

# EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF INFLAMMATORY CYTOKINES ON DRUG-INDUCED LIVER INJURY (DILI) IN HUMAN HEPATOCYTES



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## Introduction:

Drug-induced liver injury (DILI) is a major challenge in pharmaceutical development. It is a key reason for clinical trial failure and has led to withdrawal of marketed drugs.

**Inflammation is believed to be a key risk factor for DILI. Animal studies as demonstrated enhanced drug-induced liver toxicity by proinflammatory agents.**

We report here our investigation on the effects of 10 proinflammatory cytokines on the in vitro cytotoxicity of a known hepatotoxic drug, troglitazone (TRO), in primary human hepatocytes.

## Materials and Methods

**Human hepatocytes:** Plateable cryopreserved human hepatocytes were used in this study

**Cytokines:** Ten cytokines: IL1b, IL-2, IL-4, IL-6, IL-8, IL-10, TNF- $\alpha$ , TNF $\beta$ , INF $\alpha$  2b, INF $\gamma$  were evaluated. They were obtained from R&D Systems, Biovision, PBL InterferonSource, and Antigenix America.

**Cytotoxicity Evaluation:** The hepatocytes were plated in collagen-coated 384-well plates for the evaluation of troglitazone cytotoxicity in the presence and absence of each of the cytokines. The hepatocytes were thawed and plated for 4 hours at a cell density of 5000 cells/well in 10  $\mu$ L followed by the addition of an equal volume of treatment medium containing 2X of the desired final concentrations of troglitazone and cytokines. After an overnight incubation, cellular ATP contents were determined using a commercially available ATP kit consisting of lysis buffer and ATP detection reagent (PerkinElmer, Boston). Cytotoxicity is indicated by a decrease in cellular ATP content.

Cytotoxicity was expressed as % viability calculated using the following equation:

$$\% \text{ viability} = \text{ATP (treatment)} / \text{ATP (negative control)} \times 100\%$$

Experiment 1: Evaluation of relative noncytotoxic TRO concentrations to investigate if cytokines could potentiate cytotoxicity

**Finding:** None of the cytokines demonstrate significant potentiation of TRO cytotoxicity

$\mu$ M TRO	No Cytokines	IL1b		IL6		TNF $\alpha$		IL4		IL8		IL10		IL2		TNF $\beta$		IFN $\gamma$		IFN $\alpha$	
		0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml	0.1 ng/ml	5 ng/ml
0	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3.125	100.72	117.00	107.54	104.00	96.72	95.67	94.72	109.25	106.13	102.55	107.95	94.14	89.85	126.09	122.75	100.44	99.83	114.24	119.91	108.58	111.25
6.25	106.94	117.08	105.70	97.99	93.29	97.90	79.34	119.47	85.84	92.15	100.79	104.14	84.33	123.77	92.41	93.37	84.01	110.22	101.64	107.19	103.99
12.5	76.89	117.29	94.25	97.51	83.60	92.99	84.00	113.18	88.79	92.25	107.06	85.04	89.56	122.20	117.14	73.49	90.15	108.67	108.74	99.84	106.84
25	42.55	85.99	68.96	61.33	56.27	66.63	65.89	84.48	79.32	62.15	69.60	53.31	51.10	74.77	46.37	60.53	60.90	71.01	74.23	71.41	82.09
50	2.88	6.10	2.10	3.39	3.45	4.18	6.89	4.97	3.91	3.31	4.02	4.68	3.44	4.44	4.11	3.47	3.15	4.44	3.84	3.16	5.17

Experiment 2: Evaluation of cytotoxic TRO concentrations to further investigate the protective effects at 5 ng/mL of cytokines

**Finding:** That cytokines do not potentiate TRO cytotoxicity is confirmed

$\mu$ M TRO	RELATIVE VIABILITY (%)																					
	No Cytokines		IL-1b		IL-6		TNF $\alpha$		IL-4		IL-8		IL-10		IL-2		TNF $\beta$		IFN $\gamma$		IFN $\alpha$	
	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd
0	100.00	17.20	100.00	19.15	100.00	10.85	100.00	31.71	100.00	17.86	100.00	15.49	100.00	11.70	100.00	8.58	100.00	9.50	100.00	5.95	100.00	20.24
2.5	104.50	21.23	101.18	11.34	99.92	10.41	119.05	11.53	111.61	9.15	113.80	20.52	124.39	8.79	99.78	11.20	123.36	22.01	122.64	12.12	103.06	18.83
5	124.61	9.10	115.58	6.25	98.13	7.17	123.07	3.84	124.97	10.82	103.38	6.04	127.81	18.63	127.80	19.83	115.64	11.32	116.71	4.34	114.25	17.57
10	113.63	9.40	97.01	18.04	87.66	11.75	110.26	7.63	126.23	16.56	88.40	12.63	113.11	20.88	104.73	4.34	120.94	16.17	87.22	35.94	88.39	12.04
20	16.11	7.75	18.00	7.54	13.23	5.28	19.10	4.54	22.43	7.34	15.01	4.23	21.42	10.60	10.42	4.41	11.03	4.48	11.60	4.15	12.69	3.26
30	5.70	0.75	6.20	0.89	5.18	0.45	6.70	1.00	10.11	1.00	6.75	0.90	7.49	0.68	5.54	1.02	6.53	0.62	6.91	0.24	8.55	1.13
40	4.21	0.28	4.31	0.44	3.68	0.15	4.76	0.43	7.44	0.77	4.47	0.19	5.00	0.61	3.64	0.29	5.00	0.24	4.98	0.36	5.88	0.67

