A one-electron oxidation of carcinogenic non-aminoazoo dye Sudan I by horseradish peroxidase

Marcela Semanská 1, Martin Dračínský 2, Václav Martínek 1, Jiří Hudeček 1, Petr Hodek 1, Eva Frei 3, Marie Stiborová 1

1. Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic
2. Institute of Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry, Academy of Sciences of Czech Republic, Prague 6, Czech Republic
3. Division of Molecular Toxicology, German Cancer Research Center, Heidelberg, Germany

Correspondence to: Prof. Marie Stiborová, DSc.
Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science, Charles University, Albertov 2030, 128 40 Prague 2, Czech Republic
TEL.: +420-2-2195 1285, FAX: +420-2-2195 1283
E-MAIL: stiborov@natur.cuni.cz

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Abstract

OBJECTIVES: The aim of the study was to examine oxidation of carcinogenic Sudan I by peroxidase and characterize the structure of its two major peroxidase-mediated metabolites. Another target of the study was to evaluate a mechanism of this oxidation.

METHODS: Thin layer chromatography (TLC) and high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) with ultraviolet (UV) and visible (VIS) detection was employed for the separation of Sudan I metabolites formed by peroxidase. UV/VIS-, and mass- spectroscopy as well as nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) were used to characterize structures of two major Sudan I metabolites.

RESULTS: Peroxidase oxidizes Sudan I by a one electron oxidation to eight products. Two major Sudan I metabolites were isolated by TLC on silica gel and HPLC and structurally characterized. The major product formed during the Sudan I oxidation by peroxidase is Sudan I metabolite M2, which corresponds to a Sudan I dimer molecule. The second major metabolite (M1) is the product of secondary, enzyme independent reactions, being formed from the Sudan I dimer that lost the benzenediazonium moiety.

CONCLUSIONS: The data are the first report on structural characterization of Sudan I metabolites formed by its oxidation with peroxidase.

Abbreviations

APCI - atmospheric pressure chemical ionization
BDI - benzenediazonium ion
CYP - cytochrome P450
ESI - electrospray-ionization;
HPLC - high performance liquid chromatography
HRP - horseradish peroxidase
M - mol/liter
NMR - nuclear magnetic resonance
ppm - parts per million
TLC - thin layer chromatography
U - units
UV - ultraviolet
VIS - visible
v/v - volume in volume.
INTRODUCTION

Sudan I [1-(phenylazo)-2-naphthol, C.I. Solvent Yellow 14] was used as a food coloring in several countries [2], but it was not recommended to be safe, because it causes tumors in the liver and/or the urinary bladder in rats, mice, and rabbits, and is considered a possible carcinogen and mutagen for man [2,3,11–13]. Nevertheless, it is widely used to color materials such as hydrocarbon solvents, oils, fats, waxes, plastics, printing inks, and shoe and floor polishes [2,3]. Such a wide use of these azo dyes could result in a considerable exposure. While the metabolism of Sudan I is not understood in humans, its metabolism has been characterized in rabbits [2], where it is metabolized primarily in the liver by oxidative or reductive reactions. Oxidation of Sudan I catalyzed by cytochrome P450 (CYP) enzymes [7,11–13] and peroxidases [4–6,8–10], was investigated and helped us to resolve its carcinogenic mechanism [12]. C-Hydroxylated metabolites 4'-OH-Sudan I and 6-OH-Sudan I were found to be the major products of Sudan I oxidation in vivo (excreted in urine) [2], and of its oxidation by rat and human hepatic microsomal CYP in vitro [7,11–13]. Besides the C-hydroxylated metabolites, which are considered detoxication products, the benzenediazonium ion (BDI) formed by enzymatic splitting of the azo group of Sudan I was found to react with DNA in vitro [4,7,11–13] (Figure 1). The major DNA adduct formed in this reaction has been characterized and identified as the 8-(phenylazo)guanine adduct [7]. This adduct was also found in liver DNA of rats exposed to Sudan I [13]. Sudan I and its C-hydroxylated metabolites are also oxidized by peroxidases, as a consequence DNA, RNA and protein adducts are formed [4–6,8–10] (Figure 1). While CYPs were found to be responsible for the activation of Sudan I in human or animal liver, their role in the in vivo metabolic activation of Sudan I in the urinary bladder is limited. This organ has little or no detectable CYP, however, peroxidases are present at relatively high levels in this tissue. In the case of peroxidase, the Sudan I metabolites formed by this enzyme have not been identified as yet. Therefore, the aim of the present work was to isolate two major Sudan I peroxidase-mediated metabolites and characterize them by mass and/or NMR spectroscopy.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Incubation mixtures contained the following in a final volume of 70 ml: 10 mM sodium phosphate buffer (pH 8.4), 0.5 μΜ horseradish peroxidase (HRP), 100 μM Sudan I dissolved in methanol and 200 μM hydrogen peroxide. After incubation (37°C, 20 min) the mixtures were extracted with ethyl acetate (2 × 15 ml). The extracts were evaporated, dissolved in a methanol, and separated by TLC or HPLC. Silica-gel TLC plates were developed in hexane-diethyl ether (1:3, v/v). Spots of Sudan I metabolites M1 and M2 with relative mobility of 0.214 and 0.193, respectively, were extracted with methanol. Alternatively, the products were separated by HPLC on a Tessek Separon Hema S 1000 (8.0 × 250 mm) C-18 column. Gradient elution (75–100% methanol) with a flow rate of 0.3–1.5 ml/min was used. Sudan I metabolites were detected at 215, 254, 333 and 480 nm. Two product peaks with r.t. of 32 and 46 min were collected and analyzed by mass spectroscopy. Spectra were measured using Esquire 3000 Bruker Daltonics [atmospheric pressure chemical ionization (APCI), electrospray-ionization (ESI) – positive and negative ionization][1]. The mass spectra were internally calibrated using background ions with known elemental composition.

