Docking Studies of Chlorogenic Acid against Aldose Redutcase by using Molgro Virtual Docker Software

Sadaf Naeem[1], Peter Hylands[2] and David Barlow[2]

[1]Biophysics Unit, Department of Biochemistry, University of Karachi, Karachi-75270, Pakistan
[2]Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, Franklin-Wilkin Building, King's College London, 150 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NH, United Kingdom.

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Docking studies of chlorogenic acid against aldose reductase, an enzyme involved in diabetic complications, have been performed, in order to evaluate the inhibitory effects of chlorogenic acid on this enzyme. The docking studies were performed using Molgro Virtual Docker (MVD) software. From the several available alternative methods to incorporate protein flexibility in docking studies, the use of multiple crystal structures with different bound ligands was applied here, thus, of the available crystal structures of the non- mutated aldose reductase enzyme from *Homo sapiens*, five were selected for the final docking studies. The docking results of chlorogenic acid with selected aldose reductase crystal structures shows that it forms hydrogen bonds with at least two out of three key active site residues (Tyr48, His110 and Trp111). It also form hydrogen bonds to other active site residues, in particular Thr113. The average MolDock score and the MolDock Re-rank score for cholorogenic acid are -119.34 Kcal/mol and -114.92 Kcal/mol respectively. The docking results show that chlorogenic acid fits well in the active site of aldose reductase and interact with the residues in the active site which are crucial for their biological activity, thus, it could a potent inhibitor of aldose reductase enzyme and thus be used for prevention/treatment of diabetic complications.

INTRODUCTION

Chlorogenic acid (5-O-caffeoylquinic acid), a phenolic compound found ubiquitously in plants, is an antioxidant and metal chelator (Kono *et al*., 1998). It has been reported that the intake of this compound in diabetic rats, lowered glucose concentration (Andrade-Cetto and Wiedenfeld, 2001; Rodriguez de Sotillo and Hadley, 2002) and the intake of *Cecropia obtusifolia* leaf extracts, that are rich in chlorogenic acid, resulted in a significant reduction in plasma glucose concentrations in persons with type 2 diabetes (Herrera-Arellano *et al*., 2004). Although, various preventive effects of cholorogenic acid on diabetes were reported but the effects of this compound on diabetic complications are still unknown. Therefore, the effect of chlorogenic acid on aldose reductase, an enzyme involved in diabetic complications such as retinopathy (Reddy *et al*., 2008, Van den Enden *et al*., 1995), nephropathy (Sato *et al*., 1992, Dunlop *et al*., 2000), neuropathy (Oates *et al*., 1997), cataract formation (Lee *et al*. 1995) or angiopathy (Jay *et al*., 2006) has been studies here.

* *Corresponding Author*
Email: sadafnaeem_4@yahoo.com
Mobile: +92-(0)331-2071530

