

Evidence against inhibition of sarcoplasmic reticulum Ca^{2+} -pump as mechanism of H_2O_2 -induced contraction of rat aorta

SHEN Jian-Zhong, ZHENG Xiu-Feng¹, WEI Er-Qing, KWAN Chiu-Yin² (Department of Pharmacology, School of Medicine, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou 310031, China; ²Smooth Muscle Research Program and Department of Medicine, Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University, Ontario L8N 3Z5, Canada)

KEY WORDS hydrogen peroxide; cyclopiazonic acid; thoracic aorta; smooth muscle; purinergic P_2 receptors; suramin; sarcoplasmic reticulum; Ca^{2+} - Mg^{2+} -ATPase; 2-aminoethoxydiphenyl borate

ABSTRACT

AIM: To test whether inhibition of sarcoplasmic reticulum (SR) Ca^{2+} -pump is involved in H_2O_2 -induced contraction of endothelium-denuded rat aorta. **METHODS:** Isometric tension recording of H_2O_2 and cyclopiazonic acid (CPA)-induced contractions of rat aortic rings were compared in the absence or presence of various pharmacological tools to discriminate their signaling pathways involved. **RESULTS:** Both H_2O_2 and CPA contracted rat aortic rings, but with different contractile patterns. H_2O_2 triggered a fast and phasic contraction, whereas CPA elicited a slow and sustained contraction. In Ca^{2+} -free medium, pretreatment of aortic rings with CPA 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ but not with H_2O_2 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ nearly abolished phenylephrine (10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contraction. In addition, upon the maximal contraction induced by thapsigargin 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, H_2O_2 but not CPA further contracted aortic rings. On the other hand, H_2O_2 (30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)- but not CPA (10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contraction could be inhibited by suramin and RB-2 (each 100 $\mu\text{mol/L}$), two P_2 -purinoceptor antagonists. Furthermore, although pretreatment with 2-APB, a membrane permeable IP_3 receptor blocker, inhibited both H_2O_2 - and CPA-induced contractions, only H_2O_2 (30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contraction could be depressed, to different degree, by various inhibitors of receptor-coupled or downstream signaling enzymes, including PLC, PKC, PLA_2 , COX, and protein tyrosine kinases. **CONCLUSION:**

Inhibition of smooth muscle SR Ca^{2+} -pump is unlikely the mechanism responsible for H_2O_2 -induced contraction of endothelium-denuded rat aorta.

INTRODUCTION

The discovery of NO as a signaling molecule in several biological systems including vasculature renders scientists refocus on the research area of free radicals other than NO. In particular, growing body of evidence now indicate that reactive oxygen species (ROS) including hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) as well as superoxide anion (O_2^-) may also act as signaling molecules in cellular signal transduction^[1,2]. In cardiovascular system, the work done by Vanhoutte *et al*^[3] is the first to propose ROS may serve as one of the endothelium-derived contracting factors (EDCF), thereby suggesting ROS, like NO, may be also a diffusible signaling molecule involved in vascular tone regulation. Another pioneer work by Finkel *et al*^[4], however, showed that H_2O_2 was an intracellular signaling molecule required for platelet-derived growth factor (PDGF)-induced proliferation of vascular smooth muscle cells. This hypothesis has been readily confirmed now by many groups on different cell lines. For example, it was demonstrated that activation of many G-protein coupled or uncoupled cell surface receptors results in elevation of intracellular O_2^- and/or H_2O_2 ^[5,6]. In addition, the enzyme, called MOX1, which produces the intracellular O_2^- and H_2O_2 upon receptor activation, has also been identified in vascular smooth muscle cells^[7].

