



Submitted to
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**CONSEQUENCES OF THE REGULATION OF DNA
DAMAGE AND OTHER HOST RESPONSES BY FISH
OIL FOR COLORECTAL ONCOGENESIS.**

A Ph.D. Thesis
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Table of contents.....	2
Abstract.....	7
Declaration.....	9
Acknowledgments.....	10
List of figures.....	11
List of tables.....	14
List of abbreviations.....	16
List of abstracts and publications.....	18

CHAPTER 1

Introduction and literature review

1.1. Rationale.....	19
1.1.1. The burden of colorectal cancer.....	19
1.1.2. The effect of diet on colorectal cancer.....	21
1.1.3. Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and chemoprevention.....	23
1.2. The development of colorectal cancer.....	24
1.2.1. The biology of tumour formation.....	24
1.2.2. Genomic instability in the adenoma-carcinoma sequence.....	26
1.2.3. Types and causes of genomic instability.....	28
1.3. DNA adducts.....	29
1.3.1. What is an adduct?.....	29
1.3.2. The <i>O</i> ⁶ methyldeoxyGuanosine DNA adduct.....	30
1.3.2.1. Formation of <i>O</i> ⁶ medG.....	31
1.3.2.2. Mismatch and mutational properties of <i>O</i> ⁶ medG.....	32
1.3.2.3. <i>O</i> ⁶ medG levels in human and animal studies.....	35
1.3.2.4. <i>O</i> ⁶ medG as an early biomarker for CRC.....	36
1.3.3. The removal and repair of DNA adducts.....	39
1.3.3.1. Apoptosis.....	39
1.3.3.2. Methylguanine methyltransferase (MGMT).....	40
1.3.3.3. Base excision repair (BER).....	42
1.3.3.4. The mismatch repair pathway (MMR).....	43
1.4. Diet and disease interactions.....	44
1.4.1. Dietary fats and CRC.....	45
1.4.2. Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids.....	46
1.4.3. Potential mechanisms of chemoprevention via omega-3 PUFAs.....	48

1.4.3.1. Inhibition of unfavourable eicosanoid biosynthesis.....	48
1.4.3.2. Influence on COX-2 Expression	50
1.4.3.3. Influence on gene expression and transcription factors.....	50
1.4.3.4. Formation of lipid peroxidation products and apoptosis..._	51
1.4.4. Population, cohort and case control studies and omega-3 PUFAs..	52
1.4.5. <i>In vivo</i> studies and omega-3 PUFAs.....	54
1.4.5.1. Acute animal studies.....	54
1.4.5.2. Long-term animal studies.....	56
1.4.6. <i>In vitro</i> studies and omega-3 PUFAs.....	59
1.5. Novel food technologies involving omega-3 PUFAs.....	60
1.5.1. Microencapsulation of fish oil.....	60
1.6. Research questions and aims.....	61
1.6.1. The pattern of acute homeostatic responses in rat colonic epithelium following an insult of alkylating carcinogen	61
1.6.2. The effect of both free and encapsulated tuna oil on the lipid profile in animal tissue	63
1.6.3. Regulation of acute homeostatic responses in rat colonic epithelium following an insult of alkylating carcinogen using dietary fish oil	65
1.6.4. The regulation of acute homeostatic responses in rat colonic epithelium and possible consequences for the development of colorectal carcinogenesis.....	66

CHAPTER 2 **Methodology**

2.1. The Azoxymethane-Rat model of Colorectal Carcinogenesis.....	68
2.2. Animals.....	70
2.3. Ethics.....	70
2.4. Chemicals.....	70
2.5. Diets.....	71
2.5.1. Encapsulation of fish oil.....	72
2.6. Additional assays.....	73
2.6.1. Apoptosis (Haematoxylin staining).....	73
2.6.2. Apoptosis (TUNEL staining).....	74
2.6.3. Cell Proliferation ki-67 assay	75
2.6.4. Short chain fatty acid assay	75
2.6.5. Long chain fatty acid assay	76

2.6.6.	ACF Methylene blue assay.....	77
2.7.	Statistical analysis.....	77

CHAPTER 3

Establishing the *O*⁶methyldeoxyGuanosine immunohistochemical assay

3.1.	Aim	78
3.2.	Experimental rationale	78
3.3.	<i>O</i> ⁶ medG immunohistochemical protocol	79
3.4.	Quantification of <i>O</i> ⁶ medG immunoassay results	81
3.4.1.	Scoring by eye	81
3.4.2.	Image analysis system	83
3.4.2.1.	Capturing the image	83
3.4.2.2.	Generating the data	85
3.4.2.3.	Organising the data	90
3.5.	Camera comparison	93
3.6.	Summary	95

