

Reduction of Murine Cutaneous UVB-Induced Tumor-Infiltrating T Lymphocytes by Dietary Canthaxanthin

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The effect of dietary canthaxanthin, retinyl palmitate, or their combination on the tumor-infiltrating T-lymphocyte response (T-TIL) in de novo murine ultraviolet type B irradiation-induced tumors was investigated to elucidate potential mechanisms of action of these compounds. We found that dietary canthaxanthin greatly reduced the number of tumor-infiltrating helper/inducer, suppressor/cytotoxic, and interleukin-2 receptor-positive T lymphocytes and also

observed a concomitant statistically significant increase in tumour incidence in canthaxanthin-fed animals. The addition of retinyl palmitate to the canthaxanthin diet ameliorated this negative effect on TIL and the development of skin tumors. We conclude that dietary retinyl palmitate and canthaxanthin can modulate the host T-cell immune response within a growing tumor and may affect tumorigenicity. *J Invest Dermatol* 97:892-897, 1991

Non-melanoma skin cancer induced by ultraviolet B (UVB) irradiation is a serious national health problem [1]. There are approximately 400,000 new cases reported in the United States each year [2], and the incidence rate is increasing [3].

Pioneering work by Kripke [4] and Daynes et al [5] in the murine system has shown that non-melanoma skin cancer induction by UVB irradiation is dependent upon an active host immunosuppressive response mediated by suppressor T cells. These suppressor T cells are specific for tumor-associated antigen [6]. They are capable of preventing the antitumor response following transfer of tumor cells into non-irradiated animals by suppressing the induction of UVB-tumor specific helper T cells [7,8]. These suppressor T cells are critical for tumor development in that most UVB-induced non-melanoma skin tumors are of the "regressor" phenotype, i.e., they will not grow when adoptively transferred into non-irradiated syngeneic hosts [9].

Vitamin A and its derivatives (retinoids) are immunomodulators [10] and in animal-model systems are active as chemopreventive

agents of photocarcinogenesis in albino hairless mice [11,12]. Epidemiologic evidence suggests that, in humans, a high dietary intake of retinoids leads to a decrease in cancer [13]. It has been shown that dietary retinoids can reduce both post-surgical as well as burn-induced immunosuppression [14,15], and these compounds are being tested for the prevention and treatment of human cancer, particularly cutaneous malignancies [16]. Animal studies indicate that retinoids can 1) overcome neonatal tolerance, a process thought to be mediated by suppressor T cells [17]; 2) increase the activity of immune accessory cells [18]; and 3) activate helper T-cell activity [19]. However, clinical use of retinoids has been limited due to their potential toxicity and teratogenicity [16].

Beta-carotene (a pro-vitamin A) and canthaxanthin (a non-vitamin A precursor carotenoid) are dose-dependently effective in reducing photocarcinogenesis in albino hairless mouse studies [20]. In man, high carotenoid intake has been associated with reduction in prostatic carcinoma [21] without the reported toxicity associated with retinoids [22]. The carotenoid mechanism of action is as yet unknown but may be linked to either its antioxidant activity [23,24] and/or its immunomodulatory capability [25-27]. Bendich and Shapiro [26] reported increased rat T- and B-cell mitogenic responses following 20 weeks of either dietary beta-carotene or canthaxanthin. Tomita et al [27] demonstrated that dietary beta-carotene resulted in a T-cell dependent rejection of syngeneic 3-methylcholanthrene-induced fibrosarcoma cells. In vitro, beta-carotene stimulated human peripheral blood leukocytes to secrete a cytokine effective against a wide range of human neoplastic cell lines [25].

