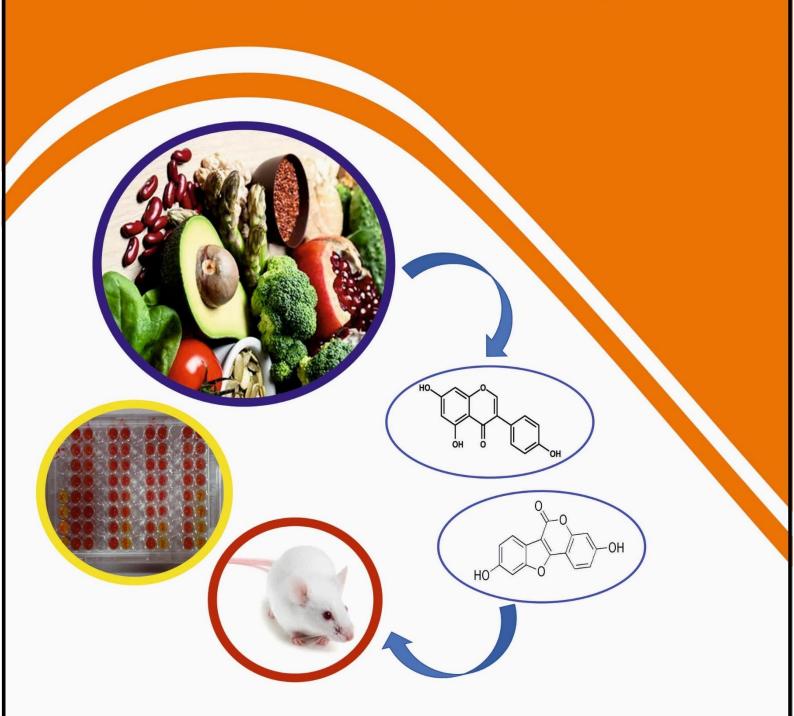
PHYTOESTROGENS: AN INVESTIGATION ON THEIR SYNERGISTIC EFFECTS



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Kripa Drishti Publications, Pune.

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PREFACE

With growing concern about environmental health worldwide, the safety of foods or diet has also received great attention over the years. Consequently, the analysis of chemical composition of various types of vegetables, fruits and other natural plant derived foods combined with determination of the possible role of various such natural compounds on human and animal health became a major scientific research focus over the last two decades. Phytoestrogens are one class of those natural compounds found in many plant derived foods which exhibit unique biological activities by mimicking the actions of estrogen, a natural hormone available in humans and other mammals.

The Estrogens play significant role in reproductive physiology of organisms possessing them. Therefore, the interference of normal endocrine functions by external agencies or environmental factors has led to the development of the new area of research known as "Environmental Endocrine Disruption".

Tremendous progress of scientific research in this field around the world have produced sufficient evidences in support of both the beneficial and harmful health effects of phytoestrogens in humans and other animals. These findings, including effects on both reproductive as well as on general health, together with the realisation of presence of multiple such compounds in our everyday diet have led to the research on yet another important concern of their possible synergistic effects.

The piece of investigation presented in this book is one of such endeavour to assess the synergistic effects of two most potent phytoestrogens viz., Genistein and Coumestrol. Both in-vivo and in-vitro effects of these compounds have been studied using Ovariectomized Albino Mice and Recombinant Yeast Cells containing gene for Estrogen Receptor respectively. Interestingly, the findings revealed synergistic effects of the compounds for certain parameters while antagonistic effects for others either in the presence or absence of estrogen.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to

My Parents

Late Nishikanta Debnath

&

Smt. Shefalika Debnath

ABSTRACT

Phytoestrogens are diverse group of naturally occurring phenolic, non-steroidal compounds that are natural components of certain plant foods. Although, they possess structural similarity to mammalian endogenous estrogen (17 β -estradiol) and have affinity for binding estrogen receptors, they are estrogenically much less potent than natural estrogens. Dietarily potent phytoestrogens like Genistein and Coumestrol have captured much attention in recent years due to their genomic as well as non-genomic mechanism of actions and their differential interaction with estrogen receptors (ER α & ER β) and transactivation which mediate comparable estrogenic activity. In the present study, the combinatorial effects of these two phytoestrogens in the presence or absence of endogenous/exogenous estrogen E2 have been taken under consideration, through *in vitro* and *in vivo* assays.

The principal focus of the present investigation was to evaluate the combinatory effects using *in vivo* utero-vaginotrophic bioassays in female C3H/He albino mice following 3 d subcutaneous administration of pure Genistein and Coumestrol compounds and taking 17β -estradiol as positive control. Additionally, however, combinatorial estrogenic activity of combination was also tested in one of the highly estrogen-sensitive *in vitro* bioassays using recombinant yeast cells to gain insight into the combinatory/synergistic estrogenic behaviour of the tested compounds in a more specific and controlled system. The results showed a dose-dependent induction (nM) and synergistic inhibition (mM) of β -galactosidase activity.

Combinatorial effects on changes in uterine histology and other estrogen-sensitive endpoints like increase in wet weight, fluid imbibition, luminal epithelial height, stromal gland number and uterine total protein were measured. To gain better understanding of the molecular mechanism of action, combinatorial effects on expression of uterine estrogen-regulated genes like estrogen receptors (ER α and ER β) and progesterone receptor (PR) were investigated using Real Time PCR. Some of these combinatorial effects were also compared with that in immature and ovaryintact mice. Antiestrogen fulvestrant (ICI, 182,780) pretreatment was done to assess whether the uterotrophic activities are mediated through ERs.

The vaginal estrogen sensitive parameters included increase in vaginal epithelial height, vaginal epithelial proliferation and vaginal epithelial cornification, in addition to changes in histology. Effect on estrous cyclicity was studied following vaginal smear method described by Stockard and Papanicolaou (1917).

