

Flg. 1 PrP imaging *in vitro* and *in vivo*. BF-168 fluorescently labeled PrP deposition in a cerebellar section from the case of GSS (a), and in cerebral sections from cases of sporadic CJD with plaques (c) and variant CJD (e). Similar results were obtained from the brains of living TSE-infected mice that were intravenously injected with BF-168 solution (0.5 mg/kg). BF-168 detected PrP deposition in the cerebral white matter between the cortex and hippocampus (g). Sections (a, c, e and g) were subsequently immunoassayed for PrP (b, d, f and h). Bars represent 100 μm (a–f) and 25 μm (g and h).

Furthermore, we established L929 cells stably infected with the RML strain. BF-168 inhibited PrPres formation in the RML-infected L929 cells with an IC₅₀ in the nanomolar range. We also tested potency against the 22L strain in two other cell lines, N2a and GT1-7 cells. BF-168 was ineffective in either cell line infected with the 22L strain. Other compounds tested here demonstrated similar results (data not shown). These results suggest that the styrylbenz-oxazole derivatives exert their inhibitory activity on PrPres

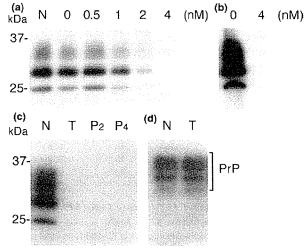


FIg. 2 Effects of BF-168 on PrP expression in ScN2a and N2a cells. BF-168 was added at the designated concentrations to freshly passaged cells. PrPres formation in ScN2a cells was inhibited in a dose-dependent manner (a). To exclude the sensitivity limit of immunoblotting, ScN2a cells treated with 4 n_M BF-168 were also analyzed by sodium PTA, and no significant signals were visualized (b). ScN2a cells treated with 10 n_M BF-168 were maintained for an additional four passages, and the PrPres signal was not restored in the absence of BF-168 (c). PrP expression was not affected in N2a cells that were grown in the presence of 10 n_M BF-168 (d). Lane N, untreated cells; lane 0, cells treated with vehicle alone; lane T, cells treated with 10 n_M BF-168; lanes P₂ and P₄, cells following two and four passages after treatment respectively. Bars on the left indicate molecular size markers at 37 and 25 kDa.

Table 3 Anti-prion activities (IC_{50}) of BF-168 in various types of TSE-infected cells

	Pathogen strains			
Host cells	RML	22L	Fukuoka-1	
N2a	0.4 nM	None ^a		
N2a58	~ 1 µM	None	None	
L929	~ 10 nM	_		
GT1-7	_	None	-	

 $^{^{}a}\text{None, no significant PrPres inhibition up to 10 <math display="inline">\mu\text{M},\,a$ dose that affect the rate of cell growth.

formation in a strain-dependent, but not a host cell-dependent, manner.

Therapeutic efficacy in vivo

The therapeutic activity of the compounds in vivo was assayed in two different mouse models using BF-168 as a representative. Treatment was initiated 2–4 weeks after TSE infection and repeated once a week for 4 weeks. The dosage at a single administration corresponded to a dose sufficient to detect PrP plaques. As shown in Table 4, there was no

b, not available.

Table 4 Effects of BF-168 treatment on intracerebrally TSE-infected mice

Mouse -		Dose		Incubation period	
pathogen strain	n	(mg/kg/week)	Administration	Mean ±	SD (days)
Tg7 - 263K					
	7	Control	-	49.4 ± 1.9	
	5	Vehicle	i.v.ª	50.2 ± 4.1	
	5	4	i.v.	52.2	± 2.6
Tga20 - RML					
	7	Control	-	66.6	± 1.6
	5	Vehicle	i.v.	64.8	± 1.6
	5	4	i.v.	72.2	± 2.5*
	5	10	s.c.b	66.0	± 3.1

^{*} p < 0.001 versus the oher groups.

significant difference in incubation periods between groups of Tg7 mice infected intracerebrally with the 263K strain, with or without treatment. In contrast, intravenous injection with 4 mg/kg BF-168 significantly prolonged the incubation period (~11.4%) of Tga20 mice intracerebrally infected with the RML strain.

In another trial, we used osmotic pumps filled with BF-168 solution, assuming that the route of administration is a key issue. The pump worked continuously for 4 weeks, and the total dosage for the duration was selected to correspond to two to three times that administered intravenously. Subcutaneous infusion of BF-168, however, did not prolong incubation periods of Tga20 mice intracerebrally infected with the RML strain (Table 4). There was no significant difference in incubation period in either group of infected mice between untreated controls and controls treated with vehicle alone.

Discussion

Our results show that styrylbenzoazole derivatives represent candidates for imaging probes as well as therapeutic drugs for TSE. It has been increasingly necessary to develop minimally non-invasive methods for recognizing early clinical infection and evaluating treatment of TSE. We have already focused on two β-amyloid imaging probes and reported them as potential agents for TSE (Ishikawa et al. 2004). The problem is, however, that they seemed to have practical limitations because of inadequate brain uptake and washout. Here, we confirmed that novel styrylbenzoazole derivatives clearly labeled PrP plaques in vitro and BF-168, the parent compound, entered the brain and labeled PrP plaques in vivo, even at a 20-fold lower dose than the probes we previously reported. In brain uptake studies, all of the compounds showed BBB permeability with >1%ID/g, which is proposed to be sufficient for neuroimaging probes. The background staining of 0.5 mg/kg BF-168 was almost absent at 4 h after administration, suggesting excellent clearance from the brain.

Most of styrylbenzoazole derivatives labeled β-amyloid aggregates in AD specimens in this study (data not shown) as well as in the previous study on Alzheimer's (Okamura et al. 2004). This is also observed with 2-(1-[6-[(2-fluoroethyl) (methyl)amino]-2-naphthyl]ethylidene)malononitrile (FDDNP), one of the promising agents for imaging \beta-amyloid deposition. FDDNP has been reported to label PrP plaques in brain sections, and is a candidate for imaging PrP deposition (Bresjanac et al. 2003). These findings imply lack of disease specificity, but the compounds should still be useful for some types of TSE, because anatomical distributions of amyloid deposition are characteristically different between diseases. Pathological changes including amyloid deposition of AD brain are always observed in the hippocampus but not in the cerebellum, whereas those of TSE tend to be absent from the hippocampus but to be demonstrated in the cerebellum.

Styrylbenzoazole derivatives detected predominantly PrP plaques, especially in specimens of sporadic CJD with plaques and variant CJD. However, their ability to detect synaptic or perivacuolar PrP deposition remains inconclusive, until more sensitive investigations, such as autoradiography, are available. The compounds tested in this study can be used with radionuclides. ¹⁸F-radiolabeled BF-168, which has already been employed for labeling of β-amyloid deposits including both neuritic and diffuse plaques in AD brain (Okamura et al. 2004), may be a suitable tool for investigating whether PrP deposition, other than plaque type, can be detected.

This study demonstrated that styrylbenzoazole derivatives have more potent anti-prion activity than the amyloid imaging probes reported previously (Ishikawa et al. 2004). Although the neuropathological processes remain unclear, one of the most likely strategies for TSE treatment is a smallmolecule drug that can enter the brain and inhibit abnormal PrP formation. It is important to emphasize that styrylbenzoazole derivatives have a wide concentration safety margin, and some were effective even at subnanomolar doses in ScN2a cells. Dozens of drug candidates for TSE have been reported to date but, as far as we know, the most potent inhibitor class for abnormal PrP formation in ScN2a cells is specific blocking antibodies with an IC₅₀ in the nanomolar range (Peretz et al. 2001).

BF-168 showed no apparent alteration in cellular PrP expression level in N2a cells, and also labeled abnormal PrP deposition both in vitro and in vivo. These data suggest that styrylbenzoazole derivatives might interact directly with abnormal PrP molecules to block the conversion of normal to abnormal PrP. The structure-activity relationship, examined by introducing side-chain or functional groups into the benzoazole and/or benzene rings, demonstrates that the inhibitory potency is not always the same, even among

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ai.V., intravenous injection of BF-168 once a week for 4 weeks from 2 weeks p.i. for Tg7, or 4 weeks p.i. for Tga20.

bs.c., continous subcutaneous infusion of BF-168 for 4 weeks from 4 weeks p.i.