This study addressed the hypothesis that dietary retinyl palmitate and/or canthaxanthin modulate photocarcinogenesis by means of altering subpopulations of T-cells infiltrating primary UVB-induced tumors. To test this hypothesis we applied the technique of immunohistochemistry to maintain and quantitate the number and subtypes of immune cells infiltrating the de novo UVB-induced tumors. We also measured the rates of tumor development and tumor burden per mouse as end points of consequence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Animals and Treatments Specific pathogen-free, pigmented female C3H/HeN strain mice (Charles River Breeding Laborato-

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Abbreviations:

- AIN: American Institute of Nutrition
- BD: basal diet
- CTX: basal diet supplemented with 1% (w/w) canthaxanthin
- IL2R: interleukin-2 receptor
- IU: international units
- RPC: basal diet supplemented with a combination diet of 1% CTX and 120 IU RP
- TIL: tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes
- T-TIL: tumor-infiltrating T lymphocytes
- UVB: ultraviolet irradiation type B
- 120 RP: basal diet supplemented with 120 IU of retinyl palmitate/gm

Table I. Monoclonal Anti-Murine Antibodies Used in the Immunohistochemical Analysis of De Novo UVB-Induced Tumors

Monoclonal Antibody	Hybridoma Clone	Specificity	Working Concentration	Source ^a
Anti-mu	Ig8	slgM positive B-cells	1:200 dilution of ascitic fluid	1
Anti-kappa	OX40	95% slg positive B-cells	1:200 dilution of ascitic fluid	1
Anti-Thy 1.2	30-H12	T-cells	2.5 µg/ml	2
Anti-L3T4	GK1.5	Helper-inducer T-cells	5 µg/ml	2
Anti-Lyt2	53-6.7	Suppressor-cytotoxic T-cells	125 µg/ml	2
Anti-IL2R	AMT-13	Interleukin-2 receptor positive cells	8 µg/ml	3
Anti-Mac-1	M1/70	Resident and tumoricidal macrophages	4 µg/ml	3
Anti-Mac-2	M3/38	Phagocytic macrophages	20 µg/ml	3
Anti-HSA	M1/75	Erythrocytes	4 µg/ml	3
Anti-IA ^k	Not available	IA ^k positive cells	1.25 µg/ml	2

^a 1, Accurate Chemical and Scientific Corporation, Westbury, NY. 2, Becton-Dickinson Immunocytometry Systems, Mountain View, CA. 3, Boehringer-Mannheim Corporation, Indianapolis, IN.

ries, Wilmington, MA) were fed the American Institute of Nutrition (AIN) synthetic 76A diet, which contained 4 International Units (IU) of retinyl palmitate per gram of diet as the retinoid source (Dyets, Inc., Bethlehem, PA). This basal diet (BD) was supplemented with either 120 IU of retinyl palmitate/gm (120 RP), 1% (w/w) canthaxanthin (CTX), or a combination diet of 1% CTX + 120 IU RP (RPC). The CTX and RP were provided by Hoffmann-La Roche (Nutley, NJ). The animals were UVB irradiated using the method of Daynes et al [28] 30 min/d, 5 times/week for 24 weeks with a bank of six FS40 fluorescent sun lamps. The animals' dorsa were shaved weekly and they received a total dose of 9.9×10^5 J/m².

Experimental Design Animals were randomized and began dietary treatments at 5 weeks of age. After 18 weeks, each dietary group was then divided into two treatment arms; one arm began UVB-irradiation and the other served as the unirradiated control group. Samples of de novo induced UVB tumors were taken from three animals/group at 29 weeks after the first UVB-radiation treatment. All animals remained on their diets throughout the experiment. A total of 220 animals were placed into the UVB-irradiated arm and were subdivided as follows: BD, 50 animals; 120 RP, 55 animals; RPC, 60 animals; and CTX, 55 animals. None of the unirradiated, dietary-matched animals developed skin tumors during the course of the experiment.