Experiment 3 Further evaluation of the protective effects of the cytokines using 20  $\mu$ M TRO and varying concentrations of cytokines

**Findings:** Again, no sensitization but apparent protective effects observed for interferon alpha (INF $\alpha$ )

Concentration (ng/mL)		RELATIVE VIABILITY (%)																			
IFN $\alpha$	Cytokines	IL1b		IL6		TNF $\alpha$		IL4		IL8		IL10		IL2		TNF $\beta$		IFN $\gamma$		IFN $\alpha$	
		mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd
0	0	4.28	0.32	3.31	0.21	2.96	0.13	3.09	0.30	3.63	0.27	3.70	0.35	2.92	0.14	2.30	0.13	2.79	0.48	1.94	0.11
0.5	3.125	4.06	0.66	3.47	0.84	2.98	0.15	3.19	0.90	4.34	0.61	4.06	0.73	3.75	0.39	3.20	0.43	2.76	0.21	2.61	0.09
1.0	6.25	3.30	0.22	3.87	0.29	3.24	0.21	2.90	0.45	4.01	0.04	4.02	0.31	4.00	0.69	3.11	0.26	3.17	0.25	2.63	0.47
2.1	12.5	3.61	0.62	3.89	0.73	2.99	0.67	3.46	0.83	3.81	0.22	4.09	0.55	5.22	1.86	2.77	0.22	3.80	0.59	3.54	1.34
4.2	25	3.05	0.29	3.69	0.57	2.97	0.24	2.67	0.23	3.62	0.18	2.95	0.22	3.69	0.66	2.61	0.18	3.07	0.43	4.29	1.46
8.3	50	2.59	0.20	3.72	0.80	3.05	0.31	2.79	0.45	3.77	0.15	2.79	0.13	4.00	1.58	2.70	0.43	3.04	0.13	3.38	1.31
16.7	100	2.39	0.32	5.10	1.73	3.20	0.26	2.65	0.67	3.60	0.63	2.53	0.17	3.53	1.59	2.63	0.23	3.08	1.97	1.89	0.62

Results normalized to viability at 20  $\mu$ M troglitazone in the absence of cytokines

Concentration (ng/mL)		RELATIVE VIABILITY (%)																			
IFN $\alpha$	Cytokines	IL1b		IL6		TNF $\alpha$		IL4		IL8		IL10		IL2		TNF $\beta$		IFN $\gamma$		IFN $\alpha$	
		mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd
0	0	100.00	7.42	100.00	6.30	100.00	4.40	100.00	9.67	100.00	7.40	100.00	9.38	100.00	4.91	100.00	5.59	100.00	17.09	100.00	5.79
0.5	3.125	94.87	15.50	104.76	25.44	100.77	4.91	103.30	28.95	119.59	16.80	109.64	19.75	128.30	13.21	139.20	18.84	99.09	7.68	134.58	4.69
1.0	6.25	77.16	5.05	116.95	8.77	109.39	7.05	93.66	14.59	110.38	1.05	108.68	8.32	136.72	23.65	135.08	11.13	113.58	8.97	135.67	24.01
2.1	12.5	84.38	14.60	117.33	21.97	100.91	22.62	111.88	26.72	105.04	6.12	110.56	14.77	178.47	63.58	120.31	9.48	136.31	21.13	182.87	69.37
4.2	25	71.27	6.84	111.35	17.26	100.15	8.03	86.27	7.46	99.87	5.03	79.78	5.91	126.28	22.57	113.40	7.76	110.32	15.27	221.36	75.24
8.3	50	60.59	4.62	112.19	24.13	102.85	10.41	90.27	14.67	103.76	4.09	75.43	3.54	136.77	54.05	117.61	18.49	108.91	4.76	174.40	67.63
16.7	100	55.74	7.56	154.09	52.14	108.00	8.77	85.72	21.69	99.31	17.39	68.22	4.61	120.75	54.46	114.47	10.10	110.42	70.66	97.47	31.85

## Conclusions

**Troglitazone demonstrated the expected, dose-dependent cytotoxicity in cultured human hepatocytes, thereby suggesting that its known hepatotoxicity could be evaluated in vitro.**

**Co-treatment of human hepatocytes with troglitazone with each of the 10 proinflammatory cytokines did not lead to higher cytotoxicity as expected.**

**The results suggest that cytokines per se do not potentiate the hepatotoxicity of troglitazone. Inflammation may still be a risk factor for troglitazone induced liver failure, but other in vivo factors (e.g. cytotoxic antibodies) may be involved.**

**An interesting finding is that IFN $\alpha$  apparently has protective effects. Further investigation is needed to understand this apparent protective effect. A working hypothesis is the alteration of drug metabolizing capacity of the hepatocytes by IFN $\alpha$ .**