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In vitro and in vivo characterization of 13 CYP2C9 allelic variants found in Chinese Han population

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Abbreviations

CYP, Cytochromes P450; AUC, the area under the plasma concentration–time curve;
 $t_{1/2}$, the half-life; PCR, the polymerase chain reaction; DMEM, Dulbecco’s modified
eagle medium; CL/F, oral clearance; EM, extensive metabolizer; PM, poor
metabolizer.

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ABSTRACT

Our previous study detected totally 35 *CYP2C9* allelic variants in 2127 Chinese subjects, of whom 21 novel alleles were reported for the first time in Chinese populations. The aim of present study was to characterize the 13 *CYP2C9* allelic variants both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Different types of *CYP2C9* variants were highly expressed in COS-7 cells and 50 μ M of tolbutamide was added as the probing substrate to evaluate their metabolic abilities *in vitro*. Subsequently, the concentrations of tolbutamide and its metabolite in the plasma and urine within individuals with different types of genotypes were determined by HPLC to evaluate the catalytic activity of the thirteen mutant *CYP2C9* proteins *in vivo*. Our results showed that compared with **1/*1* wild-type subjects, subjects with **1/*40* genotype showed increased oral clearance (CL/F), whereas individuals with **1/*3*, **1/*13*, **3/*3*, **3/*13*, **1/*16*, **1/*19*, **1/*34*, **1/*42*, **1/*45*, **1/*46* and **1/*48* genotype exhibited significantly decreased CL/F, and those with **1/*27*, **1/*29*, **1/*40* and **1/*41* genotype presented similar CL/F value. When expressed in COS-7 cells, the *CYP2C9* variants showed similar pattern to the results in clinical study. The study suggests that besides two typical defective alleles **3* and **13*, seven *CYP2C9* allelic variants (**16*, **19*, **34*, **42*, **45*, **46* and **48*) cause defective effects on the enzymatic activities both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. In clinic, patients with these defective alleles should be paid close attention to.

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Introduction

The cytochrome P450 superfamily, officially abbreviated as CYP, is a group of enzymes mainly localized in the liver and intestinal tract, and responsible for the metabolism of many endogenous hormones and xenobiotic substances including drugs and toxins. CYP2C9, making up about 20% CYP proteins in the human liver, is a major member of the CYP subfamily and is responsible for the metabolism of approximately 15% clinically used drugs (Rendic, 2002; Van Booven et al., 2010).

Human *CYP2C9* has been shown to exhibit genetic polymorphism since the discovery of the first allelic variant in 1970s. To date, more than 58 non-synonymous variants and a series of sub-variants of *CYP2C9* have been reported (see <http://www.imm.ki.se/CYPalleles>; access date: Nov.2014). *CYP2C9*2* (430T>C Arg144Cys) and *CYP2C9*3* (1075A>C Ile359Leu) are the most commonly investigated defective alleles, including the characterization of enzymatic activity *in vivo* and *in vitro* and population distribution data (García-Martín et al., 2001; Takahashi et al., 2003; Scordo et al., 2004; Scott et al., 2007; Silan et al., 2012; Krajciova et al., 2014). Different population had different frequencies of *CYP2C9*2* and *CYP2C9*3*. For instance, in Chinese Han population, *CYP2C9*1*, *CYP2C9*2* and *CYP2C9*3* had a frequency of 0.963, 0.001 and 0.036 (Yang et al., 2003), while in Italian and Ethiopian population, the corresponding frequencies were 0.8, 0.11, 0.09 and 0.94, 0.04, 0.02 (Scordo et al., 2001), respectively. *CYP2C9*13* was firstly discovered in Chinese Han population by Si et al, and reported to have a frequency of 0.02% in Chinese (Si et al., 2004). Thereafter, a series of investigations into the catalytic activity of *CYP2C9*13 in vivo* and *in vitro* were subsequently performed using tolbutamide, diclofenac and lornoxicam as the probing substrates (Guo et al., 2005a; Guo et al., 2005b). Moreover, genetic and clinic investigations in Korea had

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suggested that the presence of *CYP2C9*13* allele statistically resulted in the poor metabolism of losartan and irbesartan after a single oral dose (Li et al., 2009; Choi et al., 2012), and also influenced the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of meloxicam (Bae et al., 2011).

*CYP2C9*16*(T299A) and *CYP2C9*19*(Q454H) were discovered after studying 125 Asians from Singapore (Zhao et al., 2004). *In vitro* study showed that *CYP2C9*16* exhibited 80 to 90% lower catalytic activity of tolbutamide, while *CYP2C9*19* exhibited 30 to 40% lower catalytic activity of tolbutamide, when compared with wild-type *CYP2C9*1*, *CYP2C9*27* and *CYP2C9*29* were discovered in 263 Japanese individuals (DeLozier et al., 2005). Michaelis–Menten curves for diclofenac 4-hydroxylation from recombinant microsomes showed the identical K_m and V_{max} values of *CYP2C9*27* and *CYP2C9*29* compared to the wild-type (Maekawa et al., 2006). *CYP2C9*34* (R335Q) was discovered after studying 724 Japanese individuals, including 39 hypertensive patients under treatment with losartan when compared to the wild-type (Maekawa et al., 2006). When expressed in a baculovirus-insect cell system, *CYP2C9*34* had no substantial effect. A study on substrate-dependent functional alteration of *CYP2C9* demonstrated that *CYP2C9*34* exhibited catalytic activities almost similar to those of the wild-type for diclofenac, losartan, and glimepiride (Maekawa et al., 2009).

In our previous study, we sequenced all 9 exons of *CYP2C9* in 2127 non-related individuals, and found 21 novel *CYP2C9* allelic variants (*CYP2C9*36*-**56*) besides 14 previously reported allelic variants, of whom allelic variants (*CYP2C9*3*, *CYP2C9*13*, *CYP2C9*16*, *CYP2C9*19*, *CYP2C9*27*, *CYP2C9*29* and *CYP2C9*34*) had highest gene frequencies in Chinese population (Dai et al., 2014b). In this study, we comprehensively characterized the catalytic activities of above 7 reported *CYP2C9*

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alleles and 6 newly found allelic variants (*CYP2C9*40*, *CYP2C9*41*, *CYP2C9*42*, *CYP2C9*45*, *CYP2C9*46* and *CYP2C9*48*) both *in vitro* and *in vivo*, aiming at confirming the consistency of *in vitro* and *in vivo* study as well.

Materials and Methods

Pharmaceutical preparation and reagents

Tolbutamide and 4-hydroxytolbutamide were purchased from Sigma (St. Louis, MO, USA). Carboxytolbutamide was purchased from Toronto Research Chemicals (North York, Canada). Carbamazepine was purchased from the National Institute for Food and Drug Control (Beijing, China). Tolbutamide tablets were purchased from the Second Affiliated Hospital of Wenzhou Medical School. All other reagents were analytical grade.

