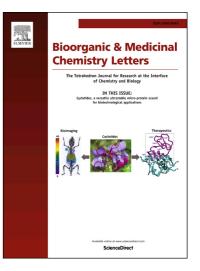
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Synthesis of novel 6-substituted amino-9-(β-D-ribofuranosyl)purine analogs

and their bioactivities on human epithelial cancer cells

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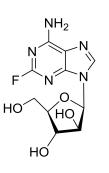
ABSTRACT

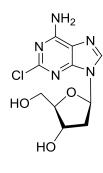
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New nucleoside derivatives with nitrogen substitution at the C-6 position were prepared and screened initially for their *in vitro* anticancer bioactivity against human epithelial cancer cells (liver Huh7, colon HCT116, breast MCF7) by the NCI-sulforhodamine B assay. N⁶-(4-Trifluoromethylphenyl)piperazine analog (27) exhibited promising cytotoxic activity. The compound 27 was more cytotoxic (IC₅₀=1-4 μ M) than 5-FU, fludarabine on Huh7, HCT116 and MCF7 cell lines. The most potent nucleosides (11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 27, 28) were further screened for their cytotoxicity in hepatocellular cancer cell lines. The compound 27 demonstrated the highest cytotoxic activity against Huh7, Mahlavu and FOCUS cells (IC₅₀=1, 3 and 1 μ M respectively). Physicochemical properties, drug-likeness, and drug score profiles of the molecules showed that they are estimated to be orally bioavailable. The results pointed that the novel derivatives would be potential drug candidates.

Keywords: Nucleoside analogs, microwave-assisted synthesis, cytotoxic activity, hepatocellular carcinoma

Cancer is one of the most important causes of death in the world, with almost 14 million new patients and 8.2 million deaths from cancer in 2012.¹ Therefore, development of new potent and selective anticancer agents is of high interest to medicinal chemistry. Nucleobase and nucleoside analogues are often exploited as chemotherapeutic agents in both hematologic malignancies and solid cancers. Nucleobases and nucleosides are the nucleotide precursors; therefore, they are considered as antimetabolites. Nucleotide compounds of similar structure, are involved in many cell processes such as cell growth and division, hence nucleobase and nucleosides have often been exploited as antineoplastic agents.^{2,3} The mechanism of action of nucleobase analogs is through induction of apoptosis.⁴ 5-Fluorouracil which is a nucleobase derivative with fluorine atom, is a frequently preferred anticancer agent for a variety of malignancies in clinics.⁵ Similarly, other pyrimidine nucleosides like cytarabine and gemcitabine have been described as antimetabolite anticancer drugs.⁶ For the last six decades, 6-mercaptopurine and 6-thioguanine have been used as a nucleic acid metabolism inhibitor for the treatment of paediatric acute lymphoblastic leukaemia.⁷ Furthermore, purine nucleosides such as fludarabine, cladribine, and pentostatine, have become established to be effective against haematological malignancies.⁸ These analogs achieve an unbalance in dNTP pool via inhibition of the ribonucleotide reductase enzyme that induces degradation in DNA synthesis.⁹ Therefore, nucleosides with anticancer bioactivities induce apoptotic cell death in general.⁶







Cladribine

Pentostatin

Figure 1. Structures of fludarabine, cladribine and pentostatine.

Primary liver cancer, hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is second deadly cancer worldwide (GLOBOCAN 2012). It is the fifth most common cancer in men and seventh in women, accounting for 7% of all cancer cases, worldwide with around 700,000 new cases each year.¹⁰⁻¹² Ethological factors for primary liver cancer are mainly HBV or HCV infection, chronic alcohol consumption, obesity and environmental toxins (aflatoxin B).^{10,13} Prognosis of HCC patients is usually very poor due to the resistance against conventional chemotherapeutic agents. Sorafenib and regorafinib are FDA approved multikinase inhibitors, which extent patient survival only 3 months with liver cancer.¹⁴⁻¹⁷ Therefore, it is essential to identify new candidate therapeutic agents for hepatocellular carcinoma.^{18,19}

