

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(trityloxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**44**). Compound **44** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 40.6%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.65 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.50–7.41 (m, 8H), 7.33–7.23 (m, 11H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.81 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.71 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.68 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 3.03 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>38</sub>H<sub>33</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>, 535.25; found, 536.75 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(6-Chloropyridin-3-yl)-5-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**45**). Compound **45** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 84.7%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.59 (d, *J* = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 7.87 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 2.5 Hz, 1H), 7.73 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.37 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.12 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 3.05 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>17</sub>ClN<sub>2</sub>O, 312.10; found, 313.05 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(6-Bromopyridin-3-yl)-5-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**46**). Compound **46** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 67.7%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.57 (d, *J* = 2.5 Hz, 1H), 7.76 (dd, *J* = 8.1, 2.5 Hz, 1H), 7.74 (d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (dd, *J* = 8.6, 1.9 Hz, 3H), 7.14 (d, *J* = 16.0 Hz, 1H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 3.06 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>17</sub>BrN<sub>2</sub>O, 356.05; found, 357.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(6-iodopyridin-3-yl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**47**). Compound **47** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 32.5%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.50 (d, *J* = 2.5 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 16.0 Hz, 1H), 7.51–7.46 (m, 3H), 7.09 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.80 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.65 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 3.01 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>17</sub>I N<sub>2</sub>O, 404.04; found, 405.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(pyridin-2-yl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**48**). Compound **48** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 56.5%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.68 (ddd, *J* = 4.7, 1.7, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 7.77 (d, *J* = 16.1 Hz, 1H), 7.72 (dd, *J* = 7.6, 1.9 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d, *J* = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.47 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 7.28 (dd, *J* = 4.8, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 6.89 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d, *J* = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 3.05 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>18</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O, 278.14; found, 279.15 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(1*H*-pyrrol-2-yl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**49**). Compound **49** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 3.3%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.72 (d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.08 (s, 1H), 6.84–6.77 (m, 2H), 6.71 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.62 (d, *J* = 1.9 Hz, 1H), 6.36 (dd, *J* = 6.0, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 6.15 (d, *J* = 12.2 Hz, 1H), 3.07 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>18</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O, 266.14; found, 267.15 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(furan-2-yl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**50**). Compound **50** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 83.9%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.70 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.50 (d, *J* = 1.9 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 15.5 Hz, 1H), 7.02 (d, *J* = 15.5 Hz, 1H), 6.81 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.66 (d, *J* = 3.2 Hz, 1H), 6.50 (dd, *J* = 3.3, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 3.04 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>, 267.13; found, 268.25 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(thiophen-2-yl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**51**). Compound **51** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 47.0%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.98 (d, *J* = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 7.84 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 5.0 Hz, 1H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 3.2 Hz, 1H), 7.22 (dd, *J* = 4.8, 3.7 Hz, 1H), 7.04 (d, *J* = 15.5 Hz, 1H), 6.97 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 3.19 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>17</sub>NOS, 283.10; found, 284.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(5-Bromothiophen-2-yl)-5-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**52**). Compound **52** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 71.0%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.69 (d, *J* = 15.4 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H),

7.05–7.02 (m, 2H), 6.79 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.78 (d, *J* = 15.5 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 3.05 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>16</sub>BrNOS, 361.01; found, 362.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(5'-Bromo-[2,2'-bithiophen]-5-yl)-5-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**53**). Compound **53** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 72.1%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.76 (d, *J* = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.20 (d, *J* = 3.2 Hz, 1H), 7.06 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1H), 7.00 (dd, *J* = 6.8, 4.0 Hz, 2H), 6.84 (d, *J* = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 6.81 (d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, *J* = 9.2 Hz, 2H), 3.05 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>18</sub>BrNOS<sub>2</sub>, 443.00; found, 444.25 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(Benzo[d][1,3]dioxol-5-yl)-5-(4-(dimethylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**54**). Compound **54** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 71.9%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.70 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.13 (d, *J* = 1.6 Hz, 1H), 7.09 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 1.7 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.86 (d, *J* = 11.6 Hz, 1H), 6.83 (d, *J* = 3.9 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.02 (s, 2H), 3.04 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>19</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>, 321.14; found, 322.15 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(1*H*-indol-5-yl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**55**). Compound **55** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 12.6%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.33 (s, 1H), 7.90 (s, 1H), 7.88 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.73 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 3H), 7.42 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 1H), 7.25 (t, *J* = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 7.09 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.71 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.64–6.59 (m, 1H), 3.05 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>20</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O, 316.16; found, 316.95 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(6-methoxynaphthalen-2-yl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**56**). Compound **56** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 43.8%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.96 (s, 1H), 7.88 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.84–7.73 (m, 4H), 7.56 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.23–7.14 (m, 3H), 6.94 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.73 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 3.97 (s, 3H), 3.07 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>23</sub>NO<sub>2</sub>, 357.17; found, 358.05 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(ferrocenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**57**). Compound **57** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 10.2%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.68 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.82 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.68 (d, *J* = 15.6 Hz, 1H), 4.57 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 2H), 4.45 (d, *J* = 1.8 Hz, 2H), 4.17 (s, 5H), 3.04 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>23</sub>FeNO, 385.13; found, 386.05 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1,5-Diphenylpenta-1,4-dien-3-one (**58**). To a solution of benzaldehyde (2.0 mmol) and acetone (1.0 mmol) in 15 mL of ethanol was added 0.2 mL of NaOMe (28% in methanol). The reaction mixture was stirred for 12 h at room temperature. The precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with water and hexane, and recrystallized from ethanol. Yield, 15.7%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.83 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 2H), 7.71 (dd, *J* = 6.6, 2.9 Hz, 4H), 7.50 (dd, *J* = 4.9, 1.8 Hz, 4H), 7.17 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 2H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>14</sub>O, 234.10; found, 235.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1,5-Bis(4-chlorophenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**59**). The same reaction described above to prepare **58** was used. Compound **59** was obtained in a yield of 67.2%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.68 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 2H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 4H), 7.39 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 4H), 7.03 (d, *J* = 16.0 Hz, 2H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>12</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>O, 302.03; found, 303.05 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1,5-Bis(4-methoxyphenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**60**). The reaction described above to prepare **58** was used. Compound **60** was obtained in a yield of 53.8%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.71 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 2H), 7.58 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 4H), 6.96 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 2H), 6.94 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 4H), 3.86 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>19</sub>H<sub>18</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, 294.13; found, 295.15 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(2*E*,6*E*)-2,6-Dibenzylidenecyclohexanone (**61**). To a solution of benzaldehyde (2.0 mmol) and cyclohexanone (1.0 mmol) in 15 mL



of ethanol was added 0.2 mL of NaOMe (28% in methanol). The reaction mixture was stirred for 12 h at room temperature. The precipitate was collected by filtration, washed with water and hexane, and recrystallized from ethanol. Yield, 88.3%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.81 (s, 2H), 7.51–7.31 (m, 12H), 2.94 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 3.9 Hz, 4H), 1.80 (dt, *J* = 12.3, 6.3 Hz, 2H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>18</sub>O, 274.14; found, 275.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(2*E*,6*E*)-2,6-Bis(4-chlorobenzylidene)cyclohexanone (**62**). The same reaction described above to prepare **61** was used. Compound **62** was obtained in a yield of 71.2%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.73 (s, 2H), 7.38 (s, 8H), 2.89 (dd, *J* = 8.3, 3.9 Hz, 4H), 1.81 (dd, *J* = 12.0, 6.0 Hz, 2H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>20</sub>H<sub>16</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>O, 342.06; found, 343.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(2*E*,6*E*)-2,6-Bis(4-methoxybenzylidene)cyclohexanone (**63**). The same reaction described above to prepare **61** was used, and **63** was obtained in a yield of 74.3%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.76 (s, 2H), 7.45 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 4H), 6.94 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 4H), 3.84 (s, 6H), 3.05–2.84 (m, 4H), 1.81 (dd, *J* = 11.9, 5.8 Hz, 2H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>22</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, 334.16; found, 335.05 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(2*E*,6*E*)-2,6-Bis(4-(dimethylamino)benzylidene)cyclohexanone (**64**). The same reaction described above to prepare **61** was used, and **64** was obtained in a yield of 12.3%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.75 (s, 2H), 7.44 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 4H), 6.71 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 4H), 3.01 (s, 12H), 2.96–2.90 (m, 4H), 1.82 (dd, *J* = 11.8, 5.7 Hz, 2H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>28</sub>N<sub>2</sub>O, 360.22; found, 361.15 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(*E*)-4-(4-Nitrophenyl)but-3-en-2-one (**65**). To a solution of 4-nitrobenzaldehyde (6.04 g, 50 mmol) in 150 mL of acetone were added 1.38 g of K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> and 10 mL of water, and the reaction mixture was stirred for 12 h at room temperature. Then, 20 mL of concentrated HCl was added, and the mixture was stirred for an additional 6 h at room temperature. After 300 mL of water was added, the white precipitate formed was collected by filtration, washed with water, and dried under vacuum to obtain 8.34 g of **65** (87.2%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 8.26 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 16.3 Hz, 1H), 6.82 (d, *J* = 16.3 Hz, 1H), 2.42 (s, 3H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>9</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>, 191.06; found, 192.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(*E*)-4-(4-Aminophenyl)but-3-en-2-one (**66**). A mixture of **65** (1.92 g, 10 mmol) and SnCl<sub>2</sub> (3.79 g, 20 mmol) dissolved in 80 mL of ethanol containing 5 mL of concentrated hydrochloric acid was stirred under reflux for 2 h. After the mixture was cooled to room temperature, 2 M NaOH (100 mL) was added and extracted with ethyl acetate (100 mL). The organic layer was dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>. The solvent was removed, and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography to give 1.16 g of **66** (72.1%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.44 (d, *J* = 16.2 Hz, 1H), 7.37 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.66 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.55 (d, *J* = 16.1 Hz, 1H), 4.00 (s, 2H), 2.34 (s, 3H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>10</sub>H<sub>11</sub>NO, 161.08; found, 162.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(*E*)-4-(4-(Methylamino)phenyl)but-3-en-2-one (**67**). To a solution of **66** (483 mg, 3 mmol) and 414 mg of K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> in 50 mL of acetone was added CH<sub>3</sub>I (852 mg, 6 mmol) dropwise, and the reaction mixture was stirred for 8 h at room temperature. After filtration, the solvent was removed, and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography to give 183.5 mg of **67** (34.9%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.45 (d, *J* = 16.1 Hz, 1H), 7.40 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.58 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.54 (d, *J* = 16.1 Hz, 1H), 4.13 (s, 1H), 2.88 (s, 3H), 2.33 (s, 3H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>11</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NO, 175.10; found, 176.15 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-Aminophenyl)-5-(4-bromophenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**68**). Compound **68** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 55.7%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.68 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.45 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.05 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.87 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.68 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 4.01 (s, 1H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>14</sub>BrNO, 327.03; found, 328.05 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-Bromophenyl)-5-(4-(methylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**69**). Compound **69** was prepared following general procedure A.

Yield, 63.1%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.70 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.62 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.53 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.46 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.06 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.59 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 2.90 (s, 3H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>16</sub>BrNO, 341.04; found, 342.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-Aminophenyl)-5-(4-iodophenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**70**). Compound **70** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 46.1%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.74 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.45 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.06 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.87 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.68 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 4.01 (s, 2H). HRMS (EI): *m/z* (EI<sup>+</sup>): calcd for C<sub>17</sub>H<sub>14</sub>INO, 375.0120; found, 375.0116.

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-Iodophenyl)-5-(4-(methylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**71**). Compound **71** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 53.2%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.74 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.61 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.33 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.07 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.60 (d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 4.18 (s, 1H), 2.90 (s, 3H). HRMS (EI): *m/z* (EI<sup>+</sup>): calcd for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>16</sub>INO, 389.0277; found, 389.0281.

