

# **Molecular and Cellular Analysis of Histamine H1 Receptors on Cultured Smooth Muscle Cells**

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Histamine is an important mediator of immediate hypersensitivity for both animals and humans. The action of histamine on target tissues is believed to be mediated by specific cell surface receptors, especially H1 and H2 receptors for hypersensitivity and inflammatory reactions, which involve stimulation of smooth muscle contractility, alterations in vascular permeability, and modifications in the activities of macrophages and lymphocytes. Although the nature of histamine receptors in the brain and peripheral tissues has been studied extensively by many laboratories, the molecular mechanism of histamine receptor-mediated reactions is not fully understood, mainly because histamine receptors are incompletely characterized from the biochemical point of view. In previous studies, we have found that the cultured smooth muscle cell line DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2, derived from hamster vas deferens, expresses low-affinity histamine H1 receptors and responds biochemically and functionally to H1-specific stimulation (Mitsuhashi and Payan, *J Cell Physiol* 134:367, 1988). This cell line provides a model for analyzing the biochemical responses of H1 receptor-mediated reactions in peripheral tissues. In this review, we summarized our recent progress in the study of low-affinity H1 receptors on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells.

**Key words:** histamine H1 receptor, calcium, protein kinase C

Histamine is an important mediator of immediate hypersensitivity for both animals and humans [1–3]. For example, in healthy human subjects, an intradermal injection of histamine induces a wheal and flare response similar to that seen in urticaria [4]. Inhalation of histamine provokes bronchoconstriction [5], and intravenous injection of histamine results in a rapid decrease in blood pressure similar to that seen in anaphylactic shock [6]. Serum levels of histamine are also increased in patients with hymenoptera-sting hypersensitivity during the acute phase of anaphylactic shock [7]. Moreover, human blood basophilic leukocytes in patients with allergic disorders release histamine *in vitro* in response to specific and nonspecific stimuli [8].

In mammalian species, histamine is synthesized by histidine decarboxylase [9] and stored in all tissues in amounts ranging from less than 1  $\mu\text{g/g}$  to over 100  $\mu\text{g/g}$  [10]. Histamine is then released in conjunction with other potent chemical mediators in

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response to specific IgE-mediated [11] or nonspecific mechanisms [12] from the tissue mast cells [13] or blood basophilic leukocytes [14]. The action of histamine on target tissues is believed to be mediated by specific cell surface receptors, especially H1 and H2 receptors for hypersensitivity and inflammatory reactions, which involve stimulation of smooth muscle contractility, alterations in vascular permeability, and modifications in the activities of macrophages and lymphocytes [1,15].

In the central nervous system, histamine is synthesized by a different histidine decarboxylase from that of mast cells [16] and is known to be a neurotransmitter via H1 and H2 receptors [17] and the newly identified H3 receptors [18]. H3 receptors are present in presynaptic locations in rat brains and inhibit the release of histamine. The precise mechanisms for the actions and interactions among these three types of histamine receptors are still unknown. Although the nature of H1 and H2 receptors has been extensively studied by many laboratories [19], the molecular mechanism of histamine receptor-mediated reactions is not fully understood, mainly because the three classes of histamine receptors are incompletely characterized from the biochemical point of view. Furthermore, recent studies indicate that H1 receptors do not comprise a homogenous population and that brain H1 receptors might be different from H1 receptors in peripheral tissues [20].

In previous studies, we have found that the cultured smooth muscle cell line, DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2, derived from hamster vas deferens [21], expresses low-affinity histamine H1 receptors and responds biochemically and functionally to the H1-specific stimulation [22]. This cell line provides a model for analyzing the biochemical responses of H1 receptor-mediated reactions in peripheral tissues [22,23]. Recently, H1 receptors on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells have been solubilized and purified to homogeneity and exhibit similar binding characteristics to those of intact cells [24]. In this review, we summarize our recent progress in the study of low-affinity H1 receptors on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells, and contrast them to high-affinity H1 receptors in the brain.

