Phototoxicity

21.1 Introduction

Phototoxicity means that something which is not toxic in itself is converted into a toxin or produces a toxin by the action of light. We can divide phototoxicity into several classes:

- Type I phototoxicity arises when a pigment, after absorption of light and acquiring an excited state, either combines directly with an important cell constituent (Fig. 21.1) or transfers electrons or hydrogen atoms. The transfer may take place from or to another molecule, which then becomes a toxic radical or radical ion or produces toxins in subsequent reactions. As an example of the action of a type I phototoxin, we show in Fig. 21.1 how 8-methoxypsoralen (MOPS in medical jargon) combines with thymine residues in DNA.
- Type II phototoxicity arises when a pigment (photosensitizer) after absorption of light goes from the excited singlet state to a triplet state, and then reacts with molecular oxygen and produces singlet excited oxygen (see Chap. 1), which is highly toxic.

In some cases, a pigment molecule excited by light absorption transfers an electron to molecular oxygen, thereby producing superoxide anion (see Fig. 21.2). According to the above definitions, this is type I phototoxicity, but in the literature it has also been designated type II phototoxicity, because in practice it is easier to distinguish between oxygenindependent and oxygen-dependent phototoxicity. The main cellular targets of both type I and II phototoxins are DNA, membrane lipids, and membrane proteins. A wide variety of organisms (except those having special protection systems) can be poisoned by most of the substances; that is, they are rather unspecific with regard to poisoned organism.

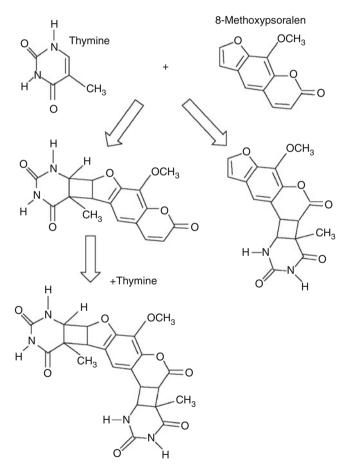


Fig. 21.1 Formation of photoadduct between 8-methoxypsoralen and thymine residues in DNA. The thymine is shown for simplicity as free molecules, but is in reality part of a DNA molecule. One 8-methoxypsoralen molecule can combine with two thymine residues, and if they are bound to opposite DNA strands, cross-bridges can form between the strands. Although "phototoxicity" sounds dangerous, this and other similar reactions are also exploited in phototherapy of certain diseases

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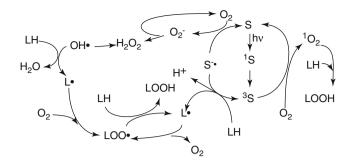


Fig. 21.2 Diagram showing how a pigment (S), excited by light (hv) via an excited singlet state (1S) to an excited triplet state (3S), can damage a membrane lipid (LH) in several ways (note that the lipid molecules enter the reactions at four points in the diagram). (1) Type II reaction (*right part* of the diagram): the triplet pigment may react with triplet (ground state) oxygen (O_2) to form singlet oxygen $({}^1O_2)$, which can directly convert the lipid to a lipid peroxide (LOOH). (2) Classical type I reaction (lower part of the diagram): the triplet pigment abstracts a hydrogen atom from the lipid, creating a lipid radical (L•), which combines with triplet oxygen to form a lipid peroxy radical (LOO•). The latter abstracts a hydrogen atom from another lipid molecule to form a lipid peroxide. In this way a new lipid radical is formed, and a chain reaction is created. (3) Oxygen-dependent hydrogen abstraction (upper part of the diagram): an electron is donated to triplet oxygen, creating superoxide anion, which via formation of hydrogen peroxide and hydroxide radical abstracts hydrogen from the lipid. Also in this case the lipid is degraded to lipid peroxide, and a chain reaction is initiated

As a third type of phototoxicity, we can categorize those cases when a substance is converted into a toxin by a photochemical reaction which does not fall into any of the above categories.

As an example in which several mechanisms contribute to the photodestructive action, we show in Fig. 21.2 a schematic description of how membrane lipids are peroxidized by a photoexcited pigment (see Samadi et al. 2001).

