

2005

Soy Isoflavone bioavailability - effects of probiotic and prebiotic consumption and oil supplementation

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Recommended Citation

Larkin, Theresa Anne, Soy Isoflavone bioavailability - effects of probiotic and prebiotic consumption and oil supplementation, PhD thesis, Department of Biomedical Science, University of Wollongong, 2005. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/456>

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CERTIFICATION

I, Theresa Anne Larkin, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Biomedical Science, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Theresa Anne Larkin

11 April 2005

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my admirable grandparents. The unconditional love that Nan, Pa, Pop and Nana have shown to so many and their unique and amazing characters are inspirational and beautifully motivating.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who I need to thank for their help during the course of my thesis. I have gained so much from, and thoroughly enjoyed, this experience.

Firstly, thank you so much to my supervisors Assoc Prof. Lee Astheimer (Department of Biomedical Science) and Assoc Prof. Will Price (Department of Chemistry). I am lucky to have had two such nice, friendly, enthusiastic, approachable, dependable and helpful people as my supervisors throughout these five years. Thank you for always providing appropriate direction, advice and assistance. I am indebted to your knowledge, patience, motivation and inspiration and have learnt an enormous amount from you.

The research in this project was funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in collaboration with Specialty Cereals, Pty Ltd and I am appreciative for this opportunity to have conducted research in an area of personal interest.

For provision of study foods, thanks to Specialty Cereals, Pty Ltd, Paul's Dairy, So Natural Foods and Penford Australia, formerly Starch Australasia. All companies and their representatives were helpful and willing to collaborate in this research.

For funding, especially for international conference travel ☺, thanks to the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences, the Smart Foods Centre and the Metabolic Research Centre, all from the University of Wollongong.

Thanks to Ian Brown for information regarding resistant starch and for friendly input, feedback and support.

Thanks to Dr. Barbara Meyer, Professor Linda Tapsell and Professor Peter Howe for their advice and assistance in various aspects of research planning and to Sister Sheena McGhee for professional but fun supervision of clinic visits.

Thank you to Assoc Prof. Ken Russell for the most friendly and helpful statistical advice.

A special thanks to the ever-patient Dr. Alice Owen, who has been an amazing help in so many ways, for endless support, encouragement and answering lots of questions!

A huge thanks to everyone in the Department of Biomedical Science: administration staff for help in so many ways, academic staff for support and encouragement in such a friendly and social way, international visitors for bringing diversity and of course my fellow students for an amazingly supportive and social network. In particular, thanks Todd for the many laughs that surely helped get us through!

Also, a big thanks to the Department of Chemistry, from which I have received a range of support from friendly, welcoming and happy people.

Thanks to Leisa Ridges, Gina Martin and Maria de los Angeles for collaboration and the sharing of skills. Especially thanks to Leisa for ongoing teamwork.

Well, there would not have been data for this thesis without the participants who took part in the studies. Thank you so much for your commitment. I had an excellent time getting to know everyone in the studies and enjoyed the clinic visits!

Thanks to Andrew Netherwood for making a nice computer version of my pencil drawing of isoflavone bioavailability!

There are too many people to list from my support network of family and friends, who I would like to thank for personal reasons - friends from Biomedical Science, including international students, thank you for the fun and the shared experiences; friends from way back, thank you so much for so many unforgettable, fun times away from uni; my closest friends, thanks for being so giving, supportive and understanding.

Most importantly, I thank my family, whom I love and am proud of - I appreciate all that we share. Mum and Dad, for everything - I thank you infinitely for love, support, encouragement, confidence in me and your thoughts and prayers. To my younger siblings Christine, Maree, Veronica and Patrick - thanks so much for making me laugh, for caring and for fun encouragement that I would one day finish!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certification.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables.....	viii
List of Figures.....	xvi
List of Abbreviations.....	xix
Abstract.....	xx
Publications from Thesis.....	xxiii

