth factor-beta receptor type 1*, MIM #190181) einhergeht: das Loeys-Dietz-Aortenaneurysma-Syndrom (LDS, MIM #609192). Das LDS ist charakterisiert durch Hypertelorismus, Gaumenspalte, zweigeteiltes Gaumenzäpfchen, abnorm geschlängelte arterielle Gefäße, aszendierendes Aortenaneurysma und Aortendissektion. Die bisher veröffentlichten Mutationen im *TGFBR2*-Gen wurden in den gut konservierten Aminosäureresten der Kinase-Domäne des Proteins nachgewiesen [Loeys et al., 2005]. Alle bisher beschriebenen *Missense* Mutationen der Patienten mit MFS II wurden ebenfalls in dieser Domäne identifiziert [Mizuguchi et al., 2004; Disabella et al., 2006].

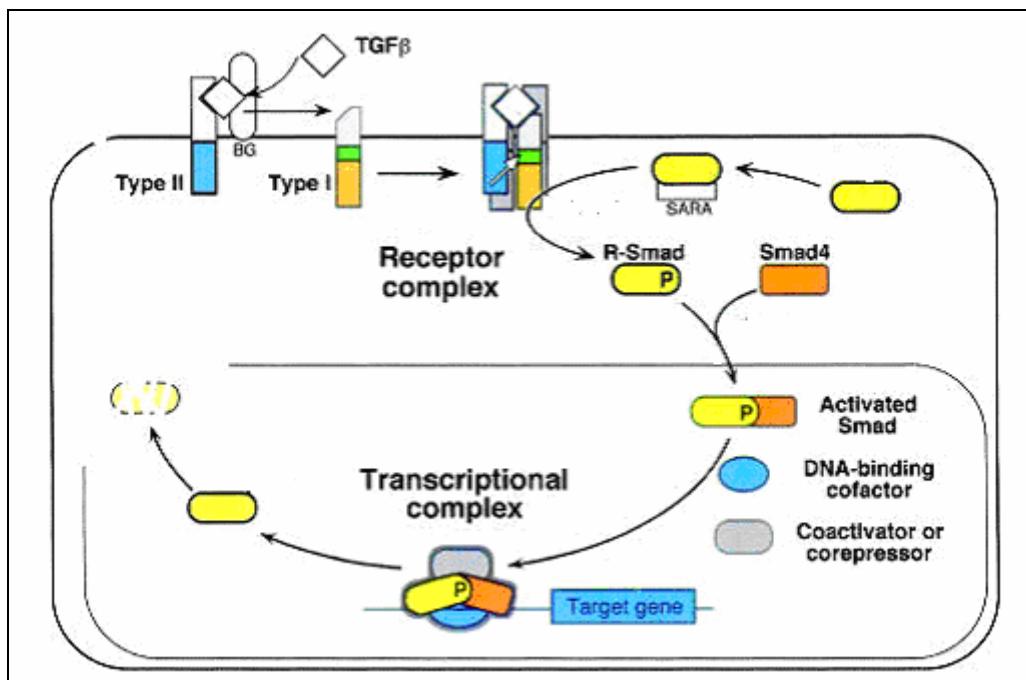
Beide Syndrome überlappen hinsichtlich des Phänotyps. Zu den gemeinsamen Symptomen gehören Aortenwurzelaneurysma, Aortendissektion, skelettale Anomalitäten in Form der malaren Hypoplasie, Arachnodaktylie, Dolichostenomelie, Deformitäten des Brustbeins, Skoliose, Kamptodaktylie und Überbeweglichkeit der Gelenke. Die spezifische Merkmale des LDS erinnern an das Shprintzen-Goldberg-Syndrom: Hypertelorismus, Kraniosynostose, Gaumenspalte, Uvula bifida, Chiari-Fehlbildung, Hydrozephalus Anomalien der arteriellen Gefäße und Aneurysmen weiterer Gefäße, können ebenso wie ein offener Ductus arteriosus Botalli und Vorhofseptumdefekt mit LDS einhergehen.

Zwei weitere *TGFBR2*-Mutationen wurden in Patienten mit isolierten Formen des thorakalen Aortenaneurysmas beschrieben [Pannu et al., 2005], darüber hinaus konnten Veränderungen im *TGFBR2*-Gen mit Krebserkrankungen der Speiseröhre, des Dickdarms und dem Auftreten kolorektaler Tumore assoziiert werden [Markowitz et al., 1995; Lu et al., 1998; Tanaka et al., 2000]

1.5.1 Struktur und Funktion von **TGFBR1** und **TGFBR2**

Die zelluläre Signaltransduktion kontrolliert über verschiedene Signalwege Zellwachstum und Zellteilung. Zu diesen Signalwegen gehören intrazelluläre Kaskaden, die mithilfe biochemischer Reaktionen zwischen der Plasmamembran und dem Kern Signale übermitteln können. Eine Schlüsselrolle bilden dabei Wachstumsfaktoren, die in der Lage sind, die Phosphorylierung von Proteinen zu induzieren. Über dieses Proteinkinase-Signaling können dann z. B. mitotische Prozesse ausgelöst werden. Viele Rezeptoren für Wachstumsfaktoren

sind Tyrosin-Kinasen oder Serin-Threonin Kinasen. Die Transmembranproteine TGFBR1 (MIM *190181) und TGFBR2 (MIM +190182) gehören zu der Klasse der Serin-Threonin-Kinasen. Sie sind Rezeptoren der „transformierenden Wachstumsfaktoren-β“ (TGF-β), die maßgeblich an der Regulation fundamentaler zellbiologischer Funktionen beteiligt sind [ten Dijke et al., 2004]. Die TGF-β Proteine bilden eine umfangreiche Familie strukturell verwandter Polypeptide, die eine Vielzahl von Zellprozessen regulieren, darunter Zellproliferation und Determination, Differenzierung, Motilität, Zelladhäsion oder Apoptose [Masague, 1998; Blobe et al., 2000]. Die Aktivierung der TGF-β Faktoren erfolgt gewebsspezifisch und innerhalb eines komplexen Zeitrahmens. Die Verfügbarkeit der Faktoren, als auch die entsprechende „Zellantwort“ bestimmen dabei die Art des Effekts, z. B. die Transkription eines spezifischen Zielgens. Weitere intrazelluläre Signalkaskaden und andere Cytokine können an den Regulationsmechanismen beteiligt sein. Der generelle Mechanismus gesteuerter Genexpression kann schematisch anhand des TGF-β/SMAD Transduktionsweges beschrieben werden (s.Abb.5).



Schema vereinfacht nach Massague et al., 2000, EMBO J.19(8):1745-54

Abb.5.: Schematische Darstellung des TGF-β/Smad Signaltransduktion. Das System wird über die membranständigen Rezeptoren (Typ II und I-Rezeptoren) und zugehörige Substrate (Smad Proteine) geregelt. Die Ligandenbindung von aktiven TGF-β führt zur Komplexbildung der Rezeptoren, in dessen Folge der Typ I-Rezeptor durch den Typ II-Rezeptor phosphoryliert wird. Der nunmehr aktivierte Typ 1-Rezeptor kann seinerseits ein Phosphatrest an ein SMAD Protein der Zelle übertragen. Über den Smad-Signalweg kann die Expression bestimmter Zielgene ausgelöst werden [Massague et al., 2005]. Die Interaktion kann weitere Kofaktoren der Zelle einschliessen.

Das *TGFBR2*-Gen liegt in der Region 3p24-p22 [Mathew et al., 1994]. Das Gen umfasst 87,26 kb, die korrespondierende mRNA kodiert für 7 Exons. Das *TGFBR1*-Gen konnte in der Region 9q22 kartiert werden [Pache et al., 1998]. Es ist 44,9 kb groß und enthält 9 Exons [Vellucci et al., 1997]. Die Typ I- und II-Rezeptoren sind Glykoproteine von 55 kDa bzw. 70 kDa Größe. Die Polypeptide umfassen einschließlich der Signalsequenz ca. 500 bzw. 570 Aminosäuren. Beide Rezeptoren enthalten eine extrazelluläre cysteinreiche Region, an der eine N-Glykolisierung erfolgen kann, eine Transmembran-Region und eine cytoplasmatische Kinase-Domäne. Der *TGFBR1*-Rezeptor besitzt darüber hinaus eine konservierte Region, die aufgrund der charakteristischen Sequenz die GS-Domäne genannt wird. Es handelt sich hierbei um eine funktionell kritische Region, die regulatorische Aktivität ermöglicht [Lebrin et al., 2004]. Mitglieder der TGF- β -Rezeptor Familie können in alternativen Formen exprimiert werden [Massague et al., 1998]. Die funktionelle Bedeutung dieser Varianten ist nicht bekannt.

1.6 Zielsetzung

Die Entdeckung des Gens *FBN1* eröffnete die Sicht auf die molekularbiologischen Ursachen und Hintergründe dieser komplexen Krankheit. Trotz intensiver Bemühungen, die molekulare Pathogenese des MFS vollständig zu verstehen, sind bisher heute nur wenige Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelationen etabliert. Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht die Auswirkungen der Störung des Fibrillin-1 anhand klinischer Daten und molekulargenetischen Untersuchungen, mit dem Ziel eine Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelation bei Patienten mit Marfan-Syndrom zu etablieren. Sie soll dazu beitragen, die molekulargenetischen Ursachen der klinischen Heterogenität des MFS aufzuklären. Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit wurden Patienten mit klinischem MFS oder Verdachtsdiagnose MFS auf Veränderungen im *FBN1*-Gen untersucht. Die unter 1.5. dargelegten Zusammenhänge resultierten in weiterführenden molekulargenetischen Untersuchungen einiger ausgewählter Patienten, mit dem Ziel den Zusammenhang zwischen MFS und *TGBR1*- bzw. *TGFBR2*-Gen Veränderungen zu erhellen. Die Ergebnisse dieser Untersuchungen werden in den nachfolgenden Arbeiten dargestellt.

2 Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen

2.1 Mutation Screening of the Fibrillin-1 (FBN1) Gene in 76 Unrelated Patients With Marfan Syndrome or Marfanoid Features Leads to the Identification of 11 Novel and Three Previously Reported Mutations

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MUTATION IN BRIEF

Mutation Screening of the Fibrillin-1 (FBN1) Gene in 76 Unrelated Patients With Marfan Syndrome or Marfanoid Features Leads to the Identification of 11 Novel and Three Previously Reported Mutations

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Mutations in the gene encoding fibrillin-1 (FBN1) cause Marfan syndrome (MFS) and other related connective tissue disorders. In this study we performed SSCP to analyze all 65 exons of the *FBN1* gene in 76 patients presenting with classical MFS or related phenotypes. We report 7 missense mutations, 3 splice site alterations, one indel mutation, one nonsense mutation and two mutations causing frameshifts: a 16bp deletion and a single nucleotide insertion. 5 of the missense mutations (Y1101C, C1806Y, T1908I, G1919D, C2251R) occur in calcium-binding Epidermal Growth Factor-like (EGFcb) domains of exons 26, 43, 46 and 55, respectively. One missense mutation (V449I) substitutes a valine residue in the non-calcium-binding epidermal growth factor like domain (EGFncb) of exon 11. One missense mutation (G880S) affects the "hybrid" motif in exon 21 by replacing glycine to serine. The 3 splice site mutations detected are: IVS1-1G>A in intron 1, IVS38-1G>A in intron 38 and IVS46+5G>A in intron 46. C628delinsK was identified in exon 15 leading to the substitution of a conserved cysteine residue. Furthermore two frameshift mutations were found in exon 15 (1904-1919del) and exon 63 (8025insC) leading to premature termination codons (PTCs) in exon 17 and 64 respectively. Finally we identified a nonsense mutation (R429X) located in the proline rich domain in exon 10 of the *FBN1* gene. Y1101C, IVS46+5G>A and R429X have been reported before. © 2002 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

KEY WORDS: Marfan syndrome, FBN1, SSCP, mutations

INTRODUCTION

Marfan syndrome (MFS; MIM# 154700) is an inherited autosomal dominant disorder, characterised by phenotypically variable manifestations in the skeletal, ocular, and cardiovascular systems. The incidence is approximately 1/10,000 individuals, about 15-30% are isolated cases. The disease is caused by mutations in the fibrillin-1 gene (*FBN1*; MIM# 134797), located on human chromosome 15q21. *FBN1* spans about 235 kb genomic

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DNA, its 65 exons coding for a cysteine rich glycoprotein of about 350 kDa molecular weight. Three additional alternatively-spliced exons were found upstream of exon 1. They are most likely untranslated, but conservation of the nucleotide sequences within these region between human, mouse and porcine suggests a regulatory role (Biery et al., 1999). Until July 2002 more than 220 mutations have been entered in the Human Gene Mutation Database (<http://www.uwcm.ac.uk/>). Nearly 75% of the mutations reported to date are missense mutations, mainly affecting one of the 43 cbEGF modules of fibrillin-1. Recent studies showed that fibrillin-1 mutations in particular those affecting the calcium binding-sites or the highly conserved cysteine residues result in morphological and structural changes of fibrillin assembly and/or influence the level of synthesis, secretion and deposition (Halliday et al. 1999, Schrijver et al. 1999). Also, the molecular mechanism of in vitro proteolysis was invoked in order to explain the pathogenicity of *FBN1* mutations (Booms et al., 2000; Reinhard et al., 2000). Genotype-phenotype correlations are difficult to establish, and the clinical variability among patients with the same mutation remains unexplained. We screened for mutations in *FBN1* in patients who had undergone cardiovascular surgery and/or presented in our genetic counseling unit with the tentative diagnosis of Marfan syndrome.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

In this study we performed SSCP analysis of the *FBN1* gene in order to identify novel mutations in a panel of 76 unrelated patients referred to our clinic with the (tentative) clinical diagnosis of Marfan syndrome, 18 of which fulfilled the clinical criteria according to Ghent nosology (DePaepe et al., 1996). DNA was isolated from whole blood by standard procedures. All 65 *FBN1* exons and their splice-junctions were amplified using the primers and conditions described by Nijbroek et al. 1995. The amplified PCR products were analyzed by SSCP analysis (Orita et al., 1989) and exons with abnormal migrating patterns were sequenced using an ABI PRISM 310 Genetic Analyzer and the ABI PRISM BigDye Terminator cycle Sequencing Kit (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA). As in other recent studies (e.g., Loeys et al., 2001), the clinical examination of our patients did not routinely include assessment of lumbosacral dural ectasia. Additionally 100 healthy blood donors served as controls for determining the allele frequency of A986T.

RESULTS

Screening of all 65 exons of the FBN-1 gene through SSCP analysis revealed different abnormal migrating patterns. We identified 7 missense mutations, 3 splice site alterations, one indel mutation, one nonsense mutation and two mutations causing frameshifts: a 16bp deletion and a single nucleotide insertion (Table 1). If family members were available for testing for nucleotide changes observed in the index patient, this is explicitly stated in the text. The role of some of the nucleotide changes reported here as disease-causing, in particular V449I, G880S, and T1908I, must be regarded as provisional and requires further family and/or functional studies.

The splice mutation IVS1–1G>A changes the splice acceptor consensus sequence in intron 1, most probably leading to exon skipping. The 32-year-old man with atypical MFS underwent emergency surgery for acute aortic dissection. The skeletal symptoms did not fulfill the clinical criteria of Gent nosology and he had no ocular involvement. His father died aged 48 years from cardiac cause, but it is not known whether he had Marfan syndrome. The absence of a clear family history makes it impossible to decide whether the patient developed Marfan syndrome as a result of a *de novo* mutation.

We identified a nonsense mutation (R429X) located in the proline rich domain in exon 10 of the *FBN1* gene. R429X was found in a 41-year-old patient with classical MFS regarding skeletal, ocular and cardiovascular symptoms. He underwent surgical replacement of the dilated ascending aorta and reconstruction of the aortic valve. The dilatation of the aorta extended to the arteria iliaca and the arteria subclavia. In addition he had mitral valve prolaps and insufficiency. The ocular system presented with bilateral ectopia lentis. His 17-year-old son also was shown to be carrier of R429X. He had a marfanoid habitus with scoliosis and slight dilatation of the aorta ascendens.

V449I was identified in a 15-year-old boy with tall stature but no typical marfanoid appearance and no ocular symptoms. The cardiovascular manifestation of Marfan syndrome was severe insufficiency of aortic valve due to dilatation of aortic root. He underwent aortic valve replacement surgery. His parents were not tested, the 42-year-old father showed mitral insufficiency.

C628delinsK was found in a woman with chronic aortic dissection who received surgical replacement of the aortic valve, aorta ascendens and aortic arch. The dissection of the aorta extended to the abdominal aorta. She presented with a height of 170 cm and arachnodactyly. Ocular involvement was bilateral retinal detachment and ectopia lentis. She died 62 years due to cardiac complications.

Table 1. FBN1 Mutations and Clinical Features According to Ghent Nosology

| Case | Location | Nucleotide Change | Amino Acid Change | Domain | Sporadic/ Familiar | SS | OS | CS | Ref. |
|------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----------------------|
| 1 | Intron 1 | IVS1-1G>A | - | NH ₂ -unique | F | (+) | - | + | this study |
| 2 | Exon 10 | 1285C>T | R429X | proline rich region | not proven | + | + | + | Matyas et al. 2002 |
| 3 | Exon 11 | 1345G>A | V449I | EGFnbc | not proven | - | - | + | this study |
| 4 | Exon 15 | 1882-1884 delinsAAA | C628delinsK | EGFcb | S | (+) | + | + | this study |
| 5 | Exon 15 | 1904-1919del | PTC exon 17 | EGFcb | not proven | - | - | + | this study |
| 6 | Exon 21 | 2638G>A | G880S | hybrid motif | S | + | (+) | + | this study |
| 7 | Exon 26 | 3302A>G | Y1101C | EGFcb | S | + | + | + | Loeys et al. 2001 |
| 8 | Intron 38 | IVS38-1G>A | - | EGFcb | F | + | + | (+) | this study |
| 9 | Exon 43 | 5417 G>A | C1806Y | EGFcb | F | + | + | + | this study |
| 10 | Exon 46 | 5723 C>T | T1908I | EGFcb | not proven | (+) | - | (+) | this study |
| 11 | Exon 46 | 5756 G>A | G1919D | EGFcb | F | + | - | + | this study |
| 12 | Intron 46 | IVS46+5G>A | - | EGFcb | S | + | + | + | Nijbroek et al. 1995 |
| 13 | Exon 55 | 6751 T>C | C2251R | EGFcb | F | (+) | + | + | this study |
| 14 | Exon 63 | 8025insC | PTC exon 64 | EGFcb | F | + | (+) | (+) | this study |

SS = Skeletal System OS = Ocular System CS = Cardiovascular System

+ = major criterion is fulfilled, (+) = organ system is involved, - = requirements for involvement not fulfilled
(De Paepe et al., 1996). Lumbosacral dural ectasia was not tested.

EGFcb = calcium-binding Epidermal Growth Factor-like,

EGFnbc = non-calcium-binding Epidermal Growth Factor-like

PTC = premature termination codon

The frameshift mutation (1904-1919del) was found in a 30-year-old woman with mild skeletal symptoms including pectus excavatus and joint hypermobility and severe dilatation of the aorta ascendens with insufficiency of the aortic valve. She underwent aortic surgery with replacement of the ascending aorta and aortic valve. The patient's father had an aneurysm of the ascending aorta and died of cardiac causes at the age of 54 years. None of the proband's three children have physical features of MFS.

