



Preventive Efficacy of Fucoïdan in Rats Exposed to γ -Rays

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ABSTRACT

Fucoïdan (FDN); β -1,3-glucan is a natural polysaccharide extracted from brown seaweeds, with a wide variety of biological properties, especially the anti-inflammatory, anti-coagulation and anti-oxidative effects. The objective of this work was to evaluate the radioprotective effect of FDN. The study was performed on Sprague-Dawley rats that were administered during 10 days FDN (100 mg/ kg body wt), rats exposed to 5 Gy γ -rays, rats administered FDN+ γ -rays comparing with control animals. The haemostatic parameters (protein-C, antithrombin-III and tissue-plasminogen activators activities), the haematological parameters: count of blood elements (total leukocytes, neutrophils, lymphocytes) and bone marrow cells (erythroid, lymphoid and myeloid cells) and biochemical parameters: thiobarbituric acid-reactive substances (TBARS) and activities of superoxide dismutase (SOD) and glutathione peroxidase (GSPx) were evaluated. Results showed that γ -rays provoked marked changes in haemostatic markers, haematological parameters and antioxidative enzymes as well as TBARS level. FDN ameliorated the alteration in all tested parameters and markers induced due to exposure to γ -rays. These data demonstrate that FDN might be viewed as a non-toxic potent agent for preventing γ -rays induced cellular hazards. Conclusion, the results may facilitate the development of a new radio protective agent with low toxicity.

Keywords: *Fucoïdan, haemostasis, blood cells, antioxidant enzymes, rat, γ -rays.*

INTRODUCTION

FDN is a heterogeneous sulphated polysaccharide purified from brown algae such as *Fucus vesiculosus* and has a variety of biological effects including mobilization of hematopoietic progenitor cells in man and animals. Recently, it

has been demonstrated that FDN significantly increased the viability of bone cells, which are the main cellular reservoir for the hematopoietic and immune system⁽¹⁾. FDN contains substantial percentages of L-fucose and sulphate ester-groups. FDN possesses anti-oxidative effects related to its capacity to interact with scavenger receptors on cell membrane and its ability to inhibit the synthesis and release of reactive oxygen species (ROS), as well as promoting their clearance⁽²⁾.

To protect the host against the harmful effects of radiation exposure, radio protective agents have been developed over several decades⁽³⁾. Recent studies have focused on the development of radio protective agents derived from natural sources and that display minimal side effects on normal cells⁽⁴⁾. Some polysaccharides purified from herbs have been shown to have radio protective and immune-stimulating effects on host immune cells⁽⁵⁾.

Although the biological functions of FDN in hematopoietic and immune systems have been studied for many years, its radio protective effects on physiological and biochemical alteration induced in irradiated animals have not been elucidated. In this study, we investigated the preventive efficacy of FDN on physiological and biochemical parameters of irradiated rats.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Irradiation

Irradiation was performed with ¹³⁷Cesium, γ -radiation source (γ -Cell⁻⁴⁰ manufactured by the Atomic Energy of Canada, Ltd.) at NCRRT. The dose rate was 0.462 Gy/ min.

Materials and FDN treatment

All reagents used were of analytical grade purchased from Sigma-Aldrich Co., USA. Rats received FDN dosage (100 mg/ kg/ body wt) orally for 10 days before whole-body irradiation according to protocol of Wu *et al.*⁽⁶⁾. FDN dissolved in phosphate-buffered saline.

Animals, experimental design and sampling

Sprague-Dawley rats were purchased from the *Laboratory Animal Centre of the Holding Company for Biological Products and Vaccines*, Cairo, Egypt. Rats were housed under normal standardized conditions with free access to food and tap water. They were handled according to the National Academy of Sciences standards⁽⁷⁾. The animals were randomly divided into 4 groups. Group

1: animals were kept as controls and received 0.5 ml of the vehicle via intra-gastric tubes once daily for 10 days. Group 2: Rats received FDN-dosage dissolved in the vehicle once daily for 10 days. Group 3: Rats exposed to single dose (5 Gy) of whole body γ -rays. Group 4: Rats received FDN-dosage for 10 days and after 24 h exposed to 5 Gy of γ -rays.

