Paper

Visualization of Spatially Distributed Bioactive Molecules using Enzyme-Linked Photo Assay

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In this paper, we propose a new simple device for visualizing bioactive molecules with a fine spatial resolution by using a membrane in which a specific enzyme is immobilized. The layer produces fluorescence after association with a specific substance. The layer, on which a biological tissue is to be mounted, is deposited on a quartz substrate that is used as a light guide to introduce UV light to the layer. Substance release is observed by a CCD camera from the opposite side of the substrate. In order to shorten the experiment time, we had automated the optical device. The paper also describes the reduction of background fluorescence by means of image processing technique. Images were acquired by employing two UV-LEDs with slightly different angle. Image processing was performed to separate background and target fluorescence by means of independent component analysis. Finally the release of $GABA(\gamma$ -aminobutyric acid) and glutamate from specific layers in rat cerebellum was successfully observed. It is expected that, using this method, both real-time transmitter release and its response to medicine can be observed.

Keywords: bioactive molecules, enzyme-linked photo assay, independent component analysis

1. Introduction

Light guide is composed of a dielectric material that can enclose the light propagation. In addition to being applied to communication, it is useful for sensing as well. In chemical sensing the surface of the light guide has to be coated with some specific chemical that may change its optical property depending on chemical reactions. Such a function can be applied to chemical imaging, if the light guide has a flat surface. This study proposes an application of two-dimensional light guide, of which surface is chemically modified, to biochemical imaging.

Neurotransmitter molecules released from neurons are not only regulators of neuronal transduction but also indicators of neuronal conditions. Glutamate and γ -aminobutyric acid (GABA) are known as typical transmitters in brain cortex that play important roles as stimulator and suppresser, respectively. Lack of balance in the release of glutamate and GABA may lead to autism, epilepsy or Parkinson's disease⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾.

In order to observe the spatio-temporal release in cerebellar cortex, we have newly proposed the enzyme-linked photo assay system, which is realized even using normal CCD camera, and observed GABA release in developing cerebellar slice using either new or authorized methods⁽³⁾.

In this paper, we propose a new simple device for this purpose by using a reactive layer in which a specific enzyme is immobilized, and produces fluorescence after association with a specific substance released from mounted slice. This layer is bound a quartz substrate that is used as a light guide for UV light excitation. Fluorescence derived from a substance is observed by a CCD camera from the opposite side of the substrate.

The paper describes the reduction of background fluorescence by means of image processing technique. Finally it will be shown that the release of transmitters from specific layers in rat cerebellum was successfully observed.

2. Specimen Preparation and Photo Excitation System

Imaging of neurotransmitter release was monitored the reaction of oxidoreductases generating reduced nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD⁺) or diphosphonucleotide (NADP⁺). For glutamate and GABA, we used glutamate dehydrogenase and GABA disassembly enzyme (GABase), respectively.

Enzymes were covalently immobilized on the quartz glass substrate using a silane coupling agent and a crosslink agent. The substrate was as thick as 1 mm. Stoichiometrically generated NADH or NADPH emits 480 nm fluorescence after excitation at 340-365 nm.

Existence of glutamate and GABA lead to fluorescence when co-existing with specific enzyme and co-enzyme. A glass substrate on which specific enzyme is coated is in contact with the biological specimen. A chamber space is created around the specimen. The space is filled with buffer liquid and co-enzyme. On the glass substrate therefore, the specimen is in contact with both enzyme and co-enzyme.

Consequently glutamate or GABA, that is released from the tissue spontaneously by stimulation, makes an oxidation-reduction reaction on the substrate. Although both glutamate and GABA do not produce fluorescence by themselves, NAD(P)H that is created as the result of the above chemical reaction makes fluorescence. As the ratio of glutamate or GABA and NAD(P)H is 1:1, the

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fluorescence can be correlated to the amount of released glutamate or GABA.

In the experiment, rat cerebellum was sliced sagittally at 400 μ m thick and incubated in oxygen-aerated HEPES-Na⁺ buffer for 40 min. The slice was placed on the quartz glass substrate with both NADP⁺ and α -ketoglutarate. Figure 1 shows the schematic diagram of the observation system including the device. The enzyme was immobilized covalently on the glass as shown in Fig. 2. Figure 3 shows chemical reactions taking place on the substrate. NADP⁺ (nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate) changes into NADPH (reduced nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate) just as glutamate and GABA degeneration. Synthesized NADPH was illuminated by 360 nm surface UV-LED, and emitted the 480 nm fluorescent light observed by cooled CCD (ORCA ER, Hamamatsu Photonics). The quartz substrate can be recognized as a light guide to illuminate the surface of the substrate.

