

# Phosphoinositide 3-kinase $\gamma/\delta$ inhibition limits infarct size after myocardial ischemia/reperfusion injury

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Although phosphoinositide 3-kinases (PI3Ks) play beneficial pro-cell survival roles during tissue ischemia, some isoforms ( $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ ) paradoxically contribute to the inflammation that damages these same tissues upon reperfusion. We therefore considered the possibility that selectively inhibiting proinflammatory PI3K isoforms during the reperfusion phase could ultimately limit overall tissue damage seen in ischemia/reperfusion injuries such as myocardial infarction. Panreactive and isoform-restricted PI3K inhibitors were identified by screening a novel chemical family; molecular modeling studies attributed isoform specificity based on rotational freedom of substituent groups. One compound (TG100-115) identified as a selective PI3K  $\gamma/\delta$  inhibitor potentially inhibited edema and inflammation in response to multiple mediators known to participate in myocardial infarction, including vascular endothelial growth factor and platelet-activating factor; by contrast, endothelial cell mitogenesis, a repair process important to tissue survival after ischemic damage, was not disrupted. In rigorous animal MI models, TG100-115 provided potent cardioprotection, reducing infarct development and preserving myocardial function. Importantly, this was achieved when dosing well after myocardial reperfusion (up to 3 h after), the same time period when patients are most accessible for therapeutic intervention. In conclusion, by targeting pathologic events occurring relatively late in myocardial damage, we have identified a potential means of addressing an elusive clinical goal: meaningful cardioprotection in the post-reperfusion time period.

edema | inflammation | myocardial infarct | VEGF

Myocardial infarction (MI) results from a biphasic ischemia/reperfusion (I/R) injury to the heart, initiating with cardiomyocyte apoptosis (1), then proceeding to a second wave of inflammation-based tissue damage (2). Despite considerable effort, therapeutic interventions to disrupt this injury pattern have not translated well from preclinical studies into the clinic. One major limitation has been a focus on antiischemia therapies that require delivery early in MI pathogenesis, a time when the great majority of patients are inaccessible (3). By contrast, although reperfusion injury does unfold in the appropriate interventional setting, inflammation's multifactorial nature complicates attempts to limit its impact. For example, proinflammatory mediators generated during I/R injury include VEGF (4), platelet-activating factor (PAF) (5), multiple cytokines and eicosanoids (6–8), histamine (9), thrombin (10), and complement factors (11). Although this diversity makes blockade at the receptor level unfeasible, inhibition at the subreceptor level would be reasonable were a common signaling element identifiable.

Phosphoinositide 3-kinase (PI3K) could represent this gatekeeper, lying downstream of both receptor tyrosine kinases and G protein-coupled receptors (GPCR), two receptor classes encompassing the ligands listed above. The  $\gamma$  and  $\delta$  isoforms in particular would appear promising targets, because genetic deletion studies establish their roles in edema and inflammatory responses (12–17). By contrast, PI3K $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , two broadly

expressed isoforms, apparently play more fundamental biologic roles, because genetic deletion of either is lethal (18).

Along with possible pitfalls from disrupting developmental events, anti-PI3K therapies are also complicated by the potential for proapoptotic activity. Considerable evidence supports a prosurvival role for PI3K (and its downstream target, Akt) during ischemia (19) and, although the exact isoform(s) involved remain unclear, in general PI3K pathways are considered beneficial events that should not be disrupted during I/R injuries (20, 21). Additionally, although commonly used PI3K inhibitors reduce inflammatory events in animal models (22), they have failed to reduce infarct size when delivered after reperfusion (23). Finally, transgenic mice overexpressing a kinase-inactive PI3K $\gamma$  in their cardiomyocytes develop infarcts of equivalent size as do wild-type animals after I/R injury (24). On the whole, then, it seems at best equivocal whether inhibition of PI3K signaling would prove beneficial, detrimental, or inconsequential to infarct development.

As a step toward resolving this question, we now report our experience using a previously undescribed PI3K $\gamma/\delta$  inhibitor to interrupt the reperfusion phase of I/R injury. This small molecule (TG100-115) was confirmed as a potent inhibitor of edema and inflammation induced by both receptor tyrosine kinase and GPCR ligands, but which at the same time spared tissue repair processes such as endothelial cell (EC) mitogenesis. In MI models designed to aggressive standards, it both reduced infarct development and improved myocardial function. Most impressively, cardioprotection was seen upon delivery up to several hours after reperfusion, a time when MI patients are available for therapeutic intervention in acute care settings, supporting our hope that this approach to selective PI3K isoform inhibition holds promise for bridging that gap between preclinical efficacy and clinical utility.

