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Effect of 70-nm silica particles on the toxicity of acetaminophen, tetracycline, trazodone, and 5-aminosalicylic acid in mice

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Exposure to nano-sized particles is increasing because they are used in a wide variety of industrial products, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Some animal studies indicate that such nanomaterials may have some toxicity, but their synergistic actions on the adverse effects of drugs are not well understood. In this study, we investigated whether 70-nm silica particles (nSP70), which are widely used in cosmetics and drug delivery, affect the toxicity of a drug for inflammatory bowel disease (5-aminosalicylic acid), an antibiotic drug (tetracycline), an antidepressant drug (trazodone), and an antipyretic drug (acetaminophen) in mice. Co-administration of nSP70 with trazodone did not increase a biochemical marker of liver injury. In contrast, co-administration increased the hepatotoxicity of the other drugs. Co-administration of nSP70 and tetracycline was lethal. These findings indicate that evaluation of synergistic adverse effects is important for the application of nano-sized materials.

1. Introduction

Nano-sized particles, which have a diameter of less than 100 nm, are widely used in medicine, food, and machinery. With their smaller size, the physical and chemical properties of their constituents change, so that they may be toxic, for example to the lungs or liver, even though macro-particles of the same materials are not (Byrne and Baugh 2008; Nishimori et al. 2009b). Some nano-sized particles show long-term accumulation or a wide distribution in the body (Byrne and Baugh 2008; Nishimori et al. 2009b; Xie et al. 2009; Yang et al. 2008).

Recent reports indicate that some nano-sized particles can generate reactive oxygen species (ROS) on their surfaces, leading to cellular injury (Jin et al., 2008; Sharma et al. 2007; Ye et al. 2010). There are also many drugs that cause adverse effects through the generation of ROS (Ali et al. 2002; Kovacic 2005; Xu et al. 2008). Thus, nano-sized particles might enhance the side-effects of some pharmaceutical drugs. Indeed, we have shown that 70-nm silica particles (nSP70) cause liver injury but that macro-sized silica particles with a diameter of 300 and 1000 nm do not (Nishimori et al. 2009b). Also, when co-administered to mice, nSP70 but not the macro-sized silica particles enhance the toxicity of cisplatin and paraquat (Nishimori et al. 2009a). Surprisingly, co-administration of cisplatin and nSP70 was lethal, suggesting that each chemical may have different synergistic effects in the presence of nano-sized materials. In the current study, to clarify the influence of nano-sized materials on the adverse effects of chemicals, we assessed the toxicity in mice of 5-aminosalicylic acid (an agent for treating inflammatory bowel disease), tetracycline (a broad-spectrum antibiotic), trazodone (an antidepressant), and acetaminophen (a common antipyretic analogue) in the presence or absence of nSP70.

2. Investigations and results

Several reports indicate that 5-aminosalicylic acid, which is used to treat inflammatory bowel disease, causes liver injury and interstitial nephritis (Deltenre et al. 1999; Margetts et al. 2001). Administration of 5-aminosalicylic acid caused an increase in ALT, AST and BUN levels (Fig. 1). Also, nSP70 dose-dependently elevated ALT and AST levels. Co-treatment with 5-aminosalicylic acid and nSP70 resulted in higher levels of ALT and AST than nSP70 alone. In contrast, changes in BUN levels in response to 5-aminosalicylic acid were not affected by nSP70.

Next, we investigated effect of nSP70 on tetracycline, a broad-spectrum antibiotic. As shown in Fig. 2A and 2B, administration of tetracycline did not elevate biochemical markers for liver injury. In contrast, co-administration with nSP70 resulted in the synergistic induction of liver injury. However, nSP70 alone did not cause kidney injury. Importantly, co-administration of 30 and 50 mg/kg nSP70 with tetracycline resulted in the death of 1 of 4 and 2 of 4 mice, respectively.

Finally, we investigated effect of nSP70 on toxicity of the antidepressant trazodone and the antipyretic analgesic acetaminophen. We found that nSP70 did not have a synergistic effect on the toxicity of trazodone (Fig. 3). In contrast, co-administration of acetaminophen with nSP70 caused synergistic liver injury (Fig. 4).

