SHORT COMMUNICATION

Contents of conjugated linoleic acid isomers cis9,trans11 and trans10,cis12 in ruminant and non-ruminant meats available in the Italian market

Francesca M. Cicognini, Filippo Rossi, Samantha Sigolo, Antonio Gallo, Aldo Prandini
Istituto di Scienze degli Alimenti e della Nutrizione, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Piacenza, Italy

Abstract

Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) isomers are considered healthy factors due to their anticarcinogenic, anti-atherosclerotic and lipolytic effect. A recommended daily intake from 0.8 to 3 g CLA/day/person has been proposed to obtain biological effects in humans. The aim of this work was to provide data on cis9,trans11 (c9,t11 CLA) and trans10,cis12 (t10,c12 CLA) contents in meats collected from Italian large-scale retail trade and completing a food CLA database. In a first trial, beef loin meats were characterised for label information available for consumers: origin (i.e., Ireland, France-Italy, Piedmont) and sex of animals. No differences were observed for c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA contents (mg/g fat) of loin meat from male or female. Piedmontese meat showed lower (P<0.05) c9,t11 CLA level (mg/g fat) than Irish and French-Italian meats, whereas similar t10,c12 CLA contents were measured in Piedmontese, Irish and French-Italian meats. Successively, meat samples from different animal species (male and female beef, veal, suckling lamb, belly beef, canned beef meat, pork and horse) were characterised for their contents in c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA. Lamb meat had the highest (P<0.05) c9,t11 CLA content (mg/g fat). The c9,t11 CLA was lower than 2 mg/g fat in veal, pork and horse meats. Low t10,c12 CLA amounts were found in all analysed meat samples. These data provided information to estimate the average daily intake of CLA from meats in an Italian cohort, which can be used in epidemiological studies.

Introduction

The conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) importance is related mainly to the healthy properties of two isomers, cis9,trans11 CLA (c9,t11 CLA) and trans10,cis12 CLA (t10,c12 CLA) (Bhattacharya et al., 2006; Stringer et al., 2010). Anticancer effects have been attributed to c9,t11 CLA (Bhattacharya et al., 2006). The t10,c12 CLA has been reported as CLA isomer responsible for improving features of the metabolic syndrome (Stringer et al., 2010). Conjugated linoleic acid supplementation has been recommended of 0.8 to 3 g per day based on anticancer effects of CLA (Ip et al., 1994; Parish et al., 2003).

Food sources derived from ruminants are significantly richer in CLA than those from monogastric animals (Schmid et al., 2006). As a matter of fact, CLA is produced by either ruminal biohydrogenation of dietary linoleic and linolenic acids or by endogenous synthesis from trans-vaccenic acid via Δ9-desaturase (Griniari and Bauman, 1999; Griniari et al., 2000).

The aims of this work were to determine the contents of c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA isomers in beef loin meats as related to sex and origin of animals, based on meat label information, and to assess the contents of these CLA isomers in meats from different animal species (ruminant and non-ruminant). The current study represented an integrative part of an extended work conducted for estimating the c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA contents in foods (Prandini et al., 2001, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Cicognini et al., 2014).

Materials and methods

Sampling

The meat samples were purchased in pre-wrapped food trays during a one-year period (from January to December 2011) at the most spread and with the highest turnover rate large-scale retail trade (LRT) brand in Italy (FederDistruzione, 2013). Male and female heifer beef loin meats (total of 42 samples) of three different origins (Piedmont, Ireland and French-Italy) were collected (T trial). Moreover, a total of 84 samples of ruminant and non-ruminant meats were collected including male and female beef, suckling lamb, belly beef, canned beef meat, veal, pork and horse (S survey).

Chemical analysis

Fat content was determined in accordance with the UNI ISO method 1443:1991 through a Soxhlet extraction after acid digestion (ISO, 1991).

The lipid extraction was performed according to Folch’s technique (Christie, 1989) as modified by Prandini et al. (2007). The preparation of c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA methyl esters was conducted in accordance with the method described by Prandini et al. (2007). GC instrument, oven parameters and gas variables for c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA methyl esters quantification were as previously described (Cicognini et al., 2014). The limit of detection (LOD) was 0.005 mg/g fat, while the limit of quantification (LOQ) was 0.01 mg/g fat. The c9,t11 and t10,c12 isomer peaks were identified by comparison with the retention times of reference standards (methyl c9,t11 and t10,c12 octadecanoate; Matreya, Pleasant Gap, PA, USA). Since a peak overlapping was found for C 19:0 [internal standard (IS); nonadecanoate methyl ester acid; Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO, USA], the area of interfering peak was measured with and without IS. In our study, the co-elution of the c9,t11+t7,c9+t8,c10 triplet (Blasko et al., 2009) was not checked owing to commercial unavailability of the t7,c9 and t8,c10 isomer standards. Nevertheless, these isomers occur in low

Corresponding author: Dr. Francesca Maria Cicognini, Istituto di Scienze degli Alimenti e della Nutrizione, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, via Emilia Parmense 84, 29122 Piacenza, Italy.
Tel. +39.0523.599286 - Fax: +39.0523.599259.
E-mail: francescamaria.cicognini@unicatt.it

Key words: cis9,trans11 CLA, trans10,cis12 CLA, Meat, Italian market, Animal origin.

