

Low-Scale Expression and Purification of an Active Putative Iduronate 2-Sulfate Sulfatase-Like Enzyme from *Escherichia coli* K12

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The sulfatase family involves a group of enzymes with a large degree of similarity. Until now, sixteen human sulfatases have been identified, most of them found in lysosomes. Human deficiency of sulfatases generates various genetic disorders characterized by abnormal accumulation of sulfated intermediate compounds. Mucopolysaccharidosis type II is characterized by the deficiency of iduronate 2-sulfate sulfatase (IDS), causing the lysosomal accumulation of heparan and dermatan sulfates. Currently, there are several cases of genetic diseases treated with enzyme replacement therapy, which have generated a great interest in the development of systems for recombinant protein expression. In this work we expressed the human recombinant IDS-Like enzyme (hrIDS-Like) in *Escherichia coli* DH5α. The enzyme concentration revealed by ELISA varied from 78.13 to 94.35 ng/ml and the specific activity varied from 34.20 to 25.97 nmol/h/mg. Western blotting done after affinity chromatography purification showed a single band of approximately 40 kDa, which was recognized by an IgY polyclonal antibody that was developed against the specific peptide of the native protein. Our 100 ml-shake-flask assays allowed us to improve the enzyme activity seven fold, compared to the *E. coli* JM109/pUC13-hrIDS-Like system.

Additionally, the results obtained in the present study were equal to those obtained with the *Pichia pastoris* GS1115/pPIC-9-hrIDS-Like system (3 L bioreactor scale). The system used in this work (*E. coli* DH5α/pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like) emerges as a strategy for improving protein expression and purification, aimed at recombinant protein chemical characterization, future laboratory assays for enzyme replacement therapy, and as new evidence of active putative sulfatase production in *E. coli*.

Keywords: iduronate 2-sulfate sulfatase, *E. coli* DH5α, recombinant protein expression, affinity chromatography

Introduction

Inborn errors of metabolism (IEM) are a group of disorders caused by defects in biochemical functioning of certain proteins. IEM are rare diseases that in general can affect 1% of newborns (Beaudet *et al.*, 2001). Up to 95% of these genetic diseases are autosomal recessive and some IEM are X-linked recessive (Barrera, 1990, 1993). Currently there are over 4,000 known genetic diseases, including the IEM (Beaudet *et al.*, 2001).

Many of the known IEM are associated with a deficiency or malfunction of sulfatases (Neufeld and Muenzer, 2001). The family of sulfatases involves a group of enzymes with a large degree of similarity (Parenti *et al.*, 1997). Human deficiency of sulfatases generates various genetic disorders characterized by abnormal accumulation of sulfated intermediate compounds (Hopwood and Ballabio, 2001; Von Figura *et al.*, 2001). To date, sixteen human sulfatases have been identified, most of them located in lysosomes, confirming that sulfatases constitute a family of evolutionarily conserved genes that share a common ancestor (Scott *et al.*, 1995; Parenti *et al.*, 1997). Sulfatases become active enzymes when either a serine (Ser) or cysteine (Cys) residue present in the active site is converted into formyl-glycine (FGly) (Dierks *et al.*, 1998a, 1998b; Miech *et al.*, 1998; von Figura *et al.*, 1998; Dierks *et al.*, 1999; Szameit *et al.*, 1999; Waldow *et al.*, 1999).

Hunter syndrome or Mucopolysaccharidosis type II (MPSII), (OMIM: 309900) is characterized by the deficiency of iduronate 2-sulfate sulfatase (IDS), (EC 3.1.6.13), causing the lysosomal accumulation of heparan sulfate and dermatan sulfate, with consequent increased urinary excretion. Deficiency of this enzyme results in severe or moderate disease manifestations. The most frequent clinical signs are: coarse features, dysostosis multiplex, skeletal deformities, hepatosplenomegaly, small stature, pulmonary hypertension, alterations in

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the myocardium, mental retardation and premature death (Neufeld and Muenzer, 2001).

Currently there are several cases of genetic diseases treated with enzyme replacement therapy (ERT), such as bovine adenosine deaminase (EC 1.4.3.4) used in the treatment of a severe form of combined immunodeficiency (Hilman and Sorensen, 1994), and glucocerebrosidase (EC 3.2.1.45) for treatment of type I Gaucher disease (Niederau *et al.*, 1998; Friedman *et al.*, 1999), which prevents progressive manifestations of the disease (Weinreb *et al.*, 2002). It is known that ERT for Hurler syndrome (MPSI) through the supply of α -L-iduronidase (EC 3.2.1.76) has allowed the recovery of normal liver size in 8/10 patients after 26 weeks of treatment and has decreased down to 61% the apnea and hypopnea episodes during sleep time (Kakkis *et al.*, 2001). Additionally, Pompe disease and the Niemann-Pick type B disease have been studied, where α -glucosidase (EC 3.2.1.3) and sphingomyelinase (EC 3.1.4.12) are the respective deficient lysosomal enzymes involved. Currently, studies are conducted in relation with the pathology of hereditary angioedema, a condition in which there is a deficiency of C1 inhibitor of esterase, and *Pemphigus vulgaris* in which there is an autoimmune response to desmoglein-3. In relation to the MPSII, it has been possible to correct the deficiency in Hunter fibroblasts by supplying recombinant IDS expressed in CHO cells (Bond *et al.*, 1997; Kakkis *et al.*, 2001); additionally, the FDA and European commission have approved the drug ElapraseTM, a recombinant form of IDS produced in a continuous line of human cells (Muenzer *et al.*, 2006, 2007; García *et al.*, 2007). All these studies have generated great interest in the development of recombinant protein expression systems towards the ERT for MPSII and other diseases.

