

## Effects of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteogenic and adipogenic differentiation of bone marrow stromal cells and on the adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts \*

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**Abstract** The 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyl tetrazolium bromide (MTT), alkaline phosphatase (ALP) activity and oil red O assays were used to examine the effects of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteogenic and adipogenic differentiation of primary mouse bone marrow stromal cells (MSCs) and the adipogenic trans-differentiation of primary mouse osteoblasts. The results indicated that daidzein, genistein and glycitein at concentrations from  $1 \times 10^{-8}$  mol/L to  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L promoted the proliferation of MSCs and osteoblasts; genistein, daidzein and glycitein promoted osteogenic differentiation and inhibited adipogenic differentiation of MSCs, and inhibited adipocytic transdifferentiation of osteoblasts at appropriate concentrations as  $17\beta$ -estradiol. It suggests that genistein, daidzein and glycitein regulate a dual differentional process of MSCs into the osteogenic and adipogenic lineages, and trans-differentional process of primary osteoblasts into the adipocyte lineages, causing a lineage shift toward osteoblast. Protective effects of them on bone may be mediated by a reversal of adipogenesis which may promote the proliferation, differentiation and mineralization of osteoblasts, and make adipocytes secrete less cytokines which may promote osteoclast formation and activation. In addition, the results also indicated that genistein, daidzein and glycitein may be helpful in preventing the development of steroid induced osteonecrosis.

**Keywords:** genistein, daidzein, glycitein, bone marrow stromal cells, osteoblasts, osteogenic differentiation, adipogenic differentiation, adipogenic trans-differentiation.

Bone contains two distinct cell types, the osteoblasts which are also called bone-forming cells and the osteoclasts which are also called bone-resorbing cells. The osteoblasts are of mesenchymal origin, while osteoclasts are multinucleated cells formed by the fusion of mononuclear progenitors of the hematopoietic monocyte/macrophage family. The imbalance between the osteoblasts and osteoclasts leads to the osteoporosis which is characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue, leading to bone fragility and an increased susceptibility to fractures. Osteoporosis is a major health problem, especially in elderly women. Estrogen has been used in hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to prevent osteoporosis in postmenopausal women, however such therapy may have serious side-effects including increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer. So many postmenopausal women are looking for alternatives to hormone therapy, of particular interest is phytoestrogens such as soy isoflavones, which are plant compounds with estrogen-like biological activity but tend

to have weaker side-effects than most estrogen<sup>[1]</sup>.

Now more and more evidence on the action of isoflavones on osteoblasts and osteoclasts has been reported. Genistein and daidzein have a stimulatory effect on the proliferation and differentiation of osteoblastic MC3T3-E1 cells. The genistein ( $10^{-6}$  and  $10^{-5}$  mol/L) or daidzein ( $10^{-6}$  and  $10^{-5}$  mol/L) caused a significant elevation of protein content, ALP and DNA content in the osteoblastic MC3T3-E1 cells, and the elevation of protein content, ALP and DNA content in the cells were clearly inhibited in the presence of tamoxifen ( $10^{-6}$  mol/L), suggesting that the effect of them is partly mediated through estrogen action<sup>[2]</sup>. Genistein has been shown to bind to estrogen receptor  $\beta$  in the osteoblastic cells although it has not been reported whether daidzein can bind to estrogen receptors<sup>[3]</sup>. Genistein ( $10^{-7}$ — $10^{-5}$  mol/L) inhibited osteoclast-like cell formation, its inhibitory effect was equal to that of other anti-bone-resorbing agents (calcitonin and  $17\beta$ -estradiol)<sup>[4]</sup>. The inhibitory effect of genistein on osteoclast-like formation in

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mouse marrow culture seemed greater than that of daidzein. In addition, genistein may partly induce apoptosis of osteoclasts by inhibiting protein tyrosine kinases in the cells.