The missense mutation G880S affects the "hybrid" motif in exon 21 by replacing glycine to serine. G880S was identified in a 15-year-old patient with typical skeletal and cardiovascular manifestations of Marfan syndrome. At the age of 12 years physical examination revealed height of 186 cm, severe pectus carinatum, dolichostenomelia, striae distensae and arachnodactyly. Cardiovascular manifestation was dilatation of the aorta ascendens, ocular symptom was myopia only. There is no family history of Marfan syndrome.

The missense mutation Y1101C was detected in a 13-year-old boy with classical Marfan syndrome including tall stature with a height of 178 cm, scoliosis, dolichostenomelia, arachnodactyly, striae atrophicae, bilateral ectopia lentis and dilatation of the aortic root. Testing of the parents revealed negative results for Y1101C, none of the patient's 9 siblings is presenting with Marfan phenotype.

The splice mutation IVS38-1G>A changes the splice acceptor consensus sequence in intron 38, most probably leading to the skipping of exon 39. The 7-year-old girl carrying IVS38-1G/A presented with ectopia lentis, mitral prolapse and typical skeletal features such as tall stature, dolichostenomelia, scoliosis, arachnodactyly and joint hypermobility. The sister and the father are suspected to have Marfan syndrome, but were not tested.

C1806Y was identified in a 12-year-old girl with classical MFS including lens dislocation, aortic root dilatation and skeletal symptoms as pectus carinatum, dolichostenomelia and joint hypermobility. Testing of the patient's father showed negative results for C1806Y. Since the mother had died in consequence of aortic rupture at the age of 37 years, she was suspected to be carrier of the mutation. The patient's sister, who was tall and had a similar skeletal constitution, turned out not to carry the mutation.

T1908I was detected in a 10-year-old boy with atypical Marfan syndrome. He had marfanoid facial appearance with highly arched palate and pes planus, but normal height, no chest deformity or other typical skeletal features. Cardiological examination because of dyspnea on exertion revealed mitral valve prolapse with regurgitation. Except slight hyperopia he had no ocular symptoms. The patient's brother exhibited similar symptoms of the cardiovascular system. Furthermore the patient's father died in cause of sudden cardiac death at the age of 48 years.

G1919D was detected in a 55-year-old woman with severe scoliosis, pectus carinatum, dolichostenomelia, highly arched palate, striae distensae and severe cardiovascular manifestation. She had an aortic aneurysm with chronic dissection that necessitated repeated surgery and replacement of aortic valve, ascending aorta, aortic arch and descending aorta. The dissected aortic aneurysm extended to the end of the abdominal aorta. Ocular symptoms were not present, except hyperopia. The patient's mother and brother both died in cause of sudden cardiac death at the age of 49 and 20, respectively. The patient's 20-year-old son exhibited aortic aneurysm and tall stature (194 cm).

The 29-year-old female patient carrying IVS46+5G>A underwent emergency surgery due to acute aortic dissection. The aorta ascendens and a part of aortic arch were replaced, the aortic valve was reconstructed. The dissection extended to the aortic bifurcation. The patient exhibited classical skeletal and ocular features of MFS as lens dislocation and retinal detachment.

Another cystein substitution located in exon 55 (C2251R) was found in a 60-year-old woman with scoliosis and other typical skeletal features, bilateral lens dislocation, mitral valve prolapse with severe mitral incompetence and dilatation of the aortic root with insufficiency of the aortic valve. She underwent surgical replacement of mitral valve. At the age of 59 she had a sudden cardiac arrest likely due to ventricular fibrillation, because resuscitation with defibrillation was successful. The patient's father and sister both had exhibited the same symptoms and had died at the age of 57 and 33, respectively. The patient has three other siblings, neither of them showing a MFS phenotype.

The frameshift mutation 8025insC was detected in a 13-year-old girl who was hospitalised after being reanimated because of ventricular fibrillation. She presented with typical skeletal features of Marfan syndrome as joint laxity, pes planus, pectus carinatum, dolichostenomelia and arachnodactyly. Cardiovascular examination revealed mitral valve prolapse. She had normal visual faculty without lens dislocation, but slight flattening of the cornea and hypoplasia of iris. Several family members, the mother and two brothers, were identified to carry the mutation. The proband's mother was found to have scoliosis, remarkable joint laxity, striae distensae and slight aortic dilatation. She had been operated for bilateral dislocation of the hip. A maternal uncle had a history of two spontaneous pneumothoraces. Two of the patient's four younger siblings were tested positive for 8025insC. At the age of 5 and 3 years, respectively, they did not demonstrate features of Marfan syndrome except abnormal middle finger length on the 97th percentile.

Polymorphisms

Searching for mutations in *FBNI* gene we identified several polymorphisms and sequence variants, some of which have been reported previously (Table 2; data from patient cohort; the frequency of A986T was also tested in 100 healthy blood donor serving as controls). Variants were tentatively assigned to the polymorphisms category whenever a mutation did not change the amino acid sequence or sequences known to be relevant for RNA splicing. However work is under progress to determine potential adverse effects of these nucleotide changes (cf. eg. Liu et al., 1997).

DISCUSSION

The results presented here describe 11 novel *FBNI* mutations. In addition, we detected three mutations, which had already been identified in previous studies. Among the 14 pathogenic changes we found, 10 were localized in the cbEGF domains of *FBNI*. The other four mutations were detected in the NH₂-unique region, in the proline rich region, in the ncbEGF of exon 11 and in the hybrid-motif in exon 21, respectively. A comparison between type and position of the mutation and patient's phenotype revealed no obvious relation. Mutations were located all over *FBNI* gene, and all types of mutation could lead to mild or severe clinical evidence. The clinical variability of phenotype and severity of disease course within families is high.

Table 2: FBN1 Polymorphisms and Sequence Variants

| Location | Nucleotid Change | Relative Frequency | Reference |
|-----------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Exon 14 | 1746C>T | 0.01 | Liu et al., 1997/98 |
| Exon 14 | 1821T>C | 0.01 | this study |
| Exon 15 | 1875C>T | 0.11 | Hayward et al., 1994 |
| Intron 17 | Exon 18-46A>G | 0.14 | Nijbroek et al., 1995 |
| Exon 24 | 2965G>A (A986T) ¹ | 0.02 0.01 (controls) | this study |
| Exon 24 | 3069G>A | 0.01 | this study |
| Exon 26 | 3294C>T | 0.01 | Yuan et al., 1999 |
| Intron 27 | Exon 28-5G>A | 0.01 | Tynan et al., 1993 |
| Inton 28 | Exon 28+ 15delTTTA | 0.11 | Nijbroek et al., 1995 |
| Inton 40 | Exon 41-13insA | 0.01 | this study |
| Exon 43 | 5343G>A | 0.01 | Loeys et al., 2001 |
| Inton 45 | Exon 45+22insT | 0.01 | Nijbroek et al., 1995 |
| Inton 52 | Exon 52+128A/G | 0.13 | Yuan et al., 1999 |
| Exon 55 | 6855T>C | 0.02 | Nijbroek et al., 1995 |
| Exon 56 | 6888G>A | 0.02 | Nijbroek et al., 1995 |
| Inton 56 | Exon 56+17G>C | 0.13 | Nijbroek et al., 1995 |
| Inton 63 | Exon 64-23T>C | 0.01 | this study |

Three patients (case 3, 5 and 10) with detected *FBN1* mutations did not fulfill the clinical diagnostic criteria for Marfan syndrome, even if they would have lumbosacral dural ectasia. Familiarity could not count as a major criterion, because it was not proven as mandated by the Ghent nosology. Two of the patients were presenting with cardiovascular symptoms only, the third patient had involvement of cardiovascular and skeletal systems, leading to the tentative diagnosis of Marfan syndrome. Two patients had a mutation in a cbEGF domain and one in a ncbEGF domain.

Based on our results presented here and before (El Aleem et al., 1999, who presented nine patients with classical Marfan syndrome and identified *FBN1* mutations), in patients who fulfill the clinical criteria for diagnosis making of Marfan syndrome according to Ghent nosology, mutations in the *FBN1* gene were found in 59% (16/27). In the group of patients with the tentative diagnosis of Marfan syndrome, not fulfilling the clinical criteria, but presenting with one major criterion or involvement of two organ systems at least, the detection rate was at least 5% (3/58) and could be as high as 12% (7/58) if none had lumbosacral dural ectasia.

Furthermore, molecular analysis of relatives showed that persons who carry the mutation often were not diagnosed or even suspected to have Marfan syndrome. Particularly in children clinical diagnosis of Marfan syndrome is difficult or impossible, because they may not yet exhibit enough symptoms. However, knowledge of the diagnosis Marfan syndrome is important for clinical management and medical treatment with the aim of improvement of the disease course, prevention of complications and enhancement of survival rate.

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2.2 Identification of 29 Novel and Nine Recurrent Fibrillin-1 (FBN1) Mutations and Genotype–Phenotype Correlations in 76 Patients With Marfan Syndrome

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Identification of 29 Novel and Nine Recurrent Fibrillin-1 (*FBN1*) Mutations and Genotype–Phenotype Correlations in 76 Patients With Marfan Syndrome

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Marfan syndrome (MFS) is an autosomal-dominant disorder of the fibrous connective tissue that is typically caused by mutations in the gene coding for fibrillin-1 (*FBN1*), a major component of extracellular microfibrils. The clinical spectrum of MFS is highly variable and includes involvement of the cardiovascular, skeletal, ocular, and other organ systems; however, the genotype–phenotype correlations have not been well developed. Various screening methods have led to the identification of about 600 different mutations (*FBN1*-UMD database; www.umd.be). In this study we performed SSCP and/or direct sequencing to analyze all 65 exons of the *FBN1* gene in 116 patients presenting with classic MFS or related phenotypes. Twenty-nine novel and nine recurrent mutations were identified in 38 of the analyzed patients. The mutations comprised 18 missense (47%), eight nonsense (21%), and five splice site (13%) mutations. Seven further mutations (18%) resulted from deletion, insertion, or duplication events, six of which led to a frameshift and subsequent premature termination. Additionally, we describe new polymorphisms and sequence variants. On the basis of the data presented here and in a previous study, we were able to establish highly significant correlations between the *FBN1* mutation type and the MFS phenotype in a group of 76 mutation-positive patients for whom comprehensive clinical data were available. Most strikingly, there was a significantly lower incidence of ectopia lentis in patients who carried a mutation that led to a premature termination codon (PTC) or a missense mutation without cysteine involvement in *FBN1*, as compared to patients whose mutations involved a cysteine substitution or splice site alteration. *Hum Mutat* 26(6), 529–539, 2005. © 2005 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

KEY WORDS: Marfan syndrome; mutation screening; fibrillin-1; *FBN1*; SSCP; genotype–phenotype correlations

INTRODUCTION

Marfan syndrome (MFS; MIM# 154700) is an autosomal-dominant disorder of the connective tissue, with an estimated prevalence of two or three per 10,000 [Loeys et al., 2003]. MFS results from mutations in the gene encoding fibrillin-1 (*FBN1*, MIM# 134797), which is located on human chromosome 15q21. Mutations in the *FBN1* gene produce a spectrum of manifestations ranging from isolated ectopia lentis to the MASS phenotype (mitral valve prolapse, aortic dilatation, and skeletal and skin involvement, MIM# 604308) to classic MFS. Classic MFS is characterized by manifestations mainly in the cardiovascular, skeletal, and ocular systems, but also in the pulmonary system, integument, and dura. The cardiovascular symptoms include progressive dilatation of the aortic root and ascending aorta, which eventually leads to aortic valve regurgitation and aortic dissection. The skeletal features of MFS include overgrowth of the long bones leading to tall stature, as well as joint hypermobility, scoliosis, and pectus deformities. Bilateral ectopia lentis is seen in almost 60% of patients with MFS

[Maumenee, 1981]. The diagnosis of MFS and assignment to related diseases is mainly clinical and relies on the diagnostic criteria known as the “Ghent nosology” [De Paepe et al., 1996].

Fibrillin-1, fibrillin-2 (*FBN2*, MIM# 121050), and fibrillin-3 (*FBN3*, MIM# 608529) belong to extracellular matrix (ECM) macromolecules with high similarity and the capacity to assemble into microfibrils. Apart from unique N- and C-terminal ends, all fibrillins contain cysteine-rich calcium-binding EGF-like domains interspersed with 8-cysteine domains and hybrid moduls. All

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cysteines in *FBN1*, *FBN2*, and *FBN3* are evolutionarily conserved [Corson et al., 2004], highlighting their essential function. Forty-three of the 47 EGF-like motifs in fibrillin-1 contain a consensus sequence for calcium binding (cbEGF), which is predicted to play an important role in microfibril stability and assembly. About 60% of the mutations so far reported in *FBN1* are missense mutations that most often affect either the cysteine residues or the conserved calcium binding sequence [Colloid-Beroud et al., 2003]. As a consequence, intradomain disulfide bond formation and calcium integration may be disturbed, destabilizing the fibrillin assembly. Other types of mutations, such as splice site alterations and frameshift mutations leading to a premature stop codon and therefore to a shortened protein, are thought to have a dominant negative effect on microfibril structure [Aoyama et al., 1995]. Nevertheless, recent studies showed that the nature of fibrillin and the pathogenesis leading to Marfan phenotype is much more complex [Judge et al., 2004]. Enhanced proteolytic susceptibility of mutated fibrillin-1 and the dysregulated interaction with other proteins of the ECM may contribute to the disease-causing mechanisms in MFS [Reinhardt et al., 2000; Neptune et al., 2003; Vollbrandt et al., 2004]. In addition to structural and functional analyses of known mutations, it is still essential to collect clinical and molecular data from patients to gain insight into pathologic coherences. A number of studies have led to the identification of about 600 mutations to date (*FBN1*-UMD database). The majority of mutations have been observed in patients displaying classic features of MFS [Loeys et al., 2001, 2004].

In this study, SSCP and/or direct sequencing of all 65 exons of the *FBN1* gene in 116 patients presenting with classic MFS or related phenotypes led to the identification of 29 novel and nine recurrent mutations in 38 index patients.

In 76 patients (36 patients from this study and 21 patients from earlier studies) and 19 mutation-positive relatives with an identified *FBN1* mutation and available clinical data, genotype-phenotype correlations were evaluated. We were able to establish highly significant correlations between the *FBN1* mutation type and the MFS phenotype. In patients with a missense mutation that leads to a cysteine substitution, or with a splice site alteration in *FBN1*, there is a significantly higher incidence of ectopia lentis compared to patients who carry a PTC mutation or a missense mutation without cysteine involvement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Patients and Control Probands

Mutation analysis by genomic DNA sequencing was performed in 116 patients who were consecutively referred to our laboratory with an established or tentative diagnosis of MFS. The first 88 patients in this series were prescreened by SSCP. The great majority of the patients were of northern German origin. A phenotypic evaluation was done in our own clinics and/or based on written documents by the referring institutions. We obtained informed consent from the patients who presented in our own clinic, and in the other cases the referrer obtained consent. Fifty healthy blood donors of mostly northern German origin served as control probands.

We performed a meta-analysis on patients in this study and in previous studies conducted by our group [El-Aleem et al., 1999; Rommel et al., 2002] to evaluate the mutation detection rate and mutation spectrum. Altogether, 201 index cases were screened for mutations in the *FBN1* gene, including 116 patients from the

present study and 85 patients from the two previous studies. Sufficient clinical data were available for 155 of 201 index cases (77 patients from this study and 78 previous patients). Taking into account the patients' clinical status and family background, the mutation detection rates and mutation type spectrum were calculated separately for three groups, as follows: Group I included sporadic cases with two major criteria and involvement of a third organ system, and familial cases with one major criterion and involvement of a second organ system who were considered to fulfill the diagnostic criteria according to the Ghent nosology (60 patients). Group II included sporadic cases with one major criterion and involvement of at least one further organ system, as well as familial cases with one major criterion or involvement of two organ systems who were considered as borderline (36 patients). Group III included sporadic cases with one major criterion or involvement of two organ systems, and familial cases with involvement of one organ system that were considered as tentative (59 patients). Insufficient clinical data were available for the remaining 46 patients.

Genotype-phenotype correlations were evaluated by comparing phenotypic manifestations in patients who carried different mutation types. Seventy-six patients with detailed phenotypic data, 57 index cases with an identified *FBN1* mutation, and 19 mutation-positive relatives were included in the analysis. The P-value was calculated by χ^2 analysis.

Laboratory Methods

DNA was isolated from whole blood by standard procedures. All *FBN1* exons and their splice junctions were PCR-amplified under previously described conditions [Nijbroek et al., 1995; Hayward et al., 1997]. Primers of exons 30, 42, 44, 46, and 47 were redesigned as follows: ATGAGGGTAGAGCCCTCAT (FBN1-30-For), TCAAGCCTGCTGACTCCAA (FBN1-30-Rev), CAGGCAAGATTATCTGTAGG (FBN1-42-For), CACAG GGTGTTGCATT (FBN1-42-Rev), CTTTGTGACTGGAC ACCAG (FBN1-44-For), CCAGATATCTGAAGCTTCATG (FBN1-44-Rev), GCTCTTTAGCCACTGTAACC (FBN1-46-For), GCTGGAACACTAGAGATGATG (FBN1-46-Rev), TGT TTGGCTAACGCCAGCAAAG (FBN1-47-For), and CATGAT TCCTTGAGTGGTCT (FBN1-47-Rev), respectively. The PCR conditions for these were as follows: initial denaturation for 5 min at 95°C followed by 35 cycles of 95°C for 30 sec, 58°C for 30 sec, 72°C for 30 sec, and a terminal extension for 10 min at 72°C. The amplified PCR products were confirmed by electrophoresis of a 5 μl reaction aliquot in 2% agarose gels containing ethidium bromide (0.5 mg/μl), followed by visualization of bands under UV light.

PCR products were mixed as follows: 6 μl PCR+10 μl formamide-loading buffer (950 g/l formamide, 10 mmol/l EDTA, and 0.5 g/l bromophenol blue, 0.5 g/l xylene cyanol). The samples were heated at 95°C for 5 min and loaded on 8% nondenaturing polyacrylamide gel in 0.8 × TBE buffer for 6–9 hr at 25 W and 4°C. After electrophoresis, the gel was fixed, silver-stained, and finally developed, photographed, and analyzed. The sample was considered normal if the band position was the same as that of the wild type.

Exons with abnormal migrating patterns were sequenced using an ABI PRISM 310 Genetic Analyzer or the ABI PRISM 3100 Avant-Genetic Analyser and the ABI PRISM BigDye Terminator cycle sequencing kit (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA).

The *FBN1* cDNA sequence (GenBank accession number L13923.1) was used, with the A of the ATG translation initiation start site as nucleotide +1. Intron/exon boundaries were as previously defined [Pereira et al., 1993].

Following Loeys et al. [2001], a disease-causing effect of an identified mutation was assumed in 1) recurrent mutations, 2) when the alteration led to a premature termination codon (PTC) or to substitution of a crucial cysteine residue or another highly conserved amino acid of the calcium-binding epidermal growth factor-like motifs, or 3) on the basis of familial segregation or its absence in 50 controls.

RESULTS

In this study we analyzed 116 unrelated patients who presented with an established, borderline, or tentative clinical diagnosis of MFS. To detect mutations in *FBN1* we performed either prescreening by SSCP ($n = 88$) or primary direct sequencing ($n = 28$) of all 65 exons and the adjacent intron/exon boundaries. We identified 29 novel and nine recurrent mutations in 38 index patients.

