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Synthesis of 5-Azacytidine Nucleosides with Rigid Sugar Moiety as Potential Antitumor Agents

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ABSTRACT

The bicyclic 3'-*O*,5'-*C*-methylene-linked and 2'-*O*,5'-*C*-methylene-linked 5-azacytidine derivatives were readily synthesized from 1,2;5,6-di-*O*-isopropylidene-D-glucose and evaluated against several cancer cell lines.

Key Words: 5-Azacytidine; Conformationally locked nucleosides.

Unmodified nucleosides exist in either the S-type or N-type conformation. However, due to the low energy barrier between these two dominating conformers, a fast equilibrium between them exists in solution state.^[1] Therefore, many approaches to lock the puckering of the furanose ring into N-type or S-type have been made since it is known that HIV-1 reverse transcriptase is able to discriminate between two

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conformationally locked carbocyclic AZT triphosphate analogues.^[2] Therefore, as we have found antitumor activity of 3',4'-tetrahydrofuran fused pyrimidine nucleosides locked in the C1'-exo conformation, it became interesting to study the antitumor activity of analogues locked into the S-type or the N-type conformation.

For this purpose, we report the synthesis of 5-azacytidine nucleoside analogues locked into the S-type or the N-type conformation as potential antitumor agents because 5-azacytidine derivatives like D-5-azacytidine and 2'-deoxy-D-5-azacytidine exhibit very potent anti-leukemic activity.^[3]

1,2;5,6-Di-*O*-isopropylidene-D-glucose (**3**) was oxidized with PDC to give ketone **4** (Sch. 1). Selective removal of 5,6-*O*-isopropylidene of **4** using 80% acetic acid followed by acetylation afforded the tricyclic diacetate which was hydrolyzed and acetylated to give **5**. Condensation of **5** with silylated 5-azacytosine and deacetylation of the resulting nucleoside using NH₄OH/MeOH afforded the final nucleoside **1**.

Ketone **4** was stereoselectively reduced using NaBH₄ to give diacetone D-allofuranose which was benzylated to afford **5**. 5,6-*O*-Isopropylidene of **6** was selectively removed using 75% acetic acid to give diol **11** of which primary and secondary hydroxyl groups were selectively protected as a benzoate and a benzyl ether, respectively, to give **6**. Hydrolysis of **6** and acetylation afforded diacetate **7**. Condensation of diacetate **7** with silylated 5-azauracil gave the protected nucleoside which underwent deacetylation and debenzoylation to give **8**. Selective tosylation of primary hydroxyl group of **8** followed by treatment with aqueous sodium hydroxide furnished cyclized derivative **9**. Treatment of **9** with POCl₃ and 1,2,4-triazole yielded triazole derivative which was hydrolyzed with aqueous NH₄OH to afford 5-azacytosine derivative **10**. Debenzylation of **10** using hydrogenolysis yielded the final nucleoside **2**.

The final nucleosides **1** and **2** were evaluated against several cancer cell lines, but they did not show significant antitumor activities.

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