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The synthesis of axially disubstituted silicon phthalocyanines, their quaternized derivatives and first inhibitory effect on human cytosolic carbonic anhydrase isozymes hCA I and II

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In this study a novel silicon(IV) phthalocyanine bearing [(2*E*)-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]-1-(4-phenoxy)prop-2-en-1-one] group and its quaternized derivative at their axial positions were synthesized for the first time. Axially disubstituted silicon(IV) phthalocyanines were also characterized by various spectroscopic techniques. The inhibition of two human cytosolic carbonic anhydrase (hCA, EC 4.2.1.1) isozymes I and II, with axially disubstituted silicon phthalocyanines and their quaternized derivatives were investigated by using the esterase assay, with 4-nitrophenyl acetate as substrate. Silicon phthalocyanines ZM-1-Si, ZM-5-Si, ZT-Si and their quaternized derivatives ZM-1-SiQ, ZM-5-SiQ, ZT-SiQ showed IC_{50} values in the range of 0.0178–0.1653 μM for hCA I and of 0.0172–0.1212 μM against hCA II, respectively. This study is the first example of carbonic anhydrase enzyme inhibition of phthalocyanines.

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1. Introduction

Carbonic anhydrase (EC 4.2.1.1, CA) is a metalloenzymes family that catalyzes the rapid conversion of CO_2 to HCO_3^- and H^+ .¹ CA isoforms are found in a variety of tissues where they participate in several important biological processes such as acid–base balance, respiration, carbon dioxide and ion transport, bone resorption, ureagenesis, gluconeogenesis, lipogenesis and electrolyte secretion.^{2–6} Many CA isozymes involved in these processes are important therapeutic targets with the potential to be inhibited/activated for the treatment of a range of disorders such as edema, glaucoma, obesity, cancer, epilepsy and osteoporosis.^{2,4} Our groups recently investigated the interaction of 12 mammalian CA isozymes with several types of phenolic compounds, such as catechol and a series of phenols and phenolic acids, e.g., catechol, resorcinol, salicylates and some of their derivatives. They are reported to possess anticancer, anti-carcinogenic, antimutagenic, antibacterial, antiviral or anti-inflammatory activities. Phenol, phenolic compounds and hydroxybenzoic acid derivatives are widely used prodrugs or drugs. Salicylic acid is known for its ability to ease aches and

pains and reduce fevers. These medicinal properties, particularly fever relief, have been known since ancient times, and it was used as an anti-inflammatory drug.^{7–9}

Indeed, phenol binds to CA in a diverse manner compared to the classical inhibitors of the sulfonamides/sulfamates/sulfamides, which coordinate to the Zn^{2+} ion from the enzyme active site by substituting the fourth, non-protein ligand, a water molecule or hydroxide ion.¹⁰ Recently, Christianson's group then reported the X-ray crystal structure for the adduct of hCA II with phenol, showing indeed this inhibitor to bind to hCA II by anchoring its OH moiety to the zinc-bound H_2O /hydroxide ion of the enzyme through a hydrogen bond as well as to the NH amide of Thr 199, an amino acid conserved in all α -CAs and critically important for the catalytic cycle of these enzymes. Furthermore, the phenyl moiety of this inhibitor was found to lay in the hydrophobic part of the hCA II active site, where presumably CO_2 , the physiologic substrate of the CAs, binds in the precatalytic complex, explaining thus the behaviour of phenol as a unique CO_2 competitive inhibitor.¹⁰

The CAIs belong to four main classes: (i) sulfonamides (and their isosteres, such as sulfamates, sulfamides and similar derivatives) and metal complexing anions, which coordinate to the Zn(II) ion from the enzyme active site in tetrahedral or trigonal bipyramidal geometries of the metal ion (Fig. 1A and B),¹¹ (ii) phenols (such as the simple phenol $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{OH}$),^{10,12} which bind to the zinc-coordinated water molecule/hydroxide ion from the active site, through a network of two hydrogen bonds (Fig. 1C), (iii) the polyamines,¹¹ such as spermine, spermidine and congeners, which bind rather similar but not identical to phenols, that is, by anchoring to the water molecule/hydroxide

