The Mechanism of Substrate Inhibition in Human Indoleamine 2,3-Dioxygenase

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ABSTRACT: Indoleamine 2,3-dioxygenase catalyzes the O₂-dependent oxidation of L-tryptophan (L-Trp) to N-formylkynurenine (NFK) as part of the kynurenine pathway. Inhibition of enzyme activity at high L-Trp concentrations was first noted more than 30 years ago, but the mechanism of inhibition has not been established. Using a combination of kinetic and reduction potential measurements, we present evidence showing that inhibition of enzyme activity in human indoleamine 2,3-dioxygenase (hIDO) and a number of site-directed variants during turnover with L-tryptophan (L-Trp) can be accounted for by the sequential, ordered binding of O₂ and L-Trp. Analysis of the data shows that at low concentrations of L-Trp, O₂ binds first followed by the binding of L-Trp; at higher concentrations of L-Trp, the order of binding is reversed. In addition, we show that the heme reduction potential (E_m⁰) has a regulatory role in controlling the overall rate of catalysis (and hence the extent of inhibition) because there is a quantifiable correlation between E_m⁰ (that increases in the presence of L-Trp) and the rate constant for O₂ binding. This means that the initial formation of ferric superoxide (Fe³⁺−O₂−) from Fe²⁺−O₂ becomes thermodynamically less favorable as substrate binds, and we propose that it is the slowing down of this oxidation step at higher concentrations of substrate that is the origin of the inhibition. In contrast, we show that regeneration of the ferrous enzyme (and formation of NFK) in the final step of the mechanism, which formally requires reduction of the heme, is facilitated by the higher reduction potential in the substrate-bound enzyme and the two constants (k_cat and E_m⁰) are shown also to be correlated. Thus, the overall catalytic activity is balanced between the equal and opposite dependencies of the initial and final steps of the mechanism on the heme reduction potential. This tuning of the reduction potential provides a simple mechanism for regulation of the reactivity, which may be used more widely across this family of enzymes.

INTRODUCTION

Indoleamine 2,3-dioxygenase (IDO) catalyzes the first and rate-limiting step in the kynurenine pathway, the O₂-dependent oxidation of L-tryptophan (L-Trp) to N-formylkynurenine, through cleavage of the C₂−C₃ bond of the substrate, Scheme 1. The mechanism of action of this dioxygenase activity is of increasing interest from a clinical perspective because tryptophan catabolism generates a number of secondary metabolites that are implicated in a wide range of neurological disorders, cataract formation, and suppression of T cell proliferation. This extends to an understanding of enzyme inhibition, because the development of dioxygenase inhibitors is ongoing, with some compounds in clinical trials.

It was noted 40 years ago that the rate of tryptophan turnover in rabbit indoleamine 2,3-dioxygenase decreases at higher concentrations of substrate. There have been several proposals for the origin of the inhibition by L-Trp, but a consensus has not been reached. It was originally assumed to be a result of binding L-Trp to the ferric form of the enzyme. However, there are two difficulties with this interpretation. First, we have reported for human IDO (hIDO) that binding of L-Trp to the ferric enzyme leads to an increase in reduction potential of the heme group; as we have noted previously, early data reported similar observations in rabbit IDO. Such an increase in reduction potential would actually stabilize formation of the catalytically

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Scheme 1. Reaction Catalyzed by IDO

![Scheme 1. Reaction Catalyzed by IDO](image)
active ferrous heme and thus would not, in isolation, be expected to lead to inhibition. Second, unlike other catalytic heme enzymes which require continuous recycling of the oxidized ferryl heme, the evidence so far indicates that only a single reduction of the ferric heme is required in IDO, after which the reaction needs no further reducing equivalents to proceed. Because of this, the binding of l-Trp to ferric heme would not be expected to inhibit turnover because ferric heme is not implicated catalytically.