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW.....	1
1.1 Scope of Thesis.....	1
1.2 Health Benefits of Soy Consumption - Epidemiological Evidence.....	1
1.3 Soy – food sources and isoflavone compositions.....	3
1.3.1 Isoflavone synthesis and distribution.....	3
1.3.2 Soybean composition.....	5
1.3.3 Dietary soy intakes and isoflavone content.....	7
1.3.4 Isoflavone composition of soybean-derived foods.....	7
1.4 Mechanisms of Action of Soy Isoflavones in Humans.....	9
1.4.1 Isoflavone structure in relation to physiological activity.....	9
1.4.2 Isoflavone actions via the estrogen receptor.....	10
1.4.3 Antioxidant activities of soy isoflavones.....	11
1.5 Effects of Soy Intake on Disease Risk Factors.....	11
1.5.1 Clinical evidence for beneficial effects of soy in relation to CVD.....	11
1.5.2 Effects of soy on breast and prostate cancer.....	14
1.5.3 Variability in health outcome measures with soy supplementation.....	15
1.6 Isoflavone Bioavailability.....	16
1.6.1 Importance of measures of bioavailability.....	16

1.6.2	Isoflavone absorption.....	18
1.6.3	Isoflavone metabolism.....	19
1.6.4	Isoflavone distribution.....	24
1.6.5	Elimination and recovery of isoflavones.....	24
1.6.6	Production of equol from daidzein.....	26
1.6.7	Role of the gut microflora in isoflavone bioavailability.....	28
1.7	Factors Affecting Isoflavone Bioavailability.....	30
1.7.1	Composition of soy foods and variability in isoflavone concentrations.....	30
1.7.2	Level and duration of isoflavone intake.....	31
1.7.3	Inherent differences in gut microfloral metabolic activity.....	32
1.7.4	Effects of diet and gut microflora.....	33
1.7.5	Direction of research.....	34
1.8	Thesis Hypotheses and Aims.....	35
1.8.1	Thesis hypotheses.....	35
1.8.2	Thesis aims.....	35
1.8.3	Summary.....	38

CHAPTER 2

	GENERAL METHODS FOR ISOFLAVONE ANALYSIS BY HPLC - ECD.....	39
2.1	Introduction.....	39
2.2	Method Development.....	41
2.2.1	HPLC conditions.....	41
2.2.2	Extraction of isoflavones from plasma and urine.....	42
2.2.3	Voltage optimisation for Antec-Leydon electrochemical flow cell.....	43
2.2.4	Isoflavone Recovery.....	44
2.3	Final Methods.....	46
2.3.1	Standards.....	46
2.3.2	Isoflavone extraction from plasma and urine.....	49
2.3.3	HPLC separation of isoflavones and quantification with ECD.....	50
2.3.4	Conclusions.....	52

CHAPTER 3

EFFECT OF ACUTE AND CHRONIC RESISTANT STARCH INTAKE ON SOY ISOFLAVONE BIOAVAILABILITY IN FEMALES – A PILOT STUDY.....54

3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	54
3.2	METHODS.....	56
3.2.1	Subjects.....	56
3.2.2	Study design.....	56
3.2.3	Study Foods.....	57
3.2.4	Sample collection.....	58
3.2.5	Isoflavone analysis of plasma and urine.....	58
3.2.6	Statistical analysis.....	58
3.3	RESULTS.....	59
3.3.1	Subjects and compliance.....	59
3.3.2	Baseline isoflavones.....	59
3.3.3	Plasma isoflavones after control soy meal.....	60
3.3.4	Urinary isoflavones after control soy meal.....	62
3.3.5	Effects of acute RS intake on plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	63
3.3.6	Effects of 2 weeks RS intake on plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	66
3.3.7	Effects of 4 weeks RS intake on plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	69
3.3.8	Effects of acute and chronic RS intake on plasma and urinary daidzein: genistein ratios.....	72
3.3.9	Effects of acute and chronic RS intake on daidzein metabolites, equol and ODMA.....	74
3.4	DISCUSSION.....	77
3.4.1	Isoflavone bioavailability after control soy meal.....	77
3.4.2	Effects of acute RS intake on isoflavone bioavailability.....	79
3.4.3	Effects of chronic RS intake on isoflavone bioavailability.....	83
3.4.4	Effects of chronic RS intake on daidzein metabolites.....	85
3.4.5	Influence of diet on equol production.....	87
3.4.6	Equol production in Kenyan subjects.....	88