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Fig. 1 CA inhibition with: zinc binders such as sulfonamides (A) and inorganic anions (B); compounds anchoring to the zinc-bound water/hydroxide ion, such as phenol (C), spermine (D) and compounds occluding the entrance to the CA active site cavity, exemplified by the hydrolyzed coumarin, *trans*-2-hydroxycinnamic acid (E). Figures represent distances (in Å), as determined by X-ray crystallographic techniques.^{10,12} (F) Hydrogen bonds are represented as dashed lines. All these binding modes have been proven by means of X-ray crystallography on enzyme-inhibitor adducts.¹⁰

ion coordinated to Zn(II), Fig. 1D and (iv) the recently reported class of effective CAIs, the coumarins and thiocoumarins, which have an inhibition mechanism not dependent of Zn(II), and bind (in hydrolyzed form) in the same active site region as the activators, occluding the entrance to the active site (Fig. 1E).¹²

Phthalocyanines (Pcs) in the family of dyes, are well-known planar compounds with highly fluorescent, very good thermal and chemical stability.¹³ Because of these properties of Pcs dyes have been attracting increasing interest. Pcs dyes have found their roles in numerous fluorescent materials and photodynamic therapy applications. Such dyes and their derivatives widespreadly have been used in different technological areas such as liquid crystals, electronic devices, gas and chemical sensors, electrochromic and electroluminescent displays, non-linear optics, photovoltaics, semiconductors, photodynamic

therapy and so forth.¹⁴ The low solubility of phthalocyanines in organic and water solvents and their aggregation is an important problem in biological application of phthalocyanines. To overcome this problem, the introduction of substituents at the axial positions of phthalocyanines is preferred because the axial positions can strongly influence some properties of phthalocyanines such as its solubility and aggregation behavior.^{15,16} For this reason, non-aggregating and water soluble axially disubstituted silicon phthalocyanines (SiPcs) can be used in biological applications. Previous researches have also demonstrated that toxicity of SiPcs are very low against cancer cells.^{17,18}

But, researches on biological study of SiPcs are quite limited in literature.^{19–25} According to our knowledge, the carbonic anhydrase inhibitor properties of silicon phthalocyanines has not been reported in the literature. We report herein, the synthesis and characterization of the novel silicon(IV) phthalocyanine bearing [(2*E*)-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]-1-(4-phenoxy)prop-2-en-1-one] group and its quaternized. Also their human cytosolic carbonic anhydrase isozymes hCA I and II inhibitory properties were investigated for the first time.

2. Experimental section

2.1. Materials and methods

All reagents and solvents were of reagent grade quality and were obtained from commercial suppliers. All solvents were dried and purified as described by Perrin and Armarego.²⁶ Sulphanilamide, Sepharose 4B, protein assay reagents, 4-nitrophenylacetate were obtained from Sigma-Aldrich Co. All other chemicals were analytical grade and obtained from Merck.

The IR spectra were recorded on a Perkin Elmer 1600 FT-IR spectrophotometer, using KBr pellets. ¹H and ¹³C-NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker Avance III 400 MHz spectrometers in CDCl₃ and chemical shifts were reported (δ) relative to Me₄Si as internal standard. MALDI-MS of complexes were obtained in dihydroxybenzoic acid as the MALDI matrix, using a nitrogen laser accumulating 50 laser shots, with a Bruker Microflex LT MALDI-TOF mass spectrometer. Optical spectra in the UV-Vis region were recorded with a Perkin Elmer Lambda 25 spectrophotometer.

