

**Influence of the membrane lipid structure on signal processing via G protein-coupled receptors.**

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**Running Title:** Membrane structure on G protein-coupled receptor signaling

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**ABBREVIATIONS:** AC, adenylyl cyclase;  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR,  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -Adrenoceptor; CHS, cholesterol hemisuccinate; DNM, daunorubicin, daunomycin; DPPC, dipalmitoyl phosphatidylcholine; EA, elaidic acid; G protein, Guanine nucleotide-binding protein; GPCR, G protein-coupled receptor; OA, oleic acid; PC, phosphatidylcholine; PE, phosphatidylethanolamine; POPE, 1-palmitoyl-2-oleoyl phosphatidylethanolamine; SA, stearic acid; 3T3-AR, NIH-3T3 cells transfected with the  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR.

**ABSTRACT**

We have recently reported that the lipid structure regulates the interaction with membranes, recruitment to membranes and distribution to membrane domains of heterotrimeric G $\alpha\beta\gamma$  proteins, G $\alpha$  subunits and G $\beta\gamma$  dimers (*J Biol Chem* **279**:36540-36545, 2004). Here, we demonstrate that modulation of the membrane structure not only determines G protein localization, but also regulates the function of G proteins and related signaling proteins. In this context, the antitumor drug daunorubicin (daunomycin) and oleic acid changed the membrane structure and inhibited G protein activity in biological membranes. They also induced marked changes in the activity of the  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -adrenergic receptor and adenylyl cyclase. In contrast, elaidic and stearic acid, did not change the activity of the above proteins. These fatty acids are chemical but not structural analogs of oleic acid, supporting the structural basis of the modulation of membrane lipid organization and subsequent regulation of G protein-coupled receptor signaling. In addition, oleic acid (and also daunorubicin) did not alter G protein activity in a membrane-free system, further demonstrating the involvement of the membrane structure in this signal modulation. The present work also unravels in part the molecular bases involved in the antihypertensive (*Hypertension* **43**:249-254, 2004) and anticancer (*Mol Pharmacol* **67**:531-540, 2005) activities of synthetic oleic acid derivatives (e.g. 2-hydroxyoleic acid), as well as the molecular bases of the effects of diet fats on human health.

## **Introduction**

Plasma membrane lipids not only serve as an inert support for membrane proteins but rather they play an active role in the activity of a cell that is yet to be fully understood. Membrane exo/endocytic processes, diffusion of macromolecules and protein activities, among other cellular events, depend on the physical properties of membrane lipids. We have recently demonstrated that the hexagonal phase propensity of membranes differentially influences the binding of  $G\alpha_i$ ,  $G\beta\gamma$  and  $G\alpha\beta\gamma$  proteins, indicating that membrane composition and structure can regulate cell signaling (Vögler et al., 2004). Heterotrimeric G proteins ( $G\alpha\beta\gamma$ , pre-active) are recruited to membrane domains rich in receptor proteins, which exhibit a high nonlamellar phase propensity. Upon activation by agonists, the receptor activates the G protein. Then, the  $G\alpha_i$  subunit (active) dissociates from the  $G\beta\gamma$  complex and because of its lesser affinity for nonlamellar structures and higher for lamellar phases can be recruited to domains with ordered bilayer structure (e.g. lipid rafts) (Vögler et al., 2004), where it may activate signaling effectors. Therefore, modulation of the lipid structure (lamellar and nonlamellar phases or propensity to form them) regulates the G protein-membrane interactions and mobilization to different membrane domains upon activation. Here, we showed that not only G protein localization is regulated by the membrane structure/composition but also the function of these transducers and related proteins.

The type and abundance of membrane lipid species is regulated by dietary fat intake, which thus influences the properties of the membrane (Escudero et al., 1998). For example, oleic acid (OA), either free or bound to other molecules, confers an increased hexagonal phase propensity to the membrane (Funari et al., 2003), whereas the closely related fatty acids elaidic (EA) and stearic acid (SA) do not have the same effect (Funari et al., 2003). Although numerous works have studied the effect of diet

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fats on lipid composition, lipoprotein levels, nutritional and biochemical status of tissues and organs, there is a lack of information about the effect of lipids on cell signaling.

We have investigated G protein-coupled receptor (GPCR)-mediated signaling to determine the effect of fatty acids on the membrane lipid structure and the propagation of signals through these receptors. Previous studies have shown that  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -adrenoceptors ( $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -ARs) are involved in the control of blood pressure and cell proliferation, biological processes related to the development of cardiovascular pathologies and cancer (Hein et al., 1999; Betuing et al., 1997). Interestingly, Mediterranean diets that include high amounts of OA (mainly from olive oil) (Trichopoulou et al., 1995) are associated with a reduced incidence of cardiovascular pathologies and cancer (Ruiz-Gutiérrez et al., 1996; Mata et al., 1992; Martin-Moreno et al., 1994; Tzounou et al., 1996), although the molecular bases of these effects remain largely unknown. In addition, therapies based on the interaction of synthetic fatty acid drugs with membranes have been recently developed (lipid therapy). This is an innovative pharmacological approach, since most of the marketed drugs target proteins and only a few of them aim nucleic acids. The present study explains in part the molecular bases of the pharmaceutical and nutraceutical effects of OA derivatives and olive oil.

The importance of membrane lipid structure and protein-lipid interactions is evident. First, the initial steps of signaling cascades are associated with membranes and with the propagation of signals across these barriers. Second, signaling pathways are more dependent on the initial membrane-associated signaling elements (receptors, G proteins and effectors) than on downstream signaling proteins that simply amplify the signals received (Levitzki, 1988). Thirdly, receptors, G proteins and effectors can be differentially recruited to certain specific membrane structures such as membrane rafts

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(Moffet et al., 2000), which partially define their activities. Finally, the presence of non-lamellar prone lipids modulates the localization and activity of peripheral proteins that are capable of translocating from the membrane to the cytosol, and as such, of propagating intracellular signals (Goñi and Alonso, 1999; Kinnunen, 1996).

