



Histamine H₃ and H₄ receptor affinity of branched 3-(1*H*-imidazol-4-yl)propyl *N*-alkylcarbamates

Dorota Łażewska^a, Małgorzata Więcek^a, Xavier Ligneau^b, Tim Kottke^c, Lilia Weizel^c, Roland Seifert^d, Walter Schunack^e, Holger Stark^c, Katarzyna Kieć-Kononowicz^{a,*}

^a Department of Technology and Biotechnology of Drugs, Jagiellonian University Medical College, ul. Medyczna 9, 30-688 Kraków, Poland

^b Bioprojet-Biotech, 4 rue du Chesnay Beauregard, BP 96205, 35762 Saint-Grégoire, France

^c Institute of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, Max-von-Laue-Strasse 9, 60438 Frankfurt/Main, Germany

^d Institute of Pharmacology, Medical School of Hannover, Carl-Neuberg-Strasse 1, 30625 Hannover, Germany

^e Institute of Pharmacy, Free University of Berlin, Königin-Luise-Strasse 2+4, 14195 Berlin, Germany

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ABSTRACT

A series of imidazole-containing (non-)chiral carbamates were tested at human histamine H₃ receptor (H₃R). All compounds displayed *K_i* values below 100 nM. A trend for a stereoselectivity at human H₃R was observed for the chiral α -branched ligands. Selected compounds were also tested at human histamine H₄ receptor and showed moderate to weak affinities (118–1460 nM).

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Imidazole moiety is present in many biologically active compounds (for review see¹). One of the most important of them is histamine. Histamine exerts tremendous influence over a variety of physiological processes by the four known receptors subtypes: H₁, H₂, H₃ and H₄.

Histamine H₃ receptors (H₃Rs) are widely expressed in CNS and play the main role in many important processes. Nowadays, the current interest in the area of H₃R ligands (inverse agonists, antagonists) is focused on non-imidazole compounds (for review see^{2–7}), whereas the first generation H₃R active structures contained the imidazole moiety (for review see⁸). These compounds were analogues of histamine with the 4-substituted imidazole ring. However, despite their high potency and clinical studies none of them have entered the market as a drug. The main drawback of these compounds was inhibition of numerous CYP450 enzymes^{9,10} (although recently some studies suggested the possibilities to minimize these activities¹¹), reduced oral bioavailability and poor brain penetration (e.g., thioperamide¹²). Actually, imidazole-based ligands like thioperamide, clobenpropit, and ciproxifan (Fig. 1) are mainly used as reference structures in a variety of preclinical animal models.

Despite that imidazole-containing ligands are further the subject of investigations and quite recently, Jablonowski et al. de-

scribed a series of *N*-methylimidazole-containing compounds—potent H₃R ligands with improved metabolic stability. (e.g., **1**, Fig. 2)¹³

Histamine H₄ receptors (H₄Rs) are preferentially expressed on hematopoietic and immune cells (e.g., eosinophils, mast cells, macrophages) and play a role in immunological and inflammatory processes.¹⁴

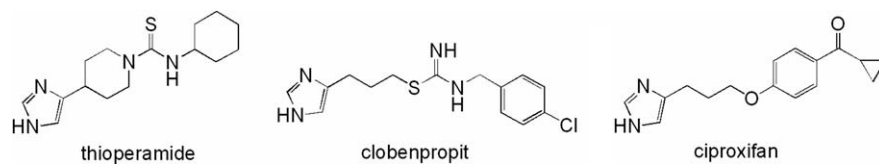
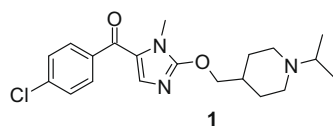
The human H₄R is closely related to the human H₃R. These two proteins have a sequence identity of 31% and their homology in the transmembrane region is 54%.¹⁵

