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THE EFFECT OF CECALLY-INFUSED PROPIONATE

ON SERUM LIPIDS IN PIGS

BY

KATHLEEN ELIZABETH BEAULIEU (C)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN

NUTRITION

DEPARTMENT OF FOODS AND NUTRITION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1990

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ISBN 0-315-65080-X

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NAME OF AUTHOR: KATHLEEN ELIZABETH BEAULIEU

TITLE OF THESIS: THE EFFECT OF CECALLY-INFUSED

PROPIONATE ON SERUM LIPIDS IN PIGS

DEGREE: MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUTRITION

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1990

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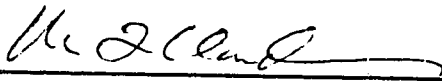
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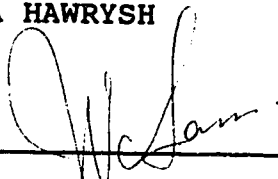
ON SERUM LIPIDS IN PIGS

SUBMITTED BY   KATHLEEN ELIZABETH BEAULIEU   IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUTRITION.

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FOR MICHAEL EMERSON BEAULIEU

TO WHOM I WILL DEDICATE SO MUCH MORE THAN THIS

ABSTRACT

Studies have shown the dietary supplementation of water-soluble fiber to be more effective at serum cholesterol lowering than the supplementation of water-insoluble fiber. Water-soluble fiber sources are more easily fermented by colonic bacteria than water-insoluble fiber sources. Short chain fatty acids are major end products of colonic fiber fermentation. It has been hypothesized that colonic absorption of the 3-carbon short chain fatty acid (propionate) is responsible for the observed hypocholesterolemic effect of water-soluble fiber supplementation.

To test this hypothesis, 9 barrows (35 kg) were surgically fitted with a T-cannula at the distal ileum and a cecal cannula. Pigs were fed a high saturated fat diet (10% fat w/w, 109 g feed/$kg^{0.75}$ per day). Pigs were continually infused for 14 day periods with either propionate (36 mmol/$kg^{0.75}$ per day) or physiological saline at a rate of 1.05 ml/min in a crosso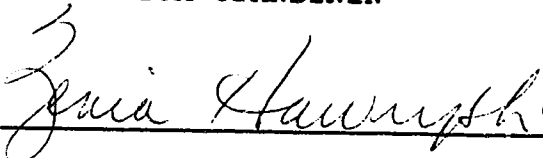ver design. Blood samples were collected by jugular puncture after each infusion period. Serum lipoproteins were separated by density using sequential floatation ultracentrifugation. Serum triglyceride, total cholesterol, VLDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and HDL cholesterol were determined enzymatically. Fecal samples (72 hour) and ileal digesta samples (24 hour) were collected during both periods to determine nutrient digestibility and

bile acid content. Serum triglyceride levels (mean $\pm$ SEM) were 50.5 $\pm$ 3.0 mg/dl and 43.3 $\pm$ 4.2 mg/dl after propionate and saline infusions respectively ($p \leq 0.17$). Serum cholesterol was higher after propionate infusion (133.9 $\pm$ 4.3 mg/dl) than after saline infusion (116.7 $\pm$ 4.2 mg/dl) ($p \leq 0.011$). LDL cholesterol was higher after propionate infusion (72.8 $\pm$ 3.1 mg/dl) than after saline infusion (63.2 $\pm$ 1.8 mg/dl) ($p \leq 0.017$). Differences in VLDL cholesterol and HDL cholesterol were not detected between infusion treatments.

Differences in nutrient digestibilities were not detected between treatments. The pooled digestibilities were 79.0% $\pm$ 2.0% and 84.0% $\pm$ 0.5% for ileal and fecal nitrogen, and 75.1% $\pm$ 1.8% and 87.1% $\pm$ 0.03% for ileal and fecal organic matter, respectively. Differences in ileal and fecal bile acid, cholesterol, and total sterol contents were not detected between treatments. VLDL cholesterol was negatively correlated with ileal cholesterol ($p \leq 0.04$), and apparent colonic disappearance of cholesterol ($p \leq 0.03$). Differences in liver cholesterol were not detected between treatments.

The increase in serum cholesterol after propionate infusion, primarily in LDL cholesterol, was not attributable to changes in nutrient digestibility, or sterol excretion. It cannot be concluded that cecally-derived propionate is responsible for the serum lipid lowering effect observed in water-soluble fiber supplementation studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

$°C$ = degrees celsius

GI = gastrointestinal

h = hour

HDL = high density lipoprotein

HMG-CoA = (3)-hydroxy-(3)-methylglutaryl coenzyme A

Ho = hypothesis

LDL = low density lipoprotein

min = minute

n = number of experimental units

p = probability

R = Pearson correlation coefficient

SCFA = short chain fatty acid

SEM = standard error of the mean

VLDL = very low density lipoprotein

INTRODUCTION

The increased consumption of dietary fiber has been significantly correlated to a decreased incidence of coronary heart disease, obesity, and atherosclerosis (Burkitt and Trowell, 1975). Research through controlled studies has confirmed many beneficial health effects result from high fiber diets, although mechanisms of action remain unclear.

The American Diabetic Association (1988), and American Heart Association (1984) have recommended generous fiber intakes of 20 - 30 g/day for those afflicted with diabetes and cardiovascular disease based on the accumulation of evidence in the last 15 years. The consumption of fiber for prevention of disease states is also considered important (Health and Welfare Canada, 1985; Food and Drug Administration, 1987).

Studies of high fiber diets have shown that water-soluble fibers exhibit more consistent effects on lowering serum lipid levels than water-insoluble fibers (Anderson and Chen, 1979; Kies, 1985). Water-soluble fibers are usually more easily fermented in the colon (McBurney and Thompson, 1989). The major non-gaseous organic end products of fiber fermentation in the colon are acetate, propionate, and butyrate. These short chain fatty acids (SCFAs) are absorbed

by mucosal cells and can be utilized as energy by the gut or metabolized by the liver. Enhanced SCFA production and absorption may be responsible for some of the beneficial health effects of dietary fiber.

The odd-number carbon chain structure of propionate may alter cholesterol synthesis through decreased hepatic HMG-CoA synthase activity (Bush and Milligan, 1971; Thacker et al, 1981; Lowe and Tubbs, 1985). This enzyme mediates formation of a precursor to cholesterol synthesis. Another proposed mechanism for the observed serum lipid lowering effect of dietary fiber is that bile acids and other sterols bind to fiber in the small intestine, preventing reabsorption (Kay and Truswell, 1977; Vahouny et al, 1980). Enhanced bile acid excretion would decrease the sterol pool in the body, and may decrease serum cholesterol.

The effect of colonic propionate absorption on serum lipids cannot be separated from the upper GI effects of fiber consumption when high fiber diets are studied. An alternate model must be used to examine the effect of propionate on serum cholesterol to determine the contribution of propionate to the serum lipid lowering effects of fermentable fiber consumption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1   TYPES OF FIBER

Mechanisms of action for the observed benefits of increased fiber consumption will be more easily understood if characteristics of different types of fibers are distinguished and individually assessed. Recommended intakes do not presently differentiate between types of fiber because of conflicting reports as to whether some fiber sources are more beneficial than others in promoting certain health effects. There is also uncertainty in analytical determination and categorization of the type of fiber a food contains (Bingham, 1987).

Dietary fiber is defined as plant polysaccharides, lignin, and other plant components such as waxes and cutins that are resistant to hydrolysis by the digestive enzymes of man (Trowell et al, 1976). Non-starch polysaccharides (NSP) can be divided into water-soluble and water-insoluble fractions. Lignin is a water-insoluble fiber. Table 1 shows a categorization of these fibers and their main sources (Anderson, 1986). The solubility of these fibers distinguishes them analytically but does not necessarily group them according to physiological effects.

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TABLE 1

Classification of dietary fiber and fiber sources[1]

Type of fiber	Plant component	Major food sources
Insoluble		
Non-carbo-hydrates	Lignin	-all plants -mainly whole grains, seeds, and woody parts of vegetables
Carbohydrate	Cellulose Hemi-cellulose	-vegetables, fruits -wheat, bran, rye, and whole grains
Soluble		
Carbohydrate	Pectins Gums	-citrus fruits and vegetables -oat products and legumes

[1] Adapted from Anderson, 1986.

2   UPPER INTESTINAL EFFECTS

Trace minerals such as Fe, Zn, Cu, and Ca have been shown to bind to certain dietary fibers in the small intestine, decreasing their availability to the absorptive surfaces of the intestinal mucosa (Platt and Clydesdale, 1985; Garcia-Lopez and Lee, 1985). Functional groups of the fiber molecules can bind metals at specific or non-specific binding sites (Platt and Clydesdale, 1987).

Malabsorption of starch in the upper GI has also been shown to result from fiber supplementation, providing starch as a fermentable substrate to the microbes in the colon. A more viscous and bulky matrix is formed in the small intestine upon fiber consumption, holding some of the nutrient content away from the absorptive surfaces of the mucosa. Although a delay in gastric emptying has been attributed to the increased viscosity of digesta when water-soluble fibers are consumed .(Leeds et al, 1981), this does not result in enhanced absorption of nutrients.

Sterols such as cholesterol and bile acids may bind to fibers in the small intestine, resulting in decreased absorption or reabsorption of these molecules (Bosaeus et al, 1986; Hillman et al, 1986; Bosaeus and Andersson, 1987). In studies with human ileostomy patients, the addition of pectin

to low fiber diets increased bile acid and cholesterol content of the ileal effluent, indicative of reduced upper intestinal absorption of bile acids and dietary cholesterol (Bosaeus et al, 1986).

3   COLONIC EFFECTS

Water-insoluble fibers such as wheat bran have been found to increase fecal bulk (Cummings, 1982). Most of this increase is attributable to the unfermented cellulosic fiber content of the feces (Cummings et al, 1978). The resulting large, wet stools and decreased intestinal transit time (Roehrig, 1988) are laxative properties mainly observed upon water-insoluble fiber ingestion (Kochen et al, 1985), although water-soluble types have also been shown to be effective as laxatives (Smith et al, 1980). Decreased intestinal transit time is also associated with water-soluble fiber supplementation (Roehrig, 1988) but a greater decrease is seen with water-insoluble fibers.

Fermentable fibers such as pectins and gums increase fecal nitrogen content due to the increased presence of bacterial cells (Cummings et al, 1979). As very little undigested fiber is present in feces, an increase in stool size is not always seen (Nyman and Asp, 1982; Penagini et al, 1986). Increased fecal fat, sterol, and bile acid content can

also occur with supplementation of a water-soluble fiber source (Reddy et al, 1980; Kelley et al, 1981).

Upon passage of dietary fiber into the colon, gut bacteria partially or wholly degrade the fiber. The bacteria of the human gut are mostly anaerobic, saccharolytic organisms (Table 2) and comprise 55% of total fecal solids (Stephen and Cummings, 1980). Many substrates passed on from the small intestine can be degraded by bacteria in the colon. Fiber fractions, malabsorbed starches or proteins, and mucins can be used as substrates for colonic organisms (Grimble, 1989). High fiber diets that provide fermentable substrate to the colon stimulate colonic microbial proliferation.

The primary fermentation products of fiber are carbon dioxide, methane, hydrogen, water, and short chain fatty acids (SCFAs) (Miller and Wolin, 1979). The majority of SCFAs produced are acetate, propionate, and butyrate which are organic acids containing 2, 3, and 4 carbons, respectively (Hoverstad, 1986). All dietary fibers are not equal as fermentable substrates. Generally, water-soluble fibers are more fermentable than water-insoluble fibers. Quantities of total SCFAs produced per gram of dietary fiber as well as the ratio of these acids (acetate : propionate : butyrate) differ among fiber sources when fermented in vitro with human fecal

TABLE 2

Gut bacterial composition in humans and pigs

Human (% population)[1]		Pig (% population)[2]	
Bacteroides fragilis ss vulgaris	11.8	Bacteroides ruminicola	33.5
Eubacterium erofaciens	9.9	Selenomonas ruminantium	20.8
Bacteroides fragilis ss thetaiotaomicron	8.9	Lactobacillus acidophilus	7.6
Peptostreptococcus productus	9.4	Butyrivibrio fibrisolvens	6.1
Bacteroides fragilis ss distasonis	6.0	Peptostreptococcus productus	3.0
Fusobacterium prausitzii	4.4	Bacteroides uniformis	3.0
Coprococcus eutactus	3.5	Eubacterium aerofaciens	2.5
Ruminococcus bromii	2.7	Lactobacillus fermentum	2.5
		Bacteroides multiacidus	2.0
		Fusobacterium prausitzii	2.0
		Megasphaera elsdenii	2.0

[1] Holdeman et al, 1976 - Average % of flora in 3 North American men
[2] Robinson et al, 1981 - Average % of flora in 3 pigs

microbiota (McBurney and Thompson, 1989; Tomlin et al, 1989).
SCFA production and utilization is discussed further in
Section 4.

4   EFFECT OF FIBER ON SERUM LIPIDS

Much emphasis in fiber research has been placed on
hypotriglyceridemic and hypocholesterolemic effects. Results,
though inconsistent, have implications for treatment of
hyperlipidemic related conditions.

Feeding 15 g citrus pectin per day for 21 days decreased
the serum cholesterol of nine normolipidemic human subjects
by 13% ($p \leq 0.001$) (Kay and Truswell, 1977). The addition of
5% pectin to a high cholesterol diet for 28 days reduced serum
cholesterol in rats by 9% ($p \leq 0.05$) and liver cholesterol by
27% ($p \leq 0.05$) (Leveille and Sauberlich, 1966). Supplementing
grapefruit pectin to miniature swine on high cholesterol
diets reduced plasma cholesterol by 32% ($p \leq 0.05$) (Baekey et
al, 1987). Other studies have found a serum lipid lowering
effect of pectin-containing diets (Keys et al, 1961; Wells and
Ershoff, 1962; Palmer and Dixon, 1966; Kiriyama et al, 1969;
Durrington et al, 1976; Langley and Thye, 1977; Miettinen and
Tarpila, 1977; Jenkins et al, 1979).

Twelve hyperlipidemic humans fed 30 g guar gum per day in a double blind placebo controlled crossover experiment showed a 9.6% decrease in serum cholesterol ($p \leq 0.05$) (Turner et al, 1990). In six healthy subjects, serum cholesterol decreased by 16% ($p \leq 0.05$) after a two week supplementation period providing 5.7 g guar per day (Penagini et al, 1986). These results are in agreement with serum lipid lowering effects of guar found in other studies (Jenkins et al, 1979; Jenkins et al, 1980; Khan et al, 1981; Simons et al, 1982; McLean Ross et al, 1983; Tuomilehto et al, 1983; Tuomilehto et al, 1983).

Some results of experiments studying the effect of oat and bean product consumption on humans serum cholesterol are shown in Table 3 (Anderson and Gustafson, 1988). Oat bran supplementation (87 g per day) in normolipidemic humans did not significantly lower serum cholesterol compared to isocalori wheat starch supplementation for a six week experime   d (Swain et al, 1990). However, after both treatment   s had about 10% lower serum cholesterol than before suppl   ntation ($p \leq 0.05$). Oat bran supplementation (100 g/day) in 7 hyperlipidemic men for 10 days showed a 13% decrease in serum cholesterol, mainly in the LDL fraction (Kirby et al, 1981)

TABLE 3

Serum lipid response to water-soluble fiber supplementation

Fiber source	Quantity (g/day dry wt)	Duration (weeks)	Subject lipid status[1]	Serum lipids[3] (%change from control)			
				CH	LDL	HDL	TG
oat bran[a]	100	1	HL	-13	-14	(NS)	-5
oat bran[b]	100	3	HL	-19	-23	(NS)	-19
oat bran[c]	100	3	HL	-23	-23	-20	-21
oat bran[d]	50	6	N	-12	--	--	(NS)
canned beans[e]	140[2]	16	HL	-7	(NS)	(NS)	-25
dried beans[b]	115	3	HL	-19	-24	(NS)	(NS)
dried beans[c]	100	3	HL	-23	-23	(NS)	-21
canned beans[f]	122[2]	3	HL	-13	--	--	(NS)
oat bran +beans[b]	41 145[2]	24	HL	-26	-24	(NS)	-25
oat bran +beans[b]	41 145[2]	99	HL	-22	-29	(NS)	--
guar gum[g]	6	2	N	-16	--	--	(NS)

[1] HL - hyperlipidemic, N - normal
[2] wet weight
[3] CH - cholesterol, TG - triglyceride
-- - results not recorded, NS - non-significant results

[a]-Kirby et al, 1981
[b]-Anderson et al, 1984(a)
[c]-Anderson et al, 1984(b)
[d]-Storch et al, 1984

[e]-Jenkins et al, 1983
[f]-Anderson, 1985
[g]-Penagini et al, 1986

Most of the interest lies in lowering blood lipids for hyperlipidemic subjects. Studies examining lipid alterations in normal lipid status subjects have found less consistent results. Lipid control mechanisms may be more resistant to change in healthy subjects whose minimum serum cholesterol may already be achieved, than in subjects with impaired lipid control (Kies, 1985).

The results of wheat bran or cellulose supplementation studies have shown a general lack of serum lipid lowering effects (Kiriyama et al, 1969; Balmer and Zilversmit, 1974; Anderson and Chen, 1979). A comparison of wheat bran and pectin supplementation in humans showed no effect of wheat bran, but a 5% ($p \leq 0.05$) decrease in serum cholesterol after pectin supplementation (Keys et al, 1961). No cholesterol lowering effect was found in rats consuming high cholesterol diets supplemented with 30% wheat bran compared to the low fiber diet control rats (Arvanitakis et al, 1977).

Water-soluble fibers such as pectins, guar gum, oat products and bean products illustrate a more consistent effect on lowering serum lipids than water-insoluble fibers such as cellulose and wheat bran (Tsai et al, 1976; Anderson and Chen, 1979; Story, 1985; Vigne et al, 1987).

Water soluble fibers are more completely fermented upon in vitro fermentation by colonic bacteria (McBurney and Thompson, 1989). Inhibition of cholesterol synthesis and enhanced gluconeogenesis are hypothesized results of SCFA uptake from colonic fiber fermentation. This is in agreement with the apparent enhanced hypocholesterolemic effect of the more fermentable fibers.

Lowered cholesterol levels may be due to enhanced bile acid and sterol excretion. Bile acids may bind to fibers in the small intestine resulting in impaired reabsorption (Bosaeus et al, 1986; Hillman et al, 1986; Bosaeus and Andersson, 1987). Synthesis of replacement bile acids from the sterol pool in the body would lower serum cholesterol levels.