Aldose reductase (EC 1.1.1.21, AR), first and the rate limiting enzyme of the polyol pathway converts glucose to sorbitol, in the presence of NADPH as reducing cofactor. The second enzyme of the pathway, sorbitol dehydrogenase (EC 1.1.1.14), oxidizes sorbitol to fructose with NAD as cofactor (Yabe-Nishimura *et al.,* 1998; Brownlee *et al*., 2001). Various studies have showed that the patho-physiological activity of aldose reductase (AR) plays a key role in the development of diabetic complications (Yabe-Nishimura *et al*., 1998; Kador *et al*., 1988; Tomlinson *et al*., 1994; King *et al*., 1996). So, a possible strategy to prevent the onset and progression of the diabetic complications is to inhibit this enzyme (Miyomoto *et al*., 2002; Costantino *et al*., 2000; Srivastava *et al.,* 2005; Costantino *et al.,* 1999). Several crystal structures of aldose reductase have been solved by X-ray diffraction complexed with NADPH (Figure 1) and diverse aldose reductase inhibitors (ARIs). All these crystal structures have shown that the active site of this enzyme is a large, deep, ellipsoidal cavity, approximately 4 Å x 15Å wide and 15 Å deep, wherein the nicotinamide ring of the NADPH cofactor and the substrate-binding site are found. The binding site is divided into 2 sub-pockets (Figure 2): an anion binding site and a specificity pocket.
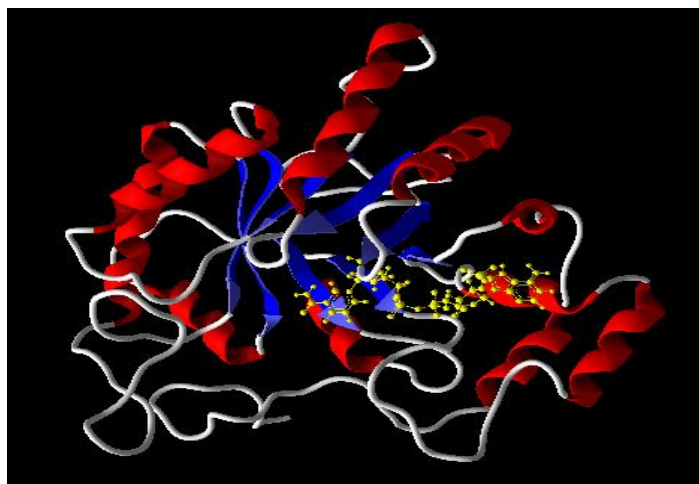
Fig. 1: Structural cartoon of aldose redutase (PDB code 1ADS; Wilson, 1992) [The α helices and β strands are represented as coils (red) and arrows (blue), respectively. NADPH is represented in ball and stick (yellow). Model prepared using MolDock (Thomsen, 2006)].
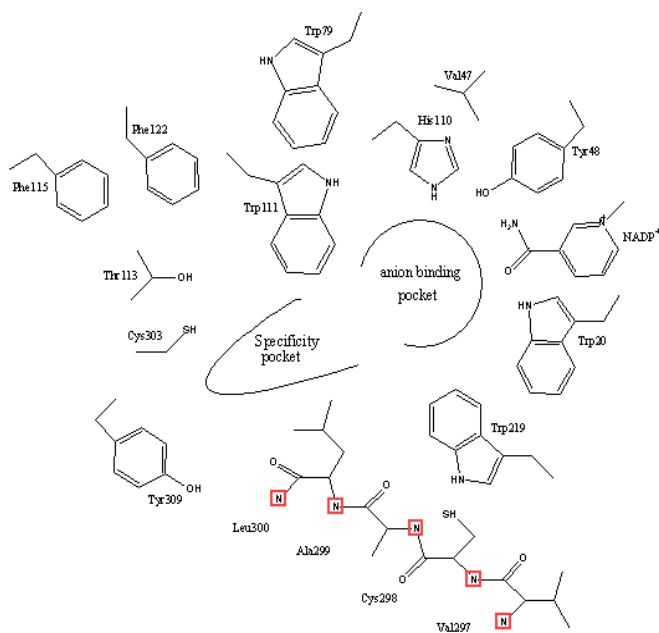

Fig. 2: A schematic diagram showing the ligand binding site of aldose reductase (Adapted from Sotriffer, 2004).

The anion binding pocket is formed by hydrophilic residues (Tyr48, His110, Trp111) and the 4-*pro*-R-hydrogen of the nicotinamide ring of NADPH and involved in catalysis, whereas, the second, specificity pocket is formed by hydrophobic residues Trp111, Trp20, Trp79, Ala299, Leu300 and Phe122. (Yabe-Nishimura *et al.,* 1998; El-Kabbani *et al.,* 1997**,** Nakano *et al.,* 1996). It can adopt various conformations depending on the size and properties of the bound ligand and is responsible for the various substrate and inhibitor specificities. (Harrison *et al.,* 1997). Hydrogen bonds are formed between the polar groups of the inhibitor and the active-site residues Tyr48, His110, and Trp111 AR (Wilson *et al.,* 1993; Urzhumtsev *et al.,* 1997; Harrison *et al.,* 1997; Rogniaux *et al.,* 1999; Oka *et al*., 2000).

