

SELECTIVE CYCLIC NUCLEOTIDE PHOSPHODIESTERASE INHIBITORS AS POTENTIAL THERAPEUTIC AGENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Not thirty years have passed since Earl Sutherland, Ted Rall, and their co-workers first suggested that a heat-stable cyclic nucleotide mediates the actions of certain hormones and neurotransmitters. This original handful of cyclic nucleotide enthusiasts has now swelled to hundreds and encompasses biologists of every discipline. As one might expect, the early studies concentrated largely on the biochemical and physiological actions of cyclic nucleotides and on the enzymes responsible for their biosynthesis (nucleotide cyclases) and hydrolysis (cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases); relatively little was done to manipulate the intracellular concentrations of cyclic nucleotides by pharmacological means. Now, however, in the face of mounting evidence that cyclic nucleotides may be involved in the etiology or pathogenesis of certain diseases, increasing numbers of investigators have turned their attention to finding pharmacologic agents that will selectively alter the intracellular concentration or the action of cyclic nucleotides. These agents fall into three general categories: compounds that alter the activity of the nucleotide cyclases, the cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases, or the cyclic nucleotide-dependent protein kinases.

The evidence that the cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases exist in several molecular forms and that these isozymes are unequally distributed in tissue makes the phosphodiesterases particularly suitable targets for pharmacologic manipulation, for it suggests that by finding selective inhibitors of the different phosphodiesterase isozymes, one may be able to raise the concentration of cyclic nucleotides in discrete cell types. Through the selective inhibition of the major phosphodiesterase isozyme of a diseased tissue, it may then be possible to alter the course of diseases characterized by an abnormal metabolism of cyclic nucleotides.

The present paper reviews the findings that suggest that cyclic nucleotides may be involved in certain diseases and summarizes the experimental results that support the notion that certain inhibitors of cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterase might serve as effective and specific therapeutic agents.

ROLE OF CYCLIC NUCLEOTIDES IN BIOLOGY

The cyclic nucleotides, adenosine cyclic 3',5'-monophosphate (cyclic AMP), and guanosine cyclic 3',5'-monophosphate (cyclic GMP) have been shown to regulate innumerable biological processes [for reviews see (1-15)]. Cyclic AMP not only mediates the actions of most biogenic amines and polypeptide hormones (16, 17), but also appears to influence such fundamental processes as cell division (18), fertilization (19), embryonic growth and differentiation (20), blood production (21-23), smooth muscle tone (24, 25), cardiac contractility and metabolism (26-28), the function of the central nervous system (29) and autonomic nervous system (30), vision (31), immunological responses (32, 33), gonadal function (34), and the release of stored intracellular materials such as insulin (35-37), histamine (38, 39), and lysosomal enzymes (40).

Several of the actions of cyclic GMP appear to be opposite to those of cyclic AMP. These observations have prompted the so-called yin-yang hypothesis (41).

Since the cyclic nucleotides influence the most basic processes in biology, any abnormality in the intracellular concentration of these compounds might disrupt normal physiological function and lead to disease. The following sections explore this possibility and suggest certain approaches by which one may use drugs to restore the proper balance in the cyclic nucleotide system.

ROLE OF CYCLIC NUCLEOTIDES IN DISEASE

As mentioned earlier, there are three major sites at which the cyclic nucleotide system may be altered in diseases and, accordingly, three general sites at which drugs may interact to modulate disease processes. One site is on the cyclic nucleotide cyclases which catalyze the synthesis of cyclic nucleotides from the high energy phosphate compounds, adenosine triphosphate and guanosine triphosphate; another is at the level of the cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases, a group of hydrolytic enzymes, which exist in several molecular forms and catalyze the degradation of cyclic nucleotides; and a third site is on the cyclic nucleotide-dependent protein kinases which, when activated by the cyclic nucleotides, cause the phosphorylation of other intracellular proteins leading ultimately to a biological response.

Diseases Associated with Defects in the Cyclic Nucleotide System

Table 1 outlines the diseases which are associated with abnormalities in each of the different steps of cyclic nucleotide physiology. An example of a disease which is associated with an abnormality in adenylate cyclase is nephrogenic diabetes insipidus. In this disorder, which is characterized by an inability to concentrate urine in response to antidiuretic hormone (ADH), the adenylate cyclase receptor in the

Table 1 Diseases associated with abnormalities in the concentration or metabolism of cyclic nucleotides

Disease	Tissue	Cyclic nucleotide concentration		Enzyme activity				Guanylate cyclase	Protein kinase	References
		cyclic AMP		Phosphodiesterase		Adenylate cyclase				
		basal	stim. ^a	cyclic AMP	cyclic GMP	basal	stim. ^b			
ASTHMA	leucocytes							decrease		265
	leucocytes		decrease							213
	leucocytes						decrease			266
	leucocytes		decrease							267
	urine		decrease							268
CANCER	adrenal cortex			decrease	decrease					269
	adrenal cortex		decrease							47
	glioblastoma					increase				280
	hepatoma	increase		increase						270
	hepatoma					decrease	decrease			271
	hepatoma	decrease		increase						65
	hepatoma	increase		decrease		increase				272
	hepatoma	increase								273
	hepatoma								decrease	66
	hepatoma			c						274
	hepatoma					decrease				275
	hepatoma			c						276
	hepatoma	decrease								183
	hepatoma							d		277
	thymus					increase	decrease			50,278
thymus	decrease		increase						50	
lymphocytes		decrease							184	

Table 1 (Continued)

Disease	Tissue	Cyclic nucleotide concentration		Enzyme activity				Guanylate cyclase	Protein kinase	References	
		cyclic AMP basal	AMP stim. ^a	cyclic GMP	Phosphodiesterase		Adenylate cyclase				
					cyclic AMP	cyclic GMP	basal				stim. ^b
	lymphocytes	decrease								264	
	leukocytes						decrease			49	
	lymphocytes				increase	increase				60,61	
	spleen				decrease					279	
	mammary	decrease								281	
	mammary				increase	increase				156	
	mammary	increase			increase					282	
	mammary						increase			283	
	mammary	increase								284	
	plant				increase					285	
	skin	increase	decrease							286	
	skin melanoma						decrease			287	
	skin	decrease								288	
	skin	increase			increase	increase				289	
	thyroid							decrease		48	
	transformed cells						decrease			45	
	transformed cells						decrease			290	
	transformed cells						decrease			291	
	transformed cells						decrease			44	

Table 1 (Continued)

	transformed cells	decrease					292
	transformed cells			decrease			293
	transformed cells		decrease	decrease	decrease		51
	transformed cells				decrease decrease		275
	transformed cells		increase	increase			181
	transformed cells			increase			294
	transformed cells			decrease			294
CARDIOVAS- CULAR							
Atherosclerosis		increase					295
Congestive failure	cardiac				decrease		242-245 , 296
	cardiac				decrease		243
Hypertension	amniotic fluid	increase					297
	aorta				increase		298
	aorta	decrease	decrease	decrease			299
	aorta	decrease	increase		decrease		52
	cardiac	decrease	decrease	decrease			300
	plasma	increase					86
	urine	increase					301
Myocardial infarction	plasma	increase					85

