

Evaluation of the inotropic effects of the pirozaline alkaloid

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Abstract When studying the dose-dependent effect of pirozaline on the activity of papillary muscle contraction of the rat heart, it was found that this alkaloid has a positive inotropic effect on the activity of the papillary muscle contraction of the rat heart at concentrations from 5 μM to 70 μM . Partial reduction of the positive inotropic effect of pirozaline on papillary muscle contractile activity in experiments with nifedipine indicates that the positive inotropic property of this alkaloid partially affects $\text{Ca}^{2+}_{\text{L}}$ -channels in cardiomyocytes. In the studies carried out in the presence of NiCl_2 (10 mM), it was found that the positive inotropic effect of pirozaline on the force of papillary muscle contraction is mainly related to the participation of $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchange.

Keywords: papillary muscle, $\text{Ca}^{2+}_{\text{L}}$ -channel, $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchanger, alkaloid.

INTRODUCTION

Diseases of the cardiovascular system^{1,2}, which continue to occupy a leading position in the structure of mortality in developed and developing countries, represent a huge socio-economic problem in the modern world. According to modern concepts, the development of cardiovascular diseases is based on numerous pathophysiological processes^{3,4,5}, among which damage to the function of Ca^{2+} transporting systems and Ca^{2+} homeostasis of heart cells play a leading role. Quite complex mechanisms are involved in maintaining Ca^{2+} homeostasis of cardiac cells, which involve various Ca^{2+} transporting systems of the plasmalemma (Na^+ -, $\text{Ca}^{2+}_{\text{L}}$ -, and $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchanger) and sarcoplasmic reticulum (RyR2 and Ca^{2+} -ATPase)⁶.

Agents with a positive inotropic effect are substances that increase the concentration of $[Ca^{2+}]_i$ in the cardiomyocyte or increase the level of sensitivity of the myofilament to Ca^{2+} , as well as those that act based on both of these mechanisms (such as pimobendan)^{7,8}.

Substances with a positive inotropic effect (alkaloids, flavonoids, and glycosides) are mainly based on their protective effect on heart failure and ischemic heart diseases^{9,10,11}. It is important that their cardiac cells effectively eliminate disturbances in the Ca^{2+} transport systems and bring the Ca^{2+} homeostasis to a normal state¹².

Among them, alkaloids have a wide range of pharmacological activities, many of which have been used in traditional or modern medicine or as starting points for medicines¹³. Today, the most studied alkaloids from a pharmacological point of view are isoquinoline^{14,15}, indole, and purine alkaloids. Some indole alkaloids have cardioprotective properties. Taking this into account, the inotropic effect of pirozoline indole alkaloid on the activity of papillary muscle contraction of rat heart was investigated.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

