

sensitive potassium channels leading to depolarization of mitochondrial membrane potential followed by mitochondrial ROS formation and respiratory dysfunction. This concept was supported by observations that ethidium bromide-induced mitochondrial damage suppressed angiotensin-II-dependent increase in Nox1 and oxidative stress. In another example hypoxia was used as a stimulator of mitochondrial ROS formation and by using pharmacological and genetic inhibitors, a role of mitochondrial ROS for the induction of NADPH oxidase via PKC ϵ was demonstrated. The third model was based on cell death by serum withdrawal that promotes the production of ROS in human 293T cells by stimulating both the mitochondria and Nox1. By superior molecular biological methods the authors showed that mitochondria were responsible for the fast onset of ROS formation followed by a slower but long-lasting oxidative stress condition based on the activation of an NADPH oxidase (Nox1) in response to the fast mitochondrial ROS formation. Finally, a cross-talk between mitochondria and NADPH oxidases (Nox2) was shown in nitroglycerin-induced tolerance involving the mitochondrial permeability transition pore and ATP-sensitive potassium channels. The use of these redox signaling pathways as pharmacological targets is briefly discussed.

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5L.4 The significance of thermogenesis for the ageing process

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Impaired thermogenesis is one of the features of ageing. Activity and recruitment of mitochondria in brown adipose tissue is important for the thermogenic needs of animals. Therefore thermogenesis, both at the level of brown-fat mitochondria and at the intact animal level, was examined here in PolgA mtDNA polymerase mutant mice (mtDNA mutator), a mouse strain exhibiting numerous mutations of mtDNA and several features of premature aging. At the mitochondrial level, as compared with wild-type mitochondria, on all three substrates investigated (pyruvate, palmitoyl-L-carnitine and glycerol-3-phosphate), UCP1-dependent oxygen consumption was significantly reduced in mutant mitochondria, similarly to maximal oxidative capacity (FCCP-response), indicating impaired thermogenesis. In intact mice, at environmental temperatures below 20 °C, mtDNA mutator mice were unable to further increase their metabolism and went into torpor. Response to adrenergic stimulus (NE injection) was significantly reduced in mtDNA mutator mice. Thus, mtDNA mutation led to lower activity of brown-fat mitochondria and impaired thermogenesis; i.e. also in this respect, mtDNA. Mutator mice mimicked normal ageing. Maintaining the mice at thermoneutral temperature (30 °C) ameliorated many of the ageing symptoms. Remarkably, the life span of the mice at thermoneutrality was increased by around 100 days, emphasizing the significance of thermogenesis for the ageing process.

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5L.5 Mitochondrial fatty acid oxidation and oxidative stress: Lack of reverse electron transfer-associated production of reactive oxygen species

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Lipotoxicity results from accumulation of lipids in non-adipose tissue and is partly attributed to an impairment of mitochondrial physiology by elevated level of nonesterified fatty acids (FFA). Typical activities of FFA are uncoupling and modulation of cellular ROS generation. Here, we examined the likely ability of fatty acid oxidation to initiate ROS generation by reverse electron transfer (RET). RET from succinate to NAD⁺ is known to be accompanied by high generation of reactive oxygen species (ROS). In contrast, oxidation of fatty acids by mitochondria, despite being a powerful source of FADH₂, does not exhibit RET-associated ROS generation. Oxidation of carnitine esters of medium- and long-chain fatty acids by rat heart mitochondria is accompanied by neither high level of NADH/NAD⁺ nor intramitochondrial reduction of acetoacetate to β -hydroxybutyrate, comparable to those accompanying succinate oxidation, although it produces the same polarization of the inner mitochondrial membrane, evidenced by high transmembrane potential ($\Delta\psi$). Also in contrast to the oxidation of succinate, where conversion of the pH difference between the mitochondrial matrix and the medium into $\Delta\psi$ by addition of nigericin results in a decrease of ROS generation, the same treatment during oxidation of octanoyl-carnitine produces a large increase of ROS. Analysis of respiratory chain complexes by Blue Native polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis revealed bands that could tentatively point to supercomplex formation between complexes II and I and complexes II and III. However, no such association could be found between complex I and the electron transferring flavoprotein that participates in fatty acid oxidation. It is speculated that structural association between respective respiratory chain components may facilitate effective RET.

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5L.6 Mitochondrial Ca²⁺ and ROS crosstalk signaling

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Mitochondria are central to cellular energy metabolism as the source of much of the cell's ATP, as well as being a hub for cellular Ca²⁺ and redox signaling pathways. Mitochondrial Ca²⁺ and morphology are effectors of ATP synthesis, yet Ca²⁺ overload and morphological deformation can lead to mitochondrial dysfunction and ultimately cell death. Moreover, Ca²⁺ uptake by mitochondria is actively involved in shaping cellular Ca²⁺ dynamics by regulating the concentrations of Ca²⁺ within microdomains between mitochondria and Ca²⁺ transporters existing in nearby sarco/endoplasmic reticulum and plasma membranes. Reactive oxygen species (ROS) are generated, at least in part, as a consequence of ATP production in the mitochondria and are important for cellular signaling, yet contribute to oxidative stress and cellular damage. ROS are important for regulating the activity of redox sensitive enzymes and ion channels within the cell, including Ca²⁺ channels. For both Ca²⁺ and ROS, a delicate balance exists between the beneficial and detrimental effects on mitochondria. In this presentation, I bring together current data on mechanisms of mitochondrial Ca²⁺-mediated ROS generation and mitochondrial fission. I propose a model for crosstalk between Ca²⁺ and ROS signaling pathways within mitochondrial microdomains, focusing on the role of mitochondrial fission machinery and mitochondrial permeability transition pores as a modulator of Ca²⁺ dynamics and ROS generation.