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closely related compounds (data not shown). Although we could not obtain any insight into inhibitory mechanisms, the efficacy of BF-168 was dependent on pathogen strain, and this is consistent with our previous work using three types of cell lines (Ishikawa et al. 2004). In an attempt to further explore strain dependency, we tested three different pathogen strains in one host cell line, and three different host cell lines with one pathogen strain. BF-168 inhibited abnormal PrP formation in all three types of RML-infected cells, including ScN2a cells. By contrast, BF-168 did not demonstrate any inhibitory activity in the 22L- or Fukuoka-1-infected cells. It is well known that prion strains differ in their biological profiles such as the degree of glycosylation and the conformation of PrP molecules. In the imaging experiments we confirmed that the compound bound to a certain type of abnormal PrP aggregates. Thus, it was assumed that the therapeutic efficacy might be based on blocking certain interactions between normal and abnormal PrP, and that BF-168 might recognize the PrP conformation. However, considering a discrepancy in the in vivo experiment between PrP imaging and treatment using infected Tg7 mice, these inferences remain unsupported and the precise mechanism of the strain-dependent efficacies needs to be elucidated.

Kocisko et al. (2004) reported that anti-prion activity in vitro does not always correlate with that in vivo. With in vivo testing, there are many variables, such as inoculation route, dosing protocol and pathogen strain. The efficacy differed according to the BF-168 administration route in Tga20 mice, even though the dose administered subcutaneously for the same duration was no less than that administered intravenously. This might be due to differences in stability and clearance of BF-168 in relation to the route of administration.

Most previous therapeutic investigations showed a significant benefit in vivo when the treatment was started before, or soon after, peripheral TSE infection. Although the efficacy of BF-168 was limited, it is noteworthy that we obtained significant results with peripheral administration at a later stage of the intracerebral infection. In addition, BF-168 showed excellent brain uptake and binding affinity towards PrP aggregates in vivo, even at a low dose, suggesting that the compound should be a good imaging probe for clinical use. In the treatment of infected Tga20 mice, BF-168 showed almost the same prolongation of the incubation period but with a 10fold smaller dose than (trans, trans)-1-bromo-2,5-bis-(3hydroxycarbonyl-4-hydroxy)styrylbenzene (BSB), which we reported previously as one of the amyloid imaging probes applicable for TSE (Ishikawa et al. 2004). BF-168 showed a low IC₅₀ of 0.4 nm in treatment of ScN2a cells, whereas the IC_{50} of BSB was more than 1000-fold higher (1.4 μ M). We decided the dosing protocol for our experimental animals from in vitro data, including the ratio of these IC₅₀ values, and from an invivo imaging experiment in which 0.1 mg BF-168 per injection was enough to detect PrP deposition. It is also

necessary to consider washout of the compound from the brain. Further studies are required to examine issues such as dose–response relationships, administration time and dosing conditions. Furthermore, there was a problem in that administration frequency was limited because animal tail tissue was damaged by repetitive intravenous injections. In addition, it should be investigated whether compounds with slower washout from the brain are more suitable as therapeutic agents.

In conclusion, styrylbenzoazole derivatives efficiently entered the brain and labeled pathological PrP deposition, and demonstrated some anti-prion activities both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Although their efficacy depended on the pathogen strain, these are a new class of compounds with potential as therapeutic drugs and imaging probes for TSE.

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Uncaria rhynchophylla, a Chinese Medicinal Herb, Has Potent Antiaggregation Effects on Alzheimer's β-Amyloid Proteins

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Because the deposition of β -amyloid protein (A β) is a consistent pathological hallmark of Alzheimer's disease (AD) brains, inhibition of Aβ generation, prevention of Aβ fibril formation, or destabilization of preformed Aβ fibrils would be attractive therapeutic strategies for the treatment of AD. We examined the effects of several medicinal herbs used in traditional Chinese medical formulae on the formation and destabilization of AB fibrils by using the thioflavin T binding assay, atomic force microscopic imaging, and electrophoresis. Our study demonstrates that several of these herbs have potent inhibitory effects on fibril formation of both $A\beta_{1\text{--}40}$ and Aβ₁₋₄₂ in concentration-dependent manners; in particular, Uncaria rhynchophylla inhibited Aβ aggregation most intensively. Significant destabilization of preformed Aβ₁... 40 and Aβ₁₋₄₂ fibrils was also induced by Uncaria rhynchophylla as well as some other herb extracts. Threedimensional HPLC analysis indicated that the water extract of this herb contains several different chemical compounds, including oxindole and indol alkaloids, which have been regarded as neuroprotective. Our results suggest that Uncaria rhynchophylla has remarkably inhibitory effects on the regulation of Aβ fibrils, and we conclude that this medicinal herb could have the potency to be a novel therapeutic agent to prevent and/or cure AD. © 2006 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

Key words: Alzheimer's disease; medicinal herb; *Uncaria rhynchophylla*; β-amyloid; thioflavin T

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most prevalent cause of dementia, characterized by loss of memory and cognition as well as behavioral and occupational instabil-

ity in old age (Multhaup, 1997). One of the pathological characteristics of AD is a progressive deposition of insoluble β -amyloid protein $(A\beta)$ in the form of senile plaques (Selkoe, 2002). This protein comprises peptides of approximately 39-43 amino acid residues derived from the transmembrane amyloid precursor protein (APP; Selkoe, 2002). AB can form monomers and a variety of different aggregate morphologies, including dimers, small soluble oligomers, protofibrils, diffuse plaques, and fibrillar deposits seen in the senile plaques. All of these variable aggregated forms of A β seem to be dominated by a so-called \(\beta\)-sheet structure (Tierney et al., 1988; Barrow and Zagorski, 1991). The increasing evidence that formation of these aggregates causes primary neurodegeneration in AD has led to the amyloid hypothesis, which states that the accumulation of Aβ in the central nervous system is highly neurotoxic and leads to deterioration of synaptic functions (Selkoe, 2002; Wirths et al., 2004). Moreover, several findings

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suggest that $A\beta$ accumulation begins at relatively early stages in AD patients (Anderton et al., 1998; Selkoe, 2002). Therefore, formation, deposition, and aggregation of $A\beta$ in the brain are primary targets for complete amelioration of dementia. Currently, drugs available for dementia such as acetylcholinesterase inhibitors exert only a temporary benefit in cognitive dysfunction (Millard and Broomfield, 1995; Park et al., 2000; Darreh-Shori et al., 2004), and they do not prevent or reverse the formation of $A\beta$ deposits. We believe that the essential requirement for a truly effective antidementia drug would be the prevention of $A\beta$ fibril formation or destabilization of aggregated $A\beta$ or a combination of both.

Herbal remedies used worldwide (particularly in East Asian countries) have a long history of use in alleviating various symptoms of many diseases. Recently, clinical trials in AD patients have also shown that some of these traditional treatments improve scores on the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), P300 latency, and blood flow in the cerebral cortex (Le Bars et al., 1997). Although inconclusive, these provocative studies suggest that even old remedies may be beneficial in AD and related disorders. We have reported that several traditional Chinese herbal medicines such as Formula lienalis angelicae compositae (Kami-untan-to in Japanese; Suzuki et al., 2001; Nakagawasai et al., 2004), Pilūlae octo-medicamentorum rehmanniae (Hachimi-jio-gan in Japanese; Iwasaki et al., 2004), and Pulvis depressionis hepatis (Yoku-kan-san in Japanese; Iwasaki et al., 2005) improve symptoms of dementia. Moreover, Terasawa et al. (1997) showed that Pulvis uncariae (Choto-san in Japanese) improved cognitive functions in patients with vascular dementia. The hooks and stems of Uncaria rhynchophylla (Uncaria uncus cum ramulus; Choto-ko in Japanese), a major medicinal plant, Pulvis uncariae, are reported to have hydroxyl radical-scavenging activity and to prevent delayed neuronal death in vivo (Yokoyama et al., 2004). However, underlying the mechanism of Chinese medical herbs, including Uncaria rhynchophylla, for the formation and metabolism of AB fibrils has not yet been investigated. In the present study, we examined the effects of Uncaria rhynchophylla on formation of AB aggregates and destabilization of preformed $A\beta$ fibrils in vitro by using fluorescence spectroscopy with thioflavin T, atomic force microscopy (AFM), and electrophoresis. Our results provide strong evidence that some Chinese herb extracts, including Uncaria rhynchophylla, have inhibitory and destabilizing effects on AB fibrils.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Reagents

 $A\beta$ proteins (1–40 and 1–42) and thioflavin T were obtained from the Peptide Institute (Osaka, Japan) and from Sigma (St. Louis, MO), respectively. All the reagents and drugs used were of analytical grade.