In this contribution, we put forward an alternative hypothesis. We show that the overall enzyme activity, and hence the extent of the inhibition, is correlated with the heme reduction potential. This provides a simple mechanism for regulation of enzyme activity.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Mutants of hIDO (S167H, S167A, F164A, F163A, F226A, F227A, F226Y, R231K) were prepared using the Quickchange™ Site-directed Mutagenesis kit (Stratagene Ltd., Cambridge, UK). All variants were sequenced to confirm that no spurious mutations had occurred during the PCR and were expressed and purified according to previously published procedures. Human IDO (hIDO) and all site-directed variants were expressed and purified as previously published methods. Mutagenesis kit (Stratagene Ltd., Cambridge, UK). All variants were sequenced to confirm that no spurious mutations had occurred during the PCR and were expressed and purified according to previously published procedures. Human IDO (hIDO) and all site-directed variants were expressed and purified as previously published methods.

We show that the overall enzyme activity, and hence the extent of the inhibition, is correlated with the heme reduction potential. This provides a simple mechanism for regulation of enzyme activity.

**RESULTS**

**Methodological Approach.** The rate of catalytic turnover of IDO decreases at higher concentrations of l-Trp. This has been observed for rabbit IDO and more recently for hIDO. In this analysis, we have interpreted the behavior according to Scheme 2. In this general mechanism, it is proposed that O2 binds first (k1), after which the heme leads to the equivalent resonance form of ferric superoxide (Fe3+−O2−). There is evidence for the presence of a ferric superoxide species from recent resonance Raman work, which is consistent with the same formulation of this ferrous bond in the globins (see for example ref 16). This is followed by binding of l-Trp (k2), leading to the formation of the ternary complex (Fe3+−O2−−Trp), which subsequently converts to product with the rate constant kcat. Scheme 2 dictates that under conditions where the concentration of l-Trp is very high (e.g., for enzyme inhibition), l-Trp will bind to the protein (k2) before O2 (k1), such that the same ternary complex forms product and the resting enzyme is recovered (with the same rate constant, kcat).
approach to present a hypothesis for substrate inhibition that is regulated by the reduction potential in wild-type hIDO and numerous site-directed variants.

**Substrate Inhibition. Derivation of Relevant Equations.**

The rate of catalytic turnover of hIDO decreases at higher concentrations of 1-Trp, as shown in Figure 2 for hIDO. The derivations from the initial steady-state approximation are presented in the Supporting Information (derivation 1), giving rise to the following expression for the rate of the reaction, eq 1 (which is Eqn S8 in the Supporting Information):

\[
\frac{d[\text{NFK}]}{dt} = \left(1 + \frac{[\text{Trp}]}{K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}}\right) \frac{k_{\text{cat}}[\text{hIDO}][\text{Trp}]}{K_M + [\text{Trp}]\left(1 + \frac{[\text{Trp}]}{K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}}\right)}
\]

As we explain in the Supporting Information and again below, this expression is useful because it accommodates different kinds of inhibition.

If \(k_{\text{cat}} \ll k_i[O_2]\), which is expected to be the case because \(k_{\text{cat}}\) is typically \(\lesssim 20 \text{ s}^{-1}\) for dioxygenases in general and only \(\sim 1 \text{ s}^{-1}\) for hIDO, and because \(k_i\) is \(\sim 10^6 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}\), then the Michaelis constant, \(K_M\), is defined as in eq 2.

\[
K_M = \frac{k_{\text{cat}}}{k_i}
\]

In eq 1, there are two effective substrate inhibition constants, \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}\) and \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff},1}\). These constants have complicated expressions (see Supporting Information); however, they can be approximated by eqs 3 and 4 to correctly account for the limiting cases of weak and strong inhibition, so that,

\[
K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}} \approx \frac{K_d [O_2]}{k_{\text{cat}}}
\]

where \(K_d\) is the binding constant of L-Trp to ferrous hIDO (Scheme 2, \(K_d = k_j/k_i\)), and

\[
K_{i,1}^{\text{eff},1} \approx \frac{k_{\text{cat}} [O_2]}{k_{\text{cat}} + k_d [O_2]}
\]

where \(k_d\) is defined as the overall (observed) rate of product formation (from the consecutive reactions) if 1-Trp binds first (depicted as “route 2” in Scheme 2)

For eq 1 there are three types of behavior, each of which we have observed in our experiments and which can be rationalized with different ratios of \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}\) and \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff},1}\); see also Supporting Information (SI) (Derivation 1). Type 1 behavior shows full inhibition of the steady-state rate, as observed for hIDO (Figure 2) and F227A (Table 1), with the effective inhibition constant \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}\).

