

Generation of Human Chiral Metabolites of Simvastatin and Lovastatin by Bacterial CYP102A1 Mutants^[S]

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Received September 17, 2010; accepted October 20, 2010

ABSTRACT:

Recently, the wild-type and mutant forms of cytochrome P450 BM3 (CYP102A1) from *Bacillus megaterium* were found to oxidize various xenobiotic substrates, including pharmaceuticals, of human P450 enzymes. Simvastatin and lovastatin, which are used to treat hyperlipidemia and hypercholesterolemia, are oxidized by human CYP3A4/5 to produce several metabolites, including 6'β-hydroxy (OH), 3"-OH, and exomethylene products. In this report, we show that the oxidation of simvastatin and lovastatin was catalyzed by wild-type CYP102A1 and a set of its mutants, which were generated by site-directed and random mutagenesis. One major hydroxylated product (6'β-OH) and one minor product (6'-exomethylene), but not other products, were produced by CYP102A1 mutants. Formation of the metabolites was confirmed by high-

performance liquid chromatography, liquid chromatography-mass spectroscopy, and NMR. Chemical methods to synthesize the metabolites of simvastatin and lovastatin have not been reported. These results demonstrate that CYP102A1 mutants can be used to produce human metabolites, especially chiral metabolites, of simvastatin and lovastatin. Our computational findings suggest that a conformational change in the cavity of the mutant active sites is related to the activity change. The modeling results also suggest that the activity change results from the movement of several specific residues in the active sites of the mutants. Furthermore, our computational findings suggest a correlation between the stabilization of the binding site and the catalytic efficiency of CYP102A1 mutants toward simvastatin and lovastatin.

This work was supported in part by the 21C Frontier Microbial Genomics and the Application Center Program of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea; the National Research Foundation [Grant 2010-0027685]; the Second Stage BK21 Project from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea; and the Support Program for the Advancement of National Research Facilities and Equipment of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea (2010).

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Parts of this work were previously presented at the following conference: Kang JY, Kim KH, Kim DH, Jung HC, Pan JG, Ahn T, and Yun CH (2009) Generation of human metabolites of simvastatin and lovastatin by bacterial cytochrome P450 BM3 enzymes [abstract]. *Drug Metab Rev* 41 (Suppl 3):47. 16th North American Regional ISSX Meeting; 2009 Oct 18-22; Baltimore, MD. International Society for the Study of Xenobiotics, Washington, DC.

Article, publication date, and citation information can be found at <http://dmd.aspetjournals.org>.

doi:10.1124/dmd.110.036392.

[S] The online version of this article (available at <http://dmd.aspetjournals.org>) contains supplemental material.

Introduction

Simvastatin and lovastatin are well known hyperlipidemia and hypercholesterolemia drugs that act as cholesterol-lowering agents (Caron et al., 2007). Simvastatin (marketed under the trade names Zocor, Simlup, Simcard, and Simvacor) is metabolized to at least four primary metabolites, namely 6'β-OH simvastatin, 6'-exomethylene simvastatin, 6'β-hydroxymethyl metabolite, and 3"-OH simvastatin (Fig. 1). Although CYP3A4 is the main enzyme involved in the primary metabolism of simvastatin, CYP2C8 (Tornio et al., 2005), CYP2C9 (Transon et al., 1996), and CYP2D6 (Transon et al., 1996) are also involved in the formation of simvastatin metabolites. The extensive oxidative metabolism of lovastatin (marketed under the trade names Mevacor and Altoprev) in the human liver is primarily mediated by CYP3A enzymes, particularly CYP3A4, to generate three known metabolites, 6'β-OH lovastatin, 3"-OH lovastatin, and 6'-exomethylene (García et al., 2003; Caron et al., 2007) (Fig. 2).

After oral ingestion, simvastatin and lovastatin, which are inactive lactones, are hydrolyzed to the corresponding β-hydroxyacid form (Vickers et al., 1990a). This molecule is a principal metabolite and an inhibitor of HMG-CoA reductase. This enzyme catalyzes the conver-

ABBREVIATIONS: OH, hydroxy; FDA, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; MIST, metabolites in safety testing; WT, wild type; P450, cytochrome P450; CYP102A1, cytochrome P450 BM3; HPLC, high-performance liquid chromatography; LC, liquid chromatography; MS, mass spectrometry; αNF, 7,8-benzoflavone; LOV, lovastatin; SIM, simvastatin; ESP, electrostatic potential; MM, molecular mechanics; PBBSA, Poisson Boltzmann and surface area; MD, molecular dynamics.

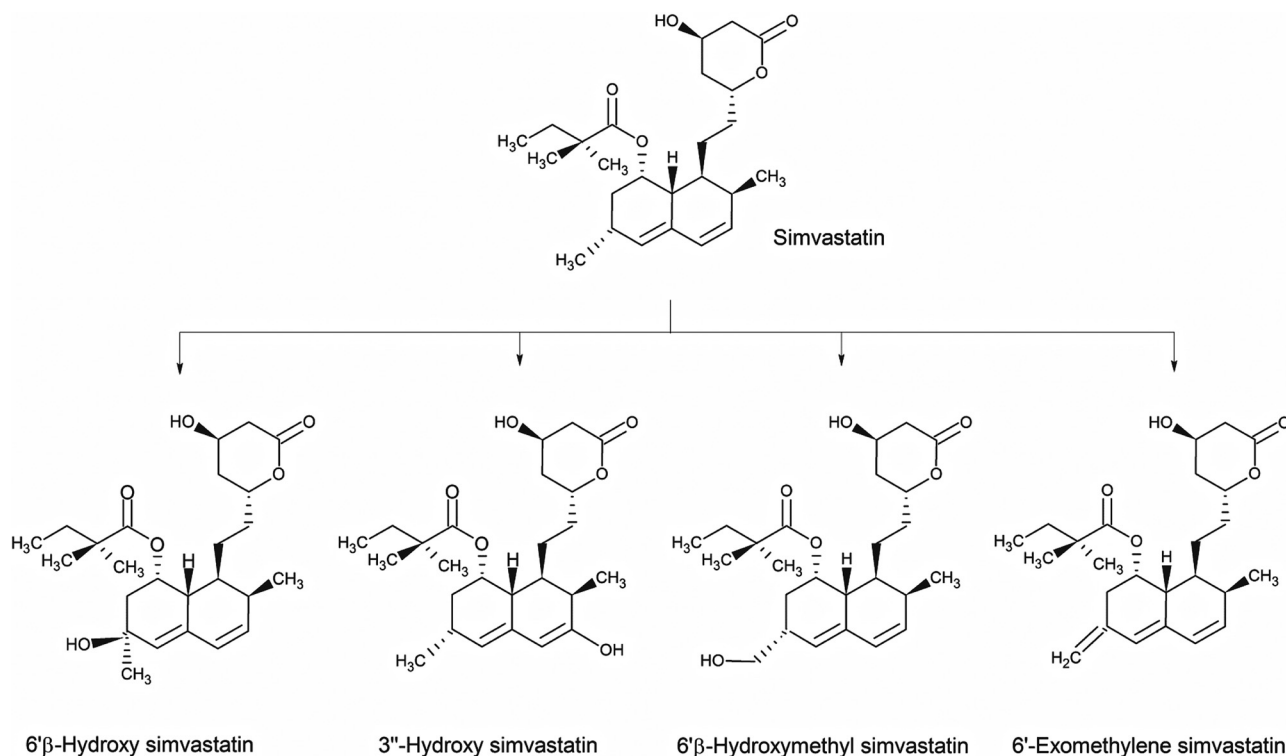


FIG. 1. Structures of simvastatin and its human metabolites. The formation of metabolites is catalyzed by P450 enzymes in the presence of NADPH in the human liver.

sion of HMG-CoA to mevalonate, which is an early and rate-limiting step in the biosynthesis of cholesterol. In addition to the P450-mediated oxidation and β -oxidation processes, glucuronidation constitutes a common metabolic pathway for statins (Prueksaritanont et al., 2002). The metabolites resulting from microsomal oxidation of simvastatin (Vickers et al., 1990b) and lovastatin (Vyas et al., 1990) by P450 enzymes are effective inhibitors of HMG-CoA reductase. Therefore, it has been suggested that the metabolites may contribute to the cholesterol-lowering effect of simvastatin and lovastatin. However, systematic studies of the safety, efficacy, and toxicity of these metabolites have not been performed.

