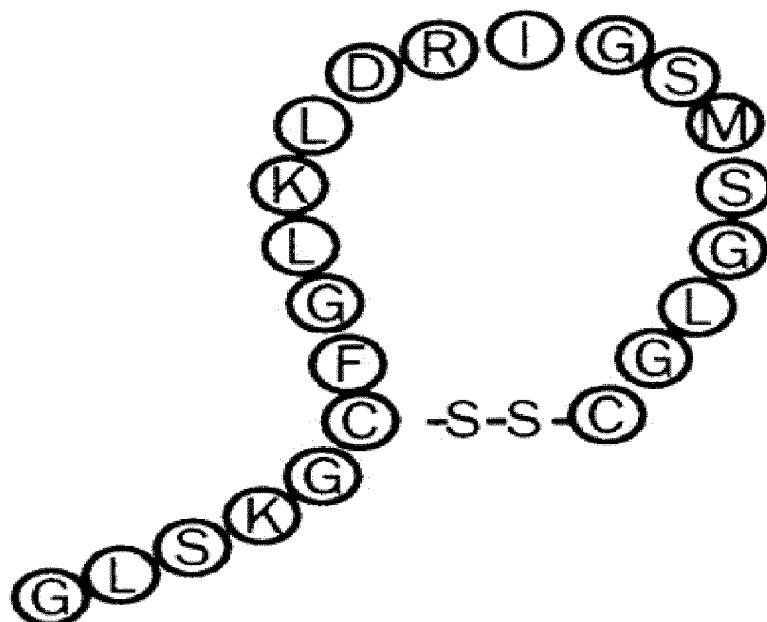




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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: CNP PRODRUGS WITH CARRIER ATTACHMENT AT THE RING MOIETY



(57) Abstract: The present invention relates to CNP prodrugs in which the carrier is covalently and reversibly attached to the ring moiety of a CNP moiety, to pharmaceutical compositions comprising such CNP prodrugs, to their uses and to methods of treating diseases that can be treated with the CNP prodrugs of the present invention.

Fig. 1

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CNP prodrugs with carrier attachment at the ring moiety

The present invention relates to CNP prodrugs in which the carrier is covalently and reversibly attached to the ring moiety of a CNP moiety, to pharmaceutical compositions comprising such CNP prodrugs, to their uses and to methods of treating diseases that can be treated with the CNP prodrugs of the present invention.

Gain-of-function mutations in FGFR3 lead to achondroplasia (ACH), hypochondroplasia (HCH), and thanatophoric dysplasia (TD). These conditions, all due to increased signaling of fibroblast-growth-factor-receptor 3 (FGFR3), are characterized by a disproportionate rhizomelic dwarfism and differ in severity, which ranges from mild (HCH) to severe (ACH) and lethal (TD). FGFR3 is a key regulator of endochondral bone growth and signals through several intracellular pathways, including those of the signal transducer and activator of transcription (STAT) and mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK). FGFR3 constitutive activation impairs proliferation and terminal differentiation of the growth-plate chondrocytes and synthesis of the extracellular matrix. FGFR3 activation is associated with increased phosphorylation of the STAT and MAPK pathways. The MAPK signaling pathway is regulated by C-type natriuretic peptide (CNP). Binding of CNP to its receptor, natriuretic-peptide receptor B (NPR-B), inhibits FGFR3 downstream signaling and thus triggers endochondral growth and skeletal overgrowth, as observed in both mice and humans overexpressing CNP. Overproduction of CNP in the cartilage or continuous delivery of CNP through intravenous (iv) infusion normalizes the dwarfism of achondroplastic mice, suggesting that administration of CNP at supraphysiological levels is a strategy for treating ACH.

However, given its short half-life of CNP-22 (2 min after intravenous (iv) administration) CNP as a therapeutic agent is challenging in a pediatric population because it would require continuous infusion. Furthermore, as CNP is extensively inactivated in the subcutaneous tissue iv infusion is required.

Potter (FEBS Journal 278 (2011) 1808–1817) describes the clearance of CNP to occur by two degradation routes: receptor-mediated degradation and degradation by extracellular proteases. CNP is degraded by the action of neutral endopeptidase 24.11 (NEP) and is removed from systemic circulation by natriuretic peptide clearance receptor, NPR-C, that binds to and deposits CNP into lysosomes, where CNP is degraded.

Reducing degradation by one or both of these clearance routes would serve to prolong the half-life of CNP.

Due to the limited size of its active site cavity, NEP preferably recognizes substrates smaller than about 3 kDa. US 8,377,884 B2 describe variants of CNP which optionally are permanently conjugated to PEG polymer to increase resistance to NEP cleavage. However, addition of PEG, even as small as 0.6 kDa, to wild-type CNP was found to reduce CNP activity, and addition of greater than about 2 or 3 kDa of PEG to CNP or variants thereof reduce CNP activity in a size-dependent manner. Therefore, attachment of PEG molecules larger than 2 to 3 kDa to reduce NEP degradation is accompanied by a loss of activity, which may reduce the therapeutic potential of such molecules.

In addition to negatively impacting activity of the peptide, conjugation of PEG or another macromolecule to CNP may also prevent effective distribution to the growth plate. Farnum et al. (*Anat Rec A Discov Mol Cell Evol Biol.* 2006 January; 288(1): 91–103) demonstrated that distribution of molecules from the systemic vasculature to the growth plate was size dependent, and that small molecules (up to 10 kDa) could distribute to the growth plate, whereas a molecular size of 40 kDa and larger prevented entry to the growth plate.

International application WO 2009/156481 A1 relates to reversible PEG-conjugates of BNP which term was defined as including all members of the family of natriuretic peptides. This application only focuses on the cardiovascular effects of this class of peptides, which are mediated through the natriuretic peptide receptor A (NPR-A). WO 2009/156481 A1 fails to disclose CNP's specific properties regarding the regulating of growth, proliferation and differentiation of cartilaginous growth plate chondrocytes, mediated via activation of the natriuretic peptide receptor B (NPR-B).

A different approach to create a NEP resistant CNP molecule and enable subcutaneous administration was described in *The American Journal of Human Genetics* 91, 1108–1114. BMN-111 is a modified recombinant human C-type Natriuretic Peptide (CNP) where 17 amino acids have been added to form a 39 amino acid CNP pharmacological analog. BMN-111 mimics CNP pharmacological activity at the growth plate and has an extended half-life as a result of neutral-endopeptidase (NEP) resistance that allows once-daily subcutaneous (SC) administration. As BMN-111 is a non-natural occurring peptide, the risk of inducing an

immunological response is increased compared to the native peptide, and as described by Martz in "sFGFR for achondroplasia" (SciBx, Biocentury October 2013), an immunological response to BMN-111 has been observed in animal studies, with the presence of antibodies not affecting the pharmacological activity of the drug. However, BMN-111 only has a half-life of 20 minutes, which when dosed daily is associated with a short duration of exposure to efficacious drug levels.

To increase exposure to efficacious drug levels the dose of the drug having CNP activity may be increased. As natriuretic peptides are a family of hormones that may affect blood volume and blood pressure, an increase in dose may be associated with cardiovascular adverse effects. Studies of BMN-111 in animals and man have demonstrated that as the dose increases, arterial blood pressure drops and heart rate increases. Doses of BMN-111 up to 15 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ were associated with mild hypotension in healthy volunteers. Therefore increasing the dose of a drug having CNP activity to increase drug exposure may be associated with unacceptable cardiovascular side effects.

In WO2009/0676639A2 and WO2010/135541A2 the use of PEGylated CNP is contemplated. However, the authors consider retaining the functionality of such a PEGylated CNP an essential property of their conjugates. Therefore, the PEGylated CNP conjugates disclosed therein maintain their ability to bind to NPR-B and thus still pose the problem of hypotension.

In summary, there is a need for a more convenient and safer CNP treatment with a reduced risk of hypotension.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to at least partially overcome the shortcomings described above.

This object is achieved with a CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof comprising

- a CNP moiety -D comprising a ring moiety; and
- a carrier moiety -Z that is conjugated through a moiety -L²- to a reversible prodrug linker moiety -L¹-, which reversible prodrug linker moiety -L¹- is covalently and reversibly conjugated to a side chain of an amino acid residue of

said ring moiety of -D or to the backbone of said ring moiety of -D; and wherein -L²- is a chemical bond or a spacer.

5 It was surprisingly found that attachment of a carrier -Z through a reversible prodrug linker moiety to the ring of a CNP moiety significantly reduces binding of the prodrug to the NPR-B receptor compared to, for example, N-terminal attachment or attachment outside the ring moiety of CNP. This allows the administration of a CNP compound with low or nearly no residual activity, i.e. with reduced NPR-B binding, which in turn reduces the risk of hypotension. As the attachment of the polymer -Z to the CNP moiety is reversible, NPR-B
10 binding is restored upon release from the CNP prodrug and the released CNP can be effectively distributed to the growth plate.

This combination of initial inactivity towards NPR-B and subsequent controlled release from the prodrug conjugate which converts the CNP moiety into a fully active form of the drug
15 with regard to NPR-B binding provides several advantages, such as a reduction in the risk of hypotension, the option of administering higher doses and a decrease in the administration frequency which enhances compliance by and convenience for the patient.

It was furthermore surprisingly found that a continuous release of CNP, such as from a
20 controlled release system, such as from the prodrugs of the present invention, is more efficacious than a once-daily bolus injection.

Within the present invention the terms are used having the meaning as follows.

25 As used herein the term "CNP" refers to all CNP polypeptides, preferably from mammalian species, more preferably from human and mammalian species, more preferably from human and murine species, as well as their variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs, and derivatives and fragments thereof, that are characterized by regulating the growth, proliferation and differentiation of cartilaginous growth plate chondrocytes. Preferably, the term "CNP" refers
30 to the CNP polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:24 as well as its variants, homologs and derivatives exhibiting essentially the same biological activity, i.e. regulating the growth, proliferation and differentiation of cartilaginous growth plate chondrocytes. More preferably, the term "CNP" refers to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:24.

In another preferred embodiment the term “CNP” refers to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:20.

In another preferred embodiment the term “CNP” refers to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:21.

5 In another preferred embodiment the term “CNP” refers to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:22.

In another preferred embodiment the term “CNP” refers to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:23.

In another preferred embodiment the term “CNP” refers to the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:30.

10

Naturally occurring CNP-22 (SEQ ID NO:1) has the following sequence:

GLSKGCFGLKLDRI GMSGLGC,

wherein the cysteines at position 6 and 22 are connected through a disulfide-bridge, as illustrated in Fig. 1.

15

SEQ ID NO:24 has the following sequence:

LQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI GMSGLGC,

wherein the cysteines at position 22 and 38 are connected through a disulfide-bridge.

20 The term “CNP” also includes all CNP variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs and derivatives and fragments thereof as disclosed in WO 2009/067639 A2 and WO 2010/135541 A2, which are herewith incorporated by reference.

Accordingly, the term “CNP” also refers preferably to the following peptide sequences:

25 SEQ ID NO:2 (CNP-53):

DLRVDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI GMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:3 (G-CNP-53):

GDLRVDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI GMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:4 (M-CNP-53):

30 MDLRVDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI GMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:5 (P-CNP-53):

PDLRVDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI GMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:6 (CNP-53 M48N):

DLRVDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI GSN SGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:7 (CNP-53 Δ15-31):

DLRVDTKSRAAWARGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:8 (CNP-52):

LRVDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

5 SEQ ID NO:9 (CNP-51):

RVDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:10 (CNP-50):

VDTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:11 (CNP-49):

10 DTKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:12 (CNP-48):

TKSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:13 (CNP-47):

KSRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

15 SEQ ID NO:14 (CNP-46):

SRAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:15 (CNP-45):

RAAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:16 (CNP-44):

20 AAWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:17 (CNP-44 Δ14-22):

AAWARLLQEHPNAGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:18 (CNP-44 Δ15-22):

AAWARLLQEHPNARGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

25 SEQ ID NO:19 (CNP-43):

AWARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:20 (CNP-42):

WARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:21 (CNP-41):

30 ARLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:22 (CNP-40):

RLLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:23 (CNP-39):

LLQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLD RIGSMSGLGC;

- SEQ ID NO:24 (CNP-38):
LQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:25 (CNP-37):
QEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 5 SEQ ID NO:26 (CNP-37 Q1pQ, wherein pQ = pyroglutamate):
pQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:27 (G-CNP-37):
GQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:28 (P-CNP-37):
- 10 PQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:29 (M-CNP-37):
MQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:30 (PG-CNP-37):
PGQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 15 SEQ ID NO:31 (MG-CNP-37):
MGQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:32 (CNP-37 M32N):
QEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSNSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:33 (G-CNP-37 M32N):
- 20 GQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSNSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:34 (G-CNP-37 K14Q):
GQEHPNARKYKGANQKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:35 (G-CNP-37 K14P):
GQEHPNARKYKGANPKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 25 SEQ ID NO:36 (G-CNP-37 K14Q, Δ15):
GQEHPNARKYKGANQGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:37 (G-CNP-37 K14Q, K15Q):
GQEHPNARKYKGANQQGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:38 (CNP-36):
- 30 EHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:39 (CNP-35):
HPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:40 (CNP-34):
PNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;

- SEQ ID NO:41 (CNP-33):
NARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:42 (CNP-32):
ARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 5 SEQ ID NO:43 (CNP-31):
RKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:44 (CNP-30):
KYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:45 (CNP-29):
- 10 YKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:46 (CNP-28):
KGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:47 (GHKSEVAHRF-CNP-28):
GHKSEVAHRFKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 15 SEQ ID NO:48 (CNP-27):
GANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:49 (CNP-27 K4Q, K5Q):
GANQQGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:50 (CNP-27 K4R, K5R):
- 20 GANRRGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:51 (CNP-27 K4P, K5R):
GANPRGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:52 (CNP-27 K4S, K5S):
GANSSGLSKGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 25 SEQ ID NO:53 (CNP-27 K4P, K5R):
GANGANPRGLSRGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:54 (CNP-27 K4R, K5R, K9R):
GANRRGLSRGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:55 (CNP-27 K4R, K5R, K9R, M22N):
- 30 GANRRGLSRGCFGLKLDRIGSNSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:56 (P-CNP-27 K4R, K5R, K9R):
PGANRRGLSRGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:57 (M-CNP-27 K4R, K5R, K9R):
MGANRRGLSRGCFGLKLDRIGSMSGLGC;

- SEQ ID NO:58 (HSA fragment-CNP-27):
GHKSEVAHRFKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLG;
- SEQ ID NO:59 (HSA fragment-CNP-27 M22N):
GHKSEVAHRFKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SNSGLGC;
- 5 SEQ ID NO:60 (M-HSA fragment-CNP-27):
MGHKSEVAHRFKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:61 (P-HSA fragment-CNP-27):
PGHKSEVAHRFKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:62 (CNP-26):
- 10 ANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:63 (CNP-25):
NKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:64 (CNP-24):
KKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- 15 SEQ ID NO:65 (CNP-23):
KGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:66 (R-CNP-22):
RGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:67 (ER-CNP-22):
- 20 ERGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:68 (R-CNP-22 K4R):
RGLSRGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:69 (ER-CNP-22 4KR):
ERGLSRGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- 25 SEQ ID NO:70 (RR-CNP-22):
RRGLSRGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:71 (HRGP fragment-CNP-22):
GHHSHEQH PHGANQQGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:72 (HRGP fragment-CNP-22):
- 30 GAHHPHEHDTHGANQQGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:73 (HRGP fragment-CNP-22):
GHHSHEQH PHGANPRGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:74 (IgG₁(F_c) fragment-CNP-22):
GQPREPQVYTLPPSGLSKGCFGLKLDRI SMSGLGC;

- SEQ ID NO:75 (HSA fragment-CNP-22):
GQHKDDNP NLPRGANPRGLSKGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:76 (HSA fragment-CNP-22):
GERAFKAWAVARLSQGLSKGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 5 SEQ ID NO:77 (osteocrin NPR C inhibitor fragment-CNP22):
FGIPMDRIGRNPRGLSKGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:78 (FGF2 heparin-binding domain fragment-CNP22):
GKRTGQYKLGSKTGPGPKGLSKGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:79 (IgG₁(F_c) fragment-CNP-22 K4R):
10 GQPREPQVYTGANQQGLSRGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:80 (HSA fragment-CNP-22 K4R):
GVPQVSTSTGANQQGLSRGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:81 (fibronectin fragment-CNP-22 K4R):
GQPSSSSQSTGANQQGLSRGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 15 SEQ ID NO:82 (fibronectin fragment-CNP-22 K4R):
GQTHSSGTQSGANQQGLSRGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:83 (fibronectin fragment-CNP-22 K4R):
GSTGQWHSESGANQQGLSRGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:84 (zinc finger fragment-CNP-22 K4R):
20 GSSSSSSSSSGANQQGLSRGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:85 (CNP-21):
LSKGCFLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:86 (CNP-20):
SKGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- 25 SEQ ID NO:87 (CNP-19):
KGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:88 (CNP-18):
GCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:89 (CNP-17):
30 CFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;
- SEQ ID NO:90 (BNP fragment-CNP-17-BNP fragment):
SPKMVQSGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGCKVLR RH;
- SEQ ID NO:91 (CNP-38 L1G):
GQEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLK LDRIGSMSGLGC;

SEQ ID NO:92 (Ac-CNP-37; wherein Ac= acetyl):

Ac-QEHPNARKYKGANKKGLSKGCFGLKLDRI GSMSGLGC.

More preferably, the term "CNP" refers to the sequence of SEQ ID: NOs 2, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23,
5 24, 25, 26, 30, 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 91, 92. Even more preferably, the term "CNP" refers
to the sequence of SEQ ID: NOs 23, 24, 25, 26, 38, 39, 91 and 92. In a particularly preferred
embodiment the term "CNP" refers to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24. In an equally preferred
embodiment the term "CNP" refers to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30. In an equally preferred
embodiment the term "CNP" refers to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20. In an equally preferred
10 embodiment the term "CNP" refers to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21. In an equally preferred
embodiment the term "CNP" refers to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22. In an equally preferred
embodiment the term "CNP" refers to the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23.

In one embodiment the term "CNP" refers to a sequence of SEQ ID NO:93
15 QEHPNARX₁YX₂GANX₃X₄GLSX₅GCFGLX₆LDRIGSMSGLGC,
wherein X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄, X₅ and X₆ are independently of each other selected from the group
consisting of K, R, P, S and Q, with the provision that at least one of X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄, X₅ and
X₆ is selected from the group consisting of R, P, S and Q; preferably X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄, X₅ and
X₆ are selected from the group consisting of K and R, with the provision that at least one of
20 X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄, X₅ and X₆ is R;

more preferably to a sequence of SEQ ID NO:94
QEHPNARKYKGANX₁X₂GLSX₃GCFGLX₄LDRIGSMSGLGC,
wherein X₁, X₂, X₃ and X₄ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting
25 of K, R, P, S and Q, with the provision that at least one of X₁, X₂, X₃ and X₄ is selected from
the group consisting of R, P, S and Q; preferably X₁, X₂, X₃ and X₄ are selected from K and
R, with the provision that at least one of X₁, X₂, X₃ and X₄ is R;

and even more preferably to a sequence of SEQ ID NO:95
30 QEHPNARKYKGANX₁X₂GLSKGCFGLKLDRI GSMSGLGC,
wherein X₁X₂ are selected from the group consisting of KR, RK, KP, PK, SS, RS, SR, QK,
QR, KQ, RQ, RR and QQ.

It is understood that also the equivalents of the cysteines in positions 22 and 38 of SEQ ID NO:24 are connected through a disulfide-bridge in SEQ ID NOs: 2 to 95.

It is understood that the present invention also encompasses CNP variants in which any one or more, up to all, residues susceptible to deamidation or a deamidation-like reaction (e.g., isomerization) may be converted to other residues via deamidation or a deamidation-like reaction to any extent, up to 100% conversion per converted residue. In certain embodiments, the disclosure encompasses CNP variants in which:

- (1) any one or more, up to all, asparagine (Asn/N) residues may be converted to aspartic acid or aspartate, and/or to isoaspartic acid or isoaspartate, via deamidation up to about 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% conversion per converted residue; or
- (2) any one or more, up to all, glutamine (Gln/Q) residues may be converted to glutamic acid or glutamate, and/or to isoglutamic acid or isoglutamate, via deamidation up to about 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% conversion per converted residue; or
- (3) any one or more, up to all, aspartic acid or aspartate (Asp/D) residues may be converted to isoaspartic acid or isoaspartate via a deamidation-like reaction (also called isomerization) up to about 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% conversion per converted residue; or
- (4) any one or more, up to all, glutamic acid or glutamate (Glu/E) residues may be converted to isoglutamic acid or isoglutamate via a deamidation-like reaction (also called isomerization) up to about 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% conversion per converted residue; or
- (5) the N-terminal glutamine (if present) may be converted into pyroglutamate up to about 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 100% conversion; or
- (6) a combination of the above.

As used herein, the term "CNP polypeptide variant" refers to a polypeptide from the same species that differs from a reference CNP polypeptide. Preferably, such reference CNP polypeptide sequence is the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24. Generally, differences are limited so that the amino acid sequence of the reference and the variant are closely similar overall and, in many regions, identical. Preferably, CNP polypeptide variants are at least 70%, 80%, 90%, or 95% identical to a reference CNP polypeptide, preferably the CNP polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:24. By a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least, for example, 95%

“identical” to a query amino acid sequence, it is intended that the amino acid sequence of the subject polypeptide is identical to the query sequence except that the subject polypeptide sequence may include up to five amino acid alterations per each 100 amino acids of the query amino acid sequence. These alterations of the reference sequence may occur at the amino (N-terminal) or carboxy terminal (C-terminal) positions of the reference amino acid sequence or
5 anywhere between those terminal positions, interspersed either individually among residues in the reference sequence or in one or more contiguous groups within the reference sequence. The query sequence may be an entire amino acid sequence of the reference sequence or any fragment specified as described herein. Preferably, the query sequence is the sequence of SEQ
10 ID NO:24.

Such CNP polypeptide variants may be naturally occurring variants, such as naturally occurring allelic variants encoded by one of several alternate forms of a CNP occupying a given locus on a chromosome or an organism, or isoforms encoded by naturally occurring
15 splice variants originating from a single primary transcript. Alternatively, a CNP polypeptide variant may be a variant that is not known to occur naturally and that can be made by mutagenesis techniques known in the art.

It is known in the art that one or more amino acids may be deleted from the N-terminus or C-terminus of a bioactive peptide or protein without substantial loss of biological function. Such
20 N- and/or C-terminal deletions are also encompassed by the term CNP polypeptide variant.

It is also recognized by one of ordinary skill in the art that some amino acid sequences of CNP polypeptides can be varied without significant effect of the structure or function of the peptide. Such mutants include deletions, insertions, inversions, repeats, and substitutions
25 selected according to general rules known in the art so as to have little effect on activity. For example, guidance concerning how to make phenotypically silent amino acid substitutions is provided in Bowie et al. (1990), Science 247:1306-1310, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety, wherein the authors indicate that there are two main approaches for
30 studying the tolerance of the amino acid sequence to change.

The term CNP polypeptide also encompasses all CNP polypeptides encoded by CNP analogs, orthologs, and/or species homologs. As used herein, the term “CNP analog” refers to CNP of different and unrelated organisms which perform the same functions in each organism, but

which did not originate from an ancestral structure that the organisms' ancestors had in common. Instead, analogous CNPs arose separately and then later evolved to perform the same or similar functions. In other words, analogous CNP polypeptides are polypeptides with quite different amino acid sequences that perform the same biological activity, namely
5 regulating the growth, proliferation and differentiation of cartilaginous growth plate chondrocytes.

As used herein the term "CNP ortholog" refers to CNP within two different species which sequences are related to each other via a common homologous CNP in an ancestral species,
10 but which have evolved to become different from each other.

As used herein, the term "CNP homolog" refers to CNP of different organisms which perform the same functions in each organism and which originate from an ancestral structure that the organisms' ancestors had in common. In other words, homologous CNP polypeptides are
15 polypeptides with quite similar amino acid sequences that perform the same biological activity, namely regulating the growth, proliferation and differentiation of cartilaginous growth plate chondrocytes. Preferably, CNP polypeptide homologs may be defined as polypeptides exhibiting at least 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90% or 95% identity to a reference CNP polypeptide, preferably the CNP polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:24.

20 Thus, a CNP polypeptide according to the invention may be, for example: (i) one in which at least one of the amino acid residues is substituted with a conserved or non-conserved amino acid residue, preferably a conserved amino acid residue, and such substituted amino acid residue may or may not be one encoded by the genetic code; and/or (ii) one in which at least
25 one of the amino acid residues includes a substituent group; and/or (iii) one in which the CNP polypeptide is fused with another compound, such as a compound to increase the half-life of the polypeptide (for example, polyethylene glycol); and/or (iv) one in which additional amino acids are fused to the CNP polypeptide, such as an IgG Fc fusion region peptide or leader or secretory sequence or a sequence which is employed for purification of the above form of the
30 polypeptide or a pre-protein sequence.

As used herein, the term "CNP polypeptide fragment" refers to any peptide comprising a contiguous span of a part of the amino acid sequence of a CNP polypeptide, preferably the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:24.

More specifically, a CNP polypeptide fragment comprises at least 6, such as at least 8, at least 10 or at least 17 consecutive amino acids of a CNP polypeptide, more preferably of the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO:24. A CNP polypeptide fragment may additionally be described as sub-genuses of CNP polypeptides comprising at least 6 amino acids, wherein “at least 6” is defined as any integer between 6 and the integer representing the C-terminal amino acid of a CNP polypeptide, preferably of the polypeptide of SEQ ID No:24. Further included are species of CNP polypeptide fragments at least 6 amino acids in length, as described above, that are further specified in terms of their N-terminal and C-terminal positions. Also encompassed by the term “CNP polypeptide fragment” as individual species are all CNP polypeptide fragments, at least 6 amino acids in length, as described above, that may be particularly specified by a N-terminal and C-terminal position. That is, every combination of a N-terminal and C-terminal position that a fragment at least 6 contiguous amino acid residues in length could occupy, on any given amino acid sequence of a CNP polypeptide, preferably the CNP polypeptide of SEQ ID:NO24, is included in the present invention.

The term “CNP” also includes poly(amino acid) conjugates which have a sequence as described above, but have a backbone that comprises both amide and non-amide linkages, such as ester linkages, like for example depsipeptides. Depsipeptides are chains of amino acid residues in which the backbone comprises both amide (peptide) and ester bonds. Accordingly, the term “side chain” as used herein refers either to the moiety attached to the alpha-carbon of an amino acid moiety, if the amino acid moiety is connected through amine bonds such as in polypeptides, or to any carbon atom-comprising moiety attached to the backbone of a poly(amino acid) conjugate, such as for example in the case of depsipeptides. Preferably, the term “CNP” refers to polypeptides having a backbone formed through amide (peptide) bonds.

As the term CNP includes the above-described variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs, derivatives and fragments of CNP, all references to specific positions within a reference sequence also include the equivalent positions in the variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs, derivatives and fragments of a CNP moiety, even if not explicitly mentioned.

As used herein, the term “random coil” refers to a peptide or protein adopting/having/forming, preferably having, a conformation which substantially lacks a defined secondary and tertiary structure as determined by circular dichroism spectroscopy

performed in aqueous buffer at ambient temperature, and pH 7.4. Preferably, ambient temperature is about 20°C, i.e. between 18°C and 22°C, most preferably ambient temperature is 20°C.

5 As used herein, the term “ring moiety” refers to the stretch of consecutive amino acid residues of the CNP drug or moiety that is located between two cysteine residues that form an intramolecular disulfide bridge or between homologous amino acid residues which are connected through a chemical linker. Preferably, the ring moiety is located between two cysteine residues that form an intramolecular disulfide bridge. These two cysteines
10 correspond to the cysteines at position 22 and position 38 in the sequence of CNP-38 (SEQ ID NO:24). Accordingly, amino acids 23 to 37 are located in said ring moiety, if the CNP drug or moiety has the sequence of CNP-38.

Independently of the length of the CNP moiety, the sequence of the ring moiety of wild-type
15 CNP is FGLKLDRI GMSGLG (SEQ ID NO:96).

As described above, the term “CNP” relates to CNP drugs or moieties having different numbers of amino acids. The person skilled in the art understands that in CNP drugs or moieties of different lengths the positions of equivalent amino acids vary and the skilled
20 artisan will have no difficulty identifying the two cysteines forming the disulfide bridge or their two homologous amino acid residues connected to each other through a chemical linker in longer, shorter and/or otherwise modified CNP versions.

As the term CNP includes the above-described variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs, derivatives and fragments of CNP, the term “ring moiety” also includes the corresponding
25 variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs, derivatives and fragments of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:96. Accordingly, all references to specific positions within a reference sequence also include the equivalent positions in variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs, derivatives and fragments of a CNP moiety, even if not explicitly mentioned.

30

As used herein the term “liquid composition” refers to a mixture comprising water-soluble CNP prodrug and one or more solvents, such as water.

As used herein, the term “dry composition” means that a pharmaceutical composition is provided in a dry form. Suitable methods for drying are spray-drying and lyophilization, i.e. freeze-drying. Such dry composition of the prodrug of the present invention has a residual water content of a maximum of 10 %, preferably less than 5% and more preferably less than 2%, determined according to Karl Fischer. Preferably, the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention is dried by lyophilization.

The term “drug” as used herein refers to a substance used in the treatment, cure, prevention, or diagnosis of a disease or used to otherwise enhance physical or mental well-being. If a drug D-H is conjugated to another moiety, the moiety -D of the resulting product that originated from the drug is referred to as “biologically active moiety”.

As used herein the term “prodrug” refers to a biologically active moiety reversibly and covalently connected to a specialized protective group through a reversible prodrug linker moiety which is a linker moiety comprising a reversible linkage with the biologically active moiety and wherein the specialized protective group alters or eliminates undesirable properties in the parent molecule. This also includes the enhancement of desirable properties in the drug and the suppression of undesirable properties. The specialized non-toxic protective group is referred to as “carrier”. A prodrug releases the reversibly and covalently bound biologically active moiety -D in the form of its corresponding drug D-H. In other words, a prodrug is a conjugate comprising a biologically active moiety which is covalently and reversibly conjugated to a carrier moiety via a reversible prodrug linker moiety, which covalent and reversible conjugation of the carrier to the reversible prodrug linker moiety is either directly or through a spacer, such as $-L^2-$. Such conjugate releases the formerly conjugated biologically active moiety in the form of a free drug.

A “biodegradable linkage” or a “reversible linkage” is a linkage that is hydrolytically degradable, i.e. cleavable, in the absence of enzymes under physiological conditions (aqueous buffer at pH 7.4, 37°C) with a half-life ranging from one hour to six months, preferably from one hour to four months, even more preferably from one hour to three months, even more preferably from one hour to two months, even more preferably from one hour to one month. Accordingly, a “stable linkage” is a linkage having a half-life under physiological conditions (aqueous buffer at pH 7.4, 37°C) of more than six months.

Accordingly, a “reversible prodrug linker moiety” is a moiety which is covalently conjugated to a biologically active moiety, such as CNP, through a reversible linkage and is also covalently conjugated to a carrier moiety, such as -Z, wherein the covalent conjugation to said carrier moiety is either directly or through a spacer moiety, such as -L²-. Preferably the linkage between -Z and -L²- is a stable linkage.

5

As used herein, the term “traceless prodrug linker” means a reversible prodrug linker which upon cleavage releases the drug in its free form. As used herein, the term “free form” of a drug means the drug in its unmodified, pharmacologically active form.

10

As used herein the term “pharmaceutical composition” refers to a composition containing one or more active ingredients, for example a drug or a prodrug, here specifically the CNP prodrugs of the present invention, and optionally one or more excipients, as well as any product which results, directly or indirectly, from combination, complexation or aggregation of any two or more of the ingredients of the composition, or from dissociation of one or more of the ingredients, or from other types of reactions or interactions of one or more of the ingredients. Accordingly, the pharmaceutical compositions of the present invention encompass any composition made by admixing one or more CNP prodrugs of the present invention and optionally a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

15

As used herein, the term "excipient" refers to a diluent, adjuvant, or vehicle with which the therapeutic, such as a drug or prodrug, is administered. Such pharmaceutical excipient can be sterile liquids, such as water and oils, including those of petroleum, animal, vegetable or synthetic origin, including but not limited to peanut oil, soybean oil, mineral oil, sesame oil and the like. Water is a preferred excipient when the pharmaceutical composition is administered orally. Saline and aqueous dextrose are preferred excipients when the pharmaceutical composition is administered intravenously. Saline solutions and aqueous dextrose and glycerol solutions are preferably employed as liquid excipients for injectable solutions. Suitable pharmaceutical excipients include starch, glucose, lactose, sucrose, mannitol, trehalose, gelatin, malt, rice, flour, chalk, silica gel, sodium stearate, glycerol monostearate, talc, sodium chloride, dried skim milk, glycerol, propylene, glycol, water, ethanol and the like. The pharmaceutical composition, if desired, can also contain minor amounts of wetting or emulsifying agents, pH buffering agents, like, for example, acetate, succinate, tris, carbonate, phosphate, HEPES (4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic

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acid), MES (2-(*N*-morpholino)ethanesulfonic acid), or can contain detergents, like Tween, poloxamers, poloxamines, CHAPS, Igepal, or amino acids like, for example, glycine, lysine, or histidine. These pharmaceutical compositions can take the form of solutions, suspensions, emulsions, tablets, pills, capsules, powders, sustained-release formulations and the like. The pharmaceutical composition can be formulated as a suppository, with traditional binders and excipients such as triglycerides. Oral formulation can include standard excipients such as pharmaceutical grades of mannitol, lactose, starch, magnesium stearate, sodium saccharine, cellulose, magnesium carbonate, etc. Such compositions will contain a therapeutically effective amount of the drug or biologically active moiety, together with a suitable amount of excipient so as to provide the form for proper administration to the patient. The formulation should suit the mode of administration.

As used herein the term “micelle” means an aggregate of amphiphilic molecules dispersed in a liquid colloid. In aqueous solution a typical micelle forms an aggregate with the hydrophilic moiety of the surfactant molecules facing the surrounding solvent and the hydrophobic moiety of the surfactant molecule facing inwards, also called “normal-phase micelle”. “Invers micelles” have the hydrophilic moiety facing inwards and the hydrophobic moiety facing the surrounding solvent.

As used herein the term “liposome” refers to a vesicle, preferably a spherical vesicle, having at least one lipid bilayer. Preferably, liposomes comprise phospholipids, even more preferably phosphatidylcholine. The term “liposome” refers to various structures and sizes, such as, for example, to multilamellar liposome vesicles (MLV) having more than one concentric lipid bilayer with an average diameter of 100 to 1000 nm, small unilamellar liposome vesicles (SUV) having one lipid bilayer and an average diameter of 25 to 100 nm, large unilamellar liposome vesicles (LUV) having one lipid bilayer and an average diameter of about 1000 μm and giant unilamellar vesicles (GUV) having one lipid bilayer and an average diameter of 1 to 100 μm . The term “liposome” also includes elastic vesicles such as transferosomes and ethosomes, for example.

As used herein the term “aquasome” refers to spherical nanoparticles having a diameter of 60 to 300 nm that comprise at least three layers of self-assembled structure, namely a solid phase nanocrystalline core coated with an oligomeric film to which drug molecules are adsorbed with or without modification of the drug.

As used herein the term “ethosome” refers to lipid vesicles comprising phospholipids and ethanol and/or isopropanol in relatively high concentration and water, having a size ranging from tens of nanometers to micrometers.

5

As used herein the term “LeciPlex” refers to positively charged phospholipid-based vesicular system which comprises soy PC, a cationic agent, and a bio-compatible solvent like PEG 300, PEG 400, diethylene glycol monoethyl ether, tetrahydrofurfuryl alcohol polyethylene glycol ether or 2-pyrrolidone or *N*-methyl-2-pyrrolidone.

10

As used herein the term “niosome” refers to unilamellar or multilamellar vesicles comprising non-ionic surfactants.

As used herein the term “pharmacosome” refers to ultrafine vesicular, micellar or hexagonal aggregates from lipids covalently bound to biologically active moieties.

15

As used herein the term “proniosome” refers to dry formulations of surfactant-coated carrier which on rehydration and mild agitation gives niosomes.

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As used herein the term “polymersome” refers to an artificial spherical vesicle comprising a membrane formed from amphiphilic synthetic block copolymers and may optionally comprise an aqueous solution in its core. A polymersome has a diameter ranging from 50 nm to 5 μm and larger. The term also includes syntosomes, which are polymersomes engineered to comprise channels that allow certain chemicals to pass through the membrane into or out of the vesicle.

25

As used herein the term “sphingosome” refers to a concentric, bilayered vesicle in which an aqueous volume is entirely enclosed by a membranous lipid bilayer mainly composed of natural or synthetic sphingolipid.

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As used herein the term “transferosome” refers to ultraflexible lipid vesicles comprising an aqueous core that are formed from a mixture of common polar and suitable edge-activated lipids which facilitate the formation of highly curved bilayers which render the transferosome highly deformable.

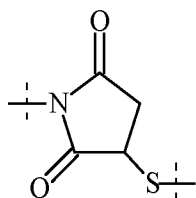
As used herein the term “ufasome” refers to a vesicle comprising unsaturated fatty acids.

As used herein, the term “reagent” means a chemical compound which comprises at least one
 5 functional group for reaction with the functional group of another chemical compound or
 drug. It is understood that a drug comprising a functional group (such as a primary or
 secondary amine or hydroxyl functional group) is also a reagent.

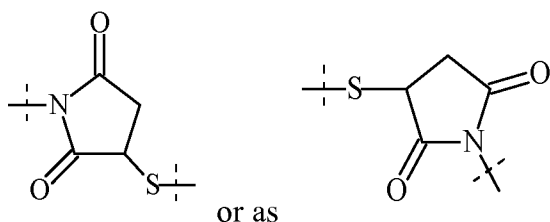
As used herein, the term “moiety” means a part of a molecule, which lacks one or more atoms
 10 compared to the corresponding reagent. If, for example, a reagent of the formula “H-X-H”
 reacts with another reagent and becomes part of the reaction product, the corresponding
 moiety of the reaction product has the structure “H-X-“ or “-X- “, whereas each “- “
 indicates attachment to another moiety. Accordingly, a biologically active moiety is released
 from a prodrug as a drug.

15

It is understood that if the sequence or chemical structure of a group of atoms is provided
 which group of atoms is attached to two moieties or is interrupting a moiety, said sequence or
 chemical structure can be attached to the two moieties in either orientation, unless explicitly
 stated otherwise. For example, a moiety “-C(O)N(R¹)-“ can be attached to two moieties or
 20 interrupting a moiety either as “-C(O)N(R¹)-“ or as “-N(R¹)C(O)-“. Similarly, a moiety



can be attached to two moieties or can interrupt a moiety either as



25 As used herein, the term “functional group” means a group of atoms which can react with
 other groups of atoms. Functional groups include but are not limited to the following groups:
 carboxylic acid (-(C=O)OH), primary or secondary amine (-NH₂, -NH-), maleimide, thiol

(-SH), sulfonic acid $-(O=S=O)OH$, carbonate, carbamate $-O(C=O)N<$, hydroxyl $-OH$, aldehyde $-(C=O)H$, ketone $-(C=O)-$, hydrazine $>N-N<$, isocyanate, isothiocyanate, phosphoric acid $-O(P=O)OHOH$, phosphonic acid $-O(P=O)OHH$, haloacetyl, alkyl halide, acryloyl, aryl fluoride, hydroxylamine, disulfide, sulfonamides, sulfuric acid, vinyl sulfone, vinyl ketone, diazoalkane, oxirane, and aziridine.

In case the prodrugs of the present invention comprise one or more acidic or basic groups, the invention also comprises their corresponding pharmaceutically or toxicologically acceptable salts, in particular their pharmaceutically utilizable salts. Thus, the prodrugs of the present invention comprising acidic groups can be used according to the invention, for example, as alkali metal salts, alkaline earth metal salts or as ammonium salts. More precise examples of such salts include sodium salts, potassium salts, calcium salts, magnesium salts or salts with ammonia or organic amines such as, for example, ethylamine, ethanolamine, triethanolamine or amino acids. Prodrugs of the present invention comprising one or more basic groups, i.e. groups which can be protonated, can be present and can be used according to the invention in the form of their addition salts with inorganic or organic acids. Examples for suitable acids include hydrogen chloride, hydrogen bromide, phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, nitric acid, methanesulfonic acid, p-toluenesulfonic acid, naphthalenedisulfonic acids, oxalic acid, acetic acid, tartaric acid, lactic acid, salicylic acid, benzoic acid, formic acid, propionic acid, pivalic acid, diethylacetic acid, malonic acid, succinic acid, pimelic acid, fumaric acid, maleic acid, malic acid, sulfaminic acid, phenylpropionic acid, gluconic acid, ascorbic acid, isonicotinic acid, citric acid, adipic acid, and other acids known to the person skilled in the art. For the person skilled in the art further methods are known for converting the basic group into a cation like the alkylation of an amine group resulting in a positively-charge ammonium group and an appropriate counterion of the salt. If the prodrugs of the present invention simultaneously comprise acidic and basic groups, the invention also includes, in addition to the salt forms mentioned, inner salts or betaines (zwitterions). The respective salts can be obtained by customary methods which are known to the person skilled in the art like, for example by contacting these prodrugs with an organic or inorganic acid or base in a solvent or dispersant, or by anion exchange or cation exchange with other salts. The present invention also includes all salts of the prodrugs of the present invention which, owing to low physiological compatibility, are not directly suitable for use in pharmaceuticals but which can be used, for example, as intermediates for chemical reactions or for the preparation of pharmaceutically acceptable salts.

The term "pharmaceutically acceptable" means a substance that does not cause harm when administered to a patient and preferably means approved by a regulatory agency, such as the EMA (Europe) and/or the FDA (US) and/or any other national regulatory agency for use in animals, preferably for use in humans.

As used herein the term "about" in combination with a numerical value is used to indicate a range ranging from and including the numerical value plus and minus no more than 10% of said numerical value, more preferably no more than 8% of said numerical value, even more preferably no more than 5% of said numerical value and most preferably no more than 2% of said numerical value. For example, the phrase "about 200" is used to mean a range ranging from and including 200 +/- 10%, i.e. ranging from and including 180 to 220; preferably 200 +/- 8%, i.e. ranging from and including 184 to 216; even more preferably ranging from and including 200 +/-5%, i.e. ranging from and including 190 to 210; and most preferably 200 +/- 2%, i.e. ranging from and including 196 to 204. It is understood that a percentage given as "about 20%" does not mean "20% +/- 10%", i.e. ranging from and including 10 to 30%, but "about 20%" means ranging from and including 18 to 22%, i.e. plus and minus 10% of the numerical value which is 20.

As used herein, the term "polymer" means a molecule comprising repeating structural units, i.e. the monomers, connected by chemical bonds in a linear, circular, branched, crosslinked or dendrimeric way or a combination thereof, which may be of synthetic or biological origin or a combination of both. It is understood that a polymer may also comprise one or more other chemical groups and/or moieties, such as, for example, one or more functional groups. Preferably, a soluble polymer has a molecular weight of at least 0.5 kDa, e.g. a molecular weight of at least 1 kDa, a molecular weight of at least 2 kDa, a molecular weight of at least 3 kDa or a molecular weight of at least 5 kDa. If the polymer is soluble, it preferably has a molecular weight of at most 1000 kDa, such as at most 750 kDa, such as at most 500 kDa, such as at most 300 kDa, such as at most 200 kDa, such as at most 100 kDa. It is understood that also a protein is a polymer in which the amino acids are the repeating structural units, even though the side chains of each amino acid may be different.

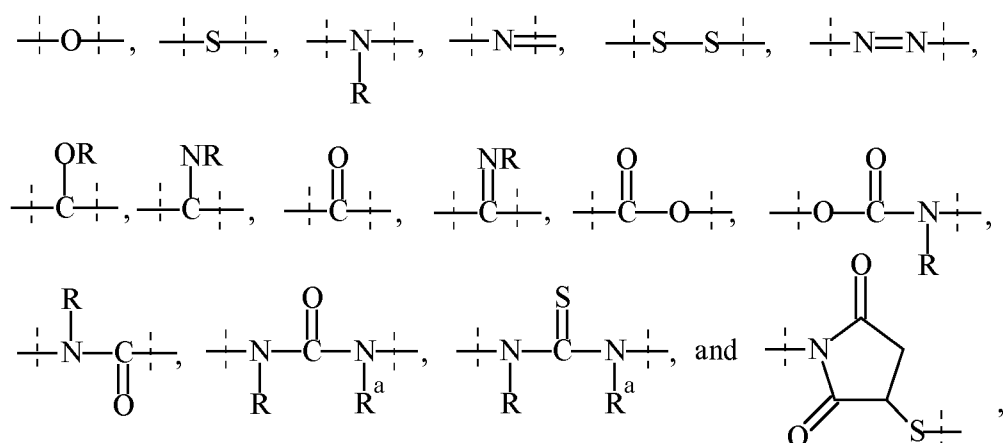
of monomers lies in a range of integers of $x \pm 10\%$, preferably $x \pm 8\%$, more preferably $x \pm 5\%$ and most preferably $x \pm 2\%$.

As used herein, the term “number average molecular weight” means the ordinary arithmetic mean of the molecular weights of the individual polymers.

As used herein the term “water-soluble” with reference to a carrier means that when such carrier is part of the CNP prodrug of the present invention at least 1 g of the CNP prodrug comprising such water-soluble carrier can be dissolved in one liter of water at 20°C to form a homogeneous solution. Accordingly, the term “water-insoluble” with reference to a carrier means that when such carrier is part of the CNP prodrug of the present invention less than 1 g of the CNP prodrug comprising such water-insoluble carrier can be dissolved in one liter of water at 20°C to form a homogeneous solution.

As used herein, the term “PEG-based” in relation to a moiety or reagent means that said moiety or reagent comprises PEG. Preferably, a PEG-based moiety or reagent comprises at least 10% (w/w) PEG, such as at least 20% (w/w) PEG, such as at least 30% (w/w) PEG, such as at least 40% (w/w) PEG, such as at least 50% (w/w), such as at least 60 (w/w) PEG, such as at least 70% (w/w) PEG, such as at least 80% (w/w) PEG, such as at least 90% (w/w) PEG, such as at least 95% (w/w) PEG. The remaining weight percentage of the PEG-based moiety or reagent are other moieties preferably selected from the following moieties and linkages:

- C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, C_{2-50} alkynyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, and tetralinyl; and
- linkages selected from the group comprising

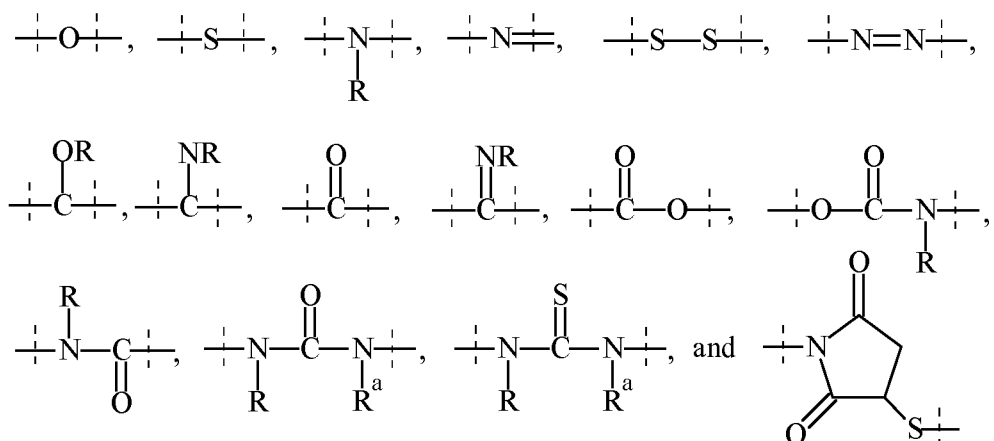


wherein

dashed lines indicate attachment to the remainder of the moiety or reagent, and
 -R and -R^a are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of -H,
 methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, pentyl and hexyl.

5 As used herein, the term “PEG-based comprising at least X% PEG” in relation to a moiety or
 reagent means that said moiety or reagent comprises at least X% (w/w) ethylene glycol units
 (-CH₂CH₂O-), wherein the ethylene glycol units may be arranged blockwise, alternating or
 may be randomly distributed within the moiety or reagent and preferably all ethylene glycol
 units of said moiety or reagent are present in one block; the remaining weight percentage of
 10 the PEG-based moiety or reagent are other moieties preferably selected from the following
 moieties and linkages:

- C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl, C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered
 heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl,
 and tetralinyl; and
- 15 • linkages selected from the group comprising



wherein

dashed lines indicate attachment to the remainder of the moiety or reagent, and
 -R and -R^a are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of -H,
 20 methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, pentyl and hexyl.

The term “hyaluronic acid-based comprising at least X% hyaluronic acid” is used
 accordingly.

25 The term “substituted” as used herein means that one or more -H atoms of a molecule or
 moiety are replaced by a different atom or a group of atoms, which are referred to as
 “substituent”.

Preferably, the one or more further optional substituents are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of halogen, -CN, -COOR^{x1}, -OR^{x1}, -C(O)R^{x1}, -C(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -S(O)₂N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -S(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -S(O)₂R^{x1}, -S(O)R^{x1}, -N(R^{x1})S(O)₂N(R^{x1a}R^{x1b}), -SR^{x1}, -N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R^{x1}, -N(R^{x1})C(O)R^{x1a}, -N(R^{x1})S(O)₂R^{x1a}, -N(R^{x1})S(O)R^{x1a}, -N(R^{x1})C(O)OR^{x1a}, -N(R^{x1})C(O)N(R^{x1a}R^{x1b}), -OC(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -T⁰, C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl; wherein -T⁰, C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more -R^{x2}, which are the same or different and wherein C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of -T⁰-, -C(O)O-, -O-, -C(O)-, -C(O)N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)₂N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)₂-, -S(O)-, -N(R^{x3})S(O)₂N(R^{x3a})-, -S-, -N(R^{x3})-, -OC(OR^{x3})(R^{x3a})-, -N(R^{x3})C(O)N(R^{x3a})-, and -OC(O)N(R^{x3})-

-R^{x1}, -R^{x1a}, -R^{x1b} are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of -H, -T⁰, C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl; wherein -T⁰, C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more -R^{x2}, which are the same or different and wherein C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of -T⁰-, -C(O)O-, -O-, -C(O)-, -C(O)N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)₂N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)₂-, -S(O)-, -N(R^{x3})S(O)₂N(R^{x3a})-, -S-, -N(R^{x3})-, -OC(OR^{x3})(R^{x3a})-, -N(R^{x3})C(O)N(R^{x3a})-, and -OC(O)N(R^{x3})-

each T⁰ is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, and 8- to 11-membered heterobicycyl; wherein each T⁰ is independently optionally substituted with one or more -R^{x2}, which are the same or different;

each -R^{x2} is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, -CN, oxo (=O), -COOR^{x4}, -OR^{x4}, -C(O)R^{x4}, -C(O)N(R^{x4}R^{x4a}), -S(O)₂N(R^{x4}R^{x4a}), -S(O)N(R^{x4}R^{x4a}), -S(O)₂R^{x4}, -S(O)R^{x4}, -N(R^{x4})S(O)₂N(R^{x4a}R^{x4b}), -SR^{x4}, -N(R^{x4}R^{x4a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R^{x4}, -N(R^{x4})C(O)R^{x4a}, -N(R^{x4})S(O)₂R^{x4a}, -N(R^{x4})S(O)R^{x4a}, -N(R^{x4})C(O)OR^{x4a}, -N(R^{x4})C(O)N(R^{x4a}R^{x4b}), -OC(O)N(R^{x4}R^{x4a}), and C₁₋₆ alkyl; wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

each $-R^{x3}$, $-R^{x3a}$, $-R^{x4}$, $-R^{x4a}$, $-R^{x4b}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of -H and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different.

- 5 More preferably, the one or more further optional substituents are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-CN$, $-COOR^{x1}$, $-OR^{x1}$, $-C(O)R^{x1}$, $-C(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{x1}R^{x1a})$, $-S(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a})$, $-S(O)_2R^{x1}$, $-S(O)R^{x1}$, $-N(R^{x1})S(O)_2N(R^{x1a}R^{x1b})$, $-SR^{x1}$, $-N(R^{x1}R^{x1a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^{x1}$, $-N(R^{x1})C(O)R^{x1a}$, $-N(R^{x1})S(O)_2R^{x1a}$, $-N(R^{x1})S(O)R^{x1a}$, $-N(R^{x1})C(O)OR^{x1a}$, $-N(R^{x1})C(O)N(R^{x1a}R^{x1b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a})$, $-T^0$, C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl, and C_{2-10} alkynyl; wherein $-T^0$, C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl, and C_{2-10} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{x2}$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl, and C_{2-10} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T^0$ -, $-C(O)O$ -, $-O$ -, $-C(O)$ -, $-C(O)N(R^{x3})$ -, $-S(O)_2N(R^{x3})$ -, $-S(O)N(R^{x3})$ -, $-S(O)_2$ -, $-S(O)$ -, $-N(R^{x3})S(O)_2N(R^{x3a})$ -, $-S$ -, $-N(R^{x3})$ -, $-OC(OR^{x3})(R^{x3a})$ -, $-N(R^{x3})C(O)N(R^{x3a})$ -, and $-OC(O)N(R^{x3})$ -;
- 10
- 15

each $-R^{x1}$, $-R^{x1a}$, $-R^{x1b}$, $-R^{x3}$, $-R^{x3a}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of -H, halogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, and C_{2-6} alkynyl;

- 20 each T^0 is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, and 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl; wherein each T^0 is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{x2}$, which are the same or different;
- 25 each $-R^{x2}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-CN$, oxo ($=O$), $-COOR^{x4}$, $-OR^{x4}$, $-C(O)R^{x4}$, $-C(O)N(R^{x4}R^{x4a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{x4}R^{x4a})$, $-S(O)N(R^{x4}R^{x4a})$, $-S(O)_2R^{x4}$, $-S(O)R^{x4}$, $-N(R^{x4})S(O)_2N(R^{x4a}R^{x4b})$, $-SR^{x4}$, $-N(R^{x4}R^{x4a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^{x4}$, $-N(R^{x4})C(O)R^{x4a}$, $-N(R^{x4})S(O)_2R^{x4a}$, $-N(R^{x4})S(O)R^{x4a}$, $-N(R^{x4})C(O)OR^{x4a}$, $-N(R^{x4})C(O)N(R^{x4a}R^{x4b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^{x4}R^{x4a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;
- 30

each $-R^{x4}$, $-R^{x4a}$, $-R^{x4b}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of -H, halogen, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl, and C_{2-6} alkynyl;

Even more preferably, the one or more further optional substituents are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of halogen, -CN, -COOR^{x1}, -OR^{x1}, -C(O)R^{x1}, -C(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -S(O)₂N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -S(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -S(O)₂R^{x1}, -S(O)R^{x1}, -N(R^{x1})S(O)₂N(R^{x1a}R^{x1b}), -SR^{x1}, -N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R^{x1}, -N(R^{x1})C(O)R^{x1a},
 5 -N(R^{x1})S(O)₂R^{x1a}, -N(R^{x1})S(O)R^{x1a}, -N(R^{x1})C(O)OR^{x1a}, -N(R^{x1})C(O)N(R^{x1a}R^{x1b}), -OC(O)N(R^{x1}R^{x1a}), -T⁰, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₂₋₆ alkenyl, and C₂₋₆ alkynyl; wherein -T⁰, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₂₋₆ alkenyl, and C₂₋₆ alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more -R^{x2}, which are the same or different and wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₂₋₆ alkenyl, and C₂₋₆ alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of -T⁰-, -C(O)O-, -O-, -C(O)-,
 10 -C(O)N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)₂N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)N(R^{x3})-, -S(O)₂-, -S(O)-, -N(R^{x3})S(O)₂N(R^{x3a})-, -S-, -N(R^{x3})-, -OC(OR^{x3})(R^{x3a})-, -N(R^{x3})C(O)N(R^{x3a})-, and -OC(O)N(R^{x3})-

each -R^{x1}, -R^{x1a}, -R^{x1b}, -R^{x2}, -R^{x3}, -R^{x3a} is independently selected from the group consisting of -H, halogen, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₂₋₆ alkenyl, and C₂₋₆ alkynyl;

15 each T⁰ is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, and 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl; wherein each T⁰ is independently optionally substituted with one or more -R^{x2}, which are the same or different.

20 Preferably, a maximum of 6 -H atoms of an optionally substituted molecule are independently replaced by a substituent, e.g. 5 -H atoms are independently replaced by a substituent, 4 -H atoms are independently replaced by a substituent, 3 -H atoms are independently replaced by a substituent, 2 -H atoms are independently replaced by a substituent, or 1 -H atom is replaced
 25 by a substituent.

The term “interrupted” means that a moiety is inserted between two carbon atoms or – if the insertion is at one of the moiety’s ends – between a carbon or heteroatom and a hydrogen atom.

30 As used herein, the term “C₁₋₄ alkyl” alone or in combination means a straight-chain or branched alkyl moiety having 1 to 4 carbon atoms. If present at the end of a molecule, examples of straight-chain or branched C₁₋₄ alkyl are methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, isobutyl, sec-butyl and tert-butyl. When two moieties of a molecule are linked by the

C₁₋₄ alkyl, then examples for such C₁₋₄ alkyl groups are -CH₂-, -CH₂-CH₂-, -CH(CH₃)-, -CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-, -CH(C₂H₅)-, -C(CH₃)₂-. Each hydrogen of a C₁₋₄ alkyl carbon may optionally be replaced by a substituent as defined above. Optionally, a C₁₋₄ alkyl may be interrupted by one or more moieties as defined below.

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As used herein, the term “C₁₋₆ alkyl” alone or in combination means a straight-chain or branched alkyl moiety having 1 to 6 carbon atoms. If present at the end of a molecule, examples of straight-chain and branched C₁₋₆ alkyl groups are methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, isobutyl, sec-butyl, tert-butyl, n-pentyl, 2-methylbutyl, 2,2-dimethylpropyl, n-hexyl, 2-methylpentyl, 3-methylpentyl, 2,2-dimethylbutyl, 2,3-dimethylbutyl and 3,3-dimethylpropyl. When two moieties of a molecule are linked by the C₁₋₆ alkyl group, then examples for such C₁₋₆ alkyl groups are -CH₂-, -CH₂-CH₂-, -CH(CH₃)-, -CH₂-CH₂-CH₂-, -CH(C₂H₅)- and -C(CH₃)₂-. Each hydrogen atom of a C₁₋₆ carbon may optionally be replaced by a substituent as defined above. Optionally, a C₁₋₆ alkyl may be interrupted by one or more moieties as defined below.

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Accordingly, “C₁₋₁₀ alkyl”, “C₁₋₂₀ alkyl” or “C₁₋₅₀ alkyl” means an alkyl chain having 1 to 10, 1 to 20 or 1 to 50 carbon atoms, respectively, wherein each hydrogen atom of the C₁₋₁₀, C₁₋₂₀ or C₁₋₅₀ carbon may optionally be replaced by a substituent as defined above. Optionally, a C₁₋₁₀ or C₁₋₅₀ alkyl may be interrupted by one or more moieties as defined below.

20

As used herein, the term “C₂₋₆ alkenyl” alone or in combination means a straight-chain or branched hydrocarbon moiety comprising at least one carbon-carbon double bond having 2 to 6 carbon atoms. If present at the end of a molecule, examples are -CH=CH₂, -CH=CH-CH₃, -CH₂-CH=CH₂, -CH=CHCH₂-CH₃ and -CH=CH-CH=CH₂. When two moieties of a molecule are linked by the C₂₋₆ alkenyl group, then an example for such C₂₋₆ alkenyl is -CH=CH-. Each hydrogen atom of a C₂₋₆ alkenyl moiety may optionally be replaced by a substituent as defined above. Optionally, a C₂₋₆ alkenyl may be interrupted by one or more moieties as defined below.

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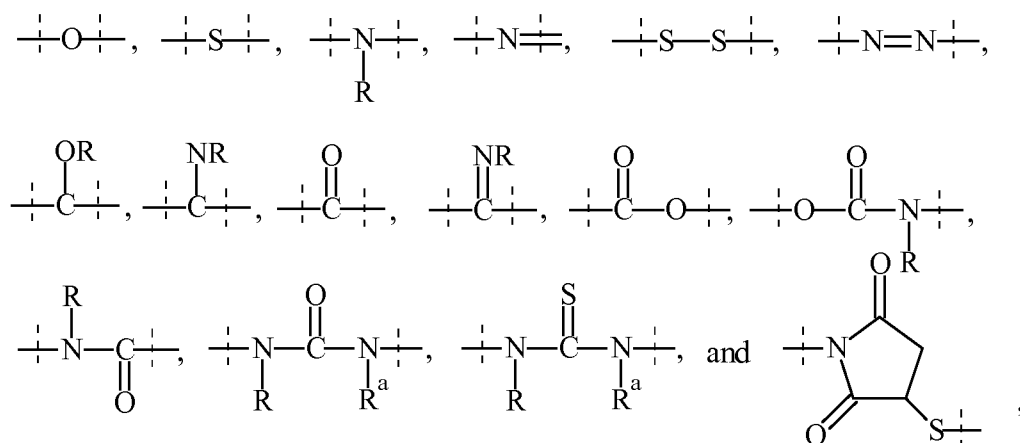
Accordingly, the term “C₂₋₁₀ alkenyl”, “C₂₋₂₀ alkenyl” or “C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl” alone or in combination means a straight-chain or branched hydrocarbon moiety comprising at least one carbon-carbon double bond having 2 to 10, 2 to 20 or 2 to 50 carbon atoms. Each hydrogen atom of a C₂₋₁₀ alkenyl, C₂₋₂₀ alkenyl or C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl group may optionally be replaced by a

substituent as defined above. Optionally, a C₂₋₁₀ alkenyl, C₂₋₂₀ alkenyl or C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl may be interrupted by one or more moieties as defined below.

