The Protective Role of Folic Acid, Vitamin B12 and Vitamin C on The Mutagenicity of The Anticancer Drug Ifosfamide

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Abstract: Ifosfamide (Holoxan, IFO) is an oxazaphosphorine alkylating agent with a broad spectrum of antineoplastic activity. IFO can damage DNA during any phase of the cell cycle and therefore, is not phase-specific. Thus the objective of this investigation is to measure the potential cytotoxicity of IFO alone and in combination with vitamins (FA, VB12 and VC) The genotoxic potential of IFO was evaluated *in vivo* using different mutagenic end points. Male Swiss mice were injected with different doses of IFO intraperitoneally to investigate the genotoxicity in somatic and germ cells. The doses were 8, 16 and 24mg IFO/kg body wt. as single doses, and 8mg IFO/kg body wt. as a repeated dose for three consecutive days. Samples were collected after 24h, 7 and 14 days after treatments. IFO induced chromosomal aberrations (in somatic and germ cells), SCEs and sperm shape abnormalities, which were highly significant in a dose dependent manner 24h after treatments. Chromosomal aberrations were declined with increasing the time of recovery. However, the tetraploid cells in mouse bone marrow were increased. IFO increased the percentage of DNA fragmentation in mouse spleen cells as measured by diphenylamine (DPA) assay, and confirmed by agarose gel-electrophoresis. Oral administration of folic acid (10 mg/kg body wt.), vitamin B12 (0.3 mg/kg) and vitamin C (50 mg/kg body wt.) declined the chromosomal aberrations in somatic and germ cells 24h after concurrent treatment with IFO. The used doses of vitamins reduced the percentage of DNA fragmentation induced by 24mg IFO/kg body wt. with DPA assay. **In conclusion**, the study indicates that the anticancer drug IFO is a mutagenic agent in mouse somatic and germ cells. Vitamins (FA, VB12 and VC) play a beneficial role against the mutagenicity of this drug.

[Souria M. Donya, Fawzia A. Aly, Mona A. M. Abo-Zeid. **The Protective Role of Folic Acid, Vitamin B12 and Vitamin C on The Mutagenicity of The Anticancer Drug Ifosfamide.** Nature and Science 2010; 8(12):164-174]. (ISSN: 1545-0740). http://www.sciencepub.net.

Key words: IFO, FA, VB12, VC, cytogenetic parameters, DNA damage.

1. Introduction

Ifosfamide (IFO) is an oxazaphosphorine alkylating agent with a broad spectrum of antineoplastic activity. It is used alone or in combination regimens for the treatment of a variety of haematological malignancies such lymphomas and multiple myeloma, and solid tumors including sarcoma, ovarian, testicular, cervical, breast, lung cancer and bone tumors (Dechant et al., 1991; Zhang et al., 2005; Goto et al., 2007) and is also used as systemic anticancer therapy in gynecological cancer patients with renal dysfunction (Li et al., 2007). IFO destroys tumor cells through apoptosis initiated by DNA damage, modulation of cell cycle and other antiproliferative effects. IFO is used concurrently with the uroprotective mesna to avoid hemorrhagic cystitis (Siu and Moore, 1998).

According to many authors who studied the action of vitamins *in vivo, the* treatment protocols that yield the best result in terms of reduction of chromosomal damage were those in which vitamins (A, B12, C, E, and FA) were administered as pre-treatment or in simultaneous treatment with the clastogenic agent (Ghaskadbi, 1992; Aly et al., 2002; Costa and Nepomuceno, 2006).

The present study was undertaken to assess the cytogenetic effect of IFO at different doses. The protective roles of FA, VB12, and VC on the induced chromosomal aberrations were also studies.

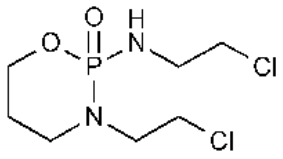

Figure 1: Ifosfamide

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Tested subastances:

Ifosfamide (Figure 1) was purchased from

Holoxan, Baxter Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Based on Paget and Barnes (1964) evaluation of drug activities, it was used as reference to convert the human therapeutic dose to mice therapeutic dose.
Folic acid (FA): Nile Co. for Pharm. and Chem. Ind. Cairo, Egypt. Vitamin B12 (B12): Amriya Pharm. Ind., Alexandria, Egypt. Vitamin C (VC): S.D.Fine-Chem.Ltd., Mumbai, India.

Table 1: Number and mean percentage of different types of chromosomal aberrations induced in mouse bone marrow cells 24h., 7 and 14 days after treatment with different doses of Ifosfamide.

