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H. 知的財産権の出願・登録状況 (予定を含む。)

1. 特許取得

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I. 健康危険情報

該当事項なし

研究成果の刊行に関する一覧表

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CD4 mimics targeting the mechanism of HIV entry

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ABSTRACT

A structure–activity relationship study was conducted of several CD4 mimicking small molecules which block the interaction between HIV-1 gp120 and CD4. These CD4 mimics induce a conformational change in gp120, exposing its co-receptor-binding site. This induces a highly synergistic interaction in the use in combination with a co-receptor CXCR4 antagonist and reveals a pronounced effect on the dynamic supramolecular mechanism of HIV-1 entry.

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Recently, remarkable success has attended the clinical treatment of HIV-infected and AIDS patients, with ‘highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART)’. This approach involves a combination of two or three agents from two categories: reverse transcriptase inhibitors and protease inhibitors.¹ In addition, the molecular mechanism involved in HIV-entry and -fusion into host cells has been described in detail.² The complex interactions of surface proteins on cellular and viral membranes, which are designated as a dynamic supramolecular mechanism of HIV entry, are reported to be crucial to the viral infection. In a first step, an HIV envelope protein, gp120 interacts with a cell surface protein, CD4, leading to a conformational change in gp120 followed by subsequent binding of gp120 to a co-receptor CCR5³ or CXCR4.⁴ CCR5 and CXCR4 are the major co-receptors for the entry of macrophage-tropic (R5-) and T cell line-tropic (X4-) HIV-1, respectively. The interaction of gp120 with CCR5 or CXCR4 triggers entry of another envelope protein, gp41 to the cell membrane and formation of a gp41 trimer-of-hairpins structure, which causes fusion of HIV/cell-membranes and completes the infection.

Informed by this mechanism, a fusion inhibitor, enfuvirtide (fuz-eon, Trimeris & Roche)⁵ and a CCR5 antagonist, maraviroc (Pfizer)⁶ in addition to an integrase inhibitor, raltegravir (Merck)⁷ have been used clinically. However, serious problems with chemotherapy still persist, including the emergence of viral strains with multi-drug resistance (MDR), considerable adverse effects and high costs. Consequently, development of novel drugs possessing mechanisms of action different from those of the above inhibitors is currently re-

quired. We have previously developed selective CXCR4 antagonists⁸ and fusion inhibitors.⁹ Furthermore, *N*-(4-Bromophenyl)-*N*-(2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)-oxalamide (**1**) and *N*-(4-chlorophenyl)-*N*-(2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidin-4-yl)-oxalamide (**2**) were previously found using chemical library screening to inhibit syncytium formation by other researchers.¹⁰ **1** and **2** bind to gp120 with binding affinities of $K_d = 2.2 \mu\text{M}$ and $3.7 \mu\text{M}$, respectively, blocking the interaction of gp120 with CD4 in the first step of an HIV-1 entry. Thus, in the present study we focus on the development of CD4 mimics that can block the interaction between gp120 and CD4. We have investigated the effect of CD4 mimics on conformational changes of gp120 and on their use in combination use with a CXCR4 antagonist.

Initially, molecular modeling of compound **2** docked into gp120 was carried out using docking simulations performed by the FlexSIS module of SYBYL 7.1 (Tripos, St. Louis) (Fig. 1).¹¹ The atomic coordinates of the crystal structure of gp120 with soluble CD4 (sCD4) were retrieved from Protein Data Bank (PDB) (entry 1RZJ) (Fig. 1a) and it was observed that Phe⁴³ and Arg⁵⁹ of the CD4 have multiple contacts with Asp³⁶⁸, Glu³⁷⁰ and Trp⁴²⁷ of gp120, which are all conserved residues. An inspection of the environment of compound **2** docked in gp120 revealed the presence of a large cavity around the *p*-position of the phenyl ring of compound **2**, which could interact with the viral surface protein gp120 (Fig. 1b and c). Several analogs of **2** with substituents on the phenyl ring were therefore synthesized.

All compounds except **12** were synthesized by previously published methods (Scheme 1).^{10b,12,13} Aniline derivatives (**3**) were coupled with ethyl oxalyl chloride to yield the corresponding ethyl oxalamates **4**. Saponification of the above oxalamates to the corresponding free acids and the subsequent coupling with 4-ami-

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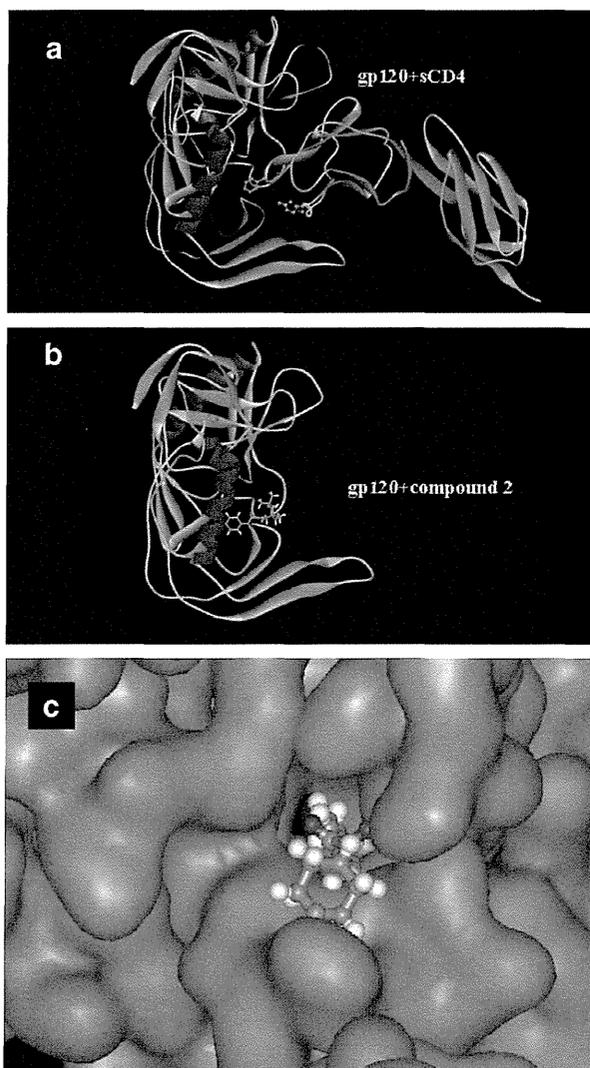
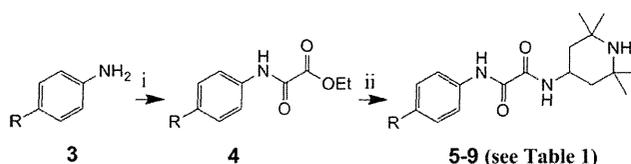
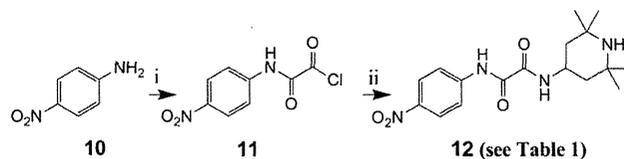


Figure 1. (a) The crystal structure of gp120 with soluble CD4 (sCD4) retrieved from the PDB (entry 1RZJ); (b) docking structure of compound 2 and gp120; (c) a focused figure of (b) shown by space-filling model.