The membrane hexagonal ( $H_{II}$ )-phase propensity regulates the cellular localization of G proteins (Vögler et al., 2004; Escribá et al., 1997). For this reason, we have studied the effect of OA on membrane structure and on the subsequent changes in the activity of  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR, G proteins and adenylyl cyclase (AC). In this context, OA but not its chemical analogs, EA and SA, altered the membrane lipid structure and functional properties of  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR, G protein and AC. Similarly, the antitumor drug daunorubicin (daunomycin, DNM) also alters the membrane structure, the cellular localization of G proteins and GPCR-associated signaling (Escribá et al., 1995). The present results may explain in part the anticancer and hypotensive activities of fatty acids, such as the novel synthetic OA analog 2-hydroxyoleic acid (desBordes and Lea, 1995; Corl et al., 2003; Llor et al., 2003; Alemany et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 2005). In summary, this work presents relevant information and will help to understand (i) how the membrane lipid composition and structure modulates cell signaling, (ii) how diet fats can influence the cell's physiology and human health and (iii) why pharmacological approaches targeting membrane lipids can be effective against cardiovascular and tumor pathologies (Alemany et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 2005).

## **Materials and Methods**

**Materials.** Tissue culture supplies were from JRH Bioscience (Lenexa, KS), acrylamide, bisacrylamide and SDS were from Bio-Rad (Madrid, Spain). [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S (1250 Ci/mmol), [<sup>3</sup>H]rauwolscine (82.3 Ci/mmol), [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 (56.0 Ci/mmol) and [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 (67.4 Ci/mmol) were all obtained from Dupont/NEN (Bad Homburg, Germany). Phospholipids were from Avanti Polar Lipids (Alabaster, AL) while OA, EA and SA were obtained from Sigma (Madrid, Spain), and the DNM and cholesteryl hemisuccinate (CHS) from RBI (Madrid, Spain).

**Differential Scanning and Isothermal Titration Calorimetry.** Differential scanning calorimetry was performed on a Microcal MCS-DSC microcalorimeter (Amherst, MA) at a scan rate of 0.5 K/min, as described previously (16). In brief, 1-palmitoyl-2-oleoyl phosphatidylethanolamine (POPE, 2 mM) or dipalmitoyl phosphatidylcholine (DPPC, 2 mM) was dissolved in chloroform in the presence or absence of different concentrations of OA (10-1000  $\mu$ M), CHS (200-2000  $\mu$ M) or DNM (200-500  $\mu$ M). The solvent was removed under an argon flow and submitted to a vacuum for at least 3 hr. The lipid film was then resuspended in "sample buffer" (10 mM HEPES/100 mM NaCl/1 mM EDTA, at pH 7.4) with agitation for 2 min at 50°C, degassed by stirring under vacuum for 10 min, and then used immediately in calorimetry experiments. Isothermal titration calorimetry was carried out on a Microcal MCS-ITC microcalorimeter (Lin et al., 1994; Heerklotz et al., 1999). During a titration experiment, POPE (2 mM) vesicles were thermostated in "sample buffer" at either 40°C (to study the binding to lamellar phases) or 75°C (to study the binding to H<sub>II</sub> phases) in a stirred reaction cell (400 rpm, 1.343 ml). Series of injections (2  $\mu$ l per injection, 50-60 injections) were carried out using a 250  $\mu$ l-syringe filled with 50 mM OA sodium salt in sample buffer. In control experiments, the OA sodium salt was injected into the buffer

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without POPE to calculate the heat of dilution, and the dilution heat ( $h_{d,i}$ ) of OA was subtracted from experimental data ( $h_i$ ):  $\delta h_i = h_i - h_{d,i}$ . The injection time was set at 5 s, and 240 s between consecutive injections to permit the equilibration of lipid binding. The first data point was disregarded (as recommended by the manufacturer) and the rest were fitted to one-, two- and three-site binding models. Data acquisition and analysis was carried out using the software provided by the manufacturer (MicroCal MCS Observer and Origin programs).

**Radioligand Binding Studies** NIH 3T3 cells were transfected with the  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR (3T3-AR cells) as described in (Lanier et al., 1991). G418-resistant clones were screened for receptor subtype expression by RNA blot analysis and by their ability to bind the  $\alpha_2$ -selective antagonists [ $^3$ H]rauwolscine or [ $^3$ H]RX821002. The cells were further characterized by their subtype ligand recognition properties and the molecular mass of the protein produced. 3T3-AR cells were maintained in monolayer culture in DMEM medium containing 10% bovine calf serum, penicillin (100 units/ml), streptomycin (100  $\mu$ g/ml), and fungizone (0.25  $\mu$ g/ml), at 37°C and 5% CO<sub>2</sub>. Cell membrane preparation and radioligand binding assays were performed as described in (Duzic et al., 1992). In brief, confluent cells were washed twice with sterile PBS (137 mM NaCl/2.6 mM KCl/10 mM Na<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>/1.8 mM KH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, at pH 7.3), harvested with a rubber policeman, and centrifuged for 5 min at 200 x g and 4°C. The pellet was resuspended in lysis buffer (1 ml/dish of 5 mM Tris-HCl/5 mM EDTA/5mM EGTA, at pH 7.5) at 4°C, and homogenized using a 1-ml syringe with a 26-g needle. The cell homogenate was centrifuged for 10 min at 14,000 x g and 4°C. The pellet was washed and resuspended in membrane buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl/0.6 mM EDTA/5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, at pH 7.5) and the protein content of the membrane suspension was determined as described previously (Lowry et al., 1951). This protocol yields a fraction rich in plasma



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membranes. Other types of membranes present in this preparation did not interfere with the assays here performed because they lack of the signaling system studied. These cell membrane preparations were treated as indicated below.