With the use of SSCP, 29 mutations (22 novel and seven recurrent mutations) were detected. Twenty-two mutations were single nucleotide changes and resulted in missense mutations, nonsense mutations, or splice site alterations, with predicted effects on exon splicing. The remaining seven mutations were

small insertions or deletions. In the 28 patients primarily screened exonwise by direct sequencing, we identified nine mutations (seven novel and two recurrent mutations). Eight mutations were single nucleotide changes, and one was a del/ins event of two basepairs. All of the mutations are detailed in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, 10 mutations replacing or introducing a cysteine residue were identified in this study, including nine that are reported here for the first time. Eight of the novel mutations are located in one of the numerous cbEGF modules of fibrillin-1: c.1622G>A (p.Cys541Thr), c.2342G>A (p.Cys781Tyr), c.3850T>G (p.Cys1284Gly), c.5371T>C (p.Cys1791Arg), c.5783G>A (p.Cys1928Tyr), c.5782T>G (p.Cys1928Gly), c.6113G>A (p.Cys2038Tyr), and c.7814G>A (p.Cys2605Tyr). The mutation c.6253T>C (p.Cys2085Arg) is located in TGF- β -like module 6.

A total of 14 mutations leading to premature termination of protein synthesis are reported (Table 1), including 11 novel mutations, namely the nonsense mutations c.493C>T (p.Arg165X), c.462T>A (p.Cys154X), c.2250C>A (p.Cys750X), c.3132C>A (p.Cys1044X), and c.5187G>A (p.Cys1729X) generating a stop codon instead of wild-type amino acid, as well as the frameshift mutations c.1348-1349dupA (p.Thr450fs),

TABLE 1. List of *FBN1* Mutations Identified in this Study*

| Case | Nucleotide change | Exon | Predicted amino acid change | Fibrillin-1 domain | Predicted effect/mutation type | Reference |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | c.493C>T | 5 | p.Arg165X | EGF-like #3 | PTC in exon 5 | This study |
| 2 [▲] | c.462T>A | 5 | p.Cys 154X | EGF-like #3 | PTC in exon 5 | This study |
| 3 | c.643C>T | 6 | p.Arg 215X | Hybrid motif #1 | PTC in exon 6 | Matsukawa et al. [2001] |
| 4 | c.1348-1349dupA | 11 | p.Thr450fs | EGF-like #4 | PTC in exon 11 | This study |
| 5 | c.1519-1521delAAC | 12 | p.Asn507del | cbEGF-like #3 | del Asn 507 | This study |
| 6 | c.1622G>A | 13 | p.Cys541Thr | cbEGF-like #4 | Missense | This study |
| 7 | c.1879C>T | 15 | p.Arg 627Cys | cbEGF-like #6 | Missense | Hayward et al. [1994] |
| 8 | c.2250C>A | 18 | p.Cys750X | cbEGF-like #7 | PTC in exon 18 | This study |
| 9 [▲] | c.2342G>A | 19 | p.Cys781Tyr | cbEGF-like #8 | Missense | This study |
| 10 [▲] | c.2420-2A>T | Intron 19 | ⊗ | Intronic | splice defect? | This study |
| 11 [▲] | c.3037G>A | 24 | p.Gly1013Arg | TGF- β -like #3 | Missense | Nijbroek et al. [1995] |
| 12 [▲] | c.2953G>A | 24 | p.Gly985 Arg | TGF- β -like #3 | Missense | Loeys et al. [2001] |
| 13 | c.3132C>A | 25 | p.Cys1044X | cbEGF-like #11 | PTC in exon 25 | This study |
| 14 [▲] | c.3337+1G>C | Intron 26 | ⊗ | Intronic | splice defect? | This study |
| 15 | c.3373C>T | 27 | p.Arg1125X | cbEGF-like #13 | PTC in exon 27 | FBN1-UMD ID #547 |
| 16 | c.3338A>T | 27 | p.Asp1113Val [△] | cbEGF-like #13 | Missense | This study |
| 17 [▲] | c.3850T>G | 31 | p.Cys1284Gly | cbEGF-like #17 | Missense | This study |
| 18 | c.4423G>A | 35 | p.Gly1475Ser [△] | cbEGF-like #21 | Missense | This study |
| 19 [▲] | c.4424-4425del insAA | 35 | p.Gly1475Glu [△] | cbEGF-like #21 | Missense | This study |
| 20 | c.4727T>C | 37 | p.Met1576Thr ^Φ | TGF- β -like #4 | Missense | This study |
| 21 | c.4621C>T | 37 | p.Arg1541X | TGF- β -like #4 | PTC in exon 37 | Halliday et al. [1999] |
| 22 | c.4619-4641dup | 37 | p.Pro1531fs | TGF- β -like #4 | PTC in exon 37 | This study |
| 23 | c.5187G>A | 41 | p.Cys1729X | TGF- β -like #5 | PTC in exon 41 | This study |
| 24 | c.5371T>C | 43 | p.Cys1791Arg | cbEGF-like #25 | Missense | This study |
| 25 | c.5783G>A | 46 | p.Cys1928Tyr | cbEGF-like #28 | Missense | This study |
| 26 | c.5782T>G | 46 | p.Cys1928Gly | cbEGF-like #28 | Missense | This study |
| 27 | c.5918-1G>C | Intron 47 | ⊗ | Intronic | splice defect? | This study |
| 28 | c.6113G>A | 49 | p.Cys2038Tyr | cbEGF-like #31 | Missense | This study |
| 29 | c.6164-1G>A | Intron 49 | ⊗ | Intronic | splice defect? | This study |
| 30 [▲] | c.6253T>C | 50 | p.Cys2085Arg | TGF- β -like #6 | Missense | This study |
| 31 | c.6431A>G | 52 | p.Asn2144Ser | cbEGF-like #32 | Missense | Hewett et al. [1993] |
| 32 | c.6997+1G>A | Intron 56 | exon56del | cbEGF-like #36 | del exon 56 | Liu et al. [1996] |
| 33 | c.7096delG | 57 | p.Asp2361fs | TGF- β -like #7 | PTC in exon 57 | This study |
| 34 | c.7524-7548del | 60 | p.Thr2508fs | cbEGF-like #39 | PTC in exon 63 | This study |
| 35 | c.7606G>A | 61 | p.Gly2536Arg | cbEGF-like #40 | Missense | Comeglio et al. [2001] |
| 36 | c.7814G>A | 62 | p.Cys2605Tyr | cbEGF-like #41 | Missense | This study |
| 37 | c.8524-8528delCTTAA | 65 | p.Leu2842fs | COOH-terminal | PTC in exon 65 | This study |
| 38 | c.8531-8535delAACTA | 65 | p.Gln2844fs | COOH-terminal | PTC in exon 65 | This study |

**FBN1* cDNA sequence with GenBank accession number L13923.1 was used with the A of the ATG translation initiation start site as nucleotide +1. PTC, premature termination codon; PM, polymorphism; [△]AA conserved in *Mus musculus*, *Rattus norvegicus*, *Drosophila melanogaster*; [▲]AA conserved in *Mus musculus*, *Rattus norvegicus*; ^ΦAA not evolutionarily conserved; [⊗]screening performed by direct sequencing of genomic DNA; [⊗]not tested at RNA level.

TABLE 2a. Clinical and Molecular Data of Patients Carrying Missense Mutations with Cysteine Involvement*

| Status | Age | Sex | Nucleotide change | Predicted amino acid change | Exon | SS | OS | Cardiovascular system | PS | SK | DE | FH | Group | Reference | |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----------------------|-----------------------------|------|-----|-----|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|------------------------|------------|
| Index 1 Cousin II. ^o | 37 | F | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | EL | MVP AD, AI | — | (+) | — | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Cousin II. ^o | 28 | M | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | — | — | — | — | — | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Uncle | 25 | F | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | (+) | AD | — | (+) | — | F | II | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Sister | 57 | M | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | EL | MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Daughter | 32 | F | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | EL | MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Daughter | 3 | F | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | EL | MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Father | 7 | F | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | EL | AD, MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Index 2 | 63 | M | c.1511G>T | p.Cys504Phe | 12 | (+) | EL | MVP | — | (+) | — | F | II | This study | |
| Index 3 | 35 | F | c.1622G>A | p.Cys541Thr | 13 | — | — | MVP | — | — | — | F | III | Hayward et al. [1994] | |
| Sister | 15 | F | c.1879C>T | p.Arg627Cys | 15 | (+) | EL | MVP | — | — | — | F | I | Hayward et al. [1994] | |
| Index 4 | 14 | F | c.1879C>T | p.Arg627Cys | 15 | — | EL | AD, MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | Rommel et al. [2002] | |
| Index 4 | 63 | F | c.1882-1884 delinsAAA | p.Cys628Lys | 15 | (+) | EL | ADS, AD, AI | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Index 5 | 39 | M | c.2342G>A | p.Cys781Tyr | 19 | (+) | EL | AD, MVP | — | (+) | DE | F | I | Loeys et al. [2001] | |
| Index 6 | 17 | M | c.3302A>G | p.Tyr101Cys | 26 | (+) | EL | AD | — | (+) | — | S | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Index 7 | 25 | F | c.3386G>A | p.Cys1129Tyr | 27 | (+) | — | AD, MVP | — | — | — | S | II | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Index 8 | 32 | M | c.3782A>G | p.Tyr1261Cys | 30 | (+) | EL | ADS, AI | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Index 9 | 37 | M | c.3850T>G | p.Cys1284Gly | 31 | (+) | EL | AD | — | (+) | — | S | I | Rommel et al. [2002] | |
| Index 10 | 17 | F | c.5417G>A | p.Cys1806Tyr | 43 | (+) | EL | AD | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Index 11 | 16 | F | c.5371T>C | p.Cys1791Arg | 43 | (+) | EL | AD, MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Sister | 18 | F | c.5371T>C | p.Cys1791Arg | 43 | (+) | EL | MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Index 12 | 39 | F | c.5783G>A | p.Cys1928Tyr | 46 | (+) | EL | — | MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study |
| Daughter | 16 | F | c.5783G>A | p.Cys1928Tyr | 46 | (+) | (+) | AD, MVP, AI | — | (+) | — | F | II | This study | |
| Index 13 | 58 | F | c.5782T>G | p.Cys1928Gly | 46 | (+) | EL | MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Index 14 | 42 | F | c.6113G>A | p.Cys2038Tyr | 49 | (+) | — | AD | — | (+) | — | S | I | This study | |
| Daughter | 11 | F | c.6113G>A | p.Cys2038Tyr | 49 | (+) | — | AD, MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Daughter | 13 | F | c.6113G>A | p.Cys2038Tyr | 49 | (+) | — | AD, MVP | — | (+) | DE | S | I | This study | |
| Index 15 | 21 | M | c.6253T>C | p.Cys2085Arg | 50 | (+) | — | ADS, ADS-AB | — | (+) | — | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Index 16 | 41 | M | c.6425G>A | p.Cys2142Tyr | 52 | (+) | EL | AD, MVP | — | (+) | — | S | II | Rommel et al. [2002] | |
| Index 17 | 64 | F | c.6751T>C | p.Cys2251Arg | 55 | (+) | — | AD, MVP | — | (+) | — | F | I | This study | |
| Index 18 | 11 | F | c.7814G>A | p.Cys2605Arg | 62 | (+) | — | AD, MVP | — | (+) | — | S | II | This study | |

*FBN1 cDNA sequence with GenBank accession number L139231 was used with the A of the ATG translation initiation start site as nucleotide +1.

TABLE 2b. Clinical and Molecular Data of Patients Carrying Mutations Resulting in Splice Site Alteration*

| Status | Age | Sex | Nucleotide change | Location | SS | OS | Cardiovascular system | PS | SK | DE | FH | Group | Reference |
|----------|-----|-----|-------------------|----------|-----|----|-----------------------|-----|----|----|----|-------|------------------------|
| Index 19 | 36 | M | c.165-1G>A | IVS1 | (+) | — | ADS | — | — | — | F? | II | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Index 20 | 42 | F | c.2420-2A>T | IVS19 | — | EL | AD | (+) | — | — | F | I | This study |
| Index 21 | 53 | F | c.3337+1G>C | IVS26 | (+) | EL | ADS | — | — | — | F? | II | This study |
| Index 22 | 11 | F | c.4817-G>T | IVS38 | — | EL | MVP | — | — | — | S | I | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Index 23 | 32 | F | c.5788+5G>A | IVS46 | — | EL | AD, ADS, MVP, PTD | — | — | — | F | I | Nijbroek et al. [1995] |
| Index 24 | 33 | F | c.5918-1G>C | IVS47 | — | EL | — | — | — | — | S | I | This study |
| Index 25 | 19 | M | c.6164-1G>A | IVS49 | — | EL | AD, MVP, PTD | — | — | — | S | III | Liu et al. [1996] |
| Index 26 | 6 | F | c.6997+1G>A | IVS56 | — | EL | — | (+) | — | — | S | III | |

* FBN1 cDNA sequence with GenBank accession number L13923.1 was used with the A of the ATG translation initiation start site as nucleotide +1.

c.4619-4641dup (p.Pro1531fs), c.7096delG (p.Asp2361fs), c.7524-7548del (p.Thr2508fs), c.8524-8528delCTTAA (p.Leu2842fs), and c.8531-8535delAACTA (p.Gln2844fs), disrupting the open reading frame with following introduction of a downstream stop codon. It is interesting to note that the majority (10/14) of the detected PTC mutations are localized in other than cbEGF modules of fibrillin-1.

C.2420-2A>T, c.3337+1G>C, c.5918-1G>C, and c.6164-1G>A are classified as novel splice site alterations affecting conserved exon/intron boundaries. The recurrent mutation c.6997+1G>A (Table 1) was previously examined by Liu et al. [1996] and was shown to result in the deletion of exon 56. The pathogenicity of the other described sequence changes awaits confirmation at the RNA level.

Eight missense mutations without cysteine involvement have been identified (Table 1), including four novel mutations: c.3338A>T (p.Asp1113Val), c.4423G>A (p.Gly1475Ser), c.4424_4425delinsAA (p.Gly1475Glu), and c.4727T>C (p.Met1576Thr). Since the exchanged amino acid 1576 is not conserved among species and has not yet been described in any patient with classic MFS, it is still unclear whether p.Met1576Thr should be regarded as a rare nonpathogenic sequence variant, although it was not identified in 50 controls. The recurrent mutation c.6431A>G (p.Asn2144Ser) was first reported by Hewett et al. (1993) and was the subject of subsequent investigations that focused on altered calcium-binding properties and their molecular effects on fibrillin-1 [Kettle et al., 1999; McGettrick et al., 2000; Yuan et al., 2002]. The novel in-frame deletion of three basepairs in exon 12 (c.1519-1521delAAC/p.Asn507del) leads to the loss of amino acid Asn507 in exon 12.

Among the nine recurrent mutations identified in this study, one mutation that was identified in neonatal Index Case 49, c.3037G>A (p.Gly1013Arg), has been reported six times before and is one of the most frequent mutations in *FBN1*. It is strongly associated with severe or neonatal MFS [Tiecke et al., 2001; Lo et al., 2001; Loey et al., 2001]. Interestingly, it has been found in affected females only.

The available clinical information for the probands identified with a mutation, and for their mutation-positive family members is provided in Tables 2a-d. This set of tables also include information on our previously described patients for a review of the genotype-phenotype correlations. Table 3 lists the detected polymorphisms and sequence variations.

We identified 29 novel and nine recurrent *FBN1* mutations in 38 patients of a cohort of 116 persons with MFS or suspected MFS. The mutations reported here are distributed over the entire coding region and exon/intron boundaries. The spectrum of these mutations reflects the contribution of mutational events reported in the *FBN1*-UMD database. We identified 18 missense mutations (47%; 10 involving cysteine substitution, and eight (21%) nonsense mutations). Seven mutations (18%; six leading to frameshift and premature termination, and one leading to inframe deletion of asparagine in codon 507) are deletions, insertions, or duplications. Five mutations (13%) are splice site alterations.

In 38 of the 116 patients examined in this study, we detected 35 mutations that are assumed to be causative because of their predicted effects on fibrillin-1 structure and/or synthesis. Two additional missense mutations (p.Asp1113Val and p.Gly1475-Ser) are considered to be pathogenic because the affected amino acid has been shown to be conserved among species. The mutation p.Met1576Thr, but was shown to be absent in 50 controls.

TABLE 2c. Clinical and Molecular Data of Patients Carrying Mutations Resulting in PTC*

| Status | Age | Sex | Nucleotide change | Predicted effect/ amino acid change | PTC location | SS | OS | Cardiovascular system | PS | SK | DE | FH | Group | Reference | |
|----------|-----|-----|---------------------|--|--------------|-----|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|-------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Index 27 | 43 | F | c.493C>T | p.Arg165X | Exon 5 | (+) | - | - | - | - | - | DE | S | II | |
| Index 28 | 11 | M | c.643C>T | p.Arg215X | Exon 6 | (+) | - | - | - | - | - | S | S | II | |
| Index 29 | 45 | M | c.1285C>T | p.Arg429X | Exon 10 | (+) | EL | AD, MVP | - | - | - | S | I | Matsuoka et al. [2001] | |
| Son | 20 | M | c.1285C>T | p.Arg429X | Exon 10 | (+) | - | - | - | - | - | F | III | Matyas et al. [2002] | |
| Index 30 | 33 | F | c.1904-1919del | p.Tyr635fs | Exon 17 | - | - | AD, AI | - | - | - | F | II | Rommel et al. [2002] | |
| Index 31 | 52 | F | c.2250C>A | p.Cys750X | Exon 18 | + | - | AD, MVP | - | - | (+) | DE | F | I | This study |
| Index 32 | 8 | M | c.3132C>A | p.Cys1044X | Exon 25 | (+) | - | AD | - | - | - | S | II | This study | |
| Index 33 | 27 | M | c.3373C>T | p.Arg1125X | Exon 27 | - | - | AD | - | - | - | F | II | FBN1-JMD | |
| Index 34 | 34 | F | c.4621C>T | p.Arg1541X | Exon 37 | + | (+) | ADS, AD | - | - | (+) | DE | F | I | Halliday et al. [1999] |
| Index 35 | 10 | M | c.4619_4641dup | p.Pro1531fs | Exon 37 | (+) | - | MVP | - | - | - | F | II | This study | |
| Index 36 | 24 | M | c.5187G>A | p.Cys1729X | Exon 41 | (+) | EL | AD, MVP | - | - | - | F? | I | This study | |
| Index 37 | 33 | F | c.5311delC | p.Arg1771fs | Exon 46 | (+) | - | AD, ADS | (+) | - | - | S | II | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Index 38 | 39 | F | c.6018delT | p.Leu2006fs | Exon 50 | (+) | - | AD, ADS | - | - | - | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Daughter | 12 | F | c.6018delT | p.Leu2006fs | Exon 50 | (+) | - | AD, ADS | - | - | - | F | III | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Index 39 | 47 | F | c.7096delG | p.Asp2361fs | Exon 57 | (+) | EL | ADS, ADS-AB | - | (+) | - | F | I | This study | |
| Index 40 | 35 | F | c.7291delA | p.Thr2431fs | Exon 58 | (+) | - | AD, MVP, AI | - | - | - | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Sister | 37 | F | c.7291delA | p.Thr2431fs | Exon 58 | (+) | - | AD, MVP | - | - | - | F | I | El-Aleem et al. [1999] | |
| Index 41 | 37 | M | c.7524-7548del | p.Thr2508fs | Exon 63 | (+) | - | AD | - | - | (+) | F | I | This study | |
| Index 42 | 18 | F | c.8027dupC | p.Pro2676fs | Exon 64 | + | (+) | MVP | - | - | - | F | I | Rommel et al. [2002] | |
| Brother | 7 | M | c.8027dupC | p.Pro2676fs | Exon 64 | - | - | - | - | - | - | F | III | Rommel et al. [2002] | |
| Brother | 9 | M | c.8027dupC | p.Pro2676fs | Exon 64 | - | - | - | - | - | - | F | III | Rommel et al. [2002] | |
| Mother | 38 | F | c.8027dupC | p.Pro2676fs | Exon 64 | (+) | - | AD | - | (+) | (+) | DE | F | I | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Index 43 | 27 | M | c.8524-8528delCTTAA | p.Leu2842fs | Exon 65 | (+) | - | AD | (+) | (+) | (+) | DE | F | I | This study |
| Niece | 6 | F | c.8524-8528delCTTAA | p.Leu2842fs | Exon 65 | (+) | - | AD | - | - | - | F | I | This study | |
| Index 44 | 46 | M | c.8531-8535delAACTA | p.Gln2844fs | Exon 65 | (+) | EL | ADS, ADS-AB | - | - | - | S | I | This study | |

*FBN1 cDNA sequence with GenBank accession number L13923.1 was used with the A of the ATG translation initiation start site as nucleotide +1.

