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Yoann Chélin, Karim Azzag, Patrick Cañadas, Julien Averseng, Stephen Baghdiguian, et al.. Simulation of Cellular Packing in Non-Proliferative Epithelia. Journal of Biomechanics, 2013, 46 (6), pp.1075-1080. 10.1016/j.jbiomech.2013.01.015i . hal-00799386

HAL Id: hal-00799386 https://hal.science/hal-00799386v1

Submitted on 12 Mar 2013

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A paper submitted to the Journal of Biomechanics

Title: Simulation of Cellular Packing in Non-Proliferative Epithelia

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Article Type: Full Length Article (max 3000 words)

Word count: 2,929 (from Introduction through Discussion / from the Introduction through the

Acknowledgments, including any appendices)

Abstract:

The physical laws governing the morphogenesis of biological tissues remain largely misunderstood. In particular, the role of the mechanical interactions occurring in this process needs to be better understood and studied. Inner follicular cells surrounding the oocytes of Ciona intestinalis form an epithelial monolayer resulting from an accretion process (without mitosis or apoptosis). This epithelium is elementary and useful for morphogenesis studies: the cells exhibit polygon packing with a specific but non-systematically repeatable topology (i.e. the distribution of pentagons, hexagons and heptagons changes). To understand the role of mechanical forces in tissue formation, we propose an innovative "2D spherical" model based on the physics of divided media. This approach simulates the cellular mechanical behavior and epithelium structuration by allowing cells to adopt a large variety of shapes and to selforganize in response to mechanical interactions. The numerical parameters considered in the model are derived from experimental data in order to perform pertinent and realistic simulations. The results obtained are compared to biological observations using the same counting method to characterize epithelium topology. Numerical and experimental data appear close enough to validate the model. It is then used for exploratory studies dealing with "Tissue Development Speed" variation, which is not easily attainable by experimentation. We show that the formation speed of the tissue influences its topology and hence its packing organization.

1. Introduction

2 The question of how biological tissues are formed is a challenge for biology, and the causes 3 of cell organization in the course of epithelium development are misunderstood (Martinand-4 Mari et al., 2009; Gibson et al., 2006; Classen et al., 2005; Mammoto and Ingber, 2010; 5 Glazier, 1989). The eggs of Asicidians, marine invertebrate hermaphroditic organisms, 6 constitute a classical model in biology development studies, the most commonly studied 7 being Ciona intestinalis (CI). 8 As shown by Martinand-Mari and collaborators, the oocyte surface of CI is progressively 9 covered by testa cells (Fig. 1; see also Martinand-Mari et al., 2009). These cells secrete a 10 specific extracellular matrix (called "chorion") on top of which two layers of follicular cells 11 (FCs) are deposited: internal FCs (IFCs) and outer FCs (OFCs). As the oocyte develops up to 12 its final size, the follicular cells grow proportionally. This accretion mechanism, which drives 13 folliculogenesis, is therefore complemented by a cellular period of growth controlled by the 14 growth of the oocyte itself (Fig. 2-a). The process continues up to the completion of the 15 follicular structure, characterized by about 60 OFCs forming a tight, compact coverage made 16 up of 60 polygons (Fig 2-b). In fact, IFC topology appears to be univocally linked to that of 17 OFCs. Based on these developmental and topological considerations, only the IFCs are taken 18 into account in present study as in previous work (Martinand-Mari et al., 2009). Interestingly, 19 the development of this specific follicular epithelium occurs without any cell division or 20 apoptosis (Mancuso, 1965). 21 22 Tissue patterns of this type are generally characterized by counting the number of polygon 23 sides of each cell, also corresponding to the number of neighboring cells (Gibson et al., 2006; 24 Classen et al., 2005). It has been largely observed that this topology is not systematically 25 repeatable: the numbers of hexagons, pentagons or heptagons vary slightly between different

CI eggs while hexagons are always the major components.