## **HETEROGENEITY OF H1 RECEPTORS**

The contractile response of guinea pig ileum smooth muscle to histamine has led to detailed functional and structural studies of H1 receptors [25]. Moreover, the lack of H2 receptors on guinea pig ileum [26] also accelerated the development and analysis of newly synthesized H1 agonists and antagonists. An early demonstration of the presence of H1 receptors on membrane fractions of guinea pig ileum smooth muscle was carried out by Hill et al. [27] using the radiolabeled H1-specific antagonist, [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine. Furthermore, the  $K_d$  from [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding studies correlated with the  $EC_{50}$  of the contractile response of guinea pig ileum to histamine, suggesting that [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding sites were specific H1 receptors. However, a similar number of [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding sites were demonstrated on rat, guinea pig, and rabbit ileal membranes, although the contractile effects of histamine varied widely in these species [28]. The dissociation constant ( $K_d$ ) of [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine also varied widely from 0.7 nM to 219 nM in various tissues (Table I) [29–34]. The difference of activity of H1 antagonists was also demonstrated in the functional assays with an  $IC_{50}$  ranging from 30 pM to 10  $\mu$ M (Table I) [35–42]. Moreover, the subclasses of H1 receptors were detected in various tissues using different radiolabeled ligands (Table II) [43–47].

TABLE I. Summary of Activities of the H1-Specific Antagonist Pyrilamine

Assay	Species	Tissue	$K_d/IC_{50}$ of pyrilamine	Reference no.
$[^3H]$ -pyrilamine binding	Guinea pig	Ileum	1.3 ( $K_d$ , nM)	27
	Guinea pig	Brain	0.7	29
	Guinea pig	Bladder	0.7	30
	Mouse	Brain	6.0	31
	Human	Astrocytoma	3.3	32
	Human	Neutrophils	52.0	33
	Human	Monocytes	3.8	34
	Human	T-helper cells	5.0	34
	Human	T-suppressor	44.6	34
	Human	B-cells	14.2	34
	Hamster	SMC <sup>a</sup>	219.0	26
Contraction response	Guinea pig	Ileum	0.8 ( $IC_{50}$ , nM)	27
	Guinea pig	Bladder	1.2	30
	Porcine	Trachea	21.2	35
	Guinea pig	Vas deferens	250–5,000	36
Cytosolic $Ca^{2+}$ release	Rat	SMC	0.03	37
Glycogen hydrolysis	Mouse	Brain	11.0	38
Prostaglandin E synthesis	Human	Synovial cell	0.3 $\mu M$	39
Ion transport	Rabbit	Colon	0.3 $\mu M$	40
$^{45}Ca$ efflux	Mouse	SMC	1 $\mu M^b$	41
cGMP formation	Human	Lung	10 $\mu M$	42

<sup>a</sup>Cultured smooth muscle cells.

<sup>b</sup>Chlorpheniramine.

$[^3H]$ -pyrilamine binding studies indicate that extracellular sodium, manganese, magnesium, and guanine nucleotides selectively alter the agonist affinity in guinea pig brain membranes [22], and dithiothreitol also increased agonist affinity in guinea pig ileum [48]. This might suggest that the heterogeneity of H1 receptors is due to the microenvironments in which H1 receptors are present or influenced by additional interaction with G-proteins, as demonstrated with other G-protein-coupled membrane receptors [49]. Because recent gene cloning techniques have identified different isoforms of receptor genes than would have been expected from the known receptor pharmacology, as in the case of muscarinic acetylcholine receptors [50], GABA receptors [51], and glycine receptors [52], H1 receptor heterogeneity might also be explained on this basis.

