

## Effects of Sulfur Amino Acids on Tyrosyl or Serine/Threonine Phosphorylation and Translocation of Cytosolic Compounds to Cell Membrane in Stimulus-treated Human Neutrophils

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## Abstract

We investigated the effects of various sulfur amino acids on the phosphorylation of proteins and the translocation of cytosolic compounds to cell membrane in stimulus-treated human neutrophils using specific monoclonal antibodies. D,L-homocysteine and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone enhanced fMLP-induced tyrosyl phosphorylation of proteins and the translocation of p47phox, p67phox, and rac to the cell membrane in a concentration-dependent manner. L-cystathionine, NAc-L-cysteine and carboxymethylcysteine suppressed the tyrosyl phosphorylation and translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane. L-cystathionine, L-cysteine and NAc-L-cysteine suppressed PMA-induced serine/threonine phosphorylation and the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane. L-cysteine, NAc-L-cysteine and D,L-homocysteine enhanced AA-induced serine/threonine phosphorylation and the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane, but L-cystathionine had opposite effects. These results indicated that the effects of sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation and the translocation of p47phox, p67phox, and rac to the cell membrane in the stimulus-treated human neutrophils were in parallel with those of the stimulus-induced superoxide generation reported in previous paper. L-cysteine, D,L-homocysteine and L-cystathionine weakly inhibited lipid peroxidation, but the other sulfur amino acids tested had no effect.

**KEYWORDS:** sulfur amino acids, phosphorylation, superoxide, cytosolic compounds, human neutrophils

## Original Article

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Noriko Kitaoka<sup>a</sup>, Koichi Yamashita<sup>a</sup>, and Hiroyuki Kodama<sup>a\*</sup><sup>a</sup>Department of Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine, Kochi Medical School, Nankoku, Kochi 783-8505, Japan,<sup>b</sup>Department of Anesthesiology, First Affiliated Hospital of China Medical University, Nanjing North Road 55,Shenyang 110001, China, and <sup>c</sup>Department of Natural Products Chemistry, School of Pharmacy,

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We investigated the effects of various sulfur amino acids on the phosphorylation of proteins and the translocation of cytosolic compounds to cell membrane in stimulus-treated human neutrophils using specific monoclonal antibodies. D,L-homocysteine and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone enhanced fMLP-induced tyrosyl phosphorylation of proteins and the translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane in a concentration-dependent manner. L-cystathionine, NAc-L-cysteine and carboxymethyl-cysteine suppressed the tyrosyl phosphorylation and translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane. L-cystathionine, L-cysteine and NAc-L-cysteine suppressed PMA-induced serine/threonine phosphorylation and the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane. L-cysteine, NAc-L-cysteine and D,L-homocysteine enhanced AA-induced serine/threonine phosphorylation and the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane, but L-cystathionine had opposite effects. These results indicated that the effects of sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation and the translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane in the stimulus-treated human neutrophils were in parallel with those of the stimulus-induced superoxide generation reported in previous paper. L-cysteine, D,L-homocysteine and L-cystathionine weakly inhibited lipid peroxidation, but the other sulfur amino acids tested had no effect.

**Key words:** sulfur amino acids, phosphorylation, superoxide, cytosolic compounds, human neutrophils

We have reported that, among the cystathionine metabolites found in the urine of 2 patients with cystathioninuria as well as in rat and bovine brain [1-5], cystathionine ketimine significantly enhanced superoxide generation in human neutrophils.

It has been reported that NAc-L-cys reduces superoxide generation response to N-formyl-methionyl-

leucyl-phenylalanine (fMLP) and phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA) and partially protects against lipid peroxidation in human polymorphonuclear [6].

Wada *et al.* [7, 8] reported that L-cystathionine significantly scavenges the superoxide radicals derived from the xanthine-xanthine oxidase system and protects the gastric mucosa from acute injury induced by ischemia-reperfusion. After that, it was reported that homocysteine enhances the oxidative stress of neutrophils, which underscores the potential role of phagocytic cells in vascular wall injury through O<sub>2</sub><sup>-</sup> release

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in hyper-homocysteinemia conditions [9].

It is known that human peripheral neutrophils play a number of critical roles in the defense against microorganisms [10], and that superoxide anion ( $O_2^-$ ) production in neutrophils is stimulated during phagocytosis by treatment with a variety of stimuli such as certain chemoattractants and activators of protein kinase [11–14]. This phenomenon relies in part on the ability of PMN leukocytes to generate large amounts of superoxide anion and related reactive oxygen species; this is known as the respiratory burst.

The respiratory burst is mediated by the activation of the NADPH oxidase, a multi-component enzyme, localized in the plasma membrane of phagocytic leukocytes. The core enzyme consists of 5 components: p40<sup>phox</sup>, p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, p22<sup>phox</sup>, and gp91<sup>phox</sup>. In the resting cell, three cytosolic components remain as a complex (p40<sup>phox</sup>, p47<sup>phox</sup>, and p67<sup>phox</sup>) and the other components; p22<sup>phox</sup> and gp91<sup>phox</sup>, are located in the membranes of secretory vesicles as heterodimeric flavohemoprotein known as cytochrome *b*<sub>558</sub>. When the cell is exposed to stimuli, p47<sup>phox</sup>, together with p67<sup>phox</sup>, migrates to the membrane associating with cytochrome *b*<sub>558</sub> under the control of rac via a cytoskeletal scaffold [15–19].