Therefore, it is not surprising, that numerous imidazole-containing H₃R ligands have also significant affinity for the human H₄R (e.g., Table 1)¹⁶ and some of them (e.g., thioperamide, clobenpropit) have been used to characterize the H₄R. While the current medicinal chemistry efforts are concerned at finding more selective compounds, AstraZeneca continues to develop imidazole derivatives acting as dual H₃R and H₄R ligands (e.g., Fig. 3).¹⁷ These compounds are considered as potential drugs for the treatment of histamine H₄ mediated diseases especially asthma. Also, very recently, Igel et al. described *N*^C-alkanoyl-imidazolylpropylguanidines as high-affinity human H₃R antagonists/partial agonists and full H₄R agonists.¹⁸ For example, UR-PI294 with *N*^C-propionyl group, was tritiated, resulting the radioligand [³H]UR-PI294.¹⁹ This radioligand is considered a valuable pharmacological tool for the determination of human H₃R and human H₄R affinities.

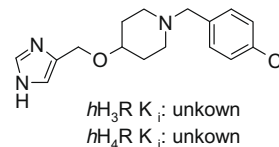
In this Letter, we describe human H₃R affinity of branched 3-(1*H*-imidazol-4-yl)-propyl *N*-alkylcarbamates (Scheme 1). Most

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +48 12 620 55 81; fax: +48 12 620 55 96.

E-mail address: mfkonono@cyf-kr.edu.pl (K. Kieć-Kononowicz).

**Figure 1.** Some reference imidazole-containing histamine H₃ receptor ligands.

H₃R:
 human K_i = 3 nM
 rat pA₂ = 8.0
 human pA₂ = 9.2
 IC₅₀s > 10 mM for CYP: 1A2, 2C9, 2C19, 2D6 and 3A4

Figure 2. Structure and potency profile of **1**.¹³**Figure 3.** Structure of one of the compounds developed by AstraZeneca.¹⁷**Table 1**
Affinities of compounds **2–22** at human histamine H₃ and H₄ receptor

Compds	R	K _i ^a (nM)	hH ₃ R K _i ^b (nM)	hH ₄ R K _i ^c (nM)	Selectivity ratio hH ₄ R/hH ₃ R
2		20 ± 5	49	nt ^d	
3		19 ± 5	12	290 ± 98	24
4		23 ± 5	31	nt ^d	
5		25 ± 4	21	nt ^d	
6		12 ± 2	15	nt ^d	
7		18 ± 4	4.7 ± 0.9	118 ± 38	25
8		8.7 ± 2.9	29	695 ± 51	24
9		19 ± 4	19	426 ± 147	22
10		12 ± 5	42	nt ^d	
11		15 ± 5	8.3	162 ± 34	20
12		5.1 ± 1.9	13	123 ± 17	9
13		nt ^d	13	nt ^d	
14		nt ^d	30	nt ^d	

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

Compds	R	K_i^a (nM)	hH_3R K_i^b (nM)	hH_4R K_i^c (nM)	Selectivity ratio hH_4R/hH_3R
15		18 ± 4	52	nt ^d	
16		23 ± 8	41	636 ± 150	16
17		18 ± 3	74	1460 ± 240	20
18		22 ± 5	75	nt ^d	
19		nt ^d	37	779 ± 85	21
20		18 ± 5	91	nt ^d	
21		nt ^d	28 ± 3^e	nt ^d	
22		nt ^d	43 ± 17^e	nt ^d	
Ciproxifan			46 ± 4^f	612 ± 32^g	13
Clobenpropit			2.4 ± 0.6^f	4.3 ± 0.2^g	1.8
Thiopramide			60 ± 12^f	43 ± 3^g	0.7

^a [³H]histamine release from synaptosomes of rat cerebral cortex,²⁵ mean \pm sem of at least three independent experiments.

^b [¹²⁵I]iodoproxyfan binding to membranes of CHO-K1 cells expressing the human H₃R,²⁶ data from a single experiment with each concentrations tested at least in triplicate, except for **7** with mean \pm sem of three independent experiments.

