

where I_{sys} and I_{pv} are the inhibitor concentration in the circulating blood and portal vein, respectively; f_u is the blood protein unbound fraction; v_{abs} is the absorption rate from the intestine to the portal vein; and Q_H is the hepatic blood flow. When the intestinal absorption is described by a first-order rate constant, this equation becomes (123, 124)

$$I_u = f_u \cdot \left(I_{\text{sys}} + \frac{F \cdot D \cdot k_a \cdot e^{-k_a t}}{Q_H} \right) \leq f_u \cdot \left(I_{\text{sys}} + \frac{F \cdot D \cdot k_a}{Q_H} \right), \quad (13)$$

where F is the fraction absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract, D is the dose, and k_a is the absorption rate constant. To avoid a false negative prediction, the unbound inhibitor concentration should be estimated by $f_u \cdot \left(I_{\text{sys}} + \frac{F \cdot D \cdot k_a}{Q_H} \right)$ for a drug-drug interaction based on a hepatic transporter-mediated process.

To date, there are many published inhibition studies of renal and hepatic uptake transporters: OATs and OATPs. In this section, the inhibitory effects of therapeutic drugs on these transporters are evaluated using K_i values, comparing them with the therapeutic concentrations.

OAT-Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions

In the kidney, the OAT family transporters are involved in the uptake of organic anions with relatively low molecular weights into the renal tubules, although OAT2 and 5 are localized in the liver and OAT4 is expressed in the brush border membrane of the kidney and may be involved in efflux from the renal tubules into the urine (21–24). These OAT family transporters are inhibited by several compounds, including therapeutic drugs (Supplemental Table 1, Follow the Supplemental Material link from the Annual Reviews home page at <http://www.annualreviews.org>). Supplemental Table 1 gives a partial list of therapeutic drugs that interact with OAT family transporters, together with their maximum plasma concentration and maximum plasma unbound concentration in a clinical situation and R value.

The calculated R values suggest that many inhibitor drugs of OAT family transporters do not cause a serious drug-drug interaction because of the relatively low plasma concentrations compared with their K_i values (Supplemental Table 1). However, some cephalosporin antibiotics and probenecid exhibited low R values and, therefore, may lead to clinically relevant drug-drug interactions (Supplemental Table 1). These results suggest that the concomitant use of these drugs with OAT substrate drugs, which are mainly excreted in the urine, should be very carefully monitored. Such use may cause at least a partial reduction in the intrinsic clearance for renal secretion, possibly leading to an increase in plasma concentration.

OATP-Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions

Among OATP family transporters, OATP-B [OATP2B1], OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1], and OATP8 [OATP1B3] are expressed in the human liver and are involved in the hepatic uptake of several compounds, including therapeutic drugs (54–58). Although, in rats, some Oatp family transporters, such as Oatp1 [Oatp1a1],

Oat-k1 [Oatp1a3], and k2, are reported to be expressed in the kidney (126–130), their human counterparts have not been characterized. As shown in Supplemental Table 2 (Follow the Supplemental Material link from the Annual Reviews home page at <http://www.annualreviews.org>), several therapeutic drugs are reported to inhibit OATP family transporters. Because they are hepatic uptake transporters, R values were calculated based on not only the maximum inhibitor unbound therapeutic concentration in the circulating blood but also that in the inlet to the liver, calculated by Equation 13 (123, 124). Values calculated based on the unbound concentration in the inlet to the liver are given as R'. Inhibitors of OATP family transporters consist of bulky compounds, including anions, neutral compounds, and even cations (Supplemental Table 2). In Supplemental Table 2, only cyclosporin A and rifampicin exhibited relatively low R and R' values and may lead to clinically relevant drug-drug interactions. On the other hand, pravastatin, an HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor, is not a cause of a severe drug-drug interaction based on OATP-mediated hepatic uptake because of its low plasma unbound concentration. As pravastatin is a potent HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor and is highly distributed to the liver, its target organ, a low plasma concentration is sufficient for its pharmacological effect, leading to a low risk of inhibition of transporter function (132). A small number of inhibitors with relatively low R values may be due to a lack of inhibition studies involving human OATP family transporters, and further studies may provide other inhibitors that cause clinically relevant drug-drug interactions. More inhibition studies on human OATP transporters are needed to allow the quantitative prediction of transporter-mediated drug-drug interactions.

