

Content	page
1. Introduction	1
1.1. The retina	1
1.2. Diabetic retinopathy	2
1.3. The biochemistry	3
1.4. VEGF and VEGFR system	5
1.4.1. VEGF	5
1.4.1.1. VEGF structure	5
1.4.1.2. VEGF isoforms	5
1.4.1.3. VEGF biological effects	6
1.4.1.4. Regulation of VEGF gene expression	7
1.4.2. VEGFRs	7
1.4.2.1. VEGFR family	7
1.4.2.2. Flt-1 and flk-1/KDR	7
1.4.3. The role of VEGF in diabetic retinopathy	8
1.5. PDGF-B and PDGF-βR	9
1.5.1. PDGF ligands	9
1.5.1.1. Structure and character	9
1.5.1.2. Expression	9
1.5.2. PDGF-βR	10
1.5.3. The role of PDGF-B and PDGF-βR	11
1.5.3.1. Pericyte function	11

1.5.3.2. Endothelial cell and pericyte interaction	11
1.5.3.3. PDGF-B/-BR	12
1.6. Aims of the study	14
1.6.1. Background retinopathy and VEGF	14
1.6.2. PDGF-B and diabetic background retinopathy	14
2. Materials and Methods	15
2.1. Animals	15
2.2. Gene typing of PDGF-B ^{+/-} mice with PCR	15
2.3. Western blot analysis	16
2.4. In situ hybridization	16
2.4.1. Plasmid transformation and amplification	16
2.4.2. Plasmid linearization	17
2.4.3. hybridization	17
2.5. Dot blot analysis of retinal flk-1 expression	17
2.6. Retina digestion preparation	18
2.7. Immunohistochemistry	18
2.7.1. LacZ staining	18
2.7.2. HE staining	18
2.7.3. Hematoxylin-Eosin staining	19
2.7.4. Immunofluorescence staining	19
2.8. Analysis methods	19

2.8.1. Assessment of chronic hyperglycemia	19
2.8.2. Measurement of vessel diameter	19
2.8.3. Assessment of pericyte loss	20
2.8.4. Determination of acellular capillary number	20
2.8.5. Neovascular quantitation	20
2.9. Statistical analysis	20
3. Results	21
3.1. VEGF and its receptor expression in rat retina	21
3.1.1. Metabolic change in the diabetic rats	21
3.1.2. Morphological change	22
3.1.2.1. Retina vessel abnormality	22
3.1.2.2. Acellular-occluded capillaries are increased in DC retina	22
3.1.2.3. Microaneurysms formation in diabetic retina	23
3.1.3. VEGF and its receptors expression in rat retina	23
3.1.3.1. Immunohistochemistry of VEGF and flk-1	23
3.1.3.2. VEGF and flk-1 expression at protein level: Western blot	24
3.1.3.3. mRNA expression of flk-1: mRNA dot blot	25
3.1.3.4. In situ hybridization of VEGF, flk-1 andflt-1	25
3.2. Pericyte and diabetic retinopathy	26
3.2.1. Morphological alteration	26
3.2.1.1. Retina vessel disorder	26
3.2.1.2. vessel abnormality in diabetic PDGF-B+/- mice	27
3.2.2. The evidence of pericyte loss	27

3.2.2.1. Pericyte number decreased in PDGF-B+/- mice	27
3.2.2.2. Acellular-occluded capillary increase in PDGF-B+/- mice	28
3.2.2.3. More acellular capillaries in diabetic PDGF-B +/- mice	28
3.2.2.4. PDGF-βR positive vascular profile reduces in PDGF-B+/- mice	29
3.2.3. Metabolic data	29
3.2.3.1. PDGF-B+/- mice reduced body weight deposit	29
3.2.3.2. Equivalent degrees of glycemia	29
3.2.3.3. Hypoxia induces more neovascular capillaries in PDGF-B+/- mice	30
4. Discussion	32
4.1. The expression of VEGF in DBR	32
4.2. The molecular mechanism of regulating VEGF	32
4.3. VEGF and vascular permeability	33
4.4. The role of VEGF in DBR	34
4.5. Upregulation of VEGF receptors	34
4.6. PDGF-B and pericyte recruitment	35
4.6.1. Abnormal vessel structure	35
4.6.2. The function of PDGF-B in diabetic retinopathy	35
4.6.3. Pericytes and endothelium interaction	35
4.6.4. Hyperglycemia and PDGF-B	36
4.7. The strategy of therapy	37
5. Summary	38
6. References	39

7. Publications	40
8. Curriculum vitae /Lebenslauf	50
9. Acknowledgement	52