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(54) **COAGULATION AND FIBRINOLYTIC
CASCADES MODULATOR**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A thromboplastin reagent comprises (i) TF, (ii) a phospholipid, and (iii) a polyP TFPI blocker.

14 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets

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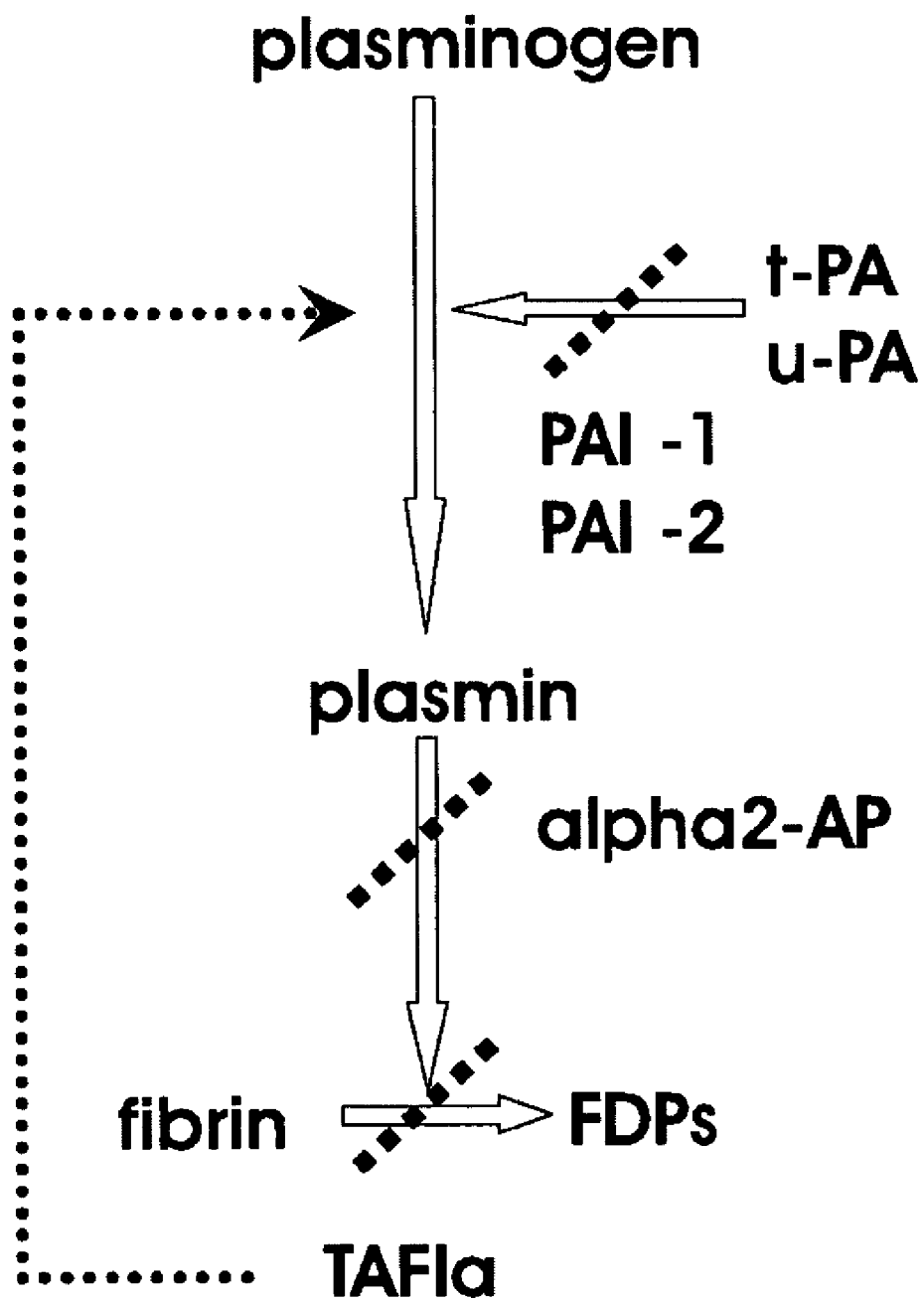


