Donde, H., Ghare, S., Joshi-Barve, S., Zhang, J., Vadhanam, M. V., Gobejishvili, L., Lorkiewicz, P., Srivastava, S., McClain, C. J., & Barve, S. (2020). Tributyrin inhibits ethanol-induced epigenetic repression of CPT-1A and attenuates hepatic steatosis and injury. *Cellular and Molecular Gastroenterology and Hepatology*, *9*(4), 569-585. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcmgh.2019.10.005

Definitions

- **Tributyrin**: A prodrug of butyrate that helps reduce inflammation and improve gut health.
- **Epigenetics**: Study of changes in gene function that do not involve changes in the DNA sequence.
- **CPT-1A (Carnitine Palmitoyltransferase-1A)**: An enzyme important for fat metabolism in the liver.
- **Hepatic Steatosis**: Accumulation of fat in the liver, often referred to as fatty liver disease.
- **Histone Deacetylase (HDAC)**: Enzymes that remove acetyl groups from histones, leading to a closed chromatin structure and reduced gene expression.
- **Histone Acetyltransferase (HAT)**: Enzymes that add acetyl groups to histones, leading to an open chromatin structure and increased gene expression.

Key Findings

- Tributyrin prevents ethanol-induced liver damage by inhibiting HDAC and enhancing CPT-1A expression.
- Ethanol reduces CPT-1A expression through epigenetic changes, specifically by recruiting HDAC1, which decreases histone acetylation.
- Tributyrin increases histone acetylation and CPT-1A expression, reducing liver fat accumulation and injury.

Introduction

The study explores how tributyrin, a prodrug of butyrate, can help reduce liver damage caused by alcohol. It focuses on the enzyme CPT-1A, which is crucial for breaking down fats in the liver. Alcohol consumption can lower CPT-1A levels through epigenetic mechanisms, leading to fatty liver disease. The researchers investigate whether tributyrin can counteract these effects and protect the liver.

Main Content

Background

Alcoholic liver disease (ALD) is a serious condition where the liver becomes damaged due to excessive alcohol consumption. One of the early signs of ALD is hepatic steatosis, where fat accumulates in the

liver. This study examines the role of CPT-1A, an enzyme important for fat metabolism, and how its expression is regulated by epigenetic mechanisms in the context of alcohol consumption. Tributyrin, a butyrate prodrug, is investigated for its potential to protect the liver by inhibiting these harmful epigenetic changes.

Methods

- **Animal Model**: Mice were fed a liquid diet with or without ethanol for four weeks. Tributyrin was administered orally.
- **Cell Studies**: Primary rat hepatocytes were treated with ethanol and/or butyrate.
- **Gene and Protein Analysis**: Techniques like real-time PCR and Western blotting were used to measure CPT-1A levels.
- **Epigenetic Analysis**: Chromatin immunoprecipitation (ChIP) was used to study histone modifications at the CPT-1A promoter.

Results

- **Hepatic Steatosis**: Ethanol-fed mice showed significant liver fat accumulation, which was reduced by tributyrin.
- **CPT-1A Expression**: Ethanol decreased CPT-1A mRNA and protein levels in the liver. Tributyrin treatment restored CPT-1A levels.
- **Histone Modifications**: Ethanol induced deacetylation of histone H3K9 at the CPT-1A promoter, mediated by HDAC1. Tributyrin inhibited this effect, increasing histone acetylation and gene expression.
- **HDAC Activity**: Ethanol increased HDAC activity, which was prevented by butyrate. This inhibition of HDAC1 by butyrate was crucial for maintaining CPT-1A expression.

Conclusion

The study concludes that tributyrin can effectively prevent alcohol-induced liver damage by inhibiting HDAC activity and restoring CPT-1A expression. This suggests that tributyrin or similar compounds could be used as a therapeutic strategy to treat or prevent alcoholic liver disease. The findings highlight the importance of understanding epigenetic mechanisms in developing new treatments for liver diseases.

Word Count: 484