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## PRECLINICAL STUDY OF THE ACUTE TOXICITY OF INTERLEUKIN-1 $\beta$ ENCAPSULATED INTO THE AUTOLOGOUS ERYTHROCYTE GHOSTS

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### Abstract

**Introduction.** The study of transport systems for targeted drug delivery is considered to be one of the promising areas of modern experimental and clinical medicine. Preclinical studies confirm the feasibility of creating a cellular system for targeted delivery of interleukin-1 $\beta$  in the body, based on autologous red blood cell ghosts, to improve the outcomes of treatment of purulent-inflammatory soft tissue diseases. The acute toxicity study is a crucial step in the preclinical safety study of autologous erythrocyte ghosts containing interleukin-1 $\beta$ .

**Aim.** To study the acute toxicity of Interleukin-1 $\beta$ , encapsulated in autologous rat erythrocyte ghosts.

**Materials and methods.** Interleukin – 1 beta was encapsulated in autologous red blood cells of rats by the method of hypoosmotic hemolysis. A study of the acute toxicity of Interleukin-1 $\beta$  encapsulated in autologous erythrocyte ghosts was conducted on white outbred rats of both sexes, weighing 250-300 g (40 animals in the main group and 50 in the control group). In the control group, the studied drug was administered in free form as an injection solution intravenously once into the femoral vein. In the main group, interleukin-1 $\beta$  encapsulated in autologous erythrocyte ghosts (pharmacocytes) was administered into the femoral vein. The range of administered doses of interleukin-1 $\beta$  was from 0.07  $\mu$ g/kg to 20  $\mu$ g/kg. During the 14 days, the rats of the main and control groups were under observation, at a constant (26-28°C) ambient temperature, and were kept with constant access to water and food. The timing of intoxication onset and animal death was recorded, with a detailed description of the observed clinical manifestations. On day 15, all animals from both groups were euthanized under deep anesthesia, performed in compliance with the principles of humane treatment of experimental animals, followed by pathomorphological examination.

**Results.** The LD50 for the free form of interleukin-1 $\beta$  was established at 15,030 ng/kg. Within the dose range used, it was not possible to determine the LD50 for interleukin-1 $\beta$  encapsulated in autologous red blood cell ghosts, as further dose escalation was technically challenging. Pathomorphological studies showed that administration of free interleukin-1 $\beta$  in the control group animals induced a pronounced inflammatory reaction in the subcutaneous adipose tissue and a moderate inflammatory response in the liver and kidneys. In contrast, administration of interleukin-1 $\beta$  encapsulated in autologous red blood cell ghosts caused only minor degenerative changes in the tissues and was manifested by moderate signs of venous congestion.

**Conclusion.** The results of the study of acute toxicity of interleukin-1 $\beta$  deposited in autologous red blood cell ghosts prove that pharmacocytes can significantly reduce the toxicity of the drug. We assume that the decreased toxicity of interleukin-1 $\beta$  upon encapsulation in autologous red blood cell ghosts is associated with altered pharmacokinetics.

**Keywords:** *interleukin-1b, acute toxicity, erythrocyte ghosts, pharmacocytes, targeted drug delivery.*

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Резюме

## ДОКЛИНИЧЕСКОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ОСТРОЙ ТОКСИЧНОСТИ ИНТЕРЛЕЙКИНА-1В, ИНКАПСУЛИРОВАННОГО В АУТОЛОГИЧНЫЕ ТЕНИ ЭРИТРОЦИТОВ

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**Введение.** Одним из перспективных направлений современной медицины является использование транспортных систем для целенаправленной доставки лекарственных препаратов. Доклинические исследования подтверждают возможность создания клеточной системы для направленной доставки интерлейкин-1β в организме на основе теней аутологичных эритроцитов для улучшения результатов лечения гнойно-воспалительных заболеваний мягких тканей. Исследование острой токсичности является важным этапом доклинического исследования безопасности аутологичных теней эритроцитов, содержащих интерлейкин-1β.

**Цель:** изучение острой токсичности Интерлейкина-1β, инкапсулированного в аутологичные тени эритроцитов крыс.

**Материал и методы:** Интерлейкин – 1 бета был инкапсулирован в аутологичные эритроциты крыс по методике гипоосмотического гемолиза. Для изучения острой токсичности инкорпорированного препарата использовали белых беспородных крыс обоего пола массой 250-300 г. В экспериментальной группе было 40 голов, в контрольной – 50 голов крыс. В контрольной группе интерлейкин-1β вводили в свободной форме в бедренную вену. В основной группе вводили в бедренную вену интерлейкин-1β, инкапсулированный в аутологичные тени эритроцитов (фармакоциты). Диапазон вводимых доз интерлейкина - 1β от 0,07мкг/кг до 20 мкг/кг. В течение 14 дней крысы находились под наблюдением и содержались при постоянной температуре окружающей среды (26-28°C) со свободным доступом к пище и воде. Регистрировали сроки развития интоксикации и гибели животных с подробным описанием наблюдаемой клинической картины. На 15-й день все животные из обеих групп были подвергнуты эвтаназии под глубокой анестезией которую выполняли с соблюдением правил гуманного отношения к экспериментальным животным и затем проводили патоморфологические исследования.