3.4.7	Influence of background diet and genetics on gut microflora.....	89
3.4.8	Individual variability and dietary intakes.....	90
3.4.9	Conclusions and recommendations.....	92
3.5	APPENDIX.....	93

CHAPTER 4

EFFECTS OF SOY VS. DAIRY PRODUCTS ON ISOFLAVONE

BIOAVAILABILITY AND LIPIDS IN MILDLY HYPERLIPIDEMIC

	SUBJECTS: A 10 WEEK CROSSOVER STUDY.....	95
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	96
4.2	METHODS.....	97
4.2.1	Subjects.....	97
4.2.2	Study design.....	97
4.2.3	Study foods.....	98
4.2.4	Sample analysis.....	99
4.2.5	Statistical analysis.....	99
4.3	RESULTS.....	100
4.3.1	Subjects and compliance.....	100
4.3.2	Treatment of data.....	100
4.3.3	Isoflavones at baseline and after dairy.....	101
4.3.4	Isoflavone levels after soy.....	101
4.3.5	Gender differences in isoflavone bioavailability.....	105
4.3.6	Dietary effects on plasma lipids.....	106
4.3.7	Correlations between baseline lipids and subsequent changes in lipids.....	107
4.3.8	Isoflavones and lipid levels.....	109
4.4	DISCUSSION.....	111
4.4.1	Plasma and urinary isoflavone levels after 5 weeks soy intake.....	111
4.4.2	Plasma and urinary isoflavones at baseline and after 5 weeks dairy intake.....	113
4.4.3	Gender differences in isoflavone bioavailability.....	114

4.4.4	Effects of soy diet on lipids.....	115
4.4.5	Metabolism to ODMA and equol.....	118
4.4.6	Influence of equol on lipid effects.....	118
4.4.7	Inter-individual variation and study design.....	119
4.4.8	Conclusions and future directions.....	120
4.5	APPENDIX.....	121

CHAPTER 5

EFFECTS OF PROBIOTIC AND PREBIOTIC FOODS ON SOY

	ISOFLAVONE BIOAVAILABILITY.....	122
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	123
5.2	METHODS.....	125
5.2.1	Subjects.....	125
5.2.2	Study design.....	125
5.2.3	Study foods.....	127
5.2.4	Sample collection.....	128
5.2.5	Isoflavone quantification in plasma and urine.....	129
5.2.6	Lipid analyses.....	129
5.2.7	Statistical analyses.....	129
5.2.8	Statistical determination of effects of order of dietary interventions.....	130
5.3	RESULTS.....	131
5.3.1	Subject completion and characteristics.....	131
5.3.2	Isoflavone levels at baseline (week 0) and after washout (week 9).....	133
5.3.3	Soy supplementation level.....	134
5.3.4	Effects of probiotic yoghurt on plasma isoflavones after soy intake.....	134
5.3.5	Probiotic effect on urinary isoflavones.....	139
5.3.6	Summary of probiotic effects on plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	142
5.3.7	Prebiotic effects of RS intake on plasma isoflavones.....	143
5.3.8	Prebiotic effect on urinary isoflavones.....	148
5.3.9	Summary of prebiotic effects on plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	152
5.3.10	Comparison between probiotic and prebiotic effects	153

5.3.11	Daidzein: genistein ratios and correlation in plasma and urine.....	156
5.3.12	Daidzein metabolites.....	158
5.3.13	Gender differences in plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	167
5.3.14	Lipids – baseline levels and changes through study.....	170
5.3.15	Probiotic effects on lipids.....	173
5.3.16	Prebiotic effects on lipids.....	173
5.3.17	Comparison between probiotic and prebiotic groups for lipids.....	174
5.3.18	Relation between equol and lipids.....	177
5.3.19	Gender differences in lipids.....	178
5.4	DISCUSSION.....	179
5.4.1	Plasma and urinary isoflavone levels following baseline soy meals.....	179
5.4.2	Probiotic effects on soy isoflavone bioavailability.....	181
5.4.3	Prebiotic effects (resistant starch) on soy isoflavone bioavailability.....	184
5.4.4	Probiotic and prebiotic effects on equol production.....	187
5.4.5	Comparison between probiotic and prebiotic effects on isoflavone bioavailability.....	192
5.4.6	Effects of gender on isoflavone metabolism.....	194
5.4.7	Inter-individual variability in isoflavone bioavailability.....	195
5.4.8	Effects of soy intake and dietary combination with probiotic and prebiotic consumption on lipids.....	196
5.4.9	Study design.....	201
5.4.10	Conclusions and future directions.....	201
5.5	APPENDIX.....	203

