

Novel P1 chain-extended HIV protease inhibitors possessing potent anti-HIV activity and remarkable inverse antiviral resistance profiles

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Abstract—A novel series of tyrosine-derived HIV protease inhibitors was synthesized and evaluated for in vitro antiviral activity against wild-type virus and two protease inhibitor-resistant viruses. All of the compounds had wild-type antiviral activities that were similar to or greater than several currently marketed HIV protease inhibitors. In addition, a number of compounds in this series were more potent against the drug-resistant mutant viruses than they were against wild-type virus.

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The advent of highly active antiretroviral therapy or ‘HAART’ in the mid-1990s resulted in dramatic improvements in the treatment of HIV disease. Prior to this time, treatment consisted of mono- or combination therapy with various nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors. The inclusion of protease inhibitors (PIs) as a component of combination regimens led to significantly improved clinical outcomes.¹ In spite of their success, the presently marketed HIV-PIs have a number of shortcomings. Of particular concern is the emergence of strains of HIV that are resistant to the current generation of PIs.² Therefore, the discovery of newer agents in the PI class that have activity against PI-resistant viral strains is becoming increasingly important.

We recently described a novel series of arylsulfonamide HIV-PIs that possessed sub-picomolar HIV protease activities and potent antiviral activity against wild-type and two drug-resistant viruses.³ This series, exemplified by compound **1** (Fig. 1), was obtained by systematically

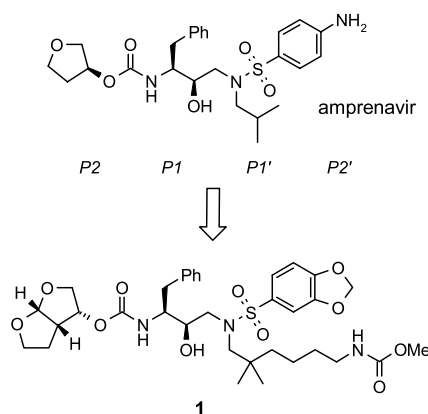


Figure 1.

modifying the P2, P1', and P2' side chains of the amprenavir scaffold.

A key element of our strategy was the possibility of improving enzyme potency through the introduction of additional enzyme–inhibitor binding interactions by tethering capped aminoalkyl moieties to the P1' isobutyl side chain. More specifically, we were interested in building in hydrogen bonding interactions between distal P1' acylamino groups and the guanidine side chain of Arg 8 in the protease enzyme. The SAR data showed a clear dependence of enzyme and antiviral activity on the nature of the amino capping group and the length

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of the tether. Both of these observations are consistent with a new enzyme–inhibitor interaction.

Herein we describe our efforts to further improve on the arylsulfonamide scaffold by shifting the capped alkylamino moieties from the P1' isobutyl side chain to an

oxygen atom located in the *para* position of the P1 phenyl group (Fig. 2). Based on the homodimeric C₂ symmetric structure of the HIV-protease enzyme, it might be possible to achieve binding interactions through P1 side chain extensions analogous to those that appear to be operative in the P1' chain-extended series.

To optimize any potential new P1 side chain–enzyme interactions, an efficient synthetic approach should allow for the straightforward variation of both tether chain length and the amino capping groups. The synthesis of compounds in the P1 chain-extended series is illustrated in Scheme 1. The route begins with tyrosine derivative **4**, which was converted to chloromethyl ketone **5** employing literature methods.⁴ Diastereoselective sodium borohydride reduction of **5** afforded a chlorohydrin intermediate which was converted to epoxide **6** by treatment with ethanolic KOH. Ring opening of **6** with isobutylamine followed by reaction with 3,4-methylenedioxybenzenesulfonyl chloride⁵ gave sulfonamide **7**. TFA-induced cleavage of the BOC group afforded primary amine **8**. The bicyclic bis-THF subunit was introduced at the P2 position by acylation with the PNP-carbonate derivative of optically pure alcohol **2**.⁶