TABLE 2d Clinical and Molecular Data of Patients Carrying Missense Mutations Without Cysteine Involvement*

| Status | Age | Sex | Nucleotide change | Mutation | Exon | SS | OS | Cardiovascular system | PS | SK | DE | FH | Group | Reference |
|----------|-----|-----|----------------------|--------------|------|-----|-----|-----------------------|-----|-----|----|----|-------|------------------------|
| Index 45 | 22 | F | c.1345G>A | p.Val1449Ile | 11 | – | – | AD, AI | – | – | – | – | III | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Index 46 | 28 | F | c.1519_1521delAAC | p.Asn507del | 12 | (+) | – | AD | – | – | DE | F | I | This study |
| Index 47 | 18 | M | c.2638G>A | p.Gly880Ser | 21 | + | – | AD | – | (+) | S | S | I | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Index 48 | 12 | F | c.2953G>A | p.Gly985Arg | 24 | – | – | AD | – | (+) | S | S | I | Loeys et al. [2001] |
| Index 49 | 2 | F | c.3037G>A | p.Gly1013Arg | 24 | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | III | Nijbroek et al. [1995] |
| Index 50 | 4 | F | c.3338A>T | p.Asp1113Val | 27 | (+) | – | MVP | – | – | S | S | I | This study |
| Index 51 | 52 | F | c.4424_4425 delinsAA | EL | – | (+) | – | AD, AI | (+) | (+) | DE | S | I | This study |
| Index 52 | 21 | M | c.4423G>A | p.Gly1475Glu | 35 | (+) | – | AD, MVP, PTD | – | (+) | S | S | I | This study |
| Index 53 | 31 | M | c.4727T>C | p.Met1576Thr | 37 | – | – | AD, MVP | – | – | S | S | III | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Index 54 | 17 | M | c.5723C>T | p.Thr1908Ile | 46 | (+) | – | MVP | – | – | F | I | III | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Index 55 | 58 | F | c.5756G>A | p.Gly1919Asp | 46 | (+) | – | ADS, ADS-AB | – | – | S | I | I | Hewitt et al. [1993] |
| Index 56 | 40 | M | c.6431A>G | p.Asn2144Ser | 52 | + | – | AD, AI | – | (+) | – | – | I | Comeglio et al. [2001] |
| Index 57 | 28 | F | c.7606G>A | p.Gly2536Arg | 61 | (+) | (+) | AD | – | DE | F | F | I | |

* FBN1 cDNA sequence with GenBank accession number L139231 was used with the A of the ATG translation initiation start site as nucleotide +1. ADS, dissection of aorta ascendens; ADS-AB, dissection of abdominal aorta; AD, dilatation of aorta ascendens; AI, insufficiency of the aortic valves; PTD, dilatation of pulmonary trunk; MVP, mitral valve prolapse; DE, lumbosacral dural ectasia; SK, skin; SS, skeletal system; PS, pulmonary system; OS, ocular system; FH, family history; F, familiar; S, sporadic; EL, ectopia lentis; blank, information not available; group I, classical MFS according to Ghent nosology; group II, sporadic cases with one major criterion and involvement of at least one further organ system and familial cases with one major criterion or involvement of two organ systems; group III, sporadic cases with one major criterion or involvement of two organ systems and familial cases with involvement of one organ system; nMFS, neonatal MFS; +, major criterion fulfilled; –, minor criterion fulfilled.

Meta-Analysis of the Mutation Detection Rate and Mutation Type Spectrum

To evaluate the mutation detection rate and mutation type spectrum, we performed a meta-analysis including patients from this study and previous studies by our group [El-Aleem et al., 1999; Rommel et al., 2002]. Altogether 201 index cases were screened for mutations in the *FBN1* gene, and 61 mutations were identified in 61 single patients. Since full clinical data were not available for all index cases, the mutation detection rate was calculated only in those 155 cases with sufficient clinical information. As expected, the *FBN1* mutation detection rate was highest in the 60 patients who fulfilled the clinical criteria according to the Ghent nosology. Thirty-seven mutations were identified in 37/60 index patients (62%) in Group I. Thirty-six patients with a negative or unknown family history of MFS were considered as borderline (Group II) when at least one major criterion and the involvement of one additional organ system were present, thus taking into account that the majority of patients were not tested for lumbosacral dural ectasia. In Group II the mutation detection rate was 16/36 (44%). In Group III with a tentative diagnosis of MFS, presenting as a sporadic case with at least one major criterion or involvement of two organ systems, or as a familial case with involvement of at least one organ system, the detection rate was 10% (6/59). Forty-six patients did not contribute to the calculation of the mutation detection rate because comprehensive clinical data were not available. In two of these 46 patients a mutation was identified (p.Cys154X and p.Thr450fs).

The spectrum of mutation types did not differ significantly among Groups I–III. The 37 mutations identified in 37/60 patients of Group I comprised 14 mutations leading to an cysteine exchange, 10 PTC mutations, eight missense mutations without cysteine involvement, and five splice site alterations. Among the 16 mutations identified in 16/36 patients of Group II there were four cysteine exchange mutations, nine PTC mutations, one missense mutation, and two splice mutations. The six mutations found in six of 59 patients of Group III were one cysteine exchange, four other missense mutations, and one splice site alteration.

Eight mutation-positive probands (three from Group II and five from Group III) did not fulfill the Ghent nosology criteria, even if the patients who were not examined by CT or MRI had lumbosacral dural ectasia. The three patients of Group II were a sporadic case with dural ectasia and involvement of the skeletal system (p.Arg165X); one 8-year-old boy, a sporadic case, with aortic dilatation, skeletal involvement, and no dural ectasia (p.Cys1044X); and a familial case, who presented with isolated dilatation of ascending aorta and no dural ectasia (p.Arg1125X). The patients of Group III were one 6-year-old girl who had ectopia lentis as the only symptom (6997+1G>A, leading to del exon 56); two patients (one of whom was a 4-year-old child) with involvement of the skeletal and cardiovascular systems without any major criterion (p.Thr1908Ile, p.Asp1113Val); and two patients with unknown family history who presented with isolated dilatation of the ascending aorta (p.Val449Ile, p. Met1576Thr). The proband from Group III carrying p.Cys541Thr was a female with a positive family history and mitral valve prolapse as the only symptom, who would fulfill the diagnostic criteria if she had lumbosacral dural ectasia. One mutation (p.Gly1013Arg) was identified in a child with neonatal MFS.

TABLE 3. Polymorphisms and Sequence Variants in *FBN1**

| Position | Polymorphism | Reference |
|-----------|--|------------------------|
| Intron 1 | c.165–40delCTT | This study |
| Exon 3 | c.306C>T | This study |
| Exon 15 | c.1875T>C | Hayward et al. [1994] |
| Intron 17 | c.2168–46 A>G | Tynan et al. [1993] |
| Intron 18 | c.2293+11T>C | This study |
| Exon 24 | c.2965G>A (p.Ala986Thr) | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Exon 26 | c.3294C>T (p.Asn1098Asn) | Yuan et al. [1999] |
| Intron 27 | c.3464–23delTGT | This study |
| Intron 27 | c.3464–5G>A | Tynan et al. [1993] |
| Intron 28 | c.3589+15del(tttta) | Nijbroek et al. [1995] |
| Intron 40 | c.5066–13insA | Rommel et al. [2002] |
| Exon 43 | c.5343 G>A (p.Val1781Val) | Loeys et al. [2001] |
| Intron 45 | c.5671+21insT | This study |
| Exon 53 | c.6601A>G (p.Met2201Val ^a) | This study |
| Exon 55 | c.6855T>C | Nijbroek et al. [1995] |
| Exon 56 | c.6888G>A | Nijbroek et al. [1995] |
| Intron 56 | c.6997+17G>C | Nijbroek et al. [1995] |
| Intron 62 | c.7819+8A>C | Körkkö et al. [2002] |

**FBN1* cDNA sequence with GenBank accession number L13923.1 was used with the A of the ATG translation initiation start site as nucleotide +1.

^ap.Met2201Val has been identified in a healthy control proband.

Genotype–Phenotype Correlations in 76 MFS Patients With *FBN1* Mutations

In this study 57 index patients (36 from this study and 21 from earlier studies) together with 19 relatives (for a total of 76 patients) who carried a *FBN1* mutation and for whom there were comprehensive clinical data were considered for genotype–phenotype correlations.

The incidence of ectopia lentis was found to be significantly higher in the patient groups with cysteine exchanges and splice site alterations compared to the groups with PTC mutations and missense mutations without cysteine involvement. In the group with cysteine involvement, 18 of 30 patients (60%) had ectopia lentis, whereas this symptom was present in four of 25 patients (16%) in the PTC group ($P = 0.001$). When affected family members were disregarded and only probands were considered in the analysis, differences in the rate for ectopia lentis were still significant ($P = 0.007$; 12/18 (67%) in the cysteine exchange group and 4/18 (22%) in the PTC group). Ectopia lentis occurred in six of eight patients (75%) with a splice site mutation, and in one of 13 patients (8%) with a missense mutation without cysteine substitution ($P = 0.0015$). Comparisons between the cysteine substitution group and the other missense group ($P = 0.0015$), and between the groups with a splice mutation and PTC ($P = 0.0016$) also revealed significant differences in their clinical spectra. The observed differences in the incidence of ectopia lentis between the mutation-type groups cannot be accounted for by differences in age, because the groups did not differ significantly in terms of age distribution.

An assessment of cardiovascular involvement in patients with different mutation types revealed no significant differences. Dilatation and/or dissection of the ascending aorta as a major cardiovascular criterion occurred in 19 of 30 patients (63%) with a cysteine substitution, in 18 of 25 patients (72%) with PTC, in five of eight patients (63%) with a splice site alteration, and in 10 of 13 patients (77%) with a missense mutation without cysteine involvement. Aortic dilatation and/or dissection were more common in index cases, as expected. In the cysteine substitution group, 72% (13/18) of the probands had aortic dilatation or dissection versus 50% (6/12) of the mutation-positive family

members. In the PTC group, 83% (15/18) of the probands had one of these symptoms versus 43% (3/7) of the mutation-carrying relatives. Aortic dissection occurred in 10% (3/30) of patients in the cysteine substitution group, and 20% (5/25) of patients in the PTC group.

According to the Ghent nosology, the major criterion in the skeletal system was considered as fulfilled when four out of eight manifestations comprising the major criterion were present. Severe skeletal involvement and fulfilled major criterion in this organ system was present in six of 30 patients (20%) in the cysteine substitution group, two of 25 patients (8%) in the PTC group, and three of 13 patients (23%) with a missense mutation without cysteine involvement, and was most common in patients in the group with splice site mutations (3/8; 38%). A significantly lower proportion of patients in the PTC group fulfilled the major criterion in the skeletal system compared to the splice site alteration group ($P = 0.04$).

DISCUSSION

In 38 of 116 analyzed patients with classic or suspected MFS, we identified 29 novel and nine recurrent *FBN1* mutations (Table 1). The spectrum of these mutations reflects the contribution of mutational events reported in the *FBN1*-UMD database.

We performed a meta-analysis on patients in this study and previous studies by our group [El-Aleem et al., 1999; Rommel et al., 2002] to evaluate the mutation detection rate and mutation spectrum in three different patient groups. Altogether 201 index cases were tested, and in 61 of the analyzed patients an *FBN1* mutation was identified. In 155 index cases with sufficient clinical information, the mutation detection rate was calculated. The *FBN1* mutation detection rate was highest in patients who fulfilled the clinical criteria according to the Ghent nosology (Group I). In this group a mutation was identified in 37 of 60 index cases (62%). Patients with negative or unknown family history (Group II) who presented with at least one major criterion and the involvement of one additional organ system were considered as borderline. In Group II the mutation detection rate was 44% (16/36 patients). In 12 of these patients the clinical diagnosis of MFS could be made if they had dural ectasia, which indicates the

necessity of performing a complete clinical investigation, including testing for dural ectasia. In patients with a tentative diagnosis of MFS (Group III), the detection rate was 10% (6/59). This is in accordance with the results of Loeys et al. [2001], who reported a detection rate of 66% in patients with classic MFS, and 12% in patients who did not fulfill the Ghent criteria. Two mutations were identified in 46 cases without available clinical data.

Eight mutation-positive probands definitely did not fulfill the Ghent nosology criteria, even if the patients who were not examined by CT or MRI had lumbosacral dural ectasia. Four of these eight patients were children, which highlights the importance of mutation analysis in patients with emerging MFS. Considering that 8% (3/36) of *FBN1* mutation-positive patients in Group II and 9% (5/59) in Group III did not receive a diagnosis of MFS on the basis of the Ghent nosology, we propose a revision of these criteria in order to include a higher number of patients during the clinical follow-up.

Seventy-six patients (57 index patients (36 from this study and 21 from earlier studies) and 19 relatives) who carried an *FBN1* mutation and for whom comprehensive clinical data were available were investigated for genotype–phenotype correlations. In the group with cysteine involvement, 18 of 30 patients (60%) had ectopia lentis, whereas this symptom was present in four of 25 patients (16%) of the PTC group ($P = 0.001$). Ectopia lentis occurred in six of eight patients (75%) with a splice site mutation, and in one of 13 patients (8%) with a missense mutation without cysteine substitution ($P = 0.0015$). Comparisons between the cysteine substitution group and the other missense group ($P = 0.0015$), and between the groups with a splice site mutation and PTC ($P = 0.0016$) also revealed significant differences in their clinical spectra.

Our results largely support and extend, but in some respects also contradict recent findings on genotype–phenotype correlations in MFS [Loeys et al., 2001; Schrijver et al., 2002; Biggin et al., 2004]. In agreement with those findings, we observed a higher prevalence of ectopia lentis in patients with cysteine substitutions compared to patients who harbored a premature termination codon. Furthermore, we observed that patients who carried a mutation predicted to result in exon-skipping also showed a significantly higher prevalence of ectopia lentis compared to the group with a PTC mutation, while the occurrence of ectopia lentis in the group with missense mutations without cysteine involvement was as low as in the PTC group. Since the majority of *FBN1* mutations described in patients with isolated ectopia lentis (MIM# 129600) are missense mutations affecting a cysteine residue [Ades et al., 2004; Comeglio et al., 2002], correct cysteine localization in *FBN1* may play an important role concerning the structural integrity of suspensory ligaments of the lens. Splice site alterations may have a similar effect by expression of shortened or misfolded protein. PTC mutations and “atypical” missense mutations often do not change cysteine residues, because either cysteine is not involved or the PTC-affected allele is weakly or not expressed, which may explain why ectopia lentis is rare in patients with these mutations.

Among the family members carrying the same mutation (p.Cys504Phe, Index 1; p.Cys2038Tyr, Index 14) the manifestation of eye involvement was very variable. The two daughters of Index Case 1, who had ectopia lentis in childhood, also developed this symptom at the ages of 2 and 4 years, respectively, whereas two mutation-positive cousins (25 and 28 years old, respectively) have no eye involvement. Index Case 14, who is affected by ectopia lentis, has two daughters (11 and 13 years old, respectively) without eye involvement. To some extent these differences in manifestation could be due to the age of onset. However, the

example of Index Case 1 shows that other genetic and/or environmental factors may contribute to eye manifestations. A comparison of phenotypes of patients harboring a recurrent mutation with clinical data available from the literature also reveals marked variability, supporting the notion that additional factors (e.g., variation in *FBN1* expression, such as that shown by Hutchinson et al. [2003] in PTC patients) may lead to differences in clinical expression.

The evaluation of cardiovascular involvement in patients with different mutation types revealed no significant differences. Aortic dissection apparently occurred more often in the PTC group (5/25; 20%) than in the cysteine substitution group (3/30; 10%). This observation corresponds with the findings of Schrijver et al. [2002], in that aortic dissection appears to be more frequent in the PTC group ($P = \text{not significant}$). However, this trend remains uninformative even if the two series are combined in the evaluation.

Our observation of a significantly lower proportion of patients in the PTC group fulfilling the major criterion in the skeletal system compared to the splice site alteration group ($P = 0.04$) is contrary to the findings of Schrijver et al. [2002], who observed that skeletal manifestations were more pronounced in patients with PTC mutations.

Even the most comprehensive screening methods [Loeys et al., 2004], including Southern blotting analysis to detect larger deletions, failed to identify *FBN1* mutations in at least 10% patients with classic MFS. Several efforts to explain this failure in mutation detection have been made during the last few years. A mutation in the *FBN2* gene was described in a family with two affected children who fulfilled the Ghent diagnostic criteria, but additional clinical features were typical for congenital contractual arachnodactyly [Gupta et al., 2004]. Mutation analysis in the *FBN3* gene, however, failed to detect disease-causing alterations in MFS [Uyeda et al., 2004]. An important discovery was the identification of *TGFBR2* (MIM# 190182) gene mutations [Mizuguchi et al., 2004] in patients with a Marfan-like syndrome, which has been shown to not be linked to *FBN1* or *FBN2* [Boileau et al., 1993], and is now named MFS type 2 (MFS2; MIM# 154705). We have also found *TGFBR2* mutations in patients who fulfill the Ghent diagnostic criteria for classic MFS (unpublished results). Furthermore, Loeys et al. [2005] recently described a clinical phenotype (Loeys-Dietz syndrome (LDS), MIM# 609192) due to mutations in *TGFBR2* or *TGFBR1* (MIM# 190181) that overlaps with the MFS phenotype.

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2.3 TGFBR1 and TGFBR2 Mutations in Patients with Features of Marfan Syndrome and Loeys-Dietz Syndrome (Manuskript)

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***TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* Mutations in Patients with
Features of Marfan Syndrome and Loeys-Dietz Syndrome**

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Abstract

Marfan syndrome (MFS) is an autosomal dominant connective tissue disorder characterized by manifestations in the cardiovascular, skeletal, ocular and other organ systems. MFS type 1 (MFS1) is caused by mutations in the gene encoding fibrillin (*FBNI*). Recently, the transforming growth factor- β receptor-2 gene, *TGFBR2*, has been shown to be associated with a second type of this disorder with typically mild or absent ocular involvement (MFS type 2; MFS2). Several point mutations were found in the highly conserved serine/threonine kinase domain of *TGFBR2*. Mutations in both, *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* are associated with Loeys-Dietz aortic aneurysm syndrome (LDS).