Dose	Duration of treatments	No. and (%) of cells with different types of structural aberrations																(%) of cells with different types of numerical aberrations				Total Chromosomal Aberrations			
		Gap		Br or F.		Del.		C. F.		C. A.		G+ Br. and/or F.		Br.+ F.				41 Ch.		Tetrap.		Including Gaps		Excluding Gaps	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I. Control	24h.	10	2.00	5	1.00	0	0.00	1	0.20	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00			0	0.00	1	0.20	17	3.40	7	1.40
	7 Days	10	2.00	4	0.80	0	0.00	1	0.20	1	0.20	0	0.00	0	0.00			0	0.00	1	0.20	17	3.40	7	1.40
	14 Days	7	1.40	4	0.80	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.20	1	0.20	1	0.20			0	0.00	2	0.40	16	3.20	9	1.80
II. IFO Single Dose 8mg/kg	24h.	69	13.8	37	7.40	0	0.00	1	0.20	2	0.40	2	0.40	33	6.60			0	0.00	7	1.40	151***	30.2	82***	16.4
	7 Days	48	9.60	33	6.60	0	0.00	2	0.40	0	0.00	9	1.80	1	0.20			0	0.00	13	2.60	106***	21.2	58***	11.6
	14 Days	42	8.40	21	4.20	0	0.00	2	0.40	3	0.60	4	0.80	2	0.40			0	0.00	18	3.60	92	18.4	50	10.0
16mg/kg	24h.	75	15.0	49	9.80	0	0.00	2	0.40	3	0.60	10	2.00	82	16.40			1	0.20	10	2.00	232***	46.4	157***	31.4
	7 Days	65	13.0	50	10.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	12	2.40	5	1.00	13	2.60			0	0.00	14	2.80	159***	31.8	94***	18.8
	14 Days	47	9.40	30	6.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	9	1.80	6	1.20			0	0.00	20	4.00	112	22.4	65	13.0
24mg/kg	24h.	91	18.2	35	7.00	3	0.60	1	0.20	10	2.00	9	1.80	130	26.0			0	0.00	13	2.60	292***	58.4	201***	40.2
	7 Days	67	13.4	58	11.6	2	0.40	1	0.20	1	0.20	11	2.20	17	3.40			0	0.00	16	3.20	173***	34.6	106***	21.2
	14 Days	66	13.2	40	8.00	1	0.20	0	0.00	3	0.60	11	2.20	6	1.20			1	0.20	20	4.00	148***	29.6	82***	16.4
Repeated Dose 8mg/kgX3days	24h.	71	14.2	64	12.8	2	0.40	5	1.00	1	0.20	4	0.80	33	6.60			0	0.00	12	2.40	192***	38.4	121***	24.2
	7 Days	65	13.0	43	8.60	0	0.00	1	0.20	0	0.00	5	1.00	7	1.40			0	0.00	13	2.60	134***	26.8	69***	13.8
	14 Days	40	8.00	26	5.20	0	0.00	2	0.40	3	0.60	6	1.20	2	0.40			0	0.00	20	4.00	99	19.8	59	11.8

The total number of scored cells is 500 (5 animals/ group); ***p<0.001 G.: Gaps, Br.: Breaks, F.: Fragments, Del.: Deletions, C. F.: Centric Fusions, C. A.: Centromeric Attenuations, Tetrap.: Tetraploidy.

2.2. Cytogenetic studies:

2.2.1. Animals:

Laboratory-bred strain Swiss albino male mice of 8-10 weeks old with an average weight of 27.5+2.5g obtained from the National Research Center, Cairo, Egypt, were used. Animals were housed in groups (5 animals/ group) and maintained under standard food and water *ad libitium.*

2.2.2. Doses and Treatments:

IFO doses were i.p. administered at 8, 16, 24 mg/kg b.wt. as a single doses and repeated treatment for three consecutive days were conducted using the lowest dose 8 mg IFO /kg b. wt. Oral treatment of vitamins at 10 mg FA/kg b. wt., 0.3 mg VB12 /kg b.wt. and 50 VC /kg b. wt. were taken concurrently with 24 mg IFO/ kg. The anticancer drug IFO and vitamins were dissolved in distilled water.

Control groups of animals received distilled water and others received vitamins alone were collected concurrently with the treated groups.

2.2.2.1. Chromosomal Aberrations in Somatic and Germ Cells:

Samples were harvested after 24 h, 7 and 14 days of treatments with the different doses of IFO. The groups of animals received the concurrent administration of 24mg IFO/kg b. wt. with each of the vitamins separately were sacrificed after 24h.