Scheme 1. Reagents and conditions: (i) ethyl oxalyl chloride, Et₃N; (ii) 1 M NaOH; 4-amino-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine, 1-(3-dimethylaminopropyl)-3-ethylcarbodiimide hydrochloride, 1-hydroxybenzotriazole, Et₃N.

no-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine using 1-ethyl-3-(3-dimethylaminopropyl)carbodiimide hydrochloride (EDC) and 1-hydroxybenzotriazole (HOBt) yielded compounds 5–9. In the case of compound 12, whose amide bond is not stable during the reaction of the saponification of the corresponding oxalamates, an alternative synthetic scheme was used (Scheme 2).¹⁴ The reaction of *p*-nitroaniline (10) with oxalyl chloride gave the corresponding oxoacetamide 11, which was subsequently coupled with 4-amino-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine to yield the desired compound 12.



Scheme 2. Reagents and conditions: (i) oxalyl chloride, Et₃N; (ii) 4-amino-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine, Et₃N.

The anti-HIV activity of the synthetic compounds was evaluated against various viral strains including both laboratory and primary isolates (Table 1). IC₅₀ values were determined by the 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide (MTT) method¹⁵ as the concentrations of the compounds which conferred 50% protection against HIV-1-induced cytopathogenicity in PM1/CCR5 cells. Cytotoxicity of the compounds based on the viability of mock-infected PM1/CCR5 cells was also evaluated using the MTT method. CC₅₀ values were determined as the concentrations achieving 50% reduction of the viability of mock-infected cells. Compounds 1 and 2 showed potent anti-HIV activity against laboratory isolates, IIIB (X4, Sub B) and 89.6 (dual, Sub B) strains, and compound 2 also possessed potent activity against a primary isolate, an fTOI strain (R5, Sub B). All of the IC₅₀ values were between 4 μM and 10 μM. Compound 1 was not tested against primary isolates. The potencies of compounds 1 and 2 are comparable to the reported binding affinities for gp120 (*K*_d = 2.2 and 3.7 μM, respectively).¹⁰ Several of the new analogs of compounds 1 and 2 showed significant anti-HIV activity. Compound 5, which has a phenyl group in place of the *p*-chlorophenyl group of compound 2, did not show significant anti-HIV activity at concentrations below 100 μM against all strains tested except for an fTOI strain (R5, Sub B). This result suggests that a substituent at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring is critical for potent activity. Compound 6, which has a fluorine atom at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring, showed moderate anti-HIV activity against laboratory isolates, IIIB (X4, Sub B) and 89.6 (dual, Sub B) strains (IC₅₀ = 61 and 81 μM, respectively), but, at concentrations below 100 μM, failed to show significant anti-HIV activity against a primary isolate, a KYAG strain (R5, Sub B). Among halogen atoms, fluorine is less suitable than bromine or chlorine as a substituent at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring, as evidenced by compound 6, which is 8–15-fold less potent than compounds 1 and 2 against IIIB (X4, Sub B) and 89.6 (dual, Sub B) strains. Compound 7, which has a methyl group at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring, showed relatively more potent activity against IIIB (X4, Sub B) and 89.6 (dual, Sub B) strains (IC₅₀ = 23 and 41 μM, respectively) than compound 6. Compound 7 also showed significant anti-HIV activity against primary isolates, fTOI (R5, Sub B) and KYAG (R5, Sub B) strains (IC₅₀ = 16 and 51 μM, respectively). Compound 8, with a methoxy group at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring, did not show significant anti-HIV activity against all strains tested until a concentration of 100 μM was reached. In the biological assays, derivatives having electron-withdrawing substituents such as bromine, chlorine and fluorine at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring are relatively potent, whereas derivatives having electron-donating groups such as methoxy at this position are not potent. Furthermore, the steric effect of a substituent at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring appears to be critical to anti-HIV activity. The sum of Hammett constants (σ) of benzoic acid substituents¹⁶ shown in Table 1 can be used to evaluate the electron-withdrawing or -donating effect of the substituents on the aromatic ring. The Taft *E*_s values^{16a,17} were used as steric parameters for substituents at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring. The order of potency found for the halogen-containing derivatives in anti-HIV activity against laboratory isolates, IIIB (X4, Sub B) and 89.6 (dual, Sub B), is: compound 1 (R = Br) (σ = 0.23, *E*_s = −1.16), 2

Table 1
Hammett constants (σ) and steric effects (E_s) of substituted aromatic rings and anti-HIV activity and cytotoxicity of synthetic compounds

Compd	R ^a	σ^b	E_s^c	IC ₅₀ ^e (μ M)				CC ₅₀ ^e (μ M)
				Lab. isolates		Primary isolates		
				IIIB (X4)	89.6 (dual)	fTOI (R5)	KYAG (R5)	
1	Br	0.23	-1.16	4	9	ND	ND	150
2	Cl	0.23	-0.97	8	10	5	>30	170
5	H	0	0	>100	>100	81	>100	350
6	F	0.06	-0.46	61	81	ND	>100	320
7	CH ₃	-0.17	-1.24	23	41	16	51	210
8	OCH ₃	-0.27	-0.55	>100	>100	ND	>100	340
9	CF ₃	0.54	-2.40	ND	27	ND	ND	72
12	NO ₂	0.78	-1.77 ^d	ND	42	ND	ND	230
sCD4				0.010	0.021	0.0044	ND	ND

^a See Schemes 1 and 2.

^b σ = Hammett constant of a substituent on a benzoic acid derivative.¹⁶

^c E_s = steric effect of a substituent at the *para* position on the aromatic ring.^{16a,17}

^d The average value of -1.01 and -2.52, which are E_s values of the NO₂ group, -1.77, was used.

^e Values are means of at least three experiments (ND = not determined).

(R = Cl) ($\sigma = 0.23$, $E_s = -0.97$), **6** (R = F) ($\sigma = 0.06$, $E_s = -0.46$) and **5** (R = H) ($\sigma = 0$, $E_s = 0$). This is the order of substituents' electron-withdrawing ability and also of their size. Methyl ($\sigma = -0.17$, $E_s = -1.24$) is an electron-donating group, but is almost as bulky as a bromine atom. Thus, the *p*-methyl derivative **7** has relatively potent anti-HIV activity against laboratory isolates, IIIB (X4, Sub B) and 89.6 (dual, Sub B), higher than that of compound **6** (R = F) but lower than that of compound **1** (R = Br) or **2** (R = Cl). The electron-donating ability of a methoxy group is stronger ($\sigma = -0.27$), but the bulk size is smaller ($E_s = -0.55$), than that of a methyl group. Thus, the *p*-methoxy derivative **8** has no significant anti-HIV activity against all strains tested at concentrations below 100 μ M. Two derivatives containing bulkier and more potent electron-withdrawing substituents such as trifluoromethyl (R = CF₃) ($\sigma = 0.54$, $E_s = -2.40$) and nitro (R = NO₂) ($\sigma = 0.78$, $E_s = -1.77$) at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring were evaluated. Compounds **9** (R = CF₃) and **12** (R = NO₂) showed significant anti-HIV activity against an 89.6 (dual, Sub B) strain. These are less potent than compounds **1** and **2** and this is perhaps due to the excessive size of the substituents at the *p*-position. This suggests that a certain level of the bulk size and a potent electron-withdrawing ability of the substituents are preferable for anti-HIV activity. It is estimated that a cavity around the *p*-position of the phenyl ring of CD4 mimicking compounds would be optimally filled by bromine ($E_s = -1.16$) or a methyl group ($E_s = -1.24$) at *p*-position, and that an electron-deficient aromatic ring might interact tightly with a negatively charged group such as carboxy of Glu³⁷⁰. In isothermal titration calorimetry (ITC) experiments reported elsewhere,^{10c} compound **5** (R = H) does not have significant affinity for gp120, and compound **6** (R = F) has less potent affinity for gp120 than compound **2**, consistent with the present data. In all but one of the compounds, no significant cytotoxicity was detected (CC₅₀ >150 μ M, Table 1), the exception being compound **9** (R = CF₃) (CC₅₀ = 72 μ M). Compounds **7** and **12** have relatively low cytotoxicities, compared to compounds **1** and **2**.

