

PROSPECT

Bioactive Food Components and Cancer Risk Reduction

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Abstract Research over the last three decades has provided convincing evidence to support the premise that diets rich in fruits and vegetables may be protective against the risk of different types of cancers. Initial evidence for protective effect of fruits and vegetables against cancer risk came from population-based case-control studies, which prompted intense research aimed at (a) identification of bioactive component(s) responsible for the anticancer effects of fruits and vegetables, (b) elucidation of the mechanisms by which bioactive food components may prevent cancer, and (c) determination of their efficacy for prevention of cancer in animal models. The bioactive components responsible for cancer chemopreventive effects of various edible plants have now been identified. For instance, anticancer effect of *Allium* vegetables including garlic is attributed to organosulfur compounds (e.g., diallyl trisulfide). Interestingly, unlike cancer chemotherapy drugs, many bioactive food components selectively target cancer cells. Molecular basis for selectivity of anticancer bioactive food components towards cancer cells remains elusive, but these agents appear promiscuous and target multiple signal transduction pathways to inhibit cancer cell growth in vitro and in vivo. Despite convincing observational and experimental evidence, however, limited effort has been directed towards clinical investigations to determine efficacy of bioactive food components for prevention of human cancers. This article reviews current knowledge on cancer chemopreventive effects of a few highly promising dietary constituents, including garlic-derived organosulfides, berry compounds, and cruciferous vegetable-derived isothiocyanates, and serves to illustrate complexity of the signal transduction mechanisms in cancer chemoprevention by these promising bioactive food components. *J. Cell. Biochem.* 104: 339–356, 2008. © 2007 Wiley-Liss, Inc.

Key words: bioactive food components; chemoprevention; garlic compounds; berry compounds; isothiocyanates

BACKGROUND

Accumulating evidence suggests that diet, in addition to containing cancer causing substances, also contains many cancer preventive agents [reviewed by Kelloff, 2000; Liu, 2003; Surh, 2003; Milner, 2004; Davis and Milner,

2006]. This implies that many cancers may be prevented by changes in dietary habits. It is becoming increasingly clear that many dietary agents can retard or prevent the process of carcinogenesis by multiple mechanisms including (a) enhanced detoxification of the carcinogenic intermediates through induction of

Abbreviation used: OSCs, organosulfides; ITCs, isothiocyanates; DADS, diallyl disulfide; DATS, diallyl trisulfide; SAC, S-allyl cysteine; SAMC, S-allylmercaptocysteine; Cdk1, cyclin-dependent kinase 1; ROS, reactive oxygen species; JNK, c-Jun N-terminal kinase; NMBA, N-nitrosomethylbenzylamine; COX-2, cyclooxygenase-2; iNOS, inducible nitric oxide synthase; NF- κ B, nuclear factor- κ B; MAPK, mitogen-activated protein kinase; PEITC, phenethyl isothiocyanate; BITC, benzyl isothiocyanate; AITC, allyl isothiocyanate; SFN, sulforaphane.

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phase 2 drug metabolizing enzymes, (b) reduced carcinogen activation due to suppression of cytochrome P450-dependent monooxygenases, (c) selective promotion of apoptosis (cell death) in cancer cells but not in normal epithelial cells, (d) perturbations in cell cycle progression, and (e) inhibition of angiogenesis and metastasis [Kelloff, 2000; Surh, 2003; Milner, 2004; Davis and Milner, 2006]. Cancer chemopreventive effect of food constituents is also supported by epidemiological data. For example, the epidemiological correlation for protective effect of cruciferous vegetables (e.g., broccoli) and *Allium* vegetables (e.g., garlic) against cancer risk is quite strong [You et al., 1989; Verhoeven et al., 1996]. Laboratory studies have documented strong chemopreventive and possibly cancer chemotherapeutic effects of whole foods and bioactive food components against cancers of the skin, lung, breast, colon, liver, stomach, prostate and other sites [Kelloff, 2000; Liu, 2003; Surh, 2003; Milner, 2004; Davis and Milner, 2006]. The promising dietary chemopreventive compounds, which have demonstrated anticancer effects in more than one tumor model, include (–)-epigallocatechin gallate in green tea, resveratrol in grapes, lupeol in fruits like mango, delphinidin in pigmented fruits, curcumin in turmeric, sulforaphane (SFN) and other isothiocyanates (ITCs) in cruciferous vegetables, organosulfur compounds (OSCs) in *Allium* vegetables, lycopene in tomato, and genistein in soy among many others [Kelloff, 2000; Liu, 2003; Surh, 2003; Milner, 2004; Davis and Milner, 2006]. This article summarizes observational and experimental evidence supporting cancer chemopreventive potential of bioactive components from three common edible plants, including *Allium* vegetable-derived OSCs, cruciferous vegetable-derived ITCs, and berry compounds. Possible gaps in our understanding of the mechanism by which these bioactive food components may prevent cancer and the significance of such studies in relation to clinical translation of laboratory findings are also discussed.

EVIDENCE FOR ANTICANCER EFFECTS OF ORGANOSULFIDES

Epidemiological Evidence

Epidemiological studies continue to support the premise that dietary intake of *Allium*

vegetables may be protective against various types of cancers, including stomach [You et al., 1989; Gao et al., 1999], colorectal [Dorant et al., 1996], esophageal [Gao et al., 1999], and prostate cancer [Hsing et al., 2002]. For instance, a population-based case-control study showed that the risk of prostate cancer was significantly lower in men consuming >10 g/day of total *Allium* vegetables than in men with total *Allium* vegetable intake of <2.2 g/day [Hsing et al., 2002].

Anticancer Effect of Organosulfides in Animal Models

The anticarcinogenic effect of *Allium* vegetables is attributed to organosulfur compounds [e.g., diallyl sulfide, diallyl disulfide (DADS), diallyl trisulfide (DATS), S-allyl cysteine (SAC), S-allylmercaptocysteine (SAMC), ajoene, etc.], which are generated upon processing (cutting or chewing) of these vegetables [Block, 1985]. *Allium* vegetable-derived OSCs are highly effective in affording protection against cancer in animal models induced by a variety of chemical carcinogens. For example, DAS has been shown to inhibit aberrant crypt foci [Wargovich et al., 1996], hepatic foci [Singh et al., 2004a], and *N*-nitrosomethylbenzylamine (NMBA)-induced esophageal tumors in rats [Wargovich et al., 1988], and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon-induced skin carcinogenesis in mice [Singh and Shukla, 1998]. Likewise, DADS has been shown to inhibit chemically induced colon carcinogenesis in rats [Takahashi et al., 1992; Reddy et al., 1993], *N*-methyl-*N*-nitrosourea-induced rat mammary carcinogenesis [Schaffer et al., 1996], and skin tumors in mice [Dwivedi et al., 1992]. The DADS treatment also inhibited 2-amino-1-methyl-6-phenylimidazo[4,5-b]pyridine-induced mammary carcinogenesis in rats [Suzui et al., 1997]. Studies from our laboratory have shown that DADS suppresses growth of H-ras oncogene-transformed tumor xenografts in nude mice without causing weight loss or any other side effects [Singh et al., 1996]. Similarly, oral gavage of 6 μ mol DATS (three times per week) to male nude mice significantly inhibited growth of PC-3 human prostate cancer xenografts [Xiao et al., 2006a]. Protective effect of garlic oil against skin tumor promotion [Belman, 1983], garlic extract against methylcholanthrene-induced carcinogenesis of the uterine cervix of

mice [Hussain et al., 1990], and ajoene against skin tumor promotion in mice [Nishikawa et al., 2002] has also been documented.

