Pentose phosphate pathway inhibition induce Endoplasmic Reticulum stress and autophagy

Luigi Mele1, Francesca Paino1, Tarik Regad2, Paola Stiuso3, Angela Lombardi3, Davide Liccardo1, Marcella La Noce1, Gianpaolo Papaccio1, Michele Caraglia3, Virginia Tirino1, Vincenzo Desiderio1

1 Department of Experimental Medicine, University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Naples, Italy
2 The John van Geest Cancer Research Centre, School of Science and Technology, Nottingham Trent University, Clifton Lane, Nottingham, UK.
3 Department of Biophysics, Biochemistry and General Pathology, University of Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”, Naples, Italy

Pentose phosphate pathway (PPP) is a major glucose catabolism pathway that supplies the cell with a reduced form of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate (NADPH) and ribose-5-phosphate. NADPH is necessary for the detoxification of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and reductive biosynthesis. A key player in this pathway is the enzyme glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) that reduces NADP+ to NADPH, oxidizes glucose-6-phosphate and prevents ROS accumulation. Here, we show that the natural molecule 3,4',5-trihydroxystilbene-3-β-d-glucoside (Polydatin) inhibits glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD). As expected, G6PD inhibition causes an imbalance in NADP+/NADPH ratio, leading to a redox imbalance, followed by Endoplasmic Reticulum (ER) stress, autophagy, cell cycle block and apoptosis. We have demonstrated a link between G6PD inhibition and ER stress, showing that Unfolded Protein Response mediator such as PERK and IRE-1 have a key role in inducing autophagy and apoptosis after PPP block. Moreover, combination of PPP inhibition with autophagy inhibitors, such as chloroquine, strongly potentiate cytotoxicity on cancer cells, evidencing the role of autophagy as an escaping mechanism. This results shows that double inhibition of PPP and autophagy may be an affective therapeutic strategy against cancer.

Keywords
Pentose Phosphate Pathway, PERK, IRE-1, Autophagy, Everolimus, Chloroquine