# Modulation of Radiation Injury by Physalis Peruviana

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Abstract: Radiation therapy is considered to be one of the most popular and important therapeutic modalities for the cure of cancer. During radiotherapy, ionizing irradiation interacts with biological systems to produce free radicals, which attacks various cellular components. The present study clarifies the efficacy of cape gooseberries (Physalis peruviana) in reducing gamma- irradiation- induced oxidative damage to the liver, lipid profile and antioxidant enzymes in adult male rats. Rats were exposed to whole body gamma radiation (2 Gy/week up to total dose of 6 Gy) and fed on basal diet supplemented with 15% of Physalis powder (Ph p.), one week before irradiation and during the period of radiation exposure. Animals were randomly divided into four groups as following: Normal control, Ph p, irradiated and Ph p + irradiated. The results demonstrated that irradiation of rats induced a significant increase in lipid peroxides level measured as thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS) and xanthine oxidase (XO) concomitant with a significant decrease in superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT) activity, glutathione (GSH) and xanthine dehydrogenase (XDH) content in liver tissues. In parallel, significant increases in serum enzymes aspartate transferase (AST), alanine transferase (ALT), alkaline phosphatase (ALP) and gamma - glutamyl transpeptidase ( $\gamma$ -GT) as well as serum bilirubin were recorded. While serum total protein (T.P) and albumin (Alb) were decreased. Furthermore, alteration in lipid profile manifested by a significant increase in triglycerides (TG), total cholesterol (TC), and low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C), and a significant decrease in high density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C), were observed. Physalis powder pretreatment has significantly improved the oxidant/antioxidant status, which was associated with reduced the severity of liver damage. It is concluded that Ph p has a protective effect against gamma-irradiation induced hepatotoxicity through antagonizing the free radicals generation beside enhancement of the antioxidant defense mechanisms.

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#### 1.Introduction

The effective use of radiotherapy in cancer cure and palliation is compromised by the sideeffects resulting from radiosensitivity of bordering normal tissues, which are invariably exposed to the cytotoxic effects of ionizing radiation during treatment (Rahman and Parvin, 2014). Ionizing radiation inflicts its adverse effects through the generation of an abnormal increase in reactive oxygen species (ROS) levels that unleash large-scale destruction or damage of various biomolecules (Moritake et al., 2003 and Yusuf et al., 2011). These free radicals react with body tissues and generate lipid peroxidation, DNA lesions and enzyme inactivation, thus leading to the alteration and impairment of function of all cellular components leading to apoptosis (Ciriolo, 2005).

Protection of normal tissue and organs during radiotherapy is still a matter of special concern. Amelioration of the deleterious effects of ionizing radiations using synthetic compounds causes undesirable side effects. Therefore, intervention of plant extracts, herbal preparations and natural agents could be the most prudent strategy to develop nontoxic and the most effective drugs to protect the human beings against harmful effects of ionizing radiation. Recently, focus has shifted to test the radioprotective potential of plants and herbs (**Jajetia**, **2007**).

Berries have been shown to provide health benefits because of their high antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and fiber (Zhao, 2007). Cape goose- berry (*Physalis peruviana*) is a fruit that belongs to the Solanaceae family has been grown in Egypt, South Africa, India, New Zealand, Australia and Great Britain (Ramadan and Mörsel, 2003; 2004). It has been used as a folk medicine with antiinflammatory, antitussive, antipyretic, diuretic, antidotal and antitumor effects in Taiwan (Lee *et al.*, 2008). Plant extracts show antioxidant activity (Ramadan and Mörsel, 2009; Valdenegro *et al.*, 2012; Ramadan, 2012; Puente *et al.*, 2010; Ramadan and Mörsel, 2007), anti-inflammatory activity (Wu *et al.*, 2006, Chang *et al.*, 2008, Arun and Asha, 2007) and antihepatotoxic (**Chang** *et al.*, **2008**) and antiproliferative effects on hepatoma cells (**Wu** *et al.*, **2005**). In addition, this fruit has excellent potential as a foodbased strategy for anti-diabetic and anti-hypertensive products (**Pinto** *et al.*, **2009**).

