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IV. 研究成果の  
刊行物・別冊

## 改良型ヒッププロテクターの着用率に与える影響

大阪市立大学大学院医学研究科整形外科 小池達也・渡邊具子・豊田宏光  
州鎌 亮・松下直史・高岡邦夫

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## Session II

## 8 改良型ヒッププロテクターの着用率に与える影響

大阪市立大学大学院医学研究科整形外科 小池達也・渡邊具子・豊田宏光  
州鎌 亮・松下直史・高岡邦夫

## はじめに

骨粗鬆症とは種々の原因によって骨量が減少し、骨折が起こりやすくなった状態と定義されている。骨粗鬆症の治療目標は、疼痛緩和や骨量増加とされた時代もあったが、現在では骨折の予防がエンドポイントとされている。臨床的に認められる骨粗鬆症にともなう骨折には、脊椎圧迫骨折・上腕骨近位端骨折・橈骨遠位端骨折・大腿骨頸部骨折がある。このうち、大腿骨頸部骨折は患者の移動能力を著しく低下させ、重度の場合にはいわゆる「寝たきり」患者を生み出し、被介護者人口の増加につながる。世界に類をみない速度で高齢化が進行するわが国においては、高齢者が有意義な老後を送るためにも、大腿骨頸部骨折をいかに予防するかが最重要課題の一つとなっている。

## 1 目 的

大腿骨頸部骨折は、転倒により大腿骨に衝撃が加わり発生する。転倒時に側方を打撲した場合に、大腿骨頸部骨折の発生率が高いことが明らかになっている。そこで、開発されたのが外側型ヒッププロテクターである。図1に示すように、大転子部に衝撃を吸収あるいは分散させる素材を装着することにより、転倒打撲時の大転子への衝撃力を弱めることを目的としている。これまで、骨折を半減させるとする報告と効果がないとする報告がある(図2)。

しかし、いずれの研究においても、装着率の低さが問題点として指摘されている。われわれ

が、以前に行った300名規模の研究でも、1年間で装着率は29%であった。装着率を低下させている原因を解析すると、トイレ動作時の着脱困難が上位の原因としてあげられた。そこで、装着率向上を目的に股割れ型パンツ(図3)を作成し、従来型のものとの装着率を比較した。

また、これまでのすべての研究で sham プロテクター群が設置されたことがなかったため、プロテクターの本体であるシェルを装着しない群も作成した。そこで、シェルあり従来型パンツ群、シェルなし従来型パンツ群、シェルあり股割れ型パンツ群、シェルなし股割れ型パンツ

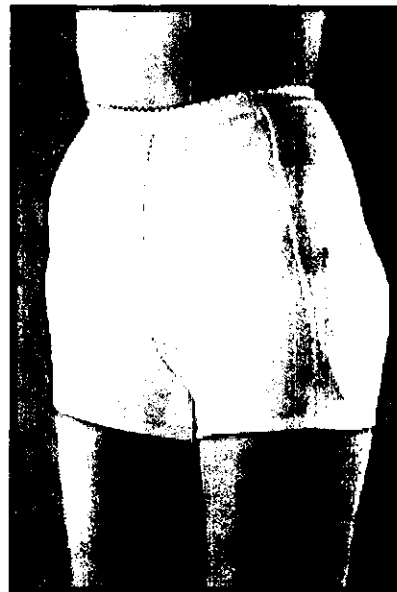


図1 ヒッププロテクター

大転子部に衝撃を吸収あるいは分散させる素材が当てられている。この写真では、衝撃分散型の硬くて軽いシェルが装着されている。

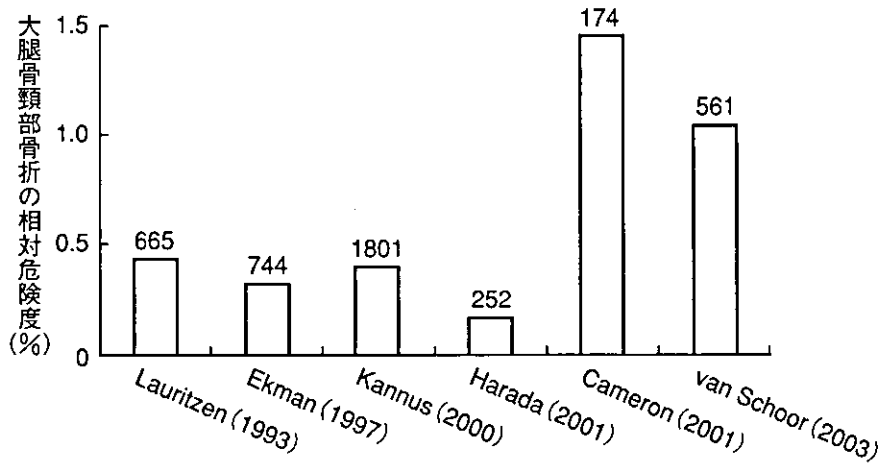


図2 ヒッププロテクターが大腿骨頸部骨折発生率に与える影響  
名前と年は発表者と報告年。バーの上の数字は対象者数。



図3 改良型股割れパンツ  
トイレ動作時に脱がずにすむように設計を行った。この上に下着を着用する。

群の4群比較を行った。

## 2 対象と方法

研究目的および方法を4施設の入所者に行い、参加を承諾した歩行可能な65歳以上の女性103名(年齢81.2±7.5歳)を無作為に4群に分け、6ヵ月間の装着率および転倒骨折率の調査を行った。本人あるいは家族から書面によるインフォームドコンセントをえた。従来型パンツか股割れ型パンツかの選択に関しては、クラスターごとに無作為に分け、シエルのあるなしに

関しては封筒法による無作為化を行った。開始時に移動能力や歩行速度および嗜好品などについてのアンケート調査を行い、また、観察開始1ヵ月の時点で、施設介護職員に対するアンケート調査も行った。

## 3 結果

各群間に、年齢・身長・体重に差は認めなかった(表1)。また、20歳時と比較しての身長低下、歩行速度、移動能力、合併症、閉経時期、アルコール・コーヒー・牛乳飲用量、睡眠薬服用頻度

表1 対象者と群分け

パンツ	シェル	人数	年齢(歳)	身長(cm)	体重(Kg)
従来型	あり	27	79.2 ± 9.0	145.3 ± 7.6	45.9 ± 9.0
従来型	なし	27	80.0 ± 6.8	145.9 ± 7.4	46.4 ± 9.4
股割れ型	あり	26	81.7 ± 6.0	146.3 ± 6.9	46.9 ± 9.0
股割れ型	なし	23	84.2 ± 7.1	145.2 ± 6.3	43.8 ± 7.0

平均±標準偏差

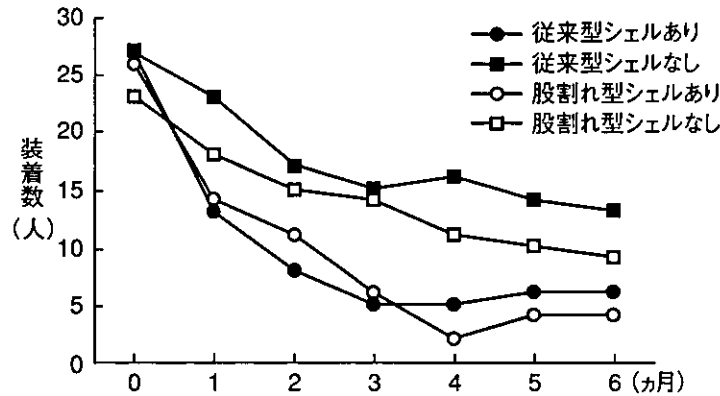


図4 装着者数変化

に関しても、各群間に差を認めなかった。

観察期間中、両群ともに大腿骨頸部骨折は1例も生じなかった。他の部位の骨折も観察されなかった。転倒回数は、シェルあり群9回、シェルなし群3回、従来型パンツ群7回、股割れ型パンツ群5回で各群間に差を認めなかった。

