Accepted Manuscript

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| PII: | S0960-894X(18)30777-7 |
|----------------|--|
| DOI: | https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bmc1.2018.09.035 |
| Reference: | BMCL 26056 |
| To appear in: | Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters |
| Received Date: | 22 June 2018 |
| Revised Date: | 10 September 2018 |
| Accepted Date: | 27 September 2018 |



Please cite this article as: Kuroda, S., Kobashi, Y., Oi, T., Amada, H., Okumura-Kitajima, L., Io, F., Yamamto, K., Kakinuma, H., Discovery of a Potent, Low-Absorbable Sodium-Dependent Glucose Cotransporter 1 (SGLT1) Inhibitor (TP0438836) for the Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes, *Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters* (2018), doi: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bmcl.2018.09.035

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Discovery of a Potent, Low-Absorbable Sodium-Dependent Glucose Cotransporter 1 (SGLT1) Inhibitor (TP0438836) for the Treatment of Type 2 Diabetes

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Abstract

The design and synthesis of a novel class of low-absorbable SGLT1 inhibitors are described. To achieve low absorption in the new series, we performed an optimization study based on a strategy to increase TPSA. Fortunately, the optimization of an aglycon moiety and a side chain of the distal aglycon moiety led to the identification of compound **30b** as a potent and low-absorbable SGLT1 inhibitor. Compound **30b** showed a desirable PK profile in Sprague-Dawley (SD) rats and a favorable glucose-lowering effect in diabetic rats.

The number of people with type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is increasing. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that approximately 415 million adults have diabetes, and this total is expected to rise to 642 million by 2040. T2DM can cause serious health problems such as cardiovascular disease, blindness, kidney failure and lower limb amputation. Recently, the association between sugar intake, particularly from sugar-sweetened beverages, and the risk of T2DM has been discussed.¹ In 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued new recommendations to limit sugar intake. Maintaining blood glucose levels is important for the prevention of T2DM.

Sodium-dependent glucose cotransporters (SGLTs) have attracted considerable attention as a new target for T2DM. SGLT2 is expressed mostly in early renal proximal tubules and is responsible

for >90% of the renal reabsorption of filtered glucose (160-180 g/day).^{2,3,4} In fact, several SGLT2 inhibitors including dapagliflozin,⁵ canagliflozin,⁶ empagliflozin,⁷ ipragliflozin,⁸ luseogliflozin⁹ and tofogliflozin¹⁰ have been approved. On the other hand, SGLT1 plays an important role in glucose absorption from the intestinal lumen into the epithelial cells of the small intestine. In fact, small intestinal SGLT1 mRNA expression and intestinal glucose uptake were increased in patients with T2DM. Therefore, creating an SGLT1 inhibitor is an attractive option for the treatment of T2DM.¹¹ Some glucose derivatives have been reported as SGLT1 inhibitors.^{12,13,14}

We have focused on low-absorbable SGLT1 inhibitors that suppress glucose absorption in the small intestine to control blood glucose with minimal side effects. However, a systemic and orally available SGLT1 inhibitor might have an overly strong blood glucose lowering effect because of the suppression of glucose absorption from the intestine and the excretion of urinary glucose via the inhibition of SGLT1 on the distal proximal tubules in the kidney, thereby inducing hypoglycemia. Furthermore, SGLT1 is also expressed in the heart, where its function is unclear.^{15,16}

We previously reported the structure-activity relationship (SAR) of *C*-phenyl 1-thio-D-glucitol derivatives with selective SGLT2 inhibitory activities.⁹ We found that the SGLT2 selectivity to SGLT1 was lowered while the SGLT2 inhibition potency was maintained when R^1 of compound **1** was a hydroxyl group. Thus, we selected compound **2** as a starting core structure for a moderate SGLT1 inhibitor.

Next, low absorbability was imparted by introducing a side chain with a highly water-soluble polar functional group into R^4 of the distal aglycon moiety. Furthermore, conversion from thioglucose to glucose was performed from the viewpoint of reducing both lipophilicity and cost (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Strategy for creating a low-absorbable SGLT1 inhibitor.