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This kind of specific topology is frequently observed in biology, as in the "perfect" hexagonal organization of honeycomb cell (or alveolus) as shown in Fig. 2-c. Such configurations are also studied in other scientific fields: fullerene carbon molecules with hexagonal and pentagonal sides, soap foam, etc. The morphogenesis of natural patterns comes from physicochemical mechanisms, mostly based on minimizing the system's potential energy. For example, the honeycomb is based on a "constrained structuration" process corresponding to self-equilibrium between the internal forces acting within the alveolus walls and external forces due to growth of larvae. The mechanical interactions result in a uniform tension system, which constitutes an optimal shortest path network (hexagons): this type of organization minimizes the amount of wax required to build a given number of alveolus, also minimizing structural energy (Thompson, 1917). Furthermore, the relationship between the biological function and the architectural organization of the structure of living cells and tissues has already been described by using a geodesic form analogy based on tension/compression equilibrium (Ingber, 1998). Moreover, the distribution of polygons on a spherical surface corresponds to a historical question. Indeed, in 1752, Euler demonstrated the impossibility of totally covering a sphere using only hexagons: 12 pentagons are required in this case. As an example, C₆₀ fullerene is

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Finally, although the relationships between mechanical forces and morphogenesis mechanisms, including mechanotransduction processes and the structure-function relationships, have been largely studied from the cellular level (Oster et al., 1983; Ingber et al., 1994; Gibson et al., 2006; Lecuit and Lenne, 2007; Maurin et al., 2008; Nienhaus et al.,

formed by 20 hexagons and 12 pentagons (like a soccer ball).

51 2009) to the organ scale (Thompson, 1917; Wirtz and Dobbs, 2000; Grodzinsky et al., 2000;

Hou et al., 2007; Fleury, 2012), this is not yet the case for non-proliferative epitheliums like

CI follicular tissues.

Indeed, to our knowledge, only one physical study has been published in this field (Martinand-Mari et al., 2009). The authors developed a model based on an analogy with a set of identical electrically charged "curved disks", freely moving on a spherical surface. The resulting balanced configuration corresponds to a specific distribution of 48 hexagons and 12 pentagons (consistent with Euler's theorem), whose edges connect the disk centers. It is also systematically repeatable and based on tetrahedral symmetry. Even if comparisons with observed CI epitheliums show that their cells tend to organize themselves in this way, the pattern uniqueness of this analogy is not adapted to the non-reproducibility of biological epitheliums.

Accordingly, our main objective is to propose a new morphogenesis model of the IFC epithelium, able to bring out the role of the mechanical stresses in the accretion process and to generate patterns like those experimentally observed. Furthermore, this model is intended to enable predictive studies to test the incidence of factors governing epithelium morphogenesis.

To do so, we use modeling with the least possible constraints to produce a high level of self-organization in the evolution of the system. Indeed, it is important to obtain numerical results with low dependency on deterministic rules or initial hypothesis imposed by the model. It is noteworthy that, numerical simulations based on the physics of divided media have already shown their ability to represent a large variety of dynamical reorganizations of the cytoplasm of adherent cells (Milan et al., 2007; Maurin et al., 2008; VanLiedekerke et al., 2010).

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We thus developed a new "granular" model applied to CI epithelial morphogenesis, in which individual cells correspond to the IFCs. In the simulations, cells evolve on a spherical surface in accordance with their physical properties and mechanical interactions. They consequently self-organize, leading to specific final tissue patterns. The model we developed is driven by biological data to obtain numerical morphogenesis consistent with experimental observations (final number of cells and sizes of cells and oocytes).

