

**EFFECT OF A POLYUNSATURATED FATTY
ACID MIMETIC ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
ATHEROSCLEROSIS IN THE APOE DEFICIENT
MOUSE**

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Summary

Atheroma, heart attacks and strokes continue to be a major cause of morbidity and mortality in our community. Atherosclerosis is a chronic inflammatory vascular disease, characterised by thickening of the vascular wall due to lipid accumulation, infiltration by circulating monocytes and T cells and proliferation of smooth muscle cells. Leukocyte adherence to the blood vessel wall is promoted by the up-regulation of cell adhesion molecules (CAM) by atherogenic substances such as tumour necrosis factor (TNF- α) and oxidised low density lipoprotein (oxidised-LDL). Recently our group has synthesised a novel polyunsaturated fatty acid, β -oxa 23:4*n*-6 which inhibits CAM up-regulation in blood vessel walls. It was therefore the objective of this thesis to determine whether this fatty acid protects against atherosclerosis. Advantage was taken of an experimental model of this disease, the apoE deficient mouse (apoE^{-/-}) which spontaneously develop atherosclerosis.

To assist our studies on MP3, we established an appropriate classification of different stages of atherosclerotic lesions and defined the kinetics of development of the disease in this model. By examining of the sections at the level of aortic roots the atherosclerotic lesions were classified into six categories. This classification was based on the histological characteristics of the plaque component including the degree of macrophage infiltration and foam cells formation, the presence of cholesterol clefts and confluent lipid cores, calcification and ossification, the composition of the fibrous cap, the media involvement and the incipient/actual aneurysm formation and inflammation, including neutrophils.

Kinetics of plaque development under the influence of a high fat and high cholesterol diet followed an exponential relationship of $y = -e^{-x}$. The asymptotic characteristic of this lesion development was however a function of compensatory aortic enlargement which accompanied the increase in lesion development and size. Thus it is concluded that the level of atherosclerosis needs to be gauged by the size of the lesion *per se*. This may be particularly important for the assessment of anti-atherogenic effects of drugs. Therefore attempts to develop a quantitative system to assess plaques revealed that expression of plaque size as % of occupation of blood vessel had limitations.

Using this model we were able to demonstrate that injections of the novel polyunsaturated fatty acid, MP3 led to a significant reduction/inhibition (70%) of plaque area and a corresponding 60% inhibition of aortic size. As expected this inhibition was not as evident when results were expressed as % of aortic lumen size. The results also suggested that protection by MP3 was dependent on conditions which promoted increased uptake into tissues by, for example, preloading animals with MP3 prior to commencing the high fat high cholesterol diet. The protective effects of MP3 are consistent with a role for the activation of the transcriptional factor, NF κ B and up-regulation of cell adhesion molecules in this disease, and the ability of MP3 to inhibit these targets. Thus the objective of this research has been achieved and the hypothesis proven.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university, and to the best of my knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

I consent to the thesis being made available for photocopying and loan in accepted for the award of the degree.

Fatemeh Moheimani

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page number
Summary	ii
Declaration	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Table of contents	vii
Abbreviations	xii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 General introduction	2
1.2 Structure of arteries	4
1.3 Atherosclerosis	5
1.3.1 Definition of atherosclerosis	5
1.3.2 Main hypotheses for development of atherosclerosis	5
1.3.3 Definition of adaptive intimal thickening	7
1.3.4 Classification of atherosclerosis	14
1.3.4.1 AHA classification	14
1.3.4.2 Modifications of AHA classification	21
1.3.5 The development of calcium deposits in atherosclerotic lesions	24
1.3.6 Role of neutrophils in atherosclerosis	24
1.4 Risk factors for atherosclerosis	26
1.5 Treatment and prevention of atherosclerosis	26

1.5.1	Dietary modification	27
1.5.2	Treatment guidelines	27
1.6	Apolipoprotein E	30
1.6.1	ApoE in lipoprotein metabolism	31
1.6.2	Clinical importance of apoE as a factor for atherosclerosis	32
1.6.3	ApoE knock out mice	33
1.7	Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA)	34
1.8	Structure of fatty acids	34
1.9	Sources of fatty acids	35
1.10	Metabolism of fatty acids	38
1.11	Importance of <i>n-3</i> fatty acids in health and disease	39
1.11.1	Fish oils and Atherosclerosis	39
1.12	Polyunsaturated fatty acids mimetics	41
1.13	Concluding remarks	44
1.14	Aim	44
1.15	Hypothesis	44
2	Materials and Methods	45
2.1	Materials	46
2.1.1	Materials used for polyunsaturated fatty acid preparation/analysis	46
2.1.2	Materials used for animal and histopathological studies	46
2.2	Methods	47
2.2.1	Polyunsaturated fatty acid	47
2.2.1.1	Synthesis of engineered polyunsaturated fatty acid	47

