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Relationship between Lipophilic Character and Hemolytic Activity of Testosterone and Testosterone Esters

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The relationship between lipophilic character and hemolytic activity was studied in a series of testosterone compounds. The lipophilic character was first expressed by means of the chronatographic $R_{\rm m}$ value, which was shown to be related to the partition coefficient between the mobile and the stationary phase of a chromatographic system. The $R_{\rm m}$ value was determined, for each compound, in two different chromatographic systems, respectively, containing in the mobile phase Me₂CO or MeOH. In both cases there was a highly significant parabolic relationship between $R_{\rm m}$ values and hemolytic activity. On the other hand this result could be expected from the linear relationship between the $R_{\rm m}$ values, respectively, determined with Me₂CO or MeOH in the mobile phase. The lipophilic character of the test compounds was also expressed by means of the π values. There was a linear relationship between the π values calculated from octanol-H₂O partition coefficients and the chromatographic $R_{\rm m}$ values. A parabolic relationship was therefore shown also between π values and hemolytic activity. The present results support previous findings, which suggest that the correlation between penetration of organic rompounds through biological membranes and partition coefficient is not affected by the nature of the phases involved in the determination of the partition data.

The hemolytic activity of some neutral steroids was shown by Tateno and Kilbourne¹ and Palmer.² Weissmann and Keiser³ in a series of 35 neutral steroids and bile acids pointed out that while the 5- β -H configuration was associated with hemolytic properties, the $5-\alpha$ -H compounds were inactive and only a few Δ -4,5 steroids were active. Testosterone, which is a Δ -4,5 steroid, was found practically inactive,^{1,3} while Palmer² observed some activity. Segaloff⁴ described the hemolytic activity in vitro and in vivo of some testosterone esters. The hemolytic activity was interpreted as a consequence of the insertion of the steroids at the lipidaqueous interface at the surface of the erythrocyte.^{3,5} On the other hand, no direct relationship was found between hemolytic activity and water solubility.³ However the acetate derivatives were found to be more active than their parent compounds.³ An enhanced hemolytic activity was also found in the AcOH and BzOH esters of some steroidal sapogenins.⁶ This could suggest the influence of the lipophilic character of the molecules, at least in a series of ester derivatives. Hansch, et al.⁷ found very good correlations between partition coefficient and penetration of organic compounds through biological membranes. In previous papers it was possible to show that reversed-phase tlc is a suitable method for the determination of the lipophilic character of drugs, as expressed by the $R_{\rm m}$ value.⁸

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Materials and Methods

The testosterone compounds were kindly provided by drug companies (Organon N.V., Vister Vismara Terapeutici S.p.A., Istituto Luso Farmaco d'Italia s.r.1., Armour Erba Farmaceutici S.p.A., Essex Italia S.p.A.) and obtained from commercial sources (Prodotti Gianni, Milan). Their structures are reported in Table I. The chromatographic procedure for the determination of the R_{n} values was also used in order to check the purity of the compounds.

 $R_{\rm m}$ Values Determination.—The lipophilic character of the test compounds was expressed by their chromatographic $R_{\rm m}$ values, which have previously been described.⁸ The stationary nonpolar phase consisted of a silica gel G layer impregnated with silicone DC 200 (350 cSt) from Applied Sciences Laboratories. The impregnation was carried out by developing the plates in a 5% silicone oil solution in Et₂O. The polar mobile phase, saturated with silicone oil, was represented by H_2O in various mixture (v/v) with Me_2CO or MeOH. In particular the concentration of Me₂CO ranged from 42 to 74%, that of MeOH, from 54 to 86%. Two plates were simultaneously developed in a chromatographic chamber containing 200 ml of mobile phase. The steroids were dissolved in Me₂CO (3 mg/ml) and 1 μ l of solution was spotted randomly on the plates in order to avoid any systematic error. The developed plates were dried and sprayed with an alkaline solution of $KMnO_4$. After a few minutes at 120° yellow spots appeared on an intensely pink background. The $R_{\rm m}$ values were calculated by means of the formula:

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TABLE I STRUCTURE OF TESTOSTERONE AND ITS ESTERS



No.	Derivatives of testosterone	R	No
1	Testosterone	OH	8
2	Acetate	OAc	9
3	Propionate	$OCOC_2H_3$	10
4	Butyrate	$OCO(CH_2)_2CH_3$	11
5	Isobutyrate	$OCOCH(CH_3)_2$	12
6	Valerate	$OCO(CH_2)_3CH_3$	13
7	Isocaproate	$OCO(CH_2)_2CH(CH_3)_2$	14

$$R_{\rm m} = \log \left(\frac{1}{R_{\rm f}} - 1\right)$$

Hemolytic Activity Determination.—The procedure was based on those of Tateno and Kilbourne,¹ Weissmann and Keiser,³ and Seeman and Weinstein.⁹ Rat blood (0.8 ml) was obtained by cardiac puncture with 1-ml syringes containing 0.2 ml of Na citrate 3.8% and was immediately used. The erythrocytes were separated by centrifugation (5 min at 2.350g) and washed 3 times with a 0.9% NaCl solution buffered to pH 7.4 by 10 mM phosphate buffer. The washed erythrocytes were then suspended in this solution to a vol of 8 ml.

In order to test compounds a vol of 3.8 ml of phosphate-buffered saline was added to 0.2 ml of the above erythrocyte suspension to a final vol of 4 ml. EtOH solutions of the test compounds were finally added to the system in 1- to $10-\mu$ amounts. In this way it was possible to obtain, for each compound, concentrations ranging from 0.25×10^{-4} to $2.5 \times 10^{-4} M$. At least 8-12 determinations were carried out for each concentration. Two series of control tubes were prepared. The assessment of 100% hemolysis was obtained by adding 3.8 ml of distd H_2O to 0.2 ml of erythrocyte suspension. The hemolytic activity of EtOH was determined by adding $1-10 \,\mu$ l of EtOH to $0.2 \,\mathrm{ml}$ of erythrocyte suspension and 3.8 ml of phosphate-buffered saline. The hemolysis caused by EtOH in the added amounts was very low. On the other hand, Weissmann and Keiser³ dissolved neutral steroids in EtOH and reported a control hemolysis varying from 0.4 to 1.4%. Obviously this does not rule out the possibility of a supraadditive synergism, between EtOH and steroids. However this hypothesis would be very difficult to prove owing to the very low water solubility of the tested compounds. Both control and test suspensions were incubated for 3 hr at 37°. After incubation all the tubes were centrifugated and the supernatants removed. The optical densities of these were measured at 540 m μ in the Bausch and Lomb colorimeter. The results were expressed as per cent of total hemolysis provoked by distilled H_2O , in the following way:

$$\frac{\text{(OD of sample - OD of EtOH control)} \times 100}{\text{OD of distilled H}_{2}\text{O control}}$$

Derivatives of testosterone	R
Enanthate	$OCO(CH_2)_5CH_3$
Caprylate	$OCO(CH_2)_6CH_3$
Caprinate	$OCO(CH_2)_8CH_3$
17-β-Cypionate	OCOCH2CH2
Phenylpropionate	$OCOCH_2CH_2C_6H_5$
Hexahydrobenzoate	OCOC ₆ H ₁₁
Undecvlenate	OCO(CH ₂) ₈ CH==CH

