



(86) Date de dépôt PCT/PCT Filing Date: 2011/05/25	(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. <i>C07K 19/00</i> (2006.01), <i>A61K 38/19</i> (2006.01), <i>A61P 25/00</i> (2006.01), <i>C12N 15/62</i> (2006.01), <i>C12N 15/63</i> (2006.01), <i>C07K 14/535</i> (2006.01)
(87) Date publication PCT/PCT Publication Date: 2011/12/01	
(45) Date de délivrance/Issue Date: 2018/05/15	
(85) Entrée phase nationale/National Entry: 2012/11/23	(72) Inventeurs/Inventors: YAN, XIAOQIANG, CN; HUANG, ZHIHUA, CN; YANG, HONGZHOU, CN; SUN, BILL N.C., CN; HUANG, YULIANG, CN
(86) N° demande PCT/PCT Application No.: CN 2011/074678	(73) Propriétaire/Owner: GENERON (SHANGHAI) CORPORATION LTD., CN
(87) N° publication PCT/PCT Publication No.: 2011/147319	(74) Agent: BORDEN LADNER GERVAIS LLP
(30) Priorité/Priority: 2010/05/25 (CN201010181623.5)	

(54) Titre : DIMERE DE G-CSF HUMAINE RECOMBINANTE ET SON EMPLOI DANS LE TRAITEMENT DE MALADIES NEUROLOGIQUES
(54) Title: RECOMBINANT HUMAN G-CSF DIMER AND USE THEREOF FOR THE TREATMENT OF NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES

(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

Provided is a recombinant human G-CSF (rhG-CSF) dimer having prolonged serum half-life and increased biological activity of G-CSF, wherein the dimer is produced by two G-CSF-Fc complexes through the pairing of two Fc fragments via disulfide bonds, and the G-CSF-Fc complex comprises a G-CSF monomer, an Fc fragment of human IgG2, and a peptide connecting the G-CSF monomer and the Fc fragment. The rhG-CSF can be used for the treatment of neurological diseases.

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau(43) International Publication Date
1 December 2011 (01.12.2011)(10) International Publication Number
WO 2011/147319 A1

(51) International Patent Classification:

C07K 19/00 (2006.01) *A61K 38/19* (2006.01)
C12N 15/62 (2006.01) *A61P 25/00* (2006.01)
C12N 15/63 (2006.01) *C07K 14/535* (2006.01)

307, 1011 Ha Lei Road, Z.J. Hi-Tech Park, Pudong District, Shanghai 201203 (CN).

(21) International Application Number:

PCT/CN2011/074678

(74) Agent: **XU & PARTNERS, LLC.**; 24th Floor, ZhongYi International Commercial Plaza, 88 GuangXin Road, Putuo, Shanghai 200061 (CN).

(22) International Filing Date:

25 May 2011 (25.05.2011)

(81) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(25) Filing Language:

English

(26) Publication Language:

English

(30) Priority Data:

201010181623.5 25 May 2010 (25.05.2010) CN

(71) Applicant (*for all designated States except US*): **GENERON (SHANGHAI) CORPORATION LTD.** [CN/CN]; Suite 307, 1011 Ha Lei Road, Z.J. Hi-Tech Park, Pudong District, Shanghai 201203 (CN).(84) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (*for US only*): **YAN, Xiaoqiang** [US/CN]; Suite 307, 1011 Ha Lei Road, Z.J. Hi-Tech Park, Pudong District, Shanghai 201203 (CN). **HUANG, Zhihua** [CN/CN]; Suite 307, 1011 Ha Lei Road, Z.J. Hi-Tech Park, Pudong District, Shanghai 201203 (CN). **YANG, Hongzhou** [CN/CN]; Suite 307, 1011 Ha Lei Road, Z.J. Hi-Tech Park, Pudong District, Shanghai 201203 (CN). **SUN, Bill N.C.** [US/CN]; Suite 307, 1011 Ha Lei Road, Z.J. Hi-Tech Park, Pudong District, Shanghai 201203 (CN). **HUANG, Yuliang** [US/CN]; Suite

Published:

— *with international search report (Art. 21(3))*— *with sequence listing part of description (Rule 5.2(a))*

(54) Title: RECOMBINANT HUMAN G-CSF DIMER AND USE THEREOF FOR THE TREATMENT OF NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES

(57) Abstract: Provided is a recombinant human G-CSF (rhG-CSF) dimer having prolonged serum half-life and increased biological activity of G-CSF, wherein the dimer is produced by two G-CSF-Fc complexes through the pairing of two Fc fragments via disulfide bonds, and the G-CSF-Fc complex comprises a G-CSF monomer, an Fc fragment of human IgG2, and a peptide connecting the G-CSF monomer and the Fc fragment. The rhG-CSF can be used for the treatment of neurological diseases.



WO 2011/147319 A1

**RECOMBINANT HUMAN G-CSF DIMER AND USE THEREOF FOR THE
TREATMENT OF NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES**

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0003] This invention relates to the area of biological and medical technologies, in particular,
15 this invention relates to a novel human G-CSF dimer and its use in the treatment of diseases
associated with neural injury.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0004] Human granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF) is a glycoprotein having 204
20 amino acids with 30 amino-acid signal peptides. Mature G-CSF protein, having 18-20 kDa in
molecular weight, is composed of 174 amino acids without signal peptides and secreted out of
the cells. Human cells mainly responsible for such secretion are monocytes, fibroblasts, and
endothelial cells.

[0005] There are three main biological functions for G-CSF, namely:

25 [0006] 1. acting on myeloid precursors and stem cells to drive the differentiation, development,
and maturation of neutrophils;

[0007] 2. activating mature neutrophils to participate in immune response; and

[0008] 3. acting with other hematopoietic growth factors such as stem cell factor, Flt-3 ligand,
and GM-CSF to mobilize hematopoietic stem cells..

30 [0009] G-CSF receptor (G-CSFR) is proven to exist in bone marrow hematopoietic stem cells
 $Sca^+Lin^-Th1^{low}$, precursor cells $CD34^+$, committed granulocyte precursor cells, and mature
neutrophils. G-CSFR is a specific receptor having a high affinity to G-CSF and 812 amino acids.

[0010] Tamada *et al.* obtained the crystalline structure of the G-CSF:G-CSFR complex and the
stoichiometry of G-CSF:G-CSFR complex was shown as a 2:2 ratio by the 2.8 angstrom
35 diffraction analysis (PNAS, 2008, Vol. 103: 3135-3140). In other words, in each complex, each

WO 2011/147319

PCT/CN2011/074678

G-CSF binds to one receptor chain to form a G-CSF-receptor complex when two G-CSF-receptor complexes are brought to close proximity, a 2:2 dimer is formed as a result of this interaction. Under this circumstance, the carboxyl terminal of the G-CSF receptor is then able to activate the downstream signal molecules JAKs (Janus tyrosine kinases, primarily JAK2).
 40 Consequently, JAK2 activates STAT3 to switch on the transcriptional genes which are critical for neutrophil differentiation and proliferation and activation.

[0011] In 2003, Schabitz W. R. *et al.* reported that recombinant human G-CSF (rhG-CSF) was shown to have a protective functionality on nerve cells from the study on the ischemic animal model (Storke, 2003, 34;745-751). Later in 2006, Shyu *et al.* reported that rhG-CSF was shown
 45 to have clinical efficacy in the treatment of patients having acute stroke in which the patients were administrated with rhG-CSF daily for five consecutive days (CMAJ, 2006, 174:927-933). The *in vivo* half-life of rat G-CSF upon subcutaneous administration is about 2 hours, whereas the half-life of human G-CSF upon subcutaneous administration is only 3.5 hours. Therefore, it is required to administrate patients in need thereof with the drug daily, or intravenous infusion
 50 and this will affect the living quality of patients.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0012] In the light of the foregoing background, it is an object of the present invention to provide an alternate drug for the treatment of diseases associated with neural injury with improved efficacy and the manufacture thereof.

55 [0013] Accordingly, the present invention, in one aspect, is a G-CSF dimer of formula (I):

[0014] (I) M1-L-M2

[0015] wherein M1 is a first monomer of G-CSF; M2 is a second monomer of G-CSF; and L is a linker connecting said first monomer and said second monomer and disposed there between.

[0016] Also, the G-CSF dimer retains the biological activity of G-CSF monomer and has a
 60 serum half-life of longer than twice of that of either the first or said second monomer.

[0017] In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the L is selected from the group consisting of:

[0018] a). an organic linker;

[0019] b). a short peptide comprising 3 to 50 amino acids; and

65 [0020] c). a polypeptide of formula (II):

[0021] (II) -Z-Y-Z-

[0022] wherein Y is a carrier protein; Z is a short peptide(s) comprising 0 to 30 amino acids. In an exemplary embodiment, the short peptide without any amino acid refers to a peptide bond.

[0023] In yet another exemplary embodiment, the linker has sufficiently little steric hindrance to
 70 the G-CSF dimer such that the proper fold and conformation formed by the configuration of the first monomer and the second monomer is not affected or significantly affected.

[0024] In one exemplary embodiment, the organic linker is selected from a group consisting of oxymethylphenylacetamidomethyl (PAM) resin, 4-oxymethyl phenylacetamidomethyl resin, and chloromethyl polystyrene resin.

75 [0025] In another exemplary embodiment, the first monomer and the second monomer are of the same entity.

[0026] In an exemplary embodiment, the biological activity of the fusion protein includes:

[0027] a). acting on neutrophil granulocytes and stem cells to drive the differentiation, growth, and maturation of neutrophils; and

80 [0028] b). activating mature neutrophils to participate in immune response.

[0029] In another exemplary embodiment, the carrier protein is albumin or Fc fragment of human IgG.

[0030] In one exemplary embodiment, the serum half-life of the G-CSF dimer is more than three, five, or ten times of that of the first and/or the second monomer.

85 [0031] In another exemplary embodiment, the G-CSF dimer is produced by two G-CSF-Fc complexes in which each G-CSF-Fc complex comprises an amino acid sequence selected from a group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7.

[0032] In yet another aspect of the present invention, a fusion protein made of a first polypeptide and a second polypeptide is provided in which the first and second polypeptides comprises an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:8, and the two polypeptides are linked together without steric hindrance.

[0033] In one exemplary embodiment, the first and second polypeptides are G-CSF monomers.

