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# Examining the role of cigarette smoke and nicotine in mesenchymal stromal cell wound healing and osteogenesis

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**Abstract**

This paper investigates the impact of cigarette smoke and nicotine on the wound healing and osteogenesis potential of mesenchymal stromal cells (MSCs). Cigarette smoking is known to impair wound healing and bone regeneration, but the specific effects of nicotine, one of its major components, on MSC function remain unclear. Through in vitro experiments, this study examines the influence of cigarette smoke extract (CSE) and nicotine on MSC proliferation, migration, wound closure, and osteogenic differentiation. The findings reveal significant alterations in MSC behavior in response to cigarette smoke and nicotine exposure, shedding light on the mechanisms underlying impaired wound healing and osteogenesis in smokers.

**Keywords:** Cigarette smoke, nicotine, mesenchymal stromal cells, wound healing, osteogenesis

## 1. Introduction

Cigarette smoking is a leading cause of preventable morbidity and mortality worldwide, affecting various organ systems and physiological processes. One notable consequence of smoking is impaired wound healing and compromised bone regeneration, which can lead to delayed recovery, increased risk of infections, and skeletal disorders. Mesenchymal stromal cells (MSCs) play a crucial role in tissue repair and bone formation, but their function may be compromised in the presence of cigarette smoke constituents, particularly nicotine.

Nicotine, a primary addictive component of cigarettes, has been implicated in the pathogenesis of smoking-related complications. However, its specific effects on MSC-mediated wound healing and osteogenesis remain poorly understood. Understanding the impact of cigarette smoke and nicotine on MSC behavior is essential for elucidating the mechanisms underlying smoking-related tissue damage and developing targeted therapeutic interventions.

## 2. Literature Review

Prior studies have demonstrated the detrimental effects of cigarette smoking on wound healing and bone regeneration, implicating impaired angiogenesis, inflammation, and extracellular matrix remodeling as contributing factors (Cyprus GN *et al*., 2018; Harrell CR *et al*., 2022) [1, 2]. Nicotine, through its interaction with nicotinic acetylcholine receptors (nAChRs), has been shown to modulate cellular processes involved in wound repair and osteogenesis, including cell proliferation, migration, and differentiation (Bakkappa G *et al*. 2023; Aspera-Werz RH *et al*., 2021) [3, 4]. However, conflicting evidence exists regarding the effects of nicotine on MSC function, with some studies reporting stimulatory effects on cell proliferation and osteogenic differentiation, while others suggest inhibitory or cytotoxic effects (Greenberg JM, 2017 *et al*., Sreekumar V, 2018) [5, 6]. Furthermore, few studies have investigated the direct impact of cigarette smoke extract (CSE), which contains a complex mixture of chemicals in addition to nicotine, on MSC behavior.

## 3. Materials and Methods

In this study, human bone marrow-derived MSCs were cultured in vitro and exposed to varying concentrations of CSE and nicotine to assess their effects on wound healing and osteogenesis. Cell proliferation and viability were evaluated using MTT assay, while cell migration was assessed through scratch wound healing assay. Alkaline phosphatase (ALP) activity and mineralization were measured to evaluate osteogenic differentiation potential.

## 4. Results

**Table 1:** Effects of CSE and Nicotine on MSC Proliferation and Viability

| Treatment | Concentration | Cell Viability (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Control | - | 100 |
| CSE | Low | 85.6 |
| | Medium | 72.3 |
| | High | 56.9 |
| Nicotine | Low | 92.4 |
| | Medium | 88.7 |
| | High | 74.5 |

**Table 2:** Effects of CSE and Nicotine on MSC Migration

| Treatment | Concentration | Wound Closure (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Control | - | 100 |
| CSE | Low | 68.2 |
| | Medium | 52.7 |
| | High | 39.4 |
| Nicotine | Low | 78.9 |
| | Medium | 63.5 |
| | High | 49.8 |

**Table 3:** Effects of CSE and Nicotine on MSC Osteogenic Differentiation

| Treatment | Concentration | ALP Activity (OD/mg protein) | Mineralization (OD/mg protein) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Control | - | 0.25 | 0.18 |
| CSE | Low | 0.17 | 0.12 |
| | Medium | 0.12 | 0.09 |
| | High | 0.08 | 0.05 |
| Nicotine | Low | 0.22 | 0.15 |
| | Medium | 0.19 | 0.13 |
| | High | 0.14 | 0.10 |

## 4. Discussion

The results indicate that both CSE and nicotine exert concentration-dependent effects on MSC proliferation, migration, and osteogenic differentiation. Exposure to CSE and high concentrations of nicotine significantly impairs cell viability, migration, and osteogenic differentiation potential. These findings suggest that cigarette smoke constituents, including nicotine, have deleterious effects on MSC function, which may contribute to impaired wound healing and osteogenesis observed in smokers.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, cigarette smoke and nicotine negatively impact the wound healing and osteogenesis potential of MSCs, potentially contributing to smoking-related complications. Further research is warranted to elucidate the underlying mechanisms and identify potential therapeutic targets to mitigate the adverse effects of smoking on tissue repair and bone regeneration.

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