Construction of dual-expression plasmid

Construction of dual-expression plasmid was performed as described previously (Dai et al., 2014b). In brief, the intact Gaussia princeps luciferase (Gluc) open reading frame (ORF) was amplified from the pGluc-Basic plasmid (New England Biolabs) using the Gluc-XF (introducing one XbaI site) and Gluc-NR (introducing one NotI site) primers. The amplicon was purified and doubly digested with the XbaI and NotI enzymes and ligated to the XbaI/NotI site of the pIRES vector (Clontech, Mountain View, CA, USA) to obtain recombinant receptor plasmid pIRES-Gluc. To introduce one nucleotide mutation at the expected site, overlap extension PCR amplification was performed using the wild-type *CYP2C9* plasmid (a kind gift from Professor Shu-feng Zhou at University of South Florida) as a template, except for the starting coding mutation *CYP2C9*36*. The PCR products were then gel purified, pooled and used as the template for the second round amplification using the *2C9-XF* and *2C9-ER* primer pairs to obtain the complete ORF region of mutated *CYP2C9*. For

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amplification of the entire ORF regions of the wild-type *1 or novel allele *36, only one round of PCR was needed, using *2C9-XF* or *SCMF* as the forward primer and *2C9-ER* as the reverse primer. Detailed information on all primers used in the construction process was presented in our previous study (Dai et al., 2014b). The entire cDNA ORF regions were purified and double digested with the XhoI and EcoRI enzymes and inserted into the XhoI/EcoRI site of the receptor plasmid pIRES-Gluc to obtain the final dual expression plasmid *pIRES-Gluc-2C9*.

Plasmid transfection

Approximately 0.7×10^5 cells per well were plated on a 6-well plate 1 day before transfection, and cells were grown to 80% confluency at the time of transfection. The next day, 400 ng of individual dual-expression plasmids was transfected into the COS-7 cells using the Lipofectamine 2000 reagent (Invitrogen, Carlsbad, CA, USA) according to manufacturer's instructions.

In vitro catalytic activities of recombinant CYP2C9 proteins

Forty-eight hours after transfection, cells were digested with trypsinogen and resuspended in 300 μ L of DMEM culture medium supplemented with 10% fetal bovine serum, 10000 U/mL penicillin, 10000 μ g/mL streptomycin and 50 μ M tolbutamide (this concentration was selected based on its metabolic K_m by the human liver microsomes (Tang et al., 2002)). The samples of various genotypes were cultured in suspension on a shaking table at 800 r.p.m. in a CO₂ incubator for 1 h. The reactions were stopped by addition of 100 μ L of 0.1 M HCl, and 50 μ L 20 μ g/mL carbamazepine in the methanol as an internal standard was added into each tube. 1 mL ethyl acetate was added for extraction. After centrifugation for 30 min at 13,000 r.p.m., the supernatant of organic phase was separated, and the organic phase was transferred to another tube and evaporated to dryness at 50 °C under a gentle stream of nitrogen.

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The residue was dissolved in 100 μ L of mobile phase for analysis.

Protein expression quantification by western blotting

Cells in each well were lysed in lysis buffer containing 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.6), 250 mM NaCl, 5 mM EDTA, 50 mM NaF, 1% NP-40, 0.01 mg/ml aprotinin and 1 mM phenylmethanesulfonyl fluoride. Twenty micrograms of the total cellular lysates were applied to 12% SDS-PAGE and electrotransferred onto PVDF membranes. Rabbit polyclonal anti-CYP2C9 antibody (AbD Serotec, Puchheim, Germany), rabbit polyclonal anti-Gluc antibody (New England Biolabs) or rabbit monoclonal anti-GAPDH antibody (Abmart, Shanghai, China) was used as the primary antibody at 1:5000. After incubation at 4°C overnight, goat anti-rabbit IgG horseradish peroxidase-conjugated antibody at 1:2000 was applied as the secondary antibody, and the materials were incubated at room temperature for 1 h. The Super Signal West Pico Trial Kit (Thermo, Rockford, IL, USA) was used to visualize the blot signals.

Subjects and sample collecting

28 healthy subjects with different genotypes, consisting of seven *CYP2C9*1* homozygotes, seven *CYP2C9*3* heterozygotes, one *CYP2C9*3* homozygotes, seven subjects with identified variants and six subjects with novel variants, aged 21~22 years, were enrolled in this study for identifying *CYP2C9* enzymatic activities *in vivo*. The details were presented in Table 1. All subjects were in good health and required to refrain from all medication and alcohol prior to the pharmacokinetic study. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Second Affiliated Hospital of Wenzhou Medical School and all subjects signed informed consents before participating in the investigation.

The 28 healthy subjects received an oral administration of 500 mg tolbutamide after fasting for 12 hours. Blood samples were collected before dosage and 0.5, 1, 1.5, 2.5,

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4.5, 6, 9, 12, 24, and 36 h at least, followed by immediate centrifugation. The plasma was extracted to 1.5 mL tube and stored at -80°C till analysis. The 36-hour concentrations of tolbutamide in plasma samples were analyzed immediately. Subjects with high tolbutamide concentrations were required to continue sample collecting till the concentration level fell below the level of 6 µg/ml. 75 g glucose was administered to subjects 0.5 h post administration of the drug. Plasma at the time points of 0-4.5 h was monitored for glucose concentration as well. Urine samples of the subjects at periods of 0~6 h, 6~12 h and 12~24 h were collected in individuals for determination of 4-hydroxytolbutamide and carboxytolbutamide.

Sample analysis

The concentrations of substrate and product in plasma were determined by high performance liquid chromatography according to the method as described previously (Lin et al., 2012). The urinary concentrations were determined as above except the mobile phase. The first 8 min, Solvent A reduced from 60% to 48%, while Solvent B increased from 20% to 32%, the next 7min, Solvent A reduced from 48% to 16%, while Solvent B increased from 32% to 64%. Solvent C maintained to be 20%. All compounds were detected at an optimum wavelength of 230 nm. Under these conditions, the retention times of 4-hydroxytolbutamide, carboxytolbutamide, and tolbutamide were 7.73, 9.114, and 14.15 min, respectively.