An interesting consequence of lipid peroxidation is that a weak light (ultraweak luminescence) is emitted during the reaction. Lipid peroxidative chain reactions can be initiated also in ways other than through phototoxic action.

In our disposition of the topic "phototoxicity," we shall not follow the categorization into types I and II, but rather subdivide into the different contexts in which phototoxicity has been observed. We shall not include photoallergic reactions here, which, as they involve the immune system, are of a different character. Photoallergy will be treated in Chap. 24.

21.2 Phototoxicity in Plant Defense

The most important defenses of plants against parasites and grazers are of a chemical nature, and among chemical defenses phototoxicity plays an important role, especially among flowering plants. The phototoxic substances employed by plants can also affect people when they appear in food, perfumes, and other cosmetic products and even if we just touch certain plants.

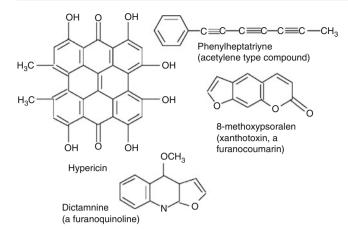
Downum (1992) estimates that 75–100 different phototoxic molecules have been isolated from flowering plants. Phototoxins or phototoxic activity has been reported for about 40 of more than 100 angiosperm families, representing all subclasses except Alismatidae and Arecidae. Many plants have several phototoxic substances. From *Ammi majus* as well as from *Angelica archangelica*, the following ones are reported: angelicin, bergapten, 8-methoxypsoralen, and pimpinellin—from the former one, in addition, furocoumarin and from the latter, one psoralen. The plant family Apiaceae (former name Umbelliferae) dominates the most important cases of phototoxicity of to humans.

The phototoxins affect bacteria, fungi, nematodes, insects, and other organisms. This wide spectrum is due to the fact that the toxins attack cellular constituents common to all cells. DNA is a major target for type I acting chemicals, such as acetophenones, coumarins, furanochromones, furanoquinolines, pterocarpans, and sesquiterpenes. Examples of type II acting compounds are isoquinolines and thiophenes.

Photosensitizers generally have many double bonds, that is, many π -electrons, and most of them are polycyclic. The most common types in plants are acetylenes and furanocoumarins, but many other types also occur.

Since absorption of ultraviolet radiation is a common feature of organic compounds, and absorption for polycyclic systems and acetylenes with conjugated triple bonds (compounds with many π -electrons) extends into the UV-A region, it is not surprising that UV-A (of which there is much more in daylight than of UV-B) in most cases is the most important spectral region for inflicting phototoxicity. However, there are exceptions, and hypericin (present in Hypericum, St. John's wort) with its many fused phenyl rings absorbs and is excited to phototoxicity even by yellow and orange light, while some other substances require UV-B radiation. Detailed information on action spectra is still lacking in most cases. Guesses made based on absorption spectra are not reliable, since cases are known in which the phototoxic action takes place with radiation of longer wavelength than that absorbed by the pure substance. The reason for this is probably that the spectrum is shifted when the substance binds to cellular components.

The mode of action of hypericin has been debated, but it has now been established (Delaey et al. 2000) that it required oxygen for phototoxicity. Like several other phototoxic compounds from plants (e.g., psoralen, 8-methoxypsoralen), it has been used in the phototherapy of diseases. Hypericin



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Fig 21.4 Structure of phenalenone in benzene solution

Fig. 21.3 Examples of phototoxic substances from plants

may be particularly dangerous for the lens of the eye (Ehrenshaft et al. 2013).

Specific plant species causing problems for humans and domestic animals naturally vary among countries, but the following are worth mentioning here:

