

Reduction of 5-lipoxygenase activity in the intestine of mice deficient in AMP-activated protein kinase

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Abstract

n-3 long-chain PUFA synthesis is a key step in lipid metabolism. However, the metabolic effect of PUFA is mediated by AMP-activated protein kinase (AMPK) family members. To determine the effect of α -linolenic acid (ALA) on the intestinal fatty acid (FA) metabolism and whether the effect is affected by AMPK deletion, mice deficient in the catalytic subunit of AMPK1 or AMPK2 and wild-type (WT) mice were fed either a high-fat diet (HF) or HF supplemented with ALA (HF-A). The results showed that ALA supplementation decreased TAG content in WT mice. ALA also decreased mRNA expression of *acetyl-CoA carboxylase 1* (ACC1), *medium-chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase 4* (MCAD4), *peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor- α* (PPAR α), *lipoprotein lipase* (LPL) and *lipoprotein lipase 2* (LPL2) in WT mice. Conversely, the expression of *AMPK1* and *AMPK2* was also decreased in WT mice after ALA addition. However, the above effects of AMPK1 or AMPK2, ALA supplementation failed to decrease the intestinal lipid content. The significant effect of either diet (HF and HF-A) on TAG content (WT, AMPK1^{-/-} and AMPK2^{-/-}) was not observed. Overall, it is suggested that AMPK is indispensable for the effect of ALA on intestinal lipid metabolism.

Key words: α -Linolenic acid: AMP-activated protein kinase: Lipid metabolism: Intestine

Dietary fat is a major energy source and essential fatty acid (FA) that is important for health. However, although the amount of dietary fat, especially the intake of *n*-6:*n*-3 PUFA ratio, may contribute to the development of obesity (1). In the recent decade, decreasing animal health has been reported in the field of the mammalian diet of high-fat diet (HF) and could be a high level of fatty acid affect intestinal lipid metabolism (2). The mammalian diet is the gateway of the health interface between the body and the diet (2) and the main factor of the β -oxidation-related energy (3,4). A fatty acid, lipid metabolism and take the intestinal metabolism are a critical role in the animal growth.

Recently, dietary *n*-3 PUFA has been suggested to decrease intestinal fatty acid synthesis-related fatty acid (5,6) and cholesterol (5). However, the mechanism demonstrating *n*-3 PUFA modulate lipid metabolism in the intestine remains to be elucidated. Many studies demonstrate that *n*-3 PUFA exerts their effect on lipid metabolism through the PPAR pathway (5,7), a *n*-3 PUFA is a specific ligand for PPAR (8). Moreover, *n*-3 PUFA could interact with PPAR α and enhance PPAR α transcriptional activity (9). However, the effect of

dietary fatty acid in the mammalian diet (C1), a key factor in the FA metabolism, could be reduced by FA through the activation of PPAR α (10,11). The results suggest that the mechanism of the effect of PPAR α on the *n*-3 PUFA-reduced FA metabolism.

AMP-activated protein kinase (AMPK) is the key factor of the whole-body energy homeostasis, and it has a critical role in the regulation of lipid metabolism through the mammalian diet (12). Previous studies have demonstrated that *n*-3 PUFA could be effective in affecting lipid metabolism through the AMPK (AMPK) pathway (13), adipose tissue and skeletal muscle (14). In addition, long-chain *n*-3 PUFA supplementation could activate AMPK and improve glucose uptake in the intestine (15). Nevertheless, the effect

effect⁽¹⁶⁾. A *de novo* lipogenesis, ALA is the most ideal candidate for mediating *n-3* PUFA in the Western diet⁽¹⁷⁾. It is also thought that fish oil (rich in DHA and EPA) may increase the effect of ALA⁽¹⁸⁾. Therefore, the present study aimed to determine whether ALA could decrease the lipid metabolism and whether AMPK affects the effect of ALA in high-fat mice deficient in AMPK α 1 and AMPK α 2.

