

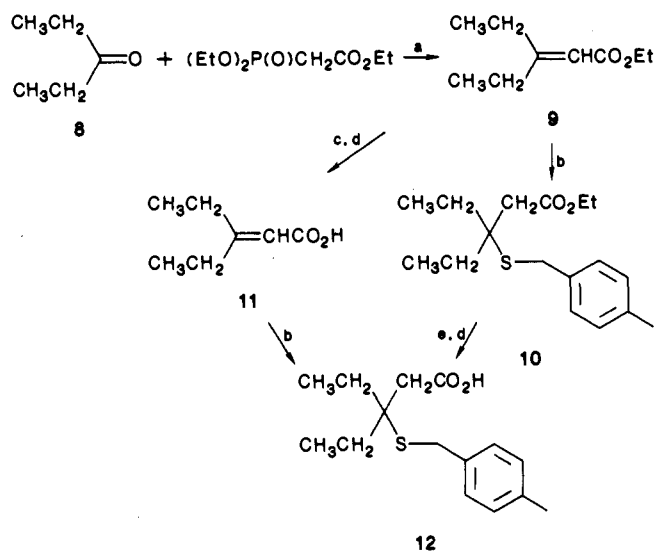
Communications to the Editor

Potent Antagonists of Vasopressin Antidiuretic Activity That Lack the β,β -Cyclopentamethylene- β -mercaptopropionic Acid Substitution at Position 1

Sir:

It was first shown by du Vigneaud¹⁻⁴ and subsequently by others⁵⁻⁷ that antagonists of the neurohypophyseal hormones oxytocin and vasopressin could be obtained by substitution of a β,β -dialkyl- β -mercaptopropionic acid for the cysteine at position 1. The alkyl groups used have included methyl (dPen), ethyl (Et₂Mpr), and cyclopentamethylene (Pmp). While potent antagonists of the pressor (or V₁) activity of vasopressin have been obtained with the dPen and Et₂Mpr substitutions, these analogues have always proven to be weak agonists of the vasopressin antidiuretic (or V₂) activity in vivo.^{8,9,14} The first potent in vivo V₂ antagonists, reported by Manning and Sawyer, contained the Pmp substitution.^{10,11} While we have demonstrated the activity of analogues with differing ring size of the β,β -cycloalkyl moiety,¹² V₂ activity has always seemed to require such a cyclic structure at position 1.^{13,14} We report here the first examples of potent vasopressin V₂ antagonists that do not possess a β,β -cycloalkyl moiety

Scheme I^a



^a(a) 1 equiv of NaH, toluene; (b) 1 equiv of *p*-methylbenzyl mercaptan, excess piperidine, reflux; (c) 5% K₂CO₃, water-MeOH (1:1); (d) H₃PO₄; (e) 5% K₂CO₃, water-MeOH-THF (1:1:1).

at position 1. In addition, we report a convenient and facile synthesis of S-protected β,β -dialkyl- β -mercaptopropionic acids suitable for use in peptide synthesis.

The activity of analogues synthesized is given in Table I. The binding affinity (K_{bind}) and adenylate cyclase activation (K_{act}) or inhibition (K_i) were measured in a pig renal medullary membrane preparation and represent V₂ receptor interactions.¹⁵ The in vivo activity is measured as the dose of antagonist necessary to lower urine osmolality to 300 mOsm/kg in a hydropenic rat preparation (ED₃₀₀).¹⁶ There are several important points to be mentioned. The dPen¹ analogue 1 is a partial agonist in vitro and is not a V₂ antagonist in vivo. The Et₂Mpr¹ analogues 2, 4, and 6 are full antagonists both in vitro and in vivo and are very similar in potency to their corresponding Pmp¹ analogues 3, 5, and 7. Note also that the analogues with D-Tyr(Et) at position 2 are about 10-fold more potent than the corresponding L-Tyr(Et) analogues. Finally, note that the activity of the des-Gly⁹ analogues 4 and 5 is comparable to that of the corresponding nonapeptides 2 and 3.

Manning et al. have recently reported the activity of [Et₂Mpr¹, Tyr(Et)², Val⁴]-AVP, which in their hands is a

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Table I. Biological Activity of Vasopressin Antagonist Analogues Modified at Position 1

