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Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

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Synthesis and Evaluation of Anti-HSV Activity of New 5-Alkynyl-2'-Deoxyuridines

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To cite this Article Pchelintseva, A. A. , Skorobogatyy, M. V. , Petrunina, A. L. , Andronova, V. L. , Galegov, G. A. , Astakhova, I. V. , Ustinov, A. V. , Malakhov, A. D. and Korshun, Vladimir A.(2005) 'Synthesis and Evaluation of Anti-HSV Activity of New 5-Alkynyl-2'-Deoxyuridines', *Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids*, 24: 5, 923 — 926

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1081/NCN-200059280

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1081/NCN-200059280>

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SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION OF ANTI-HSV ACTIVITY OF NEW 5-ALKYNYL-2'-DEOXYURIDINES

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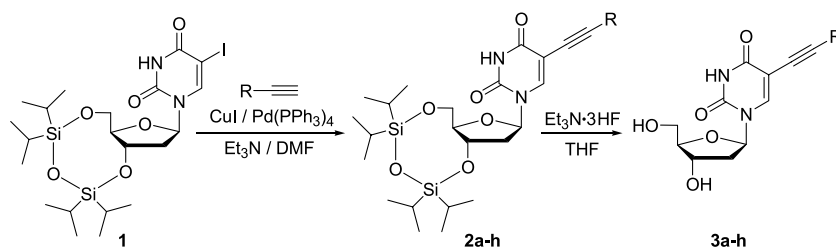
□ *Eight 5-alkynyl-2'-deoxyuridines containing different bulky substituents have been prepared and tested against HSV-1 in Vero cells. The compounds show positive antiviral activity. There is no obvious correlation between activity and substituent size. The nature of the linker between uracil and a substituent appears to be more important for antiviral properties: nucleosides containing arylethynyl groups show higher activity.*

INTRODUCTION

More than two decades ago, 5-alkynyl-2'-deoxyuridines were prepared and tested for anti-HSV activity.^[1–4] The 5-(1-propynyl)-derivative showed highest activity, while 5-(1-heptynyl)- and phenylethynyl-2'-deoxyuridines were completely inactive.^[4] This finding does not favor further search for antivirals among this class

This research was partially supported by RFBR grants (02-03-32376 and 03-03-32196). We thank Prof. Vladimir A. Efimov and Igor A. Prokhorenko for their encouraging interest and Larisa V. Grusintseva for technical assistance.

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SCHEME 1 Synthesis of 5-alkynyl-2'-deoxyuridines.

of compounds. Recently, however, we found that 5-arylethynyl-2'-deoxyuridines with bulky substituents [where aryl is 1-pyrenyl, 3-perylenyl and 4-(2-benzoxazolyl)phenyl] possess reliable activity against HSV-1.^[5] This result encouraged us to synthesize other 5-alkynyl-2'-deoxyuridines for the investigation of their structure–activity relationship.

Modified nucleosides were prepared as depicted in Scheme 1. The starting 3',5'-O-(tetraisopropylidisiloxane-1,3-diyl)-5-iodo-2'-deoxyuridine (**1**)^[6] was reacted with various terminal acetylenes under standard conditions of Sonogashira coupling for nucleosides^[3,7] to give protected nucleosides **2a–h**. Markiewicz's 3',5'-O-silyl group facilitates dramatically the purification of compounds **2a–h** by chromatography and can be easily removed by treatment with triethylamine trihydrofluoride yielding desired 5-alkynyl-2'-deoxyuridines **3a–h**.*

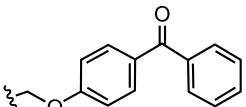
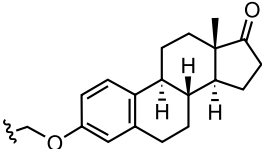
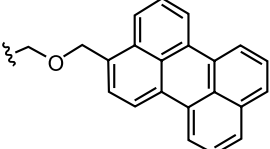
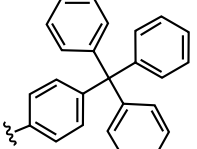
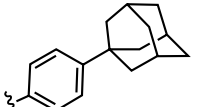
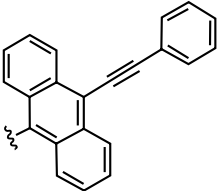
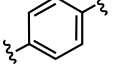
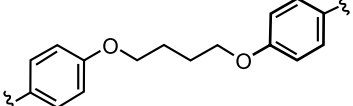
The structures of substituents R for nucleosides **3a–h** as well as their cytotoxic and anti-HSV-1 activities are given in Table 1. Nucleosides **3** are considerably more cytotoxic than acyclovir (ACV). Interestingly, two compounds bearing carbonyl groups—benzophenone nucleoside **3a** and estrone nucleoside **3b**—showed the lowest cytotoxicity. Arylethynyl nucleosides **3f** and **3e** have considerable antiviral activity; however, these derivatives are rather toxic for *Vero* cells. These compounds are active also against ACV-resistant strain of HSV-1 thus demonstrating their mode of action differs cardinally from that of ACV.

Less lipophilic dinucleoside compounds **3g** and **3h** are practically inactive. The insertion of a flexible linker between ethynyl group and aryl residue leads to complete disappearance of therapeutic properties (compound **3c** in comparison with 5-(perylene-3-ylethynyl)-2'-deoxyuridine).^[5]

Thus, 5-alkynyl-2'-deoxyuridines containing bulky aromatic substituents represent a new class of anti-HSV nucleosides with moderate activity. Further investigations are needed to understand the mechanism of viral replication inhibition by these compounds.

*Detailed procedures and characterization of compounds will be published elsewhere.

TABLE 1 Cytotoxic and Antiviral Properties of 5-Alkynyl-2'-Deoxyuridines **3** in *Vero* Cell Culture ($\mu\text{g/mL}$)^a

Nucleoside	R	CD ₅₀	HSV-1		HSV-1/ACV ^R	
			ID ₅₀	ID ₉₅	ID ₅₀	ID ₉₅
3a		250	31.3	>250	31.3	>250
3b		250	31.3	62.5	62.5	125
3c		62.5	62.5	>62.5	62.5	>62.5
3d		220	31.3	125	>220	>220
3e		13.8	7.8	>7.8	7.8	>7.8
3f		38.8	3.9	>15.6	3.9	>15.6
3g		220	125	>125	125	>125
3h		53.8	>62.5	>62.5	>62.5	> 62.5
ACV	—	>400	0.45	0.90	>400	> 400

^aHerpes simplex virus type 1, strain L₂ (HSV-1) was from the Laboratory of Virus Museum (Ivanovsky Institute of Virology, Moscow). ACV-resistant strains of HSV-1 were isolated as described earlier.^[8] Antiviral activity was expressed as the compound concentration required to reduce virus-induced cytopathicity by 50% (ID₅₀) or 95% (ID₉₅) compared to untreated control.

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