HDL cholesterol is generally not as consistently altered by fiber supplementation as is LDL cholesterol. Changes in total serum cholesterol are the most consistent and pronounced. Low density lipoproteins, composed of 45% cholesterol, contain more cholesterol than any other transport lipoprotein (Whitney and Hamilton, 1987). Lowered LDL cholesterol would be expected if total serum cholesterol were markedly decreased. As LDL is mainly responsible for cholesterol deposition to tissues, a decrease in serum quantities infers lowered risk of atherosclerosis.

5   THE EFFECT OF BILE ACID BINDING ON SERUM LIPIDS

It has been shown that dietary fibers adsorb bile acids and may also bind dietary cholesterol in the small intestine, reducing reabsorption or absorption of these sterols (Vahouny et al, 1980). The resulting enhanced sterol excretion may reduce body sterol pools as more hepatic sterols are converted to bile acids to replace losses. This may result in a lowering of serum lipids. However, bile acid excretion does not consistently correlate with decreased serum cholesterol.

The correlation of bile acid binding capacity with serum lipid lowering effects of fiber has not been clearly established. In vitro binding capacities for bile acid binding showed lignin, guar gum, and pectin to have high affinity, and cellulose and wheat bran to have low affinity (Vahouny et al, 1980; Hillman et al, 1986). Variations in methods and in vitro conditions provide discrepancies between the results of in vitro binding capacity studies.

The effect of fiber supplemented meals on small intestinal bile acid contents was studied in rats fed single meals of either cellulose, wheat bran, oat bran, guar gum, lignin, cholestryamine (a bile acid sequestrant), or no supplement (Gallaher and Schneeman, 1986). Total upper-intestinal bile acid contents of the treatment groups two

hours post-meal were not significantly different from the control group with the exception of the lignin diet that showed a 60% increase in total bile acid content. Effects on blood lipids were not determined.

Rats consuming diets supplemented with either pectin, guar gum, psyllium, cellulose, wheat bran, alfalfa, cholestryamine or no supplement for a four week period showed that bile acid output was significantly higher than the control in all supplemented diets except pectin (Vahouny et al, 1987). Serum lipids were not assessed.

Fecal sterol excretion over three days of wheat bran or pectin supplementation in the diets of ileostomy patients was studied by Bosaeus et al, 1986. Results showed that fat, bile acid, and cholesterol excretion was increased only during pectin supplementation.

Hypercholesterolemic subjects supplemented with 15 g/day pectin showed decreases in plasma cholesterol and increases in bile acid, neutral sterol, and fat excretion at the end of a two week supplementation period (Kay and Truswell, 1977). This hypocholesterolemic response is consistent with many other fiber supplementation studies (Kirby et al, 1981; Anderson et al, 1984 (a)). It remains to be determined

whether enhanced sterol excretion occurs independent of hypocholesterolemic effects.

6   SHORT CHAIN FATTY ACIDS

The mechanisms by which dietary fiber supplementation results in beneficial health effects have yet to be elucidated. SCFAs may be important in the regulation of lipid metabolism. Upon review of recent studies, however, there is a lack of conclusive evidence to attribute health effects to SCFA production in the colon. A mechanistic approach is required to look at the effect of colonically-derived SCFAs distinct from upper intestinal effects of fiber consumption.

6.1 PRODUCTION

The quantities of SCFAs produced in the colon as bacterial fermentation products of polysaccharides vary proportionally with dietary fiber intake and the overall digestibility of the meal consumed. The stoichiometrically balanced equation for the colonic production of SCFAs, methane, water, and CO_2 from a 100% fermentable carbohydrate source was calculated (equation 1) (Miller and Wolin, 1979). Equation 1 assumes the production of methane although only an estimated one third of all humans have colonic methane producing bacteria (Bond et al, 1971). SCFAs are assumed to

be the sole non-gaseous organic end products of this reaction. The molar ratio of $CO_2:(CH_4 + H_2O)$ is assumed to be 1:1 for the calculation of this equation (Brieger, 1878; Miller and Wolin, 1979).

$$34.5\ C_6H_{12}O_6 \ \text{------>} \quad 64\ SCFA + 23.75\ CH_4 \qquad (1)$$
$$+ 34.25\ CO_2 + 10.5\ H_2O$$
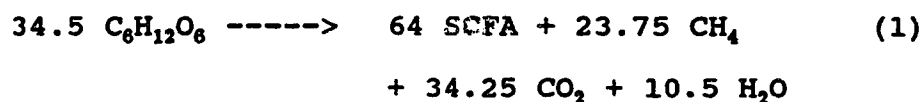
Equation 1 must be adjusted to the molar ratios of SCFAs found in vivo. The three major acids acetate, propionate, and butyrate are produced in an approximate molar ratio of 3.75 : 1.5 : 1 (Cummings, 1981). Equation 2 shows the equation for the physiological molar quantities of SCFAs produced in vivo.

$$335\ C_6H_{12}O_6 \ \text{--->} \quad 360\ acetate + 144\ propionate \qquad (2)$$
$$+ 96\ butyrate + 153\ CH_4$$
$$+ 321\ CO_2 + 168\ H_2O$$
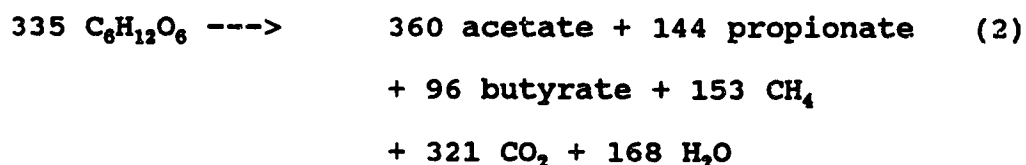
Conversion of equation 2 into weight quantities for estimation of SCFA production from a weight quantity of carbohydrate is shown in equation 3. The assumption of a constant molar ratio of acetate: propionate: butyrate is supported by in vitro fermentation studies of different fiber sources (McBurney and Thompson, 1989; Tomlin et al, 1989). It has been shown that more variation exists between total

quantities of SCFAs derived from fermentation of different fiber sources than in the ratios of the SCFAs produced (McBurney and Thompson, 1989).

$$100g \ C_6H_{12}O_6 \ \text{------->}$$

35.8g acetate (597 mmol)   (3)

+ 17.7g propionate (239 mmol)

+ 14.0g butyrate (159 mmol)

+ 4.1g CH_4 + 23.4g CO_2

+ 5.0g H_2O
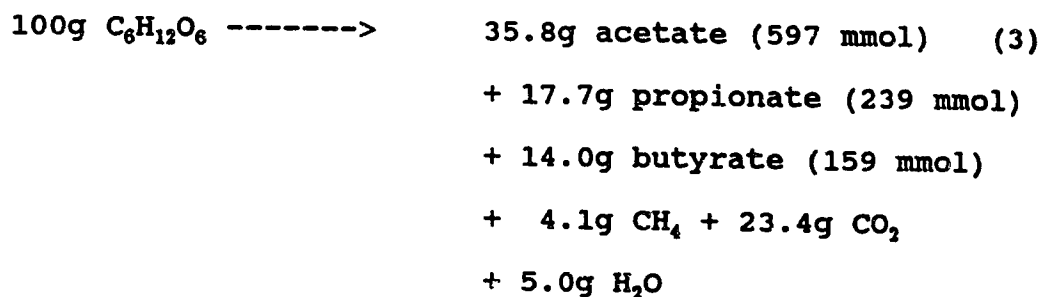
6.2 TRANSPORT ACROSS THE GUT

Short chain fatty acids produced in the colon are absorbed by the gut mucosal cells. The disappearance of SCFAs from the colon is coupled with the appearance of bicarbonate ions (HCO_3^-) in the lumen (Ruppin et al, 1980). This absorption process has not been fully characterized, but it has been hypothesized that more than 60% of the ionic form of the SCFA is protonated before entering the mucosal cells (Ruppin et al, 1980) in a process described in Figure 1. This mechanism accounts for the HCO_3^- accumulation observed in other work (Umesaki et al, 1979; Argenzio et al, 1977) as well as a subsequent increase in luminal pH upon SCFA absorption. This protonated form of the acid will more easily diffuse through the lipid membrane of the mucosal cell than will the ionic form of the acid (Hogben et al, 1959; Bougat, 1987).

FIGURE 1

Proposed mechanism of short chain fatty acid
transport into mucosal cells[1]
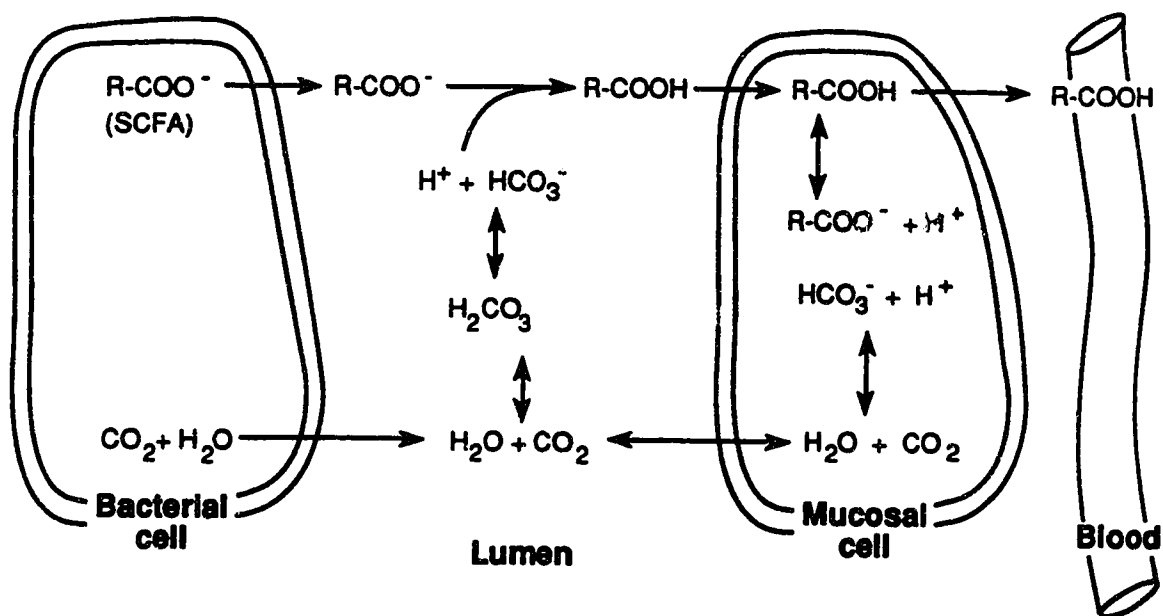
[1] Adapted from Bougat, 1987

The energy provided from acetate, propionate, and butyrate is 209, 365, and 522 kcal/mol, respectively (CRC, 1984). It has been estimated that 540 kcal/day can be obtained through SCFA absorption in humans (Ruppin et al, 1980). Only 5% of SCFAs produced in the colon remain unabsorbed in the feces (McNeil et al, 1978).

6.3 METABOLISM

The utilization of these SCFAs after absorption is still unclear. Some acids absorbed from the gut are metabolized at the site of absorption in the mucosal cell (Hoverstad, 1986). Most of the remaining SCFAs are metabolized by the liver. Propionate and butyrate concentrations were found to be ten times greater while acetate was found to be four times greater in the portal blood than in the peripheral veinous blood indicating hepatic clearance (Dankert et al 1981).

Acetate is easily incorporated into ketone bodies and primarily metabolized to glutamate, acetoacetate and aspartate as shown by ^{14}C labelled acetate incorporation (Marty et al, 1985). These products can be easily utilized as energy. Butyrate is partially converted to acetate and ketone bodies in the lumen (Bougat, 1987) through oxidative cleavage of a 2 carbon unit from the four carbon chain.

Rombeau (1988) demonstrated an increase in whole segment colonic weight and colonic mucosal DNA in rats upon colonic infusion of mixed SCFAs relative to saline infusion. In vitro studies have shown that butyrate is taken up faster by mucosal cells than other substrates: acetoacetate, glutamine, and glucose (Roediger, 1982). SCFAs have also been shown to stimulate mucosal cell proliferation (Sakata, 1987). Both intravenous and intracecal infusion of SCFAs showed stimulation of mitotic activity in the jejunal and ileal mucosa in subjects on a total parenteral nutrition feeding regime (Koruda et al, 1987). A likely explanation for this stimulation of mucosal cell growth is the production of ketone bodies from SCFAs, and the availability of these substrates to the mucosal cells as oxidative fuels. An estimated 90% of the butyrate produced in the gut is utilized by the gut, leaving only 10% to be transported to the liver (Bergman, 1975). Figure 2 shows how even numbered carbon chain substrates such as acetate and butyrate can form acetoacetate or D-3-hydroxybutyrate. These end products (Figure 2 (9) and (10)) produce acetyl-CoA which is oxidized in the tricarboxylic acid (TCA) cycle to provide energy.

Propionate is metabolized to succinate which can enter the TCA cycle or go on to gluconeogenesis. The reactions outlined in Figure 3 show intermediates in the formation of

FIGURE 2

Formation of ketone bodies from acetate and butyrate

CH_3—CH_2—CH_2—CO—OH +   CoASH   (1)
butyrate   coenzyme A

CH_3—CH_2—CH_2—CO—$SCoA$ (2)
butaryl-CoA

FAD
                    dehydrogenase
FADH$_2$

CH_3—CH=CH—CO—$SCoA$ (3)
trans-enoyl—CoA

H_2O
                    enoyl hydratase

CH_3—$CH(OH)$—CH_2—CO—$SCoA$ (4)
L-3-hydroxybutaryl-CoA

NAD+   2 (CH_3—CO—OH + CoASH) (5)
            dehydrogenase   acetate   coenzyme A
NADH/H+

                                CoASH
CH_3—CO—CH_2—CO—$SCoA$ (7) ←———————— 2 CH_3—CO-$SCoA$ (6)
acetoacetyl-CoA   B-ketothiolase   acetyl-CoA

    CH_3—CO-$SCoA$

    HMG-CoA synthase

CH_3—$C(OH)$—CH_2—CO—$SCoA$ + CoASH   (8)
        |
    CH_2—CO—OH
3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA

CH_3—CO—CH_2—CO—OH NADH/H+   NAD+ CH_3—$CH(OH)$—CH_2—CO—OH
acetoacetate   (9)   ———————————————————→   D-3-hydroxybutyric acid
        +

CH_3—CO—$SCoA$ D-3-hydroxybutyrate   (10)
acetyl CoA   dehydrogenase

FIGURE 3

Formation of succinate from propionate

CH_3—CH_2—CO—OH   +   CoASH   (1)
propionate   coenzyme A

$\downarrow$

CH_3—CH_2—CO—SCoA   (2)
propionyl-CoA

CO_2/ATP $\rightarrow$
                         propionyl carboxylase
ADP/Pi $\leftarrow$

CH_3—CH—CO—SCoA   (3)
       |
       CO-OH
methyl malonyl-CoA

$\downarrow$ methyl malonyl mutase

HO—CO—CH_2—CH_2—CO—SCoA   (4)
succinyl-CoA

CH_3—CO—CH_2—CO—OH
                    acetoacetate

HO—CO—CH_2—CH_2—CO—OH   + CH_3—CO—CH_2—CO—SCoA   (5)
succinate   acetoacetyl-CoA
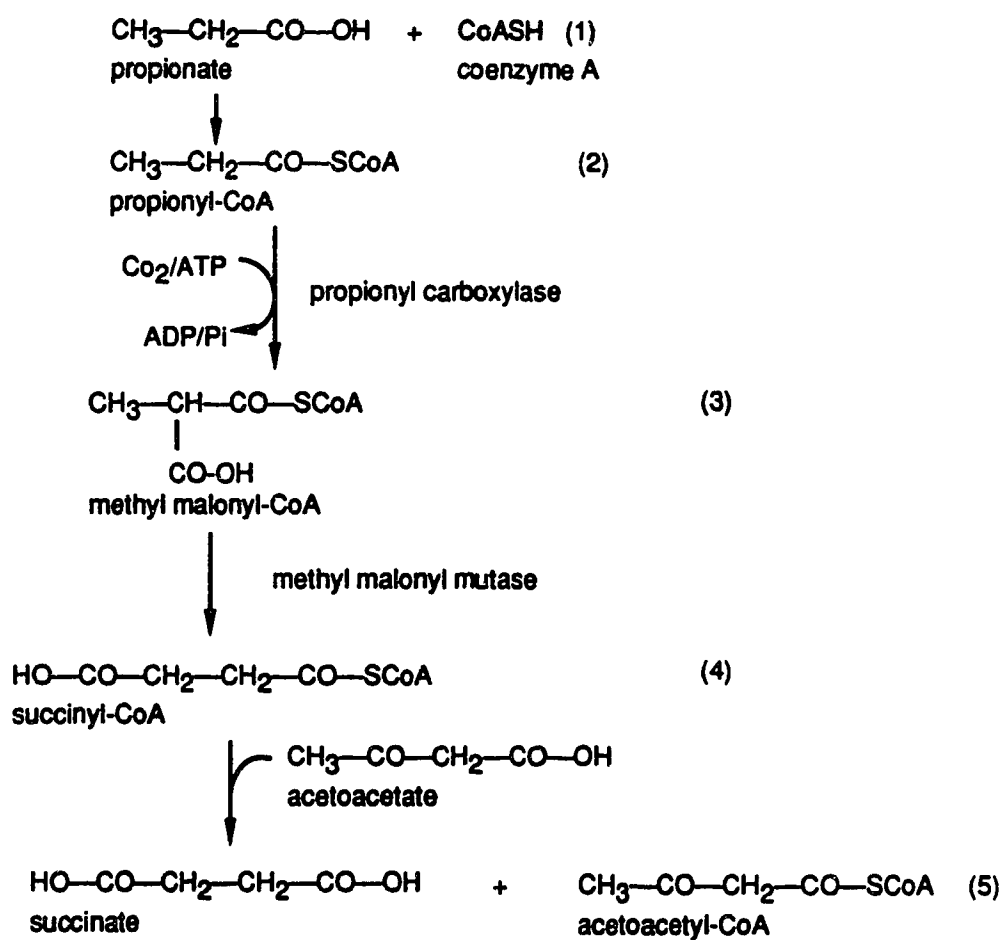
succinate. The ketone body acetoacetate is utilized in this reaction (Figure 3 (5)). This opposes the metabolism of even carbon chain fatty acids in which acetoacetate is a product (Figure 2 (9)). Since acetyl-CoA is generated from acetoacetate, the energetic utilization of propionate in the TCA cycle appears to be at the expense of energy utilization from ketone body sources. This is consistent with studies that have found propionate inhibitory to ketogenesis. Bush and Milligan (1971) illustrated the inhibition of ketogenesis upon addition of propionyl-CoA to bovine liver slices. The presence of succinate, formed in propionate metabolism, has been linked to enhanced gluconeogenesis, and has shown increases in liver glycogen when fed to rats (Scrutton and Utter, 1968).