Fluorescence activated cell sorting (FACS) analysis was performed¹⁵ to investigate whether these synthetic compounds interact with gp120 inducing the conformational change necessary for the approach of an anti-envelope antibody or a co-receptor to the gp120. The profile of binding of an anti-envelope CD4-induced monoclonal antibody, 4C11, to the Env-expressing cell surface (an R5-HIV-1 strain, JR-FL, -infected PM1 cells) pretreated with the above CD4 mimic analogs was examined. Comparison of the binding of 4C11 to the cell surface was measured in terms of the mean fluorescence intensity (MFI), and is shown in Figure 2. Pretreatment of the Env-expressing cells with compound **2** (MFI = 38.42)

produced a remarkable increase in binding affinity for 4C11, similar to that observed in pretreatment with sCD4 (MFI = 37.90). This is consistent with the results in the previous paper¹⁰ where it was reported that compound **2** enhances the binding of gp120 to the 17b monoclonal antibody which recognizes the co-receptor binding site of gp120. Env-expressing cells, which were not pretreated with sCD4 or a CD4 mimic compound, did not show significant binding affinity for 4C11 (Fig. 2, blank). The increase in binding affinity for monoclonal antibodies may be due to conformational changes in gp120, which were caused by the interaction of sCD4 or a CD4 mimic with gp120. It is hypothesized that such conformational changes involve the exposure of the co-receptor binding site of gp120 (the V3 loop), which is hidden internally, since the binding of gp120 to 17b is enhanced. Compound **5**, which failed to show significant anti-HIV activity, and compounds **7**, **9** and **12**, which had significant anti-HIV activity, were assessed in the FACS analysis. The profile of the binding of 4C11 to the Env-expressing cell surface pretreated with compound **5** (MFI = 14.34) was similar to that of the blank (MFI = 11.24), suggesting that compound **5** offers no significant enhancement of binding affinity for 4C11. This result is compatible with the anti-HIV activity of compound **5**. The profile of the binding of 4C11 to the Env-expressing cell surface pretreated with compound **7** (MFI = 38.33) was entirely similar to that of compound **2** used as a pretreatment. Pretreatment of the cell surface with compounds **9** and **12** (MFI = 29.09 and 30.01, respectively) produced a slightly lower enhancement of binding affinity for 4C11, compared to those of compounds **2** and **7** as pretreatments. However, in the ITC experiments reported elsewhere,^{10c} compound **9** (R = CF₃) has a high affinity for gp120, comparable to that of compound **2**, but compound **12** (R = NO₂) does not have significant affinity for gp120, indicating that these are not consistent with the current FACS studies, possibly due to the difference in the assay systems. Although the anti-HIV activity of **7** is weaker than that of compound **2**, the level of compound **7** inducing an enhancement of binding affinity of gp120 for 4C11 is comparable to that of compound **2**. The concentration of compounds used in the FACS analysis was 100 μ M, much beyond the IC₅₀ values of compounds **2** and **7**. A concentration of 100 μ M would be also sufficient for the expression of anti-HIV activity caused by compounds **2** and **7**.

An effect on the use of compound **2** combined with another entry inhibitor was investigated. Analysis of the synergistic effects of anti-HIV agents was performed according to the median effect principle using the CalcuSyn version 2 computer program¹⁸ to estimate IC₅₀ values of compounds in different combinations. Combination indices (CI) were estimated from the data evaluated using the MTT assay

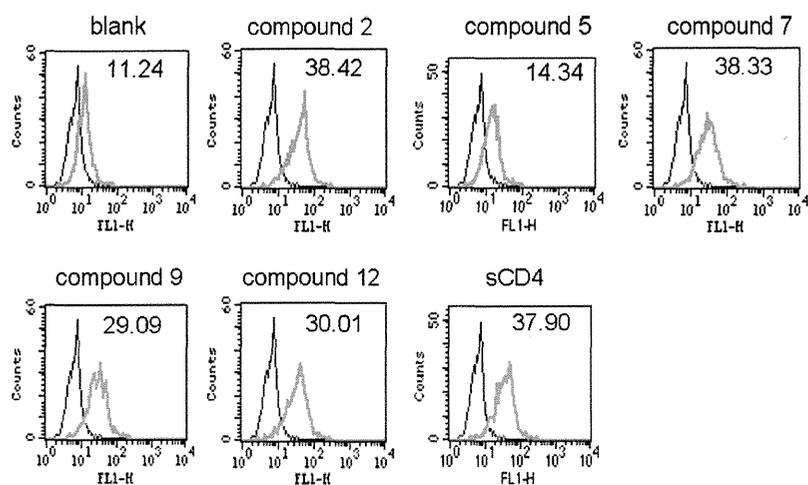


Figure 2. JR-FL (R5, Sub B) chronically infected PM1 cells were preincubated with 100 μ M of a CD4 mimic or sCD4 (11 nM) for 15 min, and then incubated with an anti-HIV-1 mAb, 4C11, at 4 $^{\circ}$ C for 15 min. The cells were washed with PBS, and fluorescein isothiocyanate (FITC)-conjugated goat anti-human IgG antibody was used for antibody-staining. Flow cytometry data for the binding of 4C11 (green lines) to the Env-expressing cell surface in the presence of sCD4 or a CD4 mimic are shown among gated PM1 cells along with a control antibody (anti-human CD19; black lines). Data are representative of the results from a minimum of two independent experiments. The number at the top of each graph shows the mean fluorescence intensity (MFI) of the antibody 4C11.

Table 2

Combination indices (CI) for compound **2** or sCD4 and a CXCR4 antagonist, T140, against an HIV IIIB strain

Combination	HIV strain	CI values at different IC ^a		
		IC ₅₀	IC ₇₅	IC ₉₀
2 + T140	IIIB	0.786	0.713	0.655
sCD4 + T140	IIIB	0.705	0.528	0.400

^a The multiple-drug effect analysis reported by Chou et al. was used to analyze the effects of combinational uses of compounds.¹⁸ CI <0.9: synergy, 0.9 < CI <1.1: additivity, CI >1.1: antagonism.

(Table 2).¹⁵ Compound **2** showed a highly remarkable synergistic anti-HIV activity with a co-receptor CXCR4 antagonist, T140,^{8a} against an X4-HIV-1 strain, IIIB at various IC values (IC₅₀, IC₇₅ and IC₉₀). However, sCD4 exhibited a higher synergistic effect (lower CI values) with T140 (Table 2). The interaction of sCD4 or a CD4 mimic with gp120 would expose the co-receptor-binding site of gp120, and the co-receptor CXCR4 could then easily approach gp120. Thus, an inhibitory effect of a CXCR4 antagonist would be meaningful, and a significant synergistic effect might also be brought about by a combination of sCD4 or a CD4 mimic and T140.

