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Title page

A clinical quantitative evaluation of hepatobiliary transport of [^{11}C]Dehydropravastatin in humans using positron emission tomography

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Running title page

Running title: Human PET study on functional analysis of OATP1Bs and MRP2

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The number of text pages: 37

The number of tables: 1

The number of figures: 8

The number of references: 34 (limit: 60)

The number of words in the Abstract: 243 (word limit: 250)

The number of words in the Introduction: 610 (word limit: 750)

The number of words in the Discussion: 1,495 (word limit: 1,500)

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List of nonstandard abbreviations:

[¹¹C]DPV, sodium (3*R*, 5*R*)-3, 5-dihydroxy-7-((1*S*, 2*S*, 6*S*, 8*S*)-6-hydroxy-2-methyl-8- ((1-

[¹¹C]-(*E*)-2-methyl-but-2-enoyl) oxy) -1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 8*α*-hexahydronaphthalen-1-yl) heptanoate

DDI, drug-drug interaction

DJS, Dubin-Johnson syndrome

E₂17βG, estradiol 17β glucuronide

MRP2/Mrp2, multidrug resistance-associated protein 2

OATP/Oatp, organic anion-transporting polypeptide

PET, positron emission tomography

15*R*-[¹¹C]TIC-Me, (15*R*)-16-*m*-[¹¹C]tolyl-17, 18, 19, 20-tetranorisocarbacyclin methyl ester

TLC, thin-layer chromatography

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ABSTRACT

Various positron emission tomography (PET) probes have been developed to assess the *in vivo* activities of drug transporters in humans, that aid in the prediction of pharmacokinetic properties of drugs and the impact of drug-drug interactions. We developed a new PET probe, [^{11}C]dehydropravastatin ([^{11}C]DPV), and demonstrated its usefulness for the quantitative investigation of Oatps/*SLCO* and Mrp2/*ABCC2* in rats. To further analyze the species differences and verify the pharmacokinetic parameters in humans, serial PET scanning of the abdominal region with [^{11}C]DPV was performed in six healthy volunteers with and without an OATP1Bs and MRP2 inhibitor, rifampicin (600 mg, oral), in a crossover fashion. After intravenous injection, [^{11}C]DPV rapidly distributed to the liver and kidney followed by secretion into the bile and urine. Rifampicin significantly reduced the liver distribution of [^{11}C]DPV 3.0-fold, resulting in a 7.5-fold reduced amount of excretion into the bile and the delayed elimination of [^{11}C]DPV from the blood circulation. The hepatic uptake clearance ($\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$) and canalicular efflux clearance ($\text{CL}_{\text{int, bile}}$) of [^{11}C]DPV ($544 \pm 204 \mu\text{L}/\text{min}/\text{g liver}$, and $10.2 \pm 3.5 \mu\text{L}/\text{min}/\text{g liver}$, respectively) in humans were lower than the previously reported corresponding parameters in rats { $1800 \mu\text{L}/\text{min}/\text{g liver}$, and $298 \mu\text{L}/\text{min}/\text{g liver}$, respectively (Shingaki et al., 2013)}. Furthermore, rifampicin treatment significantly reduced the $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ and $\text{CL}_{\text{int, bile}}$ by 58 and 44%, respectively. These results suggest that PET imaging with [^{11}C]DPV is an effective tool for quantitatively characterizing

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the OATP1Bs and MRP2 functions in the human hepatobiliary transport system.

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INTRODUCTION

Multispecific transporters, such as organic anion transporting polypeptide 1Bs (OATP1Bs)/SLCO and multidrug resistance-associated protein 2 (MRP2)/ABCC2, participate in the hepatic uptake and canalicular efflux, respectively, to facilitate the excretion of a wide variety of organic anions into the bile from the blood circulation in humans (Shitara et al., 2005; Nies and Keppler, 2007; Maeda and Sugiyama, 2008; Yoshida et al., 2013). The direct measurement of drug concentrations in organs/tissue *in vivo* is a prerequisite for the functional characterization of drug transporters, and the accurate prediction of the intrinsic clearance for overall elimination. Pharmacokinetic analyses based on plasma concentration profiles of drugs have been widely used to evaluate the overall intrinsic hepatic clearance mediated by these drug transporters. However, the elements of the overall intrinsic hepatic clearance, such as the sinusoidal uptake, and sinusoidal and canalicular efflux, are difficult to evaluate without knowing the tissue concentration time profiles of the drug *in vivo*. Furthermore, pharmacokinetic analyses involving the tissue concentration of a drug help improve the quantitative investigation of drug-drug interactions (DDIs). The plasma concentrations of some drugs, the hepatic uptake of which is the rate-determining process, are not appropriate indices for assessing the changes in canalicular efflux transporters. Under such conditions, changes in the canalicular efflux transporters hardly affects the intrinsic clearance for the overall hepatic elimination, whereas liver concentrations are more profoundly altered than the plasma

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concentrations, depending on the changes (Watanabe et al., 2010; Maeda, 2015).

Positron emission tomography (PET) is a powerful method for quantitatively investigating the *in vivo* tissue distribution of drug candidates at a microdose level because of its high sensitivity and spatiotemporal resolution (Willmann et al., 2008; Kusuhashi, 2013), thereby enabling the safe assessment of the pharmacokinetics of drug candidates in humans. We have established several PET probes for assessing drug transporters and demonstrated their usefulness in pharmacokinetic and DDI studies in animals (Takashima et al., 2010; Takashima et al., 2011; Shingaki et al., 2013; Takashima et al., 2013) and humans (Takashima et al., 2012). However, the functional characterization of multispecific drug transporters and the DDIs *in vivo* have not been fully analyzed to ensure the accuracy of pharmacokinetic prediction. For example, the (15*R*)-16-*m*-[¹¹C]tolyl-17, 18, 19, 20-tetranorisocarbacyclin methyl ester (15*R*-[¹¹C]TIC-Me), which was expected as a PET probe for hepatobiliary transport, was metabolized into at least 4 metabolites within 20 min after administration (Takashima et al., 2012). Since the complicated metabolism of 15*R*-[¹¹C]TIC-Me would decrease the evaluation accuracy of drug transporters functions, non-metabolizable PET probes are urgently required.

We recently developed a new PET probe, a pravastatin derivative, dehydropravastatin {(3*R*, 5*R*)-3, 5-dihydroxy-7-((1*S*, 2*S*, 6*S*, 8*S*)-6-hydroxy-2-methyl-8-((1-[¹¹C]-(*E*)-2-methylbut-2-enoyl) oxy)-1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 8*α*-hexahydronaphthalen-1-yl) heptanoate ([¹¹C]DPV; Figure 1)}, for the quantitative characterization of the Oatps and Mrp2 functions in the

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hepatobiliary transport (Ijuin et al., 2012). The reliability of [^{11}C]DPV for the quantitative estimation of the Oatps and Mrp2 functions has already been demonstrated in rats using rifampicin or in Mrp2-deficient mutant rats (Shingaki et al., 2013). Rat hepatocytes produced a metabolite from [^{11}C]DPV, and human hepatocytes produced no metabolites (Shingaki et al., 2013). This finding suggests that [^{11}C]DPV is a useful PET probe for the precise evaluation of hepatobiliary transport in animals and humans.

We performed a clinical PET study with [^{11}C]DPV as a non-metabolizable PET probe in healthy volunteers to assess feasibility of using [^{11}C]DPV in the pharmacokinetic analysis in humans. The utility of [^{11}C]DPV PET imaging for the quantitative investigation of the drug transporters in humans was also examined using rifampicin, a well-known drug causing OATP1Bs-mediated DDIs. In addition, to confirm the membrane transport by OATP1Bs in the liver, an *in vitro* uptake study of DPV using OATP1B1- and OATP1B3-expressing cell lines was also conducted.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

[¹¹C]DPV (Figure 1) was synthesized at Osaka City University Hospital in accordance with the procedure reported previously (Ijuin et al., 2012). The purity and concentration of [¹¹C]DPV were assessed by high-performance liquid chromatography. The synthetic procedure for [¹¹C]DPV was validated at Osaka City University. The radiochemical purity was 100% (n = 3), and the specific radioactivity was 5.4-35.6 GBq/μmol at the time of injection. The purified fraction was evaporated and reconstituted with 5 mL of saline.