- Fig, *Ficus carica*. Fig can be troublesome only for those involved in picking and handling them professionally. One source speculates that fig could have caused trouble for Adam and Eve!
- Angelica, *Angelica archangelica*. This and other *Angelica* species are used as traditional medicine from Korea to Lapland and also in drinks. They have caused problems for growers and collectors.
- Buckwheat, *Fagopyrum esculentum*. Causes trouble mainly in grazing cattle.
- Celery, *Apium graveolens*. Has caused burns when ingested before visiting suntan parlor. Contains 5-methoxypsoralen, 8-methoxypsoralen (xanthotoxin), and 4,5',8-trimethylpsoralen. Of special interest is that this plant can contain tenfold increased contents of psoralen derivatives after infection with a fungus, *Sclerotinia sclerotium* (pink rot disease). Persons handling celery professionally are at risk. Disease-resistant celery contains increased levels of furocoumarins (Fig. 21.3).
- Hogweed (*Heracleum*), especially Russian hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*). Light produces severe blisters in skin that has been in touch with the plant. The plant has spread over large areas of Europe and North America. *Heracleum* species contain angelicin, bergapten, pimpinellin, 5-methoxypsoralen, and other related substances.
- Spring parsley (also erroneously called wild carrot), *Cymopterus watsonii*, growing in Oregon, Nevada, and western Utah. Problems with grazing sheep and cattle. Newborn lambs and calves die because mothers become so touch sensitive that they refuse nursing. The plant contains furocoumarins, 8-methoxypsoralen (xanthotoxin), and bergapten.

Lei flowers, especially *Pelea anisata*. Leis are the greeting wreaths that visitors receive on their arrival to Hawaii.

- Burning bush of Moses (also called gas plant), *Dictamnus albus*. The plant grows wild in Europe and Asia and is used as a garden plant also in other parts of the world. It belongs to the family Rutaceae, which harbors also other plants with some phototoxicity, among them *Citrus* species and *Ruta graveolens*, garden rue.
- St. John's wort. *Hypericum* species contain hypericin and can cause trouble both to grazing animals and to persons who consume drinks based on *Hypericum* extracts and are exposed to light afterwards.

Some of the phytophototoxins are used for medical treatments. The most noteworthy example is treatment of vitiligo and psoriasis with 8-methoxypsoralen and related substances. In fact, the juice of the Egyptian plant *Ammi majus* has been used for this purpose since 2000 B.C. (Pathak and Fitzpatrick 1992). We can only give some examples of detailed mechanisms of action in phototoxicity. For further information on phototoxic plants and plant phototoxins, see Pathak (1986), Downum (1992), Lovell (1993), and the following Internet sites: (1) http://telemedicine.org/Botanica/ Bot5.htm and (2) http://www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/duke/ chemical_activity.pl.

Flors and Nonell (2006) have described phototoxic phytoalexins (phytoalexins are toxins that are induced and not present in unstressed plants) having a phenalenone group (Fig. 21.4) in their molecular structure. They produce singlet oxygen upon irradiation with UV-A to blue light and are toxic to fungi. They were first found in Haemodoraceae and Musaceae (Cooke and Edwards 1981), but subsequently found to be common not only in members of these families but also in Strelitziaceae. They were so long overlooked because they do not occur in unstressed plants. Related substances are present also in species of Annonaceae, Lauraceae, Magnoliaceae, Fumariaceae, Menispermaceae, and Papaveraceae (Flors and Nonell 2006).

Phototoxins of Fungal Plant Parasites 21.3

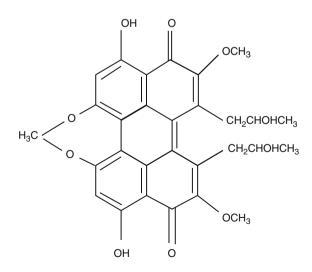
Phototoxins are not used only for plant defense but also for attack on plants by parasitic fungi. So far only one case has been thoroughly researched, but a number of plant pathogenic fungi produce photosensitizing substances. A review of the subject (Daub and Ehrenshaft 2000) has recently appeared.

The best known example of a plant parasite using a phototoxin to weaken its host is the genus Cercospora. About 500 parasitic Cercospora species are known and cause, for example, leaf spot of sugar beet, gray leaf spot of corn, purple seed stain of soybean, frogeye leaf spot of tobacco, and brown eye spot of coffee. For sugar beet the active pigment, cercosporin (Fig. 21.5), has been isolated from 34 Cercospora species grown in culture, while other species do not produce cercosporin and still can parasitize plants.

Cercosporin is a type II phototoxin. After reaching its triplet state during illumination, it reacts with oxygen to form singlet oxygen. The singlet oxygen destroys the cell membrane of host cells, which leads to leakage of nutrients to the fungus.