Prokaryotic systems such as *Escherichia coli* have been the most widely used for recombinant protein production at both industrial and laboratory scales. *E. coli* is a Gram-negative bacterium and was the first organism to have its genome sequenced and annotated. Therefore, several methods have been developed to improve gene cloning and protein expression in *E. coli*. This is mainly due to its genetic simplicity, fast growth rate, easy handling, high cell density production and the availability of an increasingly large number of vectors and host strains. Also, it needs minimal and inexpensive substances for propagation (Baneyx and Mujacic, 2004; Majidzadeh-A *et al.*, 2010; Nabavinia *et al.*, 2011).

In previous work, we expressed hrIDS-Like in *Pichia pastoris* (Córdoba-Ruiz *et al.*, 2009; Landázuri *et al.*, 2009). Recently, we demonstrated the transient expression of hrIDS by using *E. coli* K12 (JM109) (Poutou-Piñales *et al.*, 2010). Another human sulfatase, the *N*-acetylgalactosamine-6-sulfate sulfatase (GALNS), has been successfully expressed in the active form in *E. coli* (BL21) (Poutou, 2006; Rodríguez *et al.*, 2010). Considering the importance of these findings and some common characteristics between GALNS and IDS (Neufeld and Muenzer, 2001; Poutou, 2006), in our present work we expressed hrIDS-Like in *E. coli* DH5 α (K12) as a strategy for (i) improving expression of this protein, and (ii) facilitating its purification. This strategy is aimed at the chemical characterization of the recombinant protein and future ERT laboratory assays. Our results provide new evidence of active sulfatase production in *E. coli*.

Materials and Methods

Escherichia coli K12 strain

DH5 α (F' endA1 glnV44 thi-1 recA1 relA1 gyrA96 deoR nupG Φ 80 $dlacZ\Delta$ M15 Δ (*lacZYA-argF*)U169, hsdR17($r_K^- m_K^+$), λ^-) was used for transformation and expression of the designed genetic construction (Sambrook and Russell, 2001).

Obtaining the hrIDS-cDNA

The plasmid pUC13-hrIDS was digested with *Eco*RI (Invitrogen, USA) according to the manufacturer's instructions. For the prediction of the expected size of the restriction fragments, we carried out a sequence analysis of pUC13-hrIDS using the NEBcutter program (Vincze *et al.*, 2003).

Cloning hrIDS-cDNA into pGEX-3X

The *Eco*RI restriction product (hrIDS-cDNA) was cloned into pGEX-3 \times (GE Healthcare, USA) previously linearized with the same enzyme, to obtain the pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like plasmid. The ligation reaction was performed using 0.1 μ g and 0.05 μ g of insert and vector respectively, using the LigaFast kit (Promega, USA) and employing 3 units of T4-DNA ligase in 5 μ l of 2 \times Rapid Ligation Buffer [1 \times : 30 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.8 \pm 0.2), 10 mM MgCl₂, 10 mM DTT, 1 mM ATP and 5% (w/v) PEG] in a final volume of 10 μ l, and incubated for 3 h at room temperature (25°C). The reaction was stored at -20°C until the transformation process (Sambrook and Russell, 2001).

Transformation of *E. coli* DH5 α with pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like

Recombinant vector pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like was introduced into competent *E. coli* DH5 α cells using the CaCl₂ method and transformed by heat shock at 42°C (Sambrook and Russell, 2001; Zhao *et al.*, 2009). As transformation controls *E. coli* DH5 α and DH5 α /pGEX-3X were used. Recombinant colonies of *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like were plated on both Luria-Bertani (LB) (10 g/L Tryptone, 5 g/L Yeast extract and 10 g/L NaCl) and LBA (LB supplemented with 100 μ g/ml ampicillin) (Sambrook and Russell, 2001) and were then incubated at 37°C overnight. Recombinant colonies were grown in LBA broth and mixed with LBA fresh media supplemented with 60% (v/v) glycerol in 1:1 (v/v) proportion for preparing a Master Cell Bank, and conserved at -70°C as stocks until screening and preliminary expression assays (Meza *et al.*, 2004).