In summary, a series of CD4 mimic compounds were synthesized and evaluated for their anti-HIV activity. Several compounds showed significant anti-HIV activity with relatively low cytotoxicity. SAR studies showed that a certain level of size and electron-withdrawing ability of the substituents at the *p*-position of the phenyl ring are suitable for potent anti-HIV activity. In addition, the treatment of Env-expressing cells with several CD4 mimicking compounds causes a conformational change, exposing the co-receptor-binding site of gp120 externally. Thus, a CD4 mimic exhibited a remarkable synergistic effect with a co-receptor antagonist. These compounds are essential probes directed to the dynamic supramolecular mechanism of HIV entry, and important leads for the cocktail therapy of AIDS.

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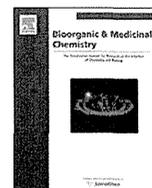
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- The structure of compound **2** was built in Sybyl and minimized with the MMFF94 force field and partial charges. (see: Halgren, T. A. *J. Comput. Chem.* **1996**, *17*, 490.) Docking was then performed using FlexSIS through its SYBYL

module, into the crystal structure of gp120 (PDB, entry 1RZJ). The binding site was defined as residues Val²⁵⁵, Asp³⁶⁸, Glu³⁷⁰, Ser³⁷⁵, Ile⁴²⁴, Trp⁴²⁷, Val⁴³⁰ and Val⁴⁷⁵, and included residues located within a radius 4.4 Å. The ligand was considered to be flexible, and all other options were set to their default values. Figures were generated with ViewerLite version 5.0 (Accelrys Inc., San Diego, CA).

12. For example, the synthesis of compound 7: To a solution of ethyl oxalyl chloride (0.400 mL, 3.48 mmol) in THF (20 mL) were added triethylamine (Et₃N) (0.480 mL, 3.48 mmol) and *p*-toluidine (373 mg, 3.48 mmol) with stirring at 0 °C. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature, and then stirred for 6 h. After removal by filtration of the resulting salts, the filtrate was concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was extracted with EtOAc (50 mL), and the extract was washed successively with brine (20 mL), 1 M HCl (20 mL × 2), brine (20 mL), saturated NaHCO₃ (20 mL × 2) and brine (20 mL × 3), then dried over MgSO₄. Concentration under reduced pressure gave the crude ethyl oxalamate, which was used without further purification. To a solution of the crude ethyl oxalamate (640 mg, 3.09 mmol) in THF (30 mL) were added aqueous 1 M NaOH (3.40 mL, 3.40 mmol), water (50 mL) and MeOH (20 mL) with stirring at 0 °C. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature, and then stirred for 20 h. After the addition of aqueous 1 M HCl (5 mL), MeOH and THF were evaporated under reduced pressure. The residue was acidified to pH 2 with 1 M HCl, and extracted with EtOAc (50 mL × 2). The combined organic layer was washed with brine (20 mL × 3), and dried over MgSO₄. Concentration under reduced pressure gave the crude acid, which was used for the next reaction without further purification. To a solution of the above crude acid (514 mg, 2.87 mmol) in THF (10 mL) were added 1-hydroxybenzotriazole (484 mg, 3.16 mmol), 4-amino-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine (446 μL, 2.58 mmol), 1-ethyl-3-(3-dimethylaminopropyl)carbodiimide hydrochloride (606 mg, 3.16 mmol) and Et₃N (0.439 mL, 3.16 mmol) with stirring at 0 °C. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature, and then stirred for 20 h. After evaporation of THF, the residue was dissolved in CHCl₃ (50 mL). The mixture was washed with saturated NaHCO₃ (20 mL × 2) and brine (20 mL × 3), and dried over MgSO₄. Concentration under reduced pressure gave the crude crystalline mass. The usual work-up followed by recrystallization from EtOAc–*n*-hexane gave the title compound 7 (363 mg, 1.14 mmol, 39.8%) as colorless crystals, mp = 176 °C; δ_H (400 MHz; CDCl₃) 1.07 (1H, m, NH), 1.16 (6H, s, CH₃), 1.29 (6H, s, CH₃), 1.44 (2H, m, CH₂), 1.91 (1H, d, *J* 3.7, CHH), 1.94 (1H, d, *J* 3.7, CHH), 2.34 (3H, s, CH₃), 4.25 (1H, m, CH), 7.17 (2H, d, *J* 8.3, ArH), 7.33 (1H, m, NH), 7.50 (2H, d, *J* 8.4, ArH), 9.18 (1H, s, NH); HRMS (FAB), *m/z* calcd for C₁₈H₂₈N₃O₂ (MH)⁺ 318.2182, found 318.2173.
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14. The synthesis of compound 12: To a solution of Et₃N (417 μL, 3.00 mmol) and 4-nitroaniline (138 mg, 1.00 mmol) in THF (1.3 mL) was added oxalyl dichloride (85.8 μL, 1.00 mmol) with stirring at 0 °C. After being stirred for 30 min at 0 °C, Et₃N (167 μL, 1.20 mmol) and 4-amino-2,2,6,6-tetramethylpiperidine (156 μL, 0.90 mmol) were added. The reaction mixture was stirred for 6 h at 0 °C. After removal by filtration of the resulting salts, the filtrate was concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was dissolved in CHCl₃ (20 mL), and the mixture was washed successively with brine (10 mL), saturated NaHCO₃ (10 mL × 2) and brine (10 mL × 3), and dried over MgSO₄. Concentration under reduced pressure followed by flash chromatography over silica gel with CHCl₃–MeOH (9:1) gave 42.4 mg (0.122 mmol, 13.5%) of the title compound 12 as colorless crystals, mp = 190 °C; δ_H (400 MHz; CDCl₃) 1.09 (1H, m, NH), 1.17 (6H, s, CH₃), 1.29 (6H, s, CH₃), 1.43 (2H, m, CH₂), 1.92 (1H, d, *J* 3.8, CHH), 1.95 (1H, d, *J* 3.8, CHH), 4.28 (1H, m, CH), 7.29 (1H, m, NH), 7.82 (2H, d, *J* 9.1, ArH), 8.28 (2H, d, *J* 9.1, ArH), 9.55 (1H, s, NH); HRMS (FAB), *m/z* calcd for C₁₇H₂₅N₄O₄ (MH)⁺ 349.1876, found 349.1871.
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Peptidic HIV integrase inhibitors derived from HIV gene products: Structure–activity relationship studies

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ABSTRACT

Structure–activity relationship studies were conducted on HIV integrase (IN) inhibitory peptides which were found by the screening of an overlapping peptide library derived from HIV-1 gene products. Since these peptides located in the second helix of Vpr are considered to have an α -helical conformation, Glu-Lys pairs were introduced into the *i* and *i* + 4 positions to increase the helicity of the lead compound possessing an octa-arginyl group. Ala-scan was also performed on the lead compound for the identification of the amino acid residues responsible for the inhibitory activity. The results indicated the importance of an α -helical structure for the expression of inhibitory activity, and presented a binding model of integrase and the lead compound.