3. Discussion

In this study, we showed that nSP70 synergistically enhance the toxicity of 5-aminosalicylic acid, tetracycline, and acetaminophen but not trazodone. To avoid direct interac-

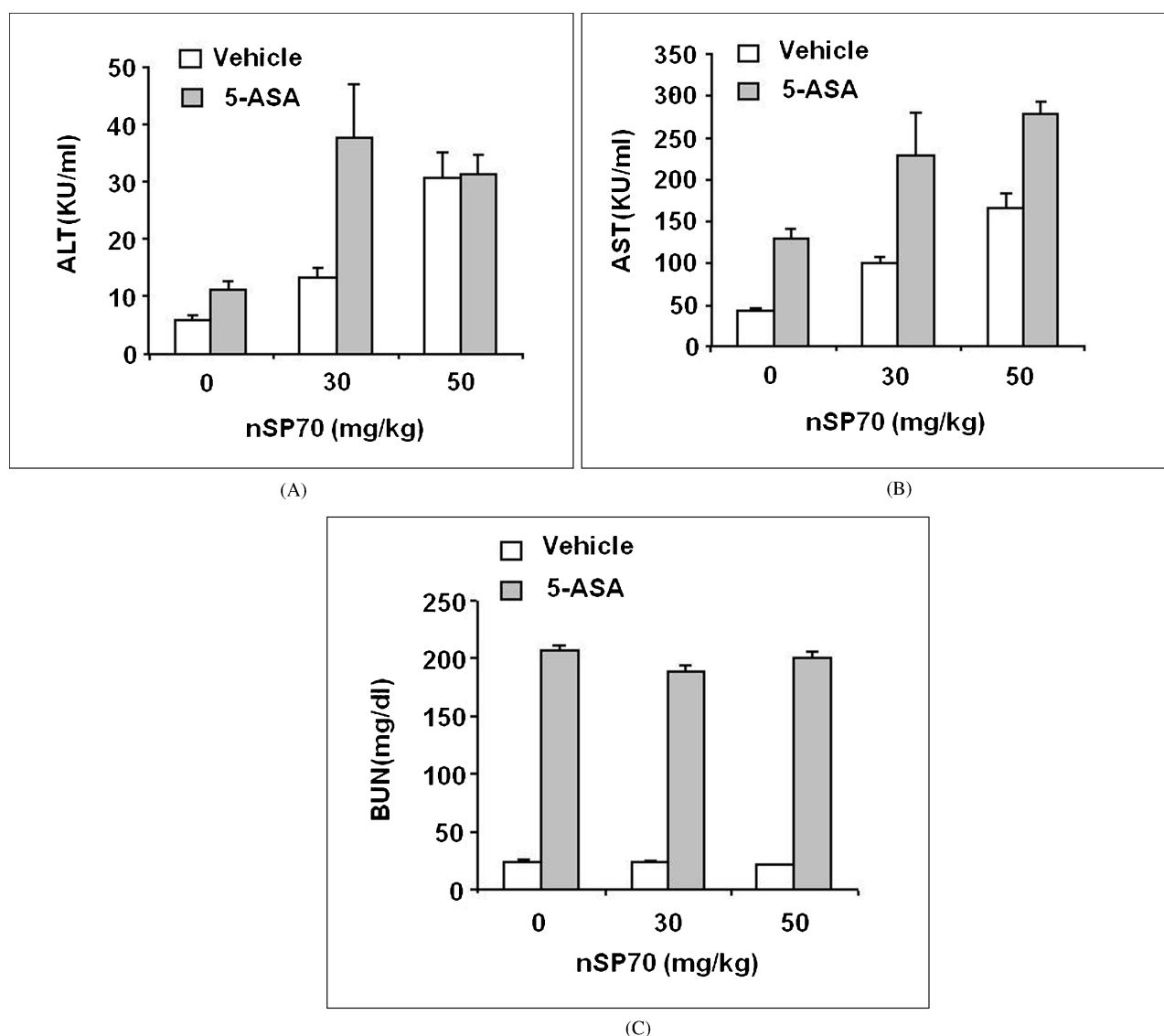


Fig. 1: Effect of nSP70 on 5-aminosalicylic acid (5-ASA)-induced toxicity. Mice were injected intraperitoneally with 5-ASA at 0 (open column) or 500 mg/kg (gray column) and intravenously with nSP70 at the indicated doses. After 24 h, the serum was collected. Shown are the levels of ALT (A), AST (B), and BUN (C). Data are means \pm SEM (n=4)