[³H]Estradiol-17β-glucuronide (E217βG, 40 Ci/mmol, > 97%) was purchased from PerkinElmer (Waltham, MA, USA). Rifampicin was purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (St. Louis, MO, USA).

Subjects and study design

The study was a single-center (Osaka City University Hospital), single-dose (microdose) clinical study. The study protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee at Osaka City University. All subjects provided their written informed consent before the study. Six healthy male Japanese subjects and a Dubin-Johnson syndrome (DJS) patient diagnosed based on the clinical features and serum bilirubin species (Dubin and Johnson, 1954; Lee et al., 2006; van Dijk et al., 2015) were enrolled in the study. Their age in the healthy subjects and the DJS

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patient was 32 ± 9 years and 67 years, and their body weight and height in the healthy subjects were 65.3 ± 8.7 kg and 166.8 ± 6.1 cm and that in the DJS patient were 59 kg and 158 cm, respectively. The subjects were allowed water but refrained from food intake for a half day before the study. Each healthy subject was enrolled for two study periods and the DJS patient was enrolled for the first study period. In the first study period, a single intravenous bolus of [^{11}C]DPV was administered. In the second study period, a single intravenous bolus of [^{11}C]DPV was administered 1 h after the oral administration of rifampicin (Rifadin; Daiichi-Sankyo, Tokyo, Japan) at a therapeutic dose of 600 mg (four 150-mg capsules). The dose of [^{11}C]DPV administered per body was 85.5 ± 12 MBq (chemical amount per body: 6.8 ± 4.3 nmol).

PET scans

Dynamic scanning was performed with a PET/CT Biograph (Siemens, Knoxville, TN, USA). Before emission scanning, each subject was positioned supine on the scanner bed with belts to minimize the body movement during scanning, and then the right and left median cubital veins were cannulated for radiotracer injection and blood sampling, respectively. Next, transmission scanning with a rotating ^{137}Cs point source was performed for abdomen positioning and attenuation correction. At the start of emission scanning, [^{11}C]DPV was intravenously administered for 30-60 s, and then the catheter line was flushed with 10-25 mL of saline to

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prevent radiotracer retention in the cannula. Serial PET scanning of the abdominal region was performed over 90 min in the 3-dimensional dynamic mode in the following sequence: 12×5 s, 8×15 s, 4×30 s, 5×60 s, 5×120 s, 2×300 s, and 3×600 s. Blood was drawn a maximum of 13 times (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 20, 30, 45, and 60 min after radiotracer administration). The volume of blood sampled at 0 min was approximately 20 mL and that at the other time points was approximately 1.5 mL. The amount of radioactivity in each sample was determined with a well-type γ -counting system (well stand type FS-3-A; Shimadzu, Kyoto, Japan), and the data were corrected for any time decay from the point of radiotracer administration.

The uptake of DPV by OAPT1B1- and OATP1B3-expressing HEK293 cells

An *in vitro* uptake study of DPV using empty-vector-transfected and OATP1B1-expressing cells was conducted at Tsukuba Research Institute, Sekisui Medical Co. Ltd. (Tokyo, Japan). The cells had been established as stably expressing OATP1B1 after lipofection of pcDNA3.1 containing an open reading frame of OATP1B1 (NM006446). An *in vitro* uptake study of DPV using empty-vector-transfected, and OATP1B3-expressing cells was conducted as previously reported (Hirano et al., 2004; Matsushima et al., 2005; Hirano et al., 2006; Kitamura et al., 2008). The amount of DPV in the uptake buffer and the cell specimens was quantified using an AB SCIEX QTRAP 5500 mass spectrometer (Applied Biosystems, Foster City, CA, USA) equipped with a Prominence high-pressure liquid chromatography system (Shimadzu

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Corporation) operated in the negative electrospray ionization mode as previously reported (Shingaki et al., 2013). The transporter-specific uptake was determined by subtracting the uptake into vector-transfected cells from the uptake into complementary DNA-transfected cells.

Analysis of PET imaging data

Acquired PET image data were normalized, and all appropriate corrections were made for dead time, attenuation, and scanner calibration. The emission images were reconstructed by Fourier rebinning and two-dimensional filtered backprojection with a ramp filter that had a cutoff at the Nyquist frequency (0.0 mm). Regions of interest were delineated for the liver, kidneys, bile duct, and gallbladder, which were visually identifiable, using the PMOD 3.0 software program (PMOD Technologies LLC, Zürich, Switzerland). For the liver and kidney images, the regions of interest were defined by calculating the radioactivity concentration and the total amount of radioactivity in the tissues. For the gallbladder and bile duct images, regions of interest that were slightly larger than the images but not overlapping the images of the other tissues, such as the liver and kidneys, were defined in order to calculating the total amount of radioactivity in the tissues. In this analysis, the radioactivity in the gallbladder and bile duct corresponded to that excreted into the bile. Time-radioactivity curves for each tissue were constructed by normalizing the decay-corrected time-radioactivity measurements to the injected dose of [^{11}C]DPV.

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Radiometabolite analyses

Radiometabolite analyses of human blood were performed using the sample obtained 2, 5, 10, 20, and 30 min after radiotracer administration of PET study to confirm the production of the radiometabolites. The sample were deproteinized by precipitation with an equivalent volume of acetonitrile and centrifuged at 12,000 rpm for 2 min at room temperature. The supernatants of blood samples were applied to RP-8 thin-layer chromatography (TLC) plates (Merck Millipore, Darmstadt, Germany). The plates were developed at room temperature with acetonitrile/water/formic acid (50:50:1) as a mobile phase. After migration, the plates were dried and exposed to BAS TR2040 imaging plates (Fujifilm Corporation, Tokyo, Japan) for 40 min. The distribution of radioactivity on the imaging plates was determined by digital PSL autoradiography using a Fuji FLA-7000 analyzer at 50- μ m resolution. The data were then analyzed using the MultiGauge image analysis software program (Fujifilm Corporation) to calculate the proportion of parent [^{11}C]DPV.

In vivo kinetic analyses to determine the clearance on PET imaging

The initial [^{11}C]DPV uptake clearance was calculated for the human liver or kidneys by the integration plot method (Kim et al., 1988), using the portion of time-radioactivity curves encompassing the linear range of the plot after [^{11}C]DPV administration, during which the

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effects of the metabolism and excretion from the tissue were negligible. The uptake clearance of [¹¹C]DPV was determined using equation 1:

$$\frac{X_{t, \text{tissue}}}{C_{t, \text{blood}}} = CL_{\text{uptake, tissue}} \times \frac{AUC_{0-t, \text{blood}}}{C_{t, \text{blood}}} + V_{E, \text{tissue}} \quad \dots \quad \text{equation 1,}$$

where $X_{t, \text{tissue}}$ is the amount of radioactivity as [¹¹C]DPV in the liver or kidneys at time t as determined by PET imaging, and $C_{t, \text{blood}}$ is the concentration of radioactivity as [¹¹C]DPV in the blood at time t , as determined by gamma counter measurement of the radioactivity in the blood taken from the femoral artery. The tissue uptake clearance ($CL_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ and $CL_{\text{uptake, kidney}}$) was obtained from the initial slope of the plot of $X_{t, \text{tissue}}/C_{t, \text{blood}}$ versus $AUC_{0-t, \text{blood}}/C_{t, \text{blood}}$. $AUC_{0-t, \text{blood}}$ is the area under the blood concentration-time curve from time 0 to time t . $V_{E, \text{tissue}}$ represents the initial distribution volume in the liver or kidneys at time 0, calculated from the y intercept of the plot.

