

Antisense & Nucleic Acid Drug Development **9**, 221-231(1999)

Selectivity of Spermine Homologs on Triplex DNA Stabilization

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We synthesized seven homologs of spermine ($H_2N(CH_2)_3NH(CH_2)_nNH(CH_2)_3NH_2$, where $n=2-9$; $n=4$ for spermine) and studied their effects on melting temperature (T_{m1}), conformation, and precipitation of poly(dA).2poly(dT). The triplex DNA melting temperature, T_{m1} was 34.4 °C in the presence of 150mM KCl. Addition of spermine homologs increased T_{m1} in a concentration-dependent and structure-dependent manner, with 3-6-3 ($n=6$) exerting optimal stabilization. The $dT_{m1}/d\log[\text{polyamine}]$ values were 9-24 for these compounds. The duplex melting temperature, T_{m2} was insensitive to homolog concentration and structure, suggesting their ability to stabilize triplex DNA without altering the stability of the underlying duplex. Circular dichroism spectral studies revealed B -DNA formation in concentration-dependent and structure-dependent manner. Phase diagrams were constructed showing the critical ionic/polyamine concentrations stabilizing different structures. These compounds also exerted structural specificity effects on precipitating triplex DNA. These data provide new insights into the ionic/structural determinants affecting triplex DNA stability and indicate that 3-6-3 is an excellent ligand to stabilize poly(dA).2poly(dT) triplex DNA under physiologic ionic conditions for antigene therapeutics.