2.2.2.2. Sister Chromatid Exchange (SCEs):

Samples were harvested 24h after treatment with the different doses of IFO.

2.2.2.3-Sperm-Shaped Abnormalities:

Mice were treated once i.p. with each of the three doses of IFO. Samples were collected after 35 days from the treatments

2.3. Cytogenetic Paramters:

- For **chromosomal aberrations** in somatic and germ cells, bone-marrow metaphases were prepared according to Yosida and Amano (1965). The diakinase –metaphase I cells collected from the spermatocytes were made following the air-drying technique of Evans *etal.* (1964).Slides were stained with 7 % Giemsa stain in phosphate buffer (pH6.8). 100 well spread metaphases per animal were analyzed for chromosomal aberrations. The types of aberrations in bone-marrow cells included gaps breaks, deletions, fragments, centric fusions, centromeric attenuations. The types of aberrations in spermatocytes were XY univalents, autosomal univalents, fragments and breaks.

- For **sister-chromatid exchanges,** the method described by Allen (1982**)** was adopted with some modifications. Bone-marrow cells were fixed and stained with fluorescence plus Giemsa method of Perry and Wolff (1974). The frequency of SCE's was recorded for each animal in at least 30 metaphases.

Table 2: Frequency of sister chromatid exchanges in mouse bone marrow cells induced by different doses of Ifosfamide.

Dose	No. of Scored Cells	Total No. of SCE's	Mean ± SE
I. Control	**150**	**583**	**3.89±0.058**
II-IFO Single Dose			***
8mg/kg	**161**	**2183**	**13.56 +0.31** ***
16mg/kg	**160**	**3842**	**24.01+0.81** ***
24mg/kg	**156**	**4030**	**25.83+0.56**
Repeated Dose			***
8mg/kgX3day	**159**	**2638**	**16.59+0.54**

***P<0.001

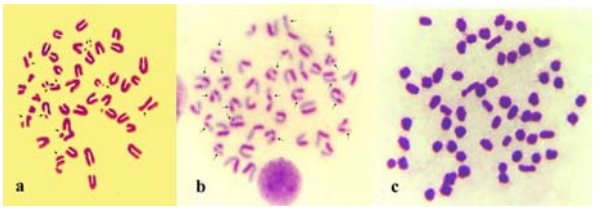

Figure 2: Metaphases with (a) chromosomal aberrations: breaks and fragments, (b) sister chromatid exchanges in bone-marrow cells and (c) triploid diaknesis- metaphase I cell in mouse spermatocyte after i.p. treatment with IFO.

- For **sperm- shape abnormalities,** the epididymides were excised and, minced in isotonic sodium citrate solution (2.2%). Smears were prepared and sperms were stained with Eosin Y (Wyrobek and Bruce, 1978). At least 1000 sperm per animal (5000/group) were assessed for morphological abnormalities of the sperm shape.

2.4. DNA Fragmentation Assay:

The groups of animals treated with different doses8, 16 and 24 of IFO were collected 24h after treatments and repeated dose 8mg IFO/kg b.wt. for three days. The other groups of animals received concurrently 24mgIFO/kg b.wt. with each of the vitamins doses and were sacrificed 24h after treatment.

The method of DNA fragmentation assay was carried out according to Perandones *et al.* (1993). Mouse spleen was mechanically dissociated in hypotonic lysis buffer. The cell lysate was centrifuged at 13.000 xg for 15 min. then, the supernatant containing small DNA fragments was separated immediately and half the supernatant was used for gel-electrophoresis. The other half, as well as the pellet containing large pieces of DNA were used for the colorimetric determination by Diphenylamine (DPA) assay.

2.5. Statistical Analysis:

The significance of the results from the control data was calculated using ($2X^2$ contingency table) for chromomosal aberrations in somatic and germ cells and t- test for SCE's ,sperm- shape abnormalities and DNA fragmentation assays.

Table 3: Number and mean percentage of different types of diakinase metaphase I cells with chromosomal aberrations induced in mouse spermatocytes 24h., 7 and 14 days after treatment with different doses of Ifosfamide.