Immunohistochemistry Tumor biopsies were snap-frozen in OCT compound (Miles Laboratories, Elkhart, IN) at -150°C in liquid nitrogen-quenched isopentane. The frozen blocks were stored at -80°C until multiple 4-µm serial sections were cut and stained with a panel of anti-murine monoclonal antibodies to examine the overall cellular response to the de novo tumor (Table I). In this report we have focused on the T-TIL response as exemplified by monoclonal antibodies to L3T4, Lyt-2, and the interleukin-2 receptor (IL2R). Antigen expression was visualized using biotin:avidin-horseradish peroxidase with diaminobenzidine as chromogen [29]. Slides were counterstained with methyl green and antigen-positive cells were enumerated in seven adjacent high-power fields of highest lymphocyte infiltration, yielding a total of 0.44 mm² analyzed per mouse. Three animals/group were studied and the T-TIL response was enumerated 4 times/animals.

Statistical Analysis The count data were analyzed using a mixed-effects extension of the basic Poisson regression model [30] with an allowance for extra-Poisson variability [31] or the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, as indicated in the figure legends. The immunohistochemical and tumor size measurements were conducted in a blind fashion. Tumor-free survival was calculated from the date of first UVB irradiation to the date of the first tumor development. The survival curves displayed in the figures were calculated using the Kaplan-Meier method [32]. The log-rank

method was used for comparisons [33]. All tests were two-tailed.

RESULTS

We tested the hypothesis that dietary canthaxanthin and retinyl palmitate alter subpopulations of tumor-infiltrating T lymphocytes (T-TIL) in primary UVB-induced skin tumors. The subcutaneous malignancies found in these UVB-irradiated mice exhibited a pleomorphic, large cell appearance. In some instances the malignancies had a spindle aspect, suggesting a soft-tissue sarcoma. The autochthonous tumor burden per mouse at 27.5 weeks after the first ultraviolet irradiation is presented in Fig 1. Based upon analysis of variance, CTX and 120 RP resulted in tumor burdens significantly lower than that found in mice fed the basal diet ($p = 0.0081$ and 0.0135 , respectively). Dietary supplementation with a combination

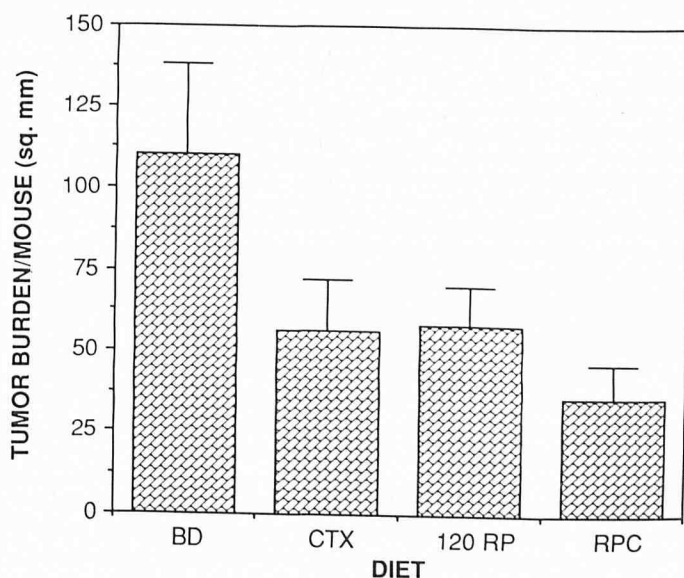
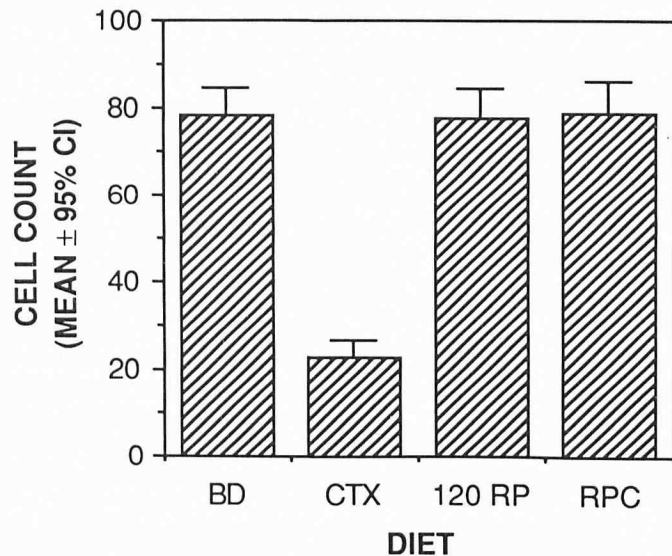