In February 2008, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) modified its standards for evaluating drug toxicity, particularly with regard to the toxicity of drug metabolites when it issued the Guidance for Industry: Safety Testing of Drug Metabolites (<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/GuidanceComplianceRegulatory-Information/Guidances/ucm079266.pdf>). According to these guidelines, any human drug metabolites "formed at greater than 10% of parent drug systemic exposure at steady state" should be subject to separate safety testing, which involves the synthesis and administration of these metabolites to test animals (Guengerich, 2009 and references therein). The issue of human metabolites in safety testing

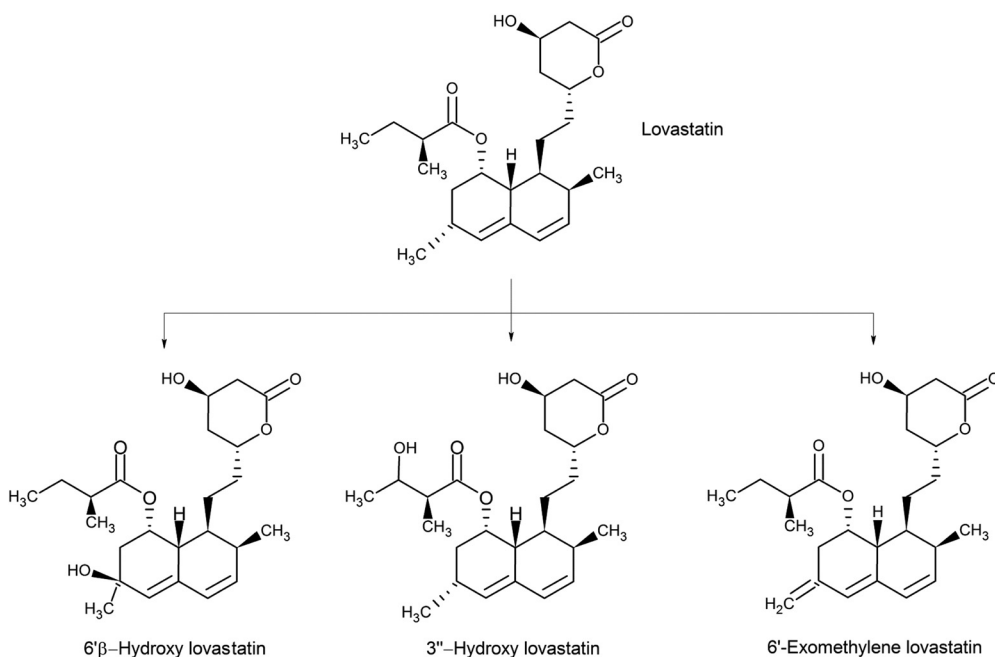


FIG. 2. Structures of lovastatin and its human metabolites. The formation of metabolites is catalyzed by P450 enzymes in the presence of NADPH in the human liver.

(MIST) has presented a challenge at the early stages of drug development for the pharmaceutical industry. Some metabolites of concern can be prepared by chemical methods, but others may not be easily prepared by these methods. In the latter case, human liver microsomes, heterologously expressed human P450 enzymes in bacteria (Vail et al., 2005; Yun et al., 2006) and in insect cells (Rushmore et al., 2000), and purified human P450 enzymes are potential candidates for biocatalysts to prepare human drug metabolites. However, these biocatalysts have several weaknesses, such as low catalytic activity and poor stability for industrial use (Guengerich 2002; Julsing et al., 2008).

The heme domain of P450 BM3 (CYP102A1) from *Bacillus megaterium*, which possesses monooxygenase activity, has strong similarities to eukaryotic members of the CYP4A (fatty acid hydroxylase) family. The P450 BM3 reductase domain, a mammalian-like diflavin reductase, is fused to the C terminus of the P450 domain in a single polypeptide. The fusion of these two enzymatic activities makes soluble CYP102A1 an ideal model for mammalian, particularly human, P450 enzymes. In recent studies, CYP102A1 mutants engineered through rational design or directed evolution were reported to produce human drug metabolites (Kim et al., 2008b, 2009, 2010; Sawayama et al., 2009; Park et al., 2010). In addition, CYP102A1 is a versatile monooxygenase with a demonstrated ability to catalyze a diversity of substrates and an established relevance to biotechnology (Urlacher and Eiben, 2006; Yun et al., 2007; Julsing et al., 2008 and references within).

In this study, we evaluated whether CYP102A1 mutants could be used to produce the human metabolites of simvastatin and lovastatin. To our knowledge, the human metabolites of these statins have not been obtained by chemical synthesis and are not commercially available. Some of the tested mutations enabled the CYP102A1 enzyme to catalyze the oxidation of simvastatin and lovastatin to generate their human metabolites. Furthermore, computational calculations and molecular modeling have been performed to provide further insight into molecular recognition on the basis of free energy decomposition and hydrogen bond analysis.

Materials and Methods

Chemicals. Simvastatin and lovastatin were obtained from Merck (Rahway, NJ). NADPH was purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO). Other chemicals were of the highest grade commercially available.

Construction of P450 BM3 Mutants by Site-Directed Mutagenesis. The CYP102A1 mutants used in this study were selected on the basis of earlier work showing their increased catalytic activity toward several human substrates (Kim et al., 2008b; Park et al., 2010 and references therein). Each mutant bears amino acid substitution(s) relative to wild-type (WT) CYP102A1, as summarized in Supplemental Table S1.

Expression and Purification of CYP102A1 Mutants. Wild-type and mutant forms of CYP102A1 were expressed in *Escherichia coli* strain DH5 α F'-IQ and purified as described previously (Kim et al., 2008b). The CYP102A1 concentrations were determined from CO difference spectra using $\epsilon = 91$ mM/cm. For all of the wild-type and mutated enzymes, a typical culture yielded 300 to 700 nM P450. The expression levels of wild-type and mutant CYP102A1 forms were typically in the range of 1.0 to 2.0 nmol P450/mg cytosolic protein.

Oxidation of Simvastatin and Lovastatin. Typical steady-state reactions for the oxidation of simvastatin and lovastatin included 50 pmol of CYP102A1 in 0.25 ml of 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) along with a specified amount of substrate. To determine the kinetic parameters of several CYP102A1 mutants, 2 to 200 μ M concentrations of statins were used. An aliquot of an NADPH-generating system was used to initiate reactions; final concentrations were 10 mM glucose 6-phosphate, 0.5 mM NADP⁺, and 1 IU/ml yeast glucose 6-phosphate. A stock solution of statins (20 mM) was prepared in dimethyl sulfoxide and diluted into the enzyme reactions with a

final organic solvent concentration of $<1\%$ (v/v). For the human CYP3A4 activity assay, a control experiment of 50 pmol of P450, 100 pmol of NADPH-P450 reductase, 100 pmol of cytochrome *b*₅, and 45 μ M L- α -dilauroyl-*sn*-glycero-3-phosphocholine in 0.25 ml of 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) was used instead of 50 pmol of CYP102A1.

Reactions were generally incubated for 10 min at 37°C and terminated with a 2-fold excess of ice-cold dichloromethane. After centrifugation of the reaction mixture, the supernatant was carefully removed, and the solvent was evaporated under N₂ gas as described previously (Vickers et al., 1990b). The products were analyzed by HPLC using a Gemini C18 column (4.6 \times 150 mm, 5 μ m; Phenomenex, Torrance, CA) with an acetonitrile-water (70:30, v/v) mobile phase containing 2.5 mM formic acid. Eluates were detected by UV at 238 nm. Authentic metabolites of 6' β -OH and 6'-exomethylene were obtained by HPLC from reaction mixtures of simvastatin and lovastatin with human CYP3A4 as described below.