All treated rats were sacrificed 24 h after end of the treatment by cervical dislocation. Blood samples were withdrawn from the heart, collected in tubes containing EDTA as anticoagulant. For preparing plasma, it was centrifuged (1000x g for 10 min), collected in test tubes with screw caps and stored at -20°C until analyzed.

Analytical methods

Haemostatic parameters, protein-C and antithrombin-III were determined according to Pabinger⁽⁸⁾ and Tollefsen⁽⁹⁾ using kits from Quimica Clinica Aplicada, Italy and chromogenix, Sweden, respectively. Tissue plasminogen-activators were determined by ELISA-technique according to Holvoet *et al.*⁽¹⁰⁾. Haematological parameters, total leukocytes count as well as differential leukocytes (neutrophils and lymphocytes) studied in peripheral blood drawn by cardiac puncture by automated blood counter (coulter model T 450 x, Contronics Co., USA). The bone marrow cells were prepared from femur as described by Goldberg *et al.*⁽¹¹⁾. Briefly, femoral bone was exposed under aseptic conditions, cells were washed with medium-199, suspended by a syringe with a needle of various diameter, and washed again 2-3 times with medium-199 (centrifuged at 150 x g, for 10 min). Smears of the cells were drawn on clean slides and fixed with methanol for 10 min and stained with May-Granwald Giemsa. At least, 1000 cells were scored from each animal to determine differential elements (erythroid, lymphoid and myeloid cells). Biochemical parameters, lipid peroxidation in plasma was determined as TBARS as described by Yoshioka *et al.*⁽¹²⁾. Activities of SOD and GSPx^(13,14) were determined in rats' fresh blood.

Statistical analysis

All results are expressed as mean \pm SD. Comparisons among groups (n= 10, both sexes in each group) were performed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by the Tukey's post-test, when indicated. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ ⁽¹⁵⁾.

RESULTS

No evident changes in protein-C, antithrombin-III and tissue-plasminogen activators activities were observed in FDN-treated rats in comparison with control group as shown in Table 1.

Table (1): Plasma activity of protein-C ($\mu\text{g/dl}$), antithrombin-III ($\mu\text{g/dl}$) and tissue plasminogen activators (ng/ml) in different groups of animals.

Groups	Protein-C	Antithrombin-III	Tissue plasminogen
Control	78.7 \pm 6.66A	88.7 \pm 8.58A	1.13 \pm 0.11A
FDN-treated	78.6 \pm 7.11A	87.8 \pm 8.32A	1.25 \pm 0.13A
Irradiated (5 Gy)	51.4 \pm 5.43B	53.3 \pm 4.92B	2.85 \pm 0.19B
FDN+ Irradiated	65.7 \pm 6.12C	63.3 \pm 6.22C	1.87 \pm 0.16C

Groups not sharing common superscripts (A, B) differ significantly at $p < 0.05$ level.

As shown in Table 1, significant decreases in activities of plasma protein-C and antithrombin-III as well as a significant increase in activity of plasma tissue-plasminogen activators were recorded in the γ -irradiated animal group compared with the corresponding control and FDN-treated groups. In protected animal groups, the recovery of the 3 haemostatic parameters was significant, compared with the control, FDN-treated and irradiated group.

Table (2): Total leukocyte, neutrophils and lymphocytes count ($\times 10^9/\text{L}$) in different groups of animals.

Groups	Total leukocytes	Neutrophils	Lymphocytes
Control	8.6 \pm 0.79A	3.9 \pm 0.32A	4.6 \pm 0.44A
FDN-treated	8.7 \pm 0.81A	3.9 \pm 0.27A	4.6 \pm 0.43A
Irradiated (5 Gy)	4.6 \pm 0.57B	2.1 \pm 0.31B	2.3 \pm 0.19B
FDN+ Irradiated	6.3 \pm 0.63C	3.0 \pm 0.28C	3.1 \pm 0.28C

Legends as in Table 1.