The canalicular efflux clearance with regard to the liver radioactivity ($CL_{\text{int, bile}}$) was estimated using the following equation by noninvasive measurements of the radioactivity in the gallbladder and bile duct (the radioactivity excreted into the bile):

$$X_{t, \text{bile}} = CL_{\text{int, bile}} \times AUC_{0-t, \text{liver}} + V_E \quad \dots \quad \text{equation 2,}$$

where $X_{t, \text{bile}}$ is the amount of radioactivity in the sum of the amounts of radioactivity in the gallbladder and bile duct at time t , as determined by PET imaging. In the control phase, significant radioactivity was also detected in the small intestine of volunteer #1 and #3 who did not show any radioactivity in the small intestine in the rifampicin-treated phase. We speculated

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that the radioactivity (1 and 18% of $X_{t, \text{bile}}$, respectively) was originated from the bile, and thus, added to $X_{t, \text{bile}}$ in the analysis. $CL_{\text{int, bile}}$ represents the canalicular efflux clearance of radioactivity in the liver, and $AUC_{0-t, \text{liver}}$ is the area under the hepatic concentration-time curve from time 0 to time t. The $CL_{\text{int, bile}}$ value can be obtained from the slope of the plot of $X_{t, \text{bile}}$ versus $AUC_{0-t, \text{liver}}$. V_E was calculated as the y-intercept of the integration plot.

Calculations for the in vitro kinetic parameters in the uptake study using transporter-expressing cells

The concentration dependence on the uptake velocity of DPV by OATP1B1 and 1B3 was fitted to the Michaelis-Menten equation, as follows:

$$v = \frac{V_{\max} \cdot S}{K_m + S} + P_{\text{dif}} \cdot S \quad \dots \quad \text{equation 3,}$$

where V_{\max} , K_m , and P_{dif} represent the maximum uptake velocity, Michaelis constant and clearance for passive diffusion, respectively. For OATP1B1, S was not included in the parameter estimation. In the parameter estimation of K_m and V_{\max} values for OATP1B3, P_{dif} was fixed as the uptake clearance at the highest concentration, 0.433 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}/\text{mg}$ protein. This uptake value was identical to the uptake clearance of DPV in the empty-vector-transfected cells.

Statistical analyses

Data were calculated as the mean \pm S.D. for six determinations. Student's two-tailed paired t -

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test was used to identify significant differences between the control group and the rifampicin-treated group. A two-way ANOVA with the Bonferroni multiple comparisons was used to assess the effect of rifampicin on the time profiles of tissue radioactivity. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

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RESULTS

Bio-distribution of radioactivity in the human abdominal region and blood after the intravenous administration of [^{11}C]DPV

Representative PET images of [^{11}C]DPV in abdominal tissues with and without rifampicin-treatment in the healthy subjects are shown in Figure 2. Representative PET images of [^{11}C]DPV in abdominal tissues without rifampicin-treatment in the healthy subjects and the DJS patient are shown in Figure 7. The distribution of [^{11}C]DPV was mainly observed in the liver and kidney and was negligible in the other tissues (Supplemental Figure 1).

The time profiles of the mean total tissue and blood radioactivity and $\text{AUC}_{\text{blood}}$ are shown in Figure 3 and Table 1. Radioactivity peaked at $0.0237\% \pm 0.003\%$ of the dose in the liver of control subjects at 13 min after administration and $0.0080\% \pm 0.0013\%$ of the dose in the liver of rifampicin-treated subjects at 1.9 min after administration. Rifampicin treatment significantly reduced the amount of radioactivity excreted into the bile ($1.5\% \pm 1.0\%$ of the dose in rifampicin-treated subjects vs. $11.2\% \pm 2.7\%$ of the dose in control subjects), and delayed the elimination of radioactivity from the systemic circulation (Figure 3). Consequently, the $\text{AUC}_{\text{blood}}$ values in rifampicin-treated subjects were 1.7-fold higher than those in control subjects ($0.180\% \pm 0.061\%$ vs. $0.103\% \pm 0.020\%$ of the dose \times min/mL) (Table 1). In contrast, rifampicin treatment slightly delayed the elimination of radioactivity from the kidney, resulting in an increase in the $\text{AUC}_{\text{kidney}}$ (Table 1).

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The time profiles of the mean total tissue and blood radioactivity in the healthy subjects and the DJS patient are shown in Figure 3 and 8. Radioactivity peaked at $0.0237\% \pm 0.003\%$ of the dose in the liver of healthy subjects at 13 min after administration and 0.0164% of the dose in the liver of DJS patient at 17 min after administration. The amount of radioactivity in the DJS patient excreted into the bile was less than that in healthy subjects (3.88% of the dose in the DJS patient vs. $11.2\% \pm 2.7\%$ of the dose in healthy subjects) (Figure 8). The AUC_{blood} values in the DJS patient were slightly higher than those in healthy subjects (0.137% vs. $0.103\% \pm 0.020\%$ of the dose \times min/mL).

Radio-metabolite analyses of [^{11}C]DPV in the blood, liver, and bile by TLC autoradiography

Figure 4 shows representative TLC autoradiograms of extracts from the blood by 30 min after the administration of [^{11}C]DPV to the control and rifampicin-treated subjects. A TLC analysis revealed one identifiable metabolite (M1) with [^{11}C]DPV in the blood in all groups. The abundance of parent [^{11}C]DPV in the blood (% of the total activity applied) in the control subjects ($n = 6$) was 100% at 2 and 5 min and decreased with time: $87\% \pm 17\%$ at 10 min, $70\% \pm 13\%$ at 20 min, and $63\% \pm 16\%$ at 30 min. The abundance of parent [^{11}C]DPV in the blood of rifampicin-treated subjects ($n = 6$) showed similar profiles to the control subjects: 100% at 2 min, $98\% \pm 4\%$ at 5 min, $97\% \pm 4\%$ at 10 min, $85\% \pm 14\%$ at 20 min, and $86\% \pm 14\%$ at 30 min respectively. Overall, the TLC assay with blood samples suggests that

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similar parent [^{11}C]DPV profiles in the blood were exhibited by all groups and that the treatment by rifampicin was likely to have negligible effects on the metabolism of [^{11}C]DPV.

The liver uptake and canalicular efflux clearance of [^{11}C]DPV

Integration plots were drawn to calculate the tissue uptake clearance of radioactivity (Figure 5, 8). The slopes of the plots were determined across the linear range. The hepatic uptake clearance ($\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$) in the control subjects ranged from 32% to 76% of the hepatic blood flow rate (21 mL/min/kg) (Davies and Morris, 1993). Rifampicin treatment significantly decreased the $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ (by $58\% \pm 19\%$; $P < 0.01$) compared with that in control subjects but had no effect on the renal uptake clearance ($\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, kidney}}$), which was 7.83 ± 3.26 and 5.72 ± 3.80 mL/min/kg in control and rifampicin-treated subjects, respectively.

Integration plots were also performed to determine the $\text{CL}_{\text{int, bile}}$ of radioactivity across the linear range. Rifampicin treatment resulted in a significant 40% lower $\text{CL}_{\text{int, bile}}$ (0.129 ± 0.091 vs. 0.221 ± 0.083 mL/min/kg) in rifampicin-treated than in control subjects, respectively (Table 1) although its inhibitory effect varied from 8.6% to 87% depending on the volunteers. More than 30% reduction was observed in 4 out of 6 subjects. Further, the $\text{CL}_{\text{int, bile}}$ in the DJS patient was lower than that in the healthy subjects (0.102 vs. 0.221 ± 0.083 mL/min/kg).