Preparation of Medicinal Herb Extracts

Water, methanol, and ethanol extracts of medicinal herbs were prepared by refluxing 10 g of sliced dry herbs in 100 ml of each solution. The decoction after cooling to room temperature was evaporated completely under reduced pressure to yield dried or oily extracts. The extracts were weighed and dissolved in dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) at a concentration of 100 mg/ml and then stored at -20°C. When being assayed, these extracts were dissolved in the 50 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) and the solutions were adjusted if necessary to pH 7.4.

Analysis of 3D HPLC Fingerprints of Water Extract of Uncaria rhynchophylla

Uncaria rhynchophylla (0.5 g) was extracted with 30 ml of distilled water under ultrasonication for 30 min. The solution was filtered and then submitted to HPLC analysis. HPLC equipment was controlled with an HPLC pump (LC-10AD; Shimadzu, Kyoto, Japan) using a TSK-GEL $80_{\rm TS}$ column (4.6 \times 250 mm), and elution was performed with solvents (A) 50 mM AcOH-AcONH₄ and (B) CH₃CN. A linear gradient of 90% A and 10% B changing over 60 min to 0% A and 100% B was used. The flow rate was controlled with the LC-10AD at 1.0 ml/min. After the eluate was obtained from the column, the 3D data were processed with a diode array detector (SPD-M10A; Shimadzu, Kyoto, Japan).

Thioflavin T Measurement

Thioflavin T measurement was performed by the method described by Suemoto et al. (2004), with slight modifications. For A β aggregate-formation assay, A β (20 μ M) dissolved in 50 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) with a test herbal extract was incubated at 37°C for 96 hr (A β_{1-41}) or 24 hr (A β_{1-42}). For destabilization assay of preformed A β aggregates, after incubation of A β_{1-40} (96 hr) or A β_{1-42} (24 hr) without a test herbal extract, the mixture of aggregated A β and each herbal extract was incubated for 30 min at 37°C.

At the end of the incubation, 3 μ M thioflavin T dissolved in the 100 mM glycine buffer (pH 8.5) was added to the mixture. Fluorescence of thioflavin T bound to A β aggregates was measured with a microplate reader (Spectramax Gemini XS; Molecular Devices, Sunnyvale, CA) with a filter set (excitation at 442 nm and emission at 485 nm) after incubation for 30 min at room temperature. Percentage inhibition was calculated by comparing these fluorescence values with those found in control solutions with no test herbal extracts.

AFM Imaging

Highly ordered pyrolytic graphite (HOPG) was used as an AFM substrate. Thirty microliters of $A\beta_{1-42}$ sample containing a test extract was placed on HOPG for 15 min. Images were acquired in liquid using a MultiMode SPM NanoScope III system (Veeco/Digital Instruments, Santa Barbara, CA) operating in tapping mode.

Destabilization Assay of SDS-Insoluble Aß Fibrils

 $A\beta_{1-42}$ dissolved in the 50 mM potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) was incubated at 37°C for 24 hr. After incu-

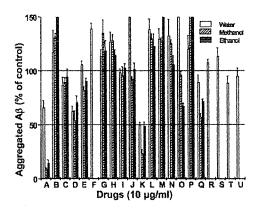


Fig. 1. Effects of different medicinal herbs on destabilization of $A\beta_{1-42}$ fibrils. The $A\beta_{1-42}$ aggregation was assessed by the thioflavin T method and expressed as a percentage of control aggregation, which was observed in the absence of these extracts. A, Curcuma longa; B, Astragalus membranaceus; C, Polygala tenuifolia; D, Cinnamomum cassia; E, Comus officinalis; F, Zizyphus jujuba; G, Dioscorea japonica; H, Rehmannia glutinosa; I, Acoru calamus; J, Alisma orientale; K, Uncaria rhynchophylla; L, Citrus unshiu; M, Angelica acutiloba; N, Panax ginseng; O, Ophiopogon japonicus; P, Poria cocos; Q, Paeonia suffruticosa; R, Saussurea lappa; S, Euphond longana; T, Aconitum carmihaeri, U, the processing of Aconitum carmihaeri. Values represent the means \pm SD from four independent experiments. *P < 0.01, compared with extract-untreated control.

bation, $A\beta$ was added into each test herbal extract and incubated at 37°C for 1 hr. After centrifuging, $A\beta$ pellets were added to 400 μ l of the 0.2% SDS-containing phosphate-buffered saline and incubated at 37°C for 1 hr. After centrifuging again, $A\beta$ pellets were added to 400 μ l of the potassium phosphate buffer and sonicated. The fluorescence of intrinsic tyrosine and phenylalanine of each $A\beta$ protein was measured with a Hitachi F-2000 fluorescence spectrophotometer (excitation and emission at 275 nm and emission at 300 nm, respectively).

Electrophoresis

The A β samples mentioned above were resuspended in the sample buffer, boiled for 5 min, electrophoresed on 10–20% Tris-tricine gel, and subjected to Coomassie brilliant blue staining.

Data Analysis

The data were expressed as mean \pm SD. Statistical comparisons were made via Student's *t*-test. P<0.05 was considered to be significant.

RESULTS

Screening of Medicinal Herbs That Influence Aggregation of $A\beta$ Fibrils

We referred to old Chinese literature and selected 20 different medicinal herbs shown in Figure 1, based on the reported benefits for memory and intelligence. The effects of extracts of these medicinal herbs on the kinetics of destabilization of $A\beta_{1-42}$ fibrils are summar-

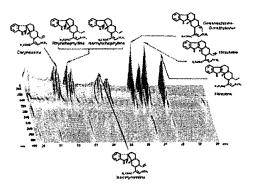


Fig. 2. Three-dimensional HPLC profile of the water extract of *Uncaria rhynchophylla*. Each peak indicates a molecule described in the figure including oxindole and indol alkaloids, which were reported to be neuroprotective.

ized in Figure 1. At a concentration of 10 μg/ml, several extracts showed destabilizing activity for Aβ fibrils, such as *Uncaria rhynchophylla*, *Cinnamomum cassia*, and *Paeonia suffruticosa*. *Uncaria rhynchophylla*, which was extracted by water, methanol, or ethanol, was concentrated under a reduced pressure to give oily residues (1.54 g, 3.21 g, and 2.40 g for water, methanol, and ethanol, respectively).

HPLC Analyses of Uncaria rhynchophylla

Three-dimensional fingerprints of water extract of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* performed by 3D HPLC are shown in Figure 2. The results show that the water extract contains several different chemical compounds, including oxindole alkaloids (corynoxeine, rhynchophylline, isorhynchophylline, and isocorynoxeine) and indol alkaloids (geissoschizine methyl ether, hirsuteine, and hirsutine).

Concentration-Dependent Effects of Uncaria rhynchophylla on Kinetics of Aß Fibril Formation and Breakdown

With regard to the inhibitory effect of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* on AB fibril formation, concentration dependencies were examined by using the thioflavin T method (Fig. 3). We observed that each of the three different extracts induced a concentration-dependent decline in fluorescence intensity in both AB₁₋₄₀ (Fig. 3A) and AB₁₋₄₂ (Fig. 3B). AB₁₋₄₀ fibril formation was inhibited by 10 μ g/ml water (38.9% \pm 12.2%), methanol (41.3% \pm 4.8%), and ethanol (50.3% \pm 46.7%) extracts of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* (Fig. 3A). AB₁₋₄₂ fibril formation was also inhibited by each of the three different extracts (10 μ g/ml), although the effect was less potent than that on AB₁₋₄₀ (Fig. 3B).