Mechanisms for Anticancer Effects of Organosulfides

A review of the literature suggests that OSCs may prevent cancer by multiple mechanisms including impairment of carcinogen activation, enhanced inactivation of carcinogenic intermediates through induction of phase 2 enzymes, inhibition of post-translational modification of oncogenic Ras, induction of apoptosis, inhibition of cell cycle progression, histone modification, inhibition of angiogenesis and metastasis [reviewed by Shukla and Kalra, 2007; Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007a]. For example, diallyl sulfide has been reported to inhibit 2-amino-fluorene-DNA adduct formation in human promyelocytic leukemia cells [Lin et al., 2002], inhibit cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) in HEK 293T cells [Elango et al., 2004], and competitively inhibit the activity of cytochrome P-450E1 in a time- and NADPH-dependent manner with pseudo-first-order kinetics [Brady et al., 1991]. The diallyl sulfide, DADS and/or DATS are potent inducers of the expression of phase 2 carcinogen inactivating enzymes, including glutathione transferases in liver, lung and/or forestomach of mice [Sparnins et al., 1988; Hu et al., 1996; Singh et al., 1997, 1998].

It is also becoming clear that OSCs are promiscuous since they target multiple signal transduction pathways to trigger growth arrest and programmed cell death (apoptosis).

The ability of OSCs to cause cell cycle arrest and apoptosis induction was first documented by Milner and colleagues in human colon cancer cells [Sundaram and Milner, 1996; Knowles and Milner, 2000]. The DADS-mediated apoptosis in human colon cancer cells correlated with an increase in the levels of free intracellular calcium and the G2/M phase cell cycle arrest was accompanied by a decrease in p34 cyclin-dependent kinase (cdk1) activity, a reduction in complex formation between cdk1 and cyclin B1, and a decrease in Cdc25C protein level [Sundaram and Milner, 1996; Knowles and Milner, 2000]. Subsequently, the OSC-mediated cell cycle arrest and/or apoptosis induction was shown in human colon cancer cells [Robert et al., 2001], SH-SY5Y neuroblastoma cells [Filomeni et al., 2003], and PC-3, DU145 and LNCaP

human prostate cancer cells [Xiao et al., 2004a, 2005a; Xiao and Singh, 2006; Kim et al., 2007]. More recent studies from our laboratory have offered novel insights into the mechanism by which DATS causes cell cycle arrest and apoptosis induction in human prostate cancer cells. We found that even a subtle change in OSC structure (e.g., oligosulfide chain length and the presence of terminal allyl groups) has a significant impact on its growth inhibitory and apoptosis inducing potency [Xiao et al., 2004a]. Interestingly, a normal prostate epithelial cell line is significantly more resistant to growth arrest and apoptosis induction by DATS compared with prostate cancer cells [Xiao et al., 2005a; Kim et al., 2007]. We showed for the first time that the DATS treated prostate cancer cells are not only arrested in G2 phase of the cell cycle but also in mitosis [Herman-Antosiewicz and Singh, 2005; Xiao et al., 2005a; Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007b]. The DATS-induced G2 phase cell cycle arrest is independent of p21 but correlates with reactive oxygen species (ROS)-dependent down-regulation and Ser216 phosphorylation of Cdc25C, a dual-specificity phosphatase partially responsible for activation of Cdk1/cyclin B kinase complex [Xiao et al., 2005a; Antosiewicz et al., 2006]. Subsequently, we reported activation of a novel checkpoint kinase1-dependent prometaphase checkpoint in DATS treated cancer cells [Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007b]. The DATS-mediated prometaphase arrest was associated with inhibition of anaphase promoting complex/cyclosome as revealed by accumulation of its substrates (cyclin A, cyclin B1, and securin) and hyperphosphorylation of core subunits (Cdc20 and Cdh1) of the anaphase promoting complex/cyclosome [Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007b]. The DATS-mediated ROS generation, which also contributed to the cell death by activating c-Jun N-terminal kinase (JNK), was caused by degradation of iron storage protein ferritin leading to elevation of labile iron pool [Antosiewicz et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2007]. The DATS-mediated G2/M phase cell cycle arrest was significantly attenuated by pretreatment with antioxidants [Xiao et al., 2005a]. A schematic of complexity of signal transduction leading to cell cycle arrest and apoptosis induction by DATS is depicted in Figure 1. Despite these advances, however, the mechanism of DATS-induced cell cycle arrest is not fully understood. For instance, the mechanism by which checkpoint

Diallyl Trisulfide (DATS)