Thus, the inhibitor binding site is a positively charged

anion well formed by Tyr48, His110 and the nicotinamide ring (Harrison *et al.,* 1997; Harrison *et al.,* 1994) and the required structural elements of aldose reductase inhibitors are proposed as an aromatic ring system to form hydrophobic or π-π stacking interactions with the hydrophobic amino acid residues in the active site (Tyr20) and an acidic ionisable group such as those of carboxylic acids and spirohydantoin which can anchor to the anionic binding site (Asp43$^-$/Lys77$^+$/Tyr48$^-$/NADP$^+$complex (Miyamoto *et al.,* 2002a; Lee *et al.,* 1998; Sun *et al.,* 2003).

During this study, cholrogenic acid have been docked into the active site of aldose resductase by using the Molgro Virtual Docker (MVD) software. Docking methods typically use an energy-based scoring function to identify the most energetically favorable conformation of a ligand when bound to the macromolecular target. Lower energy scores indicates more favored protein-ligand complexes. Molecular docking is thus an optimization problem, where the task is to find the ligand binding mode with lowest potential energy. The process of docking involves sampling the coordinate space of the target binding site and scoring each possible ligand pose within that site, the highest scoring pose then taken as the predicted binding mode for that compound. There are many different docking programs now available and they differ in the nature of the sampling algorithms they employ, in their manner of handling ligand and protein flexibility, in the scoring functions they use, and in the cpu time they required. Some of the most widely used docking programs include: Gold (Jones *et al*., 1995, 1997), Dock (Ewing *et al.,* 2001), FlexX (Rarey, *et al.,* 1996; Kramer *et al.,* 1999), Glide (Halgren *et al.,* 2004; Friesner *et al.,* 2004), Fred (McGann *et al*., 2003), LigandFit (Venkatachalam *et al.,* 2003), Slide (Schnecke *et al*., 2000) , AutoDock (Morris *et al.,* 1998), ICM (Abagyan *et al*., 1994), QXP (McMartin *et al.,* 1997), Surflex (Jain, 2003) and MVD (Thomsen *et al*., 2006).

Each of these programs attempts to predict the most likely structures of protein-ligand complexes and then to quantify the free energy of ligand binding, at the same time keeping the computing time within acceptable limits to allow for a rapid docking of large chemical libraries. In the studies reported here, MVD was used, because it showed higher docking accuracy when benchmarked against other available docking programs (MD: 87%, Glide:82%, Surflex:75%, FlexX:58%) (Thomsen *et al.,* 2006) and has been shown to be successful in several recent studies (Pripp, 2007; Sapre *et al.,* 2008; Chauhan *et al.,* 2009; Paul *et al.,* 2010), but also for reasons of cost and user-friendliness. In most docking studies, the target proteins are assumed to be rigid objects. This major assumption (neglecting protein flexibility) can cause errors (Carlson *et al*., 2000) and lead to inaccurate binding pose (Cavasotto *et al*., 2004; Osterberg *et al.,* 2002; Murray *et al*., 1999). Proteins are flexible and dynamic objects and using a single protein conformation ignores important dynamic aspects of protein ligand binding (Jorgensen *et al*., 1991). Dealing with protein flexibility is one of the major challenges in the development of docking methods (Klebe *et al*., 2006; Sousa *et al*., 2006; Teague *et al.,* 2003) - because of the high