Figure 2. Plots of rate (ΔAbs min⁻¹) versus substrate concentration for hIDO (■) and the S167A variant of hIDO (△). Lines show fits of the data to eq 1; steady-state parameters extracted from the fit are listed in Table 1. Conditions: 0.1 M Tris-HCl, pH 8.0, [enzyme] = 100 nM, 30 μg/mL catalase, [ascorbate] = 20 mM, [methylene blue] = 10 μM, \([O_2]\) = 258 μM, 20.0 °C.

**Table 1. Summary of Reduction Potentials and Steady-State and Presteady-State Constants for hIDO and Site-Directed Variants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>(E_p^\circ) (Fe²⁺/Fe³⁺) (mV)</th>
<th>(k_{\text{cat}}) (s⁻¹)</th>
<th>(K_M) (μM)</th>
<th>(K_{M,1}^{\text{eff}}) (μM)</th>
<th>(K_i) (μM)</th>
<th>(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff},1}) (μM)</th>
<th>(k_i) (μM⁻¹ s⁻¹)</th>
<th>(k_j) (μM⁻¹ s⁻¹)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hIDO⁸</td>
<td>−60</td>
<td>1.4 ± 0.1</td>
<td>5.0 ± 0.3</td>
<td>65 ± 6</td>
<td>0.7 ± 0.2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.53 ± 0.03⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S167A⁶</td>
<td>−12</td>
<td>1.6 ± 0.1</td>
<td>22 ± 2</td>
<td>31 ± 2</td>
<td>0.7 ± 0.2</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>400 ± 100</td>
<td>0.25 ± 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S167H⁹</td>
<td>−200</td>
<td>0.0060 ± 0.0003</td>
<td>26 ± 3</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>10000</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F163A⁴</td>
<td>−119</td>
<td>0.040 ± 0.002</td>
<td>68 ± 6</td>
<td>1700 ± 100</td>
<td>0.4 ± 0.1</td>
<td>2700</td>
<td>&gt;10000</td>
<td>0.78 ± 0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F164A⁴</td>
<td>−85</td>
<td>0.68 ± 0.03</td>
<td>160 ± 10</td>
<td>400 ± 20</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>1300 ± 200</td>
<td>−</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F226A⁴</td>
<td>−127</td>
<td>0.12 ± 0.01</td>
<td>310 ± 20</td>
<td>1000 ± 50</td>
<td>0.4 ± 0.1</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>970 ± 100</td>
<td>1.00 ± 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F226Y⁴</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.0 ± 0.3</td>
<td>160 ± 10</td>
<td>10 ± 1</td>
<td>0.7 ± 0.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>98 ± 10</td>
<td>0.17 ± 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F227A⁴</td>
<td>−116</td>
<td>0.40 ± 0.02</td>
<td>15 ± 2</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.2 ± 0.1</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.76 ± 0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R231K⁹</td>
<td>−106</td>
<td>0.30 ± 0.01</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.2 ± 0.1</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>0.70 ± 0.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁸The reduction potential for hIDO was previously published.¹⁰ For this type of inhibition the rate goes to zero (Type 1, full inhibition), and \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}\) is out of experimental range (i.e., >10,000 μM); see eqn S8 in SI. For this type of inhibition, \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}\) and \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff},1}\) are comparable (eq 1), and partial inhibition is observed (Type 3). In some proteins, it was not possible to obtain reliable sets of inhibition data either because the enzyme was not stable enough under conditions of high concentration of tryptophan (for R231K and F227A) or because the steady-state activity is very low to begin with (for S167H). This means that values for inhibition constants (\(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}\)) could not be obtained (see Figure 5). For this variant no inhibition is observed (Type 2). Both \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff}}\) and \(K_{i,1}^{\text{eff},1}\) are large and out of experimental range. Normal Michaelis–Menten kinetics are therefore observed. For reduction potentials, estimated errors of ±2 mV apply in all cases, which is largely a consequence of the uncertainty of the measured (literature) potential of the reference dye. In some cases, it was not possible to determine a value for \(K_i\) because the absorbance changes were too small (for \(K_i\)).