CHAPTER 4

Study of acute homeostatic responses to a carcinogen in colonic epithelium

4.1.	Time course study.....	97
4.1.1.	Aims.....	97
4.1.2.	Experimental rationale	97
4.1.3.	Study design	99
4.1.4.	Results.....	101
4.1.4.1.	Rat weights.....	101
4.1.4.2.	Time course of apoptosis.....	102
4.1.4.3.	Time course of crypt cellularity	103
4.1.4.4.	Apoptotic Index.....	104
4.1.4.5.	Confirmation of apoptosis using TUNEL.....	105
4.1.4.6.	Time course of cell proliferation	107
4.1.4.7.	Proliferative index.....	108
4.1.4.8.	Time course of <i>O</i> ⁶ medG DNA adduct formation	109
4.1.4.9.	The distribution of host responses along the colonic crypt	111
4.1.4.10.	Data summary.....	118
4.1.5.	Discussion.....	119
4.2.	Methoxyamine study.....	125
4.2.1.	Aim	125

4.2.2.	Experimental rationale	125
4.2.3.	Study design	127
4.2.4.	Results	129
	4.2.4.1. Apoptosis	129
4.2.5.	Discussion	130

CHAPTER 5

Study of the effect of free and microencapsulated fish oil on the omega-3 PUFA content in tissue phospholipid

5.1.	Dietary intervention study	133
	5.1.1. Aims	133
	5.1.2. Experimental rationale	134
	5.1.3. Study design	137
	5.1.4. Results	140
	5.1.4.1. Rat Weights	140
	5.1.4.2. Caecal short chain fatty acid profile	140
	5.1.4.3. Faecal short chain fatty acid profile	142
	5.1.4.4. Faecal pH levels	144
	5.1.4.5. Long chain fatty acid phospholipid profiles	145
	5.1.4.6. Omega-6: omega-3 ratio	158
	5.1.5. Discussion	159

CHAPTER 6

Study of the regulatory effects on acute apoptosis, cell proliferation and colonic *O*⁶medG by dietary fish oil

6.1.	Dietary intervention study	162
	6.1.1. Aims	162
	6.1.2. Experimental rationale	162
	6.1.3. Study design	165
	6.1.4. Results	166
	6.1.4.1. Dietary effect on apoptosis	166
	6.1.4.2. Dietary effect on crypt cellularity and the apoptotic index.	167
	6.1.4.3. Dietary effect on cell proliferation and the proliferative index	168
	6.1.4.4. Dietary effect on <i>O</i> ⁶ medG DNA adduct	169
	6.1.4.5. Dietary effects on the distribution of apoptosis, cell proliferation and <i>O</i> ⁶ medG throughout the colonic crypt ...	170

6.1.5.	Discussion.....	173
6.2.	N7meG study.....	177
6.2.1.	Aims.....	177
6.2.2.	Experimental rationale	177
6.2.3.	Study design.....	179
6.2.4.	Results.....	180
	6.2.4.1. N7meG DNA adduct levels.....	180
6.2.5.	Discussion.....	181

CHAPTER 7

Study of the regulatory effects on colonic ACF lesions by dietary fish oil

7.1.	ACF study.....	183
7.1.1.	Aims.....	183
7.1.2.	Experimental rationale	184
7.1.3.	Study design.....	185
7.1.4.	Results	188
	7.1.4.1. Progressive rat weights.....	188
	7.1.4.2. Dietary effect on caecal and faecal contents.....	189
	7.1.4.3. Dietary effect on ACF formation.....	191
7.1.5.	Discussion.....	193

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions and future directions

8.1.	Introduction.....	196
8.2.	Summary of aims and hypothesis of thesis.....	197
8.3.	The acute host responses in rat colonic epithelium in response to an insult of alkylating agent.....	199
8.4.	Benefits of the encapsulation of fish oil	204
8.5.	The regulation of acute homeostatic responses by fish oil.....	205
8.6.	The consequences of regulation of acute homeostatic responses by fish oil for colorectal oncogenesis.....	209
8.7.	Implications of this research and future steps.....	211
	Appendix.....	214
	References.....	215

