

# Separation of enantiomers of native amino acids with polysaccharide-based chiral columns in supercritical fluid chromatography

Emmanuelle Lipka, Anca-Elena Dascalu, Yasmine Messara, Eka Tsutsqiridze, Tivadar Farkas, Bezhan Chankvetadze

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1	Separation of enantiomers of native amino acids with polysaccharide-
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4	Emmanuelle Lipka <sup>1</sup> *, Anca-Elena Dascalu <sup>1, 2, 3</sup> , Yasmine Messara <sup>1</sup> , Eka Tsutsqiridze <sup>4</sup> ,
5	Tivadar Farkas <sup>5</sup> , Bezhan Chankvetadze <sup>4</sup> *
6	<sup>1)</sup> Unité 995 INSERM, Université de Lille, Lille Inflammation Research International
7	Center, Laboratoire de Chimie Analytique-Faculté de Pharmacie de Lille, BP 83 - 59006
8	Lille, France.
9	<sup>2)</sup> Hautes Etudes d'Ingénieur (HEI), Yncréa Hauts-de-France, UCLille, Laboratoire de
10	Pharmacochimie, 13 rue de Toul, F-59046 Lille, France.
11	<sup>3)</sup> 'Alexandru Ioan Cuza' University of Iasi, Faculty of Chemistry, Bd. Carol I nr. 11,
12	700506 Iasi, Romania.
13	<sup>4)</sup> Institute of Physical and Analytical Chemistry, School of Exact and Natural Sciences,
14	Tbilisi State University, Chavchavadze Ave 3, 0179 Tbilisi, Georgia.
15	<sup>5)</sup> Phenomenex Inc., 411 Madrid Ave., Torrance, 90501 CA, USA.
16	*Corresponding Authors:
17	Tel: +33 03 62 28 30 25, E-Mail address: emmanuelle.lipka@univ-lille.fr
18	Tel: +995 555730048, E-mail address: jpba_bezhan@yahoo.com

#### 19 Abstract

In this short communication preliminary results are reported on the separation of
enantiomers of underivatized amino acids on polysaccharide-based chiral columns in
sub/super-critical fluid chromatography (SFC).

Racemic mixtures of 14 amino acids were used to evaluate the chiral recognition ability 23 of 8 different polysaccharide-based chiral columns with coated or covalently immobilized 24 chiral selectors. Among the studied columns, the one based on cellulose (3,5-25 26 dichlorophenylcarbamate) exhibited the most universal chiral recognition ability providing baseline resolution for the enantiomers of 10 studied amino acids. In addition, 27 28 the effect of mobile phase composition (in particular, of the amount of additive used), as well as the potential contribution of evaporative light scattering detector (ELSD) to extra 29 column band-broadening was evaluated. 30

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32 *Keywords:* 

33 Separation of enantiomers; Polysaccharide-based chiral stationary phases; Native amino-

34 acids; Mobile phase composition; Extra column band-broadening.

#### 36 1. Introduction

37 Although polysaccharide derivatives represent the group of most universal chiral selectors for liquid phase separation of enantiomers [1-3], there are certain groups of 38 chiral analytes towards which these chiral selectors have been reported to exhibit 39 inadequate chiral recognition ability. Small nonaromatic carboxylic acids and most native 40 amino acids belong to this category of chiral compounds. Therefore, these analytes are 41 42 commonly converted into various derivatives prior to separation of their enantiomers on 43 polysaccharide-based chiral columns [4-10]. Although derivatization of analytes provides certain advantages from the viewpoint of separation (improved peak shape, additional 44 45 intermolecular interactions) and detection, it also has disadvantages such as an additional synthetic step prior to separation, possibility of incomplete derivatization, interference of 46 47 residual derivatizing reagent in the separation process, additional costs, etc. In addition, if 48 the analyte is required in its intact but enantiomerically pure form after the separation, recovering the analyte from its derivative used in the separation process in its initial form 49 50 will also require an additional step which may be burdened by additional shortcomings. Since many amino acids do not possess strong UV-chromophores in their structures, in 51 earlier studies their derivatization was performed both, for improving their 52 enantiorecognition and also for improving their detectability with UV/VIS or 53 fluorescence detectors. However, with the successful detection of native amino acids by 54 alternative techniques such as mass spectrometry (MS), refractive index (RI), evaporative 55 light scattering (ELS), corona charged aerosol (CA) detectors or based on label-free 56 fluorescent detection, the derivatization of amino acids with the sole purpose of 57

