tion/developmental toxicity screening test in rats given DTG by gavage at 0, 8, 20 or 50 mg/kg bw/day [15], to obtain the preliminary information on the reproductive and developmental effects of DTG, because the testing for reproductive and developmental toxicity has become an important part of the overall toxicology. Males were given DTG for a total of 49 days beginning 14 days before mating, and females were given DTG for a total of 40–49 days beginning 14 days before mating to day 3 of lactation throughout the mating and gestation period. In this screening study, deaths in both sexes at 50 mg/kg bw/day, lowered body weight gain and food consumption in males at 50 mg/kg bw/day and females at 20 and 50 mg/kg bw/day, and neurobehavioral changes such as mydriasis, decreased locomotor activity, bradypnea, prone position, tremor and/or salivation in both sexes at 20 and 50 mg/kg bw/day were found. Although no effects of DTG were detected on the estrous cyclicity, precoital interval, copulation, fertility and gestation indexes, numbers of corpora lutea and implantations, and gestation length, significant decreases in the number, body weight and viability of offspring and a significant increase in the incidence of fetuses with external malformations were noted at 50 mg/kg bw/day. Oligodactyly, anal atresia and tail anomalies were frequently observed at the highest dose. The total number of fetuses with external malformations, but not individual malformation, was significantly increased at 50 mg/kg, and the teratogenic effect of DTG was strongly suggested. However, this screening test does not provide complete information on all aspects of reproduction and development due to the relatively small numbers of animals in the dose groups and selectivity of the endpoints. Only external examination in the newborn rats was performed, and no internal or skeletal examinations were carried out in this screening test. The prenatal developmental toxicity study was therefore conducted to accurately evaluate the developmental toxicity, including the teratogenicity of DTG in rats.

2. Materials and methods

This study was performed in compliance with OECD guideline 414 Prenatal Developmental Toxicity Study [16] and in accordance with the principles for Good Laboratory Practice [17], "Law for the Humane Treatment and Management of Animals" [Law No. 105, October 1, 1973, revised June 15, 2005] and "Standards Relating to the Care and Management, etc. of Experimental Animals" [Notification No. 6, March 27, 1980 of the Prime Minister's Office].

2.1. Animals

International Genetic Standard (Crj: CD (SD) IGS) rats were used throughout this study. This strain was chosen because it is most commonly used in toxic studies, including reproductive and developmental toxicity studies, and historical control data are available. Males at 11 weeks of age and females at 10 weeks of age were purchased from Atsugi Breeding Center, Charles River Japan, Inc. (Yokohama, Japan). The rats were acclimatized to the laboratory for five days prior to the start of the experiment. Male and female rats found to be in good health were selected for use. Animals were reared on a sterilized basal diet (CRF-1; Oriental Yeast Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan) and filtered tap water ad libitum, and they were maintained in an air-conditioned room at 22 ± 3 °C, with a relative humidity of $50 \pm 20\%$, a 12-h light/dark cycle, and ventilation of 10–15 air changes/hour. Virgin female rats were mated overnight with male rats. The day when the sperm in the vaginal smear and/or vaginal plug were detected was

considered to be day 0 of pregnancy. The copulated females were distributed into four groups to equalize the female body weights among groups. The copulated females were housed individually.

2.2. Chemicals and dosing

DTG was obtained from Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd. (Tokyo, Japan). DTG, a white powder, is slightly soluble in hot water and alcohol, soluble in chloroform, and very soluble in ether, and its melting point is 179 °C, specific gravity is 1.10 and molecular weight is 239.3 [2]. The DTG (Lot no. 34K21) used in this study was 99.5% pure, and it was kept in a dark place at room temperature. The purity and stability of the chemical were verified by analysis before and after the study. Rats were dosed once daily by gastric intubation with DTG at a dose of 0 (control), 10, 20 or 40 mg/kg bw on days 6 through 19 of pregnancy. The dosage levels were determined based on the results of our reproduction/developmental toxicity screening test [15], in which deaths at 50 mg/kg bw/day and neurobehavioral changes and lowered body weight gain and food consumption at 20 and 50 mg/kg bw/day in females, and decreases in the number, body weight and viability of offspring and increased incidence of fetuses with malformations at 50 mg/kg bw/day were found. DTG was suspended in 0.5% (w/v) carboxymethylcellulose–Na solution with 0.1% (w/v) Tween 80. The volume of each dose was adjusted to 5 ml/kg body weight based on daily body weight. The control rats were given only 0.5% (w/v) carboxymethylcellulose–Na solution with 0.1% (w/v) Tween 80. The stability of formulations has been confirmed for up to 8 days. During use, the formulations were maintained under such conditions for less than 7 days, and each formulation was analyzed for concentration of DTG and the results revealed 90.3–99.5% of the intended concentration.

2.3. Observations

All females were observed daily during the pre-administration period and on the day of sacrifice, and twice a day (before and after administration) during the administration period for clinical signs of toxicity. Maternal body weight was recorded on days 0, 3 and 6–20 of pregnancy. Food consumption was recorded on days 0, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 20 of pregnancy. The pregnant rats were euthanized by exsanguination under ether anesthesia on day 20 of pregnancy. The peritoneal cavity was opened, and the uterus was removed from the maternal body and weighed. The numbers of corpora lutea, implantation sites, live and dead fetuses and resorptions were counted. The live fetuses were removed from the uterus and sexed, weighed and inspected for external malformations and malformations within the oral cavity. Approximately one-half of the live fetuses in each litter were randomly selected, fixed in alcohol, stained with alizarin red S and alician blue [18] and examined for skeletal anomalies. The remaining live fetuses in each litter were fixed in Bouin's solution. Their heads were subjected to free-hand razor-blade sectioning [19], and the thoracic areas were subjected to microdissecting [20] to reveal internal abnormalities.

2.4. Data analysis

The statistical analysis of fetuses was carried out using the litter as the experimental unit. Maternal body weight, body weight gain, adjusted weight gain, weight of the gravid uterus, food consumption, numbers of corpora lutea, implantations and live fetuses, fetal weight and placental weight were analyzed for statistical significance as follows. Bartlett's test of homogeneity of variance was used to determine if the groups had equivalent variances at the 5% level of significance. If the variances were equivalent, the groups were compared by one-way analysis of variance. If significant differences were found, Dunnett's multiple comparison test was performed. If the groups did not have equivalences, the Kruskal–Wallis test was used to assess the overall effects. Whenever significant differences were noted, pair-wise comparisons were made using the Mann–Whitney U-test. The incidences of pre- and postimplantation embryonic loss and fetuses with malformations and variations and sex ratio of live fetuses were analyzed using Wilcoxon's rank sum test. The rates of pregnancy, nonpregnancy and females showing clinical signs of toxicity were analyzed with Fisher's exact test. The 0.05 level of probability was used as the criterion for significance.

Table 1

Maternal findings in rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy

Dose (mg/kg)	0 (control)	10	20	40
No. of rats	24	24	24	24
No. of pregnant rats	24	24	24	24
Initial body weight	256 ± 13	256 ± 13	256 ± 13	256 ± 13
No. of females showing clinical sign of toxicity				
Death	0	0	0	4
Alopecia	2	2	3	2
Bradypnea	0	0	0	2
Decreased locomotor activity	0	0	1	11^{**}
Mydriasis	0	0	12^{**}	24^{**}
Prone position	0	0	0	3
Salivation	0	0	2	2
Soil of perigenital	0	0	1	4
Tremor	0	0	0	2
Body weight gain during pregnancy (g)[a]				
Days 0–6	40 ± 8	39 ± 8	40 ± 8	39 ± 8
Days 6–15	50 ± 7	49 ± 9	$37 \pm 11^{**}$	$23 \pm 10^{**}$
Days 15–20	77 ± 9	77 ± 9	71 ± 10	$47 \pm 16^{**}$
Days 0–20	167 ± 17	165 ± 21	$148 \pm 24^{**}$	$109 \pm 21^{**}$
Adjusted weight gain[b]	88 ± 15	87 ± 19	77 ± 15	$49 \pm 17^{**}$
Food consumption during pregnancy (g/day)[a]				
Days 0–6	23 ± 2	23 ± 2	23 ± 2	23 ± 2
Days 6–15	26 ± 2	26 ± 2	24 ± 3	$20 \pm 3^{**}$
Days 15–20	28 ± 2	28 ± 3	26 ± 2	$22 \pm 3^{**}$
Days 0–20	25 ± 2	26 ± 2	24 ± 2	$21 \pm 2^{**}$
Weight of gravid uterus (g)[a]	79 ± 10	78 ± 11	72 ± 15	$59 \pm 10^{**}$

[a] Values are given as the mean ± S.D.

[b] Adjusted weight gain refers to maternal weight gain excluding the gravid uterus.

** Significantly different from the control ($p < 0.01$).

3. Results

Table 1 shows the maternal findings in rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy. At 40 mg/kg bw/day, death was found on day 8 of pregnancy in two females and on days 7 and 19 of pregnancy in one female each. Statistically significant increases in the incidence of mydriasis occurred at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day, and in decreased locomotor activity at 40 mg/kg bw/day. Additional findings that appeared to be treatment related, but not statistically significant were decreased locomotor activity at 20 mg/kg bw/day, salivation and soil of the perigenital area at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day, and bradypnea, prone position and tremors at 40 mg/kg bw/day. These signs were observed consistently throughout the dosing period and relatively higher incidences of these signs were noted during the early administration period. Maternal body weight gain was significantly decreased on days 6–15 and 0–20 of pregnancy at 20 mg/kg bw/day, and on days 6–15, 15–20 and 0–20 of pregnancy at 40 mg/kg bw/day. Adjusted weight gain, the net weight gain of maternal rats during pregnancy, and the weight of the gravid uterus were also significantly reduced at 40 mg/kg bw/day. At this dose, food consumption was significantly lowered on days 6–15, 15–20 and 0–20 of pregnancy.