Of course, the fungus has cell membranes which could be damaged by cercosporin, so it must have some defense against its own toxin. In culture, they can accumulate up to millimolar toxin in the medium without observable toxic effects. In fact, it defends itself in two ways:

1. As long as the cercosporin is inside the hyphae, it is kept in a reduced form, which in light produces only a small amount of singlet oxygen. After secretion to the environment, it is oxidized to the highly active form. The two forms can be easily distinguished under the microscope, since the reduced form has a green fluorescence and the oxidized one a red fluorescence.



2. In addition, the fungus is extraordinarily well equipped with a set of triplet and singlet oxygen quenchers. That they are efficient is shown by the fact that Cercospora is resistant also to the effects of other singlet oxygen-producing phototoxins. Among the quenchers of singlet oxygen pyridoxine is thought to be particularly important for Cercospora.

Interestingly, Cercospora does not produce cercosporin in darkness (when it would be of no use); its synthesis is triggered by light.

Pigments having structures related to cercosporin (perylenequinones, see Fig. 25.1), and presumably having a corresponding function, are produced by a number of other fungi: by *Cladosporium* species, by the bamboo pathogens Shiraia bambusicola and Hypocrella bambusae, and by Stemphylium botryosum and some Alternaria and Elsinoe species. Also, light-requiring fungal toxins of other types are known, produced by Cercospora species and Dothistroma pini (Jalal et al. 1992; Stoessl et al. 1990).

21.4 Phototoxic Drugs and Cosmetics

Many phototoxic drugs are either antibiotics or medications for blood pressure and heart disease, but there are also others. In combination with light, they may cause extreme sunburn, vesicles, hives, and edema. Among antibiotics, photosensitivity reactions have more commonly been noted after administration of the following: doxycycline ("Vibramycin," etc.), demeclocycline, tetracycline (Fig. 21.6), nalidixic acid, and lomefloxacin. For blood pressure and heart medications, a similar short list includes

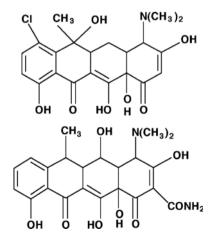


Fig. 21.6 (Top) Chlortetracycline, the first tetracycline, introduced in 1948. Tetracycline itself (introduced in 1952) has the same structure, with hydrogen in place of chlorine. (Bottom) Doxycycline, introduced in 1968, is one of the most potent photosensitizers among the tetracyclines

Fig. 21.5 Cercosporin, the phototoxin of the parasitic fungus Cercospora

hydrochlorothiazide (occurs as an ingredient in a large number of formulations), chlorothiazide, furosemide, and amiodarone. Amiodarone is responsible for an unusually high number of cases. Among other drugs causing photosensitivity reactions, chlorpromazine and other phenothiazines and birth control pills containing estrogens may be mentioned.

Somewhat surprising is the fact that also sun lotions containing para-aminobenzoic acid (PABA) or esters of it, which are sold to protect from the sun, are also a common cause of photosensitivity. These substances were selected for their ability to absorb UV-B radiation (daylight with wavelength below 315 nm), since formerly this radiation was supposed to be the only threat from sunlight. At the long-wavelength edge of their absorption band, they let radiation through to depths where they can cause the photosensitivity reactions.

It is well known that use of perfumes in combination with sunlight is unwise, because many perfumes are phototoxic or at least discolor the skin when exposed to sunlight. This is, of course, because many, if not most of them, are based on plant extracts and often contain substances mentioned in the section on phototoxins in plant defense. Freund (1916) described skin discolorations, which he attributed to eau de cologne containing bergamot oil, although he did not clearly understand the role of sunlight. Bergamot orange, *Citrus bergamia*, like many other *Citrus* species, was later found to contain photosensitizing substances.

21.5 Metabolic Disturbances Leading to Phototoxic Effects of Porphyrins or Related Compounds

A number of different disturbances in both humans and animals lead to the appearance in the skin of phototoxic compounds such as uro- and coproporphyrinogens (porphyrin precursors), protoporphyrin IX (the immediate precursor of heme, Fig. 21.7), and phylloerythrin (a breakdown product of chlorophyll, Fig. 21.8). These substances are phototoxins of type II, generating singlet oxygen in light.

