interferon/ribavirin combination is more effective than interferon alone. Typically, hepatitis C is treated with a combination of pegylated interferon alpha and ribavirin for a period of 24 or 48 weeks, depending on the HCV genotype.

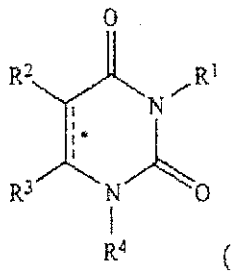
[0006] The goal of treatment is sustained viral response -- meaning that HCV is not measurable in the blood after therapy is completed. Following treatment with a combination of pegylated interferon alpha and ribavirin, sustained cure rates (sustained viral response) of about 75% or better occur in people with HCV genotypes 2 and 3 in 24 weeks of treatment, about 50% in those with HCV genotype 1 with 48 weeks of treatment, and about 65% in those with HCV genotype 4 in 48 weeks of treatment.

[0007] Treatment may be physically demanding, particularly for those with prior history of drug or alcohol abuse, because both interferon and ribavirin have numerous side effects. Common interferon-associated side effects include flu-like symptoms, extreme fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, thyroid problems, high blood sugar, hair loss, and skin reactions at the injection site. Possible serious interferon-associated side effects include psychoses (*e.g.*, suicidal behavior), heart problems (*e.g.*, heart attack, low blood pressure), other internal organ damage, blood problems (*e.g.*, blood counts falling dangerously low), and new or worsening autoimmune disease (*e.g.*, rheumatoid arthritis). Ribavirin-associated side effects include anemia, fatigue, irritability, skin rash, nasal stuffiness, sinusitis, and cough. Ribavirin can also cause birth defects, so pregnancy in female patients and female partners of male patients must be avoided during treatment and for six months afterward.

[0008] Some patients do not complete treatment because of the serious side effects discussed above; other patients (non-responders) continue to have measurable HCV levels despite treatment; and yet other patients (relapsers) "clear" the virus during therapy, but the virus returns sometime after completion of the treatment regimen. Thus, there continues to be a need for alternative compounds, compositions, and methods of treatment (used either in combination with or in lieu of an interferon agent and/or ribavirin) to alleviate the symptoms of hepatitis C, thereby providing partial or complete relief. This invention provides compounds (including salts thereof), compositions, and methods of treatment that generally address such a need.

SUMMARY ~~OF THE INVENTION~~

[0009] This disclosure~~invention~~ is directed to compounds that correspond in structure to formula (I):



(I);

and alkynyloxy, wherein:

the alkyl optionally is substituted with one or more hydroxy;

(c) the carbocyclyl and heterocyclyl portions of such substituents optionally are substituted with one or more substituents independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, carboxy, hydroxy, alkyloxy, alkenyloxy, alkynyloxy, halo, nitro, cyano, azido, and amino, wherein:

the amino optionally is substituted with one or two substituents independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkenyl, and alkynyl; and

each R^K is independently selected from the group consisting of aminosulfonyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkenylsulfonyl, and alkynylsulfonyl, wherein:

(a) the alkylsulfonyl, alkenylsulfonyl, and alkynylsulfonyl optionally are substituted with one or more substituents independently selected from the group consisting of carboxy, hydroxy, halo, amino, nitro, azido, oxo, aminosulfonyl, alkyloxycarbonyl, alkenyloxycarbonyl, alkynyloxycarbonyl, alkylcarbonyloxy, alkenylcarbonyloxy, alkynylcarbonyloxy, alkyloxy, alkenyloxy, alkynyloxy, carbocyclyl, heterocyclyl, cyano, and aminocarbonyl, wherein:

the amino, aminosulfonyl, and aminocarbonyl optionally are substituted with one or two substituents independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkenyl, and alkynyl; and

(b) the aminosulfonyl optionally is substituted with one or two substituents independently selected from the group consisting of alkyl, alkenyl, and alkynyl.

[0011] This disclosure~~invention~~ also is directed to the salts (including pharmaceutically acceptable salts) of the compounds of the disclosure~~invention~~.

[0012] This disclosure~~invention~~ also is directed to compositions (including pharmaceutical compositions) that comprise one or more compounds and/or salts of the disclosure~~invention~~, and, optionally, one or more additional therapeutic agents.

[0013] This disclosure~~invention~~ also is directed to kits that comprise one or more compounds and/or salts of the disclosure~~invention~~, and, optionally, one or more additional therapeutic agents.

[0014] This disclosure~~invention~~ also is directed to methods of use of the compounds, salts, compositions, and/or kits of the disclosure~~invention~~ to, for example, inhibit replication of an RNA virus (including HCV), treat a disease treatable by inhibiting HCV ribonucleic acid (RNA) polymerase (including hepatitis C).

[0015] This disclosure~~invention~~ also is directed to a use of one or more compounds and/or salts of the disclosure~~invention~~ to prepare a medicament. The medicament optionally can comprise one or more additional therapeutic agents. In some embodiments, the medicament is useful for treating hepatitis C.

[0016] Further benefits of Applicants' disclosure~~invention~~ will be apparent to one skilled in the art from reading this patent application.