

[gw22-e0230]

# MONASCUS-FERMENTED RICE EXTRACT REDUCED BLOOD LIPID LEVEL AND INHIBITED THE MRNA EXPRESSION OF NF- $\kappa$ B AND MMP-9 IN AORTA OF APOLIPOPROTEIN E GENE KNOCKED-OUT MICE

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10.1136/heartjnl-2011-300867.155

**Objective** To study the effect of Monascus-fermented rice extract (RMRE) on blood lipid level, mRNA expression of NF- $\kappa$ B and MMP-9 in aorta of apolipoprotein E gene knocked-out (ApoE (-/-)) mice.

**Methods** 24 six-week old ApoE (-/-) mice were assigned randomly into model group (administrated with saline, 0.4 ml/d), RMRE group (administrated with RMRE, 120 mg/kg/d), Lovastatin group (administrated with Lovastatin, 3.3 mg/kg/d) and Xuezhikang group (administrated with Xuezhikang, 120 mg/kg/d). After 34 weeks of intervention, the blood serum was separated to assay the level of blood TC, TG, LDL-C and HDL-C; and then aortas were fixed with 2.5% Glutaraldehyde, to observe the mRNA expression of NF- $\kappa$ B and MMP-9 in aorta with hybridisation in situ.

**Results** Compared with model group, blood TC, TG, HDL-C and LDL-C in all the treatment groups reduced significantly ( $p < 0.05$  or  $p < 0.01$ ), and there was no significant difference among them. It manifested with hybridisation in situ, mRNA expression rates of NF- $\kappa$ B and MMP-9 in administrative groups are lower than that of model group,  $p < 0.01$ . Observation with optical microscope showed, in model group there were excessive positive cells and the pigmentation of brown granules was deep; in RMRE group, Lovastatin group and Xuezhikang group, positive cells could also be seen but much fewer than that of model group and the pigmentation of brown granules was even.

**Conclusion** Monascus-fermented rice extract has a definite effect on reducing blood lipid level, inhibiting mRNA expression of NF- $\kappa$ B and MMP-9 in aorta of ApoE (-/-) mice, and this might be one of its mechanisms in anti-atherosclerosis and increasing plaque stability.