In human patients, a variety of diseases have been described which go under the common designation of porphyria. With the exception of a type called acute intermittent porphyria, they lead to photosensitivity of the skin: variegate porphyria (Frank and Christiano 1998) and hereditary coproporphyria (acute porphyrias with increased levels of both porphyrin precursors and porphyrins) and porphyria cutanea tarda, erythropoietic protoporphyria, and congenital porphyria (nonacute porphyrias with increased levels of porphyrins). Porphyria is due to a disturbance in either the liver (hepatic porphyria or protoporphyria) or the red blood cells

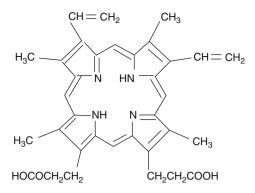


Fig. 21.7 Protoporphyrin IX, the immediate precursor of heme, which accumulates in protoporphyria due to lack of ferrochelatase (or inhibition of the enzyme due to, e.g., lead poisoning)

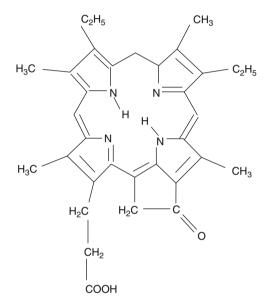


Fig. 21.8 Phylloerythrin, which causes phototoxicity in animals due to malfunctioning of the liver. In healthy animals, the substance is broken down in the liver

(erythropoietic porphyria or protoporphyria). To complicate things further, an erythrohepatic porphyria has recently been described (Gauer et al. 1995), and erythropoietic porphyria may lead to secondary damage to the liver.

Porphyria may be inherited or acquired, and even in cases when it is caused by environment, lifestyle, alcohol (Doss et al. 1999), lead poisoning, liver transplantation (Sheth et al. 1994), etc., inherited predisposition may play a role. Gross et al. (2000) remark in a review: "The molecular genetics of the porphyrias is very heterogenous. Nearly every family has its own mutation." Correct treatment of porphyria is therefore not easy and requires very careful examination. Porphyria cannot be cured, but symptoms can often be ameliorated in other ways than avoidance of light. There are prospects for a future cure of the erythropoietic protoporphyria. In this condition, the enzyme ferrochelatase is lacking in the red blood cells, causing accumulation of protoporphyrin IX. It may become possible to cure this by retroviral-mediated gene transfer to the bone marrow (Todd 1994). At present the symptoms can be alleviated using β -carotene, interestingly the same compound as used by plants to quench triplet chlorophyll.

In ruminants, another group of diseases with names such as geeldikkop ("yellow head") and alveld is important. Geeldikkop, affecting sheep in South Africa, is the best studied of these. It is caused by saponins in the plant *Tribulus terrestris* (puncture vine or calthrops of the family Zygophyllaceae) grazed upon by sheep (Miles et al. 1994; Wilkins et al. 1996). Liver damage caused by these saponins prevents breakdown of phylloerythrin, a substance produced from chlorophyll by acid in the stomach and rumen bacteria. The phylloerythrin is circulated to skin capillaries, where it can be exposed to light. In other parts of the world, *Panicum* species such as kleingrass or bambatsi grass, *P. coloratum* (Muchiri et al. 1980; Bridges et al. 1987; Regnault 1990), and switchgrass, *P. virgatum* (Puoli et al. 1992), cause the same disease in sheep and in horses (Cornick et al. 1988).

Similar symptoms were induced by *Myoporum laetum* in calves (Raposo et al. 1998), and buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*) has been suspected as a cause in cattle (Kelch et al. 1992). Mold fungi in hay and fungi in pasture can cause similar problems (Scruggs et al. 1994; Casteel et al. 1995). Finally, it has been known for a long time that cyanobacterial toxins in drinking water can cause liver damage with associated photosensitivity in cattle. In the case of the fungus *Pithomyces chartarum* in lamb pasture (Hansen et al. 1994), it is not clear whether the photosensitivity is due to primary photosensitization or liver damage.