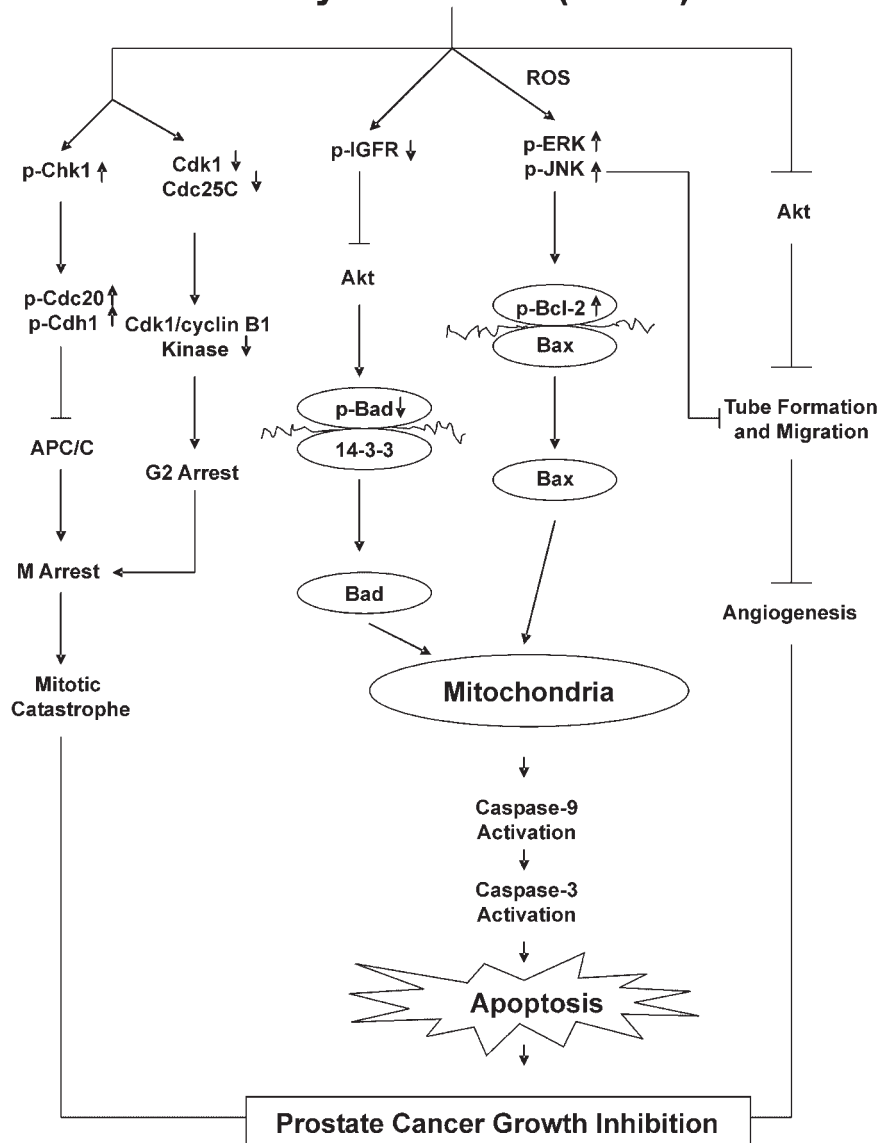


Fig. 1. Summary of signal transduction leading to cell cycle arrest, apoptosis induction, and suppression of angiogenesis by DATS. The DATS-induced G2 phase cell cycle arrest in PC-3 and DU145 human prostate cancer cells correlates with a decrease in protein levels of Cdk1 and Cdc25C leading to accumulation of inactive (Tyr15 phosphorylated) Cdk1 [Xiao et al., 2005a]. The DATS treatment causes a checkpoint kinase 1-dependent prometaphase arrest in cancer cells, which correlates with inactivation of anaphase-promoting complex/cyclosome (APC/C) as evidenced by accumulation of its substrates (cyclin A, cyclin B1, and securin) and hyperphosphorylation of APC/C subunits Cdc20 and Cdh1 [Herman-Antosiewicz and Singh, 2005; Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007b]. The mechanism by

which DATS causes activation of checkpoint kinase 1 remains elusive but may involve ROS-dependent DNA double strand breaks. The DATS treatment causes JNK (and to some extent extracellular signal-regulated kinase)-dependent phosphorylation of Bcl-2 in PC-3/DU145 cells leading to reduced interaction between Bcl-2 and Bax and mitochondria-mediated caspase activation and apoptosis [Xiao et al., 2004a]. The DATS treatment also inactivates Akt leading to reduced phosphorylation and mitochondrial translocation of proapoptotic Bad [Xiao and Singh, 2006]. The DATS inhibits angiogenic features in human umbilical vein endothelial cells in association with inactivation of Akt and JNK activation [Xiao et al., 2006b].

kinase 1 regulates DATS-mediated inhibition of anaphase promoting complex/cyclosome and mitotic block is not fully understood. Likewise, it is unclear if the DATS-induced G2 phase cell

cycle arrest is reversible and serves to allow the cell time to repair damage.

The DADS is shown to increase histone acetylation and p21(waf1/cip1) expression in

human colon tumor cell lines [Druesne et al., 2004]. In addition, Hosono et al. [2005] have documented that DATS can cause specific oxidative modification of cysteine residues Cys-12 and Cys-354 of beta-tubulin in vitro. However, it remains to be seen whether DATS causes oxidative modification of beta-tubulin cysteine in vivo.

As summarized in Figure 1, the DATS-mediated cell death in human prostate cancer cells is caspase-dependent and regulated by JNK-mediated, and to some extent extracellular signal-regulated kinase-mediated, phosphorylation of Bcl-2 (PC-3 and DU145 cells) leading to reduced interaction between Bcl-2 and Bax [Xiao et al., 2004a], inhibition of Akt kinase leading to reduced phosphorylation of proapoptotic Bcl-2 family member BAD and its translocation to the mitochondria [Xiao and Singh, 2006], and induction of proapoptotic proteins Bax and Bak [Kim et al., 2007]. The DATS-mediated suppression of PC-3 xenograft growth in vivo also correlates with induction of Bax and Bak protein expression [Xiao et al., 2006a]. A critical role for JNK in apoptosis induction by DADS has also been observed in neuroblastoma cells [Filomeni et al., 2003]. Apoptosis induction by DATS has been shown in BGC823 gastric cancer cell line [Li et al., 2006] and colon cancer cells [Hosono et al., 2005]. We have also shown previously that DATS treatment inhibits angiogenic features of human umbilical vein endothelial cells in association with suppression of vascular endothelial growth factor secretion, vascular endothelial growth factor receptor-2 down-regulation and inhibition of Akt [Xiao et al., 2006b].

Ajoene, a lipid-soluble component of garlic, induces nuclear factor- κ B (NF- κ B) activation, ROS generation, and apoptosis [Dirsch et al., 1998], and G2/M phase cell cycle arrest [Xu et al., 2004] in human leukemia cells. Garlic and onion oils inhibited proliferation and induced differentiation in HL-60 cells [Seki et al., 2000].

Pharmacokinetics and Human Studies With Organosulfides

A fundamental question, which remains unanswered, is whether the high μ M concentrations of OSCs needed for cancer cell growth suppression and apoptosis induction in vitro are achievable in human in vivo. Limited data exist on the bioavailability of garlic compounds.

The pharmacokinetics of SAC was studied in rats, mice, and dogs [Nagae et al., 1994]. The SAC was rapidly and easily absorbed in the gastrointestinal tract and distributed mainly in plasma, liver, and kidney. The bioavailability was 98.2%, 103.0%, and 87.2% in rats, mice, and dogs, respectively. The SAC was found to be mainly excreted into urine in the *N*-acetyl form in rats. On the other hand, mice excreted both SAC and the *N*-acetyl form. The half-life of SAC was longer in dogs than in rats and mice [Nagae et al., 1994]. The pharmacokinetic parameters for DATS in humans have not yet been measured, but the concentration of DATS in rat blood following treatment with 10 mg of the compound was shown to be about 31 μ mol/L [Sun et al., 2006].