TABLE II. Subclasses of H1 Receptors

Radiolabeled ligands	Species	Tissues/cells	$K_d$ of each subclass	Reference no.
$[^3H]$ -histamine	Cat	Intestine	5.0 $\mu M$ , 77 $\mu M$	43
$[^3H]$ -pyrilamine	Rat	Liver	4.2 nM, 21 nM	44
	Human	Lung	81.0 pM, 7 $\mu M$ , 320 $\mu M$	42
	Human	Lymphocytes	4.0 nM, 55 $\mu M$	45
$[^3H]$ -doxepine	Guinea pig	Brain	0.3 nM, 25 nM	46
$[^{125}I]$ -iodobolpyrilamine	Guinea pig	Brain	50.0 pM, 150 pM	47

## FUNCTIONAL H1 RECEPTORS ON THE CULTURED SMOOTH MUSCLE CELLS

The analysis of H1 receptors in whole tissue is difficult to interpret because of the heterologous population of cell types and the heterogeneity of H1 receptors. The advantage of established cell lines is that a homogeneous cell population can be studied directly. In a previous study using a cloned cell line, DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2, [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding indicated a single class of binding sites by three separate methods of determination, such as kinetic data (rate of association/dissociation), saturation (binding of labeled ligand), and competition experiments (displacement of labeled ligand by unlabeled ligand) with resulting similar K<sub>d</sub> values ranging from 102–953 nM [22]. These K<sub>d</sub> values are 100–1,000-fold higher than those of guinea pig ileum and mammalian brains. However, the H2-specific antagonist (cimetidine) and the H3-specific antagonist (thiopramide, data not shown) are less potent than the H1-specific antagonist (pyrilamine, diphenhydramine, and chlorpheniramine) [22]. These data suggest the presence of low-affinity H1 receptors on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells.

Results from a number of laboratories has demonstrated that histamine increases [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> by H1-specific mechanisms and that the elevation of [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> may be an early event in the metabolic events resulting in smooth muscle contraction. Recently, using the intracellularly trapped dye quin-2, Matsumoto et al. [37] have reported that histamine activated cell surface H1 receptors on rat aortic smooth muscle cells to increase their [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub>. In our previous study [22], changes in [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells were evaluated with the sensitive fluorescent indicator fura-2 rather than quin-2. Our results confirm that histamine increased [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> in a dose-dependent manner with an EC<sub>50</sub> of 3 × 10<sup>-5</sup> M and that the effect of histamine was inhibited by H1 receptor antagonist, but not by H2 receptor antagonist [22]. The dose of chlorpheniramine that inhibited histamine-induced increases of [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> was 100 nM, which is a concentration of the same order of magnitude as the K<sub>d</sub> values of pyrilamine derived from equilibrium binding. In Figure 1, histamine increases [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> in a dose-dependent manner. These changes are significant despite the high basal level of [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells (200–500 nM) and the rapid efflux of [Ca<sup>2+</sup>] into the extracellular space [41].

Since histamine increased [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> even in calcium-free solutions (Fig. 1), the increases in [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> are most likely due to the release of Ca<sup>2+</sup> from intracellular stores. This might indicate that H1 receptors on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells are coupled to the phosphatidylinositol pathway and induce hydrolysis of phosphatidylinositol with formation of inositol-1,4,5-trisphosphate and diacylglycerol, leading to Ca<sup>2+</sup> release and probable activation of protein kinase C (PKC), as shown in smooth muscle of guinea pig ileum [53], rabbit aorta [54], and guinea pig brain slices [55].

Numerous studies have demonstrated that the elevation of [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> activates the calcium-calmodulin-dependent myosin light-chain kinase which results in myosin phosphorylation and the subsequent polymerization of actin, which is an essential step for smooth muscle contraction [56]. In order to assess the relationship between the elevation of [Ca<sup>2+</sup>]<sub>i</sub> and the contractile response of DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells to histamine, we have previously examined the change of cell shape by phase contrast light microscopy [57]. Although histamine-induced contraction of cultured smooth muscle cells [58] and cultured mesangial cells [59] were observed microscopically, the quantification of the contractile response of individual DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells could not be accomplished in detail by light microscopy alone because DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells did not spread uniformly on tissue