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-Aminophenyl)-5-(4-(tributylstannyl)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**72**). A mixture of **68** (125 mg, 0.38 mmol), (Bu<sub>3</sub>Sn)<sub>2</sub> (440.9 mg, 0.76 mmol), and (Ph<sub>3</sub>P)<sub>4</sub>Pd (47 mg, 0.04 mmol) in toluene (10 mL) was stirred under reflux for 10 h. The solvent was removed, and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography to give 46.8 mg of **72** (22.9%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.69 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.51 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.45 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 7.08 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.90 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.67 (d, *J* = 8.5 Hz, 2H), 4.00 (s, 1H), 1.71–0.71 (m, 27H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>29</sub>H<sub>41</sub>NOSn, 539.22; found, 540.30 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Methylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(tributylstannyl)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**73**). The same reaction described above to prepare **72** was used. Compound **73** was obtained in a yield of 30.2%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.69 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.53 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.48 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 7.09 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.60 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 4.12 (s, 1H), 2.90 (s, 3H), 1.82–0.58 (m, 27H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>43</sub>NOSn, 552.24; found, 553.25 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(tributylstannyl)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**74**). The reaction described above to prepare **72** was used, and **74** was obtained in a yield of 26.9%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.71 (d, *J* = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.69 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.60–7.44 (m, 6H), 7.10 (d, *J* = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 3.03 (s, 6H), 1.82–0.77 (m, 27H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>31</sub>H<sub>45</sub>, 567.25; found, 568.25 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(2-hydroxyethoxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**75**). Compound **75** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 89.8%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.71 (d, *J* = 15.5 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.57 (d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 6.98 (d, *J* = 16.0 Hz, 1H), 6.95 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.88 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 4.14 (t, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 2H), 4.05–3.92 (m, 2H), 3.05 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>23</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>, 337.17; found, 338.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(2-(2-hydroxyethoxy)ethoxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**76**). Compound **76** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 84.3%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>): δ 7.70 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (d, *J* = 15.2 Hz, 1H), 6.94 (d, *J* = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d, *J* = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d, *J* = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.29–4.11 (m, 2H), 3.96–3.84 (m, 2H), 3.80–3.75 (m, 2H), 3.72–3.65 (m, 2H), 3.04 (s, 6H). MS (ESI): *m/z* calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>27</sub>NO<sub>4</sub>, 381.19; found, 382.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1*E*,4*E*)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(2-(2-(2-hydroxyethoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**77**). Compound **77** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 79.2%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR



(400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.70 (d,  $J$  = 12.0 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d,  $J$  = 12.1 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (d,  $J$  = 13.9 Hz, 2H), 6.94 (d,  $J$  = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 6.87 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.69 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 4.19–4.16 (m, 2H), 3.91–3.85 (m, 2H), 3.77–3.68 (m, 6H), 3.66–3.59 (m, 2H), 3.04 (s, 6H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>31</sub>NO<sub>5</sub>, 425.22; found, 426.25 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

2-(4-((1E,4E)-5-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-3-oxopenta-1,4-dien-1-yl)-phenoxy)ethyl 4-methylbenzenesulfonate (**78**). To a solution of **75** (101 mg, 0.3 mmol) in pyridine (8 mL) was added tosyl chloride (69 mg, 0.36 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred for 3 h at room temperature, 50 mL of water was added, and the mixture was extracted with CHCl<sub>3</sub>. The organic layer was dried over Na<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, and evaporation of the solvent afforded a residue, which was purified by silica gel chromatography to give 69.2 mg of **78** (46.9%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.82 (d,  $J$  = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.65 (d,  $J$  = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.52 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J$  = 9.0 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.86 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.80 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.70 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 4.50–4.32 (m, 2H), 4.19 (dd,  $J$  = 5.5, 3.9 Hz, 2H), 3.04 (s, 6H), 2.45 (s, 3H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>28</sub>H<sub>29</sub>NO<sub>5</sub>S, 491.18; found, 492.34 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

2-(2-(4-((1E,4E)-5-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-3-oxopenta-1,4-dien-1-yl)phenoxy)ethoxy)ethyl 4-methylbenzenesulfonate (**79**). The same reaction described above to prepare **78** was used. Compound **79** was obtained in a yield of 37.5%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.80 (d,  $J$  = 8.3 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.30 (d,  $J$  = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 6.98 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.91 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 4.23–4.16 (m, 2H), 4.14–4.02 (m, 2H), 3.90–3.66 (m, 4H), 3.04 (s, 6H), 2.41 (s, 3H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>33</sub>NO<sub>6</sub>S, 535.20; found, 536.17 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

2-(2-(2-(4-((1E,4E)-5-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-3-oxopenta-1,4-dien-1-yl)phenoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)ethyl 4-methylbenzenesulfonate (**80**). The reaction described above to prepare **78** was used, and **80** was obtained in a yield of 58.8%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.80 (d,  $J$  = 8.2 Hz, 2H), 7.70 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.33 (d,  $J$  = 8.1 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (d,  $J$  = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.16 (dd,  $J$  = 8.9, 4.0 Hz, 2H), 3.90–3.80 (m, 2H), 3.73–3.68 (m, 2H), 3.64 (ddd,  $J$  = 9.0, 5.6, 3.5 Hz, 4H), 3.04 (s, 6H), 2.43 (s, 3H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>32</sub>H<sub>37</sub>NO<sub>7</sub>S, 579.23; found, 580.39 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1E,4E)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(2-fluoroethoxy)phenyl)-penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**81**). To a solution of **78** (100 mg, 0.2 mmol) in 15 mL of dry tetrahydrofuran (THF) was added anhydrous TBAF (400  $\mu$ L, 1 M in THF). The reaction mixture was refluxed for 3 h. After removal of the THF, the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography to give 33.9 mg of **81** (50.0%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.71 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.68 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.57 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.98 (d,  $J$  = 15.1 Hz, 1H), 6.95 (d,  $J$  = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 5.09–4.58 (m, 2H), 4.27 (dd,  $J$  = 27.6, 4.2 Hz, 2H), 3.04 (s, 6H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>21</sub>H<sub>22</sub>FNO<sub>2</sub>, 339.16; found, 340.17 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1E,4E)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(2-(2-fluoroethoxy)ethoxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**82**). The same reaction described above to prepare **81** was used. Compound **82** was obtained in a yield of 41.3%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.70 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.56 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.52 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (d,  $J$  = 14.9 Hz, 1H), 6.95 (d,  $J$  = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.87 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.70 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 4.67–4.53 (m, 1H), 4.28–4.11 (m, 2H), 4.02–3.75 (m, 4H), 3.66 (t,  $J$  = 5.9 Hz, 1H), 3.04 (s, 6H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>23</sub>H<sub>26</sub>FNO<sub>3</sub>, 383.19; found, 384.21 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1E,4E)-1-(4-(Dimethylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-(2-(2-(2-fluoroethoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**83**). The reaction described above to prepare **81** was used, and **83** was obtained in a yield of 36.6%.

<sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.70 (d,  $J$  = 15.5 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d,  $J$  = 15.5 Hz, 1H), 7.55 (d,  $J$  = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 7.51 (d,  $J$  = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 6.97 (d,  $J$  = 16.0 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.86 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.68 (d,  $J$  = 7.7 Hz, 2H), 4.67–4.59 (m, 1H), 4.53–4.45 (m, 1H), 4.17 (t,  $J$  = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 3.88 (t,  $J$  = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 3.83–3.77 (m, 1H), 3.77–3.67 (m, 5H), 3.03 (s, 6H). HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  (EI<sup>+</sup>): calcd for C<sub>25</sub>H<sub>30</sub>FNO<sub>4</sub>, 427.2159; found, 427.2152.

4-(2-(2-(2-Fluoroethoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)benzaldehyde (**84**). To a solution of 4-(2-(2-(2-hydroxyethoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)benzaldehyde (508 mg, 2 mmol) in CHCl<sub>3</sub> (5 mL) was added DAST (645 mg, 4 mmol) in a dry ice–acetone bath. The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at room temperature and then poured into a saturated NaHSO<sub>3</sub> solution and extracted with chloroform. The organic phase was separated, dried over MgSO<sub>4</sub>, and filtered, and the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography to give 299 mg of **84** (58.3%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  9.88 (s, 1H), 7.83 (d,  $J$  = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.02 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 4.62 (dd,  $J$  = 4.6, 3.7 Hz, 1H), 4.50 (dd,  $J$  = 4.7, 3.7 Hz, 1H), 4.22 (dd,  $J$  = 5.4, 4.2 Hz, 2H), 3.90 (dd,  $J$  = 5.4, 4.2 Hz, 2H), 3.83–3.67 (m, 6H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>17</sub>FO<sub>4</sub>, 256.11; found, 257.10 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1E,4E)-1-(4-(2-(2-(2-Fluoroethoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)phenyl)-5-(4-(methylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**85**). Compound **85** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 67.2%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.68 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.67 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.47 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.96 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.86 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.58 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 4.62 (dd,  $J$  = 4.7, 3.7 Hz, 1H), 4.50 (dd,  $J$  = 4.7, 3.7 Hz, 1H), 4.26–4.11 (m, 2H), 3.88 (dd,  $J$  = 5.4, 4.2 Hz, 2H), 3.83–3.66 (m, 6H), 2.87 (s, 3H). HRMS (EI):  $m/z$  (EI<sup>+</sup>): calcd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>28</sub>FNO<sub>4</sub>, 413.2002; found, 413.2007.

(1E,4E)-1-(4-(2-(2-(2-Hydroxyethoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)phenyl)-5-(4-(methylamino)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**86**). Compound **86** was prepared following general procedure A. Yield, 70.5%. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.68 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.66 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.54 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 7.47 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.95 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 6.93 (d,  $J$  = 8.8 Hz, 2H), 6.85 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.58 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 4.20–4.13 (m, 2H), 3.93–3.83 (m, 2H), 3.72 (ddd,  $J$  = 5.8, 4.6, 2.8 Hz, 6H), 3.65–3.58 (m, 2H), 2.88 (s, 3H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>24</sub>H<sub>29</sub>NO<sub>5</sub>, 411.20; found, 412.40 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

(1E,4E)-1-(4-(Methylamino)phenyl)-5-(4-((2,2,3,3-tetramethyl-4,7,10-trioxo-3-siladodecan-12-yl)oxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-3-one (**87**). Compound **86** (659 mg, 1.60 mmol) and TBDMSCl (386 mg, 2.56 mmol) were dissolved in dichloromethane (15 mL) followed by imidazole (120 mg, 3.20 mmol). The solution was stirred at room temperature for 2 h. A white solid formed and was filtered off. After the filtrate was evaporated, the residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography to afford **87** (502 mg, 59.5%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.61 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 7.59 (d,  $J$  = 15.8 Hz, 1H), 7.44 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 7.36 (d,  $J$  = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.88 (d,  $J$  = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.84 (d,  $J$  = 8.7 Hz, 2H), 6.77 (d,  $J$  = 15.7 Hz, 1H), 6.48 (d,  $J$  = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 4.46 (s, 1H), 4.05 (t,  $J$  = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 3.77 (t,  $J$  = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 3.70 (t,  $J$  = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 3.68–3.57 (m, 4H), 3.49 (t,  $J$  = 5.3 Hz, 2H), 2.74 (s, 3H), 0.83 (s, 9H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>43</sub>NO<sub>5</sub>Si, 525.29; found, 526.29 (M + H<sup>+</sup>).

