

Chemiluminescence of Human Neutrophils Induced by Soluble Stimuli: Effect of Divalent Cations

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The effect of three soluble stimuli, phorbol myristate acetate, concanavalin A, and the calcium ionophore A23187, on the luminol-enhanced chemiluminescence of human neutrophils was investigated. All three stimuli elicited a strong burst of chemiluminescence which was dose dependent. The effect of phorbol myristate acetate was independent of the presence of divalent cations in the medium and, in fact, was greater in the presence of ethylene glycol-bis(β -aminoethyl ether)-*N,N*-tetraacetic acid. The effect of concanavalin A was greatly stimulated by the presence of calcium in the medium, although some reaction was observed in the absence of this cation. In contrast, chemiluminescence induced by A23187 was absolutely dependent upon the presence of extracellular calcium. These results suggest that the mobilization of calcium into the cell is a sufficient, but not necessary, stimulus for initiation of the respiratory burst. Compounds such as phorbol myristate acetate, which act independently of extracellular divalent cations, may function by altering the intracellular ratio of bound/free calcium.

When human neutrophils (PMN) phagocytize particulate material, they typically undergo alterations in oxidative metabolism, collectively referred to as the "respiratory burst" (2). In addition to resulting from phagocytosis, the respiratory burst may be elicited by certain soluble stimuli. These include the plant lectin concanavalin A (ConA) (6), the tumor promoter phorbol myristate acetate (PMA) (9), and the calcium ionophore A23187 (20).

One of the most sensitive measurements of respiratory burst activity involves the generation of chemiluminescence as originally described by Allen et al. (1). This chemiluminescence was suggested to be due to relaxation of singlet oxygen to the ground state (1), but the situation appears to be far more complex, involving secondary reactions of oxygen species with particles or serum components (5, 16). We recently demonstrated that soluble stimuli such as PMA would not elicit a chemiluminescence response from PMN unless there was some type of secondary emitter in the reaction, such as protein or luminol (24). In the presence of luminol, the reaction is especially sensitive, and a marked response can easily be observed with as few as 10^5 cells (24).

The mechanism of initiation of the respiratory burst is generally conceded to be due to activation of an NADPH oxidase in the cell (2, 7), but the sequence of events leading to this activation remains obscure. An early event appears to involve membrane depolarization (12, 25), and a

number of studies have suggested that this results in alterations in Ca^{2+} flux and changes in the intracellular level of free calcium (3, 12, 15, 19). The present investigation examines the effect of divalent cations on the luminol-dependent chemiluminescence of PMN induced by three different soluble stimuli of oxidative metabolism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Isolation of PMN. Human PMN were isolated from heparinized venous blood by sedimentation of the erythrocytes with plasma gel as previously described (8). Because of substantial delays (greater than 9 months) in obtaining commercial shipments of plasma gel, we developed a procedure for manufacturing a similar material in the laboratory. Into a 2-liter flask was placed 990 ml of deionized water, 7.0 g of NaCl, and 1.5 g of anhydrous $CaCl_2$. After dissolution of the salts, the mixture was brought to a boil, and 30 g of gelatin (Difco Laboratories, Detroit, Mich.) was slowly added. Boiling with occasional stirring was continued until the gelatin was dissolved. The hot solution was filtered under vacuum through a Büchner funnel with the use of Whatman no. 1 paper, and the filtrate was divided into 100-ml portions in 250-ml screw-top Erlenmeyer flasks. The flasks were then autoclaved for 20 min at 250 lb/in², cooled, sealed, and stored in the cold until use. Comparison of this preparation with commercial plasma gel (HTI Corp., Buffalo, N.Y.) indicated similar yields of cells and degrees of purity. Further, no differences in either resting or stimulated hexose monophosphate shunt activity (as measured by the oxidation of [1-¹⁴C]glucose) were noted between cells isolated in parallel with the two preparations.

Total counts on the isolated preparations were per-

formed in a hemacytometer, and the cells were suspended in Dulbecco's phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) containing glucose (100 mg/100 ml). Cells were suspended in PBS containing no added cations or containing 1.4 mM CaCl_2 and 0.7 mM MgCl_2 as dictated by the individual experiments. The cells were suspended to a concentration of $5 \times 10^6/\text{ml}$ and stored in plastic tubes on ice; immediately before use, the stock solution of cells was diluted to $5 \times 10^5/\text{ml}$ with the appropriate buffer at room temperature. The preparation typically contained 85 to 90% PMN as determined on Wright-stained smears.