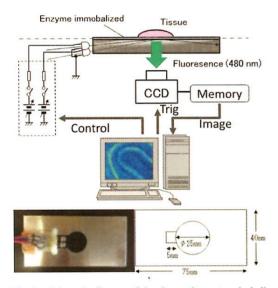


Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of the observation system including the device and its outlook

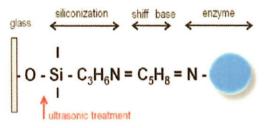


Fig. 2. Immobilized enzyme

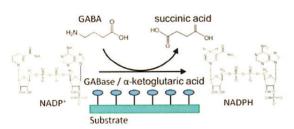


Fig. 3. Chemical reaction on the substrate

3. Image Processing

The fluorescent light detected by the CCD camera is divided into target light and background light. As significant intensity of background light is detected, it is assumed that fluorescence is excited by the light that is refracted on the interface between the substrate and tissue system including the layer. The light, being generated by LEDs and propagates though the substrate, can be decomposed into plane waves with different angles of propagation. Each plane wave transfers across the enzyme layer and comes into the tissue. We assume that both target and background light were predominantly excited by normal light. As the background light significantly damage the quality of the image, it should be reduced as much as possible. Making use of the evanescent light may be a solution, however, it may make the system complicated, and the target light may be not as significant as this case. Therefore we tried to reduce the background by means of a simple image processing.

Assuming that the light is a plane wave and scatter can be neglected, wave propagation and detected fluorescence can be illustrated as Fig. 4. In the figure, fluorescence, attributed to the layer where the enzyme is fixed, is represented as I_0 . This is

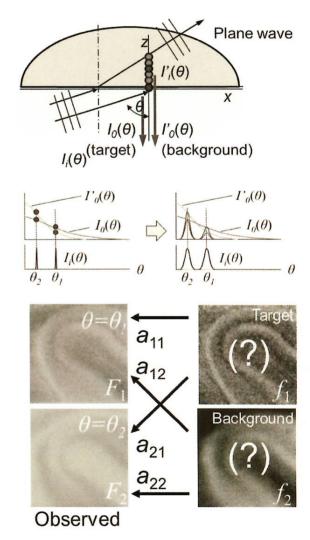


Fig. 4. Fluorescence detected by CCD camera

100

IEEJ Trans. FM, Vol.136, No.2, 2016

defined as to be the target. The fluorescence attributed to the tissue is represented as P_0 . This is defined as to be the background. Both I_0 and I'_0 depends on the incident angle θ . The thickness of the quartz plate, which is used as a light guide, is as thick as 1 mm. As it is much thicker than the diameter of normal optical fiber it is relatively easy to introduce two kinds of lights of which angles of center axes are significantly different. In addition, in practice, they depend differently on the incident angle. As the result, the proportion (I_0/I'_0) is not the same along θ . This is true even if the incident angle has distributed.

As the result, the captured fluorescence with different angle of optical axis is composed of target and background fluorescence with different mixture ratios. This can be represented as:

$$\begin{pmatrix} F_1 \\ F_2 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} a_{11} & a_{12} \\ a_{21} & a_{22} \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} f_1 \\ f_2 \end{pmatrix} \qquad (1)$$

where $F_1(x,y)$ and $F_2(x,y)$ are captured fluorescence image, $f_1(x,y)$ and $f_2(x,y)$ are spatial distributions of fluorescence as the target and background, a_{11} , a_{12} , a_{21} , a_{22} are constants. Although the image acquisition is sequential, ICA is performed by assuming that two images, $F_1(x,y)$ and $F_2(x,y)$ are acquired with a negligible time lag. Reproduced images $f'_1(x,y)$ and $f'_2(x,y)$ are calculated from F_1 and F_2 . As the result of periodical acquisitions of F_1 and F_2 , time dependent images of f'_1 and f'_2 are calculated. Eq. (1) can also be described using a matrix expression as:

$$\mathbf{F} = \mathbf{A} \cdot \mathbf{f}$$
(2)

The target and background fluorescence distribution can be calculated by applying A^{-1} to F. In practice, only contrast of the image would be enough to recognize the distribution. In such a case A^{-1} can be represented as:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 1 & \alpha \\ \beta & 1 \end{pmatrix}$$
(3)

After capturing two images F_1 and F_2 by changing the angle of

optical axis, the target and background images can be separated by finding appropriate numbers for α and β . α and β can be tuned manually by monitoring the quality of reproduced image, however, the theory of independent component analysis (ICA) may be powerful for solving such a problem⁽⁴⁾.

Stochastic distribution of pixel intensity in images f'_1 and f'_2 are represented as $p(y_{1i})$ and $p(y_{2j})$, where y_{1i} and y_{2j} represent the intensity.

$$\begin{array}{l}
p(y_1) \equiv \{p(y_{11}), \dots, p(y_{1i}), \dots p(y_{1n})\} \\
p(y_2) \equiv \{p(y_{21}), \dots, p(y_{2j}), \dots p(y_{2n})\} \end{array}$$
(4)