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improving their detectability becomes unnecessary. Thus, in some cases the separation of native amino acids may offer certain advantages over the separation of their derivatives.

Several efficient chiral selectors are available for the separation of enantiomers of 60 native amino acids. Actually, the history of enantioselective high-performance liquid 61 chromatography (HPLC) started by the successful separation of enantiomers of native 62 amino acids reported by Davankov and Rogozhin in 1971 [11]. Today, the most useful 63 64 chiral selectors for the separation of enantiomers are cation- and anion-exchangers, as 65 well as zwitterionic chiral selectors developed by Lindner and co-workers [12-14], macrocyclic antiobiotic- and cyclofructane-based materials proposed by Armstrong and 66 67 co-workers [15-17], crown ether-based [18] and few other chiral stationary phases [19, 20]. In early 2000s Ye and co-authors have published the article reporting a separation of 68 underivatized amino acid enantiomers on polysaccharide-based chiral column, Chiralpak 69 70 AD in HPLC [21]. Later, Stringham reported separation of enantiomers of underivatized proline and 4 aromatic amino acids, baclofen, 2-phenylglycine, phenylalanine and 71 72 tyrosine on the same chiral column in supercritical fluid chromatography (SFC) [22]. Separation of enantiomers of underivatized amino acids under SFC conditions on few 73 polysaccharide-based chiral columns was also reported in the conference presentation by 74 Yan and Riley [23]. 75

In this manuscript our results are reported on the evaluation of several coated and covalently immobilized polysaccharide-based chiral selectors for the separation of enantiomers of 14 native amino acids, namely valine, norvaline, threonine, phenylalanine, leucine, isoleucine, norleucine, lysine, alanine, histidine, serine, carnitine, oxoproline 80 (pyroglutamic acid) and aspartic acid (Fig. 1a) in sub/supercritical fluid chromatography81 (SFC).

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### 2. Experimental part

84 2.1 Materials

All studied amino acids, trimethylamine and n-butylamine were purchased from 85 86 Sigma-Aldrich (Steinheim, Germany) and Acros Organics (Illkirch, France) respectively. 87 HPLC grade methanol (MeOH) and ethanol (EtOH) were purchased from Carlo-Erba Reagents (Val-de-Reuil, France). Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) with purity of 99.995% was 88 89 purchased from Linde (Saint Priest, France). Chiral columns, such as Chiralpak AS based on amylose  $tris((S)-\alpha$ -phenylethylcarbamate) as chiral selector, Chiralcel OD-H and 90 91 Chiralpak IB based on cellulose tris(3,5-dimethylphenylcarbamate) as chiral selector, 92 Chiralpak AD-H and Chiralpak IA based on amylose tris(3,5-dimethylphenylcarbamate) 93 as chiral selector were purchased from Chiral Technologies Europe (Illkirch, France). Lux Cellulose-2 based on cellulose tris(3-chloro-4-methylphenylcarbamate) as chiral 94 95 selector, Lux Amylose-2 based on amylose tris(5-chloro-2-methylphenylcarbamate) as 96 chiral selector and Lux i-Cellulose-5 based on cellulose (3,5-dichlorophenylcarbamate) as chiral selector were provided by Phenomenex (Le Pecq, France). The structures of all 97 chiral selectors part of the studied columns are shown in Fig. 1b. All columns were 4.6 x 98 250 mm in size and packed with 5 micrometer particles. 99

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101 2.2 Sample solutions

Screening solutions of racemic amino acids were prepared at 3 mg/mL concentration in methanol/H<sub>2</sub>O 50/50 (v/v) mixture, except for aspartic acid which was prepared in 1 mg/mL concentration. The solutions were degassed by an ultrasonic bath and filtered through a 0.45  $\mu$ m PTFE syringe-filter (15 mm diameter) prior to be used.

