Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters 18 (2008) 5734–5737

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Bioorganic & Medicinal Chemistry Letters

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/bmcl

Open-chain half-bastadins mimic the effects of cyclic bastadins on calcium homeostasis in cultured neurons

Elzbieta Zieminska [a], Jerzy W. Lazarewicz [a,*], Elias A. Couladouros [b,c], Vassilios I. Moutsos [c], Emmanuel N. Pitsinos [c,*]

[a] Medical Research Centre, Polish Academy of Sciences, Pawinskiego 5, 02-106 Warsaw, Poland
[b] Chemistry Laboratories, Agricultural University of Athens, Iera Odos 75, GR 118 55 Athens, Greece
[c] Institute of Physical Chemistry, Natural Products Synthesis & Bioorganic Chemistry Laboratory, NCSR "DEMOKRITOS", PO Box 60228, GR 153 10 Aghia Paraskevi, Greece

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 27 August 2008
Revised 22 September 2008
Accepted 23 September 2008
Available online 26 September 2008

Keywords:
Ryanodine
Calcium channels
Cerebellar granule cells
Bastadins
Diaryl ether

ABSTRACT

Constraining the catechol aryl ether moiety of bastadins by incorporation into a macrocyle is not necessary in order to mimic the effects of these marine natural products on neuronal calcium homeostasis. Simple, acyclic analogs that embody the 'western' or 'eastern' parts of bastadins were found to evoke comparable responses with bastadin 5.

Controlled fluctuations in intracellular calcium cation (Ca^{2+}) concentrations play an important role in many cellular processes such as muscle contraction, secretion, metabolism, and neuronal function.[1] Ryanodine receptors (RyR) are intracellular ion channels that mediate the release of calcium ions from internal stores and have been suggested as pharmacological targets for heart disease and neurodegenerative diseases.[2,3] Three isoforms (RyR1, RyR2, and RyR3) are expressed by mammalian tissues: RyR1 is present predominantly in skeletal muscle; RyR2 is found in cardiac muscle and is the major brain isoform; RyR3 has a wide tissue distribution and appears to be the major isoform in smooth muscle.[2a]

Bastadins (Fig. 1) are an ever-growing family of marine natural products isolated from sponges of the order Verongida.[4] Due to their ability to interact with RyR1 channels, they are considered useful chemical probes for related biological studies. Most of them are macrocyclic bis-diaryl ethers and, depending on the relative orientation of their diaryl ether segments, are further classified either as bastaranes or isobastaranes. They feature unique α-oximino amides while the degree of *ortho*-bromination of the diaryl ether moieties as well as the oxidation state of C5/C6 varies among family members.

Although bastadins share the same gross structural features, not all of them interact with RyR channels. Seemingly subtle differences in their substitution pattern suffice to alter the response observed.[5] Thus, bastarane bastadin 5 is the most active member (EC_{50} = 2.2 μM) and seems to stabilize both open and closed channel states but has little effect on the apparent sensitivity of the channel to Ca^{2+} activation. The isobastarane with the same bromination pattern, bastadin 19, although it competes for the same binding site, does not mobilize Ca^{2+} from the channel (EC_{50} > 100 μM). The unsaturated bastadin 7 (EC_{50} = 6.3 μM) follows closely bastadin 5 in terms of potency while its hydroxylated relative bastadin 10, in contrast to bastadin 5, stabilizes primarily the open-channel conformation and over sensitizes it to Ca^{2+} activation.

Until recently, further structure–activity relationship (SAR) studies were limited to the use of naturally occurring bastadins and were hampered by the fact that not all members are readily available. We have previously reported a general and flexible synthetic strategy towards bastadins, which allows for the synthesis of both bastaranes and isobastaranes with all possible bromination patterns.[6] Molinski et al. have prepared simplified cyclic analogues of the 'western' hemisphere of bastadin 5 by an alternative strategy and investigated their effect on RyR1 channels (Fig. 2).[7] This study reiterated the importance of the diarylether unit substitution pattern and illustrated that simpler analogs can retain the activity of more structurally complex natural bastadins.