[<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding was used to evaluate G protein activity and coupling to  $\alpha_2$ -adrenoceptors. Membranes prepared from transfected NIH-3T3 cells were preincubated in the presence or absence of OA, EA, SA, DNM, PE or CHS for 30 min on ice. The reaction was then initiated by adding the membrane suspensions to assay buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl/5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>/1 mM EDTA/1 mM dithiothreitol/100 mM NaCl/1  $\mu$ M guanosine diphosphate/1  $\mu$ M propranolol, at pH 7.4) in a final volume of 100  $\mu$ l, and in the presence of 0.5 nM [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S and the  $\alpha_2$ -AR agonist UK14304 (10 nM). Reactions were incubated for 30 min at 37°C and terminated by rapid vacuum filtration through nitrocellulose filters. Radioactivity was determined by liquid scintillation counting and non-specific binding was defined in the presence of 100  $\mu$ M GTP $\gamma$ S. The agonist-stimulated [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding was determined after subtracting the basal [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding. In another series of experiments, [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding was performed as above, except that the concentrations of OA, DNM, PE and CHS were constant (100  $\mu$ M) and the concentrations of UK14304 varied between 10<sup>-8</sup> and 10<sup>-3</sup> M. The effects of OA, EA and SA on [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding to 3T3-AR membranes were also studied. Finally, [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding to purified G proteins was performed using purified bovine brain G protein heterotrimers as described in (Dingus et al., 1994). Experiments were carried out as above, using 5 nM of G proteins, 0.01% Thesit, 2.5 nM [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S and in the presence or absence of 100  $\mu$ M OA, DNM, PE or CHS.

Binding of [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 (20 nM) and [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 (1 nM) to 3T3-AR cell membranes was performed in the presence or absence of OA, EA, SA, DNM, PE or CHS, for 30 min on ice. The membrane suspensions were incubated (25  $\mu$ g of protein

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per tube) for 30 min at 24°C in 100 µl of PBS with the corresponding radioligand and non-specific binding was determined in the presence of 10 µM rauwolscine. Binding was terminated by vacuum filtration through glass fiber filters and the radioactivity determined by liquid scintillation. In all experimental series, lipids were dissolved either in water or in ethanol. The ethanol concentration in the assays was always less than 0.5%, and control samples containing this solvent were also evaluated in all experimental series. The amount of the lipids incorporated into the cell membranes was always ≥90% of the lipid added as determined by radioligand binding and ITC experiments (fatty acids), colorimetric assays (CHS), fluorescence spectroscopy (DNM) and thin layer chromatography followed by gas chromatography (phospholipids) (Escribá et al., 1995; Escribá et al., 1990).

**Adenylyl Cyclase Activity Assay.** AC activity was measured as described previously (Lanier et al., 1991; Duzic et al., 1992). Briefly, 3T3-AR cell membranes were incubated with assay buffer (50 mM Hepes/1 mM EDTA/4 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>/100 mM NaCl/0.24 mM ATP/0.1 mM GTP/0.2 mM cAMP/0.2% bovine serum albumin/0.5 mM isobutyl-L-methylxanthine, at pH 7.4) containing [<sup>32</sup>P]ATP (0.5 µCi/tube) and an ATP-regenerating system (60 mM creatinine phosphate, 10 units/ml creatinine kinase). The reactions were performed with or without (basal) forskolin (2 µM), with or without OA, EA, DNM, PE or CHS (100 µM), and in the presence or absence of UK14304 (10<sup>-5</sup> M) in a final volume of 100 µl at 37°C for 30 min. Subsequently, 2% SDS was added to the incubation solution to stop the reaction and cAMP was isolated by sequential chromatography on Dowex AG-50W-X4 and alumina columns. The 4-ml eluate from each column was equilibrated with 16 ml of Ecoscint A and the radioactivity was determined by liquid scintillation counting. The effect of the solvent (<0.5% ethanol) was evaluated as above.

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**Statistics.** The results are expressed as mean  $\pm$  SEM. One-way ANOVA followed by Scheffé's or Fisher's tests was used for statistical evaluations. The level of significance was established at  $p = 0.05$ .

## Results

**Effect of OA on Phospholipid Thermal Transitions.** The effect of OA on the thermotropic behavior of DPPC (2 mM) was different to that of DNM and CHS. DNM did not induce significant changes in the solid-to-liquid ( $S \leftrightarrow L$ ) crystalline phase transition temperature ( $T_m$ ) but rather, it did induce marked changes in the lamellar-to-hexagonal phase transition of model membranes (Fig. 1A, Tables 1 and 2; and Escribá et al., 1995). These results indicated that at low concentrations (up to 100  $\mu$ M), OA had little effect on membrane fluidity but induced important changes in membrane lipid organization. As described previously for cholesterol (Mabrey et al., 1978), CHS (a cholesterol analog) produced a segregation of membrane lipids, generating CHS-rich domains with a higher  $T_m$  and CHS-poor microdomains (Table 1). The presence of up to 100  $\mu$ M OA did not significantly affect the  $S \leftrightarrow L$  phase transition of POPE and DPPC membranes (Tables 1 and 2). In contrast, marked changes in POPE  $L \leftrightarrow H_{II}$  transition temperature ( $T_h$ ) and enthalpy ( $\Delta H_h$ ) were observed in the presence of OA (Fig. 1B, Table 2), further indicating that the fatty acid had a greater effect on the membrane lipid structure than on membrane fluidity (or viscosity). By contrast, neither EA nor SA induces important changes in the structure of model membranes (Funari et al., 2003).

The presence of OA affected differentially the  $S \leftrightarrow L$  (fluidity) and  $L \leftrightarrow H_{II}$  (nonlamellar-phase propensity) transitions, suggesting a differential interaction with different membrane lipid organizations. For this reason, we studied the binding of OA to both lipid structures, the lamellar and hexagonal ( $H_{II}$ ) phases. The OA-POPE interactions were assessed by isothermal titration calorimetry as previously used to determine the binding of other compounds to liposomes (Heerklotz et al., 1999). The binding of OA to POPE organized into lamellar and hexagonal phases fitted best a two-

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site binding model (Table 3), suggesting the existence two OA binding sites (high- and low-affinity), or interaction architectures. The higher affinity exhibited by OA occurred when interacting with non-lamellar structures ( $K_{a1} = 3100 \text{ M}^{-1}$ ;  $K_{d1} = 322 \text{ }\mu\text{M}$ ) rather than with lamellar structures ( $K_{a1} = 786 \text{ M}^{-1}$ ;  $K_{d1} = 1.27 \text{ mM}$ ). In addition, the binding capacity ( $n_t$ ) of OA to hexagonal structures was greater than that corresponding to lamellar structures (Table 3). These results explain the more significant effect of OA on membranes in the hexagonal phase than in the lamellar phase at micromolar concentrations. They also constitute the first evidence indicating that the membrane organization regulates fatty acid-phospholipid interactions. In contrast with the high-affinity site, for the low-affinity-site,  $K_{a2}$  values for L and H<sub>II</sub> structures were similar. Overall, calorimetry experiments demonstrate that OA binds to membrane phospholipids, and OA binding affinity and effects on the latter depend on the lipid type and organization.