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#### 2.3 Supercritical fluid chromatography apparatus

108 The SFC system used was an SFC-PICLAB hybrid 10-20 apparatus (PIC Solution, Avignon, France). The pump head used for pumping the  $CO_2$  was cooled to – 109 8° C by a cryostat (model Minichiller, Huber, Offenburg, Germany). The injection valve 110 111 was provided with a 19.6 µL sample loop. The system also included a Smartline 2600 112 diode array detector (DAD) (Knauer, Berlin, Germany). Detection wavelength was set at 210 nm. A Sedex 85 evaporative light scattering detector (ELSD) (Sedere, Alfortville, 113 France), was connected in-line with the DAD and right before the backpressure regulator 114 115 using a 0.064 mm ID  $\times$  160 cm long peek tubing. The pressure of the nebulizer gas (N<sub>2</sub>) was set at 3.7 bar. After optimization, the drift tube temperature was equal to 60° C and 116 117 the gain was set at 8. The system was controlled, and the data acquired and processed with the SFC PicLab Analytic Online v.3.1.2 and Offline v.3.2.0 software (PIC Solution), 118 119 respectively. During the separation optimization, the mobile phase composition was varied between 20- 40 % methanol or ethanol as modifiers in CO<sub>2</sub>. The used flow rate 120 was 3 mL/min if not indicated otherwise. All analyses were run in isocratic mode. The 121 122 column oven temperature was 40°C and the outlet pressure was maintained at 15 MPa for 123 all experiments. The dead time was marked as the first disturbance of the baseline after

124 injection, caused by the solvent peak. Retention times were average values of two125 replicate measurements.

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### **3.** Results and Discussion

128 3.1 Screening of polysaccharide-based chiral columns for the separation of129 enantiomers of underivatized amino acids

130 SFC is well established technique for separation of enantiomers [24-27]. Due to 131 lower viscosity of and fast analyte diffusion in supercritical fluids this technique offers the possibility of operating at higher flow rates (fast separations) as well as generating 132 133 higher plate numbers compared to HPLC. In addition, in preparative scale separations removal of the mobile phase is easier and less costly compared to other separation modes. 134 This technique has been explored for the separation of derivatized amino acids also with 135 136 polysaccharide-based chiral columns [9, 10]. However, to the best of our knowledge only one journal publication describes the separation of 5 underivatized amino acids, among 137 which 4 are aromatic, with polysaccharide-based chiral columns in SFC [22]. 138

All analytes were injected on the eight columns with either 40% methanol or 139 ethanol as co-solvent. The separation was performed at 40°C. The results on 140 enantioseparation of the 14 amino acids on 8 polysaccharide-based chiral columns with 141 coated or covalently immobilized chiral selectors showed that some of the studied 142 columns did not provide separation of any pair of enantiomers under this study. In 143 144 particular, coated-type columns such as Chiralcel OD, Chiralpak AD and Chiralpak AS belong to this category. In addition, no separation of enantiomers was observed on the 145 covalently immobilized version of Chiralcel OD and Chiralpak AD columns, Chiralpak 146

147 IB and Chiralpak IA, respectively. Lux Cellulose-2, having a chlorinated chiral selector provided baseline separation for the enantiomers of phenylalanine, valine, isoleucine and 148 partial resolution of enantiomers of leucine (Data not shown). Lux Amylose-2 provided 149 150 partial resolution of enantiomers of phenylalanine (Data not shown). The best enantiomer resolving ability among studied chiral columns was provided with Lux i-Cellulose-5 151 based on cellulose-(3,5-dichlorophenylcarbamate) as chiral selector in immobilized form 152 153 (Table 1). Some typical examples are shown in Fig. 2. The high enantiomer resolving 154 ability of cellulose tris(3,5-dichlorophenylcarbamate) has been known for many years [28-32] and has been observed also for rather hydrophilic non-aromatic compounds, such 155 156 as chiral metal complexes [31, 32]. Considering this experience, the results observed in 157 the present study for non-aromatic amino acids do not seem surprising.

