

Photochemical Effects Upon the Cornea, Skin and Other Tissues

PHOTOBIOLOGY OF LOW-POWER LASER EFFECTS

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Abstract—Quantitative studies have been performed to determine the actions of low-intensity visible monochromatic light on various cells (*E-coli*, yeasts, He-La Chinese hamster fibroblasts and human lymphocytes); also irradiation conditions (wavelength, dose and intensity) conducive to vital activity stimulation have been examined. Respiratory chain components are discussed as primary photo-acceptors. The possible ways for photo signal transduction and amplification are discussed. It is proposed that enhanced wound healing due to irradiation with low intensity visible laser light (He-Cd, He-Ne and semiconductor Lasers) is due to the increasing Proliferation of cells.

1. WHY LOW-POWER LASER EFFECTS SEEM TO BE INCREDIBLE AND MYSTERIOUS?

INTEREST in the "bio-stimulating effect" of low-intensity red light, particularly He-Ne irradiation, has increased in the last few years, and discussions of this phenomenon have become more urgent.

On the one hand, low-power laser therapy is undoubtedly successful in treating tropic ulcers and indolent wounds or diverse etiologic when traditional drug treatments have little effect (Mester 1980; Gamalcyra 1977, Kryuk et al. 1986). On the other hand, the method seems to be highly incredible and even mysterious. There is frank scepticism among physicists as to the reliability of the fact that low-intensity visible radiation acts directly on the organism at the molecular level. So a certain disparity has arisen between the active work of doctors and the lack of interest shown by physicists, chemists and biologists.

Indeed, it is incomprehensible how one can explain the special sensitivity of cells to irradiation by red light against a background of systematic irradiation by white light, whose spectrum contains a red component of approximately the same power. A second reason for doubts is that very often the stimulative effects of irradiation are explained by the particular role of coherent laser irradiation acting upon biological objects. This argument is not convincing and makes physicists suspicious when hearing about low-power laser bio-stimulation. And a third reason for doubts is the universality of clinical use of low-power laser therapy as well as numerous biological and physiological effects. Treatment indications are very broad (see the reviews of Gamaleya 1977; Basford 1986.. Kryuk et al. 1986), including even radioprotection (Voskanyan et al. 1985, 1986; Popova et al. 1984; Abvakhitova et al. 1982; Stepanov et al. 1977).

The aim of this paper is to try to explain these uncertainties and to prove the existence of low-Intensity visible laser radiation effects at the cellular level.

2. 'LASER BIO-STIMULATION' AS A PHOTO-BIOLOGICAL PHENOMENON WITHOUT LASER LIGHT

To support this statement, I will use three arguments. Firstly, curing with red light was used in medicine even in ancient times, and treatment with red light was among the methods used by N. R. Finsen, the father of contemporary phototherapy. Much experimental work was done in the last century and during the first third of this century. One can find these references in the review Karu 1987. It is very likely that by the time the first lasers made their appearance this earlier knowledge was forgotten.

The He-Ne laser was the first commercially available source of coherent light. No wonder that the stimulating effect of light, red light in particular was rediscovered when use was made of this coherent light source. The observed effects were attributed to the unique quality of the He-Ne laser - namely, the high coherence of this radiation. Actually there are no physical grounds for such a conclusion as demonstrated in the above-mentioned review (Karu 1987).

Secondly, the coherent effects of light-matter interaction in a condensed phase at 300 K are possible at light intensities $\geq 2 \times 10^{11}$ W/cm² (Lobko et al. 1985; Karu 1987). The usual intensity of red light (e.g., those generated by He-Ne lasers or diode lasers operating in the far red region) used in experiments on light interaction with a biological system, clinical practices included, is 10^{-4} - 10^{-2} W/cm².

And thirdly, both coherent and non-coherent red light, were clinically found to be equally effective in treating peptic ulcers (Sazonov et al. 1985; Karu 1986b).

One has every reason to believe that this "laser bio-stimulation" phenomenon is of a photo-biological nature. I would like to emphasize that I do not intend to deny the laser its merit as a handy tool for the laboratory and clinic. A discussion of the importance of specific laser light properties, such as coherence, is essential only in regard to explaining the action mechanism of low-power laser light.

3. QUANTITATIVE DATA ABOUT PHOTO-BIOLOGICAL EFFECTS AT THE CELLULAR LEVEL

During the last six years, systematic studies (Fig. 1) have been conducted with objects of varying complexity levels - bacteria (Karu et al. 1983; Tiphlova and Karu 1986. 1987a. 1987b. 1988), yeasts (Fedoseyeva et al. 1984. 1986. 1987a), and mammalian cells (Karu et al. 1982. 1984a. 1984b. 1984c. 1985a. 1985b; Fedoseyeva et al. 1988) to clarify the molecular mechanism and quantitative laws of low-intensity visible light action at the cellular level.

Some results of these studies are summarized in Figs. 2-4. Figure 2 shows the action spectra (the dependence of photo-biological effect on wavelength) of visible light for stimulation of DNA synthesis in He-La cells and for growth stimulation of *Torulopsis sphacrica* and *Escherichia coli*. Some other examples of various action spectra are reviewed in Karu 1987. All these action spectra are practically of the same type, having a maxima in almost every visible light band (at about 400-500, 570, 620 and 830 nm). If there exists a correlation between the maxima in an action spectra and the therapeutic effect of different wavelengths of visible light, the red light

near 620nm must not be the only successful wavelength for laser bio stimulation. Indeed, this is supported by the successful clinical use of low-intensity radiation of He-Cd lasers ($\lambda = 441.6\text{nm}$) (Kryuk et al. 1986) and of semiconductor lasers operating at various wavelengths in the far red and near infrared regions (Basford 1986).

Data on the stimulation of metabolic processes in cells as a function of energy doses for various wavelengths are shown in Figs. 3 and 4. From the analysis of these dose effect curves, one can conclude that there are two groups of active spectral regions. The first group - light with wavelengths of 364, 404, 434nm (see fig 3 for $\lambda = 404\text{nm}$ as an example and 890nm (fig 4) has a stimulative action 10-100 times lower than doses from the second group of wavelengths (454, 560, 633, 680 and 750nm). In other words the same effect can be achieved with light in the near UV and blue, as well as the far red regions, using one tenth the dose required, e.g. with red light.

The results of measuring the influence of light intensity (and irradiation time) are presented in fig 5. On these experiments the radiation dose was constant, while the intensity of light and irradiation time were varied.

So it is possible to conclude that irradiation with monochromatic visible light in the blue, red and far-red regions can enhance metabolic processes in the cell. The photo-biological effects of stimulation depend on the wavelengths, dose and the intensity of the light.