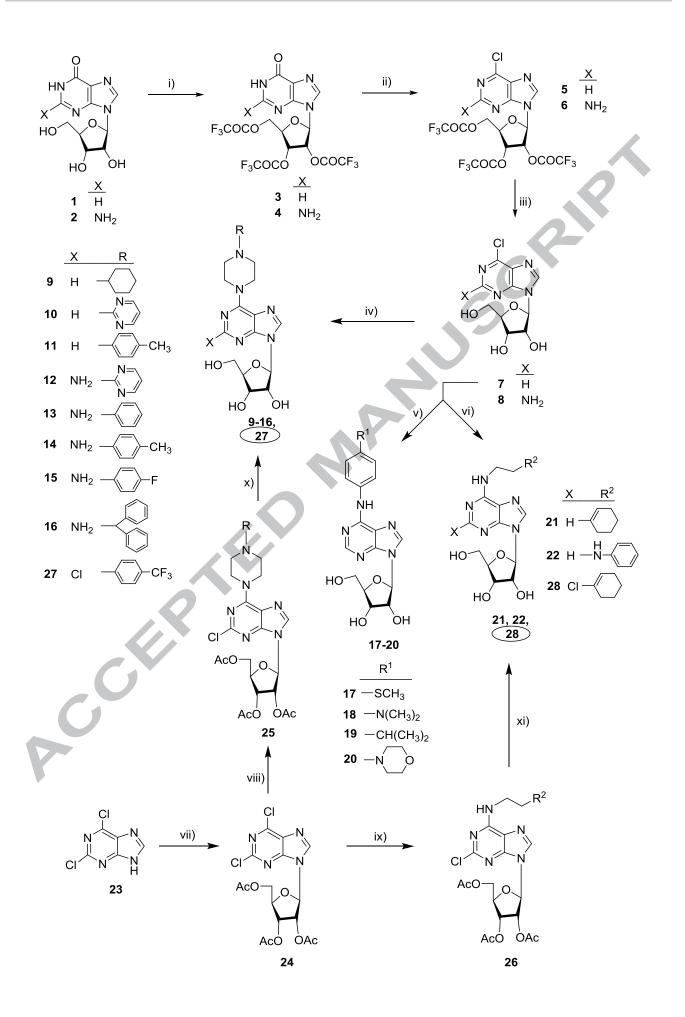
We have previously exploited purine and purine nucleoside derivatives, which have displayed promising cytotoxic activities in liver cancer cells. The molecules from those studies had liver $N^{6}-(4$ significant bioactivities cells. The compound on cancer trifluoromethylphenyl)piperazine nucleoside ($IC_{50}=5.2-9.2\mu M$) induced senescence and purine analogs (IC₅₀=0.1-0.8 μ M) lead to apoptotic cell death in HCC cell lines.^{20,21} Therefore, we designed novel compounds with amine and chlorine electronegative substituents at the C-2 position of the purine ring. These molecules were then synthesized as a new series of 6-substituted amino-9-(β -D-ribofuranosyl)purine derivatives (9-22, 27, 28) and their cytotoxic activities were screened in human epithelial cancer cells (liver Huh7, colon HCT116, breast MCF7). The bioactivities of the most potent nucleoside derivatives (11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 27, 28) were further analysed in hepatocellular cancer cell lines.

The piperazine-containing nucleoside analogs (**9-16**) were synthesized as shown in Scheme 1. In the first transformation, inosine and guanosine are converted to the 6-chloro nucleoside (**5**, **6**) with the trifluoroacetic acid anhydride, thionyl chloride method developed by Robins for

2'-deoxyinosine.²² Trifluoroacetyl groups were used for transient hydroxyl protection instead of stability of the glycosidic bond. These groups were readily removed by methanolysis after the chlorination reaction. The inosine and guanosine derivatives (**9-16**) were prepared via nucleophilic aromatic substitution of compounds **7**, **8** with 4-substituted piperazines.

Nucleosides substituted with 4-substituted anilines / 2-substituted ethyl amines at the position C-6 (17-22), were obtained with nucleophilic aromatic substitution reaction of 6-chloro-9-(β -D-ribofuranosyl)purine (7) with the suitable anilines and amines under basic conditions (Scheme 1).

The 2-chloro-6-(4-substituted piperazine) / 6-(2-substituted ethyl amino) purine analogs (27, 28) were prepared as shown in Scheme 1. 2,6-Dichloropurine (23) was condensed with the acetylated ribofuranose under microwave irradiation for 30 minutes to get 2,6-dichloro-nucleoside derivative (24) in good yield of 79%. The yield obtained as a result of this reaction was significantly higher than the yield in the previously reported method.^{23,24} Displacement of the 6-chloro group was made by nucleophilic aromatic substitution by the substituted piperazine or ethyl amine. Removal of the acetyl groups as the protecting group was made by NaOMe to obtain purine nucleoside analogs 27, 28. The structures of the all compounds were confirmed by ¹H, ¹³C NMR mass spectral data and elemental analysis.