CHAPTER 6

COMBINATION OF SOY CEREAL AND A DHA-RICH OIL ON PLASMA AND URINARY ISOFLAVONES AND LIPIDS IN HYPERLIPIDEMIC SUBJECTS – A CONTROLLED, CROSSOVER

	STUDY.....	217
6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	218
6.2	METHODS.....	221

6.2.1	Subjects.....	221
6.2.2	Study design.....	221
6.2.3	Study foods.....	223
6.2.4	Sample collection and analyses.....	224
6.2.5	Statistical analyses.....	224
6.3	RESULTS.....	225
6.3.1	Subject completion and group numbers.....	225
6.3.2	Dietary intakes and compliance.....	227
6.3.3	Treatment of data.....	229
6.3.4	Plasma and urinary isoflavones at baseline and after control cereal.....	229
6.3.5	Isoflavones after 6 weeks of soy cereal.....	233
6.3.6	Metabolism of daidzein to equol.....	235
6.3.7	Gender differences.....	237
6.3.8	Lipids.....	238
6.3.9	Effects of equol production on lipids.....	243
6.3.10	Lipid correlations.....	244
6.3.11	Gender differences in lipids.....	245
6.3.12	Summary of results.....	246
6.4	DISCUSSION.....	247
6.4.1	Plasma and urinary isoflavone levels at baseline and after control cereal.....	247
6.4.2	Plasma and urinary daidzein and genistein levels after soy cereal intake.....	248
6.4.3	Metabolism of daidzein to equol.....	252
6.4.4	Influence of oil on isoflavone bioavailability.....	253
6.4.5	Lipid effects.....	253
6.4.6	Conclusions and future directions.....	258

CHAPTER 7

OVERALL DISCUSSION AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS.....260

7.1 Influence of the Soy Matrix and its Isoflavone Content on Isoflavone
Bioavailability.....260

7.2 Effect of Other Dietary Components on Soy Isoflavone Bioavailability.....266

7.3 Metabolism to Equol.....267

7.4 Gender Differences in Isoflavone Bioavailability.....269

7.5 Lipid Effects with Soy Intake.....270

7.6 Conclusions.....276

CHAPTER 8

LITERATURE CITED.....279

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Extraction Optimisation.....	42
Table 3.1 Subject Characteristics.....	59
Table 3.2 Comparison of effects of control soy meal vs. soy + RS meal on plasma and urinary parameters.....	66
Table 3.3 Comparison between control soy vs. 2 weeks RS on plasma and urinary parameters.....	68
Table 3.4 Plasma and urinary C-max and AUC of daidzein and genistein after soy meals during chronic RS intake.....	72
Table 3.5 Plasma and urinary daidzein: genistein ratios for acute and chronic RS study components.....	73
Table 3.6 Detection of equol and ODMA in plasma and urine samples during study...	75
Table 4.1 Anthropometric Data.....	100
Table 4.2 Mean plasma and urinary isoflavones at baseline and after dairy and soy...	102
Table 4.3 Mean plasma and urinary isoflavones for equol-positive and equol-negative subjects.....	104
Table 4.4 Mean plasma and urinary daidzein and genistein for females and males....	105
Table 4.5 Mean lipid levels at baseline and after dairy and soy for combined groups.....	106
Table 4.6 Correlations between baseline lipids and lipid changes with dairy or soy....	107
Table 4.7 Correlations between plasma and urinary isoflavones and changes in lipids with soy dietary period.....	109
Table 4.8 Mean lipid levels of equol-positive and equol-negative subjects at baseline and after dairy and soy.	110
Table 5.1 Study groups - subject distribution and dietary intervention order.....	131
Table 5.2 Anthropometric Data.....	132
Table 5.3 Probiotic Cohort - Effects of 5 weeks intake of soy + control yoghurt and soy + probiotic yoghurt on plasma daidzein and genistein.....	136
Table 5.4 Urinary daidzein and genistein for probiotic cohort at weeks 0 and 5 of soy + control yoghurt and soy + probiotic yoghurt treatments.	139