The experimental data show that comparatively low doses ($10-10^3 \text{ J/m}^2$) and short periods (10-100's) of irradiation cause a macro-effect, which remains for a long time. When a He-La cell culture in the stationary growth phase was irradiated as a monolayer with a He-Ne laser and the cells were then plated at various intervals after irradiation (from 5-240 min), the culture growth stimulation in the exponential growth phase was observed to last for 6-7 days (Fig 6a). Stimulation was noted when the interval between irradiation and plating was 30 min or more (Karu et al 1984c). Irradiation of the cell with stimulative doses of red light can protect them from damaging doses of γ radiation.

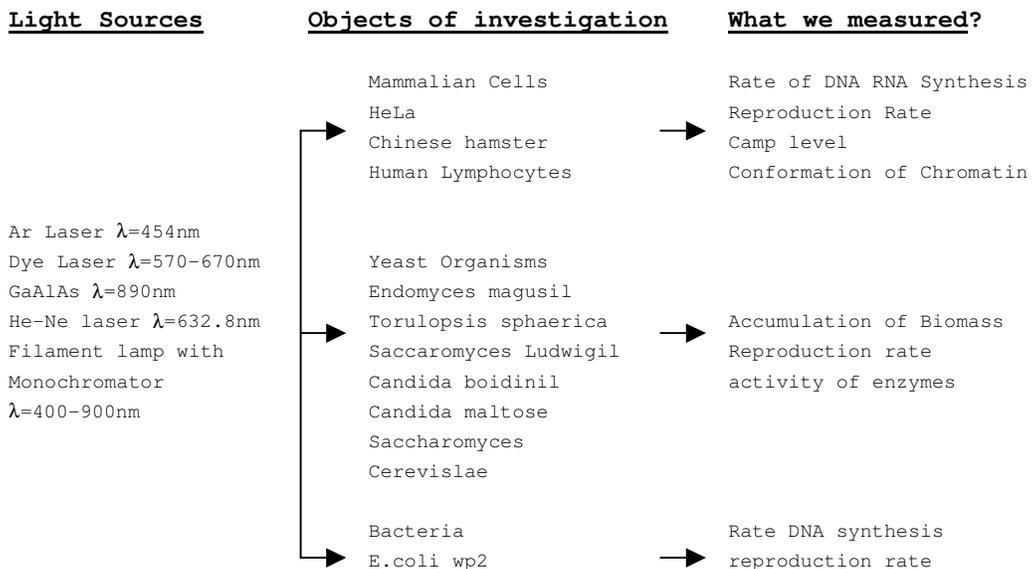


Fig 1 Experiments performed with various cells for explaining the action mechanism of low-power monochromatic visible light.

In Fig 6b is shown one result of this kind of experiment (Karu et al. 1987c). A monolayer of He-La cells in the stationary phase of growth was irradiated with a He-Ne laser ($D = 10^2 \text{ J/m}^2$) and after 180min with λ radiation (5.0Gy). After 15 min, the cells were re-plated into a fresh nutrient medium, and the growth curves, clone-forming ability and clone sizes were studied (Karu et al. 1988c). The radio-protective ability of He-Ne laser radiation appeared when the interval between laser and λ radiation was longer than 30 min.

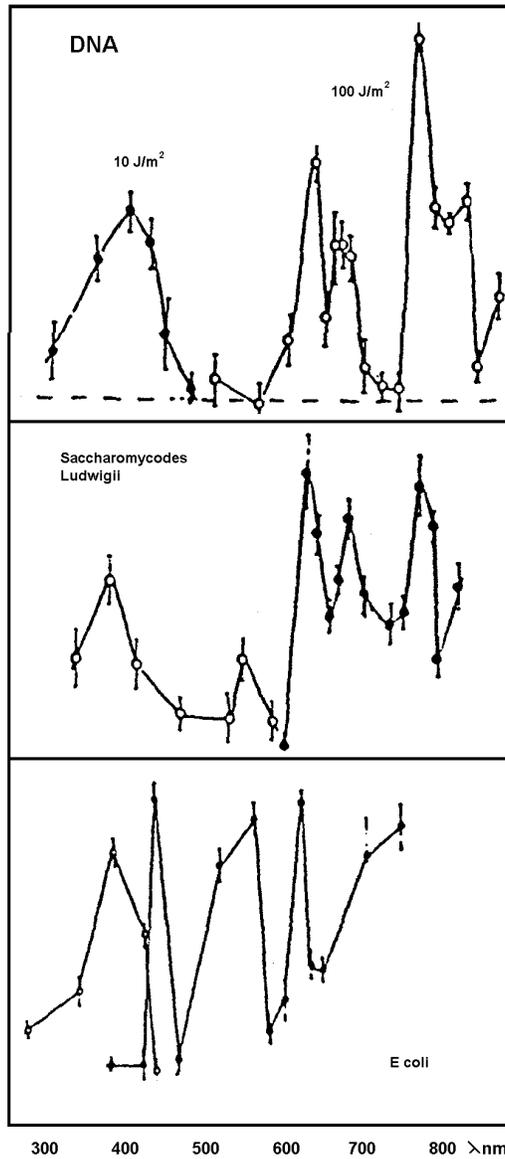


Fig. 2. Action spectra of visible monochromatic light for (a) DNA synthesis stimulation in exponentially growing He-La cells. (b) Protein synthesis stimulation of *Saccharomyces ludwigii* and (c) growth stimulation of *E.coli*. The experimental conditions are described in papers of Karu et al. 1984a, Fedoseyeva et al. 1987a, and Tiphlova and Karu 1998.