[0034] In another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the linking without hindrance between said first polypeptide and the second polypeptide is carried out by a linker. In this embodiment, the linker is:

[0035] a). an organic linker with sufficiently little steric hindrance for not affecting or significantly affecting the proper fold and conformation formed by the configuration of said first monomer and said second monomer;

[0036] b). a short peptide comprising 3 to 50 amino acids; and

100 [0037] c). a polypeptide of formula (II):

[0038] (II) $-Z-Y-Z-$

[0039] wherein Y is a carrier protein; Z is a short peptide(s) comprising 0 to 30 amino acids. In an exemplary embodiment, the short peptide without any amino acid refers to a peptide bond.

105 [0040] In one exemplary embodiment, the organic linker is: oxymethylphenylacetamidomethyl (PAM) resin, 4-oxymethyl phenylacetamidomethyl resin, and chloromethyl polystyrene resin.

[0041] In another aspect of the present invention, a pharmaceutical composition is provided comprising as its active ingredient, a purified G-CSF dimer produced by two G-CSF-Fc complexes in which each G-CSF-Fc complex comprises an amino acid sequence selected from a group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7. In an exemplary embodiment, the G-CSF dimer has a
110 purity of 90-100%; in another exemplary embodiment, the G-CSF dimer has a purity of 95-100%; in yet another exemplary embodiment, the G-CSF dimer has a purity of 99-100%.

[0042] In one exemplary embodiment in this specific aspect, a method to treat a neurological disorder comprising administering an effective amount of the aforesaid pharmaceutical
115 composition to a subject in need of the treatment. In an exemplary embodiment, the effective amount ranges from 0.001-1,000 mg of the dimer per dose. In yet another exemplary embodiment, disease is selected from a group consisting of: stroke, spinal injury, and neurological disorders accompanied with blood brain barrier injury.

[0043] In another exemplary embodiment in this specific aspect, a method of activating STAT3
120 in neural cells comprising administering an effective amount of the aforesaid pharmaceutical composition to a subject in need of the treatment. In an exemplary embodiment, the effective amount ranges from 0.001-1,000 mg of the dimer per dose.

[0044] In yet another aspect of this invention, an isolated polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7 is provided. In one embodiment, a pharmaceutical
125 composition is provided comprising as its active ingredient, a purified polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7. In an exemplary embodiment, the polypeptide has a purity of 90-100%; in another exemplary embodiment, the polypeptide has a purity of 95-100%; in yet another exemplary embodiment, the polypeptide has a purity of 99-100%.

[0045] In one exemplary embodiment in this specific aspect, a method to treat a neurological
130 disorder comprising administering an effective amount of the aforesaid pharmaceutical composition to a subject in need of the treatment. In yet another exemplary embodiment, disease is selected from a group consisting of: stroke, spinal injury, and neurological disorders accompanied with blood brain barrier injury.

[0046] In another exemplary embodiment in this specific aspect, a method of activating STAT3
135 in neural cells comprising administering an effective amount of the aforesaid pharmaceutical composition to a subject in need of the treatment.

[0047] In another aspect of this invention, it is provided a use of the human granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF) dimer or the isolated polypeptide of invention in the preparation for the medicine for treating a neurological disorder.

140 [0048] In one exemplary embodiment in this specific aspect, the disease is selected from a group consisting of: stroke, spinal injury, and neurological disorders accompanied with blood brain barrier injury.

[0049] In another aspect of this invention, it is provided a use of the human granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF) dimer or the isolated polypeptide of the invention in the preparation for the composition for activating STAT3 in neural cells.

[0050] In another aspect of this invention, a method for manufacture of a G-CSF dimer is provided which comprises the steps of:

[0051] a). transforming mammalian cells with an expression vector comprising a DNA sequence encoding a G-CSF-Fc complex comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from a group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 9-10;

[0052] b). culturing the transformed mammalian cells under conditions sufficient for expressing the G-CSF-Fc complexes and the G-CSF dimers; and

[0053] isolating and purifying the G-CSF dimer obtained from step (b);

[0054] wherein the G-CSF dimer comprises two G-CSF-Fc complexes in which each G-CSF-Fc complex comprises an amino acid sequence selected from a group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7.

[0055] In yet another aspect of this invention, a method for manufacture of an isolated polypeptide is provided which comprises the steps of:

[0056] a). transforming mammalian cells with an expression vector comprising a DNA sequence encoding the polypeptide comprising a nucleotide sequence selected from a group consisting of SEQ ID NO: 9-10;

[0057] b). culturing the transformed mammalian cells under conditions sufficient for expressing the polypeptide; and

[0058] isolating and purifying the polypeptide obtained from step (b);

[0059] wherein the polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence selected from a group consisting of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF FIGURES

[0060] Fig. 1 is an illustration of the structure of a G-CSF dimer with amino acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO:1 according to one embodiment of the present invention. In the figure, "-" represents the linker and the oval-shaped object labeled with "G-CSF" represents a G-CSF monomer.

[0061] In this specific embodiment, the G-CSF dimer has a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 1-174) connected to another G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 191-364) by a linker (amino acid residues 175-190).

[0062] Fig. 2a and 2b are illustration of the structure of a G-CSF dimer according to one embodiment of the present invention. In the figure, "-" represents the linker and the oval-shaped object labeled with "G-CSF" represents a G-CSF monomer. The oval-shaped object labeled with

180 “C” represents a carrier protein in which the G-CSF monomer is disposed at the N-terminal of the carrier protein. The oval-shaped object labeled with “Fc” represents a Fc fragment of the human IgG2.

[0063] Figs. 3a and 3b are illustration of the structure of a G-CSF dimer with amino acid according to one embodiment of the present invention. In the figure, “-” represents the linker and the oval-shaped object labeled with “G-CSF” represents a G-CSF monomer. The oval-shaped object labeled with “C” represents a carrier protein in which the G-CSF monomer is disposed at the C-terminal of the carrier protein. The oval-shaped object labeled with “Fc” represents a Fc fragment of the human IgG2.

[0064] Figs. 4, 6 show the clinical efficacy of the G-CSF dimer according to one embodiment of the present invention from the study of focal cerebral ischemia animal model.

190 [0065] Fig. 5 shows the effectiveness to activate STAT3 *in vitro* by G-CSF dimer according to one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0066] Upon an extensive and thorough research, the inventors have successfully created a novel G-CSF dimer as described herein. This novel G-CSF dimer is shown to prolong in vivo half-life thereof, improve pharmacokinetic properties of the drug thereof, reduce the drug administration frequency, enhance in vivo drug activity and promote rehabilitation of recovery of neurological function. The G-CSF dimer is also shown to exhibit significant STAT3 activation compared to the monomer G-CSF at equal G-CSF molar ratio, thus to enhance the bioactivity of the drug thereof, improve the therapeutic outcome of neural injuries. The aforesaid features will be further described in the examples below.

[0067] G-CSF Dimer

[0068] The first embodiment of the present invention is a G-CSF dimer represented by the aforesaid formula (I) and the structural illustration thereof is shown in Figs. 1-3. Carrier protein comprises Fc fragment of human IgG1, IgG2, IgG3, IgG4, and human albumin.

[0069] In one preferred embodiment, G-CSF can be disposed at the C-terminal or N-terminal of the carrier protein as shown in Figs. 2-3.

[0070] As used herein and in the claims, “linker” refers to a molecule that is capable of connecting two monomer polypeptides together such that the resulting compound retains the biological activity or has an improved biological activity of the monomer polypeptide.

[0071] In a preferred embodiment, “linker” refers to an organic linker or a sequence of peptide bonded amino acids that joins or links by peptide bonds two amino acid that joins or links by peptide bonds two amino acid sequences or polypeptide domains that are not joined by peptide

bonds in nature. A linker sequence is encoded in frame on a polynucleotide between the
215 sequences encoding the two polypeptide domains joined by the linker.

[0072] In another preferred embodiment, "linker" can also refer to a short peptide for
connecting the two G-CSF monomers sandwiching the short peptide. There is no special
restriction on the length of the linker. A linker is usually 5-50 amino acid residues in length and
in general, a linker does not affect or significantly affect the proper fold and conformation
220 formed by the configuration of the two G-CSF monomers.

[0073] A list of examples of linkers include: an organic linker, a short peptide comprising 3-50
amino acids, and a polypeptide represented by the aforesaid formula (II).

[0074] In one preferred embodiment, the organic linker can be oxymethylphenylacetamidomethyl
(PAM) resin, 4-oxymethyl phenylacetamidomethyl resin, , chloromethyl polystyrene resin, or any
225 combination thereof with sufficiently little steric hindrance for not affecting or significantly
affecting the proper fold and conformation formed by the configuration of the two G-CSF
monomers.

[0075] In another preferred embodiment, the linker comprises amino acids with a relatively small
structural conformation for not for not affecting or significantly affecting the proper fold and
230 conformation formed by the configuration of the two G-CSF monomers, such as glycine, alanine,
proline, etc.

[0076] In yet another preferred embodiment, the linker contains amino acid sequence selected
from a group consisting of:

[0077] (a). an amino acid sequence with 3-15 amino acid residues formed by hydrophobic amino
235 acids glycine (Gly) or proline (Pro), such as Gly-Pro-Gly-Pro-Gly-Pro;

[0078] (b). an amino acid sequence encoded by multiple cloning sites. Such sequence usually
contains 5-20 amino acid residues; in a preferred embodiment, such sequence contains 10-20
amino acid residues;

[0079] (c). an amino acid sequence comprising protein(s) not from G-CSF monomer, such as an
240 amino acid sequence of IgG or albumin;

[0080] (d). an amino acid sequence comprising any combination of (a), (b), and (c) above.

[0081] In one preferred embodiment, the linker has the sequence of GSGGGSGGGGSGGGGS
(i.e. 175-190 amino acid residues of SEQ ID NO:1). In another preferred embodiment, the linker
has the sequence of ASTKGP (i.e. 175-180 amino acid residues of SEQ ID NO:4).

245 [0082] In a further preferred embodiment, an amino acid sequence not affecting the biological
activity of G-CSF monomer can be added to the N-terminal or C-terminal of the G-CSF dimer.
In a preferred embodiment, such appended amino acid sequence is beneficial to expression (e.g.
signal peptide), purification (e.g. 6 x His sequence, the cleavage site of *Saccharomyces*
cerevisiae α - factor signal peptide), or enhancement of biological activity of the G-CSF dimer.