A preliminary, double-blind clinical trial using aged garlic extract (for 12 months at 2.4 ml/day) has recently reported a significant ($P = 0.04$) suppression of both size and number of colon adenomas in patients [Tanaka et al., 2006]. Excessive consumption of garlic can cause burning sensations, diarrhea, and allergic reactions [Siegers, 1992]. A toxicity study in mice has reported that the 50% lethal oral dose (mg/kg body weight) for allicin is 309 in males and 363 in females; for SAC is 8890 in males and 9390 in females; and for DADS is 145 in males and 130 in females [Imada, 1990]. Oral administration of 200 mg of synthetic DATS (also known as allitridum) in combination with 100 μ g selenium every other day for 1 month did not cause any harmful side effects [Li et al., 2004]. Detailed toxicology of OSCs, especially DATS due to its promising preclinical effects, followed by clinical trials is needed to determine whether constituents of *Allium* vegetables may be used to prevent cancers in humans.

EVIDENCE FOR ANTICANCER EFFECTS OF BERRY CONSTITUENTS

Bioactive Components of Berries

Berries (blackberry, raspberry, strawberry, blueberry, cranberry, etc.) contain numerous bioactive compounds including polyphenols (such as several anthocyanins, ellagic acid, gallic acid, ferulic acid, protocatechuic acid, p-coumaric acid, and quercetin), phytosterols (such as β -sitosterol, stigmasterol, and kaempferol), β -carotene, α -carotene, lutein, vitamins A, C, E, folic acid, calcium, and selenium [Stoner

et al., 2006]. Black raspberries contain approximately 15–20 mg of anthocyanins and approximately 2 mg of ellagic acid per gram dry weight [Bravo, 1998; Harris et al., 2001].

Cancer Chemoprevention by Berries and Their Constituents in Animal Models

In vivo studies with ellagic acid have shown that dietary intake of this phytochemical inhibits chemically induced tumorigenesis in the lung [Boukharta et al., 1992], skin [Mukhtar et al., 1984], and esophagus [Mandal and Stoner, 1990]. In addition, dietary administration of ellagic acid has been found to inhibit the development of azoxymethane-induced small intestinal adenocarcinomas in rats [Rao et al., 1991]. Several in vivo studies with freeze-dried berries have also been reported. Berries contain compounds that influence the metabolism of NMBA leading to reduced DNA damage and reduced rate of esophageal cell proliferation compared with control animals [Stoner et al., 2006]. The inhibition of tumor development by berries was associated with down-regulation of both COX-2 and inducible nitric oxide synthase (iNOS) mRNA expression and reduction of prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂) and nitrite levels, respectively, in the esophagus of NMBA-treated rats [Stoner et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2006a]. Dietary administration of freeze-dried black raspberries and strawberries caused inhibition of NMBA-induced esophageal tumor incidence and multiplicity in rats, and reduced the formation of O⁶-methylguanine adducts in esophageal DNA [Carlton et al., 2001; Kresty et al., 2001]. Black raspberries modulated NMBA metabolism in the liver and esophagus of rats, and inhibited NMBA-induced angiogenesis in association with suppression of COX-2 and iNOS expression [Reen et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2006a,b]. Interestingly, the dietary administration of freeze-dried blueberries to NMBA-treated rats did not lead to a reduction in either the formation of O⁶-methylguanine adducts in esophageal DNA or to an inhibition of esophageal tumor incidence or multiplicity [Aziz et al., 2002]. Suppression of azoxymethane-induced colon tumorigenesis in rats by administration of lyophilized black raspberries has also been reported [Harris et al., 2001]. This suppression was associated, at least in part, by a reduction in the levels of 8-hydroxy-2'-deoxyguanosine (8-OHdG) in the urine of azoxymethane-treated rats, suggesting that the

berries reduce oxidative stress in carcinogen-treated animals.

Mechanisms for Anticancer Effects of Berry Preparations and Their Constituents

Similar to *Allium* vegetable-derived OSCs, the berry compounds influence multiple signaling pathways through modulation of key regulatory transcription factors (e.g., NF- κ B and AP-1), kinases (e.g., Akt), and mitogen-activated protein kinases (MAPK) leading to effects on downstream genes such as COX-2, VEGF, and iNOS [Lu et al., 2006]. Ellagic acid has been shown to cause G1 phase cell cycle arrest, inhibit cell growth, increase expression of cdk inhibitor p21, and induce apoptosis [Narayanan et al., 1999]. Ellagic acid inhibited NMBA metabolism and DNA binding in cultured rat esophagus [Mandal et al., 1988]. Ferulic acid and β -sitosterol have been shown to inhibit the growth of premalignant and malignant human oral cavity cell lines but not normal oral cavity cells [Han et al., 2005]. The anthocyanins (cyanidin glycosides) found in black raspberries were demonstrated as effective inhibitors of NF- κ B and AP-1 expression in mouse epidermal JB-6 cells, and the ellagitannins in red raspberries inhibited the growth of human cancer cells [Hecht et al., 2006; Ross et al., 2007]. It is interesting to speculate that the inability of blueberries to inhibit NMBA-induced tumorigenesis in the rat esophagus might be due to the fact that they contain different anthocyanins than black raspberries and have very low levels of ellagitannins. These citations are discussed simply to illustrate multiplicity of signaling pathways affected by berries and their constituents and not intended to be a comprehensive review of the postulated mechanisms for their cancer chemopreventive effects.

Pharmacokinetics and Human Studies With Berry Preparations and Their Constituents

A pharmacokinetic study in healthy volunteers fed 45 g freeze-dried black raspberries for 7 days showed that the berries were tolerated well and resulted in maximum concentrations of anthocyanins and ellagic acid in plasma at 1–2 h, and in urine from 0 to 4 h [Stoner et al., 2005]. Absorption of anthocyanins and ellagic acid was less than 1% of the administered dose [Stoner et al., 2005]. Phenolic acids appeared in plasma

within 45 min following oral administration of cranberry juice [Zhang and Zuo, 2004], and anthocyanins were detected in urine 1–3 h after consumption of elderberries [Cao and Prior, 1999].