So far these studies have mainly focused on the effect of daidzein and genistein on osteoblasts and osteoclasts. MSCs are pluripotent cells which have the capacity to differentiate into osteoblasts, adipocytes, chondrocytes, myoblasts or fibroblasts<sup>[5]</sup>. Thus, lineage determination between osteoblasts and adipocytes may be a critical component in the regulatory pathways of osteoblastogenesis. Consistently, an increased lipid accumulation in bone marrow has been reported in association with age-related bone loss implying an inverse relationship between osteoblastogenesis and adipogenesis. Indeed, it is now hypothesized that an increase in the number of adipocytes occurs at the expense of osteoblasts in osteopenic disorders. Furthermore, there is more and more evidence that suggests a large degree of plasticity exists between osteoblasts and adipocytes and this trans-differentiation is reciprocal<sup>[6]</sup>. Nuttall et al. pointed out that there was a therapeutic opportunity to either prevent or treat osteopenic disorders by inhibiting marrow adipogenesis<sup>[7]</sup>. Therefore it is possible that inhibition of marrow adipogenesis with a concomitant increase in osteoblastogenesis could provide a therapeutic target with which to either prevent further increases in adipocyte formation or divert existing adipocytes to become more osteoblastic with a resulting increase in functional bone cells. Moreover, recent studies *in vitro* have demonstrated that  $17\beta$ -estradiol suppresses expression of lipoprotein lipase (LPL), a marker of adipocyte differentiation in an extramedullary preadipocytic cell line, 3T3L1<sup>[8]</sup>. Zhou et al. reported that  $17\beta$ -estradiol may enhance bone formation by activating bone morphogenetic protein-2 (BMP-2) gene transcription in mouse MSCs<sup>[9]</sup>. Okazaki et al. reported that  $17\beta$ -estradiol directly modulates differentiation of bipotential stromal cells into the osteoblast and adipocyte lineages, promoting osteoblast differentiation and inhibiting adipocyte differentiation, causing a lineage shift toward the osteoblast<sup>[10]</sup>. Such effects would lead to direct stimulation of bone formation and thereby contribute to the protective effects of  $17\beta$ -estradiol on bone. Genistein, daidzein and glycitein, belonging to the phytoestrogen, are currently heralded as offering potential alternative therapies for a range of hormone-dependent conditions, including cancer, menopausal symptoms, car-

diovascular disease, osteoporosis and osteonecrosis. The aim of the present investigation is to address the question of whether genistein, daidzein and glycitein affect osteogenic and adipogenic differentiation of primary mouse MSCs and the adipogenic trans-differentiation of primary mouse osteoblasts, and the comparison with  $17\beta$ -estradiol's effect is also made.

## 1 Materials and methods

### 1.1 Materials

KM mice were obtained from the Guangming Weiwu Biological Products Factory. Dulbecco's modified Eagle's medium (DMEM) and fetal bovine serum (FBS) were from Gibco.  $17\beta$ -estradiol, Benzylpenicillin, streptomycin, MTT,  $\beta$ -glycerophosphate, dexamethasone, ascorbic acid, insulin and oil red O were obtained from Sigma. Genistein, daidzein and glycitein were from Shanghai Tongtian Company. ALP activity kit was obtained from Nanjing Jiancheng Biological Engineering Institute, micro-protein assay kit was from Beyotime Biotechnology.

### 1.2 Methods

**1.2.1 Isolation and culture of primary bone MSCs** The mouse bone MSCs were obtained from adult KM mice (4 to 6 weeks old) using a modification of the method previously reported<sup>[11]</sup>. Briefly, mice were sacrificed by decapitation. Femora and tibiae were aseptically harvested, and the whole bone marrow was flushed using DMEM in a 1 mL syringe and a 25-gauge needle. The cells were collected and cultured in a culture flask. After incubated in a  $37^\circ\text{C}$ , 5%  $\text{CO}_2$  humidified incubator for 3 days, the nonadherent cells were removed from the cultures by gentle aspiration and the medium replaced with fresh DMEM. Then the medium was changed every 3 days in all the experiments.

