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(54) **METHOD FOR ADMINISTERING GLP-1 MOLECULES**

(76) Inventor: **Mohammed Amin Khan**, Carmel, IN (US)

Correspondence Address:
ELI LILLY AND COMPANY
PATENT DIVISION
P.O. BOX 6288
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46206-6288 (US)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention encompasses formulations that demonstrate the feasibility of oral absorption comprising GLP-1 compounds and specified delivery agents.

METHOD FOR ADMINISTERING GLP-1 MOLECULES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a formulation useful for the oral administration comprising a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) compound and a specified delivery agent. Oral administration of the formulations can be used to treat type 2 diabetes as well as a variety of other conditions.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Over the past several decades, continuous strides have been made to improve the treatment of diabetes mellitus. Approximately 90% of people with diabetes have type 2 diabetes, also known as non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM). Type 2 diabetics generally still make insulin, but the insulin cannot be used effectively by the body's cells. This is primarily because the amount of insulin produced in response to rising blood sugar levels is not sufficient to allow cells to efficiently take up glucose and thus, reduce blood sugar levels.

[0003] A large body of pre-clinical and clinical research data suggests that glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) compounds show great promise as a treatment for type 2 diabetes and other conditions. GLP-1 induces numerous biological effects such as stimulating insulin secretion, inhibiting glucagon secretion, inhibiting gastric emptying, enhancing glucose utilization, and inducing weight loss. Further, preclinical studies suggest that GLP-1 may also act to prevent the β cell deterioration that occurs as the disease progresses. Perhaps the most salient characteristic of GLP-1 is its ability to stimulate insulin secretion without the associated risk of hypoglycemia that is seen when using insulin therapy or some types of oral therapies that act by increasing insulin expression.

[0004] However, development of a GLP-1 therapeutic has been extremely difficult. This is primarily due to the instability of the peptide during manufacturing processes, in solution formulations, and in vivo. The only published clinical studies employing GLP-1 compounds to treat hyperglycemia or other conditions involve formulating GLP-1 compounds such that they can be delivered by subcutaneous injection or through continuous subcutaneous infusion or continuous intravenous administration. Many type 2 diabetics or obese patients desiring to lose weight will not be willing to undertake a treatment regimen that may involve several injections per day. Thus, there is a need to develop GLP-1 compound therapeutics that can be delivered by an alternative non-invasive means such as by oral delivery.

[0005] Unfortunately, there are numerous barriers to effective oral delivery of peptides. The high acid content and ubiquitous digestive enzymes of the digestive tract will often degrade proteins and peptides before they reach the site of absorption. Further, many peptides cannot effectively traverse the cells of the epithelial membrane in the small intestine to reach the bloodstream. Finally, many drugs become insoluble at the low pH levels encountered in the digestive tract and, thus, are not absorbed effectively.

[0006] The fact that GLP-1 compounds are relatively short in vivo half-life when administered as a solution formulation, suggested that these compounds could not be effectively delivered through the oral route. Thus, it was surprising that GLP-1 compounds could be formulated such that biologically active molecules were absorbed into the blood stream after oral administration.

