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Synthesis and Evaluation of Pseudopeptide Analogues of a Specific CXCR4 Inhibitor, T140: The Insertion of an (*E*)-Alkene Dipeptide Isostere into the β II'-Turn Moiety

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Abstract—A 14-residue peptide, T140, strongly inhibits the T-cell line-tropic HIV-1 (X4-HIV-1) infection, since this peptide functions as a specific antagonist against a chemokine receptor, CXCR4. T140 takes an antiparallel β -sheet structure with a type II' β -turn. In the present paper, we have designed and synthesized several T140 analogues, in which an (*E*)-alkene dipeptide isostere was inserted into the type II' β -turn moiety, as a bridging study to develop nonpeptidic CXCR4 inhibitors. It has been proven that the turn region of T140 can be replaced by the above surrogate with the maintenance of strong anti-HIV activity. © 2002 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Recently, a CXC-chemokine receptor, CXCR4, and a CC-chemokine receptor, CCR5, were proven to be major coreceptors for the entry of T-cell line-tropic HIV-1 (X4-HIV-1)¹ and macrophage-tropic HIV-1 (R5-HIV-1),² respectively. Since the identification of these coreceptors, several chemokine antagonists have been found by us³ and others.⁴ Currently, development of these chemokine antagonists is desired as the complement of 'highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART)' using multi-types of anti-HIV drugs, such as reverse transcriptase inhibitors and protease inhibitors.⁵ We found that 14-residue peptides, T134 and T140, derived from our SAR studies on T22,^{3a,6} are specific CXCR4 inhibitors that block the X4-HIV-1 entry.^{7,8} These peptides have one disulfide bond and maintain an antiparallel β -sheet structure connected by a type II' β -turn with D-Lys⁸-Pro⁹ at the (i+1) and (i+2) positions (the amino acid sequences of T134 and T140 are shown in Table 1 and Fig. 1^{7-9}). We wish to forward a project to develop nonpeptidic CXCR4 inhibitors based on T134 and T140. Initially, we attempted to restrict the secondary structure of these peptides. According to Wipf's study, D,L-type (or L,D-type) (*E*)-alkene dipeptide isosteres (EADIs) serve as the promoters of type II' (or type II) β -turn structures in the crystal state.¹⁰ Gellman¹¹ and Hoffmann¹² also reported (*E*)-alkene dipeptide mimetics that promote β - and β II-hairpin formation, respectively. Thus, in this study we have synthesized several T140 analogues, in which an EADI was inserted into the D-Lys⁸-Pro⁹ sequence at the (*i*+1) and (*i*+2) positions of the turn to restrict the type II' β turn structure, and evaluated their anti-HIV activity in company with their conformational analysis.

Synthesis of T140 Analogues Containing (E)-Alkene Dipeptide Isosteres

An EADI, Fmoc-D-Lys(Cl-Z)- ψ [(*E*)-CH=CH]-L-Ala-OH **9**, was synthesized starting with N^{α} -Boc- N^{ε} -(Cl-Z)-D-lysine **1** as outlined in Scheme 1. Allylalcohol **4**, which was obtained as a major diastereoisomer by the Grignard reaction of aldehyde **3**, was purified by flash chromatography. γ -Acetoxy (*E*)- α , β -enoate **6**, which was given by the Wittig-Horner-Emmons reaction of

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the aldehyde derived from 5, was also purified by flash chromatography to eliminate the (Z)-isomer. Treatment of γ -mesyloxy (E)- α , β -enoate 7 with MeCu(CN)MgBr·BF₃ yielded the (D-Lys,Ala)-type EADI, Boc-D-Lys(Cl-Z)- $\psi[(E)$ -CH=CH]-L-Ala-OBu^t 8, in 95% yield via an anti- $S_N 2'$ mechanism, as previously reported by us.^{13,14} Construction of protected peptidyl resins and introduction of the EADI 9 on the peptidyl resins were performed by the standard Fmoc-based solid-phase methodology. Treatment of the constructed peptidyl resins with 1 M trimethylsilyl bromide (TMSBr)thioanisole/trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) in the presence of *m*-cresol and 1,2-ethanedithiol (EDT) resulted in cleavage of peptides from the resins and deprotection, followed by air oxidation (Fig. 1). The crude products were purified by preparative HPLC and gel-filtration to afford a white powder of the desired peptides. The integrity of peptides was determined by ion spray mass spectrometry analysis, and the purity was confirmed by analytical HPLC (data not shown).

