

# Suppression of phospholipase C blocks $G_i$ -mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity

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## Abstract

The potential effect of inhibition of phospholipase C on the response of  $G_i$ -coupled receptors was investigated in neuroblastoma  $\times$  glioma hybrid (NG108-15) cells. The phospholipase C specific inhibitor 1-[6-((17 $\beta$ -3-methoxyestra-1,3,5(10)-trien-17-yl)amino)hexyl]-1H-pyrrole-2,5-dione (U73122), which did not affect basal and forskolin-stimulated adenylyl cyclase activities, time- and dose-dependently blocked  $\delta$ -opioid receptor-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity, the  $EC_{50}$  (0.5  $\mu$ M) of which was consistent with that for inhibition of bradykinin-dependent phospholipase C activation ( $EC_{50}$  = 1  $\mu$ M). U73122 treatment also blocked functional responses of m4 muscarinic receptor and  $\alpha_2$ -adrenoceptor in NG108-15 cells and three opioid receptors ( $\mu$ ,  $\delta$  and opioid receptor-like receptor (ORL<sub>1</sub>)) in human neuroblastoma SK-N-SH cells. 1-[6-((17 $\beta$ -3-Methoxyestra-1,3,5(10)-trien-17-yl)amino)hexyl]-2,5-pyrrolidinedione (U73343), an inactive analog of U73122, did not show any effect, which suggests that the blockade by U73122 of  $G_i$ -coupled receptor-mediated signaling is probably mediated through inhibition of phospholipase C, although a possible direct modification of G proteins can not be excluded. Furthermore, treatment with U73122 but not U73343 blocked the GTP-induced inhibition of adenylyl cyclase, indicating blockade at the level of  $G_i$  proteins. © 1998 Elsevier Science B.V.

**Keywords:** Phospholipase C;  $G_i$  protein; Adenylyl cyclase; Phospholipase C inhibitor; G protein-coupled receptor

## 1. Introduction

Heterotrimeric guanine nucleotide regulating proteins (G proteins) relay information from cell surface receptors to intracellular effectors, and either  $\alpha$  or  $\beta\gamma$  subunits of G proteins can independently transmit signals (Clapham and Neer, 1993; Murthy et al., 1996; Murthy and Makhlof, 1996). With high fidelity, each G protein transduces the signal from a certain subset of receptors to a restricted array of effectors, including adenylyl cyclase and inositol-phospholipid-specific phospholipase C. In the case of adenylyl cyclase, two different kinds of G proteins are involved, namely  $G_s$ , which stimulates adenylyl cyclase and  $G_i$ , which inhibits adenylyl cyclase. In the case of phospholipase C, some of its isoforms such as phospholipase C $\beta$  are stimulated by the  $\alpha$  subunit of  $G_q$  and  $\beta\gamma$  subunits of G proteins. All four well-characterized forms of phospholipase C $\beta$  are regulated by the  $\alpha$  subunit of the  $G_q$  class while three of them (phospholipase C $\beta$ 1–3) are

controlled by  $\beta\gamma$  subunits (Smrcka et al., 1991; Taylor et al., 1991; Lee et al., 1992).

Besides the high specificity, another prominent characteristic of G protein-mediated signaling is the cross-regulation between the different signaling pathways. For instance, stimulation of the  $G_s$ -mediated adenylyl cyclase pathway inhibits activation of phospholipase C mediated by the  $G_q$ -coupled receptor (Morris et al., 1991). It has also been shown that activation of cAMP dependent protein kinase after stimulation of  $G_s$ -coupled receptors strongly inhibits phospholipase C $\beta$ 2 activity induced by the  $\beta\gamma$  subunits of G proteins (Liu and Simon, 1996). Such cross-regulation among different signaling pathways is probably important to induce diverse cellular responses and to fine-tune the cell functions.

