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Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Biomedicine

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/apjtbOriginal article <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.apjtb.2015.01.030>PPAR γ expression by rambutan peel extract in obesity rat model-induced high-calorie dietSri Rahayu Lestari^{1,2*}, Muhammad Sasmito Djati³, Achmad Rudijanto⁴, Fatchiyah Fatchiyah³¹Doctoral Program of Biology Department, Faculty of Mathematic and Natural Science, Brawijaya University, Jl. Veteran, Malang 65145, East Java, Indonesia²Biology Department, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, State University of Malang, Jl. Semarang No.5, Malang 65145, East Java, Indonesia³Department of Biology, Faculty of Mathematic and Natural Science, Brawijaya University, Jl. Veteran, Malang 65145, East Java, Indonesia⁴Endocrinology Department, Saiful Anwar Hospital, Jl. Jaksa Agung Suprpto, Malang 65145, East Java, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 Dec 2014

Received in revised form 8 Jan,

2nd revised form 9 Jan 2015

Accepted 19 Jan 2015

Available online 15 Aug 2015

Keywords:

High calorie diet

Obesity

Peroxisome proliferator activated receptor γ

Rambutan peel extract

ABSTRACT

Objective: To monitor the physiological characteristics and genes expression of obesity rat model after rambutan peel extract (RPE) treatment.**Methods:** Twenty-four 12-week-old male rats were divided into 4 groups: normal, obesity, obesity treated with ellagic acid (O-EA) and obesity treated with RPE30 (O-RPE30). Physiological characteristics were monitored by measuring body weight, calorie intake, size of adipocyte and level of triglyceride. Peroxisome proliferator activated receptor gamma (PPAR γ), CCAAT/enhancer-binding proteins α and fatty acid binding protein 4 (FABP4) expression were observed using immunohistochemistry, Western blotting and quantitative RT-PCR methods.**Results:** Body weight gain of O-EA and O-RPE30 rats were lower than obesity group and size of adipocyte cells were smaller than obesity group ($P < 0.05$), but when we compared to normal group, those groups had higher body weight gain and larger adipocyte cells. The level of triglycerides, protein expression of PPAR γ and mRNA level of *FABP4* genes were significantly downregulated on O-EA and O-RPE30 compared to obesity group ($P < 0.05$). Our results indicated that RPE had potential substance as inhibitor of body weight gain, declining of size of adipocyte, level of triglycerides, PPAR γ expression and mRNA level of *FABP4* gene on obesity rat model.**Conclusions:** RPE have anti-obesity activity by inhibiting body weight gain, declining size of adipocyte, decreasing triglyceride, PPAR γ expression and mRNA level of *FABP4* gene on obesity rat model.

1. Introduction

High fat and carbohydrate diet has an important role in the stimulation of pre-adipocytes maturation and the up-regulation of

adipogenesis genes [1,2]. High carbohydrate and fat diet will stimulate some growth factors to be released, such as platelet derivate growth factor, vascular endothelial growth factor and insulin like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) [3-7]. IGF-1 has an important role in pre-adipocytes maturation both *in vivo* and *in vitro* [8,9]. Activation of IGF-1 stimulates mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) and genes cascade pathway which have role in adipogenesis [1,10,11]. The activation of IGF-1 will induce the activation of extracellular regulated kinase 1-2 (ERK1-2) and MAPK members. These proteins will initiate the expression of CCAAT/enhancer binding protein β (C/EBP β) that is important to induce the expression of CCAAT/enhancer binding protein α (C/EBP α)

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Peer review under responsibility of Hainan Medical University.