**1.2.2 Isolation and culture of primary marrow osteoblasts** The mouse osteoblasts were isolated mechanically from newborn mice skull using a modification of the method previously reported<sup>[12]</sup>. Briefly, skull was dissected from KM mice, endosteum and periosteum were stripped off, and the bone was cut into approximately 1–2 mm<sup>2</sup> pieces and digested with trypsin (2.5 g/L) for 30 min then with collagenase A (2.0 g/L) twice with each time for 1 h, and the cells were collected and cultured in a culture flask. After a 24 h incubation in a 5%  $\text{CO}_2$  humidified incubator,

the DMEM was removed. Then the medium was changed every 3 days in all the experiments.

**1.2.3 Assay for bone MSCs and osteoblasts proliferation** The protocol described by Mosmann was followed with some modifications<sup>[13]</sup>. Briefly, MSCs ( $3 \times 10^6$  cells per well) and osteoblast ( $10^4$  cells per well) were plated in 96-well culture plates and cultured overnight at 37 °C in a 5% CO<sub>2</sub> humidified incubator. Genistein, daidzein, glycitein and 17 $\beta$ -estradiol were then added separately to the wells. Control wells were prepared by addition of DMEM. Wells containing DMEM without cells were used as blanks. The plates were incubated at 37 °C in a 5% CO<sub>2</sub> incubator for 48 h. Upon completion of the incubation, stock MTT dye solution (20  $\mu$ L, 5 mg/mL) was added to each well. After 4 h incubation, the supernatant was removed and DMSO (100  $\mu$ L/well) was added to solubilize the MTT. The optical density of each well was measured on a microplate spectrophotometer (BioRad Model 3550, USA) at a wavelength of 570 nm. The proliferation rate was calculated according to the formula:  $(OD_{\text{treated}}/OD_{\text{control}}-1) \times 100\%$ .

**1.2.4 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteogenic differentiation of bone MSCs** The bone MSCs were isolated as above. MSCs ( $3 \times 10^6$  cells per well) were plated in 48-well culture plates, after being induced by osteogenic supplement ( $10^{-8}$  mol/L dexamethasone, 5.0 mmol/L  $\beta$ -glycerophosphate, 50  $\mu$ g/mL ascorbic acid) and treated with genistein, daidzein, glycitein and 17 $\beta$ -estradiol at final concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-7}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-6}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L for 7 days. The plates were washed thrice with ice-cold PBS and lysed by two cycles of freezing and thaw. Aliquots of supernatants were subjected to ALP activity and protein content measurements using an ALP kit and a microbradford assay kit respectively. The osteogenesis promotion rate was calculated according to the formula:  $(ALP \text{ activity}_{\text{treated}}/ALP \text{ activity}_{\text{control}}-1) \times 100\%$ .

**1.2.5 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the adipogenic differentiation of bone MSCs** The bone MSCs were isolated as above. MSCs ( $3 \times 10^6$  cells per well) were plated in 48-well culture plates, after being induced by adipogenic supplement (10  $\mu$ g/mL insulin,  $10^{-7}$  mol/L dexamethasone) they were treated with genistein, daidzein, glycitein and 17-estradiol at final concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-7}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-6}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L for

14 days. Fat droplets within differentiated adipocytes from MSCs were observed using the oil red O staining method described by Sekiya et al. with some modification<sup>[14]</sup>. Briefly, Cell monolayers were fixed in 4% formaldehyde, washed in water and stained with a 0.6% oil red O solution (60% isopropanol, 40% water) for 15 min at room temperature. For quantification of adipogenesis, cell monolayers were then washed extensively with water to remove unbound dye, then 1 mL of isopropyl alcohol was added to the stained culture dish. After 5 minutes, the absorbance of the extract was assayed by a spectrophotometer at 510 nm. The adipogenic inhibition rate was calculated according to the formula:  $(1-OD_{\text{treated}}/OD_{\text{control}}) \times 100\%$ .

**1.2.6 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts** The mouse osteoblasts were isolated as above. Osteoblasts ( $10^4$  cells per well) were plated in 48-well culture plates, after being induced by adipogenic supplement (10  $\mu$ g/mL Insulin,  $10^{-7}$  mol/L dexamethasone) they were treated with genistein, daidzein, glycitein and 17 $\beta$ -estradiol at final concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-7}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L for 9 days. The adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts was quantified as above. The adipogenic trans-differentiation inhibition rate was calculated according to the formula:  $(1-OD_{\text{treated}}/OD_{\text{control}}) \times 100\%$ .

