

## CURRENT RESEARCH ON THERAPY IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE EXPERIMENTAL MODEL: BETA-AMYLOID<sub>1-42</sub> INDUCTION

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### **Abstract: -**

*Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a neurodegenerative disorder commonly associated with brain  $\beta$ -amyloid accumulation ( $A\beta$ ). Early in disease, individuals have impairment in short-term memory, but keeps alert preserved sensory and motor functions, progressing to cognitive functions total loss. The aim of this study is to present main substances currently investigated in Alzheimer's disease experimental model induced by  $A\beta_{1-42}$  and its possible therapeutic actions. For this, we realized an exhaustive literature research, and main results data compiled and analyzed. Thus, there were observed three agents' classes used to treat AD: antioxidants, anti-inflammatory, and calcium homeostasis regulators, with 15 substances found. In conclusion, it can be seen that these agents have beneficial results which suggest actions that may be used in clinical practice to pathology treatment.*

**Keywords: -** Alzheimer's disease,  $\beta$ -amyloid<sub>1-42</sub>, treatment, hippocampus.



## INTRODUCTION

Dementia is characterized by progressive deterioration of cognitive function, memory loss and behavioral changes<sup>[1]</sup>. Alzheimer's Disease (AD) is the most dementia common form occurring progressive degeneration<sup>[2-4]</sup>, and it is commonly associated with amyloid plaque accumulation (formed by  $\beta$ -amyloid protein aggregates -  $A\beta$ ) in intracerebral regions, such hippocampus, amygdala, prefrontal cortex and striatum, being one of first identified structural features, followed by neurofibrillary tangles, associated with Tau protein hyperphosphorylation<sup>[1,2,4-6]</sup>.

$A\beta$  plays an important role in synaptic vesicle activity modulation, especially in hippocampus, wherein production, release, and degradation ratio is a possible mediator's synapses mechanism, probably indicating the initial disease pathological symptoms<sup>[1,7]</sup>. The  $A\beta$  hypothesis through amyloidogenic pathway, i.e., Amyloid Precursor Protein (APP) is cleaved initially by  $\beta$ -secretase enzyme and then by  $\gamma$ secretase one, is widely accepted by scientific community, and, through genetic, histological, and biochemical use on animal models, these findings are evidenced involving synaptic dysfunctions in several neurotransmitter systems, such as cholinergic, serotonergic, dopaminergic, and glutamatergic ones<sup>[8,9]</sup>.

AD is still an incurable disease, the search for new therapeutic approaches has been widely studied. Thus, animal models enable new strategies use for humans' treatment. Among animal models that more closely resemble human disease physiopathology have been cholinergic dysfunction models,  $A\beta$  induction aggregate, APP or Tau protein gene mutations are described in literature<sup>[10-12]</sup>.

The model based on  $A\beta$  induction aggregate can be through  $A\beta_{1-40}$ ,  $A\beta_{25-35}$  or  $A\beta_{1-42}$ , the latter being the most used one due to increased propensity to amyloid aggregation and present resemblance to disease in few days<sup>[13-15]</sup>. The  $A\beta_{1-42}$  model is done through a surgical procedure in rodents by intrahippocampal or intraventricular injection of this aggregate after animal anesthesia with assistance of a stereotactic apparatus<sup>[14,16]</sup>.

The procedure starts with anesthesia, being a meticulous substances choice according to animal type, because intravenous injection use is impractical in mice and intraperitoneal, subcutaneous or intramuscular administration shows inconsistency in its absorption<sup>[17]</sup>. Among anesthetic, the most used are: ketamine, xylazine, diazepam, thiopentone e acepromazine, being combination of these substances frequently used<sup>[18-20]</sup>.