Table 5.5 Prebiotic Cohort - effects of 5 weeks intake of soy control or soy + resistant starch on plasma daidzein and genistein.....	145
Table 5.6 Urinary daidzein and genistein for prebiotic cohort at weeks 0 and 5 of soy control and of soy + resistant starch treatments.....	150
Table 5.7 Ratio of daidzein: genistein in plasma and urine after each 5-week dietary period and correlations.....	157
Table 5.8 Week 0 subject characteristics and plasma and urinary daidzein and genistein levels for subjects in equol tertiles.....	159
Table 5.9 Number of subjects with, and range of plasma and urinary equol levels.....	160
Table 5.10 Plasma and urinary equol levels for equol-positive subjects of probiotic and prebiotic cohorts.....	162
Table 5.11 Plasma daidzein and genistein levels after 5 weeks of each treatment for equol subgroups.....	165
Table 5.12 Comparison between plasma levels of ODMA and daidzein for subject PB 06 and daidzein levels of the probiotic cohort.....	167
Table 5.13 Gender differences in plasma and urinary daidzein and genistein levels at week 0.....	168
Table 5.14 Correlations between weight and plasma isoflavones and between age and plasma isoflavones.....	169
Table 5.15 Lipid levels at baseline for each group and the whole study.....	171
Table 5.16 Statistics for between groups analysis for lipid levels.....	171
Table 5.17 Lipid changes during study.....	172
Table 5.18 Lipid levels for probiotic cohorts.....	173
Table 5.19 Lipid levels for prebiotic cohort.....	174
Table 5.20 Correlation between baseline lipid levels and subsequent changes with dietary treatment.....	176
Table 5.21 Week 0 lipids and changes with each dietary period according for equol tertiles.....	177
Table 5.22 Baseline lipids and lipid changes with each dietary period for females and males	178

Table 6.1 Study Groups - subject distribution and anthropometric data.....	225
Table 6.2 Anthropometric data for all subjects during control and soy cereal Interventions.....	226
Table 6.3 Macronutrient data during study.....	228
Table 6.4 Olive oil cohort - plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	231
Table 6.5 DHA cohort - plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	232
Table 6.6 Plasma and urinary isoflavones after soy – comparison between two olive oil groups and combined DHA groups.....	235
Table 6.7 Plasma and urinary isoflavones for equol-positive and equol-negative subjects.....	236
Table 6.8 Gender differences in plasma and urinary isoflavones.....	237
Table 6.9 Baseline lipids for the whole study population	238
Table 6.10 Lipids during study for olive oil and DHA cohort.....	239
Table 6.11 Mean lipid levels during study for DHA cohort.....	241
Table 6.12 Changes in lipids with 6 weeks of control cereal and soy cereal in olive oil and DHA cohorts.....	242
Table 6.13 Lipid levels for equol-positive and equol-negative subjects.....	243
Table 6.14 Lipid levels per gender	245
Table 7.1 Isoflavone content of food and levels in plasma and urine after long-term intake in the studies in this thesis.....	263
Table 7.2 Plasma and urinary isoflavone levels after soy intake.....	265
Table 7.3 Mean baseline lipids and lipid effects of soy intake for thesis studies.....	272
Table 7.4 Comparison of lipid effects reported in the literature.....	273
Table 7.5 Influence of baseline TCh on lipid effects of soy treatment.....	274
Table 7.6 Influence of baseline LDL on lipid effects of soy treatment.....	275