**1.2.7 Statistical analyses** Data were expressed as means  $\pm$  SD of at least three separate experiments. The statistical differences were analyzed using SPSS' *t*-test. *p* values less than 0.05 were considered to be statistical significance.

## 2 Results

### 2.1 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the MSCs proliferation

The effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the MSCs proliferation is shown in Fig. 1. Daidzein has no effect on the MSCs proliferation at concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L ( $P > 0.05$ ), but it promotes MSCs proliferation at concentration of  $5 \times 10^{-7}$  mol/L ( $P < 0.05$ ). Genistein and glycitein ( $1 \times 10^{-8}$ — $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L) promote MSCs proliferation ( $P < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the effect of 17-estradiol on the MSCs proliferation is greater than that of genistein, daidzein and glycitein.

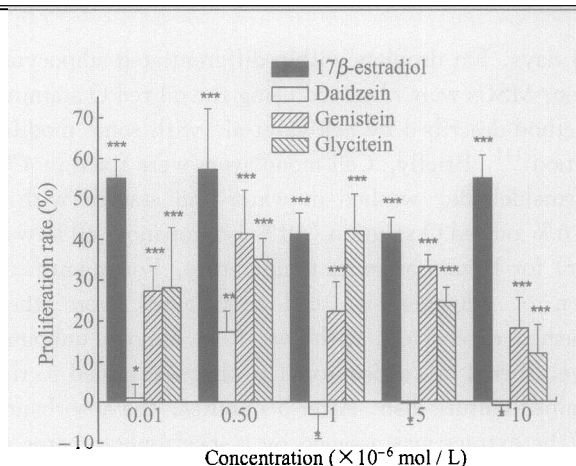


Fig. 1. Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the MSCs proliferation (\* $P > 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $P < 0.01$  vs control group,  $n = 4$ ).

## 2.2 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteoblasts proliferation

The effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteoblasts proliferation is shown in Fig. 2. Glycitein had no effect on the osteoblasts proliferation at concentration of  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L ( $P > 0.05$ ), but it promoted osteoblasts proliferation at concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-7}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L ( $P < 0.01$ ). Genistein and daidzein ( $1 \times 10^{-8}$ — $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L) promoted osteoblasts proliferation ( $P < 0.05$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). In addition, the proliferation rate reached the maximal value at concentration of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$  mol/L, the proliferation rate is 36.66%, 47.26% and 41.95% for genistein, glycitein and daidzein respectively. Moreover the effect of them ( $1 \times 10^{-8}$ — $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L) on osteoblasts proliferation increases in the sequence of glycitein > daidzein > genistein > 17-estradiol.

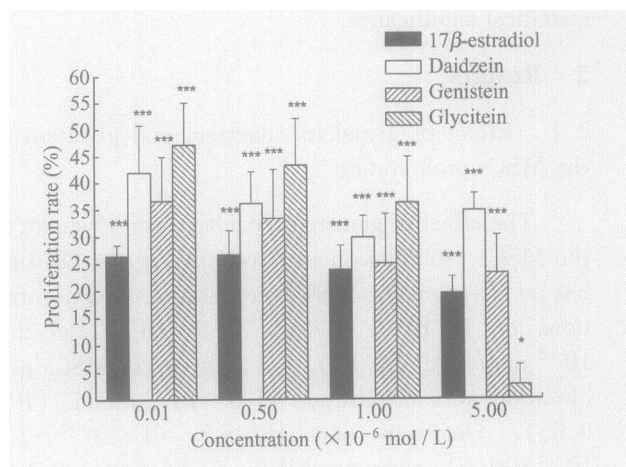


Fig. 2. Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteoblasts proliferation (\* $P > 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $P < 0.01$  vs control group,  $n = 4$ ).

