

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Investigation on the correlation between redox changes and oxidative stress in diabetes, and their role in transcription factors activation in vitro and in vivo

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**Investigation on the Correlation Between Redox Changes  
and Oxidative Stress in Diabetes, and their Role in  
Transcription Factors Activation *In Vitro* and *In Vivo***

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## Abstract

Diabetic mellitus is the most common endocrine disease. This chronic disorder is characterized by high blood glucose level (hyperglycemia) and long-term complications of eyes, kidneys, nerves and blood vessels, resulting in much morbidity and mortality in diabetic patients. However the underlying mechanism of pathogenesis of these long-term complications is complex and still largely unknown.

Many hypotheses, such as polyol pathway, advanced glycation end products, activation of PKC, have been suggested in an attempt to explain the development of the diabetic complications. According to recent researches, oxidative stress induced by the hyperglycemia seems to be a common pathway of various hypotheses, hence it is the most possible candidate in causing the diabetic complications. In the past *in vitro* experimental findings, high glucose could lead to oxidative stress in porcine endothelial and vascular smooth muscle cells. Transcription factors NF- $\kappa$ B and AP1 were also activated.

Therefore the main objectives of this project were to study the change of the reduced glutathione (GSH), which is the primary non-enzymatic antioxidant in cytosol, and malondialdehyde (MDA), which is the end products of lipid peroxidation, in the vascular smooth muscle cells (VSMC) under high glucose cultured condition (*in vitro* experiment), and in the eyes, aortas and kidneys of diabetic rats (*in vivo* experiment). Furthermore, time course studies were also carried out to establish the temporal relationships between redox status and oxidative stress. In addition the binding activities of transcription factors NF- $\kappa$ B and AP1 in different time points were also studied in *in vitro* and *in vivo* models. GSH and MDA were measured by the colorimetric method using spectrophotometer with 400nm and 586nm. While the binding activities of the transcription factors, NF- $\kappa$ B and AP1, were determined by electrophoretic mobility shift assay (EMSA). The specificity of the band(s) were verified by the specific competition and non-specific competition in the gel. Finally the effectiveness of Trolox C, a water soluble derivative of vitamin E, in reversing the change of GSH and MDA of VSMC cultured in high glucose condition was investigated.

In brief, we have successfully isolated and cultured the VSMC and endothelial cells from the aorta of S.D. rats. However only VSMC were studied in details in the *in vitro* experiments. We found that significant decrease ( $0.045 \pm 0.003$   $\mu\text{mol/mg}$  in high

glucose condition Vs.  $0.063 \pm 0.004$   $\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg}$  in normal glucose condition) ( $P < 0.01$ ) of GSH was observed from Day 2 onwards. Similarly significant increase ( $0.1 \pm 0.012$   $\text{nmol}/\text{mg}$  in high glucose condition Vs.  $0.06 \pm 0.005$   $\text{nmol}/\text{mg}$  in normal glucose condition) ( $P < 0.05$ ) in MDA was observed from Day 2 onwards. In Day 10, GSH and MDA levels of VSMC cultured in high glucose condition were significantly less and more ( $P < 0.01$ ) than that of the cells grown in the normal glucose cultured condition respectively. Furthermore these depletion and increment of GSH and MDA were due to high glucose environment only, as demonstrated using other controls. In regard to transcription factors, only binding activity of NF- $\kappa$ B, but not AP1, was increased (about 50%). In addition Trolox C had only partial effect in normalizing the GSH and MDA concentrations.

We have also successfully set up the *in vivo* model using S.D. rats injected with streptozotocin. Their serum glucose elevated rapidly within a week after the injection, and the percentage of glycated hemoglobin increased with time. GSH and MDA concentrations in eyes and aortas of diabetic rats were found to be significantly decreased and increased ( $P < 0.01$ ) respectively in the first and the eighth week onwards after the injection. However there was a significant increase ( $P < 0.01$ ) in GSH concentration in the kidneys of diabetic rats comparing with the normal control. No significant change was found in MDA concentration in the kidney of diabetic rats in the experimental period except the 4<sup>th</sup> week with significant increase ( $P < 0.01$ ). Interestingly the binding activities of the NF- $\kappa$ B and AP1 of the above three tissues were all found to be increased in the 8<sup>th</sup> week but not in the 4<sup>th</sup> week after the injection.

