

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTÓNOMA DE MÉXICO PROGRAMA DE DOCTORADO EN CIENCIAS BIOMÉDICAS FACULTAD DE MEDICINA

EL POST-ACONDICIONAMIENTO CONTRA EL DAÑO POR REPERFUSIÓN EN CORAZONES SOMETIDOS A HIPERTROFIA CARDIACA

TESIS

QUE PARA OPTAR POR EL GRADO DE: DOCTOR EN CIENCIAS BIOMÉDICAS

PRESENTA:

SAURI HERNÁNDEZ RESÉNDIZ

DIRECTOR DE TESIS: DRA. CECILIA ZAZUETA MENDIZÁBAL INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE CARDIOLOGÍA. IGNACIO-CHÁVEZ

MIEMBROS DEL COMITÉ TUTOR:

DRA. NORMA ARACELI BOBADILLA SANDOVAL INTITUTO NACIONAL DE CIENCIAS MÉDICAS Y NUTRICIÓN. SALVADOR ZUBIRÁN

DR. RAMÓN MAURICIO CORAL VAZQUEZ ESCUELA SUPERIOR DE MEDICINA, INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO NACIONAL

MÉXICO, D. F, 26 DE OCTUBRE DEL 2015



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AGRADECIMIENTOS:

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PROGRAMA DE DOCTORADO EN CIENCIAS BIOMÉDICAS. FACULTAD DE MEDICINA

CONSEJO NACIONAL DE CIENCIA y TECNOLOGÍA (CONACYT)

NÚMERO DE BECARIO: 32006

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE CARDIOLOGÍA. IGNACIO-CHÁVEZ

DEPARTAMENTO DE BIOMEDICINA CARDIOVASCULAR

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i. RESUMEN

La mortalidad por infarto agudo al miocardio ha disminuido debido al tratamiento de reperfusión, ya sea a través de la administración de agentes trombolíticos o por medio de la angioplastía primaria. Sin embargo, a pesar de los beneficios de la terapia de reperfusión, las complicaciones, incluyendo la muerte, en pacientes con infarto agudo persisten. El proceso de reperfusión es un procedimiento que paradójicamente puede inducir la extensión del daño o muerte asociado a una respuesta inflamatoria exagerada; condición conocida como "daño por reperfusión".

Los factores de comorbilidad estan asociados con alteraciones moleculares fundamentales que inciden sobre el éxito de las terapias de reperfusión. Una de estas estrategias es el postacondicionamiento (PostC), que consiste en la aplicación de ciclos de reperfusión y reoclusión coronaria después del evento isquémico y que tras la activación de la vía de señalización MEK/ERK1/2 reduce el daño por reperfusión. En este trabajo estudiamos el efecto del PostC bajo condiciones de comorbilidad. Usamos un modelo de hipertrofia (CH) cardiaca y un modelo de cardiomiopatía dilatada (DCM). En estos modelos determinamos los efectos estructurales, funcionales y de señalización tras un infarto agudo y en consecuencia directa el efecto de la aplicación del PostC. Adicionalmente, determinamos el impacto de la vía de señalización MEK/ERK1/2 sobre la regulación de la función mitocondrial.

Se administró angiotensina-II a ratas Wistar hasta que se desarrollaron las enfermedades cardiovasculares. Posteriormente, los corazones aislados se sometieron a isquemia, seguida por el tratamiento de post-acondicionamiento y de reperfusión. El PostC mantuvo el doble producto de todos los grupos. El PostC redujo el tamaño del infarto de $36.16 \pm 3\%$ a $9.8 \pm 2.2\%$ en el grupo Sham, de $37.5 \pm 2.4\%$ a $12 \pm 3\%$ en el grupo CH y de $40 \pm 2.4\%$ a $11.55 \pm 3\%$ en el grupo DCM. La inhibición de la vía MEK/ERK1/2 (proteína cinasa de la cinasa activada por mitógenos) tuvo diferentes efectos en la cardioprotección conferida por el PostC en los grupos evaluados. Interesantemente, aunque la activación de la fosfatidilinositol 3-cinasa fue insignificante en corazones DCM durante el PostC, observamos activación de la cinasa Akt. Utilizando el modelo de DCM, determinamos el impacto de la señalización de ERK1/2 en mitocondrias y evaluamos su efecto sobre el poro de la transición de la permeabilidad. Observamos que bajo condiciones de cardioprotección, una subpoblación de ERK1/2 se activa y se dirige a las membranas mitocondriales a través de tráfico vesicular, en correlación con el incremento en la fosforilación de proteínas mitocondriales y la inhibición de la apertura del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial. Nuestros resultados sugieren que las vesículas enriquecidas con caveolina-3 forman complejos de señalización que translocan a ERK1/2, GSK3ß y Akt hacia la mitocondria.

En conclusión el PostC confiere cardioprotección a través de vías alternativas de supervivencia en corazones normales y corazones con CH, mientras que la recuperación de los corazones DCM depende de la vía MEK/ERK1/2. En estos corazones, la pérdida en la actividad de PI3K no afecta la cardioprotección, ya que MEK/ERK1/2 es capaz de activar a Akt, fortaleciendo la vía de señalización cascada abajo. Los complejos de señalización, que incluyen a PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-Akt, PHO-eNOS y caveolina-3 contribuyen a inducir cardioprotección a través de la inhibición de la apertura del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial.

ii. ABSTRACT

Acute myocardial infarction mortality has diminished due to reperfusion therapy by using thrombolytic agents or primary angioplasty. Despite the benefits of reperfusion therapy, complications that include death, persist in patients with acute myocardial infarction. Reperfusion is the definitive treatment for acute coronary syndromes, especially acute myocardial infarction; however, reperfusion has the potential to exacerbate lethal tissue injury, a process termed "reperfusion injury".

Comorbidity factors are associated with fundamental molecular alterations that can potentially affect the development of ischemia and reperfusion injury *per se* and responses to cardioprotective interventions, like that conferred by Post-conditioning (PostC), which consist in applying cycles of coronary reperfusion and reocclusion n after the ischemic event. This strategy led to activation of the signaling pathway MEK/ERK1/2 that participates in reducing reperfusion injury. In this work, we founded that PostC's protection does not depend of MEK/ERK1/2 activation in hearts of animals with cardiac hypertrophy, however, is essential for animals with dilated cardiomyophaty (DCM).

Wistar rats were subjected to angiotensin-II administration until development of cardiovascular diseases. Then, isolated hearts underwent ischemia followed by PostC and reperfusion. PostC maintained the double product in all groups. PostC reduced infarct size from $36.16 \pm 3\%$ to $9.8 \pm$ 2.2% in Sham, from $37.5 \pm 2.4\%$ to $12 \pm 3\%$ in CH, and from $40 \pm 2.4\%$ to $11.55 \pm 3\%$ in DCM. Inhibition of the mitogen activated protein kinase MEK/ERK1/2 pathway had different effects on cardioprotection in the evaluated PostC-conferred groups. Interestingly, although phosphatidylinositol-3-kinase activation was negligible in PostC DCM hearts, we observed Akt activation. Using the model of DCM, we determined ERK1/2 signaling at the level of mitochondria and evaluated its effect on the permeability transition pore. The most important finding is that, under cardioprotective conditions, a subpopulation of activated ERK1/2 was directed to the mitochondrial membranes through vesicular trafficking, concurring with increased phosphorylation of mitochondrial proteins and inhibition of the mitochondrial permeability transition pore opening. In addition, our results suggest that vesicles enriched with caveolin-3 could form structures that may drive ERK1/2, GSK3B and Akt to mitochondria.

In conclusion, PostC confers cardioprotection through alternative survival pathways in normal and CH hearts, whereas cardiac function recovery in DCM relies mainly on MEK/ERK1/2 cascade. Down regulation of phosphatidylinositide 3-kinase does not affect the cardioprotective response in DCM, because MEK/ERK1/2 cascade may convey direct Akt activation, strengthening downstream signaling. Signaling complexes including PHO- ERK, PHO-Akt, PHO-eNOS and caveolin-3 contribute to cardioprotection by directly targeting the mitochondrial proteome and regulating the opening of the permeability transition pore in this model.

iii. LISTA DE ABREVIATURAS

ACC:	Colegio Americano de Cardiología
ADP:	Adenosina difosfato
AHA:	Asociación Americana del Corazón
Akt:	Proteína Cinasa B
AMP:	Adenosina monofosfato
AMPK:	Cinasa activada por adenosina monofosfato
Ang-II:	Angiotensina-II
ANP:	Péptido natriurético atrial
ANT:	Translocasa de nucleótidos de adenina
ATP:	Adenosina trifosfato
AVISA:	Años de vida saludable
BH4:	Tetrahidrobiopterina
CCCP:	m-clorocarbonilcianuro fenilhidrazona
CH:	Hipertrofia cardiaca
CPT-1:	Carnitina palmitoil transferasa-1
CsA:	Ciclosporina A
Cyp-D:	Ciclofilina-D
Cyt-c:	Citocromo-c
DCM:	Cardiomiopatía dilatada
DNA:	Ácido desoxirribonucleico
ECVs:	Enfermedades cardiovasculares
EF:	Fracción de eyección
eNOS:	Sintasa de óxido nítrico endotelial
ERK1/2:	Cinasa regulada extracelularmente 1 y 2
ESC:	Sociedad Europea de Cardiología
ETC:	Cadena transportadora de electrones
FAT:	Transportador de ácidos grasos libres
FS:	Fracción de acortamiento
G6PDH:	Glucosa-6-fosfato deshidrogenasa
GC:	Guanilato ciclasa
GLUT:	Transportador de glucosa
cGMP:	Guanosín monofosfato cíclico
GPCR:	Receptores acoplados a proteínas G
GSH:	Glutatión
GSK3β:	Cinasa glucógeno sintasa 3β
GSSG:	Disulfuro de glutatión
GST:	Glutatión s- transferasa
H&E:	Hematoxilina y eosina
HW/BW:	Cociente peso corporal/peso corazón
IL-6:	Interleucina-6
IL-8:	Interleucina-8
IS:	Tamaño del infarto
IVS:	Septo intraventricular
LVDd:	Dimensión del ventrículo izquierdo al final de la diástole
LVSd:	Dimensión del ventrículo izquierdo en telesístole
LW/BW:	Cociente peso corporal/peso pulmón
MAPK:	Proteína cinasa activada por mitógeno
MAPKKs:	Proteína cinasa de cinasa activada por mitógeno
mCAU:	Uniportador de Ca ²⁺ mitocondrial

MEK1/2:	Proteína cinasa activada por mitógenos ERK1/2
mK^{+}_{ATP} :	Canales mitocondriales de potasio sensibles a ATP
MMP-2:	Metaloproteinasa de matriz-2
mPTP:	Poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial
MTC-1:	Transportador de monocarboxilatos-1
NADPH:	Nicotinamida adenina dinucleótido fosfato
NO•:	Óxido nítrico
NR:	No-reflujo
OMS:	Organización Mundial de la Salud
OxPhos:	Fosforilación oxidativa
p70S6K:	Proteína cinasa ribosomal S6 de 70kDa
PCI:	Intervención coronaria percutánea
PDK1:	Cinasa dependiente de 3'-inositolfosfato tipo 1
PFK:	Fosfofructocinasa
Pi:	Fosfato inorgánico
PI3K:	Fosfoinositol 3-cinasa
PiC:	Acarreador de fosfatos
PIP ₂ :	Fosfatidilinositol-4, 5-bifosfato
PIP3:	Fosfatidilinositol-3, 4, 5-trifosfato
PKC:	Proteína cinasa C
PKCe1:	Proteína cinasa C épsilon 1
PKCe2:	Proteína cinasa C épsilon 2
PKG:	Proteína cinasa G
PostC:	Post-acondicionamiento
RISK:	Cinasas de salvamento ante el daño por reperfusión
ROS:	Especies reactivas de oxígeno
RTK:	Receptor tipo tirosina cinasa
Ru360:	Rutenio 360
RyR:	Receptor de rianodina
Ser:	Serina
SERCA2a:	ATPasa de Ca ²⁺ tipo 2a del retículo sarcoplásmico
SOD:	Superóxido dismutasa
SPECT:	Tomografía computarizada de emisión monofotónica
SR:	Retículo sarcoplásmico
TAG:	Triacilglicerol
Thr:	Treonina
TNFα:	Factor de necrosis tumoral α
TTC:	Cloruro de trifeniltetrazolio
TTP^+ :	tetrafenilfosfonio
Tyr:	Tirosina
VDAC:	Canal aniónico dependiente de voltaje
γ-GCS:	γ-glutamil-cisteína-sintetasa
$\Delta \Psi m$:	Potencial eléctrico mitocondrial

iv. LISTA DE FIGURAS

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I. INTRODUCCIÓN

Las enfermedades cardiovasculares (ECVs) son la primera causa de muerte y de discapacidad a nivel mundial. De acuerdo con el Anuario de Estadística Sanitaria 2014 publicado por la Organización Mundial de la Salud, anualmente 3.8 millones de hombres y 3.4 millones de mujeres mueren a causa de las ECVs. Se estima que para el 2020 la carga global de las enfermedades del corazón aumentará los años de vida saludable perdidos, tanto por muerte como por discapacidad (de 47 millones a 82 millones de habitantes) [OMS, 2014].

En México acontecieron 140,595 defunciones por enfermedades cardiovasculares, lo que se traduce en una tasa de 122 defunciones por cada 100 mil habitantes en 2011. En esta agrupación se encuentran las defunciones por enfermedades isquémicas del corazón (50.5%) y las enfermedades cerebrovasculares (22.2%), que representan la segunda y cuarta causas a nivel nacional. De las personas que fallecieron por ECVs, 51.4% fueron hombres y 48.6% mujeres; ocho de cada 10 (82.2%) personas que fallecieron por esta causa tenían 60 años y más [INEGI, 2011].

La principal complicación postoperatoria de los pacientes con enfermedad cardiovascular, como lo son los pacientes con infarto agudo al miocardio con elevación del segmento ST, surge de los efectos perjudiciales del daño por reperfusión. Después de la aparición de la isquemia miocárdica aguda en estos pacientes, la reperfusión oportuna con terapia trombolítica o con intervención coronaria percutánea primaria es esencial para salvar el tejido cardiaco viable. Sin embargo, paradójicamente la reperfusión del tejido isquémico puede acompañarse de daño y muerte celular adicional generando arritmias ventriculares, alteraciones en la función contráctil del corazón y obstrucción microvascular (daño por reperfusión). A pesar de que la reperfusión es práctica habitual en el ámbito clínico, no existe actualmente ninguna estrategia establecida para proteger el corazón contra la pérdida de la función miocárdica postoperatoria [Husenloy et al., 2013].

El tratamiento contra el daño por reperfusión requiere medidas más allá de la reperfusión oportuna. En este sentido, el post-condicionamiento (PostC) es una terapia mecánica que induce una respuesta adaptativa del corazón para mejorar la capacidad de resistencia a la reperfusión. Sin embargo, el éxito de esta terapia es aún un desafío en la práctica clínica debido a que la mayoría de las enfermedades isquémicas se desarrollan como consecuencia de un gran número de etiologías que coexisten con estados patológicos. Poco se sabe acerca de la manera en que el miocardio responde a esta terapia cuando existen factores de riesgo cardiovascular. Por tal motivo, el objetivo de este trabajo fue evaluar la efectividad del post-acondicionamiento en un modelo animal de remodelación miocárdica patológica.

II. MARCO TEÓRICO

1. Isquemia

La isquemia (del griego *iσχειν*, *ísjein*, detener, y alµa, *aíma*, sangre) es la pérdida transitoria o permanente del flujo sanguíneo de un tejido. En 1957, la oclusión aguda de la arteria circunfleja en un modelo canino de infarto experimental, permitió al Dr. Jennings describir por primera vez las consecuencias deletéreas de la ausencia del flujo coronario cardiaco [Jennings y Wartman, 1957] y con especial énfasis señaló el efecto de la isquemia sobre la producción y utilización de los fosfatos de alta energía, el daño mitocondrial y el daño a las membranas celulares [Jennings et al., 1957; Gettes et al., 1991].

El daño tisular derivado de la isquemia depende del tiempo y del grado de disminución del flujo sanguíneo colateral. Se estima que si la obstrucción del flujo sanguíneo dura menos de 15 minutos con perfusión colateral de ≥ 0.3 mL/min por gramo de peso húmedo, los cambios metabólicos establecidos por la isquemia sobre el corazón son completamente reversibles [Fleet et al., 1985]; sin embargo, si la isquemia dura más de 20 minutos con una perfusión colateral de 0.01 a 0.09 mL/min por gramo de peso húmedo, habrá infarto agudo [Kloner et al., 1976; Reimer et al., 1977].

2. Infarto agudo

El infarto agudo es una de las enfermedades más frecuentes en la consulta de urgencias del Instituto Nacional de Cardiología Ignacio Chávez. El 64.2% de los pacientes que acuden a urgencias tienen algún tipo de cardiopatía isquémica, y de éstos el 38.5% corresponden a pacientes con infarto agudo con elevación del segmento ST. [González-Pacheco et al., 2007]

El infarto agudo agudo del miocardio está estrechamente relacionado con la duración de la isquemia y con el flujo sanguíneo colateral. El infarto agudo comienza en las capas internas del miocardio y se extiende transmural y lateralmente en forma de onda del subendocardio al subepicardio. Al igual que en los seres humanos, este patrón de infarto subendocárdico se ha observado en perros, cerdos y primates; mientras que en roedores el infarto ocurre preferentemente en las capas externas del corazón, en el subepicardio. En estos animales, el infarto agudo ocurre a los 30-60 minutos de isquemia, mientras que los primates exhiben una sorprendente resistencia a desarrollarlo [Schaper et al., 1988]. En el hombre, caninos y cerdos el infarto agudo se establece a partir de los 40 minutos de isquemia y puede desarrollarse entre 8 y 12 horas [Schömig et al., 2005].

El índice de mortalidad y morbilidad por infarto agudo depende de las características del paciente incluyendo los factores de comorbilidad y el tiempo en que se restablece el flujo sanguíneo. Se estima que los pacientes con infarto agudo que pierden el 15% de masa ventricular, tienen riesgo de morir durante los 5 años posteriores al evento isquémico [Ndrepepa et al., 2010].

3. Eventos metabólicos que se desarrollan durante la isquemia

Durante la isquemia severa, en condiciones de baja concentración de O_2 , disminuye la síntesis de ATP proveniente de la fosforilación oxidativa (de 25-27 µmoles/g de peso seco a < 2.0 µmoles/g de peso seco por una hora de isquemia) [Rouslin et al., 1986]. Sesenta segundos sin flujo sanguíneo en el miocardio son suficientes para agotar las reservas de fosfatos de alta energía en forma de creatina fosfato; el aumento en la concentración de AMP durante la isquemia induce la fosforilación de la cinasa activada por AMP (AMPK), que estimula la producción de ATP a través de la vía anaerobia [Dyck et al., 2006; Carvajal y Moreno-Sánchez., 2003; Carvajal et al., 2007].

En la fase temprana de la isquemia, la glucólisis anaerobia se acelera veinte veces. El ATP producido a través de esta vía es utilizado principalmente para mantener la función de los canales iónicos de la membrana plasmática [Kubler te al., 1970; Weiss et al., 1985]. El lactato como producto de la glucólisis anaerobia es eliminado de la célula a través del transportador de monocarboxilatos (MCT-1) si el flujo coronario es >20%; sin embargo, si el flujo es menor durante la isquemia, la pérdida de la perfusión arterial favorece la acumulación del metabolito (~0.8mmol/L) en tan solo 15 minutos de isquemia, contribuyendo a la acidificación del citoplasma celular (pH ~6.6) que puede disminuir hasta pH 5.8 después de los 50 minutos de isquemia [Steenbergen et al., 1978; Gettes et al., 1991; An et al., 2001]. La acumulación de lactato y de protones (H⁺) favorecen la disminución de la actividad de la fosfofructocinasa (PFK1), una enzima limitante en la vía de la glucólisis [Rovetto et al., 1973].

La isquemia severa trae como consecuencia la pérdida del funcionamiento de bombas y canales iónicos membranales. El incremento intracelular de protones H⁺ activa al intercambiador Na⁺/H⁺ que expulsa protones de la célula a costa de incrementar los niveles de Na⁺ intracelular. Este mecanismo y la inactivación de la Na⁺/K⁺ ATPasa (dependiente de ATP) exacerban la carga de sodio citoplasmático. En respuesta a la sobrecarga de Na⁺, el intercambiador Na⁺/Ca²⁺ funciona en reversa expulsando sodio a costa de introducir Ca²⁺ a la célula [Imahashi et al., 2005]. Además, durante la fase de isquemia también disminuye la actividad de la ATPasa de Ca²⁺ tipo 2a (SERCA2a) y por lo tanto la capacidad de recaptura de Ca²⁺ hacia el retículo sarcoplásmico (SR). El calcio del SR se reduce progresivamente lo que favorece a la disminución de la activación del receptor de rianodina (RyR), un componente clave en el acoplamiento excitación-contracción [Fauconnier et al., 2013] (Figura 1).

A nivel subcelular, a pesar de los procesos de daño generados por la ausencia de oxígeno y nutrientes, el pH ácido de la célula mantiene cerrado el poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial (mPTP), un canal no específico de alta conductancia dependiente de voltaje localizado en las mitocondrias, cuya apertura se asocia con muerte por necrosis y apoptosis (Figura 1) [Bernardi et al., 1992; Monassier, 2008].

4. Reperfusión

La restauración oportuna del flujo coronario en la arteria ocluida es requisito indispensable para salvar el miocardio del infarto agudo ya que permite corregir los cambios metabólicos ocurridos durante la isquemia [Boersman et al., 2006]. La guía clínica de intervención coronaria publicada por el ACC/AHA/ESC (*American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association and European Society of Cardiology*) recomienda el uso de anticoagulantes durante la intervención coronaria percutánea primaria para restablecer el flujo sanguíneo del paciente con infarto agudo [Jacobs et al., 2008].

A nivel celular, la reperfusión temprana restablece el pH extracelular debido al lavado de H⁺ y ácido láctico; este evento favorece la actividad del intercambiador Na⁺/H⁺ y por lo tanto la entrada de Na⁺. Tras la reperfusión en el miocardio isquémico con lesión reversible, la función contráctil se recupera una vez restaurados los niveles de ATP. En presencia de oxígeno se reactiva la fosforilación oxidativa; la activación de la AMPK y la consecuente acumulación de ácidos grasos favorece la síntesis de ATP [Dick y Lopaschuk, 2006]. El sodio citosólico comienza a ser regulado por la Na⁺/K⁺ ATPasa o por el intercambiador Na⁺/Ca²⁺ [Piper et al., 2003] y la función de canales iónicos como SERCA y del receptor de rianodina se restauran (Figura 2) [Fauconnier et al., 2013].

5. Daño por reperfusión: Definición

El concepto de daño por reperfusión surgió hace más de 55 años cuando en un modelo canino de infarto experimental fueron detectadas zonas de necrosis independientes a las generadas por el evento isquémico [Jennings et al., 1960].

Actualmente, el daño por reperfusión hace referencia a aquellos cambios metabólicos y estructurales deletéreos que potencialmente pueden producir muerte celular y que se producen como consecuencia directa de la reapertura del segmento epicárdico de la arteria relacionada con el infarto [Rosenkranz et al., 1983; Yellon y Hausenloy, 2007].

Experimentalmente, las tinciones histológicas pueden marcar con precisión el daño por reperfusión y evidenciar que al final del periodo isquémico una gran porción del miocardio infartado es aún viable y que pierde su función durante los primeros minutos de la reperfusión [Heusch, 2013].



Figura 1. Principales eventos metabólicos que se desarrollan durante la isquemia. La imagen describe los cambios metabólicos que se generan en un evento isquémico a causa de la formación y creciemnto de la placa ateromatosa. (1) Las alteraciones en la superficie de una arteria resultan en la reducción del flujo sanguíneo y en consecuencia en la reducción de la disponibilidad de oxígeno y nutrientes. (2) La baja disponibilidad de oxígeno inhibe el metabolismo oxidativo y favorece la acumulación de ácidos grasos en el citoplasma. Bajo esta condición se activa el transporte de glucosa a través de la inserción de los transportadores de glucosa GLUT4. Se activa la glucogenólisis y la vía de la glucólisis se convierte en la principal fuente productora de ATP. (3) La acumulación de lactato y protones (H⁺) provenientes de la hidrólisis del ATP produce acidosis celular. (4) El incremento intracelular de H⁺ activa al intercambiador Na⁺/H⁺; este mecanismo y la inactivación de la Na⁺/K⁺ ATPasa incrementa los niveles de Na⁺ en el citoplasma. (5) Finalmente, en respuesta a la sobrecarga de Na⁺, el intercambiador Na⁺/Ca²⁺ expulsa el sodio a costa de introducir Ca²⁺ a la célula. Las flechas en naranja indican el flujo de los iones; el grosor de la flecha representa la cantidad. Las flechas en negro indican incremento o disminución. FAT, transportador de ácidos grasos; GLUT, transportador de glucosa; AMPK, cinasa activada por adenosina monofosfato; PFK, fosfofructocinasa; mPTP, poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial; RyR, receptor de rianodina; SERCA 2a, ATPasa de Ca²⁺ tipo 2a del retículo sarcoplásmico.

6. Eventos metabólicos y funcionales del daño por reperfusión

La entrada de oxígeno y nutrientes en la arteria previamente ocluida permite el restablecimiento del metabolismo aeróbico. Sin embargo, en muchos casos el aumento en la disponibilidad de ATP y la restauración del pH intracelular favorecen al desarrollo de procesos celulares deletéreos. Si la isquemia es severa (prolongada y con poca perfusión colateral), se genera un gradiente de pH enorme entre los compartimentos intra y extracelular durante la reperfusión, lo que origina un aumento en la concentración de Na⁺ derivado de la actividad del intercambiador Na⁺/H⁺, que no es eficientemente eliminado por la Na⁺/K⁺ ATPasa. En consecuencia se produce un incremento de Ca²⁺ intracelular mediado por el intercambio de Na⁺/Ca²⁺, que aumenta aún más, cuando el pH celular se restablece. Además del Ca²⁺, se acumulan otros mediadores como la trombina, el factor de activación plaquetario, radicales libres y la angiotensina-II; todos ellos asociados a extrasístoles ventriculares, taquicardias ventriculares y ritmo idioventricular acelerado, consecuencias clínicas que favorecen al daño y la muerte celular (Figura 3) [Monassier et al., 1992; Hausenloy et al., 2013].

Durante la reperfusión se producen cuatro procesos celulares principales que favorecen al desarrollo del daño por reperfusión: a) Estrés oxidante, b) sobrecarga de Ca^{2+} , c) apertura del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial y d) inflamación (Figura 3) [Piper et al., 2003].



Figura 2. Reperfusión. La imagen muestra como la reperfusión oportuna corrige los cambios metabólicos deletereos que se echaron andar durante la isquemia. (1) El restablecimeinto del flujo sanguíneo corrige la acidosis extracelular producida durante la isquemia. Este evento favorece la actividad del intercambiador Na⁺/H⁺ y por lo tanto la entrada de sodio. (2) En presencia de oxígeno se reactiva la OxPhos y los ácidos grasos acumulados durante la isquemia favorecen la sísntesi de ATP. (3) En presencia de ATP, el sodio citosólico comienza es regulado por la Na⁺/K⁺ ATPasa o por el intercambiador Na⁺/Ca²⁺. (4) La reperfusión restaura la función de SERCA y RyR. Las flechas en naranja indican el flujo de los iones; el grosor de la flecha representa la cantidad. Las flechas en negro indican incremento o disminución y las flechas discontinuas indican los procesos dependientes de ATP. FAT, transportador de ácidos grasos; GLUT, transportador de glucosa; AMPK, cinasa activada por adenosina monofosfato; PFK, fosfofructocinasa; PTPm, poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial; RyR, receptor de rianodina; SR, retículo sarcoplásmico; SERCA2a, ATPasa de Ca²⁺ del retículo sarcoplásmico tipo 2a; OxPhos, fosforilación oxidativa.

a. Estrés oxidante

La reentrada de sangre oxigenada al tejido isquémico resulta en la producción de especies reactivas de oxígeno (ROS). En 1987, Zweier y colaboradores demostraron por primera vez con mediciones de resonancia paramagnética electrónica que las ROS se producen desde la isquemia ($6.1 \pm 0.4 \mu M$ vs $4.7 \pm 0.5 \mu M$ en controles) y que se elevan y rebasan al sistema antioxidante durante la reperfusión ($11.4 \pm 0.6 \mu M$) [Zweier et al., 1987].