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#### 159 **3.2** Effect of mobile phase optimization

160 3.2.1 Type of co-solvent

161 The mobile phase was CO<sub>2</sub>/modifier mixtures; firstly 40% of either methanol or 162 ethanol were tested. As it can be seen from Fig. S1, for the enantiomers of norvaline and 163 leucine, ethanol was preferable modifier. Thus, ethanol has been used in further studies.

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165 3.2.2 Use of mobile phase additive

In liquid-phase separations of enantiomers with polysaccharide-based chiral columns commonly basic additives are used for the separations of basic compounds and acidic additives for acids. The mixture of a basic and an acidic additive has also been used [33-35]. In SFC, due to the acidic nature of carbon dioxide [36] especially in the presence of 170 alcohols [37], for the acidic solutes the addition of an acidic additive in the mobile phase is not as common as in HPLC. Triethylamine (TEA) in the amount 0.3% (v/v) was used 171 as the mobile phase additive in initial experiments. As shown in Fig. S2a the additive 172 enabled good baseline separation of enantiomers of norvaline, but broad peaks were 173 observed. Similar results were obtained for enantiomers of valine. For enantiomers of 174 leucine only partial separation was observed. Further adjustment of the ethanol content 175 176 and increasing the concentration of TEA in the mobile phase following the recently 177 published work by Speybrouck et al. [38] enabled to improve peak shapes and resolution further (Figs. S2b-f). Thus, except for phenylalanine and histidine, for which 0.3% of 178 179 TEA additive was used, 3% TEA allowed a good compromise between peak shape, analysis time and peak resolution and was therefore chosen. 180

In order of further improving peak shapes, EtOH-water mixtures in different ratios was applied as mobile phase component. The use of water in the mobile phase can suppress peak tailing by counteracting the limited solubility of amino acids in  $CO_2$ -based mobile phases. The use of 2 or 5% water in MeOH with chiral polysaccharide-based stationary phases has been reported earlier [39]. Thus, a mobile phase of 20% (2% H<sub>2</sub>O and 3% TEA in EtOH)/CO<sub>2</sub> was tested but did not improve resolution significantly.

Lastly, whenever analysis times were too long, the flow-rate was increased from 3 mL/min to 4 mL/min for isoleucine, phenylalanine and carnitine and to 6 mL/min in case of histidine. The best results obtained for the ten amino-acids are summarized in Table 1.

191 3.3 Evaluation of the potential contribution of ELSD to extra-column band-192 broadening

193 ELSD is a useful universal detector for non-aromatic amino acids having week 194 UV-absorbance. However, this detector may generate additional extra-column bandbroadening. In order to study this phenomenon, the separation of phenylalanine 195 enantiomers on Lux i-Cellulose-5 was monitored with sequentially connected UV-VIS 196 and ELS detectors in a rather wide flow-rate range (from 2 to 8 mL/min). Selected 197 chromatograms are shown in Fig. 3 for medium and high flow-rates. As it can be seen 198 199 from these overlayed chromatograms, ELSD does not contribute significantly to extra-200 column band-broadening, at least not in this particular case.

