

$J=2.4$  Hz, H-3), 6.3 (dd, 1H,  $J=5.9$  and 2.4 Hz, H-5);  $^{13}\text{C}$ -NMR (75 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ) 179.2 (C-4), 163.9 (C-2), 154.8 (C-6), 117.1 (C-5), 112.3 (C-3), 131.1 (C-1), 125.7 (C-2), 129.4 (C'-3), 131.4 (C'-4); MS  $m/e$  (relative intensity) 172 ( $\text{M}^+$ , 98), 144(78), 115(36), 102(100), 77(38). Anal. Calcd for  $\text{C}_{11}\text{H}_8\text{O}_2$ : C, 76.73; H, 4.68. Found: C, 76.62; H, 4.89.

In conclusion, the copper sulfate-catalyzed reaction of diazomalonaldehyde with enol silyl ether provides a convenient method for construction of 2-substituted  $\gamma$ -pyrones.

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- For photolytic conversion of **1** into formylketene, see: G. Maier, H. P. Reissenauer, and T. Sayrac, *Chem. Ber.*, **115**, 2192 (1982).
- Trimethylsilanol was detected by GC-Mass from crude reaction mixture.

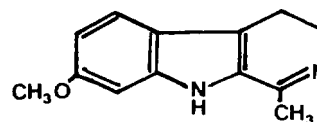
## Photochemical Interaction between Harmaline and DNA

Kyu Ho Chae

Department of Polymer Engineering,  
Chonnam National University, Chonnam 500-757

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A few  $\beta$ -carboline alkaloids have been known to be phototoxic to bacteria and yeast.<sup>1-4</sup> Several observations strengthen the view that DNA and probably other macromolecules can serve as targets for the phototoxicity of  $\beta$ -carbolines but its action mechanism is not fully understood.<sup>5-8</sup> In the course of studies on the elucidation of phototoxicity mechanism of  $\beta$ -carboline alkaloids, we<sup>9,10</sup> previously reported that these compounds photochemically produce singlet oxygen and superoxide anion radicals in the presence of oxygen, while produce carbolinyl radicals under anaerobic conditions. One of  $\beta$ -carboline derivatives, harmaline photochemically produces a cycloaddition product with fumaronitrile.<sup>11</sup>



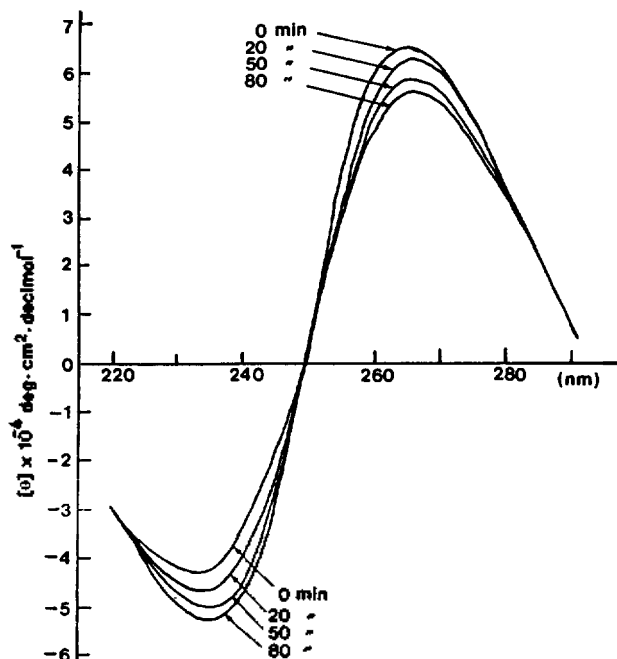
Harmaline

Scheme 1.

