Action of a Pyrimido-pyrimidine Compound on Platelet Behaviour in Vitro

A. S. DOUGLAS, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.C.P.Ed., F.R.C.P.GLASG.

Summary: A pyrimido-pyrimidine compound (RA433) was found in vitro to be a significantly more potent inhibitor of platelet behaviour than the previously available pyrimido-pyrimidine compound RA8-dipyridamole. In a turbidimetric system RA433 inhibits platelet aggregation induced by adenosine diphosphate, collagen, and noradrenaline; further, in a glass-bead-column technique it is a powerful inhibitor of platelet adhesiveness.

Introduction

One of the most promising compounds described in the search for agents which might be used to inhibit platelet aggregation in man is dipyridamole (Bunag et al., 1964). Nevertheless, with dipyridamole it is difficult to achieve adequate concentrations in vivo without unacceptable side-effects. We here report on in-vitro studies with RA433 (2,4,6-trimorpholinopyrimido(5,4-d)-pyrimidine), a synthetic dipyridamole analogue. In a number of test systems this analogue is shown to be a more powerful inhibitor of platelet aggregation and adhesiveness than dipyridamole.

The cause of thrombotic vascular occlusion is unknown, but as early as 1888 Eberth and Schimmelbusch showed that platelet masses were deposited at the sites of injury in mesenteric vessels. Whatever may be the mechanism concerned, platelet adhesion and aggregation on the inner surface of a vessel is undoubtedly an early and important event in thrombus formation. Moreover, platelet deposits may be precursors of atherosomatous lesions (Duguid, 1955).

Many naturally occurring substances—for example, fatty acids, thornin, collagen, and noradrenaline—increase the adhesiveness of platelets. Adenosine diphosphate (A.D.P.), which is present in normal red blood cells and also increases platelet adhesiveness (Hellern, 1960) has been studied intensively during recent years in relation to platelet aggregation and adhesiveness. Platelets are known to be rich in adenosine triphosphate (A.T.P.), which disappears during clotting (Born, 1958) or when platelets undergo viscous metamorphosis (Zucker and Borrelli, 1961). A.D.P., which is the first breakdown product of A.T.P., may be the factor promoting the formation of haemostatic platelet plugs and the white heads of vascular thrombi (Born, 1962). In animals infusion of A.D.P. can result in platelet aggregation (Born and Cross, 1963; Honour and Mitchell, 1963). There are also at least two agents present in the arterial wall which can cause platelet aggregation; one is probably collagen (Zucker and Borrelli, 1962) and the other A.D.P. (Mitchell and Sharp, 1964; Prentice et al., 1966).

Various compounds have been found which inhibit platelet aggregation and reduce adhesiveness. Adenosine and 2-chloroadenosine are competitive inhibitors of A.D.P.-induced platelet aggregation (Born et al., 1964), but unfortunately both have unacceptable toxic effects. Adenosine is a powerful vaso-dilator and produces hypotension (Born et al., 1965), whereas 2-chloroadenosine produces respiratory arrest when given to animals (Born et al., 1964). Dipyridamole, which slows the rate of disappearance of exogenous adenosine from whole blood in vitro (Bunag et al., 1964), also inhibits thrombus formation at the sites of injury in rabbit vessels (Emmons et al., 1965a) and A.D.P.-induced platelet aggregation in vitro, but not noradrenaline-induced aggregation (Emmons et al., 1965b). This action of dipyridamole in inhibiting A.D.P.-induced platelet aggregation and in reducing adhesiveness in a glass-bead-column technique was also described by Gray et al., 1969, who furthermore showed that when platelet-rich plasma was recalcified in a continuous rotating loop of plastic tubing (the Chandler tube technique) the initial stages of artificial thrombus formation were delayed in the presence of dipyridamole.

Materials

Citrated blood was collected by clean venepuncture, nine volumes of blood being mixed with one volume of 3-8% sodium citrate in a siliconized graduated centrifuge tube. The subjects studied were mostly colleagues or hospital patients suffering from various diseases, none of which is known to affect platelet function.