tions between nSP70 and chemicals in their administration and absorption, nSP70 and chemicals were administered intravenously and intraperitoneally, respectively. Administration of nSP70 alone has been shown to cause liver injury but not kidney injury (Nishimori et al. 2009b). Also, in this study, nSP70 did not enhance kidney injury induced by 5-aminosalicylic acid or tetracycline, two drugs known to be nephrotoxic (Grisham et al. 1992; Kunin 1971). The renal toxicity of cisplatin, another nephrotoxic chemical, was unaffected by nSP70 (Nishimori et al. 2009a). Like 5-aminosalicylic acid, tetracycline, and acetaminophen (Chun et al. 2009; Herzog and Leuschner 1995; Kunin 1971), nSP70 is hepatotoxic (Nishimori et al. 2009b), and we showed here that its co-administration synergistically enhanced liver injury. These findings indicate that nSP70 may enhance the toxicity of certain chemicals. Therefore, it will be important to assess the tissue-specific risk of nano-sized materials.

The nSP70 particles had a lethal effect when combined with tetracycline. The 50% lethal dose of tetracycline is 318 mg/kg by intraperitoneal injection in mice. A previous report showed that 100 mg/kg nSP70 is lethal in 100% of mice (Nishimori et al.

2009b). A single injection of tetracycline (100 mg/kg) or nSP70 (30 or 50 mg/kg) alone was not lethal in this study but a combination of the two was. Co-administration of cisplatin and nSP70 showed a similar synergistic lethal effect. This could be due to an interaction between nSP70 and serum albumin. Tetracycline in the bloodstream can bind to albumin (Popov et al. 1972; Powis 1974). Likewise, serum albumin adsorbs onto nano-sized silica particles (Dutta et al. 2007). When injected intravenously, 100-nm anionized albumin-modified liposomes are taken up by hepatic endothelial cells and Kupffer cells (Kamps et al. 1997), which normally clear chemically modified albumin (Jansen et al. 1991). Thus, tetracycline-bound serum albumin may adsorb onto nSP70, causing it to be taken up by the hepatic endothelial cells and Kupffer cells in the liver where it may accumulate and cause lethal liver damage.

Indirect interactions between chemicals and nano-sized particles mediated by serum albumin may be useful for estimating the toxicity of nano-sized materials. In this study, co-treatment of mice with nSP70 (50 mg/kg) and tetracycline decreased BUN levels compared to tetracycline alone or nSP70 (30 mg/kg) and tetracycline. A similar decrease in BUN levels