Fig. 1

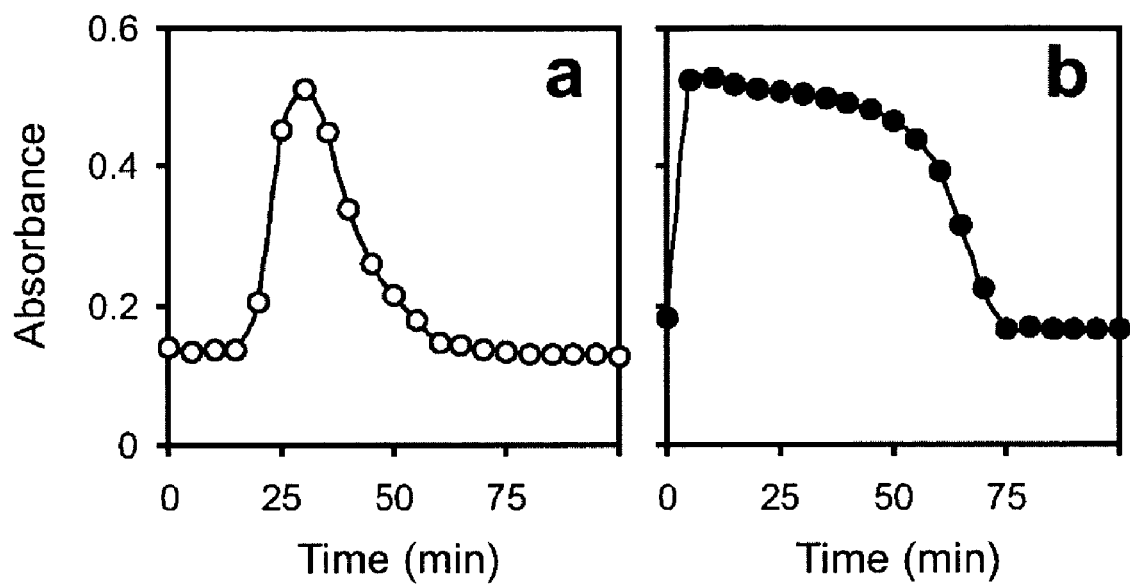


Fig. 2

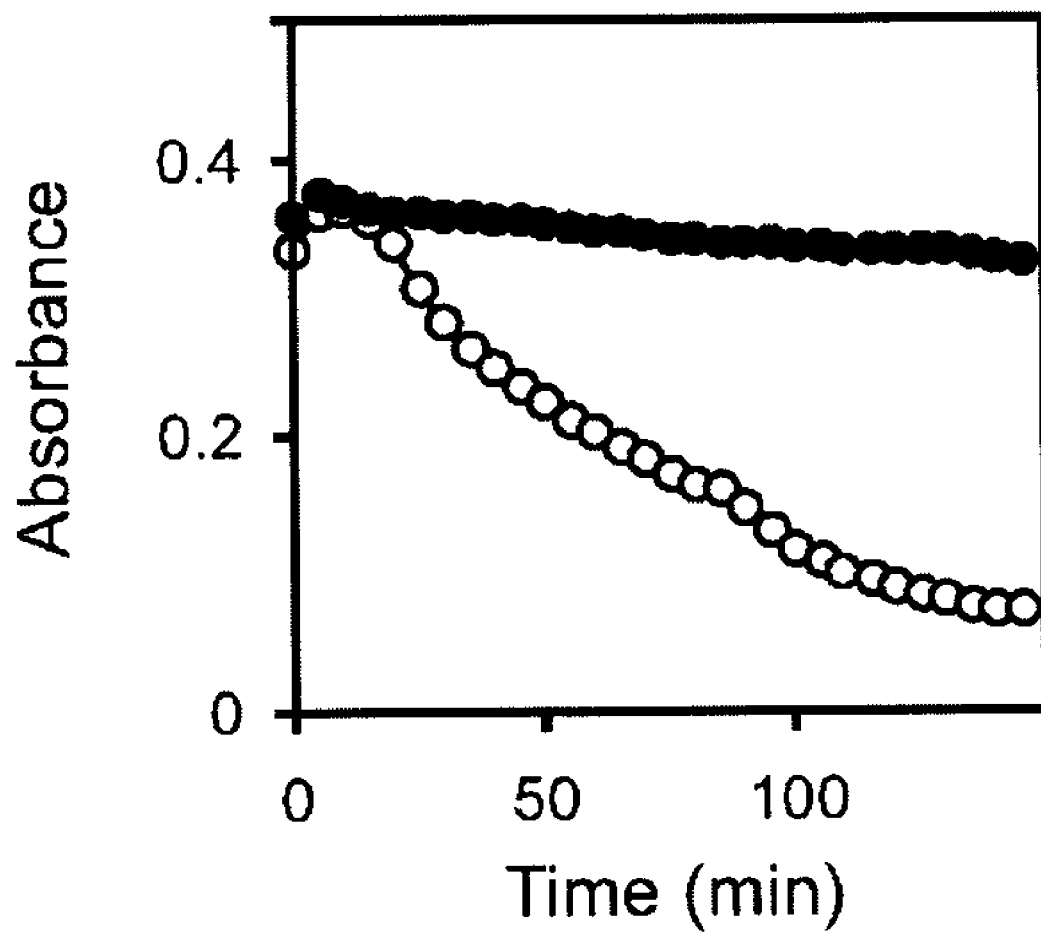


Fig. 3

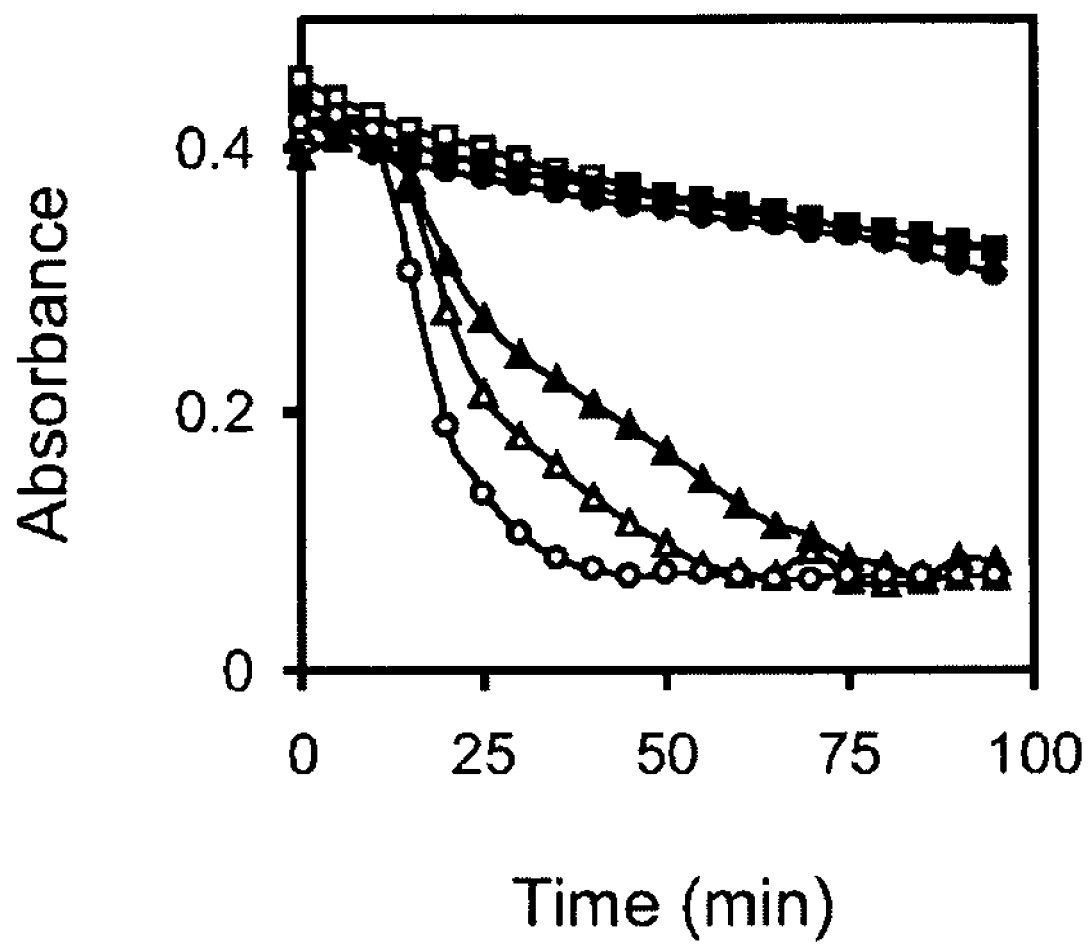


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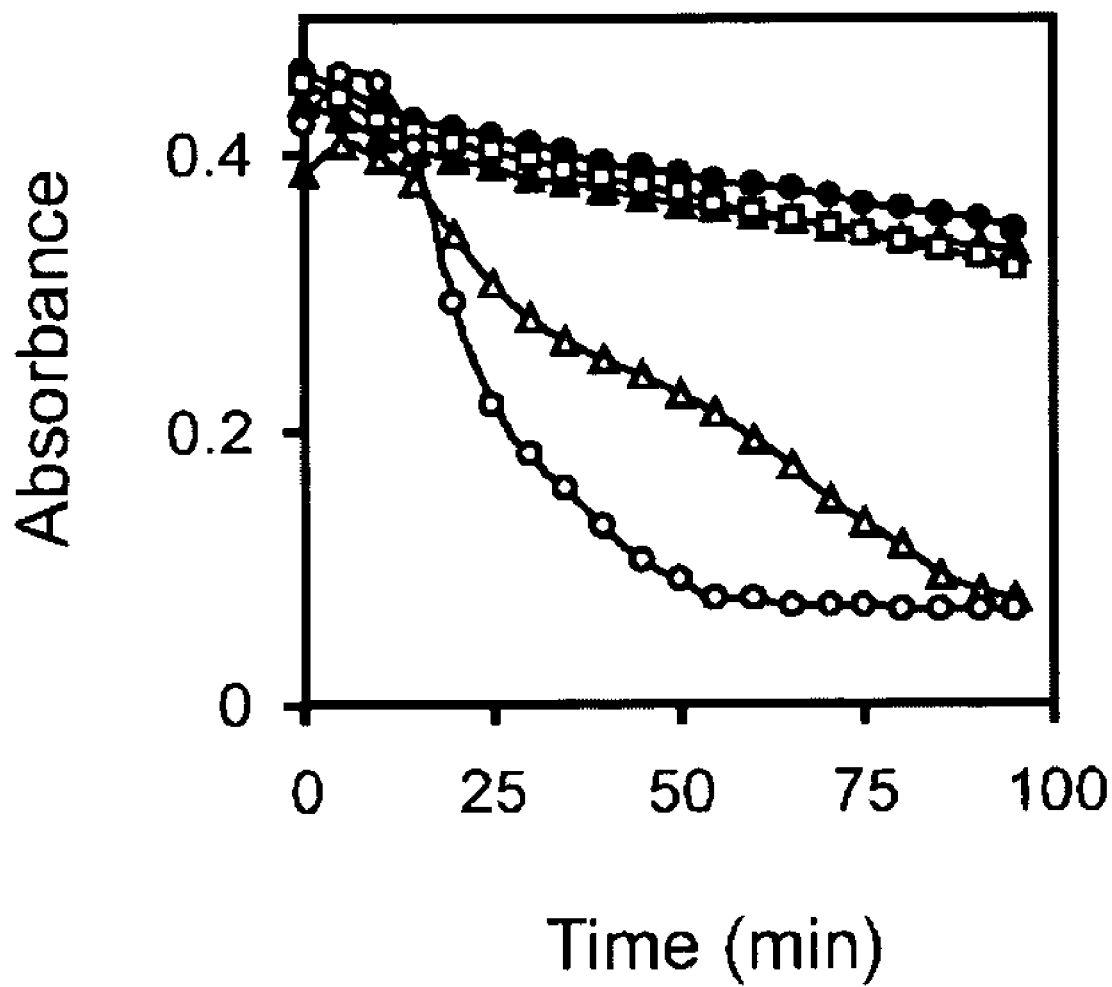