*tert*-Butylmethyl(4-((1E,4E)-3-oxo-5-(4-((2,2,3,3-tetramethyl-4,7,10-trioxo-3-siladodecan-12-yl)oxy)phenyl)penta-1,4-dien-1-yl)phenyl)-carbamate (**88**). Under a nitrogen atmosphere, **87** (491 mg, 0.94 mmol) was dissolved in anhydrous THF (20 mL) followed by Boc-anhydride (408 mg, 1.87 mmol). The solution was refluxed for 48 h. After the reaction was complete, the solvent was removed, and the residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography to afford **88** (433 mg, 74.1%). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  7.64 (d,  $J$  = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.63 (d,  $J$  = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 7.51 (d,  $J$  = 3.6 Hz, 2H), 7.49 (d,  $J$  = 3.9 Hz, 2H), 7.24 (d,  $J$  = 8.6 Hz, 2H), 6.95 (d,  $J$  = 15.9 Hz, 1H), 6.89



(d,  $J = 16.0$  Hz, 1H), 6.87 (s,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, 2H), 4.17–4.06 (m, 2H), 3.84–3.80 (m, 2H), 3.71 (t,  $J = 5.4$  Hz, 2H), 3.64 (qdd,  $J = 4.8, 3.7, 1.8$  Hz, 4H), 3.51 (t,  $J = 5.4$  Hz, 2H), 3.23 (s, 3H), 1.41 (s, 9H), 0.83 (s, 9H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{35}H_{51}NO_7Si$ , 625.34; found, 626.30 ( $M + H^+$ ).

*tert*-Butyl(4-((1*E*,4*E*)-5-(4-(2-(2-(2-hydroxyethoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)phenyl)-3-oxopenta-1,4-dien-1-yl)phenyl)(methyl)carbamate (**89**). To a solution of **88** (433 mg, 0.69 mmol) in dry THF (15 mL) was added anhydrous TBAF (1.4 mL, 1 M in THF). The solution was stirred at room temperature for 2 h. After removal of the THF, the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography to give 300 mg of **89** (85.0%).  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.70 (d,  $J = 15.9$  Hz, 1H), 7.69 (d,  $J = 15.9$  Hz, 1H), 7.57 (d,  $J = 5.2$  Hz, 2H), 7.55 (d,  $J = 5.3$  Hz, 2H), 7.31 (d,  $J = 8.4$  Hz, 2H), 7.02 (d,  $J = 15.9$  Hz, 1H), 6.96 (d,  $J = 16.3$  Hz, 1H), 6.95 (d,  $J = 8.3$  Hz, 2H), 4.21–4.14 (m, 2H), 3.92–3.84 (m, 2H), 3.76–3.66 (m, 6H), 3.65–3.58 (m, 2H), 3.29 (s, 3H), 1.48 (s, 9H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{29}H_{37}NO_7$ , 511.26; found, 534.35 ( $M + Na^+$ ).

2-(2-(2-(4-((1*E*,4*E*)-5-(4-(*tert*-Butoxycarbonyl)(methyl)amino)phenyl)-3-oxopenta-1,4-dien-1-yl)phenoxy)ethoxy)ethoxy)ethyl methanesulfonate (**90**). Compound **89** (290 mg, 0.567 mmol) was dissolved in dichloromethane (15 mL) followed by triethylamine (287.2 mg, 2.84 mmol). Methanesulfonyl chloride (195 mg, 1.70 mmol) was then added via a syringe. The solution was stirred at room temperature for 4 h. Next, 50 mL of water was added and extracted with  $CHCl_3$  ( $3 \times 50$  mL). The organic layer was dried over  $MgSO_4$ . After the solvent was removed, the residue was purified by silica gel chromatography to afford **90** (214 mg, 64%).  $^1H$  NMR (400 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta$  7.70 (d,  $J = 15.8$  Hz, 1H), 7.69 (d,  $J = 16.0$  Hz, 1H), 7.58 (d,  $J = 3.1$  Hz, 2H), 7.56 (d,  $J = 3.3$  Hz, 2H), 7.31 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, 2H), 7.03 (d,  $J = 15.9$  Hz, 1H), 6.97 (d,  $J = 15.8$  Hz, 1H), 6.94 (d,  $J = 8.5$  Hz, 2H), 4.44–4.29 (m, 2H), 4.23–4.02 (m, 2H), 3.91–3.79 (m, 2H), 3.79–3.75 (m, 2H), 3.74–3.64 (m, 4H), 3.29 (s, 3H), 3.05 (s, 3H), 1.48 (s, 9H). MS (ESI):  $m/z$  calcd for  $C_{30}H_{39}NO_9S$ , 589.23; found, 590.25 ( $M + H^+$ ).

**Radiolabeling.** Procedure for Labeling of [ $^{125}I$ ]**6**, [ $^{125}I$ ]**70**, and [ $^{125}I$ ]**71**. The radioiodinated ligands [ $^{125}I$ ]**6**, [ $^{125}I$ ]**70**, and [ $^{125}I$ ]**71** were prepared from the corresponding tributyltin precursors through an iodostannylation reaction using hydrogen peroxide as an oxidant with radiochemical yields of 27.6, 15.3, and 24.1%, respectively. After purification by HPLC, the radiochemical purity of these ligands was greater than 98% [HPLC conditions: Waters SC18-AR-II column (Analytical 4.6 mm  $\times$  150 mm)  $CH_3CN/H_2O = 6/4$ , 1 mL/min for **70**,  $CH_3CN/H_2O = 7/3$ , 1 mL/min for **71**, and  $CH_3CN/H_2O = 8/2$ , 1 mL/min for **6**]. The specific activity of the no carrier-added preparation was comparable to that of  $Na^{125}I$ , 2200 Ci/mmol. Finally, the radiochemical identity of the radioiodinated ligands was verified by coinjection with nonradioactive compounds using HPLC profiles. The final product was stored at  $-20^\circ C$  for autoradiography and biodistribution experiments.

**Procedure for Labeling of [ $^{18}F$ ]**83** and [ $^{18}F$ ]**85**.** [ $^{18}F$ ]Fluoride was produced by the JSW typeBC3015 cyclotron via an  $^{18}O(p,n)^{18}F$  reaction and passed through a Sep-Pak Light QMA cartridge (Waters) as an aqueous solution in  $^{18}O$ -enriched water. The cartridge was dried by airflow, and the  $^{18}F^-$  activity was eluted with a  $K_2CO_3$  solution (33 mM). Kryptofix<sub>222</sub> (6–8 mg) was dissolved in the solution of [ $^{18}F$ ]fluoride in water. The solvent was removed at  $120^\circ C$  under a stream of nitrogen gas. The residue was azeotropically dried with 0.3 mL of anhydrous acetonitrile twice at  $120^\circ C$  under a stream of nitrogen gas. For [ $^{18}F$ ]**83**, a solution of the tosylate precursor **80** (1.0 mg) in DMSO (0.2 mL) was added to the reaction vessel containing the  $^{18}F^-$  activity. The mixture was heated at  $120^\circ C$  for 5 min. Water (3 mL) was added, and the mixture was passed through a preconditioned Sep-Pak Plus-C18 cartridge (Waters). The cartridge was washed with 10 mL of water, and the labeled compound was eluted with 2 mL of acetonitrile. The eluted compound was purified by semipreparative HPLC (Waters, SC18-AR-II, 10 mm  $\times$  150 mm). The retention time of [ $^{18}F$ ]**83** was 13.1 min in this HPLC

system ( $CH_3CN/water = 7/3$ ; flow rate = 4 mL/min). The preparation took 40 min, and the radiochemical yield was 49% (decay corrected). For [ $^{18}F$ ]**85**, a solution of the mesylate precursor **90** (1.0 mg) in DMSO (0.2 mL) was added to the reaction vessel containing the  $^{18}F^-$  activity. The mixture was heated at  $120^\circ C$  for 5 min. Water (2 mL) was added, and the solution was cooled down for 1 min. HCl (1 M aqueous solution, 2 mL) was then added, and the mixture was heated at  $120^\circ C$  again for 5 min. An aqueous solution of  $K_2CO_3$  was added to adjust the pH to basic (pH 8–9). The mixture was extracted with ethyl acetate (1 mL  $\times$  2), the combined organic layer was dried ( $Na_2SO_4$ ), and the solvent was removed. The residue was dissolved in  $CH_3CN$  and subjected to HPLC for purification (Waters, SC18-AR-II, 10 mm  $\times$  150 mm,  $CH_3CN/water = 1/1$ ; flow rate = 4 mL/min). The retention time of [ $^{18}F$ ]**85** was 6.6 min in this HPLC system. The preparation took 80 min, and the radiochemical yield was 13% (decay corrected). The radiochemical purity of both tracers was greater than 98% with an estimated specific activity of 900–1500 Ci/mmol.

**Binding Assay in Vitro Using A $\beta$  Aggregates.** Inhibition experiments were carried out in 12 mm  $\times$  75 mm borosilicate glass tubes according to procedures described previously with some modifications.<sup>22</sup> Briefly, 100  $\mu L$  of aggregated A $\beta$  fibrils (60 nM in the final assay mixture) was added to a mixture containing 100  $\mu L$  of radioligands ([ $^{125}I$ ]IMPY) at an appropriate concentration, 10  $\mu L$  of inhibitors ( $10^{-5}$ – $10^{-10}$  M in ethanol), and 790  $\mu L$  of PBS (0.2 M, pH = 7.4) in a final volume of 1 mL. Nonspecific binding was defined in the presence of 1  $\mu M$  IMPY. The mixture was incubated for 2 h at  $37^\circ C$  with constant shaking, and then, the bound and free radioactive fractions were separated by vacuum filtration through borosilicate glass fiber filters (Whatman GF/B) using a M-24 cell harvester (Brandel, Gaithersburg, MD). The radioactivity from filters containing the bound  $^{125}I$  ligand was measured in a  $\gamma$ -counter (WALLAC/Wizard 1470, United States) with 70% efficiency. Under the assay conditions, the specifically bound fraction accounted for about 10% of total radioactivity. The half maximal inhibitory concentration ( $IC_{50}$ ) was determined using GraphPad Prism 4.0, and the inhibition constant ( $K_i$ ) was calculated using the Cheng–Prusoff equation:  $K_i = IC_{50}/(1 + [L]/K_d)$ .<sup>40</sup>

**Autoradiography in Vitro Using Tg Mouse Brains.** Paraffin-embedded mouse brain sections (C57BL6-APP/PS1, 12 months old, male) and wild-type control mouse brain sections (C57BL6, 12 months old, male) were deparaffinized with  $2 \times 20$  min washes in xylene,  $2 \times 5$  min washes in 100% ethanol, a 5 min wash in 90% ethanol/ $H_2O$ , a 5 min wash in 80% ethanol/ $H_2O$ , a 5 min wash in 60% ethanol/ $H_2O$ , and a 10 min wash in running tap water, and then incubated in PBS (0.2 M, pH = 7.4) for 30 min. The sections were incubated with radiolabeled tracers (5  $\mu Ci/100 \mu L$ ) for 1 h at room temperature, then washed with 40% ethanol for 3 min, and rinsed with water for 30 s. After they were dried, the labeled sections were exposed to a Fuji Film imaging plate overnight. The in vitro autoradiographic images were obtained using a BAS5000 scanner system (Fuji Film). The presence and location of plaques in the sections were confirmed with fluorescent staining using thioflavin S.

**Autoradiography in Vitro Using Human AD Brains.** Paraffin-embedded postmortem brain sections (Temporal lobe) of an AD patient (75 year old male) and normal control brain sections (20 year old male) were obtained from BioChain. The same protocol was employed as for the Tg mouse brains. Finally, the presence and location of plaques in the sections were confirmed with immunohistochemical staining using a monoclonal A $\beta_{1-42}$  antibody, BC05 (Wako).

**Biodistribution Experiments in Vivo Using Normal ddY Mice.** The biodistribution experiments were performed in normal female ddY mice (5 weeks, average weight, about 20 g) and approved by the animal care committee of Kyoto University. A saline solution containing the radiolabeled tracers (1  $\mu Ci/100 \mu L$  for radioiodinated tracers, 10  $\mu Ci/100 \mu L$  for radiofluorinated tracers) was injected directly into the tail. The mice were sacrificed at various time points



postinjection. The organs of interest were removed and weighed, and the radioactivity was measured with an automatic  $\gamma$ -counter (WALLAC/Wizard 1470). The percent dose per gram of wet tissue was calculated by a comparison of the tissue counts to suitably diluted aliquots of the injected material.