However, despite of these extensive studies, the potential cellular specific sites or molecules, which might be targeted by the generated ROS, are not well defined. Moreover, the actual species of intracellular ROS acting as a signaling molecule is also controversial. From vascular tone regulation view, our previous study had shown that the three different ROS including H_2O_2 , O_2^- , and hydroxyl radical ($\cdot\text{OH}$) all contract rat aorta, but with

¹ Correspondence to Prof ZHENG Xiu-Feng.
Phn 86-571-721-7269. Fax 86-571-721-7391.
E-mail shenjz@mail.hz.zj.cn

Received 2000-11-09 Accepted 2001-03-01

different contractile patterns^[8]. H₂O₂ evokes phasic contraction, whereas O₂⁻ triggers dual phasic contraction. A sustained contraction is induced by the ·OH generating system (Fe²⁺ plus vitamin C). The mechanism responsible for this difference is unclear. However, our ongoing study had shown that only H₂O₂-induced contraction could be specifically inhibited by suramin and RB-2, two widely used P₂-purinoceptor antagonists^[9,10]. Based on these findings, we proposed that P₂-purinoceptor might be one of the targets modified and thereby activated by physiological concentration of H₂O₂^[9].

At present, however, at least one of the confused factors which interfere our data interpretation is concerning the specificity of suramin and RB-2 on P₂-purinoceptors. On the other hand, ROS including H₂O₂ have been shown to inhibit sarcoplasmic reticulum (SR) Ca²⁺-pump in coronary smooth muscles^[11,12], which may play a role in the regulation of vascular tone, because it is well known that cyclopiazonic acid (CPA) and thapsigargin, two specific inhibitors of SR Ca²⁺-pump, all contract vascular smooth muscles^[13]. It is therefore possible that H₂O₂-induced contraction of rat aorta may be also the result of SR Ca²⁺-pump inhibition. To address this important question, the present study aims to further compare H₂O₂ and CPA-induced contraction of rat aorta and their signaling pathways involved. In this work, we provided functional evidence to suggest that SR Ca²⁺-pump inhibition played a minor (if any) role in H₂O₂-induced contraction of rat aorta.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Drugs and chemicals The following pharmacological tools were purchased from Sigma (St Louis, MO, USA): acetylcholine chloride (ACh), phenylephrine hydrochloride (PE), hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂), egtazic acid, 2-nitro-4-carboxyphenyl-*N,N*-diphenylcarbamate (NCDC), indomethacin, mepacrine, 1-(5-isoquinolinesulfonyl)-2-methylpiperazine (H7), suramin, reactive blue 2 (Cibacron blue 3GA, RB-2), genistein, cyclopiazonic acid (CPA), and thapsigargin. 2-Aminoethoxydiphenyl borate (2-APB) was from TOCRIS (MO, USA). All chemicals were dissolved in Krebs' solution or distilled water except for CPA, thapsigargin, and 2-APB in Me₂SO. The final bath concentration of Me₂SO never exceeded 0.1%. Indomethacin was first dissolved in 2% Na₂CO₃, then diluted with Krebs' solution.

Rats and tissue preparations Male Sprague-Dawley rats (Grade II, Zhejiang Medical Laboratory Animal Center, Certificate No 22-9601018, conferred by Animal Management Committee, Chinese Academy of Sciences), weighing 300–350 g, were stunned and killed by cervical dislocation. The thoracic aorta was isolated and placed in Krebs's solution at pH 7.4 containing (mmol/L): NaCl 118, KCl 4.7, CaCl₂ 2.5, MgCl₂ 1.2, KH₂PO₄ 1.0, NaHCO₃ 25, and glucose 11. Fat and connecting tissue were removed and the aorta was cut into 3–4 mm rings. In most rings, the endothelium was intentionally removed by gently rubbing against the teeth of a pair of forceps. The successful removal of endothelium was assessed by showing that ACh at 1 μmol/L failed to relax the rings pre-contracted by PE 1 μmol/L.

Tissue-bath experiments The aortic rings were mounted on a 3-mL organ bath, connected to a force transducer and a pen recorder. The organ bath containing Krebs' solution was bubbled continuously with 95% O₂ + 5% CO₂ at 37 °C. For experiments in which Ca²⁺-free Krebs' solution was used, Ca²⁺ was omitted and egtazic acid 0.1 mmol/L was added. The solution in the bath was changed every 20 min. The rings were equilibration for 20 min before stretching them to approximate 2 g, and were allowed for further equilibration for 90 min. Before data collection, stimulation of the rings with KCl 60 mmol/L was repeated every 20 min until a reproducible contractile response was obtained. Then, the testing chemicals including H₂O₂ and CPA were added to the bath at different concentrations. Preliminary experiments showed that the contractile response to H₂O₂ was not reproducible when it was added in a cumulative manner, so a non-cumulative concentration-response curve for H₂O₂ and a cumulative concentration-response curve for CPA were constructed. Additionally, in most tests, each vessel ring was challenged with a single concentration of H₂O₂ or CPA.