2. Methods

In the model, each cell is composed of two types of "grain" moving on a sphere surface ("2D spherical" representation). The first type represents the inner cytoplasm without an accurate description of the cytoskeleton structure. Even if its filaments play a major stress-bearing role, our biological observations on CI oocytes show that actin filaments (main cytoskeleton tension-bearing filaments) are essentially organized as peripheral structures and that no stress fiber is revealed within the cytoplasm (Fig. 2). The resulting assumption made here considers that a global balance is obtained between tensile peripheral forces and compressive forces inside the cell. Accordingly, as a first approximation, our model assumes that pressure in the cell produced by repulsive internal interactions is equilibrated by peripheral tension born by membrane elements. Thus, the second type of grain, linked by these cable elements, represents the membrane associated with the actin cortex. The forces exerted by these cables are combined with repulsive action between grains and both govern the mechanics of the media. Moreover, interactions between the membrane cables and the internal grains cause them to remain inside the cell. All the interactions are managed by the molecular dynamic method (Allen and Tildesley, 1987) extended to the grain/cable contacts, including normal viscous interactions but not adhesion or friction. Indeed, we decided to consider only unidirectional contact interactions, i.e. normal forces without any tangential (or friction) forces, as can be done in granular mechanics (F. Radjaï and F. Dubois, 2011). Thus, viscosity is only linked to normal velocity here, as in rheology when considering the Kelvin-Voigt model. The numerical processing chosen here to describe the contacts allows grain interpenetration, as is visible in Fig. 3 where some grains look like polygons. By considering (S) as the dynamical state of the system at time t (position and velocity of all the grains), we use a Runge-Kutta RK4 explicit time integration scheme for the function f(S,t), which represents the temporal evolution of the system governed by the mechanical equations of solid dynamics:

$$f(X,t) = \frac{dX(t)}{dt} = \begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1(t) & \dots & \dot{x}_g(t) \\ \ddot{x}_1(t) & \dots & \ddot{x}_g(t) \end{bmatrix} = \begin{bmatrix} \dot{x}_1(t) & \dots & \dot{x}_g(t) \\ F_1/m_1 & \dots & F_g/m_g \end{bmatrix}$$
(1)

where $x_g(t)$, $\dot{X}_g(t)$ and $\ddot{X}_g(t)$ are respectively the position, velocity and acceleration of an individual grain g, with F_g equal to the sum of the forces applied to it and m_g its mass.

Each cell grows consecutively as new grains are generated inside it successively by considering five different diameters coming up periodically (Fig. 3-a). This sequential process gives a heterogeneous cytoplasm to better allow dynamical reorganization (Table 1). Cell growth occurs until a maximum size of the cell is reached, corresponding to a maximum number of internal grains.

In this process, membrane tension (T) should increase with cell growth. However, previous authors have already reported that cortical actin tension changes slightly when epithelial cells are treated by adding cytochalasin D (Laurent et al., 2003). So the membrane tension is

- restricted here between two values (T_{\min} and T_{\max} , determined empirically to reach system
- equilibrium) by controlling the free length ($L_{\rm f}$) of the cable as follows:
- If a cable element with length L has a tension $T > T_{\text{max}}$, then L_{f} increases as
- 126 $L_{\rm f} = (E_m A_m L)/(E_m A_m + T_{\rm max})$ in order to decrease T;
- If a cable element with length L has a tension $T < T_{\min}$, then $L_{\rm f}$ decreases as
- 128 $L_f = (E_m A_m L)/(E_m A_m + T_{min})$ in order to increase T;
- where $E_{\rm m}$ and $A_{\rm m}$, both considered constant, are respectively the tensile elasticity modulus
- 130 (see Table 1) and the cross-section area of the membrane cable. Note that tensions T_{\min} and
- 131 T_{max} correspond to minimum and maximum values of cable strain: $\varepsilon_{\text{min}} = T_{\text{min}}/(E_m A_m)$ and
- $\epsilon_{\text{max}} = T_{\text{max}}/(E_m A_m)$. Consequently, adjusting the free length L_{f} of cable element in order to
- control its tension, maintains its strain in the predetermined range $[\varepsilon_{min}; \varepsilon_{max}]$.
- In addition, if a cable length is too great $(L > L_{\text{max}})$, it is divided into two cable elements.
- 135 Conversely, if the lengths of two consecutive elements are too small ($L < L_{min}$), they are
- merged.

- Adding new grains and lengthening membrane-cables physically correspond to new incoming
- material. Hence, this model refers to an open-mass system. This assumption is biologically
- 140 corroborated by the tissue growth produced by nutrients in the oocyte environment, as
- experimentally observed.
- 142 As a result, a numerical cell with adaptive membrane tension and a polydisperse cytoplasm
- can be deformed into a wide variety of shapes (shape "plasticity"). It can also move freely on
- the oocyte spherical surface and "push" other cells via membrane contacts (Fig. 3). Thus,
- cells can self-organize leading to unique tissue topologies. Statistical analysis was performed
- at the end of the simulations using the same method as in experimental studies.