Evaluation of anti-HIV activity and cytotoxicity

A strain of X4-HIV-1, HIV-1111B, was obtained from the culture supernatant of HIV-1 persistently infected MOLT-4/HIV-1111B cells. Anti-HIV activity was determined based on the protection against HIV-induced cytopathogenicity in MT-4 cells using the 3'-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide (MTT) method (EC₅₀).¹⁵ Cytotoxicity of the compounds was determined based on the reduction of the viability of mock-infected cells using the MTT method (CC₅₀).

Table 1. Anti-HIV activity, cytotoxicity and inhibitory activity against Ca^{2+} mobilization of T134, T140 and their analogues

Compd	Х	Y	EC ₅₀ (nM)	CC ₅₀ (µM)	$\frac{\mathrm{SI}~\mathrm{CC}_{50}}{\mathrm{EC}_{50}}$	IC ₅₀ (nM)
T22			44	N.T.		N.T.
T134	Trp	OH	15	N.T.		30
T140	Nal	OH	< 0.3	67	> 220,000	6.9
T134-NH ₂	Trp	NH_2	3.7	56	15,000	N.T.
T140-NH2	Nal	NH_2	4.7	57	12,000	5.0
T141-NH ₂	Cys(Bzl)	NH_2	67	54	810	N.T.
T142-NH ₂	Cys(Ad)	NH_2	7.1	49	6900	N.T.
T(E)-134-OH	Trp	OH	<1.3	100	> 78,000	27
T(E)-140-OH	Nal	OH	1.9	270	140,000	7.3
T(E)-134-NH ₄	Trp	NH_2	2.9	58	20,000	N.T.
T(E)-140-NH ₂	Nal	NH_2	1.9	58	31,000	10
T(E)-141-NH ₂	Cys(Bzl)	NH_2	45	59	1300	36
$T(E)-142-NH_{2}$	Cys(Ad)	NH_2	17	57	3300	170
AZT	/	-	0.3	12	35,000	N.T.
ddC			33	48	1500	N.T.

T134, T140, T134-NH₂, T140-NH₂, T141-NH₂ and T142-NH₂ are peptides with a nomal imide bond in D-Lys⁸-Pro⁹, whereas T(E)-134-OH, T(E)-140-OH, T(E)-134-NH₂, T(E)-140-NH₂, T(E)-141-NH₂ and T(E)-142-NH₂ are pseudopeptides with an EADI. The structures of these peptides containing X and Y are shown in Figure 1. EC₅₀ values are based on the inhibition of HIV-induced cytopathogenicity in MT-4 cells. CC₅₀ values are based on the reduction of the viability of mock-infected MT-4 cells. Selectivity index (SI) is shown as CC_{50}/EC_{50} . N.T., not tested. IC₅₀ values are based on the inhibition of [Ca²⁺] mobilization induced by SDF-1 through CXCR4. 3'-Azido-3'-dideoxythymidine (AZT) and 2',3'-dideoxycytidine (ddC) were tested for comparison. All data are the mean values for at least three experiments for EC₅₀ and CC₅₀ or two experiments for IC₅₀. Ad = S-1-ada-mantyl.

Evaluation of inhibitory activity against stromal cellderived factor 1 (SDF-1)-induced $[Ca^{2+}]$ mobilization¹⁶

CXCR4-transfected CHO cell lines were loaded with Fura-2-AM for 1 to 2 h, and sequentially treated with T140 analogues, followed by the addition of recombinant human SDF-1 α (PeproTech) after 3 min. $[Ca^{2+}]_i$ increases were measured by a spectrofluorometer by a modified procedure of the Fura-2 method.^{16e} Inhibitory activity of T140 analogues was determined based on the inhibition of $[Ca^{2+}]$ mobilization induced by SDF-1 α stimulation through CXCR4 (IC₅₀).

