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# Sex Differences in Indomethacin-sensitive $3\alpha$ -Hydroxysteroid Dehydrogenase of Rat Liver Cytosol<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

The  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid:nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (phosphate) oxidoreductase (EC 1.1.1.50) of rat liver cytosol is indistinguishable from trans-1,2-dihydrobenzene-1,2-diol dehydrogenase (EC 1.3.1.20) (T. M. Penning, I. Mukharji, S. Barrows, and P. Talalay, Biochem. J., 222: 601-611, 1984) and has been implicated in the detoxification of ultimate carcinogens (H. R. Glatt et al., Science (Wash. DC), 215: 1507-1509, 1982). Using trans-1,2-dihydroxy-3,5-cyclohexadiene as a model substrate for trans-dihydrodiol proximate carcinogens, this study shows that the specific activity of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid:nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (phosphate) oxidoreductase is 2-fold higher in the 40-75% ammonium sulfate fraction prepared from female rat liver cytosol than in similar fractions prepared from males. Comparable differences were also observed for the nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide-dependent oxidation of  $5\alpha$ -androstan- $3\alpha$ ol-17-one. Chromatofocusing of these cytosolic fractions separated the bulk of the protein from the dehydrogenase, which eluted as a single peak at pH 5.4. Examination of the protein profiles indicates that twice as much protein coeluted with the enzyme from female rat liver cytosol, suggesting that induction is responsible for the sex difference in enzyme activity. These differences were abolished by ovariectomy, while administration of a single dose of estradiol 3-sulfate (100 µg) to ovariectomized rats restored enzyme activity to within 90% of normal female levels. These findings suggest that ovarian estrogen is a natural inducer of rat liver 3a-hydroxysteroid:nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (phosphate) oxidase reductase/trans-1,2-dihydrobenzene-1,2-diol dehydrogenase.

#### INTRODUCTION

The homogeneous  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase (EC 1.1.1.50)<sup>4</sup> of rat liver cytosol is a versatile NAD(P)-linked oxidoreductase that catalyzes the oxidation of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroids, simple secondary alcohols, and benzenedihydrodiol (1, 2). The

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<sup>4</sup> The abbreviations and trivial names used are:  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase,  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid:NAD(P) oxidoreductase (EC 1.1.1.50); dihydrodiol dehydrogenase, *trans*-1,2-dihydrobenzene-1,2-diol: dehydrogenase (EC 1.3.1.20); benzenedihydrodiol, (±)-*trans*-1,2-dihydroxy-3,5-cyclohexadiene; androsterone,  $5\alpha$ -androstan- $3\alpha$ -ol-17-one;  $5\alpha$ -dihydrotestosterone,  $5\alpha$ -androstan- $3\alpha$ -ol-17-one;  $5\alpha$ -dihydrotestosterone,  $5\alpha$ -androstan- $3\alpha$ -ol-17 $\beta$ -ol;  $3\alpha$ -androstanediol,  $5\alpha$ -androstane- $3\alpha$ , 17 $\beta$ -diol; estradiol 3-sulfate, 1,3,5(10)-estratriene-3,17 $\beta$ -diol; -sodium sulfate; DTT, dithiothreitol.

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properties of this enzyme are indistinguishable from those of the dihydrodiol dehydrogenase originally purified from this source by Vogel *et al.* (3). Addition of the purified dehydrogenase to the Ames test (mouse liver microsomes + NADPH + Salmonella *typhimurium his<sup>-</sup>* mutant) for benzo(a)pyrene significantly reduced the mutagenicity of this compound (4), suggesting that the enzyme may detoxify the *trans*-dihydrodiols formed *in situ* by oxidizing them to the less reactive catechols. Similar experiments have shown that purified dihydrodiol dehydrogenase can reduce the mutagenicity of a diol-epoxide of benz(a)anthracene (5). These data suggest that dihydrodiol dehydrogenase may detoxify both proximate and ultimate carcinogens.

The nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs are remarkably potent inhibitors of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid oxidation catalyzed by the purified dehydrogenase (1, 2). In addition we have recently shown that benzenedihydrodiol and *trans*-1,2-dihydroxy-1,2-dihydronaphthalene oxidation, catalyzed by the same purified enzyme, are potently inhibited by representatives of all of the major classes of the nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs at physiological pH.<sup>5</sup> Inhibition of this potentially important detoxification pathway by these widely used compounds may have implications for the initiation phase of chemical carcinogenesis.

