



Silymarin ameliorates cisplatin-induced nephrotoxicity by downregulating TNF- α and NF-kB and by upregulating IL-10

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Abstract

Cisplatin (CP) is one of the antineoplastic agents used to treat many types of cancers. Besides these effects of CP, it causes various side effects such as nephrotoxicity. Inflammation is considered to be one of the main pathogeneses of CP-induced nephrotoxicity. Silymarin (SIL) is a flavonoid with beneficial pharmacological properties such as antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. The current study aimed to investigate the beneficial effects of Silymarin against CP-induced nephrotoxicity. Albino Wistar male rats were randomly divided into four groups (n=7): Control group was administered saline (0.5 ml) for 10 days intraperitoneally (IP), CP group was received CP (a single dose of 8 mg/kg, IP), CP+ SIL group was administered saline (0.5 ml) for 10 days and was received CP (a single dose of 8 mg/kg). To measure the inflammatory response, TNF- α , NF-kB and IL-10 expressions were performed. As a result, TNF- α and NF-kB expressions significantly increased while IL-10 expression decreased in the kidney of the CP group compared to the control group. However, SIL treatment significantly decreased TNF- α and NF-kB expressions and increased IL-10 expression in kidney CP-treated rats. These findings reveal that SIL may ameliorates the CP-induced nephrotoxicity in rats by inducing downregulation of TNF- α and NF-kB expressions and upregulation of IL-10 expression

Keywords: Cisplatin, IL-10, Nephrotoxicity, NF-kB, Silymarin, TNF- α

1. Introduction

Cisplatin (CP) is a platinum-derived anticancer agent used to treat many types of human cancers such as lung, bladder, ovary, testicular, leukemia, brain, kidney, head and neck tumors. It also plays a key role in the treatment of germ cell cancer (1). Despite its very strong effects in cancer treatment, it has side effects such as neurotoxicity and ototoxicity, especially neurotoxicity. More than 30% of patients receiving CP treatment suffered from renal dysfunction (2). Even though the toxic effects of CP have been proven, it is still a widely prescribed drug. Because it is a standard drug for some cancer treatments such as head and neck (3). Although the pathophysiology of acute kidney injury (AKI) caused by CP is complex, it mainly includes oxidative stress, apoptosis and inflammation (4). Inflammation is critical for understanding the pathogenesis of CP-induced nephrotoxicity (5). TNF- α is a major inflammatory factor that plays a crucial role in CP-induced nephrotoxicity. Production of TNF- α is mostly dependent on ROS and NF-kB activation (6). IL-10 is an anti-inflammatory cytokine that inhibits the production of proinflammatory cytokines mainly produced by T cells, macrophages and Dendritic cells (7). Since CP is both nephrotoxic and an indispensable drug in the treatment of many tumors, reducing or preventing kidney damage caused by it becomes an important problem to be solved.

Studies have reported that the administration of natural compounds may be a protective strategy against CP-induced nephrotoxicity (8, 9). Silymarin is a natural polyphenol compound extracted from the thistle (*Silybum marianum*) plant (10). It has been reported to have anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiviral, immunomodulatory, anti-proliferative properties (11, 12). Silymarin has been proven to have a hepatoprotective effect against liver toxicity induced by various hepatotoxic agents (13, 14, 15, 16). Recently, some studies have reported the protective effects of Silymarin to prevent CP-induced nephrotoxicity (17, 18). However, the effect mechanism of Silymarin in CP-caused nephrotoxicity has not been fully elucidated. Therefore, in our study, the beneficial effects of Silymarin were investigated by evaluating the expressions of TNF- α , NF-kB and IL-10 in the treatment of CP.

2. Material and Method

2.1. Experimental animals and drug treatment

Twenty-eight healthy *Albino Wistar* male rats weighing 180-200 g were randomly divided into four groups (n=7): Control (C) group was administered 0.5 ml saline for 10 days, CP group was received a single dose of 8 mg/kg cisplatin intraperitoneally (IP) on the 5th day of the study (19), Cisplatin + Silymarin group was received 50 mg/kg silymarin (Sigma

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Aldrich Biotechnology, CAS Number: 65666-07-1) orally for 10 days, and a single dose 8 mg/kg cisplatin IP was administered on the 5th day of the study, Silymarin group was received 50 mg/kg silymarin orally for 10 days (20). Animals were obtained from Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Experimental Medicine Application and Research Center. Animals were maintained normal light and dark cycles (12h:12h light/dark), at temperature (21 ± 2 °C) and humidity ($50 \% \pm 10$), their feed and water were given in accordance with the standards (*ad libitum*). All protocols of the experiment have been approved by the Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Animal Experiments Local Ethics Committee (approval number: 2021/05-01). At the end of the experiment, the rats were anesthetized with intraperitoneal ketamine (75mg/kg). The kidney was removed and was fixed in 10% neutral buffered formalin for immunohistochemical evaluation.