At the beginning of a simulation, 10 small cells are randomly positioned on the oocyte (note that the image (a) in figure 4 does not represent this initial configuration but a stage shortly after). New cells arrive regularly and are randomly disposed on the sphere, provided there is enough free space, while the oocyte diameter increases. In the same time, all the cells grow (Fig. 4).

The dynamic evolution of the model is thus driven by different speeds: accretion speed (*Vac*) corresponding to the arrival of new cells, cell growing speed (*Vcg*) and oocyte growing speed (*Vog*). These three speeds were empirically adjusted from biological observations by considering both the number and size of the cells at different times: cells are small at the beginning and become bigger until they reach their maximum size at the maturation stage of the oocyte. The model hence proposes an equivalent numerical evolution, leading to a confluent monolayer of about 60 cells, coupled with increasing egg diameter (from 90 to 160 µm in the case of CI). Taken together, these three speeds (*Vac*, *Vcg* and *Vog*) define a "Tissue Development Speed".

Simulation is stopped when IFCs cover the whole surface. The number of cells in contact (membrane/membrane) is then counted for each cell to determine the topology.

Tissue developments are not identical since simulations are doubly unpredictable. Cells are randomly positioned on the oocyte surface twice (for native cells and new incoming ones) and their growth combined with their interactions, influence their shapes and the overall form of the resulting tissue. The dynamical processes and the unpredictability of cell positions drive the packing of the virtual epithelium and, in consequence, tissue morphogenesis.

3. Results and discussion

Variation of only one of the three speeds driving tissue formation, while the two others

remain unchanged, leads to unsuitable tissue: at the final stage, it is composed of too few cells (the tissue is not confluent) or too many cells (the calculations never reach a stable equilibrium). Simulations were therefore performed by varying "Tissue Development Speed" (TDS). A "reference" TDS was determined to obtain the closest results to experimental observations: values of *Vac*, *Vcg* and *Vog* were adjusted in the "trial and error" process explained previously. We also considered a "slow" TDS (where speeds of the "reference" TDS are divided by two) and a "fast" TDS ("reference" values are multiplied by two) as shown in Table 2. Ten simulations were performed for each TDS.

The average number of computed IFCs is respectively 58.0 (+/- 1.9), 58.8 (+/- 1.4) and 60.7 (+/- 1.0) for "slow", "reference" and "fast" TDS. Experimentally, an average number of 58.7 (+/- 1.8) was measured (Martinand-Mari et al., 2009), which is consistent with simulations (Fig. 5). Interestingly, raising the TDS results in a slight increase in the final number of IFCs on the oocyte. This may be explained by the fact that, when the TDS is higher, the IFCs already positioned on the surface have less time to grow before new cells arrive by accretion. Geometrically speaking, there are more available empty spaces between the growing IFCs, sometimes allowing more new IFCs to arrive on the sphere.

In addition, all the numerical tissues were composed of confluent IFCs with pentagonal, hexagonal and heptagonal shapes, exceptionally tetragonal or octagonal (Figs. 4 and 5). The numbers of polygons were counted as previously described for each simulation and the average values were calculated for each TDS. Fig. 5 presents these average distributions showing good agreement with experimental observations made on ten oocytes by confocal microscopy (Martinand-Mari et al., 2009). Furthermore, tissue computed with the slow TDS had more hexagonal and fewer non-hexagonal cells, in comparison with the results produced

by fast TDS.