Table 2 presents the reproductive findings in rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy. No dam with total litter loss was observed in any group. No effects of DTG were found on the numbers of corpora lutea and implantations, or the incidence of preimplantation loss. At 40 mg/kg bw/day, a significantly increased incidence of postimplantation loss, a decreased number of live fetuses and lowered weights of male and female fetuses and placentae were noted. The sex ratio of live fetuses was significantly reduced in the DTG-treated groups.

The summarized results of external and internal examinations in fetuses of rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy are shown in Table 3. No fetuses with external malformations were observed in the control group. One fetus with cleft palate was found at 10 mg/kg bw/day. Fetuses with external malformations were found in 13 out of the 328 fetuses (three out of the 24 litters) at 20 mg/kg bw/day and 33 out of the 251 fetuses (11 out of the 20 litters) at 40 mg/kg bw/day, and significantly increased incidence of the total number of fetuses with external malformations was noted at 40 mg/kg bw/day. Incidences of fetuses with brachydactyly and with short tail were increased at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day, and significantly increased incidences were found at 40 mg/kg bw/day. As for internal malformations, one fetus each with microphthalmia in the control and 20 mg/kg bw/day groups, one fetus with dilatation of the lateral ventricles in the control group and one fetus with undescended testes in the 40 mg/kg bw/day were observed. Variations in the internal organs were observed in 11–19 fetuses in all groups. However, no significant differences in the incidences of

Table 2
Reproductive findings in rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy

Dose (mg/kg)	0 (control)	10	20	40
No. of litters	24	24	24	20
No. of litters totally resorbed	0	0	0	0
No. of corpora lutea per litter[a]	15.7 ± 2.1	14.8 ± 1.6	14.9 ± 1.9	15.3 ± 1.5
No. of implantations per litter[a]	15.3 ± 1.9	14.7 ± 1.8	14.2 ± 2.7	15.2 ± 1.4
% Preimplantation loss per litter[b]	2.4	0.9	5.6	0.9
% Postimplantation loss per litter[c]	3.5	3.4	4.8	16.4**
No. of live fetuses per litter[a]	14.8 ± 1.9	14.2 ± 2.1	13.7 ± 2.9	12.6 ± 1.9**
Sex ratio of live fetuses (male/female)	0.56	0.49*	0.46*	0.46*
Body weight of live fetuses (g)[a]				
Male	3.64 ± 0.17	3.72 ± 0.18	3.59 ± 0.24	3.19 ± 0.31**
Female	3.42 ± 0.16	3.53 ± 0.25	3.41 ± 0.18	3.03 ± 0.26**
Placental weight (g)[a]	0.47 ± 0.04	0.47 ± 0.03	0.50 ± 0.16	0.40 ± 0.04**

[a] Values are given as the mean ± S.D.
[b] (No. of preimplantation embryonic loss/no. of corpora lutea) × 100.
[c] (No. of resorptions and dead fetuses/no. implantations) × 100.
* Significantly different from the control ($p < 0.05$).
** Significantly different from the control ($p < 0.01$).

fetuses with internal malformations and variations were detected between the control and DTG-treated groups.

The summarized results of skeletal examinations in the fetuses of rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy are presented in Table 4. Fetuses with skeletal malformations were found in one out of the 184 fetuses (one out of the 24 litters) in the control group, one out of the 176 fetuses (one out of the 24 litters) at 10 mg/kg bw/day, 13 out of the 170 fetuses (six out of the 24 litters) at 20 mg/kg bw/day, and 26 out of the 130 fetuses (12 out of the 20 litters) at 40 mg/kg bw/day. Significantly higher incidences of the total number of fetuses with skeletal malformations were observed at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day. Incidences of fetuses with absence, fusion or malposition of the caudal vertebrae and with absence or fusion of phalanges were higher at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day, and significantly increased incidences of fetuses with these malformations and fetuses with the absence or

fusion of metacarpals were found at 40 mg/kg bw/day. Although skeletal variations in the vertebral column, ribs and sternebrae were observed in all groups, no significant differences in the incidences of fetuses with skeletal variations were detected between the control and DTG-treated groups. A significantly delayed ossification, as evidenced by the numbers of sacral and caudal vertebrae, sternebrae, and metatarsi, was also noted at 40 mg/kg bw/day.

4. Discussion

In order to obtain further information on the reproductive and developmental toxicity of DTG, the present study was conducted in compliance with OECD guideline 414 Prenatal Developmental Toxicity Study [16]. DTG was given to pregnant rats during the time of implantation to the term of pregnancy to

Table 3
External and internal examinations in fetuses of rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy

Dose (mg/kg)	0 (control)	10	20	40
External examination				
Total no. of fetuses (litters) examined	354 (24)	341 (24)	328 (24)	251 (20)
Total no. of fetuses (litters) with malformations	0	1	13 (3)	33 (11)**
Cleft palate	0	1	0	0
Brachydactyly	0	0	8 (3)	31 (11)**
Short tail	0	0	7 (2)	10 (7)**
Internal examination				
Total no. of fetuses (litters) examined	170 (24)	165 (24)	158 (24)	121 (20)
Total no. of fetuses (litters) with malformations	1	0	1	1
Microphthalmia	1	0	1	0
Dilatation of lateral ventricles	1	0	0	0
Undescended testes	0	0	0	1
Total no. of fetuses (litters) with variations	16 (10)	11 (9)	13 (7)	19 (12)
Thymic remnants in neck	13 (10)	8 (7)	12 (7)	17 (11)
Dilated renal pelvis	2 (2)	2 (2)	0	0
Left umbilical artery	1	1	1	2 (2)

** Significantly different from the control ($p < 0.01$).

Table 4
Skeletal examinations in fetuses of rats given DTG on days 6–19 of pregnancy

Dose (mg/kg)	0 (control)	10	20	40
Total no. of fetuses (litters) examined	184 (24)	176 (24)	170 (24)	130 (20)
Total no. of fetuses (litters) with malformations	1	1	13 (6)*	26 (12)**
Split cartelige of thoracic centrum	0	0	1	1
Fused cartilage of cervical vertebral arches	0	1	1	1
Fused cartilage of ribs	1	0	0	0
Absence, fusion or malposition of caudal vertebrae	0	0	8 (3)	10 (8)**
Absence or fusion of phalanges	0	0	5 (3)	18 (9)**
Fusion of metacarpal/metatarsal and phalanx	0	0	0	2 (2)
Absence or fusion of metacarpals	0	0	0	4 (4)*
Shortening of tibia and fibula	0	0	0	1
Total no. of fetuses (litters) with variations	10 (7)	16 (9)	16 (11)	12 (8)
Bipartite ossification of thoracic centrum	0	2 (1)	1	0
Dumbbell ossification of thoracic centrum	0	1	0	0
Unossified thoracic centrum	1	1	0	1
Variation of number of lumbar vertebrae	1	0	0	2 (1)
Wavy ribs	0	1	1	0
Short supernumerary rib	9 (6)	12 (7)	14 (10)	4 (4)
Short 13th rib	0	0	0	2 (2)
Sacralization of lumbar vertebra	0	0	0	2 (1)
Bipartite ossification of sternebra	0	0	1	1
Asymmetry of sternebra	0	0	0	1
Degree of ossification[a]				
No. of sacral and caudal vertebrae	7.3 ± 0.5	7.5 ± 0.5	7.5 ± 0.5	7.0 ± 0.6*
No. of sternebrae	4.6 ± 0.4	4.8 ± 0.5	4.6 ± 0.4	4.2 ± 0.4*
No. of metatarsals	8.0 ± 0.0	7.9 ± 0.3	7.8 ± 0.4	6.7 ± 1.4*

[a] Values are given as the mean ± S.D.
* Significantly different from the control ($p < 0.05$).
** Significantly different from the control ($p < 0.01$).

characterize the effects of DTG on embryonic/fetal development. The findings of the present study confirmed the results of a previous screening study and extended the understanding of the reproductive and developmental toxicity of DTG. The present data showed that the prenatal oral administration of DTG produced maternal toxicity, as evidenced by deaths, neurobehavioral changes, decreased body weight gain and reduced food consumption, and developmental toxicity, as evidenced by a high incidence of postimplantation loss, a decreased number of live fetuses and lower weight of fetuses, and teratogenicity, as evidenced by a higher incidence of fetuses with external and skeletal malformations.

DTG is a specific sigma receptor ligand [3] and sigma receptor ligands can modulate neurotransmissions, including the noradrenergic, glutamatergic and dopaminergic system [10,21,22]. The systemic injection of DTG has been reported to cause neurobehavioral changes in rats [4,6,7,9,22]. The present study shows that the oral administration of DTG also induced neurobehavioral changes at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day in pregnant rats. Lowered body weight gain at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day and food consumption at 40 mg/kg bw/day were also observed in pregnant rats. These findings indicate that DTG is maternally toxic at 20 mg/kg bw/day and higher.

The sex ratio (males/females) was significantly lowered in all DTG-treated groups. The values for sex ratio were 0.429–0.521 in the background control data for the last 6 years in the laboratory performed present study. Statistically significant changes in the sex ratio observed in the present study were considered to be unrelated to the administration of DTG, because the values for sex ratio in the DTG-treated groups were within the range of the historical control data, no increased embryonic/fetal deaths were detected at 10 and 20 mg/kg bw/day and the control value for the sex ratio was very high in the present study. A decreased number of live fetuses, increased incidence of postimplantation loss, and reduced weights of fetuses and placentae were detected at 40 mg/kg bw/day. A decreased number of live fetuses and increased incidence of postimplantation loss indicate embryonic/fetal lethality, and reduced weights of fetuses and placentae indicate intrauterine growth retardation. These findings indicate that DTG is toxic to embryonic/fetal survival or fetal growth at 40 mg/kg bw/day when administered during the time of implantation to the term of pregnancy.