Foundation Project: Supported by DGHE Ministry of Education and Culture RI (Grant no. 1056/UN.10.14/AK/2011).

and peroxisome proliferator activated receptor γ (PPAR γ) [12]. The expression of C/EBP α and PPAR γ provide the expression of fatty acid binding protein 4 (FABP4), lipoprotein lipase and 1-acylglycerol-3-phosphate O-acyltransferase proteins that have the same role in pre-adipocytes maturation [13]. Obesity is the condition when adipocyte tissue is increased by cell proliferation or cell enlargement [14]. Obesity is related to high intake of fat and carbohydrate that enter into body. Inhibition of adipocyte maturation is important way to prevent obesity development. Early process inhibits MAPK activity by specific compound to protect adipogenesis [15,16]. Various specific compounds from plants can reduce the activity of various lipase enzymes, reduce MAPK activity and can be used for related disease treatment [17]. Rambutan peel extract (RPE) compound has potential as anti-hyperglycemic and anti-acid synthase [18,19]. RPE compounds have the ability to reduce MAPK and ERK1-2 activity. Reductions of ERK1-2 activity are linked to the expression of C/EBP α and PPAR γ which are the key of adipogenesis. RPE extract reduces IGF-1 and IGF-1R expression on obesity rat model [19,20]. Regulation of adipogenesis genes is the key in obesity prevention [21]. This research focusing on monitoring body weight, calorie intake, size of adipocyte cells, level of triglyceride and expression of PPAR γ , C/EBP α and FABP4 of visceral fat by using immunohistochemistry (IHC), Western blotting and quantitative RT-PCR (qRT-PCR) analyses of obesity-induced high calorie diet rat model.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Preparation of experimental animal

Rats were obtained from a laboratory animal provider in Bandung, Indonesia. They were treated with normal and high calorie diet after weaning until the 12th week. The composition of normal food was 63% carbohydrate, 3% fat, 13% protein, 21% vitamin and mineral (manufactured by PT Comfeed, Indonesia) and obesity model rat was treated with 74% carbohydrate, 6% fat, 20% protein, vitamins, minerals and 1% fiber (manufactured by PT Phokphand, Indonesia). Rats obesity level was measured according to Lee index [22]. The rats were maintained at Biosciences Laboratory, Brawijaya University.

2.2. RPE preparation

The RPE extract was prepared from 0.5 g dried rambutan peel and 10 mL of distilled aquadest then homogenized using centrifuge (10000 r/min, 5 min). Supernatant was filtered using 0.45 μ m Millipore. Rats were treated using RPE 30 mg/kg body weight (based on previous research) from 50 mg/mL stock solution. Volume of RPE that used for oral administration was 2 mL.

2.3. Treatment

Rats were divided into 4 groups: non-treatment rats as normal control, non-treatment obesity rats, obesity rats with ellagic acid (O-EA) treatment as positive control and obesity rats with RPE 30 (O-RPE30) mg/kg body weight treatment. RPE was given orally once every two days, for 12 weeks. The study was approved by institutional ethic committee (Brawijaya University Research Ethics Committee).

2.4. RPE evaluation on calorie intake, body weight, weight of visceral fat and level of triglycerides

Calorie intake was determined (g/rat/day). The calorie intake was calculated [food intake multiplies total calorie diet (kcal)]. The animal body weights were recorded weekly. The body weight gain number was calculated from final body weight minus initial body weight. Twelve weeks after treatment, the rats were dissected under low concentration of ether anesthesia. Blood was collected at centrifuge tubes, stored at room temperature (RT) until serum and blood separated. And then, this collected tube was centrifuged at 3000 r/min at RT for 15 min. Serum samples were frozen for biochemical analysis. Visceral fat was taken from the dorsal side and weighted. Visceral fat was divided into two parts. First part was washed in phosphate buffered saline (PBS) and fixed in 4% of paraformaldehyde for IHC and the second part was prepared for immunoblotting analysis. Visceral fat was washed in PBS-diethylpyrocarbonate for total RNA isolation preparation.