We have searched for *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* mutations in 41 unrelated patients fulfilling the diagnostic criteria of Ghent nosology or with the tentative diagnosis of Marfan syndrome, in whom mutations in the *FBNI* coding region were not identified. In *TGFBR1*, two mutations and two polymorphisms were detected. In *TGFBR2*, five mutations and six polymorphisms were identified. Re-examination of patients with a *TGFBR1* or *TGFBR2* mutation revealed extensive clinical overlap between patients with MFS1, MFS2 and LDS.

Key words: Marfan syndrome type 1, Marfan syndrome type 2, Loeys-Dietz syndrome, *TGFBR1*, *TGFBR2*

Introduction

Marfan syndrome (MFS; MIM# 154700) is an autosomal dominantly inherited disorder of the connective tissue affecting the cardiovascular, skeletal, ocular and other organ systems with a prevalence of two to three per 10,000. MFS is of variable clinical expressivity and genetic heterogeneity. The clinical diagnosis is based on a nosological consensus, the revised "Ghent criteria", which takes weighted account of organ manifestations and family history [De Paepe et al., 1996]. Mutations in fibrillin gene (*FBN1*; MIM# 134797) cause classical Marfan syndrome. In patients fulfilling Ghent diagnostic criteria, the mutation detection rate in the *FBN1* gene is between 66% [Loeys et al., 2001] and 91% [Loeys et al., 2004], in part depending on extent and method of analysis. *FBN1* mutations are also associated with a broad spectrum of other "fibrillinopathies", including MASS syndrome (MIM# 604308), familial ectopia lentis (MIM# 129600), Shprintzen-Goldberg syndrome (MIM# 182212) and Weill-Marchesani syndrome (MIM# 608328).

Mutations in the transforming growth factor beta receptor type II gene (*TGFBR2*; MIM# 190182) cause MFS type 2 (MFS2; MIM# 154705) [Mizuguchi et al., 2004]. *TGFBR2* mutations have also been reported in association with cancer of the colon, rectum and esophagus [Markowitz et al., 1995; Lu et al., 1998; Tanaka et al., 2000], but an increased cancer susceptibility is not a feature of MFS.

Mutations in transforming growth factor beta receptor type I gene (*TGFBR1* ; MIM# 190181) and *TGFBR2* have been found in association with Loeys-Dietz aortic aneurysm syndrome (LDS; MIM# 609192), a recently identified syndrome characterized by hypertelorism, bifid uvula and/or cleft palate, generalized arterial tortuosity with ascending aortic aneurysm and worse cardiovascular risk profile than classic MFS including aortic dissection at a young age and at small dimensions [Loeys et al., 2005]. Other less consistent findings in patients with

LDS include craniosynostosis, structural brain anomalies, mental retardation, congenital heart disease and aneurysms with dissection throughout the arterial tree. *TGFBR2* mutations have also been shown to cause isolated familial thoracic aortic aneurysms and dissections [Pannu et al., 2005]. The TGF β s form a family of cytokines that regulate, via binding to their specific receptors, multiple cellular functions, including cell proliferation, differentiation, motility and organization. *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* are transmembrane proteins with a short cysteine-rich extracellular region and a cytoplasmic region, the principle element of which is a highly conserved serine/threonine kinase domain [Kingsley, 1994; Massague et al., 1994; Carcamo et al., 1995].

The extent of clinical overlap between MFS1, MFS2, LDS and other related syndromes is not clear. In the study of Mizuguchi et al (2004), four out of five different *TGFBR2* mutations were found in patients fulfilling the revised diagnostic criteria for MFS, while the presence or absence of typical features of LDS are not mentioned [Mizuguchi et al., 2004]. In contrast, Loeys et al. (2004, 2005), who found *FBN1* mutations in 85 out of 93 patients with classical MFS did not observe *TGFBR1* or *TGFBR2* mutations in the remaining seven cases, and none of their *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* mutation carriers fulfilled the Ghent criteria [Loeys et al., 2004, 2005].

In order to contribute to an assessment of the clinical spectrum associated with mutations in *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2*, we have sequenced these genes in 41 unrelated individuals with a confirmed or tentative clinical diagnosis of MFS and in whom *FBN1* mutations were not identified by SSCP or direct sequencing.

We here report two novel missense mutations in the *TGFBR1* coding region, three novel and one recurrent missense mutations and one novel nonsense mutation in the *TGFBR2* coding region, and one seemingly functional sequence alteration in 5'upstream region of *TGFBR2*.

We then relate these mutations to the clinical symptoms assessed in these patients. Our data show that there is extensive overlap between MFS and LDS. Four *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* mutations are associated with a symptomatology that satisfies clinical criteria for MFS.

Materials and Methods

Probands- 41 unrelated individuals, including one Turkish, one Swiss, and 39 German patients, who had been referred between 1997 and 2004 to our clinic or genetic testing service with suspected Marfan syndrome or fulfilling Ghent diagnostic criteria of Marfan syndrome, had been screened for *FBNI* mutation as described before [De Paepe et al., 1996; Rommel et al., 2002, 2005], and were not found to carry a *FBNI* mutation. 21 probands fulfilled the criteria of Ghent nosology, 15 probands presented with one major criterion and involvement of a second organ system with negative or unknown family history, and 5 probands had involvement of one or two organ systems. All 41 individuals were subjected to *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* mutation screening. In five of the seven individuals with a mutation in *TGFBR1* or *TGFBR2*, all 65 exons of *FBNI* gene were sequenced in order to confirm the results from SSCP; from the remaining two cases sufficient amounts of genomic DNA were not available. Blood samples were taken and genomic DNA was extracted from blood using standard protocols. Primers were designed based on the human sequence (accession numbers AY497473.1 (*TGFBR1*) and AY675319.1 (*TGFBR2*)) for amplification of all 9 exons of *TGFBR1*, ~1kb 5' flanking region and all 7 exons of *TGFBR2* (supplementary tables S1 and S2). All patients carrying a *TGFBR1* or *TGFBR2* mutation were re-contacted in early 2005 in order to be checked for symptoms of LDS, in particular the highly consistent features hypertelorism and bifid uvula or cleft palate. Age of onset of aortic dissection and, where possible, size of the aorta before elective surgical replacement are reported. Arterial tortuosity was not systematically assessed.

PCR and DNA Sequencing- Standard PCR conditions were, initial denaturation at 95° for 10 min followed by 33 cycles of 96° C for 1 min, 58° C for 1 min and 72° C for 1 min with final elongation for 10 min at 72° C in a 50- μ l reaction mixture, containing 1X buffer (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany), 1X Q solution (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany), 20 pM each primer and 2.5U Taq Polymerase (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany). The annealing temperature for exon 1 of *TGFBRI* was 62° C. PCR products were purified with ExoSAP-IT (USB, USA), and both strands were sequenced with BigDye Terminator chemistry version 1.1 by standard protocol (ABI, USA). Sequencing reactions were carried out at 96° C for 10 s, 50° C for 5 s, and 60° C for 4 min (25 cycles) (Biometra, Gottingen, Germany). The reaction mixtures were purified using DyeEx™ 2.0 Spin Kit (Qiagen, Hilden, Germany) and analyzed on the ABI Genetic Analyser 3100 according to the supplier's instructions with the sequence analysis software (ABI, USA). The mutation numbering is based on the cDNA sequence (*TGFBRI*; accession number NM_004612.2 and *TGFBR2*; accession number NM_003242), where +1 correspond to the nucleotide A of ATG, the translation initiation codon. All variations found upstream to ATG are numbered with –ve sign.

Cell Culture- The monkey kidney cell line COS-7 was cultured in DMEM medium supplemented with penicillin, streptomycin and 10% fetal calf serum (FCS). The cells were incubated at 37° C with 5% CO₂.

Plasmids- Mutants of the *TGFBR2* promoter in this study were cloned into the promoterless luciferase pGL3-basic vector (Promega, Mannheim, Germany) using *XhoI* and *HindIII* restriction sites. Inserts for the c.-334A, c.-126G and wild type (c.-334T and c.-126C) *TGFBR2* promoter region alternatives were obtained by amplification of the genomic DNA using forward primer (-409 *XhoI* F) 5'-GCTACGAGAGGCTCGAGGCTGGAC-3' and reverse primer (-55 *HindIII* R) 5'-TCCCGGACCCAAAGCTTCGCCTCC-3' (created restriction sites are underlined). The PCR products carrying c.-334A, c.-126C and wild type

(c.-334T and c.-126G) were cloned into the pGL-3 basic vector using *XhoI* and *HindIII* restriction sites, and the orientation was checked by sequencing.

Cell Transfection- Cells were transfected using the calcium phosphate method according to standard protocols. Briefly, for transient transfection, cells were seeded in six-well plate at a density of 2-3 X 10⁵ cells per well. The cells were transiently transfected with each construct along with the internal control plasmid pEQ 176 following 60-80% confluence. The cells were harvested 48 h post-transfection and lysed in 200 µl of passive lysis buffer (Promega, Mannheim, Germany). Aliquots of cell lysates of 20 µl were analyzed for β-galactosidase activity as an internal control for transfection efficiency and luciferase activity. The amount of light emitted was measured with PE-Wallac Victor microplate reader (PerkinElmer, USA). The samples were normalized against β-galactosidase activity, and the fold activation/inhibition was calculated by dividing the luciferase activity values of samples transfected with c.-334A, c.-126C and wild type expression vectors by that of the samples transfected with empty vector.

Search for transcription factor binding sites was performed using TFSEARCH software (<http://www.cbrc.jp/research/db/TFSEARCH.html>).

Controls- All sequence alterations were checked in a sample of 93 control individuals (healthy blood donors).

Results

In a cohort of 41 unrelated probands with the tentative diagnosis of Marfan syndrome or fulfilling criteria of Ghent nosology without identified mutation in the *FBN1* coding region, a systematic mutation screen was performed by sequencing all 9 exons of *TGFBR1*, ~1 kb of the 5' upstream region (promoter region) and all 7 exons of *TGFBR2*. In *TGFBR1*, two novel mutations and two polymorphisms were detected. In *TGFBR2*, five mutations (four novel) and six polymorphisms were found. Sequencing of *FBN1* to confirm the results from SSCP

did not reveal any mutation in this gene in the five tested individuals with a mutation in *TGFBR1* or *TGFBR2*. Clinical and molecular findings of all index patients and relatives carrying a mutation in *TGFBR1* or *TGFBR2* are summarized in table 1 and 2, respectively. Index patients and relatives with *TGFBR1* or *TGFBR2* mutations expressing LDS phenotypes have been summarized in table 3.

TGFBR1

c.759G>A (p.Met253Ile; exon 4) was detected in a male proband (index 1) of German origin with a positive family history of aortic rupture (figure 1a; II-5). At the age of 39 years he underwent emergency surgery and aorta ascendens and aortic valves replacement because of acute dissection. Histological examination revealed mucinous cystic degeneration of the intima and cystic media necrosis of aortic wall. Several surgical interventions followed in order to replace chronically dissected aorta descendens at a diameter of 7.0 cm and inferior aorta abdominalis and iliac arteries by a Y- graft. Later, replacement of the aorta thoraco-abdominalis with a size of 8.0 cm and of the aortic arch were performed. His height was 198 cm, and in the skeletal system the major criterion was fulfilled (pectus carinatum, positive wrist and thumb signs, dolichostenomelia, scoliosis, pes planus), ophthalmological examination revealed myopia as the only finding. Pulmonary system and integument were involved (spontaneous pneumothorax and recurrent herniae). According to Ghent nosology the diagnosis Marfan syndrome could be made and he was considered as a very typical patient with Marfan syndrome by experienced clinicians. The patient had no generalized arterial tortuosity on angiography, no hypertelorism, no cleft palate, but bifid uvula.

The mutation c.759G>A (p.Met253Ile) could be identified in two out of two living affected family members. His 33-year-old nephew (figure 1a; III-3) had been diagnosed to have chronic dissection of ascending aorta with a diameter of 5.0 cm at the age of 20 years and had received surgical replacement. MRA showed no anomalies of aortic arch, aorta descendens,

innominate artery, common carotid and subclavian artery. His height was 195 cm and skeletal system was involved (pectus carinatum, scoliosis, pes planus, highly arched palate) but body proportions were not strikingly marfanoid. He had no cleft palate or bifid uvula and no hypertelorism. There were striae around the hips. As a familial case Ghent diagnostic criteria were fulfilled. His niece (figure 1a; III-4) showed mitral valve prolapse as the only cardiac finding at the age of 28 years. At the age of 15 years a slight dilatation of aortic root (33 mm) had been found. However, aortic root dilatation was not progressive, and the aortic diameter was in the normal range (34 mm), when she was a young adult. Integument (striae) and skeletal system were involved (positive thumb and wrist signs, scoliosis, pes planus, funnel chest, joint hypermobility), and she was 188 cm tall. She had no cleft palate or bifid uvula and no hypertelorism. Ghent criteria have to be considered as not fulfilled.

The father of these family members (figure 1a; II-3), brother of index case 1, died of aortic rupture at the age of 36 years. The grandfather (figure 1a; I-1) died of rupture of dissected abdominal aorta. The mutation was excluded in 2 healthy relatives (figure 1a; II-2 and III-5).

c.934G>A (p.Gly312Ser; exon 5) was identified in a male proband (index 2) of German origin with a positive family history of aortic dilatation and dissection. He underwent surgical treatment of dilatation of ascending aorta with aortic regurgitation before the age of 32 years. Skeletal system was involved (reduced upper to lower segment ratio, positive wrist and thumb signs, scoliosis, funnel chest, joint hypermobility and highly arched palate), his height was 196 cm, and recurrent herniae demonstrated involvement of the integument. None of the affected family members had lens dislocation. As a familial case with a first grade relative fulfilling the diagnostic criteria independently, he fulfilled the Ghent diagnostic criteria. The patient could not be re-evaluated for signs of Loeys- Dietz syndrome.

Both missense mutations occurred in the serine/threonine kinase domain of the TGFBR1 protein. These amino acid changes occurred at the position which is evolutionarily conserved in the kinase domain among *Mus musculus* (accession number BAA05023), *Danio rerio* (accession number NP_571065), *Canis familiaris* (accession number XP_538750), *Rattus norvegicus* (accession number P80204), *Gallus gallus* (accession number NP_989577) and *Bos taurus* (accession number AAC02717) TGFBR1.

TGFBR2

c.1322C>T (p.Ser441Phe; exon 5) was seen in a 14-year-old boy (index 3) of German origin with the tentative diagnosis of Marfan syndrome. He is sibling of a twin pregnancy with his sister being unaffected. After delivery by cesarian section he was found to have arachnodactyly, cutis laxa, pectus excavatum and dilatation of ascending aorta. The diameter of aortic root was 3.3 cm and 3.8 cm at the age of 11 and 14 years, respectively. Ascending aorta measured 2.3 cm at the age of 14 years. Furthermore he had mitral valve prolapse. At the ages of 6, 11 and 14 years, his height was 119 cm, 142.5 cm and 161 cm, respectively (50th percentile at the ages of 6 and 11 years, 10.-25. percentile at the age of 14 years). He met the major criterion of Ghent nosology in the skeletal system showing dolichostenomelia (reduced upper to lower segment ratio of 0.84; arm span to height ratio was 1.04), positive wrist and thumb signs, pectus carinatum, which developed in the last years, pes planus, highly arched palate, extreme joint hypermobility and marfanoid facial appearance. The child had delayed dentition with the upper deciduous canine tooth on the right side still being in situ at the age of 14 years. Ophthalmologic examination revealed no anomalies, except myopia. The father of the boy has pectus excavatum but no other findings. The patient's mother is healthy. With the father being considered as unaffected, the boy did not fulfill the Ghent criteria. He was not tested for dural ectasia, and he would fulfil diagnostic criteria if he had this feature.

The patient had no hypertelorism, cleft palate or uvula bifida. Neither parent carried this mutation.

c.1151A>G (p.Asn384Ser; exon 4) was identified in a female proband (index 4) of German origin with a positive family history. Her father, brother and half-sister (same father) died of aortic rupture at the age of 28, 18 and 17 years, respectively. She had herself suffered from an acute dissection of ascending aorta requiring surgical treatment at the age of 28 years. The surgeon mentioned in the operation report that the anuloaortic ectasia was surprisingly small. The skeletal system was involved (pectus carinatum, positive wrist and thumb signs, joint hypermobility and highly arched palate), her height was 175 cm. The ocular system showed myopia and slightly blue sclerae. The Ghent diagnostic criteria for Marfan syndrome were not fulfilled, with detailed clinical data of diseased family members not being available. There was no uvula bifida or cleft palate. Measures of ocular distances showed hypertelorism, the inner canthal distance being borderline (2 standard deviations, SD) and both interpupillary and outer canthal distance being above 2 SD.

c.1378C>T (p.Arg460Cys; exon 5) was detected in a female proband (index 5; figure 1c; II-6) of German origin with positive family history, who had been treated for dissection of the ascending aorta at the age of 49 years. Skeletal system fulfilled the major criterion (pectus carinatum, arm span to height ratio of 1.07, scoliosis, pes planus, joint hypermobility, highly arched palate), and her height was 168 cm. The ocular system showed anisocoria of unknown cause. The integument was involved (striae). The Ghent criteria were fulfilled, even without further information about affected relatives. She had no cleft palate, bifid uvula, hypertelorism or arterial tortuosity on CT.

This missense mutation was found to segregate with Marfan syndrome in this family. Two affected siblings were heterozygous for this mutation. One affected sister (figure 1c; II-3) had dilatation of ascending aorta and underwent surgical treatment when she was 55 years old. Three months later a second operation was performed because of dissection of descending aorta. She had then chronic dissection of the abdominal aorta. At the age of 60 years, she died of rupture of the aortic arch. The 78-year-old brother of index case 5 had aortic dissection at the age of 60 years (figure 1c; II-2). There was no sign of ectopia lentis in any of the affected siblings. The father (figure 1c; I-1), who died at the age of 56 years, and another sister (figure 1c; II-1), who underwent surgical treatment of aortic dissection at the age of 55 years for the first time and died at the age of 58 years after her third operation, could not be tested for the mutation. No other mutations or polymorphisms were found in the coding region of the *TGFBR2* gene in this family. Three unaffected family members (figure 1c; III-2, III-3 and III-4) did not carry the mutation.

c.1188T>G (p.Cys396Trp; exon 4) was identified in a female proband (index 6; figure 1b; II-1) of German origin. This maternally inherited missense mutation was accompanied by the nucleotide exchange c.-334T>A in the 5'UTR of the paternal *TGFBR2* allele (figure 1b). This proband was severely affected with Ghent clinical criteria being fulfilled. She had a mitral valve prolapse and a dilatation of ascending aorta requiring replacement at the age of 23 years. Her height was 168 cm and skeletal symptoms included severe pectus excavatum and scoliosis, both requiring surgical treatment. Further surgical interventions were necessary because of clubfeet, hip dysplasia and recurrent inguinal herniae. The proband's arm span to height ratio was increased to 1.07, but this effect might be due to severe scoliosis. Positive thumb and wrist signs, pes planus, joint hypermobility and narrow, highly arched palate were additional features. At the age of 11 years the bone age was retarded by two years and metacarpal index was 8.78. The ocular system presented with unilateral ptosis and slight

exophthalmus due to flat orbital ridges, but without any signs of ectopia lentis. There was no hypertelorism, cleft palate or uvula bifida. Neither parent showed any signs of MFS. Two unaffected siblings (figure 1b; II2 and II-3) had none of the two sequence alterations.

c.1489C>T (p.Arg487X; exon 6) was seen in a male patient (index 7) of German origin with a height of 195 cm while family members had a rather short stature. Dilated ascending aorta without dissection was replaced at the size of 8.0 cm. He had involvement of the skeletal system (pectus excavatum, scoliosis, arachnodactyly with positive thumb and wrist signs). With a negative family history and absence of ocular symptoms, he did not fulfil the Ghent criteria. Nevertheless the diagnosis of Marfan syndrome could not be ruled out, because he was not tested for dural ectasia. This patient was lost to follow-up, precluding ascertainment of features of LDS.

