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A QSAR study on non-specific protein absorption on affinity resins

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Tubulin and actin often bind non-specifically to affinity chromatography resins, complicating research toward identifying the cellular targets of small molecules. Reduction of non-specific binding proteins is important for the success of such biochemical approaches. We quantitatively investigated the binding of tubulin and actin to a series of affinity resins bearing fifteen variant ligands on three commercially available polymer supports. Non-specific protein binding was proportional to the hydrophobicity of the affinity resins and could be quantitatively correlated to the CLOGP values of the ligands, which are a measure of compound hydrophobicity. When compounds had CLOGP values greater than 1.5, (amount of tubulin)= $0.73 \times \text{CLOGP} - 1.1$ ($n=7$, $r=0.97$), and (amount of actin)= $0.42 \times \text{CLOGP} - 0.79$ ($n=7$, $r=0.99$). Based on these studies, we designed a novel hydrophilic polyethyleneglycol (PEG) spacer for the conjugation of ligands to chromatography resins. As predicted by our binding algorithm, introduction of this spacer reduced the amount of non-specific protein binding in proportion to number of ethylene glycol units