**Результаты:** LD50 для свободной формы Интерлейкина- 1β установлено на уровне 15030 нг/кг. В пределах использованных доз определить LD50 для Интерлейкина-1β, инкапсулированного в аутологичные тени эритроцитов, не удалось, дальнейшее повышение доз технически было затруднено. Результаты патоморфологических исследований показали, что введение Интерлейкина- 1β в свободной форме у животных контрольной группы вызывало выраженную воспалительную реакцию в подкожно-жировой клетчатке и умеренную воспалительную реакцию в печени и почках. Введение Интерлейкина-1β, инкапсулированного в аутологичные тени эритроцитов, приводило лишь к незначительным дегенеративным реакциям в тканях и проявлялось умеренными признаками венозного застоя.

**Выводы:** Включение интерлейкина-1 бета в аутологичные тени эритроцитов привело к снижению острой токсичности. Предполагаем, что снижение токсичности Интерлейкина- 1β при инкапсуляции в аутологичные тени эритроцитов обусловлено изменением фармакокинетики.

**Ключевые слова:** интерлейкин-1β, острая токсичность, тени эритроцитов, фармакоциты, целенаправленная доставка лекарств.

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Түйіндеме

**ЭРИТРОЦИТТЕРДІҢ АУТОЛОГИЯЛЫҚ ҚАБЫҚШАЛАРЫНА  
ИНКАПСУЛЯЦИЯЛАНҒАН ИНТЕРЛЕЙКИН-1В-НЫҢ ЖЕДЕЛ  
УЫТТЫЛЫҒЫН КЛИНИКАҒА ДЕЙІНГІ ЗЕРТТЕУ****Кульжан Берикханова<sup>1,3,4\*</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6371-9210>**Гулияш Танышева<sup>2</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9531-5950>**Александр Гуляев<sup>1</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5098-4675>**Ерлан Тайгулов<sup>3</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2320-864X>**Сакен Кожаметов<sup>3</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0075-0376>**Нуржан Биханов<sup>4</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-9718-8865>**Ернур Закиров<sup>1</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-6351-7756>**Нуржан Берикханов<sup>5</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-6696-2886>**Асхат Жилкайдаров<sup>1,6</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5266-3655>**Есенхан Султан<sup>7</sup>**, <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-4593-8661><sup>1</sup> ЖМ "National Laboratory Astana", Назарбаев Университет, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы;<sup>2</sup> «Семей медицина университеті» КеАҚ, Семей қ., Қазақстан Республикасы;<sup>3</sup> «Астана медицина университеті» КеАҚ, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы;<sup>4</sup> КҚ «University Medical Center» Назарбаев Университеті, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы;<sup>5</sup> Қалалық емхана №2, Тараз қ., Қазақстан Республикасы;<sup>6</sup> Қалалық аурухана №1, Астана қ., Қазақстан Республикасы;<sup>7</sup> Қалалық емхана №14, Алматы қ., Қазақстан Республикасы.

**Кіріспе.** Заманауи медицинаның перспективалы бағыттарының бірі дәрілік препараттарды мақсатты жеткізу үшін транспорттық жүйелерді пайдалану болып табылады. Клиникаға дейінгі зерттеулер жұмсақ тіндердің іріңді-қабыну ауруларын емдеу нәтижелерін жақсарту үшін аутологиялық эритроциттердің қабықшалары негізінде денеде интерлейкин-1β-ны мақсатты жеткізу үшін жасуша жүйесін құру мүмкіндігін растайды. Жедел уыттылықты зерттеу интерлейкин-1β бар эритроциттердің аутологиялық қабықшаларының қауіпсіздігін клиникаға дейінгі зерттеудің маңызды кезеңі болып табылады.

**Мақсаты:** егеуқұйрықтардың эритроциттерінің аутологиялық қабықшаларына инкапсуляцияланған интерлейкин-1β жедел уыттылығын зерттеу болды.