Table 1 (Continued)

Disease	Tissue	Cyclic nucleotide concentration			Enzyme activity				Guanylate cyclase	Protein kinase	References
		cyclic AMP basal	AMP stim. ^a	cyclic GMP	Phosphodiesterase		Adenylate cyclase				
					cyclic AMP	cyclic GMP	basal	stim. ^b			
DOWN'S SYNDROME	saliva	increase									88
ENDOCRINOPATHIES											
Diabetes insipidus	kidney							decrease			43
	urine		decrease					decrease			42
	urine		decrease								77
Diabetes mellitus	adipocytes				decrease						54
	heart				decrease						56
	liver	increase									56
	pancreas				decrease						54
	plasma				decrease						55
	saliva	decrease									87
Hyperparathyroidism	urine	increase									73-75, 302,303
Hypoparathyroidism	urine	decrease									73-75, 302,303
Hyperthyroidism	urine	increase									71,304
	urine		increase								72

Table 1 (Continued)

Hypothyroidism	adipocytes	decrease				305
Pseudohypoparathyroidism	urine	decrease				75
EYE DISEASE	retina			decrease	decrease	57,58
	retina		increase			306
NEUROPSYCHI- ATRIC DISEASES						
CNS damage	CSF	increase				307
Depression	CSF	decrease				80
	urine	decrease				79-81
Epilepsy	cerebrum		decrease			309
	CSF	increase				307
	forebrain	increase				308
Mania	CSF	increase				80
	urine	increase				79-81
OBESITY	adipose tissue		decrease	increase	increase	53
	adipose tissue				decrease	232
PSORIASIS	epidermis	decrease				204
	epidermis	decrease	increase			205
	epidermis				decrease decrease	207
	epidermis			increase		208

^aHormonally stimulated increase in cyclic AMP concentration.

^bHormonally stimulated increase in adenylate cyclase activity.

^cIncrease in low K_m phosphodiesterase and decrease in high K_m phosphodiesterase.

^dIncrease in particulate guanylate cyclase and decrease in soluble guanylate cyclase.

renal tubule is insensitive to ADH (42, 43). Similarly, several forms of cancer, which have abnormally low intracellular concentrations of cyclic AMP, have a reduction in adenylate cyclase activity or a reduction in its hormonal responsiveness (44–50). Other forms of cancer reportedly have a reduced activity of guanylate cyclase as well (51).

There is also evidence that tissues of animals with certain diseases have an abnormal activity of cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase. These include aortas of spontaneously hypertensive rats (52), adipocytes of congenitally obese mice (53), pancreas and adipose tissue of spontaneously diabetic mice (54), plasma (55) and hearts (56) of diabetic rats, and retina of mice with an inherited retinal degenerative disease (57, 58). Our studies have shown that the activities of both cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase and cyclic GMP phosphodiesterase are increased tenfold in leukemic lymphocytes compared with that of normal lymphocytes (59–61).

Certain diseases may also have a defect in the major site at which cyclic nucleotides act, i.e. at the protein kinases. For example, in a variant of pseudohypoparathyroidism (Type II), although cyclic AMP is produced in response to parathyroid hormone, the cyclic nucleotide fails to induce the normal physiological response (62). A similar effect is seen in certain murine lymphomas. Whereas in most lymphomas cyclic AMP is cytotoxic, in a mutant cell line lacking a specific cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase, cyclic AMP fails to exert a carcinostatic effect (63, 64). Abnormalities in the intracellular binding of cyclic nucleotides have also been seen in other forms of cancer (65–67) and in diabetes (68).

Measurement of Cyclic Nucleotides in Tissue and Extracellular Fluid As a Diagnostic Aid

The findings that certain diseases are associated with an abnormal metabolism of cyclic nucleotides suggests that one might find a different concentration of cyclic nucleotides in the diseased tissue or in one of the extracellular fluid compartments (e.g. plasma, urine, or cerebrospinal fluid) of diseased individuals. This proved to be the case (for review see ref. 69). For example, in studies of the urinary excretion of cyclic nucleotides it was reported that the concentration of cyclic AMP in urine is increased in patients with diabetes (70), hyperthyroidism (71, 72), and hyperparathyroidism (73, 74). Moreover, injection of parathyroid hormone causes a large increase in urinary cyclic AMP in patients with hypoparathyroidism but not in patients with pseudohypoparathyroidism (75, 76). Urinary cyclic AMP does not increase in response to ADH in patients with nephrogenic diabetes insipidus (42) but does increase in response to ADH in patients who are ADH deficient (77). The reports of urinary excretion of cyclic AMP in manic patients are conflicting. Some showed an increase in cyclic AMP excretion in mania (79–81), whereas more recent studies failed to find such differences (82, 83). Finally, it has been found that the concentration of cyclic GMP in urine of rats bearing hepatomas is increased in proportion to the rate of tumor growth (84).

In studies of the concentration of cyclic nucleotides in plasma of diseased individuals, it was found that cyclic AMP increased following massive myocardial infarction (85) and increased in patients with hypertension (86). In cerebrospinal fluid,

cyclic AMP was reported to be elevated during the manic phase and decreased during the depressive phase of manic depressive disease (80). In gingival fluid, cyclic AMP was decreased in diabetic patients (87). In saliva, cyclic AMP was increased in children with Down's syndrome (88).

With the exception of the case of hypoparathyroidism, none of the above studies has as yet resulted in the development of specific diagnostic tests. Nevertheless, the potential of finding an early diagnostic test based on a correlation between the concentration of cyclic nucleotide in extracellular fluids with a particular disease state still exists, and this area of study should continue to be explored.

These studies point to the possibility that cyclic nucleotides are important factors in the etiology or pathogenesis of many diseases and suggest that by restoring the imbalance in the intracellular concentration of cyclic nucleotides, one may eliminate the cause or alleviate the symptoms of the disease. The enormous problem presented to the pharmacologist is not only how to alter the intracellular concentration of cyclic nucleotides, but more importantly, how to alter the concentration of each of the cyclic nucleotides selectively in discrete cell types.

DEVELOPMENT OF THERAPEUTIC AGENTS THAT ALTER CYCLIC NUCLEOTIDE METABOLISM

General Considerations

A major problem in using drugs affecting cyclic nucleotide metabolism to alter physiological responses is the ubiquitous nature of the cyclic nucleotides and the wide variety of responses they produce. (For other reviews of this topic see ref. 89–93.) It is difficult to conceive how one can alter the function of a specific cell type by manipulating cyclic nucleotide metabolism without also changing the concentration of cyclic nucleotides in other cells and, consequently, altering their function as well. Fortunately, this problem may be overcome because the metabolism of the cyclic nucleotides is controlled by an extremely complex system of enzymes consisting of many isozymes and receptor subunits. Moreover, the characteristics of these enzyme systems differ between tissues and even between cell types (94). The development of pharmacological agents which could take advantage of these characteristic differences in the enzymes might result in the selective alteration of cyclic nucleotide metabolism only in the diseased tissue. To do this, one must first gain a firm understanding of the fundamental properties of these enzymes.