ABSTRACT

The acute cellular responses to DNA damaging agents are critical in determining the long term outcome of disease. A cell's susceptibility to damage, or its capacity to remove or repair this damage, all contributes to the eventual health or disease of tissues. This process is especially crucial in colonic epithelial cells and in the development of colorectal oncogenesis. The colonic lumen is constantly subjected to different environmental compounds that may have genotoxic properties that can initiate mutational events and possibly carcinogenesis. Therefore, the study of a regulatory dietary agent that improves the colonic cells ability to withstand damage, improve repair and retain its general health is a significant and practical tool in the fight against colorectal cancer.

The health benefits of fish oil, including its potential chemopreventative properties, have been reported in numerous studies. However, the mechanism by which this protective effect occurs remains unclear. A gap in current literature exists that fails to explore the effect of fish oil on the early cellular responses to carcinogenic agents. Therefore, this thesis aims to firstly, better understand the specific host responses to an insult of carcinogen *in vivo*; secondly, to determine if regulation of these responses can be achieved by dietary fish oil; and lastly, to explore the potential consequences of this regulation for colorectal oncogenesis.

All experimental work was carried out using a rat – azoxymethane (AOM) animal model of colorectal carcinogenesis. The key host responses to the carcinogen that were measured included the formation of acute *O*⁶methyldeoxyGuanosine (*O*⁶medG) DNA damage, the acute apoptotic response to genotoxic carcinogen (AARGC) and cell proliferation rates. A novel immunochemical assay was designed to detect both the levels and distribution of *O*⁶medG in colonic cells. With this established, a pattern of these host responses were mapped out over time. A dietary intervention study trialling a range of fish oil diets containing different doses and forms was then carried out to determine if modulation of responses occurred. This study was then followed on by a longer term study that explored the consequences of regulation by fish oil on pre-neoplastic lesions in the colon.

The acute host responses to an insult of AOM showed that colonic *O*⁶medG formation began 2h post AOM administration and peaked at 6h. The AARGC response followed

the pattern of O^6 medG by a 2h delay, peaking at 8h post AOM administration, while cell proliferation rates decreased significantly after 6h.

The inclusion of tuna oil in the diet did not affect either the AARGC or cell proliferation rates when given in any form or at any dose. Animals fed a diet with 15% free tuna oil and 7% encapsulated tuna oil did however have significantly reduced levels of O^6 medG DNA damage in the distal colon ($p < 0.05$). This reduction in O^6 medG levels did not translate into a reduction of ACF lesion, with a protective effect against ACF lesions only being observed in animals fed the high dose fish oil groups.

Analysis of the data suggest that the acute host responses to an insult of DNA damaging agent appear to be closely related, all reaching their peak level of response 6-8h after the insult. The short time frame between both O^6 medG and apoptosis also did not support the current popular theory which explains O^6 medG mediated apoptosis. An alternate hypothesised BER mediated apoptotic pathway was also not supported.

Regulation of the acute apoptotic response or the cell proliferation rate was not achieved by dietary fish oil. However, a high dose fish oil diet did regulate the level of O^6 medG in colonic epithelial cells by significantly reducing the total O^6 medG DNA damage load. This reduction of O^6 medG by a high fish oil diet however, was not translated into a protective effect against the formation of pre-neoplastic lesions. These data suggests that regulation of the acute O^6 medG response to a damaging agent does not necessarily imply protection for longer term colorectal oncogenesis. Additional studies exploring both the effect of fish oil on AOM metabolising enzymes and also a longer term cancer study may help to answer some pertinent questions evolving from this thesis.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another other person except where due reference is made in the text.

Laura Sophia Nyskohus

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LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

- Figure 1:** The multi-staged development of colorectal cancer and accompanying affected genes.
- Figure 2:** From O^6 medG adduct to mutation – the mispairing properties of O^6 medG
- Figure 3:** The pathway of omega-6 and omega-3 PUFA synthesis
- Figure 4:** Metabolism of AA and EPA via cyclooxygenase and 5-Lipoxygenase

