Synthesis of Nor-C-Linked Neuraminic Acid Disaccharide: A Versatile Precursor of C-Analogs of Oligosaccharides and Gangliosides

Xuejun Yuan, Dino K. Res, and Robert J. Linhardt*
Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, Rensselaer
Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York 12180
linhar@rpi.edu
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The Neu5Ac(2,8)Neu5Ac disaccharide is an important constituent of tumor related antigen, however, the O-linkage is catabolically unstable. Vaccination with a catabolically stable sialic acid C-glycoside analog might enhance immunogenicity. The synthesis of Neu5Ac nor-C-disaccharide 20R/S, corresponding to versatile precursors of C-analogs of oligosaccharides and gangliosides, is reported. The synthesis of the protected acceptor was not straightforward, as ester, silyl ether, and isopropylidene protection failed to afford desired C-linked disaccharide. Allyl ether protection of hydroxyl groups and acetyl protection of the acetamido facilitated the successful synthesis of the 8- aldehyde neuraminyl acceptor. Samarium mediated C-glycosylation afforded the desired nor-C-disaccharide as a mixture of two separable diastereomers.

Sialic acids, among the most important saccharides in living systems, are often found at nonreducing end of glycans.1 They are involved in many biological phenomena, such as recognition, cell differentiation, neuronal transmission, transport, reproduction, differentiation, epitope masking, and epitope protection. Sialic acids are also associated with pathological processes including infection, inflammation, cancer, and in neurological, cardiovascular, endocrinological, and autoimmune diseases.2

Polysialic acids (PSAs, I) are naturally occurring helical, linear homopolymers composed entirely of negatively charged sialic acid residues joined by α(2→8), α(2→9), or α(2→8)/α(2→9) alternating ketosidic linkages3 and are commonly found N-linked to a neural cell adhesion molecule (NCAM). NCAM is a cell adhesion molecule that plays a pivotal role in embryogenesis and the developmental biology of organogenesis.4 PSAs are spatially and temporally expressed during development and disappear soon after birth. In adult mammals, PSA expression is limited to selected regions of hippocampus, where neuronal generation and axonal plasticity persists.5 PSAs can reappear in adulthood diseases such as Wilms tumor of the kidney,6 small cell lung carcinoma,7 and various malignant neuroendocrine tumors, such as neuroblastoma, pheochromocytoma, and medullary thyroid carcinoma.8 The precise function of PSA has not yet been established. The most well-demonstrated property of PSAs is in cell–cell interaction and adhesion, and it is postulated that alteration of PSA glycans in NCAM reduces cell adhesion and may be involved in invasive metastasis.7

PSAs are also expressed widely in bacteria. Structural mimicry of PSAs may result in immune tolerance, attenuating host-tumor and host-pathogen immune reactions.9 PSA capsules found in Escherichia coli K-235 to the capsular polysaccharides of Neisseria meningitidis group B and in Pasteurella hemolytica serotype A2 have identical structures.10 The role and importance of different capsular polysaccharides in the pathogenicity of several strains of E. coli have been established. A large proportion of cases of bacteremia and urinary tract infections are caused by strains containing Neu5Ac in their capsular structure.11 Similarly, over 80% of neonatal meningitis is caused by strains having PSA capsules. The virulence of these organisms is attributable to structural mimicry between their common α(2→8) PSA capsular polysaccharide and human tissue counterpart, which allows the bacteria to evade immune surveillance. The poor immunogenicity of the group B meningococcal PSA has made it difficult to formulate a protective polysaccharide-based vaccine against meningococcal meningitis.12

The glycosidic oxygen linkage in PSAs, susceptible to the enzymatic action of extracellular sialidases,13 represents an important target for modification in the rational design of PSA-based therapeutics. PSAs are also prone to spontaneous chemical depolymerization through the protonation of glycosidic oxygens by the adjacent internal carboxylic acid residues.14 Neu5Ac(2,8)Neu5Ac is also an important constituent of gangliosides GD2 and GD3, well-known melanoma-associated antigens.15

considered attractive targets for vaccine-based anticancer therapy.\textsuperscript{15} C-Glycosides are resistant to chemical and enzymatic degradation, and vaccination with C-glycosides might enhance immunogenicity\textsuperscript{16} or be of utility in understanding biological recognition at the molecular level.\textsuperscript{17} Herein, we report the synthesis of non-C-linked α(2→8) Neu5Ac disaccharide, a versatile precursor of PSA, GD\textsubscript{2}, and GD\textsubscript{3} C-analogs.

Retrosynthetic analysis (Scheme 1) suggests that glycosylation of acceptor 5 with Neu5Ac phenyl sulfonyl donor 4 should afford protected non-C-disaccharide target 3.\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{0} The success of this synthetic route relies on the design and application of acceptor 5, which we envision could be synthesized starting from the previously reported sialic acid thiophenyl glycoside 8,\textsuperscript{16}\textsuperscript{0} using an orthogonal protection strategy followed by exposure and oxidation of the C-9 hydroxyl group.