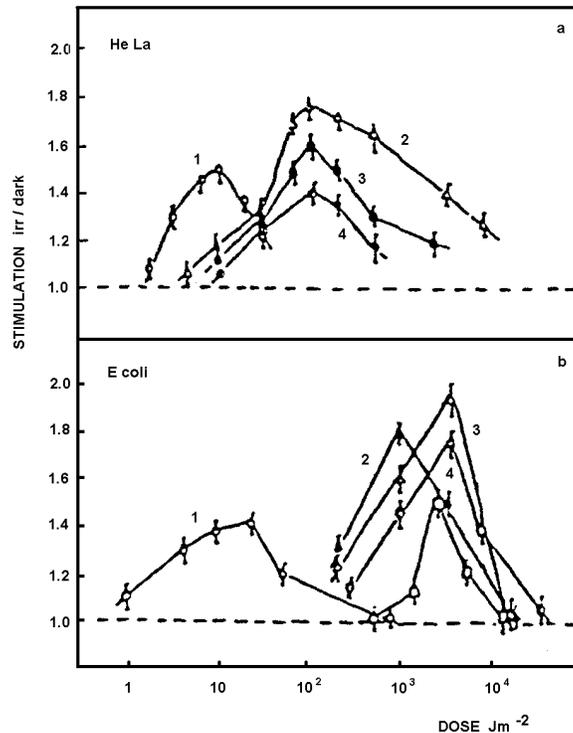


Fig. 3. The effect of irradiation dose on stimulation of; (a) DNA synthesis rate in exponentially growing HeLa cells (1: λ - 404 nm 2: λ - 760 nm 3: λ - 620 nm 4: λ - 680 nm). and (b), E.coli culture growth (1: λ - 404 nm). 2: λ - 560 nm 3: λ - 750 nm. 4: λ - 632.8 nm 5: λ - 454 nm). The irradiation conditions are described in papers of Karu et al. 1982, 1994: and Tiphlova and Karu 1987b. 1988.

Auto-radiographic studies indicated that irradiation with a He-Ne laser causes an increase in the number of S-phase cells (Fig. 7), connected with enhanced G₁-S transition of a part of the population, as well as the increase of grain count on the labelled nuclei, related to enhancement of DNA synthesis in S-phase cells (Karu et al. 1987a).

Irradiation does not influence the proliferation or various subpopulations to an equal degree, as shown by analysing the clone size distribution after irradiation (Fig. 8). The stimulative effect of irradiation is most noticeable on the proliferation activity of slowly growing subpopulations. Irradiation with a He-Ne laser also caused a decrease in the generation time of yeast cultures in an exponential period of growth (Fedoseyeva et al. 1984; Karu and Letokhov 1985).

In a series of experiments, the activity of some enzymes was measured in a stimulated culture. The culture *Torulopsis sphaerica* was irradiated with a He-Ne laser and incubated for 18h (for at least three divisions), following which the activity of various enzymes was determined (Fedoseyeva et al. 1986). Irradiation caused considerable activation of respiratory chain components - NADH dehydrogenases and cytochrome c oxidase.

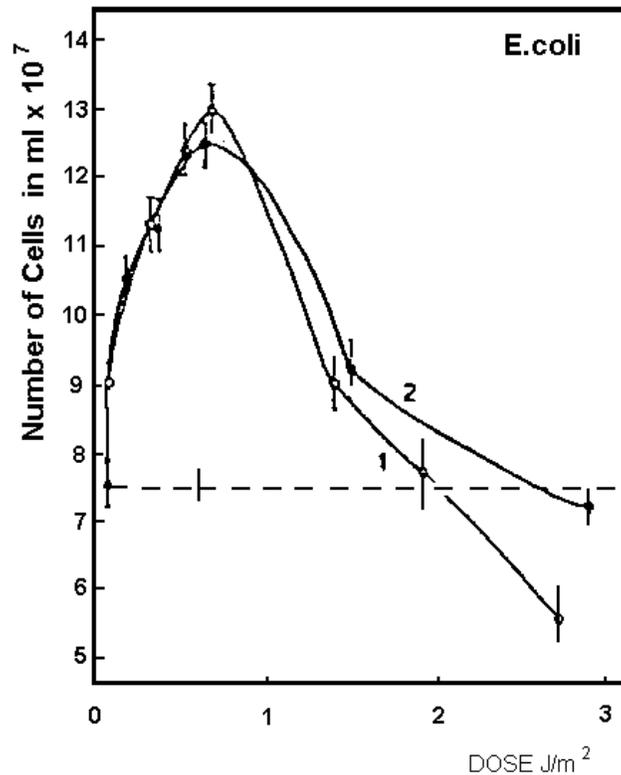


Fig. 4. The effect of irradiation dose (GaAl As Laser $\lambda = 890$ nm at frequencies of 666 Hz (1) or 3480 Hz (2). $J = 1.2 \cdot 10^{-2}$ W/m²) on the stimulation of *E. coli* growth. The irradiation conditions are described in the paper Zharov et al. 1987.

The activity of cytosolic dismutase remained practically on the control level, and the activity of acid phosphatase declined (Fig. 9). The data obtained show that the growth stimulation is accomplished by an increase in the respiration activity (with no accumulation of the toxic intermediate of oxygen metabolism) and by synthesis processes in cell-dominating degenerative ones.

To support the suggestion that light can serve as a proliferative stimulus, the resting cells (G_0 cells) - human peripheral lymphocytes - were irradiated with a He-Ne laser and the conformational changes of chromatin (chromatin does not absorb this light) were studied (Fedosyeva et al. 1988). By measuring the degree of acridine orange binding to DNA, it was found that the changes occurring in the lymphocyte chromatin structure a few hours after irradiation were similar to those caused by mitogen phytohemagglutinin (PHA). The binding of the dye to DNA increased 45-90 min after irradiation, then dropped to the control level, and later increased again (Fig. 10).

Light provides the proliferative stimulus, having some effect on the systems that are known to regulate (or at least take part in) cellular proliferation. The cyclic adenosine mono-phosphate (cAMP) system has been demonstrated to control both biosynthesis of DNA and RNA and the realization of the biologic activity of the macromolecules (Boynton and Whitfield 1983). The irradiation of Chinese hamster fibroblasts with blue (4004nm) or Red (632.8nm) light caused changes in the intracellular cAMP level (Fig 11).

Irradiation with light at 546 or 700 nm had no appreciable effect (Karu et al. 1985b, 1987b). There exists some similarity between the wavelengths effective for DNA and RNA synthesis stimulation (Fig. 2a), which cause the variations in cAMP level.

Our observation of changes in the intracellular cAMP concentration following irradiation may help relate growth stimulation effects to the known regulatory mechanisms of the proliferation activity of cells and may assist in further studies at revealing the mechanism of the bio-stimulating effect of red light, insofar as it is well known that there exists a causal relationship between variations in the concentrations of cAMP and Ca^{2+} on the one hand and the rate of synthesis of DNA and RNA on the other at early stages of regenerative processes (Mancelly and Franquinet 1984).

Summing up, it is possible to conclude that irradiation with monochromatic visible light in the blue, red and far-red regions can enhance metabolic processes in the cell and can activate proliferation. The data indicate that irradiation causes a rearrangement of the cell metabolism, light being only in the role of a trigger. This is the reason the doses needed for causing bio-stimulation effects are comparatively low ($10-10^3$ J/m²) and the irradiation times needed are short (10-100s).