**Determination of the Partition Coefficient.** The partition coefficients for these radiolabeled compounds were determined as described previously but with some modifications.<sup>41</sup> The radiolabeled compound (10  $\mu$ Ci) was added to a premixed suspensions containing 3 g of *n*-octanol and 3 g of PBS (0.05 M, pH = 7.4) in a test tube. The test tube was vortexed for 3 min at room temperature and centrifuged for 5 min at 3000 rpm. Two weighted samples from the *n*-octanol (100  $\mu$ L) and buffer (500  $\mu$ L) layers were measured. The partition coefficient was expressed as the logarithm of the ratio of the count per gram from *n*-octanol versus PBS. Samples from the *n*-octanol layer were repartitioned until consistent partition coefficient values were obtained. The measurement was done in triplicate and repeated three times.

## ■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

**S Supporting Information.** Purity of key target compounds together with HPLC chromatograms, <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectra of compounds, and HRMS data of key target compounds. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

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## ■ ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study was supported by a Grant-in-aid for Young Scientists (A) and Exploratory Research from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan. This study was also supported by the China Scholarship Council (CSC).

## ■ ABBREVIATIONS USED

AD, Alzheimer's disease; A $\beta$ ,  $\beta$ -amyloid; NFTs, neurofibrillary tangles; PET, positron emission tomography; SPECT, single photon emission computed tomography; ThT, thioflavin T; CR, Congo Red; BBB, blood–brain barrier; SAR, structure–activity relationship; TBDMSCl, *tert*-butyldimethylsilyl chloride; BOC, butyloxycarbonyl; DMSO, dimethyl sulfoxide; HPLC, high-performance liquid chromatography; THF, tetrahydrofuran; TBAF, tetra-*n*-butylammonium fluoride; FPEG, fluoro-pegylated; Tg, transgenic; IMSB, 1-iodo-2,5-bis(3-hydroxycarbonyl-4-methoxy)styrylbenzene

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## Effective encapsulation of a new cationic gadolinium chelate into apoferritin and its evaluation as an MRI contrast agent

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Received 7 December 2010; accepted 24 January 2011

### Abstract

Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A with a  $T_1$  proton relaxivity twice as high as that of commercial Gd-DOTA was newly designed and synthesized. Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A kept its high association property with gadolinium ions (Gd<sup>3+</sup>), and the Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A was efficiently encapsulated into the apoferritin cavity to further enhance the  $T_1$  relaxivity as much as 10-fold higher than Gd-DOTA on a Gd basis. The high  $T_1$  relaxivity was attained by (i) increased accessibility of water molecules to Gd<sup>3+</sup> ions in the chelate and (ii) macromolecular effect of the encapsulation. By the surface modification of apoferritin with dextran, in vivo blood clearance time of apoferritin could be prolonged. Magnetic resonance imaging of tumor-bearing mice showed that the apoferritin contrast agent accomplished tumor detection effectively as a bright signal as a result of the enhanced permeation and retention effect. Single-dose toxicity test showed no serious side effects. The apoferritin-encapsulated Gd is therefore a possible candidate for a new magnetic resonance imaging contrast agent.

**From the Clinical Editor:** In this study by Makino et al, a novel encapsulation method of a cationic Gd chelate with apoferritin led to a proton relaxivity 10 times higher than that of standard clinically used Gd contrast dyes. If this complex passed toxicity studies, it would have an enormous clinical significance in providing a much more sensitive method to visualize BBB breakdown.

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**Key words:** Magnetic resonance imaging; Molecular imaging; Apoferritin; Drug delivery; Gadolinium complex

High-contrast magnetic resonance (MR) images for precise diagnosis can be obtained in the presence of a MR imaging (MRI) contrast agent (CA), which accelerates relaxation of surrounding proton signals.<sup>1,2</sup> MRI CAs are normally divided into two types according to the mechanism of the contrast improvement; one is shortening of the longitudinal ( $T_1$ ) relaxation time of water protons,<sup>1</sup> and the other is shortening of transverse ( $T_2$ ) relaxation time.<sup>2</sup> Gadolinium (Gd) ion is a well-known  $T_1$ -shortening reagent, because Gd possesses seven unshared electrons. However, free Gd<sup>3+</sup> is easily replaced with Ca<sup>2+</sup> and Mg<sup>2+</sup> in body, showing some toxicity.<sup>3,4</sup> Therefore, Gd

chelates such as Gd-DOTA and Gd-DTPA are used for medical applications (Figure 1, A and B).<sup>1</sup> The intrinsic proton relaxivity of Gd ion is decreased by the chelate formation, resulting in the need to administer large amounts of the Gd chelate for each imaging, which increases the risk of side effects.<sup>5</sup>

We consider two strategies to increase proton relaxivity of Gd chelates, which leads to reduction in the dosage necessary to achieve MRI contrast: (i) increase of the water-accessible sites on Gd, and (ii) improve the macromolecular effect to increase the rotational correlation time. Further, we take care not to impair the high association constant of the chelate with Gd<sup>3+</sup> for toxicity reduction and also not to shorten the  $T_2$  value to avoid signal broadening.

The conventional chelator for Gd<sup>3+</sup>, DOTA (1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane-1,4,7,10-tetraacetic acid), possesses eight coordination sites in the aza-crown structure of four carboxylates and four nitrogen atoms. We removed two carboxylates from

This study was conducted as a part of the project, "R&D of Molecular Imaging Equipment for Malignant Tumor Therapy Support," supported by NEDO (New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization).

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doi:10.1016/j.nano.2011.01.015

Please cite this article as: A. Makino, et al, Effective encapsulation of a new cationic gadolinium chelate into apoferritin and its evaluation as an MRI contrast agent. *Nanomedicine: NBM* 2011;7:638-9, doi:10.1016/j.nano.2011.01.015



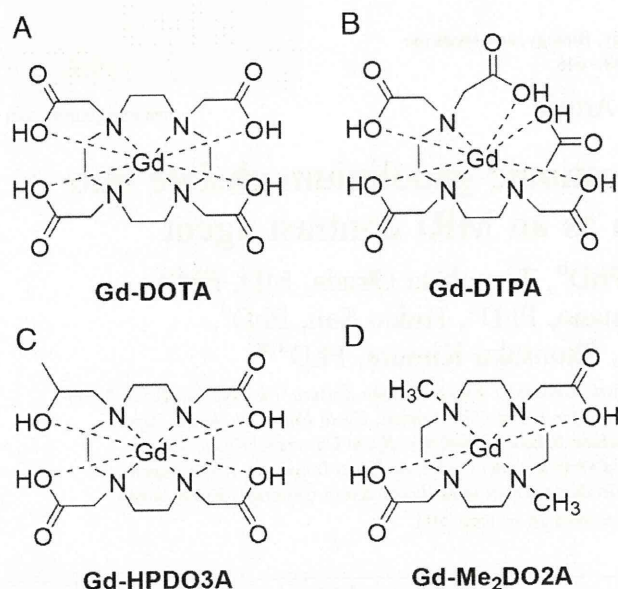


Figure 1. Chemical structures of Gd-based MRI CAs: (A) Gd-DOTA, (B) Gd-DTPA, (C) Gd-HPDO3A, and (D) Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A.

DOTA for the increase in hydration sites, but put two methyl groups at the two nitrogen atoms for enhancement of Gd<sup>3+</sup> coordination ability.

The rotational correlation time of chromophores can be increased by binding to macromolecules. Thus, we encapsulated Gd chelates in a protein capsule, apoferritin, which is known to condense some cations to the cavity. The newly designed Gd chelate was cationic so as to be encapsulated into apoferritin cavity by electrostatic interactions. Immobilization via the secondary interaction may allow moderate motions of the Gd chelate on the inner surface to prevent the excess shortening of the  $T_2$  relaxation time.

At the tumor regions, submicron-size defects exist on blood vessel walls because of accelerated blood vessel formation, enabling macromolecules to leak out through the wall. Moreover, the lymphatic system around tumor tissues grows too slowly to exclude foreign compounds from tumor tissues. Molecular assemblies with diameters of several dozen nanometers accumulate at tumor regions and could be utilized as nanocarriers for tumor imaging.<sup>6,7</sup> This effect is called the enhanced permeability and retention (EPR) effect.<sup>8–10</sup>

In this study we examined strategies to improve the MRI CA sensitivity and EPR effect-based tumor imaging through utilizing apoferritin as a nano-ordered carrier.

## Methods

All reagents and solvents were purchased commercially and used as received unless otherwise noted. Apoferritin was purchased from EMD Biosciences, Inc. (Gibbstown, New Jersey) and used without further purification (lot no. D00049186).

Preparation and evaluation of the apoferritin MRI CA are summarized in the Supplementary Materials, available online at <http://www.nanomedjournal.com>.

## Measurements

Nuclear MR and ultraviolet spectra were recorded with a Bruker DPX400 (Billerica, Massachusetts) and Shimadzu UV-2450 spectrometer (Kyoto, Japan), respectively. Transmission electron microscopy (TEM) images were taken using a JEOL JEM-200 EXII transmission electron microscope (JEOL, Tokyo, Japan). For the observation, a drop of dispersion was mounted on a carbon-coated copper grid and stained negatively with 2 wt% uranyl acetate, followed by suction of the excess fluid with a filter paper. Apoferritin concentration was estimated using the Lowry method, and apoferritin standard solutions were used to prepare the calibration curve. Gd concentration was determined by inductively coupled plasma emission-atomic emission spectrophotometry (ICP-AES SPS4000; Seiko Instruments Inc., Chiba, Japan). The Gd emission intensity in ICP-AES was calibrated at 342.247 nm. A calibration curve was constructed using Gd(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub> solutions with concentrations of 0.5–100 ppm, which were prepared by diluting standard Gd(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub> nitrate solutions (Wako Pure Chemical Industries, Ltd., Osaka, Japan) with deionized water. MRI was carried out using a 1.5-T Toshiba MRI system (EXCELART Vantage Toshiba, Tochigi, Japan). Optical imaging experiments were carried out using an IVIS-200 *in vivo* imaging device (Xenogen, Alameda, California).

## Ethics

All of our *in vivo* animal experiments were approved by the Animal Research Committee of Kyoto University. Animals were treated humanely.

## Results

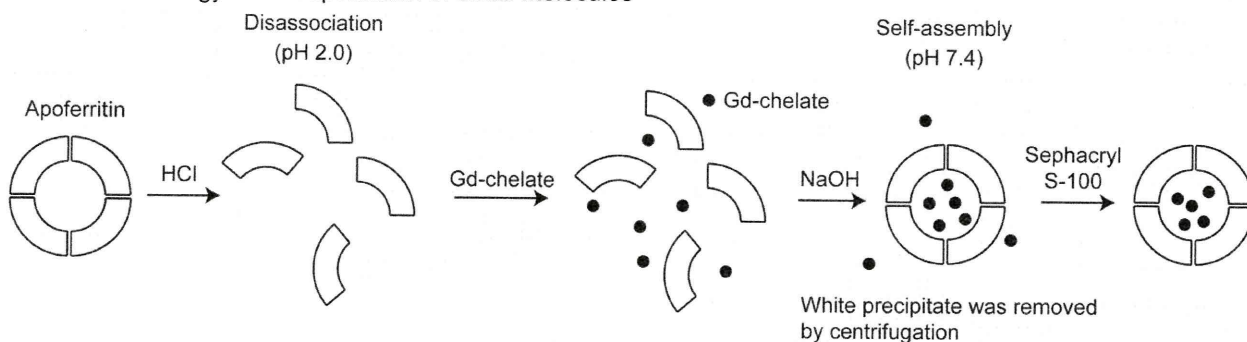
### Design of a new MRI CA, Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A

Apoferritin is an apoprotein that consists of 24 protein subunits of two types (heavy and light chains), and forms a hollow cage-like structure with a diameter of ~13 nm. It can encapsulate up to 4500 iron atoms in the form of ferric oxyhydroxide and works in our living system as an iron storage protein named ferritin.<sup>11–15</sup> We chose apoferritin as a nano-ordered carrier for Gd-based MRI CA delivery.

