



THE UNIVERSITY
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TARGETING NF- κ B AND NFATc1 SIGNALLING TO INHIBIT
BONE RESORPTION IN PERI-PROSTHETIC OSTEOLYSIS

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATION

$\alpha v\beta 3$	Alpha-v-beta-3 integrin
3D	Three dimensional
AnnVIII	Annexin 8
AP-1	Activator protein-1
ATPase	Adenosine triphosphatase
Atpv0d2	D2 isoform of vacuolar (H^+) atpase (V-atpase) V0 domain
BMD	Bone mass density
BMMs	Bone marrow macrophages
BMU	Basic multicellular unit
C	Carbon
CaMKs	Calcium/calmodulin-activated kinase
CAPE	Caffeic acid phenethyl ester
CathK	Cathepsin K
ChIP	Chromatin immunoprecipitation
CIA	Collagen-induced arthritis
CoCr	Cobalt chrome alloy
Co-Cr-Mo	Cobalt-chromium-molybdenum alloy
cpTi	Commercially pure titanium
CsA	Cyclosporin A
CSF-1	Colony stimulating factor 1
CTR	Calcitonin receptor
CTX-1	Serum type-1 carboxy-terminal collagen crosslinks
DAG	Diacylglycerol
DAP12	DNAX-activating protein 12kda
DC-STAMP	Dendritic-cell transmembrane protein
EU	Endotoxin units
FBGCs	Foreign-body giant cells
FcR γ	Fc receptor common gamma subunit
FK506	Tacrolimus
FKBP12	FK506-binding protein 12
GFP	Green fluorescent tagged
GIT	Gastrointestinal tract
GM-CSF	Granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor
H^+	Hydrogen ions
HCl	Hydrochloric acid
HMEECs	Human middle ear epithelial cells
ID2	Inhibitor of differentiation 2
Ig	Immunoglobulin
IL	Interleukin
INF- γ	Interferon- γ
IP3	Inositol-1,4,5-trisphosphate
ITAM	Immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motif
ITIM	Immunoreceptor tyrosine-based inhibitory motif
JNK	C-Jun terminal kinase

LPS	Lipopolysaccharides
LRC	Leukocyte receptor complex
MAGPHPVIVITGPHEE	Commercially available calcineurin inhibitory peptide motif VIVIT
M-CSF	Macrophage-colony stimulating factor
MITF	Microphthalmia transcription factor
MMPs	Lysosomal proteases matrix metalloproteinases
NC100	Natural compound 100
NFATc1	Nuclear factor of activated T-cells, cytoplasmic, calcineurin-dependent 1
O	Oxygen
OCIF	Osteoclasts inhibitory factor
ODF	Osteoclast differentiation factor
OPG	Osteoprotegerin
OPG-Fc	OPG-fusion protein
OPGL	Osteoprotegerin ligand
OSCAR	Osteoclast-associated receptor
OVX	Ovariectomized
PAR	Parthenolide
PBMC	Peripheral blood mononuclear cells
PBS	Phosphate-buffered saline
P-C-P	Bisphosphonates
PD	Periodontal diseases
PE	Polyethylene particles
PGE2	Prostaglandin E2
PIAS3	Protein inhibitor of activated STAT 3
PIP2	Phospholipid phosphatidylinositol-4,5-bisphosphate
PIR-A	Paired Ig receptor-A
PLC γ	Phospholipase C gamma
PLOSL	Polycystic lipomembranous osteodysplasia with sclerosis leukoencephalopathy
PMMA	Polymethylmethacrylate
P-O-P	Pyrophosphate
PTK	Src family protein tyrosine kinase
RA	Rheumatoid arthritis
RANK	Receptor activator of NF- κ B
RANKL	Receptor activator of NF- κ B ligand
RUNX-2	Runt-related transcription factor 2
SDF-1	Stromal-cell derived factor-1
SH2	Src homology 2
siRNA	Small interfering RNA
SS	Stainless steel
STA	Arthritic serum transfer
Syk	Spleen tyrosine kinase
Ti	Titanium alloy

TiAlV	Titanium-6-aluminium-4-vanadium alloy
TNF	Tumor necrosis factor
TRAF	TNF receptor activating factor
TRANCE	TNF-related induced cytokine
TRAP	Tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase
TREM2	Triggering receptor expressed in myeloid cells
TYROBP	Tyrosine kinase binding protein
UHMWPE	Ultra-high-molecular-weight PE
VIVIT	11R-VIVIT peptide
μCT	Micro-computed tomography

ABSTRACT

Peri-prosthetic osteolysis is a bone loss disease involving granulomatous inflammation in the soft tissues around prostheses characterised by excessive bone resorption adjacent to implants. Macrophages phagocytose particles of prosthetic material, thereby inducing persistent release of pro-inflammatory osteoclastogenic cytokines, such as, receptor activator of NF- κ B ligand (RANKL). RANKL interacts with its receptor RANK, to activate key transcription factor in osteoclastogenesis, NFATc1. This activates an inflammatory response leading to bone erosion at the implant bone interface and subsequent prosthetic failure. Other bone cells are affected by particles. For example, osteoblasts have reduced bone formation activity, and osteocytes, undergo apoptosis, whereby in this process they release cytokines that stimulate bone loss.

Apart from the RANKL/RANK-NFATc1 system, immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motif (ITAM)-dependent pathway has been identified as a co-stimulatory pathway in osteoclasts. Osteoclast-associated receptor (OSCAR) and TREM2 are ITAM-containing receptors pairing with adaptor molecules FcR γ and DAP12, respectively. Our group has demonstrated the increased expression of NFATc1 and ITAM-related molecules adjacent to sites of bone loss in human peri-prosthetic tissues and polyethylene (PE) particle-stimulated osteoclasts *in vitro*. Soluble OSCAR has been proposed as a potential regulator of osteoclast activity in osteolysis. Considering the importance of NF- κ B and NFATc1 we hypothesize that their inhibition will abrogate osteoclast bone resorption.

The data presented here showed that inhibition of NFATc1 by calcineurin-NFAT inhibitors, FK506 and VIVIT, and inhibition of both NFATc1 and NF- κ B by NC100, significantly suppressed osteoclast formation and activity in normal human-derived RANKL-induced osteoclast differentiation *in vitro*. mRNA expression analysis showed OSCAR was inhibited by FK506, VIVIT and NC100 at later stages of osteoclastogenesis. Together, this demonstrates potential benefits of targeting NFATc1 and NF- κ B to suppress osteoclastogenesis and modulate ITAM-containing molecules in human osteoclasts.

In the murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis, live animal micro-computed tomography analyses showed that PE particles significantly induced localised osteolysis in mice implanted with PE particles compared to controls. PAR strongly reduced surface bone resorption but not local bone volume. However, CAPE

treatment reduced local PE-induced calvarial osteolysis at both surface resorption and volumetric change. Additionally, PE particles significantly increased serum levels of bone resorptive marker CTX-1 and soluble OSCAR. However, neither PAR nor CAPE regulated CTX-1 and OSCAR in PE-implanted mice. Neither PE nor CAPE affected the gastrointestinal tract, a potential side effect of their treatments.

Interestingly, PE particles strongly enhanced osteocyte death, supporting previous reports that osteocytes undergo apoptosis in response to PE particles. PAR significantly decreased osteocyte apoptosis in PE-implanted mice, as assessed by reduced number of osteocytes with empty lacunae within the calvarial tissues. It could be important to determine the possible mechanism by which PE particles activate NF- κ B in osteocytes as this could be an important mechanism inducing osteolysis in response to prosthetic particles.

Overall the results demonstrate that targeting NFATc1 and NF- κ B signalling suppresses osteoclast differentiation and resorption induced by PE particles. Future studies are necessary to fully understand this pathology.

STUDENT DECLARATION

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution in my name and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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CHAPTER 2

Regulation of ITAM adaptor molecules and their receptors by inhibition of calcineurin-NFAT signalling during late stage osteoclast differentiation

M.S.F. Zawawi, A.A.S.S.K. Dharmapatni, M.D. Cantley, K.P. McHugh, D.R. Haynes, T.N. Crotti.

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CHAPTER 3

Molecular mechanisms and therapeutic effects of NC100 on osteoclastic bone resorption and osteoporosis

Qian Liu, Tao Wang, Muhamad Syahrul Fitri Zawawi, Tania Crotti, An Qin, Zhen Lin, Jinbo Yuan, Huangang Liu, Minghao Zheng, Jiake Xu, Jinmin Zhao.

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CHAPTER 4

Parthenolide inhibits osteocyte apoptosis and osteoclastic bone surface resorption induced by polyethylene particles in a murine calvarial model of peri-implant osteolysis

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CHAPTER 5

Caffeic acid phenethyl ester abrogates bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of polyethylene particle-induced osteolysis

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A saying (hadith)^{Sunan Abu Dawud 4811} Abu Huraira reported: The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

"He who does not thank people does not thank the almighty God (Allah)."

Therefore I wish to say; thank you. Whoever you may be, who have helped me in some way or another, some which I am aware of, some which I might not be aware of; help, smiles, wishes, prayers including my online friends, especially on Facebook, for your likes, comments, replies, posts, and supports. Maybe I have not said thank you to you before, maybe I have, but now I am saying **thank you** to you. Jazakumullah khairan kathiran.

CHAPTER 1. Inhibition of NF- κ B and NFATc1 signalling in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

1.1. Local inflammation-mediated bone loss

Bone loss occurs when there is a net change in overall bone because of the imbalance in bone formation and resorption. In general, there are two main categories of bone loss characterised by defective bone remodelling. They are the systemic and localised bone loss. Osteoporosis is one example of the systemic bone loss [1]. It is an ageing-related disease that results in bone fragility because of low bone mineral density [2]. Some examples of localised bone loss associated with inflammation are peri-prosthetic osteolysis [3], periodontal diseases (PD) [4, 5] and rheumatoid arthritis (RA) [6].

The term osteoimmunology has been used to describe the close interrelationship between bone homeostasis and immune systems [7]. Specifically osteoimmunology refers to the complex crosstalk between immune system and skeletal systems involving coordination of lymphocytes, mast cells and macrophages on osteoclasts, osteoblasts and osteocytes [2, 8-10]. It is important to understand the normal physiology in order to also understand the processes that lead to bone pathologies. Understanding these processes is also important in the context of inflammation-mediated bone loss, such as particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis, PD and RA where there is local bone erosion [11-14].

This thesis specifically focuses on the osteoimmunology of localised bone loss that occurs in particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. In this thesis the signalling pathways important in osteoclast formation and activity *in vitro* as well as *in vivo* using an animal model, have been investigated. Regulation of immunomodulatory factors that play role in bone homeostasis is the main focus of the study. The aim is to identify a therapeutical approach that modulates both the immune system and bone metabolism in peri-prosthetic osteolysis. This approach may also be relevant to other diseases of local inflammation-mediated bone loss.

1.1.1. Particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis

Prosthetic failure occurs due to the loss in bone stock around the prostheses, leading to loss of fixation of the prostheses. Prosthetic failure has been a major concern since recent reports that 5 to 30% of total joint replacement requires revision surgery within 15 to 20

years after prostheses implantation [15-17]. Hip and knee replacement has been increasing at 5 to 10% year after year for the past 10 years, with a combined increase in hip and knee replacement of 13.4% in the past year [15]. This may result in a dramatic increase of revision surgery which is more complicated and costly than primary joint replacement[18]. In addition, prosthetic failure affects people at all ages. Younger people, below 59 years of age, have a 27% risk of prosthetic failure compared to a 13% risk for people at 59-65 years old and 7.5% risk for 65-70 years old people [19]. It is very alarming that, despite new materials, prosthetic failure may greatly accelerate to become a major health burden. There are several factors promoting prosthetic failure including poor surgical technique, stress shielding, mechanical failure, infection and prosthetic fracture [20-22]. Literature, including the 2010 Australian National Joint Replacement Registry, have identified particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis as the most common factor causing prosthetic failure requiring revision surgery [15].

Peri-prosthetic osteolysis, also known as peri-implant osteolysis or aseptic loosening, is a bone loss disease involving granulomatous inflammation in the soft tissues around prostheses [23]. It is often characterised by an increase of bone resorption adjacent to implants induced by wear particles of prosthetic materials [24]. The prosthetic particles are phagocytosed by macrophages and other phagocytic cells such as foreign-body giant cells (FBGCs) [20, 24-26], fibroblasts and dendritic cells resulting in granulomatous lesions predominated by macrophages at the interface of bone-cement around loosening implants [23]. This induces persistent release of inflammation-triggering mediators, chemoattractants and osteoclastogenic pro-inflammatory cytokines, such as receptor activator of NF- κ B ligand (RANKL) and tumor necrosis factor (TNF) [10, 20, 27-34]. This leads to tissue and bone breakdown and subsequent prosthetic failure [10, 35].

1.1.2.Polyethylene (PE) particles

There are several types of materials used in and around prostheses [36]. Commonly used materials are polyethylene (PE) [20], polymethylmethacrylate (PMMA) cement [37], titanium alloy (Ti) [24, 38], ceramics [39] and metals [39-42]. The particles of cast and forged cobalt chrome alloy (CoCr), 316L stainless steel (SS) and titanium-6-aluminium-4-vanadium alloy (TiAlV) [24, 40], and commercially pure titanium (cpTi) [41] can elicit

significantly different biologic responses. Only slight differences in the composition of particles has been shown to stimulate higher levels of osteolytic agents interleukin-1 (IL-1), interleukin-6 (IL-6), TNF and prostaglandin E2 (PGE2) expressed in human monocytes [38]. These *in vitro* studies show particles of different prosthetic materials may induce different cytokines and thus have different effects on bone remodelling [24, 26, 40, 43-46]. Consistent with this, studies using animal models have also shown different effects to different biomaterials used in prostheses [47] (described in **Section 1.1.3**). Additionally, a combination of prostheses PMMA and ultra-high-molecular-weight PE (UHMWPE) resulted in a synergistic increase in membrane thickness suggesting that multiple biomaterials markedly increase the inflammatory reaction [47]. Together these studies support the idea that the extent of osteolysis is highly dependent on the materials used [41, 47].

This thesis investigates the effects of PE particles on osteolysis, as PE is one of the most frequently used materials and a common source of wear debris in clinical practice [48-54]. Many studies have illustrated a strong correlation between PE wear rates and the extent of osteolysis [55-58]. It has been found that PE is actively liberated from prostheses with evidence that the highest concentration of PE particles is present at the sites of osteolysis [49, 59-62]. It was reported that more PE particles are detected in peri-prosthetic tissues with osteolysis when compared to the tissues without osteolysis [49]. Patients with PE-containing prostheses suffer a higher incidence of peri-implant osteolysis compared to the patients with metal-on-metal hip arthroplasty [63, 64]. The significance of PE particles as a causative agent for osteolysis has also been demonstrated *in vitro* [28, 30, 31, 65]. Taken together these studies show that PE may be the most damaging types of wear particles associated with peri-prosthetic osteolysis, therefore, a key factor inducing bone loss in peri-prosthetic osteolysis [31, 49, 51-55, 66].

Apart from the local accumulation of wear particles inducing local osteolysis, particles have also been shown to travel to other regions, such as lymph nodes [67]. This in turn can induce distal bone resorption directly or indirectly via inflammatory factors [68]. It is possible that distal inflammatory factors may also affect other organs such as the gastrointestinal tract (GIT). This thesis investigates the effects of PE wear particles locally, and also systemically. The systemic effects of wear particles can be measured by studying

the biochemical marker of bone breakdown, serum type-1 carboxy-terminal collagen crosslinks (CTX-1) [69-71], which reflects overall bone resorption activity *in vivo* [72]. The systemic effects of distal inflammatory factors on GIT can be determined by analyzing jejunal and colonic tissue structures and cell components including identification of apoptotic cells based on histopathology [73-75].

1.1.3. Murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis

Complementing the *in vitro* models of particle-induced osteoclastogenesis, several animal prosthetic implant models have been developed to investigate the pathogenesis of aseptic loosening and to mimic the clinical situation [76]. Animal models have also directly demonstrated the significance of PE particles as the causative agent for osteolysis *in vivo* [54, 77, 78].

One example is the murine air pouch model that has been developed to investigate the number of cells infiltrating the air pouch in response to PE compared to other biomaterials TiAlV, CoCr and PMMA [47]. The cellular infiltration and mediators of inflammation generated in this model closely resemble the peri-prosthetic tissues associated with aseptic loosening [79, 80]. PE, TiAlV, CoCr and PMMA particles tested increased the absolute number and percentage of macrophages in the membrane when compared to controls [47]. Importantly, PE particles induced the largest numbers of macrophages within the tissue [47]. This air pouch model has also been used to investigate the effects of PE particle shape in adverse inflammatory reactions [81]. When compared to globular particles, elongated PE particles result in larger increase in IL-1 β and TNF α levels. In addition, more severe apoptotic changes within the inflammatory membrane, membrane proliferation and inflammatory cellular infiltration [81]. Even though this air pouch mouse model provides copious and sufficient tissue space for particle injections and multiple analyses [81] and biomaterials are deeply embedded within the tissue and surrounded by macrophages [47, 79], this model does not include bony tissue [47, 81]. Bone is needed to accurately assess the osteolytic component of particle-induced aseptic loosening [47, 81].

A more relevant *in vivo* model to study peri-prosthetic osteolysis that enables bony tissue assessment is calvarial mouse model which was first reported in 1999 by Merkel *et al* [82]. Briefly, the model involves a surgery to implant the particles [82, 83] on

periosteum over the calvarium and the incision closed. The osteolysis was mostly investigated and quantitated through histology of the calvarial tissues [83] and volumetric analysis in micro-computed tomography (μ CT) [67, 84]. The model has been modified and improved to further understand the pathogenesis of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. Different types of wear particles which have been used as prostheses in clinical situation [76] such as PMMA [82], Ti [83, 85] and PE [67, 84-88] have now been tested in the model.

In vivo studies using murine calvarial model have shown the implantation of PE particles at a concentration of 2×10^8 particles/mL significantly induced osteolysis as shown by μ CT after 7 days [86], 12 days [84] and 14 days [67, 87-89] after administration of PE particles. The PE particles used were commercially pure polyethylene particles (UHMWPE, Ceridust VP 3610) obtained from Clariant Company (Gersthofen, Germany) [67, 84, 86-88]. Greater than 35% of the particles were smaller than $1 \mu\text{m}$, with a mean particle size (given as equivalent circle diameter) of $1.75 \pm 1.43 \mu\text{m}$ (range 0.05-11.6) [67, 84, 87, 88, 90, 91]. It has been shown that phagocytosis and cell mortality increase with particle size and concentration [92]. It has also been shown that the concentration of particles within a critical size range was important for biological responses [93]. This is accordant with a previous report that the severity of the cellular response in peri-prosthetic tissues was related to the number of wear particles [94]. Together these studies clearly depict the role of the number and size of particles to determine the extent of particle-induced osteolysis [81]. To be consistent with previous *in vivo* studies, this thesis investigates the effects of PE particles on the calvarial mouse model of peri-prosthetic osteolysis using similar sized PE particles and implanted at similar concentrations to those previously used.

In order to investigate particle-induced osteolysis, it is important to eliminate any other possible factors contributing to osteolysis. This includes a common contaminant, endotoxins [95, 96]. Endotoxins are lipopolysaccharides (LPS) derived from cell membrane of Gram-negative bacteria [96, 97], often found in water, tissue culture media and serum used for tissue culture and other materials used to grow cells in culture [96, 97]. Endotoxins stimulate monocytes and macrophages to release osteoclastic pro-

inflammatory mediators, such as TNF, IL-1 and IL-6. This also activates the immune system [96, 97] and induces endotoxin shock, tissue injury and death [98, 99].

The term endotoxin units (EU) have been used to describe the biological activity of an endotoxin in pharmaceutical and biological products. The maximum levels have been set to 5 EU per kg of body weight per hour by all pharmacopoeias [100]. LPS can contaminate particles that have been handled or in contact with bacteria and/or LPS itself [96]. Washing particles in 100% ethanol for 48 hours [86, 101] successfully decontaminates endotoxin from particles to <0.1 EU/ml, as detected by a commercial detection kit (Chromogenic End-Point TAL with Diazo Coupling Kit; Xiamen Houshiji Ltd., Xiamen, China) [86, 101]. Following this, particles are washed, centrifuged and resuspended in phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) to completely eliminate ethanol and stored in sterilized endotoxin-free tubes at 4°C till use [86, 101].

Another possible source of LPS is direct animal contact with LPS/bacteria. Macrophages are extremely sensitive to LPS [96] and can induce osteoclast formation and resorption activity via the activation of NF- κ B signalling (described in **Section 1.3.3**) [95]. Therefore, it is crucial that *in vivo* studies are carried out using LPS-free animals. As a result of *Lps* gene mutations, LPS signal transduction in C57BL and C3H/HeJ mouse strains was impeded, thereby, inhibiting bone resorption and osteolysis [102]. Based on this the LPS-resistant C57BL [27, 67, 84, 86-88, 103-105] and C3H/HeJ [82, 106, 107] mice have been used as the murine models of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. In this thesis C3H/HeJ mice were used due to access and availability as approved by the ethics committee at The University of Adelaide (M-2001-070) and SA Pathology (106/10).

It has been shown that the extent of osteolysis in a particle-induced murine calvarial osteolysis in young 4 week old mice peaks 7 days after the particle implantation and returns to baseline levels after 13 days [108]. This was 17-fold less than that in aged mice (104 weeks old) [108]. Importantly osteolysis returned to near normal levels in these young mice and this would reduce susceptibility to aseptic loosening in young patients [108]. Additionally adult mice at 12 to 64 weeks old of age only showed a moderate response to particles and treatments due to their normal skeletal growth [108]. Our research group has established a 14-day murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis based on a model developed by Wedemeyer *et al.* [67, 87, 88] using

6- to 8-week-old LPS-resistant C3H/HeJ mice. The age 6- to 8-week-old can eliminate the factors in bone growth in mice that have not yet reached adult age at the end of the three weeks of experiment. Considering the findings that PE-induced osteolysis was at significant levels after 7 days [86], 12 days [84] and 14 days [67, 87, 88] after administration of particles, this project aims to determine the extent of osteolysis at day 14, which is a later stage of the osteolysis compared to early stage (day 7) where the process of osteolysis was reported as at its peak. Our model comprises histological and μ CT analyses and is further described in Chapter 4 and 5 in this thesis.

Most previous studies only quantified the calvarial volumetric bone loss between animal groups by the *ex vivo* μ CT scans at the final day of experiments [67, 82-84, 86-88]. Quantification of the volumetric osteolysis would be more specific if the volumetric change of each animal was determine throughout time. Therefore, studies carried out in this thesis involved the live-animal μ CT volumetric assessment at baseline (day 0) being subtracted from the *ex vivo* μ CT volumetric assessment at the final day of the experiment. This can take into account the bone growth throughout time and the volumetric differences between controls, diseased and treated/untreated animal groups over time. To our knowledge there are only limited studies investigating the calvarial volumetric osteolytic change over time [85]. The major advantage of the model used in this thesis is that osteolysis over time was used with each mouse being its own control. This increases statistical reliability and reduces the number of animals that need to be used for statistical significance.

It has been demonstrated that resorption near prostheses occurs on the bone surface at the interface [109] and at sites where there are high concentrations of PE particles are present near the surface tissues [20, 110, 111]. From this study the surface erosions are considered highly important in peri-prosthetic osteolysis because this better reflects the *in vivo* human situation. In support of this, recent studies have shown the effect of particles, on other bone cells, such as osteoblasts and osteocytes (described in Section 1.4 and 1.5 respectively), may also contribute to osteolysis [112, 113]. Whether bone surface resorption is due to osteoclast, osteoblast or osteocyte response to particles or activities is yet to be determined. In this thesis the aim is to develop a novel technique to both analyze and numerically quantify bone surface resorption by adapting μ CT-derived three-

dimensional (3D) images in a murine calvarial model of osteolysis.

1.2. Bone and normal bone remodelling

Bone is a rigid yet dynamic specialised connective tissue with its microstructure patterned to have maximal strength but with minimal mass [114-116]. Bone is composed of osteocytes, bone forming osteoblasts, bone-resorbing osteoclasts, non-mineral matrix of collagen and non-collagenous osteoid proteins, with inorganic mineral salts deposited within the matrix. Formed by a mineralised matrix to maximise elasticity and strength [66], bone protects the vital organs, such as brain and lungs, and gives mechanical support to the body [117]. Bone provides an environment for blood cell formation in the marrow and acts as a storage site for calcium, phosphorus, proteins and fat [1].

Bone tissues undergo physiological remodelling throughout life even though the skeletal growth, both organic and mineral components [118], has completed [66]. Approximately, 10% of the total bone content is replaced per year in adult vertebrates [2, 119, 120]. There are two major kinds of bones, trabecular and cortical. Trabecular bone is spongy and composed of a honeycomb-like network in the bone marrow compartment, giving the strength to stand stresses and weight-bearing bone. Cortical bone is dense and solid, surrounding the bone marrow space [1]. Bone components are continuously removed (bone resorption) and replaced (ossification or bone formation) by a homeostatic process called bone remodelling [1, 121].

Bone remodelling is essential for the renewal of skeleton, tooth eruption, fracture healing [122], maintenance of the structure and mineral homeostasis [121]. It also enables adaptation to mechanical constraints and maintenance of substantial calcium levels [66] providing structural support for the body and protection for organs in the body, as well as facilitating the movement of the body and materials in the intracellular processes.

Bone remodelling is a complex process dependent upon two tightly coupled mechanisms of bone resorption by osteoclasts and bone formation by osteoblasts [2]. This highly regulated process occurs in the bone basic multicellular unit (BMU) consisting of osteoclasts, osteoblasts and their precursors [119, 123] functioning in a complete coordinated sequence of mechanisms [124]. The bone constituents are continuously turned over and restructured by the delicate balance of bone deposition and bone resorption [125].

In healthy mature bone, bone formation and bone resorption counter balances each other to maintain a constant bone mass [126] by the integrated activities of two bone-related cells; bone-forming osteoblasts and bone-resorbing osteoclasts [127]. Abnormalities and imbalance of bone remodelling occur when one process occurs at a greater or lesser rate than the other leading to various skeletal disorders including bone loss [127].

1.3.Osteoclasts

Osteoclasts are multinucleated giant cells generally with 10 to 15 nuclei in each osteoclast, but the number of nuclei per cell can also vary from 2 to 100 [128]. Therefore, the cell size may also vary [129]. Within the bone osteoclasts are specialized cells to resorb bones in both normal and pathological bone remodelling and destruction [118] and usually found on the surface of bone resorption sites within shallow hollow structures called resorption cavities or Howship's lacunae (see **Figure 1.1**) [130].

Osteoclastogenesis or osteoclast differentiation is a 4-stage process that allows osteoclast precursor cells, including monocytes or CD14-positive cells [131], macrophages [24, 132] and dendritic cells [133] to develop into mature and functioning osteoclasts [115, 122]. Osteoclasts are highly motile cells, however, active differentiated osteoclasts *in vivo* are only found in close locality to mineralised bone and they are infrequently found in blood circulation [118]. Throughout this process osteoclasts express different types of osteoclast-associated markers, which enable determination of the stage of osteoclast differentiation. The step-by-step osteoclastogenesis is illustrated in **Figure 1.1**. The first stage of osteoclastogenesis is the recruitment of precursor cells from hematopoietic lineage [134] and monocyte-macrophage lineage [135]. These cells are believed to belong to the leukocyte family of blood cells [118], that are likely to mature towards the osteoclastic lineage in the presence of RANKL and macrophage-colony stimulating factor (M-CSF) [2, 136]. The second stage is the multinucleation, a fusion process between mononuclear pre-osteoclasts to form non-functional polykaryons where by they express dendritic-cell transmembrane protein (DC STAMP), an important protein for osteoclast multinucleation. Following the third stage of the differentiation, which is the maturation and activation of polykaryons, the polykaryons undergo the fourth stage of osteoclastogenesis to become functional osteoclasts. This final stage is an activation of mature osteoclasts involving

cytoskeletal rearrangement for the cell motility and attachment to the bone matrix only occurring at or in close proximity to the site of bone resorption [137, 138]. Taken together the osteoclast differentiation pathway is common to that of macrophages and dendritic cells where a pro-myeloid precursor can develop into either an osteoclast or a macrophage or a dendritic cell [115, 120], depending on the type of receptor activator it is exposed to [122].

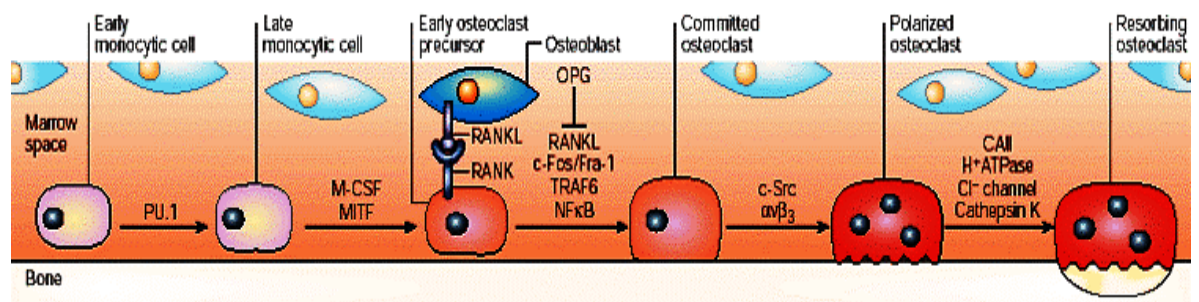


Figure 1.1 Regulation of osteoclast formation and function, and the factors involved [139].

Tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase (TRAP), a type of enzyme encoded by *Acp5* [131, 140, 141], is one of the prominent osteoclast-associated cell markers widely used for the detection of osteoclasts in histochemistry [142]. TRAP is a reliable marker of osteoclast number and bone resorbing activity [131]. However, it is not only highly expressed by osteoclasts, but also inflammatory macrophages, dendritic cells [140] and FBGCs [143] and is found in human blood circulation in adults and children [144]. TRAP knock-out mice showed osteoclast formation and reduced bone resorption activity [140]. Overexpression of TRAP increased bone turnover [145]. However, TRAP has now been shown to be reflective of osteoclast number rather than activity [146, 147].

Another prominent osteoclast-associated cell marker is cathepsin K (CathK), a mammalian protease enzyme encoded by *ctsk* [148] and highly expressed in osteoclasts [148]. CathK is also found in other cell types including fibroblasts [149], macrophages and smooth muscle cells in atheroma [150]. The expression of CathK increases throughout osteoclastogenesis [151]. CathK degrades collagen type I at both sides of in and outside helical region [152], collagen type II and bone matrix protein osteonectin [152, 153].

CathK has been shown as a bone-matrix degrading enzyme. Humans with a CathK gene mutation developed osteopetrotic condition where bone hardens and becomes denser as opposed to osteoporosis and it is called as pycnodysostosis disease [79, 154, 155]. This osteopetrotic condition is also observed in CathK-deficient mice [156, 157]. CathK-specific inhibition using peptidyl vinyl sulfones as selective cysteine protease inactivators decreased bone resorption by 80% in a dose-dependent manner [158]. These studies clearly show that CathK plays an important role in bone resorption and is a reliable marker for osteoclast resorption activity.

Alpha-v-beta-3 ($\alpha\text{v}\beta\text{3}$) integrin (the vitronectin receptor) [160], which is expressed on bone resorbing osteoclasts [161] and regulated by expression of β3 subunit during osteoclast differentiation [162, 163], is a late-stage osteoclast-associated cell marker [125] involved in the attachment of osteoclasts to bone [164-166]. Studies have shown osteoclasts express five integrins $\alpha\text{2}\beta\text{1}$, $\alpha\text{v}\beta\text{1}$, $\alpha\text{v}\beta\text{3}$, $\alpha\text{v}\beta\text{5}$ [165] and $\alpha\text{9}\beta\text{1}$ [167]. High expression levels of integrin $\alpha\text{v}\beta\text{3}$ occurs at late stage osteoclast formation *in vitro* and is found at the ruffled membrane [165] associated with adhesion [164] and cell spreading [168, 169]. The requirement for $\alpha\text{v}\beta\text{3}$ in normal osteoclast function is demonstrated by β3 gene genetic deletion in mice [168]. Murine β3 -null osteoclasts failed to form actin rings and did not form ruffled membranes, thereby, failing to resorb bone ensuing in osteosclerosis [168].

More recently, Annexin 8 (AnnVIII) has been identified as an osteoclast-specific marker important at late stage osteoclast differentiation and activation [170]. The suppression of AnnVIII expression retards actin ring formation, therefore, impeding cytoskeletal reorganization in osteoclasts [170, 171]. Taken together β3 and AnnVIII play essential roles in terminal osteoclast differentiation and activation and are reliable as osteoclast-specific markers. Importantly all these features including formation of actin rings and ruffled borders, attachment to bone and cytoskeletal reorganization are important for osteoclastic bone resorption mechanism which will be described further in **Section 1.3.1** in this thesis.

Since osteoclasts can be generated from mononuclear phagocytes of diverse tissue sources there are several methods to generate osteoclasts using *in vitro* models from tissues allowing experimental studies of osteoclast development and activity [135]. Additionally

the ability of alveolar macrophages differentiating into osteoclasts as shown by TRAP-positive colonies on mouse bone marrow-derived stromal cell lines [172] suggests that osteoclasts can be derived from mature cells of the monocyte-macrophage lineage. More importantly, osteoclast features characterized by CathK [148, 156-158], TRAP [173], calcitonin receptor (CTR) [174], OSCAR [159], $\beta 3$ [164, 168, 175, 176] and AnnVIII [170, 171] during the progression of macrophage colony units into osteoclasts enables identification of the stages of the development of osteoclasts from human peripheral blood mononuclear cells (PBMC) *in vitro* and the differentiation can be monitored by measuring the expression of these features.