4. PRIMARY PHOTO-ACCEPTORS AS RESPIRATORY CHAIN COMPONENTS AND REGULATION OF CELLULAR METABOLISM VIA CHANGES IN REDOX POTENTIAL

Complicated action spectra (Fig. 2) suggest that the photo-acceptor might be a set or interrelated molecules. The results of the dichromatic irradiation experiments with simultaneous or short-interval successive exposures to two wavelengths (e.g., 404 and 633 nm, 633 and 760 nm) support this suggestion (Karu et al. 1985a; Tiphlova and Karu 1987b). A universal photosensitive nature, similarity of action spectra, and similarity of the shape of dose-effect dependencies of various cells - prokaryotes, primitive and complex eucaryotes - to low-intensity monochromatic light suggest a similar molecular mechanism with the same primary photo-acceptors. The probability of the respiratory chain components being the primary photo-acceptors (i.e., compounds absorbing light at wavelengths effective in bringing about responses for irradiation) has been discussed in Karu 1986a, 1987 using three approaches: (1) Comparison between the action spectra for photo-responses and the absorption spectra of respiratory chain components, since an action spectrum should closely parallel the absorption spectrum of the photo-receptor compound. (2) Looking for correlations between the activity of respiratory enzymes and the proliferative activity of cells after irradiation. (3) Use of substances which are known to act as quenchers of the excited states of the presumed photo-acceptor molecules and demonstration that the compounds or procedures known to influence the probable mode of action or potential photo-acceptor do, in fact, influence the magnitude of the photo-response (Karu 1986a, 1987, 1988).

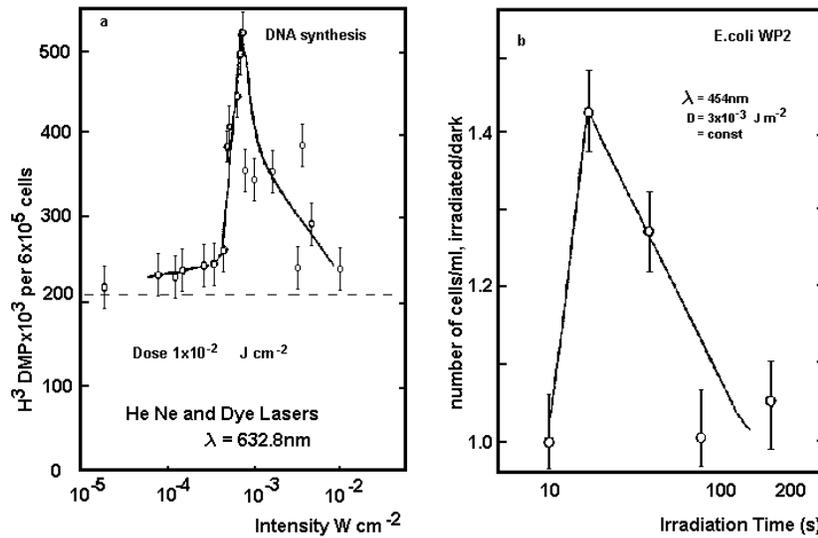


Fig. 5. The influence of light intensity of $\lambda = 633\text{nm}$ or of 454nm on the rate of (a) DNA synthesis in exponentially growing HeLa cells, or (b) *E. coli* growth (Karu et al. 1984a; Tiphlova and Karu 1986).

When cells are irradiated with various visible-light bands, light is absorbed by the respiratory chain components, and primary photochemical and photo-physical events are believed to occur in mitochondria in the case of eucaryotic cells and in the cell membrane in the case of procaryotic cells. Our present-day knowledge of the subject, moderate as it is, enables us to treat only the entire respiratory chain and not exactly any of its individual components as a primary photo-acceptor. The respiratory chain is a unitary dynamic system which, when brought acted upon at a single point, changes its whole state or response; this in turn determines its respiratory action. The light action is connected with the temporal organization of the respiratory chain whose rearrangement occurs at times commensurate with the irradiation times (Tiphlova and Karu 1987a).

How is it possible to explain the relationship between such distant events as absorption of light by respiratory chain components and acceleration of growth of the cultures?

One can imagine the following scheme or interaction between low-intensity monochromatic visible light and a cell (Fig. 12). The absorption of light by the respiratory chain components - flavin dehydrogenases, cytochromes, and cytochrome oxidase - causes a short-term activation of the respiratory chain and oxidation of the NADH pool. This in turn leads to changes in the redox status of both mitochondria and cytoplasm (Krebs and Veech 1970). Activation of the electron-transport chain must result in an increase or promotive force ($\Delta\psi$), the electrical potential of mitochondrial membrane ($\Delta\psi$) and the ATP pool, and acidification of cytoplasm. That this inference is true has been confirmed experimentally: changes in $\Delta\psi$, $\Delta\psi$ and pH, as well as extrasynthesis of ATP, have been achieved by irradiating cells with a He-Ne laser (Passarella et al. 1984), and by irradiating cells with a wide-band visible light of $\lambda = 400\text{nm}$ the activity of ATP synthetase has been enhanced (Nedelina et al. 1985).