Molecular screening

Twenty colonies of *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like were selected for screening of cDNA in frame orientation through restriction enzyme analysis with *Eco*RI and *Pvu*II (Invitrogen, USA) in order to demonstrate the presence, in frame, of the gene cloned. For the prediction of the fragments that would result from the restriction enzyme analysis mentioned above, we carried out a sequence analysis of pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like using NEBcutter (Sambrook and Russell, 2001; Vincze *et al.*, 2003).

DNA electrophoresis analysis

Agarose gels were prepared at 1% (w/v) in 1× TBE [10.8 g/L Tris-base, 5.5 g/L boric acid and 4 ml of 0.5 M EDTA (pH 8.0±0.2)] containing 0.5 µg/ml ethidium bromide and were run at 80 V for 45 min and visualized under UV light. As molecular size markers, Lambda DNA/*Hind*III (Invitrogen, USA) and Lambda DNA/*Pst*I (Fermentas INC, Canada) were used.

hrIDS-cDNA sequencing

The construct pGEX-3X-hrIDS-*Like* was used to sequence the hrIDS-cDNA at the Instituto Nacional de Salud (INS, Bogotá D.C.) using the primers IDS-Forward (5'-GGAATTCTCCGAAACGCAGGCCAACTCG-3') and IDS-Reverse (5'-GGCGCCCGCAGAATTCCTCACTGAGGGATGTCTG-3'). The reaction was carried out in an ABI PRISM 377 automatic sequencer using the BigDye® Terminator reaction v1.1 Cycle Sequencing (Applied Biosystems, USA). In order to compare the obtained sequence with the sequences reported for human IDS (hIDS), BLAST and ClustalW2 programs were used (Altschul *et al.*, 1997; Larkin *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, the conceptual translation was performed using the translate tool for comparison with the native protein hIDS (Gasteiger *et al.*, 2005).

Bioinformatic analysis

Considering the homology found after sequencing the cloned cDNA, and to compare the 3D structure of hrIDS-*Like* with the model proposed for the native hIDS, multiple alignments were performed with the sequence of the mature hrIDS-*Like* protein [starting from threonine (Thr) 34, using HHpred] (Söding, 2005) in order to find homologies with proteins whose tertiary structure have been experimentally determined and reported in the Protein Data Bank (www.pdb.org). For the construction and visualization of the 3D model we used Swiss-PdbViewer v.4.02 (Guez and Peitisch, 1997), and additionally we performed the 3D visualization of the structure using POV 3.5.

Protein expression assays

In this assay 1 ml from a stock of *E. coli* DH5α/pGEX-3X-hrIDS-*Like* was inoculated into 9 ml of LBA and cultured overnight at 30°C, 200 rpm and OD₆₀₀ between 0.8-1. Then, 10 ml of each culture were used to inoculate different 500 ml shake flasks containing 90 ml of LBA, which were incubated at 30°C and 200 rpm and OD₆₀₀ between 0.8-1.0, for 18 h. As negative controls, *E. coli* DH5α and DH5α/pGEX-3X were used. Culture samples (3.5 ml) were taken every 2 h, in order to assay optical density (OD₆₀₀), pellet disruption, protein concentration in culture media and cell lysates, SDS-PAGE and detection of hrIDS-*Like* enzyme activity as previously described (Maleki *et al.*, 2010; Dakterzada *et al.*, 2012).

Pellet disruption

Samples (0 and 18 h) were treated as follows: cells were collected by centrifugation at 5,000×g and 4°C for 5 min. The supernatant was stored at -20°C until use. The pellet was suspended in lysis buffer [50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5±0.2),

200 mM NaCl, 5% glycerol (v/v), 1 mM dithiothreitol and 1 mM PMSF] with 300 µg/ml of lysozyme, and incubated for 1 h at 4°C. After incubation, cells were treated with 4 freeze-thaw cycles (5 min in liquid N₂ followed by 5 min at 37°C) and centrifuged at 4,000×g for 10 min. Both cell lysate and culture supernatant were assayed for hrIDS activity.

Detection of hrIDS-Like enzyme specific activity

The disruption supernatants of each sample (10 µl) were mixed with 20 µl of substrate solution containing 1.25 nM of 4-methylumbelliferyl-α-iduronate 2-sulfate (MU-αIdoA-2S) dissolved in 0.1 M CH₃COONa/CH₃COO (pH 5.0±0.2) and 10 mM Pb(CH₃COO)₂·3H₂O, followed by incubation at 37°C for 4 h. Then, 40 µl of Pi/Ci buffer [0.4 M NaH₂PO₄, 0.2 M C₆H₅Na₃O₇·2H₂O (pH 4.5±0.2), 0.02% NaN₃ (w/v)] and 10 µl of LEBT were added. The solutions were incubated at 37°C for 37 h. The reaction was stopped with 650 µl of stop buffer [0.5 M NaHCO₃/NaCO₃ (pH 10.7±0.2), with 1.7 mM glycine]. Fluorescence was determined in a Turner 450 fluorometer, with excitation and emission wavelengths of 360 and 415 nm, respectively (Voznyi *et al.*, 2001). Concentration of hrIDS was determined by ELISA following the methodology previously described by Sosa *et al.* (2011). Ninety six well microplates were coated with rabbit anti-IDS IgG (Peña *et al.*, 2005) and incubated at 37°C for 3 h, and then incubated overnight at 4°C. The wells were blocked with non-fat dry milk in PBS and with PBS 0.05% Tween 20, the antigen was added in PBS and incubated 1 h at 37°C. Biotinylated IgY anti-IDS antibodies (Sosa *et al.*, 2011) were applied and incubated at 37°C for 3 h, and then incubated overnight at 4°C followed by washes with PBS 0.05% Tween 20. Peroxidase-labelled streptavidin (Promega, USA) was used according to the manufacturer's instructions. The bound streptavidin was detected with TMB as a substrate; absorbance was read at 450 nm. Total enzyme activity was expressed as U/mg (nmol/h/mg) of specific protein.