As used herein, the term “C₂₋₆ alkynyl” alone or in combination means a straight-chain or
 5 branched hydrocarbon moiety comprising at least one carbon-carbon triple bond having 2 to 6 carbon atoms. If present at the end of a molecule, examples are -C≡CH, -CH₂-C≡CH, CH₂-CH₂-C≡CH and CH₂-C≡C-CH₃. When two moieties of a molecule are linked by the alkynyl group, then an example is -C≡C-. Each hydrogen atom of a C₂₋₆ alkynyl group may optionally be replaced by a substituent as defined above. Optionally, one or more double
 10 bonds may occur. Optionally, a C₂₋₆ alkynyl may be interrupted by one or more moieties as defined below.

Accordingly, as used herein, the term “C₂₋₁₀ alkynyl”, “C₂₋₂₀ alkynyl” and “C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl” alone or in combination means a straight-chain or branched hydrocarbon moiety comprising
 15 at least one carbon-carbon triple bond having 2 to 10, 2 to 20 or 2 to 50 carbon atoms, respectively. Each hydrogen atom of a C₂₋₁₀ alkynyl, C₂₋₂₀ alkynyl or C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl group may optionally be replaced by a substituent as defined above. Optionally, one or more double bonds may occur. Optionally, a C₂₋₁₀ alkynyl, C₂₋₂₀ alkynyl or C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl may be interrupted by one or more moieties as defined below.

As mentioned above, a C₁₋₄ alkyl, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₁₋₁₀ alkyl, C₁₋₂₀ alkyl, C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₆ alkenyl, C₂₋₁₀ alkenyl, C₂₋₂₀ alkenyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, C₂₋₆ alkynyl, C₂₋₁₀ alkynyl, C₂₋₂₀ alkenyl or C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl may optionally be interrupted by one or more moieties which are preferably selected from the group consisting of



25

wherein

dashed lines indicate attachment to the remainder of the moiety or reagent; and
-R and -R^a are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of -H,
methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, pentyl and hexyl.

5 As used herein, the term "C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl" means a cyclic alkyl chain having 3 to 10 carbon atoms, which may be saturated or unsaturated, e.g. cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cyclopentyl, cyclohexyl, cyclohexenyl, cycloheptyl, cyclooctyl, cyclononyl or cyclodecyl. Each hydrogen atom of a C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl carbon may be replaced by a substituent as defined above. The term "C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl" also includes bridged bicycles like norbornane or norbornene.

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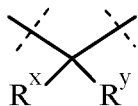
The term "8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl" or "8- to 30-membered carbopolycycle" means a cyclic moiety of two or more rings with 8 to 30 ring atoms, where two neighboring rings share at least one ring atom and that may contain up to the maximum number of double bonds (aromatic or non-aromatic ring which is fully, partially or un-saturated). Preferably a 8-
15 to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl means a cyclic moiety of two, three, four or five rings, more preferably of two, three or four rings.

As used herein, the term "3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl" or "3- to 10-membered heterocycle" means a ring with 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 ring atoms that may contain up to the
20 maximum number of double bonds (aromatic or non-aromatic ring which is fully, partially or un-saturated) wherein at least one ring atom up to 4 ring atoms are replaced by a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of sulfur (including -S(O)-, -S(O)₂-), oxygen and nitrogen (including =N(O)-) and wherein the ring is linked to the rest of the molecule via a carbon or nitrogen atom. Examples for 3- to 10-membered heterocycles include but are not limited to
25 aziridine, oxirane, thiirane, azirine, oxirene, thiirene, azetidine, oxetane, thietane, furan, thiophene, pyrrole, pyrroline, imidazole, imidazoline, pyrazole, pyrazoline, oxazole, oxazoline, isoxazole, isoxazoline, thiazole, thiazoline, isothiazole, isothiazoline, thiadiazole, thiadiazoline, tetrahydrofuran, tetrahydrothiophene, pyrrolidine, imidazolidine, pyrazolidine, oxazolidine, isoxazolidine, thiazolidine, isothiazolidine, thiadiazolidine, sulfolane, pyran,
30 dihydropyran, tetrahydropyran, imidazolidine, pyridine, pyridazine, pyrazine, pyrimidine, piperazine, piperidine, morpholine, tetrazole, triazole, triazolidine, tetrazolidine, diazepane, azepine and homopiperazine. Each hydrogen atom of a 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl or 3- to 10-membered heterocyclic group may be replaced by a substituent as defined below.

As used herein, the term "8- to 11-membered heterobicycyl" or "8- to 11-membered heterobicycle" means a heterocyclic moiety of two rings with 8 to 11 ring atoms, where at least one ring atom is shared by both rings and that may contain up to the maximum number of double bonds (aromatic or non-aromatic ring which is fully, partially or un-saturated) wherein at least one ring atom up to 6 ring atoms are replaced by a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of sulfur (including -S(O)-, -S(O)₂-), oxygen and nitrogen (including =N(O)-) and wherein the ring is linked to the rest of the molecule via a carbon or nitrogen atom. Examples for an 8- to 11-membered heterobicycle are indole, indoline, benzofuran, benzothiophene, benzoxazole, benzisoxazole, benzothiazole, benzisothiazole, benzimidazole, benzimidazoline, quinoline, quinazoline, dihydroquinazoline, quinoline, dihydroquinoline, tetrahydroquinoline, decahydroquinoline, isoquinoline, decahydroisoquinoline, tetrahydroisoquinoline, dihydroisoquinoline, benzazepine, purine and pteridine. The term 8- to 11-membered heterobicycle also includes spiro structures of two rings like 1,4-dioxa-8-azaspiro[4.5]decane or bridged heterocycles like 8-aza-bicyclo[3.2.1]octane. Each hydrogen atom of an 8- to 11-membered heterobicycyl or 8- to 11-membered heterobicycle carbon may be replaced by a substituent as defined below.

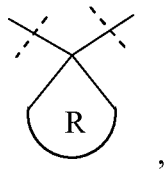
Similarly, the term "8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl" or "8- to 30-membered heteropolycycle" means a heterocyclic moiety of more than two rings with 8 to 30 ring atoms, preferably of three, four or five rings, where two neighboring rings share at least one ring atom and that may contain up to the maximum number of double bonds (aromatic or non-aromatic ring which is fully, partially or unsaturated), wherein at least one ring atom up to 10 ring atoms are replaced by a heteroatom selected from the group of sulfur (including -S(O)-, -S(O)₂-), oxygen and nitrogen (including =N(O)-) and wherein the ring is linked to the rest of a molecule via a carbon or nitrogen atom.

It is understood that the phrase "the pair R^x/R^y is joined together with the atom to which they are attached to form a C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl or a 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl" in relation with a moiety of the structure



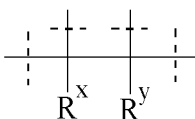
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means that R_x and R_y form the following structure:

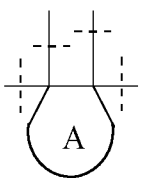


wherein R is C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl or 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl.

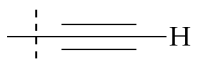
It is also understood that the phrase “the pair R^x/R^y is joint together with the atoms to which they are attached to form a ring A” in relation with a moiety of the structure



means that R^x and R^y form the following structure:



As used herein, the term “terminal alkyne” means a moiety



As used herein, “halogen” means fluoro, chloro, bromo or iodo. It is generally preferred that halogen is fluoro or chloro.

In general, the term “comprise” or “comprising” also encompasses “consist of” or “consisting of”.

In the present invention -L¹- is covalently and reversibly conjugated to the side chain of an amino acid residue of said ring moiety of -D or to the backbone of said ring moiety of -D. Preferably, -L¹- is covalently and reversibly conjugated to the side chain of an amino acid residue of said ring moiety of -D.

It was also surprisingly found that an increase in the lengths of the CNP sequence is beneficial with regard to NEP-stability: CNP-22 was more susceptible towards NEP-degradation than CNP-34 which in turn was more susceptible than CNP-38.

Preferably -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:25 or SEQ ID NO:30.

In one embodiment -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:25.

5 In another embodiment -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20.

In another embodiment -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21.

In another embodiment -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22.

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In another embodiment -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23.

In one embodiment -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30.

15 In a preferred embodiment -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24.

Said amino acid residue located in the ring moiety of -D is preferably any amino acid having a functional group.

20 Preferably, the moiety -L¹- is conjugated to the ring moiety of -D through a functional group of the corresponding CNP drug D-H selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, primary and secondary amine, maleimide, thiol, sulfonic acid, carbonate, carbamate, hydroxyl, aldehyde, ketone, hydrazine, isocyanate, isothiocyanate, phosphoric acid, phosphonic acid, haloacetyl, alkyl halide, acryloyl, aryl fluoride, hydroxylamine, sulfate,
25 disulfide, vinyl sulfone, vinyl ketone, diazoalkane, oxirane, guanidine and aziridine. Most preferably the moiety -L¹- is conjugated to the ring moiety of -D through a functional group of the corresponding CNP drug D-H selected from the group consisting hydroxyl, primary and secondary amine and guanidine. In a particular preferred embodiment the moiety -L¹- is conjugated to the ring moiety of -D through a primary or secondary amine group, preferably
30 through a primary amine group.

The moiety -L¹- can be connected to the ring moiety of -D through any type of linkage, provided that it is reversible. Preferably, -L¹- is connected to the ring moiety of -D through a linkage selected from the group consisting of amide, ester, carbamate, acetal, aminal, imine,

oxime, hydrazone, disulfide and acylguanidine. Even more preferably $-L^1-$ is connected to the ring moiety of $-D$ through a linkage selected from the group consisting of amide, ester, carbamate and acylguanidine. It is understood that these linkages may not be *per se* reversible, such as for example the amide linkage, but that suitably chosen neighboring groups comprised in $-L^1-$ may render such linkages reversible.

In one embodiment $-L^1-$ is connected to the ring moiety of $-D$ through an ester linkage.

In another embodiment $-L^1-$ is connected to the ring moiety of $-D$ through a carbamate linkage.

In another embodiment $-L^1-$ is connected to the ring moiety of $-D$ through an acylguanidine.

In a preferred embodiment $-L^1-$ is connected to the ring moiety of $-D$ through an amide linkage.

The amino acid residue of the ring moiety of $-D$ to which $-L^1-$ is conjugated is selected from the group consisting of proteinogenic amino acid residues and non-proteinogenic amino acid residues.

In one embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of $-D$ to which $-L^1-$ is conjugated is a non-proteinogenic amino acid.

In a preferred embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of $-D$ to which $-L^1-$ is conjugated is a proteinogenic amino acid. Even more preferably said amino acid is selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine, tryptophan, serine, threonine, tyrosine, aspartic acid, glutamic acid and arginine. Even more preferably said amino acid is selected from the group consisting of lysine, aspartic acid, arginine and serine. Even more preferably said amino acid is selected from the group consisting of lysine, arginine and serine.

In one embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of $-D$ to which $-L^1-$ is conjugated is a histidine. It is understood that such histidine does not occur in the sequence of SEQ ID NO:96 and that it may only be present in variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs and derivatives thereof.

In one embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is a tryptophan. It is understood that such tryptophan does not occur in the sequence of SEQ ID NO:96 and that it may only be present in variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs and derivatives thereof.

In one embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is a threonine. It is understood that such threonine does not occur in the sequence of SEQ ID NO:96 and that it may only be present in variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs and derivatives thereof.

In one embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is a tyrosine. It is understood that such tyrosine does not occur in the sequence of SEQ ID NO:96 and that it may only be present in variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs and derivatives thereof.

In one embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is a glutamic acid. It is understood that such glutamic acid does not occur in the sequence of SEQ ID NO:96 and that it may only be present in variants, analogs, orthologs, homologs and derivatives thereof.

In one embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is a lysine. Preferably, said amino acid is the lysine at position 4 of SEQ ID NO:96 which corresponds to the lysine at position 26 of SEQ ID NO:24.

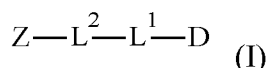
In another embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is an aspartic acid. Preferably, said amino acid is the aspartic acid at position 6 of SEQ ID NO:96 which corresponds to the aspartic acid at position 28 of SEQ ID NO:24.

In another embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is an arginine. Preferably, said amino acid is the arginine at position 7 of SEQ ID NO:96 which corresponds to the arginine at position 29 of SEQ ID NO:24.

In another embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated a serine. Preferably, said amino acid is the serine at position 10 or 12 of SEQ ID NO:96. In one embodiment said amino acid is the serine at position 10 of SEQ ID NO:96 which corresponds to the serine at position 32 of SEQ ID NO:24. In another embodiment said amino acid is the serine at position 12 of SEQ ID NO:96 which corresponds to the serine at position 34 of SEQ ID NO:24.

In a preferred embodiment the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is a lysine. Most preferably, -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and -L¹- is conjugated to the lysine at position 26.

Preferably, the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (I)



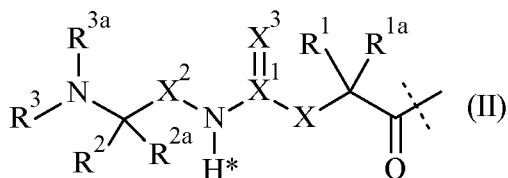
wherein

- D is a CNP moiety;
- L¹- is a reversible prodrug linker moiety which is covalently and reversibly conjugated to a side chain of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D or to the backbone of said ring moiety of -D;
- L²- is a single chemical bond or a spacer moiety; and
- Z is a carrier moiety.

The moiety -L¹- is a reversible prodrug linker from which the drug, i.e. CNP, is released in its free form, i.e. it is a traceless prodrug linker. Suitable prodrug linkers are known in the art, such as for example the reversible prodrug linker moieties disclosed in WO 2005/099768 A2, WO 2006/136586 A2, WO 2011/089216 A1 and WO 2013/024053 A1, which are incorporated by reference herewith.

In another embodiment -L¹- is a reversible prodrug linker as described in WO 2011/012722 A1, WO 2011/089214 A1, WO 2011/089215 A1, WO 2013/024052 A1 and WO 2013/160340 A1 which are incorporated by reference herewith.

A particularly preferred moiety -L¹- is disclosed in WO 2009/095479 A2. Accordingly, in one preferred embodiment the moiety -L¹- is of formula (II):



wherein the dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

-X- is -C(R⁴R^{4a})-; -N(R⁴)-; -O-; -C(R⁴R^{4a})-C(R⁵R^{5a})-; -C(R⁵R^{5a})-C(R⁴R^{4a})-;
 5 -C(R⁴R^{4a})-N(R⁶)-; -N(R⁶)-C(R⁴R^{4a})-; -C(R⁴R^{4a})-O-; -O-C(R⁴R^{4a})-;
 or -C(R⁷R^{7a})-;

X¹ is C; or S(O);

-X²- is -C(R⁸R^{8a})-; or -C(R⁸R^{8a})-C(R⁹R^{9a})-;

=X³ is =O; =S; or =N-CN;

10 -R¹, -R^{1a}, -R², -R^{2a}, -R⁴, -R^{4a}, -R⁵, -R^{5a}, -R⁶, -R⁸, -R^{8a}, -R⁹, -R^{9a} are independently selected from the group consisting of -H; and C₁₋₆ alkyl;

-R³, -R^{3a} are independently selected from the group consisting of -H; and C₁₋₆ alkyl, provided that in case one of -R³, -R^{3a} or both are other than -H they are connected to N to which they are attached through an SP³-hybridized carbon atom;

15 -R⁷ is -N(R¹⁰R^{10a}); or -NR¹⁰-(C=O)-R¹¹;

-R^{7a}, -R¹⁰, -R^{10a}, -R¹¹ are independently of each other -H; or C₁₋₆ alkyl;

optionally, one or more of the pairs -R^{1a}/-R^{4a}, -R^{1a}/-R^{5a}, -R^{1a}/-R^{7a}, -R^{4a}/-R^{5a}, -R^{8a}/-R^{9a} form a chemical bond;

20 optionally, one or more of the pairs -R¹/-R^{1a}, -R²/-R^{2a}, -R⁴/-R^{4a}, -R⁵/-R^{5a}, -R⁸/-R^{8a}, -R⁹/-R^{9a} are joined together with the atom to which they are attached to form a C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl; or 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl;

optionally, one or more of the pairs -R¹/-R⁴, -R¹/-R⁵, -R¹/-R⁶, -R¹/-R^{7a}, -R⁴/-R⁵, -R⁴/-R⁶, -R⁸/-R⁹, -R²/-R³ are joined together with the atoms to which they are attached to form a ring A;

25 optionally, R³/R^{3a} are joined together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached to form a 3- to 10-membered heterocycle;

A is selected from the group consisting of phenyl; naphthyl; indenyl; indanyl; tetralinyl; C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl; 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl; and 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl; and

30

wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (II) is not replaced by $-L^2-Z$ or a substituent;

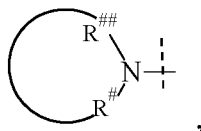
wherein

- 5 $-L^2-$ is a single chemical bond or a spacer;
 $-Z$ is a carrier moiety.

Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (II) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

- 10 In one embodiment $-L^1-$ of formula (II) is not further substituted.

It is understood that if $-R^3/-R^{3a}$ of formula (II) are joined together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached to form a 3- to 10-membered heterocycle, only such 3- to 10-membered heterocycles may be formed in which the atoms directly attached to the nitrogen
 15 are SP^3 -hybridized carbon atoms. In other words, such 3- to 10-membered heterocycle formed by $-R^3/-R^{3a}$ together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached has the following structure:

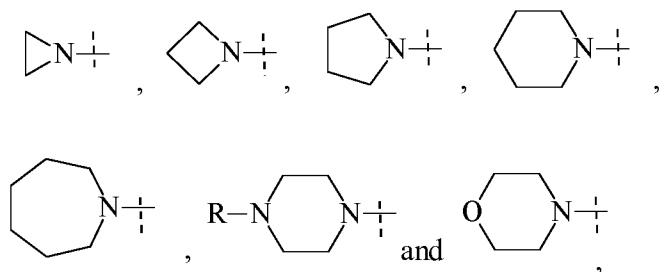


wherein

- 20 the dashed line indicates attachment to the rest of $-L^1-$;
 the ring comprises 3 to 10 atoms comprising at least one nitrogen; and
 $R^{\#}$ and $R^{##}$ represent an SP^3 -hybridized carbon atom.

It is also understood that the 3- to 10-membered heterocycle may be further substituted.

- 25 Exemplary embodiments of suitable 3- to 10-membered heterocycles formed by $-R^3/-R^{3a}$ of formula (II) together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached are the following:

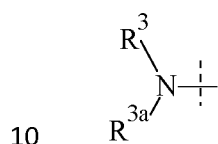


wherein

dashed lines indicate attachment to the rest of the molecule; and

5 -R is selected from the group consisting of -H and C₁₋₆ alkyl.

-L¹- of formula (II) may optionally be further substituted. In general, any substituent may be used as far as the cleavage principle is not affected, i.e. the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (II) is not replaced and the nitrogen of the moiety



10 of formula (II) remains part of a primary, secondary or tertiary amine, i.e. -R³ and -R^{3a} are independently of each other -H or are connected to -N< through an SP³-hybridized carbon atom.

15 In one embodiment -R¹ or -R^{1a} of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R² or -R^{2a} of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R³ or -R^{3a} of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁴ of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁵ or -R^{5a} of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁶ of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁷ or -R^{7a} of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁸ or -R^{8a} of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁹ or -R^{9a} of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z.

Most preferably -R⁴ of formula (II) is substituted with -L²-Z.

25

Preferably, -X- of formula (II) is -C(R⁴R^{4a})- or -N(R⁴)-. Most preferably, -X- of formula (II) is -C(R⁴R^{4a})-.

Preferably, X^1 of formula (II) is C.

Preferably, $=X^3$ of formula (II) is =O.

5 Preferably, $-X^2-$ of formula (II) is $-C(R^8R^{8a})-$.

Preferably $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (II) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably at least one of $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (II) is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (II) are -H.

10

Preferably, $-R^1$ and $-R^{1a}$ of formula (II) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of $-R^1$ and $-R^{1a}$ of formula (II) is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^1$ and $-R^{1a}$ of formula (II) are -H.

15 Preferably, $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (II) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (II) is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (II) are H.

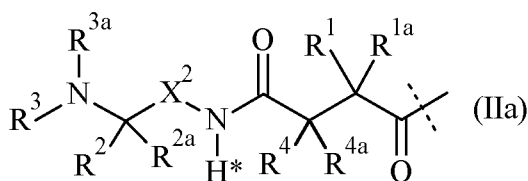
20 Preferably, $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (II) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl. Even more preferably at least one of $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (II) is methyl. In an equally preferred embodiment $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (II) are both -H. In another equally preferred embodiment $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (II) are both methyl.

25 Preferably, $-R^3$ of formula (II) is -H and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (II) is methyl.

Preferably, $-R^4$ and $-R^{4a}$ of formula (II) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of $-R^4$ and $-R^{4a}$ of formula (II) is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^4$ and $-R^{4a}$ of formula (II) are -H.

30

Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIa):



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

5 -R¹, -R^{1a}, -R², -R^{2a}, -R³, -R^{3a}, -R⁴, -R^{4a} and -X²- are used as defined in formula (II); and

wherein -L¹- is substituted with -L²-Z and wherein -L¹- is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIa) is not replaced by -L²-Z or a substituent.

10

Preferably -L¹- of formula (IIa) is substituted with one moiety -L²-Z.

Preferably the moiety -L¹- of formula (IIa) is not further substituted.

15 In one embodiment -R¹ or -R^{1a} of formula (IIa) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R² or -R^{2a} of formula (IIa) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R³ or -R^{3a} of formula (IIa) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁴ of formula (IIa) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁸ or -R^{8a} of formula (IIa) is substituted with -L²-Z. In another embodiment -R⁹ or -R^{9a} of formula (IIa) is substituted with -L²-Z.

20

Most preferably -R⁴ of formula (IIa) is substituted with -L²-Z.

Preferably, -R¹ and -R^{1a} of formula (IIa) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of -R¹ and -R^{1a} of formula (IIa) is -H.

25 Even more preferably both -R¹ and -R^{1a} of formula (IIa) are -H.

Preferably, -R⁴ and -R^{4a} of formula (IIa) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of -R⁴ and -R^{4a} of formula (IIa) is -H.

Even more preferably both -R⁴ and -R^{4a} of formula (IIa) are -H.

30

Preferably, -X²- of formula (IIa) is -C(R⁸R^{8a})-.

Preferably $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIa) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably at least one of $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIa) is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIa) are -H.

5

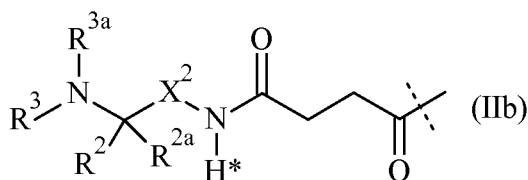
Preferably, $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIa) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIa) is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIa) are H.

10 Preferably, $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIa) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl. Even more preferably at least one of $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIa) is methyl. In an equally preferred embodiment $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIa) are both -H. In another equally preferred embodiment $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIa) are both methyl.

15

Preferably, $-R^3$ of formula (IIa) is -H and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIa) is methyl.

Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIb):



20

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

$-R^2$, $-R^{2a}$, $-R^3$, $-R^{3a}$ and $-X^2-$ are used as defined in formula (II); and

wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIb) is not replaced by $-L^2-Z$ or a substituent.

25

Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IIb) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

30 Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIb) is not further substituted.

Preferably, $-X^2-$ of formula (IIb) is $-C(R^8R^{8a})-$.

Preferably $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIb) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably at least one of $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIb) is -H.

5 Even more preferably both $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIb) are -H.

Preferably, $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIb) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIb) is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIb) are H.

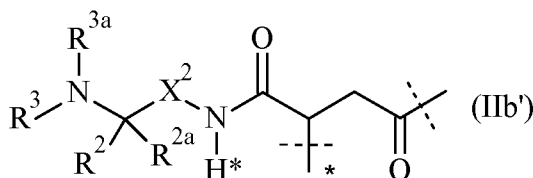
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Preferably, $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb) are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl. Even more preferably at least one of $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb) is methyl. In an equally preferred embodiment $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb) are both -H. In another equally preferred embodiment $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb) are both

15

Most preferably, $-R^3$ of formula (IIb) is -H and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb) is methyl.

Even more preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIb'):



20

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^2-$;

25

$-R^2$, $-R^{2a}$, $-R^3$, $-R^{3a}$ and $-X^2-$ are used as defined in formula (II); and

wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIb') is not replaced by a substituent.

Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIb') is not further substituted.

30

Preferably, $-X^2-$ of formula (IIb') is $-C(R^8R^{8a})-$.

Preferably $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIb') are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably at least one of $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIb') is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^8$ and $-R^{8a}$ of formula (IIb') are -H.

5

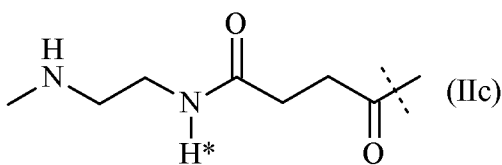
Preferably, $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIb') are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl and ethyl. More preferably, at least one of $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIb') is -H. Even more preferably both $-R^2$ and $-R^{2a}$ of formula (IIb') are H.

10 Preferably, $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb') are independently selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl. Even more preferably at least one of $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb') is methyl.

Most preferably, $-R^3$ of formula (IIb') is -H and $-R^{3a}$ of formula (IIb') is methyl.

15

Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIc):



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

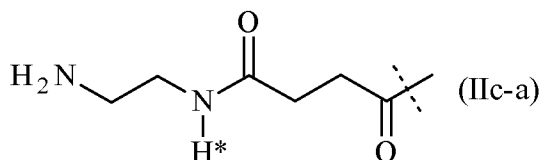
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wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIc) is not replaced by $-L^2-Z$ or a substituent.

25 Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc) is not further substituted.

In another preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIc-a):

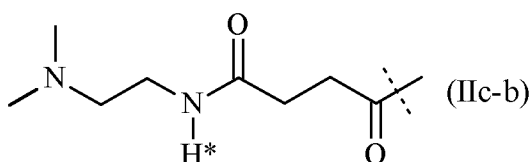


the dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIc-a) is not replaced by $-L^2-Z$ or a substituent.

Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-a) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

10 Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-a) is not further substituted.

In another preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIc-b):

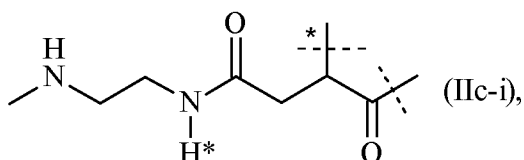


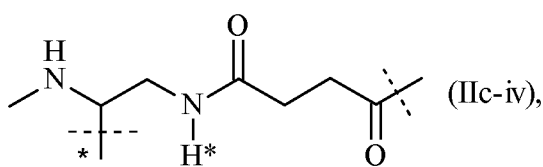
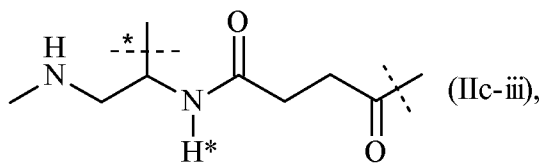
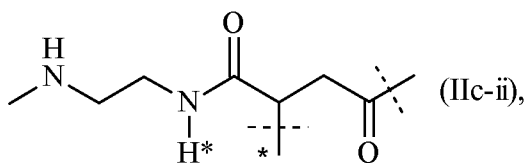
15 the dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIc-b) is not replaced by $-L^2-Z$ or a substituent.

20 Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-b) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

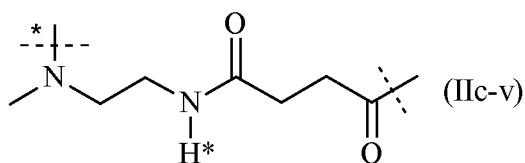
Preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-b) is not further substituted.

25 Even more preferably the moiety $-L^1-$ is selected from the group consisting of formula (IIc-i), (IIc-ii), (IIc-iii), (IIc-iv) and (IIc-v):





and



;

5 wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

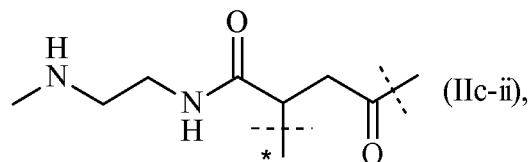
the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^2-Z$; and

10 $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIc-i), (IIc-ii), (IIc-iii), (IIc-iv) and (IIc-v) is not replaced by a substituent.

Preferably, the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-i), (IIc-ii), (IIc-iii), (IIc-iv) and (IIc-v) is not further substituted.

15

In a particularly preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIc-ii)



wherein

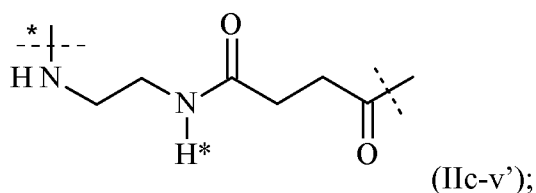
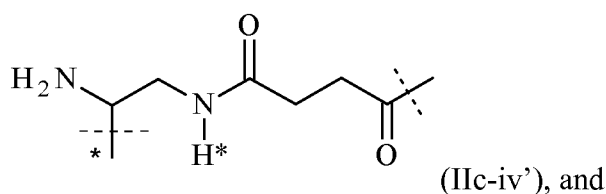
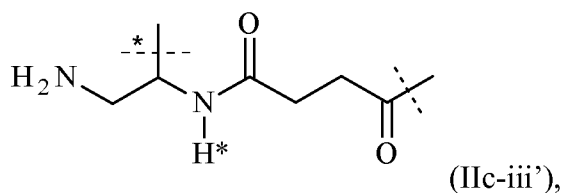
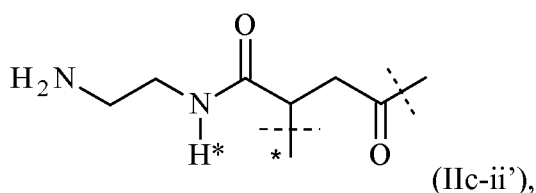
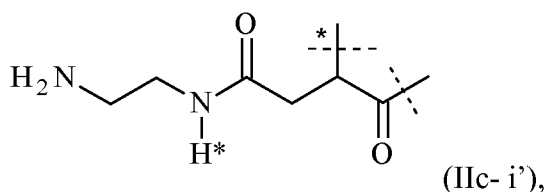
the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

20

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^2-Z$.

Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-ii) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

- 5 In an equally preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is selected from the group consisting of formula (IIc-i'), (IIc-ii'), (IIc-iii'), (IIc-iv') and (IIc-v'):



wherein

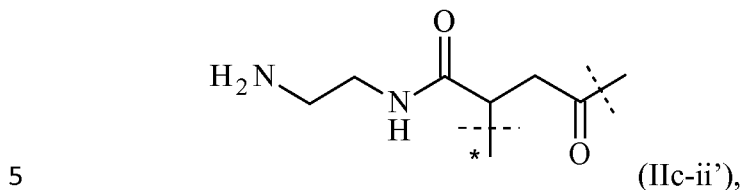
the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

- 15 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^2-Z$; and

$-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIc-i'), (IIc-ii'), (IIc-iii'), (IIc-iv') and (IIc-v') is not replaced by a substituent.

Preferably, the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-i'), (IIc-ii'), (IIc-iii'), (IIc-iv') and (IIc-v') is not further substituted.

In another particularly preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIc-ii')



wherein

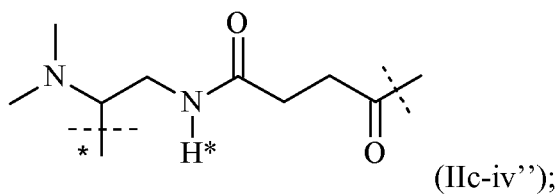
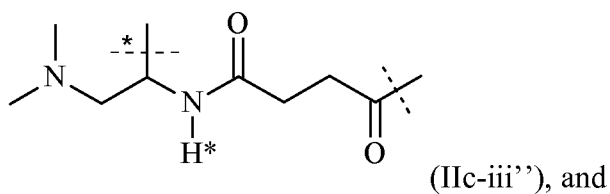
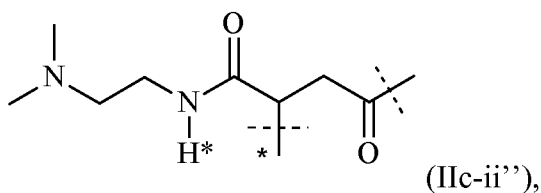
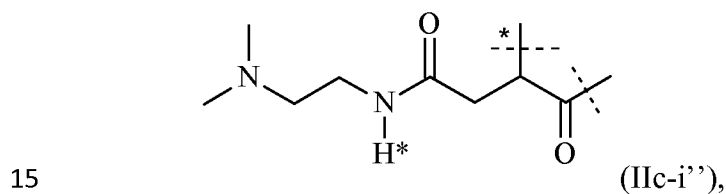
the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^2-Z$.

10

Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-ii') is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

In an equally preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is selected from the group consisting of formula (IIc-i''), (IIc-ii''), (IIc-iii'') and (IIc-iv''):



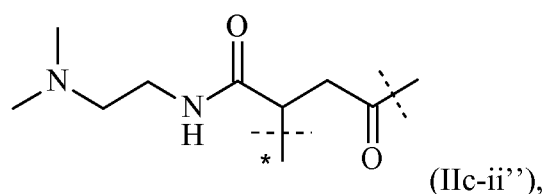
wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;
 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^2-Z$; and
 $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (IIc-i''), (IIc-ii''), (IIc-iii'') and (IIc-iv'') is not replaced by a
 5 substituent.

Preferably, the moiety $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-i''), (IIc-ii''), (IIc-iii'') and (IIc-iv'') is not further substituted.

10

In another particularly preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IIc-ii'')



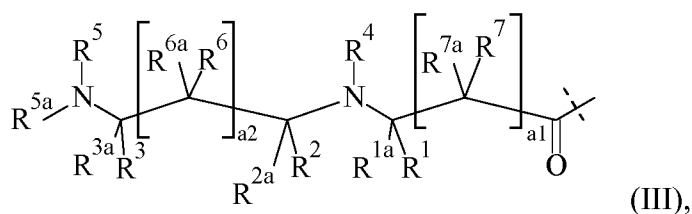
wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and
 15 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^2-Z$.

Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IIc-ii'') is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

20 The optional further substituents of $-L^1-$ of formula (II), (IIa), (IIb), (IIb'), (IIc), (IIc-a), (IIc-b), (IIc-i), (IIc-ii), (IIc-iii), (IIc-iv), (IIc-v), (IIc-i'), (IIc-ii'), (IIc-iii'), (IIc-iv'), (IIc-v'), (IIc-i''), (IIc-ii''), (IIc-iii''), (IIc-iv''), are preferably as described above.

Another particularly preferred moiety $-L^1-$ is disclosed in WO2012/020373A1. Accordingly,
 25 in another preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (III):



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to a primary or secondary amine or hydroxyl of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide or ester linkage, respectively;

$-R^1$, $-R^{1a}$, $-R^2$, $-R^{2a}$, $-R^3$ and $-R^{3a}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, $-C(R^8R^{8a}R^{8b})$, $-C(=O)R^8$, $-C\equiv N$, $-C(=NR^8)R^{8a}$, $-CR^8(=CR^{8a}R^{8b})$, $-C\equiv CR^8$ and $-T$;

$-R^4$, $-R^5$ and $-R^{5a}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, $-C(R^9R^{9a}R^{9b})$ and $-T$;

$a1$ and $a2$ are independently of each other 0 or 1;

each $-R^6$, $-R^{6a}$, $-R^7$, $-R^{7a}$, $-R^8$, $-R^{8a}$, $-R^{8b}$, $-R^9$, $-R^{9a}$, $-R^{9b}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, halogen, $-CN$, $-COOR^{10}$, $-OR^{10}$, $-C(O)R^{10}$, $-C(O)N(R^{10}R^{10a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{10}R^{10a})$, $-S(O)N(R^{10}R^{10a})$, $-S(O)_2R^{10}$, $-S(O)R^{10}$, $-N(R^{10})S(O)_2N(R^{10a}R^{10b})$, $-SR^{10}$, $-N(R^{10}R^{10a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^{10}$, $-N(R^{10})C(O)R^{10a}$, $-N(R^{10})S(O)_2R^{10a}$, $-N(R^{10})S(O)R^{10a}$, $-N(R^{10})C(O)OR^{10a}$, $-N(R^{10})C(O)N(R^{10a}R^{10b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^{10}R^{10a})$, $-T$, C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20} alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl; wherein $-T$, C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20} alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{11}$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20} alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T$ -, $-C(O)O$ -, $-O$ -, $-C(O)$ -, $-C(O)N(R^{12})$ -, $-S(O)_2N(R^{12})$ -, $-S(O)N(R^{12})$ -, $-S(O)_2$ -, $-S(O)$ -, $-N(R^{12})S(O)_2N(R^{12a})$ -, $-S$ -, $-N(R^{12})$ -, $-OC(OR^{12})(R^{12a})$ -, $-N(R^{12})C(O)N(R^{12a})$ -, and $-OC(O)N(R^{12})$ -;

each $-R^{10}$, $-R^{10a}$, $-R^{10b}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, $-T$, C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20} alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl; wherein $-T$, C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20} alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{11}$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20} alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T$ -, $-C(O)O$ -, $-O$ -, $-C(O)$ -, $-C(O)N(R^{12})$ -, $-S(O)_2N(R^{12})$ -, $-S(O)N(R^{12})$ -, $-S(O)_2$ -, $-S(O)$ -, $-N(R^{12})S(O)_2N(R^{12a})$ -, $-S$ -, $-N(R^{12})$ -, $-OC(OR^{12})(R^{12a})$ -, $-N(R^{12})C(O)N(R^{12a})$ -, and $-OC(O)N(R^{12})$ -;

each T is independently of each other selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, and 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl; wherein each T is

independently optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{11}$, which are the same or different;

each $-R^{11}$ is independently of each other selected from halogen, $-\text{CN}$, oxo ($=\text{O}$), $-\text{COOR}^{13}$, $-\text{OR}^{13}$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^{13}$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{13}\text{R}^{13\text{a}})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^{13}\text{R}^{13\text{a}})$,
 5 $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{13}\text{R}^{13\text{a}})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{R}^{13}$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{R}^{13}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^{13})\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^{13\text{a}}\text{R}^{13\text{b}})$, $-\text{SR}^{13}$,
 $-\text{N}(\text{R}^{13}\text{R}^{13\text{a}})$, $-\text{NO}_2$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}^{13}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^{13})\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^{13\text{a}}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^{13})\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{R}^{13\text{a}}$,
 $-\text{N}(\text{R}^{13})\text{S}(\text{O})\text{R}^{13\text{a}}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^{13})\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}^{13\text{a}}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^{13})\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{13\text{a}}\text{R}^{13\text{b}})$,
 $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{13}\text{R}^{13\text{a}})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted
 with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

10 each $-R^{12}$, $-R^{12\text{a}}$, $-R^{13}$, $-R^{13\text{a}}$, $-R^{13\text{b}}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-\text{H}$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

optionally, one or more of the pairs $-R^1/-R^{1\text{a}}$, $-R^2/-R^{2\text{a}}$, $-R^3/-R^{3\text{a}}$, $-R^6/-R^{6\text{a}}$, $-R^7/-R^{7\text{a}}$ are
 15 joined together with the atom to which they are attached to form a C_{3-10} cycloalkyl or a 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl;

optionally, one or more of the pairs $-R^1/-R^2$, $-R^1/-R^3$, $-R^1/-R^4$, $-R^1/-R^5$, $-R^1/-R^6$,
 $-R^1/-R^7$, $-R^2/-R^3$, $-R^2/-R^4$, $-R^2/-R^5$, $-R^2/-R^6$, $-R^2/-R^7$, $-R^3/-R^4$, $-R^3/-R^5$, $-R^3/-R^6$,
 $-R^3/-R^7$, $-R^4/-R^5$, $-R^4/-R^6$, $-R^4/-R^7$, $-R^5/-R^6$, $-R^5/-R^7$, $-R^6/-R^7$ are joint together
 with the atoms to which they are attached to form a ring A;

20 A is selected from the group consisting of phenyl; naphthyl; indenyl; indanyl; tetralinyl; C_{3-10} cycloalkyl; 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl; and 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl;

wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted;

25 wherein

$-L^2-$ is a single chemical bond or a spacer; and

$-Z$ is a carrier moiety.

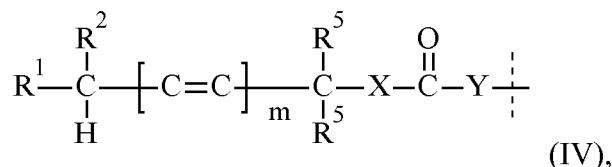
The optional further substituents of $-L^1-$ of formula (III) are preferably as described above.

30 Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (III) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

In one embodiment $-L^1-$ of formula (III) is not further substituted.

Additional preferred embodiments for $-L^1-$ are disclosed in EP1536334B1, WO2009/009712A1, WO2008/034122A1, WO2009/143412A2, WO2011/082368A2, and US8618124B2, which are herewith incorporated by reference in their entirety.

- 5 Additional preferred embodiments for $-L^1-$ are disclosed in US8946405B2 and US8754190B2, which are herewith incorporated by reference in their entirety. Accordingly, a preferred moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (IV):



wherein

- 10 the dashed line indicates attachment to the CNP moiety and wherein attachment is through a functional group of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D selected from the group consisting of -OH, -SH and -NH₂;

m is 0 or 1;

- at least one or both of $-\text{R}^1$ and $-\text{R}^2$ is/are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of -CN, -NO₂, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted alkenyl, optionally substituted alkynyl, -C(O)R³, -S(O)R³, -S(O)₂R³, and -SR⁴,

- one and only one of $-\text{R}^1$ and $-\text{R}^2$ is selected from the group consisting of -H, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, and optionally substituted heteroarylalkyl;

- 15 $-\text{R}^3$ is selected from the group consisting of -H, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, optionally substituted heteroarylalkyl, -OR⁹ and -N(R⁹)₂;

- 25 $-\text{R}^4$ is selected from the group consisting of optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl, and optionally substituted heteroarylalkyl;

- each $-\text{R}^5$ is independently selected from the group consisting of -H, optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted alkenylalkyl, optionally substituted alkynylalkyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl and optionally substituted heteroarylalkyl;

- 30 $-\text{R}^9$ is selected from the group consisting of -H and optionally substituted alkyl;

-Y- is absent and -X- is -O- or -S-; or

-Y- is -N(Q)CH₂- and -X- is -O-;

Q is selected from the group consisting of optionally substituted alkyl, optionally substituted aryl, optionally substituted arylalkyl, optionally substituted heteroaryl and optionally substituted heteroarylalkyl;

optionally, -R¹ and -R² may be joined to form a 3 to 8-membered ring; and

optionally, both -R⁹ together with the nitrogen to which they are attached form a heterocyclic ring;

wherein -L¹- is substituted with -L²-Z and wherein -L¹- is optionally further substituted;

wherein

-L²- is a single chemical bond or a spacer; and

-Z is a carrier moiety.

The optional further substituents of -L¹- of formula (IV) are preferably as described above.

Preferably -L¹- of formula (IV) is substituted with one moiety -L²-Z.

In one embodiment -L¹- of formula (IV) is not further substituted.

Only in the context of formula (IV) the terms used have the following meaning:

The term "alkyl" as used herein includes linear, branched or cyclic saturated hydrocarbon groups of 1 to 8 carbons, or in some embodiments 1 to 6 or 1 to 4 carbon atoms.

The term "alkoxy" includes alkyl groups bonded to oxygen, including methoxy, ethoxy, isopropoxy, cyclopropoxy, cyclobutoxy, and similar.

The term "alkenyl" includes non-aromatic unsaturated hydrocarbons with carbon-carbon double bonds.

The term "alkynyl" includes non-aromatic unsaturated hydrocarbons with carbon-carbon triple bonds.

The term “aryl” includes aromatic hydrocarbon groups of 6 to 18 carbons, preferably 6 to 10 carbons, including groups such as phenyl, naphthyl, and anthracenyl. The term “heteroaryl” includes aromatic rings comprising 3 to 15 carbons containing at least one N, O or S atom, preferably 3 to 7 carbons containing at least one N, O or S atom, including groups such as
 5 pyrrolyl, pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, imidazolyl, oxazolyl, isoxazolyl, thiazolyl, isothiazolyl, quinolyl, indolyl, indenyl, and similar.

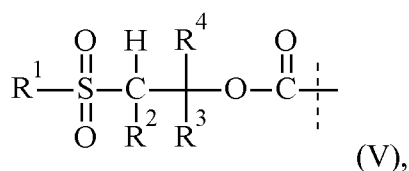
In some instance, alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl or heteroaryl moieties may be coupled to the remainder of the molecule through an alkylene linkage. Under those circumstances, the
 10 substituent will be referred to as alkenylalkyl, alkynylalkyl, arylalkyl or heteroarylalkyl, indicating that an alkylene moiety is between the alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl or heteroaryl moiety and the molecule to which the alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl or heteroaryl is coupled.

The term “halogen” includes bromo, fluoro, chloro and iodo.
 15

The term “heterocyclic ring” refers to a 4 to 8 membered aromatic or non-aromatic ring comprising 3 to 7 carbon atoms and at least one N, O, or S atom. Examples are piperidinyl, piperazinyl, tetrahydropyranyl, pyrrolidine, and tetrahydrofuranlyl, as well as the exemplary groups provided for the term “heteroaryl” above.
 20

When a ring system is optionally substituted, suitable substituents are selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, or an additional ring, each optionally further substituted. Optional substituents on any group, including the above, include halo, nitro, cyano, -OR, -SR, -NR₂, -OCOR, -NRCOR, -COOR, -CONR₂, -SOR, -SO₂R, -SONR₂, -SO₂N
 25 R₂, wherein each R is independently alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl or heteroaryl, or two R groups taken together with the atoms to which they are attached form a ring.

An additional preferred embodiment for -L¹- is disclosed in WO2013/036857A1, which is herewith incorporated by reference in its entirety. Accordingly, a preferred moiety -L¹- is of
 30 formula (V):



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to an amine functional group of a side chain of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety;

-R¹ is selected from the group consisting of optionally substituted C₁-C₆ linear, branched, or cyclic alkyl; optionally substituted aryl; optionally substituted heteroaryl; alkoxy; and -NR⁵₂;

-R² is selected from the group consisting of -H; optionally substituted C₁-C₆ alkyl; optionally substituted aryl; and optionally substituted heteroaryl;

-R³ is selected from the group consisting of -H; optionally substituted C₁-C₆ alkyl; optionally substituted aryl; and optionally substituted heteroaryl;

-R⁴ is selected from the group consisting of -H; optionally substituted C₁-C₆ alkyl; optionally substituted aryl; and optionally substituted heteroaryl;

each -R⁵ is independently of each other selected from the group consisting of -H; optionally substituted C₁-C₆ alkyl; optionally substituted aryl; and optionally substituted heteroaryl; or when taken together two -R⁵ can be cycloalkyl or cycloheteroalkyl;

wherein -L¹- is substituted with -L²-Z and wherein -L¹- is optionally further substituted;

wherein

-L²- is a single chemical bond or a spacer; and

-Z is a carrier moiety.

The optional further substituents of -L¹- of formula (V) are preferably as described above.

Preferably -L¹- of formula (V) is substituted with one moiety -L²-Z.

In one embodiment -L¹- of formula (V) is not further substituted.

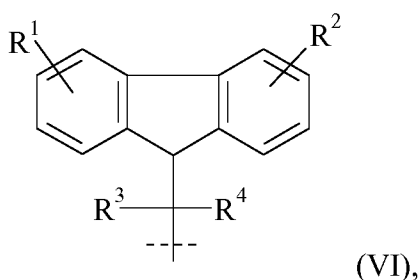
Only in the context of formula (V) the terms used have the following meaning:

“Alkyl”, “alkenyl”, and “alkynyl” include linear, branched or cyclic hydrocarbon groups of 1-8 carbons or 1-6 carbons or 1-4 carbons wherein alkyl is a saturated hydrocarbon, alkenyl includes one or more carbon-carbon double bonds and alkynyl includes one or more carbon-carbon triple bonds. Unless otherwise specified these contain 1-6 C.

“Aryl” includes aromatic hydrocarbon groups of 6-18 carbons, preferably 6-10 carbons, including groups such as phenyl, naphthyl, and anthracene “Heteroaryl” includes aromatic rings comprising 3-15 carbons containing at least one N, O or S atom, preferably 3-7 carbons containing at least one N, O or S atom, including groups such as pyrrolyl, pyridyl, pyrimidinyl, imidazolyl, oxazolyl, isoxazolyl, thiazolyl, isothiazolyl, quinolyl, indolyl, indenyl, and similar.

The term “substituted” means an alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, aryl, or heteroaryl group comprising one or more substituent groups in place of one or more hydrogen atoms. Substituents may generally be selected from halogen including F, Cl, Br, and I; lower alkyl including linear, branched, and cyclic; lower haloalkyl including fluoroalkyl, chloroalkyl, bromoalkyl, and iodoalkyl; OH; lower alkoxy including linear, branched, and cyclic; SH; lower alkylthio including linear, branched and cyclic; amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino, silyl including alkylsilyl, alkoxysilyl, and arylsilyl; nitro; cyano; carbonyl; carboxylic acid, carboxylic ester, carboxylic amide, aminocarbonyl; aminoacyl; carbamate; urea; thiocarbamate; thiourea; ketone; sulfone; sulfonamide; aryl including phenyl, naphthyl, and anthracenyl; heteroaryl including 5-member heteroaryls including as pyrrole, imidazole, furan, thiophene, oxazole, thiazole, isoxazole, isothiazole, thiadiazole, triazole, oxadiazole, and tetrazole, 6-member heteroaryls including pyridine, pyrimidine, pyrazine, and fused heteroaryls including benzofuran, benzothiophene, benzoxazole, benzimidazole, indole, benzothiazole, benzisoxazole, and benzisothiazole.

A further preferred embodiment for $-L^1-$ is disclosed in US7585837B2, which is herewith incorporated by reference in its entirety. Accordingly, a preferred moiety $-L^1-$ is of formula (VI):



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to an amine functional group of a side chain of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of a CNP moiety;

R^1 and R^2 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkoxy, alkoxyalkyl, aryl, alkaryl, aralkyl, halogen, nitro, $-\text{SO}_3\text{H}$, $-\text{SO}_2\text{NHR}^5$, amino, ammonium, carboxyl, PO_3H_2 , and OPO_3H_2 ;

R^3 , R^4 , and R^5 are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, and aryl;

wherein $-\text{L}^1-$ is substituted with $-\text{L}^2-\text{Z}$ and wherein $-\text{L}^1-$ is optionally further substituted;

wherein

$-\text{L}^2-$ is a single chemical bond or a spacer; and

$-\text{Z}$ is a carrier moiety.

Suitable substituents for formulas (VI) are alkyl (such as C_{1-6} alkyl), alkenyl (such as C_{2-6} alkenyl), alkynyl (such as C_{2-6} alkynyl), aryl (such as phenyl), heteroalkyl, heteroalkenyl, heteroalkynyl, heteroaryl (such as aromatic 4 to 7 membered heterocycle) or halogen moieties.

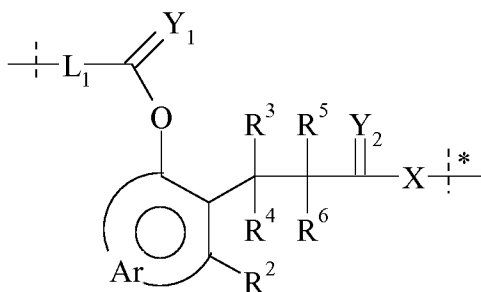
Preferably $-\text{L}^1-$ of formula (VI) is substituted with one moiety $-\text{L}^2-\text{Z}$.

In one embodiment $-\text{L}^1-$ of formula (VI) is not further substituted.

Only in the context of formula (VI) the terms used have the following meaning:

The terms “alkyl”, “alkoxy”, “alkoxyalkyl”, “aryl”, “alkaryl” and “aralkyl” mean alkyl radicals of 1-8, preferably 1-4 carbon atoms, e.g. methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl and butyl, and aryl radicals of 6-10 carbon atoms, e.g. phenyl and naphthyl. The term “halogen” includes bromo, fluoro, chloro and iodo.

A further preferred embodiment for $-\text{L}^1-$ is disclosed in WO2002/089789A1, which is herewith incorporated by reference in its entirety. Accordingly, a preferred moiety $-\text{L}^1-$ is of formula (VII):



(VII),

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to an amine functional group of a side chain of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of a CNP moiety;

5 L₁ is a bifunctional linking group,

Y₁ and Y₂ are independently O, S or NR⁷;

R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶ and R⁷ are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, C₁₋₆ alkyls, C₃₋₁₂ branched alkyls, C₃₋₈ cycloalkyls, C₁₋₆ substituted alkyls, C₃₋₈ substituted cycloalkyls, aryls, substituted aryls, aralkyls, C₁₋₆ heteroalkyls, substituted C₁₋₆ heteroalkyls, C₁₋₆ alkoxy, phenoxy, and C₁₋₆ heteroalkoxy;

Ar is a moiety which when included in formula (VII) forms a multisubstituted aromatic hydrocarbon or a multi-substituted heterocyclic group;

X is a chemical bond or a moiety that is actively transported into a target cell, a hydrophobic moiety, or a combination thereof,

15 y is 0 or 1;

wherein -L¹- is substituted with -L²-Z and wherein -L¹- is optionally further substituted;

wherein

-L²- is a single chemical bond or a spacer; and

20 -Z is a carrier moiety.

The optional further substituents of -L¹- of formula (VII) are preferably as described above.

Preferably -L¹- of formula (VII) is substituted with one moiety -L²-Z.

25

In one embodiment -L¹- of formula (VII) is not further substituted.

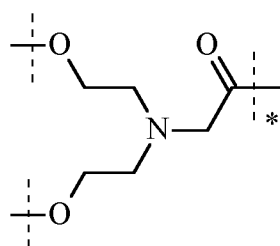
Only in the context of formula (VII) the terms used have the following meaning:

The term “alkyl” shall be understood to include, e.g. straight, branched, substituted C₁₋₁₂ alkyls, including alkoxy, C₃₋₈ cycloalkyls or substituted cycloalkyls, etc.

The term “substituted” shall be understood to include adding or replacing one or more atoms contained within a functional group or compounds with one or more different atoms.

Substituted alkyls include carboxyalkyls, aminoalkyls, dialkylaminos, hydroxyalkyls and mercaptoalkyls; substituted cycloalkyls include moieties such as 4-chlorocyclohexyl; aryls include moieties such as naphthyl; substituted aryls include moieties such as 3-bromo-phenyl; aralkyls include moieties such as toluyl; heteroalkyls include moieties such as ethylthiophene; substituted heteroalkyls include moieties such as 3-methoxythiophene; alkoxy includes moieties such as methoxy; and phenoxy includes moieties such as 3-nitrophenoxy. Halo- shall be understood to include fluoro, chloro, iodo and bromo.

15 In another preferred embodiment -L¹- comprises a substructure of formula (VIII)



(VIII),

wherein

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to an amine functional group of a side chain of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of a CNP moiety;

20 the unmarked dashed lines indicate attachment to the remainder of -L¹-; and

wherein -L¹- is substituted with -L²-Z and wherein -L¹- is optionally further substituted;

wherein

-L²- is a single chemical bond or a spacer; and

25 -Z is a carrier moiety.

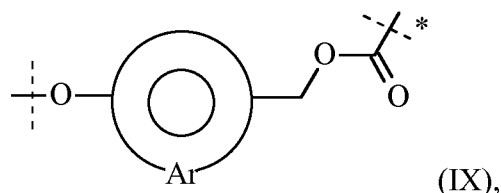
The optional further substituents of -L¹- of formula (VIII) are preferably as described above.

Preferably -L¹- of formula (VIII) is substituted with one moiety -L²-Z.

30

In one embodiment -L¹- of formula (VIII) is not further substituted.

In another preferred embodiment $-L^1-$ comprises a substructure of formula (IX)



wherein

5 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a nitrogen of a side chain of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of a CNP moiety by forming a carbamate bond;

the unmarked dashed lines indicate attachment to the remainder of $-L^1-$; and

10 wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted;

wherein

$-L^2-$ is a single chemical bond or a spacer; and

$-Z$ is a carrier moiety.

15 The optional further substituents of $-L^1-$ of formula (IX) are preferably as described above.

Preferably $-L^1-$ of formula (IX) is substituted with one moiety $-L^2-Z$.

In one embodiment $-L^1-$ of formula (IX) is not further substituted.

20

The moiety $-L^2-$ can be attached to $-L^1-$ by replacing any $-H$ present, except where explicitly excluded.

In the prodrugs of the present invention $-L^2-$ is a chemical bond or a spacer moiety.

25

In one embodiment $-L^2-$ is a chemical bond.

In another embodiment $-L^2-$ is a spacer moiety.

30 Preferably, one to five, preferably one, of the hydrogens given by $-R^1, -R^{1a}, -R^2, -R^{2a}, -R^3, -R^{3a}, -R^4, -R^{4a}, -R^5, -R^{5a}, -R^6, -R^7, -R^{7a}, -R^8, -R^{8a}, -R^9, -R^{9a}, -R^{10}, -$

R^{10a} and/or $-R^{11}$ of formula (II) are replaced by $-L^2-$. Preferably, one to five, preferably one, of the hydrogens given by $-R^1$, $-R^{1a}$, $-R^2$, $-R^{2a}$, $-R^3$, $-R^{3a}$, $-R^4$, $-R^5$, $-R^{5a}$, $-R^6$, $-R^{6a}$, $-R^7$, $-R^{7a}$, $-R^8$, $-R^{8a}$, $-R^{8b}$, $-R^9$, $-R^{9a}$, $-R^{9b}$, $-R^{10}$, $-R^{10a}$, $-R^{10b}$, $-R^{11}$, $-R^{12}$, $-R^{12a}$, $-R^{13}$, $-R^{13a}$ and/or $-R^{13b}$ of formula (III) are replaced by $-L^2-$.

5

In the prodrugs of the present invention $-L^2-$ is a chemical bond or a spacer moiety.

In one embodiment $-L^2-$ is a chemical bond.

10 In another embodiment $-L^2-$ is a spacer moiety.

When $-L^2-$ is other than a single chemical bond, $-L^2-$ is preferably selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y1})S(O)_2N(R^{y1a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^{y1})-$, $-OC(OR^{y1})(R^{y1a})-$, $-N(R^{y1})C(O)N(R^{y1a})-$, $-OC(O)N(R^{y1})-$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein $-T-$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y3})S(O)_2N(R^{y3a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^{y3})-$, $-OC(OR^{y3})(R^{y3a})-$, $-N(R^{y3})C(O)N(R^{y3a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^{y3})-$;

$-R^{y1}$ and $-R^{y1a}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, $-T$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein $-T$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which are the same or different, and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y4})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y4})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y4})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y4})S(O)_2N(R^{y4a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^{y4})-$, $-OC(OR^{y4})(R^{y4a})-$, $-N(R^{y4})C(O)N(R^{y4a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^{y4})-$;

30

each T is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicycyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl;

wherein each T is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which are the same or different;

each $-R^{y2}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-CN$, oxo
 5 $(=O)$, $-COOR^{y5}$, $-OR^{y5}$, $-C(O)R^{y5}$, $-C(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, $-S(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$,
 $-S(O)_2R^{y5}$, $-S(O)R^{y5}$, $-N(R^{y5})S(O)_2N(R^{y5a}R^{y5b})$, $-SR^{y5}$, $-N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^{y5}$,
 $-N(R^{y5})C(O)R^{y5a}$, $-N(R^{y5})S(O)_2R^{y5a}$, $-N(R^{y5})S(O)R^{y5a}$, $-N(R^{y5})C(O)OR^{y5a}$,
 $-N(R^{y5})C(O)N(R^{y5a}R^{y5b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally
 substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different; and

10 each $-R^{y3}$, $-R^{y3a}$, $-R^{y4}$, $-R^{y4a}$, $-R^{y5}$, $-R^{y5a}$ and $-R^{y5b}$ is independently selected from the group
 consisting of $-H$, and C_{1-6} alkyl, wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more
 halogen, which are the same or different.

15 When $-L^2-$ is other than a single chemical bond, $-L^2-$ is even more preferably selected
 from $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2-$,
 $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y1})S(O)_2N(R^{y1a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^{y1})-$, $-OC(OR^{y1})(R^{y1a})-$, $-N(R^{y1})C(O)N(R^{y1a})-$,
 $-OC(O)N(R^{y1})-$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein $-T-$, C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20}
 alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which are the
 20 same or different and wherein C_{1-20} alkyl, C_{2-20} alkenyl, and C_{2-20} alkynyl are optionally
 interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$,
 $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y3})S(O)_2N(R^{y3a})-$,
 $-S-$, $-N(R^{y3})-$, $-OC(OR^{y3})(R^{y3a})-$, $-N(R^{y3})C(O)N(R^{y3a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^{y3})-$;

25 $-R^{y1}$ and $-R^{y1a}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, $-T$,
 C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl, and C_{2-10} alkynyl; wherein $-T$, C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl, and C_{2-10}
 alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which are the same or different, and
 wherein C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl, and C_{2-10} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more
 groups selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$,
 30 $-C(O)N(R^{y4})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y4})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y4})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y4})S(O)_2N(R^{y4a})-$, $-S-$,
 $-N(R^{y4})-$, $-OC(OR^{y4})(R^{y4a})-$, $-N(R^{y4})C(O)N(R^{y4a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^{y4})-$;

each T is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl,
 indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered

heterobicycyl, 8-to 30-membered carbopolycycyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycycyl; wherein each T is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which are the same or different;

- 5 $-R^{y2}$ is selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-CN$, oxo ($=O$), $-COOR^{y5}$, $-OR^{y5}$, $-C(O)R^{y5}$, $-C(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, $-S(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, $-S(O)_2R^{y5}$, $-S(O)R^{y5}$, $-N(R^{y5})S(O)_2N(R^{y5a}R^{y5b})$, $-SR^{y5}$, $-N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^{y5}$, $-N(R^{y5})C(O)R^{y5a}$, $-N(R^{y5})S(O)_2R^{y5a}$, $-N(R^{y5})S(O)R^{y5a}$, $-N(R^{y5})C(O)OR^{y5a}$, $-N(R^{y5})C(O)N(R^{y5a}R^{y5b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different; and

each $-R^{y3}$, $-R^{y3a}$, $-R^{y4}$, $-R^{y4a}$, $-R^{y5}$, $-R^{y5a}$ and $-R^{y5b}$ is independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different.

