

## De Novo Synthesis and Biological Evaluation of C6''-Substituted C4''-Amide Analogues of SL0101

Roman M. Mrozowski,<sup>§,‡</sup> Zachary M. Sandusky,<sup>§,⊥</sup> Rajender Vemula,<sup>§,†</sup> Bulan Wu,<sup>§,¶</sup> Qi Zhang,<sup>§,†</sup> Deborah A. Lannigan,<sup>\*,⊥,‡</sup> and George A. O'Doherty<sup>\*,†</sup>

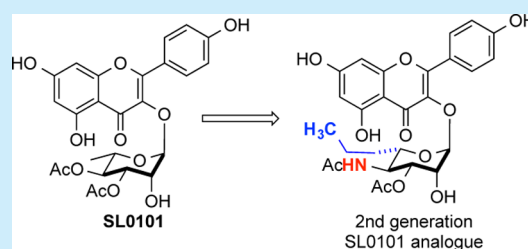
<sup>‡</sup>Departments of Pathology, Microbiology & Immunology and <sup>⊥</sup>Cancer Biology, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tennessee 37232, United States

<sup>†</sup>Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts 02115, United States

<sup>¶</sup>Department of Chemistry, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia 26506, United States

### S Supporting Information

**ABSTRACT:** In an effort to improve upon the *in vivo* half-life of the known ribosomal s6 kinase (RSK) inhibitor SL0101, C4''-amide/C6''-alkyl substituted analogues of SL0101 were synthesized and evaluated in cell-based assays. The analogues were prepared using a de novo asymmetric synthetic approach, which featured Pd- $\pi$ -allylic catalyzed glycosylation for the introduction of a C4''-azido group. Surprisingly replacement of the C4''-acetate with a C4''-amide resulted in analogues that were no longer specific for RSK in cell-based assays.



The ribosomal s6 kinases (RSKs) are a family of Ser/Thr kinases, which are downstream effectors of the extracellular signal-regulated kinase 1/2 pathways.<sup>1</sup> RSK appears to be involved in the etiology of a number of different cancers and, importantly, regulates a motility/invasive gene program.<sup>2</sup> RSK is a dual kinase domain protein with the N-terminal kinase domain (NTKD) responsible for phosphorylation of target substrates.<sup>3</sup> In a screen of botanical extracts SL0101 (**1**), a flavonoid glycoside, was identified as an inhibitor of the NTKD of RSK.<sup>4</sup> SL0101 (**1**) is a relatively selective inhibitor for RSK with a  $K_i$  of  $\sim 1 \mu\text{M}$ . From the crystal structure of SL0101 (**1**) complexed with the NTKD isoform of RSK2<sup>5</sup> and de novo synthetic studies,<sup>6</sup> we identified analogues (**2** and **3**) with C6''-substitutions of the rhamnose that showed improved efficacy in the *in vitro* kinase assays.<sup>7,8</sup>

SL0101 (**1**) has a short biological half-life *in vivo*,<sup>7</sup> which is presumably due to hydrolysis of the C3''/C4''-acetates which are necessary for high affinity.<sup>9</sup> To identify less labile groups that could replace the ester without loss of affinity, we investigated replacing the C4''-acetate with a C4''-acetamide in combination with the C6''-alkyl substitution that we previously identified.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, we targeted six C4''-acetamide analogues **4a–d** and **5a–b** (Figure 1).

Retrosynthetically, we envisioned that C4''-acetamide substituted analogues **6** could arise from C4''-azido sugar **7a**, which could be prepared from enone sugar **7c** via allylic carbonate **7b** (Scheme 1). Previously we have shown that C4'' allylic azides such as **7a** could be prepared from C4'' allylic carbonates like **7b** via Pd-catalyzed allylic alkylation.<sup>10</sup> However, this approach was not compatible for pyran rings with a C1 kaempferol group. To address this issue, a Pd-

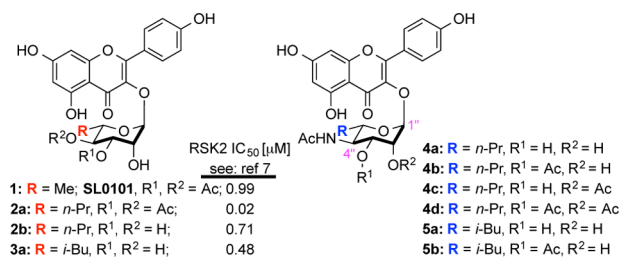


Figure 1. C4''-amide analogues of SL0101.