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#### 202 **4.** Conclusions

As this study illustrates polysaccharide-based chiral columns may successfully be used for the separation of enantiomers of underivatized nonaromatic amino acids in SFC. As expected, the nature of the chiral selector and the composition of the mobile-phase play key roles for differentiation of enantiomers. Among studied chiral columns Lux i-Cellulose-5 having cellulose-(3,5-dichlorophenylcarbamate) as the chiral selector exhibited most wide enantiomer-resolving ability towards studied amino acids. ELSD did not cause any significant extra-column band-broadening.

210

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#### 347 Legends to the figures:

348	Fig. 1 Structure	e of (a)	studied	amino	acids	and	(b)	chiral	selectors	part	of	studied	chiral
349	columns												

- Fig. 2 Separation of enantiomers of (a) valine, (b) norvaline, (c) isoleucine and (d)
  norleucine on Lux i-Cellulose-5. Separation conditions were as shown in Table 1.
- Fig. 3 Chromatograms of phenylalanine enantiomers with the flow rates of the mobile
  phase (a) 8 mL/min and (b) 4 mL/min when detected with DAD and ELSD. Other
  separation conditions were as shown in Table 1.
- 355

#### 356 Supplementary Figures:

Figure S1 Chromatograms of Leucine and Norvaline with either MeOH or EtOH as co-solvent in 60% CO<sub>2</sub>, 3 mL/min, 40°C; 15 MPa back pressure;  $T_{ELSD}$  60°C; gain = 8.

Figure S2 Separation of enantiomers of norvaline on Lux i-Cellulose-5, with 20% EtOH and a) 0.3 %; b) 1.0% ; c) 2.0%; d) 3.0% ; e) 5.0% and f) 10% of TEA additive, at 4 mL/min, 40°C, 15 MPa,  $T_{ELSD}$  60°C, gain 8.



Fig. 1a



## Cellulose-based



Name	Nature	Selector		Name	Nature	Selector		
<u>Chiralpak</u> ® AD	Coated			<u>Chiralcel</u> ® OD	Coated			
Chiralpak® AS	Coated			Lux™ i Cellulose-5	Immobi- lized			
Lux™ Amylose-2	Coated			Lux™ Cellulose-2	<u>Coated</u>			
Chiralpak <sup>®</sup> IA	Immobi- lized			Chiralpak <sup>®</sup> IB	Immobi- lized			

Fig. 1b





Fig. 2

**Table 1**: Chromatographic parameters of the separation of underivatized amino acids under optimized conditions by SFC with ELS detection on

 Lux i-Celllulose-5.

Amino acid	Conditions	tr 1 (min)	tr₂(min)	k <sub>1</sub>	k <sub>2</sub>	α	Rs
Leucine	20% EtOH+TEA 3%, 3mL/min <sup>a)</sup>	11.44	16.05	6.15	9.00	1.49	1.63
Isoleucine	20% EtOH+TEA 3%, 4mL/min	10.51	15.43	5.57	8.64	1.55	1.61
Norleucine	20% EtOH+TEA 3%, 3mL/min	12.23	19.98	7.09	12.23	1.72	2.17
Phenylalanine	20% EtOH+TEA 0.3%, 4mL/min	14.62	20.46	11.72	16.79	1.43	1.59
Alanine	20% EtOH+TEA 3%, 3mL/min	16.08	23.76	10.08	15.38	1.50	1.53
Valine	20% EtOH+TEA 3%, 3mL/min	10.55	16.90	5.65	9.65	1.71	2.24
Norvaline	20% EtOH+TEA 3%, 3mL/min	12.90	19.59	6.77	10.80	1.60	1.83
Serine	20% EtOH+TEA 3%, 3mL/min	13.12	15.25	6.41	7.62	1.19	1.51
Carnitine	40% EtOH+TEA 3%, 4mL/min	11.12	16.21	10.34	15.54	1.50	1.95
Histidine	30% EtOH+TEA 0.3%, 6mL/min	14.37	21.47	16.96	26.17	1.25	1.99

a) Other experimental conditions were: The oven temperature 40°C, pressure 150 bar;  $T_{ELSD} = 60^{\circ}C$ ; gain = 8.