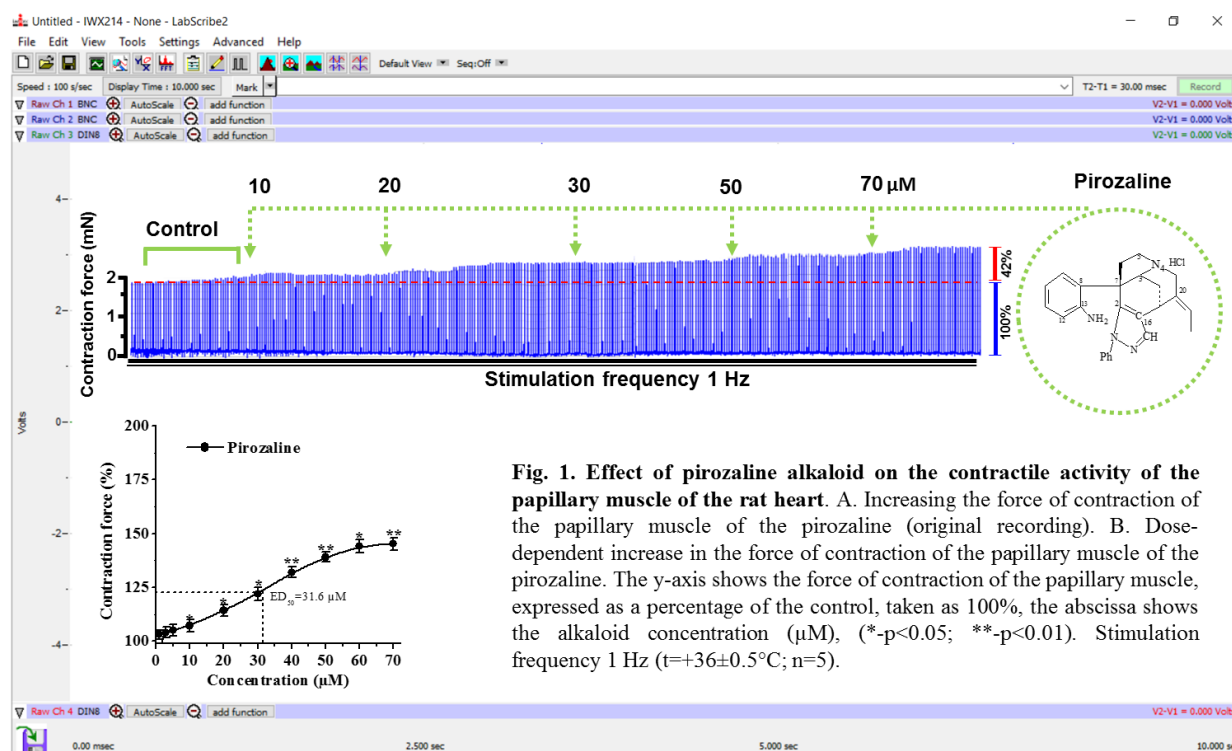
All experimental protocols and conditions for preoperative care were approved by the animal use committee of the Institute of Biophysics and Biochemistry. Adult male Wistar rats weighing 200–250g were anesthetized with sodium pentobarbital (50 mg/kg⁻¹, i.p.) and then sacrificed by cervical dislocation. The papillary muscles from the left ventricles of the rat hearts about 0,5-0,8 mm in diameter and 1-3 mm in length were dissected and mounted in a tissue bath (STEIRT, HSE, Germany) of 3 ml volume and superfused at a rate of 20 ml min⁻¹ with Krebs solution. The composition of the Krebs solution was (in mM) NaCl, 118; KCl, 4.7; MgSO₄, 1.2; KH₂PO₄, 1.2; glucose 10; NaHCO₃, 24; CaCl₂, 2.54. The solution was continuously gassed with 95% O₂ and 5% CO₂ to give a pH of 7.4 and was maintained at 37°C. The preparation was mounted horizontally in the tissue bath with one end attached to a hook and the other end attached to an isometric force transducer (Type F30, HSE) connected to a (TAM-A, HSE) gain amplifier. Each preparation was stretched to a length at which maximum developed force was evoked and allowed to equilibrate for at least 1 h before the commencement of the experiments. The preparations were field-stimulated at a rate of 1 Hz by two platinum electrodes with rectangular wave pulses of 10 ms duration at twice the threshold voltage, delivered from an electronic stimulator (ESL-2, Russia). The amplitudes of elicited maximal isometric contractions were used as the control (100%) and changes in the contractile force after drug action were expressed as a percentage of the maximal response. Contractions were recorded on a chart recorder (TZ 4620, Czech Rep.) and after conversion to digital form stored on a personal computer¹⁶.

Data are expressed as mean±SD. Control values between groups were compared by analysis of variance. The Student's *t*-test was used to compare two means. A probability of less than 0.05

was taken as a statistically significant difference. Statistical analysis was performed using OriginPro 7.5 software (OriginLab Co., U.S.A).

RESULTS

In the experiments, the dose-dependent effect of pirozaline on the activity of papillary muscle contraction of the rat heart was studied. It was found that this alkaloid has a positive inotropic effect on the contraction activity of the papillary muscle of the rat heart at all concentrations. When studying the effect of pirozaline alkaloid from 5 μM concentration to 70 μM concentration, it was found that this alkaloid showed maximum effect at 70 μM concentration and increased muscle contraction force by $45.4 \pm 3.7\%$ compared to the control (Fig. 1).



Calcium ions are universal cellular internal messengers that play an important role in the regulation of numerous biological processes in the cardiovascular system. Underlying this regulation is a dynamic change in the intracellular ($[\text{Ca}^{2+}]_i$) concentration of Ca^{2+} ions, which occurs in response to various effects of extracellular and intracellular physiological stimuli. For this reason, maintenance of Ca^{2+} -homeostasis or dynamic stability of Ca^{2+} ions in cardiac muscle cells is extremely important for the normal functioning of heart muscles, and its disturbance leads to the development of various pathologies in the cardiovascular system.