 $p(y_{1i}, y_{2j})$ represents the probability that the intensity of a pixel in image f'_1 is y_{1i} and that of the corresponding point in image f'_2 is y_{2j} . In other words $p(y_1)$ and $p(y_2)$ are probabilities that cases y_1 and y_2 take place, respectively, and $p(y_1, y_2)$ is the probability that cases y_1 and y_2 takes place simultaneously. Variables y_1 and y_2 are considered to be independent when

$$p(y_1, y_2) = p(y_1)p(y_2)$$
(5)

is established. Kullback-Leibler(K-L) parameter is often employed to indicate the independency of variables:

$$KL = \sum_{i,j} p(y_{1i}, y_{2j}) \log \frac{p(y_{1i}, y_{2j})}{p(y_{1i})p(y_{2j})}$$
(6)

The K-L parameter is zero when two sets of variables y_1 and \underline{y}_2 are completely independent together. In practice, α and β in Eq. (3), which determine the probabilities $p(y_1)$, $p(y_2)$ and $p(y_1, y_2)$, can be tuned so that the K-L parameter indicates the minimum.

The process of ICA is illustrated in Fig. 5. The equation described in the form of matrix indicates that two images, F_1 and F_2 , derive from linear combination of unknown original images f_1 and f_2 . If an appropriate inverse matrix can be found then the original images can be reproduced. However as the matrix to describe the linear combination is unknown as well, ICA algorithm is applied to find the most appropriate matrix (as the inverse matrix). In the

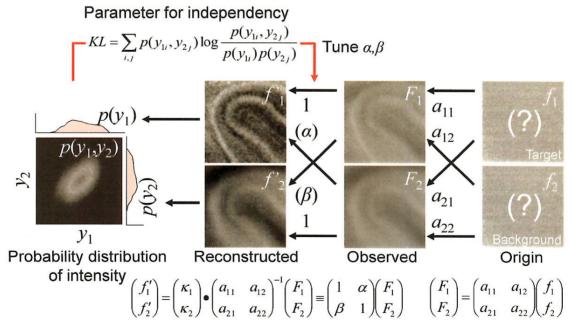


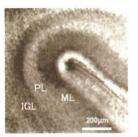
Fig. 5. Illustration for image processing based on independent component analysis

ICA process K-L parameter is calculated in order to evaluate the probabilistic independency of images f'_1 and f'_2 . It can be considered that in the reproduction algorithm the core process is the calculation of the K-L parameter. In this preliminary study K-L parameter is successively calculated by manually changing the inverse matrix, and images are assumed to be reproduced when the K-L parameter indicates the minimum.

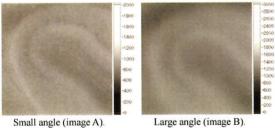
4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Image Processing using the ICA Figure 6 (a) shows visible light image of the cerebellum with postnatal 21 days. In developing cerebellum, granule cells, small input neurons, proliferate and migrate down from the external granular layer (EGL) to the internal granular layer (IGL). As the development proceeds, EGL turns into molecular layer (ML) whereas IGL remains. Purkinje cells, big output neurons, develop their dendrites and associate neuronal connections between granule cells and other interneurons. Neuronal circuit layer forms the ML. As the cerebellum shown in Fig. 6 (a) is mature, ML, PL, IGL are clearly visible. Note that ML is on the outer side of the cerebellum, and a wrinkle surrounded by the ML is seen in Fig. 6 (a).

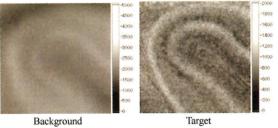
As for fluorescence observation, three different images were acquired. Two were with different inclination of the excitation



(a) Visible light image



(b) Fluorecence images before image processing



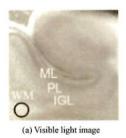
(c) Fluorecence images after image processing

Fig. 6. Cross sectional mages of cerebellar cortex: (a) Visible light image, (b) original fluorescent images with different angle of optical axes, and (c) fluorescent images after the image processing. Scales are indicated in arbitrary unit. Specimen: rat cerebellum (postnatal 21 days), target: GABA

light source, and one was with no excitation light. Each of the two images with excitation light was subtracted with the image with no excitation light, in order to reduce the background light from the outside. These two images after the subtraction were defined as images A and B.

Figure 6 (b) shows these images for a rat cerebellum. Both images are very unclear, because of the background fluorescence. Figure 6 (c) shows the result of image processing. It is clearly shown in the image entitled as "target" that the fluorescence intensity is high in two layers, whereas that entitled as "background" is not clear. By morphological inspection these layers are recognized as ML and IGL. These layers are known that GABAergic neurons distribute in mature cerebellum. Studies using HPLC and electrophysiological method have shown that GABA is released from the postnatal cerebellar cortex even before synaptogenesis, and that GABA receptors act on the developing cerebellar Purkinje cells⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾. However, dynamic GABA release could not be observed unless the enzyme-linked photo assay is used. In addition, because cytoplasmic autofluorescence becomes noisy background light, it is useful that the image processing system extracted the image of GABA release from the autofluorescence-contained image. Using this method, both real-time transmitter release and its response to medicine can be observed.

