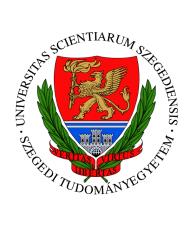
Screening of novel thalidomide analogues with label-free assays and appling in the *in vivo* model of hepatocellular carcinoma

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Ph.D thesis summary

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Fabian G., Farago N., Feher L.Z., Nagy L.I., Kulin S., Kitajka K., Bito T., Tubak V., Katona R.L., Tiszlavicz L., Puskas L.G.: High-Density Real-Time PCR-Based in Vivo Toxicogenomic Screen to Predict Organ-Specific Toxicity. INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MOLECULAR SCIENCES 12:(9) pp. 6116-6134. (2011)

Ozsvari B., Puskas L.G., Nagy L.I., Kanizsai I., Gyuris M., Madacsi R., Feher L.Z., Gero D., Szabo C.: A cell-microelectronic sensing technique for the screening of cytoprotective compounds. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MOLECULAR MEDICINE* 25:(4) pp. 525-530. (2010)

Introduction

Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is one of the leading cause of cancer death. The majority of HCC cases are associated with chronic hepatitis or cirrhosis induced by persistent infection with hepatitis B or hepatitis C virus and caused by carcinogens such as diethylnitrosamine. Despite advances in different chemotherapies which are often associated with toxic side effects, liver cancer has limited treatment options.

We demonstrated that Ac-915 and Ac-2010, novel amino-trifluoro-phtalimide analogs with novel substitutions also interfere with lipid droplets and the endoplasmic reticulum (ER), and induce intracellular reactive oxygen species (ROS) at lower concentrations than the previously observed analogue compounds. The upregulation of HSPs, as observed in various cancers, including liver cancer suggests that they might be involved in carcinogenesis. Lipid droplets (LDs) are one of the main intracellular targets of amino-trifluoro-phtalimide analogs. As LDs are formed in the ER we were able to show that specific LD-binding drugs could interfere with LD homeostasis and ER-membrane integrity and could trigger apoptosis through ER stress. Tumors, including hepatocellular carcinoma are more sensitive to ER stress and reactive oxygen species (ROS) than normal cells as their stress response is continuously engaged due to their chronic stress situation, thereby leading to activation of pro-apoptotic signals and finally tumor cell death.

DEN is widely used as a carcinogen in experimental animal models. The liver of matrilin-2 KO (Matn2^{-/-}) mice contained macroscopic tumors of both larger number and size than the wild-type liver after diethylnitrosoamine (DEN) treatment. Since DEN itself does not exert carcinogenicity, it needs to be bioactivated by cytochrome P450 enzymes in the liver, resulting in DNA-adducts that form through an alkylation mechanism locally, which induce the formation of putative preneoplastic lesions. Upon intraperitoneal administration into weaning mice at 2 weeks after birth, hepatic tumors are formed 8 month later. Owing to the increased number and size of the DEN-induced liver tumors in the transgenic Matn2^{-/-} mice, we used this in vivo model to assess the efficacy of our novel amino-trifluoro-phtalimide analogs.

Material and methods

- Cytotoxic activity in cancer cells was measured by using the MTS assay
- Real-time antiproliferative and cell migration inhibitory effects were measured by using RTCA SP and DP xCELLigence System (Acea-Roche)
- Direct biomolecular interactions were determined between human recombinant and purified HSP60, HSP70, HSP90 proteins and Ac-915 and Ac-2010 with resonant waveguide optical biosensor technology
- The subcellular localization of Ac-915 and Ac-2010 was determined by fluorescent microscopy
- Pro-oxidative effects of Ac-915 and Ac-2010 were determined with measurement of the presence of ROS in human hepatocellular carcinoma cells (Hep3B)
- The expected side-effects were determined by high-throughput QRT-PCR techniques on different organs (heart, liver, brain, kidney) where the effects of Ac-915 was compared with doxorubicin and cisplatine.
- To determine the tissue distribution of Ac compounds, native microscope sections were prepared and analyzed under fluorescent microscope.
- For studies of liver tumor development 15-day-old Matn2^{-/-} mice were treated with a single dose of DEN and treated with Ac-915 or Ac-2010 4 months after DEN treatment.