It is also known that the response of neutrophils to an activating stimulus can be potentiated sometimes by prior exposure to a priming agent [20]. A variety of proinflammatory stimuli have been observed to exercise this effect [21–23].

We have reported that D,L-homocysteine and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone enhanced fMLP-induced superoxide generation by the increased translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup> and p67<sup>phox</sup> to the cell membrane; that L-cystathionine and NAc-L-cys suppressed fMLP- and PMA-induced superoxide generation; and that N-acetyl-L-cystathionine also had scavenging activity against DPPH radicals and superoxide anion [24].

Recently, we reported that triterpenoid compounds isolated from root bark of *Aralia elata* suppressed tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation of proteins and translocation to the plasma membrane of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup> and rac in parallel with the effect of stimulus-induced superoxide generation [25, 26].

In the present study, to clarify the mechanisms underlying the effects of sulfur amino acids on stimulus-induced superoxide generations in human neutro-

phils, we investigated the effects of various sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl and serine/threonine phosphorylation of proteins; on the translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane in stimulus-treated human neutrophils; and on lipid peroxidation of erythrocyte membrane ghost by hydroxyl radicals.

## Materials and Methods

**Chemicals.** From Sigma Chemical (St. Louis, MO, USA), we obtained, L-cystathionine, L-cysteine, N-acetyl-L-cysteine (NAc-L-cys), carboxymethylcysteine (CMC), D,L-homocysteine, D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone, NADPH, ferricytochrome *c* (*cyt. c*), superoxide dismutase (SOD), N-formylmethionyl-leucyl-phenylalanine (fMLP), phorbol 12-myristate 13-acetate (PMA), and arachidonic acid (AA). All other reagents used were of analytical grade and were from Wako Pure Chemical Industries (Osaka, Japan) unless otherwise noted.

**Isolation of neutrophils.** Polymorphonuclear leukocytes were isolated from human peripheral blood of healthy volunteers by Ficoll-Hypaque (Flow Laboratories, Rockville, MD, USA) density gradient centrifugation [27] and were washed twice with Krebs-Ringer phosphate solution [28]. The cells were resuspended in KRP at a concentration of  $1 \times 10^8$  cells/ml.

**Translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to neutrophil membrane.** The cytosolic components to the cell membrane were translocated as reported elsewhere [29]. Isolated PMNs were preincubated in a phosphate-buffered saline glucose solution containing 4 mM glucose, 1.2 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, 2 mM NaN<sub>3</sub> (for inhibition of O<sub>2</sub> consumption), and 0, 50, 100, 200, 400 μM sulfur amino acid for 6 min at 37°C. Then, PMNs were stimulated by adding stimulus (12.5 nM fMLP, 1 nM PMA or 10 μM AA) for 3 min at 37°C. The cells were spun at  $1,500 \times g$  for 5 min at 4°C and resuspended in buffer A [100 mM KCl, 3 mM NaCl, 3.5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, and 10 mM Pipes (pH 7.3)] after standing on ice for 20 min.

To separate their postnuclear supernatants (PNS), cells were first disrupted by sonication and spun at  $500 \times g$  for 5 min at 4°C. PNS fractions were then separated into membrane and cytosol at  $200,000 \times g$  for 20 min at 4°C.

The pellet was resuspended in 50 μl of 109 mM

Tris-HCl (pH7.5) containing 3.5% SDS, 0.0087% bromophenol blue, and 17.4% glycerol, and sonicated for 1h to obtain membrane fractions.

For immunoblot analysis, the membrane fraction was subject to sodium dodecyl sulphate-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) with 10% gel. The electrophoresed proteins were transferred onto Immobilon-P membrane (Nippon Millipore, Tokyo, Japan) using a semidry blotting apparatus for 90 min at 20 V.

The transferred proteins were probed with a mixture of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, rac 1 primary monoclonal antibody (BD Biosciences, Franklin Lakes, NJ, USA) and horseradish peroxidase-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse immunoglobulin G antibody (E.Y. Laboratories San Mateo, CA, USA) detected by the ECL Western Blotting Detection System (GE Healthcare Bio-Science KK, Tokyo, Japan). EB-1 lysate, as the positive control, was the indicator for the location of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup> and rac.

#### ***Detection of tyrosyl and serine/threonine phosphorylation of neutrophils proteins.***

Neutrophils ( $1 \times 10^6$  cells/ml) were incubated in 1 ml of KRP containing 1mM CaCl<sub>2</sub>, 10mM glucose, and 0–400 μM sulfur amino acid for 3 min at 37°C, after which they were stimulated by 12.5nM fMLP, 10 μM AA, or 1nM PMA, and incubated for 3 min at 37°C.

Ice-cold 45% trichloroacetic acid of 0.5ml (final concentration 15%) containing 1mM sodium vanadate and phenyl-methylsulfonyl fluoride (2mM) was added to stop the reaction. After incubation for 30 min at 4°C, the mixture was centrifuged at 10,000 × g for 20 min at 4°C. The precipitate was washed twice with diethylether-ethanol (1 : 1, v/v) and then dissolved in 50 μl of 62.5mM Tris-HCl (pH6.8) containing 2% superoxide dismutase, 0.7M β-mercaptoethanol, and 10% glycerol.