Methods

Animal

All mice were housed individually and maintained at 21 ± 2°C, under a 12:12 h light-dark cycle with free access to water and food. To evaluate the effect of ALA on lipid metabolism and to clarify whether AMPK is involved, we used AMPK α 1^{-/-} and AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice with a C57BL/6 genetic background. The AMPK α 1 and AMPK α 2 knock-out mice were purchased from the Jackson Laboratory and C57BL/6 mice were used as controls.

Experimental design and sample collection

All mice at 8-week age were maintained on a 45% HF diet. The HF diet consisted of 45% (kcal%) fat from lard and beef tallow, 20% fructose and 35% carbohydrate. FA composition of diet fat is presented in Table 1. C57BL/6, AMPK α 1^{-/-} and AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice (eight male mice of each genotype) at 9-week age were divided into two groups: either control mice on a 45% HF or 45% HF + 10% ALA (Aladdin Ltd; maintaining the total amount of fat at 45%) for 12 weeks. Food intake was measured throughout the study every 3 days, and body weight was recorded every week. On the last day of the experiment, mice were killed by cervical dislocation and blood was collected from the eyeball. Next, the small intestine was removed and the jejunum and ileum were separated, then flushed with ice-cold saline and immediately frozen in liquid N₂ and stored at -80°C.

All experiments were approved by the Committee of Experimental Animal Care, Zhejiang University (Hangzhou, China).

Measurement of TAG and fatty acid composition in blood and faeces

TAG content was measured in dried faecal samples and expressed as $\mu\text{g/d}$ according to the method⁽⁷⁾. Briefly, the faeces were dried at 60°C overnight and lipid was extracted by the method of Flichet *et al.*⁽¹⁹⁾. Next, TAG content in the lipid was extracted from faeces and the extract was analysed using a TAG assay kit (GPO-POD;

Abcam Technology Inc.) as Zhang *et al.* did⁽²⁰⁾. To evaluate the FA composition of feces, lipid was extracted and the extracted lipids were analysed using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS). The FA were identified by comparing the retention time of standards with that of the samples. FA composition was calculated as a percentage of the total area.

Quantitative RT-PCR analysis

Total RNA was extracted with the Trizol reagent (Invitrogen) and the complementary DNA was synthesized with the RevertAid Reverse Transcriptase (Fermentas). Real-time PCR analysis was performed according to the method of Li *et al.*⁽²²⁾. Briefly, the PCR reaction mixture consisted of 10 μl of SYBR Prime-Ex Taq (2 \times) mix (Roche), 0.4 μl of ROX (50 \times) (Roche), 1.0 μl of cDNA, 7.8 μl of double-distilled water and 0.4 μl of primer (10 mM

Statistical analysis

Data were analysed as a 3×2 factorial, except that RT-PCR data were analysed as a 3×2×2 factorial using PROC MIXED (SAS Institute Inc.). The statistical model for body weight gain, food intake and energy density of diet, genotype and their interaction. The statistical model for energy density of diet, genotype, nutrient density and their interaction. Treatment means were calculated using the LSMEANS statement, and means were adjusted using the PDIF option of PROC MIXED. An α -value of 0.05 was used to determine significant differences among means.

Results

Body weight gain and food intake in wild-type, AMPK α 1^{-/-} and AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice

According to Table 3, there was a significant effect of genotype (wild-type (WT), AMPK α 1^{-/-} and AMPK α 2^{-/-}) of diet (HF and HF diet supplemented with ALA (HF-A)) on food intake, and their interaction between genotype and diet. Mice fed HF diet, mice fed HF-A diet had lower body weight gain (17.2±0.3 vs. 13.2±1.1 g). Hence, there was a significant effect of genotype on body weight gain.

TAG concentration in urine, m and faeces and energy, m fatty acid composition in wild-type, AMPK α 1^{-/-} and AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice

According to Table 4, there was a significant interaction between genotype and diet for TAG concentration in urine. In fact, this interaction reflected in WT mice only. In addition, there was a significant effect of genotype on diet on faecal TAG concentration, and their interaction between

genotype and diet. Energy density of diet was affected. A significant interaction between genotype and diet was observed and the effect of the genotype was significant, the data for FA composition were affected and deduced from the genotype (Table 5). Compared with mice fed HF diet, mice fed HF-A diet had higher levels of ALA (C18:3), EPA (C20:5) and DHA (C22:6) in urine, whereas mice fed HF-A diet had a lower level of C18:1.