## Results

**Identification of PI3K Isoform-Selective Inhibitors.** Screening a novel family of pteridines for activity against class IA ( $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\delta$ ) and IB

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Conflict of interest statement: J.D., G.N., E.D., J.H., and R.S. are employees of TargeGen, Inc., and hold stock options in the company. W.W. is a former employee of TargeGen, Inc., and holds stock options in the company. A.D. and D.C. serve on the Scientific Advisory Board of TargeGen, Inc., and hold stock options in the company.

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Abbreviations: MI, myocardial infarction; I/R, ischemia/reperfusion; PAF, platelet-activating factor; PI3K, phosphoinositide 3-kinase; GPCR, G protein-coupled receptor; EC, endothelial cell; LV, left ventricle; LAD, left anterior descending coronary artery; AAR, area at risk.

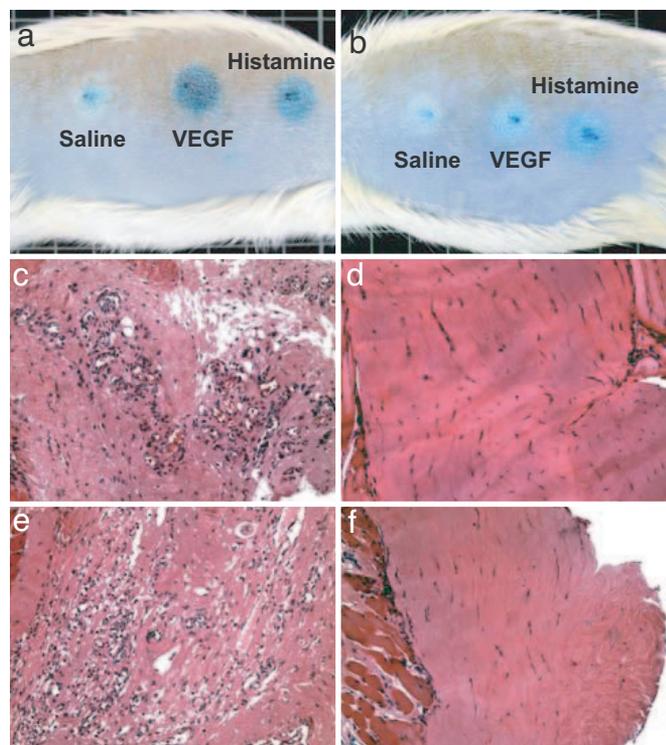
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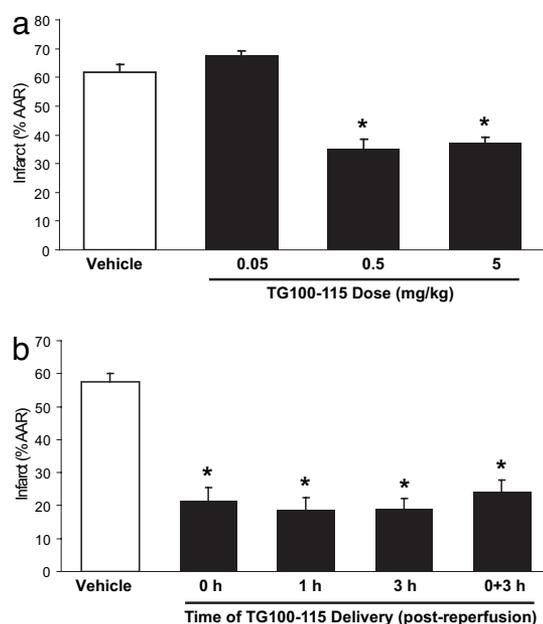




**Fig. 3.** Inhibition of edema and inflammation. (a and b) Rats were injected i.v. with Evans blue dye and then intradermally with saline, VEGF, or histamine. Pretreatment with TG100-115 (1 mg/kg) (b) reduced edema formation relative to vehicle-treated animals (a). (c–f) Rat hindpaws were injected with either PAF (c and d) or dextran (e and f) and processed 3 h later as H&E-stained paraffin sections. Pretreatment with TG100-115 (d and f; 5 mg/kg) blocked both the edema and leukocytic infiltrate induced by these two inflammatory mediators relative to animals dosed with vehicle alone (c and e). Images were taken of paws representing the mean group value for volume as presented in Results. (Original magnification  $\times 200$ .)

