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ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

Administration of a co-crystal of tramadol and celecoxib in a 1:1 molecular ratio produces synergistic antinociceptive effects in a postoperative pain model in rats^{*}

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Abstract

Drug combination for the treatment of pain is common clinical practice. Co-crystal of Tramadol-Celecoxib (CTC) consists of two active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), namely the atypical opioid tramadol and the preferential cyclooxygenase-2 inhibitor celecoxib, at a 1:1 molecular ratio. In this study, a non-formulated 'raw' form of CTC administered in suspension (referred to as ctc_{susp}) was compared with both tramadol and celecoxib alone in a rat plantar incision postoperative pain model. For comparison, the strong opioids morphine and oxycodone, and a tramadol plus acetaminophen combination at a molecular ratio of 1:17 were also tested. Isobolographic analyses showed that ctc_{susp} exerted synergistic mechanical antiallodynic (experimental $ED_{50}=2.0\pm0.5$ mg/kg, i.p.; theoretical $ED_{50}=3.8\pm0.4$ mg/kg, i.p.) and thermal (experimental $ED_{50}=2.3\pm0.5$ mg/kg, i.p.; theoretical $ED_{50}=9.8\pm0.8$ mg/kg, i.p.) antihyperalgesic effects in the postoperative pain model. In contrast, the tramadol and acetaminophen combination showed antagonistic effects on both mechanical allodynia and thermal hyperalgesia. No synergies between tramadol and celecoxib on locomotor activity, motor coordination, ulceration potential and gastrointestinal transit were observed after the administration of ctc_{susp}. Overall, rat efficacy and safety data revealed that ctc_{susp} provided synergistic analgesic effects compared with each API alone, without enhancing adverse effects. Moreover, ctc_{susp} showed similar efficacy but improved safety ratio (80, measured as

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