250 [0083] **Sequence Listing**

[0084] SEQ ID NO:1 represents a G-CSF dimer as shown in Fig. 1 comprising a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 1-174) connected to another G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 191-364) by a linker (amino acid residues 175-190).

[0085] SEQ ID NO:2 represents a G-CSF-Fc complex as component for making the G-CSF dimer as shown in Figs. 2a and 2b, comprising a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 1-174), a Fc fragment of human IgG2 (amino acid residues 191-418), and a peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (amino acid residues 175-190). The dimer is formed through the pairing of the Fc fragments contained in each of the two G-CSF-Fc complexes. In one embodiment, the Fc fragments are paired via a plurality of disulfide bonds disposed therebetween; in yet another embodiment, the number of the disulfide bonds disposed therebetween is 2 or 4.

[0086] SEQ ID NO:3 represents a G-CSF-Fc complex as component for making the G-CSF dimer as shown in Figs. 3a and 3b, comprising a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 245-418), a Fc fragment of human IgG2 (amino acid residues 1-228), and a peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (amino acid residues 229-244). The dimer is formed through the pairing of the Fc fragments contained in each of the two G-CSF-Fc complexes. In one embodiment, the Fc fragments are paired via a plurality of disulfide bonds disposed therebetween; in yet another embodiment, the number of the disulfide bonds disposed therebetween is 2 or 4.

[0087] SEQ ID NO:4 represents a G-CSF-Fc complex as component for making the G-CSF dimer as shown in Figs. 2a and 2b comprising a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 1-174), a Fc fragment of human IgG2 (amino acid residues 181-403), and a peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (amino acid residues 175-180). On comparing with SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:4 has a shorter peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (with ten less amino acid residues). Also, a short sequence of ERKCC is deleted in SEQ ID NO:5, by which two disulfide bonds are removed to result in reducing the possibility of mismatch of hinge. The dimer is formed through the pairing of the Fc fragments contained in each of the two G-CSF-Fc complexes. In one embodiment, the Fc fragments are paired via a plurality of disulfide bonds disposed therebetween; in yet another embodiment, the number of the disulfide bonds disposed therebetween is 2 or 4.

[0088] SEQ ID NO:5 represents a G-CSF-Fc complex as component for making the G-CSF dimer as shown in Figs. 3a and 3b, comprising a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 230-403), a Fc fragment of human IgG2 (amino acid residues 1-223), and a peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (amino acid residues 224-229). On comparing with SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:5 has a shorter peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (with ten less amino acid residues). Also, a short sequence of ERKCC is deleted in

SEQ ID NO:5, by which two disulfide bonds are removed to result in reducing the possibility of mismatch of hinge. The dimer is formed through the pairing of the Fc fragments contained in each of the two G-CSF-Fc complexes. In one embodiment, the Fc fragments are paired via a plurality of disulfide bonds disposed therebetween; in yet another embodiment, the number of the disulfide bonds disposed therebetween is 2 or 4.

290

[0089] SEQ ID NO:6 represents a G-CSF-Fc complex as component for making the G-CSF dimer as shown in Figs. 2a and 2b comprising a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 1-174), a Fc fragment of human IgG2 (amino acid residues 191-413), and a peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (amino acid residues 175-190). On comparing with SEQ ID NO:2, a short sequence ERKCC is deleted in SEQ ID NO:6, by which two disulfide bonds are removed to result in reducing the possibility of mismatch of hinge. The dimer is formed through the pairing of the Fc fragments contained in each of the two G-CSF-Fc complexes. In one embodiment, the Fc fragments are paired via a plurality of disulfide bonds disposed therebetween; in yet another embodiment, the number of the disulfide bonds disposed therebetween is 2 or 4.

295

300

[0090] SEQ ID NO:7 represents a G-CSF-Fc complex as component for making the G-CSF dimer as shown in Figs. 3a and 3b, comprising a G-CSF monomer (amino acid residues 240-413), a Fc fragment of human IgG2 (amino acid residues 1-223), and a peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment (amino acid residues 224-239). On comparing with SEQ ID NO:3, a short sequence ERKCC is deleted in SEQ ID NO:7, by which two disulfide bonds are removed to result in reducing the possibility of mismatch of hinge. The dimer is formed through the pairing of the Fc fragments contained in each of the two G-CSF-Fc complexes. In one embodiment, the Fc fragments are paired via a plurality of disulfide bonds disposed therebetween; in yet another embodiment, the number of the disulfide bonds disposed therebetween is 2 or 4.

305

310

[0091] SEQ ID NO:8 represents a G-CSF monomer molecule.

[0092] SEQ ID NO:9 represents the DNA sequences of SEQ ID NO:2.

[0093] SEQ ID NO:10 represents the DNA sequences of SEQ ID NO:6.

[0094] **Preparation Method**

[0095] The encoding of the DNA sequences of the G-CSF dimer or fusion protein of the present invention can be entirely artificially synthesized. Alternatively, the encoded DNA sequences of the first G-CSF monomer and/or the second G-CSF monomer can be obtained by PCR amplification or synthesis and joined together to form the encoded DNA sequence of the G-CSF dimer or fusion protein of the present invention.

315

320

[0096] In order to enhance the expression volume of the host cells, modification can be performed on the encoded sequence of G-CSF dimer. For example, codon bias of host cells can be used to eliminate sequences that are not beneficial to transcription and translation. In a

preferred embodiment, codon bias of yeast cells or mammalian cells can be used together with DNA software for detecting genes of DNA dimer, to eliminate sequences that are not beneficial to transcription and translation. In one preferred embodiment, the eliminated sequences can be
325 intron cutting site, transcription terminating sequence, etc.

[0097] After the encoded DNA sequence of the novel fusion protein of the present invention is obtained, it is first inserted into an appropriate expression carrier, followed by an appropriate host cell. Finally, the transformed host cell is cultivated and purified to obtain the novel fusion protein of the present invention. The DNA sequences of SEQ ID NO:2 and 6 are shown in SEQ
330 ID NO: 9 and 10 respectively.

[0098] As used herein and in the claims, "carrier" refers to plasmid, cosmid, expression vehicle, cloning vector, virus vector, etc.

[0099] In this invention, carrier known in the art, such as carriers available in the market, can be used. For example, with the use of carrier obtained from the market, encoded nucleotide
335 sequence of the novel fusion protein of the present invention is operationally connected to the expressing and controlling sequence to form the protein-expressing carrier.

[00100] As used herein and in the claims, "operationally connected" refers to a scenario that some parts of a linear DNA sequence can affect the biological activity of other parts of the same linear DNA sequence. For instance, if signal DNA is used as the expression of a precursor
340 and participates in secretion of polypeptides, said signal DNA (secretion leader sequence) is "operationally connected" to said polypeptides. If a promoter controls sequence transcription, the promoter is "operationally connected" to the encoded sequence. If a ribosome binding site is situated at a position where translation thereof is made possible, said ribosome binding site is "operationally connected" to the encoded sequence. In general, "operationally connected" means
345 that the residues of concern are in proximity; for secretion leader sequence, "operationally connected" refers to proximity within the reading frame.

[00101] As used herein and in the claims, "host cells" refers to both prokaryotic cells and eukaryotic cells. Prokaryotic host cells commonly used include *E. coli*, *B. subtilis*, etc. Eukaryotic host cells commonly used include yeast cells, insect cells, mammalian cells, etc. In a
350 preferred embodiment, the host cells used are eukaryotic cells; in another preferred embodiment, the host cells used are mammalian cells.

[00102] After the transformed host cells are obtained, they can be cultivated under an environment suitable to express the fusion protein of the present invention for expressing the fusion protein. The expressed fusion protein is then separated.

355 [00103] As used herein and in the claims, "neurological disorders or neurological diseases" refers to stroke, spinal injury, and neurological disorders accompanied with blood brain barrier injury.

[00104] **Pharmaceutical Composition and Method Of Administration Thereof**

[00105] Since the G-CSF dimer of the present invention has an excellent serum half-life,
360 the G-CSF dimer and a pharmaceutical composition comprising the G-CSF dimer as the main active ingredient can be used for treating disease associated with neural injury, and for protecting neurons. In a preferred embodiment, the disease associated with neural injury is selected from a group consisting of: stroke, spinal injury, and neurological disorders accompanied with blood brain barrier injury.

365 [00106] The pharmaceutical composition of the present invention comprises a safe and effective amount of said G-CSF dimer and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or carrier. "Safe and effective amount" refers to an amount of a compound sufficient to substantially improve the condition of the patient in need thereof without causing serious side-effects. In general, the pharmaceutical composition comprises 0.001-1,000 mg of G-CSF dimer per dose; in
370 a preferred embodiment, the pharmaceutical composition comprises 0.05-300 mg of G-CSF dimer per dose; in another preferred embodiment, the pharmaceutical composition comprises 0.5-200 mg of G-CSF dimer per dose.

[00107] The compound of the present invention and its pharmaceutically acceptable salts can be manufactured into different formulations, which comprises a safe and effective amount of
375 said G-CSF dimer or its pharmaceutically acceptable salts and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or carrier. "Safe and effective amount" refers to an amount of a compound sufficient to substantially improve the condition of the patient in need thereof without causing serious side-effects. The safe and effective amount of a compound is determined according to the age, condition, course of treatment, etc. of the patient in treatment.

380 [00108] "Pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or carrier" refers to solid or liquid filling or gelatin materials with one or different kinds of compatibility which are suitable to be used in human with sufficient purity and sufficiently low toxicity. "Compatibility" refers to the ability of each ingredient of the composition to mutually blend with the compound of the present invention and the mutual blending ability therebetween, without substantially decreasing the clinical
385 efficacy of the compound. Some of the examples of pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or carrier include cellulose and its derivatives (e.g. sodium carboxymethylcellulose, sodium ethylcellulose, cellulose acetate, etc), gelatin, speckstone, solid lubricating agent (e.g. stearic acid, magnesium stearate), calcium sulphate, plant oil (e.g. pea oil, sesame oil, peanut oil, olive oil, etc.), polyols (e.g. propylene glycol, glycerol, mannitol, sorbitol, etc.), emulsifier (e.g.
390 Tween®), wetting agent (e.g. sodium lauryl sulfate), colorant, flavoring agent, stabilizer, anti-oxidant, antiseptic, pyrogen-free water, etc.