2.2. Immunohistochemical preparation

Kidney tissue was embedded in paraffin after undergoing routine histological processing stages. The sections of 4 μ m thickness were taken from paraffin blocks. The taken sections were deparaffinized and dehydrated. After incubation with 3% Hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), the sections were incubated in citrate buffer (ph 6.1) by heating in a microwave oven. They were incubated in Ultra V Block. Antibodies of TNF- α (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, dilution:1/50), NF- κ B (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, dilution:1/50) and IL-10 (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, dilution:1/50) were used as primary antibody. The sections were incubated with primary antibodies +4C overnight, then they were incubated in Biotinylated Goat Anti-Polyvalent, and Streptavidin-peroxidase conjugate respectively. Diaminobenzidine (DAB) was used as a chromogen, and then stained with Mayer's hematoxylin. TNF- α , NF- κ B and IL-10 immunopositive cells were counted using cellSens Software imaging systems (Olympus, Japan) in a light microscope (Olympus BX53, Japan) and assessed by H-score.

3. Results

3.1. Immunohistochemical findings

According to the results of the immunohistochemical assay performed to measure the inflammatory response showed that CP significantly increased TNF- α and NF- κ B expressions, while decreased IL-10 expression compared to the control group ($p < 0.05$). However, treatment with silymarin reduced TNF- α and NF- κ B expressions and increased IL-10 expression in CP-induced rat kidneys ($p < 0.05$). Only a few TNF- α , NF- κ B and IL-10 immunopositive cells were observed in the Control and Silymarin groups (Fig. 1 and 2).

4. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the beneficial effects of Silymarin in CP-induced nephrotoxicity. The findings of our study showed that Silymarin has a nephroprotective effect by reducing kidney inflammation caused by CP treatment. The effect mechanism of silymarin is schematized in Fig. 3.

One of the most prominent complications of CP used to

treat many solid tumors is acute kidney injury (AKI) (4). It has been reported that inflammation is one of the most main pathogenesis of CP-induced AKI. Inflammation is a complex biological response that occurs after tissue damage (21). Previous studies have proven the role of inflammatory mechanisms in AKI caused by toxic substances (22). After kidney injury, the balance between pro-and anti-inflammatory mediators in the kidney significantly influences the extent of tissue damage and repair (23). Since AKI is closely related to inflammation, it is important to clarify inflammation in determining the necessary treatment modalities to prevent or treat AKI (21). The cellular damage and its associated molecular products are thought to be key triggers for inflammation after acute tissue injury (24). Pro-inflammatory cytokines such as TNF- α , IFN- γ , IL-6, IL-1 β , IL-23, IL-17 and anti-inflammatory cytokines such as IL-4, TGF- β , IL-10 are crucial factors in determining tissue damage and treatment strategies (25).

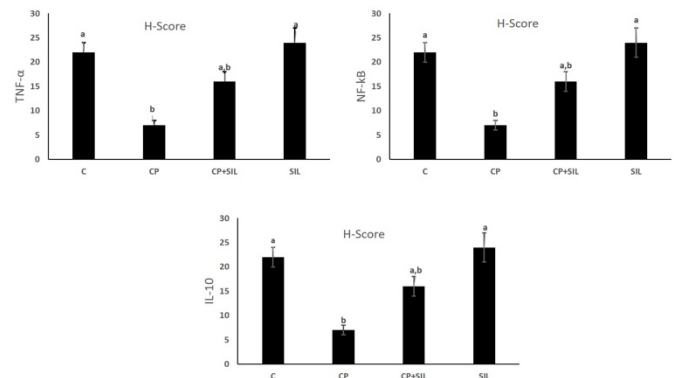


Fig. 1. The effect of silymarin on TNF- α , NF- κ B and IL-10 expressions in kidney tissue of CP induced rats. H-Score

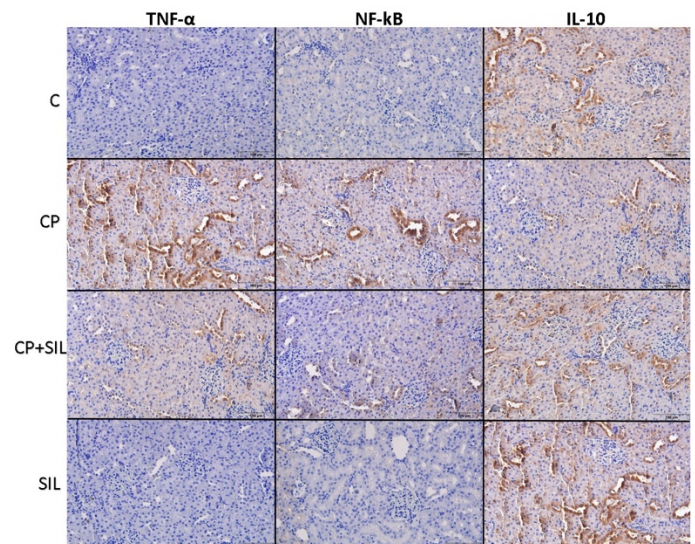


Fig. 2. Immunohistochemical figures of kidney tissues of rats. CP increased TNF- α and NF- κ B expressions, while decreased IL-10 expression. However, treatment with silymarin reduced TNF- α and NF- κ B expressions and increased IL-10 expression