In another series of experiments, the possible signaling pathways involved in the contractile response induced by H₂O₂ and CPA were analyzed in endothelium-denuded aorta. To test whether H₂O₂ and CPA-induced contractile responses were due to activation of putative receptors, endothelium-denuded rings were pretreated with suramin and RB-2, two P₂-purinoceptor antagonists^[10], or with several inhibitors of receptor-coupled or downstream signaling enzymes including PLC, PLA₂, PKC, and protein tyrosine kinase for 20 min before addition of H₂O₂ and CPA. To determine whether intracellular IP₃ receptor

was involved in H_2O_2 and CPA-induced contractions, aortic rings were pretreated with 2-APB, a membrane-permeable IP_3 receptor blocker^[15], before addition of H_2O_2 and CPA.

Data analysis All of the data were expressed as $\bar{x} \pm s$, taken from at least 3 rats. Contractile responses induced by H_2O_2 and CPA were expressed as percentage of the KCl (60 mmol/L)-induced contraction or as mg of the tension developed. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed, followed by *t*-test.

RESULTS

Characteristics of H_2O_2 - and CPA-induced contractions In endothelium-denuded resting rings, both H_2O_2 and CPA concentration-dependently evoked contraction (Fig 1C), but with different patterns. H_2O_2

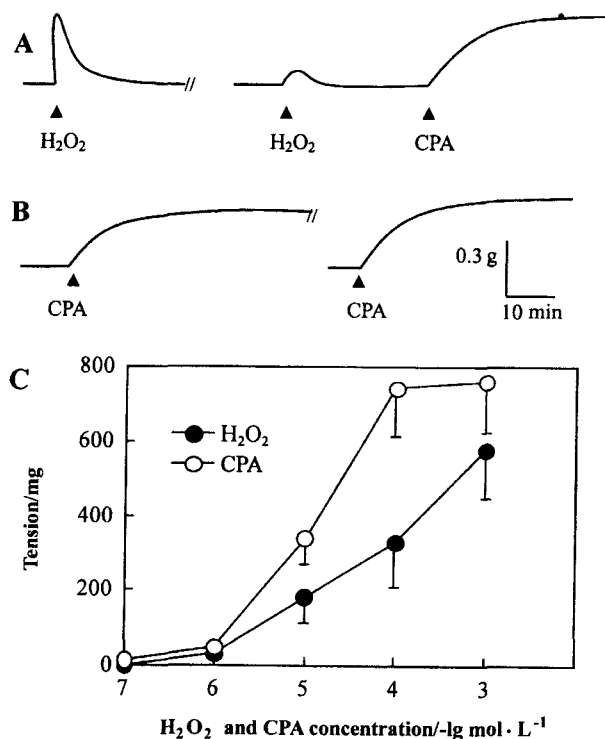


Fig 1. Contractile responses induced by H_2O_2 and CPA in endothelium-denuded rat aortic rings. (A, B) Typical traces showing the phasic contraction evoked by H_2O_2 30 $\mu mol/L$ and tonic contractions by CPA 10 $\mu mol/L$. Test drug applied point is indicated by (\blacktriangle), and (//) denotes washout for 30 min. Data in each tracing are representative of experiments using 5 individual aortic rings taken from at least 3 rats, and expressed in mg of tension developed. (C) The concentration-response curves were constructed in a cumulative manner for CPA (\circ) and non-cumulative way for H_2O_2 (\bullet). $n = 5 - 7$. $\bar{x} \pm s$.

induced phasic contraction, whereas CPA triggered a slow and sustained contraction. In addition, after the first contraction induced by H_2O_2 30 $\mu mol/L$, which subsequently washed out for 30 min, a second challenge of H_2O_2 failed to, but CPA 10 $\mu mol/L$ could still evoke contraction of rat aorta (Fig 1A). The same tachyphylaxis phenomenon, however, was not happened for CPA-induced contraction (Fig 1B).