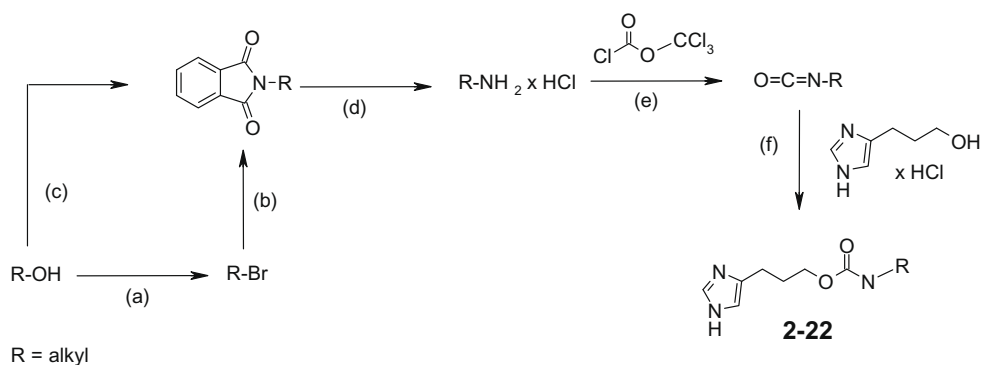
^c [³H]Histamine binding to membranes of Sf9 cells expressing the human H₄R, co-expressed with G α i2 and G β i γ 2 subunits,^{27,28} mean \pm sem of at least three independent experiments.

^d Not tested.

^e [¹²⁵I]iodoproxyfan binding to membranes of HEK-293 cells expressing the human H₃R,¹⁶ mean \pm sem of three independent experiments.

^f [¹²⁵I]iodoproxyfan binding to membranes of CHO-K1 cells expressing the human H₃R, data from Ref. 26.

^g [³H]Histamine binding to membranes of HEK-293 cells expressing the human H₄R, data from Ref. 16.



Scheme 1. General synthesis of carbamates. Reagents and conditions: (a) 48% HBr, H₂SO₄ (concd); (b) potassium phthalimide, K₂CO₃, benzyltriethylammonium chloride, acetone 6 h reflux; (c) phthalimide, DEAD, triphenylphosphine, THF, 3 days rt; (d) (i) NH₂-NH₂, EtOH, 15 min reflux; (ii) HCl, EtOH; (e) ethyl acetate, catalytic amount of charcoal, 4–5 h reflux; (f) acetonitrile, 4–5 h reflux.

of these compounds had been previously studied in a functional test on synaptosomes of rat cortex and showed high histamine H₃R affinity.^{20,21} Now some of the reported structures were also tested at the human H₄R. Results are collected in Table 1.

The synthetic route for these carbamates is illustrated in Scheme 1.²² Commercially available or prepared amines were converted to the corresponding isocyanates by the reaction with an excess of diphosgene. Then, subsequently isocyanates reacted in

acetonitrile with 3-(1H-imidazol-4-yl)-propanol hydrochloride to furnish the desired carbamates **2–22**. Non-commercially available amines were prepared from the corresponding alcohols as depicted in Scheme 1. Amines used to synthesize compounds **8**, **11** and **12** were obtained from the alkyl bromides via conventional Gabriel synthesis under phase-transfer conditions.^{20,23} Subsequently, N-alkylphthalimides by means of hydrazinolysis gave the desired amines, isolated as hydrochlorides. Alkyl bromides for **8**, **11** and

12 were synthesized by standard procedures (48% HBr in concentrated H_2SO_4). Precursor *N*-alkylphthalimides for carbamates **9**, **10**, **13**, **14** and **22** were prepared via modified Gabriel procedure reported by Mitsunobu.²⁴ These reactions were carried out at room temperature in absolute THF in the presence of DEAD and triphenylphosphine.

All compounds reported here revealed high affinities for human H_3R (K_i values from 4.7 to 91 nM). The best acceptable for hH_3R is the methyl substituent in the β position (**7** and **11**). It looks as if the ethyl group in this position (**19**) is also tolerated. However, the lack of the methyl analogue in the hexyl series did not let us confirm that.