2.5. Expressions of C/EBP α , PPAR γ and FABP4

2.5.1. IHC

Adipocytes tissue was stained using hematoxylin-eosin. C/EBP α , PPAR γ and FABP4 expressions were observed using IHC staining [23]. Rabbit C/EBP primary antibody (no.cat. SC61), rabbit PPAR α primary antibody (no.cat. SC3456), and goat FABP4 primary antibody (no.cat. SC18601) (Life Span, BioScience) were dissolved in 2% bovine serum albumin (BSA) (1:1 500) and incubated for 1 h. The secondary antibody we used was anti-rabbit immunoglobulin G (IgG) and anti-goat IgG (Lifespan Bioscience) that were dissolved in 2% BSA (1:2000) then incubated for 1 h. The adipocytes tissue was visualized by hypothalamic regulatory peptides-conjugated secondary antibody substrate (Zymed). The slides were washed three times for 10 min using PBS. The slides were dried and mounted with Canada balsam (Sigma) and then observed using Olympus 1000 microscope. Adipocytes that expressed PPAR γ gene and genes related C/EBP α and FABP4 were indicated by nucleus with brown color. Each slide was observed in 5 areas, each area seen 50 cells. Cells which expressed PPAR γ , C/EBP α and FABP4 were calculated. Average of cells which expressed PPAR γ , C/EBP α and FABP4 were presented in graph.

2.5.2. Western blotting

The visceral fat tissues were pulverized using mortar and pestle, then added 500 μ L extract buffer (1 mmol/L phenylmethanesulfonyl fluoride in dimethylsulfoxide, 50 mmol/L pH 7.4 KH₂PO₄, 0.5% Nonidet P.40, d-dH₂O). The solution was centrifuged at 4 °C and 10000 r/min for 15 min. Protein from visceral fat was separated using 12.5% sodium dodecyl sulfate polyacrylamide gel and transferred to nitrocellulose membrane (Millipore, Billerica, MA) based on a wet transfer (Bio-Rad). Rabbit C/EBP α primary antibody, rabbit PPAR γ primary antibody, and goat FABP4 primary antibody (Lifespan Bioscience) were dissolved in 2% BSA (1:1 500) and incubated overnight at 4 °C, then washed with Tris-buffered saline. The secondary antibody, anti-rabbit IgG and anti-goat IgG (Lifespan Bioscience) was dissolved in 2% BSA (1:2 000), and then was visualized by Western Blue secondary antibody substrate (KLP). Membrane with specific probe was observed using ChemiDoc-

Table 1

Specific primer design for one-step qRT-PCR.

Genes	Sequence
<i>PPAR</i> γ	PPAR γ -F-5'-TCTGGGAGATCCTCCTGT T-3' PPAR γ -R-5'-CAATCGGATGGTTCTTCGGA-3'
<i>C/EBP</i> α	C/EBP α -F-5'-CGACTTCTACGAGGCGGAG -3' C/EBP α -R-5'-TGGCTTTATCTCGGCTCTTG-3'
<i>FABP4</i>	FABP4-F-5'-GGACCTGGAAACTCGTCTCC-3' FABP4-R-5'-GGACCTGGAAACTCGTCTCC-3'
<i>EF</i>	ER-F-5'-ACCACCAGCTTGTCACCATC-3' ER-R-5'-CCAGGAAGAGCTTCACTCAAAGCTT-3'

imaging (Bio-Rad) and counted the specific protein bands by Quantity One software.

2.6. RNA isolation from visceral fat

Total RNA extraction was using NucleoSpin[®] RNA Macherey-Nagel (Germany). About 30 mg visceral fat had been pulverized using mortar and pestle. The extraction was added 500 μ L RA1 buffer and 3.5 μ L β -mercapto-ethanol. The pulverized fats were centrifuged at 13000 r/min for 1 min. Lysate was filtered using a violet ring and placed on the collecting tube then centrifuged at 15000 r/min for 1 min. The supernatant was transferred in a 1.5 mL tube, then added 350 μ L of 70% ethanol and homogenized. Lysate was transferred in column blue ring and centrifuged at 15000 r/min for 30 s then was added 350 μ L membrane desalting buffer and centrifuged at 15000 r/min for 1 min. DNAase reaction mixture was added to the center of silica membrane and incubated around 15 min at RT. The silica membrane was washed 3 times, first added 200 μ L buffer RA2, second added 600 μ L buffer RA3 and finally added 250 μ L buffer RA3, centrifuged at 15000 r/min for 1 min and discarded flow-through. NucleoSpin[®] RNA II column (light and blue ring) was placed into collection tube (1.5 mL) then added 60 μ L buffer elution (RNase-free H₂O) and centrifuged for 1 min at 15000 r/min. RNA total concentration was measured using NanoDrop spectrophotometer (ND2000).