Although it has been shown that activation of G protein/adenylyl cyclase pathway can positively or negatively regulate the G protein/phospholipase C system, it is not clear whether the G protein/phospholipase C system can cross-regulate the G protein/adenylyl cyclase cascade. In the present study, we investigated the potential effect of inhibition of phospholipase C on the adenylyl cyclase

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activity mediated by G proteins, using the specific phospholipase C inhibitor, 1-[6-((17 $\beta$ -3-methoxyestra-1,3,5(10)-trien-17-yl)amino)hexyl]-1H-pyrrole-2,5-dione (U73122) (Wu et al., 1992; Yule and Williams, 1992) and its inactive structural analog, 1-[6-((17 $\beta$ -3-methoxyestra-1,3,5(10)-trien-17-yl)amino)hexyl]-2,5-pyrrolidinedione (U73343) (Wu et al., 1992). Our results demonstrated that suppression of phospholipase C blocked G<sub>i</sub>-mediated inhibition of adenyl cyclase activity.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. Materials

[D-Pen<sup>2</sup>,D-Pen<sup>5</sup>]enkephalin (DPDPE); [D-Ala<sup>2</sup>,N-Me-pPhe<sup>4</sup>,Gly-ol<sup>5</sup>]enkephalin (DAMGO), carbachol and 5-bromo-6-[2-imidazolin-2-ylamino]-quinoline (UK14304) were from Sigma Chemical Co. (St. Louis, MO). Nociceptin was from Tocris Cookson (Bristol, UK). Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM), RPMI 1640 and fetal calf serum were from Gibco (Grand Island, NY).

### 2.2. Cell cultures

NG108-15 cells were cultured in DMEM supplemented with 10% heat-inactivated fetal calf serum, 100 units/ml penicillin, 100  $\mu$ g/ml streptomycin, 2 mM glutamine and HAT (0.1 mM hypoxanthine, 10  $\mu$ M aminopterin and 16  $\mu$ M thymidine) as described previously (Cai et al., 1996). Human neuroblastoma SK-N-SH cells (American Type Culture Collection) were cultured in RPMI 1640 supplemented with 10% heat-inactivated fetal calf serum, 100 units/ml penicillin, 100  $\mu$ g/ml streptomycin, 2 mM glutamine as described previously (Cheng et al., 1997).

### 2.3. Assay for inositol phosphate formation

Cells were labelled with 0.75 ml of DMEM containing myo-[<sup>3</sup>H]inositol (2.5  $\mu$ Ci/ml) and 5% (v/v) fetal calf serum. At 24 h after labeling, the cells were rinsed with 2 ml of assay medium (20 mM HEPES-buffered DMEM with 20 mM LiCl) followed by incubation at 37°C for 1 h in 1 ml of assay medium with the indicated drugs. inositol phosphates production was estimated by determining the ratio of [<sup>3</sup>H]inositol phosphates to [<sup>3</sup>H]inositol plus [<sup>3</sup>H]inositol phosphates as described previously (Conklin et al., 1992).

### 2.4. Cyclic AMP assay

Cells ( $\sim 1 \times 10^5$  cells/sample) were incubated at 37°C for 10 min with 10  $\mu$ M forskolin, 500  $\mu$ M 1-methyl-3-isobutylxanthine (IBMX) and test reagents. The reaction was terminated with 1 N perchloric acid and neutralized with 2 N K<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>. The cAMP levels were determined by

radioimmunoassay as described previously (Cai et al., 1997). Values were calculated as  $100 \times [\text{cAMP}(\text{For} + \text{agonist}) - \text{cAMP}(\text{basal})] / [\text{cAMP}(\text{For}) - \text{cAMP}(\text{basal})]$ . cAMP(For + agonist) represents cAMP accumulation in the presence of forskolin and agonist, cAMP(basal) represents cAMP accumulation in the absence of forskolin and agonist and cAMP(For) represents cAMP accumulation in the presence of forskolin alone.

### 2.5. Statistical analysis

Each experimental point was performed in triplicate and at least three experiments were carried out. Data are expressed as means  $\pm$  S.E. of all determinations. When not shown, error bars are smaller than symbols. Statistical significance of the experimental results was assessed by using Student's *t*-test on STATVIEW program.  $P < 0.05$  was accepted as denoting statistical significance.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Blockade by U73122 of bradykinin-mediated activation of phospholipase C

Bradykinin, a specific agonist of the bradykinin receptor which couples to the G<sub>q</sub> family of G proteins, has been reported to stimulate the metabolism of inositol phospholipids in NG108-15 cells by activation of phospholipase C (Nishizuka, 1984). After treatment of the cells with bradykinin (10  $\mu$ M) together with U73122, a specific phospholipase C inhibitor, the stimulation of inositol phosphates production by bradykinin was dose-dependently blocked by U73122 with an EC<sub>50</sub> of approximately 1  $\mu$ M (Fig. 1).