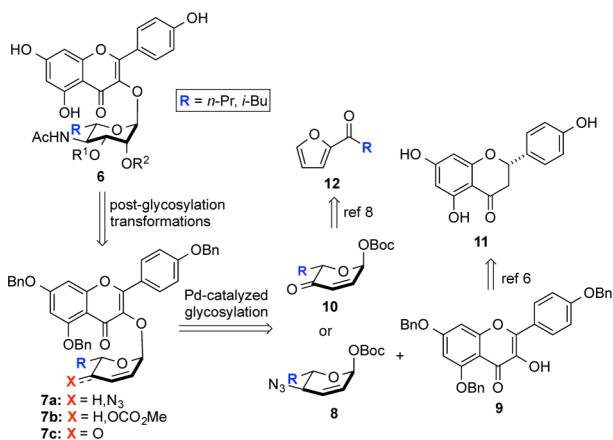
glycosylation method was developed for the direct incorporation of a C4'' azido sugar.

Our synthesis started with exposure of flavonol **9** and Boc-pyranone **13** to our typical glycosylation conditions (2.5 mol % Pd<sub>2</sub>(DBA)<sub>3</sub>-CHCl<sub>3</sub> and 10 mol % of PPh<sub>3</sub> in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> at 0 °C; 95%), which produced glycosylated pyranone **14** with complete  $\alpha$ -selectivity (Scheme 2). Reduction of the enone **14** (NaBH<sub>4</sub>/CeCl<sub>3</sub>, -78 °C in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/MeOH; 72%) resulted stereoselectively in allylic alcohol **15**.<sup>6</sup> A methyl carbonate leaving group was installed on the allylic alcohol by reaction of **15** with methyl chloroformate to form the C4''-carbonate **16** in 75% yield. Unfortunately, exposure of carbonate **16** to the Sinou conditions (TMSN<sub>3</sub>, [Pd(allyl)Cl]<sub>2</sub>/1,4-bis-(diphenylphosphino)butane) failed to afford the desired regio- and stereoisomeric allylic azide **17**. The C-1 kaempferol proved to be the better leaving group, as only products consistent with the hydrolysis at the anomeric position were observed.<sup>11</sup>

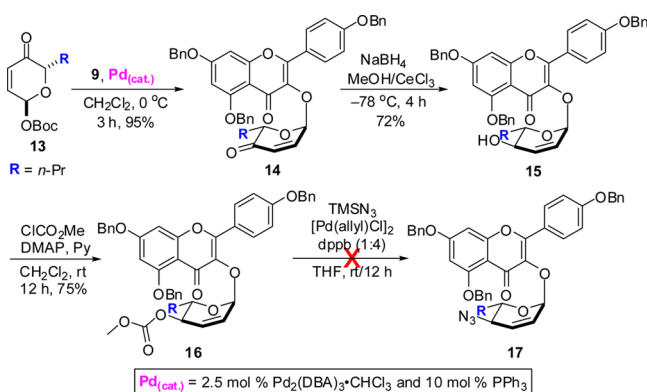
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Scheme 1. Retrosynthesis of C4''-Amide SL0101 Analogues

