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Edited by

Vincenzo Fogliano
University of Napoli ‘Federico II’
Italy

Thoma Henle
University of Dresden
Germany

Directorate-General for Research

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ANTIOXIDANT EFFECT OF MELANOIDINS AFTER INDUCTION OF OXIDATIVE STRESS IN ISOLATED RAT HEPATOCYTES

Torres, M., C.¹, Codoñer-Franch, P.¹ Muñiz, P.², González, M. L.², Boix, L.¹ and Valls-Bellés, V.¹

¹Departamento Pediatría, Ginecología y Obstetricia. Facultad de Medicina. Universidad de Valencia. ²Departamento Biotecnología y Ciencia de los Alimentos. Facultad de Ciencias. Universidad de Burgos.

Introduction
In this work we have studied the effect of melanoindins synthesised from glucose and glycine, after the induction of oxidative stress generated by the antitumoral antibiotic adriamycin in isolated rat hepatocytes. Adriamycin or doxorubicin (Fig.1) is a quinonic antibiotic belonging to the anthracyclines group. Clinically, it is a potent antitumoral antibiotic used for the treatment of a variety of human cancers including lymphomas, leukemias, and solid tumors. The citostatic effect of this drug implies the inhibition of topoisomerase II and RNA polymerase II, insertion into chromosomal DNA and formation of complexes with transition metals, provoking erroneous transcription and replication, and generation of reactive oxygen species (ROS) (Valls et al., 1994).

![Figure 1. Structural formula of adriamycin (doxorubicin)](image1)

The clinical use of the antitumoral agent, adriamycin, is largely limited, because it is a cumulative dose-related and this provokes cardiotoxicity. This toxicity is generally believed to be caused by the formation of oxygen free radicals.

![Figure 2. Redox cycling of anthracyclins by mitochondria](image2)
Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that redox cycling of anthracyclines takes place in the complex I of the electronic transport chain. The adriamycin can undergo a one-electron reduction and become a semiquinone radical. In the presence of oxygen, this semiquinone radical rapidly oxidizes, forming superoxide ion (O$_2^-$). This ion, after undergoing dismutation reaction gives rise to the formation of hydrogen peroxide (H$_2$O$_2$) which later, in the presence of transition metals such as iron leads to the formation of the hydroxyl radical (•OH). This reaction was proposed by Haber-Weiss in 1939, the results of which had been proposed by Fenton in 1894.

\[
\begin{align*}
(1) & \quad O_2^- + O_2^- + H^+ \longrightarrow H_2O_2 + O_2 \\
(2) & \quad O_2^- + Fe^{+3} \longrightarrow O_2 + Fe^{+2} \\
(3) & \quad H_2O_2 + Fe^{+2} \longrightarrow Fe^{+3} OH^- + OH^- \\
(2) + (3) & \quad O_2^- + H_2O_2 \longrightarrow OH^- + OH^- + O_2
\end{align*}
\]

These free radicals or reactive oxygenic species stimulate lipid peroxidation and inhibit the mitochondrial function, causing cell damage which provokes cardiotoxicity, one of the side effects of the antibiotic.

In this study our main objective is to reduce or eliminate ROS by the administration of melanoidins, in order to avoid the side effects of this antibiotic.

**Materials and Methods**

In order to carry out the study, we used isolated hepatic cells from male Wistar rats, aged between 3-4 months, and weighing between 250-300 g. They were fed a standard IPM-20 diet. Hepatocytes were isolated by a simplified version of the perfusion method of Berry and Friend (1969). Cell viability was tested with trypan blue. Approximately 95% of the isolated hepatocytes were found to exclude the dye. 2 ml of hepatocytes suspension containing approximately 2x10$^6$ cells in Krebs-Henseleit saline equilibrated with O$_2$/CO$_2$; 95/5; v/v were incubated in a shaking water bath at 37 °C (degrees celsius) for 1 hour, in 25 ml conical flasks sealed with rubber stoppers. Incubation mixtures containing cells and 50 µM of adriamycin in absence/presence of melanoidins (10, 50 µg), were made up to 4 ml final volume with Krebs-Henseleit buffer solution (pH 7.4). Once the incubation time had elapsed, the cells were processed to carry out the relevant tests of oxidative stress.