Scheme 1. Reagents: (i) TFAA, CH_2Cl_2 ; (ii) $SOCl_2$, CH_2Cl_2 , DMF; (iii) MeOH, 7 50%, 8 56% (yields over three steps); (iv) 4-substituted piperazines, Et₃N, EtOH, 9 35%, 10 38%, 11 60%, 12 23%, 13 11%, 14 14%, 15 16%, 16 35%; (v) 4-substituted anilines, Et₃N, abs. EtOH, 17 22%, 18 20%, 19 54%, 20 24%; (vi) 2-substituted ethyl amines, Et₃N, EtOH, 21 10%, 22 10%; (vii) 1,2,3,5-tetra-O-acetyl- β -D-ribofuranose, silica gel 60, EtOAc, microwave irradiation, 120 W, 24 79%; (viii) 1-(α , α , α -trifluoro-*p*-tolyl)piperazine, TEA, EtOH, 25 75%; (ix) 2-(1-cyclohexenyl) ethylamine, TEA, EtOH, 2662%; (x) NaOMe, MeOH, 27 87%, 28 40%.

The in vitro cytotoxicity of the compounds 9-22, 27, 28 were initially analyzed on Huh7 (liver), HCT116 (colon) and MCF7 (breast) cancer cells, using a sulforhodamine B (SRB) assay.²⁵ The IC_{50} values for each compound also were calculated in comparison with the known nucleobase analog 5-fluorouracil (5-FU), nucleoside analogs fludarabine and cladribine and the results were shown in Table 1. Among the synthesized compounds, analogs accommodating substituted piperazine moiety at their C-6 position (9-16, 27), the one with promising IC₅₀ values against Huh7 (2 µM), HCT116 (1 µM) and MCF7 (4 µM) is trifluoromethylphenyl substituted piperazine analogs (27). Nucleoside 27 displayed significant cytotoxic activity for all the cell lines screened. When, IC₅₀ values compared with 5-FU, fludarabine, the compound 27 had displayed lower values, which are in micromolar concentrations. Compound 27 established a better cytotoxic activity on Huh7 cell (2 vs. 30 and 30 for 5-FU, fludarabine respectively), HCT116 (1 vs. 4 and 8 for 5-FU and fludarabine) and MCF7 cells (4 vs. 3 and 15 for 5-FU and fludarabine). Also compound 16, bearing a diphenylmethyl substituent at piperazine moiety of the nucleoside, had higher cytotoxic activities when compared to 5-FU and known nucleoside drug fludarabine, on Huh7 cells. The substitution of (2-cyclohexenylethyl)amino at C-6 position improved the cytotoxic activity of compound 28 and the IC_{50} values for 72 hours of treatment were comparable to those of 5-FU and fludarabine on Huh7 cell line.

We then analyzed the cytotoxic activities of the most potent nucleoside derivatives (**11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 27, 28**) in a panel of HCC cells: Huh7, HepG2, Mahlavu, and FOCUS (Table 2). N⁶-Trifluoromethyl nucleoside analog **27** demonstrated the best cytotoxic activity, with IC₅₀ values of 1-3 μ M against Huh7, Mahlavu and FOCUS cells (Table 2). The 2-Cyclohexenylethyl amino derivative **21** was also found to be significantly bioactive (IC₅₀ 1 μ M) on HepG2 cell line. Compounds **27** and **21** had a better cytotoxic activity than the known cytotoxic drugs 5-FU and fludarabine on HepG2 cells. When there was a bigger diphenylmethyl group at the piperazine (**16**), we observed that compound **16** had displayed lower values in micromolar concentrations. Furthermore, nucleoside **13**, which had no substitution at the phenyl ring, were cytotoxic to FOCUS cell line with an IC₅₀ values of 9 μ M.

Nucleoside **21** being one of the most active compound, was showed noteworthy IC₅₀ values (IC₅₀=6 μ M) on HCT116 which were comparable to that of 5-FU (IC₅₀=4 μ M) and to that of nucleoside analog fludarabine (IC₅₀=8 μ M) (Table 1). Similarly, the cytotoxic activity on MCF7 cancer cells was significantly low with nucleoside **21** (IC₅₀=3 μ M), which was five times more than the known cytotoxic drug fludarabine.