Physalis peruviana contains biologically active components e.g. physalins, withanolides, phytosterols and polyunsaturated fatty acids e.g. linoleic acid and oleic acid. Among its major components are high amounts of vitamins A, B and C as well as the presence of essential minerals, magnesium, calcium, potassium, sodium and phosphorus which are classified as macronutrients, while the iron and zinc are considered as (Szefer micronutrients and Nriagu, 2007). Furthermore, Ramadan (2011) has been added that Cape gooseberry pulp, seed and pomace oils might serve as excellent dietary sources for vitamin K1, αlinoleic acid, essential fatty acids, tocopherols and carotenoids.

The present study aims to investigate the possible radioprotective effect of *Physalis peruviana* against Radiation -induced hepatotoxicity and oxidative stress.

# 2. Materials and Methods

#### 2.1. Preparation of *Physalis* powder:

Fresh fruits of Goldenberries (*Physalis peruviana*) were purchased from local market. The fruits were washed with water, crushed and dried in air oven at 50°c then grinded to powder form. *Physalis* powder was added in basal diet as 15 % in substitution of fiber.

# 2.2. Animal and Housing:

This study was carried out on twenty eight young male albino rats weighing  $150 \pm 20$  g obtained from the animal house of the National organization for Drug Control and Research. Rats were housed under controlled climatic conditions (25°C, 40–70 RH), and 12 h/12 h light/dark cycle prior to subjection to experimental protocols. All rats were fed on a standard diet and water *ad libitum*. All animals were treated and handled according to the principles of laboratory animal care.

# 2. 3. Irradiation:

Gamma – irradiation was performed at the National Centre for Radiation Research and Technology (NCRRT), Cairo, Egypt, using a <sup>137</sup>Cesium biological irradiator source ( $\gamma$ -cell-40) Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. Rats were exposed to 6 Gy whole body  $\gamma$ -irradiation fractionated over 3 weeks (2 Gy/ week). The dose rate was 0.61 Gy/min.

# 2.4. Experimental Design:

The experimental animals were divided into four groups (n = 7) after adaptation period (7day),

namely Group1 (control): Normal control, rats in this group were neither treated nor irradiated. Group 2(Ph p): animals fed on basal diet supplemented with 15% *Physalis* powder for 4 weeks. Group 3(IR): rats in this group were exposed to whole body gamma radiation with a fractionated dose (2 Gy / week up to 6 Gy total doses). Group 4 (Ph p + IR): animals received diet as group 2 for 7consecutive days before exposed to fractionated dose and within the period of fractionated irradiation (21 days).

# 2.5. Biochemical analysis:

Animals were sacrificed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day after the last gamma radiation. Blood samples were collected by heart puncture and serum `and stored frozen until the biochemical analysis. Liver was removed and homogenized with saline using Teflon homogenizer.

The activity of serum aspartate transaminase (AST) and alanine transaminase (ALT) were assayed by the method of **Reitman and frankel (1957)** while serum alkaline phosphatase (ALP) and gamma glutamyle transferase ( $\gamma$  GT) enzymes activity, were estimated according to **Kind and King (1954) and Henry (1974)**, respectively.

Total bilirubin, total protein, and Albumin concentrations were measured using the methods of Jendrassik, (1938), Lowry *et al.*, (1951) and Doumas *et al* (1977), respectively.

Total Cholesterol (TC), triglycerides (TG) and high-density lipoprotein-cholesterol (HDL-C) were assayed according to the method of Allain et al., (1974), Fossati and Prencipe, (1982) and Demacker et al., (1980), respectively. Low-density lipoprotein-cholesterol was evaluated according to Friedwald's formula (Friedewald et al., 1972) by the following equation: LDL-C (mg/dl) -TC-(TG/5+HDL-C). The extent of lipid peroxidation was assayed in hepatic tissue by the measurement of thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS) according to Yoshioka et al., (1979). The content of reduced glutathione (GSH) was determined according to Beutler et al., (1963). Estimation of superoxide dismutase (SOD) as well as catalase activities was done in the hepatic tissue according to the methods of Minami and Yoshikawa, (1979) and Bergmeyer et al., (1987), respectively. Hepatic xanthine oxidase (XO) and xanthine dehydrogenase (XDH) were determined according to Kaminski and Jewezska (1979).