4.2 Transition after Chemical Stimulation In relatively developed cerebellum, cells distributed in the ML and IGL are only the neurons of glutamate release, so that both layers showed fluorescent activities. Figure 7 indicates release distribution of glutamate in comparison with normal optical image illuminated with visible light. The fluorescent image, indicating glutamate release, is after the ICA processing. Figure 7 (c) indicates the regions of interest for analysis. Regions highlighted as ML and IGL have relatively strong intensity in fluorescence. They have a contrast to the region highlighted as PL. Release from white matter (WM), which is mostly composed of fatty materials, is much less significant.



(b) Fluorescent image

(c) Regions of interest for analysis

Fig. 7. Cerebellum with postnatal 7 days observed with visible light and fluorescent light indicating glutamate release. 0.9 mm × 0.9 mm. Gray scale is arbitrary. ML: molecular layer, PL: Purkinje layer, IGL: internal granular layer, WM: white matter. Specimen: rat cerebellum (postnatal 7 days)

IEEJ Trans. FM, Vol.136, No.2, 2016

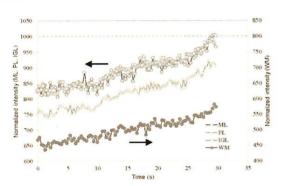


Fig. 8. Transition in fluorescence intensity in each layer (normalized by the intensity of ML 30 s after stimulation that is indicated as 1000). Specimen: rat cerebellum (postnatal 7 days), target: glutaminate

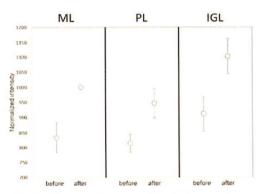


Fig. 9. Change in fluorescence intensity before and after AMPA stimulation (normalized by the intensity of ML 30 s after stimulation that is indicated as 1000). Specimen: rat cerebellum (postnatal 7 days), target: glutaminate

Our system can visualize both spontaneous and responsive transmitter release with about 0.2 s time resolution. Figure 8 shows the transition of glutamate release in response to 100 $\mu mol/\ell$ (S)-alpha-Amino-3-hydroxy- 5 methylisoxazole-4-propionic acid (AMPA) application in cerebellar slices. All values are normalized by the intensity of ML 30 s after stimulation that is indicated as 1000. Fluorescence, as indication glutamate release, was intense in both the IGL and ML, whereas the PL was indicated with lower intensity. As shown in Fig. 8, a clear increase in fluorescence was observed after stimulation. Transition in fluorescence was similar for ML and IGL, suggesting that these layers are activated. However PL, which was not expected to release glutamate, showed fluorescence as well although it was less intense than ML and IGL. As this specimen was taken from relatively young rat (postnatal 7 days), the cerebellar development was not totally completed, and the layers were not separated enough. It is hence considered that diffusion from ML and IGL to PL would take place, leading to an increase in fluorescence in this layer. The increase in fluorescence in WM suggests that glutamate might have been diffused into WM as well, although the absolute value was much lower than ML and IGL.

Figure 9 compares the fluorescence in each layer before and after stimulation. Four different specimens were used for the observation, in order to confirm reproducibility. It is clear that the AMPA stimulation brought a significant glutamate release from

ML and IGL, although the increase is also seen with PL.

5. Conclusions

A new method for visualization of spatially distributed bioactive molecules using enzyme-linked photo assay has been proposed. It is based on fluorescent reaction assisted by an enzyme immobilized on the substrate, however, background fluorescence disturbs the observation. In order to reduce the background fluorescence, two images were acquired by changing the optical axis of UV illumination. Image processing based on independent component analysis made the target image clear. Observation of rat cerebellum was successfully performed and GABA and glutamate release from two specific layers was clearly indicated.

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IEEJ Trans. FM, Vol.136, No.2, 2016

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「総 説]

化学物質(金属・有機溶剤)の毒性学と産業医としての対応

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要 旨:わが国でもかつては金属や有機溶剤による産業中毒の事例が多発していた時代があり、このことが機縁の一つとなって1972年(昭和47年)に労働安全衛生法が制定された。現在、化学物質はその危険有害性の程度に応じていくつかの規則によって管理されているが、その対象物質は産業現場で使用される化学物質の一部に過ぎず、毒性が明らかでないまま使用されている化学物質も少なくないのが現状である。労働安全衛生法が改正され、全業種の事業者に化学物質に係るリスクアセスメントが求められるようになっている中で、産業医は毒性が明らかでない化学物質を含めてこれからどのように対応していくべきであろうか。本稿では化学物質の中でも金属と有機溶剤の毒性学に焦点を当てて考察する。

キーワード: 有機溶剤, 金属, GHS分類, 神経毒性, 麻酔作用,

1. 主な金属の毒性と管理の現状

金属の安全基準について労働安全衛生法では、まず 鉛類は鉛中毒予防規則(鉛則) 四アルキル鉛中毒予防 規則(四アルキル鉛則)により規制されている。 わが 国の産業中毒としての鉛中毒はかつて蓄電池工場の作 業従事者に多く見られていた歴史がある、鉛はタンパ ク質中のSH基と結合するため非常に有毒であり、多 くの研究からヘム生合成反応を触媒する酵素群が最も 鉛毒の影響を受けることが明らかとなった。 鉛中毒の 主症状の一つに貧血があるが、これはヘム生合成過程 での最終段階の酵素であるフェロケラターゼの阻害が 生じることに起因している. フェロケラターゼ阳害に よりその基質である赤血球中プロトポルフィリンが増 加することから、これを鉛中毒における生物学的モニ タリングの指標の一つにしている. また貧血以外の主 症状として下垂手に代表される末梢神経障害があり ヒトでは軸索変性を主体とする神経変性[1] 一動物実 験では節性脱髄が主体の神経変性 [2] 一が報告されて いる.