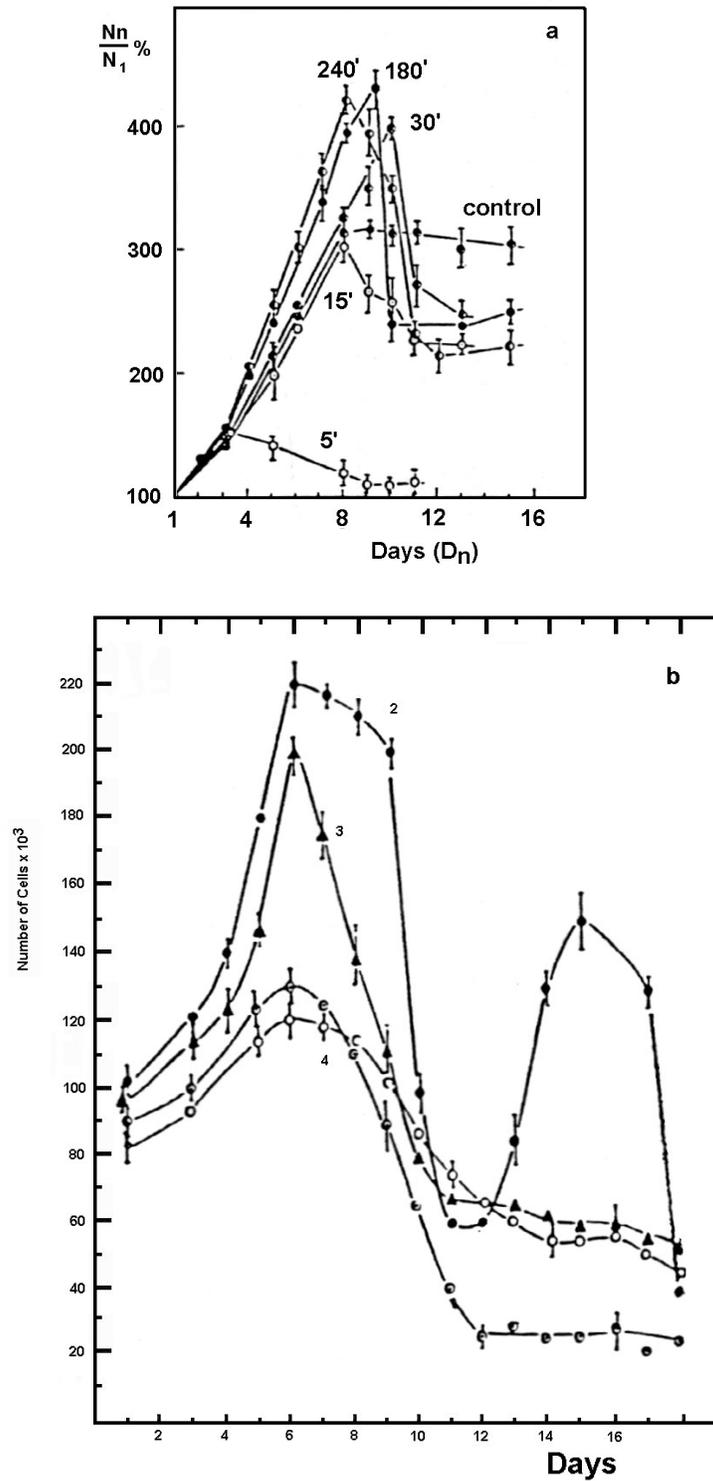


Fig. 6. The sub-cultivation growth curves of the He-La culture after irradiation of the plateau-phase cells (a) with a He-Ne laser ($D = 10^2 \text{ J/m}^2$) and inoculation into a fresh nutrient medium 5, 15, 30, 180 or 240 min after irradiation or (b) with He-Ne laser ($D = 10^2 \text{ J/m}^2$) and after 180 (2), 15 (3) or 5 (4) min with γ radiation (5.0 Gy), and inoculation or the cells into a fresh nutrient medium 15 min after γ irradiation (one γ irradiation only) (Karu et al. 1984c. 1987c).

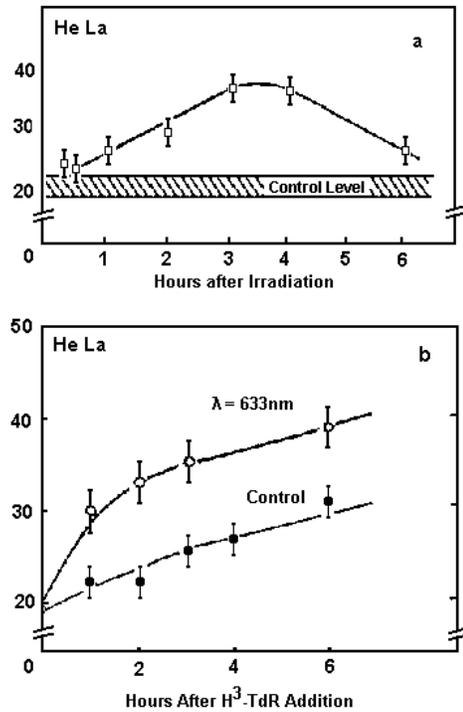


Fig. 7. Changes in (a) labelling index (percent of cells in the S phase of the cellular cycle, measured by pulse labelling with H^3 thymidine at various times, after irradiation), and (b) variation of the percent of labelled cells during continuous labelling with H^3 thymidine after irradiation exponentially growing He-La cells with a He-Ne laser ($D = 10^2 J/m^2$) (Karu et al. 1987a).

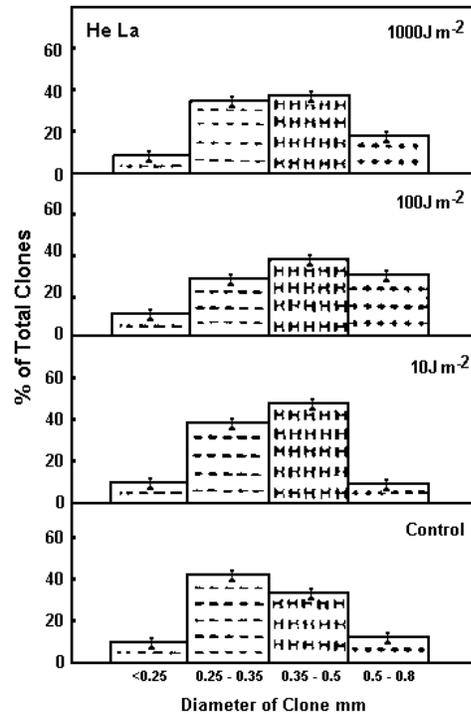


Fig. 8. Histograms of clone size distribution of cell populations at 14d after irradiation with a He-Ne laser (Karu et al. 1987a).

The rise or the intracellular H^+ concentration controls allosterically the activity or the Na^+/H^+ anti-porter situated in the cellular membrane (Pouyssegur 1985; Zilberstein et al. 1982). This enzyme plays a key part in the alkalinisation or the cytoplasm. A short-term increase in the intracellular pH is one of the necessary components involved in the transmission of mitogenic signals in the cell (Pouyssegur 1985).

The increase or the intracellular hydrogen ion and ATP concentrations in eucaryotic cells causes activation of other membrane ion carriers as well, such as Na^+ , Ka^+ and $-ATPase$.

Activation of this enzyme leads to an increase in $[K^+]$, (intracellular concentration of K^+) and a decrease in $[Na^+]$, (intracellular concentration of Na^+), and E_m (membrane potential). The variation of these parameters is a necessary component in the control of the proliferation activity or the cell (Cone 1971; Rozengurt and Mendoza 1980). It should be borne in mind that changes in the respiratory chain also alter the flow of Ca^+ between mitochondria and cytoplasm, which in turn affects the ratio $[Ca^{2+}]_1/[Ca^{2+}]_0$

Note that alteration of the cellular homeostasis parameters entails a whole cascade of re-actions and the casual relationships arc very difficult to establish unambiguously. The scheme suggested above is a possible version only. For instance the relationships between changes of almost all parameters of cellular homeostasis and activation of proliferation arc established.