- 15 When $-L^2-$ is other than a single chemical bond, $-L^2-$ is even more preferably selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y1})S(O)_2N(R^{y1a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^{y1})-$, $-OC(OR^{y1})(R^{y1a})-$, $-N(R^{y1})C(O)N(R^{y1a})-$, $-OC(O)N(R^{y1})-$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein $-T-$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y3})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y3})S(O)_2N(R^{y3a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^{y3})-$, $-OC(OR^{y3})(R^{y3a})-$, $-N(R^{y3})C(O)N(R^{y3a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^{y3})-$;

$-R^{y1}$ and $-R^{y1a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, $-T$, C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl, and C_{2-10} alkynyl;

- 30 each T is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocycyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicycyl, 8-to 30-membered carbopolycycyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycycyl;

each $-R^{y2}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, and C_{1-6} alkyl; and

each $-R^{y3}$, $-R^{y3a}$, $-R^{y4}$, $-R^{y4a}$, $-R^{y5}$, $-R^{y5a}$ and $-R^{y5b}$ is independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different.

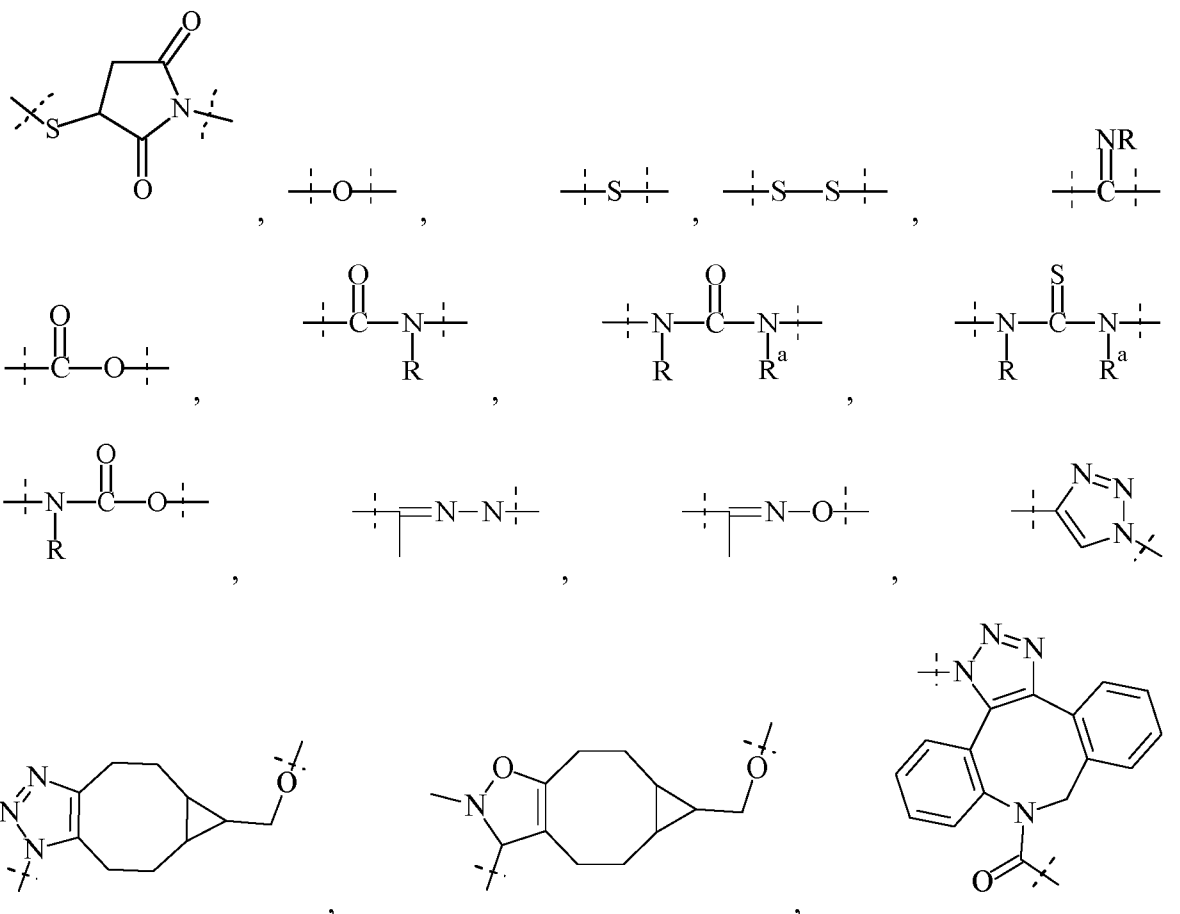
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Even more preferably, $-L^2$ is a C_{1-20} alkyl chain, which is optionally interrupted by one or more groups independently selected from $-O-$, $-T-$ and $-C(O)N(R^{y1})-$; and which C_{1-20} alkyl chain is optionally substituted with one or more groups independently selected from $-OH$, $-T$ and $-C(O)N(R^{y6}R^{y6a})$; wherein $-R^{y1}$, $-R^{y6}$, $-R^{y6a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of H and C_{1-4} alkyl and wherein T is selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl.

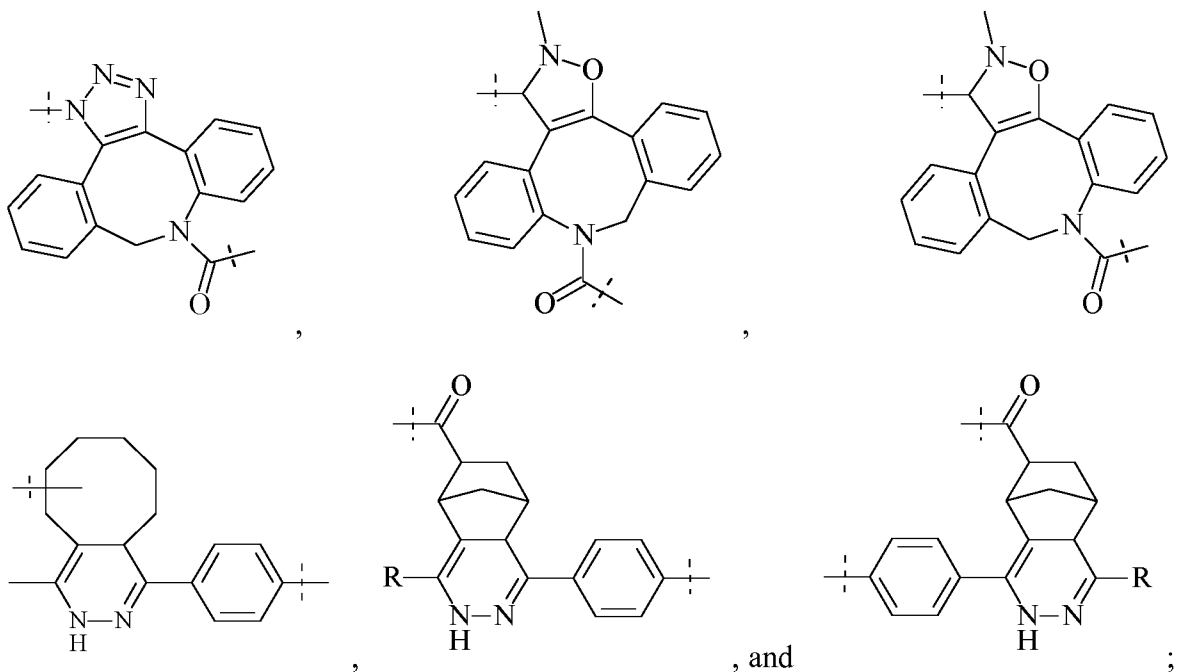
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15 Preferably, $-L^2$ has a molecular weight in the range of from 14 g/mol to 750 g/mol.

Preferably, $-L^2$ comprises a moiety selected from



20



wherein

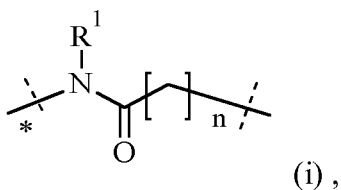
dashed lines indicate attachment to the rest of $-L^2-$, $-L^1-$ and/or $-Z$ and/or, respectively; and

- 5 $-R$ and $-R^a$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, pentyl and hexyl.

In one preferred embodiment $-L^2-$ has a chain lengths of 1 to 20 atoms.

- 10 As used herein the term “chain length” with regard to the moiety $-L^2-$ refers to the number of atoms of $-L^2-$ present in the shortest connection between $-L^1-$ and $-Z$.

Preferably, $-L^2-$ is of formula (i)



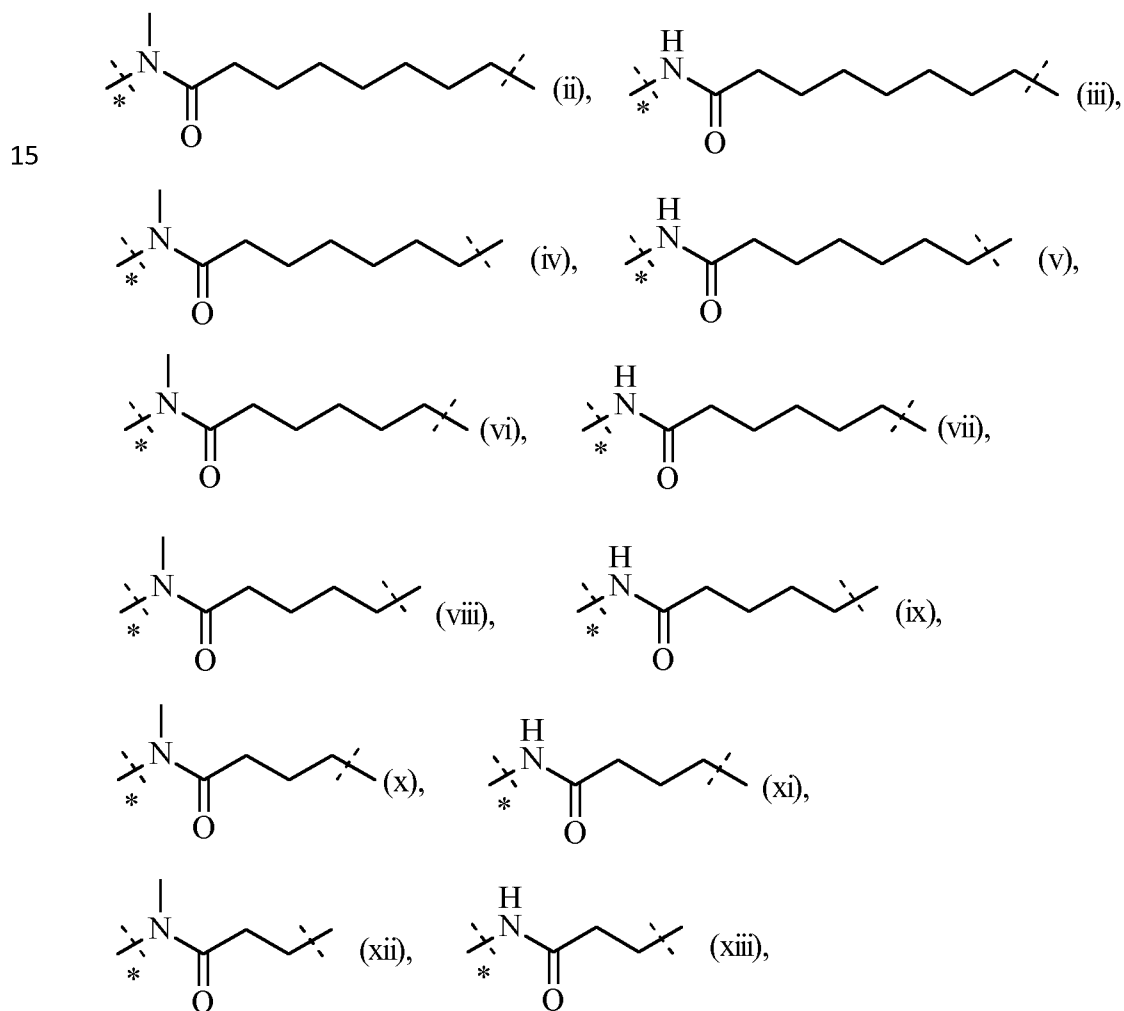
- 15 wherein
- the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^1-$;
- the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to $-Z$;
- $-R^1$ is selected from the group consisting of $-H$, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl;
- 20 n is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18; and

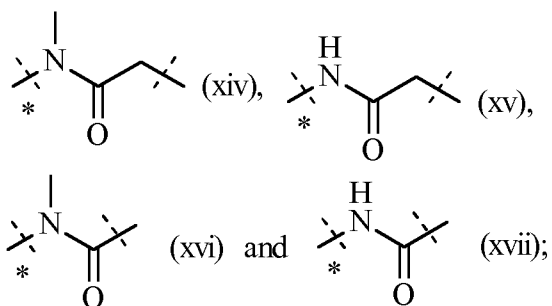
wherein the moiety of formula (i) is optionally further substituted.

Preferably $-R^1$ of formula (i) is selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl, ethyl, propyl, and butyl. Even more preferably $-R^1$ of formula (i) is selected from the group consisting of -H, methyl, ethyl and propyl. Even more preferably $-R^1$ of formula (i) is selected from the group consisting of -H and methyl. Most preferably $-R^1$ of formula (i) is methyl.

Preferably n of formula (i) is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Even more preferably n of formula (i) is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Even more preferably n of formula (i) is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2 and 3. Even more preferably n of formula (i) is selected from the group consisting of 0 and 1. Most preferably n of formula (i) is 0.

In one preferred embodiment $-L^2-$ is a moiety selected from the group consisting of





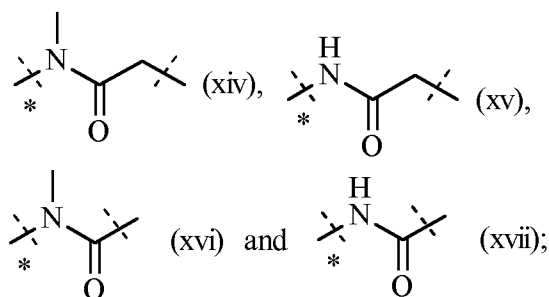
wherein

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^1-$;

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to $-Z$; and

- 5 wherein the moieties (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), (vi), (vii), (viii), (ix), (x), (xi), (xii), (xiii), (xiv), (xv), (xvi) and (xvii) are optionally further substituted.

In a preferred embodiment $-L^2-$ is selected from the group consisting of

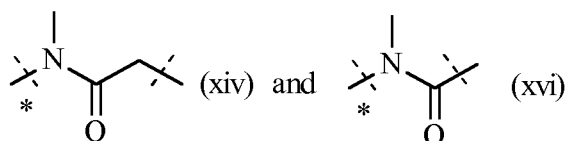


- 10 wherein

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^1-$; and

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to $-Z$.

Even more preferred $-L^2-$ is selected from the group consisting of



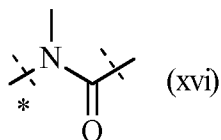
- 15

wherein

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^1-$; and

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to $-Z$.

- 20 Even more preferably $-L^2-$ is of formula (xvi)



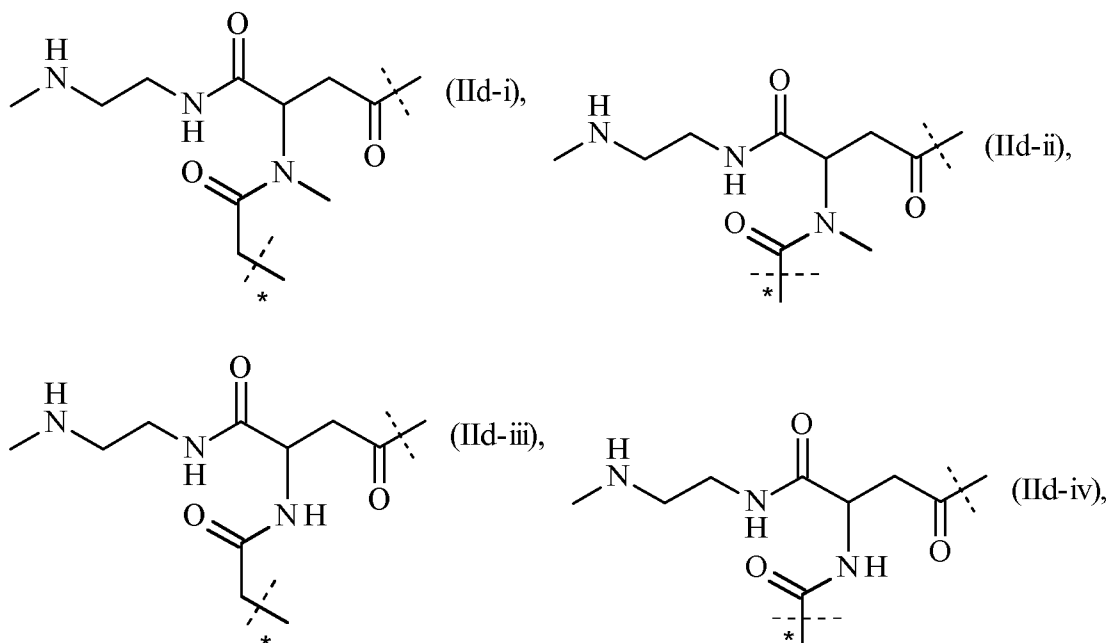
wherein

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-L^1-$; and

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to $-Z$.

5

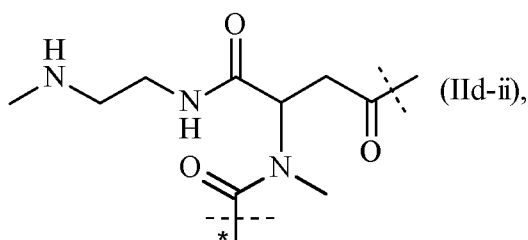
In one preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is selected from the group consisting of



wherein

10 the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-Z$.

In an even more preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is of formula (II-d-ii)

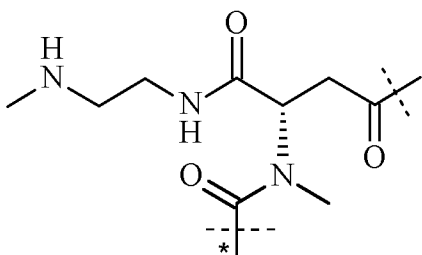


15

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z.

- 5 In a most preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is of formula (IId-ii ')



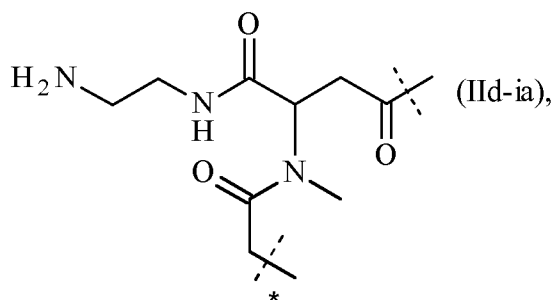
(IId-ii ')

wherein

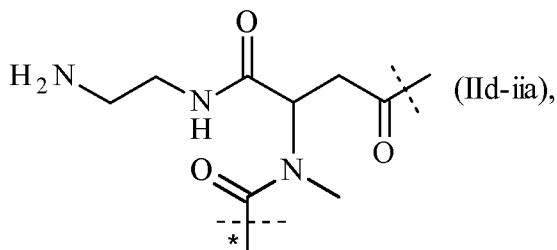
the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z.

10

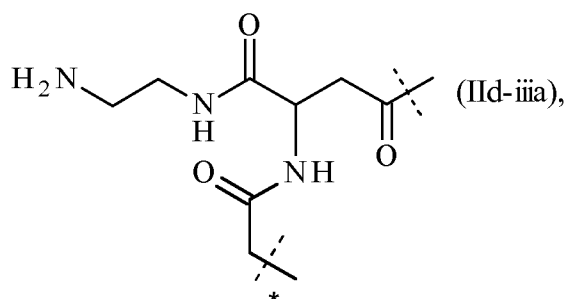
In another preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is selected from the group consisting of



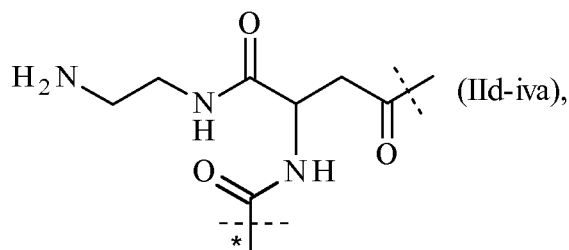
(IId-ia),



(IId-iaa),



(IId-iiia),



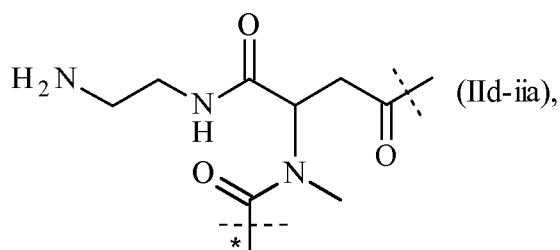
(IId-iva),

15

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z.

In an even more preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is of formula (II*d*-iia)



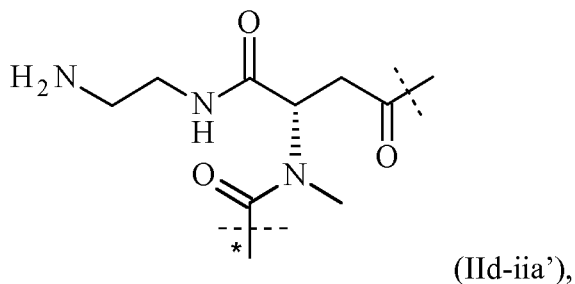
wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

5

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-Z$.

In a most preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is of formula (II*d*-iia')



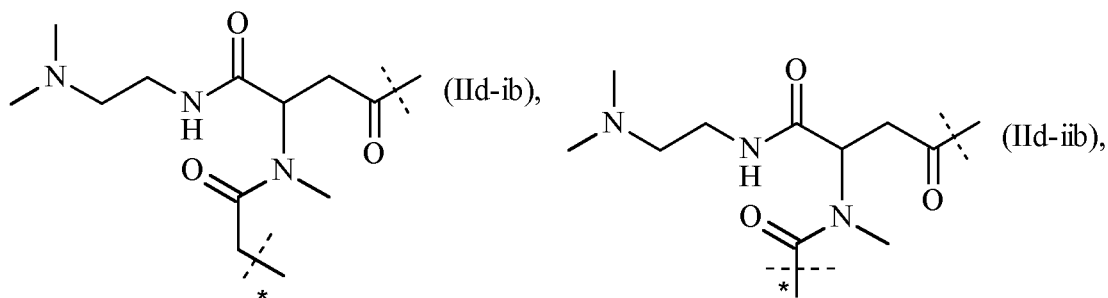
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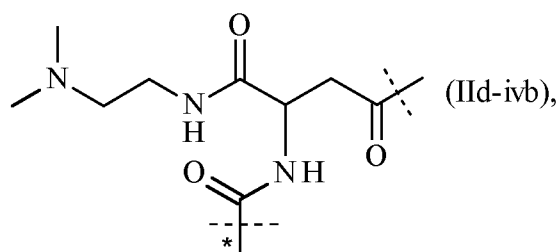
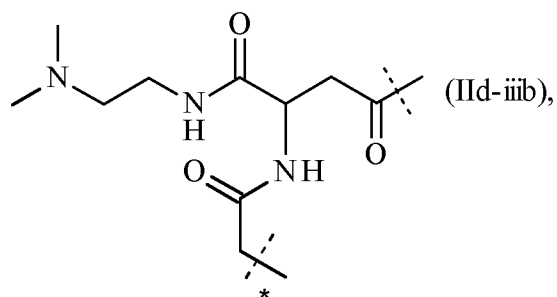
wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-Z$.

15 In another preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is selected from the group consisting of



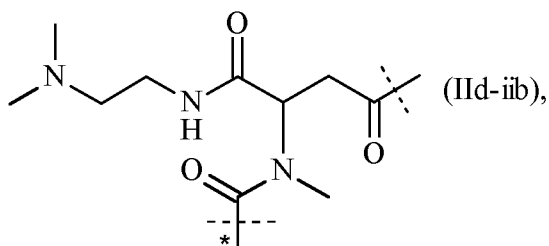


wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

5 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z.

In an even more preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is of formula (IId-iib)

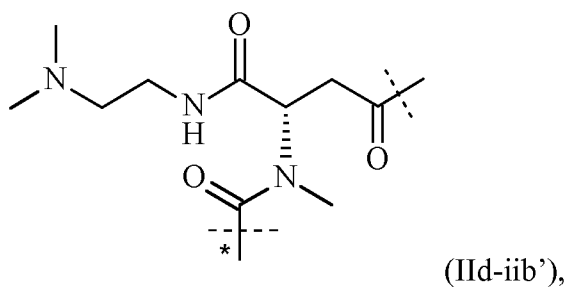


wherein

10 the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z.

In a most preferred embodiment the moiety $-L^1-L^2-$ is of formula (IId-iib')



15

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z.

20

Preferably, -Z is water-soluble.

Preferably, -Z has a molecular weight ranging from 5 to 500 kDa. Even more preferably, -Z has a molecular weight ranging from 10 to 250 kDa, even more preferably ranging from 10 to 5 150 kDa, even more preferably from 12 to 100 and most preferably from 15 to 80. In one preferred embodiment -Z has a molecular weight of about 20 kDa. In another preferred embodiment -Z has a molecular weight of about 40 kDa.

In one embodiment -Z comprises a C₈₋₂₄ alkyl moiety.

10

In a preferred embodiment -Z comprises a polymer, preferably a polymer selected from the group consisting of 2-methacryloyl-oxyethyl phosphoyl cholins, poly(acrylic acids), poly(acrylates), poly(acrylamides), poly(alkyloxy) polymers, poly(amides), poly(amidoamines), poly(amino acids), poly(anhydrides), poly(aspartamides), poly(butyric 15 acids), poly(glycolic acids), polybutylene terephthalates, poly(caprolactones), poly(carbonates), poly(cyanoacrylates), poly(dimethylacrylamides), poly(esters), poly(ethylenes), poly(ethyleneglycols), poly(ethylene oxides), poly(ethyl phosphates), poly(ethyloxazolines), poly(glycolic acids), poly(hydroxyethyl acrylates), poly(hydroxyethyl-oxazolines), poly(hydroxymethacrylates), poly(hydroxypropylmethacrylamides), 20 poly(hydroxypropyl methacrylates), poly(hydroxypropyloxazolines), poly(iminocarbonates), poly(lactic acids), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acids), poly(methacrylamides), poly(methacrylates), poly(methyloxazolines), poly(organophosphazenes), poly(ortho esters), poly(oxazolines), poly(propylene glycols), poly(siloxanes), poly(urethanes), poly(vinyl alcohols), poly(vinyl amines), poly(vinylmethylethers), poly(vinylpyrrolidones), silicones, celluloses, carbomethyl 25 celluloses, hydroxypropyl methylcelluloses, chitins, chitosans, dextrans, dextrans, gelatins, hyaluronic acids and derivatives, functionalized hyaluronic acids, mannans, pectins, rhamnogalacturonans, starches, hydroxyalkyl starches, hydroxyethyl starches and other carbohydrate-based polymers, xylans, and copolymers thereof.

30 The moiety -Z of formula (I) may be a linear, branched, multi-arm or dendritic polymeric moiety.

In one embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a linear polymeric moiety.

In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a multi-arm polymeric moiety.

In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a dendritic polymeric moiety.

5 In a preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a branched polymeric moiety.

In one embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises a protein. Preferred proteins are selected from the group consisting of carboxyl-terminal peptide of the chorionic gonadotropin as described in US 2012/0035101 A1 which are herewith incorporated by reference; albumin; XTEN
10 sequences as described in WO 2011123813 A2 which are herewith incorporated by reference; proline/alanine random coil sequences as described in WO 2011/144756 A1 which are herewith incorporated by reference; proline/alanine/serine random coil sequences as described in WO 2008/155134 A1 and WO 2013/024049 A1 which are herewith incorporated by reference; and Fc fusion proteins.

15

In one embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a polysarcosine.

In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises a poly(N-methylglycine).

20 In a particularly preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises a random coil protein moiety.

In one preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises one random coil protein moiety.

25 In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises two random coil protein moieties.

In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises three random coil protein moieties.

30

In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises four random coil protein moieties.

In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises five random coil protein moieties.

5 In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises six random coil protein moieties.

In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises seven random coil protein moieties.

10 In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises eight random coil protein moieties.

Preferably such random coil protein moiety comprises at least 25 amino acid residues and at most 2000 amino acids. Even more preferably such random coil protein moiety comprises at
15 least 30 amino acid residues and at most 1500 amino acid residues. Even more preferably such random coil protein moiety comprises at least 50 amino acid residues and at most 500 amino acid residues.

In a preferred embodiment, -Z of formula (I) comprises a random coil protein moiety of
20 which at least 80%, preferably at least 85%, even more preferably at least 90%, even more preferably at least 95%, even more preferably at least 98% and most preferably at least 99% of the total number of amino acids forming said random coil protein moiety are selected from alanine and proline. Even more preferably, at least 10%, but less than 75%, preferably less than 65%, of the total number of amino acid residues of such random coil protein moiety are
25 proline residues. Preferably, such random coil protein moiety is as described in WO 2011/144756 A1 which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. Even more preferably -Z comprises at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:9, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:11, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ
30 ID NO:13, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:15, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:17, SEQ ID NO:51 and SEQ ID NO:61 as disclosed in WO2011/144756 which are hereby incorporated by reference. A moiety comprising such random coil protein comprising alanine and proline will be referred to as "PA" or "PA moiety".

Accordingly, -Z of formula (I) comprises a PA moiety.

In an equally preferred embodiment, -Z of formula (I) comprises a random coil protein moiety of which at least 80%, preferably at least 85%, even more preferably at least 90%, even more preferably at least 95%, even more preferably at least 98% and most preferably at least 99% of the total number of amino acids forming said random coil protein moiety are selected from alanine, serine and proline. Even more preferably, at least 4%, but less than 40% of the total number of amino acid residues of such random coil protein moiety are proline residues. Preferably, such random coil protein moiety is as described in WO 2008/155134 A1 which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. Even more preferably -Z comprises at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:8, SEQ ID NO:10, SEQ ID NO:12, SEQ ID NO:14, SEQ ID NO:16, SEQ ID NO:18, SEQ ID NO:20, SEQ ID NO:22, SEQ ID NO:24, SEQ ID NO:26, SEQ ID NO:28, SEQ ID NO:30, SEQ ID NO:32, SEQ ID NO:34, SEQ ID NO:36, SEQ ID NO:40, SEQ ID NO:42, SEQ ID NO:44, SEQ ID NO:46, SEQ ID NO:50, SEQ ID NO:52, SEQ ID NO:54 and SEQ ID NO:56 as disclosed in WO 2008/155134 A1, which are hereby incorporated by reference. A moiety comprising such random coil protein moiety comprising alanine, serine and proline will be referred to as "PAS" or "PAS moiety".

Accordingly, -Z of formula (I) comprises a PAS moiety.

In an equally preferred embodiment, -Z of formula (I) comprises a random coil protein moiety of which at least 80%, preferably at least 85%, even more preferably at least 90%, even more preferably at least 95%, even more preferably at least 98% and most preferably at least 99% of the total number of amino acids forming said random coil protein moiety are selected from alanine, glycine and proline. A moiety comprising such random coil protein moiety comprising alanine, glycine and proline will be referred to as "PAG" or "PAG moiety".

Accordingly, -Z of formula (I) comprises a PAG moiety.

30

In an equally preferred embodiment, -Z of formula (I) comprises a random coil protein moiety of which at least 80%, preferably at least 85%, even more preferably at least 90%, even more preferably at least 95%, even more preferably at least 98% and most preferably at least 99% of the total number of amino acids forming said random coil protein moiety are selected from

proline and glycine. A moiety comprising such random coil protein moiety comprising proline and glycine will be referred to as “PG” or “PG moiety”.

Preferably, such PG moiety comprises a moiety of formula (a-0)

5 [(Gly)_p-Pro-(Gly)_q]_r (a-0);

wherein

p is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;

q is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5;

r is an integer ranging from and including 10 to 1000;

10 provided that at least one of p and q is at least 1;

Preferably, p of formula (a-0) is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2 and 3.

Preferably, q of formula (a-0) is selected from 0, 1 and 2.

15

Even more preferably the PG moiety comprises the sequence of SEQ ID NO:97:
GGPGGPGPGGGPGGGPGGGPG

Even more preferably, the PG moiety comprises the sequence of formula (a-0-a)

20 (GGPGGPGPGGGPGGGPGGGPG)_v (a-0-a),

wherein

v is an integer ranging from and including 1 to 50.

It is understood that the sequence of formula (a-0-a) comprises v replicates of the sequence of
25 SEQ ID NO:97.

Accordingly, -Z of formula (I) comprises a PG moiety.

In an equally preferred embodiment, -Z of formula (I) comprises a random coil protein moiety
30 of which at least 80%, preferably at least 85%, even more preferably at least 90%, even more preferably at least 95%, even more preferably at least 98% and most preferably at least 99% of the total number of amino acids forming said random coil protein moiety are selected from alanine, glycine, serine, threonine, glutamate and proline. Preferably, such random coil protein moiety is as described in WO 2010/091122 A1 which is hereby incorporated by

reference. Even more preferably -Z comprises at least one moiety selected from the group consisting of SEQ ID NO:182, SEQ ID NO:183, SEQ ID NO:184; SEQ ID NO:185, SEQ ID NO:186, SEQ ID NO:187, SEQ ID NO:188, SEQ ID NO:189, SEQ ID NO:190, SEQ ID NO:191, SEQ ID NO:192, SEQ ID NO:193, SEQ ID NO:194, SEQ ID NO:195, SEQ ID NO:196, SEQ ID NO:197, SEQ ID NO:198, SEQ ID NO:199, SEQ ID NO:200, SEQ ID NO:201, SEQ ID NO:202, SEQ ID NO:203, SEQ ID NO:204, SEQ ID NO:205, SEQ ID NO:206, SEQ ID NO:207, SEQ ID NO:208, SEQ ID NO:209, SEQ ID NO:210, SEQ ID NO:211, SEQ ID NO:212, SEQ ID NO:213, SEQ ID NO:214, SEQ ID NO:215, SEQ ID NO:216, SEQ ID NO:217, SEQ ID NO:218, SEQ ID NO:219, SEQ ID NO:220, SEQ ID NO:221, SEQ ID NO:759, SEQ ID NO:760, SEQ ID NO:761, SEQ ID NO:762, SEQ ID NO:763, SEQ ID NO:764, SEQ ID NO:765, SEQ ID NO:766, SEQ ID NO:767, SEQ ID NO:768, SEQ ID NO:769, SEQ ID NO:770, SEQ ID NO:771, SEQ ID NO:772, SEQ ID NO:773, SEQ ID NO:774, SEQ ID NO:775, SEQ ID NO:776, SEQ ID NO:777, SEQ ID NO:778, SEQ ID NO:779, SEQ ID NO:1715, SEQ ID NO:1716, SEQ ID NO:1718, SEQ ID NO:1719, SEQ ID NO:1720, SEQ ID NO:1721 and SEQ ID NO:1722 as disclosed in WO2010/091122A1, which are hereby incorporated by reference. A moiety comprising such random coil protein moiety comprising alanine, glycine, serine, threonine, glutamate and proline will be referred to as "XTEN" or "XTEN moiety" in line with its designation in WO 2010/091122 A1.

20

Accordingly, -Z of formula (I) comprises an XTEN moiety.

In another preferred embodiment, -Z of formula (I) comprises a fatty acid derivate. Preferred fatty acid derivatives are those disclosed in WO 2005/027978 A2 and WO 2014/060512 A1 which are herewith incorporated by reference.

25

In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a hyaluronic acid-based polymer.

In one embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a carrier as disclosed in WO 2012/02047 A1 which is herewith incorporated by reference.

30

In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a carrier as disclosed in WO 2013/024048 A1 which is herewith incorporated by reference.

In another preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a PEG-based polymer.

In a particularly preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a branched polymer. In one embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a branched polymer having one, two, three, four, five or six
5 branching points. Preferably, -Z of formula (I) is a branched polymer having one, two or three branching points. In one embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a branched polymer having one branching point. In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a branched polymer having two branching points. In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) is a branched polymer having three branching points.

10

A branching point is preferably selected from the group consisting of -N<, -CH< and >C<.

Preferably such branched moiety -Z of formula (I) is PEG-based.

15 In one embodiment such branched moiety -Z of formula (I) has a molecular weight ranging from and including 5 kDa to 500 kDa, more preferably ranging from and including 10 kDa to 250 Da, even more preferably ranging from and including 10 kDa to 150 kDa, even more preferably ranging from and including 12 kDa to 100 kDa and most preferably ranging from and including 15 kDa to 80 kDa.

20

Preferably, such branched moiety -Z of formula (I) has a molecular weight ranging from and including 10 kDa to 80 kDa. In one embodiment the molecular weight of -Z of formula (I) is about 10 kDa. In another embodiment the molecular weight of such branched moiety -Z of formula (I) is about 20 kDa. In another embodiment the molecular weight of such branched
25 moiety -Z of formula (I) is about 30 kDa. In another embodiment the molecular weight of such a branched moiety -Z of formula (I) is about 40 kDa. In another embodiment the molecular weight of such a branched moiety -Z of formula (I) is about 50 kDa. In another embodiment the molecular weight of such a branched moiety -Z of formula (I) is about 60 kDa. In another embodiment the molecular weight of such a branched moiety -Z of formula
30 (I) is about 70 kDa. In another embodiment the molecular weight of such a branched moiety -Z of formula (I) is about 80 kDa. Most preferably, such branched moiety -Z of formula (I) has a molecular weight of about 40 kDa.

Applicants found that an N-terminal attachment of a moiety $-L^1-L^2-Z$ is significantly more efficient with regard to NEP-stability than attachment at an internal site and that the least efficient attachment site with regard to NEP-stability is at the ring part of a CNP moiety. However, applicants surprisingly found that this disadvantage of attachment to the ring with regard to NEP-stability can be compensated by using a branched moiety $-Z$ having a molecular weight of at least 10 kDa, such as at least 12 kDa, such as at least 15 kDa, such as at least 18 kDa, such as at least 20 kDa, such as at least 24 kDa, such as at least 25 kDa, such as at least 27 kDa, such as at least 30 kDa. Preferably, such branched moiety $-Z$ has a molecular weight of no more than 500 kDa, preferably of no more than 250 kDa, preferably of no more than 200 Da, preferably of no more than 150 kDa and most preferably no more than 100 kDa. Most preferably such branched moiety $-Z$ has a molecular weight of about 40 kDa. Consequently, the use of such branched moiety $-Z$ at the ring part of the CNP moiety does not only lead to increased NEP-stability, but combines increased NEP-stability with reduced NPR-B binding associated with attachment to the ring.

15

It was surprisingly found that even though the ring moiety is involved in NPR-C binding, attachment of a 5 kDa carrier to the ring moiety did not have a significant effect on NPR-C affinity. Furthermore, it was surprisingly found that a 4x 10 kDa carrier, i.e. a branched carrier having four 10 kDa arms, attached to the ring moiety is more efficient in reducing NPR-C affinity than a 2x 20 kDa carrier, i.e. a branched carrier having two 20 kDa arms, even though the total molecular weight was the same. It is thus not only the total molecular weight of the carrier attached to the ring moiety, but the particular branching pattern of the carrier that influences NPR-C binding affinity.

25 This finding is also supported by the NPR-C affinity measured with a 4-arm 40 kDa carrier having a different branching pattern which still exhibited a high NPR-C affinity.

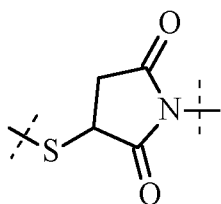
In summary, it was surprisingly found that NPR-C affinity can be efficiently reduced with a multi-branched carrier attached to the ring moiety having a first branching point close to the CNP moiety, such as less than 300 atoms from the CNP moiety, preferably 200 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably 100 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably less than 50 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably less than 25 atoms from the CNP moiety and most preferably less than 10 atoms from the CNP moiety.

30

Even more preferably, one or more further branching point(s) is/are located within less than 500 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably 300 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably less than 200 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably less than 100 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably less than 75 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably less than 50 atoms from the CNP moiety, even more preferably less than 40 atoms from the CNP moiety and most preferably less than 35 atoms from the CNP moiety.

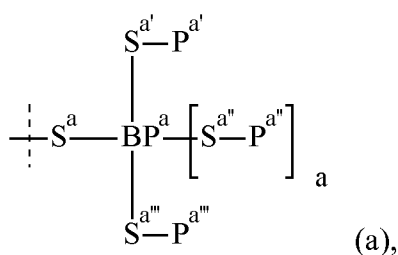
It was in addition also found that such branching pattern is beneficial for *in vivo* stability of the CNP moiety, i.e. protection against proteolytic degradation. It was surprisingly found that N-terminal degradation was stronger when using a 2x 20 kDa carrier compared to 4x 10 kDa carrier. Likewise, using a 4-arm 40 kDa carrier having a different branching pattern exhibited even stronger N-terminal degradation.

15 Preferably, -Z of formula (I) comprises a moiety



In an equally preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises an amide bond.

In one embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises a moiety of formula (a)



20

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$ or to the remainder of -Z;

BP^{a} is a branching point selected from the group consisting of $-\text{N}<$, $-\text{CR}<$ and $>\text{C}<$;

$-\text{R}$ is selected from the group consisting of $-\text{H}$ and C_{1-6} alkyl;

25

a is 0 if BP^{a} is $-\text{N}<$ or $-\text{CR}<$ and a is 1 if BP^{a} is $>\text{C}<$;

$-\text{S}^{\text{a}}$ -, $-\text{S}^{\text{a}'}$ -, $-\text{S}^{\text{a}''}$ - and $-\text{S}^{\text{a}'''}$ - are independently of each other a chemical bond or are selected from the group consisting of C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl;

wherein C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more -R¹, which are the same or different and wherein C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of -T-, -C(O)O-, -O-, -C(O)-, -C(O)N(R²)-, -S(O)₂N(R²)-, -S(O)N(R²)-, -S(O)₂-, -S(O)-, -N(R²)S(O)₂N(R^{2a})-, -S-, -N(R²)-, -OC(OR²)(R^{2a})-, -N(R²)C(O)N(R^{2a})-, and -OC(O)N(R²)-;

each -T- is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl; wherein each -T- is independently optionally substituted with one or more -R¹, which are the same or different;

each -R¹ is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, -CN, oxo (=O), -COOR³, -OR³, -C(O)R³, -C(O)N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)₂N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)₂R³, -S(O)R³, -N(R³)S(O)₂N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -SR³, -N(R³R^{3a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R³, -N(R³)C(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)₂R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)C(O)OR^{3a}, -N(R³)C(O)N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -OC(O)N(R³R^{3a}), and C₁₋₆ alkyl; wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

each -R², -R^{2a}, -R³, -R^{3a} and -R^{3b} is independently selected from the group consisting of -H, and C₁₋₆ alkyl, wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different; and

-P^a, -P^{a''} and -P^{a'''} are independently a polymeric moiety.

Optionally, the moiety of formula (a) is substituted with one or more substituents.

25 In one embodiment BP^a of formula (a) is -N<.

In another embodiment BP^a of formula (a) is -CR<. Preferably, -R is -H. Accordingly, a of formula (a) is preferably 0.

30 In another embodiment BP^a of formula (a) is >C<.

In one embodiment -S^a- of formula (a) is a chemical bond.

In another embodiment $-S^a$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl, which C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups selected from the group consisting of $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^4)S(O)_2N(R^{4a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^4)-$, $-OC(OR^4)(R^{4a})-$, $-N(R^4)C(O)N(R^{4a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^4)-$; wherein $-R^4$ and $-R^{4a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl. Preferably $-S^1$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, which are optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups selected from the group consisting of $-O-$, $-C(O)-$ and $-C(O)N(R^4)-$.

10

In one embodiment $-S^{a'}$ - of formula (a) is a chemical bond.

In another embodiment $-S^{a''}$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl, which C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups selected from the group consisting of $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^4)S(O)_2N(R^{4a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^4)-$, $-OC(OR^4)(R^{4a})-$, $-N(R^4)C(O)N(R^{4a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^4)-$; wherein $-R^4$ and $-R^{4a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl. Preferably $-S^2$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, which are optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups selected from the group consisting of $-O-$, $-C(O)-$ and $-C(O)N(R^4)-$.

20

In one embodiment $-S^{a'''}$ - of formula (a) is a chemical bond.

In another embodiment $-S^{a''''}$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl, which C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups selected from the group consisting of $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^4)S(O)_2N(R^{4a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^4)-$, $-OC(OR^4)(R^{4a})-$, $-N(R^4)C(O)N(R^{4a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^4)-$; wherein $-R^4$ and $-R^{4a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl. Preferably $-S^3$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, which are optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups selected from the group consisting of $-O-$, $-C(O)-$ and $-C(O)N(R^4)-$.

30

In one embodiment $-S^{a''''}$ - of formula (a) is a chemical bond.

In another embodiment $-S^{a''''}$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl, which C_{1-10} alkyl, C_{2-10} alkenyl and C_{2-10} alkynyl are
 5 optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups selected from the group consisting of $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)N(R^4)-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$,
 $-N(R^4)S(O)_2N(R^{4a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^4)-$, $-OC(OR^4)(R^{4a})-$, $-N(R^4)C(O)N(R^{4a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^4)-$;
 wherein $-R^4$ and $-R^{4a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, methyl,
 ethyl, propyl and butyl. Preferably $-S^4$ - of formula (a) is selected from the group consisting of
 10 methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, which are optionally interrupted by one or more chemical groups
 selected from the group consisting of $-O-$, $-C(O)-$ and $-C(O)N(R^4)-$.

Preferably, $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a''''}$ of formula (a) independently comprise a polymer selected from
 the group consisting of 2-methacryloyl-oxyethyl phosphoyl cholins, poly(acrylic acids),
 15 poly(acrylates), poly(acrylamides), poly(alkyloxy) polymers, poly(amides),
 poly(amidoamines), poly(amino acids), poly(anhydrides), poly(aspartamides), poly(butyric
 acids), poly(glycolic acids), poly(butylene terephthalates), poly(caprolactones),
 poly(carbonates), poly(cyanoacrylates), poly(dimethylacrylamides), poly(esters),
 poly(ethylenes), poly(ethyleneglycols), poly(ethylene oxides), poly(ethyl phosphates),
 20 poly(ethyloxazolines), poly(glycolic acids), poly(hydroxyethyl acrylates), poly(hydroxyethyl-
 oxazolines), poly(hydroxymethacrylates), poly(hydroxypropylmethacrylamides),
 poly(hydroxypropyl methacrylates), poly(hydroxypropyloxazolines), poly(iminocarbonates),
 poly(lactic acids), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acids), poly(methacrylamides), poly(methacrylates),
 poly(methyloxazolines), poly(organophosphazenes), poly(ortho esters), poly(oxazolines),
 25 poly(propylene glycols), poly(siloxanes), poly(urethanes), poly(vinyl alcohols), poly(vinyl
 amines), poly(vinylmethylethers), poly(vinylpyrrolidones), silicones, celluloses, carbomethyl
 celluloses, hydroxypropyl methylcelluloses, chitins, chitosans, dextrans, dextrans, gelatins,
 hyaluronic acids and derivatives, functionalized hyaluronic acids, mannans, pectins,
 rhamnogalacturonans, starches, hydroxyalkyl starches, hydroxyethyl starches and other
 30 carbohydrate-based polymers, xylans, and copolymers thereof.

Preferably, $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a''''}$ of formula (a) independently have a molecular weight ranging
 from and including 5 kDa to 50 kDa, more preferably have a molecular weight ranging from
 and including 5 kDa to 40 kDa, even more preferably ranging from and including 7.5 kDa to

35 kDa, even more preferably ranging from and 7.5 to 30 kDa, even more preferably ranging from and including 10 to 30 kDa.

In one embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) have a molecular weight of about 5 kDa.

5

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) have a molecular weight of about 7.5 kDa.

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) have a molecular weight of about 10 kDa.

10

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) have a molecular weight of about 12.5 kDa.

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) have a molecular weight of about 15 kDa.

15

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) have a molecular weight of about 20 kDa.

20

More preferably, $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) independently comprise a PEG-based moiety. Even more preferably, $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) independently comprise a PEG-based moiety comprising at least 20% PEG, even more preferably at least 30%, even more preferably at least 40% PEG, even more preferably at least 50% PEG, even more preferably at least 60% PEG, even more preferably at least 70% PEG, even more preferably at least 80% PEG and most preferably at least 90% PEG.

25

In an equally preferred embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) independently comprise a protein moiety, more preferably a random coil protein moiety and most preferably a random coil protein moiety selected from the group consisting of PA, PAS, PAG, PG and XTEN moieties.

30

In one embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) are a PA moiety.

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) are a PAS moiety.

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) are a PAG moiety.

5 In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) are a PG moiety.

In another embodiment $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$ and $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (a) are an XTEN moiety.

In one embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises one moiety of formula (a).

10

In another embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises two moieties of formula (a).

In another embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises three moieties of formula (a).

15 In another embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises four moieties of formula (a).

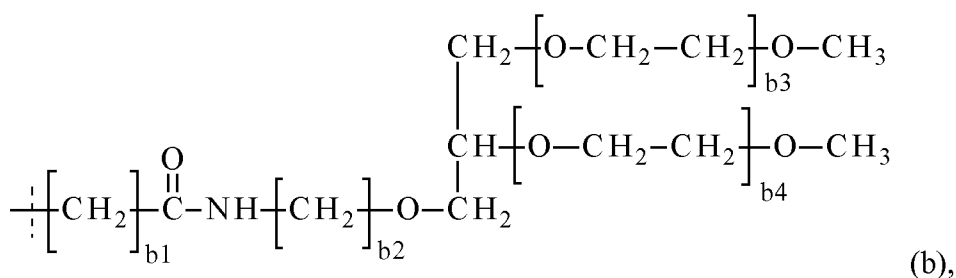
In another embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises five moieties of formula (a).

In another embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises six moieties of formula (a).

20

In a preferred embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises two moieties of formula (a).

In a preferred embodiment $-Z$ of formula (I) comprises a moiety of formula (b)



25

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$ or to the remainder of $-Z$;

b_1 is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8;

b_2 is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8;

b_3 is an integer ranging from and including 150 to 1000; preferably ranging from and including 150 to 500; and most preferably ranging from and including 200 to 460; and

30

b4 is an integer ranging from and including 150 to 1000; preferably ranging from and including 150 to 500; and most preferably ranging from and including 200 to 460.

Optionally, the moiety of formula (b) is substituted with one or more substituents.

5

Preferably, b3 and b4 of formula (b) are the same integer.

In one preferred embodiment b3 and b4 both an integer ranging from 200 to 250 and most preferably b3 and b4 of formula (b) are about 225.

10

In another preferred embodiment b3 and b4 are both an integer ranging from 400 to 500 and most preferably b3 and b4 of formula (b) are about 450.

Preferably, b1 of formula (b) is selected from the group consisting of 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4. More preferably b1 of formula (b) is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2 and 3. Most preferably b1 of formula (b) is 2.

15

Preferably, b2 of formula (b) is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. More preferably b2 of formula (b) is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3 and 4. Most preferably b2 of formula (b) is 3.

20

In one particularly preferred embodiment b1 of formula (b) is 2, b2 of formula (b) is 3, and b3 and b4 are both about 450.

In another particularly preferred embodiment b1 of formula (b) is 2, b2 of formula (b) is 3, and b3 and b4 are both about 225.

25

In one embodiment -Z comprises one moiety of formula (b).

In another embodiment -Z comprises two moieties of formula (b).

30

In another embodiment -Z comprises three moieties of formula (b).

In another embodiment -Z comprises four moieties of formula (b).

In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises four moieties of formula (c).

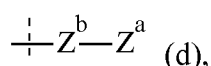
In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises five moieties of formula (c).

5

In another embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises six moieties of formula (c).

In a preferred embodiment -Z of formula (I) comprises two moieties of formula (c).

10 In one preferred embodiment the moiety -Z of formula (I) is of formula (d)



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$;

15 $-Z^b-$ is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^1$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^2)-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^2)-$, $-S(O)N(R^2)-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^2)S(O)_2N(R^{2a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^2)-$, $-OC(OR^2)(R^{2a})-$, $-N(R^2)C(O)N(R^{2a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^2)-$;

20

each $-T-$ is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl; wherein each $-T-$ is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-R^1$, which are the same or different;

25

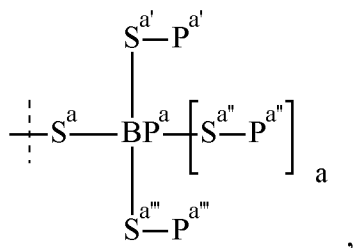
each $-R^1$ is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-CN$, oxo ($=O$), $-COOR^3$, $-OR^3$, $-C(O)R^3$, $-C(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)_2R^3$, $-S(O)R^3$, $-N(R^3)S(O)_2N(R^{3a}R^{3b})$, $-SR^3$, $-N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^3$, $-N(R^3)C(O)R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)S(O)_2R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)S(O)R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)C(O)OR^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)C(O)N(R^{3a}R^{3b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

30

each $-R^2$, $-R^{2a}$, $-R^3$, $-R^{3a}$ and $-R^{3b}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, and C_{1-6} alkyl, wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

and

5 $-Z^a$ is



wherein

BP^a , $-S^a$, $-S^{a'}$, $-S^{a''}$, $-S^{a'''}$, $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$, $-P^{a'''}$ and a are used as defined for formula (a).

10 Optionally, the moiety of formula (d) is substituted with one or more substituents.

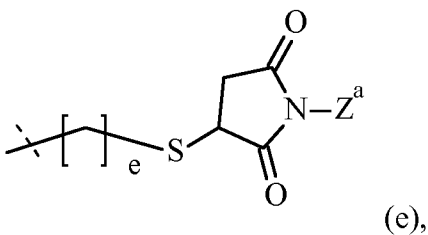
Preferred embodiments of BP^a , $-S^a$, $-S^{a'}$, $-S^{a''}$, $-S^{a'''}$, $-P^{a'}$, $-P^{a''}$, $-P^{a'''}$ of formula (d) are as defined above for formula (a).

15 Preferably, $-Z^a$ of formula (d) is of formula (b). Preferred embodiments of b1, b2, b3 and b4 are as described for formula (b).

Even more preferably, $-Z^a$ of formula (d) is of formula (c). Preferred embodiments for c1 and c2 are as described for formula (c).

20

In an even more preferred embodiment the moiety $-Z$ of formula (I) is of formula (e)

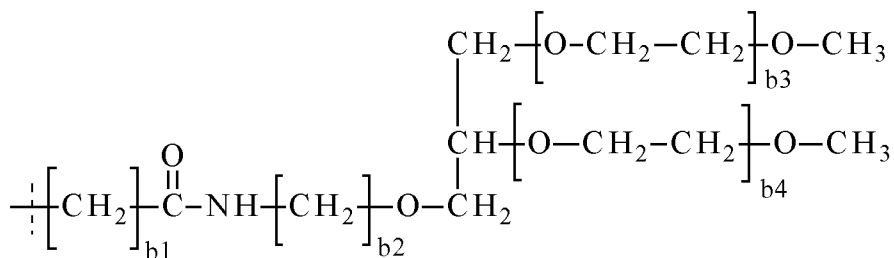


wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2$;

25 e is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15; and

$-Z^a$ is



wherein

b1, b2, b3 and b4 are used as defined for formula (b).

- 5 Optionally, the moiety of formula (e) is substituted with one or more substituents.

Preferred embodiments for b1, b2, b3 and b4 of formula (e) are as defined above for formula (b).

- 10 In one embodiment e of formula (e) is 1. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 2. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 3. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 4. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 5. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 6. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 7. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 8. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 9. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 10. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 11. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 12. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 13. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 14. In another embodiment e of formula (e) is 15.

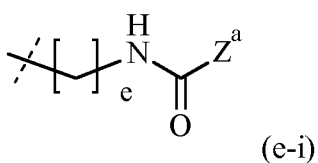
Preferably e of formula (e) is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9.

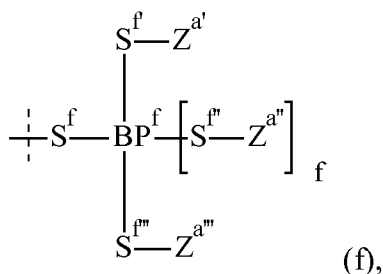
- 20 Even more preferably, e of formula (e) is selected from 3, 4, 5 and 6. Most preferably e of formula (e) is 5.

Preferably e of formula (e) is 5, b1 of formula (e) is 2, b2 of formula (e) is 3 and b3 and b4 of formula (e) are both about 450.

25

In an equally preferred embodiment the moiety -Z of formula (I) is of formula (e-i) or (e-i')





wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-\text{L}^2-$;

BP^f is a branching point selected from the group consisting of $-\text{N}<$, $-\text{CR}<$ and $>\text{C}<$;

5 $-\text{R}$ is selected from the group consisting of $-\text{H}$ and C_{1-6} alkyl;

f is 0 if BP^f is $-\text{N}<$ or $-\text{CR}<$ and f is 1 if BP^f is $>\text{C}<$;

$-\text{S}^f-$, $-\text{S}^{f'}-$, $-\text{S}^{f''}-$ and $-\text{S}^{f'''}-$ are independently either a chemical bond or are independently selected from the group consisting of C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-\text{R}^1$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-\text{T}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^2)\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^{2a})-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{OC}(\text{OR}^2)(\text{R}^{2a})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^2)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{2a})-$, and $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$;

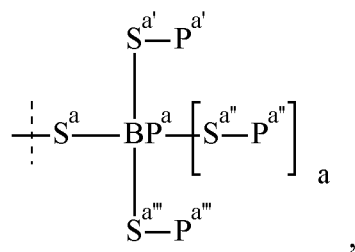
15 each $-\text{T}-$ is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicycyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl; wherein each $-\text{T}-$ is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-\text{R}^1$, which are the same or different;

20 each R^1 is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-\text{CN}$, oxo ($=\text{O}$), $-\text{COOR}^3$, $-\text{OR}^3$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^3$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{R}^3$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{R}^3$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^{3a}\text{R}^{3b})$, $-\text{SR}^3$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{NO}_2$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}^3$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{R}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{S}(\text{O})\text{R}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{3a}\text{R}^{3b})$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

25 each $-\text{R}^2$, $-\text{R}^{2a}$, $-\text{R}^3$, $-\text{R}^{3a}$ and $-\text{R}^{3b}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-\text{H}$, and C_{1-6} alkyl, wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

30 and

$-Z^{a'}$, $-Z^{a''}$ and $-Z^{a'''}$ are independently



wherein

BP^a , $-\text{S}^a$, $-\text{S}^{a'}$, $-\text{S}^{a''}$, $-\text{S}^{a'''}$, $-\text{P}^{a'}$, $-\text{P}^{a''}$, $-\text{P}^{a'''}$ and a are used as defined for formula

5 (a).

Optionally, the moiety of formula (f) is substituted with one or more substituents.

10 Preferred embodiments of BP^a , $-\text{S}^a$, $-\text{S}^{a'}$, $-\text{S}^{a''}$, $-\text{S}^{a'''}$, $-\text{P}^{a'}$, $-\text{P}^{a''}$ and $-\text{P}^{a'''}$ of formula (f) are as defined above for formula (a).

Preferably BP^f of formula (f) is $-\text{CR}<$ and r is 0. Preferably $-\text{R}$ is $-\text{H}$.

Preferably $-\text{S}^f$ of formula (f) is a chemical bond.

15

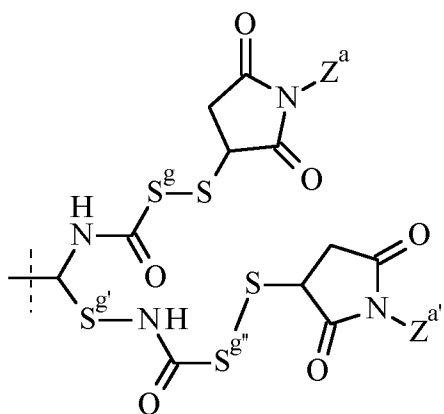
Preferably, $-Z^{a'}$, $-Z^{a''}$ and $-Z^{a'''}$ of formula (f) have the same structure. Preferably, $-Z^{a'}$, $-Z^{a''}$ and $-Z^{a'''}$ of formula (f) are of formula (b).

Preferred embodiments of b_1 , b_2 , b_3 and b_4 are as described for formula (b).

20

Preferably $-\text{S}^f$ of formula (f) is a chemical bond, BP^a of formula (f) is $-\text{CR}<$ with $-\text{R}$ being $-\text{H}$. Even more preferably $-\text{S}^f$ of formula (f) is a chemical bond, BP^a of formula (f) is $-\text{CR}<$ with $-\text{R}$ being $-\text{H}$ and $-Z^{a'}$, $-Z^{a''}$ and $-Z^{a'''}$ of formula (f) are of formula (b).

