**MOLECULAR ASPECTS OF ANTICANCER
DRUG-DNA INTERACTIONS
Volume 1**

TOPICS IN MOLECULAR AND STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY

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Topics in Molecular and Structural Biology

MOLECULAR ASPECTS OF ANTICANCER DRUG–DNA INTERACTIONS

Volume 1

Edited by

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Contents

<i>Preface</i>	viii
<i>The Contributors</i>	x
1 Selectivity in alkylating agent–DNA interactions	
J. A. Hartley	1
1 Introduction	1
2 DNA base pair selectivity	4
3 DNA base sequence selectivity	6
4 DNA crosslinking	15
5 Alkylating agent–DNA interactions in cells	19
6 Enhancing the selectivity of alkylating agent–DNA interactions	22
2 Structure–activity studies of anthracycline–DNA complexes	
A. H.-J. Wang	32
1 Introduction	32
2 Some general comments	34
3 Daunorubicin and doxorubicin	35
4 Drug–DNA crosslink induced by formaldehyde	39
5 MAR70: an anthracycline drug with a disaccharide	42
6 Nogalamycin and derivatives	42
7 Other anthracyclines	48
8 Common structural features	48
9 Conclusions	50
3 Advances in the study of pyrrolo[2,1-<i>c</i>][1,4]benzodiazepine (PBD) antitumour antibiotics	
D. E. Thurston	54
1 Introduction	55
2 Stereochemistry and conformation of PBD–DNA adducts	58
3 Dynamics of PBD–DNA adduct formation	65

4	Correlation between PBD structure, DNA-binding affinity and biological activity	74
5	Rational design of new PBD analogues	77
6	Conclusions	82
4	Molecular aspects of the interaction of (+)-CC-1065 with DNA	
	L. H. Hurley and P. H. Draves	89
1	Introduction	89
2	Reaction with DNA	91
3	Structural consequences of the reaction of (+)-CC-1065 with DNA	103
4	Biochemical consequences	113
5	Structure–activity relationships	123
6	Evolution of the biosynthetic pathway leading to the biologically potent (+)-CC-1065 molecule having sequence selectivity	127
7	Summary	129
5	Molecular aspects of platinum–DNA interactions	
	K. M. Comess and S. J. Lippard	134
1	Introduction	134
2	The binding of <i>cis</i> -DDP to intracellular targets	136
3	Factors that bind or interact directly with platinated DNA	148
4	Conclusions	156
6	New platinum drugs	
	M. J. McKeage and L. R. Kelland	169
1	Introduction	169
2	The current status of cisplatin analogues in clinical development	170
3	Tumour resistance to cisplatin/carboplatin	184
4	Future platinum-based drugs	193
5	Conclusions	198
7	Echinomycin and related quinoxaline antibiotics	
	M. J. Waring	213
1	Introduction	213
2	Bis-intercalation	213
3	Structure–activity relations	216
4	Crystallography	218
5	The nature of binding sites in DNA	224
6	Kinetics	225
7	Footprinting	227
8	Antibiotic–oligonucleotide complexes	230
9	Hoogsteen base pairing in echinomycin–DNA complexes?	232

10	Conclusion	237
8	Molecular basis of neocarzinostatin action: Roles of DNA microstructure and thiol in the mechanism of bistranded oxidative damage	
	I. H. Goldberg	243
1	Introduction	243
2	Activation of neocarzinostatin chromophore to a diradical species	244
3	NCS-Chrom interaction with DNA	247
4	Chemistry of DNA damage	249
5	Sequence-specific bistranded DNA lesions	256
6	Molecular basis of mutagenesis	262
7	Rational drug design	263
9	Antisense oligonucleotides as potential inhibitors of gene expression	
	D. M. Tidd	272
1	Introduction	272
2	Biological stability and non-specific toxicity	275
3	Cell uptake and intracellular targeting	278
4	Hybrid stability and RNase H activity	284
5	Target sequence specificity	287
6	Optimum target sequence selection	294
7	Conclusion	296
10	Antigene nucleic acids — inhibition of gene expression via triple helix formation	
	D. A. Collier	301
1	Introduction	301
2	The antigene strategy	301
3	Triple helix formation	302
4	Strand displacement oligonucleotides	312
5	Cellular uptake and persistence of oligonucleotides	313
6	Studies on oligonucleotide distribution and uptake <i>in vivo</i>	314
7	Inhibition of transcription by triple helix formation	315
8	Conclusions and future prospects	317
11	Design of sequence-specific agents: Lexitropsins	
	J. W. Lown	322
1	Introduction	322
2	Drug design concepts	324
3	Conclusions and prospects	349
	<i>Index</i>	357

Preface

DNA has long been a key target for cancer chemotherapy. Indeed, the first agents to be employed clinically in the treatment of human cancer (the nitrogen mustards) are DNA cross-linking agents. Spectacular advances have occurred during recent years in the treatment of childhood leukaemia and testicular cancer, largely as a result of the development of better DNA-interactive agents. Even though the majority of solid tumours remain resistant to chemotherapy, there is real promise that a new, third-generation of platinum compounds will prove successful in the treatment of ovarian cancer. Clinical advances in such key areas are the ultimate objective of much current research in cancer chemotherapy and biology. Future progress must surely result from wise application of the large body of fundamental knowledge being accumulated from studies in a whole range of disciplines. No one doubts that clinical success will increasingly depend upon the exploitation of such knowledge and on the interplay between it and more applied disciplines. This is especially important as the molecular and cellular bases of malignant cell growth become better understood. So the study of drug-DNA interactions has moved on from the position of a dozen years ago, when our understanding of the molecular basis of drug action was relatively poor, as were the prospects for rational design of new drugs, to a much more positive position with new horizons.

These two volumes survey our current knowledge about the mode of action of the major classes of DNA-interactive antitumour agents, and in so doing provides pointers for the discovery of new therapeutic substances. The reader will notice that certain related topics have been grouped together; indeed in one instance (that of topoisomerase inhibitors), what were originally planned as two separate chapters by different authors, have been amalgamated into one (by mutual consent!) so as to produce a more balanced and co-ordinated treatment. Elsewhere the relationships between topics may be less obvious, but we hope that our choices will stimulate cross-fertilization of ideas.

An enterprise involving many authors such as this requires the co-operation of all the contributors if it is to succeed. We are grateful to

everyone for their efforts in ensuring delivery of their manuscripts promptly and for making our task as editors such a pleasurable one. Both of us are indebted to the Cancer Research Campaign for supporting work on drug-DNA interactions in our own laboratories over a number of years. To the hard-working staff of the Campaign, as well as to those who devote their lives to the alleviation of cancer at the bedside and in the laboratory, we dedicate this pair of volumes.

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M. W.

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