It is known that many agents with a positive inotropic effect cause an increase in $[\text{Ca}^{2+}]_{in}$ concentration in the cytosol by activating Ca^{2+}_L -channels located in the sarcolemma of cardiomyocytes. One of the main reasons for the positive inotropic effect is the modulation of the activity of Ca^{2+}_L -channels in cardiomyocytes, which in turn is associated with a change in the

amount of $[Ca^{2+}]_i$ in cardiomyocyte cells¹⁷. The positive inotropic effect of pirozoline alkaloid on the activity of papillary muscle contraction of the rat heart can be caused by the activation of Ca^{2+}_L -channels located in the membrane of cardiomyocytes. To clarify this assumption, the positive inotropic effect of pirozoline was studied in the presence of Ca^{2+}_L -channel blocker-nifedipine in an incubation medium. Nifedipine^{18,19} showed a negative inotropic effect at concentrations ranging from 0.001 μ M to 0.1 μ M when the effect of nifedipine on papillary muscle contractile activity of rat heart was studied²⁰ and its half-maximal inhibitory effect concentration was $IC_{50}=0.01 \mu$ M.

In further experiments, to clarify the nature of Ca^{2+} ions involved in the positive inotropic effect of pirozoline on papillary muscle contraction activity, Ca^{2+}_L -channel blocker nifedipine was studied. In the conditions of incubation of nifedipine ($IC_{50}=0.01 \mu$ M) in the medium, it was found that the positive inotropic effect of pirozoline (70 μ M) decreased by $23.4\pm 3.3\%$ compared to the control variant (Fig. 2).