# 2.6. Statistical analysis:

The statistical package for social sciences SPSS/PC computer program was used for statistical analysis of the results. Data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by Newman–Keuls post hoc test for multiple comparisons. The data were expressed as mean  $\pm$ S.E.

Differences were considered statistically significant at (P < 0.05).

#### 3. Results

Data demonstrated in (Table 1) showed that whole body exposure of male rats to 2 Gy /week during the three weeks induced a significant increase (P<0.05) in serum AST, ALT, ALP and GGT activity, compared to control rats. Treatment of irradiated rats with Ph p significantly (p<0.05) reduced the release of these diagnostic hepatic marker enzymes, compared to their corresponding values of irradiated rats.

<b>Fable 1: Effect of Physalis powder (Ph p) administration on hepatic serum markers levels in rats exposed</b>	to
gamma radiation.	

Parameters	ALT	AST	ALP	γ-GT		
Groups	(IU/L)	(IU/L)	(IU/L) (IU/L)			
control	$31.71 \pm 4.25^{a}$	$73.20 \pm 5.46^{a}$	$69.77 \pm 7.62^{a}$	$2.07 \pm 0.19^{a}$		
Ph p	$30.35 \pm 3.14^{a}$	$71.83 \pm 4.68^{a}$	$70.10 \pm 4.10^{a}$	$1.95 \pm 0.12^{a}$		
IR.	$56.23 \pm 3.41^{b}$	121.51±7.25 <sup>b</sup>	$102.12\pm5.40^{b}$	4.45±0.50 <sup>b</sup>		
Ph p + IR.	$39.32 \pm 3.49^{\circ}$	81.34±5.61 °	$75.17 \pm 4.18^{a}$	2.41±0.32 <sup>a</sup>		

Values are given as mean  $\pm$ SE for 7 rats. Values not sharing a common superscript letter differ significantly at P $\leq$  0.05.

As shown in (Table 2), Gamma-radiation (6Gy) induced a marked increase in serum total bilirubin accompanied by a significant decrease in serum total protein and albumin levels compared to control

values. Return to some normalized amelioration was observed in total bilirubin, total protein and albumin levels when the irradiated animals feeding on diet supplemented by Ph p.

Table (2): Effect of <i>Physalis</i> powder	'h p) administration on serum total protein, albumin and bilrubin levels
in irradiated rats.	

Parameters	Т. Р	Alb	Bilirubin
Groups	(g/dl)	(g/dl)	(mg/dl)
Control	$7.51 \pm 0.37^{a}$	3.01 ±0.18 <sup>a</sup>	$0.43 \pm 0.06^{a}$
Php	7.69±0.23 <sup>a</sup>	3.15±0.29 <sup>a</sup>	$0.45{\pm}0.04^{a}$
IR.	5.95±0.25 <sup>b</sup>	2.44±0.13 <sup>b</sup>	$0.86{\pm}0.09^{b}$
Ph p + IR.	7.29±0.28 <sup>ac</sup>	2.92±0.19 <sup>a</sup>	$0.65 \pm 0.04^{b}$

Legand as in (Table 1).

Data in (Table 3) represented that rats exposed to  $\gamma$  - radiation showed a significant increase in serum TC, triglyceride and LDLc (p< 0.05), while the mean value of HDL-C was significantly decreased compared to control group.

On the other hand, treatment of irradiated rats with *Physalis* powder pre and during  $\gamma$  – radiation exposure showed significant amelioration in the above parameters compared to those of the irradiated rats (Table 3).

Table (3): Effect of Physalis powder (Ph p) administration on serum Lipid profile in rats expo	osed to gamma
radiation.	