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1. Introduction

Highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART), which involves a combination of two or three agents from two categories, reverse transcriptase inhibitors and protease inhibitors, has brought us remarkable success in the clinical treatment of HIV-infected and AIDS patients.¹ However, it has been accompanied by serious clinical problems including the emergence of viral strains with multi-drug resistance (MDR), considerable adverse effects and nonetheless high costs. As a result, new categories of anti-HIV agents operating with mechanisms of action different from those of the above inhibitors are sought. HIV-1 integrase (IN) is a critical enzyme for the stable infection of host cells since it catalyzes the insertion of viral DNA into the genome of host cells, by means of strand transfer and 3'-end processing reactions and thus it is an attractive target for the development of anti-HIV agents. Recently, the first IN inhibitor, raltegravir (Merck),² has appeared in a clinical setting. It is assumed that the activity of IN must be negatively regulated during the translocation of the viral DNA from the cytoplasm to the nucleus to prevent auto-integration. The virus, as well as the host cells, must encode mechanism(s) to prevent auto-integration since

the regulation of IN activity is critical for the virus to infect cells.³ By screening a library of overlapping peptides derived from HIV-1 SF2 gene products we have found three Vpr-derived peptides, **1**, **2** and **3**, which possess significant IN inhibitory activity, indicating that IN inhibitors exist in the viral pre-integration complex (PIC).⁴ The above inhibitory peptides, **1**, **2** and **3**, are consecutive overlapping peptides (Fig. 1). Compounds **4** and **5** are 12- and 18-mers from the original Vpr-sequence with the addition of an octa-arginyl group⁵ into the C-terminus for cell membrane permeability, respectively. Compounds **4** and **5** have IN inhibitory activity and anti-HIV activity. Here, we report structure–activity relationship studies on these lead compounds for the development of more potent IN inhibitors.

2. Results and discussion

To determine which lead compound is most suitable for further experiments, five peptides **6–10**, which were elongated by one amino acid starting with compound **4** and extended ultimately to **5**, were synthesized (Fig. 2). Judging by the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions *in vitro*,⁶ these peptides **4–10** had similar inhibitory potencies (Table 1). As a result, we concluded that 12 amino acid residues derived from the original Vpr-sequence are of sufficient for IN inhibitory activity, and any peptide among **4–10** is a suitable lead.

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- 1 AGVEAIIRILQQLLF
 2 IIRILQQLLFIHFRI
 3 LQQLLFIHFRIQCQH
 4 Ac-LQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 5 Ac-EAIIRILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂

Figure 1. Amino acid sequences of compounds 1–5. Compounds 1–3 are consecutive overlapping peptides with free N-/C-terminus. These were found by the IN inhibitory screening of a peptide library derived from HIV-1 gene products. Compounds 4 and 5 are cell penetrative leads of IN inhibitors.

- 4 Ac-LQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 6 Ac-ILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 7 Ac-RILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 8 Ac-IRILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 9 Ac-IIRILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 10 Ac-AIIRILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 5 Ac-EAIIRILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂

Figure 2. Amino acid sequences of compounds 6–10, which are elongated by one amino acid from compound 4 to 5.

Table 1

IC₅₀ values of compounds 4–10 toward the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions catalyzed by HIV-1 IN

Compound	IC ₅₀ (μM)	
	3'-End processing	Strand transfer
4	0.13 ± 0.02	0.06 ± 0.01
5	0.09 ± 0.01	0.04 ± 0.01
6	0.10 ± 0.01	0.07 ± 0.01
7	0.13 ± 0.02	0.11 ± 0.01
8	0.26 ± 0.04	0.11 ± 0.03
9	0.11 ± 0.01	0.07 ± 0.01
10	0.08 ± 0.01	0.05 ± 0.01

Structural analysis showed that the Vpr-derived peptides, 1, 2 and 3, are located in the second helix of Vpr and were thus considered to have an α-helical conformation.⁷ Compound 5 was adopted as a lead for the development of compounds with an increase in α-helicity since a longer peptide is likely to form a more stable α-helical structure than a shorter one. Initially, Glu (E) and Lys (K) were introduced in pairs into compound 5 at the *i* and *i* + 4 positions. In general, such disposition of Glu-Lys pairs at *i* and *i* + 4 positions is considered to cause an increase in α-helicity due to formation of an ionic interaction of a β-carboxy group of Glu and an ε-amino group of Lys. Several analogs of 5 with Glu-Lys pairs were synthesized by Fmoc-solid phase peptide synthesis (Fig. 3). In the inhibitory assay against the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions catalyzed by HIV-1 IN in vitro, compounds 11 and 15 showed more potent inhibitory activities than 5 (Table 2). Substitution of Glu-Lys for His¹⁴-Gly¹⁸ or Ile³-Leu⁷ caused no decrease in IN inhibitory activity but a significant increase in activity, suggesting that Ile³, Leu⁷, His¹⁴ and Gly¹⁸ are not indispensable for activity. Substitution of Glu-Lys for Ala²-Ile⁶ or Gln⁹-Ile¹³ caused a slight decrease in IN inhibitory activity against the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions (compounds 12 and 13), indicating that Ala² and/or Ile⁶, and Gln⁹ and/or Ile¹³ are partly required for activity. Substitution of Glu-Lys for Ile⁴-Gln⁸ caused a 2–4-fold decrease in IN inhibitory activity against the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions (compound 14), showing that Ile⁴ and/or Gln⁸ are essential for activity. Substitution of Glu-Lys for Leu¹¹-Phe¹⁵ caused an eightfold decrease in IN inhibitory activity against the 3'-end processing reaction and a 1.5-fold decrease in IN inhibitory activity against the

- 1 5 10 15
 5 Ac-EAIIRILQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 11 Ac-EAIIRILQQLLFIHFRIK-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 12 Ac-EEIIRKLQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 13 Ac-EAIIRILQQLLFIHFRIK-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 14 Ac-EAIIRILQQLLFIHFRIK-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 15 Ac-EAEIRIKQQLLFIHFRIQ-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 16 Ac-EAIIRILQQLLFIHFRIK-RRRRRRRR-NH₂
 17 Ac-EEIIRKLQQLLFIHFRIK-RRRRRRRR-NH₂

Figure 3. Amino acid sequences of compounds 11–17, into which Glu-Lys pairs have been introduced.

Table 2

IC₅₀ values of compounds 5 and 11–17 toward the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions catalyzed by HIV-1 IN

Compound	IC ₅₀ (μM)	
	3'-End processing	Strand transfer
5	0.09 ± 0.01	0.04 ± 0.01
11	0.05 ± 0.01	0.01 ± 0.001
12	0.12 ± 0.01	0.047 ± 0.01
13	0.14 ± 0.02	0.065 ± 0.01
14	0.23 ± 0.03	0.15 ± 0.002
15	0.04 ± 0.01	0.031 ± 0.01
16	0.71 ± 0.21	0.06 ± 0.004
17	0.18 ± 0.06	0.08 ± 0.02

strand transfer reaction (compound 16), indicating that Leu¹¹ and/or Phe¹⁵ are indispensable for activity, especially for inhibition against 3'-end processing. Compound 17 has two substitutions of Glu-Lys for His¹⁴-Gly¹⁸ and for Ala²-Ile⁶, which are common to compounds 11 and 12, respectively. A twofold decrease in both IN inhibitory activities of compound 17 is mostly due to the substitution for Ala²-Ile⁶ common to 12, although 17 is slightly less active than 12 in both IN inhibitory assays.