For immunoblot analysis, the sample was subject to SDS-PAGE with a 12% gel. The electrophoresed proteins were transferred onto Immobilon-P membrane (Nippon Millipore) using a semidry blotting apparatus for 90 min at 20 V. Tyrosyl phosphorylated proteins were probed with phosphotyrosine-specific monoclonal antibody (PY-20; ICN Biochemicals) or phosphoserine/threonine-specific monoclonal antibody (BD Biosciences), respectively, then probed with horseradish peroxidase-conjugated rabbit anti-mouse immunoglobulin G antibody (E.Y. Laboratories) and

detected by the ECL Western Blotting Detection System (GE Healthcare Bio-Science KK) [30]. The molecular masses of the proteins were determined using prestained molecular weight standards (14,300–200,000 molecular weight range; Gibco BRL).

#### ***Determination of lipid peroxidation of erythrocyte membrane ghosts by hydroxyl radicals.***

Venous blood from human healthy volunteers was collected in sodium citrate. Erythrocytes were pelleted by centrifugation and washed 3 times in saline. White ghosts were prepared by repeated washing and lysis at 4°C in 5mM phosphate buffer [31]. Erythrocyte membrane ghosts were then diluted with saline to obtain a final concentration of 1 mg protein/ml.

Hydrogen peroxide (3mM) and FeSO<sub>4</sub> (5mM) were added to erythrocyte membrane ghost suspensions (1 ml) with each of the sulfur amino acids (0–600 μM) in 5 separate experiments. The suspensions were incubated for 30 min at 37°C. Hydroxyl radical-induced lipid peroxidation of erythrocyte membrane ghosts was determined by measuring thiobarbituric acid-reactive substances [32].

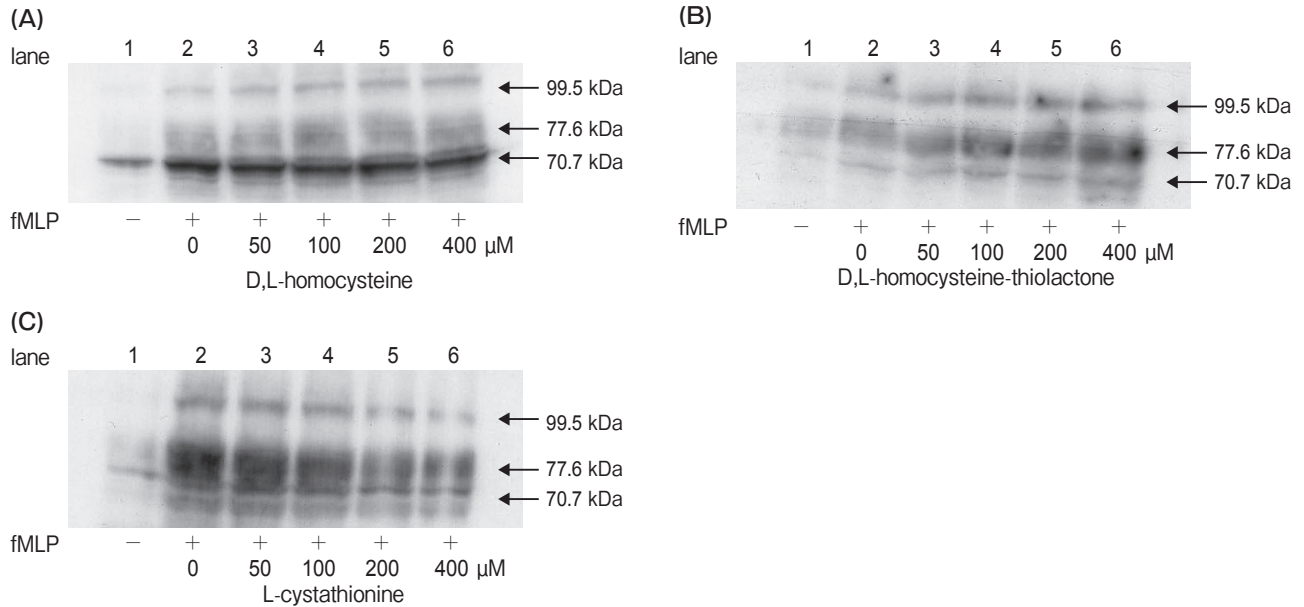
## **Results**

In the present study, we examined the effect of sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation of proteins and the translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane in stimulus-induced human neutrophils.

