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- 1. 特許取得

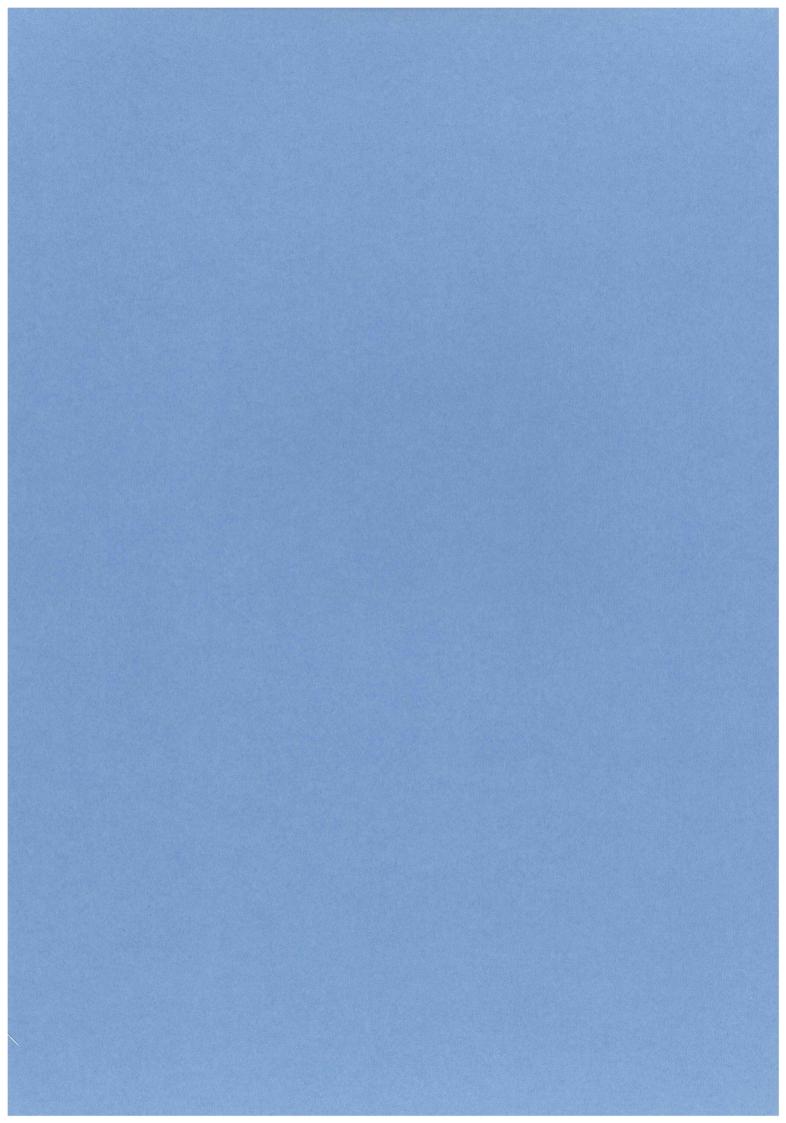
なし

2. 実用新案登録

なし

3.その他

なし



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厚生労働科学研究費補助金

難治性疾患等克服研究事業

網膜色素変性治療をめざした経強膜ウノプロストン 徐放法の開発に関する研究

平成24-26年度 総合研究報告書

研究代表者 阿部 俊明

平成27(2015)年 5月

研究成果の刊行に関する一覧表 (阿部 俊明)

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Transscleral Sustained Vasohibin-1 Delivery by a Novel Device Suppressed Experimentally-Induced Choroidal Neovascularization

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Abstract

We established a sustained vasohibin-1 (a 42-kDa protein), delivery device by a novel method using photopolymerization of a mixture of polyethylene glycol dimethacrylate, triethylene glycol dimethacrylate, and collagen microparticles. We evaluated its effects in a model of rat laser-induced choroidal neovascularization (CNV) using a transscleral approach. We used variable concentrations of vasohibin-1 in the devices, and used an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay and Western blotting to measure the released vasohibin-1 (0.31 nM/day when using the 10 µM vasohibin-1 delivery device [10VDD]). The released vasohibin-1 showed suppression activity comparable to native effects when evaluated using endothelial tube formation. We also used pelletized vasohibin-1 and fluorescein isothiocyanate-labeled 40 kDa dextran as controls. Strong fluorescein staining was observed on the sclera when the device was used for drug delivery, whereas pellet use produced strong staining in the conjunctiva and surrounding tissue, but not on the sclera. Vasohibin-1 was found in the sclera, choroid, retinal pigment epithelium (RPE), and neural retina after device implantation. Stronger immunoreactivity at the RPE and ganglion cell layers was observed than in other retinal regions. Significantly lower fluorescein angiography (FA) scores and smaller CNV areas in the flat mounts of RPE-choroid-sclera were observed for the 10VDD, VDD (1 µM vasohibin-1 delivery device), and vasohibin-1 intravitreal direct injection (0.24 µM) groups when compared to the pellet, non-vasohibin-1 delivery device, and intravitreal vehicle injection groups. Choroidal neovascularization can be treated with transscleral sustained protein delivery using our novel device. We offer a safer sustained protein release for treatment of retinal disease using the transscleral approach.