Adenylate Cyclase

Adenylate cyclase, the enzyme that catalyzes the conversion of ATP to cyclic AMP, consists of a catalytic subunit facing the interior of the cell and one or more receptors in contact with the intracellular fluid (97). (For reviews of this topic see ref. 6, 93, 95, 96.) The catalytic portion of adenylate cyclase of all mammalian cells is activated by sodium fluoride. Hormones and neurotransmitters, on the other hand, are thought to interact with specific receptor sites, present only on certain cell membranes. Thus, a given hormone activates only the adenylate cyclase contained in the

tissue in which the hormone exerts a physiological action, thereby explaining the specificity of hormonal actions (reviewed in 93).

Since variations in the properties of the receptor, rather than of the catalytic moiety of adenylate cyclase, apparently are responsible for the specificity with which different hormones can activate the various adenylate cyclases, one might be able to develop specific drugs that inhibit adenylate cyclase activity by preventing the hormone's interaction with the receptor. Unfortunately, little progress has been made in this promising area of research [see (93) for a more detailed discussion of agents that activate or inhibit adenylate cyclase].

Recently, a heat-stable, calcium-dependent protein, originally shown to increase phosphodiesterase activity (98), has been demonstrated to activate adenylate cyclase as well (99, 100). Whether this observation can be exploited to develop other types of selective agents for inhibiting specific adenylate cyclases must await further investigation. This endogenous activator of phosphodiesterase is discussed further in a subsequent section.

Guanylate Cyclase

Guanylate cyclase catalyzes the formation of cyclic GMP from GTP. (See ref. 93, 101, 102 for reviews.) This enzyme apparently exists in more than one form since guanylate cyclase activity isolated from soluble and particulate fractions migrate differently on gel filtration columns and respond differently to detergents and ions (103, 104).

The general, albeit greatly simplified, consensus relating the nucleotide cyclases to the function of the autonomic nervous system is that adenylate cyclase mediates β -adrenergic responses whereas guanylate cyclase is involved in cholinergic transmission. This is based largely on the results showing that sympathomimetic agents, as a rule, elevate cyclic AMP in adrenergically innervated structures (97, 105), whereas cholinergic agents cause an increase in the concentration of cyclic GMP (106, 107, 110).

Although it is well established that adenylate cyclase is activated by a wide variety of substances, only recently has it been demonstrated that guanylate cyclase can be stimulated in vitro (108, 109). However, there is substantial evidence that several hormones and neurotransmitters can increase the concentration of cyclic GMP (106, 107, 110, 111).

The development of agents that can selectively inhibit the activity of guanylate cyclase is still in its infancy but will surely progress as one gains a clearer understanding of the factors controlling the normal function of this enzyme. One important obstacle which must be overcome is the lack of hormonal responsiveness of guanylate cyclase in broken cell preparations.

Cyclic Nucleotide Phosphodiesterase

DISTRIBUTION Cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterase activity is found in virtually all living cells, its relative activity varying greatly among different tissues (114, 115). (For reviews see ref. 93, 112, 113.) The regional and subcellular distribution of cyclic

GMP phosphodiesterase generally parallels that of cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase. Both enzyme activities are found in all subcellular fractions with most of the activity being in the 100,000 xg supernatant fluid (61, 114, 116–120).

Although phosphodiesterase is largely a soluble enzyme, some investigators have suggested that the particulate enzyme may be of greater physiological importance since the particulate fraction contains a high affinity form of the enzyme (112, 113, 121). However, the soluble fraction also contains a high affinity form of phosphodiesterase (94, 122–124). Moreover, it is not uncommon to achieve cyclic AMP concentrations of 10^{-4} M and more in whole tissue and cells in response to hormones (125–127). Thus, even if there were no intracellular compartmentalization of cyclic nucleotides, which in fact there is (128), it would not be difficult to achieve concentrations of cyclic nucleotides in at least the 0.1 millimolar range at the active site of phosphodiesterase. In our view, it is more likely that both the low and high K_m forms of phosphodiesterase play a role in regulating the intracellular concentration of cyclic nucleotides, the low K_m form of the enzyme being responsible for the basal levels and the high K_m form controlling the cyclic nucleotide concentrations following hormonal stimulation of the nucleotide cyclases (124).

SUBSTRATE SPECIFICITY The cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases are not completely substrate specific since some of the purified phosphodiesterase isozymes can hydrolyze cyclic AMP and cyclic GMP as well as a number of other cyclic nucleotides. However, the different isozymes of phosphodiesterase do have different relative affinities for the various cyclic nucleotides (129–137).

KINETIC PROPERTIES Phosphodiesterase exhibits anomalous kinetic behavior, suggesting either the existence of a single enzyme form with the property of negative cooperativity (138) or the existence of at least two forms of phosphodiesterase, one having a low affinity (high K_m) for cyclic AMP and the other having a high affinity (low K_m) (94, 124, 130, 139–143). The evidence suggests that both possibilities are true. On the one hand, it has been shown that there are different molecular forms of phosphodiesterase (see below) and, on the other hand, it has been shown that even highly purified isozymes of phosphodiesterase exhibit negative or positive cooperativity, suggesting that there are allosteric sites on the enzyme that influence the catalytic site (132, 138, 144, 145).

MULTIPLE MOLECULAR FORMS The existence of multiple molecular forms of phosphodiesterase has been demonstrated in many tissues by numerous investigators using a variety of techniques (94, 119, 125, 143, 146–156). The pattern and ratio of these phosphodiesterase isozymes vary with the specific tissue (94, 130, 148, 149, 156) and cell type (94, 157), and their activity can be altered both chronically and acutely. Chronically, it has been shown that a specific form of phosphodiesterase can be induced by treating astrocytoma cells with norepinephrine (157). Other studies have demonstrated that one of the phosphodiesterase isozymes increases with the age of the animals (143). Acutely, it has been demonstrated that the different phosphodiesterase isozymes can be selectively inhibited and activated by drugs (94,

120, 158–160). This phenomenon is discussed in detail in a later section and forms the basis of our hypothesis that drugs can be developed that selectively alter cyclic nucleotide metabolism in a diseased tissue.

ENDOGENOUS ACTIVATOR While purifying phosphodiesterase from heart, Cheung (98, 161) noticed that the phosphodiesterase activity decreased as the enzyme became more pure, suggesting that a factor that activates phosphodiesterase was being removed during the purification process (reviewed in 162). This activator has now been isolated and has been the subject of numerous investigations (137, 163–168). The activator is a heat-stable, calcium-dependent protein (149, 166, 169–171) with a molecular weight of between 11,000 and 40,000 (161, 172). The mechanism by which the activator increases phosphodiesterase activity is quite complex and is still controversial (171, 173–175). At low concentrations, the activator increases the maximum velocity of hydrolysis (V_{max}) of cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase (158, 173) and cyclic GMP phosphodiesterase (137), whereas at high concentrations the activator appears to decrease the apparent Michaelis constant (K_m) for cyclic AMP (137, 173, 174) and cyclic GMP (137).

