

Protective Effect of Morin Hydrate in Humanepidermal Keratinocyte Cell Line (Hacat) Upon Exposure to Uvbirradiation Induced Oxidative Damage and Biochemicalalteration

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ABSTRACT

Ultraviolet-B (UVB) 280–320 nm radiation penetrates epidermis and is completely absorbed in the upper dermis of the skin. It causes a several harmful effects which include basal and squamous cell carcinoma, cataracts, sunburn, melanoma, immunosuppression and photoaging of the skin. The incidence of skin cancers has been increasing worldwide in the last few decades. Thus, identification of more and appropriate potential drug targets is essential for the prevention of skin cancers. Hence, the present study was carried out to investigate the protective effects of morin in human epidermal keratinocyte cell line (HaCaT) upon exposure to UVB irradiation induced oxidative damage. HaCaT cells were pretreated with morin (50 µM) for 30 mins before UVB irradiation. Several cellular and oxidative end points parameters were analyzed. UVB irradiation pretreated with morin (50 µM) showed significant increase in the levels of antioxidants and lipid peroxidation, and DNA damage and apoptotic morphological changes were manifest drastically in HaCaT cells. The present study was demonstrating protective effect of morin against UVB radiation.

KEYWORDS: Morin; DNA damage; apoptosis; HaCaT cells; UVB.

INTRODUCTION

Genetic factors and environmental factors contribute to the progress of skin cancers; Exposure to Ultra Violet Radiation (UVR) is a central etiological agent for melanoma, non-melanoma skin cancers and approximately 1.3 million novel cases of skin cancers every year in the United States (Narayanan et al., 2010). Skin cancers are presently a main concern on health care and public health's expenditures. Greater than 90% of skin cancers are caused by exposure to UVR from the sun. Particularly, UVB radiation induces non-melanoma skin cancer by damage the DNA - mostly absorbs light of 260 nm (directly and indirectly) by increase the levels of reactive oxygen species (Cadet and Douki, 2018). UVB radiation is generally regulated by several pathways particularly signaling, which can initiate cell cycle arrest, DNA repairs, apoptosis, cell death (Veratti et al., 2011). UVB exposure causes either directly and indirectly adverse biological effects as well as, the foundation of pyrimidine photoproducts, trans- to cis- urocanic acid isomerization, initiation of ornithine decarboxylase activities, inhibition of DNA synthesis, generation of free radicals, cell cycle growth arrest, and photoaging (Afaq et al., 2002). It significantly decreases skin antioxidants levels, thereby free radicals generated impair the skin's capacity to keep itself in opposition to the exposure to sunlight and lowers the skin's immune defense system (Trautinger, 2001). All these events lead to UVB radiation induced skin carcinogenesis.

Morin is a phenolic compound and has antioxidant properties, found in several fruits and vegetables such as orange, old fustic, fig, guava leaves, apple, and onion and in several beverages such as red wine, and tea. They are used as herbal medicines and several biological activities. The photoprotective effect of morin has already been reported in human keratinocyte stem cells (Lee et al., 2014). Therefore, antioxidants from a natural source seem to be an extreme capacity, their uses may be an effective strategy for decrease of prevalence of skin cancer and UVB induced oxidative damages (Chandrakesan et al., 2018). The human skin is the largest organ and straight exposed to UVB radiation. Hence, we have studied the preventive effect of morin on UVB radiation induced cytotoxicity, Reactive oxygen species generation, lipid peroxidation, antioxidants, DNA damage and apoptotic morphologic changes from human epidermal keratinocyte cells (HaCaT cells).

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Chemicals and Reagents

Morin was obtained from Sigma Chemicals Co., HaCaT cells were procured from Invitrogen Bioservices, India. All other chemicals and reagents were obtained from Merck specialty Pvt. Ltd and Aromatic Limited, Chennai.