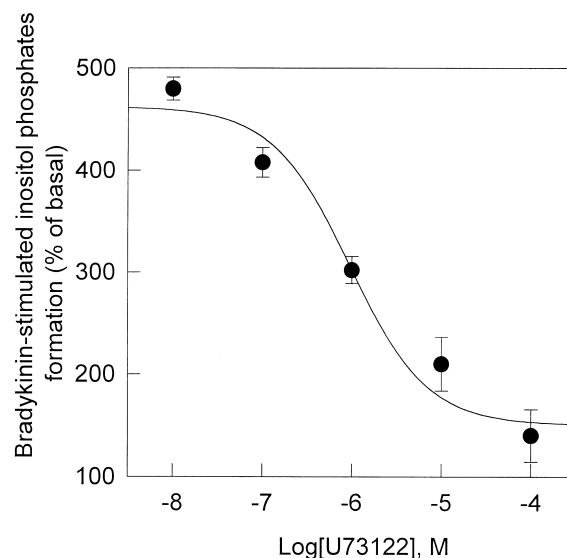


Fig. 1. Blockade by U73122 of bradykinin-stimulated inositol phosphates formation. Cells were labeled with myo-[<sup>3</sup>H]inositol. inositol phosphates production was measured after exposure to bradykinin (10  $\mu$ M) in the absence or presence of increasing concentrations of U73122 as indicated.

### 3.2. Reversal of $\delta$ -opioid receptor-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase by U73122 in NG108-15 cells

The  $\delta$ -opioid receptor is functionally coupled to the inhibitory G protein ( $G_i$ ) and, thus, negatively regulates adenylyl cyclase in NG108-15 cells (Law et al., 1983). After coadministration of DPDPE, a selective  $\delta$ -opioid receptor agonist, with U73122 (reported  $IC_{50} = 1-2 \mu M$ ), the inhibition of cAMP accumulation by DPDPE was potently blocked. The effect of U73122 was time-dependent and maximal inhibition was reached after 10 min incubation (Fig. 2A). Therefore, a 10 min of incubation time was used in all the experiments performed thereafter. Fig. 2B shows the concentration–response curve of U73122