**Материал және әдістер:** Интерлейкин-1 бета гипоосмотикалық гемолиз әдісі бойынша егеуқұйрықтардың аутологиялық эритроциттеріне инкапсуляцияланды. Жүктелген препараттың жедел уыттылығын зерттеу үшін салмағы 250-300 г болатын екі жыныстағы ақ тұқымсыз егеуқұйрықтар қолданылды. Эксперименттік топта 40 бас, бақылау тобында -50 бас егеуқұйрық болды. Бақылау тобында интерлейкин-1β ерітіндісі феморальды көктамырға таза түрде енгізілді. Негізгі топта эритроциттердің аутологиялық қабықшаларына (фармакоциттер) инкапсуляцияланған интерлейкин-1β феморальды көктамырға енгізілді. Интерлейкин - 1β дозаларының диапазоны 0,07 мкг/кг-нан 20 мкг/кг-ға дейін. 14 күн ішінде егеуқұйрықтар бақылауда болды және тамақ пен суға еркін қол жетімді тұрақты қоршаған орта температурасында (26-28°C) болды. Байқалған клиникалық көріністі егжей-тегжейлі сипаттай отырып, уыттылық деңгейі мен жануарлардың өлімінің даму мерзімдері тіркелді. 15-ші күні екі топтағы барлық жануарлар терең анестезиямен эвтаназияланды және эксперименталды жануарларға адамгершілік қатынас ережелерін сақтай отырып жүргізілді, содан кейін патоморфологиялық зерттеулер жүргізілді.

**Нәтижелер:** интерлейкин - 1β таза формасы үшін LD50 15030 нг/кг деңгейінде анықталды. Пайдаланылған дозалар шегінде эритроциттердің аутологиялық қабықшаларына инкапсуляцияланған интерлейкин-1β үшін LD50 анықтау мүмкін болмады, дозаны одан әрі арттыру техникалық тұрғыдан қиын болды. Патоморфологиялық зерттеулердің нәтижелері бақылау тобындағы жануарларда интерлейкин - 1β таза түрінде енгізу тері астындағы май тінде айқын қабыну реакциясын және бауыр мен бүйректе орташа қабыну реакциясын тудырғанын көрсетті. Эритроциттердің аутологиялық қабықшаларына инкапсуляцияланған интерлейкин-1β енгізу тіндерде аз ғана дегенеративті реакцияларға әкелді және веноздық тоқыраудың орташа белгілерімен көрінді.

**Қорытынды:** интерлейкин-1β-ны эритроциттердің аутологиялық қабықшаларына жүктеу жедел уыттылықтың төмендеуіне әкелді. Эритроциттердің аутологиялық қабықшаларына инкапсуляция кезінде интерлейкин-1β уыттылығының төмендеуі фармакокинетиканың өзгеруіне байланысты деп есептейміз.

**Түйінді сөздер:** интерлейкин-1β, жедел уыттылық, эритроциттердің қабықшалары, фармакоциттер, дәрі-дәрмектерді мақсатты жеткізу.

**Дәйексөз үшін:**

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### Introduction

The study of transport systems for targeted drug delivery is considered to be one of the promising areas of modern experimental and clinical medicine [41,24,22,12]. Targeted drug delivery not only increases the effectiveness of therapy by creating optimal concentrations of the drug directly at the pathological site, but also significantly reduces the risk of systemic side effects. Among the most promising delivery systems are cellular carriers, including erythrocyte ghosts and their nanoderivatives, which exhibit biocompatibility, prolonged circulation time, and the ability to protect encapsulated drugs from rapid degradation. These approaches open up opportunities for personalized therapy, improved treatment outcomes, and reduced drug burden on the patient's body, making them highly relevant for further preclinical and clinical studies [30,19,18,29,17,34,38]. The development of innovative approaches in the pathogenetic therapy of pyoinflammatory diseases through the targeted delivery of immunomodulators to the inflammatory site is of great interest for practical medicine [1,24,22,12]. We have developed a transport system based on autologous erythrocyte ghosts for targeted cytokine delivery in the body to improve the results of treatment of pyoinflammatory diseases of soft tissues [14,15,32].

The use of blood cells to create systems for targeted drug delivery is undoubtedly the simplest, most clinically accessible, and logically justified option for addressing this problem. Targeted transport of drugs deposited in autologous erythrocytes provides a substantial increase in treatment efficacy and a significant reduction in drug toxicity by enhancing bioavailability and enabling drug accumulation directly at the site of the infectious process, bypassing excessive systemic distribution [15,37].

Drug delivery using erythrocyte ghosts is supported by the physiological characteristics of the inflammatory response. Purulent-inflammatory sites are known to exhibit enhanced blood supply and a high density of macrophages. When autologous erythrocyte-based carriers loaded with drugs are introduced into the body, they are preferentially taken up by cells of the mononuclear phagocyte system. Within the inflammatory focus, these erythrocyte pharmacocytes undergo phagocytosis, leading to the controlled release of the encapsulated drug and the establishment of a sustained, locally elevated drug concentration. This outcome unattainable with conventional drug administration methods [15].

The introduction of erythrocyte pharmacocyte-based targeted drug delivery technology into clinical practice opens prospects for a significant increase in the effectiveness of therapy in the treatment of severe surgical infections. Targeted drug delivery not only provides a pronounced anti-inflammatory effect at the site of purulent inflammation but also reduces overall toxicity through selective distribution and reduced daily dosage. The results of conducted studies have confirmed the possibility of substantially lowering overall toxicity and drug burden compared with traditional treatment methods. Furthermore, this technology promotes the rational use of drugs, reduces their consumption, and thus yields significant economic and social benefits. Conducted experimental and clinical trials have demonstrated the feasibility of using erythrocyte

ghosts containing deposited antibiotics or cytokines to enhance the treatment outcomes of surgical infections. It has been shown that the use of erythrocyte pharmacocytes enables the formation of consistently high concentrations of the drug both in blood serum and in the wound site for a prolonged period following a single dose—an effect fundamentally different from conventional intravenous administration or local tissue saturation with the same drug [14].