Effect of α -linolenic acid on hepatic gene expression of AMPK and pAMPK in the small intestine of mice

No interaction among genotype, diet and their interaction and their interaction were observed for the expression of AMPK α 1 and AMPK α 2 in both the jejunal and ileal mucosa. Protein levels of AMPK α 2 in AMPK α 1^{-/-} mice were higher than in WT mice, and protein levels of AMPK α 1 in AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice were higher than in WT mice in both the jejunal and ileal mucosa (Fig. 1(a)–(e)). No interaction among genotype, diet and their interaction and their interaction were observed, except that their interaction between genotype and diet was observed for relative protein levels of AMPK α 1 and AMPK α 2 in both the jejunal and ileal mucosa, because the HF-A diet increased relative protein levels of AMPK α 1 compared with the HF diet in WT mice but not in AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice, and HF-A diet increased relative protein levels of AMPK α 2 compared with the HF diet in WT mice but not in AMPK α 1^{-/-} mice (Fig. 1(f)–(j)).

Effect of α -linolenic acid on gene expression of fatty acid oxidase, fatty acid synthase and TAG in the ileal gene in the small intestine of mice

According to Table 6, no interaction among genotype, diet and their interaction and their interaction were detected, except that their interaction between genotype and diet

Table 5. Fatty acid composition in serum of wild-type mice (WT), AMPK α 1 whole-body knockout mice (AMPK α 1^{-/-}) and AMPK α 2 whole-body knockout mice (AMPK α 2^{-/-})^a (Mean values with their pooled standard errors)

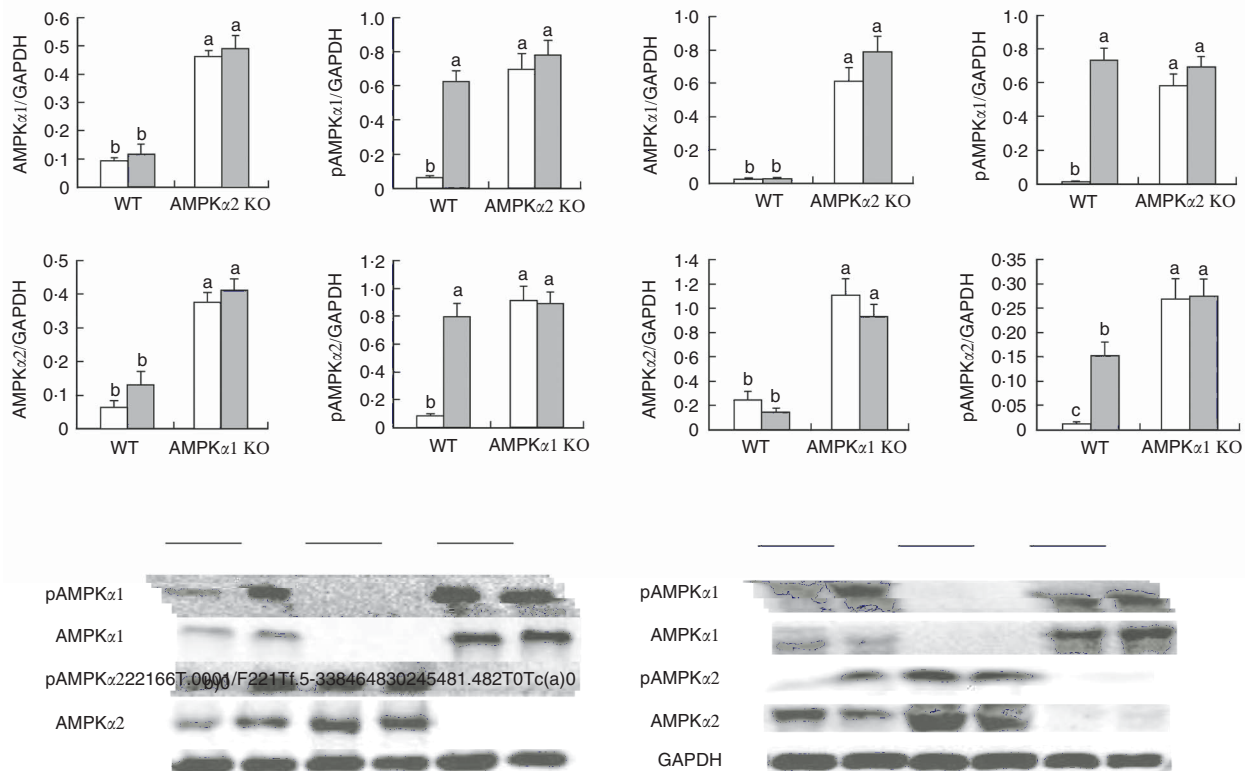
Fatty acid (% of total fat)	HF	HF-A	SEM	P
C16	28.6	26.5	1.05	0.09
C18	17.7	17.1	1.22	0.17
C18 : 1	37.6 ^a	31.8 ^b	1.52	0.03
C18 : 2	13.5	14.2	0.99	0.41
C18 : 3	0.2 ^b	7.3 ^a	0.61	<0.001
C20 : 5	0 ^b	0.34 ^a	0.03	<0.001
C22 : 6	0 ^b	0.54 ^a	0.05	<0.001