Figure 1. Autochthonous tumor burden per mouse in UVB-irradiated animals fed retinyl palmitate and/or canthaxanthin. Tumors were induced by 9.9×10^5 J/m² of UVB delivered over a 24-week period. The tumor area per mouse was calculated as the total tumor area (length \times width of each tumor) per mouse at 27.5 weeks after the first ultraviolet radiation exposure. The data are expressed as the mean \pm SEM. BD, basal diet consisting of AIN 76A supplemented with placebo beadslets; CTX, basal diet supplemented with 1% canthaxanthin; 120 RP, basal diet supplemented with 120 IU of retinyl palmitate per gram of diet; RPC, basal diet supplemented with 1% canthaxanthin plus 120 IU of retinyl palmitate per gram of diet.



SIMULTANEOUS TESTS OF MEAN DIFFERENCE AT 0.05 LEVEL

COMPARISON	P-VALUE
BD vs. CTX	0.0000*
BD vs. 120 RP	0.9282
BD vs. RPC	0.9442
CTX vs. 120 RP	0.0000*
CTX vs. RPC	0.0000*
120 RP vs. RPC	0.8806

Figure 2. Effect of dietary retinyl palmitate and/or canthaxanthin on the host UVB-tumor infiltrating L3T4-positive lymphocyte response. Mice were treated as described in the legend for Fig 1. Tumor biopsies from three animals per group were snap-frozen and 4- μ m sections were stained with monoclonal anti-L3T4 antibody. Antigen-antibody interaction was visualized with biotin:avidin horseradish peroxidase methodology and DAB as chromogen. Antigen-positive cells were enumerated in seven high-power fields (40 \times objective) and analyzed with a mixed-effects extension of the Poisson regression model. Data are expressed as the mean cell count \pm 95% confidence interval.

of these two micronutrients resulted in further reduction of tumor burden. These results indicate that the 120 RP and CTX were acting as chemomodulatory agents in these pigmented mice.

The number of L3T4-positive (helper/inducer phenotype) T cells within these primary UVB-induced tumors was dramatically reduced in animals fed 1% canthaxanthin (CTX) when compared with the three other tumor-bearing dietary groups ($p \ll 0.0001$, Fig 2). However, there was no difference in the number of L3T4-positive TIL in the mice fed 120 IU retinyl palmitate/gm of diet (120 RP), 1% canthaxanthin plus 120 IU retinyl palmitate (RPC), or the basal diet (BD) (Fig 2).

The Lyt-2-positive (suppressor/cytotoxic phenotype) TIL in the CTX group was also sharply reduced when ranked against the levels found in animals fed the BD ($p \ll 0.0001$) or 120 RP ($p \ll 0.0001$) (Fig 3). Those animals provided with the combination diet also had severely reduced Lyt-2-positive TIL compared to BD animals ($p \ll 0.0001$), although the reduction was less than in those animals receiving CTX alone ($p = 0.0122$). Interestingly, there was a marginal increase in the number of Lyt-2-positive TIL