CD spectroscopy of T140 analogues

CD spectra of peptides in H_2O at 10 μ M were recorded on a JASCO J-720 spectropolarimeter (Tokyo, Japan) as previously reported.⁸

¹H NMR spectroscopy of T(E)-140-OH

The NMR spectra of T(E)-140-OH in H_2O-D_2O (9:1) were recorded at 25 °C on a Varian UNITY 600 spectrometer at 600 MHz ¹H frequency. NMR experiments and assignments were achieved in the same manner as previously reported.⁹

Molecular dynamics calculations

Molecular dynamics calculations were made using the NMR refine program within the Insight II/Discover package (Molecular Simulation, Inc., CA, USA) on a Silicon Graphics Origin 2000 workstation. The dynamics calculations were carried out with distance constraints from NOEs and dihedral constraints from *J*-couplings. The 40 initial structures of the backbone of T(E)-140-OH were randomly generated using the NMR refine program. The direction of the two protons of the (*E*)-alkene in 20 initial structures was reversed from that of the two protons in the other 20 structures, since the backbone structure near the (*E*)-alkene in turn could not be determined by NMR. These initial structures



Figure 1. The synthesis of EADI-containing peptides: T(E)-134-OH, T(E)-140-OH, T(E)-134-NH₂, T(E)-140-NH₂, T(E)-141-NH₂ and T(E)-142-NH₂; (i) 1 M TMSBr-thioanisole/TFA, *m*-cresol, EDT; (ii) air oxidation; Pmc = 2,2,5,7,8-pentamethylchroman-6-sulfonyl; X and Y are shown in Table 1.



Scheme 1. (i) MeI, KHCO₃ (100%); (ii) DIBAL; (iii) vinylMgCl, LiCl, $ZnCl_2$ (40%, 2 steps); (iv) Ac₂O, pyridine, DMAP (50%); (v) O₃, Me₂S; (EtO)₂P(O)CH₂COOBu', LiCl, DIPEA (67%); (vi) Na₂CO₃, MeOH; MsCl, pyridine, DMAP (79%); (vii) MeCu(CN)MgBr·BF₃ (95%); (viii) TFA; Et₃N, MeCN-H₂O, Fmoc-Osu (17%); Cl-Z = 2-chloro-carbobenzoxy, Fmoc=9-fluorenylmethyloxycarbonyl.

were subjected to the simulated annealing calculations in the same manner as previously reported.¹⁷

Results and Discussion

First, anti-HIV activity (EC₅₀) and cytotoxicity (CC₅₀) of T134, T140 and their analogues were evaluated by the MTT assay (Table 1). Since the cytotoxicity of T134 was previously evaluated ($CC_{50} > 50 \,\mu\text{M}$),⁸ the examination at high concentrations of T134 was omitted in this study. Our previous Ala-scanning study revealed that Pro⁹ of T140 could be replaced by Ala without significant reduction of activity, indicating that the sidechain of Pro⁹ is dispensable.¹⁸ Thus, we adopted D-Lys- $\psi[(E)$ -CH=CH]-L-Ala as a dipeptide isostere of the D-Lys⁸-Pro⁹ sequence (Fig. 1). T(E)-134-OH and T(E)-140-OH, which are T134 and T140 analogues containing an EADI D-Lys- $\psi[(E)$ -CH=CH]-L-Ala, respectively, have strong anti-HIV activity, comparable to that of T134 and T140. Both analogues [T(E)-134-OH and T(E)-140-OH] have low cytotoxicity (CC₅₀s > 100 μ M) and very high SIs. Recently, we found that T140 is not completely stable and the C-terminal Arg can be easily hydrolyzed in the mouse and feline sera, and that T140-NH₂, which has a C-terminal carboxyl amide group, is stable in the serum.¹⁹ Additionally, our previous study proved that an amino acid residue at the 3-position (Trp for T134, or Nal for T140) is important for anti-HIV activity (unpublished data). As such, we attempted to synthesize and evaluate several EADI-containing analogues, which possess Trp, Nal, Cys(Bzl) or Cys(Ad) at the 3 position with the C-terminal amide [Fig. 1 and Table 1, T(E)-134-NH₂, T(E)-140-NH₂, T(E)-141-NH₂ and T(E)-142-NH₂]. Their corresponding parent peptides, T134-NH₂, T140-NH₂, T141-NH₂ and T142-NH₂, which have a normal imide bond in the D-Lys⁸-Pro⁹ sequence, were also prepared for the comparative study (Table 1). T(E)-134-NH₂ and T(E)-140-NH₂ exhibited high anti-HIV activity, which is nearly equal to that of T(E)-134-OH and T(E)-140-OH, and higher than (or nearly equal to) that of $T134-NH_2$ and T140- NH_2 . However, the cytotoxicity of T(E)-134-NH₂ and T(E)-140-NH₂ is relatively stronger than that of T(E)-