## 2.3 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteogenic differentiation of MSCs

Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteogenic differentiation of MSCs is shown in Fig. 3. The results indicate that daidzein at the concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$ ,  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L has no effect on the osteogenic differentiation of MSCs ( $P > 0.05$ ), whereas it promotes osteogenic differentiation of MSCs at concentration of  $5 \times 10^{-7}$  mol/L ( $P < 0.05$ ), and the promotion rate is 42.44%. For genistein, it promotes osteogenic differentiation of MSCs at concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L ( $P < 0.05$ ), and the promotion rate is 22.01% and 31.41% respectively, but has no effect on the osteogenic differentiation of MSCs at other concentrations ( $P > 0.05$ ). Glycitein has no effect on the osteogenic differentiation of MSCs at concentrations of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$  and  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L ( $P > 0.05$ ), but promotes osteogenic differentiation of MSCs in a dose-dependent manner at concentrations of  $5 \times 10^{-7}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L ( $P < 0.05$ ), and the promotion rate is 37.70%, 49.54% and 67.93% respectively. For 17-estradiol, it ( $5 \times 10^{-7}$ — $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L) also promotes osteogenic differentiation of MSCs ( $P < 0.05$ ), and promotion rate reaches the maximal value at concentration of  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L.

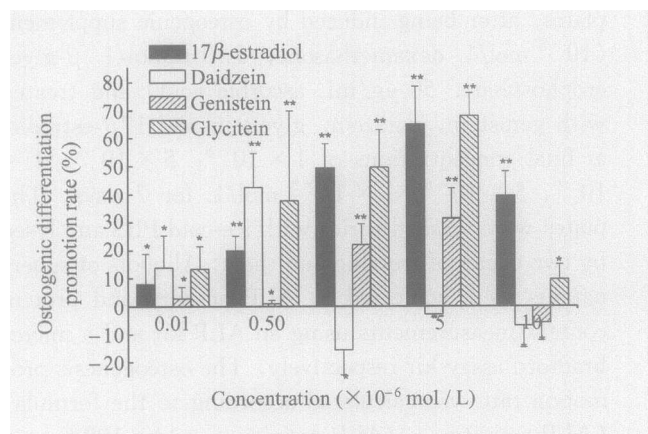


Fig. 3. Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the osteogenic differentiation of MSCs for 7 days (\* $P > 0.05$ , \*\* $P < 0.05$  vs control group,  $n = 4$ ).

## 2.4 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the adipogenic differentiation of MSCs

Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the adipogenic differentiation of MSCs is illustrated in Fig. 4. The results indicate that both daidzein and

$17\beta$ -estradiol ( $1 \times 10^{-8}$ — $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L) inhibit adipogenic differentiation of MSCs ( $P < 0.05$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and inhibition rate reaches the maximal value at concentration of  $5 \times 10^{-7}$  and  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L respectively. For genistein and glycitein, they do not affect the adipogenic differentiation of MSCs at concentration of  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L ( $P > 0.05$ ), but inhibit adipogenic differentiation of MSCs at other concentrations ( $P < 0.05$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), the inhibition rate reaches the maximal value at concentration of  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $1 \times 10^{-8}$  mol/L, and inhibition rate is 42.86% and 26.27% respectively. Moreover the experimental results are in accordance with morphological observations (Fig. 5).

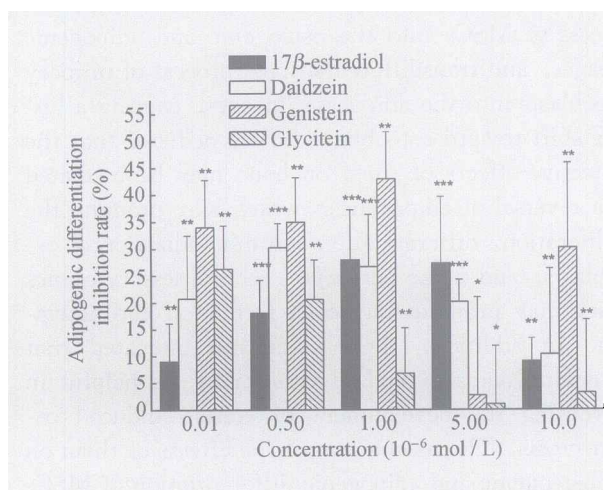


Fig. 4. Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the adipogenic differentiation of MSCs for 14 days (\*  $P > 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $P < 0.01$  vs control group,  $n = 4$ ).