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The uptake of DPV by OATP1B1- and OATP1B3-expressing HEK293 cells

The activities of OATP1B1 and OATP1B3 in HEK293 cells were confirmed by examining the uptake of [³H]E217βG, a prototypical substrate of OATPs, in the presence and absence of rifampicin (100 μM). The uptake of [³H]E217βG in the OATP1B1- and OATP1B3-expressing cells was significantly decreased in the presence of rifampicin (Supplemental Figure 2). DPV (1 and 3 μM for OATP1B1, and OATP1B3 tests, respectively) was significantly accumulated in both OATP1B1- and OATP1B3-expressing cells but diminished in the presence of rifampicin (10 μM) (Figure 6). The uptake rate of DPV in OATP1B1- and OATP1B3-expressing cells was determined at various substrate concentrations (3-300 μM) (Figure 6). The uptake velocity of DPV by OATP1B1 and OATP1B3 follows the Michaelis-Menten equation. The K_m (μM) and V_{max} (pmol/min/mg protein) of DPV were 6.52 ± 2.16 and 42.1 ± 3.2 for OATP1B1, and 17.1 ± 8.3 and 39.6 ± 12.1 for OATP1B3, respectively.

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DISCUSSION

We demonstrated that [^{11}C]DPV, a newly developed PET probe, was a useful novel non-invasive method of assessing the *in vivo* drug transporters activity in humans. We showed that PET imaging with [^{11}C]DPV enabled the quantitative evaluation of the OATP1Bs function in the hepatic uptake, and MRP2 in the canalicular efflux. This helped to clarify the drug transporter-mediated DDIs.

Hepatic and/or renal elimination is the major pathway of most drugs in a living body. Since multispecific drug transporters, such as OATP1Bs and organic anion transporters (OATs), are indispensable in the hepatic and renal uptake of various drugs, especially those with anionic properties, the accurate functional characterization of these transporters is essential to drug development. Non-invasive PET imaging methods potentially offer new approaches to the direct estimation of the functional activity of transporters that contribute to drug disposition, even in humans. Indeed, through their PET imaging-based pharmacokinetic analysis, Takashima et al. demonstrated that 15R-[^{11}C]TIC was an OATP1Bs transporter substrate in rat and human livers and directly estimated the pharmacokinetic parameters of hepatic clearance ($\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$). The $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ in humans was one-third of that in rats. The magnitude of the relationship between $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ and the hepatic blood flow rate showed a clear species difference; the $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ in rats was comparable to the hepatic blood-flow rate (55 mL/min/kg), whereas that in humans was below the hepatic blood-flow rate (Takashima et

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al., 2012). A large amount of the multiple metabolites (rats: 3 metabolites, humans: 4 metabolites) of 15R-[¹¹C]TIC-Me in liver might have hampered the precise evaluation of the hepatobiliary clearance *in vivo* (Takashima et al., 2010; Takashima et al., 2012).

We found that the distribution of the pravastatin analog, [¹¹C]DPV is limited to the liver and kidney in humans, as previously reported in rats (Shingaki et al., 2013). Rifampicin treatment markedly decreased the liver radioactivity, and its AUC, and reduced the cumulative radioactivity of [¹¹C]DPV associated with the gall bladder and bile duct (Table 1 and Figure 3). Consequently, rifampicin significantly delayed the elimination from the blood (Table 1 and Figure 3). Although rifampicin treatment did not affect the maximum radioactivity in the kidney, a slight delay caused by prolonged systemic exposure was observed. These changes were in good agreement with the clinical studies of 15R-[¹¹C]TIC (Takashima et al., 2012), suggesting that hepatic elimination accounts for the significant fraction of the total elimination pathway of [¹¹C]DPV from the blood circulation.

The tissue uptake clearances ($CL_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ and $CL_{\text{uptake, kidney}}$), regarding the blood concentrations and intrinsic canalicular efflux ($CL_{\text{int, bile}}$), regarding the liver concentrations was determined by an integration plot analysis. Rats exhibited a blood-flow limited liver uptake of [¹¹C]DPV (Shingaki et al., 2013). Meanwhile, the $CL_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ was half of the human hepatic blood-flow rate (20.7 mL/min/kg) (Table 1). $CL_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ in humans ($544 \pm 204 \mu\text{L/min/g liver}$) were 3-fold lower than the previously reported corresponding

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parameters in rats (1800 $\mu\text{L}/\text{min}/\text{g}$ liver). Considering the blood-flow limited liver uptake in rats, the species difference in the intrinsic tissue uptake clearances will be more remarkable. The $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ of $[^{11}\text{C}]\text{DPV}$ was almost equivalent to the non-renal clearance (7.2 $\text{mL}/\text{min}/\text{kg}$) of pravastatin in humans (Singhvi et al., 1990). This is consistent with *in vitro* data, where the transport activity of DPV and pravastatin by OATP1B1 and OATP1B3 were similar (Supplemental Figure 3). Further, the K_m value for OATP1B1 was almost the same as that of pravastatin, as reported previously (27, 29, and 35 μM , respectively) (Hsiang et al., 1999; Sharma et al., 2012; Izumi et al., 2015). More importantly, significant reduction in the $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, liver}}$ of $[^{11}\text{C}]\text{DPV}$ by rifampicin administration supports (Figure 5) that this PET tracer is applicable for the quantitative evaluation of the human hepatic uptake mediated by OATP1B1 and OATP1B3. Meanwhile, the modest effect of rifampicin (Table 1) suggest that it is necessary to validate the dynamic range for the analysis.

While a PET imaging-based pharmacokinetic analysis allows for the quantitative evaluation of $\text{CL}_{\text{int, bile}}$, it is limited by its inability to distinguish between the radioactivity of the parent drug and its metabolites in the targeted tissue. $[^{11}\text{C}]\text{DPV}$ is hardly metabolized in *in vitro* human hepatocytes (Shingaki et al., 2013), whereas our radiometabolite analysis in humans confirmed the presence of a metabolite (M1) with radioactivity in the blood. The abundance of the M1 in the control subjects ($n = 6$) increased with time, and accounted for approximately 40% of the total activity at 30 min after the administration. Since one metabolite

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predominated in the blood 20 min after the injection of 15R-[¹¹C]TIC-Me (Takashima et al., 2012), [¹¹C]DPV is a more metabolic stable PET probe than 15R-[¹¹C]TIC-Me. However, impact of metabolite formation on evaluation of CL_{int, bile} of [¹¹C]DPV remains unknown. Further studies are necessary to identify M1, and to clarify the MRP2 activities of the M1 in comparison to DPV to increase the certainty of CL_{int, bile} measurement. Concurrently, we continue our efforts to develop a non-metabolizable PET probe for OATP1Bs and MRP2.

The functional activity of Mrp2 in rats was evaluated based on a [¹¹C]DPV PET imaging analysis. Rifampicin-treated and Mrp2-defective rats showed decreased CL_{int, bile} (Shingaki et al., 2013). Large differences are seen in the liver MRP2 activity of rats and other species including humans (Ishizuka et al., 1999; Niinuma et al., 1999). The ATP-dependent uptake of pravastatin by the canalicular membrane vesicles in humans was 6-times lower than that in rats (Niinuma et al., 1999). Consistently, the CL_{int, bile} of [¹¹C]DPV (10.2 μL/min/g liver) in control subjects was 30-times lower than those in rats (298 μL/min/g liver) (Shingaki et al., 2013). The effect of rifampicin on the CL_{int, bile} was statistically significant, but varied; the value decreased by >30% in 4 out of 6 subjects, while the others showed a reduction of ≤10%. To strengthen the application of [¹¹C]DPV as a PET probe for MRP2, an additional clinical study was conducted in a patient with DJS caused by hereditary MRP2-deficiency. The CL_{int, bile} in the DJS patient (0.102 mL/min/kg) was smaller than that in control subjects (0.221 mL/min/kg) (Figure 7, 8), supporting the importance of MRP2 in the transport process. The impact of

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genetic polymorphisms of OATP1Bs and MRP2 on the pharmacokinetic parameters remains to be clarified by [^{11}C]DPV PET imaging, as the pharmacokinetics of pravastatin showed large interindividual variation due to genetic polymorphisms of not only OATP1Bs but also MRP2 (Ieiri et al., 2009).