Debido a su naturaleza altamente reactiva, las ROS pueden modificar por oxidación cualquier tipo de biomolécula. El estrés oxidante produce la pérdida de la función del tejido cardiaco vía peroxidación lipídica de membranas, oxidación del DNA, activación de metaloproteinasas de matriz, activación de calpaínas, promueve el no-reflujo y causa la apertura del mPTP [Chen y Zweier, 2014]. El Dr. Roberto Bolli, pionero en el estudio del efecto de las ROS sobre el aparato contráctil de los miocitos, demostró que las ROS son responsables del aturdimiento miocárdico, un daño completamente reversible en presencia de antioxidantes [Bolli et al., 1989; Bolli et al., 1990]. Durante la reperfusión, las ROS son producidas por diferentes enzimas incluyendo la ciclooxigenasa, el citocromo p450, la monoaminooxidasa, la NADPH oxidasa, la xantina oxidasa y los complejos mitocondriales pertenecientes a la cadena transportadora de electrones. Además, se ha demostrado que bajo condiciones de agotamiento de arginina o de tetrahidrobiopterina la óxido nítrico sintasa (NOS) se desacopla y también produce ROS. El estrés oxidante producido durante la reperfusión es generado por células endoteliales a través de la oxidación mitocondrial por la xantina oxidasa; por neutrófilos a través de la NADPH oxidasa y por los miocitos a través de la cadena transportadora de electrones [Zweier and Talukder, 2006].

Las mitocondrias de los miocitos comprenden entre el 30 y 40% del volumen total y generan el \approx 90% de ATP con alta demanda de O₂; por lo tanto, no es difícil pensar en este organelo como la principal fuente productora de ROS en el sistema cardiovascular. Bajo condiciones fisiológicas el transporte de electrones al O₂ está acoplado a la fosforilación oxidativa para la síntesis de ATP. Este

mecanismo depende de un gradiente electroquímico que representa la fuente de generación de ROS mitocondrial. Durante la reperfusión, la disminución de la tasa de fosforilación mitocondrial aumenta la fuga de electrones de los complejos de la cadena transportadora de electrones incrementando la producción de anión superóxido (O_2^{\bullet}) [Chen y Zweier, 2014].

Bajo condiciones fisiológicas, el O_2^{\bullet} es un radical que dismuta a peróxido de hidrógeno (H₂O₂) espontáneamente o a través de una reacción que se lleva a cabo 1000 veces más rápidamente por la superóxido dismutasa (SOD), para luego ser inactivado por la catalasa y producir H₂O y O₂. Las proteínas mitocondriales son ricas en cofactores metálicos como los grupo hemo (en los complejos II, III y IV) y centros hierro azufre (complejo I, II y III) por lo que en un medio altamente oxidante y en presencia de metales de transición, el peróxido de hidrógeno puede oxidarse al altamente reactivo radical hidroxilo ([•]OH) por la reacción de Fenton [Pauslen y Carroll 2010]. Se reporta que el pico máximo en la formación de [•]OH aparece entre los 30 y 90 segundos de haber iniciado la reperfusión [Takemura et al., 1992]. Además, la exposición aguda de las membranas a los radicales altamente reactivos producen la oxidación de la cardiolipina promoviendo alteraciones sobre el ensamble y la actividad de los complejos mitocondriales. Estas modificaciones estructurales contribuye a la fuga de electrones alimentando la producción de ROS y generando un circulo vicioso donde las ROS producen más ROS [Zweier y Talukder, 2006].

b. Sobrecarga de Ca²⁺

Al final de la isquemia, el citosol está cargado de Na⁺, Ca²⁺ y H⁺, y el resultado de la reperfusión tras una isquemia severa es la sobrecarga de Ca²⁺.

Como se describió anteriormente, la normalización del pH extracelular durante la reperfusión crea inicialmente un gradiente de protones a través de la membrana celular promoviendo el intercambio de iones Na⁺/H⁺. Este gradiente no fisiológico induce la acción pasiva inversa del intercambiador Na⁺/Ca²⁺, contribuyendo al aumento de calcio intracelular. La activación de la bomba dependiente de ATP del retículo sarcoplásmico o SERCA, temporalmente puede secuestrar y almacenar el exceso de calcio intracelular; sin embargo, si la cantidad de Ca²⁺ citosólico rebasa la capacidad del retículo sarcoplásmico, inicia un ciclo de liberación y receptación de este ión causando oscilaciones que se propagan como ondas y que se cree facilitan su entrada a la mitocondria; además de favorecer un estado de contracción permanente de las miofibrillas (hipercontractura) [Ndrepepa et al., 2010; Ruiz-Mena et al., 2009].

La alta concentración de iones calcio en el citosol favorece su entrada a la mitocondria a través del uniportador de Ca²⁺ mitocondrial (mCaU), en respuesta al potencial electroquímico mitocondrial ($\Delta\Psi$ m) negativo [Contreras et al., 2010]. La sobrecarga de Ca²⁺ mitocondrial resulta en la despolarización de la membrana interna, la producción de ROS y la apertura del mPTP [Dixon et al., 1990]. Al atenuar la sobrecarga de Ca²⁺ mitocondrial con el bloqueador del uniportador de calcio Ru360, se logra reducir el daño por reperfusión en un modelo *in vivo* [García-Rivas et al., 2006].

c. Apertura del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial (mPTP)

Haworth y Hunter a finales de los 70s describieron por primera vez el poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial, un canal no específico que se forma en los sitios de contacto entre la membrana interna y la membrana externa de la mitocondria y cuya apertura se asocia a necrosis y apoptosis [Hunter et al., 1976]. La composición del mPTP sigue siendo controversial, sin embargo, se reconocen tres componentes principales, el translocador de adenin nucleótidos (ANT), el acarreador de fosfatos (PiC) y la ciclofilina-D (Cyp-D). Hallazgos experimentales más recientes también han demostrado la participación del canal aniónico dependiente de voltaje (VDAC) y de la ATP sintasa o complejo V mitocondrial [Ong et al., 2015].

El mPTP permanece cerrado durante la isquemia debido a las condiciones ácidas; sin embargo, la normalización del pH, la sobrecarga de Ca²⁺, el exceso de ROS, la concentración creciente de fosfato inorgánico (Pi) y el agotamiento de ADP generado durante la reperfusión favorecen su apertura [Yellon et al., 2007]. La apertura del mPTP representa el flujo no selectivo de solutos de ≤ 1.5 kDa a través de la membrana y por lo tanto el colapso del $\Delta \psi m$. Con esto se crea un gradiente osmótico que favorece la entrada de agua a la mitocondria provocando su hinchamiento y bajo condiciones de daño severo, la ruptura de la membrana mitocondrial. Como tal, la inhibición de la apertura del mPTP forma parte de las estrategias terapéuticas contra el daño por reperfusión; ya que el uso de ciclosporina A (CsA) reduce la sensibilidad de la activación del poro durante la reperfusión [Nazareth et al., 1991].

d. Inflamación

La respuesta inflamatoria en la reperfusión es similar a la que se produce en la sepsis, la insuficiencia cardiaca crónica y en el bypass cardiopulmonar [Meldrum et al., 1998, Levine te al., 1990]. Al inicio de la reperfusión diferentes tipos celulares del tejido cardiaco incluyendo células endoteliales, miocitos y macrófagos liberan factores pro inflamatorios como el TNFα. IL-6 e IL-8 que activan y reclutan neutrófilos [Meldrum et al., 1998]. Durante las primeras 6 horas de la reperfusión, los neutrófilos son reclutados en el espacio intravascular del área de riesgo y durante las 24 horas subsiguientes migrarán a través del endotelio hacia la zona del subendocardio dañado [Smith et al., 1998; Chatelain et al., 1987; Zhao et al., 2000]. Una vez activados e infiltrados, los neutrófilos producen grandes cantidades de ROS [Kvietys et al., 2012] y liberan más de 20 proteolíticas incluyendo hidrolasas ácidas, proteasas diferentes enzimas de serina, metaloproteinasas, gelatinasas y colagenasas con actividad catalítica específicas y tiempo de vida media larga para degradar proteínas estructurales del endotelio. Estas enzimas proteolíticas tienen como blanco principal a las enzimas de la matriz extracelular como la elastina, el colágeno, proteoglicanos y glicoproteínas; su degradación trae como consecuencia la pérdida de la vasodilatación endotelial y el desarrollo del fenómeno de no-reflujo [Vinten-Johansen, 2004].



Figura 3. Daño por reperfusión. La imagen muestra los procesos celulares que favorecen el daño por reperfusión: (a) El estrés oxidante, (b) la sobrecarga de Ca²⁺, (c) la apertura del mPTP y (d) la inflamación. (1) Al restablecer el flujo sanguíneo tras una isquemia prolongada, incrementa la disponibilidad de ATP y restablecer el pH intracelular, se favorece a que la apertura del mPTP ocurra. (2) Alteraciones del SR contribuyen a la sobrecarga de Ca²⁺ citosólico y a la hipercontractura. (3) La sobrecarga de Ca²⁺, los ROS y la apertura del mPTP inducen la liberación del citocromo c. (4) La liberación de interleucinas y de TNF α por las células endoteliales inducen el reclutamiento intravascular de neutrófilos. Las flechas en naranja indican el flujo de los iones; el grosor de la flecha representa la cantidad. Las flechas en negro indican incremento o disminución. FAT, transportador de ácidos grasos; GLUT, transportador de glucosa; AMPK, cinasa activada por adenosina monofosfato; PFK, fosfofructocinasa; mPTP, poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial; RyR, receptor de rianodina; SERCA 2a, ATPasa de Ca²⁺ tipo 2a del retículo sarcoplásmico; IL, interleucina; NO• ; óxido nítrico.

7. Consecuencias del daño por reperfusión

Actualmente se reconocen dos consecuencias reversibles y dos irreversibles del daño por reperfusión. Son reversibles las arritmias y el aturdimiento miocárdico, condición que se refiere a la pérdida temporal de la función de las células cardiacas.

Las condiciones irreversibles son la obstrucción vascular o la incapacidad para perfundir al miocardio a nivel vascular que se manifiesta como "no-reflujo" coronario; y el daño letal por reperfusión, el cual se refiere a la muerte adicional de los miocitos viables al final de la isquemia y que puede contribuir hasta con un 50% del tamaño del infarto (IS) [Jennings, 2013; Monassier et al., 1992; Komamura et al., 1994].

a. No-reflujo

El fenómeno de no-reflujo (NR) se define como la pérdida de la perfusión de un segmento coronario sin evidencia angiográfica de obstrucción coronaria epicárdica [Kloner et al., 1974, Galasso te al., 2014]. El NR se considera una complicación en la práctica habitual de la intervención coronaria percutánea primaria cuya incidencia favorece la remodelación miocárdica y la reincidencia de infarto [Resnic et al., 2003]. La zona de no-reflujo se identifica por la presencia de hinchamiento intramural de la vasculatura, adhesión e infiltración de neutrófilos, formación de vesículas pinocíticas, presencia de potentes vasoconstrictores (angiotensina y endotelina), obstrucción microvascular por embolización, coagulación y disminución de óxido nítrico (NO•) [Heusch et al., 2013; Niccoli et al., 2009]. Se ha determinado que 20 minutos de reperfusión son suficientes para producir daño en más del 40% de los capilares [Kloner et al., 1974]. El tratamiento del NR durante la intervención coronaria primaria favorece el flujo colateral y permite que los diferentes tratamientos coadyuvantes contra el infarto agudo lleguen a su blanco tisular. La tromectomía mecánica aplicada en el momento del cateterismo es una terapia contra el no-reflujo, sin embargo, la administración de antiplaquetarios y agentes que aumentan los niveles de NO• en el

corazón reperfundido como la adenosina [Desmet et al., 2011] y el prolame [Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2015] han mostrado efectos benéficos en el sistema cardiovascular.

b. Incremento en el tamaño del infarto (IS)

El tamaño del infarto (IS) resultante de la isquemia y de la reperfusión es el determinante más importante del pronóstico en pacientes que han sobrevivido al evento de infarto agudo al miocardio [Heusch, 2013, Ovize et al., 2010]. La duración de la isquemia, la zona de riesgo y el flujo coronario residual determinan el tamaño del infarto y por lo tanto la posibilidad de reducir el IS con estrategias de protección. En roedores con 60 minutos de isquemia, la posibilidad de reducir el IS con estrategias protectoras es casi nula; en contraste, si la isquemia dura entre 30-40 minutos y se aplica el mismo protocolo de protección, el IS se reduce considerablemente [Skyschally et al., 2009]. La Figura 4 muestra la contribución individual sobre el IS generado por la isquemia, la reperfusión y el daño por reperfusión (expresada en unidades arbitrarias). En el ámbito clínico, el IS puede detectarse con biomarcadores de circulación y técnicas de imagen [Roberts y Sobel, 1987]. Bajo entornos experimentales, el tamaño del infarto se mide con precisión usando el marcador estándar de oro el cloruro de trifeniltetrazolium [Heusch, 2013].

c. Remodelación

La remodelación miocárdica tras la reperfusión esta íntimamente relacionada con los índices de morbilidad y mortalidad post-operatoria en los pacientes con infarto agudo. Independientemente de los factores relacionados con la remodelación, las consecuencias patológicas que la favorecen dependen del tamaño del infarto [Heusch et al., 2014]. La remodelación miocárdica es una respuesta celular del endotelio, los miocitos, el músculo liso, las células intersticiales y de matriz a cambios hemodinámicos, metabólicos e inflamatorios de carácter nocivo.

La remodelación del endotelio vascular contribuye al desarrollo de enfermedades crónicas degenerativas post-operatorias comunes como la ateroesclerosis y la hipertensión [Libby et al., 2011]. Además, durante el proceso de remodelación se llevan a cabo cambios importantes a nivel metabólico que favorecen el establecimiento de enfermedades como la hipertrofia y la falla cardiaca [Heusch et al., 2014].



Figura 4. Tamaño del infarto (IS) en función de la duración de la isquemia y el tiempo de reperfusión. En ausencia de la reperfusión, la isquemia causa la muerte progresiva de la totalidad del tejido cardiaco (línea roja punteada). A pesar de que la reperfusión detiene el proceso de muerte celular por isquemia, también puede producir lesión (línea negra punteada). El resultado neto es el tejido reperfundido con menos muerte celular que la que se produciría en el tejido isquémico sin reperfusión. Terapias de protección cardiaca aplicadas al inicio de la reperfusión limitan el alcance de la lesión por reperfusión e incrementa el efecto de salvamento de la reperfusión (línea azul punteada). El panel inferior muestra imágenes representativas de corazones de rata teñidos con TTC que muestran el porcentaje del tamaño del infarto (zona amarilla) bajo las tres condiciones A) tras una isquemia de 60 minutos y sin reperfusión, B) tras una isquemia de 30 minutos y 60 minutos de reperfusión y C) tras 30 minutos de isquemia, post-acondicionamiento y 60 minutos de reperfusión. Modificado de García -Dorado [García-Dorado y Piper, 2006].

8. Cardioprotección

La cardioprotección es un término que se refiere a las estrategias de origen mecánico o farmacológico dirigidos a reducir o eliminar el daño por reperfusión. Estudios experimentales han identificado en el tejido cardiaco un programa de autoprotección endógeno que al ser activado reduce el tamaño del infarto. Este sistema de protección es sensible a fármacos y a breves ciclos de hipoxia y reoxigenación antes o después de que ocurra la isquemia; incluso, actualmente este programa de cardioprotección mecánica puede ser activado a distancia (acondicionamiento remoto) [Kerendi et al., 2005].

9. Post-acondicionamiento (PostC)

El concepto de post-acondicionamiento (PostC: *postconditioning*) fue introducido por el grupo de Vinten-Johansen quienes con el antecedente de los efectos benéficos del pre-acondicionamiento reportados por Charles Murry, propusieron la aplicación de la misma estrategia mecánica pero al inicio de la reperfusión. Encontraron que tres ciclos de 30 segundos de reperfusión y 30 segundos de reoclusión coronaria después del evento isquémico reducen el IS (Figura 5) [Zhao et al., 2003].

El PostC surgió de la necesidad de proporcionar una estrategia aplicable en la práctica clínica y aunque no se ha definido un protocolo óptimo (el número de episodios y la duración de la intermitencia de reperfusión y reoclusión) el éxito generalizado en el medio experimental consolidó la idea de llevarlo a la práctica clínica. La apertura de la arteria coronaria ocluida por angioplastia percutánea transmural es equivalente a remover la ligadura alrededor de la arteria coronaria en los animales experimentales. Para los pacientes con infarto agudo tratados con angioplastia primaria, el PostC se logra con inflaciones repetidas del globo [Ovize et al., 2010].



10. Efectos del PostC sobre la función celular en el corazón reperfundido

- a. Efecto del pH. La reperfusión ácida inhibe la apertura del mPTP. Se ha reportado que el PostC preserva el pH ácido durante los primeros 3 minutos de la reperfusión [Inserte et al., 2008] y que la reperfusión ácida de 6.4 no tiene efecto benéfico si dura menos de 2 minutos [Rodriguez-Sinovas et al., 2009] o, si supera los 3 minutos [Cohen et al., 2008]. Esto indica que al retrasar la restauración del pH intracelular, se evita la sobrecarga de Na⁺ y se restauran los niveles de ATP; a este fenómeno se suma el hecho de que la actividad de proteasas como las calpainas es baja a pH 6.5 [Zhao et al., 1998].
- b. Homeostasis iónica. El PostC restablece la homeostasis iónica debido a que previene la entrada adicional de Ca²⁺ vía intercambiador Na⁺/Ca²⁺ en su modo inverso durante los primeros 4 minutos de la reperfusión [Inserte et al.,2008], éste efecto puede estar relacionado con la regulación del pH y por lo tanto con la disminución de la concentración de Na⁺ intracelular.
- c. Síntesis de ATP. El post-acondicionamiento preserva los niveles de ATP a través de la glucólisis aerobia y la β -oxidación. Incrementa la hidrólisis de triacilglicerol (TAG),

incrementa la actividad de la AMPK, la glucosa-6-fosfato deshidrogenasa (G6PDH) y provee de equivalentes reductores en forma de NADPH [Prendes et al., 2011].

- d. Sistema antioxidante. El PostC mantiene la relación de glutatión reducido/oxidado (GSH/GSSG) [Arreguín et al., 2012; Prendes et al., 2011] y promueve la activación de Nrf-2 que induce la transcripción de enzimas antioxidantes como la γ-glutamil-cisteína-sintetasa (γ-GCS), glutatión-S-transferasa (GST) y la superóxido dismutasa cobre/zinc (SOD Cu/Zn) [Buelna-Chontal et al., 2014].
- e. Reducción de la apoptosis. El post-acondicionamiento genera resistencia a apoptosis por efecto de la inhibición de la caspasa-3 y -9; además, mantiene la relación Bcl-2/Bax que favorecen un estado antiapoptótico [Sun et al., 2006].

11. Transducción de señales en la cardioprotección del PostC: Vía de cinasas de salvamento contra el daño por reperfusión (RISK)

La protección que deriva del PostC es resultado de la activación de dos principales vías de señalización, la vía de PI3K/Akt y la vía de MEK/ERK1/2. Colectivamente esta señalización es conocida como la vía RISK (RISK: *Reperfusion Injury Salvage Kinase*) [Hausenloy e Yellon, 2004]. Los elementos de RISK incluyen también a la p70S6 cinasa, PKC, PKG, la sintasa de óxido nítrico endotelial (eNOS: *endothelial nitric oxide synthase*) y GSK3β (GSK3β: *glycogen synthase kinase-3β*) [Hausenloy e Yellon, 2006]. Se ha demostrado en diversos estudios que la activación tanto de Akt como de ERK1/2 durante la reperfusión es necesaria para inducir cardioprotección (Figura 6) [Shulman et al., 2002; Tsang et al., 2004].

a. Vía PI3K/Akt

PI3K: PI3K pertenece a una familia de cinasas que se clasifica en tres clases dependiendo de sus características estructurales. PI3K Clase I posee una subunidad catalítica denominada p110 γ , la cual genera fosfatidilinositol-3, 4, 5-trifosfato (PI3,4,5P) que interacciona con múltiples moléculas de señalización. Además, p110 γ es activada directamente por receptores acoplados a proteínas-G (GPCRs) a través de la interacción con la subunidad trimérica G $\alpha\beta\gamma$ [Chang et al., 2007].

Akt/protein kinase B (PKB): Akt es una cinasa efectora que se activa por dos eventos de fosforilación; uno en el dominio de activación, en el residuo de Thr-308 (conformación conocida como AKT1) y otro en la Ser-473 del carboxilo terminal, en el motivo hidrofóbico [Sarbassov et al., 2005].

Se ha demostrado que la activación de la vía canónica PI3K/Akt durante los primeros 15 minutos de reperfusión reduce el IS [Tsang et al., 2004]. También se ha aceptado la participación de la vía PI3K/Akt/mTOR en la cardioprotección, ambas vías confieren protección mitocondrial e inhiben la apoptosis [Zhang et al., 2014]. Además, la fosforilación de Akt favorece la síntesis de NO• y la regulación de los canales de potasio mitocondriales sensibles a ATP (mK⁺_{ATP}). El tratamiento con inhibidores de PI3K bloquea los efectos benéficos del PostC en animales sanos (Figura 6) [Yang et al., 2005].

b. Vía MEK/ERK1/2

MEK: MEK es una cinasa perteneciente al grupo evolutivamente conservado de las MAPKKs. MEK se activa principalmente por la fosforilación de sus dos residuos de serina y su único substrato fisiológico es ERK1/2 [Rose et al., 2010].

ERK1/2: ERK1 de 44kDa (p44) y ERK2 de 42kDa (p42) son MAP cinasas 83% idénticas y por consecuencia son conocidas como ERK1/2. Estas MAP cinasas son activadas por la doble fosforilación de sus residuos de treonina y tirosina (ERK1: Thr-202 y Tyr-204; ERK2: Thr-183 y Tyr-185). ERK 1/2 fosforila más de 100 posibles sustratos celulares y está implicada en la transmisión de las señales extracelulares en vías que inducen diferenciación, desarrollo y apoptosis [Shaul et al., 2007; Ebisuya et al., 2005; Canagarajah et al., 1997].

La fosforilación de ERK1/2 durante los primeros minutos de la reperfusión reduce los procesos de apoptosis y preserva la integridad mitocondrial. La activación de ERK1/2 está asociada con la reducción del 40-50% del IS. La interacción ligando-receptor entre autacoides (adenosina, bradicinina y opioides) y GPCRs promueve la fosforilación de ERK1/2 en sus residuos de treonina y tirosina; esta fosforilación conlleva a la activación de proteínas anti-apoptóticas río abajo como p70S6K. Además, se ha reportado que PHO-ERK1/2 reduce la liberación de citocromo-c (Cyt-c) de la mitocondria, inhibe la apertura del mPTP y mejora el metabolismo energético del miocito a través de la fosforilación de eNOS y GSK3 β en animales sanos [Rahman et al., 2011] como lo muestra la figura 6 y 7.

c. Óxido Nítrico (NO•)

El óxido nítrico (NO•) es un radical libre que induce cardioprotección a través de la guanilato ciclasa (GC) y la activación de PKG y PKC [Yang et al., 2005]. Ambas cinasas activadas por cGMP tienen la capacidad de modular los canales mK^+_{ATP} e inhibir la apertura del mPTP. Además, diversas investigaciones han demostrado que el NO• puede modificar directamente residuos de cisteínas por s-nitrosilación, una modificación postranscripcional que comienza a asociarse fuertemente con cardioprotección (Figura 6) [Sun et al., 2015].



na y opioides) son liberados durante la etapa temprana de la reperfusión; la interacción de estos ligandos con sus receptores tipo GPCR promueven la activación de Ras y RAF, y río abajo la fosforilación de p70S6K, eNOS, PKG y GSK3 β . La activación de los componentes de la vía de RISK resulta en la inhibición de la apertura del mPTP vía GSK3 β . La vía PKG/PKC induce protección mitocondrial a través de la apertura intermitente de los canales mK⁺_{ATP} (mostrado a detalle en la Figura 7). Las abreviaturas se encuentran en en el apartado iii.



Figura 7. Posible mecanismo de protección mitocondrial por efecto del PostC. La producción de GMPc y la subsecuente activación de PKG inhiben la apertura del mPTP a través de la activación de una población de PKCɛ1 ubicada en espacio intermembrnal de la mitocondria. La activación de esta cinasa hipotética induce la apertura de los canales mK^+_{ATP} e incrementa ligeramente los niveles de ROS. Se piensa que la apertura del mPTP. Simultaneamente, los niveles de ROS producidos durante el PostC también promueven la actividad de los canales de potasio y de PKCɛ2. Potencial transmembranal mitocondrial $\Delta\Psi$ m; I, II, III, IV, complejos respiratorios; Cyt-c, citocromo-c. La abreviaturas se encuentran en el apartado iii. Modificado de Costa [Costa y Garlid, 2008].

12. Factores implicados en la pérdida de la cardioprotección por PostC

Condiciones patológicas como la diabetes [Sasaki et al., 2007], la obesidad [Katakam et al., 2007] y la hipertensión [Ebrahim et al.,2007] alteran los beneficios del acondicionamiento mecánico. Los posibles mecanismos implicados en la pérdida de la protección han sido poco estudiados; sin embargo, es razonable predecir que las principales vías de señalización implicadas en inducir supervivencia como lo es la vía de RISK podrían estar alteradas en estos estados patológicos, así como en la hipertrofia cardiaca y la cardiomiopatía dilatada, donde prevalece el estrés oxidante y predominan los cambios en el metabolismo energético (Figura 8).

a. Hipertrofia Cardiaca (CH)

La hipertensión está fuertemente asociada al desarrollo de remodelación hipertrófica ventricular vía sobrecarga de presión. El estrés sobre la pared ventricular izquierda estimula la activación del sistema renina-angiotensina promoviendo el aumento de tamaño de los miocitos, la remodelación intersticial y la activación de metaloproteinasas de matríz [Patel y Mehta, 2012]. En adición, durante la hipertrofia disminuyen los niveles de mRNA de SERCA, RyR y fosfolamban; hay modificaciones en el manejo de Ca^{2+} predisponiendo al desarrollo de patologías valvulares y cardiomiopatía dilatada hipertensiva [Hill, 2003].

b. Cardiomiopatía dilatada (DCM)

La cardiomiopatía dilatada (DCM) es una enfermedad del miocardio asociada al deterioro ventricular. La DCM se define como el acortamiento fraccional del ventrículo izquierdo sistólico (fracción de acortamiento de <25% ó fracción de eyección de 45%) asociada a la dilatación del ventrículo izquierdo (diámetro tele diastólico ventricular izquierdo >117% del valor predicho por la fórmula de Henry) [Destrona et al., 1999; Henry et al., 1980]. La dilatación ventricular generalmente es secundaria a la hipertrofia y manifiesta pérdida del metabolismo oxidativo y de la función de los canales mK^+_{ATP} [Meyer et al., 2013].



Figura 8. Hipertrofia y Cardiomiopatía dilatada. La ilustración muestra la remodelación miocárdica por efecto de la sobrecarga de presión sobre la pared ventricular. Si el estrés hemodinámico persiste, cambios deletereos producirán la pérdida del tejido contractil provocando la dilatación ventricular. LV, ventrículo izquierdo; Ang-II, angiotensina-II; GPCR, receptor acoplado a proteínas G.

III. ANTECEDENTES

El beneficio generalizado derivado de la aplicación del PostC en modelos experimentales apoya su utilización en el esquema general de cardioprotección en pacientes con infarto agudo. Sin embargo, las enfermedades isquémicas se desarrollan como consecuencia de un gran número de etiologías que coexisten con estados patológicos como por ejemplo la hipertensión arterial sistémica asociada a la hipertrofia del ventrículo izquierdo, la aterosclerosis, la diabetes, la falla cardiaca y el envejecimiento, que potencialmente pueden modificar el efecto benéfico de la terapia de cardioprotección [Peart y Headrick, 2009; Lecour et al., 2014].

Se sabe que bajo condiciones de co-morbilidad, la expresión y actividad de los componentes de la vía de RISK está alterada [Lecour et al.,2014]. En este sentido, se ha demostrado que en el envejecimiento PKC está presente pero su capacidad de translocación está reducida [Takayama et al., 2001]. Además, en un modelo de ratas con resistencia a la insulina se ha observado que la cantidad de canales mK⁺_{ATP} es similar a la de animales sanos, sin embargo, el estrés oxidante que persiste en la diabetes reduce la función del canal [Katakam et al., 2007]. Ratas con síndrome metabólico (WOKW: *Wistar-Ottawa-Karlsburg W*) pierden por completo la capacidad de protección por PostC debido a la incapacidad de activar a ERK1/2 [Wagner et al., 2008]; de hecho, se han identificado alteraciones en la activación de esta cinasa en el miocardio diabético y envejecido [Pryzklenk et al., 2008]. Adicionalmente, en un modelo de obesidad (ratones mutantes *ob/ob*, deficientes de leptina), la pérdida de la función de ERK1/2 se atribuye a la alta actividad de fosfatasas [Bouhidel et al., 2008]. En contraste, animales con hipertrofia o hipertensión mantienen la protección a través de la vía RISK, mientras que ratas diabeticas (*New Zealand genetically hypertensive rats*) con post-acondicionamiento no recuperan la función ni los niveles de PHO-ERK1/2 [Przyklenk et al., 2011].