装着率変化を、図4に示す。各群ともに、開始直後より装着率は急激に低下したが、低下率はシェルあり群でより急激であり、従来型パンツと股割れ型パンツ群の間では、シェルのあるなしにかかわらず差を認めなかった。

1ヵ月時点での介護者に対するアンケート調査では、どの群においても対象者に対する指導頻度が少ないことが判明したが、指導を行えば対象者の装着率が向上することも判明した(図5)。

#### 4 考 察

大腿骨頸部骨折の発生要因は単一のものではなく、種々の要因が絡み合って形成されている。多くの大腿骨頸部骨折は、骨量が骨折閾値

以下に低下した高齢者に発生する。しかし、骨量だけでは将来の頸部骨折を予測することはできないとされており、大腿骨頸部骨折発生に関しては転倒というイベントが重要な意味をもつ。実際、大腿骨頸部骨折の90%以上は転倒にともなって発生する。そのため転倒要因と骨強度規定因子のバランスを理解することが重要である。

したがって、頸部骨折を予防するためには理論上、以下のような方策が考えられる。まず、転倒そのものを防ごうとするもので、転倒要因で改善可能なものを対象とする。種々の運動療法や生活環境改善などがここに含まれる。また、骨の脆弱性を改善し骨折予防を行おうとするものには、骨粗鬆症の治療方法が食事療法などもあわせてすべて含まれる。薬物療法においては、ビスフォスフォネート製剤が骨量を著明に増加させ、頸部骨折発生率を50%程度抑制することが大規模臨床試験で証明されている。ところが、骨量増加のみで頸部骨折の発生を抑制しようとすると、20%以上の骨量増加が要求される。これはビスフォスフォネート製剤をもってしても

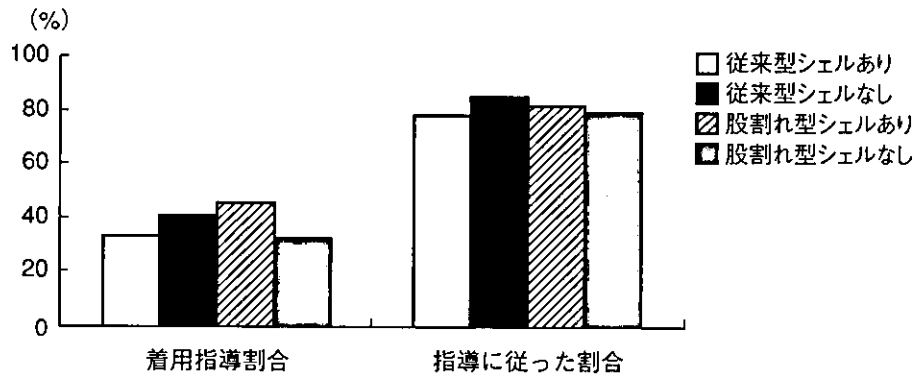


図5 施設職員に対するアンケート

開始1ヵ月後に実施。対象者に対して、毎日着用を指導したかとの問いと、その指導に対して対象者が従ったか否かに関する質問。各群間に差を認めない。

到達できないレベルである。そこで、骨が弱くて転倒しても骨が折れない方法として、ヒッププロテクターが考案された。

ヒッププロテクターには大きく分けて二つの種類がある。衝撃分散型 (energy-shunting) と衝撃吸収型 (energy-absorbing) で、前者は硬くて軽いシェル構造を、後者は柔らかくて重いジェル構造をしている。転倒して病院に運ばれた306名のうち、頸部骨折を起こした206名と起こさなかった100名の転倒様式を調査した研究<sup>1)</sup>によると、骨折者の76%が側方への転倒で、56%が大転子上に血腫を認めたと報告されている。一方、非骨折者は側方への転倒が少なく(63%)、手を伸ばすような防御反応が42%に認められた(骨折群では17%)。したがって、プロテクターを大転子外側に設置し、転倒時の大転子への衝撃を減弱させれば、頸部骨折を予防できると推測される。

臨床試験での成績は、1993年にLauritzenらによって報告されて以来、いずれの報告でも大腿骨頸部骨折発生の相対危険率を50%以下に抑制することに成功している<sup>2~6)</sup>(図2)。ただし、最近では、後述する装着率の低さを含めて、ヒッププロテクター効果に関する否定的な結果も報告されている<sup>7)</sup>。前述のように、ヒッププロテクター装着は大腿骨頸部骨折発生を抑制するが、それは当然のことながらヒッププロテクターを正しく装着していた場合のみである。これまでの研究においても、脱落症例が多いこと

が問題となっている。対象者はさまざまな理由でヒッププロテクターを装着しない。シェル型は硬くて痛みをともなうことが多く、ジェル型は柔らかい代わりに重くてかさばる。不快感(プロテクターがきつい、暑い、装着そのものに対する拒否反応)や、見栄え(腰回りが膨らむ)、あるいは不自由さ(トイレ動作時の煩雑さ)を理由にヒッププロテクターを着けないことが多く、特に夜間の装着率は著しく低下する。

そこで、われわれはトイレ動作などに便利なように股割れ型のヒッププロテクターを開発したが、今回の調査で、われわれの改良は装着率向上に貢献しないことが判明した。対象者への聞き取り調査では、シェルあり群ではやはり疼痛が一番多い不満であり、股割れ群ではかぶれなどのこれまでに報告されていないような訴えも認められた。

ヒッププロテクターは正しく装着されれば、大腿骨頸部骨折発生率を有意に減少させることができる。特に、施設入所者などで転倒のコントロールが難しいと思われるような対象者には最適の装具と思われる。問題点である装着率の低さを改善するために、今後もスタイルの変更などを模索すべきであるが、シェルそのものの構造にも改良を加える必要がある。さらに、より重要なことは、介護する側の意識を高め、転倒骨折を防ぐ努力を日々の業務に取り入れていくことであると考えられた。



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**A prostanoid receptor EP4 agonist enhances ectopic bone formation induced by recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2**

Ryuichi Sasaoka, Hidetomi Terai, Hiromitsu Toyoda, Yuuki Imai,  
Ryo Sugama, and Kunio Takaoka

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## A prostanoid receptor EP4 agonist enhances ectopic bone formation induced by recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2<sup>☆</sup>

Ryuichi Sasaoka, Hidetomi Terai,<sup>\*</sup> Hiromitsu Toyoda, Yuuki Imai, Ryo Sugama, and Kunio Takaoka

*Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Osaka City University Graduate School of Medicine, 1-4-3 Asahi-machi, Abeno-ku, Osaka 545-8585, Japan*

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### Abstract

The anabolic effects of prostaglandin E<sub>2</sub> on bone are effected through the activation of EP4, a G protein-coupled receptor. In the present study, we examined the effects of a prostanoid receptor-selective agonist (ONO-4819) in an experimental system of ectopic bone formation using recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2 (rhBMP-2). Collagen pellets containing rhBMP-2 were implanted onto the back muscles of mice and then treated with ONO-4819 administered every 8 h by subcutaneous injection. The ossicles elicited ectopically by rhBMP-2 in mice treated with 30 µg/kg ONO-4819 were significantly larger in size and had a higher bone mineral density and bone mineral content when compared to the controls. We also noted that the anabolic effect of ONO-4819 was seen only in the early phase of the rhBMP-2-induced bone-forming process. These experimental results indicate that the EP4 receptor agonist enhances the rhBMP-2-induced bone formation through a selective effect on early stage mesenchymal cells, which in turn may result in increased responsiveness of the host animals to rhBMP-2.