[0007] The present invention involves the use of specific delivery agent molecules that interact with GLP-1 compounds in a non-covalent fashion to allow the compounds to cross gut membranes and yet remain therapeutically active. Although the delivery agents employed in the present invention have been disclosed in a series of U.S. patents (see U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,541,155; 5,693,338; 5,976,569; 5,643,957; 5,955,503; 6,100,298; 5,650,386; 5,866,536; 5,965,121; 5,989,539; 6,001,347; 6,071,510; 5,820,881; and 6,242,495; see also WO 02/02509; WO 01/51454; WO 01/44199; WO 01/32130; WO 00/59863; WO 00/50386; WO 00/47188; and WO 00/40203), oral administration of formulations comprising GLP-1 compounds with these delivery agents has not been disclosed or suggested. Further, numerous parameters impact whether a particular class of compounds can be effectively delivered in combination with one or more classes of delivery agents. For example, the conformation of the peptide, the surface charges on the molecule under certain formulation conditions, the solubility profile, the stability as a formulated component, as well as susceptibility to protease digestion and in vivo stability all influence the ability to deliver a compound orally.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The present invention encompasses the development of novel formulations comprising GLP-1 compounds and delivery agents that can be administered orally. The present invention provides a formulation which can be administered orally comprising a GLP-1 compound and a specified delivery agent. The GLP-1 compound can be native GLP-1; GLP-1 fragments; GLP-1 analogs; GLP-1 derivatives of native, fragments, or analogs of GLP-1; and Exendin-3 and Exendin-4. The delivery agent is selected from delivery agents described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,541,155; 5,693,338; 5,976,569; 5,643,957; 5,955,503; 6,100,298; 5,650,386; 5,866,536; 5,965,121; 5,989,539, 6,001,347; 6,071,510; 5,820,881; and 6,242,495; and WO 02/02509; WO 01/51454; WO01/44199; WO01/32130; WO00/59863; WO00/50386; WO00/47188; and WO 00/40203.

[0009] Preferred GLP-1 compounds are analogs or derivatives of analogs having modifications at one or more of the following positions: 8, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 27, 30, 33, and 37 and show increased potency compared with Val^8-GLP-1(7-37) OH. Preferred GLP-1 compounds are also described in SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, or SEQ ID NO:14. More preferred GLP-1 compounds are described in compounds of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:13, and SEQ ID NO:14.

[0010] Preferred delivery agents are described in Table 1. More preferred delivery agents are delivery agents corresponding to numbers of Table 1 selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22,

[0011] The present invention also encompasses a method of stimulating the GLP-1 receptor in a subject in need of such stimulation, said method comprising the step of administering to the subject an effective amount of the oral formulation described herein. Subjects in need of GLP-1 receptor stimulation include those with non-insulin dependent diabetes and obesity.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The three-letter abbreviation code for amino acids used in this specification conforms with the list contained in Table 3 of Annex C, Appendix 2 of the PCT Administrative Instructions and with 37 C.F.R. § 1.822(d)(1)(2000).

[0013] For purposes of the present invention as disclosed and described herein, the following terms and abbreviations are defined as follows.

[0014] The term "formulation" as used herein refers to a GLP-1 compound and a specified delivery agent combined together which can be administered orally such that GLP-1 compound passes through the gut into the systemic circulation and has the ability to bind to the GLP-1 receptor and initiate a signal transduction pathway resulting in insulinotropic activity. The formulation can optionally comprise other agents so long as the GLP-1 retains the ability to bind the GLP-1 receptor.

[0015] The term "oral" as used herein refers to delivery of a compound by mouth such that the compound passes through the stomach, small intestine, or large intestine into the systemic circulation.

[0016] The term "GLP-1 compound" as used herein refers to polypeptides that include naturally occurring GLP-1 polypeptides (GLP-1(7-37)OH and GLP-1(7-36)NH_2), GLP-1 fragments, GLP-1 analogs, GLP-1 derivatives of naturally occurring GLP-1 polypeptides, GLP-1 fragments, or GLP-1 analogs, and Exendin-3 and Exendin-4 that have the ability to bind to the GLP-1 receptor and initiate a signal transduction pathway resulting in insulinotropic activity.

[0017] The term "insulinotropic activity" refers to the ability to stimulate insulin secretion in response to elevated glucose levels, thereby causing glucose uptake by cells and decreased plasma glucose levels. For example, insulinotropic activity can be determined using the method described in Example 1. A GLP-1 molecule has insulinotropic activity if islet cells secrete insulin levels in the presence of the GLP-1 molecule above background levels.