Due to tachyphylaxis for H_2O_2 -induced contraction, a cumulative concentration-response curve was not employed in the subsequent experiments. We selected a concentration of H_2O_2 30 $\mu mol/L$ and CPA 10 $\mu mol/L$ which close to their EC_{50} for further investigation.

Effects of CPA and H_2O_2 on PE-induced contraction in Ca^{2+} -free medium When rat aortic rings denuded endothelium were pretreated with Ca^{2+} -free Krebs' solutions for 10 min, PE 10 $\mu mol/L$ evoked a phasic contraction (Fig 2A). This is consistent with the notion that in the absence of extracellular Ca^{2+} , receptor agonists, like PE, contract vascular smooth muscle via mobilization of intracellular Ca^{2+} . To deplete SR-stored Ca^{2+} , rat aortic rings were co-incubated with Ca^{2+} -free Krebs' solutions and a specific SR Ca^{2+} -pump inhibitor of CPA 30 $\mu mol/L$. This protocol nearly abolished PE (10 $\mu mol/L$)-induced contraction (Fig 2B and 2D). However, co-incubation with Ca^{2+} -free Krebs' solutions and H_2O_2 30 $\mu mol/L$ was no effect on PE (10 $\mu mol/L$)-induced contraction (Fig 2C and 2D).

Effects of CPA and H_2O_2 on thapsigargin-induced maximal contractions To achieve full inhibition of SR Ca^{2+} -pump in smooth muscles, rat aortic rings without endothelium were incubated with thapsigargin 30 $\mu mol/L$, another highly specific inhibitor of SR Ca^{2+} -pump^[14]. Upon the maximal steady-state contraction triggered by thapsigargin, addition of H_2O_2 30 $\mu mol/L$ but not CPA 10 $\mu mol/L$ produced further contraction of aortic rings (Fig 3A, B, and C).

Effects of P_2 -purinoceptor antagonists on H_2O_2 - and CPA-induced contractions Suramin and RB-2 (each 100 $\mu mol/L$), two widely used P_2 -purinoceptor antagonists^[10], all inhibited H_2O_2 (30 $\mu mol/L$)-induced contraction in endothelium-denuded preparations by more than 90 % (Fig 4A), in supporting our previous proposal that H_2O_2 might target P_2 -purinoceptors^[9]. The same concentration of suramin and RB-2, however, did not affect CPA (10 $\mu mol/L$)-induced contraction (Fig 4B).