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Isoflavone structures.....	4
Figure 1.2 The four different isomers of daidzein in soy foods.....	6
Figure 1.3 Structural similarity between estradiol and the isoflavone metabolite equol..	9
Figure 1.4 Diagrammatic representation of the physiological processes involved in isoflavone bioavailability.....	17
Figure 1.5 Glucuronide and sulphate conjugates of genistein.....	22
Figure 2.1 Optimisation of Oxidative Voltages for VT-03 electrochemical flow cell for the five isoflavones investigated.....	44
Figure 2.2 Standard curve for flavone (UV detection at 260 nm).....	46
Figure 2.3 Standard curves of individual isoflavones during a run.....	48
Figure 2.4 HPLC-ECD traces of a mixed standard and a urine sample quantified using the method used for studies reported in Chapters 3 and 4.....	51
Figure 2.5 HPLC-ECD traces of a mixed standard and a plasma sample quantified using the method for studies reported in Chapters 5 and 6.....	53
Figure 3.1 Study Design.....	57
Figure 3.2 Mean plasma isoflavone levels after control soy meal.....	60
Figure 3.3 Sample AUC representation.....	61
Figure 3.4 Mean urinary isoflavone levels after the control soy meal.....	62
Figure 3.5 Effects of acute RS on mean plasma daidzein and genistein.....	64
Figure 3.6 Effects of acute RS on mean urinary daidzein and enistein.....	65
Figure 3.7 Mean plasma daidzein and genistein following soy meal before and after 2 weeks RS intake.....	67
Figure 3.8 Mean urinary daidzein and genistein following soy meal before and after 2 weeks RS intake.....	69
Figure 3.9 Mean plasma daidzein and genistein following soy meals during 4 weeks chronic RS intake.....	70
Figure 3.10 Mean urinary daidzein and genistein during chronic RS intake.	71
Figure 3.11 Mean overnight urinary excretion of daidzein + equol + ODMA.....	76
Figure 4.1 Study Design.....	98

Figure 4.2 Correlation between urinary excretion of daidzein and ODMA after 5-week soy dietary period.....	103
Figure 4.3 Correlations between baseline lipids and the subsequent change in lipid levels with soy or dairy dietary periods.....	108
Figure 5.1 Study Design.....	126
Figure 5.2 Effect of 5 weeks daily intake of soy + control yoghurt and of soy + probiotic yoghurt on plasma daidzein and genistein for probiotic cohort.....	135
Figure 5.3 Mean absolute change in plasma daidzein and genistein concentrations with 5 weeks of soy + control yoghurt and of soy + probiotic yoghurt	138
Figure 5.4 Urinary daidzein and genistein excretion before and after 5 weeks of soy +control yoghurt and 5 weeks of soy + probiotic yoghurt	140
Figure 5.5 Mean absolute change in urinary daidzein and genistein with 5 weeks of soy control yoghurt and of soy + probiotic yoghurt.....	141
Figure 5.6 Mean percent change of urinary daidzein and genistein excretion with 5 weeks of soy + control yoghurt and of soy + probiotic yoghurt	142
Figure 5.7 Prebiotic cohort - effects of 5 weeks of soy control and of soy + resistant starch on mean plasma daidzein and genistein levels.....	144
Figure 5.8 Mean absolute change in plasma daidzein and genistein levels after 5 weeks of soy control and of soy + resistant starch.....	147
Figure 5.9 Mean urinary excretion of daidzein and genistein with 5 weeks of soy control and of soy + resistant starch.....	149
Figure 5.10 Mean absolute change in urinary daidzein and genistein excretion with 5 weeks of soy control and of soy + resistant starch.....	151
Figure 5.11 Mean percent change of urinary daidzein and genistein concentration with 5 weeks of soy control and of soy + resistant starch.....	152
Figure 5.12 Comparison between probiotic and prebiotic cohorts - mean change in plasma isoflavone concentrations.....	154
Figure 5.13 Mean changes in urinary isoflavone excretion - comparison between probiotic and prebiotic cohorts.....	155
Figure 5.14 Mean plasma equol for equol-positive subjects.....	160
Figure 5.15 Mean plasma daidzein and genistein for subjects in equol-tertiles.....	163

Figure 5.16 Mean urinary daidzein and genistein excretion for equol-tertiles.....	164
Figure 5.17 Mean 0 h plasma daidzein and genistein levels after 5 weeks of each treatment for equol-tertiles.	166
Figure 5.18 Mean lipid changes with each dietary period.	175
Figure 5.19 Correlation between baseline TCh and change in TCh with control soy dietary periods.....	176
Figure 6.1 Chemical structure of n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids: eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA, 20:5n-3) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA, 22:6n-3).....	218
Figure 6.2 Study Design.....	222
Figure 6.3 Lipid levels with DHA supplementation.....	240
Figure 6.4 Correlation between TCh level before cereal intervention and the subsequent change during each 6-week intervention.....	244
Figure 6.5 Correlation between TG and subsequent change with 12 weeks DHA supplementation.....	245