Fig. 5

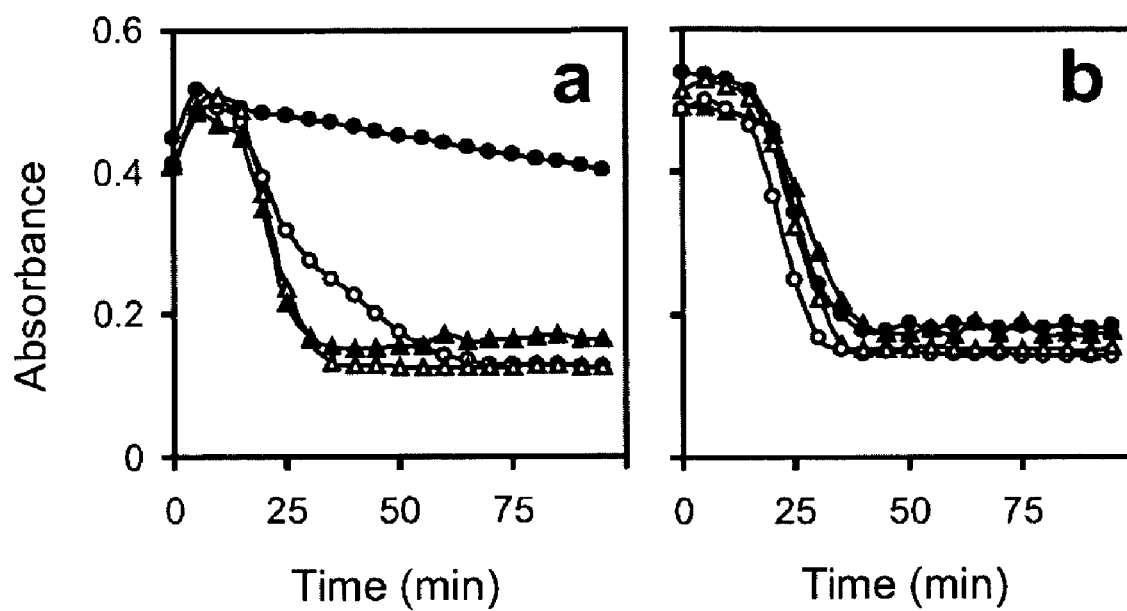


Fig. 6

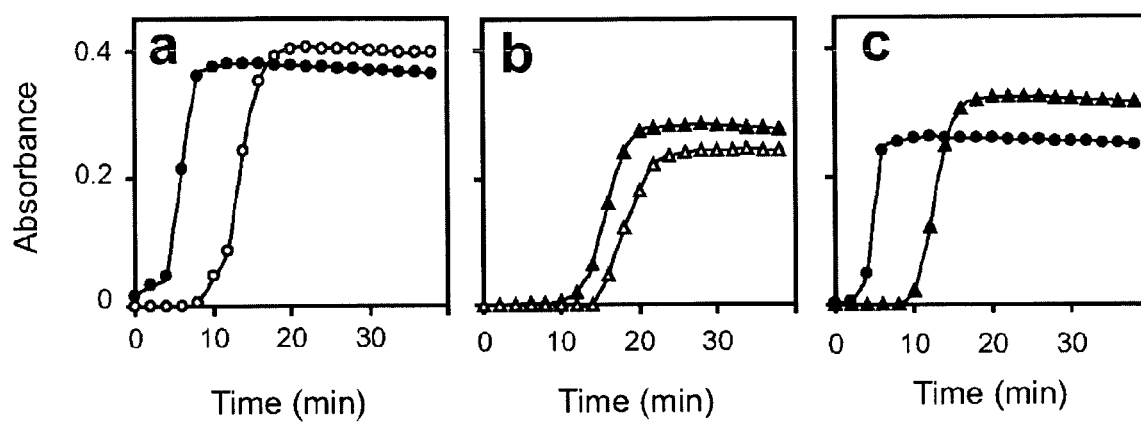


Fig. 7

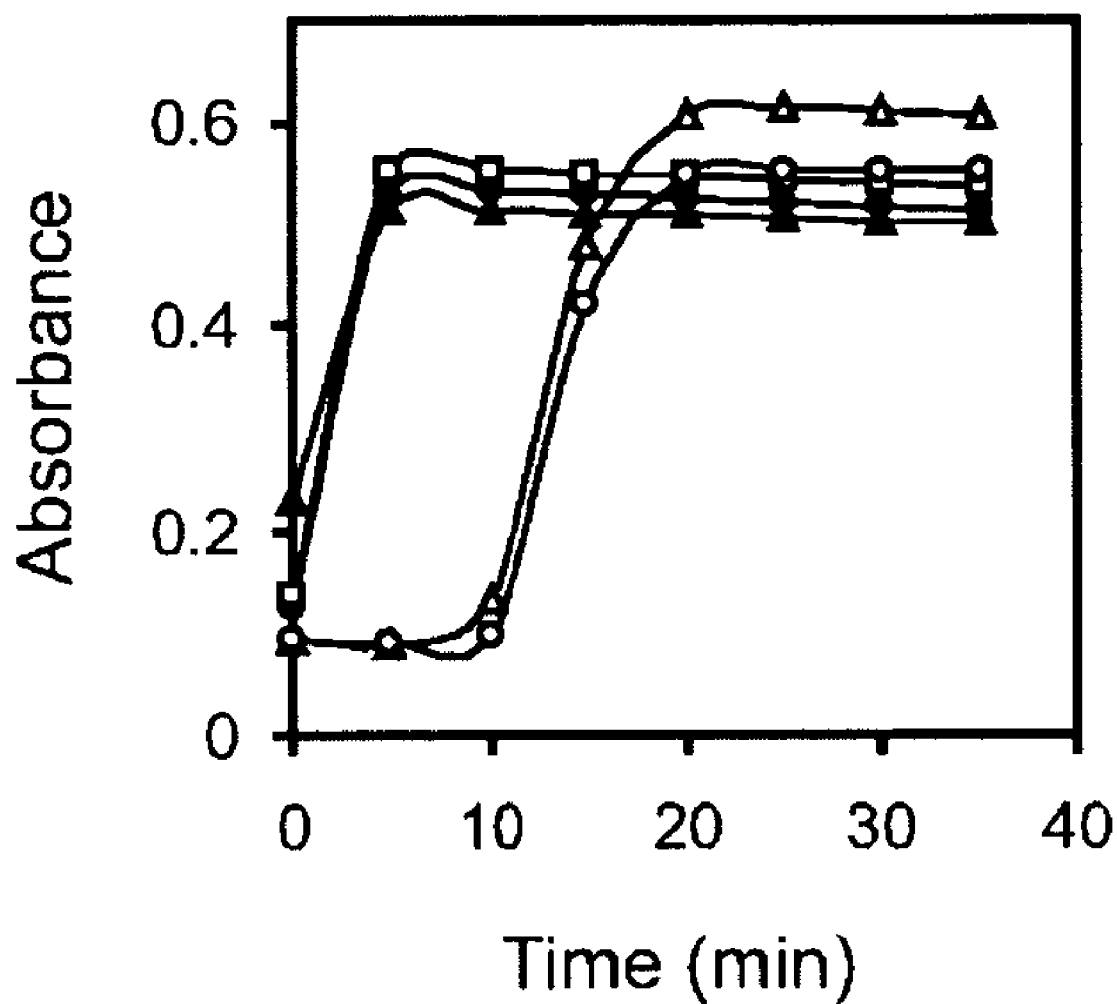


Fig. 8

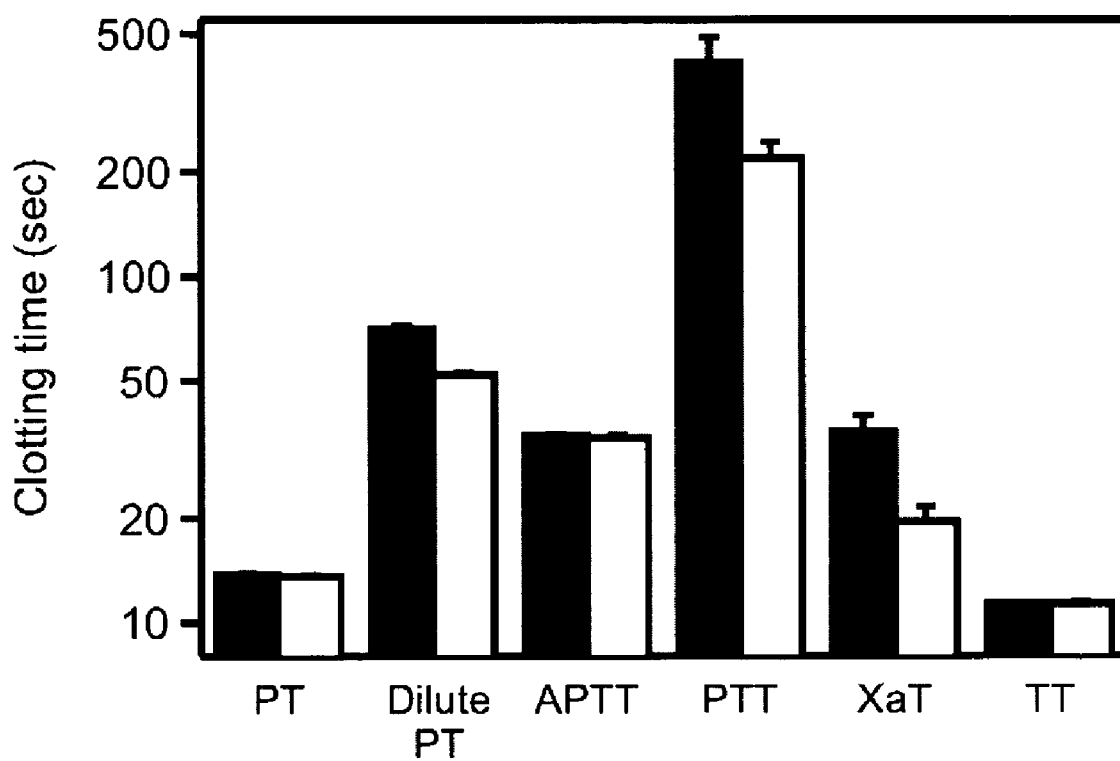


Fig. 9

Fig. 10

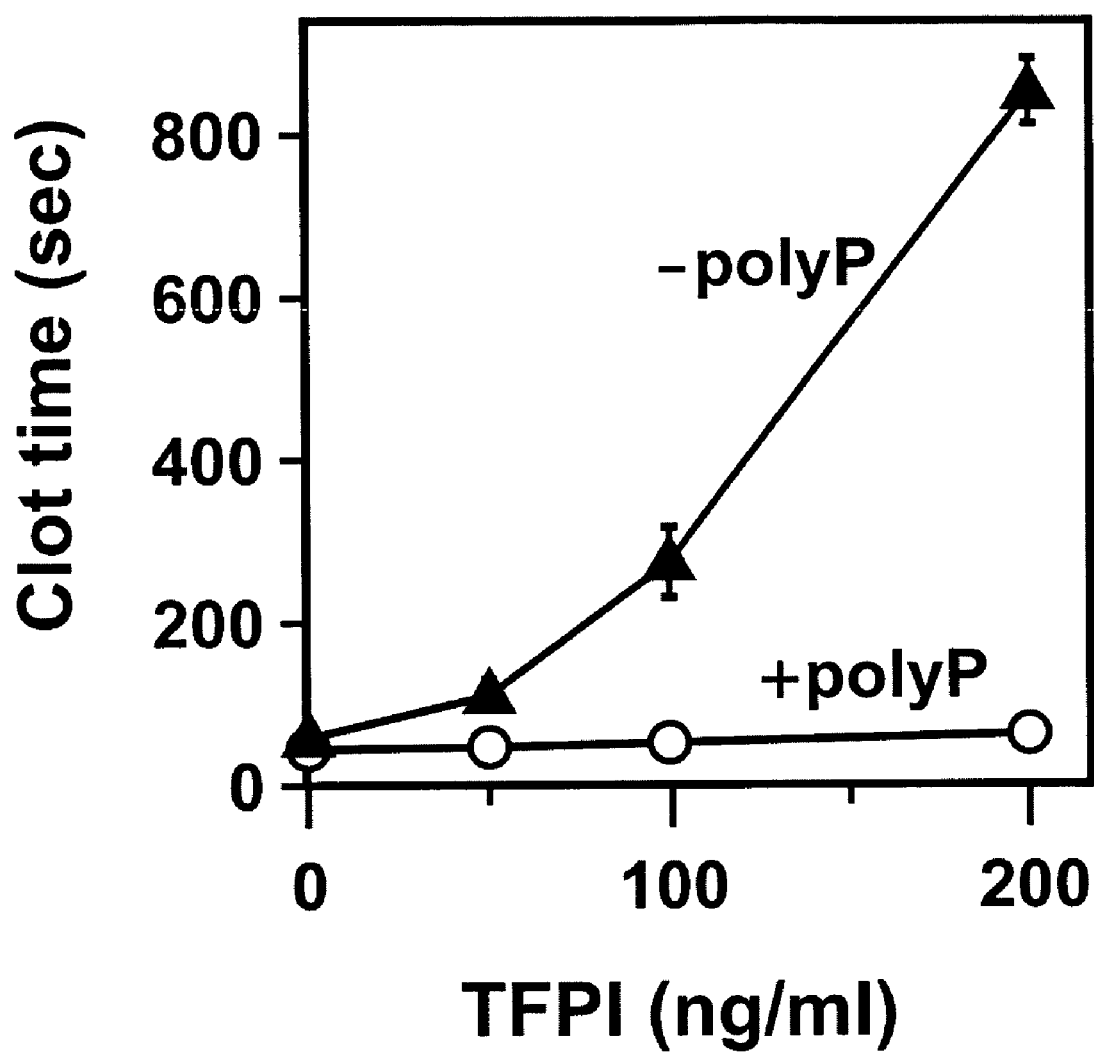


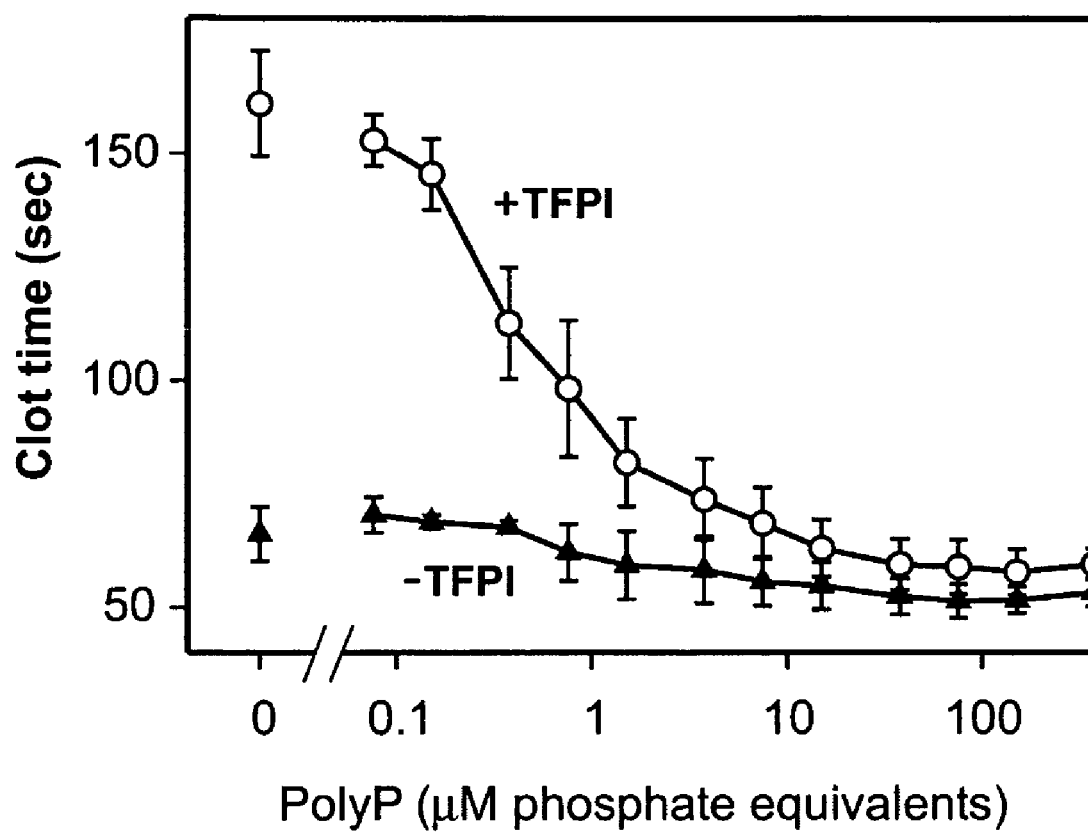
Fig. 11

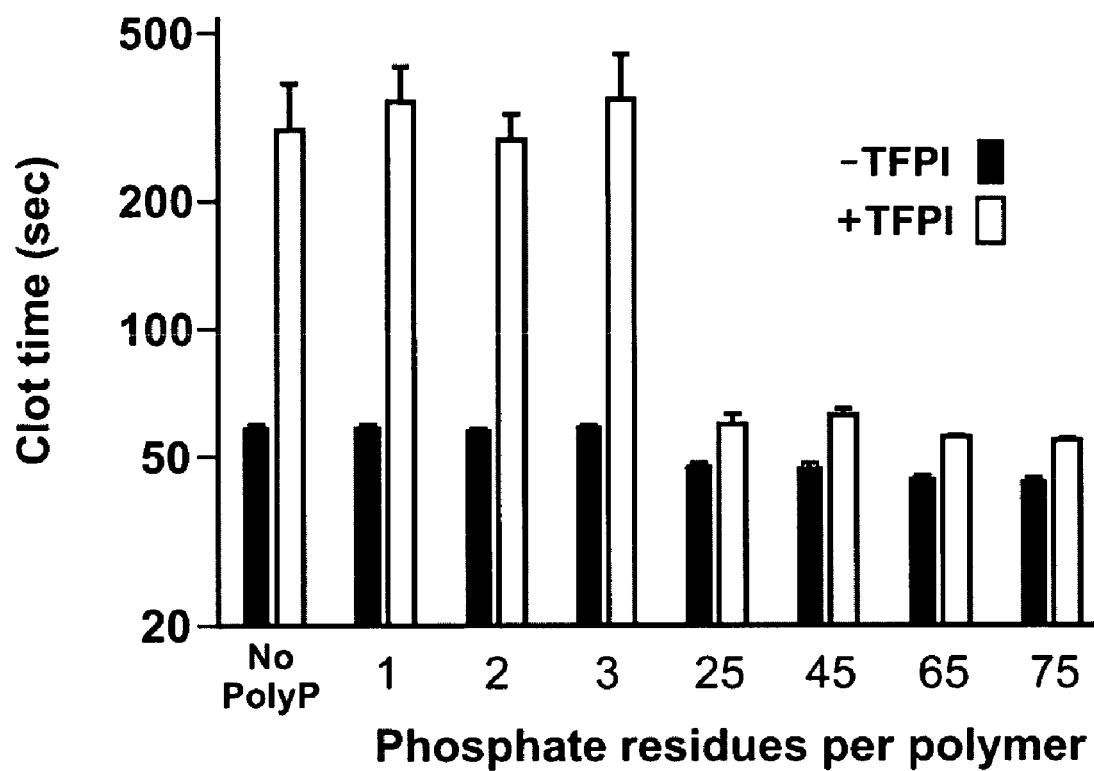
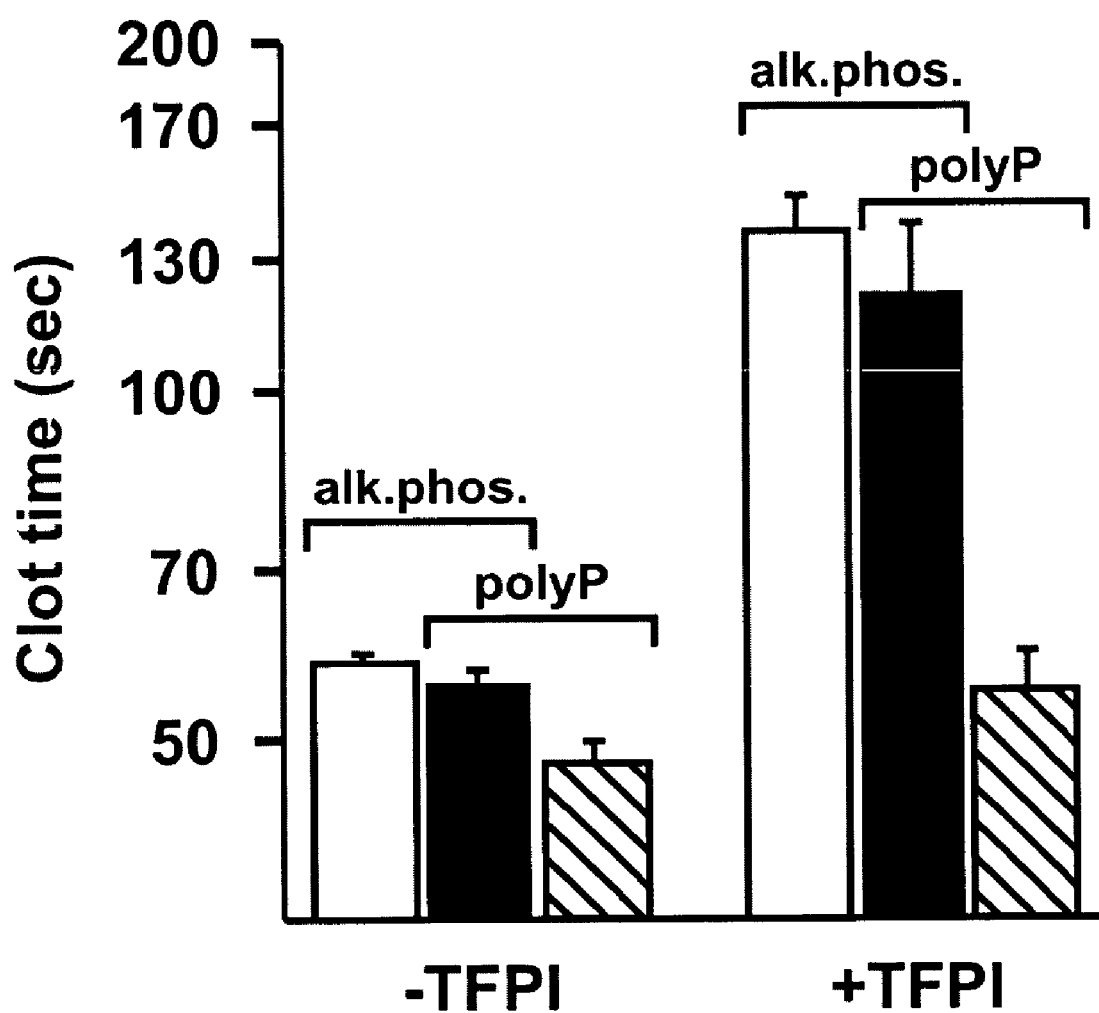
Fig. 12

