Supporting Information

Development of Substituted Phenyl Dihydrouracil as the Novel Achiral Cereblon Ligands for Targeted Protein Degradation

Haibo Xie,1‡ Chunrong Li,1‡ Hua Tang,¹ Ira Tandon,¹ Junzhuo Liao,¹ Brett L. Roberts,¹ Yu Zhao¹ and Weiping Tang1,2.*

1. Lachman Institute for Pharmaceutical Development, School of Pharmacy, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 777 Highland Avenue, Madison, WI 53705 (USA)

E-mail: weiping.tang@wisc.edu

2. Department of Chemistry, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1101 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53706 (USA)

These authors contributed equally.

Table of Contents

Structural Modeling of the Binding Poses of 6F

Since the imide moiety of novel achiral ligand **2** is the same as the classic glutarimide ligands, which makes three H-bond contacts with CRBN, and that FP competition binding is successfully performed with a classic ligand probe, it is presumed the binding pocket and core pose will be the same. By comparison, the closest analog with crystal structure (PDB: 7SHH) available also shows a binding pose the same as all other classic imides.

PDB: 4TZ4 was the starting point of the modeling. Missing non-terminal protein residues were restored by Modeller¹ in UCSF Chimera. Ligand 6F was converted into 3D mol2 format by OBabel² from mol format saved from ChemDraw.

The docking was performed by GOLD.³ The search efficiency was set to 200%. Automatic bond types were on for both protein and ligand. The protein was set to be rigid. Other settings were kept at default with the ChemPLP scoring function being used. From human judgement, the binding pose can be either up or down in regard to the phenyl ring substituents (see SI Figure S1), and the up or down pose is not interconvertible while the ligand is bound due to sterics of rotation, so subsequent modeling by MD refinement will need two separate starting points. Due to the randomness incorporated in the GOLD algorithm, results are different for each run. Most poses were on the downside, and the best scoring one, which also had the correct imide binding pose, was chosen for the down pose. The down pose had an H-Bond with neighboring Histidine 353, and the relevant HID tautomer was used. Docking was run multiple times until a reasonable top pose was generated, which had an even more favorable score than the best chosen down pose.

Figure S1. Docking poses to start the MD refinement. Blue is best pose of phenyl ring substituents rotated down, also determined later to be the ideal ligand binding pose. Orange is best pose of phenyl ring substituents rotated up.

The refinement allows both the ligand and protein to fully relax since ligand induced changes may occur on protein side chains. Additionally, ligand binding stabilities can be observed during the refinement process, including filtering out false positive poses. To perform the refinement, in the AMBERTools Suite,⁴ the ligand was assigned AM1-BCC partial charges by antechamber, and remaining ligand parameters derived from gaff2 force field with parmchk2. In tleap, the ff19SB force field was used for the protein. An OPC octahedral box of water was set to extend at least 10 Å from any solute atom, and counterions (Na+, Cl-) were added to neutralize charges

Using pmemd.cuda,⁵ 5,000 steps of steepest descent minimization was performed with 5 kcal/mol/ A^2 restraints on the heavy atoms. To equilibrate the system, MD simulation was performed with 5 kcal/mol/Å² restraints on the heavy atoms for 50,000 steps in the NPT ensemble with a 0.001 ps timestep, followed by 50,000 steps with 1 kcal/mol/Å² restraints, and 50,000 steps with no restraints. The Langevin thermostat was used with gamma_In set to 2.0 ps⁻¹, and the Monte Carlo barostat was used with taup set to 0.5 ps. For the production runs, in the NVT ensemble, the timestep was set to 0.004 ps with hydrogen-mass-repartitioning (HMR) applied to give solute hydrogens 3.024 mass, and MD simulation performed for 4 ns, using the Langevin thermostat with a gamma_ln of 0.01 ps⁻¹. The SHAKE algorithm was applied to restrict bond length changes involving hydrogens, and no forces were calculated for bonds with hydrogens. Snapshots were collected every 0.1 ns. 5 replicate simulation runs were performed.