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**Keywords:** Prostaglandins; EP4 agonist; BMP; Bone morphogenetic protein; Bone formation; Osteoblast; Mesenchymal cell

Bone morphogenetic proteins are physiological agents responsible for the inherent regenerating potential of bone. These proteins promote the differentiation of early stage mesenchymal cells into chondrogenic and osteogenic lineages to support new bone formation. Because of the specific biological activity of BMPs and the successful generation of synthetic BMPs by DNA recombination, there is tremendous interest in using these proteins for bone repair and reconstructive surgery in the clinic. However, one of the major problems with the clinical application of rhBMP-2 is that milligrams of protein is required to elicit new bone formation in humans. The lower responsiveness of humans to BMP

results in a high cost for the clinical use of the BMP. Therefore, in order to improve the cost-effectiveness of this protein, the use of additional drugs to enhance BMP action might be a possible solution.

Prostaglandins produced by osteocytes or cells of the osteoblastic lineage have been shown to play an important role in both bone formation and bone resorption [1–3]. Among the PGs, prostaglandin E (PGE) exhibits significant anabolic effects on bone formation when administered systemically or locally to the skeleton [4–6]. PGE<sub>2</sub> exerts its effects through the interaction with specific G-protein-coupled surface receptor subtypes, EP1, EP2, EP3, and EP4. These receptors are encoded by distinct genes, are expressed differentially depending on the tissue, and are responsible for the tissue-specific actions of PGE<sub>2</sub> [7–9]. A previous study using mice that lack each of the four receptor subtypes revealed that EP4 is the only receptor that mediates the PGE<sub>2</sub>-induced anabolic action in bone formation in

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<sup>\*</sup> Corresponding author. Fax: +81-6-6646-6260.

E-mail address: [hterai@med.osaka-cu.ac.jp](mailto:hterai@med.osaka-cu.ac.jp) (H. Terai).

rodents [10–13]. Further studies indicated that an EP2-selective agonist could enhance bone healing in beagle dogs or rats [14,15]. Taken together, these data suggest that BMP-elicited bone formation could be enhanced with the use of PGE<sub>2</sub> receptor-specific agonists.

To test this hypothesis, we examined the effect of an EP4 subtype-specific agonist on BMP-dependent ectopic bone formation *in vivo*.

## Materials and methods

**Mice.** One hundred and ten male closed colony SPF (ICR) mice (Charles River Japan, Tokyo), four weeks of age, were housed and acclimated in cages with free access to food and water for one week. Experiments were carried out in strict accordance with the Institutional Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals of Osaka City University.

**Preparation of BMP-containing collagen pellet implants.** rhBMP-2 was produced by the Genetics Institute (Cambridge, MA) and donated to us through Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical (Tokyo, Japan). The rhBMP-2 was provided in a buffer solution (5 mmol/L glutamic acid, 2.5% glycine, 0.5% sucrose, and 0.01% Tween 80) at a concentration of 1 µg/µL after filter sterilization. To prepare one implant sample, 5 µL (5 µg of rhBMP-2) of the rhBMP-2 solution was added to 20 µL of 0.01 N HCl solution and blotted onto a collagen sponge disk (6 mm diameter, 1 mm thickness) fabricated from commercially available bovine collagen sheets (Helistat, Integra Life Sciences, Plainsboro, NJ), freeze-dried, and kept at –20 °C until implantation into mice. All procedures were carried out under sterile conditions.

**EP4-receptor-selective agonist (ONO-4819).** The prostanoid receptor EP4-selective agonist (ONO-4819), methyl 7-[(1R,2R,3R)-3-hydroxy-2-[(E)-(3S)-3-hydroxy-4-(*m*-methoxymethylphenyl)-1-butenyl]-5-oxocyclopentyl]-5-thiaheptanoate (Patent Cooperation Treaty published No. WO 00/03980), was obtained from Ono Pharmaceutical (Osaka, Japan) and dissolved in physiological saline prior to subcutaneous injection into mice.

**Experimental design.** The mice were anesthetized with diethyl ether before surgery and the rhBMP-2 containing collagen pellet was implanted into the left dorsal muscle pouches (one pellet per animal). To determine the dose-dependent effects of the EP4 agonist, the mice were divided into four groups (10 mice per group). Vehicle alone (0 µg/kg), or 10, 30, and 100 µg/kg ONO-4819 were injected subcutaneously every 8 h for 21 days after surgical implantation of the pellets. In order to examine the phase-dependent effect of the EP4 agonist during the BMP-induced bone forming process, another group of mice was divided into four sub-groups (10 mice per group) and injected with ONO-4819 subcutaneously (30 µg/kg body weight) every 8 h for 7 days during the pre- and post-implantation phases. The phases were divided as follows; –1–0w (day –7 to day –1), 0–1w (day 0 to day 6), 1–2w (day 7 to day 13), and 2–3w (day 14 to day 21) after surgery. Three weeks after surgery, the mice were sacrificed, the implants were harvested and evaluated by morphological, radiological, and histological methods.

**Evaluation of rhBMP-2-induced ectopic bone.** The size of each ossicle was determined based on three mutually orthogonal measurements (*a*, *b*, and *c*) by using a caliper. A formula,  $V = abc\pi/6$ , was used to calculate ossicle volumes. All harvested tissues were radiographed with a soft X-ray apparatus (Sofron, Tokyo, Japan). To evaluate bone quality and the quantity of the ossicles, the BMD (milligrams per square centimeter) and BMC (milligrams per ossicle) of each ossicle were measured by dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA) using a bone mineral analyzer (DCS-600EX, Aloka, Tokyo). The ossicles or tissue mass from each group was then fixed in neutralized 10% formalin, decalcified with K-CX (Fujisawa Pharmaceutical, Japan), and embedded in paraffin wax. Sections of 3 µm in

thickness were cut, stained with hematoxylin–eosin, and observed under a light microscope.

**Bone metabolic markers in mice.** In order to investigate the effects of ONO-4819 on systemic bone metabolism, blood samples were collected from mice lacking implants in the control and ONO-4819 (30 µg/kg ONO-4819; 5 mice per group) groups following one, two, and three weeks of drug treatment. The blood samples were stored at –80 °C until required for biochemical measurements. Serum osteocalcin was measured by immunoradiometric assay (IRMA) using a commercial kit (Immutopics, San Clemente, CA). Total alkaline phosphatase (ALP) activity, calcium (Ca) and phosphate (P) in serum were also measured in each group with commercially available kits.

**Statistical Analysis.** Data are presented as means ± SE. The degree of significance was determined by post hoc testing using the Bonferroni method. An associated probability (*P* value) of <0.05 was considered significant.

## Results

### Effects of ONO-4819 on rhBMP-2-induced ectopic bone

Administration of ONO-4819 at the dose of 30 µg/kg percutaneously every 8 h for 3 weeks produced large ectopic ossicles (Fig. 1) (Control 45.0 ± 8.1 mm<sup>3</sup>, 10 µg/kg 48.7 ± 4.4 mm<sup>3</sup>, 30 µg/kg 86.5 ± 10.1 mm<sup>3</sup>, and 100 µg/kg 55.7 ± 8.9 mm<sup>3</sup>). There were no significant differences between the control group and 10 or 100 µg/kg ONO-4819 treatment groups.

Radiographic examination revealed that the calcified mass area in 30 and 100 µg/kg group was larger than the mass observed in control group (Fig. 2). The trabeculae in the ossicles of the 30 and 100 µg/kg group appeared more densely packed than those in the control ossicles based on histological examination (Figs. 3A–D).