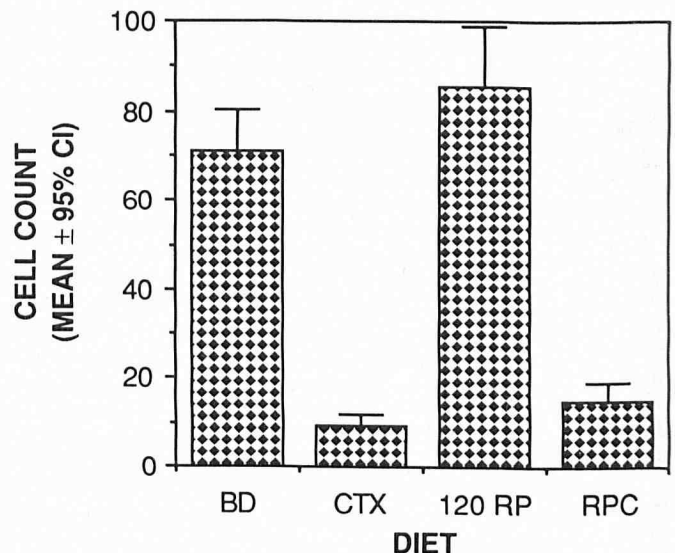
in those animals treated with 120 RP over values in the BD animals ($p = 0.0644$).

The number of IL2R-positive TIL in animals fed CTX was significantly lower than that found in all other diets ($p \ll 0.0001$, Fig 4). However, the IL2R-positive TIL response was greater in 120 RP-fed animals than in the BD animals ($p \ll 0.0001$), and those animals receiving RPC had a larger IL2R TIL response than CTX mice ($p \ll 0.0001$), but the RPC-induced response was somewhat reduced when compared to the BD animals ($p = 0.063$).

Collectively, these data suggest that the presence of dietary 120 RP tended to offset the inhibitory effect of CTX on T-TIL. This can be seen in the numerical parity of L3T4-positive TIL in animals fed RPC, 120 RP, and BD (Fig 2) and the increase in the number of Lyt-2 positive ($p = 0.0122$, CTX versus RPC; Fig 3) and IL2R-positive TIL ($p \ll 0.0001$, CTX versus RPC; Fig 4).

Tumor-free survival was significantly less in the CTX group than the BD animals (Fig 5A, $p = 0.016$), although there was a delay in the initial development of tumors in animals fed 1% canthaxanthin. Addition of 120 IU of retinyl palmitate to the 1% canthaxanthin diet ameliorated the negative impact of CTX on tumor-free survival (Fig 5B, $p = 0.231$ BD versus RPC and Fig 5C, $p = 0.045$ RPC versus CTX).

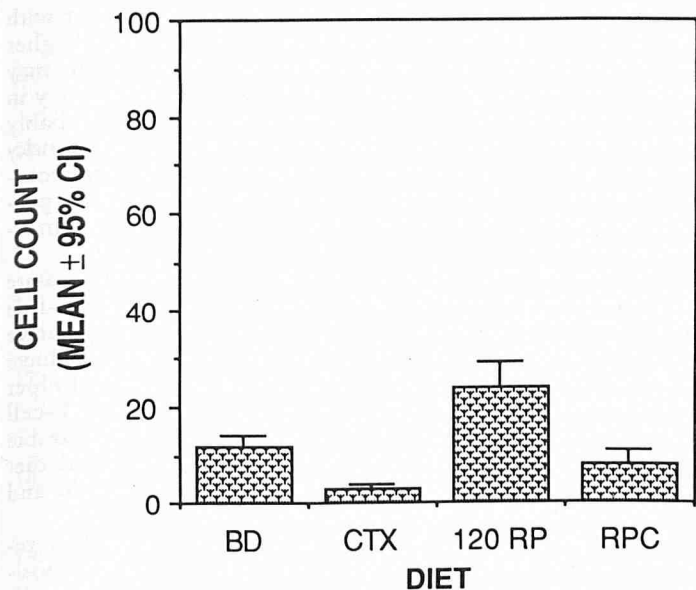
The combination of CTX or 120 RP with UVB irradiation did



SIMULTANEOUS TESTS OF MEAN DIFFERENCE AT 0.05 LEVEL

COMPARISON	P-VALUE
BD vs. CTX	0.0000*
BD vs. 120 RP	0.0644
BD vs. RPC	0.0000*
CTX vs. 120 RP	0.0000*
CTX vs. RPC	0.0122*
120 RP vs. RPC	0.0000*

Figure 3. Effect of dietary micronutrients on the host UVB-tumor infiltrating Lyt-2-positive lymphocyte response. Mouse treatment and symbols are described in the legend for Fig 1. Tumor biopsy, immunohistochemistry, cell enumeration, and statistical methods are as described in the legend for Fig 2 with the exception that anti-Lyt-2 antibody was used in the place of anti-L3T4.