21.6 Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons as Phototoxic Contaminants in Aquatic Environments

21.6.1 Nature and Occurrence of PAHs

Some compounds have a potential to become toxic or acquire increased toxicity when they interact with natural or simulated sunlight. Such compounds with a possible environmental relevance include photoactive insecticides, such as naturally occurring α -terthienyl (Kagan et al. 1984, 1987) and some photodynamic dyes (Larson and Berenbaum 1988); a carbamate insecticide (Zaga et al. 1998), trinitrotoluene (TNT, an explosive), and some related compounds (Davenport et al. 1994); photoreactive nanomaterials (e.g., TiO₂ nanoparticles) used in a wide range of products (Ma et al. 2012); and many polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) (Newsted and Giesy 1987; Arfsten et al. 1996;

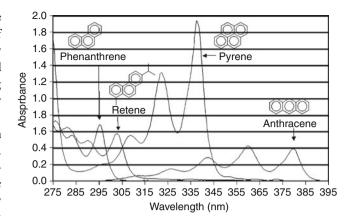


Fig. 21.9 Absorption spectra of anthracene, pyrene, phenanthrene, and retene (7-isopropyl-1-methylphenanthrene) (10 mg^{-1} in dimethyl sulfoxide) (Modified from Huovinen et al. (2001), with permission from Elsevier Science)

Diamond 2003). PAHs, composed of multiple aromatic rings (Fig. 21.9) and present in coal and petroleum products, are widespread organic environmental contaminants, some having carcinogenic potential. PAHs can be introduced into the environment, for example, through incomplete combustion of organic matter. In aquatic environments oil spills, surface runoff from land, and industrial and domestic wastewaters are among the possible sources of PAH contamination, as well as airborne PAHs entering aquatic systems through dry fallout and rainfall (Neff 1979, 1985; Latimer and Zheng 2003). Photoenhanced toxicity of petroleum products (Pelletier et al. 1997; Wernersson 2003) and creosote (Schirmer et al. 1999) has been related to phototoxicity of PAHs present. Furthermore, liquid-phase elutriates of petroleum-containing sediments (Davenport and Spacie 1991), urban stormwater runoff (Ireland et al. 1996), as well as PAH-contaminated sediments (Ankley et al. 1994; Monson et al. 1995) contain phototoxic components, suggesting the role of PAHs. Interaction with solar radiation has also been shown to increase the toxicity of weathered oil (Cleveland et al. 2000; Little et al. 2000; Barron et al. 2003).

Although generally considered relatively acutely nontoxic under normal laboratory lighting, numerous PAHs, such as anthracene, benzo[a]pyrene (3,4-benzopyrene, benzo[d,e,f]chrysene), fluoranthene, and pyrene, have a potential to become highly toxic in the presence of UV radiation, and a risk that PAHs constitute through this photoenhanced toxicity to aquatic organisms has been recognized (reviewed by Landrum et al. 1987; Arfsten et al. 1996; Ankley et al. 2003; Diamond 2003; Pelletier et al. 2006). Since bioassays used to test the toxicity of chemicals are commonly carried out in the laboratory under artificial lighting not including UV radiation, the risk related to photoactive compounds in natural conditions can be underestimated with traditional toxicity testing. On the other hand, the ecological relevance of PAH phototoxicity evaluations and their use in risk assessment has been criticized (McDonald and Chapman 2002) as often experimental approaches cannot be considered representative of natural environmental conditions where a suite of factors interact.

21.6.2 Mechanisms of PAH Phototoxicity

Because of their chemical structure, many PAHs absorb energy in the UV waveband (Newsted and Giesy 1987; Huang et al. 1993; Diamond et al. 2000; Huovinen et al. 2001) (Fig. 21.9). According to the quantitative structure/activity relationship (OSAR) model, the phototoxicity of PAHs can be related to the HOMO-LUMO gap (i.e., energy difference between the highest occupied molecular orbital and the lowest unoccupied molecular orbital), which has been suggested as a suitable ground state index of the electronic structure relating to absorbed energy and molecular stability (Mekenyan et al. 1994). However, the comparison of the phototoxic potency of PAHs is complicated because it is also related to the bioaccumulation potential of each compound (Boese et al. 1998). Contaminated environments generally contain a mixture of numerous PAHs, and phototoxicity of PAH mixtures has been regarded as somewhat additive (Swartz et al. 1997; Boese et al. 1999; Erickson et al. 1999). Co-exposure with other contaminants, for example, methyl tertiary-butyl ether or piperonyl butoxide, has been shown to increase bioconcentration and photoinduced toxicity of some PAHs (Cho et al. 2003; Weinstein and Garner 2008). Also, substituted PAHs can contribute to phototoxicity (Boese et al. 1998; Kosian et al. 1998). With some exceptions, phototoxicity is likely in a substituted PAH only if the aromatic structure of its parent compound is phototoxic (Veith et al. 1995).