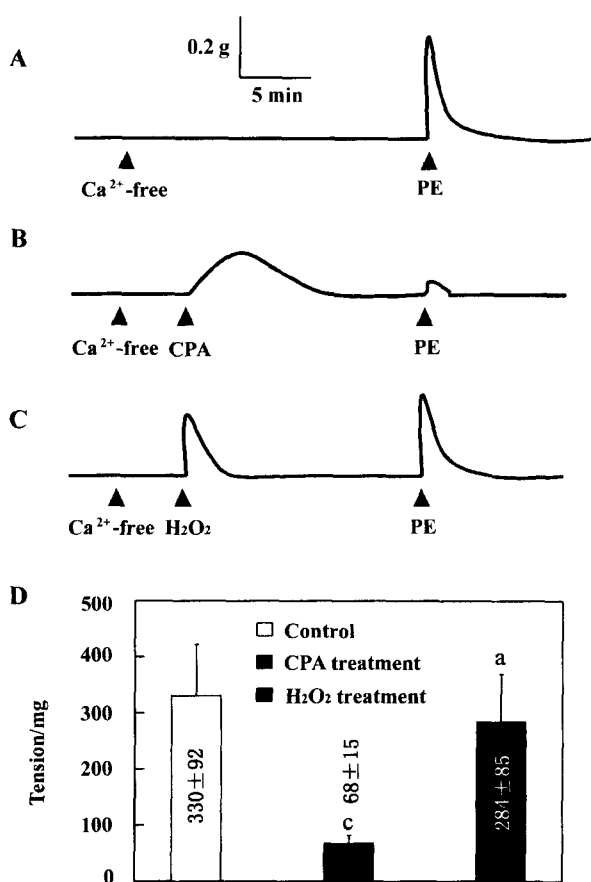


Fig 2. Effects of CPA 10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ and H_2O_2 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ on PE (10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contraction of rat aorta in the absence of endothelium and extracellular Ca^{2+} . (A, B, and C) Typical traces showing the phasic contraction of PE 10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ in Ca^{2+} -free medium, and the influence of CPA 10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ or H_2O_2 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ on PE (10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contractions. (\blacktriangle) denotes addition of drugs or treatment with Ca^{2+} -free Krebs' solution (containing egtazic acid 100 $\mu\text{mol/L}$). (D) Data summary. $n=6$. $\bar{x} \pm s$. $^aP > 0.05$, $^cP < 0.01$ vs control.

Roles of receptor-coupled enzymes and IP_3 receptors in H_2O_2 - and CPA-induced contractions

In normal Krebs' solutions, H_2O_2 (30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contraction was significantly depressed by NCDC 10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, a PLC inhibitor; by H7 10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, a PKC inhibitor; by genistein 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, an inhibitor of protein tyrosine kinases; or by mepacrine 50 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ and indomethacin 3 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, inhibitor of PLA_2 and COX respectively (Fig 5A). However, pretreatment with the same concentration of NCDC, H7, genistein, mepacrine, and indomethacin had no effect on CPA (10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contraction (Fig 5B). Interestingly, preincubation with 2-APB 50 $\mu\text{mol/L}$, a membrane-permeable IP_3

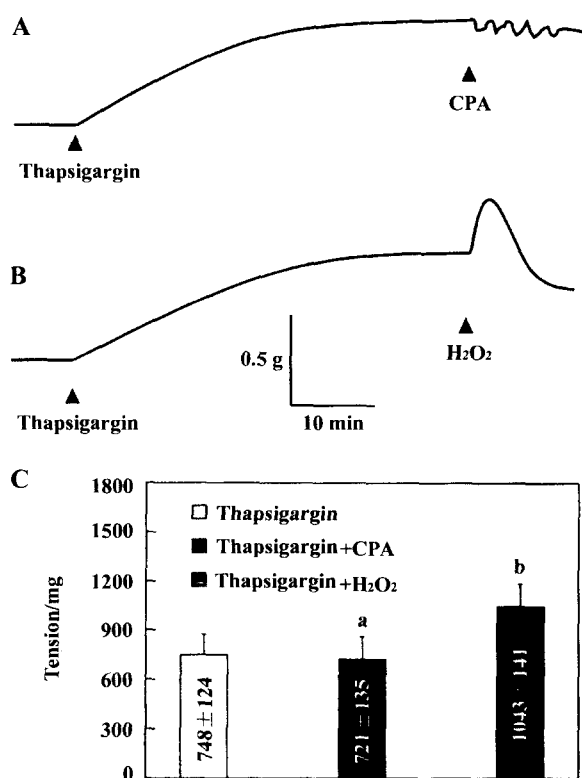


Fig 3. Effects of H_2O_2 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ and CPA 10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ in the presence of maximal response to thapsigargin 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$. (A, B) Typical traces showing H_2O_2 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ but not CPA 10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ evoked further contraction on top of the maximal response to thapsigargin. (\blacktriangle) denotes addition of drugs. (C) Data summary. $n=6$. $\bar{x} \pm s$. $^aP > 0.05$, $^bP < 0.05$ vs thapsigargin group.

receptor blocker^[15], not only inhibited H_2O_2 (30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)- but also CPA (10 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contractions (Fig 5A and 5B), with no influence on KCl (30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$)-induced contraction (data not shown).