Citation: Onami H, Nagai N, Kaji H, Nishizawa M, Sato Y, et al. (2013) Transscleral Sustained Vasohibin-1 Delivery by a Novel Device Suppressed Experimentally-Induced Choroidal Neovascularization. PLoS ONE 8(3): e58580. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0058580

Editor: Olaf Strauß, Eye Hospital, Charité, Germany

Received August 11, 2012; Accepted February 6, 2013; Published March 5, 2013

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Funding: This work was supported in part by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (No. 21592214) and Young Scientists (A) (No. 23680054) from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, Health Labour Sciences Research Grant from the Ministry of Health Labour and Welfare (No. H23-iryokiki-wakate-003, H23-kankaku-ippan-004, H24-nanchitoh-ippan-067), the Suzuken Memorial Foundation, and the Ichiro Kanehara Foundation. The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

Competing Interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Introduction

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is a well-known sight-threatening disease in developed countries [1]. Although many treatment regimens have been used to treat AMD [2–6], intravitreal injection of anti-vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) produced lesion improvement and better visual acuity in some patients [7,8]. However, intra-vitreal injection of anti-VEGF also produced irritation, infection, and other adverse side effects [9]. Further, that treatment required repeated injections, usually occurring once a month [7,8]. Thus, other types of drugs or drug delivery systems (DDSs) need to be developed to treat AMD.

Eye drops and systemic drug administration are unsuitable for retinal diseases if the physician is looking for effective drug penetration into the eye, especially for macular diseases such as AMD [10,11]. Although drug delivery device implantation into the vitreous showed effective delivery of drug to the retina, these treatments may cause severe side effects, such as infection, vitreous hemorrhage, or retinal detachment [12–14]. Drug delivery using viral vectors has been attempted for treatment of devastating retinal diseases [15]; however, this method may induce immune cell or humoral responses [16,17].

Subconjunctival drug delivery is less invasive than intravitreal drug injection and can deliver more drug than seen with eye drops or systemic administration [10,11]. There are published data investigating clinical use of subconjunctival drug administration [18,19]. Thus, the subconjunctival route may be an attractive method for drug delivery to the retina. The major difficulties with subconjunctival DDS are uncontrollable release of the target drug [20], as well as an unknown drug delivery route and mechanism to

reach the retina [20,21]. Sustained release, with no drug bolus effect, would be required to reduce side effects [22,23].

We previously reported our results of the use of a novel drug delivery device placed on the sclera that we thought would be an effective tool in treating retinal diseases [24]. The device consisted of a drug-releasing semi-permeable membrane and impermeable membranes acting as the drug reservoir. Because of the non-biodegradable and one-way release nature of the device, we could achieve sustained release of the drug to the retina. We examined the effects of this device using a laser-induced choroidal neovascularization (CNV) model in rats.

Anti-VEGF antibody is a well-known treatment agent in CNV therapy, but suppression of VEGF function may induce many harmful effects in physiological function [25]. We selected vasohibin-1 for the loading drug in the device in this study because of its well-known anti-angiogenic activity [26,27]. Vasohibin-1 is a 42-kDa polypeptide, a VEGF-inducible molecule expressed by cultured human endothelial cells (ECs) [26]. Vasohibin-1 inhibits the formation of EC networks in vitro, corneal neovascularization in vitro [26], retinal neovascularization in a mouse model of oxygen-induced ischemic retinopathy [27], and laser-induced mouse [25] and monkey CNV [28]. Each of the in vivo studies treated the tissue by direct intravitreal injection of vasohibin-1.

Here we shall show that continuous trans-scleral vasohibin-l delivery by the device can suppress laser-induced CNV in rat eyes (Fig. 1A) as well as that by intravitreal injection. This technique and device may hold promise for safer and more effective treatment of patients with AMD.

Methods

Vasohibin-1 and Device Preparation

Vasohibin-1 was purified as reported previously [25]. For the preparation of the vasohibin-1 formulation, an 80- μ L volume of vasohibin-1 (either 1.25 or 12.5 μ M) in vehicle (phosphate buffered saline [PBS] control) was mixed with 20 μ L of polyethylene glycol dimethacrylate (PEGDM), then underwent UV curing at an intensity of 11.5 mJ/cm² (Lightningcure LCS; Hamamatsu Photonics, Hamamatsu City, Japan) for 3 minutes.

