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Substrate Properties of C'-Methylnucleoside and C'-Methyl-2'-deoxynucleoside 5'-Triphosphates in RNA and DNA Synthesis Reactions Catalysed by RNA and DNA Polymerases

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SUBSTRATE PROPERTIES OF C'-METHYLNUCLEOSIDE AND C'-METHYL-2'-DEOXYNUCLEOSIDE 5'-TRIPHOSPHATES IN RNA AND DNA SYNTHESIS REACTIONS CATALYSED BY RNA AND DNA POLYMERASES

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ABSTRACT. C'-Methyl derivatives of NTP and dNTP were prepared and their substrate properties were investigated in RNA and DNA synthesis reactions.

The present work is a sequel to earlier experiments in which we synthesized functionally competent analogs of nucleosides and their phosphoric esters as well as studied their physico-chemical and biological properties¹. These analogs contain all the functionalities of natural compounds, i.e. all the possible binding sites for the enzymes. Here we sum up the data on the substrate properties of C'-methylribo (and 2'-deoxyribo)nucleoside 5'-triphosphates (**1a-4a** and **1b-3b**) in the reactions of RNA and DNA synthesis catalysed by different RNA and DNA polymerases.

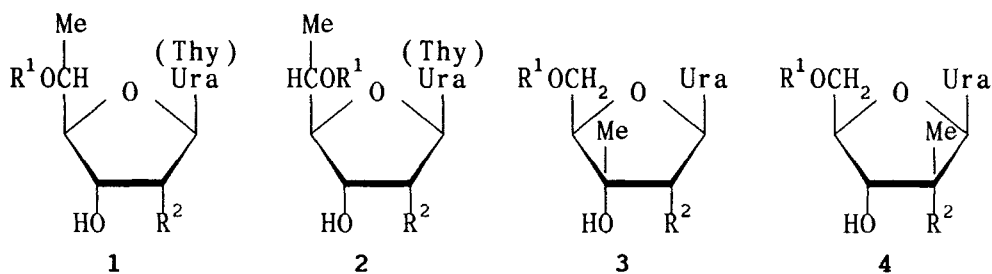
The C'-methylribonucleosides synthesized earlier (**1c-4c**)¹ were converted into the corresponding 5'-triphosphates (**1a-4a**) and 2'-deoxyderivatives (**1d-3d**)^{2,3} and then into 5'-triphosphates (**1b-3b**). Their substrate properties were studied in the reactions of RNA and DNA synthesis catalysed by *E.coli* Klenows fragment DNA polymerase I and RNA polymerase, terminal deoxynucleotidyl transferase (TDT) and DNA polymerase α from calf thymus, and avian myeloblastosis virus reverse transcriptase (RT). RNA was synthesized on T7 Δ DIII

TABLE 1. Substrate properties of C'-methylnucleoside 5'-triphosphates in RNA and DNA synthesis reactions.

Enzymes	C'-methylnucleoside 5'-triphosphates			
	1a	2a	3a	4a
RNA-polymerase	substrate	substrate	terminator	substrate
TDT	*	*	*	*
	C'-methyl-2'-deoxynucleoside 5'-triphosphates			
	1b	2b	3b	
DNA-polymerase I	substrate	substrate	inhibitor	
DNA-polymerase α	substrate	substrate	inhibitor	
RT	substrate	substrate	inhibitor	
TDT	*	substrate	*	

*NTP analogs were not transformed

phage DNA in the presence of CpA which allows one to initiate RNA synthesis from an A1 promoter (the experiment is described in detail elsewhere^{4,5}). Reactions catalysed by DNA polymerases were carried out with an equimolar complex of M13 mp10 phage DNA and with a [p^{32}]dCCCAGTCACGACGT labeled primer. The same primer was used in the synthesis catalysed with TDT without a template. The results are listed in Table 1.