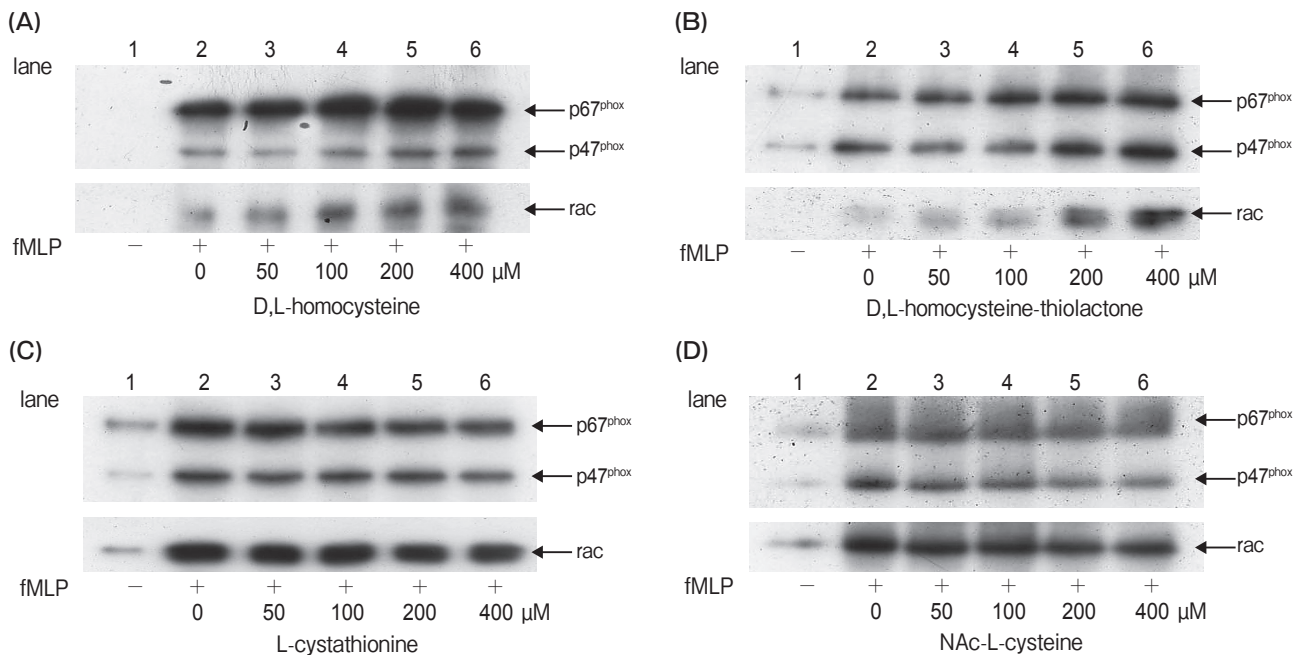
#### ***Effects of sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl phosphorylation and cytosolic compounds in fMLP-induced human neutrophils.***

When neutrophils were incubated with fMLP, tyrosyl phosphorylation of 99.5, 77.6, and 70.7 -kDa proteins was induced. D,L-homocysteine and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone increased tyrosyl phosphorylation in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 1A–B). Conversely, L-cystathionine suppressed tyrosyl phosphorylation in a dose-dependent manner (Fig. 1C).

D,L-homocysteine or D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone increased the translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane in a concentration-dependent manner, as shown in Fig. 2A and B. On the other hand, L-cystathionine and NAc-L-cys decreased the translocation of cytosolic p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac in a concentration-dependent manner (Fig. 2C and D).



**Fig. 1** Effects of D,L-homocysteine, D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone, and L-cystathionine on fMLP-induced tyrosyl phosphorylation of human neutrophil proteins. The tyrosyl-phosphorylated-proteins were detected by immunoblotting using phosphotyrosine-specific monoclonal antibodies. Lane 1, without compound; lane 2, 12.5nM fMLP; lanes 3–6, 12.5nM fMLP and 50, 100, 200, 400 μM compound. (A) D,L-homocysteine, (B) D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone, (C) L-cystathionine.



**Fig. 2** Effects of D,L-homocysteine, D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone, L-cystathionine, and NAC-L-cysteine on translocation to the cell membrane of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac in fMLP-stimulated neutrophils. The translocation to the cell membrane of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac was detected by immunoblotting using p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac1-specific monoclonal antibodies as described in Materials and Methods. Lane 1, without compound; lane 2, 12.5nM fMLP; lanes 3–6, 12.5nM fMLP and 50, 100, 200, 400 μM compound. (A) D,L-homocysteine, (B) D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone, (C) L-cystathionine, and (D) NAC-L-cysteine.

**Effect of sulfur amino acids on serine/threonine phosphorylation and cytosolic compounds in PMA-induced human neutrophils.** When neutrophils were incubated with PMA, serine/threonine phosphorylation of 63.5 and 37.3 kDa was increased. L-cysteine, NAc-L-cys and L-cystathionine suppressed serine/threonine phosphorylation in a concentration-dependent manner. (Fig. 3A-C).

However, serine/threonine phosphorylation did not decrease in the presence of D,L-homocysteine (data not shown).

The translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane decreased slightly in a dose-dependent manner in the presence of L-cysteine, NAc-L-cys and L-cystathionine, but D,L-homocysteine did not decrease (Fig. 4A-D).

**Effect of sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl phosphorylation and cytosolic compounds in AA-induced human neutrophils.** When neutrophils were incubated with AA, tyrosyl phosphorylation of 31.1 and 29.3 kDa was induced. The tyrosyl phosphorylation increased in the presence of L-cysteine, NAc-L-cys and D,L-homocysteine (Fig. 5A-C).