2.7. qRT-PCR

qRT-PCR was designed using rat specific primer (Table 1). The procedure of q-RT was based on one-step RT-PCR

(Sigma–Aldrich) kit. Concentration of RNA for qRT-PCR was 10 ng/ μ L.

2.8. Statistical analysis

One way ANOVA was used for statistical analysis of data. Least significant difference test was used for determining the significance. A probable value of $P < 0.05$ was considered significant.

3. Results

3.1. Effect of the RPE on calorie intake, body weight, level of triglyceride and diameter of adipocyte

Obesity rat model consumed 30% calories more than control rat. O-EA calories intake was similar to RPE30 obesity rat model. Body weight significantly increased in rat fed high calorie diet compared to control group (fed normal diet). Obesity rats with RPE treatment had reduced body weight gains significantly, and it was similar to EA treatment ($P < 0.05$). Level of triglycerides on obesity rat model was different compared to normal rats, O-EA and O-RPE30 ($P < 0.05$). Level of triglyceride was shown on obesity-RPE30 rat model. As expected, the microanatomy slides of visceral fats shown the adipocytes in obesity rats were significantly larger. After RPE treatment, adipocytes appeared smaller in obesity rats (Figure 1). Data of the RPE effect on calorie intake, body weight, level of triglyceride, and adipocyte size were shown in Table 2.

3.2. IHC and Western blotting

The expression profile of protein density of C/EBP α , PPAR γ and FABP4 was shown in Figure 2. PPAR γ expression on obesity rat model was significantly higher than both of O-EA and O-RPE30 rat models ($P < 0.05$). RPE30 treatment on obesity rat model showed the inhibition of PPAR γ expression compared with obesity rat model. It had the similar expression profile to control and O-EA treatment. C/EBP α expression was not different among all the treatments except normal. FABP4 expression on obesity rat model showed higher expression compared with O-EA and O-RPE30.