**PI3K $\gamma/\delta$  Inhibition Reduces Edema and Inflammation *in Vivo*.** Because VE-cadherin phosphorylation triggers a reduction in endothelial barrier function (26), TG100-115's ability to block this cellular event should translate into an antiedema effect. This was directly demonstrated in Miles assay studies, where this compound inhibited VEGF-induced vascular permeability (Fig. 3). TG100-115 also blocked histamine-induced permeability, as predicted based on PI3K's role in GPCR signaling. Varying the time between compound administration and agonist challenge demonstrated that a single i.v. administration reduced edema formation for at least 4 h (data not shown).

The Miles assay models a primarily endothelial-based response that develops rapidly (within minutes). As a comparator, we next used a rodent hindpaw model, where more complex inflammatory reactions develop over several hours. Agonists included PAF, a GPCR ligand that activates both EC and leukocytes, and dextran, a phagocytic stimulus for mast cell and leukocyte activation (27). Histology revealed quite clearly that TG100-115 strongly antagonized both the edema and leukocyte infiltration induced by these two mediators (Fig. 3 c–f). Paw volume (a more quantitative measure of edema and inflammation) was reduced by 62% and 78% in response to PAF or dextran, respectively ( $n = 8$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). Finally, to correlate these *in vivo* responses with the molecular target of interest, we monitored PI3K pathway signaling through Western blot analyses of Akt phosphorylation (a PI3K-mediated event). VEGF injection i.v. in mice induced a rapid Akt phosphorylation readily detectable in lung lysates and, as expected, pretreatment with



**Fig. 4.** Reduction of infarct development in a rodent MI model. (a) Rats were subjected to 60 min of LAD occlusion followed by vehicle or TG100-115 delivery (at the indicated dose) 60 min after reperfusion. Both ischemic area [area at risk (AAR)] and infarct area were then determined 24 h after study initiation. Data are shown as infarct area as a percentage of the AAR (means  $\pm$  SEM,  $n = 6$ ; \*, 0.5 and 5 mg/kg TG100-115 dose groups differ from vehicle control by  $P < 0.05$  but not from one another). (b) Animals were treated as in a, except that a single TG100-115 dose (0.1 mg/kg) was delivered at 0–3 h after reperfusion; in one group, animals were dosed at both 0 and 3 h. Data shown are as in a ( $n = 5$ –9; \*, all TG100-115 groups differ from vehicle control by  $P < 0.001$  but not from one another).

TG100-115 blocked this response (SI Fig. 7). Blockade was seen with TG100-115 doses as low as 0.5 mg/kg and persisted over a period of several hours.

**PI3K $\gamma/\delta$  Inhibition Limits Infarct Development and Improves Myocardial Functioning in Rodents.** We previously documented in rodents the vascular changes, such as edema and neutrophil activation, which contribute to infarct development (26). Given the anti-inflammatory actions of our PI3K $\gamma/\delta$  inhibitor, therefore, we tested this compound for possible cardioprotective activities. In a rodent model of MI, TG100-115 delivered as a single i.v. bolus 60 min after reperfusion routinely reduced infarct size by  $\geq 40\%$ , with maximal efficacy reached by a dose of 0.5 mg/kg (Fig. 4a). [This model initiates with a 60-min coronary artery occlusion followed by complete reperfusion and then infarct measurement at 24 h; in control animals, the ischemic zone typically covers 30–45% of the total left ventricle (LV) with 55–70% infarction of this area. Pilot studies revealed that longer ischemic periods do not produce larger infarcts and that infarcts do not reach a fixed size until  $\approx 6$  h after reperfusion.] Immunohistochemistry as well as EM revealed similar patterns of monocyte and neutrophil infiltration in hearts from TG100-115 vs. vehicle-treated animals (data not shown). Although it was obvious that infarcts were smaller in TG100-115 animals, inflammatory infiltrates were present to an equivalent degree in infarcted myocardium from both treatment groups. Inflammation was not detectable, by contrast, in viable tissue (i.e., myocardium not showing morphologic signs of cardiomyocyte or vascular damage). These observations are consistent, therefore, with an action by TG100-115 to reduce the overall area in which inflammation occurs and thus the final extent of infarction.