Acknowledgements: this research was supported by a grant from Fondazione Romeo e Enrica Invernizzi, Milano, Italy.

Received for publication: 29 September 2013. Accepted for publication: 17 January 2014.

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Italian Journal of Animal Science 2014; 13:3125
doi:10.4081/ijas.2014.3125
Statistical analysis
Data were tested for normality with the Shapiro–Wilk test. Non-normal variables were log-normal transformed before statistical analysis (Petrie and Watson, 2006) and Levene’s test was carried out to verify equality of variances across each combination of two tested factors in T trial (i.e., sex and origin) and meat types in S survey. When variances were homogenous, data were analysed by Mixed procedure of SAS (2010) by using respectively two- or one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) with equal variances in T trial or S Survey, otherwise ANOVA with unequal variances was used. In this case, the Welch’s statistic was used to provide a test of equality of means across the levels of tested factors. Mean post-hoc comparisons were assessed with the LSMEANS statement and the respective level of significance was adjusted according to the Tukey-Kramer method (Littell et al., 2006). The significance level was set at P<0.05.

### Results and discussion

#### T trial
Table 1 shows the $c_{9,11}$, $t_{10,12}$ CLA and fat contents of beef loin meats. No differences were found in the $c_{9,11}$ and $t_{10,12}$ CLA contents (mg/g fat) of loin meat from male and female animals. Female loin meat was 58% richer (P<0.05) in fat than male loin meat, consequently female meat contained an amount of $c_{9,11}$ MLA (mg/100 g meat) about two-times higher (P<0.05).

Piedmontese meat showed lower (P<0.05) content of intramuscular fat (~68% on average) compared with Irish and French-Italian meats. The Piedmontese breed is characterised by muscle hypertrophy or double-muscled. In agreement with our result, this characteristic was associated with meat with lower fat content than meat from normal animals (Aldai et al., 2006). Piedmontese meat exhibited also lower (~35% on average; P<0.05) $c_{9,11}$ MLA content (mg/g fat) than Irish and French-Italian ones. When data were expressed as mg/100 g meat the highest and lowest (P<0.05) values were 29.36 for French-Italy and 4.36 in Piedmont, respectively. Differences in fat content and a possible lower activity of Δ9 desaturase enzyme in leaner animals, as reported by Aldai et al. (2006) and Brugiapaglia et al. (2013), could explain the lower $c_{9,11}$ MLA content in leaner animals compared with fatter animals. In agreement with Brugiapaglia et al. (2013), a positive correlation between $c_{9,11}$ MLA and fat content was observed in the current experiment (P<0.05, r=0.25). No difference due to origin of meats was instead observed in $t_{10,12}$ MLA content. On the other hand, the ruminal biohydrogenation is the only synthesis pathway responsible for the $t_{10,12}$ CLA level in ruminant products as animal tissues do not possess the desaturase enzyme capable of inserting a C 12-double bond into the t 110 C 18:1 molecule (Raes et al., 2004).

#### S survey
Table 2 shows the $c_{9,11}$, $t_{10,12}$ CLA and fat contents of meats from different animal species. Suckling lamb meat had the highest (P<0.05) $c_{9,11}$ MLA content (mg/g fat). In agreement, a review of Schmid et al. (2006)

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**Table 1. Average $c_{9,11}$, $t_{10,12}$ CLA and fat contents of beef loin meat from animals of different sex and origin.**

| Sex     | n  | $c_{9,11}$ CLA, mg/g fat | $t_{10,12}$ CLA, mg/g fat | $c_{9,11}$ MLA, mg/100 g meat | $t_{10,12}$ MLA, mg/100 g meat | Fat, % |
|---------|----|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Male    | 18 | 2.98                     | 0.04                      | 8.23                        | 0.10                           | 2.54   |
| Female  | 19 | 2.88                     | 0.01                      | 17.76                       | 0.06                           | 5.98   |
| Ireland | 9  | 3.34                     | 0.01                      | 13.27                       | 0.05                           | 4.46   |
| France  | 14 | 3.40^a                   | 0.03                      | 29.36                       | 0.16                           | 6.76^a |
| Piedmont| 14 | 2.19^b                   | 0.04                      | 4.36^b                      | 0.04                           | 1.80^b |
| VMSE    | 124| 1.091                    | 14.25                     | 0.687                       |                                |        |
| Sex     |    | P                        | ns                        | <0.05                       | ns                             | <0.05  |
| Origin  |    | P                        | ns                        | <0.05                       | ns                             | <0.05  |