⁹Calculated using eq 3. All second-order rate constants for \(O_2\) binding, \(k_i\), were determined experimentally by stopped flow (from a linear dependence of \(k_{\text{cat}}\) on \([O_2]\)), except for the value presented for hIDO which has been reported previously.¹⁰ The second-order rate constant in the presence of 1-Trp was observed to be lower (\(k_d = 0.16 \pm 0.02 \text{ μM}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}\)). In some cases, it was not possible to determine a reliable value for \(k_i\) because the ferrous oxy species was unstable (F164A, S167H) or found not to be formed in 100% yields (S167H).
under conditions where the experimental concentration of l-Trp can exceed the magnitude of $K_{\text{eff}}$. In this case, $K_{\text{eff}}$ is within experimental range, $k_{\text{cat}}$ approaches zero at the limiting concentration of l-Trp, and $K_{\text{eff,1}}$ is (infinitely) large and is not experimentally accessible. Type 2 behavior occurs when $K_{\text{eff}}$ itself is not experimentally accessible (i.e. $K_{\text{eff}} > [\text{l-Trp}]$). In this case, *no inhibition* is observed, and $k_{\text{cat}}$ does not decrease with increasing concentration of substrate, an example being the F226A variant, Figure S1(S1). Type 3 behavior is when $k_{\text{cat}}$ reduces in value but does not approach zero, for example for the F226Y variant, Figure S1(S1), the S167A variant (Figure 2), and the F163A, F164A variants, Table 1. In this case, the additional constant $K_{\text{eff,1}}$ (which can be considered as the concentration of l-Trp at which the rate of product formation through routes 1 and 2 in Scheme 2 becomes equal, see derivation 2 in SI) is within experimental range (i.e., not infinitely large as above) but takes into consideration our observations for certain variants that the reaction may not always approach zero at high concentrations of l-Trp. In these cases partial inhibition is seen, because turnover is slowed down but can still proceed at a measurable rate even when l-Trp binds first (route 2 in Scheme 2, where $k_d \neq 0$). One can see from eqs 1, 3, and 4 that in extremis, when the concentration of l-Trp is larger than either that of $K_{\text{eff}}$ or $K_{\text{eff,1}}$, then the reaction rate is $k_d$ [hIDO] and that under these conditions of high tryptophan concentration, from eq 5 one can see that $k_d$ is small and approximates to $k_d$[O2] when $k_{\text{cat}} > k_d$[O2]. The latter condition dictates that with binding of O2 to the Fe3+-Trp complex, $k_d$ must be slowed down in the presence of the substrate, which is the ultimate reason for the inhibition.

**Data Analysis.** Figure 2 shows the results of the substrate inhibition experiments for hIDO and an analysis of the experimental data according to Scheme 2 and fitted to eq 1. Best-fit values for the parameters $k_{\text{cat}}, K_{\text{M}}, K_{\text{eff}},$ and $K_{\text{eff,1}}$ are shown in Table 1 along with the reduction potential for hIDO (previously reported10). The corresponding fitted values for a number of site-directed variants are also presented in Table 1.