[00109] Route of administration of the G-CSF dimer of the present invention comprises oral administration, rectal administration, parenteral administration (intravenous, intramuscular, or subcutaneous), and partial administration.

395 [00110] Solid form for oral administration comprises capsules, tablets, pills, powder, and granules. In these solid forms, active compound is mixed with at least one of the conventionally inert excipients (or carriers), such as sodium citrate, dicalcium phosphate, or any of the following ingredients: (a) filling or bulking agent, e.g. starch, lactose, sucrose, glucose, mannitol, and silicic acid; (b) adhesion agent, e.g. carboxymethylcellulose, alginate, gelatin, polyvinyl
400 pyrrolidone, sucrose, and acacia; (c) humectants, e.g. glycerol; (d) disintegrating agent, e.g. agar, calcium carbonate, potato starch or cassava starch, alginic acid, compounded silicate, and sodium carbonate; (e) buffering agent, e.g. paraffin wax; (f) absorption accelerating agent, e.g. quaternary amine compound; (g) wetting agent, e.g. cetanol and glycerin monostearate; (h) absorbent, e.g. bolus alba; and (i). lubricating agent, e.g. speckstone, calcium stearate, sodium
405 stearate, solid polyethylene glycol, sodium lauryl sulfate, or any mixture thereof. Capsules, tablets, and pills can also comprise buffering agent.

[00111] Solid forms such as tablets, sugar pill, capsules, pills, and granules can be prepared with coating and core-shell materials, such as casing and other materials known in the art. These materials comprise opacifying agent and the active compound or compound in such
410 composition can be released in a delayed fashion that the release is done in certain part of the alimentary canal. Embedding component such as polymer materials and wax materials can be used. If desired, active compounds can be mixed with one or more of the above-described excipients to formulate a micro capsule form.

[00112] Liquid forms for oral administration comprise pharmaceutically acceptable
415 emulsion, solution, suspension, syrup, or tincture. Apart from active compounds, liquid forms also comprise inert diluents conventionally used in the art such as water or other solvent, solubilizing agent and emulsifier such as ethanol, isopropanol, carbonate acetate, ethyl acetate, propan-2-ol, 1,3-butan-2-ol, dimethylformamide, and oil, in particular cotton oil, peanut oil, castor oil, olive oil, maize embryo oil, and sesame oil or any mixture thereof.

420 [00113] Apart from the inert diluents, the compound can also comprise additives, such as wetting agent, emulsifying agent, suspending agent, sweetening agent, correctives, and spices.

[00114] Apart from active compounds, suspension can also comprise suspending agent, such as ethoxyl isostearic alcohol, polyoxyethylene sorbitol, sorbitan, microcrystalline cellulose, aluminium methoxide, agar, or any mixture thereof.

425 [00115] Compounds used for parenteral administration can also comprise physiologically acceptable sterile water or anhydrous solution, dispersion solution, suspension, or emulsion, and sterile powder that can be re-dissolved into sterile injectable solution or dispersion solution.

WO 2011/147319

PCT/CN2011/074678

Appropriate hydrated or anhydrous carriers, diluting agent, solvent, or excipient comprises water, ethanol, polyols, and its appropriate mixtures thereof.

430 [00116] Forms of the G-CSF dimer of the present invention used for partial administration comprise ointment, powder, patch, sprayer, and inhalant. Under sterile conditions, active components can be mixed with physiologically acceptable carrier and any antiseptic, buffering agent, or may be propellant if desired.

[00117] The G-CSF dimer of the present invention can be solely administrated or be
435 administrated in conjunction with any pharmaceutically acceptable compounds.

[00118] On using the pharmaceutical composition, a safe and effective of the amount of the G-CSF dimer of the present invention is administrated to a mammal (e.g. human) in use thereof in which the dosage administrated is a pharmaceutically acceptable effective administration dosage. For a human of 60kg, the administration dosage is usually 0.01-300 mg;
440 in a preferred embodiment, the administration dosage is 0.5-100 mg. In determination of the actual dosage, factors known in the art such as administration route, patients' condition, etc. have to be considered.

[00119] There are many advantages of the G-CSF dimer of the present invention which includes but not limited to:

445 [00120] 1. A longer *in vivo* biological half-life.

[00121] 2. A better biological activity in activating STAT3 in neural cells.

[00122] 3. A substantial clinical efficacy in a single or two-time injection in ischemic animal model.

[00123] The following exemplary embodiments further describe the present invention.

450 Although the description referred to particular embodiments, it will be clear to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced with variation of these specific details. Hence this invention should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein. Further, for the embodiments in which details of the experimental methods are not described, such methods are carried out according to conventional conditions such as those described in Sambrook *et al.*
455 Molecular Cloning: A Laboratory Manual (New York: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Pres, 1989), or suggested by the manufacturers.

[00124] **Examples**

[00125] The G-CSF dimer of the present invention having amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1 or comprising G-CSF-Fc complexes with amino acid sequence SEQ ID NOs: 2-7 with
460 the structure thereof described in Figs. 1-3 is prepared and purified by conventional methods. Exemplary methods thereof are described in Examples 1-3 below.

[00126] **Example 1 - Construction of a mammalian vector expressing rhG-CSF dimer**

[00127] The full length DNA sequence containing human G-CSF, a linker peptide, and a
465 Fc fragment of human immunoglobulin (IgG2) was synthesized. At the 5' end, sequences
containing a restriction enzyme, Hind III, site, Kozak sequence, and signal peptide were
introduced. At the 3' end, a sequence containing EcoRI site was introduced. The full length G-
CSF dimer DNA sequence was cloned into pUC19 to result in pG-CSF-Fc. The plasmid was
amplified in *E. Coli* TG1, and digested with Hind III and EcoRI, and subcloned into pcDNA3
470 (Invitrogen) vector to result in expression vector pEX-G-CSF-Fc. pEX-G-CSF-Fc was
linearized and transfected into CHO cells by electroporation. The transfected cells were selected
in selecting media and cloned. The protein levels of individual clones were measured by ELISA.
The clones with the highest G-CSF-Fc dimer expression levels were frozen to generate cell bank
and used for recombinant protein generation.

475 [00128] As an example for illustration, the aforesaid full length DNA sequence containing
human G-CSF, a linker peptide, and a Fc fragment of human immunoglobulin (IgG2) has a
corresponding amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7. As such, according to the steps as
afore-described, the resulting expression vector pEX-G-CSF-Fc comprising a corresponding
amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7 was linearized and transfected into CHO cells by
480 electroporation. The transfected cells were selected in selecting media in which a mixture of G-
CSF-Fc monomers and G-CSF-Fc dimers were expressed. The protein levels of individual clones
were measured by ELISA. The clones with G-CSF-Fc dimer expression were first selected and
those with the highest G-CSF-Fc dimer expression levels were frozen to generate cell bank and
used for recombinant protein generation.

485 [00129] **Example 2 - Production of rhG-CSF dimer protein in mammalian cells**

[00130] One vial of cells ($\sim 1 \times 10^7$ cells/ml) from the cell bank was thawed and seeded in
10 mL basal medium in a 10 cm Petri dish and incubated at 37°C, 5% CO₂ for approximately 24
hrs.

[00131] The seeding expansion: The culture was sequentially expanded in shaking flasks
490 in 3-4 times in volume (eg. from 10 mL to 30-40 mL). When the cell density reached 1.0-1.5 x
10⁶ cells/mL with viability $\geq 90\%$, the culture volume reached 300-400 mL. The shaking flasks
were incubated at 120 rpm 37°C, 5% CO₂.

[00132] Stage one of culture expansion in bioreactor (3L-10L): When the cell density in
the seeding expansion reached 300-400 mL at 1.0 – 3.0 x 10⁶ cells/mL with viability $\geq 90\%$, the
495 seeding expanded culture was aseptically transferred to a 3-10 L bioreactor containing basal
medium, with the culture control conditions at 37°C, pH of 6.8, dissolved Oxygen at
approximately 50 % and stirring speed at 65–100 rpm.

[00133] Stage two of culture expansion in bioreactor (30 -100 L): When the cell density
in the 3.0-10 L bioreactor reached 1.0 – 3.0 x 10⁶ cells/ml with viability $\geq 90\%$, the culture was

500 aseptically transferred to 30 – 100 L bioreactor containing a basal medium, with the culture control conditions at 37°C, pH of 6.8, dissolved Oxygen at approximately 50 % and stirring speed at 65–100 rpm. The culture was fed at 12 to 48 hrs to control the glucose level at or below 1g/L with the addition of fed-batch medium before harvest.

[00134] **Example 3 – Purification of recombinant human G-CSF dimer protein**

505 [00135] Purification process of G-CSF dimer protein was carried out by affinity chromatography, since the G-CSF dimer protein contains a human Fc fragment capable of binding to protein A. Supernatant harvested from bioreactor contains G-CSF-Fc multi-mer (or aggregate), dimer, and G-CSF-Fc complex and metabolites. After being harvested from the bioreactor culture, the cell culture supernatant was obtained by filtration, followed by stepwise
510 purification at ambient temperature using a series of chromatography columns to obtain the purified recombinant product. For example, a typical rProtein A Sepharose FF (GE Healthcare, cat#17-1279-04) column with elution buffer containing 50 mM citric acid/ sodium citrate and 0.2M NaCl with pH 3.7-3.8 is used, resulting in >90% pure G-CSF dimer protein by reverse phase HPLC analysis. Additional chromatography steps were performed using CptoTM Adhere
515 column in elution buffer containing 50 mM NaAc/HAC and 0.2 M NaCl with pH 4.5-5.0, followed by SP Sepharose FF (GE Healthcare Cat #17-0729-04). Sample buffer used was 50mM NaAc/HAC (pH4.5-5.0), whereas equilibrium buffer was 10mM PB (pH 6.0±0.1). Elute buffer used was 10mM PB and 0.2M NaCl (pH 7.2±0.1) with flow rate of 10-200 cm/hr depending on the size of the column. Additional processes involved viral activation at low pH, filtration, and
520 buffer balance by dialysis.

[00136] The purity of the G-CSF dimer protein was > 95% by reverse phase HPLC, with estimated molecular weight of 47±5 Kd by reduced SDS-PAGE analysis. The G-CSF dimer protein was glycosylated with oligosaccharide of 2-10% of the total molecular weight. The isoelectric point of the protein was between pH 5.8 to pH 6.8. The maximum UV absorbing
525 wavelength was at 280 nM.