Figure 1. Scheme of Sudan I metabolism
NMR spectra of the metabolite M₁ (δ, ppm; J, Hz) were measured on a Bruker Avance II-600 instrument (600.1 MHz for ¹H and 150.9 MHz for ¹³C) in hexadeutero dimethyl sulfoxide and referenced to the solvent signal (δ 2.50 and 39.7, respectively). ¹³C NMR (DMSO, 150.92MHz): 83.65 (C-1'); 108.15 (C-3); 121.83 (C-8); 126.61 (C-2''); 123.03 (C-3'); 125.71 (C-5); 126.60 (C-4'); 129.03 (C-3''); 129.20 (C-5'); 129.51 (C-4a); 129.98 (C-1); 130.02 (C-8'); 130.88 (C-6'); 131.05 (C-4'a); 131.57 (C-7'); 131.65 (C-8a); 131.92 (C-6); 132.95 (C-7'); 135.25 (C-8 a); 142.84 (C-1'''); 147.18 (C-4a'); 149.09 (C-2); 183.96 (C-4); 191.46 (C-2'). ¹H NMR (DMSO, 600.13MHz): 6.17 s, 1 H (H-3); 6.30 d, 1 H; J(3’,2’) = 10.0 (H-3'); 6.91 m, 2 H (H-2’'); 7.15 m, 1 H (H-4'''); 7.23 m, 2 H (H-3'''); 7.52 – 7.62 m, 4 H (H-6, H-5', H-6' and H-7'''); 7.73 m, 1 H (H-7); 7.76 d, 1 H; J(4’,3’) = 10.0 (H-4'); 7.86 m, 1 H (H-8'); 8.03 m, 1 H (H-5); 8.13 m, 1 H (H-8).

**RESULTS**

 Peroxidase in the presence of hydrogen peroxide is able to oxidize Sudan I. Depending on time of incubation, the absorption spectrum of the reaction mixture containing Sudan I, peroxidase and H₂O₂ was significantly changed (Figure 2). During the reaction, the absorption maximum at 480 nm (due to Sudan I) decreases, whiles the absorbance at about 340 nm increases slightly (Figure 2). In the former studies, we identified that the products formed during peroxidase-mediated Sudan I oxidation includes BDI and C-hydroxy derivatives [6-OH-Sudan I and 4',6-di(OH)-Sudan I] [4]. But major metabolites are unstable (sensitive to light and elevated temperature) [6,8]. Plant peroxidase, HRP, was used in these studies. Both mammalian and plant peroxidases catalyze oxidation of many substrates with similar mechanisms, having analogous arrangement of the active sites [4]. Hence, HRP is an acceptable model for the mammalian enzymes such as cyclooxygenases, which are expressed in the urinary bladder, the target tissue for the Sudan I carcinogenicity [2,4,8–10].