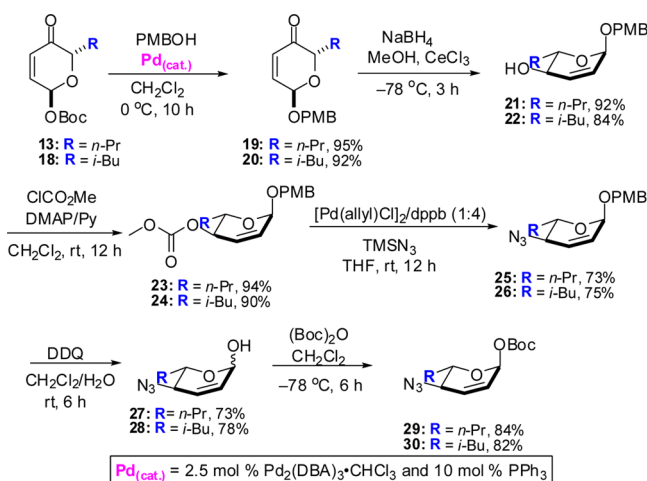


Scheme 2. Unsuccessful Approach to C4''-Azide Sugar 17



To solve this problem, we decided to try reversing the sequence of the two Pd- $\pi$ -allyl substitution reactions, which required the synthesis of allylic azides **29** and **30** (Scheme 3). This began with a palladium-catalyzed glycosylation (Pd(0)/PPh<sub>3</sub>, 1:2) of *p*-methoxybenzyl alcohol with Boc-pyranones **13** and **18** which stereoselectively afforded PMB-pyranones **19** and **20** (95% and 92% respectively). Diastereoselective reduction of the two enones (NaBH<sub>4</sub>/CeCl<sub>3</sub>, -78 °C in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>/MeOH; 92% and 84%) gave allylic alcohols **21** and **22**

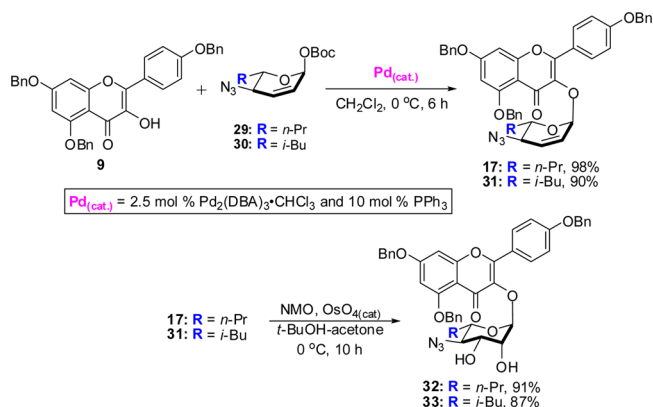
Scheme 3. Synthesis of C4''-Azide Sugar Glycosyl Donors 29/30



**22**. Treatment of the two allylic alcohols with methyl chloroformate in the presence of a catalytic amount of DMAP gave the allylic carbonates **23** and **24** (94% and 90%). Exposure of the carbonates to the Sinou conditions (TMSN<sub>3</sub>, [Pd(allyl)Cl]<sub>2</sub>/1,4-bis(diphenylphosphino)butane) regio- and stereospecifically afforded the desired allylic azides **25** and **26** (73% and 75%). An oxidative PMB deprotection (DDQ/H<sub>2</sub>O) of **25** and **26** provided anomeric alcohols **27** and **28** as a 13:1 mixture of anomers in 73% and 78% yields. The following Boc-protection of the two alcohols produced the key azido containing intermediates **29** and **30** in 84% and 82% yields with excellent diastereoselectivity.

To our delight, exposure of sugar donor Boc-allylic azides **29** and **30** and acceptor **9** to our typical Pd-catalyzed glycosylation conditions provided our desired glycosylated allylic azides **17** and **31** in excellent yield (98% and 90%) with complete  $\alpha$ -selectivity and no sign of hydrolysis at the anomeric position. Exposure of the two allylic azides to Upjohn conditions (OsO<sub>4</sub>/NMO; 91% and 87%) stereoselectively converted them into the two rhamno-diols **32** and **33**, which are poised for further manipulation into the desired SL0101 analogues (Scheme 4).