Dose	Duration of treatments	No. and % of cells with different types of chromosomal aberrations										Total Chromosomal Aberrations	
		XY un.		Auto. un.		XY+ Auto. un.		Br. or F.		3n			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
I. Control	24h.	8	1.60	3	0.60	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	11	2.20
	7 Days	7	1.40	4	0.80	0	0.00	1	0.20	0	0.00	12	2.40
	14 Days	6	1.20	3	0.60	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	9	1.80
II. IFO.Single Dose												***	
8mg/kg	24h.	16	3.20	12	2.40	3	0.60	3	0.60	1	0.20	35	7.00
	7 Days	9	1.80	9	1.80	1	0.20	3	0.60	0	0.00	n.s. 22	4.40
	14 Days	14	2.80	1	0.20	1	0.20	1	0.20	0	0.00	n.s. 17	3.40
												***	
16mg/kg	24h.	29	5.80	22	4.40	7	1.40	7	1.40	0	0.00	65	13.0
	7 Days	31	6.20	6	1.20	0	0.00	7	1.40	1	0.20	*** 45	9.00
	14 Days	15	3.00	6	1.20	3	0.60	3	0.60	1	0.20	** 28	5.60
24mg/kg												***	
	24h.	27	5.40	17	3.40	14	2.80	9	1.80	0	0.00	67	13.40
	7 Days	24	4.80	15	3.00	2	0.40	8	1.60	0	0.00	*** 49	9.80
	14 Days	21	4.20	8	1.60	3	0.60	4	0.80	1	0.20	*** 37	7.40
Repeated Dose												***	
8mg/kgX3days	24h.	15	3.00	23	4.60	6	1.20	2	0.40	0	0.00	46	9.20
	7 Days	16	3.20	12	2.40	2	0.40	5	1.00	0	0.00	*** 35	7.00
	14 Days	15	3.00	6	1.20	1	0.20	3	0.60	0	0.00	** 25	5.00

The total number of scored cells is 500 (5 animals/ group); XY un.: XY univalents, Auto. un.: Autosomal univalents, XY+ Auto. un.: XY univalents plus Autosomal univalents, Br.: Breaks, F.: Fragments. ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001; n.s. = not significant.

Table 4: Number and mean percentage of different types of sperm shape abnormalities in mouse sperms induced by different doses of Ifosfamide.

Dose	No. of Scored sperms	Abnormal sperms		(%) of Different types of abnormal sperms							
		No.	Mean (%) ± SE	Amor.	Triang	W. Hook	Ban. Shape	Big Head	Small Head	Forked Head	Coiled Tail
I. Control	5099	99	1.94±0.23	1.02	0.33	0.24	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.00	0.23
II. IFO Single Dose											
8mg/kg	5146	146	* 2.84+0.19	1.52	0.82	0.25	0.09	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.12
16mg/kg	5331	331	*** 6.21+0.09	1.99	3.08	0.49	0.09	0.06	0.04	0.02	0.46
24mg/kg	5430	430	*** 7.92+0.21	2.71	3.52	0.76	0.07	0.04	0.07	0.11	0.64
Repeated Dose 8mg/kgX3 day	5212	212	*** 4.07+0.22	1.78	1.06	0.49	0.13	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.55

* p<0.05; *** p<0.001; Amor.: Amorphous, Triang.: Triangular, W. Hook : Without Hook, Ban. Shape: Banana Shape

3. Results

3.1. Cytogenetic effect of IFO

3.1.1. Effect of IFO on somatic cells:

a- Chromosomal aberrations in bone marrow cells:

Table (1) illustrates a detailed study of single and repeated treatments with IFO for 24h, 7 and 14 days on the induction of chromosomal aberrations in mouse bone marrow. The percentage of induced aberrations was increased by increasing the dose of IFO. It was found to be statistically highly significant ($p<0.001$) after excluding gaps. The percentage of chromosomal aberrations decreased with increasing the time of recovery (Figure 2a).

b- Sister chromatid exchanges (SCE's):

All the tested doses induced a statistically significant increase in the frequency of SCE's ($p<0.001$) over that of the control (Table 2; Figure 2b).

3.1.2. Effect of IFO on germ cells:

a- Chromosomal aberrations in diakinase metaphase I (spermatocytes):

Aberration rates of control animals showed no variation. The significant effect of IFO on the induction of chromosome aberrations in spermatocytes was observed after single and repeated treatment. The percentage of chromosomal aberrations was dose dependent and decreased as the time after treatment increased (Table 3; Figure 2c).

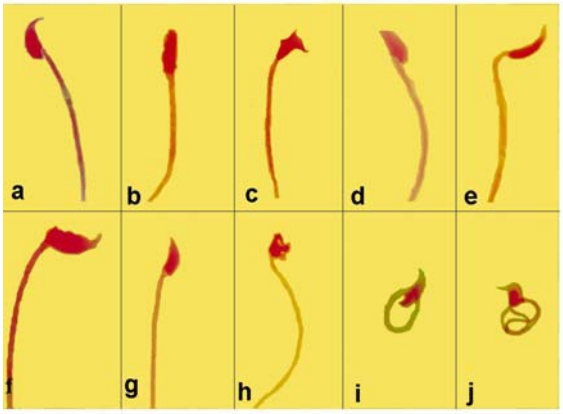

Figure 3: Types of sperm-shape abnormalities found in normal and IFO treated mice (a) normal sperm with a definite head by a marked hook and tail, (b and c) amorphous head, (d) without hook, (e) banana –shape, (f) big head, (g) small head, (h) triangular, (i and j) coiled tail.