The metabolite M₁ was analyzed by mass spectrometry, both in positive and negative mode using low-resolution ion trap instrument. M₂ provided singly charged molecular adduct [M+H]+ at m/z 495.1 (Figure 5) and deprotonated molecule [M–H]– at m/z 493.0 (Figure 5). Therefore, nominal mass of the molecule is 494. The fragment peak at m/z 495 in the metabolite M₁ (Figure 5) indicates the ion composed of two Sudan I molecules. Moreover, fragmentation peaks at m/z 159, 172, 247, 389 (391) and 417 (Figure 5) seem to correspond to decomposition of the Sudan I dimer molecule of the structure shown in Figure 6. Further fragmentation experiments were not performed because of the sample instability. The metabolite M₂ reacts spontaneously (without enzymatic reaction) to the metabolite M₁. This feature was the reason that M₂ could not be isolated in quantities sufficient for its NMR characterization.

The metabolite M₁ provided singly charged molecular adduct [M+H]+ at m/z 405.1 (Figure 5), the calculated elemental composition C₂₆H₂₇N₂O₃ was in agreement with the assumed structure shown in Figure 6. In ¹H NMR spectrum we observed one singlet at 6.17 ppm, two doublets with coupling constant 10.0 Hz, a set of signals of N-substituted aniline and two sets of signals of ortho-disubstituted benzene derivatives. No exchangeable protons were detected by addition of a drop of D₂O to the sample. The most interesting signals in ¹³C NMR spectra were two carbonyl carbons (at 191.5 and 184.0 ppm) and a quaternary carbon atom at 83.7 ppm. The structure of M₁ was elucidated from 2D NMR spectra (H,H-COSY, H,C-HSQC a H,C-HMBC). Two naphthalene fragments and one N-substituted aniline were recognized in the molecule. By combination of 1D and 2D NMR techniques ¹H and ¹³C chemical shifts were completely assigned. The compound M₁ is a spiro compound with one chiral center (quarternary carbon ¹, Figure 6). The metabolite M₁ should be a racemic mixture of both enantiomers. This was approved by adding of a chiral NMR shift reagent (–)-2,2,2-trifluoro-1-(9-anthryl)-ethanol (the signals split into two sets corresponding to the two antipods).

**DISCUSSION**

Sudan I is an azo dye containing a free hydroxyl group in its molecule. Many phenolic compounds can serve as substrates for peroxidases, being oxidized to phenoxyl radicals, which will undergo secondary reactions in dependence on their individual free radicals chemistry. This mechanism was also found for Sudan I as a substrate of peroxidase previously [5,6,8] and in the present work; peroxidase oxidizes this carcinogen, giving rise to an oxygen-centered radical (naphthoxyl radical) [6,8]. Plant peroxidase, HRP, was used in these studies. Both mammalian and plant peroxidases catalyze oxidation of many substrates with similar mechanisms, having analogous arrangement of the active sites [4]. Hence, HRP is an acceptable model for the mammalian enzymes such as cyclooxygenases, which are expressed in the urinary bladder, the target tissue for the Sudan I carcinogenicity [2,4,8–10]. From the results found in the present study we can suggest the proposed mechanism of one-electron Sudan I oxidation by peroxidase. First, peroxidase forms a Sudan I radical found previously [5] by homolytic OH bond cleavage. This radical reacts with another Sudan I molecule to form aliphatic azo compound, the metabolite M₂.
Figure 2. Oxidation of Sudan I by the peroxidase/H$_2$O$_2$ system. The samples (1 ml) contained 50 mM Na phosphate buffer pH 8.4, 0.2 mg horseradish peroxidase, 0.15 mM Sudan I, and 0.5 mM H$_2$O$_2$. The spectra were recorded sequentially at 0 min (—), 2.5 min (— —) and 10 min (• • •).

Figure 3. TLC of Sudan I metabolites formed by peroxidase (the major metabolites are assigned as M$_1$ and M$_2$)

Figure 4. HPLC of Sudan I metabolites formed by peroxidase (a) and their HPLC re-chromatography (b, c)

Figure 5. Mass spectra (APCI) of Sudan I metabolites M$_1$ (a) and M$_2$ (b)
This metabolite is probable structure shown in Figure 6, but due to its instability the structure could not be confirmed by NMR spectroscopy. However, the structure of M2, evaluated from mass spectroscopy was further confirmed after the structural identification of the metabolite M1, which is the product of M2 conversion. Aliphaticazo compounds are instable and they are easily subjected to homolytic cleavage of C-N bond by formation of two radicals. The metabolite M2 is cleaved to metabolite M1, which is the product of M2 conversion. 

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**References**