The systemic administration of ONO-4819 increased the bone mineral content (BMC) and bone mineral density (BMD) of rhBMP-2-induced bone (Fig. 4). In terms

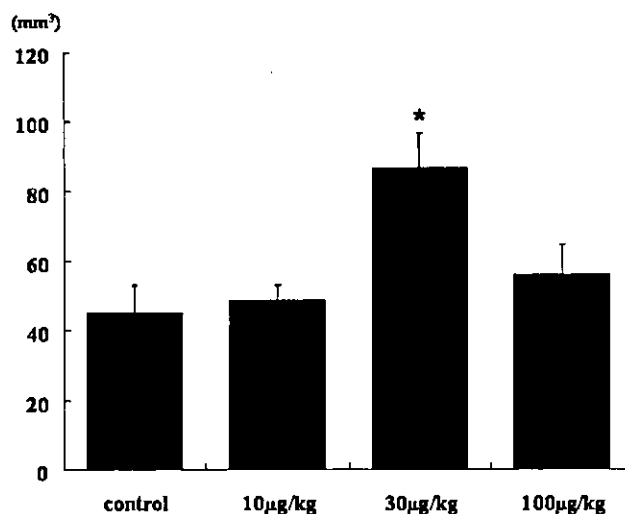


Fig. 1. Volume of harvested tissues (*n* = 10 each). RhBMP-2-induced ossicles with 30 µg/kg ONO-4819 treatment were significantly larger than the controls. Data expressed as means ± SE. \*Significantly different from controls (*P* < 0.05).

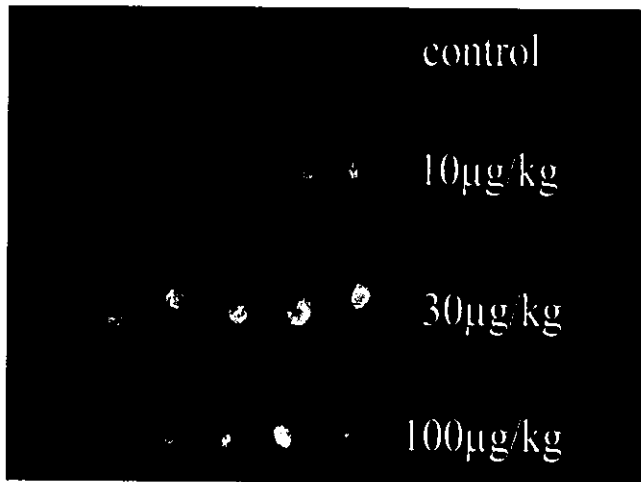


Fig. 2. Soft X-ray photograph of the ossicles harvested at 3 weeks after implantation. A typical implant from each group is shown (control, ONO-4819 10, 30, and 100  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ ). The radio-opaque areas of the ONO-4819 treatment groups were larger than those observed in the control group.

of BMC and BMD, the values of 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  group (BMC  $21.57 \pm 4.13$  mg, BMD  $33.79 \pm 1.64$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>) were significantly higher than those of control group (BMC  $7.91 \pm 1.27$  mg, BMD  $18.68 \pm 1.30$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>). For BMD, the values of 100  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  group (BMC  $13.47 \pm 2.26$  mg, BMD  $30.61 \pm 1.92$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>) were significantly higher than those of control group. There were no significant differences between 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  group (BMC  $12.87 \pm 2.19$  mg, BMD  $22.39 \pm 2.03$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>) and control group. The evaluation of the effect of ONO-4819 on BMC and BMD of tibiae in mice that did not receive implants without BMP implantation showed no significant systemic effect at the dose of ONO-4819 used in the study (Fig. 5).

#### Phase-dependent effects of ONO-4819

Fig. 6 shows the effect of ONO-4819 on early, intermediate, and late phases of BMP-induced new bone formation. ONO-4819 enhanced rhBMP-2-induced bone formation for the first week after implantation and

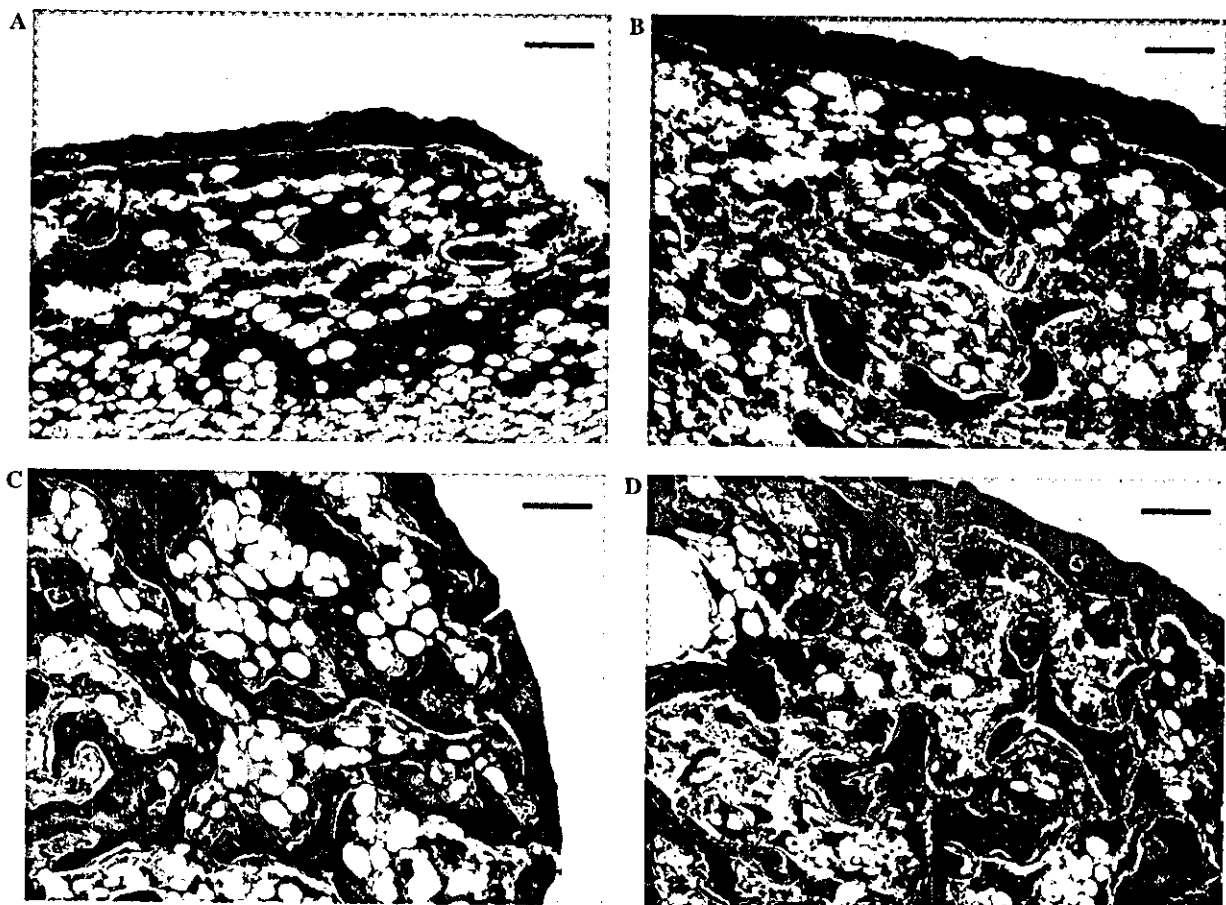


Fig. 3. Histological sections of the ossicles at 3 weeks after implantation are shown (hematoxylin-eosin stain; original magnification 100 $\times$ , bar = 100  $\mu\text{m}$ ). (A) Control, (B) ONO-4819 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ , (C) ONO-4819 30  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ , and (D) ONO-4819 100  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ . New bone formation with hematopoietic marrow and bony trabeculae were visible in the rhBMP-2-induced ossicles. In the 30 and 100  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  ONO-4819 treatment groups, there were visible increases in the number and thickness of bony trabeculae when compared with the control group.

