Protective Effects of L-Malate against Myocardial Ischemia/Reperfusion Injury in Rats

Shiao Ding, Yang Yang, and Ju Mei

Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Xin Hua Hospital, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, Shanghai 200092, China

Correspondence should be addressed to Ju Mei; ju_mei63@126.com

Received 17 October 2015; Accepted 22 December 2015

Academic Editor: José L. Ríos

Copyright © 2016 Shiao Ding et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Objective. To investigate the protective effects of L-malate against myocardial ischemia/reperfusion (I/R) injury in rats. Methods. Male Sprague-Dawley rats were randomly assigned to the following groups: sham (sham), an ischemia/reperfusion (I/R) model group (model), an DMF pretreated group (DMF), and 5 L-malate pretreated groups (15, 60, 120, 240, or 480 mg/kg, gavage) before inducing myocardial ischemia. Plasma LDH, cTn-I, TNF-\(\alpha\), h s - C R P , S O D , a n d G S H - P X w e r e m e a s u r e d 3 h l a t e I / R . A r e a s o f myocardial infarction were measured; hemodynamic parameters during I/R were recorded. Heart swere harvested and Western blot was used to quantify Nrf2, Keap1, HO-1, and NQO-1 expression in the myocardium. Results. L-malate significantly reduced LDH and cTn-I release, reduced myocardial infarct size, inhibited expression of inflammatory cytokines, and partially preserved heart function, as well as increasing antioxidant activity after myocardial I/R injury. Western blot confirmed that L-malate reduced Kelch-like ECH-associated protein 1 in ischemic myocardial tissue, upregulated expression of Nrf2 and Nrf2 nuclear translocation, and increased expression of heme oxygenase-1 and NAD(P)H:quinone oxidoreductase 1, which are major targets of Nrf2. Conclusions. L-malate may protect against myocardial I/R injury in rats and this may be associated with activation of the Nrf2/Keap1 antioxidant pathway.

1. Introduction

Ischemic heart disease contributes to high health care costs and mortality worldwide [1]. Therapeutic strategies to restore cardiac blood flow to the ischemic myocardium such as thrombolysis, primary angioplasty, and cardiac surgery under cardiopulmonary bypass (CPB) are commonly used. During cardiac surgery under CPB, ischemic cardiac arrest is initiated and perfusion is restored. However, data show that the reperfusion itself is damaging and can exacerbate necrosis, producing myocardial ischemia/reperfusion injury (MIRI) that can influence surgical treatment and postoperative long-term recovery [2–4]. The mechanism of MIRI is unclear and better treatment strategies are needed. Additionally, drugs that offer cardioprotective effects have been studied but few have made it to clinical use, perhaps due to animal model choices for studying drug effects as well as myriad side effects and limited efficacy [5–7]. Fumaric acid, a tricarboxylic acid cycle small molecule metabolite, may offer myocardial protection via activation of the Nrf2 antioxidant pathway [8]. Thus, we speculate that similar compounds may also offer myocardial protection. A structural analogue of fumaric acid, L-malate, is produced during biological metabolism of organic acids and serves as an important metabolic intermediate. In 1967, L-malic acid was recognized as a safe, nontoxic, harmless, and edible organic acid by the US Food and Drug Administration [9]. As a tricarboxylic acid cycle intermediate, L-malate can be easily absorbed into the mitochondrion through the cell membrane, and here it promotes energy production. Research suggests that some organic acids have various pharmacological effects and biological activity, including anti-inflammatory, antiplatelet aggregation, and antioxidant activity, and may reduce apoptosis [10–14]. Thus, our work with L-malate on MIRI is new and preliminary. We report here that L-malate may protect the heart from MIRI and we have postulated a possible mechanism by which it offers myocardial protection.
2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Animals. Male adult Sprague-Dawley rats (200–250 g) were purchased from Chinese Academy of Sciences Holdings Co., Ltd. (certificate number SCXK (HU) 2012-0002). Rats were housed under standard conditions and supplied with drinking water and food ad libitum. All animal experiments were performed in accordance with the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences Guide for Laboratory Animals which conforms to the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals published by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH Publications number 85-23, revised 1996).