Quantification of proteins in the culture medium and cell lysate

The total protein concentrations in culture media and cell lysates of *E. coli* DH5α/pGEX-3X-IDS-*Like* and DH5α/pGEX-3X were determined by using the bicinchoninic acid kit for protein determination (Sigma-Aldrich, USA).

SDS-PAGE

Samples of disrupted cells were separated electrophoretically in polyacrylamide gels 12% (w/v) using Tris-Glycine 1× buffer [3.02 g/L Tris-base, 18.8 g/L Glycine, 10 g/L SDS 2% (w/v)]. A 20 µl volume of sample at a concentration of 1 µg/µl was used with 1× of loading buffer [50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 6.8±0.2), 2% SDS (w/v), 0.1% (w/v) bromophenol blue, 10% (v/v) glycerol, 100 mM β-mercaptoethanol] in a 3:1 (v/v) ratio. The pre-stained BenchMark™ Protein Ladder (Invitrogen) was used as molecular weight marker. Gels were stained with Coomassie brilliant blue [0.25 g Coomassie Brilliant Blue R-250 in 90 ml of methanol:H₂O (1:1 (v/v)) and 10 ml of glacial acetic acid] (Laemmli, 1970).

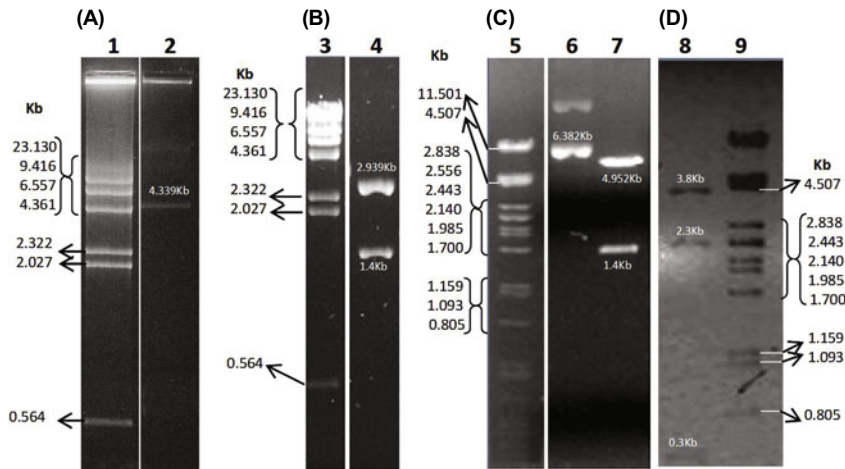


Fig. 1. Agarose gel electrophoreses [1% (w/v) in 1×-TBE] (A) 1, Molecular size marker λ HindIII; 2, pUC13-hrIDS. (B) 3, Molecular size marker λ HindIII; 4, pUC13-hrIDS digested with *Eco*RI. (C) 5, Molecular size marker λ PstI; 6, pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like; 7, pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like digested with *Eco*RI. (D) 8, pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like digested with *Pvu*II; 9, Molecular size marker λ PstI. DNA photographs were contrasted by using Quantity One from BioRad (V4.6.9).

Purification of hrIDS-Like

Another 500 ml shake flask culture was prepared and the crude extract of the disrupted pellet was used in the purification assay. Purification was performed by affinity chromatography on a glutathione-agarose matrix (Sigma-Aldrich) at 4°C. The column was equilibrated with PBS (8 g/L NaCl, 0.2 g/L KCl, 1.44 g/L Na₂HPO₄, 0.24 g/L KH₂PO₄, pH 7.4±0.2). Triton X-100 was added to a final concentration of 1% (v/v) to the product of cell lysis; the mixture was passed through the affinity column (2 ml/min); once the protein was attached, the column was washed with PBS-T buffer [PBS containing 1% Triton X-100 (v/v)].