To determine the total turnover numbers of several P450 enzymes, a 1.0 mM concentration of statin was used. The reaction in the presence of a 500 μ M concentration of substrate and 50 pmol of enzyme was initiated by the addition of the NADPH-generating system in 0.25 ml of 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) and incubated for 4 h at 37°C. After a 2-h incubation, a 500 μ M concentration of each substrate was added to the reaction mixture. The formation rate of statin metabolites was determined by HPLC as described above.

The kinetic parameters (K_m and k_{cat}) were determined using nonlinear regression analysis with GraphPad Prism software (GraphPad Software, Inc., San Diego, CA). The data were fit to the standard Michaelis-Menten equation: $v = k_{cat}[E][S]/([S] + K_m)$, where the velocity of the reaction is a function of the turnover rate (k_{cat}), which is the rate-limiting step, the enzyme concentration ($[E]$), the substrate concentration ($[S]$), and the Michaelis constant (K_m).

LC-MS Analysis. CYP102A1 mutants and human CYP3A4 were incubated with 100 μ M lovastatin and simvastatin at 37°C for 30 min in the presence of an NADPH-generating system. Reactions were terminated by the addition of a 2-fold excess of ice-cold dichloromethane. After centrifugation, the supernatant from each incubated reaction was removed and evaporated to dryness. The reaction residue was reconstituted into 100 μ l of mobile phase by vortex mixing and sonication for 20 s. An aliquot (10 μ l) of this solution was injected onto the LC column. LC-MS analysis was performed in electrospray ionization (positive) mode on a Shimadzu LCMS-2010 EV system (Shimadzu, Kyoto, Japan) having LC-MS solution software. The separation was performed on a Shim-pack VP-ODS column (2.0 mm i.d. \times 250 mm; Shimadzu) using an acetonitrile-water (70:30, v/v) mobile phase containing 2.5 mM formic acid at a flow rate of 0.16 ml/min. To identify the metabolites, mass spectra were recorded by electrospray ionization in positive mode. The interface and detector voltages were 4.4 and 1.5 kV, respectively. The nebulization gas flow was set at 1.5 l/min. The interface, curve desolvation line, and heat block temperatures were 250°C, 230°C, and 200°C, respectively.

Identification of the Metabolites by NMR Spectroscopy. An Agilent model 1100 HPLC system (Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA) was used for the isolation of the 6' β -OH metabolites of simvastatin and lovastatin in the reaction mixtures. Semipreparative columns were used for the isolation of 6' β -OH simvastatin (SunFire Prep C18, 5 μ m, 10 mm i.d. \times 150 mm; Waters, Milford, MA) and 6' β -OH lovastatin (Pursuit C18, 5 μ m, 10 mm i.d. \times 250 mm; Varian, Inc., Palo Alto, CA) from the reaction mixtures. Each metabolite mixture, which was approximately 10 mg in CH₃OH, was injected onto the semipreparative columns. The 6' β -OH simvastatin was eluted with a linear gradient (1.5%/min) of 30 to 90% CH₃CN after elution with 30% CH₃CN for 10 min. The metabolite fractions were collected at 18.2 min. The 6' β -OH lovastatin was eluted with a series of gradients: H₂O-CH₃CN (75:25, v/v) for 20 min; 25 to 45% CH₃CN for 40 min (0.5%/min); 45 to 90% CH₃CN for 40 min (4.5%/min); and 90% CH₃CN for 10 min. The metabolite fractions were collected at 63.7 min. The flow rate was 3 ml/min for both columns, and the eluates were monitored at 240 nm.

NMR experiments were performed on a VNMR 600-MHz NMR spectrometer (Varian) equipped with a carbon-enhanced cryogenic probe. Chloroform-d₁ was used as a solvent, and chemical shifts for proton and carbon were measured in parts per million relative to trimethylsilane. All of the one-dimensional and two-dimensional NMR experiments were performed with standard pulse sequences in the VNMR (version 2.3) library and processed with the same software. Spectral assignments were done with one-dimensional

^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectroscopy along with two-dimensional NMR spectroscopic techniques (double quantum correlation spectroscopy, heteronuclear single quantum correlation, and heteronuclear multiple-bond correlation spectroscopy). The stereochemical configurations of the 6'- β -OH position of both compounds were determined with 1-dimensional nuclear Overhauser effect spectroscopy.

Effects of 7,8-Benzoflavone on the Oxidation Reactions of Simvastatin and Lovastatin Catalyzed by CYP102A1 Enzymes. Reaction mixtures consisted of 50 pmol of P450, 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4), an NADPH-generating system, substrate (100 μM of simvastatin or lovastatin), and 200 μM 7,8-benzoflavone (αNF) in 0.25 ml of 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4). Products were analyzed by HPLC as described above. In the case of the human CYP3A4 activity assay, a control experiment of 50 pmol of P450, 100 pmol of NADPH-P450 reductase, 100 pmol of cytochrome b_5 , and 45 μM L- α -dilauroyl-*sn*-glycero-3-phosphocholine was used instead of 50 pmol of CYP102A1.

Spectral Binding Titrations. Spectral binding titrations were used to determine dissociation constants (K_d) for substrates as described previously (Kim et al., 2008a). Binding affinities of ligands to the CYP102A1 enzymes were determined (at 23°C) by titrating 1.5 μM enzyme with the ligand in a total volume of 1.0 ml of 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4). Final CH_3CN concentrations were <2% (v/v). Spectral dissociation constants (K_s) were estimated using GraphPad Prism software. Unless the estimated K_s was within 5-fold of the P450 concentration, nonlinear regression analysis was applied using the hyperbolic equation $\Delta A = B_{\text{max}}[L]/(K_s + [L])$, where A is the absorbance difference, B_{max} is the maximum absorbance difference extrapolated to infinite ligand concentration, and $[L]$ is the ligand concentration.

Molecular Dynamics and Docking Simulation. Coordinates of the CYP102A1 structure (Protein Data Bank code 2UWH) (Huang et al., 2007) from *B. megaterium* were taken from the Protein Data Bank. Crystallographic water molecules were removed from all of the structures. The structure 2UWH contains the mutated residue Phe82, which was corrected to Ala82. The rectified CYP102A1 was then mutated to CYP102A1 mutant 16 (R47L/F81I/F87V/E143G/L188Q/E267V) and CYP102A1 mutant 17 (R47L/E64G/F81I/F87V/E143G/L188Q/E267V) using MODELLER (Sali and Blundell, 1993). The substrates lovastatin (LOV) and simvastatin (SIM) were prepared for molecular dynamics simulation with CYP102A1 mutants. The substrates were then applied with partial atomic charges derived by fitting ESP obtained by quantum electronic structure calculation. The substrates were geometry-optimized with the 6-31G*(p,d) basis set by the B3LYP method using the Gaussian 03 program (Gaussian Inc., Wallingford, CT). The Antechamber module was used to calculate the atom-centered restrained electrostatic surface potential by fitting ESPs estimated from wave functions (Bayly et al., 1993). Parameters that were missing for the ligands were generated using the general amber force field and the Parmchk module of Antechamber (Wang et al., 2004). Docking was performed using AutoDock (Morris et al., 1998) to determine the correct position for the substrates in place of palmitate. The best position was selected on the basis of the root-mean-square deviation and binding free energy. After applying the force field, all hydrogen atoms were automatically added to all systems. Structures were solvated with a TIP3P water model by creating an isometric water box, in which the distance of the box is 8.5 Å from the periphery of the protein (Jorgensen et al., 1983). Molecular systems were neutralized by the addition of counterions. Systems were then energy-minimized in two steps. In the first step, the CYP102A1 and substrates were kept fixed, and only the water molecules were allowed to move; in the second step, all atoms were allowed to move. For the first step, the energy minimization was performed in 500 and 1500 steps using the steepest descent and conjugate gradient methods, respectively. For the second step, the energy minimizations were performed in 1000 and 1500 steps using the steepest descent and conjugate gradient methods, respectively. Heating was performed with an NVT ensemble for 10 ps; the CYP102A1 mutants complexed with substrates were restrained with a force constant of 10 kcal/mol/Å². Equilibration was performed for 50 ps on an NPT ensemble restraining the CYP102A1 mutants/substrates complex by 1 kcal/mol/Å². Final simulations, i.e., the production phase, were performed for 5 ns on an NPT ensemble at a temperature of 310 K and 1 atm of pressure. Step size was 2 fs for the entire simulation. A Langevin thermostat and barostat was used for temperature and pressure

coupling. A SHAKE algorithm was applied to constrain all bonds containing hydrogen atoms (van Gunsteren and Berendsen, 1977). The nonbonded cutoff was kept at 10 Å, and long-range electrostatic interactions were treated by the particle mesh Ewald method with a fast Fourier transform grid having approximately 0.1 nm space (Darden et al., 1993). Trajectory snapshots were taken at each 1 ps, which were then used for analysis. All simulations were performed by the SANDER module of AMBER 10 with amber force field (ff03) (Case et al., 2008).