However, a careful conversion rate between humans and animals is extremely important for treatment after induction model<sup>[21]</sup>. Therefore, after anesthesia, animal is fixed in stereotaxic through ear bars and nose fixer, then an incision is made to skull expose to bregma and lambda visualization. With an atlas coordinates assistance<sup>[22]</sup>, hippocampus or third ventricle region are located, where  $A\beta_{1-42}$  aggregate application are performed, being approximately 5 $\mu$ l per application. For this purpose,  $A\beta_{1-42}$  peptide, lyophilized powder, needs to be prepared by dilution and centrifugation with physiological or fetal bovine serum (FBS)<sup>[14,23]</sup>. Surgery total time may vary according to anesthesia (10-20 minutes), and/or selected pre-anesthesia, with apparatus fixing animal (15-20 minutes), with intracerebral injection (20-30 minutes), suture and anesthesia recovery (10-30 minutes)<sup>[24]</sup>.

The necessity to studies and research on finding new therapies that control, reverse or even cure this disease in humans make animal models important in preclinical studies. Additionally,  $A\beta_{1-42}$  model promotes na important research source for new therapeutic approaches in scientific community. Thus, the study aims to conduct a literature review in order to identify new therapies being more invested in  $A\beta_{1-42}$  experimental model by researchers.

## Materials and Methods

This study constituted in a relevant literature survey on subject, for that the following keywords were related to each other: Alzheimer,  $A\beta_{1-42}$  and Treatment considering their appearance in Title, Abstract, and/or text words. Publications were considered in different databases, such as SciELO, LILACS, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and BIREME in the last 05 years. Articles with humans' treatment and cell culture were excluded, as well as others animal models which did not use  $A\beta_{1-42}$  protein. After initial survey, Title and Abstract had been read, and it was considered only new substances not used in AD standard clinical practice or even those ones which were not approved for human use and it were disconsidered papers in duplicate, exposing forward obtained results

## Results and Discussion

A scientific analysis previously done with drugs under development for Alzheimer treatment observed a 99% failure rate between years 2002-2012<sup>[25]</sup>. Currently there are five drugs approved by Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for disease treatment, such Tacrine, Donepezil, Galantamine, Rivastigmine (acetylcholinesterase inhibitors), Memantine (NMDA glutamatergic receptor antagonist), and association between Donepezil and Memantine<sup>[26]</sup>.

Understand mechanisms involved in disease onset and progression can contribute to search for more effective treatments. Studies demonstrated, besides  $A\beta$  aggregates and Tau hyperphosphorylation, reactive oxygen (ROS) and nitrogen species (RNS) production, inflammation, and excitotoxicity related to calcium homeostasis deregulation are also involved in disease pathogenesis<sup>[27]</sup>. This section presents subgroups and substances used in interest experimental model and their results.

## Antioxidants

Oxidative stress can be defined as na imbalance between pro and antioxidants substances. ROS and RNS are aerobic cellular metabolism products, involved with redox balance, together with antioxidant substances and enzymes, thus playing na important role in neurodegenerative diseases<sup>[28]</sup> and aging process<sup>[29]</sup>.

Among antioxidants substances recently studied, Resveratrol, a polyphenol derived from plants and found elevated level in red grapes and wine, possibly activate directly sirtuins, which have similar effect to caloric restriction affecting pathway

regulation related diseases aging, such AD<sup>[30]</sup>. It is believed it is a substance with antioxidant properties and when administered in an AD experimental model in mice may promote reduction A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> levels in hippocampus region after treatment<sup>[31]</sup>.

Another antioxidant compound, 5-Hydroxymethylfurfural (5-HMF) produced from natural ones, such as fructose, glucose, sucrose, and cellulose, has been studied under various extraction processes, as well as its production from wood, straw rice or corn<sup>[32]</sup>. Currently it is extracted from *Alpinia oxyphylla* Miq. and in a study involving mice treated for Five consecutive days showed positive results in relation to memory and learning in Morris Water Maze (MWM), and antioxidant enzymes increase, indicating as a possible therapeutic agent in AD treatment<sup>[33]</sup>.

Minocycline, a second-generation tetracycline derivative, has been used for over 40 years for its characteristic to overcome blood brain barrier and prevent caspase upregulation, possibly reducing neuronal apoptosis in Huntington experimental model and Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis<sup>[34]</sup>. Evidences indicate this agent has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, observing a reduction in 3-nitrotyrosine

(3-NT) levels, a peroxynitrite formation marker, in rats' glial cells, and possible reduction in oxidative enzymes activity, such cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2), NADPH-oxidase e calcium-insensitive nitric oxide synthase (iNOS)<sup>[35]</sup>.