Data analysis

Percentage of enzymatic activity matching the wild type was calculated to compare the catalytic activity of novel variants with that of *CYP2C9*1/*1*. Dunnett's test was used to analyze differences in catalytic activity in the mutant *CYP2C9* group to a single control group (*CYP2C9*1*) for *in vitro* study. The plasma concentration–time profiles of tolbutamide and 4'-hydroxytolbutamide were evaluated by

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non-compartmental analysis. The area under the plasma concentration–time curve from time zero to infinity [$AUC_{(0-\infty)}$], $AUC_{(0-t)}$, the half-life ($t_{1/2}$), C_{max} , T_{max} were calculated by DAS3.0 (Mathematical Pharmacology Professional Committee of China, Shanghai, China). The sum of amounts of metabolites excreted in urine over 24 hours post administration was calculated. The Student t test was used to analyze pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic differences in catalytic activity between the *CYP2C9*1*1* and *CYP2C9*1*3* subjects. Statistical analyses were performed with the SPSS package (version 19.0; SPSS Inc, Chicago, Ill), with $P < 0.05$ considered to be statistically significant. The correlation between in vitro enzymatic activity and in vivo activity (half-life) was analyzed using a linear regression analysis program (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA).

Results

In vitro study of novel alleles

When expressed in COS-7 cells, besides two typical defective alleles *CYP2C9*3* and *CYP2C9*13*, three allelic variants (*CYP2C9*19*, *CYP2C9*34* and *CYP2C9*46*) exhibited significantly lower expression levels as compared with that of wild-type protein *CYP2C9*1*. Consequently, their corresponding catalytic activities significantly were impaired when tolbutamide was used as the probing substrate in our analytical system. In addition, five other *CYP2C9* isoforms (*CYP2C9*16*, *CYP2C9*42*, *CYP2C9*45*, *CYP2C9*46* and *CYP2C9*48*) exhibited impaired enzymatic activities compared with wild-type protein although their protein expression levels were slightly influenced or comparable to that of wild-type enzyme. Remaining four variants had similar protein expression levels but two variants (*CYP2C9*29* and *CYP2C9*40*) showed higher catalytic activities towards tobutamide and the other two isoforms (*CYP2C9*27* and *CYP2C9*41*) had similar characters to

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wild-type (Fig.1). These data infer that most of the mutations in *CYP2C9* genes could significantly affect the enzyme's catalytic activities towards tolbutamide *in vitro* (Fig 1 and Table2).

The in vivo effects of novel alleles on concentrations of tolbutamide and its hydroxyl metabolites in plasma

The pharmacokinetic parameters of $AUC_{(0-\infty)}$, $AUC_{(0-t)}$, C_{max} , $t_{1/2}$ and CL/F were calculated to functionally characterize the catalytic activities of *CYP2C9* alleles, and the data were shown in Table 3 and 4, the concentration-time curve of tolbutamide and 4'-hydroxytolbutamide were shown in Figures 2-4.

In the present study, subjects with the genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*3* and *CYP2C9*1/*13* had 1.78-fold and 2.81-fold increases in $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ as well as 1.69-fold and 2.08-fold increases in $t_{1/2}$, respectively, while their CL/F values were decreased by 43% and 65%, respectively, when compared with subjects with genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*1*. $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ and $t_{1/2}$ of the individual with the genotype of *CYP2C9*3/*3* were increased by 5.84 fold and 5.48 fold, respectively, while its CL/F was decreased by 86%. $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ and $t_{1/2}$ of the individual with the genotype of *CYP2C9*3/*13* were increased by 8.06 fold and 6.07 fold respectively, while its CL/F was decreased by 89%.

*CYP2C9*16*, *CYP2C9*19*, *CYP2C9*27*, *CYP2C9*29* and *CYP2C9*34* were five rare variants that had already been identified in Chinese Han population. Compared with the wild type, subjects with genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*16*, *CYP2C9*1/*19* and *CYP2C9*34* showed a 1.36-fold, 1.50-fold and 1.90-fold increases in $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ and 1.51-fold, 1.31-fold, and 1.76-fold increases in $t_{1/2}$, while the CL/F values were decreased by 28%, 35% and 49%, respectively. The individual with the genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*27* had 12% and 10% decrease in $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ and $t_{1/2}$, respectively, while the

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CL/F was increased by 11%. The individual with the genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*29* had a very slight (1.05- and 1.02-fold) increase in $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ and $t_{1/2}$, and the CL/F was also decreased slightly (7%). The data showed a serious impact on *CYP2C9*34* enzymatic activity, while in the study of Tong YIN (Yin et al., 2008), a slight diminution in intrinsic clearance (6%) was observed for the *CYP2C9*34* (Arg335Gln) protein with slightly decreased K_m and V_{max} values in in-vitro investigation.

*CYP2C9*40*, *CYP2C9*41*, *CYP2C9*42*, *CYP2C9*45*, *CYP2C9*46* and *CYP2C9*48* were the six novel variants found in our previous study (Dai et al., 2014b). Compared with the wild type, the individual with the genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*40* had a 22% and 19% decrease in $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ and $t_{1/2}$, while the CL/F was increased by 25%; the individual with the genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*41* had 7% increase in $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$, while the $t_{1/2}$ and CL/F was decreased by 6% and 9%, showing a slight decrease in enzymatic activity (Table 3). The individuals with the genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*42*, **1/*45*, **1/*46* and **1/*48* had a 2.16-fold, 1.70-fold, 1.87-fold and 3.29-fold increases in $AUC_{0\rightarrow t}$ and 1.95-fold, 1.65-fold, 1.47-fold and 2.89-fold increases in $t_{1/2}$ while the CL/F was decreased by 55%, 43%, 48% and 70%, respectively. The results of 4'-hydroxytolbutamide (as listed in Table.4) showed greater variability than tolbutamide in plasma.

In vitro-in vivo correlation analysis

Combined the *in vitro* and *in vivo* data together, good correlation (Figure 7) was found between *in vitro* enzymatic activity and half-life of tolbutamide *in vivo* when excluding the data of *CYP2C9*48* ($r_2=0.8031$). These data infer that most of newly found mutated sites in *CYP2C9* can significantly decrease the metabolic activity of CYPs and result in the longer half-life time of tolbutamide for individuals carrying these novel alleles.

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Concentration of tolbutamide and its metabolites in urine

The 0-24h urinary excretions of both metabolites were calculated and were shown in Fig 5. Significant decrease in urinary excretion of tolbutamide metabolites in the 0 to 24-hour interval were observed in individuals with the genotype of *CYP2C9* *1/*3, compared with subjects expressing the *CYP2C9**1/*1.

Pharmacodynamic study

Before tolbutamide administration, there were no significant differences in serum glucose concentrations between the *CYP2C9**1/*1 and *CYP2C9**1/*3 subjects. The time course of serum glucose levels and delta glucose levels after oral administration of 75g dextrose was presented in Fig 6. After tolbutamide administration, statistical significance of delta glucose concentration was only observed at time points of 0.5h and 4.5h.