A pesar de las posibles alteraciones sobre la actividad de los componentes de la vía señalización de RISK, las cinasas también pueden amplificar la señal a través de una gran variedad de interacciones con componentes alternos a su vía canónica. Al respecto, se sabe que la activación en paralelo de PI3K/Akt y MEK/ERK1/2 durante el PostC converge sobre blancos río abajo comunes. En este sentido, se ha propuesto que la ausencia en la actividad de alguno de los componentes de la vía de RISK, potencialmente pueden generar puntos de convergencia entre ambas vías para conservar el efecto de cardioprotección. De hecho, Hausenloy y Yellon demostraron que p70S6K es un punto de convergencia entre PI3K/Akt y MEK/ERK1/2 y que estas dos vías interactúan de tal manera que inhibir cualquiera de ellas estimula la actividad de la otra vía en respuesta compensatoria, asegurando que la señal sea ejecutada [Hausenloy et al., 2004].

Es claro que la tolerancia al daño por reperfusión y los efectos del post-acondicionamiento se modifican en presencia de factores de riesgo cardiovascular. Para determinar los cambios relacionados con la remodelación del miocardio, las vías PI3K/Akt y MEK/ERK1/2 fueron analizadas en este trabajo.

IV. JUSTIFICACIÓN

El beneficio generalizado del PostC en el ámbito experimental consolidó la idea de llevarlo a la práctica clínica; sin embargo, los resultados obtenidos hasta la fecha son inconclusos y poco alentadores. De acuerdo con la Sociedad Europea de Cardiología (*European Society of Cardiology* (ESC) *Working Group* (WG) *Cellular Biology of the Heart Position Paper* 2014) los factores de riesgo cardiovascular o comorbilidades afectan la eficacia de las terapias contra el daño por reperfusión. Por lo tanto, debido al potencial terapéutico que tiene el PostC es de interés evaluar si esta estrategia preserva los efectos benéficos de protección en corazones con hipertrofia ventricular y con cardiomiopatía dilatada hipertensiva.

Tomando como base lo antes mencionado y con el fin de contribuir al estudio de la integración de señales intracelulares que confieren protección miocárdica contra el daño por reperfusión, planteamos investigar primero si el PostC confiere cardioprotección en un modelo de hipertrofia experimental y que deriva en cardiomiopatía dilatada; segundo, si hay cambios en la activación de las vías canónicas de señalización de PI3K/Akt y MEK/ERK1/2 y finalmente cuál es el papel de estas cinasas sobre la función mitocondrial, particularmente sobre el mPTP, que es el efector final de muerte celular en el daño por reperfusión.
V. HIPÓTESIS

Si la intervención del post-acondicionamiento (PostC) activa la vía de señalización RISK para evitar el daño por reperfusión en corazones con infarto agudo al miocardio, entonces la presencia y activación de MEK/ERK1/2 en corazones con hipertrofia estable y en aquellos corazones que hayan evolucionado a cardiomiopatía dilatada hipertensiva, garantizará la efectividad de la maniobra del PostC cuando los corazones con remodelación severa se encuentren ante un evento de isquemia aguda.

VI. OBJETIVOS

1. Objetivo general

Evaluar el efecto del post-acondicionamiento y el papel de MEK/ERK1/2 en dos estados de remodelación miocárdica patológica por efecto de la hipertensión: en hipertrofia cardiaca (CH) y en corazones con cardiomiopatía dilatada (DCM).

2. Objetivos particulares

En modelo aislado Langendorff:

- a. Determinar los niveles basales de ERK1/2 y de las principales cinasas involucradas en la cardioprotección en corazones CH y DCM
- b. Evaluar el efecto del PostC en corazones CH y DCM
- c. Determinar la importancia de la vía de ERK1/2 en corazones CH y DCM
- d. Obtener la cinética de activación de ERK1/2 en corazones DCM
- e. Analizar la posible asociación de ERK1/2 con proteínas blanco para inducir cardioprotección en corazones DCM

En corazones DCM en modelo in vivo:

- a. Determinar el papel de ERK1/2 en la señalización de cardioprotección del PostC
- b. Determinar la posible asociación de ERK1/2 con blancos mitocondriales para inducir cardioprotección

VII. MATERIAL Y MÉTODOS

Esta investigación se llevó a cabo conforme la Guía para el cuidado y uso de animales de laboratorio publicado por el Instituto Nacional de Salud de Estados Unidos (US-NIH: *United States National Institutes of Health*) (NIH *publication* 85-23,1985) y fue aprobado por el comité de ética del Instituto Nacional de Cardiología I. Ch. El trabajo experimental ha seguido las normas de la Norma Oficial Mexicana para el uso y cuidado de los animales de laboratorio (NOM-062-ZOO-1999) y para la eliminación de los residuos biológicos (NOM-087-ECOL-1995).

1. Modelo experimental CH y DCM

Bombas osmóticas (Alzet Osmotic pumps, Durect Corporation, Cupertino Palo Alto, CA) con angiotensina-II (Ang-II) humana (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis OM) fueron implantadas quirúrgicamente en el área escapular de ratas Wistar macho de 400-450g. Grupo hipertrofia cardiaca (CH): se perfundieron 320 ng • kg⁻¹• min⁻¹ de Ang-II durante 7 días. Grupo cardiomiopatía dilatada (DCM): la perfusión de Ang-II fue de 435 ng•kg⁻¹•min⁻¹ durante 14 días. Los grupos Sham-CH y Sham-DCM se refieren a los animales experimentales que cursaron por el mismo procedimiento quirúrgico pero sin perfusión de Ang-II.

2. Marcadores de remodelación cardiaca

La presión sistólica (SP) se evaluó diariamente mediante un método no invasivo, conectando el transductor de pulso a la cola del roedor (Narco Biosystems, Austin Texas). Al final del tratamiento los corazones y pulmones de todos los grupos experimentales se pesaron y se estableció la relación entre peso del corazón/peso corporal (HW/BW) y peso del pulmón/ peso corporal (LW/BW). Se realizaron análisis histológicos utilizando la técnica de hematoxilina-eosina (H&E) y se determinaron los niveles de metaloproteinasa de matriz tipo 2 (MMP-2). Adicionalmente, se realizaron mediciones de ecocardiografía y análisis de perfusión por SPECT (SPECT).

a. Análisis por Ecocardiografía

Para el análisis de estructura y función ventricular se obtuvieron imágenes de ecocardiografía mediante un ecocardiografo Sonos 55000 (Koninlijke Philips Electronics, Eindhoven, The Netherlands) y un transductor de 12-MHZ. Las imágenes fueron obtenidas en el eje largo y corto paraesternal de ratas anestesiadas. Se realizó ecocardiografía bidimensional en modo-M guiada y las determinaciones se realizaron al menos en 3 latidos por cada rata. Las medidas de la cavidad y el grosor de la pared del ventrículo izquierdo fueron obtenidas para determinar la fracción de eyección (EF) y la fracción de acortamiento (FS) de acuerdo a las siguientes fórmulas: %EF=[(EDV-ESV/EDV) X 100] y %FS=[(LVDd-LVSd/LVDd) X 100] [Wandt et al., 1999]

b. Análisis histológico H&E

El corazón se cortó en segmentos de 0.25cm de ancho que fueron fijados por inmersión en una solución de paraformaldehído al 4%, deshidratados y embebidos en parafina. Secciones delgadas de tejido de 2µm fueron teñidas con hematoxilina y eosina (H&E) y analizadas con un microscopio de luz Leica (Cambridge, UK). En los cortes de corazón, se analizaron

los perfiles histológicos de nueve campos 10X seleccionados al azar por corazón de rata (n=6 por grupo) y se registró el tamaño de la pared del ventrículo izquierdo.

c. Evaluación por SPECT

La perfusión miocárdica de animales CH y DCM se determinó por tomografía computarizada de emisión de monofotones, SPECT. Las ratas fueron anestesiadas con pentobarbital sódico vía intraperitoneal (60mg/kg^{-1}) y recibieron un dosis de ²⁰¹Tl (150μ Ci) vía intravenosa. Después de 15 minutos de estabilización se adquirieron 32 proyecciones de 128X128 pixeles con una gamma-cámara equipada con 36 tubos fotomultiplicadores dispuestos para una visión de campo de 370 X 370 mm (Milenio MPR/MPS gamma-camera; General Electric). La distribución en la fase de reposo fue adquirida durante 54 minutos. Las proyecciones se transfirieron y almacenaron en formato DICOM en una estación de procesamiento (Xeleris 2.1753; GE Healthcare) y las imágenes fueron procesadas con el software SPECT *Quantitative Gated SPECT/Quantitative Perfusion SPECT*. El algoritmo de reconstrucción iterativa fue OSEM (Ordered Subsets Expectation Maximization) y el filtro Butterworth fue utilizado para el filtrado de los cortes. La resolución espacial de las imágenes fue de 3X3mm.

3. Preparación de corazón aislado: Langendorff

Los animales CH y DCM fueron anestesiados vía intraperitoneal con 40mg/kg de pentobarbital sódico en presencia de heparina sódica (10 U/kg). Minutos después se ingresó a la pared abdominal y se seccionó por la línea del tórax hasta el cartílago xifoides. Posteriormente, se realizó una toracotomía aislando el segmento proximal de la aorta para retirar el corazón del animal. En seguida, los corazones fueron montados y perfundidos de manera retrograda vía aorta en el aparato de perfusión de Langendorff [Langendorff, 1895] con un flujo constante de 12 ml/min con medio Krebs-Henseleit (4.3 mM de glucosa a una atmósfera de 95% de $O_2 y 5\%$ de CO_2 a 37 ⁰C) [Krebs et al., 1932]. El trabajo cardiaco (TC) de los corazones experimentales aislados fue monitoreado introduciendo un balón de látex en el ventrículo izquierdo al que se conectó un transductor de presión (Figura 9A).

a. Protocolos experimentales: isquemia/reperfusión y PostC.

Los grupos experimentales CH y DCM se dividieron en 7 subgrupos de 12 ratas cada uno para evaluar los siguientes protocolos: perfusión (P), isquemia/reperfusión (I/R), post-acondicionamiento (PostC), post-acondicionamiento más inhibidor U0126 (PostC+U), post-acondicionamiento más inhibidor LY294002 (PostC+LY), perfusión más U0126 (P+U), perfusión más LY294002 (P+LY). Adicionalmente, nueve subgrupos fueron formados con el objeto de evaluar la cinética de activación de ERK1/2: estabilización (S₂₀), a los 5 minutos de isquemia (I₅), a los 20 minutos de isquemia (I₂₀) y a los 5, 10 y 60 minutos después de la reperfusión con y sin PostC (I/R₅, I/R₁₀, I/R₆₀, PostC₅, PostC₁₀ y PostC₆₀ respectivamente). Todos los protocolos probados en el sistema de Langendorff se resumen en la figura 9A. **Isquemia:** Se produjo isquemia total con duración de 30 minutos, cerrando la perilla del flujo que alimenta con medio Krebs-Henseleit al corazón en el sistema de Langendorff.

PostC: La maniobra de post-acondicionamiento consistió en la aplicación de 5 ciclos de reperfusión y reoclusión con 30 segundos de duración cada uno. Después de la aplicación de los ciclos, el corazón se reperfundió durante 60 minutos. Además, el tiempo de estabilización se utilizó alternativamente para inhibir a la cinasa ERK 1/2 con 500 nM del compuesto U0126 o a PI3K con 500 nM de LY294002 (Figura 9A).

4. Modelo de corazón in vivo

Treinta y dos ratas DCM fueron intervenidas con una incisión en la línea media cervical para realizar una traqueotomía. Los roedores fueron ventilados mecánicamente a una tasa de 60 respiraciones por minuto con volumen de 1ml/100g de peso corporal. Después de la traqueotomía, se midieron parámetros hemodinámicos con un catéter de presión-volumen SPR-869 Mikro-Tip (Millar Instruments, Houston, TX). Los registros de electrocardiograma fueron obtenidos usando los tres electrodos estándar (Figura 9B).

a. Protocolo experimental

Los animales DCM fueron divididos en 4 subgrupos para la evaluación de los protocolos: perfundidos (P), isquemia/reperfusión (I/R), post-acondicionamiento (PostC) y post-acondicionamiento más U0126 (PostC+U).

Isquemia: Se realizó una oclusión en la arteria coronaria descendente izquierda (CAO) con una sutura de nylon 6-0. La oclusión genera la isquemia localizada del ventrículo izquierdo y se logró apretando el nylon alrededor de la arteria durante 5 minutos (Figura 10).

PostC: El post-acondicionamiento consistió en la aplicación de tres ciclos de reperfusión de 30 segundos y 30 segundos de reoclusión inmediatamente después del evento isquémico (Figura 10).

5. Determinación del tamaño del infarto (IS)

Corazones de los diferentes grupos experimentales se congelaron a -30° C y se cortaron en rebanadas de aproximadamente 3mm. Las rebanadas se incubaron en una solución de cloruro de trifeniltetrazolio (TTC) al 1% (w/v) con buffer de fosfatos pH 7.4 durante 25 minutos a 37°C. Al finalizar la incubación, los cortes del corazón se montaron entre dos placas de vidrio para hacer el análisis de la tinción diferencial entre las zonas sanas y las zonas de infarto en el corazón.

6. Preparación de homogenados tisulares

El ventrículo izquierdo fue extraído y congelado a -70°C. El tejido se homogenizó con un politrón Brinkmann Modelo PT 2000 (Westbury, NY, USA) en una solución amortiguadora RIPA pH8.0 (NaCl 150mM, TRIS-HCl 50mM, IGEPAL 0.5%, EGTA 5mM, NP-40 1%, MgCl₂ 1mM, cocktail anti-proteasa). Los homogenados se centrifugaron a 3,000g y se conservó la fracción del sobrenadante. En los sobrenadantes se determinaron diferentes proteínas de interés para esta investigación (MMP-2, MEK1/2, ERK1/2, PHO-ERK1/2, PI3K, PHO-PI3K, Akt, PHO-Akt, GSK β , caveolina, eNOS, etc). La concentración de proteína de los homogenados se determinó de acuerdo al método descrito por Lowry et al (1951).

7. Evaluación de ERK1/2 y PHO-ERK1/2

a. Activación de ERK1/2

Cantidades equivalentes de proteína del ventrículo izquierdo $(100\mu g)$ fueron separadas por SDS-PAGE y transferidas a membranas de floruro de polivinilideno. La cinética de activación de ERK1/2 fue obtenida a partir de muestras tomadas a diferentes tiempos de la reperfusión (Figura 10A).

b. Efecto de U0126 en el PostC

Los corazones de los grupos PostC+U recibieron la perfusión de 0.5 mM del inhibidor U0126 (Cell Signalling Technology) un inhibidor específico de la cinasa MEK. U0126 fue perfundido durante la maniobra del PostC y durante toda la reperfusión. Al final del experimento, los corazones fueron congelados rápidamente para determinar la relación ERK1/2/PHO-ERK1/2 por la técnica de electrotransferencia tipo western blot.

c. Niveles de ERK1/2 y PHO-ERK1/2 en fracciones mitocondriales

Cantidades equivalentes de proteína mitocondrial (100µg) fueron separadas por SDS-PAGE para analizar por técnica de electrotransferencia tipo Western Blot la presencia de PHO-ERK1/2 en las fracciones mitocondriales.

8. Aislamiento y purificación de mitocondrias

Al término del periodo de isquemia/reperfusión, los corazones fueron desmontados para obtener las mitocondrias en solución Sacarosa-Tris-EGTA helada (sacarosa 250 mM, Tris-Na 10 mM, EGTA 1mM) pH 7.3 en presencia de subtisilina A. Posteriormente, se obtuvieron las fracciones mitocondriales por centrifugación diferencial como lo reportaron Chávez et al. (1989). La concentración de proteína fue cuantificada por el método de Biuret.

9. Determinación del potencial de membrana mitocondrial

La determinación cuantitativa se hizo mediante la distribución de tetrafenilfosfonio $[H^3]$ TPP⁺. Se resuspendieron 2mg de proteína en 0.5 ml de medio KME (K₂HPO₄ 5mM, succinato 10mM, rotenona 1µM y $[H^3]$ TPP⁺ 0.8µm) y se incubaron durante 4 minutos. Se adicionó ADP 10mM al

medio e inmediatamente se centrifugó a 14000 rpm por 10 min a 4°C en una microcentrífuga. Al término se tomaron 150µl del sobrenadante y se resuspendió el botón en el mismo volumen de una solución de SDS al 0.5%. [Rottenberg, 1984]. El potencial transmembranal se calculó de acuerdo a la ecuación de Nernst, considerando los coeficientes de partición reportados para el TPP⁺ [Rottenberg, 1984]

 $\Delta \Psi = RT/ZF \ln (R_C V_O - K_O) / (V_i + K_i) a 30^{\circ}C \text{ es igual a}$ $\Delta \Psi = 60mV \log (R_C V_O - K_O) / (V_i + K_i) \text{ donde}$

 R_{C} = La relación entre el contenido del catión en las mitocondrias y en el medio.

 V_{O} = volumen del medio externo

 V_i = volumen de la matriz mitocondrial (1µl • mg de proteína)

 K_0 = Coeficiente de partición interno del TPP⁺ (7.9 µl • mg de proteína)

 K_i = Coeficiente de partición externo del TPP⁺ (14.3 µl • mg de proteína)

10. Transporte de Ca²⁺ mitocondrial

Los cambios en la permeabilidad de las mitocondrias se evaluaron mediante la medición de la dinámica del Ca²⁺ mitocondrial. La retención y liberación de calcio mitocondrial se evaluó mediante espectrofotometría en un espectro doble haz a 675-685 nm utilizando el colorante metalocrómico arsenazo III (50µM). Se utilizaron 2.8mL de un medio con 125 mM de KCl, 10mM de Hepes y 3mM de fosfato inorgánico (Pi) pH7.3, complementado con 200µM de ADP, 2µM de rotenona y 100µM de CaCl₂. La reacción se inició mediante la adición de 2mg de mitocondrias íntegras [Kendrick, 1976].

11. Oxidación de proteínas mitocondriales

La oxidación de proteínas mitocondriales se determinó mediante OxyBlotTM (OxyBlot Kit; CHEMICON, Temecula, CA). Los residuos carbonilo de las proteínas modificados por oxidación son derivatizados a 2,4-dinitrofenilhidrazona (DNP-hydrazone) por la reacción con DNPH. Las membranas PVDF se incubaron durante 24 horas a 4°C con anticuerpos específicos que identifican a las proteínas con la fracción DNP.

12. Determinación de fosforilación de proteína mitocondrial

Las proteínas fosforiladas fueron detectadas directamente en geles usando un kit de tinción (GelCode® phosphoprotein staining Kit, Pierce Chemical, Rockford, IL).

13. Determinación de la translocación de ERK1/2 a la mitocondria

Para determinar la translocación de ERK1/2 citosólica hacia las membranas mitocondriales utilizamos la estrategia experimental de Quinlan et al. (2008) empleada para purificar complejos multimoleculares de señalización con modificaciones menores. Brevemente, las mitocondrias se purificaron en gradientes de 40-60% de Percoll y se obtuvieron dos fracciones, una fracción de alta densidad que contiene mitocondrias purificadas y una fracción de baja densidad que se reporta contiene moléculas de señalización. El grado de purificación de las moléculas señal (SM) se evaluó

mediante la medición del enriquecimiento de caveolina y la disminución del translocador ANT. En las moléculas señal y en las fracciones citosólicas se determinó el contenido de ERK1/2 y PHO-ERK1/2.

14. Análisis estadístico

Todos los datos se expresan como la media \pm SD. Los datos de los valores hemodinámicos y de otras determinaciones dependientes del tiempo fueron comparadas por mediciones repetidas ANOVA seguidas por análisis post hoc. Los análisis de una sola variable como el IS fueron comparados por ANOVA de una sola vía seguida por la prueba de Duncan. P<0.05 fue considerado estadísticamente diferente.



Figura 9. Esquema simplificado del sistema de Langendorff y del modelo de corazón *in vivo.* A) Muestra el sistema de Langendorff a presión y flujo constante. El corazón es canulado vía aorta y perfundido en forma retrógada dentro de un compartimento que lo mantiene a 37°C. La presión del ventrículo izquierdo (LV) se obtiene a través de la inserción del transductor de presión dentro de la cavidad ventricular. La bomba peristáltica administra el medio de perfusión a flujo y presión constante (12ml/min). Todo el sistema de tubería y cámaras estan contenidos dentro de una cobertura para mantener el medio de perfusión a 37 °C. B) En el sistema de corazón *in vivo*, los animales son ventilados mecánicamente y los parámetros hemodinamicos son obtenidos a través de un catéter de presión-volumen SPR-869 Mikro-Tip. El electrocardiograma (ECG) es obtenido con los electrodos para roedores ADinstruments.



Figura 10. Protocolo experimental. A) Protocolo experimental empleado para el modelo de corazón aislado en el sistema de Langendorff. B) Protocolo probado en el modelo de corazón *in vivo*. P, perfusión; I/R, isquemia/reperfusión; PostC, post-acondicionamiento; PostC+U, post-acondicionamineto + 500nM de U0126; Post-C+LY, post-acondicionamiento + 500nM de LY294002; P+U, perfusión + 500nM de U0126; P+LY, perfusión + 500nM de LY294002; CAO, oclusión de la arteria coronaria izquierda; S, estabilización; I, isquemia.

VIII. RESULTADOS

1. Modelo de Hipertrofia Cardiaca (CH) y Cardiomiopatía dilatada (DCM): Marcadores de Remodelación cardiaca

Al final del tratamiento con angiotensina-II, el análisis histológico de los corazones del grupo CH reveló engrosamiento de la pared ventricular izquierda y reducción del radio de la cavidad ventricular; además las miofibrillas fueron de mayor tamaño en el grupo CH que las miofibrillas del grupo Sham (Figura 12A). El grupo de hipertrofia cardiaca incrementó la presión sistólica (168 \pm 9 mmHg en el grupo CH vs. 109 \pm 10 mmHg en el grupo Sham). La relación HW/BW fue estadísticamente mayor que la del grupo Sham (2.8 \pm 0.4 g/kg vs. 4.6 \pm 0.2 g/kg) mientras que la relación LW/BW no mostró cambios (Tabla1).

En el grupo DCM aumentó la presión arterial sistólica de 109 ± 10 mmHg a 219 ± 14 mmHg. El grupo DCM perdió peso corporal (445 ± 13.2 vs. 221 ± 13 g en el grupo Sham) durante los 14 días de tratamiento, así como masa ventricular (Figura 12A). El peso del corazón (HW/BW) incrementó y en la relación LW/BW se observó una tendencia a incrementar, sin embargo no hubo cambios significativos (Tabla1).

a. SPECT

El análisis por SPECT de los valores obtenidos por la retención de cloruro de talio-201 (²⁰¹Tl), reveló alteraciones en la perfusión ventricular de los animales con DCM mientras que el grupo Sham y CH no se mostraron cambios en la perfusión ventricular (Figura 12B).

b. Ecocardiografía

Las imágenes obtenidas por ecocardiografía mostraron cambios importantes en los corazones con hipertrofia cardiaca así como en el grupo DCM. En el grupo CH, el grosor del septo interventricular (IVS), el LVDd y LVSd presentaron una tendencia a aumentar, sin embargo no hubo cambios importantes en la fracción de eyección (EF) ni en la fracción de acortamiento (FS) con respecto al grupo Sham. El grupo DCM perdió función sistólica con un incremento del 28% en LVSd y la reducción del 25% en la fracción de eyección en comparación con el grupo Sham (67 \pm 14% vs 88 \pm 12%; P<0.05; Tabla1, Figura 13A).

c. Péptido natriurético atrial (ANP) y metaloproteinasa de matriz-2 (MMP-2)

Diversos estudios han demostrado que durante la hipertrofia cardiaca y la cardiomiopatía dilatada incrementan los niveles de metaloproteinasas [Zhang et al., 2015]. En particular niveles elevados de MMP-2 han sido asociados con cardiomiopatía dilatada. En el grupo CH y DCM incrementaron los niveles de MMP-2 (Figura 11A). Adicionalmente, los niveles de péptido natriurético atrial (ANP), un marcador positivo de falla cardiaca se observó en el grupo DCM (Figura 11B).

En general, el análisis en conjunto de los datos sugieren que la administración de Ang-II a las dosis empleadas generan hipertensión, hipertrofia del ventrículo izquierdo (grupo CH) y que su progresión produce pérdida de la función sistólica (grupo DCM).

2. Niveles basales de PHO-PI3K, PHO-Akt, PHO-MEK, PHO-ERK1/2 en ventrículos de corazones CH y DCM

El contenido basal de proteína total de PI3K, Akt, MEK y ERK1/2 no cambió entre los grupos. PHO-Akt, PHO-MEK y PHO-ERK1/2 mantuvieron niveles similares en el grupo CH y DCM con respecto al grupo Sham; sin embargo, el grupo DCM mostró una reducción significativa en el contenido de PHO-PI3K con respecto al grupo Sham y CH (P<0.001; Figura 13B).

3. Efecto del post-acondicionamiento sobre la función cardiaca en corazones Sham, CH y DCM

Corazón aislado: Sistema de Langendorff

El análisis de la función cardiaca de corazones CH durante 110 minutos de perfusión mostró un incremento significativo en el doble producto al inicio y durante el experimento $(32,914 \pm 1,705 \text{ mmHg x latidos x min}^{-1})$ comparado con los corazones Sham $(21,711 \pm 186 \text{ mmHg x latidos x min}^{-1})$. Ambos grupos, Sham y CH perdieron progresivamente el doble producto durante en el protocolo de I/R; mientras que bajo el protocolo de PosC la función cardiaca se mantuvo tras la isquemia y la reperfusión (Figura 14 A y B).

En las preparaciones DCM, se observó una pérdida del 52% del doble producto en el protocolo de perfusión (de 32, 101 ± 3 , 890 mmHg x latidos x min⁻¹ a 16, 604 ± 1 , 847 mmHg x latidos x min⁻¹) revelando la sensibilidad del tejido y por lo tanto mayor susceptibilidad al daño por reperfusión. Sin embargo, el PostC preservó la función cardiaca durante los 60 minutos de reperfusión (Figura 14A).

- a. Efecto del PostC sobre el tamaño del infarto en corazones CH y DCM: De acuerdo con los datos obtenidos del análisis de los corazones con TTC, el IS después de la isquemia y la reperfusión (I/R) fue de 36 ± 3% en el grupo Sham, 38 ± 2.4% en el grupo CH y 40 ± 2.4 % en el grupo DCM. El PostC redujo significativamente el tamaño del infarto (73% en Sham, 69% en CH y 71% en corazones DCM; Figura 16 A, B, C).
- b. Efecto del PostC sobre la activación de ERK 1/2 en corazones CH y DCM: El contenido de ERK1/2 y PHO-ERK1/2 en los corazones CH no mostró cambios relevantes entre los protocolos I/R y PostC (Figura 16E); mientras que en el grupo DCM, en el protocolo de I/R disminuyeron los niveles de PHO-ERK1/2 y se mantuvieron en el protocolo PostC (Figura 16F).

4. Efecto de la inhibición de ERK1/2 y PI3K en la cardioprotección por PostC en corazones CH y DCM

a. Efecto del compuesto U0126 y LY294002 sobre la activación de ERK1/2 y PI3K en corazones CH y DCM: Para evaluar el papel de la vía de MEK/ERK1/2 y la vía de PI3K/Akt, empleamos inhibidores específicos de ambas vías. El inhibidor específico de MEK1/2, el compuesto U0126 (U) fue administrado durante el protocolo del PostC y durante toda la reperfusión; para determinar la importancia de la vía de PI3K, se perfundió el compuesto LY294002 (LY) de la misma forma. La cardioprotección se

mantuvo sin modificación en corazones Sham tratados con U o con LY (Figura 15B). El doble producto de los corazones CH disminuyó parcialmente tras la administración de U y LY (16,036 ± 4, 331 mmHg x latidos x min⁻¹ en corazones PostC+U y 19, 017 ± 1, 605 mmHg x latidos x min⁻¹ en corazones PostC+LY después de 60 minutos de reperfusión; Figura 15B). En el grupo DCM, el protocolo PostC+U produjo cambios deletéreos en la función cardiaca similares a los observados bajo el protocolo de I/R (3, 813 ± 2, 128 mmHg x latidos x min-1 vs 1, 056 ± 744 mmHg x latidos x min-1; Figura 15B).