After the simulation, in cpptraj,⁶ solvent and ions were removed and frames aligned based on protein pocket C-α atoms within 10 Å of the ligand. The 5 production runs were combined and clustered based on ligand heavy atoms and protein heavy atoms within 4 \AA of the ligand. The DBSCAN algorithm was used and the Epsilon was set to 0.9 Å and minpoints set to 1. No sieving was used so all frames were used to cluster. For each cluster, one representative pose with the lowest cumulative distance to all other frames in cluster was extracted.

Based on the above clustering conditions, **6F** top formed 15 clusters greater than 1 frame and the top cluster was 22%, and second cluster was 2.5%. The ligand moved away from the docked pose. **6F** down formed 4 clusters greater than 1 frame and the top cluster was 57% and all clusters maintained this H-bond with the neighboring Histidine 353. The docked pose is mostly maintained. The distinction is apparent that the down pose is the more stable and likely one. The representative pose from the most populous cluster is shown as the modeled binding pose in Figure 3 of main text.

Human Plasma Stability

Selected compounds were submitted to CRO company (SAI Life Sciences Limited) for human plasma stability.

MATERIALS

Table S1. Consumables and reagents

Table S2. Equipments

METHOD

Preparation of DMSO stocks and working solutions

A 20 mM stock solutions of test compounds was prepared by dissolving appropriate amount of compounds in DMSO. These were diluted in DMSO to prepare a stock of 1 mM. A 1 mM stock was further diluted 200-folds in human plasma (pre-warmed at 37 °C for 15 minutes) to attain a final concentration of 1 μ M respectively (0.1 % DMSO).

Table S3. Assay conditions

Procedure

Incubation

Positive controls and test compounds spiked into 400 µL aliquot (n = 2) of human plasma was incubated in a CO₂ incubator at 37 °C. An aliquot of 50 µL was withdrawn at 0, 60, 90, 120 and 240 min and immediately quenched with 400 µL of ice-cold acetonitrile containing internal standard followed by storing at minus 2-8 °C.

Preparation of test samples for bio-analysis

All the samples were thawed at room temperature. Samples were vortexed for 5 min followed by centrifugation at 4000 RPM for 15 min at 4 °C. An aliquot of 100 µL was transferred to 96-well deep plate and submitted for analysis by LC-MS/MS.

Analysis

The analyte area of test compounds and positive control was quantified in the test samples using LC-MS/MS. The LC-MS/MS conditions and MRM chromatogram will be provided as per client's request.

DATA ANALYSIS

The percentage of compounds remaining at each time point was calculated by considering the peak area (PA) ratios (analyte versus internal standard) obtained at 0 min as 100%. The slope of initial linear range of logarithmic curve of percent remaining versus time was used for calculation of half-life $(t_{1/2})$.

Elimination rate constant $(k) = (-\text{gradient})$

Half life
$$
(t_{1/2})
$$
 (min) = $\frac{0.693}{k}$

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Parent compounds remaining and half-life of positive control Propantheline bromide was used in the experiment is in good agreement with validation data generated in-house (Table 1). All the compounds were stable in human plasma within duration of incubation. Details provided in table (1)

Table S4. Time versus % remaining of control and test compounds in human plasma

NC: Not calculated as compound was stable within duration of incubation

Human Liver Microsome Stability

Selected compounds were submitted to CRO company (SAI Life Sciences Limited) for liver microsome stability

MATERIALS

Table S5. Consumables and reagents

Table S6. Equipments

METHOD

Preparation of reagents

Preparation of potassium phosphate buffer, 50 mM (pH 7.4)

50 mM Potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) was prepared by adding 0.647g potassium phosphate monobasic (KH₂PO₄) and 3.527g potassium phosphate dibasic (K₂HPO₄) to 400 mL of Milli-Q water. pH of the buffer was adjusted to 7.4 and volume was made up to 500 mL.

