



DECEMBER 11-12, 2025
۲۱ و ۲۰ آذر ماه ۱۴۰۴



دومین کنگره
پلاسما پزشکی ایران

The 2nd Congress on Plasma Medicine

دبیرخانه دائمی کنگره
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Effect of Cold Atmospheric Plasma on CT26 Murine Colorectal Carcinoma Cells

Glavizh Adibhesami^{1,2}, Faezeh Vakhshiteh¹, Roya Ghods^{1,2}, Zahra Madjd^{1,2*}

¹Oncopathology Research Center, Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS), Tehran, Iran

²Department of Molecular Medicine, Faculty of Advanced Technologies in Medicine, Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS), Tehran, Iran

OPEN ACCESS

Citation:

Adibhesami G, Vakhshiteh F, Ghods R, Madjd Z. Effect of Cold Atmospheric Plasma on CT26 Murine Colorectal Carcinoma Cells. *Iran Biomed J. Supplementary* (2-2026): 10.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Colorectal cancer remains a major clinical challenge. Cold atmospheric plasma (CAP) generates reactive oxygen and nitrogen species that selectively damage cancer cells, triggering oxidative stress and cell death.

Materials and Methods: A helium CAP jet (AC, 6.8 kV, 12–13 kHz) was used to treat CT26 murine colorectal carcinoma cells. The cells were seeded at 1×10^5 cells/mL in 24-well plates and exposed to CAP for 30–240 s at fixed voltage, frequency, gas flow, and 1 cm jet-sample distance. The levels of hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) in PBS and DMEM/F12 + 10% FBS were quantified calorimetrically using a horseradish peroxidase-based kit. Intracellular reactive oxygen species (ROS) were measured by flow cytometry. Cell viability was assessed using the MTT assay, which measures mitochondrial metabolic activity by reducing tetrazolium to formazan.

Results and Discussion: CAP exposure elevated extracellular H_2O_2 over time. In the PBS solution, H_2O_2 levels increased from 36.3 μM to 342 μM over 30–240 s. In the DMEM/F12 + FBS solution, levels increased from 92 μM to 360 μM over 240 s. Intracellular ROS levels rose from 61 μM (control) to 79 μM over 180 s. CAP treatment reduced viability in a duration-dependent manner, decreasing to 82% at 30 s and 18% at 240 s. The IC_{50} was determined to be between 90 and 120 seconds, which is consistent with CAP's cytotoxic action via oxidative mechanisms. These findings support the use of CAP as a selective antitumor modality for colorectal cancer, motivating the optimization of exposure parameters and media conditions to maximize therapeutic windows.

Conclusion: Direct helium CAP produces oxidative stress in CT26 cells by elevating extracellular H_2O_2 and intracellular ROS levels, leading to a reduction in cell viability with an IC_{50} of approximately 90–120 s.



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Keywords: Cold atmospheric plasma, Colorectal cancer, Reactive oxygen and nitrogen species

Corresponding Author: Zahra Madjd

Oncopathology Research Center, Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS), Tehran, Iran; Department of Molecular Medicine, Faculty of Advanced Technologies in Medicine, Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS), Tehran, Iran; E-mail: zahra.madjd@yahoo.com



Iranian Biomedical Journal Supplementary (February 2026): 10