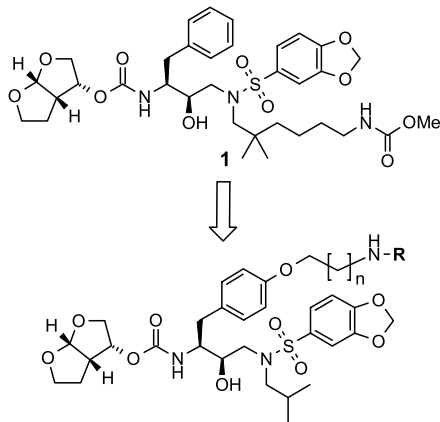
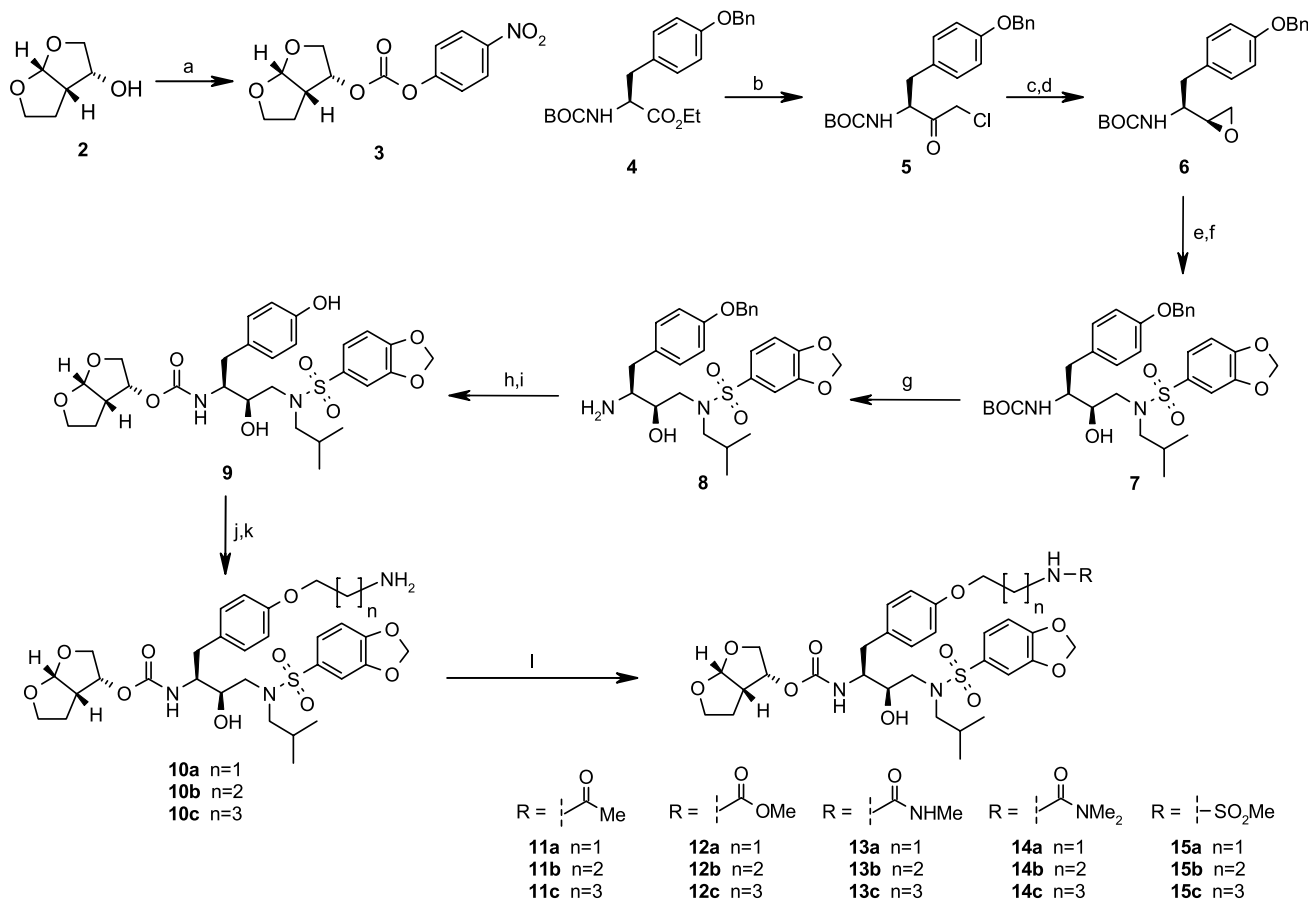
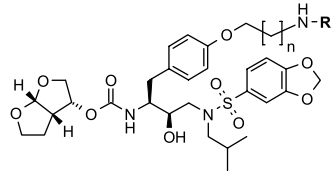