Binding Free Energy Calculation. The molecular mechanics Poisson Boltzmann and surface area (MM/PBSA) methods were used to calculate binding free energies for all of the CYP102A1 mutant complexes, using MM/PBSA implementation in AMBER 10 (Massova and Kollman, 2000). Binding free energy (ΔG_{bind}) is given by the following equation: $\Delta G_{\text{bind}} = \Delta E_{\text{MM}} + \Delta G_{\text{sol}} + T\Delta S$, where ΔG_{bind} is the binding free energy in solution, ΔE_{MM} is the molecular mechanics energy, which is composed of a van der Waals and an electrostatic contribution, and ΔG_{sol} is the solvation energy, which consists of electrostatic and nonpolar interactions. Entropy could be calculated by either normal-mode analysis or quasi-harmonic approximation. Estimation of entropy has been shown to be computationally expensive with a low prediction accuracy. In this study, $T\Delta S$ was not considered for the calculation, as we were mainly interested in protein flexibility and the relative energy contributions of amino acids toward binding. ΔE_{MM} was calculated by the following equation: $\Delta E_{\text{MM}} = \Delta E_{\text{int_elec}} + \Delta E_{\text{int_vdW}}$, where $\Delta E_{\text{int_elec}}$ and $\Delta E_{\text{int_vdW}}$ are electrostatic and van der Waals interaction energies between substrates and CYP102A1 mutants. These energies were computed with no cutoff. The solvation energy ΔG_{sol} can be divided into two parts: $\Delta G_{\text{sol}} = \Delta G_{\text{sol_elec}} + \Delta G_{\text{sol_npol}}$. The electrostatic contribution to the solvation free energy $\Delta G_{\text{sol_elec}}$ was calculated using the generalized Born model (Gohlke and Case, 2004). The hydrophobic contribution to the solvation energy $\Delta G_{\text{sol_npol}}$ was determined with a function of the solvent accessible surface area by the following equation: $\Delta G_{\text{sol_npol}} = \gamma\text{SASA} + b$, where γ and b are empirical constants. The γ value was set to 0.0072 kcal/mol/Å², whereas b was set to a default value of 0. SASA is the solvent accessible surface area estimated using the linear combination of pairwise overlaps model. Snapshots from 0.1 to 5 ns molecular dynamics (MD) simulation trajectories were taken for the calculation of free energy. For PBSA and generalized Born surface area calculations, dielectric constants for solute and solvent were taken as 1.0 and 80.0, respectively. SASA was calculated using the molsurf program implemented in AMBER 10 by taking the solvent probe as 1.4 Å. Free energy was decomposed using MM/PBSA of AMBER 10 to estimate the contribution of each residue in the binding process.

Results

Oxidation of Simvastatin and Lovastatin by Wild-Type P450 BM3 and Its Mutants. We examined whether CYP102A1 can oxidize simvastatin and lovastatin. First, the ability of wild-type and a set of CYP102A1 mutants to oxidize simvastatin and lovastatin was measured at a fixed substrate concentration (100 μM) (Fig. 3). Whereas simvastatin and lovastatin are known to produce at least four and three metabolites, respectively (Figs. 1 and 2), CYP102A1 mutants produced only two metabolites, one major (6'- β -OH statin) metabolite and one minor (6'-exomethylene statin) metabolite. The metabolites were analyzed by HPLC and compared with those of human CYP3A4 (Figs. 4 and 5). Catalytically active mutants of CYP102A1 produced one major product, which had a retention time that exactly matched the 6'- β -OH statin and the minor metabolite 6'-exomethylene product. However, other products were not observed under the experimental conditions used here.

The turnover numbers for the oxidation of statins (product formation) by the entire set of 18 mutants varied over a wide range. CYP102A1 wild-type showed very low catalytic activity toward simvastatin (0.0049 min⁻¹ for 6'- β -OH simvastatin), and no other metabolites were observed for either substrate. (Fig. 3). Mutant 4 did not show any apparent activity toward either statin (< 0.001 min⁻¹). Mutants 16 and 17 each showed higher activity than that of human

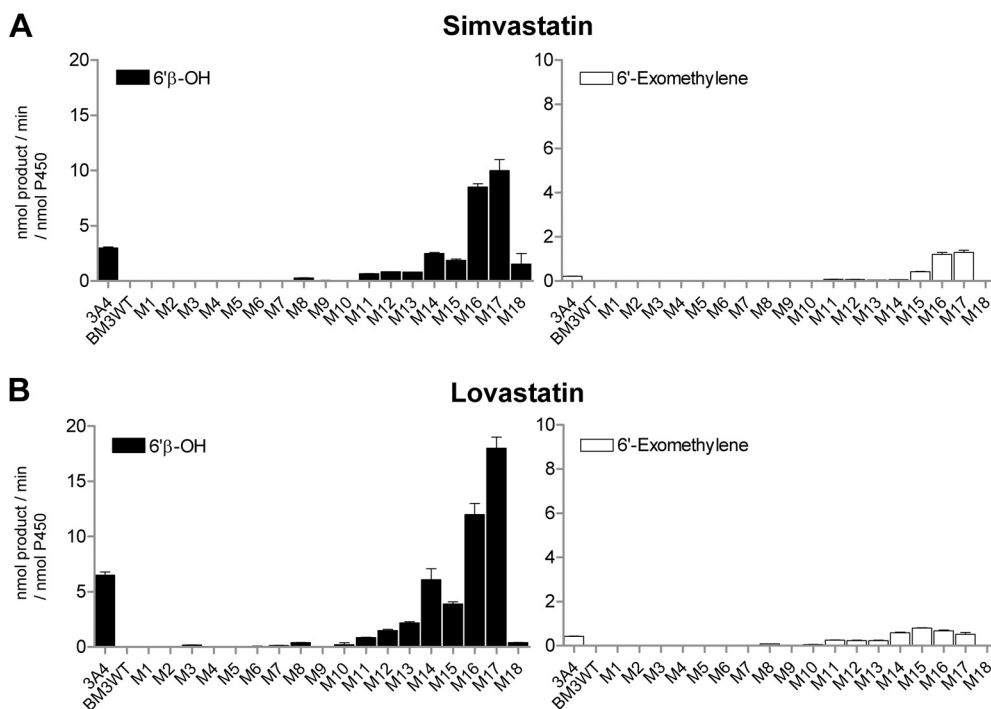


FIG. 3. Rates of 6'β-OH and 6'-exomethylene product formation of simvastatin (A) and lovastatin (B) by various CYP102A1 mutants. Assays were performed using 100 μM simvastatin or lovastatin as described under *Materials and Methods*. Values are the mean ± S.D. of triplicate determinations.

CYP3A4. In the case of mutant 17, the turnover number (10 min^{-1}) was 3.3- and 2040-fold higher than that of human CYP3A4 and wild-type CYP102A1, respectively.