[0018] The term "DPP IV resistant" refers to GLP-1 molecules that have extended metabolic stability and improved biological activity. For example, DPP IV resistance can be determined using the method described in Example 2. A GLP-1 molecule is DPP Iv resistant if in the presence of DPP IV the GLP-1 molecule has extended metabolic stability above that of native GLP-1. DPP IV resistant GLP-1 molecules can have an amino acid change at the DPP IV recognition site (position 8), or DPP IV resistant peptides can have an attached group that restricts the accessibility of the DPP IV to the recognition site, or both.

[0019] A "GLP-1 fragment" is a polypeptide obtained

analog or derivative thereof. The nomenclature used to describe GLP-1 (7-37)OH is also applicable to GLP-1 fragments. For example, GLP-1(9-36)OH denotes a GLP-1 fragment obtained by truncating two amino acids from the N-terminus and one amino acid from the C-terminus. The amino acids in the fragment are denoted by the same number as the corresponding amino acid in GLP-1(7-37)OH. For example, the N-terminal glutamic acid in GLP-1(9-36)OH is at position 9; position 12 is occupied by phenylalanine; and position 22 is occupied by glycine, as in GLP-1(7-37)OH. For GLP-1(7-36)OH, the glycine at position 37 of GLP-1(7-37)OH is deleted.

[0020] A "GLP-1 analog" has sufficient homology to GLP-1(7-37)OH or a fragment of GLP-1(7-37)OH such that the analog has insulinotropic activity. Preferably, a GLP-1 analog has the amino acid sequence of GLP-1(7-37)OH or a fragment thereof, modified so that from one, two, three, four or five amino acids differ from the amino acid in corresponding position of GLP-1(7-37)OH or a fragment of GLP-1(7-37)OH. In the nomenclature used herein to designate GLP-1 compounds, the substituting amino acid and its position is indicated prior to the parent structure. For example, Glu^{22}-GLP-1(7-37)OH designates a GLP-1 compound in which the glycine normally found at position 22 of GLP-1(7-37)OH has been replaced with glutamic acid; Val^{8}-Glu^{22}-GLP-1(7-37)OH designates a GLP-1 compound in which alanine normally found at position 8 and glycine normally found at position 22 of GLP-1(7-37)OH have been replaced with valine and glutamic acid, respectively.

[0021] GLP-1 molecules also include polypeptides in which one or more amino acids have been added to the N-terminus and/or C-terminus of GLP-1(7-37)OH, or fragments or analogs thereof. It is preferred that GLP-1 molecules of this type have up to about thirty-nine amino acids. The amino acids in the "extended" GLP-1 molecule are denoted by the same number as the corresponding amino acid in GLP-1(7-37)OH. For example, for a GLP-1 molecule obtained by adding two amino acids to the N-terminus of GLP-1(7-37)OH, the N-terminal amino acid is located at position 5; and for a GLP-1 molecule obtained by adding one amino acid to the C-terminus of GLP-1(7-37)OH, the C-terminal amino acid is located at position 38. Thus, position 12 is occupied by phenylalanine and position 22 is occupied by glycine in both of these "extended" GLP-1 compounds, as in GLP-1(7-37)OH. Amino acids 1-6 of an extended GLP-1 molecule are preferably the same as or a conservative substitution of the amino acid at the corresponding position of GLP-1(1-37)OH. Amino acids 38-45 of an extended GLP-1 molecule are preferably the same as or a conservative substitution of the amino acid at the corresponding position of glucagon or Exendin-4.

[0022] A "GLP-1 derivative" refers to a molecule having the amino acid sequence of GLP-1, a GLP-1 fragment, or a GLP-1 analog, but additionally having chemical modification of one or more of its amino acid side groups, α-carbon atoms, terminal amino group, or terminal carboxylic acid group. A chemical modification includes, but is not limited to, adding chemical moieties, creating new bonds, and removing chemical moieties. Modifications at amino acid side groups include, without limitation, acylation of lysine ε-amino groups, N-alkylation of arginine, histidine, or

fications of the terminal amino group include, without limitation, the des-amino, N-lower alkyl, N-di-lower alkyl, and N-acyl modifications. Modifications of the terminal carboxy group include, without limitation, the amide, lower alkyl amide, dialkyl amide, and lower alkyl ester modifications. Lower allyl is C_1-C_4 alkyl. Furthermore, one or more side groups, or terminal groups, may be protected by protective groups known to the ordinarily-skilled protein chemist. The α-carbon of an amino acid may be mono- or dimethylated.

