Design, Synthesis, and Blood–Brain Barrier Transport Study of
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S Supporting Information

ABSTRACT: We designed and synthesized a pyrilamine derivative **1** as a selective class I HDAC inhibitor that targets pyrilamine-sensitive proton-coupled organic cation antiporter (PYSOCA) at the blood–brain barrier (BBB). Introduction of pyrilamine moiety to benzamide type HDAC inhibitors kept selective class I HDAC inhibitory activity and increased BBB permeability. Our BBB transport study showed that compound **1** is a substrate of PYSOCA. Thus, our findings suggest that the hybrid method of HDAC inhibitor and substrate of PYSOCA such as pyrilamine is useful for development of HDAC inhibitors with increased BBB permeability.

KEYWORDS: Histone deacetylase, HDAC inhibitor, blood–brain barrier, selective inhibitor, pyrilamine-sensitive proton-coupled organic cation antiporter

Histone deacetylases (HDACs) are a family of enzymes that repress gene expression by catalyzing the post translational hydrolytic cleavage of acetyl groups present on lysine residues of nuclear histones.^{1,2} Excluding the nonzinc-dependent HDACs, HDACs consist of 11 isoforms categorized into four classes as follows: class I (HDAC1, 2, 3, 8), class IIa (HDAC4, 5, 7, 9), class IIb (HDAC6, 10), and class IV (HDAC11).³ Since the discovery that transcription is activated by the HDAC inhibitor trichostatin A (TSA),⁴ medicinal chemists have discovered a variety of HDAC inhibitors (Figure S1, see Supporting Information). Among them, romidepsin (FK228), vorinostat (SAHA), and panobinostat have been approved as anticancer drugs by the United States Food and Drug Administration (Figure S1). Also, HDACs are the attractive drug targets in many central nervous system (CNS) diseases.⁵ In fact, HDAC inhibitors showed disease-modifying effects in CNS disease models.⁶ For example, class I HDAC inhibitors and HDAC6 inhibitors improved disease-like behaviors in Alzheimer's disease.^{7–10} In addition, HDAC inhibitor improved disease phenotype in Huntington's disease model.^{11–14} Moreover, CI-994 was exposed to brain and improved posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)-like behavior in rats.¹⁵ Although a variety of CNS-penetrant HDAC inhibitors

have been identified (Figure S2, see Supporting Information), there is no HDAC inhibitor approved as CNS drugs. One of the hurdles of applying HDAC inhibitors to CNS drugs is that they generally show poor blood–brain barrier (BBB) permeability due to the presence of polar hydroxamic acid or amino group as the zinc-binding group (ZBG). In fact, positron emission tomography (PET) studies using radiolabeled HDAC inhibitors indicate that brain penetration of MS-275, butyric acid, 4-phenyl butyric acid, valproic acid, and SAHA was poor.^{16–20} Efforts to discover HDAC inhibitors with improved BBB permeability have mainly focused on increasing the lipophilicity. For example, Hooker and co-workers reported that some HDAC inhibitors showed good CNS distribution, based on PET studies.^{21–25} However, increasing the lipophilicity generally leads to metabolic instability and increases affinities to other off-target proteins and protein binding.²⁶ Therefore, a new strategy is needed for delivery of HDAC inhibitors to the CNS.

One approach would be targeting compounds to transporters expressed in brain capillary endothelial cells, which form the

Received: February 28, 2018

Accepted: August 23, 2018

Published: August 23, 2018

BBB. Polt and co-workers designed prodrugs targeting glucose transporter 1.²⁷ In addition, large amino acid transporter 1²⁸ and vitamin C transporter 2²⁹ have been used to deliver compounds to the brain. However, Wang and co-workers focused on pyrillamine-sensitive proton-coupled organic cation (H^+/OC) antiporter (PYSOCA); they designed conjugates of naproxen and cyclic tertiary amines and confirmed that they were distributed to CNS.³⁰ Nevertheless, no BBB permeable shuttle moiety is yet available for targeting HDAC inhibitors to transporters at the BBB. Here, we describe the design, synthesis, and pharmacokinetic evaluations of compound **1** as a BBB permeable HDAC inhibitor targeting PYSOCA. A transport study using human immortalized brain capillary endothelial cells (hCMEC/D3) confirmed that compound **1** is recognized by PYSOCA. In addition, we confirmed that compound **1** showed both HDAC-inhibitory activity *in vitro* and increased BBB permeability in rats.