To conclude, high glucose cultured condition lead to a reduced level of GSH in VSMC in the early period. And this depletion would then lead to oxidative stress occurring in the cells (as the MDA level was increased). These oxidative change signals may subsequently lead to activation of NF- $\kappa$ B, but not AP1 in VSMC. Trolox C had partial effect in normalizing the GSH and MDA of VSMC cultured in high glucose condition. Similarly, hyperglycemic condition may lead to the cells of the eyes and aorta of the diabetic rats, generating more free radicals. These reactive oxygen species may then attack the cell membrane and stimulate the activation of NF- $\kappa$ B and AP1. However, the complications occurring in the kidney may primarily due to expansion of extracellular matrix rather than oxidative damage.

## Table of contents

<b>Declaration</b>	<i>i</i>
<b>Abstract</b>	<i>ii</i>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<i>iv</i>
<b>Table of contents</b>	<i>v</i>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<i>xi</i>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<i>xii</i>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<i>xv</i>

### **Chapter I: Introduction**

<b>General introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Background information of diabetes mellitus</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2 Diabetes mellitus in Chinese medicine</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.3 Classification of diabetes mellitus</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.4 Complications of diabetes mellitus</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.5 Details of diabetic complications</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.5.1 Microvasculopathy</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.5.2 Macrovasculopathy</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.6 Different proposed mechanisms of developing diabetic complications</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.6.1 Glucose-dependent biochemical process (AGE pathway)</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1.6.2 Activation of protein kinase C</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.6.3 Polyol pathway</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>1.6.4 The role of haemodynamic factors</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.6.5 Extracellular matrix accumulation</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1.6.6 Induction of the growth factors</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>1.7 Interrelationship between the proposed mechanisms and the oxidative stress</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>1.8 Our proposed mechanism</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>1.9 Background information of the reactive oxygen species (ROS)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>1.9.1 Introduction in oxidative stress</b>	<b>23</b>

1.9.2 Relationship between hyperglycemia and oxidative stress	27
1.10 General properties and information of transcription factors	30
1.10.1 Properties of NF- $\kappa$ B	31
1.10.2 Properties of AP1	32
1.10.3 Relationships of transcription factors with hyperglycemia and oxidative stress	33
1.11 Aims of studies	35

## Chapter II: Methodologies of the project

2.1 <i>In vitro</i> experiments	37
2.1.1 Materials and reagents	37
2.1.2 Isolating and culturing the VSMC (primary cell culture)	37
2.1.3 Subculturing the VSMC	38
2.1.4 Harvesting the cells	39
2.1.5 Identifying VSMC by immunostaining method	39
2.1.6 Isolating and culturing the EC (primary cell culture)	41
2.1.7 Subculturing the EC	41
2.1.8 Harvesting the EC	42
2.1.9 Identifying EC by immunostaining method	42
2.2 <i>In vivo</i> experiments	44
2.2.1 Preparation of the diabetic rats	44
2.2.2 Materials and reagents	44
2.2.3 Procedure of setting up diabetic rats models	44
2.2.4 Enzymatic determination of serum glucose level (sigma diagnostics)	46
2.2.4.1 Principle	46
2.2.4.2 Materials and reagents	46
2.2.4.3 Procedure	47
2.2.5 Glycated hemoglobin assay (sigma diagnostics)	48
2.2.5.1 Principle	49
2.2.5.2 Materials and reagents	50
2.2.5.3 Procedure	50
2.2.5.4 For the HbA <sub>1</sub> columns preparation	52
2.3 Reduced glutathione measurement (GSH)	53
2.3.1 Materials and reagents needed	53
2.3.2 For samples preparation	54