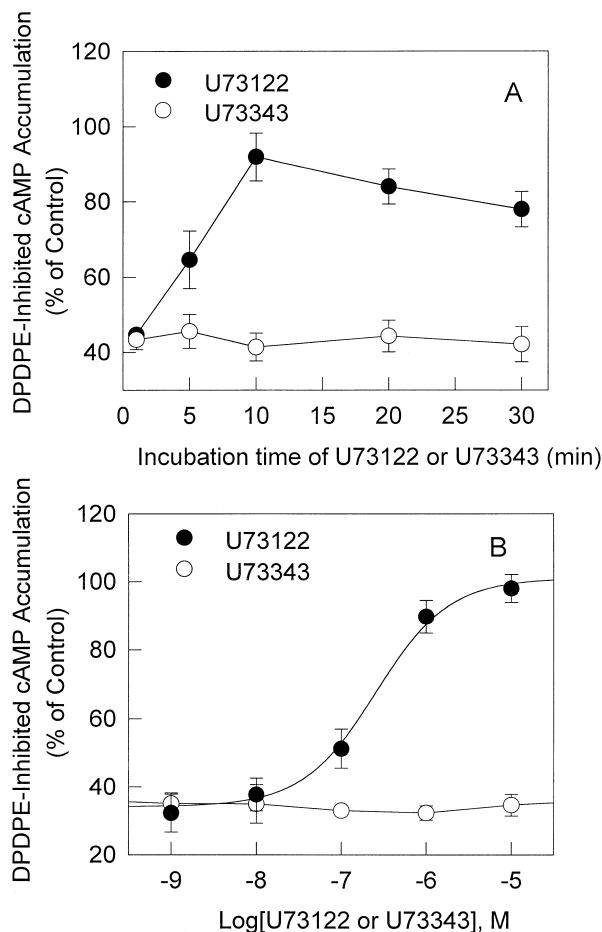


Fig. 2. Time- and dose-dependent blockade by the phospholipase C inhibitor U73122 of  $\delta$ -opioid receptor-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase in NG108-15 cells. (A) Time-dependent effects of U73122 on DPDPE inhibition of forskolin-stimulated cAMP accumulation. Cells were incubated at 37°C with forskolin (10  $\mu M$ ), IBMX (500  $\mu M$ ) and DPDPE (1  $\mu M$ ) for 10 min in the presence of U73122 (10  $\mu M$ ) or U73343 (10  $\mu M$ ) for different times indicated. The reaction was terminated with 1 N perchloric acid and cAMP concentration was measured by radioimmunoassay. (B) Dose-dependent effect of U73122 on DPDPE inhibition of cAMP accumulation. Cells were incubated at 37°C for 10 min with forskolin (10  $\mu M$ ), IBMX (500  $\mu M$ ) and DPDPE (0.1  $\mu M$ ) in the absence or presence of different concentrations of U73122 or U73343. The reaction was terminated and cAMP concentration was measured by radioimmunoassay. Values were calculated as described in Section 2.

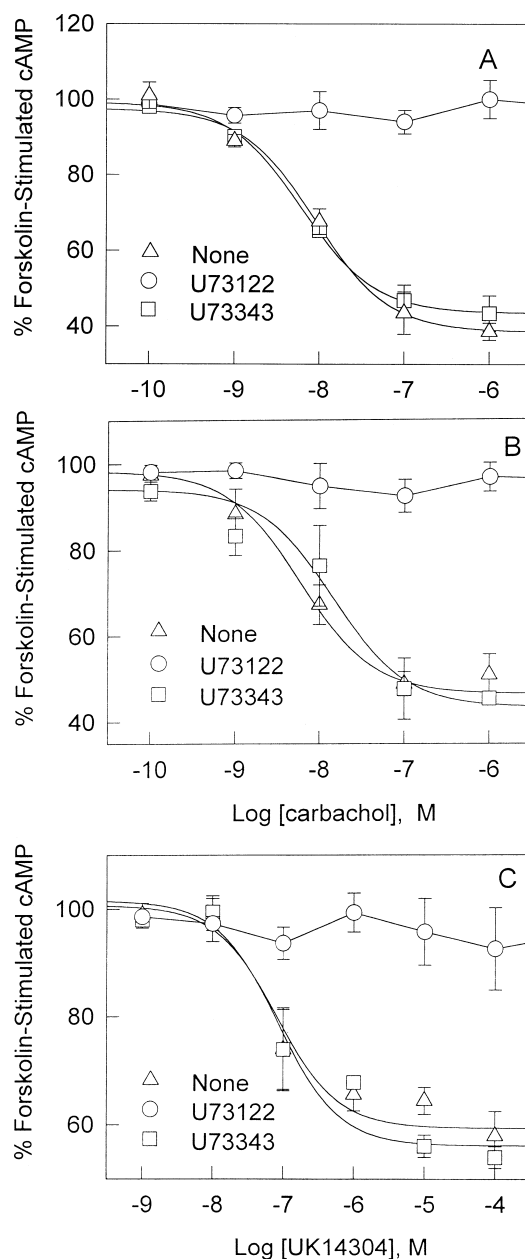


Fig. 3. Blockade by U73122 of inhibition of cAMP accumulation by DPDPE (panel A), carbachol (panel B), or UK14304 (panel C) in NG108-15 cells. Cells were incubated at 37°C for 10 min with forskolin (10  $\mu M$ ), IBMX (500  $\mu M$ ) and DPDPE ( $10^{-10}$ – $10^{-6}$  M) or carbachol ( $10^{-10}$ – $10^{-6}$  M) or UK14304 ( $10^{-9}$ – $10^{-4}$  M) in the absence or presence of U73122 (10  $\mu M$ ) or U73343 (10  $\mu M$ ). cAMP levels were determined and calculated as described Section 2.

on DPDPE-induced attenuation of cAMP accumulation. Half-maximal inhibition was achieved at approximately 0.5  $\mu M$ , which agreed with that for inhibition of agonist-dependent phospholipase C activation. The effect of U73122 was not mimicked by U73343, an inactive structural analog of U73122, suggesting the effect of U73122 was possibly mediated through inhibition of phospholipase C, though a possible direct modification could not be excluded.