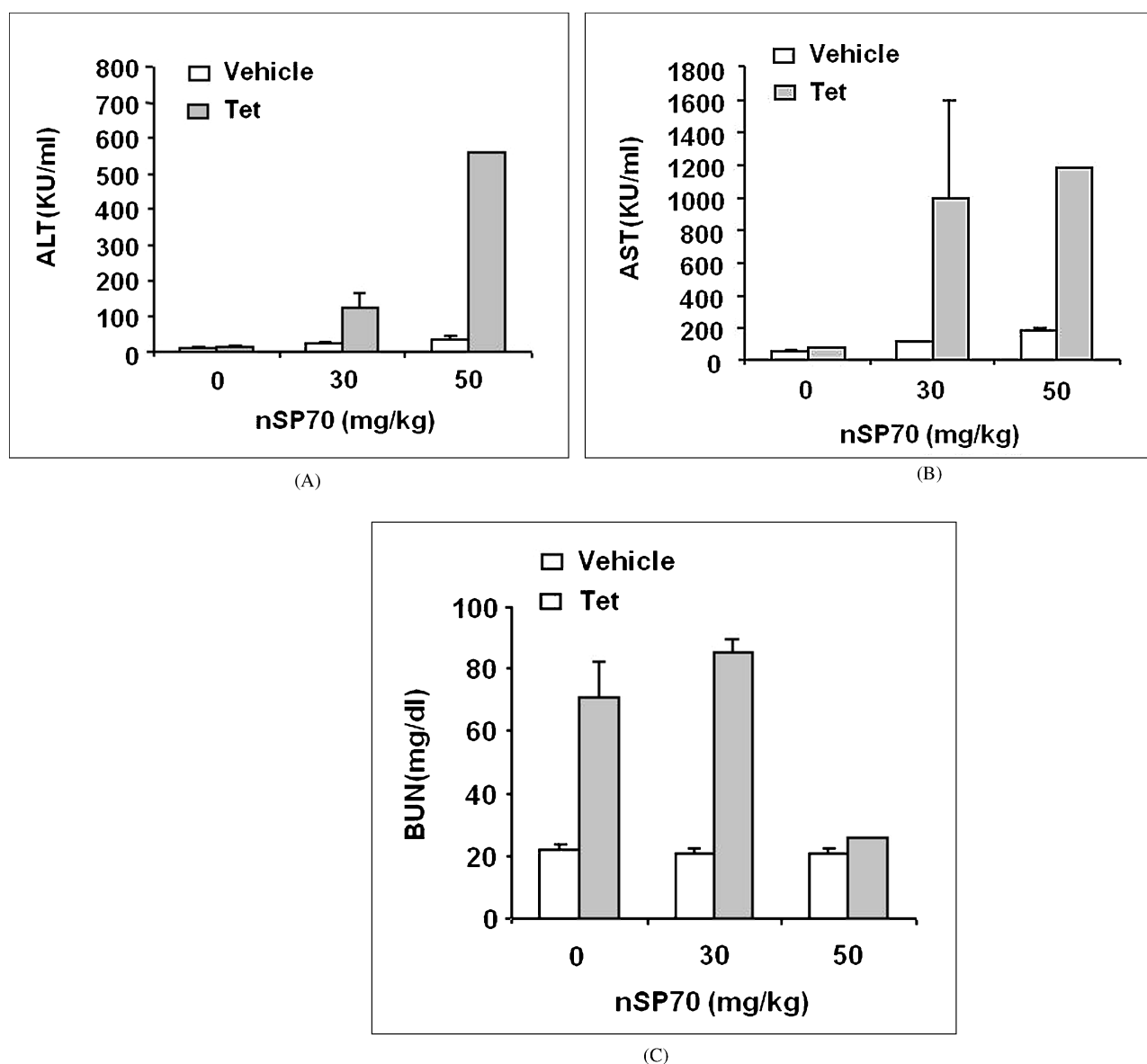


Fig. 2: Effect of nSP70 on tetracycline (Tet)-induced toxicity. Mice were injected intraperitoneally with Tet at 0 (open column) or 100 mg/kg (gray column) and intravenously with nSP70 at the indicated doses. After 24 h, the serum was collected. Shown are the levels of ALT (A), AST (B), and BUN (C). One of 4 mice died when co-treated with nSP70 (30 mg/kg) and Tet (100 mg/kg), and 2 of 4 mice died when co-treated with nSP70 (50 mg/kg) and Tet (100 mg/kg). Data are means or means \pm SEM (n = 2–4).

was also reported in mice co-treated with nSP70 and cisplatin (Nishimori et al. 2009a). However, the mechanism by which these decrease the BUN level remains to be determined.

In conclusion, we found that nSP70 cause synergistic toxicity when combined with some clinically used drugs, although the synergistic effects differ between chemicals. One combination was lethal, and the others resulted in tissue injury. These studies suggest that evaluation of possible synergistic adverse effects with pharmaceutical drugs may be important for assessing the safety of nano-sized particles.

4. Experimental

4.1. Materials

The nSP70 nanoparticles were obtained from Micromod Partikeltechnologie GmH (Rostock, Germany). The mean diameter of the particles, as analyzed by a Zetasizer (Sysmex Co., Kobe, Japan), was 55.7 nm, and the particles were spherical and nonporous. The particles were stored at 25 mg/ml as an aqueous suspension. The suspensions were thoroughly dispersed by soni-

cation before use and diluted in water. An equal volume of solution was injected for each treatment. Acetaminophen, tetracycline, and trazodone were dissolved in saline solution, and 5-aminosalicylic acid was suspended in 1% sodium salt of carboxy methyl cellulose. All reagents were of research grade.