MDR-Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions

MDR1 is expressed in the liver and kidney (7, 8, 15). Therefore, MDR1-mediated drug-drug interactions result in a reduction in renal and hepatobiliary excretion. It is also expressed in the intestine and the blood-brain barrier and, therefore, MDR1-mediated transport affects intestinal absorption and even distribution to the brain (7). MDR1-mediated drug-drug interactions cause complex effects. MDR1 has a broad substrate specificity and is inhibited by a large number of compounds. Quinidine is one MDR1 inhibitor (35). As the K_m value of quinidine for ATP-dependent efflux via MDR1 is approximately $5 \mu\text{M}$ (32), its K_i value for MDR1 can be assumed to be $5 \mu\text{M}$. The therapeutic steady-state concentration of quinidine is approximately $4.5 \mu\text{M}$ and its unbound concentration is $0.59 \mu\text{M}$. As MDR1 is an efflux transporter, the R value should be calculated using the unbound concentration of inhibitor in the cell. However, it is practically impossible to measure the intracellular unbound concentration of inhibitors in humans. Assuming the cell-to-medium concentration ratio to be 10 as a safety margin, the R value can be calculated to be $\frac{1}{1+10 \times 0.59/5} = 0.46$, suggesting that renal efflux will be reduced to at most 46% of the control. For hepatobiliary efflux, the blood concentration at the inlet to the liver should be used. The plasma concentration of quinidine at the inlet to the liver is calculated to be $4.6 \mu\text{M}$ using $Q_H = 1.6 \text{ liters min}^{-1}$, $F_a * F_g =$

0.8, $k_a = 0.1 \text{ min}^{-1}$, and $f_u = 0.13$. Using this and assuming a cell-to-medium concentration ratio of 10, the calculated R value is $\frac{1}{1+10 \times 4.6/5} = 0.098$, suggesting that hepatobiliary excretion will be reduced to at most 9.8% of the control. Actually, both the hepatobiliary and renal clearances of digoxin have been reported to be reduced when concomitantly administered with quinidine (133).

MRP2-Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions

MRP2 also has a broad substrate specificity and is inhibited by a large number of therapeutic drugs, including cyclosporin A, daunomycin, etoposide, probenecid, and pravastatin (33, 134, 135). MRP2 functions as an efflux transporter for CPT-11 and its metabolites, SN-38 and SN-38 glucuronide (SN38-glu) (136). CPT-11 is excreted into the bile mainly via MDR1 and, to a minor extent, via MRP2, whereas SN-38 and SN38-glu are excreted via MRP2 (136). The biliary excretion of its metabolites causes severe diarrhea as a side effect (137, 138). To prevent this side effect, inhibition of MRP2-mediated transport by coadministration of its inhibitor may be effective. Horikawa et al. have investigated the inhibitory effects of several compounds on rat MRP2 function (139). Among them, probenecid, sulfobromophthalein, and the glutathione-conjugate of sulfobromophthalein had potent inhibitory effects (139). The inhibitory effects of probenecid were also confirmed for the *in vitro* human biliary excretion of SN-38 with a K_i value of $42 \mu\text{M}$ (139). The same authors also confirmed these inhibitors of rat MRP2 significantly reduced the biliary excretion of CPT-11, SN-38, and SN38-glu (140). They suggested the possibility of using MRP2 inhibitors such as probenecid to prevent the clinically observed toxicity of diarrhea by CPT-11.

EXAMPLES OF CLINICALLY RELEVANT DRUG-DRUG INTERACTIONS BASED ON RENAL AND HEPATOBILIARY TRANSPORT

In this section, examples of clinically relevant drug-drug interactions based on membrane transport in the kidney and the liver are described.

HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors Versus Cyclosporin A

As cerivastatin, a potent HMG-CoA reductase inhibitor (statin), is metabolized by two different enzymes, cytochrome P450 2C8 (CYP2C8) and 3A4, the likelihood of a severe drug-drug interaction was believed to be low (141). However, the plasma concentration of cerivastatin was reported to be increased when coadministered with cyclosporin A (142).