Results

 $R_{\rm m}$ and π Values.—The partitioning of the testosterone compounds between the nonpolar stationary phase and the polar mobile phase affected their chromatographic migration in such a way, that they did not migrate until a certain concentration of Me₂CO or MeOH was reached in the mobile phase. On the other hand, above a certain Me₂CO or MeOH concentration in the mobile phase they tend to migrate with the solvent front. In any case, there is a range where, for each compound, the $R_{\rm f}$ values increase with the Me₂CO or MeOH concentration. Lower $R_{\rm f}$ values indicate shorter migrations and, therefore, molecules more lipophilic than those characterized by higher $R_{\rm f}$ values and longer migrations. As a consequence of the formula $R_{\rm m} = \log [1/(R_{\rm f}) - 1]$ negative and positive $R_{\rm m}$ values derive from $R_{\rm f}$ values, respectively, greater and smaller than 0.5. Therefore higher and/or positive $R_{\rm m}$ values indicate compounds more lipophilic than those represented by a lower and/or negative $R_{\rm m}$ value. The plots of Figures 1 and 2 show that for each compound there is a range of linear relationship between the $R_{\rm m}$ values and the concentration, respectively, of Me₂CO or MeOH in the mobile phase. According to Boyce and Milborrow,¹⁰ the $R_{\rm m}$ values in the range of linearity were considered to be the most satisfactory ones, as over this range there are the maximum increments in the $R_{\rm m}$ value of each compound and among different compounds. By means of the least-squares method the equations of the straight lines were calculated from the $R_{\rm m}$ values in the linearity range. The equation of each straight line was used in order to calculate an $R_{
m m}$ value corresponding to a 54% concentration of $Me_2\overline{CO}$ or MeOH in the mobile phase. In this way it was possible to obtain, for each compound, an $R_{\rm m}$ value in a standard system and in the range of maximum accuracy. The 54% concentration value was not chosen for any particular reason. The substantial parallelism of the straight lines of Figures 1 and 2 could permit the use of any other concentration. The $R_{\rm m}$ values calculated by means of the equation of the straight lines are reported in Table II as observed $R_{\rm m}$ values. They permitted the observation of the differ-

(10) C. B. C. Boyce and B. V. Milborrow, Nature (London), 208, 537 (1965).

TABLE II

CORRELATION BETWEEN π VALUES AND R_m VALUES OBTAINED WITH M02CO AND MOOH IN THE MOBILE PHASE. THE R_m (CALCE) VALUES WERE, RESPECTIVELY, OBTAINED FROM EQ.2 AND 3 OF TABLE IV

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Conned		<u>О</u> це)	R ₁₀ vabres (Me ₂ CO)	() al (alu)	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	R _{be} values (MeO	n, -
COMPT	# values	0.080	(Atten	$Oost \sim e000$	Oasd	Catea	Obsil Caled
1	-1.160	(), 600	-0.471	-0.129	-0.020	0.039	-0.059
2	-0.270	-0.220	-0.219	-0.001	0.400	0.390	0,010
3	0.230	-0.050	-0.078	0.028	0.590	0.587	0.003
4	0.739	0.090	0.064	0.026	0.770	0.783	-0.013
5	0.530	0,090	0.007	0.983	0.730	0,705	0.025
6	1.230	0.250	0.206	0.044	1.020	0.980	0.040
ī	1.530	0.400	0.291	0.109	1.190	1.098	0.092
8	2.230	0.560	0.489	0.071	1,450	1.374	0.076
9	2.730	0.700	0.631	O. 0691	1.630	1.571	0.029
10	3.730	0.160	0.914	0.046	1.960	1.965	-0.005
11	2.370	0.540	0.529	0.011	1.520	1.429	0.091
12	2.360	0.190	0.526	-0.336	1.060	1.425	-0.365
13	1.740	0.400	0.350	0.050	1,230	1.181	0.049
14	3.930	0,000	0.971	-0.071	2.040	2.043	-0.003



Figure 1.—Linear relationship between R_m values and acctone concentration in the mobile phase. Each point represents the mean of 8–12 values: (1) restosterone; (2) testosterone acctate; (3) (estosterone propinate; (4) testosterone butyrate; (5) resubsterone isobatyrate; (6) testosterone valerate; (7) testosterone isocaproate; (8) testosterone evalutate; (9) testosterone caprylate; (10) testosterone caprinate; (11) testosterone 17- β cypionate; (12) restosterone phenylpropinate; (13) testosterone hexahydrobenzoate; (14) testosterone undecylenate.

ences due to the presence in the mobile phase of Me_2CO or MeOH at the same concentration.