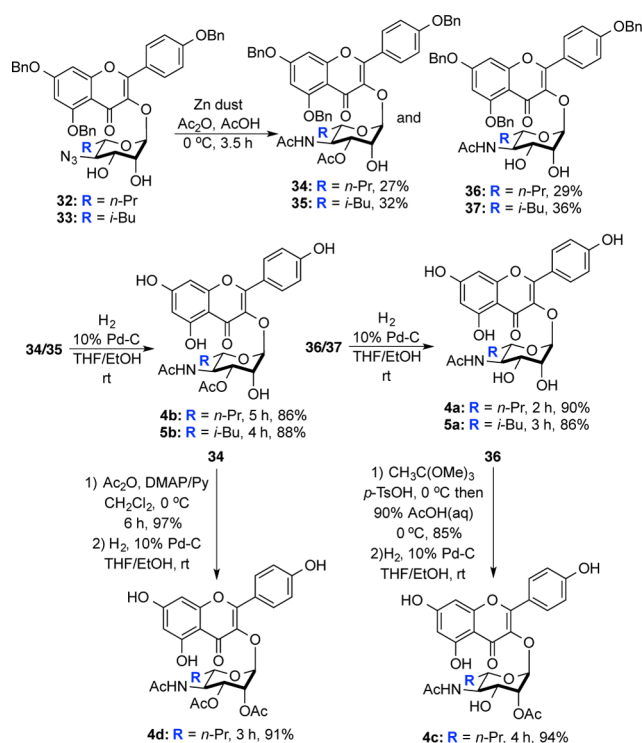
Scheme 4. Synthesis of C4''-Azido Rhamno-sugars 32/33



We next investigated the reduction and acylation of azidodiols **32** and **33** (Scheme 5).<sup>6</sup> Fortunately, both the C4 acylated amides **36** and **37** and C3/C4 bis-acylated products **34** and **35** were generated in an ~1:1 mixture in one pot from the reduction of **32** and **33** with zinc dust in the presence of acetic anhydride and acetic acid. Thus, the reduction acylation of **32** gave the desired C4''-acetamides **36** (29%) and **34** (27%), whereas the reduction acylation of **33** gave the desired C4''-acetamides **37** (36%) and **35** (32%).

The intermediates **34**–**37** were globally deprotected by an exhaustive hydrogenolysis, which produced four of the desired analogues. Thus, exposure of **34** and **35** to typical hydrogenolysis conditions (1 atm of hydrogen with Pd/C) furnished **4b** and **5b** in good yields (86% and 88%, respectively). Exposure of **36** and **37** to similar hydrogenolysis conditions furnished **4a** and **5a** in good yields (90% and 86%, respectively). Finally the last two analogues **4c** and **4d** were prepared by an acylation deprotection sequence. The peracylated product **4d** was prepared from **34** in 91% overall yield by bis-acylation (Ac<sub>2</sub>O, DMAP/Py; 97%) and exhaustive hydrogenolysis. Similarly, the C2 acylated product **4c** was prepared from **36** via an ortho-ester mediated C2-acylation (CH<sub>3</sub>C(OMe)<sub>3</sub>, 10% *p*-TsOH in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>; then excess 90%

## Scheme 5. Synthesis of C4''-Amide Analogues of SL0101 (4/5)



AcOH/H<sub>2</sub>O; 85%) and per-hydrogenolysis (94% overall yield).