Anti-HIV activity of these compounds was assessed by an MT-4 Luc system, in which MT-4 cells were stably transduced with the firefly luciferase expression cassette by a murine leukemia viral vector. MT-4 Luc cells constitutively express high levels of luciferase. HIV-1 infection significantly reduces luciferase expression due to the high susceptibility of MT-4 cells to HIV-1 infection. Protection of MT-4 Luc cells from HIV-1-induced cell death maintains the luciferase signals at high levels. In addition, the cytotoxicity of test compounds can be evaluated by a decrease of luciferase signals in these MT-4 Luc systems. The parent compound 5 showed significant anti-HIV activity at concentrations above 1.25 μM, as reported previously (Fig. 4).⁴ Compound 15 showed a significant inhibitory effect against HIV-1 replication, and is thus comparable to compound 5. Compounds 11, 14 and 16 also displayed weak antiviral effects at concentrations of 2.5 and 5.0 μM and compounds 12, 13 and 17 failed to show any significant anti-HIV activity. These results suggest that there is a positive correlation between IN inhibitory activity and anti-HIV activity of the compounds. None of these compounds showed significant cytotoxic effects at concentrations below 5.0 μM.

The structures of compounds 5 and 11–17 were assessed by CD spectroscopy. Because the aqueous solubility of these peptides is not high the peptides were dissolved in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, containing 50% MeOH at pH 5.6. The CD spectra suggest that the parent compound 5, which has no Glu-Lys pair, forms a typical α-helical structure, and the other compounds, with the exception of 11 and 15, form α-helical structures similarly (Fig. 5). The order of strength of α-helicity is 12, 16 > 14 > 17 > 5 > 13. Compounds 11 and 15 have no characteristic pattern, although IN inhibitory activities of both compounds are superior to that of the parent

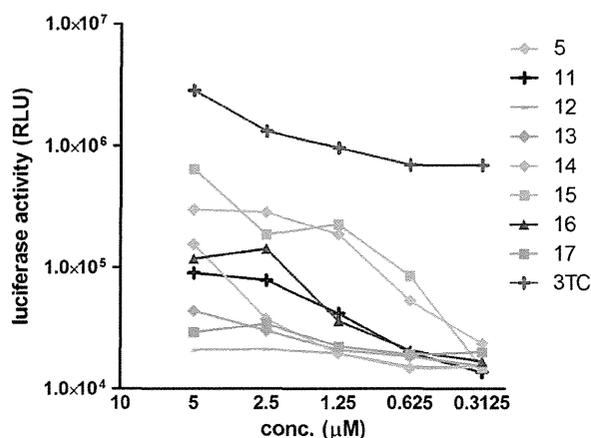


Figure 4. Luciferase signals in MT-4 Luc cells infected with HIV-1 in the presence of different concentrations of compounds **11–17**. Luciferase activity is expressed as relative luciferase units (RLU). 3TC is an HIV reverse transcriptase inhibitor, which was used as a positive control.

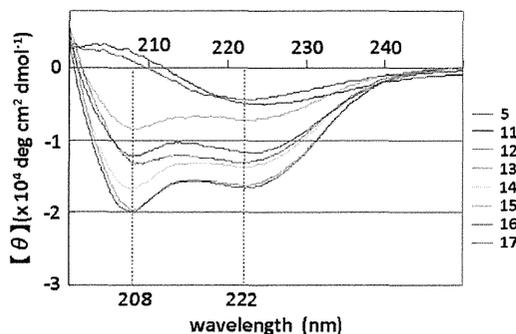


Figure 5. CD spectra of compounds **5** and **11–17** (5 μM) in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 5.6 containing 50% MeOH at 25 °C.

compound **5**. Replacement of His¹⁴-Gly¹⁸ and Ile³-Leu⁷ by Glu-Lys in compounds **11** and **15**, respectively, caused a significant decrease in α -helicity, possibly due to formation of unfavorable salt bridges such as Glu¹⁴-Arg¹⁶ and Glu³-Arg⁵. Introduction of a Glu-Lys pair into Gln⁹-Ile¹³ in compound **13** caused a slight decrease in α -helicity, possibly due to interference in the formation of a salt bridge of Glu¹-Arg⁵ by that of Arg⁵-Glu⁹. In the other analogs, increases in α -helicity were observed to result from the introduction of Glu-Lys pairs as we had initially postulated. Overall, there is no positive correlation between IN inhibitory or anti-HIV activity and the degree of α -helicity of the compounds.

In order to identify the amino acid residues responsible for IN inhibitory and anti-HIV activities of these peptides, an Ala-scan of compound **4** was performed (Fig. 6). Compounds **18–22**, **25**, **27** and **29** showed IN inhibitory activities against the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions similar to those of **4** (Table 3). Ala-substitution for Leu⁷, Gln⁸, Gln⁹, Leu¹⁰, Leu¹¹, His¹⁴, Arg¹⁶ or Gly¹⁸ did not cause any significant change in either of IN inhibitory activities, indicating that the replaced amino acids are not essential for IN inhibition. Ala-substitution for Phe¹², Ile¹³, Phe¹⁵ or Ile¹⁷ gave compounds **23**, **24**, **26** and **28**, which were 2–4 times less active in both the IN inhibitory assays, suggesting that Phe¹², Ile¹³, Phe¹⁵ and Ile¹⁷ are indispensable for IN inhibition. Assessment of anti-HIV activity in the MT-4 Luc system showed that all compounds **18–29** produced dose-dependent inhibition of HIV-1 replication, although they displayed cytotoxicity at 10 μM (**4**, **19–23**, **26** and **27**) or above 5 μM (**24** and **25**) (Fig. 7). Compounds **23** and **24**,

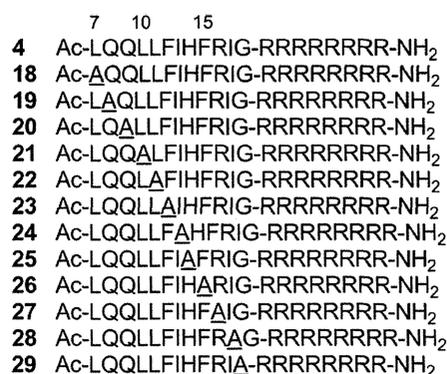


Figure 6. Amino acid sequences of compounds **18–29** based on an Ala-scan of compound **4**. Position numbers correspond to alignment with compound **5**.

Table 3

IC₅₀ values of compounds **18–29** toward the 3'-end processing and strand transfer reactions catalyzed by HIV-1 IN

Compound	IC ₅₀ (μM)	
	3'-End processing	Strand transfer
4	0.11 ± 0.03	0.05 ± 0.01
18	0.12 ± 0.004	0.08 ± 0.01
19	0.13 ± 0.02	0.06 ± 0.01
20	0.10 ± 0.004	0.06 ± 0.01
21	0.12 ± 0.02	0.07 ± 0.01
22	0.13 ± 0.003	0.06 ± 0.01
23	0.34 ± 0.06	0.18 ± 0.03
24	0.33 ± 0.02	0.22 ± 0.01
25	0.13 ± 0.01	0.06 ± 0.01
26	0.25 ± 0.02	0.12 ± 0.01
27	0.11 ± 0.01	0.05 ± 0.01
28	0.20 ± 0.03	0.16 ± 0.02
29	0.09 ± 0.01	0.09 ± 0.01