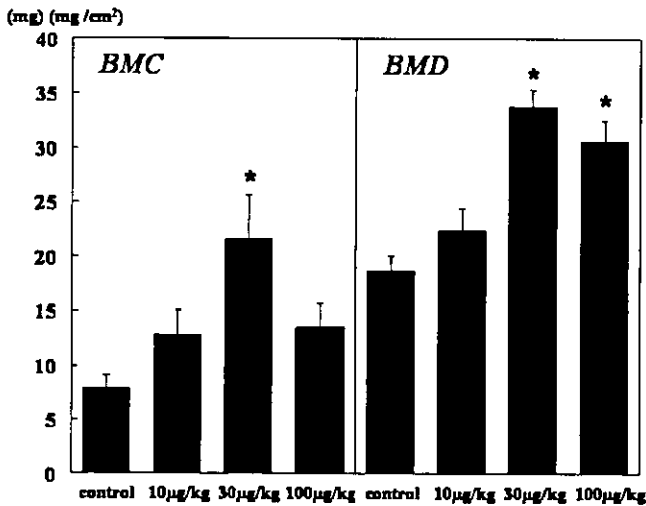


Fig. 4. The bone mineral content (BMC) and density (BMD) of the ossicles at 3 weeks after implantation. There were significant differences between the control group and the 30 µg/kg ONO-4819 group in terms of BMC and BMD. The BMD from 100 µg/kg ONO-4819 group was significantly higher than that of control group. Data are expressed as means ± SE. \*Significantly different from controls ( $P < 0.05$ ).

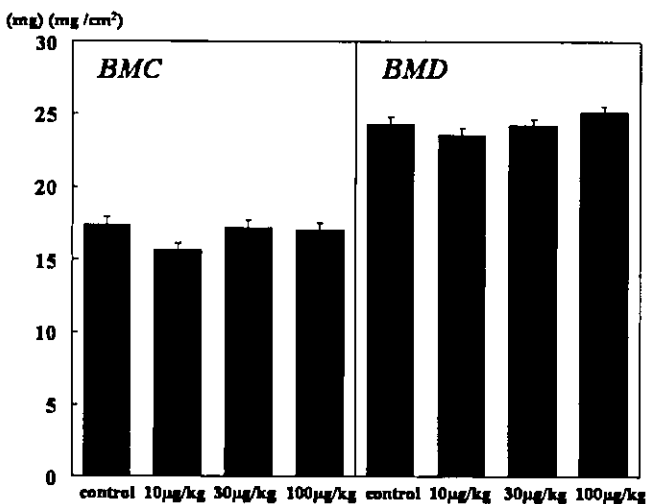


Fig. 5. The effect of ONO-4819 on the systemic skeletal system was examined by recording the values for bone mineral content (BMC) and density (BMD) in the tibia in mice that did not receive rhBMP2 pellets. There were no significant differences between the treatment groups and the control groups.

BMC and BMD in that group were significantly higher (BMC  $16.51 \pm 3.24$  mg, BMD  $29.75 \pm 2.23$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>) than the control group. There was no significant difference among other groups, -1-0 week (BMC  $9.66 \pm 1.79$  mg, BMD  $17.90 \pm 2.02$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>), 1-2 week (BMC  $10.14 \pm 1.17$  mg, BMD  $24.04 \pm 1.24$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>), 2-3 week groups (BMC  $8.04 \pm 1.08$  mg, BMD  $17.40 \pm 1.20$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>), and control group (BMC  $7.91 \pm 1.26$  mg, BMD  $18.68 \pm 1.30$  mg/cm<sup>2</sup>).

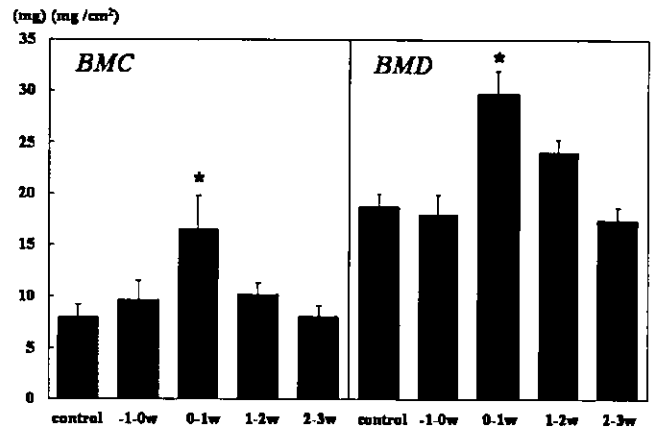


Fig. 6. The phase-dependent effect of ONO-4819 on rhBMP-2-induced ectopic bone formation was examined at the level of bone mineral content (BMC) and density (BMD) of the ossicles. The BMC and BMD from the initial phase (0-1 week) treatment group were significantly higher than the values recorded for the control group. There were no significant differences between pre(-1-0w), middle-(1-2w) or late-(2-3w) phase and the control group. Data are expressed as means ± SE. \*Significantly different from controls ( $P < 0.05$ ).

#### Systemic effects of ONO-4819

The side effects of ONO-4819 administration were represented by changes in body weight of mice in each group receiving this drug. All of the experimental groups that received ONO-4819 injections for 3 weeks showed suppressed body weight gain compared to control group. A marked retardation in body weight increase was observed in 100 µg/kg group (Fig. 7).

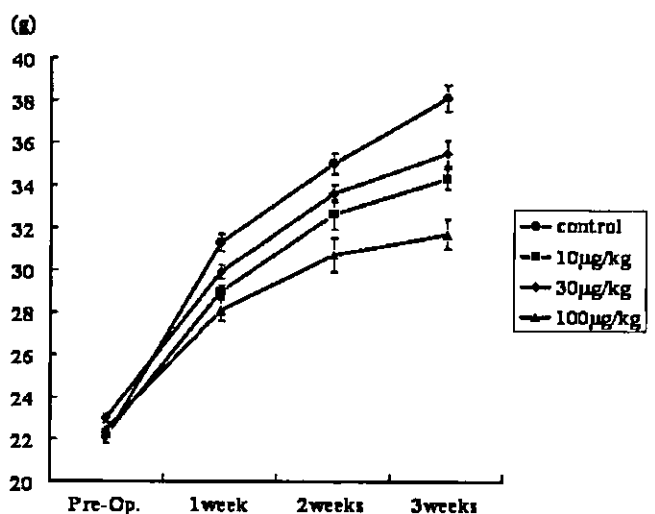


Fig. 7. Mice that received a systemic injection of ONO-4819 for 3 weeks showed a significant decline in body weight gain when compared to the control group. There was a marked retardation in body weight gain in the 100 µg/kg ONO-4819 treatment group.

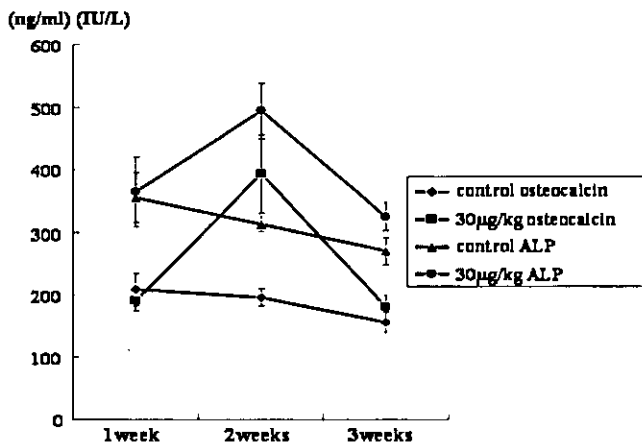


Fig. 8. Two weeks after the start of drug treatment, the serum osteocalcin level and total ALP activity from the 30 µg/kg ONO-4819 group that did not receive rhBMP-2 pellets were increased significantly when compared to the control groups.

#### Bone metabolic markers in mice

After two week administration of ONO-4819, both serum osteocalcin ( $393 \pm 62.5$  ng/ml) and ALP activity ( $494 \pm 44.2$  IU/L) levels increased significantly compared to controls (osteocalcin  $196 \pm 13.9$  ng/ml, ALP activity  $313 \pm 12.1$  IU/L). However, there were no significant differences in these parameters at 1 week and 3 weeks after administration (Fig. 8). There was no significant increase in serum calcium and phosphate levels in any of the groups at any time point (data not shown).