The plasma AUC and maximum plasma concentration of cerivastatin increased by four- and fivefold, respectively, when concomitantly administered with cyclosporin A (142). Our group investigated the mechanism underlying this drug-drug interaction (62). We have shown that the transporter-mediated uptake of

cerivastatin is inhibited by cyclosporin A at a low concentration (K_i was $0.3 \sim 0.7 \mu\text{M}$), whereas the *in vitro* metabolism of cerivastatin is inhibited with an IC_{50} value of more than $30 \mu\text{M}$, suggesting that this clinically relevant drug-drug interaction was caused by a transporter-mediated process rather than a metabolic one (62). The unbound concentration of cyclosporin A in the circulating blood and at the inlet to the liver, calculated by Equation 13, are, at most, $0.1 \mu\text{M}$ and $0.6 \mu\text{M}$, respectively, which may explain the clinically relevant drug-drug interaction, although there may be other mechanisms involved (62). We also showed that the OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1]-mediated transport of cerivastatin was inhibited by cyclosporin A with a K_i value of less than $0.2 \mu\text{M}$ (Figure 7) (62).

In addition to cerivastatin, the plasma concentrations of pravastatin, pitavastatin, and HMG-CoA reductase inhibitory activity of atorvastatin are reported to be affected by concomitantly administered cyclosporin A (143–145). Among them, pravastatin and pitavastatin undergo only minimal metabolism, and the likelihood of a drug-drug interaction owing to this is quite low. As these statins are substrates of OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1], interactions with cyclosporin A may also be caused by a transporter-based mechanism (55, 56, 121). Interaction between atorvastatin and cyclosporin A may be occurred by a transporter-mediated

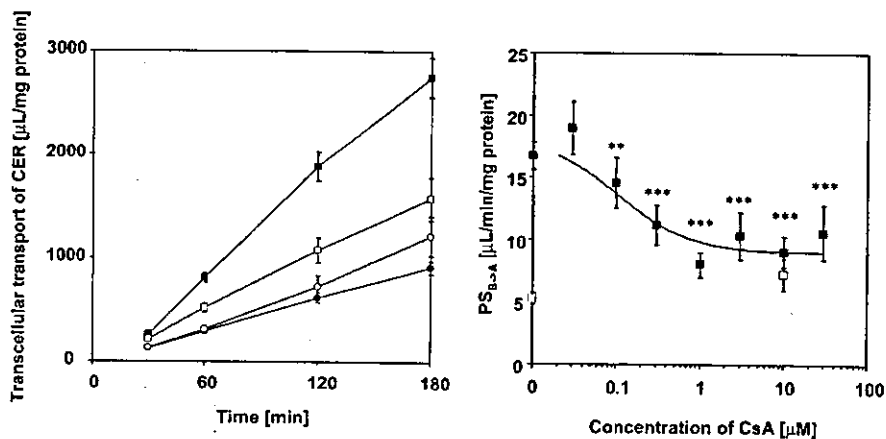


Figure 7 Transcellular transport of cerivastatin (CER) mediated by OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1] and MRP2 and the inhibitory effect of cyclosporin A. (a) Transcellular transport of [^{14}C]CER in OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1] and MRP2 double-transfected MDCK cells (*closed squares*) and in vector-transfected cells (*closed circles*) was examined. Addition of cyclosporin A ($10 \mu\text{M}$) inhibited OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1]- and MRP2-mediated transport of CER (*open squares*), whereas it did not change the transcellular transport in vector-transfected cells (*open circles*). (b) Cyclosporin A inhibited the transcellular transport ($\text{PS}_{\text{B} \rightarrow \text{A}}$) in a concentration-dependent manner. The IC_{50} value obtained in this experimental system was $0.084 \pm 0.015 \mu\text{M}$. ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

DRUG-DRUG INTERACTION INVOLVING TRANSPORTERS 707

TABLE 1 Kinetic parameters of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors coadministered with cyclosporin A

HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors	Cyclosporin A (+/-)				Major clearance mechanism	Reference
	C _{max} [ng/mL]	Ratio	AUC [ng·hr/mL]	Ratio		
Simvastatin	18.9/2.5** 20.6/9.9*	7.56 2.08	78.1/9.8** 101/39.6*	7.97 2.55	CYP3A4	193 194
Pravastatin	223/28.0	7.95	1300/ 57.1***		OATP-C	143
Fluvastatin	155/119	1.30	373/192	1.94	CYP2C9	195
Cerivastatin	7.82/1.56	5.01	36.2/9.53	3.80	CYP2C8/ 3A4OATP-C	142
Atorvastatin	58.0/8.8#*	6.59	595/79.9#*	7.45	CYP3A4- OATP-C	145
Pitavastatin	179/27.6***	6.49	347/76.9***	4.51	OATP-C	144

#ng eq./mL or ng eq.·hr/mL
 *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

and metabolism-based mechanism as atorvastatin is metabolized by CYP3A4 and cyclosporin A inhibits CYP3A4-mediated metabolism (146). In Table 1, we summarize pharmacokinetic interactions between HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors and cyclosporin A.

HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors Versus Gemfibrozil

Gemfibrozil also interacts with a wide range of statins (Table 2). In particular, interactions with cerivastatin have been reported to cause the severe side effect of myotoxicity, including lethal rhabdomyolysis (147). In addition, pharmacokinetic interaction between cerivastatin and gemfibrozil was reported (148, 149). Although our group examined the inhibitory effects of gemfibrozil and its major metabolites on the OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1]-mediated uptake of cerivastatin, we found gemfibrozil and its glucuronide inhibited it with IC₅₀ values of 72 and 24 μM, respectively, which were higher than their therapeutic unbound concentrations, suggesting a low possibility of a transporter-mediated drug-drug interaction (150). On the other hand, an interaction with rosuvastatin was reported to be caused by the inhibition of OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1]-mediated uptake by Schneck et al. (151). In their report, gemfibrozil inhibited the OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1]-mediated transport of cerivastatin with a low IC₅₀ value of 4 μM (151). Although it is still higher than the therapeutic unbound concentration of cerivastatin, this value is lower than that we have obtained (150). This gap may be partly due to the difference in the experimental system, i.e., we used transporter-expressing MDCK cells, whereas Schneck et al. used cRNA-injected

TABLE 2 Kinetic parameters of HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors coadministered with gemfibrozil

HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors	Gemfibrozil (+/-)				Major clearance mechanism	Reference
	Cmax [ng/mL]	Ratio	AUC [ng · hr/mL]	Ratio		
Lovastatin	2.38/2.69	0.885	33.1/34.4	0.962	CYP3A4	196
Simvastatin	6.15/6.87	0.895	36.2/25.2**	1.44	CYP3A4	197
Pravastatin	120/66.3*	1.81	281/139*	2.02	OATP-C	198
Fluvastatin	54.3/48.4	1.12	213/227	0.938	CYP2C9	199
Cerivastatin	8.0/3.2**	2.5	91.1/20.9***	4.36	CYP2C8/3A4	148
	2.93/1.61	1.82	41.9/9.92	4.22	OATP-C	149
Pitavastatin	no data	1.30	no data	1.45	OATP-C	200
Rosuvastatin	109/49.5	2.20	771/410	1.88	CYP2C9	151
					OATP-C	

*p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Xenopus laevis oocytes (150, 151). We also analyzed the inhibitory effects of gemfibrozil and its metabolites on the P450-mediated metabolism of cerivastatin and found that gemfibrozil and its glucuronide inhibited the CYP2C8-mediated metabolism with IC₅₀ values of 28 and 4 μM, respectively (150). They are still higher than the therapeutic unbound concentrations in the circulating blood. However, there are reports that, in rat perfusion studies, gemfibrozil-1-O-glucuronide is actively taken up into the liver and accumulates there (152–154). If this also took place in human liver, the concentrated gemfibrozil-1-O-glucuronide might act as an inhibitor of CYP2C8-mediated metabolism, leading to a drug-drug interaction. In this case, a transporter plays an important role, i.e., an inhibitor of the metabolism leading to accumulation in the liver via transporter-mediated uptake. Our hypothesis that interaction with gemfibrozil is not a transporter-mediated one, but a metabolism-mediated one is supported by the fact that gemfibrozil does not cause a severe interaction with pravastatin and pitavastatin, which are mainly cleared by the OATP-C/OATP2 [OATP1B1]-mediated hepatic uptake (Table 2). Therefore, we should also be more cautious about drug-drug interactions when inhibitors of the metabolism are substrates of hepatic uptake transporters (Figure 8).