All missense mutations occurred in the serine/threonine kinase domain of the TGFBR2 protein. These amino acid changes occurred at the position which is evolutionarily conserved in the kinase domain among *Mus musculus* (accession number NP_083851), *Danio rerio* (accession number NP_878275), *Canis familiaris* (accession number AAR19223) and *Rattus norvegicus* (accession number NM_031132) TGFBR2 .

We detected a total of eight polymorphisms, two in *TGFBR1* and six in *TGFBR2*, respectively. In *TGFBR1* the 9A/6A polymorphism in exon 1 and the c.1512+69A>G polymorphism in the 3'UTR were seen at essentially the same frequencies as reported from controls (accession numbers rs11466445 and rs868, respectively).

The four single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) in the 5' upstream region of the *TGFBR2* gene were c.-1213G>A, c.-967T>G, c.-334T>A and c.-126C>G. Two SNPs, namely c.-1213G>A and c.-967T>G have already been reported in normal subjects (accession number

AY675319). The allele frequencies for c.-1213G>A and c.-967T>G were 0.19 and 0.038, respectively, in our cohort and do not differ from published data (see accession number AY675319). Variation c.-126C>G was identified in two unrelated probands (allele frequency 0.024 in the patient cohort and 0.020 in the controls). A reporter assay for the transcriptional activity of c.-126C>G, did not show any difference to the wild type (figure 2). A search for the transcription factor binding sites using TFSEARCH did not reveal any novel sites in the c.-126C sequence version.

The c.-334T>A variant was found in the patient compound heterozygous for c.1188T>G (p.Cys396Trp) but in none of the controls. Reporter assay for the transcriptional activity of c.-334T>A, showed up-regulation of the *luciferase* gene with a nearly two-fold higher expression in comparison to the wild type (figure 2). TFSEARCH supported this finding, as c.-334T>A creates a transcription factor binding site (gctgAtggcg) for the transcription factor GATA-1 (score 96.3).

Two silent mutations were found, namely c.1062C>T (p.Leu354Leu) in one proband and c.1167C>T (p.Asn389Asn) in two independent probands. The silent mutation c.1062C>T (p.Leu354Leu) was seen in controls (allele frequency 0.005) and c.1167C>T (p.Asn389Asn) has already been reported in normal subjects and seems to play no role in Marfan syndrome [Lucke et al., 2001].

Discussion

In our cohort of 41 patients with tentative diagnosis of Marfan syndrome or fulfilling Ghent diagnostic criteria, a total of two novel missense mutations were detected in *TGFBR1* and five mutations (three novel and one recurrent missense mutations and one novel nonsense mutation) were found in *TGFBR2* in seven index cases.

Both of the missense mutations (p.Met253Ile and p.Gly312Ser) in *TGFBR1* occurred in the evolutionarily highly conserved kinase domain of TGFBR1, and one of these (p.Met253Ile) was found to segregate in affected family members (figure 1a). These findings indicate a pathological role of these two missense mutations.

All of the four missense mutations identified in *TGFBR2* (p.Asn384Ser, p.Cys396Trp, p.Ser441Phe and p.Arg460Cys) were located in the highly conserved kinase domain of the TGFBR2. Of these four missense mutations, p.Asn384Ser and p.Ser441Phe are expected to affect the kinase activity of the TGFBR2, as serine is a common site of phosphorylation. The missense mutation p.Cys396Trp is expected to affect either the disulfide linkage, thereby the three-dimensional structure, or the kinase activity of the protein. Another missense mutation identified was p.Arg460Cys. Mutations at p.Arg460 has already been described in association with TAAD (Thoracic Aortic Aneurysms and Dissections) [Pannu et al., 2005], and Marfan syndrome [Disabella et al., 2006]. Mutations identified in TAAD were p.Arg460Cys (c.1378C>T) and p.Arg460His (c.1379G>A). p.Arg460 has been shown to maintain the structural integrity of the TGFBR2 catalytic loop for effective signalling, hence the mutation p.Arg460Cys will lead to diminished signalling activity of TGFBR2 [Pannu et al., 2005]. As p.Arg460His was identified in familial Marfan cases, a mutation at p.Arg460 appears to give rise to diverse phenotypes.

The missense mutation p.Cys396Trp was found in a patient compound heterozygous for the c.-334T>A variant in the 5'UTR. c.-334T>A was found to be associated with up-regulation of the *luciferase* gene in the reporter assay (figure 2). Functionality of this variant was supported by the results of a search for transcription factor binding sites (TFSEARCH) showing that c.-334T>A creates an extra binding site for the transcription factor GATA-1, known to play an important role during development and for different patterns of expression in tissues [Zon et

al., 1991; Merika et al., 1993]. The index patient 6 carrying both sequence alterations was severely affected, whereas both the mother carrying the mutation p.Cys396Trp and the father carrying c.-334T>A were unaffected by MFS. Two healthy siblings of the index patient did not carry any of the two mutations. TGF- β signalling is a complex pathway, regulated by several ligands and their receptors [de Caestecker, 2004; ten Dijke and Hill, 2004], and both up- and down-regulated transcriptional activity may be functionally relevant, perhaps in a context-dependent fashion as suggested by Loeys et al [Loeys et al., 2005]. It cannot be excluded that the combined effects of these two mutations are responsible for the disease in this case, which must, however, be regarded as unresolved at the present stage.

The missense mutation p.Arg460Cys was found in two other affected siblings of the index patient but in none of the other family members. A family member (figure 1c; III-3), who died of colon cancer, did not carry the p.Arg460Cys mutation. We regard it as highly likely that the missense mutation p.Arg460Cys is responsible for Marfan syndrome in these patients.

The proband carrying the nonsense or premature terminating mutation p.Arg497X did not show much phenotypic divergence in comparison to the probands carrying missense mutations, regarding symptoms of Marfan syndrome. He had dilatation of ascending aorta of 8 cm and was tall with minor criterion fulfilled in skeletal system. This suggests that the nonsense mutation has a comparable impact as the observed missense mutations, but, as the patient could not be examined for features of LDS, this remains speculative.

Among 41 probands with suspected Marfan syndrome or fulfilling Ghent diagnostic criteria and in whom *FBN1* mutations were not identified, two *TGFB1* mutations and five *TGFB2* mutations were detected in seven German index patients and four out of four genotyped affected relatives. All these seven individuals and the relatives had no developmental delay or

mental retardation and shared common clinical features of classical Marfan syndrome except ectopia lentis, but further examination revealed signs of LDS in some of them.

Index case 1 (p.Met253Ile in *TGFBRI*) fulfilled Ghent diagnostic criteria, but had cleft uvula in addition. It is noteworthy that this symptom was absent in his nephew and niece, both carrying the mutation. The clinical course among affected family members is highly variable, with aortic dissection occurring between 20 and 39 years, and with one family member only showing mitral valve prolapse at the age of 28 years.

Index case 4 (p.Asn384Ser in *TGFBRI*), not fulfilling diagnostic criteria, had hypertelorism, blue sclerae and a family history of aortic rupture at an early age and at small annuloaortic ectasia size. The mean age of aortic dissection in this family was 22.7 years. This index patient represented a typical case of LDS.

In index case 3 (p.Ser441Phe in *TGFBRI*) it was difficult to discriminate clinically between emerging Marfan syndrome and LDS. He fulfilled the major criterion in the cardiovascular system and in the skeletal system. Without being tall, his body proportions were strikingly marfanoid. Main craniofacial symptoms of LDS were lacking, but arterial tortuosity was not examined.

Index case 6 (p.Cys396Trp and c.-334T>A in *TGFBRI*) fulfilled the Ghent diagnostic criteria and showed additionally talipes equinovarus, a feature of LDS.

We could not detect features of LDS in index case 5. She fulfilled Ghent criteria, had no craniofacial signs of LDS and no arterial tortuosity. She herself and all affected relatives suffered from aortic dissection and underwent surgical treatment at the age of 49 years and

older, mean age being 55 years. This patient was considered as a case of Marfan syndrome type 2. These findings are in concordance with the previous observations by Mizuguchi et al., where *TGFBR2* mutations were found in four French probands with Marfan syndrome accompanied by mild ocular anomalies [Mizuguchi et al., 2004].

The novel missense and nonsense mutations that were found in this study further expand the spectrum of known *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* mutations in MFS2 and LDS. The combined *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2* mutation detection rate was 19% (4/21) in patients fulfilling clinical criteria of the Ghent nosology, and 15% (3/20) in patients with the tentative clinical diagnosis of Marfan syndrome.

Our data show that there is a broad clinical overlap among MFS1, MFS2 and LDS. Three index case patients with *TGFBR2* mutations and two affected family members with a *TGFBR1* mutation show neither hypertelorism, nor uvula bifida, nor cleft palate, which are highly consistent features of LDS. Three other patients, one with *TGFBR1* and two with *TGFBR2* mutation show manifestations of LDS in addition to features of classical Marfan syndrome. It appears that an optimal differential diagnosis requires both careful clinical examination and mutation screening.

Ethics approval

This study has obeyed to the rules set out by the Ethics Committee of Hannover Medical School.

Competing interest statement

The authors wish to declare no competing interests.

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APPENDIX

Family Pedigree 1-3

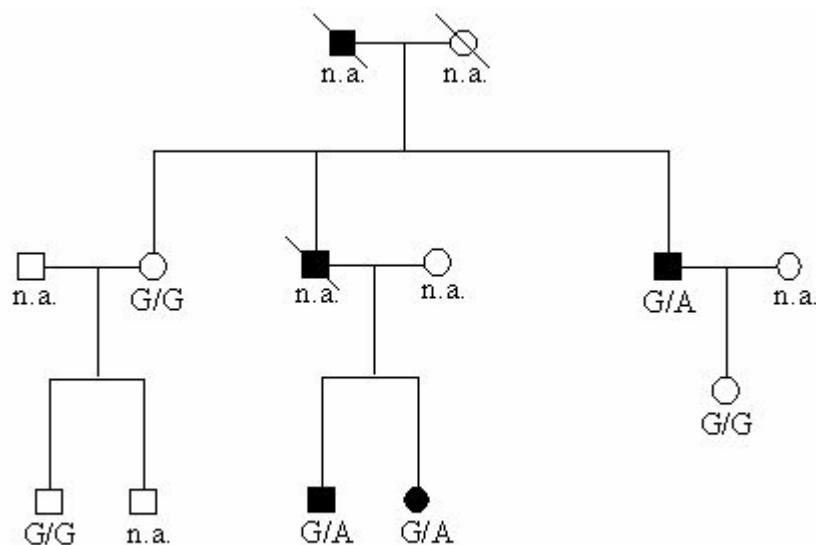


Figure 1a

Figure 1a. Pedigree of a family with Marfan syndrome associated with 759G>A (M253I) in *TGFBR1* gene. n.a.: no DNA available.

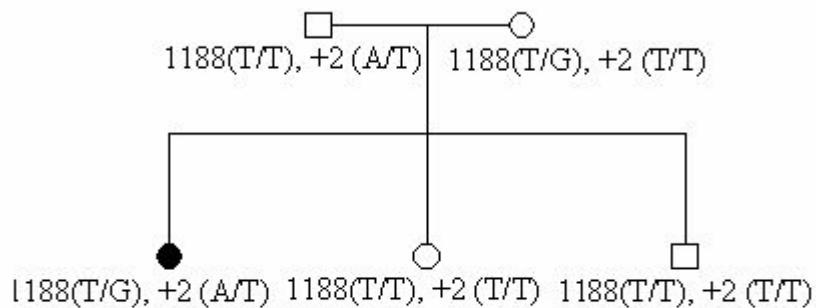


Figure 1b

Figure 1b. Pedigree of a family carrying 1188T>G (C396W) in *TGFBR2* gene with Marfan syndrome. The mother is heterozygous for 1188T>G, father heterozygous for +2T>A, and the patient compound heterozygous for both mutations.

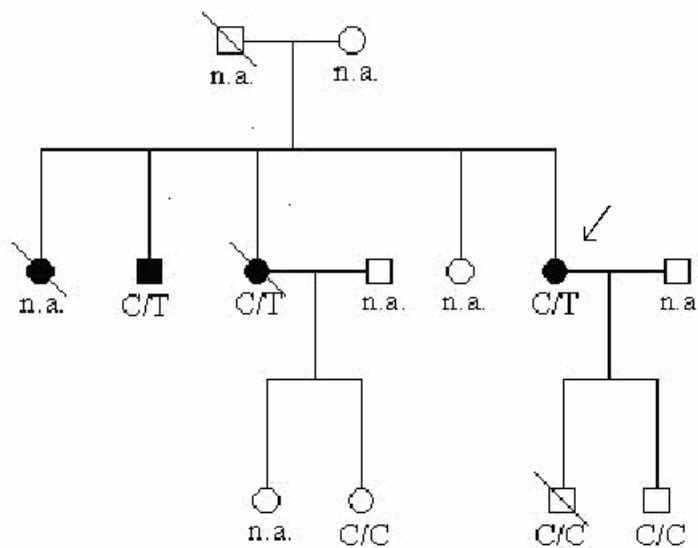


Figure 1c

Figure 1c. DNA available.Pedigree of a family with Marfan syndrome associated with 1378C>T (R460C) in *TGFBR2* gene. n.a.: no DNA available.

Luciferase Assay

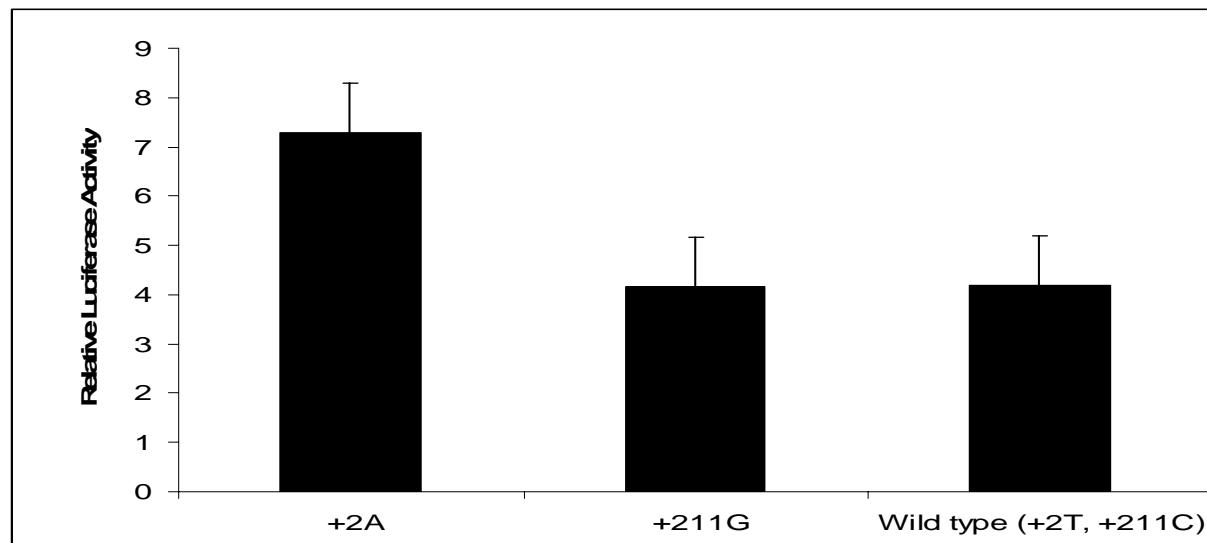


Figure 2. Figure 2. COS-7 cells were transiently transfected with each *TGFBR2* construct (c.-334A, c.-126G and the wild type) along with the internal control plasmid pEQ 176. Activities of luciferase reporter genes were assayed and normalized as described in the Materials and Methods section. This experiment was performed three times. Data shown are means and standard deviation for triplicate measurements from one representative transfection.

Primersequences of *TGFBR1* and *TGFBR2*

| Positions | Primers used |
|-----------|--|
| Exon 1F | 5'-TCG-CGG-CTG-CGG-ATT-GGC-TGC-CT-3' |
| Exon 1R | 5'-GGC-CCC-GCG-CCA-TGT-TTG-AGA-AAG-3' |
| Exon 2F | 5'-GGA-TAA-TTT-CAA-ACT-GTT-AAC-CTT-G-3' |
| Exon 2R | 5'-TTC-TAA-AAT-CAC-AGA-GTA-TGA-AGA-G-3' |
| Exon 3F | 5'-GTC-GTT-GAT-GTT-TAT-TTC-ACT-CG-3' |
| Exon 3R | 5'-ACA-TTC-TAG-CAA-GTT-GGC-TTA-TTA-G-3' |
| Exon 4F | 5'-GGG-TCA-CTC-ATT-AGT-GCC-TAT-CAT-G-3' |
| Exon 4R | 5'-TCT-GTA-AAG-ACT-TAA-AGA-GAT-CTT-G-3' |
| Exon 5F | 5'-ATT-GAA-CAA-ATA-AAT-CAT-AAA-TGG-TC-3' |
| Exon 5R | 5'-TTT-AAA-GCT-TAA-ATA-ATA-GAA-CTG-C-3' |
| Exon 6F | 5'-GAT-GTG-AGT-TGT-GAT-TGG-TAT-TAC-C-3' |
| Exon 6R | 5'-GGT-GAT-TTC-AGA-AGA-TAT-TAA-ATA-T-3' |
| Exon 7F | 5'-AAG-GAG-GTT-CAT-CCA-AAT-ATG-GCA-G-3' |
| Exon 7R | 5'-ACA-ACT-TCT-GCT-CAT-GAC-AAA-CTA-C-3' |
| Exon 8F | 5'-GCC-TTG-GCA-TTA-GCT-GAA-TAA-ATT-C-3' |
| Exon 8R | 5'-ACT-TTT-GCT-TAC-TAA-GCA-GAA-GCA-G-3' |
| Exon 9F1 | 5'-CCA-GAC-CAA-TGG-AAA-ATG-GTG-CAT-G-3' |
| Exon 9R1 | 5'-GTA-ATA-AGA-CAT-GTT-TCA-TTG-TAA-T-3' |
| 3'UTRF2 | 5'-GAG-ATC-ATC-TTT-AAG-GGC-AAA-GGA-G-3' |
| 3'UTRR2 | 5'-GTT-TGG-GTT-ACC-CAG-ATA-AAT-AAG-C-3' |

Table S 1: Primer sequences used for amplification of all 9 exons of *TGFBR1*.

