

Research Article

The Effects of Mung Bean Peptide and Its' Complexes on the Treatment of Lead Poisoning

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Objective. To investigate the effects of mung bean peptide and its' complexes on promoting lead excretion and neuroprotection of zebrafish. *Methods*. The lead poisoning models of zebrafish were established by lead acetate solution; the models were treated with high and low concentrations (58.3 and 175 μ g/mL) of mung bean peptides, with high, medium, and low concentrations (27.8, 83.3, and 250 μ g/mL) of mung bean peptide complexes, separately. The effects of the mung bean peptide complexes on the lead content, axonal fluorescence intensity, and peripheral motor nerve length changes were identified in the zebrafish model, and the effects of mung bean peptide and its' complexes on zebrafish's lead excretion, axonal protection rate, and peripheral movement promotion rate of nerve regeneration were calculated. *Results*. The effects of high concentration of mung bean peptide (175 μ g/mL) in promoting lead excretion was 29% (p < 0.05), and the effect of high concentration of mung bean peptide complexes (250 μ g/mL) in promoting lead excretion was 30% (p < 0.05). The other concentrations of mung bean peptide and its' complex groups did not show a noticeable lead excretion effect. The protective effects of mung bean peptide at concentrations of 58.3 and 175 μ g/mL against zebrafish axonal injury were 98% and 101% (p < 0.01), and the peripheral nerve regeneration promotion effects were 29% (p > 0.05) and 42% (p < 0.05), respectively. The protective effects of mung bean peptide complexes at concentrations of 27.8, 83.3, and 250 μ g/mL against zebrafish axonal injury were 85%, 78%, and 93% (p < 0.01); peripheral nerve regeneration promotion rates were 46%, 50%, and 50% (p < 0.05). *Conclusion*. The mung bean peptide and its' complexes can effectively promote the discharge of lead in the zebrafish lead poisoning and have protective and regeneration effects on zebrafish nerves.

1. Introduction

Lead (Pb) is a common neurotoxic heavy metal pollutant, which is widely used in industrial activities, and enters the environment through different routes [1, 2]. Acute lead exposure can cause neurotoxic effects in animals, such as abnormal behavior, learning disabilities, and hearing loss [3]. In addition to its apparent neurodevelopmental toxicity, lead can also destroy the redox state of the body by directly inducing the body to produce reactive oxygen species and consuming intracellular antioxidants, leading to oxidative damage to the body, which would cause injuries to tissues and organs, especially in the nervous system [4, 5]. Lead can easily pass through the blood-brain barrier, inhibiting the development of the central nervous system [6]. The normal development of glial cells has an important influence on the migration of neurons and the establishment of synaptic connections. Lead can also lead to the premature differentiation of glial cells, and the interactions between glial cells and neurons cannot proceed normally [7]. Besides, lead can accumulate in endothelial cells, and it can also affect the formation of synapses through calcium-like effects and nerve cell adhesion molecules [8].

Mung beans are rich in protein, starch, minerals, vitamins, and essential amino acids, among which the protein content is 19.5% to 33.1% [9, 10]. In the past 20 years, researchers have found that the peptides from food-derived proteins have a wide

range of biologically active functions, such as antioxidation, lowering blood pressure, lowering cholesterol, and improving the body's immunity [11–17]. In recent years, more and more attention has been paid to the studies on the health mechanism of mung bean peptides (MBPs), especially the neuroprotective mechanism. However, there is no report on repairing nerve injury caused by lead poisoning with MBPs [16].