We focused on pyrillamine as a shuttle moiety to increase BBB permeability because PYSOCA recognizes a variety of centrally acting drugs.^{31,32} Indeed, Yamazaki and co-workers have reported that PYSOCA mediates BBB penetration and brain accumulation of some pyrillamine-containing histamine H_1 receptor antagonists,^{33,34} including compounds containing a polar moiety. Thus, we adopted a hybrid strategy based on linking benzamide-type HDAC inhibitors with substrates of PYSOCA. Class I selective HDAC inhibitors generally include *N*-(2-aminophenyl)pyridylamide or *N*-(2-aminophenyl)-benzamide as the ZBG (Figure 1). Since the 2-aminopyridine structure is a known linker moiety,³⁵ we designed the pyrillamine-based hybrid compound **1** (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Hybrid design strategy for compound **1**.

The structure–activity relationship (SAR) study of compound **1** and its derivatives are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. SAR Study of Compound **1** and Its Derivatives

entry	compound	R	HDAC inhibition (% 100 μ M)	
			HDAC1	HDAC6
1	1	H	61	11
2	2	Cl	62	7
3	3	Br	52	21
4	4	I	45	16
5	5	thiophen-2-yl	64	15
6	6	phenyl	62	14
7	7	furan-2-yl	64	15
8	CI-994		67	18
9	TSA		100	98

Compound **1** inhibited HDAC1 (61% at 100 μ M) but did not inhibit HDAC6 (11% at 100 μ M). The inhibitory activities against HDACs are similar to those of CI-994 (entries 1 and 9). Replacement of the hydrogen atom at the 5-position of the benzene ring by chlorine kept HDAC1 inhibitory activity (entry 2). However, introduction of bromine or iodine at the 5-position decreased HDAC1 inhibitory activity (entries 3 and 4). The compounds with thiophen-2-yl, furan-2-yl, or phenyl group at the 5-position of the benzene ring inhibited HDAC1 at the same content (entries 5–7). These results indicate that introduction of internal cavity motif does not significantly increase HDAC1 inhibitory activity in spite of the increase of molecular weight. Based on our criteria that molecular weight is less than 430, which is generally advantageous for CNS drugs,³⁶ we picked up compound **1** for further evaluation. After that, we evaluated IC_{50} values and isozyme selectivity to clarify pharmacological potential of compound **1**. As a result, compound **1** showed selectivity for class I HDACs over other HDAC isozymes (HDAC1 IC_{50} = 1.5 μ M, HDAC2 IC_{50} = 5.5 μ M, HDAC3 IC_{50} = 12.0 μ M, HDAC10 IC_{50} = 15.5 μ M, other HDACs: <10% inhibition at 30 μ M, Tables S1 and S2). These results indicate that the pyrillamine moiety is acceptable as a cap group.

Next, we evaluated a functional cell-based assay for HDAC inhibitory activity (Figure S3, see Supporting Information) by monitoring acetylated histone protein. Evaluation of time-dependent inhibition is necessary to clarify the potency of compound **1** because benzamide-type HDAC inhibitors show slow and tight binding.³⁷ As a result, both compound **1** and CI-994 increased acetylated histone H3K9 in HeLaS3 cells at 10 μ M (Figure S3A). In addition, *in vitro* kinetic analysis suggests that compound **1** inhibited HDAC time-dependently (Figure S3B). Treatment of both compound **1** and CI-994 increased acetylated histone H3K9 from 6 h after the addition of the compounds. However, TSA increased acetylated histone immediately (Figure S3B). Especially, compound **1** showed more continuous HDAC inhibitory activity than CI-994 and TSA (Figure S3C–E). These results indicate that compound **1** and CI-994 inhibited HDAC at the same content in HeLaK3 cells.