Table (2) revealed that total leukocyte count was nearly 2-fold decreased after irradiation in comparison with control group and no significant changes were found in rats treated with FDN. The rate of neutrophil and lymphocytes levels in same rats groups was similar to the changes in total leukocyte count.

The recovery of total leukocytes in peripheral blood following FDN-administration before irradiation was significantly high compared with the irradiated group. Furthermore, significant protection of blood neutrophils and lymphocytes were observed in the FDN+ irradiated group of rats.

Table (3): Bone marrow erythroid, lymphoid and myeloid cells (x103/ femur) in different groups of animals.

Groups	Erythroid	Lymphoid	Myeloid
Control	1.1± 0.09A	7.5± 0.64A	76.3± 6.72A
FDN-treated	1.2± 0.11A	7.9± 0.76A	77.6± 6.43A
Irradiated (5 Gy)	0.5± 0.07B	3.6± 0.34B	40.3± 4.11B
FDN+ Irradiated	0.8± 0.63C	5.6± 0.52C	53.1± 5.27C

Legends as in Table 1.

In Table 3, γ -irradiated group show marked significant decreases in erythroid, lymphoid and myeloid cells count comparing with control and FDN-treated groups. In protected group, the count of the 3 types of cells increased significantly, comparing with their values in irradiated group (Table 3).

Table (4): Lipid peroxidation (TBARS), SOD and GSPx in different groups of animals.

Groups	TBARS (n mol/ dl)	SOD (U/ ml)	GSPx (U/ ml)
Control	8.6 ± 0.79A	3.9± 0.32A	5.6± 0.53A
FDN-treated	8.7± 0.81A	3.9± 0.27A	5.6± 0.51A
Irradiated (5 Gy)	14.6± 1.57B	2.1± 0.31B	3.3± 0.23B
FDN+ Irradiated	10.3± 0.93C	3.0± 0.28C	4.1± 0.32C

Legends as in Table 1.

TBARS level in irradiated-group significantly increased comparing with control and FDN-treated groups, but significantly declined in protected group in comparison with irradiated-group (Table 4).

The blood SOD and GPx activities in irradiated-group significantly decreased, comparing with their activities in control and FDN-treated groups. Administration of FDN before-irradiation significantly enhanced these two enzymes as compared to those of the irradiated-group (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

In animals, naturally occurring carbohydrates such as polysaccharides can be sulphated and acts as molecular signals that regulate growth, development, and survival in the environment ⁽¹⁶⁾.

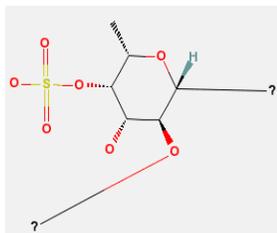


Figure (1): Fucoidan structure.

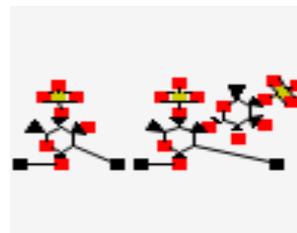
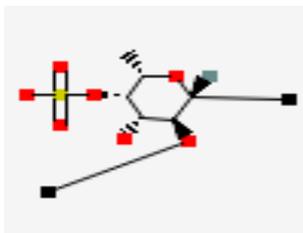


Figure (2): Sulfated fucose.

FDN carries functional groups (carboxymethyl, phosphate and sulphate groups), these sulfate constituents that occurs in biomolecules, can play a critical role in major physiological functions in animals ⁽¹⁷⁾. FDN is made up of β -L-fucose units (Fig. 1) linked by (1 \rightarrow 4) and (1 \rightarrow 3) glycosidic bonds and sulphated (Fig. 2) at positions 2 and/or 3 and/or 4 depending on the algal species ⁽¹⁸⁾.