This endogenous activator is of particular interest to us because it is extremely potent and highly selective. Less than 1 μ g of activator is capable of increasing the activity of one of the molecular forms of phosphodiesterase more than tenfold, while the activity of other isozymes of phosphodiesterase isolated from the same tissue remains essentially unaltered (158). Moreover, this activable form of phosphodiesterase is not present in all tissues (60, 61, 120), and where it is found, it is present in different amounts relative to the other phosphodiesterase isozymes (149, 176). Therefore, by interfering with the activation process, one may be able to inhibit selectively phosphodiesterase activity in one tissue and not in another. Recent studies from our laboratory indicate that certain phenothiazine antipsychotics, in fact, do act by preventing the activation of phosphodiesterase (158, 159, 168).

The proposal that the interaction of the activator with the activable form of phosphodiesterase is controlled by a protein kinase-mediated release of activator from the membrane (177) suggests yet another site at which drugs might act to alter the metabolism of cyclic nucleotides.

To summarize, the properties of the cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterase system pertinent to our discussion are the following: (a) the enzymes exist in several different molecular forms; (b) these isozymes are unequally distributed among the various tissues; (c) they have different kinetic properties and different substrate affinities; (d) they can be selectively activated by an endogenous protein; (e) they can be selectively inhibited by drugs; and (f) they possess allosteric sites that can influence their activity.

These properties of the cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases suggest to us that drugs could be developed which would interfere with phosphodiesterase activity through a variety of different mechanisms, namely: Drugs could act (a) by interfering with the binding of substrate to the active site of the enzyme by competing with the substrate for the active site, (b) by altering allosteric sites on the enzyme, or

(c) by interfering with the release or binding of activators. Drugs acting by these mechanisms may prove to be highly selective in modifying the phosphodiesterase activity and, consequently, the intracellular concentration of cyclic nucleotides in discrete cell types, and may, therefore, constitute a new class of pharmacologic agents useful in the treatment of diseases.

USE OF PHOSPHODIESTERASE INHIBITORS IN THE TREATMENT OF DISEASE

Drugs that inhibit phosphodiesterase activity have been used for decades in treating diseases [for recent reviews see (89, 120, 178)]. Although it is obvious that not all of the beneficial effects of these drugs can be explained by their inhibition of phosphodiesterase, nevertheless some drugs clearly act by inhibiting phosphodiesterase activity. The findings that several diseases are associated with an abnormal metabolism of cyclic nucleotides suggest that it might be possible to alter the course of diseases with specific phosphodiesterase inhibitors. We concentrate our discussion on the use of phosphodiesterase inhibitors only in those diseases in which there is good evidence of abnormalities in cyclic nucleotide metabolism.

Cancer Chemotherapeutic Agents

Of the many diseases associated with an abnormality in cyclic nucleotide physiology, neoplasia has received the most attention and offers one of the best examples of how, by controlling the metabolism of cyclic nucleotides, one might eventually alter the course of a disease (reviewed in 154, 179, 180). Generally, it has been found that malignant or transformed cells have a lower concentration of cyclic AMP when compared with normal or nontransformed cells (50, 181–184). Moreover, cyclic AMP or agents that increase the concentration of cyclic AMP, such as activators of adenylate cyclase or inhibitors of phosphodiesterase, reduce the growth rate of malignant cells (185–191), and, in some cases, revert the morphological and biochemical characteristics of these cells toward those of normal cells (192–195). Pertinent to our discussion are studies showing a correlation between phosphodiesterase inhibition and carcinostasis. For example, Hsie et al (196) have shown that dibutyryl cyclic AMP, which reduces the growth rate of transformed Chinese hamster ovary cells, also inhibits a low K_m phosphodiesterase in these cells. Tisdale & Phillips (197, 198) have demonstrated that the carcinogenic agents, such as chlorambucil and melphalan, may be due, at least in part, to their inhibition of phosphodiesterase. They demonstrated that chlorambucil increased the concentration of cyclic AMP only in those cell lines in which it inhibited cell growth; it had no effect on the concentration of cyclic AMP in chlorambucil-resistant cell lines. These results could be explained by the ability of alkylating agents to inhibit a low K_m form of phosphodiesterase; this form of the enzyme apparently is deficient in the drug-resistant cell lines.

Determination of the mechanism by which cyclic AMP reverts malignant cells toward the normal phenotype may provide the key to the pathogenesis of certain

forms of cancer. One clue into the mechanism by which cyclic AMP exerts its carcinostatic effects was derived from studies on mutant cells. Cyclic AMP failed to produce a carcinostatic effect in mutant lymphoma cells that lack a specific cyclic AMP-dependent protein kinase, suggesting that activation of protein kinase was essential for the growth-inhibitory effects of cyclic AMP (63, 64). Activation of protein kinase could, in turn, lead to the phosphorylation of histones (199) which could account for the increased DNA-mediated RNA synthesis (200), increased protein synthesis (201), and changes in the properties of the cell membrane (202, 203) seen in malignant cells treated with agents that increase the intracellular concentration of cyclic AMP.

Drugs Used in the Treatment of Psoriasis

Psoriasis is a disease of the skin characterized by an increased proliferation and a decreased differentiation of epidermal epithelium and by an increased accumulation of glycogen in these cells. Stimulated by the observations that cyclic AMP inhibits cellular proliferation (185), induces cellular differentiation (192–195), and stimulates the breakdown of glycogen (16), Voorhees and his co-workers (204, 205) have studied the concentration and metabolism of cyclic nucleotides in the skin of psoriatic patients. They demonstrated that the concentration of cyclic AMP was significantly decreased in psoriatic lesions (204), whereas the levels of cyclic GMP was increased (205). They also showed that β -adrenergic agonists such as isoproterenol inhibited epidermal cell division and that this effect was associated with a concomitant increase in cyclic AMP (206).

Studies of the adenylate cyclase system of psoriatic skin have not yielded conclusive results (207, 208). However, studies of the phosphodiesterase system showed a threefold increase in cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase activity in psoriatic lesions (208). The increased phosphodiesterase activity could explain the decreased concentrations of cyclic AMP and suggests that phosphodiesterase inhibitors may be effective clinical agents in treating psoriasis. This concept gains support from the recent clinical study showing that topically applied papaverine, a potent inhibitor of phosphodiesterase, was effective in the treatment of psoriasis (209).

Antiasthmatics

One suggestion concerning the etiology of asthma is that there is an intrinsic defect in the β -adrenergic receptor–adenylate cyclase complex. In the bronchioles this defect results in a decreased response to the smooth muscle relaxant effects of catecholamines (210). Support for this notion is derived from experiments showing that asthmatics have a diminished hyperglycemic (211) and lipolytic (212) response to epinephrine, and that leucocytes from these patients show a decreased accumulation of cyclic AMP in response to catecholamines (213). This hypothesis is supported further by studies showing that several agents that are effective in treating asthma, both acutely and prophylactically, increase the intracellular concentration of cyclic AMP. For example, the most effective agents for treating the acute asthmatic attack are epinephrine and isoproterenol, potent stimulators of adenylate cyclase. The phosphodiesterase inhibitor, theophylline, theophylline-containing

compounds, such as aminophylline, and several other phosphodiesterase inhibitors (214–216) are also effective in treating experimentally induced asthmatic reactions. Since theophylline often potentiates the effects of agents that stimulate adenylate cyclase activity *in vitro* (217), it would not be surprising to find that the concomitant administration of a catecholamine and theophylline is more effective than using either drug alone.