To determine whether these extracts have a destabilizing activity on preformed A β fibrils, we performed further thioflavin T experiments (Fig. 3C,D). Fluorescence derived from thioflavin T was decreased dose

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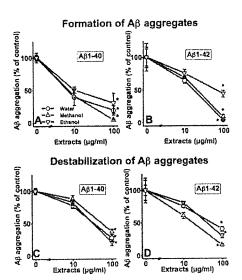


Fig. 3. Effects of three different *Uncaria rhynchophylla* extracts on the kinetics of formation and destabilization of Aβs. **A,B**: Aβ aggregate-formation assay. Reaction mixtures containing 20 μM of Aβ₁₋₄₀ (A) or Aβ₁₋₄₂ (B), 50 mM phosphate buffer (pH 7.4), and various extracts [water (circles), methanol (upward-pointing triangles), and ethanol (downward-pointing triangles)] were incubated at 37°C for 96 hr (A) or 24 hr (B). Aβ aggregation was expressed as a percentage of control, which was observed in the absence of herbal extract. **C,D**: Aβ aggregate-destabilization assay. Reaction mixtures containing 20 μM Aβ₁₋₄₀ (C) or Aβ₁₋₄₂ (D) were incubated at 37°C for 96 hr (C) or 24 hr (D). Then these extracts were added and incubated for 30 min. Aβ aggregation was assessed by the thioflavin T method and expressed as a percentage of control aggregation, which was observed in the absence of herbal extract. Values represent the means \pm SD from four independent experiments. *P < 0.01, compared with extract-untreated control.

dependently after the addition of each extract of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* to preformed A β fibrils to an extent similar to the inhibitory effects on A β aggregations. Preformed A β_{1-40} (Fig. 3C) fibrils were destabilized by 10 μ g/ml of water (77.2 \pm 3.7%), methanol (87.7 \pm 5.4%), and ethanol (82.3 \pm 4.5%) extracts. Moreover, preformed A β_{1-40} (Fig. 3C) and A β_{1-42} (Fig. 3D) fibrils were destabilized by each of the three different extracts (100 μ g/ml) by more than 50%.

AFM Elucidates Inhibitory Effects of Uncaria rhynchophylla on Aß Fibrils

To visualize A β fibril breakdown by herbal extracts, the fibrils were observed by AFM. After incubation of A β_{1-42} (20 μ M) with the water extract of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* (100 μ g/ml), preformed A β fibrils were largely diminished, although the shapes of the fibrils were hardly changed in the presence or absence of the herbal extract (Fig. 4A,B). A similar tendency was observed after incubation with 100 μ g/ml methanol or ethanol extract of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* (Fig. 4C,D).

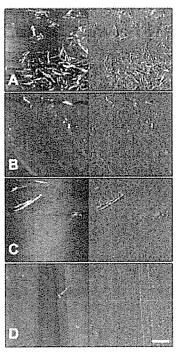


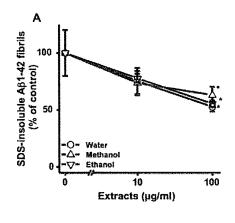
Fig. 4. Atomic force microscopic imaging of $A\beta_{1\rightarrow 2}$ fibrils. After incubation of $A\beta_{1\rightarrow 42}$ for 24 hr for preformed fibrils, the mixture of aggregated $A\beta$ and the *Uncaria rhynchophylla* extract was incubated at 37°C for 30 min. **A:** vehicle (DMSO). **B:** 100 µg/ml water extract. **C:** 100 µg/ml methanol extract. **D:** 100 µg/ml ethanol extract. Left and right panels indicate height and amplitude modes, respectively. Scale bar = 500 nm.

Centrifugation and Electrophoresis of SDS-Insoluble Aßs

SDS solubility of $A\beta_{1\rightarrow 42}$ fibrils was analyzed in order to investigate the biochemical characteristics of $A\beta$ fibril disassembly by *Uncaria rhynchophylla*. After centrifugation, levels of pellets were assessed by fluorescence of aggregated $A\beta_{1\rightarrow 42}$ (Fig. 5A). SDS-insoluble pellets in the absence of extract served as the control. SDS-insoluble pellets were reduced to approximately 60% by treatment with 100 μ g/ml of these extracts. Furthermore, the electrophoresis analysis also revealed that *Uncaria rhynchophylla* decreased SDS-insoluble $A\beta_{1\rightarrow 42}$ fibrils (Fig. 5B).

DISCUSSION

Pulvis uncariae and Pulvis depressionis hepatis are representative traditional Chinese herbal medicines that have been used for neuropsychiatric disorders. The former has been administered to relatively aged patients with physical weakness and subjective symptoms such as headache, dizziness, vertigo and tinnitus, and the latter has been used as a remedy for restlessness and agitation in children. Uncaria uncus cum ramulus originating from the hooks and stems of Uncaria rhynchophylla (Oliv.)



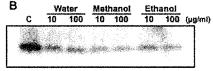


Fig. 5. Effects of three different extracts of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* on SDS-insoluble $A\beta_{1-42}$. **A:** After reaction mixtures containing 20 μ M $A\beta_{1-42}$ were incubated at 37°C for 24 hr, the *Uncaria rhynchophylla* extracts [water (circles), methanol (upward-pointing triangles), and ethanol (downward-pointing triangles)] were added and incubated for 1 hr. The aggregates dissolved in SDS-contained PBS were assessed by fluorescence measurement. Values represent the means \pm SD from four independent experiments. *P < 0.05, compared with extract-untreated control. **B:** Levels of SDS-insoluble $A\beta_{1-42}$ fibril were assessed by electrophoresis. The mixtures containing 20 μ M $A\beta_{1-42}$ and each extract were run on a 10–20% Tris-tricine gel, followed by staining with Coomassie brilliant blue.

Havil. is regarded as a main medicinal plant comprising Pulvis uncariae and Pulvis depressionis hepatis. It was reported that Uncaria rhynchophylla, which we mainly investigated in this study, has neuroprotective effects in vitro and in vivo by reducing oxidative damage to neurons (Dohi et al., 2003; Mahakunakorn et al., 2004, 2005). In addition, *Uncaria rhynchophylla* contains approximately 0.09% (=2 mM) alkaloids such as corynoxeine, rhynchophylline, isorhynchophylline, isocorynoxeine, geissoschizine methyl ether, hirsuteine, and hirsutine (shown in Fig. 2), which are reported to protect neurons against glutamate toxicity in cultured cerebellar granule cells by the inhibition of Ca²⁺ influx (Shimada et al., 1999). Thus, these alkaloids are considered to play important roles in neurotrophic, neuroprotective, and antiapoptotic mechanisms in neurons and other kinds of cells (Shi and Kenneth, 2002; Kang et al., 2004), although the relationship between these compounds with amyloid aggregation is still unknown. Studies of antiamyloid effects of these alkaloids and how much of the active compounds of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* could pass through the blood-brain barrier are now underway.

In the present study, we examined the effects of water, methanol, and ethanol extracts of several medicinal herbs contained in traditional Chinese herbal medi-

cines on fibrillation and destabilization of A β s. Curcuma longa (extract A in Fig. 1), Cinnamomum cassia (D), Uncaria thynchophylla (K), and Paeonia suffruticosa (Q) destabilized A β_{1-40} and A β_{1-42} fibrils with IC₅₀ values of approximately 10 µg/ml. The major molecule contained in Curcuma longa is curcumin, which was previously reported to inhibit A β fibril formation and destabilize preformed A β fibrils in vitro and in vivo (Ono et al., 2004; Yang et al., 2005). Therefore, Curcuma longa could also be a good candidate for treatment of AD.

The extracts of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* inhibited aggregation of both $A\beta_{1-40}$ and $A\beta_{1-42}$ to a similar extent. These results suggest that the inhibitory effect of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* on amyloidogenesis of $A\beta$ is not dependent on the amino acid sequence of its C-terminal. However, *Citrus unshiu* (L) caused inhibition of $A\beta_{1-40}$ fibril formation and destabilization of preformed $A\beta_{1-40}$ fibrils, whereas it did not affect $A\beta_{1-42}$. Furthermore, some of the other Chinese herbal extracts show distinct effects on $A\beta_{1-40}$ from those on $A\beta_{1-42}$ so that mechanisms of herbal medicines on aggregation and metabolism of $A\beta$ s could not be the same.