25 Even more preferably $-\text{Z}$ is of formula (g)



(g),

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2$ -;

$-S^g$ -, $-S^{g'}$ - and $-S^{g''}$ - are independently selected from the group consisting of C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^1$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T$ -, $-C(O)O$ -, $-O$ -, $-C(O)$ -, $-C(O)N(R^2)$ -, $-S(O)_2N(R^2)$ -, $-S(O)N(R^2)$ -, $-S(O)_2$ -, $-S(O)$ -, $-N(R^2)S(O)_2N(R^{2a})$ -, $-S$ -, $-N(R^2)$ -, $-OC(OR^2)(R^{2a})$ -, $-N(R^2)C(O)N(R^{2a})$ -, and $-OC(O)N(R^2)$ -;

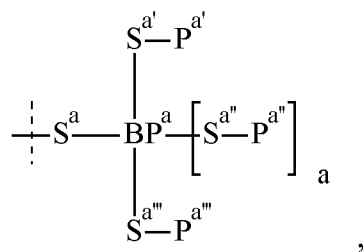
each $-T$ - is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl; wherein each $-T$ - is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-R^1$, which are the same or different;

each R^1 is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-CN$, oxo ($=O$), $-COOR^3$, $-OR^3$, $-C(O)R^3$, $-C(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)_2R^3$, $-S(O)R^3$, $-N(R^3)S(O)_2N(R^{3a}R^{3b})$, $-SR^3$, $-N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^3$, $-N(R^3)C(O)R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)S(O)_2R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)S(O)R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)C(O)OR^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)C(O)N(R^{3a}R^{3b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

each $-R^2$ -, $-R^{2a}$ -, $-R^3$ -, $-R^{3a}$ and $-R^{3b}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$ -, and C_{1-6} alkyl, wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

and

$-Z^a$ and $-Z^{a'}$ are independently



wherein

BP^a , $-\text{S}^a$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a''}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'''}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a''}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a'''}$ and a are used as defined for formula

5 (a).

Optionally, the moiety of formula (g) is substituted with one or more substituents.

10 Preferred embodiments of BP^a , $-\text{S}^a$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a''}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'''}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a''}$ and $-\text{P}^{a'''}$ of formula (g) are as defined above for formula (a).

Preferably, $-\text{S}^g$ - of formula (g) is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl, which are optionally substituted with one or more $-\text{R}^1$, which is the same or different,

15 wherein

$-\text{R}^1$ is selected from the group consisting of halogen, oxo ($=\text{O}$), $-\text{COOR}^3$, $-\text{OR}^3$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^3$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{R}^3$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{R}^3$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^{3a}\text{R}^{3b})$, $-\text{SR}^3$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, $-\text{NO}_2$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{R}^3$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{R}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{S}(\text{O})\text{R}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{OR}^{3a}$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^3)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{3a}\text{R}^{3b})$, $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different; and $-\text{R}^3$, $-\text{R}^{3a}$ and $-\text{R}^{3b}$ are independently selected from $-\text{H}$, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl.

20

Even more preferably $-\text{S}^g$ - of formula (g) is selected from C_{1-6} alkyl.

25

Preferably, $-\text{S}^g$ - of formula (g) is selected from the group consisting of C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl, which are optionally substituted with one or more $-\text{R}^1$, which is the same or different,

wherein

5 -R¹ is selected from the group consisting of halogen, oxo (=O), -COOR³, -OR³, -C(O)R³, -C(O)N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)₂N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)₂R³, -S(O)R³, -N(R³)S(O)₂N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -SR³, -N(R³R^{3a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R³, -N(R³)C(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)₂R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)C(O)OR^{3a}, -N(R³)C(O)N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -OC(O)N(R³R^{3a}), and C₁₋₆ alkyl; wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different; and -R³, -R^{3a} and -R^{3b} are independently selected from -H, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl.

Even more preferably -S^g - of formula (g) is selected from C₁₋₆ alkyl.

10

Preferably, -S^{g'} - of formula (g) is selected from the group consisting of C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₂₋₆ alkenyl and C₂₋₆ alkynyl, which are optionally substituted with one or more -R¹, which is the same or different,

wherein

15

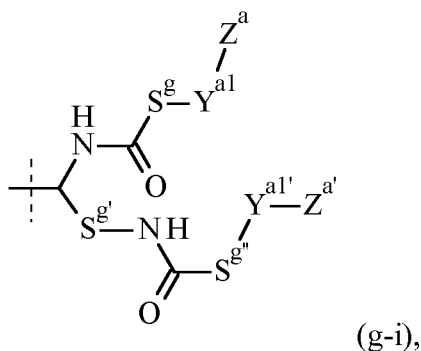
-R¹ is selected from the group consisting of halogen, oxo (=O), -COOR³, -OR³, -C(O)R³, -C(O)N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)₂N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)N(R³R^{3a}), -S(O)₂R³, -S(O)R³, -N(R³)S(O)₂N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -SR³, -N(R³R^{3a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R³, -N(R³)C(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)₂R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)C(O)OR^{3a}, -N(R³)C(O)N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -OC(O)N(R³R^{3a}), and C₁₋₆ alkyl; wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different; and -R³, -R^{3a} and -R^{3b} are independently selected from -H, methyl, ethyl, propyl and butyl.

20

Even more preferably -S^{g''} - of formula (g) is selected from C₁₋₆ alkyl.

25 Preferably, -Z^a and -Z^{a'} of formula (g) have the same structure. Preferably, -Z^a and -Z^{a'} of formula (g) are of formula (b).

In an alternative even more preferred embodiment -Z is of formula (g-i)



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$;

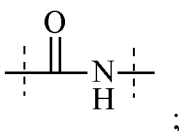
5 $-S^g-$, $-S^{g'}$ and $-S^{g''}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^1$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-T-$, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^2)-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^2)-$, $-S(O)N(R^2)-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^2)S(O)_2N(R^{2a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^2)-$, $-OC(OR^2)(R^{2a})-$, $-N(R^2)C(O)N(R^{2a})-$, and $-OC(O)N(R^2)-$;

10 each $-T-$ is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl; wherein each $-T-$ is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-R^1$, which are the same or different;

15 each R^1 is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-CN$, oxo ($=O$), $-COOR^3$, $-OR^3$, $-C(O)R^3$, $-C(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)_2N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-S(O)_2R^3$, $-S(O)R^3$, $-N(R^3)S(O)_2N(R^{3a}R^{3b})$, $-SR^3$, $-N(R^3R^{3a})$, $-NO_2$, $-OC(O)R^3$, $-N(R^3)C(O)R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)S(O)_2R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)S(O)R^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)C(O)OR^{3a}$, $-N(R^3)C(O)N(R^{3a}R^{3b})$, $-OC(O)N(R^3R^{3a})$, and C_{1-6} alkyl; wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

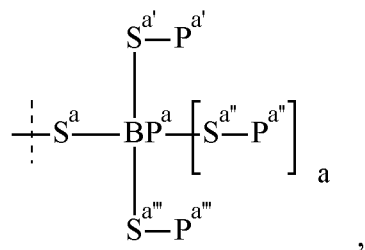
20 each $-R^2$, $-R^{2a}$, $-R^3$, $-R^{3a}$ and $-R^{3b}$ is independently selected from the group consisting of $-H$, and C_{1-6} alkyl, wherein C_{1-6} alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;

25 $-Y^{a1}$ and $-Y^{a1'}$ are



and

$-Z^a$ and $-Z^{a'}$ are independently



wherein

- 5 BP^a , $-\text{S}^a$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a''}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'''}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a''}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a'''}$ and a are used as defined for formula (a).

Optionally, the moiety of formula (g-i) is substituted with one or more substituents.

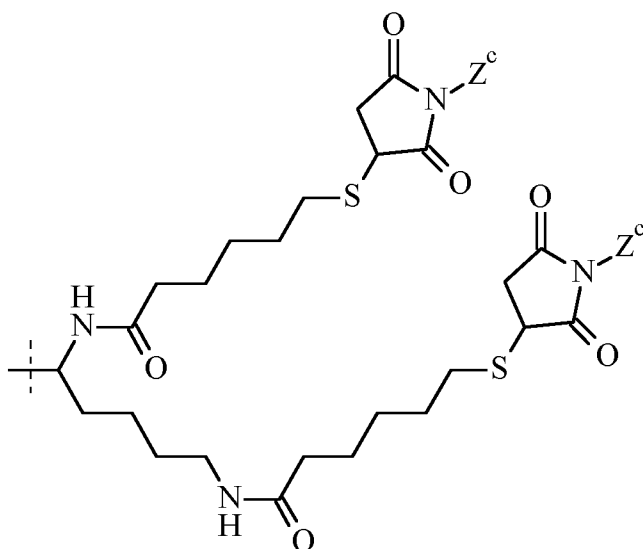
- 10 Preferably, $-\text{Y}^{a1}$ - and $-\text{Y}^{a1'}$ - of formula (g-i) are both $\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ || \\ \text{---N---} \\ | \\ \text{H} \end{array}$, wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is attached to $-Z^a$ or $-Z^{a'}$, respectively.

Preferred embodiments of BP^a , $-\text{S}^a$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a''}$ -, $-\text{S}^{a'''}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a'}$ -, $-\text{P}^{a''}$ and $-\text{P}^{a'''}$ of formula (g-i) are as defined above for formula (a).

- 15 Preferred embodiments of $-\text{S}^g$ -, $-\text{S}^{g'}$ - and $-\text{S}^{g''}$ - of formula (g-i) are as defined for formula (g).

- 20 Preferably, $-Z^a$ and $-Z^{a'}$ of formula (g-i) have the same structure. Preferably, $-Z^a$ and $-Z^{a'}$ of formula (g-i) are of formula (b). Preferred embodiments for b1, b2, b3 and b4 are as described for formula (b).

Even more preferably $-Z$ is of formula (h)

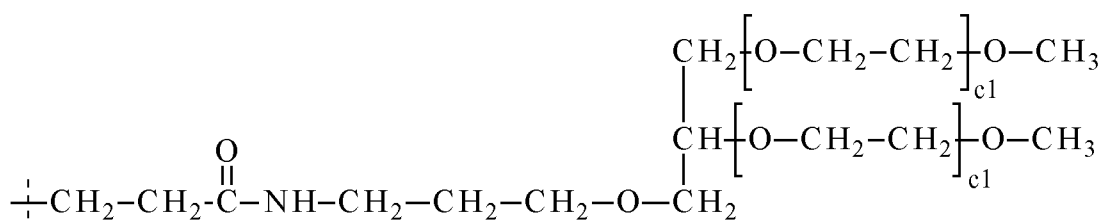


(h),

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$; and

each $-Z^c$ is a moiety



5

wherein

each $c1$ is an integer independently ranging from about 200 to 250.

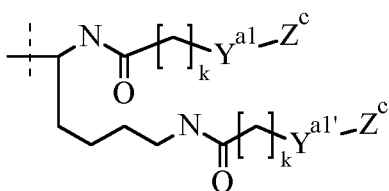
Optionally, the moiety of formula (h) is substituted with one or more substituents.

10

Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h) are the same.

Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h) are about 225.

15 Even more preferably $-Z$ is of formula (h-a)



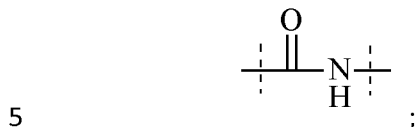
(h-a),

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$;

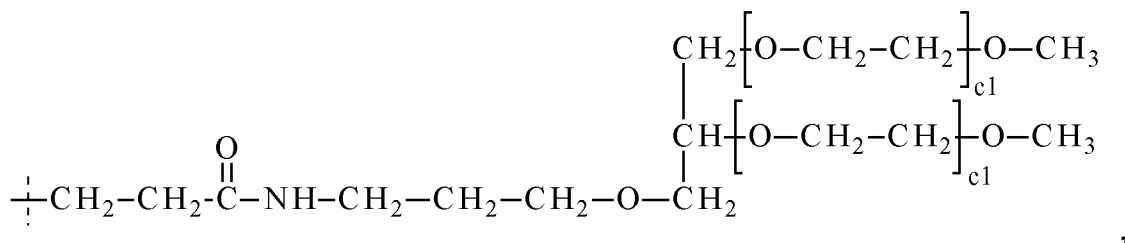
each k is independently of each other selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

$-Y^{a1}$ - and $-Y^{a1'}$ - are



and

each $-Z^c$ is a moiety



wherein

10 each $c1$ is an integer independently ranging from about 200 to 250.

Optionally, the moiety of formula (h-a) is substituted with one or more substituents.

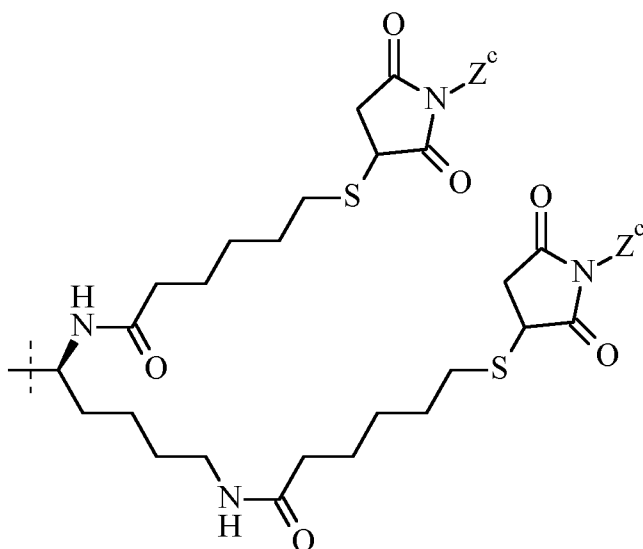
15 Preferably, each k of formula (h-a) is independently selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Preferably, both k of formula (h-a) are identical.

Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h-a) are the same.

Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h-a) are about 225.

20 Preferably, $-Y^{a1}$ - and $-Y^{a1'}$ - of formula (h-a) are both $\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \parallel \\ \text{---} \text{N} \text{---} \\ | \\ \text{H} \end{array} *$, wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is attached to $-Z^c$.

In an even more preferred embodiment the moiety $-Z$ is of formula (h-i)

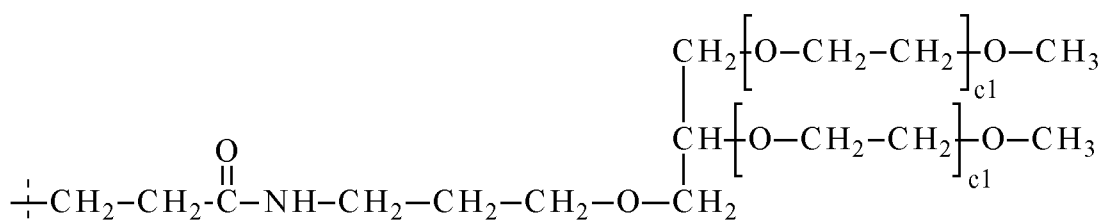


(h-i),

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$; and

each $-Z^c$ is a moiety



5

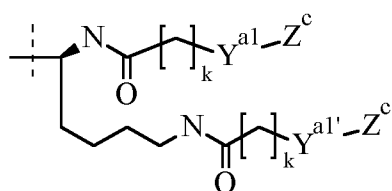
each $c1$ is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Optionally, the moiety of formula (h-i) is substituted with one or more substituents.

10 Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h-i) are the same.

Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h-i) are about 225.

In an alternative even more preferred embodiment the moiety $-Z$ is of formula (h-ia)



(h-ia),

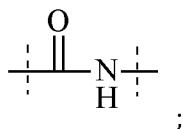
15

wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$;

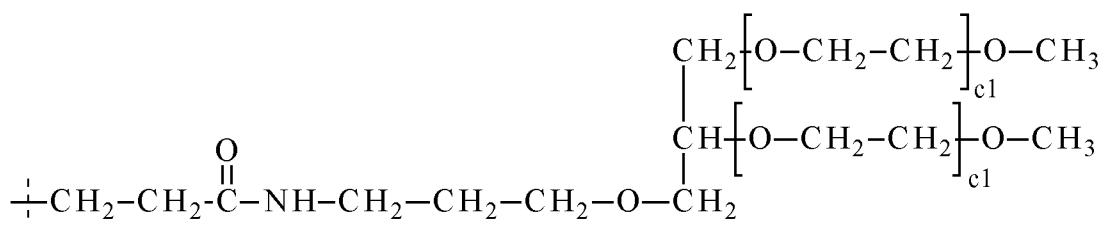
each k is independently of each other selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

$-Y^{a1}$ - and $-Y^{a1'}$ - are



5 and

each $-Z^c$ is a moiety



each $c1$ is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

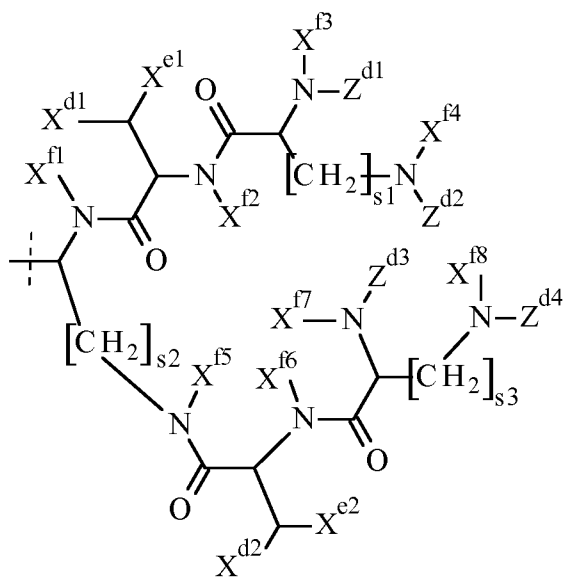
10 Preferably, each k of formula (h-ia) is independently selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Preferably, both k of formula (h-ia) are identical.

Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h-ia) are the same.

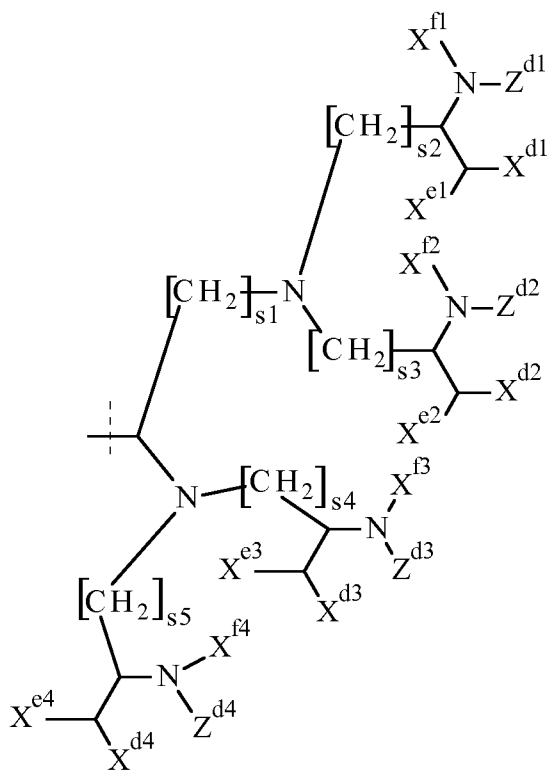
15 Preferably both $c1$ of formula (h-ia) are about 225.

Preferably, $-Y^{a1}$ - and $-Y^{a1'}$ - of formula (h-ia) are both $\begin{array}{c} \text{O} \\ \parallel \\ \text{---} \text{N} \text{---} \\ | \\ \text{H} \end{array}^*$, wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is attached to $-Z^c$.

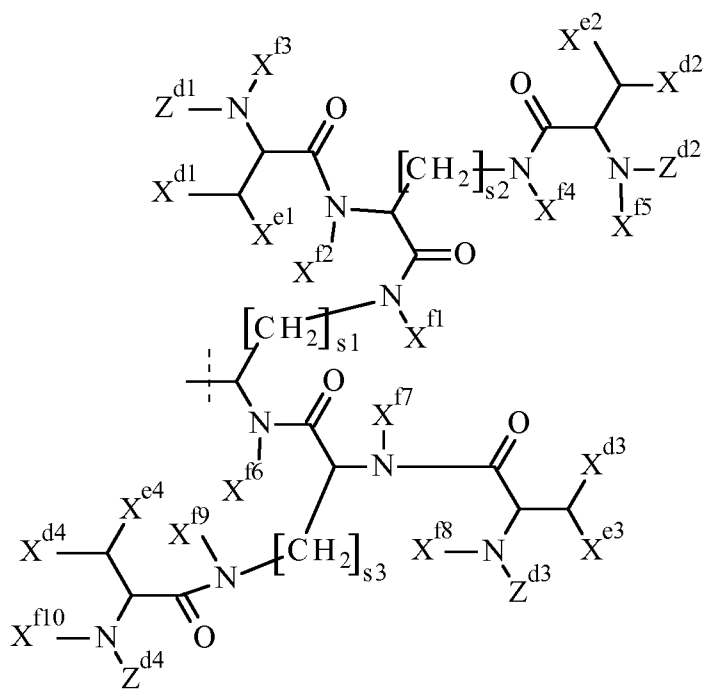
In an equally preferred the embodiment $-Z$ comprises a moiety selected from the group
20 consisting of



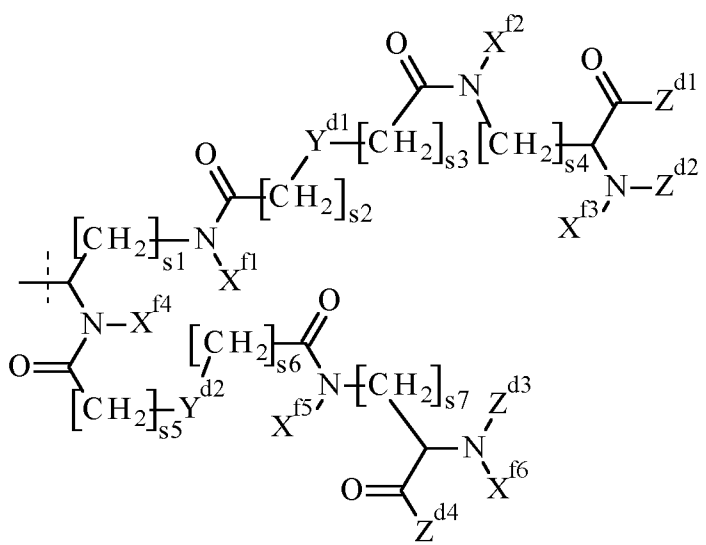
(j-i),



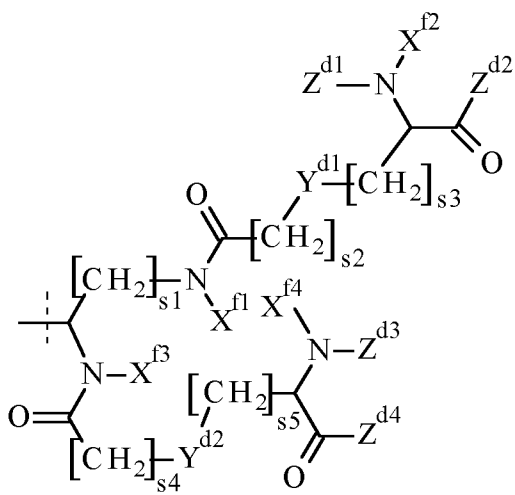
(j-ii),



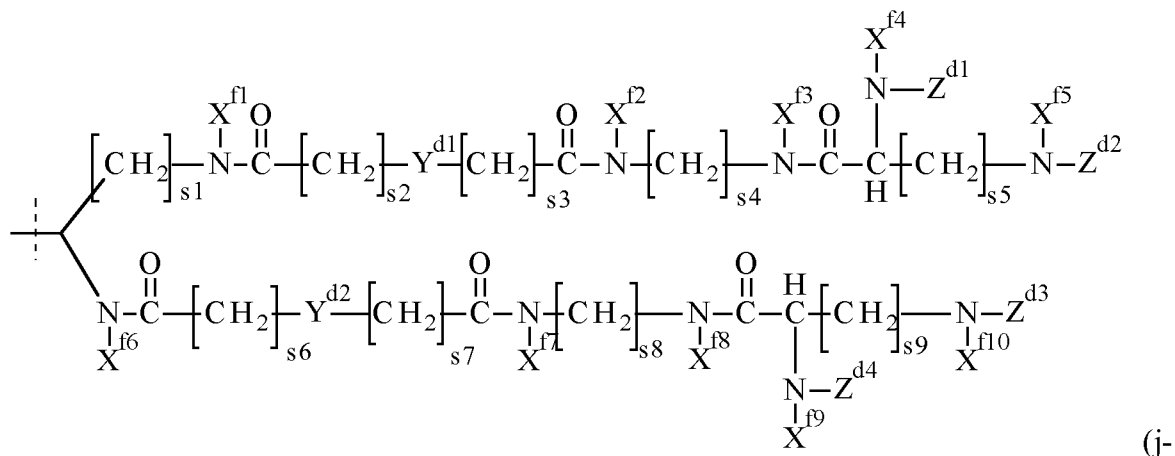
(j-iii),



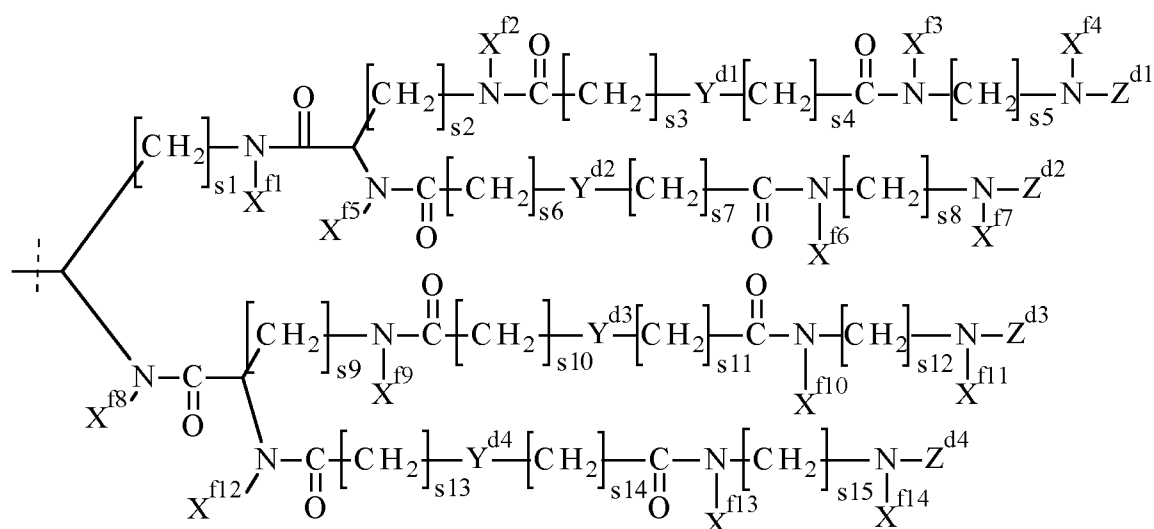
(j-iv),



(j-v),



vi)



(j-vii)

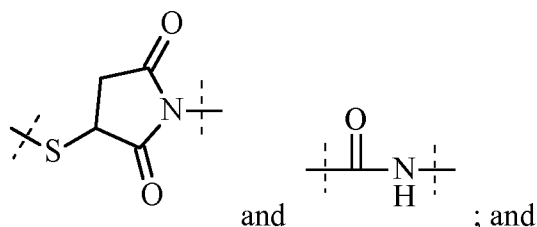
5 wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-L^2-$;

s1, s2, s3, s4, s5, s6, s7, s8, s9, s10, s11, s12, s13, s14 and s15 are independently of each other selected from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10;

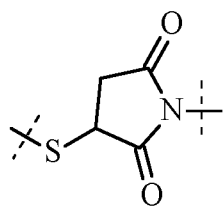
10 $-X^{d1}$, $-X^{d2}$, $-X^{d3}$ and $-X^{d4}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-OH$, $-SH$ and $-NR^{g1}R^{g2}$; preferably $-OH$; $-X^{e1}$, $-X^{e2}$, $-X^{e3}$ and $-X^{e4}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl; $-R^{g1}$ and $-R^{g2}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl;15 $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$, $-X^{f10}$, $-X^{f11}$, $-X^{f12}$, $-X^{f13}$ and $-X^{f14}$ are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of $-H$, C_{1-6} alkyl, C_{2-6} alkenyl and C_{2-6} alkynyl; preferably $-H$;

$-Y^{d1}$ -, $-Y^{d2}$ -, $-Y^{d3}$ - and $-Y^{d4}$ - are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of

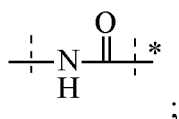


- 5 $-Z^{d1}$ -, $-Z^{d2}$ -, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ are independently of each other a protein, more preferably a random coil protein and most preferably a random coil protein selected from the group consisting of PA, PAS, PAG, PG and XTEN.

10 In one preferred embodiment, $-Y^{d1}$ - and $-Y^{d2}$ - of formula (j-iv), (j-v) and (j-vi) and $-Y^{d1}$ -, $-Y^{d2}$ -, $-Y^{d3}$ - and $-Y^{d4}$ - of formula (j-vii) are



In another preferred embodiment, $-Y^{d1}$ - and $-Y^{d2}$ - of formula (j-iv), (j-v) and (j-vi) and $-Y^{d1}$ -, $-Y^{d2}$ -, $-Y^{d3}$ - and $-Y^{d4}$ - of formula (j-vii) are



- 15 wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is oriented towards $-Z^{d1}$ -, $-Z^{d2}$ -, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ -, respectively, and the unmarked dashed line is oriented towards $-L^2$ -.

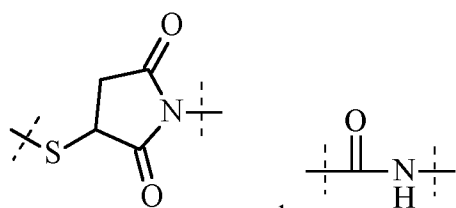
20 Preferably, $-X^{f1}$ -, $-X^{f2}$ -, $-X^{f3}$ -, $-X^{f4}$ -, $-X^{f5}$ -, $-X^{f6}$ -, $-X^{f7}$ and $-X^{f8}$ of formula (j-i) are -H; $-X^{d1}$ and $-X^{d2}$ of formula (j-i) are -OH; $-X^{e1}$ and $-X^{e2}$ of formula (j-i) are selected from the group consisting of -H and methyl; and s_1 , s_2 , s_3 and s_4 of formula (j-i) are selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Even more preferably $-X^{f1}$ -, $-X^{f2}$ -, $-X^{f3}$ -, $-X^{f4}$ -, $-X^{f5}$ -, $-X^{f6}$ -, $-X^{f7}$ and $-X^{f8}$ of formula (j-i) are -H; $-X^{d1}$ and $-X^{d2}$ of formula (j-i) are -OH; $-X^{e1}$ and $-X^{e2}$ of formula (j-i) are -H; and s_1 , s_2 , s_3 and s_4 of formula (j-i) are 4.

Preferably, $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$ and $-X^{f4}$ of formula (j-ii) are -H; $-X^{d1}$, $-X^{d2}$, $-X^{d3}$ and $-X^{d2}$ of formula (j-ii) are -OH; $-X^{e1}$, $-X^{e2}$, $-X^{e3}$ and $-X^{e4}$ of formula (j-ii) are selected from the group consisting of -H and methyl; s1, s2, s3, s4 and s5 of formula (j-ii) are selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Even more preferably $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$ and $-X^{f4}$ of formula (j-ii) are -H; $-X^{d1}$, $-X^{d2}$, $-X^{d3}$ and $-X^{d2}$ of formula (j-ii) are -OH; $-X^{e1}$, $-X^{e2}$, $-X^{e3}$ and $-X^{e4}$ of formula (j-ii) are -H; s1 is 4 of formula (j-ii) and s2, s3, s4 and s5 of formula (j-ii) are 1.

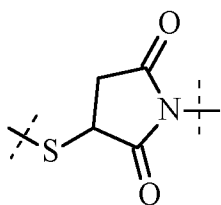
Preferably, $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$ and $-X^{f10}$ of formula (j-iii) are -H; $-X^{d1}$, $-X^{d2}$, $-X^{d3}$ and $-X^{d4}$ of formula (j-iii) are -OH; $-X^{e1}$, $-X^{e2}$, $-X^{e3}$ and $-X^{e4}$ of formula (j-iii) are selected from the group consisting of -H and methyl; and s1, s2 and s3 of formula (j-iii) are selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Even more preferably $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$ and $-X^{f10}$ of formula (j-iii) are -H; $-X^{d1}$, $-X^{d2}$, $-X^{d3}$ and $-X^{d4}$ of formula (j-iii) are -OH; $-X^{e1}$, $-X^{e2}$, $-X^{e3}$ and $-X^{e4}$ of formula (j-iii) are -H; and s1, s2 and s3 of formula (j-iii) are 4.

15

Preferably, $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$ and $-X^{f6}$ of formula (j-iv) are -H; s1, s2, s3, s4, s5, s6 and s7 of formula (j-iv) are selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; $-Y^{d1}$ - and $-Y^{d2}$ - are selected from the group consisting of

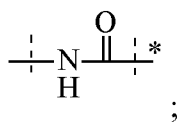


In an even more preferred embodiment $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$ and $-X^{f6}$ of formula (j-iv) are -H; s1 of formula (j-iv) is 3, s2 of formula (j-iv) is 5, s3 of formula (j-iv) is 2, s4 of formula (j-iv) is 4, s5 of formula (j-iv) is 5, s6 of formula (j-iv) is 2 and s7 of formula (j-iv) is 4; and $-Y^{d1}$ - and $-Y^{d2}$ - of formula (j-iv) are



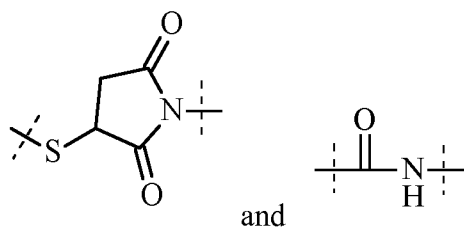
In an equally preferred embodiment $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$ and $-X^{f6}$ of formula (j-iv) are -H; s1 of formula (j-iv) is 3, s2 of formula (j-iv) is 5, s3 of formula (j-iv) is 2, s4 of formula (j-iv) is 4, s5 of formula (j-iv) is 5, s6 of formula (j-iv) is 2 and s7 of formula (j-iv) is 4; and $-Y^{d1}$ - and $-Y^{d2}$ - of formula (j-iv) are

25

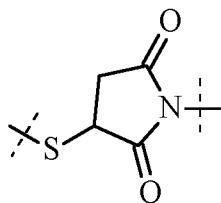


wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is oriented towards $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$, respectively, and the unmarked dashed line is oriented towards $-L^2$.

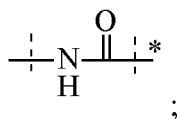
- 5 Preferably, $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$ and $-X^{f4}$ of formula (j-v) are -H; s1, s2, s3, s4 and s5 of formula (j-v) are selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; $-Y^{d1}$ and $-Y^{d2}$ of formula (j-v) are selected from the group consisting of



- 10 . In an even more preferred embodiment $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$ and $-X^{f4}$ of formula (j-v) are -H; s1 of formula (j-v) is 3, s2 of formula (j-v) is 2, s3 of formula (j-v) is 1, s4 of formula (j-v) is 2 and s5 of formula (j-v) is 1; and $-Y^{d1}$ and $-Y^{d2}$ of formula

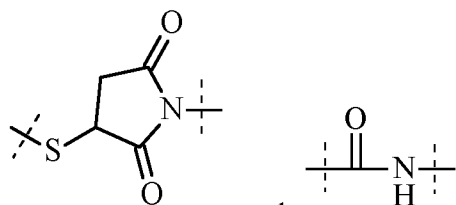


(j-v) are . In an equally preferred embodiment $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$ and $-X^{f4}$ of formula (j-v) are -H; s1 of formula (j-v) is 3, s2 of formula (j-v) is 2, s3 of formula (j-v) is 1, s4 of formula (j-v) is 2 and s5 of formula (j-v) is 1; and $-Y^{d1}$ and $-Y^{d2}$ of formula (j-v) are

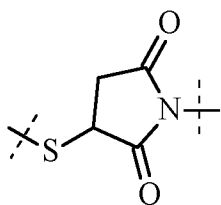


- 15 wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is oriented towards $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$, respectively, and the unmarked dashed line is oriented towards $-L^2$.

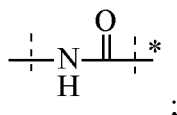
- 20 Preferably, $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$ and $-X^{f10}$ of formula (j-vi) are -H ; s1, s2, s3, s4, s5, s6, s7, s8 and s9 of formula (j-vi) are selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; $-Y^{d1}$ and $-Y^{d2}$ of formula (j-vi) are selected from the group consisting of



and . In an even more preferred embodiment $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$ and $-X^{f10}$ of formula (j-vi) are -H; s1 of formula (j-vi) is 4, s2 of formula (j-vi) is 5, s3 of formula (j-vi) is 2, s4 of formula (j-vi) is 4, s5 of formula (j-vi) is 4, s6 of formula (j-vi) is 5, s7 of formula (j-vi) is 2, s8 of formula (j-vi) is 4 and s9 of formula (j-vi) is 4; and $-Y^{d1}$ - and $-Y^{d2}$ - of formula (j-v) are

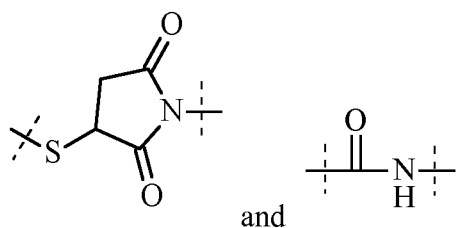


. In an equally preferred embodiment $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$ and $-X^{f10}$ of formula (j-vi) are -H; s1 of formula (j-vi) is 4, s2 of formula (j-vi) is 5, s3 of formula (j-vi) is 2, s4 of formula (j-vi) is 4, s5 of formula (j-vi) is 4, s6 of formula (j-vi) is 5, s7 of formula (j-vi) is 2, s8 of formula (j-vi) is 4 and s9 of formula (j-vi) is 4; and $-Y^{d1}$ - and $-Y^{d2}$ - of formula (j-v) are



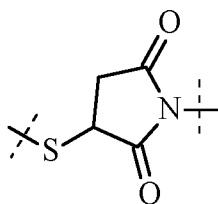
wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is oriented towards $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$, respectively, and the unmarked dashed line is oriented towards $-L^2$ -.

15 Preferably, $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$, $-X^{f10}$, $-X^{f11}$, $-X^{f12}$, $-X^{f13}$ and $-X^{f14}$ of formula (j-vii) are -H; s1, s2, s3, s4, s5, s6, s7, s8, s9, s10, s11, s12, s13, s14 and s15 of formula (j-vii) are selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; $-Y^{d1}$ -, $-Y^{d2}$ -, $-Y^{d3}$ - and $-Y^{d4}$ - of formula (j-vii) are selected from the group consisting of

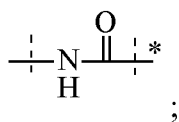


and . In an even more preferred embodiment $-X^{f1}$, $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$, $-X^{f10}$, $-X^{f11}$, $-X^{f12}$, $-X^{f13}$ and $-X^{f14}$ of formula (j-vii) are -H; are -H; s1 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s2 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s3 of formula (j-vii) is 5, s4 of formula (j-vii) is 2, s5 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s6 of formula (j-vii) is

5, s7 of formula (j-vii) is 2, s8 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s9 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s10 of formula (j-vii) is 5, s11 of formula (j-vii) is 2, s12 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s13 of formula (j-vii) is 5, s14 of formula (j-vii) is 2 and s15 of formula (j-vii) is 4; and $-Y^{d1}$ -, $-Y^{d2}$ -, $-Y^{d3}$ - and $-Y^{d4}$ - of



formula (j-vii) are . In an equally preferred
 5 embodiment- X^{f1} , $-X^{f2}$, $-X^{f3}$, $-X^{f4}$, $-X^{f5}$, $-X^{f6}$, $-X^{f7}$, $-X^{f8}$, $-X^{f9}$, $-X^{f10}$, $-X^{f11}$, $-X^{f12}$, $-X^{f13}$ and $-X^{f14}$
 of formula (j-vii) are -H; are -H; s1 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s2 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s3 of
 formula (j-vii) is 5, s4 of formula (j-vii) is 2, s5 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s6 of formula (j-vii) is
 5, s7 of formula (j-vii) is 2, s8 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s9 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s10 of formula
 (j-vii) is 5, s11 of formula (j-vii) is 2, s12 of formula (j-vii) is 4, s13 of formula (j-vii) is 5,
 10 s14 of formula (j-vii) is 2 and s15 of formula (j-vii) is 4; and $-Y^{d1}$ -, $-Y^{d2}$ -, $-Y^{d3}$ - and $-Y^{d4}$ - of
 formula (j-vii) are



wherein the dashed line marked with the asterisk is oriented towards $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$,
 respectively, and the unmarked dashed line is oriented towards $-L^2$.

15

Preferably $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ of formula (j-i), (j-ii), (j-iii), (j-iv), (j-v), (j-vi) and (j-vii)
 have the same structure.

20 In one embodiment $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ of formula (j-i), (j-ii), (j-iii), (j-iv), (j-v), (j-vi) and
 (j-vii) are a PA moiety.

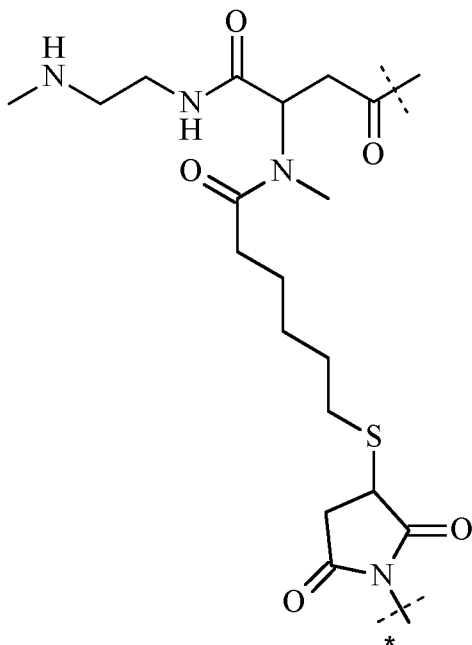
In another embodiment $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ of formula (j-i), (j-ii), (j-iii), (j-iv), (j-v), (j-vi)
 and (j-vii) are a PAS moiety.

25 In another embodiment $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ of formula (j-i), (j-ii), (j-iii), (j-iv), (j-v), (j-vi)
 and (j-vii) are a PAG moiety.

In another embodiment $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ of formula (j-i), (j-ii), (j-iii), (j-iv), (j-v), (j-vi)
 and (j-vii) are a PG moiety.

In another embodiment $-Z^{d1}$, $-Z^{d2}$, $-Z^{d3}$ and $-Z^{d4}$ of formula (j-i), (j-ii), (j-iii), (j-iv), (j-v), (j-vi) and (j-vii) are a XTEN moiety.

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe)



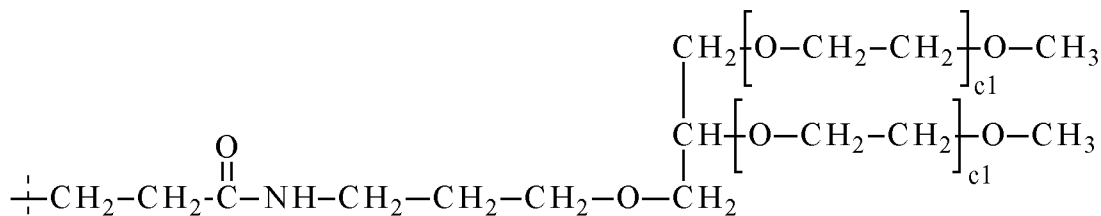
5

(IIe),

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



10

wherein

each $c1$ is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

Preferably, $c1$ of formula (IIe) is about 450.

15

In an equally preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i)

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIe), (IIe-i) and (IIe-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21.

- 5 In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIe), (IIe-i) and (IIe-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIe), (IIe-i) and (IIe-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23.

10

In a preferred embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIe), (IIe-i) and (IIe-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24.

- 15 In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26.

- 20 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26.

- 25 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26.

- 30 In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

5

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

10

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

15

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

20

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

25

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

30

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

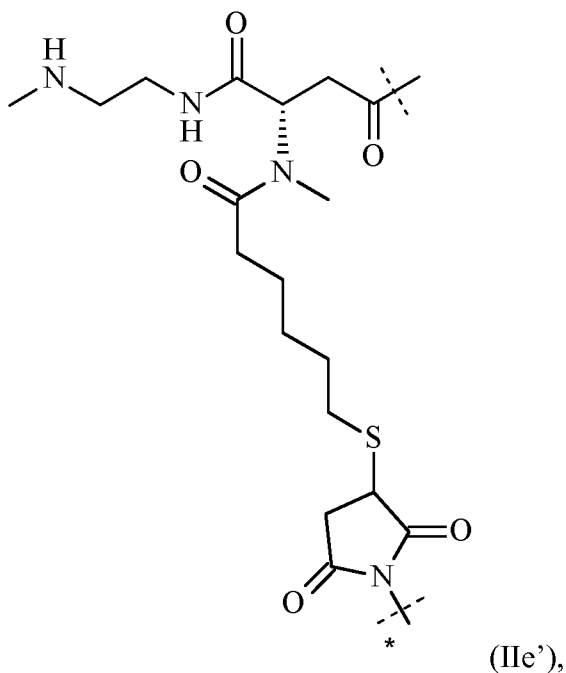
In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is

attached to -L¹ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

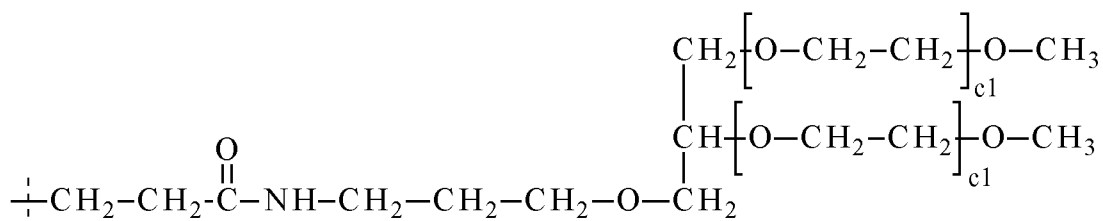
Accordingly, in a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe')



wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety

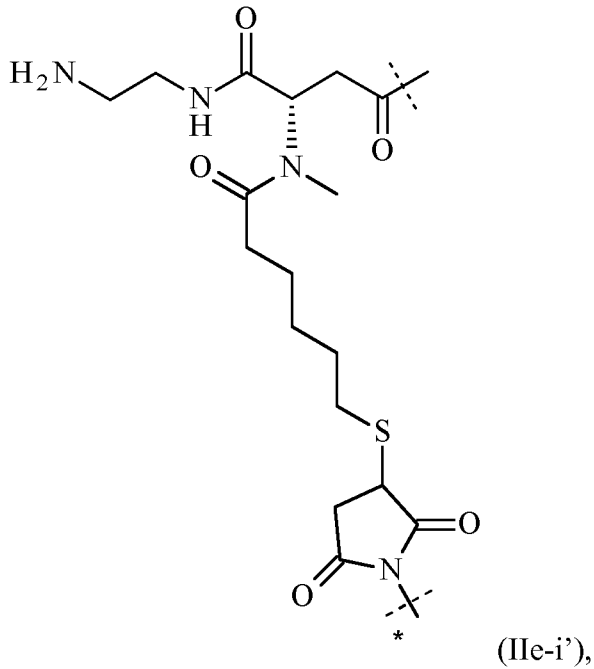


wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIe') is about 450.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-i')

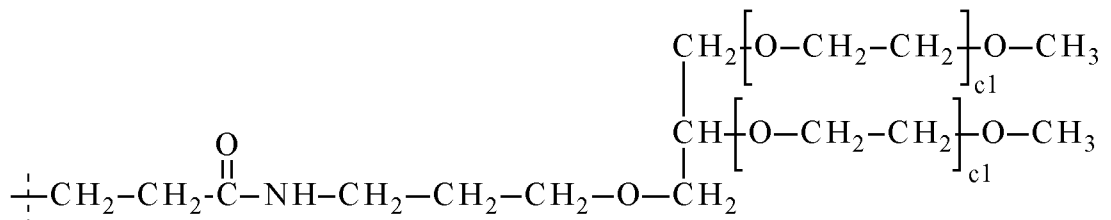


wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

5

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



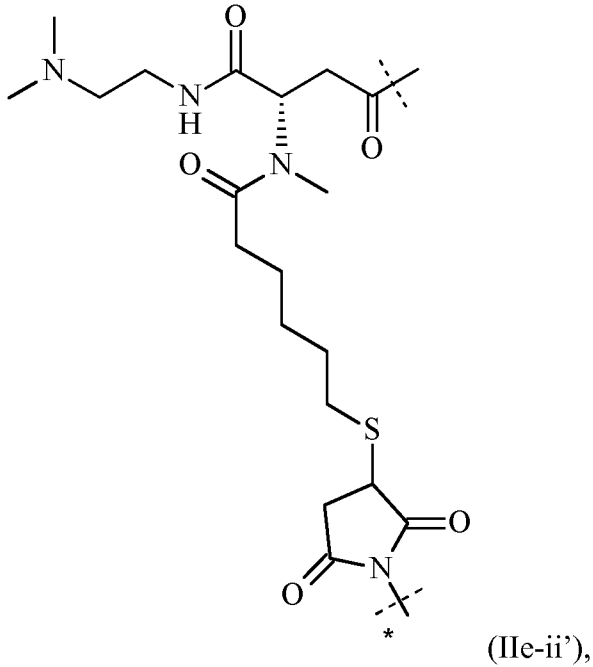
wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

10

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIe-i') is about 450.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIe-ii')

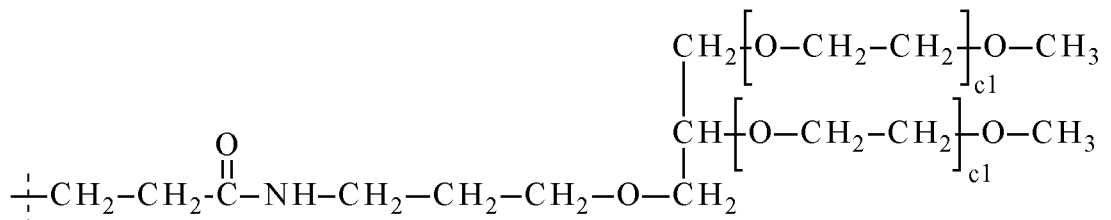


wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

5

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



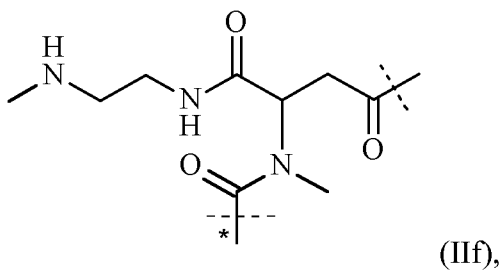
wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

10

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIe-ii') is about 450.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf)



15

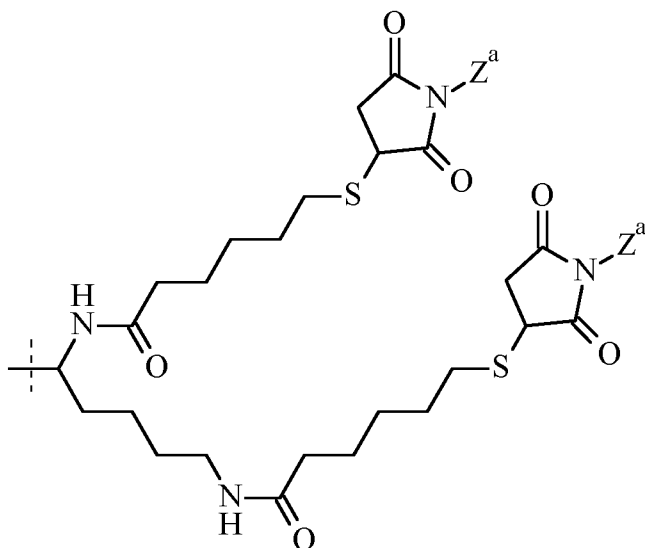
wherein

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

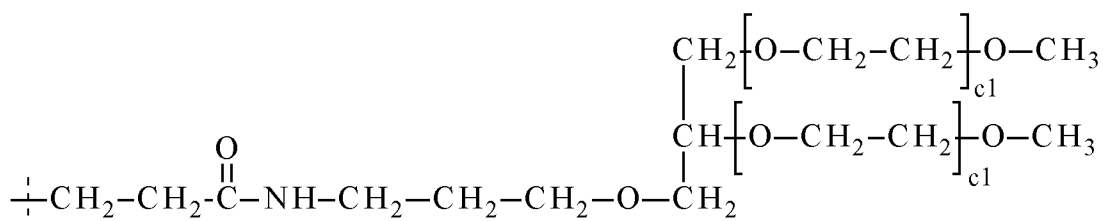
the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure

5



wherein

each -Z^a is



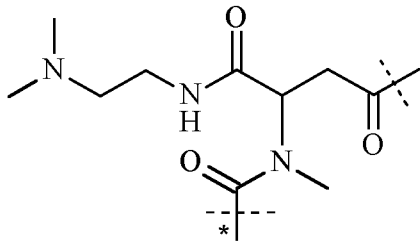
10

wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIf-i) is about 225.

15 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-ii)

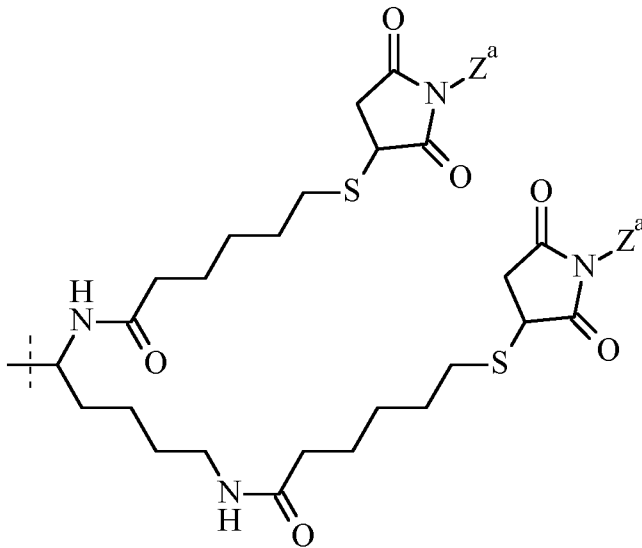


(IIf-ii),

wherein

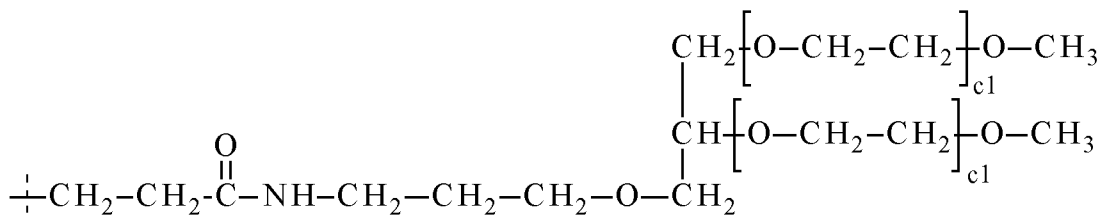
the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

5 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure



wherein

each -Z^a is



10

wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIf-ii) is about 225.

15

In one embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIf), (IIf-i) and (IIf-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:25.

5 In one embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIf), (IIf-i) and (IIf-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIf), (IIf-i) and (IIf-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20.

10 In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIf), (IIf-i) and (IIf-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIf), (IIf-i) and (IIf-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22.

15 In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIf), (IIf-i) and (IIf-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23.

20 In a preferred embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIf), (IIf-i) and (IIf-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24.

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position
25 26.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-i), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at
30 position 26.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-ii), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is

attached to $-L^1$ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26.

5 In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to $-L^1$ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

10 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-i), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to $-L^1$ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

15 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-ii), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to $-L^1$ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

20 In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to $-L^1$ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

25 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-i), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to $-L^1$ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

30 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-ii), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to $-L^1$ - through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (II_f), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

5

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (II_f-i), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

10

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (II_f-ii), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

15

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (II_f), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

20

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (II_f-i), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

25

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (II_f-ii), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

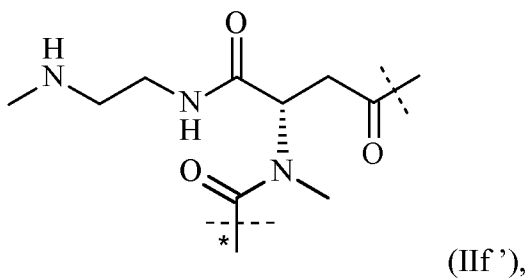
30

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (II_f), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

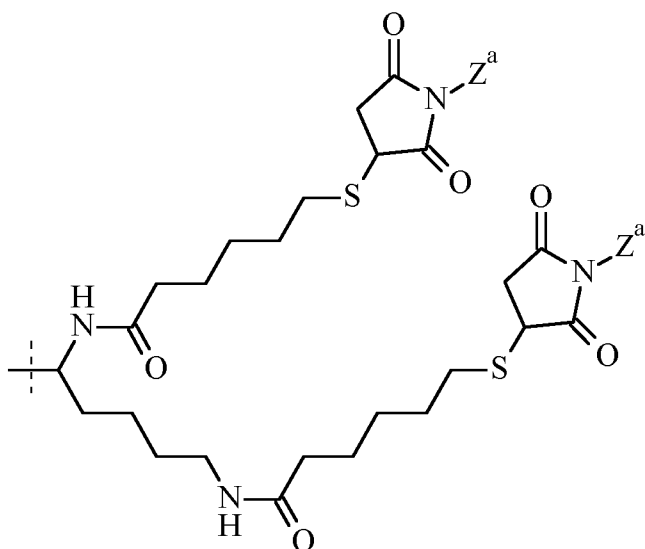
In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-i), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to $-L^1$ through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-ii), wherein c1 is about 225, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to $-L^1$ through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf')

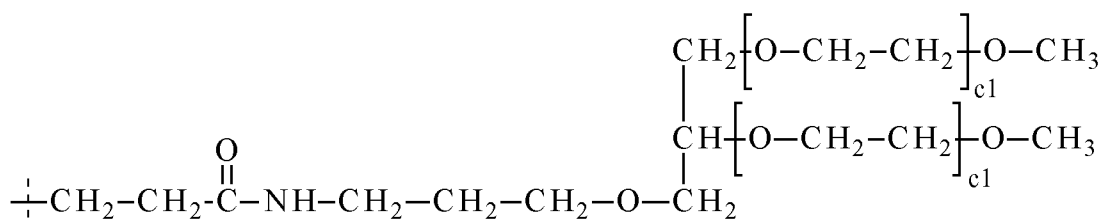


wherein
 the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and
 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-Z$ having the structure



wherein

each Z^a is



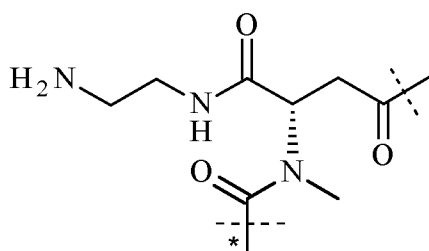
5

wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIf') is about 225.

- 10 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-i')



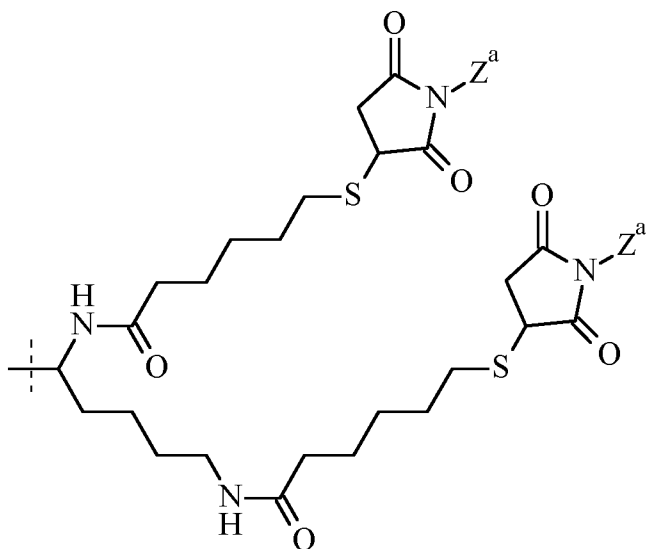
(IIf-i'),

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

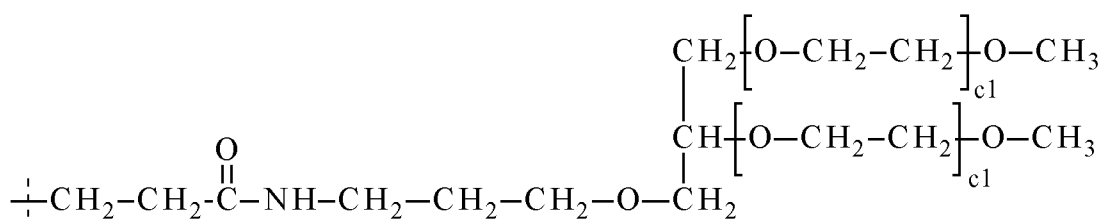
15

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure



wherein

5 each Z^a is

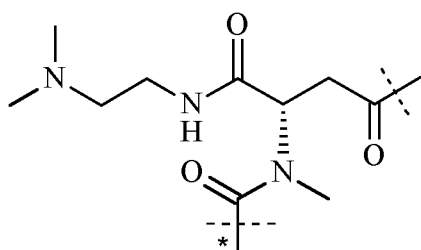


wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

10 Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIf-i') is about 225.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIf-ii')



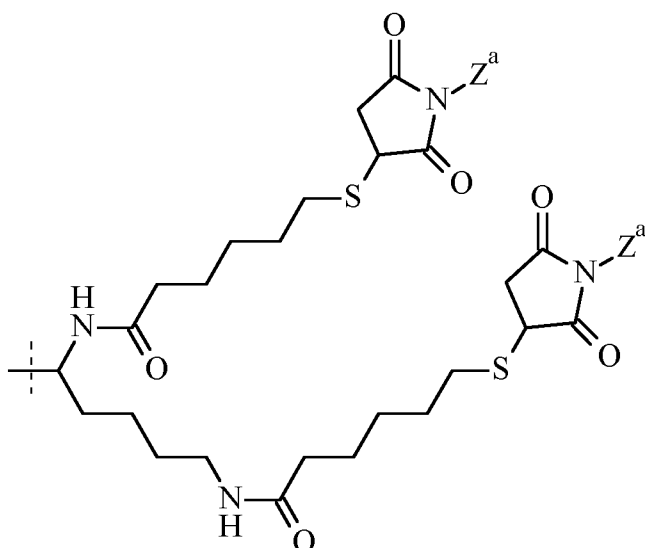
(IIf-ii'),

15 wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

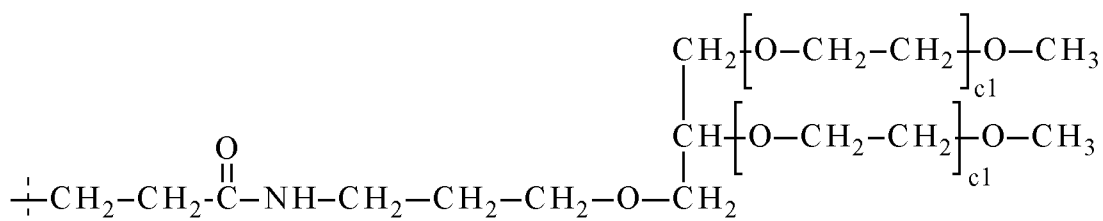
the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure

5



wherein

each Z^a is



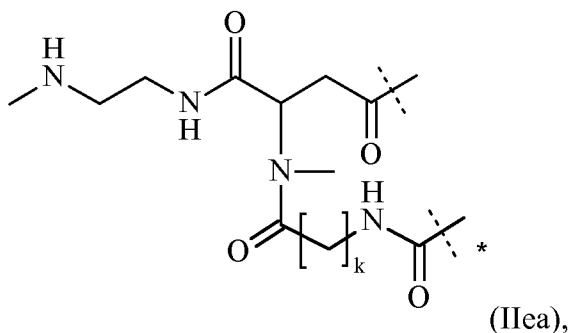
10

wherein

each c_1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Preferably, each c_1 of formula (IIf-ii') is about 225.