A trend for a stereoselectivity at human H_3R was also observed for the chiral α -branched ligand. Indeed, the *R*-enantiomers (**3**, **9**, **16** and **21**) were slightly more potent than the corresponding *S*-enantiomers (**4**, **10**, **17** and **22**). In the *R*-eutomer series, the alkyl chain consisting of three to five carbons (compare **3**, **6** and **9**) was well tolerated by human H_3R . A six-carbon chain (compare **3**, **6** and **9** with **16**) was detrimental for H_3R binding and caused about threefold lost of in vitro affinity. Surprisingly, the seven-carbon compound **21** had again a better affinity than the six-carbon analogue **16**.

In the series of the pentyl derivatives (**8**–**14**), the methyl group was introduced into the different positions (α , β , γ and δ) and the dimethyl compound (**14**, α and δ position) was also prepared. Compounds with the methyl substituent in the β , γ or δ position were about twice more potent than α -branched ones (compare **11**, **12** and **13** with **8**). Interestingly, the introduction of a second methyl group in the δ position (**14**) did not influence the affinity when comparing with **8**, indicating that α -substituent determined affinity and prevented the optimal interaction with the H_3R .

Comparing the results with those previously obtained in a functional test in rat cerebral cortex,^{20,21} it is seen that most of the investigated compounds displayed lower or comparable affinity at the human H_3R . Surprisingly, **7** and **11** are more potent at the human H_3R than at the rat cortex (**7**: hK_i : 4.7 nM, rat K_i : 18 nM; **11**: hK_i : 8.3 nM, rat K_i : 15 nM).

Some of the compounds (**3**, **7**–**9**, **11**, **12**, **16**, **17** and **19**) were tested at human H_4R .^{27,28} These studies revealed their moderate to weak affinities (hK_i : 118–1420 nM). The most potent was **7** (hK_i : 118 nM), also very active at human H_3R (hK_i : 4.7 nM). These chosen compounds (**3**, **7**–**9**, **11**, **12**, **16**, **17** and **19**) had some selectivity for the H_3R (from 9 to 25-fold) over the H_4R , in some cases even better than the reference compounds (Table 1).

In summary, we investigated a series of branched 3-(1*H*-imidazol-4-yl)propyl *N*-alkylcarbamates which were found to be potent human H_3R ligands. Additional pharmacological evaluation of nine selected compounds showed that these structures, as most imidazole-containing ligands, displayed also affinity for the H_4R . However, our present and unpublished results indicate that selectivity for the H_3R (high affinity) among imidazole-containing derivatives over the H_4R (weak or lack of affinity) is possible to achieve.