Preparation of microsomes

Microsomes (20 mg/mL) were diluted in 50 mM Potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) buffer to prepare a concentration of 0.714 mg/mL. **Preparation of test compounds**

A stock solution of the test compounds were prepared in DMSO at a concentration of 1 mM.

Preparation of NADPH solution

A stock solution of 3.33 mM NADPH (3.33X) was prepared by dissolving appropriate amount of NADPH in 50 mM Potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4)

Preparation of internal standard solution

1 mg/mL of internal standard glipizide and albendenzole were prepared in DMSO and methanol (1:1). From this stock solution of glipizide (300 ng/mL) and albendenzole (100 ng/mL) prepared in acetonitrile.

Table S7. Assay Conditions

Assay

A microsomal mix (microsomes and potassium phosphate buffer pH 7.4) was prepared at concentration of 0.714 mg/mL. A 1 µL (1 mM) of test compounds/positive control was spiked into 699 µL of microsomal working solution (intermediate test compound/positive control concentration is 1.42 µM). After mixing, 70 µL (microsomal mix and compounds) was transferred to 96 well plate for 0 min and 30 min time point ($n=2$) for with NAPPH and without NADPH and pre-incubated at 37 °C for 5 min. After pre-incubation, for zero min time point 30 µL of NADPH (3.33 mM) in NAPDH samples and potassium phosphate buffer pH 7.4 in without NAPDH samples was added (Final microsomal mix conc. is 0.5 mg/mL and test compound/positive control conc. is 1 µM) and reaction was stopped immediately using 200 µL of ice-cold acetonitrile containing internal standard. For 30 min time point reaction was initiated by addition of 30 µL of NADPH (3.33 mM) in NAPDH samples and potassium phosphate buffer pH 7.4 in without NAPDH samples was added and incubated at 37 °C for 30 min, incubation reaction was stopped with 200 uL of ice-cold acetonitrile containing internal standard. A 200 µL of acetonitrile containing internal standard was added into both 0 min and 30 min quenched plates. The plates were centrifuged at 4000 RPM for 10 min and 100 µL supernatant were submitted for analysis by LC-MS/MS.

Bio-Analysis

Samples were monitored for parent compound disappearance in MRM mode using LC-MS/MS. The LC-MS/MS conditions and MRM chromatogram will be provided as per client request.

DATA ANALYSIS

The peak area ratios of analyte versus internal standard were used to calculate the % remaining at the end of 60 minutes in presence NADPH.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Percentage remaining of positive control, Verapamil and test compounds in HLM were tabulated in table 2.

PCR: Parent Compound Remaining

Glutarimide and Dihydrouracil Hydrolytic Ring Opening Stability

pH 7.4 was 100 mM potassium phosphate buffer. pH 8.8 was 100 mM bicine buffer. pH 1.0 was 100 mM HCl solution. The stability assays were performed at 100 μM and incubated at 37 ºC for indicated time. The percentage of compound remaining was determined by HPLC peak area ratio with internal standard (L-tryptophan).

Fluorescence Polarization Assay

The human recombinant DDB1/CRBN protein (Cat.# E3-500-MTO, Lot 35378320) was purchased from R&D Systems. The CRBN binding fluorescence probe was obtained by fluorescence labelling the Thalidomide 4'-oxyacetamide-alkylC4-amine (Purchased from TOCRIS, Cat.# 6469) by 5(6)-SFX (Purchased from TOCRIS, Cat.# 6488). The assay was carried out in Black Nunc™ 384-Shallow Well Standard Height Polypropylene Microplates (Catalog Number: 267461).

Assay buffer: 50 mM HEPES, 75 mM NaCl, 0.01% Triton X-100, pH7.4; Assay volume: 20µL.

Single concentration binding comparison: DDB1/CRBN: 150 nM, fluorescence probe: 8 nM, compound: 1000 nM;

Dose response for IC₅₀: DDB1/CRBN: 150 nM, fluorescence probe: 8 nM.