Since DPV is efficiently transported by OAT3, but not OAT1 (Supplemental Figure 4), this transporter will mediate the basolateral uptake in the kidney, as suggested for pravastatin (Watanabe et al., 2011). $\text{CL}_{\text{uptake, kidney}}$ was decreased in four out of six subjects by rifampicin treatment (Figure 5). The factor accounting for the interindividual variability in the effect of rifampicin remains unknown. Such interindividual variability was also observed in renal clearance of pravastatin to a lesser extent which was decreased in three out of ten subjects (Kyrklund et al., 2004). Provided that rifampicin is a weak inhibitor of OAT3 (Kusuhara et al., 2013), the inhibition of OAT3-mediated uptake is unlikely mechanism.

This study highlighted the usefulness of PET imaging in investigating the pharmacokinetics and DDIs, particularly on the tissue concentrations caused by the inhibition of the transporter function. The tissue concentration of drugs is associated with the drug response when an intracellular protein is the target. However, when the uptake involves transporters, the prediction of the tissue concentration under both control and DDI conditions must be further clarified. A clinical PET study could determine the tissue concentration when the drug is labeled by a positron-emitted isotope. Furthermore, pharmacokinetic analyses of

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the PET data will help clarify the DDI mechanisms, including some that may have been overlooked. Indeed, the present study suggests that the DDI mechanisms of rifampicin involve the inhibition of the canalicular efflux in some patients, as well as the sinusoidal uptake by OATP1B1/1B3. There are two factors accounting for interindividual variability in $CL_{int, bile}$ to be investigated; interindividual difference in MRP2 sensitivity to rifampicin caused by its genetic polymorphisms, and that in the unbound liver concentration of rifampicin caused by interindividual difference in the membrane transport and metabolism. Moreover, the accumulation of data on the *in vivo* intrinsic parameters of the elements across the drugs will provide correlations to *in vitro* parameters and help identify the empirical scaling factors that may improve the precision of the *in vitro-in vivo* extrapolation to new chemical entities. Molecular imaging probes for the quantitative functional characterization of drug transporters are still being developed by our group and others {[^{11}C]Rosuvastatin, Oatps, Bcrp and Mrp2 in rats (He et al., 2014)} but the characterization of drug transporters and DDIs in humans has not yet been fully achieved. Further enrichment of these probes is necessary to increase the predictability of these transporters.

In conclusion, our findings demonstrated that noninvasive PET imaging with [^{11}C]DPV as a PET probe with fewer metabolites than 15R-[^{11}C]TIC-Me can assess the hepatobiliary transport by OATP1Bs and MRP2. Therefore, [^{11}C]DPV is a useful probe for the kinetic analysis of hepatobiliary transport in humans.

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Acknowledgments

The authors acknowledge the valuable help and cooperation of the investigators and subjects who participated in this study, as well as the following individuals: Tomotaka Shingaki, PhD, formerly of CLST, for clinical support. We are indebted to Masashi Okamoto and Hisako Kobata (Osaka City University Hospital) for their expert technical assistance and supervision of this study and would like to thank Ryo Fujino and Shunsuke Aoyama (ADME & Toxicology Research Institute, Sekisui Medical Co., Ltd., Ibaraki, Japan) for their contribution to *in vitro* experiments using HEK293 cells expressing OATP1B1.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Tomotaka Shingaki, PhD, is a former employees of CLST and has authored several papers while at CLST.

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Conducted experiments:

Tanaka, Ishii, Katayama, Kawahata, Yamanaga, Wada, and Miyake

Contributed new reagents or analytic tools:

Tanaka, Katayama, Kawahata, Yamanaga, Wada, Kawabe, and Shiomi

Performed the data analysis:

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Wrote or contributed to the writing of the manuscript:

Kaneko, Maeda, Cui, Kusuhara, Sugiyama, and Watanabe

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FOOTNOTES

This work was supported in part by a consignment expense from the Molecular Imaging Program on “Research Base for Exploring New Drugs” from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), and Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) KAKENHI Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (S) [Number 24229002].

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FIGURE LEGENDS

Figure 1. Chemical structure of [^{11}C]DPV.

Figure 2. Color-coded PET images of abdominal region of healthy male subjects after the administration of [^{11}C]DPV with and without rifampicin. Coronal maximum-intensity-projection PET images of the radioactivity in the abdominal region were captured at 2, 4, 10, and 60 min after the administration of [^{11}C]DPV (84 ± 11 MBq/body, 6.0 ± 4.0 nmol/body) in the absence (A) or presence (B) of 600 mg of rifampicin.

Figure 3. Radioactivity-time profiles in the blood, liver, and kidneys of healthy male subjects after the intravenous administration of [^{11}C]DPV. Time profiles of the mean \pm S.D. ($n = 6$) radioactivity in the blood (A), liver (B), gall bladder and bile duct (C), and kidney (D) were determined. PET of the abdominal region and blood sampling were performed over 60 min after the administration of [^{11}C]DPV to subjects who received (closed circles) or did not receive (open circles) rifampicin pretreatment.

Figure 4. Representative radiochromatograms of [^{11}C]DPV and its metabolites in blood. Blood specimens collected from control and rifampicin-treated subjects at 2, 5, 10, 20, and 30 min were subjected to TLC and then analyzed by autoradiography. Au-std indicates [^{11}C]DPV as an authentic standard.

Figure 5. An integration plot analysis after the intravenous administration of [^{11}C]DPV. Integration plots were determined for the hepatic uptake (A), canalicular efflux (B), renal

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uptake (C) and the clearance of [^{11}C]DPV in the control and rifampicin-treated (600 mg/body) subjects. The hepatic uptake (D), canalicular efflux (E) and renal uptake (F) of clearance were compared between the control and rifampicin-treated groups. The statistical significance was tested by Student's two-tailed paired t -test ($^{\#}$, $P < 0.05$; * , $P < 0.01$).

Figure 6. The uptake of DPV by OATP1B1- and OATP1B3-expressing HEK293 cells. (A)

The uptake of DPV (1 and 3 μM for OATP1B1 and OATP1B3 tests, respectively) by empty-vector-transfected cells (square symbol), OATP1B1-expressing cells (circle symbol) and OATP1B3-expressing cells (diamond symbol) in the absence (open symbol) and presence (closed symbol) of rifampicin (10 μM) was determined at 37°C at the designated time points. (B) The concentration dependence of the uptake is shown as a Michaelis-Menten plot and Eadie-Hofstee plot (inset figure). The uptake of DPV for 2 min was determined at various substrate concentrations (1-100 μM for OATP1B1, and 3-300 μM for OATP1B3). Solid lines represent the fitted lines. Details of the fitting are described in Materials and Methods. Each point represents the mean \pm S.E. ($n = 4$ for OATP1B1, and $n = 3$ for OATP1B3).

Figure 7. Color-coded PET images of abdominal region of healthy male subjects (A) and

a DJS patient (B) after the administration of [^{11}C]DPV. Coronal maximum-intensity-projection PET images of the radioactivity in the abdominal region were captured at 5, 20, 30, and 60 min after the administration of [^{11}C]DPV (82 ± 12 MBq/body, 8.7 ± 5.0 nmol/body).