| Positions | Primers Used |
|-----------|---|
| -945 F | 5'-CAT-GTA-CAC-CAG-GAA-TGT-CTT-GG-3' |
| -323 R | 5'-TGC-AAG-TTG-AGA-TCC-AGG-AGT-G-3' |
| -375 F | 5'-ATG-TGC-TCG-CGA-CTC-AAT-AGA-T-3' |
| Exon 1 F | 5'-TAC-GAG-AGA-GCT-AGG-GGC-TG-3' |
| Exon 1R | 5'-GGG-GAA-ACT-TTC-CTC-GTT-TCC-G-3' |
| Exon 2 F | 5'-GCA-GGC-TGC-CTG-GCA-GTT-GG-3' |
| Exon 2 R | 5'-GGA-ACA-GGT-GTT-TAC-ATT-TAG-GAG-3' |
| Exon 3 F | 5'-CAT-TTA-TTC-TCT-TTC-TCT-CTC-TCC-3' |
| Exon 3 R | 5'-TGC-TCT-ATG-ACA-CTG-CAG-ACC-AA-3' |
| Exon 4 F1 | 5'-CCT-ACC-ACA-TCC-AAC-TCC-TTC-TCT-3' |
| Exon 4 R1 | 5'-CTT-ATA-GAC-CTC-AGC-AAA-GCG-ACC-3' |
| Exon 4 F2 | 5'-GAG-CTG-CTG-CCC-ATT-GAG-CTG-GA-3' |
| Exon 4 R2 | 5'-CCT-CCC-ACA-TGG-AGT-GTG-ATC-AC-3' |
| Exon 4 F3 | 5'-CCT-GAC-GCG-GCA-TGT-CAT-CAG-CT-3' |
| Exon 4 R3 | 5'-CAG-ACT-CCA-TAC-TTT-GGC-TAG-ATT-C-3' |
| Exon 5 F | 5'-GGC-AGC-TGG-AAT-TAA-ATG-ATG-GG-3' |
| Exon 5R | 5'-CAC-ATG-ATC-TTA-TTT-TGA-AGA-CAA-G-3' |
| Exon 6 F | 5'-GCA-CAT-GCC-ATT-CTC-AGT-GAC-CC- |
| Exon 6 R | 5'-CAA-TAT-TCC-AGA-ATT-CTC-TGC-CAC-C-3' |
| Exon 7F | 5'-CCA-CCT-TGC-CTT-CCG-CGG-AG-3' |
| Exon 7 R | 5'-CCT-TGG-TTT-TCC-AGG-AGG-CAT-CA-3' |

Table S 2: Primer sequences used for amplification of ~1 kb 5'upstream region and all 7 exons of *TGFBR2*.

| Status | Age | Sex | Nucleotide Change | Amino Acid Change | Location | SS | Ocular System | Cardio Vascular System | PS | SK | FH | Ghent Nosology | Hyper-telorism | Cleft palate | Bifid uvula |
|----------------|-----|-----|-------------------|-------------------|----------|-----|---------------|------------------------|-----|-----|----|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Index 1 | 57 | M | c.759G>A | M253I | Exon 4 | + | myopia | + ADiss | (+) | (+) | F | fulfilled | no | no | yes |
| Nephew ♠ | 33 | M | c.759G>A | M253I | Exon 4 | (+) | myopia | + ADiss | - | (+) | F | fulfilled | no | no | no |
| Niece ♠ | 28 | F | c.759G>A | M253I | Exon 4 | (+) | myopia | (+) MVP | - | (+) | F | not fulfilled | no | no | no |
| Index 2 | 36 | M | c.934G>A | G312S | Exon 5 | + | - | + ADilat MVP | - | (+) | F | fulfilled | ? | ? | ? |

Table 1: Patients with mutation in *TGFBR1* gene. The mutation numbering is based on the cDNA sequence (accession number NM_004612.2), where +1 corresponds to the nucleotide A of ATG, the translation initiation codon. ♠ The father (brother of index 1) died of aortic rupture at the age of 36. The unaffected sister and daughter of index 1 do not carry the mutation. Dural Ectasia was not tested in the patients.

| Status | Age | Sex | Nucleotide Change | Amino Acid Change | Location | SS | Ocular System | Cardio vascular system | PS | SK | FH | Ghent Nosology | Hyper-telorism | Cleft palate | Bifid uvula |
|------------------|----------------|-----|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----|---------------|------------------------------------|----|-----|----|----------------|----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Index 3 | 14 | M | c.1322C>T | S441F | Exon 5 | (+) | myopia | + Adilat MVP | - | - | S | not fulfilled | no | no | no |
| Index 4 ♣ | 40 | F | c.1151A>G | N384S | Exon 4 | (+) | myopia | + ADiss | - | ? | F | fulfilled | yes* | no | no |
| Index 5 ♦ | 61 | F | c.1378C>T | R460C | Exon 5 | + | aniso-corria | + ADiss | - | - | F | fulfilled | no | no | no |
| Sister | Died Aged 60 y | F | c.1378C>T | R460C | Exon 5 | (+) | ? | + Adilat Diss A.desc Diss A.abdom. | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Brother | 78 | M | c.1378C>T | R460C | Exon 5 | | ? | + ADiss | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Index 6 | 34 | F | c.1188T>G +2T>A | C396W | c.-334T>A | + | ptosis exoph | + ADilat MVP | - | (+) | S | fulfilled | no | no | no |
| Index 7 | 40 | M | c.1489C>T | R497X | Exon 6 | (+) | - | + ADilat | ? | ? | S | not fulfilled | ? | ? | ? |

Table 2: Patients with mutation in *TGFBR2* gene. The mutation numbering is based on the cDNA sequence (accession number NM_003242), where +1 corresponds to the nucleotide A of ATG, the translation initiation codon. Variations found upstream to ATG are numbered with -ve sign. * Inner canthal distance (ICD) below 2 standard deviations (SD) Interpupillary distance (IPD) and outer canthal distance (OCD) above 2 SD. ♠ Father died of aortic rupture at the age of 28 years / Brother died of aortic rupture at the age of 18 years / Half-sister (same father) died of aortic rupture at the age of 17 years. ♦ Three unaffected family members do not carry the mutation Dural Ectasia was not tested in the patients.

Abbreviations for Table 1 and Table 2: + = major criterion fulfilled, (+) = minor criterion fulfilled = organ system involved - = organ system not involved, SS= skeletal system, OS= ocular system, DE= dural ectasia, FH= family history, F= familial S= sporadic, ADiss = dissection of aorta ascendens, ADilat = dilatation of aorta ascendens, Diss = dissection, MVP = mitral valve prolapse, A.abdom. = aorta abdominalis, A. desc. = aorta descendens, exoph = exophthalmos

| | This report | [Loeys et al. 2005] |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Hypertelorism | 1/7 (14%) | 13/14 (93%) |
| Cleft palate/bifid uvula | 1/7 (14%) | 11/11 (100%) |
| Aortic root aneurysm | 10/11 (91%) | 16/16 (100%) |
| Arterial tortuosity | 0/2 (0%) | 11/11 (100%) |
| Aneurysm of other vessels | 1/9 (11%) | 12/13 (92%) |
| Craniosynostosis | 0/9 (0%) | 4/11 (36%) |
| Malar hypoplasia | 5/7 (71%) | 11/13 (85%) |
| Blue sclerae | 1/7 (14%) | 8/13 (62%) |
| Ectopia lentis | 0/9 (0%) | 0/16 (0%) |
| Arachnodactyly | 6/8 (75%) | 8/14 (57%) |
| Dolichostenomelia | 7/9 (78%) | 4/14 (57%) |
| Pectus deformity | 7/9 (78%) | 9/14 (64%) |
| Scoliosis | 6/9 (67%) | 10/14 /71%) |
| Talipes equinovarus | 1/9 (11%) | 4/14 (29%) |
| Camptodactyly | 2/9 (22%) | 6/14 (43%) |
| Joint laxity | 6/9 (67%) | 12/14 (86%) |
| Patent ductus arteriosus | 0/7 (0%) | 7/13 (54%) |
| Atrial septal defect | 0/7 (0%) | 4/13 (31%) |
| Chiari type I | Not examined | 2/10 (20%) |
| Developmental delay | 0/11 (0%) | 3/14 (21%) |
| Hydrocephalus | 0/11 (0%) | 2/13 (15%) |
| Anisocoria | 1/9 | Not reported |

Table 3 : Clinical characteristics of individuals with TGFBR1 and TGFBR2 mutations.

3 Diskussion

3.1 Detektionsrate der *FBN1*-Mutationen

Das Marfan-Syndrom ist eine komplexe autosomal-dominant vererbte Erkrankung, die mit Defekten im kardiovaskulären, skelettalen und okulären System einhergeht. Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen, dessen Transkript ein struktureller Bestandteil der extrazellulären Bindegewebsmatrix darstellt, können ursächlich für die Entstehung dieses Syndroms sein.

Im Rahmen der vorliegenden Studie wurde eine komplette *FBN1*-Analyse von insgesamt 192 Index-Patienten durchgeführt. Die Rekrutierung der Patienten erfolgte über die human-genetische Beratungsstelle des Instituts für Humangenetik der Medizinischen Hochschule in Hannover bzw. der Uniklinik Hamburg-Eppendorf, oder durch zugesandte Blut/DNA-Proben niedergelassener Ärzte. Soweit es möglich war, sind nach einem erfolgten Mutationsnachweis verwandte Personen in die molekulargenetischen Untersuchungen einbezogen worden. Es konnten 52 Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen der Indexpatienten und 13 Mutationen bei betroffenen Familienmitgliedern identifiziert werden. Die bei der Ausgangskohorte erzielte Detektionsrate liegt bei 27 %. Eine während der Studie erfolgte Umstellung der Screening-Methode von *SSCP*-Analyse hin zu direkter Sequenzierung konnte eine leichte Verbesserung in den beiden Vergleichsgruppen erzielen (*SSCP*-Analyse: 23/104 = 22 % vs. direkte Sequenzierung 29/88 = 33 %).

Unterteilt man die Patienten gemäß Gent-Nosologie in Gruppen mit klinisch gesicherter Diagnose einerseits und Verdachtsfälle andererseits, so erhöht sich diese Rate bei der Gruppe mit klassischem MFS auf 62 %. Dieses Ergebnis bestätigt, dass die Detektionsrate vor allem von der sorgfältigen Auswahl der Patienten abhängig ist [Loeys et al., 2001, 2004] und macht deutlich, dass die stringente Anwendung der klinischen Kriterien einem genetischen Screening vorausgehen sollte.

3.2 Spektrum der *FBN1* Mutationen

Im Rahmen der Untersuchung von 192 Index- Patienten konnten 40 zuvor nicht beschriebene und 12 rekurrente Mutationen identifiziert werden. Die überwiegende Mehrheit (n = 41) der Veränderungen bestand in Einzelnukleotidsubstitutionen. Bei acht Mutationen handelt es sich um kleinere Insertionen oder Deletionen von bis zu 5 bp und eine Insertion/Deletion

(C628delTGCinsAAA). Zwei Mutationen gehen mit einer größeren Deletion von 16 bp bzw. 24 bp einher, eine weitere Veränderung ist bedingt durch ein Duplikationsereignis von 24 bp. Darüber hinaus sind zahlreiche Polymorphismen identifiziert worden.

Größere Umstrukturierungen innerhalb des *FBN1*-Gens sind eher ungewöhnlich und Veränderungen scheinen fast ausschließlich nur wenige Basen zu betreffen. Auch in dieser Studie konnten keine größere Rearrangements oder komplexere Umgestaltungen nachgewiesen werden. Möglicherweise ist der Verlust größerer struktureller Einheiten des *FBN1*-Gens nicht oder nur in Ausnahmen mit dem Leben vereinbar. Die durchgeführten Untersuchungen mittels *SSCP*-Analyse oder direkter Sequenzierung sind außerdem zumeist nicht geeignet, z. B. Exon-übergreifende Deletionen zu erfassen. Eine Diplomandin unserer Arbeitsgruppe konnte durch *Southern blot*-Analyse ein verändertes Restriktionsmuster im *FBN1*-Gen einer Patientin dieser Untersuchungsgruppe nachweisen.

Insgesamt 25 Mutationen (48 %) führen zu einem Aminosäureaustausch und werden den *Missense* Mutationen zugeordnet. Neun der identifizierten Veränderungen (17 %) resultieren in *Nonsense* Mutationen. Weitere neun Mutationen führen zu einer Sequenzveränderung der konservierten Exon/Intron Übergänge und werden als Spleißmutation gewertet. Sechs Deletionen, 2 Insertionen und eine Duplikation von 23 bp bilden die Gruppe der *Frameshift* Mutationen mit ebenfalls 17 % der Veränderungen. Letztere führen, bis auf eine Ausnahme (N507del), durch die Generation eines *PTC* zum frühzeitigen Abbruch der Translation. Insgesamt lässt sich in dieser Studie eine typische Verteilung der verschiedenen Mutationstypen vorfinden, die recht gut das gegenwärtige Verhältnis der zurzeit in den Datenbanken (UMD-*FBN1*) erfassten Mutation widerspiegelt (s.1.3.5):

Mit Abstand am häufigsten konnten *Missense* Mutationen identifiziert werden, gefolgt von solchen Mutationen, die ein frühzeitiges Stoppkodon integrieren (32 %), sei es direkt durch eine *Nonsense* Mutation oder indirekt durch eine *Frameshift* Mutation mit nachfolgendem *PTC*. Spleißmutationen können in dieser Studie mit 17 % etwas häufiger als im Durchschnitt identifiziert werden.

Die Verteilung der Mutationen im *FBN1*-Gen lässt keine Schwerpunkte im Hinblick auf die Lokalisation erkennen, sie sind über alle Exons verteilt. Die meisten Mutationen ($n = 28$) beeinflussen eines der zahlreichen cbEGF-like Module des Fibrillins. In absteigender Reihenfolge sind die TGF- β -like Module ($n = 8$), die ncbEGF-like Module 4 ($n = 4$), die

Hybrid-motive 1 und 2 ($n = 2$), die carboxyterminale ($n = 2$) sowie die prolinreiche Region des Exons 10 ($n = 1$) durch Mutationen betroffen. Diese Verteilung ist statistisch betrachtet unauffällig. Je öfter ein Modul im *FBN1*-Gen vertreten ist, desto häufiger kann ein Mutationsereignis in dieser Region stattfinden.

Die von Boileau et al. 2005 beschriebene Häufung von Mutationen im Bereich von Exon 13, 26 und 27 (s. 1.3.5) lässt sich in dieser Studie nicht bestätigen, auch ein Mangel an Mutationen in den Bereichen Exon 57 und 65 des *FBN1*-Gens kann nicht beobachtet werden. Spitzenreiter dieser Studie ist das Exon 46 mit 4 Mutationen im exonischen Bereich und einer Veränderung in Intron 46.

3.3 Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelationen der untersuchten Patienten

Für die Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelation standen nicht alle klinischen Daten der Indexpatienten zur Verfügung. Um die statistische Aussagekraft zu erhöhen, wurden die Daten von neun Indexpatienten einer bereits abgeschlossenen Studie in der Auswertung berücksichtigt [El-Aleem et al., 1999]. 20 weitere Familienangehörige der 9 Indexpatienten wurden im Rahmen der vorliegenden Dissertation molekulargenetisch charakterisiert und in die Untersuchungsergebnisse einbezogen. Insgesamt konnten die Daten von 76 Patienten (57 Index-Patienten und 19 Verwandte) in die Genotyp-Phänotyp-Korrelation einfließen.

Neun der identifizierten Mutationen betreffen die „neonatale Region“ der Exons 24-32. Bei 3 Index-Fällen (2, 4 und 8 Jahre) handelt es sich um Patienten mit der neonatalen oder einer infantilen Form des MFS. Zwei weitere junge Patienten (12 und 17 Jahre) zeigten schon frühzeitig das klassische Erscheinungsbild des MFS. Vier der Patienten sind Erwachsene (25, 27, 32 und 37 Jahre). Darunter befinden sich drei Personen mit klinisch gesicherter Form des Marfan-Syndroms und ein Patient (Träger der Mutation R1125X) mit familiärer Aortendilatation. Auffällig ist der hohe Prozentsatz an sehr jungen Patienten, die eine klassische Symptomatik aufweisen. Diese Daten bestätigen die funktionelle und auch strukturelle Bedeutung der Region im Bereich der Exons 24-32.

Bei den identifizierten Mutationen Y1101C, R1125X, G985R und G1013R handelt es sich um rekurrente Veränderungen [Loeys et al., 2002; FBN1-UMD; Nijbroek et al., 1995]. Die Mutation G1013R konnte erstmals in einem Säugling mit neonatalen MFS identifiziert

werden, und auch in dieser Studie ist die Veränderung mit der schweren Verlaufsform assoziiert. Mittlerweile konnten einschließlich dieser Studie sieben weitere Fälle beschrieben werden, die auf G1013R zurückzuführen sind (FBN1-UMD). Es handelt es sich bei sieben der acht beschriebenen Fälle um die neonatale Form des Kindsalters, nur ein Fall konnte mit der klassischen Form des MFS assoziiert werden. G1013R beeinträchtigt eine anscheinend für den frühen Entwicklungsprozess kritischen Bereich des Proteins (TGF- β -like 3).

Bei 18 Index-Patienten und 7 verwandten Familienmitgliedern konnten *Nonsense* Mutationen oder *Frameshift* Mutationen identifiziert werden, die einen vorzeitigen Stopp der Translation zu Folge haben. Die Hypothese, dass solche Veränderungen häufiger mit einer milden Verlaufsform einhergehen (s. 1.3.6.), konnte hier nicht unterstützt werden. Allein 14 Patienten dieser Gruppe konnten aufgrund der klinischen Daten eindeutig dem klassischen MFS-Syndrom zugeordnet werden. Elf Patienten wurden einer atypischen Verlaufsform zugeordnet, da sie nicht den Kriterien der Gent-Nosologie entsprechen. Bei 6 dieser 11 Patienten handelt es sich um Kinder bis zu 12 Jahren. Ein Vergleich der Phänotypen erscheint hier nicht unbedingt sinnvoll, da die Ausprägung des MFS altersabhängig ist und sich bei diesen Patienten noch verstärken kann. Zwei weitere der 11 Patienten (Trägerin 5311delC / Trägerin 1904del15 bp) können ebenfalls nicht berücksichtigt werden, da das Vorkommen einer Duralektasie nicht untersucht wurde. Im Falle einer positiven Diagnostik müssten beide Patienten zur Gruppe mit klassischem MFS gezählt werden. Letztendlich können also nur drei erwachsene Patienten dieser Gruppe mit einer atypischen Verlaufsform assoziiert werden. Dazu gehören:

- Der schon zuvor erwähnte Patient mit familiärer Aortendilatation und Träger der Mutation R1125X in Exon 27. R1125X wurde bereits in der Literatur beschrieben (FBN1-UMD). Auch bei diesem Fall handelte es sich um eine inkomplette Form des MFS mit geringer Beteiligung des Aortensystems.
- Eine 47-jährige Patientin mit der Mutation R165X in Exon 5. Sie zeigt ebenfalls einen vergleichsweise milden Phänotyp mit Beteiligung des Skeletts und einer Duralektasie.
- Atypisch betroffen ist auch der Sohn eines Patienten mit der Mutation R429X. Im Gegensatz zu seinem 45-jährigen Vater, der vor allem eine typische Beteiligung des okulären und kardiovaskulären Systems aufweist, kann bei dem 20-jährigen Sohn ausschließlich eine geringe Beteiligung des Skelettsystems diagnostiziert werden. Eine Ursache für diese starke interfamiliäre Variabilität könnte in der altersabhängigen Ausprägung des Syndroms begründet liegen, es scheint jedoch sehr wahrscheinlich, dass noch weitere Faktoren auf den

Krankheitsverlauf Einfluß nehmen. Diese These wird gestützt durch die Tatsache, dass R429X bei zwei weiteren Patienten beschrieben werden konnte, deren Phänotypen nicht kongruent mit den hier beschriebenen sind (FBN1-UMD).