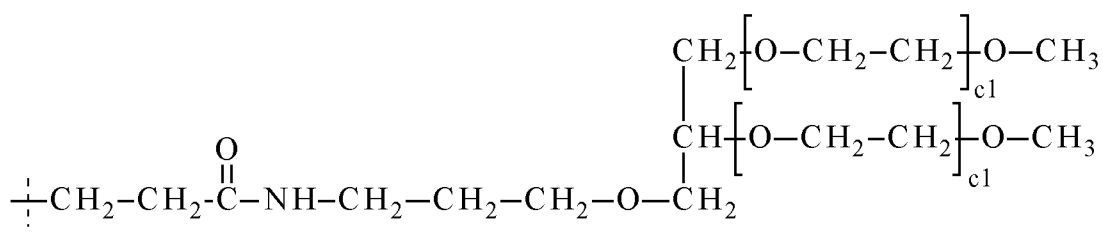
15 In an equally preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea)



wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of -D which is a CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

- 5 k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



wherein

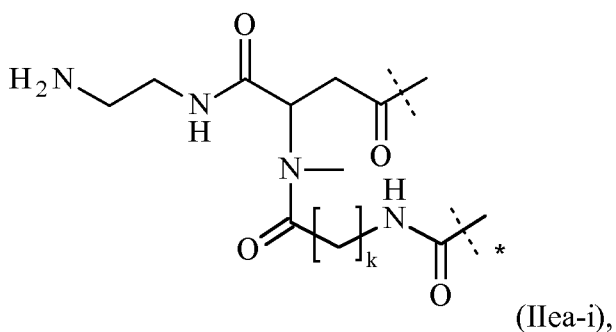
each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

10

Preferably, c1 of formula (IIea) is about 450.

Preferably, k of formula (IIea) is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

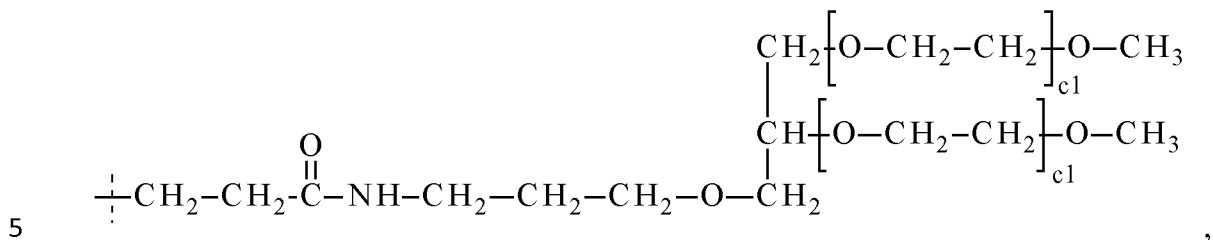
- 15 In an equally preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i)



wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of -D which is a CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



wherein

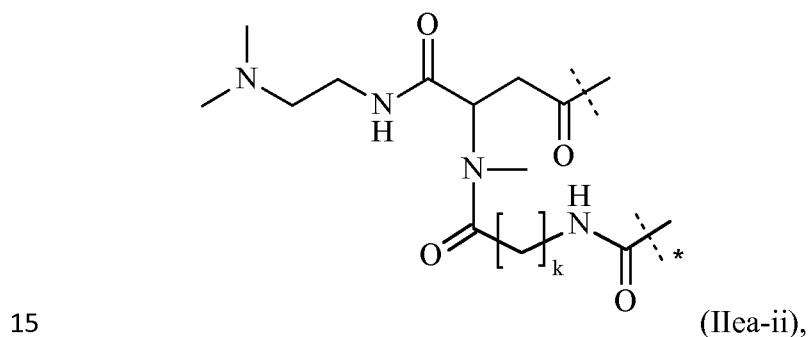
each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

Preferably, k of formula (Ilea-i) is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

10

Preferably, c1 of formula (Ilea-i) is about 450.

In another equally preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (Ilea-ii)

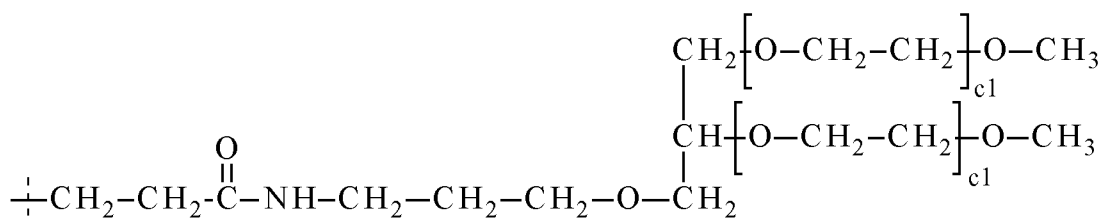


wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of -D which is a CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety

20



wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

Preferably, k of formula (IIea-ii) is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

5

Preferably, c1 of formula (IIea-ii) is about 450.

In one embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:25.

10

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20.

15

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22.

20

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23.

25

In a preferred embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24.

In one embodiment the CNP moiety is attached to -L¹- in the CNP prodrug of formula (IIea), (IIea-i) and (IIea-ii) through the nitrogen of the N-terminal amine functional group of CNP.

30

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached

to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26.

5 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26.

10 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26.

15 In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

20 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

25 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 30.

30 In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

5

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 29.

10

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

15

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

20

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 28.

25

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

30

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

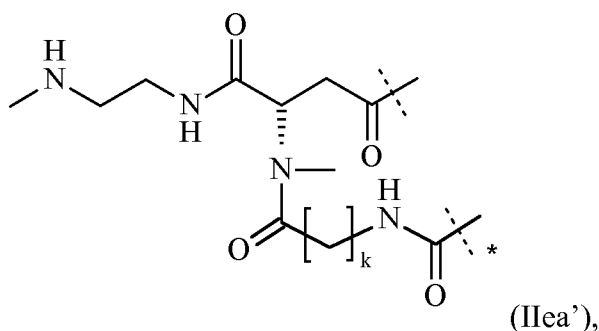
In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

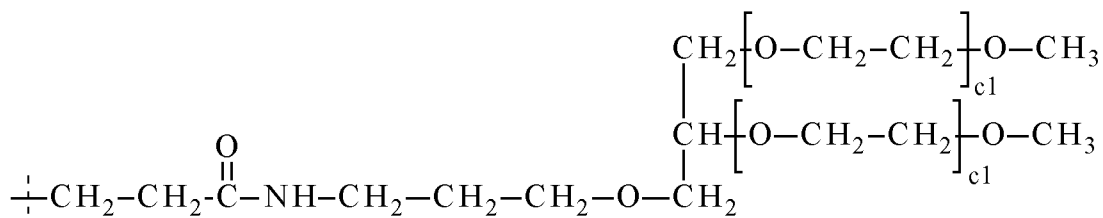
In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-ii), wherein c1 is about 450, the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30 and is attached to -L¹- through the amine functional group provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 27.

Accordingly, in a preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea')



wherein
 the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to the nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond;
 k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



wherein

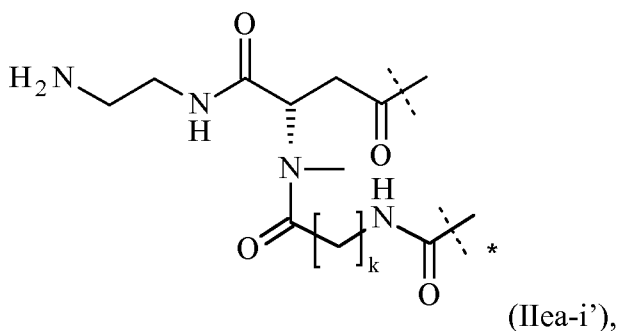
each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

5

Preferably, k of formula (IIea') is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIea') is about 450.

- 10 In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIea-i')

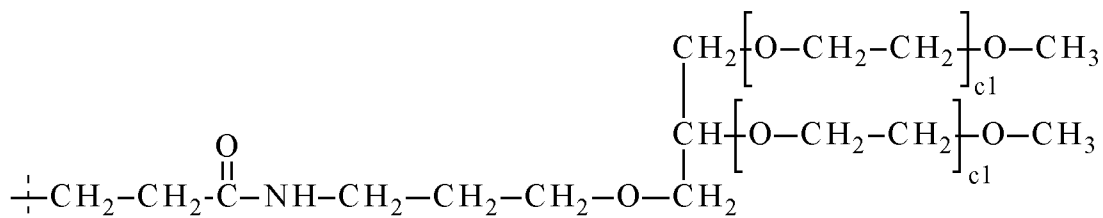


wherein

- 15 the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond;

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



20

wherein

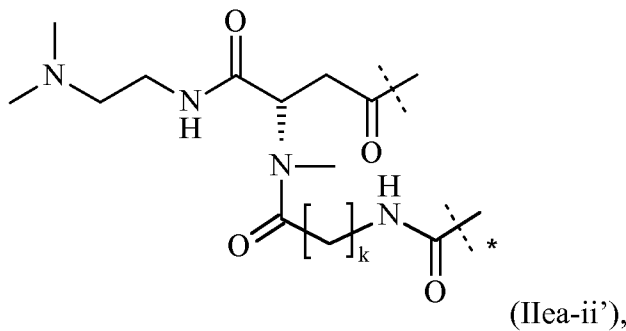
each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

Preferably, k of formula (IIea-i') is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIea-i') is about 450.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula

5 (IIea-ii')

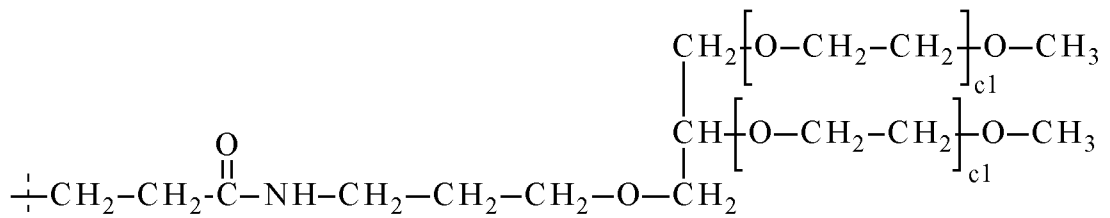


wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond;

10

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12; and the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to a moiety



wherein

15

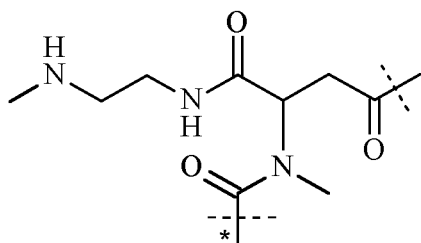
each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 400 to 500.

Preferably, k of formula (IIea-ii') is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIea-ii') is about 450.

20

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIfa)

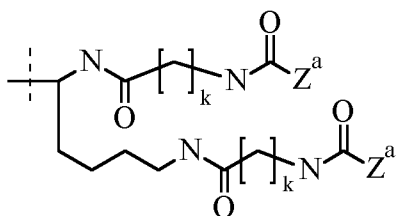


(IIfa),

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of -D which is a CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

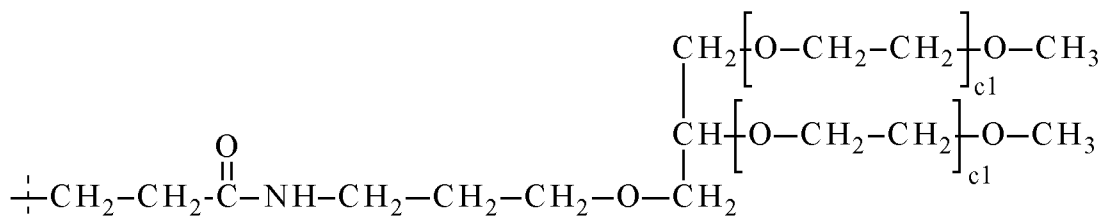
5 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure



wherein

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

10 each -Z^a is



wherein

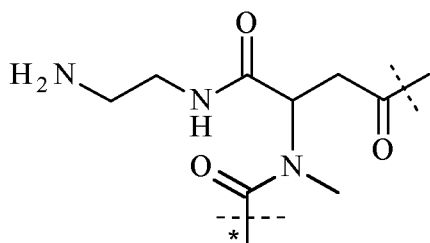
each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

15 Preferably, k of formula (IIfa) is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIfa) is about 225.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula

20 (IIfa-i)

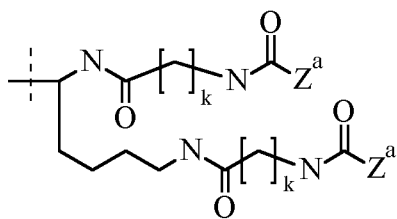


(IIfa-i),

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of -D which is a CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

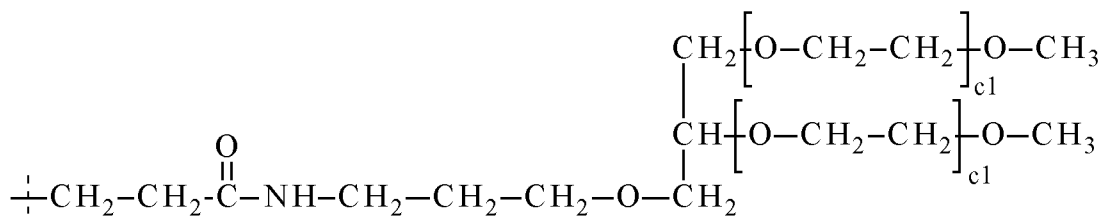
- 5 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure



wherein

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

- 10 each -Z^a is



wherein

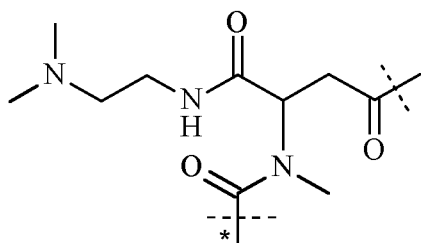
each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

- 15 Preferably, k of formula (IIfa-i) is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIfa-i) is about 225.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula

- 20 (IIfa-ii)

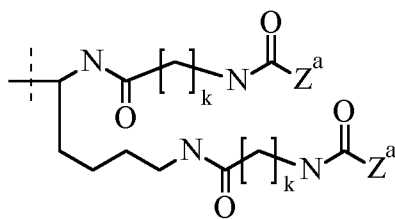


(IIfa-ii),

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen of -D which is a CNP moiety by forming an amide bond; and

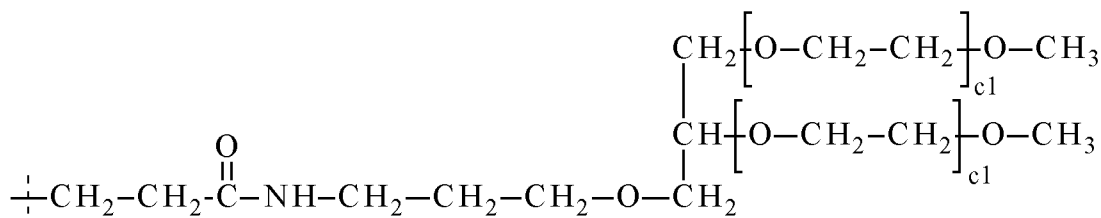
5 the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure



wherein

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

10 each -Z^a is



wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

15 Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIfa-ii) is about 225.

In one embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:25.

20 In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:30.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:20.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:21.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:22.

In another embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:23.

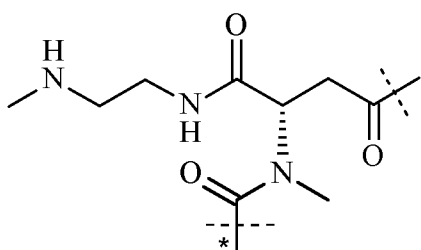
In a preferred embodiment the CNP moiety of the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24.

15

In one embodiment the CNP moiety is attached to $-L^1-$ in the CNP prodrug of formula (IIfa), (IIfa-i) and (IIfa-ii) through the nitrogen of the N-terminal amine functional group of CNP.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIfa')

20



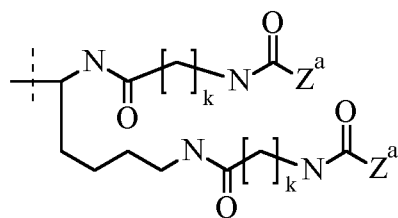
(IIfa'),

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to the nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

25

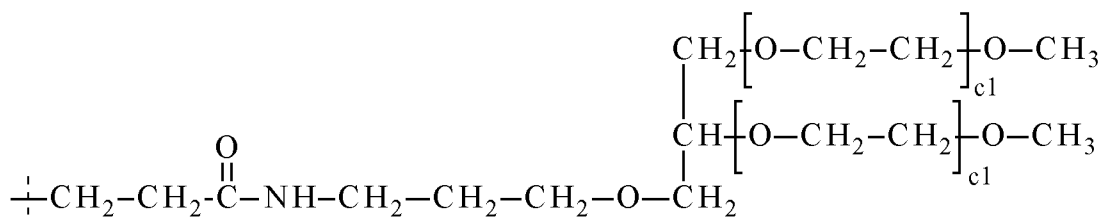
the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to $-Z$ having the structure



wherein

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

each Z^a is



5

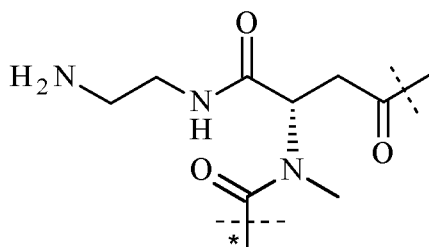
wherein

each $c1$ is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Preferably, k of formula (IIfa') is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

10 Preferably, each $c1$ of formula (IIfa') is about 225.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIfa-i')



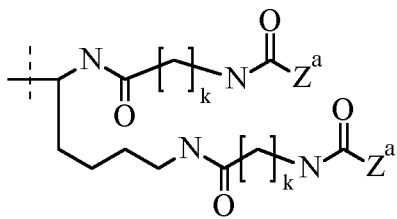
(IIfa-i'),

15 wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure

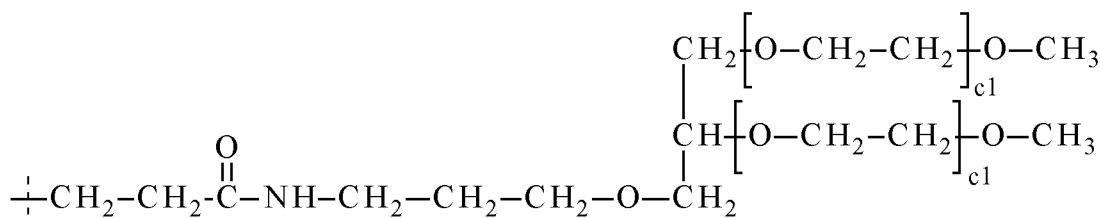
20



wherein

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

each Z^a is



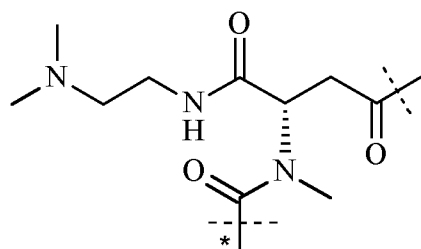
wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Preferably, k of formula (IIfa-i') is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIfa-i') is about 225.

In another preferred embodiment the CNP prodrug of the present invention is of formula (IIfa-ii')

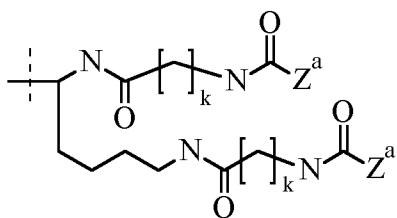


(IIfa-ii'),

wherein

the unmarked dashed line indicates the attachment to a nitrogen provided by the side chain of the lysine at position 26 of the CNP moiety of SEQ ID NO:24 by forming an amide bond; and

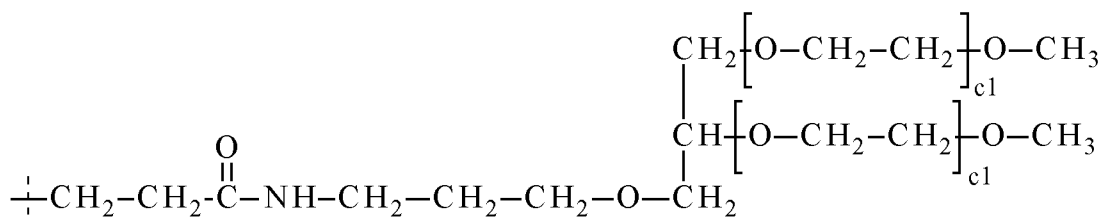
the dashed line marked with the asterisk indicates attachment to -Z having the structure



wherein

k is selected from the group consisting of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12;

each Z^a is



wherein

each c1 is an integer independently ranging from 200 to 250.

Preferably, k of formula (IIfa-ii') is selected from the group consisting of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Preferably, each c1 of formula (IIfa-ii') is about 225.

Preferably, the total mass of the CNP prodrug of the present invention is at least 10 kDa, such as at least 12 kDa, such as at least 15 kDa, such as at least 20 kDa or such as at least 30 kDa.

It is preferred that the total mass of the CNP prodrug of the present invention is at most 250 kDa, such as at most 200 kDa, 180 kDa, 150 kDa or 100 kDa.

In a preferred embodiment the residual activity of the CNP prodrug of the present invention is less than 10%, more preferably less than 1%, even more preferably less than 0.1%, even more preferably less than 0.01%, even more preferably less than 0.001% and most preferably less than 0.0001%.

As used herein the term "residual activity" refers to the activity exhibited by the CNP prodrug of the present invention with the CNP moiety bound to a carrier in relation to the activity exhibited by the corresponding free CNP. In this context the term "activity" refers to NPR-B binding. It is understood that measuring the residual activity of the CNP prodrug of the present invention takes time during which a certain amount of CNP will be released the CNP

prodrug of the present invention and that such released CNP will distort the results measured for the CNP prodrug. It is thus accepted practice to test the residual activity of a prodrug with a conjugate in which the drug moiety, in this case CNP, is non-reversibly, i.e. stably, bound to a carrier, which as closely as possible resembles the structure of the CNP prodrug for which residual activity is to be measured.

A suitable assay for measuring CNP activity and the residual activity of the CNP prodrug of the present invention, preferably in the form of a stable analog, is described in WO 2010/135541 A1, example 4, page 143/144.

Another aspect of the present invention is a pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of the present invention and at least one excipient.

In one embodiment the pharmaceutical composition comprising CNP prodrug molecules of the present invention comprises a mixture of CNP prodrugs in which the CNP moieties are attached to $-L^1-$ through functional groups, preferably through amine functional groups, of different amino acid residues of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety.

In a preferred embodiment the CNP moieties of all CNP prodrug molecules comprised in the pharmaceutical composition are attached to $-L^1-$ through a functional group of the same amino acid residue of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety, preferably through an amine functional group of the same amino acid residue of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety. In a preferred embodiment the CNP moieties of all CNP prodrug molecules comprised in the pharmaceutical composition are attached to $-L^1-$ through the amine functional group of the side chain of lysine 26, if the CNP moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID:NO 24.

Preferably, the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of the present invention has a pH ranging from and including pH 3 to pH 8. More preferably, the pharmaceutical composition has a pH ranging from and including pH 4 to pH 6. Most preferably, the pharmaceutical composition has a pH ranging from and including pH 4 to pH 5.

In one embodiment the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of the present invention and at least one excipient is a liquid formulation.

- 5 In another embodiment the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of the present invention and at least one excipient is a dry formulation.

Such liquid or dry pharmaceutical composition comprises at least one excipient. Excipients
10 used in parenteral formulations may be categorized as, for example, buffering agents, isotonicity modifiers, preservatives, stabilizers, anti-adsorption agents, oxidation protection agents, viscosifiers/viscosity enhancing agents, or other auxiliary agents. However, in some cases, one excipient may have dual or triple functions. Preferably, the at least one excipient
15 comprised in the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention is selected from the group consisting of

- (i) Buffering agents: physiologically tolerated buffers to maintain pH in a desired range, such as sodium phosphate, bicarbonate, succinate, histidine, citrate and acetate, sulphate, nitrate, chloride, pyruvate; antacids such as $Mg(OH)_2$ or $ZnCO_3$ may be also
20 used;
- (ii) Isotonicity modifiers: to minimize pain that can result from cell damage due to osmotic pressure differences at the injection depot; glycerin and sodium chloride are examples; effective concentrations can be determined by osmometry using an assumed osmolality of 285-315 mOsmol/kg for serum;
- 25
- (iii) Preservatives and/or antimicrobials: multidose parenteral formulations require the addition of preservatives at a sufficient concentration to minimize risk of patients becoming infected upon injection and corresponding regulatory requirements have been established; typical preservatives include m-cresol, phenol, methylparaben, ethylparaben, propylparaben, butylparaben, chlorobutanol, benzyl alcohol,
30 phenylmercuric nitrate, thimerosal, sorbic acid, potassium sorbate, benzoic acid, chlorocresol, and benzalkonium chloride;

- (iv) Stabilizers: Stabilisation is achieved by strengthening of the protein-stabilising forces, by destabilisation of the denatured state, or by direct binding of excipients to the protein; stabilizers may be amino acids such as alanine, arginine, aspartic acid, glycine, histidine, lysine, proline, sugars such as glucose, sucrose, trehalose, polyols such as glycerol, mannitol, sorbitol, salts such as potassium phosphate, sodium sulphate, chelating agents such as EDTA, hexaphosphate, ligands such as divalent metal ions (zinc, calcium, etc.), other salts or organic molecules such as phenolic derivatives; in addition, oligomers or polymers such as cyclodextrins, dextran, dendrimers, PEG or PVP or protamine or HSA may be used;
- (v) Anti-adsorption agents: Mainly ionic or non-ionic surfactants or other proteins or soluble polymers are used to coat or adsorb competitively to the inner surface of the formulation's container; e.g., poloxamer (Pluronic F-68), PEG dodecyl ether (Brij 35), polysorbate 20 and 80, dextran, polyethylene glycol, PEG-polyhistidine, BSA and HSA and gelatins; chosen concentration and type of excipient depends on the effect to be avoided but typically a monolayer of surfactant is formed at the interface just above the CMC value;
- (vi) Oxidation protection agents: antioxidants such as ascorbic acid, ectoine, methionine, glutathione, monothioglycerol, morin, polyethylenimine (PEI), propyl gallate, and vitamin E; chelating agents such as citric acid, EDTA, hexaphosphate, and thioglycolic acid may also be used;
- (vii) Viscosifiers or viscosity enhancers: retard settling of the particles in the vial and syringe and are used in order to facilitate mixing and resuspension of the particles and to make the suspension easier to inject (i.e., low force on the syringe plunger); suitable viscosifiers or viscosity enhancers are, for example, carbomer viscosifiers like Carbopol 940, Carbopol Ultrez 10, cellulose derivatives like hydroxypropylmethylcellulose (hypromellose, HPMC) or diethylaminoethyl cellulose (DEAE or DEAE-C), colloidal magnesium silicate (Veegum) or sodium silicate, hydroxyapatite gel, tricalcium phosphate gel, xanthans, carrageenans like Satia gum UTC 30, aliphatic poly(hydroxy acids), such as poly(D,L- or L-lactic acid) (PLA) and poly(glycolic acid) (PGA) and their copolymers (PLGA), terpolymers of D,L-lactide, glycolide and caprolactone, poloxamers, hydrophilic poly(oxyethylene) blocks and

hydrophobic poly(oxypropylene) blocks to make up a triblock of poly(oxyethylene)-poly(oxypropylene)-poly(oxyethylene) (e.g. Pluronic®), polyetherester copolymer, such as a polyethylene glycol terephthalate/polybutylene terephthalate copolymer, sucrose acetate isobutyrate (SAIB), dextran or derivatives thereof, combinations of
5 dextrans and PEG, polydimethylsiloxane, collagen, chitosan, polyvinyl alcohol (PVA) and derivatives, polyalkylimides, poly (acrylamide-co-diallyldimethyl ammonium (DADMA)), polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP), glycosaminoglycans (GAGs) such as dermatan sulfate, chondroitin sulfate, keratan sulfate, heparin, heparan sulfate, hyaluronan, ABA triblock or AB block copolymers composed of hydrophobic A-
10 blocks, such as polylactide (PLA) or poly(lactide-co-glycolide) (PLGA), and hydrophilic B-blocks, such as polyethylene glycol (PEG) or polyvinyl pyrrolidone; such block copolymers as well as the abovementioned poloxamers may exhibit reverse thermal gelation behavior (fluid state at room temperature to facilitate administration and gel state above sol-gel transition temperature at body temperature after injection);

15

(viii) Spreading or diffusing agent: modifies the permeability of connective tissue through the hydrolysis of components of the extracellular matrix in the intrastitial space such as but not limited to hyaluronic acid, a polysaccharide found in the intercellular space of connective tissue; a spreading agent such as but not limited to hyaluronidase
20 temporarily decreases the viscosity of the extracellular matrix and promotes diffusion of injected drugs; and

20

(ix) Other auxiliary agents: such as wetting agents, viscosity modifiers, antibiotics, hyaluronidase; acids and bases such as hydrochloric acid and sodium hydroxide are
25 auxiliary agents necessary for pH adjustment during manufacture.

25

Another aspect of the present invention is CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug of the present invention for use as a medicament.

30

Preferably, said medicament is used in the treatment of a disease selected from the group consisting of achondroplasia, hypochondroplasia, short stature, dwarfism, osteochondrodysplasias, thanatophoric dysplasia, osteogenesis imperfecta, achondrogenesis, chondrodysplasia punctata, homozygous achondroplasia, camptomelic dysplasia, congenital

lethal hypophosphatasia, perinatal lethal type of osteogenesis imperfecta, short-rib polydactyly syndromes, rhizomelic type of chondrodysplasia punctata, Jansen-type metaphyseal dysplasia, spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita, atelosteogenesis, diastrophic dysplasia, congenital short femur, Langer-type mesomelic dysplasia, Nievergelt-type mesomelic dysplasia, Robinow syndrome, Reinhardt syndrome, acrodysostosis, peripheral dysostosis, Kniest dysplasia, fibrochondrogenesis, Roberts syndrome, acromesomelic dysplasia, micromelia, Morquio syndrome, Kniest syndrome, metatrophic dysplasia, spondyloepimetaphyseal dysplasia, neurofibromatosis, Legius syndrome, LEOPARD syndrome, Noonan syndrome, hereditary gingival fibromatosis, neurofibromatosis type 1, Legius syndrome, cardiofaciocutaneous syndrome, Costello syndrome, SHOX deficiency, idiopathic short stature, growth hormone deficiency, osteoarthritis, cleidocranial dysostosis, craniosynostosis (e.g., Muenke syndrome, Crouzon syndrome, Apert syndrome, Jackson-Weiss syndrome, Pfeiffer syndrome, or Crouzonodermoskeletal syndrome), dactyly, brachydactyly, camptodactyly, polydactyly, syndactyly, dyssegmental dysplasia, enchondromatosis, fibrous dysplasia, hereditary multiple exostoses, hypophosphatemic rickets, Jaffe-Lichtenstein syndrome, Marfan syndrome, McCune-Albright syndrome, osteopetrosis and osteopoikilosis.

In another embodiment said medicament is used in the treatment of an ophthalmic disorder, such as glaucoma and/or elevated intraocular pressure.

In another embodiment said medicament is used in the treatment of a cancer disease associated with overactivation of FGFR3, e.g., multiple myeloma, myeloproliferative syndrome, leukemia, plasma cell leukemia, lymphoma, glioblastoma, prostate cancer, bladder cancer, or mammary cancer.

In another embodiment said medicament is used in the treatment of a vascular smooth muscle disorder, preferably selected from the group consisting of hypertension, restenosis, arteriosclerosis, acute decompensated heart failure, congestive heart failure, cardiac edema, nephredema, hepatic edema, acute renal insufficiency, and chronic renal insufficiency.

In another embodiment said medicament is used in the treatment of hemorrhagic shock.

Preferably said medicament is used in the treatment of an achondroplasia phenotype selected from the group consisting of growth retardation, skull deformities, orthodontic defects, cervical cord compression, spinal stenosis, hydrocephalus, hearing loss due to chronic otitis, cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, and obesity.

5

Most preferably said medicament is used in the treatment of achondroplasia.

Another aspect of the present invention is the CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug of the present invention for use in a method of treatment of a disease which can be treated with CNP.

10

Preferably, said disease is selected from the group consisting of achondroplasia, hypochondroplasia, short stature, dwarfism, osteochondrodysplasias, thanatophoric dysplasia, osteogenesis imperfecta, achondrogenesis, chondrodysplasia punctata, homozygous achondroplasia, camptomelic dysplasia, congenital lethal hypophosphatasia, perinatal lethal type of osteogenesis imperfecta, short-rib polydactyly syndromes, rhizomelic type of chondrodysplasia punctata, Jansen-type metaphyseal dysplasia, spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita, atelosteogenesis, diastrophic dysplasia, congenital short femur, Langer-type mesomelic dysplasia, Nievergelt-type mesomelic dysplasia, Robinow syndrome, Reinhardt syndrome, acrodysostosis, peripheral dysostosis, Kniest dysplasia, fibrochondrogenesis, Roberts syndrome, acromesomelic dysplasia, micromelia, Morquio syndrome, Kniest syndrome, metatrophic dysplasia, spondyloepimetaphyseal dysplasia, neurofibromatosis, Legius syndrome, LEOPARD syndrome, Noonan syndrome, hereditary gingival fibromatosis, neurofibromatosis type 1, Legius syndrome, cardiofaciocutaneous syndrome, Costello syndrome, SHOX deficiency, idiopathic short stature, growth hormone deficiency, osteoarthritis, cleidocranial dysostosis, craniosynostosis (e.g., Muenke syndrome, Crouzon syndrome, Apert syndrome, Jackson-Weiss syndrome, Pfeiffer syndrome, or Crouzonerodermoskeletal syndrome), dactyly, brachydactyly, camptodactyly, polydactyly, syndactyly, dyssegmental dysplasia, enchondromatosis, fibrous dysplasia, hereditary multiple exostoses, hypophosphatemic rickets, Jaffe-Lichtenstein syndrome, Marfan syndrome, McCune-Albright syndrome, osteopetrosis and osteopoikilosis.

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In another embodiment the disease is an ophthalmic disorder, such as glaucoma and/or elevated intraocular pressure.

5 In another embodiment said disease is associated with overactivation of FGFR3 in cancer, e.g., multiple myeloma, myeloproliferative syndrome, leukemia, plasma cell leukemia, lymphoma, glioblastoma, prostate cancer, bladder cancer, or mammary cancer.

10 In another embodiment said disease is a vascular smooth muscle disorder, preferably selected from the group consisting of hypertension, restenosis, arteriosclerosis, acute decompensated heart failure, congestive heart failure, cardiac edema, nephredema, hepatic edema, acute renal insufficiency, and chronic renal insufficiency.

In another embodiment said disease is hemorrhagic shock.

15 Preferably said disease is an achondroplasia phenotype selected from the group consisting of growth retardation, skull deformities, orthodontic defects, cervical cord compression, spinal stenosis, hydrocephalus, hearing loss due to chronic otitis, cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, and obesity.

20 Most preferably said disease is achondroplasia.

In one embodiment the patient undergoing the method of treatment of the present invention is a mammalian patient, preferably a human patient. In one embodiment this human patient is an adult. In a preferred embodiment the human patient is a pediatric patient.

25 Another aspect of the present invention is the use of the CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug of the present invention for the manufacture of a medicament for treating a disease which can be treated with CNP.

30 Preferably, said disease is selected from the group consisting of achondroplasia, hypochondroplasia, short stature, dwarfism, osteochondrodysplasias, thanatophoric dysplasia, osteogenesis imperfecta, achondrogenesis, chondrodysplasia punctata, homozygous achondroplasia, camptomelic dysplasia, congenital lethal hypophosphatasia, perinatal lethal

type of osteogenesis imperfecta, short-rib polydactyly syndromes, rhizomelic type of chondrodysplasia punctata, Jansen-type metaphyseal dysplasia, spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita, atelosteogenesis, diastrophic dysplasia, congenital short femur, Langer-type mesomelic dysplasia, Nievergelt-type mesomelic dysplasia, Robinow syndrome, Reinhardt syndrome, acrodysostosis, peripheral dysostosis, Kniest dysplasia, fibrochondrogenesis, Roberts syndrome, acromesomelic dysplasia, micromelia, Morquio syndrome, Kniest syndrome, metatrophic dysplasia, spondyloepimetaphyseal dysplasia, neurofibromatosis, Legius syndrome, LEOPARD syndrome, Noonan syndrome, hereditary gingival fibromatosis, neurofibromatosis type 1, Legius syndrome, cardiofaciocutaneous syndrome, Costello syndrome, SHOX deficiency, idiopathic short stature, growth hormone deficiency, osteoarthritis, cleidocranial dysostosis, craniosynostosis (e.g., Muenke syndrome, Crouzon syndrome, Apert syndrome, Jackson-Weiss syndrome, Pfeiffer syndrome, or Crouzonerodermoskeletal syndrome), dactyly, brachydactyly, camptodactyly, polydactyly, syndactyly, dyssegmental dysplasia, enchondromatosis, fibrous dysplasia, hereditary multiple exostoses, hypophosphatemic rickets, Jaffe-Lichtenstein syndrome, Marfan syndrome, McCune-Albright syndrome, osteopetrosis and osteopoikilosis.

In another embodiment the disease is an ophthalmic disorder, such as glaucoma and/or elevated intraocular pressure.

In another embodiment said disease is associated with overactivation of FGFR3 in cancer, e.g., multiple myeloma, myeloproliferative syndrome, leukemia, plasma cell leukemia, lymphoma, glioblastoma, prostate cancer, bladder cancer, or mammary cancer.

In another embodiment said disease is a vascular smooth muscle disorder, preferably selected from the group consisting of hypertension, restenosis, arteriosclerosis, acute decompensated heart failure, congestive heart failure, cardiac edema, nephredema, hepatic edema, acute renal insufficiency, and chronic renal insufficiency.

In another embodiment said disease is hemorrhagic shock.

Preferably said disease is an achondroplasia phenotype selected from the group consisting of growth retardation, skull deformities, orthodontic defects, cervical cord compression, spinal

stenosis, hydrocephalus, hearing loss due to chronic otitis, cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, and obesity.

Most preferably said disease is achondroplasia.

5

In one embodiment the disease to be treated with the CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug of the present invention occurs in a mammalian patient, preferably in a human patient. In one embodiment this human patient is an adult. In a preferred embodiment the
10 human patient is a pediatric patient.

15

A further aspect of the present invention is a method of treating, controlling, delaying or preventing in a mammalian patient, preferably a human patient, in need of the treatment of one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP, comprising the step of administering to
15 said patient in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a pharmaceutical composition comprising CNP prodrug of the present invention. In one embodiment the human patient is an adult. In a preferred embodiment the human patient is a pediatric patient.

20

Preferably, the one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP is selected from the group consisting of achondroplasia, hypochondroplasia, short stature, dwarfism, osteochondrodysplasias, thanatophoric dysplasia, osteogenesis imperfecta, achondrogenesis, chondrodysplasia punctata, homozygous achondroplasia, camptomelic dysplasia, congenital
25 lethal hypophosphatasia, perinatal lethal type of osteogenesis imperfecta, short-rib polydactyly syndromes, rhizomelic type of chondrodysplasia punctata, Jansen-type metaphyseal dysplasia, spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita, atelosteogenesis, diastrophic dysplasia, congenital short femur, Langer-type mesomelic dysplasia, Nievergelt-type mesomelic dysplasia, Robinow syndrome, Reinhardt syndrome, acrodysostosis, peripheral
30 dysostosis, Kniest dysplasia, fibrochondrogenesis, Roberts syndrome, acromesomelic dysplasia, micromelia, Morquio syndrome, Kniest syndrome, metatrophic dysplasia, spondyloepimetaphyseal dysplasia, neurofibromatosis, Legius syndrome, LEOPARD syndrome, Noonan syndrome, hereditary gingival fibromatosis, neurofibromatosis type 1, Legius syndrome, cardiofaciocutaneous syndrome, Costello syndrome, SHOX deficiency, idiopathic short stature, growth hormone deficiency, osteoarthritis, cleidocranial dysostosis,

craniosynostosis (e.g., Muenke syndrome, Crouzon syndrome, Apert syndrome, Jackson-Weiss syndrome, Pfeiffer syndrome, or Crouzonodermoskeletal syndrome), dactyly, brachydactyly, camptodactyly, polydactyly, syndactyly, dyssegmental dysplasia, enchondromatosis, fibrous dysplasia, hereditary multiple exostoses, hypophosphatemic rickets, Jaffe-Lichtenstein syndrome, Marfan syndrome, McCune-Albright syndrome, 5 osteopetrosis and osteopoikilosis.

In another embodiment the one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP is an ophthalmic disorder, such as glaucoma and/or elevated intraocular pressure.

10

In another embodiment the one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP is associated with overactivation of FGFR3 in cancer, e.g., multiple myeloma, myeloproliferative syndrome, leukemia, plasma cell leukemia, lymphoma, glioblastoma, prostate cancer, bladder cancer, or mammary cancer.

15

In another embodiment the one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP is a vascular smooth muscle disorder, preferably selected from the group consisting of hypertension, restenosis, arteriosclerosis, acute decompensated heart failure, congestive heart failure, cardiac edema, nephredema, hepatic edema, acute renal insufficiency, and chronic renal 20 insufficiency.

In another embodiment the one or more disease which can be treated with CNP is hemorrhagic shock.

25 Preferably the one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP is an achondroplasia phenotype selected from the group consisting of growth retardation, skull deformities, orthodontic defects, cervical cord compression, spinal stenosis, hydrocephalus, hearing loss due to chronic otitis, cardiovascular disease, neurological disease, and obesity.

30 Most preferably the one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP is achondroplasia.

An additional aspect of the present invention is a method of administering the CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or pharmaceutical composition of the present invention, wherein the method comprises the step of administering the CNP prodrug or the

pharmaceutical composition of the present invention via topical, enteral or parenteral administration and by methods of external application, injection or infusion, including intraarticular, periarticular, intradermal, subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous, intraosseous, intraperitoneal, intrathecal, intracapsular, intraorbital, intravitreal, intratympanic, intravesical, intracardiac, transtracheal, subcuticular, subcapsular, subarachnoid, intraspinal, intraventricular, intrasternal injection and infusion, direct delivery to the brain via implanted device allowing delivery of the invention or the like to brain tissue or brain fluids (e.g., Ommaya Reservoir), direct intracerebroventricular injection or infusion, injection or infusion into brain or brain associated regions, injection into the subchoroidal space, retro-orbital injection and ocular instillation, preferably via subcutaneous injection.

In a preferred embodiment, the present invention relates to a CNP prodrug or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or a pharmaceutical composition of the present invention, for use in the treatment of achondroplasia via subcutaneous injection.

15

In a further aspect the present invention relates to a pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug of the present invention or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein the pharmaceutical composition comprises at least one further biologically active moiety or drug.

20

The at least one further biologically active moiety or drug may be in its free form (i.e. in the form of a free drug), may be in the form of a stable conjugate or may be in the form of a controlled-release compound.

In one embodiment, the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug is a drug in its free form, i.e. the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention comprises at least one CNP prodrug and at least one further drug.

Preferably, the at least one further drug is selected from the group consisting of antihistamins; human anti-FGFR3 antibodies; soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3; tyrosine kinase inhibitors; statins; CNP agonists; growth hormone; IGF-1; ANP; BNP; inhibitors of peptidases and proteases; and inhibitors of NPR-C.

A preferred antihistamin is meclozine.

A preferred tyrosine kinase inhibitor is NVP-BGJ398.

A preferred statin is rosuvastatin.

5

A preferred CNP agonist for the at least one further drug is vosoritide.

Preferred inhibitors of peptidases and proteases are NEP and furin inhibitors.

10 A preferred inhibitor for NEP are thiorphan and candoxatril.

Preferred inhibitors of NPR-C are the fragment of SEQ ID NO:98 (FGIPMDRIGRNPR) and antibody B701.

15 Preferred inhibitors of tyrosine kinases are as disclosed in U.S. patents 6329375 and 6344459, which are herewith incorporated by reference.

In one embodiment the at least one further drug is an antihistamin.

20 In another embodiment the at least one further drug is a human anti-FGFR3 antibody.

In another embodiment the at least one further drug is a soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (sFGFR3).

25 In another embodiment the at least one further drug is a tyrosine kinase inhibitor.

In another embodiment the at least one further drug is a statin.

In another embodiment the at least one further drug is a growth hormone.

30

In another embodiment the at least one further drug is a CNP agonist.

In another embodiment the at least one further drug is IGF-1.

In another embodiment the at least one further drug is ANP.

In another embodiment the at least one further is BNP.

- 5 In another embodiment the at least one further drug is an inhibitor of peptidases and proteases.

In another embodiment the at least one further drug is an inhibitor of NPR-C.

- 10 In another embodiment, the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug is in the form of a stable conjugate.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises at least one biologically active moiety covalently conjugated through a
 15 stable linkage to a polymeric moiety, preferably to a water-soluble polymeric moiety, either directly or through a spacer moiety.

Preferably, such polymeric moiety, even more preferably water-soluble polymeric moiety, comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of 2-methacryloyl-oxyethyl
 20 phosphoyl cholins, poly(acrylic acids), poly(acrylates), poly(acrylamides), poly(alkyloxy) polymers, poly(amides), poly(amidoamines), poly(amino acids), poly(anhydrides), poly(aspartamides), poly(butyric acids), poly(glycolic acids), polybutylene terephthalates, poly(caprolactones), poly(carbonates), poly(cyanoacrylates), poly(dimethylacrylamides), poly(esters), poly(ethylenes), poly(ethyleneglycols), poly(ethylene oxides), poly(ethyl
 25 phosphates), poly(ethyloxazolines), poly(glycolic acids), poly(hydroxyethyl acrylates), poly(hydroxyethyl-oxazolines), poly(hydroxymethacrylates), poly(hydroxypropylmethacrylamides), poly(hydroxypropyl methacrylates), poly(hydroxypropyloxazolines), poly(iminocarbonates), poly(lactic acids), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acids), poly(methacrylamides), poly(methacrylates), poly(methyloxazolines),
 30 poly(organophosphazenes), poly(ortho esters), poly(oxazolines), poly(propylene glycols), poly(siloxanes), poly(urethanes), poly(vinyl alcohols), poly(vinyl amines), poly(vinylmethylethers), poly(vinylpyrrolidones), silicones, celluloses, carbomethyl celluloses, hydroxypropyl methylcelluloses, chitins, chitosans, dextrans, dextrans, gelatins, hyaluronic acids and derivatives, functionalized hyaluronic acids, mannans, pectins,

rhamnogalacturonans, starches, hydroxyalkyl starches, hydroxyethyl starches and other carbohydrate-based polymers, xylans, and copolymers thereof.

5 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate is covalently conjugated through a stable linkage to an albumin-binding moiety. Preferably, said albumin-binding moiety is a C₈₋₂₄ alkyl moiety or fatty acid derivative. Preferred fatty acid derivatives are those disclosed in WO 2005/027978 A2 and WO 2014/060512 A1 which are herewith incorporated by reference.

10 Preferably, the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a biologically active moiety selected from the group consisting of antihistamins; human anti-FGFR3 antibodies; soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (sFGFR3); tyrosine kinase inhibitors; statins; CNP agonists; growth hormone; IGF-1; ANP; BNP; inhibitors of peptidases and proteases; and inhibitors of NPR-C.

15

A preferred antihistamin is meclozine.

A preferred tyrosine kinase inhibitor is NVP-BGJ398.

20

A preferred statin is rosuvastatin.

A preferred CNP agonist for the at least one further biologically active moiety is vosoritide.

Preferred inhibitors of peptidases and proteases are NEP and furin inhibitors.

25

A preferred inhibitor for NEP are thiorphan and candoxatril.

Preferred inhibitors of NPR-C are the fragment of SEQ ID NO:98 (FGIPMDRIGRNPR) and antibody B701.

30

Preferred inhibitors of tyrosine kinases are as disclosed in U.S. patents 6329375 and 6344459, which are herewith incorporated by reference.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises an antihistamin moiety.

5 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a human anti-FGFR3 antibody moiety.

10 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (sFGFR3) moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a tyrosine kinase inhibitor moiety.

15 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a statin moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a growth hormone moiety.

20 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a CNP agonist moiety.

25 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises an IGF-1 moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises an ANP moiety.

30 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises a BNP moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises an inhibitor of peptidases and proteases moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a stable conjugate comprises an inhibitor of NPR-C moiety.

5 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug is in the form of a controlled-release compound.

10 Preferably, the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release compound comprises at least one biologically active moiety or drug selected from the group consisting of antihistamins; human anti-FGFR3 antibodies; soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3; statins; CNP agonists; growth hormone; IGF-1; ANP; BNP; inhibitors of peptidases and proteases; inhibitors of tyrosine kinases; and inhibitors of NPR-C.

15 A preferred antihistamin is meclozine.

A preferred tyrosine kinase inhibitor is NVP-BGJ398.

A preferred statin is rosuvastatin.

20 A preferred CNP agonist for the at least one further drug is vosoritide.

Preferred inhibitors of peptidases and proteases are NEP and furin inhibitors.

25 A preferred inhibitor for NEP are thiorphan and candoxatriol.

Preferred inhibitors of NPR-C are the fragment of SEQ ID NO:98 (FGIPMDRIGRNPR) and antibody B701.

30 Preferred inhibitors of tyrosine kinases are as disclosed in U.S. patents 6329375 and 6344459, which are herewith incorporated by reference.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises an antihistamin moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises a human anti-FGFR3 antibody moiety or drug.

5 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises a soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (sFGFR3) moiety or drug.

10 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises a tyrosine kinase inhibitor moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises a statin moiety or drug.

15 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises a growth hormone moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises a CNP agonist moiety or drug.

20 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises an IGF-1 moiety or drug.

25 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises an ANP moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises a BNP moiety or drug.

30 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises an inhibitor of peptidases and proteases moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release comprises an inhibitor of NPR-C moiety or drug.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release compound is water-insoluble.

5 Preferably, such water-insoluble controlled-release compound is selected from the group consisting of crystals, nanoparticles, microparticles, nanospheres and microspheres.

10 In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a crystal comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a nanoparticle comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety.

15 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a microparticle comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety.

20 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a nanosphere comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety.

25 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a microsphere comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a vesicle comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety. Preferably, such vesicle comprising at least one drug or
30 biologically active moiety is a micelle, liposome or polymersome.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a micelle comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a liposome comprising at least one drug or biologically active moiety. Preferably, such liposome is selected from the group consisting of aquasomes; non-ionic surfactant vesicles, such as niosomes and proniosomes; cationic liposomes, such as LeciPlex; transfersomes; ethosomes; ufasomes; sphingosomes; and pharmacosomes.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound is a polymersome at least one drug or biologically active moiety.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound comprises at least one biologically active moiety or drug non-covalently embedded in a water-insoluble polymer. Preferably, such water-insoluble polymer comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of 2-methacryloyl-oxyethyl phosphoyl cholins, poly(acrylic acids), poly(acrylates), poly(acrylamides), poly(alkyloxy) polymers, poly(amides), poly(amidoamines), poly(amino acids), poly(anhydrides), poly(aspartamides), poly(butyric acids), poly(glycolic acids), polybutylene terephthalates, poly(caprolactones), poly(carbonates), poly(cyanoacrylates), poly(dimethylacrylamides), poly(esters), poly(ethylenes), poly(ethyleneglycols), poly(ethylene oxides), poly(ethyl phosphates), poly(ethyloxazolines), poly(glycolic acids), poly(hydroxyethyl acrylates), poly(hydroxyethyl-oxazolines), poly(hydroxymethacrylates), poly(hydroxypropylmethacrylamides), poly(hydroxypropyl methacrylates), poly(hydroxypropyloxazolines), poly(iminocarbonates), poly(lactic acids), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acids), poly(methacrylamides), poly(methacrylates), poly(methyloxazolines), poly(organophosphazenes), poly(ortho esters), poly(oxazolines), poly(propylene glycols), poly(siloxanes), poly(urethanes), poly(vinyl alcohols), poly(vinyl amines), poly(vinylmethylethers), poly(vinylpyrrolidones), silicones, celluloses, carbomethyl celluloses, hydroxypropyl methylcelluloses, chitins, chitosans, dextrans, dextrans, gelatins, hyaluronic acids and derivatives, functionalized hyaluronic acids, mannans, pectins, rhamnogalacturonans, starches, hydroxyalkyl starches, hydroxyethyl starches and other carbohydrate-based polymers, xylans, and copolymers thereof.

In a preferred embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound comprises at least one drug or biologically active moiety non-covalently embedded in poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA).

5 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound comprises at least one biologically active moiety covalently and reversibly conjugated to a water-insoluble polymer. Preferably such water-insoluble polymer comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of 2-methacryloyl-oxyethyl phosphoyl cholins, poly(acrylic acids), poly(acrylates),
10 poly(acrylamides), poly(alkyloxy) polymers, poly(amides), poly(amidoamines), poly(amino acids), poly(anhydrides), poly(aspartamides), poly(butyric acids), poly(glycolic acids), poly(butylene terephthalates), poly(caprolactones), poly(carbonates), poly(cyanoacrylates), poly(dimethylacrylamides), poly(esters), poly(ethylenes), poly(ethyleneglycols), poly(ethylene oxides), poly(ethyl phosphates), poly(ethyloxazolines), poly(glycolic acids),
15 poly(hydroxyethyl acrylates), poly(hydroxyethyl-oxazolines), poly(hydroxymethacrylates), poly(hydroxypropylmethacrylamides), poly(hydroxypropyl methacrylates), poly(hydroxypropyloxazolines), poly(iminocarbonates), poly(lactic acids), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acids), poly(methacrylamides), poly(methacrylates), poly(methyloxazolines), poly(organophosphazenes), poly(ortho esters), poly(oxazolines), poly(propylene glycols),
20 poly(siloxanes), poly(urethanes), poly(vinyl alcohols), poly(vinyl amines), poly(vinylmethylethers), poly(vinylpyrrolidones), silicones, celluloses, carbomethyl celluloses, hydroxypropyl methylcelluloses, chitins, chitosans, dextrans, dextrans, gelatins, hyaluronic acids and derivatives, functionalized hyaluronic acids, mannans, pectins, rhamnogalacturonans, starches, hydroxyalkyl starches, hydroxyethyl starches and other
25 carbohydrate-based polymers, xylans, and copolymers thereof.

Preferably, the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release compound comprises at least one biologically active moiety or drug selected from the group consisting of antihistamins; human anti-FGFR3 antibodies;
30 soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3; tyrosine kinase inhibitors; statins; CNP agonists; growth hormone; IGF-1; ANP; BNP; inhibitors of peptidases and proteases; and inhibitors of NPR-C.

A preferred antihistamin is meclozine.

A preferred tyrosine kinase inhibitor is NVP-BGJ398.

A preferred statin is rosuvastatin.

5

A preferred CNP agonist for the at least one further drug is vosoritide.

Preferred inhibitors of peptidases and proteases are NEP and furin inhibitors.

10 A preferred inhibitor for NEP are thiorphan and candoxatril.

Preferred inhibitors of NPR-C are the fragment of SEQ ID NO:98 (FGIPMDRIGRNPR) and antibody B701.

15 Preferred inhibitors of tyrosine kinases are as disclosed in U.S. patents 6329375 and 6344459, which are herewith incorporated by reference.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises an antihistamin moiety or drug.

20

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises a human anti-FGFR3 antibody moiety or drug.

25 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises a soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (sFGFR3) moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form
30 of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises a tyrosine kinase inhibitor moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises a statin moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises a growth hormone moiety or drug.

5 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises a CNP agonist moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises an IGF-1 moiety or drug.

10 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises an ANP moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises a BNP moiety or drug.

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In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises an inhibitor of peptidases and proteases moiety or drug.

20 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-insoluble controlled-release comprises an inhibitor of NPR-C moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a controlled-release compound is water-soluble.

25

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release compound comprises at least one biologically active moiety covalently conjugated through a reversible linkage to a water-soluble polymeric moiety, either directly or through a spacer moiety.

30

Preferably, such water-soluble polymeric moiety comprises a polymer selected from the group consisting of 2-methacryloyl-oxyethyl phosphoyl cholins, poly(acrylic acids), poly(acrylates), poly(acrylamides), poly(alkyloxy) polymers, poly(amides), poly(amidoamines), poly(amino acids), poly(anhydrides), poly(aspartamides), poly(butyric

acids), poly(glycolic acids), polybutylene terephthalates, poly(caprolactones), poly(carbonates), poly(cyanoacrylates), poly(dimethylacrylamides), poly(esters), poly(ethylenes), poly(ethyleneglycols), poly(ethylene oxides), poly(ethyl phosphates), poly(ethyloxazolines), poly(glycolic acids), poly(hydroxyethyl acrylates), poly(hydroxyethyl-oxazolines), poly(hydroxymethacrylates), poly(hydroxypropylmethacrylamides), poly(hydroxypropyl methacrylates), poly(hydroxypropyloxazolines), poly(iminocarbonates), poly(lactic acids), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acids), poly(methacrylamides), poly(methacrylates), poly(methyloxazolines), poly(organophosphazenes), poly(ortho esters), poly(oxazolines), poly(propylene glycols), poly(siloxanes), poly(urethanes), poly(vinyl alcohols), poly(vinyl amines), poly(vinylmethylethers), poly(vinylpyrrolidones), silicones, celluloses, carbomethyl celluloses, hydroxypropyl methylcelluloses, chitins, chitosans, dextrans, dextrans, gelatins, hyaluronic acids and derivatives, functionalized hyaluronic acids, mannans, pectins, rhamnogalacturonans, starches, hydroxyalkyl starches, hydroxyethyl starches and other carbohydrate-based polymers, xylans, and copolymers thereof.

15

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release compound is covalently conjugated through a stable linkage to an albumin-binding moiety. Preferably, said albumin-binding moiety is a C₈₋₂₄ alkyl moiety or fatty acid derivative. Preferred fatty acid derivatives are those disclosed in WO 2005/027978 A2 and WO 2014/060512 A1 which are herewith incorporated by reference.

20

Preferably, the at least one further biologically active moiety in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a biologically active moiety selected from the group consisting of antihistamins; human anti-FGFR3 antibodies; soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3; tyrosine kinase inhibitors; statins; CNP agonists; growth hormone; IGF-1; ANP; BNP; inhibitors of peptidases and proteases; and inhibitors of NPR-C.

25

A preferred antihistamin is meclozine.

30 A preferred tyrosine kinase inhibitor is NVP-BGJ398.

A preferred statin is rosuvastatin.

A preferred CNP agonist for the at least one further drug is vosoritide.

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A preferred inhibitor for NEP are thiorphan and candoxatril.

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Preferred inhibitors of tyrosine kinases are as disclosed in U.S. patents 6329375 and 6344459,
10 which are herewith incorporated by reference.

In one embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises an antihistamin moiety or drug.