The multinucleation of osteoclasts is highly important for the bone-resorbing capability and efficiency [129, 177-180]. Murine-derived osteoclasts, incapable of multinucleation *in vitro* have a remarkably reduced resorption capacity [181, 182]. In support of this, murine cells lacking DC-STAMP exhibited a reduction in resorption efficiency *in vivo* leading to osteopetrosis, a condition associated with decreased bone resorbing capacity [178]. Murine cells deficient in d2 isoform of vacuolar (H^+) adenosine triphosphatase (V-ATPase) V0 domain (Atpv0d2), another important protein for osteoclast multinucleation, demonstrated impaired osteoclast fusion and maturation [183]. Osteoclasts possess a high number of mitochondria in their nuclei to generate high amounts of energy needed by the ATPase pump for the secretion of protons [184], thereby, providing synergy in terms of resorption efficiency in the bone resorption mechanism [179, 185]. Taken together, this shows that defects in osteoclast multinucleation reduce bone-resorbing activity. In addition bone resorption activity increases with the number of nuclei in osteoclasts [129, 179, 180] and cell size [129].

Osteoclast bone resorption activity is necessary for many skeletal processes and maintenance of an appropriate blood calcium level. It is obligatory during bone growth, tooth eruption and fracture healing [122]. Likewise, continuous physiological remodelling of bone is dependent on bone resorption [114, 122].

1.3.1.Mechanism of bone resorption

Bone resorption is a cell specific sequential multistep process involving the degradation of bone tissues by mature osteoclasts [114, 166]. The process or mechanism of

bone resorption begins with recruitment, adherence and attachment of mature multinucleated osteoclasts to bone surface [186]. Osteoclasts move to the bone surface via chemotaxis. The osteoclasts recognize the site of attachment by the aid of membrane-bound molecules known as integrins to form a 'sealing zone', which has high number of filamentous actin. $\alpha\text{v}\beta\text{3}$ integrin has high affinity for adherence to denatured collagen [165], therefore, playing a significant role in the attachment of osteoclasts to bone for resorption [138, 164-166, 168, 187].

Figure 1.1 represents a functioning osteoclast attached to the bone surface with formation of a sealing zone' and Howship's lacuna crucial for bone resorption. Surrounded by ruffled membranes, the sealing zone is formed by a complex cytoskeletal reorganization to enable osteoclast polarization at the resorption site on bone surface [188]. This in turn enables osteoclasts to firmly adhere to bone surface forming Howship's lacunae [130]. The ruffled border and Howship's lacunae increase the surface area of osteoclast-bone contact, thereby, enhancing the efficiency of osteoclastic bone resorption activity.

The first phase of bone resorption mechanism, the inorganic phase (bone demineralisation), begins with the release of bone degrading factors such as H^+ ions and matrix degrading enzymes [189]. Via exocytosis [190] osteoclasts release hydrogen ions (H^+) in the form of hydrochloric acid (HCl) and acidify the sealed region. This is facilitated by vacuolar H^+ ATPase pump located in the osteoclast ruffled membrane [191, 192] to dissolve bone minerals [114]. H^+ produced by cytoplasmic carbonic anhydrase II within the osteoclasts [193] is released into the area between the cells and the bone [194]. In this acidic microenvironment, bone demineralises when the solid hydroxyapatite $\text{Ca}_{10}(\text{PO}_4)_6(\text{OH})_2$ releases Ca^{2+} , HPO_4^{2-} and water, H_2O [195]. As a result of H^+ release this intracellular environment becomes alkaline, chloride/bicarbonate exchange pump neutralizes the microenvironment [194, 196]. Importantly sealing prevents leakage of all these factors involved in this phase [114, 189].

The second and final phase of bone resorption mechanism is the organic matrix degradation phase. Matrix degrading enzymes are released by osteoclasts via exocytosis. Lysosomal proteases matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) such as MMP-9 [197, 198] and CathK [148] degrade the organic components of the bone forming lacuna pits on the surface of the bone as a result of bone resorption activity [114]. This bone resorption

mechanism terminates itself as osteoclasts have limited lifespan. The accumulation of high concentration of calcium from the bone demineralisation [199] or products from bone matrix including TGF- β cytokine [200] may also stop the resorption activity of osteoclasts.

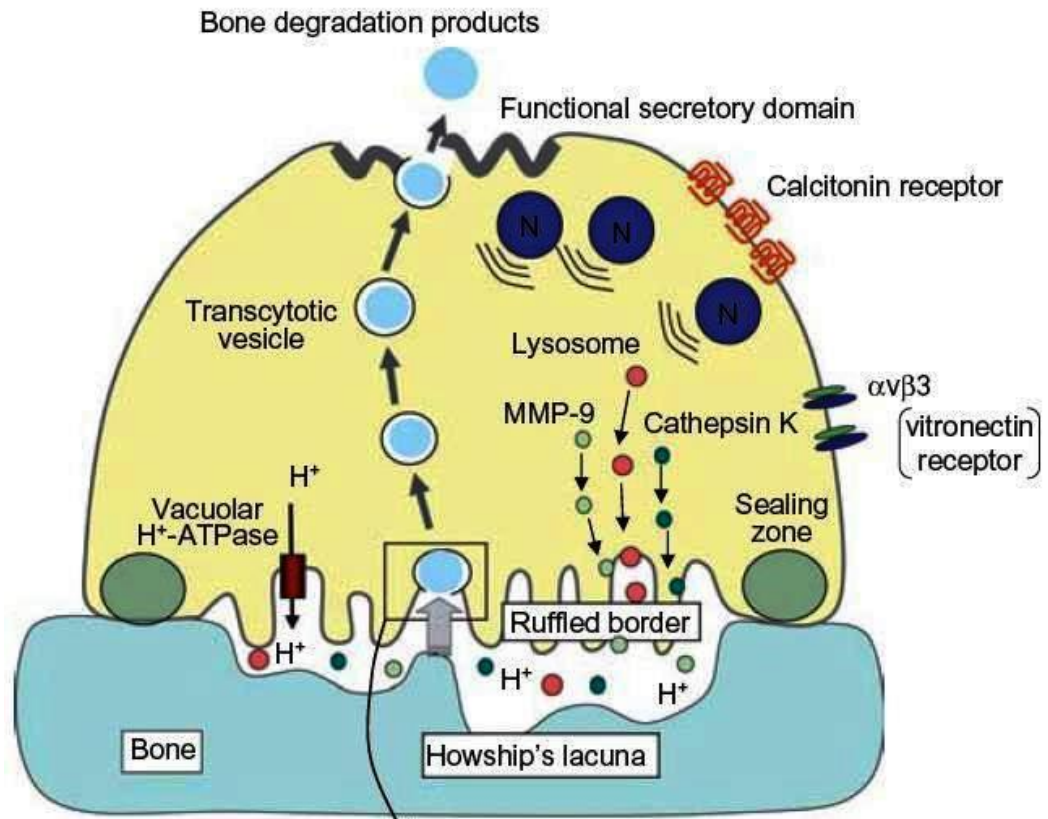


Figure 1.1 A functioning osteoclast at the site of resorption with the Howship's lacuna, sealing zone, ruffled border and other features completely formed to induce resorption activity [188].

1.3.2.M-CSF

M-CSF, also known as colony stimulating factor 1 (CSF-1) [201], is key cytokine promoting cell proliferation in osteoclast development and survival [202, 203]. Within the bone, M-CSF is usually expressed by stromal cells or osteoblasts [204, 205]. As illustrated in **Figure 1.5**, M-CSF binds to its receptor c-Fms on the surface of precursor cells [114, 173, 202] which in turn stimulates the proliferation of osteoclast precursors [201, 206]. Depending on the types of signals received, precursor cells may differentiate into

osteoclasts or dendritic cells. The MCSF-c-Fms binding acts as a crucial lineage-fate determining factor that leads precursor cells to differentiate into osteoclasts [206]. M-CSF exerts an autocrine effect to upregulate RANKL [207] and M-CSF induces its natural receptor, receptor activator of NF- κ B (RANK) to effectively respond to RANKL [2]. The RANKL-RANK interaction further stimulates pre-osteoclasts to differentiate into mature osteoclasts [208]. It has been shown that M-CSF is required for cell proliferation of monocyte/macrophage-associated cells into osteoclasts *in vitro* [202]. M-CSF knock-out mice developed osteopetrosis [204] and these osteopetrotic mice had recovered their bone volume when treated with M-CSF in a further experiment [201]. M-CSF has been shown as important for bone resorption *in vivo* [201, 204].

1.3.3.RANKL/RANK-dependent pathway in osteoclast formation and activity

RANKL/RANK signaling pathway is the key pathway to regulate osteoclast formation and bone resorption activity in normal bone remodelling and pathological diseases. Excessive osteoclastogenesis results in bone loss. Osteoprotegerin (OPG) binds to RANKL preventing binding to its receptor, RANK to protect the skeleton from excessive bone resorption. Therefore RANKL/RANK/OPG system (**Figure 1.3**) is important in the maintenance of bone homeostasis [173].

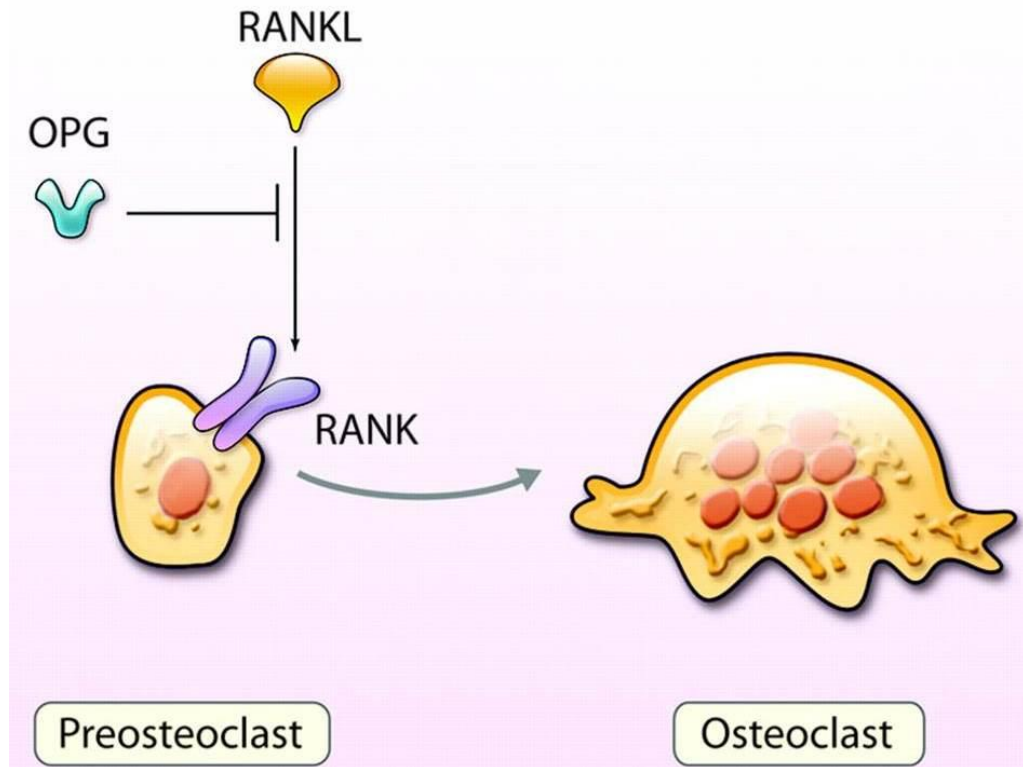


Figure 1.2 RANKL/RANK/OPG interactions [209].

1.3.3.1.RANKL/RANK

RANKL [210] is also known as osteoclast differentiation factor (ODF) [211], TNF-related induced cytokine (TRANCE) [173, 212] and osteoprotegerin ligand (OPGL) [173, 213-215]. RANKL is highly expressed in osteoblasts [115], bone marrow, lymphoid tissue [216], fibroblasts [217] and dendritic cells [218]. RANKL is a cytokine in the TNF superfamily, which is expressed as a 317-amino acid long protein containing a receptor binding core domain in a cysteine-rich extracellular domain [219]. It is mostly released from the cell surface as a soluble molecule following proteolytic cleavage by MMPs such as MMP-14 [220, 221]. RANKL is found in membrane-bound and soluble form [222]. Membrane-bound RANKL binds more efficiently to its receptor RANK when compared to the soluble RANKL [222].

In bone, RANKL induces osteoclast differentiation and resorption activity as well as prevents osteoclast apoptosis *in vitro* [219]. The presence of M-CSF and RANKL can induce differentiation of pre-osteoclasts into multinucleated osteoclasts in human, mouse and rat *in vitro* [216, 223]. Consistent with this, *in vivo* studies with transgenic mice

lacking functional RANKL developed osteopetrosis [213, 224] whilst mice administered with excessive recombinant RANKL developed osteoporosis [216]. These studies highlight the importance and role of RANKL in osteoclast differentiation and maturation [225].

RANKL is also found in autoimmune system, hence, has a major role in osteoimmunology. It is greatly expressed in activated T-cells [219] where RANKL induces the activation of c-Jun terminal kinase (JNK) in T-cells and in turn accelerates the proliferation of T-cells. Other than osteoporosis RANKL knock-out mice are accompanied by immune system abnormalities including deficient mature T and B cells [225].

RANK is a natural receptor for RANKL [226, 227] present on the surface of osteoclast precursors. The ligation between RANKL and RANK is important to activate NF- κ B to complete the development of functional osteoclasts [227]. Small interfering RNA (siRNA) targeting RANK significantly inhibits both osteoclast formation and bone resorption in RAW 264.7 and primary bone marrow cell cultures *in vitro* [228]. Mice with a disruption of RANK or RANKL show severe osteopetrosis due to failure to form osteoclasts *in vivo* [213, 229] as well as accompanied by a defect in tooth eruption [220]. RANK knock-out mice exhibited severe bone sclerosis due to lack of osteoclasts, suggesting RANK is a key factor in the differentiation, maturation and functioning osteoclasts [230]. These findings clearly demonstrate that RANK/RANKL is essential for osteoclastogenesis [220].

1.3.3.2. OPG

OPG is a TNF receptor superfamily member which possesses four cysteine-rich domains, two death domain homologous regions and a high net positive charge heparin-binding domain so that it can dimerise with heparin to be functional [120]. OPG is secreted as a soluble protein [214, 231] by osteoblasts [214], marrow stromal cells, monocytes/macrophages, dendritic cells, fibroblasts, both T and B lymphocytes [214, 215], endothelial cells [137, 232-234] and mesenchymal stem cells [235]. OPG is identical to osteoclasts inhibitory factor (OCIF) [214, 231, 236]. OPG is an effective negative regulator of osteoclastogenesis where it binds to RANKL [214, 215] preventing RANKL from binding to RANK (**Figure 1.2**) [237]. This RANKL/OPG binding inhibits osteoclastogenesis as well as promotes the apoptosis of osteoclasts both *in vitro* and *in vivo*

[216, 237]. In support of this, transgenic mice lacking OPG suffer severe osteoporosis, resulting from both an increased number and enhanced activity of osteoclasts [220, 221, 238]. Decreased osteoclast differentiation in transgenic mice and rats with over-expression of OPG exhibited suppression of bone resorption [239] and osteopetrosis [214]. Taken together RANK/RANK/OPG system plays a major role in osteoclast resorption activity and bone metabolism. Generally most of the known hormones and cytokines work on bone through this RANKL/RANK/OPG system and this signalling pathway is the target of antiresorptive inhibitors used in this study.

1.3.3.3.RANKL/RANK/OPG system

Briefly, RANKL-RANK binding triggers the intracellular pathway beginning with the activation of mitogen-activated kinases, including JNK and p38 [220, 221], TNF receptor activating factor (TRAF) including TRAF1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 [2, 218, 220, 240] which then activates NF- κ B [218]. TRAF6 plays a crucial role (**Figure 1.3**). The elevated amount of TRAF6 and activated NF- κ B further enhance the dephosphorylation and activation of nuclear factor of activated T-cells, cytoplasmic, calcineurin-dependent 1 (NFATc1) (described in **Section 1.3.3.4**) [241]. Mediated by JNK, p38 and NF- κ B1 (p50/p105) and NF- κ B2 (p52/p100) [125], dephosphorylated NFATc1 translocates specific transcription factors into the nucleus to enable expression of osteoclast-specific genes [175, 242, 243] including TRAP, OSCAR [244] and α v β 3 [175, 240, 242]. This in turn initiates osteoclast formation and differentiation. Similarly, the activated NF- κ B will induce c-Fos to relay the intracellular signal from RANKL stimulation (**Figure 1.4**) [245]. c-Fos heterodimerizes with c-Jun to form an important transcription factor, activator protein-1 (AP-1). c-Fos cooperates with NFATc1 [246] to bind to the promoter regions on osteoclast-specific genes and induce those genes in osteoclastogenesis [242].

TRAF6 knock-out mice developed severe osteopetrosis *in vivo* with defects in osteoclast function, impaired bone remodelling and tooth eruption [247, 248] and osteoclast precursor cells failed to differentiate when cultured *in vitro* [248]. TRAF6-null osteoclasts were also defective in cytoskeletal organization similar to RANK- and RANKL-null mice [247, 249]. However inhibition of TRAF6 interaction cannot fully suppress the activity of downstream factors such as JNK, indicating that the process of

osteoclast formation may be partially regulated by other molecules compensating TRAF6 deficiency [250].

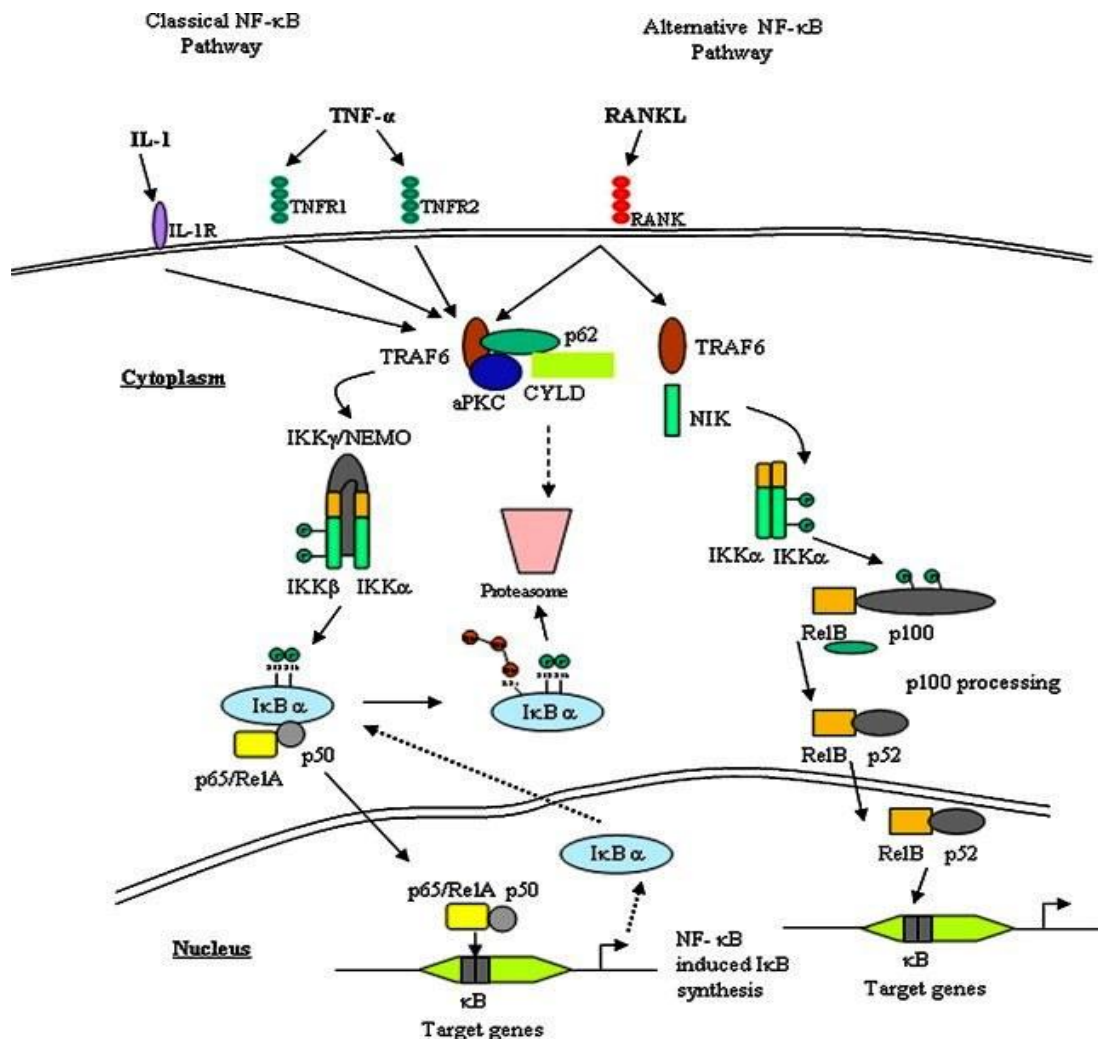


Figure 1.3 RANKL signaling via NF-κB pathway [251].

1.3.3.4. NF-κB

NF-κB is a nuclear factor or an omnipresent transcription factor that regulates the expression of genes encoding cytokines, chemokines, growth factors and cell adhesion molecules important in health and diseases [251]. Osteoclastic cytokines including IL-1, IL-6, RANKL and TNF-α have been shown to initiate osteoclastogenesis via induction of NF-κB signaling [208, 252]. NF-κB which exists in all eukaryotic cell types acts as a

regulator on various genes in many genes [95] and is a critical regulator of inflammation [253].

The NF- κ B pathway, illustrated in **Figure 1.5**, is associated with RANKL/RANK-regulated osteoclast formation, differentiation and resorption activity [251]. Phosphorylation of NF- κ B and the degradation of its inhibitory unit I κ B α are required to activate NF- κ B. The activated NF- κ B is a heterodimer consisting two proteins, most commonly seen is p65/p50 [254]. Activated NF- κ B enhances cell proliferation and reduces apoptosis [255]. Of NF- κ B, p50 and p52 are crucial for the normal development of osteoclasts. Gene-knock-out of both p50 and p52 led to osteopetrosis due to lack of osteoclasts, which suggests an essential role of the NF- κ B molecule in mediating osteoclastogenesis [256, 257].

Apart from cytokines, bacterial products such as LPS activate NF- κ B signaling [95]. It has been shown LPS-induced osteolysis was inhibited through the suppression of NF- κ B signaling and activity *in vivo* by NF- κ B inhibitors [103, 107]. This highlights the modification of NF- κ B signalling pathway may be a potential therapeutic target for the treatment of many osteoclast-related osteolysis diseases. Taken together NF- κ B inhibition has been shown to suppress osteoclastogenesis, therefore, understanding the RANKL/RANK-regulated NF- κ B signaling pathway may serve as a therapeutic target for osteoclast-associated bone loss including treatment using anti-resorptive inhibitors.

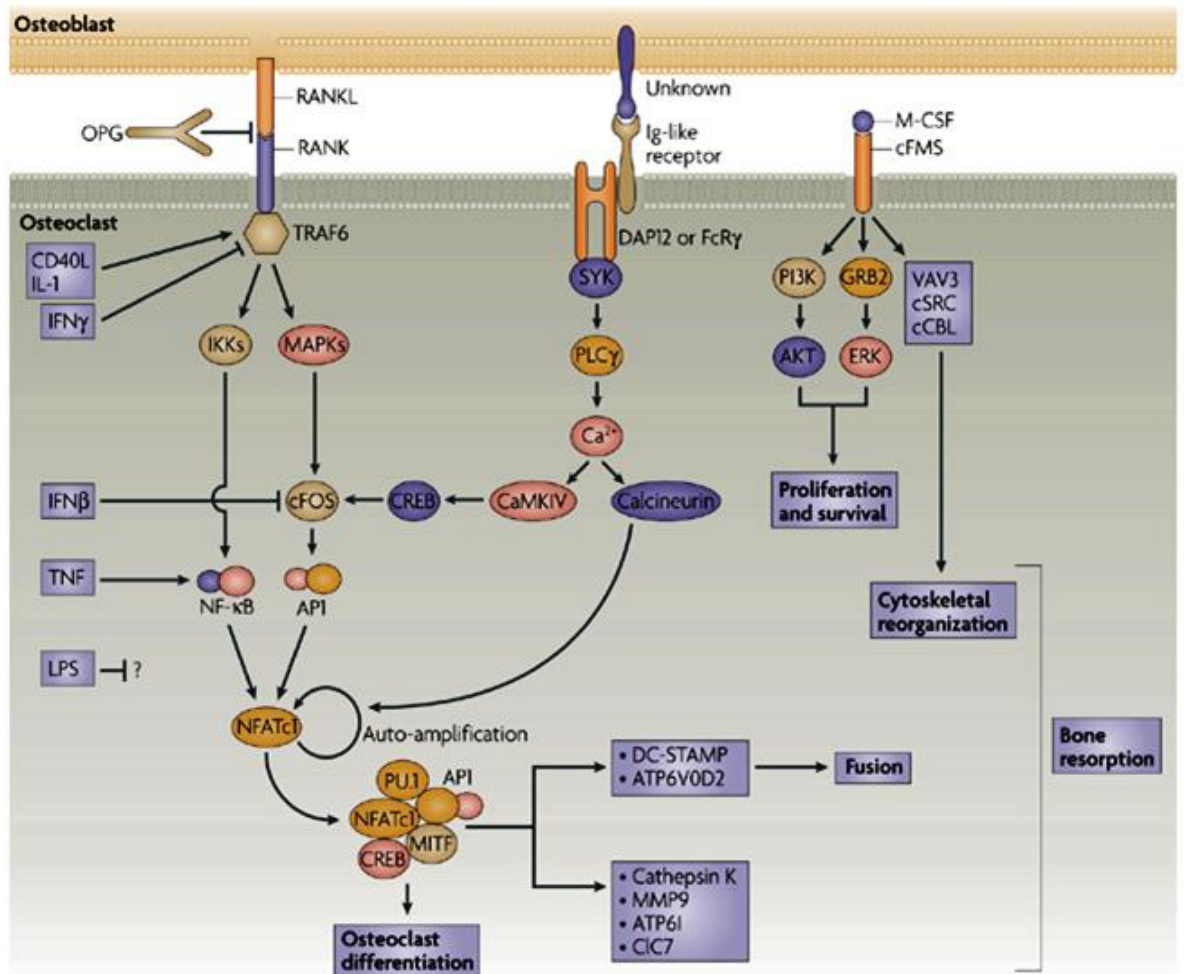


Figure 1.4 RANKL/RANK signaling system via NF- κ B together with ITAM co-stimulatory system induces NFATc1 expression to regulate osteoclastogenesis in inflammation-mediated localised bone loss pathologies [2].

1.3.3.5. NFATc1

NFATc1 is a member of the NFAT transcription factor family and was first identified in T-cells. Currently there are 5 members identified in this transcription factor family, which are NFAT1 (NFATc2), NFAT2 (NFATc1), NFAT3 (NFATc4), NFAT4 (NFATc3) and NFAT5 [2]. Studies have shown RANKL highly stimulates osteoclastogenesis through NFATc1 [125, 242]. This induction depends on both the TRAF6-NF- κ B and c-Fos pathway [220]. Since NFATc1 induction has been shown to be impaired in TRAF-null

cells [258], NFATc1 has been suggested as important in the early phase of osteoclastogenesis. This is supported by the findings that RANKL-stimulated induction of NFATc1 is suppressed by NF- κ B inhibition [259] and by absence of p50/p52 [244]. NFATc1 mRNA and protein levels were undetectable in c-Fos-null [260] indicating that upregulation of NFATc1 expression takes place downstream of c-fos activation.

NFATc1 regulates a number of osteoclast-specific genes, such as CathK, TRAP, β 3, MMP9 and OSCAR cooperatively with other transcription factors such as AP-1, PU.1 and microphthalmia transcription factor (MITF) [2, 139, 220, 261]. Various studies have identified the NFAT binding sites in the promoter region of osteoclast-specific genes. For example, NFAT binds to *acp5* (TRAP-encoding gene), *calcr* (calcitonin receptor), *ctsk* (an extracellular bone matrix protein-hydrolysing cysteine protease) [242] and β 3 encoding-gene [175, 262].

NFAT signaling transduction cascade is a key pathway in osteoclastogenesis. Osteoclastogenesis is retarded in NFATc1 suppression [263] and knock-out embryonic stem cells *in vitro* [242]. Its relationship to RANKL is demonstrated when NFATc1 expression is upregulated in response to RANKL-stimulated osteoclast differentiation [125, 242, 263]. Over-expression [242] or ectopic expression of constitutively active [125] NFATc1 stimulates osteoclastogenesis itself even though in the absence of RANKL. Taken together these studies illustrate the essential role of NFATc1 in the induction of osteoclastogenesis.

In a further study, NFATc2 was found to be greatly expressed following RANKL stimulation and binds to the promoter of NFATc1 to upregulate the NFATc1 expression [264]. NFATc1 can also auto-regulate its own promoter during osteoclastogenesis thus enabling the strong induction of NFATc1 which lasts till the end of osteoclastogenesis [264]. AP-1 containing c-Fos together with continuous activation of calcium signalling is involved in this autoamplification [220, 242]. Comparing mRNA expression between NFATc1 and NFATc2, it appears that the regulation of NFATc1 mRNA expression is mainly controlled at the epigenetic level [264]. Auto-amplification of NFATc1 expression also indicates that NFATc1 plays a central role in the molecular mechanism of osteoclastogenesis.

1.3.4. ITAM-dependent signalling pathway

The immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motif (ITAM)-dependent signalling pathway has recently been shown to co-stimulate osteoclastogenesis along with RANK/RANKL system [9, 265-268]. ITAM signalling is downstream to RANK (**Figure 1.5**) and has been shown as fundamental for osteoclastogenesis [220, 269]. Additionally ITAM signalling system is also crucial in the regulation of effector immune cells proliferation, survival and differentiation [265, 266].

Molecules in the ITAM co-stimulatory pathway in pre-osteoclasts and osteoclasts discussed in this thesis are two adaptor proteins and two co-receptor proteins. The two ITAM-containing adaptor proteins are DNAX-activating protein 12kDa (DAP12) and Fc receptor common gamma subunit (FcR γ) expressed in osteoclast-lineage myeloid cells [267]. Murine DAP12^{-/-} FcR γ ^{-/-} osteoclast precursor cells in a RANKL- and M-CSF-mediated osteoclast culture system cannot undergo osteoclast differentiation *in vitro* [265, 266]. Additionally, DAP12^{-/-} FcR γ ^{-/-} mice exhibited severe osteopetrosis, with bone marrow filled with unresorbed bone *in vivo* [266]. This indicates the important role of ITAM-containing adaptor molecules to induce osteoclast formation.

Ligands cannot directly bind to these adaptor proteins due to lack and minimal extracellular domain in their structure [270-272]. Therefore, DAP12 and FcR γ pair with two co-receptor proteins in order to receive and send signals to the extracellular micro-environment [271, 272]. The two co-receptor proteins are triggering receptor expressed in myeloid cells (TREM2) and OSCAR [246, 267, 273, 274]. The positively charged transmembrane amino acid residues on the co-receptors binds through ionic interaction to the corresponding negatively charged transmembrane residues on the adaptor proteins [267, 271, 274-277].

Following ligand recognition and receptor clustering from the OSCAR-FcR γ and TREM2-DAP12 bindings respectively, tyrosine residues are phosphorylated by Src family protein tyrosine kinase (PTK) [267], thereby recruiting spleen tyrosine kinase (Syk) to the motif [265, 266] creating a docking site [278]. In turn, this activates Syk [265, 266, 279, 280] through the Src homology 2 (SH2) domain of the Syk's C-terminal binding to the ITAM motif [266, 281] and autophosphorylation of important effector molecules, such as phospholipase C gamma (PLC γ) [282] that in turn mediates several other intracellular

pathways that take place during osteoclastogenesis process. It has been reported that deficiency or inhibition of Syk tyrosine kinase resulted in impaired osteoclast differentiation and function [265, 266]. The activated Syk-PLC γ will increase the intracellular calcium concentration to activate the calcineurin [283] to dephosphorylate NFATc1 [240, 284], activate Ras resulting in stimulation of the ERK pathway and cellular activation and induce the NF- κ B activation (**Figure 1.4**) [268]. NFATc1 translocation will then take place resulting in the stimulation of NFATc1 expression (**Figure 1.5**) as well as activated NF- κ B will enhance osteoclastogenesis [264]. This important signalling cascade is illustrated in **Figure 1.6**. It has been suggested the stimulation on this ITAM signalling pathway is stopped (in a negative feedback loop) by stimulation on the ITAM-counter immunoreceptor tyrosine-based inhibitory motif (ITIM)-mediated pathway [268]. However, this is not discussed in this thesis.

Apart from inducing osteoclast formation, ITAM signalling pathway has also been found to play a significant role in regulation of osteoclast resorption activity and capacity. Osteoclasts from DAP12^{-/-} FcR γ ^{-/-} mice failed to multinucleate *in vitro* [265, 266]. Osteoclasts from DAP12^{-/-} FcR γ ^{-/-} mice also exhibited cytoskeletal dysfunction, failed to firmly adhere to bone surface and secure cell polarisation ensuing a failure to resorb bone [186, 279]. As described in **Section 1.3.1**, failure in multinucleation and cytoskeletal reorganization will retard bone resorption capacity in osteoclasts.

As illustrated in **Figure 1.5**, the activation of phospholipase C by TRAF6 produces inositol-1,4,5-trisphosphate (IP3) that enhances intracellular calcium levels which in turn leads to the activation of calcineurin to dephosphorylate NFATc1 [125]. This calcium signalling is initiated by the phosphorylation of PLC γ downstream of ITAM signalling [265], resulting in the cleavage of the cell membrane phospholipid phosphatidylinositol-4,5-bisphosphate (PIP2) into the molecules of IP3 and diacylglycerol (DAG), which become the second messengers in the signalling system. PLC γ is believed to involve in osteoclastogenesis that phospholipase-deficient mice exhibited osteopetrosis and defective in osteoclastogenesis [285]. The IP3 induces calcium release from the endoplasmic reticulum, which leads to the increase in intracellular calcium concentration. This activates downstream effector proteins, phosphatase calcineurin and calcium/calmodulin-activated

kinase (CaMKs). Phosphatase calcineurin is the molecule reported to control the activity of NFATc1 [286, 287].