DISCUSSION

This is the first study that systematically compared H_2O_2 - and CPA-induced contraction of rat aorta in the absence of endothelium. We found that although both H_2O_2 and CPA all concentration-dependently contracted rat aorta, their contractile patterns were quite different. H_2O_2 evoked a fast phasic contraction, whereas CPA triggered a slow and tonic contraction. Furthermore, a tachyphylaxis phenomenon was observed for H_2O_2 but not for CPA-induced contractions. These results would give the first evidence not supporting the proposal that inhibition of SR Ca^{2+} -pump by H_2O_2 as reported by Grover *et al*^[11,12] could be the mechanism of H_2O_2 -induced

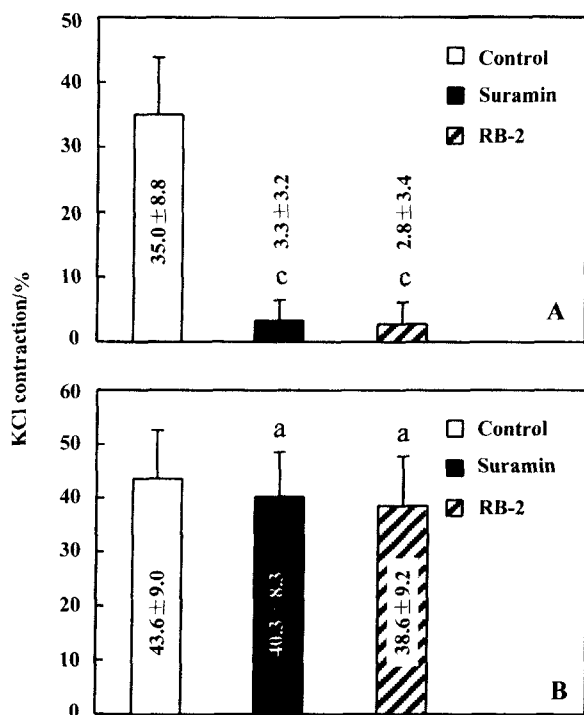


Fig 4. Effect of suramin and RB-2 on the contraction induced by 30 μmol/L of H₂O₂ (A) or 10 μmol/L of CPA (B) in endothelium-denuded rat aortic rings. Each preparation was challenged with H₂O₂ or CPA only once after pre-incubation with either vehicle (control) or suramin and RB-2 (each 100 μmol/L) for 20 min. *n* = 6–9. $\bar{x} \pm s$. ^a*P* > 0.05, ^c*P* < 0.01 vs control.

contraction of rat aorta. However, it may be argued that the fast onset and termination of H₂O₂-induced contraction as showed here may be due to its fast membrane diffusion and intracellular metabolism in vascular smooth muscle cells. This seems to be the reason of the different contractile patterns exerted by H₂O₂ and CPA, since CPA, a chemical of large molecule, may need more time than H₂O₂ to diffuse and target the SR Ca²⁺-pump. However, at least two lines of evidence do not support this reasoning. First, it was demonstrated that a successful detection of intracellular H₂O₂ in rat aortic smooth muscle cells requires the exogenous added H₂O₂ at least 100 μmol/L^[4], indicating that if H₂O₂-induced contraction is truly due to its direct inhibition of intracellular SR Ca²⁺-pump, then a threshold concentration of 100 μmol/L must be achieved for H₂O₂-induced contraction. This is contrasted with our observation that as low as 3 μmol/L H₂O₂ can elicit a detectable threshold contraction in rat aorta with an EC₅₀ of 30 μmol/L. Second, if the fast termination of H₂O₂-induced contraction is the result of