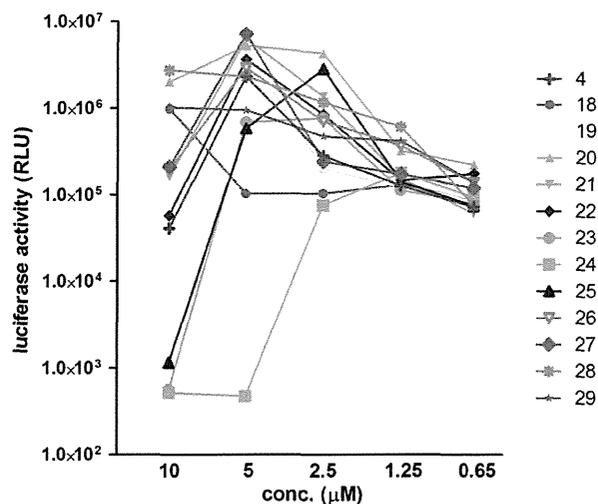


Figure 7. Luciferase signals in MT-4 Luc cells infected with HIV-1 in the presence of various concentrations of compounds **18–29**. Luciferase activity was valued as RLU.

with Ala-substitution for Phe¹² and Ile¹³, respectively, showed weaker inhibitory activity than **4** at 5 μM. Consequently, Phe¹² and Ile¹³ were deemed to be critical for activity, which is consistent with the IN inhibitory activity results. A control peptide isomer of **5** (Ac-QIFEHLAQIQLRFLRI-R₈-NH₂) did not show anti-HIV activity at

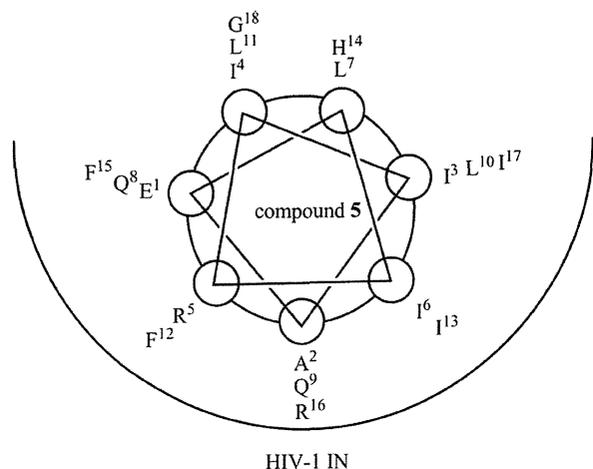


Figure 8. Brief presumed drawing of the binding model of HIV-1 IN and compound 5.

concentrations below 10 μM , suggesting that the original Vpr-sequence, with the exceptions of Phe¹², Ile¹³, Phe¹⁵ and Ile¹⁷, is critical for activity.

The assumption that compound **5** forms an α -helical structure when binding to HIV-1 IN suggests the binding model of IN and **5** shown in Figure 8, as **5** forms an α -helical structure in 50% aqueous MeOH solution. In this model, Phe¹², Ile¹³, Phe¹⁵ and Ile¹⁷, which were identified by the Ala-scan experiment as critical residues, are located in the pocket of IN. His¹⁴ and Gly¹⁸, which can be replaced by Glu-Lys with an increase of activity in compound **11**, are located outside of the pocket of IN. Ile³ and Leu⁷ can also be replaced by Glu-Lys while retaining activity in compound **15**, and Leu⁷ is located outside of the pocket, whereas Ile³ is located in the edge of the pocket. Compounds **11** and **15** might form α -helical structures when binding to IN, although **11** or **15** does not show α -helicity in the CD spectrum. Thus, these compounds might retain IN inhibitory activity. This binding model is compatible with the results of structure–activity relationship studies involving Glu-Lys substitution and Ala-scan. The reason for decreases in IN inhibitory and anti-HIV activity of compounds **12** and **17**, which show increases of α -helicity, are possibly due to substitution of Glu-Lys for Ala² and Ile⁶, which are located in the pocket of IN. The reason for a decrease in activity of compounds **14** and **16**, which show increased α -helicity, might be due to substitution of Lys for Gln⁸ and Phe¹⁵, respectively, which are located in the pocket of IN. The reason for decreases in IN inhibitory and anti-HIV activity of compound **13**, which also shows a decrease of α -helicity, are possibly due to substitution of Glu-Lys for Gln⁹ and Ile¹³, which are located in the pocket of IN.

3. Conclusion

In the present study, structure–activity relationship studies were performed on Vpr-derived peptides **4** and **5**, which had been previously identified as HIV-1 IN inhibitors.⁴ The Glu-Lys substitution experiments and Ala-scan data suggest that several amino acid residues of **4** and **5** are indispensable for IN inhibitory and anti-HIV activities, and a binding model of IN and **5** were proposed. Furthermore, two novel compounds **11** and **15**, which contained Glu-Lys pairs and showed more potent IN inhibitory activities than compound **5**, were found. These data including the binding model should be useful for the development of potent HIV-1 IN inhibitors based on Vpr-peptides.

4. Experimental

4.1. Chemistry

All peptides were synthesized by the Fmoc-based solid-phase method. The synthetic peptides were purified by RP-HPLC and identified by ESI-TOF-MS. Fmoc-protected amino acids and reagents for peptide synthesis were purchased from Novabiochem, Kokusan Chemical Co., Ltd and Watanabe Chemical Industries, Ltd. Protected peptide resins were constructed on NovaSyn TGR resins (0.26 meq/g, 0.025 and 0.0125 mmol scales for Glu-Lys substitution and Ala-scan peptides, respectively). All peptides were synthesized by stepwise elongation techniques. Each cycle involves (i) deprotection of an Fmoc group with 20% (v/v) piperidine/DMF (10 mL) for 15 min and (ii) coupling with 5.0 equiv of Fmoc-protected amino acid, 5.0 equiv of diisopropylcarbodiimide (DIPCI) and 5.0 equiv of 1-hydroxybenzotriazole monohydrate (HOBt·H₂O) in DMF (3 mL) for 90 min. N-Terminal α -amino groups of Glu-Lys substitution and Ala-scan peptides were acetylated with 100 equiv of acetic anhydride in DMF (10 mL). Cleavage from the resin and side chain deprotection were carried out by stirring for 1.5 h with *m*-cresol (0.25 mL), thioanisole (0.75 mL), 1,2-ethanedithiol (0.75 mL) and TFA (8.25 mL). After removal of the resins by filtration, the filtrate was concentrated under reduced pressure, the crude peptides were precipitated in cooled diethyl ether and purified by preparative RP-HPLC on a Cosmosil 5C18-AR II column (10 \times 250 mm, Nacalai Tesque, Inc.) with a LaChrom Elite HTA system (Hitachi). The HPLC solvents employed were water containing 0.1% TFA (solvent A) and acetonitrile containing 0.1% TFA (solvent B). All peptides were purified using a linear gradient of solvents A and B over 30 min at a flow rate of 3 cm³ min⁻¹. The purified peptides were identified by ESI-TOF-MS (Bruker Daltonics micrOTOF-2focus) (shown in Table S1 in Supplementary data). All peptides were obtained after lyophilization as fluffy white powders of the TFA salts. The purities of these peptides were checked by analytical HPLC on a Cosmosil 5C18-ARII column (4.6 \times 250 mm, Nacalai Tesque, Inc.) eluted with a linear gradient of solvents A and B at a flow rate of 1 cm³ min⁻¹, and eluted products were detected by UV at 220 nm (shown in Figs. S1–S3 in Supplementary data).