#### Discussion

The experimental results presented above indicated that the EP4 agonist enhanced rhBMP-2-induced ectopic new bone formation in mice. Therapeutic agents that enhance bone formation have been described in previous studies. Daily subcutaneous injection of 1–34 or 1–84 parathyroid hormones (PTH) is known to enhance systemic bone formation and is currently utilized for the treatment of osteoporosis [16]. In addition, it has been shown that a daily systemic injection (20 mg/kg) of the phosphodiesterase-4 (PDE-4)-selective inhibitor, Rolipram, can enhance BMP-2-dependent ectopic new bone formation in mice [17]. All of these agents elevate intracellular cyclic nucleotides (cyclic AMP or GMP) via the G-protein-coupled receptors specific to the respective ligand. However, the exact mechanisms by which BMP-dependent bone formation is enhanced after the elevation of intracellular cAMP in bone forming cells remain unclear and further studies are required.

PGE<sub>2</sub> elevates intracellular cAMP and it produces this effect on cells through four receptor subtypes, EP1, EP2, EP3, and EP4. The anabolic effect of PGE<sub>2</sub> on bone was effected through the activation of EP2 or EP4 and con-

sequent elevation of intracellular cAMP level [18]. In a previous animal study, the activation of the EP4 receptor by continuous administration of an EP4-selective compound agonist was reported to enhance fracture repair. [13]. Paralkar et al. [14] also reported that an EP2-selective compound agonist (CP-533,536) enhanced bone healing in critical sized bone defects of the canine ulnar and tibial osteotomy model. Clearly, given the data from all of these studies, there is strong evidence to conclude that PGE<sub>2</sub>-selective receptor agonists have anabolic effects on bone metabolism. These findings prompted us to use EP4 receptor-selective agonist (ONO-4819) to improve the performance of BMP-dependent bone formation. In this study, the systemic administration of ONO-4819 (30 µg/kg) at 8 h intervals resulted in a significant increase of both BMC and BMD in the BMP-induced ectopic ossicles. However, higher doses (100 µg/kg) of ONO-4819 resulted in slight increase of BMD and no increase in BMC with suppression of body weight increase. These data would suggest that at higher doses, the systemic administration of the EP4 agonist may cause adverse events, an important observation in terms of the practical application of this reagent.

Another explanation for the anabolic effect of the EP4 agonist on the BMP-induced bone formation comes from the studies involving cyclooxygenase (COX). Cyclooxygenase is the major enzyme that produces prostaglandins. COX-2 is one of the isoforms highly expressed in osteoblasts [19]. Zhang et al. [20] showed the complementary effect of BMP-2 in COX-2<sup>-/-</sup> marrow cell culture and suggested that BMP signaling events might replace PGE<sub>2</sub> effects. Chikazu et al. [21] reported that in osteoblasts, BMP-2 transcriptionally induces COX-2 expression which in turn regulates, via the cbfa-1 binding site, the production of PGE<sub>2</sub> and promotion of osteoblastic differentiation. From these data, a conclusion might be that BMP and PGE<sub>2</sub> might have complementary or cooperative anabolic effects on bone metabolism. These results indicate that ONO-4819 and BMP work cooperatively on mesenchymal cells to stimulate the early phase of osteoblastic differentiation.

In the BMP-induced ectopic bone forming reaction, undifferentiated mesenchymal cells in contact with BMP proliferate and differentiate to chondrocytes in the initial phase. The resultant cartilage tissue is resorbed and replaced by bone through the vascular invasion by osteoblasts and marrow cells in the subsequent phases. In order to identify the time phase when ONO-4819 exerts its pharmacological effects, the EP4 agonist was administered for one week over the pre-(-1–0 week), initial-(0–1 week), middle-(1–2 week) or late-(2–3 week) phase, respectively. The anabolic effect of the EP4 agonist was seen in mice that received the EP4 agonist during the initial phase. This result would indicate the EP4 agonist acted upon the proliferating mesenchymal cells at the interface with the BMP-retaining pellets.

The anabolic effects of ONO-4819 administered systemically appeared fairly specific to the BMP-induced ossicles, since the BMD of the host mouse skeleton of the host mice was unchanged. Serum osteocalcin and alkaline phosphatase levels were significantly increased at two weeks after ONO-4819 injection but the levels returned to baseline during the period of treatment with the EP4 agonist.

In summary, the intermittent systemic administration of ONO-4819, a selective agonist for the EP4 prostanoid receptor, was shown to have an anabolic effect on ectopic ossicles induced by rhBMP2. The doubling of ossicle size by 30 µg/kg BW of ONO-4819 indicates that this agent enhances the action of BMP. The potentiation of BMP action by the ONO-4819 compound could potentially reduce the dose of BMP required to form an adequate mass of new bone. Higher doses of the EP4 agonist resulted in adverse catabolic effects, a finding that may influence the route for administration of this drug. In order to avoid these effects, the local administration of a low and optimized dose of the drug in combination with BMP will achieve the goals of enhancing the BMP action by the drug and reducing the dose of BMP for new bone formation. The development of a practical delivery system to enable the coadministration of BMP and an EP4 agonist is currently underway in our laboratory.

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## Enhancement of recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2 (rhBMP-2)-induced new bone formation by concurrent treatment with parathyroid hormone and a phosphodiesterase inhibitor, pentoxifylline

HIROSHI HORIUCHI, NAOTO SAITO, TETSUYA KINOSHITA, SHINJI WAKABAYASHI, TAKAHIRO TSUTSUMIMOTO, SATORU OTSURU, and KUNIO TAKAOKA

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Shinshu University School of Medicine, 3-1-1 Asahi, Matsumoto 390-8621, Japan

**Abstract** We investigated the enhancement of new bone formation elicited ectopically by recombinant human bone morphogenetic protein-2 (rhBMP-2), using parathyroid hormone (PTH) and a phosphodiesterase inhibitor (PDEi), pentoxifylline (PTX), in an animal model. Collagen sponge sheet discs containing rhBMP were implanted onto the back muscles of mice. PTX alone (200 mg/kg body weight [BW]), PTH(1–34) (10 µg/kg BW), PTX plus PTH (200 mg/kg BW and 10 µg/kg BW, respectively), or vehicle (control) were injected subcutaneously daily for 3 weeks after implantation. At the end of this period, rhBMP-2-induced ectopic ossicles were harvested from each group of animals. Ossicles from the PTX-treated group were significantly larger in size, with unchanged bone mineral density (BMD), as compared with the ossicles from the controls. In contrast, the ossicles from the PTH-treated group had significantly higher BMD, but showed no difference in size when compared with those from the control animals. The ossicles of the PTX + PTH treatment group were significantly larger than those of the control and PTH treatment groups. In addition, the BMD of the harvested tissues from the PTX + PTH treatment group was significantly higher than that of tissues from the control and PTX treatment groups. Although the calcium content of ossicles was significantly higher in the PTX-, PTH-, and PTX + PTH-treated groups than in the control group, the Ca content of ossicles from the PTH + PTX-treated group was highest (two times that of controls), followed by the PTH- and PTX-treated groups.

**Key words** bone morphogenetic protein (BMP) · ectopic bone formation · parathyroid hormone · phosphodiesterase inhibitor (PDEi)

### Introduction

Parathyroid hormone (PTH) is a major regulator of osteoblastic function through its specific G-protein-coupled receptor and the protein kinase A (PKA) kinase cascade [1,2]. A number of animal studies have demonstrated that intermittent PTH injection in animals exerts anabolic effects on bone formation [3–7], although the precise mechanism of this anabolic action remains unknown. From a clinical perspective, the anabolic action of this hormone highlights its potential value in the treatment of bone diseases associated with suppressed bone formation or bone loss, such as osteoporosis and non-union fractures.

Phosphodiesterase inhibitors (PDEis), e.g., pentoxifylline (PTX) and rolipram, have also been shown to enhance bone-forming potential in *in vivo* situations [8–10], probably through elevating intracellular levels of cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) in osteoblasts and enhancing the responsiveness of young mesenchymal cells to BMP-2 or BMP-4 [11,12].