Table 5: Number and mean percentage of chromosomal aberrations in mouse bone marrow cells induced by different doses of Ifosfamide plus different doses of vitamins FA, VB12, and VC.

Treatment and Doses	No. of cells with different types of structural aberrations							No. of cells with numerical aberration		Total Chromosomal Aberrations				Inhibition (%) Of Aberrant Cells Excluding Gaps
	G.	Br. or F.	Del.	C.F.	C.A.	G+Br. and/or F.	Br.+ F.	41 Ch.	Tetrap.	Including Gaps No.	%	Excluding Gaps No.	%	
I. Control	10	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	17	3.40	7	1.40	-
FA (10mg/kg)	11	9	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	25	5.00	14	2.80	-
VB12 (0.3mg/kg)	12	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	23	4.60	11	2.20	-
VC (50mg/kg)	10	8	0	2	0	0	0	0	4	24	4.80	14	2.80	-
II. Treatment and Protection for Single Dose														
IFO (24mg/kg)	91	35	3	1	10	9	130	0	13	292***	58.4	201***	40.2	-
IFO+ FA (24 +10)	36	25	0	1	5	9	80	0	9	165•••	33.0	129•••	25.8	35.82
IFO+ VB12(24+0.3)	36	29	0	0	0	7	95	1	13	181•••	36.2	145•••	29.0	27.86
IFO+ VC(24+50)	32	22	1	0	3	2	101	0	17	178•••	35.6	146•••	29.2	27.36
III. Treatment and Protection for Repeated Dose														
IFO(8mg/kgX3days)	71	64	2	5	1	4	33	0	12	192***	38.4	121***	24.2	-
IFO+ FA(8+10)	38	24	0	0	4	3	15	0	11	95•••	19.0	57•••	11.4	52.89
IFO+ VB12(8+0.3)	35	30	0	0	1	2	16	0	16	100•••	20.0	65•••	13.0	46.28
IFO+ VC(8+50)	40	37	1	0	5	3	28	1	13	128•••	25.6	88•	17.6	27.27

The total number of scored cells is 500 (5 animals/ group); *** $p<0.001$: Significance compared to Control.

•$p<0.05$; •••$p<0.001$: Significance compared to treatment with IFO; G.: Gaps, Br.: Breaks, F.: Fragments, Del.: Deletions, C. F.: Centric Fusions, C. A.: Centromeric Attenuations, 41 Ch.: 41 Chromosomes, Tetrap.: Tetraploidy, IFO: Ifosfamide, FA: Folic acid, VB12: Vitamin B12, VC: Vitamin C.

Table 6: Number and mean percentage of diakinase metaphase I cells with chromosomal aberrations in mouse spermatocytes induced by different doses of Ifosfamide plus different doses of vit. FA, VB12, VC.

Treatment and Doses	Normal Cells	XY un.	Auto. un.	XY+ Auto. un.	Br. or Frag.	3n	Total Aberr.ations No.	%	Inhibition (%) of Aberrant Cells
I. Control	489	8	3	0	0	0	11	2.20	-
FA (10mg/kg)	487	7	6	0	0	0	13	2.60	-
VB12 (0.3mg/kg)	488	8	1	0	3	0	12	2.40	-
VC (50mg/kg)	490	8	2	0	0	0	10	2.00	-
II. Treatment and Protection for Single Dose									
IFO (24mg/kg)	433	27	17	14	9	0	67***	13.4	-
IFO+ FA (24 +10mg/kg)	472	15	8	2	3	0	28•••	5.60	58.21
IFO+VB12(24 +0.3mg/kg)	474	13	8	2	3	0	26•••	5.20	61.19
IFO+ VC(24 +50mg/kg)	471	17	8	2	3	0	30•••	6.00	55.22
III. Treatment and Protection for Repeated Dose									
IFO(8mg/kgX3days)	454	15	23	6	2	0	46***	9.20	-
IFO+ FA (8 +10mg/kg)	478	11	6	2	2	1	22••	4.40	52.17
IFO+ VB12 (8 +0.3mg/kg)	477	11	8	0	3	1	23••	4.60	50.00
IFO+ VC (8 +50mg/kg)	480	14	5	1	0	0	20•••	4.00	56.52