The acute toxicity study is a crucial step in the preclinical safety study of autologous erythrocyte ghosts containing interleukin-1 $\beta$  [11,36].

**Aim.** To study the acute toxicity of Interleukin-1 $\beta$ , encapsulated in autologous erythrocyte ghosts.

### Materials and methods

Interleukin – 1 beta (Betaleukin, lyophilizate for solution preparation 0.5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$ , Federal State Unitary Enterprise "State Scientific Research Institute of Pure Biochemistry", Russian Federation). A total of 90 albino Wistar rats weighing 250–350 grams were housed under standard controlled conditions at the National Biotechnology Center's vivarium. The environmental conditions included a temperature of  $22 \pm 2$  °C, humidity of  $55 \pm 5\%$ , and a 12-hour light/dark cycle. The rats were fed ad libitum with unrestricted access to food and water. The experimental work was performed in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Recommendation №33 of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission dated November 14, 2023 «About the Guidelines for working with laboratory (experimental) animals during preclinical (non-clinical) studies» and the provisions of the European Convention for the Protection of Vertebrate Animals Used for Experimental and Scientific Purposes, as well as the provisions of Directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and Council of the European Union of September 22, 2010 on animal welfare used for scientific purposes.

The use of experimental animals was approved by the Local Ethical Committee of PI "National Laboratory Astana" (№ 05-2022/21.10.2022). All procedures were carried out with appropriate anesthesia, under isoflurane inhalation anesthesia.

The creation of pharmacocytes and encapsulation of the Interleukin-1 $\beta$  drug in them was done according to the previously described author's method [43].

A study of the acute toxicity of Interleukin-1 $\beta$  encapsulated in autologous erythrocyte ghosts was conducted on white outbred rats of both sexes, weighing 250-300 g (40 animals in the main group and 50 in the control group).

In the control group, the studied drug was administered in free form as an injection solution intravenously once into the femoral vein. The range of administered doses of interleukin-1 $\beta$  was from 0.07  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  to 20  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ .

In the main group, the drug was administered in the form of pharmacocytes intravenously once into the femoral vein.

In all cases, observations were made from the first minutes of changes in the color of exposed areas of the skin. During the entire study period, the rats of the main and

control groups were under observation, at a constant (26-280C) ambient temperature, and were kept with constant access to water and food. Throughout the subsequent period, the animals' behavior and appearance were observed, and any changes that could be attributed to the toxic effect of the drug were recorded. The observation lasted 14 days. The lethal doses were calculated using probit analysis:  $y = \Phi(\alpha + \beta x)$ , where  $y$  is the proportion of dead animals,  $x$  is the decimal logarithm of the drug dose expressed in nanograms per kilogram,  $\Phi$  is the distribution function of the standard normal variable, and  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are regression coefficients [3]. Regression coefficients were determined using the STATISTICA program.

14 days after the administration of the studied drug, the rats of the main and control groups were withdrawn from the experiment. Histological studies of rat organs revealed pathomorphological changes after administration of drugs at a dose of 0.8  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ . For the pathomorphological examination of organs and tissues, animals were removed from the experiment under inhalation anesthesia by dislocation of the cervical vertebrae. Samples of organs and tissues (liver, heart, kidneys, testicles, brain, spleen, adrenal glands) were collected from each group for pathomorphological examination. Tissue samples were fixed in 10% neutral formalin and alcohol-formol. 6-8  $\mu\text{m}$  thick histosections, prepared on an MPS-2 rotation microscope, were deparaffinized and stained with Mayer's hematoxylin and eosin, picrofuchsin according to Van Gieson, methyl green and pyronin according to Brachet, periodate K and Schiff's reagent according to McManus [2,6].

Statistical processing of the results was made using the Statistica 12 software package. The results obtained are presented as "arithmetic mean  $\pm$  standard error of the mean". Intergroup differences were assessed using the nonparametric Mann-Whitney U-test. Differences were considered reliable at a significance level of  $p < 0.05$  [35,26].

**Results**

The results of experimental studies on the acute toxicity of interleukin-1 $\beta$  (Betaleukin) in free form and in the form of the drug deposited in autologous erythrocytes (pharmacocytes) are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1.