A common feature of many xenobiotic-metabolizing enzymes is inducibility, and identification of inducers of enzymes involved in the detoxification of carcinogens may have utility in the chemoprevention of cancer. For example induction of glutathione-Stransferase (6), microsomal epoxide hydratase (7), and a NAD(P)H-linked quinone reductase (8) by the common food additive 2(3)-tert-butyl-4-hydroxyanisole have all been proposed as mechanisms for the protective effects of this compound against carcinogenesis (9). Steroid hormones can also act as natural inducers of enzymes involved in drug metabolism. For example alcohol dehydrogenase of mouse kidney has been shown to be under androgenic control (10). The present report demonstrates significant sex differences in the specific activity of the  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid/dihydrodiol dehydrogenase from rat liver cytosol and shows that this difference is due to induction by ovarian estrogen.

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Chemicals.** Androsterone and estradiol 3-sulfate were purchased from Steraloids (Wilton, NH).  $\beta$ -NAD and NADP (monosodium salts) were obtained from Pharmacia PL Biochemicals (Piscataway, NJ). Indomethacin was purchased from Sigma Chemical Co. (St. Louis, MO). Enzyme grade ammonium sulfate and sucrose were obtained from Schwarz/Mann, Inc. (Spring Valley, NY). Polybuffer exchanger PBE-94 and Polybuffer 74 (for chromatofocusing) were products of Pharmacia P-L Biochemicals. Benzenedihydrodiol was synthesized by treating benzene oxide (1,2-epoxy-3,5-cyclohexadiene) with hydrogen peroxide in

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> T. E. Smithgall and T. M. Penning, unpublished observations.

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aqueous base, followed by sodium borohydride reduction of the resulting hydroperoxide (11). Benzene oxide was synthesized from 1,4-cyclohexadiene (Aldrich Chemical Co., Milwaukee, WI) by the method of Vogel (12). IR and UV data for the final product agree with published data (13).

Animals. Male, female, and ovariectomized Sprague-Dawley rats (180-200 g) were obtained from Charles River Breeding Laboratories, Inc. (Wilmington, MA). Female rats were ovariectomized during the fourth week of life, and 2 weeks later they were either sacrificed or given injections of estradiol 3-sulfate (see below).

**Enzyme Preparation.** Rats were killed by cervical dislocation and livers were removed, frozen in liquid nitrogen, and stored at  $-80^{\circ}$ C. Thawed livers were homogenized in 3 volumes (w/v) of 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.6, containing 250 mM sucrose, 1 mM EDTA, and 1 mM DTT, and centrifuged at  $10,000 \times g$  for 30 min. The supernatant was filtered through nonabsorbent cotton and microsomes were sedimented by centrifugation at  $100,000 \times g$  for 1 h. Cytosolic proteins were precipitated from the resulting supernatant with ammonium sulfate, yielding fractions of 0-40%, 40-75%, and >75% saturation. The protein precipitates were collected by centrifugation ( $15,000 \times g$  for 30 min) and redissolved in a minimal volume of dialysis buffer containing 10 mM Tris-HCl, 1 mM EDTA, and 0.5 mM DTT (pH 8.6 at  $4^{\circ}$ C). All three ammonium sulfate fractions were dialyzed overnight against three 1-liter changes of this buffer. The dialyzed material was then assayed for enzyme activity.

Spectrophotometric Assay for 3a-Hydroxysteroid and Dihydrodiol Dehydrogenase Activities. Since  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase catalyzes the oxidation of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroids and *trans*-dihydrodiols, both androsterone and benzenedihydrodiol were used as substrates for the enzyme. Oxidation of androsterone was measured in a 1.0-ml system containing 100 mm potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.0), 2.3 mm NAD+, and 75 µm androsterone; benzenedihydrodiol oxidation was assayed in 1.0 ml of 100 mm potassium phosphate buffer (pH 7.0) containing 2.3 MM NADP and 1.0 MM benzenedihydrodiol. Androsterone and benzenedihydrodiol were dissolved in acetonitrile and methanol, respectively, and the final concentration of organic solvent in the assay was 4%. Both reactions were monitored by following the increase in absorbance of the pyridine nucleotide at 340 nm. Reactions were initiated by the addition of the enzyme preparation. Activities were expressed as nmol substrate oxidized per min per mg protein, except for the chromatofocusing experiments where they were expressed as µmol substrate oxidized per min per fraction. Protein determinations were made using the method of Lowry et al. (14), using crystalline bovine serum albumin (Armour Pharmaceutical Co., Kankakee, IL) as standard.

Inhibition of  $3\alpha$ -Hydroxysteroid Dehydrogenase by Indomethacin. Using the spectrophotometric assay the concentration of indomethacin required to produce 50% inhibition of the initial rate of both benzenedihydrodiol and androsterone oxidation was determined. Indomethacin was dissolved in the same organic solvent as the substrate (acetonitrile or methanol), and the final organic solvent concentration was kept constant at 4%.