四アルキル鉛(労働安全衛生法施行令では、四メチル鉛、四エチル鉛、一メチル・三エチル鉛、二メチル・二エチル鉛および三メチル・一エチル鉛並びにこれを含有するアンチノック剤を四アルキル鉛と呼ぶ)は有機鉛であり、製造工場での事故や輸送中の災害に

よる中毒事例があった. 四アルキル鉛は生体内でより毒性の強い三アルキル鉛に変換され, 両者ともに脂溶性が高く血液脳関門を容易に通過するため中枢神経症状を生じる. これを反映して四アルキル鉛等業務に常時従事する労働者に対して行われる特殊健康診断では中枢神経症状・精神神経症状の有無の検査が必須となっている. 前述した軸索変性のメカニズムを含めて鉛の神経毒性の詳細については未だ不明な点も多いが, これまでの研究から細胞内Ca²+イオンが鉛イオンと置き換わることにより, リン酸化酵素の代表的なものであるプロテインキナーゼCが持続的に活性化されるようになり, 細胞内におけるCa²+依存性反応に異常が生じることが神経毒性の一因であると考えられている[3]

鉛則および四アルキル則が制定された以降は、かつて問題となった高濃度の無機鉛・有機鉛による曝露事例が少なくなってきたことから、特殊健康診断項目についても見直しが進められている。四アルキル鉛業務に常時従事する労働者に対する特殊健康診断の検査項目については平成24年10月より「血液中の鉛の量の検査」および「尿中のデルタアミノレブリン酸の量の検査」が追加され、「血圧の測定」および「好塩基点赤血球数又は尿中のコプロポルフィリンの検査」は除かれるようになった、好塩基点赤血球数はかつて鉛業務の特殊健康診断項目でもあったが、そもそもこれは血

中鉛濃度が80μg/mlを超えないと変動(増加)が認められにくい、今回の法改正によって四アルキル鉛業務の特殊健康診断項目から除外され、血中鉛濃度の検査が加わるようになったことは、四アルキル鉛についても無機鉛と同様により低濃度の曝露に対しての管理が義務付けられるようになったこと意味している。

鉛類以外の金属については特定化学物質障害予防規 則(特化則)により規制されている。これまでにベリリ ウム,水銀,カドミウム,クロム(クロミウム),バナ ジウム. ニッケル、ヒ素、マンガンといったものがそ の対象物質であったが、平成25年1月より新たに『イ ンジウム化合物』『コバルト及びその無機化合物』が対 象物質に加えられた. インジウムはインジウム・スズ 化合物 (ITO) として最近は薄型ディスプレイ等の透明 電極材料としての需要が高い、いわゆるレアメタルの 一つであるが、動物実験において発がん性(国際がん 研究機関IARCの区分2A) が認められ、また反復投与 毒性としてヒトでは間質性肺炎が認められている. そ のため今回定められたインジウム化合物の製造・取扱 業務従事者の一次健康診断項目の中には血清インジウ ム量の測定とともに間質性肺炎のマーカーとされる血 清中のシアル化糖鎖抗原KL-6量の測定が含まれてい る.

コバルトは携帯電話や携帯用音楽プレーヤー, ノートパソコン等に使用されるリチウムイオン2次電池の電極に使用されており, 近年その需要が拡大している. 主な毒性として発がん性(金属コバルトおよびコバルト化合物はIARC区分2B, コバルト・炭化タングステン合金は区分2A)の他, コバルトはニッケル・クロムとともに金属アレルギーの三大原因金属の一つであることから, アレルギー性接触性皮膚炎や気管支喘息などの恐れもあるため, 健診項目には呼吸器症状や皮膚症状の有無の検査が含まれている.