[0023] For the purposes of the present invention, an in vitro GLP-1 receptor-signaling assay is used to determine whether a particular extended GLP-1 peptide will exhibit insulinotropic activity in vivo. Extended GLP-1 peptides encompassed by the present invention have an in vitro potency that is not less than one-tenth the in vitro potency of the DPP IV resistant GLP-1 analog known as Val^8-GLP-1(7-37)OH. More preferably, the extended GLP-1 peptides of the present invention are as potent or more potent than Val^8-GLP-1 (7-37)OH.

[0024] "In vitro potency" as used herein is the measure of the ability of a peptide to activate the GLP-1 receptor in a cell-based assay. In vitro potency is expressed as the "EC_{50}" which is the effective concentration of compound that results in 50% activity in a single dose-response experiment. For the purposes of the present invention, in vitro potency is determined using a fluorescence assay that employs HEK-293 Aurora CRE-BLAM cells that stably express the human GLP-1 receptor. These HEK-293 cells have stably integrated a DNA vector having a cAMP response element (CRE) driving expression of the 3-lactamase (BLAM) gene. The interaction of a GLP-1 agonist with the receptor initiates a signal that results in activation of the cAMP response element and subsequent expression of β-lactamase. The β-lactamase CCF2/AM substrate that emits fluorescence when it is cleaved by β-lactamase (Aurora Biosciences Corp.) can then be added to cells that have been exposed to a specific amount of GLP-1 agonist to provide a measure of GLP-1 agonist potency. The assay is further described in Zlokarnik, et al. (1998) Science 279: 84-88 (See also Example 1). The EC_{50} values for the compounds listed in example 1 were determined using the BLAM assay described above by generating a dose response curve using dilutions ranging from 0.00003 nanomolar to 30 nanomolar. Relative in vitro potency values are established by running Val^8-GLP-1(7-37)OH as a control and assigning the control a reference value of 1.

[0025] The term "delivery agent" refers to molecules in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,541,155; 5,693,338; 5,976,569; 5,643,957; 5,955,503; 6,100,298; 5,650,386; 5,866,536; 5,965,121; 5,989,539; 6,001,347; 6,071,510; 5,820,881; and 6,242,495; and WO 02/02509; WO 01/51454; WO 01/44199; WO 01/32130; WO 00/59863; WO 00/50386; WO 00/47188; and WO 00/40203. The delivery agents are generally derived from amino acids and are useful in the oral formulations of the present invention., The derived amino acids can also be in the form of poly amino acids, and peptides. An amino acid is any carboxylic acid having at least one free amine group and includes naturally occurring and synthetic amino acids. Poly amino acids are either peptides or two or more amino acids linked by a bond formed by other groups by a peptide bond. Peptides can vary in length from dipeptides with two amino acids to polypeptides with several hundred amino acids. Preferred peptides include di-peptides, tri-peptides, tetra-peptides, and penta-peptides.

[0026] Furthermore, the delivery agents of the present invention are optionally in a salt form. Examples of salts include sodium, hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, phosphoric acid, citric acid, acetic acid, sulfate, phosphate, chloride, bromide, iodide, acetate, propionate, hydrobromic acid, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, and potassium carbonate.

[0027] The various oral formulations of the present invention may optionally encompass a pharmaceutically acceptable buffer. Examples of pharmaceutically acceptable buffers include phosphate buffers such as dibasic sodium phosphate, TRIS, glycylglycine, maleate, sodium acetate, sodium citrate, sodium tartrate, or an amino acid such as glycine, histidine, lysine or arginine. Other pharmaceutically acceptable buffers are known in the art. Preferably, the buffer is selected from the group consisting of phosphate, TRIS, maleate, and glycine. Even more preferably the buffer is TRIS.

