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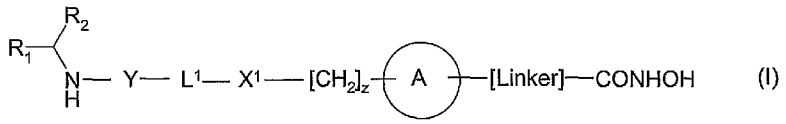

(57) Abstract: Compounds of formula (I) are inhibitors of histone deacetylase activity, and are useful in the treatment of, for example, cancers, wherein R_1 is a carboxylic acid group (-COOH), or an ester group which is hydrolysable by one or more intracellular carboxyesterase enzymes to a carboxylic acid group; $R_2$is the side chain of a natural or non-natural alpha amino acid; Y is a bond, -C(=O)-, -S(=O)$_2$-, -C(=O)O-, -C(O)NR$_3$-, -C(=S)-NR$_3$, -C(=NH)NR$_3$ or -S(=O)$_2$NR$_3$- wherein R_3 is hydrogen or optionally substituted C_1-C_6 alkyl; L^1 is a divalent radical of formula -(Alk^1)$_m$(Q)$_n$(Alk^2)$_p$- wherein m, n and p are independently 0 or 1 , Q is (i) an optionally substituted divalent mono- or bicyclic carbocyclic or heterocyclic radical having 5 - 13 ring members, or (ii), in the case where both m and p are 0, a divalent radical of formula -X^2-Q^1- or -Q^1-X^2- wherein X^2 is -O-, S- or NR^A- wherein R^A is hydrogen or optionally substituted C_1-C_3 alkyl, and Q^1 is an optionally substituted divalent mono- or bicyclic carbocyclic or heterocyclic radical having 5 - 13 ring members, AIk^1 and AIk^2 independently represent optionally substituted divalent C_3-C_7 cycloalkyl radicals, or optionally substituted straight or branched, C_1-C_6 alkylene, C_2-C_6 alkenylene ,or C_2-C_6 alkynylene radicals which may optionally contain or terminate in an ether (-O-), thioether (-S-) or amino (-NR^A-) link wherein R^A is hydrogen or optionally substituted C_1-C_3 alkyl; X^1 represents a bond; -C(=O); or -S(=O)$_2$-; -NR$_4$C(=O)-, -C(=O)NR$_4$-, -NR$_4$C(=O)NR$_5$- , -NR$_4$S(=O)$_2$-, or -S(=O)$_2$NR$_4$-wherein R_4 and R_5 are independently hydrogen or optionally substituted C_1-C_6 alkyl; z is 0 or 1 ; A represents an optionally substituted mono-, bi- or tri-cyclic carbocyclic or heterocyclic ring system wherein the radicals R_1R_2NH-Y-L^1-X^1-[CH$_2$]$_Z$- and HONHCO-[LINKER]- are attached different ring atoms; and -[Linker]- represents a divalent linker radical linking a ring atom in A with the hydroxamic acid group CONHOH, the length of the linker radical, from the terminal atom linked to the ring atom of A to the terminal atom linked to the hydroxamic acid group, is equivalent to that of an unbranched saturated hydrocarbon chain of from 3-10 carbon atoms.

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