For the recovery of the GST-hrIDS fusion protein (GST, glutathione-S-transferase, EC 2.5.1.18), elution buffer was used (10 mM reduced glutathione in 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 9.5±0.2 at 4°C). For the release of the fusion protein eluate, the collected fraction was treated with Factor X Activation Peptide (Xa) (La Vallie and McCoy, 1994) (Sigma-Aldrich) (1 mM CaCl₂, 100 mM NaCl, and 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0±0.2 at 22°C for 16 h) (Nagai and Thøgersen, 1987). Factor Xa removal was performed with the Factor Xa Removal kit (Nagai and Thøgersen, 1984) (Sigma-Aldrich). A culture of *E. coli* DH5a/pGEX-3X was used as negative control.

Western blot analysis of the hrIDS-Like

Pure hrIDS-Like was analyzed by western blot following the methodology previously described by Sosa *et al.* (2011). After separation in SDS-PAGE, protein bands were transferred to a 0.45 μ m nitrocellulose membrane previously soaked in transfer buffer (3.03 g/L Tris, 14.04 g/L glycine, 1 g/L SDS, 200 ml methanol, pH 8.3±0.2). The membrane was blocked with non-fat dry milk in PBS buffer with 0.2% (v/v) Tween 20 solution. After washing, the membrane was cut into strips and incubated with polyclonal IgY anti-IDS (Sosa *et al.*, 2011) for 1 h at room temperature. The membrane was washed and incubated with anti IgY-HRP (conjugate) and revealed using the DAB substrate (Sigma-Aldrich).

Results

Obtaining the hrIDS-cDNA

Once pUC13-hrIDS (Fig. 1A) was digested with *Eco*RI, a band corresponding to 1.4 kb-cDNA-hrIDS was obtained (Fig. 1B).

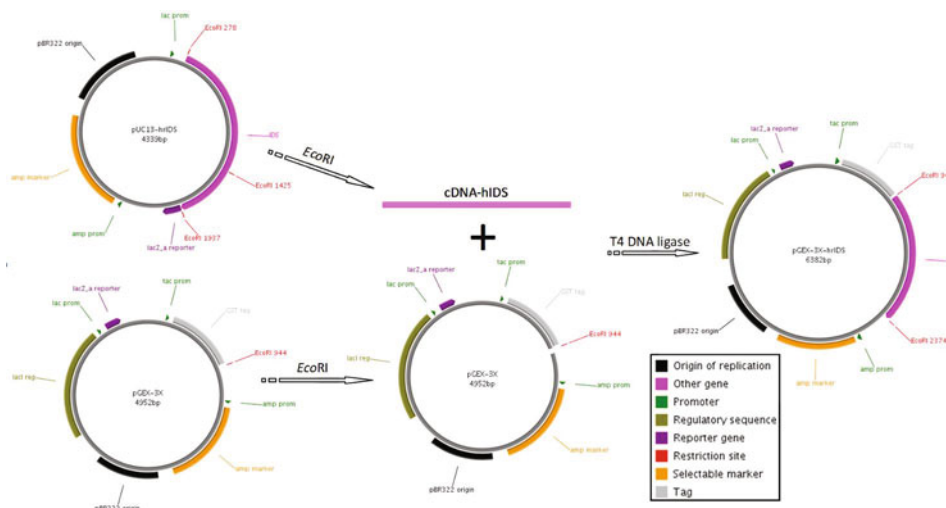


Fig. 2. Diagram of the cloning strategy and plasmid vectors. Plasmid map design was performed using PlasMapper (V2.0) (Dong *et al.*, 2004).

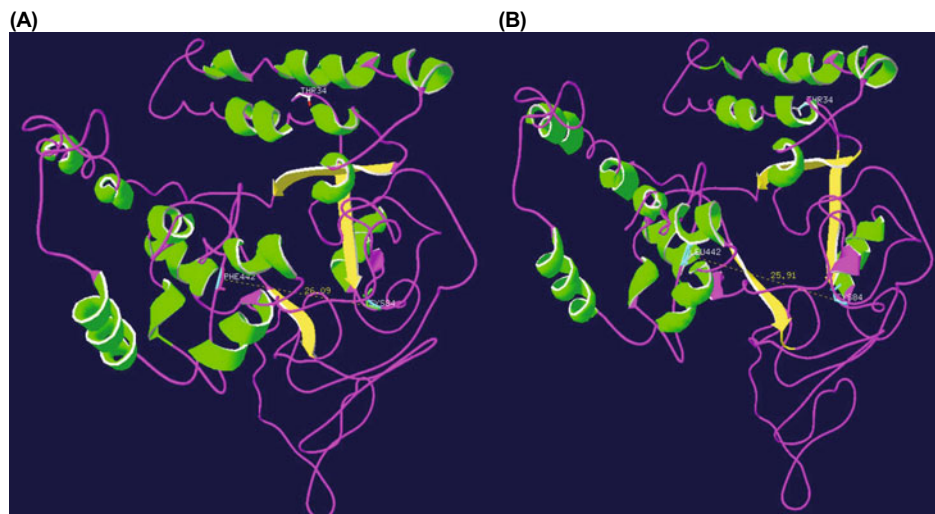


Fig. 3. 3D models of the native hIDS and hrIDS-Like. In both cases, Thr 34 highlighted at the amino terminus, proves that the model represents the mature protein because of the lack of the signal peptide (25 residues) and of the pro-peptide (8 residues). (A) model of the hIDS showing a distance of 26.09Å between Phe 442 and Cys 84. (B) hrIDS-Like model showing a distance of 25.91Å between Leu 442 and Cys 84. For the construction and visualization of the models we used Swiss-Pdb-Viewer v.4.02 and POV 3.5.