Characterization of the Chiral Metabolites of Simvastatin and Lovastatin. The identities of the major metabolite and substrate were verified by comparing the HPLC results (Figs. 4 and 5), the LC-MS results (Supplemental Figs. S1 and S2), and the absorption spectra

(Supplemental Figs. S3 and S4) with those of authentic compounds, which were produced by human CYP3A4. The production of 6'β-OH and 6'-exomethylene statins by CYP102A1 mutants was confirmed by LC-MS analysis of the reaction mixture. The retention time and fragmentation pattern of the CYP102A1 metabolites were exactly matched to those of the authentic metabolites, which were produced by human CYP3A4 (Supplemental Figs. S1 and S2).

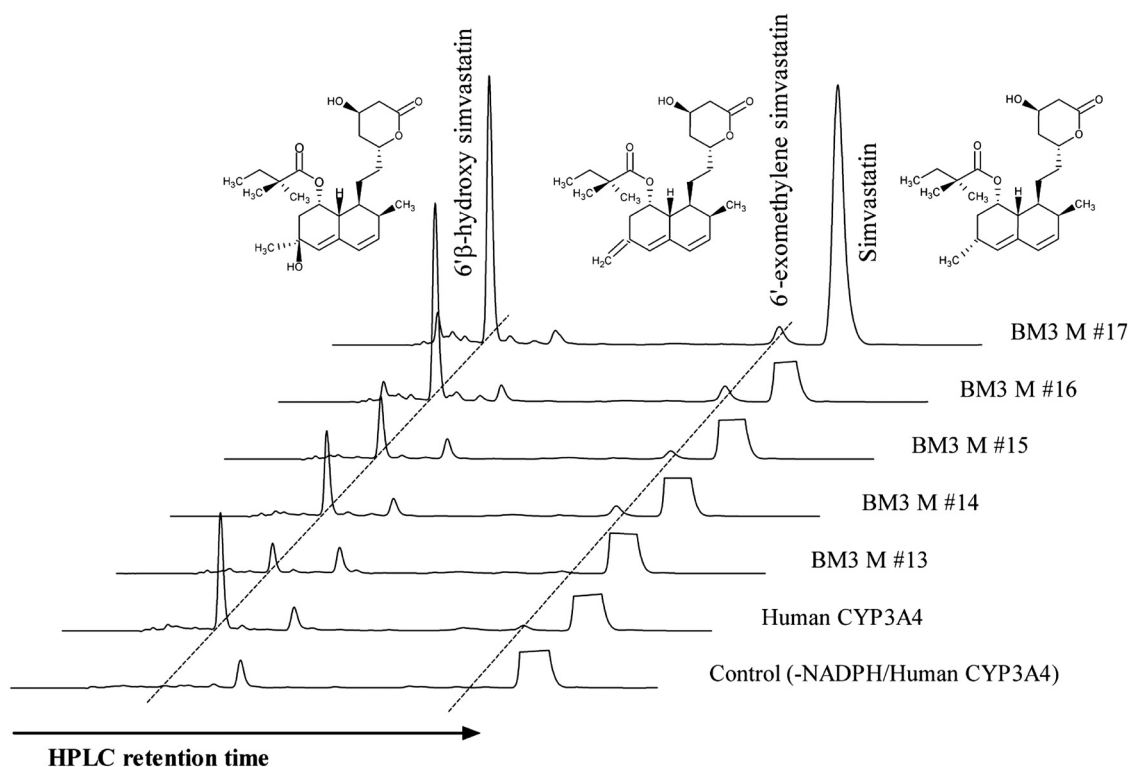


FIG. 4. HPLC chromatograms of simvastatin metabolites produced by CYP102A1 mutants (13–17) and human CYP3A4. Peaks were identified by comparing the retention times with those of metabolites produced by CYP3A4. The peaks of the substrate and two major products (hydroxylated product and exomethylene product) are indicated. UV absorbance was monitored at 238 nm.

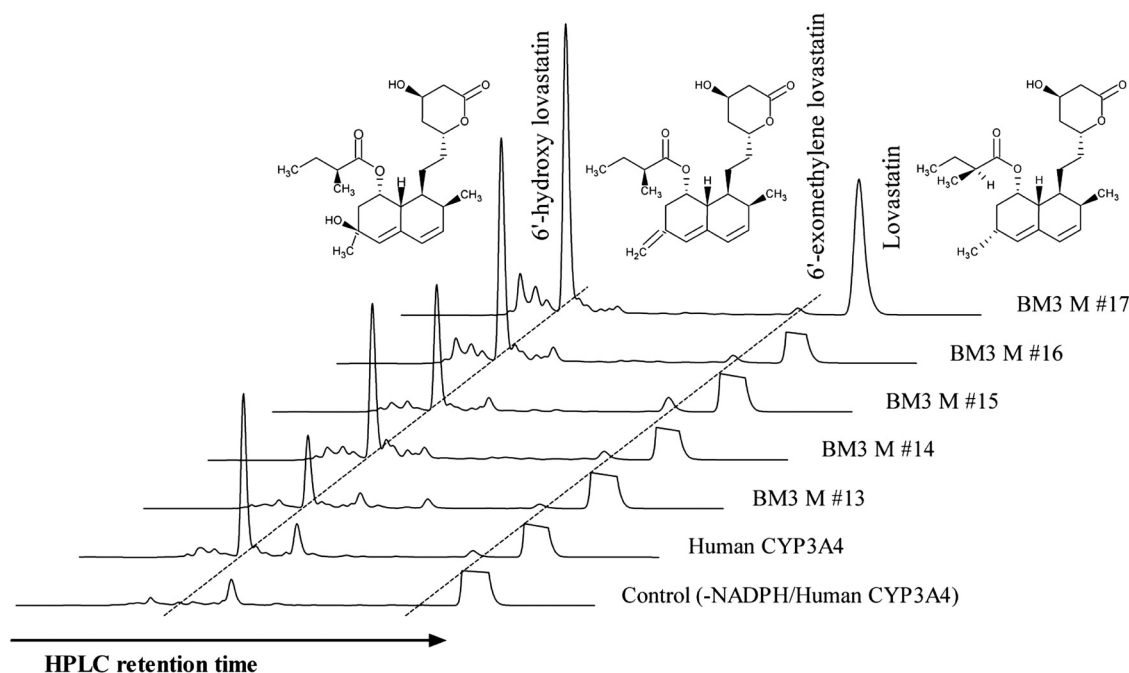


FIG. 5. HPLC chromatograms of lovastatin metabolites produced by CYP102A1 mutants (13–17) and human CYP3A4. Peaks were identified by comparing the retention times with those of substrate and authentic metabolites produced by CYP3A4. The peaks of the substrate and two major products are indicated. UV absorbance was monitored at 238 nm.

Chemical structures of 6' β -OH statins were identified by one- and two-dimensional NMR experiments. Spectral assignments were accomplished with two-dimensional ^1H NMR and ^{13}C NMR spectroscopy along with two-dimensional NMR spectroscopic techniques. The results are shown in Supplemental Fig. S5 and Supplemental Tables S2 to S5. The stereochemical configurations of the 6' β -OH position for both compounds were determined with one-dimensional nuclear Overhauser effect spectroscopy. There have been reports for proton chemical shifts in 6' β -OH lovastatin in different NMR solvents (acetonitrile- d_4) (Vyas et al., 1990), and, to our knowledge, there have been no publications of C13 chemical shift data for 6' β -OH simvastatin and 6' β -OH lovastatin. The stereochemical configurations at the 6' β -OH position of both compounds were determined with one-dimensional double-pulsed field gradient spin echo nuclear Overhauser effect. When previously assigned proton peaks from H-6' α (δ 1.35 ppm for 6' β -OH simvastatin and δ 1.34 ppm for 6' β -OH lovastatin) were selectively irradiated, proton NMR peaks from H-7'(eq) (δ 2.44 ppm for 6' β -OH simvastatin and δ 2.43 ppm for 6' β -OH lovastatin) appeared out of two H-7' protons. Subsequent selective irradiation of H-8' using a one-dimensional double-pulsed field gradient spin echo nuclear Overhauser effect experiment confirmed the 6' β -OH position of both compounds (Supplemental Figs. S5, E and F).