In agreement with other studies, the present investigation also produced evidences in favour of comparative estrogenicity of Gen and Coum in ovariectomized and ovary-intact and immature mice, which possibly, in part, be attributed to differences in status of estrogen and estrogen receptors. However, as expected, together, Gen and Coum modulated uterine estrogen-sensitive endpoints in an additive or synergistic manner in both ovariectomized and immature mice and significantly also

in ovary-intact adult mice. The synergistic or additive response on uterine weight in ovariectomized mice also reflected down-regulation of $ER\alpha$ and PR while upregulation of $ER\beta$. This study established that Gen and Coum-induced uterine growth are ER-dependent and also clearly identified the inverse association of $ER\alpha/ER\beta$ ratio with uterine growth for all treatments. Pre-treatment with antiestrogen fulvestrant (Ful) reduced uterine wet weight induced by E_2 , Gen, Coum and their combinations indicating ER-dependent activity.

Even though Gen and Coum themselves did not exhibit synergism with respect to all the vaginal estrogen-sensitive parameters, they, in presence of E₂, altered all the vaginal estrogenic endpoints in an additive or synergistic manner.

Keeping in view of the various established non-genomic/non-estrogenic mechanisms of action of these two phytoestrogens and numerous claims about their potential beneficial role in health and diseases, effects on some additional biochemical parameters were assessed. In the acute *in vivo* exposure regime, Gen and Coum exhibited partial synergism with respect to increase in serum total and HDL cholesterol, total protein, albumin and globulin with a shift of albumin/globulin ratio towards globulin. Compared to ovariectomized mice, the overall effects of combination were more significant in ovary-intact mice. Although synergistic reduction of serum glucose by Gen and Coum appear to be mediated in estrogen-like manner, their significant combinatorial reduction of liver glycogen content seemed to be mediated in an estrogen-independent manner, since, steroidal estrogens may increase tissue glycogen content, primarily through the stimulation of glucose transport into the muscle and liver cells.

ABBREVIATIONS

AF-1/2 Activation function-1/2
ANOVA Analysis of variance
AR Androgen receptor

AhR Aryl hydrocarbon receptor

BERKO Estrogen receptor beta knock-out

BSA Bovine serum albumin

cDNA Complementary deoxyribonucleic acid

CNS Central nervous system

COT Committee on toxicity of chemicals in food, consumer

products and the environment

Coum Coumestrol

CPRG Chlorophenol red β-D-galactopyranoside

DBD DNA- binding domain DEPC Diethyl pyrocarbonate

DERKO Double estrogen receptor knock-out

DES Diethylstilbestrol

dl Deci litre

DMSO Dimethyl Sulphoxide
DNA Deoxyribonucleic acid

 E_2 17β-estradiol

EACs Endocrine active chemicals
EDTA Ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid

EE Ethinylestradiol

EGF Epidermal growth factor

EGFR Epidermal growth factor receptor

 $\begin{array}{ll} ER & Estrogen\ receptor \\ ER\alpha & Estrogen\ receptor\ alpha \\ ER\beta & Estrogen\ receptor\ beta \end{array}$

ERKO Estrogen receptor alpha knock-out
ERE Estrogen responsive element
FSA Food Standard Agency
FSH Follicle stimulating hormone
Ful Fulvestrant (ICI 182, 780)

GAPDH Glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase

GE Glandular elithelium

Gen Genistein

GnRH Gonadotropins releasing hormone

H₂SO₄ Sulphuric acid HCL Hydrochloric acid HDL High density lipoprotein hER Human estrogen receptor HRT Hormone replacement therapy

hsp Heat shock protein
ICI Imperial cancer institute
IGF Insulin like growth factor

IGFR Insulin like growth factor receptor

i.m. Intramuscular

KOH Potassium hydroxide
LBD Ligand binding domain
LE Luminal epithelium
LH Luteinizing hormone
LDL Low density lipoprotein

LOAEL Lowest observed adverse effect level

mRNA Messenger ribonucleic acid

NaOH Sodium hydroxide

NOEC No observed effect concentration

OD Optical density

OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OVX Ovariectomized P₄ Progesterone

PCB Polychlorinated bisphenol

ppm Parts per million
PR Progesterone receptor
RBA Relative binding affinity

RNA Ribonucleic acid rpm Revolution per minute

s.c. Subcutaneous

SERM Selective estrogen receptor modulator
STEAR Selective tissue estrogenic activity regulator

SEM Standard error of mean

SHBG Sex steroid hormone binding globulin

TCA Trichloro acetic acid

TAF Transcriptional activation function

TGF Transforming growth factor

Tris Tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane
TSH Thyroid stimulating hormone

 $\begin{array}{cc} \mu g & \quad \text{Micro gram} \\ UV & \quad \text{Ultra violet} \end{array}$

VEGF Vascular endothelial growth factor

WHO World Health Organization

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Dr. Nitu Debnath

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About the Book

This Book is a humble attempt on part of the author to present the findings of his PhD research in a form which enhance visibility of relevant scientific knowledge and information to larger community of students, teachers, researchers, health-workers & readers alike. Because, creating more and more awareness about various facets concerning consumption of plant-derived food and their plausible health effects and disseminating the scientific information to society at large through various means are essential to ensure healthy life in current context.

The detail background on Phytoestrogens, specific objectives of the present work, various established methods applied to meet the objectives, the important findings of the work, and finally the analysis of the findings in the context of recent relevant information are presented with best of effort in the Book as six separate Chapters.

Hope, this book will cater to the need of Students, Teachers, Researchers, Health workers, Dietician and health conscious people in general who will play pivotal role in achieving the ultimate goal of this scientific research.

About the Author



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