HaCaT cell culture

Cultured HaCaT cells were incubated at 37°C in 5% air-95% CO₂-5%, saturated culture cells incubator with added medium 106, low serum augmentation, with 2% FBS (Fetal bovine serum), 1 µg/ml hydrocortisone, 3 ng/ml basic fibroblast growth factors, 10 ng/ml human epidermal growth factor, 109 µg/ml heparin and antibiotics. The cells were kept to grow for 7 days to reach the extreme confluence and were collected using 4ml of trypsin-EDTA solution; cells were then subculture and used for experiments.

Preparations of morin and method of administration for HaCaT

Different concentrations of morin were dissolved in 0.5% dimethyl sulphoxide (DMSO). Working concentration of 25 μ M and 50 μ M morin was prepared from the stock solution and used for the cytotoxic assay.

Experimental design

Cultured HaCaT cells were separated into five groups as follows:

Group 1: HaCaT cells - without treatment

Group 2: HaCaT cells + Morin (50 μ M)

Group 3: HaCaT cells + UVB irradiated

Group 4: HaCaT cells + Morin (25 μ M) + UVB

Group 5: HaCaT cells + Morin (50 μ M) + UVB

Treatment of cell line

Two doses for test 25 μ M, 50 μ M of morin were additional to the grouped HaCaT cells 30 mins before UVB-exposure. The test, Trypan blue dye exclusion was carried out to check the suitability and toxicity of these concentration of morin for photoprotection studies. Before UVB - exposure, the HaCaT cells were washed once with PBS solution. Mock - irradiated HaCaT showed not changes in viability over the 30 mins retro of incubation.

Radiation procedure for cell line

HaCaT cells were washed one time with PBS and UVB - irradiated in a thin coating of medium. The culture medium was later detached and covered with a UVB permeable membrane to stop contamination. A battery of TL20W/20 fluorescent tubes was used as UVB- source (wavelength range of 290-320 nm), Set at 312nm and intensity of 2.2mW/cm² for 9 mins. The total UV- Radiation was 20mJ/cm² and an average value of 1.52 \times 10⁻³ mJ/cells. After radiation, HaCaT cells were allowed at room temperature for 4 hrs at 37°C in 5% CO₂ then the HaCaT cells were cleaned and shift to sterilized tubes for investigations.

Cytotoxicity in HaCaT cells - MTT assay

The cytotoxic effect of UVB-irradiated HaCaT was determined by MTT assay based on the detection of mitochondrial dehydrogenase activity in living cells. Cultured HaCaT (1 \times 10⁶ cells/mL) were taken into a 96 well plate. Then the cells were pretreated with different concentration of morin (25, 50 μ M). After 1 hr incubation with morin the cells were exposed to UVB - irradiation. Then the cells were incubated at 5 % CO₂ and 95 % O₂ environment at 37°C for 24 hrs. MTT was added to the incubated cells and then further incubated for another 4 hrs. The cells were centrifuged for 10 mins and the supernatant were removed, 200 μ L of DMSO were added into each tube. Absorbance was measured in a microplate reader at 540 nm. Images captured under a microscope and % of cytotoxicity was calculated.

$$\% \text{ Cytotoxicity} = \frac{\text{Test optical density}}{\text{Control optical density}} \times 100$$

ROS generation- Spectrofluorometer

The ROS level was assessed in the control, UVB - irradiated plus morin treated HaCaT cells. Briefly, an aliquot of the isolated cells was made up to a final volume of 2 ml in PBS. Then, 1ml of cell suspensions was taken, to which 10 μ M DCFH-DA was added and incubated at 37°C for 30 mins. Then, morin pretreated and / or UVB irradiated HaCaT were incubated for 30 mins in 6 well plates with 10 μ M of DCFH-DA in PBS. Finally, cells were washed three times with PBS and the fluorescence intensity was recorded using spectrofluorometer and the images were captured by fluorescence microscope (460 nm).