Herein, we optimized the substituents on the aglycon moiety of 2 to improve the SGLT1 inhibition activity (Figure 1). We describe the synthesis and structure-activity relationships (SARs) of this new series of *C*-phenyl 1-thio-D-glucitol derivatives and *C*-phenyl D-glucitol derivatives, focusing on improving the SGLT1 inhibition potency and decreasing absorbability, to create a low-absorbable functional SGLT1 inhibitor.

The C-phenyl 1-thio-D-glucitol derivatives 4a-4c, shown in Table 1, were synthesized as described in our previous paper.⁹

The synthesis of the C-phenyl 1-thio-D-glucitol derivatives 14a-14e, also shown in Table 1, is

shown in Scheme 1. For the synthesis of compounds **14a-14e**, commercially available 4-hydroxy-2-methyl-acetophenone (**5**) was protected by a benzyl group using benzyl bromide and then oxidatively brominated using NaBr in the presence of OXONE[®] to generate **6**. The carboxyl group of **6** was converted to aldehyde via a Winreb amide reduction to yield **7**. After the halogen lithium exchange of compounds **8a-8e**, these compounds were coupled with **7**, leading to **9a-9e**. Reduction of the hydroxyl group of **9a-9e** using triethylsilane and boron trifluoride diethyletherate produced aglycon **10a-10e**. **12a-12e** were obtained by adding thiolactone **11**, synthesized as described in our previous paper, to the THF solution of Grignard reagents prepared from compounds **10a-10e** and magnesium powder. The resulting hydroxyl group of **12a-12e** was reduced β -stereoselectively to yield compounds **13a-13e**. Finally, the benzyl group of **13a-13e** was removed by catalytic hydrogenation with palladium hydroxide under a hydrogen atmosphere to yield **14a-14e**.



Scheme 1. (a) BnBr, K₂CO₃, TBAI, DMF, rt; (b) NaBr, OXONE[®], acetone-H₂O, rt; (c) (COCl)₂, DMF(cat.), CHCl₃, rt, then *N*-methoxy-*N*-methylamine hydrochloride, Et₃N, rt ; (d) LiAlH₄, THF, 0°C; (e) **8a-8e**, *n*-BuLi, THF, -78°C, then **7**; (f) Et₃SiH, BF₃OEt₂, CH₃CN/CHCl₃, 0°C; (g) Mg, THF; (h) Et₃SiH, BF₃OEt₂, CH₃CN/CHCl₃, -15°C; (i) Pd(OH)₂/H₂, EtOH, rt.

The synthesis of the *C*-phenyl 1-thio-D-glucitol derivatives **22c-22h** is shown in Scheme 2. Compound **7** was protected by an acetal group using ethylene glycol under acidic conditions, yielding **15**. **17a** and **17b** were obtained by adding thiolactone **16a** or commercially available lactone **16b** to lithium reagents prepared from **15** and *n*-BuLi. The removal of the acetal group of **17a** and

17b yielded 18a and 18b, respectively. 1,4-Dibromobenzene was mono-lithiated using *n*-BuLi and coupled with 18a and 18b, followed by the reduction of the hydroxyl group at the anomeric position to yield 19a and 19b, respectively. A subsequent Mizoroki-Heck reaction of 19a, 19b with vinylacetate under microwave irradiation yielded 20a and 20b, respectively. 21c-21h were obtained by condensing 20a, 20b and the corresponding amines using water soluble carbodiimide hydrochloride. Finally, the benzyl group removal and double bond reduction of 21c-21h were performed under conditions similar to those used for 13a-13e in Scheme 1 to yield the desired products 22c-22h.



Scheme 2. (a) *p*-TsOH, ethylene glycol, PhMe, reflux; (b) *n*-BuLi, THF, -78°C, then **16a**,**16b**; (c) 6NHCl, THF; (d) 1,4-dibromobenzene, *n*-BuLi, THF, -78°C, (e) Et₃SiH, BF₃OEt₂, CH₃CN/CHCl₃, 0°C; (f) vinyl acetate, Pd(OAc)₂, (*o*-tolyl)₃P, Et₃N, MeCN, 120°C; (g) amine, WSCI-HCl, HOBt, CHCl₃, rt; (h) Pd(OH)₂/H₂, EtOH, rt.

