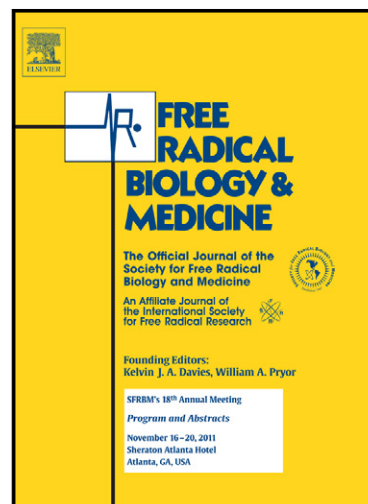


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Winnie Wai-Ying Kam, Richard B. Banati



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The Effects of Ionizing Radiation on Mitochondria

Winnie Wai-Ying Kam^{a,b*}, Richard B. Banati^{a,b,c}

^aAustralian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, Lucas Heights, Sydney, New South Wales 2234, Australia

^bMedical Radiation Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Sydney, Cumberland, Sydney, New South Wales 2141, Australia

^cNational Imaging Facility at Brain and Mind Research Institute (BMRI), University of Sydney, Camperdown, Sydney, New South Wales 2050, Australia

*Corresponding author at: Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, Lucas Heights, Menai, Sydney, NSW 2234, Australia. Tel.: +612 9717 7241; fax: +612 9717 9262.

Email: winikam@gmail.com

Email: wik@ansto.gov.au

Email: winnie.kam@sydney.edu.au

Abstract

The current concept of radiobiology posits that damage to the DNA in the cell nucleus is the primary cause for the detrimental effects of radiation. However, emerging experimental evidence suggests that this theoretical framework is insufficient for describing extra-nuclear radiation effects, particularly the response of the mitochondria, an important site of extra-nuclear, coding DNA. Here, we discuss experimental observations of the effects of ionizing radiation on the mitochondria at (1) the DNA and (2) functional levels. The role of mitochondria in (3) oxidative stress and (4) late radiation effects are discussed.

In this review, we summarize the current understanding of targets for ionizing radiation outside the cell nucleus. Available experimental data suggest that an increase in the tumoricidal efficacy of radiation therapy might be achievable by

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