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TARGET VALIDATION AND EXPERIMENTAL ACTIVITY OF FUNCTIONALLY SUBSTITUTED 1,3,4-THIADIAZOLES: A CRITICAL SECONDARY ANALYSIS

Basirova Guzel Rasulovna
Andijan State Medical Institute
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Abstract Background: Molecular docking and animal experiments have both been reported for functionally substituted 1,3,4-thiadiazoles, but interpretation requires careful alignment of computational targets with disease biology. Objective: To critically integrate previously published docking observations with in vivo anti-inflammatory and glucose-lowering findings while checking the identity of the deposited protein structures. Methods: A secondary narrative appraisal of three publications from 2024 was undertaken. Reported ligand identities, protein Data Bank codes, carrageenan-induced edema and alloxan-induced hyperglycemia outcomes were extracted without generating new docking scores or biological measurements. The target identifiers were checked against their Protein Data Bank records. Results: The original docking abstract identified diethyl 2,2′-((1,3,4-thiadiazole-2,5-diyl)bis(sulfanediyl))diacetate as a promising ligand, whereas an animal study highlighted the corresponding diacetohydrazide in assays of inflammation and glycemia. Critically, PDB 6W5C represents a Cas12i–RNA–DNA complex rather than a validated inflammatory target; PDB 2DSQ describes an insulin-like growth factor/IGF-binding protein complex, not a validated antidiabetic therapeutic target in the cited report. Conclusion: The animal results justify further investigation of selected thiadiazoles, but the docking claims cannot currently be taken as mechanistic confirmation. Re-docking against validated disease-relevant targets and independent experimental validation are needed.

Keywords:1,3,4-thiadiazole; molecular docking; target validation; carrageenan-induced edema; alloxan-induced diabetes; critical appraisal.

Introduction

1,3,4-Thiadiazole derivatives offer structural diversity for medicinal chemistry investigation. A 2024 conference abstract reported docking of four thiadiazole-related compounds using AutoDock against PDB structures labelled 6W5C and 2DSQ [1]. A separate experimental paper reported anti-inflammatory and glucose-lowering observations for derivatives from this chemical series [2], while another publication detailed acute oral tolerability and carrageenan-induced edema experiments [3]. Together, these reports permit a critical review of concordance between computational prioritisation and biological screening.

Docking poses and calculated affinities are, however, target-specific hypotheses rather than direct evidence of pharmacological efficacy. The biological interpretation of an affinity score depends on correct protein identity, biological relevance, ligand preparation, control compounds and validation against reference ligands. The purpose of this analysis is to distinguish what the prior data show from what remains untested.

Materials and methods

Study design. This is a secondary documentary analysis of three publications released in 2024 [1–3], supplemented by validation of deposited target identities through primary RCSB Protein Data Bank descriptions [4,5]. No docking simulations, animal treatments, spectral measurements or inferential statistical tests were undertaken for this manuscript.

Information extraction. We recorded the four derivatives named in the docking abstract, the two reported PDB codes, the stated leading docking candidate, and the summary experimental findings for inflammation, glycemia and acute toxicity. The publications did not report a numeric affinity table, docking search-space coordinates, protein preparation settings, binding-site validation, RMSD or experimental biochemical target inhibition. These absent values were not imputed.

Terminology. The original papers use variable transliterations for the sulfur-linked diacetate and diacetohydrazide; these are treated as distinct compounds and never conflated. Data from different assays are not presented as if derived from one directly comparable experiment.

Table 1. Verification of protein identifiers originally used for docking.

PDB ID	Verified deposited structure	Implication
6W5C	Cas12i(E894A)–crRNA–dsDNA complex	Not a validated mammalian inflammation target
2DSQ	IGF/IGF-binding protein complex	Biologically relevant to IGF, but does not establish antidiabetic target inhibition

Results

Computational prioritisation. The docking conference abstract compared 2,5-dimercapto-1,3,4-thiadiazole, 5-phenyl-1,3,4-thiadiazol-2-amine, a bis(sulfanediyl)-linked diethyl diacetate, and a related diacetohydrazide. Its stated principal finding was preferential binding for the diethyl diacetate [1]. In the absence of numerical docking scores or reference ligands, neither the magnitude nor reproducibility of this ranking can be independently evaluated.

Protein identity check. Entry 6W5C is explicitly annotated as a cryo-electron microscopy structure of a Cas12i(E894A)–crRNA–double-stranded DNA complex [4]. Entry 2DSQ is a structure involving insulin-like growth factor and IGF-binding proteins [5]. Thus, describing the two entries simply as an inflammatory protein and a diabetes protein does not establish disease-specific target engagement. In particular, 6W5C is not an obvious direct mediator of mammalian inflammation; 2DSQ belongs to growth-factor biology but docking to it would not by itself imply a glucose-lowering effect.

Experimental cross-check. The pharmacology publication reported 40% reduction in carrageenan-induced edema at 50 mg/kg for the diacetohydrazide derivative after 24 h and a blood-glucose measurement of 5.2 ± 0.39 mmol/L on day 14 in the alloxan model for this derivative at 50 mg/kg [2]. Those findings concern a different leading compound than the docking abstract and should not be described as a direct confirmation of its docking ranking.

Table 2. Distinct reported lead findings across the published studies.

Evidence stream	Reported lead	Interpretation
Docking abstract [1]	Diethyl bis(sulfanediyl)	Qualitative ranking only;

	diacetate	numeric scores absent
Anti-inflammatory study [2,3]	Bis(sulfanediyl) diacetohydrazide at 50 mg/kg	Reported 40% edema inhibition at 24 h
Glucose study [2]	Bis(sulfanediyl) diacetohydrazide at 50 mg/kg	Day-14 glucose 5.2 ± 0.39 mmol/L

Discussion

The main result of this appraisal is an interpretive discrepancy, not a demonstration that the studied chemicals are inactive. The docking observations may remain useful as preliminary exploratory calculations, but neither protein identifier supports the simple therapeutic-target labels used in the original abstract. Correcting or substantiating protein identity is therefore a prerequisite for mechanistic conclusions.

A robust future workflow should first select a named mammalian protein with a defensible causal role in the chosen indication, verify its RCSB annotation and active-site biology, validate docking by re-docking a crystallographic ligand where possible, report affinity distributions and binding interactions, and use orthogonal enzyme or cell-based assays before attempting to interpret animal outcomes mechanistically. For glycemia experiments, possible targets must be selected on a biological rationale rather than only on their association with insulin-related pathways.

The previously reported in vivo findings are screening observations and cannot establish clinical utility. They do, nonetheless, identify the diacetohydrazide as a candidate for mechanistic and pharmacokinetic assessment. The possibility that different physicochemical properties favor docking scores and in vivo efficacy is a hypothesis, not a demonstrated structure–activity relationship.

Limitations

Only publicly reported summaries were available; original docking input files, target validation, per-animal observations, intervention randomisation/blinding and complete statistical output were unavailable. The experimental and docking reports may involve nonidentical subsets of compounds. No original data were generated in this analysis. The previous publications must be disclosed to any prospective journal because the present paper reinterprets previously published results.

Conclusion

The 2024 studies provide preliminary experimental reasons to investigate 1,3,4-thiadiazole derivatives. Nevertheless, the deposited structures 6W5C and 2DSQ do not support the uncomplicated inflammation/diabetes target designations used in the original docking report. Target verification and reproducible docking, followed by functional target-level validation, should precede mechanistic or drug-development claims.

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