Lipid peroxidation and antioxidant status-Spectrophotometry

The concentration of TBARS and antioxidant status in the cell suspension were taken for estimations. The level of lipid peroxidation was determined by thiobarbituric acid reactive substances (TBARS) according to the procedure of Niehaus 1968 (Niehaus and Samuelsson, 1968). The reactions of enzymatic antioxidants such as SOD, CAT, GPx were analyzed by the procedure of Kakkar 1984, Sinha 1972 and Rotruck 1973 (Kakkar *et al.*, 1984, Sinha, 1972, Rotruck, 1973) respectively and non-enzymatic antioxidant like Reduced Glutathione (GSH) by the procedure of Ellman 1959 (Ellman, 1959).

DNA damage-Comet Assay

Comet assay or Single cell gel electrophoresis (SCGE) used to evaluation DNA damage at the single cell level. Freshly suspended HaCaT cells (50 μ L) were mixed with 200 μ L in 0.8% Low - Melting Point Agarose (LMPA) was cast on to frosted microscopic slides and placed for 10 mins in icebox to solidify. Then, the cover slip was removed and a top layer of 100 μ L of LMPA was added and the slides were cooled for 10 mins. The cells were then lysed by immersing the slides in the lysis buffer for 1hr at 4°C. After lysis, slides were placed in a horizontal electrophoresis tank. Filled with alkaline electrophoresis buffer above the slides. The cells were exposed to the alkaline electrophoresis buffer for 30 mins to allow DNA unwinding. Electrophoresis was conducted in a cold condition for 20 mins. After electrophoresis, the slides were placed horizontally and neutralized with Tris - HCl buffer. Finally, 50 μ L of ethidium bromide was added to each slide and analysed using a fluorescence microscope. DNA damages were expressed as %.

Apoptotic morphological changes -AO/EtBr dual staining

Ethidium bromide is a membrane impermeable molecule that binds between the stacked base-pairs of relaxed DNAs. HaCaT cells were seeded in 6-well plate and incubated in CO₂ incubator for 24 hrs. The cells were fixed with methanol : glacial acetic acid (3:1) for 30 mins at room temperature. Then, the cells were washed in PBS and stained with (1:1) ratio of acridine orange / ethidium bromide (AO/EtBr). Stained cells were washed again with PBS and viewed

under a fluorescence microscope. The number of cells showing features of apoptosis was counted as a function of the total number of cells present in the field.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

All the values were expressed as means of six ($n=6$) determinations. The data were statistically analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) and the group means were compared by Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT). The results were considered statistically significant if the $P < 0.05$ levels.

RESULTS

Effect of Morin on UVB induced cytotoxicity in HaCaT cells.

UVB -induced cytotoxicity shows a significant reduction in cell viabilities (38%) while compared with control and morin 50 μM treated cells (non-irradiated HaCaT cells) (Fig. 1). Morin pretreatment shows good improvement in UVB- induced cell deaths and restored cell viabilities in a concentration reliant manner. Concentrations of morin 25 μM and 50 μM was tested, 50 μM of morin restored (about 98%) cell viability when compared with 25 μM in HaCaT cells.

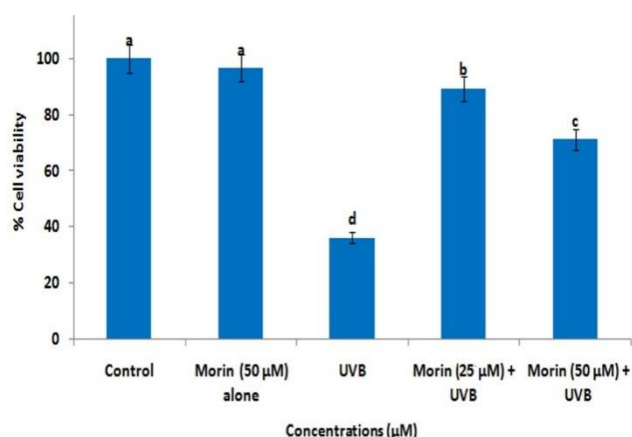


Fig. 1 Effect of morin on UV-B induced cytotoxicity in HaCaT by MTT assay. Values are given as means \pm S.D. of six experiments in each group. Values not sharing a common marking (a, b, c & d) differ significantly at $P < 0.05$ (DMRT).