Fig. 13

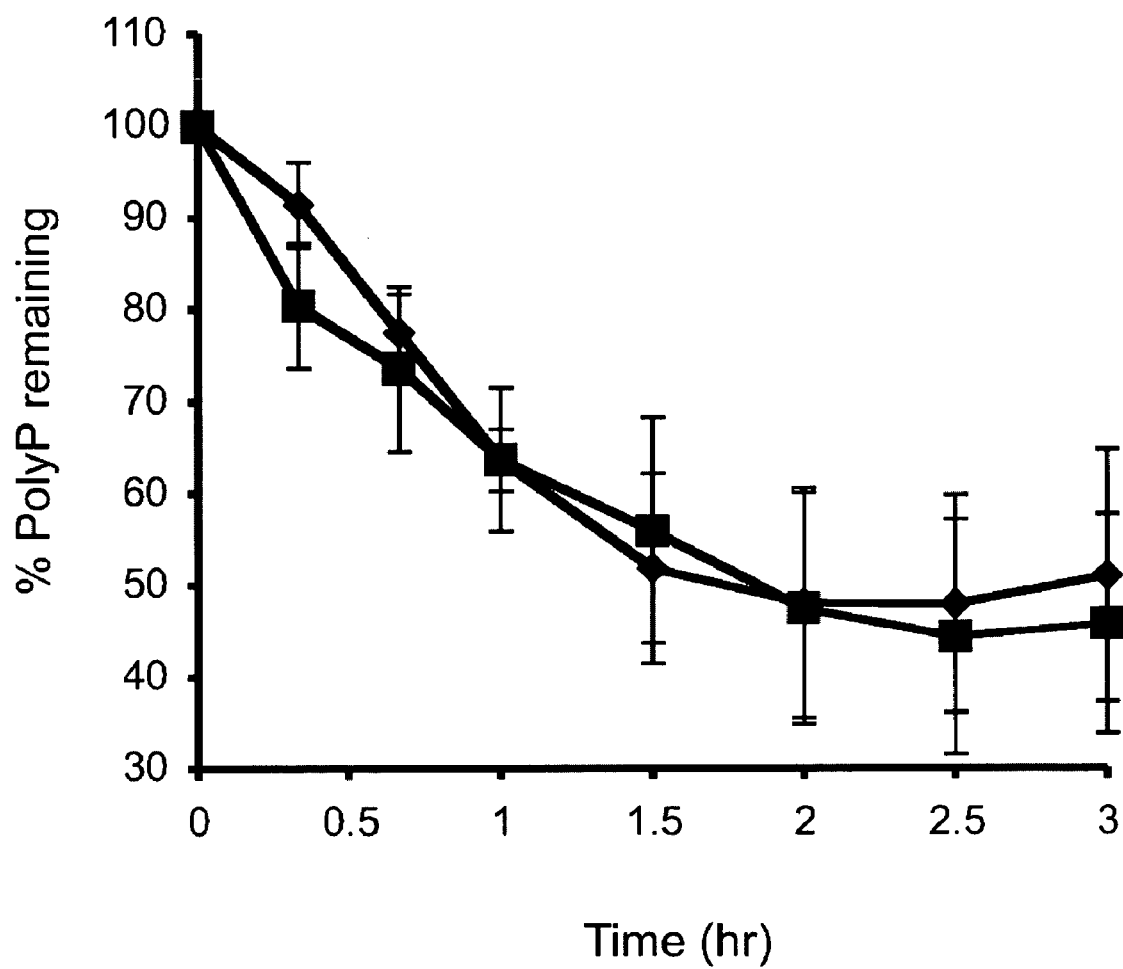


Fig. 14

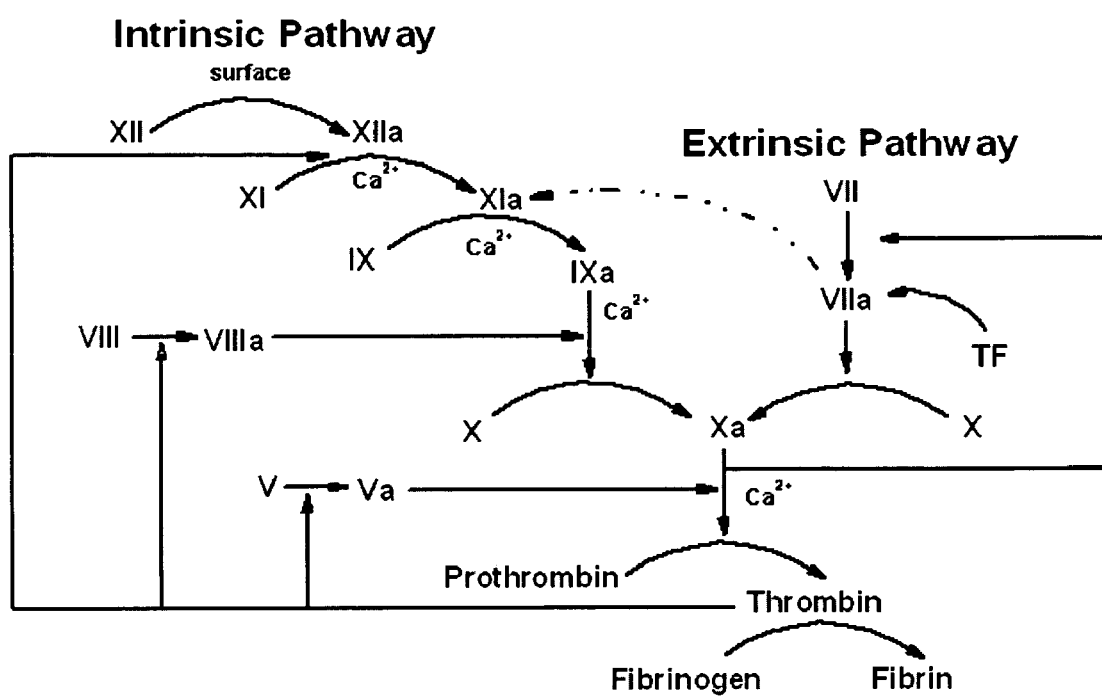


Fig. 15

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COAGULATION AND FIBRINOLYTIC CASCADES MODULATOR

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/658,776 entitled "COAGULATION AND FIBRINOLYTIC CASCADES MODULATOR" filed 4 Mar. 2005, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

This application was funded in part under the following research grants and contracts: NIH (NHLBI and NIAID) Grant Nos. P50 HL45402, R01 HL47014, and R01 AI23259. The U.S. Government may have rights in this invention.

BACKGROUND

A schematic of the clotting cascades is shown in FIG. 15. In the figure the various clotting factors are indicated by their Roman numeral (i.e., factor VII is indicated by VII). The intrinsic cascade (also referred to as the contact pathway of blood coagulation) is initiated when contact is made between blood and certain artificial surfaces. The extrinsic pathway (also referred to as the tissue factor pathway of blood coagulation) is initiated upon vascular injury which leads to exposure of tissue factor (TF) (also identified as factor III). The dotted arrow represents a point of cross-over between the extrinsic and intrinsic pathways. The two pathways converge at the activation of factor X to Xa. Factor Xa has a role in the further activation of factor VII to VIIa. Active factor Xa hydrolyzes and activates prothrombin to thrombin. Thrombin can then activate factors XI, VII and V furthering the cascade. Ultimately, the role of thrombin is to convert fibrinogen to fibrin, which forms clots.

The fibrinolytic system is responsible for the breakdown of fibrin clots through a series of highly regulated enzymatic reactions. In addition to their role in blood hemostasis, the components of the fibrinolytic system have also been implicated in extracellular matrix degradation and cell migration during inflammation, tumor invasion, tissue repair and angiogenesis (reviewed by [4]). A schematic representation of the proteins and interactions involved in fibrinolysis is shown in FIG. 1. Two main phases are involved: plasminogen activation and subsequent fibrin degradation. Plasminogen activation occurs by the action of either of two serine proteases, tissue-type plasminogen activator (tPA) or urokinase-type plasminogen activator (uPA). The enzymatic activities of these plasminogen activators are opposed by the plasminogen activator inhibitor, PAI-1, a member of the serpin (serine protease inhibitor) superfamily. The product of plasminogen activation is the serine protease, plasmin, whose activity is regulated by another serpin, alpha2-antiplasmin (alpha2-AP). Plasmin proteolytically degrades fibrin into soluble fibrin degradation products (FDPs). Recently, a carboxypeptidase inhibitor of fibrinolysis has been described [5]. This inhibitor serves as a link between coagulation and fibrinolysis, as its main physiological activator is thrombin (especially, thrombin bound to thrombomodulin). For this reason, the molecule is termed Thrombin Activatable Fibrinolysis Inhibitor (TAFI). It should be noted that this inhibitor has also been referred to as carboxypeptidase U, carboxypeptidase R, and plasma carboxypeptidase B, since it was discovered by several groups simultaneously. TAFI circulates as a procarbox-

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ypeptidase, which is converted to the active carboxypeptidase enzyme (TAFIa) by limited proteolysis.

Tissue factor pathway inhibitor (TFPI) is one of the physiologically important coagulation inhibitors present in blood. When blood coagulation is initiated, TFPI binds very tightly to the active site of coagulation factor Xa (FXa) and inhibits its enzymatic activity. The inhibited TFPI:FXa complex can then bind to the complex of factor VIIa (FVIIa) and tissue factor (TF), resulting in a fully inhibited tetrameolecular complex (TF:FVIIa:TFPI:FXa). This effectively shuts down further initiation of blood clotting, which is thought to be important in limiting the size of blood clots following injury. In vivo, only a small amount of TFPI circulates in the plasma as free TFPI [24]. (There is another pool of TFPI in plasma that is covalently bound to lipoprotein particles, but it is essentially inactive.) In healthy normal persons, the majority of active TFPI is bound to the endothelial cell surface or is present in platelets [24].

As with other clotting proteins, the plasma levels of TFPI can vary from individual to individual. Normal variation in TFPI levels generally has a limited impact on routine clotting assays for two reasons. First, most normal plasma samples contain fairly low levels of active TFPI (1-20 ng/ml). Second, the influence of natural coagulation inhibitors like TFPI on plasma clotting times is lessened when clotting times are short.

Since routine screening tests for global coagulation function (such as the Prothrombin Time (PT) test) are generally designed to clot very rapidly (the range of normal clotting times in the PT assay is typically 10 to 15 seconds), these tests are only minimally influenced by the normal variation in TFPI levels. However, the influence of TFPI on clotting time in vitro can become significant when the plasma sample contains an unusually high level of TFPI, when other deficiencies in clotting function prolong the clot time and allow TFPI to have a larger influence, or in specialized clotting assays.

Patients with thrombotic episodes are typically treated with anticoagulants. Often, these patients are treated initially with heparin by injection, then gradually switched over to oral anticoagulant therapy (coumadin) for long-term control. The anticoagulant status of patients being treated with coumadin is usually monitored with the PT assay, whose results are used to adjust the coumadin dosage. Multiple studies have described the potential variability of PT results during this period of transition between heparin and coumadin therapy. One possible source of interference in clotting assays in samples from patients undergoing heparin therapy is elevated levels of plasma TFPI. This happens because administration of heparin causes release of the pool of endothelial-bound TFPI into the plasma [25]. In patients with increased TFPI activity, prolonged clot times may be misinterpreted as coagulation factor deficiencies or attributed to the effect of oral anticoagulant (coumadin) therapy.

Some studies have demonstrated that elevated levels of plasma TFPI, especially in patients undergoing heparin therapy, can seriously interfere with the proper interpretation of plasma clotting data. This is especially true for the soluble tissue factor-based clotting assay that is used to measuring plasma factor VIIa levels [26,27]. Thus, the anticoagulant effect of elevated TFPI can prolong the observed clotting times in such clotting assays, yielding a falsely depressed measurement of plasma factor VIIa. Inhibitory anti-TFPI antibodies have been successfully used to eliminate interference from elevated levels of TFPI in such assays [26,27]. However, anti-TFPI antibodies are expensive and must be used at high concentrations to completely block TFPI function, which limits their general usefulness. It would therefore

be highly desirable to have a simple and inexpensive method for blocking TFPI anticoagulant function in clotting assays.

The Prothrombin Time (PT) test is widely used to monitor oral anticoagulation therapy by coumarins, as a general screening test for the blood clotting system, and as the basis for specific Factor assays. Clotting times obtained with the PT are primarily dependent on the plasma levels of the vitamin K-dependent coagulation Factors II (prothrombin), VII, and X, and on the levels of two non-vitamin K-dependent proteins, Factor V and fibrinogen. Coumarin treatment antagonizes the vitamin K carboxylase/reductase cycle, thus inhibiting the post-translational conversion of glutamate residues to gamma-carboxyglutamate. Vitamin K-dependent clotting factors contain essential gamma-carboxyglutamate residues in their Gla domains. Patients receiving coumarin therapy will therefore produce undercarboxylated vitamin K-dependent clotting factors with reduced procoagulant activity. This prolongs the PT, chiefly due to depression in the levels of Factors II, VII and X. Successful oral anticoagulant therapy with coumarins requires careful monitoring of the patient's PT in order to achieve an effective level of anticoagulation while minimizing bleeding complications (reviewed by Hirsh et al. [1]).

Polyphosphates have been widely used for many years in a number of commercial applications, including uses in food additives, food processing, and water softeners [1]. Polyphosphates have also been used in dentistry in the treatment of periodontal disease, and polyphosphates have been reported to have antimicrobial activity [1]. Polyphosphates have been used to aid in the refolding of recombinant TFPI [19-21].

Inorganic polyphosphate (polyP) is a ubiquitous polymer formed from phosphate residues linked by high-energy phosphoanhydride bonds. PolyP is found in the environment and has been detected in bacterial, fungal, animal and plant cells, although its presence in human cells has remained less studied [1].