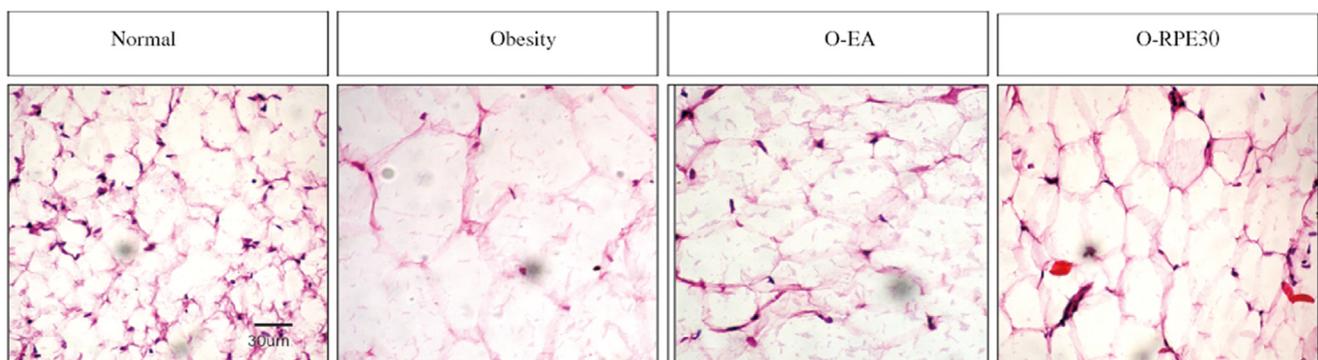
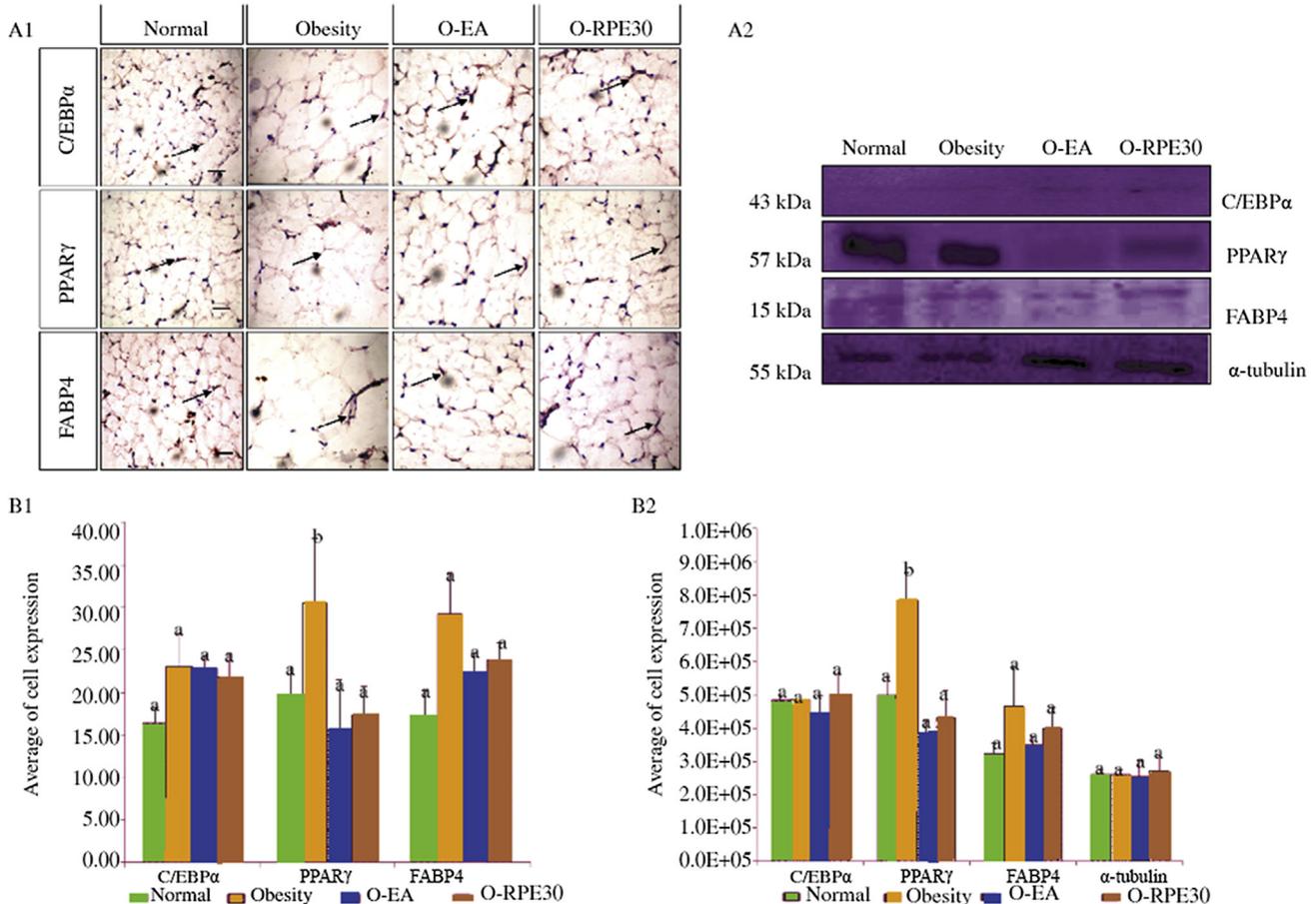


Figure 1. Size of adipocyte on visceral fat stained with hematoxylin eosin (scale: 30 μ m, magnification: 400 \times).

Table 2

Calorie intake, body weight, size of adipocyte and level of triglycerides on normal, obesity, obesity model rat treated EA and RPE30.