### 3.3. Blockade of $G_i$ -coupled receptor-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity by U73122 in NG108-15 cells

In addition to  $\delta$ -opioid receptor, there are other  $G_i$  protein-coupled receptors such as m4 muscarinic receptor and  $\alpha_2$ -adrenoceptor expressed in NG108-15 cells (McClue and Milligan, 1990; Strassheim and Malbon, 1994). To test if the inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity by these  $G_i$ -coupled receptors was also affected by phospholipase C inhibitor, NG108-15 cells were challenged with U73122 together with either the muscarinic receptor agonist carbachol ( $10^{-10}$ – $10^{-6}$  M) or the  $\alpha_2$ -adrenoceptor agonist UK14304 ( $10^{-9}$ – $10^{-4}$  M). Interestingly, the inhibition by both carbachol and UK14304 of forskolin-stimulated cAMP accumulation was potently blocked by U73122 treatment but not by U73343 treatment (Fig. 3B and C).

### 3.4. Effect of U73122 on $G_i$ -coupled receptor function in SK-N-SH cells

To exclude the possibility that the effect of phospholipase C inhibitor on  $G_i$ -coupled receptor function is a characteristic limited to NG108-15 cells, human neuroblastoma cell line SK-N-SH cells were tested for an effect of U73122 on  $G_i$ -coupled  $\delta$ ,  $\mu$  and ORL<sub>1</sub> receptors (Zhang et al., 1996; Cheng et al., 1997). Treatment of the cells with U73122 (10  $\mu$ M) together with 0.1  $\mu$ M DPDPE, 0.1  $\mu$ M DAMGO (a specific  $\mu$ -opioid receptor agonist), or 0.1  $\mu$ M nociceptin (a specific ORL<sub>1</sub> receptor agonist) potently blocked the inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity induced by these agonists (Fig. 4). In contrast, treatment with U73343 (10  $\mu$ M) displayed no apparent effect (Fig. 4).

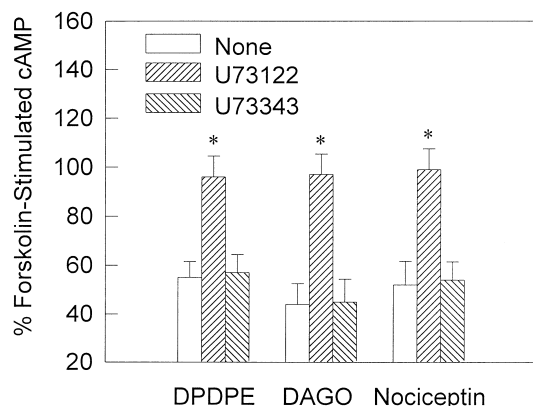


Fig. 4. Blockade by U73122 of  $\mu$ ,  $\delta$  and ORL<sub>1</sub> receptor-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity in SK-N-SH cells. Cells were incubated at 37°C for 10 min with forskolin (10  $\mu$ M), IBMX (500  $\mu$ M), DPDPE (0.1  $\mu$ M) or DAGO (0.1  $\mu$ M) or nociceptin (0.1  $\mu$ M) in the absence or presence of U73122 (10  $\mu$ M) or U73343 (10  $\mu$ M). cAMP levels were determined and calculated as described in Section 2. \* $P$  < 0.05 in comparison with control.