All the results obtained from thioflavin T fluorescence, AFM, and SDS-insoluble fibril analyses have proved the inhibitory effects of Uncaria rhynchophylla extracts (water, methanol, and ethanol) on the assembly of AB fibrils. In the thioflavin T experiments, the three extracts induced a decrease in fluorescence intensity of thioflavin T in the µg/ml range. We confirmed that these extracts did not quench thioflavin T fluorescence at the diluted concentration in our preliminary experiment. These results would suggest two possibilities; one is that Uncaria rhynchophylla indeed destabilizes AB fibrils, and the other is that this extract antagonizes binding of thioflavin T to AB. It is reported that absorbance of Congo red is increased by binding to AB protein as well as thioflavin T, although the binding site in $A\beta$ to Congo red is different from that to thioflavin T. In our preliminary experiments, each of three different Uncaria rhynchophylla extracts decreased absorbance of Congo red, suggesting that the decrease in thioflavin T fluorescence by Uncaria rhynchophylla extracts is caused by destabilization of AB fibrils. Furthermore, our AFM results also strongly support this notion, because destabilization of AB fibrils by Uncaria rhynchophylla extracts was indeed visualized morphologically.

Legleiter and colleagues (2004) have previously reported from AFM study that the m266.2 antibody directed against the central domain of A β prevents formation of fibrils, and our AFM study also revealed that the number of A β_{1-42} fibrils was significantly reduced by treatment with each of the extracts of *Uncaria rhynchophylla*. In addition, *Uncaria rhynchophylla* affected both A β_{1-40} and A β_{1-42} , which are different in the amino acid sequences of the C-terminal, to a similar extent. These results suggest that the extracts of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* could inhibit A β fibril formation through blocking A β proteins to bind to each other at the central domain of the protein.

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The levels of SDS-insoluble $A\beta_{1-42}$ fibril measured by Li and colleagues (1999) indicated that human AD brains express predominantly SDS-insoluble $A\beta$ compared with the SDS-soluble $A\beta$ fraction. These phenomena would suggest that the SDS-insoluble form of $A\beta$, as predicted to be present in the AD brain where massive amyloid plaques are formed, plays a key role in the pathogenesis of AD. Because our data revealed that SDS-insoluble pellets of $A\beta$ were decreased by the extracts of Uncaria rhynchophylla in a concentration-dependent manner, these extracts are considered to be candidates for a therapeutic strategy for AD by eliminating senile plaques in the brain.

It is proposed that $A\beta$ toxicity is more strongly linked to the formation of oligomeric aggregates (Kirkitadze et al., 2002). In our preliminary experiments, the treatment of SK-N-SH cells with *Uncaria rhynchophylla* extracts significantly protected the cells against $A\beta_{1\rightarrow 40}$ or $A\beta_{1\rightarrow 42}$ toxicity, in close agreement with concentrations that inhibited $A\beta$ aggregation. It is not clear whether this protective effect of *Uncaria rhynchophylla* extracts is mediated by inhibition of polymerization of insoluble $A\beta$ s or by a decrease in oligomeric $A\beta$ formation from soluble monomeric $A\beta$ s. We are now investigating how each status of $A\beta$ s, that is, monomers, oligomers, and polymers, is modulated by *Uncaria rhynchophylla* extracts.

In conclusion, our study suggests that Uncaria rhynchophylla not only inhibits AB fibril formation but also disassembles preformed AB fibrils. Therefore, the extracts of Uncaria rhynchophylla could have the ability to become a therapeutic drug for AD patients as well as a primary or secondary preventive agent for healthy individuals and patients with mild cognitive impairment. This medical plant is reported to have protective effects against neuronal cell death, and it is considered that Uncaria rhynchophylla has very little toxicity, because no obvious adverse effects of Pulvis uncariae and Pulvis depressionis hepatis have been reported although these have been used as therapeutics for other diseases for more than 1,000 years. Therefore, Uncaria rhynchophylla may be a new class of therapeutic and preventive drug for AD through regulation of the formation and the clearance of senile plaques.

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アルツハイマー病ー臨床医が診断後なすべきこと

認知症診断に役立つ補助検査法

- 生物学的診断マーカーと脳分子イメージング

Diagnostic adjuncts of dementia; Biomarker and molecular imaging

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Summary

補助検査法として、CT または MRI による画像検査は 水頭症や硬膜下血腫との鑑別診断および脳腫瘍の発見の ため必須の検査である。認知症医療においては、早期診 断をサポートするための検査法が最も重要であるが、そ のなかで将来の予防医学を見据えたアミロイドの沈着を 画像化する分子イメージングが注目を集めている。日本 は独自に開発した分子イメージング技術を世界に向けて 発信すべきであり、米国で開発された PIB-PET を導入 するだけではあまりに安易すぎる。

Key words

- ●アルツハイマー病
- ●バイオマーカー
- ●脳分子イメージング
- ●タウ蛋白
- ●アミロイド
- ●予防医学



はじめに

一般に、認知症とは「一度獲得された知的機能の後天 的な障害によって、自立した日常生活機能を喪失した状 態 | と定義されることが多い。より操作的な米国のアル ツハイマー病(Alzheimer's disease; AD)の臨床診断基 準である NINCDS-ADRDA (National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Strokes-the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association)11 P DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV)でも、「記憶障害のみならず、失語、 失行, 実行機能障害などがみられ, 複数の脳領域にまた がって高次機能が障害された結果として,以前の日常生 活機能レベルからダウンし自立した生活が維持できな い」ことが確認されてはじめて認知症と診断されること になっている。この NINCDS-ADRDA の基準で probable AD(臨床的に確実な AD)と診断された症例を剖検 し, その病理診断をゴールドスタンダードとして比較研 究した結果が報告されているが、臨床診断と病理診断の 一致率はほぼ80%と高い。認知症の診断はあくまで臨床 医の目でみた医学的判断であり、繁用される改訂長谷川 式簡易知能評価スケールや MMSE (mini-mental state examination)で○○点以下が認知症というものでもな い。診断に重要なポイントは、以前のレベルからの低下 = decline である。かつては何でもできた人が、字も書 けなくなった、服も1人では着られないといった進行し たケースであれば, 認知症の判断は比較的容易であろう。 しかし,「最近物忘れが目立つ」といった場合,年齢の ためなのか、環境要因なのか、あるいは認知症のはじま りなのかの判断は臨床的観察のみでは非常に困難であ る。現に、昨年受診したA病院では「年のせい」と診断 されたが、今年受診したB病院では「ADの初期」との 診断を受け、困惑顔でセカンド(サード)オピニオンを求 めてくることも多い。特にこの傾向は、塩酸ドネペジル が本格的に使われはじめた2000年以降顕著となり、「早 期治療のための早期診断」を求める声として広がってい る。本稿のテーマである「認知症診断に役立つ補助検査 法」とは、このような早期診断をサポートする臨床検査 法としての意義が最も期待されている。2001年 American Academy of Neurology から出された認知症診断の practice parameter²⁾を参照されたい。ADに関しては NINCDS-ADRDA を用いての probable AD¹, クロイツ フェルト-ヤコブ病では Brown の診断基準3を用いるこ とがガイドラインとされ、レビー小体病は McKeith ら の consortium 診断基準", 前頭側頭型認知症(frontotemporal dementia)ではLund-Manchesterのconsortium 診断基準50を用いることが有用(option)とされている。血 管性認知症(vascular dementia; VD)に関しては診断基 準の推奨はせず、Hachinski の虚血スコア®を option と して挙げている。この practice parameter の結論とし て,バイオマーカーの開発とその validation がきわめて 重要であること, そして理想的なバイオマーカーやイメ ージングは認知症発症前に検出能力を有するものでなけ ればならないことが強調されている。



鑑別診断のための CT または MRI による画像診断は必須である

CT または MRI による画像診断は必須の検査であるが、造影まではルーチンの検査では行わない。画像診断はラクナー梗塞や大脳白質病変の検出に有用であるばかりでなく、水頭症や硬膜下血腫など脳外科領域の治療可能な認知症(treatable dementia)の発見に直接結びつく。