Acknowledgments

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- Compounds **2**–**12** and **14**–**20** were described previously.^{20,21} Compounds **13**, **21** and **22** were prepared as described by Sasse et al.²⁰ The products were obtained as colorless oils and crystallized as hydrogen maleates in EtOH/Et₂O. (a) Compound **13**. Starting from 4-methylpentan-1-ol; *N*-(4-Methylpentyl)phthalimide, yellow oil (yield: 71%); 4-Methylpentanamine hydrochloride, white solid, Mp 197 °C; yield: 72%; 3-(1-*H*-imidazol-4-yl)propyl *N*-(4-methylpentyl)carbamate hydrogen maleate, white solid; Mp 81–82 °C; yield: 15%. ¹H NMR [DMSO-*d*₆]: δ = 8.83 (s, 1H, Im-2-*H*), 7.37 (s, 1H, Im-5-*H*), 7.06 (t, *J* = 5.6 Hz, 1H, CONH), 6.04 (s, 2H, Mal), 3.96 (t, *J* = 6.5 Hz, 2H Im-CH₂-O), 2.93 (q, *J* = 6.4 Hz, 2H, N-CH₂), 2.66 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H, Im-CH₂), 1.87 (m, 2H, Im-CH₂-CH₂), 1.51 (m, 1H, -CH(CH₃)₂), 1.38 (m, 2H, -CH₂-CH₂-CH(CH₃)₂), 1.12 (m, 2H, -CH₂-CH(CH₃)₂), 0.84 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 6H, (CH₃)₂); IR (KBr) (cm⁻¹): 1694s (ν [C=O]); MS *m/z* (%) 253 ([M⁺], 8), 109 ([Im-(CH₂)₃⁺], 32), 108 (100), 107 (38), 95 ([Im-(CH₂)₂⁺], 67), 82 (22), 81 ([Im-CH₂⁺], 35), 80 (11), 54 (16), 41 (18). Anal. Calcd for C₁₃H₂₃N₃O₂·C₄H₄O₄·0.5H₂O (*M*_r: 378.30): C, 53.98; H, 7.46; N, 11.11. Found: C, 54.23; H, 7.10; N, 11.13. (b) Compound **21**. Starting from (R)-(-)-octan-2-amine (Lancaster). White solid, Mp 105–107 °C; yield: 30%; [α]_D: -2.77 (c 1.0, EtOH); ¹H NMR [DMSO-*d*₆]: δ = 8.90 (s, 1H, Im-2-*H*), 7.40 (s, 1H, Im-5-*H*), 6.96 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H, CONH), 6.06 (s, 2H, Mal), 3.96 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2H Im-CH₂-O), 3.70–3.38 (br s, 1H, N-CH + H₂O), 2.69 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H, Im-CH₂), 1.90 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H, Im-CH₂-CH₂), 1.34–1.24 (m, 10H, -(CH₂)₅), 1.02 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 3H, -CH-CH₃), 0.82 (t, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 3H, CH₂-CH₃); IR (KBr) (cm⁻¹): 1689s (ν [C=O]); MS *m/z* (%) 281 ([M⁺], 4), 113 (46), 109 ([Im-(CH₂)₃⁺], 37), 108 (74), 107 (23), 95 ([Im-(CH₂)₂⁺], 70), 82 (24), 81 ([Im-CH₂⁺], 53), 70 (100), 55 (37), 44 (48). Anal. Calcd for C₁₅H₂₇N₃O₂·C₄H₄O₄·0.75H₂O (*M*_r: 410.98): C, 55.53; H, 7.58; N, 10.38. Found: C, 55.48; H, 7.97; N, 10.22. (c) Compound **22**. Starting from (R)-(-)-octan-2-ol (Aldrich); *N*-(S)-(+)-2-octylphthalimide, colorless oil; yield: 79%; [α]_D: +29.48 (c 3.0, EtOH); (S)-(+)-octan-2-amine hydrochloride, white solid, Mp 85–86 °C; yield: 36%; [α]_D: -4.42 (c 1.5, MeOH); 3-(1-*H*-imidazol-4-yl)propyl *N*-[(S)-(+)-2-octyl]carbamate hydrogen maleate, white solid; Mp 108–110 °C; yield: 7%; [α]_D: +2.93 (c 1.0, EtOH); ¹H NMR [DMSO-*d*₆]: δ = 8.85 (s, 1H, Im-2-*H*), 7.40 (s, 1H, Im-5-*H*), 6.91 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H, CONH), 6.02 (s, 2H, Mal), 3.93 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2H Im-CH₂-O), 3.42–3.30 (br s, 1H, N-CH + H₂O), 2.65 (t, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H, Im-CH₂), 1.86 (qu, *J* = 7.4 Hz, 2H, Im-CH₂-CH₂), 1.31–1.16 (m, 10H, -(CH₂)₅), 0.98 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 3H, -CH-CH₃), 0.82 (t, *J* = 6.1 Hz, 3H, CH₂-CH₃); IR (KBr) (cm⁻¹): 1689s (ν [C=O]); MS *m/z* (%) 281 ([M⁺], 12), 109 ([Im-(CH₂)₃⁺], 34), 108 (100), 107 (22), 95 ([Im-(CH₂)₂⁺], 56), 82 (23), 81 ([Im-CH₂⁺], 41), 72 (14), 54 (17), 45 (16). Anal. Calcd for C₁₅H₂₇N₃O₂·C₄H₄O₄·0.5H₂O (*M*_r: 406.48): C, 56.14; H, 7.94; N, 10.34. Found: C, 56.27; H, 7.89; N, 10.13.
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