Simvastatin and lovastatin proved to be good substrates for CYP102A1 enzymes, exhibiting high turnover numbers that approached 10 and 18 min^{-1} for 6' β -OH product formation from

simvastatin and lovastatin, respectively, in the case of mutant 17. Although other products were found to be metabolites of human liver microsomes (Caron et al., 2007 and references therein), all of the CYP102A1 enzymes, including wild-type and active mutants, produced only two metabolites, 6' β -OH and 6'-exomethylene (Figs. 4 and 5). Human CYP3A4, the major enzyme for the hydroxylation reactions of simvastatin and lovastatin in human liver, also shows a preference for the 6' β -hydroxylation reaction over the dehydrogenation reaction at the 6' position (Figs. 4 and 5).

Kinetic Parameters of Simvastatin and Lovastatin Oxidation by CYP102A1 Mutants. The two high-activity mutants 16 and 17 were used to measure kinetic parameters for the 6' β -hydroxylation of simvastatin and lovastatin (Table 1; Supplemental Fig. S6). Wild-type and some mutant forms of CYP102A1 did not exhibit any or appreciable activities to determine reliable kinetic parameters (Fig. 3). Only mutants 16 and 17 showed significantly elevated k_{cat} values for the 6' β -hydroxylation reaction, which yielded the highest k_{cat} values of $>10 \text{ min}^{-1}$ for simvastatin and lovastatin (Fig. 3). Human CYP3A4 exhibited k_{cat} values of 6.6 and 4.2 min^{-1} for 6' β -hydroxylation of simvastatin and lovastatin, respectively. The overall range of K_m values for the CYP102A1 mutants was from 37 to 44 μM . Of note, human CYP3A4 displayed a higher K_m value of 130 μM for the 6' β -hydroxylation of simvastatin. The catalytic efficiencies (k_{cat}/K_m) of 6' β -hydroxylation of simvastatin and lovastatin by mutant 17 were

TABLE 1
Kinetic parameters for the formation of the 6' β -OH hydroxylated product by CYP102A1 mutants

P450 Enzyme	Simvastatin			Lovastatin		
	k_{cat}	K_m	k_{cat}/K_m	k_{cat}	K_m	k_{cat}/K_m
	min^{-1}	mM	$\text{min}^{-1}/\mu\text{M}$	min^{-1}	mM	$\text{min}^{-1}/\mu\text{M}$
Mutant 16	10 ± 1	37 ± 6	0.27 ± 0.05	14 ± 1	44 ± 9	0.32 ± 0.07
Mutant 17	15 ± 1	42 ± 6	0.36 ± 0.60	19 ± 2	41 ± 9	0.46 ± 0.11
Human CYP3A4	6.6 ± 0.9	130 ± 30	0.051 ± 0.014	4.2 ± 0.5	54 ± 15	0.078 ± 0.024

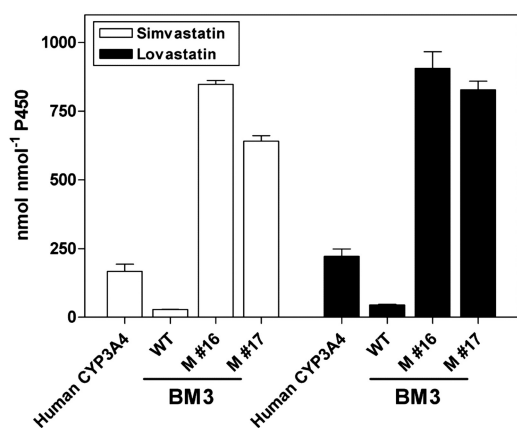


FIG. 6. Total turnover numbers for 6'β-OH product formation by CYP102A1 mutants. To determine the total turnover number of several CYP102A1 mutants, we used 1.0 mM simvastatin or lovastatin. The reaction was initiated by the addition of an NADPH-generating system and incubation for 4 h at 37°C. The formation rate of metabolites was determined by HPLC as described in the legends to Figs. 4 and 5.

0.36 and 0.46 min⁻¹ · μM⁻¹, which are more efficient than those of human CYP3A4 by 7- and 6-fold, respectively.

When the total turnover numbers (moles of product per mole of catalyst) for the CYP102A1 mutants were determined, the overall range was 150 to 210 (Fig. 6). Mutant 16 showed the highest activity, which was 5- to 6-fold higher than that of human CYP3A4 after a 4-h incubation period. The wild-type CYP102A1 enzyme showed much lower catalytic activity toward simvastatin and lovastatin (0.77 and 1.9 nmol of product/nmol of P450, respectively).

Inhibitory Effects of αNF on the CYP102A1-Catalyzed Oxidation of Simvastatin and Lovastatin. Modulation of the catalytic activities of human CYP3A4 by αNF is known (Ueng et al., 1997). In this work, we examined the effect of αNF on the catalytic activities of CYP102A1 mutants that possessed human CYP3A4 activities. αNF inhibited the 6'β-hydroxylation of simvastatin and lovastatin in a concentration-dependent manner. When 50 μM αNF was added to incubated reaction mixtures with simvastatin and lovastatin (Supplemental Fig. S7), the 6'β-hydroxylation activities of human CYP3A4 for simvastatin and lovastatin were inhibited by 42 and 69%, respectively. The 6'β-hydroxylation activities of CYP102A1 mutants 16 and 17 for simvastatin were inhibited by 44 and 77%, respectively. The activities of CYP102A1 mutants 16 and 17 for lovastatin were inhibited by 48 and 76%, respectively, in the presence of αNF. This result shows that αNF can bind to the active site of CYP102A1 mutants to change their catalytic activities.

A triple CYP102A1 mutant 10 (R47L/F87V/L188Q) has been reported to metabolize typical mammalian P450 substrates, such as amodiaquine, dextromethorphan, acetaminophen, testosterone, and 3,4-methylenedioxymethylamphetamine (van Vugt-Lussenburg et al., 2007). Although product formation from these chemicals by CYP102A1 mutant 10 was inhibited from 30 to 60% in the presence of αNF, αNF did not have a significant effect on the metabolism of acetaminophen and 3,4-methylenedioxymethylamphetamine (van Vugt-Lussenburg et al., 2007). This mutant could also oxidize simvastatin and lovastatin to generate 6'β-OH and 6'-exomethylene products at relatively low rates (6'β-OH simvastatin, 0.046 ± 0.003 min⁻¹; 6'-exomethylene simvastatin, 0.00028 ± 0.00068 min⁻¹; 6'β-OH lovastatin, 0.22 ± 0.17 min⁻¹; and 6'-exomethylene lovastatin, 0.057 ± 0.008 min⁻¹) (Fig. 3).

Titration. The addition of simvastatin and lovastatin to a solution with human CYP3A4 produced a typical low- to high-spin conversion (type I difference spectrum) (Supplemental Fig. S8). The binding

affinities of human CYP3A4 toward the simvastatin ($K_s = 14 \pm 1$ μM) and lovastatin ($K_s = 8.8 \pm 0.8$ μM) substrates were determined from the titration curves. However, in the case of the CYP102A1 mutants, the addition of the substrates tested here did not result in any apparent spectral changes (data not known).

Modeling and Computational Calculation. In this study, we have analyzed interactions in a dynamic environment that depend on time to derive more insight into molecular recognition. Interactions were analyzed on the basis of free energy decomposition and hydrogen-bond analysis. For each complex, free energy was decomposed to analyze the contributions of individual residues in binding. The hydrogen bonds that showed stable behavior during molecular dynamics were analyzed. To fully investigate the influence of the CYP102A1 mutation on the interaction with substrates, the substrate-residue interactions in each wild-type complex and the corresponding mutated complex were also compared systematically.