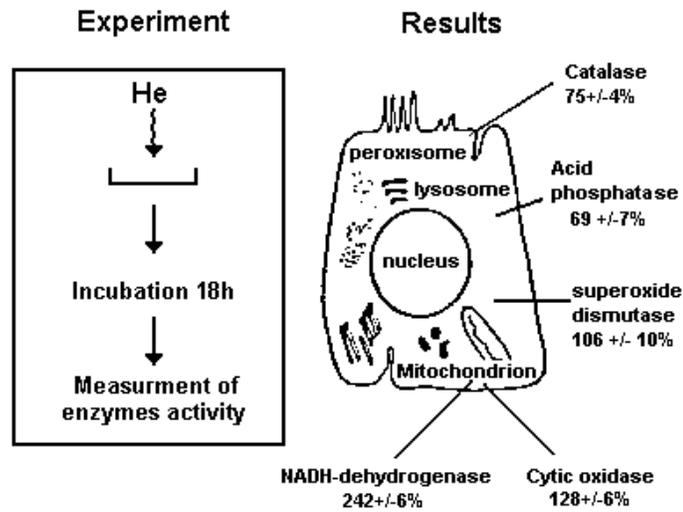


Fig 9 Changes in the activity of various enzymes 18h after the irradiation of *Torulopsis sphaerica* with a He-Ne laser ($D=1 \times 10^3 \text{ J/m}^2$) Detailed results are given in paper of Fedoseyeva et al. 1986

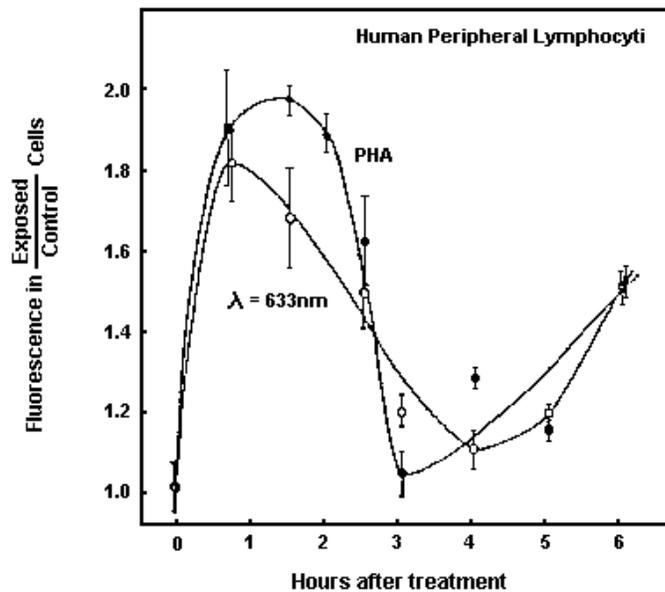


Fig 10 The binding of acridine orange to the DNA of human peripheral lymphocytes: (1) after irradiation of lymphocytes with a He-Ne laser at a dose of 56 J/m^2 or (2) after phytohemagglutinin ($4 \mu\text{g/ml}$) (Fedoseyeva et al. 1988)

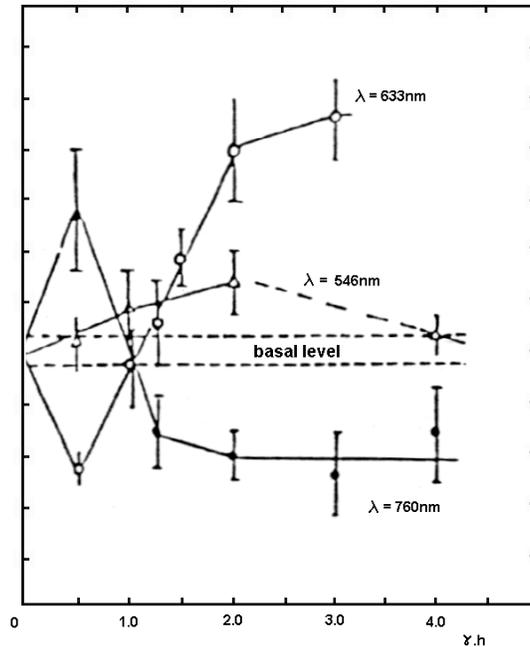


Fig 11. Changes in intracellular cAMP level after irradiation of ese hamster fibroblasts with light at (1) 633nm. (2) 760nm or (3) 546nm at doses of $1 \times 10^2 \text{ J/m}^2$, as described in the papers Karu et al. 1985. 1987b.

Changes in the redox level of the cell, as well as in the concentration of mono and divalent ions may affect the metabolism by influencing the cAMP level (Whitfield 1980). Our results (Fig. 11), as well as experimental test about changes in cAMP in eucaryotic microorganisms after irradiation with blue light (Coben and Robinson 1978, Kritsky et al. 1984), provide grounds to believe that the action of visible light upon the cell might be connected with regulation of cellular metabolism via cAMP. Variations in cAMP level, as well as in the electro-physiological properties of cellular membranes follow blue light irradiation (Kritsky et al. 1984) show that cellular membrane participates in the photo-signal chain. According to the universally adopted point, signals from substances influencing the eucaryotic cell proliferation (growth factors, mitogens of the A type) are perceived and transferred by the cellular membrane. Should our suggestion concerning the respiratory chain as a primary photo-acceptor be correct, the photo-signal transmission chain is longer (Fig. 12) as compared with those for mitogens.

Accommodation (behavioural) responses or bacteria, including *E. coli*, are connected with the phenomenon of proton motive force ($\rho \mu_{H^+}$) sensing (Taylor 1983; Glaev 1984). The bacteria use their respiratory chain as a sensor for a behavioural response (e.g., aero-taxis, cheotaxis, etc.). In this case, any factor (including light quantum) that alters the $\rho \mu_{H^+}$ can be a stimulus. This - the possible role of light as a growth-controlling signal for procaryotic micro-organisms be stated as follows: The light signal perceived by the cell respiratory chain is a case of the more general class of sensory reception reactions. These reactions share the same initial stage (a variation of the $\rho \mu_{H^+}$, while signal realization mechanisms (signal transduction chains), and end results differ. The possible scheme of the regulation of the *E. coli* growth rate by visible light is shown in Karu 1988.