Since Chitosan discovery in mid-1850s, numerous studies have been conducted since application in reducing blood cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure, as well as diseases related to inflammation<sup>[36]</sup>. Chitosan oligosaccharides (COS) are a Chitosan hydrolyzed product, abundant in crustaceans' exoskeletons and fungi and insects cell wall. In a study with rats, using MWM and biochemical methods, it was observed in treated group there was na improvement in memory and indexes decrease in malondialdehyde (MDA) levels, as well as increased antioxidant enzymes levels<sup>[37]</sup>.

Canola seeds are rich in phenolic compounds when compared to other oil ones. The most significant component is extracted from this seed is sinapic acid (SA), and the acid component main antioxidant derivative was identified as 1-O- $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl sinapate<sup>[38]</sup>. O SA is a phenylpropanoid compound which can also be found in wheat bran or plants, such as *Sinapis alba*, and mustard seeds. It presents antioxidant and anti-inflammatory actions. In a study with mice, it was observed reduction in iNOS expression when treated with SA for a week<sup>[39]</sup>.

Orientin (ORI) is a flavonoid component found in abundance in passion fruit peel and bamboo leaves, with a long history in Asian medicine for possible exerts antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties<sup>[40]</sup>. In a study that demonstrate antioxidant properties by lowering mitochondrial apoptotic pathway in mice brain, it was observed, after 15 days of treatment with ORI intraperitoneally, there was improvement in memory and learning tests using MWM, as well as reduction in 3-NT levels, lipid peroxidation (4-hydroxy-nonenal, 4-HNE) and DNA oxidation (8-hydroxy-2'-deoxyguanosine, 8-OHdG), related oxidative stress<sup>[41]</sup>.

### Calcium Homeostasis Regulators

Among some features related to AD pathogenesis, calcium homeostasis imbalance can promote deficits in memory and learning<sup>[3]</sup>, being suggested as a theory in relationship between AD high rates in individuals with Diabetes Mellitus type 2<sup>[3,4]</sup>.

Exendin-4 is a peptide of 39-amino, an acid glucagon-like peptide (GLP-1) analog, and it is present in Gila monster (*Heloderma suspectum*) saliva<sup>[42]</sup>. In a recent study of this substance as diabetes mellitus type 2 treatment, since it has an action to stimulate insulin secretion by increasing calcium inflow. This turned out to support the Exendin-4 theory use in AD treatment<sup>[43]</sup>.

Anthocyanins are a group derived from flavilium salts polihydroxy compounds which belongs to flavonoid family and they are responsible for blue, purple and red pigments in higher plants' leaves, fruits and flowers. Usually, plants produce these substances as a defense mechanism against environmental stress factors as ultraviolet rays, low temperatures and droughts<sup>[44]</sup>. In a study using anthocyanins in AD experimental model was observed that treated animals showed reduction in A $\beta$  levels in hippocampus when compared to control group, as well as calcium levels normalization in a study with cell culture. Thus, it is suggested that treated animals' A $\beta$  levels reduction in hippocampus is due to an intracellular calcium levels' normal balance<sup>[45]</sup>.

### Anti-inflammatory

Evidences indicate that neuritic plaques formed by A $\beta$  accumulation in brain are responsible for synaptic dysfunction followed by neuronal damage<sup>[46]</sup>. A $\beta$  possibly promotes neurodegeneration through parallel mechanism via microglial cells and astocytes activation<sup>[47]</sup>. Microglia makes up about 10% of cells in Central Nervous System (CNS) and plays an important role in most immune cell defense in this system, representing the defense first line against pathogens and other lesions types<sup>[48,49]</sup>.