In individuals with allergic or intrinsic asthma, the asthmatic attack is precipitated by the binding of an allergen to a specific immunoglobulin on sensitized mast cells which results in the release of pharmacologically active substances such as histamine, bradykinin, and slow-reacting substances of anaphylaxis. The release of these agents appears to be controlled by the cyclic nucleotides since drugs that increase the intracellular concentration of cyclic AMP inhibit the antigen-induced release of histamine from sensitized tissues (218–220). In contrast, compound 48/80, which promotes the release of histamine, decreases the intracellular concentration of cyclic AMP (221), presumably by increasing phosphodiesterase activity (222).

A logical approach to the prophylactic treatment of asthma, therefore, would be through the use of drugs that would raise the intracellular levels of cyclic AMP in mast cells, thereby preventing the release of anaphylactoid mediators from these cells. The recently developed drug, sodium dichromoglycate, may act through this mechanism since it has been shown to be an inhibitor, albeit a weak one, of phosphodiesterase activity (223). Moreover, lymphocytes of patients receiving disodium chromoglycate do, in fact, have lower activities of phosphodiesterase than do those of untreated or theophylline-treated patients (224).

Certain steroids used prophylactically in treating asthma may also act by altering the metabolism or action of cyclic nucleotides. This would be predictable since glucocorticoids augment many physiological responses mediated by cyclic AMP, such as lipolysis and glycogenolysis (225). In this regard, hydrocortisone (226) and dexamethasone (227) have been reported to inhibit phosphodiesterase activity. However, since these agents are relatively weak phosphodiesterase inhibitors, they may be acting by increasing adenylate cyclase activity or by increasing the synthesis of a cyclic AMP-dependent-protein kinase.

Anti-Inflammatory Agents

The role of cyclic nucleotides in the inflammatory process has been reviewed recently by Ignarro et al (40). They and other investigators (228, 229) have demonstrated that cyclic AMP stabilizes lysosomal membranes, and cyclic GMP labilizes these membranes. Moreover, they have shown that the release of endogenous substances that mediate the inflammatory response is inhibited by agents which increase the intracellular concentration of cyclic AMP. Based on these results, one would predict that certain cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase inhibitors might have antiinflammatory properties. In fact, it has been shown that the antiinflammatory compounds, indomethacin and several of its analogues (230), arylacetic acid, mefenamic acid, flufenic acid, quinolone compounds, and pyrazolones (230, 231) inhibit phosphodiesterase of chicken cartilage.

Drugs Used in the Treatment of Obesity

Cyclic AMP mediates the effect of catecholamines and other lipolytic agents (217). Evidence that some forms of obesity may be due to a defect in the metabolism of cyclic nucleotides comes from the study of Kupiecki & Adams (232) who showed that the adenylate cyclase system of adipocytes of genetically obese mice was poorly responsive to the stimulatory effects of catecholamines, and from that of Lovell-Smith & Sneyd (53) who showed an increased activity of phosphodiesterase in these mice as well as a decreased responsiveness of adenylate cyclase to catecholamines. This suggests that drugs which inhibit the specific phosphodiesterase isozyme in adipocytes may be of benefit in certain forms of obesity.

Drugs Used in the Treatment of Cardiovascular Disease

SMOOTH MUSCLE RELAXANTS Evidence for a role of cyclic AMP in the relaxation of smooth muscle has been reviewed by Somlyo et al (24). This evidence is based, in part, on the observations that several drugs that relax smooth muscle inhibit phosphodiesterase activity. These agents include papaverine (233, 234), isobutylmethylxanthine (235), diazoxide (236, 237), and chromonar (238). Wells et al (155, 160) have isolated two phosphodiesterase isozymes from porcine coronary arteries and have demonstrated that only one of the isozymes was activated by the endogenous protein activator. They also found that papaverine was a potent inhibitor of this activable isozyme whereas isobutylmethylxanthine was a more potent inhibitor of the nonactivable isozyme. Thus, as in the brain (see section on drugs used in the treatment of neuropsychiatric diseases), the isozymes of phosphodiesterase in coronary arteries can be selectively activated and inhibited by drugs. It would be important to learn whether the increased activity of phosphodiesterase seen in arteries of hypertensive animals (52) is due to a selective increase in one of these isozymes. If this were so, and one could find a drug that selectively inhibits this phosphodiesterase isozyme, a more potent and specific class of therapeutic agents for relaxing smooth muscle would evolve.

DIURETICS The hypothesis that cAMP is involved in diuresis is derived largely from experiments showing that cAMP increases the water permeability of toad bladder (239). The pharmacological evidence supporting this notion is based on the observations that clinically effective diuretics such as the benzothiadiazine derivatives inhibit phosphodiesterase activity (236, 237). Other classes of diuretics such as the mercurials (240), furosemide and bendroflumethiazide (89), ethacrynic acid, chlorthalidone, and acetazolamide (241) inhibit phosphodiesterase activity. However, since antidiuretic hormone, as well as diuretic agents, elevates cAMP, it is not readily apparent how inhibition of phosphodiesterase activity could explain the mechanism of action of diuretics. Perhaps this apparent contradiction could be clarified by determining the effects of all these agents on the specific phosphodiesterase isozymes in the cells on which these drugs are thought to act to produce their diuretic effects.

CARDIAC GLYCOSIDES There is abundant evidence that cyclic AMP plays a role in the inotropic effects of the heart (26, 242). The observation that cardiac tissue from experimental animals and humans with congestive heart failure exhibits a reduced accumulation of cyclic AMP in response to glucagon (242–244) and norepinephrine (245) suggests that specific phosphodiesterase inhibitors might be of benefit in this disease. Support for this proposal was provided by Lippmann (246) who demonstrated that certain analogues of cardiac glycosides were more potent inhibitors of phosphodiesterase than was theophylline. In contrast, several naturally occurring and pharmacologically inactive glycosides were less potent inhibitors of this enzyme.

ANTIATHEROSCLEROTIC AGENTS The possible role of cyclic AMP in the pathogenesis of atherosclerosis has been reviewed by Shimamoto (247). He suggested that a decreased concentration of cyclic AMP in arterial endothelial cells may be responsible for the accumulation of lipids in these cells. This accumulation of lipid and the development of atherosclerosis in rabbits was inhibited by dibutylryl cyclic AMP, and phthalazinol and its derivatives, agents that inhibit phosphodiesterase activity (247). The hypolipidemic agent, eritadenine [2(R)-dihydroxy-Y-(9-adenyl)-butyric acid], has also been shown to inhibit phosphodiesterase activity (248).

Oral Hypoglycemic Agents

Cyclic AMP induces the release of insulin from pancreatic islets (37). The therapeutic consequences, therefore, of inhibiting pancreatic phosphodiesterase would predictably be an increase in the release of insulin and a hypoglycemic effect. Accordingly, it was not surprising to find that several oral hypoglycemic agents such as the sulfonylureas inhibit phosphodiesterase activity (249–251). Agents that inhibit the dominant isozyme of phosphodiesterase present in pancreas might be still more effective and specific for treating adult onset diabetes.