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Table 1. In vitro cytotoxicity of the compounds 9-22, 27, 28 on different human cancer celllines (Huh7, HCT116, MCF7)

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_	Cancer	cell lines, IC ₅₀ (µ	ιM) ^a
Compound	Huh7	HCT116	MCF7
9	NI	>100	NI
10	NI	>100	40±2
11	NI	70±10	>100
12	NI	NI	NI
13	50±20	30±0.2	NI
14	NI	NI	NI
15	>100	30±3	NI
16	10±1	20±0.5	20±0.9
17	NI	>100	NI
18	80±80	40±10	30±8
19	60±40	10±2	50±20
20	NI	NI	80±60
21	>100	6±1	3±1
22	NI	30±10	>100
27	2±0.5	1±0.2	4±0.1
28	20±2	90±100	30±8
5-FU Fludarabine Cladribine	30±2 30±20 0.9±0.7	4±0.3 8±3 <0.1	3 ± 0.7 15 ± 0.1 2 ± 2 rowth inhibition curves obtained from the

^aIC₅₀ values were calculated from the cell growth inhibition curves obtained from the treatments done with increasing concentrations of each molecule (40, 20, 10, 5, and 2.5 μ M) for 72h. Experiments are done in duplicate. NI: No inhibition

	HCC cell line, IC ₅₀ (µM) ^a						
Compound	Huh7	HepG2	MAHLAVU	FOCUS			
11	NI	NI	>100	40±9			
13	50±20	>100	NI	9±0.5			
16	10±1	20±4	7±1	20±3			
18	80±80	30±10	30±2	20±6			
19	60±40	40±8	40±5	20±3			
21	>100	1±0.2	>100	NI			
27	1±0.06	3±0.4	3±0.2	1±0.01			
28	20±2	40±10	30±8	50±20			
5-FU	30±2	5±0.8	10±2	4±0.5			
Fludarabine	30±20	20±6	10±5	10±1			
Cladribine	0.4 ± 0.01	0.04 ± 0.003	0.1±0.01	0.4±0.01			

Table 2. IC₅₀ values of **11**, **13**, **16**, **18**, **19**, **21**, **27**, **28** against hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) cell lines: Huh7, HepG2, MAHLAVU, FOCUS.

^aIC₅₀ values were calculated from the cell growth inhibition curves obtained from the treatments done with increasing concentrations (40, 20, 10, 5, and 2.5 μ M) for the molecules with IC₅₀ values above 2.5 μ M and (4, 2, 1, 0.5, 0.25, 0.125, 0.0625 and 0.03125 μ M) for IC₅₀ values below 2.5 μ M for 72h. Experiments are done in triplicate. NI: No inhibition

In silico ADME parameters of the new nucleoside analogs **9-22**, **27-28**, were used to calculate Lipinski's rules, solubility, percentage of absorption (%ABS) and topological polar surface area (TPSA) (Table 3) (see supplementary documentation). All compounds have molecular weights smaller than 500 (377.44 > MW < 447.47), with the exception of the compounds **16** and **27**. The % ABS values were between the range of 49.72% and 68.73%, predicting that the synthesized nucleosides might penetrate through cell membrane.²⁶ Majority of the synthesized compounds possess the values of TPSA theoretically compatible with acceptable passive oral absorption. The results pointed that the novel derivatives would be potential drug candidates. To further support our*in silico* predictions, we calculated drug-likeness and drug-scores of

these compounds which were comparable to those of 5-FU, cladribine and fludarabine (0.06,

0.45 and 0.46 respectively) in general.