2. 主な有機溶剤の毒性と管理の現状

有機溶剤は塗装や洗浄等の産業に広く使用されている.しかしながら揮発性の高いものや脂肪を溶かす作用,すなわち脂溶性が高いものが多く,取扱いを誤ると皮膚や呼吸器を通して容易に体内に吸収され急性中毒や慢性中毒等の健康障害を発生させる恐れがある.有機溶剤中毒の代表的な事例として,1954年(昭和33年)に判明したヘップサンダル製造従事者の骨髄障害がある.ヘップサンダルとは映画「ローマの休日」の中でオードリー・ヘップバーンが履いていたサンダルをヒントに作られたもので,映画の流行とともにこの

ヘップサンダルの製造が盛んとなった. 当時のヘップ サンダル製造は下町の家内工業で多くの内職者により 行われていたが、サンダルを接着するゴムのりにベン ゼン (ベンゾール) が含まれているのを知らずに高濃 度のベンゼン蒸気を毎日吸い続けた結果、再生不良性 貧血や汎骨髄痨といった骨髄障害 (ベンゼン中毒)を 生じていたことが判明した. ベンゼンによる骨髄障害 の機序については、ベンゼン自身あるいは肝臓におけ るベンゼン代謝産物の多能性造血幹細胞・造血前駆細 胞や骨髄間質細胞への作用によるものとされているが 未だ不明な点も多い[4].

このベンゼン中毒の発覚と同じ頃に、 やはりサンダ ル (ビニールサンダル) の製造作業従事者で発覚したの がノルマルヘキサン曝露による多発性神経障害である。 これもビニールサンダルの製造過程内で使用していた ノルマルヘキサン含有の接着剤からの曝露が原因で 家内工業労働者に下肢遠位部の知覚障害に始まる多発 神経炎が認められた[5]. このノルマルヘキサン曝露 による多発神経炎は代謝産物である2.5-ヘキサンジオ ンがニューロフィラメント(神経細胞に分布し細胞骨 格として機能する)と架橋形成することによるもので あることが知られている[6]. これらベンゼン中毒. ノルマルヘキサン中毒を含めて昭和30~40年代はわが 国で最も労働災害が多発した時期であり、このような 状況を改善すべく1972年(昭和47年)に労働安全衛生 法が制定され、特にベンゼン中毒の問題は有機溶剤中 毒予防規則(有機則)の機縁となった経緯があるが、現 在ベンゼンは特化則の対象物質として、ノルマルヘキ サンが有機則の対象物質として管理されている.

有機則および特化則といった特別規則の対象物質で ない金属・有機溶剤についても、特定化学物質の環境 への排出量の把握等及び管理の改善の促進に関する法 律 (PRTR 法) の対象物質 (640物質) であれば、譲渡提 供される際にGHS(化学品の分類及び表示に関する世 界調和システム) の基づく化学物質安全データシート (SDS) の交付が義務付けられている. 2006年(平成18 年)4月に施行された改正労働安全衛生法の中で、全 業種の事業者に対して化学物質に係るリスクアセスメ ントの実施、ならびにその結果に基づく健康障害防止 措置が努力義務として位置付けられた. 産業医もまた 人体の仕組みについての専門家として、化学物質がも たらす毒性や健康影響等の判断と評価が今まで以上に 求められるようになっており、 そのためにもSDSな どを活用して産業現場で使用されている化学物質につ いての情報を積極的に把握していくことが求められて いる

3. リスクアセスメントのための金属の毒性学

わが国の産業界で使用されたことのある又は現に使用されている化学物質は、主なものだけでも約60,000種類、さらに新規化学物質として新たに届け出られ使用されるものは年間1,000種類を超えるといわれているが、当然その全ての物質について毒性に関するデータが十分に提供されているわけではない。化学物質に係るリスクアセスメントが求められる中、産業医としてどのような対応が可能であろうか。

金属については前述したように、いわゆるレアメタルの一つであるインジウムが特化則の対象物質として管理されるようになったばかりである。レアメタルやこの一種であるレアアース(希土類)については需要が増加する一方で、その調達環境の悪化から省・脱レアアース・レアメタル利用部品への代替が推奨され始めていることから、今後産業現場でどの程度の量を扱うようになるかは予測しがたいところもあるが、レアアース・レアメタルを使用する産業現場においては、これらの毒性についても注意しておくことは必要であると思われるが、特にレアアースについての毒性はまだ十分評価されていない。

レアアースの中でもランタノイドには神経毒性に 関する報告があり、in vitroの実験からT型電位依存性 Ca²⁺チャネルを抑制する作用が認められることや 抑 制性神経伝達を担うGABA、受容体の機能を活性化す ることなどが報告されている[7].一方,ラットを用 いたランタン (La3+) の経口曝露実験では空間記憶機能 に障害が認められている[8]. ほとんどのランタノイ ドは安定な原子価として3価をとるが、前述したT型 Ca²⁺チャネルの抑制作用の強さはHo³⁺(ホルミウム・ 原子番号67) > Yb³+(イッテルビウム・原子番号70) ≥ Er³+(エルビウム・原子番号68) > Gd³+(ガドリニウム・ 原子番号64) > Nd3+(ネオジウム・原子番号60) > Ce3+ (セリウム・原子番号58) > La³+(ランタン・原子番号 57) の順であることが報告されている [9]. ランタノ イドは原子番号の増加とともに原子半径がわずかずつ 小さくなる傾向が見られることが知られていることを 考慮すると,この抑制作用はイオンチャネルのチャネ ル孔のサイズに対するランタノイドイオンの大きさと が関係しているかもしれない. このように金属イオン については、安定原子価とイオンの大きさから、イオ ンチャネルに対する作用であれば推定できる可能性 があることは興味深い. さらに、心筋に存在するK+ チャネル (HERG) に対してコバルトおよびランタンが 抑制作用を示すことがin vitroの実験から報告されて