Antiviral Agents

The antiviral agent, N-methyl-isatin- β semicarbazone, inhibited phosphodiesterase in peripheral blood lymphocytes but not in lymphoma cells (252). However, the role of cyclic nucleotides in viral infections is unclear.

Drugs Used in the Treatment of Neuropsychiatric Diseases

ANTIPSYCHOTIC AGENTS The effects of cyclic nucleotides in the central nervous system and their role in neuropsychiatric disorders have been reviewed recently (29). The pharmacologic evidence supporting a role for these cyclic nucleotides in the central nervous system is based largely on the actions of psychotropic drugs, such as the phenothiazine antipsychotics and butyrophenones, on the cyclic nucleotide system of brain. Apparently, these drugs have two distinct effects on the enzymes catalyzing the biosynthesis and hydrolysis of cyclic nucleotides. On the one hand, they inhibit specific norepinephrine- (253) and dopamine- (254) sensitive adenylate

cyclases, effects that would prevent the rise of cyclic AMP induced by these agents. On the other hand, they inhibit a specific activator-sensitive phosphodiesterase in brain (158, 159, 168), an effect that would tend to increase the intracellular concentration of cyclic nucleotides. Therefore, the net effect of these agents on the concentration of cyclic nucleotides in each area of the brain would depend on the relative quantity of the catecholamine-sensitive adenylate cyclases and the activator-sensitive phosphodiesterase in each of these brain areas. This theory predicts that antipsychotics might increase the level of cyclic AMP in one region of the brain and reduce it in another, an effect which, in fact, has recently been demonstrated (255).

The unusual specificity of antipsychotics for inhibiting a single phosphodiesterase isozyme in brain is discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

ANTI-ANXIETY AGENTS Antianxiety agents such as the benzodiazepines have also been shown to inhibit phosphodiesterase of brain (168, 256). The effects of these drugs on the phosphodiesterase of several areas of cat brain varied with the specific brain area studied (257).

TRICYCLIC ANTIDEPRESSANTS Several dibenzazepines also inhibit phosphodiesterase activity. These agents were found to be competitive with cyclic AMP (256, 258, 259) and were more potent than theophylline (260), a finding which should not be viewed as remarkable since, despite its widespread use, theophylline is a relatively weak inhibitor of phosphodiesterase.

A FEASIBLE APPROACH TO THE SELECTIVE ALTERATION OF CYCLIC NUCLEOTIDE METABOLISM

Drugs that exert their effect by indiscriminately altering cyclic nucleotide metabolism would have little clinical utility since they would alter the function of many different types of cells. Ideally, the drug should be able to alter the concentration of specific cyclic nucleotides in a diseased tissue without substantially affecting the concentration of these cyclic nucleotides in normal tissue.

We feel that there is a good possibility of realizing this ideal. We base our optimism on the following observations: there are different patterns and ratios of the phosphodiesterase isozymes in different tissues; these isozymes can be selectively altered by drugs; certain diseases are associated with an abnormal metabolism of cyclic nucleotides; and drugs that alter the intracellular concentrations of cyclic nucleotides already have been shown to be fairly selective and effective therapeutic agents.

Some of the evidence in support of these statements has already been reviewed briefly. A more detailed discussion of the distribution and selective inhibition of the phosphodiesterase isozymes is presented below.

Several studies have shown that drugs could differentially inhibit the phosphodiesterase activity of different tissues (89, 90, 253, 259, 261, 262). For example, Uzunov & Weiss (253) showed that trifluoperazine was more effective in inhibiting

the phosphodiesterase of cerebrum than that of cerebellum, and Pichard et al (259) demonstrated that dipyridamole, an inhibitor of platelet aggregation, is a more potent inhibitor of the phosphodiesterase of platelets than that of the brain, while the tricyclic antidepressants, opipramol, nortryptiline, and imipramine were more potent inhibitors of the phosphodiesterase of brain than that of platelets. These and other studies suggested that the selectivity of the phosphodiesterase inhibitors was due to a difference in the distribution or in the sensitivity of the phosphodiesterase isozymes to inhibitors.

Distribution of Phosphodiesterase Isozymes

It is now clear that there are marked differences in the distribution of the various cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterase isozymes among different tissues and cell types (see section on multiple molecular forms). For example, the rat cerebellum was found to have six forms of phosphodiesterase (149), cerebrum four forms (94), and caudate nucleus two forms (119). The lung (120) also had two forms of phosphodiesterase activity but the types and ratio of these isozymes were different from those of the caudate nucleus. A cloned astrocytoma cell line (C21) had two forms of phosphodiesterase as well, but the type and ratio of these isozymes was unlike that found in the caudate nucleus or in lung (94). Finally, cloned neuroblastoma cells were shown to have a single isozyme of phosphodiesterase, and this isozyme was different from either of the two forms found in the C21 astrocytoma cell lines (94).

Selective Activation and Inhibition of the Phosphodiesterase Isozymes

The other important property of these isozymes that must be satisfied before phosphodiesterase inhibitors can be clinically useful is that they must be selectively activated or inhibited by drugs. Studies from our laboratory demonstrated that some of the phosphodiesterase isozymes can, in fact, be selectively inhibited and activated by endogenous and exogenous agents (94, 119, 120, 144, 149, 158, 159), a finding that has recently been confirmed by other laboratories (160, 175). For example, of the four isozymes of phosphodiesterase isolated from the rat cerebrum (94) (isozymes were designated as Peaks I to IV according to the order of their emergence from a preparative polyacrylamide gel column), Peak I, which hydrolyzes cyclic AMP and not cyclic GMP, is relatively resistant to the commonly used inhibitors of phosphodiesterase (120, 158, 159). Peak II, which is the major form of phosphodiesterase in cerebrum (94, 158, 159), is of great pharmacological and biological interest, since it is the only major isozyme which is activated by the endogenous activator of phosphodiesterase (94, 158). This isozyme, which is sensitive to the inhibitory effects of cyclic GMP and is particularly sensitive to the effects of trifluoperazine and other antipsychotic agents when it is in the activated form, has been examined in some detail (94, 137, 158, 168; see below). Peak III phosphodiesterase was not significantly activated by the protein activator and was relatively sensitive to theophylline and papaverine (158). Peak IV phosphodiesterase was more sensitive to papaverine than to trifluoperazine or theophylline (158). A summary of these studies is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Selective inhibition of the multiple forms of cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase of rat cerebrum^a

Peak	K _i values (μM)			
	Theophylline	Trifluoperazine	Papaverine	Cyclic GMP
I	2000	1000	180	730
II (not activated)	350	250	100	20
II (activated)	350	10	100	10
III	180	250	60	25
IV	600	75	25	

^aThe phosphodiesterase isozymes were prepared from the soluble 100,000 × *g* supernatant fraction of rat cerebrum. Each peak of phosphodiesterase was identified by its electrophoretic mobility on a polyacrylamide gel column (149). Phosphodiesterase activity was determined by the luciferin-luciferase technique (140). The Peak II isozyme was assayed in the absence and presence of optimum amounts of the calcium-dependent activator. The activator produced approximately a tenfold increase in phosphodiesterase activity. (Taken in part from 158.)