The proposal of the respiratory chain as the primary photo-acceptor in the cell allows one to explain the problem of positive and negative effects of visible light in the following way. In section 3 of this paper, the positive (stimulating) effects of irradiation were described. But there exists a tremendous amount of data describing an inhibitory or even lethal effect of visible light (especially blue and fluorescent light) on various types of cells. These data are summarized for *E. coli* and mammalian cells in Tables 1 and 2. For these negative (inhibitory) effects, the respiratory chain components as primary photo-acceptors are discussed (Epel 1973). An analysis of these data makes it possible to suggest that the dose and intensity of light used determine the sense of the end macro-effect. By way of example the stimulative (Fig. 2) and lethal (Webb and Brown 1976) action spectra of blue light on *E. coli* both have maxima at 404-460 nm. The stimulating doses of blue light fall within the range between 10 and 10^3 J/m^2 (Fig. 3), while a lethal effect is caused by doses of 10^6 - 10^8 J/m^2 (Webb and Brown 1976). In both cases, the flavin components of the respiratory chain are discussed as photo-acceptors (Tiphlova and Karu 1987a, Webb and Brown 1976).

The fact that irradiation of cells with visible light or the same wavelength and absorption of this light by the same molecules have both a positive effect (acceleration or cell division) and a negative effect (damage to intra-cellular systems and even death of cells) can be explained as follows. There are two processes involving the same primary photo-processes - electronic excitation. One of them is the acceleration of electron transfer in the redox pairs in some sections of the respiratory chain, and the other is the transfer of excitation energy to oxygen to form l_{o_2} (as will be recalled, flavins and cytochromes are photo-sensitizers). At low doses, the former process predominates (the result being the redox control of cellular metabolism), and at high doses photodynamic damage occurs. This problem is discussed in more detail in Karu 1989. The shape of dose-effect dependencies (Figs. 3 and 4) indicates also the possibility of the existence of more than one primary process. It is important to emphasize that the effective dose range for achieving a stimulative effect is rather narrow and is determined for every kind of cell.

5. THE MAGNITUDE OF THE 'BIOSTIMULATION' EFFECT AND ITS DEPENDENCY ON THE PHYSIOLOGICAL STATE OF THE CELL BEFORE IRRADIATION.

The experiments with chemicals (auxin, KI, Na dithionite) or procedures (decreasing pO_2 in a nutrient medium dichromatic irradiation) known to influence the action of potential photo-acceptors indicated that in these cases, when the treatment before irradiation lowers the redox potential in the cell, the magnitude of the irradiation effect is stronger. The opposite is true when the redox potential of the cell is great enough (optimal or near optimal from the functional point of view) before the irradiation and when the effect of light is weak, if even present (Karu 1986b, 1988; Tiphlova and Karu 1987a, 1987b, 1988). It means that the photosensitivity of cells is not an all-or-nothing phenomenon but depends to various degrees on the physiological state of the cell before irradiation.

In the case of mammalian cellular culture after irradiation with a He-Ne, the growth rate of slow growing but not fast growing subpopulations was increased (fig 8). In our experiments with micro-organisms we established seasonal variations of possible growth stimulation.

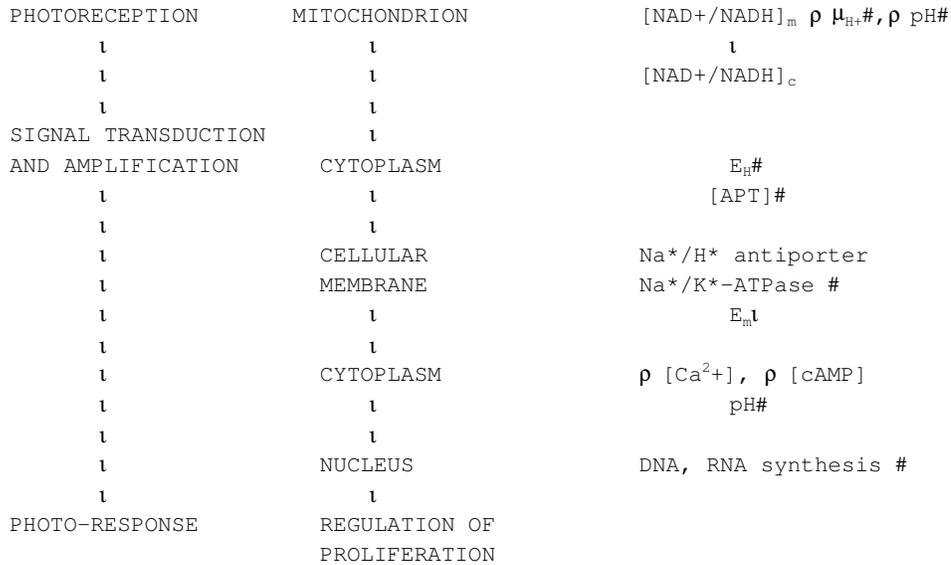


Fig. 12. Possible photo signal transduction chains for proliferation stimulation by monochromic hands of visible light, ρ μ_H#, ρ pH#, ρ ×# - increase in photo-motive force, proton gradient and electrical potential of mitochondria membrane; [ATP]# - increase in ATP concentration; E_H# -increase in cellular redox potential (change into more oxidized direction); [NAD⁺/NADH]_m #γ [NAD⁺/NADH]_c #- oxidation of the NADH pool in mitochondrion causing changes in NADH pool of cytoplasm; Na⁺/H⁺ anti-porter #. Na⁺.K⁺-ATPase - activation of these enzymes; E_m ↓ decrease of electrical potential of cellular membrane; pH# - decrease of H⁺ concentration in cell ρ [Ca²⁺][cAMP] - changes in intracellular concentration of Ca²⁺ and cAMP: DNA.RNA synthesis # - activation of nuclei acids synthesis.

Table 1 Action of blue and red light on the growth of E.coli WP2

	Growth stimulation		Growth inhibition	
	Dose (J/m2)	Reference	Dose (J/m2)	Reference
Blue				
λ̄ = 400-450nm	10-10 ²	Fig 2 this paper	10 ⁴ -10 ⁸	Webb & Brown 1976
				D'Aousi et al 1980,
				Jagger 1983
Red				
λ̄ = 620-630nm	10 ² -10 ¹	Fig 3 this paper	~10 ²	Webb & Brown 1976

Table 2. The action of various bands of visible light on proliferation activity of mammalian cellular cultures.