Conversely, tyrosyl phosphorylation was suppressed in the presence of L-cystathionine in a con-

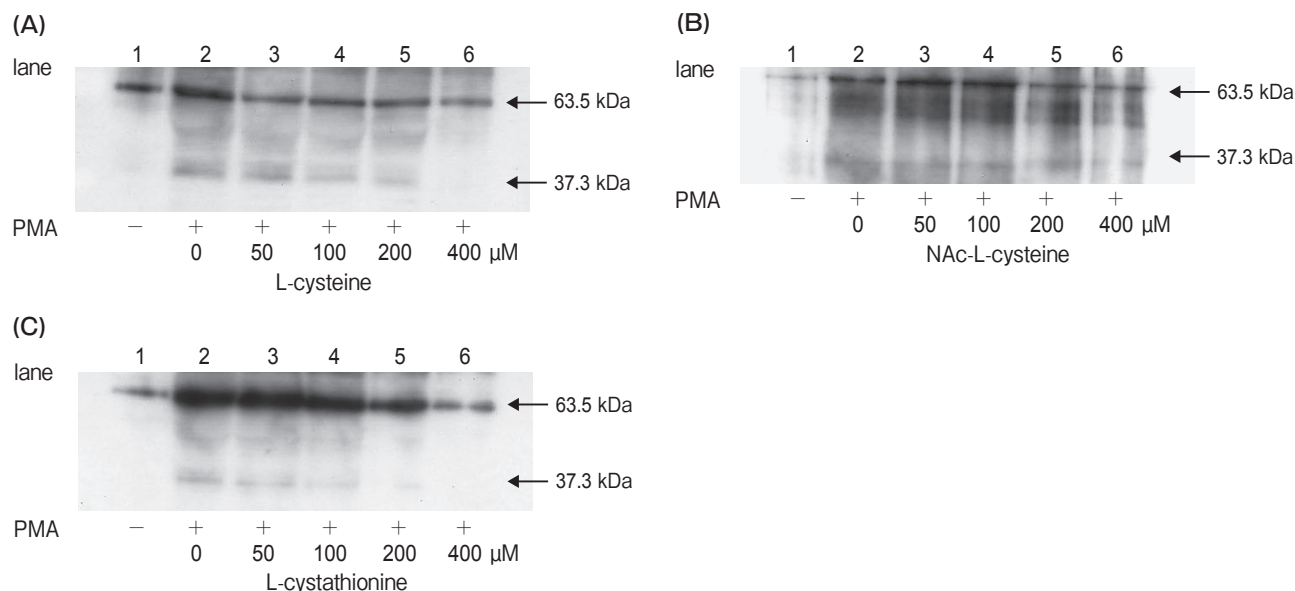
centration-dependent manner (Fig. 5D), but serine/threonine phosphorylation did not decrease in the presence of L-cystathionine (data not shown).

The translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane increased dose-dependently in the presence of L-cysteine, NAc-L-cys or D,L-homocysteine (Fig. 6A-C).

L-cystathionine decreased the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane, as shown in Fig. 6D.

**Effect of sulfur amino acids on lipid peroxidation.** The effects of sulfur amino acids on lipid peroxidation were also investigated. The effect of sulfur amino acids on hydroxy radical-induced lipid peroxidation of erythrocyte membrane ghosts are shown in Fig. 7.

L-cysteine, D,L-homocysteine, and L-cystathionine reduced weakly the lipid peroxidation level (thiobarbituric acid-reactive substances) of erythrocyte membrane ghosts at a concentration of 600 mM, but NAc-L-cys, CMC, and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone did not reduce lipid peroxidation levels.

