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Modeling and Virtual Screening of Antisense Peptides Targeting the Divergent Region of Tumor-Associated MT1-MMP Protein

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Abstract

Membrane type 1 matrix metalloproteinase (MT1-MMP; also known as MMP14) is a key enzyme involved in tumor invasion and metastasis, and is a potential target for drug discovery for cancer therapy. However, till now there is no MT1-MMP or MMP-based anticancer drugs in the market mainly because of the high conservation of the MMP family and also because there is no elucidated crystal structure for the mature MT1-MMP. The modeling of the three-dimensional structure of mature MT1-MMP and the finding of MT1-MMP targeted peptides by virtual screening are highly desired. In this study, the three-dimensional structure of mature MT1-MMP is constructed by homology and *de novo* modeling and later rationalized and optimized by molecular dynamics simulations. An antisense peptide library was constructed against the divergent sense peptide DEGTEEET in the specific region of MT1-MMP, which was found by multiple alignment of the whole MMP family. The antisense peptide library was virtually screened against the constructed three-dimensional model of MT1-MMP. The top 20 novel peptides were further studied, which were found well docked with MT1-MMP at the region of DEGTEEET, again confirming their specific binding to MT1-MMP. Preliminary study of one of the top-ranked peptide SFLSPFV showed that it could inhibit the viabilities of MG63 and MDA-MB231 tumor cells. We thus not only successfully modeled the three-dimensional structure of mature MT1-MMP but also provided a new way for the finding of peptide candidates targeting MT1-MMP based on antisense peptide library.

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