2.3.3 Details of the assay	56
2.3.4 Principle of the assay	57
2.4 Malondialdehyde (MDA) measurement	58
2.4.1 Materials and reagents	58
2.4.2 For samples preparation	59
2.4.3 Details of the assay	61
2.4.4 Principle of the assay	62
2.5 Protein concentration determination	63
2.5.1 Materials and reagents used	63
2.5.2 Solutions preparations	63
2.5.3 Assay in the flat-bottom microplate	63
2.6 Electrophoretic mobility shift assay (EMSA)	65
2.6.1 Crude nuclear protein extraction	65
2.6.2 The protein concentration measurement	66
2.6.3 End-labeling of consensus oligomer and removal of unincorporated nucleotides	67
2.6.4 Binding reaction	68
2.6.5 Gel preparation, running, drying and analysis	69
2.6.6 Competition experiments	71
2.7 Statistical analysis	72

### **Chapter III: The *in vitro* experiments**

3.1 Introduction	73
3.2 Objectives	74
3.3 Methodology	75
3.3.1 Culture of VSMC	75
3.3.2 Reduced GSH and MDA measurements	75
3.3.3 A time course study investigating the change of MDA and GSH of VSMC cultured under high glucose cultured condition	75
3.3.4 Investigation on the change of MDA and GSH of VSMC in different culturing conditions	76
3.3.5 Investigation on the binding activities of transcription factors (NF- $\kappa$ B and AP1) in VSMC cultured in different conditions	77
3.6 Results	78

3.6.1 Isolation and cultured of VSMC and EC	78
3.6.2 Change of GSH level in VSMC cultured in different culture conditions	84
3.6.3 A time course study on the change of GSH levels in VSMC grown in high glucose condition	86
3.6.4 Change of the MDA when VSMC culturing in different culture conditions	88
3.6.5 A time course study on the change of MDA of VSMC grown in high glucose condition	90
3.6.6 The binding activities of NF- $\kappa$ B in VSMC cultured in different culture conditions	92
3.6.7 The binding activities of AP1 in VSMC cultured in different culture conditions	95
3.7 Discussion	98
3.7.1 Identification of the cultured cells	98
3.7.2 The change of GSH in VSMC cultured under high glucose condition for 10 days and the onset time of this changing	98
3.7.3 The effectiveness of the antioxidant Trolox C in reversing depletion of GSH	100
3.7.4 The change of MDA in VSMC cultured under high glucose condition for 10 days and the onset time of this changing	101
3.7.5 The effectiveness of Trolox C on preventing lipid peroxidation	103
3.7.6 Different response in binding activities of the transcription factors	104
3.8 Conclusion	107

#### Chapter IV: The *in vivo* experiments

4.1 Introduction	109
4.2 Objectives	110
4.3 Methodology for the <i>in vivo</i> experiment	111
4.4 Results	112
4.4.1 Setting up the diabetic S.D. rats model	112
4.4.2 A time course study measuring blood glucose concentration of control and diabetic rats	114
4.4.3 A time course study on the glycated hemoglobin level in control and diabetic rats	116



4.4.4 A time course study on the change of GSH in eyes, aorta and kidneys of the diabetic rats	119
4.4.5 A time course study on the change of malondialdehyde (MDA) in eyes, aorta and kidneys of the diabetic rats	125
4.4.6 A time course study on the change of the binding activities of NF- $\kappa$ B in eyes (lens removed), descending aorta and kidneys	130
4.4.6.1 Eyes	130
4.4.6.2 Aorta	133
4.4.6.3 Kidneys	136
4.4.7 A time course study on the change of the binding activities of AP1 in eyes (lens removed), descending aorta and kidneys	139
4.5 Discussion	148
4.5.1 Setting up the diabetic <i>in vivo</i> model	148
4.5.2 The change of the glycated hemoglobin	149
4.5.3 Time course study on GSH concentration in eyes, aorta and kidneys of diabetic rats	151
4.5.4 Time course study on MDA concentration in eyes, aorta and kidneys of diabetic rats	154
4.5.5 Time course study of the changing of the binding activities of transcription factors	158
4.6 Conclusion	162

## Chapter V General discussion and conclusion

5.1 Final overview discussion	165
5.2 Overview discussion of the <i>in vitro</i> experiments	167
5.3 Overview discussion of the <i>in vivo</i> experiments	170

## Chapter VI Further suggested researches

6.1 Suggested further studies	175
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<b><u>List of References</u></b>	178
<b><u>List of Publications</u></b>	197
<b><u>Curriculum Vitae</u></b>	198