[00137] The G-CSF dimer fusion protein exhibited the following *in vitro* biological activities including stimulation of the proliferation and the activation of STAT3 in M-NSF-60 cell lines in a dose-dependent manner. The ED50 for STAT3 activation and proliferation in M-NSF-60 cells was between 0.1-10 ng/mL. The proliferation of M-NFS-60 cells stimulated by G-
530 CSF dimer could be neutralized by the anti-human G-CSF antibody. In addition, the G-CSF dimer protein was able to activate STAT3 in primary neuron cells. The G-CSF dimer fusion protein exhibited the following *in vivo* biological activities including rapid increase of cell counts in white blood cells (WBC), neutrophils in normal or neutropenic animals including mice, rats, and monkeys. The G-CSF dimer protein was also able to activate STAT3 in primary neurons *in*
535 *vitro* and to reduce the infarct volume of brain in the acute ischemic stroke model in rats.

[00138] **Example 4 – *In vivo* half-life of G-CSF dimer**

[00139] Rats received a single dose of 100 µg/kg of G-CSF dimer of the present invention composed of two G-CSF-Fc complexes (SEQ ID NO: 3) by subcutaneous injection. The pharmacokinetic parameters were calculated and listed in Table 1 below.

540

TABLE 1

Parameter (n=6)	Unit	Average Value	SD
AUC _(0-t)	ng/mL * h	4234.8	640.3
MRT _(0-t)	h	21.6	1.4
t _(1/2)	h	7.7	1.2
Clz/F	L/h/kg	0.024	0.003
C _{max}	ng/mL	162.2	30.2

[00140] From the above Table 1, it can be seen that the *in vivo* half-life of G-CSF dimer in rats is about 7.7 hours, whereas the *in vivo* half-life of G-CSF monomer is about 2 hours.

[00141] **Example 5 – Pharmacokinetic properties of G-CSF dimer in human**

545 [00142] Healthy male subjects received an ascending single dose of 30, 60, 120, 240 µg/kg of G-CSF dimer (G-CSF-D; composed of two G-CSF-Fc complexes (SEQ ID NO: 6) by subcutaneous injection. A total of 24 healthy male subjects were enrolled and assigned to 4 sequential single dose cohorts of G-CSF-D (30, 60, 120 and 240 µg/kg).

[00143] Blood samples were collected before drug administration and at 0.5, 1, 2, 4, 8, 550 16, 24, 36, 48, 72, 96 hours, Day 6 (120 hrs), 7, 9, 11, 13, and 15 after dosing. Serum was separated and stored below -70°C. The serum concentrations of G-CSF-D were measured by an enzyme-linked immunoassay (ELISA, Quantikine human G-CSF ELISA kit, R&D System, Inc. Minneapolis, Min, Cat: PDCS50).

[00144] The pharmacokinetic parameters were calculated using the standard non- 555 compartmental analytical procedures (WinNonlin v 5.2, Pharsight Corporation, USA). The actual times of sample collection were used in the calculations of pharmacokinetic parameters. C_{max} (the maximum observed plasma concentration over the sampling period) and T_{max} (the time at which C_{max} occurred) were taken directly from the data. The elimination rate constant, Kel (hr⁻¹) was determined by linear regression of a minimum of 3 points. Area under the plasma 560 concentration versus time curve (AUC) was determined by the linear trapezoidal rule, where AUC_{last} was the AUC from time zero until the last concentration point. AUC_(0-inf) was the AUC_{last} and the last concentration point divided by Kel. Half-life (t_{1/2}) was determined according to t_{1/2} = 0.693/Kel where possible. Apparent clearance (CL) was calculated as dose/ AUC_(0-inf).

[00145] The results as shown in Table 2 illustrated that the G-CSF dimer had t_{1/2} between 565 43.9 and 62.8 hrs in human, while the half-life of G-CSF monomer had t_{1/2} of approximately 3.5

hrs. The G-CSF dimer thus has significantly improved pharmacokinetic properties by at least 12 folds.

TABLE 2

Parameter (n=6)	30 μ g/kg	60 μ g/kg	120 μ g/kg	240 μ g/kg
C _{max} (ng/mL)	21.3 (10.3)	44.6 (17.7)	219.9 (76.6)	759 (160)
T _{max} (h, median & range)	8 (8-16)	8 (8-16)	16 (16-36)	36 (36)
t _{1/2} (h)	43.9 (4.3)	56.1 (23.3)	59.3 (23.5)	62.8 (10.8)
AUC _(0-inf) (ng.h/mL)	778 (213)	1847 (686)	8349 (2769)	46664 (17258)
CL/F (mL/h/kg)	41.4 (12.8)	36.8 (14.6)	18.5 (7.7)	5.7 (2.0)

Mean (SD)

570 [00146] **Example 6 – Activation of signal transducer and activator of transcription 3 (STAT3) by G-CSF dimer**

[00147] Mice with injured or impaired brain-blood barrier can be used to show the improved bioactivity of activating pSTAT3 for G-CSF dimer. First, tested mice can be divided into different groups of: control group receiving a control, G-CSF group receiving G-CSF monomer, and G-CSF dimer group receiving G-CSF dimer. The G-CSF dimer used in this study can comprise two G-CSF-Fc complexes and the amino acid sequence for such G-CSF-Fc complex can be selected from any one of SEQ ID NOs: 2-7. The amount of G-CSF and G-CSF dimer respectively injected into the G-CSF group and the G-CSF dimer can be determined such that both groups practically receive the equal molar ratio of the G-CSF. At the end of the study, 580 the mice can be sacrificed and brain tissues can be harvested and lysed. The content of phosphorylated STAT3 (pSTAT3) can then be measured using conventional tool such as an ELISA kit.

[00148] On analyzing the data obtained from performing the aforesaid procedures, the G-CSF dimer group can be shown to have a stronger STAT3 activating bioactivity than the G-CSF monomer group. 585

[00149] **Example 7 – Activation of STAT3 in primary neurons *in vitro***

[00150] Fetal rat brain was harvested from female SD rats at the 17th day of gestation. The whole fetal brain was placed in D-Hanks solution on ice. Cerebral cortex was carefully removed under microscopy and cut into small pieces of approximately 1 mm³. The minced cerebral cortex was digested in 10 mL of 0.125% of trypsin, at 37°C for 15 mins. The supernatant was transferred into DMEM containing 10% FBS with pipetting for a few times to stop the trypsin digestion. The cells were spun down and re-suspended in neuron culture basal medium (Invitrogen, Cat 21103049) and B27 (Invitrogen, Cat 17504044) without serum in 12- 590

595 well plate with 5×10^5 /well, and incubated at 37°C, 5% CO₂ for 8 days. The media was replaced once every two days.

[00151] The primary neuron cells after 8 days of culture were treated with carrier control, G-CSF, or G-CSF dimer composed of two G-CSF-Fc complexes (SEQ ID NO: 6) at equal molar of G-CSF concentration for 15 mins. The cells were then washed twice with PBS and
600 lysed with lysis buffer containing 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 150 mM NaCl, 1 mM Na₂EDTA, 1 mM EGTA, 1% TritonTM, 2.5 mM sodium pyrophosphate, 1 mM beta-glycerophosphate, 1 mM Na₃VO₄, 1 µg/ml leupeptin, 1 mM PMSF (Invitrogen, Cat 9803). The protein concentration in the lysate was determined using Bradford protein assay. The content of pSTAT3 in cell lysates was measured using a STAT3 ELISA kit (Invitrogen, Cat KH00481).

605 [00152] Results in Fig. 5 shows that both G-CSF and G-CSF dimer (represented by G-CSF-D in Fig. 5) were able to activate pSTAT3 in primary rat neurons showing a significantly elevated pSTAT3 amount compared to that of the control cultures. At equal molar of G-CSF, the G-CSF dimer is shown to activate at least 2 folds more pSTAT3 than that activated by G-CSF monomer. Thus, G-CSF dimer has stronger STAT3 activating bioactivity than that of the
610 G-CSF monomer.

[00153] **Example 8 – Clinical efficacy of G-CSF dimer in focal cerebral ischemia animal model study**

[00154] Middle cerebral artery, MCA, is stroke-prone sites for human. Middle cerebral artery occlusion (MCAO) model is generally regarded as the standard animal model for studying
615 focal cerebral ischemia in which one of the main methods is the thread occlusion of the middle cerebral artery.

[00155] Male SD rats (250-300 g) were used in this study. After anaesthetized by intraperitoneal injection of pentobarbital sodium (dosage of 50-60 mg/kg), the rats were fixed in a dorsal position. Upon incision of the right neck skin and blunt dissection of
620 sternocleidomastoid muscle and sternohyoid muscle, right common carotid artery (CCA) and vagus nerves were exposed. CCA, external carotid artery (ECA) and its branch arteries were ligated. Internal carotid artery (ICA) was dissected until extracranial branches of the pterygopalatine artery can be observed at the tympanic bulla and then that branch was ligated at its root. Thread was prepared at the near end of ICA whereas artery clamp was placed at the far
625 end of ICA. A small cut was incised at the ligation site of ECA (5mm from the fork of ECA and ICA) and a nylon thread with diameter of 0.22-0.249 mm was inserted via the ECA cutting. The thread was heated prior to insertion to make the insertion end become blunt and mark for length of thread was also made. The thread was tightened and the artery clamp was released, followed by inserting the nylon thread into ICA via the fork of ECA and ICA. The nylon thread was then

630 allowed to proceed for 17-19 mm to the starting place of anterior cerebral. MCA was then occluded to result in the focal cerebral ischemia.

[00156] The rats were divided into three groups with eight rats in each group. Rats in G-CSF dimer composed of two G-CSF-Fc complexes (SEQ ID NO: 3) group were subcutaneously injected at a dose of 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ upon a 30-minute ischemia. G-CSF dimer was re-injected once
635 after 72 hours of modeling. Rats in G-CSF group, received rhG-CSF daily at a dose of 16 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}/\text{day}$ by subcutaneous injection for five consecutive days. As such, by the end of the experiment, both G-CSF dimer and G-CSF groups received the equal molar of G-CSF. Rats in solvent control group received the same dose of PBS. The nylon thread was slowly removed upon a 90-minute ischemia for all groups.

640 [00157] From the result in Fig. 4, at equal molar dosage, although G-CSF monomer was shown to have certain clinical efficacy, there is no statistically difference between this G-CSF group and the solvent control group. On the other hand, at equal molar dosage, G-CSF was illustrated to have significant clinical efficacy.