Cloning hrIDS-cDNA in pGEX-3X

The cloning strategy, the maps of the plasmid vectors and the final constructs are shown in Fig. 2. The construct pGEX-3X-hrIDS had a size of 6.4 kb (Fig. 1C), and the cutting with *EcoRI* released the fragment of the recombinant IDS (1.4 kb).

Molecular screening

Figure 1C shows the plasmid pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like and its respective restriction analysis using *EcoRI* revealed a band of 5 kb (vector) and another band of 1.4 kb confirming the presence of the hrIDS in the expression construct. Cloning in-frame with the *tac* promoter was demonstrated by digestion with *PvuII*, which should generate fragments with sizes of 3766, 2255, 268, and 93 bp as reported by the virtual restriction analysis. Figure 1C shows 3 bands with approximate sizes of 3.8, 2.3, and 0.3 kb that are consistent with those expected; however, the band below 0.1 kb could not be observed due to the gel concentration used.

hrIDS-cDNA sequencing

The sequence obtained from the hrIDS was compared with the sequence corresponding to the coding region of *Homo sapiens* IDS, transcript variant 1, mRNA (NCBI Reference Sequence: NM_000202.5) and there was an identity of 99%. There were two transition-type substitutions: C1269T and T1324C. Analyzing the results of the conceptual translation, the first substitution was silent for the amino acid proline (Pro) and the second one resulted in a change of phenylalanine (Phe) for leucine (Leu).

Bioinformatic analysis

Multiple alignments of the mature protein showed homology with fragments of 40 proteins with experimentally determined tertiary structure. These molecules showed identities between 14 and 25%, similarities between 0.010 and 0.424, and occurrence probabilities between 33.38 and 99.99%. They also showed a high homology with the tertiary structure of arylsulfatase (1HDD, EC 3.1.6.1) from *Pseudomonas aur-*

ginosa, arylsulfatase A (1AUK, EC 3.1.6.8) from *Homo sapiens*, Ectonucleotide pyrophosphatase (3NKQ, EC 3.1.4.39) from *Mus musculus*, and N-Acetylgalactosamine-4-sulfatase (1FSU, EC 3.1.6.12) from *Homo sapiens*. To obtain a 3D model of the hrIDS-Like, homologous fragments of the four previously mentioned proteins were linked, and only 12 amino acids with no 3D prediction were added manually. These amino acids were added one by one based on the secondary structure prediction, to finally expose the structure to several energy minimization cycles. The resulting model includes the mutation where Phe 442 changes by Leu. The 3D models proposed for the native hIDS (Sáenz *et al.*, 2007) and hrIDS-Like are shown in Fig. 3. Using these models the distance between the Phe or Leu and Cys 84 (key amino acid in the active center of the protein) was measured; additionally the Root Mean Square (RMS) reported a value of 0.012 (Guez and Peitisch, 1997).

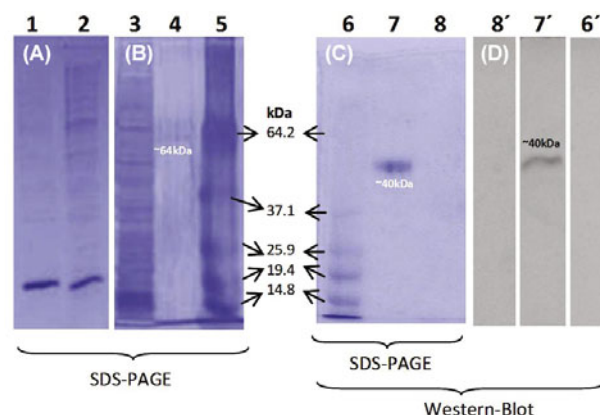


Fig. 4. SDS-PAGE (12% w/v) and Western blot analysis. (A) 1, Cell lysate of *E. coli* DH5α/pGEX-3X; 2, Cell lysate of *E. coli* DH5α/pGEX-3X-IDS-Like. (B) 3, Cell lysate of *E. coli* DH5α/pGEX-3X-IDS-Like. 4, Purification product GST-hrIDS-Like; 5, Molecular weight marker (Benchmark). (C) 6, Molecular weight marker (Benchmark); 7, Product of the cutting of hrIDS-Like with Factor Xa and Factor Xa Removal kit; 8, Negative control. (D) 8', Negative control; 7', Product of the cutting with Factor Xa; 6', Molecular weight marker (Benchmark).