The intracellular level of cAMP is upregulated by G protein-coupled adenylcyclase [13] and degraded by phosphodiesterases (PDEs) [14], a family of enzymes that catalyze the hydrolysis of cAMP and cyclic granosine monophosphate (cGMP). Thus, both PDEis and PTH may lead to the elevation of intracellular cAMP following activation via the PKA cascade. However, based on previous experimental studies, the mechanisms of action of these agents appear to be different. Pentoxifylline (PTX), a non-selective PDE inhibitor, promoted larger bone morphogenetic protein (BMP)-induced ossicles [9] with identical bone mineral density (BMD) when compared to non-treated control ossicles. In contrast to the effects of the PDEi, the BMP-induced ossicles from PTH-treated animals had an identical size and higher BMD when compared with the controls. These experimental data invoke the possibility that concurrent treatment with PDEi and PTH may act

Offprint requests to: H. Horiuchi  
(e-mail: horiuchi@hsp.md.shinshu-u.ac.jp)  
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in a complementary manner to maximize BMP-induced new bone mass. Clearly, this could have significant therapeutic value in the clinical setting. The present experimental study was designed to address this hypothesis.

## Materials and methods

### Preparation of BMP-containing collagen pellets

Recombinant human (rh)BMP-2 was produced by the Genetics Institute (Cambridge, MA, USA) and donated to us through Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical (Tokyo, Japan). The rhBMP-2 was provided in a buffer solution (5 mM glutamic acid, 2.5% glycine, 0.5% sucrose, and 0.01% Tween 80) at a concentration of 1 µg/1 µl after filter sterilization. To prepare one collagen disc implant sample, 5 µl (5 µg of rhBMP) of the rhBMP-2 solution was added to 20 µl of 0.01 N HCl solution and blotted into a porous collagen disc (6 mm in diameter, 1 mm in thickness) fabricated from commercially available bovine collagen sheets (Helistat; Integra Life Sciences, Plainsboro, NJ, USA), freeze-dried, and kept at -20°C until implantation into mice. All procedures were carried out under sterile conditions.

### Pentoxifylline and PTH(1-34)

Pentoxifylline (PTX) was obtained from Research Biochemical International (Natick, MA, USA) and dissolved in physiological saline prior to use. Human (h)PTH(1-34) was synthesized and donated to us by Asahi Chemical (Tokyo, Japan). The hPTH(1-34) was dissolved in vehicle containing 0.1% bovin serum albumin (BSA).

### Experimental protocols

Forty male ddy mice, at 4 weeks of age, were purchased from Nippon SLC (Shizuoka, Japan). The mice were housed in cages with free access to food and water from 1 week before the start of the experiment until 3 weeks after implantation. The mice were randomly assigned to four groups (10 mice for each group): (1) control group: vehicle alone, (2) PTX 200 mg/kg (body weight) BW, injected daily, (3) PTH 10 µg/kg BW, injected daily, and (4) PTX 200 mg/kg BW + PTH 10 µg/kg BW, injected daily. The doses of PTH and PTX were optimized based on data from our previous study [9] and preliminary experiments.

Before surgery to implant the samples, the animals were anesthetized with diethyl ether. The uniformly-sized implants were placed into the left dorsal muscle pouches (one implant per animal).

The implants were harvested and processed for radiological, chemical, and histological examinations. All of

the harvested tissues were measured and then radiographed with a soft X-ray apparatus (Sofron; Sofron, Tokyo, Japan) and fixed in 10% neutral pH formalin solution. The volume of each ossicle was determined based on three mutually orthogonal measurements (A,B,C) of the ossicle, done with a caliper, and the ossicle volume was calculated by the formula,  $V = ABC \times \pi/6$  [10,15,16]. The BMD of each ossicle (g/mm<sup>2</sup>) was measured by single-energy X-ray absorptiometry (SXA), using a bone mineral analyzer (DCS-600R; Aloka, Tokyo, Japan). After measurement of these parameters, three of the ten samples from each group were defatted with chloroform, decalcified with 10% EDTA, and embedded in paraffin wax. Sections 5 µm in thickness were cut, stained with hematoxylin and eosin (H&E), and examined under a light microscope. The remaining seven samples from each group were decalcified in 5 ml of 0.6 N HCl in separate sealed glass bottles and stirred for 48 h. The calcium content of each bottle was measured by the orthocresolphthalein complexone (OCPC) method (Calcium C-test kit, wako; Wako Pure Chemical Industries, Osaka, Japan), as previously described [9,17,18]. All the animal experiments were carried out in compliance with the requirements of the Institutional Animal Care Committee at Shinshu University.

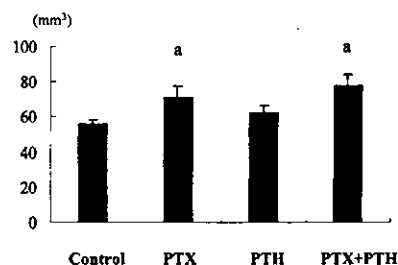
### Statistical analysis

The data were assessed by Kruskal-Wallis analysis of variance and the Mann-Whitney *U*-test. A *P* value of 0.05 was used to delineate significant differences between groups.

## Results

### Volume of the harvested tissue

Figure 1 shows the mean volumes of the harvested tissue from each of the four groups 3 weeks after implantation. The mean volume of the harvested tissue of the



**Fig. 1.** The ossicles of the PTX alone and PTX + PTH groups were significantly larger than those of the control group. However, there was no significant difference between the volumes of the PTH-alone and control groups (*n* = 10). Data values are means ± SD. <sup>a</sup>*P* < 0.05 vs control

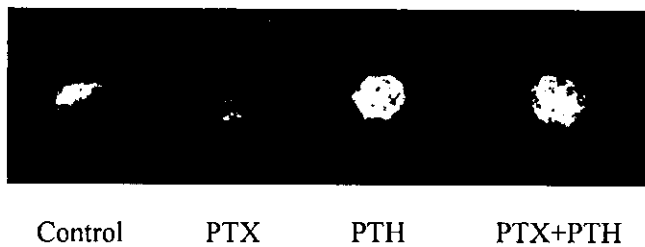


Fig. 2. Soft X-ray photographs of the ossicles at 3 weeks after implantation. A typical ossicle from each group is shown

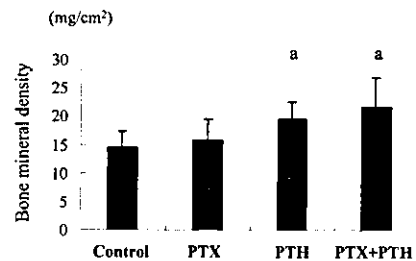


Fig. 3. The bone mineral density (BMD) values of the harvested tissues from the PTH-alone and PTX + PTH group were significantly higher than that in the control group ( $n = 10$ ). Data values are means  $\pm$  SD.  $^a P < 0.05$  vs control