Phototoxicity of PAHs is reported to occur mainly via photosensitization and/or photomodification reactions. The role of PAHs as active photosensitizers is related to their capability of forming triplet states and transferring their triplet energy to oxygen, potentially resulting in the formation of biologically damaging singlet oxygen (Foote 1987; Larson and Berenbaum 1988; see Chap. 1). Photosensitization reactions of bioaccumulated PAHs in biological matrices are regarded as important mechanisms for phototoxicity, which is supported by studies demonstrating enhanced toxicity when bioaccumulation of PAHs in aquatic organisms is followed by exposure to UV radiation in clean uncontaminated water (Bowling et al. 1983; Allred and Giesy 1985; Ankley et al. 1994, 1997; Boese et al. 1997; Monson et al. 1999; Huovinen et al. 2001). Phototoxicity via photosensitization is considered a function of both PAH dose in tissue and UV intensity (Ankley et al. 1995; Huovinen et al. 2001).

In addition to photodegradation (Neff 1979, 1985), PAHs may be photomodified into more toxic forms, for example,

via photooxidation (McConkey et al. 1997; Mallakin et al. 1999; Lampi et al. 2006). Photomodification of PAH can result in a complex mixture of products (Mallakin et al. 1999). The enhanced toxicity of many photoproducts can probably be attributed to increased aqueous solubility and thus potentially increased bioavailability, as well as increased bioactivity (Duxbury et al. 1997; McConkey et al. 1997). Although many photomodified PAHs are toxic as such, they can be phototoxic as well (Huang et al. 1993; Mallakin et al. 1999). According to model predictions, photosensitization and photomodification contribute additively to phototoxicity (Huang et al. 1997; Krylov et al. 1997; Mezey et al. 1998; El-Alawi et al. 2002).

21.6.3 Factors Affecting Exposure to Phototoxicity of PAHs in Aquatic Systems

Due to their hydrophobic nature, PAHs tend to accumulate in sediments and organic particles (Neff 1979, 1985), resulting in a decrease in their bioavailability to organisms. However, disturbance of contaminated sediment, for example, during a storm or dredging, may result in mobilization and resuspension of PAHs in the water, increasing the risk of phototoxicity (Davenport and Spacie 1991; Ireland et al. 1996). On the other hand, because of their lipophilic nature, PAHs also tend to bioaccumulate in organisms. In addition to waterborne PAHs, possible routes of exposure to PAHs are their bioaccumulation from contaminated sediments (Ankley et al. 1994; Boese et al. 1998), through maternal transfer (Hall and Oris 1991; Pelletier et al. 2000), via ingested food and potentially also via the food chain. Factors related to PAH bioavailability and bioaccumulation, defining finally the body burden (together with metabolism) (reviewed by Burgess et al. 2003), form the basis for the photosensitization-based phototoxicity risk.

The potential for UV exposure varies in different types of waters. UV-B penetration depths can range from a few centimeters in highly humic lakes (Lean 1998; Huovinen et al. 2003; Kirk 2011), few meters in costal marine waters (Huovinen and Gómez 2011), to dozens of meters in clear oceanic waters (Smith et al. 1992; Kirk 2011). The spectra of underwater UV irradiance change with depth, as penetration decreases with decreasing wavelength (Lean 1998; Huovinen et al. 2003; Kirk 2011). This spectral variation among natural waters affect the potential for phototoxicity (Barron et al. 2000), since the phototoxic response is related to the UV absorption characteristics of a compound (Newsted and Giesy 1987; Diamond et al. 2000; Huovinen et al. 2001; Lampi et al. 2006) (Fig. 21.9). Aquatic biota in PAHcontaminated areas (particularly in clear, shallow waters and littoral areas, which often provide habitats for various aquatic

organisms during reproduction and early development) may be at risk. UV exposure and thus phototoxicity can also be increased, for example, during low flow (Ireland et al. 1996) or when organisms move up in the water column. Other factors, such as increased turbidity, which reduce the penetration of UV radiation in the water column, can attenuate phototoxicity as well (Ireland et al. 1996).