Effect of Morin on UVB induced ROS generation in HaCaT cells

ROS produces a significantly higher in UVB irradiated HaCaT (C-776.66) which is compared to the non-irradiated HaCaT. Significantly good reduction of ROS level was detected in morin (50 μM) plus UVB- irradiated HaCaT cells while compared with UVB- irradiated cells (Fig. 2ii). From the photomicrograph clearly evidence that of bright green fluorescence in UVB irradiated cells was shown (Fig. 2i C). Morin plus UVB - irradiated HaCaT cells exhibited dimmed green fluorescence because of reduced ROS generation (Fig. 2i D). No changes in non-irradiated HaCaT cell (Fig. 2i A, B).

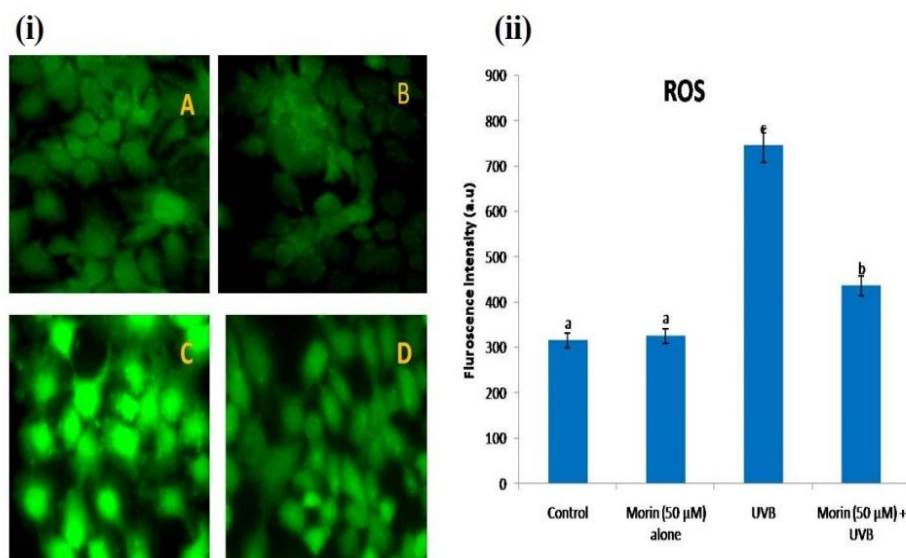


Fig. 2 Effect of morin on UV-B radiation induced ROS generation in HaCaT cells. **(i)** Photomicrographs showed (20x) enhanced green fluorescence in UV-B-exposed HaCaT cells; Morin pretreatment decreased UV-B-induced ROS generation in a dose dependent manner. (A) Control, (B) morin (50 μ M), (C) UV-B, (D) UV-B + morin (50 μ M). **(ii)** Spectrofluorometric

Morin inhibits on UVB- induced oxidative stress in HaCaT cells (Lipid peroxidation)

Levels of TBARS were significantly improved in UVB irradiated HaCaT when compared to non-irradiated HaCaT (Fig. 3). TBARS levels in morin (50 μ M) plusUVB- irradiated are significantly good reduction while compared toUVB irradiated HaCaT cells.