2.2. Reagents and Chemicals. An LDH assay kit was purchased from Shanghai Ailex Technology Co., Ltd. (batch number R403ACA). A superoxide dismutase (SOD) assay kit (batch number 20150126) and glutathione peroxidase (GSH-PX) assay kit (batch number 20150124) were obtained from Nanjing Jiancheng Bioengineering Institute. Rat tumor necrosis factor-α (TNF-α) (Catalog number bs-0078R), rat high-sensitivity-C-reactive protein (hs-CRP) (Catalog number bs-0078R), and cTn-I Quantikine ELISA kit (Catalog number 20150126) were obtained from Shanghai J&L Biological Technology Co., Ltd. Nitroblue tetrazolium (N-BT) (Catalog number 3069BI17) was from AMRESCO Inc. (Solon, OH). Antibodies for actin (number sc-1616r), anti-Keap1 (numbers bs-0078R), and cTn-I Quantikine ELISA kit (Catalog number 20150126) were purchased from Shanghai J&L Biological Technology Co., Ltd. All chemicals used were of analytical grade.

2.3. Drug Pretreatment and Myocardial Ischemia/Reperfusion Protocols. L-malate studies on MIRI were performed independently with identical experimental designs. Animals were randomly assigned to 8 groups (N = 10): sham (sham), ischemia/reperfusion (I/R) model group (model), DMF pretreated group (DMF), and the 5 L-malate pretreated groups (15, 60, 120, 240, or 480 mg/kg, gavage), respectively, upon initiation of myocardial ischemia. Sham animals received surgery only (sham-operated), and other groups were subjected to myocardial ischemia and reperfusion 30 min later. In addition, the sham and I/R model control groups were gavaged an equal volume of L-malate vehicle. Vehicle/drugs were administered twice daily for 5 consecutive days prior to the experiment.

2.4. Myocardial I/R Injury. MIRI was carried out via LAD ligation for 30 min followed by 3 h reperfusion at 1 h after the last drug treatment as previously described. Rats were anesthetized with 3.5% chloral hydrate and sacrificed. Hearts were quickly excised and sliced into 6 sections from the position under the ligation line (1.5 to 2 mm). Slices were weighed and immediately incubated in N-BT staining solution dissolved in phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) at 37°C for 10 min. The noninfarcted myocardia were uniformly blue, and the infarction area was not stained or appeared pale yellow. The infarcted weights and left ventricular weights were measured using an electronic balance (FA1104, Shanghai, China). The infarction percentages of the ventricle were calculated.

2.5. Hemodynamic Assessment. We separated the right common carotid artery and connected the RM6240 biological signal processing system to monitor heart function, including left ventricular systolic pressure (LVSP), left ventricular end-diastolic pressure (LVEDP), and first derivative (±dp/dt max) of left ventricular pressure in each group. To eliminate confounding factors of loading conditions of the heart which may influence cardiovascular parameters, additional rats were used to test whether L-malate alone modified LVSP, LVEDP, and ±dp/dt max in normal hearts under sham-operated conditions.

2.6. Measurement of Myocardial Infarct Size. Myocardial infarct size was evaluated using N-BT staining as previously described [5]. Briefly, at the end of 3 h reperfusion, rats were anesthetized with 3.5% chloral hydrate and sacrificed. Hearts were quickly excised and sliced into 6 sections from the position under the ligation line (1.5 to 2 mm). Slices were weighed and immediately incubated in N-BT staining solution dissolved in phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) at 37°C for 10 min. The noninfarcted myocardia were uniformly blue, and the infarction area was not stained or appeared pale yellow. The infarcted weights and left ventricular weights were measured using an electronic balance (FA1104, Shanghai, China). The infarction percentages of the ventricle were calculated.

2.7. Serum Biochemistry. After 3 h of reperfusion, blood samples were collected from the right ventricle and centrifuged at 3,000 × g for 10 min to isolate sera. Then, LDH, SOD, and GSH-PX were measured with kits according to the manufacturer's instructions. ELISA was used to quantify cTn-I, TNF-α, and hs-CRP.

