

Synthesis and Biological Activity of New Octapeptide Analogues of Somatostatin with N-Terminal Modifications*

by A. Janecka¹ and M. Zubrzycka²

¹Department of Medicinal Chemistry and ²Department of Clinical and Experimental Physiology, Institute of Physiology and Biochemistry, Medical University of Łódź, Lindleya 6, 90-131 Łódź, Poland

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Five new octapeptide analogues of somatostatin, based on RC-160, D-Phe-c(C^β-T^β-D-T^βp-L^β-Val-C^β)-Thr-NH₂, containing N-terminal modifications have been synthesized. N-terminal, cyclic D-Phe^β was replaced by aromatic unnatural amino acid: D-Nal, D-3(2-naphthyl)alanine; D-Pal, D-3-(3-pyridyl)alanine; D-Qal, D-3-(3-quinolyl)alanine; D-Cl-Phe, D-3-(4-chlorophenyl)alanine, and D-Cl₂-Phe, D-3-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)alanine. The inhibitory effect of the new analogues on growth hormone (GH) release in rats was measured. It was found that the analogue with bicyclic D-Nal and D-Qal is more potent than RC-160 in inhibiting GH release *in vivo*, while all the analogues with aromatic, monocyclic amino acid in position 1 are more potent than RC-160. The best results were obtained for the analogue containing hydrophilic D-Pal in position 1. This analogue is a 8.4 times more potent than RC-160.

Key words: somatostatin analogue, solid phase peptide synthesis, aromatic amino acid, release inhibition

Native somatostatin (SRIF), Ala-Glu²-c(C^β-L^β-A^βn-Phe-Phe-T^βp-L^β-Thr-Phe-Thr-Ser^β-C^β) is a 14-residue peptide hormone, which is primarily involved in neuroendocrine and neuroimmunological regulation of cell proliferation, cell motility, regulation of endocrine and exocrine secretion including growth hormone, insulin, and glucagon. Discovered in 1973 by Braha *et al.* [1] as the primary factor responsible for the inhibition of growth hormone (GH) release, somatostatin is a cyclic octapeptide and more difficult to produce and purify than natural analogues. The short half-life of somatostatin has challenged many researchers to develop more stable compounds. Structural modification of native somatostatin, such as the incorporation of D-amino acid isopeptidomimetic has led to the discovery of analogues with extended half-life and increased biological activity [2,3]. The development of peptide and non-peptide analogues of somatostatin has been intensively studied in [4]. The synthesis and biological activity of somatostatin analogues have been investigated for, only three octapeptide analogues: octreotide [5], lanreotide [6], and RC-160 [7,8] (Fig. 1) are in clinical use and/or use.

* Abbreviations of unnatural amino acids: Nal 3(2-naphthyl)alanine; Pal 3-(3-pyridyl)alanine; Qal 3-(3-quinolyl)alanine; Cl-Phe 3-(4-chlorophenyl)alanine; Cl₂-Phe 3-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)alanine.

We have chosen RC-160 for further modification. In the present paper we report the design, synthesis and *in vivo* biological activity of five novel opioid analogues of RC-160.

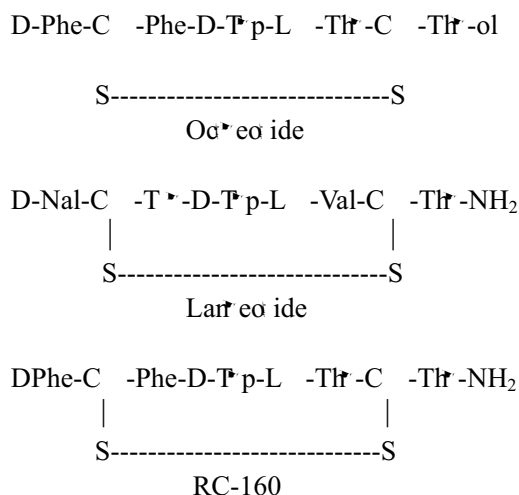


Figure 1. Chemical structures of clinically effective lomaopain analogues.

EXPERIMENTAL

Starting materials. The amino acid derivatives: Boc-Phe, Boc-D-Phe, Boc-C (4-MeB L), Boc-D-Trp, Boc-L (2-Cl-Z), Boc-Thr (B L), and natural amino acid: Boc-D-Cl-Phe and Boc-D-Cl₂-Phe were purchased from Chem Impex Inc. (USA). Boc-D-Nal, Boc-D-Qal, Boc-D-Pal, BHA⁹ resin, and TBTU (2-[1H-benzotriazol-1-yl]-1,3,3-tetramethyluronium hexafluorophosphate) were purchased from Bachem (Switzerland).

Peptide synthesis. The analogues were synthesized using standard solid-phase procedure on BHA⁹ resin (0.6 mequiv g⁻¹) in 0.25 mmol calcium *tert*-butoxycarbonate (Boc) groups for N^α-amino protection and TBTU as a condensing reagent. The coupling time was 180 min. A 3-fold excess of protected amino acid was used.