Reagents. PMA (Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, Mo.) was dissolved in dimethyl sulfoxide to give a stock solution of 2.0 mg/ml. The stock solution was stored frozen; a portion was diluted to the appropriate concentration with PBS (with or without divalent cations) immediately before use. ConA (Sigma Chemical Co.) was prepared fresh daily as a stock solution of 10 mg/ml in the appropriate buffer; a portion was added to each incubation vessel to yield the designated final concentration. The calcium ionophore A23187 (Calbiochem, La Jolla, Calif.) was stored in a refrigerator as a stock solution of 0.04 M in dimethyl sulfoxide. Dilutions of this were made in the appropriate buffer immediately before use to yield the designated final concentrations. Luminol (Sigma) was dissolved in dimethyl sulfoxide to a concentration of 10 mg/ml, stored in a dark bottle at room temperature, and diluted with PBS immediately before use to give a final concentration in the assay of 10^{-6} M. CaCl_2 and MgCl_2 (Fisher Scientific Co., Fairlawn, N.J.) were stored at room temperature as stock solutions of 1 M and were diluted with deionized water just prior to use. These could not be diluted in buffer because of precipitation of the metal phosphates. EDTA and ethylene glycol-bis(β -aminoethyl ether)-*N,N*-tetraacetic acid (EGTA; Fisher) were stored at room temperature as stock solutions of 0.10 M, pH 7.4, and were diluted to the desired concentration just prior to use with cation-free PBS.

Measurement of chemiluminescence. Chemiluminescence was measured at ambient temperature in a Beckman LS 100C liquid scintillation spectrometer set in the out-of-coincidence mode with a ^{14}C - ^3H window and a gain of 2.5. The use of the luminol-enhanced system permitted performance of the assay in a lighted room without the inconvenience of dark-adapting reagents or working under red (actinic) light (18). The reactions were performed in polyethylene minivials with a capacity of 4.0 ml (Fisher Scientific Co.). Each vial contained a final volume of 2.0 ml, including buffer, luminol (10^{-6} M), the indicated concentration of stimulus, and, where indicated, the appropriate concentrations of Ca^{2+} , Mg^{2+} , or EGTA. Reaction was initiated in a timed sequence by the addition of 0.20 ml of isolated PMN (10^5 cells), and the vials were mixed by inversion and counted for 0.20 min. When the last vial was in place, the scintillation counter was closed and repetitive counts (every 3 to 5 min depending upon the experiment) were recorded. The initial (zero time) values were spurious as a result of the luminescence of the vials; however, later time points were entirely reproducible. Since the resting values (no stimulus) did not vary significantly over the course of 2 h, it was a simple matter to extrapolate to the zero-time value.

In several experiments, the generation of chemiluminescence in a model system was examined by use of the xanthine oxidase-acetaldehyde system (14). These experiments were performed in the same fashion as those described except that the substrate was 0.10 M freshly distilled acetaldehyde and the reaction was initiated by the addition of 0.024 U of xanthine oxidase. It was necessary to reduce the luminol concentration to 5×10^{-8} M in these experiments to keep the activity on scale. Other additions to the reaction are described in the text.

RESULTS

Figure 1 illustrates the effect of various doses of PMA on the luminol-dependent chemiluminescence. With a PMA concentration of 10 ng/ml, there was a rapid and intense burst of chemiluminescence which reached a peak within 15 to 20 min and then decayed. As the dose was reduced, the peak response was more delayed and lower in intensity. At much higher concentrations of PMA (e.g., 1 to 2 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$), the measurable chemiluminescence was actually less than that observed with 10 ng/ml (data not shown). In the absence of PMA, there was a low background level of chemiluminescence (10,000 to 20,000 cpm) which did not vary significantly over the course of 2 h.

The effect of divalent cations on this response is illustrated in Fig. 2. In this experiment the cells were suspended in PBS without divalent cations or containing 1.4 mM Ca^{2+} and 0.7 mM Mg^{2+} . No difference was observed in either the magnitude or the time course of the response with the different buffers.

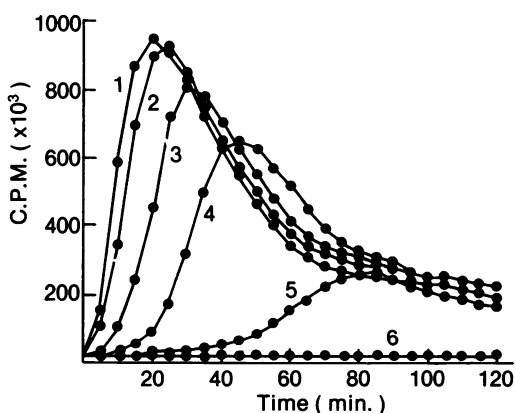


FIG. 1. Effect of PMA concentration on the luminol-dependent chemiluminescence. Each vial contained 10^5 PMN in 2.0 ml of PBS containing 1.4 mM Ca^{2+} and 0.7 mM Mg^{2+} . Luminol concentration was 10^{-6} M. Curve 1, 10 ng of PMA/ml; curve 2, 5 ng of PMA/ml; curve 3, 2.5 ng of PMA/ml; curve 4, 1.0 ng of PMA/ml; curve 5, 0.50 ng of PMA/ml; curve 6, control, no PMA added.