The efficacy of the analogues **4a–d** and **5a–b** to inhibit RSK2 activity was determined in an *in vitro* kinase assay using purified recombinant RSK2 (Table 1).<sup>4</sup> The data were fit using nonlinear regression analysis. In the *n*-Pr series, **4b** and **4c** with a single acetate at the C3''- or C2''-position had significantly lower (~5-fold) IC<sub>50</sub>'s compared to SL0101. However, when compared with our best analogue **2a** (C3''/C4''-diacetate, Figure 1) the related C4''-acetamide **4b** had a 10-fold increase in IC<sub>50</sub>.<sup>7</sup> The IC<sub>50</sub>'s for **4a** with no C2''- or C3''-acetate and **4d** with two acetates were not statistically different from that of SL0101. These results are similar to those obtained in the series in which the acetyl group was at the C4''-position.<sup>7</sup> In the isobutyl series the C3''-acetate **5b** had a 3-fold improved IC<sub>50</sub> compared to that of SL0101, whereas **5a** with no C2''- or C3''-acetate had a much poorer IC<sub>50</sub> than SL0101. This suggests that, in the *n*-Pr-series, the C4''-acetamide can replace the C4''-acetate without dramatically compromising the affinity of the analogues for RSK2.

The six analogues were evaluated for their ability to decrease proliferation of the breast cancer cell line, MCF-7 (Table 1). Initially, each analogue was tested at a dose of 100 μM and compared to SL0101 (**1**). Analogue **4d** was the only analogue that inhibited proliferation to a greater extent than SL0101 (**1**). A dose response curve with **4d** showed that cytostasis occurred at ~35 μM and substantial cell death occurred at ~50 μM (see Supporting Information (SI)). For comparison SL0101 (**1**) at 100 μM (maximum concentration) induces a reduction in proliferation (~60%). To evaluate whether **4d** was specific for RSK, we compared its antiproliferative effects in MCF-7 cells versus MCF-10A, an immortalized nontransformed human breast cell line. We previously found that a preferential ability to inhibit MCF-7 compared to MCF-10A proliferation correlates with specificity for RSK inhibition.<sup>4,7–12</sup> At 25 μM **4d** inhibited proliferation of MCF-7 cells by 50% and marginally inhibited MCF-10A proliferation (see SI). However, at 50 μM of **4d**, a cytotoxic dose in MCF-7 cells, proliferation of MCF-10A cells was inhibited by 70%. Thus, **4d** shows a very limited ability to preferentially inhibit MCF-7 proliferation and survival compared to MCF-10A cells. These results suggest that **4d** is not a specific RSK inhibitor in intact cells.

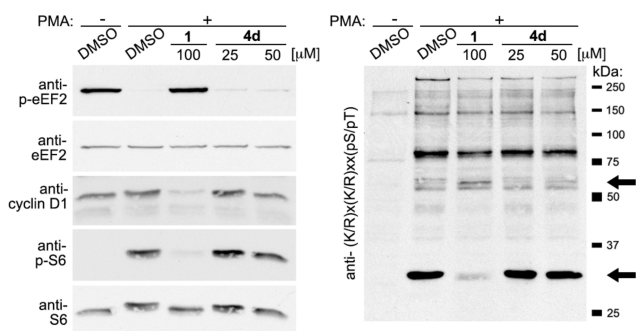
To further evaluate the specificity of **4d** at inhibiting RSK, we compared the efficacy of SL0101 (**1**) and **4d** to alter the phosphorylation of known RSK substrates. We chose to test **4d** at both cytostatic (25 μM) and cytotoxic (50 μM) concentrations. To increase the phosphorylation of substrates MCF-7 cells were stimulated with the mitogen, phorbol myristate acetate (PMA), after a pretreatment with inhibitor or vehicle. RSK phosphorylates and inhibits the activity of eukaryotic elongation factor 2 (eEF2) kinase.<sup>13</sup> Thus, inhibition of RSK relieves the inhibition of eEF2 kinase, which results in an increase in p-eEF2. As expected activation of RSK by PMA led to a decrease in p-eEF2 and inhibition of RSK with SL0101 increased p-eEF2 compared to the PMA control (Figure 2).