Scheme 3 shows the synthesis of compounds 25a-25c. Mizoroki-Heck coupling of 19b with

allyl urea derivatives **23a-23c** under heating yielded **24a-24c**. The benzyl group removal and double bond reduction of **24a-24c** were performed under conditions similar to those used for **13a-13e** in Scheme 1 to yield the desired products **25a-25c**.



Scheme 3. (a) Pd(OAc)₂, (o-tolyl)₃P, Et₃N, MeCN, 120°C; (b) Pd(OH)₂/H₂, EtOH, rt.

Scheme 4 shows the synthesis of compounds 30a and 30b. Compound 27 was obtained by adding 18b to aryl lithium prepared from 26. The hydroxyl groups of 27 were reduced at the same time to yield 28 as a β -C-glucoside. The trityl group removal of 28 was removed under acidic conditions to yield 29. The preparations of 30a and 30b were performed by the condensation of 29 with the corresponding amines followed by the removal of the benzyl group under the same conditions as those used for 13a-13e in Scheme 1.



Scheme 4. (a) 26, *n*-BuLi, THF, then 18b, -78°C, (b) Et₃SiH, BF₃OEt₂, CH₃CN/CHCl₃, 0°C; (c) TFA, r.t.; (d) *p*-nitrophenyl chloroformate, pyridine, rt; (e) Pd(OH)₂/H₂, MeOH, rt.

To assess the in vitro potency of SGLT1 and SGLT2 inhibition, the inhibitory activities of the compounds on SGLTs were determined using a cell-based assay in which the inhibition of the rate of glucose uptake was monitored using CHO-K1 cells expressing human SGLT1 and SGLT2. The inhibitory activities of SGLT1 and SGLT2 together with the topological PSA (TPSA)¹⁷ are listed in Table 1.

A number of physicochemical property-based rules for oral bioavailability were evaluated. Veber et al. proposed that a polar surface area (PSA) equal to or less than 140 Å² (or 12 or fewer H-bond donors and acceptors) is likely to have a high probability of good oral bioavailability in rats.¹⁸ Tian et al. proposed that two simple parameters (PSA < 160 Å² and log P > -2.2) were well correlated with intestinal absorption, but not bioavailability.¹⁹ Therefore, we designed compounds with polar functional groups focusing on TPSA and the number of H-bond donors and acceptors.

The inhibitory activities of SGLT1 and SGLT2 were significantly improved by incorporating the methyl group on \mathbb{R}^2 **4b**, compared with our previously reported **4a**. The substitution of \mathbb{R}^1 by hydroxyl group **4c** enhanced the SGLT1 and SGLT2 inhibition activities by several-fold, compared with **4a**. Then, we evaluated the SAR of the para position on the B ring (\mathbb{R}^3) by preparing compounds **14a-14e** with substitutions of low alky and alkoxy groups on \mathbb{R}^3 . Compounds **14d** and **14e** had slightly more potent SGLT1 inhibitory activities than those of **14a** and **14b**, suggesting that a linear alkyl group had some enhancing effect on the activity. The derivative **14d** created by introducing a methyl group had an SGLT1 inhibitory activity of 25 nM and an SGLT2 inhibitory activity of 2 nM, with a TPSA value of 126 and 11 H-bond donors and acceptors. Since the physicochemical properties of **14d** were similar to those of the selective SGLT2 inhibitor luseogliflozin, **14d** was expected to exhibit good intestinal absorption. To acquire a low-absorbable compound, we performed further optimization synthesis with the aim of increasing the TPSA and the number of H-bond donors and acceptors.

