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Abstract

Dipyridamole is a nucleoside transport inhibitor and a non-selective phosphodiesterase inhibitor that increases intracellular level of cAMP and cGMP through phosphodiesterase inhibition. Type 4 phosphodiesterase has been demonstrated to have anti-inflammatory effects in many experimental systems. This study investigates whether dipyridamole inhibits lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced inducible nitric oxide (iNOS) and cyclooxygenase (COX-2) expression in RAW 264.7 macrophages. Treatment of RAW 264.7 macrophages with LPS caused dose- and time-dependent increases in iNOS and COX-2 expression. Treatment of cells with dipyridamole blocked the LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expression. Dipyridamole inhibited NF-κB activation as demonstrated by inhibition of IκB phosphorylation, IκB degradation, p65 NF-κB transloction and the transcription of reporter gene. Dipyridamole also inhibited LPS-stimulated p38 MAPK and IKK-β activities in RAW 264.7 cells. A p38 mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) inhibitor, SB203580, inhibited LPS-stimulated iNOS expression and IKK-β activation suggesting LPS may activate NF-κB signaling pathway via upstream p38 MAPK activation. Furthermore, dipyridamole stimulated a transient activation of mitogen-activated protein kinase phosphatase 1 (MKP-1), a potent inhibitor of p38 MAPK. Taken together, these data suggest that dipyridamole exerts anti-inflammatory effect via activation of MKP-1, which dephosphorylates and inactivates p38 MAPK. Inactivation of p38 MAPK in turn inhibits IKK-β activation and subsequent NF-κB signaling pathway that mediates LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expression in RAW 264.7 cells. These results support the notion that dipyridamole may have anti-inflammatory effects.

Keywords: Dipyridamole, NOS, LPS, NF-kappa B, RAW 264.7 macrophages.

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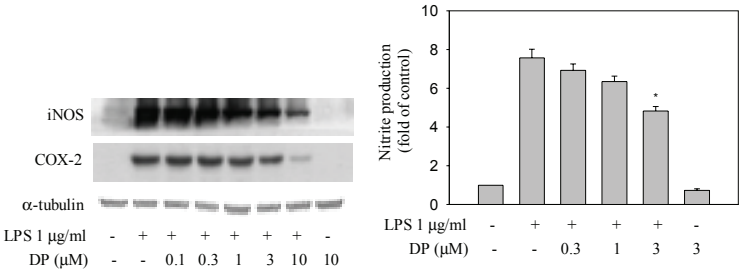
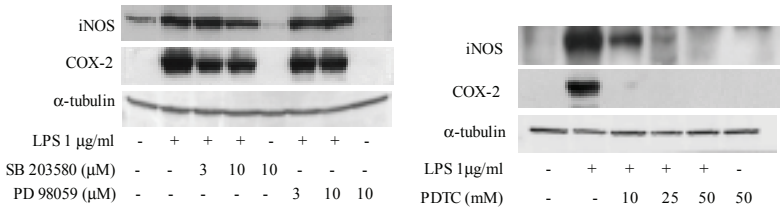
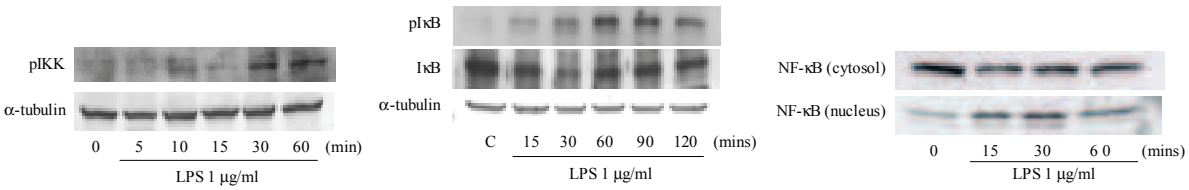
3.1. Dipyridamole inhibits LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expression and nitrite accumulation in RAW 264.7 cells.