2.2. Synthesis

2.2.1. Bis[(2*E*)-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]-1-(4-phenoxy)prop-2-en-1-one]phthalocyaninato silicon(IV) (ZT-Si). A mixture of SiPcCl₂ (**1**) (100 mg, 0.16 mmol) and (2*E*)-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]-1-(4-hydroxyphenyl)prop-2-en-1-one (**2**) (85 mg, 0.32 mmol) in toluene (10 mL) was stirred and then sodium hydride (7.7 mg, 0.32 mmol) was added to this mixture. After heating at reflux temperature under nitrogen atmosphere for 24 h, toluene was evaporated to dry under reduced pressure. The green product was purified by column chromatography [silica gel/CHCl₃ : CH₃OH (100 : 6)]. Yield: 61 mg (35%). FT-IR (KBr pellet) ν (cm⁻¹): 3021 (Ar-H), 2984–2848 (Aliph. C-H), 1645, 1579, 1550, 1503, 1430, 1334, 1289, 1263, 1210, 1160, 1120, 1079, 1038, 912, 881, 759, 729, 680. ¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆), (δ :ppm): 9.74–9.72 (m, 8H, Pc-H₂), 8.58–8.55 (m, 12H, Ar-H),





Fig. 2 The synthesis of the silicon(IV) phthalocyanine ZT-Si and its quaternized derivative ZT-SiQ. (i) Toluene, NaH, reflux. (ii) CHCl₃, CH₃-I, room temperature.

Q band region at 684 nm in DMF (Fig. 5). The quaternization of the non-ionic phthalocyanines did not affect to the absorption wavelength of the studied phthalocyanines. The B bands were observed at 414, 355 and 324 nm which are similar wavelength with non-ionic phthalocyanine ZT-Si in DMF.

3.2. Biological evaluation of the synthesized and reference compounds for CA inhibitory activity

The purification of the two CA isozymes used here was performed with a simple one step method by a affinity chromatography.³⁴ Inhibitory effects of silicon phthalocyanines ZM-1-Si, ZM-5-Si, ZT-Si





Fig. 3 The synthesis of the silicon(IV) phthalocyanines ZM-1-Si, ZM-5-Si and their quaternized derivative ZM-1-SiQ, ZM-5-SiQ.



Fig. 4 MALDI-TOF mass spectrum of ZT-Si.

and their quaternized derivatives ZM-1-SiQ, ZM-5-SiQ, ZT-SiQ on enzyme activities were tested for the first time under *in vitro* conditions; IC₅₀ values are given in Table 1.

We report here the first study on the inhibitory effects of ZM-1-Si, ZM-1-SiQ, ZM-5-Si, ZM-5-SiQ, ZT-Si and ZT-SiQ on the esterase activity of hCA I and II. Data of Table 1 show the following regarding inhibition of hCA I and II with these

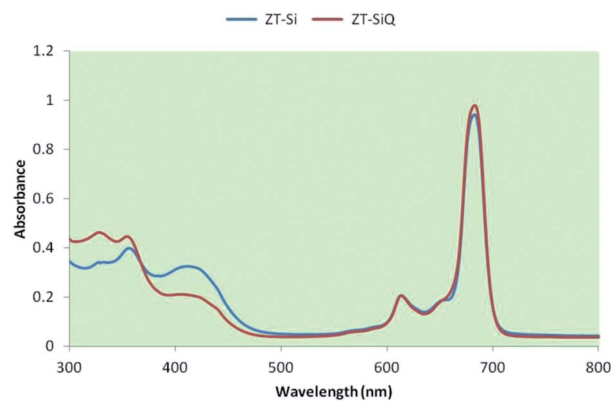


Fig. 5 UV-Vis spectrum of ZT-Si and ZT-SiQ in DMF.

compounds, by an esterase assay^{3,6} with 4-nitrophenylacetate (4-NPA) as substrate:

(i) Against the slow cytosolic isozyme hCA I were moderately inhibited by compound ZM-1-Si. A second group of derivatives, including ZM-5-Si, ZM-1-SiQ and ZM-5-SiQ showed better inhibitory activity as compared to the previously mentioned phthalocyanine, with IC₅₀ values in the range of 0.0243–0.0840 μM. Molecules ZT-SiQ and ZT-Si were among the best inhibitors in this series of phthalocyanines. Data of Table 1 also show that