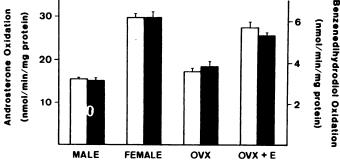
Chromatofocusing of the 40–75% Ammonium Sulfate Fractions of Male and Female Rat Liver Cytosol. Representative 40–75% ammonium sulfate fractions prepared from male or female rat livers were dialyzed against 25 mM imidazole-HCl, pH 7.4, containing 1 mM EDTA and 0.5 mM DTT (three 1-liter changes). After determination of the initial specific activity, the sample was applied to a column (1 x 15 cm) packed with polybuffer exchanger PBE-94 and equilibrated to pH 7.4 with the dialysis buffer. A linear pH gradient from 7 to 5 was generated on the polybuffer exchanger by elution with 10 bed volumes of Polybuffer 74-HCl, pH 5.0, containing 1 mM EDTA and 0.5 mM DTT. Protein elution was monitored at 280 nm. Fractions (2.0 ml) were collected at 10 ml/h and assayed spectrophotometrically as described.

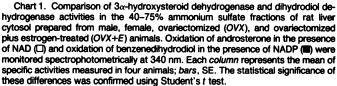
#### RESULTS

Comparison of the Specific Activity of  $3\alpha$ -Hydroxysteroid Dehydrogenase Present in Liver Cytosol of Male, Female,

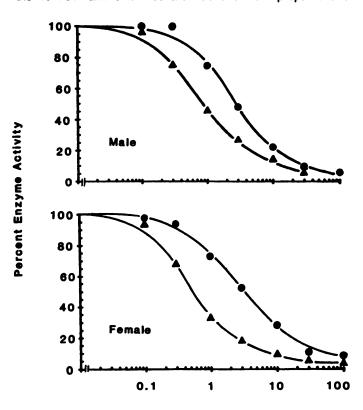
and Ovariectomized Rats. The oxidation of benzenedihydrodiol in the presence of NADP and of androsterone in the presence of NAD, catalyzed by ammonium sulfate fractions prepared from male, female, and ovariectomized rat liver cytosols, was measured. In all groups of animals the majority of the activity precipitated in the 40-75% ammonium sulfate fraction. Specific activities for the oxidation of both substrates were approximately 2fold higher in females than in males, and ovariectomy abolished this difference, suggesting that the enzyme is under the control of ovarian hormones (Chart 1). The oxidation of androsterone and benzenedihydrodiol, catalyzed by both male and female rat liver cytosols, was potently inhibited by indomethacin, yielding 50% inhibitory concentrations in the low micromolar range (Chart 2). The apparent differences in the potency of inhibition are most probably due to differences in the  $K_m$  values of these two substrates for the enzyme [K<sub>m</sub> values for benzenedihydrodiol and androsterone for the purified rat liver  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase are 1.0 mm and 30  $\mu$ m, respectively (1)]. At higher indomethacin concentrations the oxidation of both substrates was nearly abolished (greater than 90% inhibition). This result is consistent with the view that the indomethacin-sensitive enzyme is the major activity responsible for the oxidation of benzenedihydrodiol and androsterone in both male and female rat liver cytosols.

Chromatofocusing of the 40-75% Ammonium Sulfate Fractions of Male and Female Rat Liver Cytosols. When the 40-75% ammonium sulfate fraction prepared from either male or female rat liver cytosol was subjected to chromatofocusing, the  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase (pl 5.4) was separated from the bulk of the protein (Chart 3). In both sexes all of the activity responsible for the oxidation of benzenedihydrodiol and androsterone eluted under this peak. In females activity in the peak fractions was twice as high as that found in males. Examination of the A<sub>280</sub> profiles indicates that approximately twice as much protein eluted with the activity present in female cytosol, suggesting that enzyme induction may be responsible for sex differences in enzyme activity. Resolution of these differences is possible using this single chromatographic step, since the  $3\alpha$ hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase comprises almost 1% of the total protein present in male rat liver cytosol (1). These results are consistent with the presence of a single dehydrogenase existing at higher (induced) levels in female rat liver cytosol.





CANCER RESEARCH VOL. 45 OCTOBER 1985 4947 Identification of the Natural Inducer of  $3\alpha$ -Hydroxysteroid Dehydrogenase. In order to identify the natural ovarian inducer of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase, 12 ovariectomized rats were given a single i.p. dose of estradiol 3-sulfate (100  $\mu$ g in water via i.p. injection), and groups of 4 animals were sacrificed 2, 4, and 6 days after injection. After the livers were processed, the 40–75% ammonium sulfate fractions were prepared and