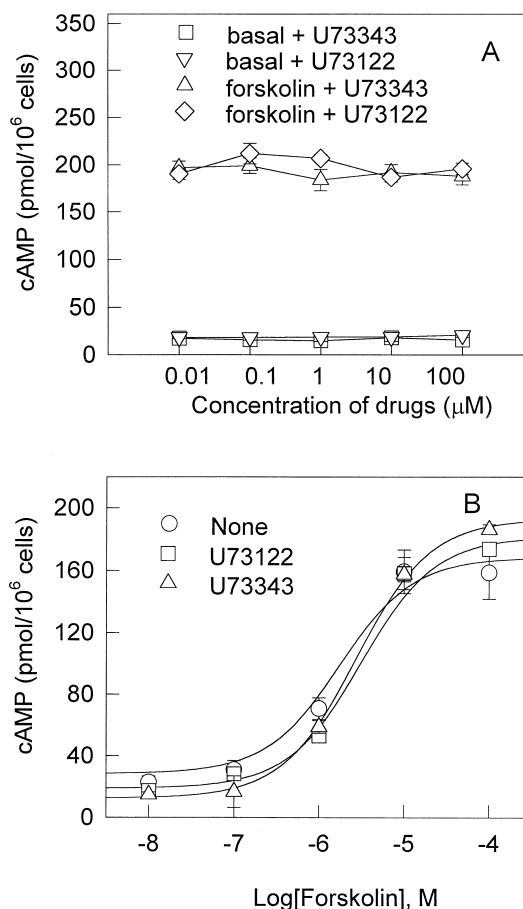


Fig. 5. Lack of effect of U73122 on basal and forskolin-stimulated adenylyl cyclase activity in NG108-15 cells. (A) Cells were treated at 37°C for 10 min without or with forskolin (10  $\mu$ M), and IBMX (500  $\mu$ M) in the absence or presence of different concentrations of U73122 ( $10^{-8}$ – $10^{-4}$  M) or U73343 ( $10^{-8}$ – $10^{-4}$  M). (B) Cells were treated at 37°C for 10 min with forskolin ( $10^{-8}$ – $10^{-4}$  M) and IBMX (500  $\mu$ M) in the absence or presence of 10  $\mu$ M U73122 or 10  $\mu$ M U73343. cAMP levels were determined by radioimmunoassay as described in Section 2.

### 3.5. Lack of effect of U73122 on basal and forskolin-stimulated adenylyl cyclase activity in NG108-15 cells

The above results raise the question whether the inhibition of phospholipase C by U73122 is mediated by its effect on adenylyl cyclase. NG108-15 cells were treated without or with forskolin in the presence of U73122 or U73343 and then cAMP concentrations were measured. As shown in Fig. 5A, basal and forskolin-stimulated cAMP levels were not altered by different concentrations of U73122 or U73343. The concentration-dependent stimulation of cAMP accumulation by forskolin was also unchanged after treatment with either 10  $\mu$ M U73122 or 10  $\mu$ M U73343 (Fig. 5B). These results, taken together, indicate that inhibition of phospholipase C did not affect the basal and forskolin-stimulated activity of adenylyl cyclase.

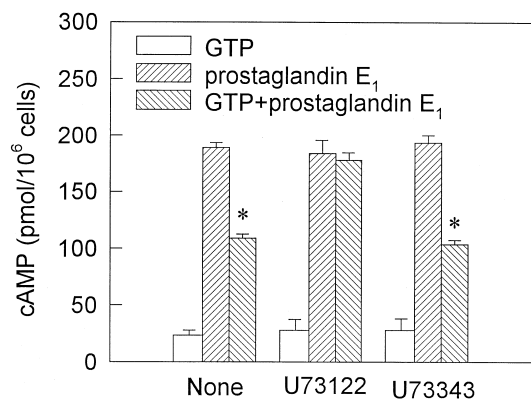


Fig. 6. Inhibition of adenylyl cyclase by GTP was blocked in broken cell preparations from U73122 treated cells. Cells were homogenized in phosphate buffered saline and the homogenates were incubated at 37°C for 10 min with IBMX (500  $\mu$ M), GTP (0.1 mM), or prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub> (10  $\mu$ M), or GTP (0.1 mM)+ prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) in the absence or presence of either U73122 (10  $\mu$ M) or U73343 (10  $\mu$ M). cAMP levels were determined by radioimmunoassay. \*  $P < 0.05$  in comparison with prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub> treated cells.

### 3.6. Blockade of GTP-induced inhibition of adenylyl cyclase by U73122

In order to assess the potential effects of phospholipase C inhibition on the activity of G<sub>i</sub> proteins, we assayed adenylyl cyclase activity in cell homogenates prepared from control, U73343- or U73122-treated NG108-15 cells. Cells were treated for 10 min with 10  $\mu$ M U73122 or 10  $\mu$ M U73343, immediately homogenized and then assayed for adenylyl cyclase activity. In this assay, cyclic AMP accumulation in response to stimulation by prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub> (10  $\mu$ M) was not altered by inhibition of phospholipase C. High concentrations (0.1 mM) of GTP generally activate inhibitory adenylyl cyclase (Strassheim and Malbon, 1994), possibly due to an effect of phospholipase C  $\beta$  and/or an effect of G<sub>i</sub>. It was shown that GTP inhibition of prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub>-stimulated cyclic AMP accumulation was significantly blocked by treatment with U73122 but not by U73343 treatment (Fig. 6). Our data suggest that G proteins are probably affected by the inhibition of phospholipase C.