6.4 THE EFFECT OF PROPIONATE ON SERUM LIPIDS

Propionate metabolism has been studied for a potential hypolipidemic effect (Thacker et al, 1981; Boila et al, 1981; Chen et al, 1984). Propionate has been shown to inhibit cholesterol synthesis rates in isolated rat hepatocytes (Anderson and Bridges, 1981). Lowered serum cholesterol was observed in rats consuming high cholesterol diets supplemented with propionate as compared to rats without propionate supplementation (Chen et al, 1984). Serum triglycerides were

not affect^d by propionate feeding although triglycerides were significantly raised by the high cholestere. diet.

Thacker and Bowland (1981) found that pigs fed hypercholesterolemic diets responded to 6 and 9% dietary propionate supplementation with reduced total plasma cholesterol and HDL cholesterol levels. No changes were observed in serum triglycerides. Feeding dietary propionate is not necessarily parallel to the absorption of propionate by the mucosa of the large intestine. It has been shown that SCFAs fed orally are absorbed in the stomach (Vahouny et al, 1988). This site of absorption makes propionate less available to the colonic mucosal cells and may decrease SCFAs reaching the liver (Argenzio and Southworth, 1974).

Inhibition of the enzyme 3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA (HMG-CoA) synthase was shown by a 40% reduction in activity when bovine liver slices were incubated with butyrate and . propionate as compared to incubation with butyrate alone (Bush and Milligan, 1971). Odd-number carbon chain fatty acids showed inhibition of cholesterol synthesis compared to even-number carbon chain fatty acids in rat liver homogenates (Wood and Migicovsky, 1956). The addition of succinyl-CoA to ox liver inhibited HMG-CoA synthase in the mitochondria in vitro (Lowe and Tubbs, 1985).

Of great interest is an alternate pathway that utilizes the ketone-body intermediate HMG-CoA (Figure 2 (8)) in cholesterol synthesis. The condensation reaction forming HMG-CoA is shown to be imperative in the synthesis of cholesterol (Lehninger, 1975). Figure 4 shows some of the steps involved in this pathway. If HMG-CoA synthase activity were reduced by the metabolism of propionate, HMG-CoA would not be as abundant for cholesterol synthesis.

A reduction in cholesterol synthesis may explain results that find lowered blood cholesterol levels accompanying propionate ingestion (Thacker et al, 1981; Thacker and Bowland, 1981). A reduction in HMG-CoA reductase after pectin supplementation was observed by Proia et al (1981). HMG-CoA reductase is the rate limiting enzyme in cholesterol biosynthesis (Rodwell et al, 1976). A decrease in HMG-CoA synthase activity would provide less HMG-CoA as a substrate for the reductase (Figure 4 (1)) which may decrease the rate of cholesterol synthesis.

7   CHOICES OF AN ANIMAL MODEL

An appropriate model of human digestion is required for studies that are difficult to conduct with human subjects. The boredom of a homogeneous diet, the inconvenience to the subject of frequent sampling of blood and feces, the inability

FIGURE 4

Utilization of 3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA
in formation of mevalonic acid for
cholesterol synthesis

$$CH_3\text{—}C(OH)\text{—}CH_2\text{—}CO\text{—}SCoA \qquad (1)$$

$$CH_2\text{—}CO\text{—}OH$$

3-hydroxy-3-methylglutaryl-CoA

2NADPH/H+ ⟶

HMG-CoA reductase

2NADP+ ⟵

$$HO\text{—}CO\text{—}CH_2\text{—}C(OH)\text{—}CH_2\text{—}CH_2\text{—}OH \qquad (2) \quad + \quad CoASH$$

coenzyme A

$$CH_3$$

mevalonic acid ⟶ cholesterol synthesis
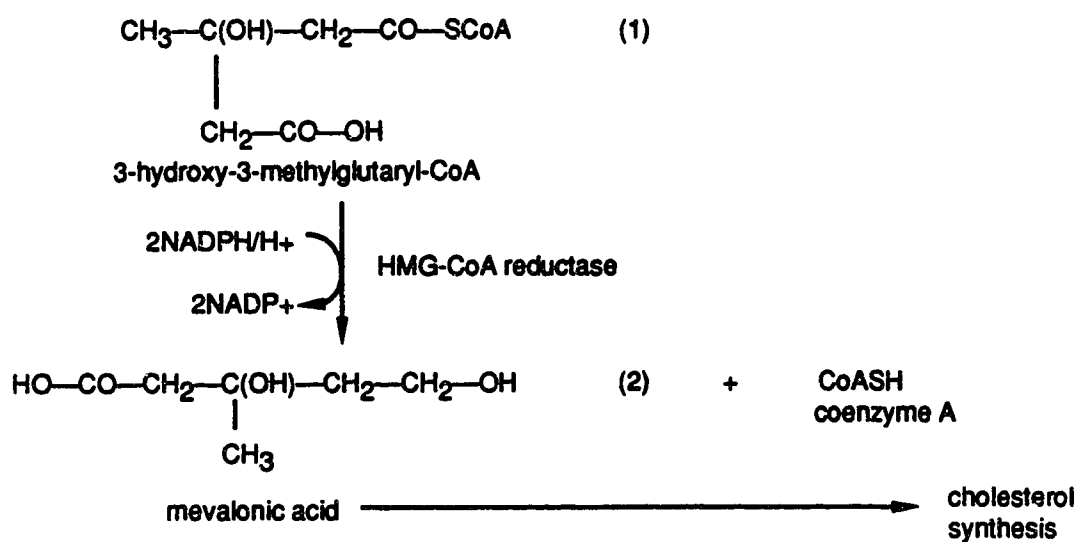
to employ surgical techniques, as well as the expense involved are a few reasons that make human studies more difficult than animal studies. Ileostomy patients are often used to study isolated upper intestinal effects of fiber supplementation (Bosaeus et al, 1986; Bosaeus and Andersson, 1987; McBurney et al, 1987). However, lower intestinal effects are difficult to isolate in human subjects. Many monogastric animals have been assessed for their usefulness as a model.

Non-human primates have the gastrointestinal physiology that most closely approaches that of humans (Kritchevsky et al, 1988). Vervet monkeys and baboons have been used in assessing blood lipids after fiber supplementation (Kritchevsky et al, 1974; Kritchevsky et al, 1981; Kritchevsky et al, 1986). A western diet high in saturated fat and cholesterol caused hypercholesterolemia in monkeys (Kritchevsky et al, 1986; Kritchevsky et al, 1988) showing similarities to humans. However, the expense involved and difficulties in maintenance of these animals prevent their widespread use.

The dog has a 7% energetic contribution from SCFA production (Stevens, 1977). This is comparable to the 5 - 10% contribution found in man (Bougat, 1987). However, the

carnivorous diet of the dog is too different from the human diet to use the dog as a model in human gastrointestinal function.

Rats are frequently used in the study of dietary fiber due to their inexpensive diet and maintenance. However, rats are primarily cecal fermenters (Graham and Aman, 1987) and are not recommended for dietary fiber studies (Van Soest et al, 1982). Rats have a colonic separation mechanism that enables them to form two types of fecal pellets, one which can be re-consumed and contains a higher protein and a lower fiber concentration than the other type (Sperber et al, 1983). Although coprophagy can be reduced by wire mesh cage bottoms, the influence of altered passage rate and corresponding changes in fermentation time on colonic SCFA production and absorption is unknown. The mean retention time of food is 6 - 10 hours in the rat. A shorter transit time yields fecal pellets high in protein and a longer retention time allows for enhanced fermentation of digesta fiber content. The human gut retention time of 30 - 40 hours provides no colonic separation mechanism. The rat may not be representative when a model is required to look specifically at colonic fermentation effects.

The pig is a practical and suitable choice as an animal model and has been shown to be similar to the human in

digestive physiology, size, and diet. The pig also displays similar metabolic responses to diet and disease as humans. The feeding of excess dietary cholesterol and fat to the adult pig can induce hypercholesterolemia (Mahley et al, 1975). A diet simulating the gross composition of a western diet for humans, providing 52, 30, and 18% of its energy as carbohydrate, fat, and protein, respectively, and supplemented with 1% crystalline cholesterol and 0.5% cholic acid, increased pig serum cholesterol to hypercholesterolemic levels of 8.4 mmol/litre (323 mg/dl) after a four week experimental period (Ahrens et al, 1986). Normal total serum cholesterol in pigs is about 2 mmol/litre (77 mg/dl) (Mahley et al, 1975). Grower diets supplemented with stabilized tallow to bring the total fat content of the diet to 11% (w/w) resulted in cholesterol consumption of 0.06% (w/w) from the tallow (Thacker et al, 1981). Pigs consuming this diet for a four week period showed a 10% increase in serum lipids, attributable to the ingestion of cholesterol (Thacker et al, 1981).

7.1 PHYSIOLOGICAL SIMILARITIES BETWEEN HUMAN AND PORCINE GUT FUNCTION

Although the pig has a larger cecum than the human, it is still primarily considered a colonic fermenter (Graham and Aman, 1987). The relative volume of different compartments

of the gastrointestinal tracts of the pig and human are shown in Table 4 (Stevens, 1977).

Digesta retention time for the pig is 50 hours (Van Soest et al, 1982). Compared to humans, pigs may have more opportunity to absorb SCFAs upon fermentation. It has been estimated that the pig can derive 15 to 30% of its basal energy requirement for maintenance from SCFAs produced from fermentation of fiber and absorbed by the gut (Friend et al, 1964; Kennelly et al, 1981; Rerat et al, 1985). The rate of uptake of SCFAs in the colon of the pig (8-10 umol/cm^2 per h) (Argenzio and Southworth, 1974) was found to be similar to that of humans (6-12 umol/cm^2 per h) (McNeil et al, 1978).

Variations in the ratio of acetate:propionate:butyrate exist between and within species (Bougat, 1987). Values of fecal SCFA ratios indicate that human and pig flora produce similar ratios, as shown in Table 5. Other ratios have been reported (Miller and Wolin, 1979; Kennelly et al, 1981; Roth et al, 1988). Using these molar ratios and adapting a previous equation (equation 1) for prediction of fermentation products, equation 4 shows molar SCFA production from fermentable carbohydrate in the pig. Equation 5 converts molar ratios to weight values of the components. Variations in colonic bacteria due to diet, climate, stress, illness, and

TABLE 4

Relative volume of gastrointestinal segments
in the pig and human[1]

	Pig	Human
Compartment	Percent relative wet capacity	
Stomach	31	17
Small Intestine	27	66
Cecum	10	--
Colon	28	17
Rectum	4	--

[1] Adapted from Stevens, 1977

TABLE 5

Ratios of short chain fatty acids found
in the feces of humans and pigs

Molar ratios of acids (%)

	Acetate	Propionate	Butyrate	Reference
Pig	69	23	8	Sambrook, 1979
Human	60	24	16	Cummings, 1981

heredity can affect ratio and quantity of SCFAs formed (Holdeman et al, 1976).

$$326.5 \ C_6H_{12}O_6 \ -----> \ 414 \ acetate \ + \ 138 \ propionate$$
$$+ \ 48 \ butyrate \ + \ 204 \ CH_4 \quad (4)$$
$$+ \ 321 \ CO_2 \ + \ 117 \ H_2O$$

$$100g \ C_6H_{12}O_6 \ --------> \quad 42.3g \ acetate \ (705 \ mmol) \quad (5)$$
$$+ \ 17.4g \ propionate \ (235 \ mmol)$$
$$+ \ 7.2g \ butyrate \ (82 \ mmol)$$
$$+ \ 5.6g \ CH_4 \ + \ 24.0g \ CO_2$$
$$+ \ 3.6g \ H_2O$$
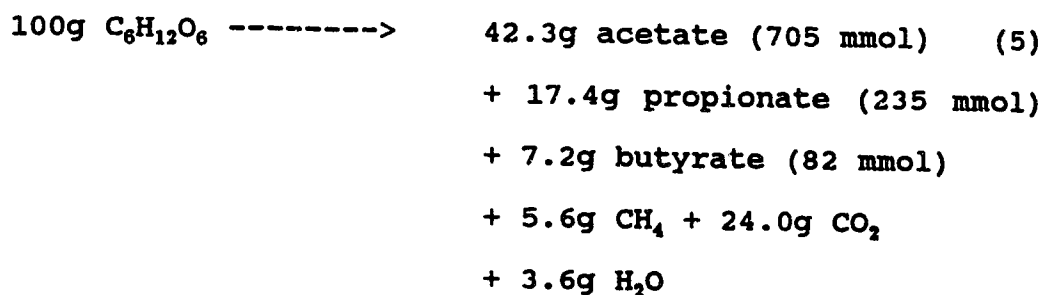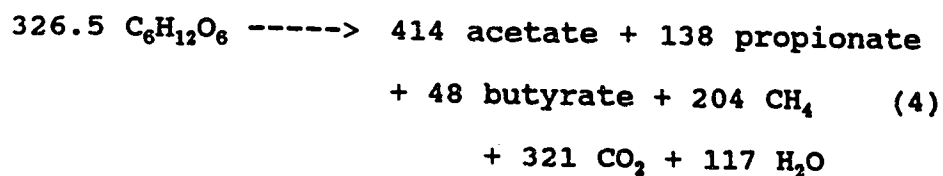
Some differences exist between the fecal flora of pigs and humans. The most commonly occuring colonic microbes in both the porcine colon and the human colon are listed in Table 2. The largest difference is the greater presence of cellulolytic bacteria in pig than in human fecal flora (Varel et al, 1984). This would enable pigs to more efficiently utilize cellulosic fiber fractions which may partially account for the greater percentage of metabolic energy from colonic fermentation seen in pigs as compared to humans (Bougat, 1987).

Studies that have looked at colonic bacterial population of both the human (Holdeman et al, 1976) and the pig (Robinson et al, 1981) have observed more variation between different

subjects than for a single subject after a change in diet. Changes in human fecal flora have been observed during stressful situations such as confinement to isolated quarters or prior to writing an examination (Holdeman et al, 1976). Changes in transit time have also been observed in stressful situations with pigs (Fleming and Acre, 1986). The potential for changes due to a stressful situation is of concern when working with animals. Sufficient time for adaptation to an experimental situation is required to avoid confounding results in fermentation studies.

7.2 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN HUMAN AND PORCINE LIPOPROTEINS

Lipoprotein densities in pig serum are in general agreement in the literature. The LDL fraction is found mainly between densities of 1.03 and 1.08 g/ml (Mahley and Weisgraber, 1974), with the main components concentrated between 1.063 and 1.074 g/ml (Fidge and Smith, 1975). The main HDL fraction is found between densities of 1.09 and 1.21 g/ml (Nestruck et al, 1977), although some HDL has been found at densities as low as 1.07 g/ml. (Mahley and Weisgraber, 1974). VLDL, although considered a minor component of pig serum (Mills and Taylaur, 1971) is generally isolated at densities below 1.03 g/ml (Mahley and Weisgraber, 1974).

Human lipoprotein separation by density defines lipoproteins present in the serum fraction of density less than 1.019 g/ml as VLDL. Lipoproteins present in the fraction between densities 1.019 and 1.063 g/ml are LDL, and those present in the faction of density greater 1.063 g/ml are HDL (Havel et al, 1955).

Miniature swine fed 15% lard and 1.5% cholesterol for 7 months had an increase in serum cholesterol of 400% over controls (Mahley et al, 1975). This model may not be representative of the hyperlipidemic human. These pigs showed altered lipoprotein distribution in the lower density fractions. In control pigs 64% of serum cholesterol was contained in lipoproteins of densities less than 1.06 g/ml. Hyperlipidemic pigs had 90% of cholesterol in lipoproteins of densities less than 1.06 g/ml. However, the hyperlipidemic swine showed an arginine-rich B-apoprotein in VLDL that co-electrophoresed with B-VLDL from type III hyperlipidemic humans (Mahley et al, 1975). In normal pigs HDL has 1/4 as much triglyceride and twice as much cholesterol ester as human HDL (Mills and Taylaur, 1971). Pig HDL is a more homogeneous protein than human HDL (Chapman, 1980). As differences do exist between human and porcine lipoproteins, saturated fat and cholesterol feeding studies using the pig as a model of the human should be interpreted with caution.

7.3 THE CANNULATED PIG MODEL

Cannulation at the distal ileum is a technique that can be used in animal models to monitor upper intestinal and lower intestinal effects separately. A T-cannula fitted at the distal ileum, adapted from duodenal cannulation as described by Sauer et al (1983), enables digesta sampling. Upper intestinal nutrient digestibility can be de ermined. Cannulation has been successfully employed in pigs by other researchers (Bjornhag and Jonsson, 1984; Fleming and Wasilewski, 1984; Graham et al, 1985; Aherns et al, 1986; Kik et al, 1988; vanLeeuwen et al, 1988; deLange et al, 1989a).

Infusion of propionate through a cannula at the cecum would be a useful model in assessing the effect of colonically derived propionate independent of upper intestinal effects of fiber supplementation. Energetic utilization of intracecally infused propionate in sows has shown complete propionate utilization when 31.4% of the animal's daily energy was infused through a cannula as propionate (Roth et al, 1988).

HYPOTHESIS

The dietary supplementation of fermentable fibers has displayed more of an effect on serum lipid lowering than supplementation of non-fermentable fibers. The enhanced formation and absorption of propionate as an end product of fiber fermentation may be responsible in part for the hypocholesterolemic effect of water-soluble fiber su plem ntation. Propionate may inhibit hepatic HMG-CoA synthase, an enzyme required for cholesterol synthesis. Cecal propionate infusion in a hypercholesterolemic cannulated pig model may decrease hepatic cholesterol synthesis and result in lowered serum cholesterol.

METHODOLOGY

1   ANIMALS

Ten York-Landrace barrows weighing between 27 kg and 40 kg (average 34.5 kg) were obtained from the Swine Unit at the University of Alberta Research Farm. Animals were housed individually in metabolic crates in the Metabolic Barn at the University of Alberta Research Farm. All aspects of the experiment were approved by the University of Alberta Animal Policy and Welfare Committee.