Discussion

The present investigation provides comprehensive data on functional characters of 13 *CYP2C9* allelic variants both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. The previous effort on the large-scale direct sequencing of *CYP2C9* gene allowed us to discover 36 genetic variations in 2127 Chinese Han individuals. Volunteers in the present study included 16 different types of genotypes: *CYP2C9**1/*1, *CYP2C9**1/*3, *CYP2C9**3/*3, *CYP2C9**1/*13, *CYP2C9**3/*13, *CYP2C9**1/*16, *CYP2C9**1/*19, *CYP2C9**1/*27, *CYP2C9**1/*29, *CYP2C9**1/*34, *CYP2C9**1/*40, *CYP2C9**1/*41, *CYP2C9**1/*42, *CYP2C9**1/*45, *CYP2C9**1/*46 and *CYP2C9**1/*48.

In this study, tolbutamide, a first-generation sulphonylurea hypoglycemic drug, was selected as the probe substrate for determining *CYP2C9* activity *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Tolbutamide is commonly chosen as the typical probing substrate for *CYP2C9* enzyme both *in vitro* and *in vivo*, since it is primarily (78-93%) metabolized by

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hepatic CYP2C9 to 4'-OH-tolbutamide, which is further oxidized to carboxytolbutamide by alcohol dehydrogenase and excreted by kidney (Wester et al., 2000). Though CYP2C19 also participated in tolbutamide metabolism, it has been stated that no pharmacokinetic and pharmacodynamic differences were found between CYP2C19EM and PM genotype subjects and tolbutamide was a selective probe for measuring CYP2C9 activity in humans (Shon et al., 2002b).

*CYP2C9*3* and *CYP2C9*13* are two defective alleles studied most in the Chinese population. Our data showed that both *CYP2C9*3* and *CYP2C9*13* alleles dramatically impaired catalytic activities of their CYP2C9 proteins. *CYP2C9*3* carriers exhibited statistical significance on AUC, $t_{1/2}$ and CL/F of tolbutamide and C_{max} of 4'-hydroxytolbutamide. Due to the fact that *CYP2C9* alleles on two parallel chromosomes are both responsible for the expression of enzymes *in vivo*, thus affection of the enzymatic deficiency on function in homozygote is far beyond that in heterozygous individual. In our study, concentrations of 4'-hydroxytolbutamide of the *CYP2C9*3/*3* and *CYP2C9*3/*13* subjects were lower than those of the *CYP2C9*1/*1*, *CYP2C9*1/*3* and *CYP2C9*1/*13* subjects. Dayong Si et al reported that one individual with the genotype of *CYP2C9*3/*13* had a 108 h half-life of tolbutamide, which was much longer than that (half-life of 56.9 h) discovered in our study (Si et al., 2004). We believe that the longer monitoring time of drug concentration in our present study makes our result more precise than the previous report. Our *in vitro* and *in vivo* data indicate that individual carrying *CYP2C9*13* allele exhibits a more defective catalytic activity than that of *CYP2C9*3* allele carriers, which is well in accord with the previous report (Choi et al., 2012).

Previously reported *CYP2C9*16*, **19*, **27*, **29* and **34* alleles showed different impact on enzymatic activities. *CYP2C9*16* and **19* had apparently defective effects

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in tolbutamide metabolism both *in vitro* and *in vivo*, while *CYP2C9*27* and **29* exhibited a slight increase in catalytic activities toward tolbutamide when expressed in COS-7 cells and heterozygous carriers of *CYP2C9*27* and **29* showed similar kinetic parameters as wild type. We have previously reported that five alleles had relatively higher frequencies in Chinese population, which includes *CYP2C9*2* (0.0014), *CYP2C9*3* (0.0294), *CYP2C9*13* (0.0016), *CYP2C9*16*(0.0019), *CYP2C9*27*(0.0012) and *CYP2C9*29*(0.0019) (Dai et al., 2014b). Combined the functional analysis data, our present data suggested that *CYP2C9*16* was another important defective *CYP2C9* allele for Chinese Han individuals except for the commonly studied alleles **2*, **3* and **13*. Keiko Maekawa et al reported that recombinant microsome of *CYP2C9*34* had no substantial effect on the metabolism of diclofenac, losartan, and glimepiride (Maekawa et al., 2009). However, in the present study, *CYP2C9*34* exhibited decreased catalytic activity for tolbutamide in COS-7 cells, which is in consistent with activity *in vivo*. Western blotting result indicated that expression of *CYP2C9*34* in COS-7 cells lowered and this may partially explain its defective effect on metabolic activity of enzyme. When expressed in insect microsomes, variant *CYP2C9*34* also exhibited significantly decreased enzymatic activities towards tolbutamide(Dai et al., 2013), glimepiride(Dai et al., 2014a) and losartan (Wang et al., 2014). Our *in vitro* and *in vivo* data inferred that *CYP2C9*34* can be regarded as one defective allele.

For the newly found allelic variants, *CYP2C9*42*, **45*, **46*, and **48* showed defects in enzymatic activities. As shown in Fig 1B and Table 2, *CYP2C9*42* and **45* were the most defective in metabolizing tolbutamide in COS-7 cells, with 99.18 and 99.68% decreases in clearance, respectively. Similarly, heterozygotes of *CYP2C9*42* and **45* had apparent deficiency in metabolizing tolbutamide *in vivo* with a much

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longer half-life and decreased clearance values compared with wild-type. *In vitro* data showed that *CYP2C9**46 and *48 had modest deficiency in metabolizing tolbutamide in COS-7 cells. Heterozygote of *CYP2C9**46 also had modest decrease in metabolizing tolbutamide whereas heterozygote of *CYP2C9**48, as shown in Table 3, exhibited the most defective effect in all tested heterozygotes. The *in vivo* outcome of *CYP2C9**48 was confusing and the reason of the discrepancy remained unknown. The analysis showed that *in vivo* and *in vitro* catalysis was well correlated, except *CYP2C9**48.

In this study, *CYP2C9**40 and *41 showed apparently increased enzymatic activities in COS-7 cells toward tolbutamide, which is in accordance with those observed for diclofenac (Dai et al., 2014b). However, when expressed in insect microsomes, *CYP2C9**40 exhibited decreased activity toward tolbutamide and losartan while showing similar activity to the second generation sulphonylurea-type antidiabetic drug glimepiride. *CYP2C9**41 exhibited lower metabolic activities toward all these three substrates (Dai et al., 2013; Dai et al., 2014a; Wang et al., 2014). Thus, heterozygotes of *CYP2C9**40 and *CYP2C9**41 had equivalent activities toward tolbutamide *in vivo*. We believe that different protein expression system expressed CYPs with different protein conformation characteristics, thus exhibited different catalytic activities towards same substrate. Comparing with insect microsome expression system, mammalian cells have adequate endogenous NADPH-CYP oxidoreductase (OR) and cytochrome b5 levels to support CYP activities and are much closer to the native state of the CYP protein (Hiratsuka, 2012; Dai et al., 2014b). Correlation analysis also confirmed this, in which data obtained in COS-7 cells is much closer to that observed *in vivo*.