a: $R^1 = P_3O_9H_4$, $R^2 = OH$

c: $R^1 = H$, $R^2 = OH$

b: $R^1 = P_3O_9H_4$, $R^2 = H$

d: $R^1 = R^2 = H$

It would be relevant to note that 5'-triphosphates of 5'-C-methylnucleosides belonging to the D-allo and L-talo series (**1a** and **2a**) are integrated into a growing RNA chain by RNA polymerase with a different effectiveness⁴ whereas 5'-triphosphates of 3'-C-methylnucleosides are terminating substrates for this enzyme and can be used to sequence nucleic acids⁶. **1b** and **2b** are substrates for all the studied DNA polymerases and the corresponding modified nucleoside residues can be integrated into the middle of a DNA chain. On the contrary, **3b** cannot be incorporated into a growing DNA chain and is an inhibitor of this reaction. In the reaction catalysed by TDT, **1b** is not a substrate while **2b** is built into the 3'-end of the oligonucleotide, and the formed dpCCCAGTCACGACGT5'MeT cannot be extended readily when dTTP is added. It should be noted that both ribo-UTP derivatives **1a** and **2a** are not substrates for this enzyme.

The reactivity of hydroxyls and conformational properties are modified when a methyl group is incorporated into a nucleoside molecule. The presence of bulky methyl groups may induce steric hindrances due to intermolecular and intramolecular collisions when the substrate is fixed in a certain conformation in the enzyme-substrate complex.

In order to detect intramolecular contacts between a methyl group and a heterocyclic base conformational analysis of nucleosides and their analogs using force-field method in the approximation of "rigid" bond lengths was carried out. The conformational energy maps (the χ -P dependence versus the potential energy E) are nearly identical for 5'-C-methylnucleosides and natural nucleosides when the exocyclic HOCH₂ group has a fixed gauche-gauche orientation ($\gamma=60^\circ$). Differences appear when the methyl group of an analog is arranged above the furanose cycle⁷. Then the heterocyclic base will collide with the methyl group both in *syn* and *anti* regions. The energetically forbidden conformation will be defined as a conformation when the following condition is met: $E_{\text{analog}} - E_{\text{natural nucleoside}} > 10 \text{ kcal/mol.}$ Table 2

Table 2. Energetically forbidden conformations of 2'-C- and 3'-C-methyluridine ($E_{\text{analog}} - E_{\text{natural nucleoside}} > 10$ kcal/mol)

Conformation *	Energetically forbidden regions** of glycoside angle χ values	
	2'-C-methyluridine	3'-C-methyluridine
<i>N-region</i>		
P=0° ³ T	80-185°, 265-360°	10-125°, 195-295°
P=18° ³ E	65-190°, 260-360°	10-115°, 195-290°
P=36° ³ T	55-190°, 250-360°	20-100°, 210-270°
P=54° ⁴ E	55-185°, 240-360°	35-85°, 230-245°
<i>S-region</i>		
P=126° ¹ E	45-145°, 235-325°	-
P=144° ² T	35-145°, 235-320°	-
P=162° ² E	35-145°, 215-315°	-

*Calculated at fixed values of the angle $\gamma=60^\circ$. The methyl group collides within the entire range of glycoside angles χ in the ²T conformer (P=180°) for 2'-C-methyluridine.

**For the remaining regions $E_{\text{analog}} \approx E_{\text{natural nucleoside}}$.

presents these regions of χ angles for the main conformers of 2'-C- and 3'-C-methyluridine⁵. Only N-conformers of 3'-methylnucleosides have energetically forbidden conformations whereas no intramolecular collisions occur in S-conformers. The energy barrier of a *syn-anti* conversion rises noticeably when a methyl group is introduced in the 2'-position.

When RNA polymerase is used, **3a** acts as a terminating substrate and **4a** can substitute for UTP in the reactions of RNA synthesis. Therefore, its conformations in enzyme-substrate complexes do not acquire forbidden states. Hence, possible χ values for the substrate are in the *anti* region (150-240°), which is consistent with the conformations of RNA double helices in the A form⁸.

The conformation of a carbohydrate residue ought to be known in order to specify the substrate conformation. For the N-family typical of RNA double helices⁸, an allowed substrate conformation in the enzyme-substrate complex is confined to the χ angle range of 185 to 195° according to the calculated data for 2'-C- and 3'-C-methyluridines.

The finding that **3b** cannot act as a substrate in the reactions of DNA synthesis may be associated with steric hindrances within the χ angle range of 210 to 270° in the N-family of conformers.

The application of this approach to other enzymes of nucleic acids biosynthesis has made it possible to specify the conformation of a substrate in the course of its enzyme-catalysed transformation.

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