**Results of acute toxicity determination of interleukin-1 $\beta$  preparation, standard intravenous interleukin-1 $\beta$  preparation (control group)**

Dose, ng/kg	Mortality/survival count
70	0/10
700	0/10
3300	1/10
13333	3/7
20000	4/6

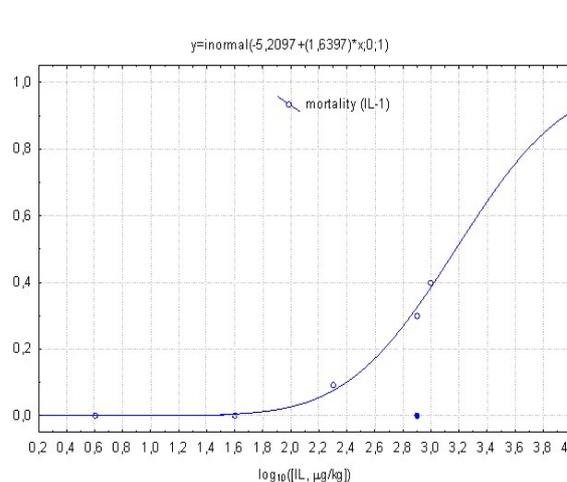
The lethal dose level for interleukin-1 $\beta$  in free form is:  $y = ((-5.21) + (1.64) x)$ , therefore, DL50=15030 ng/kg  
DL16=3690 ng/kg

Table 2.

**Results of determination of acute toxicity of the interleukin-1 $\beta$  drug deposited in pharmacocytes (experimental group).**

Dose, ng/kg	Mortality/survival count
70	2
700	0/10
3300	0/10
13333	0/10
20000	0/10

As can be seen from the presented data, the maximum technically possible dose under the conditions of this experiment of 20,000 ng/kg does not cause mortality in the experimental animals used. Further increases in doses were technically impossible. Hypothetically, based on the semi-logarithmic curve shown in Figure 1, mortality rates could only be achieved with technically unrealistic doses of the administered drug.



**Figure 1. Semi-logarithmic dose-response curve for Interleukin-1 in the form of pharmacocytes**

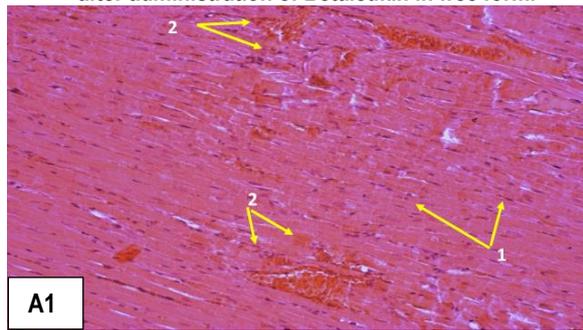
Thus, the results of the study of acute toxicity of the drug interleukin-1 $\beta$  in free form correspond to the data presented in the available literature: 50% lethal doses of interleukin-1 $\beta$  – DL50 = 15030 ng/kg [4,5,7,8,9,10,13,16,20,21,23,25,27,28,31,33, 39,40].

As can be seen, the deposition of interleukin-1 $\beta$  in pharmacocytes leads to a significant decrease in the toxicity of the drug. It is pharmacocytes that provide a decrease in the toxic potential of the cytokine under study.

This was confirmed by the results of pathomorphological studies. Histological studies of animal organs after administration of drugs for acute toxicity studies are shown in the following figures (Figure 2).

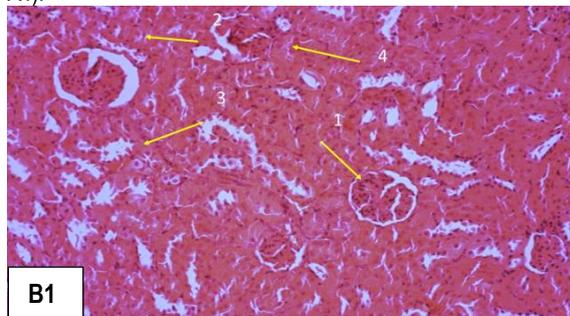
The results of the histological examination of the organs of rat after the introduction of Betaleukin in free form and the organs of rat after the introduction of Betaleukin in pharmacocytes for the study of acute toxicity are given below..

**Results of histological examination of rat organs after administration of Betaleukin in free form.**



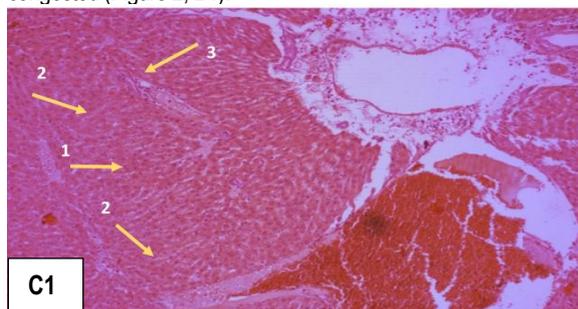
**A1 Heart tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.**  
1- cardiomyocytes; 2- hemorrhage zones.