Table 1

Structure-activity/TPSA relationships of C-phenyl 1-thio-D-glucitol derivatives

| | R ¹ | R^2 | R^3 |
|----|----------------|-------|-------|
| HO | S | | D |
| HO | | H | |
| | Оп | | |

| Cpd. R ¹ | \mathbf{P}^2 | D ³ | hSGLT1 ^a | hSGLT2 ^a | TDC Ab | |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------|
| | К | ĸ | К | IC ₅₀ (nM) | IC ₅₀ (nM) | IFSA |
| 4a | Н | Н | OEt | 26100 ^c | 73.6 | 115 |
| 4b | Н | Me | OEt | 671 ^c | 2.29 | 115 |
| 4c | OH | Н | OEt | 4040° | 17.4 | 136 |

| 14a | OH | Me | OEt | 162 | 3 | 136 |
|-----|----|----|------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----|
| 14b | OH | Me | OMe | 65 | \mathbf{NT}^{d} | 136 |
| 14c | OH | Me | OiPr | 414 | 3 | 136 |
| 14d | OH | Me | Me | 25 | 2 | 126 |
| 14e | OH | Me | Et | 32 ^c | 2 | 126 |

^a IC₅₀ values for hSGLT1 and hSGLT2 activities represent the mean values of at least two experiments.

^b The TPSA value was calculated using software from ACD/ Percepta, version 2015, Advanced Chemistry Development, Inc.

^c 0.1 mM methyl- α -D-glucopyranoside containing [¹⁴C] methyl- α -D-glucopyranoside.

^d Not tested.

We anticipated obtaining a low absorbable compound by introducing an alkyl chain with a water-soluble functional group on R³. Compounds **22c**, **22d** and **22e**, in which a highly water-soluble amide were introduced into a linear alkyl linker, achieved an increase in TPSA and the number of H-bond donors and acceptors while maintaining the activity (Table 2). For future mass production, we next confirmed the tolerability of a glucose structure instead of a 5-thio-glucose structure, for which intermediate **11** has a 14-step synthesis from D-glucurono-3,6-lactone. As a result, the SGLT1 inhibitory activities of amide derivatives **22f**, **22g** and **22h** were equivalent to those of **22c**, **22d** and **22e**, respectively. In addition, the urea derivatives **25b** and **25c** showed slightly weaker SGLT1 inhibitory activities. Also, **25a** with basic methylpiperazine exhibited a significantly weakened SGLT1 inhibitory activity. Next, urea derivatives **30a** and **30b**, in which one carbon chain was shortened, were obtained; these compounds had the same inhibitory activities as the amide derivatives. Compound **30b** showed strong inhibitory activities, with an SGLT1 inhibitory activity of 28 nM and an SGLT2 inhibitory activity of 7 nM, a TPSA value of 212, and 22 H-bond donors and acceptors.

Table 2

Structure-activity/TPSA relationships of R⁴ on B ring



| Cnd | X | \mathbf{B}^4 | hSGLT1 ^a | hSGLT2 ^a | TPS A ^b | |
|------|----|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|
| epu. | 28 | R | IC ₅₀ (nM) | IC ₅₀ (nM) | 11.571 | |

| 22c | S | | 22 | 5 | 196 |
|-----|---|--|-----|-----|-----|
| 22d | S | * OH OH OH | 35 | 9 | 216 |
| 22e | S | $* \overset{H}{\overset{O}{\overset{V}{\underset{O}{\overset{U}{I}{\overset{U}{\bullet{O}{\bullet{O}{O}{I}{I}{I}}{I}}}}}}}}}}}}}}$ | 47 | 40 | 199 |
| 22f | 0 | * ~ ~ ~ ^H O H OH | 32 | NT° | 180 |
| 22g | 0 | * O O H O O O H O O H O H O H O H O H O H O H O H O H | 35 | NT° | 200 |
| 22h | 0 | | 51 | 7 | 183 |
| 25a | 0 | | 764 | 5 | 146 |
| 25b | 0 | ∗NN ∠_он | 65 | 5 | 172 |
| 25c | 0 | | 175 | 7 | 212 |
| 30a | 0 | ∗ ~~ ^Н Н ~ ОН | 51 | 4 | 172 |
| 30b | 0 | | 28 | 7 | 212 |

 $^{\rm a}$ IC_{50} values for hSGLT1 and hSGLT2 activities represent the mean values of at least two experiments.