Preclinical studies in rats fed freeze-dried black raspberries or strawberries at 5% and 10% in the diet for a period of 9 months showed no evidence of histopathological changes in any organ or tissue [Stoner et al., 2007]. Clinical trials with freeze-dried berries have been recently reported. A Phase I trial to determine the safety and tolerability of 45 g per day of freeze-dried black raspberries fed for 1 week to healthy volunteers [Stoner et al., 2005], showed that the freeze-dried berries were in general well tolerated, with four of the 11 subjects presenting mild to moderate constipation. Phase II clinical trials with freeze-dried black raspberries are underway in patients at high risk of oral (i.e., patients with oral dysplasia), esophageal (i.e., patients with Barrett's esophagus or esophageal dysplasia) and colon cancers, to determine whether berries will influence the progression of these diseases [Stoner et al., 2007]. Topical application of a 10% black raspberry gel to the surface of oral dysplastic lesions in 17 patients for a period of 6 weeks led to histologic regression in a subset of patients, as well as a significant reduction in loss of heterozygosity (LOH) at three tumor suppressor gene loci [Shumway et al., 2007]. Oral administration of 32 or 45 g/day (female and male, respectively) of freeze-dried black raspberries for 6 months to 10 patients with Barrett's esophagus did not result in a reduction in the length of the Barrett's lesion however, it led to reductions in the urinary excretion of two markers of oxidative stress, 8-epi-prostaglandin F₂ α (8-Iso-PGF₂) and 8-OHdG [Kresty et al., 2006]. A clinical trial to evaluate the effect of freeze-dried strawberries on the progression of esophageal dysplasia to squamous cell carcinoma is underway in China, and trials are ongoing in the U.S. in both colon cancer patients and in patients with familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) to determine if freeze-dried black raspberries will modulate the expression of colon cancer genes and/or regress rectal polyps in patients with FAP, respectively [Stoner et al., 2007]. We eagerly await results from these studies to gauge into potential application of berries for cancer chemoprevention. Only a few berry-derived compounds have

been evaluated for chemoprevention efficacy in human clinical trials. A recent clinical trial evaluated the effect of a combination treatment of 480 mg curcumin and 20 mg quercetin (administered orally, three times a day) for adenomas in five familial adenomatous patients [Cruz-Correa et al., 2006]. The combination treatment was found to reduce the number and size of ileal and rectal adenomas in patients without appreciable toxicity [Cruz-Correa et al., 2006].

EVIDENCE FOR ANTICANCER EFFECTS OF ISOTHIOCYANATES

Epidemiological Data

Several case-control and prospective cohort studies have found that high intake of cruciferous vegetables is associated with a lower risk for lung cancer [Verhoeven et al., 1996; London et al., 2000; Higdon et al., 2007], while other prospective studies of US men [Feskanich et al., 2000] and European men and women [Miller et al., 2004] found no such inverse correlation. A number of case-control studies and a prospective study in Dutch adults [Verhoeven et al., 1996; Voorrips et al., 2000] found that high intake of cruciferous vegetables was associated with reduced colorectal cancer risk, while another prospective study did not reveal such an inverse association [Michels et al., 2000]. The inverse association between consumption of brassica vegetables and cancer risk has also been shown for prostate, endometrial, ovarian, and breast cancers [Verhoeven et al., 1996; Fowke et al., 2003; Ambrosone et al., 2004]. Recent studies have also suggested that the preventive effects of cruciferous vegetables on cancer risk might be influenced by the genetic polymorphisms including polymorphisms at glutathione transferase gene loci [Lampe and Peterson, 2002; Seow et al., 2002].

Cancer Chemoprevention by ITCs in Animal Models

The cancer chemopreventive effect of cruciferous vegetables is attributed to ITCs, which occur naturally as thioglucoside conjugates (glucosinolates) and distinguish them from other vegetables [Fahey et al., 2001]. The ITCs are hydrolysis products of glucosinolates and generated through catalytic mediation of myrosinase, which is released upon processing

(cutting or chewing) of cruciferous vegetables from a compartment separated from glucosinolates [Fahey et al., 2001]. Evidence exists for conversion of glucosinolates to ITCs by the gut microflora [Fahey et al., 2001]. ITCs have a common basic skeleton but differ in their terminal R-group, which can be an alkyl, alkenyl, alkylthioalkyl, aryl, beta-hydroxyalkyl or indolylmethyl group. At least 120 different glucosinolates have been identified [Fahey et al., 2001]. The widely studied ITCs include phenethyl isothiocyanate (PEITC), benzyl isothiocyanate (BITC), SFN, and allyl isothiocyanate (AITC).

The ITCs have been reported as effective chemopreventive agents in several animal models. For instance, PEITC and phenyl propyl-ITC have been shown to reduce tumor incidence in the esophagus of NMBA-treated rats [Stoner et al., 1991; Wilkinson et al., 1995]. Protective effect of PEITC has also been reported against lung tumorigenesis induced by the tobacco-derived carcinogen 4-(methylnitrosamino)-1-(3-pyridyl)-1-butanone in mice [Morse et al., 1989, 1991; Hecht et al., 2000] and rats [Chung et al., 1996], and lung and pancreatic tumors induced by *N*-nitrosobis(2-oxopropyl)-amine in hamster [Nishikawa et al., 1996]. On the other hand, PEITC administration was ineffective in prevention of lung tumorigenesis induced by benzo[a]pyrene in mice [Adam-Rodwell et al., 1993]. To our surprise, treatment with dimethylbenz[a]anthracene plus PEITC increased the multiplicity of mammary tumors relative to that observed with carcinogen treatment alone in rats [Lubet et al., 1997]. Inhibitory effects of BITC have been shown in models of mouse lung and forestomach tumorigenesis induced by benzo[a]pyrene [Wattenberg, 1987]. However, BITC had no effect on inhibition of lung tumors induced by diethylnitrosamine in mice [Wattenberg, 1987] or esophageal tumors induced by NMBA in rats [Wilkinson et al., 1995]. These results indicated that even a subtle difference in ITC structure (e.g., the alkyl chain length between PEITC and BITC) could have a significant impact on its ability to prevent chemically induced cancers *in vivo*. However, the mechanism behind differential response of PEITC and BITC for prevention of chemically induced cancers is not fully understood and requires further investigation. In addition to prevention of chemically induced cancers, PEITC has been shown to inhibit growth of

prostate cancer xenografts in nude mice [Xiao et al., 2005b, 2006c].

The SFN is another widely studied ITC compound that has generated a great deal of research interest due to its interesting biological effects. For example, SFN has been shown to inhibit mammary tumorigenesis induced by dimethylbenz(a)anthracene in rats [Zhang et al., 1994], formation of aberrant crypt foci induced by azoxymethane in rats [Chung et al., 2000], forestomach tumorigenesis induced by benzo[a]pyrene in mice [Fahey et al., 2002], and 7,12-dimethylbenz(a)anthracene/12-*O*-tetradecanoylphorbol 13-acetate-induced skin tumorigenesis in mice [Gills et al., 2006]. We have shown previously that orally administered SFN significantly retards growth of PC-3 human prostate cancer xenografts in athymic mice without causing weight loss or any other side effects [Singh et al., 2004b]. Feeding of Apc/Min/+ mice with diets supplemented with 300 and 600 parts per million SFN for 3 weeks resulted in statistically significant inhibition of polyp size and number [Hu et al., 2006].