Apoferritin MRI CA, which contains Gd chelate in the cavity, was previously reported by Aime et al.<sup>16</sup> The group encapsulated the electrically neutral Gd chelate Gd-HPDO3A (Figure 1, C). However, an excess amount of Gd-HPDO3A, which is a 10,000-fold larger amount than apoferritin, was needed to encapsulate only 8–10 Gd chelates per apoferritin molecule, which means its encapsulation efficiency is low. To improve the encapsulation efficiency, we focused our attention on the intrinsic property of apoferritin to condense cations in the cavity.<sup>14,15,17</sup> A positively charged Gd chelate, Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A, was therefore designed by reduction of the number of carboxylates in the chelator from the conventional chelators of Gd-DOTA, Gd-DTPA, and Gd-HPDO3A (Figure 1). The net charge of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is +1, leaving three coordination sites for water molecules, which should also contribute to the improvement of proton relaxivity of the chelated Gd.



### A Normal strategy for encapsulation of small molecules



### B Newly developed strategy for encapsulation of small molecules

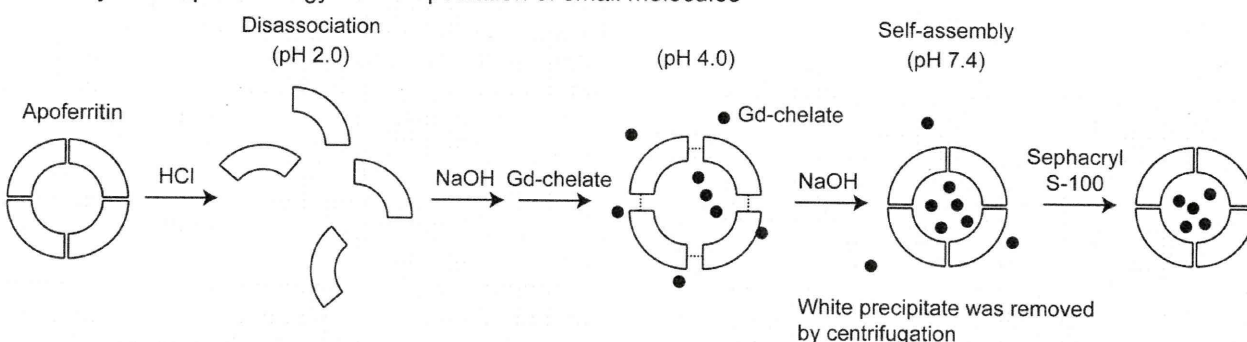


Figure 2. (A) Conventional strategy to encapsulate small molecules into apoferritin cavity. (B) Newly developed strategy.

#### Preparation of a new cationic Gd chelate, Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A

Starting from 1,4,7,10-tetraazacyclododecane, Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A was synthesized (Supplementary Figure S1, available online at <http://www.nanomedjournal.com>). The thermodynamic stability constant ( $\log K_{ML}$ ) of the new Gd chelate Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A was 18.2, as determined by the conventional method using arsenazo III.<sup>18,19</sup> Thermodynamic Gd stability constants of Gd-DOTA,<sup>19</sup> Gd-DTPA<sup>20</sup>, and Gd-DTPA-BMA,<sup>20</sup> which are commercially available with US Food and Drug Administration approval, are reported to be 24, 18, and 15, respectively. Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A therefore maintains a thermodynamic stability as high as commercially available chelates, despite fewer carboxylates in the chelate. The reported thermodynamic Gd stability constant of DO<sub>2</sub>A, having no *N*-methyl group, is 13<sup>21</sup> (the other group reported to be 19,<sup>22</sup> but this value is uncertain, because the stability constant with Ca<sup>2+</sup> from the same group was corrected). The Gd stability constant of Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is thus higher than that of DO<sub>2</sub>A as a result of the contribution of the two *N*-methyl groups, which may strengthen the coordination ability of the aza-crown nitrogen atoms.

Phantom MR images of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A with changing concentrations are shown together with those of Gd-DOTA in Supplementary Figure S2. Images of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A are brighter than those of Gd-DOTA at lower concentrations. Proton relaxivities of Gd-DOTA and Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A in water are 3.9 and 7.2, respectively, which are obtained as the solvent longitudinal relaxation time ( $T_1$ ) by the inversion recovery

method. This enhanced relaxivity of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is due to the increased water coordination number from Gd-DOTA of 1 to Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A of 3 per Gd ion.

#### Encapsulation of Gd chelate into apoferritin

Apoferritin has 14 ion channels of 3–4 Å in diameter, through which ferric ions and water molecules can move in and out in vivo. However, the diameter of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is larger than that of the apoferritin ion channel, thus blocking the Gd chelate from passing through the channel.<sup>23,24</sup> Previously, Gd-HPDO<sub>3</sub>A was encapsulated in apoferritin, utilizing its pH-responsive behaviors of dissociating at pH 2.0 and reassembling at pH 7.4 (Figure 2, A).<sup>25,26</sup> Adopting the same method, Gd<sup>3+</sup>, Gd-DOTA, and Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A were encapsulated in apoferritin (Table 1). Concentrations of apoferritin and Gd after the encapsulation process were determined by the Lowry method<sup>27</sup> and by ICP measurements, respectively. When Gd<sup>3+</sup> was added at pH 2.0 (entry 2, Table 1), apoferritin was precipitated. It is probable that some specific residues that are essential for apoferritin reassembling via hydrogen bond formation and electrostatic interaction were blocked by Gd<sup>3+</sup>. Gd-DOTA and cationic Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A did not yield as much precipitate as Gd<sup>3+</sup>, but anionic Gd-DOTA was scarcely encapsulated in apoferritin (entry 3, Table 1). On the other hand, the concentration of the encapsulated Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A in apoferritin became 1.5-fold higher than that of the feed solution (entry 4, Table 1), implying active condensation. The electrostatic interaction between the



Table 1  
Encapsulation results of Gd chelate utilizing conventional strategy as illustrated in Figure 2, A

Entry	Gd chelate	Molar feed ratio of Gd chelate to apoferritin	Protein recovery rate (%)	Gd atoms per apoferritin molecule*
1	Gd-HPDO3A	10,000	-†	~10 (7.0) <sup>19</sup>
2	Gd <sup>3+</sup>	10,000	6	8.2 (7.0)
3	Gd-DOTA	10,000	23	0.5 (7.0)
4	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	10,000	25	10.8 (7.0)
5	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	120	51	-‡ (0.2)

\* Theoretical amount without condensation is shown in parentheses.

† Protein (apoferritin) recovery rate was not reported.

‡ Gd signal measured by ICP-AES was too weak, and Gd concentration in the solution could not be determined.

Table 2  
Results of encapsulation of Gd chelate into apoferritin utilizing newly developed strategy as illustrated in Figure 2, B

Entry	Gd chelate	Molar feed ratio of Gd chelate to apoferritin	Protein recovery rate (%)	Gd atoms per apoferritin molecule*
6	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	12	99	12.4 (0.02)
7	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	48	97	21.1 (0.08)
8	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	72	98	25.6 (0.12)
9	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	120	98	36.2 (0.2)
10	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	240	84	11.1 (0.4)
11	Gd-DOTA	120	100	0.3 (0.2)
12	Gd-DOTA	240	98	0.4 (0.4)
13	Gd-HPDO3A	120	97	0.2 (0.2)
14	Gd-HPDO3A	240	99	0.2 (0.4)

\* Theoretical amount without condensation is shown in parentheses.

cationic Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A and the anionic inner surface of apoferritin should work partially. However, the protein (apoferritin) recovery rate and the amounts of the encapsulated Gd chelates were relatively low.

We speculate that the main reason for the low protein recovery rate is production of irregular assembly during the reassembling process. In fact, there is a report that doxorubicin molecules bound to apoferritin subunits in the pH region of 3–4 lost an average of 48% apoferritin.<sup>25</sup> It was shown that the subunits start to reassemble at pH 3.0 to yield dimers predominantly at pH 3.5,<sup>28</sup> and apoferritin subunits form incomplete globular assembly via weak intersubunit interactions at pH 4.0. On the basis of these reports, we modified the reassembling process, wherein the apoferritin solution at pH 2.0 was titrated slowly by sodium hydroxide to reach 4.0, and then Gd chelate was added, followed by adjustment of the pH at 7.4 (Figure 2, B).

As summarized in Table 2, the protein recovery rates were drastically improved over 90%, and Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A was highly condensed in the apoferritin cavity. The concentrations of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A in the cavity were evaluated to be 28- to 620-fold higher than those in the feed solutions (Table 2, entries 6–10). When encapsulation of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A was performed by the conventional method under the same condition as entry 9, a white precipitate was produced and the amount of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A encapsulated in apoferritin was extremely low (Table 1, entry 5).

Table 3  
Evaluation of adsorbed Gd chelate on outer surface of apoferritin

Entry	Gd chelate	Molar feed ratio of Gd chelate to apoferritin	White precipitate (%)	Gd atoms per apoferritin molecule
15	Gd-DOTA	120	0	0.1
16	Gd-DOTA	10,000	0	0.2
17	Gd-HPDO3A	120	0	0.1
18	Gd-HPDO3A	10,000	0	0.1
19	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	120	0	2.6
20	Gd-Me <sub>2</sub> DO2A	10,000	91	8.8

This result is good evidence for the superiority of the present reconstruction and encapsulation process. Furthermore, integrity and capsule structure of the reconstructed apoferritin with Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A in the cavity was confirmed by TEM observation (Supplementary Figure S3). When the Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A feed ratio against apoferritin exceeded 240, a white precipitate was formed to decrease the protein recovery rate. At the same time, the amount of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A encapsulated in each apoferritin cavity became low (Table 2, entry 10). With increasing Gd chelates in the feed, the reassembling process may be disturbed by adsorption of Gd chelates onto some residues important for apoferritin reassembling.

Gd chelates were mixed with an intact apoferritin solution at pH 7.4, and apoferritin was separated by ultrafiltration. The concentrations of Gd and protein in the purified fraction were evaluated using ICP and the Lowry method, respectively (Table 3). When Gd-DOTA and Gd-HPDO3A were mixed with apoferritin, the amounts of Gd in the apoferritin fractions were low independent of the Gd chelate feed ratio (Table 3, entries 15–18). On the other hand, when Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A of 120 eq against an apoferritin molecule was mixed with apoferritin, 2.6 Gd atoms per apoferritin was detected (Table 3, entry 19). As described above, the diameter of the apoferritin ion channel is not large enough to allow passage of Gd chelates, and Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A cannot enter the apoferritin cavity without apoferritin disassociation. The zeta potential of apoferritin was found to be -18.9 mV. Therefore, Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A is considered to be adsorbed onto the apoferritin outer surface by electrostatic interaction. However, the amount of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A adsorbed on the outer surface was as low as ~7% compared with that in the apoferritin cavity of 46.2 Gd atoms (Table 2, entry 9). Repeated washing of the apoferritin solution by ultrafiltration could not remove the Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A, suggesting that Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO2A was stably adsorbed on the surface.

#### Surface modification of apoferritin with dextran

Apoferritin on its own has a strong tendency to accumulate in liver, which is not suited for selective delivery of the encapsulated Gd chelate in apoferritin to tumor tissues. Therefore, after Gd chelates were encapsulated into the apoferritin cavity, the apoferritin outer surface was modified by partially oxidized dextran to prolong in vivo blood clearance time (Figure 3).<sup>29,30</sup> The diameter of the resulting apoferritin could be easily controlled from 30 to 100 nm with changing the activation degree of dextran by cyanogen bromide, and set here to be 30 nm.