In our previous reproductive and developmental screening test [15], the total number of fetuses with external malformations, but not individual malformation, was significantly increased at 50 mg/kg. At this dose, oligodactyly and tail anomalies were frequently observed, and the teratogenic effect of DTG was strongly suggested. No malformed fetuses were found at 20 mg/kg bw/day in our previous study. In the present study, morphological examinations in the fetuses of exposed mothers revealed increased incidence of fetuses with external and skeletal malformations at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day.

Fetuses with external, internal and/or skeletal malformations and/or variations were found in all groups. The malformations and variations observed in the present study are of the types that occur spontaneously among the control rat fetuses [23–26]. At 40 mg/kg bw/day, significantly higher incidences of the total number of fetuses with external and skeletal malformations were detected, and significantly higher incidences of individual types of external and skeletal malformation were also noted. At 20 mg/kg bw/day, the incidence of the total number of fetuses with skeletal malformations was significantly higher than that of control group. Although the incidence of individual types of skeletal malformation was not significantly increased at 20 mg/kg bw/day, types of external and skeletal malformations observed at this dose were the same as those observed at 40 mg/kg bw/day. Consideration of the sum of these findings suggests that a conservative estimate of the LOAEL for the teratogenic dose of DTG is 20 mg/kg bw/day in rats when administered during the time of implantation to the term of pregnancy. DTG caused suppression of body weight gain and neurobehavioral changes in dams and abnormally morphological development and developmental delay in the offspring of rats at 20 and 40 mg/kg bw/day. Therefore, the teratogenic effects of DTG at doses without maternal toxicity, a selective teratogenicity of DTG, was not found in the current study. There are no available reports in which the developmental toxicity of DTG is assessed in any other animal species. Further studies are needed to confirm the reproductive and developmental toxicity of DTG in additional species. Developmental neurotoxicity and multi-generation studies are also required to support the conclusion of the prenatal hazard of DTG.

In conclusion, DTG caused maternal neurobehavioral changes and decreased body weight gain at 20 mg/kg bw/day and higher, embryonic/fetal deaths and lowered fetal weight at 40 mg/kg bw/day, and increased incidence of fetuses with malformations at 20 mg/kg bw/day and higher when administered during the time of implantation to the term of pregnancy in rats.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Evaluation of reproductive and developmental toxicity of the rubber accelerator N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide in rats

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ABSTRACT   Male and female Crl:CD(SD) rats were fed a diet containing the rubber accelerator N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide (DCBS) at 0, 1500, 3000, 6000 or 10 000 p.p.m. (0, 83, 172, 343 or 551 mg/kg bw/day in males and 0, 126, 264, 476 or 707 mg/kg bw/day in females) for a total of 57 days beginning 16 days before mating in males, and a total of 61–65 days from 16 days before mating to day 21 of lactation in females. Body weight gains and food consumption were reduced in males at 6000 p.p.m. and higher and in females at 3000 p.p.m. and higher. The weights of the spleen at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m. and of the thymus at 10 000 p.p.m. were decreased in females. No changes in estrous cyclicity, copulation index, fertility index, gestation index, delivery index, precoital interval or gestation length were observed at any dose of DCBS. Numbers of implantations at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m. and pups delivered at 10 000 p.p.m. were reduced. There were no changes in the sex ratio or viability of pups. The body weights of male and female pups were lowered at 6000 p.p.m. and higher. Decreased weight of the spleen in weanlings was also observed in males at 1500 p.p.m. and higher and in females at 3000 p.p.m. and higher. The data indicate that DCBS possesses adverse effects on reproduction and development in rats.

Key Words: developmental toxicity, N, N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide, rat, reproductive toxicity, rubber accelerator

INTRODUCTION

Sulfenamide accelerator compounds are widely used in the manufacture of automotive compartments and industrial rubber products such as tires, hoses, conveyer belts, bushings seals, gaskets and windshield wiper blades (EPA 2001). N,N-Dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide (DCBS, Fig. 1) is a sulfenamide accelerator. The annual production level of DCBS in Japan was approximately 1000 tons in 1990–1993 and 1900 tons in 2000–2003. Most of this amount was sold and handled domestically (OECD 2007). DCBS is used as an accelerator of vulcanization and is completely reacted in the vulcanizing process (OECD 2007). DCBS is regulated in Germany for use in articles that contact food, but is not regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration for use in food contact applications (Flexsys 2000).

Exposure of workers handling sulfenamide accelerator materials is likely to be highest in the area of materials packaging. During material packout at the manufacturing site, and to a lesser degree during weigh-up activities at the consumer site, there is a possibility of skin and inhalation exposure. Although consumer exposure should be minimal, the most likely route of consumer exposure is skin contact with rubber or latex articles (EPA 2001).

Only up to 6% biodegradation has been determined for DCBS in a ready biodegradability test, and a measured log Kow value of 4.8 suggests that DCBS may have a high bioaccumulation potential (OECD 2007). The possibility of such a chemical compound entering biological systems has aroused great concern regarding its toxicological potential. Generally, biological effects of chemicals should be studied in laboratory animals to investigate their possible influences on human health, and the results of animal tests of chemical toxicity relevant to humans (Clayson & Krewski 1990). However, very little information on the toxicity of DCBS has been published. The toxic effects of DCBS have been briefly summarized by the European Chemical Bureau (2000) and US EPA (2001). It was reported that the oral LD50 values were 1077–10 000 mg/kg bw in rats, the oral NOAEL for 44-day repeated dose toxicity was higher than 100 mg/kg bw/day in rats, and no effects on reproduction were observed at doses up to 400 mg/kg bw/day in rats (EPA 2001). The oral LD50 value was 8500 mg/kg bw in male mice, and repeated daily inhalation exposure of male rats for 15 days at 2 h/day and 350–400 mg/m^3 caused mucous membrane irritation (Vorobera 1969).

The Japanese Government (MHW 1998) conducted toxicity studies for DCBS, including acute toxicity, *in vitro* genotoxicity and repeat dose toxicity combined with reproductive/developmental toxicity as a part of the Safety Examination of Existing Chemical Substances and Chemical Safety Programmes. These toxicity studies are summarized in the IUCLID Data Sets (EPA 2006), OECD Screening Information Data Sets (OECD 2007) and the Hazard Assessment Sheet (CERI 2002). We previously reported the results of a screening test for repeat dose toxicity combined with a reproductive/developmental toxicity in rats, where DCBS at 400 mg/kg bw/day had a deleterious effect on reproduction and development and caused a marked decrease in the number of live pups as well as a total loss of pups by postnatal day (PND) 4 (Ema *et al.* 2007). The primary effects may be on the gestation index for dams and live birth index for pups, both of which appear to be affected at multiple points along the female reproductive process. The viability of neonatal pups may also be affected. To examine the adverse effect of dietary DCBS on survival and growth of pups, a reproductive and developmental toxicity study was performed in rats given DCBS during an extended administration period up to the weaning of pups.
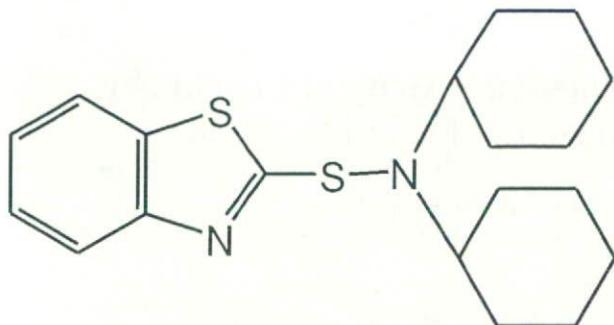
Fig. 1 Structural formula of N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was performed in 2005–2006 at the Safety Research Institute for Chemical Compounds (Sapporo, Japan) in compliance with *Law for the Humane Treatment and Management of Animals* (Law no. 105, October 1, 1973, revised December 22, 1999, Revised Law no. 221; revised June 22, 2005, Revised Law no. 68), *Standards Relating to the Care, Management and Refinement of Laboratory Animals* (Notification no. 88 of the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, April 28, 2006) and *Fundamental Guidelines for Proper Conduct of Animal Experiment and Related Activities in the Testing Facility under the Jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare* (Notification no. 0601005 of the Health Sciences Division, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, June 1, 2006).

Chemical and dosing

DCBS (CAS no. 4979-32-2) was obtained from Ouchishinko Chemical Industrial (Tokyo, Japan). DCBS in the form of off-white to tan granules is very slightly soluble in water and methanol but soluble in oil. Its melting point is 100–105°C, density is 1230 kg/m³ and molecular weight is 347 (Flexsys 2000). DCBS (Lot no. 508001) used in this study was 99.7% pure and was kept in a sealed container under cool (1–8°C) and dark conditions. The purity and stability of the chemical were verified by analysis using high-performance liquid chromatography before and after the study. Rats were given dietary DCBS at a concentration of 0 (control), 1500, 3000, 6000 or 10 000 p.p.m. Males were fed a diet containing DCBS for a total of 57 days beginning 16 days before mating. Females were fed a diet containing DCBS for a total of 61–65 days from 16 days before mating to day 21 of lactation throughout the mating, gestation and lactation periods. Control rats were fed a basal diet only.

The dosage levels were determined based on the results of a previous study in rats that were given DCBS by gavage at 0, 6, 25, 100, or 400 mg/kg bw/day for a total of 44 days from 14 days before mating in males and a total of 40–51 days beginning 14 days before mating to day 3 of lactation throughout the mating and gestation periods in females (Ema *et al.* 2007). In that study, toxicologically significant changes were observed only at 400 mg/kg bw/day. Three of 10 females died during parturition. An increased incidence of females showing decreased locomotor activity, soil of the lower abdominal fur and reddish tears was observed. Decreased body weights were found in males and females. Decreased weight of the thymus in both sexes was noted. Decreases in the gestation

index, numbers of corpora lutea, implantations, pups born and pups born alive, live birth index and viability index were detected.