Docking and Molecular Dynamics Simulation Analysis. Binding features observed in the simulation of the substrates docked into the wild-type CYP102A1 (CYP102A1 WT) are schematically represented (Fig. 7, A and B) together with interatomic distances for the 6'β-carbon of the substrates and the Fe atom of the heme. Coordination of the 6'β-carbon of the substrates to the catalytic iron atom was maintained for the entire simulation time, and none of the oxygen atoms in the substrates formed a stable hydrogen bond to any residues of CYP102A1 WT, suggesting that the substrate oxygen atoms are not the primary determinant; this situation for binding of LOV/SIM into CYP102A1 WT is unlike the case of other CYP102A1 mutant complexes. Because no direct hydrogen bond between CYP102A1 WT and LOV/SIM was retained during the energy minimization stage of the initial complex model, the distance of the 6'β-carbon of the substrates moved away from the catalytic iron atom during the equilibrium stage of the MD simulation (8–9 Å). In the subsequent data sampling stage, a direct hydrogen bond was also not observed. Significantly, the movement of the substrates from their original position at the catalytic sites to the channel entrance was observed in the MD simulation; this movement was found to be due to a collision between the fused ring connected to the oxoxane ring of LOV/SIM and flexible or large hydrophobic residues, such as Leu75 and Phe87. The simulations indicated that the butanone chain and the oxoxane ring could not fit into the space created by the Thr49, Met185, and Leu437 shift without inducing steric repulsion. Thus, a small increase in the hydroxylation potency for SIM caused by introducing a methyl group on the LOV was only ascribed to the induced fit of SIM. Both simulations yield nearly identical mean values for the distance between the 6'β-carbon of the substrates and the Fe iron, 9.07 and 8.62 Å for LOV and SIM (Fig. 7, A and B), respectively, which are comparable to those observed in the experimental results described above.

The replacement of several residues [mutant 16 (R47L/F81I/F87V/E143G/L188Q/E267V) and mutant 17 (R47L/E64G/F81I/F87V/E143G/L188Q/E267V)] that led to quite potent monooxygenase activity induced significant changes in the overall shape of the catalytic sites of CYP102A1, which were determined by the conformations of their side chains (Supplemental Fig. S9). The docking of substrates into CYP102A1 mutants (16 and 17) revealed that coordination of the 6'β-carbon of the substrates to the iron atom is possible only when a hydrogen bond is made in the shallow cleft that acts as a catalytic subsite around the heme. The simulations for CYP102A1 WT and its mutant complexes showed a significant difference in the buried surface areas at the interface between the substrates and CYP102A1, suggesting that interaction of the hydrophobic residues in the catalytic subsites with the substrates is very extensive and consequently makes

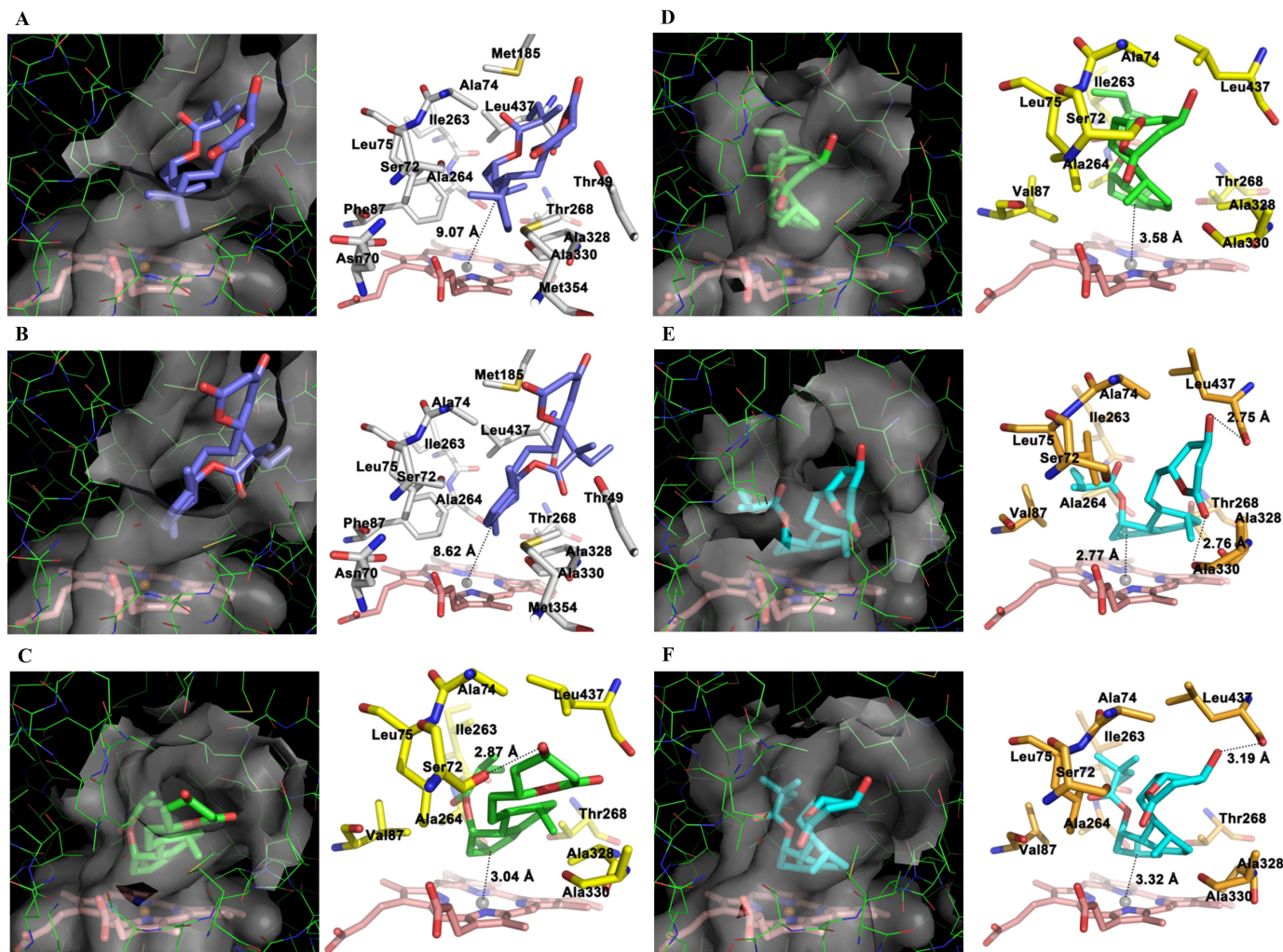


FIG. 7. Molecular binding surface area and binding site structural comparison of lovastatin and simvastatin in wild-type CYP102A1 and its mutants (16 and 17); the average MD structures of WT/lovastatin (A), WT/simvastatin (B), mutant #16/lovastatin (C), mutant #16/simvastatin (D), mutant #17/lovastatin (E), and mutant #17/simvastatin (F) are shown. The substrate, heme, and active sites are shown as stick diagrams.

an important contribution to the destabilization of substrate binding. We speculate that the mutation of CYP102A1 causes conformational changes in the active site. When coupled with structural information, these conformational changes can be used to interpret the experimental results.

Hydrogen bonds play an essential role in stabilizing the complexes of the CYP102A1 mutants (16 and 17)-LOV/SIM complexes. We examined the geometry and stability of the hydrogen bond network formed by LOV/SIM in the binding pocket of mutants 16/17 on the basis of the trajectories of the MD simulations. Conformational changes in the binding pocket at the active site caused by several mutations affect the LOV and SIM binding (Fig. 7, C–F). Molecular surface visualization showed that there are relatively deep pockets in the CYP102A1 mutants. Interactions of these pockets with the oxooxane moiety of LOV/SIM could enhance their binding ability. The most significant hydrogen bond contacts between the CYP102A1 mutants and LOV/SIM were schematically identified and characterized in terms of distances between heavy atoms and their percentage of occurrence.