2.8. Western Blot. Nrf2, Keap1, HO-1, and NQO-1 expression were measured using Western blot using myocardial samples extracted after 3 h of reperfusion. Nuclear and cytoplasmic protein were isolated (Pierce, Rockford, IL) according to the manufacturer's instructions. ELISA was used to quantify cTn-I, TNF-α, and hs-CRP.
To investigate potential anti-inflammatory activity of L-malate after MIRI, cytokines associated with inflammation, such as hs-CRP and TNF-α, were measured. Compared with sham, hs-CRP and TNF-α significantly were increased ($P < 0.01$) in model controls. In groups treated with L-malate (240 and 480 mg/kg) hs-CRP and TNF-α decreased compared to model controls, but, at higher concentrations of L-malate, TNF-α increased (Figure 4).

3. Results

3.1. L-Malate Improves Functional Recovery after I/R Injury. No significant difference in LVEDP, LVSP, and $\pm dp/dt_{max}$ was observed in all animals before MIRI (Table 1). Hemodynamic changes recorded in anesthetized animals are presented in Figure 1. After myocardial I/R injury, LVSP and $\pm dp/dt_{max}$ decreased, and LVEDP was significantly increased in controls compared to shams. These effects were partly reversed after treatment with DMF and L-malate ($\geq$60 mg/kg) and these effects were L-malate concentration-dependent.

3.2. L-Malate Reduces LDH and cTn-I Release after I/R Injury. Compared with shams, LDH and cTn-I in models were significantly increased, and these were significantly different ($P < 0.01$) (Figure 2). Compared with models, DMF reduced cTn-I and LDH ($P < 0.05$ or $P < 0.01$); L-malate (120 mg and greater) reduced cTn-I and LDH as well ($P < 0.01$).

3.3. L-Malate Reduces Myocardial Damage after I/R Injury. To investigate the potential protective effects of L-malate against MIRI, we measured the myocardial infarct volume. Figure 3 shows that no MI occurred in the sham group, but MIRI was significant ($P < 0.01$) in the other groups and DMF significantly reduces the ventricular infarction compared to model ($P < 0.01$). L-malate reduces infarct volume in a dose-dependent manner at concentrations greater than 15 mg/kg, which was not different than the vehicle group ($P > 0.05$). The highest dose (240 mg/kg) of L-malate was the most effective and more protection was not observed at higher concentrations.

3.4. Effects of L-Malate and Inflammatory Cytokine Expression. To investigate potential anti-inflammatory activity of L-malate after MIRI, cytokines associated with inflammation, such as hs-CRP and TNF-α, were measured. Compared with sham, hs-CRP and TNF-α significantly were increased ($P < 0.01$) in model controls. In groups treated with L-malate (240 and 480 mg/kg) hs-CRP and TNF-α decreased compared to model controls, but, at higher concentrations of L-malate, TNF-α increased (Figure 4).

3.5. Effects of L-Malate on Antioxidant Activity after MIRI. Antioxidants such as SOD and GSH-PX were increased in model controls compared to shams 3 h after MIRI, suggesting oxidative damage conferred by MIRI (Figure 5). Treatment with L-malate significantly preserved SOD and GSH-PX activity 3 h after MIRI, and this was dose-dependent ($P < 0.05$ or $P < 0.01$).

3.6. Effects of L-Malate on Expression of Keap1, Nrf2, HO-1, NQO-1, and Nrf2 Nuclear Translocation after MIRI. To better understand the mechanism of L-malate on cardioprotection, expressions of Keap1, Nrf2, HO-1, NQO-1, and Nrf2 in nuclear expression in ischemic myocardial tissues were measured using Western blot (Figure 6). Compared with model controls, Nrf2, HO-1, and NQO-1 expression were increased after the higher concentrations of L-malate (240 mg/kg; 1.42-fold, 1.80-fold, and 2.41-fold, $P < 0.01$; 480 mg/kg; 2.03-fold, 1.64-fold, and 3.18-fold, $P < 0.01$). Keap1 expression decreased after L-malate treatment at 240 mg/kg (0.35-fold, $P < 0.01$) and 480 mg/kg (0.27-fold, $P < 0.01$). Nrf2 in nuclear protein was significantly elevated after L-malate at 240 mg/kg (2.12-fold, $P < 0.01$) and 480 mg/kg (2.27-fold, $P < 0.01$), indicating increased Nrf2 nuclear translocation.