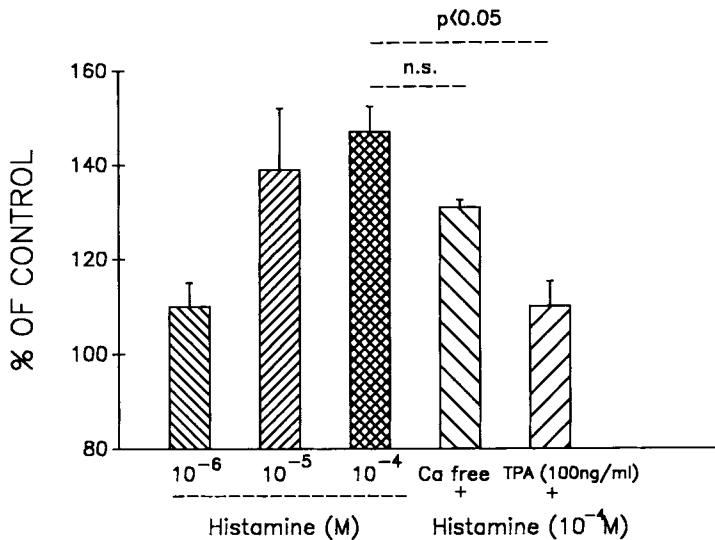


Fig. 1. Histamine-induced stimulation of changes in cytosolic calcium in DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells. DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells at a density of  $1 \times 10^7$  in 1 ml Hanks' Balanced Salt Solution (HBSS) containing 0.1% Bovine Serum Albumin (BSA) were incubated with  $2.5 \mu\text{M}$  fura-2 for 60 min at  $37^\circ\text{C}$  and the intracellular fura-2 signals were measured at 340 nm or 380 nm excitation and 510 nm emission in a fluorescence spectrophotometer as described previously [22]. For the TPA-induced down-regulation of H1 receptors,  $5 \times 10^6$  DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells were suspended in 15 ml Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DME) containing 5% fetal calf serum (FCS) and seeded into  $25 \text{ cm}^2$  tissue culture flasks. After 2 days, medium was replaced with 0.1% BSA-DME and the cultures were continued for another 24 h for cell quiescence. Cells were then incubated with 100 ng/ml of TPA at  $37^\circ\text{C}$  for 2 h. Cells were then resuspended in fresh HBSS containing 0.1% BSA at a density of  $1 \times 10^7$  cells/ml, and incubated with  $2.5 \mu\text{M}$  fura-2 as described above. The increase of  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]_i$  is expressed as the percentage of basal level of  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]_i$ . Each data point represents the mean  $\pm$  SEM of 3–17 determinations.

culture plates. Therefore, the degree of intracellular actin polymerization was assessed by a DNase inhibition assay, based on the inhibition of DNase-I by nonpolymerized actin, but not polymerized actin [60]. As a result, histamine induced the polymerization of intracellular actin in DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells in a dose-dependent manner with an  $\text{EC}_{50}$  of approximately  $1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ , which is comparable to that of  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]_i$  ( $3 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ), but lower than the  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of histamine derived from pyrilamine binding ( $3 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ ) [22]. These data suggest that occupancy of a fraction of cell surface binding sites may be sufficient to trigger a maximal functional response as previously described in mouse brain slices [38]. The inhibitory effect on actin polymerization of  $10^{-6}$  to  $10^{-7} \text{ M}$  chlorpheniramine was also similar to the concentrations which inhibit rises in  $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]_i$ , which is of the same order of magnitude as the  $K_d$  values of pyrilamine derived from equilibrium binding ( $2.19 \times 10^{-7} \text{ M}$ ).

Flow cytometric evaluation has been used to further quantify histamine-induced changes in cell shape by the combination of forward light scatter and  $90^\circ$  light scatter as previously described for human leukocytes [61]. Our experiments demonstrate that the cell shape of DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells was significantly changed by the addition of  $3 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$  histamine. These data suggest that [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding sites on the surface of DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells are functionally active and are capable of inducing contraction of individual cells.