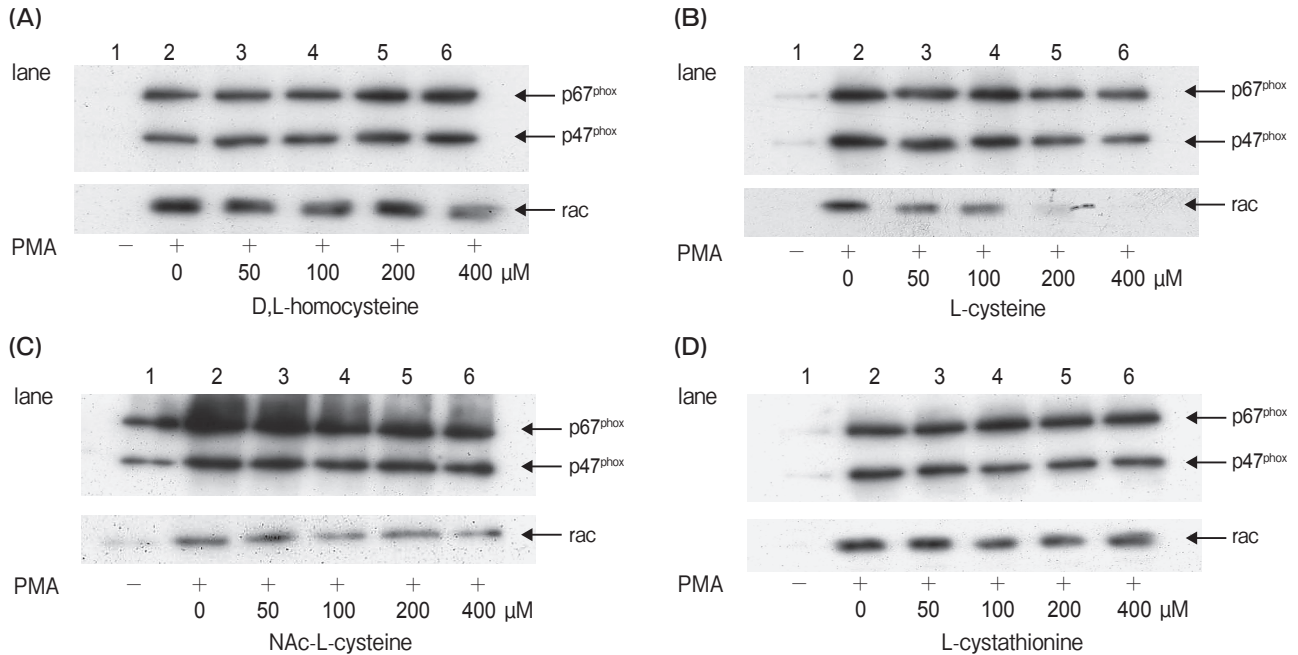


**Fig. 3** Effects of L-cysteine, NAc-L-cysteine, and L-cystathionine on PMA-induced serine/threonine phosphorylation of human neutrophil proteins. The serine/threonine phosphorylation proteins were detected by immunoblotting using phosphoserine/threonine-specific monoclonal antibodies. Lane 1, without compound; lane 2, 1 nM PMA; lanes 3-6, 1 nM PMA and 50, 100, 200, 400 μM compound. (A) L-cysteine, (B) NAc-L-cysteine, and (C) L-cystathionine.

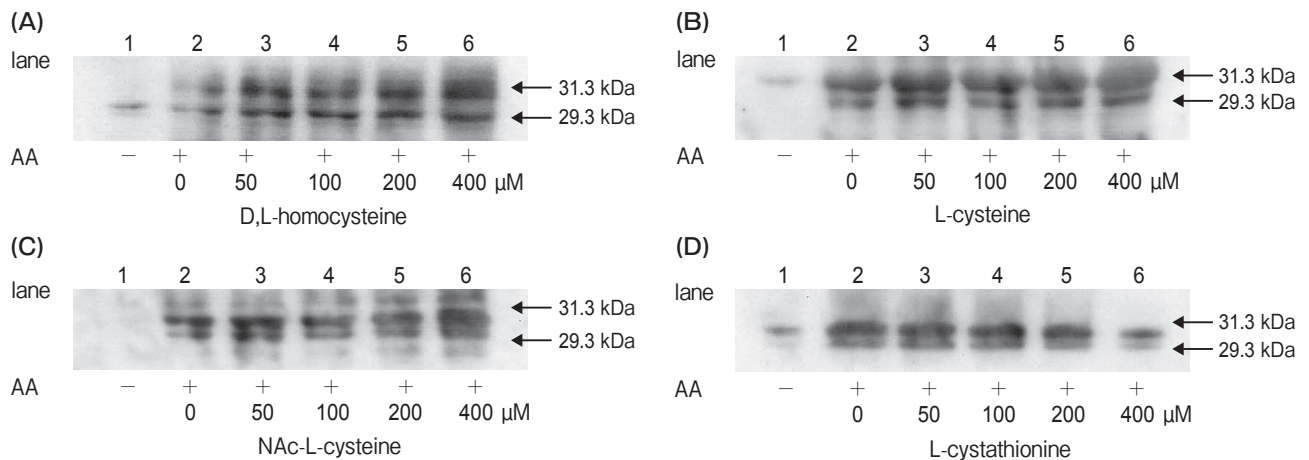
## Discussion

A previous paper investigated the effects of sulfur amino acids, L-cysteine, NAc-L-cys, CMC, L-cys-

tathionine, D,L-homocysteine, and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone on superoxide generation in stimulus-induced human neutrophils and on the scavenging of free radicals [24].



**Fig. 4** Effects of D,L-homocysteine, L-cysteine, NAc-L-cysteine, and L-cystathionine on translocation to the cell membrane of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac in PMA-stimulated neutrophils. The translocation to the cell membrane of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac was detected by immunoblotting using p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac1-specific monoclonal antibodies, as described in Materials and Methods. Lane 1, without compound; lane 2, 1 nM PMA; lanes 3–6, 1 nM PMA and 50, 100, 200, 400 μM compound. (A) D,L-homocysteine, (B) L-cysteine, (C) NAc-L-cysteine, and (D) L-cystathionine.