Digoxin Versus Quinidine and Quinine

Digoxin undergoes biliary and renal excretion. Drug-drug interactions between digoxin and quinidine and between digoxin and quinine (a stereoisomer of quinidine) have been reported by Hedmann et al. (133). Quinidine reduced the renal and biliary excretion of digoxin, whereas quinine reduced only the biliary excretion of digoxin (133).

Because quinidine is a well-known P-gp inhibitor, its effect on biliary and urinary excretion may be related to P-gp (MDR1)-mediated transport (35). As de-

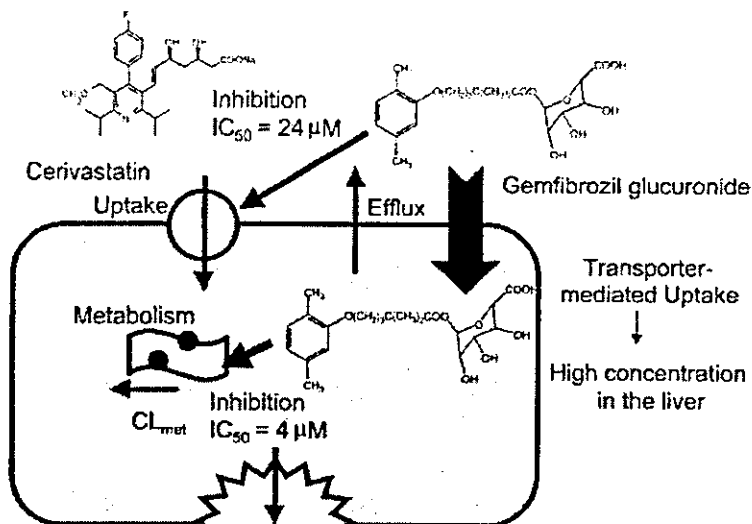


Figure 8 Possible mechanism of drug-drug interaction between cerivastatin and gemfibrozil. Gemfibrozil-1-O-glucuronide is actively taken up via transporter(s) and accumulates in the liver. In the liver, its concentration is hypothesized to be high enough to inhibit the P450-mediated metabolism of cerivastatin.

scribed in MDR-Mediated Drug-Drug Interactions (above), the K_i value of quinidine for the MDR1-mediated efflux can be assumed to be $5 \mu M$. On the other hand, the steady-state plasma concentration of quinidine in this study was $4.5 \mu M$, with a protein unbound fraction of 0.13. Therefore, the protein unbound concentration in the circulating blood is estimated to be $0.59 \mu M$. The unbound concentration of quinidine at the inlet to the liver estimated by Equation 13 is $4.6 \mu M$ using $Q_H = 1.6 \text{ liters min}^{-1}$, $F_a \cdot F_g = 0.8$, and $k_a = 0.1 \text{ min}^{-1}$. With a safety margin of 1 ~ 10 as a cell-to-medium concentration ratio, the estimated reduction in the renal excretion of digoxin is 46% to 89% of the control, and the estimated reduction in the hepatobiliary excretion of digoxin is 9.8% to 52% of the control. In clinical situations, the hepatobiliary excretion was reduced to 42% of the control, whereas the renal excretion was reduced to 60% of the control, which was within the predicted range (133).

In rat hepatocytes, the inhibitory effect on the uptake of digoxin was more potent for quinine than for quinidine, and the same tendency was observed using the rat Oatp2 [Oatp1a4] expression system (122, 155). Therefore, the mechanism of the drug-drug interaction between digoxin and quinine may be caused by the inhibition of the transporter-mediated uptake. However, there is a study that shows that both quinine and quinidine had no inhibitory effects on the uptake of digoxin into isolated human hepatocytes, although both of them inhibited the uptake of digoxin into rat hepatocytes (156).