The devices consisted of a semi-permeable drug-releasing membrane and an impermeable reservoir (Fig. 1A, 1B), as we reported previously [24]. The loaded vasohibin-1 doses included vehicle only (identified as NVDD), 1 µM vasohibin-1 (VDD), and 10 μM vasohibin-1 (10VDD), with a total volume of 1.5 μL in each device. The size of the device was 2 mm×2 mm wide ×1 mm high (drug-releasing surface area; 1.5 mm×1.5 mm $= 2.25 \text{ mm}^2$) for the rat experiments (Fig. 1B, device) and 4 mm×4 mm×1.5 mm (drug-releasing surface 3.5 mm \times 3.5 mm = 12.25 mm²) for the vasohibin-1 releasing in vitro assay. The release amount from the transplanted device was small and it was very difficult to detect released vasohibin-1 by the standard ELISA technique, so we decided to use a larger device for the ELISA procedure. As a control, we used pelletized vasohibin-l without the reservoir and permeable membrane (Fig. 1B, pellet). The concentration of pelletized vasohibin-1 was adjusted to be the same concentration as that of the 10VDD (10 µM vasohibin-1). The total amount of vasohibin-1 released from the 10VDD device during the 2-week in vivo experiment was aimed to be equivalent to that of the intravitreal vasohibin-1 injection. A FITC-labeled 40 kDa dextran-loaded device (FD40DD) was also used for monitoring the position of the implanted device.

In Vitro Experiments

I In Vitro Release Assay, Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay, and Western Blotting. The devices loaded with vasohibin-1 were placed in the wells of a 24-well culture plate filled with 200 μL PBS at 37°C. Aliquots (200 μL) of the buffer in each well were collected at Days 1, 7, 14, and 28 during changeout of old buffer for new buffer solution. The collected samples were considered to include only protein for vasohibin-1. We then determined the amount of vasohibin-1 in the buffer using an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) [29] and western blotting [30]. The intensity of the color of the ELISA reaction products was measured with a microplate reader (MAXline; Molecular Devices Corporation, Sunnyvale, CA, USA). The measurements were made in duplicate, and the mean value was used for comparisons. The 50-µL collected samples and 100 fmol of recombinant vasohibin-1 (positive control) were loaded, separated by sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) on a 10% separating gel, and transferred to nitrocellulose membranes for western blotting. The membranes were blocked for 1 hour at room temperature with 5% ECL blocking agent (GE Healthcare Biosciences, Pittsburgh, PA, USA), and then incubated overnight at 4°C in PBS containing 0.05% Tween 20 (T-PBS), 2.5% skim milk, and 1 µg/mL horseradish peroxidase-conjugated anti-vasohibin-1 monoclonal antibody. The membrane filters were washed 3 times with T-TBS and the blots were detected using an enhanced chemiluminescence method (ECL Western Blotting Detection Kit; Amersham Biosciences, Piscataway, NJ, USA). The results were visualized using an imaging system (ImageQuant LAS-1000; GE Healthcare Biosciences).

2 Endothelial Tube Formation. Endothelial tube formation was assessed with normal human umbilical vein endothelial cells (HUVECs) (Takara Bio; Otsu, Japan) co-cultured on neonatal normal human dermal fibroblasts (NHDF, Takara Bio) layer using anti-human CD31 immunostaining, as reported previously [28]. Two nM vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF, Wako; Tokyo, Japan) was then added to the endothelial cell growth medium (EGM, Takara Bio) containing no vasohibin-1 (control), and 0.2, 2, or 10 nM vasohibin-1, respectively. VEGF (2 nM) and samples of vasohibin-1 released from the vasohibin-1-loaded device over 3 hours at 37°C were used to examine released vasohibin-1 activity. We collected the released vasohibin-1 from the pellet and used it at a concentration of 0.56 nM (as measured by ELISA). On Day 3, the cells were fixed and stained using an anti-human CD31 immunostaining kit (Kurabo; Tokyo, Japan) according to the manufacturer's instructions. The number of stained HUVECs was determined using a computerized system (Kurabo Angiogenesis Image Analyzer program; Kurabo).

In Vivo CNV Experiments

1 Animals. The procedures used in the animal experiments followed the guidelines of the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Statement for the Use of Animals in Ophthalmic and Vision Research, and they were approved by the Animal Care Committee of Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine (Permit Number: 2011–136). Twenty Sprague-Dawley (SD) rats (Experiments 1 and 2) and 36 Brown Norway (BN) rats (Experiment 3) weighing between 250 and 300 g were used (Table 1). All animals were followed up to 2 weeks after device transplantation and/or laser burn. We examined the effects of devices either at 1 week or 2 weeks for FA evaluation and 2 weeks for flat-mount evaluation. Macro examination was performed at 1 and 2 weeks after the device transplantation. For all procedures, the rats were anesthetized with an intramuscular