Dosed diet preparations were formulated by mixing DCBS into an appropriate amount of a powdered basal diet (CRF-1; Oriental Yeast, Tokyo, Japan) for each dietary concentration. Chemical analysis showed that DCBS in the diet was stable for at least 21 days at room temperature and the formulations were maintained in a room temperature for no more than 21 days. Generally, the diet was replaced once a week.

Animals and housing conditions

Sprague–Dawley (Crl:CD[SD]) rats were used throughout this study. Rats of this strain were chosen because they are the most commonly used in reproductive and developmental toxicity studies and historical control data are available. Male and female rats at nine weeks of age were purchased from the Tsukuba Breeding Center (Charles River Laboratories Japan, Yokohama, Japan). The rats were acclimated to the laboratory for six days prior to the start of the experiment. Male and female rats found to be in good health were selected for use. Rats (F0) were randomly distributed into five groups of six males and six females each, and all animals were assigned a unique number and tattooed on the ear prior to the start of the experiment. Animals were housed individually in suspended aluminum/stainless steel cages except during the acclimation, mating and nursing periods. From day 17 of pregnancy to the day of weaning, individual dams and litters were reared using wood chips as bedding (White Flake; Charles River Laboratories Japan,).

Animals were reared on a basal diet or a diet containing DCBS and filtered tap water *ad libitum* and maintained in an air-conditioned room at 22 ± 3°C with a humidity of 50 ± 20% and a 12-h light (8:00–20:00)/dark (20:00–8:00) cycle. The room was ventilated 10–15 times/h.

Observations

All rats were observed twice a day for clinical signs of toxicity. The body weight was recorded once a week for males and once a week during the premating period, on days 0, 7, 14 and 20 of pregnancy, and on days 0, 4, 7, 14 and 21 of lactation for females. Food consumption was recorded once a week for males, and once a week during the premating period, on days 0, 7, 14 and 20 of pregnancy and on days 0, 7, 14 and 21 of lactation for females.

Rats were euthanized by exsanguination under ether anesthesia. Males were euthanized at 17 weeks and females at 18 weeks on day 21 of lactation. The external surfaces of the rats were examined for abnormalities. The abdomen and thoracic cavities were opened and gross internal examination was performed. In females, the number of implantation sites was recorded. The brain, pituitary, thymus, thyroid, liver, kidney, spleen, adrenal gland, testis, epididymis, seminal vesicle, ventral prostate, ovary and uterus were weighed. The thyroid and seminal vesicle were weighed after fixation with 10% neutral buffered formalin.

Daily vaginal lavage samples from each female were evaluated for estrous cyclicity for two weeks of the premating period. Females with repeated 4–6 day estrous cycles were judged to be normal. Each female rat was mated overnight with a single male rat of the same dosage group until copulation occurred. During the mating period, daily vaginal smears were examined for the presence of sperm. The presence of sperm in the vaginal smear and/or a vaginal plug was considered evidence of successful mating (day 0 of pregnancy). Copulated females were checked for signs of parturition three times a day on days 21–23 of pregnancy.

The females were allowed to deliver spontaneously and nurse their pups until PND 21. The day on which parturition was

completed by 13:00 was designated as PND 0. Total litter size and the numbers of live and dead pups were recorded. Live pups were counted, sexed, examined grossly and individually weighed on PND 0, 4, 7, 14 and 21. On PND 4, litters were randomly adjusted to eight pups comprised of four males and four females. No adjustment was made for litters with fewer than 8 pups. Selected pups were assigned a unique number and tattooed on a limb on PND 4. Unselected pups were necropsied on PND 4. Weanlings were necropsied on PND 21 and the brain, thymus, liver, spleen and uterus were weighed.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis of the offspring was carried out using the litter as the experimental unit.

Body weight, body weight gain, food consumption, length of estrous cycle, precoital interval, gestation length, number of implantations and pups delivered, delivery index, organ weight, organ/body weight ratio (relative organ weight) and the viability of pups were analyzed for statistical significance in the following way. Bartlett's test of homogeneity of variance was used to determine if the groups had equivalent variances. If the variances were equivalent, the groups were compared by one-way analysis of variance

(ANOVA). If significant differences were found, Dunnett's multiple comparison test was performed. If the groups did not have equivalent variances, the Kruskal–Wallis test was used to assess the overall effects. Whenever significant differences were noted, pairwise comparisons were made by Mann–Whitney U-test. The incidence of females with normal estrous cycles, copulation index, fertility index, gestation index and neonatal sex ratio was analyzed by the χ^2 test or Fisher's exact test.

The 0.05 level of probability was used as the criterion for significance.

RESULTS

Clinical observations, body weight and food consumption (F0 males and females)

No deaths were found in F0 males and females. In males, there were no compound related clinical signs of toxicity at any doses. Hematuria and soil of perigenital fur were each observed at 10 000 p.p.m. in one female.

Table 1 shows body weight gain in F0 males and females during dosing. In males, body weight gain on days 0–7 of the dosing period at 6000 p.p.m. and higher was significantly lowered. In females,

Table 1 Body weight gains of F0 parental male and female rats given N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide

Dose (p.p.m.)	0 (Control)	1500	3000	6000	10 000
No. males	6	6	6	6	6
Initial body weight (g)†	367 ± 7	367 ± 6	366 ± 7	366 ± 8	366 ± 7
Body weight gain during dosing period (g)†					
Days 0–7	48.0 ± 10.4	36.8 ± 14.5	36.3 ± 4.8	26.7 ± 8.5**	25.2 ± 6.5**
Days 7–14	38.2 ± 9.2	33.7 ± 13.4	34.5 ± 8.7	35.2 ± 5.6	29.5 ± 5.5
Days 14–21	21.7 ± 9.2	27.3 ± 7.1	24.3 ± 5.2	23.0 ± 12.6	21.8 ± 3.1
Days 21–28	26.8 ± 10.2	25.7 ± 8.3	22.3 ± 10.5	23.5 ± 6.7	25.2 ± 5.0
Days 28–35	21.2 ± 7.7	20.8 ± 6.5	28.5 ± 12.6	24.0 ± 3.7	19.2 ± 4.1
Days 35–42	14.8 ± 6.9	15.3 ± 6.5	20.3 ± 6.9	17.3 ± 6.3	20.5 ± 5.2
Days 42–49	13.8 ± 8.3	19.5 ± 4.2	13.5 ± 2.7	19.8 ± 5.5	17.2 ± 2.9
Days 49–56	14.8 ± 7.6	19.5 ± 6.3	16.7 ± 5.0	20.5 ± 6.2	17.0 ± 3.5
No. females	6	6	6	6	6
Initial body weight (g)†	238 ± 6	239 ± 7	237 ± 5	238 ± 6	237 ± 7
Body weight gain during premating period (g)†					
Days 0–7	6.5 ± 7.7	8.8 ± 8.8	6.8 ± 4.6	−6.5 ± 9.7*	−19.3 ± 9.3**
Days 7–14	15.7 ± 8.5	16.3 ± 6.9	14.2 ± 5.9	12.2 ± 8.0	13.0 ± 8.7
Body weight gain during pregnancy (g)†					
Days 0–7	45.3 ± 6.5	42.5 ± 4.2	32.8 ± 5.4*	31.2 ± 8.6*	19.5 ± 12.0**
Days 7–14	38.3 ± 6.0	35.7 ± 5.4	36.8 ± 7.0	35.2 ± 6.2	31.2 ± 8.6
Days 14–20	76.7 ± 14.6	68.3 ± 4.3	75.8 ± 12.4	68.7 ± 7.7	62.5 ± 12.2
Body weight gain during lactation (g)†					
Days 0–4	28.0 ± 15.7	10.8 ± 24.3	28.0 ± 15.7	8.2 ± 8.7	−2.5 ± 14.6*
Days 4–7	6.5 ± 2.7	12.0 ± 9.0	10.0 ± 10.2	5.3 ± 7.3	0.5 ± 10.9
Days 7–14	1.3 ± 10.7	10.2 ± 7.3	4.2 ± 8.1	14.2 ± 11.1	6.0 ± 12.5‡
Days 14–21	−19.0 ± 14.7	−31.7 ± 9.9	−17.0 ± 8.3	−8.8 ± 9.8	2.6 ± 14.3‡*

*Significantly different from the control, $P < 0.05$; **significantly different from the control. $P < 0.01$.

†Values are given as mean ± SD; ‡data were obtained from five females because one female was excluded (total litter loss on day 9 of lactation).

body weight gains were decreased on days 0–7 of the premating period at 6000 p.p.m. and higher, on days 0–7 of pregnancy at 3000 p.p.m. and higher, and on days 0–4 of lactation at 10 000 p.p.m. Body weight gain on days 14–21 of lactation was significantly increased at 10 000 p.p.m.

In F0 males, food consumption was significantly decreased during the first week at 6000 p.p.m. and higher and during the second week at 10 000 p.p.m. In F0 females, food consumption was significantly decreased throughout the premating, pregnancy and lactation periods at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m., except on days 7–14 and 14–20 of pregnancy at 6000 p.p.m. A tendency towards decreased food consumption was observed on days 0–7 of pregnancy at 3000 p.p.m.

The mean daily intakes of DCBS were 83, 172, 343 and 551 mg/kg bw in F0 males, and 126, 264, 476 and 707 mg/kg bw in F0 females for 1500, 3000, 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m., respectively.

Estrous cyclicity (F0 females)

All F0 females showed normal estrous cycles in all groups, and the length of the estrous cycles was not significantly different between the control and DCBS-treated groups.