As shown by eq 1 of Table IV there is a highly significant linear relationship between the $R_{\rm m}$ values calculated at 54% Me₂CO and those calculated at 54% MeOH.

The calculations of the π values of the testosterone compounds were kindly provided by Hansch¹¹ and reported in Table II. A linear relationship between π

(24) C. Hansel, personal communication.

values and $R_{\rm m}$ values at 54% Me₂CO or MeOH is, respectively, shown by eq 2 and 3, from which were obtained the calculated $R_{\rm m}$ values of Table II.

Hemolytic Activity.—Some of the testosterone compounds could be tested with a dosewise approach in order to calculate a H₅₀ value, that is, the molar concentration provoking a 50% hemolysis. This approach was not possible for some other compounds because of their low hemolytic activity. Therefore an effectwise approach was adopted for all the compounds, *i.e.*, all of them were tested at the same molar concentration of $1.50 \times 10^{-4} M$, which was selected because it caused a suitable hemolytic response for all the compounds. The results are reported in Table III as the log of the per cent of the total hemolysis found with distilled H₂O (log *BR*).

TABLE III

Hemolytic Activity of Testosterone and its Derivatives, as Expressed by the Observed and Calculated Ldg *BR* Values. The Log *BR* (Calco) Values Were Obtained from Eq.5, 7, and 9, Respectively, for $R_{\rm m}({\rm Me}_2{\rm CO})$, $R_{\rm m}({\rm MeOH})$, and π Values

'anna	$\log BR$	$\begin{array}{c} \operatorname{Log} BR\\ \mathrm{caled}\\ (R_{\mathrm{tor}} \mathrm{MesCO}) \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c} \operatorname{Log} BR\\ \operatorname{ealed}\\ (R_m \ \operatorname{MeOH}) \end{array}$	Log BR eater) (π)
l	0.06	0,06	0.03	0.10
2	1.00	1.08	1.01	0.95
3	1.00	1.42	1.33	1.31
-1	1.74	1.63	1.57	1.58
5	1.69	1.63	1.58	1.48
G	1.94	1.78	1.80	1.77
7	1,94	1.85	1.87	1.85
8	1.92	1.84	1.88	1.00
b.	1.71	1.75	1.80	1.84
10	1.24	1.41	1.40	1.46
11	1,50	1.84	1.86	1.89
12	1.81	1.74	1.82	1.89
13	1.69	1.85	1.88	1.88
14	1.63	1.51	1.38	1.34

Physicochemical Properties—Activity Relationship. The equations which correlate structure and activity in the testosterone compounds are reported in Table IV. They were calculated from the $R_{\rm m}$ and log BRvalues of Tables II and III, by means of multiple regression analysis. Equations 4, 5, 6, and 7 were calculated with the $R_{\rm m}$ values determined, respectively. with Me₂CO or MeOH in the mobile phase. By comparing eq 4 and 5 on the one hand with eq 6 and 7, respectively, on the other, it is evident that there is no significant difference in their correlation coefficients. This is clearly due to the linear relationship existing between the $R_{\rm m}$ values determined with a Me₂COcontaining mobile phase and those determined in presence of MeOH, as expressed by eq 1. In any case the best rationalization of the relationship between structure and activity is provided by eq 5 and 7, which explain, respectively, 91 and 90% of the variation in the biological activity, as obtained by R^{2,12} The relationship between π values and log BR data is described by eq 8 and 9, the latter of which shows a very good correlation coefficient. On the other hand eq 9 does not provide a better correlation than those shown by eq 5and 7. The $\log BR$ values calculated from equations 5, 7, and 9 are reported in Table III.