ときに脳腫瘍や血管奇形が発見されることもある。脳萎 縮の解釈は難しい。脳萎縮があっても認知面では全く正 常という場合もあり、逆に AD の初期段階では全く脳 萎縮がみられないこともあり、脳萎縮を診断の拠り所に してはいけない。また、陳旧性の血管病変(cerebrovascular disease; CVD) は VD の必要条件であるが, 血管 病変があれば VD と短絡的に診断してはならない。現在 の認知機能低下が CT/MRI で示された血管病変の部 位・大きさから説明可能な妥当性を有するものであるか どうかの慎重な判断が要求される。高齢になるにつれ無 症候性脳梗塞や大脳白質病変の頻度が増加する。高齢者 AD の約3分の1にラクナー梗塞がみられるが、これを どのように扱うかは問題の残るところである。これを AD with CVD(あくまで中心は AD であり付随的に血管 障害を考える)とする立場と mixed dementia(血管障害 も AD もともに認知機能の低下に寄与する)とする立場 があるが、少なくとも短絡的に VD としないような注意 深さは必要であろう。ADと VDの鑑別では、画像所見 はあくまで参考であり1人1人の患者の臨床経過や全体 像を総合的に評価すべきである。その際、前述の随伴す る局所神経症状の有無を含め Hachinski の虚血スコアが 重要な参考となることもある。。SPECT や PET などの 機能画像法は、局所脳機能を知るのに有用である。AD では典型的には側頭頭頂葉領域で, レビー小体を伴う認 知症では側頭頭頂葉領域に加えて後頭葉で, 進行性核上 性麻痺では前頭葉で、皮質基底核変性症では前頭頭頂葉 領域での血流や代謝の低下がみられる。梗塞巣が大脳基 底核・内包付近の穿通枝領域に多発するタイプの VD で は、前方型の血流や代謝の低下を示すことが多い。

バイオマーカーとしては、脳脊髄液検査が有用である"。慢性化した中枢神経感染症や脱髄性疾患による認知症では髄液細胞数、蛋白濃度などに異常がみられる。最近われわれは AD の約80~85%の症例では、神経原線維変化(neurofibrillary tangles; NFT)の形成と神経細胞死を反映して、その主要構成成分である(リン酸化)タウ蛋白が髄液中に流出する結果、髄液(リン酸化)タウ蛋白が高値を示すことを明らかにした。典型的な VD では髄液(リン酸化)タウ蛋白は上昇せず、AD とは明らか

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に差別化しうる。進行性核上性麻痺や皮質基底核変性症 などのいわゆるタウオパチーでも髄液(リン酸化)タウ蛋 白が上昇する症例もあり、上述のような機能画像所見や 神経所見を勘案して判断する。さらに、髄液(リン酸化) タウ蛋白レベルは、AD に進行する軽度認知障害(mild cognitive impairment; MCI)の約85%においてベース ラインですでに高値であり、早期診断として有用である。 髄液アミロイド β 蛋白 $(A\beta)$ 1-42レベルは、老人斑への AB の蓄積を反映して AD では低下する。髄液は腰椎穿 刺という侵襲的手段を用いてのみ採取可能であること, および一般高齢者のスクリーニング検査としては適さな いことなどが欠点として挙げられるが、北欧諸国やドイ ツにおいて盛んに行われており、日本でも一部の専門外 来で施行されている"。ADの診断に有用な血液や尿か らのバイオマーカーは知られていない。クロイツフェル ト-ヤコブ病における髄液14-3-3蛋白は、診断的価値が高 いとされているが、早期診断には MRI 拡散強調画像に おいて高信号域を検出する方法が優れている®。心不全 に伴う認知機能低下やせん妄などの認知症様状態との鑑 別のため、胸部X線写真、心電図、一般採血などの内科 一般の検査は必須である。また症例によっては血清梅毒 反応、ビタミン Bizや葉酸、甲状腺ホルモンの測定も行 い、treatable dementia の発見に努める。

検査項目ではないが、高齢者において特に重要なものとして、現在服用している薬物をきちんと聞くことを怠ってはならない。高齢者では潜在的な腎機能低下のため、薬物の腎排泄が遅延しており、体内に蓄積しやすいため常用量でも副作用を招きやすい。認知機能低下や日中の傾眠・転倒傾向などの背景に抗不安薬、抗精神病薬、抗コリン作用をもった薬剤などがないか注意深く聞き出す必要がある。



予防医学を見据えた新しい 画像診断技術の開発 一脳分子イメージング

AD 脳においては、2つの重要な神経病理変化が観察される。老人斑と NFT である。前者は分子量 4kDa 程

度の AB により、後者は高度にリン酸化されたタウ蛋白 により構成されている。図1に示すように、70歳から物 忘れが目立つようになり5年ほどは日常生活が自立して いたが、75歳時には問題行動が出現しADとの診断を 受けた患者を想定すると、この患者では Aβ の脳への蓄 積が始まったのは50歳前後、NFT(タウ蛋白のリン酸化) とそれに伴う神経細胞死が始まったのが60~65歳前後と 予想されるのである。年齢には多少の前後はあるにして も、ADではABの蓄積開始から臨床的に認知症の初期 症状が出現するまでに20年ものタイムラグがあることを まず認識しなければならない。70歳から Aβ の蓄積が始 まった場合は,90歳にならないと認知症が顕在化しない。 このような患者が仮に80歳で他の原因で死亡したとする と, Aβ の広範な沈着はあるがタウは全く沈着していな い非認知症老人ということになる。これは一見 AB と認 知症発症のネガティブな関連を示すように思えるが、そ うではない。つまり、何歳で認知症を発症するかは、何 歳から AB が蓄積を開始するかで規定されると考えられ る。平均寿命が60歳の時代と80歳の時代を考えてみよう。 60歳までに認知症が顕在化するには、40歳かそれ以前に Αβ が蓄積を開始しなければならないが,このようなケ ースはきわめてまれであり、アミロイド前駆体遺伝子,

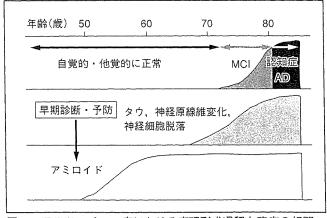


図1 アルツハイマー病における病理形成過程と臨床の相関 アミロイド沈着と臨床的な症状顕在化の間には20年以上の 長い潜伏期間がある。この期間は完全に無症状であるが、抗 アミロイド治療開始のゴールデンタイムでもある。 (井原康夫、平成15年度日本医学会シンポジウムより)

プレセニリン-1遺伝子,プレセニリン-2遺伝子の突然 変異を伴う家系か、疾患感受性遺伝子であるアポリポ蛋 白 E 4 遺伝子の保有者に限られ、平均寿命60歳の時代に は認知症はほとんどみられなかった。一方、平均寿命が 80歳の時代では、60歳までに Aβ が蓄積を開始したケー スが(他の原因で死亡しなければ)すべて上積みされるこ とになり、認知症はより common disease(ありふれた病 気)となり社会に対するインパクトを変えていくことに なる。東京都の1995年の調査でも、80歳台の認知症有病 率は約20%,90歳台では約40%,100歳以上では実に約 90%となっている。長生きすればするほど、水面下にあ った病変が水面上に頭を出すこと, つまり認知症が顕在 化することになる。これが、今日 AD 患者が増え続け る理由である。21世紀の日本は長寿と引き換えに認知症 という重い荷物を背負うことになったといえる。このよ うな Aβ 蓄積を起点とし、その後のすべてのイベントを AB 蓄積から説明しようとする考え方を今日「アミロイ ド仮説」と呼んでいる。このアミロイド仮説は根本的な 治療法の開発に向けての創薬の原点ともなっている。

東北大学先進医工学研究機構の工藤らは、入手可能な 有機化合物ライブラリーから,蛋白化学的手法を用いて, 凝集しβシート構造をとった老人斑 ABに「鍵」と 「鍵穴」の関係のごとく結合するプローブの開発に成功 したเขาแ。選択された化合物はさらに最適化され、放射 ラベル化し、PET にて画像を得る。この方法により、AD を臨床像によらず、蓄積物質に基づき診断することが可 能となる(図2)。また、①発症原因物質とみなされてい

ば、全く Aβ が観察されないケースもあるということで ある。人間の目をはるかに超える感度をもつこのような 技術開発が行われると、正常、MCI あるいは AD など という臨床診断の意味が根本から問い直されることにな ろう。AB の蓄積の程度に基づいた新たな分類が生まれ てくるかもしれない。一方、先述の Growden は2005年 MCI A(D)