4. Discussion

When myocardial ischemia occurs, cardiac blood supply and attendant oxygen and nutrients are diminished [15]. Reestablishment of blood flow after prolonged ischemia can help to alleviate the initial injury but also it can aggravate myocardial damage and eventually cause structural and functional changes [16]. However, rational drug intervention prior to ischemia and reperfusion may reduce the degree of myocardial injury and promote recovery [17].
In the present study, the protective effect of L-malate on MIRI and its potential mechanism were revealed in rats. Data indicate that MIRI leads to necrosis and apoptosis in cardiomyocytes, which ultimately leads to myocardial infarction and cardiac loss of function. L-malate significantly reduced infarct volume induced by MIRI and prevented depletion of cTn-I protein and LDH in ischemic heart tissues when administrated after MIRI. In addition, treatment with L-malate significantly preserved left ventricular function, as reflected by a significant increase in $+\frac{dp}{dt_{max}}$, $-\frac{dp}{dt_{max}}$, and LVSP and a decrease in LVEDP in the MIRI rat heart. These data clearly show that L-malate has a protective effect on MIRI, and this protective effect was dose-dependent up to a point.

MIRI is known to be caused by inflammation, oxidative stress injury, and apoptosis [2], and studies suggest that early inflammatory reactions and oxidative stress are two main pathological contributors to myocardial reperfusion injury [18, 19]. After inflammation is initiated, hs-CRP increases and inflammatory mediators exacerbate myocardial damage not only during acute ischemic injury, but also during the ensuing reperfusion phase [20–22]. TNF-α, IL-1, IL-6, and IL-8 after myocardial ischemia began to produce and release TNF-α [23, 24], which exacerbates myocardial injury via activation of neutrophils and endothelial cells [25]. Here, we observed that L-malate significantly decreased hs-CRP and TNF-α, compared to vehicle-treated animals ($P < 0.05$ or $P < 0.01$). Therefore, the protective effects of L-malate against MIRI
Figure 2: L-malate (LM) reduces myocardial damage after MIRI. (a) LDH and (b) cTn-I were assayed 3 h after reperfusion. Data are presented as means ± SD from 8 experiments. **P < 0.01 versus sham, ***P < 0.01, *P < 0.05 versus model.

Figure 3: L-malate (LM) decreases infarct volume after MIRI. Representative N-BT staining of infarct size. Noninfarcted myocardial stained dark blue, and the ischemic area was white or grayish-yellow. Myocardial infarct volume was assayed 3 h after reperfusion. Data are presented as means ± SD from 8 experiments. **P < 0.01 versus sham, ***P < 0.01, *P < 0.05 versus model.

may be due to suppression of the inflammatory response via inhibiting proinflammatory mediators. Oxidative stress injury through the generation of free radicals and reactive species can directly damage myocardial cells, resulting in cellular structural damage and cell death [26, 27]. Antioxidants are critical for response to endogenous or exogenous oxidative stress, and molecules such as GSH-PX and SOD can be synergistically protective [28, 29]. Therefore, increasing
antioxidant activity may be helpful. L-malate significantly improved SOD and GSH-Px activity ($P < 0.05$ or $P < 0.01$) after MIRI suggesting that L-malate can reduce oxidative stress damage after MIRI.

As a transcription factor, Nrf2-mediated regulation of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory mediators is important for defense against oxidative stress [30]. Nrf2 is localized to the cytoplasm as an inactive complex bound to a repressor molecule, Keap1, which facilitates its ubiquitination, such that cytoplasmic Nrf2 is degraded by the ubiquitin pathway and cannot move to the nucleus [31]. Under oxidative or electrophilic stress, Nrf2 dissociates from the Keap1-Nrf2 complex, and when Nrf2 is not ubiquitinated, it can accumulate cytoplasmically and translocate to the nucleus. There, it can promote antioxidant genes such as NQO-1 and HO-1 and initiate their transcription [32, 33]. Our results indicate that L-malate significantly upregulated expression of total Nrf2, nuclear Nrf2, HO-1, and NQO-1, suggesting that L-malate could promote Nrf2 nuclear transfer, increase HO-1 and NQO-1, and reduce I/R injury. Keap1 is the protein primarily responsible for the regulation of Nrf2 by forming a homodimer responsible for sequestering Nrf2 in the cytosol and rendering it inactive [34]. The activity of Nrf2 is primarily regulated via its interaction with Keap1, which directs the transcription factor for proteasomal degradation. Keap1 expression was significantly downregulated by L-malate.
Figure 6: L-malate (LM) increases expression of total Nrf2 and nuclear Nrf2 protein and HO-1, NQO-1 protein after MIRI and decreases expression of Keap1 protein. Expression of total Nrf2, nuclear Nrf2, HO-1, NQO-1, and Keap1 was measured with Western blot. Densitometric analysis was performed with Quantity One software 24 h later. Data are presented as means ± SD from 3 experiments. **P < 0.01 versus model.
(240 and 480 mg/kg) relative to model controls, but Nrf2 can be regulated independently of Keap1 at the level of protein transcription [35, 36]; it can also be regulated at the level of translation and by posttranslational modifications, including phosphorylation of Nrf2 by interaction with epigenetic factors (micro-RNAs 144, 28 [37, 38]), various protein kinases (PKC, GSK-3b [39, 40]), and other protein partners (p21, caveolin-1 [41, 42]). These and other processes are potentially important determinants of Nrf2 activity with Keap1-independent pathway. So further research into L-malate as a preconditioning protectant of cardiovascular function is warranted.