#### Indomethacin, uM

Chart 2. Inhibition of  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid and dihydrodiol dehydrogenase activities by indomethacin in the 40–75% ammonium sulfate fractions prepared from male and female rat liver cytosols. Androsterone oxidation ( $\oplus$ ) and benzenedihydrodiol oxidation ( $\triangle$ ) were assayed by following the absorbance of the pyridine nucleotide at 340 nm in the presence of 1–100  $\mu$ M indomethacin. Results are expressed as percentage of specific activity measured in the absence of drug.

assayed for the oxidation of benzenedihydrodiol and androsterone. The results shown in Chart 1 clearly indicate that, following the administration of estrogen, both activities were restored to within 90% of those observed in intact females. The maximum increase in enzyme activity was observed 2 days after hormone injection. Oxidation of benzenedihydrodiol and androsterone by the estrogen-treated group was almost completely abolished by 30  $\mu$ M indomethacin. Chromatofocusing experiments (not shown) indicate that the enzyme from the estrogen-treated group focused as a single peak with a pl of 5.4. These findings suggest that estrogen acts as an endogenous inducer of the indomethacin-sensitive  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase of rat liver cytosol.

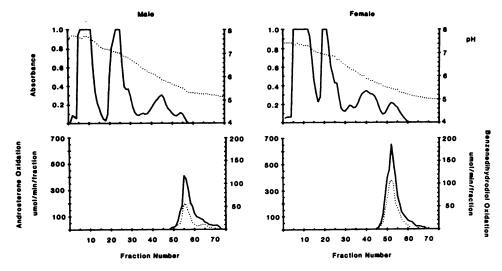
#### DISCUSSION

This report demonstrates that the  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase of female rat liver cytosol is induced by estrogen. Briefly a 2-fold sex difference was observed in the ability of rat liver cytosol to oxidize benzenedihydrodiol and androsterone. This difference was abolished by ovariectomy and restored by the administration of estradiol 3-sulfate. The effect of estrogen appears to be one of true induction rather than activation or decreased degradation of the enzyme, because twice as much protein is associated with the elevated enzyme activities present in females. The induced dehydrogenase appears to be identical to the uninduced enyzme, since both proteins have the same isoelectric point and are equally sensitive to inhibition by low micromolar concentrations of indomethacin.

The oxidation of *trans*-dihydrodiols, catalyzed by  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase, has been implicated in the detoxification of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (3–5). Inhibition of this enzyme by indomethacin or other "aspirin-like" drugs may interfere with the detoxification of proximate carcinogens *in vivo*. Since estrogens enhance  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid/dihydrodiol dehydrogenase activity, we speculate that they may protect against this possible adverse effect of the nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs.

The finding that estrogen acts as a natural inducer of the hepatic  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase is consistent with earlier reports of elevated  $3\alpha$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase activ-

Chart 3. Chromatofocusing of cytosolic proteins from male and female rat livers. Protein (160 mg) from the 40–75% ammonium sulfate fraction prepared from either male or female rat liver cytosol was dialyzed and applied to a chromatofocusing column (1.0 x 15.0 cm). The column was eluted with Polybuffer 74 (pH 5.0), and fractions (2.0 ml) were collected at 10 ml/ h. *Top:* —, protein measured as absorbance at 280 nm; ...., pH of each fraction. *Bottom:* —, androsterone oxidation with NAD; ...., benzenedihydrodiol oxidation with NADP.



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ities in cytosols prepared from female rat liver and kidney. Specifically Hoff and Schreifers (15) have demonstrated sex differences in the rate of  $5\alpha$ -androstan-3,17-dione reduction catalyzed by rat liver cytosol, while Verhoeven *et al.* (16) have shown that the reduction of  $5\alpha$ -dihydrotestosterone to  $3\alpha$ -androstanediol catalyzed by rat kidney cytosol is 2-fold greater in females. This latter difference has been attributed to regulation of the enzyme by estrogen (17).

In addition to steroid hormones polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons such as benz(a)anthracene and 3-methylcholanthrene are also potent enzyme inducers, acting primarily on the microsomal mixed function oxidases responsible for their metabolism (18, 19). This inductive effect may represent an important mechanism for increasing the level of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon metabolism but may also lead to enhanced formation of toxic intermediates (20). It will be of interest to determine whether polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons also induce 3a-hydroxysteroid/dihydrodiol dehydrogenase activity. Under such circumstances these compounds may also enhance the detoxification of their own trans-dihydrodiol metabolites. Glatt et al. (21) have recently shown that dihydrodiol dehydrogenase activity of male C3H mouse liver cytosol is not sensitive to induction by either 3methylcholanthrene or phenobarbital. However, these studies may not predict the sensitivity of the rat liver enzyme to these classical inducers because significant species variation in hepatic dihydrodiol dehydrogenase has been reported. For example Swiss-Webster mouse liver cytosol has been shown to contain multiple forms of dihydrodiol dehydrogenase, which also display  $17\beta$ -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase activity (22).

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