FDN possess anti-proliferative and anti-adhesive effects on cells, protect cells from viral infection and is widely used as a health-promoting food component. However, studies on the toxicity of FDN from different brown algae are limited. No significant toxicological changes were induced in rats by FDN at a dose of 600 mg/ kg of body wt/ day. However, with 1200 mg, clotting time was significantly prolonged. No other signs of toxicity were observed ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Radiation-induced damage effect to cells by production and activation of haemostatic factors in addition, radiation induced inflammations, which in turn modulate the haemostatic system by induction the coagulation and fibrinolytic systems, altering the balance between pro-coagulant and anticoagulant activities ⁽²⁰⁾.

Protein-C anticoagulant pathway appears to be the major pathway involved in the cross link between inflammation and coagulation ⁽²¹⁾. Antithrombin-III is the physiologic inhibitor of thrombin of the clotting cascade, would be anticipated to decrease thrombin-mediated augmentation of the inflammatory events ⁽²²⁾. The endothelium can trigger and control fibrinolysis by the synthesis and release of tissue-type plasminogen activators ⁽²³⁾.

The present study showed significant decrements in plasma protein-C and antithrombin-III and a significant increase in plasma tissue-plasminogen activators in irradiated animal group. FDN was shown to give a significant

protection when administered before irradiation. Protective actions of FDN were displayed as the inhibition of γ -radiation induced haemostatic disorder. FDN was able to prolong the clotting time of human plasma and inhibited thrombin activity and adjusted platelet aggregation⁽²⁴⁾.

In the present study, the recovery efficacy of FDN on total leukocytes count as well as neutrophils and lymphocytes rates in rats' peripheral blood were observed. The direct antioxidant activity of FDN, its ability to protect against radiation-induced cellular damage and enhance the post-irradiation recovery of haematopoiesis, as well as immune modulator activity together could contribute to FDN radio protective efficacy. FDN inhibited leukocyte recruitment in an inflammation model in rats, the relation between their structure and biological activities remain largely unknown⁽²⁴⁾. Furthermore, it significantly inhibited neutrophil infiltration into the tissues and increased the number of circulating leukocytes 2 h after administration⁽²⁵⁾. In addition, FDN as an immune-regulatory agent could promote the recovery of immunologic function in irradiated rats. The mechanism is associated with the arrest of lymphocyte-apoptosis by FDN⁽⁶⁾.

The hematopoietic syndrome death is often sufficient for the organism lethality because of infection due to the impairment of the immune system⁽²⁶⁾. Bone marrow is the main cellular source for the hematopoietic and immune systems; it contains large numbers of lymphocytes, granulocytes and stromal cells as precursors and mature cells. Our results suggested that specific populations of erythroid, lymphoid and myeloid cells may selectively survive in response to FDN-treatment following irradiation.

This data attributed to FDN affinity to inhibit radiation-induced apoptosis. Furthermore, FDN altered the production of immune-related cytokines from bone marrow cells (BMCs) and increased the capability of BMCs to induce proliferation of allergenic splenocytes that means, FDN had radio protective effects on BMCs with respect to cell viability and immunoreactivity⁽¹⁾. In addition, Wu *et al.*⁽⁶⁾ concluded that FDN could inhibit rat splenic-lymphocyte apoptosis induced by radiation, and its mechanism could be associated with its regulation on expressions of Bax-proteins in splenic-lymphocyte.

Irradiation at the dose level of 5 Gy resulted in marked oxidative-stress presented by the significant increase in TBARS level and decreases in SOD and GSPx activities. Recently, Zahran *et al.*⁽²⁷⁾ and Tawfik *et al.*⁽²⁸⁾ confirmed these

obtained data. According to present study, treating rats with FDN attenuated the increase in the levels of TBARS caused by radiation-injury and enhanced SOD and GSPx activities.