15 In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a human anti-FGFR3 antibody moiety or drug.

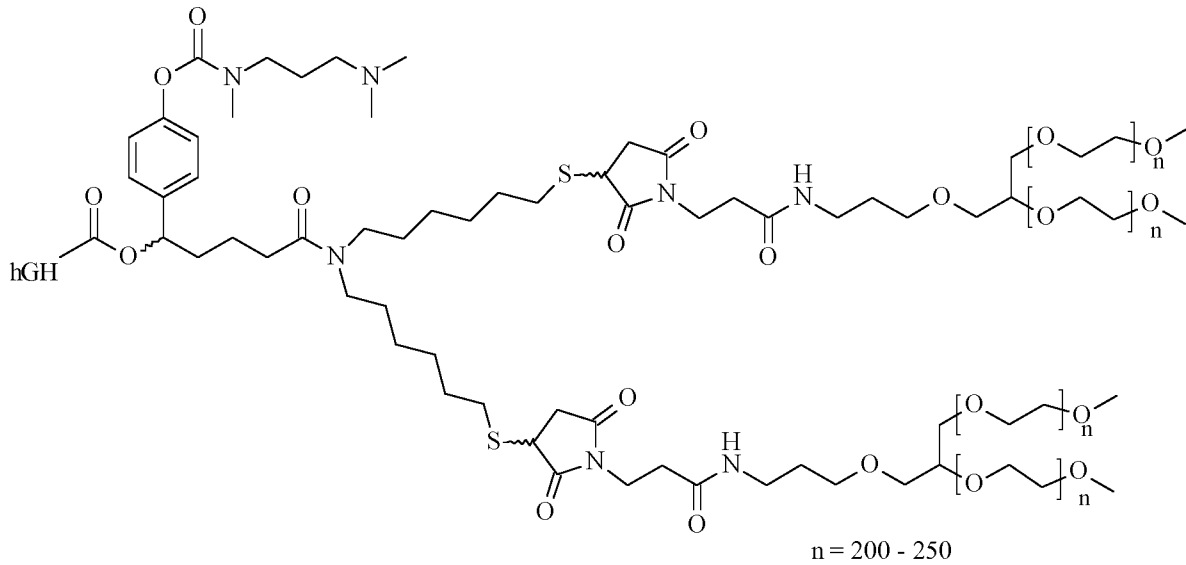
In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form
20 of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a soluble forms of human fibroblast growth factor receptor 3 (sFGFR3) moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a tyrosine kinase inhibitor moiety or drug.

25

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a statin moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form
30 of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a growth hormone moiety or drug. A preferred water-soluble controlled-release growth hormone compound is compound 2 of example 2 of WO2016/079114A1. Accordingly, a preferred water-soluble controlled-release growth hormone compound has the following structure:



In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a CNP agonist moiety or drug.

5

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises an IGF-1 moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises an ANP moiety or drug.

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In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises a BNP moiety or drug.

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises an inhibitor of peptidases and proteases moiety or drug.

15

In another embodiment the at least one further biologically active moiety or drug in the form of a water-soluble controlled-release comprises an inhibitor of NPR-C moiety or drug.

20

Another aspect of the present invention is the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug and at least one further biologically active moiety or drug of the present invention for use as a medicament.

25

Another aspect of the present invention is the pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug and at least one further biologically active moiety or drug of the present invention for use in the treatment of a patient suffering from a disorder that benefits from stimulating growth.

5

Preferably, the patient is a mammalian patient, more preferably a human patient.

Preferably, such disorders that benefit from stimulating growth are selected from the group comprising achondroplasia, hypochondroplasia, short stature, dwarfism, osteochondrodysplasias, thanatophoric dysplasia, osteogenesis imperfecta, achondrogenesis, chondrodysplasia punctata, homozygous achondroplasia, camptomelic dysplasia, congenital lethal hypophosphatasia, perinatal lethal type of osteogenesis imperfecta, short-rib polydactyly syndromes, rhizomelic type of chondrodysplasia punctata, Jansen-type metaphyseal dysplasia, spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita, atelosteogenesis, diastrophic dysplasia, congenital short femur, Langer-type mesomelic dysplasia, Nievergelt-type mesomelic dysplasia, Robinow syndrome, Reinhardt syndrome, acrodysostosis, peripheral dysostosis, Kniest dysplasia, fibrochondrogenesis, Roberts syndrome, acromesomelic dysplasia, micromelia, Morquio syndrome, Kniest syndrome, metatrophic dysplasia, and spondyloepimetaphyseal dysplasia. Most preferably, the disorder that benefits from stimulating growth is achondroplasia.

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15
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Another aspect of the present invention is a method of treating a patient suffering from a disorder that benefits from stimulating growth by administering the pharmaceutical composition of the present invention.

25

Preferably, the patient is a mammalian patient, more preferably a human patient.

Preferably, such disorders that benefit from stimulating growth are selected from the group comprising achondroplasia, hypochondroplasia, short stature, dwarfism, osteochondrodysplasias, thanatophoric dysplasia, osteogenesis imperfecta, achondrogenesis, chondrodysplasia punctata, homozygous achondroplasia, camptomelic dysplasia, congenital lethal hypophosphatasia, perinatal lethal type of osteogenesis imperfecta, short-rib polydactyly syndromes, rhizomelic type of chondrodysplasia punctata, Jansen-type metaphyseal dysplasia, spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia congenita, atelosteogenesis, diastrophic

30

dysplasia, congenital short femur, Langer-type mesomelic dysplasia, Nievergelt-type mesomelic dysplasia, Robinow syndrome, Reinhardt syndrome, acrodysostosis, peripheral dysostosis, Kniest dysplasia, fibrochondrogenesis, Roberts syndrome, acromesomelic dysplasia, micromelia, Morquio syndrome, Kniest syndrome, metatrophic dysplasia, and
5 spondyloepimetaphyseal dysplasia. Most preferably, the disorder that benefits from stimulating growth is achondroplasia.

The polypeptide moiety of the CNP prodrug may be prepared by standard solid-phase peptide synthesis methods, e.g. by Boc chemistry (R. B. Merrifield, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 85(14): 2149-
10 2154 (1963)). Alternatively, Fmoc (fluorenylmethoxycarbonyl) chemistry may be employed.

Methods known in the art can be employed to improve purity and/or yield, including the use of pseudoproline or other dipeptide building blocks, fragment coupling and others (J. Wade et al., *Lett. Pept. Sci.*, 7(2):107-112 (2000); Y. Fujiwara et al., *Chem. Pharm. Bull.*, 44(7):1326-
15 1331 (1996); P. Cherkupally et al., *Eur. J. Org. Chem.*, 6372–6378 (2013)).

Alternatively, the polypeptide moiety of the CNP prodrug may be produced by recombinant synthesis processes.

20 **Fig. 1:** Structure of CNP according to SEQ ID NO:1.

Examples

Materials and Methods

25 CNP SEQ ID No:1 was obtained from Bachem AG, Bubendorf, Switzerland (CNP-22, human, catalogue no. H-1296). CNP-34 SEQ ID No:40 and CNP-38 SEQ ID No:24 were obtained from CASLO ApS, Kongens Lyngby, Denmark.

Side chain protected CNP-38 on TCP resin having Boc protected N-terminus and ivDde
30 protected side chain of Lys26 (synthesized by Fmoc-strategy) was obtained from CASLO ApS, Kongens Lyngby, Denmark.

Side chain protected CNP-34 on CTC Tentagel resin having Boc protected N-terminus and ivDde protected side chain of either Lys12, Lys16 or Lys22 (synthesized by Fmoc-strategy)

was obtained from Peptide Specialty Laboratories GmbH, Heidelberg, Germany. Side chain protected CNP-38 on TCP tentagel resin having free N-terminus (synthesized by Fmoc-strategy) was obtained from Peptide Specialty Laboratories GmbH, Heidelberg, Germany.

- 5 Methoxy PEG amine 5 kDa was obtained from Rapp Polymere GmbH, Tuebingen, Germany. All other PEGs used in this work were acquired from NOF Europe N.V., Grobbendonk, Belgium.

- Fmoc-N-Me-Asp(OtBu)-OH was obtained from Bachem AG, Bubendorf, Switzerland. S-10 Trityl-6-mercaptohexanoic acid was purchased from Polypeptide, Strasbourg, France. HATU was obtained from Merck Biosciences GmbH, Schwalbach/Ts, Germany.

2,4-Dimethylbenzyl alcohol was obtained from abcr GmbH, Karlsruhe, Germany.

- 15 Fmoc-N-Me-Asp(OBn)-OH was obtained from Peptide International Inc., Louisville, KY, USA.

Neutral Endopeptidase (NEP) was obtained from Enzo Life Sciences GmbH, Lörrach, Germany.

20

All other chemicals and reagents were purchased from Sigma Aldrich GmbH, Taufkirchen, Germany.

- 25 Syringes equipped with polyethylene frits (MultiSynTech GmbH, Witten, Germany) were used as reaction vessels or for washing steps for peptide resins.

General procedure for the removal of ivDde protecting group from side chain protected CNPs on resin

- 30 The resin was pre-swollen in DMF for 30 min and the solvent was discarded. The ivDde group was removed by incubating the resin with DMF/hydrazine hydrate 4/1 (v/v, 2.5 mL/g resin) for 8 x 15 min. For each step fresh DMF/hydrazine hydrate solution was used. Finally, the resin was washed with DMF (10 x), DCM (10 x) and dried *in vacuo*.

RP-HPLC purification:

For preparative RP-HPLC a Waters 600 controller and a 2487 Dual Absorbance Detector was used, equipped with the following columns: Waters XBridge™ BEH300 Prep C18 5 μm, 150 x 10 mm, flow rate 6 mL/min, or Waters XBridge™ BEH300 Prep C18 10 μm, 150 x 30 mm, flow rate 40 mL/min. Linear gradients of solvent system A (water containing 0.1 % TFA v/v or 0.01 % conc. HCl v/v) and solvent system B (acetonitrile containing 0.1 % TFA v/v or 0.01 % conc. HCl v/v) were used.

HPLC fractions containing product were pooled and lyophilized if not stated otherwise.

10 Flash Chromatography

Flash chromatography purifications were performed on an Isolera One system from Biotage AB, Sweden, using Biotage KP-Sil silica cartridges and n-heptane and ethyl acetate as eluents. Products were detected at 254 nm.

15 Analytical methods

Analytical ultra-performance LC (UPLC)-MS was performed on a Waters Acquity system equipped with a Waters BEH300 C18 column (2.1 x 50 mm, 1.7 μm particle size, flow: 0.25 mL/min; solvent A: water containing 0.04% TFA (v/v), solvent B: acetonitrile containing 0.05% TFA (v/v)) coupled to a LTQ Orbitrap Discovery mass spectrometer from Thermo Scientific or coupled to a Waters Micromass ZQ.

Size exclusion chromatography (SEC) was performed using an Amersham Bioscience AEKTAbasic system equipped with a Superdex 200 5/150 GL column (Amersham Bioscience/GE Healthcare) equipped with a 0.45 μm inlet filter, if not stated otherwise. 20 mM sodium phosphate, 140 mM NaCl, pH 7.4, was used as mobile phase.

Due to the reversible nature of the attachment of -L¹- to -D measurements for NEP-stability and receptor affinity were made using stable analogs of the CNP prodrugs of the present invention, i.e. they were made using similar structures to those of the CNP prodrugs of the present invention which instead of a reversible attachment of -Z to -D have a stable attachment.

This was necessary, because the CNP prodrugs of the present invention would release CNP in the course of the experiment and said released CNP would have influenced the result.

Quantification of plasma total CNP-38 concentrations

Plasma total CNP-38 concentrations (conjugated and released CNP-38) were determined by quantification of the N-terminal signature peptide (sequence: LQEHPNAR) and C-terminal signature peptide (sequence: IGSMSGLGC) after tryptic digestion.

LC-MS analysis was carried out by using an Agilent 1290 UPLC coupled to an Agilent 6550 iFunnel Q-TOF mass spectrometer via an ESI probe. Chromatography was performed on a Waters Acquity BEH300 C18 analytical column (50 x 2.1 mm I.D., 1.7 μ m particle size) with pre-filter at a flow rate of 0.25 mL/min (T = 25 °C). Water (UPLC grade) containing 0.2 % formic acid (v/v) was used as mobile phase A and acetonitrile (UPLC grade) with 0.2 % formic acid as mobile phase B. The gradient system comprised a short isocratic step at the initial parameters of 0.1 % B for 3.0 min followed by a linear increase from 0.1 % B to 16 % B in 17 min. Mass analysis was performed in the single ion monitoring (SIM) mode, monitoring the ions m/z 482.75 $[M+2H]^{2+}$ (N-terminal) and m/z 824.36 $[M+H]^{1+}$ (C-terminal). As internal standard deuterated CNP-38 peptide was used.

Calibration standards of CNP-38 conjugate in blank plasma were prepared as follows: The thawed Li-heparin cynomolgous plasma was first homogenized, then centrifuged for 5 minutes. The CNP-38 conjugate formulation was diluted to a working solution of 10 μ g/mL (conjugate CNP-38 eq.) in DMSO and spiked into blank plasma at concentrations between 9.3 ng/100 μ L (conjugate CNP-38 eq.) and 139.5 ng/100 μ L (conjugate CNP-38 eq.). These solutions were used for the generation of a calibration curve. Calibration curves were weighted $1/x^2$ for both signature peptides (N- and C-Terminal). For quality control, three quality control samples were prepared accordingly with contents of 116.2 ng/100 μ L (high QC, conjugate CNP-38 eq.), 69.75 ng/100 μ L (mid QC, conjugate CNP-38 eq.) and 23.25 ng /100 μ L (low QC, conjugate CNP-38 eq.).

For sample preparation, protein precipitation was carried out by addition of 300 μ L of precooled (0 °C) methanol to 100 μ L of the plasma sample. 200 μ L of the supernatant were transferred into a new well-plate and evaporated to dryness (under a gentle nitrogen stream at 35 °C). 100 μ L of reconstitution solvent (Thermo digestion buffer, order number 60109-101, Thermo Fisher Scientific GmbH, Dreieich, Germany) were used to dissolve the residue. 20 μ g

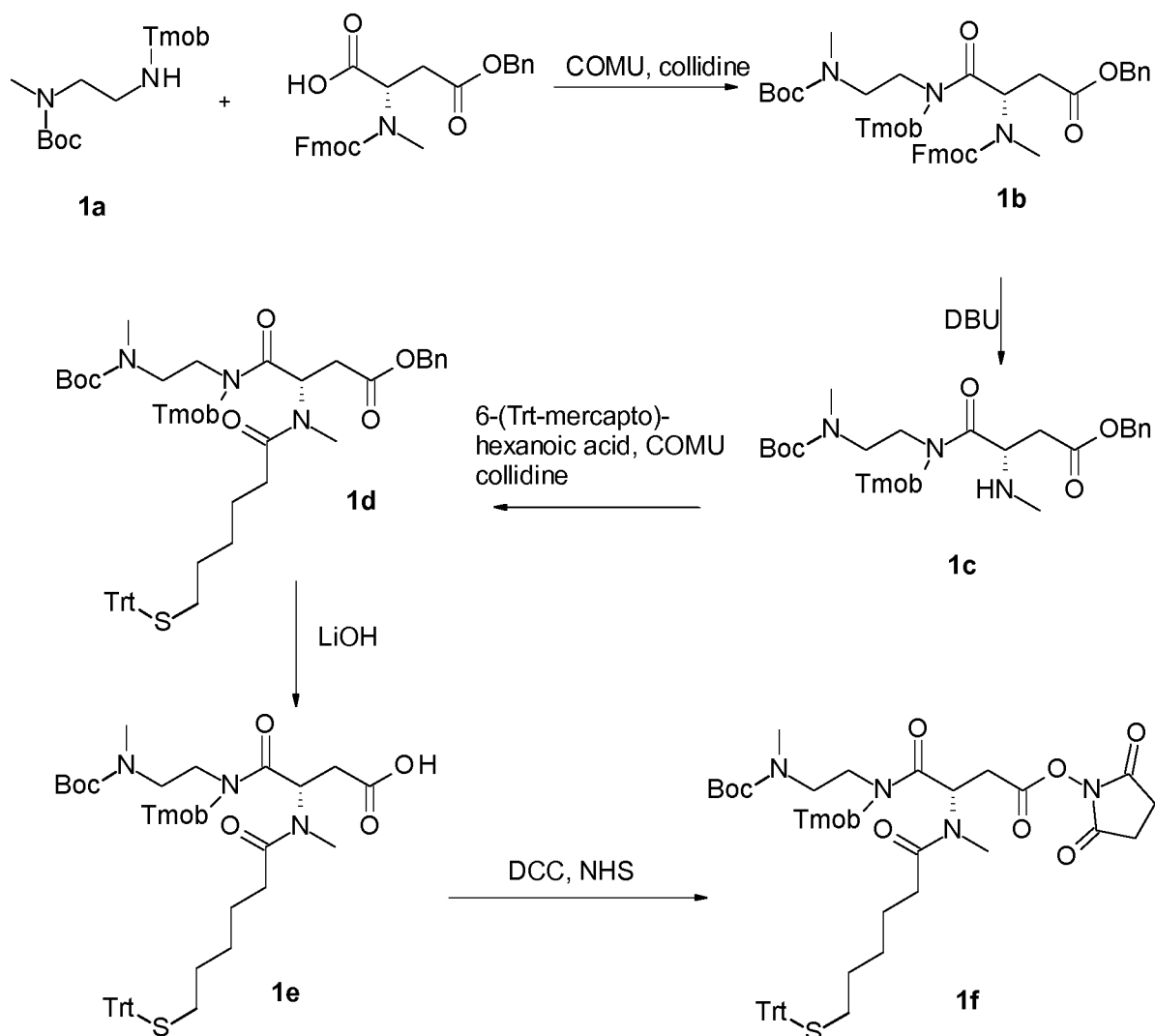
of trypsin (order number V5111, Promega GmbH, Mannheim, Germany) were dissolved in 20 μ L of 10 mM acetic acid. 2 μ L of the trypsin solution were added to each cavity.

After 4 hours incubation at 37 °C (water bath), 5 μ L of a 0.5 M TCEP solution were added to each cavity and incubated again for 5 min at 96 °C. After the samples had cooled to room temperature, 3 μ L acetonitrile were added. The eluates were transferred into vials. 10 μ L were injected into the UPLC-MS system.

Example 1

10 Synthesis of linker reagent 1f

Linker reagent **1f** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



15

To a solution of N-methyl-N-Boc-ethylenediamine (2 g, 11.48 mmol) and NaCNBH₃ (819 mg, 12.63 mmol) in MeOH (20 mL) was added 2,4,6-trimethoxybenzaldehyde (2.08 g, 10.61 mmol) portion wise. The mixture was stirred at rt for 90 min, acidified with 3 M HCl (4 mL)

and stirred further 15 min. The reaction mixture was added to saturated NaHCO₃ solution (200 mL) and extracted 5 x with CH₂Cl₂. The combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄ and the solvents were evaporated under reduced pressure. The resulting N-methyl-N-Boc-N'-Tmob-ethylenediamine **1a** was dried *in vacuo* and used in the next reaction step without further purification.

Yield: 3.76 g (11.48 mmol, 89 % purity, **1a** : double Tmob protected product = 8 :1)

MS: m/z 355.22 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass =354.21).

To a solution of **1a** (2 g, 5.65 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (24 mL) COMU (4.84 g, 11.3 mmol), N-Fmoc-N-Me-Asp(OBn)-OH (2.08 g, 4.52 mmol) and 2,4,6-collidine (2.65 mL, 20.34 mmol) were added. The reaction mixture was stirred for 3 h at rt, diluted with CH₂Cl₂ (250 mL) and washed 3 x with 0.1 M H₂SO₄ (100 mL) and 3 x with brine (100 mL). The aqueous phases were re-extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (100 mL). The combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄, filtrated and the residue concentrated to a volume of 24 mL. **1b** was purified using flash chromatography.

Yield: 5.31 g (148 %, 6.66 mmol)

MS: m/z 796.38 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass =795.37).

To a solution of **1b** (5.31 g, max. 4.52 mmol) in THF (60 mL) DBU (1.8 mL, 3 % v/v) was added. The solution was stirred for 12 min at rt, diluted with CH₂Cl₂ (400 mL) and washed 3 x with 0.1 M H₂SO₄ (150 mL) and 3 x with brine (150 mL). The aqueous phases were re-extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (100 mL). The combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄ and filtrated. **1c** was isolated upon evaporation of the solvent and used in the next reaction without further purification.

MS: m/z 574.31 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 573.30).

1c (5.31 g, 4.52 mmol, crude) was dissolved in acetonitrile (26 mL) and COMU (3.87 g, 9.04 mmol), 6-tritylmercaptohexanoic acid (2.12 g, 5.42 mmol) and 2,4,6-collidine (2.35 mL, 18.08 mmol) were added. The reaction mixture was stirred for 4 h at rt, diluted with CH₂Cl₂ (400 mL) and washed 3 x with 0.1 M H₂SO₄ (100 mL) and 3 x with brine (100 mL). The aqueous phases were re-extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (100 mL). The combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄, filtrated and **1d** was isolated upon evaporation of the solvent. Product **1d** was purified using flash chromatography.

Yield: 2.63 g (62 %, 94 % purity)

MS: m/z 856.41 = $[M+H]^+$, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 855.41).

To a solution of **1d** (2.63 g, 2.78 mmol) in *i*-PrOH (33 mL) and H₂O (11 mL) was added LiOH (267 mg, 11.12 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred for 70 min at rt. The mixture was diluted with CH₂Cl₂ (200 mL) and washed 3 x with 0.1 M H₂SO₄ (50 mL) and 3 x with brine (50 mL). The aqueous phases were re-extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (100 mL). The combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄, filtrated and **1e** was isolated upon evaporation of the solvent. **1e** was purified using flash chromatography.

Yield: 2.1 g (88 %)

10 MS: m/z 878.4 = $[M+Na]^+$, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 855.40).

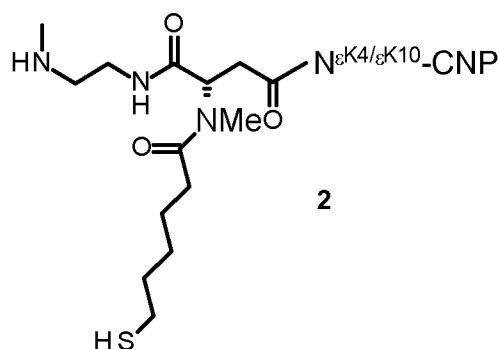
To a solution of **1e** (170 mg, 0.198 mmol) in anhydrous DCM (4 mL) were added DCC (123 mg, 0.59 mmol), and a catalytic amount of DMAP. After 5 min N-hydroxy-succinimide (114 mg, 0.99 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred at rt for 1 h. The reaction mixture was filtered, the solvent was removed *in vacuo* and the residue was taken up in 90 % acetonitrile plus 0.1 % TFA (3.4 mL). The crude mixture was purified by RP-HPLC. Product fractions were neutralized with 0.5 M pH 7.4 phosphate buffer and concentrated. The remaining aqueous phase was extracted with DCM and **1f** was isolated upon evaporation of the solvent.

20 Yield: 154 mg (81%)

MS: m/z 953.4 = $[M+H]^+$, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 952.43).

Example 2

Synthesis of N^{εK4/εK10}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2**, N^{εK4}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2c** and N^{εK10}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2d**



N^{εK4/εK10}-CNP mono-linker thiol (mixture of regioisomers with linker conjugated at side chain amino group of Lys4 or Lys10) **2** is prepared by dissolving CNP-22 (5.2 μmol) in

0.6 mL DMSO. 0.15 mL 0.375 M borate buffer, adjusted to pH 8.5 with tetrabutylammoniumhydroxide hydrate, 60 μ L DIPEA and **1f** (6.1 mg, 7.1 μ mol) in 0.34 mL of DMSO are added and the mixture is stirred for 30 min at rt. Reaction mixture is diluted with 2 mL acetonitrile/ water 1/1 (v/v) and 200 μ L AcOH and the protected N ^{ϵ K4/ ϵ K10}-CNP mono-linker conjugate is isolated from the reaction mixture by RP-HPLC.

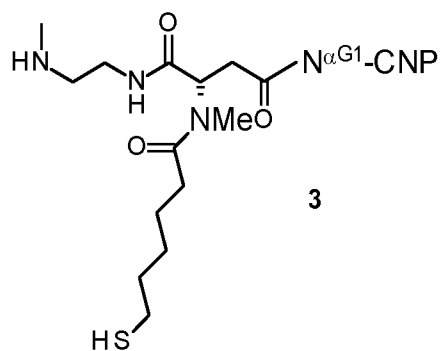
Optimized RP-HPLC gradients can be used for isolation of N ^{ϵ K4}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2a** and N ^{ϵ K10}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2b**.

Removal of protecting groups is affected by treatment of lyophilized product fractions with 0.6 mL of 90/10/2/2 (v/v/v/v) HFIP/TFA/TES/water for 1h at rt. The deprotected N ^{ϵ K4/ ϵ K10}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2** is purified by RP-HPLC. Identity and purity of the product is determined by ESI-LCMS.

Deprotected N ^{ϵ K4}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2c** and N ^{ϵ K10}-CNP mono-linker thiol **2d** can be obtained likewise from **2a** and **2b**, respectively.

Example 3

Synthesis of N ^{α G1}-CNP mono-linker thiol **3**



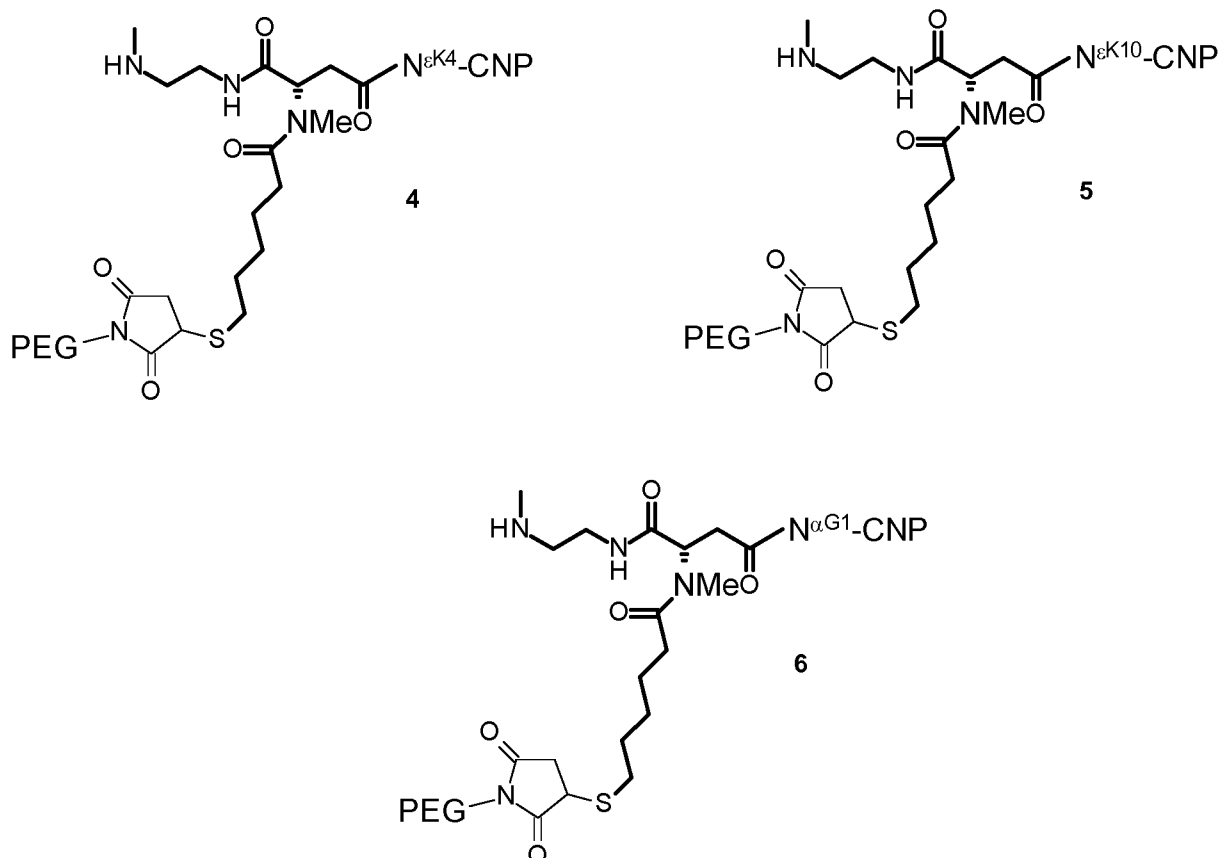
N ^{α G1}-CNP mono-linker thiol **3** is prepared by dissolving CNP-22 (5.2 μ mol) in 0.6 mL DMSO. 0.25 mL 0.5 M phosphate buffer pH 7.4 and **1f** (6.1 mg, 7.1 μ mol) in 0.34 mL of DMSO are added and the mixture is stirred for several hours at rt. Reaction mixture is diluted with 2 mL acetonitrile/ water 1/1 (v/v) and 200 μ L AcOH and the protected N ^{α G1}-CNP mono-linker thiol is isolated from the reaction mixture by RP-HPLC.

Removal of protecting groups is affected by treatment of lyophilized product fractions with 0.6 mL of 90/10/2/2 (v/v/v/v) HFIP/TFA/TES/water for 1h at rt. The deprotected N ^{α G1}-CNP

mono-linker thiol **3** is purified by RP-HPLC. Identity and purity of the product is determined by ESI-LCMS.

Example 4

5 PEGylation of CNP mono-linker thiols **2c**, **2d** and **3**



10

1 μ mol CNP mono-linker thiol **2c** is dissolved in 0.5 mL acetonitrile / 0.2 M succinate buffer pH 3.8 1/1 (v/v) 1.2 μ mol of linear 40 kDa PEG-maleimide is added and the mixture is stirred at rt. The reaction is quenched by addition of 20 μ L AcOH and CNP conjugate **4** is purified by preparative RP-HPLC.

15

CNP conjugates **5** and **6** are prepared likewise from 1 μ mol CNP mono-linker thiols **2d** and **3**.

CNP content is determined by quantitative amino acid analysis after total hydrolysis under acidic conditions.

20

Example 5

Release kinetics in vitro

CNP conjugates **4**, **5** and **6** are dissolved in 60 mM sodium phosphate, 3 mM EDTA, 0.01% Tween-20, pH 7.4 at a concentration of approximately 2 mg/mL and filtered sterile. Mixtures are incubated at 37 °C. At time points aliquots are withdrawn and analysed by RP-HPLC and
 5 ESI-MS. UV-signals correlating to liberated CNP are integrated and plotted against incubation time.

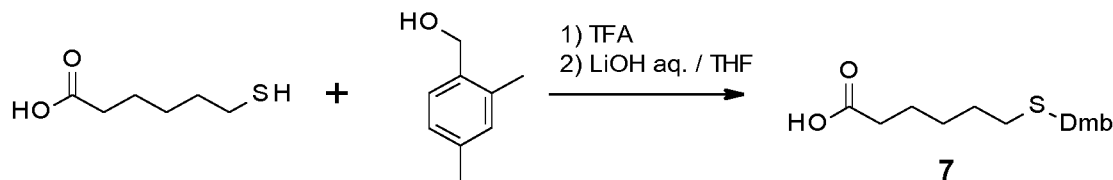
Curve-fitting software is applied to estimate the corresponding half-time of release.

Example 6**10 Pharmacokinetics and cGMP production in rats**

Equimolar doses of CNP-22, CNP conjugates **4**, **5** or **6** are injected iv and sc in normal rats. Plasma CNP and cGMP levels over time are determined as described in the literature (US patent 8,377,884 B2).

15 Example 7**Synthesis of Dmb protected 6-mercaptohexanoic acid 7**

Compound **7** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



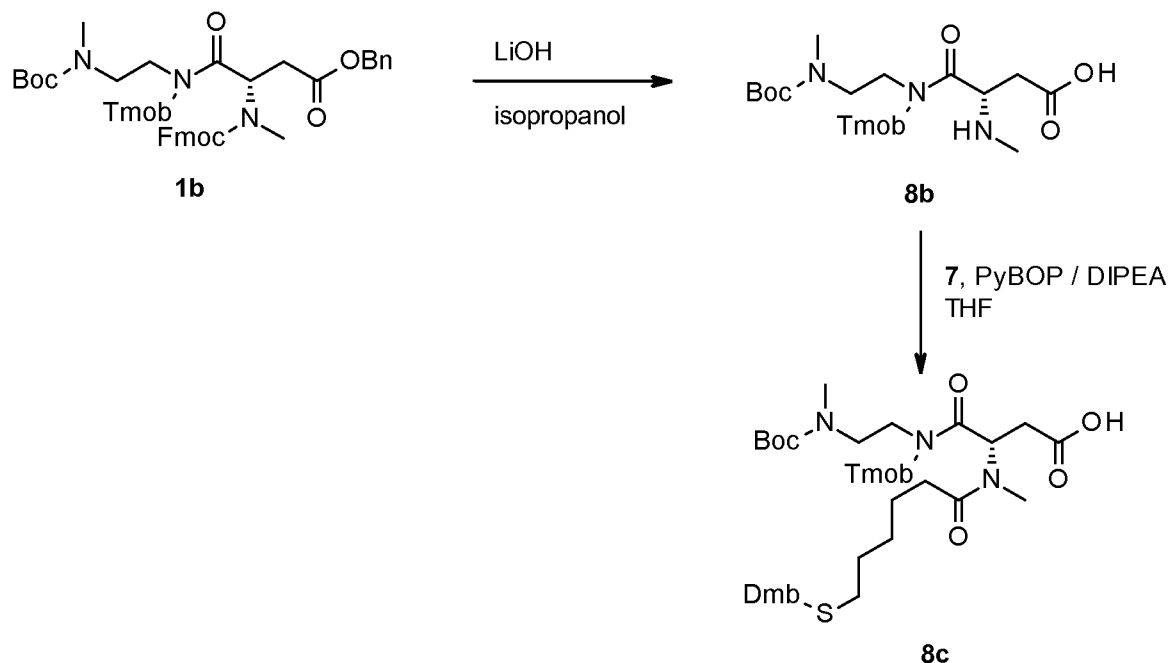
To a solution of 6-mercaptohexanoic acid (7.10 g, 47.90 mmol) in trifluoroacetic acid (20
 20 mL), 2,4-dimethylbenzyl alcohol (13.5 g, 95.80 mmol) was added. The mixture was stirred at RT for 60 min and then the trifluoroacetic acid was removed *in vacuo*. The residue was dissolved in a mixture of 95.8 mL LiOH (3 M) and THF (81 mL) and stirred at rt for 60 min. The solvent was removed *in vacuo* and the aqueous residue was extracted 3x with EtOAc (200 mL). The combined organic phases were dried over MgSO₄, and the solvent was removed *in*
 25 *vacuo*. **7** was purified by RP-HPLC.

Yield: 2.27 g (8.52 mmol, 18 %)

MS: m/z 267.01 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 266.13).

Example 8**30 Synthesis of linker reagent 8c**

Linker reagent **8c** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



To a solution of **1b** (21.6 g, 27.18 mmol) in isopropanol (401 mL) were added water (130 mL) and LiOH (3.90 g, 163.06 mmol). The reaction mixture was stirred for 3 h at rt, then it was diluted with toluene (300 mL) and washed 3 x with 0.1 M HCl (200 mL). The combined aqueous phases were washed 3 x with toluene (100 mL). The aqueous phase was basified with 4 M NaOH (4 mL) to a pH of 8.5 and extracted 8 x with CH₂Cl₂ (200 mL). The combined CH₂Cl₂ phases were washed with brine (50 mL), dried over Na₂SO₄. **8b** was isolated upon evaporation of the solvent and used in the next reaction without further purification.

Yield: 11.89 g (24.59 mmol, 90 %)

10 MS: m/z 484.16 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 483.26).

To a solution of **7** (293 mg, 1.10 mmol) and PyBOP (572 mg, 1.10 mmol) in THF (10 mL) was added DIEA (0.52 mL, 3.00 mmol) under a N₂-atmosphere. The reaction mixture was stirred for 60 min at rt. A solution of **8b** (484 mg, 1.00 mmol) in THF (2 mL) was added and the reaction was stirred for a further 60 min. The reaction was quenched with 2 M citric acid solution (10 mL) and the THF was removed *in vacuo*. The resulting aqueous phase was then extracted 2 x with EtOAc (15 mL) and the combined organic layers were washed with water (10 mL) and brine (10 mL), and dried over MgSO₄. The solvent was removed *in vacuo* and **8c** was purified by RP HPLC.

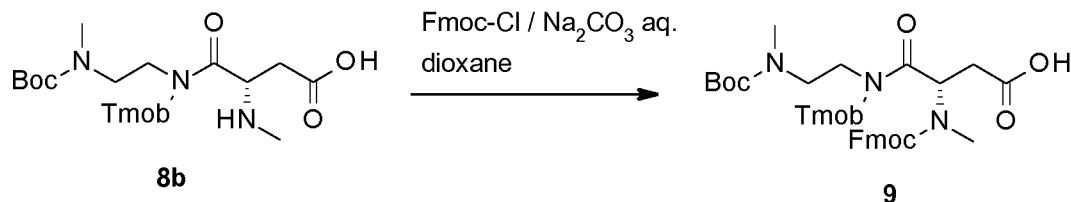
20 Yield: 330 mg (0.451 mmol, 45 %)

MS: m/z 732.34 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 731.38).

Example 9

Synthesis of linker reagent 9

Linker reagent **9** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



To a solution of **8b** (2.00 g, 4.14 mmol) and Fmoc-Cl (1.07 g, 4.14 mmol) in dioxane (20 mL) was added 1 M Na₂CO₃ solution (20 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred for 40 min at rt. Water (100 mL) and diethyl ether (100 mL) were added and the aqueous phase was extracted 2 x with diethyl ether (100 mL). The aqueous phase was acidified with conc. HCl until pH 1 and again extracted 3 x with diethyl ether. The combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄ and the solvent was removed *in vacuo*. **9** was used in the next step without further purification.

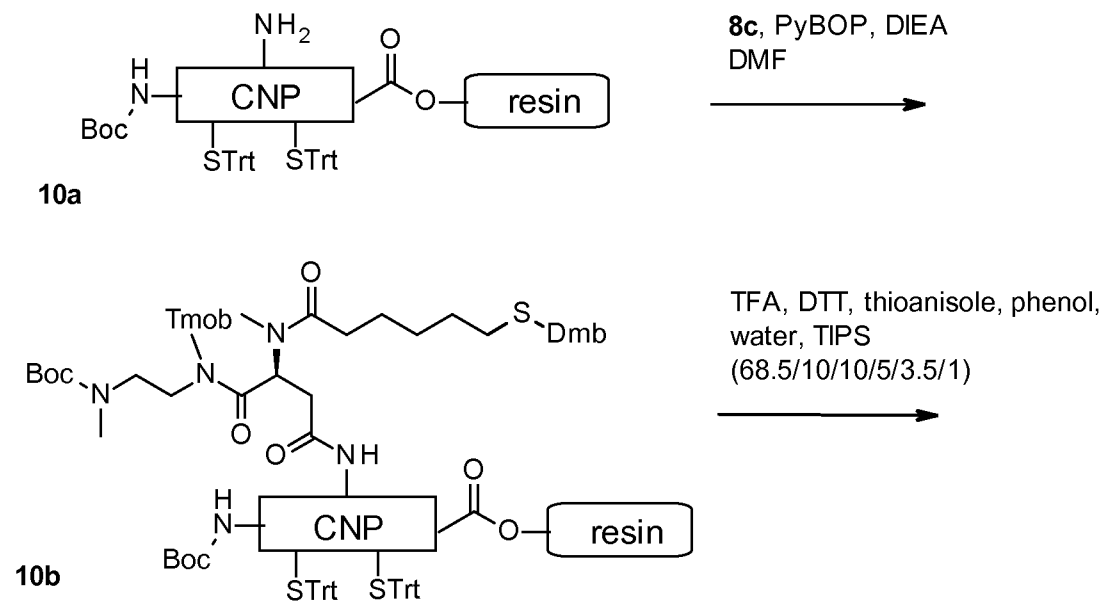
Yield: 2.63 g (3.73 mmol, 90 %)

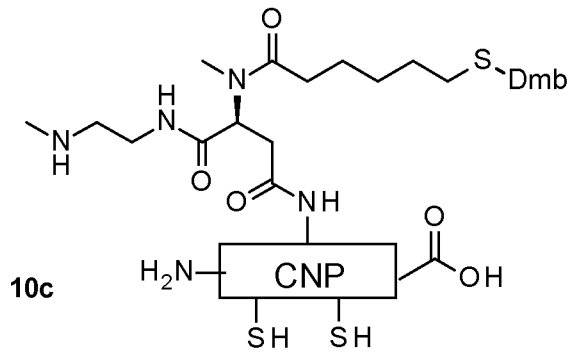
MS: m/z 728.32 = [M+Na]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 705.33).

Example 10

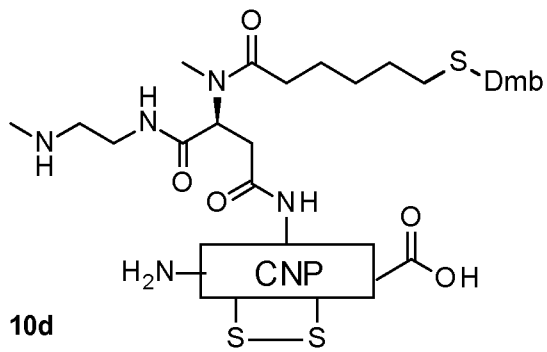
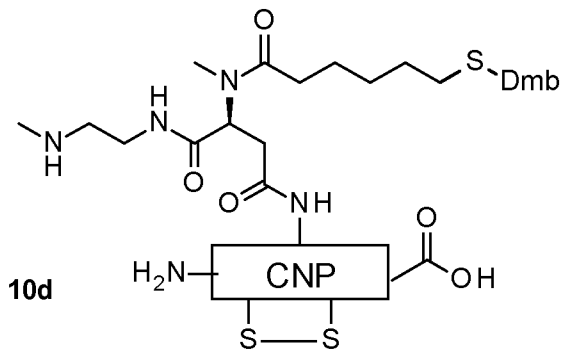
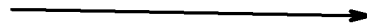
15 Synthesis of reversible Lys26 CNP-38 PEG2x20 kDa conjugate 10f

Conjugate **10f** was synthesized according to the following scheme:





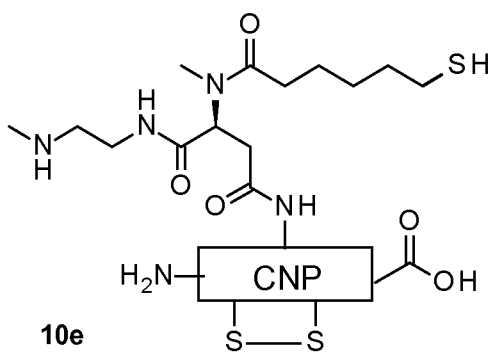
2,2'-Dithiobis(pyridine-N-oxide)



TFA, MSA, DTT, water, thioanisole
(100/5/3/2/1)

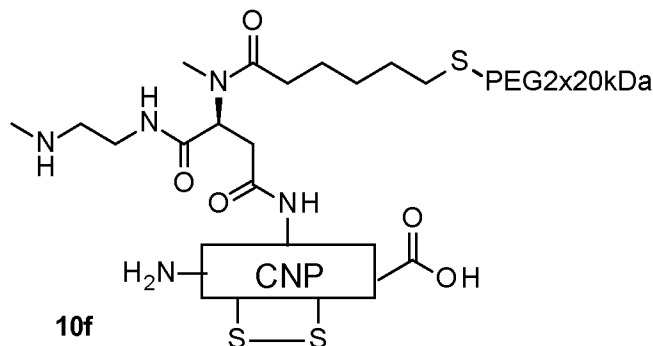


5



PEG2x20kDa-
maleimide





2.00 g (0.21 mmol) of side chain protected CNP-38 on CTC resin having Boc protected N-terminus and ivDde protected side chain of Lys26 was ivDde deprotected according to the procedure given in Materials and Methods to obtain **10a**. A solution of linker reagent **8c** (336 mg, 0.46 mmol), PyBOP (239 mg, 0.46 mmol) and DIEA (182 μ L, 1.04 mmol) in DMF (5 mL) was incubated for 10 min at rt, then added to the resin **10a**. The suspension was shaken for 2 h at rt. The resin was washed 10 x with DMF (10 mL) and 10 x with DCM (10 mL) and dried *in vacuo* for 15 min. Cleavage of the peptide from resin and removal of protecting groups was achieved by treatment of the resin with 15 mL pre-cooled (-18 $^{\circ}$ C) cleavage cocktail 68.5/10/10/5/3.5/1 (v/w/v/v/v/v) TFA/DTT/thioanisole/phenol/water/TIPS. The mixture was allowed to warm to rt and was agitated for 60 min. The resin was filtered off and crude **10c** was precipitated in pre-cooled diethyl ether (-18 $^{\circ}$ C). The precipitate was dissolved in ACN/water and purified by RP-HPLC. The combined HPLC fractions were used directly in the next step.

MS: m/z 1124.60 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1124.59).

To the combined HPLC fractions of **10c** (250 mL) 40 mL of 0.5 M citric acid buffer (pH = 5.00) and 7 mL of a 0.01 M solution of 2,2'-dithiobis(pyridine-N-oxide) solution in 1/1 (v/v) acetonitrile/water were added. After incubation for 5 min at rt the reaction was complete. The mixture was diluted with 500 mL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) and acidified with AcOH (20 mL) to a pH of approx. 2. **10d** was purified by RP-HPLC. Product fractions were combined and freeze dried.

Yield: 101 mg (17.3 μ mol, 9 %) CNP-38-linker-Dmb * 10 TFA

MS: m/z 1124.10 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1124.09).

Cleavage of the Dmb protecting group was achieved by adding 30 mL pre-cooled (-18 °C) cleavage cocktail 100/5/3/2/1 (v/v/w/v/v) TFA/MSA/DTT/water/thioanisole to **10d** (101 mg, 17.3 μmol) and stirring for 3 h at 0 °C. Crude **10e** was precipitated in pre-cooled (-18 °C) diethyl ether. The precipitate was dissolved in water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) and incubated for 10 min in order to hydrolyze any TFA esters. **10e** was purified by RP-HPLC.

Yield: 46 mg (8.34 μmol, 48 %) CNP-38-linker-thiol * 10 TFA

MS: m/z 1094.58 = [M+4H]⁴⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass for [M+4H]⁴⁺ = 1094.57).

10 To a solution of **10e** (46 mg, 8.43 μmol) in 1.15 mL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) was added a solution of PEG 2x20 kDa maleimide (Sunbright GL2-400MA, 870 mg, 21.75 μmol) in 4.35 mL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v), followed by 0.5 M lactic acid buffer (1.07 mL, pH = 4.20). The mixture was stirred at rt for 4 h. Conjugate **10f** was purified by RP-HPLC.

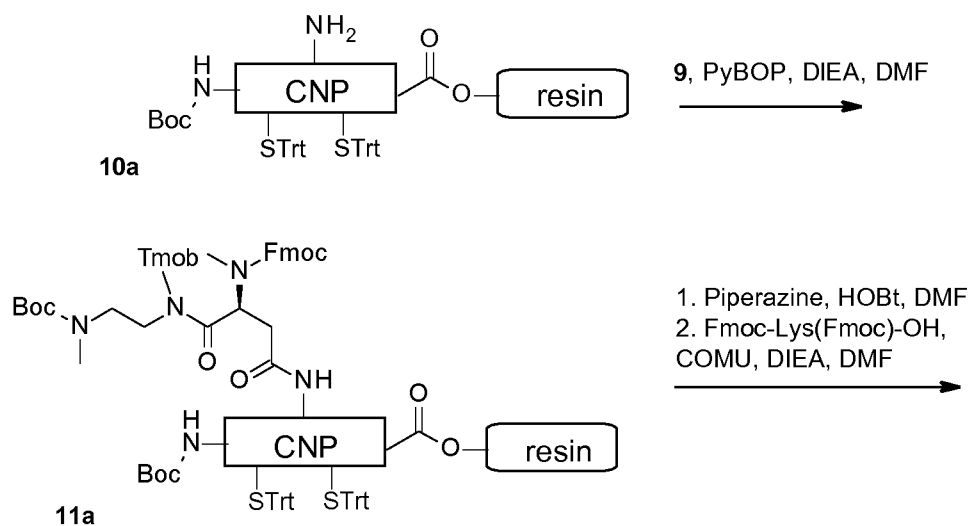
Yield: 233 mg (5.21 μmol, 62 %) conjugate **10f** * 10 HCl

15

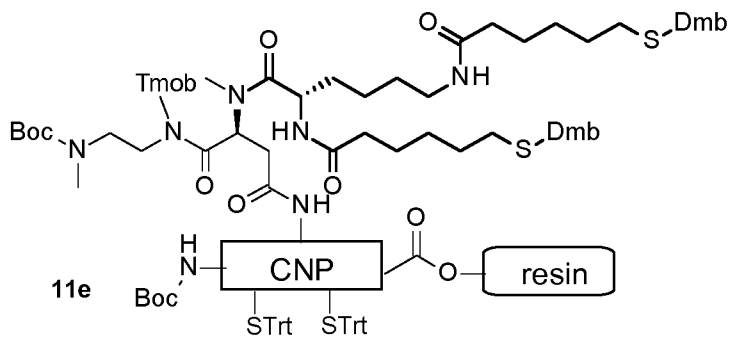
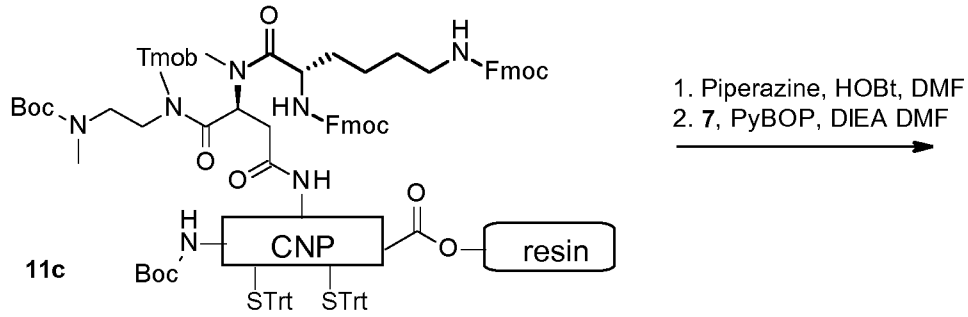
Example 11

Synthesis of reversible Lys26 CNP-38 PEG4x10 kDa conjugate conjugate 11i

Conjugate **11i** was synthesized according to the following scheme:

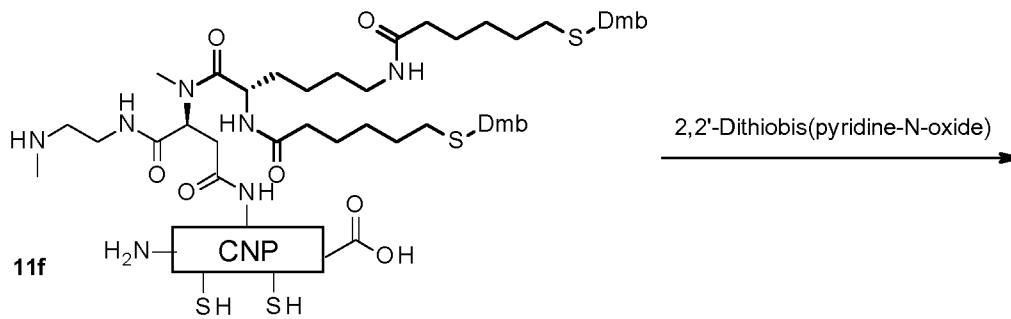


20

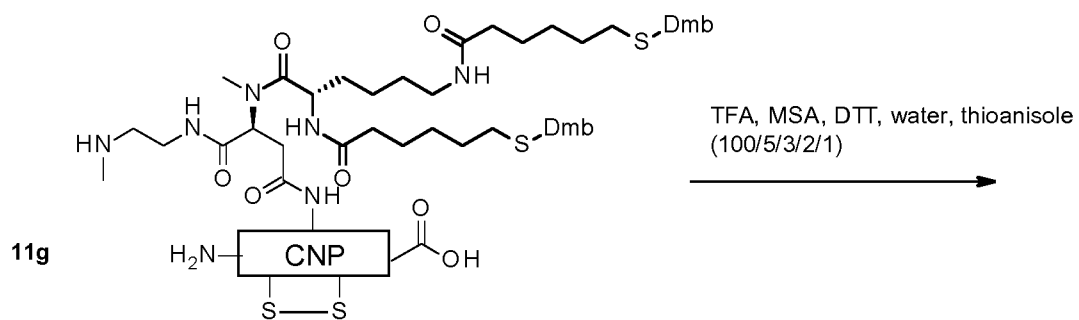


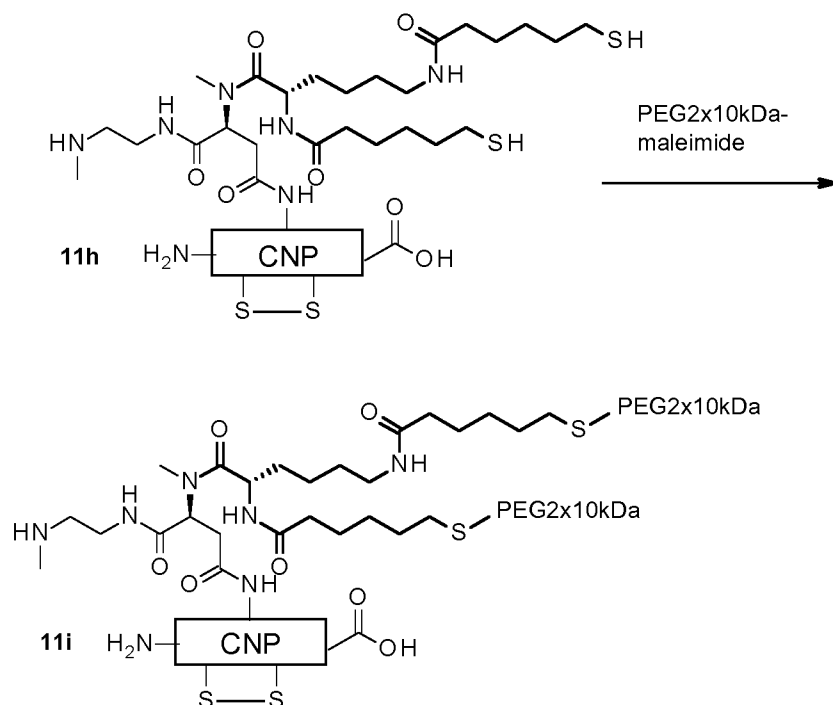
TFA, DTT, thioanisole, phenol, water, TIPS
(68.5/10/10/5/3.5/1)

11e



5





To a solution of **9** (353 mg, 0.50 mmol) and PyBOP (260 mg, 0.50 mmol) in DMF (9 mL) was added DIEA (105 μ L, 0.60 mmol). This mixture was drawn onto Lys26-side-chain deprotected CNP-38 resin **10a** (2.00 g, 0.21 mmol) and the suspension was shaken for 2 h at RT in order to afford resin **11a**. The resin was washed 10 x with DMF (7 mL). Cleavage of the Fmoc protecting group in **11a** was carried out with a solution of HOBt (0.68 g, 5.03 mmol) and piperazine (3.00 g, 34.83 mmol) in DMF (47 mL). Therefore, the resin was incubated 5 x with 10 mL of the cleavage mixture for 15 min at rt each time. Then, the resin was washed 7 x with DMF (7 mL).

A solution of Fmoc-Lys(Fmoc)-OH (449 mg, 0.76 mmol), COMU (325 mg, 0.76 mmol) and DIEA (165 μ L, 0.95 mmol) in DMF (9 mL) was prepared and drawn onto the resin. The mixture was shaken for 2 h at rt. The procedure was repeated twice, each for 1 h with freshly prepared coupling mixture. The resin was washed 10 x with DMF (7 mL) and the remaining free amino groups were capped with 8 mL 1/1/2 (v/v/v) Ac₂O/pyridine/DMF.

Cleavage of the Fmoc protecting groups in **11c** was carried out with a solution of HOBt (0.68 g, 5.03 mmol), piperazine (3.00 g, 34.83 mmol) in DMF (47 mL). Therefore, the resin was incubated 5 x with 10 mL of the cleavage mixture for 15 min at rt each time. The resin was washed 7 x with DMF (7 mL).

To a solution of **7** (266 mg, 1.00 mmol) and PyBOP (520 mg, 1.00 mmol) in DMF (9 mL) was added DIEA (209 μ L, 1.20 mmol). This mixture was drawn onto the resin and was shaken for 2 h at rt. The resin was washed 7 x with DMF (7 mL) affording resin **11e**. Cleavage of the peptide from resin and removal of protecting groups was achieved by treatment of the resin with 15 mL pre-cooled (-18 °C) cleavage cocktail 68.5/10/10/5/3.5/1 (v/w/v/v/v/v) TFA/DTT/thioanisole/phenol/water/TIPS. The mixture was allowed to warm to rt and was agitated for 3 h at. The resin was filtered off and crude **11f** was precipitated in pre-cooled (-18 °C) diethyl ether and purified by RP-HPLC. The combined HPLC fractions were used directly in the next step.

10 MS: m/z 1218.66 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1218.65).

To the combined HPLC product fractions of **11f** (1 L) 160 mL of 0.5 M citric acid buffer (pH = 5.00) and 100 mL of a 50 mM 2,2'-dithiobis(pyridine-N-oxide) solution in 9/1 (v/v) acetonitrile/water were added. The mixture was stirred for 4 h at rt and then diluted with 1 L of water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v). **11g** was purified by RP-HPLC. The product fractions were combined and lyophilized.

Yield: 64.3 mg (10.7 μ mol, 6 %) CNP-38-linker-DMB * 10 TFA

15 MS: m/z 1218.15 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1218.14).

Cleavage of the Dmb protecting group was achieved by adding 45 mL of pre-cooled (-18 °C) cleavage cocktail 100/5/3/2/1 (v/v/w/v/v) TFA/MSA/DTT/water/thioanisole to **11g** (61.8 mg, 10.3 μ mol), and then stirring for 4 h at 0 °C. Crude **11h** was precipitated in pre-cooled (-18 °C) ether. The precipitate was dissolved in a solution of 1/1 (v/v) acetonitrile/water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) and incubated for 4 h at rt in order to hydrolyze any TFA esters. **11h** was purified by RP-HPLC.

Yield: 38.4 mg (6.65 μ mol, 65 %) CNP-38-linker-thiol * 10 TFA

25 MS: m/z 1159.11 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1159.10).

To a solution of **11h** (34.6 mg, 5.99 μ mol) in 1 mL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) was added a solution of PEG 2x10 kDa maleimide (Sunbright GL2-200MA, 1.12 g, 56.03 μ mol)

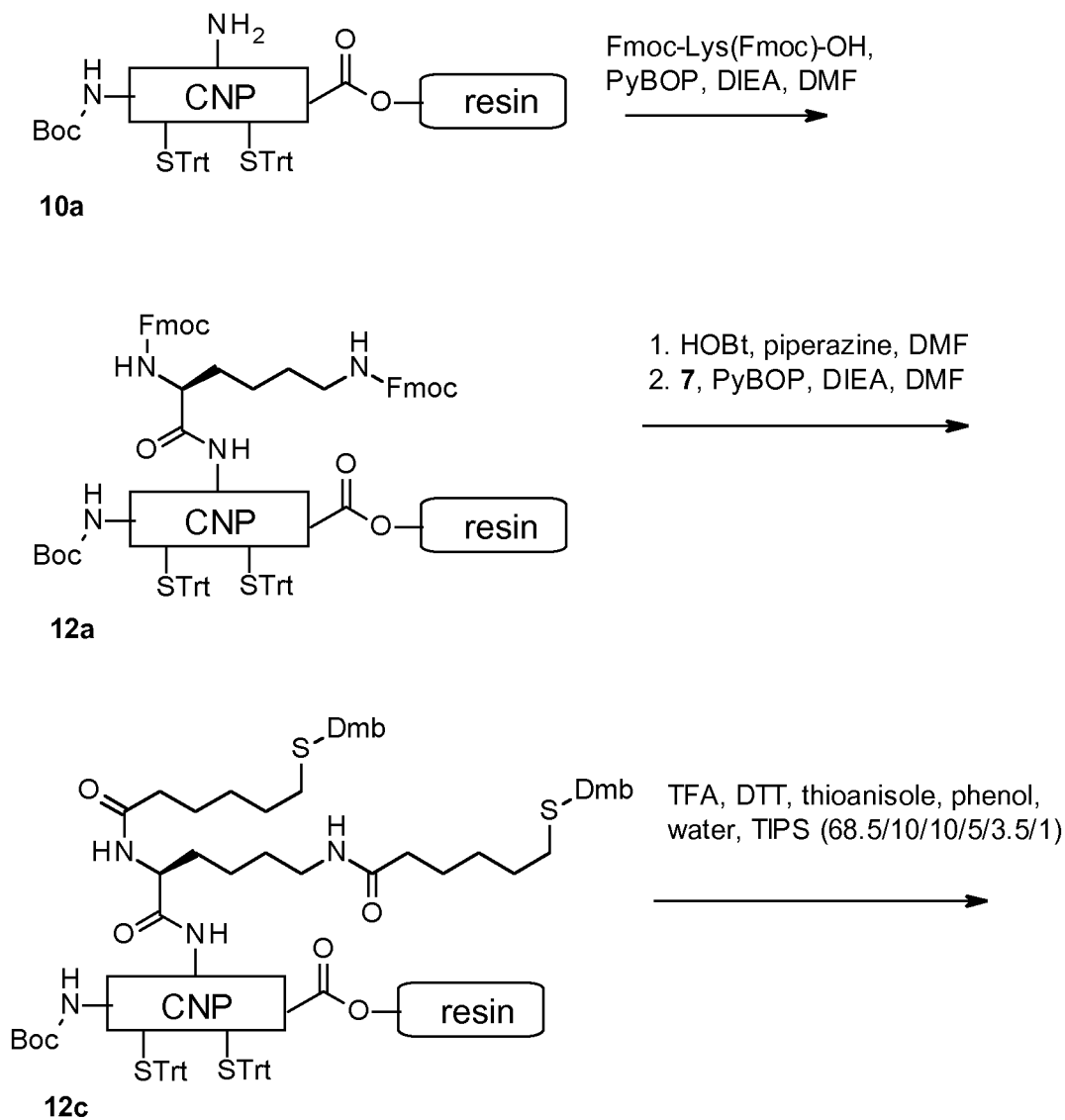
in 6.1 mL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v), followed by 0.5 M lactic acid buffer (1.46 mL, pH = 4.00). The mixture was stirred at rt for 4 h. Conjugate **11i** was purified by RP-HPLC.