After mixing the CRBN protein, fluorescence probe and compound, the plate was incubated at room temperature for 20 minutes. The polarization signals (mP) were acquired by PHERAstar FS Plate Reader (FP 485-520-520nM Optic module). The data was processed, IC₅₀ was calculted by GraphPad 9.0.

Figure S2. Dose response of selected compound by fluorescence polarization assay

 $K_i = IC_{50}/(1 + ([L]/K_D))$,⁷

where

[L] = the concentration of labeled ligand,

 K_i = the inhibition constant, defined as the equilibrium concentration of competitive inhibitor that would occupy 50% of receptor sites if no competing labeled ligand was present,

IC₅₀ = the concentration of competitive inhibitor that displaces 50% of the specifically bound labeled ligand, and

 K_D = the affinity constant, defined as the equilibrium concentration of labeled ligand that occupies 50% of receptor sites in the absence of competition. $K_D = 122$ nM 8

 $K_d/K_i = IC_{50}/(1 + 8 \text{ nM}/122 \text{ nM}) = IC_{50}/1.066$

References

- (1) Šali, A.; Blundell, T. L. Comparative Protein Modelling by Satisfaction of Spatial Restraints. *J. Mol. Biol.* **1993**, *234* (3), 779–815. https://doi.org/10.1006/jmbi.1993.1626.
- (2) O'Boyle, N. M.; Banck, M.; James, C. A.; Morley, C.; Vandermeersch, T.; Hutchison, G. R. Open Babel: An Open Chemical Toolbox. *J. Cheminformatics* **2011**, *3* (1), 33. https://doi.org/10.1186/1758-2946-3-33.
- (3) Jones, G.; Willett, P.; Glen, R. C.; Leach, A. R.; Taylor, R. Development and Validation of a Genetic Algorithm for Flexible Docking11Edited by F. E. Cohen. *J. Mol. Biol.* **1997**, *267* (3), 727–748. https://doi.org/10.1006/jmbi.1996.0897.
- (4) D.A. Case, K. Belfon, I.Y. Ben-Shalom, S.R. Brozell, D.S. Cerutti, T.E. Cheatham, III, V.W.D. Cruzeiro, T.A. Darden, R.E. Duke, G. Giambasu, M.K. Gilson, H. Gohlke, A.W. Goetz,R Harris, S. Izadi, S.A. Izmailov, K. Kasavajhala, A. Kovalenko, R. Krasny, T. Kurtzman, T.S. Lee, S. LeGrand, P. Li, C. Lin, J. Liu, T. Luchko, R. Luo, V. Man, K.M. Merz, Y. Miao, O. Mikhailovskii, G. Monard, H. Nguyen, A. Onufriev, F. Pan, S. Pantano, R. Qi, D.R. Roe, A. Roitberg, C. Sagui, S. Schott-Verdugo, J. Shen, C.L. Simmerling, N.R. Skrynnikov, J. Smith, J. Swails, R.C. Walker, J. Wang, L. Wilson, R.M. Wolf, X. Wu, Y. Xiong, Y. Xue, D.M. York and P.A. Kollman (2020), AMBER 2020, University of California, San Francisco.
- (5) Salomon-Ferrer, R.; Götz, A. W.; Poole, D.; Le Grand, S.; Walker, R. C. Routine Microsecond Molecular Dynamics Simulations with AMBER on GPUs. 2. Explicit Solvent Particle Mesh Ewald. *J. Chem. Theory Comput.* **2013**, *9* (9), 3878–3888. https://doi.org/10.1021/ct400314y.
- (6) Roe, D. R.; Cheatham, T. E. PTRAJ and CPPTRAJ: Software for Processing and Analysis of Molecular Dynamics Trajectory Data. *J. Chem. Theory Comput.* **2013**, *9* (7), 3084–3095. https://doi.org/10.1021/ct400341p.
- (7) Newton, P.; Harrison, P.; Clulow, S. A Novel Method for Determination of the Affinity of Protein: Protein Interactions in Homogeneous Assays. *J. Biomol. Screen.* **2008**, *13* (7), 674–682. https://doi.org/10.1177/1087057108321086.
- (8) Fischer, E. S.; Böhm, K.; Lydeard, J. R.; Yang, H.; Stadler, M. B.; Cavadini, S.; Nagel, J.; Serluca, F.; Acker, V.; Lingaraju, G. M.; Tichkule, R. B.; Schebesta, M.; Forrester, W. C.; Schirle, M.; Hassiepen, U.; Ottl, J.; Hild, M.; Beckwith, R. E. J.; Harper, J. W.; Jenkins, J. L.; Thomä, N. H. Structure of the DDB1–CRBN E3 Ubiquitin Ligase in Complex with Thalidomide. *Nature* **2014**, *512* (7512), 49. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature13527.

