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J.-F. Griffon^a, D. Dukhan^a, C. Pierra^a, S. Benzaria^a, A. G. Loi^b, P. La Colla^b, J.-P. Sommadossi^c & G. Gosselin^{a d}

^a Laboratoire Coopératif Idenix-CNRS, Université Montpellier II, France

^b Idenix Pharmaceuticals-University of Cagliari Collaborative Laboratory, Cagliari, Italy

^c Idenix Pharmaceuticals Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

^d Université de Montpellier II, Laboratoire de Chimie Organique Biomoleculaire de Synthése, CC008, Place E. Bataillon, F-34095, Montpellier Cedex 5, France Published online: 31 Aug 2006.

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4'-C-Methyl-β-D-ribofuranosyl Purine and Pyrimidine Nucleosides Revisited[†]

J.-F. Griffon,¹ D. Dukhan,¹ C. Pierra,¹ S. Benzaria,¹ A. G. Loi,² P. La Colla,² J.-P. Sommadossi,³ and G. Gosselin^{1,*}

¹Laboratoire Coopératif Idenix-CNRS, Université Montpellier II, France ²Idenix Pharmaceuticals-University of Cagliari Collaborative Laboratory, Cagliari, Italy ³Idenix Pharmaceuticals Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

ABSTRACT

In order to evaluate their antiviral properties, a series of 4'-C-methyl-β-D-ribofuranosyl purine and pyrimidine nucleosides has been prepared. Unfortunately, none of these 4'-branched nucleosides showed any antiviral activity or cytotoxcity when tested against HIV, HBV, and Yellow Fever virus.

Key Words: 4'-C-methyl-β-D-ribofuranosyl nucleosides; HIV; HBV; Yellow Fever virus.

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[†]Dedicated to the memory of Martin Bryant, deceased on March 4, 2002.

^{*}Correspondence: G. Gosselin, Université de Montpellier II, Laboratoire de Chimie Organique Biomoleculaire de Synthése, CC008, Place E. Bataillon, F-34095 Montpellier Cedex 5, France; Fax: +33 4 6754 9610; E-mail: gosselin@univ-montp2.fr.

INTRODUCTION

In the search for new antiviral agents, various 4'-C-branched-2'-deoxynucleosides have been reported to have potent antiretroviral activity in vitro.^[1] Regarding the 4'-C-methyl- β -D-ribofuranonucleoside derivatives, the synthesis of those bearing the five natural bases has been previously described but no biological data were reported.^[2,3]

Based on these considerations, a series of 4'-C-methyl- β -D-ribofuranosyl purine and pyrimidine nucleosides **3–9** (Sch. 1) has been prepared in order to evaluate their antiviral properties.

SYNTHESIS OF THE 4'-C-METHYL-β-D-RIBOFURANOSYL PURINE AND PYRIMIDINE NUCLEOSIDES 3–9 (SCH. 1)

5-*O*-Benzoyl-4-*C*-methyl-1-*O*-methyl-2,3-*O*-isopropylidene-β-D-ribofuranose **1** was prepared in 8 steps according to published procedures.^[4–6] Cleavage of the 2,3-*O*-isopropylidene group of **1**, followed by acetylation led to the hitherto unknown 5-*O*-benzoyl-4-*C*-methyl-1,2,3-*O*-acetyl-D-ribofuranose **2**. Condensation of **2**, under Vorbrüggen conditions, respectively with silylated uracil, 5-fluorouracil, or thymine afforded the corresponding fully acylated 4'-*C*-methyl-β-D-ribofuranosyl nucleosides. Regarding the purine nucleobases, <u>2</u> was either condensed with adenine or silylated O^6 -diphenylcarbamoyl- N^2 -isobutyrylguanine. Finally, treatment with saturated methanolic ammonia gave the title compounds **3**–**7**. Conversion of the uracil and 5-fluorouracil derivatives into the corresponding cytosine and 5-fluorocytosine 4'-*C*-methyl-β-D-ribofuranosyl nucleosides **8**–**9** was carried out via a treatment with Lawesson's reagent, followed by a treatment with saturated methanolic ammonia at 100°C.

ANTIVIRAL EVALUATIONS

The 4'-C-methyl- β -D-ribofuranosyl nucleosides 3–9 were evaluated for their in vitro inhibitory effects on the replication of HIV-1(IIIb) in MT-4 cell system, but none of them showed any antiviral activity or cytotoxcity (up to 100 μ M, data not shown). When evaluated in anti-HBV assays in the HBV DNA-transfected



Scheme 1. Synthesis of the 4'-C-methyl- β -D-ribofuranonucleosides 3–9.

4'-C-Methyl-β-D-ribofuranosyl Nucleosides

Hep-G2 cells (2.2.15 cells), none of the compounds tested **3–9** was active (up to a concentration of $10 \,\mu\text{M}$) or cytotoxic (up to a concentration of $100 \,\mu\text{M}$). Compounds **3–9** were also inactive and non-cytotoxic (up to a concentration of $100 \,\mu\text{M}$) against Yellow Fever virus in BHK cell lines.

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