Mechanisms for Anticancer Effects of ITCs

The mechanism for cancer chemoprevention by ITCs possibly involves both inhibition of cytochrome P450s-dependent carcinogen activation and induction of phase 2 enzymes responsible for detoxification of carcinogenic intermediates [reviewed by Hecht, 1999; Conway et al., 2002; Fimognari and Hrelia, 2007]. For example, SFN has been shown to cause potent induction of phase 2 enzymes in human prostate cancer cells [Brooks et al., 2001]. Interestingly, Affymetrix whole genome microarray analyses using gastric mucosal tissues collected from volunteers 6 h after administration of high glucosinolate broccoli (a rich source of SFN) or water failed to detect any changes in expression of genes associated with xenobiotic metabolism and cell cycle control [Gasper et al., 2007]. The effect of SFN administration on the immune system was studied recently using BALB/c mice [Thejass and Kuttan, 2006]. Intra-peritoneal administration of five doses of SFN (500 μ g/dose/animal/day) was found to increase total white blood cell count, bone marrow cellularity, and α -esterase positive cells [Thejass and Kuttan, 2006]. Treatment with SFN together

with sheep red blood cells as an antigen caused an increase in the circulating antibody titer [Thejass and Kuttan, 2006]. The SFN was shown to suppress angiogenesis and disrupt endothelial mitotic progression and microtubule polymerization [Jackson et al., 2007]. We have shown recently that PEITC inhibits angiogenesis *in vitro* and *ex vivo* [Xiao and Singh, 2007] at pharmacologically achievable concentrations. The PEITC-mediated inhibition of angiogenesis correlated with suppression of vascular endothelial growth factor secretion and inactivation of Akt [Xiao and Singh, 2007]. We speculate that inhibition of angiogenesis may be an important mechanism in cancer chemoprevention by ITCs. Both AITC and PEITC inhibited tumor-specific angiogenesis by down-regulating nitric oxide and tumor necrosis factor- α production [Thejass and Kuttan, 2007]. The SFN was shown to inhibit histone deacetylase [Myzak et al., 2004, 2006]. Suppression of NF- κ B and NF- κ B-regulated gene expression (vascular endothelial growth factor, Bcl-xL, cyclin D1) by SFN and PEITC has also been documented [Xu et al., 2005].

Several ITCs, including PEITC, BITC, SFN, and AITC, have been shown to inhibit cell growth and cell cycle progression and cause apoptosis in various cell types. For example, SFN was reported to inhibit cell proliferation, induce cell cycle arrest and apoptosis in human colon [Gamet-Payraastre et al., 2000], leukemia [Fimognari et al., 2002], and prostate cancer cells [Singh et al., 2004a,c, 2005; Choi and Singh, 2005; Choi et al., 2007]. Recent studies from our laboratory have demonstrated that SFN treatment causes irreversible G2/M phase cell cycle arrest in human prostate cancer cells that is associated with activation of checkpoint kinase 2, which promotes Ser216 phosphorylation of Cdc25C leading to its translocation from nucleus to the cytosol [Singh et al., 2004c]. A diagram showing mechanism of SFN-induced G2/M phase cell cycle arrest in human prostate cancer cells, based on the results from our laboratory, is presented in Figure 2. However, it is unclear if the checkpoint kinase-2/Cdc25C-mediated G2/M phase cell cycle arrest is unique to the human prostate cancer cells or to SFN. Interestingly, Cho et al. [2005] showed that the G2/M phase cell cycle arrest in DU145 human prostate cancer cell line is accompanied by JNK activation and pharmacological inhibition of JNK activation confers significant protection

against the cell cycle arrest. The G2/M phase cell cycle arrest by SFN treatment has also been observed in other cellular systems including HT29 human colon cancer cell line [Gamet-Payraastre et al., 2000], F3II mouse sarcomatoid mammary carcinoma cell line [Jackson and Singletary, 2004], and human benign prostate hyperplasia epithelial cell line BPH-1 [Myzak et al., 2006]. In contrast, previous studies by Chiao et al. [2002] have documented a G0/G1 phase cell cycle arrest in LNCaP cells following a 24 h exposure to 3 and 9 μ M SFN. In a follow-up study, the same group of investigators reported enrichment of G1 fraction in DU145 human prostate cancer cells under similar conditions of SFN treatment [Wang et al., 2004], which is in sharp contrast to the G2/M phase arrest observed by Cho et al. [2005] in the same cell line (10 μ M SFN for 24 h). The G0/G1 phase cell cycle arrest in SFN treated LNCaP cells was also not observed in another study [Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007c]. Discrepancy in cell cycle responses to SFN has also been reported in HT29 human colon cancer cells [Gamet-Payraastre et al., 2000; Shen et al., 2006]. The reasons for discrepancy in cell cycle effects of SFN remain to be explained. The G2/M phase cell cycle arrest in cancer cells in response to treatment with other ITCs has also been observed, including PEITC [Zhang et al., 2003; Visanji et al., 2004; Xiao et al., 2004b], BITC [Zhang et al., 2003; Miyoshi et al., 2004; Srivastava and Singh, 2004; Visanji et al., 2004; Xiao et al., 2006d], and AITC [Xiao et al., 2003]. A previous study showed that BITC-mediated cell cycle arrest in leukemia cells correlated with activation of p38 and pharmacological inhibition of this MAPK attenuated the cell cycle arrest [Miyoshi et al., 2004]. However, further studies are needed to determine whether involvement of p38 in ITC-mediated cell cycle arrest is restricted to leukemia cells or BITC.