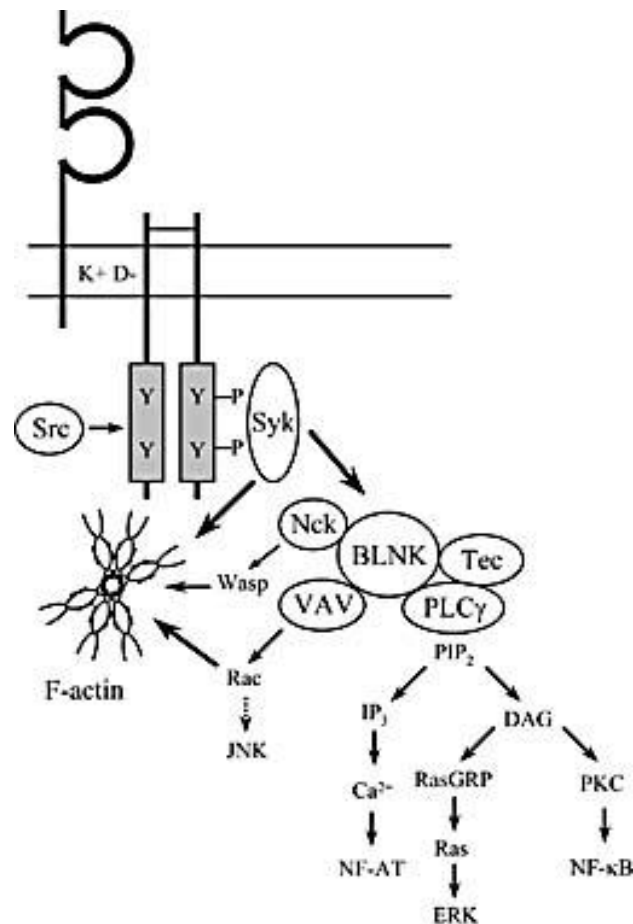


Figure 1.5 Haemopoietic cell ITAM signalling cascade. Ligand-induced receptor aggregation results in ITAM phosphorylation by Src, allowing recruitment and activation of Syk family PTK. Syk family PTK phosphorylate F-actin and the BLNK/SLP-76 family of adaptor proteins, leading to recruitment and activation of multiple signalling pathway [268].

1.3.4.1.DAP12

DAP12 also known as tyrosine kinase binding protein (TYROBP) or KARAP [275, 288], is expressed in osteoclasts, monocytes differentiating into macrophages [289] and dendritic cells [276], granulocytes as well as some T and B lymphocytes [181, 271, 290-292].

DAP12-null mice exhibited severe osteopetrosis with increased bone mass and trabecular thickness [181], and when cultured *in vitro* the osteoclast precursor cells failed to undergo differentiation [182, 265, 266, 272, 293] and multinucleation [294], similar to osteoclasts from DAP12^{-/-} FcRγ^{-/-} mice [265, 266]. Retroviral introduction of DAP12 into DAP12^{-/-} FcRγ^{-/-} mice restored the multinucleation and differentiation capability [181, 182, 265, 266]. Additionally DAP12 overexpression enhanced proliferation rate of the osteoclast progenitors.

Apart from osteoclast formation, DAP12 has been shown as important for osteoclast cytoskeletal reorganisation for bone resorption mechanism [186]. Deletion of Syk downstream of DAP12 [265] led to failure in cytoskeletal dysfunction that led to inability to resorb mineralised substrate *in vitro* [280]. This cytoskeletal dysfunction resulted in impaired formation of actin ring, ruffled border and attachment to bone surface thereby inhibiting osteoclasts from resorbing bone [186]. Together these studies demonstrate that DAP12 by itself has significant roles played in osteoclast development in health and disease.

For example in the context of human pathology, DAP12 deficiency due to genetic mutation on chromosome-19 leading to premature termination of the protein is believed as the cause to an uncommon genetically recessive human disease called polycystic lipomembranous osteodysplasia with sclerosis leukoencephalopathy (PLOSL) or also known as Nasu-Hakola disease [182, 288, 295]. PLOSL is described in **Section 1.3.4.2**.

1.3.4.2.TREM2

Together with TREM1, TREM3 and TREM-like 4 [296], TREM2 is a member the TREM family [297]. TREM2 was first discovered in human monocyte-derived dendritic cells and mouse macrophage RAW264.7 cell line [276, 277] and is widely expressed by cells from myeloid lineage such as dendritic cells, macrophages, microglial cells and osteoclasts [277, 297]. TREM2 may be regulated by MITF and PU.1 since promoter region of TREM2 contains the binding sites for these transcription factors [246]. TREM2-Fc proteins, which bind to TREM2 ligand, inhibit osteoclast formation in an osteoclast-osteoblast *in vitro* co-culture [246]

Human TREM2-deficient pre-osteoclasts could not differentiate into functional osteoclasts *in vitro* [182]. When TREM2 was suppressed through RNA silencing [298] in RAW264.7 cell osteoclast cultures, osteoclastogenesis, bone resorbing activity and migrating capability were suppressed. More importantly, TREM2 stimulation in mouse pre-osteoclasts enhanced osteoclast multinucleation and chemotaxis [294, 299]. Meanwhile stimulation of TREM2 in RAW264.7 cells and murine primary bone marrow macrophages (BMMs) via antibody cross-linking enhanced osteoclast-like cells formation in the presence of RANKL, M-CSF and DAP12 [299].

The findings that there is no putative NFAT binding site on TREM2 promoter region and TREM2 gene expression is not significantly inhibited with inhibition of calcineurin/NFATc1 signalling give the idea that NFATc1 does not regulate TREM2 expression [246]. Indeed, there have been more recent *in vitro* studies showing that TREM2 is upstream of NFATc1 expression in the RANKL-induced CaMK-MEK-ERK the cell signalling pathway in PBMC-derived osteoclast culture [298, 300].

Studies have also shown that TREM2 is highly regulated by ligand binding [246]. When TREM2 was blocked from ligand binding in RAW264.7 cell osteoclast cultures osteoclastogenesis, bone resorbing activity and migrating capability were suppressed [299]. However, the ligand for TREM2 is still unknown. TREM2 has been shown to bind to anionic ligands possibly through pattern recognition [299, 301]. A more recent study suggested plexin-A1, a receptor for semaphorins, as a potential activating ligand in TREM2/DAP12-mediated signalling pathway during osteoclastogenesis. In the study, stimulation of osteoclast precursors with cells deficient in plexin-A1 led to reduction in osteoclast formation *in vitro* and *in vivo* mouse model lack of plexin-A1 exhibited osteosclerosis and increased bone mass [302]. Recent studies on characterizing the ligand of TREM2 reported that TREM2 binds to bacterial LPS [303] and it has been suggested to function as phagocytic receptor for bacteria in macrophages [304].

Mutations in DAP12 and TREM2 did not lead to complete loss of osteoclastogenesis but resulted in delayed osteoclast differentiation and decreased dentine resorption [182]. In humans, a mutation of TREM2 or DAP12 leads to PLOSL as discussed in **Section 1.3.4.1** [220, 305]. PLOSL is characterized by osteopenia and early onset of osteoporosis, lipid-filled bony cysts on wrists and ankles, trabecular bone loss and cortical bone

demineralisation, loss of brain white matter leading to presenile dementia disease, premature death before age 50 [305, 306] and fragile bones [295]. DAP12-null mice with PLOSL demonstrated bone and brain abnormalities suggesting PLOSL is associated with DAP12 deficiency [307]. However a very recent conflicting data reported that osteopenia in PLOSL was observed in transgenic mice overexpressing DAP12. Whether deficiency or overexpression of DAP12, mutation of DAP12 gene is shown as contributing to the development of PLOSL. Additionally, TREM2 mutation in PLOSL is believed to cause defect in neuronal apoptotic clearance by microglia leading to brain abnormality [308, 309]. Taken together these show that DAP12 and TREM2 have important roles in cellular regulation including osteoclast formation and resorption activity.

1.3.4.3.FcR γ

FcR γ is an adaptor protein for Fc receptors [265, 274]. The FcR γ chain has been demonstrated to facilitate or upregulate the expression of OSCAR on the cell surface [274] and ITAM signal transduction [265]. FcR γ has also been found to couple with other receptors such as FcRIII [310] and paired Ig receptor-A (PIR-A) [311].

It has been shown that pre-osteoclasts with double mutations in both DAP12 and FcR γ could not differentiate into multinucleated osteoclasts even in the presence of osteoblasts [265, 266, 293]. This suggests that ITAM-containing adaptor proteins DAP12 and FcR γ are cooperatively involved in transducing signals for osteoclastogenesis [246]. However, pre-osteoclasts which are deficient in DAP12, “DAP-null” were able to multinucleate in the presence of osteoblasts [265, 266]. This concept is supported by *in vivo* finding that double knock-out of both DAP12 and FcR γ mice develop severe osteopetrosis but it is less severe in DAP12 knock-out alone. Together these studies suggest the role of FcR γ in osteoclastogenesis could be compensated by other mechanism or pathway *in vivo* as FcR γ -deficient mice do not develop osteopetrosis [265, 266, 274].

Interestingly osteoclasts with DAP12 deficiency increase in size when treated with FcR γ [159, 265, 266]. Additionally activation of OSCAR-FcR γ increase osteoclast formation [186] and stimulation of OSCAR or FcR γ -mediated pathway was able to enhance osteoclastogenesis in DAP12-deficient cells [77]. Together these studies show

that FcR γ may compensate the osteoclastogenesis in DAP12 deficiency. Hence despite this redundancy, the role of FcR γ may still be important to osteoclast formation [265, 266].

1.3.4.4.OSCAR

OSCAR, an immunoglobulin (Ig)-like receptor, is a novel member of leukocyte receptor complex (LRC)-encoded protein found at both gene and protein levels in human and murine osteoclasts [159]. In mouse, OSCAR is only expressed by mature osteoclasts, found in bone tissues and murine osteoclast-like cell-line RAW264.7 cells [159]. Although sharing 73% similar sequence homology [159], in human OSCAR is expressed by many types of cells including monocytes, dendritic cells [312-315] and endothelial cells [9, 316]. The expression of OSCAR is usually found at the terminal stage of osteoclast differentiation after TRAP-positive pre-osteoclast formation [159] and NFATc1 expression [243] suggesting OSCAR as a reliable marker for mature osteoclasts [159, 181].

OSCAR has been also been shown to play role in immune system [313, 314] through antigen presentation as well as survival, maturation and activation of dendritic cells [269, 274, 313-315]. OSCAR elevates pro-inflammatory reaction in monocytes and neutrophils by inducing the secretion of cytokines such as granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) and IL-4 that sustain T-cell proliferation [312, 315]. Moreover, OSCAR reduced apoptotic cell number and increased anti-apoptotic molecule Bcl-2 expression in dendritic cells, leading to reduced apoptosis and prolonged cell survival [312, 313]. Ligation of human OSCAR on monocytes and neutrophils results in the induction of a pro-inflammatory cascade and the initiation of downstream immune responses [315].

With full length cDNA comprising 282 amino acids [9, 159], OSCAR is a type I transmembrane protein with a positively charged arginine residue in the transmembrane domain [159] suggesting OSCAR couples with other transmembrane proteins or ligands in the induction of ITAM signalling. Based on protein structure modelling, human OSCAR is expected to contain a signal peptide [9] and it has been speculated that its secretory function and supporting the idea of soluble isoform [269]. The presence of the soluble isoform is further supported by detection *in vivo* and *in vitro* studies [317].

A ligand for OSCAR has been identified as an extracellular matrix collagen [77]. The interaction between OSCAR and osteoblast-derived collagen ligand has been shown to enhance osteoclastogenesis *in vitro* in which this osteoclastogenesis was retarded when the OSCAR and ligand interaction was blocked using OSCAR-Fc fusion protein [77, 159, 269]. Interestingly this ligand was stained with OSCAR-Ig fusion protein [159] which suggests this OSCAR ligand might be expressed by osteoblasts [159]. This is supported by detection of OSCAR ligand on osteoblasts upon stimulation by osteotropic factors 1, 25-(OH)₂ vitamin D3 and PGE2 as well as RANKL [246]. In a study involving an interaction between mononucleated osteoclast expressing OSCAR and collagen expressed by osteoblasts, it was found that collagen type I is a ligand for OSCAR [77]. These suggest that OSCAR is responsible for osteoclast differentiation process in close proximity to bone in the presence of osteoblasts instead of in tissues and circulation.

OSCAR has a specific role in co-stimulating osteoclastogenesis [159, 265]. Upregulation of OSCAR expression has been observed during osteoclastogenesis [274] and inhibition of calcineurin/NFAT-mediated pathway downregulates OSCAR gene expression [246]. Therefore these suggest OSCAR gene expression could be directly regulated by NFATc1. This has been further demonstrated by a direct chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) assay and gene reporter assay [243, 246] that RANKL/RANK binding induces NFATc1 expression [243, 246]. Consistently with this constitutively active NFATc1 was found to promote the expression of OSCAR [243]. While there are two NFATc1-binding sites identified on mouse OSCAR promoter region which indicates NFATc1 has the capability to directly induce OSCAR gene expression [243], NFATc1 has also been reported to upregulate downstream of calcium signalling mediated by OSCAR [265]. This implies that a positive feedback loop may be involved in the interaction between OSCAR and NFATc1 (**Figure 1.5**) [246, 265].

Importantly, transcription factors MITF, PU.1 [318], USF, inhibitor of differentiation 2 (ID2) [319], MafB and protein inhibitor of activated STAT 3 (PIAS3) [320] also regulate OSCAR expression. A study that mouse promoter region on the OSCAR gene indicates that MITF and PU.1 may bind to promoter site to initiate OSCAR expression [318], is supported by the finding that MITF and PU.1 transcription factors enhanced OSCAR gene expression together with TRAP [246], CathK [321] and NFATc1 [246, 318]. USF also

promotes OSCAR expression [322]. ID2 [319], MafB and PIAS3 [320] negatively regulate OSCAR expression. For example overexpression of PIAS3 recruited histone deacetylase 1 to the promoter of OSCAR reducing OSCAR and NFATc1 expression and eventually inhibited osteoclast differentiation [320].

1.4.Osteoblasts

Osteoblasts, the bone-forming cells [323], are cells of multipotent mesenchymal origin [1, 2]. Osteoblasts secrete bone-matrix proteins and promote subsequent mineralization within the bone [2], together with production of collagen and osteocalcin [323]. In contrast to osteoclasts, osteoblasts are mononucleated cells found in various shapes including flat and plump depending on their stages of cellular activity. Formation of osteoblasts are regulated by specific transcription factors such as runt-related transcription factor 2 (RUNX-2) and osterix [2], which are essential to determine the formation of osteoblasts [2, 324]. The similar factors could cross-inhibit the other factors that may differentiate mesenchymal progenitor cells into other cells such as adipocytes and chondrocytes [324].

Osteoblasts play significant function in the regulation of osteogenesis, ossification and bone formation. Briefly, when receiving bone-forming signals, mesenchymal cells cluster and differentiate into osteoblasts, forming an ossification center in the fibrous connective tissues within the bone. Following this osteoblasts secrete extracellular organic bone matrix (osteoid) therefore leading to matrix mineralization and bone formation [325]. Osteoblasts deposit osteoid as they undergo differentiation [325] and ultimately, some osteoblasts undergo apoptosis [325, 326] and some osteoblasts become trapped and embedded in bone matrix giving rise to osteocytes which gradually stop secreting osteoid [325]. Osteocytes are described in **Section 1.5**.

Apart from the responsibility in depositing bone matrix for bone formation, osteoblasts particularly mature osteoblasts, have been shown to regulate formation and activity of osteoclasts [1, 325]. Osteoblasts initiate the chemotactic mobilization of osteoclasts by releasing osteoclastogenic key regulator molecules, RANKL and M-CSF [237]. Osteoblasts also release stromal-cell derived factor-1 (SDF-1) important in the migration [323] and homing of osteoclasts [327]. Importantly osteoblasts secrete OPG to inhibit osteoclastogenesis [214]. Together with the regulation of osteoclastogenesis, osteoblasts

indirectly modulate the calcium homeostasis in bone. It has now been established that osteoblasts play an important role in bone homeostasis to maintain composition of bone by promoting bone resorption via osteoclasts followed by performing bone formation and mineralization when necessary.

1.5.Osteocyte

Osteocytes are the most plentiful cells within bone matrix residing in lacunae and form a network throughout mineralized bone tissue, communicating through gap junctions with each other and with surface osteoblasts [325, 328]. Therefore osteocytes act as mechanosensors within bone in which they regulate the signals to instruct osteoclasts where and when to resorb bone and osteoblasts where and when to form bone [1, 119]. They do this via the formation of long dendritic processes travelling through canaliculi, a small tunnel structure connecting osteocytes within bone matrix or lacunae with cells on bone surface [329]. This syncytial network support and maintain bone structure and metabolism [1].

As described, osteoblasts mature into osteocytes, thus osteocytes represent terminally differentiated osteoblasts that stop releasing osteoid. Additionally, once they are embedded in the mineralised matrix, osteocytes secrete sclerostin, a negative regulator of the osteoblast [330] retarding bone-forming activity of osteoblasts [331, 332]. These show that osteocytes play a role in regulating osteoblasts for initiating and terminating bone formation.

Within bone, micro-damage may happen as a result of normal wear and tear [112]. It has been suggested that bone microdamage causes osteocyte injuries leading to disrupted osteocyte integrity and osteocyte apoptosis [333]. Moreover, it has been proposed that osteocytes can remove minerals from their lacunae and perilacunar matrix which may explain bone fragility [328] and the presence of empty lacunae in ageing bone suggests that osteocytes may eventually undergo apoptosis [1]. Together these give rise to the idea that osteocytes may also be involved in regulating bone remodelling.

It has been hypothesized that dying osteocytes in the close proximity to the microdamage transmit chemotactic signals to osteoclasts requesting for bone remodelling for fracture removal at particular sites of bone [112, 334]. The signal transmission would

likely involve osteopontin, an osteoclast chemoattractant important for initiating bone remodelling following mechanical loading [335-337]. It was found that the expression of osteopontin by osteocytes is upregulated in hypoxic condition [335]. In addition to microdamage responses osteocyte cellular network induces RANKL expression thereby increasing RANKL-mediated local osteoclast formation [113, 338, 339]. This recruitment of functional osteoclasts as well as induction of osteoclast formation around sites of microdamage due to osteocyte apoptosis indicate that osteocytes play an important role in regulating osteoclasts and bone resorption at bone erosion sites.

1.6.Regulation of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis

1.6.1.Osteoclasts in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

Immunohistochemical analyses of the pseudomembrane (as described in **Section 1.1.1**) surrounding the failed prostheses in peri-prosthetic tissues have identified populations of cells expressing osteoclast markers [340-342]. This is supported by observations of radiological examination in the form of radiographic hallmark features of aseptic loosening called radiolucent zones at the interface between failed prostheses and adjacent bone [111, 343, 344]. The progression of bone erosion in this disease appears to be dominated by excessive numbers of macrophages [345] believed to be the progenitors for osteoclasts [24, 132]. Consistent with this, macrophages isolated from the tissues were found to have capability to become osteoclasts *ex vivo* either with [41, 132] or without the support of osteoblasts or stromal cells [24]. Taken together these findings suggest that ingestion of prosthetic wear particles by macrophages results in expression of osteoclast-differentiating molecules [24] followed by increased macrophage-derived osteoclast formation and activity that eventually results in excessive bone loss [3, 23, 346].

As described in **Section 1.1.1**, the phagocytosis of prosthetic materials by phagocytic cells such as macrophages and FBGCs persistently releases osteoclastogenic pro-inflammatory mediators, including RANKL [28, 30, 31]. Consistent with this, all types of wear particles including TiAlV, CoCr and SS show stimulation and release of osteoclastogenic pro-inflammatory mediators such as IL-1 β , IL-6 and TNF- α by human

monocytes *in vitro* even though there is variation in the levels and pattern of expression [24].

PE particles also induce upregulation of expression of IL-1 β , IL-6, TNF- α [347], RANK [20, 28, 233], RANKL and M-CSF [24] in cells of the monocytic lineage. This release of osteoclastogenic pro-inflammatory molecules stimulated by PE particles in turn recruits osteoclast precursor cells such as dendritic cells [133] and macrophages [62, 65, 92] into the tissues [23, 111], thereby initiating and elevating osteoclast differentiation process in the tissues surrounding the prostheses [20, 27, 28, 31-34, 65, 345, 346]. This is supported by the finding that cells containing PE particles found in human peri-prosthetic tissues expressed osteoclast phenotypic markers TRAP, CathK and CTR [25]. Importantly introduction of PE into *in vivo* model has led to increased osteoclast-like formation and activity in a particle concentration-dependent manner [54, 348]. Both excessive osteoclast formation and activity appear to be responsible to promote PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis [76] and modulation of molecules involved during osteoclastogenesis is potentially important to combat the development of osteolysis in the disease.

1.6.1.1.RANK-RANKL-OPG in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

RANKL/RANK/OPG system (**Figure 1.3**) is important in maintenance of bone homeostasis and normal bone physiology. Disruption in the balance between the levels and activity of these molecules results in enhanced osteoclastogenesis thereby excessive bone resorption [24, 115, 233, 234, 349-351] and suppression of osteoblast differentiation and bone formation activity [352] as shown in RA, periodontal disease [232, 349, 353] and peri-prosthetic osteolysis [3, 350, 354, 355].

In inflammation-mediated bone loss diseases, the RANKL/OPG imbalance is caused by elevated cytokine expression such as RANKL [20, 233, 349, 356], IL-1 [357, 358] and TNF- α [20] levels relative to OPG, or decreased OPG expression levels relative to RANKL [24, 234, 359]. This is shown by a positive correlation between severity of synovitis in RA patients and the increase in RANKL [349] accompanied with decreased OPG expression [232, 360]. However, studies have shown high RANKL expression is the most prominent factor. In RANKL-mediated *in vitro* osteoclast cultures with higher concentrations of RANKL (50ng/mL), dentine resorption pit formation was significantly

increased when compared to osteoclast culture with a lower concentration of RANKL (10ng/mL) [20]. Recruitment of pro-inflammatory cytokine TNF- α to RANKL-induced osteoclast culture also increased osteoclast resorption activity [20]. Together these findings show that imbalanced RANKL:OPG ratio contributes to osteoclastogenesis.

In order to reduce osteoclast bone resorption caused by excessive RANKL expression, studies have shown introduction of OPG may restore excessive RANKL expression to its normal relative levels. Treatment with OPG significantly reduced TNF- α -mediated osteoclast formation and bone destruction *in vitro* [361]. Similarly, treatment with OPG-fusion protein (OPG-Fc) *in vivo* significantly reduced osteoclast formation and bone erosion in a rat model of collagen-induced arthritis (CIA) [362]. Consistent with this treatment with a peptide that functions like OPG [363] and a molecule that modulates endogenous OPG expression [364] reduced bone resorption in ovariectomised mice [363, 364] and amine-induced adjuvant arthritic mice [364]. Taken together these show that promotion of OPG binding to RANKL restores the excessive RANKL expression levels *in vivo*.

When OPG/RANKL ratio is out of balance due to the lack of RANKL, introduction of RANKL in RANKL-deficient animals has shown improved symptoms in pathological bone loss diseases. For example, blocking RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis was found to stop alveolar bone loss in an experimental model of periodontitis [365, 366]. Additionally, RANKL-knock-out mice failed to show signs of arthritis following arthritic serum transfer (STA) of RANKL [224, 361, 362].

Significantly higher levels of RANKL were found in the peri-prosthetic tissues of patients with implant failure than in similar tissues from osteoarthritic and healthy subjects [233]. In contrast, OPG protein levels were similar in all tissues with the net result higher RANKL:OPG ratio [233]. This shows that there is excessive RANKL molecules were found in peri-prosthetic osteolysis. In peri-prosthetic osteolysis, RANKL molecules are expressed by osteoblasts [367], fibroblasts [217, 368], activated T-lymphocytes, giant cells and macrophages [3, 24, 354, 355]. Macrophages, which have phagocytosed wear particles, have been shown as responsible for the high release of RANKL protein and mRNA in particle-induced osteolysis around the prostheses [3, 20]. This shows that the presence of wear particles stimulates the RANKL expression, thus osteoclast formation.

Wear particles, at low concentration, were able to increase the expression of RANKL and M-CSF by osteoblast culture *in vitro* [367]. Particles of prosthetic materials also stimulated human monocytes to express osteoclast-associated genes and osteoclast-mediating factors *in vitro* [350]. Complementing this, metal and PE wear debris have shown increased RANKL in mouse calvarial model *in vivo* [369]. These findings support the contention that high levels of RANKL in peri-prosthetic tissues of patients with prosthetic loosening may significantly contribute to aseptic implant loosening [233].

In the human situation, synovial fluid from peri-prosthetic patients showed excessive RANKL and insufficient OPG levels and this was able to stimulate osteoclast formation *in vitro* when added to an osteoclast cultures [370]. As described earlier, OPG may have an effect to counter this. Addition of exogenous OPG has counteracted the effect in that osteoclast culture [370]. Supporting this, treatment with OPG reduced osteolysis in a PE-induced osteolysis mouse calvarial model [371]. Similarly, treatment with RANK-fusion protein, RANK-Fc which is also an antagonist to RANKL composed of extracellular region of RANK with Fc portion of human IgG1, has reduced resorption in a particle-induced osteolysis animal model [372].

Together these studies indicate ratio of RANKL:OPG gene and protein expression is associated with enhanced differentiation and activity of the bone-resorbing osteoclasts, suggesting RANKL:OPG ratio as an important indicator for bone erosion. As RANKL and OPG are key molecules regulating osteoclastogenesis [232, 360], therapeutic interventions targeting these molecules and their signaling cascades are currently being studied to treat inflammation-mediated bone loss diseases particularly peri-prosthetic osteolysis as being discussed in this thesis.

1.6.1.2.NF- κ B in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

The NF- κ B signalling factor is involved in regulating osteoclastogenesis in normal bone homeostasis as well as in disease. In the context of peri-prosthetic osteolysis, wear particles have been found to induce NF- κ B activation [373]. Ti particles activated NF- κ B in peripheral blood monocytes from healthy donors and also induced the production of TNF- α and IL-6 cytokines which in turn enhanced osteoclastogenesis *in vitro* [373]. Within 15 minutes of exposure to Ti, NF- κ B binding activity is rapidly induced by

particles in murine macrophage cell line, ANA-1 *in vitro* and this involves the degradation of p105, a precursor of p50 that binds to p65, in NF- κ B signaling pathway. TNF- α induction is mediated, at least in part, through NF- κ B binding to the κ B2a, one of the four NF- κ B binding sites in the TNF- α promoter [253]. In addition, as described above in **Section 1.3.3.3**, NF- κ B inhibitors suppress NF- κ B signalling pathway to reduce bone loss in LPS-induced osteolysis *in vivo* [103, 107]. Taken together the modulation of NF- κ B may reduce osteoclast formation and activity therefore bone loss through reduced NF- κ B activation in particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

1.6.1.3.NFATc1 in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

NFATc1 is the key transcription factor for osteoclastogenesis in normal bone homeostasis and is essential in pathological bone loss. NFATc1 at both mRNA and protein expression levels is higher in peri-prosthetic osteolysis than osteoarthritis tissues although levels difference did not reach significance [35]. This is consistent with low T lymphocyte numbers observed in these tissues [35]. This is further supported by the findings that NFATc1 was expressed in BMMs and multinucleated cells cultured with Ti [45] and PMMA particles [46]. Inactivation of NFATc1 in this culture potently impeded the Ti [45] and PMMA [46] particle-induced osteoclast formation and activity *in vitro*. Consistent with this inhibition of NFATc1 significantly suppressed volumetric bone resorption in a PE-induced osteolysis in a murine calvarial *in vivo* model [89]. Together these studies and many others illustrate the NFATc1 regulation and modulation may become a reliable therapeutic target in the prevention of bone loss in peri-prosthetic osteolysis. This thesis investigates the effects of NFATc1 inhibition on osteoclast formation and activity, ITAM-associated molecules *in vitro* and localized and systemic bone resorption in a PE-induced osteolysis *in vivo*.

1.6.1.4.ITAM signaling in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

While the importance of RANKL-RANK in localized inflammation-mediated bone loss has been reported, limited studies have shown the expression of ITAM factors in pathology. Our research group have shown the expression of ITAM factors was increased in synovial tissue and vasculature of rheumatoid arthritic joints [374] and in tissues

adjacent to bone erosion sites in peri-prosthetic osteolysis patients [35]. Therefore, it is suggested that ITAM-associated molecules may contribute to the pathogenesis and severity of RA, periodontal disease, peri-prosthetic osteolysis and osteoporosis [35, 269, 338, 374-376].

In PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis, osteoclast-like cells containing PE particles in human tissues express high levels of ITAM molecules OSCAR, TREM2, DAP12 and FcR γ [35] and when assessed by a semi-quantitative scoring system, these are significantly higher when compared to the levels of OSCAR, TREM2, DAP12 and FcR γ , respectively, in osteoarthritic synovial control tissue [35]. This was consistent with the finding that the corresponding mRNA levels were also increased *in vitro* [35]. Additionally, PE particles added into human PBMC-derived osteoclast cell cultures *in vitro* upregulated ITAM expression [35].

This ITAM co-stimulatory immune pathway is also associated with increased osteoclast differentiation and activity [265, 377]. These ITAM molecules are important in osteoclastogenesis and human localized bone loss but there is only a limited number of studies investigating the expression of osteoclast ITAM-associated molecules in the context of pathogenic bone loss. Therefore, it is valuable to further understand the relationship between the co-stimulatory ITAM pathway in osteoclast regulation and particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

16.1.4.1.OSCAR in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

Upregulation of OSCAR expression in RA occurs not only locally in mononuclear monocytes prior to differentiation into osteoclasts at the inflamed synovium, but also in the circulating monocytes before cells enter synovium [269]. Hence it is thought that the increase in the expression of OSCAR could also be associated with systemic inflammation [269]. However, it has been controversial as to whether soluble OSCAR increases in healthy individuals or as a result of erosive activity. Serum levels of soluble OSCAR are shown to inversely correlate with erosion and disease activity [338] as it has been found that higher serum levels of soluble OSCAR are detected in serum in healthy individuals with no history of arthritis when compared to RA patients [269, 338]. However, recently higher serum levels of OSCAR are found in RA patients rather than healthy individuals

hence soluble OSCAR indicates erosive activity [376]. Additionally our research group has shown sOSCAR in the synovial fluid of osteoarthritis patients has no significant difference to that in active RA patients [374].

OSCAR has also been investigated in the context of osteoarthritis [374], low bone mass density (BMD) [375] and osteoporosis [378]. Incubation of cells with synovial fluid taken from osteoarthritis patients *in vitro* increased OSCAR and NFATc1 mRNA expression, suggesting that there are unknown factors in synovial fluids stimulating OSCAR expression [374]. A single nucleotide polymorphism, OSCAR 2322A>G that affects CREB binding site in OSCAR promoter region, is associated with low BMD [375]. Moreover, FcR γ ^{-/-} DAP^{-/-} in acute estrogen deficiency-induced osteoporotic ovariectomised mice improves bone loss [378].

We believe soluble OSCAR (sOSCAR) can potentially act as a decoy receptor for OSCAR ligand within the joint and affect osteoclast development in RA. It is possible successful treatment results in increased cleavage of cell associated OSCAR resulting in increased sOSCAR levels in the joint. In this way sOSCAR regulates osteoclastic bone resorption and is an early marker that predicts joint damage. Of note, the biological effect of serum and synovial fluid-derived OSCAR on osteoclastogenesis has not been investigated. Considering the OSCAR-encoded gene is a newly-discovered target of NFATc1 and OSCAR itself is a more recently discovered osteoclast-specific protein, little is known about OSCAR regulation and its role in osteoclastogenesis. In this thesis we investigated the effects of NFATc1 inhibition on OSCAR expression *in vitro*. To further understand this correlation to the context of pathological bone loss, this thesis investigated the serum levels of soluble OSCAR in normal mice and peri-prosthetic osteolysis *in vivo*.

1.6.2. Osteoblasts in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

Although the effects of PE particles have been proposed to be less on osteoblast bone formation when compared to osteoclastogenesis [379], it is important to understand the role played by osteoblasts in this pathology. Research has been reporting the involvement of osteoblasts in wear particle-induced osteolysis. PE particles promote osteoblast maturation to osteocytes [50]. It has been demonstrated that PE promote bone loss through regulation of osteoblasts by suppressing bone formation [50, 379, 380] or promoting

osteoclastogenesis through the production of pro-osteoclastogenesis mediators such as RANKL [379, 381]. In response to PE osteoblasts undergoing maturation produce nitric oxide which has been shown to be involved in mediating localized bone destruction [382]. The production of RANKL and associated cytokines may induce osteoclastic bone resorption in PE-induced osteolysis through these mechanisms.

1.6.3. Osteocytes in peri-prosthetic osteolysis

Osteocytes have been shown to contribute to osteoclastogenesis in pathology. One of the mechanisms osteocytes regulate osteoclast activity is through induction of osteocyte apoptosis [112]. It has been shown the microdamage may induce osteocyte injuries and apoptosis thereby generating one or more signals for recruitment of functional osteoclasts to resorb bone at the sites of bone containing the dead or dying cells [112]. Additionally it has been shown cobalt-chromium-molybdenum alloy (Co-Cr-Mo) particles *in vitro* has directed osteocytes to undergo apoptosis [383].

Another mechanism suggesting the involvement of osteocytes in osteoclast regulation is through expression of inflammatory cytokines to initiate osteoclast formation. In response to mechanical damage on the surface of the matrix, the osteocyte cellular network induces RANKL-mediated local osteoclast formation and resorption *in vitro* [113]. Additionally osteocytes also produce osteoclast-associated inflammatory cytokines including RANKL, IL-8 and M-CSF in response to Co-Cr-Mo particles *in vitro* [383]. PE particles induce RANKL production by osteocytes *in vitro* [50].

This micro-damage on the matrix surface which elevates osteocyte apoptosis therefore enhancing osteoclast activity around the damaged matrix surface may explain the importance to investigate the effects of wear particles implantation on bone resorption and osteocyte apoptosis. It is possible that the osteocyte response to wear particles can enhance surface bone resorption through similar mechanisms. This thesis investigates the effects of PE particles on osteocyte apoptosis together with local bone surface resorption on murine calvarial bone in PE-induced osteolysis.

1.7. Inhibition of bone resorption

The treatment of peri-prosthetic osteolysis has been improving with the use of novel anti-resorptive drugs as well as osteoanabolic drugs. Since osteoclasts have been shown as the main culprit in promoting bone resorption at the site of bone erosions, osteoclasts are becoming an important target for development of therapeutics to treat peri-prosthetic osteolysis. The treatments include reduction of osteoclast formation and number, inhibition of osteoclast resorption activity and increase of osteoclast apoptosis [384]. This thesis focuses on targeting the signalling pathways important in osteoclast formation and activity *in vitro* as well as using an animal model for *in vivo* studies.