The total number of scored cells is 500 (5 animals/ group); *** p<0.001: Significance compared to Control.
•• p<0.01 ••• p<0.001: Significance compared to treatment with IFO; Br.: Breaks, F.: Fragments, IFO: Ifosfamide FA: Folic acid, VB12: Vitamin B12, VC: Vitamin C.

b- Sperm-shape abnormalities:

IFO induced a dose dependent and statistically significant increase in the percentage of sperm shape abnormalities. Table (4) shows the different types of observed abnormalities (Figure 3).

3.1.3. The protective effect of vitamins:

Tables (5, 6) demonstrated the protective effect of FA, VB12& VC on the induction of the chromosomal aberrations in somatic and germ cells after concurrent treatment with IFO. The results showed that FA, VB12 & VC exerted a significant reduction in the percentage of chromosome aberration induced by 24 mg IFO/kg b. wt. as a single dose and 8mgIFO/kg b. wt. for 3 consecutive days as a repeated dose.

3.2. DNA fragmentation assay:

3.2.1. Effect of IFO:

a. DPA assay:

Mean percentage of DNA fragmentation in mouse spleen cells was markedly increased (p<0.001) after treatment with the single and repeated doses of IFO (Table 7).

b. Agarose gel-electrophoresis:

DNA fragmentation assessed by agarose gel-electrophoresis was increased in a dose dependent manner with the increasing of IFO (Figure 4)

3.2.2. Protective effect of vitamins:

Table (7) illustrates the mean percentage of DNA fragmentation induced in mouse spleen cells after i.p. treatment with 24mg IFO /kg b. wt. and oral concurrent treatment with 10, 0.3 and 50mg /kg b. wt. FA, VB12 and VC, respectively. The percentage of DNA fragmentation decreased to 12.68%, 10.64% and 11.15% after treatment with FA, VB12 and VC, respectively, compared with 21.77% for IFO alone. Figure (4) shows the DNA fragmentation assessed by agarose gel- electrophoresis, which was decreased after treatment with vitamins compared to that with 24mgIFO/ kg b.wt.

4. Discussion

Ifosfamide, as all other alkylating agents, destroy tumor cells through apoptosis initiated by DNA damage, modulation of cell cycle and other anti-proliferative effects. Thus it can damage DNA during any phase of cell cycle, and therefore, it is not phase specific. The main mechanism is inhibition of DNA replication, as the interlinked strands cannot separate. (Zhang *et al.*, 2005).

IFO induced highly significant percentage of structural chromosomal aberrations in mouse bone marrow cells and diakinesis metaphase I cells (spermatocytes) which increased with dose increasing. Adler and El-Tarras, (1990) demonstrated that cisplatine, an alkylating anticancer drug, induced chromosomal aberrations in primary spermatocytes and spermatogonial stem cells of male mice at 5, 7.5

and 10 mg/kg b.wt. Alvarez-Gonzalez *et al.,* (2001) found that IFO induced micronuclei in muose bone marrow cells. Also this was reported when injected i.p. tumor bearing mice at 90 mg/kg for 1-3 days led to loss of IP+/-19q (Leurand *et al.,* 2004). Although the structural aberrations in mouse cells decreased with increasing the time of recovery, the numerical aberrations increased and reached their maximum after 14 days of recovery. The positive correlation between tetraploid cells and long duration of treatment may lead to induction of secondry carcinoma. This hypothesis supported with the study of Kubota *et al*., (1997) who found that induction of secondary carcinoma appeared in patient treated with therapeutic regimens containing daunorubicin and cyclophosphamide. Also, they observed a third malignancy caused by alkylating agents (therapeutic regimens) containing IFO.

Table 7: Mean percentage of DNA fragmentation induced in mouse spleen cells after treatment with different doses of IFO alone and in combination with FA, VB12 or VC using DPA assay.

Dose (mg/kg)	DNA Fragmentation Mean (%)±SE	DNA Fragmentation Inhibition (%)
I. Control	**2.95±0.621**	-
FA (10mg)	**2.56±0.869**	-
VB12 (0.3mg)	**3.17±0.787**	-
VC (50mg)	**2.87±0.716**	-
II. IFO		
Single dose	***	
8	**20.73+1.441** ***	-
16	**21.03+1.511** ***	-
24	**21.77+1.076** ***	-
Repeated dose		
8X3days	**21.25+0.898**	-
III. IFO+Vitamins	•••	
IFO+FA (24+10)	**12.68±1.123** •••	**41.74**
IFO+VB12 (24+0.3)	**10.64±1.116** •••	**51.12**
IFO+VC (24+50)	**11.15±0.944**	**48.76**

(5 animals/ group);
*** p<0.001: Significance compared to Control.
••• p<0.001: Significance compared to treatment with IFO.