SIMULTANEOUS TESTS OF MEAN DIFFERENCE AT 0.05 LEVEL

COMPARISON	P-VALUE
BD vs. CTX	0.0000*
BD vs. 120 RP	0.0000*
BD vs. RPC	0.0630
CTX vs. 120 RP	0.0000*
CTX vs. RPC	0.0000*
120 RP vs. RPC	0.0000*

Figure 4. Effect of dietary micronutrients on the host UVB-tumor infiltrating interleukin-2 receptor (IL2R)-positive lymphocyte response. Mouse treatment and symbols are described in the legend for Fig 1. Tumor biopsy, immunohistochemistry, cell enumeration, and statistical methods are as described in the legend for Fig 2 with the exception that anti-IL2R antibody was used in the place of anti-L3T4.

not selectively inhibit the growth of these animals (Fig 6). Although the irradiation procedure limited weight gain by all exposed animals, only those UVB-irradiated mice fed the combination diet had a significantly lower body weight than the BD mice, based upon analysis of variance, and this difference averaged only 1.5 g/mouse. Thus, the observed reduction of T-TIL and decreased tumor-free survival in the CTX group cannot be attributed to selective dietary toxicity or nutritional deficiency.

DISCUSSION

Dietary canthaxanthin (CTX) resulted in a profound depression of L3T4-positive and Lyt-2-positive T lymphocytes infiltrating primary UVB-induced tumors. There was also a sharp decline (relative to control levels) in cells positive for the interleukin-2 receptor (IL2R), a marker of T-cell activation. Additionally, those animals fed CTX had a delay in tumor development, but a poorer overall tumor-free survival than the BD or RPC groups. Thus, this single dietary component appears to have regulated T-cell infiltration into these autochthonous tumors and host susceptibility to tumor development. When 120 RP was added in combination with dietary CTX, the number of L3T4-positive and IL2R-positive cells in the tumors were at control levels and tumor-free survival was not sig-