In bacteria as well as in several unicellular eukaryotes, such as trypanosomatid and apicomplexan parasites, the green alga *Chlamydomonas reinhardtii*, and the slime mold *Dictyostelium discoideum*, polyP is accumulated in acidic organelles known as acidocalcisomes where it can reach millimolar or molar levels [2]. It has recently been found that human platelet dense granules are similar to acidocalcisomes in their density, acidity, and ability to accumulate pyrophosphate (PP_i), cations, and polyP [3]. This makes acidocalcisomes the only known class of organelles that has been conserved during evolution from bacteria to humans.

SUMMARY

In a first aspect, the present invention is a thromboplastin reagent, comprising (i) TF, (ii) a phospholipid, and (iii) a polyP TFPI blocker.

In a second aspect, the present invention is a composition for promoting clotting, comprising (i) polyP, and (ii) a pharmaceutical carrier.

In a third aspect, the present invention is a method of stopping or slowing bleeding from a wound, comprising contacting blood from the wound with polyP.

In a fourth aspect, the present invention is a method of blocking TFPI, comprising including polyP in a composition comprising the TFPI.

In a fifth aspect, the present invention is a reagent for a clotting assay, comprising an activator of clotting, and polyP.

DEFINITIONS

V or factor V means coagulation factor V.

Va or factor Va means coagulation factor Va.

VII or factor VII means coagulation factor VII.

VIIa or factor VIIa means coagulation factor VIIa.

X or factor X means coagulation factor X.

Xa or factor Xa means coagulation factor Xa.

VIII or factor VIII means coagulation factor VIII.

VIIIa or factor VIIIa means coagulation factor VIIIa.

IX or factor IX means coagulation factor IX.

IXa or factor IXa means coagulation factor IXa.

XI or factor XI means coagulation factor XI.

XIa or factor XIa means coagulation factor XIa.

XII or factor XII means coagulation factor XII.

XIIa or factor XIIa means coagulation factor XIIa.

tPA means tissue-type plasminogen activator.

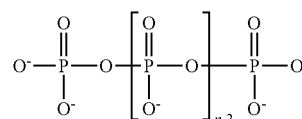
uPA means urokinase-type plasminogen activator.

TAFI means thrombin-activatable fibrinolysis inhibitor (procarboxypeptidase), also known as procarboxypeptidase B, U, or R.

TAFIa means the activated form of TAFI (active carboxypeptidase).

TFPI means tissue factor pathway inhibitor.

PolyP_n means a compound of the following formula:



where the value of n is equal to the number of PO₃ units in the molecule, and n is at least 3. Polyphosphate (polyP) is a generic term for polyP_n, including mixtures, where n of each polyP_n is at least 3. Concentrations of polyphosphate and any polyP_n may be expressed as "phosphate equivalents", which means the concentration of PO₃ moieties (for example, 1 μM polyP₇₅ is the same as 75 μM phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅).

A polyP TFPI blocker is one or more polyphosphates which block the activity of TFPI, as determined by the TFPI blocking test. The TFPI blocking test is a set of PT clotting assays, comparing clotting times using thromboplastin reagents with and without the polyP TFPI blocker added, and with and without TFPI added to the pooled plasma. PT clotting assays are performed in a coagulometer (such as a STart coagulometer, Diagnostica Stago, Parsippany N.J.) by pre-incubating 50 μl of human plasma with 50 μl of the thromboplastin reagent at 37° C. for 120 sec. Clotting is then initiated by adding 50 μl of 25 mM calcium chloride solution that has been pre-warmed to 37° C. The time to clot formation is then measured relative to the point of addition of calcium chloride. TFPI is added to the plasma at a concentration of 50 ng/ml immediately before use. The polyphosphate to be tested is added to the clotting reagent at a concentration 75 μM phosphate equivalents. The thromboplastin reagent contributes one-third of the total volume in the clotting reaction, and therefore the final concentration of the polyphosphate is one-third of its concentration in the thromboplastin reagent.

FVII means any protein that exhibits Factor VII clotting activity of human Factor VII. The Factor VII clotting activity

of a protein is determined by comparing the amount of the protein necessary to give the same clotting time as human Factor VII in the following assay: 50 μ L of citrated Factor VII deficient plasma, together with human Factor VII or the protein, is incubated in a cuvette for 2 min at 37° C., after which clotting is initiated by adding 100 μ L pre-warmed calcium-containing thromboplastin reagent, and the time to clot formation is measured with a coagulometer, such as an ST4 coagulometer (Diagnostica Stago, Parsippany, N.J.). The amount of human Factor VII and the type of thromboplastin reagent are preferably selected to give a clotting time of 10-15 seconds. The molar amount of human Factor VII that achieves a given clotting time is divided by the molar amount of the protein that gives the same clotting time, which gives the relative Factor VII clotting activity of the protein. Preferably, FVII has at least 1% of the clotting activity of human Factor VII. FVII includes, for example, natural human Factor VII, natural human Factor VIIa, recombinant human Factor VII [22] and Vila, and other mammalian Factor VII and Vila (such as natural rabbit Factor VII and natural rabbit Factor VIIa).

"Factor VIIa equivalents" means that the amount of FVII present has the same clotting activity as the specified amount of natural human Factor VIIa. For example, "10 ng Factor VIIa equivalents of FVII" means that the amount of FVII present has the same clotting activity as 10 ng of natural human Factor VIIa.

rTF means any recombinant tissue factor which is not identical to natural mammalian tissue factor. This includes recombinant tissue factor produced in bacteria (which differs from natural mammalian tissue factor in molecular weight since it does not have attached carbohydrate), and recombinant tissue factor produced in insect cells (baculovirus) (which differs from natural mammalian tissue factor in molecular weight, since certain problematic domains have been removed).

TF means any tissue factor protein, such as rTF and natural mammalian tissue factors.

Thromboplastin reagent is any reagent which contains TF and that when 50 μ L of the reagent is mixed with 50 μ L plasma pooled from normal individuals and incubated for 120 sec at 37° C., then 50 μ L pre-warmed 25 mM CaCl₂ solution is added, will result in clotting within 1 minute. Optionally, the thromboplastin reagent may contain calcium ion, in which case no CaCl₂ solution is added.

Dilute PT assay is a PT assay performed using a thromboplastin reagent that has been diluted with a suitable buffer (dilute thromboplastin) to yield prolonged clotting times in a PT assay.

Synthetic thromboplastin reagent is any thromboplastin reagent that contains rTF. Alternatively, synthetic thromboplastin reagent contains TF and does not contain any actin, hexokinase, and alkaline phosphatase.

"Prothrombin time ratio" (PTR) for a "1% Factor" of a thromboplastin reagent is determined by dividing the PT for a plasma containing 1% of the normal level of the specified factor by the PT for pooled normal plasma (100% factor) obtained with the thromboplastin reagent. For example, the "prothrombin time ratio for 1% Factor VII" of a thromboplastin reagent is determined by dividing the PT for a plasma containing 1% of the normal level of Factor VII by the PT for pooled normal plasma (100% factor) obtained with the thromboplastin reagent.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates the fibrinolytic cascade.

FIGS. 2a and 2b are graphs showing that polyP accelerates plasma clotting and delays fibrinolysis. FIG. 2a: Pooled normal plasma was supplemented with 1.4 nM uPA and clotting was initiated by adding calcium chloride; half-maximal absorbance (light scattering), indicative of clot formation, was reached by 25 min and the time to 50% clot lysis was 43 min. FIG. 2b: Plasma clot/lysis reaction as in FIG. 2a, but with the addition of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅. Results in both panels are the mean of duplicate wells. These data are a representative example of 10 experiments.

FIG. 3 is a graph showing that polyP inhibits fibrinolysis. Pooled normal plasma was supplemented with 1.4 nM uPA and clotting was initiated by adding a mixture of calcium chloride and thrombin. In the absence of polyP (open symbols), plasma clotted rapidly and then lysed over the next 100 min. In the presence of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅ (closed symbols), plasma also clotted rapidly but failed to lyse over the next 150 min. Results are the mean of duplicate wells. These data are a representative example of 10 experiments.

FIG. 4 is a graph showing that inhibition of fibrinolysis by polyP is concentration-dependent. Pooled normal plasma was supplemented with 1.4 nM uPA and clotting was initiated by adding a mixture of calcium chloride and thrombin. PolyP₇₅ was included at the following concentrations: 0 nM phosphate equivalents (open circles); 750 nM phosphate equivalents (open triangles); 3750 nM phosphate equivalents (filled triangles); 7.5 μ M phosphate equivalents (open squares); 37.5 μ M phosphate equivalents (filled squares); and 75 μ M phosphate equivalents (filled circles). Results are the mean of duplicate wells. These data are a representative example of 3 experiments.

FIG. 5 is a graph showing that the antifibrinolytic effect of polyP depends upon chain length. Pooled normal plasma was supplemented with 1.4 nM uPA and clotting was initiated by adding a mixture of calcium chloride and thrombin (open circles: no polyP). PolyP of different chain lengths was included at 75 μ M phosphate equivalents: polyP₂₅ (open triangles); polyP₄₅ (filled triangles); polyP₆₅ (open squares) and polyP₇₅ (filled circles). Results are the mean of duplicate wells. These data are a representative example of 3 experiments.

FIGS. 6a and 6b are graphs showing that attenuation of fibrinolysis by polyP is TAFI-dependent. FIG. 6a: Pooled normal plasma was supplemented with 1.4 nM uPA and clotting was initiated by adding a mixture of calcium chloride and thrombin. Clot lysis was complete by about 50 min in the absence of polyP (open circles), but clot lysis was severely attenuated in the presence of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅ (filled circles). Addition of 6.25 μ M CPI accelerated clot lysis equally well in the absence (open triangles) and the presence of polyP₇₅ (filled triangles). FIG. 6b: TAFI-deficient plasma was supplemented with 1.4 nM uPA and clotting was initiated by adding a mixture of calcium chloride and thrombin. Rapid clot lysis was observed under all conditions tested: uPA only (open circles); 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅ but no CPI (filled circles); 6.25 μ M CPI but no polyP (open triangles); and 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅ plus 6.25 μ M CPI (filled triangles). Results in both panels are the mean of duplicate wells. These data are a representative example of 5 experiments.

FIGS. 7a, 7b and 7c are graphs showing that activation of coagulation factor XII by the contact pathway is enhanced by polyP. FIG. 7a: the effect of polyP₇₅ on clotting of pooled

normal plasma. Normal plasma was incubated in the well of a polystyrene 96-well plate for 2 min at ambient temperature in the absence (open circles) or presence (filled circles) of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅. Clotting was then induced by addition of calcium chloride and absorbance at 405 nm was measured at 37° C., timed from addition of calcium chloride. FIG. 7b: the effect of polyP₇₅ on clotting of factor XII-deficient plasma. Clotting reactions were carried out as in FIG. 7a, except that factor XII-deficient plasma was employed in place of pooled normal plasma. The times to clot formation (>10 min) were significantly longer than with pooled normal plasma, both in the absence of polyP (open triangles) and in the presence of polyP₇₅ (filled triangles). FIG. 7c: order of addition affects the ability of polyP₇₅ to stimulate clotting. Clotting reactions were performed as in FIG. 7a, except that the initial 2 min incubation of plasma with polyP₇₅ at ambient temperature was performed with a 40 μ l aliquot of either factor XII-deficient or normal plasma. At the end of the 2 min incubation period, a second 40 μ l aliquot of plasma was added, immediately after which clotting was initiated with calcium chloride. When the first incubation was with normal plasma, the second aliquot was with factor XII-deficient plasma, and vice versa. When factor XII-deficient plasma was pre-incubated with polyP₇₅ for 2 min and then normal plasma was added, clot times were longer than 10 min (filled triangles). When normal plasma was pre-incubated with polyP₇₅ for 2 min and then factor XII-deficient plasma was added, clot times were less than 5 min (filled circles). Results in all three panels are the mean of duplicate wells. These data are a representative example of 3 experiments.

FIG. 8 is a graph showing that polyP polymers of greater than 25-phosphates are required to enhance factor XII activation. Pooled normal plasma was incubated for 2 min at room temperature in the absence (open circles) or presence of polyP, after which clotting was initiated with calcium chloride. PolyP of different chain lengths was included at a final concentration of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents. PolyP lengths used were: polyP₂₅ (open triangles); polyP₄₅ (filled triangles); polyP₆₅ (open squares); polyP₇₅ (filled circles). Results represent the mean of duplicate wells. These data are a representative example of 3 experiments.

FIG. 9 is a bar graph showing the effect of polyP on various clotting tests. The indicated clotting assays were performed in a coagulometer with pooled normal plasma in the presence (open bars) or absence (filled bars) of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅ added to the clotting reagents. Mean clotting times are depicted (error bars=standard deviation; n=5).

FIG. 10 is a graph showing that polyP abrogates the anticoagulant effect of TFPI. Varying concentrations of TFPI were added to pooled normal plasma and the clotting times were measured using the dilute PT assay in the presence (open circles) or absence (closed triangles) of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents of polyP₇₅ added to the dilute thromboplastin reagent. Mean clotting times are depicted (error bars=standard deviation; n=3).

FIG. 11 is a graph showing that abrogation of the anticoagulant effect of TFPI by polyP is concentration-dependent. Varying concentrations of polyP₇₅ as phosphate equivalents were added to the dilute thromboplastin reagent. Clotting times were measured by the dilute PT assay using pooled normal plasma without added TFPI (closed triangles) or with 100 ng/ml TFPI (open circles). Mean clotting times are depicted (error bars=standard deviation; n=3).