Figure 8. Radioactivity-time profiles of the blood, liver, and gall bladder and bile duct,

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and integration plot analysis of gall bladder and bile duct of healthy male subjects and a

DJS patient after the intravenous administration of [¹¹C]DPV. The time profile of the

mean \pm S.D. radioactivity in the blood (A), liver (B), gall bladder and bile duct (C) of control

subjects (n = 6) was determined. The time profile of the DJS patient was the data from a single

patient. PET of the abdominal region and blood sampling was performed over 60 min after the

administration of [¹¹C]DPV to the control subjects (open circles) or DJS patient (closed

diamonds). (D) Integration plots were determined for the canalicular efflux clearance of

[¹¹C]DPV in the control subjects and the DJS patient. Closed circles represent the control

subjects. Closed diamonds represent as the DJS patient.

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TABLE.

Table 1. Pharmacokinetic parameters of [¹¹C]DPV after intravenous administration in control and rifampicin-subjects.

	Control	Rifampicin- treated	(Rifampicin-treated / Control) %
AUC _{0–60 min, blood} (%dose·min/mL)	0.103 ± 0.020	0.180 ± 0.061*	174.8
AUC _{0–60 min, liver} (%dose·min/g tissue)	1.02 ± 0.11	0.263 ± 0.034†	25.8
AUC _{0–60 min, kidney} (%dose·min/g tissue)	0.656 ± 0.197	0.906 ± 0.259	138.1
CL _{uptake, liver} (mL/min/kg)	11.4 ± 4.0	5.18 ± 3.81*	45.4
V _{E, liver} (mL/kg)	4.45 ± 0.63	4.07 ± 0.84	91.5
CL _{uptake, kidneys} (mL/min/kg)	7.83 ± 3.26	5.72 ± 3.80	73.1
V _{E, kidneys} (mL/kg)	5.49 ± 0.67	5.44 ± 0.47	99.1
CL _{int, bile} (mL/min/kg)	0.221 ± 0.083	0.129 ± 0.091 [#]	58.4

CL_{uptake, liver}, CL_{uptake, kidneys}, V_{E, liver}, and V_{E, kidneys} were calculated from equation 1, and CL_{int, bile} was obtained from equation 2. Each value represents the mean ± S.D. (n = 6). Statistical significance was tested by Student's two-tailed paired *t*-test ([#], *P* < 0.05; *, *P* < 0.01; †, *P* < 0.0001). The unit of clearance determined by the integration plot analysis was converted using the body weight, liver weight and kidney weight in Supplemental Table 1.