Separation of chromosomes forming XY and autosomal univalents was the most common type of aberrations in mouse spermatocytes in the present study. Concerning numerical aberrations, it is worth to mention that a very low frequency of triploid diakinasis metaphase I cells were observed after treatment with different doses of IFO. This phenomenon may be attributed to the effect of the anticancer on the spindle apparatus (Temtamy *et al.,* 1982; Hemavathy and Krishnamurthy, 1988). Such results agree with Amer *et al.,* (2002) who observed triploid spermatocytes in mice treated with 1mg Mitomycine C /kg b.wt.

IFO at single and repeated doses induced a highly significant and a dose dependent increase in SCE's frequencies in mouse bone marrow cells. The mean values of SCE's/cell were higher than three folds of the control indicating that IFO is a strong inducer of SCE. Induction of SCE's was observed in cultured V79 chinese hamster cells after treatment with IFO and cyclophosphamide (Sirianni and Huang 1980). Aly *et al*. (2003) demonstrated that both cisplatin and gemcitabine separately induced SCE's in mouse bone marrow cells in a dose dependent manner.

Sperm-head abnormalities are usually taken as a characteristic criterion and as an applied test for monitoring the mutagenic potential for many chemicals (Brusick, 1980). Tail deformities were reported to reduce fertility in human and animals (Topham.1983).

The mean percentage of sperm shape abnormalities were dose dependent with IFO. The maximum percentage was 7.92+0.21($p<0.001$)24h after treatment with 24mg IFO/kg b. wt., such results coincide with the results obtained by cisplatin (Giri *et al.,* 1998), Mitomycin C 1mg/kg b.wt (Farghaly and Ibrahim, 2003) and cyclophosphamide at 20, 60 mg/kg b. wt. (El-Nahas et al., 1989; Kumar et al., 2004; Hassan et al., 2006) which induced highly significant sperm shape abnormalities in mice.

Apoptosis is a form of programmed cell death was shown to play a key role in normal development and oncogenesis. Its hall mark biochemical feature of endonuclease activation, was giving rise to internucleosomal DNA fragmentation (Perandones *et al.,* 1993). The present study indicated the apoptotic changes induced by IFO in mouse spleen cells (*in vivo*) revealed a significant increase in the percentage of DNA fragmentation with (DPA) assay and was confirmed by agarose gel electrophoresis. The observed increase in DNA fragmentation might be due to the induction of DNA strand breaks by this compound.

Many studies demonstrated that IFO have the potential to induce DNA fragmentation and apoptosis in various tissues *in vivo* and *in vitro* .Latz *et al.*, (1997) demonstrated that 1ug/ml IFO for 2h induced DNA fragmentation in different cell lines *in vitro* such as V79 Chinese hamster, caski- (squamous ca.),

widr-(colon ca.) and MRI-221 (melanoma) cells. Hartley *et al.,* (1999) observed the presence of DNA cross linking in the lymphocytes of patients treated with IFO at 3.09/m^2 /day by continuous intravenous infusion over 3-5 days or as a 3h infusion daily for 3 days. Ypsilantis *et al*.,(2004) demonstrated that IFO induced enterocyte apoptosis and DNA fragmentation in the rabbit small and large intestine in a dose and intestinal site- dependent manner and it had a dose related apoptotic, but steady anti-mitotic effect on intestinal crypt cells, which led to mucosal atrophy in the small intestine of the rabbit.

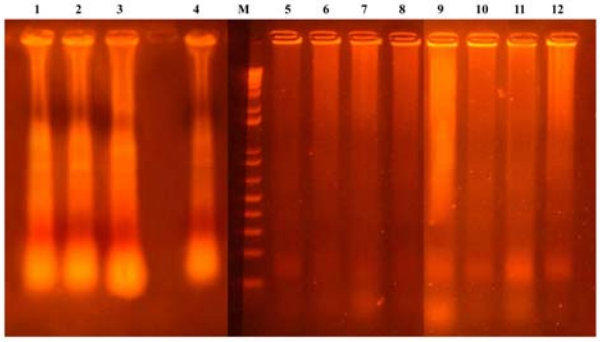

Figure (4): Effect of IFO on DNA fragmentation. Lanes 1-3: DNA of mice treated with 8, 16 and 24mg IFO/kg b wt. respectively. Lane 4: treatment with repeated dose of IFO. Lane M: 1K base DNA ladder. Lane 5: control .Lanes 6-8: DNA of mice administered FA, VB12 or VC respectively. Lane9: DNA of mice treated with 24 mg IFO/kg b. wt. Lanes10-12: DNA of mice treated concurrently with IFO plus FA, VB12 or VC respectively (FA, 10mg/kg b. wt., VB12 0.3mg/kg b. wt., VC 50mg/kg b. wt.).