[0028] Preferably, the TRIS concentration is between about 1 mM and 100 mM. Even more preferably, the concentration is between about 10 mM and about 50 mM, most preferably the buffer is about 20 mM.

[0029] The pH of the oral formulations is adjusted to provide stability and to be acceptable for oral administration. Preferably, the pH is adjusted to between about 7.0 and about 9.0, more preferably the pH is between about 7.4 and 8.4. Even more preferably the pH is between about 7.8 and 8.4. Most preferably, the pH is between about 7.8 and 8.1.

[0030] The various oral formulations of the present invention may optionally encompass a suspending agent. Some delivery agents require a suspending agent due to their solubility characteristics. An example of a suspending agent is hydroxypropylmethylcellulose. Preferably, the final concentration of hydroxypropylmethylcellulose is between about 2% and about 10% (weight/volume). Even more preferably, the concentration is between about 2% and about 5% (w/v). Most preferably the concentration is about 3.9% (w/v).

[0031] The oral formulations of the present invention may optionally comprise a cosolvent. Some delivery agents require cosolvents due to their solubility characteristics. Examples of cosolvents include ethanol, N-methylpyrrolidone, N,N-dimethylacetamide, N,N-dimethylformamide, glycofurol, ethoxydiol, propylene glycol, polyethylene glycol 300 and polyvinylpyrrolidone. Preferably, the final concentration of the cosolvents is between about 5% and about 30% (volume/volume). Even more preferably, the concentration is between about 10% and about 25% (v/v). Most preferably the concentration is about 20% (v/v).

[0032] The oral formulations of the present invention may optionally comprise a preservative. Preservative refers to a compound that is added to the formulation to act as an antimicrobial agent. Among preservatives known in the art as being effective and acceptable in parenteral formulations are phenolic preservatives, alkylparabens, benzyl alcohol,

tives include cresols and phenol or a mixture of cresols and phenol. Examples of cresols include meta-cresol, ortho-cresol, para-cresol, chlorocresol, or mixtures thereof. Alkylparaben refers to a C_1 to C_4 alkylparaben, or mixtures thereof. Examples of alkylparabens include methylparaben, ethylparaben, propylparaben, or butylparaben. The concentrations must be sufficient to maintain preservative effectiveness by retarding microbial growth. Preferably, the preservative is a phenol derivative. More preferably the preservative is a cresol. Even more preferably the preservative is meta-cresol.

[0033] A preferred concentration of a preservative in the final mixture is about 1.0 mg/mL to about 20.0 mg/mL. More preferred ranges of concentration of preservative in the final mixture are about 2.0 mg/mL to about 8.0 mg/mL, about 2.5 mg/mL to about 4.5 mg/mL and about 2.0 mg/mL to about 4.0 mg/mL. A most preferred concentration of preservative in the final mixture is about 3.0 mg/mL.

[0034] The oral formulations of the present invention may optionally comprise an isotonicity agent. Isotonicity agents refer to compounds that are tolerated physiologically and impart a suitable tonicity to the formulation to prevent the net flow of water across cell membranes. Examples of such compounds include glycerin, salts, e.g., NaCl, and sugars, e.g., dextrose, mannitol, and sucrose. These compounds are commonly used for such purposes at known concentrations. One or more isotonicity agents may be added to adjust the ionic strength or tonicity. The preferred isotonicity agent is NaCl. The concentration of the NaCl is preferably between about 10 mM and 200 mM, more preferred is between about 50 mM and 150 mM, and most preferred is about 100 mM.

[0035] The administration compositions may alternatively be in the form of a solid, such as a tablet, capsule or particle, such as a powder. Solid dosage forms may be prepared by mixing the solid form of the compound with the solid form of the active agent. Alternatively, a solid may be obtained from a solution of compound and active agent by methods known in the art, such as freeze drying, precipitation, crystallization ad solid dispersion.