[00158] **Example 9 – Effects of G-CSF dimer in middle cerebral artery occlusion (MCAO) in rats**
645

[00159] SD rats (male, 250 – 300 grams) were used for the study. The animals were divided into 5 groups: Vehicle (MCAO + vehicle, n = 12), G-CSF dimer (G-CSF-D; composed of two G-CSF-Fc complexes (SEQ ID NO: 6)) (MCAO + G-CSF-D 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, n = 12), G-CSF-D (MCAO + rhG-CSF D 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, n = 12), G-CSF (MCAO + 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, n = 12), and Sham
650 group (surgical process + vehicle, n = 12). The G-CSF-D was administered subcutaneously at 0.5 hr and 48 hr after blood reperfusion. G-CSF was administered subcutaneously at 0.5, 12, 24 and 48 hr after blood reperfusion. Under anesthesia, the right common carotid artery, (CCA), internal carotid artery (ICA), and external carotid artery (ECA) were exposed through a midline incision of the neck. A commercial monofilament (silicon-coated) was used as an occluder and
655 inserted via the ECA. The occluder was advanced into the ICA 18 ± 0.5 mm beyond the carotid bifurcation. Mild resistance indicated that the occluder was properly lodged in the anterior cerebral artery and blocked blood flow to the middle cerebral artery (MCA). After 60 minutes, reperfusion was allowed by withdrawing the monofilament by approximately 10 mm. Body temperature was kept 36.5 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ with a heating pad during the surgery process

660 [00160] 72 hrs after surgery, the rats were re-anesthetized and decapitated. The brains were removed and coronally sectioned into 6 slices with 2-mm thickness. The brain slices were incubated for 30 minutes in a 2% solution of triphenyltetrazolium chloride (TTC) at 37 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ and fixed by immersion in a 10% buffered formalin solution. The brain slices were photographed and unstained areas were defined as infarcted volume. The infarcted volume was measured using
665 Image-Pro Plus 5.1.

WO 2011/147319

PCT/CN2011/074678

[00161] The results as shown in Fig. 6 illustrated that at equal molar of G-CSF ratio, the group administrated with two treatments of G-CSF dimer showed only around 54% of brain infarcted volume compared to the group receiving four treatments of the G-CSF monomer. The G-CSF dimer showed superior therapeutic efficacy than the G-CSF monomer in rat stroke model.

670 [00162] The exemplary embodiments of the present invention are thus fully described. Although the description referred to particular embodiments, it will be clear to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced with variation of these specific details. Hence this invention should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein.

675

CLAIMS:

1. A human granulocyte colony-stimulating factor (G-CSF) dimer comprising a first and second monomer of a G-CSF-Fc complex,

wherein said G-CSF dimer retains the biological activity of G-CSF and has a serum half-life of more than twice that of G-CSF;

wherein each of said G-CSF-Fc complexes comprises a G-CSF monomer, a Fc fragment of human IgG2, and a peptide connecting said G-CSF monomer and said Fc fragment; and said dimer is formed through the pairing of two said Fc fragments via a plurality of disulfide bonds disposed therebetween; and

wherein each of said G-CSF-Fc complexes comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6.

2. The dimer according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of disulfide bonds comprises 2 or 4 disulfide bonds.

3. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a purified dimer according to claim 1 or 2, in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent or carrier.

4. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 3, wherein said dimer has a purity of 90-100%.

5. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 3 or 4, for use in treating stroke.

6. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 5, formulated to provide from 0.001-1,000 mg of said dimer per dose.

7. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 3 or 4, for use in activating STAT3 in neural cells.

8. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 7, formulated for administration in a range from 0.001-1,000 mg of said dimer per dose.

9. A method for the manufacture of the dimer according to claim 1, comprising the steps of:

a) transforming mammalian cells with an expression vector comprising a DNA sequence comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:10, encoding a G-CSF-Fc complex;

b) culturing said transformed mammalian cells under conditions sufficient for expressing said G-CSF-Fc complex and said dimer; and

c) isolating and purifying said dimer obtained from step (b);

wherein said dimer comprises two of said G-CSF-Fc complexes, each of said G-CSF-Fc complexes comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 6.

10. An isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of any one of SEQ ID NOs:4-7.

11. The isolated polypeptide of claim 10, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:4.

12. The isolated polypeptide of claim 10, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:5.

13. The isolated polypeptide of claim 10, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:6.

14. The isolated polypeptide of claim 10, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:7.

15. A pharmaceutical composition comprising the isolated polypeptide according to claim 10, in admixture with a pharmaceutically acceptable diluent or carrier.

16. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:4.

17. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:5.
18. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:6.
19. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein the polypeptide comprises SEQ ID NO:7.
20. The pharmaceutical composition according to any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein said polypeptide has a purity of 90-100%.
21. The pharmaceutical composition according to any one of claims 15 to 20, for use in treating stroke.
22. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 21, formulated for administration in a range from 0.001-1,000 mg of said polypeptide per dose.
23. The pharmaceutical composition according to any one of claims 15 to 20, for use in activating STAT3 in neural cells.
24. The pharmaceutical composition according to claim 23, formulated for administration in a range from 0.001-1,000 mg of said polypeptide per dose.