The validity of the fitting process can be verified because the extracted values for $K_{\text{eff}}$ can be calculated independently from other experimentally accessible constants, as $K_{\text{eff}}$ is itself the product of two terms, eq 3. The first, $K_p$, is the binding constant of l-Trp to ferrous hIDO ($K_p = k_b/k_d$, Scheme 2), which was determined by anaerobic titration of reduced enzyme with l-Trp, Table 1. The second comes from the ratio $k_d$[O2]/$k_{\text{cat}}$ where [O2] is constant (258 μM). Where reliable experimental values are available for $k_b$, values for $K_{\text{eff}}$ can thus be calculated independently from $K_p$, $K_1$ and $k_{\text{cat}}$ (eq 3) and compared with the experimental values. For instance for hIDO, $k_{\text{cat}} = 1.35 \text{ s}^{-1}$ (Table 1), $K_p = 0.53 \mu\text{M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$10, and $K_1 = 0.7 \mu\text{M}$, which yields $K_{\text{eff}} = 68 \mu\text{M}$. This is close to the value derived experimentally ($K_{\text{eff}} = 65 \mu\text{M}$, Table 1). Other calculated values for $K_{\text{eff}}$ are shown in Table 1, and are likewise in good agreement with the experimental data. In general, less active hIDO variants have smaller values of $K_{\text{eff}}$ which lead to larger values for $K_{\text{eff}}$ according to eq 3, which accounts for the fact that substrate inhibition is not observed with these mutants (Type 2 behavior): F163A is an example, as $K_{\text{eff}}$ is in the millimolar range and therefore inaccessible experimentally. Overall, these analyses show that reliable values for $K_{\text{eff}}$ can be extracted (in the range of 5 μM to 2 mM) and that the experimental values are in reasonable agreement with calculated values.

**Dependence of $k_1$ on Reduction Potential.** We have reported10 the reduction potential ($E_m^0$) of hIDO as $-63 \text{ mV}$ (substantially lower than typically observed in the globins17,18) and that binding of l-Trp to hIDO increases the reduction potential to +18 mV in the presence of the substrate. In that work10 we made the preliminary observation that second-order rate constants for binding of O2 to ferrous hIDO are affected by changes in the reduction potential of the heme group introduced by mutation. In particular, the S167A variant ($E_m^0$ (Fe3+/Fe2+) = -12 mV, which is 50 mV higher than hIDO), has a second-order rate constant for O2 binding ($k_1 = 0.25 \mu\text{M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$) that is 2-fold slower than that observed for hIDO ($k_1 = 0.53 \mu\text{M}^{-1} \text{s}^{-1}$), and the correlation between the rate constants is according to the expected dependence of the rate constant for Fe2+ oxidation on the reduction potential (because the oxy ferrous intermediate converts by oxidation to ferric superoxide), eq 6.

$$\text{Fe}^{2+} + \text{O}_2 \rightarrow \text{Fe}^{3+} - \text{O}_2^- \quad \text{(6)}$$

The following expression applies,

$$\ln k_1 = \text{const} - \alpha E_m^0(\text{Fe}^{3+}/\text{Fe}^{2+})/RT \quad \text{(7)}$$

where $0 < \alpha < 1$ is the Marcus transfer coefficient,19 and $RT(=RT/F) = 25 \text{ mV}$ at $T = 20 ^\circ \text{C}$. As we show in the SI (derivation 2, Eqn SC), a linear expression can be derived by equating the two expressions for the wild type and variants. We present data for hIDO and a number of variants plotted in this way according to Eqn SC, Figure 3. The reduction potentials used in these analyses are presented in Table 1, with a representative data set shown for the F226Y variant in Figure S2 (SI); second-order rate constants for O2 binding, $k_1$, are also reported in Table 1, with representative data sets shown for the F227Y variant in Figure S3 (SI). A linear correlation of $\ln k_1$ against reduction potential is observed across the range of variants, Figure 3, although there is some scattering of points. The average slope is calculated as $\alpha = 0.28$, which is consistent with the analysis and discussed further below. To our knowledge, this dependence of the rate constant for O2 binding with reduction potential appears to have been overlooked in previous studies.