## REGULATION OF CELL SURFACE H1 RECEPTORS

The biochemical mechanisms of desensitization or down-regulation of cell surface receptors for mediators are important in the modulation of hypersensitivity phenomena. Experimental evidence indicates the presence of different biochemical pathways for receptor regulation depending on the type of ligand and target cell [62]. For instance, incubation of clonal astrocytoma cells with dibutyryl adenosine cyclic monophosphate (cAMP) produced a refractory state to both catecholamines and prostaglandins, suggesting that cAMP can mediate heterologous desensitization [63]. The prostaglandin E-mediated heterologous desensitization observed in fibroblasts appears to involve uncoupling of the guanine nucleotide binding protein from the catalytic unit of adenylate cyclase [64]. Moreover, recent evidence suggests that protein kinase C (PKC) exerts down-regulation of inositol coupled receptors in various cell types [65].

Desensitization of histamine H1 receptors has been reported with respect to the histamine-elicited contraction of smooth muscle [66], histamine-induced stimulation of guanosine cyclic monophosphate (cGMP) accumulation in clonal neuroblastoma cells [67], and histamine-mediated glycogen hydrolysis in mouse brain slices [31]. However, the mechanism by which H1 receptor-mediated desensitization occurs is not entirely understood. H1 receptor stimulation has been shown to induce the breakdown of inositol phospholipids [53–55] and increase  $[Ca^{2+}]_i$  [22,37]. These data suggested that desensitization of H1 receptors may be mediated via the activation of PKC.

12-O-tetradecanoylphorbol-13-acetate (TPA) has been shown to directly activate PKC by substituting for diacylglycerol with resultant alteration in the density on cell surface receptors for molecules known to modulate cell growth [68]. Furthermore, TPA activation of PKC in DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells has been extensively studied by Leeb-Lundberg et al. [69,70] and Cowlen et al. [71]. Therefore, we examined the effect of TPA on specific [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding of DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells. As expected, specific [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding sites were reduced by pretreatment with TPA, but not the K<sub>d</sub> [23]. The TPA analogue, 4 $\alpha$  phorbol 12,13-didecanoate, which does not activate PKC, failed to induce down-regulation of H1 receptors. TPA-induced down-regulation of H1 receptors was inhibited by pretreatment with 1-(5-isoquinilinesulfonyl)-2-methylpiperazine dihydrochloride (H-7) [72], a PKC inhibitor, in a dose-dependent manner [23]. The H-7 analogue, H-8, which is a less potent inhibitor of PKC [72], but a potent inhibitor of cyclic nucleotide dependent protein kinase, had no effect on H1 receptors. Moreover, as shown in Figure 1, TPA inhibited histamine-induced increases in  $[Ca^{2+}]_i$ . These data suggest that H1 receptors on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells are functionally regulated by PKC.

Recent work demonstrates that PKC phosphorylates epidermal growth factor (EGF) receptors [73], insulin receptors [74], transferrin receptors [75], and  $\alpha_1$ -adrenergic receptors [69]. However, the determination of whether PKC directly phosphorylates H1 receptors will require further knowledge of the protein constituents of H1 receptors than is currently available.

## BIOCHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF H1 RECEPTORS

H1 receptors solubilized from various tissues have demonstrated similar binding characteristics to those of the original intact tissues. For example, [<sup>3</sup>H]-doxepine binding activity was solubilized by 1% digitonin from rat and guinea pig brain membranes [76], [<sup>3</sup>H]-pyrilamine binding activity was solubilized by digitonin from guinea pig brain

membranes [77,78], [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-histamine binding activity was solubilized by 1% Triton X-100 from cat small intestine [43], and [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-histamine binding activity was solubilized by 1% Nonidet 40 from calf thymocyte membranes [79]. Recently, [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine binding activity was also solubilized by 1% digitonin from DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells [24]. The  $K_d$  of [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine on solubilized DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells was  $172 \pm 81$  nM, which is equivalent to that on the intact cells.