134-OH and T(E)-140-OH. T141-NH₂, T142-NH₂, T(E)-141-NH₂ and T(E)-142-NH₂ showed modest anti-HIV activity. Next, inhibitory activity of novel representative compounds against $[Ca^{2+}]$ mobilization induced by SDF-1 α stimulation through CXCR4 (IC₅₀) was evaluated to confirm whether these compounds are targeted for CXCR4 (Table 1). All of the tested compounds inhibited $[Ca^{2+}]$ mobilization (IC₅₀ < 170 nM), showing an apparent correlation between anti-HIV activity (EC₅₀) and inhibitory activity against $[Ca^{2+}]$ mobilization (IC₅₀). As a result, the D-Lys⁸-Pro⁹ sequence at the (*i*+1) and (*i*+2) positions of the β II'turn can be replaced by an EADI, D-Lys- ψ [(*E*)-CH=CH]-L-Ala, without significant reduction of anti-



Figure 2. CD spectra of T140 (solid line), T134 (dotted line), T(E)-140-OH (dashed line) and T(E)-134-OH (center-dotted line).

HIV activity or CXCR4-inhibitory activity. T(E)-140-OH is the top analogue among all the tested EADIcontaining surrogates in terms of both anti-HIV activity and CXCR4-inhibitory activity.

Second, the solution structures of the representative surrogates, T(E)-134-OH and T(E)-140-OH, were analyzed by CD spectroscopy to examine whether these pseudopeptides maintain the solution structures of the corresponding parent peptides, T134 and T140 (Fig. 2). T140 assumes an antiparallel β -sheet structure with a type II' β -turn, which was determined by NMR and molecular dynamics calculations.⁹ T134 is also thought to form a β -sheet structure similar to that of T140 according to CD spectra.8 T(E)-134-OH and T(E)-140-OH showed CD patterns different from those of T134 and T140, respectively. Both a negative band near 210 nm and a positive band near 197 nm, which are characteristic bands of β -sheet structures, are markedly weaker in T(E)-134-OH and T(E)-140-OH than in T134 and T140, suggesting that the β -sheet structure in T(E)-134-OH and T(E)-140-OH is partially collapsed. Introduction of the EADI in the (i+1) and (i+2) positions of the BII'-turn region seems to impair the secondary structure composed of the β -sheet- β II'-turn structure.



Figure 3. The best-fit superposition of the backbone atoms of five lowenergy structures. Green line: ribbon presentation of the backbones except for the (E)-alkene.

Third, ¹H NMR analysis followed by molecular dynamics calculations was performed to disclose the detailed structure of T(E)-140-OH in solution. The backbones of 5 low-energy structures among 40 generated structures were superimposed, where the root mean square deviation value was 1.10 Å between Cys⁴ and Cys^{13} (Fig. 3). The direction of the two protons of the (E)-alkene was almost similar in 40 generated structures. The direction of these two protons was nearly equal to that of the oxygen and the δ -carbon of the inide of D-Lys⁸-Pro⁹ at the (i+1) and (i+2) positions of the β II'-turn of T140. The three-dimensional structure of one of these structures is shown in Figure 4. The presence of β -sheet was seen from Cys⁴ to Arg⁶ and from Arg^{11} to Cys^{13} , whereas two strands were not parallel near Lys⁷ and Tyr¹⁰. In addition, judging from the distances between Lys⁷ NH and Tyr¹⁰ CO and between Lys⁷ CO and Tyr¹⁰ NH, hydrogen bonds could not be formed between these atoms. Furthermore, the superimposition was inferior, particularly in the D-Lys- ψ [(E)-CH=CH]-L-Ala region. Thus, the Lys⁷(i)-D-Lys⁸ $(i+1)-\psi[(E)-CH=CH]-L-Ala^{9}(i+2)-Tyr^{10}(i+3)$ moiety did not assume a type II' β -turn, which requires the formation of a hydrogen bond between the atoms of [Lys⁷ CO, Tyr¹⁰ NH]. As a result, the complete antiparallel β -sheet structure connected by the type II' β turn, existing from Cys⁴ to Cys¹³ of T140, was collapsed in T(E)-140-OH, although the simulated structure