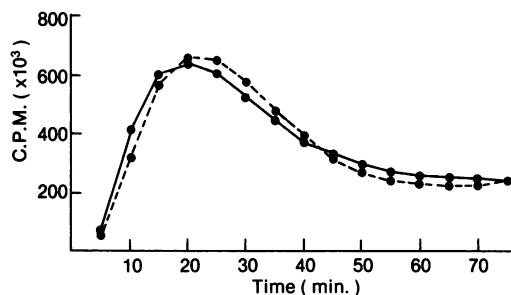


FIG. 2. Effect of divalent cations on chemiluminescence. Conditions were the same as described for Fig. 1, with a final PMA concentration of 10 ng/ml. Solid line, PBS containing 1.4 mM Ca^{2+} and 0.7 mM Mg^{2+} ; dotted line, PBS in the absence of added divalent cations. The data are from a single experiment which is representative of four separate experiments.

In an attempt to demonstrate conclusively that chemiluminescence in this system was independent of extracellular calcium, the experiment was performed in the presence of 1 mM EGTA. Results of a typical experiment are presented in Fig. 3. As observed in Fig. 2, the PMA-induced chemiluminescence was not significantly affected by the addition of 1.4 mM Ca^{2+} in the medium. Surprisingly, the response was markedly stimulated by the addition of 1 mM EGTA in the absence of Ca^{2+} . Although the magnitude of stimulation by EGTA varied from day to day (130 to 160% of control), the effect was observed in each of five separate experiments. This stimulation was completely abolished when Ca^{2+} and EGTA were present simultaneously. Similar results were obtained when EDTA was substituted for EGTA, although the degree of stimulation was usually not as marked (data not shown).

We next examined the effect of EGTA on chemiluminescence generated in a model system to determine whether the stimulation represented a direct effect on the cell. As shown in Fig. 4, 1 mM EGTA markedly stimulated the chemiluminescence response observed in the xanthine oxidase-acetaldehyde system. This stimulation was partially inhibited by the inclusion of Mg^{2+} , but was dramatically inhibited (below the control level) when EGTA and Ca^{2+} were present simultaneously. Similar results were obtained with EDTA in a single experiment (data not shown).

We next attempted to employ other soluble stimuli of neutrophils to determine whether the independence of extracellular calcium was a general phenomenon. The results in Fig. 5 demonstrate that 100 μg of ConA per ml, in the presence of Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} , stimulated a significant burst of chemiluminescence in the present system; this is in agreement with previously published dose-response curves (24). In contrast

to the stimulation by PMA, there was a marked diminution of the response to ConA when Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} were omitted from the reaction; this response was further attenuated when 1 mM EGTA was added. These observations are confirmed and extended in Fig. 6. Some chemiluminescence was observed with ConA in the absence of divalent cations; this was marginally stimulated when Mg^{2+} was included in the reaction, but was markedly enhanced by the addition of extracellular Ca^{2+} . The simultaneous addition of both Mg^{2+} and Ca^{2+} did not yield significantly greater chemiluminescence than the presence of Ca^{2+} alone.

Finally, we investigated the effect of the calcium ionophore A23187 on the luminescent response. The effect of various concentrations of ionophore is illustrated in Fig. 7. At high concentrations of ionophore (i.e., 1.0 μM), there was a very pronounced initial response which declined rapidly with time. As the concentration of ionophore was decreased, there was a decrease in peak intensity with a corresponding shift in the time of maximal response, so that a concentration of 0.01 μM gave a very usable response. That this response was dependent