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Quantitatively, the average experimental topology was roughly 17 pentagons (29.7%), 37 hexagons (63.2%) and 4 heptagons (7.1%). It is interesting to note that this organization differs from Euler's distribution for 60 polygons, i.e. 48 hexagons (80%) and 12 pentagons (20%) that could be related to the results obtained in studies like (Martinand-Mari et al., 2009). The morphogenetic process of accretion leads, in the case of IFCs of Ciona intestinalis, to another configuration in which a key point may be "optimum" physical interaction energy. In fact, Martinand-Mari and coworkers used always 60 identical disks and do not consider the role of mechanical forces between IFCs in their growing and spatial rearrangement which always converge to the same distribution of neighbors (12 disks with 5 neighbors and 48 with 6 neighbors; personal communication of Martinand-Mari co-author S. Baghdiguian). By contrast, our model takes into account individual cell behaviors and is driven by the mechanical interactions between cells, leading to tissues formed by a number of cells varying from 58.0 (+/- 1.9) to 60.7 (+/- 1.0) and a fluctuating number of cell neighbors. Accordingly, mechanical forces can govern the specific morphogenesis of IFC epithelium, its "final" state corresponding to a balanced system. Numerical simulations with slow TDS also tended to be closer to Euler's packing (the contrary being seen for fast TDS). Indeed, a decrease in TDS may give the cells more time to self-organize, thus getting closer to this packing. Moreover, topology varied slightly in the simulations for the same TDS. This shows that the model gives non-systematic results. However, we noted that the numerical standard deviations were low (maximum 6.6%) and close to experimental values (maximum 9.4%). This indicates that morphogenesis may be a fairly stable mechanism. Deviations also seem to increase slightly with TDS: a slow value gives better repeatability than a fast one (Table 3). This is consistent with the above comments on the relationships between IFC organization and overall time evolution.

4. Conclusion

and to predict the possible influence of "Tissue Development Speed" on a non-proliferative
epithelium. The implemented numerical growth of both cells and oocyte drives the dynamical
evolution of the tissue, providing a means of analyzing the mechanical forces inside and
between the cells during the morphogenesis process. However, in spite of good agreement
with experimental results, particularly concerning polygon distributions, we observe that
numerical standard deviations were always lower than experimental ones. This suggests that
other biological features (nutriment concentration, biochemical cascades, signalling
transduction, etc.) and structures (adhesion protein complexes, cytoskeleton, testa cells and
OFCs, etc.) may influence the development of IFCs. Accordingly, our model could be
improved by including some of these aspects.
A major drawback of this approach is that cellular modeling is too basic, being limited to
intracellular pressure, produced by repulsion between the inner grains, and surrounded by a
peripheral tension carried by the membrane-cables. However, previous studies have shown
that granular cell modeling may also provide a means of considering a dynamical
cytoskeleton (Milan et al., 2007; Maurin et al., 2008). Thus, one possible development could
be to implement such a dynamical "granular cytoskeleton", thus producing a macro-micro
description of tissue morphogenesis (Sandersius and Newman, 2008) for
mechanotransduction analyses. Similarly, the model could be enhanced by including
intercellular links such as cadherins. In addition, other morphogenesis simulations could be
conceived using different geometries (e.g., a planar substrate), different boundary conditions
(e.g., a circular or a rectangular box) or other mechanisms that govern morphogenetic

To sum up, the present model is able to reproduce tissue organization as biologically observed

248 processes including proliferation or apoptosis (Dubertret and Rivier, 2000). 249 Overall, this promising approach, based on an original cell-tissue modeling, allows new 250 useful architectural descriptions and mechanical analysis of cell and tissue evolution in 251 epithelial morphogenesis. 252 References 253 254 Allen, M., Tildesley, D., 1987. Computer simulation of liquids. Oxford university Press, 255 Oxford. 256 Classen, A.-K., Anderson, K.I., Marois, E., Eaton, S., 2005. Hexagonal packing of Drosophila 257 258 wing epithelial cells by the planar cell polarity pathway. Developmental Cell 9, 805-817. 259 260 Thompson, D.W., 1917. On growth and form. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. 261 262 Dubertret, B., Rivier, N., 2000. Geometrical models of the renewal of the epidermis. Comptes 263 Rendus de l'Académie des Sciences III 323, 49-56. 264 265 Fleury, V., 2012. Clarifying tetrapod embryogenesis by a dorso-ventral analysis of the tissue 266 flows during early stages of chicken development. Biosystems 109, 460-474. 267 268 Gibson, M.C., Patel, A.B., Nagpal, R., Perrimon, N., 2006. The emergence of geometric order 269 in proliferating metazoan epithelia. Nature 442, 1038-1041. 270