1.7.1. Intercellular signalling pathway inhibitors

Most therapeutic approaches to lessen pathological bone loss have been focusing on the inhibition of osteoclast bone resorption using drugs or inhibitors. Several bone resorption inhibitors currently used are bisphosphonates and denosumab, which target molecules at the upstream signalling pathway of osteoclastogenesis.

1.7.1.1. Bisphosphonates

Bisphosphonates (P-C-P) are analogs of pyrophosphate (P-O-P) but with oxygen (O) replaced by carbon (C) [126]. Bisphosphonates, a class of anti-resorptive drugs, bind strongly to mineral crystals of bone thereby inhibiting osteoclast bone resorption activity [184, 385]. Bisphosphonates are effectively used in the treatment of various bone disorders, including osteoporosis, tumour-associated osteolysis, arthritis [386], Paget's disease and bone tumors [184]. Due to reduction in osteoclast precursors [387], there was a 50% reduction of bone resorption due to bisphosphonate treatment [184]. Despite having benefits of reducing generalized bone loss in osteoporosis, their effectiveness in suppressing focal bone erosions is questionable [388, 389]. There are also concerns about a side effect of upper gastrointestinal distress that the arrest of bone turn over may lead to low quality bone susceptible to fracture with long term use. However further studies have shown several types of bisphosphonates such as alendronate [390, 391], TRK-530 [392] and pamidronate [65, 393] inhibit PE-induced osteolysis in animals with some success *in*

vivo. This is further supported by reduced particle-induced osteolysis with reduced side effects [90, 394].

1.7.1.2. Denosumab

A humanised monoclonal immunoglobulin G (2) antibody [389], denosumab (formally known as AMG162), acts by binding to RANKL like natural OPG, thereby preventing RANKL interaction with its receptor, RANK [395]. This results in decreased osteoclast formation, activity and survival therefore bone resorption [396]. In osteoporotic postmenopausal women, denosumab treatment was shown to increase BMD by reducing bone turnover markers and reducing vertebral, hip and non-vertebral fractures [397]. Denosumab has a potent effect on osteoclast function but needs further studies in particle-induced osteolysis [398].

1.7.2. Intracellular signalling pathway inhibitors

In addition to RANKL/RANK signaling pathway in osteoclastogenesis, NFAT signal transduction pathway has drawn significant attention for its role in osteoclastogenesis. Calcineurin is the key mediator of NFAT signalling pathway. This calcineurin/NFAT signalling pathway is becoming an important target for treatment of pathological bone loss.

A well known inhibitor of calcineurin pathway, an immunosuppressant drug Cyclosporin A (CsA) isolated from the fungus *Hypocladium inflatum gams* that is used to treat allograft rejection and graft versus host disease [136], has been shown to retard RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis *in vitro* [125, 263]. CsA forms a complex with an intracytoplasmic protein cyclophilin, which in turn inhibits intracellular phosphatase calcineurin [136, 399, 400] to exert its immunosuppressive effect. This calcineurin pathway inhibition in turn blocks nuclear localisation of NFATc1 and, therefore, osteoclastogenesis [125, 242, 263]. Tacrolimus (FK506) [400] and 11R-VIVIT peptide (VIVIT) demonstrated similar outcomes [125]. However, due to limited studies on calcineurin/NFAT signalling pathway, the mechanism of action of the calcineurin inhibitors including CsA and FK506, and how it affects a range of mediators downstream is not clear. In this thesis we aim to determine the effects of calcineurin/NFAT inhibition on ITAM signalling pathway downstream to RANKL/RANK signalling in

osteoclastogenesis in the context of inflammation. Calcineurin/NFAT inhibitors FK506 (**Section 1.7.2.1**, Chapter 2), VIVIT (**Section 1.7.2.2**, Chapter 2) and NC100 (**Section 1.7.2.3**, Chapter 3) have been investigated to better understand the role of ITAM-associated molecules in osteoclastogenesis in the context of pathogenic bone loss.

Importantly, NF- κ B and NFATc1 downstream to calcineurin have been shown to be the key signalling molecules in osteoclastogenesis. The development of novel drugs or inhibitors that specifically target NF- κ B and NFATc1 may be specifically useful to treat inflammation-mediated pathological bone loss diseases such as peri-prosthetic osteolysis. In this thesis the effects of NF- κ B inhibitor parthenolide (PAR) (**Section 1.7.2.4**, Chapter 4) and NF- κ B/NFATc1 inhibitor caffeic acid phenethyl ester (CAPE) (**Section 1.7.2.5**, Chapter 5) are being studied in an animal model of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

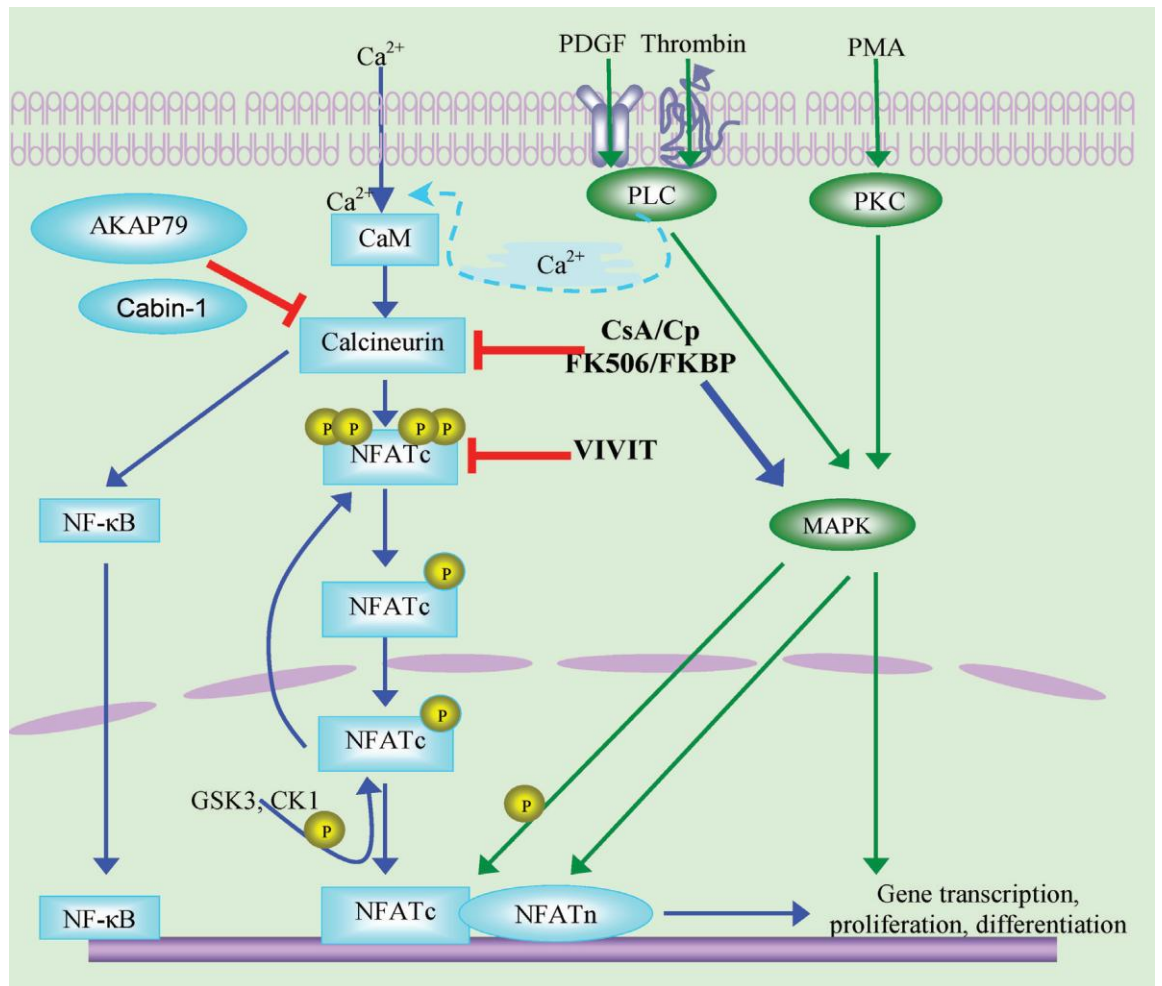


Figure 1.7 Calcineurin/NFAT inhibitors FK506, CsA and VIVIT target different points in the calcineurin pathway in osteoclastogenesis [401].

1.7.2.1. Tacrolimus (FK506)

FK506, a compound isolated from *Streptomyces tsukubaensis* bacteria, is a macrolide immunosuppressant drug used in organ transplantation, particularly liver donor transplantation [400] and atopic dermatitis [402]. FK506 has been identified as an effective treatment of DMARD-resistant or intolerant RA patients [403]. It binds exclusively to a member of intracellular cytosolic immunophilin proteins FK506-binding protein 12 (FKBP12) [136, 404]. The FK506-FKBP12 complex blocks calcineurin, thereby inhibiting immune function of osteoclastogenesis (**Figure 1.7**) [125, 136]. In addition FK506 also blocks T cell-derived pro-inflammatory cytokines such as TNF- α , IL-2 and interferon- γ

(INF- γ) [136] and reduces NFATc1 nuclear localisation [125] thereby inhibiting RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis *in vitro* [402, 404].

Complementary to this, FK506 at 0.1 μ M has been shown to more strongly suppress osteoclastogenesis when compared to lower doses of FK506 (0.001 and 0.01 μ M) [402]. FK506 at 0.1 μ M inhibits human monocyte-osteoclast differentiation more effectively at the late stage of osteoclast differentiation [402]. FK506 also exhibits anabolic effects on the osteoblast *in vivo* and *in vitro* [405]. Together, these reports demonstrate and confirm the significant inhibition of calcineurin/NFAT signalling by FK506 in osteoclastogenesis [136, 242]. Thus far no studies have shown specifically how inhibition of NFATc1 by FK506 modulates ITAM molecules. The current study investigates the modulatory effects of calcineurin/NFAT suppression by FK506 on ITAM-signalling associated molecules in osteoclastogenesis *in vitro*.

1.7.2.2.11R-VIVIT peptide (VIVIT)

Previous studies have shown that a peptide, “SPRIEIT”, encoding an amino acid sequence that has only a low affinity towards calcineurin pathway [406]. Further study has shown that the amino acid sequence, a commercially available calcineurin inhibitory peptide motif VIVIT (MAGPHPVIVITGPHEE) is 25 times more effective than the original SPRIEIT peptide, can selectively and potently inhibit calcineurin-NFAT interaction [399, 401]. The development of VIVIT may avoid side effects associated with treatment with FK506 [401].

As illustrated in **Figure 1.8**, VIVIT has a more specific and selective profile than that of FK506 and CsA in its ability to inhibit the NFAT pathway. This specificity is confirmed by studies using green fluorescent tagged (GFP)-VIVIT where GFP-VIVIT only inhibited NFAT activation but not NF- κ B [399]. The idea of specificity is supported by similar inhibition of calcineurin phosphatase activity by VIVIT which only needs a relatively small amount (10 μ M) compared to CsA [401]. VIVIT interferes selectively with calcineurin-NFAT interaction without affecting calcineurin phosphatase activity [399].

VIVIT affects osteoclast morphology and suppression of β 3 integrin gene expression in murine bone marrow-derived osteoclasts [262]. VIVIT inhibits RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis *in vitro* and reduces the nuclear localisation of NFATc1 [125]. VIVIT

significantly reduced resorption and completely inhibited NFATc1 expression in BMMs and multinucleated cell cultures [407]. In support of this, inactivation of NFATc1 by VIVIT potently impeded the Ti particle-induced TNF- α expression [46] and osteoclastogenesis in RANKL-induced BMM culture [45]. A similar observation was seen in PMMA-induced BMM-derived osteoclast cultures and inactivation of NFATc1 by VIVIT also reduced the resorption area and total number of resorption pits on ivory slices [46]. This further demonstrates the potency of VIVIT to target calcineurin pathway and inhibit osteoclast formation and differentiation. However, the effects of VIVIT treatment on the regulation of ITAM factors have not been investigated. This opens up a new area to develop strategies to inhibit the excessive bone resorption activities by osteoclasts in pathological bone loss. The current study investigates the effects of calcineurin/NFAT inhibition using VIVIT on the ITAM factors *in vitro*.

1.7.2.3. Natural compound 100 (NC100)

The development of natural compounds that can regulate osteoclast formation and bone resorption activity is potentially essential to prevent and treat bone loss diseases. NC100, a new calcineurin-inhibiting natural compound isolated from *Zanthoxylum nitidum* (*Rutaceae*) and *Fagara zanthoxyloides* has not yet been tested in any bone-related studies. It has been shown as antifungal, antihypertensive and antileukemic [408]. NC100 has strong antitumor activity and anti-hypertensive properties [409]. NC100 possibly inhibits tumor cell proliferation via the promotion of T and B cell proliferation and differentiation to enhance NK cell and monocyte-macrophage cell activation [410]. NC100 has also been used as an active component to multidrug resistant tumor cells by inhibiting the growth and promoting the apoptosis of KBV200 cells [411]. In addition, NC100 has been used for toothpaste in China for 30 years. However, the role of NC100 in osteoclastic bone resorption is unknown. Recently, our collaborator Professor Jiake Xu (University of Western Australia) has demonstrated NC100 inhibits murine osteoclast development *in vitro* by reducing NFATc1 expression in cells (unpublished work). In order to understand the molecular mechanisms of NC100 in osteoclast formation, the effects of NC100 on osteoclast formation and activity must be investigated.

1.7.2.4.Parthenolide (PAR)

Recently, several natural and synthetic NF- κ B inhibitors have been studied. They exert their suppressive effects by retarding NF- κ B activities at different sites [251]. PAR, an active ingredient of medicinal plant Feverfew [251, 412, 413], significantly inhibits *in vitro* osteoclastogenesis, particularly during the early stage of it [107]. PAR prevents NF- κ B DNA binding by inhibiting thereby sequestering I κ B kinase in the cytoplasm, as well as by directly modifying p65 protein [107]. Additionally PAR reduces LPS- [107] and PE-induced [86] osteolysis in mice. These findings suggest PAR as a treatment to target the NF- κ B pathway in osteoclast formation for the treatment of human peri-implant bone lysis. The current study investigates whether PAR treatment reduces the PE particle-induced volumetric bone change over time in a murine calvarial model of osteolysis at day 14. Importantly, the current study assesses the effects of PE particles and PAR treatment on surface bone resorption of the calvariae and osteocyte apoptosis.

1.7.2.5.Caffeic acid phenethyl ester (CAPE)

A phenolic antioxidant derived from the propolis of honeybee hives, CAPE, is a potent and specific inhibitor of NFATc1 and NF- κ B [414-416]. This natural compound has antiviral [414] and anti-inflammatory properties [415, 416]. *In vitro* osteoclast assays demonstrate that CAPE inhibits RANKL-induced activation of NF- κ B and NFAT via p65 nuclear translocation resulting in abrogation of osteoclastogenesis and induction of apoptosis [416], suggesting CAPE as a potential candidate for the prevention or treatment of osteolytic and arthritic bone diseases [416].

CAPE at high dose has been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties in a rat air pouch model (10-100mg/ml) [417] and LPS-induced inflammation of cultured human middle ear epithelial cells (HMEECs) (50-200 μ M) [418]. In a rat model of colitis, CAPE at 30mg/kg caused weight loss although it effectively reduced macroscopic colonic damage [419]. Importantly CAPE at low dose, 0.5mg/kg [420] and 1.0mg/kg (unpublished data from Jiake Xu) inhibits local bone loss in an ovariectomized (OVX) murine model of osteolysis. It is therefore important to ascertain the effects of CAPE on locally induced bone loss and systemic effects on bone resorption and GIT.

1.8. Conclusion and study outline

Many studies have shown activated RANKL-RANK signalling involving NF- κ B enhances osteoclastogenesis via calcineurin and NFATc1 expression. Similarly, ITAM-related factors OSCAR, FcR γ , TREM2 and DAP12 have been found to induce NFATc1 expression, thereby, increasing osteoclast formation and activity. However, it is unclear whether inhibition of osteoclastogenesis through calcineurin/NFAT pathway modulates ITAM signaling and subsequent osteoclast numbers and activity.

Inhibition of NF- κ B and NFATc1 has been effective in reducing bone resorption in osteoporotic animal model. However, the effects of this inhibition have not been studied in PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. In addition, the effects on ITAM-associated factors, such as OSCAR, are yet to be fully understood. It is important to elucidate the effects of PE particles on NF- κ B/NFATc1 signalling as well as NF- κ B/NFATc1 inhibition at local and systemic levels.

1.8.1. Hypotheses and aims

Hypothesis 1: Inhibition of NF- κ B and NFATc1 modulates ITAM signalling and osteoclastogenesis in human osteoclast cultures *in vitro*.

Aim 1.0: To investigate the effects of calcineurin/NFAT inhibitors FK506, VIVIT and NC100 on ITAM expression, late stage osteoclast markers and osteoclast resorption in PBMC-derived human osteoclast culture *in vitro*.

Hypothesis 2: Inhibition of NF- κ B suppresses localized and systemic bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Aim 2.0: To establish a novel technique to analyse local surface bone resorption by using μ CT in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Aim 3.0: To investigate the effects of NF- κ B inhibitor PAR on local and systemic bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Aim 4.0: To determine the systemic effects of PE particles and PAR treatment on the soluble OSCAR levels in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Aim 5.0: To investigate effects of PE particles and PAR treatment on osteocytes in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Hypothesis 3: Inhibition of NF- κ B and NFATc1 suppresses localized and systemic bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Aim 6.0: To investigate the effects of NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibitor CAPE on local and systemic bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Aim 7.0: To determine the systemic effects of PE particles and CAPE treatment on soluble OSCAR levels in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

Aim 8.0: To investigate the systemic effects of PE particles and CAPE treatment on GIT in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

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CHAPTER 2. Regulation of ITAM adaptor molecules and their receptors by inhibition of calcineurin-NFAT signalling during late stage osteoclast differentiation

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Chapter summary

Previous studies have shown FK506 and VIVIT inhibited osteoclast differentiation. However the mechanism is not fully understood. Chapter 2 investigated the effects of calcineurin/NFAT inhibitors FK506 and VIVIT on ITAM expression, late stage osteoclast markers and osteoclast resorption in PBMC-derived human osteoclast cultures *in vitro*. It was hypothesized that inhibition of NF- κ B and NFATc1 modulates ITAM signalling and osteoclastogenesis in human osteoclast cultures *in vitro*.

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CHAPTER 3. Molecular mechanisms and therapeutic effects of NC100 on osteoclastic bone resorption and osteoporosis

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Chapter summary

NC100 exhibits anti-cancer or anti-inflammatory effects through its regulation of NF- κ B. But its effects in bone-related studies have not been shown. This is the first study to investigate the effects of NC100 on osteoclastogenesis involving analyses of osteoclast formation and resorption activity on dentine, and mRNA expression of ITAM-related and late stage osteoclast markers, in BMM- and PBMC-derived osteoclast cultures *in vitro*. In addition we investigated the effects of NC100 in a murine model of osteoporosis.

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Molecular mechanisms and therapeutic effects of NC100 on osteoclastic bone resorption and osteoporosis

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3.1.SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: Excessive osteoclast formation/function could result in osteoporotic diseases such as osteoporosis and Paget's disease. Many natural compounds have been shown to mitigate these osteoporotic diseases by regulating osteoclasts, while the effect of NC100 on this cell is unknown. Here, we aimed to investigate the effects of NC100, a bioactive alkaloid isolated from a folk medicine *Zanthoxylum nitidum* (Roxb.) on osteoclast formation and function, and to explore its underlining mechanisms.

EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH: Western blot, real-time PCR and luciferase report gene assays were used to explore the regulative effect of NC100 on osteoclastogenesis-related protein and gene expression. Ovariectomy (OVX) mouse model was established to determine the effects of NC100 on bone loss *in vivo* using micro-CT.

KEY RESULTS: Our results demonstrate that NC100 inhibited RANKL-mediated osteoclastogenesis, blocked NF- κ B and NFATc1 signalling pathway, suppressed osteoclast-specific markers including calcitonin receptor, cathepsin K and TRAP *in vitro*. Interestingly, we found NC100 inhibited the expression of V-ATPase in osteoclast. Furthermore, micro-CT analysis showed that NC100 reversed the decrease BV/TV, Tb.Th, Tb.N and the increase of Tb.Sp in OVX mice.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: Overall, the data demonstrated that NC100 inhibits osteoclast formation and activity, and attenuates OVX-induced bone loss, by blocking NF- κ B and NFATc1 signalling pathway. Therefore, NC100 has therapeutic potential for the treatment of osteoclast-related osteoporotic diseases.

Keywords: NC100, osteoclast, RANKL signalling pathway, bone resorption, osteoporosis

3.2.INTRODUCTION

Osteoclastic bone resorption outstripping bone synthesis results in various bone diseases, such as Paget's disease of the bone, bone metastatic diseases, osteoporosis, arthritis, aseptic bone loosening and non-union of fractures. RANKL signalling pathway has been proposed as a key therapeutic target in osteolytic bone diseases; including osteoporosis, Paget's diseases of bone, rheumatoid arthritis and cancer bone metastasis. Several approaches have been developed to inhibit RANKL function via the disruption of RANKL/RANK interactions. These include RANK-Fc (Feeley et al., 2006), Fc-OPG (Id Boufker et al., 2010; Romas et al., 2002), peptidomimetics (Aoki et al., 2006) and RANKL mutants (Cheng et al., 2009) which have been proposed for the treatment of osteolytic bone diseases. More importantly, anti-RANKL antibodies, Denosumab, a fully human monoclonal antibody to RANKL, have been found to increase bone density and reduce fracture risk.

RANKL associates with RANK to initiate a cascade of the intracellular signalling pathways that involve NF- κ B, MAPK, NFAT, Akt, ionic calcium, and calcium/calmodulin-dependent kinase. The NF- κ B signalling pathways play a key role in osteoclast formation (Franzoso et al., 1997; Iotsova et al., 1997; Xu et al., 2009). RANKL-induced activation of NFATc1 signalling pathway also represents a master switch for regulating terminal differentiation of osteoclasts (Miyazaki et al., 2000). Additionally, co-stimulatory pathway in osteoclasts, the immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motif (ITAM)-dependent pathway involving osteoclast-associated receptor (OSCAR), triggering receptor expressed in myeloid cells (TREM2), Fc receptor common gamma chain (FcR γ) and DNAX-activating protein 12 kDa (DAP12), has also been shown to be important in regulating osteoclastogenesis via RANKL and NFAT (Takayanagi, 2007; Zawawi et al., 2012). In addition, antagonist on TRAF6, a signalling adaptor molecule has shown to be effective (Darnay et al., 2007). Therefore, targeting RANKL signalling pathway is a promising strategy for the treatment of osteoclast-related diseases.

NC100 is a benzophenanthridine alkaloid isolated from *Zanthoxylum Nitidum* (*Rutaceae*) and *Fagara zanthoxyloide* (Cushman et al., 1984). Modern pharmacology studies have shown it has anti-tumor and anti-inflammation properties. NC100 inhibits breast cancer cells migration and invasion by suppressing MMP-9 and MMP-2 and

blocking c-Src/FAK signalling pathway (Pan et al., 2011). It also inhibits renal cancer cell metastasis by suppressing AKT and ERK signalling pathway (Fang et al., 2013; Fang et al., 2014). Interestingly, it was found that the anti-inflammatory activity of NC100 has suppressed LPS-induced TNF- α , IL-1 β , and IL-6 expression by modulating MAPK and NF- κ B pathway in RAW264.7 cells (Wang et al., 2012). However, the role of NC100 in osteoclastic bone resorption is unknown.

In order to understand the molecular mechanisms of NC100 on osteoclast formation, as well as its application in osteoclast-related diseases, we investigated the effect of NC100 on osteoclast both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. We hypothesize that NC100 inhibits osteoclast formation and bone resorption via the modulation of RANKL-induced signalling pathways. Therefore, in this study, we examined the effects of NC100 in RANKL-induced signalling pathways including NFAT, NF- κ B and MAPK, important for osteoclast formation and function.

3.3.METHODS

3.3.1.Reagents

NC100 was purchased from National Institute for control of Pharmaceutical and Biological Products (Beijing, China) and dissolved to 100 μ M in DMSO. Murine monocyte cell line RAW264.7 cells were ordered from The American Type Culture Collection (Rockville, MD, USA). RAW264.7 C4 cells were transfected with a luciferase reporter gene 3 κ B-Luc-SV40 which contains three κ B sites from the interferon gene. P3K cells were produced as previously described (Wang et al., 2003). Alpha modified of Eagles Medium (α -MEM) was purchased from Thermo, Electron (Sydney, Australia) and FBS was purchased from TRACE (Sydney, Australia). P3 κ B-Luc vector was obtained from Promega Corp. (USA) and pNFATc1-TA-Luc vector was obtained from BD Bioscience (MA, USA). The luciferase assay system was obtained from Promega (Sydney, Australia). M-CSF was obtained from R & D Systems (Minneapolis, USA). Recombinant GST-rRANKL protein was expressed and purified as previously described (Xu et al., 2000). For human peripheral blood mononuclear cell (PBMC), cells were cultured with recombinant human M-CSF (Chemicon, CA, USA), Minimum Essential Medium Alpha Medium (α -MEM)

(Invitrogen, Life Technologies, CA, USA) with 10% foetal calf serum (FCS) (Invitrogen, CA, USA), 1% 5µg/mL penicillin-50U/mL streptomycin (Gibco) and 1% 2mM L-glutamine (Invitrogen, CA, USA).

3.3.2. *In vitro* osteoclast cell culture

For bone marrow macrophage (BMM), osteoclast differentiation was modelled *in vitro* by isolating fresh bone marrow cells from C57BL6J mice. These cells were cultured with complete-MEM medium supplemented with 10 ng/ml of M-CSF. The cells were seeded onto a 96-well plate at 8×10^3 BMM cells per well with NC100, in the presence of RANKL (100 ng/ml) for 7 days. The medium was replaced every 2 days. Cells were then fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde (PFA) for 20 minutes at room temperature and washed thrice with $1 \times$ PBS. Tartrate resistant acid phosphatase (TRAP) staining was performed and osteoclast number was counted. TRAP-positive multinucleated cells with more than three nuclei were counted as osteoclasts.

For human PBMC-derived osteoclasts, PBMCs were isolated from whole blood buffy coats obtained from healthy donors from the Australian Red Cross Blood Service (Adelaide, South Australia) based on published methods (Cantley et al., 2011; Zawawi et al., 2012). PBMCs were washed with pre-warmed HANKs balanced salt solution (HBSS, 10mM HEPES, Sigma-Aldrich) and the monocytes isolated by Ficoll (Lymphoprep-SoFidium diatrizoate/polysucrose solution, Axix-Sheld, Oslo Norway) separation. Following final wash, the cell pellet was resuspended in complete medium (α -MEM with 10% FCS, 1% 5µg/mL penicillin-50U/mL streptomycin and 1% 2mM L-glutamine). Cells were resuspended in complete medium at 2×10^6 cells/ml and seeded either into 12mm 48-well trays for mRNA expression analysis and onto sterilised 8mm whale tooth dentine in 96-well tray for pit resorption analysis. Cells were allowed to adhere for 24 hours at 37°C, 5% CO₂ in a humidified atmosphere, before non-adherent cells were removed and replaced with fresh complete medium containing 25ng/mL recombinant human M-CSF. The medium was replaced at days 1, 3 and 5. From day 7, cells were treated with 0.5µM or 1.0µM NC100. Control wells were treated with 0.01% DMSO. Osteoclasts were differentiated by addition of human recombinant RANKL (50ng/mL) (Chemicon, CA, USA) from day 7. Following this, the medium containing treatments was replaced at days

10 and 12. Doses were based on our preliminary data and results from Cell Proliferation Reagent WST-1 (Roche, Mannheim, Germany) from 3 donors after 48-hour treatment with NC100 (data not shown).

3.3.3.Reverse transcription (RT)-PCR

BMM cells were seeded into a 6-well plate at 1×10^5 cells/well. Cells were cultured with RANKL in the presence or absence of 0.1 μM or 0.5 μM NC100 for 7 days. Total RNA was extracted using Trizolin accordance with the manufacturer's protocol. For reverse transcription, single-stranded cDNA was prepared from 2 μg of total RNA using reverse transcriptase with an oligo-dT primer. Each cDNA (1 μl) was subjected to PCR amplification using specific forward and reverse primers. 18sRNA was used as an internal control. The reactions were mixed and microcentrifuged before they were placed in a PCR thermal cycler set for initial denaturation at 94°C for 3 minutes. For the amplification of the primers, forward and reverse primers were used and PCR-amplified for 30 cycles (94°C, 40 seconds; 58°C, 40 seconds; and 72°C, 40 seconds). The final extension was performed at 72°C for 7 minutes, followed by 4°C indefinitely. Specific primers of the following genes were used for PCR amplification: 18sRNA (Forward: ACC ATA AAC GAT GCC GAC T; Reverse: TGT CAA TCC TGT CCG TGT C), 36B4 (Forward: TCA TTG TGG GAG CAG ACA; Reverse: TCC TCC GAC TCT TCC TTT), Calcitonin Receptor (Forward: TGG TTG AGG TTG TGC CCA; Reverse: CTC GTG GGT TTG CCT CAT C), Cathepsin K (Forward: GGG AGA AAA ACC TGA AGC; Reverse: ATT CTG GGG ACT CAG AGC), DC-STAMP (Forward: CTT GCA ACC TAA GGG CAA AG; Reverse: TCA ACA GCT CTG TCG TGA CC), V-ATPase d2 (Forward: GGA TCC GAA TTC ATG CTT GAG ACT GCA GAG; Reverse: GGT CTA GAT TAT AAA ATT GGA ATG TAG CT3), NFATc1 (mouseNFATc1) (Forward: CAA CGC CCT GAC CAC CGA TAG; Reverse: GGC TGC CTT CCG TCT CAT AGT), TRAP (Forward: TGT GGC CAT CTT TAT GCT; Reverse: GTC ATT TCT TTG GGG CTT).

3.3.4.Quantitative real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR)

For BMM, real-time PCR was performed using a 7900HT Fast Real-Time PCR System (Applied Biosystems). Samples were loaded onto a 96-well plate and placed in the

AB17900HT. The thermocycler was set for initial denaturation at 95°C for 5 minutes; 40 cycles of 95°C for 15 seconds; 58°C for 20 seconds; 72°C for 20 seconds; and 72°C for 1 minute before the final extension. The cycle threshold value was determined, and the normalized fold expression of each gene in reference to the housekeeping gene 18sRNA was calculated using the Pfaffl equation on Microsoft® Excel 2003.

For PBMC-derived osteoclasts, RNA was isolated in duplicate at Day 3, 7 and 10 of the culture following addition of 300µL Trizol® (Invitrogen Corporation, Carlsbad, CA, USA) per well based on manufacturer's instructions and as previously described (Cantley et al., 2011; Zawawi et al., 2012). Samples were then DNase treated (Turbo DNA-free, Ambion Inc.). Complementary DNA (cDNA) was prepared by adding 1µg of total RNA with 1mM deoxyribonucleotide triphosphates (dNTP's, Biorline, London, UK) and 250ng random hexamer (Geneworks Pty. Ltd. Adelaide, Australia) and 200Units Superscript® III (Invitrogen) in a Rotor-Gene® 3000, software version 6.0.38 (Corbett Life Science, Mortlake, NSW, Australia) as per manufacturer's instructions.

The expression of the genes of interest was analyzed by quantitative RT-PCR. Amplification was performed using 1µL of the pre-diluted cDNA, 300nM of each forward and reverse primer, Platinum® SYBR® Green qPCR SuperMix-UDG (Invitrogen) and DEPC.H₂O. PCR master mixes were made up for each gene of interest; human acidic ribosomal protein (hARP) (reference control gene) (Franssen et al., 2005), Cathepsin K, NFATc1, OSCAR, FcR γ , TREM2 and DAP12 (designed using Primer3Plus) (Alias et al., 2012; Zawawi et al., 2012). Each sample was prepared in triplicate, with a no RNA RT as a negative control. Samples were placed in the Rotor-Gene™ 3000 and analysed using Rotor-Gene™ Series 1.7 software for the PCR procedure. The endogenous reference gene hARP (Franssen et al., 2005) was used to normalize cycle threshold (Ct) data obtained from the genes investigated. For each sample, a value for Ct was determined, defined as the mean cycle at which the fluorescence curve reached an arbitrary threshold. The values for CathK, NFATc1, OSCAR, FcR γ , TREM2 and DAP12 were compared to those of hARP. The Δ Ct for each sample was then calculated according to the formula Ct target gene - Ct hARP. The relative quantification was calculated in comparative Ct method, $2^{-\Delta\Delta Ct}$ and plotted in the graphs (Livak et al., 2001; Zawawi et al., 2012).

3.3.5.NF- κ B luciferase reporter gene assay

The transcriptional activity of nuclear factor kappa-light-chain-enhancer of activated B cells was examined by transfecting RAW264.7 cells with a luciferase reporter gene p-NF- κ B-TA-Luc (Wang et al., 2003) at 1×10^5 cells/well in 24-well plates, and pre-treated with NC100 for 1 hour. After 8-hour stimulation with 100 ng/ml mouse RANKL, cells were immediately washed twice in cold $1 \times$ PBS and lysis buffer (100 μ l) added to each well. Following harvest, RAW264.7 cell luciferase activity was measured using the Promega Luciferase Assay System according to the manufacturer's instructions (Promega, Sydney, Australia).

3.3.6.NFAT luciferase reporter gene assay

The transcriptional activity of nuclear factor of activated T-cells cytoplasmic 1 (NFATc1) was monitored using the NFATc1 luciferase reporter gene. Using the diethylaminoethyl-dextran method, RAW264.7 cells were temporarily transfected with 0.457 μ g/ μ l of pNFATc1-TA-Luc vector in dulbecco's modified eagle medium (DMEM)/4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid medium. After transfection, cells were placed in a 24-well plate, cultured with complete DMEM for 18~24 hours and pre-treated with NC100 for 1 hour. Following stimulation with 100 ng/ml mouse RANKL for about 24~36 hours, cells were harvested and firefly luciferase activity was measured using the Promega Luciferase Assay System.