2   CANNULATION

2.1   SURGERY

Animals were fasted 24 hours prior to surgery. Surgery was performed under standard sterile surgical conditions at the University of Alberta Research Farm. Pigs were fasted for 24 hours prior to surgery, and given a tranquilizer (2 ml Atravet, 25 mg/ml acepromazine maleate, Ayerst) at least 30 minutes prior to surgery. Halothane (2% at 4 litres/minute in 1:3 $N_2O:O_2$) was used to anesthetize animals. The cannulation was performed as described by Sauer (PhD Thesis, 1976), with the following modifications.

A T-cannula (Figure 5) was inserted at the distal ileum approximately 10 cm proximal to the cecum. A smaller cannula (Figure 6) was made from a cylindrical L-shaped mold which was repeatedly dipped in liquid polyvinylchloride plastisol and hardened by baking for 15 seconds at 400°C after each dip. A purse string suture was placed on the dorsal portion of the cecum and the cecum was punctured. The smaller (cecal) cannula was inserted into the cecum and the purse string suture was tightened and tied. A second purse string suture was placed around the cannula.

Terramycin (Phizer) was placed in the incision cavity (2 ml of 100 mg/ml) before closing. Both cannulae were exteriorized on the right side of the pig. The T-cannula had a screw-cap that could be removed for collection of ileal effluent. The cecal cannula had a butyl rubber stopper (approx 1.5 cm diameter) to prevent leakage. A hole was drilled in the stopper to allow for the insertion of 25 cm of tygon tubing (Fisher Scientific, formulation R-3603, 1.5 mm ID, 3.0 mm OD) through the cannula and into the cecum. The tubing, present inside the cecum, had been previously perforated with 30 holes evenly distributed along the last 15 cm of its length. Tygon tubing (20 cm) extended through the stopper in the cecal cannula, exterior to the pig. A needle (Beckton-Dickinson 18 G 1 1/2) with the sharp tip removed was inserted into the exterior end of the tygon tubing. An

FIGURE 5

The distal ileal T-cannula

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a - screw cap

b - ring, exterior to body wall

c - central cylinder

d - flanged end of cannula, placed inside terminal ileum
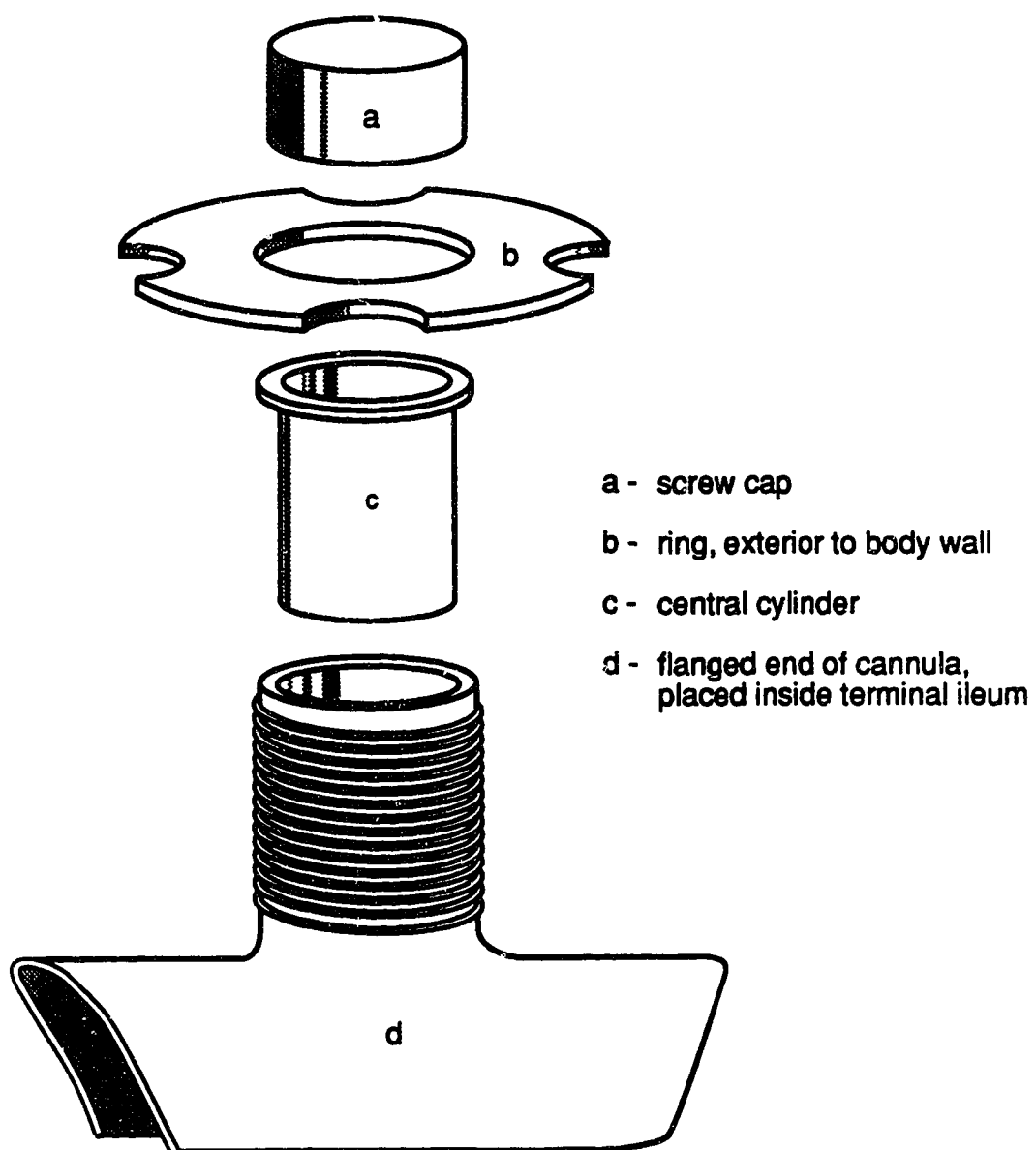
FIGURE 6

The cecal infusion cannula

a - intermittent
injection cap

b - needle with
sharp tip removed

c - tygon tubing

d - butyl rubber
stopper

e - rubber ring

f - ring, exterior
to body wall

g - flanged end of
cannula, placed
inside cecum

h - perforated
tygon tubing
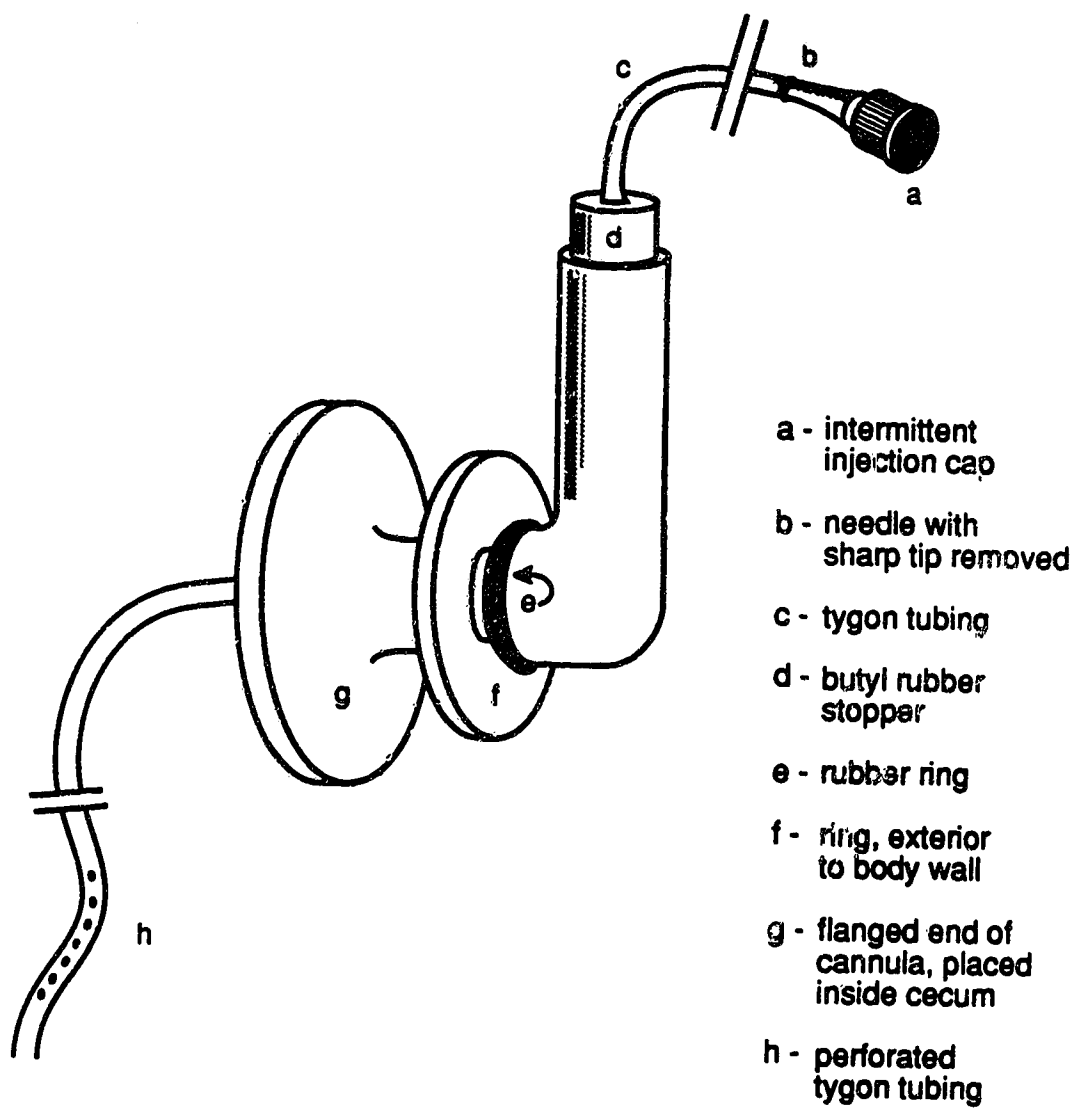
intermittent injec⁺ cap (Short INT Stopper, Luer Lock, Burron Medical Inc ι s screwed onto the needle so that the cecal infusion line could be attached once the animal was in the metabolic crate.

2.2   RECOVERY

Pigs were returned to their metabolic crates immediately after surgery. One animal did not survive the post-surgical period. Terramycin (Animal Formula Soluble Powder, Kane Veterinary Supplies, Edmonton, Alta) was administered orally (10 mg/kg body weight per day) for three days post-surgery. Motrin (Upjohn) was administered orally (200 - 400 mg, 1 - 3 times/day) for pain relief as necessary. Pigs consumed between 100 g and 300 g of a standard grower diet (see section 4.1) twice daily during the first four days of the post-surgical recovery period.

3   EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The experiment was planned as a crossover design in which each pig would receive saline infusion (control) and propionate infusion. Ten pigs were cannulated so that at least eight would be available to provide an adequate sample size. The nine pigs that survived surgery were assigned to one of two groups such that the average animal weights were

not different between infusion groups. Five pigs received propionate infusion in the first period and saline infusion in the second period. The other four pigs received infusion treatments in the reverse order. A time line of the experimental design is shown in Figure 7.

3.1 INFUSION PERIODS

The first infusion period began 12 days after the last surgery. An Ismatec MP-13 (Brinkman Instruments, Rexdale, Ontario) peristaltic infusion pump was used to provide a flow rate of 1.05 ml/minute (1512 ml/day). Tygon tubing (Fisher Scientific, formulation R-3603, 1.5 mm ID, 3.0 mm OD) was from the infusion pump and connected to a needle (Beckton-Dickinson 18 G 1 1/2), with the sharp tip removed, that punctured the intermittent injection cap exterior to the cecal cannula.

Infusate was individually supplied to each infusion line from a stoppered 2 litre nalgene bottle. A hole was drilled in the stopper to allow for the insertion of the tygon tubing infusion line into the nalgene bottle. A needle (Beckton-Dickinson 18 G 1 1/2) also punctured the stopper to allow air into the bottle to replace the infusate. Infusion lines were weighted to prevent the lines from floating and drawing in

FIGURE 7

Study design

Surgery   Period 1   Period 2   Sacrifice
                                                              Animals

Day 0   12   20   23   28   32   40   43   48
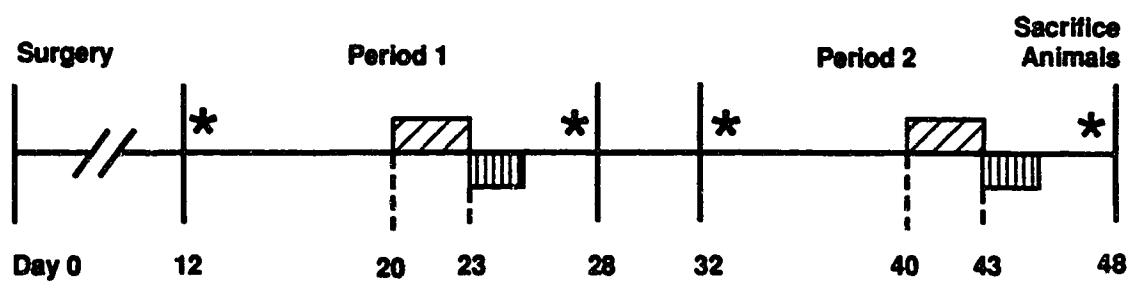
✱   Blood sampling

▨   72h fecal collection

▥   48h digesta collection

• 9 pigs in a crossover design

• Infusion at 1.05 ml/min
    • Saline = 0.9% NaCl
    • Propionate = 36.4 mmol/kg$^{0.75}$ per day
        Period 1 - 44.4 g/day
        Period 2 - 56.7 g/day

air. Infusion was continuous during the two 16 day periods. A four day non-infusion period occurred between the two infusion periods.

3.1.1   SALINE INFUSION

Physiological saline (0.9% NaCl w/w) was prepared with distilled water every second day. Pigs received 13.6 g NaCl/day into the cecum during both the first and second saline infusion periods.

3.1.2   PROPIONATE INFUSION

Sodium propionate was prepared with distilled water every second day. The sodium salt was formed by adding NaOH and propionate in equimolar quantities. Pigs received 36.4 mmol propionate/kg of metabolic body weight ($kg^{0.75}$) per day. Metabolic body weight was calculated at the beginning of each infusion period based on the average weight of all nine pigs. During the first infusion period, this corresponded to 600 mmol propionate/day (44.4 g propionate/day or 58.2 g sodium propionate/day) providing 219 kcal/day. During the second infusion period, pigs received 756 mmol propionate/day (56.7 g propionate/day or 73.3 g sodium propionate/day) providing 276 kcal/day. The infusate concentrations were 397 mmol propionate/litre and 500 mmol propionate/litre in periods 1

and 2, respectively. Sodium propionate was present in the infusate solutions at a level of 3.85% (w/w) in period 1 and 4.85% (w/w) in period 2. This represented 3.5% extra kcal/day in the form of propionate.

3.2   COLLECTIONS

3.2.1   ILEAL DIGESTA COLLECTION

Digesta collections were conducted on the 12th and 13th days of each infusion period. The T-cannula was used to obtain a sample of the digesta passing from the distal ileum into the colon. The screw cap was removed from the cannula, and 2 m lengths of 5 cm flat polyethylene tubing bags were secured to the opening of the cannula with an elasticized velcro fastener. The closed end of the plastic tubing was placed in a bucket of ice water to ensure that effluent collected was kept close to $0^{o}C$ to minimize bacterial and enzymatic degradation. After the three hour collection period, effluent was stored at $-25^{o}C$.

The three hour collection periods were followed by three hour non-collection periods to minimize the daily loss of effluent to the large bowel during collection. Collection periods for the 12th day of each infusion period began at 12 midnight, 6 am, 12 noon, 6 pm. Collection periods for the 13th

day of each infusion period began at 3 am, 9 am, 3 pm, and 9 pm. The 24 hours of collection were divided out over the two days such that the cumulative hours of collection represented every hour of the day. The digesta collected from a pig during all eight of the three hour collection periods was weighed, freeze-dried, pooled, and weighed again. Freeze-dried digesta was ground to a fine consistency in a grinder mill (Kurzzeitbetrieb Micro Mill, Terochem), and stored at 23°C for later analysis.

3.2.2 FECAL COLLECTION

A seventy-two hour fecal collection period occurred on days 9, 10, and 11 of each infusion period. Feces were collected three times daily and weighed. Water was added as 10% of the fecal weight to facilitate homogenization. The fecal collection with added water was homogenized by pummelling it in heavy plastic zip-lock bags. A 10% aliquot of the resulting fecal homogenate was stored at -30°C. Later, these aliquots were freeze-dried, weighed, ground to a fine consistency in a grinder mill, and stored at 23°C until further analysis.

3.2.3   BLOOD COLLECTION

On days 1 and 17 of each infusion period, blood was drawn from each animal.   Serum collection Vacutainers (Beckton Dickinson, 10 ml or 15 ml tubes) were used to collect blood through jugular puncture.   Tubes were kept on ice for no more than one hour prior to centrifugation.   Centrifugation occurred at 3000 rpm for 30 minutes at 4°C on a Beckman J-6M/E Centrifuge.   Serum was removed and stored at -30°C for two to three months prior to analysis.

3.2.4   LIVER COLLECTION

After the 8 am feeding on the 17th day of the second infusion period, pigs were sacrificed and the livers removed. Livers were immediately weighed and kept at 4°C for four hours.   Liver samples were then removed with a cork bore and stored at -30°C for two months prior to analysis.

4   DIETS

4.1   CONSUMPTION

Pigs consumed between 100 and 300 g (323 - 969 kcal) of grower diet twice daily at 8 am and 6 pm during the first 4 days of the post-surgical recovery period.   This intake was

gradually increased to 900 g (2907 kcal) twice daily. Once all pigs were consuming 1800 g/day (5814 kcal/day) of the grower diet, animals were switched to the high fat diet.

Pigs consumed the high fat diet for at least five days prior to the start of the first infusion period to ensure adaptation to the diet. Pigs were fed 109.3 $g/kg^{0.75}$ per day (376 $kcal/kg^{0.75}$ per day) in both infusion periods based on the average weight of all pigs on the first day of the infusion period. This amounted to 1800 g/day (6194 kcal/day) in the first infusion period, and 2268 g/day (7804 kcal/day) in the second infusion period. Feed intakes were adjusted according to metabolic body weight to ensure that any differences found between the two infusion periods would not be due to a decreased energy intake per metabolic body weight in the second infusion period. Pigs were fed two equal meals at 8 am and 6 pm throughout the experiment.

4.2   COMPOSITION

Formulations of the standard grower and high fat diets are given in Table 6. Nutrient contents of both diets were calculated from nutrient composition tables and are given in Table 7.