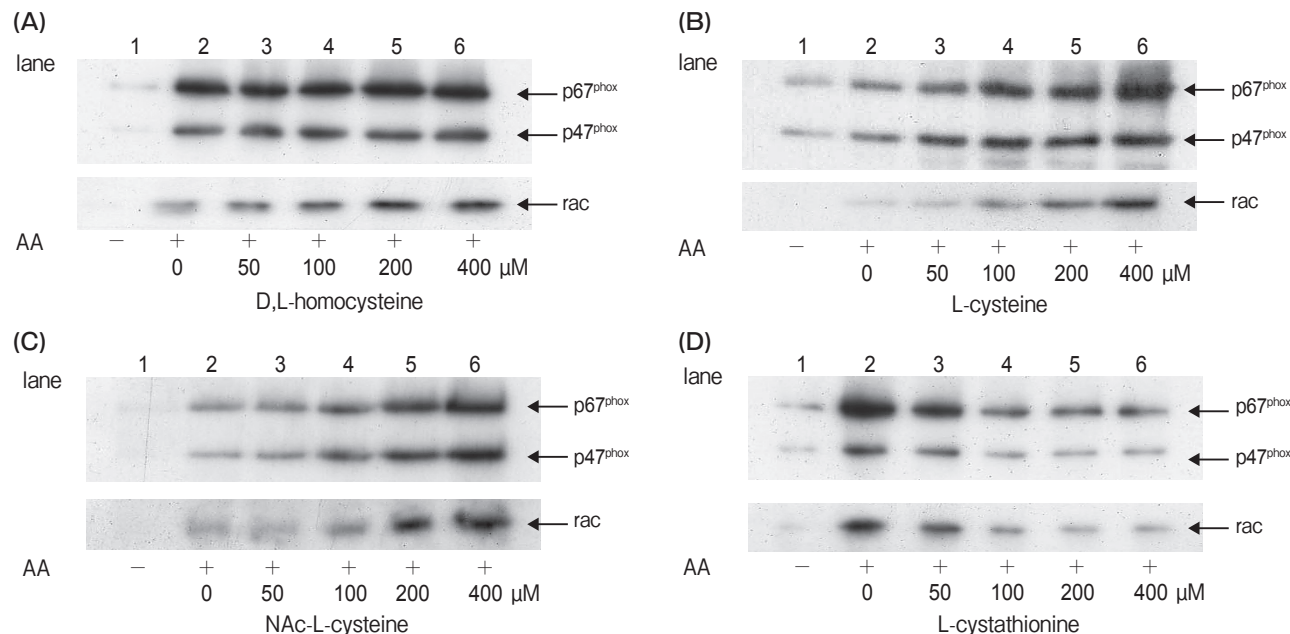


**Fig. 5** Effects of D,L-homocysteine, L-cysteine, NAc-L-cysteine, and L-cystathionine on AA-induced tyrosyl phosphorylation of human neutrophil proteins. The tyrosyl-phosphorylated proteins were detected by immunoblotting using phosphotyrosine-specific monoclonal antibodies. Lane 1, without compound; lane 2, 10 μM AA; lanes 3–6, 10 μM AA and 50, 100, 200, 400 μM compound. (A) D,L-homocysteine, (B) L-cysteine, (C) NAc-L-cysteine, and (D) L-cystathionine.

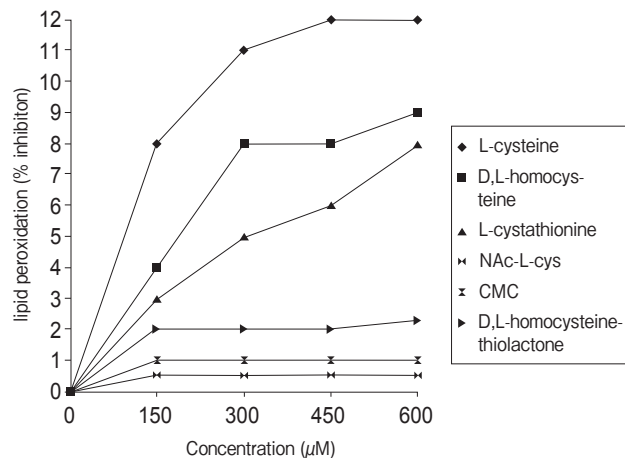


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**Fig. 6** Effects of D,L-homocysteine, L-cysteine, NAc-L-cysteine, and L-cystathionine on translocation to the cell membrane of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac in AA-stimulated neutrophils. The translocation to the cell membrane of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac was detected by immunoblotting using p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac1-specific monoclonal antibodies as described in Materials and Methods. Lane 1, without compound; lane 2, 10 μM AA; lanes 3–6, 10 μM AA and 50, 100, 200, 400 μM compound. (A) D,L-homocysteine, (B) L-cysteine, (C) NAc-cysteine, and (D) L-cystathionine.



**Fig. 7** Effects of the sulfur-amino acids on hydroxyl radical-derived lipid peroxidation of erythrocyte membrane ghosts were determined by measuring thiobarbituric acid-reactive substances as described in Materials and Methods. Results are expressed as means  $\pm$  SD ( $n = 3$ ) of the inhibition of lipid peroxidation.

In the present study, D,L-homocysteine and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone enhanced fMLP- and AA-induced superoxide generation in a concentration

dependent manner, but had no effect on PMA-induced superoxide generation. In the previous paper, on the other hand, L-cystathionine inhibited fMLP-, AA-, and PMA-induced superoxide generation. L-cysteine and NAc-L-cys enhanced AA-induced superoxide generation, but inhibited fMLP- and PMA-induced superoxide generation.

In our studies on superoxide generation and inflammation, we found that the various compounds affected tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation, and the phosphorylation of neutrophil proteins occurred in parallel with stimulus-induced superoxide generation in PMN [32, 34]. Therefore, we proposed that these compounds affect stimulus-induced superoxide generation by affecting the tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation of PMN proteins.

To gain insights into the mechanism underlying the suppression or enhancement of stimulus-induced superoxide generation by the sulfur amino acids, we here investigated the effects of these sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation of proteins, as well as the translocation of p47<sup>phox</sup>, p67<sup>phox</sup>, and rac to the cell membrane in human neutrophils using

fMLP, AA, and PMA as the stimuli.