Significant progress has been made in our understanding of the mechanism by which ITCs cause cell death. First, similar to OSCs, ITCs seem selective towards cancer cells since normal epithelial cells display significant resistance towards ITC-induced apoptosis [Choi and Singh, 2005; Xiao et al., 2005b, 2006d; Trachootham et al., 2006]. The second common theme emerging from molecular analysis of ITCs is that they produce ROS to initiate apoptotic signal transduction in various cell

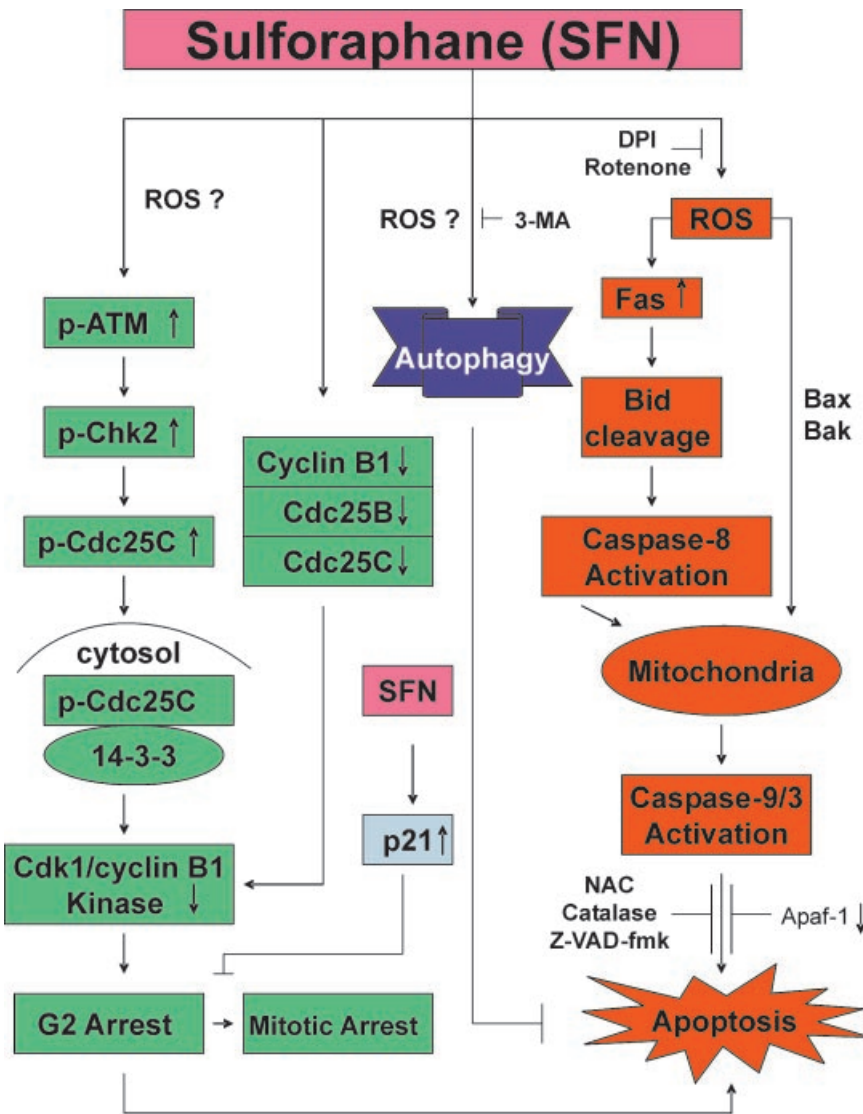


Fig. 2. Proposed mechanisms for SFN-induced cell cycle arrest and apoptosis induction in human prostate cancer cells. The SFN treatment causes activation of checkpoint kinase-2 leading to phosphorylation of Cdc25C at Ser 216 and its sequestration in the cytosol due to increased binding with 14-3-3 in PC-3 cells. The SFN treatment also decreases protein levels of cyclin B1, Cdc25B, and Cdc25C. The net result of these effects is inhibition of Cdk1/cyclin B kinase complex and G2/M progression [Singh et al., 2004c]. The SFN treated LNCaP human prostate cancer cells are also arrested in mitosis which correlates with p21 induction. The SFN-mediated p21 induction serves to protect against SFN-mediated mitotic arrest [Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007c]. The SFN-induced apoptosis in PC-3/DU145 cells correlates with ROS generation and activation of extrinsic caspase cascade (due to Fas induction leading to caspase-8 activation) and intrinsic caspase cascade (Bax and Bak regulated activation of caspase-9) [Singh et al., 2004a, 2005]. The SFN-induced apoptosis is inhibited by overexpression of Bcl-xL but not Bcl-2 in PC-3 cells [Singh et al., 2005], and SV40 immortalized mouse embryonic fibroblasts derived from Bax, Bak, and Bid knockout mice are significantly more resistant to

apoptosis induction by SFN compared with wild-type fibroblasts [Choi and Singh, 2005; Singh et al., 2005]. The SFN-induced apoptosis in LNCaP cells correlates with stabilization of p53, activation of Bax, down-regulation of inhibitor of apoptosis family proteins, and induction of Apaf-1 [Choi et al., 2007]. The Apaf-1, but not p53, protein knockdown confers significant protection against SFN-induced apoptosis in LNCaP cells [Choi et al., 2007]. The SFN treatment also causes autophagy in PC-3/LNCaP cells characterized by appearance of membranous vacuoles in the cytoplasm as revealed by transmission electron microscopy and formation of acidic vesicular organelles as revealed by fluorescence microscopy following staining with the lysosomotropic agent acridine orange [Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2006]. The SFN-induced autophagy correlates with up-regulation, processing, and recruitment to autophagosomes of microtubule-associated protein 1 light chain 3 and attenuated in the presence of a specific inhibitor of autophagy (3-methyladenine; 3-MA). The SFN-induced apoptosis is enhanced in the presence of 3-MA indicating that autophagy represents a defense mechanism against SFN-induced apoptosis [Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2006].

types, including human prostate and breast cancer cells, *H-Ras*^{V12} transformed ovarian epithelial cells, and *Bcr-Abl* overexpressing hematopoietic cells [Cho et al., 2005; Singh et al., 2005; Trachootham et al., 2006; Xiao et al., 2006d]. The ITC-mediated apoptosis is significantly attenuated by antioxidants and overexpression of catalase [Singh et al., 2005; Trachootham et al., 2006; Xiao et al., 2006c,d]. However, the mechanism by which ITCs cause ROS generation is not fully understood, although a role for mitochondria in this process has been suggested by some studies [Nakamura et al., 2002; Singh et al., 2005]. Third, the ITC-mediated apoptosis is caspase-dependent and appears to involve both intrinsic and extrinsic caspase cascades [Singh et al., 2005; Tang and Zhang, 2005; Xiao et al., 2005b, 2006d]. Fourth, the ITC-mediated apoptosis correlates with changes in Bcl-2 family protein levels and Bax activation, and deficiency of Bax and Bak, but not Bid, confers significant protection against ITC-mediated cell death [Choi and Singh, 2005; Singh et al., 2005; Xiao et al., 2005b, 2006d]. Involvement of inhibitor of apoptosis family proteins and Apaf-1 in regulation of SFN-induced apoptosis was suggested in prostate cancer cells [Choi et al., 2007]. More recent studies from our laboratory have documented certain novel responses to ITCs. For instance, we are the first to show that SFN treatment causes autophagy in PC-3 and LNCaP human prostate cancer cells, which serves to protect against apoptosis induction by sequestering mitochondria in autophagosome-like structures (revealed by transmission electron microscopy) and delaying release of apoptogenic molecules from mitochondria to the cytosol [Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2006]. The mechanism by which SFN causes autophagy remains elusive. Similarly, it is unclear if autophagic protection against cell death is unique to SFN or applies to other ITCs; although treatment of MDA-MB-231 human breast cancer cells with BITC results in formation of autophagic vacuoles [Xiao et al., 2006d]. We are also the first to report that PEITC inhibits cap-dependent translation by regulating the level and phosphorylation of 4E-BP1 [Hu et al., 2007]. The SFN was shown to sensitize human hepatoma cells to apoptosis induction by tumor necrosis factor-related apoptosis inducing-ligand through ROS-mediated up-regulation of death-receptor 5 [Kim et al., 2006].