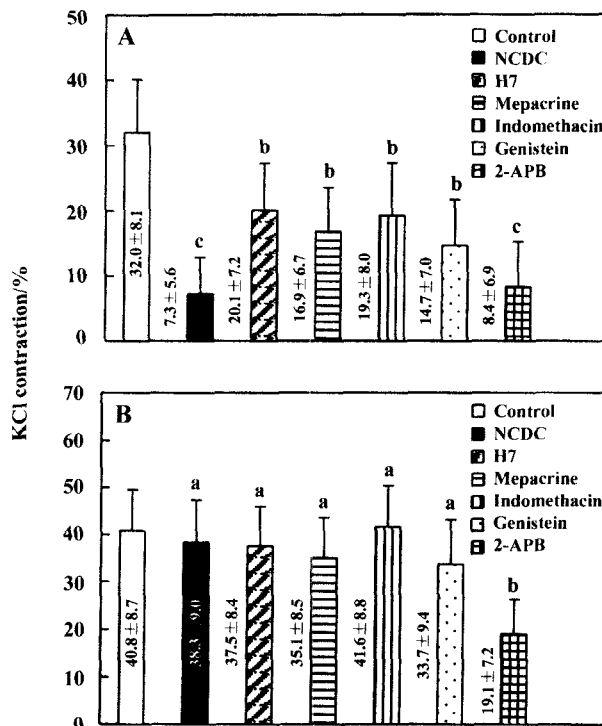


Fig 5. Effects of NCDC 10 μmol/L, H7 10 μmol/L, mepacrine 50 μmol/L, indomethacin 3 μmol/L, genistein 30 μmol/L, and 2-APB 50 μmol/L on the contractions induced by 30 μmol/L H₂O₂ (A) or 10 μmol/L CPA (B) in endothelium-denuded aortic rings. Each preparation was challenged with H₂O₂ or CPA only once after pre-incubation with either vehicle (control) or the various inhibitors for 20 min. *n* = 6–9. $\bar{x} \pm s$. ^a*P* > 0.05, ^b*P* < 0.05, ^c*P* < 0.01 vs control.

scavenging by intracellular catalase and/or other enzymes, then a second challenge of H₂O₂ will be expected to re-contract aortic smooth muscles. The fact that H₂O₂ failed to contract aorta in the presence or absence of the first-added H₂O₂ apparently does not support this postulation. On the other hand, it may be also argued that the functional tachyphylaxis exerted by H₂O₂ might be the result of damage of vascular smooth muscles due to H₂O₂ challenge. Indeed, our previous result that a brief pre-treatment (15 min) of aortic rings with H₂O₂ 30 μmol/L did not impair caffeine- and KCl-induced contractions^[9], combined with the present observation that H₂O₂ treatment did not affect CPA-induced contraction would also argue against a non-selective impairment of vascular smooth muscles and their SR Ca²⁺-pumps.

It is well established that both intracellular Ca²⁺ release and extracellular Ca²⁺ influx all participate in PE-induced contraction of vascular smooth muscles. Our finding that PE only evoked a phasic contraction in Ca²⁺-

free medium is consistent with this notion. In addition, the fact that CPA pretreatment in Ca^{2+} -free medium nearly abolished PE-induced phasic contraction, well supports the previous view that CPA could deplete IP_3 -related Ca^{2+} stores through specific inhibition of SR Ca^{2+} -pump^[13]. Under the same experimental conditions, H_2O_2 exposure failed to affect subsequent PE-induced contraction, suggesting no involvement of SR Ca^{2+} -pump inhibition exerted by H_2O_2 , at least at the testing concentration of 30 $\mu\text{mol/L}$. Such a view is further supported by our another important finding that H_2O_2 but not CPA could further contract rat aortic rings after the maximal contraction evoked upon the full inhibition of SR Ca^{2+} -pump by thapsigargin.

Recently, we proposed a model that H_2O_2 might activate P_2 -purinoceptors, thereby eliciting the vasoconstrictile response^[8,9]. The present data that suramin and RB-2, two widely used P_2 -purinoceptor antagonists, all nearly abolished H_2O_2 -induced contraction of rat aorta are consistent with this hypothesis. Again, the failure of suramin and RB-2 on CPA-induced contraction lends additional support to our contention that H_2O_2 and CPA may use different signaling pathways in mediating their contractile responses in rat aorta. This view is further supported by the finding that only H_2O_2 - but not CPA-induced contraction could be attenuated, to different degree, by various inhibitors of receptor-coupled or downstream signaling enzymes, including NCDC (PLC), H7 (PKC), genistein (protein tyrosine kinases), mepacrine (PLA_2), and indomethacin (COX).