CHAPTER 2

- Figure 5:** The metabolism of AOM

CHAPTER 3

- Figure 6:** O^6 medG staining intensity counted by eye of a rat 6h post AOM
- Figure 7:** Comparing the mean O^6 medG count done in duplicate along the colonic crypt of a rat 6h post AOM
- Figure 8:** An image of a colonic crypt deemed suitable for image analysis
- Figure 9:** CSV data file automatically created after identifying line of interest in a crypt
- Figure 10:** O^6 medG image analysis red, green and blue raw data and luminescence counts
- Figure 11:** O^6 medG image analysis red, green and blue counts adjusted for luminescence
- Figure 12:** O^6 medG image analysis RoB and BoR ratio data and the measured RoB average
- Figure 13:** Repeated counts from a line drawn through the centre of nuclei from a crypt stained for O^6 medG
- Figure 14:** Adjusted RoB counts using the 'fmeasure' function with 5 different average boundaries
- Figure 15:** XLS template
- Figure 16:** A CSV file pasted into the XLS template
- Figure 17:** Average RoB data for each nucleus along the crypt length combined with the scatter of individual RoB counts for each nuclei
- Figure 18:** Comparison of RoB ratio from saline control colonic crypt for different camera settings

Figure 19: Comparison of RoB ratio from AOM treated colonic crypt for different camera settings

CHAPTER 4

Figure 20: Time course study time line

Figure 21: Rat weights

Figure 22: Number of apoptotic cells per crypt over 48h following an insult of AOM

Figure 23: Crypt cellularity over 48h following an insult of AOM

Figure 24: Apoptotic index over 48h following an insult of AOM

Figure 25: Comparison of TUNEL Vs Haematoxylin apoptotic counts

Figure 26: Scatter plot of TUNEL Vs Haematoxylin apoptotic counts

Figure 27: Number of proliferating cells per crypt over 48h following an insult of AOM

Figure 28: Proliferative index over 48h following an insult of AOM

Figure 29: Images of O^6 medG negative and positive staining in rat colonic crypt using the immunochemical assay.

Figure 30: Total O^6 medG adduct load over 48h following an insult of AOM

Figure 31A: O^6 medG distribution along the colonic crypt length at different time point

Figure 31B: Apoptotic distribution along the colonic crypt length at different time points

Figure 31C: Distribution of proliferative cells along the colonic crypt length at different time points

Figure 32A.1: Change in O^6 medG over time by crypt compartment

Figure 32A.2: Trend of O^6 medG levels represented by crypt compartment over 48h

Figure 32B.1: Change in the apoptotic response over time by crypt compartment

Figure 32B.2: Trend of apoptosis represented by crypt compartment over 48h

Figure 32C.1: Change in cell proliferation over time by crypt compartment

Figure 32C.2: Trend of cell proliferation represented by crypt compartment over 48h

Figure 33: Apoptosis, O^6 medG and cell proliferation levels over 48h following an insult of AOM

Figure 34: MX Study timeline

Figure 35: MX Study Apoptosis counts

CHAPTER 5

Figure 36: Acute dietary study time line

Figure 37: Caecal SCFA levels

- Figure 38:** Caecal Butyrate levels
Figure 39: Faecal SCFA levels
Figure 40: Faecal Butyrate levels
Figure 41: DHA and EPA levels in Heart phospholipid
Figure 42: DHA and EPA levels in Liver phospholipid
Figure 43: DHA and EPA levels in Kidney phospholipid
Figure 44: DHA and EPA levels in Adipose phospholipid
Figure 45: DHA and EPA levels in Small Intestine phospholipid
Figure 46: DHA and EPA levels in Proximal Colonic phospholipid
Figure 47: DHA and EPA levels in Distal Colonic phospholipid
Figure 48: DHA and EPA levels in Plasma
Figure 49: DHA and EPA levels in Faeces
Figure 50: Polyunsaturated n6: n3 ratio across all diets in all samples measured

CHAPTER 6

- Figure 51:** Modulation of AARGC and O^6 medG contributing to a reduction in CRC
Figure 52: Number of apoptotic cells per crypt
Figure 53: Crypt cellularity
Figure 54: Apoptotic Index
Figure 55: Number of proliferating cells per crypt
Figure 56: Cell proliferative index
Figure 57: Total O^6 medG adduct load over 48h
Figure 58: Effect of diet on the apoptotic response by crypt compartment
Figure 59: Effect of diet on cell proliferation over time by crypt compartment
Figure 60: Effect of diet on O^6 medG load over time by crypt compartment
Figure 61: N7meG levels in Liver DNA