**Effects of OA and DNM on  $\alpha_2$ -Adrenoceptor Function.** To determine the influence of the lipid structure on signal processing by GPCRs, we evaluated the effect of OA and DNM on  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR function in membranes from 3T3 cells overexpressing the  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR. This model of biological membranes is more complex than the above model membranes because it contains the first elements of the GPCR signaling machinery, but it is less complex than a whole cell. In this model similarly to cells, the interaction of the G protein with the receptor stabilizes the conformation of the  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -AR such that it exhibits a high affinity for agonists. This interaction is disrupted by the exchange of GDP by GTP or its analogs in the G $\alpha$  subunit, such as Gpp(NH)p (an event that activates the G protein). At low concentrations, ~90% of [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 agonist binding was sensitive to Gpp(NH)p. Adrenoceptor agonist binding was significantly diminished in the presence of OA (a reduction of  $81.2 \pm 13\%$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and DNM (a reduction of

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61.9±7%,  $p<0.01$ ; Fig. 2A). The  $\alpha_2$ -AR antagonist [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 is less sensitive to Gpp(NH)p, and its binding to 3T3-AR cell membranes in the presence of OA was reduced by 41±7% ( $p<0.01$ ) while DNM provoked a slightly smaller decrease of 36.3±12% ( $p<0.01$ ; Fig. 2B). In contrast, neither PE nor CHS induced significant changes in the binding of [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 or [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 to 3T3-AR membranes (Fig. 2). Furthermore, the OA analogs EA and SA (300  $\mu$ M) did not alter the radioligand recognition properties of  $\alpha_2$ -ARs, despite the fact that OA, EA (*cis* and *trans* stereoisomers of 9-octadecenoic acid, respectively) and SA (octadecanoic acid) are 18-C fatty acids (Fig. 3). *Trans* and unsaturated fatty acids (e.g., EA and SA) have a linear “molecular shape” whereas the prominent kink induced by the *cis*-double bonds in OA induces important differences in its “molecular shape” with respect to these analogs.

**Effect of OA on G Protein activity.** The relationship between the modification in membrane structure and G protein function was addressed by determining the influence of OA on the agonist-induced increases in [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding to G proteins in membranes. The presence of OA markedly reduced agonist-induced [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding to 3T3-AR membranes in a concentration-dependent manner (Fig. 4A). While DNM induced a similar effect, CHS and PE only induced modest changes in agonist-induced activation of G proteins. We also analyzed the inhibitory effect of OA (100  $\mu$ M) and DNM (100  $\mu$ M) on [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding at increasing concentrations of UK14304 ( $10^{-8}$  M to  $10^{-3}$  M). Both, OA and DNM induced a significant decrease in [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S binding to 3T3-AR membranes at all concentrations of UK14304 examined (Fig. 4B). In contrast, PE and CHS did not markedly alter the binding of this GTP analog (Fig. 4B), and EA and SA did not alter receptor-mediated activation of G protein (Fig. 4C). The effect of OA (and DNM) on G protein function was not due to a direct

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interaction of the fatty acid with the protein, since the [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP<sub>γ</sub>S binding to purified G proteins in the absence of membranes was not altered (Fig. 4D).

**Effects of OA and DNM on Adenylyl Cyclase Activity.** Finally, we extended this study to evaluate the influence of manipulating the lipid phase on the activity of AC. A decrease was observed in the basal activity of AC in the presence of OA (a decrease of 92.8±3.5%, *p*<0.001) and DNM (a decrease of 30.9±13.7%, *p*<0.05) and of the forskolin-stimulated activity of AC (decreases of 98±1%, *p*<0.001 and 57.2±10%, *p*<0.01, for OA and DNM, respectively) (Fig. 5A). As expected, the α<sub>2</sub>-AR agonist UK14304 also inhibited the basal and forskolin-stimulated activity of AC (37.8±9.7%, *p*<0.01 and 38.3±12%, *p*<0.05, respectively) (Fig. 5B). In contrast, PE and CHS did not significantly alter either the basal or the forskolin-stimulated activity of AC (Fig. 5). Furthermore, no synergism was observed between UK14304 and OA, EA, DNM, PE or CHS since in combination AC activity was not inhibited did more than in the presence of any of these compounds alone (data not shown). Again, the effect of OA was structure-specific as the congener EA had no effects on basal or forskolin-stimulated AC activity.

## **Discussion**

The effects of the membrane lipid composition/structure on the cell's physiology remain largely unknown. Their knowledge is important to understand (i) how lipid alterations influence cell signaling in those pathologies where lipid changes have been described, (ii) the mechanisms involved in the effects of diet fats on health and (iii) the molecular bases underlying "lipid therapy" (Martínez et al., 2005). Fatty acids are the most important molecules in the formation of the core of cell membranes, either in their free state or as a moiety of other molecules (e.g., phospholipids). However, not all fatty acids have the same structural properties or confer the same properties to membranes. Among the characteristics of membranes, the propensity to form non-lamellar ( $H_{II}$ ) structures is facilitated by the cis-monounsaturated fatty acid OA (Funari et al., 2003). In contrast, trans-monounsaturated (EA) or saturated (SA) fatty acids do not affect this property in model membranes, indicating that  $H_{II}$  propensity modulation depends on the "molecular shape" of the fatty acid and relies on highly structural bases (Funari et al., 2003). Interestingly, certain phosphatidylethanolamine derivatives with OA, such as dioleoyl phosphatidylethanolamine, have a very high  $H_{II}$  propensity ( $T_h \sim -16^\circ\text{C}$ ). In POPE, used here, the high  $T_h$  value ( $\sim 71^\circ\text{C}$ , Table 2) suggests that the palmitoyl moiety in position 1 inhibits the motion of the oleoyl residue, also indicating that the free fatty acid (OA) has greater effect on  $H_{II}$  propensity. We recently demonstrated that activated  $G\alpha_i$  proteins prefer lamellar-prone membranes whereas heterotrimeric  $G_i$  ( $\alpha\beta\gamma$ ) proteins and  $G\beta\gamma$  dimers prefer  $H_{II}$  phases (Vögler et al., 2004). Here, we show that OA modulated the  $H_{II}$  phase propensity (Fig. 1) and regulated the activities of GPCRs and G proteins (Figs. 2 and 4). In contrast, the OA analogs EA and SA did not significantly alter either membrane structure or GPCR-mediated signaling. Although OA and DNM induced important changes on G protein activity in 3T3 membranes, they did not