**Analytic Methods**

- cell viability assessment, by quantification of the lactate dehydrogenase released into the extracellular medium (Bergmeyer and Bernt,1974).
- Damage caused to lipids, the extent lipid peroxidation was determined by measuring thioarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS) according to the spectrofotometric method of Stacey and Priestly (1978).
- Damage caused to proteins, by quantification of the protein carbonyl groups (Levine et al.,1990)
- Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) levels was determined by Lamprecht and Trautschold method (1974).
- GSH content of isolated hepatic cells was determined using the assay of Brigelius, of the glutathione -S- transferase (Brigelius et al.,1983), and the protein content by Lowry method. (Lowry et al.,1951).
Results and Discussion
We first determined cellular viability (Fig. 3) by quantification of the lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) released into the extracellular medium. Being T0, the value corresponding to the cells not incubated, and T60, cells incubated for 60 minutes in absence of substrates, this is the control value. The first column of each block represents those cells incubated for 60 minutes with ADR (50 μM). We can observe that as the concentration of adriamycin rises, the release of LDH increases. The last two columns refer to the cells incubated with only melanoidins at 10 and 50 μg. We can observe that the values are equal to the control, which verifies that melanoidins do not have any toxic effect. When melanoidins are present in the incubation medium together with adriamycin, the levels of LDH decrease, reaching values even lower than control T60, being significant in the case studied. These results reveal the protective effect of melanoidins in cellular viability.

![Graph showing LDH levels in cells](image)

**Figure 3** Lactate dehydrogenase (LDH) levels in isolated rat hepatocytes. Results are expressed as mean ± SD of 8 separate experiments. Statistical significance was evaluated by Student’s t-test.

- ΔP < 0.05 and ΔΔP < 0.005 - Compared with the control (T60)
- *P < 0.05 and **P < 0.005 - Compared with corresponding adriamycin concentration
**Figure 4** Levels of thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS) in isolated rat hepatocytes. Results are expressed as mean YSD of 8 separate experiments. Statistical significance was evaluated by Student's t-test.

$^\Delta P<0.05$ and $^{\Delta\Delta} P<0.005$ - Compared with the control (T60)

$^* P<0.05$ and $^{**} P<0.005$ - Compared with corresponding Adriamycin concentration

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**Figure 5** Protein carbonyls content in isolated rat hepatocytes. Results are expressed as mean YSD of 8 separate experiments. Statistical significance was evaluated by Student's t-test.

$^\Delta P<0.05$ and $^{\Delta\Delta} P<0.005$ - Compared with the control (T60)

$^* P<0.05$ and $^{**} P<0.005$ - Compared with corresponding Adriamycin concentration
Later we studied the damage caused to lipids and proteins. The damage to lipids was studied by quantification of the products formed in lipid peroxidation and which react with thiobarbituric acid (TBARS), figure 4. It was observed that adriamycin induces peroxidation, increasing levels of TBARS. When melanoids are present in the medium, there is a considerable reduction until control values are reached. When the concentration of melanoids is 50 µg, values are identical to control T0, being significant in the concentration of ADR studied. The higher the concentration of melanoids is, the greater is the protective effect.

In figure 5 we study the damage caused to proteins, by quantification of the protein carbonyl groups. Here, there is also an increase in the presence of adriamycin compared with the control, and a reduction when there are melanoids present in the medium, being equal to control T60.

These results highlight the antioxidant effect of melanoids against macromolecules, such as lipids and proteins.

Since the main source of energy is the adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and adriamycin interacts with the first complex of the electronic transfer chain, we quantify the levels of ATP, figure 6. In this graph we observe that in the presence of adriamycin the levels of ATP decrease, although it is not significant. When melanoids are present in the medium they increase, reaching the control values.

![Diagram showing ATP levels](image)

**Fig.6.-** Levels of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) in isolated rat hepatocytes.

Results are expressed as mean YSD of 8 separate experiments. Statistical significance was evaluated by Student's t-test.

$^\Delta P<0.05$ and $^{\Delta\Delta} P<0.005$ - Compared with the control (T60)

$^* P<0.05$ and $^{**} P<0.005$ - Compared with corresponding adriamycin concentration

However, when we study non enzymatic antioxidant defence, as in the case of glutathione (GSH), figure 7, we observed that in the presence of melanoids the levels of GSH are equal to control T60, not having any effect. But when melanoids are present together with adriamycin the values are lower. This would be on effect not desired in the antioxidant defence.
Figure 7 Glutathione (GSH) levels in isolated rat hepatocytes.

Results are expressed as mean SD of 8 separate experiments. Statistical significance was evaluated by Student's t-test.

$^4P < 0.05$ and $^{5,6}P < 0.005$ - Compared with the control (T60)

$^*P < 0.05$ and $^{**}P < 0.005$ - Compared with corresponding adriamycin concentration

In conclusion, melanoidins synthesized from glucose and glycine have a protective effect over macromolecules. They increase cell viability, protect lipids and proteins from the oxidative stress and induce ATP formation, therefore, they have an antioxidant effect. But, on the other hand, they maintain or decrease GSH levels, an adverse effect for antioxidant defence. At the time being we have only determined levels of GSH, but it would be interesting to determine other parameters involved in antioxidant defence.

References