The structure is not damaged. Preserved transverse striation is observed. There are extensive hemorrhage fields in the form of accumulation of erythrocytes and hemosiderin in the stroma and in the intermuscular spaces. There are small hemorrhages and moderate stromal edema between the muscle fibers. Cardiomyocytes with signs of protein hyaline-droplet dystrophy. The vessels of the interstitial tissue are full-blooded, in single vessels there is separation of erythrocytes from blood plasma. (Figure 2, A1).



**B1 Kidney tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.**  
1 - renal corpuscle. 2 - proximal tubule. 3 - distal tubule.  
4 - lobulated glomerulus.

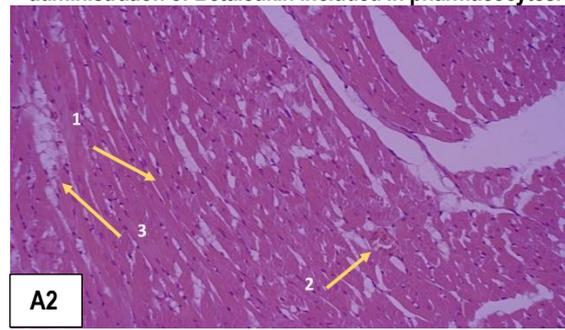
Interstitial edema, vascular and interstitial tissue congestion is observed. The cortex and medulla are preserved. Vascular glomeruli with moderate vascular loop congestion are found in the cortex. Some vascular loops form lobule-like structures. The epithelium of the proximal and distal tubules shows signs of protein hyaline droplet dystrophy. The vessels of the interstitial tissue are congested (Figure 2, B1).



**C1 Liver tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x100.**  
Hepatocytes. 2 - sinusoids. 3 - portal tract.

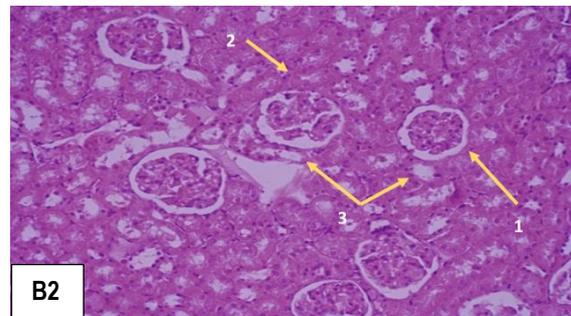
The preserved zone of liver tissue is represented by sharply dilated deformed portal tracts infiltrated with lymphocytes, histiocytes, and an admixture of neutrophilic leukocytes. Portal tracts are deformed and sclerotic. Proliferation of bile ducts. Hepatocytes in liver lobules with signs of hyaline-droplet dystrophy. In the sinusoids, there are clusters of erythrocytes and stellate reticuloendotheliocytes (Figure 2, C1).

**Results of histological examination of rat organs after administration of Betaleukin included in pharmacocytes.**



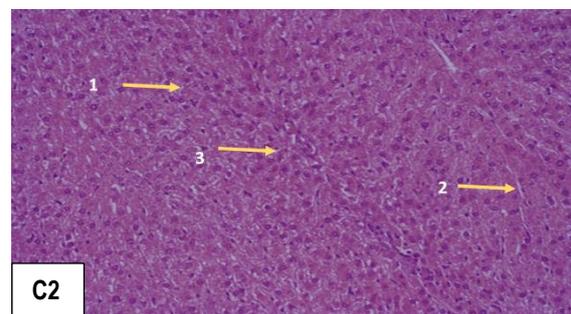
**A2 Heart tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.**  
1- cardiomyocytes; 2- isolated minor hemorrhage areas;  
3- interstitial tissue vessels.

The tissue structure is preserved. Transverse striation of myocytes is observed. Cardiomyocytes with signs of protein hyaline-droplet dystrophy. Mild intermuscular edema. Interstitial tissue vessels are moderately full-blooded. Minor hemorrhages are observed in isolated areas in the stroma and intermuscular spaces (Figure 2, A2).



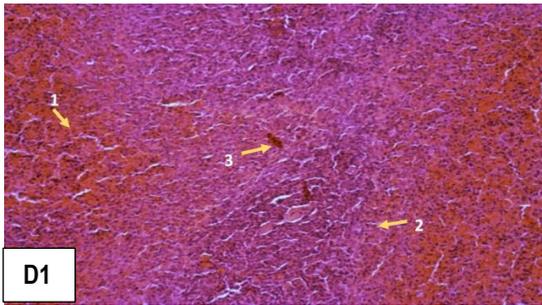
**B2 Kidney tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.**  
1 - renal corpuscle. 2 - proximal tubules. 3 - distal tubules.

The cortical and cerebral layers are preserved. Vascular glomeruli with moderate congestion of vascular loops are found in the cortical layer. Vascular loops of the glomeruli are moderately full-blooded, with minor mesangial proliferation. Epithelium of proximal and distal tubules with hyaline-droplet dystrophy (Figure 2, B2).