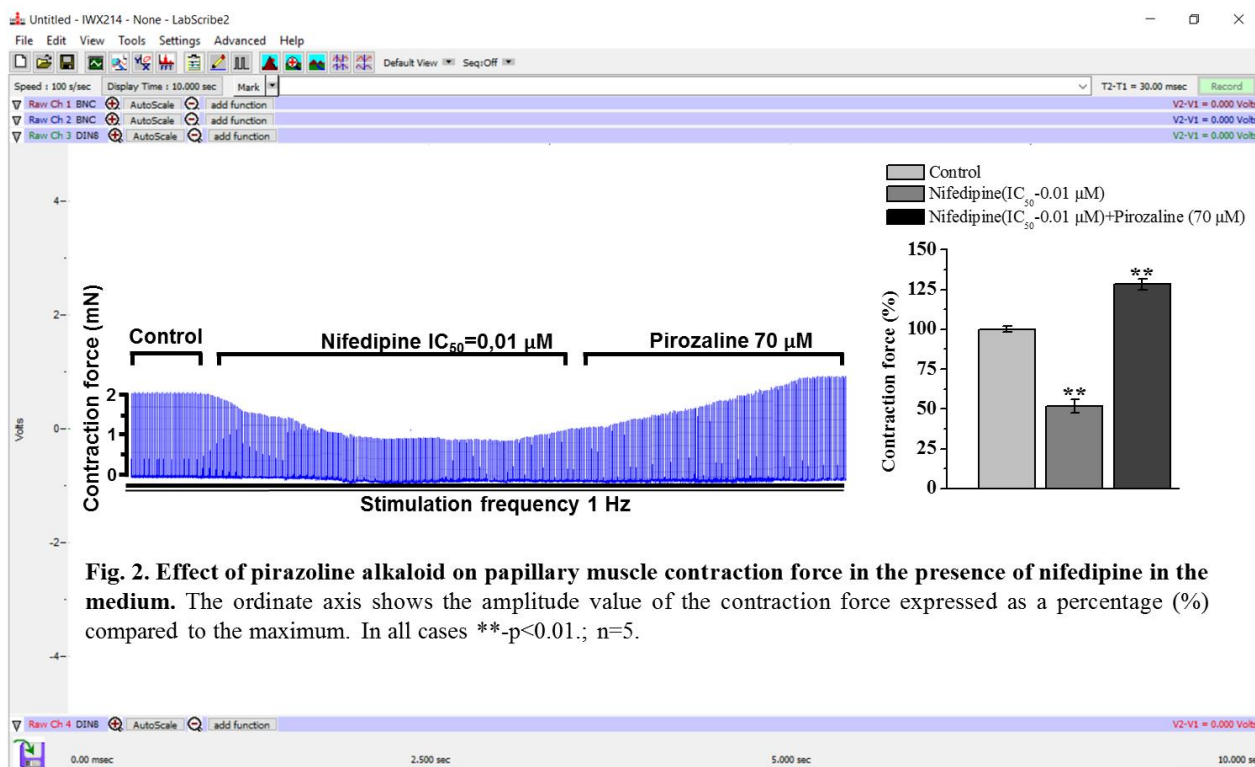


Fig. 2. Effect of pirozoline alkaloid on papillary muscle contraction force in the presence of nifedipine in the medium. The ordinate axis shows the amplitude value of the contraction force expressed as a percentage (%) compared to the maximum. In all cases $**\text{-}p<0.01$; $n=5$.

The results of the conducted research show that, according to the analysis of the obtained results, in the presence of nifedipine, a partial reduction of the positive inotropic effect of pirozoline on papillary muscle contraction activity was determined. It can be concluded that the positive inotropic property of this alkaloid is explained by its partial effect on Ca^{2+}_L -channels in cardiomyocytes. SR Ca^{2+} -ATPase and Na^+/Ca^{2+} -exchange system function play a key role in cardiomyocyte relaxation. Increased function of SR Ca^{2+} -ATPase and Na^+/Ca^{2+} -exchange system leads to a decrease of $[Ca^{2+}]_i$ content in the cytosol of cardiomyocytes, this process, in turn, increases the relaxation rate¹². It is known that the Na^+/Ca^{2+} -exchange system in cardiomyocytes in

normal physiological conditions is the main system that brings Na^+ ions into the cell and releases Ca^{2+} ions out of the cell²¹. Therefore, in the experiments, we studied the effect of these alkaloids on the papillary muscle $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchange system. To evaluate the effect of pirozaline on papillary muscle contraction activity and the position of the $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchange system located in the sarcolemma of cardiomyocytes, a concentration of 10 mM of its non-selective blocker - NiCl_2 was used. In the presence of NiCl_2 (10 mM) in the medium, the positive inotropic effect of pirozaline at a concentration of 70 μM on the force of papillary muscle contraction was $93.5 \pm 3.7\%$ (Fig. 3).

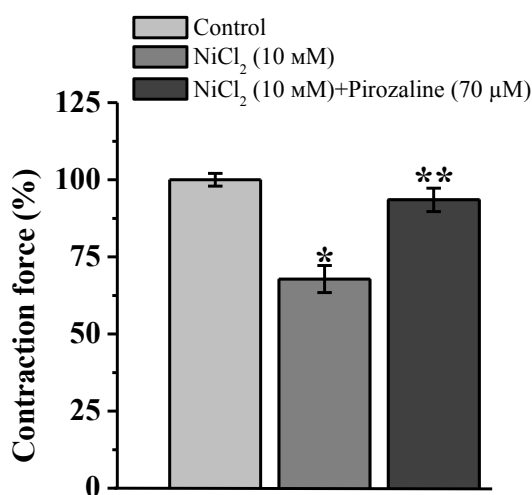


Fig.3. Effects of pirozaline alkaloid in the presence of NiCl_2 . On the ordinate axis - the amplitude value of the contraction force is expressed as a percentage (%) compared to the maximum. The frequency of stimulation of the drug is 1 Hz. In all cases * - $p < 0.05$; ** - $p < 0.01$; $n = 5$.

The positive inotropic effect of this alkaloid on papillary muscle contractile activity was shown to decrease by $52.8 \pm 5.2\%$ compared to the control condition. Based on this, this condition is evidenced by the participation of $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchange in the positive inotropic effect of the alkaloid. The results of the conducted research show that, according to the analysis of the obtained results, in the presence of nifedipine, the positive inotropic effect of pirozaline alkaloid on papillary muscle contraction activity is partially reduced, and the positive inotropic property of the alkaloid is explained by the partial effect on Ca^{2+}_L -channels in cardiomyocytes.

To assess the position of the $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchange system, pirozaline alkaloid is explained by the fact that its blocker NiCl_2 (10 mM) modulates the $\text{Na}^+/\text{Ca}^{2+}$ -exchange by having a positive inotropic effect on papillary muscle contraction force.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST. The authors have declared that no conflict of interest exists.

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