Reproductive and developmental effects (F0 parents/F1 offspring)

The reproductive and developmental parameters for F0 parents/F1 offspring are presented in Table 2. In F0 parent animals in all groups, all pairs copulated, all male and female rats were fertile and all females delivered live pups. All rats of all groups mated within four days. There were no significant differences between control and DCBS-treated groups in copulation index, fertility index, gestation index, precoital interval, gestation length, delivery index, sex ratio of F1 pups, or viability of F1 pups during lactation. Significantly lower numbers of implantations at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m. and pups delivered at 10 000 p.p.m. were observed. Body weights of male pups were significantly lowered on PND 4, 7 and 21 at 6000 p.p.m. and on PND 7, 14 and 21 at 10 000 p.p.m. In female pups, significantly lower body weights were observed on PND 7, 14 and 21 at 6000 p.p.m. and higher. No malformed pups were detected in any groups.

Necropsy and organ weights (F0 males and females)

Atrophy of the thymus was found in two females at 10 000 p.p.m. No compound-related gross lesions of the reproductive organs were noted in F0 males and females. In males, significantly increased relative weights of the liver and kidney were observed at 10 000 p.p.m.

The organ weights of F0 females are shown in Table 3. The body weight at the scheduled terminal sacrifice was significantly lowered at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m. The absolute weight of the ovary was significantly lowered at 10 000 p.p.m. Significantly increased relative weights were found for the pituitary at 3000 p.p.m., the liver at 6000 p.p.m., and the brain, kidney and adrenal gland at 10 000 p.p.m. The absolute and relative weights of the thymus at 10 000 p.p.m. and the spleen at 6000 p.p.m. and higher were significantly decreased.

Necropsy and organ weights (F1 weanlings)

No compound related gross lesions were observed in F1 weanlings.

The organ weights of F1 male weanlings are presented in Table 4. The body weight at the scheduled sacrifice was significantly reduced at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m. The absolute weights of the brain at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m. and the liver at 10 000 p.p.m. were also significantly reduced. The relative weights of the liver at

1500 and 6000 p.p.m. and of the brain at 10 000 p.p.m. were significantly increased. Significantly decreased absolute and relative weights of the spleen, except for the relative weight at 3000 p.p.m., were noted at 1500 p.p.m. and higher.

The organ weights of F1 female weanlings are presented in Table 5. The body weight at the scheduled sacrifice was significantly reduced at 6000 p.p.m. and higher. Significantly reduced absolute weights of the brain at 6000 and 10 000 p.p.m., the liver at 10 000 p.p.m., and the uterus at 3000 p.p.m. and 10 000 p.p.m. were also observed. The relative weight of the brain was significantly increased at 10 000 p.p.m. The absolute and relative weights of the spleen were significantly reduced at 3000 p.p.m. and higher.

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to assess the effects of DCBS on continuous parameters such as body weight and food consumption, as well as endpoints for reproductive and developmental toxicity.

Significant decreases in body weight gain and food consumption were observed at 6000 p.p.m. and higher in F0 males and females. In females at 3000 p.p.m., body weight gain was significantly decreased during early pregnancy. Food consumption also decreased, but not significantly. The data indicate that changes in body weight gain were associated with changes in food consumption and that DCBS adversely affects body weight gain and food consumption at 6000 p.p.m. in male rats and 3000 p.p.m. in female rats. The higher relative weights of the liver and kidney at the highest dose in F0 males seem to be due to secondary effects of lowered body weight rather than direct effects of DCBS on the organs. More pronounced effects on organ weights were noted in females. Lower absolute and relative weights of the thymus at 10 000 p.p.m. and spleen at 6000 p.p.m. and higher were detected. In our previous study, histopathological examination revealed atrophy of the thymus and spleen at 400 mg/kg bw/day (Ema et al. 2007). Other changes in female organ weight such as the relative weights of the brain, pituitary, liver, kidney and adrenal gland, as well as the absolute weight of the ovary are unlikely to be due to the toxic effects of DCBS because the degree of changes was relatively small, no dose-dependency was shown and no changes were noted in absolute or relative weight. These findings suggest that the immune system may be a target of DCBS toxicity, and that female rats have a higher susceptibility to the toxicity of DCBS than male rats. These findings are consistent with our previous study (Ema et al. 2007). The higher susceptibility to DCBS toxicity in females may be explained by the stress of pregnancy and lactation. DCBS is likely to be not reproductively toxic in male rats because DCBS caused neither pathological changes in male reproductive organs nor changes in male reproductive parameters.

In our previous study, DCBS given by gavage to rats at 400 mg/kg bw/day from 14 days before mating to day 3 of lactation caused significant decreases in the gestation index, number of corpora lutea, implantations, pups born and pups born alive, live birth index and viability index (Ema et al. 2007). This dose also caused severe maternal toxicity and a total loss of pups by PND 4. No maternal or reproductive/developmental toxicity was detected at 100 mg/kg bw/day in our previous study. In the present study, no serious reproductive difficulties were noted even at the highest dose of 10 000 p.p.m., and necropsy of the reproductive organs revealed no evidence of reproductive failure. Although decreased numbers of implantations and pups delivered were noted at the highest dose, the viability of pups until weaning was not significantly decreased. In the present feeding study, the mean daily intakes of DCBS at the

Table 2 Reproductive and developmental findings for F0 parents/F1 offspring of rats given N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide

Dose (p.p.m.)	Control	1500	3000	6000	10 000
No. pairs	6	6	6	6	6
Copulation index[b]					
Male/female (%)	100/100	100/100	100/100	100/100	100/100
Pre-coital interval (days)[a]	2.2 ' 0.8	2.3 ' 1.2	3.2 ' 0.8	3.0 ' 0.9	2.7 ' 1.2
Fertility index[c]					
Male/female (%)	100/100	100/100	100/100	100/100	100/100
Gestation index (%)[d]	100	100	100	100	100
Gestation length (days)[a]	22.2 ± 0.4	22.2 ± 0.4	22.2 ± 0.4	22.0 ± 0.0	22.2 ± 0.4
No. implantations[a]	16.0 ± 1.8	15.0 ± 0.9	16.3 ± 1.2	13.5 ± 2.0*	12.8 ± 1.2**
Delivery index (%)[a,e]	95.8 ± 8.0	96.7 ± 3.7	95.8 ± 5.3	95.6 ± 8.1	86.7 ± 21.1
No. pups delivered[a]	15.3 ' 2.2	14.5 ' 1.0	15.7 ' 1.8	13.0 ' 2.6	11.2 ' 3.1*
Sex ratio of F1 pups[f]	0.467	0.448	0.564	0.526	0.463
Viability index (%)[a]					
PND 0[g]	100 ± 0	100 ± 0	100 ± 0	100 ± 0	91.2 ± 12.9
PND 4[h]	99.1 ± 2.3	97.9 ± 3.3	95.9 ± 5.3	90.6 ± 12.2	72.1 ± 40.8
PND 21[i]	97.9 ± 5.1	97.9 ± 5.1	100.0 ± 0.0	89.6 ± 25.5	83.3 ± 40.8
Male pup body weight during lactation (g)[a]					
PND 0	6.8 ' 0.4	6.7 ' 0.7	6.3 ' 0.4	6.2 ' 0.6	6.5 ' 0.7
PND 4	10.6 ± 0.9	10.3 ± 0.8	9.6 ± 0.6	9.1 ± 0.7**	9.1 ± 2.2[j]
PND 7	18.7 ± 1.3	17.7 ± 1.3	17.6 ± 1.3	14.5 ± 2.2**	13.3 ± 3.7[j]**
PND 14	39.2 ± 3.0	36.2 ± 3.0	37.3 ± 2.9	33.0 ± 4.0	26.3 ± 7.2[j]**
PND 21	67.0 ± 4.6	61.1 ± 6.1	62.8 ± 3.2	55.7 ± 7.6*	44.1 ± 9.9[j]**
Female pup body weight during lactation (g)[a]					
PND 0	6.4 ± 0.4	6.4 ± 0.5	6.0 ± 0.3	5.8 ± 0.6	6.2 ± 0.5
PND 4	10.1 ' 1.1	9.9 ' 0.7	9.0 ' 0.6	8.7 ' 0.7	8.5 ' 1.9
PND 7	18.2 ± 2.0	17.4 ± 0.7	16.0 ± 1.2	13.8 ± 1.3**	11.7 ± 4.2*
PND 14	38.6 ± 3.5	36.1 ± 2.1	35.0 ± 2.4	31.5 ± 4.9*	25.3 ± 7.2[k]**
PND 21	65.1 ± 5.2	60.1 ± 3.7	58.2 ± 3.3	53.5 ± 9.0*	42.5 ± 9.9[k]**

*Significantly different from the control, $P < 0.05$; **significantly different from the control. $P < 0.01$.

[a]Values are given as mean ' SD; [b]copulation index (%) (number of animals with successful copulation/number of animals paired) × 100; [c]fertility index (%) (number of animals that impregnated a female or were pregnant/number of animals with successful copulation) × 100; [d]gestation index (%) (number of females that delivered live pups/number of pregnant females) × 100; [e]delivery index (%) (number of pups delivered/number of implantations) × 100; [f]sex ratio (total number of male pups/total number of pups delivered); [g]viability index on PND 0 (number of live pups on PND 0/number of pups delivered) × 100; [h]viability index on PND 4 (number of live pups on PND 4/number of live pups on PND 0) × 100; [i]viability index on PND 21 (number of live pups on PND 21/number of live pups selected on PND 4) × 100; [j]data were obtained from five litters because one female experienced total male litter loss by day 4 of lactation; and [k]data were obtained from five litters because one female experienced total litter loss by day 9 of lactation.

PND, post natal day.

highest dose were 551 and 707 mg/kg bw in F0 males and females, respectively. One possible explanation for the discrepancy in the degree of reproductive and developmental toxicity between the present and previous studies may be the difference in administration method. Some studies have shown that gavage and feed administration result in different toxicokinetics for various chemicals (Yuan *et al.* 1994, 1995). Further studies are needed to clarify the difference in DCBS toxicokinetics between gavage and feed administrations.