MSE, mean-square error. *Interaction of sex and origin was not statistically significant. ^Interaction is referred to $c_{9,11}$ and $t_{10,12}$ CLA of triplet; #Values were log-normal transformed before statistical analysis. *All the meat samples were obtained from bulls. °Means in the same column within sex and origin with different superscripts are significantly different (P<0.05).

**Table 2. $c_{9,11}$, $t_{10,12}$ CLA and fat contents of meats from animals of different species.**

| Meat type      | n. (total=84) | $c_{9,11}$ CLA, mg/g fat | $t_{10,12}$ CLA, mg/g fat | $c_{9,11}$ MLA, mg/100 g meat | $t_{10,12}$ MLA, mg/100 g meat | Fat, % |
|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| Ruminant meat  | 18            | 2.98                     | 0.04                      | 8.41                        | (7.83)                         | 0.12^a (0.22) | 2.54^a (1.87) |
| Beef male      | 19            | 2.88                     | 0.01                      | 17.59                       | (10.36)                        | 0.06^c (0.05) | 5.96^c (5.17) |
| Veal           | 15            | 1.28                     | 0.07                      | 6.82                        | (6.10)                         | 0.39^c (0.37) | 5.15^c (4.14) |
| Suckling lamb  | 6             | 9.84                     | 0.02                      | 103.96                      | (63.62)                        | 0.34^c (0.31) | 11.59^c (6.93) |
| Belly beef     | 6             | 4.24                     | 0.38                      | 75.13                       | (39.64)                        | 9.27^c (10.32) | 18.81^c (11.83) |
| Veal           | 7             | 2.01                     | 0.54                      | 2.62                        | (1.23)                         | 0.01^c (0.00) | 1.31^c (0.16) |
| Non-ruminant meat | 7             | 0.67                     | 0.01                      | 3.45                        | (3.3)                          | 0.08^c (0.08) | 4.80^c±3.04 |
| Pork           | 6             | 0.34                     | 0.01                      | 0.91                        | (0.75)                         | 0.03^c (0.01) | 2.73^c±1.48 |
| Horse          | 1             | 1.747                    | 0.822                     | 0.976                       | 1.320                          | 0.810             |

MSE, mean-square error. *Interaction is referred to $c_{9,11}$ and $t_{10,12}$ CLA of triplet; °Values were log-normal transformed before statistical analysis. Values are expressed as means and standard deviation (in brackets). °Means in the same column within sex and origin with different superscripts are significantly different (P<0.05).
reported that c9,t11 CLA content in lamb meat can range from 4.3 to 19.0 mg/g fat and this could be associated with diet, being sheep milk rich in CLA (Contarini et al., 2009). According to their high fat content, suckling lamb meat and belly beef showed the highest (P<0.05) c9,t11 CLA amount as mg/100 g meat.

The c9,t11 CLA was lower than 2 mg/g fat in veal, pork and horse meats. The c9,t11 CLA amount in veal meat depends on the diet mainly based on cows’ milk derivatives. Being non-ruminant animals, pork and horse meats showed c9,t11 CLA levels lower than 1 mg/g fat, in agreement with previous studies (Schmid et al., 2006). Studies carried out on mice have shown that CLA is synthesised endogenously from dietary vaccenic acid (C18:1 t11) (Khanal and Dhiman, 2004). Synthesis of CLA from trans-vaccenic acid has been shown to occur in humans too (Adolf et al., 2000). Moreover, Alonso et al. (2003) reported that several species of bacteria derived from the human intestine could synthesise CLA.

Amounts of t10,c12 CLA lower than instrumental LOQ (0.01 mg/g fat) were found in several analysed meat samples. Belly beef showed the highest (P<0.05) level of t10,c12 CLA both as mg/g fat and mg/100 g meat.

Conclusions

This study provided information on the c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA contents in meats available in the Italian LKT. Generally, meat contained low amounts of c9,t11 CLA and almost negligible levels of t10,c12 CLA for appreciation of health benefits in humans. Consequently, the consumption of other food, such as milk and their by-products, should be encouraged to improve daily CLA intake by humans. Alternatively, specific feeding strategies should be taken into account in order to enhance the c9,t11 and t10,c12 CLA contents in meat.

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