Oxycodone was cleaved from the resin by treatment with hydrogen fluoride (HF), containing the catalyst: anisole and dihydroxyol, for 60 min. at 0°C. The peptide was collected in 90% AcOH (500 ml) with a slight excess of I₂ (15 min.). Excess I₂ was then removed by the addition of a carbonic acid [9]. After collection, dried peptide was subjected to gel filtration on a 3 × 110 cm Sephadex G-10 column in 5% AcOH, followed by chromatography on Sephadex LH-20, in the solvent system H₂O:n-BuOH:CH₃COOH:MeOH 90:10:10:8. The purity of the final product was checked by analytical HPLC (Beckman Instruments, USA) on a C₁₈V dac column (3.6 × 250 mm) in a linear gradient 30–80% of B (A: 0.1% TFA in H₂O and B 80% ACN in H₂O + 0.1% TFA). The purified peptide was characterized by FAB-MS.

GH potency assay. Adult male Long-Evans rats weighing 350–400 g were used in all experiments. The rats were anaesthetized with sodium pentobarbital (60 mg/kg of body weight, administered intraperitoneally), and 30 min. later the lomaopain analogue or saline was injected subcutaneously. Blood samples were drawn from the jugular vein 15 min. after injection, and plasma separated and radioimmunoassayed for GH according to Meier [10]. The potency was expressed as the percentage of lomaopain activity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The nine octapeptide reported here are based on RC-160 and contain functional fragment Phe-D-Trp-L⁻-Thr (corresponding to residue 7-10 of omeprazole), which is found to be an essential pharmacophore of omeprazole and its analogues [11]. The conformational constraint imposed by the disulfide bridge allows the main functional fragment of the analogue to attain a bioactive conformation. However, it is found that the peptide is not as effective as the parent compound in inhibiting the biological activity. The compound c[⁻-Phe-D-Trp-L⁻-Thr-C⁻]-NH₂ inhibited only 1.4% of omeprazole activity *in vivo* [12]. Incorporation of D-Phe at the N^α-terminus and Thr-ol at the C^α-terminus greatly increased the GH⁺ release inhibitory effect [5]. Based on these results, we decided to replace the cyclic N^α-terminal D-Phe residue by aromatic, mono- and bicyclic natural residues: D-Nal, D-Cl-Phe, D-Cl₂-Phe, D-Pal and D-Qal. New analogues were synthesized by a standard solid-phase method. The crude products were obtained in about 60-80% yield, on the basis of analytical HPLC. Disulfide peptide were purified by iodine and purified by gel filtration on Sephadex G-10, followed by chromatography on Sephadex LH-20. The purity of the peptide was checked by analytical HPLC. In all cases the purity was found to be about 97%, based on UV absorbance at 214 nm. The purified octapeptide showed expected molecular weight (Table 1).

Table 1. Physicochemical data of the new analogues.

Analogue	Yield (%)	Rf ^a (HPLC)	MW	
			Calc.	Found
RC-160	88	8.74	1032.36	1033.45
1	76	10.43	1082.47	1083.57
2	73	9.81	1066.77	1068.01
3	75	10.67	1101.37	1102.45
4	68	5.32	1034.26	1035.33
5	57	6.27	1083.53	1084.42

^aHPLC on a V dac C₁₈ column, 3.6 × 250 mm; column A 0.1% TFA in H₂O, column B, 80% ACN in H₂O + 0.1% TFA; gradient 30-80% B in 30 min.

The native omeprazole possesses a wide range of biological activities. In the dose-response-activity relation, the concentration of the inhibitory effect of GH⁺ release of GH. The inhibitory effect of all new octapeptide analogues on GH⁺ release *in vivo* in omeprazole is much better than that of the parent compound. The results of the inhibitory effect of GH⁺ release for all new analogues are shown in Table 2. Three out of five new analogues showed greater potency in inhibiting GH⁺ release *in vivo* than omeprazole. The most potent analogue of this series was found to be compound 4, D-Pal-c[⁻-Phe-D-Trp-L⁻-Thr-C⁻]-Thr-NH₂, which is 8.4 times more potent than omeprazole. Peptide 2 and 3, containing D-Cl-Phe and D-Cl₂-Phe at position 1, are 5.4 and 4.8 times more potent than omeprazole, respectively. Analogues 1 and 5 are bicyclic

The idea of the position 1 is both less potent than ornithine. It seems that monocyclic, hydrophilic N-terminal is more adequate for potency of ornithine analogues. The moderate difference in activity of all new analogues may suggest that the monocyclic N-terminal is indeed involved in binding in the receptor recognition, but more likely is a part of a constrained topology, which maintains the proper orientation of the Phe-D-Trp-L-Tyr pharmacophore.

Table 2. Structure and GH inhibitory activity of ornithine analogues.

Analogue	Structure	GH inhibition [%]
RC-160	D-Phe-c[C ^α -Phe-D-Trp-L-Tyr-C ^β]-Tyr-NH ₂	100
1	D-Nal-c[C ^α -Phe-D-Trp-L-Tyr-C ^β]-Tyr-NH ₂	56
2	D-Cl-Phe-c[C ^α -Phe-D-Trp-L-Tyr-C ^β]-Tyr-NH ₂	540
3	D-Cl ₂ -Phe-c[C ^α -Phe-D-Trp-L-Tyr-C ^β]-Tyr-NH ₂	480
4	D-Pal-c[C ^α -Phe-D-Trp-L-Tyr-C ^β]-Tyr-NH ₂	840
5	D-Qal-c[C ^α -Phe-D-Trp-L-Tyr-C ^β]-Tyr-NH ₂	72

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