いるが [10-12]、今のところ SDSに心毒性についての記載はない (コバルトについては心臓への影響はあるものの二次的なものとして判断されている). 血液脳関門を通過して初めて生じる中枢神経系のイオンチャネルへの作用と異なり、心筋のイオンチャネルへの作用は化学物質が全身循環に入れば生じる可能性が考えられるので、これらのレアアース・レアメタルの心筋イオンチャネルへの作用、すなわちレアメタル・レアアース曝露と不整脈の発生についてはリスクアセスメントの立場からは注意しておく必要があるのではないだろうか.

4. リスクアセスメントのための有機溶剤の毒性学

有機溶剤についていえば、類似の化学構造を持った 化学物質の毒性データを参考にすることも一つの手段 となるだろう. 大阪の印刷事業場で発生した胆管がん の事例は記憶に新しいところであるが、この原因物質 として考えられているのがジクロルメタンおよび1,2-ジクロロプロパンである. ジクロルメタンはすでに 有機則の対象物質であり、 日本産業衛生学会により 1999年 (平成11年) に許容濃度が50 ppm と提案されて いた. 一方. 1,2-ジクロロプロパンについては2012年 (平成24年)1月28日より化学物質による健康障害防 止指針の対象物質の一つに加えられたばかりで、特別 規則による規制を受けてはいなかった物質である. ジ クロルメタンはハロゲン化された鎖状炭化水素であ り、このジクロルメタンと比べ炭素が一つ多い炭化水 素骨格を持つものに1,2-ジクロロエタンがある. これ はジクロルメタンと比べると沸点が高く(約84℃ ジ クロルプロパンは沸点40℃), 脂溶性もやや高い. さ らにジクロルメタンと同様、すでに有機則の対象物質 (第1種有機溶剤. ジクロルメタンは第2種)となって いる. この1,2-ジクロロエタンよりさらに炭素が一つ 多い炭化水素骨格を持つものが1,2-ジクロロプロパン であり、沸点はさらに高くなって(約96℃)脂溶性も 高くなる. 沸点が高くなれば揮発性が低くなるので経 気道曝露のリスクは低くなるかもしれないが、脂溶性 が高くなることで接触した場合の経皮曝露、および体 内蓄積のリスクは高くなる可能性が考えられる。もし 体内蓄積量が増えれば体内代謝も変わり、代謝産物に も変化が現れるかもしれない。

このように考えていくと、ジクロルメタン、1,2-ジクロロエタンが有機則の対象物質となっていることから、これらの物質よりも沸点は高いものの脂溶性が高くなっている1,2-ジクロロプロパンもまた有機則の対

象物質に相当するリスクを有した有機溶剤の可能性が あると、少なくともリスクアセスメントを進める上で は考えることが望ましいであろう. 現在, ジクロルメ タンおよび1,2-ジクロロプロパン曝露による胆管がん の発症の可能性、ならびにそのメカニズムについての 解明が進められている. その中でジクロルメタンは高 濃度で曝露された場合に、通常のシトクロムP450酵 素による代謝経路(CYP経路)が飽和し、代わってグ ルタチオン-S-転移酵素によるグルタチオン抱合経路 (GST経路)による代謝が活性化される. しかもこの グルタチオン-S-転移酵素はヒトでは胆管上皮に多く 発現しているため、GST経路による代謝産物がヒトで は胆管がんを発生させるのではないかと考えられてい る[13]. 1,2-ジクロロプロパンの代謝産物の同定やそ の発がん性の評価が待たれるところではあるが、もし ジクロルメタンよりも脂溶性が高い1,2-ジクロロプロ パンの方では体内蓄積量が多くなるとすれば、たとえ 低濃度であっても長期間の曝露によってCYP経路が 飽和しやすくなり、GST経路による代謝が活性化して 発がん性を持った代謝産物が産生される. という可能 性があるのではないだろうか.

いわゆるシンナー遊びに用いられたトルエンやキシ レンに代表されるように、有機溶剤には『吸うと意識 が朦朧となる』とイメージしている人も多いだろう. GHS分類にある『健康に対する有害性』の項目には『特 定標的臓器毒性(単回曝露)』というのがある[14]. こ の項目での物質の分類基準として区分1から区分3ま での定義があり、区分3の定義(一時的な特定臓器へ の影響)の最後に『この区分は、麻酔の作用および気 道刺激性を含む』と記述されている. つまり中枢神経 学的影響という観点からは『麻酔作用』の有無が健康 に対する有害性の有無の第一段階になるわけである. さらにこの『麻酔作用』の定義として『眠気. うとうと 感、敏捷性の減少、反射の消失、協調の欠如およびめ まいといったヒトにおける麻酔作用を含む中枢神経 系の抑制を含む. これらの影響は、ひどい頭痛また は吐き気としても現れ、判断力低下、めまい、過敏 症, 倦怠感, 記憶機能障害, 知覚や協調の欠如, 反応 時間(の延長)や嗜眠に到ることもある』という記述が ある. この定義に記されている症状は、見方を変えれ ば有機溶剤曝露のない作業従事者にもしばしば認めら れるような非特異的なものでもある. 特に最近問題と なっているメンタルヘルス不全でも認められるような 症状とも重なるものがあることから、有機溶剤曝露に よる症状 (麻酔作用) であることを見出すには注意が 必要であると考えられる.