In addition to strongly contributing to attenuation of UV radiation, humic substances have a complex role in aquatic systems in potentially affecting the phototoxicity of PAHs. Dissolved humic material may mitigate the potential for photoinduced toxicity (Gensemer et al. 1998, 1999) by reducing the bioaccumulation of PAHs to organisms (Oris et al. 1990; Weinstein and Oris 1999). On the other hand, the risk for phototoxicity may be increased as a result of higher UV penetration in aquatic ecosystems due to decrease of dissolved organic carbon content induced by UV radiation (Morris and Hargreaves 1997), acidification, and climate warming (Schindler et al. 1996). Humic substances as potential photosensitizers (Larson and Berenbaum 1988) play a role in photodegradation of aquatic contaminants via formation of reactive oxygen species by UV radiation (Boule et al. 1999).

In all, a variety of factors affecting the exposure of organisms to PAHs and to UV radiation, as well as interactions between multiple environmental factors and stressors present in natural conditions, complicate the risk assessment for phototoxicity. Currently ecotoxicological risk assessment is facing new challenges under global climate change scenarios, also influencing photoactivated toxicity as both PAH and UV exposure can potentially be altered by climate change in several ways (Gouin et al. 2013; Hooper et al. 2013).

21.6.4 Phototoxicity of PAHs to Aquatic Biota

Since the early evidence of a potential risk of co-exposure to PAHs and UV radiation to aquatic organisms and environments (e.g., Bowling et al. 1983; Oris and Giesy 1985), information on the mechanisms of phototoxicity and the effects on aquatic biota have been increasing over the last decades. Phototoxicity of PAHs has been demonstrated in a variety of aquatic organisms, including bacteria, phytoplankton, aquatic macrophytes, zooplankton, benthic invertebrates, insect larvae, amphibians, bivalves, and fish, with responses in biota ranging from acute lethality to chronic effects, such as reproductive impairment (reviewed by Landrum et al. 1987; Arfsten et al. 1996; Ankley et al. 2003; Diamond 2003; Pelletier et al. 2006; Barron 2007).

Species vary in their sensitivity to the phototoxicity of PAHs (Boese et. al. 1997; Hatch and Burton 1998; Spehar et al. 1999), which could be related to behavioral (Hatch and Burton 1999) and potentially to metabolic and morphological differences. Translucent early life stages are expected to

be more vulnerable to phototoxicity than pigmented juvenile and adult stages (Barron et al. 2005). Also previous exposure of organisms to UV radiation can lead to development of protective mechanisms (e.g., pigmentation) reducing their sensitivity (Boese et al. 1997; Gevertz et al. 2012). Defense mechanisms against oxidative stress, for example, carotenoid pigments, could mitigate the effects of PAH phototoxicity by quenching singlet oxygen generated from PAH photosensitization (Gala and Giesy 1993). Xanthophyll cycling, which has traditionally been associated with photochemical reactions to excess solar radiation, has been suggested also as an energy dissipative response to photoinduced PAH toxicity in microalgae (Southerland and Lewitus 2004). Photoprotective UV-absorbing compounds, such as mycosporine-like amino acids reported in various aquatic organisms or phenolic compounds (phlorotannins) of brown algae, might affect phototoxic potential by providing protection against UV exposure and possibly via their antioxidant activity (Dunlap and Yamamoto 1995; Huovinen et al. 2010). Furthermore, a possibility for repair of photo-

Although phototoxicity potential of numerous PAHs is well known, attention should be paid to the ecological relevance of especially laboratory-based results when using them in risk evaluations (McDonald and Chapman 2002). Overall, the importance of incorporating phototoxicity in water and sediment quality evaluations has been recognized, and recently conceptual frameworks (the adverse outcome pathway) have been proposed to improve predictive approaches and support ecotoxicological risk assessment (Ankley et al. 2010).

toxic effects has been demonstrated (Oris and Giesy 1986).

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