Platelet-rich plasma was obtained by centrifugation at 400 g for five minutes at room temperature. Siliconized glassware was used throughout (Siliclad Clay-Adams Inc.). A.D.P. was used as the sodium salt (Sigma). A stock solution of 50 µg./ml. was made in a barbitone-saline buffer pH 7.2 and kept at -20°C. for use in all experiments. Appropriate dilutions were made from this stock solution.

R.A. 433—A stock solution of 400 µg./ml. was prepared in 0.1 N hydrochloric acid and kept at -20°C. The various concentrations referred to in the text were made from this stock solution by the addition of 0.1 N hydrochloric acid.

Collagen was prepared from tendon by Sigma Chemical Company, 0.4 g. being mixed in 5 ml. of normal saline for 3 minutes at room temperature. The undissolved fibres were centrifuged out and the supernatant was stored at 4°C.

Noradrenaline (Bayer Products Ltd.).

Methods

Chandler Tube Technique.—The method was that described by Chandler (1958) as modified by Cunningham et al. (1965). Transparent vinyl tubing (Portland Plastics Ltd., code No. N/17), 12-3 mm. bore, 71 cm. long, was made into a loop by means of a Nylon adapter. The loop was washed in cold water and rinsed in 0.9% sodium chloride. Thirty minutes after venepuncture a 10-ml. sample of platelet-rich plasma, which had been kept at 37°C, was split into equal parts; to these was added 0.05 ml. of various dilutions of RA433 or control diluent and incubated for 10 minutes. The samples of plasma were then transferred to the loop, the volume of each having been made up to 15 ml. with 0.9% sodium chloride. The system was then recalcified with 1.5 ml. of 0.25 M calcium chloride and the loop rotated at 28.5 r.p.m. on the turntable of a blood cell suspension mixer (Matburn Ltd.) in a glass-fronted incubator at 37°C. Platelet aggregation was assessed by the length of time taken for the "snowstorm" of platelet aggregation to appear after recalcification.

Turbidimetric assessment of platelet aggregation was carried out as described by Born (1962). The apparatus used in this study consisted of an EEL titrator connected to a galvanometer...
is divided was path light were placed in the cuvette together with a small stirring rod. With the stirring rod rotating at a uniform speed the optical density reading of the plasma sample on the galvanometer scale was adjusted to an arbitrary value of 0.600. Before adding the aggregating agent the plasma was stirred for at least 30 seconds to ensure a stable baseline; optical density was recorded at 30-second intervals over a period of 10 minutes from the time of adding the aggregating agent. Assessment of platelet aggregation was made following challenge with A.D.P. (0.5 µg./ml. of plasma), noradrenaline (15 µg./ml. of plasma), and collagen.

Platelet adhesion to glass beads was assessed in a glass-bead-column method as described by Hellem (1960) and modified by Hirsh et al. (1966). The column was made of a length of vinyl tubing (NT 13 Portland Plastics Ltd.) with 2.5-g. Ballotini glass beads (0.57 mm. diameter) to give a column 6 cm. in length. The glass beads are held in the column by a filter of fine Nylon gauze fitted at each end of the column. Citrated blood which had been standing at room temperature for 30 minutes was tested. Aliquots (0.02 ml.) of the appropriate dilution of RA433 or of control diluent were added to 2 ml. of blood and incubated at 37° C. for 10 minutes. Test and control samples were then drawn into 2-ml. graduated plastic syringes, which were fitted to an electrically operated pump, and the sample was pushed through the column at a constant rate so that the mean contact time between blood and glass was 30 ± 1 seconds. Platelet counts were performed on the samples before and after passage through the column. The difference between the two counts was expressed as a percentage of the initial platelet count, and this value was taken as an index of platelet adheriveness in the samples.

Platelet counts were performed with formal citrate as the diluting fluid (Dacie, 1956). Freshly filtered diluting fluid (10 ml.) was delivered to a clear glass test-tube and to this was added 0.1 ml. of blood. The tube was inverted gently until the contents were thoroughly mixed. A sample was run on to a Neubauer improved counting chamber and allowed to stand in a damp atmosphere for 20 minutes before the platelets were counted.