Applying the same rate constant/reduction potential correlation, according to Scheme 2, one can predict that when l-Trp binds first the positive shift in potential (81 mV for hIDO10)
should decelerate the subsequent binding of O₂ to the hIDO–Trp complex (k₁) according to eq 7, because the formation of ferric-superoxo heme from oxidation of ferrous oxy heme is redox driven and can be analyzed as such. Accordingly, when the Fe³⁺/Fe²⁺ potential is increased, the rate constant k₁ is expected to decrease, and one can predict that it slows down by exp(–α(E⁰ₘ(Fe³⁺/Fe²⁺) – Eᵢₑff(Fe³⁺–Trp/Fe²⁺–Trp))/RT) = exp(0.24 × 81/25) = 2.1 times. This conclusion is verified by stopped-flow experiments in which formation of Fe³⁺–O₂ (monitored at 570 nm) was faster in the absence of tryptophan (kₑff = 0.53 ± 0.06 μM⁻¹ s⁻¹) than after preincubation of ferrous hIDO with L-Trp (kₑff = 0.16 ± 0.02 μM⁻¹ s⁻¹, Table 1). The experimentally determined ratio kₑff/k₁ = 3.3 is in good agreement with the predicted value of 2.1 calculated from the shift in the reduction potentials.

**Dependence of kₑff on Reduction Potential.** In the preceding section we have shown that the kinetics of O₂ binding to ferrous hIDO were correlated with the reduction potential of the heme iron, Figure 3, as described by eq 7. One can further expand this approach and also consider the rate-determining final step (kₑff) in Scheme 2 as a redox process because it involves formal “re-reduction” of the heme, eq 8.

\[
\text{Fe}^3+ – \text{O}_2^- \rightarrow \text{Trp} \rightarrow \text{Fe}^2+ + [\text{O}_2 – \text{Trp}]
\]  

(8)

When considering this as an electrochemical process, a similar expression for the rate constant can be proposed, eq 9.

\[
\ln kₑff = \text{const} + (1 – \alpha)Eₘ^0(\text{Fe}^3+/\text{Fe}^2+)/RT
\]  

(9)

This shows that the dependence of kₑff on reduction potential is also exponential (as it is for k₁ in eq 7), but there is an important difference: the transfer coefficient must be 1 – α, since it is the reverse reaction that is being considered. Experimental verification of this requirement imposes a crucial check on the validity of the model.

The experimental data for hIDO and a number of variants are shown in Figure 4, where plots of ln kₑff for each variant (using a derivation similar to k₁ above, see Supporting Information, Eqn (SD)) are shown as a function of the corresponding difference in the reduction potential between hIDO and the variant (Table 1). The dependence fits a linear function according to eq 9. Moreover, the transfer coefficient (from the slope) is 1 – α = 0.76 according to eq 9. This means that α = 0.24 which is in very good agreement with the estimate of α = 0.28 from the O₂-binding experiment shown in Figure 3 (above), providing a reliable test of the methodology.

**Overall Dependence of Enzyme Inhibition (Kₑff) on Reduction Potential.** The above analyses for k₁ and kₑff show that they are oppositely correlated with the heme reduction potential, Figures 3 and 4. But both of these terms contribute to the inhibition constant, Kₑff, extracted from Figure 2, because Kₑff = Kᵢₑff[K₉]/kₑff (eq 3). From eq 7 for k₁ and eq 9 for kₑff one sees that the transfer α coefficient cancels, since k₁/kₑff ≈ exp(–αEₘ(Fe³⁺/Fe²⁺)/RT)/exp((1 – α)Eₘ(Fe³⁺/Fe²⁺)/RT) = exp(–Eₘ(Fe³⁺/Fe²⁺)/RT)

Combining the pre-exponential factors into a single potential independent constant, one derives eq 10:

\[
\ln Kₑff = \text{const} – \frac{Eₘ^0(\text{Fe}^3+/\text{Fe}^2+)}{RT}
\]  

(10)

which gives an expression for the overall dependence of Kₑff on the reduction potential, which is contributed by the equal and opposite effects of the dependence of k₁ and kₑff on the reduction potential. As above for k₁, a linear expression can be derived by equating the two expressions for the wild type and variants (derivation in SI, Eqn SE). Accordingly, a logarithmic plot of Eqn SE, Figure 5, is expected to be linear. The data show that this is indeed the case, and the slope (= 0.86 ± 0.05) is close to unity which means that the assumptions leading to eq 10 are correct.