Drug-Drug Interactions Between Cephalosporin Antibiotics and Probenecid

There are many reports on the drug-drug interactions between cephalosporin antibiotics and probenecid (157). As both cephalosporins and probenecid interact with OAT family transporters, some of these drug-drug interactions may be due to an OAT-mediated uptake process. Most cephalosporins are excreted in the urine, which may be partly mediated by OAT family transporters. The elimination rates of cephazedone, cefazolin, cefalexin, cefradine, cefaclor, cefmetazole, cefoxitin, cefuroxime, cefmenoxime, ceftizoxime, and ceftriaxone were significantly reduced by coadministration of probenecid, which may be partly caused by the inhibition of their renal excretions (157).

Marino & Dominguez-Gil have shown that the pharmacokinetics of cefadroxil is altered by coadministration of probenecid (158). In their report, the peak concentration and half-life of cefadroxil was increased 1.4- and 1.3-fold, respectively, following coadministration of probenecid. Its urinary excretion rate constant falls by 58%, supporting the possibility of drug-drug interaction at the renal excretion. Supplemental Table 1 suggests that OAT1- and OAT3-mediated transport should be decreased to at most 25%–47% and 25%–69% of the control, and, therefore, it may be partly explained by the OAT-mediated drug-drug interaction.

Probenecid has also been shown to alter the plasma concentrations of cefamandole and ceftriaxone (159). The maximum plasma concentration and half-life of cefamandole were increased 6- and 1.8-fold by coadministration of probenecid (159). Also, 71% of cefamandole is excreted in the urine, and this was reduced to 66% of the control (159). The elimination of ceftriaxone was slightly affected by coadministration of probenecid (160). Probenecid reduced the serum clearance of ceftriaxone to 73% of the control (160). It reduced the renal and nonrenal clearance to 80% and 68% of the control, respectively, suggesting that this drug-drug interaction is, to a minor extent, due to renal excretion (160).

Drug-Drug Interaction Between Methotrexate and NSAIDs

To date, there are reports that coadministration of MTX with penicillin, probenecid, and NSAIDs cause drug-drug interactions and several potential sites for these DDI have been reported: an increase in the protein unbound fraction of MTX, a decrease in the urine flow rate resulting from the inhibition of prostaglandin synthesis, and inhibition of the renal tubular secretion of MTX (161–164). Nozaki et al. analyzed the uptake mechanism of MTX in rat kidney slices and examined the effects of NSAIDs on its uptake (165). They showed that rat Oat3 and reduced folate carrier 1 (RFC-1) equally contribute to the renal uptake (30% each), with the remaining fraction being accounted for by passive diffusion and/or adsorption, whereas rOat1 makes only a limited contribution (165). Many NSAIDs inhibited both rOat3- and RFC-1-mediated uptake of MTX, but the K_i value for Oat3 was lower than that for RFC-1 (165). At their therapeutic concentrations, they inhibited only Oat3-mediated uptake of MTX. Therefore, the effect of NSAIDs on the renal uptake of

MTX is expected to be nonextensive and partial. Many NSAIDs also inhibit human OAT3-mediated uptake of MTX with therapeutic relevant plasma concentrations of unbound drugs (26). However, also in humans, the contribution of OAT3 to the total renal uptake of MTX needs to be clarified for the identification of the mechanism of the clinically relevant DDI.

CONCLUSION

In addition to phase I and phase II enzymes, transporters also play an important role in drug elimination and distribution. Therefore, it is possible that transporter-mediated drug-drug interactions alter pharmacokinetics, and could result in severe side effects.

A large number of transporters have been characterized in rodents and humans, and the mechanism of the membrane transport of several compounds including endogenous compounds and therapeutic drugs has been clarified. However, the transport mechanism of most therapeutic drugs remains unknown. To predict a transporter-mediated drug-drug interaction, the transporters involved in the membrane transport of the drug need to be characterized. As multiple transporters have been characterized in the kidney and liver and their expression systems are available, it should be possible to predict a transporter-mediated drug-drug interaction by using these systems with the information of the contribution made by each transporter to the net transport in the kidney and liver.

We have estimated the possibility of a transporter-mediated drug-drug interaction from the R value calculated using the maximum unbound concentration of inhibitors. This method may avoid false negative predictions of drug-drug interactions. In conclusion, greater awareness of the possibility of transporter-mediated drug-drug interactions is necessary.

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