Parameters	TC	TGs	HDL-C	LDL-C
Groups	(mg/dl)	(mg/dl)	(mg/dl)	(mg/dl)
Control	127.55±3.35 <sup>a</sup>	94.54±1.74 <sup>a</sup>	71.36 ±0.96 <sup>a</sup>	38.53±2.09 <sup>a</sup>
Php.	121.71±4.07 <sup>a</sup>	93.90±2.18 <sup>a</sup>	72.36±1.00 <sup>a</sup>	35. 59±3.79 <sup>a</sup>
IR.	200.03±7.15 b	171.17±7.72 <sup>b</sup>	35.57±0.59 <sup>b</sup>	130.75±8.32 <sup>b</sup>
Ph p + IR.	148.00±4.23 °	119.91±4.04 °	47.03±0.80 <sup>c</sup>	75.98±2.44 °

Legand as in (Table 1).

Whole-body gamma-irradiation increased the formation of hepatic lipid peroxides by 64 % compared to the control group (Table 4). In the present study, treatment with PhP produced a significant reduction in TBARS levels in irradiatedtreated rats. Irradiated rats showed significant decreases (P < 0.05) in liver GSH content, SOD and CAT activities as compared to control group (Table 4). PhP supplementation before and during the period of radiation exposure showed a significant elevation in the GSH level as well as SOD and CAT activities when compared with the irradiated untreated rats.

Parameters	TBARS	GSH	SOD	CAT
Groups	(µmol/g tissue)	(mg/g tissue)	(U/mg protein)	(U/mg protein)
Control	$112.26 \pm 4.66^{a}$	$36.37 \pm 1.63^{a}$	$29.10 \pm 1.11^{a}$	$9.49\pm0.43^{a}$
Php.	$105.18 \pm 3.34^{a}$	$34.52\pm1.26^a$	$30.33 \pm 1.37^{a}$	$10.02\pm0.57^{a}$
IR.	175.20± 5.89 <sup>b</sup>	$20.53 \pm 1.12^{b}$	$18.43 \pm 0.97^{b}$	$5.19 \pm 0.29^{b}$
Ph p + IR.	$125.57 \pm 4.93^{aC}$	$29.24 \pm 1.30^{\circ}$	$23.45 \pm 1.14^{\circ}$	$9.09\pm0.46^{a}$

Table	4: Effect	of	<b>Physalis</b>	powder	(Ph	p)	administration	on	hepatic	TBARS,	GSH,	SOD	and	CAT	in
	irradiat	ted r	ats.												

Legand as in (Table 1).

Data in (Table 5) presented that exposure to gamma radiation (6 Gy) induced a significant increase in liver XO accompanied by a significant decrease in liver XDH compared to normal controls.

Interestingly, treatment with Php in addition to radiation (group 4) lead to significant improvement in the levels of these enzymes relative to the irradiated untreated group (group 3).

Table (5): Effect of Php supplementation to  $\gamma$ -irradiated rats on the level of xanthine oxidoreductase system (XO and XDH)

Groups				
Parameters	Control	Php.	IR.	Ph p + IR.
XO(mU/mgprotein)	2.12±0.08 <sup>a</sup>	$2.09\pm0.07^{a}$	3.82±0.09 <sup>b</sup>	2.73±0.06 <sup>c</sup>
XDH(mU/mgprotein)	3.29±0.15 <sup>a</sup>	3.25±0.14 <sup>a</sup>	$1.62 \pm 0.09^{b}$	2.87±0.12 <sup>c</sup>
T 1 ' T 11 1				

Legand as in Table 1.

#### 4. Discussion

Search for effective and less toxic radioprotectors lead to increasing interest on natural compounds from dietary ingredients to medicinal herbs (Yamini and Gopal, 2010). The crude extracts of these plants and their preparation constitute several effective radioprotective drugs which can used for protecting patients from the side-effects of radiotherapy, as well as occupational workers in nuclear and radiation plants.