Drawn from above, *CYP2C9* enzymes expressed in COS-7 cells, to a great extent,

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represented its activity *in vivo*. But the expression of double chromosomes would undermine its effect and the complexity of *in vivo* ADME brought variables into *in vitro/in vivo* prediction.

The urinary measurement of tolbutamide metabolism was controversial (Veronese et al., 1993; Lee et al., 2002). It has been demonstrated that the variability observed in urinary excretion of tolbutamide was much greater than that of two metabolites since urinary concentrations of two metabolites were much higher than those of unchanged tolbutamide (Lee et al., 2002), which made the amount of urinary 4'-OH-tolbutamide and carboxytolbutamide less variable than tolbutamide metabolic ratio (the amount of the metabolites in urine/the amount of tolbutamide in urine). In our investigation, urinary excretion of two metabolites of tolbutamide in 0 to 24-hour interval was chosen and estimated. As shown in Fig 5, significant decrease was observed between the *CYP2C9*1/*1* and *CYP2C9*1/*3* subjects. For other subjects, no statistical results were obtained since only one or two subjects were involved for one genotype. These data demonstrated that poor metabolizers (PMs) tended to excrete less tolbutamide metabolites than extensive metabolizers (EMs).

The gene-response effect of tolbutamide was controversial as well (Kirchheiner et al., 2002; Shon et al., 2002a; Chen et al., 2005), where positive or negative results were reported. In our investigation, statistically significant differences of delta blood glucose were only observed at the time points of 0.5 h and 4.5 h, indicating that the gene-response effect of tolbutamide, to some degree, may be more related to fasting blood glucose.

In summary, we identified 13 variations of *CYP2C9* in its catalytic activities both *in vitro* and *in vivo* using tolbutamide as probe drug, including 7 previously reported variations and 6 newly found variations in Chinese population. Our data indicate that

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most of these mutations in *CYP2C9* gene could significantly impair the catalytic activity of enzyme both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Enzymes expressed in COS-7 cells, to an extent, well presented the enzymatic activity *in vivo*. Our data provide fundamental information on these allelic variants and could be relevant for the future personalized medicine in China. However, further clinical studies must be carried out in the future to precisely evaluate the effects of variations on *CYP2C9* enzymatic activities *in vivo* because only one heterozygous carrier for each novel allele was included in the current pharmacokinetics study.

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Footnotes

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Legends for Figures

Fig.1 Expression efficacies of *CYPs* and their activities to hydroxylize tolbutamide. Panel A, Expression efficacies evaluated by western blotting. The first line (COS-7) was transfected by the mock agent, and the expression efficacy was adjusted by the internal transfection control protein (Gaussia princeps luciferase, Glu). GAPDH is a house-keeping protein; Panel B, the relative tolbutamide hydroxylase activities of mutant *CYP2C9* alleles in COS-7 cells were compared with that of wild-type *CYP2C9*1* (as 100%). *, **, significantly different from wild-type *CYP2C9*, $P < 0.05$ and 0.01, respectively.

Fig.2 A. Plasma concentration-time curves of tolbutamide in healthy subjects with genotype of *CYP2C9*1/*1* (■) (n=7), *CYP2C9*1/*3* (●) (n=7), *CYP2C9*1/*13* (▲) (n=2), *CYP2C9*3/*3* (*), and *CYP2C9*3/*13* (□) after a single oral dose of 500 mg of tolbutamide. B. Plasma concentration-time curves of 4-hydroxytolbutamide in healthy subjects with the corresponding genotypes.

Fig.3 A. Plasma concentration-time curves of tolbutamide in healthy subjects with genotypes of *CYP2C9*1/*1* (■) (n=7), *CYP2C9*1/*16* (●) (n=2), *CYP2C9*1/*19* (▲), *CYP2C9*1/*27* (□), *CYP2C9*1/*29* (○), and *CYP2C9*1/*34* (*) after a single oral dose of 500mg of tolbutamide. B. Plasma concentration-time curves of 4-hydroxytolbutamide in healthy subjects with the corresponding genotypes.

Fig.4 A. Plasma concentration-time curves of tolbutamide in healthy subjects with genotype *CYP2C9*1/*1* (■) (n=7), *CYP2C9*1/*40* (●) and *CYP2C9*1/*41* (▲) after a single oral dose of 500 mg of tolbutamide. B. Plasma concentration-time curves of

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4-hydroxytolbutamide in healthy subjects with the corresponding genotypes C. Plasma concentration-time curves of tolbutamide in healthy subjects with genotype *CYP2C9*1/*1* (■) (n=7), *CYP2C9*1/*42* (●), *CYP2C9*1/*45* (▲), *CYP2C9*1/*46* (*) and *CYP2C9*1/*48* (□) after a single oral dose of 500 mg of tolbutamide. D. Plasma concentration-time curves of 4-hydroxytolbutamide in healthy subjects with the corresponding genotypes.

Fig.5 The amount of urinary 4'-OH-tolbutamide and carboxytolbutamide of *2C9* variants excreted over 24 hours compared with that of wild type *2C9*1/*1*.

Fig.6 (A) Average serum glucose concentration-time profiles after single oral administration of 75g dextrose in seven normal healthy subjects with *CYP2C9*1/*1*(■) (n=7) genotypes and seven subjects with *CYP2C9*1/*3*(●) (n=7) genotypes. (B) Average delta serum glucose level from the baseline measured before oral intake of 75g dextrose in subjects with *CYP2C9*1/*1*(■) (n=7) and *CYP2C9*1/*3*(●) (n=7) genotypes.

Fig.7 Correlations between *in vitro* enzymatic activity and *in vivo* activity (half-life of tolbutamide).

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics and *CYP2C9* genotypes of 30 subjects aged 21~22 years old.