- b. Efecto de U y LY sobre el tamaño del infarto en corazones Sham, CH y DCM: Ninguno de los inhibidores revirtió la disminución en el tamaño del infarto en corazones Sham o CH post-acondicionados. Sin embargo, la administración de U0126 en el grupo DCM con PostC incrementó el tamaño del infarto ($34 \pm 3\%$ en PostC+U vs $12 \pm 3\%$ en PostC; Figura 17C).
- c. Efecto de U y LY sobre la activación de ERK1/2: Después de haber observado la pérdida progresiva del doble producto en los corazones DCM post-acondicionados así como el incremento del IS en los corazones tratados con U0126, determinamos por western blot los posibles cambios en los componentes de la vía canónica de MEK/ERK1/2 (Figura 18A). No observamos cambios en la actividad de las proteínas río debajo de MEK1/2, incluyendo a p70S6K (Figura 18B). Después relacionamos el efecto funcional (doble producto) con el nivel de fosforilación de la cinasa ERK1/2. Observamos una clara disminución en los niveles de fosforilación de la cinasa en los corazones DCM bajo el protocolo PostC+U. La función cardiaca de los corazones DCM correlacionó con los niveles de PHO-ERK1/2. También confirmamos que el inhibidor de PI3K no disminuye el contenido de PHO-ERK1/2 (Figura 19).
- d. Efecto de U y LY sobre la activación de PI3K/Akt: Aunque ya habíamos observado que los niveles basales de PHO-PI3K eran bajos en corazones DCM (Figura 13B) y que la inhibición de su inhibidor no evitaba el efecto protector del PostC (Figura 15C), decidimos confirmar si efectivamente se estaba disminuyendo la fosforilación de PI3K en estas condiciones. Los western blot fueron sobreexpuestos y así logramos observa que los niveles de PI3K permanecen sin cambios en los grupos P, I/R, PostC y PostC+U; sin embargo, PHO-PI3K fue sensible a la administración de LY (Figura 20A). También analizamos el contenido y la activación del sustrato de PI3K: Akt y PHO-Akt. Interesantemente, observamos aumento en la activación de Akt en corazones PostC, que disminuyó notablemente tanto en presencia de LY, como del inhibidor de MEK1/2 (Figura 20B).

5. Cinética de activación de ERK1/2 en corazones DCM

Para determinar el tiempo de activación de ERK1/2 en corazones DCM post-acondicionados, se obtuvieron muestras de los corazones I/R y PostC a los 5 y 20 minutos de isquemia, y a los 5, 10 y 60 minutos de la reperfusión. Los niveles de PHO-ERK1/2 se conservaron constantes durante el periodo de estabilización y durante el inicio de la isquemia. A los 20 minutos de isquemia, los niveles de ERK1/2 fosforilada drásticamente disminuyeron y permanecen reducidos durante toda la reperfusión (Figura 21A). En los corazones DCM bajo el protocolo de PostC, la reactivación de

ERK1/2 se observó a los 10 minutos de reperfusión y se mantuvo así durante los 60 minutos (Figura 21B).

6. Cinética de activación de Akt en corazones DCM

Debido a que Akt mostró actividad independiente de la fosforilación de PI3K, decidimos determinar el tiempo de activación de Akt bajo los mismos tiempos a los que se determinó ERK1/2. Observamos que la fosforilación de Akt bajo el protocolo I/R disminuye desde el minuto veinte de la isquemia y que permanece a niveles reducidos durante los 60 minutos de reperfusión (Figura 22A). Bajo el protocolo de PostC, la cinasa fosforilada se reduce desde el minuto 20 de la isquemia, pero se reactiva al minuto 10 de la reperfusión y permanece activa durante los 60 minutos de reperfusión (Figura 22B), siguiendo una cinética de activación muy similar a la de ERK1/2.

7. Efecto de Akt sobre la activación de GSK3β en corazones DCM

GSK3 β al ser fosforilada se inhibe y puede regular procesos de apoptosis. Ya que esta cinasa es blanco de Akt, determinamos los niveles de PHO-GSK3 β en corazones DCM bajo los diferentes protocolos. Como los muestra la figura 23, los niveles de PHO-GSK3 β aumentan significativamente bajo el protocolo PostC y dicho incremento es sensible al tratamiento con ambos inhibidores (U y LY; Figura 23).

8. Modelo *in vivo* en corazones DCM: Efecto del PostC sobre la función cardiaca, tamaño del infarto y la activación de ERK1/2

Aunque el modelo de corazón aislado nos permitió observar importantes diferencias entre las dos vías de protección activadas por el PostC, particularmente la estrecha relación entre la actividad de ERK1/2 y la protección de los corazones DCM, reconocemos que podría no reproducir muchos de los aspectos relevantes en la hipertrofia y en la cardiomiopatía dilatada que podrían ocurrir *in vivo*, como la regulación neurohormonal, la inflamación y otros mecanismos de compensación. El PostC evitó el daño por reperfusión en los animales DCM también en el modelo *in vivo*. Los corazones DCM post-acondicionados recuperaron el ritmo sinusal y la protección del PostC mostró sensibilidad al tratamiento con U0126. Observamos que la aplicación de los 3 ciclos de hipoxia y reoxigenación reducen el 60% del IS en comparación con los corazones que únicamente son reperfundidos (I/R) o que recibieron una dosis del inhibidor U0126.

9. Activación de ERK1/2 y el incremento en la fosforilación de la proteína mitocondrial de corazones DCM *in vivo*

Comprobamos también en el modelo in vivo, conocido como "open chest" que la fosforilación de ERK1/2 es indispensable para inducir protección en animales con DCM [Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2014]. Preparamos fracciones mitocondriales del ventrículo izquierdo de los corazones DCM sujetos a los diferentes protocolos experimentales y determinamos que existe una subpoblación de PHO-ERK1/2 asociada a mitocondrias que tiene como sustrato río abajo a GSK3β en corazones DCM in vivo (Figura 24A y 24B).

10. Asociación entre la apertura del mPTP y la actividad de ERK1/2 en corazones DCM

Adicionalmente, nos interesó determinar si existía una correlación entre la actividad de ERK1/2 con el estado de fosforilación de otras proteínas mitocondriales. Observamos un claro incremento en los niveles de fosforilación en la fracción mitocondrial de corazones PostC, que disminuyó en presencia del inhibidor de ERK1/2 (Figura 25A). Ya que el estado de activación del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial determina los procesos de muerte celular durante la reperfusión, decidimos medir si su apertura podría ser modulada por la actividad de esta cinasa, para lo cual medimos parámetros que son indicativos de su apertura, como el transporte de calcio y el potencial transmembranal mitocondrial ($\Delta \psi$ m).

Lo que observamos fue que las mitocondrias de corazones DCM perfundidos fueron capaces de retener el calcio hasta que el potencial transmembranal se disipó por la adición del desacoplante CCCP. Por el contrario, las mitocondrias de los corazones bajo el protocolo I/R no fueron capaces de retener el calcio como consecuencia de la apertura del mPTP. Además, las mitocondrias I/R perdieron su $\Delta \psi m$ (-79±10 mV vs. -156±13mV en corazones perfundidos). Interesantemente, los corazones PostC retuvieron el Ca²⁺ y preservaron el potencial transmembranal mitocondrial de -142 ± 11mV. El tratamiento con el inhibidor de ERK1/2 (PostC+U) revertió la condición protectora conferida por el PostC (Figura 25B y 25C).

11. Correlación entre la inhibición de ERK1/2 y los niveles de oxidación de la proteína mitocondrial

Dado que las mitocondrias son la principal fuente generadora de especies reactivas de oxígeno en miocitos, determinamos el nivel de oxidación del contenido proteico mitocondrial. Utilizamos FeCl₂ y H_2O_2 como control positivo y todas las muestras obtenidas de los protocolos de la Figura 10B fueron comparados contra este grupo. La proteína mitocondrial de corazones DCM mostró el 21% de carbonilación en corazones bajo el protocolo de perfusión, 78% en corazones reperfundidos y el 36% en corazones PostC (Figura 26).

12. Translocación de ERK1/2 del citosol a la membrana externa mitocondrial a través de complejos moleculares de señalización enriquecidas con caveolina-3

Finalmente evaluamos si el PostC induce la movilización de PHO-ERK1/2 del citosol hacia las mitocondrias o si en estos organelos existe una subpoblación que responde al estímulo del PostC. En la figura 27, se muestra que tanto PHO-Akt, como PHO-ERK1/2 y PHO- GSK3β se localizan preferentemente en el citosol en condiciones de perfusión; durante la reperfusión, la activación disminuye en ambos compartimentos, aunque la ubicación de la cinasas predomina en la fracción citosólica. Interesantemente, la determinación de PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-Akt y PHO- GSK3β en corazones DCM, nos mostró que los niveles de estas cinasas incrementan significativamente en la fracción mitocondrial cuando se aplica el post-acondicionamiento. Estos resultados nos sugieren que las cinasas son translocadas hacia la mitocondria aunque PHO-GSK3β también aumenta en la fracción citosólica en comparación con los niveles observados en el grupo I/R (Figura 28). El hecho de que la inhibición de ERK1/2 disminuyera la fosforilada tanto en la fracción citosólica como en la fracción mitocondrial. Finalmente, exploramos la posibilidad de que "moléculas señal" constituidas por caveolina-3 estuvieran involucradas en la interacción de PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-Akt y de otros

elementos de la vía de RISK (eNOS y GSK3 β) con la mitocondria. Realizamos algunas modificaciones al protocolo descrito por Quinlan et al (1998), para obtener las moléculas señal y determinamos los niveles de las cinasas antes mencionadas bajo el protocolo de PostC. Una vez que las fracciones fueron separadas (mitocondrial y SM), observamos que la señal de PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-Akt, PHO-eNOS, PHO-GSK3 β y caveolina-3 disminuye en la fracción mitocondrial y permanece en la fracción SM de los corazones PostC, lo que sugiere que estas estructuras favorecen el transporte de cinasas a la mitocondria. Interesantemente, la inhibición de la fosforilación de ERK1/2 no solo reduce la actividad de Akt y eNOS, también reduce el contenido de caveolina-3 sugiriendo que las moléculas de señalización son reclutadas preferentemente en su forma activa (Figura 28).

DCM.	rales y funcion	ales de los g	rupos CH y
Parametros	Sham	СН	DCM
Peso corporal (g)	445±13.2	370 ±10	221±13 ^a
Peso corazón (g)	1.3 ± 0.2	1.5 ±0.6	0.9 ± 0.3^{ab}
HW/BW (g/kg)	2.8 ± 0.4	4.6 ±0.2 ^a	6.9 ±0.3 ^{ab}
Peso pulmón (a)	2.5 ± 0.6	1.9 ±0.7 ^a	2.1±0.2
IW/BW (g/kg)	5.3 ± 0.4	5.0 ±0.4	6.4 ±0.3
IVS (mm)	0.6 ±0.04	2.2 ±0.3 ^a	1.1 ±0.06
LVDd (mm)	5.1 ±1.2	4.1±0.5	4.6 ±0.9
LVSd (mm)	2.5 ±0.4	1.9 ±0.2	3.2 ± 0.2^{a}
EF (%)	88 ±12	92 ±10	67 ± 14^{ab}
FS(%)	51 ±6	57 ±12	31.2±10 ^{ab}
Parámetros funcionales			
HR (latidos/min)	410 ±12	270 ± 14^{a}	246 ±13 ^a
Presión sistólica (mmHq)	109 ±10	168 ± 9^{a}	219 ± 14^{ab}

CH, hipertrofia cardiaca; DCM, cardiomiopatía dilatada; HW/BW, cociente peso corporal/peso corazón; LW/BW, cociente peso corporal/peso pulmón; EF, fracción de eyección; FS, fracción de acortamiento; IVS, septo intraventricular; LVDd, dimensión del ventrículo izquierdo al final de la diástole; LVSd, dimensión del ventrículo izquierdo en telesístole de almenos 9 animales por grupo experimental y 6 animales por parámetro. ªP<0.05 vs Sham, ^bP<0.05 vs CH.



Figura 11. Niveles de MMP-2 y ANP en corazones Sham, CH y DCM. Los páneles muestran las imágenes de western blot representativos de los marcadores de remodelación cardiaca normalizados contra GAPDH. A) Contenido de MMP-2 y B) contenido de ANP. Los datos representan la media \pm DS de seis experimentos diferentes. ^aP<0.05 vs. Sham, ^bP<0.0672





Figura 13. Imágenes de ecocardiografía y contenido basal de las cinasas de supervivencia de la vía de RISK. A) Imágenes representativas de ecocardiografía del ventrículo izquierdo (LV) obtenidas por debajo de la válvula mitral. IVS, septo interventricular. Las flechas verdes muestran la dimensión del ventrículo izquierdo al final de la diástole y las flechas azules muestran la dimensión ventricular al final de la sístole. B) Niveles basales de PI3K, PHO-PI3K, Akt, PHO-Akt, MEK1/2, PHO-MEK1/2, ERK1/2 y PHO-ERK1/2 en corazones Sham, CH y DCM. Imágen repersentativa del western Blot de seis diferentes preparaciones. Los datos representan la media ± SD de 6 diferentes experimentos. ^aP<0.05.





#P<0.001 vs. P y PostC. Las abreviaciones se encuentran en el listado iii.









Figura 20. Efecto de U0126 y LY294002 sobre la activación de PI3K/Akt en corazones DCM post-acondicionados. A) El panel superior muestra el western blot representativo del contenido de PI3K y PHO-PI3K de tres experimentos independientes. B) western blot representativo del contenido de Akt y PHO-Akt de tres ensayos diferentes. Las barras muestran la media \pm SD de la relación de la cinasa fosforilada y total de seis experimentos. ^aP< 0.05; ^bP<0.001 vs. P and PostC.







Fracción mitocondrial Fracción mitocondrial В А Ρ I/R PostC PostC+U PostC PostC+U P I/R PHO-ERK1/2 PHO-GSK3B (Thr 202/Tyr 204) (Ser 9) ERK1/2 GSK3_β 3 3 PHO-ERK1/2 / ERK1/2 ab PHO-GSK3B / GSK3B ab 2 2 1 a 0 0 Ρ PostC PostC+U I/R Ρ I/R PostC PostC+U

Figura 24. U0126 inhibe la fosforilación de ERK1/2 y GSK3 β mitocondrial. Las imágenes muestran el western blot representativos con los niveles de A) PHO-ERK1/2, ERK1/2 y B) PHO-GSK3 β , GSK3 β de corazones DCM bajo el protocolo de perfusión (P), isquemia/reperfusión (I/R), post-acondicionamiento (PostC) y PostC con inhibidor U0126 (PostC+U). Las barras indican la media ± SD de 6 experimentos independientes. ^aP< 0.05 vs. P, ^bP< 0.001 PostC vs. PostC+U.





Figura 26. La inhibición de PHO-ERK1/2 incrementa los niveles de carbonilación en mitocondrias de corazones DCM. A) Muestra el western blot representativo de los niveles de oxidación de proteína mitocondrial. FeCl₂ y H₂O₂ (carril 1), P (carril 2), I/R (carril 3), PostC (carril 4) y PostC+U (carril 5). En B) se muestra el gráfico del porcentaje de carbonilación por 100 µg de proteína mitocondrial de ventrículo izquierdo de corazones DCM. El porcentaje de proteína oxidada fue obtenida de la comparación de los niveles mostrados en el carril 1 contra los carriles 2 -5.Los datos de carbonilación representan la media \pm SD de 6 experimentos diferentes. ^aP< 0.001.



Figura 27. Contenido de diferentes cinasas en fracciones citosólicas y mitocondriales del ventrículo izquierdo de corazones DCM. El panel muestra la imagen del westrn blot representativo de 6 experimentos independientes que muestra los niveles de PHO-Akt, PHO-ERK1/2 y PHO-GSK3 β en fracciones citosólicas y mitocondriales bajo el protocolo de perfusión (P), isquemia/reperfusión (I/R), y PostC. Los datos representan la media \pm SD de seis experimentos independientes. ^aP<0.001 vs. Fracción mitocondrial y ^bP<0.001 vs. I/R Fracción mitocondrial.



IX. DISCUSIÓN

Las cardiopatías isquémicas en los seres humanos son desórdenes complejos asociados a factores de co-morbilidad como la hipertensión, la hiperlipidemia, la diabetes, la resistencia a la insulina, la insuficiencia cardiaca y el envejecimiento [Lecour et al., 2014]. Estos factores de riesgo cardiovascular inducen alteraciones fundamentales sobre las vías de señalización implicadas en el desarrollo de la isquemia, la reperfusión y la respuesta a las intervenciones de cardioprotección [Ferdinandy et al., 2014]. En este sentido queda implícita la relevancia del estudio del entorno de la enfermedad isquémica y el impacto de los factores de co-morbilidad que la acompañan para predecir del resultado de la aplicación del post-acondicionamiento (PostC) en el paciente con infarto agudo.

Se sabe que los pacientes con remodelación cardiaca y vascular son más susceptibles a desarrollar complicaciones funcionales durante la isquemia y la reperfusión [Obata et al., 1990; Osbakken et al., 1992; Anderson et al., 1987]. La hipertrofia del ventrículo izquierdo puede desarrollarse por diversas condiciones, incluyendo la anemia, la enfermedad de válvula aórtica, el hipertiroidismo, la obesidad, la enfermedad renal y la hipertensión [Swynghedauw, 1999]. Diversas evidencias experimentales han demostrado que el miocardio hipertrófico aumenta el riesgo de desarrollar alteraciones metabólicas y electrofisiológicas después de la reperfusión. Se ha determinado que durante la isquemia global, los corazones con hipertrofia desarrollan con mayor facilidad hipercontractura y debido a los cambios metabólicos propios de la enfermedad (energética mitocondrial y cambios en el metabolismo glucolítico) podrían incrementa la susceptibilidad al daño por reperfusión [Osbakken et al., 1992].

En el tema de cardioprotección, se ha reportado que la terapia clásica de pre-acondicionamiento (ciclos de hipoxia y reoxigenación aplicados antes de la isquemia) reduce el tamaño del infarto en animales hipertensos que desarrollan hipertrofia del ventrículo izquierdo. Ebrahim y colaboradores observaron en un modelo de hipertensión DOCA (DOCA: *4-week deoxycorticosterone acetate-salt hypertensive rat hearts*), una pobre respuesta del miocardio a la protección inducida por bradicinina, por lo tanto ineficacia para reducir el IS. Interesantemente, la aplicación del pre-acondicionamiento en este mismo modelo logró reducir el IS [Ebrahim et al.,2007a]. Adicionalmente, se ha demostrado que la edad es un factor importante que debe ser considerado para la aplicación de las terapias de cardioprotección. En este sentido, Ebrahim y colaboradores demostraron que el pre-acondicionamiento es efectivo limitando el IS en corazones de ratas hipertensas SHR (SHR: *spontaneously hypertensive rats*) y normotensas WKY (WKY: *Wistar Kyoto*) jóvenes y maduras, pero al igual que Moolman et al., observaron que el pre-acondicionamiento es ineficiente cuando las ratas son viejas [Moolman et al., 1997; Ebrahim et al 2007b].

En cuanto a la cardioprotección por PostC en la remodelación cardiaca patológica existen reportes que muestran que el PostC no conserva su eficacia en un modelo de hipertrofia cardiaca inducida con nandrolona [Penna et al., 2011], mientras que en un modelos de SHR [Penna C et al., 2010], la aplicación de esta maniobra mostró una clara tendencia a reducir el daño por reperfusión.

¿Por qué existe esta discrepancia en cuanto al efecto de cardioprotección en corazones con comorbilidad? La utilización de diferentes modelos de isquemia y de terapia proporcionan respuestas diferentes bajo protocolos diferentes. En el presente estudio, podemos descartar esta variable, pues no existe diferencia en cuanto a los protocolos de isquemia, reperfusión y post-acondicionamiento. Las diferencias están establecidas por el nivel de daño en el que cada uno de los modelos se enfrentó al evento isquémico, por lo que podemos descartar el factor metodológico en la respuesta observada.

Para dilucidar el efecto del post-acondicionamiento en la remodelación compensatoria y en un modelo crónico, desarrollamos un modelo de hipertrofia cardiaca y un modelo de dilatación ventricular por hipertensión. En estos modelos experimentales demostramos que la eficacia del PostC se conserva; incluso cuando la hipertrofia inicial o moderada se convierte en remodelación patológica severa (grupo DCM). Observamos que la inhibición farmacológica de PHO-ERK1/2 reduce parcialmente la función de los corazones CH post-acondicionados e induce un ligero aumento en el tamaño del infarto final. Por el contrario, la inhibición de PHO-ERK1/2 en los corazones DCM generó la pérdida de la frecuencia y presión cardiaca e incrementó el IS [Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2013; Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2014]. En relación a la presente discusión, se sabe que animales con hipertiroidismo que desarrollan hipertrofia cardiaca generan resistencia al daño por reperfusión. En el miocardio hipertrófico de ratas hipertiroideas aumenta la actividad de algunas cinasas. Se han determinado niveles elevados de PKC_E [Pantos et al., 2001] y se ha reportado que la aplicación subcutánea de triiodotironina (T3) promueve la activación de la cinasa de sobrevivencia Akt [Kuzman et al., 2005]. En contraste, nosotros no encontramos niveles elevados de PHO-Akt y PHO-ERK1/2 en el miocardio CH y DCM, al contrario, los corazones DCM mostraron bajo condiciones basales niveles de PHO-PI3K reducidos. Sin embargo, a pesar de esta deficiencia, nuestros resultados demuestran que el PostC induce protección en corazones CH a través de la activación de las dos vías de rescate: PI3K/Akt y MEK/ERK1/2 y que se conserva en corazones DCM pero exclusivamente a través de la activación de MEK/ER1/2.

Esta dependencia probablemente se deba a que bajo condiciones de remodelación severa PHO-PI3K está ausente; de hecho, estudios previos en miocardio humano con remodelación han reportado patrones de activación diferencial en esta vía, señalando que los estados patológicos crónicos se acompañan de la reducción en la actividad de PI3K [Haq et al., 2001]. La relevancia de este hallazgo va en relación con el informe hecho por Miki et al., quienes demuestran que PHO-ERK1/2 incrementa su actividad en ausencia de la vía PI3K/Akt [Miki et al., 2007]. También Hausenloy y Yellon apoyan la idea de compensación entre las vías de señalización, sugiriendo la existencia de puntos de convergencia entre las vías PI3K/Akt y MEK/ERK1/2 como estrategia para asegurar que la señal sea ejecutada [Hausenloy et al., 2004].

Nuestra observación sobre la presencia de PHO-Akt en el miocardio DCM post-acondicionado a pesar de la ausencia de PHO-PI3K y la sensibilidad al inhibidor U0126 (inhibidor específico de MEK), nos hizo pensar en un posible vínculo entre ERK1/2 y Akt. Considerando que la señalización puede intersectar con otros puntos para co-regular substratos río abajo; nosotros decidimos determinar los niveles de actividad de posibles puntos de convergencia o substratos en común entre las dos vías. PHO-p70S6K, una cinasa en común de ERK1/2 y Akt presentó actividad en presencia del inhibidor de la vía de MEK/ERK1/2, sugiriendo que bajo esta condición, Akt actúa como el principal activador de p70S6K. PHO-GSK3β, la cinasa río abajo de p70S6K, es una cinasa cuya fosforilación se asocia con la inhibición de la apertura del poro de la transición de la

permeabilidad mitocondrial (mPTP). La fosforilación de GSK3 β en presencia de U0126 se redujo significativamente, sugiriendo que su actividad depende principalmente de ERK1/2. Estos hallazgos nos llevaron a pensar en un posible vínculo entre PHO-ERK1/2 y la regulación por fosforilación de elementos mitocondriales. Por lo tanto, también demostramos que la vía de MEK/ERK1/2 puede incidir directamente sobre el proteoma mitocondrial y que este efecto contribuye en la cardioprotección por PostC.

La fosforilación de las proteínas mitocondriales tiene implicaciones funcionales que previenen o inducen eventos celulares deletéreos [Hüttemann et al., 2007; Hebert-Chatelain, 2013]. Se ha determinado que los componentes del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial [Lewandroski et al., 2008], algunas subunidades de los complejos de la cadena transportadora de electrones [Ogura et al., 2012], el acarreador de electrones, el citocromo-c, y la cinasa piruvato deshidrogenasa [Salvi et al., 2007] modifican su función por fosforilación.

La protección del miocardio contra el daño por reperfusión se ha asociado con la formación de microdominios de señalización en la membrana plasmática (*signalosomes*) que pueden interactuar con las mitocondrias. Recientemente, fue demostrado que el pre-acondicionamiento isquémico induce la formación de vesículas constituidas por caveolina (caveolas). En este sentido, se sabe que la caveolina contiene un dominio conservado denominado dominio de andamiaje; este dominio es un sitio de unión con motivos específicos de diversas proteínas, incluyendo cinasas y receptores [Segal et al., 1999]. El dominio de andamiaje de la caveolina es afín con proteínas de salvamento como eNOS [Koneru et al., 2007], ERK1/2 y otras MAPKs [Ballard-Croft et al., 2006]. Nosotros observamos que PHO-ERK1/2 puede estar reclutado en plataformas de señalización o moléculas señal tras aplicar la maniobra del PostC. Sugerimos que las SM pueden estar interactuando con elementos de la membrana externa mitocondrial y contribuir en la regulación de funciones de supervivencia. Las moléculas señal que nosotros detectamos contienen los componentes de salvamento PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-Akt y PHO-eNOS; sin embargo no descartamos la posibilidad de que su contenido sea más amplio.

Hasta donde sabemos, sólo un estudio ha abordado el papel directo de ERK mitocondrial en corazón. Baines et al. demostraron que la activación de PKC ε confiere cardioprotección promoviendo la formación de módulos de señalización mitocondrial conformada por PKC ε , ERK1/2 y p38MAPK [Baines et al., 2002]. Cabe mencionar que otras cinasas han sido asociadas con la regulación de la función mitocondrial en el tejido post-isquémico [Rasola et al., 2010]. Por ejemplo, la PKC β que interactúa con el mPTP en cerebro [Kowalczyk et al., 2012] y PHO-Akt que se ha asociado con ANT en corazones perfundidos con eritropoyetina [Kobayashi et al., 2008]. Además se ha demostrado que PKC ε se transloca a través de complejos de señalización ensamblados en la membrana plasmática y que este mecanismo tiene efecto sobre la actividad de los canales de mK⁺_{ATP} [Quinlan et al., 2008].

Pocas investigaciones han abordado la importancia de las cinasas mitocondriales. Los mecanismos exactos por los cuales la caveolina-3 en miocitos protege al corazón del daño por reperfusión y cómo esta interacción favorece la adaptación de la mitocondria al estrés celular aún se desconocen.

En resumen, nuestros resultados demuestran que el post-acondicionamiento, circunscrito al ámbito experimental, reduce el daño por reperfusión en corazones con antecedente de hipertrofia y

cardiomiopatía dilatada hipertensiva. Que la mitocondria es un blanco de la señalización por cinasas y que específicamente, PHO-ERK1/2 inhibe la apertura del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial en corazones DCM post-acondicionados: Finalmente que esta regulación involucra la formación de moléculas señal constituidas por PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-Akt y PHO-eNOS (Figura 29).

X. CONCLUSIONES

- 1. El post-acondicionamiento protege contra el daño por reperfusión en corazones con hipertrofia (grupo CH) y en corazones donde la sobrecarga hemodinámica progresa a cardiomiopatía dilatada hipertensiva.
- 2. A diferencia de lo que ocurre en corazones sanos, la activación de PI3K inducida por el PostC, no un componente clave en la vía de rescate RISK en corazones DCM.
- 3. En corazones DCM el PostC induce protección a través de la activación de ERK1/2/Akt/GSK3β.
- 4. PHO-ERK1/2 contribuye a mantener cerrado el poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial inhibiendo a GSK3 β a través de su fosforilación en la serina 9.
- 5. PHO-ERK1/2 es translocada hacia la mitocondria vía moléculas señal enriquecidas con caveolina-3.
- 6. Las molécula señal formadas por efecto del post-acondicionamiento contienen elementos de la vía de RISK incluyendo a PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-eNOS y PHO-Akt.



XI. PERSPECTIVAS

La fosforilación de las proteínas mitocondriales, específicamente la fosforilación de residuos de tirosinas (Tyr), tiene implicaciones funcionales y metabólicas de gran relevancia biológica [Hüttemann et al., 2007; Hebert-Chatelain, 2013]. Esta modificación postraduccional se ha asociado con cambios funcionales de la mitocondria que previenen o inducen un gran número de eventos patológicos. Entre los sustratos fosforilados que podrían regular dichas funciones se incluyen: los componentes del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial, la hexocinasa tipo 1, la subunidad γ de la ATP sintasa [Lewandroski et al., 2008], algunas subunidades de los complejos de la cadena transportadora de electrones [Ogura et al., 2012], el acarreador de electrones, el citocromo-c, y la cinasa piruvato deshidrogenasa [Salvi et al., 2007].

Nosotros identificamos a PHO-ERK1/2 (cinasas que tiene como substrato residuos de tirosinas y treoninas) en fracciones mitocondriales de corazones DCM post-acondicionados. Con los resultados obtenidos, sugerimos que esta subpoblación mitocondrial de cinasas es esencial para modular los procesos de muerte celular. En este sentido, nuestras perspectivas van dirigidas a determinar si PHO-ERK1/2 regula la función de los elementos del poro de la transición de la permeabilidad mitocondrial (por ejemplo, de VDAC y ciclofilina-D), además nos interesa determinar si la función de elementos involucrados en la regulación iónica y metabólica, como mCAU y la enzima carnitina palmitoiltransferasa-1, se modifican por fosforilación.