4.2. Animals

Eight-week-old BALB/c male mice were purchased from Shimizu Laboratory Supplies Co., Ltd. (Kyoto, Japan). Mice were maintained in controlled environment ($23 \pm 1.5^\circ\text{C}$; 12-h light/12-h dark cycle) with free access to standard rodent chow and water. The mice were given 1 week to adapt before experiments. All of the experimental protocols complied with the ethical guidelines of the Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Osaka University.

4.3. Biochemical analysis

Serum alanine aminotransferase (ALT), aspartate aminotransferase (AST), and blood urea nitrogen (BUN) were measured using commercially available kits according to the manufacturer's protocols (WAKO Pure Chemical, Osaka, Japan).

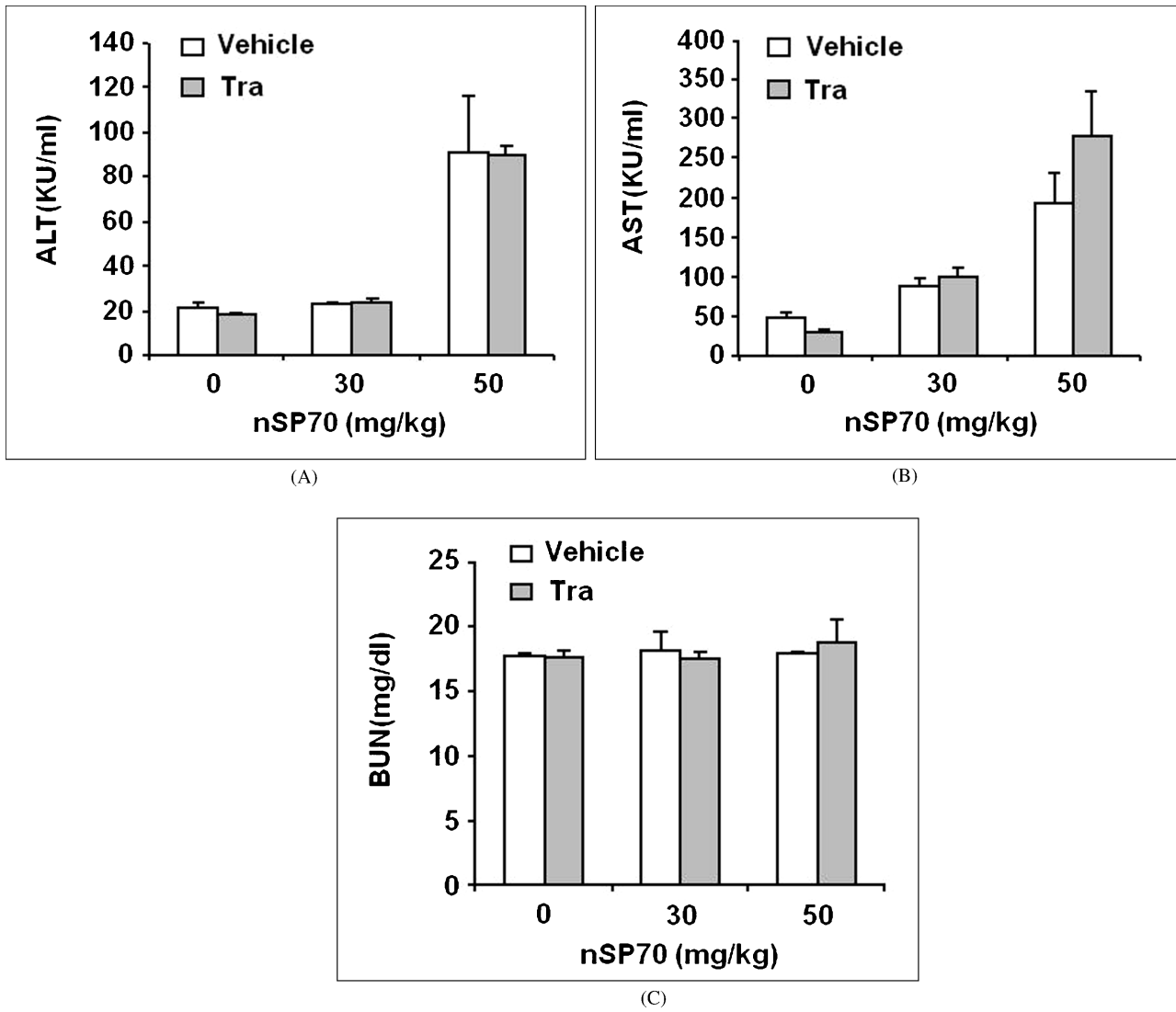


Fig. 3: Effect of nSP70 on trazodone (Tra)-induced toxicity Mice were injected intraperitoneally with Tra at 0 (open column) or 100 mg/kg (gray column) and intravenously with nSP70 at 30 or 50 mg/kg. After 24 h, the serum was collected. Shown are the levels of ALT (A), AST (B), and BUN (C). Data are means \pm SEM (n = 4)

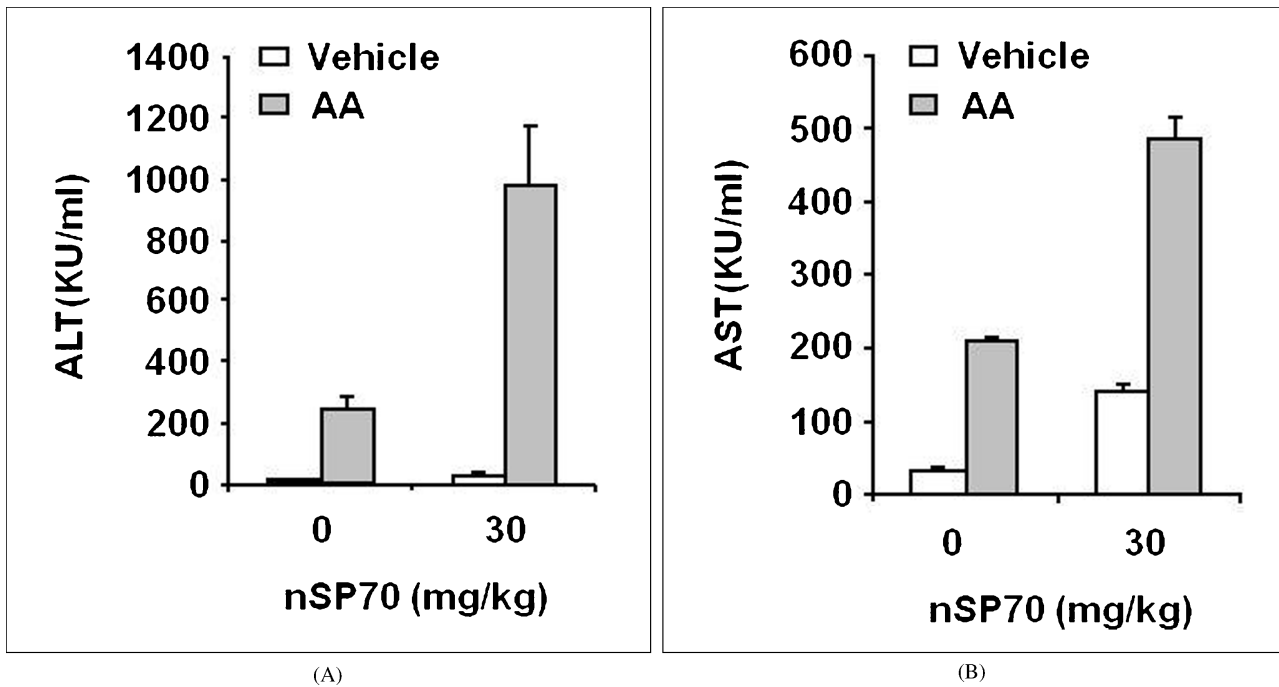


Fig. 4: Effect of nSP70 on acetaminophen (AA)-induced toxicity Mice were injected intraperitoneally with AA at 0 (open column) or 500 mg/kg (gray column) and intravenously with nSP70 (30 mg/kg). After 24 h, the serum was collected. Shown are the levels of ALT (A) and AST (B). Data are means \pm SEM (n = 4)

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