Genotype	Number	Gender		Body Weight (kg)	BMI
		Male	Female		
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*1	7	3	4	57.9±13.3	21.31±4.47
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*3	7	4	3	53.3±10.3	19.71±2.92
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*13	1		1	44	18.31
<i>CYP2C9</i> *3/*3	1	1		68	22.56
<i>CYP2C9</i> *3/*13	1		1	53	20.20
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*16	1	1		80	27.68
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*19	1	1		52.5	19.40
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*27	1	1		65	20.52
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*29	1		1	50	19.05
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*34	1	1		65	22.49
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*40	1		1	47	19.07
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*41	1	1		54	18.47
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*42	1		1	43	19.15
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*45	1		1	65	20.02
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*46	1	1		60	21.37
<i>CYP2C9</i> *1/*48	1	1		50	21.16

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Table.2 Tolbutamide hydroxylase activities of mutant *CYP2C9* alleles in COS-7 cells
compared with that of wild-type *CYP2C9*1*

Genotype	Percentage of matching with wild type	Genotype	Percentage of matching with wild type
<i>CYP2C9*1</i>	100.00% ± 10.18%	<i>CYP2C9*34</i>	24.34% ± 0.39%**
<i>CYP2C9*3</i>	10.73% ± 1.90%**	<i>CYP2C9*40</i>	125.78% ± 2.60%**
<i>CYP2C9*13</i>	1.28% ± 0.48%**	<i>CYP2C9*41</i>	97.62% ± 6.11%
<i>CYP2C9*16</i>	3.45% ± 0.48%**	<i>CYP2C9*42</i>	0.32% ± 0.24%**
<i>CYP2C9*19</i>	31.11% ± 7.43%**	<i>CYP2C9*45</i>	0.82% ± 0.01%**
<i>CYP2C9*27</i>	114.99% ± 5.38%**	<i>CYP2C9*46</i>	29.06% ± 1.35%**
<i>CYP2C9*29</i>	109.14% ± 2.60%	<i>CYP2C9*48</i>	38.22% ± 1.27%**

Values are mean ± SD. *,** indicate significant difference from wild-type *CYP2C9*, at P < 0.05, and 0.01, respectively.

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Table 3. Pharmacokinetic parameters of tolbutamide in healthy subjects.

Genotype	AUC _{0→∞}	AUC _{0→t}	C _{max}	t _{1/2}	CL/F
	mg/L*h	mg/L*h	mg/L	h	L/h
<i>CYP2C9*1/*1</i>	970.61±152.14	933.90±149.02	65.94±11.68	8.14±1.24	0.528±0.094
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*3</i>	1722.88±379.50**	1666.49±377.69**	77.34±11.95	13.73±1.80**	0.301±0.058**
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*13</i>	2636.63	2729.30	95.42	16.92	0.183
<i>CYP 2C9*3/*3</i>	6639.49	6393.57	77.02	52.71	0.075
<i>CYP 2C9*3/*13</i>	8792.82	8462.01	103.72	57.53	0.057
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*16</i>	1269.659	1322.83	71.53	12.30	0.378
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*19</i>	1451.51	1375.93	86.33	10.66	0.344
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*27</i>	853.5	814.95	70.72	7.30	0.586
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*29</i>	1015.49	992.06	71.58	8.29	0.492
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*34</i>	1846.61	1808.14	75.62	14.34	0.271
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*40</i>	756.18	729.97	42.13	6.60	0.661
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*41</i>	1038.72	985.34	65.99	7.69	0.481
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*42</i>	2094.06	1919.56	87.16	15.85	0.239
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*45</i>	1654.64	1563.04	71.12	13.41	0.302
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*46</i>	1813.07	1754.54	94.98	12.00	0.276
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*48</i>	3197.57	3168.09	79.45	23.54	0.156

Values are mean ± SD. *,** indicate significant difference from wild-type *CYP2C9*, at P < 0.05, and 0.01, respectively.

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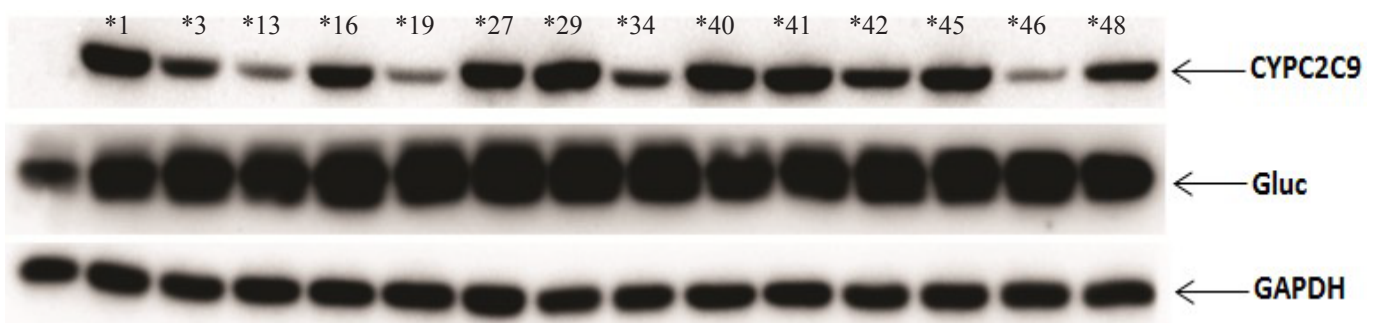
Table 4. Pharmacokinetic parameters of 4'-hydroxy tolbutamide in healthy subjects.

Genotype	AUC _{0→∞}	AUC _{0→t}	C _{max}	t _{1/2}
	mg/L*h	mg/L*h	mg/L	h
<i>CYP2C9*1/*1</i>	5.812±1.219	5.579±1.253	0.359±0.090	7.642±2.285
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*3</i>	5.176±0.904	5.042±0.858	0.252±0.035*	9.237±3.052
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*13</i>	7.608	7.426	0.301	10.025
<i>CYP 2C9*3/*3</i>	2.653	2.441	0.065	211.759
<i>CYP 2C9*3/*13</i>	3.976	3.908	0.072	43.997
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*16</i>	3.551	3.542	0.177	5.553
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*19</i>	7.981	6.749	0.360	16.716
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*27</i>	7.506	6.414	0.396	11.635
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*29</i>	9.643	9.151	0.514	10.175
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*34</i>	5.947	5.860	0.252	8.453
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*40</i>	5.47	4.746	0.389	7.092
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*41</i>	7.534	7.013	0.409	8.351
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*42</i>	5.938	5.839	0.242	10.033
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*45</i>	5.975	5.901	0.221	7.773
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*46</i>	6.605	6.597	0.298	4.812
<i>CYP 2C9*1/*48</i>	7.402	7.268	0.217	19.589

Values are mean ± SD. *,** indicate significant difference from wild-type *CYP2C9*, at P < 0.05, and 0.01, respectively.