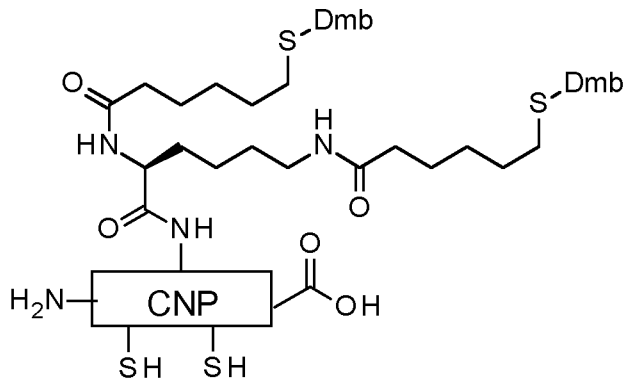
Yield: 227 mg (4.96 μ mol, 83 %) conjugate **11i** * 10 HCl

5 Example 12

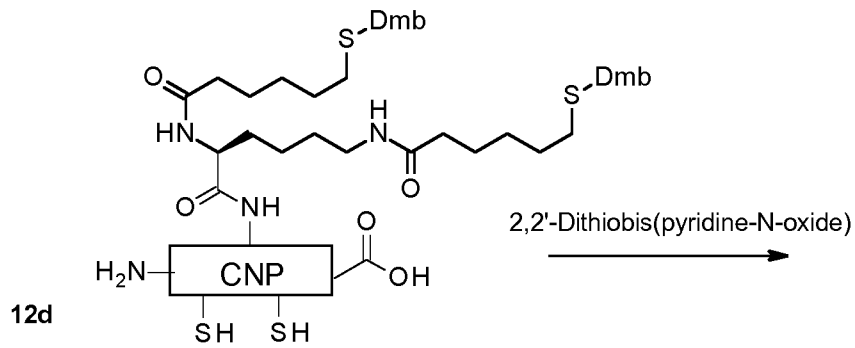
Synthesis of permanent Lys26 CNP-38 PEG4x10 kDa conjugate **12g**

Conjugate **12g** was synthesized according to the following scheme:

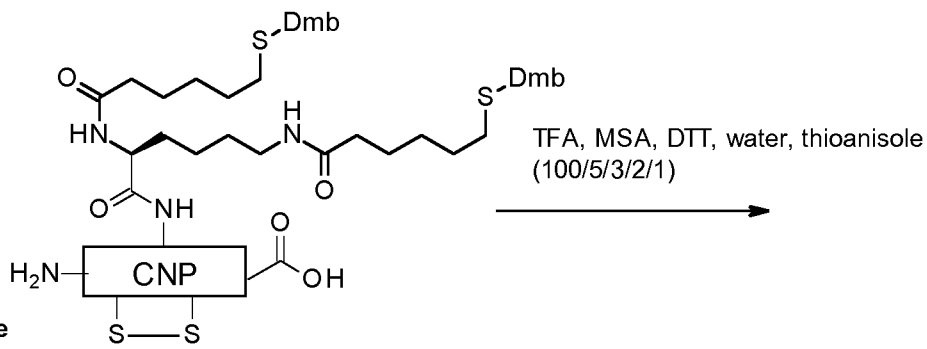




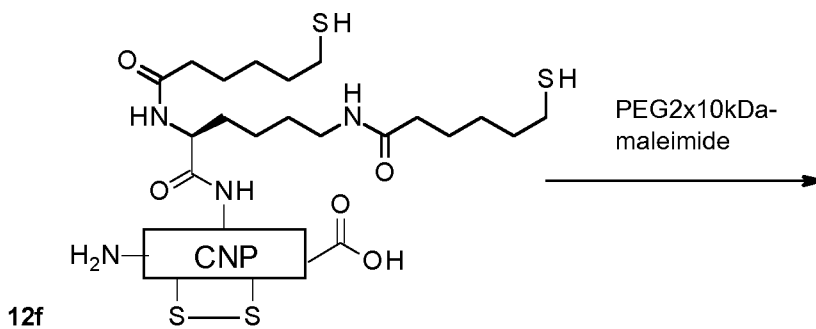
12d



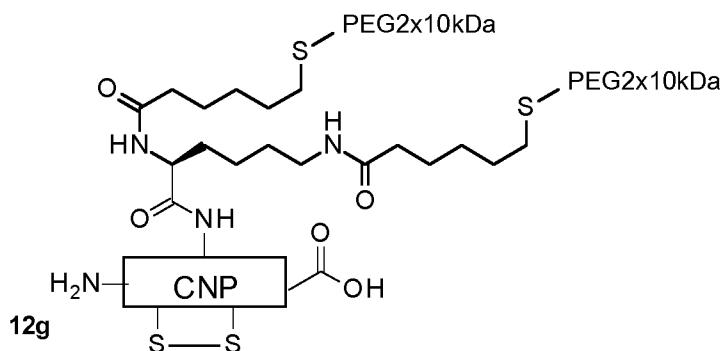
12d



12e



12f



To a solution of Fmoc-Lys(Fmoc)-OH (365 mg, 0.62 mmol) and PyBOP (322 mg, 0.62 mmol) in DMF (4.6 mL) was added DIEA (0.11 mL, 0.62 mmol). The mixture was drawn onto resin **10a** (2.0 g, 0.21 mmol). The suspension was shaken for 2 h at rt. The resin was washed 10 x with DMF (7 mL). Cleavage of the Fmoc protecting groups in **12a** was carried out with a solution of HOBt (1.35 g, 9.99 mmol), piperazine (6.00 g, 69.66 mmol) in DMF (94 mL). Therefore, the resin was incubated 5 x with the cleavage mixture for 15 min at rt each time, affording resin **12b**. Then the resin was washed 7 x with DMF (7 mL).

To a solution of **7** (283 mg, 1.06 mmol) and PyBOP (552 mg, 1.06 mmol) in DMF (6.5 mL), DIEA (185 μ L, 1.06 mmol) was added and the mixture was drawn onto resin **12b** (2.07 g, 0.10 mmol/g, 0.21 mmol). The mixture was shaken for 2 h at rt. Then, the resin was washed 10 x each with DMF (7 mL) and CH_2Cl_2 (7 mL) and dried *in vacuo*.

Cleavage of the peptide from resin and removal of protecting groups was achieved by treatment of the resin with 15 mL pre-cooled (-18 $^\circ\text{C}$) cleavage cocktail 68.5/10/10/5/3.5/1 (v/w/v/v/v/v) TFA/DTT/thioanisole/phenol/water/TIPS. The mixture was allowed to warm to rt and was agitated for 2.5 h. The resin was filtered off and crude **12d** was precipitated in pre-cooled diethyl ether (-18 $^\circ\text{C}$) and purified by RP-HPLC. The combined HPLC fractions were used directly in the next step.

MS: m/z 1172.37 = $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$ = 1172.37).

To the combined HPLC product fractions of **12d** (390 mL) 58.5 mL of 0.5 M citric acid buffer (pH = 5.00) and 8.9 mL of a 10 mM 2,2'-dithiobis(pyridine-N-oxide) solution in 1/1 (v/v) acetonitrile/water were added. The mixture was stirred for 10 min at rt then diluted with 400 mL of water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v). **12e** was purified by RP-HPLC.

Yield: 100 mg (17.5 μ mol, 8 % over 6 steps) CNP-38-linker-Dmb * 9 TFA

MS: m/z 1171.87 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1171.86).

5 Cleavage of the Dmb protecting group was achieved by adding 65 mL pre-cooled (-18 °C) cleavage cocktail 100/5/3/2/1 (v/v/w/v/v) TFA/MSA/DTT/water/thioanisole to **12e** (100 mg, 17.5 μ mol) and stirring for 3.5 h at 0 °C. Crude **12f** was precipitated in pre-cooled (-18 °C) diethyl ether. The precipitate was dissolved in water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) and incubated for 2 h at rt in order to hydrolyze any TFA esters. **12f** was purified by RP-HPLC.

Yield: 43.4 mg (7.92 μ mol, 45 %) CNP-38-linker-thiol * 9TFA

10 MS: m/z 1112.83 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1112.82).

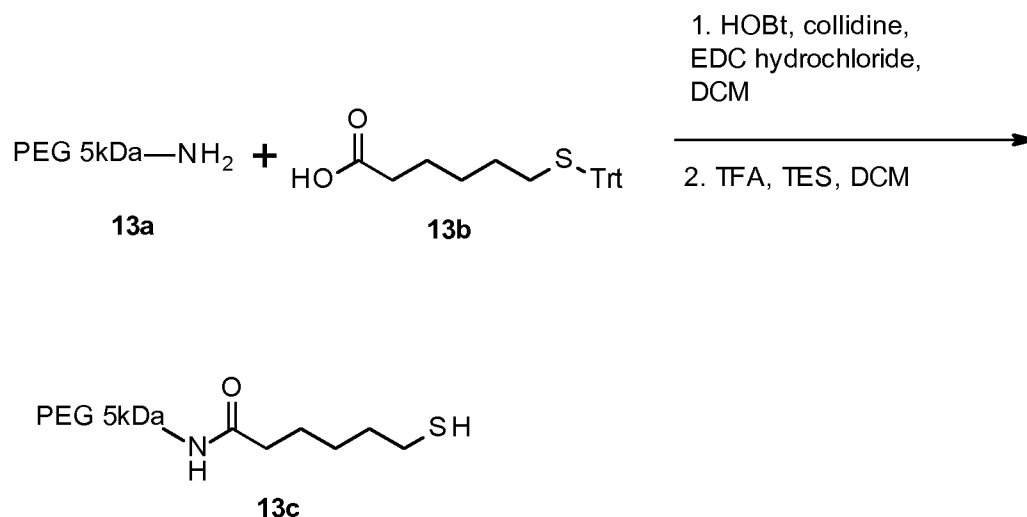
To a solution of **12f** (39.6 mg, 7.22 μ mol) in 1 mL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) was added a solution of PEG 2x10 kDa maleimide (Sunbright GL2-200MA, 1.22 g, 59.94 μ mol) in 6.16 mL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v), followed by 0.5 M lactic acid buffer (1.41 mL, pH = 4.20). The mixture was stirred at rt for 4 h. Conjugate **12g** was purified by RP-HPLC.

Yield: 204 mg (4.48 μ mol, 57 %) conjugate **12g** * 9 HCl

Example 13

20 Synthesis of PEG5kDa thiol **13c**

PEG5kDa thiol **13c** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



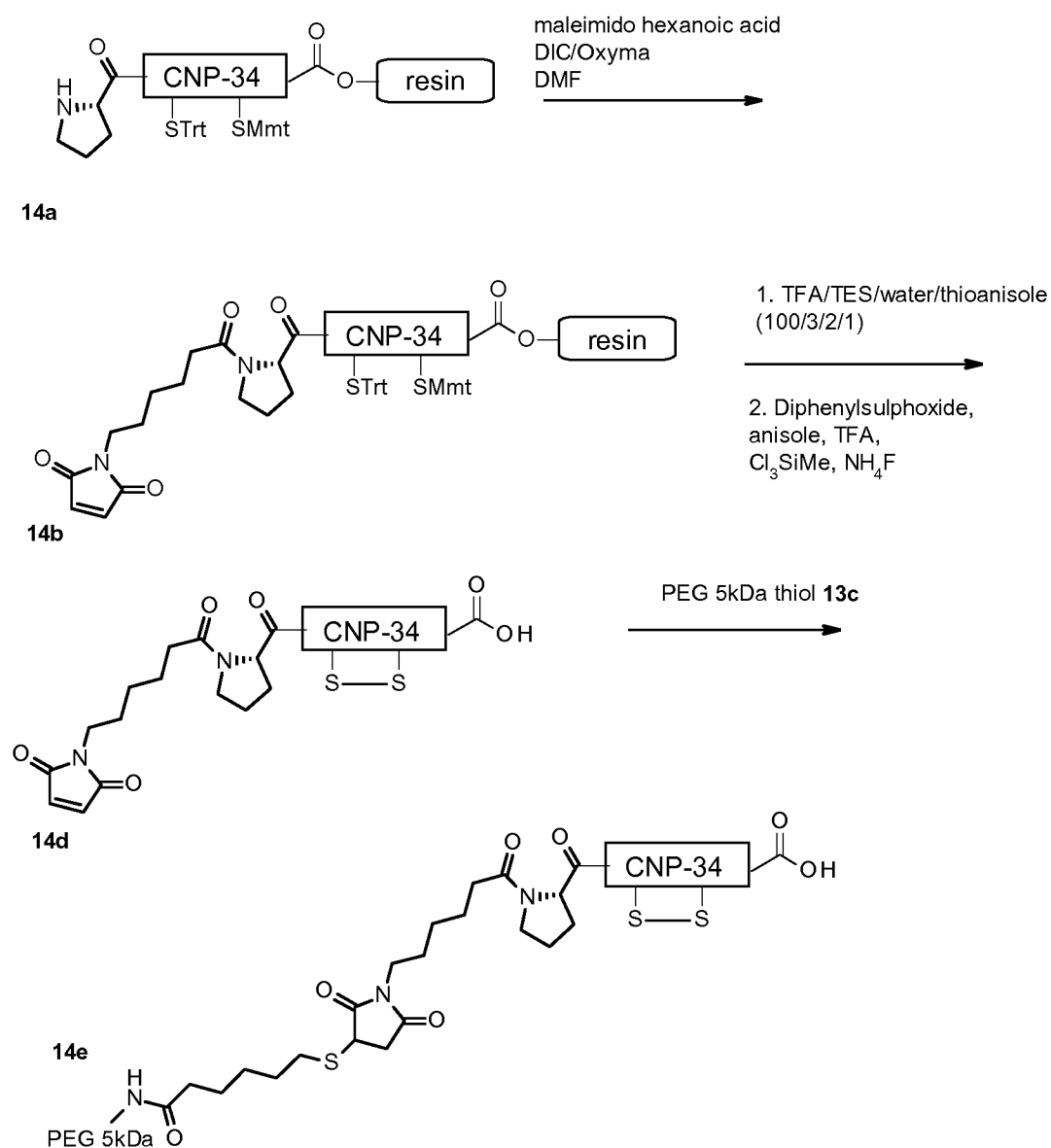
To a solution of **13b** (58.6 mg, 0.15 mmol), HOBt (22.9 mg, 0.15 mmol) and EDC hydrochloride (28.8 mg, 0.15 mmol) in DCM (1.00 mL) 2,4,6-collidine (121 mg, 1.00 mmol) was added. Then, a solution of methoxy PEG amine 5 kDa **13a** (500 mg, 0.10 mmol) in DCM (4.00 mL) was added and the mixture was stirred for 16 h at rt. The solvent was evaporated

and the mixture was dissolved in ACN/water and purified by RP-HPLC. The amount of solvent was reduced *in vacuo* and the aqueous residue was extracted with DCM (1 x 100 mL, 2 x 50 mL). The combined organic layers were reduced *in vacuo* to 20 mL. TFA (1.6 mL) and TES (3.5 mL) were added and the mixture was stirred at rt for 4.5 h. **13c** was precipitated in diethyl ether, stored over night at -20 °C, filtered and dried *in vacuo*.
 Yield: 372 mg (72 μmol, 72 %)

Example 14

Synthesis of permanent N-terminal CNP-34 PEG 5 kDa conjugate **14e**

Conjugate **14e** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



Side chain protected CNP-34 on TCP tentagel resin having free N-terminus **14a** (0.78 g, 70 μmol) was pre-swollen in DMF for 30 min. A solution of maleimido hexanoic acid (85.3 mg, 0.40 mmol), DIC (50.9 mg, 0.40 mmol) and Oxyma (57.4 mL, 0.40 mmol) in DMF (6 mL)

was drawn onto the resin and the mixture was shaken for 30 min at rt. The coupling then was repeated once with freshly prepared coupling solution. The resin was washed 10 x each with DMF and CH₂Cl₂ and dried *in vacuo* affording **14b**.

- 5 Cleavage of the peptide from resin and removal of protecting groups was achieved by treatment of the resin with 6 mL cleavage cocktail 100/3/2/1 (v/v/v/v) TFA/TES/water/thioanisole for 1.5 h at rt. The crude peptide was precipitated in pre-cooled (-18 °C) diethyl ether.

MS: m/z 937.77 = [M+4H]⁴⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass for [M+4H]⁴⁺ = 937.74).

10

The precipitate was dissolved in 15 mL TFA. A solution of diphenylsulfoxide (68.06 mg, 0.34 mmol) and anisole (0.18 mL, 1.68 mmol) in 5 mL TFA was added. Trichloromethylsilane (0.47 mL, 4.17 mmol) was added and the mixture was stirred for 15 min at rt. Ammonium fluoride (0.38 g, 10.3 mmol) was added and the solution was agitated for a further 2 min. The crude material was precipitated in pre-cooled (-18 °C) diethyl ether and purified by RP-HPLC affording **14d**.

15

Yield: 8.30 mg (1.78 μmol, 82 % purity, 1.4 % over 3 steps) CNP-34-Malhx * 8 TFA

MS: m/z 937.26 = [M+4H]⁴⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass for [M+4H]⁴⁺ = 937.23).

20

To a solution of **14d** (7.34 mg, 1.57 μmol) in 200 μL 1/1 (v/v) acetonitrile/water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) was added a solution of **13c** (20 mg, 3.90 μmol) in 200 μL water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v), followed by 200 μL 0.5 M acetate buffer (pH = 5.00). The mixture was incubated at rt for 30 min. Conjugate **14e** was purified by RP-HPLC.

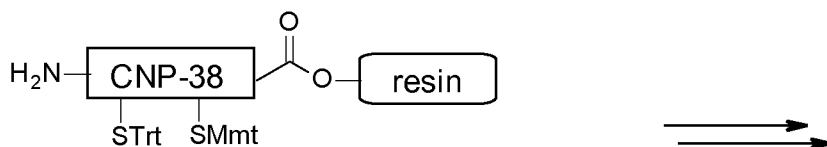
25

Yield: 9.92 mg (1.01 μmol, 57 %) conjugate **14e** * 8 TFA

Example 15

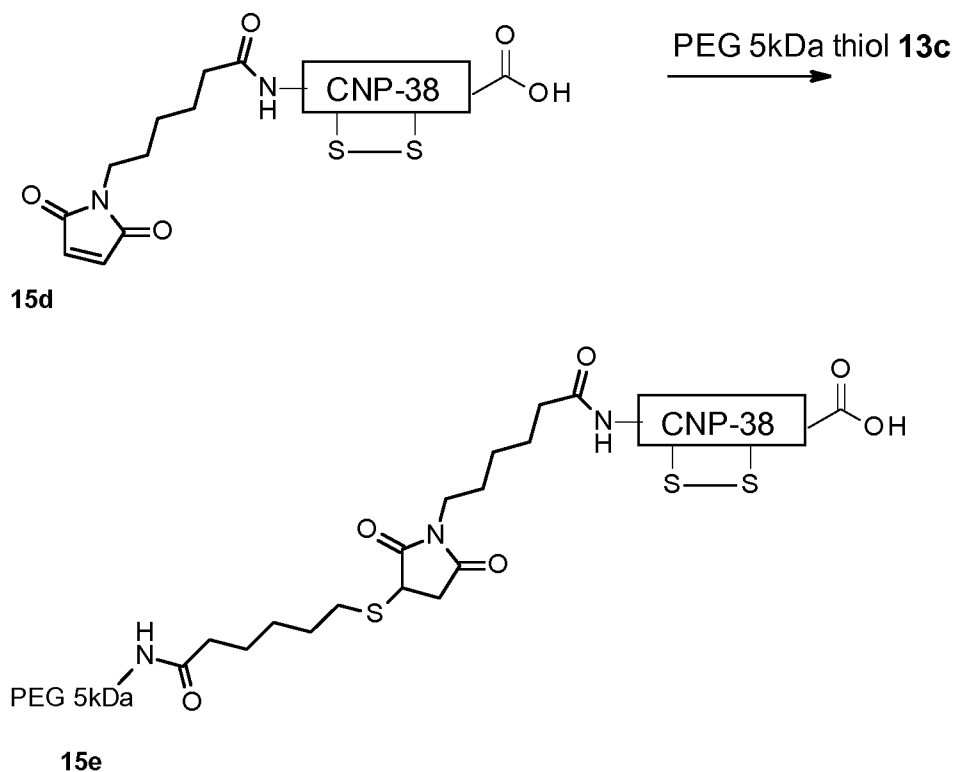
Synthesis of permanent N-terminal CNP-38 PEG 5kDa conjugate **15e**

Conjugate **15e** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



30

15a



Compound **15d** was synthesized as described for **14d**, except that side chain protected CNP-38 on TCP tentagel resin having free N-terminus **15a** (1.34 g, 0.12 mmol) was used as starting material.

Yield: 15.6 mg (2.94 μmol , 6.6 %) CNP-38-Malhx * 9 TFA

MS: m/z 1064.05 = $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$ = 1064.04).

10

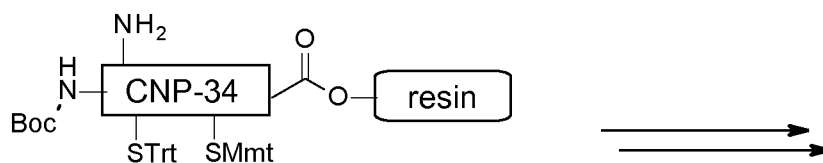
Conjugate **15e** was synthesized as described for **14e**, except that **15d** (8.34 g, 1.58 mmol) was used as starting material.

Yield: 9.47 mg (0.91 μmol , 31 %) conjugate **15e** * 9 TFA

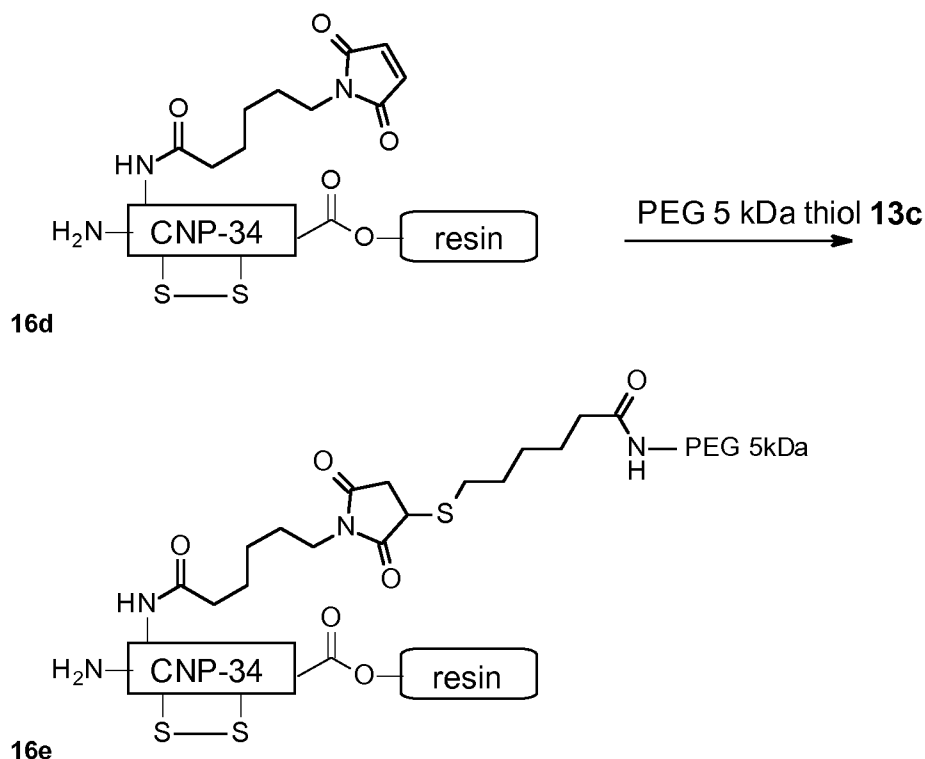
15 Example 16

Synthesis of permanent Lys12 CNP-34 PEG 5 kDa conjugate **16e**

Conjugate **16e** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



16a



1.00 g (0.10 mmol) of side chain protected CNP-34 on TCP tentagel resin having Boc protected N-terminus and ivDde protected side chain of Lys12 was ivDde deprotected according to the procedure given in Materials and Methods to obtain **16a**.

Compound **16d** was synthesized as described for **14d**, except that resin **16a** (1.00 g, 0.10 mmol) was used as starting material.

10 Yield: 17.0 mg (3.65 μmol , 3.7 %) CNP-34-Lys12-Malx * 8 TFA

MS: m/z 937.25 = $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$ = 937.23).

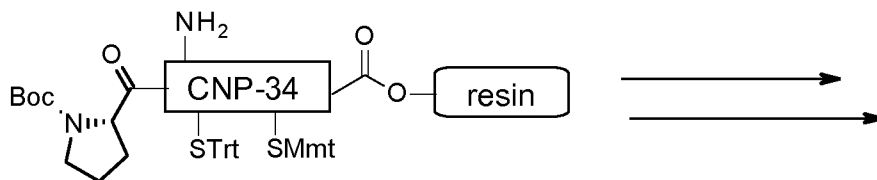
15 Conjugate **16e** was synthesized as described for **14e**, except that **16d** (17 mg, 3.65 μmol) was used as starting material.

Yield: 12.2 mg (1.25 μmol , 34 %) conjugate **16e** * 8 TFA

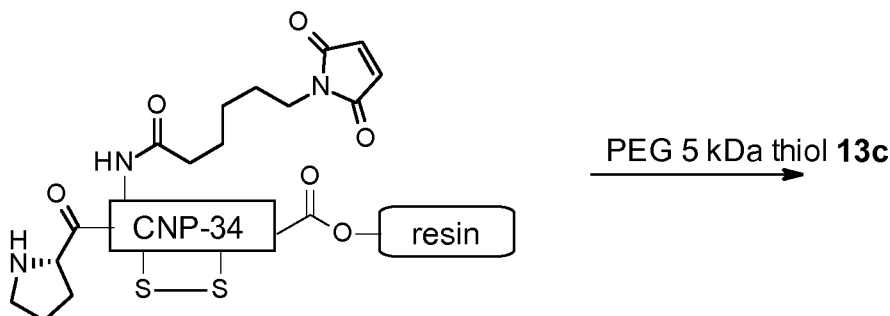
Example 17

Synthesis of permanent Lys16 CNP-34 PEG 5 kDa conjugate **17e**

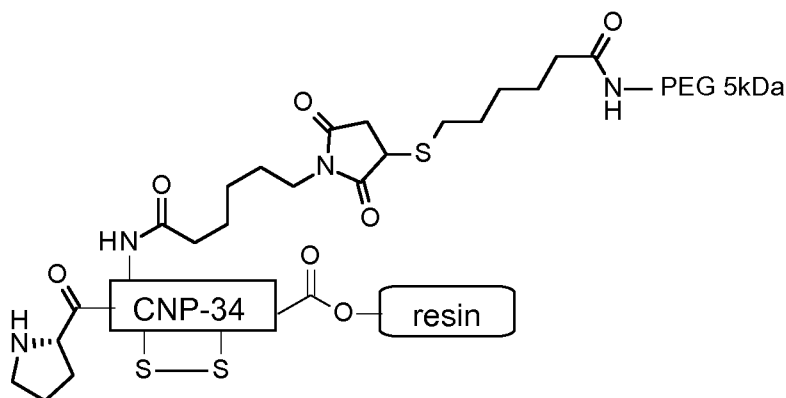
20 Conjugate **17e** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



17a



17d



17e

0.78 g (0.07 mmol) of side chain protected CNP- 34 on TCP tentagel resin having Boc protected N-terminus and ivDde protected side chain of Lys16 was ivDde deprotected according to the procedure given in Materials and Methods to obtain **17a**.

- 5 Compound **17d** was synthesized as described for **14d**, except that resin **17a** (0.78 g, 0.13 mmol) was used as starting material.

Yield: 5.39 mg (1.16 μmol , 1.7 %) CNP-34-Lys16-Malhx * 8 TFA

MS: m/z 937.26 = $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$ = 937.23).

10

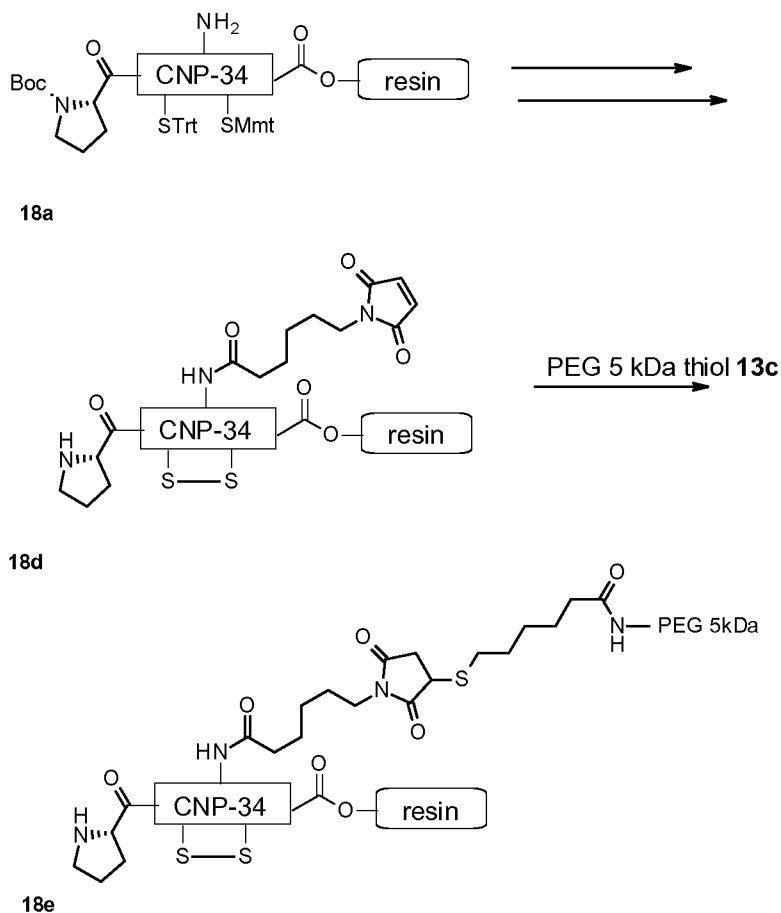
Conjugate **17e** was synthesized as described for **14e**, except that **17d** (5.39 mg, 1.16 μmol) was used as starting material.

Yield: 10.7 mg (1.09 μmol , 94 %) conjugate **17e** * 8 TFA

15 **Example 18**

Synthesis of permanent Lys22 CNP-34 PEG 5 kDa conjugate **18e**

Conjugate **18e** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



1.07 g (0.11 mmol) of side chain protected CNP- 34 on TCP tentagel resin having Boc protected N-terminus and ivDde protected side chain of Lys22 was ivDde deprotected according to the procedure given in Materials and Methods to obtain **18a**.

Compound **18d** was synthesized as described for **14d**, except that resin **18a** (1.07 g, 0.11 mmol) was used as starting material.

10 Yield: 5.20 mg (1.12 μmol , 1.0 %) CNP-34-Lys22-Malhx * 8 TFA
 MS: m/z 937.26 = $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[\text{M}+4\text{H}]^{4+}$ = 937.23).

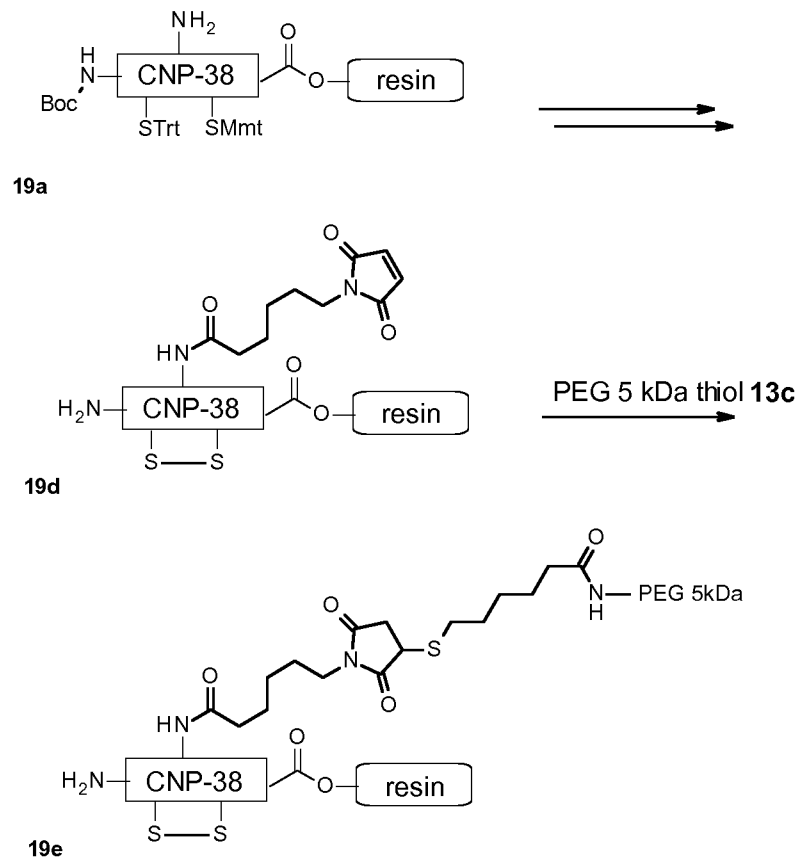
15 Conjugate **18e** was synthesized as described for **14e**, except that **18d** (5.2 mg, 1.12 μmol) was used as starting material.

Yield: 4.20 mg (0.43 μmol , 38 %) conjugate **18e** * 8 TFA

Example 19

Synthesis of permanent Lys26 CNP-38 PEG 5 kDa conjugate 19e

Conjugate **19e** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



- 5 (0.865 g, 0.10 mmol) of side chain protected CNP-38 on TCP tentagel resin having Boc protected N-terminus and ivDde protected side chain of Lys26 was ivDde deprotected according to the procedure given in Materials and Methods to obtain **19a**.

Compound **19d** was synthesized as described for **14d**, except that resin **19a** (0.865 g, 0.10 mmol) was used as starting material.

- 10 Yield: 10.3 mg (1.95 μ mol, 2.0 %) CNP-38-Lys26-Malhx * 9 TFA
 MS: m/z 1064.05 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1064.04).

- 15 Conjugate **19e** was synthesized as described for **14e**, except that **19d** (4.70 mg, 1.10 μ mol) was used as starting material.

Yield: 3.20 mg (0.31 μ mol, 28 %) conjugate **19e** * 9 TFA

Example 20

Release kinetics in vitro

CNP conjugates **10f** and **11i** were dissolved in a PBS buffer containing 3 mM EDTA and 10 mM methionine, pH 7.4 at a concentration of approximately 1 mg conjugate/mL. The solutions were filtered sterile and were incubated at 37 °C. At time points aliquots were withdrawn and analysed by RP-HPLC and ESI-MS. UV-signals correlating to liberated CNP were integrated and plotted against incubation time.

Curve-fitting software was applied to estimate the corresponding half-time of release.

Results:

- For conjugate **10f** a release half life time of 8.5 d (\pm 1 d) was obtained.
For conjugate **11i** a release half life time of 9.5 d (\pm 1.5 d) was obtained.

Example 21

Digest of CNP variants by Neutral Endopeptidase *In Vitro*

- In order to determine the *in vitro* stability of various CNP variants including different peptide chain lengths and PEGylations using different PEGylation sites and PEG molecules in the presence of Neutral Endopeptidase (NEP), a NEP digest assay was established. This assay monitored the decrease of the non-digested CNP variant (normalized with the internal standard PFP) over time in reference to the t_0 -time point.

- In detail, recombinant human NEP (2.5 μ g/mL final concentration) and the standard pentafluorophenol (PFP; 40 μ g/mL final concentration) were added to the CNP variant (100 μ g CNP equivalents/mL) in digest buffer (50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.4, 10 mM NaCl). The solution was incubated at 37 °C and 500 rpm for up to 4 days. Samples were taken at different time intervals. The reaction was stopped by a combined reduction and heat denaturation adding TCEP (tris(2-carboxyethyl)phosphine; 25 mM final concentration) and incubating the mixture at 95 °C, 500 rpm for 5 minutes. The resulting reaction products were assigned using HPLC-MS. The half life of each CNP variant was calculated via the ratio change in the HPLC-UV peak areas of CNP and PFP over time. To compensate for variations in the protease activity, a CNP-38 or CNP-34 digest was carried out in every batch measurement as reference.

Table 1 lists the half-lives, based on the *in vitro* NEP cleavage assay, of various CNP variants of different lengths and having various PEG molecules attached to different side chains.

Compound	CNP-variant	PEGylation	half life norm. [h]
CNP-22 ¹	CNP-22	-	0.32
CNP-34 ¹	CNP-34	-	4.15
14e ¹	CNP-34	5 kDa PEG, N-Terminus	Almost no proteolysis after 4 days.
17e ¹	CNP 34	5 kDa PEG, Lys16	54.23
18e ¹	CNP-34	5 kDa PEG, Lys22	38.87
16e ¹	CNP-34	5 kDa PEG, Lys12	No evaluation possible.
CNP-38 ²	CNP-38	-	12.10
19e ²	CNP-38	5 kDa PEG, Lys26	62.76
15e ²	CNP-38	5 kDa PEG, N-Terminus	Almost no proteolysis after 4 days.
12g ²	CNP-38	4x10 kDa PEG, -Lys26	Almost no proteolysis after 4 days.

- 1) Due to variations in NEP catalytic activity between experiments, a mean was formed of all CNP-34 half life measurements (4.15h) and the CNP-34 conjugates' half life measurements were normalized to this mean using a coefficient to calculate the adjusted $t_{1/2}$.
- 5 2) Due to variations in NEP catalytic activity between experiments, a mean was formed of all CNP-38 half life measurements (12.10h) and the CNP-38 conjugates' half life measurements were normalized to this mean using a coefficient to calculate the adjusted $t_{1/2}$.

The rank order of resistance towards NEP is as follows: The longer CNP-variant (CNP-38) is more stable than the shorter CNP variant (CNP-34), which in turn is more stable than the shorter CNP-22. The order of the PEG-attachment sites is as follows: N-terminal > next-to-ring > ring. Therefore, an N-terminal PEG attachment confers the highest stability towards the proteolytic digest with NEP for the tested conjugates. The stability of CNP-38 PEGylated at Lys26 can be increased with increasing PEG size.

15

Example 22

Functional cGMP stimulation in NIH-3T3 cells with CNP variants

Functional activity of CNP variants were determined in a cell-based assay with NIH-3T3 cells (Murine Embryo Fibroblast cell line). These cells express endogenously NPR-B on the cell surface. Stimulation of NPR-B with CNP leads to intracellular production of the second

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messenger cGMP which is detected with a commercially available cGMP assay. NIH-3T3 cells were routinely cultured in DMEM F-12 medium with 5 % FBS and 5 mM glutamine at 37°C and 5 % CO₂. For each assay, 50,000 cells were resuspended in stimulation buffer (Dulbecco's PBS with IBMX) and incubated with the CNP variants in different concentrations. CNP (dilutions were made in PBS with 0.2 % BSA). After incubation of 30 min at 37°C and 5 % CO₂, the cells were lysed and cGMP levels were determined with a commercially available cGMP TR-FRET assay (Cisbio, cGMP kit, Cat. No. 62GM2PEB). PEGylated CNP variants were always characterized in comparison with the non-PEGylated version in the same experiment batch. If possible, evaluation of the residual activity was done via the EC₅₀- parameter of the resulting dose-response curve (restricted model with common slope).

Table 2: Residual NPR-B activity of PEGylated CNP variants in a cell-based assay as determined against the non-PEGylated CNP variant

Compound	CNP Variant	PEGylation	EC ₅₀ compound/EC ₅₀ CNP-38
15e	CNP-38	5 kDa PEG, N-Terminus	>5
19e	CNP-38	5 kDa PEG, Lys26	>100
12g	CNP-38	4x10 kDa PEG, Lys26	>>100
11i	CNP-38	4x10 kDa PEG, Lys26	>>100
10f	CNP-38	2x20 kDa PEG, Lys26	>>100

15

Comparing the tested PEG attachment sites, the attachment at the Lys26 (ring-lysine) showed the highest functional activity reduction, whereas the N-terminal attachment showed relatively high residual functional activity values. Increasing the PEG size resulted in a better shielding of the CNP molecule and a lower residual functional activity.

20

Example 23

Growth study in FVB mice after 5 weeks treatment with CNP-38 by daily subcutaneous bolus injection or by continuous subcutaneous infusion

This study was performed in order to test the effect of daily subcutaneous bolus injection vs. continuous subcutaneous infusion of CNP-38 on animal growth. 21- to 22-days-old wild-type FVB male mice (n = 9/group) were given 50 nmol/kg/d CNP-38 or vehicle (30 mM acetate pH 4 containing 5 % sucrose and 1 % benzylic alcohol) either by daily subcutaneous bolus

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injection or by continuous subcutaneous infusion in the scapular region over 35 days. Continuous infusion was applied by Alzet osmotic pumps model 1002 for week 1-2, followed by model 1004 for week 3-5. CNP-38 concentrations in the pumps were adjusted for the mean animal weight at study day 7 (pump model 1002) or study day 25 (pump model 1004).

5 Growth was determined at d 35 by total body length measurement and X-ray measurements of the right femur and tibia.

Results of animals treated by daily subcutaneous bolus injection: At d 35, total body length of CNP-38 treated animals was 110.2 %, right femur length was 105.6 % and right tibia length
10 was 104.0 % compared to vehicle treated animals.

Results of animals treated by continuous subcutaneous infusion: At d 35, total body length of CNP-38 treated animals was 121.7 %, right femur length was 107.5 % and right tibia length was 112.2 % compared to vehicle treated animals.

15

It was concluded that continuous subcutaneous infusion or related slow release formulations of CNP-38 (e.g. a slow releasing CNP-38 prodrug) are more effective than daily subcutaneous bolus injection in eliciting growth in the appendicular and axial skeleton.

20 **Example 24**

Pharmacokinetic study of permanent Lys26 CNP-38 PEG4x10 kDa conjugate 12g in cynomolgus monkeys

This study was performed in order to show the suitability of **12g** as a model compound for a slow release CNP-38 prodrug in cynomolgus monkeys. Male cynomolgus monkeys (2-4 years
25 old, 3.5-4.1 kg) received either a single intravenous (n = 3 animals) or a single subcutaneous (n = 2 animals) administration of **12g** at a dose of 0.146 mg CNP-38 eq/kg. Blood samples were collected up to 168 h post dose, and plasma was generated. Plasma total CNP-38 concentrations were determined by quantification of the N-terminal signature peptide (sequence: LQEHPNAR) and C-terminal signature peptide (sequence: IGSMGLGC) after
30 tryptic digestion as described in Materials and Methods.

Results: Dose administrations were well tolerated with no visible signs of discomfort during administration and following administration. No dose site reactions were observed any time throughout the study. After intravenous injection the CNP-38 t_{max} was observed at 15 min

(earliest time point analyzed), followed by a slow decay in CNP-38 content with a half life time of approx. 24 h. After subcutaneous injection the CNP-38 concentration peaked at a t_{max} of 48 h. At 168 h the CNP-38 concentration was still as high as ca. 50 % of c_{max} . The bioavailability was ca. 50 %. Similar PK curves were obtained for the N- and the C-terminal signature peptide up to 168 h post dose, indicating the presence of intact CNP-38 in the conjugate.

The favourable long lasting PK over several days and the stability of CNP-38 in the conjugate indicates the suitability of the permanent model compound Lys26 CNP-38 PEG 4x10 kDa conjugate **12g** as a slow releasing CNP-38 prodrug after subcutaneous injection. It can be concluded that similar conjugates having a transiently Lys26 linked CNP-38 (like e.g. **11i**) are suitable CNP-38 prodrugs providing long lasting levels of released bioactive CNP-38 over several days.

15 **Example 25**

Pharmacokinetic study of transient conjugates 10f and 11i in cynomolgus monkeys

This study was performed in order to show the suitability of **10f** and **11i** as slow release CNP-38 prodrugs in cynomolgus monkeys. Male cynomolgus monkeys (2-4 years old, 3-5 kg) received either a single subcutaneous administration ($n = 3$ animals) of compound **10f** or a single subcutaneous ($n = 3$ animals) administration of **11i** at a dose of 0.146 mg CNP-38 eq/kg. Blood samples were collected up to 168 h post dose, and plasma was generated. Plasma levels of total CNP-38 content were analyzed as described in example 24. In order to analyze the plasma content of free CNP-38, the blood samples were acidified after withdrawal by adding 20 vol% of 0.5 M sodium citrate buffer pH 4 to stop further CNP-38 release from the conjugate. Free CNP-38 levels in plasma can e.g. be determined by ELISA using a CNP antibody that binds to the ring region of CNP, as described in the literature (US patent 8,377,884 B2), or by LC-MS/MS.

Results: Dose administrations were well tolerated with no visible signs of discomfort during administration and following administration. No dose site reactions were observed any time throughout the study. After dose administration the total CNP-38 t_{max} was observed at 12 h for compound **10f** and 24 h for compound **11i**. Total CNP-38 plasma levels were below LOQ (100 ng/mL, C-terminal peptide) after 120 h for compound **10f**, while the plasma level was still as high as ca. 30 % of c_{max} . for compound **11i** after 168 h (C-terminal peptide). For

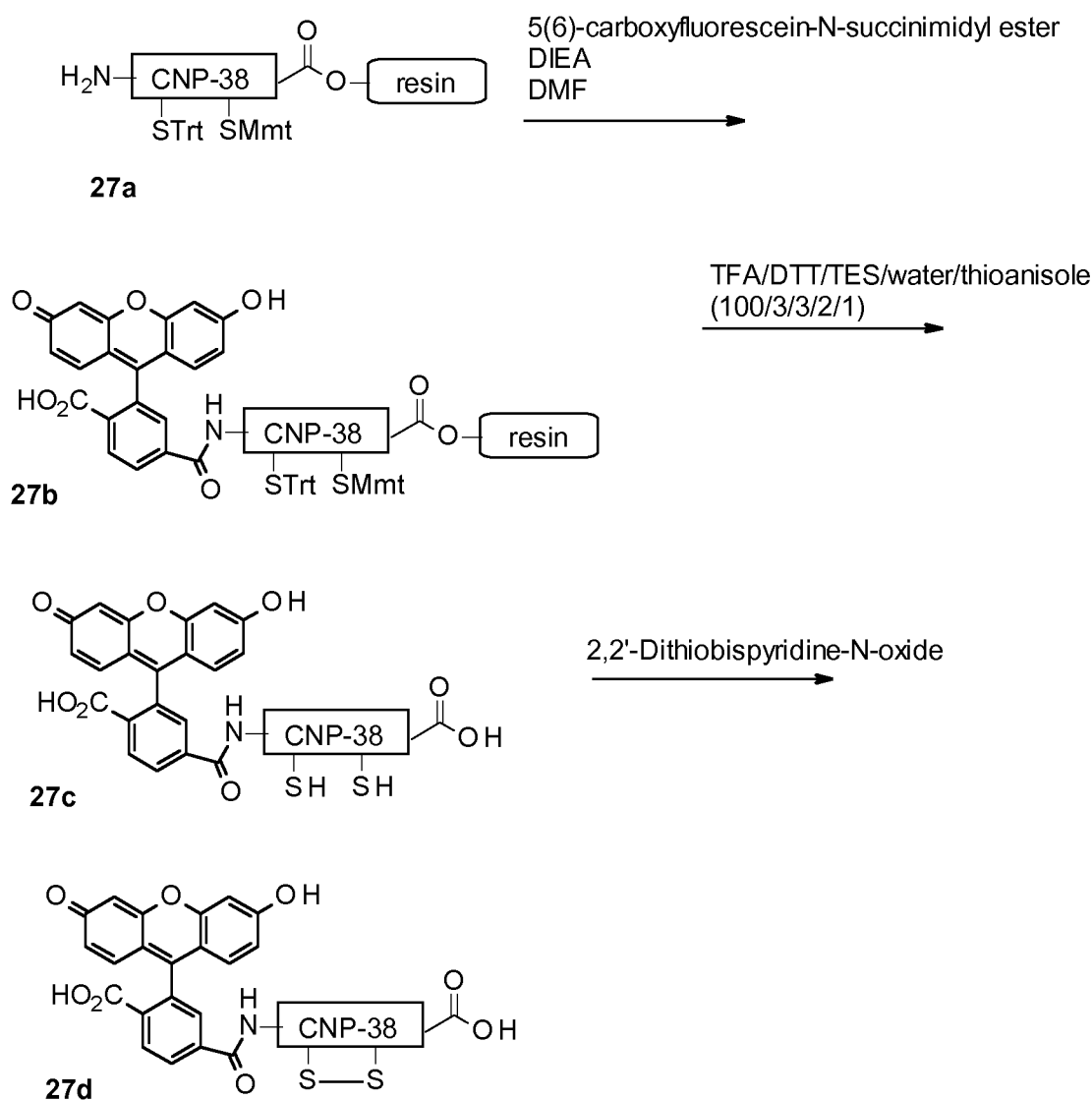
compound **11i** similar terminal half life of 3-4 d was found for the C-terminal and the N-terminal peptide, indicating the presence of intact CNP-38 in the conjugate.

Conclusion: The favourable long lasting PK over several days and the stability of CNP-38 in the conjugate **11i** indicates its suitability as CNP-38 prodrug for providing long lasting levels of released bioactive CNP-38 over several days.

Example 27

Synthesis of fluorescein labelled CNP-38 **27d** and NPR-C affinity assay

10 Compound **27d** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



15 Side chain protected CNP-38 on TCP tentagel resin having free N-terminus **27a** (0.50 g, 35.4 μ mol) was pre-swollen in DMF for 30 min. A solution of 5(6)-carboxyfluorescein-N-succinimidyl ester (41.9 mg, 88.5 μ mol) and DIEA (30.9 μ L, 177 μ mol) in DMF (1.6 mL)

was drawn onto the resin and the mixture was shaken over night at rt. The resin was washed 10 x each with DMF and CH₂Cl₂ and dried *in vacuo* affording **27b**.

5 Cleavage of the peptide from resin and removal of protecting groups was achieved by treatment of the resin with 7 mL cleavage cocktail 100/3/3/2/1 (v/w/v/v/v) TFA/DTT/TES/water/thioanisole for 1 h at rt. The resin was filtered off and crude **27c** was precipitated in pre-cooled (-18 °C) diethyl ether and purified by RP-HPLC affording **27c**. The combined HPLC fractions were used directly in the next step.

MS: m/z 1105.80 = [M+4H]⁴⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass for [M+4H]⁴⁺ = 1105.81).

10

To the combined HPLC product fractions of **27c** (115 mL), 30 mL of 0.5 M citric acid buffer (pH = 5.00) and 8 mL of a 10 mM 2,2'-dithiobis(pyridine-N-oxide) solution in 1/1 (v/v) acetonitrile/water were added. The mixture was stirred for 60 min at rt and then diluted with 350 mL of water containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v). **27d** was purified by RP-HPLC.

15 Yield: 16.1 mg (2.90 μmol, 8.2 % over 3 steps) labelled CNP-38 * 10 TFA

MS: m/z 1105.30 = [M+4H]⁴⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass for [M+4H]⁴⁺ = 1105.30).

For the NPR-C affinity assay, a NPR-C expressing Hek293 cell line was developed. The coding region of the NPR-C sequence (BC131540) was cloned into a lentiviral vector under CMV promoter for constitutive receptor expression. A bicistronic element located on the vector for puromycin resistance was used as eukaryotic selection marker. After transduction, stably growing cell pools were subjected to qRT-PCR for confirmation of receptor mRNA-expression compared to parental Hek293 cells. An NPR-C-expressing cell pool was expanded and frozen as master cell bank for CNP sample testing.

25

For the assay, growing cells were trypsinized from the cell flask bottom, counted, and seeded in a 96-well plate (1.5 x 10⁵/well) and centrifuged. Supernatants were discarded. CNP standard and sample were serially diluted over 9 steps in PBS 0.2% BSA and transferred to the micro plate in duplicates and mixed with cells. After 30 min incubation at room temperature, fluorescein-labelled CNP **27d** was added to each well with a constant concentration and cells were incubated for additional 45 min at room temperature. Subsequently, cells were analyzed by flow cytometry using mean fluorescence intensity of the FITC channel (FL1, Beckman Coulter FC500MPL) as read out.

30

Standard curve and sample curve were generated in an analysis software (PLA 2.0) using a 4PL fit for potency and/or IC₅₀ calculation.

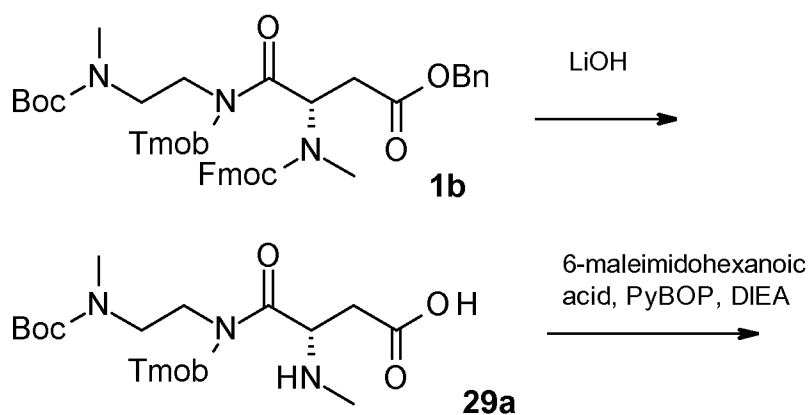
- 5 Table 3: Residual NPR-C affinity of PEGylated CNP-38 variants in a cell-based assay versus CNP-38

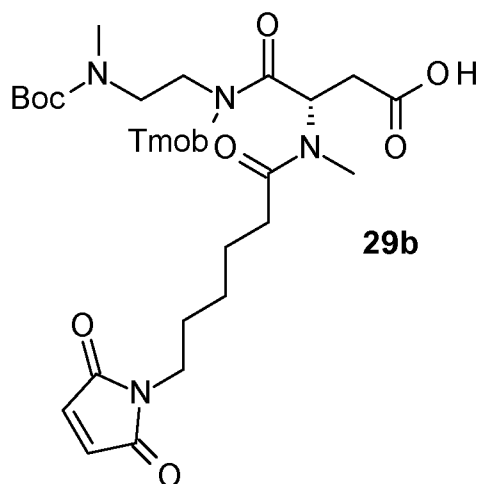
Compound	PEGylation	IC ₅₀ of PEGylated CNP-38/IC ₅₀ CNP-38
15e	5 kDa PEG, N-Terminus	0.53
19e	5 kDa PEG, Lys26	1.1
10f	2x20 kDa PEG, Lys26 (reversible conjugate, first carrier branching point close to CNP moiety)	12
12g	4x10 kDa PEG, Lys26 (permanent conjugate, first carrier branching point close to the CNP moiety)	143
11i	4x10 kDa PEG, Lys26 (reversible conjugate, first carrier branching point close to the CNP moiety)	91
31d	4-arm PEG 40 kDa, Lys26 (reversible conjugate, first carrier branching point not close to the CNP moiety)	1.7

Example 29

Synthesis of Asn-linker reagent **29b**

- 10 Asn-linker reagent **29b** was synthesized according to the following scheme:





To a solution of **1b** (12.85 g, 16.14 mmol) in isopropanol (238 mL), H₂O (77.5 mL) and LiOH (2.32 g, 96.87 mmol) were added. The reaction mixture was stirred for 4 h at rt.

5 Afterwards, the reaction mixture was diluted with toluene (300 mL). The phases were separated and the organic phase was washed 3 x with 0.1 M HCl (200 mL). The phases were separated again. The aqueous phase was extracted 3 x with toluene (100 mL). The product was found in the acidic aqueous phase and the pH value of this phase was adjusted to pH 8.5 by the addition of 4 N NaOH. Then, the aqueous phase was extracted 3 x with CH₂Cl₂ (200

10 mL). The organic phase was washed with brine (50 mL), dried over Na₂SO₄ and filtrated. **29a** was isolated upon evaporation of the solvent and used in the next reaction without further purification.

Yield: 6.46 g (13.36 mmol, 83%)

MS: m/z 484.06 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass =483.26).

15

To a solution of 6-maleimidohexanoic acid (1.73 g, 8.19 mmol) in THF (70 mL), PyBOP (4.26 g, 8.19 mmol) and DIEA (3.89 mL, 22.33 mmol) were added. Then, the reaction mixture was stirred for 2 h at rt. Afterwards, **29a** (3.60 g, 7.44 mmol) was dissolved in THF (10 mL) and added to the reaction mixture. The reaction was stirred at rt overnight. Then,

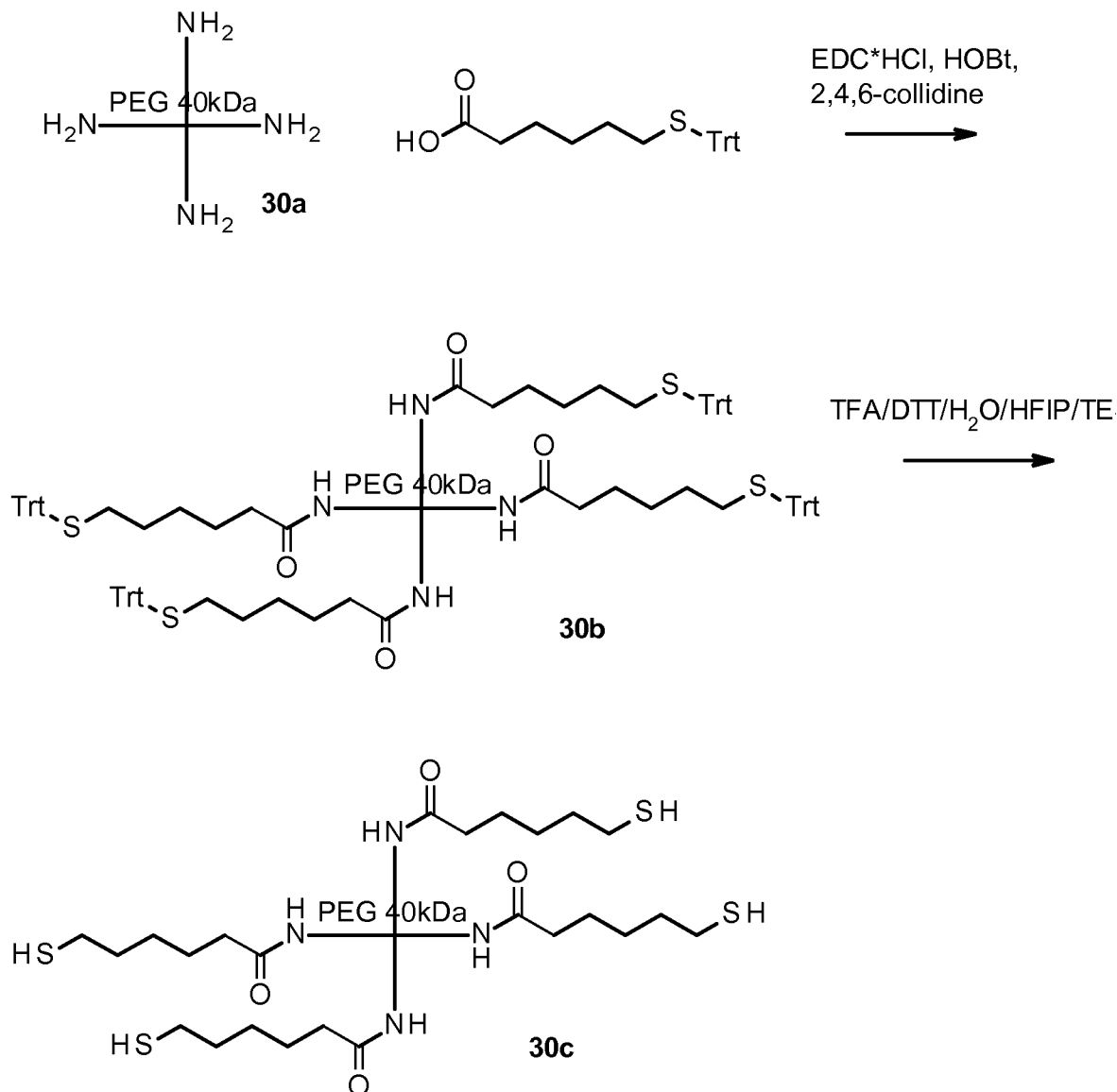
20 methyl-tert-butylether (300 mL) was added. The organic phase was washed 2 x with 0.1 M HCl solution (200 mL). The combined aqueous phases were extracted 2 x with methyl-tert-butylether (200 mL). The combined organic phases were washed with brine (150 mL), dried over Na₂SO₄ and filtrated. The solvent was evaporated *in vacuo*. **29b** was purified using flash chromatography.

25 Yield: 3.34 g (4.94 mmol, 66%)

MS: m/z 677.34 = [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass =676.33).

Example 30**Synthesis of 4-arm-thiol-PEG 40kDa 30c**

4-arm-thiol PEG **30c** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



5

To a solution of 6-tritylmercapto-hexanoic acid (111.72 mg, 286.02 μmol), HOBt (43.81 mg, 286.06 μmol) and EDC·HCl (54.84 mg, 286.06 μmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (5 mL) was added 2,4,6-collidine (251 μL , 1.91 mmol). Then, this solution was added to a solution of 4-arm amino PEG 40 kDa (NOF, Sunbright PTE-400PA, 1.30 g, 31.78 μmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (10 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred over night at rt. Afterwards, the solvent was evaporated (water bath 30 °C). **30b** was purified by RP-HPLC.