FIG. 12 is a bar graph showing that the ability of polyP to antagonize the anticoagulant effect of TFPI depends upon chain length. Dilute PT assays were performed on pooled

normal plasma samples, some of which contained 200 ng/ml TFPI (open bars) and some of which did not (filled bars).

FIG. 13 is a bar graph showing that phosphatase digestion of polyP eliminates its ability to reverse the anticoagulant effect of TFPI. PolyP₆₅ was incubated at room temperature with or without calf intestinal alkaline phosphatase, and dilute PT clotting times were measured using pooled normal plasma with or without added TFPI. With alkaline phosphatase but no polyP (white bars); with phosphatase and polyP₆₅ (black bars); and with polyP but no alkaline phosphatase (lined bars). Data are mean clotting times (error bars=standard deviation; n=3).

FIG. 14 is a graph showing the stability of polyP in plasma and serum. PolyP₇₅ was incubated in human serum (squares) or heparinized plasma (diamonds), and at different time points aliquots were taken and the remaining polyP was determined.

FIG. 15 is a schematic of the clotting cascades.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Platelets exert strongly procoagulant and antifibrinolytic effects. The anticoagulant effect of platelets has been attributed to the presence of the inhibitors PAI-1 and alpha2-antiplasmin in platelet alpha granules. Many lines of evidence suggest that the strongly antifibrinolytic nature of platelets cannot solely be explained by the presence of these inhibitors, however. Recently, polyP was discovered at high concentration in dense granules of human platelets [3]. PolyP in platelet dense granules has a chain length of 70-75 phosphate units and is present in millimolar phosphate equivalent levels. It is released from platelets upon thrombin stimulation together with serotonin and PP_i [3]. This discovery prompted us to hypothesize that release of polyP from activated platelets may serve to regulate blood coagulation and/or fibrinolysis.

The present invention makes use of the discovery that polyP can promote coagulation through both the extrinsic and intrinsic pathways, and also inhibit fibrinolysis. PolyP may be used in compositions to promote clotting, through either or both the extrinsic and intrinsic pathways. Furthermore, addition of polyP to thromboplastin reagents or other clotting reagents may be used to block the effects of TFPI, improving the accuracy of clotting test for patients in the transition from heparin therapy and other anticoagulant therapies.

PolyP contains at least 3 PO₃ moieties. For blocking TFPI and promoting clotting, polyP may be used. Preferably, polyP_n with n of at least 25 may be used, for example n=25-1000, more preferably, n=25-100. For inhibiting fibrinolysis, polyP_n with n greater than 25 is preferred, for example n=26-1000 (including 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44), more preferably n is at least 45, including 45-1000. For promoting clotting via the intrinsic pathway, polyP_n with n greater than 25 is preferred, for example n=26-1000 (including 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44), more preferably n is at least 45, including 45-1000.

In a composition for promoting clotting, the concentration of polyP is preferably at least 1 nM phosphate equivalents, such as 1 nM to 100 mM, more preferably at least 100 nM phosphate equivalents, such as 100 nM to 10 mM, most preferably 7500 nM to 10 mM phosphate equivalents. For compositions to promote clotting which are internalized into a patient, preferably the maximum amount of polyP used in a single dose is 10 μ mol phosphate equivalents per kg body weight. If administered intravenously, preferably the maxi-

mum amount of polyP used in a single dose will result in a plasma concentration in the patient of 75 to 225 μ M phosphate equivalents.

Preferably, the polyP is used together with a phosphatase inhibitor, to slow down the breakdown of polyP.

The polyphosphates to promote clotting and/or prevent fibrinolysis may be administered through oral (such as mouthwashes, tablets and lozenges), parenteral, topical, nasal, aural, rectal (such as suppositories and enemas), etc., routes in the treatment of bleeding. Therapeutic compositions may be formed, to stop bleeding from a wound, by contacting blood from the wound, or by contacting the wound with the composition. The composition may contain the components needed to initiate the intrinsic pathway, the extrinsic pathway, inhibit fibrinolysis, or any combination thereof. The therapeutic composition may be in a variety of forms, depending on the location of the wound: a topical composition, a nasal spray, a suppository, a mouthwash, an injectable composition, or carried in or on a bandage or a wound dressing. Therapeutic compositions are preferably sterile, and may contain preservatives. Therapeutic compositions may be administered in a wide variety of forms including unit dosage forms (tablets, capsules, pre-measured ampoules, pre-measured powder pouches, or any other therapeutic composition intended for a single administration), and may be combined with various pharmaceutical carriers. Such carriers include solid diluents or fillers, sterile aqueous media and various non-toxic organic solvents. As used herein, pharmaceutical carriers includes solid substrates, such as fibers and fabrics used in bandages, wound dressings, and tampons. When suspensions, emulsions or solutions are desired, the polyphosphate may be combined with various sweetening or flavoring agents (for oral administration), coloring matter or dyes, and emulsifying and/or suspending agents as well, together with such diluents as water, ethanol, propylene glycol, glycerin and combinations thereof.

A nasal spray may contain the composition in wet or dry powder form. In wet form, the composition may contain the same additives as those described below for injectable compositions. As a dry powder, in may also included other customary additives and/or carriers, such as those described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,815,424.

A mouthwash will contain the composition in wet form, optionally contain other ingredients common to a mouthwash. Examples include those described in U.S. Pat. No. 5,945,087 and U.S. Pat. No. 5,338,538. These compositions may be used to rinse the mouth, such as by gargling, particularly by hemophiliacs after dental work.

For oral administration in dry form, tablets containing various excipients such as microcrystalline cellulose, sodium citrate, calcium carbonate, dicalcium phosphate and glycine may be employed along with various disintegrants such as starch (and preferably corn, potato or tapioca starch), alginic acid and certain complex silicates, together with granulation binders like polyvinylpyrrolidone, sucrose, gelatin and acacia. Additionally, lubricating agents such as magnesium stearate, sodium lauryl sulfate and talc are useful for tabletting purposes. Solid compositions of a similar type may also be employed as fillers in gelatin capsules.

For administration by injection, polyphosphates in, for example, water, saline, sesame or peanut oil, aqueous propylene glycol, or another pharmaceutical carrier, are suitable. Aqueous solutions should be suitably buffered, if necessary and the liquid diluent preferably rendered isotonic. The aqueous solutions are suitable for intravenous injection purposes. The oily solutions are suitable for parenteral, intramuscular and subcutaneous injection purposes. Injection into

various body cavities may be used to promote clotting for wounds bleeding into a body cavity.

Bandage and wound dressings may contain the composition in wet or dry form. These may be prepared by applying a solution or suspension of polyP, such as those described above for injection together with any other additives desired, to a bandage or wound dressing, and drying the solution or suspension. The solution or suspension preferably contains the polyP in the concentrations noted above. Powdered polyP may also be impregnated into the bandage or dressing, or woven into the fibers used to form the bandage or dressing.

A topical composition may be in wet or dry powder form, and may include a topically acceptable carrier, as well as a pharmaceutical carrier. Examples of such topically acceptable carriers may be found in International Patent Publication WO 00/62742, published Oct. 26, 2000; U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,691,380; 5,968,528; 4,139,619; and 4,684,635; as well as the CTFA Cosmetic Ingredient Handbook, Second Edition (1992). Suitable topically acceptable carriers, as well as other pharmaceutical carriers, are also described in Remington's Pharmaceutical Sciences, 17th ed., Mack Publishing Company, Easton, Pa. (1990), which is a standard reference text in this field. A topically applied composition of the invention may be in a form suitable for topical application, such as an emulsion (including oil-in-water, water-in-oil, water-in-oil-in-water, and oil-in-water-in-silicone emulsions), a cream, an ointment, an aqueous solution, a lotion or an aerosol.

PolyP may be used in any clotting assay, to block TFPI, or as an activator of clotting. A reagent for a clotting assay, which contains an activator of clotting and optionally buffer and/or Ca^{2+} (for example, adding CaCl_2), may also contain polyP to block TFPI that may be present in the sample from a patient. Alternatively, polyP may be used as the activator of clotting, in addition to, or as a substitute for, the activator of clotting typically used in that reagent. The following table is a list of clotting assays and their associated activators of clotting present in the reagent for that clotting assay [28]:

TABLE

Clotting assays and reagents for clotting assays.

Assay	Name of reagent for clotting assay (if any)	Activator of clotting	Optional ingredients in reagent
Prothrombin Time	Thromboplastin	Tissue factor	Phospholipids, buffer, calcium
Activated Partial Thromboplastin Time	Partial thromboplastin	Kaolin or silica	Phospholipids, buffer, calcium
Partial Thromboplastin Time	Partial thromboplastin	Phospholipids	Buffer, calcium
Xa Clot Time		Factor Xa	Phospholipids, buffer, calcium
Thrombin Clot Time		Thrombin	Buffer, calcium
Venom based clot time (such as Russell's Viper Venom Time)		Snake venom or purified snake venom protein	Phospholipids, buffer, calcium
VIIa Clotting Assay		Soluble tissue factor	Phospholipids, buffer, calcium

When used in a thromboplastin reagent to block TFPI, the concentration of polyP present is preferably at least 300 nM phosphate equivalents, such as 300 nM to 500 μ M, more preferably at least 7500 nM phosphate equivalents, such as 7500 nM to 500 μ M.

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Preferably, the thromboplastin reagent contains Ca^{2+} , or the Ca^{2+} may be added just prior to use of the reagent. The Ca^{2+} may be provided with the thromboplastin reagent in a kit, with each part separately packed, optional with each reagent is dry form. Ca^{2+} is preferably added as CaCl_2 . The amount of Ca^{2+} is preferably 1-100 mM, more preferably 5-75 mM, more preferably 10-50 mM, including 10 mM, 12.5 mM, 15 mM, 20 mM, 25 mM, 30 mM, 35 mM, 40 mM and 45 mM.

Ionic strength may be adjusted by adding salts, such as alkali metal and alkaline earth metal salts, including halides, sulfates, nitrates and acetates, such as NaCl and KCl. Preferably, the salts are present in an amount of 0-200 mM, 10-150 mM, 15-125 mM, or more preferably 25-100 mM.

The thromboplastin reagents contain TF relipidated into phospholipids, such as phosphatidylcholine (PC), phosphatidylserine (PS) and phosphatidylethanolamine (PE). At least a portion of the phospholipids are net negatively charged phospholipids, such as PS, phosphatidylglycerol (PG), phosphatidic acid (PA), or phosphatidylinositol (PI). Preferably, the amount of PS is from 5-50%, more preferably from 10-40%, including 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%, and 35%, of the total phospholipids content. The amount of PE is preferably 0-50%, more preferably 5-40%, including 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%, and 35%, of the total phospholipids content. Preferably, the remainder of the phospholipids content is composed of neutral phospholipids, such as PC, for example 0-95%, more preferably 40-90%, including 45%, 50%, 55%, 60%, 65%, 70%, 75%, 80%, and 85%, of the total phospholipid content. The TF may be natural TF which has been extracted from tissue, or rTF. The thromboplastin reagent may also be of the type described in U.S. provisional patent application "UNIVERSAL PROCOAGULANT" to James H. Morrissey and Emily M. Kerestes, filed 16 Feb. 2005, application Ser. No. 11/816,401, the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference.

The International Sensitivity Index (ISI) value of the thromboplastin reagent is preferably 0.6 to 2, more preferably 0.8 to 1.5, even more preferably 0.8 to 1.2, and most preferably 0.9 to 1.1. Alternatively, preferably the ISI value of the thromboplastin reagent is at most 1.5 or at most 1.2. ISI value of the thromboplastin reagent should be determined by the WHO approved method [23].

Preferably, the PTR for 1% Factor VII is 1-10, more preferably 1-5, even more preferably 1-2, and most preferably at most 1.5, including at most 1.4, 1.3, 1.2 and 1.1.

Preferably, the PTR for 1% Factor II (prothrombin) is 1-10, more preferably 1.5-7, even more preferably 2-7, and most preferably at least 2, including at least 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Preferably, the PTR for 1% Factor X is 1-10, including 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, the PTR for 1% Factor VII is at most 2 and the PTR for 1% Factor II is at least 4; more preferably the PTR for 1% Factor VII is at most 1.5 and the PTR for 1% Factor II is at least 5; and most preferably the PTR for 1% Factor VII is at most 1.2 and the PTR for 1% Factor II is at least 6.

The thromboplastin reagents may be provided in dried form, by freeze-drying, spray-drying, or other suitable protein drying methods. The reagents may be dried onto strips or other solid supports, and may be provided as kits with the components provided separately packaged, or groups of the components packaged into 2 or more packages. Some or all of the components may be provided in dried forms, and other components provided in saline or a physiological buffer. A thromboplastin reagent provided as a kit may contain the

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thromboplastin reagent(s) in one or more containers, and the polyP supplied in a separate contain, so that it may be added only when necessary.

Thromboplastin reagents of the present invention may contain added FVII. Addition of minute amounts of Factor VIIa to the thromboplastin reagent can be used to minimize sensitivity to Factor VII and to further manipulate responses to other factors. This is more fully explained in "THROMBOPLASTIN REAGENTS" U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/931,282 to Morrissey et al., filed on Aug. 31, 2004. Any FVII may be used including any mammalian Factor VII or VIIa (such as human, rabbit, rat, cow, etc.). Preferably the thromboplastin reagents contain added Factor VIIa, more preferably human Factor VIIa. The FVII may be prepared recombinantly [22].