To better define the available therapeutic window for this



mediated inflammation was therefore a positive step in proposing this compound as a cardioprotectant.

Rodent and porcine MI models confirmed these cardioprotective actions. A major goal was to provide weight to these data by designing studies to aggressive standards. Therefore, although ischemic phases <60 min coupled with <6 h endpoints are commonly used, we adopted 60- to 90-min ischemic periods and measured infarcts 24 h after initiation, as recommended by a National Institutes of Health-convened expert panel (3). Most importantly, all therapeutic interventions were administered after reperfusion rather than during ischemia or even preischemia, as is routinely reported. Adopting these aggressive standards limited the achievable extent of infarct reduction, because considerable myocardial death would have occurred in the time between ischemia onset and therapeutic intervention. Despite this challenge, PI3K $\gamma/\delta$  inhibition reduced infarct size by  $\approx 40\%$  in both rodent- and porcine-based studies. In the rat, TG100-115 achieved maximal efficacy when dosed as late as 3 h after reperfusion (4 h after the initial ischemic injury), and a single dosing on the day of infarction was sufficient to yield a durable functional benefit (improved fractional shortening 4 weeks later). This achievement hopefully serves the goal of producing data better predictive of potential performance in the intended clinical environment, where patients are most likely to receive cardioprotective therapy after diagnosis of an evolving MI if not after reperfusion (3), after meaningful ischemic and even reperfusion injury has already occurred.

In conclusion, we propose that PI3K inhibition represents a promising approach to limiting I/R injuries such as acute MI, provided the appropriate kinase inhibitor can be identified. Consensus is building that isoform specificity must be successfully addressed when developing PI3K inhibitors, with both  $\delta$  and  $\gamma$  isoforms ranking high as potential targets. For example, an inhibitor slanted toward the  $\gamma$  isoform (but also inhibiting PI3K $\alpha/\beta/\delta$  at  $\leq 300$  nM) was recently shown to inhibit rheumatoid arthritis and lupus nephritis (41, 42). Our data extend these concepts by demonstrating the value of PI3K $\gamma/\delta$  inhibition in inflammatory-based but nonautoimmune pathologies. We believe that TG100-115 meets several criteria that support its development as a cardioprotective therapy, in that it is specific against its targets, is deliverable by the clinically appropriate route (i.v.) during the clinically appropriate period (after reperfusion), achieves relatively high efficacy at relatively low doses, and provides maximal efficacy within a relatively wide therapeutic window. Indeed, based on these positive attributes, TG100-115 is currently being studied in acute MI patients when delivered after reperfusion.

## Methods

**Kinase Inhibitors.** TG100-115 [3-[2,4-diamino-6-(3-hydroxyphenyl)pteridin-7-yl]phenol], TG100713 [3-(2,4-diamino-pteridin-6-yl)-phenol], and TG101110 [6-(1H-indol-4-yl)-pteridin-2,4-diamine] were designed by and synthesized at TargeGen; Wortmannin and LY294002 were purchased from Calbiochem (San Diego, CA). Compounds were prepared for *in vitro* assays as DMSO stocks and for *in vivo* assays as either PEG or sulfobutyl ether  $\beta$ -cyclodextrin (CyDex, Lenexa, KS) formulations.

**Molecular Modeling.** Protein coordinates for human PI3K $\gamma$  were taken from RCSB Protein Data Bank entry 1E8Z; additional structures (1E7U, 1E7V, 1E8W, and 1E8Y) were superimposed to examine potential flexibility and binding modes. Compound structures were docked into PI3K active sites using interactive modeling and automated docking software, then minimized in a molecular mechanics program using the consistent force field (CFF) with a distance-dependent dielectric (Insight II and Discover; Accelrys, San Diego, CA). For optimization, all atoms were allowed movement in residues containing at least one atom within 8 Å of any

ligand atom. Ribbon models were generated by using YASARA (Yasara Biosciences, Graz, Austria). Complexes were overlaid by using a method that superimposes corresponding carbon  $\alpha$  atoms (43), and renderings generated by using Insight II.