* Corresponding authors. Fax: +48 22668 54 23 (J.W.L); tel.: +30 2106503789; fax: +30 2106511766 (E.N.P.).
E-mail addresses: jerzyl@cmdik.pan.pl (J.W. Lazarewicz), pitsinos@chem.demokritos.gr (E.N. Pitsinos).

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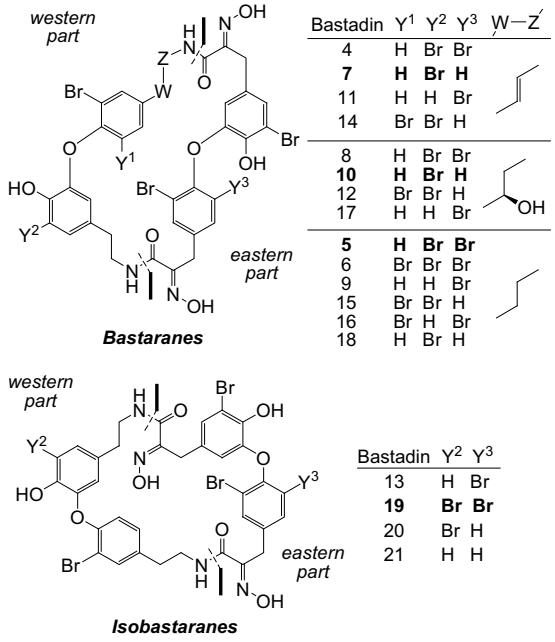
doi:10.1016/j.bmcl.2008.09.080



Bastadin	Y^1	Y^2	Y^3	W—Z
4	H	Br	Br	
7	**H**	**Br**	**H**	
11	H	H	Br	
14	Br	Br	H	
8	H	Br	Br	
10	**H**	**Br**	**H**	
12	Br	Br	H	
17	H	H	Br	
5	**H**	**Br**	**Br**	
6	Br	Br	Br	
9	H	H	Br	
15	Br	Br	H	
16	Br	H	Br	
18	H	Br	H	

Bastadin	Y^2	Y^3
13	H	Br
19	**Br**	**Br**
20	Br	H
21	H	H

Figure 1. Some naturally occurring bastadins.

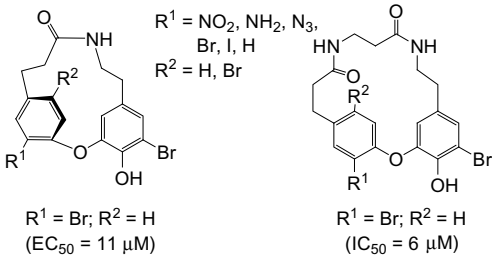
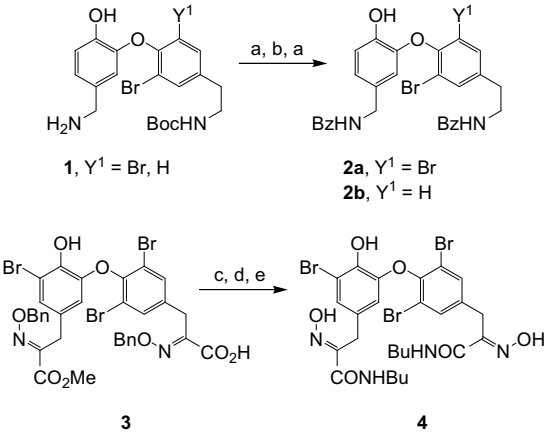


Figure 2. Simplified cyclic analogs of bastadin 5 prepared by Molinski et al. and their effect on RyR1 channels.[7]

Subsequently, we have investigated the effect of several synthetic bastadins, including bastadins 5 and 10, on the RyR2 receptors employing primary cultures of rat cerebellar granule neurons and observed that they elicit responses similar to the ones previously identified on skeletal RyR1 receptors.[8] Intrigued by the above mentioned structure–activity relationships, we examined and report herein the effect of simple acyclic analogues of 'eastern' and 'western' parts of bastadins (**2a**, **2b**, and **4**; Scheme 1) on calcium homeostasis in cultured neurons.