4.2. Expression and purification of F185K/C280S HIV-1 integrase from *Escherichia coli*

Plasmid encoding IN1–288/F185K/C280S was expressed in *Escherichia coli* strain C41. The solubility of the mutant protein was examined in a crude cell lysate, as follows. Cells were grown in 1 L of culture medium containing 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ of ampicillin at 37 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ until the optical density of the culture at 600 nm was between 0.4 and 0.9. Protein expression was induced by the addition of isopropyl-1-thio- β -D-galactopyranoside to a final concentration of 0.1 mM. After 2 h, the cells were collected by centrifugation at 6000 rpm for 30 min. After removal of the supernatant, the cells were resuspended in HED buffer (20 mM HEPES, pH 7.5, 1 mM EDTA, 1 mM DTT) with 0.5 mg/mL lysozyme and stored on ice for 30 min. The cells were sonicated until the solution exhibited minimal viscosity then it was centrifuged at 15,000 rpm for 30 min. After removal of the supernatant, the pellet was dissolved in TNM buffer (20 mM Tris/HCl, pH 8.0, 1 M NaCl, 2 mM 2-mercaptoethanol) with 5 mM imidazole and stored on ice for 30 min. The cells were then centrifuged at 15,000 rpm for 30 min and the supernatant was collected. The supernatant was then filtered through 0.45 μm filter cartridge and applied to a HisTrap column at 1 mL/min flow rate. After loading, the column was washed with 10 volume of TNM buffer with 5 mM imidazole. Protein was eluted with a linear gradient of 500 mM imidazole, containing TNM buf-

fer. Fractions containing IN were pooled and checked with SDS-PAGE.

4.3. CD spectroscopy of peptides with Glu-Lys substitution

CD measurements were performed on a JASCO J720 spectropolarimeter equipped with thermo-regulator (JASCO Corp., Ltd), using 5 μ M of peptides dissolved in 0.1 M phosphate buffer, pH 5.6 containing 50% MeOH. UV spectra were recorded at 25 °C in a quartz cell 1.0 mm path length, a time constant of 1 s, and a 100 nm/min scanning speed with 0.1 nm resolution.

4.4. Integrase assays

Expression and purification of the recombinant IN in *E. coli* were performed as previously reported with addition of 10% glycerol to all buffers. Oligonucleotide substrates were prepared as described.⁶ Integrase reactions were performed in 10 μ L with 400 nM of recombinant IN, 20 nM of 5'-end [³²P]-labeled oligonucleotide substrate and inhibitors at various concentrations. Solutions of 10% DMSO without inhibitors were used as controls. Reaction mixtures were incubated at 37 °C (60 min) in buffer containing 50 mM MOPS, pH 7.2, 7.5 mM MgCl₂, and 14.3 mM 2-mercaptoethanol. Reactions were stopped by addition of 10 μ L of loading dye (10 mM EDTA, 98% deionized formamide, 0.025% xylene cyanol and 0.025% bromophenol blue). Reactions were then subjected to electrophoresis in 20% polyacrylamide–7 M urea gels. Gels were dried and reaction products were visualized and quantitated with a Typhoon 8600 (GE Healthcare, Little Chalfont, Buckinghamshire, UK). Densitometric analyses were performed using ImageQuant from Molecular Dynamics Inc. The concentrations at which enzyme activity was reduced by 50% (IC₅₀) were determined using 'Prism' software (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA) for nonlinear regression to fit dose–response data to logistic curve models.

4.5. Replication assays (MT-4 luciferase assays)

MT-4 luciferase cells (1×10^3 cells) grown in 96-well plates were infected with HIV-1_{HXB2} in the presence of various concentrations of peptides. At 6–7 days post-infection, cells were lysed and the luciferase activities were measured using the Steady-Glo assay kit (Promega), according to the manufacturer's protocol. Chemiluminescence was detected with a Veritas luminometer (Promega).

Acknowledgments

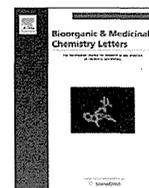
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Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:10.1016/j.bmc.2010.07.050.

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CD4 mimics targeting the HIV entry mechanism and their hybrid molecules with a CXCR4 antagonist

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ABSTRACT

Small molecules behaving as CD4 mimics were previously reported as HIV-1 entry inhibitors that block the gp120–CD4 interaction and induce a conformational change in gp120, exposing its co-receptor-binding site. A structure–activity relationship (SAR) study of a series of CD4 mimic analogs was conducted to investigate the contribution from the piperidine moiety of CD4 mimic **1** to anti-HIV activity, cytotoxicity, and CD4 mimicry effects on conformational changes of gp120. In addition, several hybrid molecules based on conjugation of a CD4 mimic analog with a selective CXCR4 antagonist were also synthesized and their utility evaluated.

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The infection of host cells by HIV-1 takes place in multiple steps via a dynamic supramolecular mechanism mediated by two viral envelope glycoproteins (gp41, gp120) and several cell surface proteins (CD4, CCR5/CXCR4).¹ Cell penetration begins with the interaction of gp120 with the primary receptor CD4. This induces conformational changes in gp120, leading to the exposure of its V3 loop allowing the subsequent binding of gp120 to a co-receptor, CCR5² or CXCR4.³

N-(4-Chlorophenyl)-*N'*-(2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-piperidin-4-yl)oxalamide (NBD-556: **1**) and the related compounds NBD-557 (**2**) and YYA-021 (**3**) have been identified as a novel class of HIV-1 entry inhibitors, which exert potent cell fusion and virus cell fusion inhibitory activity at low micromolar levels (Fig. 1).⁴ Furthermore, compound **1** can also induce thermodynamically favored conformational changes in gp120 similar to those caused by CD4 binding. The X-ray crystal structure of gp120 complexed with CD4 revealed the presence of a hydrophobic cavity, the Phe43 cavity, which is penetrated by the aromatic ring of Phe⁴³ of CD4.⁵ Molecular modeling revealed that compound **1** is also inserted into the Phe43 cavity, the *para*-chlorophenyl group of **1** entering more deeply than the phenyl ring of Phe⁴³ of CD4 and interacting with the conserved gp120 residues such as Trp⁴²⁷, Phe³⁸², and Trp¹¹².^{4c} The modeling also suggested that an oxalamide linker forms hydrogen bonds with carbonyl groups of the gp120 backbone peptide bonds. Our model of **1** docked into gp120 revealed that eight other gp120

residues, Val²⁵⁵, Asp³⁶⁸, Glu³⁷⁰, Ser³⁷⁵, Ile⁴²⁴, Trp⁴²⁷, Val⁴³⁰, and Val⁴⁷⁵ are located within a 4.4 Å-radius of **1** and that a large cavity exists around the *p*-position of the aromatic ring of **1**.^{4e} Based on these observations, we conducted a structure–activity relationship (SAR) study of a series of analogs of CD4 mimics with substituents at the *p*-position of the aromatic ring. This study revealed that a certain size and electron-withdrawing ability of the substituents are indispensable for potent anti-HIV activity.^{4e}

Although several reported SAR studies of **1** have revealed the contributions of the phenyl ring and the oxalamide linker of **1** to the binding affinity with gp120, the anti-HIV activity and the CD4 mimicry on conformational changes of gp120,⁴ there has been, to the best of our knowledge, no prior report describing SAR studies of the piperidine ring of **1**. In this paper, the contributions of the piperidine ring of **1** to the anti-HIV activity, CD4 mimicry and cytotoxicity were investigated through the SAR studies focused on the piperidine ring of **1**. Furthermore, to apply the utility of CD4 mimics to the development of potent anti-HIV agents, a series of the

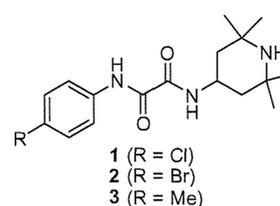


Figure 1. NBD-556 (**1**) and related compounds.

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