Figure 1

(A)



(B)

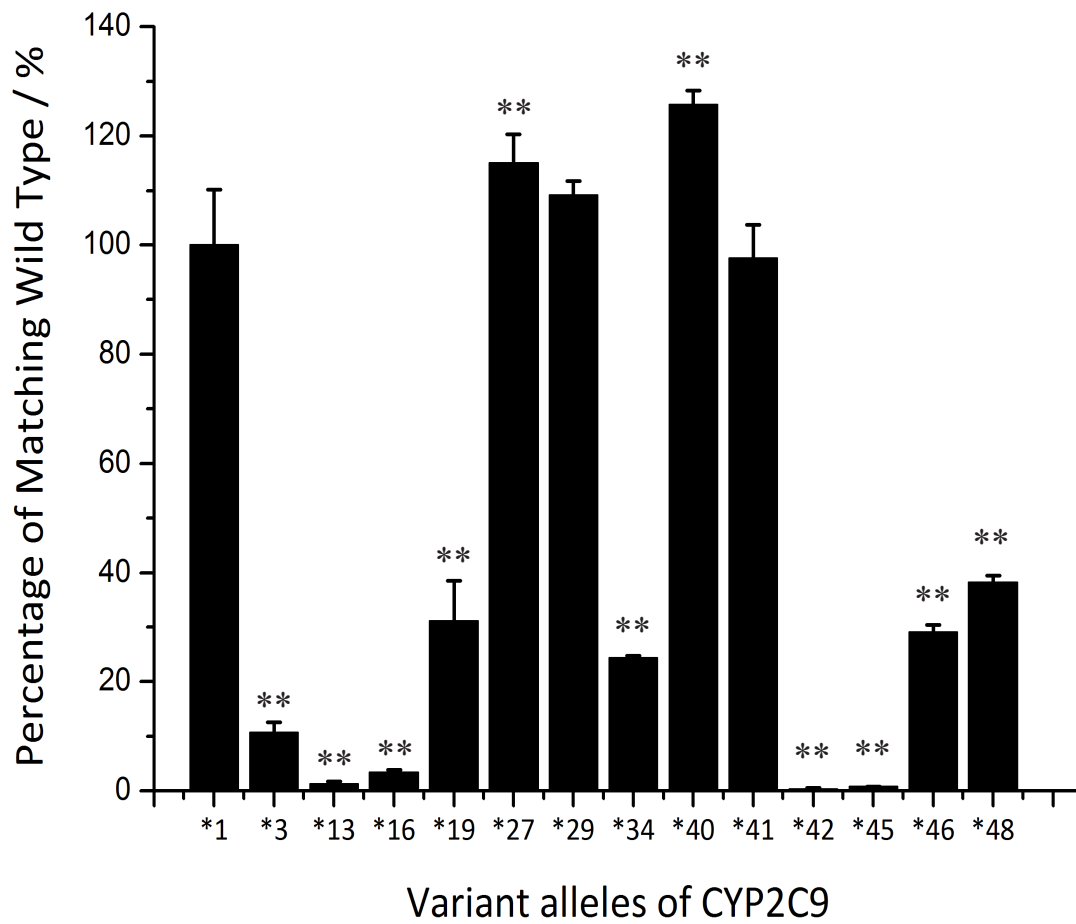


Figure 2

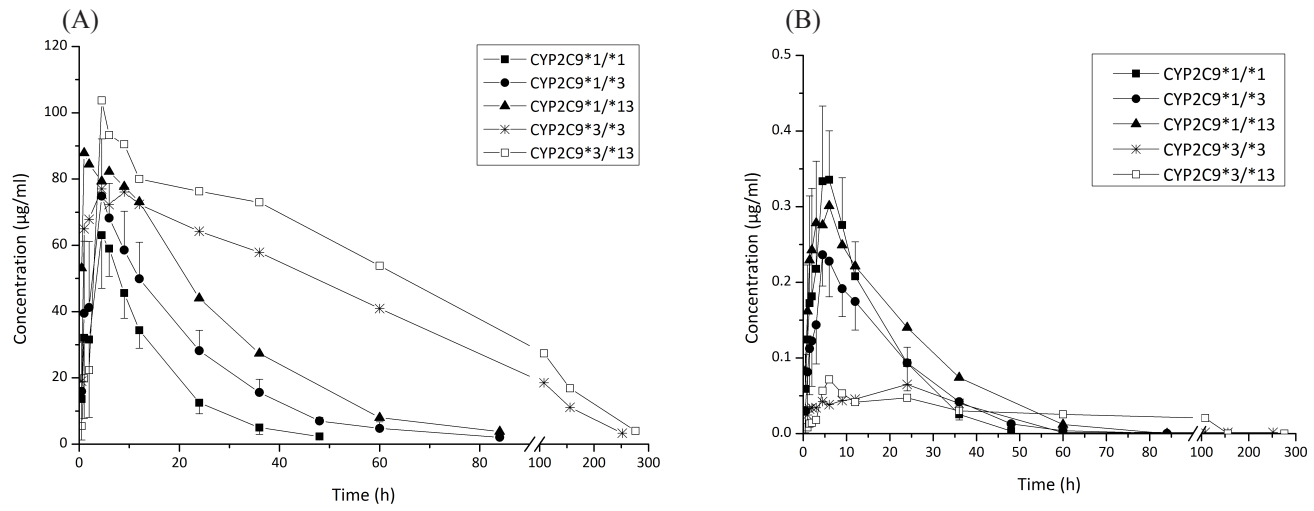


Figure 3

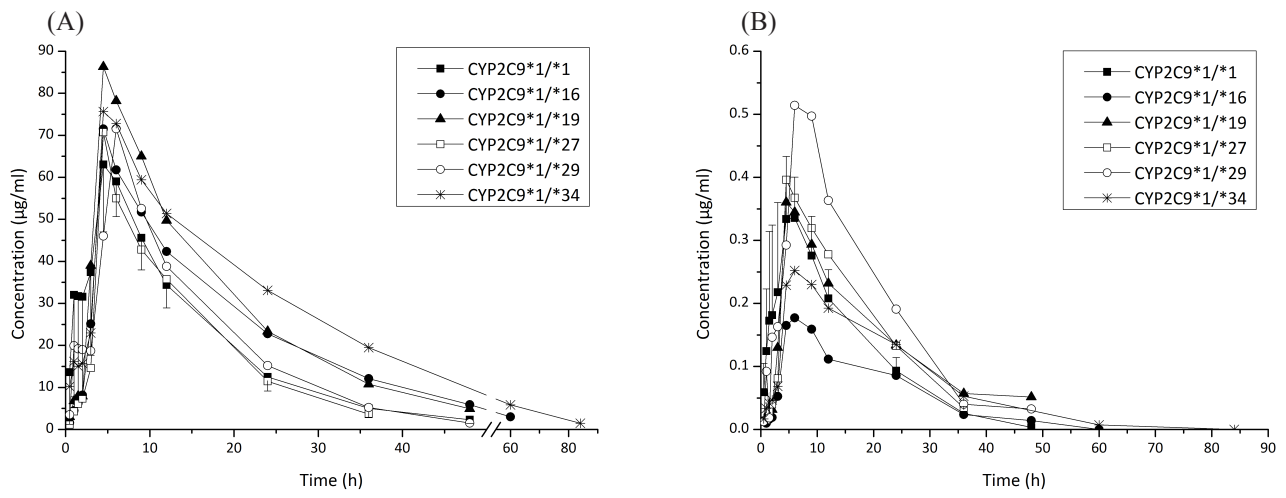