Detection of hrIDS-Like specific enzyme activity

We conducted two IDS activity assays at 18 h of culture, using the cell lysate of *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X-hrIDS, and DH5 α /pGEX-3X as negative control. The concentrations obtained by ELISA for *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like were 78.13 and 94.35 ng/ml and the specific IDS activities were 34.20 and 25.97 nmol/h/mg, for the first and second ELISA and activity assays, respectively. No activity was found in *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X. The total protein concentrations for *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X and DH5 α /pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like in the cell lysate (18 h) were 3480 and 3441 μ g/ml respectively and lysates were then analyzed by SDS-PAGE (Fig. 4A).

Purification of hrIDS

Figure 4B shows the preliminary results of the purification of the GST-hrIDS fusion protein. A band with molecular weight of 64 kDa was observed, part of which belongs to GST (Kaplan et al., 1997). After treating the pure fusion protein with Factor Xa and Factor Xa Removal kit (where the GST was removed by Factor Xa and retained by the column), a band corresponding to the hrIDS was observed by SDS-PAGE (Fig. 4C). Figure 4D shows the results of the western blot, in which a band of approximately 40 kDa was identified as hrIDS using polyclonal antibody.

Discussion

The human IDS is a lysosomal enzyme with 550 amino acids, of which 25 at the N-terminal position comprise the signal peptide and the next 8 are eliminated during protein processing and the mature protein isoforms vary from 42 to 170 kDa (Nyhan and Ozand, 1998; Neufeld and Muenzer, 2001; Sáenz et al., 2007). The main objective of this study was to achieve the expression of the active hrIDS-Like in *E. coli* K12 (DH5 α) in order to improve the enzyme activity and to use a fusion protein to facilitate purification by affinity chromatography.

The conceptual translation corresponding to the hrIDS-Like obtained in this work revealed a large degree of identity when compared with the native protein (NCBI Reference Sequence: NP_000193.1) despite the two substitutions found. Nucleotide substitution at position 1269 resulted in a silent mutation of Pro. The substitution at nucleotide 1324 resulted in a change of Phe by Leu, where the functionality of the protein was not compromised. There are no mutation reports for this position (UniProt P22304) (Sáenz, 2005; Sáenz et al.,

2007). The 3D model of the native hIDS shows a distance of 26.09 Å between the amino acid residue Phe 442 and Cys 84 (active site). This distance is decreased in the hrIDS-Like model to 25.91 Å due to the substitution of Phe 442 by Leu (which is the reason why we call it hrIDS-Like). This shift did not affect the activity and, as seen in Fig. 3, there is no easily observable change in the previously proposed 3D structure (Sáenz et al., 2007); which was supported by the RMS measure (Guez and Peitisch, 1997).

Our IDS activity results were at least seven times higher than the reported values of 2.5 nmol/h/mg for IDS expressed in *E. coli* JM109/pUC13-hrIDS-Like at a 400 ml-shake-flask scale (Poutou-Piñales et al., 2010) and 4.2 nmol/h/mg for IDS-Like expressed in *P. pastoris* GS115/pPIC9-hrIDS-Like at a 100 ml-shake-flask scale (Landázuri et al., 2009). Our IDS activity proved to be very similar to the reported values ranging from 24.4 to 29.5 nmol/h/mg for IDS expressed in *P. pastoris* GS115/pPIC9-hrIDS-Like at 1 L of effective working volume at a 3 L bioreactor scale (Poutou et al., 2005; Córdoba-Ruiz et al., 2009).

GALNS (EC 3.1.6.4), another human sulfatase with similar characteristics, (Neufeld and Muenzer, 2001) has been expressed using two different expression systems: *E. coli* BL21/pGEX-3X-GALNS (Rodríguez et al., 2010) and *E. coli* GI724/pLEX-GALNS (unpublished data) (Poutou, 2006). The activity obtained with BL21/pGEX-3X-GALNS was 0.078 nmol/h/mg in 3 L of effective working volume at a bioreactor scale, and the activity found with GI724/pLEX-GALNS was 7 nmol/h/mg (Poutou, 2006). By using the expression system *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like we improved the IDS-Like activity, even when compared with the expression of GALNS that had been produced using similar and different expression systems. These results are further evidence of the possibility of expressing human active sulfatasases in *E. coli*, in particular using the strain DH5 α , which also stands out as a far more efficient strain for the production of recombinant proteins (Lili et al., 2006) and it does not require expression inducers (IPTG, Isopropyl β -D-1-thiogalactopyranoside) because the plasmid copy number that the strain can retain exceeds the *lac* repressor action (Invitrogen, 2001).