In conclusion, L-malate can protect the heart against MIRI via anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity and through Keap1/Nrf2-ARE pathway. Thus, L-malate may offer therapeutic efficacy for limiting the severity and functional deficits associated with MIRI.

**Conflict of Interests**

The authors declare no competing financial interests.

**Authors’ Contribution**

All authors conceived and designed the experiment. Shiao Ding carried out the experiment and wrote the paper, Yang Yang took statistical analyses and is the coauthor of the paper. Ju Mei commented on the paper.

**Acknowledgment**

This study was financially supported by Shanghai Science and Technology Grant (no. 13XD1403200).

**References**

[1] C. D. Mathers, T. Boerma, and D. Ma Fat, "Global and regional causes of death," *British Medical Bulletin*, vol. 92, no. 1, pp. 7–32, 2009.

[2] A. V. Songco and S. J. Brener, "Initial strategy of revascularization versus optimal medical therapy for improving outcomes in ischemic heart disease: a review of the literature," *Current Cardiology Reports*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 397–407, 2012.

[3] H. M. Piper, D. García-Dorado, and M. Ovize, "A fresh look at reperfusion injury," *Cardiovascular Research*, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 291–300, 1998.

[4] A. T. Turer and J. A. Hill, "Pathogenesis of myocardial ischemia-reperfusion injury and rationale for therapy," *American Journal of Cardiology*, vol. 106, no. 3, pp. 360–368, 2010.

[5] X.-Y. Wang, W.-P. Dong, S.-H. Bi et al., "Protective effects of osthole against myocardial ischemia/reperfusion injury in rats," *International Journal of Molecular Medicine*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 365–372, 2013.

[6] X. Ji, B. K.-H. Tan, Y. C. Zhu, W. Linz, and Y. Z. Zhu, "Comparison of cardioprotective effects using ramipril and Danshen for the treatment of acute myocardial infarction in rats," *Life Sciences*, vol. 73, no. 11, pp. 1413–1426, 2003.

[7] R. Bolli, L. Becker, G. Gross, R. Mentzer Jr., D. Balshaw, and D. A. Lathrop, "Myocardial protection at a crossroads: the need for translation into clinical therapy," *Circulation Research*, vol. 95, no. 2, pp. 125–134, 2004.

[8] H. Ashrafiyan, G. Czibik, M. Bellahcene et al., "Fumarate is cardioprotective via activation of the Nrf2 antioxidant pathway," *Cell Metabolism*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 361–371, 2012.

[9] X. Zeng, J. Wu, Q. Wu, and J. Zhang, "L-malate enhances the gene expression of carried proteins and antioxidant enzymes in liver of aged rats," *Physiological Research*, vol. 64, no. 1, pp. 71–78, 2015.

[10] K. K. Dharmappa, R. V. Kumar, A. Nataraju, R. Mohamed, H. V. Shivaprasad, and B. S. Vishwanath, "Anti-inflammatory activity of oleic acid by inhibition of secretory phospholipase A₂," *Planta Medica*, vol. 75, no. 3, pp. 211–215, 2009.