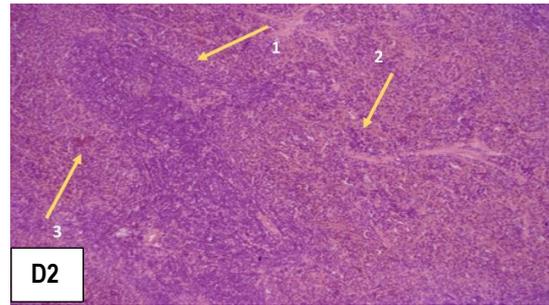
**C2 Liver tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.**  
1 - Hepatocytes. 2 - sinusoids. 3 - portal tract.

The structure of the liver tissue is not damaged. The vessels of the portal tracts and central veins are full-blooded. In the portal tracts, proliferation of bile ducts is observed. Hepatocytes in the liver lobules are with signs of protein hyaline-drop dystrophy. In the lumen of the sinusoids, there is a slight accumulation of erythrocytes and low-active stellate reticuloendotheliocytes are found (Figure 2, C2).



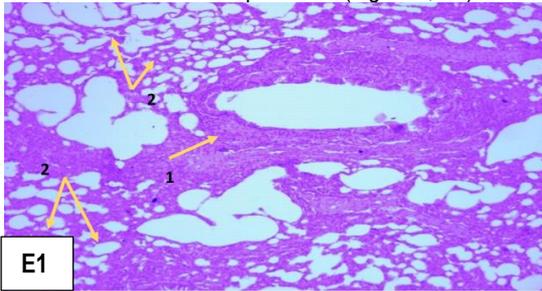
**D1 Spleen tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.**  
1 - interstitial tissue vessels. 2 - follicles.  
3 - hemosiderin accumulation.

Interstitial tissue vessels are full-blooded. Preserved follicles are found. Moderate congestion of spleen tissue with brown hemosiderin accumulation is preserved (Figure 2, D1).



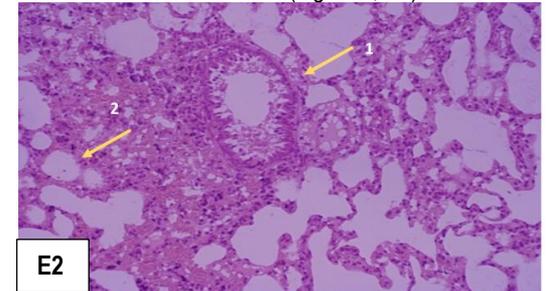
**D2 Spleen tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x100.**  
1-follicles. 2-interstitial tissue vessels.  
3-hemorrhage foci.

Spleen tissue is with venous congestion, with focal hemorrhages. Interstitial tissue vessels are congested. Preserved follicles are detected (Figure 2, D2).



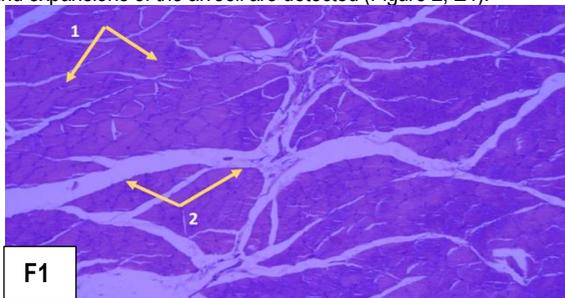
**E1 Lung tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x100.**  
1 - bronch. 2 - alveoli.

The structure is damaged. Microscopically, exudate with a large accumulation of lymphocytes, histiocytes and a moderate number of neutrophilic leukocytes is determined in the respiratory part and bronchi. Peribronchial changes predominate: thickening of the peribronchial tissue, narrowing of the bronchial lumen. Collapses and expansions of the alveoli are detected (Figure 2, E1).



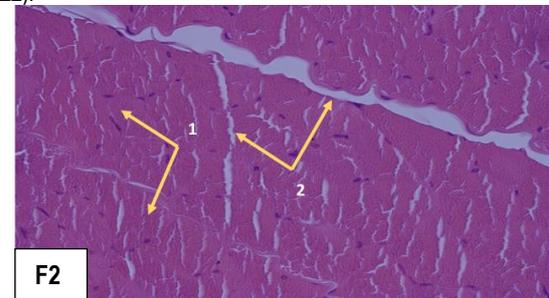
**E2 Lung tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.**  
1 - bronch. 2 - alveoli.

The structure is not damaged. Moderately thickened interalveolar septa are determined. Focal - emphysematous swelling of the alveoli. Pronounced lymphollicles around the bronchi. In the arteries, blood plasma proteins are determined and there is an accumulation of erythrocytes closer to the arterial wall (Figure 2, E2).



