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JOURNAL ARTICLE

Dose and time relationships in the endocrine response of the irradiated adult rat testis

J. I. Delic, J. H. Hendry, I. D. Morris and S. M. Shalet

The dose- and time-dependent responses for the interstitial and tubular compartments in irradiated adult rat testes are described. Leydig cell dysfunction, as indicated by increased serum LH (to a maximum of 385% of control after 5 Gy) and decreased serum T (to a minimum of 30% of control after 10 Gy), was observed at 8 weeks postirradiation. Subsequent recovery of Leydig cell function was then observed, so that after 9 months serum T was normal but LH was still marginally elevated. The dysfunction, with a threshold of about 4 to 5

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Gy, was associated with a loss of Leydig cells from the testis. Spermatogenic damage was observed; after doses of 3 Gy and above a marked dose-response was recorded as assessed by counts of tubule cross sections exhibiting spermatogenesis. Reduced serum levels of androgen binding protein indicated Sertoli cell dysfunction at 8 weeks after 3 Gy and above, with values of less than one half of those seen in the controls. Serum FSH also was elevated to between 150% and 200% of control, and after 9 months closely reflected androgen binding protein changes. Unlike the Leydig cell, no recovery with time was observed for this aspect of Sertoli cell function.

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