AMPK, AMP-activated protein kinase.

HF: WT, AMPK α 1^{-/-} and AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice fed a high-fat diet; HF-A: WT, AMPK α 1^{-/-} and AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice fed a high-fat diet supplemented with α -linolenic acid.

^{a,b} Mean values within a row with unlike superscript letters were significantly different ($P < 0.05$).

* As no interactions between genotypes and types of diet were observed and the effect of the genotypes is never significant, the data are presented independently from the genotype.



decreased expression of CPT1a, acyl-CoA oxidase 1 (ACOX1), medium-chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase (ACADM), carnitine palmitoyltransferase 4A10 (C4a10), fatty acid ketone body 4 (dk4), medium-chain long-chain 1-O-acyltransferase 2 (MGAT2), diacylglycerol 1-O-acyltransferase 1 and 2 (DGAT1 and DGAT2) in both the jejunum and the ileum, because diet supplemented with ALA decreased expression of CPT1a, ACOX1, ACADM (FA oxidation-related gene, which regulated β -oxidation activity), C4a10 (FA

oxidation-related gene, which regulated β -oxidation activity), *pdx4* (triglyceride and chylomicron lipoprotein synthesis-related gene)⁽²³⁾, *MGAT2*, *DGAT1* and *DGAT2* (TAG synthesis-related gene), but not in AMPK α 2^{-/-} and AMPK α 1^{-/-} mice. Gene expression level of fatty acid transporter 4 (FATP4) and the cluster of differentiation 36 (CD36) decreased in the jejunum but not in the ileum, whereas either gene expression of FATP4 and CD36

Discussion

n-3 long-chain PUFA, DHA and EPA have been demonstrated to reduce the total lipid metabolite and atherogenic lipid levels in mice fed a high-fat diet (5–7). However, little is known about the effect of the reduction of ALA on the total lipid levels, especially that ALA-rich TAG could be beneficial to the total lipid levels (24). In the current study, we found that ALA also could protect WT mice from HF-induced hyperlipidaemia and reduce the total FA levels.

Some studies demonstrate that the efficiency of ALA conversion to DHA and EPA is limited (25), hence the diet fed to that dietary ALA could reduce the level of EPA and DHA levels, and the (26) and the active members (27,28). Moreover, ALA, with its conversion to DHA and EPA, could protect against HF-induced obesity and related diseases (29). Otherwise, we found that dietary ALA reduced HF-induced TAG levels in WT mice fed a HF diet. Dietary ALA remarkably improved ALA levels in either WT mice or AMPK-lacking mice. In addition, a beneficial level of DHA and EPA were observed in mice after ALA supplementation. Collectively, we found that ALA also could alleviate hyperlipidaemia, a feature of diet-induced obesity (29). In addition, gender had no effect on FA composition.