**Kinase Assays.** PI3K reactions were constructed by using recombinant human kinases, 3  $\mu$ M ATP, phosphatidylinositol substrate, and cofactors, and reaction progression measured by using a luminescent-based detection system to quantify ATP consumption (see *SI Supporting Text*). Protein kinase assays were performed by using commercial screening services (Upstate Biotechnology, Charlottesville, VA; Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA).

**Western Blots.** Serum-starved human umbilical vein EC (Cambrex BioScience, Walkersville, MD) were treated for 15 min with test agents (10  $\mu$ M) or vehicle, followed by a 5-min treatment with 20 ng/ml recombinant human VEGF (PeproTech, Rocky Hill, NJ) or vehicle. Lysates were then processed as Western blots to detect phosphorylated VE-cadherin and ERK1/2 or total ERK2 (see *SI Supporting Text*). For detection of *in vivo* phospho-Akt, BALB/c mice were first dosed i.v. with TG100-115 or vehicle and then injected i.v. at the desired time with 20 ng of VEGF or saline. Lungs were explanted after 5 min and processed to lysates, and Western blots performed as described.

**Cell Proliferation Assays.** Human umbilical vein EC plated in 96-well cluster plates (5,000 cells/well) were cultured in assay medium (containing 0.5% serum and 50 ng/ml VEGF) in the presence or absence of test compounds (10  $\mu$ M), and cell numbers were quantified by XTT assay (Promega, Madison, WI) 24, 48, or 72 h later.

**Miles Assay.** All animal studies followed current NIH Guidelines for the Use of Laboratory Animals and were performed according to Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee-approved protocols. Sprague–Dawley rats (175–200 g) were dosed i.v. with either TG100-115 (1 mg/kg) or vehicle, and 1–4 h later Evans blue dye (Sigma, St. Louis, MO) was administered i.v. as 500  $\mu$ l of a 2% sterile saline solution. Immediately after dye injection, animals were injected intradermally on each shaved flank with 100  $\mu$ l of saline, VEGF (2  $\mu$ g/ml stock), or histamine (10  $\mu$ g/ml stock). Thirty minutes later, injection sites were photographed.

**Hindpaw Inflammation.** Sprague–Dawley rats (275–300 g) were dosed i.v. with either TG100-115 (5 mg/kg) or vehicle and then injected 30 min later in the plantar hindlimb surface with 100  $\mu$ l of dextran suspension (Sephadex G-75 suspended at 80 mg/ml in saline and autoclaved) or PAF (16 pM c-PAF stock; Biomol International, Plymouth Meeting, PA). Animals were administered buprenorphine (0.01 mg/kg, s.c.) to control pain, and 3 h later paw dimensions were measured to the nearest 0.1 mm using calipers. Volume was then calculated and expressed as mm<sup>3</sup>; injection sites were harvested and processed to H&E-stained paraffin sections.

**Animal MI Models.** Rodent and porcine MI models are fully described in *SI Supporting Text*. Briefly, Sprague–Dawley rats were subjected to 60 min of complete left anterior descending coronary artery (LAD) occlusion followed by complete reperfusion; TG100-115 or vehicle was delivered i.v. at 0–3 h after reperfusion. Twenty-four hours later, LAD occlusion was repeated, animals were injected with Evans blue dye to delineate perfused from ischemic areas, and then heart sections were stained in triphenyltetrazolium chloride to delineate viable tissue from infarct and photographs were processed using an image analysis software program to quantify infarct area. Alternatively, LV function was assessed using echocardiography at 4 weeks by determining percent fractional shortening from long

axis images (by personnel blinded as to treatment identity). For the porcine model, farm swine were subjected to 90 min of complete LAD occlusion followed by complete reperfusion; TG100-115 or vehicle was delivered i.v. 30 min after reperfusion, and infarct area was determined as in the rodent model at 24 h.

**Statistics.** Two group comparisons were made using unpaired Student's *t* tests, and multiple group analyses using one-way ANOVA with post hoc Dunnett's tests (SigmaStat software; SPSS, Chicago, IL). If Dunnett's tests showed statistical differences for more than one group compared with controls, a second

ANOVA for intergroup differences was performed using the Student–Newman–Keuls method as the post hoc test. Statistical significance was defined as  $P < 0.05$ .

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