Whole body  $\gamma$  -radiation of rats with 2Gy / week up to a total dose of 6Gy induced a significant elevation of serum AST, ALT, ALP and y- GT activities in rats, it indicate that radiation causes hepato-cellular damage which in turn alters the structure and function of liver cells (Table 1). These conclusions are in accordance with those of other studies (Makhlouf and Makhlouf, 2012; Nwozo et al., 2012). The increase in the activities of AST and ALT in the serum after exposure to  $\gamma$ -radiation can be attributed to the possible release of these enzymes from different tissues associated with the obstruction of the blood flow to the liver (Park et al., 2010). Moreover, the increased in serum alkaline phosphatase may be related to the increased synthesis of it by cells lining bile canalliculi usually in response to cholestasis and increased biliary pressure (Venkatachalam and Muthukrishnan, 2013). The elevated y- GT activity after radiation-exposure pointed to the destruction of cell membrane where the enzyme is attached. y- GT, is a membrane-bound

enzyme that initiates the degradation of extracellular glutathione (GSH) forming  $\gamma$ -glutamyl amino acid and cysteinylglycine (El-Batal *et al.*, 2008).

Animals receiving diet supplemented with *Physalis* powder before whole body  $\gamma$ -radiation and during the period of radiation exposure showed a significant reduction in the severity of the liver damage by decreasing the activities of the above enzymes. These results are agreement with (Arun and Asha, 2007 and El-Gengaihi et al., 2013). Chang et al., (2008) who recorded that pre-treatment with Physalis peruviana L. (Solanaceae) aqueous extract at doses150, 300, and 600 mg/kg body weight significantly prevented the increase in serum ALT, AST and alkaline phosphatase enzymes, which are the major indicators of liver hepatitis. Moreover, Rashwan (2012) concluded that the decrease in serum enzymes may be due to the prevention of the leakage of intracellular enzymes by its membrane stabilizing activity.

Hypoalbuminemia is a symptom of hepatic damage. Results from the present study demonstrated that exposure to radiation led to a significant decrease in serum total protein and albumin level (**Table 2**). The obtained results were agreed with **Moulder** *et al* (2004) and **Osman** (2013). This decease may be related to significant pathology either in production of albumin by the liver or its leakage through damaged surface (Mackiewiez *et al.*, 1992). Moreover, the decrease in total protein of irradiated rats might be referred to either damage of vital biological processes or to changes in permeability of liver, kidney and other tissue cells leading to leakage of proteins via the kidney (Roushdy *et al.*, 1989).

Data of the present study depicted that serum total bilirubin level increase post exposure to fractionated dose of gamma radiation which comes in agreement with **Osman and Hamza (2013)**. Bilirubin is a waste product that results from the breakdown of hemoglobin molecules. The amount of bilirubin in blood circulation may be increased with reasons which induced destruction of red blood cells such as radiation, chemical agents and hemolytic anemia (or hemolytic disease of the newborn) (Cavusoglu *et al.*,2010).

Interestingly, administration of *Physalis* significantly improved the radiation-induced decline in total protein and albumin level in irradiated group. **Shariati and Zarei (2006)**, observed that intraperitoneal prescription of *Physalis alkekengi* plant fruit extract induces increase in plasma proteins and albumin levels. Furthermore, Php return the level of bilirubin to be closed to control group indicated the effectiveness of the *physalis* in normalized functional status of the liver (**Yihui** *et al.*, **2012**).

Exposure of animals to fractionated dose of 6Gy has induced alteration in lipid profile possibly as a result of liver injury (Table 3). These changes are in agreement with previous studies on rats (Makhlouf and Makhlouf, 2012). Azab *et al.*, (2011a) reported that radiation exposure is associated with induction of hyperlipidemic state which resulted from increased fat mobilization from adipose tissues due to radiation induced cellular biomembranes injury. Moreover, Bodwen *et al.*, (1989) stated that irradiation induces hyperlipidemia through cell membrane destruction, enhancement of lipid metabolism, cholesterol release and triglycerides synthesis.

In this study, rats fed diet supplemented with physalis powder caused reduction in the levels of serum cholesterol, LDL, but HDL statistically increased. This is probably due to the wealth of phytosterols in the physalis fruit which induce a decrease in lipoprotein cholesterol levels in total plasma (Ramadan et al., 2011). Furthermore, Wasan et al., (2001) has been hypothesized that these compounds provoke a decrease in cholesterol solubility and their absorption across the intestinal barrier, inducing consequently low plasma cholesterol levels. These findings are in agreement with previous studies suggested that cape gooseberry has effective in reducing cholesterol level (Arun and Asha, 2007).