10

Yield: 650.5 mg (48%).

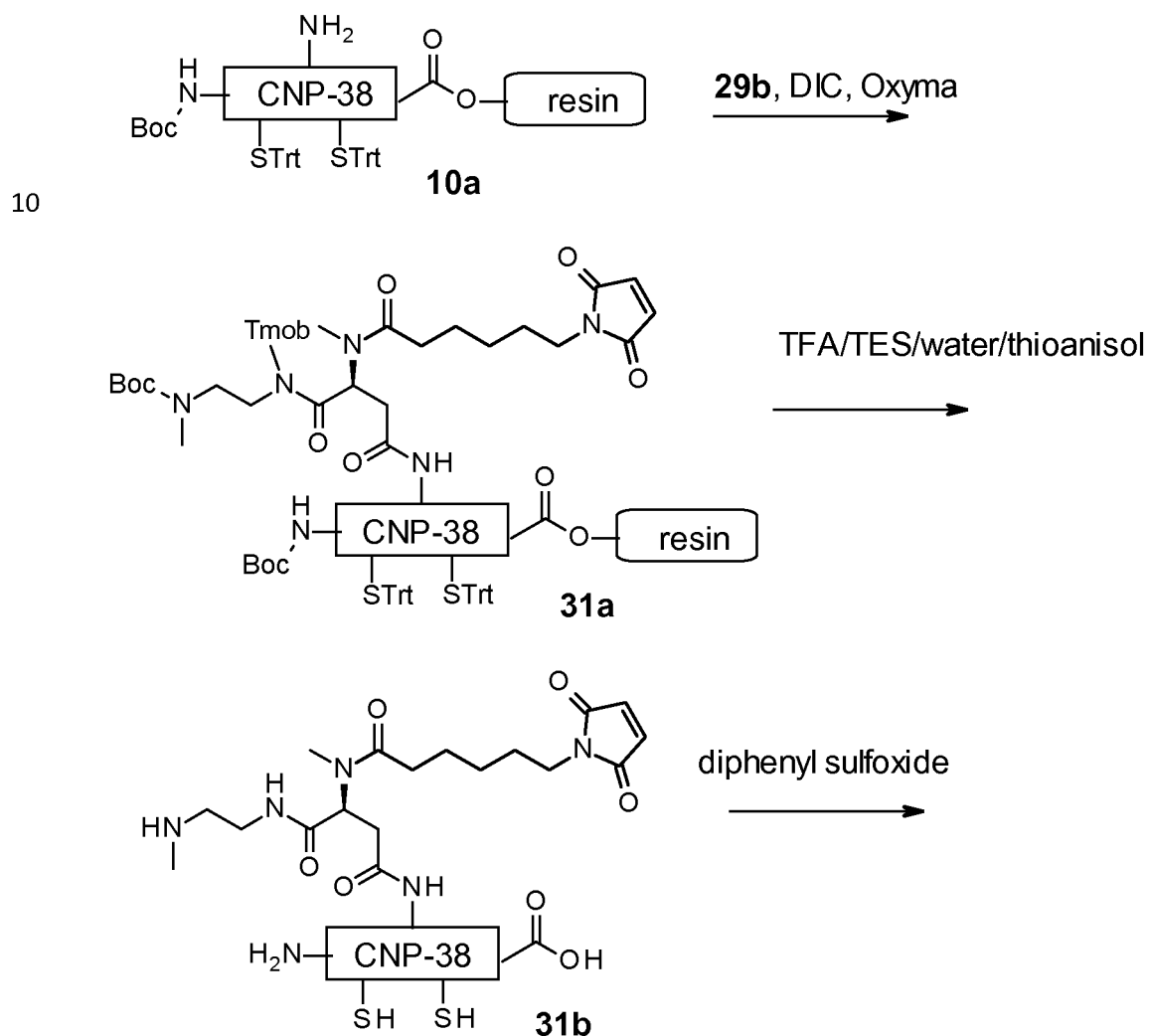
Cleavage of the Trt protecting group was achieved by adding the cleavage cocktail (DTT 500 mg/TFA 500 μ L/water 500 μ L, TES 2.5 mL/HFIP 5.0 mL/ CH_2Cl_2 25.0 mL) to **30b** (500 mg, 11.79 μ mol) and incubating for 30 min at rt. **30c** was obtained after precipitation in pre-cooled (-18 $^\circ\text{C}$) diethyl ether.

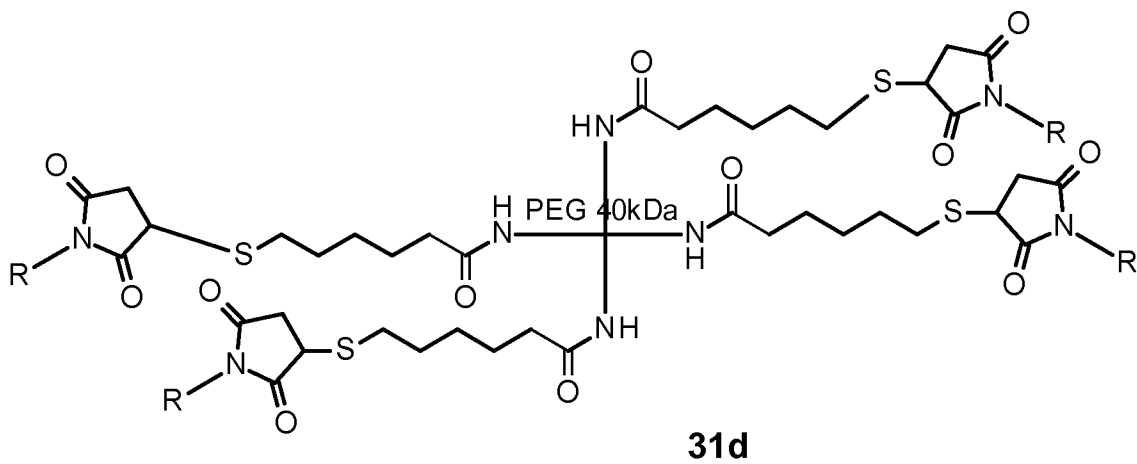
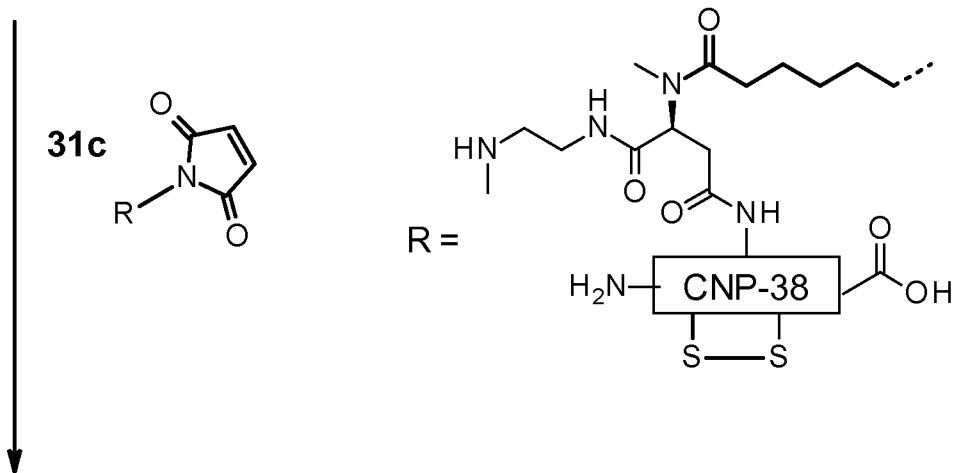
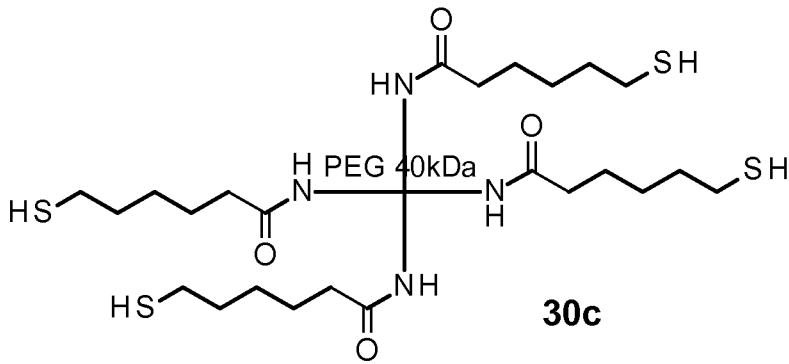
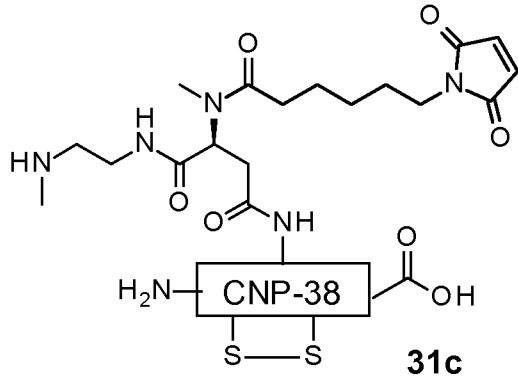
5 Yield: 401.3 mg (82%; 93.3% purity).

Example 31

Synthesis of conjugate **31d**

Conjugate **31d** was synthesized according to the following scheme:





A solution of linker reagent **29b** (3.82 g, 5.64 mmol), OxymaPure (802 mg, 5.64 mmol) and DIC (868 μ L, 5.64 mmol) in DMF (42.5 mL) was added to the resin **10a** (18 g, 1.85 mmol). The suspension was shaken for 100 min at rt to afford resin **31a**. The resin was washed 10 x with DMF (10 mL) and 10 x with DCM (10 mL) and dried *in vacuo* for 15 min. Cleavage of the peptide from resin and removal of protecting groups was achieved by treatment of the resin with 135 mL cleavage cocktail 100/3/2/1 (v/v/v/v) TFA/TES/water/thioanisol. The mixture was agitated for 60 min at rt. Crude **31b** was precipitated in pre-cooled diethyl ether (-18 °C).

The precipitate was dissolved in TFA (423 mL). To this solution, a solution of diphenyl sulfoxide (1.87 g, 9.25 mmol) and anisole (5.05 mL, 46.25 mmol) in TFA (40 mL) was added. Afterwards, trichloromethylsilane (13.3 mL, 114.7 mmol) was added and the reaction mixture was stirred for 15 min at rt. Then, ammonium fluoride (10.96 g, 296 mmol) was added and the solution was stirred for 2 min in a water bath at rt. Crude **31c** was precipitated in pre-cooled diethyl ether (-18 °C) and purified by RP-HPLC.

Yield: 187 mg (34.2 μ mol, 16%) CNP-38-linker * 9 TFA

MS: m/z 1110.33 = $[M+4H]^{4+}$, (calculated monoisotopic mass for $[M+4H]^{4+}$ = 1110.33).

To a solution of **31c** (88.0 mg, 16.1 μ mol) in 4.40 mL MeCN/H₂O (1:1) containing 0.1 % TFA (v/v) was added a solution of 4-arm-thiol-PEG 40kDa **30c** (107.35 mg, 2.59 μ mol) in 1.45 mL water containing 0.1% TFA and 1 mM EDTA, followed by 0.5 M phosphate buffer containing 3 mM EDTA (1.46 mL, pH 6.0). The mixture was incubated for 2 h at rt. Conjugate **31d** was purified by RP-HPLC.

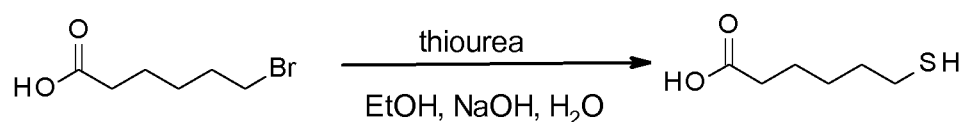
Yield: 129 mg (2.09 μ mol, 80 %) conjugate **16d** * 36 TFA

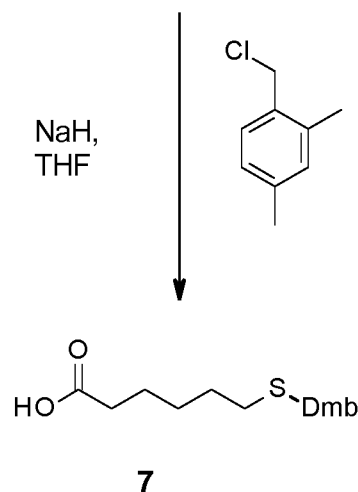
Example 32

Alternative synthesis of Dmb protected 6-mercaptohexanoic acid 7

Dmb-protected mercapto hexanoic acid **7** was synthesized according to the following scheme:

30





To a solution of 6-bromohexanoic acid (100 g, 0.513 mol) in EtOH (1.0 L) was added thiourea (47 g, 0.615 mol) in one portion at 20 °C. Then, the suspension was heated up to 78 °C (a clear solution was formed) and stirred for 12 h. A solution of NaOH (62 g, 1.54 mol) in H₂O (1.0 L) was added dropwise with a constant pressure funnel. Afterwards, refluxing was continued for additional 2 h. The reaction mixture was poured into H₂O (1 L) and extracted with EtOAc (1 L). The aqueous phase was acidified with con. HCl towards pH = 2 and then extracted 3 x with EtOAc (500 mL). The combined organic phases were washed with brine (400 mL). Afterwards, the combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄, filtrated and the solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure at 45 °C. The 6-mercaptohexanoic acid was used in the next reaction without further purification.

Yield: 62 g (crude)

¹H-NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃):

δ = 2.50 – 2.55 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2H), 2.36 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 2H), 1.66 – 1.61 (m, 4H), 1.41 – 1.49 (m, 2H), 1.34 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H) ppm.

6-mercaptohexanoic acid (27.0 g, 0.182 mol) was charged in a 1 L three-necked bottom flask with anhydrous THF (540 mL). The solution was degassed by freeze-pump-thaw technique and then cooled to 0 °C with an external ice bath. NaH (18.2, 455.4 mmol, 4.16 mL, 60% purity) was added with spoon horns over 30 min at 0 °C. Then, 2,6-dimethylbenzylchloride (28.2 g, 0.182 mol) was added in one portion. The reaction mixture was warmed up to 20 °C and stirred for 12 h. The reaction mixture was poured into H₂O (540 mL) and extracted 2 x with MTBE (540 mL). Afterwards, the aqueous phase was acidified with conc. HCl towards pH = 2 and then extracted 3 x with MTBE (500 mL). The combined organic phases were washed with brine (500 mL), dried over Na₂SO₄ and filtrated. **7** was isolated upon evaporation of the solvent under reduced pressure at 45 °C as a yellow oil.

Yield: 41.5 g (0.16 mol, 85%)

¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆):

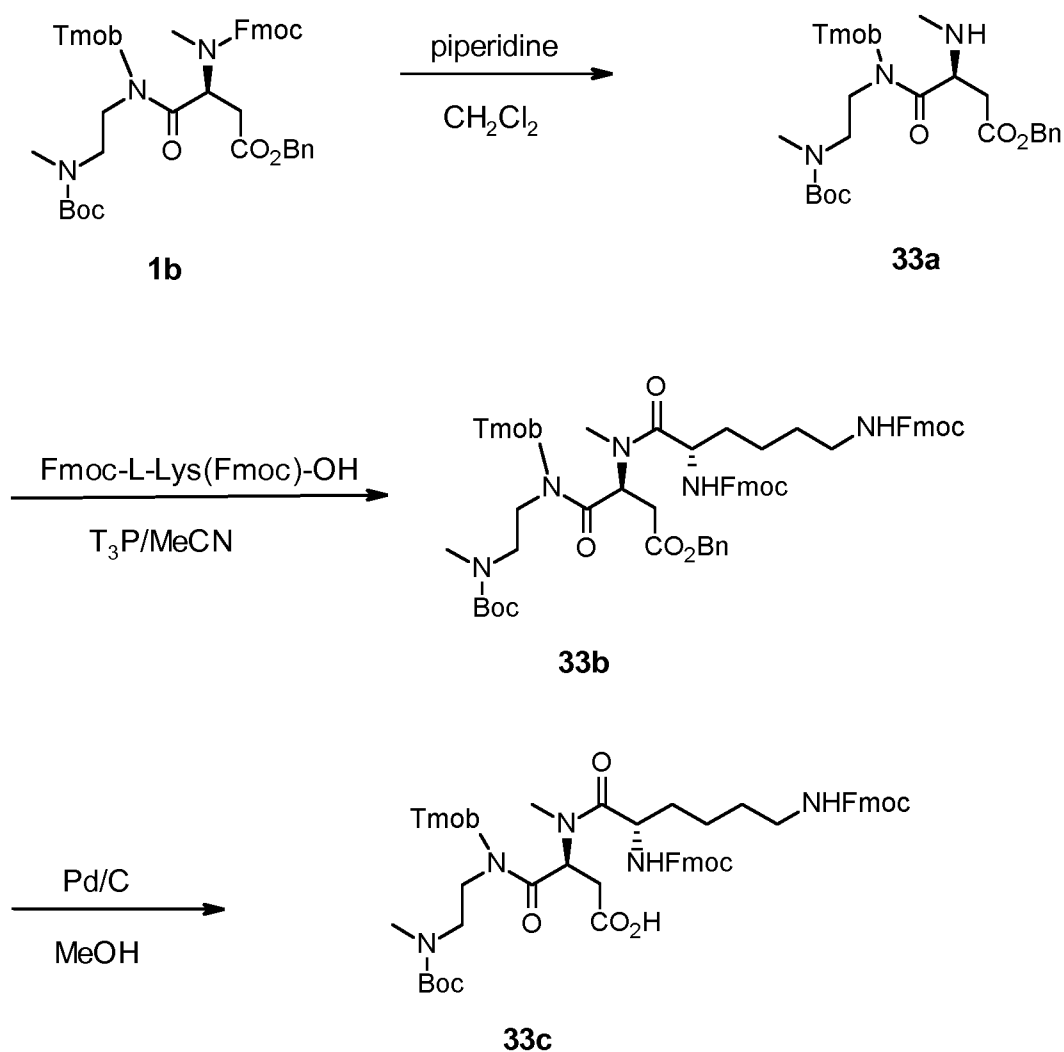
δ = 11.99 (s, 1 H), 7.05 – 7.07 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 6.97 (s, 1H), 6.91 – 6.92 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 1H), 3.66 (s, 2H), 2.38 – 2.39 (m, 2H), 2.29 (s, 3H), 2.23 (s, 3H), 2.16 – 2.19 (m, 2H), 1.40 – 1.55 (m, 4H), 1.22 – 1.38 (m, 2H) ppm

MS (neg. mode): *m/z* 265.0 = [M-H]⁻, (calculated monoisotopic mass = 265.13).

Example 33

Synthesis of linker reagent 33c

10 Linker reagent **33c** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



Four reactions were carried out in parallel. To a solution of compound **1b** (60 g, 75 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (300 mL) was added piperidine (58 g, 0.68 mol, 67 mL). The reaction mixture was stirred at rt for 4 h. The four reactions which were performed in parallel were combined for work-up. The reaction mixture was diluted with H₂O (500 mL) and adjusted with a 0.5 N HCl

solution towards pH = 3 ~ 4. The organic phase was separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (800 mL). The combined organic phases were washed with brine (400 mL) and 5% saturated NaHCO₃ solution (400 mL) in turn. Then, the combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and the solvent was evaporated *in vacuo*. **33a** was purified
5 by chromatography on silica (100-200 mesh) with DCM/MeOH (20/1 to 4/1).

Yield: 150 g (87%)

¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆):

δ = 7.34 – 7.38 (m, 4H), 6.25 – 7.29 (m, 2H), 5.08 – 5.19 (m, 2H), 4.60 – 4.68 (m, 1H), 4.32 –
4.40 (m, 2H), 3.73 – 3.79 (m, 9H), 3.10 – 3.27 (m, 3H), 2.65 – 3.05 (m, 8H), 1.36 (s, 9H)
10 ppm.

Two reactions were carried out in parallel. To a solution of Fmoc-L-Lys(Fmoc)-OH (79 g, 0.13 mol), **33a** (70 g, 0.12 mol), 4-ethyl--morpholine (70 g, 0.61 mol, 77 mL) in MeCN (850 mL) was added dropwise T₃P (50% in EtOAc; 140 g, 0.22 mol) over a period of 30 min.
15 After addition, the reaction mixture was stirred at rt for 18 h. The two reactions which were performed in parallel were combined for work-up. The reaction mixture was diluted with H₂O/CH₂Cl₂ (1:1, 2 L) and then adjusted with 0.5 N HCl solution towards pH = 3 ~ 4. The organic phase was separated and the aqueous phase was extracted with CH₂Cl₂ (1 L). The combined organic phases were washed with brine (800 mL) and 5% NaHCO₃ solution (800 mL) in turn. Then, the combined organic phases were dried over Na₂SO₄, filtered and the solvent was evaporated *in vacuo*. **33b** was purified by chromatography on silica (100-200 mesh) with petroleum ether/ethyl acetate (5/1 to 1/1)..

Yield: 160 g (57%)

¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆):

δ = 7.80 – 7.90 (m, 4H), 7.61 – 7.68 (m, 5H), 7.20 – 7.40 (m, 14H), 6.14 – 6.28 (m, 3H), 5.01 – 5.07 (m, 2H), 4.15 – 4.36 (m, 8H), 3.71 – 3.77 (m, 9H), 2.80 – 3.53 (m, 9H), 2.66 – 2.75 (m, 4H), 2.36 – 2.39 (m, 1H), 1.52 – 1.55 (m, 2H), 0.88 – 1.19 (m, 13H) ppm.

Two reactions were carried out in parallel. To a solution of **33b** (60 g, 52 mmol) in MeOH
30 (1.2 L) was added 10% Pd/C (18 g) in a 2 L hydrogenated bottle. The reaction mixture was degassed and purged 3 x with H₂ and then stirred at 25 °C under H₂-atmosphere (45 psi) for 2.5 h. The two reactions which were performed in parallel were combined for work-up. The reaction mixture was filtered by diatomite and the filtrate was concentrated *in vacuo* to give

crude **33c**. **33c** was purified by chromatography on silica (100-200 mesh) with DCM/MeOH (200/1 to 100/3).

Yield: 70 g (63%)

¹H-NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-d₆):

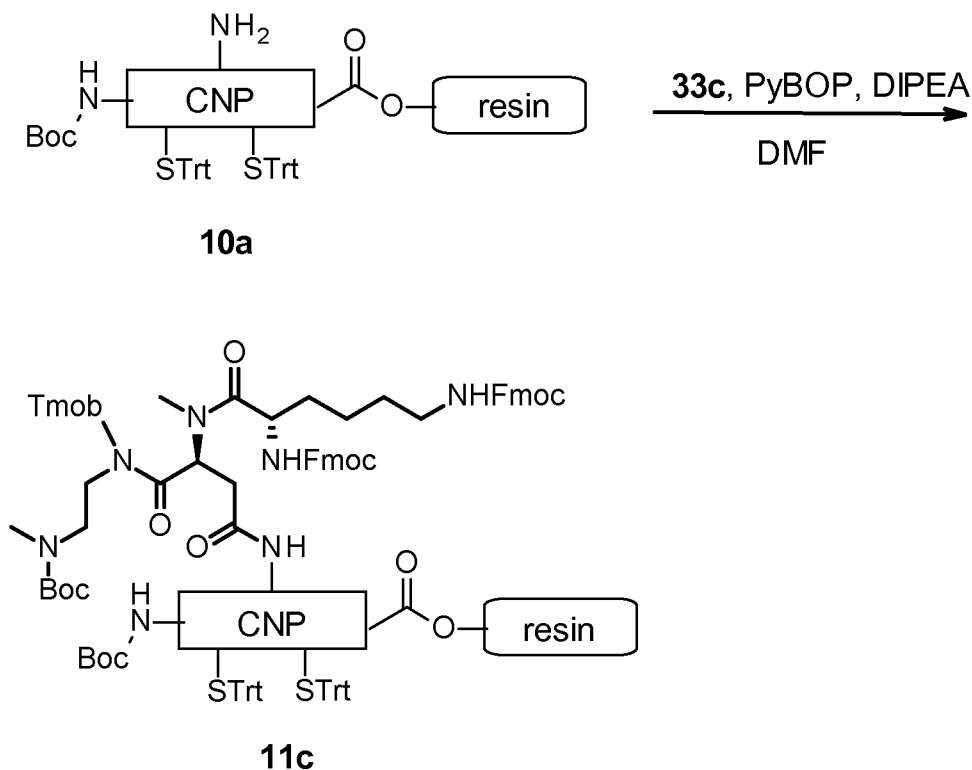
5 δ = 12.15 (s, 1H), 7.87 – 7.89 (m, 4H), 7.50 – 7.70 (m, 5H), 7.31 – 7.40 (m, 9H), 6.20 – 6.23 (m, 2H), 4.13 – 4.36 (m, 10H), 3.70 – 3.77 (m, 9H), 2.62 – 3.10 (m, 12H), 2.30 – 2.34 (m, 1H), 2.14 – 2.18 (m, 1H), 1.50 – 1.58 (m, 2H), 1.25 – 1.34 (m, 13H) ppm

MS: m/z 1056.4= [M+H]⁺, (calculated monoisotopic mass =1056.50).

10 Example 34

Alternative synthesis of 11c

Compound **11c** was synthesized according to the following scheme:



15 A solution of linker reagent **33c** (3.21 g, 3.04 mmol), PyBOP (1.58 g, 3.04 mmol) and DIPEA (848 mL, 4.86 mmol) in DMF (24.0 mL) was incubated for 5 min at rt, then added to the resin **10a** (12 g, 1.21 mmol). The suspension was shaken for 2.5 h at rt. The resin was washed 10 x with DMF (10 mL) and 10 x with DCM (10 mL) and dried *in vacuo* for 60 min.

Example 35

20 **CNP-38 and Conjugate 11i: Evaluation of Cardiovascular Effects in the Conscious Mouse (Subcutaneous Administration)**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the haemodynamic side effects of **11i** at dose level equivalent to a CNP-38 dose level eliciting haemodynamic side effects (decrease in blood pressure) in the telemetered mouse.

5 Male Crl:CD1(ICR) mice (age range 8-13 weeks and body weight range 27.3-35.6 g at start of dosing) were surgically implanted with a TA11PA-C10 telemetry transmitter (Data Sciences International (DSI)) in the carotid artery. The body of the transmitter was placed subcutaneously in the lateral flank of the mouse. The mice were dosed subcutaneously in a latin square crossover design with at least 72 hours between dosing occasions. Mice were
10 dosed with 1) vehicle (10mM succinate, 46.0 g/L mannitol, pH 4.00), 2) CNP-38 (800 µg CNP-38/kg, 10mM succinate, 46.0 g/L mannitol, pH 4.00) or 3) **11i** (800 µg CNP-38 eq/kg, 10mM succinate, 46.0 g/L mannitol, pH 4.00). At least four mice were included at each dose level. Blood pressure (systolic (SAP), diastolic (DAP) and mean (MAP) and heart rate (HR, derived from blood pressure), were recorded using a digital data capture system linked with a
15 DSITM Ponemah data acquisition and analysis system. The capture system allowed recording of the cardiovascular parameters whilst the mice were in individual cages. On the day of each test session the animals were weighed and a predose recording was performed for at least 60 min prior to dosing. Each mouse was returned to the home cage and the cardiovascular parameters were recorded for approximately 48 hours postdose. Blood pressure and HR were
20 reported at the following time points: -30, -20, -10, 5, 15 and 30 min postdose and 1, 2, 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 42 and 48 hours postdose. Each time point was presented as the average value of five minute's recording prior to the time point. The monitoring period was selected to cover exposure to the test items both prior to and after T_{max} .

25 Results: Compared to predose values, vehicle dosed animals had increased MAP at the 5, 15, and 30 min post dose sampling time point. This was considered a normal physiological response due to handling and dosing. The same physiological increase in MAP was seen for animals dosed with **11i** at the 5, 15, and 30 min post dose sampling time point predose. In 3 of 4 animals dosed with CNP-38 the physiological increase in MAP was not evident. On the
30 contrary, 3 of 4 CNP-38 dosed animals showed a significant decrease in MAP at the 5, 15, and 30 min post dose sampling time point. During the remaining ten time points there were no difference in MAP between animals dosed with vehicle, CNP-38 and **11i**.

MAP (mmHg) predose to 30 min post dose (mean ±SD)

	Vehicle (<i>n</i> =10)	11i (<i>n</i> =4)	CNP-38 (<i>n</i> =4)
predose	101.9±10.0	106.4±10.7	106.8±13.4
5 min post dose	125.9±7.3	122.8±5.9	102.0±7.5
15 min post dose	126.3±6.9	121.5±7.5	89.5±29.4
30 min post dose	114.4±15.3	111.5±13.7	99.5±25.2

Similar trends were seen for SAP and DAP for all dose levels. HR was not impacted by treatment with CNP-38 or **11i**.

- 5 In conclusion, subcutaneous administration of **11i** did not decrease blood pressure as seen for an equivalent dosage CNP-38.

Example 36

10 Pharmacokinetic profile of CNP-38 after subcutaneous single-dose administration to cynomolgus monkeys

This study was performed in order to test the pharmacokinetics of CNP-38 after subcutaneous (s.c.) administration in cynomolgus monkeys. Three male monkeys (2-4 years old, 3-5 kg) received a single s.c. injection at a dose of 40 µg/kg of CNP-38. Blood samples were collected at 5, 10, 15, 30, 45 min and 1, 2, 4, 8 hours upon dose.

15

Method: Plasma levels of CNP were analysed using a commercially available competitive radioimmuno-assay (RK-012-03, Phoenix Pharmaceuticals, CA). The assay was applied essentially as described by the manufacturer. The assay is based on competitive binding between 125I-labelled CNP (supplied in the kit) and unlabeled CNP (from study sample or calibrants) to an anti-CNP antibody. When the concentration of CNP in the sample increases, the amount of 125I-labelled CNP that is able to bind to the antibody decreases. By measuring the amount of 125I-labelled CNP bound as a function of the concentration of peptide, it is possible to construct a calibration curve from which the concentration of peptide in the sample can be determined. A few changes to the supplied assay protocol were made. These changes included using in-house CNP calibrant and QC samples to secure consistency between assay runs. In order to shorten the duration of the assay, the initial incubation of samples with antibodies was performed at room temperature for 5 hours (instead of 16-24 hours at 4°C). Due to matrix effects in monkey plasma, the minimal required dilution was set at 1:10, yielding an assay range of 150-1080 pg/mL CNP.

20

25

Results: Administration of CNP-38 to cynomolgus monkeys was well tolerated. After s.c. injection, the CNP-38 median T_{max} was observed at 10 min, with a mean half-life time of approximately 7 min.

5

PK Parameter	Result
T_{max} (median)	10 min
C_{max} (mean)	7.9 ng/mL
AUC_{last} (mean)	2.5 h*ng/mL
Half-life (mean)	6.6 min

Example 37

Pharmacokinetic profile of Conjugate 11i after subcutaneous single-dose administration to cynomolgus monkeys

10 This study was performed in order to investigate pharmacokinetics of **11i** after s.c. administration in cynomolgus monkeys. Four male animals (2-4 years old, 3-5 kg) received a single s.c. injection of **11i** at a dose of 40 μ g CNP-38 eq/kg. Blood samples were collected up to 168 h post dose and plasma was generated (LiHeparin). Total CNP-38 concentrations were determined by LC-MS/MS

15

Method: The term „total CNP-38“ refers to a combination of both free CNP-38 and CNP-38 bound in the CNP-38 conjugate. Plasma total CNP-38 concentrations were determined by quantification of the C-terminal signature peptide (sequence: IGSMSGLGC) after tryptic digestion and disulfide bridge reduction.

20

LC-MS analysis was carried out by using an Agilent 1290 UPLC coupled to an Agilent 6460 Triple Quad mass spectrometer via an ESI probe. Chromatography was performed on a Waters Acquity BEH C18 analytical column (50 x 1.0 mm I.D., 1.7 μ m particle size, 130 Å) with pre-filter at a flow rate of 0.5 mL/min (T = 45 °C). Water (Ultrapure \leq 500 ppt sodium grade) containing 0.1 % formic acid (v/v) was used as mobile phase A and acetonitrile (ULC/MS grade) with 0.1 % formic acid as mobile phase B. The gradient system comprised a short isocratic step at the initial parameters of 0.1 % B for 0.5 min followed by a linear increase from 0.1 % B to 30 % B in 1.5 min. Mass analysis was performed in the multiple

25

reaction monitoring (MRM) mode, monitoring the reactions of the ionsation m/z 824.5 $[M+H]^{1+}$ to 515.2. As internal standard deuterated CNP-38 conjugate was used.

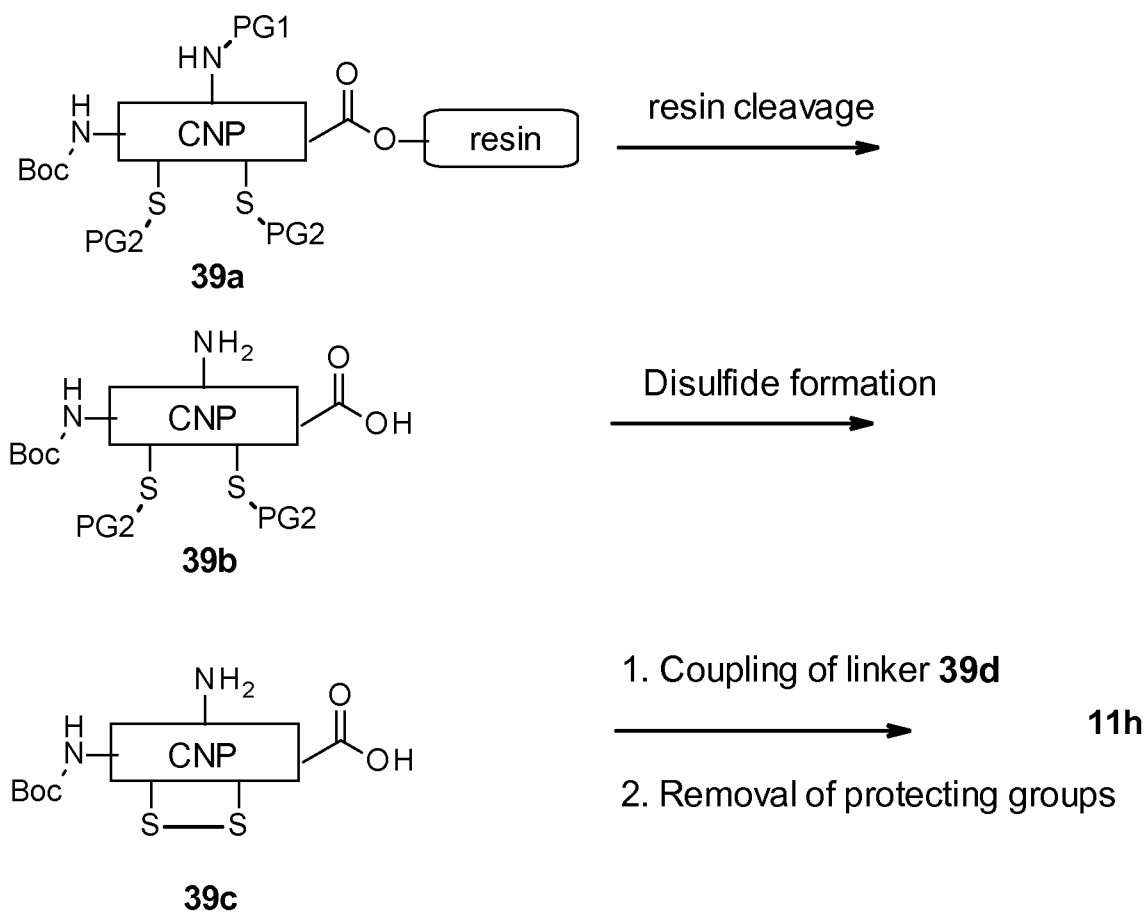
- Calibration standards of CNP-38 conjugate in blank plasma were prepared as follows: The thawed Li-heparin cynomolgus plasma was first homogenized, then centrifuged for 5 minutes. The CNP-38 conjugate formulation was diluted to eight different calibration working solutions containing between 0.103 and 51.28 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ (CNP-38 eq.) in 50% methanol/50% water/0.1 % formic acid (v/v/v). The working solutions were spiked into blank plasma at concentrations between 10.3 ng/ mL (CNP-38 eq.) and 5128 ng/mL (CNP-38 eq.). The standards were used for the generation of a calibration curve. A calibration curve was generated based on analyte to internal standard peak area ratios using weighted ($1/x^2$) linear regression and the sample concentrations were determined by back-calculation against the calibration curve.
- For sample preparation, protein precipitation was carried out by addition of 200 μL of precooled (0°C) acetonitrile to 50 μL of the plasma sample and 10 μL of internal standard solution (2.8 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ CNP-38 eq. in 50% methanol/50% water/0.1 % formic acid (v/v/v)). 200 μL of the supernatant were transferred into a new well-plate and evaporated to dryness (under a gentle nitrogen stream at 35°C). For reconstitution solvent 100 μg Trypsin (order number V5111, Promega GmbH, Mannheim, Germany) were dissolved in 100 μL 10 mM acetic acid. 2.5 mL Tris buffer and 500 μL methanol were added. 50 μL of the resulting reconstitution solvent were added to each cavity of the-well plate. After 3 hours incubation at 37°C (Eppendorf ThermoMixer with ThermoTop), 5 μL of a 0.5 M TCEP solution were added to each cavity and incubated again for 30 min at 37°C . After the samples had cooled to room temperature, 2 μL 60% formic acid in water were added. 10 μL were injected into the UHPLC-MS system. Results: Administration of **11i** to cynomolgus monkeys was well tolerated. After s.c. injection the **11i** median T_{max} was 36 h, and with a mean half-life time of 107 h.

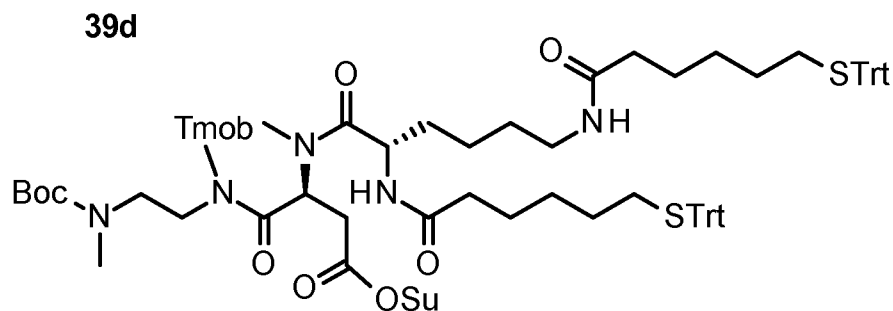
PK Parameter	Result
T_{max} (median)	36 hours
C_{max} (mean)	316 ng/mL
$\text{AUC}_{\text{tlast}}$ (mean)	38,051 h*ng/mL
Half-life (mean)	107 hours

Example 38**Functional cGMP stimulation in NIH-3T3 cells with released CNP**

11i was incubated under physiological conditions (1 mg CNP-38 eq/mL), as described in Example 20. After 7 d, released CNP-38 was isolated by RP-HPLC and analyzed for bioactivity as described in Example 22.

Compound	CNP Variant	PEGylation	EC ₅₀ compound/EC ₅₀ CNP-38
Released CNP-38	CNP-38	-	1

Example 39**10 Alternative synthesis of 11h**



Alternative synthesis of compound **11h**: **39a** is synthesized by solid phase synthesis as described in Material and Methods. Protecting group PG1 for the ring lysin side chain and
 5 protecting groups PG2 for the cysteine side chains is Mmt. Mild resin cleavage and disulfide formation by iodine treatment affords compound **39c**. After coupling of linker molecule **39d** and global deprotection, **11h** is purified by RP-HPLC.

Abbreviations:

10	ACH	achondroplasia
	ACN	acetonitrile
	AcOH	acetic acid
	AUC _{tlast}	Area Under the Curve to the last quantifiable time point
	Bn	benzyl
15	Boc	tert-butyloxycarbonyl
	BSA	bovine serum albumin
	cGMP	cyclic guanosine monophosphate
	C _{max}	Maximum concentration
	CMV	cytomegalovirus
20	CNP	C-type natriuretic peptide
	COMU	(1-cyano-2-ethoxy-2-oxoethylideneaminoxy)dimethylamino-morpholino-carbenium hexafluorophosphate
	conc.	Concentrated
	d	day
25	CTC	Chlorotriylchloride polystyrol
	DAP	Diastolic arterial pressure
	DBU	1,3-diazabicyclo[5.4.0]undecene
	DCC	N,N'-dicyclohexylcarbodiimide
	DCM	dichloromethane

	DIC	N,N'-diisopropylcarbodiimide
	DIEA	N,N-diisopropylethylamine
	DIPEA	N,N-diisopropylethylamine
	DMAP	dimethylamino-pyridine
5	DMEM	Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium
	Dmb	2,4-dimethylbenzyl
	DMEM	Dulbecco's modified eagle medium
	DMF	N,N-dimethylformamide
	DMSO	dimethylsulfoxide
10	DTT	dithiothreitol
	EC50	half maximal effective concentration
	EDC	1-ethyl-3-(3-dimethylaminopropyl)carbodiimide
	EDTA	ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
	ELISA	enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay
15	eq	stoichiometric equivalent
	ESI-MS	electrospray ionization mass spectrometry
	Et	ethyl
	EtOAc	ethyl acetate
	EtOH	ethanol
20	FBS	fetal bovine serum
	FGFR3	fibroblast-growth-factor-receptor 3
	FITC	fluorescein isothiocyanate
	Fmoc	9-fluorenylmethoxycarbonyl
	h	hour
25	HATU	O-(7-azabenzotriazole-1-yl)-N,N,N',N'-tetramethyluronium hexafluorophosphate
	HCH	hypochondroplasia
	HFIP	hexafluoroisopropanol
	HPLC	high performance liquid chromatography
30	HOBt	N-hydroxybenzotriazole
	HR	Heart rate
	IBMX	3-isobutyl-1-methylxanthine
	iPrOH	2-propanol
	iv	intravenous

	ivDde	4,4-dimethyl-2,6-dioxocyclohex-1-ylidene)-3-methylbutyl
	LC	liquid chromatography
	LTQ	linear trap quadrupole
	Mal	3-maleimido propyl
5	MAP	Mean arterial pressure
	Me	methyl
	MeOH	methanol
	min	minutes
	Mmt	monomethoxytrityl
10	MS	mass spectrum / mass spectrometry
	MSA	methanesulfonic acid
	MTBE	methyl-tert-butylether
	Mtt	methyltrityl
	MW	molecular weight
15	m/z	mass-to-charge ratio
	NEP	neutral endopeptidase
	NHS	N-hydroxy succinimide
	NPR	natriuretic peptide receptor
	OtBu	tert-butyloxy
20	PBS	phosphate buffered saline
	PEG	poly(ethylene glycol)
	PFP	pentafluorophenol
	pH	<i>potentia Hydrogenii</i>
	Pr	propyl
25	PyBOP	benzotriazol-1-yl-oxytripyrrolidinophosphonium hexafluorophosphate
	Q-TOF	quadrupole time-of-flight
	qRT-PCR	quantitative real-time polymerase chain reaction
	RP-HPLC	reversed-phase high performance liquid chromatography
	rpm	rounds per minute
30	rt	room temperature
	SIM	single ion monitoring
	SAP	Systolic arterial pressure
	SEC	size exclusion chromatography
	sc	subcutaneous

	Su	succinimidyl
	T ₃ P	2,4,6-tripropyl-1,3,5,2,4,6-trioxatriphosphorinane-2,4,6-trioxide
	TCEP	tris(2-carboxyethyl)phosphine
	TCP	tritylchloride polystyrene
5	TD	thanatophoric dysplasia
	TES	triethylsilane
	TFA	trifluoroacetic acid
	THF	tetrahydrofuran
	TIPS	triisopropylsilane
10	T _{max}	Time of maximum concentration
	TMEDA	N,N,N',N'-tetramethylethylene diamine
	Tmob	2,4,6-trimethoxybenzyl
	TR-FRET	time-resolved fluorescence energy transfer
	Trt	triphenylmethyl, trityl
15	UPLC	ultra performance liquid chromatography
	UV	ultraviolet
	vs.	versus
	ZQ	single quadrupole

Claims

1. A CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof comprising
 - a CNP moiety -D comprising a ring moiety; and
 - 5 - a carrier moiety -Z that is conjugated through a moiety -L²- to a reversible prodrug linker moiety -L¹-, which reversible prodrug linker moiety -L¹- is covalently and reversibly conjugated to a side chain of an amino acid residue of said ring moiety of -D or to the backbone of said ring moiety of -D; and wherein -L²- is a chemical bond or a spacer.
- 10 2. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of claim 1, wherein -L¹- is covalently and reversibly conjugated to the side chain of an amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D.
- 15 3. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of claim 1 or 2, wherein -L¹- is conjugated to the ring moiety of -D through a functional group of the corresponding CNP drug D-H selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, primary and secondary amine, maleimide, thiol, sulfonic acid, carbonate, carbamate, hydroxyl, aldehyde, ketone, hydrazine, isocyanate, isothiocyanate, phosphoric acid, 20 phosphonic acid, haloacetyl, alkyl halide, acryloyl, aryl fluoride, hydroxylamine, sulfate, disulfide, vinyl sulfone, vinyl ketone, diazoalkane, oxirane, guanidine and aziridine
- 25 4. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein -L¹- is connected to the ring moiety of -D through a linkage selected from the group consisting of amide, ester, carbamate, acetal, aminal, imine, oxime, hydrazone, disulfide and acylguanidine
- 30 5. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is selected from the group consisting of proteinogenic amino acid residues and non-proteinogenic amino acid residues.

6. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is selected from the group consisting of histidine, lysine, tryptophan, serine, threonine, tyrosine, aspartic acid, glutamic acid and arginine.

5

7. The CNP prodrug or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the amino acid residue of the ring moiety of -D to which -L¹- is conjugated is a lysine.

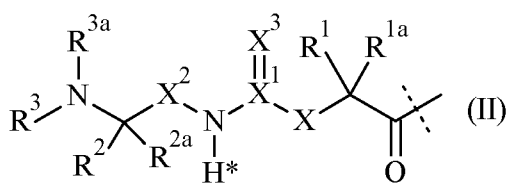
10 8. The CNP prodrug or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the ring moiety has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:96.

9. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24.

15

10. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein -D has the sequence of SEQ ID NO:24 and -L¹- is conjugated to the lysine at position 26.

20 11. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein -L¹- is of formula (II):



wherein the dashed line indicates attachment to a nitrogen of an amino acid side chain of the ring moiety of the CNP moiety by forming an amide bond;

25 -X- is -C(R⁴R^{4a})-; -N(R⁴)-; -O-; -C(R⁴R^{4a})-C(R⁵R^{5a})-; -C(R⁵R^{5a})-C(R⁴R^{4a})-; -C(R⁴R^{4a})-N(R⁶)-; -N(R⁶)-C(R⁴R^{4a})-; -C(R⁴R^{4a})-O-; -O-C(R⁴R^{4a})-; or -C(R⁷R^{7a})-;

X¹ is C; or S(O);

-X²- is -C(R⁸R^{8a})-; or -C(R⁸R^{8a})-C(R⁹R^{9a})-;

30 =X³ is =O; =S; or =N-CN;

$-R^1$, $-R^{1a}$, $-R^2$, $-R^{2a}$, $-R^4$, $-R^{4a}$, $-R^5$, $-R^{5a}$, $-R^6$, $-R^8$, $-R^{8a}$, $-R^9$, $-R^{9a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of -H; and C_{1-6} alkyl;

$-R^3$, $-R^{3a}$ are independently selected from the group consisting of -H; and C_{1-6} alkyl, provided that in case one of $-R^3$, $-R^{3a}$ or both are other than -H they are connected to N to which they are attached through an SP^3 -hybridized carbon atom;

$-R^7$ is $-N(R^{10}R^{10a})$; or $-NR^{10}-(C=O)-R^{11}$;

$-R^{7a}$, $-R^{10}$, $-R^{10a}$, $-R^{11}$ are independently of each other -H; or C_{1-6} alkyl;

optionally, one or more of the pairs $-R^{1a}/-R^{4a}$, $-R^{1a}/-R^{5a}$, $-R^{1a}/-R^{7a}$, $-R^{4a}/-R^{5a}$, $-R^{8a}/-R^{9a}$ form a chemical bond;

optionally, one or more of the pairs $-R^1/-R^{1a}$, $-R^2/-R^{2a}$, $-R^4/-R^{4a}$, $-R^5/-R^{5a}$, $-R^8/-R^{8a}$, $-R^9/-R^{9a}$ are joined together with the atom to which they are attached to form a C_{3-10} cycloalkyl; or 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl;

optionally, one or more of the pairs $-R^1/-R^4$, $-R^1/-R^5$, $-R^1/-R^6$, $-R^1/-R^{7a}$, $-R^4/-R^5$, $-R^4/-R^6$, $-R^8/-R^9$, $-R^2/-R^3$ are joined together with the atoms to which they are attached to form a ring A;

optionally, R^3/R^{3a} are joined together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached to form a 3- to 10-membered heterocycle;

A is selected from the group consisting of phenyl; naphthyl; indenyl; indanyl; tetralinyl; C_{3-10} cycloalkyl; 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl; and 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl; and

wherein $-L^1-$ is substituted with $-L^2-Z$ and wherein $-L^1-$ is optionally further substituted, provided that the hydrogen marked with the asterisk in formula (II) is not replaced by $-L^2-Z$ or a substituent;

wherein

$-L^2-$ is a single chemical bond or a spacer;

$-Z$ is a carrier moiety.

12. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein $-L^2-$ is selected from the group consisting of -T-, $-C(O)O-$, $-O-$, $-C(O)-$, $-C(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)N(R^{y1})-$, $-S(O)_2-$, $-S(O)-$, $-N(R^{y1})S(O)_2N(R^{y1a})-$, $-S-$, $-N(R^{y1})-$, $-OC(OR^{y1})(R^{y1a})-$, $-N(R^{y1})C(O)N(R^{y1a})-$, $-OC(O)N(R^{y1})-$, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein -T-, C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-R^{y2}$, which

are the same or different and wherein C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of -T-, -C(O)O-, -O-, -C(O)-, -C(O)N(R^{y3})-, -S(O)₂N(R^{y3})-, -S(O)N(R^{y3})-, -S(O)₂-, -S(O)-, -N(R^{y3})S(O)₂N(R^{y3a})-, -S-, -N(R^{y3})-, -OC(OR^{y3})(R^{y3a})-, -N(R^{y3})C(O)N(R^{y3a})-, and -OC(O)N(R^{y3})-;

5

-R^{y1} and -R^{y1a} are independently of each other selected from the group consisting of -H, -T, C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl; wherein -T, C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more -R^{y2}, which are the same or different, and wherein C₁₋₅₀ alkyl, C₂₋₅₀ alkenyl, and C₂₋₅₀ alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of -T-, -C(O)O-, -O-, -C(O)-, -C(O)N(R^{y4})-, -S(O)₂N(R^{y4})-, -S(O)N(R^{y4})-, -S(O)₂-, -S(O)-, -N(R^{y4})S(O)₂N(R^{y4a})-, -S-, -N(R^{y4})-, -OC(OR^{y4})(R^{y4a})-, -N(R^{y4})C(O)N(R^{y4a})-, and -OC(O)N(R^{y4})-;

10

15

each T is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C₃₋₁₀ cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicycyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl; wherein each T is independently optionally substituted with one or more -R^{y2}, which are the same or different;

20

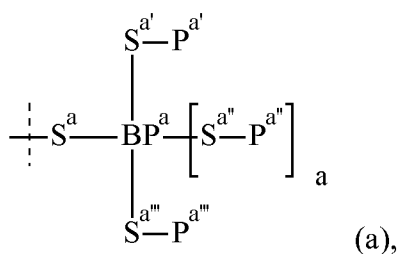
each -R^{y2} is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, -CN, oxo (=O), -COOR^{y5}, -OR^{y5}, -C(O)R^{y5}, -C(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a}), -S(O)₂N(R^{y5}R^{y5a}), -S(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a}), -S(O)₂R^{y5}, -S(O)R^{y5}, -N(R^{y5})S(O)₂N(R^{y5a}R^{y5b}), -SR^{y5}, -N(R^{y5}R^{y5a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R^{y5}, -N(R^{y5})C(O)R^{y5a}, -N(R^{y5})S(O)₂R^{y5a}, -N(R^{y5})S(O)R^{y5a}, -N(R^{y5})C(O)OR^{y5a}, -N(R^{y5})C(O)N(R^{y5a}R^{y5b}), -OC(O)N(R^{y5}R^{y5a}), and C₁₋₆ alkyl; wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different; and

25

each -R^{y3}, -R^{y3a}, -R^{y4}, -R^{y4a}, -R^{y5}, -R^{y5a} and -R^{y5b} is independently selected from the group consisting of -H, and C₁₋₆ alkyl, wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different.

30

13. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein -Z is a branched polymer.
14. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of claim 13, wherein the branched moiety -Z has a molecular weight ranging from and including 10 kDa to 80 kDa.
15. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein -Z comprises a moiety of formula (a)



wherein

the dashed line indicates attachment to $-\text{L}^2-$ or to the remainder of -Z;

BP^{a} is a branching point selected from the group consisting of $-\text{N}<$, $-\text{CR}<$ and $>\text{C}<$;

$-\text{R}$ is selected from the group consisting of $-\text{H}$ and C_{1-6} alkyl;

a is 0 if BP^{a} is $-\text{N}<$ or $-\text{CR}<$ and n is 1 if BP^{a} is $>\text{C}<$;

$-\text{S}^{\text{a}}$ -, $-\text{S}^{\text{a}'}$ -, $-\text{S}^{\text{a}''}$ - and $-\text{S}^{\text{a}'''}$ - are independently of each other a chemical bond or are selected from the group consisting of C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl; wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally substituted with one or more $-\text{R}^1$, which are the same or different and wherein C_{1-50} alkyl, C_{2-50} alkenyl, and C_{2-50} alkynyl are optionally interrupted by one or more groups selected from the group consisting of $-\text{T}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{O}-$, $-\text{O}-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2-$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^2)\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^{2\text{a}})-$, $-\text{S}-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$, $-\text{OC}(\text{OR}^2)(\text{R}^{2\text{a}})-$, $-\text{N}(\text{R}^2)\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^{2\text{a}})-$, and $-\text{OC}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^2)-$;

each $-\text{T}-$ is independently selected from the group consisting of phenyl, naphthyl, indenyl, indanyl, tetralinyl, C_{3-10} cycloalkyl, 3- to 10-membered heterocyclyl, 8- to 11-membered heterobicyclyl, 8- to 30-membered carbopolycyclyl, and 8- to 30-membered heteropolycyclyl; wherein each $-\text{T}-$ is independently optionally substituted with one or more $-\text{R}^1$, which are the same or different;

each $-\text{R}^1$ is independently selected from the group consisting of halogen, $-\text{CN}$, oxo ($=\text{O}$), $-\text{COOR}^3$, $-\text{OR}^3$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{R}^3$, $-\text{C}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3\text{a}})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})_2\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3\text{a}})$, $-\text{S}(\text{O})\text{N}(\text{R}^3\text{R}^{3\text{a}})$,

-S(O)₂R³, -S(O)R³, -N(R³)S(O)₂N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -SR³, -N(R³R^{3a}), -NO₂, -OC(O)R³,
 -N(R³)C(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)₂R^{3a}, -N(R³)S(O)R^{3a}, -N(R³)C(O)OR^{3a},
 -N(R³)C(O)N(R^{3a}R^{3b}), -OC(O)N(R³R^{3a}), and C₁₋₆ alkyl; wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is
 optionally substituted with one or more halogen, which are the same or different;
 5 each -R², -R^{2a}, -R³, -R^{3a} and -R^{3b} is independently selected from the group consisting
 of -H, and C₁₋₆ alkyl, wherein C₁₋₆ alkyl is optionally substituted with one or more
 halogen, which are the same or different; and
 -P^{a'}, -P^{a''} and -P^{a'''} are independently a polymeric moiety.

- 10 16. A pharmaceutical composition comprising at least one CNP prodrug or a
 pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 15 and at least one
 excipient.
17. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1
 15 to 15 or the pharmaceutical composition of claim 16 for use as a medicament.
18. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or the pharmaceutical
 composition of claim 17, wherein the medicament is used in the treatment of
 achondroplasia.
- 20 19. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1
 to 15 or the pharmaceutical composition of claim 16 for use in a method of treatment
 of a disease which can be treated with CNP.
- 25 20. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or the pharmaceutical
 composition of claim 19, wherein the disease which can be treated with CNP is
 selected from the group consisting of achondroplasia, hypochondroplasia, short
 stature, dwarfism, osteochondrodysplasias, thanatophoric dysplasia, osteogenesis
 imperfecta, achondrogenesis, chondrodysplasia punctata, homozygous achondroplasia,
 30 camptomelic dysplasia, congenital lethal hypophosphatasia, perinatal lethal type of
 osteogenesis imperfecta, short-rib polydactyly syndromes, rhizomelic type of
 chondrodysplasia punctata, Jansen-type metaphyseal dysplasia, spondyloepiphyseal
 dysplasia congenita, atelosteogenesis, diastrophic dysplasia, congenital short femur,
 Langer-type mesomelic dysplasia, Nievergelt-type mesomelic dysplasia, Robinow

- syndrome, Reinhardt syndrome, acrodysostosis, peripheral dysostosis, Kniest dysplasia, fibrochondrogenesis, Roberts syndrome, acromesomelic dysplasia, micromelia, Morquio syndrome, Kniest syndrome, metatrophic dysplasia, spondyloepimetaphyseal dysplasia, neurofibromatosis, Legius syndrome, LEOPARD syndrome, Noonan syndrome, hereditary gingival fibromatosis, neurofibromatosis type 1, Legius syndrome, cardiofaciocutaneous syndrome, Costello syndrome, SHOX deficiency, idiopathic short stature, growth hormone deficiency, osteoarthritis, cleidocranial dysostosis, craniosynostosis, dactyly, brachydactyly, camptodactyly, polydactyly, syndactyly, dyssegmental dysplasia, enchondromatosis, fibrous dysplasia, hereditary multiple exostoses, hypophosphatemic rickets, Jaffe-Lichtenstein syndrome, Marfan syndrome, McCune-Albright syndrome, osteopetrosis and osteopoikilosis.
- 5
- 10
21. The CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or the pharmaceutical composition of claim 19 or 20, wherein the disease which can be treated with CNP is achondroplasia.
- 15
22. A method of treating, controlling, delaying or preventing in a mammalian patient in need of the treatment of one or more diseases which can be treated with CNP, comprising the step of administering to said patient in need thereof a therapeutically effective amount of the CNP prodrug or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof of any one of claims 1 to 15 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof or the pharmaceutical composition of claim 16.
- 20

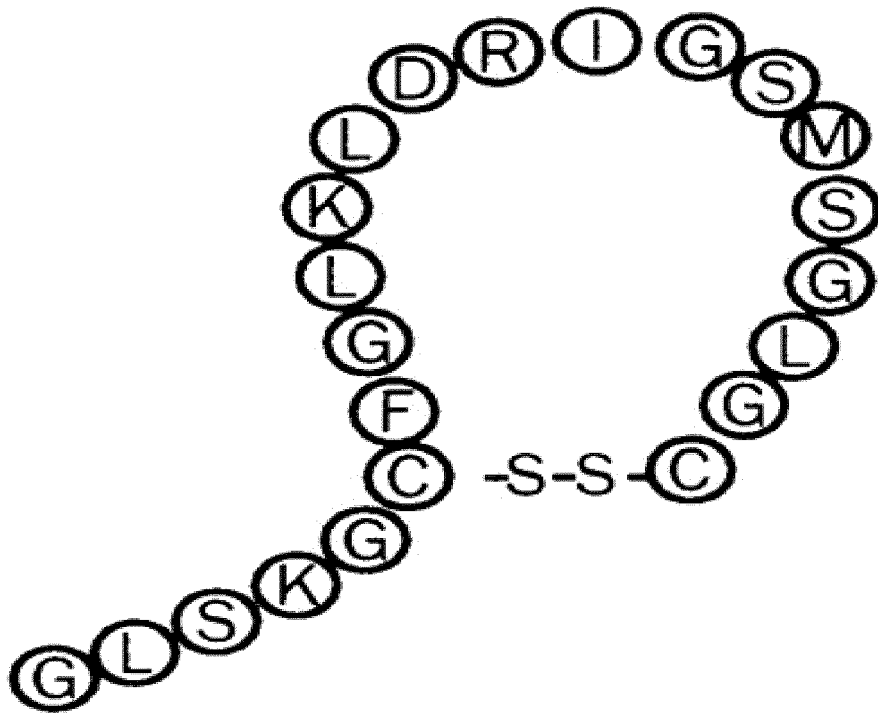


Fig. 1

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2017/050209

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
INV. A61K47/60 A61P19/08
ADD.
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
A61K
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
EPO-Internal, BIOSIS, EMBASE, CHEM ABS Data, DISSERTATION ABS, PASCAL, WPI Data

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 2010/135541 A2 (BIOMARIN PHARM INC [US]; WENDT DANIEL J [US]; AOYAGI-SCHARBER MIKA [US]) 25 November 2010 (2010-11-25) cited in the application examples sequence 160	1-22
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search 3 April 2017	Date of mailing of the international search report 11/04/2017
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016	Authorized officer Dullaart, Anwyn

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/EP2017/050209

C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	D. J. WENDT ET AL: "Neutral Endopeptidase-Resistant C-Type Natriuretic Peptide Variant Represents a New Therapeutic Approach for Treatment of Fibroblast Growth Factor Receptor 3-Related Dwarfism", JOURNAL OF PHARMACOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTAL THERAPEUTICS, vol. 353, no. 1, 3 February 2015 (2015-02-03), pages 132-149, XP055282054, DOI: 10.1124/jpet.114.218560 abstract pages 133-134 page 136; table 1	1-22
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