The stability of trialkysilyl ether masking group made it an attractive candidate as temporary protecting group (P') for the 9-hydroxy group. In initial attempts, starting from Neu5Ac phenyl thioglycoside 8, C-9 hydroxyl was protected as t-butyldimethylsilyl (TBDMS) ether.\textsuperscript{17} Peracetylation, followed by selective deprotection of the 9-OH using TBAF,\textsuperscript{18} resulted in acetylation migration over a wide range of conditions (pH 3→9).\textsuperscript{19} Persilylation of hydroxyl groups in 8 using a more aggressive silylating reagent, TBDMS-OTf,\textsuperscript{20} selective deprotection of C-9 hydroxyl group,\textsuperscript{21} and Swern oxidation afforded desired aldehyde acceptor 5 (P=TBDMS).\textsuperscript{19} SmI\textsubscript{2} mediated C-glycosylation with Neu5Ac sulfonyl donor 4 (P′=Ac), failed to afford the desired C-linked Neu5Ac disaccharide 3.\textsuperscript{10} Molecular modeling of 5 (P=TBDMS) suggested the 9-aldehyde group was crowded and suggested the 7,8-hydroxy groups might be better protected as a smaller of isopropylidene ketal. Selective TBDMS protection of 4- and 9-hydroxyl groups resulted in 9 (Scheme 2). Treatment with dimethyl acetone ketal in the presence of a catalytic amount of tosic acid resulted in loss of the 9-O-TBDMS group, affording the undesired 8,9-O-isopropylidene derivative 10. The t-butyldiphenylsilyl (TBDPS) ether 11 was prepared\textsuperscript{22} to enhance the acid stability of the protection group at the C-9. Successful protection of the 7,8-hydroxy groups as isopropylidene was followed by exposure of the 9-hydroxyl group using TBAF (11→12). Unfortunately, 12 was insufficiently stable, due to its strained 5-membered ring, showing 50% decomposition within one week at room temperature.

Modeling suggested allyl protection should allow C-glycosylation with the bulky nucleophile 4. The ease of introduction, electron-donating properties, orthogonality, and ease of removal made OAll an ideal protecting group for synthesis of desired aldehyde acceptor 5.\textsuperscript{23} Regioselective protection of 8,9-diol of 8 gave 13 in 94% yield, which was then regioselectively opened\textsuperscript{24} affording the 9-p-methoxybenzyl (PMB) ether 14 (Scheme 3). Perallylation of 15 under standard conditions
resulted in unexpected lactamization affording 15. A mixture of BaO and Ba(OH)$_2$·8H$_2$O$^{25}$ gave the desired, albeit transesterified, allylated compound 16 in 75% yield. If the ratio of BaO and Ba(OH)$_2$·8H$_2$O was altered in any way, the methyl ester was hydrolyzed. N-Acetylation of 16 afforded 17 in 80% yield.$^{20}$ Deprotection of the PMB gave 9-hydroxy derivatives 18, which was oxidized to the corresponding aldehyde acceptor 19 in 70% yield. C-Glycosylation of the aldehyde 19 with Neu5Ac sulfone donor 4 in the presence of freshly prepared SmI$_2$ gave the desired donor (2,8)-C-neuraminic acid disaccharide 20 in 35% yield, as a diastereomeric mixture ($R$/S 1:1) at the bridge hydroxymethyl group. The two diastereomers were separated by flash chromatography.

$^1$H NMR shows the expected resonances of the C-3/3’ methylene and the C-4/4’ protons of ulosonic acid skeleton in the 5C$^2$ conformation.$^{28}$ The α-configuration of the products was confirmed by a $J_{C1, H3ax} = 8.5$ Hz and $J_{C1, H3eq} < 1.0$ Hz for less polar isomer, and a $J_{C1, H3eq} = 9.0$ Hz and $J_{C1, H3ax} < 1.0$ Hz for the other, as measured by selective $^1$H NMR decoupling.$^{16}$ The stereochemistry of newly generated bridge carbon was determined by ROESY, NOESY, and TCOSSY experiments and the less polar diastereomer assigned as $S$ and the more polar as $R$. Data from computational molecular modeling are in excellent agreement with NMR experimental data (Table 1). NOE was only observed between two protons with the closest through-space distance. Differences observed in the H-3ax chemical shifts coincide with the stereochemistry assignments at the C-9 position in both diastereomers. In the 20S, the 9H-9’ and H8’ is consistent with the dihedral angle of 178.8° in the structure of the $S$ diastereomer.$^{16}$

**Experimental Section**

Methyl phenyl5-acetamido-endo-8,9-O-(p-methoxy) benzyliden-3,5-dideoxy-2-thio-d-glycero-α-β-galacto-non-2-ulopyranosidonicote (13), Neu5Ac phenyl sulfide 8 (1.00 g, 2.41 mmol) was dissolved in CH$_2$CN (100 mL), and anisaldehyde dimethyl acetal (3.3 mL, 19.4 mmol) and camphorsulfonic acid (56.0 mg, 0.20 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred for overnight and neutralized with trimethylamine ($\text{pH} = 7$) and solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure. The residue was dissolved in CH$_2$Cl$_2$ (100 mL) and washed with saturated aqueous NaHCO$_3$ (60 mL) and water (3 × 25 mL). The organic phase was dried over anhyd. MgSO$_4$ and filtered, and the filtrate was concentrated under vacuum. The residue was purified by flash chromatography (CH$_2$Cl$_2$–CH$_3$OH, v/v 10:1) to afford 13 as light-yellow foam (1.46 g, 94%, endo/exo 1:1).