3.3.7.Bone resorption pit assay

For BMM-derived osteoclasts, BMM cells were isolated from the long bone of wild type mice and cultured in α -MEM supplemented with RANKL (100 ng/ml) and MCSF (10 ng/ml), in a 6-well plate for 3 days. Once mature osteoclasts formed, cells were trypsinized, pelleted and resuspended. Osteoclasts (1×10^3 cells/ml) were seeded onto ~0.75 mm thick bovine bone slices with complete α -MEM culture medium, RANKL (100 ng/ml) and MCSF (10 ng/ml) in a 96-well plate for 12 hours. NC100 was then added to the culture. Following 48 hours incubation at 37°C, the cells were fixed with 4% PFA and stained with the osteoclast marker TRAP. TRAP-positive cells with three or more nuclei were counted under a light microscope. The bone slices were gently brushed and sonicated

to remove the extraneous cells. The resorption pits were examined using a Philips XL30 scanning electron microscope and the percentage resorbed surface area quantified using the Scion Image software (Scion Cooperation, National Institutes of Health) (Yip et al., 2006).

3.3.8. Dentine resorption pit formation analysis

For PBMC-derived osteoclasts, after 10 days with RANKL, adherent cells were detached from dentine by addition of 0.1% v/v Trypsin in PBS. The dentine was then viewed under a scanning electron microscope (SEM) (Phillips XL20 SEM, Adelaide Microscopy) and three images from three different areas per dentine piece were taken at 150× magnification. The images were then traced and filled in Adobe Photoshop Elements 7 (2008). ImageJ (Version 1.36b, National Institutes of Health, USA) was used to calculate the area of bone resorption as a percentage of the total area.

3.3.9. Western blot assay

Freshly isolated BMM cells were cultured in a 6-well collagen-coated plate. BMMs were pre-treated with different doses of NC100 (0.5 μM or 1 μM) for 1 hour, then stimulated with RANKL (at 0, 5, 10, 20, 30, 60 min or 0, 10, 20, 30, 60, 120 min) in a short-time western blot assay. BMMs were pre-treated with different doses of NC100 (0.5 μM or 1 μM) for 1 hour, then stimulated with RANKL (at 0, 4, 24, 72, 120, 168 hours) in a long-time western blot assay. Cells were then lysed for protein extraction. SDS-PAGE electrophoresis was performed. Following protein transfer to a nitrocellulose membrane, the membrane was blocked in a 5% dry skim milk with TBS-Tween solution for at least one hour. After washing with TBS-Tween, antibodies such as IKB α , D2, NFAT were used to detect RANKL-induced signal pathway. The immunoreactivity was visualized using Enhanced Chemiluminescence (ECL) reagents.

3.3.10. Animal Procedures

3.3.10.1. Animal housing and handling

Animals were housed in plastic cages with hay shavings in a temperature-regulated room (22 °C) under controlled lighting conditions (12 hours light and 12 hours dark). Food and water were provided ad libitum for mice. C57BL6J mice handling procedures were carried out in accordance with the protocols approved by The University of Western Australia Animal Ethics Committee and The Guangxi Medical University Ethics Committee (SCXK - (军) 2012-0004, Beijing, China).

3.3.10.2. Ovariectomy (OVX) animal model

Thirty female C57BL6J mice aged 6-8 weeks were randomly assigned into five groups of 6. The mice were anesthetized with 10% chloral hydrate solution. Small dorsal incisions were made, and each ovary, together with its capsule and part of the oviduct, was removed. A dissecting microscope was used to locate these organs. Each incision was closed by one stitch performed with a 5-0 synthetic absorbable suture. One week after surgery, mice were given an intraperitoneal (i.p.) injection of two doses of NC100 in DMSO (3 mg/kg for group 1; 6 mg/kg for group 2,) every 2 days for 6 weeks. The negative control group received 10% DMSO (mixed with sterile water) as a placebo. At 6 weeks post-treatment (7 weeks post-OVX), the mice were euthanized. The tibias were removed, fixed in 4% paraformaldehyde (PFA) for about 20-24 hours and radiologically analysed using micro-CT.

3.3.11. Micro-CT analysis

The tibias were then washed thrice with 1×PBS. Bones were scanned at 6.1 μm resolutions in a Skyscan 1174 microCT instrument (Skyscan, Aartselaar, Belgium). The source voltage used was 50 kV, the current was 800 μA, and the filter was 0.5 mm aluminum. Scans were reconstructed using NRecon software (cone beam reconstruction algorithm, Skyscan) with a constant global threshold. Reconstructed samples were then analyzed using CTAn software (Skyscan) with trabecular and cortical regions of interest determined with reference to the bottom of the growth plate. Trabecular bones were analyzed within a volume of slices spanning a 1 mm distance, starting 0.5 mm from the bottom of the growth plate. The trabecular regions of interest were outlined by interpolation of operator-drawn

regions exclusively representing trabecular bones. Regions of interest were binarized using constant threshold values and analyzed using CTAn software.

3.3.12. Statistical analysis

All data presented in this thesis are representative of one of three independent experiments, and results are presented as mean \pm SEM and resorption data were calculated as mean \pm standard error (S.E) from 3 donors in the PBMC-derived osteoclasts. Statistical analyses included paired or unpaired Student's t-tests using Microsoft Office 2003. A *p*-value of <0.05 was set as statistically significant.

3.4. RESULTS

3.4.1. The effect of NC100 on osteoclastogenesis

Osteoclasts derived from BMM cell culture were stained for TRAP activity. Consistent with previous data, osteoclast formation decreased when treated with high concentration of NC100. The total number of multinucleated TRAP-positive cells was significantly lower in 0.03125 μ M compared to 1 μ M of NC100 (Figure 3.1 B). No osteoclast was observed in culture treated with 0.5 μ M and 1.0 μ M NC100 (Figure 3.1 C). These results suggest that NC100 dose-dependently inhibits RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis in BMM cells.

3.4.2. The effect of NC100 on RANKL-induced expression of osteoclast genes

Expression of calcitonin receptor, cathepsin K and TRAP decreased in a dose-dependent manner during RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis in the BMM-derived osteoclasts (Figure 3.2). Additionally, NC100 also suppressed osteoclast fusion (V-ATPase d2) and Cathepsin K at protein (Figure 3.2) and gene (Figure 3.3) levels. Together, these data show that NC100 suppresses osteoclast gene expression during RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis.

In order to determine the temporal effects of drug treatments, mRNA expression of gene of interest was assessed in the PBMC-derived osteoclasts at days 3, 7 and 10. Figure 3.4 shows the data obtained after 10 days with 0.1 μ M and 1.0 μ M NC100 treatments. Cathepsin K expression, indicating the presence of mature osteoclasts (Shen et al., 2006),

was significantly reduced in response to NC100 treatments at day 10. NC100 treatments significantly reduced OSCAR, FcR γ , TREM2 and DAP12 expression at day 10 when compared to the controls. While NFATc1 expression was significantly reduced by 1.0 μ M NC100, this was not statistically significant in culture treated with 0.1 μ M NC100.

3.4.3. The effect of NC100 on osteoclastic bone resorption

NC100 significantly attenuated osteoclastic bone resorption area in murine BMM cell culture (Figure 3.5 A) and in human osteoclast culture derived from PBMCs (Figure 3.5 B). Noticeably, treatment with NC100 showed smaller and shallower resorption pits compared to untreated control. These data indicated that NC100 suppressed acquisition of osteoclast function, consistent with its effect on the suppression of osteoclastogenesis and gene expression.

3.4.4. Effects of NC100 on RANKL-induced NF- κ B activation and I κ B α degradation

Data from RAW264.7 cells transfected with the 3 κ B-Luc-SV40 reporter gene demonstrated that NC100 suppressed RANKL-induced NF- κ B activation at 0.5 μ M and 1 μ M in a dose-dependent fashion and the inhibition was statistically significant (Figure 3.6 A). To further evaluate whether NC100 was involved in NF- κ B activation, we tested the effect of NC100 on I κ B α degradation by RANKL stimulation in RAW264.7 cells and BMMs (Figure 3.6). The results showed that NC100 has little effect on RANKL-induced degradation of I κ B α .

3.4.5. NC100 suppresses RANKL-induced NFAT activation and protein expression

NC100 suppressed RANKL-induced NFAT activation in a dose dependent manner (Figure 3.7 A). In addition, Figure 3.7 B indicated that NC100 inhibited osteoclast formation by suppressing RANKL-induced NFATc1 signalling pathway in a dose-dependent manner.

In the absence of NC100, the highest expression of both NFATc1 and D2 protein was found at 120 min. The NFATc1 and D2 expression was low at all time points in the presence of NC100 (Figure 3.7 C). Together these showed NC100 inhibits NFATc1 and D2 expression throughout RANKL-induced osteoclast-forming time course.

3.4.6. NC100 protects OVX-induced bone loss in mice

An ovariectomized mouse model (OVX) of postmenopausal bone loss was used to examine the effects of NC100 on osteolysis *in vivo* for 7 weeks. Quantitative micro-CT analysis of mouse tibias showed that treatment with NC100 inhibited the OVX-induced reduction of bone volume, trabecular thickness and trabecular number of trabecular bone (Figure 3.8). Furthermore, OVX-induced increase of trabecular separation was also reduced. Overall, it showed that NC100 inhibits OVX-induced bone loss in mice.

3.5. DISCUSSION

Current treatments for osteoporosis including bisphosphonates, selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERMs) and hormone treatment show negative effects (Lippuner, 2012; Putnam et al., 2007). Thus, development of new osteoporosis drug is urgent. Natural compounds such as mangiferin, naringin and NC100 regulate NF- κ B and exhibit anti-cancer or anti-inflammatory activities (Del Poeta et al., 1999; Garcia et al., 2002; Prado et al., 2004; Sanchez et al., 2000). Naringin protects retinoic acid-induced osteoporosis (Wei et al., 2007). Furthermore, parthenolide, a natural product from feverfew, inhibits LPS-induced osteolysis and bone resorption (Yip et al., 2004). Recently, chemical composition of NC100 has been analyzed, but its pharmacological mechanism on bone and the role of NC100 in osteoclastogenesis are unknown. In this study, for the first time, we show NC100 suppresses gene expression of NFAT, NF- κ B and osteoclast markers including calcitonin receptor, cathepsin K, TRAP and V-ATPase d2. These results suggest that NC100 targets osteoclasts and might have therapeutic potential for the treatment of osteoclast-related bone diseases including osteoporosis, Paget's disease and cancer metastasis to bone.

Osteoclastogenic factors including RANKL, TNF- α and interleukin-1 could contribute to osteoclastogenesis. A recent study has found hematopoietic precursors lacking RANKL, RANK or TRAF6 can become osteoclasts *in vitro* when co-stimulated with TNF- α and TGF- β , suggesting a RANKL-RANK-TRAF6 independent axis for osteoclastogenesis (Kim et al., 2005). The engagement of RANKL-RANK-TRAF6 will lead to activation of downstream signalling pathways including NF- κ B, NFAT, and MAPK (Boyle et al., 2003). To date, there has been no report on the effects of NC100 on the RANKL-RANK-

TRAF6 signalling pathway. In this study, RAW264.7 cells, BMM cells and human PBMCs were used to define the direct role of NC100 on RANKL-induced activation of NF- κ B, NFAT, and MAPK in osteoclastogenesis and we show NC100 inhibits RANKL-induced NFAT protein expression and activation.

NFAT has been demonstrated as a significant transcriptional factor in osteoclasts. NFATc1 induces the differentiation of osteoclast precursor cells into TRAP-positive multinucleated osteoclast-like cells (Ikeda et al., 2004). Calcineurin is the key mediator of NFAT signalling pathways. Cyclosporine A, FK506 and 11R-VIVIT peptide inhibit the activity of calcineurin. Cyclosporine A and FK506 suppress bone marrow-derived osteoclastogenesis through the induction of apoptosis (Igarashi et al., 2004) and RANKL-induced differentiation in RAW264.7 cells (Hirota et al., 2004). Calcineurin-NFAT signalling has been inhibited by FK506 and 11R-VIVIT peptide in PBMC-derived osteoclast culture (Zawawi et al., 2012). It will be interesting to determine the effects of NC100 on NFAT/calcineurin pathways in great detail. While our preliminary result suggested that NC100 has little effect on calcineurin protein expression in a short time course (data not shown), we reported that NC100 has significantly reduced the expression of ITAM-related molecules OSCAR, TREM2, FcR γ and DAP12 at the upstream of NFAT/calcineurin pathway, during late stage osteoclast differentiation.

In addition to the role of NFAT signalling in osteoclasts, other studies have found that inhibition of RANKL-induced activation of NF- κ B is also effective for the treatment of osteolysis (Xu et al., 2009). Over the past several years, our laboratory has identified several natural compounds that have potential effects on the inhibition of osteoclast formation, bone resorption and RANKL-induced NF- κ B activation. These include parthenolide (Yip et al., 2004) and caffeic acid phenethyl ester (Ang et al., 2009). In this study, we have found that NC100 significantly modulates NF- κ B activity. This effect could contribute to the inhibitory effect of NC100 in osteoclasts. Taken together, these data provide a mechanistic explanation for the inhibitory effects of NC100 on osteoclast formation and bone resorption.

To date, our knowledge regarding the role of NC100 in cell signalling is very limited. Only recently, NC100 has been found to inhibit phosphorylation of c-Src, FAK, MAPKs, and activation of RhoA, Rac1 and AP-1 transcriptional activity induced by PDGF in breast

cancer cells (Pan et al., 2011). However, we have found that NC100 has little effect on RANKL-induced C-Src phosphorylation. Other studies have shown that NC100 induces the activation of the caspase-dependent pathway in MG63, an osteosarcoma cell line (Ang et al., 2011). It remains to be determined whether NC100 could impact these signalling pathways, which also contribute to osteoclast formation and bone resorption.

More importantly, we have yet to define the molecular target of NC100 in osteoclasts. To this end, we have attempted to use protein binding and pull down assays combined with proteomics analysis to identify NC100 binding partners. Preliminary results indicate that NC100 binds to several mitochondrial-related proteins; including ATP5 α ATP synthase α subunit, aldehyde dehydrogenase and NADH dehydrogenase iron-sulphur protein 2 (data not shown). However, further studies are required to confirm these initial findings. Dissecting the mechanism of action of NC100 at both molecular and cellular level in osteoclasts will provide very important information for its use in osteoporosis treatment.

The *in vitro* inhibition of osteoclastogenesis and bone resorption by NC100 also correlates to its *in vivo* effect of protecting osteolytic conditions in an OVX mouse model. These results suggest that NC100 might have therapeutic potential for the treatment of osteoclast-related bone diseases; including osteoporosis, Paget's disease of bone and cancer metastasis to bone, by targeting osteoclasts. However, the role of NC100 in osteoblast differentiation and mineralization is unknown. The maintenance of dynamic balancing of the bone involves both bone resorption by osteoclasts and bone synthesis by osteoblasts (Tomoyasu et al., 1998). The bone loss related diseases are not only associated with osteoclasts but also with osteoblasts. Thus, it will be interesting to test the effects of NC100 on the osteoblastic lineage in our future experiments. Similarly, since the effects of NC100 in other local bone cells are unknown, it remains to be seen how NC100 affects these cells; including osteocytes, and endothelial cells that might have contributed to the bone mineral density *in vivo* via bone remodelling processes.

Collectively, this study has shown that NC100 plays an essential role in RANKL-induced osteoclast differentiation and bone resorption. Defining the precise target of NC100 in signalling for osteoclast differentiation and function will require further investigation of the downstream RANKL-induced signalling pathways in osteoclasts.

Dissecting the mechanism of action of NC100 at the molecular and cellular level will provide very important information for their potential use in the treatment of osteoporosis.

3.6.ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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3.8.FIGURES

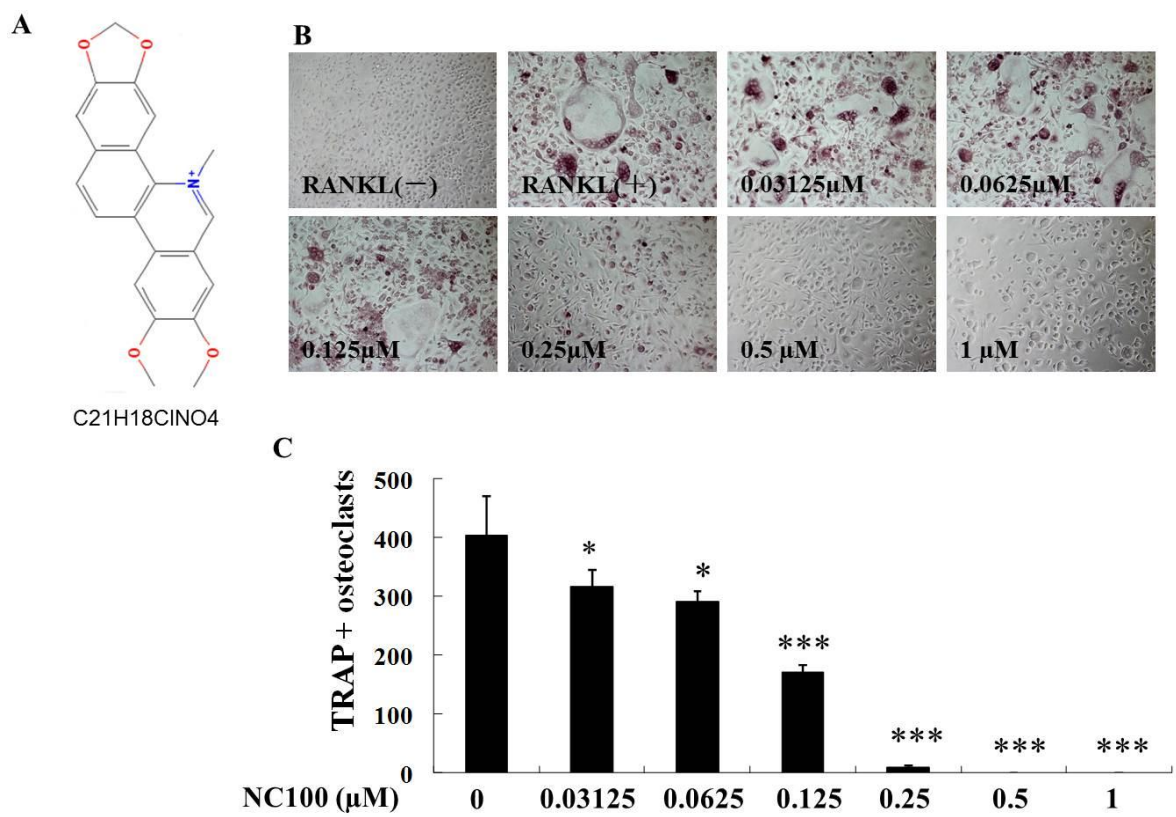


Fig. 3.1. NC100 inhibits RANKL-induced osteoclast formation.

A: Chemical structure of NC100 (PubChem substance ID 12013221). B: BMM cells were cultured in the presence of M-CSF and RANKL (100 ng/ml) with or without varying dose of NC100 for 5 days and stained for TRAP expression. Light microscope images depicting the dose-dependent effect of NC100 on RANKL-induced osteoclastogenesis. C: TRAP-positive multinuclear cells containing three or more nuclei were scored (* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$ vs. control).

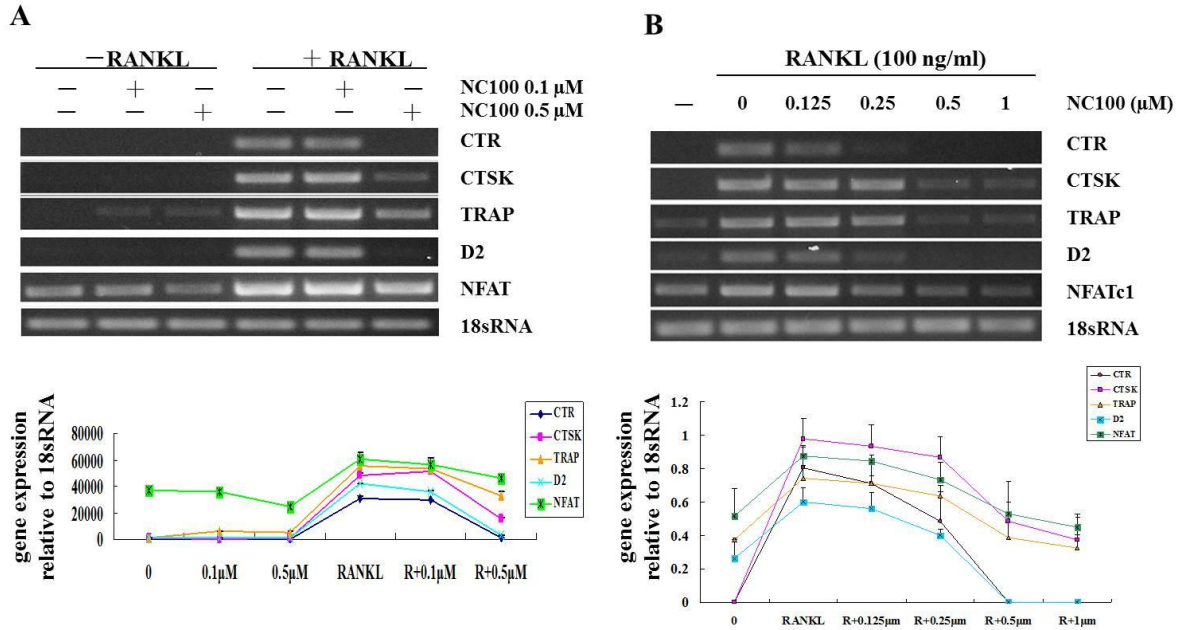


Fig. 3.2. Suppression of RANKL-induced gene expression by NC100.

A: BMMs were cultured with M-CSF and 100 ng/ml of RANKL in the presence or absence of 0.1 μ M or 0.5 μ M NC100 for 7 days. B: BMMs were seeded in the presence and absence of 100 ng/ml of RANKL with different dose of NC100 (0, 0.125, 0.25, 0.5 and 1 μ M) for 7 days. The mRNA expression levels of the indicated genes were determined by RT-PCR.

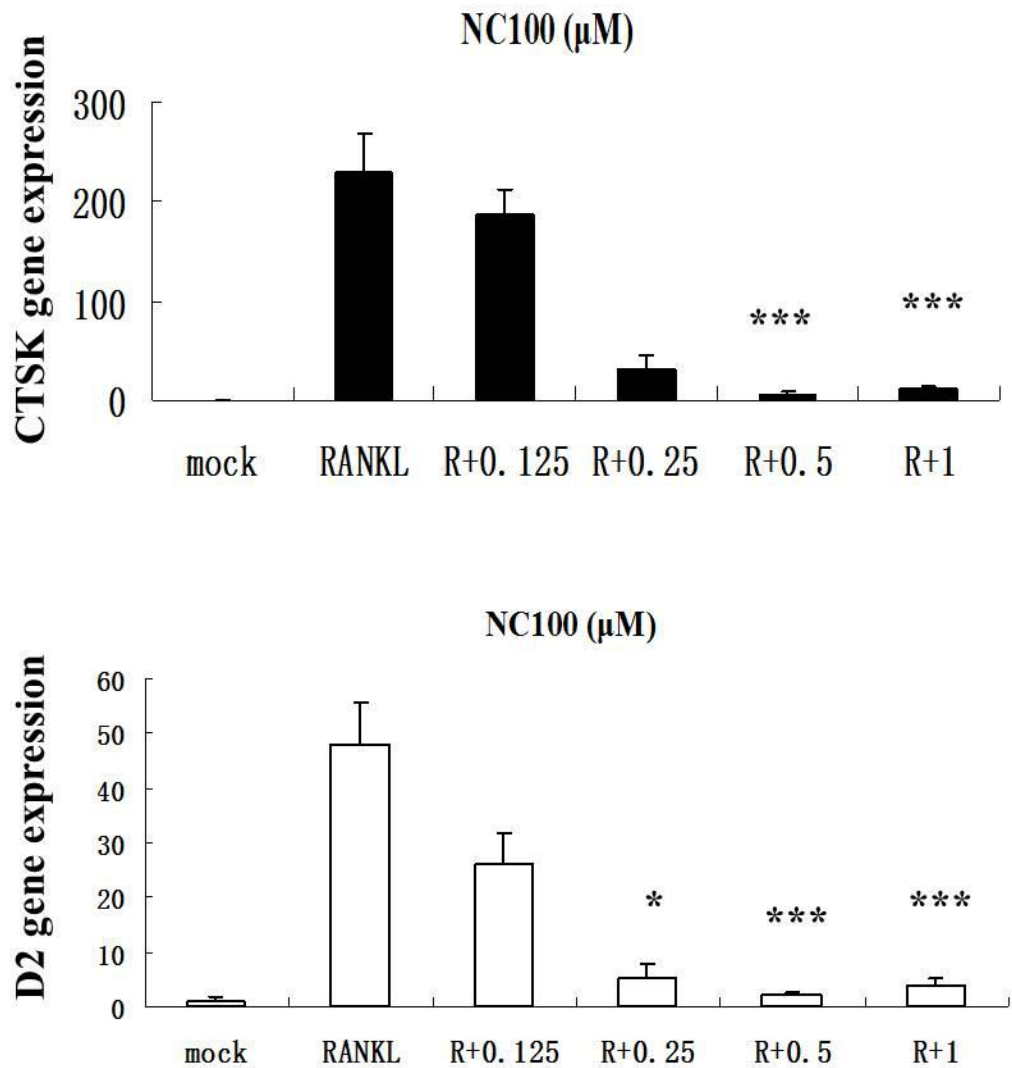


Fig. 3.3. NC100 dose-dependently affects RANKL-induced gene expression.

BMMs were seeded onto 6-well plates in the presence and absence of RANKL (100 ng/ml) with NC100 (0, 0.125 μM , 0.25 μM , 0.5 μM and 1 μM) for 7 days. The mRNA expression levels of the indicated genes were determined by quantitative real-time PCR. The relative amount of CTSK and V-ATPase d2 mRNA were treated with different doses of NC100 (* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$ vs. control group).

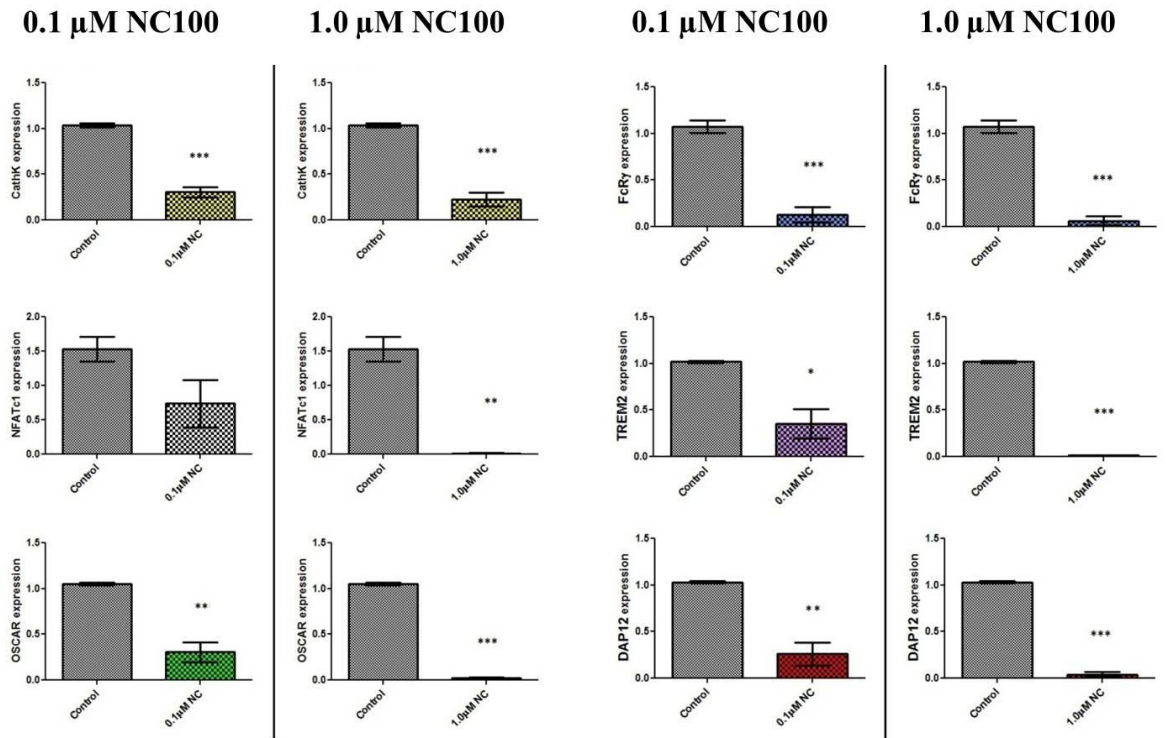


Fig. 3.4. Gene expression as assessed by quantitative real-time RT-PCR in 0.1 μM and 1.0 μM NC100 treatment, compared to control (no treatment).

The $2^{-\Delta\Delta Ct}$ values of the expression of genes of interest relative to hARP as the reference gene are graphed and represented by mean \pm S.E (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$ vs. control).

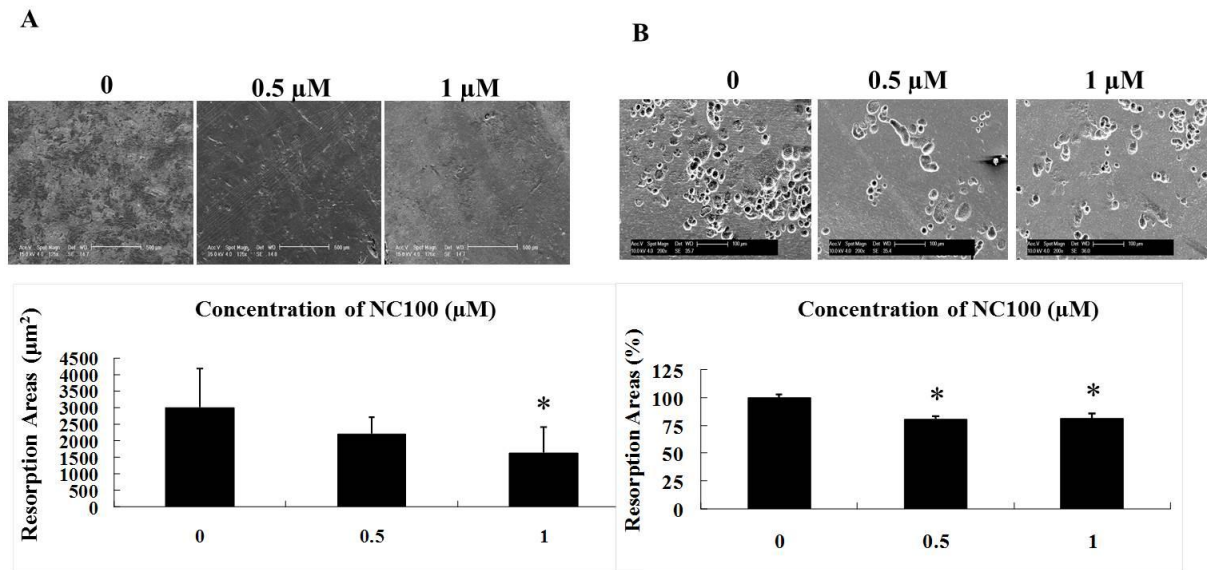


Fig. 3.5. NC100 reduces bone resorption.

A: Equal number of osteoclast-like cells derived from BMM cells was seeded onto bone slices and permitted to attach before exposure to NC100 at different doses (0, 0.5 and 1 μM) for 48 hours. B: Equal number of osteoclast-like cells derived from donor peripheral blood was seeded onto dentine bone slices and permitted to attach before exposure to NC100 at different doses (0, 0.5 and 1 μM) for 10 days. Representative scanning electron microscope images of bone resorption pits are shown. The summed areas of resorption pits were measured under scanning electron microscope and are presented graphically normalized with same numbers of osteoclasts (*p value < 0.05).

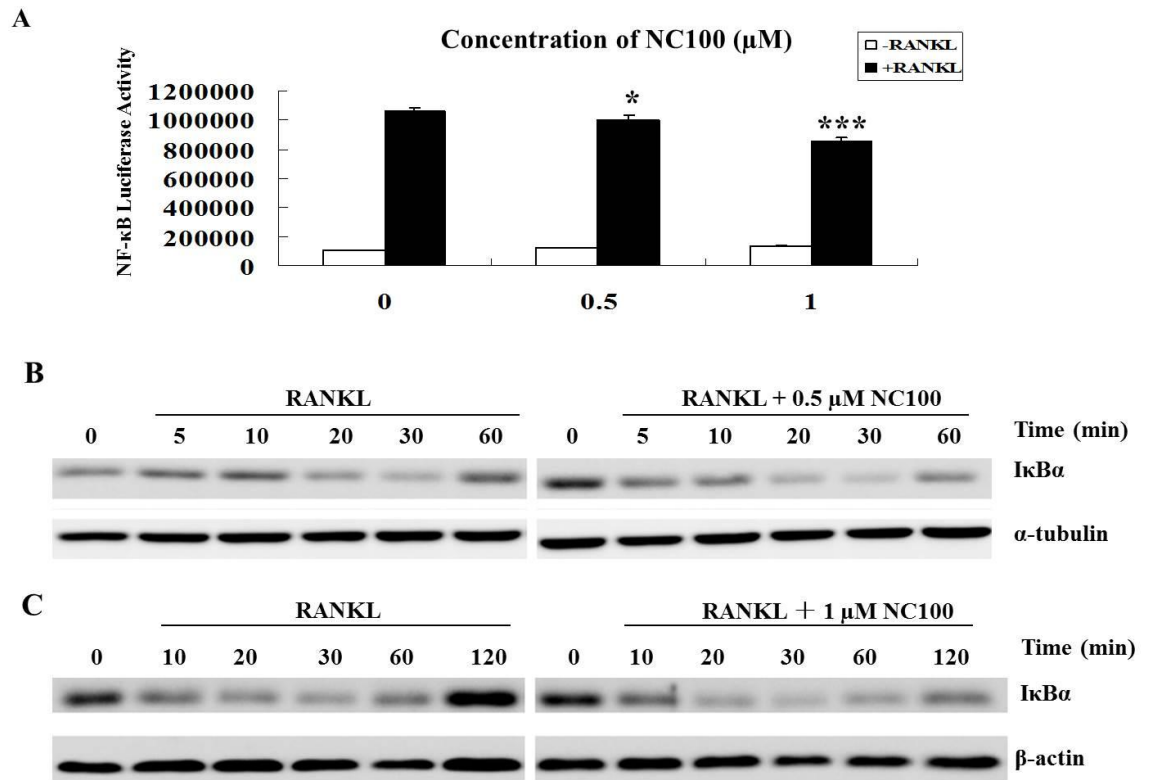


Fig. 3.6. The effect of NC100 on the degradation of IκB α by RANKL.