CHAPTER 7

- Figure 62:** ACF study time line
Figure 63: Progressive rat weights
Figure 64: Caecal acetate, propionate and butyrate levels
Figure 65: Faecal acetate, propionate and butyrate levels
Figure 66: Total ACF count

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 2

Table 1: Composition of Control diet

CHAPTER 4

Table 2: Apoptosis counts per crypt

Table 3: Summary of acute homeostatic responses in colonic epithelium over time in response an insult of AOM

Table 4: MX Study groups

Table 5: MX Study apoptotic counts

CHAPTER 5

Table 6: Diet Composition for acute fish oil experiment

Table 7: Caecal SCFA data

Table 8: Faecal SCFA data

Table 9: Faecal pH

Table 10: Fatty acid Profile from phospholipid of heart in rats fed different experimental diets.

Table 11: Fatty acid Profile from phospholipid of liver in rats fed different experimental diets.

Table 12: Fatty acid Profile from phospholipid of kidney in rats fed different experimental diets.

Table 13: Fatty acid Profile from adipose tissue in rats fed different experimental diets.

Table 14: Fatty acid Profile from phospholipid of small intestine in rats fed different experimental diets

Table 15: Fatty acid Profile from the phospholipid of proximal colon tissue in rats fed different experimental diets.

Table 16: Fatty acid Profile from phospholipid of distal colon in rats fed different experimental diets.

Table 17: Fatty acid Profile from plasma in rats fed different experimental diets.

Table 18: Fatty acid Profile from faecal matter in rats fed different experimental diets

CHAPTER 6

Table 19: N7meG Levels in Liver DNA

CHAPTER 7

- Table 20:** Diet compositions for ACF study
- Table 21:** pH levels in caecal and faecal samples
- Table 22:** Butyrate levels in caecal and faecal samples
- Table 23:** Analysis of Colonic ACF Counts

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

8-OH-dG	8-hydroxy-2-deoxy Guanosine
AA	Arachnidonic Acid
AARGC	Acute Apoptotic Response to Genotoxic Carcinogen
ACF	Aberrant Crypt Foci
AOM	Azoxymethane
APC	Adenomatous Poliposis Coli
BER	Base Excision Repair
BNF	Beta - naphthoflavone
CRC	Colorectal cancer
CSIRO	Commenwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation
DAB	3,3` Diaminobenzidine
DHA	Docosahexaenoic acid
DHM	Dimethylhydrazine
ENU	N-ethyl-N-nitrosourea
EPA	Eicosapentaenoic acid
FAP	Familial Adenomatous Polyposis
FIT	Faecal Immunohistochemical Test
FOBT	Faecal Occult Blood Test
FSA	Food Sciences Australia
GC	Gas Chromatography
HNPCC	Hereditary Non-Polyposis Colorectal Cancer
LA	Linoleic Acid
LCFA	Long Chain Fatty Acid
LNA	Linolenic Acid
LOH	Loss of Heterozygosity
MAM	Methylazoxymethanol
MBN	MethylbenzylNitrosamine
MCFA	Medium Chain Fatty Acids
ME	Microencapsulated
MEMO	Microencapsulated menhaden oil
MESO	Microencapsulated sunflower oil
METO	Microencapsulated tuna oil
MO	Menhaden oil
MGMT	<i>O</i> ⁶ -methylguanine-DNA methyltransferase
MMR	Mismatch Repair

MMS	Methyl methane-sulfonate
MNU	N-Nitroso-N-methylurea
MUFA	Monounsaturated fatty acid
N7meG	N7methyldeoxyGuanosine
<i>O</i> ⁶ medG	<i>O</i> ⁶ methyldeoxyGuanosine
PCNA	Proliferating nuclear cell antigen
PICR	Patterson Institute of Cancer Research
PPAR	Peroxisome Proliferators Activated Receptors
PUFA	Polyunsaturated Fatty Acid
ROI	Reactive Oxygen Intermediates
SCFA	Short Chain Fatty Acid
SFA	Saturated fatty acid
SO	Sunflower oil
TO	Tuna oil

LIST OF ABSTRACTS AND PUBLICATIONS

Nyskohus LS, Hu Y, LeLeu RK, Young GP (2008) A comparison of the effects of free and microencapsulated omega-3 PUFAs on early colorectal cancer biomarkers in the azoxymethane animal model. Abstract only. *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. V17-s3 S79.

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