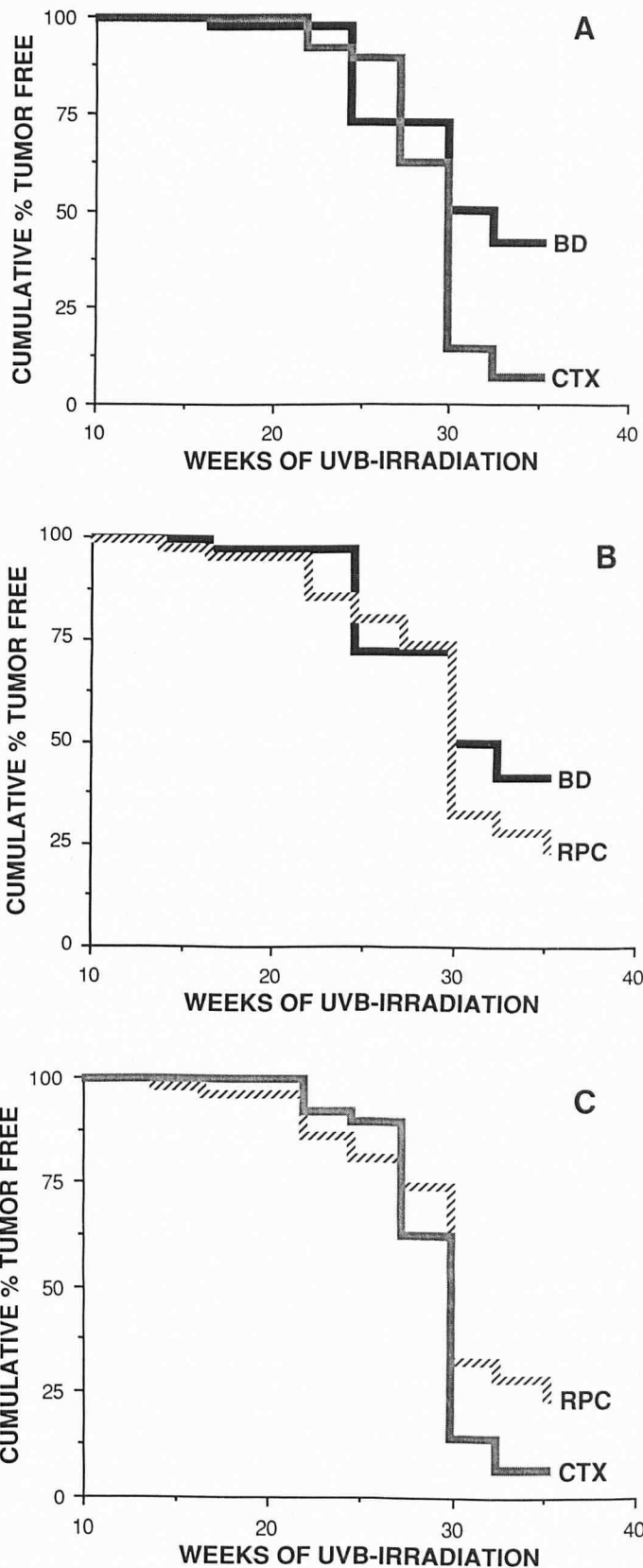


Figure 5. Correlation of tumor-free survival with dietary micronutrient treatment in UVB-irradiated mice. *A* compares 50 animals fed the basal diet (BD) with 55 canthaxanthin (CTX)-fed animals ($p = 0.016$, log-rank). *B* compares the BD group with 60 animals fed the combined diet (RPC) consisting of 120 IU retinyl palmitate/gm plus 1% canthaxanthin ($p = 0.231$, log-rank). *C* compares the RPC fed animals with the CTX group ($p = 0.045$, log-rank).

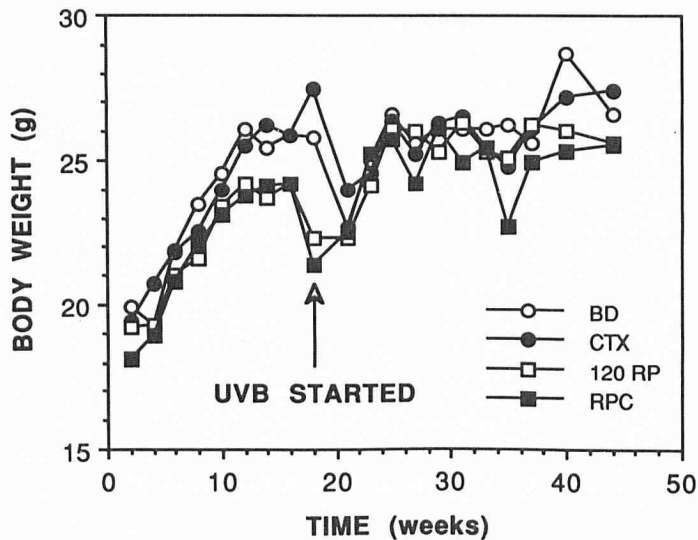


Figure 6. Effect of dietary retinyl palmitate and/or canthaxanthin on the body weight of UVB-irradiated mice. Animal treatment and symbols are described in the legend for Fig 1. Data are expressed as the mean of 20 mice per group.

nificantly different from the BD group, so that retinyl palmitate mitigated the canthaxanthin effect.