A: Cells were treated with medium alone, RANKL (100 ng/ml), NC100 at 0.5 μM and 1 μM in the presence or absence of RANKL. RAW264.7 cells transfected with the 3kB-Luc-SV40 reporter gene were pre-incubated with varying doses of NC100. B: BMMs were pre-treated with different doses of NC100 for 1 hour, and then stimulated with RANKL for 30 minutes. Proteins from whole cell extracts were separated and transferred to membranes, which were blocked and probed with antibody to IκB α and β -actin. B and C: BMMs were pretreated with NC100 (0.5 μM or 1 μM) for 1 hour, and then stimulated with RANKL for the indicated times. Cell lysates were prepared and subjected to western blotting with IκB α antibody. The α -tubulin or β -actin blot is shown as loading control (* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$ vs. control).

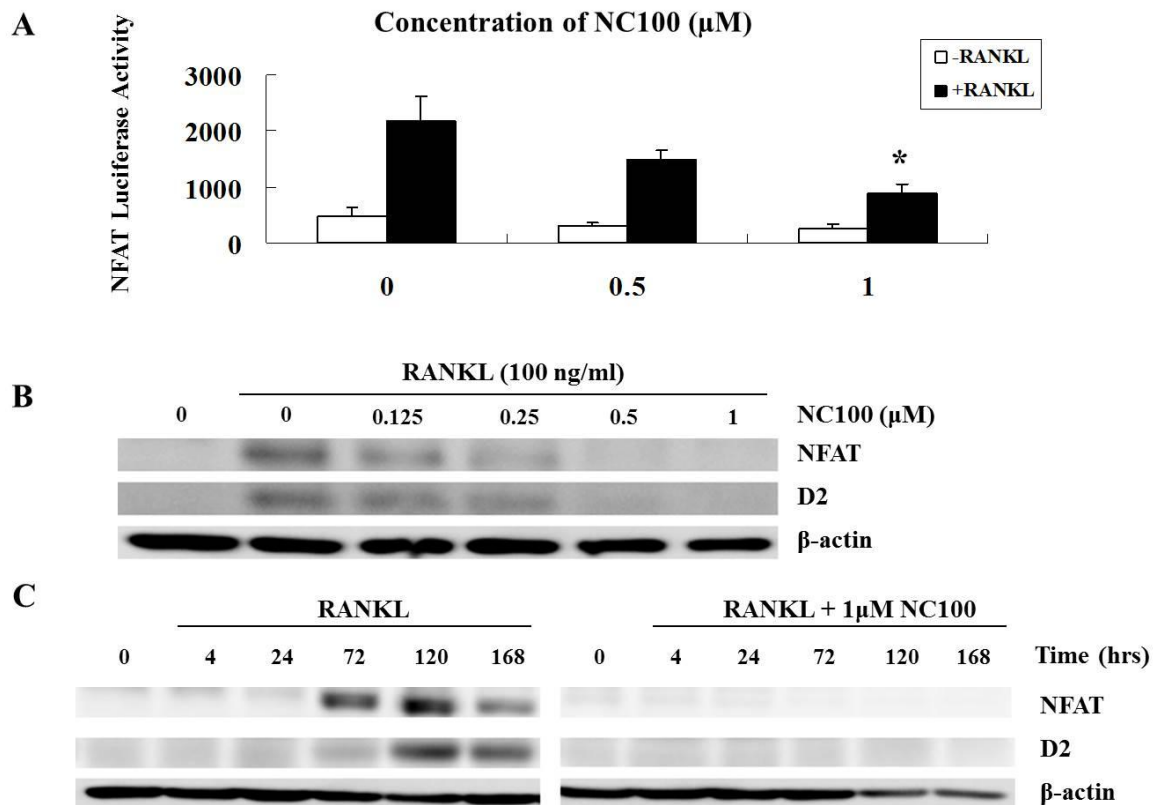


Fig. 3.7. NC100 inhibits RANKL-induced NFAT expression.

A: Cells were treated with medium alone, RANKL (100 ng/ml), NC100 at 0.5 μM and 1 μM in the presence or absence of RANKL. RAW264.7 cells were transiently transfected with pNFAT-TA-Luc vector. (* $p < 0.05$ vs. control) B: BMMs were incubated with different doses of NC100 for 1 hour and treated with 100 ng/ml RANKL for 7 days. C: BMMs were incubated with 1 μM NC100 for 1 hour and treated with RANKL for the indicated times. Quantitative Western Blot analysis of NFAT and D2 was performed, β -actin was used as a control.

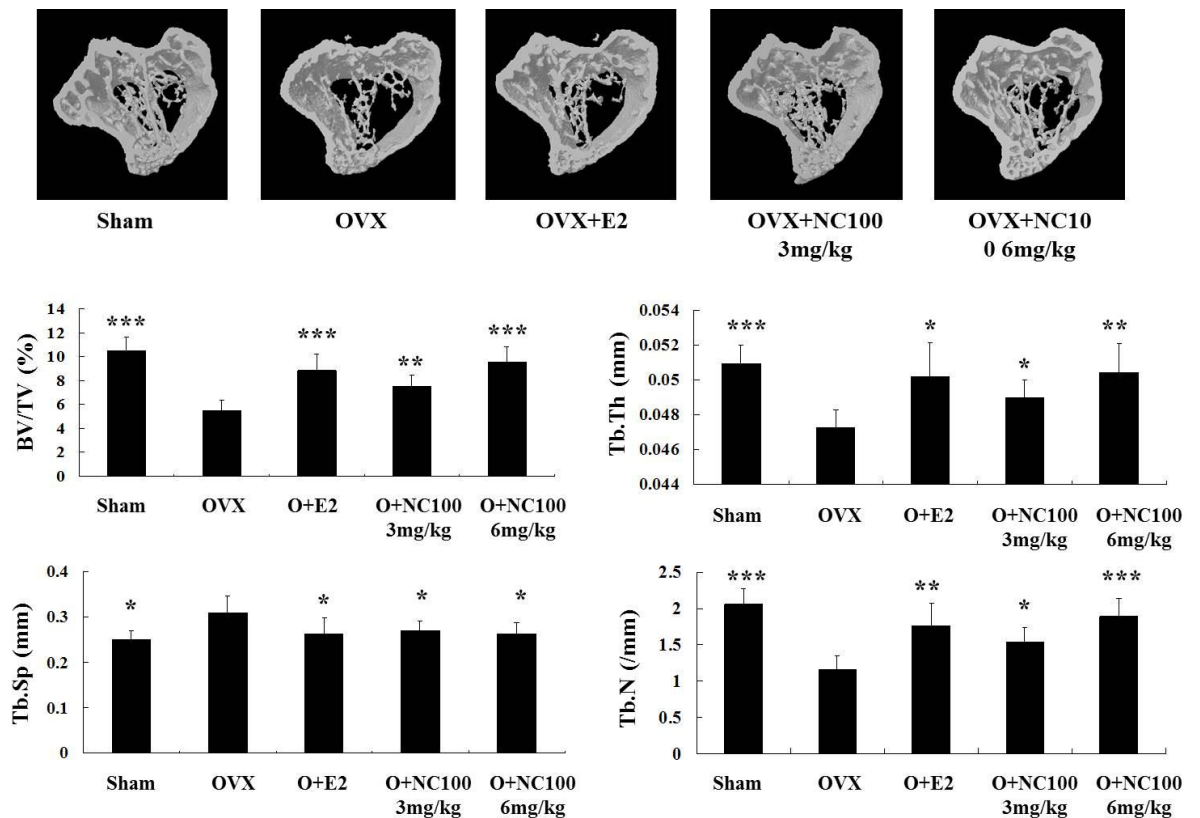


Fig. 3.8. NC100 prevented bone loss in OVX C57BL6J mice.

Trabecular bone microarchitecture by 3D micro-CT analysis in the proximal tibial metaphysis. Trabecular bone was analysed by micro-CT in sham-operated or ovariectomized mice after vehicle or NC100 treatment (3 and 6 mg/kg). Bone volume/tissue volume (BV/TV), trabecular space (Tb. Sp), trabecular thick (Tb. Th) and trabecular number (Tb. N). Values are means \pm SE from 6 mice per group (* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$ and *** $p < 0.001$ vs. control).

CHAPTER 4. Parthenolide inhibits osteocyte apoptosis and osteoclastic bone surface resorption induced by polyethylene particles in a murine calvarial model of peri-implant osteolysis

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Chapter summary

In Chapter 4 the study aimed to investigate the effects of NF- κ B inhibitor PAR on local and systemic bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. We established a novel method to numerically analyse localised bone surface resorption from the μ CT-derived images. Additionally the study determined the effects of PE particles and PAR treatment on the soluble OSCAR levels and osteocytes to better understand this pathology.

Statement of Authorship

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Parthenolide inhibits osteocyte apoptosis and osteoclastic bone surface resorption induced by polyethylene particles in a murine calvarial model of peri-implant osteolysis

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Running title: Parthenolide suppresses calvarial surface resorption

4.1.ABSTRACT

The study aims to determine the effects of parthenolide (PAR) on bone volume (BV) and bone surface resorption (as assessed by live-animal μ CT) and osteocyte death (as assessed by histology) on polyethylene (PE) particle-induced calvarial osteolysis in mice. Baseline μ CT scans were conducted 7 days pre-implantation of 2×10^8 PE particles/mL over the calvariae (day 0). PAR at 1mg/kg/day was subcutaneously injected on days 0, 4, 7 and 10. At day 14, BV and surface resorption was analyzed with μ CT. Calvarial tissue was processed for histomorphometric osteocyte evaluation. Serum was analyzed for type-1 carboxy-terminal collagen crosslinks (CTX-1) and osteoclast associated receptor (OSCAR) levels by ELISA. PE significantly decreased BV ($p=0.0368$), increased surface bone resorption area ($p=0.0022$) and increased osteocyte death ($p<0.0001$). Interestingly, PAR significantly reduced the resorption surface area in the PE-calvariae ($p=0.0022$), but it did not affect BV, serum CTX-1 or OSCAR levels. PAR also significantly reduced osteocyte death ($p<0.0001$). The ability of PAR to inhibit PE-induced surface bone erosion is important as it may better reflect the *in vivo* situation, where resorption occurs on the surface at the bone-implant interface and that may be related to the role of osteocytes in this pathology.

Keywords: Parthenolide; bone resorption; wear particles; calvarial model; osteolysis

4.2.INTRODUCTION

Total hip replacement (THR) is a highly successful procedure but these implants can fail prematurely for several reasons, of which the most common is osteolysis.¹ Prosthetic wear particles liberated from the implant surface over time are phagocytosed by macrophages. This leads to a chronic inflammatory response characterized by production of pro-inflammatory mediators, enhanced recruitment and activation of bone-resorbing osteoclasts¹ and suppression of bone formation by the osteoblasts resulting in bone loss.² Levels of receptor activator of nuclear factor κ B ligand (RANKL) relative to its inhibitor osteoprotegerin are increased in peri-implant tissues correlating with increased osteoclast resorption activity *ex vivo*.³ RANKL binds to its receptor, RANK to activate critical osteoclast intracellular factors nuclear factor kappa B (NF- κ B) and nuclear factor of activated T-cells, cytoplasmic calcineurin-dependent-1 (NFATc1). NFATc1 is induced by particles *in vitro* and NFATc1 is crucial to induction of genes required and crucial for osteoclast motility, morphology and activity.⁴⁻⁶

The effect of particles such as polyethylene (PE) particles on osteoblasts and osteocytes may also contribute to osteolysis. Osteocytes regulate osteoclast activity through several mechanisms, including microdamage to the bone and induction of osteocyte apoptosis.⁷ In response to mechanical damage on the surface of the matrix, the osteocyte cellular network induces RANKL-mediated local osteoclastic formation and resorption *in vitro*.⁸ It is possible the osteocyte response to wear particles can enhance surface bone resorption through similar mechanisms. PE particles promote osteoblast maturation to osteocytes and induce RANKL production by osteocytes.² Osteocytes undergo apoptosis and produce inflammatory cytokines in response to cobalt-chromium-molybdenum alloy (Co-Cr-Mo) particles *in vitro*.⁹ Osteocyte apoptosis generates one or more signals that increase bone loss and direct it toward the area of bone containing the dead or dying cells.⁷ This study determines the effects of PE particles on osteocyte apoptosis in a murine model of PE-induced osteolysis.

PE particles significantly induce osteolysis in a calvarial mouse model as shown histologically and by micro-computed tomography (μ CT) with reduced bone volume (BV) assessed *ex vivo* at 7 days,¹⁰ 12 days¹¹ and 14 days.¹² The current study extends this by investigating whether PE particle induced volumetric bone change overtime as well as

assessing surface bone resorption.

Parthenolide (PAR) is a Feverfew-derived natural product¹⁰ that prevents NF- κ B DNA binding in osteoclasts *in vitro*¹³ and reduces lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-¹³ and PE-induced¹⁰ osteolysis in mice. The current study investigates whether PAR treatment reduces the PE particle-induced volumetric bone change over time in a murine calvarial model of osteolysis at day 14. Importantly the current study assesses the effects of PE particles and PAR treatment on surface bone resorption of the calvariae and osteocyte apoptosis.

In addition to RANKL-RANK signaling, the immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motif (ITAM)-dependent pathway provides co-stimulatory signals in the osteoclast to stimulate calcium signals that enhances NFATc1 expression via a positive feedback loop.¹⁴ The ITAM factor osteoclast-associated receptor (OSCAR) contributes to the pathogenesis and severity of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and peri-implant osteolysis.^{4,15,16} Increased levels of membrane bound OSCAR is associated with peripheral blood monocytes, synovial tissue macrophages and the vasculature in RA synovial tissues.^{15,16} OSCAR and NFATc1 protein expression is increased by PE in human peri-implant tissue and *in vitro* assays.¹⁷ Additionally, calcineurin/NFAT inhibitors suppress OSCAR in osteoclast formation *in vitro*.¹⁸ We propose soluble OSCAR in the serum and synovial fluid^{15,16,19,20} may modulate osteoclast activity in the context of inflammatory induced osteolysis.

This study aims to investigate whether inhibition of NF- κ B using PAR reduces localized osteolysis and modulates osteocyte death in a calvarial model of PE-induced bone loss 14 days after administration of PE particles. We further investigated the systemic effects of treatments on bone resorption marker serum type-1 carboxy-terminal collagen crosslinks (CTX-1), and OSCAR in the murine model and in human peri-implant osteolytic patients.

4.3.MATERIAL AND METHODS

4.3.1.Murine calvarial model of polyethylene particle-induced osteolysis

This murine model of PE particle-induced osteolysis was based on a model developed by Wedemeyer *et al.*¹² Twenty-four 6-8-week LPS-resistant²¹ C3H/HEJ mice were randomly allocated to 4 groups of 6: Control (no disease and no treatment); PAR only (no disease but treated with PAR); PE only (disease and no treatment) and PE+PAR (disease with PAR treatment). Ethical approval was obtained from the Animal Ethics Committees of the University of Adelaide (M-2001-070) and SA Pathology (106/10) and complied with the National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia) Code of Practice for Animal Care in Research and Teaching (2014).

4.3.2.Polyethylene particle preparation

Commercially pure PE particles (UHMWPE, Ceridust VP 3610, Clariant, Gersthofen, Germany)¹² were washed in 100% ethanol for endotoxin removal¹⁰ then washed in phosphate buffer solution (PBS) with 1% normal mouse serum (NMS).

4.3.3.Particle implantation and treatment

At day 0, mice were anaesthetized with 2% isoflurane anaesthetic in oxygen. Heads were shaved and a 2mm skin incision was made along the midline. The periosteum of the calvarium was lightly scratched and 30µL of PBS with 1% normal mouse serum (NMS) (Control and PAR only) or PE particles in PBS with 1% NMS at 2×10^8 particles/mL (PE+/-PAR) were placed onto the periosteum¹¹ and the incision was stapled.²² At days 0, 4, 7 and 10, PAR only and PE+PAR mice were subcutaneously injected with PAR (Alexis Biochemicals; 350-258-M005' purity 99%) at 1mg/kg/day^{10,13} in PBS with 0.04% dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO). Control and PE only mice received PBS+0.04% DMSO. At day 14 post-surgery, mice were anaesthetized and blood was collected by cardiac puncture before cervical dislocation. *Ex vivo* µCT scans were performed and calvariae were processed for histology.

4.3.4. Micro-computed tomography (μ CT) imaging and selection of the volume of interest

Baseline measurements were obtained 6-7 days prior to particle implantation (day 0), as previously described²³. Mice were scanned using a live animal μ CT system (Skyscan model 1076 high resolution *in vivo* scanner; Skyscan, Kontich, Belgium) with the following settings: 75kV voltage, 120mA current, 1.0mm aluminium filter,²³ field of view of 35mm \times 35mm, at 17 μ m isotropic pixel size and rotation step 0.5°. Each scan took 16 minutes. Following killing at day 14, an *ex vivo* μ CT scan with the same settings was performed on the skinned heads.

The cross-section images were reconstructed using a filtered back-projection algorithm (NRecon software, V 1.12.04, Skyscan, Kontich, Belgium)²³ and saved as 8-bit greylevel files (.BMP format). For each skull, a stack of up to 1800 cross-sections was reconstructed, with an inter-slice distance of 1 pixel corresponding to a maximum reconstructed length of 16.2mm (Fig.4.1), recreating the full length of the skull. These were uniformly thresholded to segment the bone voxels as a solid and a 3D model of the skull was created (CT Analyser) and visualized (ParaView Software, V 3.1.2.0-RC2, New York, USA) (Fig. 4.1).

For the subsequent quantitative analysis of the segmented μ CT images, a rectangular region of interest (ROI), 1.7mm length \times 3.5mm width (200 \times 400 pixel) was centered over the skull to include the area of PE implantation. The ROI, used over the stack of bone of 220 μ CT images of each skull (corresponding to 2.0mm depth), formed a volume of interest (VOI). The VOI included the entire thickness of the skull and produced a rectangular slab in 3D (Fig. 4.1e-l) in which quantitative μ CT analysis was performed.

4.3.5. Surface resorptive area analysis via μ CT

For each segmented VOI (rectangular slab) visualized in 3D, of the day 14 scans, two orthogonal images were taken (software Paraview). One image visualized the outer skull surface and one for the inner surface (Fig. 4.1e-l). Resorption areas that were visible as darker crater-like regions in these images were then traced manually using a tablet (Bamboo, Wacom Co. 2009) and areas of resorption filled (Adobe Photoshop Elements 7).¹⁸ The area was quantified (pixel counting) using ImageJ analysis software (Version

1.36b, National Institutes of Health, USA).¹⁸ The percentage area of resorption was calculated as a fraction of the total ROI area analyzed for the inner, outer and combined surfaces of the calvariae.

4.3.6. Volumetric bone loss analysis via μ CT

For each VOI, the BV (mm^3) was calculated as the volume occupied by the voxels segmented as 'bone' using CTAn software.²⁴ For each animal, the change in BV (mm^3) overtime was determined as BV at day 14 minus BV at baseline.

4.3.7. Histomorphometric osteocyte evaluation of the calvarial tissue

Mouse heads were skinned and fixed in 10% PBS-buffered formalin for 48 hours. Following decalcification in a pH 7.4 10% dehydrate disodium salt (EDTA) solution over 8 weeks, heads were cut coronally into front and back regions and paraffin embedded. Sections of calvariae ($5\mu\text{m}$) were mounted on (3-Aminopropyltriethoxysilane 98% (APTS)-coated glass slides (Sigma-Aldrich) and stained with haemotoxylin and eosin (H&E) to screen for the depth at which particles were present within the calvarial tissue. Toluidine blue staining was performed to identify osteocytes within the lacunae of calvarial tissues.⁷ Slides were mounted with DPX Mountant for histology (Sigma-Aldrich) and imaged using the NanoZoomer Digital Pathology (NDP) (Hamamatsu Photonics K.K., Shizuoka Pref., Japan) at x40 magnifications. Within a $1.6 \times 1.0 \text{mm}$ box on the right and left sides of midline suture the percentage of dead osteocytes (empty osteocyte lacunae, E) over the total osteocyte number (total of E and normal-appearing nuclei, N)⁷ was calculated. The two values from each mouse were averaged to represent each animal.

4.3.8. Serum analysis of a murine model of PE induced calvarial osteolysis

Blood collected at day 14 was allowed to clot in the Eppendorf tubes then centrifuged and serum was collected for analysis of levels of CTX-1 (RatLaps, Nordic Bioscience, Denmark) and OSCAR (Cusabio, Life Research, Australia), as per ELISA kit protocols.

4.3.9.Serum analysis of patients with peri-implant osteolysis

Serum was collected at the time of surgery from 10 patients with osteoarthritis (OA) receiving their primary hip implant or 19 patients undergoing revision for peri-implant osteolysis (metal-on-polyethylene total hips) at Hospital for Special Surgery following an IRB approved protocol. The osteolytic patients were aged 44-93 (mean=64.3) with time to revision 7-31 (mean=17) years. Informed consent was obtained from all participating patients. OSCAR levels were determined using a commercial ELISA kit (Cusabio CSB-EL017255HU).

4.3.10.Statistics and data presentation

All data was presented as mean \pm standard error of the mean. The Kruskal–Wallis test was used for statistical significance among all groups (GraphPad Prism 6 for Windows,v6.0.0.289, 2012) followed by a Mann-Whitney on Control vs PAR only, Control vs PE only and PE only vs PE+PAR. Statistical significance was set as $p < 0.05$.

4.4.RESULTS

4.4.1.Visual assessment of osteolysis via histology and μ CT

H&E stained tissue showed the presence of fibrous granulomatous reaction and bone osteolysis in mice with PE (data not shown). In the PE-implanted group, at day 14 the 3D μ CT images revealed the presence of craters (resorption regions) on the skull surface, adjacent to the location where the particles were placed (Fig. 4.1a-d). This was visible on both the outer (Fig. 4.1e-h) and inner surface (Fig.4.1i-l).

4.4.2.Quantitative assessment of bone surface resorptive area via μ CT

The areas of surface bone resorption were quantified within the rectangular ROIs on the outer and inner surface (Fig. 4.1e-l). There was a statistically significant increase in the percentage of resorbed area for the outer, inner surfaces and combined surfaces in the PE group when compared to the control ($p = 0.0022$ for each) (Fig. 4.2c). PAR treatment significantly reduced the area resorbed over all examined surfaces ($p = 0.0022$) in the PE

group compared with the PE untreated group, with a 67% decrease (from 0.53% to 0.17%) (Fig. 4.2c).

4.4.3. Quantitative changes in bone volume determined by μ CT

By day 14, BV in the control group increased from baseline by 0.35mm^3 consistent with animal growth. BV in the PE group increased by only 0.09mm^3 indicating significant osteolysis induced by PE when compared to control ($p=0.0368$) (Fig. 4.2d). PAR treatment had no significant effect on BV when compared to control nor when comparing the PE groups.

4.4.4. Quantitative assessment of osteocyte death

Toluidine blue was used to stain mineralized tissue and identify lacunae with and without osteocytes (Fig. 4.3a-d). The percentage of empty osteocyte lacunae was significantly increased in animals given PE when compared to control ($p<0.0001$) (Fig. 4.3e). PAR treatment significantly reduced the percentage of osteocyte death when comparing the PE groups ($p<0.0001$). PAR treatment in the absence of particles increased osteocyte death ($p=0.0116$).

4.4.5. Murine serum levels of CTX-1 and soluble OSCAR

CTX-1 levels were measured as an indicator of systemic bone resorption. CTX-1 was significantly higher in the PE group ($p=0.0303$) and PAR treated group ($p=0.0411$) when compared to the control group (Fig. 4.4a). While CTX-1 levels were lower in the PAR treated PE group compared to the PE group, this was not statistically significant ($p=0.1429$).

Serum OSCAR levels (Fig. 4.4b) were assessed as a potential indicator of osteolytic activity.^{16,19,20} OSCAR levels were significantly increased in mice with PE particles ($p=0.0286$) and decreased in PAR treated groups ($p=0.0286$) when compared to the control. PAR did not affect the OSCAR levels in the PE groups ($p=0.2286$).

4.4.6. Human serum levels of OSCAR in primary OA and revision patients

Serum levels of soluble OSCAR were measured in primary OA (n=10) and peri-implant osteolytic patients (n=19). OSCAR was not significantly different (p=0.6874) in the peri-implant (0.00-11.10pg/ml) compared to the OA patients (0.00-5.99pg/ml) (Fig. 4. 5).

4.5. DISCUSSION

Particle-induced osteolysis is a major cause of aseptic loosening and subsequent implant failure following total joint arthroplasty. Excessive osteoclast bone resorption induced by wear particles is largely responsible for peri-implant osteolysis and subsequent loosening.¹ Previous reports have shown osteocytes undergo apoptosis in response to wear particles⁹ and fatigue-induced microdamage⁷ resulting in bone containing the dead osteocytes being resorbed by osteoclasts, thereby contributing to osteolysis. The current study showed PE-induced osteolysis as measured by BV and surface resorption in a murine calvarial model of osteolysis. In addition PE caused osteocyte apoptosis, potentially contributing to osteolysis via this mechanism. The NF- κ B inhibitor PAR abrogated PE-induced surface bone lysis but not BV.

This study is novel in that it involves *in vivo* μ CT in order to calculate changes in bone volume overtime after 14 days administration of PE particles in a murine calvarial model of osteolysis, with each animal being its own control at baseline. At day 14 post-surgery BV in the PE group was significantly reduced when compared to control, consistent with the development of osteolysis at that time point as previously reported.¹²

PAR significantly inhibits NF- κ B and osteoclastogenesis *in vitro*,²⁵ abrogates LPS-¹³ and PE-induced¹⁰ osteolysis in mice. In the current study, PAR was administered at 1mg/kg/3-day to PE implanted mice and PAR treatment did not significantly affect the BV after 14 days when compared to the baseline BV. In a previous study by Li *et al* mice receiving 1mg/kg/day PAR for 7-days post-surgery had a significantly reduced bone volume fraction (BV/TV) measurements at day 7.¹⁰ Together these findings suggest PAR is able to prevent PE-induced osteolysis as assessed volumetrically at the earlier stage (day 7) rather than the late stage (day 14) of peri-implant osteolysis.

We contend that the surface erosions are highly important as these better reflect the *in vivo* situation as numerous studies have shown that resorption near implants occurs on the

bone surface at the interface²⁶ and at sites where there are high concentrations of PE wear particles present in the surface tissues.²⁷ This study includes extensive quantitative analysis of the area of macroscopically visible calvarial surface bone resorption using the μ CT-derived images. PE significantly increased the percentage resorption surface area, whereas the PAR treatment significantly reduced this surface resorption. This suggests PAR treatment had a significant focal effect on reduction of the bone surface resorption adjacent to the implanted PE particles. Interestingly, osteolysis induced by PE particles resulted in both internal and external surface erosion, suggesting that the particles may also induce resorption at a distance. This is most likely due to mediators induced by PE particles stimulating osteoclast activity in the bone marrow. This may also occur within the bone and on the trabeculae.

While the analysis of the resorption bone surface is done over a surface area within a rectangular ROI over the skull, the bone volume (BV and BV/TV) measurements are done over the VOI, which encompasses the entire skull thickness, from the internal to external surface (3D slab). Importantly, our results indicate that at day 14, PAR significantly reduced surface bone resorption but not volume. However, until further work is carried out, it is difficult to know why at day 14 PAR affects only surface erosions but not volume. It is possible this is due to the different mechanisms of bone erosion occurring at the surface and within bone, and these have different sensitivities to PAR.

Osteocytes may also play a role in regulating peri-implant osteolysis via apoptosis signals^{7,8} as they have been shown to be apoptotic in response to particles *in vitro*.⁹ Consistent with this, the current study found PE particles significantly increased osteocyte death *in vivo*. Additionally, PE particles directly induce osteocytes to produce RANKL,² thus, significantly contributing to particle-induced osteolysis.² In the current study, PAR significantly reduced the numbers of empty lacune and this is consistent with surface osteolysis being regulated by osteocyte apoptosis. Since PAR acts by targeting NF- κ B, it would be interesting to know if osteocyte death is regulated by NF- κ B in osteocytes. A recent report found TNF- α enhanced sclerostin expression in an NF- κ B-dependent manner in the osteocyte cell line, MLO-Y4, indicating NF- κ B could have a role in osteocyte functions.²⁸ The possible mechanism by which PE induces NF- κ B in osteocytes and thus induces osteolysis requires further studies.

Particles may also act distally by travelling and inducing inflammatory factors that exacerbate bone resorption elsewhere, as has been suggested previously.²⁹ As an indicator of systemic bone resorption CTX-1 levels were significantly increased in PE-given mice. Unexpectedly, in the absence of particles PAR increased CTX-1 levels.

Soluble OSCAR has been proposed as a potential regulator of osteoclast activity.^{16,19} in this osteolysis. Decreased levels are present in active RA patients compared with healthy patients^{16,19} and there is an inverse relationship between RA and the presence of erosions.¹⁹ We found almost undetectable levels of serum OSCAR in patients with end-stage wear-induced osteolysis as well as in primary OA patients. This may be explained by limit of detection of the assay used. In our mouse model of osteolysis, OSCAR increased in the serum of mice with PE induced bone resorption, consistent with a recent finding that OSCAR was found at low levels in healthy individuals and high in active RA.²⁰ It is important to consider that in mice cell associated and possibly secreted OSCAR is limited to osteoclast cells³⁰ whereas in humans it is expressed and potentially released by multiple cells types¹⁵ including dendritic cells,³¹ osteoclasts¹⁴ and endothelial cells.³²

4.6.CONCLUSION

PE particles significantly induced osteocyte death, and bone loss as assessed by internal and external surface resorption and BV in a calvarial murine model of peri-implant osteolysis. At day 14, PAR treatment every 3 days resulted in a significant reduction in osteocyte death and PE particle-induced bone surface resorption but not bone volume change. The ability of PAR to inhibit surface erosion induced by PE particles is important as surface erosion may better reflect the *in vivo* situation where bone is resorbed on the surface at the bone-implant interface, and that may be related to the role of osteocytes in this pathology.

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4.9.FIGURE LEGENDS

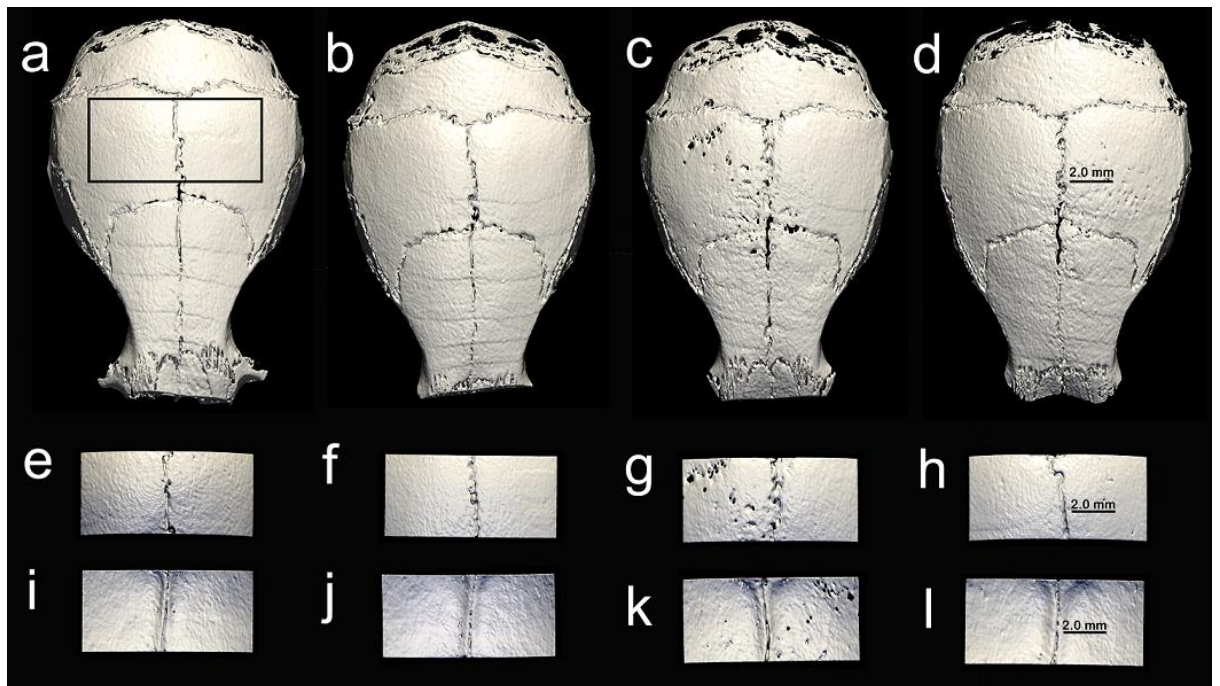


Figure 4.1

(a-d) Three-dimensional μ CT images of mouse calvariae at day 14, (e-l) Rectangular ROI (1.7 \times 3.5mm) selected for quantitative analysis over the calvariae, (e-h) view of the outer surface and (i-l) of the inner surface, (a, e, i) Control, (b, f, j) PAR only, (c, g, k) PE only, (d, h, l) PE+PAR. (a) Location of rectangular ROI depicted by black box. (c) The visible resorptive regions/craters on the surface of the calvariae of the PE group.