AMPK is a heterotrimeric enzyme composed of α , β and γ subunits. The α and α 2

subunits of the α subunit have 90% amino acid sequence homology with the catalytic site, but major difference in the C-terminal tail of α 1 and α 2 subunits (30). As a result, the catalytic subunit conferred tissue-specific differences regarding the formation of heterotrimeric and metabolic regulation (31). For the past decade, we have suggested that the α 2 subunit is a favorable target for the modulation of gene expression (32). However, the results indicated that the α 1 catalytic subunit accounts for most of the activity of AMPK, especially in adipocytes (33,34). Moreover, mice lacking the α 2 subunit exhibited adipocyte and adipocyte hyperplasia and obesity (35). Otherwise, we found that heterotrimeric catalytic subunit lacking, the expression of the catalytic subunit is a common artifact of gene deletion. Surprisingly, ALA did not affect the expression of AMPK α subunit in the present study. However, ALA supplementation reduced AMPK heterotrimeric subunit α 1 and α 2 subunit in the muscle tissue. We suggested that ALA may reduce the total AMPK activity.



mice and mRNA expression levels of genes involved in FA oxidation in the liver of WT mice a high-fat diet. The results indicated that AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice. The effect of ALA on the lipid metabolism. It has been reported that mice lacking AMPK α 2^{-/-} had altered lipid accumulation in adipocytes with a change in adipocyte number and differentiation⁽³⁵⁾. However, both the effect of the diet on the lipid metabolism and the differentiation of adipocytes in TAG content were better in WT and AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice fed a HF. According to the immunoblotting analysis of the liver of WT mice, injected with HF-A medium, the effect of the diet on the lipid metabolism, although increased FA oxidation in the muscle, it was the only effect of ALA on lipid metabolism in adipocytes⁽³⁶⁾, liver⁽²⁶⁾ and skeletal muscle⁽³⁷⁾. Consumption of the diet, demonstrating that AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice receive a beneficial lipidemic effect of *n*-3 PUFA (DHA and EPA) *ad libitum*-fed mice⁽³⁸⁾, and had a reduced effect of high-fat diet on TAG in AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice fed a HF-A diet compared with WT mice. The results indicated that AMPK α 2^{-/-} mice fed a HF-A diet had a lower effect of ALA, both on the effect of DHA or EPA. However, mice with a high-fat diet deleted for AMPK α 1^{-/-} did not feed a HF diet had a high TAG level in the muscle of WT mice, and ALA addition to the diet did not decrease TAG level in AMPK α 1^{-/-} mice. The results indicated that AMPK α 1^{-/-} mice fed a HF diet had a lower effect of ALA on the lipid metabolism. The addition of either ALA addition or AMPK catalytic activity deletion affected the expression of genes involved in the lipid metabolism, a significant change observed in *CD36* and *FATP4* expression. Moreover, differences in faecal TAG content in all treatment could be further elucidated. However, TAG in the liver of WT mice injected with HF-A diet a significant decrease, a mRNA expression of *DGAT1* and *DGAT2* a high-fat diet with the treatment. Addition, increased FA oxidation caused by ALA treatment may be the main effect of this change.

Consequently, the results showed that ALA protected WT mice from HF diet-induced lipidemia and increased the lipid metabolism. Moreover, both AMPK α 1 and AMPK α 2 are indistinguishable for the effect of ALA on the lipid metabolism. The findings might indicate a higher benefit of the effect of ALA on the lipid metabolism and the mechanism of action, and could be useful for the management of lipid metabolism. Nevertheless, further studies will be needed to evaluate the differential effect of *n*-6 PUFA and *n*-3 PUFA on the lipid metabolism and the mechanism.

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