Mitigation of oxidative stress, or excessive free-radical damage, may be especially relevant. FDN as antioxidant protect the outer membranes of cells, particularly blood and immune cells⁽⁵⁾.

Recent studies have shown that FDN was able to increase the antioxidant enzymes in rats treated with oxidant agents⁽²⁹⁾. Furthermore, FDN may represent a new approach for inhibiting the harm caused by excessive free radicals. FDN from *Fucus vesiculosus* had the highest antioxidant activity in relation to the other fractions, with high levels of uronic acid⁽³⁰⁾. According to the results obtained in the present study, it could be concluded that FDN way offered protection against γ -rays induced cellular hazards.

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كفاءة الفيوكيدان الوقائية في الجرذان المعرضة لأشعة جاما

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*قسم البحوث الصحية الإشعاعية ، المركز القومي لبحوث وتكنولوجيا الإشعاع- هيئة الطاقة الذرية ، ص. ب. 29 مدينة نصر ، القاهرة ، مصر.

**قسم علم الحيوان- كلية العلوم- جامعة الملك سعود و قسم بحوث البيولوجيا الإشعاعية- شعبة البحوث الإشعاعية- المركز القومي لبحوث وتكنولوجيا الإشعاع ، هيئة الطاقة الذرية ص. ب. 29 مدينة نصر ، القاهرة ، مصر.

يعتبر الفيوكيدان من الكربوهيدرات (السكريات المركبة) ويتم استخلاصه من فطريات البحر البنية، و يختص بميزاته البيولوجية المتعددة و خواصه: كمضاد للالتهاب والتخثر وكمانع للأكسدة.

تم دراسة الكفاءة الوقائية للفيوكيدان (100 ميلليجرام / كجم) بتجريبه لمجموعة من الجرذان لمدة 10 أيام ، وتعريض مجموعة أخرى لجرعة 5 جراى من أشعة جاما ، ومجموعة تجرعت الفيوكيدان ثم عرضت لأشعة جاما ، وذلك بالمقارنة بمجموعة ضابطة من الجرذان.

تم تقدير بعض معايير التجلط الدموي: بروتين-س (protein-C) ومضاد البرثر ومبين- الثالث (antithrombin-III) ومنشطات البلازمينوجين النسيجية (Tissue-plasminogen). كما تم تقدير بعض المعايير الدموية: عدد كرات الدم البيضاء الكلية (total leukocytes) ، وبعض أنواع الكرات البيضاء ومنها المتعادلة (neutrophils) والليمفاوية (lymphocytes) ، كما تم تقدير تعداد بعض خلايا نخاع العظم و منها عدد خلايا نخاع العظم و الحمرات (erythroid) والليمفاوية (lymphoid) والبيضاء (myeloid) ، وكذلك تم تقدير مستوى حمض الثيوبوربتوريك (TBARS) ونشاط إنزيم وى السوبرأكسيد ديسميوتيز (SOD) والجلوتاثيون بيروكسيديز (GSPx) بالدم. أظهرت النتائج حدوث تغييرات إحصائية بمعايير التجلط الدموي و المعايير الدموية ومستوى حمض الثيوبوربتوريك ونشاط إنزيم وى السوبرأكسيد ديسميوتيز والجلوتاثيون بيروكسيديز المضادان للأكسدة وذلك بسبب تعرض الجرذان لأشعة جاما.

دللت النتائج المتحصل عليها أن وقاية الجرذان بالفيوكيدان أدت الي تحسين مستويات كل المعايير و الدلالات المقدره التي تبدلت نتيجة التعرض لأشعة جاما. كما تشير النتائج أن عقار الفيوكيدان له تأثير وقائي فعال في التصدي لتأثير الإشعاع المدمر لخلايا الجسم.

الخلاصة: الفيوكيدان قد يكون عقار جديد فعال يقي من أضرار الإشعاع يتميز بأنه غير سام عند تناوله مثل غيره من واقيات الإشعاع الأخرى.