Thus, with microglia activation and astrocytes recruitment occurs na acute inflammatory response with cytokines release, activating a neuroinflammation cascade. These inflammatory mediators are involved in AD and when released in excess promote neurotoxicity<sup>[50]</sup>. During brain lesions or neurodegenerative processes, Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF- $\alpha$ ) release, inflammatory cytokines, nitric oxide and ROS activate microglia<sup>[47-49]</sup>. Thus, evidences suggest that inflammatory mechanisms are involved in disease pathogenesis, contributing to its progression, leading to extensive research on antiinflammatory substances use as a treatment option that offer benefits in AD<sup>[51]</sup>.

Soybean isoflavone has been cultivated for about 5,000 years in China and it was introduced in Europe and America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, respectively. This substance is biosynthesized through a general phenylpropanoid pathway, which initiates from naringenin phenylalanine, na pathway intermediate amino acid, converted sequentially in genistein isoflavone by isoflavone synthase enzyme and dehydratase<sup>[52]</sup>. In a recent study, this substance was able to reduce

Interleukin-1 (IL-1) and TNF- $\alpha$  level, and thus it can be an effective component in inflammatory processes' reduction treatment related to AD<sup>[53]</sup>.

Dipsacus asper wall is a substance extracted from Chinese plants with various therapeutic applications, such low back pain, traumatic hematomas and bone fractures. Evidences indicate that this substance could reduce cognitive impairment and decrease A $\beta$  production in hippocampus induced by chronic exposure of rats to aluminum<sup>[54,55]</sup>. Akebia Saponin D is extracted from this medicinal herb above mentioned and it has been studied like an anti-inflammatory substance. A recent study showed this activity, by histochemical and biochemical methods, with reduction in IL-1 and TNF- $\alpha$  levels<sup>[56]</sup>.

Another option discussed in literature with anti-inflammatory effects is hydrogen-rich saline, an option to hydrogen gas use, because transport and handle tanks difficulty, as well as itself is safe and costeffective option. Studies demonstrate beneficial therapeutic effect on ROS production and inflammatory processes in several brain injury types and neurodegenerative diseases<sup>[57]</sup>. In a 2011 study, they examined these saline effects in reducing neuroinflammation, which they found decrease in IL-1 $\beta$  levels, concluding that it may attenuate inflammatory effects on AD<sup>[58]</sup>.

Ginseng is an important medicinal herb related to longevity, especially in Asian countries. In traditional Chinese medicine, this plant is widely used for improving cognitive functions like memory and slow processes related to dementia. The main pharmacologically active ingredients in ginseng are ginsenosides Rg1 e Rb1, involved in inhibiting neuroinflammation and reduced A $\beta$  aggregation<sup>[59,60]</sup>.

Thus, Rb1 effects were studied in AD experimental model in rats induced by A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> and through MWM it was observed a damage in memory reversal caused after surgery, suggesting an indirect mechanism for drugs development that promote reversal neuroinflammation on hippocampus<sup>[61]</sup>.

Hydroxy-safflor yellow A (HSYA) is the main chemical component of isolated yellow pigment from Carthamus tinctorius L. and it has demonstrated antithrombotic properties and has been used for treating cardiovascular diseases and pulmonary inflammatory lesions minimization<sup>[62]</sup>. Evidences suggest that this substance has anti-inflammatory properties and a study model induced by A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> was demonstrated significant reductions in IL-1 e TNF- $\alpha$  level, suggesting an inflammatory response inhibition in AD<sup>[63]</sup>.

Tetrandine, an isolated alkaloid extracted from Chinese herb Stephania tetrandia root, presents antihypertensive, hepatoprotective, and anti-inflammatory effects<sup>[64,65]</sup>. In a recent study, this alkaloid decreased proinflammatory mediators' expression by inhibiting Nuclear Factor-kB (NF-kB) activation. By reducing IL-1 e TNF- $\alpha$ , spatial learning and memory could be improved in rats by NF-kB downregulation, suggesting that this substance administration might be used on patients with AD treatment<sup>[66]</sup>.