Mechanism for the Selective Inhibition of the Phosphodiesterase Isozymes

One obvious explanation for the selective inhibition of the phosphodiesterase isozymes is that the phosphodiesterase inhibitors are acting by different mechanisms. Therefore, considerable effort was spent in studying the mechanism of action of these agents. Thus far, evidence has been obtained for four distinct mechanisms of action. The drugs may act (*a*) by competing with the cyclic nucleotide substrate; (*b*) by acting at the substrate site noncompetitively; (*c*) by acting at an allosteric site to increase or decrease the affinity of the enzyme for its substrate; and (*d*) by acting on one of the endogenous activators or cofactors for the enzyme.

Methylxanthines, like theophylline, which have a structural similarity to the cyclic nucleotides, competitively inhibit phosphodiesterase. This was shown initially in cardiac tissue (115) and more recently in isolated phosphodiesterase isozymes of brain (94, 158). Low concentrations of papaverine also competitively inhibit the phosphodiesterase isozymes (158), whereas high concentrations appear to act noncompetitively (158). Other phosphodiesterase inhibitors such as SQ 20,009 also have been reported to act both competitively and noncompetitively (262).

A compound that apparently acts at an allosteric site to alter the activity of cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase is the cyclic nucleotide, cyclic GMP (132, 144, 145). This latter observation suggests that the concentration of one cyclic nucleotide may influence the metabolism of another cyclic nucleotide.

The final mechanism by which compounds may act is by interfering with the endogenous activator of phosphodiesterase. This mechanism may prove to be one of the most specific since the activity of only one major form of phosphodiesterase is increased by this endogenous activator (149, 158–160, 175). Since trifluoperazine was a particularly effective inhibitor of the Peak II isozyme of phosphodiesterase, and since this is the only major phosphodiesterase isozyme which is activated by

the endogenous activator of phosphodiesterase, we examined the influence of trifluoperazine on Peak II in the presence and absence of the phosphodiesterase activator. The phenothiazine was found to be 25 times more potent an inhibitor of activated Peak II than of the unactivated form (Table 2). Moreover, this inhibition of phosphodiesterase by trifluoperazine (158) or chlorpromazine (168) could be overcome by adding excess activator; kinetic analysis of these data revealed that these phenothiazines were competitive inhibitors of the activation of Peak II phosphodiesterase. Other centrally acting drugs were also shown to be highly specific inhibitors of the activated form of phosphodiesterase (169).

The specific mechanisms by which phenothiazine antipsychotics block the activation of phosphodiesterase has recently been studied in our laboratory where it was shown that the phenothiazines act by binding to the endogenous activator (R. Levin and B. Weiss, unpublished). Since the same protein that increases phosphodiesterase activity apparently is responsible for the activation of adenylate cyclase, our results may explain why phenothiazine antipsychotics inhibit the activity of both adenylate cyclase (253, 254, 263) and phosphodiesterase.

These results suggest again that drugs, by selectively inhibiting the phosphodiesterase isozymes, may be able to raise the intracellular concentration of cyclic AMP in discrete tissues. For example, phenothiazine antipsychotics should raise the concentration of cyclic AMP in cerebral cortex, which has a high proportion of Peak II phosphodiesterase (94, 158), but should have little effect on peripheral tissues that have little or none of this isozyme (60, 61, 144). Papaverine, on the other hand, may exert a greater effect on tissues with a high proportion of Peak III or Peak IV phosphodiesterase. Studies of this type might also yield compounds that exert a selective inhibitory action on either the cyclic GMP phosphodiesterase or cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase (160), a result which would render even greater specificity of action to these compounds.

Possible Clinical Application of the Selective Inhibition of Phosphodiesterase Isozymes

Although the extrapolation of these basic studies to therapeutic applications is a long way off, the goal is clear, that is, to find drugs that will selectively inhibit or activate the major isozyme of phosphodiesterase in each tissue. If a disease is caused by a defect in the metabolism of cyclic nucleotides, these drugs may be able to restore the concentration of cyclic nucleotides in that tissue without adversely affecting other tissue.

Recently, we have begun to test this approach in an attempt to alter selectively the cyclic nucleotide metabolism of malignant cells. The investigations to be described were based on the assumptions that (a) an abnormality in cyclic nucleotide physiology was a characteristic and perhaps a causative factor in neoplastic disease; (b) the major isozyme of malignant tissue may be different from that of normal tissues; (c) this abnormal metabolism might be corrected by the selective manipulation of phosphodiesterase isozymes; (d) this isozyme could be selectively manipulated by drugs; and (e) the correction of cyclic nucleotide metabolism would result in the restoration of normal growth and differentiation of neoplastic tissue and would, therefore, provide a new therapeutic approach to malignant disease.

For these studies we chose the murine leukemias, L5178Y and L1210, because there was substantial evidence to suggest that these and other leukemic lymphocytes had an abnormal cyclic nucleotide system (see Table 1). For example, Monahan and co-workers (264) demonstrated that unlike normal cells, which accumulate cyclic AMP at high cell density and exhibit contact inhibition of growth, L5178Y cells do not. The addition of exogenous cyclic AMP to these cells, however, does inhibit their growth (187). Our studies showing that both L5178Y and L1210 leukemic lymphocytes had approximately a tenfold increase in activity in both cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase and cyclic GMP phosphodiesterase compared with that of normal lymphocytes (59, 60, 61) provided one explanation for the inability of cyclic AMP to accumulate in these leukemic lymphocytes.

To determine whether this increased phosphodiesterase activity of leukemic lymphocytes was due to a specific elevation of one of the phosphodiesterase isozymes, we separated the phosphodiesterases of these lymphocytes by gel electrophoresis according to the procedure of Uzunov & Weiss (149). Three major forms of phosphodiesterase were found. One peak, which constituted about 5% of the total activity, was found in fractions 30–35; a second peak, also having about 5% of the activity, was in fractions 40–50; the third peak (fractions 80–100) accounted for about 90% of the activity recovered from the gel electrophoresis column. This pattern of phosphodiesterase activity was clearly different from that of all other tissues we have studied thus far. For example, leukemic lymphocytes do not contain the major form of phosphodiesterase found in most brain areas, i.e. the activator-sensitive Peak II, nor do they have substantial quantities of the isozyme which is the predominant form found in salivary gland. Thus, the mouse salivary gland had only two major forms of phosphodiesterase activity. The first peak (fractions 40–50) accounted for about 60% of the activity and the second peak (fractions 60–70) for about 40% of the recovered activity. The different isozymic pattern of phosphodiesterase activity of leukemic lymphocytes suggested that the phosphodiesterase in this tissue might be selectively inhibited by drugs.