Adicionalmente, estamos interesados el estudio de las plataformas de señalización o "moléculas señal" que protegen al miocito del daño por reperfusión. En particular, queremos determinar cuál es el papel de las SM, bajo que condiciones prevalecen y cuál es el resultado de su interacción con las mitocondrias.
XII. REFERENCIAS

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XIII. PUBLICACIONES DERIVADAS DE ESTA TESIS

Basic Res Cardiol (2015) 110:1 DOI 10.1007/s00395-015-0464-y

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Reduction of no-reflow and reperfusion injury with the synthetic 17β-aminoestrogen compound Prolame is associated with PI3K/Akt/eNOS signaling cascade

Sauri Hernández-Reséndiz · Carlos Palma-Flores · Sergio De los Santos · Nadia G. Román-Anguiano · Mirthala Flores · Aurora de la Peña · Pedro L. Flores · Juan M. Fernández-G · Ramón M. Coral-Vázquez · Cecilia Zazueta

Received: 2 July 2014/Revised: 7 January 2015/Accepted: 9 January 2015 © Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg 2015

Abstract A high proportion of primary percutaneous coronary interventions performed in the setting of acute myocardial infarction, concur with inadequate myocardial perfusion at the microvascular level. This phenomenon, known as "no-reflow" contributes to reperfusion injury, poor prognosis and to unfavorable clinical outcome. In this study, we evaluated the hypothesis that the synthetic 17β aminoestrogen Prolame, may confer cardioprotection and prevent against no-reflow. In an open-chest model of 30-min ischemia and 90-min reperfusion, male Wistar rats were randomly assigned to different groups: Control, Prolame. Prolame followed by the nitric oxide synthase inhibitor (L-NAME), and 17\beta-estradiol. Areas of risk, infarct size and no-reflow were determined by planimetry with triphenyltetrazolium chloride and thioflavin-S stains. Structural damage of the vasculature was measured as

Electronic supplementary material The online version of this article (doi:10.1007/s00395-015-0464-y) contains supplementary material, which is available to authorized users.

S. Hernández-Reséndiz · N. G. Román-Anguiano ·

C. Zazueta (🖂)

Departamento de Biomedicina Cardiovascular, Instituto Nacional de Cardiología, I. Ch., Juan Badiano No. 1. Colonia Sección XVI, Mexico, DF 14080, Mexico e-mail: azazuetam@yahoo.com

C. Palma-Flores · S. De los Santos · R. M. Coral-Vázquez Subdirección de Enseñanza e Investigación, Centro Médico Nacional 20 de Noviembre, Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado, Mexico, DF 03100, Mexico

M. Flores · A. de la Peña Departamento de Biología Molecular, Instituto Nacional de Cardiología, I. Ch., Mexico, DF 14080, Mexico

Published online: 15 January 2015

capillary compression in clarified tissue after intra-atrial injection of Microfil. Hemodynamic function was obtained at the end of stabilization, ischemia and reperfusion; nitric oxide (NO·) content was determined indirectly using the Griess reaction. Activation of the eNOS signaling cascade was determined by western blot. Prolame reduced the infarcted area, decreased the zones of no-reflow and capillary compression by activating the PI3K/Akt/eNOS signaling pathway in correlation with NO· increase. Prolame also activated endothelial cells augmenting NO- production, which was inhibited by ICI182780 (a selective estrogen receptor down-regulator), supporting the notion that the cardioprotective effect of Prolame involves the preservation of endothelium through the activation of estrogen receptor downstream signaling. Our results provide evidence that Prolame has potential therapeutic application in patients with AMI, as it prevents from both vascular and cardiac tissue damage.

A. de la Peña

Departamento de Farmacología, Facultad de Medicina, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico, DF 04510, Mexico

P. L. Flores

Departamento de Instrumentación Electromecánica, Instituto Nacional de Cardiología, I. Ch., Mexico, DF 14080, Mexico

J. M. Fernández-G Instituto de Química, Circuito Exterior, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico, DF 04510, Mexico

R. M. Coral-Vázquez Sección de Estudios de Posgrado e Investigación, Escuela Superior de Medicina, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Mexico, DF 11340, Mexico

🖄 Springer

Keywords Myocardial infarction · Reperfusion injury · No-reflow · Prolame · Cardioprotection · Nitric oxide

Introduction

Retrospective and observational studies indicate that primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI), the preferred treatment against acute myocardial infarction (AMI), renders satisfactory epicardial coronary flow and greater patency rates of the infarct-related artery [44]. However, PCI does not always guarantee clinical improvement; studies of myocardial contrast echocardiography (MCE) have shown diminished patency rates or even no-perfusion at the coronary microvascular level in many of these patients, condition known as no-reflow (NR) phenomenon which contributes to myocardial reperfusion injury. Trials on primary PCI show that up to 40 % cases concurred with inadequate myocardial perfusion due to microvascular obstruction, which was associated with increased 30-day mortality if not adequately treated (32 vs. 2.8 %) [10, 30].

The factors associated with the establishment of NR include: endothelial dysfunction, compression of capillaries by swollen myocytes, alteration of the vasoregulation pathways, epicardial spasm, mechanical obstruction from embolization, extrinsic coagulation pathways, leukocyte adherence, microvascular ischemia, edema and vasoconstriction mediators [15, 23, 38]. Endothelial cell injury occurs in approximately 20 % of vessels after 60 min of reperfusion and in 40 % of vessels at 20–80 min of reperfusion. Indeed, pioneer reports showed tightly packed erythrocytes and endothelial gaps plugged by platelet and fibrin thrombi with numerous extra vascular red blood cells in capillaries from hearts reperfused only during 20 min [29].

Mechanical thrombectomy applied at the time of catheterization is used as a therapy against no-reflow; however, the administration of agents which increases nitric oxide (NO·) levels in the post-ischemic heart is also a common practice, due to its multiple effects on the cardiovascular system [24]. NO· inhibits platelet aggregation [27], reduces oxygen consumption [33], regulates directly or indirectly myocardial contractility [3], scavenges superoxide anions (O^{2-}) [2], prevents leukocyte adhesion [34] and mediates the anti-proliferative/anti-inflammatory response [11]. In spite of this, the administration of NO· donors like nitroglycerin [4], statins [25], verapamil [52], sodium nitroprusside [1] and abciximab have rendered inconclusive results at the microvascular level. Similar outcomes have been reported for adenosine, which despite of its proved efficacy in numerous experimental models, does not provided maximal coronary vasodilatation [20] neither improved TIMI flow rate in patients with acute ST-segment elevation myocardial infarction [8].

Other approaches have focused on the effects of estrogen at vascular level. In animal models and in patients, estrogen promotes vasodilatation via nitric oxide production, regulates blood pressure, decreases vascular inflammation/atherosclerosis and improves vascular reactivity. The fast vascular response observed after estrogen stimulation suggests the activation of non-genomic mechanisms via membrane receptors and downstream cascade PI3K/ Akt/eNOS (phosphoinositide 3-kinase/protein serine-threonine kinase/endothelial nitric oxide synthase) [37].

Here we report on a small molecule that might potentiate the effects of estrogen and NO· production on vasoregulation of post-ischemic hearts. The synthetic 17β-aminoestrogen (AE) Prolame [17B-(3-hvdroxy-1-propylamino)-1,3,5(10)-estratrien-3-ol)] is an estradiol analog in which the C17 position of the steroid nucleus is substituted by an amino-alcohol side chain-NH-(CH2)3-OH with three methylenes groups [6] (Supplementary Figure 1). Previous studies have shown that the 17β -AEs, besides its antiplatelet properties have high affinity to estrogen α (ER α) receptor [26], producing changes in vasoregulation [36]. In particular, it was demonstrated that Prolame enhanced NO· production in endothelial cells, platelets and in vivo mouse models [12]. This fact and the recent proposal that antiplatelet agents may be cardioprotective following myocardial infarction by mechanisms not mediated by reduction of microvascular obstruction [43], led us to evaluate whether the 17\beta-aminoestrogen Prolame might diminish the noreflow phenomenon and provide cardioprotection in rats with acute myocardial infarction followed by reperfusion.

Methods

Reagents

Chemicals were of reagent or higher grade from Sigma-Aldrich (St Louis, MO) unless otherwise specified. Anti-PI3K monoclonal antibody; polyclonal anti-PHO-PI3K, Tyr458/Tyr199; polyclonal anti-Akt; monoclonal anti-PHO-Akt, Thr308; monoclonal anti-PHO-eNOS, Ser1177; polyclonal anti-NOS and specific PI3K inhibitor LY294002 were all purchased from Cell Signaling Technology Inc. (Danver, MA). The enhanced chemiluminescence detection system was from Millipore Corporation (Bedford, MA) and alkaline phosphatase (AP)-conjugated secondary antibodies were from Santa Cruz Biotechnology (Santa Cruz, CA). All other chemicals used were of the highest purity available from Baker Co. (México) and Sigma-Aldrich (México).

Ethical approval

This investigation was performed in accordance with the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, published by the United States National Institutes of Health (US-NIH) (NIH publication 85-23, 1985) and approved by the Ethics Committee of the National Institute of Cardiology I. Ch. Experimental work followed the guidelines of the Norma Oficial Mexicana for the use and care of laboratory animals (NOM-062-ZOO-1999) and for the disposal of biological residues (NOM-087-ECOL-1995).

Experimental preparation

The study was performed with male Wistar rats weighting between 400 and 450 g that were anesthetized with 40 mg/ kg sodium pentobarbital. A midline incision was made in the neck, and tracheotomy was performed. The rats were mechanically ventilated with room air supplemented with low-flow oxygen using a small-animal ventilator (Harvard apparatus, Holliston, MA) at a rate of 60 breaths per minute and a tidal volume of 1 ml/100 g body weight and respiratory ratio 1:3. After left thoracotomy, hemodynamic parameters were measured with an SPR-869 Mikro-Tip pressure-volume catheter (Millar Instruments, Houston, TX) introduced into the left ventricle, whereas electrocardiogram registers were obtained using standard limb electrodes. Then, a 6-0 nylon suture was placed around the proximal left coronary artery and the ends were passed through a small plastic tube to form a snare. The artery was occluded by pulling the snare, which was kept in place with a haemostatic clamp. Myocardial ischemia was confirmed by visual cyanosis and maintained during 30 min, then the snare was released and the ischemic myocardium was reperfused for 90 min. Sham rats were subjected to the same surgical protocols performed in ischemic-reperfused rats, except that the snare was not tied.

Heart rate (HR), left ventricular end-diastolic pressure (LVEDP), left ventricular end systolic pressure (LVESP) and maximum change rate of left ventricular pressure rise and fall $(\pm dp/dt)$ were monitored continuously during the entire ischemic/reperfusion protocol. Data acquisition were recorded with the MPVS Ultra Foundation System (ADInstruments, Spechbach, Germany) and analyzed with the LabChart Pro Software (ADInstruments, Spechbach, Germany).

Experimental groups

Animals were randomly divided into six groups: (1) Sham group, rats without ligation and only threading; (2) Control group, rats with 30 min of ischemia by ligation of the left anterior descending coronary artery and 90 min of reperfusion without any treatment; (3) Prolame group (Pro), rats Page 3 of 12 1

that received 75 μ g/kg Prolame as an intravenous bolus 5 min before reperfusion through the tail veins; (4) Prolame + L-NAME group (Pro + L-NAME), rats to which a single dose of 10 mg/kg of N(G)-nitro-L-arginine methyl ester (L-NAME) was given 5 min after Prolame; (5) 17 β -estradiol group, rats that received 12.5 μ g/kg of 17 β -estradiol as an intravenous bolus 5 min before reperfusion through tail veins and (6) Pro + LY group, in which some rats received the PI3K inhibitor LY294002 (0.5 mg/kg) (Supplementary Figure 2).

Chemical synthesis

17β-(3-Hydroxy-1-propylamino)-1,3,5(10)-Estratrien-3-ol, Prolame, was synthesized from estrone. Chemical purity was established by spectral (IR/NMR/MS) and chromatographic (HPLC, TLC) techniques as previously reported [6].

Measurements of area at risk and infarct size

Measurements of the myocardial area at risk (AAR) and infarct area (IA) were performed according to a previous report [32]. In brief, Evans blue dye was injected into the left atrium to determine ligation area and then, the rats were euthanized by injecting 2 ml of 15 % potassium chloride via femoral vein. After excision, the heart was placed in cold saline and the heart was cut into six slices parallel to the atrio-ventricular groove. The area unstained by Evans blue, indicating AAR was traced in visible light. The extent of myocardial necrosis was evaluated incubating the left ventricular slices in 1 % triphenyltetrazolium chloride (TTC) phosphate buffered saline for 25 min at 37 °C. The outlines of the slices and TTC negative staining (infarct area) were traced and photographed in color.

Area of no-reflow (ANR) and capillary compressions (CC) measurements

At the end of the experimental protocols a group of three rats received a 2 % solution of the perfusion marker thio-flavin-*S* (1 ml/kg) through femoral artery. After 15 min, the animals were euthanized and the hearts excised. Thioflavin-*S* distribution was visualized and photografied under ultraviolet light ($\lambda = 365$ nm).

Some animals from each group (n = 6) were subjected to intra-atrial injection with Microfilm to evaluate the presence of capillary compressions in the left ventricles, as described by Coral-Vázquez et al. [5]. Briefly, a bilateral sternum incision was performed to expose the left ventricle and 3 ml of Microfil, a silicon rubber (Flow Tech., Carver, MA) were perfused into the left ventricle. After contraction stopped, the hearts were rapidly excised and maintained in ice for

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about 20 min. Afterwards, the hearts were fixed in 10 % formaldehyde for 24 h and cardiac tissue was sectioned into 2-mm-thick transverse cross sections. The tissues were subsequently cleared by sequential 24-h immersions in 25, 50, 75, 95 % and finally 100 % ethanol. Finally, the hearts were placed in pure methyl salicylate for 24–48 h. All steps were carried out at room temperature. CC visualization and quantification were performed under transillumination at $10 \times$ magnification in 45 non-adjacent microscopic fields. Total number of CC per left ventricle was measured and compared between the experimental groups.

NO- production in cardiac homogenates and in human umbilical vein endothelial cells (HUVEC)

Left ventricle samples (100 mg) were obtained from each animal. Tissues were added to 300 µl of phosphate buffered saline (PBS: 137 mM NaCl, 10 mM phosphate, 2.7 mM KCl, pH 7.4) and homogenized until complete homogenization. The homogenates were then centrifuged at 10,000 rpm for 10 min at 4 °C and the supernatants placed in sterile 1 ml Eppendorf tubes. Later, the resulting supernatants were ultra-filtrated through two filters of 0.45um pore size (Ministart, Sartorius Ltd., Gottingen, Germany) and 10 kDa cut-off (Vavispin 2, Sartorius Ltd., Stonehouse, UK), respectively, to eliminate proteins from each sample. Cadmium-coated granules were prepared as described [45] and used within 10 min to reduce nitrates to nitrites. Nitrite (NO2⁻) total levels were measured using the colorimetric Greiss reagent according to Granger's method as indicator of NO· production [13].

Human umbilical cords obtained from the Obstetric/ Gynecology Service of the Luis Castelazo Ayala Hospital of the Mexican Institute of Social Security, were immediately placed in 0.9 % NaCl supplemented with an antibiotic and antimycotic cocktail. Primary HUVEC cultures were isolated, grown, and identified in endothelial basal medium EBMTM (Lonza, Walkersville, MD, USA), supplemented with EGMTM SingleQuotTM growth factors in a humidified atmosphere of 5 % CO_2 and 95 % O_2 at 37 °C. Seven hours before the experiments, HUVEC were washed with phenol red-free Hanks salt solution and kept in phenol red-free DMEM plus 1 % of fetal bovine serum and 1 % of antibiotic-antimycotic cocktail. Later, confluent HUVEC monolayers were incubated for 1 h in phenol red-free Hanks salt solution supplemented with 4 mM Larginine (Sigma-Aldrich Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO, USA), and then stimulated with 1 µM bradykinin (BK) (Sigma-Aldrich Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO, USA) or with 10 µM Prolame for 15 min. In some experiments HUVEC were incubated with the selective estrogen receptor (ER) down-regulator ICI182780 (Abcam, Cambridge, MA, USA) at 5 μ M for 24 h before the addition of Prolame. Culture supernatants were used to measure NOlevels and whole cell extracts obtained with RIPA buffer for protein determination. Confluent cell cultures were typically assayed on passages 5–10.

Western blot analysis

Samples of 100 mg from at least six hearts from each group were individually prepared by adding 1 ml of ice cold RIPA lysis buffer (20 mM Tris HCl, pH 7.5, 150 mM NaCl, 0.1 % SDS, 0.5 % sodium deoxycholate) and 10 µl phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride (1 mM). Aliquots of samples (60 µg of protein) were separated by 8-10 % SDS-PAGE, electrotransferred onto a cellulose acetate membrane and blocked with 5 % nonfat milk in TBS-T buffer (20 mM Tris HCl, pH 7.4, 135 mM NaCl, 0.1 % Tween-20). Anti-PHO-PI3K, Tyr458/Tyr199 (1:1,000 dilution); anti-PI3K (1:1,000 dilution); polyclonal anti-Akt (1:1,000 dilution); anti-PHO-Akt, Thr 308 (1:1,000 dilution); anti-PHO-eNOS, Ser 1177 (1:1,000 dilution) and anti-NOS (1:1,000 dilution) were used to evaluated the PI3K/Akt/ eNOS pathway activation. Secondary antibodies conjugated with alkaline phosphatase were used to detect protein content along with a chemiluminescence detection system (Millipore, Billerica, MA, USA). Autoradiographic images were analyzed using scanning densitometer software. Ratio between phosphorylated protein and total protein was obtained in the same membrane in all experiments, and then data were compared among groups.

Effect of Prolame on impedance aggregometry

Aggregation was determined by measuring impedance with a whole blood aggregometer (Model 560CA, Chrono-log Corporation Havertown, PA, USA). Samples of 0.5 ml heparinized arterial blood (68 USP units) from Sham, Control, Pro and Pro + LY rats were collected. For each assay, whole blood was diluted 1:1 with saline solution (0.9 % w/v) and incubated during 3 min at 37 °C in a plastic cuvette under continuous stirring. Aggregation was stimulated with 10 μ M ADP or 2 μ g/mL collagen (Chrono-PAR Corporation Havertown, PA; USA) as described by Yang et al. [51]. Platelet aggregation was measured during 6 min and maximum changes were recorded. The data were analyzed with the AggroLink software package.

Statistical analysis

All data are expressed as mean \pm SE. Data from all conditions, such as hemodynamic data and other time-dependent determinations, were compared by repeated-measures ANOVA followed by post hoc analysis with Student– Newman–Keuls multiple comparisons. Differences in a single variable, such as ANR and IA, were compared among groups by one-way ANOVA followed by Duncan's post hoc test. P < 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Results

Hemodynamic data

HR, LVESP, LVEDP, and $\pm dp/dt$ before ischemia (stabilization), at the end of ischemia (Ischemia_{30 min}) and at the end of reperfusion (Reperfusion_{90 min}) were evaluated in all experimental groups (Table 1). No significant differences were observed after the stabilization period in any of these parameters between the groups; neither during

120 min of continuous registers in Sham rats (not shown). After 30 min of ischemia, HR, LVESP and $\pm dp/dt$ diminished, whereas LVEDP increased in all groups, as compared with values obtained during stabilization. At the end of reperfusion (Reperfusion_{90 min}), hemodynamic parameters were similar to those observed after the ischemic period (Ischemia_{30 min}) in the Control group. In contrast, HR, LVESP and $\pm dp/dt$ values increased and LVEDP diminished in the Pro group. Those changes were significantly different to values obtained in the Control group after reperfusion (P < 0.05). In the Pro + L-NAME group, the cardioprotective effect of Pro was abolished, as well as in the Pro + LY group indicating the participation of the PI3K/Akt/eNOS signaling cascade. On the other hand, 17β-estradiol showed similar effects that those exerted by Prolame.

Table 1 Effect of Prolame on hemodynamic data from rats with ischemia and reperfusion

	HR (beats/min)	LVESP (mmHg)	LVEDP (mmHg)	+dp/dt (mmHg/s)	-dp/dt (mmHg/s)
Sham					
Stabilization	310 ± 18	110 ± 8.5	9.6 ± 10	$4,492 \pm 480$	$3{,}710\pm380$
Ischemia _{30 min}	-	-	-	-	-
Reperfusion _{90 min}	_	-	-	-	-
Control					
Stabilization	302 ± 16.4	114 ± 12	9.9 ± 13	$4,209 \pm 399$	$3{,}690\pm299$
Ischemia30 mm	$249\pm8^{\rm c}$	$80 \pm 3.5^{\circ}$	$29 \pm 7^{\rm c}$	$2,310 \pm 230^{\circ}$	$2{,}002\pm200^{\rm c}$
Reperfusion _{90 min}	$270\pm5.6^{\rm c}$	$82 \pm 4^{\rm c}$	$28.3 \pm 6^{\circ}$	$2,780 \pm 249^{\circ}$	$2{,}231\pm210^{\rm c}$
Pro					
Stabilization	312 ± 18	118 ± 2.4	9.1 ± 8	$4,502 \pm 375$	$3{,}681 \pm 287$
Ischemia _{30 mm}	265 ± 16^{c}	$83\pm3.8^{\rm c}$	$27 \pm 2.3^{\circ}$	$2,430 \pm 298^{\circ}$	$2,080 \pm 243^{c}$
Reperfusion _{90 min}	306 ± 8^{ab}	108 ± 4.6^{ab}	12.3 ± 2.3^{ab}	$3,870 \pm 210^{ab}$	$2{,}959\pm210^{ab}$
Pro + L-NAME					
Stabilization	304 ± 12	116 ± 3.5	9.4 ± 4.6	$4,441 \pm 310$	$3,710\pm323$
Ischemia _{30 min}	$270 \pm 18^{\circ}$	$79 \pm 6.2^{\circ}$	$28\pm27^{\rm c}$	$2,390 \pm 289^{\circ}$	$2,070 \pm 310^{\circ}$
Reperfusion _{90 min}	$284 \pm 21^{\circ}$	80 ± 3.7^{c}	$20 \pm 3.2^{\circ}$	$2,910 \pm 232^{\circ}$	$2,110 \pm 300^{\circ}$
17β-Estradiol					
Stabilization	301 ± 10	$112 \pm 2.$	9.0 ± 2.4	$4,491 \pm 310$	$3,660 \pm 413$
Ischemia _{30 min}	$259 \pm 18^{\circ}$	$74 \pm 6.2^{\circ}$	$25 \pm 1.7^{\circ}$	$2,209 \pm 278^{\circ}$	$2,120 \pm 310^{\circ}$
Reperfusion _{90 min}	$290 \pm 3.1^{\mathrm{ac}}$	87 ± 3.7^{ac}	$18 \pm 1.2^{\rm ac}$	$3,710 \pm 312^{\rm ac}$	$2{,}920\pm290^{ac}$
Pro + LY					
Stabilization	308 ± 13.6	102 ± 10	9.2 ± 13	$4,339 \pm 301$	$3,640 \pm 309$
Ischemia _{30 min}	$229 \pm 10^{\circ}$	$72\pm3.8^{\rm c}$	$22 \pm 9^{\rm c}$	$2,310 \pm 244^{\circ}$	$2,044 \pm 199^{\circ}$
Reperfusion _{90 min}	$279\pm8.1^{\rm c}$	$88 \pm 9^{\circ}$	$16.1 \pm 4.9^{\circ}$	$2,880 \pm 200^{\circ}$	$2,\!265\pm239^{\rm c}$

Data are expressed as the mean value \pm SE. HR, LVSP, LVEDP, $\pm dp/dt$ and LY, represent heart rate, left ventricular systolic pressure, left ventricular end-diastolic pressure, the maximal and minimal change in rate of left ventricular pressure rise and LY294002, respectively. Sham (n = 6); control (n = 6); Prolame, Pro (n = 8); Pro + L-NAME (n = 6); 17 β estradiol (n = 6); Pro + LY (n = 6)

Data obtained at the end of stabilization, ischemia and reperfusion

^a P < 0.05 vs. Reperfusion_{90 min} in control group

 $^{\rm b}$ P < 0.05 vs. Reperfusion_{90 {\rm min}} in the Pro + LY group

 $^{\rm c}~P<0.05$ vs. stabilization in each group

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AAR, IA and ANR evaluation

The AAR in the left ventricle (LV) was comparable in Control, Pro, Pro + L-NAME and 17 β -estradiol groups, averaging 43 %. The IA observed in the Control group after reperfusion (Reperfusion_{90 min}) was 55 %, whereas in Pro and 17 β -estradiol groups diminished to 35 and 45 %, respectively. IA was also significantly lower in the Pro group than in the Pro + L-NAME group (35 ± 3.1 vs. 53 ± 3.6, P < 0.05).

The ANR diminished significantly in the Pro group as compared with the Control, Pro + L-NAME and 17 β -estradiol groups (P < 0.05). Coronary vessels were in general smoothly tapered in the Sham group and CC quantification was only of 9.2 ± 2.3/LV. In contrast, CC increased to 79 ± 4.6/LV in the control group in correlation with generalized sparseness of perfusion. Prolame

treatment (Pro group) decreased CC to $23 \pm 3.8/LV$ and 17β -estradiol only to $40 \pm 2.5/LV$. Diminution in CC observed in the Pro group was abolished in presence of L-NAME ($63 \pm 4.2/LV$) (Figs. 1a, b).

NO· levels and eNOS activation

NO· levels were analyzed in both the right ventricle (RV) and in the LV from all groups at the end of the protocols. In Fig. 2a is shown that changes in NO· levels followed a similar pattern in both ventricles, although changes were more evident in the LV. A 69 % diminution in NO· was observed in the Control group as compared with the Sham and the Pro groups (P < 0.05). NO· content was partially maintained in the 17β-estradiol group and totally depressed by the PI3K inhibitor LY294002 (Pro + LY group) suggesting the participation of the PI3K/Akt signaling

Fig. 1 Area at risk (AAR), infarct area (IA), area of noreflow (ANR) and capillary compressions (CC) in reperfused rat hearts treated with Prolame. a Representative images of heart sections stained with: Evans blue, in which unstained zones indicated AAR (panels 1-5); triphenyltetrazolium chloride (TTC) in which pale zones represented IA (panels 6-10) and, thioflavin-S in which the NR area is negative for fluorescence (panels 11-15). Transillumination of Microfilperfused coronary arteries showing capillary compressions (panels 16-20). The yellow arrow indicates one capillary compression. b Statistical analysis of AAR, IA and ANR expressed in percentage. c Statistical analysis of CC total number/LV. Left ventricle (LV). Values are expressed as mean \pm SE. ^aP < 0.05 vs. Control, ${}^{b}P < 0.05$ vs. Pro + L-NAME, ${}^{c}P < 0.05$ vs. 17 β estradiol. Images are representative of at least (AAR, n = 4; IA, n = 4; ANR, n = 3; CC. n = 6) different experiments





Fig. 2 Myocardial NO- levels and eNOS phosphorylation in reperfused hearts treated with Prolame. **a** Nitric oxide content. **b** eNOS phosphorylation at Ser1177 in left ventricle (LV) from Control, Pro, Pro + L-NAME, and 17β-estradiol groups. NO- content and eNOS phosphorylation in the right ventricle (RV) from the Sham group is also shown. Data are expressed as mean ± SE of six different preparations from all the experimental groups. ^a*P* < 0.05 vs. Sham, ^b*P* < 0.05 vs. Control, ^c*P* < 0.05 vs. Pro + L-NAME and 17β-estradiol

pathway in NO· production induced by Prolame. Myocardial PHO-eNOS content correlated with variations observed in NO· levels in all groups (Fig. 2b).

Activation of the PI3K/Akt/eNOS cascade by Prolame and its effect on NR

It has been reported that binding of estradiol to its membranal receptor activates the PI3K/Akt pathway resulting in eNOS phosphorylation; thus, we evaluated the activation of these kinases at the end of stabilization, ischemia and at 30, 60 and 90 min of reperfusion in the Control and Pro groups. There were no significant differences in PHO-PI3K content during stabilization or ischemia between Control and Pro groups. At 30 min of ischemia, levels drastically diminished in both groups (P < 0.05 vs. Stabilization). Page 7 of 12 1

Reperfusion induced further decline in PHO-PI3K content in the Control group. On the other hand, PHO-PI3K levels increased significantly in the Pro group since the first 30 min of reperfusion and remained so, until the end of the experiment. The inhibitory effect of LY was observed in all conditions (Fig. 3a). We also correlated the effect of PI3K inhibition with IA, ANR and CC in the Pro group. Such parameters increased significantly in the Pro + LY group as compared with the Pro group (Fig. 3b). On the other hand, PHO-Akt levels were the same in the stabilization period and final ischemia in all groups. Then, at 30 min of reperfusion, levels drastically diminished and remained low throughout the 60 and 90 min of reperfusion in Control and pro groups (Fig. 4).