Table 1 Silicon phthalocyanines and their IC₅₀ values^a

Test compounds	IC ₅₀ (μM)	
	hCA I	hCA II
ZM-1-Si	0.1653	0.1212
ZM-1-SiQ	0.0710	0.0544
ZM-5-Si	0.0840	0.0762
ZM-5-SiQ	0.0243	0.0363
ZT-Si	0.0178	0.0172
ZT-SiQ	0.0223	0.0260
AZA (Acetazolamide) ³⁵	0.9857	0.4894

^a Errors in the range of 2–5% of the shown data, from three different assays.

similarly to acetazolamide (AZA), some of the investigated phthalocyanines bind in the same regions of the active site cavity as the substrate. However the binding site of 4-NPA itself is unknown, but it is presumed to be in the same region as that of CO₂, the physiological substrate of this enzyme.²⁸

(ii) A rather similar activity of these compounds has been observed also for the inhibition of the rapid cytosolic isozyme, hCA II (Table 1). Thus, a first group of derivatives, ZM-1-Si showed modest hCA II inhibitory activity with IC₅₀ in the range of 0.1212 μM (Table 1), whereas the remaining five phthalocyanines, that is, the same compounds acting as efficient hCA II inhibitors, showed IC₅₀ in the range of 0.0172–0.0762 μM. The best hCA II inhibitor in this series of derivatives were ZT-Si and ZT-SiQ, which with a IC₅₀ of 0.0172–0.026 μM. Considering the data of Table 1, structure–activity relationship was thus quite similar in these small groups of *N,N*-dimethylaniline derivatives (phthalocyanines), for both the inhibition of hCA I and II, although differences of affinity between the two isozymes are evident. The *N,N*-dimethylamino substituent on phenyl ring could easily be predicted to be involved in making hydrogen bonds with the active site as observed in classical CAI sulfonamide inhibitors (Fig. 1F). Again most of these compounds acted as competitive inhibitors with 4-NPA as substrate (Table 1). The new compounds ZT-Si and ZT-SiQ showed promising powerful inhibitory profiles compared to the standard drug AZA and they all had comparable IC₅₀ values against hCA I and hCA II.

In a recent study it was reported that different phenolic compounds,³⁷ a simple compound lacking the sulfonamide, sulfamate, or related functional groups that are typically found in all known CA inhibitors, acts as a CAI inhibitor, and could represent the starting point for a new class of inhibitors that may have advantages for patients with sulfonamide allergies.³⁸ However, it is critically important to explore further classes of potent CAIs in order to detect compounds with a different inhibition profile as compared to the sulfonamides and their bioisosteres and to find novel applications for the inhibitors of these widespread enzymes.

4. Conclusion

In the presented work, novel silicon(iv) phthalocyanine axially substituted with [(2*E*)-3-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]-1-(4-phenoxy)prop-2-en-1-one] groups ZT-Si and its quaternized

derivative ZT-SiQ were synthesized for the first time. A novel class of efficient CAIs, interacting with the CA isozymes I and II (cytosolic) in a different manner compared to sulfonamides, sulfamates and other classes of inhibitors, is reported in this paper. Kinetic measurements allowed us to identify *N,N*-dimethylaniline substituted phthalocyanines as well as ZT-SiQ as submicromolar–low micromolar inhibitors of the two CA isozymes. This new class of inhibitors binds differently of all other CAIs known to date, being found between the phenol-binding site within the enzyme cavity. They exploit different interactions with amino acid residues and water molecules from the CA active site compared to other classes of inhibitors, offering the possibility to design compounds with a better inhibition profile compared to the clinically used sulfonamides/sulfamates. As a result, this study is the first example of carbonic anhydrase enzyme inhibition of phthalocyanines. These results showed that silicon phthalocyanines have potential as carbonic anhydrase inhibitors.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

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