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329	Conflict of interest statement				
330	The authors disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or				
331	organizations that could inappropriately influence their work.				
332	This includes no conflict of interest including employment, consultancies, stock ownership,				
333	honoraria, paid expert testimony, patent applications/registrations, and grants or other				
334	funding.				
335					
336	Non-publication statement				
337	The authors state that this material has not been and will not be submitted for publication				
338	elsewhere.				
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- Fig. 1. (a) Representation of a mature Ciona intestinalis eggs where inset corresponds to the field shown in (b). (b) Cross-sectional sketch showing the oocyte (O) surrounded by the testa cells (T), the extra cellular matrix called chorion (C) and both the inner (IFC) and outer (OFC) follicular cells. Extracted from Martinand-Mari et al., 2009.
- Fig. 2. (a and b) Basal face of IFC covering a CI oocyte (labeled by FITC Phaloidin, revealing actin filaments): (a) non-mature egg during the accretion process and (b) mature egg with IFC polygonal organization. Note that actin filaments appear essentially organized as peripheral structures (actin cortex) and that no stress fiber is revealed. (c) Hexagonal topology of honeycomb (Thompson, 1917).
- Fig. 3: (a) Cell growth process with increasing number of cytoplasmic-grains and membrane lengthening. (b) Cell-cell interactions: membrane-cables in contact define the organization between cells. Grain shapes often appear polygonal due to contact processing, which allows interpenetration.
- Fig. 4: Steps (from (a) to (d)) of evolution of the follicular system surrounding the oocyte: shortly after the initial configuration (a); new cells arrive and the cells and oocyte grow simultaneously (b) and (c); development continues until the egg is totally covered (d). The image (e) corresponds to (d) but with the tissue membranes only to better reveal the topology). The number of neighbors of each cell is indicated at its center ((d) and (e)). A corresponding movie is available at http://www.lmgc.univ-montp2.fr/~canadas/Movie.
- Fig. 5: Distribution of the average number of neighboring cells determined from experimental observations and simulations. Standard deviations increase slightly when TDS increases.

- Table 1: Numerical values considered in simulations. $E_{\rm gg}$ and $C_{\rm gg}$ are respectively the compressive stiffness and damping of the grain-grain contact. $E_{\rm gc}$ and $C_{\rm gc}$ are respectively the compressive stiffness and damping of the grain-cable contact
- Table 2: Relative values of the three "Tissue Development Speeds".
- Table 3: Average values (standard deviation in parenthesis) of experimental and numerical polygon distributions.