Figures

Figure 1

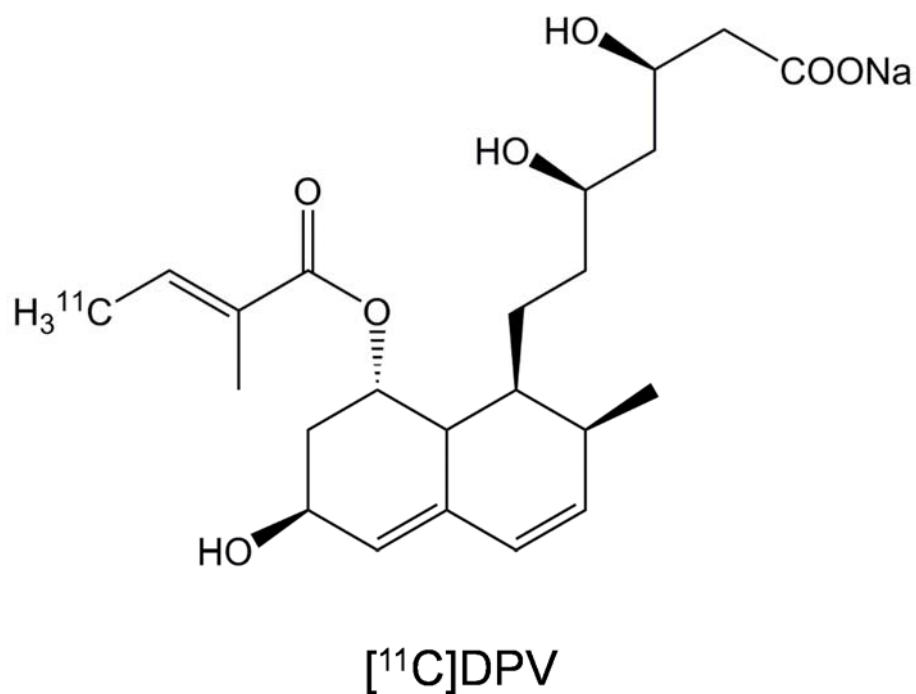


Figure 2

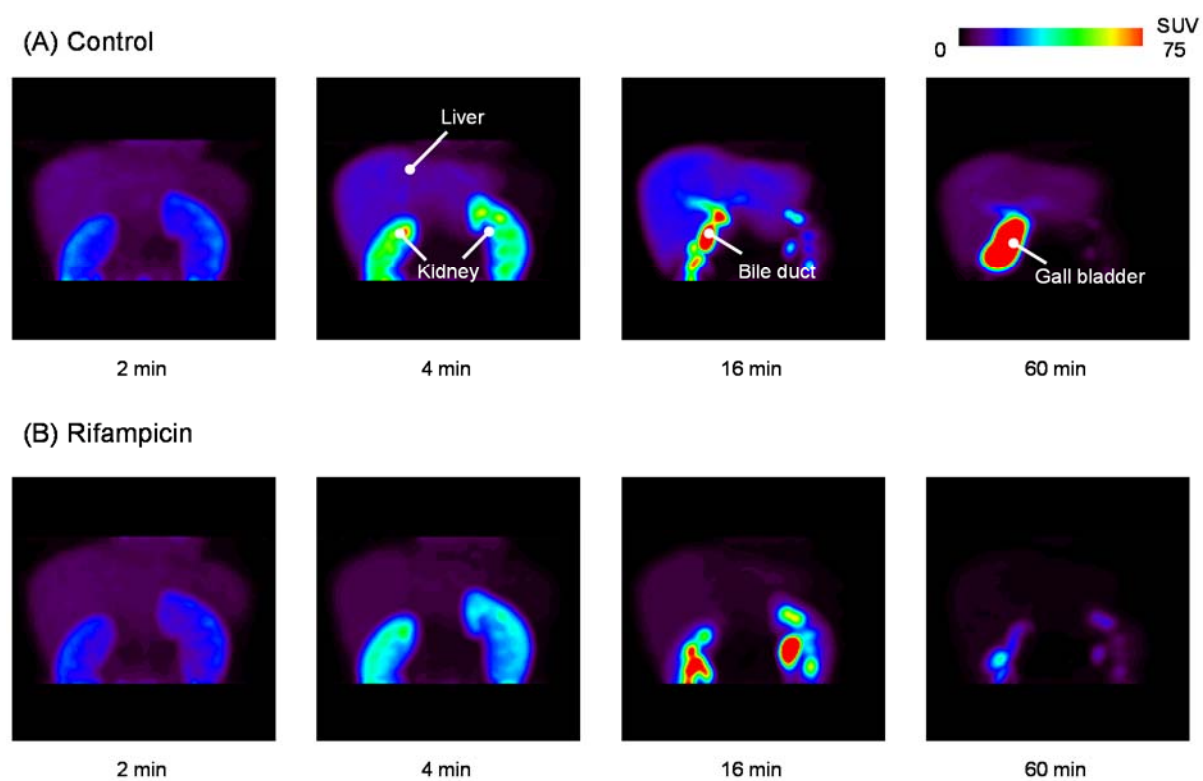


Figure 3

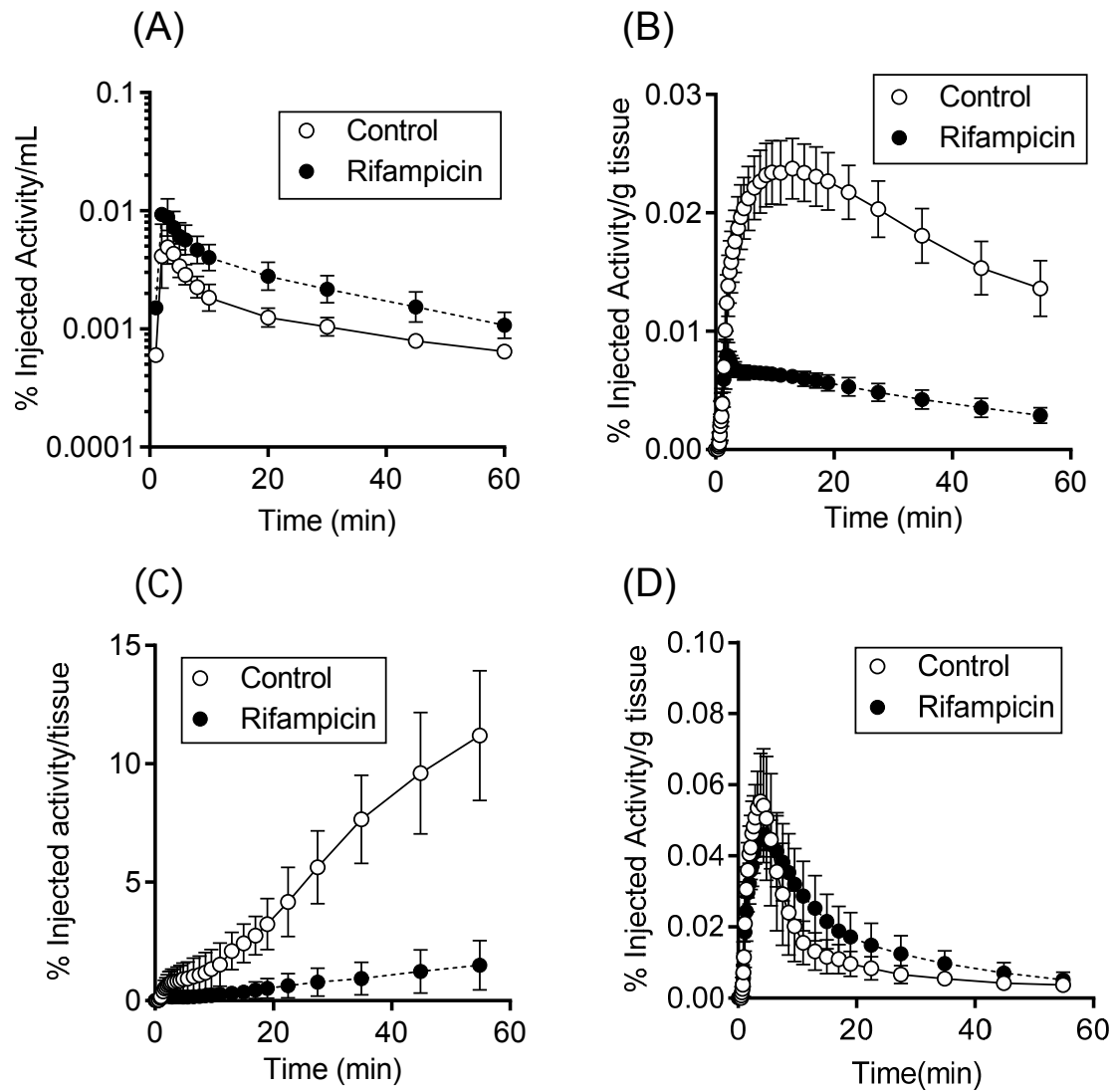


Figure 4