Figure 4

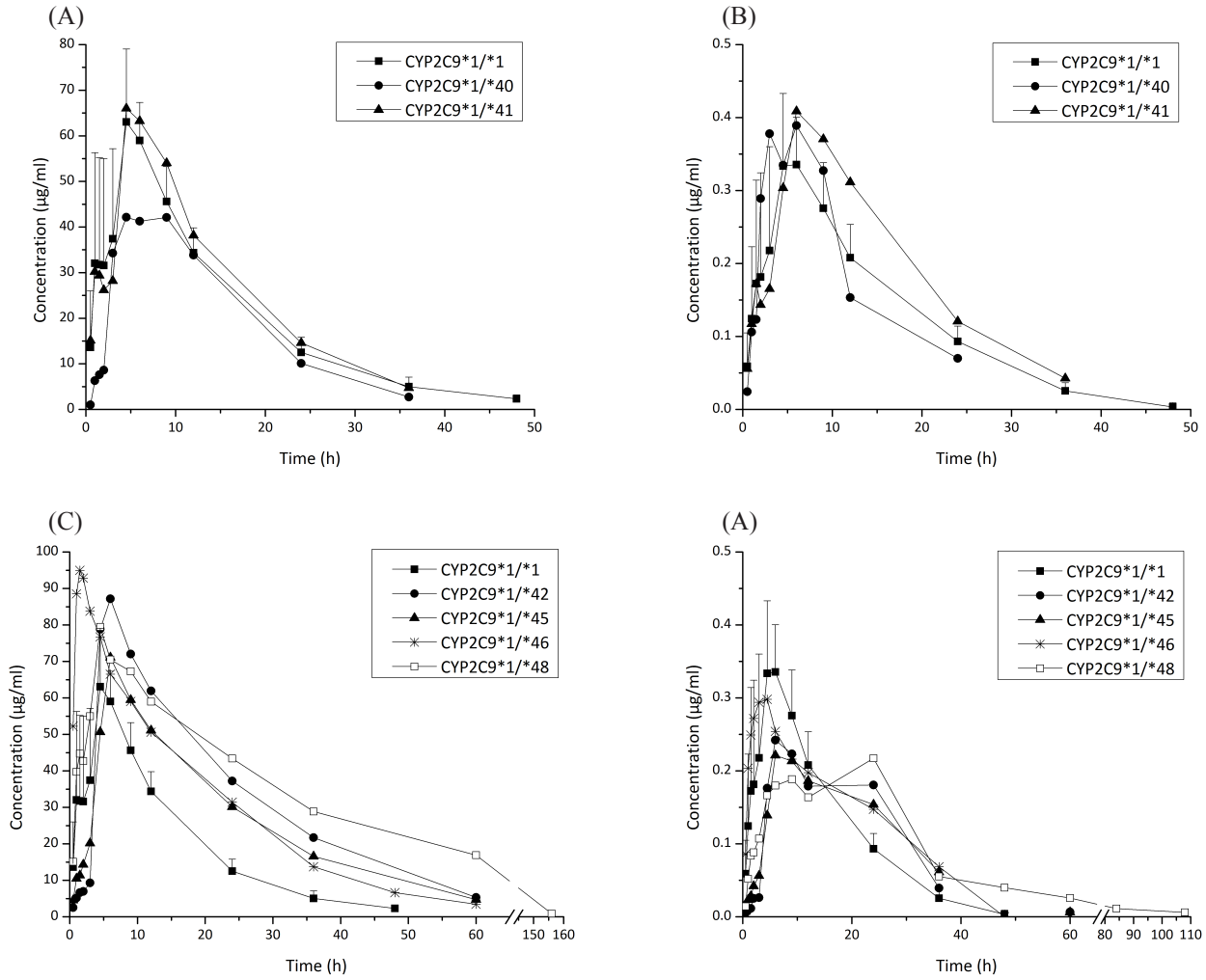


Figure 5

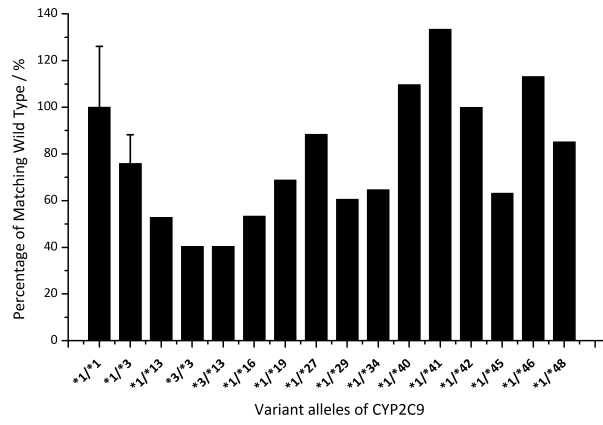


Figure 6

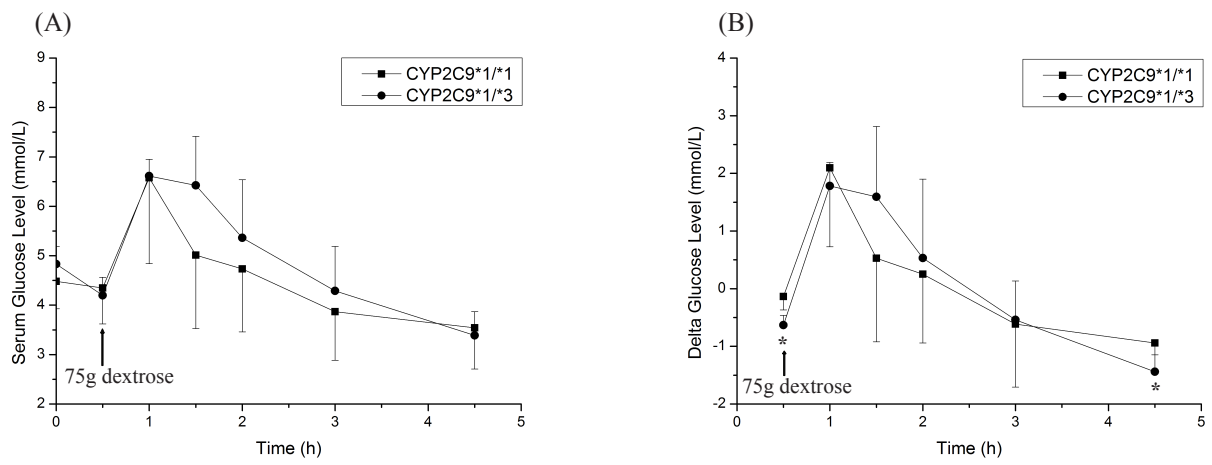


Figure 7