Figure 1

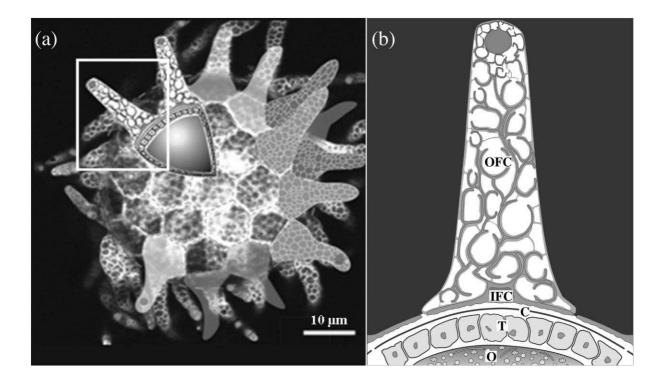


Figure 2

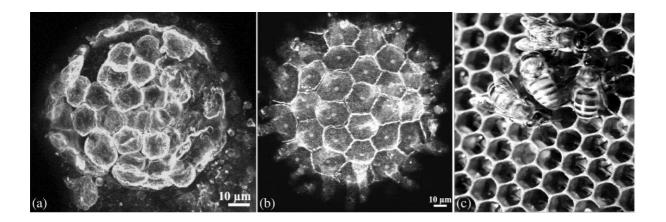


Figure 3

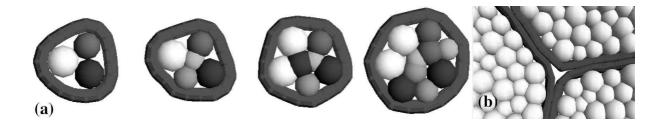


Figure 4

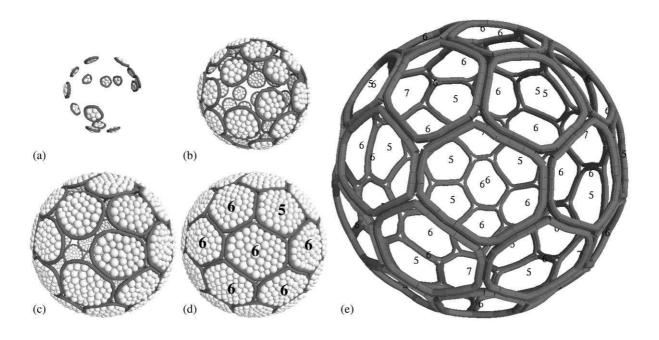


Figure 5

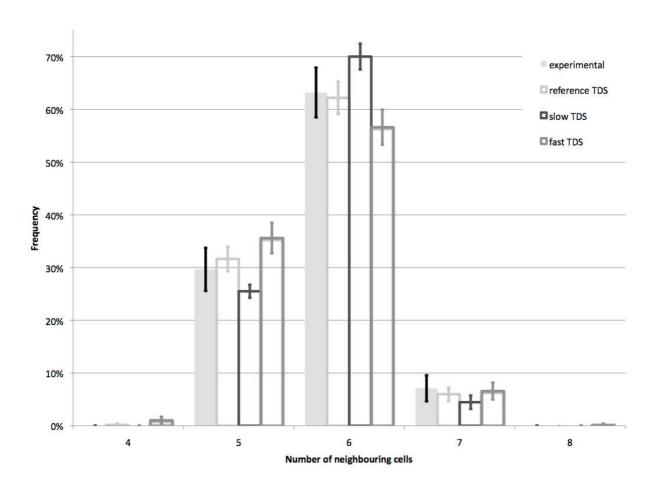


Table 1

Geometry			
- cytoplasmic-grain: size	diameter of grain = $5.0 - 5.6 - 6.0 - 6.6 - 7.0 \mu m$ (sequential)		
number in a cell	- 3 grains at the beginning		
	- 45 grains at the end (for a mature cell)		
- membrane-cable: size	$diameter = 3.0 \mu m$		
length	$L_{\min} = 2.0 \mu \text{m}; L_{\max} = 5.5 \mu \text{m}$		
Mechanics			
- grain/grain contact: compressive stiffness and damping	$E_{\rm gg} = 20 \text{ N/m}; C_{\rm gg} = 5 \text{ N/(m.s}^{-1})$		
- grain/cable contact: compressive stiffness and damping	$E_{\rm gc} = 13 \text{ N/m}; C_{\rm gc} = 5 \text{ N/(m.s}^{-1})$		
- membrane-cable: tensile stiffness modulus	$E_{\rm m} = 5.10^{-3} \rm N/m^2$		
tension range	$T_{\min} = 0.5 \text{ N}; T_{\max} = 0.6 \text{ N}$		
Biology			
- cell growth	grains added one by one		
	(their diameter depend on the number of existing grains)		
- tissue growth	new cells arrive one by one		
	(if there is enough space after testing 100 random positions)		
Numerical			
- time step: used in 4 th order Runge-Kutta scheme	0.005 s (see eq.1)		

Table 2

	reference TDS	slow TDS	fast TDS
accretion speed	Vac	<i>Vac</i> / 2	Vac x 2
cell growth speed	Vcg	<i>Vcg</i> / 2	$Vcg \times 2$
oocyte growth speed	Vog	<i>Vog</i> / 2	Vog x 2

Table 3

	tetragon	pentagon	hexagon	heptagon	octagon
experimental	0.0% (±0.0)	29.7% (±8.1)	63.2% (±9.4)	7.1% (±4.9)	0.0% (±0.0)
reference TDS	0.2% (±0.5)	31.7% (±4.7)	62.2% (±6.1)	6.0% (±2.5)	0.0% (±0.0)
slow TDS	$0.0\% (\pm 0.0)$	25.5% (±2.5)	70.0% (±4.9)	4.5% (±2.5)	$0.0\%~(\pm 0.0)$
fast TDS	1.0% (±1.3)	35.6% (±5.8)	56.6% (±6.6)	6.6% (±3.2)	0.1% (±0.5)