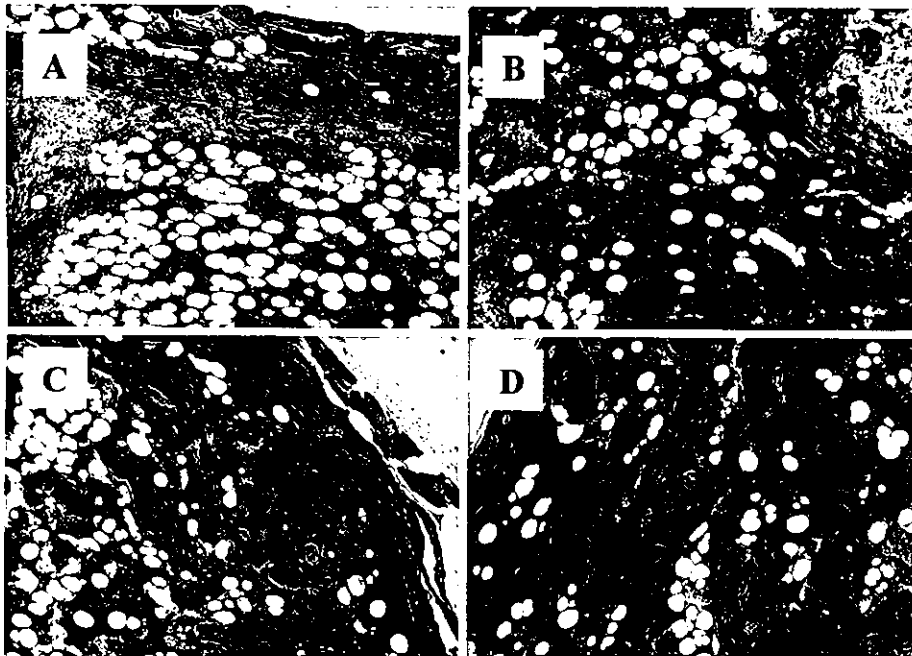


Fig. 4. Photomicrographs of the harvested tissues at 3 weeks after implantation. A Control; B PTX; C PTH; D PTX + PTH. New bone formation with hematopoietic bone marrow and trabeculae is visible in the tissue. In the PTH-alone treatment group and the PTX + PTH treatment group, there were visible increases in the number and thickness of bony trabeculae when compared to the PTX and control group. A-D H&E,  $\times 100$

control group was  $55.6 \pm 2.5 \text{ mm}^3$ ; that of the PTX group was  $70.9 \pm 6.3 \text{ mm}^3$ ; and that of the PTX + PTH group,  $77.3 \pm 6.5 \text{ mm}^3$ . The values for the PTX and PTX + PTH groups were significantly higher than that recorded for the control group ( $P < 0.05$ ). However, there was no significant difference between the controls and the PTH group ( $62.1 \pm 3.5 \text{ mm}^3$ ).

#### Radiographic findings

The radiographic appearances of the harvested tissues 3 weeks after implantations are shown in Fig. 2. All of the pellets harvested 3 weeks after implantation showed radiographic evidence of calcification and calcified trabeculae.

#### Bone mineral density (BMD) of the ossicles

Figure 3 shows the mean BMD of ossicles from each group, measured with SXA. There was no significant

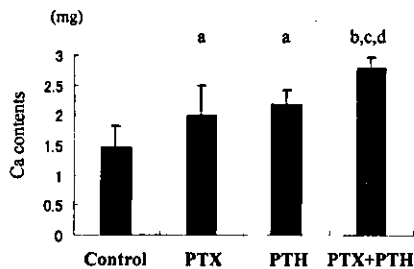
difference in BMD between the PTX group ( $15.7 \pm 3.8 \text{ mg/cm}^2$ ) and the control group ( $14.5 \pm 2.7 \text{ mg/cm}^2$ ). However, the BMDs of the PTH group ( $19.4 \pm 3.1 \text{ mg/cm}^2$ ) and the PTX + PTH group ( $21.8 \pm 5.2 \text{ mg/cm}^2$ ) were significantly higher than those of the control group and the PTX group.

#### Histology

Ossicles from all of the four groups revealed normal bone histology, with hematopoietic marrow and bony trabeculae (Fig. 4). Small amounts of collagen carrier remnants were seen in the centers of all the ossicles.

#### Calcium content in the ossicles

The mean calcium content in ossicles harvested from each group is shown in Fig. 5. The calcium content in



**Fig. 5.** Ca content of the harvested tissues at 3 weeks after implantation. Ca content was measured by OCPC method (Calcium C test kit; Wako) ( $n = 7$ ). The Ca content of the ossicles from the PTX group and the PTH group was significantly higher than that in the control group. The Ca content of the ossicles from the PTX + PTH concurrent treatment group was significantly higher than that in the ossicles from the control, PTX-alone, and PTH-alone treatment groups. Data values are means  $\pm$  SD. <sup>a</sup> $P < 0.05$  vs control; <sup>b</sup> $P < 0.01$  vs control; <sup>c</sup> $P < 0.05$  vs PTX group; <sup>d</sup> $P < 0.05$  vs PTH group

ossicles from the PTX ( $1.99 \pm 0.51$  mg), PTH ( $2.18 \pm 0.24$  mg), and PTX + PTH groups ( $2.78 \pm 0.18$  mg) was significantly higher than the value in the control group ( $1.46 \pm 0.36$  mg). The Mean calcium content in the ossicles of the PTX + PTH group was significantly higher than that in the PTH and PTX groups ( $n = 7$ ).

## Discussion

The results of the present experimental study revealed additive anabolic effects of the daily injection of active fragment of human PTH and a nonselective PDEi (PTX) on endochondral ossification elicited ectopically by rhBMP-2 in mice. The additive and complementary effects of both agents on endochondral bone formation were postulated from the results of our previous studies using the same model, indicating two aspects of the enhancement of bone formation, i.e., increased mass of the new bone and increased density of the new bone. Daily injection of PTX increased the mass of BMP-induced ectopic bone without changing the BMD [9], and PTH increased the BMD without changing the bone mass. In the initial phase of new ectopic bone formation in the BMP-retaining collagen pellets, the pellet is resorbed and replaced by a cartilage shell at the periphery of the pellet. This shell is then thought to be replaced by new bone through endochondral ossification, with the shell determining the final size of the BMP-induced ossicle [19]. In previous studies of ours, it was radiographically determined that the calcified rings in tissues harvested from mice treated for 1 week with PTX and other PDEi agents were larger than those observed in the control group [9,10]. Because the chondro-osseous differentiation of undifferentiated

mesenchymal cells is initiated when these cells come into contact with BMP at the periphery of the BMP-retaining disk, this increase in the bone mass may indicate greater sensitivity and earlier initiation of the response to BMP-2 induced by PTX compared with the control. PTX therefore appears to have a stimulatory effect on the early stage of bone formation during BMP-induced osteogenesis. In an in vitro study, PTX has been shown to enhance BMP effects predominantly in less differentiated cells which have the potential for osteogenic or chondrogenic differentiation [20]. PTX may target undifferentiated mesenchymal cells that come into contact with BMP in the initial phase of ossification and may increase their responsiveness to BMP. This, in turn, may lead to the earlier initiation of chondrogenic differentiation, resulting in a larger cartilagenous anlage to be replaced later by new bone tissue, and leading to an increase in implant size. However, our study did not find an increase in the size of the harvested tissue as a result of PTH treatment. This indicates that PTH may not affect the cartilage formation phase in this model. The tissues harvested from mice treated with PTH for only the first week were not significantly different from the control, either in size or in BMD (data not shown). The BMD of the tissue harvested from the PTH-treatment group at 3 weeks after implantation was significantly higher than that of the tissue from the control group and the group treated with PTX alone. These findings suggest that PTH may affect a late rather than an early phase of this BMP-induced endochondral ossification process. The mechanisms of the anabolic effect of PTH remain unknown, however. Several studies have reported that the receptor for PTH is expressed in the cells of both chondrocytes and osteoblasts [21,22]. However, this claim does not seem to support the findings of the present study, in that the anabolic effects of PTH were observed at a later phase of the BMP-induced endochondral ossification process. Further studies to clarify this point therefore appear to be necessary.

Thus, PTX and PTH appear to act on distinct phases of the osteogenic process. Therefore, we hypothesized that the two agents would work additively when used concurrently. Our data seemed to confirm this hypothesis, with concurrent PTX + PTH treatment resulting in the induction of new ossicles of a larger size and with a higher BMD than the controls.

Several studies have reported that the cortical area of the tibia or femoral diaphysis increased significantly after injections of 50–200  $\mu$ g/kg BW per day of PTH(1–34) [23–28]. However, other studies found that injection at doses of 1.5–10  $\mu$ g/kg BW had an anabolic effect on bone formation [29–30]. We performed preliminary experiments in the model used in the present study. The injection of 4, 10, and 40  $\mu$ g/kg BW per day of PTH (1–