Regarding the development of offspring, decreases in the numbers of implantations and pups delivered and lowered body weights of male and female pups were noted at 6000 p.p.m. and higher. These findings indicate that the dose level of 6000 p.p.m. used in this study was potent enough to adversely affect the survival and growth of pups. Reduced weight of the spleen was also observed in male and female weanlings. These findings also suggest that the immune system may be a target of DCBS toxicity. Other changes in the weights of organs, such as the brain and liver in male weanlings and the brain, liver and uterus in female weanlings are unlikely to be due to the toxic effects of DCBS because the degree of changes was relatively small, no dose-dependency was shown, no changes were noted in the absolute or relative weight, and also

Table 3 Absolute and relative organ weights of F0 female rats given N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide

Dose (p.p.m.)	Control	1500	3000	6000	10 000
No. females	6	6	6	6	5
Body weight (g)†	331 ± 18	316 ± 16	320 ± 11	306 ± 14*	274 ± 20**
Brain (g)†	2.10 ± 0.05‡	2.11 ± 0.08	2.10 ± 0.05	2.06 ± 0.10	2.06 ± 0.03
	0.63 ¹ 0.03§	0.67 ¹ 0.04	0.66 ¹ 0.02	0.67 ¹ 0.04	0.76 ¹ 0.05**
Pituitary (mg)†	13.3 ± 1.6‡	13.4 ± 2.4	15.4 ± 0.9	13.9 ± 1.9	12.9 ± 2.6
	4.03 ± 0.44§	4.24 ± 0.65	4.81 ± 0.32*	4.53 ± 0.46	4.70 ± 0.66
Thyroid (mg)†	18.3 ± 3.6‡	17.6 ± 3.5	17.7 ± 4.3	18.8 ± 2.7	17.5 ± 3.6
	5.52 ± 0.87§	5.55 ± 0.99	5.51 ± 1.18	6.15 ± 0.94	6.39 ± 1.02
Thymus (mg)†	255 ± 47‡	205 ± 63	237 ± 45	186 ± 89	116 ± 60**
	77.1 ± 14.4§	65.0 ± 19.6	74.2 ± 13.1	60.1 ± 26.5	41.7 ± 19.9*
Liver (g)†	13.03 ¹ 0.83‡	12.51 ¹ 0.71	13.42 ¹ 1.18	13.69 ¹ 0.68	12.18 ¹ 1.60
	3.94 ± 0.21§	3.97 ± 0.23	4.20 ± 0.27	4.48 ± 0.09**	4.46 ± 0.59
Kidney (g)†	2.34 ± 0.16‡	2.38 ± 0.13	2.35 ± 0.10	2.20 ± 0.12	2.51 ± 0.41
	0.71 ± 0.04§	0.75 ± 0.05	0.74 ± 0.04	0.72 ± 0.03	0.92 ± 0.18**
Spleen (mg)†	682 ± 74‡	589 ± 68	600 ± 89	493 ± 24**	459 ± 46**
	206 ± 20§	187 ± 19	188 ± 31	161 ± 5**	168 ± 15**
Adrenal (mg)†	75.5 ± 11.0‡	81.8 ± 12.9	77.0 ± 8.8	72.0 ± 8.8	88.2 ± 8.3
	22.9 ¹ 3.2§	26.0 ¹ 3.9	24.1 ¹ 2.7	23.5 ¹ 2.8	32.4 ¹ 3.8**
Ovary (mg)†	109 ± 18‡	113 ± 17	101 ± 5	101 ± 10	75 ± 23**
	32.9 ± 3.8§	36.1 ± 6.8	31.6 ± 2.4	32.9 ± 3.9	27.1 ± 6.4
Uterus (mg)†	513 ± 68‡	465 ± 73	489 ± 101	414 ± 71	369 ± 183
	156 ± 24§	148 ± 26	153 ± 32	135 ± 22	132 ± 56

*Significantly different from the control, $P < 0.05$; **significantly different from the control, $P < 0.01$.

†Values are given as the mean ± S.D; ‡absolute organ weight; §relative organ weight (organ weight [g or mg]/100 g body weight).

Table 4 Absolute and relative organ weights for F1 male weanlings of rats given N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide

Dose (p.p.m.)	Control	1500	3000	6000	10 000
No. males	6	6	6	6	5
Body weight (g)†	67.1 ± 6.7	62.5 ± 4.5	63.8 ± 4.2	55.3 ± 8.9*	43.8 ± 10.6**
Brain (g)†	1.70 ± 0.05‡	1.63 ± 0.12	1.59 ± 0.04	1.51 ± 0.05**	1.45 ± 0.11**
	2.55 ± 0.21§	2.61 ± 0.24	2.50 ± 0.15	2.78 ± 0.42	3.44 ± 0.74*
Thymus (mg)†	257 ¹ 44‡	219 ¹ 33	265 ¹ 45	246 ¹ 36	190 ¹ 65
	382 ± 50§	351 ± 57	415 ± 59	449 ± 60	424 ± 50
Liver (g)†	2.56 ± 0.35‡	2.65 ± 0.29	2.69 ± 0.38	2.37 ± 0.38	1.72 ± 0.49**
	3.80 ± 0.17§	4.22 ± 0.20*	4.20 ± 0.37	4.30 ± 0.33*	3.90 ± 0.22
Spleen (mg)†	372 ± 63‡	276 ± 53**	296 ± 32*	250 ± 45**	148 ± 36**
	556 ± 84§	442 ± 80*	466 ± 56	452 ± 32*	337 ± 31**

*Significantly different from the control, $P < 0.05$; **significantly different from the control, $P < 0.01$.

†Values are given as mean ± S.D; ‡absolute organ weight; §relative organ weight (organ weight [g or mg]/100 g body weight).

because the changes seem to be secondary effects of the lowered body weight. In the present study, external and internal morphological examinations of offspring were performed, but no skeletal examinations were conducted. To accurately evaluate prenatal developmental toxicity including teratogenicity, it is necessary to interrupt pregnancy 12–24 h before the expected term either by hysterectomy or the necropsy of maternal animals (Wilson 1965).

The adverse effects of DCBS on reproduction and development noted in the present feeding study are almost consistent with the findings of our previous gavage study (Ema *et al.* 2007), which showed decreased numbers of implantations and pups delivered and decreased body weight of the pups at higher doses. These endpoints appear to be affected at multiple points of the female reproductive and developmental process. The decreased number of implantations

Table 5 Absolute and relative organ weights for F1 female weanlings of rats given N,N-dicyclohexyl-2-benzothiazolesulfenamide

Dose (p.p.m.)	Control	1500	3000	6000	10 000
No. females	6	6	6	6	5
Body weight (g)†	65.7 ± 7.2	61.1 ± 3.4	59.9 ± 4.6	54.0 ± 9.6*	42.8 ± 9.6**
Brain (g)†	1.60 ± 0.09‡	1.56 ± 0.07	1.53 ± 0.03	1.50 ± 0.05*	1.37 ± 0.08**
	2.46 ˈ 0.25§	2.56 ˈ 0.16	2.57 ˈ 0.18	2.84 ˈ 0.39	3.34 ˈ 0.78**
Thymus (mg)†	272 ± 46‡	253 ± 33	252 ± 27	243 ± 51	216 ± 82
	415 ± 56§	415 ± 57	422 ± 37	456 ± 101	491 ± 92
Liver (g)†	2.58 ± 0.31‡	2.47 ± 0.27	2.42 ± 0.42	2.27 ± 0.43	1.71 ± 0.49**
	3.93 ± 0.14§	4.03 ± 0.22	4.02 ± 0.41	4.19 ± 0.13	3.96 ± 0.29
Spleen (mg)†	360 ± 57‡	296 ± 16	267 ± 60*	247 ± 50**	163 ± 59**
	548 ± 66§	484 ± 9	442 ± 72*	456 ± 37*	371 ± 58**
Uterus (mg)†	44.7 ˈ 6.6‡	41.3 ˈ 6.1	35.7 ˈ 2.1*	42.0 ˈ 6.9	32.4 ˈ 4.8**
	68.9 ± 14.0 Temp.§	67.7 ± 9.8	60.0 ± 7.4	78.5 ± 10.8	77.3 ± 10.3

*Significantly different from the control, $P < 0.05$; ** significantly different from the control, $P < 0.01$.

†Values are given as the mean ± S.D; ‡absolute organ weight; §relative organ weight (organ weight [g or mg]/100 g body weight).

was the most striking effect in the present study. In our previous study, a decreased number of corpora lutea was noted in female rats given DCBS (Ema *et al.* 2007). Therefore, it is likely that the decreased number of implantations can be attributed to the decreased number of corpora lutea. The present study does not provide complete information on all aspects of reproduction and development due to the relatively small numbers of animals in the dose groups and selectivity of the endpoints. To further evaluate the reproductive and developmental toxicity of DCBS in rats, a two-generation reproductive toxicity study should be performed.

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COMMENTARY

Comments from the Developmental Neurotoxicology Committee of the Japanese Teratology Society on the OECD Guideline for the Testing of Chemicals, Proposal for a New Guideline 426, Developmental Neurotoxicity Study, Draft Document (October 2006 version), and on the Draft Document of the Retrospective Performance Assessment of the Draft Test Guideline 426 on Developmental Neurotoxicity

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ABSTRACT　　In October 2006, a new revision of the draft guideline (OECD Guideline for the Testing of Chemicals, Proposal for a New Guideline 426. Developmental Neurotoxicity Study) and Draft Document of the Retrospective Performance Assessment (RPA) of the Draft Test Guideline 426 on Developmental Neurotoxicity were distributed following incorporation of the results of the Expert Consultation Meeting in Tokyo on May 24–26, 2005. The draft guideline consists of 50 paragraphs and an appendix with 102 references; and the draft RPA consists of 37 paragraphs with 109 references. National coordinators were requested to arrange for national expert reviews of these draft documents in their member countries. Members of the Developmental Neurotoxicology (DNT) Committee of the Japanese Teratology Society (JTS) reviewed, discussed, and commented on the draft Test Guideline Proposal. The DNT Committee of the JTS also commented on the draft document of the RPA. These comments were sent to the OECD Secretariat. The DNT Committee of the JTS expects the comments to be useful for the finalization of these draft documents.