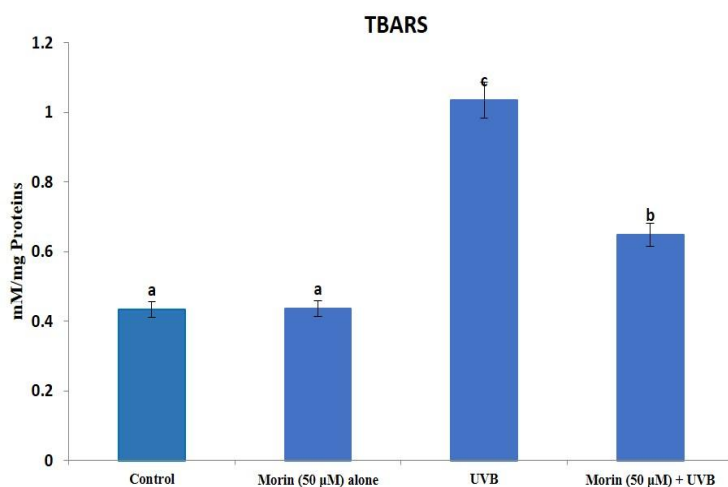


Fig. 3 Effect of morin on UV-B induced lipid peroxidation in HaCaT cells. Values are given as means \pm S.D. of six experiments in each group. Values not sharing a common marking (a, b, c & d) differ significantly at $P < 0.05$ (DMRT).

Effect of morin on UVB-induced antioxidant status in HaCaT cells

Fig.4a shows the enzymatic antioxidant activities of SOD, GPx, CAT, non-enzymatic antioxidant activities of Glutathione (GSH) (Fig.4b) were significantly decreased in UVB-exposed HaCaT when compared to non-irradiated HaCaT cells. Morin plus UVB - induced HaCaT cells shows significantly good improvement and bring back to the normalcy of SOD, CAT, GPx, GSH when compared with UVB- irradiated HaCaT cells.

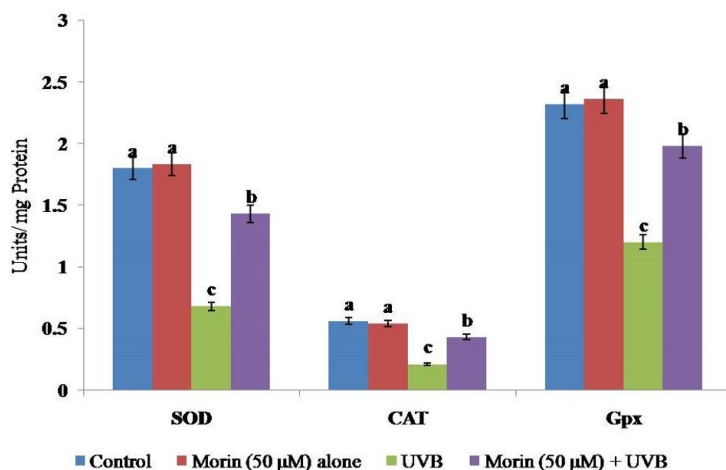


Fig. 4a Effect of morin and/or UV-B exposure on antioxidant enzymes activities (SOD, CAT and GPx) in HaCaT cells. Values are given as means \pm S.D. of six experiments in each group. Values not sharing a common marking (a, b, c & d) differ significantly at $P < 0.05$ (DMRT). SOD - Enzyme concentration required for 50% inhibition of nitroblue tetrazolium reduction in one minute. CAT - μ mol of hydrogen peroxide consumed per minute. GPx - μ g of glutathione consumed per minute.

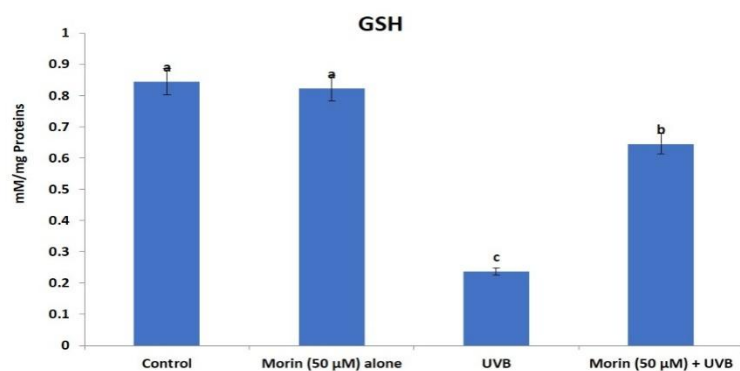


Fig. 4b Effect of morin on GSH levels in UV-B irradiated HaCaT cells. Bars represent means \pm S.D. of six experiments in each group. Values not sharing a common marking (a, b, c & d) differ significantly at $P < 0.05$ (DMRT).