Zebrafish has the characteristics of small size, short reproduction cycle, rapid embryo development, transparent embryo body, and high homology with mammals [18]. The effects of complexes on the nervous system in live or intact fixed specimens through special staining can be quickly detected. Organic damage is a model activity widely used in developmental toxicology, genetic biology, drug development, and environmental monitoring [19–22]. In order to further explore the effects of mung bean peptides and mung bean peptide complexes in promoting lead excretion and protecting nerves, a zebrafish lead poisoning model through induction was established, and the effects of different concentrations of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes on zebrafish in promoting lead excretion and neuroprotection were observed.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Drugs and Main Reagents. Mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes were supplied from Zhongshiduqing (Shandong) Biological Co., Ltd. (Heze, China); calcium sodium edetate was purchased from Huazhong Haiwei Gene Technology Co., Ltd. (Beijing, China); lead acetate trihydrate and other reagents were provided by Shanghai Aladdin Biochemical Technology Co., Ltd. (Shanghai, China).

2.2. Main Instruments. Dissecting microscope (SZX7, OLYMPUS, Japan); precision electronic balance (CP214, OHAUS, China); inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometer (thermoelectric, XII type, Thermo); motorized focusing continuous zoom fluorescence microscope (AZ100, Nikon, Japan); antimicrotubule and related protein antibodies (T6793, Sigma, USA); 6-well plate (Nest, China); methylcellulose (Sigma, China).

2.3. Animals. The wild-type AB strain of zebrafish was reproduced by natural paired mating. A total of 2130 fishes with an age of 2 hpf were used to determine the maximum tolerated concentration (MTC) of mung bean peptide complexes, evaluate the lead excretion effects of mung bean

six-well plate (30 fish in each well, and each with a volume of

peptide and mung bean peptide complexes, and evaluate the protective effects of injured axonal. Motor neuron fluorescent zebrafish (NBT strain) was reproduced by natural paired mating. A total of 240 fishes, with an age of 2 hpf, were used to evaluate the effect of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes on the promotion of peripheral motor nerve regeneration. The above zebrafish were raised in fish farming water at 28°C (water quality: 200 mg of instant sea salt was added to each 1L of reverse osmosis water, conductivity was 480~510 μ S/cm; pH is 6.9~7.2; hardness was 53.7~71.6 mg/L CaCO₃).

2.4. Determination of Mung Bean Peptide Complexes MTC. 2102 hpf wild-type AB strains of zebrafish were randomly selected in a six-well plate (30 fish per well, each well with a capacity of 3 mL), and the mung bean peptide complexes (50, 100, 250, 500, and 1000 μ g/mL) were dissolved in water to obtain different concentrations. A normal control group (zebrafish treated with water for fish farming) and model control group were set up. The dead zebrafish were observed and removed every day. After the mung bean peptide complexes were treated to 72 hpf, the number of deaths of the zebrafish was counted, and the MTC of the zebrafish was determined according to the toxicity and death of the zebrafish.

2.5. Evaluation of the Effects of Mung Bean Peptide and Mung Bean Peptide Complexes in Promoting Lead Excretion. A total of 240 wild-type AB strains of zebrafish were randomly chosen 2 hours (2 hpf) after fertilization and placed in a sixwell plate. There were 30 fish in each well with a capacity of 3 mL each, and a total of 6 parallel groups were treated. The models were treated with mung bean peptide (58.3 and $175 \,\mu\text{g/mL}$) and mung bean peptide complexes (27.8, 83.3, and $250 \,\mu g/mL$) in water solution separately, and the positive control drug was injected with calcium sodium edetate 125 ng per fish. Lead acetate was added to water to establish a lead poisoning model. After 70 hours, samples of zebrafish were collected by washing the liquid and sucking up the water for fish farming with EP tubes. Every 60 zebrafishes were set as a series of samples, and each of them was detected by ICP-MS. The lead content (C) of a zebrafish sample was converted to the ratio of total lead to the wet weight of the zebrafish, and C of the mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes were used to evaluate the lead excretion effects of the complexes. The calculation formula for the lead excretion effect is as follows:

(27.8, 83.3, and 250 µg/mL). After 70 hours of

promoting lead discharge rate (%) = $\frac{C(mo)}{m}$	$\frac{10 \text{ del control group}) - C(\text{test group})}{C(\text{model control group})} \times 100\%.$		
2.6. Protective Effect on Axonal Injury. 2402 hpf transgenic wild-type AB strains of zebrafish were randomly chosen in a	3 mL). The models were treated with mung bean p (58.3 and 175μ g/mL) and mung bean peptide com	peptide pplexes	

administration, the axonal-specific antibodies were stained, and the pictures were taken under a fluorescence microscope. Zebrafish head axonal fluorescence intensity (S) was collected to evaluate the axonal protection of the mung bean peptide and its' complexes. The formula for calculating the protective effect of axonal damage is as follows:

$$axonal protection rate (\%) = \frac{S(\text{test group}) - S(\text{model control group})}{S(\text{normal control group}) - S(\text{model control group})} \times 100\%.$$
(2)
2.7. Promoting Regeneration of Peripheral Motor Neuron
Injury. After 70 hours, pictures were taken under a fluo-
rescence microscope to collect the average length of pe-
ripheral motor nerves (L). The motor nerve length was used
$$motor nerve regeneration rate (\%) = \frac{L(\text{test group}) - L(\text{model control group})}{L(\text{normal control group}) - L(\text{model control group})} \times 100\%.$$
(3)

2.8. Statistical Analysis. The data were expressed as $(\overline{x} \pm s)$, and the differences were tested among the groups by *T*-test.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Determination of the MTC of Mung Bean Peptide Complexes. The mung bean peptide complexes induced 100% death of zebrafish at the concentrations of $500 \,\mu g \,m L^{-1}$ and above, and no apparent toxic phenotype was found at the concentrations of 250 μ g mL⁻¹ and below. Therefore, the MTC of mung bean peptide complexes is determined to be $250 \,\mu \text{g mL}^{-1}$ (Table 1). The concentration of mung bean peptide complexes was reduced to MTC, and $27.8 \,\mu g \,m L^{-1}$ (1/9 MTC), $83.3 \,\mu g \, m L^{-1}$ (1/3 MTC), and $250 \,\mu g \,\mathrm{mL}^{-1}$ (MTC) were selected in the pharmacodynamic evaluation experiment. The mung bean peptide complexes contain 70% mung bean peptides. Therefore, the concentrations of the mung bean peptides in the regeneration test of peripheral motor nerve were set at $58.3 \,\mu g \,\text{mL}^{-1}$ (1/3 MTC) and $175 \,\mu \text{g mL}^{-1}$ (MTC), respectively.

3.2. Lead Excretion Effect of Mung Bean Peptide and Its' Complexes. After successfully establishing zebrafish lead poisoning models, they were treated with mung bean peptide and its' complexes, respectively. After 70 hours, the zebrafish samples were collected by washing the liquid and sucking up the water for fish farming with EP tubes. Three parallel samples were tested for each experimental group, and each 60 zebrafish was considered as one sample. The lead content of zebrafish in the lead poisoning model control group $(9.01 \,\mu g \, g^{-1})$ was significantly higher than that of the normal control group $(3.11 \,\mu g \, g^{-1})$, indicating that the model was successfully constructed (p < 0.01). The positive control group (calcium sodium edetate 125 ng per fish) contained 8.38 μ g g⁻¹ of lead, and the effect of promoting lead excretion was 7%, indicating that calcium sodium edetate has a certain tendency to promote lead excretion under the experimental dose conditions.

Compared with the model control group, the lead content of the zebrafish in the mung bean peptide high concentration group (175 μ g/mL) was significantly reduced (p < 0.05), and the lead excretion effect was 29%; compared with the model control group, the lead content of the zebrafish in the mung bean peptide complexes high concentration group (250 μ g/mL) was significantly reduced (p < 0.05), and the lead excretion effect was 30%. There was no noticeable lead excretion effect in the other concentrations of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes, which shows that the appropriate concentration of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes have significant effects of promoting lead excretion (Table 2).