dimensionality of the search space involved and because of the complexity of energy function to be computed. Thus, a number of attempts have been made to introduce protein flexibility into docking protocols (Carlson *et al.*, 2002; Klebe *et al.*, 2006; Guvench *et al.,* 2009), among which the use of multiple protein crystal structures is considered the best option to take advantage of the full flexibility of the receptor (Carlson *et al.*, 2000).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this study, docking of cholorogenic acid against AR have been performed using MVD software. Usually, a single rigid crystal structure of an enzyme is used for docking studies, but here in order to incorporate the protein flexibility in this docking studies, five different crystal structures of AR, were selected (Table 1), from the available 95 crystal structures of AR (June 2009) held in the Protein Databank (PDB) (Deshpande 2005) accessed at the URL: (http://www.rcsb.org/pdb), - under the criteria that they had a reasonable resolution ($\leq$ 2.8 Å) and involved the *non-mutated* aldose reductase enzyme from *Homo sapiens*, in complex with different ligands.

Chlorogenic acid have been docked against each of these five selected AR crystal structures and 10 independent runs were performed with the guided differential evolution algorithm, with each of these docking runs returning one solution (pose). The MolDock scoring function used by MVD is derived from the PLP scoring functions originally proposed by Gehlhaar *et al.* (1995, 1998) and extended later by Yang *et al.* (2004).

The 10 solutions obtained from the 10 independent docking runs were re-ranked, in order to further increase the docking accuracy, by using a more complex scoring function. In MVD, along with the docking scoring function terms, a Lennard Jones 12-6 potential (Morris, 1998) and sp^2-sp^2 torsion terms were also used. On the basis of pilot docking studies, the MolDock re-rank scores were selected for ranking the inhibitor poses, and for all the aldose reductase docking performed here, the poses selected as the best were taken as those with the highest MolDock re-rank score. Aldose reductase crystal structures were directly downloaded to the workspace of MVD from the PDB (Deshpande, 2005) accessed at the URL: (http://www.rcsb.org/pdb). The structure of chlorogenic acid has been drawn on ChemDraw software and imported to the MVD workspace in 'sdf' format. In order to make accurate predictions, it is important that the imported structures have been properly prepared, that is, the atom connectivity and bond orders are correct and partial atomic charges are assigned. PDB files often have poor or missing assignment of explicit hydrogens, and the PDB file format cannot accommodate bond order information. All necessary valency checks and H atom addition were thus performed using the utilities provided in MVD. The binding site specifies the region of interest where the docking procedure will look for promising poses (ligand conformations). MolDock automatically identifies potential binding sites (also referred as cavities or active sites) by using its cavity detection algorithm. The cavities within a 30 x 30 x 30 $Å^3$ cube centered at

the experimentally known ligand position were used. The cavities that are identified by the cavity detection algorithm are then used by the guided differential evolution search algorithm to focus the search, to that specific area during the docking simulation. In the case of the crystal structures for aldose reductase complexes, the program generally identified five different binding sites (Figure 3). From these five predicted cavities the one with the highest volume (205.13 $Å^3$) was selected for consideration, as it includes the bound ligand.
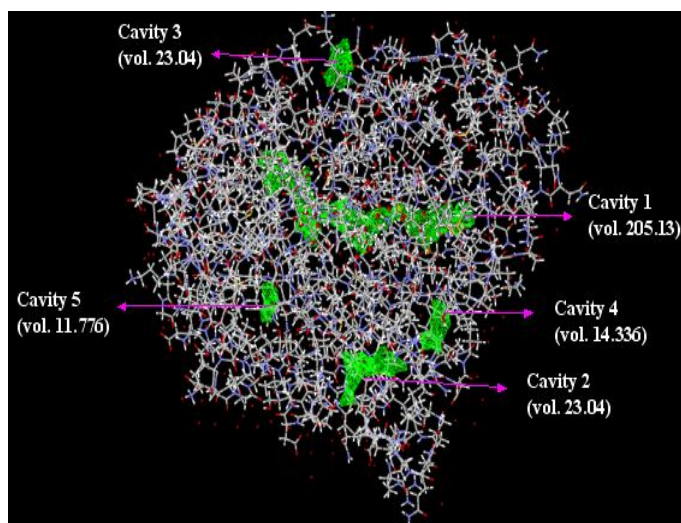