Effect of Morin on UVB - induced DNA damage in HaCaT cells

UVB- irradiation significantly increased comet attributes that is tail – DNA and tail - length in HaCaT when compare to non-UVB irradiated HaCaT (Fig. 5ii). Morin plus UVB - irradiated shows significantly decreases the level DNA damage when compare with UVB - irradiated HaCaT. Fluorescence microphotograph shows distinguishable comet tail in UVB- irradiated HaCaT (Fig. 5i C). Morin plus UVB-exposed HaCaT showed dwindled comet formation (Fig. 5i D) and non-irradiated control HaCaT shows whole round shaped nucleoid.

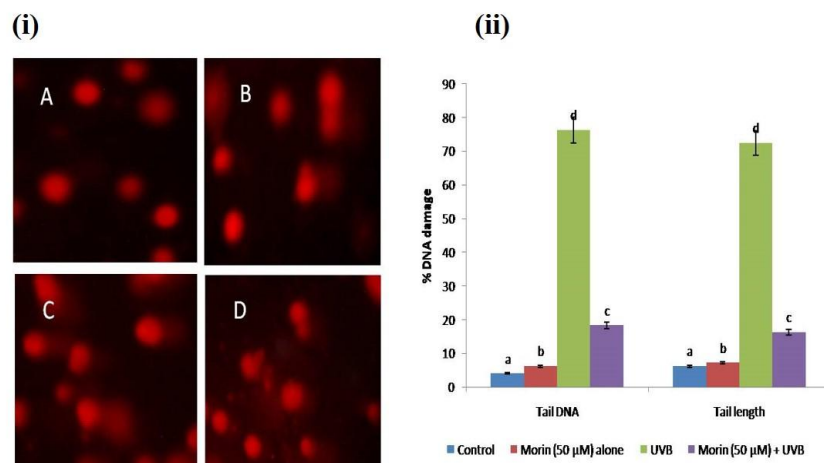


Fig. 5 Effect of morin on UV-B induced DNA damage attributes in HaCaT cells. **(i)** Fluorescence microphotograph shows enhanced comet tail in UV-B radiated HaCaT cells (C), morin pretreatment decreased UV-B induced comet formation (Figure 5D). **(ii)** Values are given as means \pm S.D. of six experiments in each group. Values not sharing a common marking (a, b, c & d) differ significantly at $P < 0.05$ (DMRT).

Effect of morin on UVB- induced apoptotic morphological changes in HaCaT cells

In this study, we used AO and EtBr to discern cells that are apoptotic and/or viable (Fig. 6). UVB-irradiated HaCaT showed condensed nuclei, membrane blebbing and apoptotic bodies. In contrast, the control cells showed intact nuclear architecture, with only 7% apoptotic cells. Morin plus UVB irradiated cells showed reduced percentage of apoptotic cells while compared with UVB-exposure HaCaT cells.