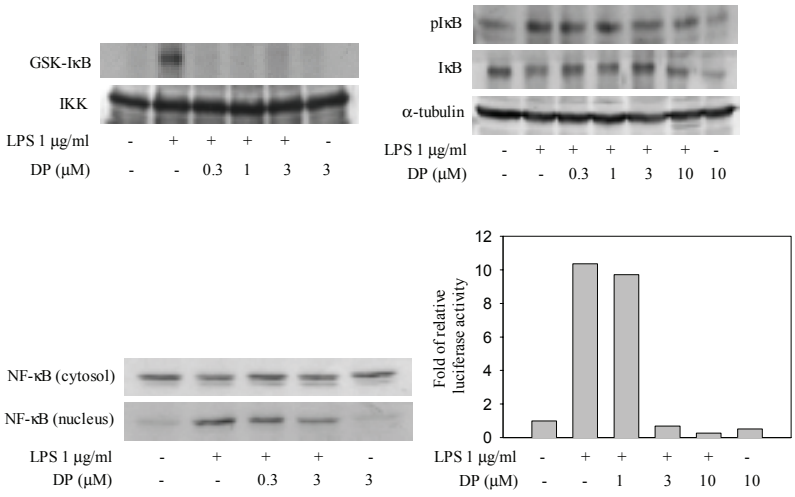
3.2. LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expression is mediated through p38MAPK and NFkB pathways.



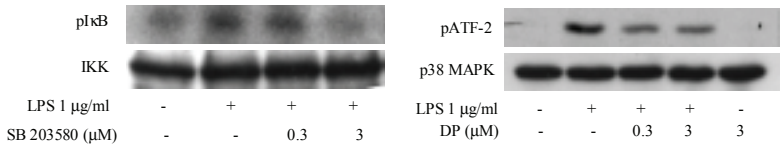
3.3. Effect of LPS on IKK phosphorylation, IkB phosphorylation, IkB degradation and NF-κB translocation in RAW 264.7 cells.



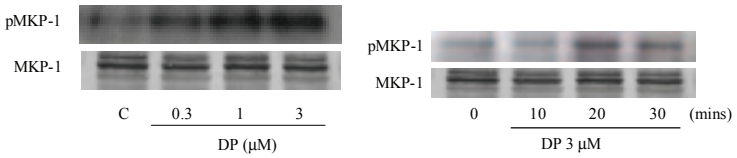
3.4. Dipyridamole inhibits LPS-induced IKK activity, IkB phosphorylation, IkB degradation, NF-κB translocation and NF-κB responsive luciferase reporter gene expression in RAW 264.7 cells.



3.6. Effect of SB203580 on LPS-stimulated on IKK-β activity in RAW 264.7 cells. Dipyridamole inhibits LPS-activated p38 MAPK in RAW 264.7 cells.



3.7. Dipyridamole increases MKP-1 phosphorylation in RAW 264.7 cells.



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Dipyridamole is a non-selective phosphodiesterase inhibitor, which has been shown to improve proteinurea in membranous glomerulonephritis, mesangial IgA glomerulonephritis, and segmentary and focal hyalinosis glomerulonephritis (Harmankaya et al., 2001). Inhibition of proteinuria in glomerulonephritis has been attributed to platelet response (Camara et al., 1991). However, there is no consistent evidence supporting dipyridamole as an effective antithrombotic agent in cardiovascular and renal diseases. Because many PDE inhibitors suppress the LPS-stimulated cytokine production (Yoshigawa et al., 1999), we have sought to resolve the question of whether dipyridamole exerts an anti-inflammatory effect. LPS is a bacterial endotoxin, which induces the expression of a number of proteins associated with inflammation. LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expression are key mediators in inflammatory responses. In the present study, we investigate whether dipyridamole has an effect on LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expression. We present evidences showing that dipyridamole inhibits iNOS and COX-2 expression in LPS-stimulated RAW 264.7 cells. Because inhibition of p38 MAPK by a pharmacological specific inhibitor, SB203580, is enough to suppress the IKK-β activity, these data suggest that dipyridamole inhibits p38 MAPK activation leading to an inhibition of IKK-β and the NF-κB signaling pathway, and subsequently suppresses LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expression in RAW 264.7 macrophages. In addition to these novel findings, we demonstrated that dipyridamole stimulates MKP-1 activation, which lead to p38 MAPK and IKK-β inactivation and NF-κB specific transcription.