TABLE IV

Regression Analysis of the Data of Tables II and III

No.	Equations		r	8	
1	$R_{\rm m(Me;CO)} = -0.509 + 0.728$	14	0,993	0.051	
	$R_{m(MeOH)}$				
2	$R_{\rm m(Me_2CO)} = -0.143 + 0.288 \ \pi$	14	0.964	0.119	
3	$R_{\rm m(MeOH)} = 0.496 + 0.394 \ \pi$	14	0.981	0.118	
4	$\log BR = 1.289 + 0.766$	14	0.622	0.431	
	$R_{m(Me_{7}CO)}$				
5	$\log BR = 1.502 + 1.561$	14	0.954	0.173	
	$R_{\rm m(Me_2CO)} - 1.723$				
	$R_{m^2(Me_*CO)}$				
6	$\log BR = 0.922 + 0.537$	14	0.594	0.443	
	$R_{m(MeOH)}$				
7	$\log BR = 0.087 + 2.716$	14	0.949	0.183	
	$R_{m(MeOH)} - 1.020 R_{m^{2}(MeOH)}$				
8	$\log BR = 1.192 + 0.209 \pi$	14	0.577	0.450	
9	$\log BR = 1.155 + 0.172 \pi$	14	0.944	0.189	
	$-0.169 \pi^2$				

Discussion

The present data confirm the existence of a parabolic relationship between lipophilic character and penetration of molecules through biological membranes. The negative sign associated with the $R_{\rm m}^2$ term of eq 5, 7, and 9 means that the hemolytic activity of testosterone compounds increases and decreases as the $R_{\rm m}$ and π values change and pass through an optimum. The lack of any significant difference between the correlation coefficients provided by eq 5, 7, and 9 shows that the nature of the phases involved in the determination of the partition data does not affect the results. This is explained on the one hand by the very high correlation between $R_{\rm m}$ values calculated with Me₂CO and MeOH, respectively, in the mobile phase and, on the other, by the high correlation between $R_{\rm m}$ and π values. These results support the findings of Collander¹³ who pointed out that the penetration of organic compounds into Nitella cells was equally correlated with Et₂O-H₂O and olive oil-H₂O partition coefficients. In fact, Collander^{13b} also found a linear relationship between the partition coefficients obtained with two different



Figure 2.—Linear relationship between $R_{\rm m}$ values and methanol concentration in the mobile phase. Each point represents the mean of 8–12 values. The compounds are indicated as in Figure 1.

sets of solvents. More recently Iwasa, et al.,¹⁴ found a very high correlation between π values and $R_{\rm m}$ values, a further support of Collander's findings. The correlation between $R_{\rm m}$ values and π values is very good, except for compound 12. This is the phenylpropionate ester which from its π value seems to be more lipophilic than expected from its R_m values. This could be explained on the basis of some group interactions which interfere with the postulate of the additivity of π values.^{7a} In the side chain of the phenylpropionate ester a $C_6H_5CH_2$ group is present. In benzylpenicillin, where the same $C_6H_5CH_2$ group is seen, it was possible to point out, in agreement with an analogous result of Bird and Marshall,¹⁵ a similar disagreement between $R_{\rm m}$ and π value.^{8a} However, at the present time insufficient data are available for any conclusion. The present work seems to suggest that the lipophilic character of the testosterone derivatives plays a major role in determining the disruption of the erythrocytes membrane. Seeman¹⁶ distinguished between nonspecific and specific hemolysins. The nonspecific hemolysins exert their hemolytic effect because of their properties of surface-active or lipid-soluble compounds; in very low concentrations they stabilize the erythrocytes from hypotonic hemolysis. Specific hemolysins were considered to be those compounds which interact with a specific membrane component; they do not show the

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⁽¹⁵⁾ A. E. Bird and A. C. Marshall, Biochem. Pharmacol., 16, 2275 (1967).