Native *E. coli* DH5 α does not express active sulfatasases; however, the active expression of hrIDS obtained in this work, once *E. coli* DH5 α was transformed with the construct pGEX-3X-hrIDS, allows us to think that the FGly generation system was able to transform the Cys 84 (Millat et al., 1997; Sáenz et al., 2007) at the active site of the enzyme (Dierks et al., 1998b; Szameit et al., 1999; Benjdia et al., 2007). This

Table 1. Chronologic comparative results of different systems employed for the production of hrIDS

Systems	<i>E. coli</i> JM109	<i>P. pastoris</i> GS115		<i>E. coli</i> BL21	<i>E. coli</i> DH5 α
	pUC13-hrIDS	pPIC9-hrIDS		pGEX-5X-1-hrIDS	pGEX-3X-hrIDS
hrIDS, ng/ml (ELISA)	nd	nd		nd	78-94
Western-Blot, Bands, kDa	40, 41, 43, 49, 52, 62 and 97	40, 49, 67, 82, 89, 92 and 109		37 and 42	40
Specific activity, nmol/h/mg	2.82	4.21	29.5	nde	25.97-34.20
Assay scale, ml	400	100	1000	50	100
References	Landázuri (2002), Poutou (2006), Poutou-Piñales et al. (2010)	Poutou et al. (2005), Poutou (2006)	Sáenz (2005), Córdoba-Ruiz et al. (2009)	Unpublished	This work
nd, not determined					
nde, not determined even					

fact, combined with the absence of sulfatase activity in *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X (negative control), confirms that the activity detected in this work is caused by the cloned hrIDS-cDNA.

The fusion protein GST was not secreted into the culture medium. For this reason, the purification of GST-hrIDS was conducted from the cell lysate using only the soluble form of the protein. In a previous work we did the purification of hrIDS by ultrafiltration and three fractions were separated (>100 kDa, 30–100 kDa and <30 kDa). hrIDS activity was detected in the three fractions (Poutou-Piñales *et al.*, 2010). These results suggested that hrIDS was proteolytically processed by *E. coli*, producing bands of different molecular weights which were identified by western blot (Poutou-Piñales *et al.*, 2010). In the present work, we have selected pGEX-3X to facilitate purification by using affinity chromatography, based on the fact that pGEX-3X contains the GST acting as the fusion protein affinity tag (Bader and Leisinger, 1994; Kaplan *et al.*, 1997; Saluta and Bell, 2005).

Contrary to the methodology of the work of Rodríguez *et al.* (2010) in which the inclusion bodies retained the major part of GALNS activity, we maintained all the shake flask cultures at 30°C instead of 37°C to minimize the formation of inclusion bodies and to decrease the hrIDS degradation due to temperature.

Figures 4C and 4D show that after the treatment of GST-hrIDS with Factor Xa and Factor Xa Removal kit, a 40 kDa protein was released and recognized by the IgY polyclonal antibody. Contrary to results in which the hrIDS expression was achieved using different systems (Landázuri *et al.*, 2009; Poutou-Piñales *et al.*, 2010), we obtained a single pure protein band with a molecular weight near to 42 kDa, a very similar size to that of the hIDS isoform most frequently described in literature (Di Natale and Ronsisville, 1981; Archer *et al.*, 1982; Weaston and Neufeld, 1982; Lissens *et al.*, 1984; Bielicki *et al.*, 1990, 1993; Froissart *et al.*, 1995). We still need to: *i.* demonstrate whether our 40 kDa protein is the same as the 42 kDa isoform *ii.* demonstrate recombinant protein activity after the purification step and *iii.* confirm the purification results by ELISA, in order to remove some possible problems regarding protein solubility and activity after GST elimination. Table 1 shows the comparative results of different systems employed for the production of hrIDS supporting the improvement reported in this paper.

The biological activity found in this work, and the lack of a clear influence caused by the change of Phe to Leu on the active site of the protein, suggest the possibility of modification of the side chains, in order to direct them to the target organ, based on imposed glycosylation by humanized yeast (Vervecken *et al.*, 2004; Jacobs *et al.*, 2008) or chemically added glycosylation to the product obtained in *E. coli*; which is promising for the potential use of this protein in enzyme replacement therapy (ERT).

Hunter Syndrome is considered an orphan disease and in most cases supportive therapy is applied. Many of the Latin American health systems do not cover the costs of such therapies. For example, for Fabry disease and Gaucher, the ERT cost varies from \$100,000 to 200,000/year/patient (Poutou, 2006). In this sense, our purpose in the long term is to produce recombinant proteins that can be used in the treat-

ment of such diseases. For this reason, a consistent production of complex proteins like hrIDS, glycosylated (in *P. pastoris*) or not glycosylated (in *E. coli*) is very important.

Conclusion

In summary, we have improved seven-fold the hrIDS activity at a 100 ml scale compared with previous work even at higher scales (Landázuri *et al.*, 2009; Poutou-Piñales *et al.*, 2010). By using a lower culture temperature and a strain (DH5 α) capable of retaining a high copy number of pGEX-3X-rIDS-Like, the purification of a single pure protein band was facilitated. The protein was then recognized by a polyclonal antibody. *E. coli* DH5 α /pGEX-3X-hrIDS-Like was a suitable system for low-scale production of the recombinant IDS.

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