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA.....	analysis of variance
ANOVA/RM.....	ANOVA with repeated measures
AUC.....	area under the curve
BMI.....	body mass index
CFU.....	colony forming units
C-max.....	maximum concentration
CVD.....	cardiovascular disease
D/G.....	daidzein: genistein ratio
DAID.....	daidzein
DHA.....	docosahexaenoic acid
ECD.....	electrochemical detector
EPA.....	eicosapentaenoic acid
EQL.....	equol
GEN.....	genistein
HPLC.....	high performance liquid chromatography
HRT.....	hormone replacement therapy
n-3.....	omega-3
ODMA.....	o-desmethylangolensin
OO.....	olive oil
PEP.....	p-ethyl phenol
PUFA.....	polyunsaturated fatty acids
SEM.....	standard error of the mean
RS.....	resistant starch
YC.....	control yoghurt
YP.....	probiotic yoghurt

ABSTRACT

Epidemiological evidence suggests a beneficial effect of soy consumption in relation to cardiovascular disease and in 1999, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved a health claim for the cholesterol-lowering effects of soy protein. However, this effect has not always been reproduced in subsequent soy dietary interventions, the results of which vary greatly. Soy beans are the richest dietary source of the isoflavones daidzein, genistein and glycitein, which have also been implicated with a role in lipid-lowering due to their antioxidant and estrogen receptor activities. After soy intake, there is large variability between individuals in isoflavone bioavailability. The isoflavones are present in soy as glycoside conjugates and after endogenous hydrolysis, the aglycones are absorbed, metabolised by liver and intestinal enzymes, distributed to tissues and excreted in urine. Endogenous isoflavone metabolites have been identified; of particular interest is the metabolism of daidzein to equol, as this has greater antioxidant and estrogen receptor activities than daidzein. Gut microflora is essential for isoflavone bioavailability and metabolism and can be affected by dietary modification. Differences in gut microflora composition may contribute to the large inter-individual variability in these processes, which in turn may contribute to variation in the lipid effects of soy consumption. Recently there has been much interest in the identification of dietary components that may enhance soy isoflavone bioavailability and it was the aim of this thesis to examine the effects of soy foods and other dietary components on soy isoflavone bioavailability and lipids. Four human studies were conducted and isoflavone bioavailability was determined based on plasma and urinary isoflavone levels. These samples were extracted with *Helix Pomatia* juice containing β -glucuronidases and sulphatases and the isoflavone aglycones were quantified by HPLC with electrochemical detection.

Resistant starch is a prebiotic and therefore has specific effects on gut microflora activity in the gastrointestinal tract and it was hypothesised that resistant starch intake may also affect isoflavone bioavailability. A pilot study with nine females (7 Australian and 2 Kenyan) was conducted to determine the acute and chronic effects of resistant starch

intake on soy isoflavone bioavailability. When resistant starch was consumed in the same meal as soy, plasma levels of daidzein and genistein were significantly reduced. However, daily resistant starch intake for 2 and 4 weeks prior to a soy meal resulted in a trend of increased mean daidzein excretion and of increased equol production in the two Kenyan subjects. It was concluded that resistant starch may enhance equol production, possibly dependent on gut microflora, genetics or habitual diet.

To determine whether there was an association between isoflavone bioavailability and lipid changes after soy intake, a soy dietary intervention was conducted in 23 hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women. Plasma and urinary daidzein and genistein levels were increased significantly after 6 weeks of soy milk and yoghurt intake. This treatment did not significantly affect lipids and there were no correlations between plasma or urinary isoflavone levels and lipid changes. However, in 8 subjects who produced equol in their plasma or urine, soy intake resulted in significant reductions in total and LDL cholesterol. This suggests that metabolism of daidzein to equol may be a determinant of the lipid-lowering effects of soy, contributing to this variation.