⁽¹⁶⁾ P. Seeman, ibid., 15, 1767 (1966).

above stabilizing effect at any concentration. In this sense vitamin A,¹⁷ phenothiazine tranquilizers,^{9,18a} local anesthetics,^{18a} alcohols, and steroids^{18b} are nonspecific hemolysins. In particular Seeman^{18b} considered testosterone to be a nonspecific hemolysin. Polyene antibiotics and saponins, on the other hand, are examples of specific hemolysins.

This is in agreement with the present data, which show the influence of the lipophilic character on the hemolytic activity of nonspecific hemolysins such as testosterone esters. The lipophilic character should exert its effect also in the case of specific hemolysins.

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(18) (n) P. Seeman, Biochem. Pharmacol., 15, 1753 (1966); (b) ibid., 15, 1632 (1966).

In fact it should influence the penetration to their site of action.

Finally, Milborrow and Williams¹⁹ recently reexamined Collander's contribution on the penetration of *Nitella* cells by nonelectrolytes.¹³ Collander¹⁴ had suggested a linear relationship between penetration and partition coefficient. Actually Milborrow and Williams¹⁹ showed the existence of a parabolic relationship between penetration and partition coefficient. This provides further support for our findings of a quadratic relationship between hemolytic activity and $R_{\rm m}$ values.

Acknowledgment.—We are grateful to Dr. Hanseh for his helpful suggestions.

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Steroidal Heterocycles. XIII.^{1a} 4α ,5-Epoxy-5 α -androst-2-eno[2,3-d]isoxazoles and Related Compounds

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The preparation of a number of 4,5-epoxysteroido [2,3-d] isoxazzles from the corresponding Δ^{\pm} isompounds and their conversion into the corresponding 2-cyano derivatives and to 4,5-dihydroxy-, 5-hydroxy-4-oxo-, and 4-oxo derivatives are described. Several of these compounds were found to have unexperted adrenal cortical inhibitory activity.

Several compounds described in this paper, which were prepared as part of a continuing program in these laboratories involving the preparation and reactions of steroidal heterocycles,^{1a} were found to inhibit adrenal cortical function. We have used them in attempts at molecular modification which has played such an important role in the development of better and safer drugs.²

Androsta-2,6-dieno [2,3-d] isoxazol-17 β -ol $(1\mathbf{a})$,³ on treatment with either peracetic or perphthalic acid in C₆H₆, consistently yielded a mixture of 4α ,5-epoxy-5 α androst-2-eno [2,3-d] isoxazol-17 β -ol $(2\mathbf{a})$ with starting material in a ratio of approximately 1:2. However, when a solution of isoxazole 1**a** in CHCl₃ or CH₂Cl₂ was treated with either permaleic acid⁴ or *m*-chloroperbenzoic acid⁵ in the presence of a small amount of pyridine, 2**a** was obtained in 80-90% yield.

Treatment of $4\alpha,5$ -epoxy- 5α -androst-2-eno[2,3-d]isoxazol-17 β -ol acetate (**2b**) with aq Me₂CO-H₂SO₄ yielded 5α -androst-2-eno[2,3-d]isoxazole- $4\beta,5,17\beta$ -

(3) A. J. Manson, F. W. Stonner, H. C. Neumann, R. G. Christiansen, Robert L. Clarke, J. H. Ackerman, D. F. Page, J. W. Dean, D. K. Phillips, G. O. Potts, A. Arnold, A. L. Beyler, and R. O. Clinton, J. Med. Chem., 6, 1 (1963).

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(5) Technical Data, FMC Corp. Bulletin (1963); L. F. Fieser and M. Fieser, "Reagents for Organic Synthesis," Wiley, New York, N. Y., 1967, p 135.



triol 17-acetate (**5a**) in 76% yield which was converted in Ac₂O-pyridine into the corresponding 4β -acetoxy compound (**5b**), also obtained directly on treatment of **2b** with aq AcOH--H₂SO₄. When a solution of **2b** in

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