TABLE 6

Formulation of standard grower diet
and high fat diet

Component	Percent of diet (by weight)	
	Grower	High Fat
Wheat	25.00	22.44
Barley	53.10	47.88
Soybean meal	16.00	18.95
Tallow	2.00	6.38
Iodized salt	0.40	0.40
Biofos	1.50	1.50
Limestone (33% Ca)	1.00	1.00
Vitamin/mineral premix*	1.00	1.20
Chromic oxide	-	0.25
Total	100.00	100.00

* Vitamin/mineral premix contains the following
per 10 g: 120 mg Zn, 48 mg Mn, 100 mg
Fe, 10 mg Cu, 0.1 mg Se, 7500 IU vit A, 700 IU
vit D, 45 IU vit E, 12 mg riboflavin, 40 mg
niacin, 27 mg Ca-pantothenate, 28 ug vit B_{12}.

TABLE 7

Nutrient content of selected nutrients in the grower diet and the high fat diet[1]

Nutrient			Grower	High Fat
Energy[2]	DE	(kcal/kg)	3230	3441
	ME	(kcal/kg)	3112	3310
Protein[3]		(g/kg)	163	167
Fat[4]		(g/kg)	34.8	77.6
	SFA	(g/kg)	10.3	26.2
	PUFA	(g/kg)	10.8	17.0
	PUFA/SFA		1.05	0.65
Cholesterol[5]		(mg/kg)	105	336
Ca		(mg/kg)	4173	4229
Fe		(mg/kg)	170	189
Zn		(mg/kg)	146	170
Mn		(mg/kg)	48.0	57.6
Cu		(mg/kg)	10	12
Se		(mg/kg)	0.10	0.12
Vitamin A		(IU/kg)	7500	9000
Vitamin D		(IU/kg)	700	840
Vitamin E		(IU/kg)	45	54
Vitamin B_{12}		(ug/kg)	28.0	33.6
Niacin		(mg/kg)	93.1	101.6
Riboflavin		(mg/kg)	13.6	16.0
Thiamin		(mg/kg)	4.47	4.30

[1] Calculated from values found in National Research Council's Nutrient Requirements of Swine, 1988.
[2] Energy calculated as digestible energy
[3] Protein calculated as crude protein
[4] Fat calculated as ether extract
[5] Cholesterol analysed as outlined under 4.3.6

Diets were mixed at the University of Alberta Research Farm feed mill. Both diets were ground to a fine meal consistency, to prevent clogging or irritation by large particles at cannulation sites. Two batches of high fat diet were mixed. One batch was fed during the first infusion period, and the other during the second infusion period. Four aliquots (200 g) of feed were randomly sampled from each batch of feed for subsequent analysis.

4.3 LABORATORY ANALYSIS OF DIET

4.3.1 MOISTURE

Moisture content of the high fat diet was determined as a percentage of initial feed weight. Empty porcelain crucibles were dried overnight at $85°C$ and hot weighed. Feed samples (1.0 - 2.0 g) were weighed into cooled crucibles and dried in a Precision Scientific convection oven at $100°C$ for 8 hours. The dry feed samples were hot weighed to reduce moisture absorption while cooling. The moisture content of the 4 feed samples from both batches of high fat diet was analysed in duplicate.

4.3.2   ASH

Ash content of the high fat diet was analysed according to the AOAC (1984) method for determination of ash in animal feed and expressed as a percentage of initial feed weight. Empty porcelain crucibles were dried overnight at 100°C and hot weighed. Feed samples (3.0 - 4.0 g) were weighed into the cooled crucibles, and ashed in a Lindberg Hevi Duty muffle furnace oven at 550°C for 24 hours. Crucibles were then placed in a convection oven at 100°C for at least 4 hours before hot weights were obtained. The ash content of the 4 feed samples drawn from both batches of high fat diet was analysed in duplicate.

4.3.3   CHROMIC OXIDE

Chromic oxide was added to the high fat diet at a level of 0.25% by weight. Cr_2O_3 passes through the digestive tract unabsorbed, and can be used as a digestibility marker. The concentration of Cr_2O_3 to components in feces and ileal digesta was compared to the concentration of Cr_2O_3 to components in the diet to determine the digestibility of the components.

Chromic oxide content of the high fat diet was analysed using sodium peroxide fusion (Calvert et al, 1989). Feed samples (3.0 - 4.0 g) were weighed into 30 ml porcelain

crucibles and heated in a Lindberg Hevi Duty muffle furnace oven at 550°C for 48 hours. Crucibles were cooled and 2.0 - 3.0 g of Na_2O_2 were mixed in with the ash. This mixture was covered with an additional 2.0 - 3.0 g Na_2O_2. Crucibles were covered and heated to 700°C in a muffle furnace oven for 25 minutes. After cooling for two hours, crucibles were placed in 400 ml beakers and placed under a fume hood. Crucibles were filled about two-thirds full with distilled water, and left to stand for ten minutes while oxygen and alkaline fumes were released.

The contents of each crucible was then rinsed into a beaker with 50 - 100 ml of distilled water. Glass rods were used to scrape off the material adhering to the sides of the crucibles. Crucibles were rinsed with a 1:8 (vol:vol) solution of sulfuric acid and distilled water which was allowed to remain in the crucibles for 3 - 5 min to free any remaining Cr-containing residue. These solutions were added to the contents of the beakers, and crucibles were rinsed with 10 ml distilled water. The pH of the resulting mixture (11.5 - 12.5) was adjusted to 8.5 - 9.5 with concentrated H_2SO_4.

The content of each beaker was transferred quantitatively into 250 ml volumetric flasks and brought to volume with

distilled water. Flasks were agitated thoroughly, and left to stand at 23°C overnight to allow for settling of insoluble material.

A stock solution of potassium dichromate containing 3.735 g K_2CrO_4 in one litre of distilled water (1 mg Cr/ml) was prepared. Subsequent dilutions of this stock solution were made to prepare standards containing between 0.5 and 10.0 mg Cr/litre. Aliquots (1.0 ml) of supernatant from the 250 ml volumetric flask were mixed with water (5.0 ml), and absorbance was read at 366 nm on a Unicam SP1800 Ultraviolet Spectrophotometer. Distilled water was used for a blank. Standards were measured with each set of samples to determine sample concentrations. The chromium content of the 4 feed samples from both batches of high fat diet was analysed in triplicate and expressed as mg Cr_2O_3/g feed.

4.3.4   NITROGEN

Nitrogen content of the high fat diet was analysed according to the AOAC (1984) Kjeldahl method using a Micro-Kjeldahl system. Nitrogen present in a sample is digested in strong sulfuric acid with a mercuric catalyst and converted

to $(NH_4)_2SO_4$. In the presence of NaOH, the ammonia salt is distilled as NH_3 into a weak acid-base indicator solution and titrated to end-point with a weak acid.

The Micro-Kjeldahl system used consisted of a Kjeltec Digestion System 20 1015 Digester and a Kjeltec System 1002 Distilling Unit. Feed samples (1.0 - 2.0 g) were weighed into Kjeldahl digestion tubes. One Kjel-Tab (3.5 g K_2SO_4, 0.175 g HgO) and 12.5 ml of reagent grade H_2SO_4 were added to each digestion tube. Tubes were digested for 4 hours to ensure complete digestion. Distilled water (75 ml) was added to each tube when digestion was complete. An aliquot (110 ml) of 40% NaOH containing 60 g/litre sodium thiosulfate was dispensed to each tube prior to distillation. Distillates were collected in 250 ml Erlenmeyer flasks containing 25 ml of a solution of 4% (w/w) boric acid with methyl red and bromcresol green indicators. Flasks were titrated with 0.1 N H_2SO_4 to endpoint. Standards and blanks were prepared by digesting and distilling $(NH_4)_2SO_4$ and water, respectively.

The nitrogen content of the 4 feed samples from both batches of the high fat diet was analysed in quadruplicate. The concentration of nitrogen in the diet was expressed as mg N/g feed and as mg N/mg Cr_2O_3.

4.3.5 ORGANIC MATTER

Organic matter in the high fat diet was calculated as the weight remaining when water and ash weights were subtracted. This was calculated for each of the 4 feed samples from both batches of the high fat diet and expressed as a percentage of initial feed weight, as shown in equation 6, and as g organic matter/mg Cr_2O_3.

$$\% \text{ ORGANIC MATTER} = 100\% - (\% \text{ WATER} + \% \text{ ASH}) \qquad (6)$$

4.3.6 CHOLESTEROL

The total cholesterol content of the high fat diet was analysed using a colorimetric method Test-Combination kit from Boehringer Mannheim (Cat. no. 139-050). To determine total cholesterol, a methylation procedure was used to free esterified cholesterol.

Cholesterol was quantitated as follows. Cholesterol is converted to delta-4-cholestenone and H_2O_2 in the presence of cholesterol oxidase and oxygen. The enzyme catalase converts methanol to formaldehyde and water in the presence of H_2O_2. Formaldehyde reacts with ammonium ion and 2 acetylacetone molecules to form 3,5-diacetyl-1,4-dihydrolutidine or lutidine-dye. This dye is a yellow compound that can be

detected by visible light absorption at 405 nm. The
concentration of dye molecules formed is proportional to the
concentration of cholesterol present. Cr_2O_3 present in the
diet does not absorb at 405 nm.

4.3.6.1 EXTRACTION AND METHYLATION

A feed sample (1.0 - 2.0 g) was placed in a 100 ml round-
bottom flask with 1 g sea sand and 10 ml of a freshly prepared
methanolic KOH (1.0 mol/litre) solution. The flask was boiled
in a heated sand bath under reflux for 30 minutes. the
contents were stirred with a magnetic stir bar. The
supernatant was removed and placed in a 50 ml volumetric
flask. The residue was boiled twice with 10 ml volumes of
isopropanol for five minutes under a reflux condenser with
stirring. The supernatant was added to the 50 ml volumetric
flask. The contents of the flask were cooled to 23°C, made
up to the mark with isopropanol and agitated thoroughly. The
contents of the flask were filtered through a fluted paper
filter (Whatman Qualitative Filter Paper No.3, 9.0 cm) into
a capped 100 ml bottle. This was the sample solution.

4.3.6.2 ENZYMATIC ASSAY FOR CHOLESTEROL DETERMINATION

A reaction mixture containing methanol (1.71 mmol/ml),
acetylacetone (0.019 mmol/ml), catalase (1420 U/ml), ammonium

phosphate buffer (pH 7.0), and stabilizers was prepared. The reaction mixture (4.0 ml), distilled water (1.0 ml), and the sample solution (0.4 ml) were placed into 10 ml borosilicate glass disposable test tubes. The tubes were mixed thoroughly and a 2.5 ml aliquot of this solution was placed in a second test tube. The first tube was used as a sample blank. Cholesterol oxidase (0.02 ml, 15 U/ml) was added to the second tube (sample reaction tube). A standard solution of cholesterol in isopropanol (1.0 mg/ml) was used to prepare standards. Standards were prepared for each set of tubes measured. Isopropanol was used for the standard blank. All tubes were incubated in a 37°C water bath for 60 min.

After cooling to 23°C, the absorbance at 405 nm of both the sample blank and the sample reaction tube were recorded against air. The difference in absorbance at 405 nm between the sample blank and the sample reaction tube (delta A) was compared to the delta A of standards to quantitate cholesterol concentrations of samples. The cholesterol content of the 4 feed samples from both batches of the high fat diet was analysed in duplicate and expressed as mg cholesterol/g feed and mg cholesterol/mg Cr_2O_3.

5   ILEAL DIGESTA AND FECAL ANALYSIS

5.1   MOISTURE

Freeze-dried ileal digesta and fecal homogenate moisture
contents were analysed as outlined under 4.3.1. Moisture was
expressed as a percentage of initial and freeze-dried weight.
The moisture content of the 24 hour digesta samples and 72
hour fecal samples for each pig from both infusion periods was
analysed in duplicate.

5.2   ASH

Freeze-dried ileal digesta and fecal homogenate ash
contents were analysed according to the AOAC (1984) method
outlined under 4.3.2. Digesta and fecal samples (1.0 - 2.0
g) were analysed in duplicate for each pig from both infusion
periods. Ash was expressed as a percentage of initial and
freeze-dried weight and mg ash/mg Cr_2O_3.

5.3   CHROMIC OXIDE

Cr_2O_3 content of freeze-dried ileal digesta and fecal
homogenate was analysed using sodium peroxide fusion (Calvert
et al, 1989) as outlined under 4.3.3. Samples (1.0 -2.0 g)

were analysed in duplicate. Cr_2O_3 was expressed as mg Cr_2O_3/g freeze-dried sample.

5.4 NITROGEN

Freeze-dried ileal digesta and fecal homogenate nitrogen contents were analysed according to the AOAC (1984) Kjeldahl method as outlined under 4.3.4. Samples from both infusion periods (1.0 - 2.0 g) were analysed in quadruplicate for each pig. Nitrogen content was expressed as mg N/mg Cr_2O_3. Nitrogen digestibilities were calculated as shown in equations 7 and 8, and expressed as a percentage.

$$\% \text{ ILEAL NDIG} = ((\text{FDN} - \text{DGN})/\text{FDN}) \times 100 \qquad (7)$$

where FDN = mg N/mg Cr_2O_3 in feed

DGN = mg N/mg Cr_2O_3 in digesta

NDIG = nitrogen digestibility

$$\% \text{ FECAL NDIG} = ((\text{FDN} - \text{FCLN})/\text{FDN}) \times 100 \qquad (8)$$

where FDN = mg N/mg Cr_2O_3 in feed

FCLN = mg N/mg Cr_2O_3 in feces

NDIG = nitrogen digestibility

5.5   ORGANIC MATTER

Freeze-dried digesta and fecal homogenate organic matter contents were calculated as the weight remaining when freeze-dried water and ash weights were subtracted, as outlined under 4.3.5. This was calculated for each pig during each infusion period. Organic matter was expressed as a percentage of freeze-dried sample weight and as g organic matter/mg Cr_2O_3. Ileal and fecal organic matter digestibilities were calculated as shown in equations 9 and 10, and expressed as a percentage.

$$\% \text{ ILEAL OM DIGESTIBILITY} = ((FDO - DGO)/FDO) \times 100 \quad (9)$$

$$\text{where FDO} = \text{g OM/mg } Cr_2O_3 \text{ in feed}$$

$$DGO = \text{g OM/mg } Cr_2O_3 \text{ in digesta}$$

$$OM = \text{organic matter}$$

$$\% \text{ FECAL OM DIGESTIBILITY} = ((FDO - FCLO)/FDO) \times 100 \quad (10)$$

$$\text{where FDO} = \text{g OM/mg } Cr_2O_3 \text{ in feed}$$

$$FCLO = \text{g OM/mg } Cr_2O_3 \text{ in feces}$$

$$OM = \text{organic matter}$$

5.6   CHOLESTEROL

Freeze-dried ileal digesta and fecal homogenate cholesterol contents were analysed using the colorimetric method Test-Combination kit from Boehringer Mannheim (Cat. no.

139-050) as outlined under 4.3.6 with the foll ving modifications.

Freeze-dried samples (1.0 - 2.0 g) were placed in 50 ml teflon-lined screw-capped methylation tubes with 1 g sea sand and 10 ml of a freshly prepared methanolic KOH (1.0 mol/litre) solution. The tubes were agitated thoroughly and placed for 60 minutes in a sand bath heated to 100°C on a hot plate. Tubes were cooled slightly, the supernatants were removed and placed in 50 ml volumetric flasks. The residues were boiled twice with 10 ml volumes of isopropanol for 10 minutes in the capped tubes placed in the sand bath. The supernatants were added to the 50 ml volumetric flasks. The contents of the flasks were cooled to 23°C, made up to the mark with isopropanol and agitated thoroughly. The contents of the flasks were filtered through a fluted paper filter (Whatman Qualitative Filter Paper No.3, 9.0 cm) into a capped 100 ml bottle. This was the sample solution.

The sample solutions were analysed as outlined under 4.3.6.2. Samples were analysed in duplicate. Cholesterol content was expressed as mg cholesterol/mg Cr_2O_3.

5.7   BILE ACID

Bile acid analysis was carried out based on an enzymatic method (Sheltawy and Losowsky, 1975) with modification (Gallaher and Schneeman, 1986). Freeze-dried ileal digesta and fecal homogenate bile acid contents were analysed in duplicate and expressed as nmol bile acid/mg Cr_2O_3.

The enzyme 3-alpha-hydroxy steroid dehydrogenase (3-alpha-HSD) is an enzyme specific for the oxidation of the 3-alpha-hydroxyl group of C-24 steroids, found in 90% of fecal bile acids. When this oxidation occurs in the presence of NAD, NADH is formed and detected at 340 nm. NADH formation is stoichiometric with the amount of 3-alpha-hydroxy bile acid present.

5.7.1   EXTRACTION

Ground, freeze-dried samples (0.3 - 0.7 g) with 0.5 N HCl in absolute ethanol (5 ml) were agitated for 30 sec in screw-cap 15 ml test tubes . Tubes were then incubated for 1 hour at 37°C with agitation every 15 min. Tubes were centrifuged at 1000 x g for 10 minutes at 22°C.

The supernatant was transferred to a weighed 10 ml screw-cap test tube. The pellet was again extracted with 0.5 N HCl

in absolute ethanol (5 ml), then incubated, agitated, and centrifuged as above. The two supernatants were pooled and dried under partial vacuum at 25°C. The dried extract was refrigerated at 4°C until analysis.

The dried extract was resuspended with methanol (0.6 ml) and mixed with a vortex mixer for 15 sec. Distilled water (2.4 ml) was then added and the mixture vortexed. This was the extraction suspension. The tube was weighed and the empty tube weight subtracted to determine the weight of the extraction suspension. The density of this solution was assessed as 1 mg/ml and the volume was calculated.

5.7.2 REMOVAL OF LIPIDS FROM EXTRACT

A Waters Sep-Pak C18 Reverse-Phase cartridge was attached to a 10 ml Beckton Dickinson disposable syringe. The cartridge was washed with methanol (10 ml) followed by distilled water (10 ml). Solvents were eluted by gravity. An aliquot of the extraction suspension (1.0 ml) was then loaded onto the cartridge and allowed to sink in.

The cartridge was then washed with distilled water (5.0 ml), hexane (5.0 ml), distilled water (5.0 ml), and 40:60 methanol:water (5.0 ml). All of the effluent was discarded. A solution of 75:25 methanol:water (4.0 ml) was then

introduced unto the cartridge and the effluent was collected in a weighed borosilicate glass disposable 15 ml test tube. Two subsequent 3 ml volumes were introduced onto the column and collected in the same tube. The tube containing 10 ml of methanolic bile salt solution was weighed and the empty tube weight was subtracted to obtain the weight of the solution. The density of the solution was assessed as 0.84 mg/ml and volume was calculated.