Preferably, the amount of FVII present is less than the amount of Factor VII or Factor VIIa found in the plasma of normal individuals, including the amount of Factor VII or VIIa found in Factor II- and Factor X-deficient plasmas. The amount of FVII present is preferably 0.1 to 10 nanograms/milliliter (ng/ml) Factor VIIa equivalents, 1 to 6 ng/ml Factor VIIa equivalents, or 2.5 to 5 ng/ml Factor VIIa equivalents, and more preferably at least 1 ng/ml or at least 2.5 ng/ml Factor VIIa equivalents. Alternatively, the amount of FVII may be expressed in picomolar (pM) amounts; such as 1-1000 pM Factor VIIa equivalents, 50-400 pM Factor VIIa equivalents, preferably at least 150 pM Factor VIIa equivalents or at least 200 pM Factor VIIa equivalents.

Thromboplastin reagents may be used to monitor any anti-coagulant drug therapy. Table 1 below lists a variety of these drugs.

TABLE 1

Anticoagulant drugs that may be monitored with thromboplastin reagents	
Coumarin Derivatives (block production of functional factors II, VII, and X):	Warfarin (COUMADIN®) ¹ Nicoumalone (ACENOCOUMAROL™) ¹ Dicoumarol (BISHYDROXYCOUMARIN™) Phenprocoumon
Thrombin (FIIa) Inhibitors	Argatroban (NOVASTAN®) ¹ Ximelgatran (EXANTA®) ² BIBR 1048 ² BIBR 953 Desirudin (REVASC®) ¹ Lepirudin (REFLUDAN® or PHARMION®) ¹ Bivalirudin (ANGIOMAX®, previously HIRULOG®) ¹
FXa Inhibitors	DX-9065a ² DPC 906 ² Antistasin ³
TF/FVIIa Inhibitors	Anti-TF antibodies Recombinant Nematode Anticoagulant Protein (rNAPc2) ² Recombinant Tissue Factor Pathway Inhibitor (TFACOGIN™) ² FVIIai ³ ART-123™ (recombinant soluble thrombomodulin) ²

¹FDA approved for use in humans

²Evaluated in clinical trials but not yet approved

³Still in development (animal studies only)

EXAMPLES

PolyP affects both the rate of plasma clotting and the rate of fibrinolysis

The role of polyP in blood coagulation and fibrinolysis was initially investigated using a combined model of plasma clot-

ting and lysis. In this system, clotting of citrated, pooled normal human plasma is initiated by adding calcium chloride. Clotting initiated in this way occurs through the intrinsic pathway of blood coagulation and is relatively slow in the absence of an added contact activator. Thrombin (the final enzyme in the clotting cascade) proteolytically converts fibrinogen to fibrin, which spontaneously polymerizes to form a fibrin gel, or clot. Clotting of fibrin is associated with an increase in turbidity of the plasma, which is easily monitored by measuring the change in absorbance of light at 405 nm. Addition of a plasminogen activator to the plasma at the same time as the calcium ions allows the activation of plasminogen to plasmin, and subsequent lysis of the fibrin clot. Lysis is observed as a decrease in turbidity over time. As seen in FIG. 2a, the plasma clotted following calcium addition, reaching half-maximal absorbance at approximately 25 min. In the presence of uPA the clot dissolved, with 50% clot lysis occurring at 43 min. (In the absence of uPA, the clot formation phase was identical to that described but no lysis occurred; data not shown.)

Adding polyP with a chain length of 75 phosphate units (polyP₇₅) to plasma in this model dramatically affected both the rate of plasma clotting and the rate of fibrinolysis. The time to reach half maximal absorbance was shortened to less than 5 min in the presence of polyP₇₅ (FIG. 2b), compared to approximately 25 min in the absence of polyP (FIG. 2a). In addition, the presence of polyP₇₅ increased the time to 50% lysis to 68 min (FIG. 2b), compared to 43 min with uPA alone (FIG. 2a). These results indicate that polyP both accelerates clotting and inhibits fibrinolysis.

PolyP Inhibits Fibrinolysis

In order to study the effect of polyP on fibrinolysis independent of its effect on clotting times, the model was modified such that clotting was initiated by a mixture of calcium ions and thrombin in the presence of uPA (pooled normal plasma supplemented with 1.4 nM uPA). The amount of thrombin was chosen to yield rapid clotting times, permitting analyses to focus on the lytic phase only. As seen in FIG. 3, thrombin rapidly induced plasma clotting in the presence or absence of polyP₇₅, such that clotting was nearly complete by the first time point. In the absence of polyP, the clots subsequently lysed, with a 50% lysis time of 61 min in this experiment. In the presence of polyP₇₅, clot lysis was strongly inhibited (i.e., time to 50% lysis exceeded 150 min). Similar effects were also observed when tPA was substituted for uPA in this clot lysis model: lysis was abrogated by the presence of polyP₇₅ (data not shown). The magnitude of the effect of polyP₇₅ on the inhibition of fibrinolysis was dependent on the uPA concentration. At high uPA concentrations the effect of polyP₇₅ could be masked, presumably reflecting a balance situation between uPA and polyP within the clot (data not shown).

The inhibition of fibrinolysis by polyP₇₅ was concentration-dependent, with an optimal concentration range of 100 nM to 1 μ M polyP₇₅ (FIG. 4). The polyP chain length was also important. PolyP₄₅, polyP₆₅ and polyP₇₅ had comparable abilities to inhibit fibrinolysis, while PolyP₂₅ had reduced ability to inhibit fibrinolysis (FIG. 5). Very short phosphate molecules, such as sodium phosphate (P_i), PP_i, or sodium tripolyphosphate (polyP₃) had no discernable effect on fibrinolysis (data not shown). It should be noted that the highest polyP concentrations used (equivalent to 75 μ M phosphate monomer) are far below the mM concentrations of calcium ions employed in our assays. This rules out the possibility that polyP influences coagulation or fibrinolysis simply by reducing the free calcium ion concentration (e.g., by forming complexes with calcium ions or by precipitating them).

There are a number of potential mechanisms by which polyP could inhibit fibrinolysis. For example, polyP could attenuate plasminogen activation by inhibiting tPA or uPA enzymatic activity. Alternatively, polyP could act by enhancing the activation or function of one of the plasma inhibitors of fibrinolysis. The direct effect of polyP₇₅ on uPA or tPA enzymatic activity was tested in enzymatic assays using purified proteins, and polyP₇₅ was found not to inhibit either enzyme (data not shown).

Inhibition of Fibrinolysis by PolyP is Dependent upon Thrombin Activatable Fibrinolysis Inhibitor (TAFI)

One possible target of polyP is the plasma fibrinolysis inhibitor, TAFI. The mechanism of action of TAFIa differs from classical (serpin) inhibitors. This is because it decreases the rate of fibrinolysis, not by direct interaction with active enzymes, but by removing C-terminal lysine and arginine residues from fibrin. C-terminal lysine residues, which are exposed on partially degraded fibrin, bind plasminogen and tPA. This binding serves to localize plasminogen and tPA enzymes at their site of action, providing a positive feedback mechanism whereby conversion of plasminogen to plasmin is accelerated. Thus, TAFIa negatively modulates this feedback response by eliminating the residues important in binding of tPA and plasminogen [6-8]. The concentration of TAFI in plasma is approximately 100 nM, but only a small amount of TAFIa is required to dramatically prolong lysis. A half-maximal effect of TAFIa on lysis is seen at 1 nM, with maximal effect at 10 nM [9].

No known physiological inhibitor of TAFIa exists. Its activity is believed to be regulated by its extremely thermolabile nature, with a half-life of approximately 10 min at 37° C. Many naturally occurring variations in TAFI exist, some of which confer stability and profoundly change the antifibrinolytic potential in vivo [9,10]. The spontaneous decay of TAFIa is a result of an induced conformational change rather than proteolytic cleavage [11].

The role of TAFI in the polyP-dependent delay of clot lysis was investigated. This question was first examined using a specific inhibitor of TAFIa in plasma, the carboxypeptidase inhibitor derived from potato tubers (CPI). Pooled normal plasma was clotted by adding calcium ions and thrombin in the presence or absence of CPI (6.25 μ M) and/or polyP₇₅ (75 μ M phosphate equivalents). As was observed in previous experiments, clot lysis was dramatically inhibited in the presence of polyP₇₅ (FIG. 6a). When CPI was added to the plasma (to eliminate any contribution from TAFIa), the rate of fibrinolysis was increased. Interestingly, polyP₇₅ no longer had any effect on the rate or extent of fibrinolysis when CPI was present (FIG. 6a). This indicates that the ability of polyP₇₅ to delay fibrinolysis is dependent upon plasma TAFI. To confirm this observation, the role of TAFI in the prolongation of fibrinolysis by polyP₇₅ was examined using plasma immunodepleted of TAFI. Again, in stark contrast to its effect on normal plasma, addition of polyP₇₅ to TAFI-deficient plasma had no effect on clot lysis time (FIG. 6b).

PolyP Accelerates the Contact Pathway of Blood Coagulation

The effect of polyP on plasma coagulation was evaluated further, using a plasma clotting assay in multiwell plates carried out in the absence of any added plasminogen activator. Clotting of plasma in such assays is dependent upon the contact pathway of blood coagulation, and since the assays are conducted in plastic (polystyrene) wells with no other contact activator added, clotting times are slow. The time to clot formation was more than 10 min in the absence of polyP, but was shortened to about 5 min by the inclusion of polyP₇₅ (FIG. 7a). To directly test the idea that polyP acts through the

contact pathway, these clotting assays were repeated using factor XII-deficient plasma, resulting in greatly prolonged clotting times (nearly 20 min; FIG. 7b). Adding polyP₇₅ to factor XII-deficient plasma resulted in clotting times that were still greatly prolonged (FIG. 7b), compared with normal pooled plasma (FIG. 7a).

The initiation phase of the contact pathway of blood clotting is not calcium-dependent, so factor XII activation can take place in citrated plasma without added calcium ions. When pooled normal plasma was pre-incubated for 2 min with polyP₇₅ and then calcium chloride added, clotting times were significantly shortened relative to those of plasmas not pre-incubated with polyP (data not shown). This suggested that polyP₇₅ might accelerate the initiation phase of the contact pathway. Indeed, many of the known artificial activators of the contact pathway contain negatively charged surfaces or negatively charged polymers [13]. Accordingly, the hypothesis that polyP might serve to activate the contact phase of clotting was tested by pre-incubating either pooled normal plasma or factor XII-deficient plasma with polyP₇₅ for 2 min. After this pre-incubation period, a second aliquot of plasma (either factor XII-deficient plasma or normal plasma, respectively) was added, followed immediately by calcium chloride, and the time to clot formation was measured. Thus, the clotting assays in this experiment contained a 50:50 mixture of normal and factor XII-deficient plasma, although the order in which the plasmas were pre-incubated with polyP₇₅ differed. Pre-incubation of polyP₇₅ with normal plasma resulted in significant shortening of the clotting time (to approximately 4 min; FIG. 7c). On the other hand, pre-incubation of polyP₇₅ with factor XII-deficient plasma resulted in long clotting times (>10 min), in spite of the fact that 50% of the plasma volume was contributed by pooled normal plasma (FIG. 7c). These results demonstrate that pre-incubation of plasma with polyP₇₅ shortens the clotting time in a factor XII-dependent manner, indicative of activation of the contact pathway of blood clotting.

The effect of polyP chain length on activation of clotting via the contact pathway was examined by pre-incubating PolyP of varying chain lengths with pooled normal plasma for 2 min, after which clotting was initiated with calcium chloride. As seen in FIG. 8, normal plasma incubated without polyP took more than 10 min to clot. Adding polyP₂₅ had no discernable effect on clotting time, but adding polyP₄₅, polyP₆₅ or polyP₇₅ dramatically shortened the clotting times (to less than 5 min; FIG. 8). These data indicate that, in order to enhance factor XII activation, polyP molecules preferably have a minimal chain length of between 25 and 45 phosphate residues.

PolyP Accelerates the Tissue Factor Pathway of Blood Clotting

The ability of polyP₇₅ to influence the clotting time of a variety of clotting assays was systematically evaluated, employing commonly used plasma clotting assays including the prothrombin time (PT) assay, the partial thromboplastin time (PTT) assay, the activated partial thromboplastin time (aPTT) assay, a factor Xa clotting assay (XaT), and the thrombin time (TT) assay (FIG. 9). The PT assay, which is conducted by adding a thromboplastin reagent (a source of tissue factor activity and calcium ions) to plasma, drives coagulation through the extrinsic, or tissue factor pathway. The PTT and aPTT assays rely on the contact, or intrinsic, pathway of blood clotting. The XaT assay relies on the presence of factor V, prothrombin and fibrinogen in plasma, while the TT assay relies only on the presence of fibrinogen. Therefore, these assays assess different stages of the blood clotting cascades. All were performed in a coagulometer at 37° C.