Fig. 3: The five MVD-detected cavities in AR, and their calculated volumes (in Å) (PDB code: 1T40 (Ruiz, 2004); detected cavities: green; carbon atoms: grey; oxygen atoms: red; nitrogen atoms: blue)

The number of runs specifies the number of times that the docking simulation is repeated for each ligand chosen to be docked. By default MVD sets the number of docking runs '*n*' as 10. Pilot docking studies were first conducted with *n* = 10, 50 and 100, to determine if the increase in number of runs yielded improvements in docking scores/success, but no improvements in docking results were observed with the increase in *n*, so all the studies reported here used *n* = 10.
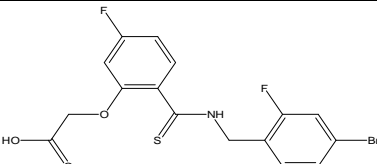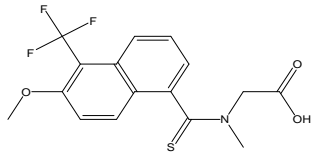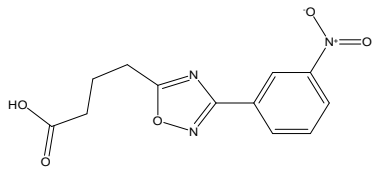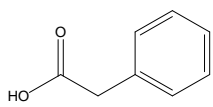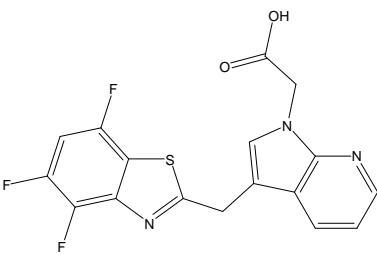
For each AR docking, each pose was inspected individually and the interaction of the ligand with the amino acids in the binding site viewed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most convenient way to incorporate protein flexibility in the docking process is to perform docking using an ensemble of static receptor conformations and nowadays, this approach is applied more and more in virtual screening experiments (Bowman *et al.*, 2007b; Cheng *et al.*, 2008).

It is this approach that was applied here, using a collection of selected AR crystal structures with different bound ligands to provide different conformations of the protein and allow for structural changes in the protein upon ligand binding (Subramanian *et al.,* 2006). Thus, five of the aldose reductase crystal structures bound to different ligands— 2FZD, IUS0, 3G5E, 2INE and 2IKG were used in this study (Table 1).

Table. 1: List of crystal structures of aldose reductase used for docking studies (PDB ID = four character PDB identifier representing each entry).

PDB ID	Ligand	Ligand structure	Ligand volume (Å)	Reference
1US0	IDD594		921.8	Howard, 2004
2FZD	Tolrestat		860.2	Steuber, 2006
2IKG	Nitrophenyl oxadiazole type inhibitor		729	Steuber, 2007
2INE	Phenylacetic acid		480.8	Brownlee, 2006
3G5E	IDD740		898.2	Van Zandt, 2009

(Kinoshita *et al.,* 2002; Steuber *et al.,* 2007; Steuber *et al.,* 2006; Van Zandt *et al.,* 2009; Howard *et al.,* 2004.

Chlorogenic acid was docked with all of these five selected human crystal structures of AR bound to different ligands. In each docking run, the best poses were selected on the basis of their MVD re-rank scores and the mean of the 5 re-rank scores was then computed as the final score for each compound.

