# Author's Accepted Manuscript

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 PII:
 S0891-5849(17)30216-2

 DOI:
 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.freeradbiomed.2017.04.013

 Reference:
 FRB13294

To appear in: Free Radical Biology and Medicine

Received date: 2 February 2017 Revised date: 9 April 2017 Accepted date: 12 April 2017

Cite this article as: Chiara Zerbinati and Luigi Iuliano, Cholesterol and relate sterols autoxidation, *Free Radical Biology and Medicine* http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.freeradbiomed.2017.04.013

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## **ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT**

### Cholesterol and related sterols autoxidation

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#### Abstract

Cholesterol is a unique lipid molecule providing the building block for membranes, hormone, vitamin D and bile acid synthesis. Metabolism of cholesterol involves several enzymes acting on the sterol nucleus or the iso-octyl tail. In the recent years, research interest has been focused on oxysterols, cholesterol derivatives generated by the addition of oxygen to the cholesterol backbone. Oxysterols can be produced enzymatically or by autoxidation. Autoxidation of cholesterol proceeds through type I or type II mechanisms. Type I autoxidation is initiated by free radical species, such as those arising from the superoxide/hydrogen peroxide/hydroxyl radical system. Type II autoxidation occurs stoichiometrically by non-radical highly reactive oxygen species such as singlet oxygen, HOCl, and ozone. The vulnerability of cholesterol towards high reactive species has raised considerable interest for mechanistic studies and for the potential biological activity of oxysterols, as well as for the use of oxysterols as biomarkers for the non-invasive study of oxidative stress *in vivo*.

Key words: cholesterol, cholesterol autoxidation, free radicals, lipid peroxidation, oxidative stress, oxysterols

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