^b The TPSA value was calculated using software from ACD/ Percepta, version 2015, Advanced Chemistry Development, Inc.

^c Not tested.

Given the promising good potency and low absorbability, we evaluated the pharmacokinetic (PK) profile of compound **30b** (TP0438836) in SD rats and the membrane permeability of compound **30b** using parallel artificial membrane permeability assays (PAMPA). The resulting PK parameters and permeability of **30b** are shown in Table 3. The total clearance (CL_{total}), volume of distribution at steady state (Vd_{ss}), and elimination half-life ($t_{1/2}$) after the single intravenous administration of compound **30b** (2 mg/kg) were 1080 mL/h/kg, 439 mL/kg, and 0.362 hours, respectively. As expected, compound **30b** exhibited a low membrane permeability (0.3 × 10⁻⁶ cm/s). Also, the bioavailability of compound **30b** (1 mg/kg) was 1.46 ng/mL, and the bioavailability (F) was 0.05%. These data indicated that compound **30b** had a low absorbability.

Table 3

Pharmacokinetic parameters in SD rats and permeability of **30b**

| | Pharmacokinetic parameters | | | | | | Permeability |
|------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| C 1 | IV (2 mg/kg) ^a | | | РО | PO (1 mg/kg) ^b | | |
| Compound | CL _{total} | Vd _{ss} | t _{1/2} | C _{max} | T _{max} | F | at pH7.4 |
| | (mL/h/kg) | (mL/kg) | (h) | (ng/mL) | (h) | (%) | $(\times 10^{-6} \text{ cm/s})$ |
| 30b | 1080 | 439 | 0.362 | 1.46 | 0.25 | 0.05 | 0.3 |

^aDosing vehicle: saline

^b Dosing vehicle: 0.5% CMC Na

The PK parameters were calculated using the mean value of the plasma concentration in three animals at each point.

Next, the glucose-lowering effect of **30b** was evaluated using an oral glucose tolerance test (oGTT) in SD rats. Compound **30b** was orally administered just prior to glucose loading, and the plasma glucose concentration was then measured over 2 h. The reductions in glucose excursion compared with vehicle administration (Δ AUC from 0 to 2 h) were 31.5%, 58.5% and 62.2% at 0.1, 0.3 and 1 mg/kg, respectively (Figure 2). Thus, the glucose-lowering effect increased in a dose-dependent manner.

Moreover, we confirmed the absence of urinary glucose excretion after repeated dosing of **30b** for 4 days at doses of 0.1 or 0.3 mg/kg twice a day, followed by subcutaneous glucose administration on day 5. However, slightly urinary glucose excretions were observed at a dose of 1

mg/kg twice a day, but the value was not significant compared with the vehicle control.

Together, these results suggest that compound **30b** exerted its hypoglycemic effect through the inhibition of SGLT1 only in the gastrointestinal tract when administered at doses of 0.1 and 0.3 mg/kg. On the other hand, administration at a dose of 1 mg/kg twice a day in the high-dose group might have resulted in some absorption of **30b**, which most likely inhibited the activity of SGLT2 in the renal tubules.



Figure 2. Effects of oral administration of **30b** (0.03, 0.1, 0.3, or 1 mg/kg) on plasma glucose during an oGTT in SD rats. Each point represents the mean \pm SE. **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001 vs. Vehicle group, Dunnett's test.(n=8)

In summary, a new series of *C*-phenyl D-glucitol derivatives was designed, synthesized and evaluated for their SGLT1 inhibitory potency and low absorption. To achieve low absorption in this new series, we performed an optimization study based on a strategy to increase the TPSA. The optimization study led to the identification of compound **30b**, which possessed the targeted PK properties (low bioavailability) in SD rats and exhibited a glucose-lowering effect at a dose of 0.1 mg/kg (p.o.) in SD rats, suggesting its potential for the treatment of T2DM. Further optimization of **30b** aimed at improving its safety is ongoing and will be reported in due course.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Yoshiki Fukasawa for helpful suggestions and the collection of the ADME data.

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