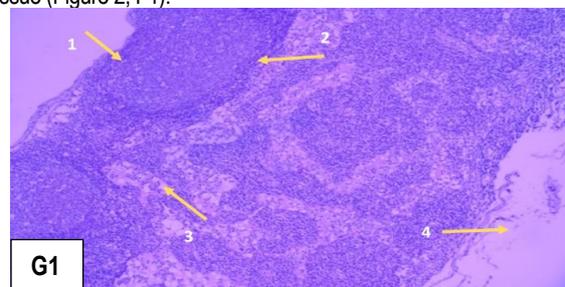
**F1 Thigh muscles. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x100.**  
1 - skeletal muscle. 2 - intermuscular tissue edema.

The structure of the skeletal muscle is preserved with signs of transverse striation with pronounced edema of the intermuscular tissue (Figure 2, F1).



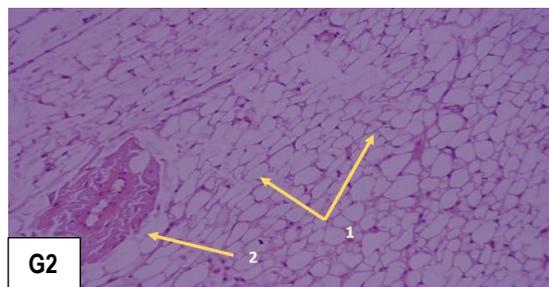
**F2 Muscle tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x400.**  
1 - skeletal muscle. 2 - intermuscular tissue.

Skeletal muscle with transverse striation with signs of protein-hyaline droplet dystrophy of myocytes (Figure 2, F2).



**G1 Subcutaneous fat. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x100.**  
1 - epidermis; 2 - basal layer; 3 - dermis; 4 - subcutaneous fat.

The epidermal tissue is represented by fragments of multilayered squamous epithelium with proliferation of the basal layer of cells. Under the squamous epithelium in the thickness of the subcutaneous fat there is focal inflammatory infiltration of lymphocytes, histiocytes and neutrophilic leukocytes.



**G2 Subcutaneous fat tissue. Hematoxylin and eosin staining. x200.** 1 – fat vacuoles; 2 – interstitial tissue.

Subcutaneous fat tissue is represented by preserved fat vacuoles and interstitial tissue.

**Figure 2. Results of histological studies of animal organs.**

Histological examination of animal organs after administration of the drugs at 0.8 µg/kg revealed the following:

a) A moderate toxic effect is observed when Betaleukin is administered in free form, which manifests itself in a pronounced inflammatory reaction in the subcutaneous fat tissue and a moderate one in the internal organs (Fig. A1 – G1).

b) A lower toxic effect was determined after the introduction of Betaleukin included in pharmacocytes (Fig. A2 – G2), since minor dystrophic processes and moderate signs of venous congestion were observed in the organs.

### Discussion

The results of the study of acute toxicity of interleukin-1β deposited in pharmacocytes prove that pharmacocytes can significantly reduce the toxicity of the drug. Thus, if the results of the study of acute toxicity of interleukin-1β in the standard, free form correspond to the data presented in the available literature: 50% lethal doses of interleukin-1β - DL50 = 15030 ng / kg, then the acute toxicity of the drug in the form of pharmacocytes is significantly lower than the toxicity of the free drug. The level of lethal doses could not be determined for technical reasons. The lower toxicity of deposited interleukin-1β is also confirmed by the results of pathomorphological examination. Thus, it was established that according to the data of histological examination of tissues after intravenous administration of DL50% betaleukin in free form in surviving animals (rats) on the 15th day, toxicity is manifested in a pronounced inflammatory reaction in the subcutaneous fat tissue and a moderate one in the liver, kidneys, and heart. In the same situation, when an equivalent dose of this cytokine was administered in the form of pharmacocytes, only minor dystrophic processes and moderate signs of venous congestion were detected. Pharmacocytes evidently reduce the toxic potential of cytokines.

This fact, previously established by us for pharmacocytes containing an antibiotic, allows us to build upon the premise and assert that, as a drug form, pharmacocytes reduce the toxic potential of the medicinal substance deposited in them; this position is new and previously unproven, although assumptions have been made by individual researchers [14,42,32]. The study demonstrates that encapsulation of interleukin-1β in pharmacocytes markedly reduces its acute toxicity compared to the free form, as confirmed by both survival data and histological findings. These results support the concept that pharmacocytes can serve as an effective cellular transport system to minimize drug toxicity and justify further preclinical research toward clinical application.

### Conclusion

The data obtained in our experimental conditions on the possibility of reducing the toxicity of interleukin-1β in the case of deposition of this substance in pharmacocytes allow us to confirm the general position on cellular transport systems, and also to continue preclinical studies of pharmacocytes with the prospect of creating a new transport system for the clinic. Thus, erythrocyte pharmacocyte-based targeted drug delivery technology represents an innovative and pathogenetically justified approach that improves the outcomes of surgical infection treatment, reduces toxicity, increases the safety of therapy,

and broadens the opportunities of clinical pharmacology in the field of personalized medicine.

**Conflict of Interest.** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Contribution of authors.** All authors were equally involved in the writing of this article.

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