Pharmacokinetics and Human Studies With ITCs

A pharmacokinetics study of PEITC in rats showed that ¹⁴C-PEITC was readily absorbed and distributed to all major tissues with a t_{max} (time to reach maximal plasma concentration) of 2.9 h and an elimination half-life of 21.7 h after oral administration of 50 $\mu\text{mol/kg}$ body weight [Conaway et al., 1999]. In another pharmacokinetic study in rats, PEITC was shown to be stable in biological samples with increased stability under refrigerated conditions [Ji et al., 2005]. The PEITC had high oral bioavailability, low clearance, and high protein binding in rats and nonlinear elimination and distribution occurred following the administration of high doses of PEITC [Ji et al., 2005]. The maximal plasma concentration of PEITC (C_{max}) following ingestion of 100 g watercress ranged between 673 and 1155 nM (mean: 928 ± 250 nM) with t_{max} of about 2.1 ± 1.1 h [Liebes et al., 2001]. A C_{max} between 0.64 and 1.4 μM (mean: 1.04 ± 0.22 μM) of total ITC in three subjects taking a single dose PEITC (40 mg) was reported in another study [Ji and Morris, 2003]. The pharmacokinetic parameters for SFN have also been studied. The SFN was detectable in the plasma of rats orally dosed with 50 μmol SFN after 1 h, peaked around 20 μM after 4 h and declined with a half life of about 2.2 h [Hu et al., 2004]. Previous studies have also shown that SFN can accumulate in cells in up to mM concentrations [Ye and Zhang, 2001].

PEITC has entered human clinical trials. A Phase I clinical trial for the prevention of lung cancer in smokers is currently ongoing at NCI (NYU-9905, NCI-P00-0151). Eight healthy women undergoing reduction mammoplasty were given a broccoli sprout preparation containing 200 μmol of SFN 1 h prior to surgery [Cornblatt et al., 2007]. The SFN metabolites were readily measurable in the mammary gland [Cornblatt et al., 2007], providing a strong rationale for evaluating the protective effects of SFN-rich broccoli sprout preparations in future clinical trials for breast cancer.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Epidemiological, experimental, and clinical evidence accumulated in the last few decades

suggest that fruit and vegetable-derived compounds may have beneficial effects in preventing several types of cancer. With their relatively low or no toxicity, food-derived bioactive components continue to remain highly promising cancer chemopreventive agents. Characterized by multiple mechanisms of action, the anticarcinogenic effects of bioactive food components have been shown both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Bioactive food components can act as cytochrome P450 inhibitors, phase 2 inducers, inducers of cell cycle arrest and apoptosis, and inhibitors of angiogenesis. Even though much has been learned about the molecular pathways affected by bioactive food components, significant gaps still exist in our understanding of the mechanisms by which these compounds may prevent cancer. For instance, as discussed above, the precise mechanism of checkpoint kinase 1-dependent inactivation of anaphase promoting complex/cyclosome in DATS-mediated prometaphase arrest is not known. Likewise, the mechanism by which ITCs cause ROS generation to trigger complex signal transduction still remains elusive. Thus further studies are clearly needed to define the mechanisms by which dietary bioactive components affect cellular machinery. For instance, the intrinsic value of defining the mechanism by which bioactive food components cause cell cycle arrest and apoptosis induction may be appreciated in many ways including (a) identification and *in vivo* validation of biomarker(s) of their efficacy potentially useful in future clinical trials, (b) rational design of second generation analogues with improved chemopreventive index (higher efficacy and reduced toxicity, if any), (c) optimization of chemopreventive regimens to avoid potential adverse interactions with other agents/drugs, and (d) rational design of synergistic combinations using mechanistically distinct agent(s) to achieve greater chemopreventive efficacy. Biomarker development must proceed in a systematic manner beginning with identification of molecular target(s) and validation of its/their functional significance using well characterized cellular systems followed by *in vivo* validation of the cellular findings in appropriate animal models. Moreover, previous studies have relied on correlative observations (e.g., change in protein levels or gene expression) to draw significant conclusions concerning mechanism of action of these compounds. As an example, previous studies includ-

ing our own have revealed that BITC-induced apoptosis correlates with changes in levels of Bcl-2, Bcl-xL and Bak yet no attempt has been made to experimentally verify the contribution of these proteins to the cell death caused by BITC, which underscores the significance of more in-depth molecular studies to determine the mechanism of their action.

It is interesting to note that many dietary cancer chemopreventive agents (e.g., DATS and SFN) cause ROS generation to initiate signaling events leading to cell cycle arrest and apoptosis induction in cancer cells [reviewed by Fimognari and Hrelia, 2007; Herman-Antosiewicz et al., 2007a]. Because ROS generation is implicated in pathogenesis of many chronic diseases including cancer, the potential side effects of ROS production by bioactive food components cannot be ignored. However, we are tempted to speculate that ROS generation by cancer chemopreventive food components may not be harmful because: (a) these agents are abundant in many edible plants consumed by humans on a daily basis yet epidemiological studies continue to support the premise that dietary intake of these vegetables may reduce the risk of different types of malignancies, (b) majority of the cancer chemopreventive bioactive food components are nontoxic in animals, and (c) normal epithelial cells are resistant to growth arrest by several cancer chemopreventive bioactive food constituents compared with cancer cells. It is possible that ROS generation by bioactive food constituents in cancer cells is transient and serves to trigger the apoptosis signaling cascade. However, further studies are needed to systematically explore these possibilities.

More clinical trials are needed to determine whether these promising bioactive food components can prevent cancer in humans. Also, more studies are required to understand the bioavailability and pharmacokinetics of some of these compounds. A future better approach might also involve chemoprevention using combinations rather than individual agents.

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