HPLC traces of compounds 6F, 9-11, 12A, 12B, 12C, 13, 13NT and 14

Data File D:\HPCHEM\1\DATA\HX\ACRBN114.D Sample Name: HX4285 6F Seq. Line : 14 Different Inj Volume from Sequence ! Actual Inj Volume
Acq. Method : D:\HPCHEM\1\METHODS\G GRADRP.M
Last changed : 12/10/21 1:53:38 PM by HX
Analysis Method : D:\HPCHEM\1\METHODS\G GRADRP.M
Last changed : 11/12/22 3:05:14 (modified after loading) GGG Gradient
DAD1 B. Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100 (HXVACRBN114.D) Avex 2080.63 mALI- $3-88$ 500 400 300 All Britain Britain 200 100 α à ś ^B min $\overline{\mathbf{z}}$ Area Percent Report Sorted By ¥ Signal Multiplier \pm 1.0000 1.0000 Dilution \pm Signal 1: DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100 Area Peak RetTime Type Width Area Height # [min] [min] [mAU*s] $[mAU* s]$ -1-0.0645 2080.63135 537.72906 98.6416
0.0645 2080.63135 537.72906 98.6416
0.0759 5.58109 1.22478 0.2646
0.0705 6.21087 1.46868 0.2945 3.884 MM
4.442 MM
4.779 MM J. σ 3. 4 4.893 MM 2109.28343 544.53666 Totals : Results obtained with enhanced integrator! Summed Peaks Report Signal 1: DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100 ---Final Summed Peaks Report Signal 1: DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100 *** End of Report ***

instrument 1 11/21/22 5:37:17 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Sample Name: HX5044

9

instrument 1 11/21/22 4:59:23 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Sample Name: HX5045

instrument 1 11/21/22 5:02:15 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Page 1 of 1

Ľ.

instrument 1 11/22/22 4:28:45 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Page 1 of 1

Sample Name: HX5048

11

Data File D:\HPCHEM\1\DATA\HX\ACRBN301.D

 IZA

instrument 1 11/22/22 6:01:07 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Data File D: \HPCHEM\1\DATA\HX\ACRBN218.D

Sample Name: HT37

 $12B$

instrument 1 11/22/22 4:31:35 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Data File D:\HPCHEM\1\DATA\HX\ACRBN219.D

Sample Name: HT38

 $12C$

instrument 1 11/22/22 4:35:19 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Data File D:\HPCHEM\1\DATA\HX\ACRBN220.D