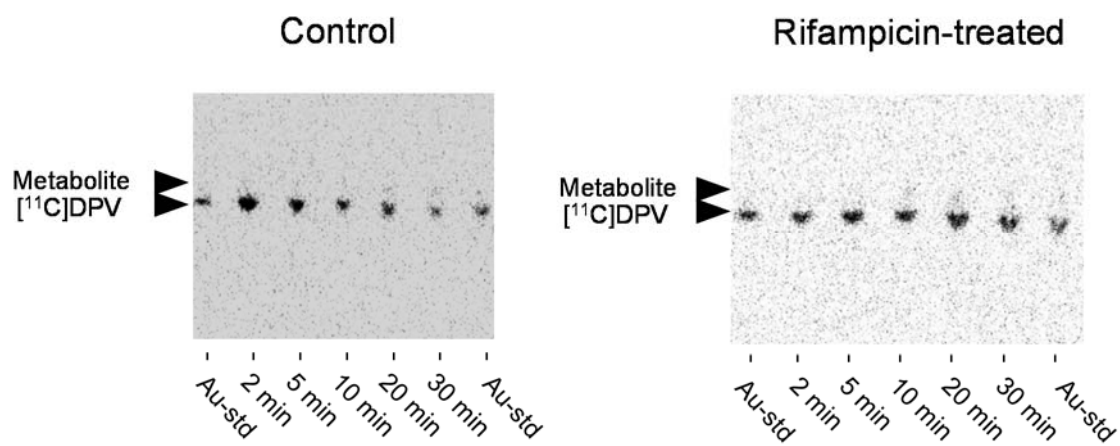


Figure 5

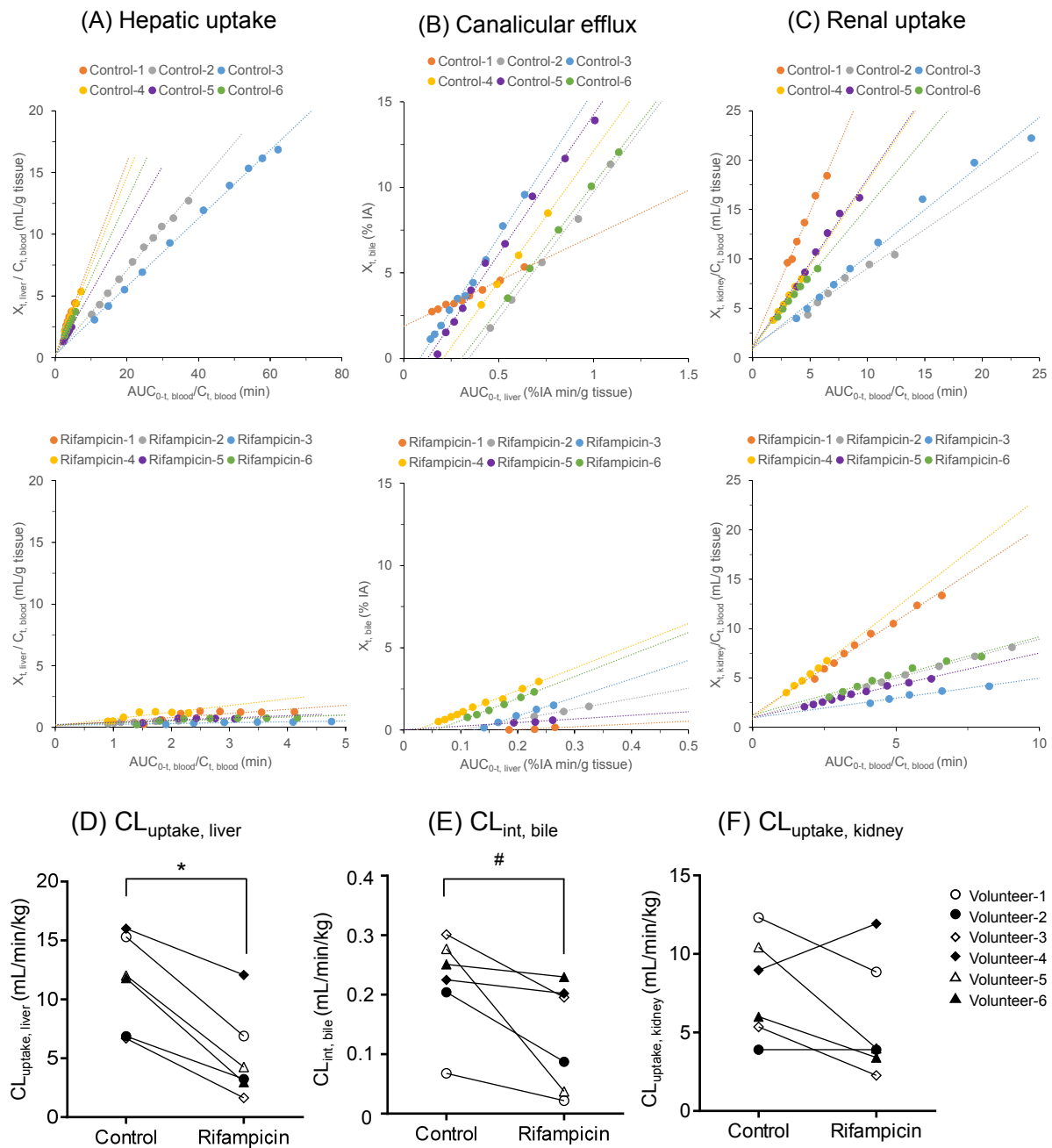


Figure 6

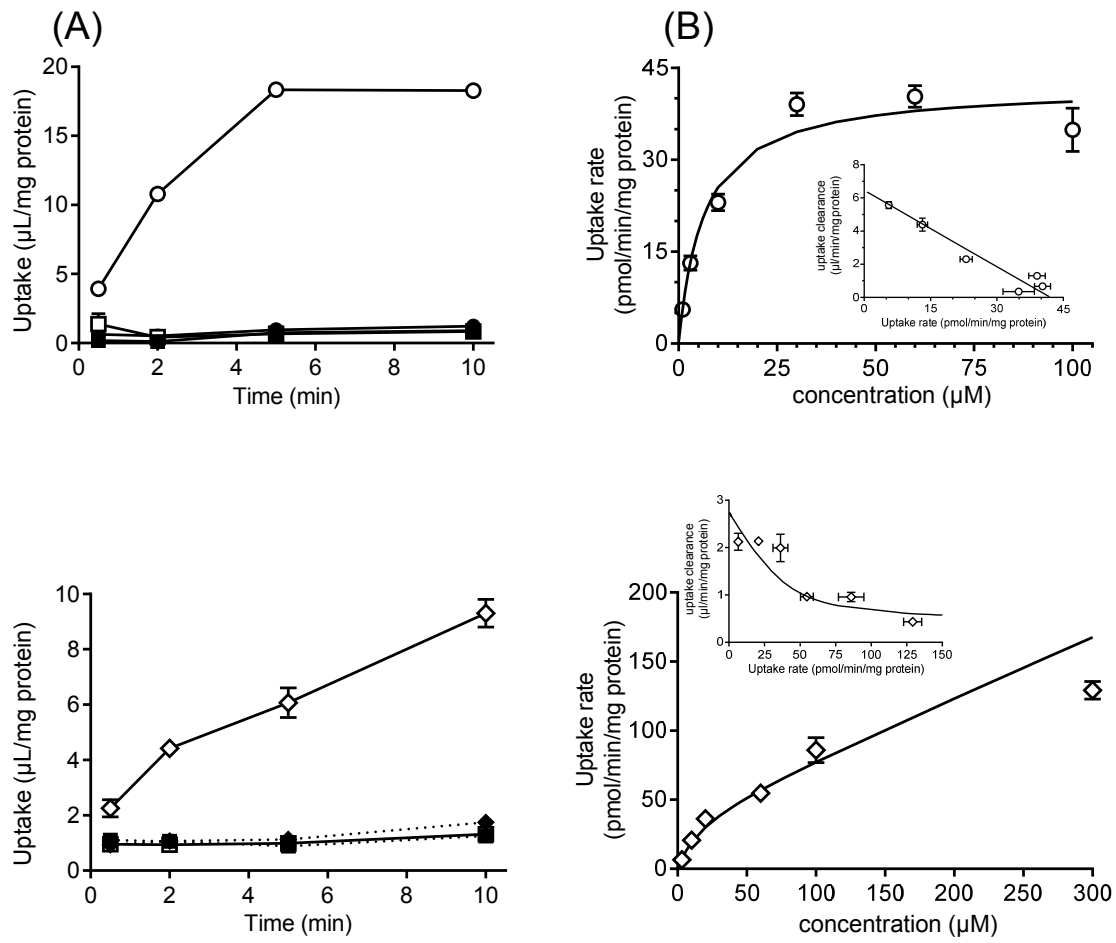


Figure 7

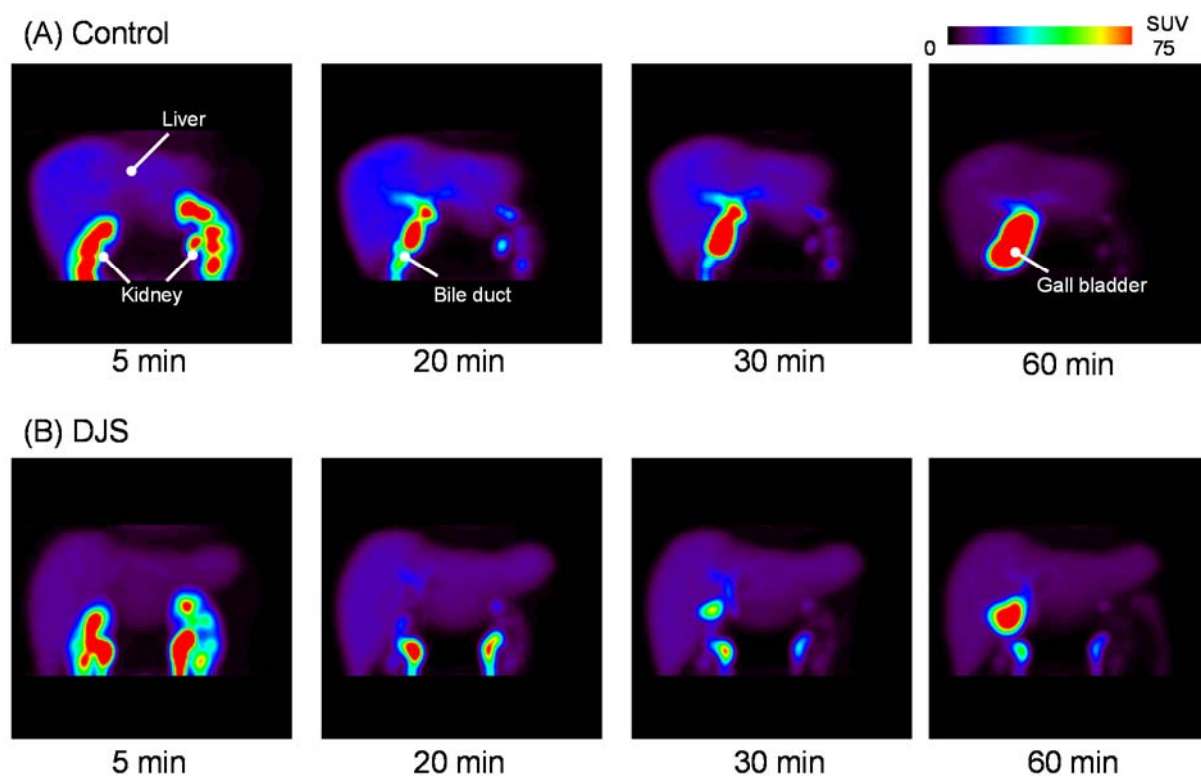


Figure 8