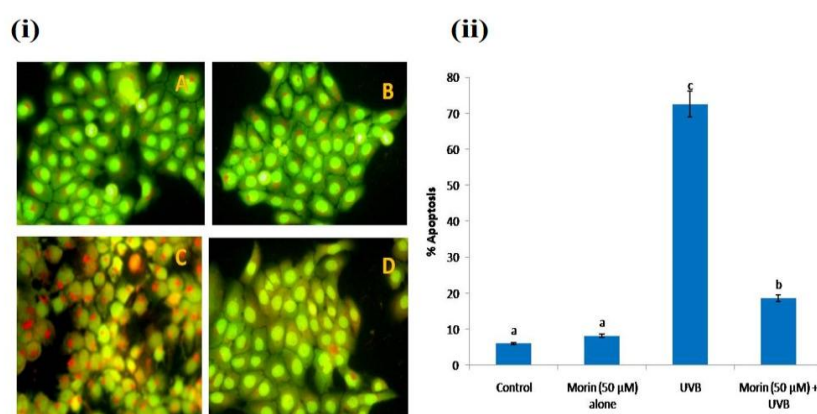


Fig. 6 Effect of morin on UV-B induced apoptotic morphological changes in HaCaT cells. **(i)** Cellular morphological changes were observed under a fluorescence microscope using AO/EtBr staining (20x). More number of apoptotic cells (red colour) was observed in UV-B exposed HaCaT (C), morin pretreatment decreased frequency of UV-B induced apoptotic cells (D). **(ii)** UV-B exposure increased percentage apoptotic cell death and DNA fragmentation in HaCaT. Morin treatment (50 µM) before UV-B exposure reduced percentage of apoptotic cells (AO stained cells). Values are given as means \pm S.D. of six experiments in each group. Values not sharing a common marking (a, b, c & d) differ significantly at $P < 0.05$ (DMRT).

DISCUSSION

Skin is the biggest organ of the body and it divided into 2 primary layers, epidermis and dermis. Epidermis, of ectodermal origin, is the outmost stratum of skin and helps as the body's point of contact to the environments. UVB- radiation released from sun permeates the atmosphere and enter into the epidermis stratum of skin which then led to several pathological effects.

UVB- induce the formation of ROS in the skin and progresses oxidative stress, which potentially contributes to skin carcinogenesis (Ichihashi *et al.*, 2003). Hence, progress of "photoprotectors" particularly from natural origin is highly desirable target. Previous study suggested that phenolic compound (ferulic acid) like, an ideal antioxidant and ROS in free radical scavenging systems (Kanski *et al.*, 2002). UVB- radiation is known to interact to cellular porphyrins, cytochrome and flavones resulting in the formation of ROS. In the current study, we have experiential that the exposure of UVB - induced in HaCaT cells reduced the percentage of cell viability while significant increase in the cell's viability was observed in morin with UVB - irradiated HaCaT cells. Similarly, ROS generation was significantly decreased in HaCaT cells in the presence of morin. This indicates that morin exerts a protective effect on HaCaT cells upon exposure of UVB. Recently, some studies have authenticated the protective action of morin with respect to cell viability. Administration of morin increases the cell viability in primary rat hepatocytes when exposed to high concentration of glucose (Surampalli *et al.*, 2015). Previous study shows, the evidence that primary mechanism by which UVB- radiation instigates molecular responses in human skin is by formation of ROS (Widel *et al.*, 2014). In this present study, morin treatment significantly prevented UVB induced ROS generation and reduced solar radiation induced ROS generation with a net reduction of protein oxidation in human epidermal keratinocyte. In accordance with our findings, Domenicoreported that ferulic acid ethyl ester anti - oxidative stress mediated by UVB- irradiation in human epidermal melanocytes and morin treated lung cancer cell line (A549) (Tsai *et al.*, 2015) and also showed decreased cell viability, colony formation and migration (Yao *et al.*, 2017). These evidences support that morin exerts an anti-tumor effect by *in vitro*.

Lipid components in the membranes are extremely prone to radiation damage (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2009). We have observed that, TBARS levels were significantly decreased in morin plus UVB- irradiated cells while compared with the UVB- exposed group. TBARS is a reliable by product formed during lipid peroxidation and it increases during oxidative stress. A decreased level of TBARS in morin administered group suggests that morin employs an antioxidant action upon UVB exposure. The loss of antioxidant function which outcomes in the accumulation of ROS. Antioxidant enzymes like SOD, GPx and CAT act in shows to protect cellular components from damage by ROS, which embodies the primary line of defense (Ighodaro and Akinloye, 2018). Earlier study has proven that a polypeptide isolated from *Chlamys farreri* rises the activities of antioxidant enzymes in UVB- irradiated HaCaT cells (Działo *et al.*, 2016). Phenolics are powerful hydrogen-donating antioxidants and free radical scavengers in many *in vitro* systems and *in vivo* models (Lala *et al.*, 2006). In the present study, morin pre-treatment significantly improved the activities of SOD, GPx, CAT in UVB -irradiated HaCaT cells and thus, morin could wield a beneficial action against pathologic alterations caused by the