Compound	Parameter									
	% ABS	TPSA	Log S at PH 7.4	MW	cLog P	nHBA	nHBD	RB	DL	DS
9	68.73	116.72	-1.52	420.51	-1.12	10	3	3	-5.45	0.39
10	58.70	145.78	-2.99	414.42	-0.66	11	3	4	0.95	0.70
11	67.60	120.00	-4.16	426.47	1.10	9	3 3	4	-1.48	0.43
12	49.72	171.80	-3.33	429.44	-0.81	12	4	4	3.67	0.77
13	59.75	142.74	-2.62	429.48	-1.25	11	4	3	4.13	0.73
14	58.62	146.02	-4.50	441.49	0.95	10	4	4	1.25	0.61
15	59.75	142.74	-2.87	447.47	-1.11	11	4	3	1.20	0.60
16	59.75	142.74	-2.98	519.60	0.36	11	4	5	4.05	0.55
17	66.81	122.27	-3.81	391.45	-0.49	9	4	4	-2.80	0.37
18	65.69	125.51	-2.91	388.42	-1.01	10	4	4	-9.11	0.14
19	66.81	122.27	-4.50	387.44	0.13	9	4	4	-5.28	0.35
20	62.51	134.74	-3.36	430.46	-1.23	11	4	4	-4.96	0.13
21	66.81	122.27	-3.71	377.44	-0.95	9	4	5	-8.29	0.39
22	62.66	134.30	-3.05	388.42	-1.75	10	5	6	-5.14	0.41
27	68.73	116.72	-4.70	516.91	0.91	10	3	4	-6.06	0.27
28	66.81	122.27	-4.02	411.89	0.10	9	4	5	-5.48	0.35
5-FU	88.92	58.20	-1.16	130.07	-0.66	2	2	0	-4.50	0.06
Fludarabine	41.44	195.80	-2.33	365.21	-1.59	10	5	4	-21.96	0.45
Cladribine	67.84	119.30	-2.90	285.69	-0.28	7	3	2	0.89	0.46

Table 3. Lipinski's rule of 5, %ABS, TPSA, Log S values, druglikeness and drug scores for the compounds **9-22**, **27-28**.

%ABS=109–0.345×TPSA; Number hydrogen bond acceptor (NO)=nHBA \leq 10;Number hydrogen bond donors (OHNH)=nHBD \leq 5; MW \leq 500; RB \leq 10; Octanol-water partition coefficient=Log P<5; Solubility=Log S between -1 and -5; TPSA<140 Å; DL: Drug-Likeness score; DS: Drug-Score

To conclude, fourteen novel nucleoside derivatives (9-22) bearing substitutedpiperazine/phenyl amino)/ethyl amino at the C-6 position were designed, synthesized and their bioactivities were assessed in human liver breast and colon epithelial cancer and a set of liver cancer cells. These compounds were acquired with a multistep reactions starting from inosine/guanosine. Alternatively, the condensation of 2,6dichloropurine with the sugar acetylated β -D-ribofuranose were efficiently used for the synthesis of 2-chloro nucleoside analogs (27, 28) and their cytotoxicity were also analyzed on

the same set of cancer cells. Our results indicated that the compounds 21, 27 were promising candidates as chemotherapeutic drugs with the IC_{50} values less than 10 μ M in Huh7 liver, MCF7 breast and HCT116 colon cancer cells .With the aim of investigating their potential anticancer use in hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the bioactivies of the compounds 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 27, 28 were further tested on a panel of liver cancer cell lines. Compound 21 and 27, which were designed as putative anticancer agents, showed the best biological activities with IC₅₀ values of 1-3 μ M on HepG2 liver cancer cells.

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Supplementary Data

Supplementary data (experimental procedures and spectroscopic characterizations of the compounds) associated with this article can be found, in the online version.

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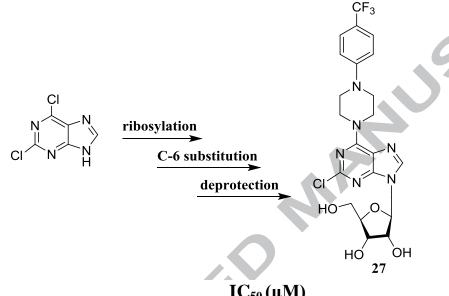
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GRAPHICAL ABSTRACT

Synthesis of novel 6-substituted amino-9-(β -D-ribofuranosyl)purine analogs and their

bioactivities on human epithelial cancer cells

Meral Tuncbilek, Asligul Kucukdumlu, Ebru Bilget Guven, Duygu Altiparmak, Rengul Cetin-Atalay



	10.50 (μινι)						
	27	5-FU	Fludarabine	Cladribine			
Huh7	1±0.06	30±2	30±20	0.4±0.01			
MAHLAVU	3±0.2	10±2	10±5	0.1±0.01			
FOCUS	1±0.01	4±0.5	10±1	0.4±0.01			
P							