[11] K. Takada, T. Nakane, K. Masuda, and H. Ishii, "Ursolic acid and oleic acid, members of pentacyclic triterpenoid acids, suppress TNF-α-induced E-selectin expression by cultured umbilical vein endothelial cells," *Phytotherapy Research*, vol. 17, no. 14, pp. 1114–1119, 2003.

[12] X. Wang, X.-L. Ye, R. Liu et al., "Antioxidant activities of oleic acid in vitro: possible role of Nrf2 and MAP kinases," *Chemico-Biological Interactions*, vol. 184, no. 3, pp. 328–337, 2010.

[13] R. Vari, M. D’Archivio, C. Filesi et al., "Protocatechuc acid induces antioxidant/detoxifying enzyme expression through JNK-mediated Nrf2 activation inmurine macrophages," *The Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry*, vol. 22, no. 5, pp. 409–417, 2011.

[14] J.-L. Wu, Q.-P. Wu, X.-F. Yang et al., "L-malate reverses oxidative stress and antioxidative defenses in liver and heart of aged rats," *Physiological Research*, vol. 57, no. 2, pp. 261–268, 2008.

[15] K. Raedschelders, D. M. Ansley, and D. D. Y. Chen, "The cellular and molecular origin of reactive oxygen species generation during myocardial ischemia and reperfusion," *Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, vol. 133, no. 2, pp. 230–255, 2012.

[16] R. M. Bell and D. M. Yellon, "There is more to life than revascularization: therapeutic targeting of myocardial ischemia/reperfusion injury," *Cardiovascular Therapeutics*, vol. 29, no. 6, pp. e67–e79, 2011.

[17] M. Akhlaghi and B. Bandy, "Mechanisms of flavonoid protection against myocardial ischemia-reperfusion injury," *Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 309–317, 2009.

[18] X. Mu, G. He, Y. Cheng, X. Li, B. Xu, and G. Du, "Baicalein exerts neuroprotective effects in 6-hydroxydopamine-induced experimental parkinsonism in vivo and in vitro," *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior*, vol. 92, no. 4, pp. 642–648, 2009.

[19] H. J. Lee, Y. H. Noh, D. Y. Lee et al., "Baicalein attenuates 6-hydroxydopamine-induced neurotoxicity in SH-SYSY cells," *European Journal of Cell Biology*, vol. 84, no. 11, pp. 897–905, 2005.

[20] T. H. Vu, K. Liu, D. M. Lloyd-Jones et al., " Favorable levels of all major cardiovascular risk factors at younger ages and high-sensitivity c-reactive protein 39 years later—the Chicago healthy aging study," *Preventive Medicine Reports*, vol. 2, pp. 235–240, 2015.

[21] J. E. Jordan, Z.-Q. Zhao, and J. Vinten-Johansen, "The role of neutrophils in myocardial ischemia-reperfusion injury," *Cardiovascular Research*, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 860–878, 1999.

[22] S. Steffens, F. Montecucco, and F. Mach, "The inflammatory response as a target to reduce myocardial ischaemia and reperfusion injury," *Thrombosis and Haemostasis*, vol. 102, no. 2, pp. 240–247, 2009.
Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine

[23] J. Vinten-Johansen, R. Jiang, J. G. Reeves, J. Mykytenko, J. Deneve, and L. J. Jobe, "Inflammation, proinflammatory mediators and myocardial ischemia-reperfusion injury," Hematology/Oncology Clinics of North America, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 123–145, 2007.

[24] P. Kleinbongard, G. Heusch, and R. Schulz, "TNFα in atherosclerosis, myocardial ischemia/reperfusion and heart failure," Pharmacology and Therapeutics, vol. 127, no. 3, pp. 295–314, 2010.

[25] N. G. Frangogiannis, C. W. Smith, and M. L. Entman, "The inflammatory response in myocardial infarction," Cardiovascular Research, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 31–47, 2002.

[26] Z. Xiaohui, Z. Xinfeng, Z. Xin, W. Shixiang, W. Yinmao, and Z. Jianbin, "Determination of the main bioactive metabolites of Radix Salvia miltiorrhiza in Compound Danshen Dripping Pills and the tissue distribution of Danshensu in rabbit by SPE-HPLC-MSn," Journal of Separation Science, vol. 30, no. 6, pp. 851–857, 2007.