Carotenoids are present in considerable amounts in human plasma and tissues due to tomatoes, red vegetables and watermelons dietary intake<sup>[67]</sup>. Lycopene, a carotenoid type, has antioxidant and antiinflammatory effects. In AD, a study demonstrated a proinflammatory cytokines significant reduction, such as TNF- $\alpha$ , TGF- $\beta$  and IL-1 $\beta$  in rats' brain after 14 days of treatment. The improvement in relation to learning and spatial memory was confirmed through WMW<sup>[68]</sup>.

**Table 01 – Screened substances in different papers with their methodological characteristics (animal species, effective doses, treatment duration, methods used) and results obtained (action and effects) in an experimental model induced by A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub>.**

Substances	Animal species	Doses	Treatment duration	Methods used	Action	Effects	Paper number
Resveratrol	Rats	40, 80 mg/kg	12 weeks	IA, Wb	Antioxidant	↓NF- $\kappa$ B, A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub>	[31]
5-Hydroxymethylfurfural (5-HMF)	Mice	15, 150 $\mu$ g/kg	05 days	MWM	Antioxidant	↓Cognitive impairment	[33]
	Rats	25 mg/kg	07 days	IH	Antioxidant	↓3-NT	[35]
Chitosan oligosaccharides (COS)	Rats	200, 400, 800 mg/kg	14 days	BCH	Antioxidant	↓MDA	[37]
Sinapic acid	Mice	10 mg/kg	07 days	Wb	Antioxidant	↓iNOS	[39]
Orientin	Mice	20, 40 mg/kg	3 weeks	IH	Antioxidant	↓3-NT	[41]
Exendin-4	Rats	1 $\mu$ l	Injection 15 minutes after surgery	IH	Calcium homeostasis regulators	↓Ca <sup>2+</sup>	[43]
Anthocyanins	Rats	0.2 mg/kg	30 days	Wb	Calcium homeostasis regulators	↓A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub>	[45]
Soybeanisoflavone	Rats	80 mg/kg	14 days before surgery	RT-PCR, Wb	Antiinflammatory	↓IL-1, TNF- $\alpha$	[53]
Akebia Saponin D	Rats	30, 90, 270 mg/kg	4 weeks	BCH, HCH	Antiinflammatory	↓IL-1, TNF- $\alpha$	[56]
hydrogen-rich saline	Rats	5 ml/kg	10 days	IH, Wb	Antiinflammatory	↓IL-1	[58]
Ginseng Rb1	Rats	10 mg/kg		MWM	Antiinflammatory	↓Cognitive impairment	[61]
Hydroxy-safflor yellow A	Mice	20 mg/kg	14 days	RT-PCR, Wb	Antiinflammatory	↓IL-1, TNF- $\alpha$	[63]
Tetrandine	Rats	40 mg/kg	14 days	BCH, HCH	Antiinflammatory	↓IL-1, TNF- $\alpha$	[66]
Lycopeno	Rats	1,2,4 mg/kg	14 days	Imunoassay-kit	Antiinflammatory	↓TNF- $\alpha$ , TGF- $\beta$ , IL-1 $\beta$	[68]

IA- Immunosorbent assay; Wb- Western blot; Ih- Immunohistochemistry; RT-PCR- Reverse transcriptionpolymerase chain reaction; MWM- Morris Water Maze; BCH- Biochemistry; HCH- Histochemistry; MDA- malondialdehyde; ↓- reduction; NF- Nuclear Factor; A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub>-  $\beta$ -amyloid<sub>1-42</sub>; 3-NT- 3-nitrotyrosine; MDA- malondialdehyde; iNOS- calcium-insensitive nitric oxide synthase; Ca<sup>2+</sup>- calcium levels; IL- Interleukin; TNF- Tumor Necrosis Factor; TGF- Tumor Growth Factor.

### Conclusion

AD, because it is a multifactorial disease and its origin remains Unknown, presents a variety of research related to treatment, but insufficient in complete remission. It is observed, among animals' models similar to AD, A $\beta$ <sub>1-42</sub> experimental model has been extensively studied in recent years with several substances, which promote positive effects, mainly antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and calcium homeostasis regulators.

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