Results

- Two novel amino-trifluoro-phtalimide analogs Ac-915 and Ac-2010 showed superior cytotoxic activity in cancer cells and therefore were selected to the present study. Their cytotoxic effects on human hepatocellular carcinoma cell lines (namely: HepG2, Hep3B and Huh7) were measured by using the MTS assay. Both Ac-915 and Ac-2010 induced cell death of liver cancer cells at sub- or low micromolar ranges.
- Cytotoxic effects of Ac-915 and Ac-2010 compounds were also tested by the real-time cell electronic sensing, xCELLigence System (RT-CES) on two different hepatocellular carcinoma cell lines (Huh7, HepG2). Both analogs exerted micromolar cytotoxic effects on both liver cancer cell lines used. These results are in good correlation with data obtained by using the biochemical assay.
- Ac-2010 inhibited migration even at 250 nM, where no cytotoxicity could be detected in case of HepG2 cells. At higher concentration the drug completely inhibited cell migration 2 h after administration.
- The affinity values of intermolecular interaction between HSPs and thalidomide analogues (KD) were calculated as follows for Ac-915: HSP70 KD: 14 μ M, HSP90 KD: 11.5 μ M; for Ac-2010: HSP70 KD: \approx 16 μ M, HSP90 KD: \approx 16 μ M and PDI KD: \approx 6 μ M.
- The subcellular localization of the new thalidomide analogs Ac-915 and Ac-2010 was determined by fluorescent microscopy in human liver cancer cells. Both compounds showed ER-specific localization.
- According to our expectations, by inducing oxidative stress both compounds also depleted intracellular GSH levels and increased the ROS production.
- Ac-915 activated fewer genes in fewer organs and the fluctuation in the gene expression levels focused on liver and kidney.
- The Ac componds accumulate in the liver, the target organ of our study. No or slight fluorescence increase was measured in other organs.
- significantly less tumor development was found in the livers of the treated mice compared with that of control mice, as evaluated by less liver tumor incidence, fewer tumors and smaller tumor size.

Conclusions and final remarks

The present study demonstrated a potent cell death-inducing effect of two novel amino-trifluoro-phtalimide analogs, Ac-915 and Ac-2010, which bind lipid droplets, induce intracellular ROS formation and ER-stress. Both Ac-915 and Ac-2010 compounds induced cell death of liver cancer cells at sub or low micromolar ranges detected by classical biochemical end-point assay as well as with real-time measurements. Besides cell proliferation inhibition, analogs exert cell migration inhibition even at 250 nM. Cytotoxic effects of the novel analogs were mediated by affecting chaperone functions, induction of oxidative stress and depletion of intracellular GSH. The novel thalidomide analogues interacted with several proteins that localized into lipid droplets and ER. Among their candidate protein targets are the different heat-shock proteins (HSP60, HSP70, and HSP90). Direct biomolecular interactions between human HSP70, HSP90 proteins and Ac-915 and Ac-2010 were confirmed with resonant waveguide optical biosensors. Relative biodistribution of the analogs was analyzed in using native tissue sections of different organs after administration of drugs, and fluorescent confocal microscopy based on the inherent blue fluorescence of the compounds. The target organs of the analogs were the liver and the kidney. No, or minimal penetration could be detected into the brain, the muscle or the heart. We used the Matn2^{-/-} mice and DEN treatment for induction of tumors in the liver. Mice were treated either with Ac-915 (10 mg/kg) for 3 months, or Ac-2010 (4 mg/kg) for 1 months, following 4 months of DEN treatment. Significantly less tumor development was found in the livers of the Ac-915- or Ac-2010-treated groups compared with those of control mice, and were characterized by less liver tumor incidence, fewer tumors and smaller tumor size.

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Statements

Jelölt neve: Nagy Lajos István

Doktori iskola: SZTE TTIK, Biológiai Doktori Iskola

Közlemény címe: Lipid droplet binding thalidomide analogs activate endoplasmic reticulum stress and suppress hepatocellular carcinoma in a chemically induced transgenic mouse model

Szerzői: Nagy Lajos István, Dr. Molnár Eszter, Dr. Kanizsai Iván, Madácsi Ramóna, Dr. Ózsvári Béla, Dr. Fehér Liliána, Dr. Fábián Gabriella, Marton Annamária, Dr. Vizler Csaba, Dr. Ferhan Ayaydin, Dr. Kitajka Klára, ifj. Dr. Hackler László, Dr. Mátés Lajos, Dr. Deák Ferenc, Dr. Kiss Ibolya, Dr. Puskás László

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Társszerzői nyilatkozat

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Dr. Puskás László	7			

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Közlemény címe: A cell-microelectronic sensing technique for the screening of cytoprotective compounds

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Közlemények címei:

- Lipid droplet binding thalidomide analogs activate endoplasmic reticulum stress and suppress hepatocellular carcinoma in a chemically induced transgenic mouse model; LIPIDS IN HEALTH AND DISEASE 12:(1) Paper 175. 11 p.; 2013
- High-Density Real-Time PCR-Based in Vivo Toxicogenomic Screen to Predict Organ-Specific Toxicity; INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MOLECULAR SCIENCES 12:(9) pp. 6116-6134.; 2011
- A cell-microelectronic sensing technique for the screening of cytoprotective compounds; INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MOLECULAR MEDICINE 25:(4) pp. 525-530.; 2010

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Alulírott Dr. Puskás László, mint témavezető kijelentem, hogy Nagy Lajos István, doktorjelölt, a fentebb felsorolt közleményekben közzétett eredmények elérésében a meghatározó munkát végzett. Valamint igazolom, hogy a jelölt által a Szegedi Tudományegyetem Biológiai Doktori Iskolájához benyújtott tézisében és az értekezésben szereplő eredmények eddig nem szerepeltek más Ph.D. értekezés között és a többi társszerző a jövőben nem kívánja felhasználni doktori eljárás kezdeményezésére.

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