Figure 2.



Scheme 1. Reagents and conditions: (a) 4-Nitrophenylchloroformate, pyridine, CH₂Cl₂, 89%; (b) ICH₂Cl, LDA, THF, −78 °C, 70%; (c) NaBH₄, EtOH/THF; (d) KOH, EtOH, reflux; (e) isobutylamine, *i*-PrOH, reflux; (f) 3,4-methylenedioxybenzenesulfonyl chloride, DIEA, CH₂Cl₂, 86% from **6**; (g) TFA, CH₂Cl₂ then aqueous NaOH, 100%; (h) compound **3**, DIEA, MeCN, 96%; (i) H₂, 10% Pd(C), THF, 98%; (j) HOCH₂(CH₂)_nNHBOC, di-*t*-butylazodicarboxylate, Ph₃P, CH₂Cl₂, 70–95%; (k) TFA, CH₂Cl₂ then aqueous NaOH, 76–94%; (l) for **11a–c**: acetyl chloride, DIEA, CH₂Cl₂, 79–95%; for **12a–c**: methyl chloroformate, DIEA, CH₂Cl₂, 85–92%; for **13a–c**: methyl isocyanate, THF, 83–96%; for **14a–c**: dimethylcarbamyl chloride, DIEA, CH₂Cl₂, 85–98%; for **15a–c**: methanesulfonyl chloride, DIEA, CH₂Cl₂, 83–100%.

Table 1. Antiviral data for P1 chain-extended arylsulfonamides^a


Entry	<i>n</i>	R	HXB2 IC ₅₀ (nM)	EP13 IC ₅₀ (nM)	D545701 IC ₅₀ (nM)
10a	1	H	180	150	130
10b	2	H	67	50	65
10c	3	H	15	14	28
11a	1		140	52	53
11b	2		57	18	20
11c	3		39	13	16
12a	1		3.0	2.9	7.1
12b	2		2.8	2.6	7.1
12c	3		2.6	2.6	6.6
13a	1		200	131	130
13b	2		119	56	43
13c	3		60	26	22
14a	1		37	9.1	11
14b	2		25	11	11
14c	3		65	22	32
15a	1		62	9.1	20
15b	2		41	20	21
15c	3		15	5.9	9.2
1	—	—	2.2	19	15
Atazanavir	—	—	25	93	70
Lopinavir	—	—	40	400	>1000
Indinavir	—	—	50	330	440
Amprenavir	—	—	130	440	>1000
Nelfinavir	—	—	320	450	>1000

^a With the exception of compound **15a**, all IC₅₀ values represent averages of at least three experimental results.

Catalytic hydrogenolysis of the *O*-benzyl group afforded phenol intermediate **9**. The P1 aminoalkyl linkers were installed by Mitsunobu reaction with BOC protected aminoalkanols followed by TFA deprotection of the BOC group. Finally, the amino capping groups were introduced via reactions of primary amine intermediates **10a–c** with various electrophiles.