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change the activity of purified G proteins in a membrane-free system, further supporting the involvement of membranes in their effects. Therefore, this work shows that the membrane structure regulates not only G protein localization but also the activity of G proteins. On the other hand, OA regulated not only [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 but also [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 binding (insensitive to Gpp(NH)p) to  $\alpha_{2A/D}$ -ARs (Fig. 2). These results suggest that the effect on the receptor could be due to the contribution of the membrane environment on G proteins and by a direct effect on the receptor molecule. This issue is currently under investigation. Again, neither EA nor SA influenced  $\alpha_2$ -AR activity, further indicating the pivotal role of the membrane structure in the modulation of GPCR-associated signaling.

Why biological membranes are so abundant in types and diverse in compositions if they only define barriers? Why the membrane composition is so finely regulated and membrane lipids can organize into more secondary structures than proteins or nucleic acids if they mainly serve as supports for proteins? Membrane lipids have more functions than those usually attributed to them. Hexagonally-prone lipids modulate the activity and the interaction of peripheral proteins with the plasma membrane (Escribá et al., 1995, 1997; Soulages et al., 1995; Giorgione et al., 1995). Our data indicate that the effects of OA and DNM on cell signaling pathways are related to the propensity of the membrane to enter the hexagonal ( $H_{II}$ )-phase, since OA binds more readily to non-lamellar phases (Table 3). Accordingly, DSC data indicated stronger effect of OA on the hexagonal-phase propensity of the membrane (defined by the  $L \leftrightarrow H_{II}$  transition) than on membrane fluidity (defined by the  $S \leftrightarrow L$  transition) (Tables 1 and 2). Here we also showed that the lipid structure also influenced the binding of fatty acids to model membranes. In a similar fashion to OA, DNM has also been shown to interact differentially with model membranes of different composition (Escribá et al., 1990). In

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addition, it has been observed that resistance to antitumor drugs is related to the membrane lipid properties, which can be modulated by treatments with fatty acids (Escribá et al., 1990; Callaghan et al., 1993).

In the present study, we show that the membrane structure also modulates AC activity (Fig 5). To our knowledge, this is first time that AC activity has been shown to be regulated by H<sub>II</sub> phase propensity, is in agreement with its regulation by changes in the membrane lipid composition (Calorini et al., 1993). The signaling cascades controlled by  $\alpha_{2AD}$ -ARs often use Gi proteins as transducers and AC as the effector.

In addition to their apparent effect on signal processing by GPCRs, H<sub>II</sub> structures are involved in many other cellular functions, including exo-endocytic processes (Vidal and Hoekstra, 1995). Non-lamellar structures also modulate the membrane permeability, elasticity and fluid shear stress, which regulate the activity of membrane proteins (Gudi et al., 1998; Keller et al., 1993). The H<sub>II</sub>-prone phospholipid PE has been shown to accumulate at the cleavage furrow, during eukaryotic cell division (Emoto et al., 1996), and in *E. coli* it exhibits a chaperone-like activity (Bogdanov et al., 1996). Indeed, PE is required for the membrane packaging of integral proteins (de Kruijff, 1997) and it has also been used for biomedical and biotechnological purposes (Perkins et al., 1996; Zelphati and Szoka, 1996; Landau and Rosenbusch, 1996). The high proportion of this phospholipid in membranes and the precise regulation of its levels indicate that the hexagonal phase propensity is of great functional importance (Goldfine et al., 1987; Wieslander et al., 1986).

This study further supports the mechanism of action proposed for daunorubicin (Escribá et al., 1995). Using this molecular mechanism we have designed new compounds (2-hydroxyoleic acid) with a great anticancer activity (Martínez et al.,

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2005). This work also explains in part the molecular mechanisms underlying the protective effects of cis-unsaturated fatty acids against cardiovascular and tumor pathologies (desBordes and Lea, 1995; Perez et al., 2003). Based on these mechanisms, we have designed new anticancer and anti-hypertensive drugs structurally related to OA (Alemany et al., 2004; Martínez et al., 2005; Barceló et al., 2004). One of the main targets of these compounds are membrane lipids (Funari et al., 2003; Barceló et al., 2004), thus defining a new pharmacological approach termed “lipid therapy” (Escribá and Bean, 2002). The present study also explains the molecular bases of the effects of diet fats on human health. For instance, high OA intake, mainly through consumption of olive oil (containing about 80% OA) typical of Mediterranean diets, has been associated with a decrease in the incidence of cardiovascular (Ruiz-Gutiérrez et al., 1996; Heyden, 1994) and tumor pathologies (Martin-Moreno et al., 1994; Tzounou et al., 1996). Finally, the differential effect of OA, EA and SA on membrane structure and cell signaling indicated that lipid-protein and lipid-lipid interactions are driven by structural biology principles.

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**Footnotes**

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## LEGENDS FOR FIGURES

**Fig. 1.** Effects of OA and DNM on the thermotropic behavior of DPPC and POPE. (A) Effect of OA on DPPC (2 mM) S $\leftrightarrow$ L phase transition. Only OA concentrations above 200  $\mu$ M induced significant changes on membrane fluidity (Table 1). (B) Effect of OA and DNM on POPE (2 mM) L $\leftrightarrow$ H (H<sub>II</sub>) phase transition. Lamellar (L) and hexagonal (H<sub>II</sub>) phases are shown below the upper thermogram. For further details see table 2.