The unexpected and interesting finding of the present study is that 2-APB, a membrane-permeable IP_3 receptor blocker^[15], not only inhibited H_2O_2 - but also CPA-induced contractions. This result is inconsistent with the data that NCDC, a PLC inhibitor, failed to influence CPA-induced contraction, thereby indicating no involvement of IP_3 . The nature of this discrepancy is unclear. However, a recent study has shown that IP_3 receptor itself rather than IP_3 molecule is required for CPA-evoked extracellular Ca^{2+} influx^[15]. On the other hand, the overall finding of the present study is contrasted with that reported by Grover *et al*, who showed ROS including H_2O_2 inhibited SR Ca^{2+} -pump in coronary smooth muscles^[11,12]. The reasons for this apparent contradiction are unknown. However, it should be noted that Grover *et al* challenged coronary arteries with ROS generated from xanthine oxidase/xanthine system which indeed produced not only H_2O_2 but also O_2^- and $\cdot\text{OH}$. An early

study in isolated cardiac and skeletal muscle SR vesicles had demonstrated that it was the $\cdot\text{OH}$ rather than H_2O_2 itself that competitively inhibited the activity of SR Ca^{2+} -pump^[16]. And our previous study had excluded the involvement of O_2^- and $\cdot\text{OH}$ in H_2O_2 -induced contraction of rat aorta^[8]. Nevertheless, despite all of these arguments, we still could not fully rule out the possibility that SR Ca^{2+} -pump in vascular smooth muscles might be somewhat impaired if the challenge time and concentration of H_2O_2 were raised to 45 min and 1 mmol/L respectively as employed by one study^[12].

In summary, we have provided functional evidence against the involvement of SR Ca^{2+} -pump inhibition in the H_2O_2 -induced contraction of rat aorta in the absence of endothelium. It seems that H_2O_2 contracts rat aorta through receptor (presumably P_2 -purinoceptors)-sensitive signaling pathways, which are not shared by that of CPA, a specific inhibitor of SR Ca^{2+} -pump. This finding would lead to better understanding of the nature of the oxidative signaling exerted by H_2O_2 .

ACKNOWLEDGMENT This work was supported by grants in part from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario (CYK). Mr SHEN Jian-Zhong was a visiting scholar of McMaster University (Canada).

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肌浆网钙泵的抑制不参与过氧化氢诱导的大鼠主动脉收缩

沈建中, 郑秀凤¹, 魏尔清, 關超然²

(浙江大学医学院药理教研室, 杭州 310031, 中国;
² McMaster大学医学院平滑肌研究组, 安大略省 L8N 3Z5, 加拿大)

关键词 过氧化氢; 环匹阿尼酸; 胸主动脉; 平滑肌; 嘌呤能 P₂ 受体; 舒拉明; 肌浆网; 钙镁 ATP 酶; 2-氨乙氧基二苯酯硼酸

目的: 研究肌浆网钙泵抑制是否参与 H₂O₂ 诱导的大鼠主动脉收缩反应. **方法:** 离体主动脉环张力实验比较 H₂O₂ 及钙泵特异性抑制剂环匹阿尼酸(CPA)缩血管效应及其信号机制的差异. **结果:** H₂O₂ 和 CPA 均收缩去内皮主动脉环, 但 H₂O₂ 触发快速短暂相位相收缩, 而 CPA 诱导缓慢持续的张力相收缩. 在无钙液中, 仅 CPA 30 μmol/L 而非 H₂O₂ 30 μmol/L 预处理取消苯肾上腺素 10 μmol/L 缩血管效应. Thapsigargin 30 μmol/L 诱导最大收缩反应时, 仅 H₂O₂ 能使血管环进一步收缩. 另外, P₂ 受体拮抗剂 suramin、RB-2 (各 100 μmol/L) 以及多种酶抑制剂包括 PLC、PKC、PLA₂、COX 和蛋白质酪氨酸激酶均能抑制 H₂O₂ 而非 CPA 诱导的缩血管效应, 但 2-APB 50 μmol/L 对两者都有抑制作用. **结论:** 肌浆网钙泵抑制不是 H₂O₂ 收缩大鼠去内皮主动脉的机制.

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