1/5

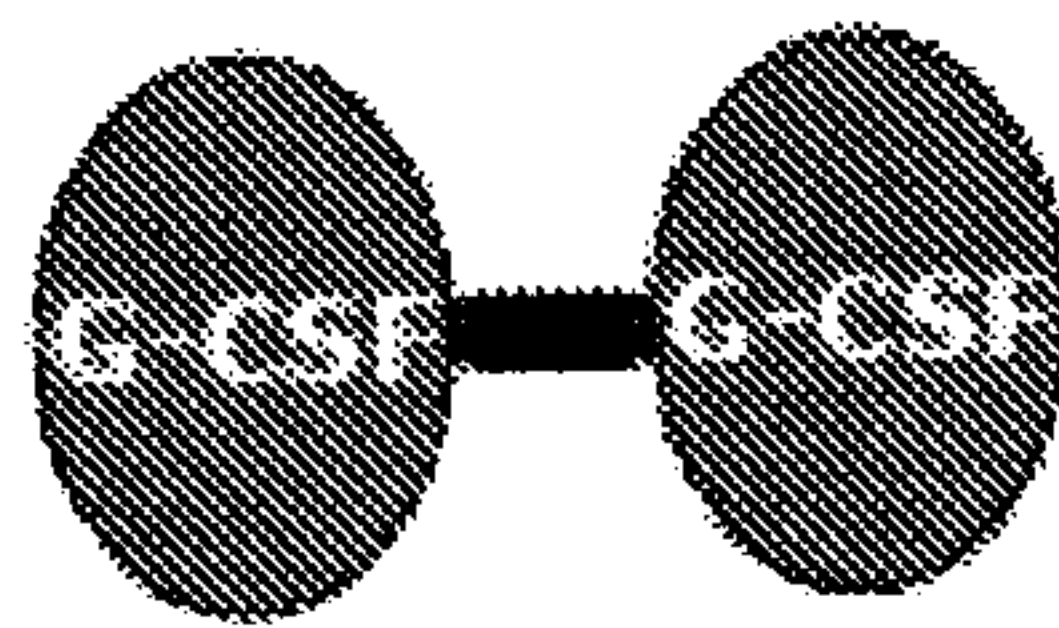


Fig. 1

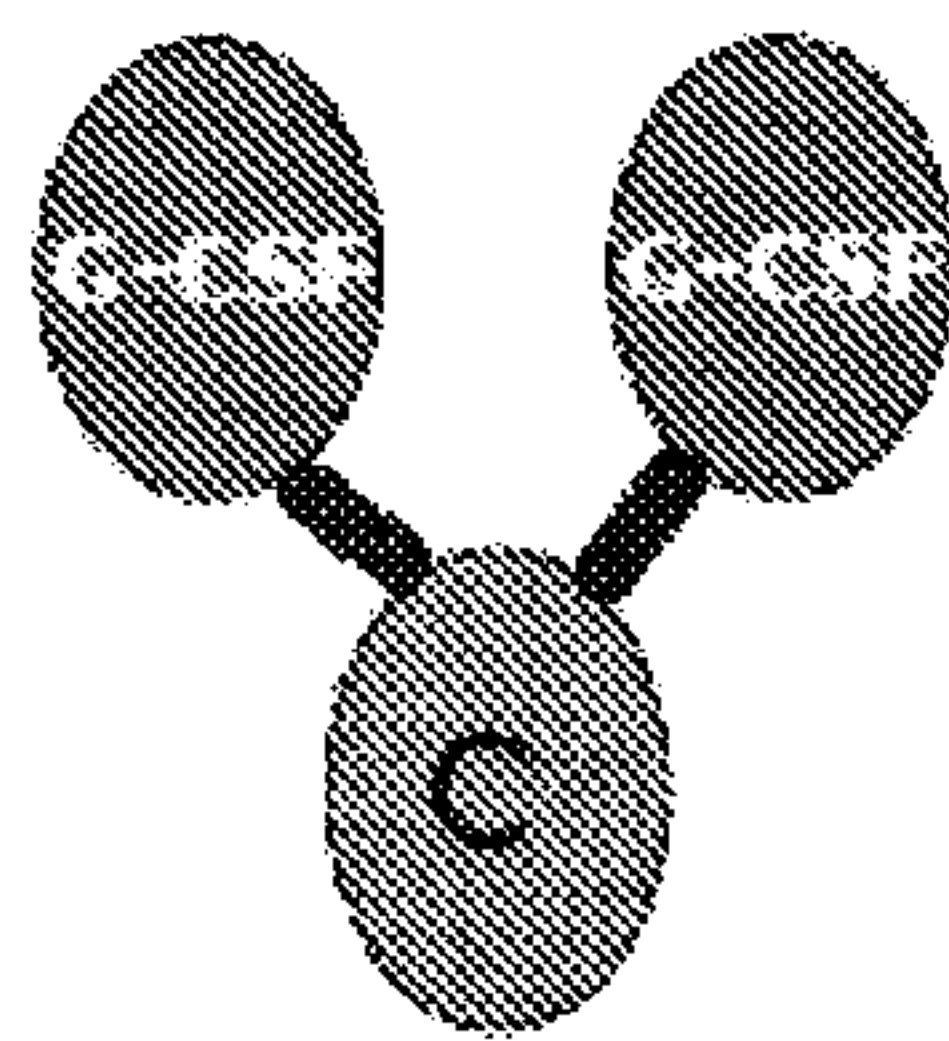


Fig. 2a

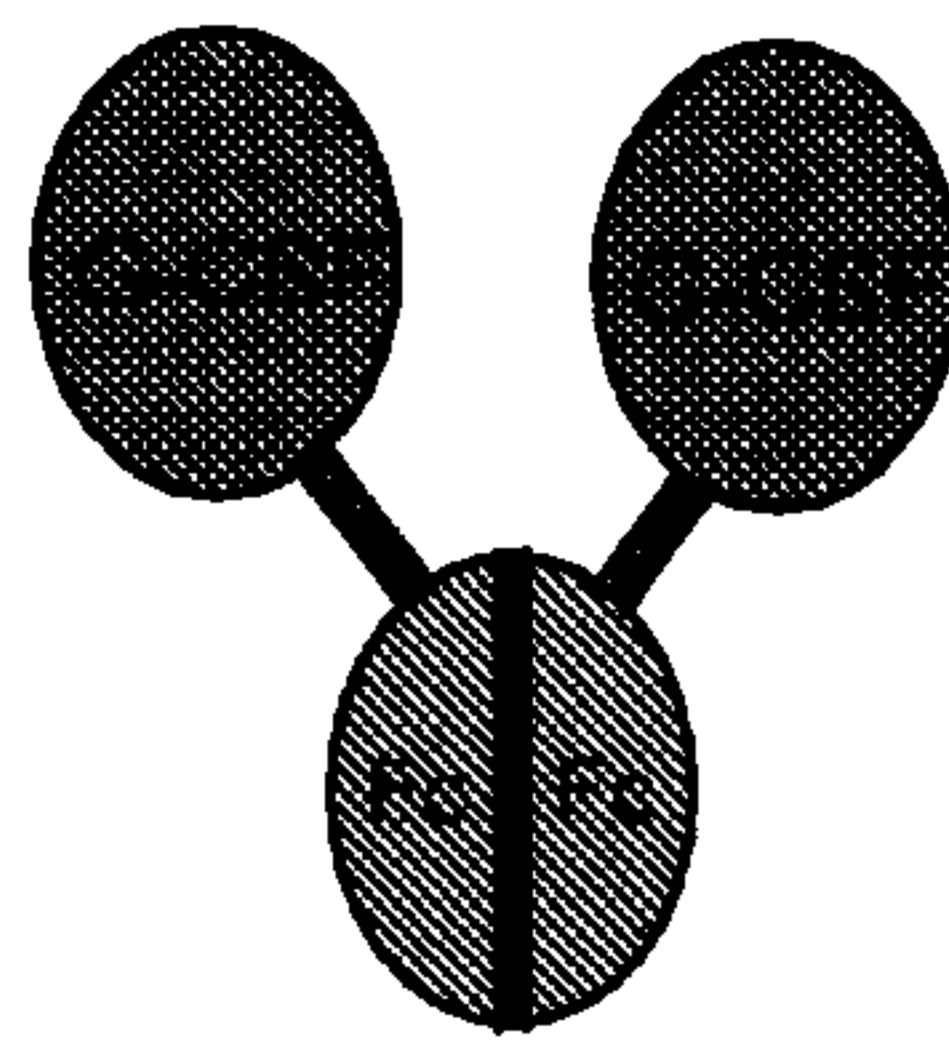


Fig. 2b

2/5

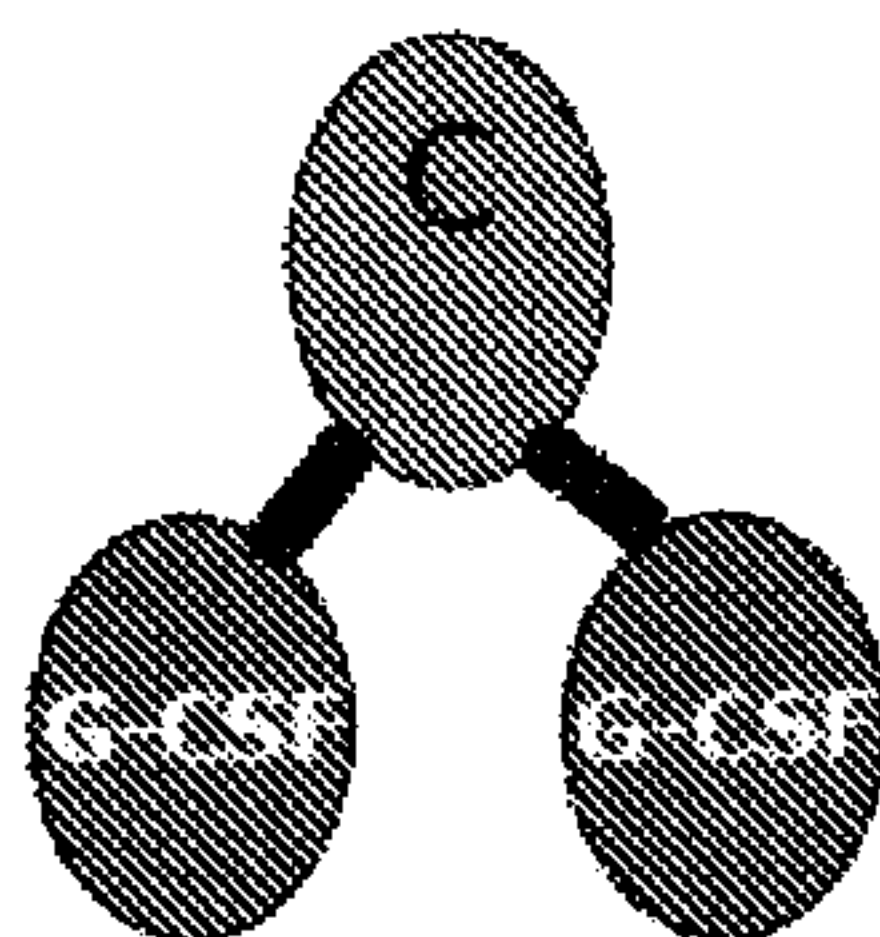


Fig. 3a