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{CH}_2\text{CO}-\text{X}-\text{Phe}-\text{Val}-\text{Asn}-\text{Cys}-\text{Pro}-\text{Arg}-\text{Y} \\ | \\ \text{CR}_2 \\ | \\ \text{S} \end{array}$$

compd	R	X	Y	K_{bind}^a nM	K_i^b nM	K_{act}^c nM	ED_{300}^d ($\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$)
1	CH ₃	D-Tyr(Et)	Gly-NH ₂	39 (2)	<i>e</i>	79	na
2	CH ₂ CH ₃	D-Tyr(Et)	Gly-NH ₂	35	5.3 (2)		23 (3)
3	(CH ₂) ₅	D-Tyr(Et)	Gly-NH ₂	12 (9)	6.4 (9)		11 (7)
4	CH ₂ CH ₃	D-Tyr(Et)	NH ₂	30	8.9		12 (3)
5	(CH ₂) ₅	D-Tyr(Et)	NH ₂	12 (9)	3.9 (8)		10 (26)
6	CH ₂ CH ₃	Tyr(Et)	NH ₂	450 (2)	nd		120
7	(CH ₂) ₅	Tyr(Et)	NH ₂	280	nd		300

^a Binding affinity measured by competition with tritiated LVP; each determination represents the average of triplicate assays; the number in parentheses is the number of determinations. ^b Inhibition of LVP-sensitive adenylate cyclase; each determination represents the average of triplicate assays; the number in parentheses is the number of determinations. ^c Activation of adenylate cyclase; each determination represents the average of triplicate assays. ^d Dose to lower urine osmolality to 300 mOsm/kg; each determination is the average for four rats; the number in parentheses is the number of determinations. ^e Partial agonist with a relative V_{max} of 14%.

potent V_1 antagonist but completely devoid of V_2 antagonist activity *in vivo*.¹⁴ In fact, they report it to be a weak V_2 agonist. Our compound 6, which differs only in being the des-Gly⁹ analogue, is a fairly potent V_2 antagonist *in vivo*. It is unlikely that this difference could be due to the des-Gly modification. [Pmp¹, Tyr(Et)², Val⁴]-AVP exhibits a K_{bind} of 87 nM and an ED_{300} of 58 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, only a factor of 3 better than compound 7, implying that the des-Gly modification is well-tolerated in analogues with L-Tyr(Et) at position 2. In addition, the fact that the activities of the Et₂Mpr analogues 2 and 4 are essentially the same as that of the corresponding Pmp analogues 3 and 5 suggests that the structure-activity relationship with respect to the des-Gly modification is the same in both the Pmp and Et₂Mpr series of analogues. We can only surmise that this discrepancy is due to differences in the bioassay for antagonists. We have previously noted that the rank order of antagonist potency we generate differs from the one generated by Manning and Sawyer.¹⁶

The synthesis of the protected β,β -diethyl- β -mercaptopropionic acid is shown in Scheme I. The diethylacrylate 9 is conveniently prepared from the corresponding ketone 8 by using the Wadsworth-Emmons reaction.¹⁷ Michael addition of *p*-methylbenzyl mercaptan to 9 yields the S-protected mercaptopropionic acid 10. We have shown previously in the synthesis of Pmp that using a catalytic amount of sodium hydride as base greatly improves the yield of the Michael adduct.¹⁸ In this case, however, use of such a strong base significantly increases rearrangement of the double bond of 9 to give the unreactive β,γ -isomer. The reaction proceeds cleanly, however, with use of weaker

base piperidine.² Saponification of the Michael adduct 10 yields the desired free acid 12. This is accompanied by a significant amount of retro-Michael elimination of *p*-methylbenzyl mercaptan to give the diethylacrylic acid 11 as a contaminant. While the retro-Michael reaction can be suppressed to a degree by using 5% potassium carbonate in a 1:1:1 methanol-tetrahydrofuran-water mixture, it cannot be eliminated entirely. In order to circumvent this problem, we investigated the possibility of performing the Michael addition directly on the acrylic acid.¹ The diethylacrylic acid 11 is easily prepared from 9 by saponification. It cleanly undergoes Michael addition with *p*-methylbenzyl mercaptan with use of piperidine as the base, as before, to yield the desired S-protected mercaptopropionic acid 12. We have used this method to prepare a number of mono- and disubstituted β -mercaptopropionic acids and find it to be a convenient and generally applicable procedure.

Registry No. 1, 104532-36-7; 2, 104532-37-8; 3, 80148-24-9; 4, 104532-38-9; 5, 90332-82-4; 6, 104532-39-0; 7, 90332-81-3; 8, 96-22-0; 9, 15249-93-1; 11, 79930-59-9; 12, 104532-41-4; Me₂CO, 67-64-1; Me₂C=CHCO₂Et, 638-10-8; Me₂C=CHCO₂H, 541-47-9; *p*-Me₂C(CH₂CO₂H)SCH₂C₆H₄Me, 104532-40-3; (EtO)₂P(O)-CH₂CO₂Et, 867-13-0; cyclohexanone, 108-94-1; ethyl cyclohexylideneacetate, 1552-92-7; cyclohexylideneacetic acid, 1552-91-6; 1-[*p*-tolylmethylthio]cyclohexaneacetic acid, 87242-91-9; adenylate cyclase, 9012-42-4.

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