As seen in FIG. 9, adding polyP₇₅ to plasma in a standard PT assay had little effect on clotting time. However, when the PT assay was modified to employ a dilute thromboplastin reagent (dilute PT assay), polyP₇₅ caused a small but reproducible shortening of the clotting time. PolyP₇₅ had no effect on the aPTT assay, but shortened the clotting time of the PTT assay. This result is consistent with polyP being a weak activator of the contact pathway of blood clotting, since the aPTT assay employs a potent activator of the contact pathway which is missing in the PTT assay. Interestingly, polyP₇₅ had no effect on the TT assay, but shortened the clotting time in the XaT assay. This latter result, together with the results from the dilute PT assay, suggest that polyP enhances some aspect of the tissue factor pathway of blood clotting upstream of thrombin.

PolyP Accelerates the Tissue Factor Pathway by Potently Blocking the Anticoagulant Effect of TFPI

The hypothesis that polyP might block the anticoagulant effect of TFPI was tested. This was examined in a dilute PT assay in which varying concentrations of recombinant TFPI were added to plasma samples. Plasma normally contains relatively low levels of free TFPI, so adding exogenous TFPI can dramatically lengthen PT clotting times. As seen in FIG. 10, adding 50, 100 or 200 ng/ml TFPI to pooled normal plasma greatly prolonged the dilute PT clotting time. In striking contrast, inclusion of 75 μ M polyP₇₅ phosphate equivalents in the dilute thromboplastin reagent completely abrogated the anticoagulant effect of TFPI at all TFPI concentrations tested. In other experiments, it was found that polyP₇₅ also abrogated the effect of TFPI in standard PT assays, although the absolute differences in clotting times with or without TFPI were smaller due to the very short baseline clotting times in standard PT assays (data not shown). Another plasma protease inhibitor capable of inactivating factor Xa is the serpin, antithrombin (formerly known as antithrombin III). Similar experiments using varying quantities of antithrombin added to antithrombin-deficient plasma in clotting assays to which polyP₇₅ was added revealed that polyP does not block the anticoagulant function of antithrombin (data not shown).

The ability of polyP₇₅ to abrogate the anticoagulant effect of TFPI is concentration-dependent. When 100 ng/ml TFPI was added to pooled normal plasma, the dilute PT clotting time was increased from 66 sec to over 160 sec (FIG. 11). Adding increasing concentrations of polyP₇₅ to the dilute thromboplastin reagent progressively antagonized the ability of TFPI to prolong the clotting time. Interestingly, a significant shortening of the TFPI-prolonged clotting time was observed with as little as 375 nM phosphate equivalents of polyP, while the anticoagulant effect of TFPI was essentially completely abrogated at polyP₇₅ concentrations ranging from approximately 7500 nM phosphate equivalents to 375 μ M phosphate equivalents. (It should be pointed out that the polyP concentrations given here are the concentrations added to the thromboplastin reagent; since the thromboplastin reagent made up only one-third of the final volume in the clotting assays, the final concentrations of polyP₇₅ in clotting mixtures were threefold lower than indicated.)

The ability of polyP to block the effect of TFPI was also dependent upon polyP chain length. Dilute PT assays were performed on pooled normal plasma samples, some of which contained 200 ng/ml TFPI. In the absence of polyP, the addition of TFPI prolonged the mean clotting time from 59 sec to 294 sec. PolyP of the indicated chain lengths were included in the dilute thromboplastin reagent at concentrations of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents. PolyP₂₅, PolyP₄₅, PolyP₆₅ and PolyP₇₅ all abrogated the anticoagulant effect of the TFPI

(FIG. 12). On the other hand, very short phosphate molecules (P_i , PP_i , or $polyP_3$) did not block TFPI anticoagulant function at all. The size-dependence of $polyP$ abrogation of TFPI function therefore differs from the size-dependence of $polyP$ inhibition of fibrinolysis or activation of the contact pathway of blood coagulation. Thus, $polyP_{25}$ had the same ability to block TFPI function as did longer $polyP$ molecules. In contrast, $polyP_{25}$ exhibited no ability to trigger the contact pathway and attenuated ability to inhibit fibrinolysis, relative to $polyP$ molecules consisting of 45 or more phosphate units. This result means that it is possible to employ $polyP$ molecules of varying polymer lengths to differentially modulate TFPI function versus fibrinolysis or contact activation.

To further underscore the size-dependence of $polyP$ in antagonizing TFPI function, $polyP_{65}$ was extensively digested with calf intestine alkaline phosphatase. Previous studies have shown that mammalian intestine alkaline phosphatase is also a highly active exopolyphosphatase [14]. Adding 100 ng/ml TFPI to pooled normal plasma substantially prolonged its dilute PT clotting time, and adding 1300 nM phosphate equivalents of $polyP_{65}$ abrogated this prolongation (FIG. 13). After $polyP_{65}$ was digested for 2 hr with alkaline phosphatase, however, it was rendered completely ineffective in blocking the TFPI-mediated prolongation of the dilute PT clotting assay (FIG. 13). This experiment confirms that short phosphate molecules cannot block the anticoagulant effect of TFPI, and furthermore it demonstrates that the ability of $polyP$ to abrogate the effect of TFPI is not due to contaminant(s) present in the $polyP$ preparations.

Stability of PolyP in Human Plasma and Serum

To investigate the stability of $polyP$, $polyP_{75}$ was incubated at a final concentration of 10 mM phosphate equivalents in human plasma or serum at 37° C. and the remaining $polyP$ was quantified at varying times thereafter. The results (FIG. 14) revealed that degradation of $polyP_{75}$ was slow, with a 50% degradation at about 2 hours. This is in agreement with a previous report on the slow degradation of $polyP_{34}$ in the presence of human plasma or serum [15].

Materials & Methods

Materials—Pooled normal plasma and factor XII-deficient plasma were obtained from George King Bio-Medical, Inc. (Overland Park, Kans.). Human plasmas immunodepleted of TAFI or antithrombin were from Affinity Biologicals (Ancaster, Ontario, Canada). $PolyP$ of mean chain lengths 25, 45, 65 or 75 (sodium phosphate glass) was obtained from Sigma Chemical Company (St. Louis, Mo.). CPI and tPA were obtained from Calbiochem (San Diego, Calif.), while uPA was a kind gift of J. Henkin (Abbott Laboratories). Human alpha thrombin, antithrombin, and factor Xa were from Enzyme Research Laboratories (South Bend, Ind.). Recombinant, full-length human TFPI was a kind gift of Dr. George Broze, Washington University St. Louis.

Microplate-based assays of plasma clotting and fibrinolysis—Some of the clotting assays were conducted in flat-bottom, polystyrene, 96-well plates (Corning). Turbidity, a measure of clot formation, was quantified at 37° C. by measuring the absorbance of light at 405 nm in a VERSAmax microplate reader (Molecular Devices, Sunnyvale, Calif.). Reactions (100 μ l final volume) typically contained the following final concentrations: 30% (v/v) human plasma; 8 mM Tris-HCl buffer, pH 7.4; 0.008% (v/v) Tween-20; 10.6 mM calcium chloride; and, variably, 10 nM thrombin. In some experiments, clotting reactions were initiated by calcium ions alone. In this case, a 1.25 \times reaction mixture of the above-described components (except calcium chloride) was prepared in a final volume of 80 μ l per well. Clotting was then initiated by adding 20 μ l of 53 mM calcium chloride and

absorbance at 405 nM was monitored. In other experiments, clotting was initiated by a mixture of calcium ions and thrombin. In these cases, to the 80 μ l reaction mixtures described above were added 10 μ l of 106 mM calcium chloride followed immediately by 10 μ l of 100 nM thrombin.

Combined plasma clotting/fibrinolysis assays were also performed in 96-well plates as described in the previous paragraph, except that the reaction mixtures included 1.4 nM uPA to stimulate fibrinolysis.

Unless otherwise stated, $polyP_{75}$ was typically included in these clotting or clotting/fibrinolysis assays at a final concentration of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents in the clotting reaction. When $polyP$ preparations of other chain lengths were studied, they were also typically used at final concentrations of 75 μ M phosphate equivalents. Thus, $polyP_{25}$ was used at a final concentration of 3 μ M, $polyP_{45}$ was used at a final concentration of 1.67 μ M, and $polyP_{65}$ was used at a final concentration of 1.15 μ M. When present, CPI was used at a final concentration of 6.25 μ M CPI.

Coagulometer-based plasma clotting assays—Recombinant human tissue factor was reconstituted into phospholipid vesicles as previously described [18], using a mixture of 20% phosphatidylserine and 80% phosphatidylcholine at a phospholipid:tissue factor molar ratio of 8700:1. Blank phospholipid vesicles (PCPS vesicles) composed of 20% phosphatidylserine and 80% phosphatidylcholine (and no tissue factor) were prepared as described [18]. The thromboplastin reagent for the PT assay was prepared by diluting relipidated tissue factor to a final concentration of 200 ng/ml tissue factor in TBSA buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl pH 7.5, 100 mM NaCl, 0.02% sodium azide, 0.1% (w/v) bovine serum albumin). The thromboplastin reagent for the dilute PT assay was prepared in the same manner as the reagent for the PT assay, except that the relipidated tissue factor was typically diluted to a final concentration of 1 ng/ml tissue factor in TBSA buffer containing 50 μ M PCPS vesicles. The aPTT reagent was STA®-PTT (Diagnostics Stago, Parsippany, N.J.). The PTT reagent consisted of 50 μ M PCPS vesicles in TBSA buffer. The clotting reagent for the XaT assay consisted of 1 nM factor Xa in TBSA buffer containing 50 μ M PCPS vesicles. The TT reagent consisted of 5 units/ml thrombin in TBSA buffer containing 16.7 mM calcium chloride.

The PT, XaT, aPTT and PTT clotting assays were typically performed in a STA coagulometer (Diagnostics Stago) by pre-incubating 50 μ l of human plasma with 50 μ l of the indicated clotting reagent at 37° C. for the following times: PT and XaT assays, 120 sec; aPTT and PTT assays, 180 sec. Clotting was then initiated by adding 50 μ l of 25 mM calcium chloride solution that had been pre-warmed to 37° C. The time to clot formation was then measured relative to the point of addition of calcium chloride. The TT clotting assay was performed in the same coagulometer as follows: 50 μ l human plasma was pre-warmed to 37° C. for 60 sec, after which 50 μ l of pre-warmed TT reagent was added and the time to clot formation was measured. When the effect of TFPI on clotting was tested, TFPI was added to plasma at the indicated concentration immediately before use. When the effect of $polyP$ on clotting was tested, $polyP$ was added to the clotting reagent at the indicated concentration. In all but the TT assay, the clotting reagent contributed one-third of the total volume in the clotting reaction. For this reason, the final $polyP$ concentrations in the clotting reactions were typically threefold lower than indicated (or twofold lower for the TT assay).

Digestion of $polyP$ with alkaline phosphatase—100 μ M $PolyP_{65}$ was digested for 2 hr at room temperature by 100 U/ml calf intestinal alkaline phosphatase (Promega, Madison, Wis.) in 50 mM Tris-HCl buffer, pH 9.5. The digested

polyP was used immediately in clotting reactions by diluting the digestion mixture into dilute thromboplastin reagent to yield a final polyP₆₅ concentration of 200 nM.

PolyP determination—Perchloric acid extraction and measurement of polyP after its incubation with human serum or heparinized plasma was performed as described [3].

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What is claimed is:

1. A thromboplastin reagent, comprising:

- (i) tissue factor (TF),
- (ii) a phospholipid, and
- (iii) an inorganic polyphosphate tissue factor pathway inhibitor (polyP TFPI) blocker.

2. The thromboplastin reagent of claim 1, wherein the polyP TFPI blocker comprises polyP_n, where n is at least 25.

3. The thromboplastin reagent of claim 2, further comprising (iv) Ca²⁺.

4. The thromboplastin reagent of claim 2, further comprising (v) factor VII.

5. The thromboplastin reagent of claim 2, further comprising (vi) at least one alkali metal salt.

6. The thromboplastin reagent of claim 2, wherein the phospholipid comprises phosphatidylserine (PS).

7. The thromboplastin reagent of claim 2, wherein n is less than 45.

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8. The thromboplastin reagent of claim 2, further comprising:

- (iv) Ca^{2+} ,
- (v) factor VII, and
- (vi) at least one alkali metal salt,

wherein the phospholipid comprises phosphatidylcholine (PC) and PS.

9. A reagent for a clotting assay, comprising:
an activator of clotting, and
polyP.

10. The reagent of claim 9, further comprising buffer.

11. The reagent of claim 9, further comprising calcium ions.

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12. The reagent of claim 9, wherein the clotting assay is selected from the group consisting of prothrombin time, activated partial thromboplastin time, partial thromboplastin time, Xa clot time, venom based clot time, thrombin clot time and VIIa clotting assay.

13. The reagent of claim 9, wherein the reagent is dried.

14. A method of administering an anticoagulant drug, comprising:

- administering an anticoagulant drug to a patient in need thereof, and
- measuring the patient's clotting time with the thromboplastin reagent of claim 2.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 7,682,808 B2
APPLICATION NO. : 11/362270
DATED : March 23, 2010
INVENTOR(S) : James H. Morrissey et al.

Page 1 of 1

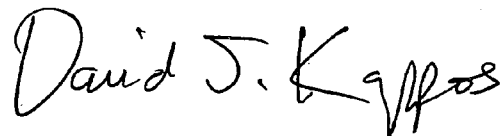
It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In the claims:

Column 20, line 58 please remove "Ca²⁻" and insert --Ca²⁺--.

Signed and Sealed this

Ninth Day of November, 2010

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David J. Kappos". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D' and 'K'.

David J. Kappos
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office