The MVD score and the re-rank scores of the best poses for each of the docking studies of chlorogenic acid with five crystal structures of AR, and their average is presented in Table 2. The average MolDock score and the MolDock Re-rank score obtained for cholorogenic acid are -119.34 Kcal/mol and -114.92 Kcal/mol respectively. The best docking poses obtained on the basis of MVD re-rank score for chlorogenic acid with each of the 5 crystal structures of aldose reductase are presented in Figures 4. The reported crystallographic studies have shown that the interactions of ligands in the catalytic site of AR are mostly polar (Howard *et al.,* 2004), and in most of the AR crystal structures involving the more potent inhibition, these compounds are all carboxylic acids, with their carboxylate groups firmly anchored in the active site, with hydrogen bonds to His110, Tyr48, and Trp111

Chlorogenic acid (Figure 4a) is formed by the esterification of caffeic acid and quinic acids. While docking of chlorogenic acid with the five crystal structures of aldose reductase, it is oriented in the active site such that it forms hydrogen bond with at least two of the three key residues i.e. Tyr48, His110 and Trp111.

Table. 2: MVD and Re-rank score (kcal/mol) for chlorogenic acid when docked with five aldose reductase crystal structures.

	MolDock Score	MolDock Rerank Score
2FZD	-107.75	-101.48
2IKG	-92.35	-91.368
2INE	-122.83	-119.73
3G5E	-132.78	-127.71
IUS0	-140.99	-134.32
Average Score	-119.34 ± 19.5	-114.92 ± 18