NF- κ B is an important factor that plays an active role in the activation of transcription of genes encoding proinflammatory

cytokines especially TNF- α , and thus mediates inflammation (26). TNF- α is a potent cytokine that mediates inflammatory tissue damage in the kidney, and specifically activates IL1- β , MCP-1, and IL-6 pro-inflammatory cytokines (28). Previous studies have reported that CP causes an inflammatory response by stimulating the production of proinflammatory cytokines such as TNF- α , IL-1 β , IL-6, MCP-1 and NF- κ B in the kidney (5). It has been demonstrated that CP administration activates NF- κ B which stimulates the expression of other pro-inflammatory cytokines such as TNF- α in the kidney. It also inhibits the production of IL-10 which suppresses the expression of TNF- α . IL-10 has protective effects on tissue damage as well as inhibiting the production of inflammatory cytokines (28). In parallel to studying of Kim et al. (2010), the current study revealed that CP treatment-induced inflammation by increasing the expression of NF- κ B and TNF- α in the kidney. On the other hand, it inhibited the anti-inflammatory mechanism by suppressing IL-10 expression.

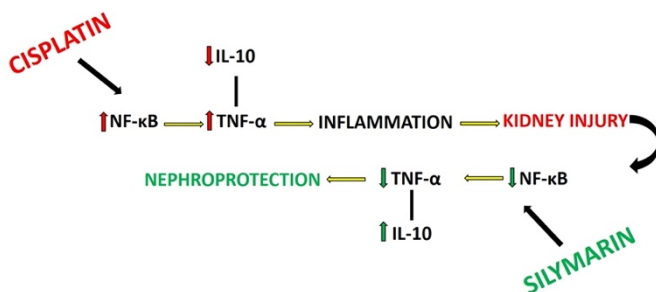


Fig. 3. Mechanism of action of silymarin in CP-induced nephrotoxicity. CP treatment upregulates TNF- α and NF- κ B expression in the kidney, while it downregulates IL-10 expression. However, silymarin treatment exerts a renoprotective effect by suppressing TNF- α and NF- κ B expressions and stimulating IL-10 expression in CP-induced kidney

Recently, it has been reported that antioxidants have a nephroprotective effect by suppressing oxidative stress and inflammation in CP-induced nephrotoxicity (29). Soetikno et al. (2018) reported that increased NF- κ B and TNF- α expressions in CP-induced kidneys were significantly inhibited by curcumin treatment, and it also showed a nephroprotective effect by increasing IL-10 expression (30). Similarly, Sánchez-González et al. (2017) reported that CP-induced inflammatory markers such as TNF- α , iNOS and neutrophil infiltration, and Quercetin treatment improved these inflammatory markers (31). Similar to previous studies, in the current study, the increase in the expression of NF- κ B and TNF- α caused by CP was significantly restored with Silymarin treatment. On the other hand, IL-10 expression suppressed by CP was significantly increased with Silymarin treatment (30, 31). These findings of our study reveal that Silymarin has an anti-inflammatory effect against inflammation caused by CP in the kidney of rats.

One of the most important ways of preventing CP-induced kidney damage is to inhibit increased TNF- α . It has been

reported that TNF- α can directly damages the glomerular and tubular cells and activates internal and external apoptotic pathways (32). Gawad and Mohamed (2010) revealed that it was observed histopathological changes such as diffuse renal tubular necrosis, degeneration and mononuclear cellular infiltration in the kidney tissues of rats treated with CP (33). They also reported that Silymarin can be used as a nephroprotective agent by improving these structural changes induced by CP. Similarly, Abdelmeguid et al. (2010) reported that CP application caused deteriorations in the kidney such as glomerular atrophy, dilated filtration gap, loss of brush border of proximal collecting tubules, hypertrophied podocyte pedicels and tubular cell vacuolization, but Silymarin treatment ameliorated these changes (34). It is estimated that the inflammation caused by CP may be related to the histopathological findings of previous studies (13, 33). This study shows that increased TNF- α , which is an important marker of inflammation, can have a direct toxic effect on kidney cells (32). In addition, the current study reveals that silymarin suppresses the expression of TNF- α and increases the expression of IL-10, which is both an anti-inflammatory and tissue-protective cytokine, and it may be a protective agent for cells in kidney tissue. In this respect, our study is thought to support previous studies (13, 33).

The results of our study showed that silymarin may have a renoprotective effect by reducing the increased inflammation in the kidney induced. It is considered that the renoprotective effects of silymarin are mainly related to the downregulation of the expression of TNF- α and NF- κ B and the upregulation of the expression of IL-10. Therefore, it is estimated that silymarin may be used as a protective agent against CP-induced nephrotoxicity.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest

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