**DISCUSSION**

Substrate inhibition of IDO has long been a feature of the literature, but the mechanism of inhibition has not been established. It has been suggested that it originate from the unproductive binding of L-Trp to the catalytically inactive ferric form of the enzyme. However, in 2005 we noted that the reduction potential for human IDO (hIDO) increases on binding of L-Trp, which is the source of the inhibition in hIDO. There may indeed be a second (weak) binding site, and at high enough concentrations...
the substrate may well bind at more than one location or in multiple conformations within the distal cavity (although spectroscopic data suggest that multiple conformations of substrate orientation are not likely in the presence of O$_2$). We do not exclude the possibility of a second site at high concentrations of Trp, most likely above those found physiologically, but we can account for the inhibition without needing to invoke binding at a second, inhibitory site (physiological concentrations of tryptophan are not well documented but are probably in the range $40-100 \mu$M$^{24,25}$). Indeed, the crystal structure of hIDO shows two CHES molecules in the active site, which might be an indication of a larger, more open active site. However, a fit of kinetic inhibition data to this kind of dependence does not, _ipso facto_, establish the existence of a second site. We find that substrate inhibition in hIDO can be rationalized by assuming only a single binding site for L-Trp for the wild-type protein and all variants. We do not exclude the possibility of a second site at high concentrations of Trp (most likely above those found physiologically), but we can account for the inhibition without needing to invoke binding at a second, inhibitory site. Our analyses go beyond just the fitting of steady-state inhibition data and include an examination of the effect of the inhibition constant is correlated with the dependence of the inhibition constant is exactly correlated with the electron-thermic groups (which have different reduction potentials). But the experiments were carried out on different enzymes, which means that the observations were correlated only qualitatively, with the authors simply noting that “the catalytic activity of 1-tryptophan 2,3-dioxygenase increases as the affinity of the enzyme for oxygen increases”. This is precisely the behavior that we describe, and so we have used our eqs 7 and 9 to quantify the previously published data. If we take the previously published values for $K_{i}$ (for TDO) and the binding constant of the ferrous enzyme for O$_2$ and reanalyze the original data in the same way as we have done above for IDO, we observe the expected logarithmic dependence (with one rogue data point in each case, Figure 6). This analysis further supports our conclusions, and the two sets of experiments can in fact be regarded as similar—on the one hand by changing reduction potential by substitution of the heme group and on the other by mutation (this work)—but giving the same overall correlation.

**pH-Dependence of Substrate Inhibition.** Our analyses also help to clarify other aspects of the older literature. First, Sono and co-workers have shown for rabbit IDO that substrate inhibition is stronger at higher pH (Figure 6 in ref 4) and separately that there is a decrease in $K_{i}$ for L-Trp binding to ferrous IDO with increasing pH (Figure 5 in ref 4, which is the same dependence as that observed for hIDO$^6$).

**A Quantitative Correlation of Older Data.** The analysis also helps to clarify several older reports in the published literature. A qualitative correlation between activity and the electron-withdrawing capacity (which can be considered as correlated with the reduction potential) of heme had been noted previously, but its implications had not been quantified or widely appreciated. It was shown some years ago that the logarithm of the turnover rate is linearly correlated with reduction potential in TDO reconstituted with variously substituted heme prosthetic groups (which have different reduction potentials). But the experiments were carried out on different enzymes, which meant that the observations were correlated only qualitatively, with the authors simply noting that “the catalytic activity of 1-tryptophan 2,3-dioxygenase increases as the affinity of the enzyme for oxygen increases”. This is precisely the behavior that we describe, and so we have used our eqs 7 and 9 to quantify the previously published data. If we take the previously published values for $K_{i}$ (for TDO) and the binding constant of the ferrous enzyme for O$_2$ and reanalyze the original data in the same way as we have done above for IDO, we observe the expected logarithmic dependence (with one rogue data point in each case, Figure 6). This analysis further supports our conclusions, and the two sets of experiments can in fact be regarded as similar—on the one hand by changing reduction potential by substitution of the heme group and on the other by mutation (this work)—but giving the same overall correlation.