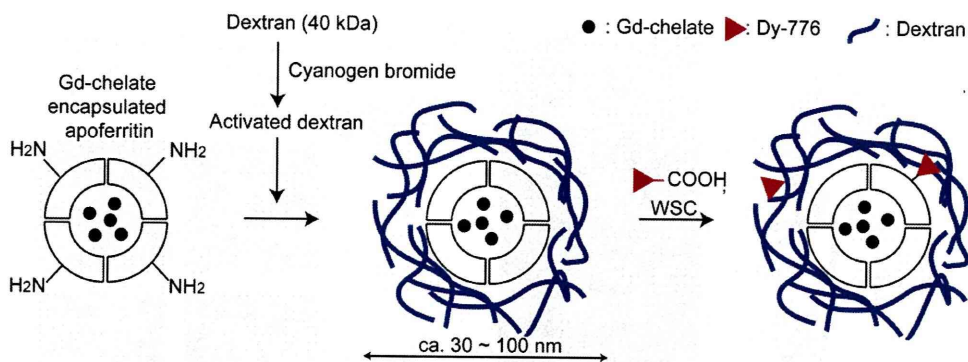


Figure 3. Surface modification of apoferritin. WSC, water-soluble carbodiimide.

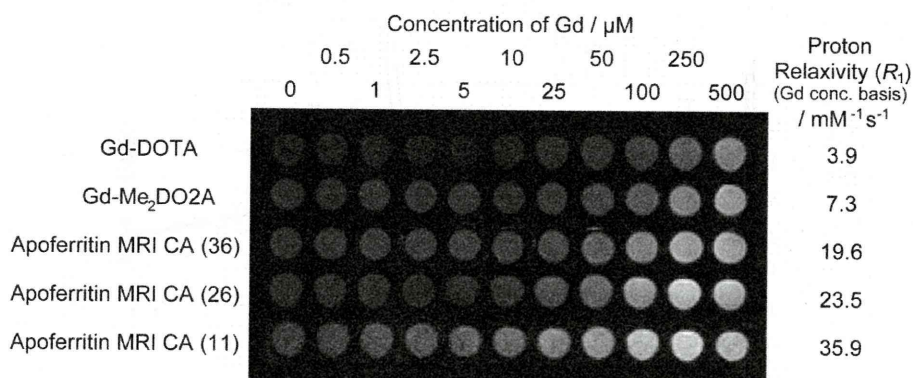


Figure 4. MR images of Gd-DOTA, Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A, and apoferritin CA encapsulating Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A under various concentrations, and their proton relaxivities. Horizontal axis represents Gd molar concentration; numbers of encapsulated Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A molecules in each apoferritin cavity are shown in parentheses. Proton relaxivity of each CA on a Gd molar concentration basis, as determined by the inversion recovery method, is shown in the right column. Phantom image was taken by 1.5-T MRI equipment with  $T_R = 500$  msec and  $T_E = 15$  msec.

To the dextran-coated apoferritin molecule was attached the near-infrared fluorescence (NIRF) compound Dyomics Dy-776 (Dyomics GmbH, Jena, Germany) so as to trace directly the in vivo distribution of apoferritin. Suppression of apoferritin entrapment at liver was proven by the NIRF imaging technique as shown in Supplementary Figure S4. The suppressed accumulation in liver is due to the dextran coating, which blinds the nature of apoferritin and also endows the surface with a hydration layer similarly to PEGylated nano-carriers.<sup>31</sup>

#### Relaxivity of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A encapsulated in apoferritin

A phantom image of the dextran-coated apoferritin that encapsulated Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A (apoferritin MRI CA) is shown in Figure 4. Interestingly, the apoferritin encapsulating 11 Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A molecules in the cavity shows a proton relaxivity of  $35.9 \text{ mmol}^{-1}\text{s}^{-1}$  (on the basis of Gd concentration), which is 10-fold higher than that of Gd-DOTA. This high relaxivity should be attained by the immobilization of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A on the inner surface of apoferritin to increase the rotational correlation time (called the macromolecular effect), in addition to Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A having more coordination sites for water than Gd-DOTA. With the increased number of the encapsulated Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A

molecules from 11 to 36, the proton relaxivity was decreased to about half.

#### Safety of the apoferritin-MRI CA

Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A encapsulated in apoferritin was stored in a bovine blood serum solution at 4°C for one week to examine the stability. No Gd ions leaking from the apoferritin cavity were detected by ICP measurement, indicating that Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is stably located in apoferritin (Supplementary Figure S5). Even if the Gd complex was released from apoferritin and eliminated into the bloodstream, Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is considered to be smoothly discharged from the body via the kidney, and the released Gd shows no toxicity.

Acute toxicity of the apoferritin MRI CA was also preliminarily examined by a single-dose toxicity test. The apoferritin-MRI CAs were administered into the tail vein of 8-week-old nude mice (BALB/c nu/nu mice; SHIMIZU Laboratory Supplies Co. Ltd., Kyoto, Japan) at two different doses, where one dose was equal to that for an MR imaging experiment (group A,  $n = 4$ ) and the other dose was 10-fold larger than group A's dosage (group B,  $n = 2$ ). Body weight changes of these mice were traced for 2 weeks, and then autopsy diagnosis was performed. No mice in either group died during



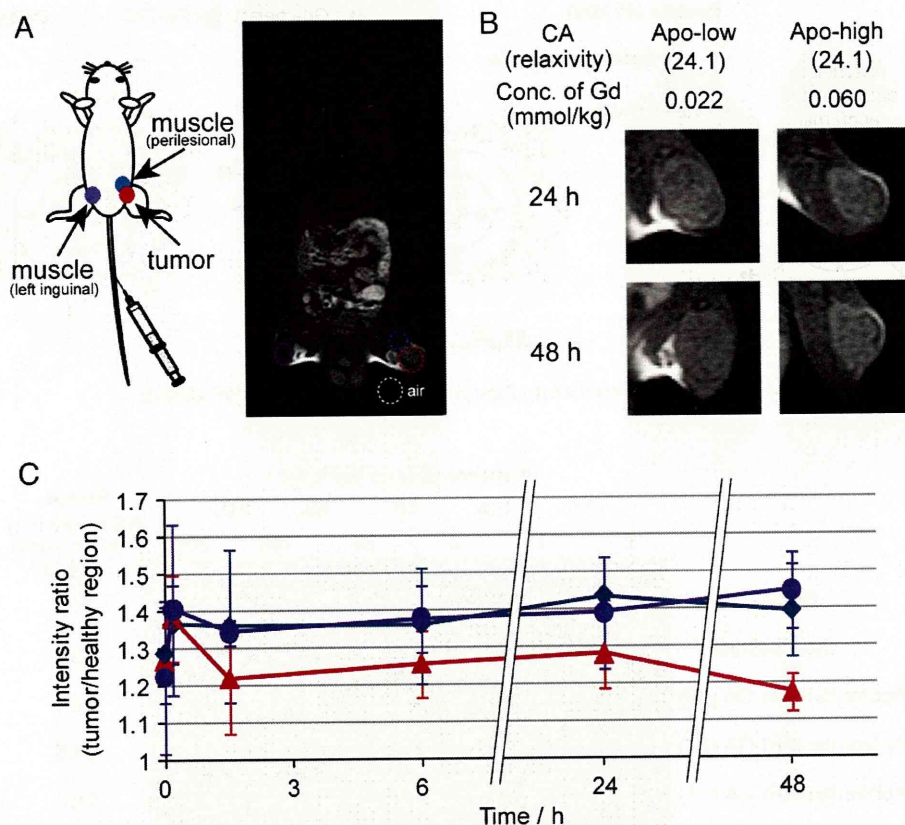


Figure 5. (A) Noncontrasted MR image of tumor-bearing mouse. (B) Magnitude MR images of the grafted tumor region using MRI CAs. (C) Time lapse image of brightness intensity ratio around tumor region (right inguinal region, red triangles) as compared to two healthy muscle regions of the left inguinal muscle (purple circles) and the perilesional region (blue diamonds). As CAs, apoferritin-encapsulated Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A MRI CA: 0.022 mmol/kg (purple dots and blue diamonds), and Gd-DOTA: 0.13 mmol/kg (red triangles) were used.

the 2 weeks. The body weight of group B mice decreased during the first 2 or 3 days compared with that of reference groups, but no other serious side effects were observed. Toxicity tests will be reported in detail in another article.

#### MR imaging using tumor-bearing mouse

Apoferritin-MRI CA with relaxivity of 23.5 on a Gd basis was used for in vivo MR imaging. Its diameter as determined by dynamic light scattering measurement was 30 nm. Human cervical epithelial adenocarcinoma cells (HeLa) were subcutaneously transplanted into the right hind leg of immunodeficient nude mice. A buffered solution of the apoferritin-MRI CA was intravenously injected into the tumor-bearing mice, and  $T_1$ -weighted MR images were taken by the Toshiba EXCELART Vantage MRI system (1.5T,  $T_R = 500$  ms,  $T_E = 15$  ms). As a reference CA, the commercially available Gd-DOTA (Magne-scope syringe; supplied by Guerbet Japan KK, Tokyo, Japan) was used. The amount of injected Gd-DOTA was decided based on the necessary quantity for human imaging (0.13 mmol/kg). Proton relaxivity of the apoferritin is about sixfold higher than that of Gd-DOTA. Therefore, concentration of the administered Gd of the apoferritin MRI CA was set to be 0.022 mmol/kg to adjust the CA net effects.

Figure 5, A and B show MR images of tumor-bearing mice with or without administration of apoferritin with Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>-DO<sub>2</sub>A. The tumor region was imaged brighter than the healthy region (left inguinal muscle) and the perilesional muscle. With help of the CA, the contrast at the tumor region became more vivid. Figure 5, C shows time-dependent changes of the intensity ratios of the tumor region (right inguinal region) as compared to two healthy muscle regions of the left inguinal muscle and the perilesional region. Soon after the administration of the CA (10 minutes), the intensity ratios increased about 20%. In 24 hours, the intensity ratio showed the highest value (1.45) and remained relatively high even after 2 days. On the other hand, Gd-DOTA showed a similar intensity ratio increasing in the initial 10 minutes, but soon decreasing to the original level (red triangles). Gd-DOTA was rapidly cleared from the blood circulation through the kidneys. By using the Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A encapsulated in apoferritin, the total amount of Gd ion for imaging was successfully reduced to 17% of Gd-DOTA with the same contrast effect in the tumor image, and the contrast can be retained for a prolonged period. When apoferritin-MRI CA was used at a higher concentration of 0.060 mmol/kg, which is about half of that in the case of the Gd-DOTA on a Gd concentration basis, the tumor region was imaged more clearly, as shown in Figure 5, B (Apo-high).