Ribosomal protein S6, a component of the 40S ribosomal subunit, is phosphorylated by RSK,<sup>14</sup> and in agreement with these data SL0101 (**1**) inhibits PMA-induced phosphorylation of S6. We have also found that RSK regulates the levels of the oncogene, cyclin D1, in MCF-7 cells.<sup>15</sup> Consistent with these observations SL0101 (**1**) inhibited cyclin D1 levels. In contrast with our observations with SL0101 the analogue **4d** did not alter the phosphorylation status of eEF2, S6 or the levels of cyclin D1. To further investigate the ability of **4d** to inhibit RSK in intact cells, we immunoblotted the lysates with an antibody against the phosphorylation motif that is

Table 1. *In Vitro* Potency of SL0101 (**1**) and Analogues<sup>a</sup>

compd name	RSK2 IC <sub>50</sub> [μM]	RSK2 IC <sub>50</sub> <i>p</i> (1)	MCF-7 proliferation [% control]	MCF-7 proliferation <i>p</i> (DMSO)	MCF-7 proliferation <i>p</i> (1)
SL0101 ( <b>1</b> )	1.04 ± 0.60		38.6 ± 14.6	<0.01	
<b>4a</b>	0.76 ± 0.43	0.17	94.5 ± 21.6	0.41	
<b>4b</b>	0.23 ± 0.07	<0.01	39.2 ± 7.2	<0.01	0.91
<b>4c</b>	0.11 ± 0.09	<0.01	47.8 ± 10.6	<0.01	0.16
<b>4d</b>	0.44 ± 0.39	0.02	−80.0 ± 6.6	<0.01	<0.01
<b>5a</b>	2.33 ± 0.88	<0.01	47.5 ± 19.1	<0.01	0.21
<b>5b</b>	0.32 ± 0.18	<0.01	24.6 ± 10.4	<0.01	0.03

<sup>a</sup>RSK2 IC<sub>50</sub>: concentration needed for 50% RSK2 inhibition (*n* > 2; quadruplicate: mean, S.D.; *p*(1) Student's *t* test compared to SL0101(**1**)). MCF-7 proliferation: (*n* > 2; triplicate: mean, S.D.; *p*(DMSO) Student's *t* test compared to control; *p*(1) Student's *t* test compared to SL0101 (**1**)). *p* < 0.01 significant.



**Figure 2.** RSK biomarkers comparison of **4d** and **1**. Comparison of analogue **4d** and SL0101 (**1**) was made against known RSK biomarkers in intact cells. MCF-7 cells were pretreated with **4d** at the indicated concentrations and then treated with vehicle or PMA. Lysates were analyzed by immunoblotting. The motif, (K/R)<sub>x</sub>(K/R)<sub>xx</sub>(pS/pT), is recognized by a number of kinases, including RSK. The arrows indicate bands whose intensity is altered upon treatment of cells with SL0101 (**1**).

recognized by numerous kinases, including RSK. Treatment with SL0101 increased the phosphorylation of a band at ~60 kDa and decreased the intensity of a band at ~27 kDa. Analogue **4d** did not alter the phosphorylation pattern as compared to PMA. Consistent with these results we observed that analogue **4b** (100 μM) did not alter the phosphorylation of RSK biomarkers or cyclin D1 levels in intact cells (data not shown). These results suggest that the amide analogues of SL0101 (**1**) are not specific for RSK.

In conclusion, using de novo synthesis C<sup>4</sup>''-acetamide analogues of SL0101 with a C<sup>6</sup>'' substitution were prepared and evaluated as RSK inhibitors. Analogues with improved *in vitro* kinase inhibitory activities were identified; however, this increase in activity came at a loss of selectivity for RSK. Further studies aimed at defining the requirements for a specific-RSK inhibition are ongoing and will be reported in due course.

## ■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

### Supporting Information

Experimental procedures and spectral data for all new compounds. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at <http://pubs.acs.org>.

## ■ AUTHOR INFORMATION

### Corresponding Authors

\*E-mail: G.O'Doherty@neu.edu (G.A.O.).

\*E-mail: deborah.lannigan@vanderbilt.edu (D.A.L.).

### Author Contributions

§R.M.M., Z.M.S., R.V., B.W., and Q.Z. are co-first authors; the order is alphabetical.

### Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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