To test this hypothesis we compared the effects of a phenothiazine (chlorpromazine), a methylxanthine (isobutylmethylxanthine), a benzylisoquinolone (papaverine), and a pyrazole derivative (SQ 20,009) on the phosphodiesterase activity of cerebrum, salivary gland, and leukemic lymphocytes. As predicted from earlier experiments, the phosphodiesterase of cerebrum, which is rich in the Peak II isozyme, was very sensitive to the inhibitory effects of chlorpromazine ($I_{50} = 30 \mu\text{M}$) whereas the phosphodiesterase of leukemic lymphocytes, which is essentially devoid of Peak II phosphodiesterase, was totally resistant to the phenothiazine (61). Papaverine, which is a potent inhibitor of Peak III phosphodiesterase of cerebrum (159), produced a marked inhibition of the major phosphodiesterase isozyme of leukemic lymphocytes. SQ 20,009, a drug which also has been shown to be a selective inhibitor of isolated phosphodiesterase isozymes (120), was 10 times more potent an inhibitor of the major form of phosphodiesterase of salivary gland than that of leukemic lymphocytes (Figure 1). In contrast, isobutylmethylxanthine was a more specific inhibitor of the major phosphodiesterase isozyme of leukemic lymphocytes than that of the major isozyme of salivary gland (Figure 2). These studies,

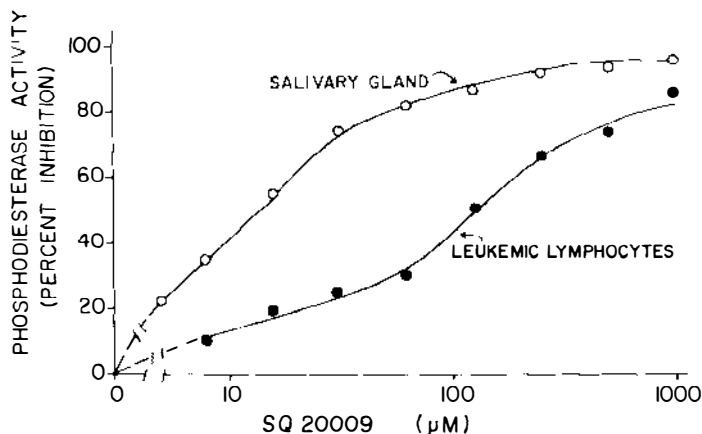


Figure 1 Effect of SQ 20,009 on purified isozymes of phosphodiesterase from mouse salivary gland and leukemic lymphocytes. Tissue was homogenized in 50 mM glycylglycine buffer, pH 8.0, and centrifuged at 100,000 $\times g$ for 60 min. The phosphodiesterase isozymes in the supernatant fraction were separated by preparative polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (149). The activity of phosphodiesterase was assayed by the firefly luciferin-luciferase technique (140) with 100 μM cyclic AMP as substrate. The figure shows the effects of varying concentrations of SQ 20,009 [1-ethyl-4-(isopropylidenehydrazino)-1H-pyrazolo-(3,4-b)-pyridine-5-carboxylic acid, ethyl ester] on the major phosphodiesterase isozyme isolated from salivary gland (fractions 40–50) and leukemic lymphocytes (fractions 80–100).

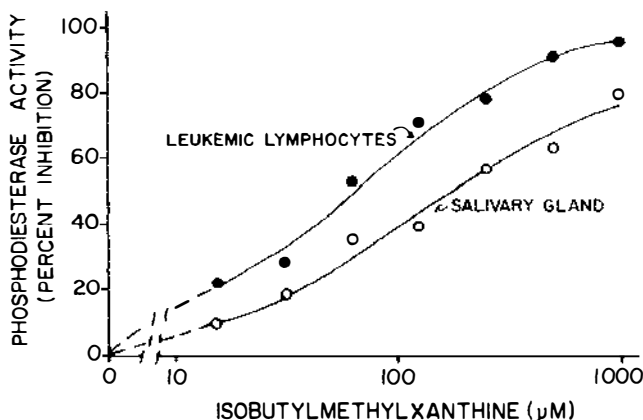


Figure 2 Effect of isobutylmethylxanthine on purified isozymes of phosphodiesterase from mouse salivary gland and leukemic lymphocytes. The tissue and isozymes were prepared as described in the legend to Figure 1. The major phosphodiesterase isozymes of salivary glands and leukemic lymphocytes were assayed in the absence and presence of varying concentrations of isobutylmethylxanthine.

combined with the evidence that cyclic AMP is cytotoxic to leukemic lymphocytes (63, 64), suggest that the development of selective inhibitors of the major phosphodiesterase isozyme of leukemic lymphocytes, may yield new agents for treating certain forms of leukemia.

Moreover, these studies support the hypothesis that by identifying and characterizing the major form of phosphodiesterase in each tissue, it may be possible to predict which drug would selectively inhibit the phosphodiesterase of that tissue. Further studies on the mechanisms by which these agents act and on the structure-activity relationship of these drugs will surely lead to more potent and more selective inhibitors of the individual phosphodiesterase isozymes.

SUMMARY

The cyclic nucleotides, cyclic AMP and cyclic GMP, influence a wide variety of biological functions, and many diseases apparently are associated with or may even be caused by an abnormal intracellular concentration of these cyclic nucleotides. This abnormal concentration of cyclic AMP or cyclic GMP in diseased tissue has been shown to be due to an alteration in the enzymes that catalyze their synthesis (nucleotide cyclases) or hydrolysis (cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases). Accordingly, by correcting the defect in cyclic nucleotide metabolism, the course of a disease may be favorably altered.

The cyclic nucleotide phosphodiesterases, which hydrolyze cyclic AMP and cyclic GMP, are instrumental in controlling the concentration of these cyclic nucleotides. Since these enzymes exist as a complex system of isozymes having characteristic differences among tissues, they represent excellent targets for selective pharmacological manipulation. Recent studies showed that the individual isozymes can be selectively activated and inhibited and that this selective alteration of enzyme activity is due to differences in the mechanisms by which these agents act. For example, methylxanthines inhibit phosphodiesterase activity by competing with the cyclic nucleotide substrates, SQ 20,009 inhibits phosphodiesterase activity both competitively and noncompetitively, cyclic GMP activates cyclic AMP phosphodiesterase by binding to an allosteric site, and the phenothiazine antipsychotics inhibit a specific isozyme of phosphodiesterase by interfering with an endogenous protein activator of this phosphodiesterase isozyme.

Since each tissue has its own peculiar pattern and ratio of the phosphodiesterase isozymes, drugs may be developed that will inhibit the major isozyme in each tissue, resulting in the selective alteration of the concentration of cyclic nucleotides in this tissue. As an example, our studies showed that leukemic lymphocytes have a markedly increased activity of phosphodiesterase compared with that of normal lymphocytes. This increase was due to an elevation of one of the phosphodiesterase isozymes. Since this isozyme can be inhibited by drugs which have relatively little action on the major phosphodiesterase isozymes of other tissue, one would predict that the concentration of cyclic nucleotides would be elevated in the leukemic cells but not in normal tissue. And since malignant cell growth can be repressed by increasing the intracellular concentration of cyclic AMP, specific phosphodiesterase

inhibitors may inhibit the growth and induce the differentiation in these leukemic lymphocytes without adversely affecting the function of other tissue.

Thus, the evidence reviewed in this paper favors the conclusion that the determination of the biochemical properties of the phosphodiesterase isozymes in normal and diseased tissue and the continued search for new and more selective inhibitors of each phosphodiesterase isozyme may lead to the development of a new class of selective therapeutic agents, ones that act by altering the metabolism of cyclic nucleotides.

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