る Αβ やタウ蛋白に関するストレートな情報を有する,

②繰り返し検査可能である,③ Aβ の蓄積を的確に把握

でき,発症前診断が可能となる, ④安全で有効な AB 生

成・凝集阻害剤が開発されれば、AD の発症をコントロ ールすることが可能となるなど、さまざまな利点を有す

る。米国では、Pittsburgh compound B(PIB)というプ

ローブを用いたアミロイド分子イメージングが早くも始

まっている。米国では、この PIB-PET とアミロイドワ

クチン療法, あるいはγセクレターゼ阻害薬による臨床

治験が抱き合わせで進行しているようである(ハーバー

ド大学神経学 Growden からの私信)。2005年 6月に米

国で開催された AD の予防に関する国際会議で、ピッ

ツバーグ大学の Klunk らによって図3のような PIB-

PET 診断の進捗状況が報告されている。左の2名は正 常コントロール、中央の3名はMCI、右の1名はAD

と臨床診断されたケースである。ADで AB が広範に蓄

積していることは明らかであるが、注目すべきは、正常

者でも Aβ 沈着が始まっていることが確認され、MCI

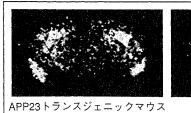
に至っては、AD と同程度に沈着しているケースもあれ

PIB-PET を用いたヒトアミロイド分子イメージング

(巻頭グラビアページ参照)

左の2名は正常コントロール,中央の3名は MCI,右の1 名は AD と臨床診断されたケースである。

> (Klunk WE, et al. Alzheimer's Association/ Prevention 会議, 2005.6より)



野牛型マウス

[¹8F]BF-168静注3時間後に摘出した脳標本のオートラ ジオグラフィー像(巻頭グラビアページ参照) [IBF]BF-168を遺伝子改変マウス(APP23)に静注し、3時間

後オートラジオグラフィーを撮った。[18F]BF-168は遺伝子 改変マウスの老人斑に結合している。

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12月の第3回 Takeda Symposium で講演し、生前 PIB-PET 検査を受け陽性所見を示した患者の1例を提示し、剖検では陽性所見を示した側頭葉には全く老人斑はなく、血管アミロイド症のみであったことから、PIB-PETの解釈に慎重にならざるをえないと述べている。

理化学研究所理事長でノーベル化学賞を受賞した野依 良治氏は、若く優秀な研究者を育成し、公共性を重視し つつ競争力のある技術開発を地道に行うことこそ国益に 資する投資であると述べている(2006年1月6日付日本 経済新聞)。日本は独自に開発した分子イメージング技 術を世界に向けて発信すべきであり、米国で開発された PIB-PET を日本に導入するだけではあまりに安易すぎ ないだろうか。

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PET によるアミロイドイメージング

工藤幸司

東北大学先進医工学研究機構/くどう・ゆきつか

1世紀ほど前にアロイス・アルツハイマーがア ルツハイマー病 Alzheimer's disease (AD)を見 出して以来の劇的な転換期と呼ぶにふさわしいこ とが、この疾患の診断と治療の世界に起こりつつ ある. それらの第一はまずアミロイドイメージン グと呼ばれる診断法により、早期は無論のこと発 症前診断が可能になりそうなこと. 第二にワクチ ンやβおよび γ セクレターゼ阻害剤などによって 根本治療が可能になりそうなこと. 第三に第一の 診断に基づき第二の治療的介入を加えることによ り、診断時点で発症前でさえあれば AD に陥ら ずに生涯をおくれる時代が到来しつつあることで ある. 本稿では第一の早期ないしは発症前診断法 としての陽電子断層撮影装置 positron emission tomography (PET) を用いたアミロイドイメージ ングにつき概説したい.

AD は患者を取り巻く家族または臨床家が、こ の疾病特有の臨床症状に気づいたときには、老人 斑・神経原線維変化の蓄積などの病理像はすでに 取り返しのつかない状態まで進展していることが 知られている. 近年, ADの一部前駆状態と考え られている軽度認知障害 mild cognitive impairment (MCI) に相当する very mild AD というき わめて早期の症例であっても, その剖検例ではす でに多数の老人斑・神経原線維変化が出現し、病 理学的にはすでに立派な AD 状態であることが 明らかにされている.

とするならば、これら病理像をインビボで追跡 することが可能となれば、ADをきわめて早期に 診断することは無論のこと、診断時点では発症は していないが近い将来に発症する確率の高い高リ スク者を発症前段階で診断することも可能になる であろうことは容易に推測される.

アミロイドイメージングはまさにこの病理像を 追跡し診断する技術であるが、そのストラテジイ

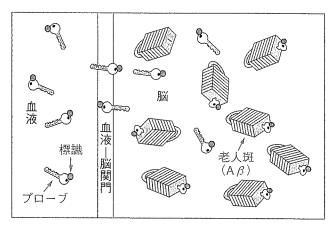


図1 アミロイドイメージングの概念図 静脈内投与された標識プローブは血液─脳関門を越え $て脳内の老人斑(ないしは <math>A\beta$) に結合する。一定時間 後には非結合プローブは洗い流され、老人斑に結合し たプローブのみが残る.

を紹介すると以下の通りである.

- 1. ADの代表的病理像である老人斑のほとん どは β シート構造をとったアミロイド β 蛋白(A β)によって形成されている.
- 2. 同シート構造をとった A βに特異的選択的 に結合し、かつ容易に血液--脳関門を透過する低 分子有機化合物を見出す.
- 3. この化合物を PET で扱うことが可能な核種 で標識する.
- 4. これをプローブとして生体に静脈内投与す る.
- 5. プローブは血液--脳関門を越えて脳内の老 人斑を形成している A Bに結合する. 一定時間後 には非結合プローブは洗い流され, A βに結合に 結合したプローブのみが脳内に残る.
- 6. これを PET を用い、イメージング画像とし て取り込み、 β シート構造をとった脳内 A β (=老 人斑)蓄積量の定量およびその空間的分布から ADを診断する(図1).

アミロイドイメージングは Aβの蓄積量および

アルツハイマー病の病理像 ($A\beta$ 蓄積) は臨床症状に先行する、アミロイドイメージングはアルツハイマー病の $A\beta$ 蓄積を追跡する、アミロイドイメージングは早期ないしは発症前診断を可能とする、イメージング用 PET プローブとして [11 C] PIB などが開発されている。 [11 C] PIB の臨床試験では従来の方法に比し診断精度がすぐれていた。日本においては東北大学において [11 C] BF-227 の臨床試験が進行中である。

その空間的分布から AD を診断しようとするものであり、AD 早期診断の精度を高め、発症前診断までを可能とするのではないか、さらに AD 患者脳の病理像を直接 覗き込む技術であることから、その診断の感度、特異度は現状をはるかに超えたものになるのではないかと期待されている。

これまで、AD 患者を対象に探索的臨床試験が 実施された PET 用プローブは[18 F] FDDNP、 [11 C] PIB (= 6-OH BTA-1)、[11 C] SB-13、また SPECT 用プローブは[123 I] IMPY である.その なかで最も進捗度の高い[11 C] PIB のデータを紹 介すると、以下の通りである.

1) このプローブの開発者 $Klunk^{1)}$ らによると AD 患者脳において高い集積の認められる部位は 前頭葉,側頭頭頂葉などであるが,これらは明らかに健常コントロール画像と異なっており, [18 F] FDG 代謝の低下している部位に集積がみられた. [11 C] PIB 集積と[18 F] FDG の代謝率を比較したところ,前者の集積の方が後者の代謝率 よりも AD 患者一健常コントロール間のデータのオーバーラップが少なかった.このことはこのプローブによる診断の方が[18 F] FDG を用いたそれよりも AD の診断精度がすぐれていることを示唆している.

2) 最近, 正常, MCI および AD 患者間での比較 データが論文 $^{2)}$ および 2005 年 Society for Neuroscience (ワシントンDC)で公表されたが、それらのデータによると記憶や認知機能の decline の速い MCI 患者では 11 C] PIB 集積が高い(AD 患

者と同じレベル)ことが報告されている.

3) しかし一方, AD 患者において[¹¹C] PIB 集積が正常レベルであった例, 正常コントロールでも集積の高かった例(20% 程度の例数)などもみられている. これらが false positive/negative なのか, または発症前高リスク者であるのかは今後多例数を重ねて検討する必要があろう.

[11 C] SB-13 は AD 患者において[11 C] PIB とほぼ同様の結果が得られていることが報告されている 3 . また,[123 I] IMPY の臨床試験成績に関しては現時点では学会報告のみである.