Methyl phenyl 5-acetamido-9-O-(p-methoxy) benzyl-3,5-dideoxy-2-thio-d-glycero-α-β-galacto-non-2-ulopyranosidonicote (14), BH$_4$·NMe$_3$ (297 mg, 4.10 mmol) and AlCl$_3$ (530 mg, 3.98 mmol) were added to a solution of 13 (360 mg, 0.66 mmol) in anhydrous THF (60 mL) with activated molecular sieves (4 Å, 1.80 g) at 0 °C. After stirring at 0 °C for 4 h and at room temperature overnight, the reaction mixture was filtered over a pad of Celite and solids
were washed with CH\textsubscript{3}CN (3 \times 25 mL). The combined filtrate was concentrated in vacuum. The residue was dissolved in ethyl acetate (30 mL) and washed with saturated aqueous NaHCO\textsubscript{3} (30 mL) and water (3 \times 20 mL). The organic phase was dried over MgSO\textsubscript{4} and filtered, and the filtrate was concentrated in vacuum. The residue was purified by flash column chromatography (CH\textsubscript{3}Cl\textsubscript{2}/MeOH 20:1), affording 14 as snow-white foam (190 mg, 52.7%).

**Allylphenyl 4,7,8-tri-O-allyl-5-acetamido-9-O-(p-methoxy)-benzyl-3,5-dideoxy-2-thio-o-glycero-a-galacto-non-2-ulopyranosidionate (16).** Ba(O\textsubscript{2}) (420 mg, 2.74 mmol) and Ba(OH\textsubscript{2})\cdot8H\textsubscript{2}O (564 mg, 1.8 mmol) were added to a solution of 14 (160 mg, 0.30 mmol) in anhydrous DMF (10 mL) under stirring. Half an hour later, AllBr (0.54 mL, 6.2 mmol) was added dropwise to the above mixture. The mixture was stirred under argon at r.t. for 10 h. The reaction was quenched with TsOH, the reaction mixture was filtered over a pad of celite, and the solids were washed with CH\textsubscript{3}CN (3 \times 20 mL). The combined filtrate was rotary evaporated under vacuum, leaving a yellow oil-like liquid residue. The residue was subject to flash column chromatography (CH\textsubscript{3}Cl\textsubscript{2}→MeOH, v/v 35:1) to afford 16 (150 mg, 73.6%) as a yellowish oil-like liquid.

**Allylphenyl 4,7,8-tri-O-allyl-5-(N-acetylamido)-9-O-(p-methoxy)benzyl-3,5-dideoxy-2-thio-o-glycero-a-galacto-non-2-ulopyranosidionate (17).** A solution of 16 (150 mg, 0.208 mmol) and TsOH\cdotH\textsubscript{2}O (10 mg, 0.05 mmol) in isopropenyl acetate (5 mL) was stirred at 60 °C for 6 h. The reaction mixture was neutralized by addition of Et\textsubscript{3}N. The reaction solution was concentrated under vacuum. The residue was purified by flash silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether-EtOAc, v/v 4:1), affording 17 as a light-yellow oil-like liquid (0.123 g, 77%).

**Methyl 5-Acetamido-4,7,8,9-tetra-O-acetyl-2,6-anhydro-3,5-dideoxy-2-C-((S)-hydroxy-9′-allyl)phenyl4,7,8′-tri-O-allyl-5-(N-acetylamido)-3,5-dideoxy-2-thio-o-glycero-a-galacto-oct-2-ulopyranosidionate (methyl) 1-(d-erythro-L-mannono-nonionate (20).** A solution of compounds 19 (30 mg, 0.050 mmol) and 4 (60 mg, 0.10 mmol) in CH\textsubscript{3}Cl\textsubscript{2} (2 mL) was evaporated to dryness and the resulting residue dried overnight under high vacuum. The residue was purified by flash column chromatography (petroleum ether-EtOAc, v/v 3:1:1) in a total yield of (S)-20 (9.5 mg) and (R)-20 (9.5 mg) corresponding to 35.0%.

**Supporting Information Available:** 1H and 13C NMR spectra for compounds 9–21 and HR ESI-MS spectra for 20R and 20S, general methods, and the synthesis and characterization of 9–19, and 21. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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