## 4. Discussion

The present study demonstrated that the specific phospholipase C inhibitor U73122 dose- and time-dependently blocked the  $\delta$ -opioid receptor-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity in NG108-15 cells. The inhibition of adenylyl cyclase by two other G<sub>i</sub>-coupled receptors, m4 muscarinic receptor and  $\alpha_2$ -adrenoceptor, was also blocked by U73122. In addition, the  $\delta$ ,  $\mu$  and ORL<sub>1</sub> receptor-induced reduction of cAMP levels was completely reversed

by U73122 in SK-N-SH cells. The fact that treatment with U73343, an inactive structural analog of U73122, did not show any effect under the same conditions, and that the EC<sub>50</sub> for U73122 to inhibit the DPDPE response was similar to that to inhibit phospholipase C activation in NG108-15 cells suggested that the observed effect of U73122 was likely mediated through inhibition of phospholipase C, though a possible covalent modification by the compound could not be excluded. Taken together, our results demonstrate that the phospholipase C inhibitor U73122 blocked G<sub>i</sub>-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity.

It has been established that stimulation of phospholipase C leads to generation of inositol 1,4,5-trisphosphate (InsP<sub>3</sub>) and diacylglycerol followed by mobilization of Ca<sup>2+</sup> from intracellular stores and activation of protein kinase C. But it seems unlikely that the blockade of the G<sub>i</sub>/adenylyl cyclase system by inhibition of phospholipase C was due to suppression of Ca<sup>2+</sup> mobilization or protein kinase C, since removal of intracellular Ca<sup>2+</sup> with the Ca<sup>2+</sup> chelator did not affect the functional responses of opioid receptors (data not shown), and nor did acute blockade of protein kinase C change opioid receptor-mediated inhibition of adenylyl cyclase, as has been demonstrated in our previous study (Cai et al., 1997). On the contrary, activation rather than inhibition of protein kinase C has been shown to attenuate inhibition of adenylyl cyclase mediated by opioid and other G<sub>i</sub>-coupled receptors (Strassheim and Malbon, 1994). This suggests that inhibition of phospholipase C itself cross-regulates the G<sub>i</sub>/adenylyl cyclase cascade.

The blockade by U73122 of G<sub>i</sub>-coupled receptor signaling could occur at the level of the receptor, G protein, or adenylyl cyclase. U73122 treatment, which significantly blocked  $\delta$ -opioid receptor-mediated signaling, did not affect agonist binding to the receptor (data not shown). In addition, basal and forskolin-stimulated adenylyl cyclase activity was unchanged in response to the phospholipase C inhibitor treatment. Further evidence that the GTP-induced inhibition of adenylyl cyclase activity was blocked by U73122 but not U73343 and that opioid-stimulated activation of G proteins was blocked by U73122 but not by U73343 (data not shown) indicated the blockade was at the level of G<sub>i</sub> proteins.

Although the present study shows that the phospholipase C inhibitor U73122 blocks G<sub>i</sub>-mediated signaling, the underlying mechanisms remain unclear. In addition to the potential direct modification of G proteins by the compound, one possibility could be that inhibition of phospholipase C, which possesses a pleckstrin homology domain and binds to  $\beta\gamma$  subunits of G proteins (Harlan et al., 1995; Luttrell et al., 1995), may indirectly affect the activity of G<sub>i</sub> proteins by interfering with the dissociation of  $\beta\gamma$  subunits from the  $\alpha$  subunit. Another possibility could be that phospholipase C acts as a guanine nucleotide release protein, which catalyses the release of bound GDP and promotes the reactivation of G proteins (Bourne et al.,

1991) and thus inhibition of phospholipase C would prevent GDP release and the subsequent activation of G proteins.

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