The inhibition of DNA synthesis, specially the cellular DNA may be induced by cross links between the anticancer drugs and the DNA molecules. IFO generates bifunctional alkylating nitrogen mustards which are converted to chemically reactive carbonium ions at neutral PH and react with the 7-nitrogen atom of purine bases in DNA, especially when they are flanked by adjacent guanines.The second arm in phosphoramide mustard can react with a second guanine moiety in an opposite DNA strand or in the same strand to form cross links. The O^6 atom of guanine may also be a target for oxazaphosphorines (Zhang et al., 2005)

In a trial to minimize the genotoxicity effect of IFO. FA, VB12 and VC were administered simultaneously with single and repeat doses. The results showed that the maximum effect of FA appeared after repeated treatment in mouse bone marrow cells and spermatocytes. The possible mechanism of FA action is connected with thymidylate synthetase activity and through DNA synthesis (Glover, 1982) and with modifying cellular nucleotide pools (Kunz, 1988). Also, FA is involved in both methyl metabolism and in DNA synthesis and repair (Duthie and Hawdon, 1998).

Donya and Aly (2003) found that FA caused a highly significant inhibition in the percentage of aberrant metaphases induced in mice somatic and germ cells after treatment with methotrexate (anticancer drug).

VB12 is required for the synthesis of methionine and S-adenosyl methionine, the common methyl donor required for the maintenance of DNA conformation (Zingg and Jones, 1997). It is essential for one-carbon metabolism and cell division thus its synthesis is very complex and restricted to microorganisms (Afman *et al.,* 2001; Ulleland *et al.,* 2002).

The percentage of inhibition reached 61.12% and 50.00% in mouse spermatocytes after single and repeated treatments with IFO plus VB12. The present results agreed with the studies carried out by Joksic *et al.* (2006), who demonstrated that VB12 reduced the incidence of micronuclei induced by ribavirin, a synthetic purine nucleoside analogue with a broad spectrum of antiviral activity, in phytohemaglutinine-stimulated human lymphocytes.

Oral administration of VC to mice treated with IFO (concurrent administration) minimized the percentage of chromosomal aberration induced in somatic and germ cells after both single and repeated treatments. VC is a powerful reducing agent (antioxidant) and plays a part in intracellular oxidation/reduction system, and binding oxidants (free radicals) produced endogenously. Besides,VC can promote the removal of oxidative DNA damage from the DNA and/or nucleotide pool,through the upregulation of repair enzymes ,perhaps induced by the vitamin's proxidative properties(Cooke *et al.,* 1998).

Ghaskadbi *et al.,* 1992 and Vijayalaxmi and Venu 1999 reported that the modifying effect of ascorbic acid at low doses on cyclophosphamide induced micronuclei in mice. Also, Giri *et al*., (1998) found that the frequency of all mutagenic parameters in Swiss albino mice treated with VC plus cisplatin were significantly less than those treated with cisplatin alone suggesting a protective role of ascorbic acid against cisplatin.

The concurrent administration of IFO at 8mg/kg b. wt. with vitamins FA, VB12, and VC reduced the percentage of DNA fragmentation in mouse spleen cells as measured by DPA and agarose gel electrophorasis. Simultaneous treatment of human peripheral blood mononuclear cells (*in vitro*) with cisplatin and melatonin (free radical scavenger and general antioxidant pineal hormone) decreased cisplatin induction of DNA fragmentation from 45%

to 28%.(Hassan *et al.,* 1999).VC diminished the extent of DNA damage evoked by selenium-cisplatin conjugate but had no effect on the kinetics of DNA repair in human lymphocytes (Blasiak and Kowalik, 2001).But post treatment of VC for mice treated with cyclophosphamide did not affect DNA damage level using comet assay in peripheral white blood cells (Franke et al ., 2005).

The present study indicates that the anticancer drug IFO is a mutagenic agent in mouse somatic and germ cells. Vitamins (FA, VB12 and VC) play a beneficial role against the mutagenicity of this drug.

Acknowledgement:
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8/1/2010