These compounds were readily prepared (Scheme 1) from key synthetic intermediates of our total synthesis effort.[6d] Thus, benzoylation of amine **1** (1:1 mixture of mono- and dibromo-derivative), followed by cleavage of the Boc protective group and a second benzoylation furnished a separable mixture of dibenzoylamides **2a** and **2b** in 76% overall yield.[9] On the other hand, hydrolysis of methyl ester **3** followed by coupling of the resulting diacid with *n*-butylamine and final benzyl ether cleavage, upon treatment with BBr_3 in the presence of thioanisole, yielded derivative **4** in 33% overall yield.[9]

The ability of bastadin 5 (positive control) and the acyclic analogues **2a**, **2b**, and **4** to increase the intracellular calcium concentration in cultured rat cerebellar granule cells[10] was evaluated using FLUO-3, a calcium-sensitive fluorescent probe. After loading the cells with the fluorescent probe, the compounds were applied to the incubation medium in equal concentration (20 μM) and the



Scheme 1. Reagents and conditions: (a) BzCl, Et_3N, benzene; (b) TFA, CH_2Cl_2; (c) LiOH, MeOH/THF/H_2O; (d) $BuNH_2$, EDC, HOBt, iPr_2EtN, DMF/CH_2Cl_2, 0 °C–rt; (e) BBr_3, thioanisole, 0 °C–rt.

initial level of fluorescence was measured using confocal microscopy (Fig. 3).[11] Synthetic bastadin 5, which in the control experiments demonstrated identical calcium mobilizing potential with the natural, commercially available product (results not shown), induced a substantial increase in the FLUO-3 fluorescence, indicating its ability to release calcium from the intracellular stores.[8] From the three analogs tested, **4** induced the most potent calcium transients comparable with the effects of bastadin 5 and even more dynamic. Analogue **2b** was less potent, whereas analog **2a** had practically no effect on the neuronal free calcium level.

Increases of intracellular Ca^{2+} concentration may arise from intracellular stores calcium release and/or from extracellular Ca^{2+} influx. Thus, in order to characterize bastadin-induced changes in calcium homeostasis, apart from measurements of the intracellular calcium level detected with FLUO-3 fluorescence, we monitored also the influx of extracellular calcium to neurons employing $^{45}Ca^{2+}$ isotope.[12] As presented in Fig. 4, application of bastadin 5 significantly increased uptake of $^{45}Ca^{2+}$ in the cultured neurons. Moreover the effect of the acyclic analogs on calcium accumulation mirrored the picture observed for their effect on the intracellular

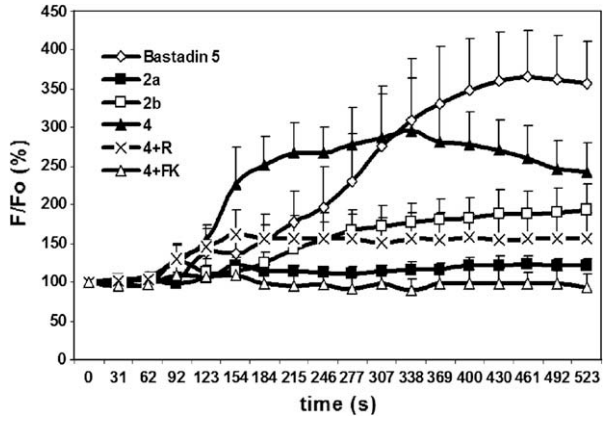


Figure 3. Effects of bastadin 5 and analogues on the intracellular calcium level in primary cultures of rat cerebellar granule cells. Synthetic bastadin 5 as well as analogues **2a**, 2**b**, and **4** (all compounds 20 μM) were applied after 60 s of incubation. Analog **4** was also applied in the presence of 200 μM ryanodine (**4 + R**) or 50 μM FK506 (**4 + FK**). Results, means ± SD ($n = 15$) are presented as percent changes in the intensity of fluorescence compared with the basal level (F/F_0). The presented data are from one of three independent experiments using different cultures that gave qualitatively identical results.