PHO-eNOS levels were similar during the stabilization period and at the end of ischemia in all groups. Phosphorylation at Ser1177 increased early during reperfusion and was maintained until the end of reperfusion in the Pro group. L-NAME pretreatment (Pro + L-NAME) significantly reduced eNOS activity compared with the Pro group (P < 0.01). 17β-estradiol exerted a delayed and time-limited effect on eNOS phosphorylation around 60 min of reperfusion. Accordingly, CC in the Pro group ($22 \pm 3.6/$ LV) was significantly minor than that obtained in the Pro + L-NAME group (40 ± 2.7 /LV, P < 0.05) and in the 17β-estradiol group (31 ± 4 /LV, P < 0.05) (Fig. 5).

Prolame stimulates NO· production in human umbilical cord vein endothelial cells (HUVEC)

In order to confirm that Prolame directly activated endothelial NO· production, studies were performed in HUVEC primary cultures. NO· levels increased significantly in the supernatants after incubation with both Prolame and with the vasoactive peptide BK, supporting the idea that the cardioprotection conferred by Prolame involved preservation of endothelium function. To further characterize the precise mechanisms underlying endothelium-dependent NO· signaling in response to Prolame, we used the estrogen receptor down-regulator (ICI) in cell cultures. HUVEC generated and maintained NO· production throughout time, peaking at 15 min (14.3 \pm 2.6 μ M). NO· diminished by 47.3 % in presence of the ER inhibitor (13.8 \pm 2.3 vs. 7 \pm 2.1 μ M, P < 0.05) (Supplementary Figure 3).

Antiplatelet effect of Prolame

To unravel if the antiplatelet properties of Prolame may account in some degree for the observed cardioprotection, we measured platelet aggregation in heparinized arterial blood from control, Prolame (Pro) and (Pro + LY) rats at the end of the reperfusion experiments. Platelet aggregation observed in arterial blood from the Control group both with

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Fig. 3 PI3K activation during early reperfusion is related with diminution of the no-reflow phenomenon. **a** Representative western blots of PHO-PI3K and PI3K content in independent preparations of LV from control, Pro and Pro + LY groups subjected to stabilization, ischemia and reperfusion for 30, 60 and 90 min. *Bars* represent mean \pm SE of at least six independent experiments of each condition

in every group. ^a*P* < 0.05 vs. stabilization. **b** Representative images of IA, ANR (*scale* 1.5 mm) and CC (*scale* 200 μ m). A capillary compression is shown with a *yellow arrow*. **c** Statistical analyses of IA, ANR and CC. Data are expressed as mean \pm SE of six independent experiments. ^a*P* < 0.05 vs. Control ^b*P* < 0.05 vs. Pro

Fig. 4 Effect of Prolame on Akt activation in reperfused hearts. Representative western blots of Akt and PHO-Akt content from independent experiments of each condition in the control and Pro group. *Bars* show the mean \pm SE of total and phosphorylated protein ratio from six left ventricles obtained at the indicated conditions. ^aP < 0.05 vs. control



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ADP (10 μ M) and with collagen (2 μ g/ml), diminished in blood samples from Pro and Pro + LY groups. Inhibition of NO production had no effect on Prolame's antiplatelet aggregation properties (Supplementary Figure 4).

Discussion

vs. Pro

The patency of infarct-related artery has to be restored as soon as possible to recover heart function in patients with ST-segment elevation acute myocardial infarction or acute coronary syndrome. PCI is the most direct and effective

method to reperfuse the myocardium [14, 28]; however, successful reopening of the infarct-related artery (stenosis ≤10 %) not always is translated into complete tissue reperfusion; not even into obtaining TIMI grade 3 of antegrade flow. This condition, known as NR, is a complication of PCI and is closely correlated with worse prognosis, higher mortality and incidence of re-infarction in hospital [40].

Although the exact mechanism of NR is not clear, there is considerable evidence suggesting that this phenomenon is due to microvascular spasm caused by free radicals, endothelin, angiotensin-II, thromboxane and/or to progressive

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accumulation of leucocytes and erythrocytes in the microcirculation, to distal-end occlusion resulting from microthrombus or plaque fragments and to intracellular edema (interstitial substance). Also, mechanical obstruction by cardiac pericytes has also been pointed out as cause of diminished reperfusion of coronary capillaries [39]. Myocardial ischemia and reperfusion are responsible for a cascade of reactions leading to endothelial injury, characterized by a decrease in the production of nitric oxide (NO·); therefore, the pharmacotherapy of NR has focused primarily on strategies like local vasodilator therapy, antiplatelet therapy and use of devices for aspiration of thrombi. The use of intracoronary vasodilators has produced inconclusive results, although class IIa recommendation for the administration of intracoronary vasodilators (e.g., adenosine, calcium channel blockers, or nitroprusside) was given by the ACC/AHA PCI (American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Percutaneous Coronary Intervention) guidelines in 2011 [31]. Two multicenter studies (AMISTAD 1 and II) showed that adenosine infusion reduced infarct size in anterior myocardial infarction [35, 41], whereas in the ADAPT trial (adenosine administration during primary percutaneous coronary intervention in acute myocardial infarction trial, n = 488), no significant differences were observed in no-reflow between patients randomized to adenosine or placebo treatment [8]. Some results have shown that nitroglycerin has little impact on arteriolar tone and hence in NR, since it needs to be metabolized in the vascular wall to release nitric oxide. Besides, only the epicardial arteries are capable to metabolize nitroglycerin but not the microvascular resistance arterioles and indeed, some studies indicate that verapamil may be more effective than nitroglycerin [49]. This calcium channel blocker, as well as diltiazem and nicardipine are endothelium-independent vasodilators used in hypertensive emergency and in NR treatment in some countries; however, it has been observed that its administration also induces bradycardia and hypotension [9]. Devices for aspiration of thrombi and thrombusderived vasoconstrictor, have shown to reduce thrombus burden, improve perfusion, and provide protection in patients with acute myocardial infarction [22].

The estrogen receptors, being widely expressed in the cardiovascular system constitute potential therapeutic targets in acute myocardial infarction and NR [7]. Studies in vitro and in vivo have demonstrated that estrogen induces microvascular dilation by endothelium-mediated mechanisms. Activation of eNOS through non-genomic pathways, namely the PI3K/Akt cascade, was observed in human endothelial cells treated with 17 β -estradiol in association with beneficial effects on the vasculature [18].

Other cardioprotective approaches like mild hypothermia and postconditioning (PostC) have been tested to reduce no-reflow. In a first report, Kloner's group found that hypothermia protects against no-reflow but failed to reduce myocardial infarct size in rabbit hearts [16]. The same group developed a new cooling system to produce rapid hypothermia, which resulted in a profound diminution in infarct size and anatomic zone of no-reflow in hearts from rat and rabbit [19]. On the other hand, PostC, despite its almost universal efficiency in diminishing infarct size, had no effect on non-reflow in an open-chest rabbit model [17].

It is worth mentioning that both myocardial tolerance to injury from I/R and cardioprotection might be confounded by age, sex, comorbidities, and drugs, although they are relevant in patients who need cardioprotection [21]. Particularly, some intriguing results of the effects of cardioprotective strategies when antiplatelet therapy has been previously applied to patients, have raised the idea that the cardioprotective phenomenon might already be established.

Lack of conclusive reports on the efficacy of therapies against no-reflux led us to conduct this study, in which was hypothesized that Prolame, an estradiol analog with antiplatelet and antithrombotic properties may prevent NR phenomenon by exerting endothelial protection, contributing to confer cardioprotection. We found that Prolame effectively preserved cardiac function, decreased the infarcted area and the NR phenomenon in post-ischemic hearts; such protective effect was completely suppressed by inhibiting eNOS or PI3K, suggesting that this compound may be a postconditioning mimetic. The retrospective study by Roubille et al. (2012) [42] adds to this hypothesis with the demonstration that the antiplatelet compound clopidrogel attenuates lethal reperfusion injury in patients by mechanisms related with increased eNOS phosphorylation [46]. Besides, Yang et al. (2013) [51] reported that the inhibitors of the RISK pathway blocked the cardioprotection provided by clopidrogel or cangrelor in isolated rabbit hearts and also, that such results were consistent with those obtained in monkey hearts [50].

We recognize some limitations in this study: one is related with the demonstration of differential RISK pathway activation observed during postconditioning among different species, i.e., small mammals and pigs [47, 48] which raises doubts about the relevance of Akt and ERK1/ 2 activation in a translational context. In this regard, as it is common that even small variation in experimental strategies, not to mention the use of different species may affect cardioprotection, it would be desirable to further confirm findings obtained in rodent models, in larger animal models. Second, the experimental acute infarction used here does not reproduce the most common clinical situations of coronary occlusion resulting from chronic pathologies. However, it is worth mentioning, that no adverse effects by Prolame administration were observed in rat hearts not subjected to ischemia and reperfusion.

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Acknowledgments This article is part of the doctoral thesis of Sauri Hernández-Reséndiz in the Biomedical Sciences Doctoral Program, School of Medicine, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Sauri Hernández-Reséndiz received a scholarship (32006) from the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT). This work was partially supported by Grant 177527 to CZ from CONACYT, Mexico.

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical standards All authors in this work gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study. The manuscript does not contain clinical studies or patient data.

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Life Sciences 108 (2014) 13-21



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Life Sciences

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/lifescie

PHO-ERK1/2 interaction with mitochondria regulates the permeability transition pore in cardioprotective signaling



Sauri Hernández-Reséndiz, Cecilia Zazueta *

Department of Cardiovascular Biomedicine, National Institute of Cardiology, I.Ch., Juan Badiano No. 1, Colonia Sección XVI, Mexico 14080, DF, Mexico

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Article history: Received 24 January 2014 Accepted 30 April 2014 Available online 14 May 2014

Keywords: Postconditioning Reperfusion Mitochondrial ERK1/2 Cardioprotection Dilated cardiomyopathy Signalosomes

Aims: The molecular mechanism(s) by which extracellular signal-regulated kinase 1/2 (ERK1/2) and other kinases communicate with downstream targets have not been fully determined. Multiprotein signaling complexes undergoing spatiotemporal redistribution may enhance their interaction with effector proteins promoting cardioprotective response. Particularly, it has been proposed that some active kinases in association with caveolae may converge into mitochondria. Therefore, in this study we investigate if PHO-ERK1/2 interaction with mitochondria may provide a mechanistic link in the regulation of these organelles in cardioprotective signaling. Main methods: Using a model of dilated cardiomyopathy followed by ischemia-reperfusion injury, we determined ERK1/2 signaling at the level of mitochondria and evaluated its effect on the permeability transition pore.

Key findings: The most important finding of the present study is that, under cardioprotective conditions, a subpopulation of activated ERK1/2 was directed to the mitochondrial membranes through vesicular trafficking, concurring with increased phosphorylation of mitochondrial proteins and inhibition of the mitochondrial permeability transition pore opening. In addition, our results suggest that vesicles enriched with caveolin-3 could form structures that may drive ERK1/2, GSK3B and Akt to mitochondria.

Significance: Signaling complexes including PHO-ERK, PHO-Akt, PHO-eNOS and caveolin-3 contribute to cardioprotection by directly targeting the mitochondrial proteome and regulating the opening of the permeability transition pore in this model.

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Introduction

The fate of cardiomyocytes under pathological conditions is indisputably related to mitochondrial function. In this regard, it has been demonstrated that intracellular signals that promote cardioprotection, generated either by ischemic preconditioning (PC), postconditioning (PostC) or pharmacological conditioning, involve G protein-coupled receptor activation and downstream substrates, like extracellular signalregulated kinases 1/2 (ERK1/2), which are members of the reperfusion injury survival kinases (RISK) (Tsang et al., 2005; Davidson et al., 2006). The processes related to pro-survival kinase cascade and mitochondrial targeting are poorly understood, although growing evidence indicates that several mitochondrial phosphorylated proteins may exist (Horbinski and Chu, 2009; Pagliarini and Dixon, 2006; Budas et al., 2012). In this sense, it is widely known that the mitochondrial permeability transition pore (mPTP), a complex assembled from a group of preexisting proteins, is a major cause of reperfusion injury and an effective target for cardioprotection (Halestrap, 2009; Ovize et al., 2010). The precise conformation of the mPTP is currently under intensive research,

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/i.lfs.2014.04.037 0024-3205/© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

(ANT), the voltage dependent anion channel (VDAC) and the matrix protein cyclophilin (CyP) are main components of the pore. Although little is known about the interactions occurring between cytosolic kinase signaling and mitochondria, some reports have described that mPTP post-translational modifications are related to mitochondrial function in both in vitro and in vivo settings. For example, PKCE interaction with the pore components and inhibition of Ca²⁺-induced pore opening have been reported in isolated mitochondria, whereas VDAC phosphorylation and inhibition of the channel secondary to ROSinduced-PKCE translocation have been demonstrated in mice overexpressing PKCE (Baines et al., 2003) In addition, the inhibition of constitutively activated glycogen synthase kinase 3β (GSK3 β) by ERK1/2 and other RISK members (Khaliulin et al., 2010; Costa et al., 2008) has been considered relevant for mPTP regulation and cardioprotection (Nishihara et al., 2007). In this sense, it is remarkable that both PC and PostC confer protection in mouse hearts expressing only noninhibitable forms of GSK3B (Nishino et al., 2008). Thus, it would be possible that ERK1/2 or other kinases bypass GSK3B action and impinge on the mPTP or other mitochondrial targets. Recent findings of endosomal fractions enriched with ERK1/2 (Wortzel and Seger, 2011) sustain the possibility of ERK1/2 trafficking into different subcellular compartments, a mechanism by which cytosolic ERK1/2 may

but it is generally accepted that the adenine nucleotide translocase

^{*} Corresponding author at: Juan Badiano No. 1, Colonia Sección XVI, Mexico 14080, DF, Mexico. Tel.: +52 55 5573 2911; fax: +52 55 5573 0926. E-mail address: azazuetam@yahoo.com (C. Zazueta).

reach mitochondria and which, could also explain previous reports on the existence of a mitochondrial ERK1/2 pool (Baines et al., 2002; Galli et al., 2008). Even more, in chronically-infarcted rat hearts subjected to ischemia/reperfusion, the cardioprotective effect of sevoflurane has been related to PBK/Akt and ERK1/2 recruitment to mitochondria (Penna et al., 2013).

Taking into account the aforementioned, this work was aimed to further elucidate the functional relationship of ERK1/2 and putative mitochondrial targets. We use rats with dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) instead of healthy hearts, as systemic diseases - through multiple effects and biochemical alterations - may compromise the cardioprotective effect of signal transduction cascades in PostC. Accordingly, we previously reported that transition from an adaptive to a pathologic state (DCM) is accompanied with reduced PI3K activity and, that PostC-conferred cardioprotection is sustained mainly on the activation of ERK1/2 cascade in DCM hearts (Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2013). Thus, since mitochondrial protein phosphorylation is an area of considerable interest and since we observed that PostCconferred cardioprotection depends mainly on ERK1/2 activation in DCM hearts, we sought to determine if this kinase could regulate mitochondrial function by directly targeting the mitochondrial proteome, and if such events can contribute to the cardioprotective actions of ERK1/2.

Material and methods

Ethical approval

This investigation was performed in accordance with the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, published by the United States National Institutes of Health (US-NIH) and approved by the Ethics Committee of the National Institute of Cardiology I. Ch. Experimental work followed the guidelines of the *Norma Oficial Mexicana* for the use and care of laboratory animals (NOM-062-ZOO-1999) and for the disposal of biological residues (NOM-087-ECOL-1995).

Reagents

Chemicals were of reagent or higher grade from Sigma-Aldrich (St Louis, MO), unless otherwise specified. Anti-ERK1/2 polyclonal antibodies; monoclonal anti-PHO-ERK1/2, Thr202/Tyr204; anti-PI3K monoclonal antibody; polyclonal anti-PHO-PI3K, Tyr458/Tyr199; polyclonal anti-Akt; monoclonal anti-PHO-Akt, Thr308; monoclonal anti-caveolin-3; monoclonal anti-GSK3β; monoclonal anti-PHO-GSK3β; monoclonal anti-PHO-eNOS; polyclonal anti-NOS; and monoclonal anti-VDAC and U0129 inhibitor were all purchased from Cell Signaling Technology Inc. (Danver, MA). The enhanced chemiluminescence detection system was from Millipore Corporation (Bedford, MA) and alkaline phosphatase (AP)-conjugated secondary antibodies were from Zymed Laboratories (San Francisco, CA).

Experimental dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM)

Osmotic pumps (Alzet Osmotic pumps, Durect Corporation, Cupertino Palo Alto, CA) containing angiotensin-II human (Ang-II) (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, MO) were surgically implanted at the scapular area of male Wistar rats (400–450 g) anesthetized intraperitoneally with a small dose of sodium pentobarbital ($50 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{kg}^{-1}$) and complete lack of pain response was assessed by determining pedal withdrawal reflex. Thirty-two animals were subjected to continuous Ang-II release during 14 days (DCM rats) and then, were randomized into four study protocols: perfused, P (Baines et al., 2003); ischemia/reperfusion, I/R (Baines et al., 2003); postconditioning, PostC (Baines et al., 2003) and postconditioning + U0126, PostC + U (Baines et al., 2003). Previously, the morphometric and echocardiographic parameters of DCM rats were compared against those of a group of rats (Sham = 8), in which the surgical procedure included the implantation of a Teflon devise similar in size and weight to the osmotic pumps delivering Ang-II. At the seventh day, left ventricular (LV) walls were severely thickened showing concentric hypertrophy, whereas ventricular dilation, increased radius of the ventricular cavity and loss of wall thickness were observed at the end of the treatment (Supplemental Fig. 1). LV cavity and wall thickness changes were measured by two-dimensional-guided (2D) M-mode echocardiography as described (Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2013; Wandt et al., 1999); besides the increment in systolic arterial blood pressure (SBP) was monitored daily during Ang-II treatment. Comparison of morphometric and echocardiographic parameters at day seven and at the end of the protocol is shown in Table 1.

Ischemia/reperfusion and postconditioning in vivo

DCM rats were anesthetized by intramuscular injection of sodium pentobarbital (70 mg·kg⁻¹) and complete lack of pain response was assessed as described above. The animals received mechanical ventilation at a frequency of 80 beats per minute (bpm) and tidal volume of 200–250 µL after midline cervical incision and tracheotomy.

Thoracotomy was performed on the fourth left intercostal space after 15 min of stabilization and, then, the rats were randomly subjected to one of the following protocols: i) I/R, in which the upper branch of the left coronary artery was tied with a 6-0 nylon suture. The free ends of the ligature were used to form a noose around a plastic tube, which was placed flat on the myocardium. Coronary artery occlusion (CAO) was achieved by tightening the noose around the tube during 5 min as previously described (García-Rivas, 2006; Hagar et al., 1991; Parra et al., 2005). Occlusion induced immediate pallor of the left ventricle wall; then reflow was achieved by releasing the ligature during 30 min, reperfusion was confirmed by the color change in the ventricular surface, from cyanosis to hyperemia and by the onset of ventricular tachycardia (VT) (Supplemental Fig. 2B). ii) PostC consisted of the application of three cycles of hypoxia/reoxygenation (30 s each) after ischemia and before reperfusion. Some hearts were reperfused only during 10 min to evaluate initial ERK1/2 signaling, as previously reported by our group (Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2013) Finally, in iii) perfusion, rats underwent simulated surgical procedures. Procedures were monitored by three surface electrodes for electrocardiogram (ECG) recordings and one pressure transducer connected to a SIEVART program. Additionally, at least, 12 rats subjected to PostC were treated with 0.5 µmol/L of U0126 (U), a specific inhibitor of MEK/ERK1/2 during the ischemia period (Fig. 1B).

Measurement of infarct size

Infarct size was measured as reported (Reid et al., 2005). Briefly, hearts were quickly frozen, and cut into ~1 mm thick transverse slices.

Table 1 Changes in morphometric and echocardiographic parameters.

Parameters	Day			
	0	7	14	
Body weight (g)	448 ± 22.5	385 ± 8	$230\pm14^{\ast}$	
Heart weight (g)	1.8 ± 0.6	1.7 ± 0.2	$0.92 \pm 0.3^{*\#}$	
HW/BW (g/kg)	3 ± 0.12	$4.02 \pm 0.4^{*}$	$7.4 \pm 0.7^{**}$	
Lung weight (g)	2.8 ± 0.9	$1.7 \pm 0.9^{*}$	2.3 ± 0.5	
LW/BW (g/kg)	5.72 ± 0.63	4.97 ± 0.8	6.44 ± 0.3	
IVS (mm)	0.60 ± 0.06	$2.4 \pm 0.6^{*}$	$1.20 \pm 1^{*}$	
LVDd (mm)	5.3 ± 1.4	4.2 ± 0.3	4 ± 1.2	
LVSd (mm)	2.8 ± 0.2	1.7 ± 0.4	3 ± 0.6	
EF (%)	80 ± 14	94 ± 12	$49 \pm 20^{*\#}$	
FS (%)	50 ± 9	59 ± 14	$32 \pm 8^{*\#}$	
Functional parameters	n = 16	n = 16	n = 16	
Heart rate (beats/min)	420 ± 19	$265 \pm 24^{*}$	$268 \pm 19^{*}$	
Systolic pressure (mm Hg)	98 ± 10	$140 \pm 19^{*}$	190 ± 16 ^{*#}	

*P < 0.05 vs. Day 0; #P < 0.001 vs. Day 0.





Fig. 1. (A) Protocol of Ang-II administration to induce experimental dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) in rats. Wistar male rats were subjected to a continuous angiotensin-II human (Ang-II) release (435 ng-kg⁻¹ per min) for 14 days. (B) Protocols of ischemia and reperfusion (*J*(*R*), postconditioning (PostC), and inhibitor administration (PostC + U) in DCM rat hearts. The hearts were stabilized for 10 min before *I*/*R*, which consisted of 5 min of ischemia followed by 30 min of reperfusion. PostC (gray arrows) consisted of 3 cycles of 30 s of ischemia (gray solid areas) and 30 s of reperfusion (white areas) before reperfusion. PostC + U rats were treated with U0126 (0.5 µmol/L) during ischemia. Perfused hearts (P). Coronary artery occlusion (CAO) is indicated by black arrows.

The slices were incubated in 1% triphenyltetrazolium chloride (TTC) in sodium phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) at 37 °C for 20 min with constant agitation. Then, the slices were immersed in 12% formalin to enhance the contrast between stained and unstained tissues and finally placed on a holder between two glass covers. Digital images of each heart section were taken on a Hewlett-Packard Scanjet 3800 scanner (Hewlett-Packard), and the myocardial area-at-risk (AR) and infarct size (IS) per left ventricle were determined using the Image J (Javabased image processing) program, from NIH.

PHO-ERK1/2 activation in DCM heart homogenates

Equivalent amounts of protein (100 µg) from a pool of left ventricles were separated by SDS-PAGE and transferred to polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF) membranes. Activated ERK1/2 was determined by using 1:1000 monoclonal anti-PHO-ERK1/2, Thr202/Tyr204 (Cell Signaling Technology, Inc.). Total ERK1/2 was evaluated with 1:1000 anti-ERK1/2 polyclonal antibodies (Cell Signaling Technology, Inc.). Secondary antibodies conjugated with alkaline phosphatase were used to detect the protein content along with a chemiluminescence detection system (Millipore, Billerica, MA). Ratio between phosphorylated protein and total protein was obtained in the same membrane in all experiments and, then, data were compared among groups. GAPDH was detected as loading control.

Isolation and purification of mitochondria from DCM hearts

At the end of the protocols, some hearts were collected while still beating. Cytosols and mitochondria were isolated from a pool of, at least, three left ventricles (LV) by differential centrifugation (Martínez-Abundis et al., 2009). Cytosol fractions were obtained by centrifugation of the low-speed supernatants at 100,000 g for 30 min. Purified mitochondria were separated from other cellular constituents with similar buoyant densities by using a 40–60% Percoll gradient as previously described (Correa and Zazueta, 2005). Crossed contamination between mitochondrial and cytosolic fractions was evaluated by immunodetection of the cytosolic protein glyceraldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase (GAPDH) and the mitochondrial inner membrane

adenine nucleotide translocase (ANT). The content of GAPDH in the mitochondrial fraction was around 10%, whereas ANT was not detected in the cytosolic fraction (not shown).

ERK1/2 and PHO-ERK1/2 levels in purified mitochondria from DCM hearts

Equivalent amounts of protein (100 μ g) from mitochondria were separated by SDS-PAGE and transferred to PVDF membranes and subjected to western blot analysis against ERK1/2 and PHO-ERK1/2. Ratio between phosphorylated protein and total protein was obtained in the same membrane in all experiments. The inner membrane protein ANT was detected as internal control in all experiments.

Protein phosphorylation measurement in mitochondria from DCM hearts

Phosphorylated proteins were detected directly on gels using a basic dye staining kit (GelCode® Phosphoprotein Staining Kit, Pierce Chemicals, Rockford, IL). Briefly, the phosphoprotein phosphoester link was hydrolyzed with 0.5 N NaOH in the presence of calcium ions. Then, the newly formed insoluble calcium phosphate was incubated with ammonium molybdate in diluted nitric acid to yield insoluble nitrophospho-molybdate complex, which was stained with methyl green dye. Protein loading was evaluated by transferring the gels into PDVF membranes and incubating against anti-ANT polyclonal antibodies.

Analysis of mitochondrial membrane potential ($\Delta \Psi_m$) in DCM hearts

Tetraphenylphosphonium [H³] (TPP⁺) distribution in mitochondria was measured to determine $\Delta \Psi_m$. Two milligrams of protein was suspended in 0.5 mL of KME (5 mM K₂HPO₄, 10 mM succinate, 1 μ M rotenone and 0.8 μ M [H³] TPP⁺ [specific activity 1000 cpm/nmol]). ADP (200 μ M) and 50 μ M CaCl₂ were added to the medium and, where indicated, 0.05 μ M of the uncoupler carbonylcyanide mchlorophenylhydrazone (CCCP). The samples were incubated for 2 min and immediately centrifuged at 14,000 g for 10 min at 4 °C. [H³] (TPP⁺) content was measured in both the mitochondrial and the supernatant fractions. $\Delta\Psi_m$ values were calculated by using the Nernst equation.

Calcium transport in mitochondria from DCM hearts

Changes in mitochondria permeability were evaluated by measuring Ca^{2+} dynamics. Mitochondrial Ca^{2+} accumulation and retention was evaluated spectrophotometrically in a double-beam spectrophotometer at 675–685 nm by using the metallochromic dye arsenazo III (50 μ M). The reaction was carried out in 2.8 mL of a medium containing 125 mM KCl, 10 mM Hepes, and 3 mM inorganic phosphate (Pi), pH 7.3, supplemented with 200 μ M ADP, 2 μ M rotenone, and 100 μ M CaCl₂. The reaction was initiated by adding 2 mg of fresh mitochondria (Kendrick, 1976).

Mitochondrial protein oxidation

Protein oxidation in mitochondria was measured with the $\mathsf{OxyBlot}^{\mathsf{TM}}$ protein oxidation detection, according to manufacturer's instructions (OxyBlot Kit; Chemicon, Temecula, CA). Briefly, carbonyl residues resulting from oxidative modification in proteins were derivatized to 2,4-dinitrophenylhydrazone (DNP-hydrazone) by reaction with 2,4dinitrophenylhydrazine (DNPH). Then, samples were neutralized and separated by SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE). After electrophoresis, proteins were transferred to PVDF membranes and incubated overnight at 4 °C with antibodies specific to the DNP moiety of the proteins. Membranes were then incubated with horseradish peroxidase-conjugated secondary antibodies, and antibody binding was detected using a chemiluminescent detection system (Millipore). Maximal protein carbonylation was obtained after incubating mitochondria from perfused hearts with FeCl₂ plus H₂O₂ according to Garcia and Chávez (2007) and then, protein loading was evaluated by stripping the membranes and re-probing against anti-ANT polyclonal antibodies.

Translocation of cytosolic ERK1/2 to mitochondrial membranes

We followed the experimental strategy to purify multimolecular signaling complexes, called signalosomes, as reported with minor modifications (Quinlan et al., 2008). Briefly, DCM heart mitochondria were purified in 40–60% Percoll gradient. Two fractions were obtained, a high density fraction that contained purified mitochondria and a low-density fraction, which has been reported to contain signalosomes and that we will refer as signaling molecules (SM). SM purification was evaluated by measuring caveolin enrichment and ANT diminution by western blot. ERK1/2 and PHO-ERK1/2 contents were evaluated in this fraction.

Statistical analysis

Data are expressed as the mean value \pm standard deviation, by percentage or as otherwise indicated. Heart rate and arterial blood pressure were compared among groups using a two-way ANOVA for repeated measures. Differences in infarct size, ERK1/2 phosphorylation, oxidized protein, and phosphorylation protein among groups were compared by one-way ANOVA with Fisher LSD *post hoc* testing. Statistical analysis was performed using GraphPad Version 5.00 (GraphPad Software, La Jolla, CA). Statistical significance was defined at P < 0.05.