**Fig. 2.** Specific binding of the  $\alpha_2$ -adrenoceptor agonist [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 (A) and the antagonist [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 (B) to 3T3-AR membranes in the presence or absence (control) of OA, ES, SA, DNM, PE or CHS (300  $\mu$ M). Specific [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 binding was obtained by subtracting the radiolabeled ligand binding in the presence of 100  $\mu$ M Gpp(NH)p from that in the absence of Gpp(NH)p. Specific [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 binding was carried out in the absence of Gpp(NH)p. Data are expressed as percentage values (mean $\pm$ SEM) with respect to the control untreated membranes. Binding of [<sup>3</sup>H]UK14304 to control (untreated) membranes was  $0.9 \pm 0.15$  pmol/mg protein while binding of [<sup>3</sup>H]RX821002 to control (untreated) membranes was  $5.3 \pm 0.5$  pmol/mg protein. For other details see text. \*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

**Fig. 3.** Chemical structure of oleic acid (OA, cis-9-octadecenoic, 18:1 c $\Delta$ 9), elaidic acid (EA, trans-9-octadecenoic, 18:1 t $\Delta$ 9) and stearic acid (SA, octadecanoic, 18:0). OA has a double (*cis*) bond that restrains the mobility between C9 and C10, inducing a boomerang-like "molecular shape". EA (the *trans* isomer of OA) and SA have a "molecular shape" that resemble a rod. Only OA altered GPCR-mediated signaling.

**Fig. 4.** The influence of agents that modify the lipid-phase on agonist-induced binding of [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S to 3T3-AR cell membranes and to purified brain G proteins. (A) Specific

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agonist-stimulated binding of [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S (mean  $\pm$  SEM) was measured in the presence or absence (Control) of increasing concentrations of OA, DNM, PE or CHS. (B) Specific agonist-stimulated binding of [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S to 3T3-AR membranes in the absence (C, control) or presence of 100  $\mu$ M OA, DNM, PE or CHS at increasing concentrations of the  $\alpha_2$ -AR agonist UK14304. (C) Effect of 100  $\mu$ M OA, EA and SA on the specific agonist-stimulated binding of [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S to 3T3-AR membranes. (D) Specific binding of [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S to G proteins purified from bovine brain, in the absence of membranes and in the presence or absence (Control) of 100  $\mu$ M OA, DNM, PE or CHS. Basal [<sup>35</sup>S]GTP $\gamma$ S (control) binding to 3T3-AR membranes was  $182.9 \pm 26.9$  and in UK14304-stimulated ( $5 \times 10^{-6}$ M) membranes binding reached  $280.35 \pm 35.4$  fmol/mg protein. Binding to control purified G proteins was  $101 \pm 4$  fmol/mg protein. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

**Fig. 5.** Adenylyl cyclase (AC) activity. Basal (A) and forskolin-stimulated (B) AC activity measured in 3T3-AR cells, in the presence or absence (C, Control) of 50  $\mu$ M OA (OA50), 100  $\mu$ M OA (OA), 100  $\mu$ M EA (EA), 100  $\mu$ M DNM (DNM), 100  $\mu$ M CHS (CHS) or 10  $\mu$ M UK14304 (UK). The level of control basal AC activity was  $15.37 \pm 2.8$  pmol cAMP/min mg protein and control forskolin-stimulated AC activity was  $275.0 \pm 36.9$  pmol cAMP/min mg protein. The results are expressed as mean  $\pm$  SEM. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

**TABLE 1**

OA and CHS on DPPC thermodynamic parameters

<b>OA (<math>\mu\text{M}</math>)</b>	0	100	200	350	500	1000
	0	1:20	1:10	7:40	1:4	1:2
$T_m^1$	41.5	41.2	40.3	39.0	38.3	37.1
$\Delta H^2$	10.9	10.7	10.3	9.9	9.1	9.5

<b>CHS (<math>\mu\text{M}</math>)</b>	0	200	500	1000	2000
	0	1:10	1:4	1:2	1:1
$T_{m1}^1$	41.5	39.2	40.2	47.3	-
$\Delta H_1^2$	10.9	8.1	6.3	3.6	0
$T_{m2}^1$	-	53	61.8	63.4	-
$\Delta H_2^2$	-	1.2	1.5	2.2	0

<sup>1</sup> $T_m$  values are given in °C. <sup>2</sup> $\Delta H$  values are expressed in kcal/mol.  $T_m$  values for DPPC in the presence of 200-500  $\mu\text{M}$  DNM were 41.1-41.4°C, and  $\Delta H$  values were 10.6-10.9 kcal/mol. 2 mM DPPC was always used. OA or CHS to DPPC ratios (mol:mol) are indicated below the corresponding molar concentration.

TABLE 2

OA on POPE thermodynamic parameters

OA ( $\mu\text{M}$ )	0	10	20	50	100	200	500
	0	1:200	1:100	1:40	1:20	1:10	1:4
$T_m$	25.9	26.1	26.0	25.8	25.3	24.1	22.7
$\Delta H$	5.9	6.4	6.4	5.9	5.1	5.9	6.2
$T_h$	71.0	72.2	66.1	64.3	64.9	-	-
$\Delta H_h$	0.61	0.49	0.41	0.31	0.17	-	-

$S \leftrightarrow L$  ( $T_m$ ) and  $L \leftrightarrow H$  ( $T_h$ ) transition temperatures are given in  $^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The corresponding enthalpies ( $\Delta H$  and  $\Delta H_h$ , respectively) are given in kcal/mol. Effects of DNM on POPE and OA on bovine brain PE were also measured (see text). DNM effects on  $L \leftrightarrow H_{II}$  transition were described elsewhere (Trichopoulou et al., 1995). 2 mM POPE was always used. OA to POPE ratio (mol:mol) is indicated below the corresponding molar concentration.

TABLE 3

Binding parameters for OA-POPE interaction

	$n_1$	$K_{a1}$	$H_1$	$n_2$	$K_{a2}$	$H_2$	$n_t$
<b>L phase</b>	1.03±0.08	786±49	413±16	0.75±0.05	122±8	-1180±58	1.78±0.08
<b>H<sub>II</sub> phase</b>	1.06±0.11	3100±289**	159±9**	1.66±0.09**	124±10	-2170±164**	2.72±0.10*

Binding of OA (70  $\mu$ M to 4 mM) to POPE (2 mM) liposomes was measured by isothermal titration calorimetry, where  $n_i$  are binding site stoichiometry values (mol OA:mol POPE),  $K_{ai}$  ( $M^{-1}$ ) association binding constants and  $H_i$  (cal/mol) reaction enthalpies. The overall OA binding corresponds to  $n_t$  values. Results are means of 3 independent experiments. \* $p$ <0.05; \*\* $p$ <0.01.