5.7.3 ENZYMATIC ASSAY FOR BILE ACIDS

Semicarbazide HCl (0.5 M) was prepared in 0.02 M pyrophosphate buffer. NaOH was added to adjust the pH to 10.0. CAPS buffer (0.02 M) was prepared. A 20 ml volume of incubation reagent consisted of 1 ml of semicarbazide HCl phosphate buffer, 19 ml CAPS buffer, and 5 mg NAD.

Sample reaction tubes contained methanolic bile salt solution (1.0 ml) and incubation reagent (3.0 ml). Sample blank tubes were prepared with methanolic bile salt solution (1.0 ml), incubation reagent (3.0 ml), and distilled water (0.1 ml). Standard solutions of sodium taurocholate in 75:25 methanol:water (0.05 - 0.50 mMol) were prepared and aliquots (1.0 ml) of these standards were used in the standard reaction and standard blank tubes. All tubes were heated in a water bath at 37°C for 10 min. The 3-alpha-HSD enzyme solution

(0.1 ml of 3 units/ml) was then added to the standard and sample reaction tubes only, and all tubes were incubated at 37°C for 60 minutes. Absorbance of tubes was read at 340 nm against air. The difference in absorbance between reaction tubes and blank tubes (delta A) was analysed and sample bile acid content was determined from the standards.

6   SERUM ANALYSIS

Frozen serum samples were thawed at 4°C for 4 hours. A solution of EDTA (0.1 Mol), NaCl (0.15 Mol), and NaN$_3$ (0.2 Mol) was then added as 0.01 ml/ml serum to inhibit lipid peroxidation and bacterial activity. Serum was brought to 23°C before being aliquoted by volume. Total cholesterol, triglyceride, and lipoprotein cholesterol were analysed in serum obtained from each pig on the first and last day of both infusion periods.

6.1   TRIGLYCERIDE

The total triglyceride content of serum was analysed enzymatically with GPO-Trinder Reagent (Sigma Diagnostics, St. Louis, MO., procedure no. 339). Triglycerides are hydrolysed by lipoprotein lipase to glycerol and free fatty acids. The glycerol is phosphorylated to glycerol-1-phosphate by ATP in a reaction catalysed by glycerol kinase. Glycerol-

1-phosphate is then oxidized by glycerol phosphate oxidase to dihydroxyacetone phosphate and hydrogen peroxide. The H_2O_2 reacts with 4-aminoantipyrine and sodium N-ethyl-N-(3-sulfopropyl)m-anisidine (ESPA) in the presence of peroxidase to produce a quinoneimine dye, detected with an absorbance maximum at 540 nm. The quinoneimine dye molecule is formed stoichiometrically with the quantity of glycerol present.

A reagent mixture containing ATP (0.3 mMol), magnesium salt (3.0 mMol), 4-aminoantipyrene (0.15 mMol), ESPA (1.69 mMol), lipase (50000 U/litre), glycerol kinase (1000 U/litre), glycerol phosphate oxidase (2000 U/litre), peroxidase (2000 U/litre), and NaN_3 (0.5 g/litre) in a pH 7.0 buffer was used. Reagent mixture (1.0 ml) and distilled water (1.0 ml) were placed in each reaction tube. A 0.01 ml volume of either serum, glycerol standard (50 - 200 mg/dl), or distilled water (blank) was added to each reaction tube. Tubes were then agitated and incubated at 30°C for 10 minutes. Absorbance at 540 nm was determined and sample concentrations were calculated from standards.

Serum samples were analysed in triplicate. The quantity of glycerol present was analysed in each sample tube and converted to mg triglyceride/dl serum, expressed as triolein.

6.2   TOTAL CHOLESTEROL

The total cholesterol content of serum was analysed enzymatically with a Cholesterol Reagent preparation (Sigma Diagnostics, St. Louis, MO., procedure no. 352). Cholesterol esters are hydrolysed by cholesterol esterase to cholesterol and free fatty acids. Cholesterol is then oxidized by cholesterol oxidase to cholest-4-en-3-one and H_2O_2. The H_2O_2 reacts with 4-aminoantipyrine and p-hydroxybenzenesulfonate in the presence of peroxidase to produce a quinoneimine dye that is detected with an absorbance maximum at 500 nm. The quinoneimine dye molecule is formed stoichiometrically with the quantity of cholesterol present.

A reagent mixture containing 4-aminoantipyrine (0.3 mMol), p-hydroxybenzenesulfonate (30.0 mMol), cholesterol oxidase (300 U/litre), cholesterol esterase (100 U/litre), and peroxidase (1000 U/litre) in a pH 6.5 buffer was used. Reagent mixture (1.0 ml) and distilled water (1.0 ml) were placed in each reaction tube. A 0.01 ml volume of serum, cholesterol standard (50 - 300 mg/dl), or distilled water (blank) was added to each reaction tube. Tubes were then agitated and incubated at 37°C for 10 minutes. Absorbance at 500 nm was determined, and sample concentrations were determined from standards.

Serum samples were analysed in triplicate. The quantity of cholesterol present was determined in each sample tube and expressed as mg cholesterol/dl serum.

6.3   LIPOPROTEIN CHOLESTEROL

Lipoproteins were separated by density in serum using sequential floatation ultracentrifugation. The densities at which the major lipoproteins were isolated in pig serum were $1.006 \leq VLDL \leq 1.03$ g/ml, $1.03 < LDL \leq 1.09$ g/ml, and $1.09 \leq HDL \leq 1.21$ mg/dl. The procedure was developed based on methods used by Shuttler (PhD Thesis, 1989) with the following modifications. The total cholesterol content of each lipoprotein fraction was analysed enzymatically with a Cholesterol Reagent preparation (Sigma Diagnostics, St. Louis, MO., procedure no. 352).

Serum lipoprotein cholesterol was analysed in duplicate for each pig on the first and last day of both infusion periods. Cholesterol was expressed as mg lipoprotein cholesterol/dl serum.

6.3.1   VLDL

6.3.1.1   DENSITY ADJUSTMENT

Given the initial density of serum as 1.0063 g/ml at 22°C, precise quantities of KBr were added to 1.000 ml serum for density adjustment to 1.030 g/ml. At this density, the VLDL lipoprotein fraction of pig serum will float on top of the rest of the serum upon high speed centrifugation. The quantity of KBr needed to make this density adjustment was calculated using equation 11 (where v=1.000, d1=1.0063, d2=1.030, and p=0.2910). The mass of KBr required to adjust serum density was determined to be 0.0339 g KBr/ml of serum.

$$M = v(d2-d1)/(1-p*d2) \tag{11}$$

where M   = mass (g) of KBr to be added

d1   = original serum density (g/ml)

d2   = desired density (g/ml)

v   = original serum volume (ml)

p   = partial specific volume (ml/g) of
       KBr at 22°C and at a density of d2

KBr (Analytical Reagent Grade, 99.5%, BDH Chemicals, Toronto) was dried for 48 h at 85°C in a Precision Scientific convection oven, and stored in a dessicator at 22°C. A density adjusting solution of KBr in distilled water (0.1695

g/ml) was prepared. The density adjusting solution (0.200 ml), containing 0.0339 g KBr, was placed in 1 ml Beckman polycarbonate centrifuge tubes (11x34 mm, reorder no. 343778). These tubes were ⁚⁚⁚⁚ at 85°C for 12 hours to evaporate the water in the densi⁚⁚ ⁚justing solution, leaving only the KBr. Tubes were cooled to 22°C in a dessicator, and 1.000 ml serum was added to each tube. Tubes were agitated until all ⁚⁚⁚ was dissolved in the serum.

6.3.1.2 CENTRIFUGATION AND ISOLATION

Tubes were then centrifuged for 7 h at 12°C and 100,000 rpm on a Beckman TL-100 Ultracentrifuge, using a Beckman TLA 100.2 Fixed Angle Rotor (rmax = 38.9, rmin = 24.5). The floating VLDL layer appeared as a milky white layer and was drawn off carefully with a fine bore pipette under a concentrated incandescent light source. The VLDL layer was placed in a weighed 15 ml borosilicate glass disposable test tube. The pipette was rinsed with distilled water, and the washings were added to the tube containing VLDL. The tube volume was made up to about 10 ml with distilled water. The weight of the tube content was recorded and volume calculated assuming a density of 1 mg/ml. This was the diluted VLDL extract.

6.3.1.3   CHOLESTEROL ANALYSIS

Total cholesterol content of the VLDL fraction was analysed using the procedure described in 6.2 with the following modification. Diluted VLDL extract (0.7 ml), distilled water (1.0 ml), and reagent mixture (1.0 ml) were added to reaction tubes. Appropriate cholesterol standards and blanks were prepared. Tubes were then agitated and incubated at 37°C for 10 minutes. Absorbance at 500 nm was determined, and sample concentrations were calculated from the standards.

6.3.2   LDL

6.3.2.1   DENSITY ADJUSTMENT

Assuming the density of serum adjusted to 1.030 g/ml had changed negligibly upon removal of VLDL cholesterol, the volume of the remaining serum in the centrifuge tube after VLDL removal was made up to 1.000 ml with a KBr solution of density 1.030 g/ml. The composition of this volume adjusting solution was calculated to be 4.486 g KBr in 98.000 ml distilled water using equation 11 (where v=98.000, d1=0.998, d2=1.030, and p=0.2921).

Precise quantities of KBr were added to this 1.000 ml serum for density adjustment to 1.090 g/ml. At this density, the LDL lipoprotein fraction of pig serum floats on top of the rest of the serum upon high speed centrifugation. The quantity of KBr needed to make this density adjustment was calculated using equation 11 (where d1=1.030, d2=1.090, v=1.000, and p=0.2968). The mass of KBr required to adjust 1.000 ml serum of density 1.030 g/ml to 1.090 g/ml was determined to be 0.0890 g.

Dried KBr was used to make a density adjusting solution in distilled water of 0.445 g KBr/ml. Density adjusting solution (0.200 ml) containing 0.089 g KBr was added to 1 ml centrifuge tubes. These tubes were dried at 85°C for 12 hours to evaporate the water in the density adjusting solution, leaving only the KBr. Tubes were cooled to 22°C in a dessicator, and the 1.000 ml of serum (of density 1.030 g/ml) was added to each tube. Tubes were agitated until all KBr was dissolved in the serum.

6.3.2.2 CENTRIFUGATION AND ISOLATION

Tubes were centrifuged as described under 6.3.1.2. The floating LDL layer appeared as a slightly yellow layer and was drawn off and diluted as described under 6.3.1.2. This was the diluted LDL extract.

6.3.2.3   CHOLESTEROL ANALYSIS

Total cholesterol content of the LDL fraction was analysed using the procedure described under 6.2 with the following modification.   Diluted LDL extract (0.15 ml), distilled water (1.0 ml), and reagent mixture (1.0 ml) were added to reaction tubes.   Appropriate cholesterol standards and blanks were prepared.   Tubes were then agitated and incubated at 37°C for 10 minutes.   Absorbance at 500 nm was determined   and   sample   concentrations   calculated   from standards.

6.3.3   HDL

6.3.3.1   DENSITY ADJUSTMENT

Assuming the density of serum adjusted to 1.090 g/ml had changed negligibly upon removal of LDL cholesterol, the volume of the remaining serum in the centrifuge tube after LDL removal was made up to 1.000 ml with a KBr solution of density 1.090 g/ml.   The composition of this volume adjusting solution was calculated to be 13.240 g KBr in 97.000 ml distilled water using equation 11 (where v=97.000, d1=0.998, d2=1.090, and p=0.2990).

Precise quantities of KBr were added to this 1.000 ml serum of density 1.090 g/ml for density adjustment to 1.210 g/ml. At this density, the HDL lipoprotein fraction of pig serum floats on top of the rest of the serum upon high speed centrifugation. The quantity of KBr needed to make this density adjustment was calculated using equation 11 (where v=1.000, d1=1.090, d2=1.210, and p=0.3077). The mass of KBr required to adjust 1.000 ml serum of density 1.090 to 1.120 was determined to be 0.1913 g.

Dried KBr was used to make a density adjusting solution in distilled water of 0.445 g KBr/ml. The density adjusting solution (0.430 ml) containing 0.1913 g KBr, was added to 1 ml centrifuge tubes. These tubes were dried at 85°C for 12 hours to evaporate the water in the density adjusting solution, leaving only the KBr. Tubes were cooled to 22°C in a dessicator and the 1.000 ml of serum (of density 1.090 g/ml) was added to each tube. Tubes were agitated until all KBr was dissolved in the serum.

6.3.3.2   CENTRIFUGATION AND ISOLATION

Tubes were centrifuged for 14 hours under conditions described under 6.3.1.2. The floating HDL layer appeared as a slightly yellow layer and was drawn off and diluted as described under 6.3.1.2.   This was the diluted HDL extract.

6.3.3.3   CHOLESTEROL ANALYSIS

Total cholesterol content of the HDL fraction was analysed using the procedure described under 6.2 with the following modification.   Diluted HDL extract (0.3 ml), distilled water (1.0 ml), and reagent mixture (1.0 ml) were placed in reaction tubes.   Appropriate cholesterol standards and blanks were prepared.   Tubes were then agitated and incubated at 37°C for 10 minutes.   Absorbance at 500 nm was determined   and   sample   concentrations   calculated   from standards.

7   LIVER ANALYSIS

7.1   TOTAL CHOLESTEROL CONTENT

The total cholesterol content of each liver was analysed using a colorimetric method Test-Combination kit from Boehringer Mannheim (Cat. no. 139-050).   To determine total cholesterol, a methylation procedure was used to free the esterified cholesterol.

Frozen liver samples were thawed at 4°C for 12 hours prior to analysis.   Cholesterol content of the liver samples (1.0 - 3.0 g) taken from the last day of the second infusion period were analysed in triplicate.   The procedure outlined

under 4.3.6 was used without further modification. Total liver cholesterol content was expressed as mg cholesterol/g liver, mg cholesterol/liver, and mg liver cholesterol/kg body weight.

8   STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

A SAS procedure for general linear models (proc GLM) employed the model shown in equation 12 for the two way factorial analysis of variance with interaction for most parameters measured. Proc GLM was used since an unequal number of observations can be accommodated for the different combinations of sources of variance.

$$Y_{ij} = w_i + x_j + w_i x_j + error \qquad (12)$$

where Y_{ij} = an individual observation

w_i = the effect of infusion period,
  where $_i$ has two levels

x_j = the effect of infusion treatment,
  where $_j$ has two levels

$w_i x_j$ = the effect of period and treatment
  interaction, where there are
  $_i x_j$ levels

If interaction ($w_i x_j$) effects were not significant in this model, the main effects model shown in equation 13 was used.

This model calculates variation due to individual animal differences.

$$Y_{ijk} = w_i + x_j + z_k + error \qquad (13)$$

where $\quad Y_{ijk}$ = an individual observation

w_i = the effect of infusion period, where $_i$ has two levels

x_j = the effect of infusion treatment where $_j$ has two levels

z_k = the effect of individual animals, where $_k$ has nine levels

If the main effect of infusion period (w_i) was not significant in either the two way factorial ANOVA or the main effects ANOVA, a paired T-test (SAS proc MEANS) was used to assess differences using each pig as its own control.

Liver analysis would not illustrate infusion period or animal effects, as livers were only extracted after the second infusion period. The four pigs that received propionate infusion were compared to the five pigs that received saline infusion in the second infusion period. Liver data were analysed in a one-way ANOVA shown in equation 14.

$$Y_j \quad = x_j + error \qquad (14)$$

$$\text{where } Y_j \quad = \text{an individual observation}$$

$$x_j \quad = \text{the effect of treatment,}$$

$$\text{where } j \text{ has two levels}$$

Proc CORR in SAS was used to calculate Pearson Correlation Coefficients (R) for correlations between serum lipid, ileal digesta and fecal sterol content, ileal minus fecal sterol difference, and liver parameters.

For all tests, the p value to accept a significant difference was set as a probability ≤ 0.05.

RESULTS

Pig weights (Figure 8) did not differ between treatment groups before or after either infusion period. Weight gain (Table 8) did not differ between the treatment groups, but was different between periods 1 and 2 ($p \leq 0.05$). Feed consumption was increased from 1800 g/day in period 1 to 2268 g/day in period 2 to maintain a constant feed intake of 109.3 $g/kg^{0.75}$ per day. This increase in consumption in the second period is reflected in the greater weight gain in the second period. Feed efficiency and percent body weight change (Table 8) were constant during both infusion periods and for both treatments.

Ileal digesta and fecal digestibility coefficients for nitrogen and organic matter are shown in Table 9. Nitrogen and organic matter digestibilities were not altered by infusion treatment. Fecal organic matter digestibility was greater in period 2 than in period 1 ($p \leq 0.05$).

