Integrin alfa3beta1 and tetraspanin CD151 in particular in the skin and the kidney
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During my medical training (UvA, AMC, Amsterdam, 1983-1996) I became especially interested in the kidney, its development and its diseases. At the time Ph.D. student Annemieke de Melker was working at the department of Cell Biology in the group of Arnoud Sonnenberg (NKI, Amsterdam) on a project supported by the Dutch Kidney Foundation (C91-1179) concerning the main integrin expressed in the glomerulus, α3β1. In 1994 I joined her for half a year as an apprentice to learn about biochemical work and studied the expression of integrins and matrix molecules in the adult and developing kidney. In the period between 1994 and 1997 I finished my specialization as a pathologist (AMC, 1996) and worked as a clinical pathologist at the AZR in Rotterdam (1997). Meanwhile Annemieke graduated (1997) and my project (Dutch Kidney Foundation, C96-1581) became in fact the continuation of her work. In the period between 1997 and 2001 I combined the work as a clinical pathologist (AvL, Amsterdam) with experimental work for this thesis at the department of Cell Biology at the NKI (Dr. A. Sonnenberg) and at the department of Pathology at the AMC (Prof. Dr. J.J. Weening). The above explains why this thesis has developed over a long period of time, while during this period research was making progress. Consequently some of the data may have become superseded or now seem common knowledge. Furthermore, while in anticipation of the conditional integrin α3 subunit knock-out mice, my focus of interest shifted from integrins and matrix molecules in the kidney to tetraspanins and laminin-binding integrins in general, a logical result of the research developments in this field.

Besides of my interest in the kidney, this thesis is also the result of a longstanding interest in fundamental research and the intention of combining research with more clinical aspects. Although this premise was my motivation for specializing in pathology, practice proved otherwise, while results in fundamental research are not always easy to translate to a clinical situation or vice versa. Nevertheless, the work presented is always an attempt to integrate in vitro and in vivo findings.

As most readers of this thesis will be either medical doctors or more fundamental researchers, the general introduction is written in a way that people with either background will be able to follow most of the outlines. In addition to an overview on the literature on integrins and tetraspanins, mostly in relation to the kidney and the skin, this thesis comprises different tables in which self generated data and data known from literature are conveniently arranged.

Because of the indications that exciting progress in the line of work presented is soon at hand, it is unfortunate that I was not enabled to proceed on the road taken. However, I hope that maybe after reading this thesis new people will become as enthusiastic as I and will proceed where I left off.