これまでにトルエン、トリクロロエチレン、1,1,1-トリクロロエタンはいずれも GABA_A 受容体機能を増強すること [15]、トルエン、四塩化エチレンはいずれも神経型ニコチン性アセチルコリン受容体機能を抑制することが報告されている [16]。これらの受容体は、臨床で用いられる揮発性麻酔薬のような全身麻酔薬の作用部位としても考えられており [17]、前述した化学構造の類似性から推測すると、SDS に記載されていない場合であっても有機溶剤には概ね麻酔作用が出現すると考える方がリスクアセスメントの立場からは妥当であると考えられる。

5. お わ り に

GHS分類の導入と改正労働安全衛生法により、金属・有機溶剤を含めて化学物質についてはSDSなどを活用することによって、毒性情報ばかりでなく、沸点や脂溶性といった化学的性質に関する情報までも詳細に提供されるようになり、またそのような情報もインターネットを通じて容易に得られるようになった、毒性に関してはすべてが提供されていない場合もあるので、SDSからの情報だけでは即座に正確な毒性の評価を行うことは難しい、しかしながら、これらの情報を統合して考察することによって、リスクアセスメントの立場からの毒性の推測は可能であると考えられる、金属・有機溶剤の毒性について理解すること、またそれらのリスクアセスメントを実施することに対して、化学物質を化学的にかつ医学的に捉える視点がこれからの産業医に求められるのではないだろうか。

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Toxicology of chemical substances (metals and organic solvents): Management as an occupational physician

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Abstract: Even in Japan, there was a time when cases of occupational poisoning had frequently occurred, which led to the enactment of the Industrial Safety and Health Act in 1972. Currently, the use of only a part of chemical substances utilized in the workplace is regulated according to their designated hazardous level, but there are many other substances whose toxicities have not been elucidated. Risk assessment is now required of entrepreneurs in all categories of industry by the recently-revised Industrial Safety and Health Act. This article will focus on the toxicology of metals and organic solvents, and it will discuss how occupational physicians should manage chemicals, including the ones whose toxicities have not been clarified.

Key words: organic solvents, metals, GHS classification, neurotoxicity, narcotic/anesthetic action.

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Perspectives and Commentary

Hazardous Metal Pollution in the Republic of Fiji and the Need to Elicit Human Exposure

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The fact that hazardous metals do not bio-degrade or bio-deteriorate translates to long-lasting environmental effects. In the context of evidently rapid global industrialization, this ought to warrant serious caution, particularly in developing countries. In the Republic of Fiji, a developing country in the South Pacific, several different environmental studies over the past 20 years have shown levels of lead, copper, zinc and iron in sediments of the Suva Harbor to be 6.2, 3.9, 3.3 and 2.1 times more than the accepted background reference levels, respectively. High levels of mercury have also been reported in lagoon shellfish. These data inevitably warrant thorough assessment of the waste practices of industries located upstream from the estuaries, but in addition, an exposure and health impact assessment has never been conducted. Relevant government departments are duty-bound, at least to the general public that reside in and consume seafood from the vicinities of the Suva Harbor, to investigate possible human effects of the elevated hazardous metal concentrations found consistently in 20 years of surface sediment analysis. Furthermore, pollution of the intermediate food web with hazardous metals should be investigated, regardless of whether human effects are eventually confirmed present or not.

Keywords Developing countries, Fiji, Hazardous metals, Hazardous metal poisoning, Hazardous metal pollution, Industrialization

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Environmental contamination with hazardous metals should raise concern because metals are not bio-degraded or bio-deteriorated over time like organic pollutants, resulting in long-standing environmental toxicity. In addition to the tendency to bio-accumulate and increase their concentrations over time, hazardous metals are also toxic at low concentrations. These facts ought to raise serious concern in the face of the current trend of global industrialization, particularly in developing countries.

Surface dumping of hazardous metals exposes them to air and rain, thereby generating much acid drainage. Pollution of farm-

land results in plants absorbing metals and accumulating them in their tissues. This ultimately results in accumulation of these toxins in tissues of animals and marine organisms, and in milk of lactating females [1]. Exposure in human beings results from consumption of contaminated water, plants and animal meat, which induce differential effects on the neurological system and also on human biochemistry. Essentially, all living organisms in any ecosystem are affected at their individual levels on the food chain [1].

We discuss in this paper the situation of hazardous metals in the environment, in the Republic of Fiji (hereafter called "Fiji"),