Our data agree with many other reports showing phosphodiesterase inhibitors are immunoregulators and can be used as an anti-inflammatory agent (Bielekova et al., 2000; Burnouf et al., 2002). Dipyridamole exerts beneficial effects on glomerulonephritis (Camara etal., 1991) and blocks the lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced increase in monocyte-associated tissue factor activity (Brozna et al., 1990). LPS-activation of p38MAPK and NF-kB signal transduction pathways may contribute to inflammatory responses and disease progression. In

this study, we demonstrated that dipyridamole activates MKP-1, which in turn inactivates these proinflammatory signaling pathways. Our results support the notion, that dipyridamole can serve as a anti-inflammatory agent as well.

The results of our inhibitor studies suggest that the LPS-induced iNOS and COX-2 expressions is a consequence of the activation of p38 MAPK, IKK, and NF-κB in RAW 264.7 cells. Activation of the transcription factor, NF-κB, is responsible for the altered transcription of iNOS and COX-2 in macrophages and many other cell types (Huttunen et al., 1999; Mohamed et al., 1999; Li et al., 2000). Consistently, we have found that NF-κB activation plays an important role in LPS-induced iNOS expression. This notion is supported by the data herein: *1)* Pretreatment of cells with PDTC inhibited LPS-mediated iNOS induction; *2)* Treatment of RAW cells with LPS increased p65 NF-κB translocation from the cytosol to the nucleus; *3)* LPS treatment phosphorylated and degraded IκB in the cytosol; and 4) Treatment of RAW cells with LPS enhanced NF-κB-specific transcription as demonstrated by the expression of reporter gene, luciferase activity.

NF-κB can be activated in response to a broad range of stimuli and conditions, including interleukin-1 (IL-1) and tumor necrosis factor-α (TNF-α) (Bowie and O'Neill, 2000). LPS triggers a signaling pathway resulting in the production of inflammatory cytokines, which include TNF α and IL-1. Thus, LPS activation of NF-κB may well be an indirect effect due to the release of cytokines. Indeed, LPS induces TNF α secretion through nuclear factor kappa B in human vascular muscle cells.

The intracellular signaling mechanisms by which LPS induce NF-κB remain to be determined. LPS may activate protein tyrosine kinase, p21 Ras, protein kinase C-βII (PKC βII), or p42/44MAPK. In agreement, we previously found that protein tyrosine kinase, p21 Ras, and p38 MAPK are involved in LPS-induced iNOS expression in A549 cells (Lin et al., 2001). LPS stimulation of human monocytes activates several intracellular signaling pathways that include the p38 mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) pathway (Guha and Mackman, 2001). Lipoteichoic acid activation of NF-κB is mediated through protein tyrosine kinase (Kengatharan al., 1996). Activation of NF-κB in human monocytes involves PKC and PI-3K (D'Addario et al., 1999; Diaz-Guerra et al., 1999). Thus, LPS may activate tyrosine kinase, PI-3K, PKC, and p38 MAPK, which in turn activate IκB kinase (IKK), resulting in NF-kappaB (p50/p65) translocation and the induction of many genes encoding inflammatory mediators including iNOS. However, given the addition of MEK-specific inhibitor, PD 98059, fails to normalize the LPS-induced iNOS expression, and the facts that many other pathways could contribute to the activation of NF-κB, which may play a role in the NF-κB dependent induction of iNOS expression. It is possible that other signaling pathways other than those highlighted in the present study may also contribute to the activation of LPS in RAW264.7 cells.

In conclusion, our results suggest that dipyridamole may have anti-inflammatory effects. Our results clearly demonstrated that dipyridamole inhibits LPS-induced inflammatory

mediator expression in RAW 264.7 macrophages through p38 MAPK, IKK, and NF-κB dependent mechanisms. Whether dipyridamole exerts these effects in clinical treatment warrant further investigation.

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