Key Words: behavior, developmental neurotoxicity, OECD, test guideline

BACKGROUND

In June 1995, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Working Group on Reproduction and Developmental Toxicity at Copenhagen recommended that a guideline for developmental neurotoxicity (DNT) should be written (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 1995). In June 1996, an OECD Consultation Meeting on DNT was held in Copenhagen to provide the Secretariat with a draft report on the outline of a new guideline (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 1996). Comments on this draft report were provided from the Behavioral Teratology (BT) Committee of the Japanese Teratology Society (JTS), in association with the Meeting of Neurobehavioral Toxicology of the Japanese Society of Toxicology. After this meeting, a draft proposal for Test Guideline 426 on DNT Study was developed, and it was submitted to the Secretariat in February 1998. The draft guideline reflecting these comments was distributed in December 1998. The BT Committee of the JTS commented again on this draft guideline. The draft guideline proposal was extensively revised and distributed in October 1999. In October 2000, an OECD Expert Consultation Meeting and International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Risk Science Institute Workshop discussed general issues regarding the design of DNT studies in Washington, D.C. (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2003).

A new revision of the guideline was distributed in September 2003. The draft guideline consists of 51 paragraphs and an appendix. The BT Committee of the JTS commented on the draft Test Guideline Proposal (Fukui *et al.* 2004). The BT Committee of the JTS also commented that an International Collaborative Study to validate this protocol should definitely be performed, as indicated in OECD ENV/EHS/HK/mc/2003.49. These comments were sent to the OECD Secretariat through the Japanese national coordinator in January, 2004.

In response to the comments, the Expert Consultation Meeting was held to make the final revisions to the draft Test Guideline 426 on DNT in Tokyo on May 24–26, 2005 (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2005). Thirteen Japanese, including five persons from the government and eight from the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) attended this meeting among the total of 27 participants from the OECD member countries. Participants included the members of the BT Committee of the JTS, Drs Hiroaki Aoyama, Makoto Ema, and Takashi Tanimura. In this Tokyo Meeting, the number of animals used, issues on dose limits and maternal toxicity, the direct dosing of pups, physical development, neuropathological examination, interpretation of results, Table 3, references, and issues on Test Method Performance (motor activity, sensory function, and memory test) were generally discussed (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development 2005). Japan drafted a new Figure 1 (originally prepared by Dr Tanimura) and presented this figure to the meeting for consideration. After the meeting, Japan edited the references in paragraph 35 and recommended to remove some references because they did not correctly refer to the text.

In October 2006, a new revision of the draft guideline (OECD Guideline for the Testing of Chemicals, Proposal for a New Guideline 426. DNT Study) and Draft Document of the Retrospective Performance Assessment (RPA) of the Draft Test Guideline 426 on DNT were distributed following the incorporation of the results of the Tokyo Meeting in 2005. These draft documents are posted on the OECD public web site of the Test guidelines programme at: http://www.oecd.org/document/55/0,2340,en_2649_34377_2349687_1_1_1_1,00.html. The draft guideline consists of 50 paragraphs, one figure, one table, and one appendix with 102 references, and the draft RPA consists of 37 paragraphs and four tables with 109 references. National coordinators were requested to arrange for national expert reviews of these draft documents in their member countries. The deadline for the expert responses to these draft documents was December 15, 2006.

National experts asked the members of the DNT committee (former BT committee) of the JTS and Japanese participants in the Tokyo Meeting to comment on these documents, a new revision of the draft guideline (OECD Guideline for the Testing of Chemicals, Proposal for a New Guideline 426. DNT Study), and the Draft Document of the RPA of the Draft Test Guideline 426 on DNT. The members of the DNT Committee (Chairman: Dr Yoshihiro Fukui, Professor, University of Tokushima School of Medicine) of the JTS reviewed and commented on the draft documents. The national experts received the comments to these draft documents only from the DNT Committee of the JTS. These comments were sent to the OECD Secretariat through the Japanese national coordinator (Ms. Yayoi Sasaki, Director of the Office of Chemical Safety, Pharmaceutical and Food Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan) before the deadline.

The DNT Committee of the JTS expects the comments to be useful for the finalization of these draft documents.

The comments from the DNT Committee of the JTS are as follows:

COMMENTS

Comments on OECD Guideline for the Testing of Chemicals, Proposal for a New Guideline 426. Developmental Neurotoxicity Study (October, 2006)

General comments

The proposed revised draft of Test Guideline 426 is generally acceptable, except for several minor editorial comments and the need for a uniform style of literature.

Specific comments

A. Editorial remarks

P31	Line 3	Better wording should be used for the sentence: 'If developmental landmarks are ... measurements should be performed.
P37	Line 18	No references are given for adult rats.
P38	Line 4	'brain' should be central nervous system (CNS). Peripheral Nervous System should be peripheral nervous system.
P40	Line 4	'central (CNS)' should be 'CNS'. See P38 suggestion.
P43	Line 4	'and' before 'the cerebellum' should be deleted for consistency of the document form.
P45	Line 3	Subject (evidence) and verb (are) must agree in number.
P47	Line 7	'be use' is correct? In the third revision (Aug '2005), it was 'be done using'.

Figure 1. 2nd Box, Offspring: Approximately 80/sex/group: Line 4 'bodyweight' should be 'body weight'.

Table 1. Insert a horizontal line between the row m1 + f5 and m2 + f6.

Table 2 and Table 3. Column 1/row 1, 'Pup no' should be 'Pup no.' Another 13 comments regarding editorial remarks were made.

B. Literature

It is greatly appreciated that many new references have been added. However, their styles are not uniform, especially in the abbreviation of journal titles.

A total of 81 editorial comments were made in LITERATURE.

Comments on the Draft Document of the Retrospective Performance Assessment (RPA) of the Draft Test Guideline 426 on Developmental Neurotoxicity

We feel a strong need to add a description of the collaborative studies of the JTS.

Efforts for a more unified style of literature are requested.

Addition of the collaborative studies of the JTS

a. P10. Table 1

The following one row is to be added between the rows of 1989 and 1995.

Date	Event	Summary	References
1993–1997	Collaborative studies of the Japanese Teratology Society	Three interlaboratory studies using behavioral teratogens to evaluate a core battery of tests	Fukunishi *et al.* (1998), Tachibana *et al.* (1998), Nishimura *et al.* (2001)

b. P19.

The following new paragraph is to be placed as P19 and the current P19 'The International Programme on Chemical Safety (IPCS) Study' is to be numbered as a New P20.

19. Collaborative Studies of the Japanese Teratology Society – The Japanese Teratology Society established the Behavioral Teratology Meeting (BTM) as a satellite meeting in 1982. Following the small-scale collaborative studies with the unified protocol, workshops were held between 1988 and 1990, with three subgroups: reflexes and sensory function, activity and emotionality, and learning (Tanimura 1992). Subsequently, a core battery test draft for behavioral developmental toxicity was proposed and its utility was examined with three positive behavioral teratogens in 1993–1997. They were phenytoin (Fukunishi *et al*. 1998), retinoic acid (Nishimura *et al*. 2001), and nicotine (Tachibana *et al*. 1998). Participating laboratories were 32, 28, and 18, respectively. It was concluded that the proposed core battery of tests are useful as a screening method to detect postnatal developmental disorders, including behavioral dysfunction, in rats. Activities of the BTM of the Japanese Teratology Society had continued to be presented as the Behavioral Teratology Committee (present DNT Committee) until July 2006. For instance, comments on the OECD Test Guideline 426, Developmental Neurotoxicity Study, Draft Document (September, 2003) were published (Fukui *et al*. 2004).

C. References

The following five references for the New P19 are to be added.

Fukui Y, Ema M, Fujiwara M *et al*. (2004) Comments from the Behavioral Teratology Committee of the Japanese Teratology Society on OECD Guideline for the Testing of Chemicals, proposal for a new guideline 426, developmental neurotoxicity study, draft document (September, 2003). *Congenital Anomalies* **44**: 172–177.

Fukunishi K, Terada Y, Tachibana T, Tanimura T (1998) Collaborative behavioral teratology study of phenytoin: A test battery for neurobehavioral developmental toxicity in rats. *Congenital Anomalies* **38**: 117–141.

Nishimura T, Iwase T, Hashimoto Y, Tanimura T (2001) Evaluation of a core battery of tests for detecting behavioral dysfunction of rat offspring induced by retinoic acid: Collaborative work II of the Japanese Behavioral Teratology Committee. *Congenital Anomalies* **41**: 156–168.

Tachibana T, Narita H, Ogawa T, Tanimura T (1998) Using postnatal age to determine test dates leads to misinterpretations when treatments alter gestation length: Results from a collaborative behavioral teratology study in Japan. *Neurotoxicology and Teratology* **20**: 449–457.

Tanimura T (1992) Update on the activities of the Japanese Behavioral Teratology Meeting. *Congenital Anomalies* **32** (Suppl.): S7–S20.

Note: 'Congenital Anomalies' is the official journal of the Japanese Teratology Society. It has been recently adopted by PubMed and the abbreviated title in PubMed is 'Congenit Anom Kyoto'.

For the Secretariat's convenience, copies of the front page of the five papers are attached.