さて、日本であるが著者らを含む東北大学チームによって $[^{11}C]$ BF-227と呼ばれるプローブ $^{4)}$ の探索的臨床試験が進行中である。その結果については 2006 年夏ごろまでには公表したいと考えている。

文献

- 1) Klunk, W. E., Engler, H., Nordberg, A. et al.: Imaging brain amyloid in Alzheimer's disease with Pittsburgh Compound-B. Ann Neurol 55: 306-319, 2004
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脳アミロイドの分子イメージング

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今、Alzheimer病(AD)の診断と治療は 歴史的転換期を迎えつつある。ほんの10 年前にはこのような時代がこようとは当 の AD 研究者達でさえも想像できなかっ たことが、今まさに起こりつつある。それ らを紹介すると、まず診断では、これまで いかなる名医をしても不可能であったで あろう AD の早期ないしは発症前診断技 術に目途がついたこと、次に治療ではワク チン、セクレターゼ阻害薬に代表される 根本治療薬がいよいよ現実のものになり つつあること、そしてこれらのことから 当然予想されるのは発症前診断技術をも とに根本療法を加えることにより、診断 時点で発症前でさえあれば、ADに陥らず に生涯を送れる(であろう)時代の到来、 である。本稿ではそれらのうち、アミロイド イメージングと呼ばれる AD の早期ない しは発症前診断法について述べてみたい。



〈文献〉

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AD高リスク者の発症前診断

ADにおいては患者を取り巻く周辺または臨床家が特有の臨床症状に気づいた時には、脳の病理像はもはや取り返しのつかない段階まで進行していること、その病理像のスタートは気づいた時点から数十年前まで遡ること、また近年、MCI(Mild Cognitive Impairment:軽度認知障害)という概念が起こってきたが、ADに進行するMCIにおいても病理学的にはすでに立派なAD状態であることがわかってきた。すなわち、病理学的ADと臨床的ADの間には大きな乖離が存在していることになる。

とするならば、この病理像を in vivoで 追跡することが可能となれば、ADを極め て早期に診断することは無論のこと、診 断時点では発症はしていないが近い将来 に発症する確率の高い高リスク者を発症 前段階で診断することも可能になるであ ろうと推測される。

新しい診断法のストラテジィ

さてそれではこれまで述べてきた新しい診断法ではどのようなストラテジィのもとにADを診断しようとしているかを紹介すると、それは以下の通りである。

- ①ADの病理学的主徴の1つであり、臨床症状が顕性化する数十年前から蓄積が始まる老人斑のほとんどは β シート構造をとったアミロイド β 蛋白($A\beta$)によって形成されている。
- ②同シート構造をとった A β に特異的選択的に結合し、かつ容易に血液—脳関門を透過する低分子有機化合物を見い出す。
- ③この化合物を PET(positron emission tomography: 陽電子放射型断層撮影 法)またはSPECT(single-photon emission computed tomography: 単光子放射型コンピュータ断層撮影法)で扱うこ

とが可能な核種で標識する。

- ④これをプローブとして生体に静脈内投 与する。
- ⑤プローブは血液--脳関門を越えて脳内の老人斑を形成している $A\beta$ に結合する。一定時間後には非結合プローブは洗い流され、 $A\beta$ に結合したプローブのみが脳内に残る。
- ⑥これを PET または SPECT を用い、イメージング画像として取り込み、 β シート構造をとった脳内 $A\beta$ (=老人斑) 蓄積量の定量およびその空間的分布から AD を診断する (図)。

アミロイドイメージングは $A\beta$ の蓄積量およびその空間的分布から ADを診断しようとするものであり、AD早期診断の精度を高め、発症前診断までを可能とするのではないか、さらにAD患者脳の病理像を直接覗き込む技術であることから、その診断の感度、特異度は現状をはるかに超えたものになるのではないかと期待されている。

プローブの探索

これまで、AD患者を対象に探索的臨床 試験が実施されたPET用プローブは[¹⁸F] FDDNP、[¹¹C]PIB(=6-OH BTA-1)、[¹¹C] SB-13、また SPECT用プローブは[¹²³I] IMPYである。そのなかで最も進捗度の高 い[¹¹C]PIBのデータを紹介すると、以下 の通りである。

スウェーデン ウプサラ大学 PET センターにおいてまず最初の¹⁾、次いでカナダトロント大学でヒトPETスタディが行われ²⁾、その後かなりの施設で追試が行われている模様である。現在までのところ感度、特異度のデータは出ていないが、学会発表および論文データからみて AD と非ADとの鑑別は十分に可能であり、また従来の診断法に比し明らかに優れている、が筆者の意見である。

このプローブの開発者 Klunk らによる

CURRENT OPINIONS

とAD患者脳において高い集積の認められる部位は前頭葉、側頭頭頂葉などであるが、これらは明らかに健常コントロール画像と異なっており、[18F]FDG代謝の低下している部位に集積がみられた」。[11C] PIB集積と[18F]FDGの代謝率を比較したところ、前者の集積の方が後者の代謝率よりもAD患者・健常コントロール間のデータのオーバーラップが少なかった。このことはこのプローブによる診断の方が[18F]FDGを用いたそれよりもADの診断精度が優れていることを示唆している。

最近、正常、MCIおよびAD患者間での 比較データが論文 3 および2005年のSociety for Neuroscience (ワシントン D.C.) で公表されたが、それらのデータによる と記憶や認知機能の decline の速い MCI 患者では[11 C] PIB集積が高い(AD患者と 同じレベル)ことが報告されている。 しかし一方、AD患者において[¹¹C] PIB 集積が正常レベルであった例、正常コントロールでも集積の高かった例(20%程度の例数)などもみられている。これらが偽陽性/偽陰性なのか、または発症前高リスク者であるのかは今後多例数を重ねて検討する必要があろう。

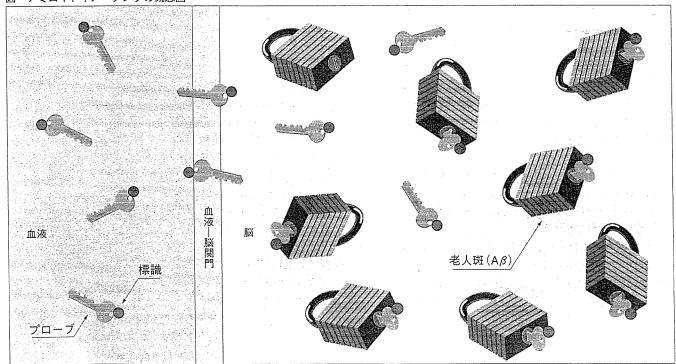
["C]SB-13 は AD 患者において["C] PIB とほぼ同様の結果が得られていることが報告されている²⁾。また、[¹²³I]IMPY の臨床試験成績に関しては現時点では学会報告のみである。

さて、日本であるが筆者らを含む東北 大学チームによっての[¹¹C]BF-227⁽¹⁾と呼ばれるプローブの探索的臨床試験が実施 されている。その結果については2006年 夏ごろまでには公表したいと考えている。

現時点でのPET用アミロイドイメージ ングプローブはすべて半減期の短い(約 20分)[¹¹C]標識体であるが、より臨床有用性に優れているのは半減期の長い(約110分)[¹⁸F]標識体である。筆者らもそうであるが[¹¹C]標識体から[¹⁸F]標識体への変換が、競合研究者らにおいても進められている。アミロイドイメージングが広く世に普及するのは[¹⁸F]標識体の登場を待たなくてはならないのかもしれない。

今回述べてきたプローブは AD 特有蛋白の β シート構造を認識することは明らかではあるが、同時にこれらのプローブおよびその周辺化合物はコンフォメーション病特有の β シート構造をとった蛋白を認識する、すなわち同病の診断プローブとなりうる可能性、さらに β シート構造をとる蛋白の産生を抑制する、すなわち同病治療薬となる可能性が示唆されており、筆者らもこれらに関していくつかの成果を得ている β 0

図 アミロイドイメージングの概念図



静脈内投与された標識プローブは血液一脳関門を越えて脳内の老人斑(ないしは A β)に結合する。 一定時間後には非結合プローブは洗い流され、老人斑に結合したプローブのみが残る。