To examine whether compound **1** and CI-994 are taken up via PYSOCA, we first evaluated their uptake by hCMEC/D3 cells at 37 or 4 $^{\circ}$ C (Figures 2A,B). The uptake clearance of compound **1**, which was calculated from the initial slope, was estimated as 107 μ L/min/mg protein. This clearance was 85-fold greater than that of CI-994 (1.26 μ L/min/mg protein). The uptake of compound **1** was significantly lower at 4 $^{\circ}$ C for up to 10 min, while CI-994 uptake at 4 $^{\circ}$ C slowly increased and reached a similar cell-to-medium ratio to that at 37 $^{\circ}$ C by 30 min. Uptake of compound **1** was concentration-dependent with a K_m of 326 $\pm$ 72 μ M and a V_{max} of 5.17 $\pm$ 0.86 nmol/mg protein/min (Figure 2C). These results suggest that compound **1** is taken up by hCMEC/D3 cells via a carrier-mediated transport process.

Next, we investigated whether the above transport properties are consistent with those previously reported for PYSOCA. To examine the effect of ATP depletion, hCMEC/D3 cells were pretreated with NaN_3 as a metabolic inhibitor. The uptake of compound **1** was significantly inhibited by NaN_3 (Figure 2D). However, uptake was increased by intracellular acidification (Figure 2E, pretreatment with NH_4Cl), and decreased by intracellular alkalization (Figure 2E, acute treatment with NH_4Cl). These results suggest that the uptake is dependent on metabolic energy and an outward H^+ -gradient. These

Figure 2. Time-courses of uptake of (A) compound **1** and (B) CI-994 by hCMEC/D3 cells. Uptake was measured at 37 °C (open circles) or 4 °C (closed squares) for the indicated times. Each point represents the mean $\pm$ SE ($n = 4$). Where the SE is not shown, it is smaller than the symbol. Uptake of **1** and CI-994 by hCMEC/D3 cells increased linearly (black lines) for at least 2 and 1 min, respectively. $*p < 0.01$, significantly different from the uptake at 4 °C at the corresponding time. (C) Concentration dependency of the uptake of compound **1** by hCMEC/D3 cells. The concentration dependency of the uptake of compound **1** was examined at 37 °C for 2 min. Kinetic parameters obtained from eq 1 (see Supporting Information) were K_m 326 ± 72 μ M and V_{max} 5.17 ± 0.86 nmol/mg protein/min. The solid line was calculated according to eq 1 with these parameters. Each point represents the mean $\pm$ SE ($n = 4$). Where the SE is not shown, it is smaller than the symbol. (D), (E) Dependency of the uptake of compound **1** by hCMEC/D3 cells on metabolic energy (D) and intracellular pH (E). (D) hCMEC/D3 cells were pretreated with NaN_3 (0.1%) for 20 min to deplete cellular ATP, and uptake of compound **1** was measured at 37 °C for 2 min. (E) hCMEC/D3 cells were pretreated with transport buffer in the absence (Control and Acute) or presence (Pre) of 30 mM NH_4Cl , and then uptake of compound **1** was measured in the absence (Control and Pre) or presence (Acute) of 30 mM NH_4Cl at 37 °C for 1 min. Each column represents the mean $\pm$ SE ($n = 4$). $*p < 0.01$, significantly different from control.

properties are consistent with those of PYSOCA reported previously.^{34,38}

Third, we determined the effect of several known substrates of PYSOCA on uptake of compound **1** and CI-994 by hCMEC/D3 cells. Indeed, uptake of compound **1** was significantly inhibited by pyrilamine,³³ diphenhydramine,³⁴ memantine,³⁹ tramadol,³² clonidine,⁴⁰ and varenicline.³¹ In contrast, TEA, MPP⁺, decynium-22, L-carnitine, and choline, which are typical substrates of OCTs, OCTNs, and choline transporter, had little effect on the uptake of compound **1** (Table S3, see Supporting Information). However, CI-994 uptake was not significantly decreased by these inhibitors (Table S3).

The above results suggest that organic cation transport via PYSOCA is primarily involved in the uptake of compound **1** by hCMEC/D3 cells, but not in CI-994. Diphenhydramine is a known substrate of PYSOCA.³⁴ The uptake of compound **1** was

competitively inhibited by diphenhydramine with a K_i value of 104 ± 28 μ M, again suggesting that PYSOCA is involved in the uptake of compound **1** by hCMEC/D3 cells (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Inhibition by diphenhydramine of the uptake of compound **1** into hCMEC/D3 cells. Uptake of compound **1** at various concentrations was measured at 37 °C for 2 min in the absence (open circles) or presence (closed circles) of diphenhydramine (100 μ M). Where the SE is not shown, it is smaller than the symbol. Data were subjected to Michaelis–Menten plot (A) and Lineweaver–Burk plot (B) analysis. Kinetic parameters were obtained by nonlinear least-squares regression according to eqs 1 and 2 (see Supporting Information). The straight lines were drawn using the kinetic parameters obtained. Each point shows the mean $\pm$ SE ($n = 4$).