Uniform style of references
More efforts towards a uniform style of references, especially in the abbreviation of journal titles, are needed. In this document, the majority of journal titles are fully spelled out, while most of the journal titles in Test Guideline 426 are abbreviated. In consideration of the hope that this document may be read not only by academics but also by the public in broader areas, the full spelling of journal titles may have some merits. In any case, the current presentation of references is quite variable, and it is strongly requested that the Secretariat be responsible for the proper amendments.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (1995) *Draft Report of the OECD Ad Hoc Working Group on Reproduction and Developmental Toxicity.* Copenhagen, Denmark, 13th–14th June 1995.

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (1996) *Final Report of the Consultation Meeting on Developmental Neurotoxicity.* Copenhagen, Denmark, 17th–18th June 1996.

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2003) *Report of the Expert Consultation Meeting in Developmental Neurotoxicity Testing.* Washington, US, 23th–25th October 2000.

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) (2005) *Draft Meeting Report of the Expert Consultation Meeting for the Revision of draft Test guideline 426 on 'Developmental Neurotoxicity Study'.* 24–16 May, 2005, Tokyo, MHLW, Japan.

Tachibana T, Narita H, Ogawa T, Tanimura T (1998) Using postnatal age to determine test dates leads to misinterpretations when treatments alter gestation length: Results from a collaborative behavioral teratology study in Japan. *Neurotoxicol Teratol* **20**: 449–457.

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Evaluation of Developmental Toxicity of Ultraviolet Absorber 2-(3',5'-Di-tert-butyl-2'-hydroxyphenyl)-5-Chlorobenzotriazole in Rats

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2-(3',5'-Di-tert-butyl-2'-hydroxyphenyl)-5-chlorobenzotriazole (DBHCB) is widely used as a UV absorber. In this study, the developmental toxicity of DBHCB was evaluated in rats. Pregnant rats were given DBHCB at 0, 62.5, 250, or 1000 mg kg^{-1} day^{-1} by gavage on days 5–19 of pregnancy. No deaths were observed in the pregnant rats of any group. No effect of DBHCB on the general conditions, body weight gain, or feed consumption was observed in the pregnant rats. There were no changes in the ovarian weight, gravid uterine weight, or necropsy findings in the maternal rats of the DBHCB-treated groups. No significant effects of DBHCB were found in the number of corpora lutea, implantations, live fetuses, resorptions or dead fetuses, incidence of pre- or postimplantation embryonic loss, viability of fetuses, fetal weight, or sex ratio of live fetuses. No significant difference in the incidence of fetuses with malformations or variations or degree of ossification was detected between the DBHCB-treated and control groups.

Keywords Benzotriazole, Developmental toxicity, Rat, UV absorber.

INTRODUCTION

2-(3',5'-Di-*tert*-butyl-2'-hydroxyphenyl)-5-chlorobenzotriazole (CAS no. 3864 99–1; DBHCB) is slightly yellowish powder, stable under ordinary conditions, and insoluble in water. Its melting point is 154–158°C, and its specific gravity

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is 1.26. This chemical provides effective light stabilization and prevents the yellowing and degradation of polymers such as polypropylene, high-density polyethylene, unsaturated polyester, styrene-based thermoplastics elastomer, polyamide and impact polystyrene and is used as a UV absorber (Chemical Land21, 2005). The finished polymers—which contain UV absorbers at levels not to exceed 0.5% by weight of polyethylene phthalate polymers, complying with 21 CFR 177.1630 (FDA, 2005a)—may be used in contact with some food types and used under certain conditions as described in 21 CFR 176.170 (FDA, 2000; 2005b). UV absorbers are used in food packages as plastic additives, their function being mainly to prevent polymer degradation and/or a change in the quality of the packed food due to UV rays.

It has caused some anxiety that humans have been exposed to these chemicals in occupational surroundings, from environmental contamination and from contamination in food migrated from packages. The possibility of these chemicals entering the biological system has aroused great concern about their toxic potential. Important information can be gained by studying the biological effects produced by environmental chemicals in laboratory animals, in order to investigate their possible influences on human health.

Recently, DBHCB was assessed for its estrogenic activity, using a recombinant yeast assay (Miller et al., 2001) and the yeast two-hybrid assay (Kawamura et al., 2003); it was reported that DBHCB was not estrogenic. Some information on toxicity is available (Everlight Chemical Industrial Corporation, 2002). The oral LD_{50} for DBHCB was greater than 5000 mg/kg in rats. DBHCB caused minimal irritation to the skin and slight irritation to the eyes in rabbits. A 90-day feeding study of DBHCB in rats, at 22–800 mg/kg, resulted in dose-dependent increases in liver weights and signs of liver toxicity. No effects were found at 3.7 mg/kg. However, no detailed information is available for the toxicity studies.

Although testing for reproductive and developmental toxicity has become an important part of the overall toxicology profile for chemicals, no information has yet been presented on the reproductive and developmental toxicity of DBHCB. Therefore, the current study was conducted to evaluate the developmental toxicity of DBHCB given orally to rats during pregnancy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was performed in compliance with the OECD Guideline 414 Prenatal Developmental Toxicity Study (OECD, 2001) in 2004 at the Shin Nippon Biomedical Laboratories, Ltd. (SNBL; Kagoshima, Japan).

Animals

International Genetic Standard [Crj: CD (SD) IGS] rats were used throughout this study. This strain was chosen because it is most commonly

used in reproductive and developmental toxicity studies, and historical control data are available. Males at 11 weeks of age and females at 10 weeks of age were purchased from Hino Breeding Center, Charles River Japan, Inc. (Yokohama, Japan). The rats were acclimatized to the laboratory for 1 week prior to the start of the experiment. Male and female rats found to be in good health were selected for use. Animals were reared with a basal diet (CE-2; Clea Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan), water was provided *ad libitum*, and the animals were maintained in an air-conditioned room at 21.6–22.2°C, with a relative humidity of 45–58%, a 12-h light/dark cycle, and ventilation with 15 air changes/hour. Virgin female rats were mated overnight with male rats. The day when the sperm and/or vaginal plug was found to be day 0 of pregnancy. The copulated females, weighing 245–314 g, 11 weeks old, were distributed on a random basis into 4 groups of 20 rats each and housed individually. This experiment was approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of SNBL and performed in accordance with the ethics criteria contained in the bylaws of the committee of SNBL.

Chemicals and Dosing

DBHCB was obtained from Musashino Geigy Co., Ltd. (Kitaibaraki, Japan). The DBHCB (lot no. 05004IX3) used in this study was 99.9% pure based on HPLC analysis, and it was kept in a dark place at room temperature under airtight conditions. The purity and stability of the chemical were verified by analysis before the study. Rats were treated once daily by gastric intubation with DBHCB at a dosage of 0 (control), 62.5, 250, or 1000 mg/kg on day 5 through day 19 of pregnancy. The dosage levels were determined based on the results of our dose-finding study in which a significantly increased liver weight was caused in males at 250 mg kg^{-1} day^{-1} and higher, but not in females even at 1000 mg kg^{-1} day^{-1}, after administration of DBHCB for 14 days in rats. DBHCB was suspended in 5% gum arabic solution. The volume of each dose was adjusted to 10 mL/kg body weight based on the latest body weight. The control rats were given only 5% gum arabic solution. The stability of the formulations in a dark and cool place under airtight conditions had been confirmed for up to 14 days. During use, the formulations were maintained under such conditions for no more than 7 days and were 97.3% to 100.1% of the target concentration.

Observations

All females were observed daily during the preadministration period and twice a day (before administration and 1 to 2 h after administration) during the administration period for clinical signs of toxicity. Maternal body weight was recorded on days 0, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19, and 20 of pregnancy. Feed consumption was recorded on days 0–1, 5–6, 8–9, 11–12, 14–15, 17–18, and 19–20

of pregnancy. The pregnant rats were euthanized by exsanguination under ether anesthesia on day 20 of pregnancy. The peritoneal cavity was opened, and the uterus and ovaries were removed from the maternal body and weighed. The numbers of corpora lutea, implantation sites, and live and dead fetuses and resorptions were counted. The live fetuses were removed from the uterus and sexed, weighed, and inspected for external malformations and malformations within the oral cavity. Approximately one-half of the live fetuses in each litter were randomly selected, fixed in alcohol, stained with alizarin red S (Dawson, 1926), and examined for skeletal anomalies. The remaining live fetuses in each litter were fixed in Bouin's solution. Their heads were subjected to free-hand razor-blade sectioning (Wilson, 1973), and the thoracic areas were subjected to microdissecting (Nishimura, 1974) to reveal internal abnormalities.

Data Analysis

The statistical analysis of fetuses was carried out using the litter as the experimental unit. The initial body weight, body weight gain, and feed consumption of the pregnant rats, numbers of corpora lutea, implantations and live fetuses per litter, and fetal weight were analyzed with Bartlett's test (Snedecor and Cochran, 1974) for homogeneity of variance at the 5% level of significance. When the variance was homogeneous, Dunnett's test (Dunnett, 1996) was performed to compare the mean value in the control group with that in each DBHCB group. When the variance was heterogeneous, a Dunnett-type test (Miller, 1987) was performed to compare the mean value in the control group with that in each DBHCB group after rank conversion. The Dunnett-type test was used for the incidences of pre- and postimplantation embryonic loss and fetal anomalies and sex ratio of fetuses to compare the mean rank of groups treated with DBHCB and that of the control group. The incidence of dams with anomalous fetuses was analyzed with Fisher's exact test.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the maternal findings in rats given DBHCB on days 5–19 of pregnancy. No deaths or clinical signs of toxicity were found in female rats of any group. There was no difference in the fertility rate between the control and DBHCB-treated groups. No effects of DBHCB on body weight gains on days 0–5, 5–14, 14–19, and 19–20 of pregnancy were observed. During the whole period of pregnancy, no effects of DBHCB were also detected in body weight gain. There was no difference in feed consumption during pregnancy between the control and DBHCB-treated groups. No effects of DBHCB on weights of the gravid uterus and ovaries were detected.