Parameters	Calorie intake (kcal)	Body weight (g)			Size of adipocyte (μm)	Level of triglyceride (mg/dL)
		Initial	Final	Gain		
Normal	50.02 \pm 2.90 ^a	265.35 \pm 5.61	327.55 \pm 3.20	62.20 \pm 2.41 ^a	33.41 \pm 1.10 ^a	78.04 \pm 21.04 ^b
Obesity	78.68 \pm 6.87 ^b	334.05 \pm 8.25	440.43 \pm 4.61	106.35 \pm 3.64 ^c	104.19 \pm 3.09 ^d	118.20 \pm 20.42 ^c
O-EA	71.36 \pm 6.70 ^{bc}	368.00 \pm 4.41	449.85 \pm 9.82	81.85 \pm 5.23 ^b	75.85 \pm 0.34 ^b	76.64 \pm 18.72 ^b
O-RPE30	63.69 \pm 2.55 ^c	345.87 \pm 3.43	428.16 \pm 1.12	82.89 \pm 2.31 ^b	90.53 \pm 1.53 ^c	42.36 \pm 11.96 ^a

The data represent the mean \pm SD for six rats per group. The different abjad indicate significance compared another ($P < 0.05$).**Figure 2.** IHC and Western blotting of C/EBP α , PPAR γ and FABP4.A1: The expressions of C/EBP α , PPAR γ and FABP4 on visceral fat detected by IHC (scale: 30 μm , magnification: 400 \times); A2: The expressions of C/EBP α , PPAR γ and FABP4 protein detected by Western blotting; B1: The average cell expressions of C/EBP, PPAR γ and FABP4 on visceral fat; B2: The mean density of protein C/EBP α , PPAR γ and FABP4. ^{a,b}: Indicate significance ($P < 0.05$).

3.3. qRT-PCR

mRNA gene C/EBP α level on obesity rat model was similar to O-RPE30 rat model, but 12% lower than EA treatment (Table 3). There is no difference of PPAR γ mRNA level in all

treatment (Table 4). There was a decrease in mRNA level on FABP4 gene, on O-EA and O-RPE30 compared to obesity. mRNA level on O-EA treatment decreased about 40% and 30% on O-RPE30 respectively (Table 5).

Table 3Level of mRNA C/EBP α gene synthesized by using primers QF1/QR1 on visceral fat detected by qRT-PCR, normalized by EF gene. Mean \pm SD %.

Samples	Mean \pm SD
Normal	66.4 \pm 7.1
Obesity	100.7 \pm 17.2
O-EA	88.4 \pm 59.9
O-RPE30	10.2 \pm 28.6

Table 4Level of mRNA PPAR γ gene synthesized by using primers QF1/QR1 on visceral fat detected by qRT-PCR normalized by EF gene. Mean \pm SD %.

Samples	Mean \pm SD
Normal	115.3 \pm 3.4
Obesity	126.6 \pm 72.2
O-EA	131.7 \pm 66.6
O-RPE30	127.1 \pm 45.5

Table 5

Level of mRNA *FABP4* gene synthesized by using primers QF1/QR1 on visceral fat detected by qRT-PCR normalized by EF gene. Mean \pm SD %.

Samples	Mean \pm SD
Normal	50.6 \pm 59.8
Obesity	100.0 \pm 2.0
O-EA	60.4 \pm 51.7
O-RPE30	70.0 \pm 35.5

4. Discussion

Adipogenesis process involves various cellular activation pathways [1,24]. MAPK pathway such as ERK1-2 activation may lead to main adipogenesis genes expression, such as *C/EBP α* , *PPAR γ* and *FABP4* [25]. IHC and immunoblotting had shown the same result which indicated high expression of *PPAR γ* in the obesity rat model group [1].

Growth hormone is one factor that can trigger the transcription of *IGF-1* gene for adipocyte differentiation. It initiates and stimulates cell on pre-adipocyte phase that has mitogenic effect on the clonal expansion. Pre-adipocyte secretes insulin growth factor-binding proteins which is important in modulating the *IGF-1* action on adipogenesis process [11]. *IGF-1* is a ligand that plays an important role in insulin synthesis regulation, mitogenic factors, cell growth and differentiation through MAPKase pathways [21,26,27].