Results

Postconditioning in vivo maintains heart function in rats with dilated cardiomyopathy

Electrocardiograms from DCM rats maintained sinus rhythm along all the perfusion protocol, whereas reperfused hearts showed tachyarrhythmia from the first minutes of reperfusion. PostC hearts recovered sinus rhythm after an initial period, in which occasional arrhythmias persisted; however PostC-conferred cardioprotection was completely lost in U0126-treated hearts (Supplemental Fig. 2A–D).

The heart rate-pressure double product (DP), an indicator of myocardial work performance, was 44% (P < 0.001) of DP in I/R compared to PostC groups, whereas the PostC + U0126 group regained 82% of perfused hearts values at the end of the experiments (Supplemental Figs. 3 and 4). Heart rate values at the first minute of reperfusion were 466 \pm 53 beats·min⁻¹ in the I/R group vs. 336 \pm 62 beats·min⁻¹ in PostC hearts (P < 0.001) and 470 \pm 50 in PostC + U0126. Contractile force diminution observed during reperfusion was also recovered in PostC hearts. At the beginning of reperfusion, arterial blood pressure values were 86 \pm 32 mm Hg in PostC vs. 47 \pm 18 mm Hg in I/R rat hearts, P < 0.001. Accordingly, in postconditioned hearts + U0126, a complete decline of arterial pressure was observed at the end of the experiment.

Infarct size reduction in postconditioned hearts with dilated cardiomyopathy correlated with ERK1/2 activation

We also determined infarct size and evaluated RISK activation in DCM hearts subjected to the different protocols. We observed a significant 60% reduction in infarct size in PostC rat hearts as compared to I/R hearts, an effect reverted by U0126 (Fig. 2A). Cardioprotection was mimicked by PHO-ERK1/2 activation (Thr202/Tyr204) (Fig. 2B), but not by P13K phosphorylation, which, as we previously described (Hernández-Reséndiz et al., 2013), was almost completely inactivated during PostC in DCM hearts (Supplemental Fig. 5).

ERK1/2 activation and mitochondrial protein phosphorylation in DCM hearts

Our previous findings that the PostC cardioprotective effect in DCM hearts was supported mainly by ERK1/2 activity, along with evidences from other groups that ERK1/2 is localized in mitochondria (Baines et al., 2002), led us to determine if mitochondrial ERK1/2 subpopulation may participate in regulating mitochondrial function in hearts with dilated cardiomyopathy. First, we determined total ERK1/2 and PHO-ERK1/2 contents in purified mitochondria. PHO-ERK1/2 increased significantly in mitochondria from PostC hearts and this increase was inhibited by U0126 (Fig. 3A).

GSK-3 β inactivation by phosphorylation and subsequent translocation to the mitochondria has been related to cardioprotective signaling. This constitutively activated kinase is a substrate of ERK1/2 and/or other kinases. Accordingly, we observed that ERK1/2 inhibition decreased GSK3 β phosphorylation at critical Ser9 residue, in purified mitochondria from PostC hearts (Fig. 3B). Very interestingly, the levels of phosphorylated proteins in mitochondria correlated with ERK1/2 activation in the evaluated groups (Fig. 4A).

mPTP opening is associated with ERK1/2 activity in mitochondria from DCM hearts

We also sought to correlate mitochondrial ERK1/2 activation and protein phosphorylation with the regulation of the mitochondrial permeability transition pore (mPTP), a main target of cardioprotective signaling. We measured mitochondrial calcium transport and transmembrane potential ($\Delta \Psi_m$), parameters that evaluate mitochondrial integrity and are indicative of mPTP opening. Calcium was accumulated in mitochondria from perfused DCM hearts and remained inside until the inner membrane potential was dissipated by CCCP uncoupling. Conversely, mitochondria from I/R hearts were unable to retain calcium as a consequence of mPTP opening. PostC prevented this condition, whereas U0126-treatment abolished the protective condition (Fig. 4B). Accordingly, purified heart mitochondria from I/R hearts

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Fig. 2. Infarct size and ERK1/2 activation in DCM hearts. (A) Representative images of tetrazolium blue stained hearts and graph showing mean values \pm SD of infarct size/area at risk ratio. Individual measurements of the 12 hearts of each group are also shown. (B) ERK1/2 activation in DCM heart homogenates. Data represent mean \pm SD of 16 independent experiments, ***P < 0.001 vs. PostC, **P < 0.01 vs. PostC, **P < 0.05.

showed a dramatic loss in $\Delta\Psi_m$ $(-79\pm10$ mV), as compared to mitochondria from perfused $(-156\pm13$ mV) and PostC hearts $(-142\pm11$ mV), whereas U0126 abolished the protection conferred by PostC $(-76\pm16$ mV in PostC + U0126) (Fig. 4C) correlating with diminution in mitochondrial PHO-ERK1/2 levels. These data establish a correlation between kinase cascade activation and mPTP opening.

ERK1/2 activation correlates with the oxidative status of mitochondrial proteins from DCM hearts

Since mitochondria are an important source of reactive oxygen species (ROS) during ischemia/reperfusion injury, we also measured oxidative modification of mitochondrial proteins as an indicator of damage and to demonstrate further a relationship between ERK1/2 and mitochondrial integrity. Maximal protein carbonylation was obtained after incubating mitochondria from perfused hearts with FeCl₂ plus H₂O₂ (Garcia and Chávez, 2007). Data of all groups were normalized with this control. Therefore, mitochondria from perfused hearts showed 21% of protein carbonylation, which increased to 78% in mitochondria from I/R hearts. PostC decreased these levels to 36%, and the effect was reverted in conditions of ERK1/2 inhibition (Fig. 5).

ERK1/2 is translocated from the cytosol to the mitochondrial outer membranes in vesicular signaling complexes enriched with caveolin

Next, we determined if ERK1/2 was translocated from the cytosol to purified mitochondria in PostC hearts. In Fig. 6, we observed that PHO-ERK1/2 location was restricted to the cytosol in perfused hearts and to both the cytosol and mitochondria during reperfusion. PHO-ERK1/2 signal increased along with augmented levels of PHO-Akt and PHO-GSK3 $\!\beta$ in mitochondria from PostC hearts. We discard that cytosolic contamination in mitochondrial fractions may be responsible of the observed effects, as increased activation of the kinase in this compartment concurred with the maintenance of mitochondrial function and cardioprotection, whereas cytosolic ERK1/2 activity did not change. These results indicate that the kinases are translocated to the mitochondria, although PHO-GSK3B was also found in the cytosolic fraction. The fact that ERK1/2 inhibition decreased GSK3B phosphorylation in mitochondria suggests that this kinase could be phosphorylated in both the cytosol and in mitochondria, whereas upstream kinases are delivered to mitochondria.

Finally, we explored the possible role of caveolar signaling molecules (signalosomes), described by Garlid's group (Quinlan et al., 2008), in



Fig. 3. U0126 inhibits ERK1/2 activity and GSK3 β activation in mitochondrial fractions from DCM hearts. ERK1/2, PHO-ERK1/2, GSK3 β and PHO-GSK3 β contents in mitochondria from the left ventricles of DCM hearts subjected to perfusion (P), ischemia/reperfusion (I/R), and, PostC in the absence and presence of 0.5 μ M U0126 (PostC + U). Bars show the mean \pm SD of total and phosphorylated protein ratio from six separate experiments. ***P < 0.001.

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Fig. 4. U0126 decreases protein phosphorylation and induces opening of the permeability transition pore in mitochondria from postconditioned DCM hearts. (A) Phosphorylation levels of mitochondrial proteins from left ventricles of DCM hearts subjected to the same protocols. (C +) is a positive control protein (Phosvitin) and C (-) is a negative control protein (Soybean tryps in inhibitor). The adentic translocase (ANT) content is shown as marker of mitochondrial membranes. Data represent mean values \pm D0 of six independent experiments, *P < 0.05. (B) Representative recordings of calcium accumulation in mitochondria and (C), transmembrane potential values ($\Delta \Psi_m$) in mitochondria isolated from left ventricles of DCM hearts of the abovementioned groups in the presence of CCCP. Calcium uptake was evaluated in at least six separate experiments of each group, whereas $\Delta \Psi_m$ data represent the mean \pm SD of 12 different experiments. *P < 0.001.

ERK1/2 delivery to mitochondria during postconditioning. Results shown in Fig. 7 demonstrated that increased ERK1/2 activity observed in mitochondrial fractions after PostC (Figs. 3A and 6), was in fact attributable to the signalosome fraction associated with the organelles. Once both fractions were separated, the signal disappeared from the mitochondria, but was maintained in the signalosome fraction. Very interesting was the observation, that ERK1/2 inhibition not only turns off the activity of downstream kinases, PHO-Akt and PHO-eNOS, but diminished caveolin content suggesting that the signaling molecules are preferentially recruited into the signalosomes in their activated state (Fig. 7).

Discussion

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In this work, we showed that ERK1/2 signaling might directly impinge on the mitochondrial proteome, contributing to PostC cardioprotection in a rat model of dilated cardiomyopathy. Activated ERK1/2 was localized in purified mitochondria, concurring with increased phosphorylation levels of mitochondrial proteins and inhibition of mPTP opening. Our results also indicate that PHO-ERK1/2 is majorly organized within signalosomes associated with the mitochondrial membranes and that such vesicles contained other phosphokinases, which may participate in PostC-conferred protection.

There are few reports that have investigated the mitochondrial phosphoproteome profile in pathophysiological conditions. An example is the study of selective activation of PKCe and translocation to mitochondria in nonpathological hypertrophy (Chen et al., 2001). Also, it has been suggested that alterations in the phosphorylation of mitochondrial proteins are related to mitochondrial dysfunction and cardiac unbalance in heart failure (O'Rourke et al., 2011) and, that tyrosine phosphorylation of the adenine nucleotide translocator (ANT) and the voltage dependent anion channel (VDAC) is reduced in mitochondria from rats subjected to ischemia and reperfusion (Feng et al., 2008; Schwertz et al., 2007). More recently, selective activation of PKCe in



Fig. 5. Inhibition of mitochondrial ERK1/2 increases the level of oxidized proteins in mitochondria from DCM hearts. Protein carbonylation in mitochondria from left ventricles of DCM hearts subjected to perfusion (lane 2), ischemia/reperfusion (lane 3), and PostC in the absence (lane 4) and presence (lane 5) of 0.5 μ M U0126. Percent of oxidized proteins was obtained by comparing against mitochondria from perfused hearts incubated with FeCl₂ and H₂O₂ (lane 1 = 100% carbonylation). Control loading was determined by stripping the membranes and incubating versus anti-ANT polycional antibodies. **P < 0.001.

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Fig. 6. PHO-Akt, PHO-ERK1/2, and PHO-GSK3β contents in cytosolic and purified mitochondrial fractions from postconditioned DCM hearts. (A) Representative immunoblots of 4 independent experiments. Data represent mean ± SD of six independent experiments. *P < 0.001 vs. mitochondria and **P < 0.001 vs. cytosol.

correlation with the phosphorylation of several mitochondrial proteins involved in glucose, lipid metabolism and oxidative phosphorylation was related to the cardioprotective effect against ischemic injury (Budas et al., 2010).

The cardioprotective effects of ERK1/2 on mitochondrial functions have already been described, but mainly referred to apoptosis regulation. It has been reported, for example, that ERK1/2 phosphorylates GSK3 β and increases pro-survival Bcl-2 to Bax ratio in a mouse model of ischemia/reperfusion (Das et al., 2012). In addition, mitochondrial ERK1/2 regulates mPTP opening through the negative regulation of cyclophylin D phosphorylation in tumoral cells (Rasola et al., 2010).

However, to our knowledge, only one study has addressed a direct role of mitochondrial ERKs in cardioprotection. Baines et al. (2002) showed that transgenic activation of PKCɛ conferred cardioprotection to mice subjected to I/R, promoting the formation of mitochondrial signaling modules conformed by PKCɛ-ERK1/2 and p38 MAPK, whose



Fig. 7. PHO-ERK1/2, PHO-Akt, PHO-eNOS, and caveolin-3 contents in cytosol, mitochondria, and signaling molecules from postconditioned DCM hearts. (A) Representative immunoblots of six independent experiments. Cytosolic fraction (Cyt), mitochondrial protein (Mit) and signaling molecules (SM) from perfused hearts (P), ischemic-reperfused hearts (I/R), PostC and PostC in the presence of 0.5 μ M U0126 (PostC + U). Data represent mean \pm SD of six independent experiments. ***P < 0.001 vs. P, I/R, and PostC + U in SM fractions.

activities were associated with phosphorylation and inactivation of the pro-apoptotic protein Bad (Baines et al., 2002). Recently, PHO-ERK1/2 increment in the mitochondrial fraction of both ischemic and pharma-cological PostC hearts has been suggested to depend on a redox-sensitive translocation mechanism (Penna et al., 2013).

It is worth mentioning that other mitochondrial kinases have been linked to the regulation of mitochondrial targets in post-ischemic tissue. For example, PKC_B interacts with the mPTP in the brain (Kowalczyk et al., 2012), whereas PHO-Akt forms complexes with ANT in hearts infused with erythropoietin (Kobayashi et al., 2008). However, few investigations have addressed the import of mitochondrial kinases. Heat shock proteins and mitochondrial membrane potential may be related to mitochondrial import of specific proteins. A coordinated action of heat shock protein 90 and the translocase of the outer membrane (TOM) complex in PKCE translocation to heart mitochondria was reported in an ex vivo model of I/R (Budas et al., 2010). PKCE translocation may take place in vesicles containing multimolecular signaling complexes assembled in the plasmatic membrane, since the addition of such complexes, isolated from pre and postconditioned hearts, promotes mitoKATP channel opening in mitochondria from untreated hearts (Quinlan et al., 2008). Furthermore, a specific association between mito K_{ATP} and its regulatory kinase, PKC ϵ , has been observed in proteoliposomes (Jaburek et al., 2006).

ERK1/2 has been found in submitochondrial fractions containing both outer membrane and intermembrane space proteins in the brain (Alonso et al., 2004), whereas ERK1 has been associated with the voltage dependent anion channel (VDAC) in HeLa cells exposed to a proliferative stimulus (Galli et al., 2009). On the other hand, Baines et al. (2002) suggested that ERK1/2 is a resident of cardiac mitochondria and might be activated by PKCɛ in the same compartment (Baines et al., 2002). This hypothesis cannot be discarded, since, despite the growing evidence of ERK1/2 trafficking to mitochondrial membranes, neither ERK1/2 nor any of the components of the cascade seem to contain a mi tochondrial localization signal. It is worth mentioning that we observed basal levels of this kinase in our mitochondrial preparations.

The mechanism by which ERK1/2 is activated in mitochondria could result from either *in situ* phosphorylation by an upstream kinase like PKCc or, translocation of already activated ERK1/2. Demonstration that 6-hydroxydopamin elicits activity-related localization of ERK1/2 to mitochondria in a human neuroblastoma cell line (Gucek and Murphy, 2010), along with the proposed existence of a mitochondrial ERK1/2 and phospho-ERK1/2 pool, which depend on cytosolic ERK activation after growth factors or stress stimulation in tumor cells (Galli et al., 2009), favors the second hypothesis.

Tissue protection against reperfusion injury has been associated with the formation of plasmatic membrane signaling microdomains (signalosomes), which might interact with mitochondria. Recently, it was shown that ischemic preconditioning induces the formation of caveolae and increases their association with mitochondria (Fridolfsson et al., 2012). It is well known that caveolin contains a conserved "caveolin scaffolding domain" which functions as the physical binding site for a number of signaling molecules (Segal et al., 1999). The scaffolding domain of caveolin binds with specific motifs of cardioprotective signaling proteins, such as eNOS (Koneru et al., 2007) and, furthermore it has been reported that ischemia-reperfusion activates ERK1/2 and other MAPKs in myocardial caveolin-3-enriched fractions (Ballard-Croft et al. 2006). On the other hand, it is known that both Akt and ERK activation prevents GSK3\beta-mediated mitochondrial damage (mPTP opening) (Zhang et al., 2011), although the coupling mechanisms of kinase activation with mitochondrial function are still under investigation.

A direct connection between caveolae/caveolin and enhanced mitochondrial function during ischemic stress was recently provided in mice overexpressing this protein (Fridolfsson et al., 2012) and, last but not the least, it has been proposed that caveolae serve as platforms of signal transduction pathways in physiological and pathological scenarios and that caveolae bring together and regulate protein function in the cardioprotective response (Sun et al., 2012). Therefore, our finding that caveolin-3 content decreases in association with ERK1/2 dephosphorylation in the signaling platforms (Fig. 7), suggests that ERK1/2 in-activation may disrupt or at least modify the structure of the signaling platforms, impacting on mitochondrial function.

The precise molecular mechanisms by which caveolin-3 in myocytes protects the heart from ischemia–reperfusion injury and, how does caveolin in mitochondria enhance adaptation to cellular stress, require to be further studied. In this sense it is tempting to speculate that caveolin in conjunction with other proteins that may include those described here, may exert such protective effects.

Conclusions

We suggest that vesicles enriched with caveolin-3 could form structures that may drive ERK1/2, GSK3β and Akt to mitochondria, regulating mPTP opening, and contributing to the cardioprotective effect conferred by PostC in hearts with dilated cardiomyopathy. Further experiments are required to identify novel mitochondrial targets of mitochondrial ERKs and other kinases to determine the relevance of mitochondrial proteome phosphorylation in cardioprotection.

Conflict of interest statement

No competing interest

Acknowledgments

This article is part of the doctoral thesis of Sauri Hernández-Reséndiz in the Biomedical Sciences Doctoral Program, School of Medicine, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Sauri Hernández-Reséndiz received a scholarship from the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT). This work was partially supported by Grant 177527 to C2 from CONACYT, Mexico.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at http://dx. doi.org/10.1016/j.lfs.2014.04.037.

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Basic Science and Experimental Study

Postconditioning Protects Against Reperfusion Injury in Hypertensive Dilated Cardiomyopathy by Activating MEK/ERK1/2 Signaling

SAURI HERNÁNDEZ-RESÉNDIZ, MSc,¹ FRANCISCO-JAVIER ROLDÁN, MD,² FRANCISCO CORREA, PhD,¹ EDUARDO MARTÍNEZ-ABUNDIS, PhD,³ GABRIEL OSORIO-VALENCIA, BSc,⁴ OSCAR RUÍZ-DE-JESÚS, BSc,⁴ ERICK ALEXÁNDERSON-ROSAS, MD,⁴ ROSA M. VIGUERAS, PhD,⁵ MARTHA FRANCO, PhD,⁶ AND CECILIA ZAZUETA, PhD¹

México City, México

ABSTRACT

Background: Postconditioning (PostC) cardioprotection has been related to up-regulation of survival kinases; however, the efficacy of PostC and the role of ERK1/2 (extracellular signal-regulated kinase 1/2) remain to be substantiated in hypertension states that may produce "pathologic remodeling." Therefore, in this work we compared PostC effect and assessed the role of ERK1/2 activation in a model of hypertensive dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM), versus normal (Sham) and compensated hypertrophy (CH) models. **Methods and Results:** Rats were subjected to angiotensin II administration until development of cardiovascular diseases. Then, isolated hearts underwent ischemia followed by PostC and reperfusion. PostC maintained the double product in all groups. PostC reduced infarct size from $36.16 \pm 3\%$ to $9.8\% \pm 2.2$ in Sham, from $37.5 \pm 2.4\%$ to $11.2 \pm 3\%$ in CH, and from $40 \pm 2.4\%$ to $11.55 \pm 3\%$ in DCM. Inhibition of the mitogen-activated protein kinase kinase (MEK)/ERK1/2 pathway had different effects on PostC-conferred

cardioprotection in the evaluated groups. Interestingly, although phosphatidylinositol-3-kinase activation was negligible in PostC DCM hearts, we observed Akt activation. **Conclusions:** PostC confers cardioprotection through alternative survival pathways in normal and CH

hearts, and cardiac function recovery in DCM relies mainly on MEK/ERK1/2 cascade. Downregulation of phosphatidylinositide 3-kinase does not affect the cardioprotective response in DCM, because MEK/ERK1/2 cascade may convey direct Akt activation, strengthening downstream signaling. (*J Cardiac Fail 2013;19:135–146*)

Key Words: Postconditioning, ERK1/2, hypertrophy, dilated cardiomyopathy, cardioprotection.

Hypertrophic ventricular remodeling is an adaptive response of the heart to stress conditions that results in diverse biochemical and functional changes, such as alterations in Ca^{2+} handling, sarcomere function, signaling cascades, and energy metabolism.¹ Hypertensive left ventricular (LV) hypertrophy augments susceptibility to ischemic injury^{2,3,4} and, under sustained stress, progresses toward systolic heart failure. Accordingly, the Framingham study⁵ indicates that the risk of developing heart failure is doubled in the population with mild hypertension and quadruples when blood

1071-9164/\$ - see front matter © 2013 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cardfail.2013.01.003

From the ¹Department of Cardiovascular Medicine, Ignacio Chávez National Institute of Cardiology, México City, México, ²Department of Echocardiography, Ignacio Chávez National Institute of Cardiology, México City, México; ³Department of Biochemistry, Ignacio Chávez National Institute of Cardiology, México City, México; ⁴Department of Nuclear Medicine, Ignacio Chávez National Institute of Cardiology, México City, México; ⁵Department of Nephrology, Ignacio Chávez National Institute of Cardiology, México City, México and ⁶Department of Histopathology, National Institute of Pediatrics, México City, México.

Manuscript received October 15, 2012; revised manuscript received December 19, 2012; revised manuscript accepted January 3, 2013. Reprint requests: Cecilia Zazueta, PhD, Department of Biochemistry, Ignacio Chávez National Institute of Cardiology, Juan Badiano No. 1,

Colonia Sección XVI, México 14080, DF México. Tel: +52-55-5573 2911 x1465; Fax: +52-55-5573-0926. E-mail: azazuetam@yahoo.com Funding: Sauri Hernández-Reséndiz was supported in part by the Doctoral Program in Biomedical Sciences, School of Medicine, National Autonomous University of México, and a scholarship from the National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), México. This work

Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT), México. This work was partially supported by grants 80791 to CZ and 79661 to MF from the CONACYT. See page 145 for disclosure information.
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pressure values exceed 160/95 mm Hg. In this regard, secondary dilated cardiomyopathy is characterized by chamber dilation associated with impaired systolic and diastolic function, whose predisposing causes are diverse and often include long-term adaptive hypertrophy and hypertension.⁶ The mechanisms that determine the transition from physiologic to pathologic hypertrophy in the heart are not completely understood, but activation of different signaling cascades has been implicated.^{7,8,9} Interestingly, a number of these signal transduction pathways are also activated by ischemic postconditioning (PostC). PostC is a powerful cardioprotective strategy against reperfusion injury, which consists of the application of brief periods of ischemiareperfusion immediately before prolonged reperfusion. In this context, the extracellular signal-regulated kinase (ERK) pathway, along with other members of the reperfusion injury survival kinases (RISK) pathway, eg, phosphatidylinositol-3-kinase (PI3K)/Akt and protein kinase C (PKC) ε , are matter of intensive research in PostC hearts.^{3,10,11,12,13,14,15} However, relatively rare efforts have been made to define whether the efficacy of RISK signaling is blunted by either risk factors or systemic diseases that cause or, at least, are associated with ischemic heart pathology. It is conceivable that systemic diseases, which exert multiple effects and biochemical alterations, may affect the cardioprotective response of PostC,¹⁶ as occurred in a model of cardiovascular aging in which ERK1/2 signaling downregulation was related to protection loss.¹⁷ Regarding heart diseases associated with remodeling processes, Penna's group reported that PostC-conferred cardioprotection was lost when slight hypertrophy developed into marked hypertrophy18; whereas other work showed that PostC improved postischemic systolic function in spontaneously hypertensive rats with increased hypertrophy markers.¹⁹ Studies of the relevance of ERK1/2 signaling in remodeled hearts have also rendered inconclusive data. For example, PostC-induced cardioprotection was ascribed to this pathway in a hypertrophic mouse model of transverse aortic constriction,²⁰ whereas in remodeled hearts from rats subjected to coronary artery ligation and one-kidney one-clip, the predominant RISK pathway evoked for PostC-induced protection was the PI3K/ Akt pathway.²¹ Therefore, to get further insight into the cardioprotective role of the RISK pathway in the transition from physiologic to pathologic remodeling, in the present study we evaluated the role of ERK1/2 and PI3K in PostC hearts with compensatory hypertrophy that develops into hypertensive dilated cardiomyopathy.

Materials and Methods

Chemicals were of reagent or higher grade from Sigma-Aldrich (St Louis, Missouri), and antibodies were purchased from Cell Signaling Technology (Danvers, Massachusetts) unless otherwise specified. The enhanced chemiluminescence detection system was obtained from Merck Millipore Corporation (Bedford, Massachusetts); alkaline phosphatase–conjugated secondary antibodies were from Zymed Laboratories (San Francisco, California); U0126 and LY294002 were purchased from Cell Signaling Technology.

This investigation was performed in accordance with the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, published by the United States National Institutes of Health (US-NIH).

Experimental Groups

Three groups were evaluated: 1) normal (Sham); 2) cardiac hypertrophy (CH); and 3) dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). Osmotic pumps (Alzet; Durect Corp., Palo Alto, California) containing human angiotensin II (Ang-II) (Merck Calbiochem, Darmstadt, Germany) were surgically implanted at the scapular area of male Wistar rats. The CH and DCM groups were subjected to a continuous Ang-II release of 435 ng kg⁻¹ min⁻¹ in Ringer lactate for 7 and 14 days, respectively. The same surgical procedure was applied to the Sham group, in which the implant was a Teflon device of similar size and weight as the osmotic pump; the animals carried the Teflon devices for 14 days but were not exposed to Ang-II.

It is important to note that animals without implant were also evaluated and showed results similar to those obtained in the Sham group (data not shown).

Cardiac Remodeling Markers

Systolic pressure (SP) was measured daily by connecting the tail cuff to a pneumatic pulse transducer and a programmed electrosphygmomanometer (Narco Biosystems, Austin, Texas) as described previously.²² Recordings were made in triplicate by means of a Grass polygraph (Grass Medical Instruments, Quincy, Massachusetts). At the end of the Ang-II treatment, the hearts and lungs from all groups were evaluated by absolute heart weight/body weight (HW/BW) and absolute lung weight/body weight ratio (LW/BW). Histologic analysis was performed with the hematoxylin-eosin technique. Echocardiographic images were obtained by means of a Sonos 5500 echocardiographer (Koninlijke Philips Electronics, Eindhoven, The Netherlands) with a 12-MHz transducer. Parasternal long- and short-axis views were analyzed in the anesthetized rats. Two-dimensional-guided M-mode echocardiography was performed and determinations were made from at least 3 beats in each rat. LV cavity and wall thickness were measured to calculate the ejection fraction (EF) and fraction shortening (FS) as follows: %EF = [(EDV - ESV/EDV) × 100]; and %FS = [(LVDd - LVSd/LVDd) \times 100], where LVDd is LV dimension at end-diastole, LVSd is LV dimension at end-systole, EDV is end-diastolic volume, and ESV is end-systolic volume. EDV and ESV were calculated as: 1.047 \times LVDd 3 and 1.047 \times LVSd,3 respectively according to Wandt et al.23 Further characterization of the models included histologic analysis, electrocardiograms (Supplemental Fig. 1) and myocardial perfusion analysis by single-photon-emission computerized tomography (SPECT).

Prognostic Value of SPECT

Some rats were anesthetized by intraperitoneal injection with sodium pentobarbital (60 mg/kg) and received ²⁰¹Tl (150 μ Ci) intravenously. After 15 minutes of stabilization, 32 projections of 128 × 128 pixels were acquired with a gamma camera equipped with 36 photomultiplier tubes arranged in a square for a field view of 370 × 370 mm (Millennium MPR/MPS gamma camera; General Electric). The distribution in resting phase was acquired for 54 minutes. Projections were transferred and stored in DICOM format in a processing station (Xeleris 2.1753; GE Healthcare)

and the images were processed with the SPECT software Quantitative Gated SPECT/Quantitative Perfusion SPECT. The iterative reconstruction algorithm was OSEM (ordered subsets expectation maximization), and the Butterworth filter was used for filtering cuts. The spatial resolution of the images was 3×3 mm. The assessment of myocardial perfusion was carried out by specialists of the Ignacio Chávez National Institute of Cardiology.

After analysis, hearts were excised, frozen immediately, and stored in liquid nitrogen. Cardiac tissue was powdered with a prechilled pestle in a frozen mortar and dissolved in ice-cold buffer containing 50 mmol/L Tris-HCl, 120 mmol/L NaCl, 0.5% IGEPAL, 100 µmol/L NaF, and 200 µmol/L NaVO3, pH 8.0, and centrifuged at 4000 g for 10 minutes. The proteins in the homogenates were separated by sodium dodecyl sulfate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE), transferred to polyvinylidene difluoride (PVDF) membranes, and evaluated for remodeling by determining metalloproteinase-2 (MMP-2) activation and atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP) content, with the use of 1:1,000 MMP-2 polyclonal antibodies (Merck Millipore Corp., Billerica, Massachusetts) and 1:1,000 ANP polyclonal antibodies (Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Santa Cruz, California), respectively. Enhanced chemiluminescence was used as detection system, and control loading was determined by incubating the membranes against anti-GAPDH (Abcam, Cambridge, Massachusetts) polyclonal antibodies (1:25,000).