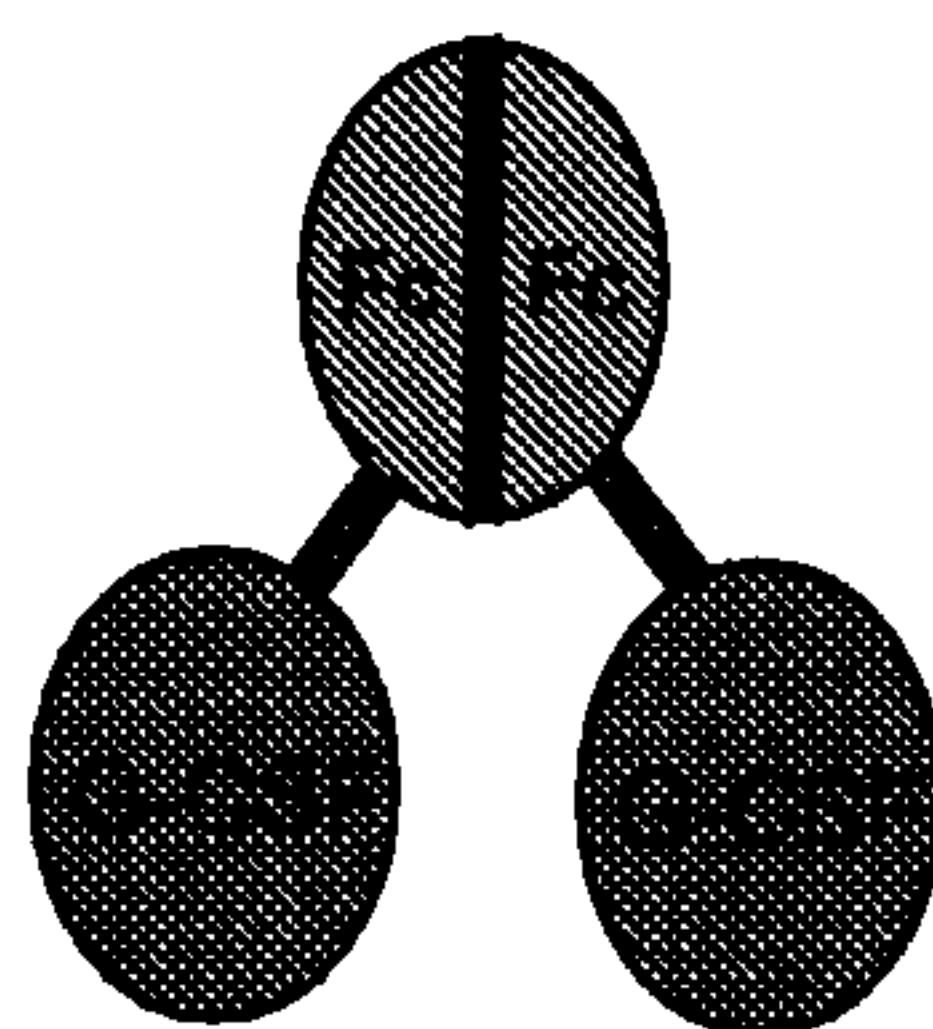


Fig. 3b

3/5

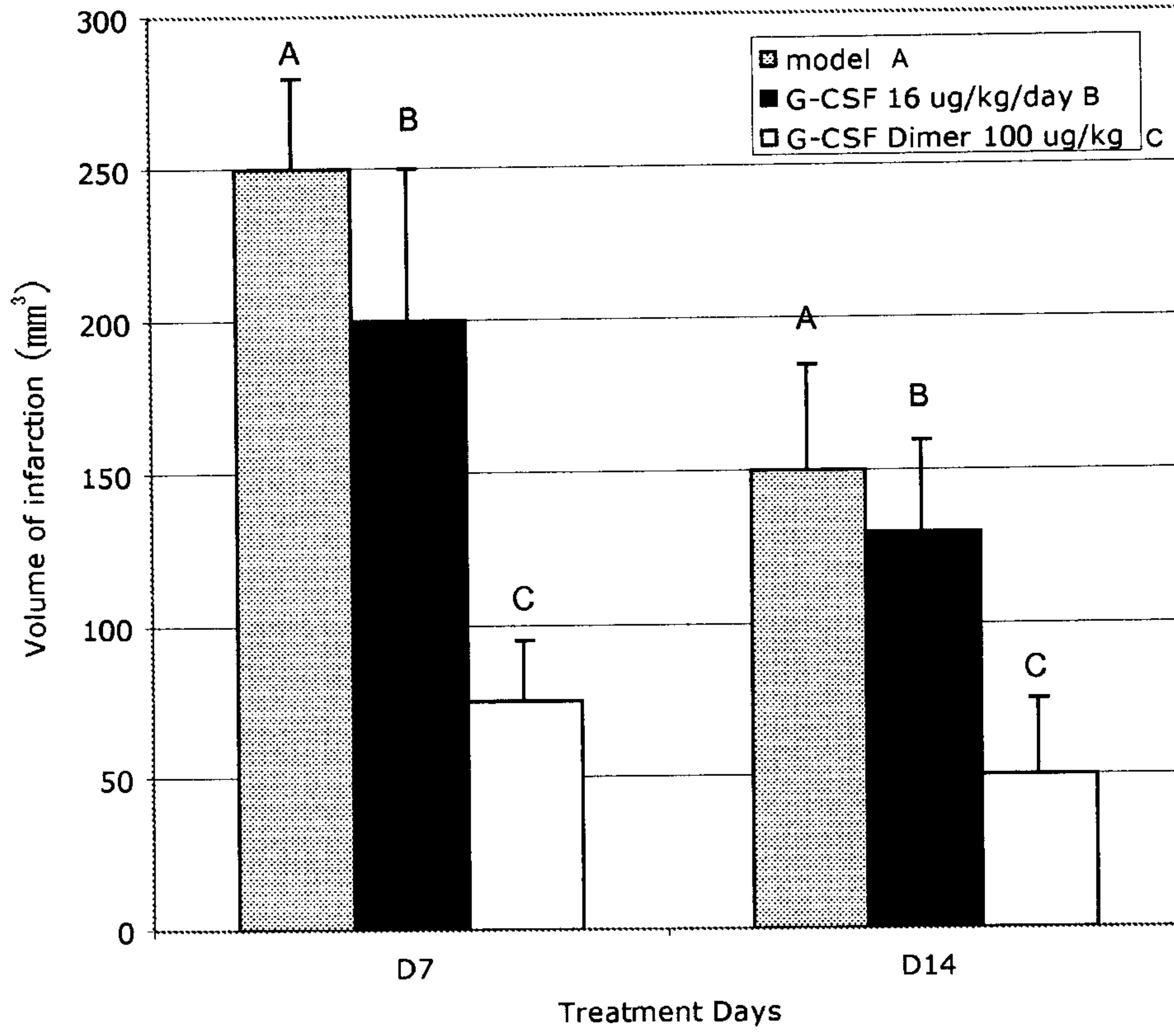


Fig. 4

4/5

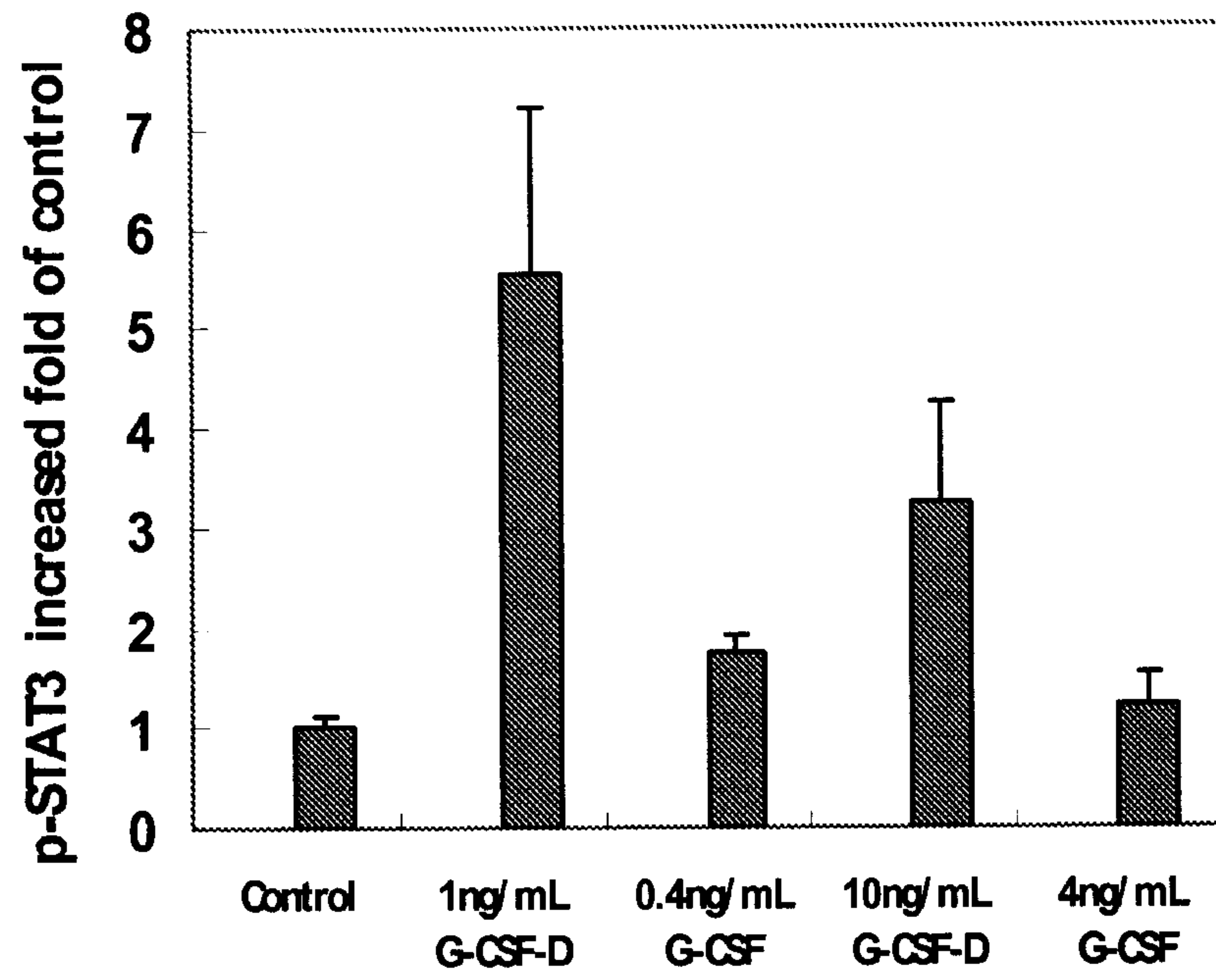


Fig. 5

5/5

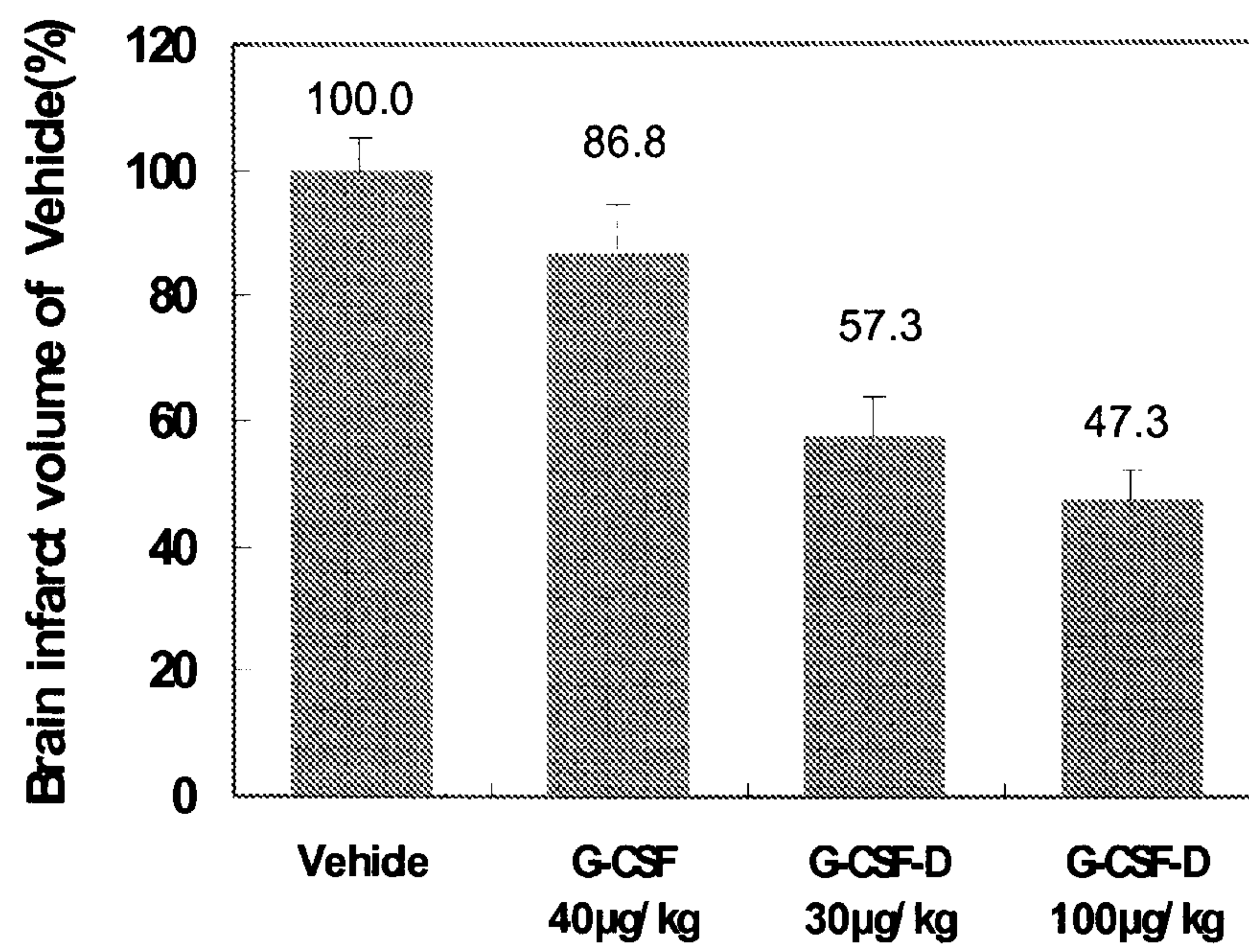


Fig. 6