Based on the findings of the first two studies, a dietary combination of soy (cereal and milk) with either a probiotic or a prebiotic was proposed for further examination of the effects of resistant starch and equol production on isoflavone bioavailability and lipid levels. In a study of crossover design with 5-week dietary periods, soy consumption was compared with intake of soy plus either probiotic yoghurt or resistant starch-enriched bread for the effects on plasma and urinary isoflavone levels after a test soy meal in 31 hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women. Soy intake significantly increased circulating plasma daidzein and genistein levels, but did not affect plasma or urinary isoflavones after the test soy meal. There were no additional significant effects of either probiotic or prebiotic treatments; however, there was a trend for increased circulating plasma daidzein and genistein with probiotic treatment and for increased plasma daidzein and genistein 24 hours after the test soy meal with prebiotic treatment. Probiotic or prebiotic treatment did not induce or increase equol production, though there was a trend for increased plasma equol in “equol-positive” subjects (n = 12) after probiotic treatment.

The lack of any overall significant effects on isoflavone bioavailability with either probiotic or prebiotic treatment suggests that even if gut microflora was modified, this was not favourable for isoflavone bioavailability or equol production and thus it appears that other inherent features may determine these processes. Total cholesterol was significantly decreased with soy plus probiotic or prebiotic intake ($-4.7 \pm 2.0\%$ and $-5.5 \pm 1.6\%$ respectively) and LDL cholesterol was significantly decreased with soy intake and with prebiotic treatment ($-4.1 \pm 2.1\%$ and $-7.3 \pm 2.2\%$ respectively). This suggests that even in the absence of effects on isoflavone bioavailability, there was synergistic action between soy and probiotic or prebiotic intake for lipid-lowering effects and thus combination of these dietary components may be useful in lipid management.

For further examination of potential lipid-lowering effects of soy in synergy with other dietary components, it was hypothesised that a novel combination of soy with DHA-rich oil may also affect isoflavone bioavailability and result in a more positive lipid profile than supplementation with either component alone. DHA supplementation has strong triglyceride lowering effects, but it often also results in elevated LDL cholesterol, whereas conversely, a reduction in LDL is the most commonly reported lipid effect of dietary soy intake. In a crossover study with 35 hyperlipidemic men and postmenopausal women, plasma and urinary isoflavones were significantly increased after 6 weeks of soy (cereal) intake, but there were no significant effects of DHA-rich oil supplementation. Soy intake did not result in any significant lipid effects; however DHA supplementation resulted in a significant increase in HDL and decrease in triglycerides, independent of concurrent soy intake. In addition, there was an influence of the combination of DHA and soy compared with DHA alone for total and LDL cholesterol. While total and LDL cholesterol were increased with DHA supplementation alone, significantly for LDL, these increases were somewhat attenuated with concurrent soy intake. This suggests the potential for a combination of soy and n-3 fatty acids in producing lipid effects protective in relation to cardiovascular disease.

When the latter three studies were compared, a relation between the daidzein and genistein levels of food with the ratios of these isoflavones in plasma and urine was

evident, however some effects of soy food matrix were observed. Soy milk intake resulted in greater genistein bioavailability than daidzein compared to their relative amounts in the soy milk, while resistant starch intake appeared to increase daidzein excretion more than genistein. Furthermore, there was a particular finding of high occurrence of equol in plasma in the third study examining the combination of soy with oil; this was suggested to be due to the higher proportions of daidzein and glycitein than genistein in the soy germ product ingredient of the cereal.

Overall, there appears to be the potential for probiotic and prebiotic foods and the soy matrix isoflavone composition to influence soy isoflavone bioavailability. These findings are important in relation to physiological activities of soy foods as the isoflavones differ in their bioactivity and require further investigation. Further, in relation to lipid effects of soy consumption, baseline levels of total and LDL cholesterol were both significantly inversely correlated with subsequent lipid changes with soy intake. In addition, there were beneficial additive hypocholesterolemic effects of soy with probiotic and prebiotic foods and with DHA-rich oil supplementation. In conclusion, the bioavailability of isoflavones from soy is affected by other dietary components and the soy matrix in which they are contained. This did not appear to influence lipid effects which were modest and only significant when soy was consumed concurrently with other dietary components also known to produce beneficial effects. The latter finding has application in the development of functional foods for those with elevated lipids.

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