3.3. Mung Bean Peptide and Its' Complexes Protect the Injured Axonal. Compared with model group, calcium sodium edetate had a protective rate of 85% against zebrafish axonal injury (p < 0.05), mung bean peptide with the concentrations of 58.3 and $175 \,\mu$ g/mL had a protective effect on zebrafish, and the protection rates of axonal injury were 98% (p < 0.01) and 101% (p < 0.01). Compared with the model group, the mung bean peptide complexes with the concentrations of 27.8, 83.3, and 250 μ g/mL protected the injured axonal in zebrafish, and the rates were 85% (p < 0.01), 78% (p < 0.01) and 93% (p < 0.01). The results showed that the appropriate concentration of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes had noticeable protective effects on zebrafish injured axonal (Figure 1 and Table 3).

3.4. The Protection of Mung Bean Peptide and Its' Complexes Promoting the Regeneration of Injured Peripheral Motor Neuron. Compared with the model group, calcium sodium edetate promoted the regeneration of zebrafish peripheral nerves by 46% (p < 0.05). Compared with the model group, the mung bean peptide with the concentrations of 58.3 and 175μ g/mL had effects on the regeneration of peripheral nerve in zebrafish, and the regeneration rates were 29% (p > 0.05) and 42% (p < 0.05). Compared with the model

Group	Concentration ($\mu g m L^{-1}$)	Number of deaths	Mortality rate (%)	Toxic phenotype
Normal control group	_	0	0	No obvious abnormalities
Model control group	_	0	0	1 body bending
	50	0	0	No obvious abnormalities
	100	0	0	1 body bending and slowed heart rate
Mung bean peptide complexes	250	0	0	1 pericardium and renal edema
	500	30	100	—
	1000	30	100	_

TABLE 1: The relationship of between the concentration of mung bean peptide complexes and the toxicity (n = 30).

TABLE 2: The effects of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes on lead-removing in zebrafish.

Group	Concentration (µg/mL)	Lead content (μ g/g, mean ± SE)	Promoting lead discharge rate (%)
Normal control group	_	3.11 ± 0.32	_
Model control group	_	$9.01 \pm 0.64^{\#}$	_
Calcium edetate	125 ng per fish	8.38 ± 0.27	7
Mung bean peptide	58.3	8.28 ± 1.17	8
	175	$6.43 \pm 0.11^*$	29
	27.8	9.26 ± 0.78	-3
Mung bean peptide complexes	83.3	9.34 ± 0.97	-4
	250	$6.31 \pm 0.11^*$	30

Note: compared with the normal control group, $p^{\#} < 0.01$; compared with the model control group, $p^{*} < 0.05$.



FIGURE 1: Phenotype diagram of the protective effect of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes on the axonal injury.

TABLE 3: 1	Protective	effects c	f mung	bean	peptide	and its'	complexes	peptides	on zebrafish i	njured	axonal ((n = 10))).

Group	Concentration (µg/mL)	Axonal fluorescence intensity (pixel, mean ± SE)	Axonal protection rate (%)
Normal control group	_	832327 ± 18094	
Model control group	_	707955 ± 23086	—
Calcium edetate	125 ng per fish	$813117 \pm 31637^*$	85
Mung bean peptide	58.3	$829757 \pm 23552 * *$	98
	175	$833368 \pm 26475^{**}$	101
	27.8	$814069 \pm 24781^{**}$	85
Mung bean peptide complexes	83.3	$805023 \pm 19766^{**}$	78
	250	$824010 \pm 15684^{***}$	93
Mung bean peptide complexes	83.3 250	$805023 \pm 19766^{**}$ $824010 \pm 15684^{***}$	78 93

Note: compared with the model control group, *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, and ***p < 0.001.

group, mung bean peptide complexes with the concentrations of 27.8, 83.3, and $250 \,\mu\text{g/mL}$ promoted the peripheral nerve regeneration, and the rates were 46% (p < 0.05), 50% (p < 0.05), and 50% (p < 0.05). The results

indicated that the appropriate concentrations of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes could significantly promote the regeneration of peripheral nerves in zebrafish (Figure 2 and Table 4).



compound (27.8µg/mL)

compound (83.3 μ g/mL)

compound (250µg/mL)

FIGURE 2: Phenotype diagram of the promoting effect of mung bean peptide and mung bean peptide complexes on peripheral motor nerve regeneration.