The reported molecular size of membrane-bound H1 receptors in both bovine and human cerebral cortex by target size analysis has demonstrated an approximate size of 160,000 daltons [80]. However, the molecular weight of soluble H1 receptors from guinea pig brain was shown to be approximately 430,000 by gel filtration [76]. The difference of molecular weight is most likely due to the presence of digitonin-H1 receptor complexes. Recently, Ruat et al. [81] have used irreversible photoaffinity labeling to specifically label H1-binding proteins in cell membranes. They synthesized [ $^{125}\text{I}$ ]-iodoazidophenpyramine, a highly potent H1 receptor antagonist derived from pyrilamine. Upon irradiation, 5% of the bound radioactivity was covalently incorporated into H1 receptors of guinea pig brain membranes. SDS-gel electrophoresis analysis indicated that the molecular weight of H1 receptors was 350,000–400,000 daltons in the absence of 2-mercaptoethanol, and the molecular weight decreased to 47,000–56,000 daltons in the presence of 2-mercaptoethanol, which is similar to the molecular weight of the receptor on calf thymocyte membranes [79]. This suggests that H1 receptors may have one or more disulfide bridges resulting in a higher molecular weight complex. Furthermore, in the presence of protease inhibitors, labeling of the 56,000 dalton peptide increased at the expense of the 47,000 dalton peptide. This also suggests that the 47,000 dalton peptide was a proteolytic product of the 56,000 dalton peptide.

In our recent studies [24], the protein with [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine binding activity was also purified with gel filtration, chromatofocusing followed by reverse phase HPLC. The final material was a single peak on reverse-phase HPLC and a single band of apparent molecular weight 39,000 daltons on SDS-PAGE, which exhibited specific [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine binding activity. This molecular weight of H1 receptors on DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 is smaller than that reported by Ruat et al. [81], and might also be due to proteolytic degradation. Since Garbarg et al. [78] also reported that H1 receptors were glycoproteins using lectin affinity chromatography, part of the difference in molecular weight might also be due to receptor glycosylation. More recently, we have raised a rabbit polyclonal antibody against the 39 kD protein by subcutaneous implantation of dried SDS-gels containing the band of interest. Preliminary results demonstrate that antiserum inhibits [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine binding to DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 2). These data strongly suggest that the 39,000 protein purified from DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells is the low-affinity histamine H1 receptor, and should result in the identification of an H1 receptor gene and further elucidate the molecular mechanism of histamine responses.

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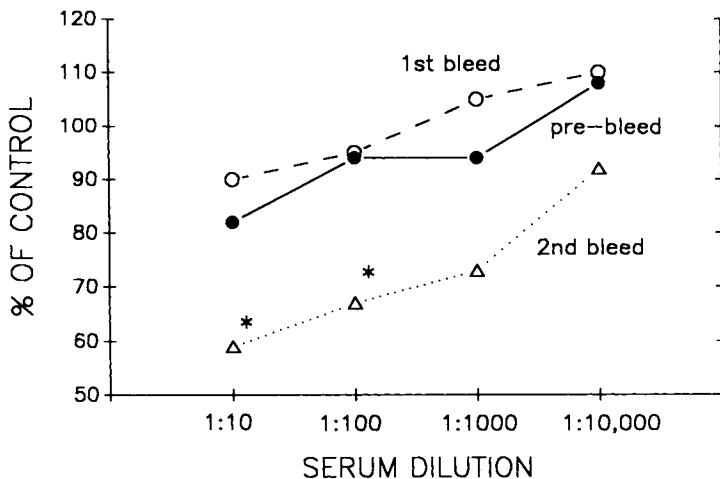


Fig. 2. Inhibition of [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine binding. DDT<sub>1</sub>MF-2 cells were removed from flasks and resuspended in HBSS containing 5 mM histidine at a density of  $1 \times 10^6$ /ml and [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine binding was performed with 100 nM [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine as described previously [22,23] in the presence of various concentration of polyclonal antibodies against 39,000 dalton H1 receptor protein. Each data point is expressed by the mean of the percentage of control [ $^3\text{H}$ ]-pyrilamine binding from two to three separate experiments performed in duplicate. \* $P < 0.05$ .

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**192:JCB      Mitsuhashi and Payan**

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