Finally, *in situ* brain perfusion was performed to measure blood-to-brain transport of compound **1** and CI-994 across the BBB. The results are shown in Figure 4. The BBB permeability

Figure 4. BBB permeability of compound **1** and CI-994 across the rat BBB. The right cerebral hemisphere of the rat was perfused with buffer containing compound **1** or CI-994 (20 μ M) at a rate 4.9 mL/min for 1 min. Each column represents the mean $\pm$ SE ($n = 3$). $*p < 0.01$, significantly different from the PS_{BBB} of CI-994.

(PS_{BBB}) of compound **1** was determined to be 42.4 ± 4.9 μ L/min/g brain, which is 3.3-fold greater than that of CI-994 (12.7 ± 0.1 μ L/min/g brain). Discrepancy in the BBB permeability between *in vitro* and *in vivo* may be due to species difference of efflux transporter activity such as P-gp. In fact, it has been reported that the protein expression level of P-gp (mdr1) in rodent animal microvessels is significantly higher than that in humans.⁴¹

Preparation of compound **1** is shown in Scheme 1. Reaction of compound **9**⁴² with commercially available compound **8** under microwave irradiation afforded compound **10** in 61% yield, and then deprotection of the Boc group afforded **1** in 90% yield. Synthesis of compounds **2–7** is provided in the Supporting Information (Schemes S2, S3, and S4).

In summary, to overcome the low BBB permeability of existing HDAC inhibitors, we designed compound **1** using a pyrilamine moiety as a shuttle targeting PYSOCA for drug delivery to the CNS. The synthesized hybrid compound **1** showed selective class I HDAC inhibitory activity. Transport

Scheme 1. Synthesis of the Hybrid Compound 1^a

^aReagents and conditions: (a) pyridine, DMSO, 110 °C, 4.5 h, microwave, 61%; (b) TFA, 0.5 h, 90%.

studies using hCMEC/D3 cells confirmed that compound 1 is a substrate of PYSOCA, and *in situ* brain perfusion confirmed increased BBB permeability of compound 1 in the brain compared with CI-994. This design strategy appears promising for development of potent BBB-permeable HDAC inhibitors to treat CNS diseases.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge on the ACS Publications website at DOI: 10.1021/acsmchemlett.8b00099.

Experimental procedures for the biological experiments and synthetic procedures and characterization data for the compounds (PDF)

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Author Contributions

T.S. and S.H. conceived and directed medicinal chemistry. M.Y. and A.I. directed pharmacology. M.A. contributed the histone acetylation assay. Y.D. directed the pharmacokinetic study. Y.T., K.H., and T.K. contributed PK studies. The manuscript was written through contributions of all authors.

Funding

Part of this work was supported by the Kansai University Subsidy for Supporting Young Scholars, 2015 "Development of macrocyclization reaction via a photoaffinity reaction", JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP15K18903, Grant-in-Aid for Young Scientists (B) Japan, and MEXT-Supported Program for the Strategic Research Foundation at Private Universities (2013–2017), Japan.

Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

■ ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Dr. Pierre-Olivier Couraud (Institut Cochin, Paris, France) for supplying hCMEC/D3 cells under license from INSERM. The authors also give gratitude to Dr. Teruki Honma for calculations of physicochemical properties and Dr. Shinichi Uesato for useful suggestions.

■ ABBREVIATIONS

HDAC, histone deacetylase; BBB, blood–brain barrier; Boc, *t*-butoxycarbonyl; CNS, central nervous system; SAHA, suberoylanilide hydroxamic acid; TSA, trichostatin A; PET, positron emission tomography; PYSOCA, pyrilamine sensitive proton coupled organic cation antiporter; hCMEC, human cardiac microvascular endothelial cells; ATP, adenosine triphosphate; DMSO, dimethyl sulfoxide; TFA, trifluoroacetic acid; TEA, tetraethylammonium; MPP⁺, 1-methyl-4-phenylpyridinium; P-gp, P-glycoprotein; OCTs, organic cation transporters; OCTNs, organic cation/carnitine transporters

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