TABLE 4: The regenerative effects of mung bean peptide and its complexes on the injured peripheral motor nerve (n = 10).

Group	Concentration (µg/ mL)	Peripheral motor nerve length (pixel, mean \pm SE)	Promoting regeneration rate (%)
Normal control group	_	228 ± 2.39	
Model control group	_	204 ± 2.59	_
Calcium edetate	125 ng per fish	$215 \pm 4.00^{*}$	46
Mung bean peptide	58.3	211 ± 5.50	29
	175	$214 \pm 2.67^{*}$	42
Mung haan nantida	27.8	$215 \pm 3.55^*$	46
complexes	83.3	$216 \pm 3.61^*$	50
	250	$216 \pm 2.86^{*}$	50

Note: compared with the model control group, *p < 0.05.

4. Conclusion

Lead is harmful to multiple systems and organs in the human body, including bone marrow, hematopoietic system, immune system, nervous system, digestive system, kidney, and heart [22, 23]. With the development of industrialization and transportation in recent years, environmental lead pollution was increased, and the impact on human health has become increasingly severe [24]. Clinically, the treatment of lead poisoning mainly uses edetate calcium disodium and penicillamine, but these drugs have many side-effect reactions, such as kidney damage and allergic reactions [25]. Natural products have significant effects on the discharge of lead [26-28]. It has been reported that alliin in garlic can bind with lead to reduce the toxicity of lead-poisoned rats; konjac powder can specifically bind to lead and promote its discharge without affecting absorbing calcium, iron, and zinc, so the refined konjac powder can be

used as a health food for preventing and controlling lead poisoning [29, 30].

Mung bean is recognized as a safe and nontoxic health food, which has attracted wide attention from all over the world [31]. At present, most focuses of mung bean is the processing of mung bean starch and vermicelli, ignoring the development and utilization of its byproduct mung bean protein [32, 33]. Under the investigated concentration range of this work, the mung bean peptide and its' complexes provided by Zhongshiduqing (Shandong) Biological Co., Ltd. have significant effects on the excretion of lead, have a significant regenerative effect on zebrafish peripheral motor nerve damage caused by lead poisoning, and have an apparent protective effect on axonal injury.

After nerve injury, the neuron cell bodies cannot be regenerated, and the leading related functions will also be constantly under attack [34–37]. At present, the so-called nerve regeneration refers to the regeneration of axons,

including axon growth, axon extension, rebuilding synaptic connections with target cells, realizing nerve reinnervation, and restoring function [38, 39]. Under normal circumstances, after peripheral nerve injury, Wallerian degeneration occurs at the proximal end of some nerves and all distal ends, which leads to degeneration and necrosis of nerve fibers and myelin sheaths to make nerve function disorders [40, 41]. In this work, it was found that high-concentration mung bean peptide complexes ($250 \mu g/mL$) have a protection rate of 93% against zebrafish axonal damage and a 50% promotion rate of peripheral neuron injury, indicating that mung bean peptide can protect zebrafish axonal and promote the regeneration of the peripheral motor nerve.

As a kind of agricultural product, mung bean is easy to grow, and the output of mung bean is very high. It is expected to develop mung bean peptide complexes as a leadpromoting health functional food, which would provide an adequate, nontoxic, green lead-emission health food for patients with chronic lead poisoning.

Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon request.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Wei Wei and Shue Wang contributed equally to this work.

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