In dieser Studie konnte ein Zusammenhang zwischen dem Mutationstyp und der Beteiligung einzelner Organsysteme aufgestellt werden. Vergleicht man die Krankheitsbilder der Patienten aus den verschiedenen Mutationsgruppen, ergeben sich zum Teil signifikante Unterschiede im Hinblick auf die Symptome. Die Aufteilung erfolgte unter der Annahme, dass die qualitativen Eigenschaften der Mutationen, als auch der quantitative Effekt unterschiedliche pathologische Mechanismen auslösen, die sich letztlich in dem Phänotyp widerspiegeln. Folgende Unterteilung wurde erstellt:

- In Gruppe 1 ($n = 30$) werden Patienten mit *Missense* Mutationen betrachtet. Ausschlaggebend sind solche Mutationen, die mit Veränderungen von Cysteinresten einhergehen, bezw. einen neuen Cysteinrest in das Protein integrieren.
- Unter Gruppe 2 ($n = 13$) sind solche Patienten aufgeführt, die Träger einer anders gearteten *Missense* Mutation sind (Mutationen ohne Cysteinbeteiligung)
- Gruppe 3 ($n = 25$) besteht aus Patienten mit *Nonsense* oder *Frameshift* Mutationen, die den vorzeitigen Stopp der Translation bewirken (*PTC* Mutationen).
- Gruppe 4 ($n = 8$) enthält Patienten mit putativen Spleißmutationen.

Im Hinblick auf die Augenbeteiligung wurden bei 18 von 30 Patienten (60 %) der Gruppe 1 (Cystein) ektopische Linsen diagnostiziert, während nur vier von 25 Patienten (16 %) der Gruppe 3 (*PTC*) von diesem Symptom betroffen sind ($P = 0.001$). Ektopische Linsen traten bei sechs von acht Patienten (75 %) mit einer Spleißmutation auf, demgegenüber konnte eine Linsenluxation nur bei einem von 13 Patienten (8 %) der Gruppe 2 identifiziert werden ($P = 0.0015$).

Vergleicht man die Beteiligung des okulären Systems der Gruppe 1 mit den Daten der Gruppe 2 (atypische *Missense* Mutationen), können ebenfalls signifikante Unterschiede festgestellt werden ($P = 0.0015$). Ein Zusammenhang zwischen Beteiligung der Augen und dem Mutationstyp konnte auch in dem Vergleich der klinischen Daten zwischen der Gruppe 3 und 4 verifiziert werden ($P = 0.0016$). Diese Ergebnisse gehen konform mit Phänotyp-Genotyp-Korrelationen aus dem Jahr 2001 und 2004, in denen eine höhere Prävalenz von ektopischen

Linsen bei Patienten beobachtet wurde, die Träger einer Cystein Mutation sind, verglichen mit Patienten, die eine *PTC* Mutation tragen. [Loeys et al., 2002; Biggin et al., 2004].

Darüberhinaus konnte in dieser Studie festgestellt werden, dass auch Patienten mit Spleißmutationen im Vergleich zu Patienten mit *PTC* Mutationen ein erhöhtes Risiko für eine Linsenluxation tragen. Das Risiko für Träger einer *Missense* Mutationen ohne Cysteinbeteiligung ist wiederum vergleichsweise niedrig und entspricht dem Risiko der Gruppe 3.

Diese Ergebnisse lassen darauf schließen, dass der korrekte Einbau von Cysteinresten hinsichtlich der strukturellen Integrität der Zonularfasern des Auges von großer Bedeutung ist. Diese Hypothese wird gestützt durch die Tatsache, dass es sich bei der überwiegenden Mehrheit der *FBNI*-Mutationen, die mit der familiären Form ektopischer Linsen assoziiert sind, um *Missense* Mutationen handelt, die einen Cysteinrest beeinträchtigen [Korkko et al., 2002, Ades et al., 2004; Comeglio et al., 2002]. Der zugrunde liegende Mechanismus ist unbekannt.

Die Beteiligung des kardiovaskulären Systems ist nicht abhängig von der Art der Mutation. Es ergab sich kein statistischer Unterschied hinsichtlich des Auftretens von Aortendilatation oder Aortendissektion innerhalb der gebildeten Patientengruppen. 19 von 30 Patienten (63 %) der Gruppe 1, 10 von 13 Patienten der Gruppe 2 (77 %), 18 von 25 Patienten (72 %) der Gruppe 3 und fünf der acht Patienten aus Gruppe 4 (63 %) erfüllen das Hauptkriterium des kardiovaskulären Systems.

Eine Aortendissektion kann häufiger bei Patienten mit *PTC* Mutationen beobachtet werden (5/25 oder 20 %) als bei Patienten der Gruppe 1 (3/30 oder 10 %). Dieses Ergebnis korrespondiert mit einer 2002 erschienenen Studie [Schrijver et al. 2002], kann aber anhand der vorliegenden Daten nicht statistisch abgesichert werden

Gemäß Gent-Nosologie ist ein Hauptkriterium des skelettalen Systems erfüllt, wenn vier von acht möglichen Manifestationen präsent sind. In dieser Studie erfüllen sechs von 30 (20 %) Patienten der Gruppe 1, zwei von 25 Patienten (8 %) der Gruppe 3 und drei von 13 Patienten (23%) der Gruppe 2 diese Voraussetzungen. Mit 38 % sind am häufigsten Patienten der Gruppe 4 betroffen. Einen signifikanter Unterschied ($P = 0.04$) ergibt sich aus dem Vergleich der Patientendaten der Gruppe 3 (*PTC*) mit Patienten der Gruppe 4. Deutlich weniger Patienten der Gruppe 3 zeigen hinsichtlich des skelettalen Systems eine schwerwiegende Beeinträchtigung. Dieses Ergebnis widerspricht einer Studie, in der festgestellt wurde, dass

vorwiegend Patienten mit Stoppmutationen von skelettalen Symptomen betroffen sind [Schrijver et al. 2002].

3.4 Mutationen der TGF- β -Rezeptoren

Es gelingt nur bei etwa 65-75% der Patienten mit klinisch gesicherten Marfan-Syndrom funktionelle Mutationen innerhalb des *FBN1*-Gens nachzuweisen [Baumgartner et al., 2005]. Die Entdeckung von Mutationen im *TGFBR2*-Gen bei Patienten mit MFS Typ 2 macht jedoch deutlich, dass die Analyse des *FBN1*-Gens allein nicht ausreichen kann, um den genetischen Hintergrund dieser komplexen Krankheit zu erfassen. Aus diesem Grund wurden 41 Patienten aus der Studienkohorte weiterführenden Analysen unterworfen. Aufgrund der funktionellen Interaktion der beiden TGF- β -Rezeptoren, und der phänotypischen Verwandtheit zwischen dem Loeys-Dietz-Aortenaneurysma-Syndrom und dem Marfan-Syndrom, wurde auch das *TGFBR1*-Gen in die Untersuchungen der Patienten einbezogen. Die molekulargenetische Analyse am *TGFBR1*- und *TGFBR2*-Gen der Patienten erfolgte nach Screening und Ausschluss von *FBN1*-Mutationen. Im Rahmen der Forschungsarbeit unserer Arbeitsgruppe zum MFS führten diese Untersuchungen zur Entdeckung von zwei *Missense* Mutationen im *TGFBR1*-Gen und 4 *Missense* (darunter eine rekurrente) sowie einer *Nonsense* Mutation im *TGFBR2*-Gen bei sieben Patienten.

Die identifizierten *Missense* Mutationen M253I und G312S beeinträchtigen die hoch konservierte Serin-Kinase Domäne des *TGFBR1* Proteins. Den Veränderungen kann somit höchstwahrscheinlich eine pathologische Auswirkung zugeschrieben werden. Unterstützt wird diese Vermutung durch die Tatsache, dass M253I auch bei erkrankten Familienmitgliedern des 39-jährigen Patienten identifiziert werden konnte. Unklar ist die genaue Zuordnung der Patienten zu den derzeit bekannten Syndromen. Beide Indexpatienten erfüllen die Gent-Kriterien für das klassische Marfan-Syndrom. Der Träger der Mutation M253I wies als spezifisches Merkmal des LDS-Syndroms eine Uvulaspalte auf, dieses Symptom konnte jedoch nicht bei seinen ebenfalls erkrankten Familienmitgliedern nachgewiesen werden. Der Indexpatient mit der Mutation G312S war nicht verfügbar für Untersuchungen auf typische Kriterien des Loeys-Dietz-Aortenaneurysma-Syndroms.

Alle vier identifizierten *Missense* Mutationen des *TGFBR2*-Gens (N384S, C396W, S441F und R460C) sind in der Kinase Domäne des Proteins lokalisiert. Die Mutationen N384S und

S441F beeinflussen höchstwahrscheinlich direkt die Kinasefunktion, deren Aktivität u. a. durch die Phophorylierung von Serinresten im TGFBR2 Protein gesteuert wird [Massague et al., 1998]. N384S konnte bei einer Patientin mit positiver Familienanamnese identifiziert werden. Aufgrund der charakteristischen klinischen Zeichen wurde dieser Fall dem LDS-Syndrom zugeordnet. Neben Symptomen eines typischen MFS in Form einer operationsbedürftigen Aortendissektion und Beteiligung des Skelettsystems, konnten ebenfalls Anomalien des Aortensystems und ein leichter Hypertelorismus festgestellt werden.

Der 14-jährige Träger der Mutation S441F konnte nicht eindeutig einem Syndrom zugeordnet werden. Der Patient zeigte die Hauptkriterien im skelettalen und kardiovaskulären System gemäß Gent-Nosologie erfüllt, es konnte jedoch keine Marfan-typische Beteiligung des okulären Systems oder aber kraniofaziale Zeichen des LDS festgestellt werden. Ohne weitere Untersuchungen könnte dieser Patient dem MFS Typ II zugeordnet werden, sollte zusätzlich eine lumbosakrale Duraektasie diagnostiziert werden, so wäre die Zuordnung zum klassischen MFS Typ I möglich. Dieser Umstand verdeutlicht sehr gut, wie wichtig eine genetische Untersuchung für Patienten mit komplexen Syndromen ist, da die klinischen Daten eine eindeutige Zuordnung oft nicht erlauben.

Die rekurrente Mutation R460C wurde erstmals in einem Patienten mit isoliertem Aortenaneurysma und Aortendissektion (TAAD, *Thoracic Aortic Aneurysms and Dissections*) beschrieben [Pannu et al., 2005]. Weitere Veränderungen der Aminosäure Arginin an Position 460, die in einer wichtigen katalytischen Position des Proteins lokalisiert ist, konnten darüber hinaus mit familiären Marfan-Syndrom assoziiert werden [Disabella et al., 2006]. Im Rahmen unserer Forschungsarbeit wurde R460C bei einer Patientin mit gesichertem MFS gemäß Gent-Nosologie und positiver Familienanamnese identifiziert. Es gab keine Anhaltspunkte für das Vorliegen eines LDS in Form von Gaumenspalte, bifider Uvula, Hypertelorismus oder weiteren Anomalien.

Die *Nonsense* Mutation R487X wurde in einem Patienten mit Verdacht auf MFS identifiziert. Er zeigte vor allem eine Beeinträchtigung des kardiovaskulären Systems in Form einer aszendierenden Aortendilatation, aber auch Hochwuchs und weitere Beteiligungen des skelettalen Systems. Der Patient konnte nicht auf weitere Kriterien des LDS untersucht werden.

Die Mutation C396W führt zum Verlust einer für die strukturelle Konformation wichtigen Aminosäure. Sie konnte in einer Patientin mit klassischem MFS identifiziert werden, die

neben typischen Symptomen des MFS ebenfalls ein klinisches Anzeichen (Spitz-Klumpfuß) für das LDS zeigte. Interessanterweise konnte bei der Mutter der Patientin, die als Überträgerin von C396W identifiziert wurde, keine Erkrankung festgestellt werden. Weitere Untersuchungen ergaben eine vom ebenfalls nicht betroffenen Vater vererbte Veränderung (c.-334T>A) im 5' Bereich des *TGFBR2*-Gens. Da -334T>A im Luciferase-Reportergenassay mit erhöhter Genexpression assoziiert werden kann, stellt sich die Frage, ob der additive Effekt in der compound-heterozygoten Patientin den schwerwiegenden Krankheitsverlauf auslöst. Es ist schon seit längerer Zeit bekannt, dass TGF- β assoziierte Krankheiten eine sehr variable Expressivität aufweisen, die sowohl von Zellfaktoren, als auch weiteren modifizierenden Genen abhängig sein können. Nicht zuletzt TGF- β selbst stellt einen solchen modifizierenden Faktor dar. So ist bekannt, dass eine *Missense* Mutation im Signalpeptid des TGF- β 1 mit der Erhöhung systemischer TGF- β 1 Werte einhergeht und das Risiko verändert, an bestimmten kardiovaskulären und fibrotischen Syndromen zu erkranken [Akhurst et al., 2004].

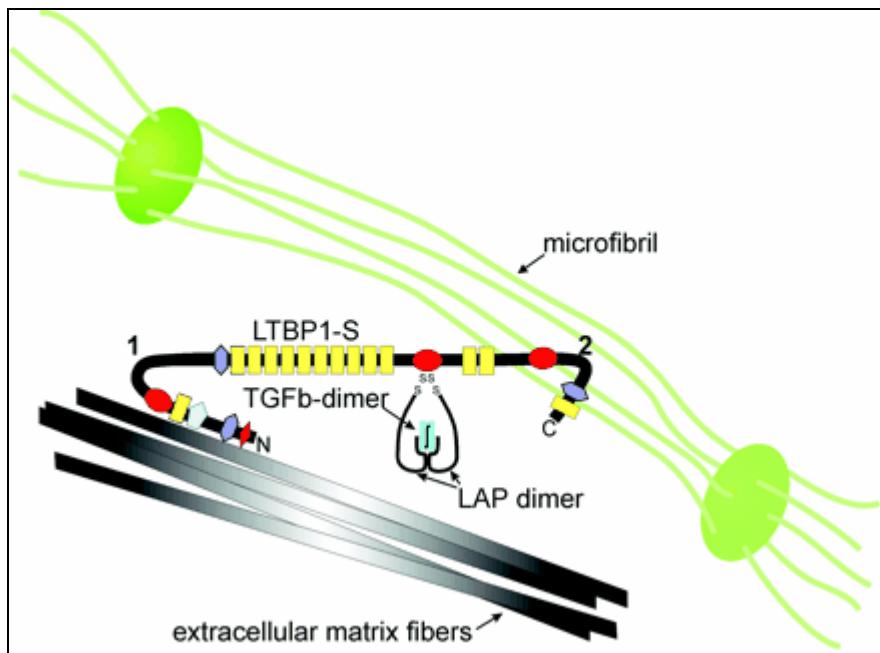
Die Erkenntnisse aus diesen Untersuchungen verdeutlichen, dass eine klare Abgrenzung zwischen MFS Typ 1 und 2, LDS und auch verwandten Bindegewebserkrankungen oft nicht möglich ist und eine Neuzuordnung dieser komplexen Syndrome erforderlich ist. Weitere Patientendaten sind nötig, um das gesamte Spektrum der klinischen Zeichen dieser Syndrome zu erfassen. Die genetischen Analysen von *FBN1*, *TGFBR2* und *TGFBR1* sind dabei unerlässlich, um den molekularpathologischen Hintergrund aufzuklären, der diese Krankheiten verbindet. Darüber hinaus stellt sich die Frage nach weiteren modifizierenden Faktoren. Eine adäquate Prognose des Krankheitsverlauf wird nur dann möglich sein, wenn die Regulationmechanismen identifiziert sind, die der ausgeprägten Variabilität zu Grunde liegen.

3.5 Ausblick

Bis vor kurzem wurden die meisten Manifestationen des MFS und verwandten Phänotypen dem Verlust mechanischer Eigenschaften der Fibrillen zugeschrieben. Die aus Tiermodellen gewonnenen Erkenntnisse deuten auf wesentlich komplexere Zusammenhänge hin und lassen darauf schließen, dass der Pathogenese des MFS eine Störung der TGF- β Signaltransduktion zugrunde liegen könnte [Boileau et al., 2005; Ades et al. 2006]. Diese Aussage wird

unterstützt durch die Tatsache, dass Mutationen in den TGF- β relevanten Rezeptoren der Zellmembran die Ausprägung phänotypisch verwandter Syndrome des MFS Typ I, MFS-Typ II oder Loeys-Dietz Syndrom zur Folge hat.

Fibrillin-1 ist strukturell eng verwandt mit dem LTBP (*latent TGFB-binding protein*), welches zusammen mit LAP (*latency-associated peptide*) und der inaktiven (*latent*) Form des aktiven TGF- β in einem biologisch inaktiven Komplex sezerniert wird. Erst die Abtrennung beider Komponenten führt zur Freisetzung und somit Aktivierung der TGF- β Moleküle [Oklu et al., 2000]. Immunohistologische Bindungsstudien belegen die mechanische Interaktion zwischen LTBP-1 und dem N-Terminus von Fibrillin-1(s. Abb.6).



Schema nach Isogai et al., 2002, J Biol Chem. 278(4):2750-7.

Abb. 6: Schematische Darstellung der Verknüpfung von LTBP-1 mit Mikrofibrillen und anderen Komponenten der ECM

Die Vermutung liegt nahe, dass diese Interaktion zur Stabilisierung des *latent* TGF-beta Komplex beiträgt. Störungen des Systems könnten infolgedessen die erhöhten Freisetzung aktiven TGF- β s zu Folge haben [Isogai et al., 2002]. Tatsächlich zeigen Fbn1-hypomorphe Mäuse eine erhöhte TGF- β Freisetzung in der Lunge [Neptune et al., 2003]. Dies ist auch bei *FBNI knock-in* Mäusen, deren Marfan-typisches Krankheitsbild einer *Missense* Mutation zu Grunde liegt, festgestellt worden [Ng et al., 2004]. Beide Phänotypen konnten durch perinatale Gabe TGF- β neutralisierender Antikörper unterdrückt werden. Die Erkenntnisse wurden in unlängst in einer Studie genutzt, um eine Therapieansatz für Marfan Patienten zu

entwickeln, der auf den Einsatz TGF- β blockierenden Antagonisten beruht [Habashi et al., 2006]. Der Angiotensin-II-Rezeptoren-Antagonist Losartan konnte dabei in Tierversuchen erfolgreich eingesetzt werden, um die Ausbildung typischer kardiovaskulärer Symptome bei Marfan-Mäusen zu verhindern.

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5 Anhang

Erklärung zur Dissertation

Hierdurch erkläre ich, dass die Dissertation mit dem Titel „Molekulargenetik des Marfan-Syndroms“ selbstständig verfasst und alle benutzten Hilfsmittel sowie evtl. zur Hilfeleistung herangezogene Institutionen vollständig angegeben wurden.

Herr M.Sc. Biotech Krishna K. Singh am Institut für Humangenetik der Medizinischen Hochschule Hannover führte das ergänzende genetische Screening am *TGFBR1*- und *TGFBR2*-Gen der Studienkohorte durch.

Die Dissertation wurde nicht schon als Diplom- oder ähnliche Prüfungsarbeit verwendet.

Hannover, den 2.05.2006

Kathrin Rommel

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