		Stimulation		Inhibition	
Wavelength	Culture	Dose (J/m2)		Dose (J/m2)	Reference
>400	HU-274	~10 ⁴		10 ² -10 ⁴	Parshad & Sanford 1977a.b
441.6	Human embryonic	10 ² -10 ⁴		10 ² -10 ⁴	Stepanov et al 1977
632.8	skin fibroblasts				
694.3					
741					
Cool white fluorescent lamp	Human embryonic diploid lung fibroblasts	Dose not shown Exposition everyday during 150d - 2h cell went through 70 div 4h: 60 div. Dark Cont: 53 div		Dose not shown The cells exposed constantly died within 2-3 days	Litwin 1972
405	Human Lymphoblastoid Cell			~10 ³	Tyrrell et al 1984
630-633	Chinese hamster fibroblasts	~10 ³		~10 ⁴	Abvakhitova et al 1982
632.8	L	7, 5		-	Gamaleya et al 1983
632.8	Human Embryonic foreskin fibroblast	~10 ²		-	Boulton Marshall 1986
632.8	HeLa	~10 ²		-	Fig 6a this paper
546-579	HeLa	Dose not shown dose rate 40-50 W/cm ²		Dose not shown dose rate 100-300 W/cm ²	Klein and Edsall 1967

Illustrated in Fig. 13 are three examples. There is practically no growth photo-stimulation in summer, and in winter the effect is maximal. It was proposed that the seasonal variation in the magnitude of the effect depends on the growth rate of the culture before irradiation (Karu 1987). This means that in summer when the growth rate of a culture is high (a maximal rate is possible under these fixed experimental conditions), the stimulation of its growth by light appears to be impossible.

Here is an example of how neglect of the physiological state of cells before irradiation can lead to an incorrect conclusion. The main conclusion in the paper of Boulton and Marshall 1986 was that irradiation with a He-Ne laser increased the proliferation rate of a cellular culture, but that with non-coherent light at $\lambda = 633 \pm 9 \text{ nm}$ the proliferation rate did not increase. Comparing the growth rates of the non-irradiated cultures in both experiments, it becomes clear that the culture used for irradiation with non-coherent light divided more rapidly than the one used for irradiation with a He-Ne laser, hence, the light stimulation of the faster growing culture was weaker than that of the slower growing one. This is the real reason for the practically absent effect of non-coherent light, and not the absence of light coherence.

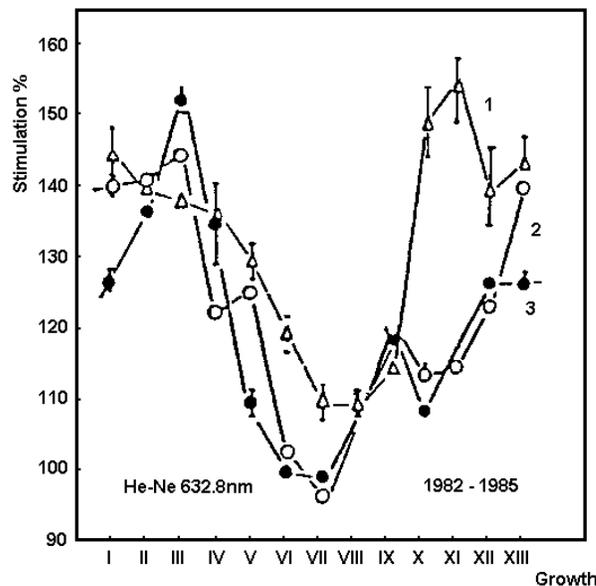


Fig. 13. Variation of maximal growth stimulation of microorganisms during the year, (1: E.coli. 2: T.sphaerica, 3: S. Ludwigii). Average date from full years 1982-85. The irradiation was always performed at the same time (at approximately 11a.m. with E.coli and at approximately 6 p.m. with yeasts).

6. THE MECHANISM OF LOW-POWER LASER THERAPY

The "local" effects of photo-therapy in treating trophic ulcers and indolent wounds with the He-Ne laser, the He-Cd laser or with diode lasers operating in the far-red region may be explained by the action of low-intensity visible light on cell proliferation. In the area of such injuries, conditions are created (low oxygen concentration and pH, lack of necessary nutrients) which prevent proliferation, so that the cells enter the G_0 phase

or remain in the G_1 phase. For such cells, light may serve as a signal to increase proliferation. When irradiating fresh wounds, the effect of irradiation can be minimal, if even present at all. An effect does happen in cases when the proliferation is active and the regeneration of tissue integrity occurs at a more or less maximal (normal) rate. This may be the reason no photo-therapeutic effect is often observed when irradiating fresh experimental wounds and proves effective in the case of "old" and "bad" ones. Of course, it should be borne in mind that proliferation control, in the case of a whole organism, is a much more complex process compared to a cell culture, because in the organism a hierarchy or proliferation control structures exist.

In clinical practice, low-intensity laser radiation is used for treating not only local lesions (trophic ulcers and wounds), but very often 'systemic' effects have also been found (i.e. the effect is observed at some distance from the irradiation site) (Basford 1986). It is exactly this universality of the action of low-intensity light (a "cure for all diseases") that gives rise to some scepticism, although vast statistical material has been amassed to date proving that such a treatment has a positive effect (Gamaleya 1977: Kryuk et al. 1986: Basford 1986 and references made therein). The positive effects of phototherapy in the case of 'systemic' treatment (e.g., pain relief) can be explained by the fact that low-intensity light (blue, red) acts on excitable cells (myocardial cells, neurons) to generate action potentials in them, and to alter their beating frequency, etc. (Arvanitaki and Chalazonitis 1947; Salet et al. 1979; Uzdenskii 1982). Proof can be found in these works that photoreception occurs on the level of mitochondria and that the intensification or respiratory metabolism of the excitable cell affects the electro-physiological properties of the cell membrane.

It is quite possible that the universality of low-power laser effects is due to the universal photo-biological mechanism - variation of the redox state of the respiratory chain components leading to the changes in the physiological state of the cell (i.e. the increase of the proliferation activity of non-excitable cells or changes in activity potentials of excitable cells).

7. CONCLUSIONS

(1) Laser bio-stimulation is a photo-biological phenomenon. Coherent light is not needed.

(2) Primary photo-acceptors are components of the respiratory chain. This explains the universality of low power laser effects.

(3) The respiratory chain components can be the photo-acceptors in the case of cellular metabolism stimulation, as well as inhibition depending on the dose of light. At low doses, irradiation causes redox regulation or cellular metabolism; at high doses photodynamic damage prevails.

(4) Light quantum is only a trigger for cellular metabolism regulation. This explains the low doses and intensities needed.

(5) The magnitude of the bio-stimulation effect depends on the physiological state of the cell before irradiation. This explains why the bio-stimulation effect is not always possible.

(6) The therapeutic effects of low-power laser irradiation can be explained by an increase or proliferation of G_0 and G_1 cells or by changes in the physiological activity of excitable cells.

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