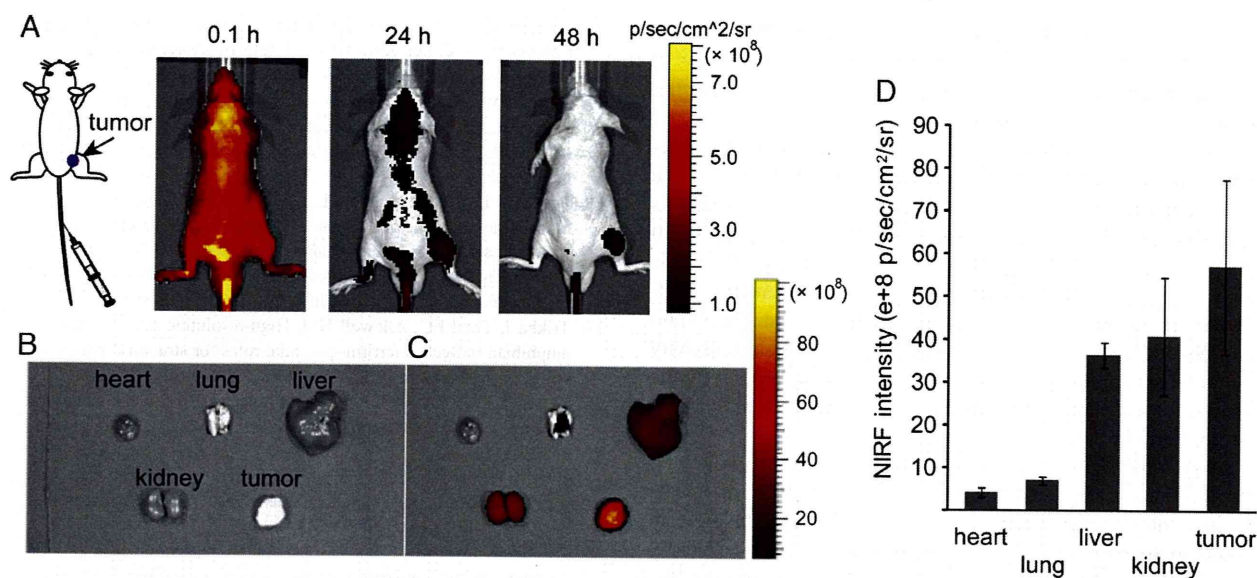


Figure 6. NIRF images of tumor-bearing mice using Dy-776 labeled apoferritin MRI CA, whose surface was coated with dextran. (A) Time lapse in vivo cancer imaging. (B, C) Ex vivo optical and NIRF images of isolated five organs after 48 hours from administration. (D) NIRF intensities of isolated organs.

To confirm that the apoferritin was responsible for the specific accumulation of Gd in the tumor xenograft, the disposition of the apoferritin itself was examined by NIRF image using Dy-776 (Dyomics), which was introduced onto the apoferritin outer surface (Figure 6, A). Soon after the administration (0.1 hour), the apoferritin-MRI CA was widely spread in the entire body of the mouse. With time, the excess amount of the apoferritin was excreted from the body, and NIRF signal intensity in normal tissues was decreased. On the other hand, NIRF signal obviously remained at the tumor region. Tumor was clearly imaged by NIRF 24 hours after administration, indicating that apoferritin coated with dextran should accumulate in the tumor region by the EPR effect. Figure 6, B and C show ex vivo NIRF images of several organs at 48 hours after administration. The strongest fluorescence signal was observed at the tumor region compared with others including liver (Figure 6, C). Although the NIRF signal intensity is not strictly quantitative, integrated NIRF signal intensity from tumor was the strongest among five isolated organs and reached 1.5 times higher than that from liver (Figure 6, D). NIRF and MR signals were detected at the same tumor region, confirming that Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is stably encapsulated in the apoferritin cavity in vivo.

## Discussion

In this study we developed a new method of encapsulating small molecules into the apoferritin cavity utilizing electrostatic interaction, and prepared a new high-contrast MRI CA. The high proton relaxivity attained was due to (1) an increased water coordination number from Gd-DOTA of 1 to Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A of 3 per Gd ion, and (2) immobilization of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A on the inner surface of apoferritin to increase the rotational correlation time, called the macromolecular effect.

Importantly, Gd-DOTA and Gd-HPDO<sub>3</sub>A were not successfully condensed in apoferritin by this newly developed method. This observation suggests that condensation of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A into the apoferritin cavity is due to the electrostatic interaction between cationic Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A and the anionic apoferritin inner surface. The Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A concentration in feed was lowered from 0.1 M in the case of the previous method to  $1.2 \times 10^{-4}$  to  $2.4 \times 10^{-3}$  M by using this new method. The lowering of concentration by two or three orders of magnitude on preparation had another significant effect—that of reducing nonspecific binding of Gd chelates on the apoferritin outer surface. When the Gd chelate concentration was high in the encapsulation process, a careful purification procedure (e.g., multiple purifications by size exclusion chromatography) was required to remove the excess Gd chelates. In the case where the feed ratio of Gd chelate to apoferritin was 10,000, the excess amount of Gd chelate could not be washed out by a single purification process using size exclusion chromatography, Sephacryl S-100 (data not shown). It is obvious that undesired adsorption of Gd-chelate onto the apoferritin outer surface is also decreased by lowering the Gd chelate concentration at the encapsulation process.

Increasing the number of encapsulated Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A molecules from 11 to 36 resulted in a decrease of the proton relaxivity by about half. This result also supports the immobilization of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A on the apoferritin surface. The number of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A immobilization sites on the apoferritin inner surface is probably limited, and the excess Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A may be weakly bound to the inner surface. Proton relaxivity of the weakly bound Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A is not high. Therefore, proton relaxivity of averages would be decreased by virtue of the limited strong Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A binding sites on the apoferritin inner surface.

Considering the proton relaxivity on an apoferritin concentration basis, the proton relaxivity of apoferritin encapsulating 36 molecules of Gd-Me<sub>2</sub>DO<sub>2</sub>A was over  $700 \text{ mmol}^{-1}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . Proton



relaxivity of apoferritin encapsulating 10 Gd-HPDO3A was reported to be  $80 \text{ mmol}^{-1}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  on a Gd concentration basis.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, apoferritin-based proton relaxivities are almost the same level between these two cases.

However, we considered that our apoferritin MRI CA is preferable to apoferritin encapsulating Gd-HPDO3A for the following reasons. The expected proton relaxivity, which is increased by the macromolecular effect, is normally up to  $30 \text{ mmol}^{-1}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  refs.<sup>32-35</sup>. A proton relaxivity of  $80 \text{ mmol}^{-1}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  is high in view of the general consideration. Moreover, Gd-HPDO3A is an electrically neutral chelate and shows no electrostatic interaction with apoferritin. The high relaxivity might be explained by Gd chelate nonspecific adsorption on the apoferritin surface due to the high Gd chelate concentration in the encapsulation process.

A cationic Gd chelate, which has three water coordination sites and shows twofold higher proton relaxivity than Gd-DOTA, is efficiently encapsulated in apoferritin. The Gd chelates are bound to the inner surface of apoferritin to increase the relaxivity in total of 10-fold higher than Gd-DOTA. Decorating the apoferritin surface with dextran leads to accumulation of the apoferritin-MRI CA in the transplanted tumor region due to the EPR effect. The required amount of Gd for tumor imaging is successfully reduced by the high proton relaxivity of the apoferritin-MRI CA. Chemical design of the chelator and the chemical modification of the nanocage demonstrated here should be useful for development of the coming MR imaging CA.

## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.nano.2011.01.015.

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# *A Pre-targeting Strategy for MR Imaging of Functional Molecules Using Dendritic Gd-Based Contrast Agents*

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**Molecular Imaging and Biology**

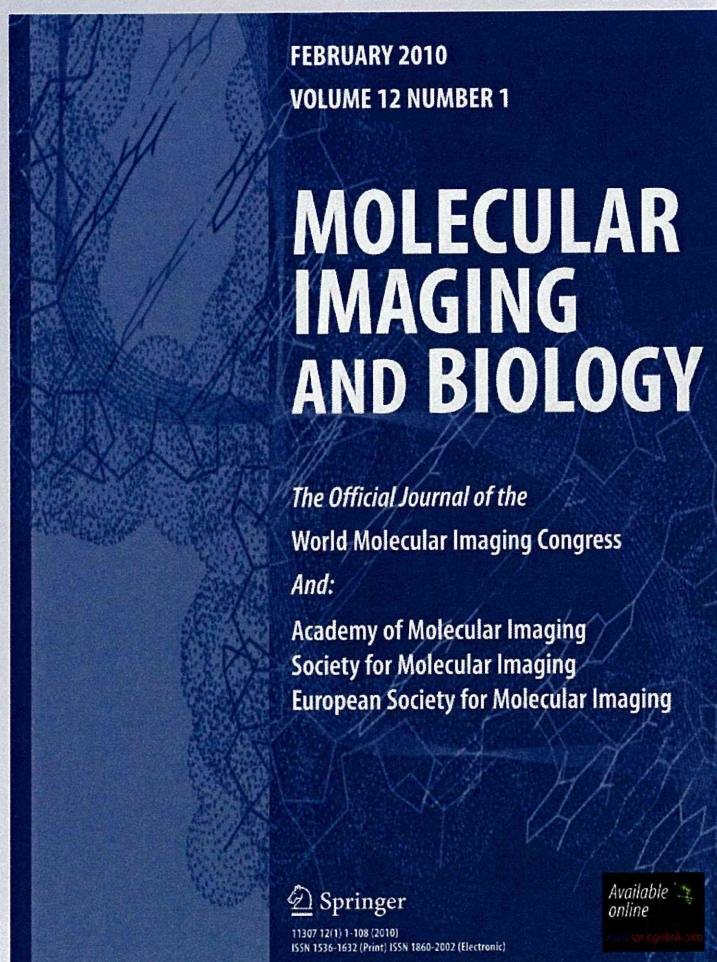
ISSN 1536-1632

Volume 13

Number 6

Mol Imaging Biol (2011) 13:1196-1203

DOI 10.1007/s11307-010-0463-1



 Springer



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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# A Pre-targeting Strategy for MR Imaging of Functional Molecules Using Dendritic Gd-Based Contrast Agents

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** We aimed to establish a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) protocol for the sensitive and specific imaging of functional molecules with a pre-targeting strategy utilizing the streptavidin–biotin interaction. Membrane type-1 matrix metalloproteinase (MT1-MMP) was selected as the target molecule.

**Procedures:** The biotinylated polyamidoamine dendrimer (PAMAM)-based contrast agent (Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd)) was prepared, and its proton relaxivity ( $r_1$ ) and affinity to streptavidin were evaluated. Tumor-bearing mice were pre-targeted with streptavidin-conjugated anti-MT1-MMP monoclonal antibody (mAb), streptavidin-conjugated negative control IgG, or saline and 3 days later were injected with Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) followed immediately by MRI for a period of 3 h.

**Results:** High  $r_1$  ( $15.5 \text{ L mmol}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ ) and 1.9-fold higher affinity than D-biotin were obtained. Significantly higher relative tumor signals were observed in mice pre-targeted with streptavidin-conjugated anti-MT1-MMP mAb (165% at 3 h vs. pre-administration) than with saline or streptavidin-conjugated negative control IgG ( $P < 0.0001$ ).

**Conclusions:** This pre-targeting approach can accomplish sensitive and specific *in vivo* MRI of functional molecules.

**Key words:** Pre-targeting, Polyamidoamine dendrimer (PAMAM), Membrane type-1 matrix metalloproteinase, Magnetic resonance imaging

## Introduction

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), characterized by a remarkable spatial resolution, is a powerful tool for noninvasive morphologic diagnosis of diseases including cancer. Recently, the application of MRI to functional

molecular imaging coupled with anatomical information has been explored. To realize functional molecular imaging by MRI, contrast agents are required that possess a high relaxation to produce high MR signals to compensate for the low intrinsic sensitivity of MRI [1] in addition to selectively accumulating in the targeting site.

Gadolinium (Gd) chelates conjugated to macromolecules such as liposomes, micelles, and dendrimers can give rise to enhanced proton relaxivities in comparison with simple,

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small molecule contrast agents such as Gd-diethylenetriamine pentaacetic acid (Gd-DTPA) [2–4]. This effect is due to a restriction in thermal flexibility leading to increased interactions between the Gd atom and surrounding water molecules [5–7]. Some groups have developed monoclonal antibody (mAb)-conjugated macromolecular contrast agents for imaging integrin  $\alpha\beta 3$  or human epidermal growth factor receptor type 2 (HER2) in tumors, which successfully increased the tumor signal intensity by 15–30% [8, 9]. However, many researchers have failed to demonstrate *in vivo* functional molecular imaging using macromolecules conjugated with several Gd chelates and targeting moieties like antibodies and peptides because the pharmacokinetics of the targeting moieties was significantly altered by the introduction of macromolecular contrast agents, which resulted in low target recognition and high accumulation of the labeling agent in non-targeted tissues [10, 11]. Furthermore, when antibody-conjugated macromolecular contrast agents are injected at a Gd dose (0.1 mmol Gd/kg) necessary for adequate imaging, excess antibodies (on the order of milligrams per mouse) are typically administered, which leads to major limitations of cost and *in vivo* toxicity.