[27] I. M. Fearon and S. P. Faux, "Oxidative stress and cardiovascular disease: novel tools give (free) radical insight," Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 372–381, 2009.

[28] A. Rakotovao, C. Berthonneche, A. Guiraud et al., "Ethanol, wine, and experimental cardioprotection in ischemia/reperfusion: role of the prooxidant/antioxidant balance," Antioxidants and Redox Signaling, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 431–438, 2004.

[29] J. Wu, J. G. Hecker, and N. Chiamvimonvat, "Antioxidant enzyme gene transfer for ischemic diseases," Advanced Drug Delivery Reviews, vol. 61, no. 4, pp. 351–363, 2009.

[30] X.-L. Chen, G. Dodd, S. Thomas et al., "Activation of Nrf2/ARE pathway protects endothelial cells from oxidant injury and inhibits inflammatory gene expression," American Journal of Physiology—Heart and Circulatory Physiology, vol. 290, no. 5, pp. H1862–H1870, 2006.

[31] S. L. Slocomb and T. W. Kensler, "Nrf2: control of sensitivity to carcinogens," Archives of Toxicology, vol. 85, no. 4, pp. 273–284, 2011.

[32] K. Takaya, T. Suzuki, H. Motohashi et al., "Validation of the multiple sensor mechanism of the Keap1-Nrf2 system," Free Radical Biology and Medicine, vol. 53, no. 4, pp. 817–827, 2012.

[33] B. Soyalan, J. Minn, H. J. Schmitz et al., "Apple juice intervention modulates expression of ARE-dependent genes in rat colon and liver," European Journal of Nutrition, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 135–143, 2011.

[34] H. K. Bryan, A. Olayanju, C. E. Goldring, and B. K. Park, "The Nrf2 cell defence pathway: Keap1-dependent and -independent mechanisms of regulation," Biochemical Pharmacology, vol. 85, no. 6, pp. 705–717, 2013.

[35] W. Miao, L. Hu, P. J. Scrivens, and G. Batist, "Transcriptional regulation of NF-E2 p45-related factor (NRF2) expression by the aryl hydrocarbon receptor-xenobiotic response element signaling pathway: direct cross-talk between phase I and II drug-metabolizing enzymes," The Journal of Biological Chemistry, vol. 280, no. 21, pp. 20340–20348, 2005.

[36] S. Nair, S. T. Doh, J. Y. Chan, A.-N. Kong, and L. Cai, "Regulatory potential for concerted modulation of Nrf2- and Nkki1-mediated gene expression in inflammation and carcinogenesis," British Journal of Cancer, vol. 99, no. 12, pp. 2070–2082, 2008.

[37] M. Yang, Y. Yao, G. Eades, Y. Zhang, and Q. Zhou, "miR-28 regulates Nrf2 expression through a Keap1-independent mechanism," Breast Cancer Research and Treatment, vol. 129, no. 3, pp. 983–991, 2011.

[38] C. Sangokoya, M. J. Telen, and J.-T. Chi, "MicroRNA miR-144 modulates oxidative stress tolerance and associates with anemia severity in sickle cell disease," Blood, vol. 116, no. 20, pp. 4338–4348, 2010.

[39] S. Numazawa, M. Ishikawa, A. Yoshida, S. Tanaka, and T. Yoshida, "Atypical protein kinase C mediates activation of NF-E2-related factor 2 in response to oxidative stress," The American Journal of Physiology—Cell Physiology, vol. 285, no. 2, pp. C334–C342, 2003.

[40] A. K. Jain and A. K. Jaiswal, "GSK-3β acts upstream of Fyn kinase in regulation of nuclear export and degradation of NF-E2 related factor 2," The Journal of Biological Chemistry, vol. 282, no. 22, pp. 16502–16510, 2007.

[41] W. Chen, Z. Sun, X.-J. Wang et al., "Direct interaction between Nrf2 and p21Cip1/WAF1 upregulates the Nrf2-mediated antioxidant response," Molecular Cell, vol. 34, no. 6, pp. 663–673, 2009.

[42] W. Li, H. Liu, J.-S. Zhou et al., "Caveolin-1 inhibits expression of antioxidant enzymes through direct interaction with nuclear erythroid 2 p45-related factor-2 (Nrf2)," The Journal of Biological Chemistry, vol. 287, no. 25, pp. 20922–20930, 2012.