UVB- radiation. GSH is a various protector and performs radioprotective function via free radical scavenging, restoration of the damaged molecule by hydrogen donation, decrease of peroxides and protection of protein thiols in the reduced state (Merwald *et al.*, 2005). Reduced levels of GSH during UVB- exposure may be due to the leakage and oxidation of GSH (Ali *et al.*, 2011). GSH depletion of cultured skin cells make them sensitive to UVB- induced mutations and cell deaths (Punnonen *et al.*, 1991). Upon UVB- irradiation, decreased levels of GSH were seen in HaCaT cells while morin pretreatment have significantly increased GSH levels.

Numerous evidences suggested that solar radiation can give increase to cellular DNA - damage by indirect and direct mechanisms for the induction of pyrimidine dimers and oxidative DNA modifications (Cooke *et al.*, 2000). Previous evidence suggested that UVB generates ROS and it has been associated with oxidative DNA damage. Oxidative DNA base damage via UV-rays can probably donate to the induction of both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer (Kvam and Tyrrell, 1997). Single cell gel electrophoresis (SCGE) or Comet assay has become one of the common methods for assessing DNA damage, with application in genotoxicity testing as well as fundamental research in DNA damage and repair. We have noticed improved frequency of DNA damage i.e., tail- DNA and tail- length in UVB- irradiated HaCaT. Improved comet attributes observed in this study might be due to the DNA strand breaks induced during UVB- exposure. On the other side, morin pretreatment reduced percentage of tail - DNA and tail- length in HaCaT. Current study might be indicating that the DNA damage repairing capacity of morin in UVB- irradiated HaCaT. It has been earlier proved that the protective effect of morin, on UVB- induced DNA damage was analyzed in keratinocyte stem cells (Lee *et al.*, 2014). Another study showed that caffeic acid is a phenolic compound on UVB- induced oxidative DNA damage in cultured human lymphocytes (Prasad *et al.*, 2009). Based on the outcomes, phenolic compound could inhibit the CPD formation and DNA damage.

Mitochondrial changes are dangerous for the inductive effect phase of apoptosis. UVB- radiation is the primary environmental agent that leads to apoptosis in human cells. UVB- irradiation of cells elicits a complex cellular response through cell surface receptor aggregation (Brash *et al.*, 1991) and upon prolonged exposure; it induces apoptosis in mammalian cells like, keratinocytes and lymphocytes (Kanimozhi and Prasad, 2009). In this study, we have detected the preventive effect of morin on UVB- radiation induced apoptotic morphological changes. Pre - treated with Morin plus UVB- irradiated cells exhibited reduced percentage of apoptotic cells while compared with UVB- exposure alone (Fig.6).

Dietary polyphenols because of their antioxidant activity and the capacity to scavenge the free radicals formed during the pathological process like cancer and another study showed, to neutralize ROS, recover mitochondrial membrane potential, and block apoptotic pathways against oxidative stress on UVB- induced cancer cell lines (Kanagalakshmi *et al.*, 2014). Morin treatment reduced ROS formation, bring back mitochondrial membrane potential and reduced cytochrome C release and intrinsic pathway apoptosis activation induced by oxidative stress mediated apoptosis in primary rat hepatocytes (Kapoor and Kakkar, 2012).

CONCLUSION

The present study demonstrates that morin is playing a critical role against UVB- induced Oxidative stress, Lipid peroxidation, DNA damage and Apoptotic morphological changes. Based on our study, we recommend that morin can be used as an actively protective agent for the biochemical alterations caused by UVB- exposure.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest

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