[0036] GLP-1 Compounds Appropriate for use in the Present Invention:

[0037] The GLP-1 compounds of the present invention can be made by a variety of methods known in the art such as solid-phase synthetic chemistry, purification of GLP-1 molecules from natural sources, recombinant DNA technology, or a combination of these methods. For example, methods for preparing GLP-1 peptides are described in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,118,666; 5,120,712; 5,512,549; 5,977,071; and 6,191,102.

[0038] By custom in the art, the amino terminus of GLP-1(7-37)OH has been assigned number residue 7, and the carboxy-terminus has been assigned number 37. The other amino acids in the polypeptide are numbered consecutively,

[0039] The two naturally occurring truncated GLP-1 peptides are represented in Formula I, SEQ ID NO:1.

FORMULA I

SEQ ID NO: 1

His^{7}-Ala-Glu-Gly^{10}-Thr-Phe-Thr-Ser-Asp-Val-Ser-Ser-Tyr-Leu^{20}-Glu-Gly-Gln-Ala-Ala^{25}-Lys-Glu-Phe-Ile-Ala^{30}-Trp-Leu-Val-Lys-Gly^{35}-Arg-Xaa^{37}

[0040] wherein:

[0041] Xaa^{37} is Gly, or —NH_2.

[0042] Preferably, a GLP-1 compound has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or is modified so that from one, two, three, four or five amino acids differ from SEQ ID NO: 1.

[0043] A preferred group of GLP-1 compounds is composed of GLP-1 analogs of Formula I (SEQ ID NO:2).

FORMULA I

(SEQ ID NO: 2)

His-Xaa^{8}-Xaa^{9}-Gly-Xaa^{11}-Phe-Thr-Xaa^{14}-Asp-Xaa^{16}-Xaa^{17}-Xaa^{18}-Xaa^{19}-Xaa^{20}-Xaa^{21}-Xaa^{22}-Xaa^{23}-Xaa^{24}-Xaa^{25}-Xaa^{26}-Xaa^{27}-Phe-Ile-Xaa^{30}-Xaa^{31}-Xaa^{32}-Xaa^{33}-Xaa^{34}-Xaa^{35}-Xaa^{36}-Xaa^{37}-Xaa^{38}-Xaa^{39}-Xaa^{40}-Xaa^{41}-Xaa^{42}-Xaa^{43}-Xaa^{44}-Xaa^{45}

[0044] wherein:

[0045] Xaa^{8} is Ala, Gly, Ser, Thr, Leu, Ile, Val, Glu, Asp, or Lys;

[0046] Xaa^{9} is Glu, Asp, or Lys;

[0047] Xaa^{11} is Thr, Ala, Gly, Ser, Leu, Ile, Val, Glu, Asp, or Lys;

[0048] Xaa^{14} is Ser, Ala, Gly, Thr, Leu, Ile, Val, Glu, Asp, or Lys;

[0049] Xaa^{16} is Val, Ala, Gly, Ser, Thr, Leu, Ile, Tyr, Glu, Asp, Trp, or Lys;

[0050] Xaa^{17} is Ser, Ala, Gly, Thr, Leu, Ile, Val, Glu, Asp, or Lys;

[0051] Xaa^{18} is Ser, Ala, Gly, Thr, Leu, Ile, Val, Glu, Asp, Trp, Tyr, or Lys;

[0052] Xaa^{19} is Tyr, Phe, Trp, Glu, Asp, Gln, or Lys;

[0053] Xaa^{20} is Leu, Ala, Gly, Ser, Thr, Ile, Val, Glu, Asp, Met, Trp, Tyr, or Lys;

[0054] Xaa^{21} is Glu, Asp, or Lys;

[0055] Xaa^{22} is Gly, Ala, Ser, Thr, Leu, Ile, Val, Glu, Asp, or Lys;

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