Results

Chandler Tube Experiments

Table I shows the mean values and standard deviations of the times for the "snowstorm" effect to appear in seven experiments at various concentrations of RA433 and also with seven controls. There is no statistical difference between controls and tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration</th>
<th>Time of &quot;Snowstorm&quot; Effect</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>0-11</td>
<td>&gt;0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>&gt;0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-0</td>
<td>&gt;0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>&gt;0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turbidimetric Method

Fig. 1 shows the effect of RA433 in various concentrations (10-80 µg./ml.) on A.D.P.-induced platelet aggregation. Each graph shows the mean of seven tests with RA433 and seven controls. RA433 produced a concentration-dependent inhibition of platelet aggregation in this system. Statistical evaluation of the difference between test and control experiments was carried out on the observations made at 2 and 10 minutes; significant differences (P<0.02) were found with RA433 concentrations of 20 µg./ml. and higher.

The results of experiments with collagen as the aggregating agent are shown in Fig. 2, which shows the mean of seven controls and seven tests with RA433 present at a concentration of 40 and 80 µg./ml. of plasma. At both concentrations there is significant inhibition of platelet aggregation (P<0.001) at both 2 and 10 minutes.
Similar results were obtained with noradrenaline as the aggregating agent. Fig. 3 shows the mean of seven controls and tests with RA433 present at a concentration of 80 μg/ml. There is a significant difference (P<0.001) between test and control experiments at 2 and at 10 minutes.

A comparison of the action of RA433 at a concentration of 20 μg/ml. and various concentrations of dipyridamole is shown in Fig. 4. The experiments were all carried out with aliquots from a single sample of platelet-rich plasma kept at room temperature. The control line in the graph is the mean of eight control experiments carried out in the course of one and a half hours. In this comparison it is the ability of RA433 to inhibit aggregation which is the striking feature; RA433 is shown to inhibit A.D.P.-induced platelet aggregation at a much lower concentration than dipyridamole.

**Glass-bead-column Technique**

The mean and standard deviations of seven controls and seven tests with various concentrations of RA433 are shown in Table II. A significant difference in platelet adhesiveness is present when the concentration of RA433 is 30 μg/ml. of plasma and above.

**Table II.—Effect of Addition of RA433 in Various Concentrations on Platelet Adhesiveness (Modified Helmet Technique) Compared with Controls.** (Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Seven Experiments are Shown in Each Case)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration of RA433 (μg/ml Plasma)</th>
<th>% Adhesiveness</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>68 ± 6</td>
<td>67 ± 6</td>
<td>0-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>53 ± 15</td>
<td>36 ± 15</td>
<td>0-94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>56 ± 18</td>
<td>23 ± 10</td>
<td>15-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

We have shown that RA433 at levels which might well be achieved following administration by mouth to man inhibits platelet aggregation induced by A.D.P., collagen, and noradrenaline, and also significantly reduces platelet adhesiveness. These findings are complementary to the observations of Elkeles et al. (1968), who found that RA433 inhibits A.D.P.-induced and noradrenaline-induced platelet aggregation. These workers also showed that RA433 had a striking effect on the changes in electrophoretic mobility induced by A.D.P. and noradrenaline in addition to being some 40 to 100 times more active than dipyridamole in aggregation and electrophoretic studies.

The differences between dipyridamole and RA433 are not only quantitative; RA433 inhibits platelet aggregation induced by noradrenaline, while this is not a feature of the action of dipyridamole (Emmons et al., 1965a). Conversely dipyridamole prevents the formation of white bodies in injured cerebral arteries in the rabbit (Elkeles et al., 1968), whereas RA433 does not. Furthermore, in previous studies it was shown that dipyridamole delayed the initial stages of artificial thrombus formation of a Chandler tube system (Gray et al., 1968), but RA433 in the present investigation did not have this effect.

The mechanism whereby RA433 inhibits platelet adhesiveness and platelet aggregation in response to A.D.P., collagen, and noradrenaline is not known. In view of these findings RA433 clearly has potential therapeutic importance in the prevention of thrombus formation, and a clinical pharmacological investigation should be started in man. In animal toxicity studies the drug appears to be relatively non-toxic and free from vasomotor side-effects (J. H. Shelley, personal communication, 1967).

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**References**