Figure 4. The three-dimensional structure of $T(E)\mbox{-}140\mbox{-}OH$ refined by Insight II/Discover.

partly assumed the β -sheet structure. This result is compatible with that of CD spectroscopy. T(E)-140-OH frayed in its N- and C-terminal tails.

The difference in the solution structure from Arg⁶ to Arg¹¹ between T140 and T(E)-140-OH did not cause significant reduction in anti-HIV activity or CXCR4-inhibitory activity. According to our previous SAR study, Arg², Nal³, Tyr⁵ and Arg¹⁴ are indispensable residues, which form the intrinsic pharmacophore of anti-HIV activity and CXCR4-inhibitory activity.¹⁸ Taken together, the third-dimensional structure from Arg⁶ to Arg¹¹ of T140 might not be significantly important for each activity. The region of Arg²-Nal³-Cys(S-)⁴-Tyr⁵ and Cys(S-)¹³-Arg¹⁴, which are linked by the disulfide bridge, is thought to be critical for the activity, although the backbones of Arg²-Nal³ and Arg¹⁴ were found to be flexible.

In conclusion, the pseudopeptide T(E)-140-OH, in which an EADI was inserted into the (i+1)–(i+2) residue of the β II' turn, exhibited strong anti-HIV activity and CXCR4-inhibitory activity comparable to those of the parent peptide T140, while its solution structure is different from that of T140, particularly in the turn region, which is not critical for each activity. In this case, partial nonpeptidylation was successful in terms of activity, although an EADI did not serve as a promoter of a β II'-turn structure. Our further study on nonpeptidylation of T140 will be followed to develop efficient CXCR4 inhibitors based on T140. In addition, we wish to investigate whether EADIs promote β - or β IIhairpin formation in other compounds in solution.

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14. Characterization data for the EADI 8: colourless oil (found: C, 61.49; H, 7.86; N, 5.25. C₂₁H₄₁ClN₂O₆ requires: C, 61.76; H, 7.87; N, 5.34%); $[\alpha]_D^{26}$ -3.03 (c 0.330 in CHCl₃); $\Delta \epsilon$ (CD spectroscopy) -2.83 (227 nm, isooctane); $\delta_{\rm H}$ (300 MHz; CDCl₃) 1.20 (3H, d, J=7.3 Hz, Me), 1.43 (18H, s, Boc and Bu^t), 1.3-1.7 (6H, m, CH₂), 3.01 (1H, m, 2-H), 3.17 (2H, m, CH₂), 4.08 (1H, m, 5-H), 4.46 (1H, m, NH), 4.90 (1H, m, NH), 5.21 (2H, s, CH₂), 5.42 (1H, dd, J=15.3 and 6.3 Hz, CH=), 5.65 (1H, ddd, J=15.5, 7.6 and 1.0 Hz, CH=), 7.2–7.5 (4H, m, ArH); *m*/*z* (FAB-LRMS) 547 (MNa⁺), 525 (MH⁺), 425 (base peak), 369, 308, 184, 127, 125, 57. The EADI **9**: colourless crystals, mp 95-99 °C [from AcOEt-Et₂O (5:1)] (found: C, 66.76; H, 5.94; N, 4.66. C₃₃H₃₅ClN₂O₆ requires: C, 67.05; H, 5.97; N, 4.74%); $[\alpha]_D^{26} = -0.005$ (c 0.047 in CHCl₃); δ_H (300 MHz; CDCl₃) 1.27 (3H, d, J=7.3 Hz, Me), 1.3–1.7 (6H, m, CH₂), 3.1–3.3 (3H, m, 2-H and CH₂), 4.1–4.3 (1H, m, 5-H), 4.42 (1H, m, NH), 4.8-4.9 (1H, m, NH), 5.20 (2H, s, CH₂), 5.4-5.8 (2H, m, CH=), 7.2-7.8 (12H, m, ArH).

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