Zarei *et al.*, (2011) concluded that the hypocholesterolemic effects of cape gooseberry are mainly due to the lycopene existing in the plant which is a strong antioxidant which inhibits the production of LDL and presumably increases the excretories through releasing cholesterol; therefore, it reduces blood cholesterol level and controls cholesterol synthesis. Recently, **Ramadan (2012)** suggested that consumption of goldenberry pomace has hypocholesterolemic activities in rats fed high cholesterol diet (HCD). In addition, goldenberry supplementation seems to protect the liver in response to oxidative stress as well as alleviate the magnitude of fatty liver development in response to HCD.

Results of the study demonstrated that exposure of rats to ionizing radiation has induced an increase in the levels of TBARS concomitant with a decrease in SOD and CAT activities and GSH content in liver tissues (Table4). These results are in agreement with Mansour and Hafez (2012), who recorded a significant depletion in the antioxidant system accompanied by enhancement of lipid peroxides after whole body gamma-radiation. The increase of TBARS is probably the consequence of interaction of the excess of 'OH generated in the cells after exposure to ionizing radiation with the polyunsaturated fatty acids in the phospholipids portion of cell membranes initiating the lipid peroxidation chain reaction (Azab et al., 2011b). The observed decrease in SOD activity suggests inactivation of the enzyme possibly due to increased superoxide radical production or an inhibition by the H2O2 as a result of corresponding decrease in the activity of CAT which selectively degrades H2O2 (El shahat,2013). Moreover, Kregel and Zhang, (2007) attributed the significant decrease in the activity of SOD and CAT might be due to the excess of ROS, which interacts with the enzyme molecules causing their denaturation and partial inactivation. The observed decrease in GSH content after irradiation may be due to the diminished activity of glutathione reductase (GR) and to the deficiency of NADPH (formed by G6PDH), which is necessary to change the oxidized glutathione to its reduced form ( Pulpanova et al., 1982). These alteration of SOD and GSH in liver tissues indicated disturbance of cellular antioxidants and increase in the production of oxygen free radicals which in turn causes lipid peroxidation that is indicated by increase in MDA level (Kanimozhi and Prasad, 2009).

On the other hand, rats receiving the *Physalis* powder before irradiation and within the period of radiation exposure showed a significant reduction in the level of lipid peroxides in parallel with a significant increase in antioxidant activities. This might be attributed to its high levels of polyphenols and other antioxidants like flavonoids **(Abdel Moneim and El-Deib ,2012)**, which enhanced the process of regeneration by destruction of free radicals, supplying a competitive substrate for

unsaturated lipids in the membrane and/or accelerating the repair mechanism of damaged cell membrane (Coskun *et al.*, 2005). However, the administration of *physalis* to the irradiated rats were significantly reverted back TBARS levels to near normal values which show the anti-lipid peroxidative property of *physalis* in the experimental animals (Hassan and Ghoneim, 2013).

According to the data obtained, it appears that exposure rats to whole body gamma radiation resulted in alteration of XOR system and conversion of XDH into XO activity (Table 5). These results is consistent with the finding of (Osman and Hamza, 2013) who reported that, fractionated 8Gy of gammaradiation induced a significant increase in XO activity paralleled with significant decrease in XDH activity. XOR system is shifted towards XO in case of cellular and tissue damages by radiation (Srivastava and Kale, 1999). In addition, Saada et al., (2010) reported that the significant increase in XO activity might be attributed to radiation-induced hypoxia where insufficient oxygen availability elevates calcium concentration, which activates protease capability of converting the dehydrogenase to oxidase form.

Administration of *physalis* in irradiated rats showed significant improvement in liver XOR system as compared to irradiated rats. This protective effect of *physalis* may be due to the presence of phytochemicals that protect the thiols from being oxidized.

In conclusion, the results of the present study indicate that the *Physalis peruviana* Linnaeus exhibited a potential hepatoprotective activity against  $\gamma$ -radiation induced hepatotoxicity via regulation of ROS generator in addition to direct antioxidant action of the mixture that protect the self antioxidant molecules.

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