Table 1 shows the in vitro antiviral data for 18 new compounds in the P1 chain-extended series. In addition, analogous data are shown for the earlier generation arylsulfonamide **1** and five currently marketed HIV protease inhibitors, also determined using our in-house antiviral assays. The antiviral IC₅₀s for wild-type HIV virus (HXB2)⁷ and two multi-PI resistant viruses

(EP13 and D545701)⁸ were determined in an MT4 cell line.⁹

The primary amine derivatives **10a–c** show a clear increase in wild-type and mutant antiviral activity upon extending the P1 chain from $n = 1$ to $n = 3$. This trend is consistent with a new side chain interaction which is strongest for $n = 3$. However, in the absence of enzyme inhibitory activities¹⁰ or X-ray crystallographic data supporting a new interaction, the strength of this inference is limited. Clearly, factors beyond intrinsic enzyme activity, such as cell penetration and protein binding, influence the observed trends in cellular antiviral activities.

Acetyl derivatives **11a–c** are in general more potent than the analogous primary amines and they show a striking inverse resistance profile with approximately threefold increases in mutant activities versus wild-type. This inverse resistance behavior, often referred to as 'hypersusceptibility'¹¹, compares favorably to the threefold and >25-fold decrease in D545701 activities for atazanavir and lopinavir, respectively. Methyl carbamates **12a–c** comprise the most potent class of molecules in the series with single digit nanomolar IC₅₀s for all three virus strains tested. Interestingly, there appears to be no dependence of potency on the length of the P1 tether for the carbamate derivatives. The impressive potencies, along with the absence of a chain length SAR, suggest that their activities are probably more a function of physiochemical parameters than any specific P1 side chain binding interactions. Perhaps the methyl carbamate moiety imparts favorable polarity properties leading to an enhancement in cell penetration.

A comparison of monomethyl urea derivatives **13a–c** to dimethyl ureas **14a–c** is interesting. The monomethyl compounds show a consistent chain length SAR similar to that observed for primary amines **10a–c** and acetamides **11a–c**. In contrast, the dimethyl derivatives display a relatively flat chain length SAR and they are, as a class, more potent than the analogous monomethyl compounds. The methanesulfonyl derivatives **15a–c** show a chain length SAR against the wild-type virus that is consistent with compounds **10**, **11**, and **13**; however, the activity trends against the two mutant viruses are rather ill-defined.

Table 2 summarizes the in vivo pharmacokinetic analysis of methyl carbamate derivatives **12a** and **12b**. Both compounds possess negligible oral bioavailability in both rat and dog. However, when **12a** was co-administered with the potent cytochrome P450 inhibitor ritonavir, a dramatic increase from 0% to 33% oral bioavailability was achieved. Poor oral bioavailability is one of the general shortcomings of the HIV protease drug class. This can be effectively offset by 'boosting' systemic drug exposures via ritonavir co-administration and in fact this has become standard clinical practice (e.g., co-formulation of ritonavir with lopinavir in the commercial preparation of Kaletra).¹²

In summary, we have discovered a novel series of P1 chain-extended arylsulfonamide HIV-PIs that show very

Table 2. In vivo pharmacokinetic parameters for **12a** and **12b**

Entry	Species	Dose (mg/kg)	IV clearance (mL/h/kg)	$t_{1/2}$ (h)	% F
12b	Rat	1.0	43	0.2	~3
12b	Dog	0.5	30	1.1	~1
12a	Rat	1.0	55	1.6	~1
12a	Dog	0.5	68	nd	0
12a	Dog	0.5 ^a	nd	0.6	33 ^b

^a Co-administered with 4 mg/kg ritonavir.

^b Calculated by dividing the ritonavir-boosted oral AUC by the non-boosted IV AUC.

potent antiviral activity and in many cases inverse antiviral resistance profiles. As a class, the methyl carbamates **12a–c** are the most potent with mutant antiviral potencies of up to 35 times that of the currently marketed PI atazanavir. In addition, they show significant improvements in mutant antiviral activities versus our earlier generation arylsulfonamide series (i.e, compound **1**). Structural studies aimed toward elucidating any potential new enzyme–inhibitor interactions and the origin of the inverse resistance behavior are currently in progress and will be reported in due course.

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