**Figure 6.** Plots of previously published data (taken from Table 1 of ref 25) showing (A) ln $V_{max}$ and (B) ln $K_{cat}$ for heme-substituted TDO as a function of reduction potential of the corresponding heme. $V_{max}$ is the maximal turnover rate, and $K_{cat}$ is the O$_2$ affinity.
These observations are reconciled by eq 3, because the inhibition constant $K_{i}^{\text{eff}}$ is proportional to $K_i$ so that the observed decrease in $K_i$ at higher pH leads directly to a corresponding decrease in $K_{i}^{\text{eff}}$, thus accounting for the stronger inhibition. Second, it was concluded that inhibition was caused by binding of Trp to the ferric enzyme because the inhibition constant was found to be of a magnitude similar to that of the $K_i$ for binding of L-Trp to ferric enzyme (i.e., in the millimolar range). This seems unlikely, because in fact $K_{i}^{\text{eff}}$ (Table 1) is less than 100 $\mu$M, which is much lower than the binding constant for Trp binding to ferric enzyme (most recent determinations put the $K_i$ for L-Trp binding to ferric enzyme as very much higher, in the millimolar range). Our model resolves this problem, because it implicates $K_i$ only for the ferrous enzyme. The inhibition constant, $K_{i}^{\text{eff}}$, is equal to $K_i$ multiplied by the factor $k_{\alpha}[O_2]/k_{\alpha}^{\text{cat}}$, eq 3, which shifts the value of $K_i$ for the ferrous enzyme to a much higher value (from the submicromolar range to much higher (tens of micromoles)), and therefore in close agreement with the values for $K_{i}^{\text{eff}}$. As we explained in the Introduction, there are other conceptual problems with the idea that binding of L-Trp to ferric enzyme is the source of the inhibition.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

There has been considerable confusion in the literature on the order of substrate binding in the dioxygenases. In hIDO at least, our data clearly indicate that O$_2$ binding precedes Trp binding because if this binding order is reversed the increase in reduction potential as a consequence of Trp binding disfavors the subsequent O$_2$ binding step. There is an informative analogy here with the P450s. In the P450s, substrate binding can also be accompanied by an increase in reduction potential of the heme, although in this case the substrate binds to ferric heme, and the increase in potential facilitates the subsequent reduction and turnover—a molecular ‘gate’ that needs to be ‘opened’ during every turnover cycle. In IDO, there is no need for continuous reduction of the heme because only a single (initiating) reduction is required. Consequently, the increase in reduction potential on substrate binding in IDO is not used in the same way; instead, the increase in reduction potential stabilizes the ferrous form and slows down O$_2$ binding. We propose that this is the source of the inhibition at high substrate concentrations, thus dictating that O$_2$ binds first.

### ASSOCIATED CONTENT

1. Supporting Information

The derivation of relevant equations, steady-state data for variants (Figure S1) and representative reduction potential (Figure S2) and O$_2$ binding (Figure S3) data. Complete ref 11. This material is available free of charge via the Internet at http://pubs.acs.org.

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### ADDITIONAL NOTES

“In all calculations for variants we assume that the “const” in eq 7” (and in eq 9) is not altered by the mutations, so that only the reduction potential is changed. To simplify formulas, we use RT instead of RT/F in all cases (which is equivalent, if it is measured in mV).

In eq 8, the formation of the product NFK is shown schematically as [O$_2$–Trp] to allow only the charge transfer processes to be easily visualized.

The finding that $\alpha = 0.28$ is conserved for $k_i$ and $k_{\alpha}^{\text{cat}}$ (where it is $1 - \alpha$, with $\alpha = 0.24$) reflects the fact that both reactions have the same geometry of transition state, in which charge is redistributed between iron and oxygen.

### REFERENCES