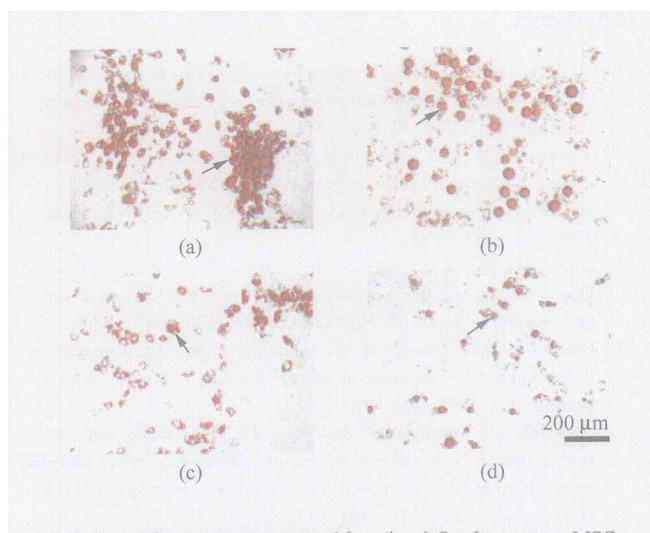


Fig. 5. Adipocytes were stained by oil red O when mouse MSCs were cultured in the presence of  $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  insulin and  $1 \times 10^{-7}$  mol/L dexamethasone for 14 days. (a) Control group; (b)  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L glycitein; (c)  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L daidzein; (d)  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L genistein.

## 2.5 Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts

Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts is indicated in Fig. 6. The results indicate that daidzein, genistein and  $17\beta$ -estradiol ( $1 \times 10^{-8}$ — $1 \times 10^{-5}$  mol/L) can inhibit adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts ( $P < 0.05$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), with the maximal inhibition rate of 18.75%, 17.87% and 16.73% respectively at concentration of  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L. For glycitein, it has no effect on adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts at concentration of  $1 \times 10^{-8}$  mol/L ( $P > 0.05$ ), but it inhibits adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts at concentrations of  $5 \times 10^{-7}$ ,  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $5 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L ( $P < 0.05$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), the inhibition rate is 3.45%, 10.34% and 9.48% respectively. Moreover the experimental results are accordance with morphological observations (Fig. 7).

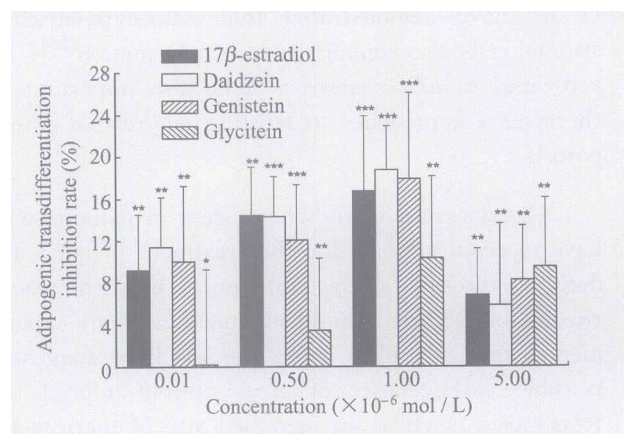


Fig. 6. Effect of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on the adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts for 9 days (\*  $P > 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $P < 0.01$ , vs control group,  $n = 4$ ).