FMLP, AA, and PMA were used as, the inducer of receptor-mediated activation, a membrane perturber, and an activator of  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$ - and phospholipids-dependent protein kinase C, respectively.

L-cystathionine suppressed the tyrosyl phosphorylation of proteins induced by fMLP and AA, as well as the serine/threonine phosphorylation of proteins with PMA in a concentration-dependent manner, as shown in Fig. 1, 3, 5. D,L-homocysteine increased the tyrosyl phosphorylation of proteins induced by fMLP and AA in a concentration-dependent manner, but had no effect on PMA-induced serine/threonine phosphorylation. L-cysteine and NAc-L-cys dose-dependently suppressed the serine/threonine phosphorylation of proteins induced by PMA. L-cysteine and NAc-L-cys enhanced the tyrosyl phosphorylation of proteins induced by AA.

These results for sulfur amino acids on the tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation of proteins in stimulus-induced human neutrophils well coincided with the sulfur amino acid-mediated suppression or enhancement of superoxide generation in stimulus-treated human neutrophils, as reported in a previous paper [24].

It is generally accepted that upon activation of the respiratory burst oxidase in stimulated human neutrophils, cytosolic  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* move to the cell membrane and associate with cytochrome  $b_{558}$ , forming an electron-transport chain responsible for the reduction of molecular oxygen to superoxide. Therefore, we also investigated the effect of these sulfur amino acids on the translocation of  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* to the cell membrane in fMLP-, AA-, and PMA-stimulated human neutrophils.

When neutrophils were incubated with fMLP, AA, or PMA, the translocation of  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* to the cell membrane was increased.

L-cystathionine suppressed the translocation of  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* to the cell membrane in fMLP-, AA-, and PMA-stimulated human neutrophils; NAc-L-cys suppressed the translocation of  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* in fMLP-, and PMA-stimulated human neutrophils, but increased the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane in AA-stimulated human neutrophils. D,L-homocysteine increased the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane in fMLP-, and

AA-stimulated neutrophils, but PMA-induced neutrophils did not affect the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane. L-cysteine and NAc-L-cys enhanced the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane in AA-stimulated human neutrophils.

These results well coincided with the effects of these sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl phosphorylation induced by fMLP and AA or on serine/threonine phosphorylation induced by PMA.

The effects of the sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation and translocation of cytosolic  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* to the cell membrane also well coincided with the effects of these sulfur amino acids on stimulus-induced superoxide generation.

It has also been noted that NAc-L-cys reduced superoxide anion generation of proteins and phorbol myristate in a concentration-dependent manner [6].

The effect of these sulfur amino acids on serine/threonine phosphorylation of protein and the translocation of  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* to the cell membrane paralleled that of PMA-induced superoxide generation reported previously by us and Villagrase *et al.* in previous papers. The same parallel effect was found in two other compounds; CMC, and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone (data not shown).

We also investigated the effects of sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl phosphorylation and translocation of  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* to the cell membrane in AA-stimulated human neutrophils. These results coincided well with the effect of sulfur amino acids on stimulus-induced superoxide generation.

These data indicated that the process involves the migration of cytosolic compounds  $\text{p47}^{\text{phox}}$ ,  $\text{p67}^{\text{phox}}$ , and *rac* to the cell membrane and the tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylations of some neutrophil proteins by affecting tyrosine kinase or protein kinase C.

Wada *et al.* [7, 8] reported that L-cystathionine significantly scavenged superoxide radicals derived from the xanthine-xanthine system and protected the gastric mucosa from acute injury-induced ischemia-reperfusion.

It was reported that NAc-L-cys reduced superoxide generation of the response to fMLP and PMA, and partially protected against lipid peroxidation in human neutrophils [6].

Thereafter, it was reported that homocysteine

enhanced the oxidative stress of neutrophils. This underscores the potential role of phagocytic cells in vascular wall injury through  $O_2^-$  release in hyperhomocysteinemic conditions [9].

Previous results [6–9] well coincided with the effects of sulfur amino acids on tyrosyl or serine/threonine phosphorylation and the translocation of cytosolic compounds to the cell membrane in stimulus-treated neutrophils.

It is well known that the sulfur amino acids, L-cystathionine and NAc-L-cys exhibit scavenging functions against superoxide radicals and hypochlorous. Therefore, in the present study, the effects of the sulfur amino acids on lipid peroxidation were also investigated. L-cysteine, D,L-homocysteine, and L-cystathionine reduced weakly the lipid peroxidation level (thiobarbituric acid - reactive substances) of erythrocyte membrane ghosts at the concentration of 600mM, but NAc-L-cys, CMC, and D,L-homocysteine-thiolactone did not reduce lipid peroxidation levels.

These results suggest that sulfur amino acids suppress superoxide generation induced by stimulus-treated neutrophils rather than scavenging the generated superoxide anions.

Our present results demonstrate clearly that sulfur amino acids involve superoxide generation mainly via tyrosyl or serine/tyreonine phosphorylation, and the translocation of  $p47^{phox}$ ,  $p67^{phox}$ , and rac to the cell membrane.

Further studies on the relationships between pharmaceutical function and their effects on stimulus-induced superoxide generation may be helpful in the development of clinical applications.

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