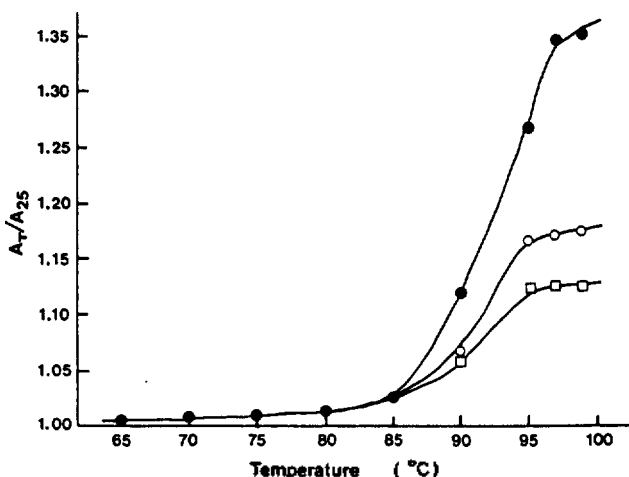
Photochemical reaction of harmaline with DNA was studied in order to make insight into the phototoxicity mechanism of  $\beta$ -carbolines. UV absorption spectrum of harmaline was not so strongly but somewhat affected by increasing DNA (Sigma, type I) concentration indicating weak ground state complexation between harmaline and DNA. UV absorption spectral changes of harmaline ( $1 \times 10^{-4}$  M in  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ) in the presence of calf thymus DNA (0.05 mg/cc) with time of irradiation show that the absorption maximum of harmaline at 375 nm gradually decreased and an isosbestic point was observed at 320 nm. Similar results were obtained when the reactions were run without DNA but far more slower rate. The relative absorbance decrease at 375 nm was in the order of the reaction run with DNA under  $\text{N}_2$  > with DNA under  $\text{O}_2$  > without DNA under  $\text{N}_2$  or  $\text{O}_2$ . The absorbance at 375 nm of harmaline in the presence of DNA under  $\text{N}_2$  decreased more effectively than under  $\text{O}_2$  strongly suggesting that the double bond of harmaline disappeared via photochemical reaction with DNA and this photoreaction is likely to proceed through its triplet excited state.

The photochemical modification in the helical structure of DNA in the presence of harmaline was investigated by monitoring the changes in circular dichroism spectrum. A 0.01 M NaCl solution of harmaline ( $1 \times 10^{-4}$  M) and calf thymus DNA ( $A=1.0$  at 260 nm) was irradiated with 350 nm UV light under  $\text{N}_2$ . The CD spectral changes with time of irradiation are shown in Figure 1. Both positive and negative band of the CD spectrum decreased significantly on irradiation. It has been known that when DNA is irradiated in the presence of the bifunctional psoralen, 8-MOP, both the negative and positive bands in the CD spectrum were affected to a similar extent.<sup>12</sup> However, in the presence of monofunctional 1,4-diphenylbutadiyne<sup>13</sup> or 5,7-dimethoxycoumarin, the negative band of the CD spectrum remained unperturbed but positive band increased with time of irradiation. The results suggest that the photochemical interaction of harmaline and DNA involves cross-linking of DNA double strands.

Photo-crosslinking of DNA by harmaline is further demonstrated by melting temperature profiles. As shown on Figure 2, the irradiation of DNA in the presence of harmaline under



**Figure 1.** Circular dichroism spectral changes of DNA in the presence of harmaline ( $1 \times 10^{-4}$  M) with time of irradiation under  $N_2$ .



**Figure 2.** Melting temperature profile of calf thymus DNA (●) and after treatment with harmaline and irradiation at 350 nm for 0 min (○) and 45 min (□) under  $N_2$ . The ratio of the absorbance at 260 nm observed at  $T^\circ C$  and at  $25^\circ C$  ( $A_T/A_{25}$ ) is plotted as a function of temperature.

$N_2$  results in a shift of the melting temperature profile toward higher temperatures. It has been known that the photo-binding of 8-MOP with DNA, which involves cross-linking of double strands, the melting temperature profile shifts toward higher temperatures.<sup>14</sup> However, in the presence of monofunctional compounds such as angelicine,<sup>12</sup> 1,4-diphenylbutadiyne,<sup>13</sup> and 5,7-dimethoxycoumarin which involve binding single strand only, the melting temperature profile shifts toward lower temperatures.

The photochemical changes of DNA in the presence of harmaline were also studied by agarose gel electrophoresis. An aqueous solution of DNA (800  $\mu g/ml$ ) and harmaline ( $5 \times 10^{-4}$  M) was irradiated with 350 nm UV light. The solution was applied to agarose gel electrophoresis (tris buffer, 50 V) after dialysis to remove low molecular weight materials. The mobility of DNA increased when the reaction was run under  $O_2$  and decreased under  $N_2$  compared with untreated DNA. The results suggest that the molecular weight of DNA decreases by photocleavage of DNA under aerobic conditions but increases by photo-crosslinking of DNA under anaerobic conditions.

It is reminiscent that harmaline efficiently produces singlet oxygen and superoxide anion radicals under  $O_2$ <sup>9</sup> and radicals under  $N_2$ .<sup>10</sup> As DNA molecules have been known to split by superoxide anion radicals,<sup>15</sup> the results can be explained as follows: DNA molecule is likely to be cleaved by the superoxide anion radicals produced by the photochemical reaction of harmaline with oxygen under aerobic conditions, while photocrosslinked by two steps - that is photochemical reaction of harmaline and photochemically produced harmalinal radical with DNA under anaerobic conditions. The nature of photoproducts formed between harmaline and DNA will be pursued further in this laboratory.

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