## 3 Discussion

Adipocytic and osteogenic cells are believed to derive from multipotential stromal cells in the marrow, and *in vitro* studies have shown an inverse relationship between the differentiation of adipocytic and osteogenic cells<sup>[6]</sup>. It was reported that preadipocytes isolated from mouse marrow may regulate the activity and final differentiation of marrow precursors of osteoblasts. The condition medium harvested from mouse stromal preadipocytes had a decreased ALP activity in a mouse stromal osteoblastic cell line. Besides having a passive role of space-filling in bone marrow cavity, recent data suggest that medullary adipocytes are secretory cells that may influence hematopoiesis and osteogenesis. A variety of peptide



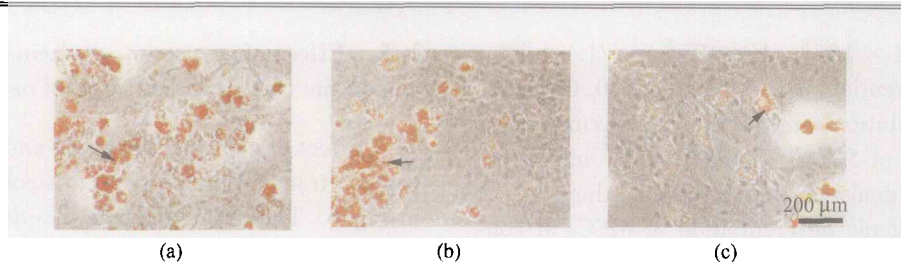


Fig. 7. Adipocytes were stained by oil red O when mouse primary osteoblasts were cultured in the presence of 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$  insulin and  $10^{-7}$  mol/L dexamethasone for 9 days. (a) Control group; (b)  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L glycitein; (c)  $1 \times 10^{-6}$  mol/L genistein.

and nonpeptide compounds are synthesized by and released from adipocytes. Adipocytes also secrete cytokines such as tumor necrosis factor- $\alpha$  (TNF- $\alpha$ ) and interleukin 6 (IL-6), and the main effect of these cytokines is a stimulation of bone resorption<sup>[16]</sup>. In addition, Benayahu et al. reported that preadipocytes have the potential to stimulate osteoclast differentiation<sup>[17]</sup>. In the relationship between adipogenesis and the ability to support osteoclast formation, Sakaguchi et al. have demonstrated that adipocyte-enriched stromal cells also support osteoclast formation<sup>[18]</sup>. So a reversal of adipogenesis will be also important as therapeutic approaches to treating age-related osteoporosis.

Osteonecrosis is known to occur in patients who have received steroids for the treatment of such underlying diseases as systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, and leukemia etc. Many experimental animal studies using steroids have suggested possible pathogenesis of corticosteroid-induced osteonecrosis, such as an increased size of marrow fat cells, a high intraosseous pressure, an accumulation of lipid within the osteocytes, and fat emboli<sup>[19]</sup>. Cui et al. reported that steroid-induced adipogenesis by bone progenitor cells in marrow may influence the development of osteonecrosis<sup>[20]</sup>. Lipid clearing agents, such as lovastatin which promotes osteogenic differentiation and inhibits adipogenic differentiation of MSCs, may be helpful in preventing the development of steroid-induced osteonecrosis<sup>[21]</sup>.

In this study we have examined the effects of genistein, daidzein and glycitein on osteogenic and adipogenic differentiation of MSCs and on the adipogenic transdifferentiation of osteoblasts in an *in vitro* assay employing isolated mouse primary MSCs and osteoblasts. The results indicated that genistein, daidzein and glycitein promoted osteogenic differentiation and inhibited adipogenic differentiation of MSCs, and inhibited adipocytic transdifferentiation of osteoblasts at appropriate concentrations as  $17\beta$ -estra-

diol in a dose-independent manner. These results were further supported by the facts that genistein, daidzein and glycitein did not inhibit proliferation of the MSCs and osteoblasts. It suggests that genistein, daidzein and glycitein regulate a dual differentiative process of MSCs into the osteogenic and adipogenic lineages, and transdifferentiate primary osteoblasts into the adipocyte lineages, causing a lineage shift toward osteoblast. So we deduced that the protective effects of them on bone may be mediated by a reversal of adipogenesis which may promote the proliferation, differentiation and mineralization of osteoblasts, and make adipocytes secrete less cytokines which may promote osteoclast formation and activation. In addition, the results also indicated that genistein, daidzein and glycitein may be helpful in preventing the development of steroid induced osteonecrosis. The mechanism of the effects of them on the osteogenic and adipogenic differentiation of MSCs and the adipogenic trans-differentiation of osteoblasts remains to be further studied.

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