Along with these three residues hydrogen bonds are also formed with some other active site amino acids among which Cys298 and Thr113 are most frequent.
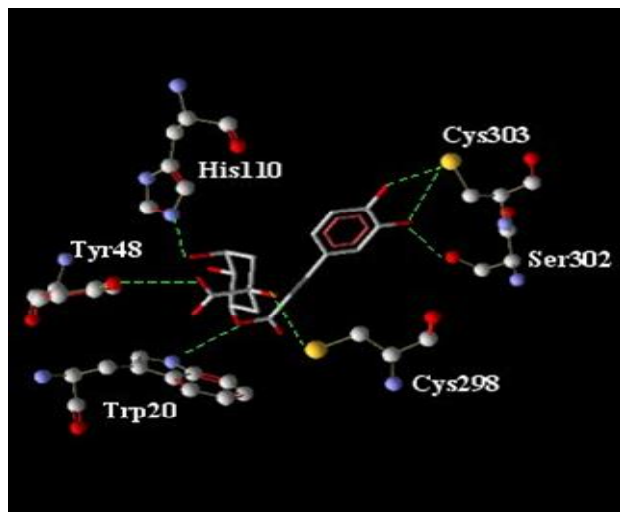
The comparison of the binding of Tolrestat in the active site of aldose reductase (PDB ID: 2FZD) (Figure 5a) and docking of cholorogenic acid in the active site of the same enzyme (Figure 5b) clearly shows similarity in the binding of the two compounds.
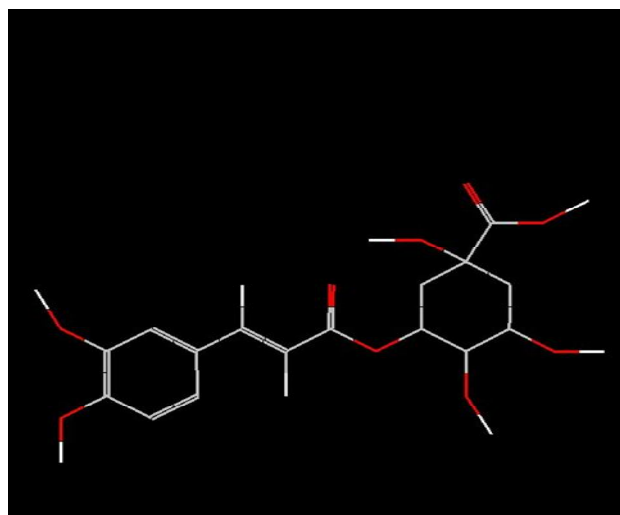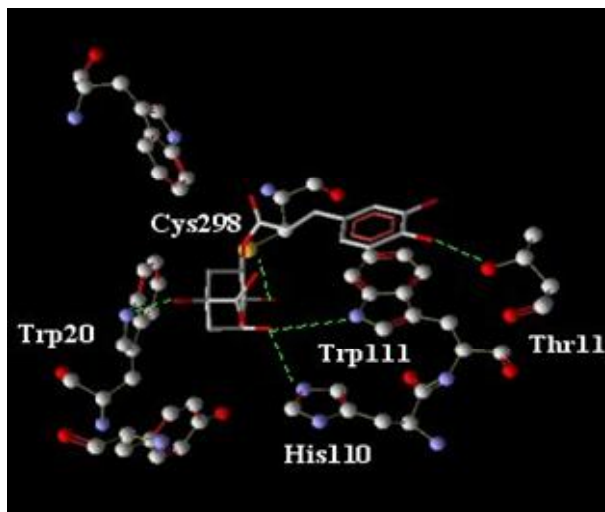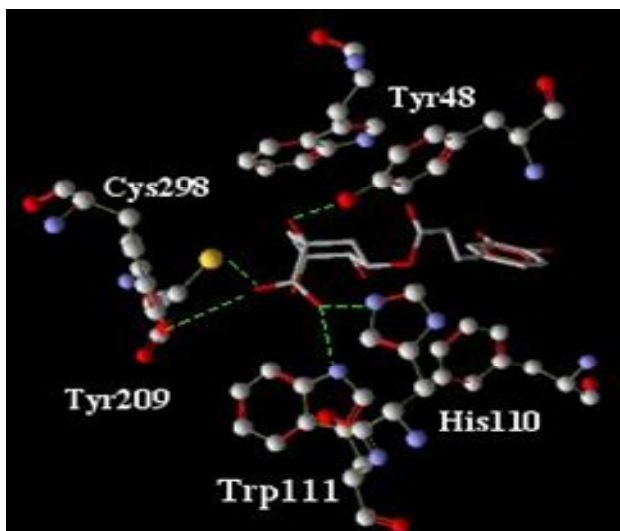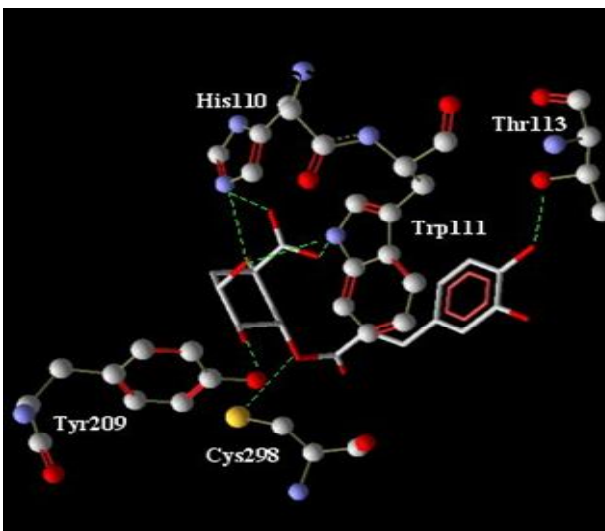
A-chiorogenicacid
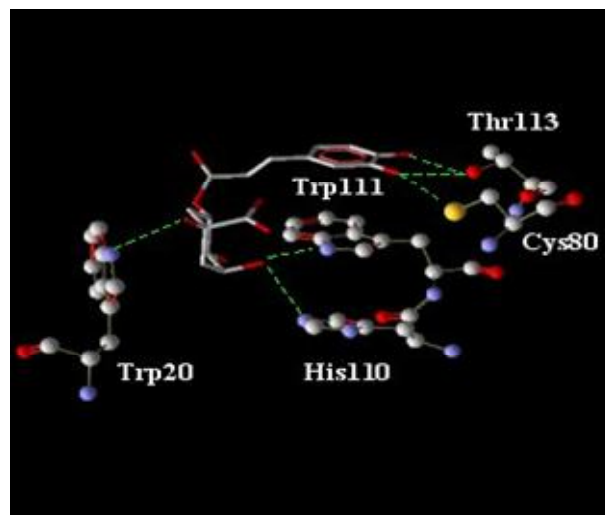
B- 1USO