Isolated Heart Preparations

Rats (400–450 g) were anesthetized with sodium pentobarbital (60 mg/kg), and complete lack of pain response was assessed by determining pedal withdrawal reflex. Then, sodium heparin was injected (1,000 U/kg) and 5 minutes later a midsternal thoracot-omy was performed. The heart was rapidly excised, placed in ice-cold Krebs-Henseleit buffer solution at pH 7.4, containing 118 mmol/L NaCl, 4.75 mmol/L KCl, 1.18 mmol/L, KH₂PO₄, 1.18 mmol/L MgSO₄·7H₂O, 2.5 mmol/L CaCl₂, 25 mmol/L NaH-CO₃, 3 mmol/L glucose, and 0.1 mmol/L sodium octanoate, and mounted onto a Langendorff heart perfusion system. Hearts (average weight 1 g) were perfused retrogradely via the aorta at a constant flow rate of 12 mL/min with Krebs-Henseleit solution, which was continuously bubbled with 95% O₂ and 5% CO₂ at 37°C. Cardiac performance was measured at LV end-diastolic pressure

(LVEDP) of 10 mm Hg with the use of a latex balloon inserted into the left ventricle and connected to a pressure transducer.²⁴ Throughout the experiment, LV developed pressure (LVDP) was continuously recorded by means of a computer acquisition data system designed by the Instrumentation and Technical Development Department of the National Institute of Cardiology, México. Heart rate (HR) is expressed as beats/min. Cardiac contractile function was calculated by subtracting LVEDP from LV peak systolic pressure (LVSP), yielding LVDP. The double product (DP) was calculated by multiplying HR by LVDP.

The protocols of ischemia/reperfusion, PostC, and inhibitor administration are outlined in Figure 1A, and protocols to determine kinase activation kinetics are depicted in Figure 1B. Hearts that developed arrhythmia before ischemia were discarded and replaced. Therefore, all analyses represent hearts that did not show electrical dysfunction before ischemia.

Effect of ERK1/2 Inhibition in Postconditioned Hearts

The hearts of all groups received 0.5 µmol/L U0126 (Cell Signaling Technology) a specific inhibitor of mitogen-activated protein kinase kinase (MEK) 1/2, during the PostC maneuver and reperfusion (Fig. 1A). At the end of the experiment, the hearts were rapidly frozen to evaluate infarct size. The dose used in these experiments did not compromise myocardial function in either CH or DCM hearts, even if continuously perfused for 110 minutes (Supplemental Fig. 2).

Effect of PI3K Inhibition in Postconditioned Hearts

The hearts of all groups were perfused with 0.5 µmol/L of the specific PI3K inhibitor LY294002 (Cell Signaling Technology), during the PostC maneuver and reperfusion (Fig. 1A). At the end of the experiments final myocardial infarct size was evaluated. The dose used in these experiments did not compromise myocardial function in either CH or DCM hearts, even if continuously perfused for 110 minutes (Supplemental Fig. 3A).

Infarct Size Measurement

The hearts to be used for infarct size calculations were frozen at -20° C for 24 hours. Later, the hearts were cut into \sim 3-mm slices visually and immersed in 1% triphenyltetrazolium chloride solution



Fig. 1. Experimental protocols in isolated rat hearts. (A) Protocols of ischemia and reperfusion (I/R), postconditioning (PostC), and inhibitor administration. (B) Protocols of kinase activation kinetics. All hearts were stabilized (S) for 20 minutes before I/R consisting of 30 minutes of ischemia followed by 60 minutes of reperfusion. PostC consisted of 5 cycles of 30 seconds of ischemia (*solid areas*) and 30 seconds of reperfusion (*white areas*) before reperfusion; PostC+U hearts were treated with U0126 (0.5 μ mol/L) during PostC and heart reperfusion; PostC+LY hearts were treated with LY294002 (0.5 μ mol/L) during PostC and heart reperfusion. Black arrows indicate the start of application. Perfused hearts (P) were perfused during 110 minutes. The *red arrows* indicate the times of sampling for kinase determination.

in phosphate buffer, pH 7.4, for 20 minutes at 37°C. The samples were incubated in a solution of formalin for 5 minutes, placed between 2 glasses separated by a fixed 2-mm distance and scanned on a Hewlett-Packard Scanjet 3800 scanner. In the globally ischemic heart, the entire ventricle is at risk of infarction; therefore, only the infarct zones were traced, and the resulting areas were calculated with the ImageJ Java-based image processing program from the USA National Institutes of Health.²⁵ Infarct size was expressed as percentage of infarct size/area at risk (IS/AR%).

Kinase Activation in Postconditioned DCM Hearts

At least 6 hearts from each group were homogenized for Western blot analysis as indicated in Figure 1B. Equivalent amounts of protein (100 µg) from heart homogenates were separated by SDS-PAGE and transferred to PVDF membranes. Phosphorylated (pho) ERK1/2 was determined by with the use of monoclonal anti-pho-ERK1/2 Thr202/Tyr204 (1:1,000) and total ERK1/2 with the use of anti-ERK1/2 polyclonal antibodies (1:1000); pho-PI3K was evaluated by with the use of polyclonal anti-pho-PI3K Tyr458/Tyr199 (1:1,000) and total PI3K with the use of anti-PI3K monoclonal antibody (1:1,000). Activated Akt was detected with anti-pho-Akt Thr308 polyclonal antibodies (1:1,000), whereas total Akt was evaluated with 1:100 anti-Akt monoclonal antibody (1:1,000). Phosphorylated (glycogen synthase kinase 3 β) (pho-GSK3 β) was evaluated with anti-pho-GSK3ß Ser9 polyclonal antibodies (1:1,000) and total GSK3ß with anti-GSK3ß monoclonal antibody (1:1,000). Secondary antibodies conjugated with alkaline phosphatase were used to detect the protein content along with a chemiluminescence detection system (Millipore). Ratio between phosphorylated protein and total protein was obtained in the same membrane in all experiments. and then data were compared among groups.

Data Analysis

Data are presented as mean \pm SD for each experimental protocol. Significance ($P \le .05$) or otherwise indicated was determined by repeated measures using analysis of variance analysis and Bonferroni post hoc test (Graphpad Prism version 5.00 [trial]).

Results

Compensatory Hypertrophy and Hypertensive Dilated Cardiomyopathy Development

At the end of treatment, the body weight of DCM rats was 50% and 40% lower than that of Sham and CH rats, respectively. Heart weight (normalized to body weight) increased in both CH and DCM compared with Sham rats (P < .05), and heart weight decreased in DCM compared with both Sham and CH groups (P < .05). Lung weight moderately increased in DCM, but only when related to body mass. Heart rate significantly decreased in both CH and DCM groups, whereas systolic pressure increased dramatically in CH (168 \pm 9 mm Hg) and further in DCM rats (219 \pm 14 mm Hg) versus the Sham group (109 \pm 10 mm Hg; Table 1). The histologic analysis also showed that LV heart walls of the CH group were severely thickened, showing concentric hypertrophy; whereas ventricular dilation, increased radius of the ventricular cavity, and loss of wall thickness were observed in DCM hearts. Analysis of SPECT

 Table 1. Structural and Functional Parameters from Sham, CH, and DCM Animals

Sham	СН	DCM
445 ± 13.2	370 ± 10.2	221 ± 12.9*
1.3 ± 0.2	1.5 ± 0.6	$0.96 \pm 0.3^{*\#}$
2.84 ± 0.4	$4.62 \pm 0.2*$	$6.99 \pm 0.3^{**}$
2.5 ± 0.6	$1.9 \pm 0.7*$	2 ± 0.2
5.31 ± 0.4	5.05 ± 0.4	6.44 ± 0.3
0.64 ± 0.04	$2.24 \pm 0.3*$	$1.13 \pm 0.06*$
5.1 ± 1.2	4 ± 0.5	4.6 ± 0.9
2.5 ± 0.4	1.9 ± 0.2	$3.2 \pm 0.2^{\#}$
88 ± 12	92 ± 10	67 ± 14* [#]
51 ± 6	57 ± 12	$31.2 \pm 10^{*#}$
(n = 10)	(n = 10)	(n = 10)
410 ± 12	$270 \pm 14^*$	246 ± 13*
109 ± 10	$168 \pm 9*$	$219 \pm 14^{*\#}$
	$\begin{array}{c} Sham \\ 445 \pm 13.2 \\ 1.3 \pm 0.2 \\ 2.84 \pm 0.4 \\ 2.5 \pm 0.6 \\ 5.31 \pm 0.4 \\ 0.64 \pm 0.04 \\ 5.1 \pm 1.2 \\ 2.5 \pm 0.4 \\ 88 \pm 12 \\ 51 \pm 6 \\ (n = 10) \\ 410 \pm 12 \\ 109 \pm 10 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c $

CH, compensated hypertrophy; DCM, hypertensive dilated cardiomyopathy; HW/BW, heart weight/body weight ratio; LW/BW, lung weight/body weight ratio; EF, ejection fraction; FS, fraction shortening; IVS, interventricular septum; LVDd, left ventricular dimension at end-diastole; LVSd, left ventricular dimension at end-systole.

Values are presented as the mean \pm SD of the indicated number of animals in each experimental group.

*P < .05 vs Sham. *P < .05 vs CH.

< .05 vs cm.

images showed perfusion abnormalities in DCM rats, measured by radiotracer ²⁰¹Tl retention, and echocardiographic images showed changes in interventricular septum, LVDd, and LVDs in DCM hearts (Fig. 2A). The decrease of heart weight observed in this group, compared with the CH group, suggested gradual loss of cardiomyocytes.

DCM rat hearts also showed systolic dysfunction, with a 28% increase in LVSd and 25% reduction in EF compared with the Sham group ($67 \pm 14\%$ vs $88 \pm 12\%$; P < .05; Table 1). Cardiac remodeling protein MMP-2 was highly up-regulated in both CH and DCM (Fig. 2B) and very interestingly, ANP, a putative marker of heart failure, was observed only in DCM (Fig. 2C). These parameters were associated with high mortality rate in DCM rats. Consistent with these alterations, the hematoxylin-eosin staining revealed typical enlargement of myocytes in the CH group and myocyte disarray at multiple foci in DCM tissue (Supplemental Fig. 1A), and electrocardiographic alterations were also observed in this group (Supplemental Fig. 1B).

Overall, analysis of the data indicated that Ang-II administration at the doses used induced severe hypertension and ventricular hypertrophy (CH group) that progressed to hypertensive DCM with systolic dysfunction (DCM group).

Basal pho-PI3K, pho-Akt, pho-MEK, and pho-ERK1/2 Levels in Sham, CH, and DCM Hearts

Basal content of phosphorylated and total proteins MEK1/2, ERK1/2, PI3K, and Akt were evaluated in all groups. pho-MEK1/2, pho-ERK1/2, and pho-Akt maintained similar levels in Sham, CH, and DCM hearts. Conversely a clear diminution in pho-PI3K (P < .001 vs Sham and CH hearts) was observed in DCM hearts (Fig. 2D).



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Fig. 2. Cardiac morphology, function, and remodeling in compensated hypertrophy (CH) and dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) hearts. (A) Heart cross-sections stained with hematoxylin-eosin (H&E), showing changes in left ventricular wall thickness (*asterisk*). Bar = 1.5 mm. SPECT images of heart short-axis division in one-third half (a) and horizontal long-axis (b) divisions. Healthy tissue is colored in yellow and unperfused areas in purple. *White arrows* indicate zones of decreased perfusion. Bar = 3.5 mm. Representative echocardiographic images (Echo) of the left ventricular dimension in end-systole (*yellow arrow*). Representative Western blots of cardiac remodeling markers normalized with GAPDH content: (B) metalloproteinase-2 (MMP-2) and (C) atrial natriuretic peptide (ANP). (D) Basal content of P13K, pho-P13K, Akt, pho-Akt, MEK, pho-MEK, ERK1/2, and pho-ERK1/2 in Sham, CH, and DCM hearts. Representative Western blots of 6 different heart preparations and signal intensity of pho-kinase and total kinase ratio. Data represent the mean \pm SD of 6 different experiments. **P* < .005 vs Sham; ***P* < .001; #*P* < .0672.

Postconditioning Effect on Function and Infarct Size in Sham, CH, and DCM Isolated Hearts

Analysis of cardiac function during 110 minutes of constant perfusion, during the protocol of ischemia-reperfusion (I/R), and during PostC, was performed in Sham (Fig. 3A), CH (Fig. 3B), and DCM (Fig. 3C) hearts. Isolated preparations of CH hearts showed a significant increment in double product at the beginning of the experiments (32,914 \pm 1,705 mm Hg \cdot beats/min) compared with Sham hearts (21,711 \pm 186 mm Hg \cdot beats/min), owing to the establishment of higher LVDP in CH versus Sham hearts (Supplemental Table 1). Both Sham and CH hearts subjected to I/R lost double product during reperfusion, collapsing at the end of the experiment. Conversely, PostC maintained heart function at all reperfusion times, at comparable values to those observed in nonischemic and nonreperfused hearts (Fig. 3A and B).

On the other hand, DCM preparations lost up to 52% of double product during perfusion (from $32,101 \pm 3,890$ mm Hg \cdot beats/min to $16,604 \pm 1,847$ mm Hg \cdot beats/min), revealing chronic maladaptive changes characteristic of heart failure, which were unmasked from the very first minutes of perfusion. These hearts were more susceptible to reperfusion damage as LVDP and frequency were lost (Supplemental Table 1). However, PostC DCM hearts had a dramatic outcome, with the mechanical performance improved at rates observed in DCM nonischemic hearts (Fig. 3C).

Accordingly, infarct size after ischemia and reperfusion was $36 \pm 3\%$ in Sham, $38 \pm 2.4\%$ in CH, and $40 \pm 2.4\%$ in DCM hearts. Postconditioning diminished the infarct size by 72.9% in Sham, 69% in CH, and 71% in DCM hearts (Fig. 4A, B, and C, respectively), but such recovery was not related to augmented ERK1/2 phosphorylation in Sham or CH hearts (Fig. 4D and E). In contrast, pho-ERK1/2 was increased in PostC DCM hearts, in correlation with infarct size reduction (Fig. 4F).

Effect of ERK1/2 and PI3K Inhibition on the Cardioprotection Exerted by Postconditioning in Sham, CH, and DCM Isolated Hearts

To assess the effect of ERK1/2 and PI3K inhibition on cardiac function of postconditioned Sham, CH, and DCM hearts, we administered U0126 (U), a specific MEK1/2 inhibitor, or LY294002 (LY), a PI3K inhibitor, to the isolated hearts during the PostC cycles and during reperfusion (Fig. 1A). Postconditioning-conferred cardioprotection was

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Fig. 3. Heart function in postconditioned hearts. Double product of (A) Sham, (B) CH, (C) and DCM hearts. Data represent the mean of six different experiments \pm SD. **P* < .05 vs P; #*P* < .001 vs P and PostC in each group. P, constant perfusion; other Abbreviations as in Figures 1 and 2.

maintained in Sham hearts treated with either U or LY (Fig. 5A; Supplemental Table 1). Double product partially diminished in PostC CH hearts in the presence of either inhibitor: 16,036 \pm 4,331 mm Hg \cdot beats/min in U-treated hearts and 19,017 \pm 1,605 mm Hg \cdot beats/min in LY- treated hearts after 60 minutes of reperfusion (Fig. 5B) as a consequence of LVDP diminution (Supplemental Table 1). In DCM hearts

subjected to PostC, only ERK1/2 inhibition promoted changes in cardiac function, which was depressed from the beginning and throughout the reperfusion phase, culminating in mechanical performance values similar to those observed at the end of I/R (3,813 \pm 2128 mm Hg \cdot beats/min vs 1,056 \pm 744 mm Hg \cdot beats/min; Fig. 5C; Supplemental Table 1).



Fig. 4. Final myocardial infarct size and pho-ERK1/2 levels in postconditioned hearts: (A and D) Sham hearts, (B and E) CH hearts, (C and F) and DCM hearts. *P < .05 vs P; **P < .05 vs PostC; n = 6. Abbreviations as in Figure 2.

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Fig. 5. U0126 and LY294002 effect on the double product of (A) Sham, (B) CH, and (C) DCM postconditioned hearts. Data represent the mean \pm SD of 6 different experiments. **P* < .05 vs P and PostC, and #*P* < .001 vs P and PostC. Abbreviations as in Figures 1–3.

Neither U nor LY treatment significantly increased the infarct size in PostC Sham or CH hearts (Fig. 6A and B), whereas U administration increased (P < .05) the infarct size in DCM hearts ($34 \pm 3\%$ vs $12 \pm 3\%$ in PostC; Fig. 6C).

Effect of U and LY on ERK1/2 Activation in DCM Isolated Hearts

Because results suggested that cardioprotection was sustained mainly by ERK1/2 activation in DCM hearts, we focused on that experimental group. First, we analyzed possible changes in the activation of upstream and downstream elements of the ERK1/2 signaling pathway evoked by PostC in isolated DCM hearts. Activated MEK was observed, whereas c-Raf, P90RSK (90-kDa ribosomal S6 kinase), and MSK1 (mitogen- and stress-activated protein kinase 1) remained constant under all conditions (Supplemental Fig. 4). Next, we performed Western blot analysis to relate the functional effects exerted by ERK1/2 inhibition in DCM hearts.



Fig. 6. Effect of U0126 and LY294002 on final myocardial infarct size in postconditioned hearts. Representative images of infarcted tissue after 60 minutes of reperfusion of (A) Sham, (B) CH, and (C) DCM hearts subjected to the different protocols (left panels). Individual and mean \pm SD infarct size/area at risk (IS/AR; %) values of 6 different experiments (right panels). **P* < .05 vs P; ***P* < .05 vs PostC. Abbreviations as in Figures 1–3.



Fig. 7. Effect of U0126 and LY294002 on ERK1/2 activation in postconditioned DCM hearts. Representative Western blots of ERK1/2 and pho-ERK1/2 content in 3 independent preparations of DCM hearts subjected to the different experimental protocols. Bars show the mean \pm SD of pho-ERK1/2 and ERK1/2 ratio from 6 separate experiments. **P* < .05 vs P and PostC. Abbreviations as in Figures 1–3.

The increase in pho-ERK1/2 induced by PostC was dramatically reduced in hearts treated with U, but not in those treated with LY, confirming the inhibitors' specificity (Fig. 7).

Kinetics of ERK1/2 Activation in DCM Hearts

To determine the critical time of activation and signal transduction kinetics of ERK1/2 in DCM hearts, we evaluated samples at 5 and 20 minutes of ischemia and at 5, 10, and 60 minutes during reperfusion after I/R and PostC. pho-ERK1/2 levels were the same in the stabilization period and initial ischemia. Then, at 20 minutes of ischemia, levels drastically diminished and remained low throughout the reperfusion period (I/R). PostC induced ERK1/2 reactivation at 10 minutes of reperfusion, which was maintained until 60 minutes of reperfusion at higher levels than in I/R hearts (P < .001; Fig. 8).

Effect of U and LY on PI3K Activation in DCM Isolated Hearts

Although evidence indicated that pho-PI3K levels were intrinsically diminished in DCM hearts (Fig. 2D), we sought to determine the efficacy of its inhibitor to reinforce the main role of ERK1/2 in the cardioprotective effect of PostC in such hearts. Western blots were overexposed to visualize pho-PI3K in all groups. As observed, PI3K levels remained constant in perfused, I/R, and PostC hearts. The administration of U did not decrease pho-PI3K content (Fig. 9A), but LY depressed PI3K phosphorylation, discarding any participation of this kinase on PostC-conferred cardioprotection in DCM hearts. To get a deeper insight into



Fig. 8. Kinetics of ERK1/2 activation in I/R and postconditioned DCM hearts. Representative Western blots of ERK1/2 and pho-ERK1/2 content in independent preparations of DCM hearts subjected to I/R and PostC. Samples were obtained from hearts subjected to I/R or to PostC during the stabilization period, after 5 and 20 minutes of ischemia, and at 5, 10, and 60 minutes of reperfusion. Bars show the mean \pm SD of pho-ERK1/2 and ERK1/2 ratio from 6 separate experiments. **P* < .001 vs S; ***P* < .001 vs I/R at minute 10 and at minute 60. Abbreviations as in Figures 1–3.

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Fig. 9. Effect of U0126 and LY294002 on PI3K/Akt activation in DCM postconditioned hearts. (A) Representative Western blots of PI3K and pho-PI3K content in 3 independent preparations of DCM hearts subjected to the different experimental protocols. (B) Representative Western blots of Akt and pho-Akt content in three independent preparations of DCM hearts subjected to the different experimental protocols. Bars show the mean \pm SD of total and phosphorylated protein ratio from 6 separate experiments. *P < .05; **P < .001 vs P and PostC. Abbreviations as in Figures 1–3.

the effects of PI3K dysfunction in DCM hearts, we also analyzed Akt phosphorylation levels. Surprisingly, we observed that PostC promoted a trend to pho-Akt increase and that Akt activation was modified by both PI3K and ERK1/2 inhibitors (Fig. 9B). Very interestingly, the kinetics in Akt phosphorylation paralleled ERK1/2 activation. Reactivation was initiated at 10 minutes and was sustained throughout the reperfusion period (60 min), remaining activated at higher levels than those observed in I/R hearts at the same reperfusion times (P < .001; Fig. 10). Finally, we measured GSK3 β activation, because that serine/threonine kinase is a known downstream substrate of Akt. As expected, GSK3 β phosphorylation increased after ischemic PostC in DCM hearts, following the same pattern of ERK1/2 and Akt activation (Fig. 11).

Discussion

Understanding the environment of ischemic diseases and the impact of comorbid factors is crucial to assessing the efficacy of PostC as a therapeutic strategy. An emerging picture of the mechanisms activated by PostC has been drawn by with the use of pharmacologic approaches. It is proposed that G-protein—coupled receptors and downstream RISK sig-naling cascades are involved.^{26,27,28} This cytosolic pathway presumably culminates at mitochondria, where cardioprotective signaling seems to work by either inhibiting the mitochondrial permeability transition pore²⁹ or preventing conditions that promote its opening.³⁰ Although practically all studies to date support this general scheme for PostCconferred cardioprotection, it is not known if the efficacy is blunted in comorbidities models and if so, whether single or multiple modifications of the protective pathway are implicated. Regarding PostC cardioprotection in remodeled hearts, controversy increases when hypertrophy develops into pathologic remodeling. For example, it has been reported that PostC failed to provide cardioprotection in a cardiac hypertrophy model of chronically nandrolone-treated rats,¹⁸ whereas a trend toward reduction of infarct size with PostC was observed in spontaneously hypertensive rats (SHR).19 Conversely, a recent report showed that ischemic postconditioning was lost in the hypertrophied myocardium of SHR.³¹ We found that PostC protection persists even when initial/moderate hypertrophy has developed into pathologic remodeling. Our results also indicated that pho-ERK1/2 becomes more relevant with progression from an early compensatory stage (CH) into a pathologic stage (DCM). We observed that pharmacologic inhibition of pho-ERK1/2 diminished the cardioprotective effect of PostC on CH heart function and induced a slight but nonsignificant increase in infarct size. Conversely, in DCM, pho-ERK1/2 inhibition completely abolished the cardioprotective effect of PostC in both parameters: function and infarct size. We can not reconcile the seemingly discrepant outcomes between functional and infarct size data in CH hearts when subjected to U treatment. However, similar discrepancies have been obtained by other groups in hypertensive rats. For example, it has been reported that PostC slightly improved systolic function in SHR hearts, even when the effect on infarct size was not significant.19 Also, Fantinelli and Mosca (2007) found that PostC recovered postischemic systolic function of SHR hearts, although they did not measure infarct size.32 We decided to show both data sets, because only a few studies besides these have evaluated the effect of PostC on cardiac function^{26,33} and because the observed functional responses in normal established CH and in DCM may have relevance in designing specific therapies under different remodeling states.

In accord with earlier studies, in which differential activation of signal transduction pathways in human hearts with hypertrophy or advanced heart failure was observed,³⁴ we found that transition from an adaptative to a pathologic state is accompanied with reduced PI3K activity. In this

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Fig. 10. Kinetics of Akt activation in I/R and postconditioned DCM hearts. Representative Western blots of Akt and pho-Akt content in independent preparations of DCM hearts subjected to I/R and PostC. Samples were obtained from hearts subjected to I/R or to PostC during the stabilization period, after 5 and 20 minutes of ischemia, and at 5, 10, and 60 minutes of reperfusion. Bars show the mean \pm SD of pho-Akt and Akt ratio from 6 separate experiments. **P* < .001 vs S; ***P* < .001 vs I/R at minute 10 and at minute 60. Abbreviations as in Figures 1–3.

respect, deregulation of redox-sensitive protein tyrosine phosphatases and altered PI3K/Akt signaling has been observed in vascular cells subjected to Ang-II treatment.³⁵ Despite defective PI3K activation, the protective effect of



Fig. 11. Effect of U0126 and LY294002 on GSK3- β activation in postconditioned DCM hearts. Representative Western blots of GSK3 β and pho-GSK3 β content in 3 independent preparations of DCM hearts subjected to the different experimental protocols. Bars show the mean \pm SD of total and phosphorylated protein ratio from 6 separate experiments. **P* < .05 vs P and PostC. Abbreviations as in Figures 1–3.

PostC was preserved by MEK/ERK1/2 signaling in DCM hearts. Relevant to this finding is the report by Miki et al. (2007), which showed that impaired PI3K/Akt signaling favored the activation of a compensatory ERK-mediated pathway that induced protection against infarction.³⁶

The intriguing observation that Akt remained active in spite of PI3K dysfunction in DCM postconditioned hearts and, that such activity was sensitive to MEK/ERK1/2 inhibition suggested a link between both cascades. In this respect, it has been reported that originally modeled linear signaling conduits might intersect to coregulate downstream functions.^{36,37,38} Goodman et al. (2008) reported that enhanced myocardial functional recovery, along with Akt phosphorylation, occurred through PI3K-independent signals in postconditioned hearts.²⁶ Furthermore, a cross-talk between the PI3K/Akt and MEK/ERK1/2 cascades has been observed in cardioprotection evoked by preconditioning.³⁹

To our knowledge, Akt has not been reported to be activated by ERK1/2; however, it is known that this kinase phosphorylates multiple substrates, which include transcription factors, protein kinases and phosphatases, cytoskeletal elements, regulators of apoptosis, and a variety of other signaling-related molecules.⁴⁰ Therefore, it would be possible that ERK1/2, besides inducing Akt phosphorylation, may indirectly maintain pho-Akt levels by inactivating serine/threonine phosphatases. In this respect, protein tyrosine phosphatase 2C has been demonstrated to be regulated by ERK1/2.⁴¹ Another control point may be the existence of

inhibitory connections between both cascades.³⁹ It is known, eg, that Raf-1 phosphorylation and inactivation are mediated by PI3K/Akt and that pharmacologic removal of this cascade leads to an increase of Raf-1-kinase and ERK1/2 activity due to the suppression of the cross-talk inhibitory effect.^{11,38} The observed downstream activation of GSK3 β , whose phosphorylation and subsequent inhibition has been correlated with the mitochondrial permeability pore regulation,^{42,43} provides a possible link between mitochondrial function and the observed cardioprotection in DCM hearts.

The present findings should be interpreted within the constraints of potential limitations. We are aware that the ex vivo isolated heart model takes any study further away from clinical relevance than the in vivo model and, furthermore, that blood-perfused isolated heart preparations demonstrate comparatively minor perturbations in metabolism compared with buffer-perfused preparations.⁴⁴ However, because it has been demonstrated that PostC protection is not dependent on circulating blood factors or cells,⁴⁵ we think that the isolated model as presented here is adequate to study differential response at functional and at the molecular level. We can not rule out that additional survival kinases or alternative mechanisms independent from signaling cascades may be activated and contribute to the cardio-protective effect of postconditioning in DCM hearts.

In conclusion, our observations indicate that PostC exerts cardioprotection in clearly established hypertrophy (CH group) as well as in conditions in which hemodynamic overload progresses toward systolic dysfunction (DCM group). Furthermore, in this pathologic state, alterations of a key modulator of cardioprotection (pho-PI3K) did not abolished postconditioning cardioprotection, possibly due to a cross-talk between ERK1/2 and Akt. Synergistic effect between both pathways could strengthen downstream signaling. Thus, the drug-mediated preservation of activated ERK1/2 in DCM could be an approach to be used to prevent heart injury during reperfusion.

Acknowledgments

The authors thank Mr José Santamaría for technical assistance.

Disclosures

None.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found online at http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cardfail.2013.01.003.

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