Triglyceride, HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, VLDL cholesterol, and total cholesterol content of serum collected after 16 days of infusion are presented in Table 10. Lipid content of serum collected on the first day of each infusion period did not differ between treatment groups or infusion

FIGURE 8

Pig weights[1]

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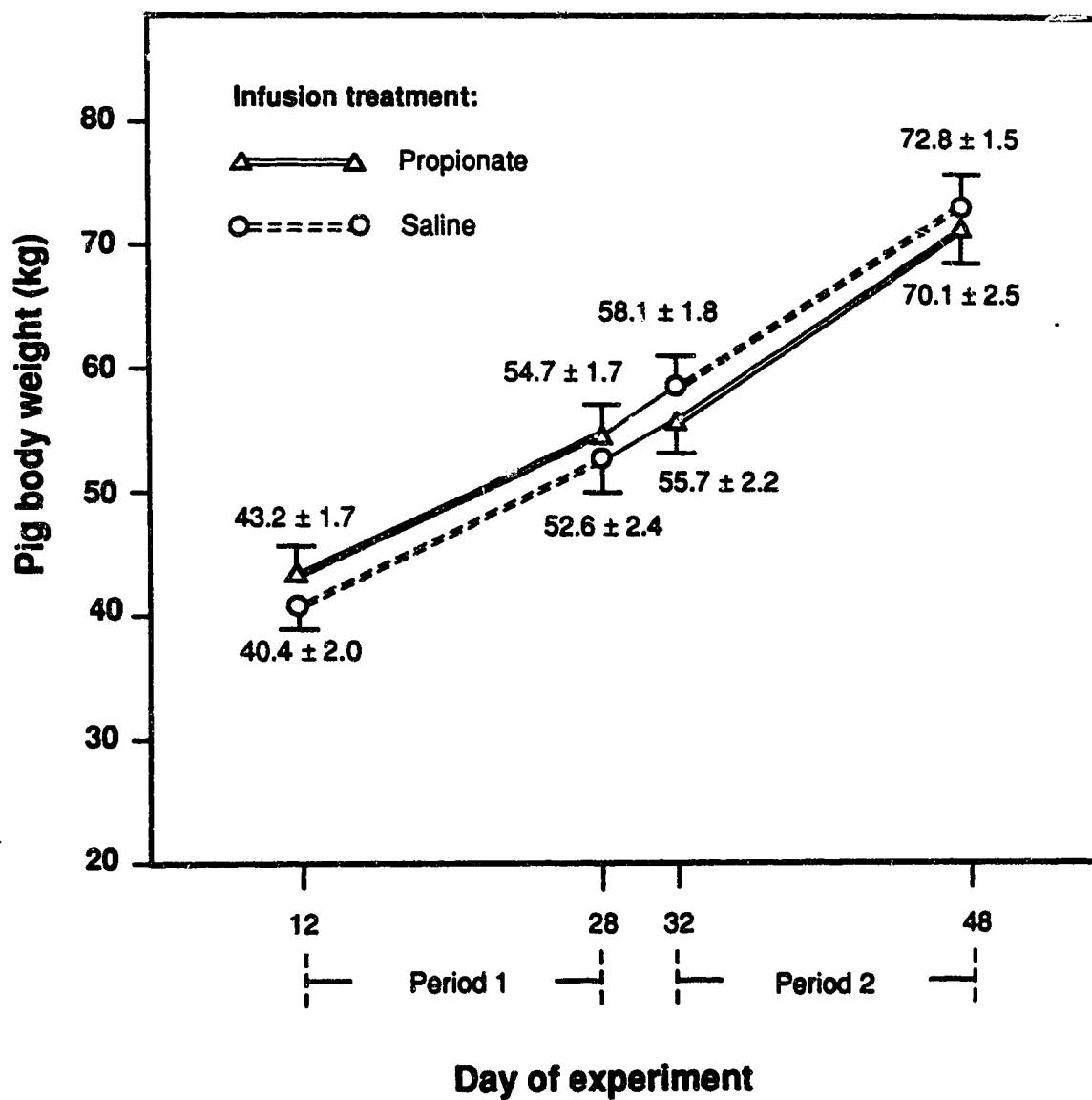
[1] Values represent means ± SEM, n = 5, 4 for
upper and lower lines, respectively.

TABLE 8

Weight gain, weight change, and feed efficiency[1]

	Infusion treatment	
	Propionate	Saline

Weight gain (kg)

Period 1	11.5 ± 0.2 (5)a	11.2 ± 0.4 (4)a
Period 2	14.3 ± 0.8 (4)b	15.3 ± 0.8 (5)b
Average	12.8 ± 0.6 (9)	13.5 ± 0.9 (9)

Weight change (gain as % of start of period weight)

Period 1	26.8 ± 1.3 (5)	28.5 ± 2.2 (4)
Period 2	25.9 ± 1.7 (4)	27.5 ± 2.5 (5)
Average	26.4 ± 1.0 (9)	27.9 ± 1.6 (9)

Feed efficiency (gain/consumption)

Period 1	0.40 + 0.01 (5)	0.39 + 0.02 (4)
Period 2	0.39 + 0.02 (4)	0.42 + 0.02 (5)
Average	0.40 + 0.02 (9)	0.41 + 0.03 (9)

[1] Values are means ± SEM (n). Period values with different letters are significantly different $p \leq 0.05$.

TABLE 9

Ileal and fecal digestibility coefficients
of nitrogen and organic matter[1]

	Infusion treatment	
	Propionate	Saline
Ileal nitrogen	Digestibility coefficient (%)	
Period 1	80.43 ± 2.31 (5)	72.83 ± 7.98 (4)
Period 2	79.25 ± 2.89 (4)	8..45 ± 0.87 (5)
Average	79.90 ± 1.71 (9)	78.17 ± 3.70 (9)
Ileal organic matter		
Period 1	76.96 ± 1.55 (5)	71.64 ± 7.08 (4)
Period 2	73.74 ± 4.44 (4)	77.90 ± 0.91 (5)
Average	75.53 ± 2.07 (9)	75.12 ± 3.13 (9)
Fecal nitrogen		
Period 1	84.41 ± 1.03 (5)	82.54 ± 0.97 (4)
Period 2	84.60 ± 1.03 (4)	84.30 ± 1.26 (5)
Average	84.50 ± 0.69 (9)	83.52 ± 0.83 (9)
Fecal organic matter		
Period 1	86.13 ± 0.45 (5)a	85.92 ± 0.28 (4)a
Period 2	88.95 ± 0.46 (4)b	87.82 ± 0.39 (5)b
Average	87.38 ± 0.58 (9)	86.98 ± 0.41 (9)

[1]Values are means ± SEM (n). Period values with different
letters are significantly different, $p \leq 0.05$.

TABLE 10

Serum cholesterol content, triglyceride content,
and LDL/HDL cholesterol ratio[1]

		Infusion treatment	
		Propionate	Saline
		mg/dl serum	
Total CH	Period 1	136.27 ± 4.71 (5)	112.91 ± 6.49 (4)
	Period 2	131.03 ± 8.32 (4)	119.73 ± 5.67 (5)
	Average	133.94 ± 4.30 (9)	116.70 ± 4.17 (9)*
HDL CH	Period 1	46.72 ± 2.06 (5)	39.90 ± 4.67 (4)
	Period 2	48.87 ± 3.37 (4)	43.75 ± 2.16 (5)
	Average	47.67 ± 1.79 (9)	42.04 ± 2.32 (9)
LDL CH	Period 1	74.57 ± 3.77 (5)	63.17 ± 2.14 (4)
	Period 2	70.52 ± 5.68 (4)	63.30 ± 2.89 (5)
	Average	72.77 ± 3.14 (9)	63.24 ± 1.76 (9)**
VLDL CH	Period 1	14.99 ± 1.63 (5)	9.82 ± 2.04 (4)
	Period 2	11.45 ± 1.77 (4)	12.68 ± 2.15 (5)
	Average	13.42 ± 1.28 (9)	11.41 ± 1.49 (9)
TG	Period 1	52.83 ± 3.69 (5)	38.12 ± 2.85 (4)
	Period 2	47.49 ± 4.98 (4)	47.45 ± 6.87 (5)
	Average	50.46 ± 2.97 (9)	43.30 ± 4.14 (9)
LDL CH/HDL CH			
	Period 1	2.28 ± 0.40 (5)	2.26 ± 0.87 (4)
	Period 2	1.97 ± 0.52 (4)	2.46 ± 0.63 (5)
	Average	2.14 ± 0.30 (9)	2.37 ± 0.38 (9)

[1]Values are means ± SEM (n).
*, ** - Average treatment values are significantly
   different, $p \leq 0.011$ and $p \leq 0.017$, respectively.
CH - cholesterol
TG - triglyceride

periods. These base-line values were (mear ± SEM mg/dl serum) 42.7 ± 2.7, 35.6 ± 2.5, 70.5 ± 3.3, 12.5 ± 1.2, ard 118.8 ± 3.2 for triglyceride, HDL cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, VLDL cholesterol, and total cholesterol, respectively.

Total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol levels were different between treatments ($p \leq 0.011$, $p \leq 0.017$, respectively). Total cholesterol increased by 14.8%, from 116.7 mg/dl serum after saline infusion to 133.9 mg/dl after propionate infusion. LDL cholesterol increased by 15.1%, from 63.2 mg/dl after saline infusion to 72.8 mg/dl after propionate infusion. Other serum lipid categories, HDL cholesterol, VLDL cholesterol, and triglyceride, did not differ between infusion treatments, although serum lipids tended to increase with propionate infusion (Figure 9). The LDL cholesterol to HDL cholesterol ratio was not altered by infusion treatment.

Liver cholesterol content and liver weight measured at the end of the second infusion period are shown in Table 11. No differences in liver weight, total liver cholesterol, cholesterol concentration, liver weight expressed as a percentage of body weight, or liver cholesterol per kg of body weight were found between the treatment groups.

FIGURE 9

Effect of infusion treatment on serum lipids[1]
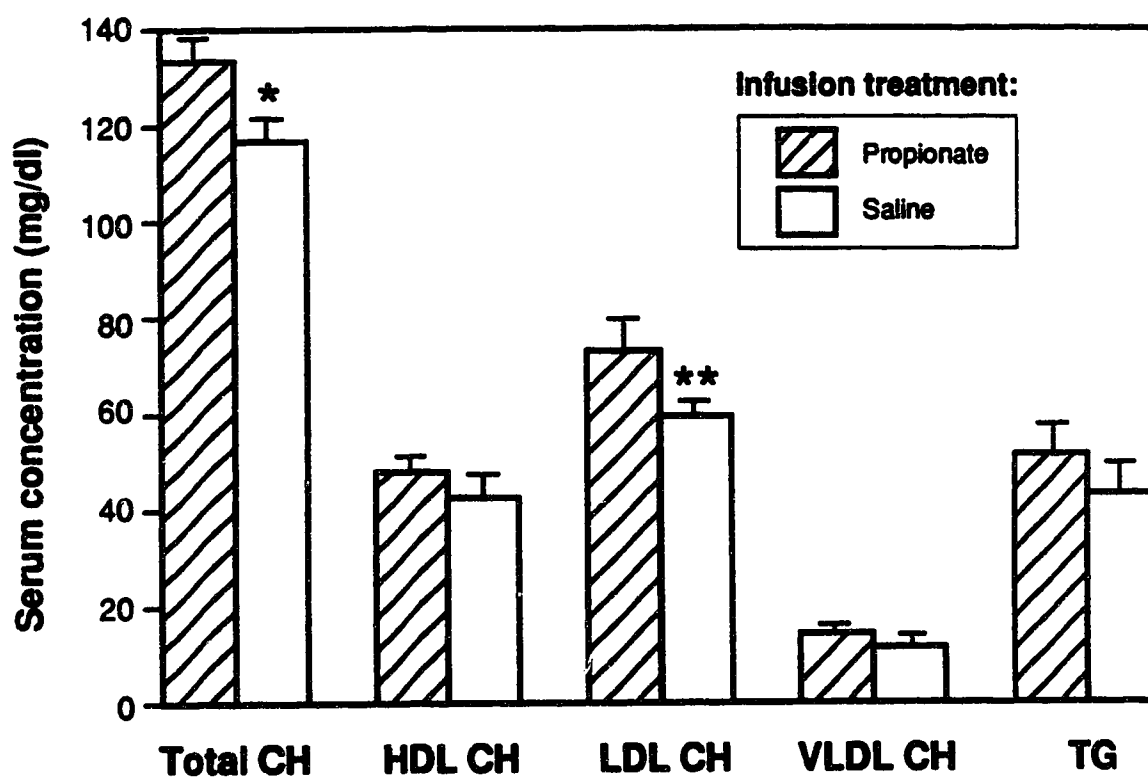
[1] Bars represent means ± SEM, n = 9
*,** - Lipid component means are significantly
different, p<0.011, p<0.017 respectively

TABLE 11

Liver cholesterol and liver weight[1]

	Infusion treatment	
	Propionate (n=4)	Saline (n=5)
Liver weight (g)	1351.0 ± 35.7	1369.0 ± 31.9
Liver cholesterol (mg)	8876 ± 184	9137 ± 184
Liver cholesterol concentration (mg/g liver)	6.57 ± 0.10	6.78 ± 0.30
Liver weight as % of body weight	1.89 ± 0.03	1.92 ± 0.08
Liver cholesterol per kg body weight (mg/kg)	124.0 ± 2.0	127.9 ± 2.8

[1] Values are means ± SEM.

The bile acid and cholesterol content of the ileal digesta and the feces were not affected by infusion treatment (Table 12). Apparent colonic disappearance was calculated as the difference between ileal digesta sterol content and fecal sterol content as an estimate of the quantity of sterol either absorbed or degraded in the colon. Apparent colonic disappearance of sterols was not affected by treatment (Table 13).

Pearson Correlation Coefficients (R) for serum lipids are shown in Table 14. Total cholesterol correlated with HDL cholesterol ($p \leq 0.001$), LDL cholesterol ($p \leq 0.0001$), VLDL cholesterol ($p \leq 0.001$), and triglyceride ($p \leq 0.0002$). HDL cholesterol correlated with triglyceride ($p \leq 0.018$). LDL cholesterol correlated with VLDL cholesterol ($p \leq 0.04$), and triglyceride ($p \leq 0.016$). VLDL cholesterol correlated with triglyceride ($p \leq 0.001$).

Table 15 shows Pearson Correlation Coefficients for serum lipids with ileal digesta, fecal, and apparent colonic disappearance of sterol content. The only significant correlations that were found were negative relationships between VLDL cholesterol and ileal digesta cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.04$), and apparent colonic disappearance of cholesterol ($p \leq 0.03$).

TABLE 12

Sterol content of ileal digesta and feces[1]

| | | Infusion treatment | |
		Propionate	Saline
Ileal		mmol/day	
BA	Period 1	4.55 ± 0.81 (5)	8.80 ± 1.93 (4)
	Period 2	9.78 ± 2.54 (4)	5.51 ± 0.49 (5)
	Average	6.88 ± 1.45 (9)	6.98 ± 1.01 (9)
CH	Period 1	2.20 ± 0.29 (5)	2.99 ± 0.24 (4)
	Period 2	3.29 ± 0.37 (4)	2.92 ± 0.11 (5)
	Average	2.67 ± 0.29 (9)	2.95 ± 0.11 (9)
BA+CH	Period 1	6.75 ± 0.64 (5)	11.79 ± 2.14 (4)
	Period 2	13.07 ± 2.90 (4)	8.43 ± 0.50 (5)
	Average	9.56 ± 1.66 (9)	9.92 ± 1.08 (9)
Fecal			
BA	Period 1	1.11 ± 0.26 (5)	1.64 ± 0.15 (4)
	Period 2	1.95 ± 0.25 (4)	1.05 ± 0.06 (5)
	Average	1.48 ± 0.23 (9)	1.31 ± 0.12 (9)
CH	Period 1	0.62 ± 0.07 (5)	0.74 ± 0.05 (4)
	Period 2	1.12 ± 0.04 (4)	1.15 ± 0.09 (5)
	Average	0.84 ± 0.10 (9)	0.97 ± 0.09 (9)
BA+CH	Period 1	1.73 ± 0.27 (5)	2.38 ± 0.11 (4)
	Period 2	3.07 ± 0.22 (4)	2.20 ± 0.08 (5)
	Average	2.32 ± 0.29 (9)	2.28 ± 0.07 (9)

[1]Values are means ± SEM (n).
BA - bile acid, CH - cholesterol

TABLE 13

Apparent colonic disappearance of sterols[1]

	Infusion treatment	
	Propionate	Saline
Bile acid	mmol/day	
Period 1	3.44 ± 0.75 (5)	7.16 ± 2.01 (4)
Period 2	7.83 ± 2.58 (4)	4.46 ± 0.50 (5)
Average	5.39 ± 1.36 (9)	5.66 ± 0.98 (9)
Cholesterol		
Period 1	1.58 ± 0.34 (5)	2.24 ± 0.21 (4)
Period 2	2.17 ± 0.37 (4)	1.77 ± 0.11 (5)
Average	1.84 ± 0.25 (9)	1.98 ± 0.13 (9)
Bile acid + cholesterol		
Period 1	5.03 ± 0.48 (5)	9.41 ± 2.17 (4)
Period 2	10.00 ± 2.93 (4)	6.23 ± 0.42 (5)
Average	7.24 ± 1.50 (9)	7.64 ± 1.07 (9)

[1] Values are means ± SEM (n).

TABLE 14

Pearson correlation coefficient matrix
for serum lipids

R/ p>|R| under Ho: R=0 (n=18)

	VLDL CH	LDL CH	HDL CH	Total CH	T	LDL CH/ HDL CH
VLDL CH						
	1.00	0.49	0.34	0.71	0.71	-0.10
	0.00	0.04	0.17	0.001	0.001	0.69
LDL CH		1.00	0.29	0.85	0.56	0.02
		0.00	0.24	0.0001	0.016	0.94
HDL CH			1.00	0.71	0.55	-0.14
			0.00	0.001	0.018	0.58
Total CH				1.00	0.76	-0.08
				0.00	0.0002	0.75
TG					1.00	-0.15
					0.00	0.55
LDL CH/HDL CH						1.00
						0.00

CH - cholesterol, TG - triglyceride

TABLE 15

Pearson correlation coefficient matrix for
serum lipids, ileal and fecal sterol content,
and apparent colonic disappearance

R/ p>|R| under Ho: R=0 (n=18)

Ileal	VLDL CH	LDL CH	HDL CH	Total CH	TG
BA	-0.14	0.25	0.02	0.12	0.02
	0.59	0.32	0.93	0.64	0.92
CH	-0.47	-0.17	0.06	-0.20	-0.05
	0.04	0.50	0.80	0.42	0.84
BA+CH	-0.19	0.20	0.03	0.07	0.01
	0.43	0.44	0.90	0.77	0.96
Fecal					
BA	-0.33	0.22	0.14	0.10	-0.09
	0.18	0.38	0.58	0.69	0.70
CH	-0.01	-0.08	0.02	-0.04	0.08
	0.98	0.73	0.94	0.87	0.74
BA+CH	-0.29	0.16	0.13	0.07	-0.05
	0.24	0.54	0.61	0.78	0.85
Apparent colonic disappearance					
BA	-0.09	0.23	0.01	0.11	0.04
	0.72	0.36	0.99	0.66	0.87
CH	-0.51	-0.15	0.06	-0.20	-0.10
	0.03	0.56	0.80	0.42	0.70
BA+CH	-0.16	0.18	0.01	0.07	0.02
	0.52	0.46	0.96	0.79	0.93

CH - cholesterol, TG - triglyceride, BA - bile acid

Positive correlations were found between fecal and ileal sterol content (Table 16). Ileal digesta bile acid content was correlated with ileal digesta cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.004$), ileal digesta bile acid + cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.0001$), and fecal bile acid + cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.04$). Ileal digesta cholesterol content correlated with ileal digesta bile acid + cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.0006$), and fecal bile acid + cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.02$). Ileal digesta bile acid + cholesterol correlated with fecal bile acid + cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.03$). Fecal bile acid and cholesterol correlated with fecal bile acid + cholesterol ($p \leq 0.0001$ and $p \leq 0.05$, respectively).