PPAR γ expression was increased in obesity rat model and was not followed by the expression of *C/EBP α* and *FABP4*. It may be caused by *C/EBP α* which plays a role in *PPAR γ* activation. Two group researchers proved that *C/EBP α* was needed before the adipocyte-specific gene expression [10,28]. The activity of *C/EBP α* will be declined following the increase of *PPAR γ* gene expression. *C/EBP α* mediates the cell at the arrest cycle and will be declined as *PPAR γ* begins to be expressed. Expressions of *C/EBP α* and *FABP4* had no difference in obesity rat model, O-EA and O-RPE30 [29]. The expression of *FABP4* is increased in obesity rat model and decreased in O-EA, O-RPE30 and control. *FABP4* plays its role at the end of adipogenesis process and carries the triglycerides from outside to cytoplasm of the cell. *FABP4* is a protein that carries the free fatty acid that expresses in adipocyte [30]. The ability of RPE to act as anti-hyperglycemic and anti-obesity agents has been reported *in vitro* and *in vivo* [18]. The RPE and geraniin isolated from RPE possess alpha-glycosidase, alpha amylase, and α -reductase inhibitory activities. RPE at an oral dose of 100 mg/kg could prevent inflammation in dark agouti rats [31]. Many researches found RPE is a safe treatment to be used in therapy [32].

O-EA treatment rat model has low expression of *PPAR γ* . EA inhibits the adipocyte formation in 3T3-L1, *PPAR γ* and lipid accumulation for 37% [33,34]. EA is a synthetic compound that has been widely used as anti-obesity and anti-lipogenic that inhibits ERK1-2. EA can block the cell cycle on G1/S phase [33]. Treatment using RPE 30 mg/kg body weight decreases *PPAR γ* level which is similar to normal and O-EA. The declined level of *PPAR γ* caused by the phytochemical extract of rambutan peel activity which has the ability to bind *IGF-1* and *IGF-1R* has a role in ERK-1 activation pathways. Adipogenesis regulation is activated mainly due to the bond of chemical compound with *IGF-1* receptor that declined the activity of ERK1-2 [6,35]. The low expression of *IGF-1* may be affected by the level of EA

in RPE that has the same characteristic with epigallocatechin-3-gallate, one of green tea chemical compound that is able to inhibit *IGF-1* and *Ras/Raf/MAPK* signaling pathways [21]. Some active compounds that inhibit the activity of *IGF-1* and its receptor are able to inhibit the *MAPK* signaling cascade that lead to low expression of ERK1-2 and *PPAR γ* . RPE (30 mg/kg body weight) decreases the expression of ERK1-2 and *PPAR γ* , approaching the level of normal rat.

Gene expression is controlled in many steps, because it involves the processes through regulation of transcription, post transcription and translation [36]. Expressions of *PPAR γ* reduce on O-EA and O-RPE30 rat models, but expression of *C/EBP α* is not different in all of the treatments. EA is a hydrophilic compound in rambutan peel and it may bind the surface-cell receptor like *IGF-1R* and indirectly can decrease the mRNA level of *C/EBP α* and *PPAR γ* [30]. This research has the same result as research of pomegranate which can weaken adipocyte through controlling mRNA level of *MAPKs*. EA of pomegranate causes lipolysis on fat tissue and fatty acid oxidation on liver [37].

The result of this research showed that RPE30 is more effective than EA, due to its chemical compounds from RPEs and synergistic work that led to a greater effect than EA treatment alone [38]. RPE is an alternative way which can be used in obesity prevention. The intensive researchers focused on adipocyte have a chance to find a potential medicine against obesity and insulin resistance [6]. The main factor that caused obesity is the increasing adipocyte, so inhibition of the formation of fat cells is an important way to prevent obesity.

Rambutan peel is a waste material that has a potential to regulate obesity by preventing the adipocyte formation through normal *PPAR γ* genes on obesity rat model. Chemical compounds of RPE have anti-obesity activity by inhibiting body weight gain, declining size of adipocyte and decreasing triglyceride. It also decreases the expression of *PPAR γ* and level of mRNA *FABP4* gene.

Conflict of interest statement

We declare that we have no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments

This study was supported by DGHE Ministry of Education and Culture RI (Grant no. 1056/UN.10.14/AK/2011). We would like to thank Animal Laboratory of Brawijaya University for providing the research analysis. We acknowledge Bambang Setiawan, Sentot Joko Raharjo, Antonius Christianto and Mohamad Rifki Hariri for the helpful discussion.

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