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### **C-terminal fragments inhibit amyloid $\beta$ -protein oligomerization and neurotoxicity**

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*Abstract:* Self-association of amyloid  $\beta$ -protein ( $A\beta$ ) into toxic oligomers is a seminal event in Alzheimer's disease (AD).  $A\beta$  exists in two predominant forms,  $A\beta_{40}$  and  $A\beta_{42}$ . The oligomers formed by  $A\beta_{42}$  are significantly more toxic than those formed by  $A\beta_{40}$ . Previously, it was shown that the C-terminus of  $A\beta_{42}$  is critical for the formation of higher order oligomers. We hypothesized that molecules with a high affinity for the C-terminus of  $A\beta_{42}$  may inhibit  $A\beta_{42}$ -induced neurotoxicity. We prepared a series of  $A\beta(x-42)$  C-terminal fragments (CTFs) and tested their ability to inhibit  $A\beta_{42}$  oligomerization and neurotoxicity. The formation of neurotoxic  $A\beta_{42}$  hexamers was attenuated by CTFs and correlated roughly with peptide length.  $A\beta(29-42)$  inhibited hexamer formation at submicromolar concentrations. Surprisingly, inhibition of toxicity did not correlate with inhibition of oligomerization.  $A\beta(31-42)$  was the strongest inhibitor of toxicity and significant inhibition was found for  $A\beta(39-42)$ .  $A\beta(31-42)$  inhibited  $A\beta_{42}$  induced neurotoxicity completely and fully rescued cells from  $A\beta_{42}$ -induced inhibition of mini excitatory postsynaptic currents. Additionally, dynamic light scattering revealed that  $A\beta(31-42)$  significantly decreased the rate of  $A\beta_{42}$  aggregation. The ability of both short and long CTFs to inhibit  $A\beta_{42}$  toxicity suggests the existence of two classes of CTFs that act through different mechanisms. Preliminary data suggest that  $A\beta(31-42)$  interacts with  $A\beta_{42}$  to form large heterooligomers that precipitate out of solution, whereas,  $A\beta(39-42)$  may interact with the N-terminus of  $A\beta_{42}$  modifying the biological properties of the oligomers.

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