C-2FZD

D-2IKG

E-2INL

F-3GSE

Fig. 4: The best scored docking solution of Chlorogenic acid (a) with the five selected crystal structures of AR (b to f). (The coenzyme NADPH is removed for the sake of clarity. Amino acids in the active site are presented in ball and stick with element colour and ligand is presented in thick lines with element colour (where carbon is grey, oxygen is red, nitrogen is blue and sulphur is yellow and hydrogen in white). Green lines represent the hydrogen bonds in between the ligand and the active site of AR).
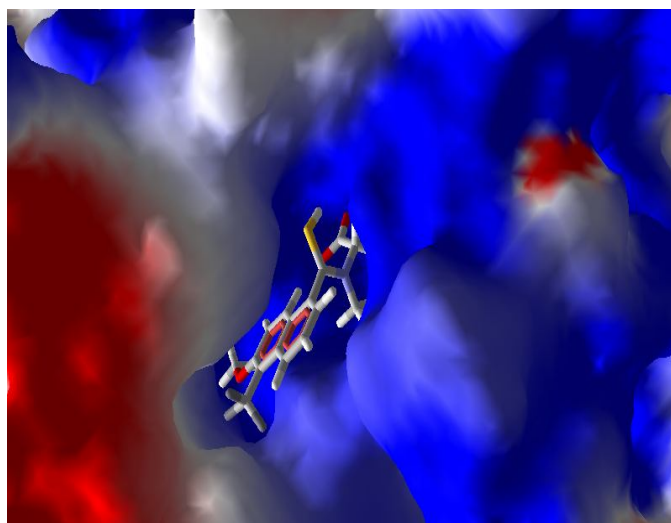
Fig. 5a: Binding of Tolrestat in the active site of aldose redustase (PDB ID 2FZD)[The anion binding pocket is at top right (blue) and specificity pocket is at bottom left (red)].
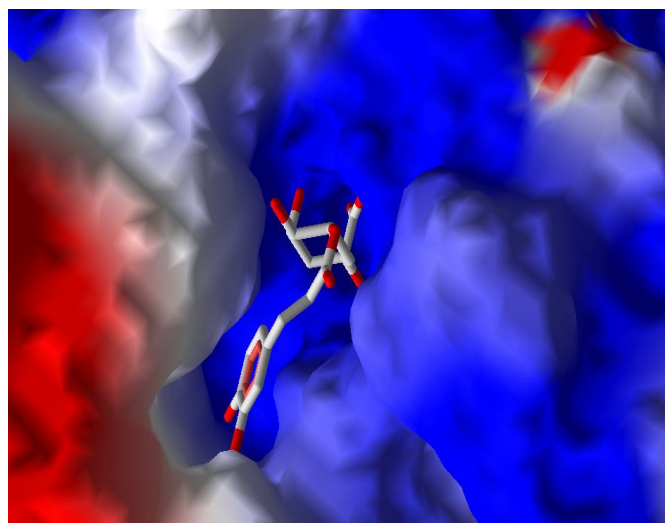

Fig. 5b: Docking of chlorogenic acid into the AR active site in 2FZD [The anion binding pocket is at top right (blue) and specificity pocket is at bottom left (red)].

CONCLUSION

The docking studies detailed above provide estimates of the inhibitory activities of the docked ligand. The results show that chlorogenic acid fits well in the active site of aldose reductase and also interact with the residues in the active site which are important for their biological activity, thus, chlorogenic acid could be a putative inhibitor of aldose reductase and can be used to prevent the onset/treatment of diabetic complications.

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