The mechanism by which canthaxanthin modulates T-cell infiltration into UVB-induced tumors is unknown. However, there have been reports of T-cell immunoregulation by carotenoids. Male Wistar rats fed canthaxanthin and beta-carotene had elevated splenic T- and B-cell mitogen-induced responses [26] and mice fed beta-carotene exhibited a heightened rejection of syngeneic fibrosarcoma cells mediated by Lyt-2-positive T-lymphocytes [27]. Alternatively, the function of antigen-presenting cells may have been influenced by the canthaxanthin diet, thereby affecting recruitment of T cells into the tumors. Such influences by carotenoids have been described [25]. More recently Mufti and Watson reported a statistically significant increase in the percentage of activated splenic macrophages in C57BL/6 mice fed 1% canthaxanthin for 12 weeks [34]. Additionally, Schwartz et al showed that oral canthaxanthin increased the macrophage and T-cell infiltrate into 7,12-dimethylbenz(a)anthracene-induced squamous cell carcinomas in a hamster model [35].

If tumor containment was Lyt-2-positive T-lymphocyte dependent in the present study, one would predict that the CTX group would have had the largest tumor burden, but this was not the case. Philipps et al [36] have shown that the *in vitro* cytotoxic lymphocyte response to the regressor UV-tumor 1591 was Lyt-2-positive and selection for regressor variants of 1591 by these cytotoxic lymphocytes led to the sequential loss of immunodominant class I major histocompatibility complex-like molecules resulting in a highly metastatic regressor variant. Lill and Fortner [37] reported that regressing UVB tumors from unirradiated animals contained three-fold greater numbers of highly cytotoxic T lymphocytes than progressing tumors. These T cells were isolated directly from tumor fragments implanted into UVB-irradiated (immunosuppressed) or unirradiated (immunocompetent) animals. The present protocol, however, involved measurement of the hosts' tumor-infiltrating T-lymphocyte response in *de novo* UVB tumors as opposed to transfer of tumor fragments and would therefore depict the natural pathogenesis of these tumors.

It is intriguing to note that those animals fed the basal diet supplemented exclusively with CTX had an increased latency, as was also reported by Mathews-Roth [20]. However, at the thirty-fifth week after initiation of UVB irradiation, the CTX group had a poorer

overall tumor-free survival than the other groups, in contrast with the results of Mathews-Roth and Krinsky [38,39]. This higher tumor incidence at the completion of the present experiment may be the *in vivo* consequence of the L3T4-positive cell deficiency in the CTX group. Our discordant tumor incidence results probably reflect differences in mouse strains as Mathews-Roth and Krinsky used an albino mouse model and a different UVB-induction protocol. The carotenoid effect appears to be one of inhibiting the promotional phase of carcinogenesis without altering overall tumor-free survival [40].

The second finding of this study was that dietary retinyl palmitate lessened the suppressive effect of canthaxanthin on both tumor-free survival and T-TIL, most notably on the number of L3T4-positive helper T lymphocytes. Studies by Romerdahl and Kripke [7,8] have shown that regressing murine UVB tumors contain a greater helper T-lymphocyte activity than progressing tumors, and helper T-cell activity was vital for tumor rejection. The presence of comparable numbers of helper T cells in the RPC group with the basal diet group may explain, in part, the reduction in tumor burden and improved tumor-free survival in the RPC group.

In summary, dietary supplementation with canthaxanthin resulted in a dramatic decrease, relative to control levels, in L3T4-positive, Lyt-2-positive, and interleukin-2 receptor-positive T cells infiltrating into autochthonous UVB-induced tumors in mice. Accompanying this reduction in T-TIL was a decrease in tumor-free survival. The addition of retinyl palmitate, along with dietary canthaxanthin, prevented both the canthaxanthin-induced reduction of L3T4-positive and interleukin-2 receptor-positive T cells in autochthonous UVB-induced tumors, and the canthaxanthin-induced decrease in tumor-free survival. Thus, the hypothesis that canthaxanthins' mechanism of action is to increase T-TIL was not substantiated by this study, whereas one antineoplastic mechanism of action of retinyl palmitate may indeed be an increase in T-TIL. A major role for nutrition is recognized in assessments of cancer risk factors [41,42], and it appears likely that dietary immunomodulation will prove to be a significant component of host susceptibility.

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