Sample Name: HX5023

13

Seq. Line : 21 Injection Date : 11/22/22 4:36:02 PM Sample Name : Alicence
Acq. Operator : HX
Acq. Operator : HX $Vial : 20$ Inj : $\mathbf 1$ $\begin{array}{c} \text{Inj} \\ \text{Actual Inj} \end{array}$ Volume : 10μ l Different Inj Volume from Sequence | Actual I
Acq. Method | D:\HPCHEM\I\NETHODS\G GRADRP.M
Last changed | 9/12/22 1:24:01 PM by HUA Different Inj Volume from Sequence ! Acq. Method Acq. Method : D:\HPCHEM\I\METHODS\G GRADAF:A
Last changed : 9/12/22 1:24:01 PM by HUA
Analysis Method : D:\HPCHEM\1\METHODS\G GRADRP.M d: D:\HPCHEW\1\MEINODS\G\GRADRE\R
: 11/12/22 3:05:14 PM by Chelsi Almodovar
(modified after loading) Last changed 000 Gradient
DAD1 C, Sig=210,16 Ref=360,100 (HXVACRBN220.D) Area: 2007.98 mAU 600 400 August 170 Aves 1 0124 成绩 200 16, \mathfrak{o} $.900$ -400 min $\mathbf{0}$ Area Percent Report Signal Sorted By \mathbf{r} 1.0000
 1.0000 Multiplier \cdot Dilution 9 Signal 1: DAD1 C, Sig=210,16 Ref=360,100 Peak RetTime Type Width Area Height Area $[\text{min}] \quad [\text{min}] \quad [\text{max}] \quad [\text{min}]$ $\frac{a}{b}$ $#$ $|$ $-$ Æ. 2.663 MM $\mathbf 1$ $\overline{2}$ 2.743 MM 3.326 MM
3.797 MM ä ä 4.023 MM \bar{z} 2144.02869 753.24232 Totals : Results obtained with enhanced integrator! Summed Peaks Report Signal 1: DAD1 C, Sig=210,16 Ref=360,100 Final Summed Peaks Report Signal 1: DAD1 C, Sig=210,16 Ref=360,100 *** End of Report ***

instrument 1 11/22/22 5:24:45 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Data File D:\HPCHEM\1\DATA\HX\ACRBN405.D

Sample Name: HX5047

 $13NT$

Seq. Line : 2 Injection Date : 11/23/22 2:44:30 PM Sample Name : HX5047
Acq. Operator : HX Vial : \overline{z} Inj : $\overline{1}$ $\begin{array}{c} \text{Inj Volume : } 10 \mu1 \\ \text{Actual Inj Volume : } 50 \mu1 \end{array}$ Different Inj Volume from Sequence ! Actual 1
Acq. Method : D:\HPCHEM\1\METHODS\G GRADRP.M
Last changed : 9/12/22 1:24:01 PM by HUA Different Inj Volume from Sequence ! Last changed : 9/12/22 1:24:01 PM by HUA
Analysis Method : D:\HPCHEM\l\METHODS\G GRADRP.M nd: 11/12/22 3:05:14 PM by Chelsi Almodovar
: 11/12/22 3:05:14 PM by Chelsi Almodovar
(modified after loading) Last changed GGG Gradient
DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100 (HXVACRBN405.D) Ages, 1157 AS 8.469 **UAm** 300 250 200 150 Superintendence 100 2,999 50 α à min 禺 Area Percent Report Sorted By \pm Signal Multiplier 1.0000 ä 1.0000 Dilution \cdot Signal 1: DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100 Peak RetTime Type Width Area Height Area me rype width [mAU*s] [mAU]
1] [min] [mAU*s] [mAU] \$ [min] # $-$ 11.23807 0.9608 4.11089 2.999 MM 0.0456 $\mathbf{1}$ 349.45285 97.2477
2.29280 0.7586
4.08039 1.0329 0.0542 1137.44678 $\overline{2}$ 3.469 MM 8.87346 0.0645 8.87346
0.0493 12.08090 3.760 MM \overline{a} ä 4.034 MM 1169.63921 359.93693 Totals : Results obtained with enhanced integrator! Summed Peaks Report Signal 1: DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100 --------------------------Final Summed Peaks Report Signal 1: DAD1 B, Sig=254,16 Ref=360,100
*** End of Report ***

instrument 1 11/23/22 2:52:04 PM Chelsi Almodovar

*********************** Area Percent Report

Data File D:\HPCHEM\1\DATA\HX\ACRBN221.D

Signal 1: DAD1 C, Sig=210,16 Ref=360,100

instrument 1 11/22/22 5:29:34 PM Chelsi Almodovar

Page 1 of 1

Sample Name: HX5025

min

ia in

 14

S19

1H and 13C NMR spectrum

S30

S47