Thus, in this study, to overcome these problems and to realize functional molecular MRI by a macromolecule-based contrast agent, we aimed to use a pre-targeting strategy that utilizes the high affinity interaction between streptavidin and biotin ( $K_d=10^{-15}$  M) [12]. In this pre-targeting method, the first step is to administer a streptavidin-conjugated target-specific antibody. In the second step, after selective accumulation of streptavidin-conjugated antibody in the targeted tissue and clearance of unbound targeting agent from the circulation, a biotin-bound imaging probe is injected. As the post-administration contrast agent, polyamidoamine dendrimer (PAMAM) was selected as the base structure since it is structurally well-defined and functional moieties including biotins and Gd chelates for both targeting and signal emission functions can easily be attached to the large number of its surface amino groups. The pre-targeting strategy is expected to provide selective and effective accumulation of the PAMAM-based contrast agent to the targeted site and a high S/N ratio during the first hours following administration, as has been observed in radioimmunotherapy and radioimmunodetection [13–16], and to potentially lead to lower *in vivo* toxicity [17, 18].

Thus, in this paper, we describe our efforts to establish a sensitive and specific *in vivo* MRI protocol for imaging functional molecules utilizing a pre-targeting strategy that combines a streptavidin-conjugated antibody with a PAMAM-based contrast agent modified with biotins. As the targeted biomolecule, membrane type-1 matrix metalloproteinase (MT1-MMP) was selected. Since MT1-MMP is exclusively expressed in tumors and is closely associated with metastasis [19] and invasion [20], MT1-MMP is a potential imaging target for evaluating tumor malignancy.

## Materials and Methods

### *Synthesis of Streptavidin-Conjugated Anti-MT1-MMP mAb*

Streptavidin-conjugated anti-MT1-MMP mAb and streptavidin-conjugated negative control IgG were synthesized according to a previously described method [14]. Briefly, EZ-Link® sulfo-succinimidyl-6-(biotinamido) hexanoate (sulfo-NHS-LC-biotin; Pierce, Inc.) was added to a solution of anti-MT1-MMP mAb (113-5B7, Daiichi Fine Chemical Co.) in a molar ratio of 12:1. The mixture was gently stirred for 30 min at room temperature and then was purified with a diafiltration membrane (Amicon Ultra 4 (MWCO 30,000), Millipore Co.). A solution of biotinylated anti-MT1-MMP mAb was added to a solution of streptavidin (SAv; Pierce, Inc.) in a 1:3 molar ratio. The mixture was incubated for 1 h at 37°C followed by purification twice by affinity chromatography using a HiTrap rProtein A column (GE Healthcare Bioscience). The eluate containing anti-MT1-MMP mAb-SAv was concentrated with a diafiltration membrane (MWCO 30,000), and the protein concentration was determined by the bicinchoninate (BCA) method. The purification was monitored by a size exclusion chromatograph using a 300×4.6-mm i.d. TSK-Gel Super SW 3000 column (Tosoh Co., Japan) eluted with phosphate buffer (0.1 M, pH 6.8) at a flow rate of 0.1 mL/min. Comparison of molecular mass standards (Oriental Yeast Co., Japan) of the absorbance at 280 nm indicated that a peak at 30.3 min was consistent with the presence of a 210-kDa streptavidin-conjugated anti-MT1-MMP mAb. Furthermore, streptavidin-conjugated anti-MT1-MMP mAb retained 81.3% of the anti-MT1-MMP mAb immunoreactivity, which was confirmed by flow cytometry.

### *Synthesis of Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd)*

EZ-Link® sulfo-NHS-LC-biotin was added to a solution of PAMAM (generation 4 (G4)) (Sigma Aldrich) in a molar ratio of 20:1. The mixture was stirred for 30 min at room temperature and then was applied to a diafiltration membrane (MWCO 10,000) to remove unbound biotins as well as to change the buffer to phosphate buffer (0.1 M, pH 9.0). After purification, the incorporation ratio of biotins conjugated to each dendrimer was measured using an EZ™ Biotin Quantitation Kit (Pierce, Inc.). The biotinylated PAMAM was reacted with a 64-fold molar excess of 2-(*p*-isothiocyanatobenzyl)-diethylenetriamine pentaacetic acid (*p*-SCN-Bz-DTPA) (Macrocyclics) at 40°C for 24 h. During the reaction, the pH was maintained at 9.0 with 1 N NaOH. An additional equal amount of *p*-SCN-Bz-DTPA was added after 24 h, and the reaction was incubated for another 24 h at 40°C. The resulting preparation was purified by diafiltration membrane (MWCO 10,000). After purification, the number of DTPAs incorporated into each G4 dendrimer was checked by chelate titration using ZnSO<sub>4</sub> (indicator: 4-(2-pyridylazo)resorcinol, NH<sub>3</sub>/NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>, pH 10), according to a previously described method with some modification [21]. Purified Bt-PAMAM-DTPA was mixed with GdCl<sub>3</sub> (Sigma Aldrich) in citrate buffer (0.3 M, pH 5.0) for 2 h at 40°C. The excess Gd was removed by diafiltration membrane (MWCO 10,000) while simultaneously changing the buffer to PBS (0.1 M, pH 7.4). The number of Gd incorporated into the dendrimer was checked by separating the free Gd and Bt-PAMAM-DTPA



(Gd) with a diafiltration filter after labeling the Bt-PAMAM-DTPA with  $^{153}\text{Gd}$  and nonradioactive Gd. For comparison purposes, PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) containing one biotin (Bt<sub>1</sub>-PAMAM-DTPA (Gd)) was also prepared in a similar manner.

### Stability of Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) in Mouse Plasma

$^{153}\text{Gd}$ -labeled Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) was prepared by reacting Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) with  $^{153}\text{Gd}$  (1  $\mu\text{Ci}$ , PerkinElmer Japan Co., Osaka, Japan) and non-radioactive Gd in 0.3 M citrate buffer at pH 5.0 for 2 h at 40°C.  $^{153}\text{Gd}$ -labeled Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) (30  $\mu\text{L}$ ) was added to mouse plasma collected from female C3H/He mice (270  $\mu\text{L}$ ), and the plasma samples were incubated at 37°C for 0, 3, and 24 h. After incubation, aliquots of the samples were drawn, and radioactivity was analyzed by size-exclusion chromatography with a PD-10 column (GE Healthcare Bioscience) using saline as eluent.

### Affinity of Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) for Streptavidin

Competition assays of  $^{125}\text{I}$ -(3-iodobenzoyl)norbiotinamide ( $^{125}\text{I}$ -IBB), a radiolabeled biotin derivative synthesized as reported previously [22], were performed by incubating streptavidin (Pierce, Inc.; 400  $\mu\text{L}$ , 2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ ),  $^{125}\text{I}$ -IBB (50  $\mu\text{L}$ , 5  $\mu\text{Ci}$ ), and various concentrations of Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd), Bt<sub>1</sub>-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd), and D-biotin (Nacalai Tesque, Kyoto, Japan; 50  $\mu\text{L}$ ,  $10^{-8}$ – $10^{-4}$  M) in PBS (0.1 M, pH 7.4) for 60 min at 37°C. At the end of the incubation, the mixture was applied to a size exclusion column with a Sephadex G-50 Fine (GE Healthcare Bioscience), followed by measurement of the radioactivity from the column eluent (containing macromolecules) with a NaI well-type scintillation counter (1470WIZARD, PerkinElmer Japan Co.). Nonspecific binding was determined in the presence of 10  $\text{mg}/\text{mL}$  D-biotin. The 50% inhibitory concentrations ( $\text{IC}_{50}\text{s}$ ) were determined from displacement curves of the percent inhibition of  $^{125}\text{I}$ -IBB binding vs. the inhibitor concentration.

### Preparation of Tumor-Bearing Animals

Female C3H/He mice (5 weeks old), supplied by Japan SLC Co. (Hamamatsu, Japan), were housed under a 12-h light/12-h dark cycle and were given free access to food and water. The animal experiments in this study were conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines and were approved by the Kyoto University Animal Care Committee, Japan.

FM3A mouse breast carcinoma cells were supplied by the Health Science Research Resources Bank (Osaka, Japan). They were cultured in DMEM medium (Nissui Pharmaceutical Co.) supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum at 37°C in a humidified atmosphere containing 5%  $\text{CO}_2$  and 95% air and had a 10.6-h doubling time.

FM3A cells were suspended in 0.01 M PBS (pH 7.4) followed by subcutaneous inoculation into the right hind leg of the mouse ( $5 \times 10^6$  cells/100  $\mu\text{L}/\text{mouse}$ ) [23]. The tumor volume was estimated by  $(\text{length}) \times (\text{width})^2 / 2$  [24] over a 10-day tumor growth period. The average size of the tumors was  $213 \pm 82 \text{ mm}^3$

on the MRI study day. The expression of MT1-MMP in FM3A cells and tumor tissues was confirmed by western blotting and immunohistochemistry [25].

### Magnetic Resonance Imaging

MRI was performed using a clinical 1.5 Tesla MR scanner (MAGNETOM Symphony Sonata, Siemens). All  $T_1$ -weighted MR images were acquired with a multislice spin-echo pulse sequence. MRI data were analyzed using the ImageJ software.

### Phantom Study

Solutions of Gd-DTPA (Sigma Aldrich) and Bt-PAMAM-DTPA (Gd) were prepared with a Gd concentration in the range of 10 to 500  $\mu\text{M}$  in vials with an inner diameter of 15 mm followed by the MR scan using a knee coil (20.5 cm in diameter) at 20°C. To obtain proton relaxivity ( $r_1$ ) for samples, spin-echo images were obtained using a sequence with TR=500, 1,000, 1,500, and 2,000 ms and with TE=15 ms. The imaging parameters were as follows: field-of-view,  $256 \times 128 \text{ mm}$ ; matrix,  $256 \times 128$ ; slice thickness, 7 mm; and number of average, 3.

### In Vivo Study

Mice ( $n=4$ ) bearing FM3A tumors in the right thigh received streptavidin-conjugated anti-MT1-MMP mAb (50  $\mu\text{g}/100 \mu\text{L}$  in saline) via tail vein. Three days later, Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) (0.1 mmol Gd/kg, 100  $\mu\text{L}$  in PBS (0.1 M, pH 7.4), i.v.) was injected followed by data acquisition by MRI at several time points over a 3-h post-injection period under sodium pentobarbital (50 mg/kg, i.p.) anesthesia. All MR images were obtained using a hand-made round surface coil (5.5 cm in diameter) fixed by a custom constructed coil holder. The imaging parameters were as follows: TR/TE, 300/5.2 ms; field-of-view,  $128 \times 96 \text{ mm}$ ; matrix,  $256 \times 192$ ; slice thickness, 1.5 mm; and number of average, 3. MRI studies were also conducted as above on FM3A tumor-bearing mice ( $n=3$ ) pre-treated with saline (100  $\mu\text{L}$ ) or streptavidin-conjugated negative control IgG (50  $\mu\text{g}/100 \mu\text{L}$  in saline). The signal intensity was calculated by drawing a region of interest around the tumor, muscle in the contralateral hind limb, and kidneys. The relative signal intensity in each tissue was defined as the signal intensity after administration of Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) divided by the signal intensity before administration.

### Statistical Analysis

Unpaired Student's  $t$  test was used to evaluate the significance of differences of  $r_1$  between Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) and Gd-DTPA. To compare the time courses of relative signal intensity in the tumor and kidneys and tumor/muscle (T/M) signal ratios among Bt-PAMAM-DTPA(Gd) pre-targeted by streptavidin-conjugated anti-MT1-MMP mAb, streptavidin-conjugated negative control IgG, and saline, two-way repeated measures ANOVA with post-hoc analysis by the Tukey–Kramer test was