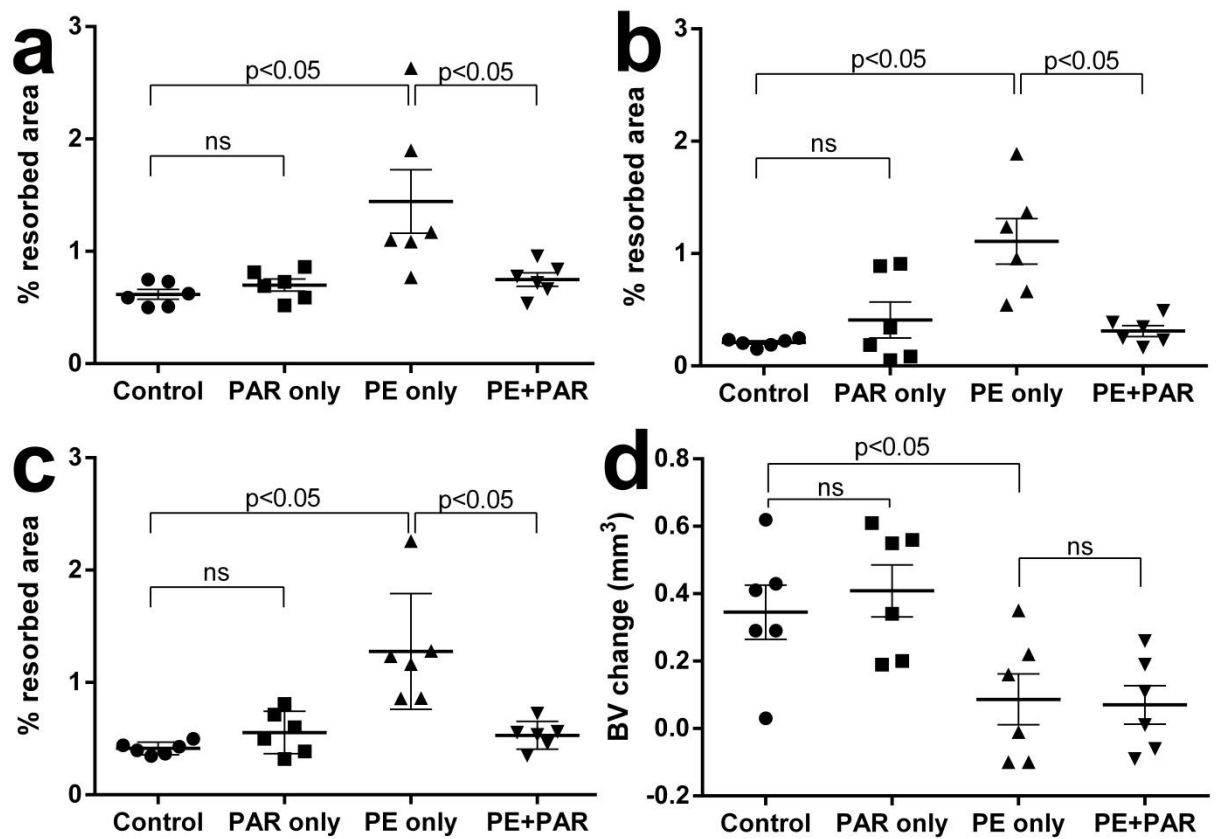


Figure 4.2

Quantitative μ CT analysis within the rectangular ROI selected at day 14, percentage resorbed bone area for (a) the outer surface of the calvariae, (b) the inner surface of the calvariae, (c) combined outer and inner surfaces of the calvariae, (d) Change in Bone volume (BV) compared to baseline. The values are presented as mean \pm S.E. Significance was considered as $p < 0.05$; ns referred to not significant.

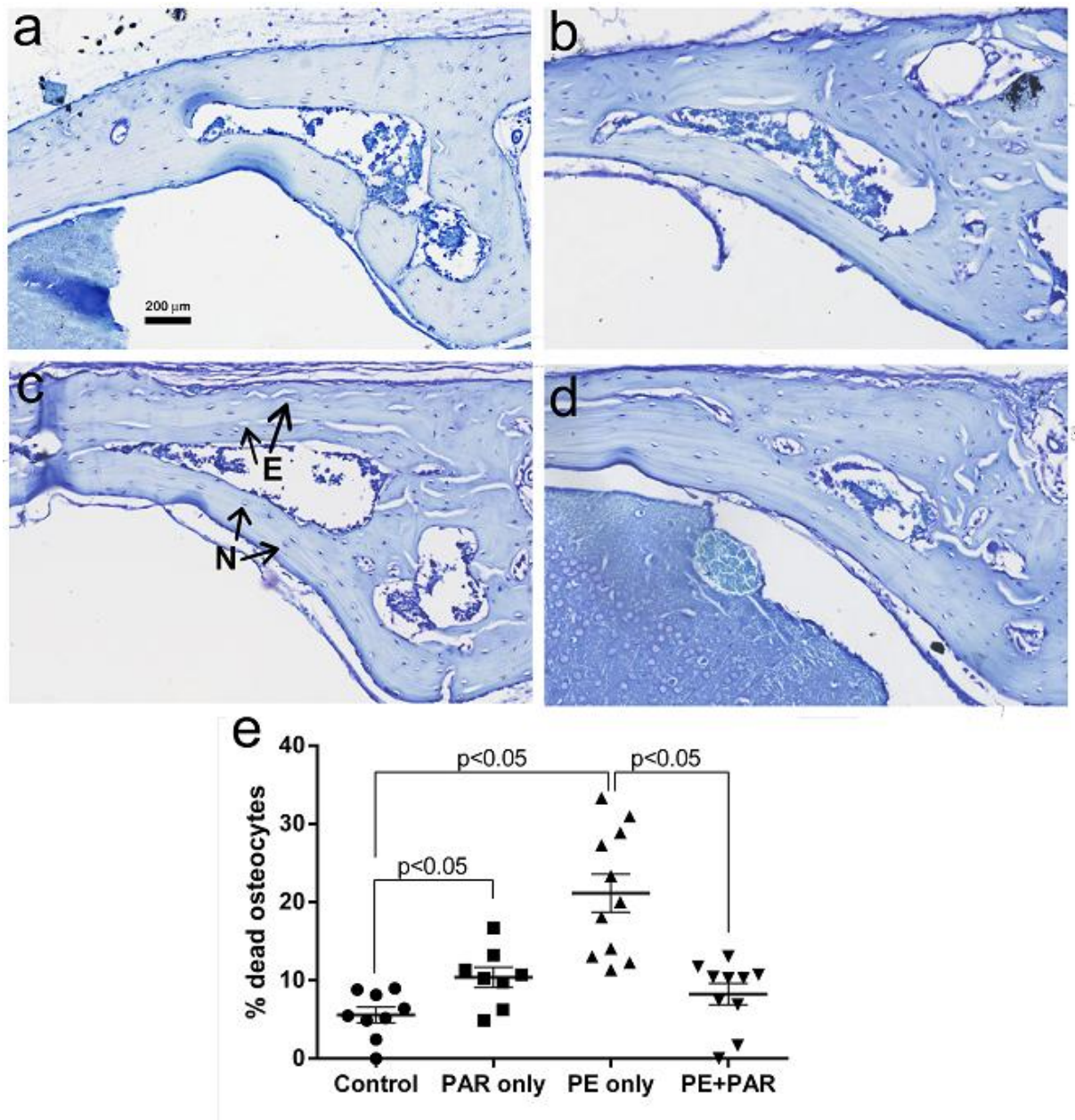


Figure 4.3

(a-d) Photomicrograph of toluidine blue-stained sections of murine calvarial tissue (left hand-side from midline suture), at 40× magnification. (a) Control, (b) PAR only, (c) PE only, (d) PE+PAR. (c) Empty osteocyte lacunae, E and normal-appearing nuclei, N. (e) The percentage of dead osteocyte in 1.6×1.0mm tissue section. The values are presented as mean ± S.E. Significance was set as $p < 0.05$.

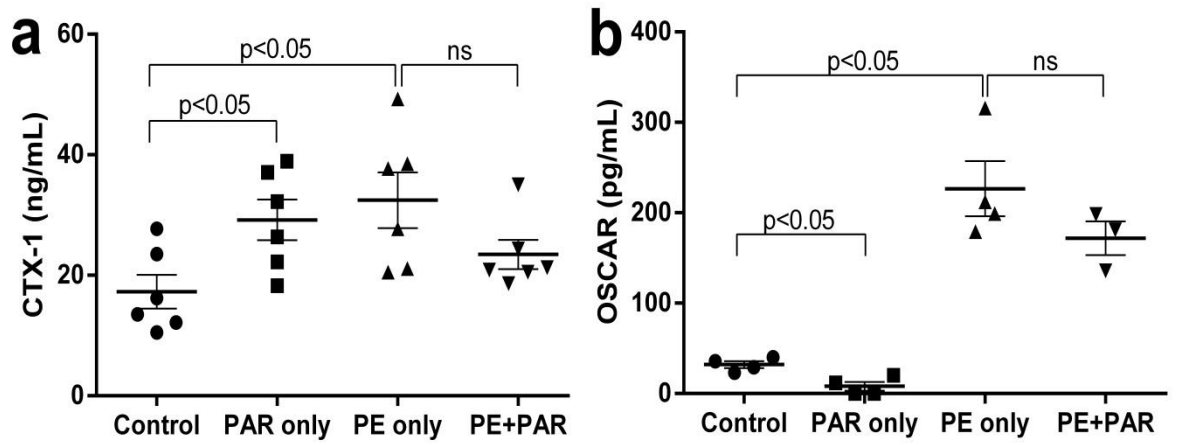


Figure 4.4

Biochemical analyses of the murine serum. CTX-1 concentration in a particle induced murine model of osteolysis. (b) Soluble OSCAR levels in a particle-induced murine model of osteolysis. The values are presented as mean \pm S.E. Significance was considered as $p < 0.05$; ns referred to not significant.

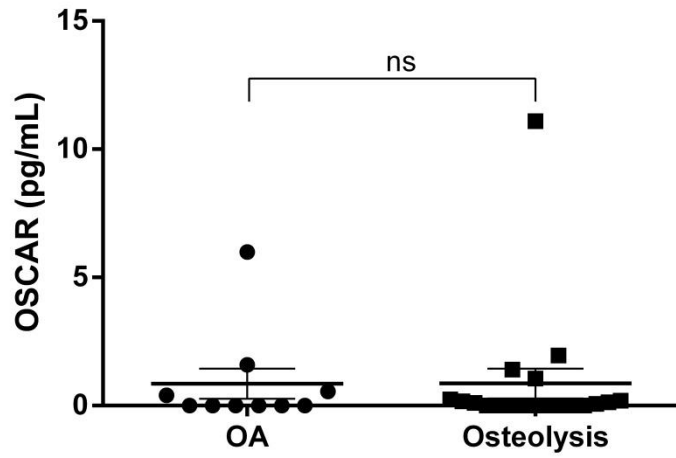


Figure 4.5

Serum levels of soluble OSCAR in human osteolysis. The values are presented as mean \pm S.E. Significance was considered as $p < 0.05$; ns referred to not significant.

CHAPTER 5. Caffeic acid phenethyl ester abrogates bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of polyethylene particle-induced osteolysis

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Chapter summary

Chapter 4 showed the effects of NF- κ B inhibition on bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. Using this murine model, Chapter 5 investigated the effects of NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibitor CAPE on localised PE-induced calvarial bone resorption. The systemic effects of PE particles and CAPE treatment were assessed by analyses of serum CTX-1 levels, soluble OSCAR and GIT. It was hypothesized inhibition of NF- κ B and NFATc1 suppresses localized and systemic bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

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Caffeic acid phenethyl ester abrogates bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of polyethylene particle-induced osteolysis

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5.0. Abstract

Particle-induced bone loss by osteoclasts is a common cause of aseptic loosening around implants. The study investigates whether caffeic acid phenethyl ester (CAPE), a potent and specific inhibitor of NFATc1 and NF- κ B, at a low dose reduces bone resorption in a murine calvarial model of polyethylene (PE) particle-induced osteolysis. The effects of particles and CAPE treatment on gastrointestinal tract (GIT) histopathology were also evaluated. Mice were scanned using *in vivo*-animal micro-computed tomography (μ CT) as a baseline measurement. PE particles (2.82×10^9 particles/mL) were implanted over the calvariae on day 0. CAPE was administered subcutaneously (1mg/kg/day) at days 0, 4, 7 and 10. Mice were killed at day 14 and serum analysed for Type 1 carboxyterminal collagen crosslinks (CTX)-1 and Osteoclast Associated Receptor (OSCAR) levels. *Ex vivo* μ CT scans were conducted to assess bone volume (BV) change and percentage area of calvarial surface resorbed. Calvarial and GIT tissue was processed for histopathology. By day 14, PE particles significantly induced calvarial bone loss compared to control animals as evidenced by resorptive areas adjacent to the implanted PE in three-dimensional μ CT images, an increase in percentage of resorbed area ($p=0.0022$), reduction in BV ($p=0.0012$) and increased CTX-1 serum levels ($p=0.0495$). Serum OSCAR levels significantly increased in the PE implant group ($p=0.0006$). CAPE significantly inhibited PE particle-induced calvarial osteolysis as evidenced by a significant reduction in surface bone resorption ($p=0.0012$) and volumetric change ($p=0.0154$) compared to PE only but had no effect on systemic CTX-1. Neither particles nor CAPE had an effect on GIT histopathology.

Keywords: Osteolysis; CAPE; NF kappa B inhibitor; micro CT; CTX-1; OSCAR

5.1.Introduction

Particle-induced bone loss by osteoclasts is a common cause of aseptic loosening around implants. Macrophages phagocytose wear particles and the chronic inflammatory response [1] enhances differentiation and bone-resorbing activity of the osteoclasts mediated by receptor activator of nuclear factor κ B ligand (RANKL) [2, 3]. Our previous *in vivo* analyses demonstrated increased protein and mRNA expression of RANKL relative to its inhibitor osteoprotegerin in peri-implant tissues [3]. This correlated with increased resorptive activity confirming the role of osteoclasts in this osteolysis [3]. RANKL acts by binding to its receptor RANK and activating critical intracellular factors, nuclear factor kappa B (NF- κ B) and nuclear factor of activated T-cells, cytoplasmic calcineurin-dependent-1 (NFATc1), to induce expression of key genes required for osteoclastogenesis [4, 5].

The local accumulation of wear particles induces local osteolysis [6] but particles have also been proposed to travel to other regions such as lymph nodes and induce distal bone resorption directly or indirectly via inflammatory factors that exacerbated bone resorption, elsewhere [7]. It is possible that distal inflammatory factors may affect other organs such as the gastrointestinal tract (GIT) as per other chronic inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and Crohn's disease.

NF- κ B and calcineurin/NFAT signaling pathways play crucial roles in inflammatory pathological states involving increased osteoclast activity [8, 9]. Elevated activation of NF- κ B has been reported in the inflamed joints of arthritic mice [10], lipopolysaccharide-induced bone destruction [11] and particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis [12]. Suppression of NF- κ B transcription *in vivo* results in decreased bone loss in chronically inflamed bone [13] and reduced tumor-mediated osteolysis [14]. Further to this, inhibition of calcineurin/NFAT signaling by Cyclosporin A reduces the severity of arthritis developed in a collagen antibody induced arthritis (CAIA) model in both the early and late phases of disease [15]. This is significant, as NFATc1 is induced by calcineurin and is crucial to both T cell activation and osteoclastogenesis.

Co-stimulatory pathways involving NFATc1 and NF- κ B have been identified in osteoclasts [16-18]. The immunoreceptor tyrosine-based activation motif (ITAM)-dependent pathway stimulates calcium signals that activate the NFAT/calcineurin pathway

thus inducing NFATc1 [18]. The ITAM factor osteoclast-associated receptor (OSCAR) is induced via NFATc1 and on ligand interaction OSCAR signals via its adaptor protein Fc-receptor common gamma-chain (FcR γ) to further enhance ITAM signalling [17-20]. We have demonstrated increased expression of these factors adjacent to sites of bone loss in human peri-implant tissue and *in vitro* assays of PE particle-stimulated osteoclasts [21]. We have also shown calcineurin/NFAT inhibitors significantly reduced the expression of ITAM factors in human osteoclast differentiation *in vitro* [22]. OSCAR may contribute to the pathogenesis and severity of RA, peri-implant loosening and osteoporosis [21, 23-26]. Increased level of membrane bound OSCAR is associated with the peripheral blood monocytes and synovial tissue macrophages as well as the vasculature in RA synovial tissues [24, 26]. Conversely soluble OSCAR is lower in the serum of active RA patients compared with healthy individuals [24, 25]. Further to this, OSCAR inversely correlates with erosion in active RA [25]. We propose that soluble OSCAR acts as a negative regulator of osteoclast activity with serum levels reducing in the context of inflammatory induced osteolysis.

Caffeic acid phenethyl ester (CAPE) is a phenolic antioxidant derived from the propolis of honeybee hives, and acts as a potent and specific inhibitor of NFATc1 and NF- κ B [27-29]. CAPE has been demonstrated to have anti-viral [27] and anti-inflammatory properties [28, 29]. Using *in vitro* osteoclast assays demonstrate that CAPE has been shown to act by inhibiting the RANKL-induced activation of NF- κ B and p65 nuclear translocation resulting in abrogation of osteoclastogenesis and induction of apoptosis [28], supporting it as a potential candidate for the prevention or treatment of osteolytic and arthritic bone diseases. CAPE at high dose has been demonstrated to have anti-inflammatory properties in a rat air pouch model (10-100mg/ml) [30] and lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced inflammation of cultured human middle ear epithelial cells (HMEECs) (50-200 μ M) [31]. In a rat model of colitis, CAPE at 30mg/kg caused weight loss although it effectively reduced macroscopic colonic damage [32]. It has been demonstrated that CAPE at a low dose (0.5mg/kg) inhibits local bone loss in an ovariectomized (OVX) murine models of osteolysis (unpublished results from J Xu). It is therefore important to ascertain the effects of CAPE on locally induced bone loss and systemic effects on bone resorption and the GIT.

We have demonstrated inhibition of ITAM factors and resorptive activity with calcineurin-NFAT inhibitors in our human *in vitro* model of osteoclast formation [22]. We propose that NFATc1 and NF- κ B inhibitors may suppress inflammation induced bone loss associated with particle-induced osteolysis. This investigates the effect of NFATc1 and NF- κ B suppression by CAPE administered at low dose on PE-particle induced bone loss and systemic osteoclast activity in a murine calvarial model. Additionally we propose to investigate the systemic effects of PE wear particles and CAPE by assessing tissue histopathology in the GIT.

5.2. Materials and methods

5.2.1. Murine polyethylene particle-induced osteolysis model

Our murine model of PE particle-induced osteolysis was based on a model developed by Wedemeyer et al [6, 33, 34]. Twenty-two (22) 6-8-week LPS-resistant C3H/HEJ female mice were randomly divided into 3 groups: Control (no particles and no treatment, n=7), PE only (particle implantation, n=7) and PE+CAPE (particles and CAPE, n=8). This study was conducted in accordance with ethics approved by The University of Adelaide (M-2001-070) and SA Pathology (106/10) and complied with the National Health and Medical Research Council (Australia) Code of Practice for Animal Care in Research and Teaching (2014).

2.2. Preparation of polyethylene particles

Commercially pure polyethylene particles (UHMWPE, Ceridust VP 3610) were obtained from Clariant Company (Gersthofen, Germany). Greater than 35% of the particles were smaller than 1 μ m, with a mean particle size (given as equivalent circle diameter) of 1.75 \pm 1.43 μ m (range 0.05-11.6) [35-37]. Particles were washed in 100% ethanol for endotoxin decontamination, as previously described [38, 39], resuspended and washed in phosphate buffer solution (PBS) with 1% normal mouse serum (NMS) 6 times to eliminate all ethanol. The particles were stored in endotoxin free, sterile tubes.

5.2.3.Surgical procedure for PE implantation over murine calvariae

At day 0, mice were anaesthetized with 2% isoflurane anaesthetic in oxygen, heads shaved and a 2mm skin incision was made along the midline. The skin was retracted, the periosteum of the calvarium was lightly scratched and 30 μ L of PBS with 1% NMS (Control) or PE particles in PBS with 1% NMS at 2.82×10^9 particles/mL (PE only, and PE+CAPE) were placed onto the periosteum [40]. The incision was carefully stapled to ensure the particles remained in place and mice were allowed to recover [41]. At day 14 post-surgery mice were humanely killed and the calvaria were removed, as previously described [36, 42, 43].

5.2.4.Drug administration by subcutaneous injection

CAPE was purchased from Sigma–Aldrich (Sydney, Australia). To investigate the effect of CAPE on bone resorption, low dosage CAPE at 1mg/kg/day in PBS with 0.04% dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO) (based on unpublished observations by J Xu) was administered to the mice in Group 3 at days 0, 4, 7 and 10 by subcutaneous injection over the shoulders, into the loose skin over the neck. Mice in Group 1 and 2 were subcutaneously injected with PBS with 0.04% DMSO vehicle control at the same time points.

5.2.5.Micro-computed tomography (μ CT) imaging and selection of the volume of interest

Six-seven days prior to particle administration, mice were scanned *in vivo* using a live-animal micro-computed tomography (μ CT) system (Skyscan model 1076, high resolution *in vivo* system, Skyscan, Bruker, Kontich, Belgium) to determine the bone volume (BV) levels at baseline. The scanning system settings were as follows: 48kV voltage, 110 μ A current, 0.5mm aluminium filter, field of view of 35mm \times 35mm, at 9 μ m isotropic pixel size and rotation step 0.8°. Mice were anaesthetized via an intraperitoneal injection (rat/mouse anaesthetic – 1ml xylazine, 2ml ketamine (100mg/ml), 17ml water in the injection (0.3ml for a 30g mouse)) for scanning, as previously described [44], with each scan taking an average of 24 minutes. Mice were then placed in a separate cage to allow recovery. On day 14 (completion of the study), mice were humanely killed and the heads

were skinned and an *ex vivo* μ CT scan was performed with the same settings used during the *in vivo* scan.

The cross-section images were reconstructed using a filtered back-projection algorithm (NRecon software, V 1.12.04, Skyscan, Bruker, Kontich, Belgium) [44] and saved as 8-bit greylevel files (.BMP format). For each skull, a stack of up to 1800 cross-sections was reconstructed, with an inter-slice distance of 1 pixel corresponding to a maximum reconstructed height of 16.2mm (Figure 5.1), recreating the full length of the skull. Following uniform thresholding, which segmented the bone voxels as a solid, 3D models of the skulls were created (CT Analyser) and visualized (ParaView Software, V 3.1.2.0-RC2, New York, USA) (Figure 5.1).

For the subsequent quantitative analysis of the segmented μ CT images, a rectangular region of interest (ROI) was selected, 4.35mm long (500 pixels), 5.22mm wide (600 pixels) and centred over the skull to include the area where the PE particles were implanted. This ROI was used over a stack of 220 μ CT images of each skull (corresponding to 1.98 mm depth), forming a volume of interest (VOI) of size 4.35 \times 5.22 \times 1.98mm (length \times width \times depth) which included the entire thickness of the skull, producing a rectangular bone slab in 3D (Figure 5.1G-L). Over this VOI, quantitative μ CT analysis was performed.

5.2.6. Percentage resorption area analysis via μ CT

For the scans at day 14, for each segmented VOI (rectangular slab), 3D surface models were built (CT Analyser) and visualised in 3D (software Paraview). Two orthogonal screenshot images were taken, one 3D image visualizing the outer skull surface and one for the inner surface. Resorption areas, visible as darker crater-like regions in these images, had their boundaries contoured manually using a tablet (Bamboo, Wacom Co. 2009) and their areas of resorption filled (Adobe Photoshop Elements 7) [22]. The area of resorption was quantified (pixel counting) using ImageJ analysis software (Version 1.36b, National Institutes of Health, USA) [22]. The percentage area of resorption (%) was calculated as a fraction of the total area analyzed (the area of the ROI), for the inner and the outer surface of the calvariae separately. These values were averaged to represent the percentage of area resorbed for each animal.

5.2.7. Volumetric bone loss analysis via μ CT

For each VOI, the BV (expressed in mm^3) was calculated as the volume occupied by the voxels segmented as 'bone' using CTAn software (Skyscan) [45]. For each animal, the change in BV (mm^3) over time was determined as BV at day 14 minus BV at baseline.

5.2.8. Biochemical analyses

Mice were deeply anaesthetized and blood was collected by cardiac puncture before cervical dislocation at the conclusion of the experiment. Following clotting and centrifugation, the serum was collected for analysis of bone resorption markers. Serum levels of CTX-1 and of OSCAR were measured by commercial ELISA (Nordic Bioscience, Denmark and Cusabio, Life Research, Australia, respectively), as per kit protocols.

5.2.9. Histologic evaluation by TRAP staining of the calvarial tissue

Following death, mouse heads were skinned and fixed in fixative 10% PBS-buffered formalin for 48 hours. Heads were decalcified in a pH 7.4 10% dehydrate disodium salt (EDTA) solution over 8 weeks. Decalcified heads were cut coronally into front and back regions and paraffin embedded. Five μm sections of calvariae were mounted on (3-Aminopropyltriethoxysilane 98% (APTS)-coated glass slides (Sigma-Aldrich) at the depth at which particles were detected morphologically within the calvarial tissue.

Tartrate-resistant acid phosphatase (TRAP) staining was performed to identify pre-osteoclasts/osteoclasts in the calvarial tissues [46, 47]. TRAP staining was performed using the naphthol-based method [48]. The TRAP substrate was prepared according to previous methods [48, 49] and incubated with tissues at 37°C for 40 minutes. Tissues were counterstained in Harris' haematoxylin/lithium carbonate, cover-slipped using Aquatex (Merck) and viewed under a Nikon FXA Research light Microscope at $\times 10$ magnification.

5.2.10. Histologic evaluation by H&E staining of the gastrointestinal tract (GIT)

The entire GIT was removed, contents were flushed with saline and small (1cm) sections of the jejunum and colon were fixed in 10% formalin for further analysis. Following

routine processing and embedding in paraffin wax, 4µm sections of jejunum and colon were cut using a rotary microtome. Sections were then stained using a standard Haematoxylin and Eosin Stain. Briefly, sections were dewaxed and re-hydrated through a graded series of ethanols before staining in haematoxylin for 2 minutes. Sections were differentiated in 1% hydrochloric acid and then counterstained with eosin for 2 minutes. After dehydration, sections were cleared in histolene, mounted and coverslipped [29, 50]. Analysis was conducted using a validated scoring system [50]. Briefly, the sections were analysed in a blinded fashion (RS) for identification of tissue structures and cell components including identification of apoptotic cells based on histopathology [51-53]. The number of apoptotic cells in the crypt and the crypt depth in the epithelium of jejunal and colonic mucosa, and the general structure of the jejunal and colonic mucosa including the presence of red blood cells, thickened blood vessels and crypt vesicles were analysed as per previous studies [53].

5.2.12. Statistics and data presentation

For all examined parameters data was presented as mean±standard error of the mean. To test for changes in BV between time points within each group, a Wilcoxon ranked signed test was used. To test for significant differences in percentage resorption area at day 14 and time-related changes in BV among the three groups, a Kruskal–Wallis test was used (GraphPad Prism 6 for Windows, Version 6.0.0.289, 2012), followed by a Mann-Whitney test on Control vs. PE only and PE only vs. PE+CAPE. Differences were deemed statistically significant for $p < 0.05$.

5.3. Results

5.3.1. Visual assessment of osteolysis via histology and µCT

TRAP stained tissue (Figure 5.1A-F) showed the presence of fibrous granulomatous reaction accompanied by bone osteolysis in mice with PE, and higher number of TRAP positive cells were found in animals given PE compared to controls and CAPE-treated PE animals. PE particles in the tissues appeared bright when viewed under the polarized light (Figure 5.1D, F). In the PE implanted group, at day 14 the 3D µCT images (Figure 5.1G-I)

revealed the presence of craters reflecting resorptive regions on the skull surface, adjacent to the location where the particles were implanted. While there were resorption areas on the outer surface of the calvariae (Figure 5.1J-L), there were also craters visible on the inner surface of the calvariae (Figure 5.1M-O).

5.3.2. Quantitative assessment of bone resorption area via μ CT

The outer and inner surfaces of the calvaria were assessed for resorbed regions (dark areas indicating bone loss) to indicate local direct effects of PE particles and CAPE treatment (Figure 5.2A, B). Compared to the control group, the PE implanted group exhibited significantly greater percentage resorption area at the outer ($p=0.0006$), inner ($p=0.0006$) and combined surfaces ($p=0.0022$) (Figure 5.2C). Compared to PE only group, the percentage resorption area was significantly reduced from 9.58% to 3.66%—in the PE+CAPE group at the outer ($p=0.0003$), inner ($p=0.0093$) and combined surfaces ($p=0.0012$) (Figure 5.2A-C respectively). Of note, the percentage of resorption area in the PE+CAPE group was not significantly different to the control ($p=0.0932$).

5.3.3. Quantitative changes in bone volume determined by μ CT

As assessed by the Wilcoxon ranked signed test, the control ($p=0.0156$) and PE+CAPE ($p=0.0078$), showed significantly increased BV at the conclusion of the experiment compared to baseline, consistent with animal growth. The PE only group did not significantly increase in BV ($p=0.1094$). At day 14, the average increase in BV for the control group was $0.54\pm 0.06\text{mm}^3$. BV in the PE implanted group increased by only $0.15\pm 0.06\text{mm}^3$, which was significantly lower compared to the control ($p=0.0012$) and consistent with bone loss induced by PE particles (Figure 5.2D). In the PE+CAPE group, BV increased by $0.44\pm 0.09\text{mm}^3$ over time, which was significantly higher compared to the PE-only group ($p=0.0154$), and not significantly different from the control group ($p=0.3201$).

5.3.4. Murine serum levels of CTX-1

CTX-1 levels (Figure 5.3A) were measured as an indicator of systemic bone resorption. CTX-1 was significantly higher in the PE group ($p=0.0495$) when compared to the control

group. CAPE did not significantly ($p=0.3916$) alter PE induced CTX-1 levels when compared to the PE group.

5.3.5. Serum levels of soluble OSCAR in the PE calvarial model

Serum OSCAR levels (Figure 5.3B) were assessed as a potential regulator of osteolysis [24, 25]. Systemic OSCAR levels significantly increased in the PE implant group ($p=0.0006$) compared to the controls. CAPE did not affect the OSCAR levels in the PE-implanted group.

5.3.6. Gastrointestinal changes

The histopathology of the jejunum (Figure 5.4A-C) and colon (Figure 5.5A-C) was not significantly different between groups. No significant difference was detected between the three groups in jejunum (Figure 5.4D-E); crypt apoptosis $p=0.9773$, crypt depth $p=0.2707$, and colon (Figure 5.5D-E); crypt apoptosis $p=0.1430$, crypt depth $p=0.4559$.

5.4. Discussion

PE particles are one of the most frequent and biologically relevant sources of wear debris in clinical practice [54]. Additionally, they are a major driver of aseptic bone loss resulting in osteolysis [55] and implant failure. In the current study, PE particles significantly induced osteolysis in a mouse calvarial model, consistent with previous findings [6, 33, 34, 38, 40, 56]. In addition to the analysis of BV to investigate volumetric osteolysis [6], the current study extended previous analysis of this model by extensive analysis of the area of macroscopically visible calvarial surface bone resorption using the μ CT-derived 3D images. This enabled quantification of the effects of PE and CAPE on the bone surface in these regions of macroscopically visible calvarial surface bone resorption using the μ CT-derived 3D images. This study investigates the effects of PE at 2.82×10^9 particles/mL on bone by quantifying BV using live μ CT. Baseline scans of the same animals are used for time-related comparisons, reducing the number of animals required. The current study found that PE particle implantation significantly reduced BV, and significantly increased percentage of resorptive area both on the outer and inner surfaces of the calvariae, when compared to the control. Levels of CTX-1 were significantly increased suggesting particles

perhaps travelled systemically and induced bone resorption elsewhere directly or indirectly via induction of cytokines [7]. This finding supported the reports that wear debris such as PE particles can enhance the pronounced osteoclastogenesis and subsequent osteolysis [57] locally [6] and systemically [7].

Natural compounds that inhibit NF- κ B and NFAT have been shown to inhibit osteoclast activity *in vitro* and bone loss in LPS [11] and OVX (unpublished results from J Xu) murine models of osteolysis. Studies have shown that a propolis, CAPE, inhibited both the DNA-binding and transcriptional activity of NFAT [29] and NF- κ B [27, 29] *in vitro*. CAPE blocked the induction of NFATc1 and c-Fos following RANKL stimulation [58]. CAPE inhibited NF- κ B-dependent transcriptional activity without affecting the degradation of the cytoplasmic NF- κ B inhibitory protein, I κ B α [29]. CAPE has also been shown to significantly inhibit the RANKL-induced osteoclast formation in mouse calvariae *in vivo* and the M-CSF and RANKL-induced osteoclast differentiation in dose-dependent manner *in vitro* mouse bone marrow-derived macrophages (BMMs) [58]. Further to this when CAPE was used to inhibit NF- κ B and NFAT activation in RANKL-induced osteoclasts *in vitro*, osteoclast differentiation and resorption was impeded [59]. These findings indicate that CAPE is a potential therapeutic agent to inhibit osteoclast bone resorption and osteolysis and thus could potentially be used to prevent aseptic loosening.

Crucially in the current experiment, CAPE has been shown for the first time to significantly inhibit murine calvarial osteolysis induced by PE particles. CAPE significantly reduced the localized surface resorption area on the outer and inner surfaces of the calvariae in the PE+CAPE group, as well as significantly reduced the volumetric bone loss, restoring the levels of percentage resorptive area and BV change of the control group. This suggests the effectiveness of CAPE to prevent bone resorption mediated by PE particles likely due to its modulatory properties to abrogate osteoclastogenesis via NFATc1 and NF- κ B signaling. Of note, CAPE did not reduce the systemic resorption induced in PE group as reflected by the serum levels of CTX-1.

Conflicting reports exist as to the levels of OSCAR in erosive disease such as RA. Decreased soluble OSCAR levels have been reported in active RA patients compared with healthy patients [24, 25]. Further to this, Zhao demonstrated that there is an inverse

relationship between RA and the presence of erosions, and hence soluble OSCAR has been proposed to be a potential regulator of osteoclast activity [25]. However a more recent finding found low levels in healthy individuals and high in active RA [60]. Our findings are consistent with this more recent report that in our murine model of osteolysis, OSCAR was increased in the serum of mice with PE-induced bone resorption. Of note, it is important to consider that in mice cell associated and possibly secreted OSCAR is limited to osteoclasts [61], whereas in humans it is expressed and potentially released by multiple cells types including dendritic cells, osteoclast and endothelial cells in the human [26, 62].