Endothermic ↑

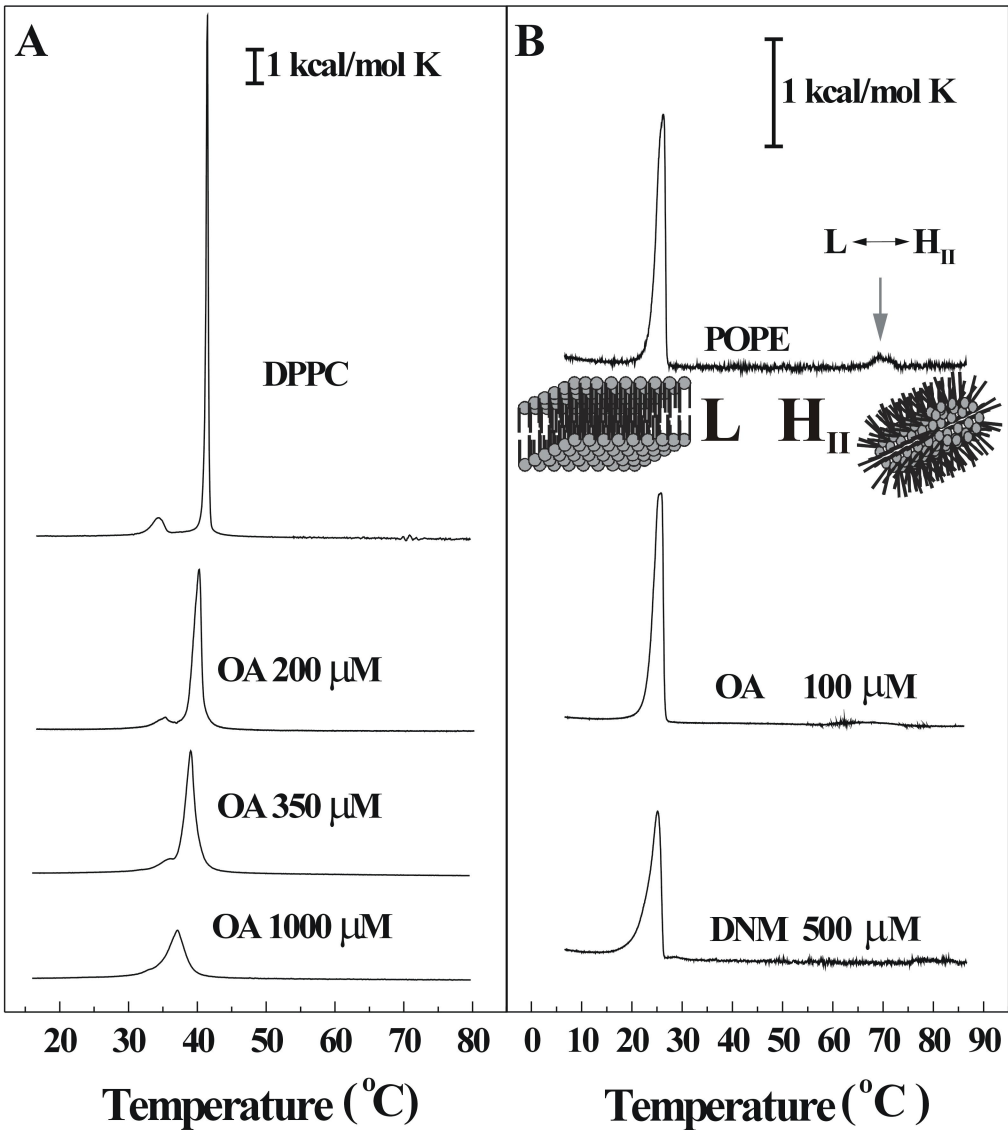


Figure 1



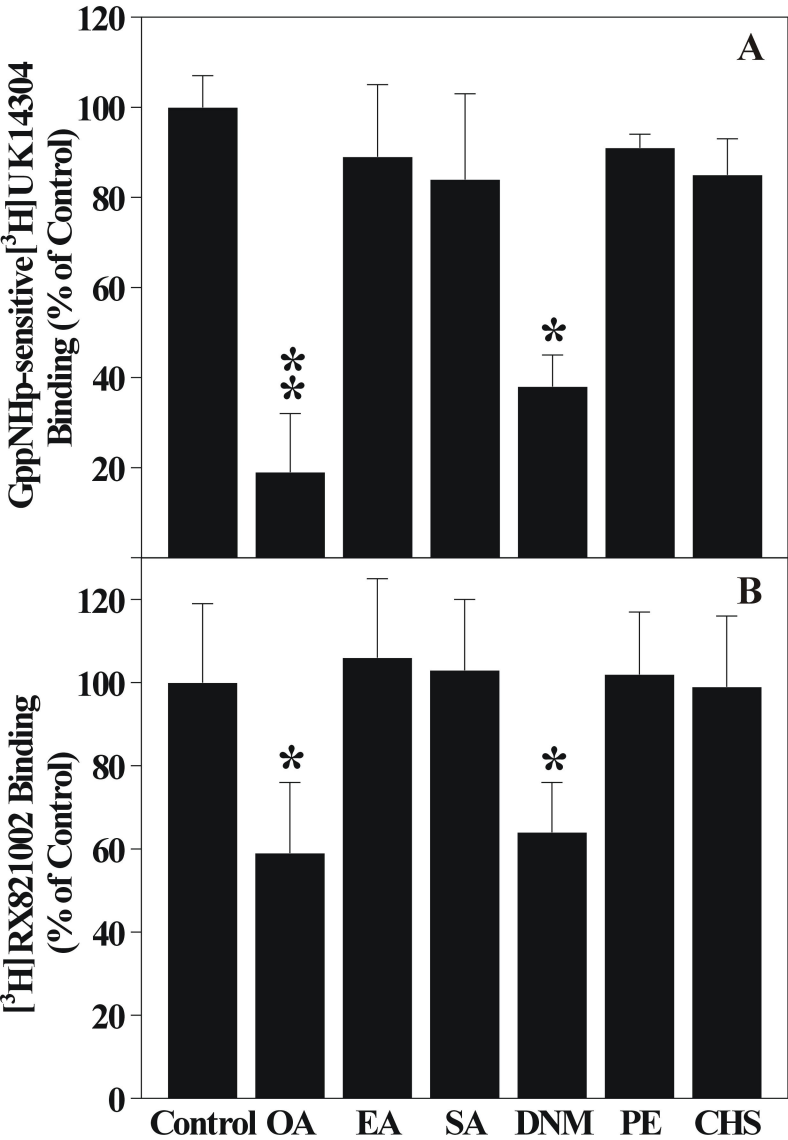
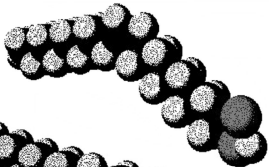
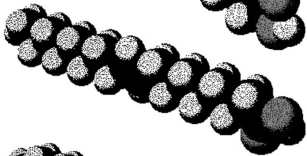