2.2.1.2	Preparation of fatty acid	49
2.2.2	ApoE deficient mice	50
2.2.2.1	Feeding with high fat diet and normal diet	50
2.2.2.2	Collection of organs and blood samples	51
2.2.3	Light microscopy	52
2.2.3.1	Tissue sectioning and staining	52
2.2.3.2	Slides and tissue quality control	56
2.2.3.3	Quantification of atherosclerotic plaque in apoE ^{-/-} mice	56
2.2.3.4	Consistency in measurement	58
2.2.4	Electron microscopy	58
2.2.4.1	Tissue processing	58
2.2.4.2	Preparation and examination of sections	59
2.3	Statistics and data analysis	59
3	Criteria for grading atherosclerosis in the apoE deficient mouse model	60
3.1	Introduction	61
3.2	Characterisation of atherosclerotic lesions	61
3.2.1	Region of the aortic root selected for measurement of plaque area	61
3.2.2	Histological criteria for grading atherosclerotic lesions in apoE ^{-/-} mice	62
3.2.3	Presence of calcification and ossification in atherosclerotic lesion of apoE ^{-/-} mice	77

3.2.4	The presence of neutrophils in atherosclerotic lesions of apoE ^{-/-} mice	80
3.3	Summary	83
4	Kinetics of development of atherosclerotic lesions in the apoE deficient mouse model	84
4.1	Introduction	85
4.2	Kinetics of development of atherosclerotic lesions	85
4.2.1	Selection of the most appropriate site of proximal aorta for measurement of plaque area	85
4.2.2	Measurement variability	86
4.2.3	Time related development of atherosclerotic plaque in apoE ^{-/-} mice subjected to a Western diet	88
4.2.4	Development of atherosclerotic lesions in apoE ^{-/-} mice on a normal diet	95
4.2.5	Comparison between high fat diet and normal diet on size and type of atherosclerotic lesions in apoE ^{-/-} mice	101
4.2.6	Relationship between the size of the atherosclerotic lesion and the type of lesion	105
4.3	Summary	107
5	Effect of β-oxa 23: 4<i>n</i>-6 on the development of atherosclerosis	109
5.1	Introduction	110
5.2	Effect of MP3 on the development of atherosclerosis	111

5.3	The ability of MP3 to reverse atherosclerosis	121
5.4	Effect of treatment with MP3 prior to initiation atherosclerosis development with high fat diet	131
5.5	Summary	135
6	Discussion	136
6.1	Criteria for grading atherosclerosis in apoE ^{-/-} mice	137
6.2	Kinetics of development of atherosclerosis in apoE ^{-/-} mice	145
6.3	MP3 protects against atherosclerosis	149
6.4	Concluding remarks	154
6.5	Future research	155
	Bibliography	157

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	arachidonic acid
AGE	Advanced glycation end products
AHA	American heart association
Akt (PKB)	activating protein kinase B
ALA	α -linoleic acid
ApoE	Apolipoprotein E
ApoE ^{-/-}	homozygous apoE deficient
BP	blood pressure
CAM	cell adhesion molecule
CHD	Coronary heart disease
COX	cyclooxygenases
DHA	docosahexaenoic acid
EPA	eicosapentaenoic acid
ES	embryonic stem cell
FA	Fatty acid
HBSS	hannks balanced salt solution

HDL	high density lipoprotein
HUVEC	human umbilical vein endothelial cell
ICAM-1	intercellular adhesion molecule 1
IDL	intermediate density lipoprotein
IEL	internal elastic lamina
IL-1	interleukin 1
IP	intraperitoneal injection
LA	linoleic acid
LDL	low density lipoprotein
Li_2CO_3	Lithium Carbonate
LOX	lipoxygenases
LPS	lipopolysaccharide
MCP-1	monocyte chemotactic protein 1
M-CSF	macrophage colony-stimulating factor
MMP	matrix metalloproteinase
NE	neutrophil elastase
NO	nitric oxide
Oxidised-LDL	oxidised low density lipoprotein

PDK	phosphoinositide-dependent kinase
PI3K	phosphatidylinositol 3 kinase
PIP2	phosphatidylinositol 4, 5 bisphosphate
PMA	phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate
PPAR α	peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor α
PUFA	polyunsaturated fatty acid
SEM	standard error of the sample mean
TBS	Tris buffered saline
TNF- α	tumour necrosis factor α
VCAM-1	vascular-cell adhesion molecule 1
VLDL	very low density lipoprotein