Additionally, in this study the effects of PE particles and CAPE treatment on the GIT were investigated. Although PE particles may travel elsewhere in the body and induce bone resorption systemically [7], this study found no effect on the gastrointestinal tract. Literature has suggested that CAPE at high dose may cause systemic toxicity, in particular reduced body weight as evidenced in a rat model of colitis [32]. CAPE has also been reported to induce apoptotic cell death in a dose-dependent fashion on a glucocorticoid-sensitive and –resistant cell line of lymphoid origin, increased leukocyte apoptosis and lead to a marked reduction in exudate leukocyte, neutrophil and monocyte concentrations at the inflammatory site in a rat model of carrageenan-induced subcutaneous inflammation [63]. Therefore it was a critical finding that that low doses of CAPE did not adversely affect the GIT.

5.5.Conclusion

PE particles significantly induced bone loss as assessed by increased bone surface resorption and local volumetric bone loss in a calvarial murine model of PE induced osteolysis. Additionally, although PE affected systemic bone resorption as indicated by CTX-1 levels, it did not affect GIT histopathology. Importantly an NF- κ B and NFAT inhibitor, CAPE at low dose significantly reduced PE-induced surface bone resorption and local volumetric bone loss in the calvarial animal model. Low dose CAPE in the PE treated mice had inhibitory effect on bone resorption but did not adversely affect the GIT histopathology.

5.6.Acknowledgement

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5.7.References

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5.8. Figure legends

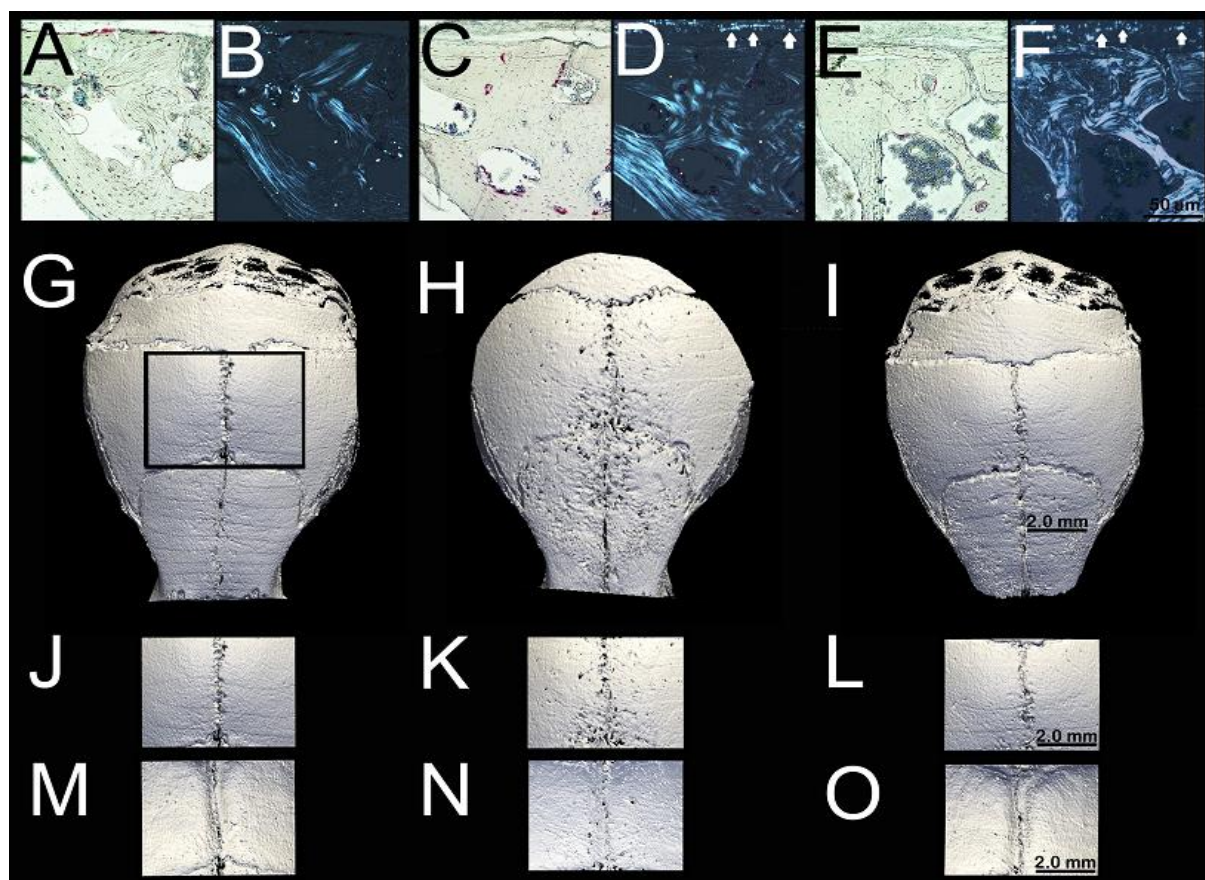


Figure 5.1

(A, B, G, J, M) Control. (C, D, H, K, N) PE only. (E, F, I, L, O) PE+CAPE. (A-F) Calvarial tissue sections stained with TRAP, with the periosteal surface found at the top of the image, and the midsagittal sutures or their remnants are located on the right hand-side of images. Magnification: $\times 100$. (A, C, E) TRAP+ve cells stained red. (B, D F) Tissues viewed under polarized light, and the PE particles appeared bright as shown by arrows. (G-I) Three-dimensional μ CT images of mouse calvariae at day 14. (G) Location of ROI (length \times width, 4.35 \times 5.22mm) depicted by black box. (J-O) Rectangular ROI images (length \times width, 4.35 \times 5.22mm) selected for quantitative analysis over the calvariae. (J-L) View of the outer surface and (M-O) of the inner surface of the ROI. (H) The resorption area on the surface of the calvariae of the PE implanted group are visible whilst (I) in the CAPE-treated PE group have been abrogated.

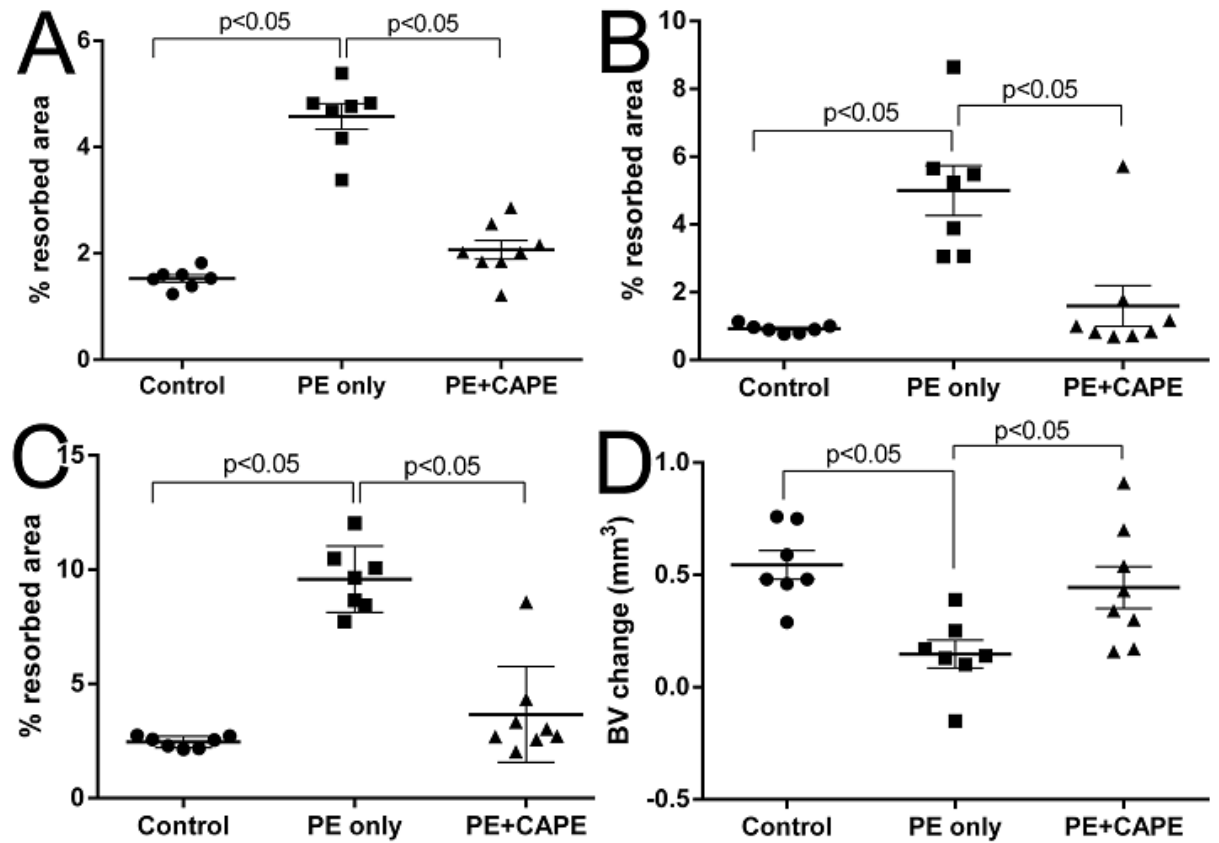


Figure 5.2

Quantitative μ CT analysis within the rectangular ROI selected (see Figure 5.1) at day 14, percentage resorption bone area for (A) the outer surface of the calvariae, (B) the inner surface of the calvariae, (C) combined outer and inner surfaces of the calvariae, (D) Change in bone volume (BV) compared to baseline. The values are presented as mean \pm S.E. Significance was considered as $p < 0.05$.

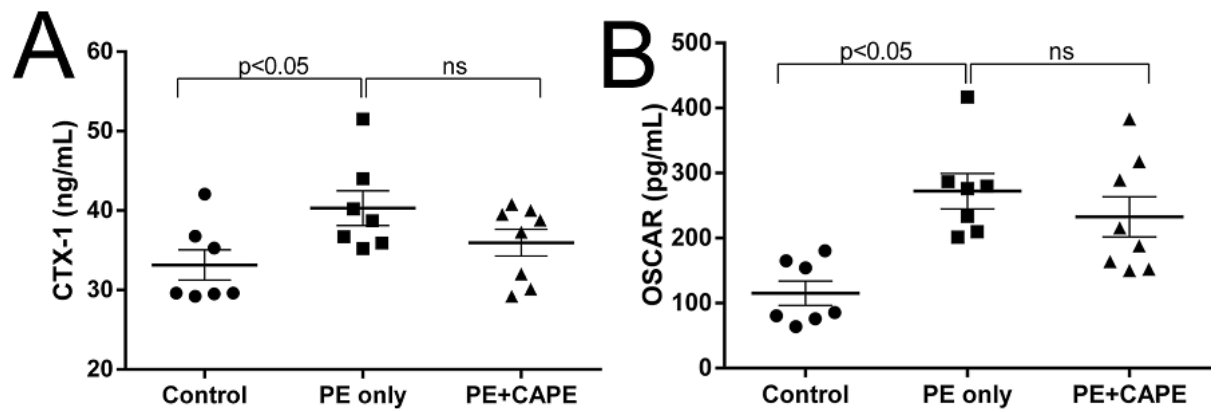


Figure 5.3

Biochemical analyses of the murine serum in a particle induced murine model of osteolysis. (A) CTX-1 concentration as an indicator of systemic bone resorption. (B) Soluble OSCAR levels as a potential modulator of osteoclast activity. The values are presented as mean±S.E. Significance was considered as $p < 0.05$.

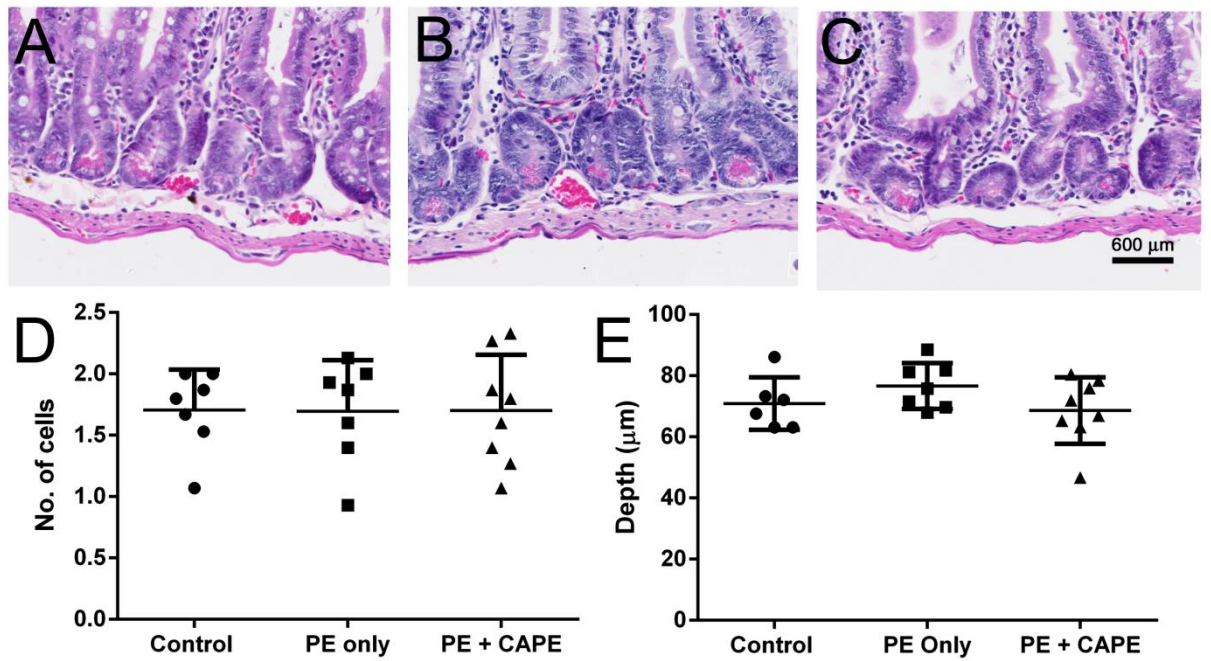


Figure 5.4

Morphological analysis of the jejunum by H&E staining. Magnification $\times 300$. (A) Control. (B) PE only. (C) PE+CAPE (D) Number of jejunul crypt apoptosis. (E) Jejunul crypt depth.

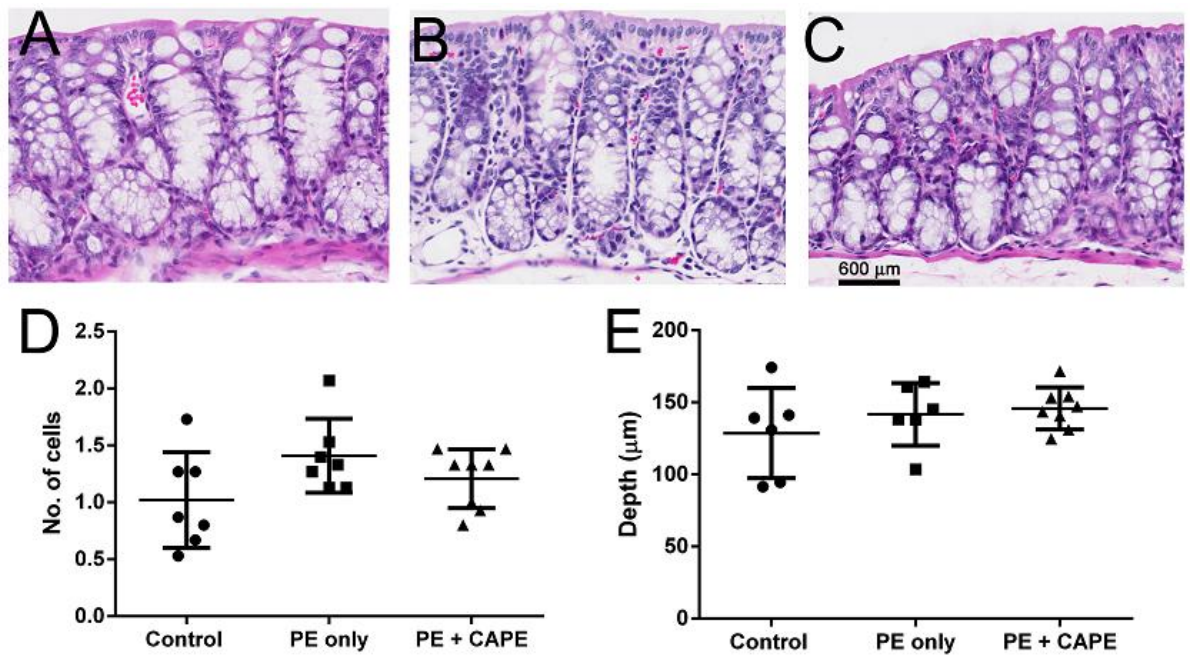


Figure 5.5

Morphological analysis of the colon by H&E staining. Magnification $\times 300$. (A) Control. (B) PE only. (C) PE+CAPE. (D) Number of jejunal crypt apoptosis. (E) Jejunal crypt depth.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion

6.1. Discussion

Particle-induced osteolysis is a major cause of aseptic loosening and subsequent implant failure following total joint arthroplasty. Following phagocytosis of wear debris macrophages and FBGCs release the osteoclastic pro-inflammatory mediators, including RANKL, TNF α and IL-1 [1-4], that increase recruitment of osteoclast precursor cells into tissues around the prostheses and enhance osteoclast differentiation [5-7]. Thus chronic inflammation within the tissues [8-12] induces excessive osteoclast bone resorption which is largely responsible for particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis and subsequent loosening of the prosthesis [13]. It has been shown that particles regulate the expression of osteoclast-associated genes including NFATc1 [14], NF- κ B [15], RANKL and OPG [8, 9, 16], as well as ITAM-related molecules [17]. Hence, investigation of factors regulating osteoclastogenesis and their regulation by wear particles will help us better understand the pathology of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

As shown in normal osteoclastogenesis [18-20] and particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis [17], NFATc1 and NF- κ B play key roles to enhance RANKL-mediated osteoclast formation and differentiation [17-20]. In addition to this, the ITAM-dependent pathway provides co-stimulatory signals that stimulate calcium signals to activate the calcineurin [21], thereby enhancing NFATc1 expression via a positive feedback loop [19, 20]. Supporting this concept, calcineurin-NFAT inhibitors including FK506 [18, 22] and VIVIT [23, 24] have been demonstrated to suppress osteoclastogenesis during pathological bone loss. Consistent with previous publications, the present study (Chapter 2) confirmed that FK506 [25] and VIVIT [26] inhibit RANKL-induced osteoclast differentiation, as assessed by number of multinucleated cells expressing TRAP, and osteoclast resorption activity *in vitro*. To date NC100 has not been studied in regard to its effects on osteoclastogenesis but its anti-cancer or anti-inflammatory activities are well established through its regulation of NF- κ B [27-30]. Here, for the first time the inhibitory effect of NC100 on osteoclast formation and resorption activity in normal human PBMC- and BMM-derived osteoclast cultures *in vitro* is demonstrated (Chapter 3).

The effects of FK506 or VIVIT on osteoclast-associated gene expression during osteoclastogenesis have been shown *in vitro* [25] and *in vivo* [26]. In this study (Chapter

2), we found FK506 significantly reduced both CathK and NFATc1 expression in RANKL-induced osteoclast cultures. This is consistent with the previous reports demonstrating a reduction in NFATc1 expression by FK506 [25]. VIVIT has been shown to inhibit CathK and NFATc1 expression in a murine model of Ti particle-induced osteoclast formation [26]. However, VIVIT in this study (Chapter 2) significantly reduced CathK but not NFATc1 expression in normal PBMC-derived human osteoclast development. In addition to the inhibition of osteoclast formation and resorption *in vitro* (Chapter 3), NC100 suppressed osteoclast marker genes, CathK and NFATc1. This indicates NC100 takes its effect through the regulation of NFATc1 and NF- κ B *in vitro*. NC100 also inhibited murine OVX-induced bone loss *in vivo* through NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibition (Chapter 3).

Collectively, various studies [18, 25, 26], including those presented here (Chapters 2 and 3), demonstrate that inhibition of NFATc1 plays an essential role in RANKL-induced osteoclast differentiation and resorption. In addition to regulating NFATc1 signalling in osteoclasts, other studies [31, 32] and ours (Chapter 3) found that inhibition of RANKL-induced NF- κ B activation also inhibits osteolysis. Over the past few years studies have investigated several natural compounds that have inhibitory effects on osteoclast formation and bone resorption through suppression of RANKL-induced NF- κ B activation [31, 33-38]. These include two natural inhibitors being investigated in this thesis: PAR (Chapter 4) which inhibited LPS-induced osteolysis in mice through NF- κ B suppression [35] and CAPE (Chapter 5) which suppressed osteoclastogenesis *in vitro* [36, 39]. CAPE also inhibited OVX-induced bone loss in a murine model through NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibition [39].

In the context of particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis, PE wear rate has been shown to correlate with enhanced peri-prosthetic osteolysis and subsequent implant failure [10, 40-44]. A murine calvarial model has been developed to investigate the osteoclast-associated cellular responses to the exposure to PE particles in this thesis, similar to that used by others [45-50]. The findings presented here were the first μ CT studies to calculate volumetric changes overtime after administration of PE particles in a murine calvarial model. The use of live animal μ CT allows us to use each animal as its own control thus reducing number of animals required and increasing the accuracy of measurement of bone

loss (Chapters 4 and 5). The bone volumetric measurements (BV and BV/TV) were determined over the VOI which encompasses the entire skull thickness, from the internal to external surface (3D slab) [51]. In the current study, PE particles at day 14 post-surgery significantly induced osteolysis when compared to the control (Chapters 4 and 5), consistent with numerous previous analyses of the *ex vivo* μ CT scans at final day of experiments [46, 48-50, 52, 53].

Previously, PAR and CAPE have been shown to inhibit NF- κ B [31, 35] and both NF- κ B and NFATc1 [36, 54-57], respectively, and both were shown to suppress osteoclastogenesis and osteoclast resorption *in vivo*. This demonstrates the therapeutic potential of PAR and CAPE for the treatment of disease where excessive osteoclast bone resorption occurs, such as aseptic loosening. In our murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis, PAR has been shown to not significantly affecting BV after 14 days when compared to the baseline (Chapter 4). This contradicted a previous finding which showed PE-given mice receiving daily treatment of 1mg/kg PAR for 7 days post-surgery had a significant reduction in bone volume fraction (BV/TV) measurements at day 7 [53]. However, the findings suggest PAR is able to prevent volumetric PE-induced osteolysis at the earlier stage (day 7) rather than the late stage (day 14) of peri-prosthetic osteolysis. Interestingly CAPE significantly reduced the volumetric bone loss at day 14 when compared to the baseline. This was consistent with the fact that CAPE inhibited osteoclast differentiation *in vitro* [36] and osteoporotic bone loss in mice [57].

Many studies including ours (Chapters 4 and 5) have shown volumetric effects of PE particles on bone, but there is no report quantifying the bone surface resorption. We contend that the surface erosions are highly important as these better reflect the *in vivo* situation in human as numerous studies have shown that resorption near implants occurs on the bone surface at the interface [58] and at sites with high concentrations of PE wear particles in the soft tissues [10]. Our studies included extensive quantitative analysis of the calvarial surface bone resorption using the μ CT-derived images of the region of interest of the skull (Chapters 4 and 5). This enabled measurement of significantly increased resorptive area both on the outer and inner surfaces of the calvariae when compared to the control (Chapters 4 and 5). The osteolysis induced of both internal and external surface erosion suggests that the particles can induce resorption at a distance. This is most likely

due to diffusion of mediators induced by PE particles stimulating osteoclast activity into the bone marrow. This may also occur within the bone and on the trabeculae.

Importantly, NF- κ B inhibition by PAR (Chapter 4) and NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibition by CAPE (Chapter 5) treatment significantly reduced this surface resorption on the outer and inner surfaces of the calvariae in PE-given mice. This suggests that PAR and CAPE can focally reduce bone surface resorption adjacent to the implanted PE particles (Chapters 4 and 5). Further work is necessary to identify why at day 14 PAR affects only PE-induced calvarial surface erosions but not volume (Chapter 4). It is possible this is due to the different mechanisms of bone erosion occurring at the surface and within bone, and these have different sensitivities to PAR. This thesis showed for the first time that CAPE significantly reduce the localized surface resorption area on the outer and inner surfaces of the calvariae in the PE-given mice (Chapter 5). Together with the significant reduction in the volumetric bone loss, the ability of CAPE to restore normal levels of surface resorptive area and BV may be due to the fact that CAPE can prevent PE-induced bone resorption via both NFATc1 and NF- κ B signalling (Chapter 5).

There are multiple reports of particulate wear debris in the serum, urine and end-organs in patients [59-64]. Thus, it is important to investigate whether PE particles can affect bone resorption systemically. CTX-1 levels, a good indicator of systemic bone loss [65], were significantly increased in PE-given mice (Chapters 4 and 5) suggesting particles either directly or indirectly induce bone loss possibly via the movement of particles or cytokines [66]. Our findings in Chapters 4 and 5 supported previous reports that wear debris can enhance osteoclastogenesis and subsequent osteolysis [67] locally [50] and systemically [66]. Notably while we found PAR and CAPE treatment reduced CTX-1 levels, the differences were not significant when compared to mice not given PE (Chapters 4 and 5).

Although PE particles appeared to increase systemic osteolysis (Chapters 4 and 5), we found no significant systemic effects of PE particles on the colon and jejunum of GIT (Chapter 5). Previous findings have shown CAPE at a high dose caused systemic toxicity and reduced body weight in a rat model of colitis [68]. CAPE also can induce apoptotic cell death in a dose-dependent fashion significantly reducing leukocyte, neutrophil and monocyte concentrations at the inflammatory site in a rat model of carrageenan-induced subcutaneous inflammation [69]. Therefore, it was important to determine the effects of

CAPE during treatment and it was found that it did not adversely affect the GIT (Chapter 5). An unexpected result was that, in the absence of particles, PAR increased CTX-1 levels (Chapter 4), suggesting CAPE can affect normal bone metabolism.

Consistent with previous findings [22, 25], ITAM related molecules are strongly expressed during the late stages of osteoclastogenesis *in vitro* (Chapters 2 and 3). The expression of ITAM adaptor molecules, FcR γ and DAP12 was significantly reduced by FK506, whereas, VIVIT significantly reduced FcR γ but not DAP12 (Chapter 2). To our knowledge, NFATc1 has not been shown to directly induce DAP12 and this is consistent with the lack of inhibition with the more specifically acting inhibitor VIVIT. In a study using murine BMM-derived osteoclasts OSCAR, but not TREM2 expression, was inhibited by FK506 [22]. Importantly, our studies demonstrated that both TREM and OSCAR were inhibited by FK506 in the late stage of human PBMC-derived osteoclast formation (Chapter 2). Interestingly, we noted that VIVIT suppressed OSCAR but not TREM2 expression (Chapter 2). This independent regulation of OSCAR and TREM2 was consistent with promoter studies demonstrating direct induction of OSCAR, but not TREM2, by NFATc1 [22]. This may be because VIVIT inhibits calcineurin-mediated dephosphorylation of NFATs without affecting calcineurin phosphatase signalling and non-NFAT mediated signalling. In contrast, FK506 acts further upstream, more broadly affecting both calcineurin phosphatase signalling and non-NFAT mediated signalling [23, 70]. In this study (Chapter 3) for the first time we reported that NC100 significantly reduced the expression of OSCAR, TREM2, FcR γ and DAP12 during late stage osteoclast differentiation.

Soluble OSCAR has been proposed as a regulator of osteoclast activity in osteolysis in RA [71, 72]. It has been suggested that there is an inverse relationship in RA with the presence of erosions [72] corresponding to lower levels of soluble OSCAR in active RA patients compared with healthy patients [71, 72]. We found almost undetectable levels of serum OSCAR in patients with end-stage wear-induced osteolysis as well as in primary osteoarthritis patients (Chapter 4). Importantly, in our mouse model of osteolysis, higher levels of soluble OSCAR were found in the serum of mice with PE-induced bone resorption when compared to control (Chapters 4 and 5). Our findings were consistent with a recent finding showing higher levels of OSCAR in active RA patients compared to

healthy individuals [73]. In mice, OSCAR was only associated with osteoclasts [19], whereas, in humans OSCAR can be expressed by multiple cells types [74, 75] including dendritic cells [76], osteoclasts [19] and endothelial cells [77]. Together these data strengthen the idea that modulation of osteoclastogenesis through inhibition of NF- κ B/NFATc1 regulate ITAM-associated molecule OSCAR in osteolysis (Chapters 4 and 5) further supporting our *in vitro* findings in normal human osteoclast cultures (Chapters 2 and 3).

It has been suggested that osteocytes may also contribute to the development of particle-induced osteolysis. Osteocytes may regulate peri-prosthetic osteolysis via apoptotic signals [78, 79]. As osteocytes have been shown to undergo apoptosis in response to wear particles *in vitro* [80] as well as surface fatigue-induced microdamage [78], resulting in bone containing the dead osteocytes being resorbed by osteoclasts. Consistent with this, the current study found PE particles significantly increased osteocyte death as assessed by empty lacunae *in vivo* (Chapter 4). Additionally, PE particles can directly induce osteocytes to produce RANKL, thus directly stimulating particle-induced osteolysis [81]. This may explain the significant resorption observed on the bone surface around the location of the PE particles as well as the bone volumetric changes (Chapters 4 and 5). A recent report found TNF- α enhanced sclerostin expression in an NF- κ B-dependent manner in the osteocyte cell line, MLO-Y4, indicating NF- κ B could have a role in osteocyte functions [82]. It is possible PE particles induce NF- κ B in osteocytes, thus inducing osteolysis, and this merits further study.

In Chapter 4 it was shown that PAR significantly reduced numbers of dead osteocytes and surface osteolysis indicating that these may be related as discussed above. Likewise, PAR treatment resulted in a significant reduction in PE-induced bone surface resorption as assessed by internal and external surface resorption but not bone volume resorption (Chapter 4). The ability of PAR to inhibit surface erosion induced by PE particles is important as surface erosion may better reflect the *in vivo* situation where bone is resorbed on the surface at the bone-implant interface. This may be related to the role of osteocytes in this pathology discussed above. CAPE treatment significantly reduced both PE-induced bone surface resorption and reduction in bone volume (Chapter 5). It would be valuable to further investigate the mechanisms behind the different effects of PAR and CAPE

treatments. In particular, whether osteocyte death is regulated by NF- κ B and if inhibition of NF- κ B/NFATc1 by CAPE could also result in reduced osteocyte death similar to inhibition of NF- κ B by PAR. Overall, the data presented in this thesis demonstrates osteocytes are likely to have an important role in PE-induced osteolysis.

As more specific inhibitors of NF- κ B and NFATc1 are developed, more studies will be carried out on the effects of this type of regulation of osteoclastogenesis and bone resorption. This is likely to identify a novel therapeutic approach to combat inflammation-mediated bone loss including particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

6.2. References

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CHAPTER 7: Conclusion and future directions

7.1. Conclusion

The effects of disrupting NFATc1 and NF- κ B signalling and the role of ITAM-related factors in osteoclastogenesis and bone resorption are only just becoming understood. Overall the findings of this thesis demonstrate there is a crucial interaction between NFATc1, NF- κ B and ITAM molecules in osteoclastogenesis and bone resorption *in vitro* and *in vivo*. NF- κ B or NF- κ B/NFATc1 inhibition can regulate *in vivo* volumetric and surface particle-induced osteolysis as well as one of the ITAM-related molecules, OSCAR in murine particle-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. In addition to the effects of particles and inhibitors of NF- κ B or NF- κ B/NFATc1 on osteoclasts, the study shows that osteocytes are affected. As we are beginning to understand the important role osteocytes play in regulating bone metabolism, the contribution of osteocytes to the progression of osteolysis is worth investigating further. Understanding this complex interaction of bone cells may offer novel ways in inhibiting osteolysis seen in many bone loss pathologies particularly peri-prosthetic osteolysis.

7.2. Future directions

These following future directions may be useful to better understand the mechanisms involved in the studies in this thesis:

1. In Chapter 1 we have discovered the effects of NFATc1 and NF- κ B inhibition by FK506, VIVIT and NC100 on osteoclast formation and activity. In addition, gene expression of osteoclast-associated factors and ITAM-related molecules in normal human PBMC-derived osteoclast cultures *in vitro* was investigated. This indicates that it would be valuable to repeat similar experiments in the presence of PE particles *in vitro*. This would allow us to understand the effects of PE particles on osteoclastogenesis as well as ITAM factors in an *in vitro* model that better reflects that occurring *in vivo*.
2. Additionally it would be important to determine the effects of FK506, VIVIT and NC100 in a murine calvarial model of PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis as these have not been reported yet.

3. Studies similar to that carried out in Chapters 4 and 5 to study the gene and protein expression of NFATc1, NF- κ B, and ITAM-associated molecules in the tissues would allow us understand the effects of PE particles and inhibitor treatments *in vivo*.
4. We have shown the effects of PAR and CAPE in a murine PE-induced calvarial osteolysis in Chapters 4 and 5. In order to further understand the effectiveness of PAR and CAPE to suppress osteolysis, it would be interesting to determine the effects of PAR and/or CAPE on other inflammatory driven disease models, such as, collagen antibody-induced arthritic (CAIA) mouse model, already established in our research group.
5. Due to the time limitations only the effects of NF- κ B inhibition by PAR on osteocytes could be investigated (Chapter 4). It would be worthwhile to extend this study to determine whether NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibition by CAPE (Chapter 5) also affected osteocytes in this disease model.
6. To date there has been only limited *in vitro* research on the effects of PAR on osteoclastogenesis. It would be useful to investigate the effects of PAR more extensively, particularly, on gene expression of osteoclast-associated factors and ITAM-related molecules similar to the approach in Chapters 2 and 3.

The results of this thesis have demonstrated the potential of NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibition to suppress inflammation-mediated osteolysis particularly in PE-induced peri-prosthetic osteolysis. Although our knowledge on the mechanisms of action is limited, the data presented here and the work of others illustrate that the effects of NF- κ B and NFATc1 inhibition may lead to effective treatments of human bone loss pathologies.