Figure 2

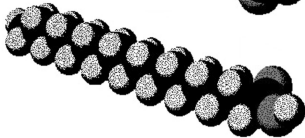
OA

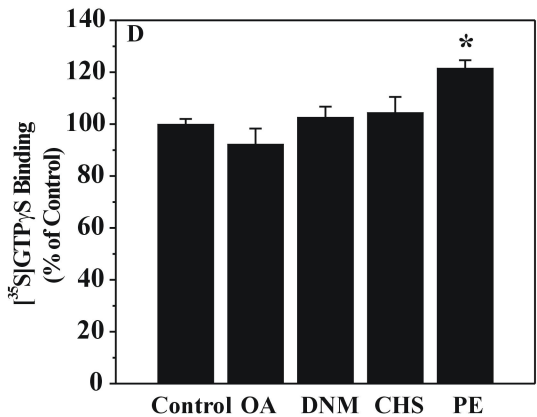
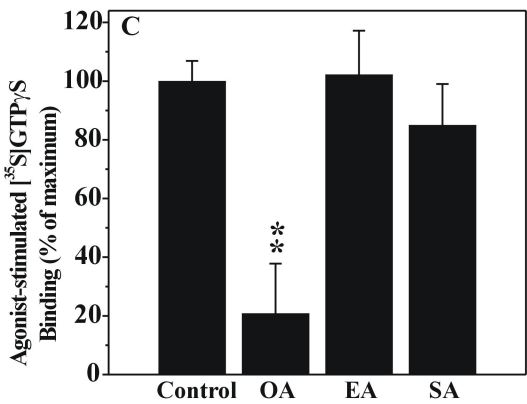
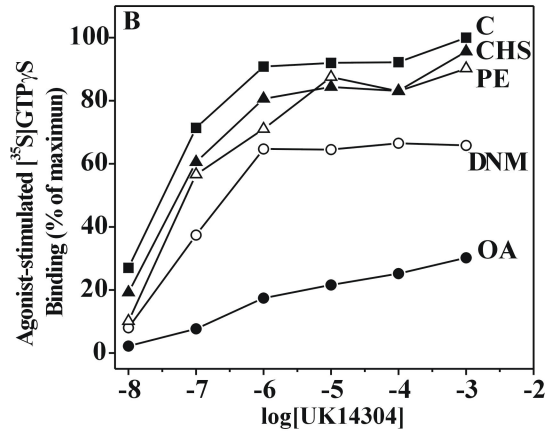
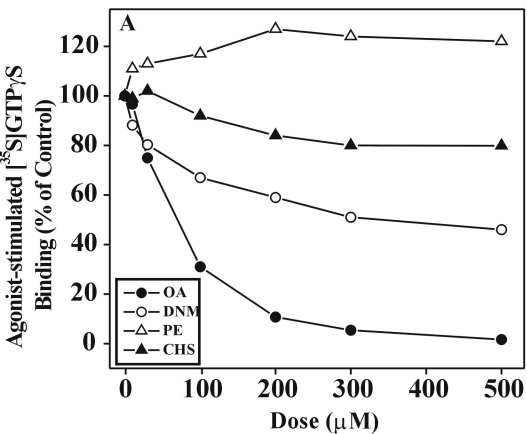


EA



SA





**Figure 4**

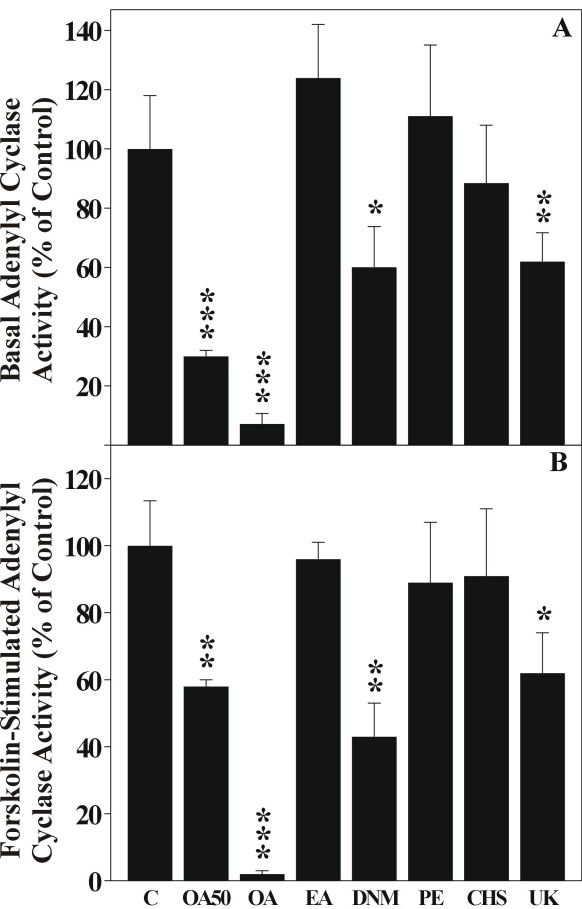


Figure 5