Positive correlations were found between all apparent colonic disappearance of sterol categories (Table 17). Ileal digesta contents of bile acid, cholesterol, and bile acid + cholesterol were correlated with apparent colonic disappearance of bile acid, cholesterol, and bile acid + cholesterol. However, significant correlations were not found between the content of any fecal sterols and apparent colonic disappearance of any sterol categories (Table 17).

Table 18 shows correlation coefficients for liver weight and liver cholesterol values and serum lipids. Liver cholesterol concentration was correlated positively with liver weight ($p \leq 0.016$). Both total liver cholesterol and liver

TABLE 16

Pearson correlation coefficient matrix for fecal and ileal sterol content

R/ p>|R| under Ho: R=0 (n=18)

Ileal	Ileal BA	Ileal CH	Ileal BA+CH	Fecal BA	Fecal CH	Fecal BA+CH
BA	1.00	0.64	0.99	0.39	0.31	0.49
	0.00	0.004	0.0001	0.11	0.20	0.04
CH		1.00	0.73	0.41	0.40	0.54
		0.00	0.0006	0.09	0.10	0.02
BA+CH			1.00	0.41	0.34	0.52
			0.00	0.09	0.16	0.03
Fecal						
BA				1.00	0.02	0.89
				0.00	0.94	0.0001
CH					1.00	0.47
					0.00	0.05
BA+CH						1.00
						0.00

BA - bile acid, CH - cholesterol

TABLE 17

Pearson correlation coefficient matrix for
ileal, fecal, and apparent colonic disappearance
of sterols

R/ p>|R| under Ho: R=0 (n=18)

Apparent colonic difference

Ileal	BA	CH	BA + CH
BA	0.99	0.55	0.99
	0.0001	0.02	0.0001
CH	0.61	0.90	0.70
	0.007	0.0001	0.001
BA + CH	0.98	0.63	0.99
	0.001	0.005	0.001

Fecal

	BA	CH	BA + CH
BA	0.25	0.43	0.30
	0.31	0.07	0.23
CH	0.33	-0.04	0.29
	0.18	0.88	0.24
BA + CH	0.37	0.36	0.39
	0.13	0.14	0.10

Apparent colonic disappearance

	BA	CH	BA + CH
BA	1.00	0.51	0.99
	0.00	0.03	0.0001
CH		1.00	0.62
		0.00	0.006
BA + CH			1.00
			0.00

BA - bile acid, CH - cholesterol

TABLE 18

Pearson correlation coefficient matrix for
liver weight, liver cholesterol
and serum lipids

R/ p>|R| under Ho: R=0 (n=9)

	LIVWT	CH/gL	CH/L	%L/BW	CH/kgBW
LIVWT	1.00	-0.76	0.06	0.41	-0.51
	0.00	0.016	0.87	0.28	0.16
CH/gL		1.00	0.53	-0.65	0.46
		0.00	0.14	0.05	0.21
CH/L			1.00	-0.69	-0.12
			0.00	0.04	0.76
%L/BW				1.00	0.34
				0.00	0.37
CH/kgBW					1.00
					0.00
VLDL CH	0.09	-0.28	-0.43	0.69	0.49
	0.82	0.47	0.25	0.038	0.18
LDL CH	0.59	-0.46	0.08	0.19	-0.32
	0.09	0.21	0.83	0.63	0.41
HDL CH	-0.30	0.06	-0.32	0.19	0.32
	0.48	0.88	0.41	0.62	0.40
.Total CH	0.27	-0.34	-0.20	0.38	0.07
	0.48	0.37	0.60	0.31	0.86
TG	0.41	-0.45	-0.29	0.74	0.34
	0.28	0.23	0.45	0.02	0.37

CH - cholesterol, TG - triglyceride,
LIVWT - liver weight, CH/gL - cholesterol/g liver,
CH/L - total liver cholesterol,
%L/BW - liver weight as % body weight,
CH/kgBW - liver cholesterol/kg body weight.

cholesterol concentration were negatively correlated with liver weight expressed as a percentage of body weight ($p \leq 0.04$, $p \leq 0.05$, respectively). Liver weight expressed as a percentage of body weight was positively correlated with VLDL cholesterol and triglyceride ($p \leq 0.038$, $p \leq 0.02$, respectively). Liver parameters were not correlated with ileal digesta and fecal sterol contents (Table 19).

TABLE 19

Pearson correlation coefficient matrix for
liver weight and cholesterol
with ileal content, fecal content,
and apparent colonic disappearance of sterols

R/ p>|R| under Ho: R=0 (n=9)

Ileal	LIVWT	CH/gL	CH/L	%L/BW	CH/kgBW
BA	0.15	-0.34	-0.32	0.19	-0.18
	0.69	0.37	0.40	0.63	0.65
CH	0.11	-0.10	-0.03	-0.08	-0.21
	0.78	0.79	0.93	0.85	0.59
BA+CH	0.15	-0.31	-0.29	0.16	-0.20
	0.70	0.41	0.41	0.69	0.60
Fecal					
BA	0.14	-0.17	-0.04	-0.17	-0.42
	0.72	0.66	0.92	0.67	0.26
CH	-0.16	0.14	0.15	0.16	0.54
	0.68	0.71	0.70	0.68	0.13
BA+CH	0.10	-0.14	0.00	-0.13	-0.30
	0.80	0.72	1.00	0.73	0.44
Apparent colonic disappearance					
BA	0.14	-0.33	-0.33	0.22	-0.14
	0.72	0.38	0.38	0.56	0.72
CH	0.15	-0.15	-0.08	-0.12	-0.39
	0.70	0.71	0.84	0.76	0.31
BA+CH	0.14	-0.31	-0.31	0.18	-0.17
	0.71	0.41	0.42	0.64	0.66

CH - cholesterol, BA - bile acid,
LIVWT - liver weight, CH/gL - cholesterol/g liver,
CH/L - total liver cholesterol,
%L/BW - liver weight as % body weight,
CH/kgBW - liver cholesterol/kg body weight.

DISCUSSION

Although propionate infusion provided 3.5% extra kcals, the increase in energy was not accompanied by an increase in weight gain or % weight change during propionate infusion (Table 8). Weight gain was significantly different between the first and second infusion periods ($p \leq 0.05$, Table 8). The increase in gain during the second period was attributable to increased consumption. Pig body weight at the start of the second infusion period was 36% greater than at the start of the first infusion period (Figure 8). Metabolic body weight ($kg^{0.75}$) was increased by 26%. Feed intake was purposefully increased to maintain a constant $kcal/kg^{0.75}$ ratio, thus providing a constant excess of energy in both periods. It has been shown that cholesterol synthesis is decreased when a mild kcal restriction is imposed (Grundy, 1978). Due to this feed consumption correction for metabolic body weight, % body weight change and feed efficiency did not differ between infusion periods (Table 8). There was no significant period effect in serum lipid analysis (Table 10), indicating this correction was justified.

Digestibilities of dietary components were assessed to ensure that any differences in serum lipids were not attributable to altered absorption of nutrients. Fich et al (1989) illustrated stimulation of ileal emptying by bursts of

phasic contractions upon bolus infusion of SCFAs to the ileum compared to saline infusion in both fasting and post-prandial dogs. Bolus SCFA infusion through ileal intubation of humans showed enhanced motility relative to saline and air infusion in humans (Kamath et al, 1988). This effect could lead to nutrient malabsorption in the small intestine. Propionate provision may enhance gut integrity, which could enhance nutrient absorption.

Fecal digestibilities did not differ between infusion treatments (Table 9). However, there was an increase in fecal organic matter digestibility in the second period (Table 9). The significance of this relatively small increase of about 2% was due in part to very little variation among animals in each period. This increase in digestibility was not reflected in a concurrent increase in feed efficiency (Table 8). In infusion period 1, one animal in the saline infusion group had lower ileal nitrogen and organic matter digestibility than the others (Table 9), making the mean of the four animals seem lower than would be expected. This animal was not excluded, as no differences were detected between treatment groups. Differences in serum lipids are not attributable to nutrient losses through excretion.

The results of the serum lipid analyses (Table 10) do not support the hypothesis that propionate infusion lowers serum

lipids, but instead suggest that propionate infusion increases serum cholesterol, mainly in the LDL cholesterol fraction. Although serum was stored at -30°C for 2 to 3 months prior to analysis, it is unlikely that the storage period affected lipoprotein cholesterol or triglyceride concentrations. Changes in human lipoprotein cholesterol or triglyceride fractions have not been found between fresh serum and serum stored at -20°C for 27 weeks prior to separated by density gradient ultracentrifugation (Tiedink and Katan, 1988).

Pigs were fed a high fat diet as a model of the hyperlipidemic human. The range of serum triglyceride, cholesterol and lipoprotein cholesterol concentrations found in the present study (Table 10) were in agreement with other studies that have shown increased tallow consumption to cause hyperlipidemia in pigs (Boila et al, 1981; Thacker and Bowland, 1981). A hyperlipidemic pig model was used because fiber supplementation for the purpose of lowering serum cholesterol is of more practical concern for those individuals with high serum cholesterol.

In the present study, excess cholesterol was not supplemented in the diet beyond the quantity found in the tallow added to the diet. Inclusion of a larger quantity may have masked any effects that propionate infusion had on hepatic cholesterol synthesis. Pigs fed diets supplemented

with 1% cholesterol and 0.5% cholic acid, with 14% fat (w/w) had serum cholesterol levels of about 400% of normal pigs consuming a grower diet (Ahrens, 1986). At this dramatically increased level, results would be difficult to interpret, and would not be representative of the hypercholesterolemic human.

Normal pig serum cholesterol ranges around 30 mg/dl (2 mmol/litre) (Mahley, 1974). In the present study, pigs consuming the high fat diet had serum cholesterol values ranging about 150% of normal (Table 10) and were considered a representative model of humans with elevated serum cholesterol levels.

Propionate feeding at a level of 6 and 9% (w/w) of an ad libitum fed diet resulted in a decreased diet consumption, compared to the 0% control and the 3% propionate supplemented diet (Thacker and Bowland, 1981). Decreased caloric intake may be responsible for the observed decrease in serum cholesterol at 6 and 9% dietary propionate supplementation levels (Thacker and Bowland, 1981). No differences in serum cholesterol were observed in pigs fed the 3% (w/w) propionate supplemented diet. The quantity of sodium propionate infused in the present study was equal to 2.5% of the diet (w/w) or 3.5% of the kcals.

Sodium propionate feeding in rats as 5% (w/w) of the diet also showed low diet compliance, resulting in a 20-25% lower consumption during the first two days of a ten day feeding period (Illman et al, 1988). A decrease in total plasma cholesterol resulted in these rats after the ten days of feeding, as compared to control rats. Hepatic cholesterol synthesis was measured through tritiated water incorporation from intraperitoneal injection one hour prior to liver extraction. Liver cholesterol concentration was increased upon propionate feeding, but synthesis was unchanged. Provision of 7.5 g sodium propionate/day (1.5% of daily kcal) for seven weeks increased triglyceride and HDL cholesterol in humans (Venter et al, 1990).

Liver cholesterol content and liver weight were evaluated at the end of the second infusion period only. The four pigs receiving propionate infusion were compared to the five pigs receiving saline infusion. Individual variation between animals could not be accounted for, and considerable variation existed within a treatment group. Differences in liver cholesterol were not detected between treatments (Table 11).

Sterol content of ileal digesta and feces did not show differences between treatments (Table 12). Correlations between serum lipids and ileal digesta or fecal sterol content were not significant (Table 15). Differences in serum lipids

were not due to alterations in sterol absorption or excretion. Bacterial degradation of bile acids in the human colon can occur so that degradation products are unrecognizable to the enzyme 3-alpha-hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase (3-alpha-HSD) (Lepage and Roy, 1988). An estimated 15% of bile acids, present as sulfated or keto bile acids are also undetected by 3-alpha-HSD (Roy and Weber, 1977). As fecal bile acid losses can be used as a rough estimate of bile acid synthesis (Hofmann, 1977; Lepage and Roy, 1988), it is unlikely that differences in bile acid synthesis occurred between treatment groups.

Apparent colonic disappearance of sterols indicate the quantity of sterol either reabsorbed between the distal ileum and the rectum, or those altered or degraded to a form unrecognizable to 3-alpha-HSD. The lack of difference between treatment groups (Table 13) indicates enhanced reabsorption of sterol is not responsible for the observed increase in serum cholesterol.

The significant correlations found between total cholesterol, with triglyceride and all serum lipoprotein cholesterol fractions (Table 14) emphasizes the tendency for all lipoprotein cholesterol concentrations and triglyceride to increase upon propionate infusion. However, this tendency

was not statistically significant in the analysis of variance (Table 10).

Ileal and fecal sterol content did not correlate significantly with serum lipids, except for ileal digesta cholesterol which correlated negatively with VLDL cholesterol ($p \leq 0.04$, Table 15). VLDL is synthesized in both liver (Marsh and Whereat, 1959), and intestinal mucosa (Gangl and Ockner, 1975). The correlation implies that increased upper gastrointestinal cholesterol absorption, resulting in less cholesterol entering the colon, increases the quantity of cholesterol incorporated into VLDL in mucosal VLDL synthesis. VLDL cholesterol also correlated negatively with apparent colonic disappearance of cholesterol (Table 15), suggesting an increase in colonic cholesterol absorption also results in increased incorporation of cholesterol into VLDL. No other apparent colonic disappearances of sterols were correlated to serum lipids (Table 15). As triglyceride is mainly carried by VLDL in serum, the lack of correlation of ileal digesta cholesterol or apparent colonic disappearance of cholesterol with triglyceride suggests VLDL composition is altered by absorption of cholesterol from the intestine (Table 15).

Ileal digesta bile acid was correlated with cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.004$, Table 16). This implies that enhanced upper

gastrointestinal sterol absorption proceeds through a mechanism that increases absorption of both sterol classes.

Fecal bile acid and cholesterol content correlated with both ileal digesta bile acid and cholesterol content ($p \leq 0.04$ and $p \leq 0.02$, respectively, Table 16) indicating that a higher quantity of sterol entering the colon is accompanied by increased sterol excretion, although increased apparent colonic disappearance of sterol is also observed when a higher quantity of sterol enters the colon. This is evidenced by correlations found between apparent colonic disappearance of both bile acids and cholesterol with digesta bile acid and cholesterol content (Table 17).

Correlations of liver weight as percentage of body weight with VLDL cholesterol ($p \leq 0.04$) and triglyceride ($p \leq 0.02$) were found (Table 18). This suggests that a larger liver weight was associated with higher serum triglyceride and VLDL cholesterol. Total cholesterol content of liver and cholesterol concentration in liver were negatively correlated with liver weight ($p \leq 0.05$ and $p \leq 0.04$, respectively, Table 18). This suggests that a larger liver weight was not associated with increased liver cholesterol.

No correlations were significant between ileal and fecal sterols or apparent colonic disappearance of sterols with the

liver parameters assessed (Table 19). This suggests that no relationship exists between sterol reabsorption or excretion and liver cholesterol.

The increase in serum total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol cannot be attributed to enhanced sterol conservation. The occurrence of either mobilization of tissue cholesterol to serum, enhanced cholesterol synthesis, or down-regulation of serum LDL clearance are alternate explanations for the observed serum cholesterol increase. In the present study, LDL cholesterol was the main serum cholesterol fraction to increase (Table 10). LDL cholesterol increases in serum have been highly correlated with an increased incidence of atherosclerosis in other studies (Wilkenson, 1948; Epstein et al, 1959; Slack, 1969). The origin of the cholesterol found in atherosclerotic lesions is from LDL cholesterol (Newman and Zilversmit, 1962; Jagannathan et al, 1974). Thus, elevated LDL cholesterol is generally associated with tissue cholesterol deposition rather than mobilization.

Increases in serum cholesterol upon ingestion of saturated fats is well documented (Hegsted et al, 1965; McNamara et al, 1987; Keys et al 1957). Studies in humans show increases in serum cholesterol induced by saturated fat feeding are largely in the LDL fraction (Vega et al, 1982; Mattson and Grundy, 1985; Grundy, 1986). This response also

occurred upon propionate infusion in the present study. Enhanced cholesterol synthesis or decreased serum LDL cholesterol clearance due to propionate are likely explanations for the increase in serum cholesterol.

Isolated rat hepatocytes incubated in 15-30 mMol propionate showed inhibited cholesterol synthesis (Anderson and Bridges, 1981). Bovine liver slices incubated in 15 mMol propionate resulted in inhibition HMG-CoA synthase activity (Bush and Milligan, 1971), and 18 mMol propionate inhibited cholesterol synthesis in perfused rat liver, although 1 mMol propionate had no effect (Illman et al, 1988). Hepatic portal blood concentration of propionate in non-fasted ad libitum-fed rats was 0.22 mMol, and total SCFA concentration was 1.6 mMol (Illman et al, 1988). In vitro incubation at extraphysiological levels (15 and 18 mMol) are difficult to interpret and may not be representative of in vivo hepatic cholesterol synthesis. Diets containing 5% sodium propionate fed to rats for 10 days resulted in increased liver cholesterol content although no change in cholesterol synthesis was observed and total serum cholesterol decreased (Illman et al, 1988).

To address this problem further, it would be beneficial to assess tissue cholesterol from biopsies done while animals experience different treatments to remove effects of

individual variability. A liver biopsy for assessment of hepatic cholesterol synthesis while an animal experiences different treatments, or a drug interfering with cholesterol synthesis such as AY-9944 (Boila et al, 1981), could be used to see if synthesis or clearance of cholesterol is responsible for serum cholesterol alterations.

To ensure animals receive the same quantity of energy during both treatments, extra energy in the form of carbohydrate could be given to animals during the saline infusion treatment to compensate for the quantity of energy provided from propionate infusion. This may address the question of whether the increase in serum cholesterol is due to excess energy, or the form the energy is provided in. Also, a slight energy restriction would ensure propionate is used for energy, and is not incorporated into fatty acids for storage. Infusing ^{14}C labelled propionate would show the fate of the infused molecules and the degree of incorporation in the tissues or in serum cholesterol.

Pigs have a longer GI retention time than humans, and fermentation can occur in the cecum. Pigs metabolize considerably more SCFAs than humans (Van Soest et al, 1982). Pigs do not consume as much saturated fat and cholesterol as

humans, due to a grain based diet. These results must be interpreted for humans with species differences in mind, as outlined under 7.2.

Although cecal propionate infusion may alter hepatic cholesterol synthesis or serum cholesterol clearance, its metabolism does not appear to be the main mechanism of the observed serum cholesterol lowering effect upon fermentable fiber supplementation. The observations made in this study reflect the conflicting reports of the role of propionate on serum cholesterol regulation.

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