The hydroxyl group of the oxooxane ring in LOV complexed with CYP102A1 mutant 16 mainly participates in a hydrogen bond with the Ser72 hydroxyl group (87.3% occupied of the bonds being maintained during the MD simulation) (Fig. 7C). This hydrogen bond

possibly plays an important role in enhancing the affinity of the oval-like pocket of CYP102A1 mutant 16. However, the hydroxyl of Ser72 adopted a different conformation in the SIM complex with CYP102A1 mutant 16 and failed to form a hydrogen bond with the hydroxyl group of SIM; it is present in only 17.0% of the computed snapshots (Fig. 7D), indicating that SIM barely interacts with Ser72 in the CYP102A1 mutant 16 active site model. The hydrophobic interaction between the methyl butanoate group and Ile263/Ala264 was shown to contribute to the complex stabilization, whereas the hydrogen bond to Ser72 was frequently observed to be cleaved in the simulation, giving a longer average distance than that for the complex with LOV.

In the model structure of CYP102A1 mutant 17 complex with LOV, Ala330 and Leu437 make a hydrogen bond and an electrostatic interaction through their backbone carbonyl group with a hydroxyl group and carbonyl group located in the oxooxane ring, respectively (95.3% occupied for Leu437 and 91.6% occupied for Ala330). These interactions may stabilize the binding of LOV to CYP102A1 mutant 17. The averaged distances along the 5-ns MD trajectory between the 6'β carbon atom of LOV and the Fe atom of the heme is less than 2.77 Å (Fig. 7E). For the SIM complex with CYP102A1 mutant 17, no interaction exists between the main chain oxygen of the Ala330 backbone and the carbonyl group of the oxooxane ring in SIM (Fig.

M16, mutant 16, R47L/F81I/F87V/E143G/L188Q/E267V; M17, mutant 17, R47L/E64G/F81I/F87V/E143G/L188Q/E267V; DG_{Sol} , polar/nonpolar ($DG_{\text{sol_elec}}$ + $DG_{\text{sol_npol}}$) contribution; DG_{Elec} , electrostatic ($DE_{\text{int_elec}}$ + $DG_{\text{sol_elec}}$) contribution.

the total affinity arises from a more complex interplay between all of these energy components. The structural analysis demonstrates that the hydrophobic group in the upper part of the heme takes advantage of the favorable van der Waals and hydrophobic interactions with the binding pocket of CYP102A1 mutants. In the binding pocket, Leu75, Val78, Ala82, Val87, Ile263, and Leu437 residues constitute a relatively large hydrophobic core, which can generate strong van der Waals and hydrophobic interactions with the fused ring of the substrates. The $\Delta E_{\text{int_vdW}}$ value for the complex of mutant 17 with LOV is the highest among the complexes of mutants 16 and 17 with the two substrates because lovastatin fits more snugly within the active site cavity and binds more tightly to mutant 17 than to the other complexes by adding nonpolar packing to the active site to a much greater extent.

Discussion

In this work, we have shown that bacterial CYP102A1 mutant enzymes catalyze the same reactions as human CYP3A4 to generate the human metabolites 6'- β -OH and 6'-exomethylene from simvastatin and lovastatin. To our knowledge, the production of metabolites of simvastatin and lovastatin by chemical synthesis has never been reported. The 6'- β -OH products are chiral compounds, which are usually difficult to synthesize by chemical methods. Therefore, an alternative to chemical synthesis of these metabolites is to use CYP102A1 enzymes to generate the metabolites of simvastatin and lovastatin. Of interest, an unknown P450 from *Nocardia autotropica* has been found to oxidize simvastatin to generate 6'- β -hydroxymethyl simvastatin (Gbewonyo et al., 1991).

Human P450 enzymes are involved in the metabolism of most (>80%) drugs currently available on the market (Guengerich, 2003). We proposed previously that CYP102A1 from *B. megaterium* could be developed as a biocatalyst with drug oxidation activities comparable to those of human P450 (Yun et al., 2007 and references therein). In recent studies, several lines of evidence supporting our proposal have been reported. CYP102A1 mutants were found to generate human drug metabolites by oxidizing various drugs, including clozapine (Damsten et al., 2008), diclofenac (Damsten et al., 2008), acetaminophen (Damsten et al., 2008), 3,4-methylenedioxymethylamphetamine (Stjernschantz et al., 2008), dextromethorphan (Stjernschantz et al., 2008), phenacetin (Kim et al., 2010), verapamil (Sawayama et al., 2009), and astemizole (Sawayama et al., 2009). CYP102A1 mutants can also oxidize several human P450 substrates, including 7-ethoxycoumarin (Kim et al., 2008b), coumarin (Park et al., 2010), chlorzoxazone (Park et al., 2010), and resveratrol (Kim et al., 2009), to generate human metabolites.

The issue of human MIST as outlined by the FDA has presented a challenge at the early stages of drug development for the pharmaceutical industry (Guengerich, 2009 and references therein). Metabolites of concern should be prepared by chemical methods or with biocatalysts, such as bacteria, yeast, and enzymes. Human drug metabolites are required for studies of drug toxicity, especially to satisfy the MIST issue, and efficacy during the process of drug discovery and development. The "active metabolite" is also an important issue in drug development (Johnson et al., 2004). In addition to the use of CYP102A1 mutants for the production of the metabolites of human P450-catalyzed reactions, we found other advantages to using CYP102A1 mutants instead of human P450 enzymes. For example, the human metabolite piceatannol can be generated from the anticancer agent resveratrol by CYP102A1 (Kim et al., 2009); however, piceatannol cannot be made from its substrate, resveratrol, by human P450 enzymes, as piceatannol is a potent inhibitor for the human P450-catalyzed reactions.

Several CYP102A1 mutants were generated by directed evolution and rational design and were found to have much higher activity and stability than human P450 enzymes. These mutants could thus be developed as industrial enzymes for cost-effective and scalable production of human drug metabolites. The metabolites could also be developed as lead compounds for new drugs.

Our computational findings suggest that a conformational change in the cavity size of the mutant active sites is related to the activity change. The modeling results further suggest that the changes in activity result from the movement of several specific residues in the mutant active sites (Fig. 7; Supplemental Fig. S9). The computational results obtained from highly active mutants with the statins are consistent with those of previous work for CYP102A1 mutants with phenacetin/7-ethoxyresorufin (Kim et al., 2010).

We also found good correlation between *in silico* analyses and *in vitro* determination of k_{cat} values of CYP102A1 mutants. Mutant 17 showed higher k_{cat} values than mutant 16 toward lovastatin and simvastatin (Table 1). Calculated binding free energies of mutant 17/SIM and mutant 17/LOV complexes were greater than those of mutant 16/SIM and mutant 16/LOV complexes, respectively (Table 2). When the average distances between the 6'- β carbon atom of statins and the Fe atom were compared, mutant 17 showed much shorter average distances than those of mutant 16. However, we could not see apparent differences in K_{m} values between the complexes when experimental error ranges were considered (Table 1).

In summary, this work involved a set of CYP102A1 mutants and statin substrates, which are human P450 substrates, and revealed that bacterial CYP102A1 enzymes catalyze the same reactions as human CYP3A4 to generate the human metabolites 6'- β -OH and 6'-exomethylene. The oxidation of simvastatin and lovastatin is catalyzed by wild-type and some mutant forms of CYP102A1. One major hydroxylated product, the 6'- β -OH product, was produced as a result of a hydroxylation reaction. The other product, the exomethylene product, was produced by a dehydrogenation reaction. Metabolite formation was confirmed by HPLC and LC-MS by comparing the metabolites with the authentic human metabolites produced by human CYP3A4. Chemical structures of the major 6'- β -OH products were identified by NMR. Thus, the CYP102A1 mutants efficiently produce human metabolites of simvastatin and lovastatin.

Authorship Contributions

Participated in research design: K.H. Kim, D. Kim, Jung, Pan, Ahn, and Yun.

Conducted experiments: K.H. Kim, Kang, D.H. Kim, Su.H. Park, Se.H. Park, K.D. Park, and Lee.

Performed data analysis: K.H. Kim, Kang, D.-H. Kim, Su.H. Park, Se.H. Park, D. Kim, K.D. Park, Lee, Jung, Pan, Ahn, and Yun.

Wrote or contributed to the writing of the manuscript: D. Kim, K.D. Park, and Yun.

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