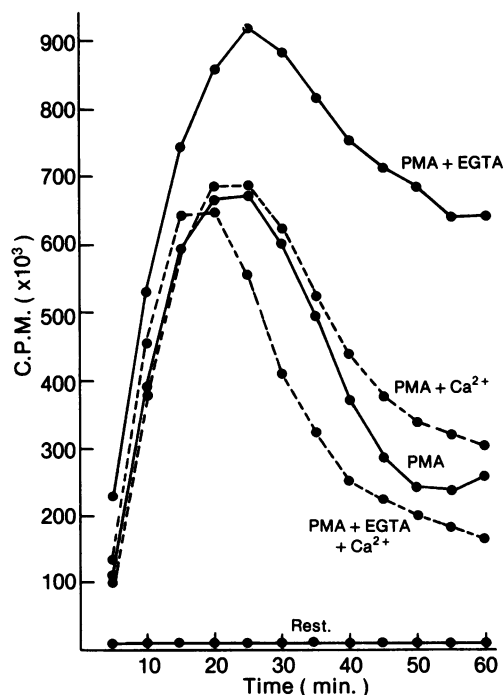


FIG. 3. Effect of EGTA and Ca^{2+} on the PMA-induced chemiluminescence of PMN. Where indicated, PMA was added to a final concentration of 10 ng/ml, and EGTA and Ca^{2+} were added to a final concentration of 1.0 mM. The data are from a single experiment which is representative of three separate experiments.

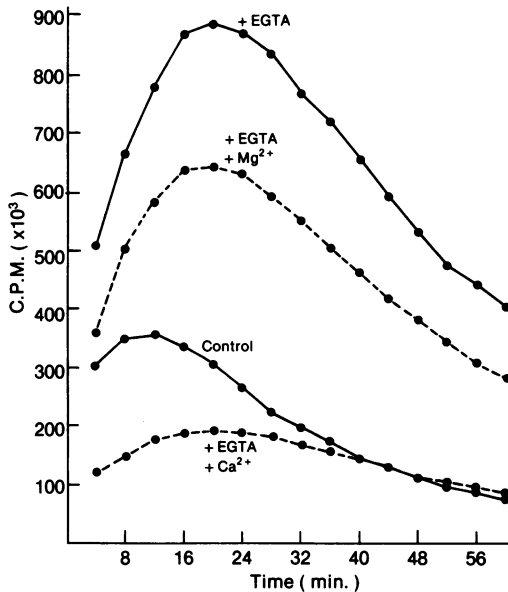


FIG. 4. Effect of EGTA and divalent cations on the chemiluminescence emitted by xanthine oxidase and acetaldehyde. The experimental conditions are described in Materials and Methods. EGTA, Mg^{2+} , and Ca^{2+} were added, where indicated, to a final concentration of 1.0 mM. The data are from a single experiment which is representative of three separate experiments.

upon the presence of divalent cations is illustrated by the data in Fig. 8. A good chemiluminescent response was elicited by 0.01 μM ionophore in the presence of 1.0 mM Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} ; essentially the same response was observed in the presence of 1.0 mM Ca^{2+} alone. In contrast, the omission of Ca^{2+} resulted in no significant activity above background regardless of whether Mg^{2+} was present. Similarly, the inclusion of 0.10 mM EGTA or EDTA with the ionophore resulted in no chemiluminescence response.

DISCUSSION

The activation of the respiratory burst as monitored by luminol-dependent chemiluminescence with PMA as a stimulus was not dependent upon the presence of extracellular Ca^{2+} or Mg^{2+} (Fig. 2 and 3). This is in agreement with other studies in which the PMA-induced stimulation of O_2^- production was independent of extracellular calcium ion (13, 17). In the presence of EGTA, a metal ion chelator, the chemiluminescence was markedly enhanced; this was completely reversed by the presence of an equimolar amount of extracellular calcium (Fig. 3). This observation suggested the possibility that initiation of the respiratory burst involves the efflux of Ca^{2+} from the cell, as suggested by the data of Barthélemy et al. (3); the presence of

EGTA in the medium might facilitate this efflux. This turned out not to be the case, however, since EGTA also stimulated chemiluminescence in a cell-free system in which xanthine oxidase and acetaldehyde were used (Fig. 4). These results suggest that EGTA was somehow acting as an additional amplification signal, perhaps in a manner analogous to the role of luminol itself. This amplification by EGTA apparently required EGTA in the free (unchelated) form. The stimulation was only moderately reduced by equimolar quantities of Mg^{2+} but was completely obliterated by the same concentration of Ca^{2+} . This correlates with the fact that EGTA has a much greater affinity for Ca^{2+} than for Mg^{2+} (4).

In contrast to PMA, the stimulation of chemiluminescence by ConA was heavily dependent upon the presence of extracellular cations. As shown in Fig. 6, the most significant cation for the ConA response was Ca^{2+} .

The addition of the ionophore A23187 in the presence of divalent cations resulted in a marked generation of chemiluminescence which was dose dependent (Fig. 7). To observe a reproducible peak response, we found it necessary to employ a concentration of 0.01 μM , an amount substantially lower than that generally employed in other systems (10, 22, 27). Wilson et al. (26) had previously reported a very modest stimulation of chemiluminescence by 1 μM A23187 (less than 3% of the value obtained with opsonized zymosan). However, their system did not em-

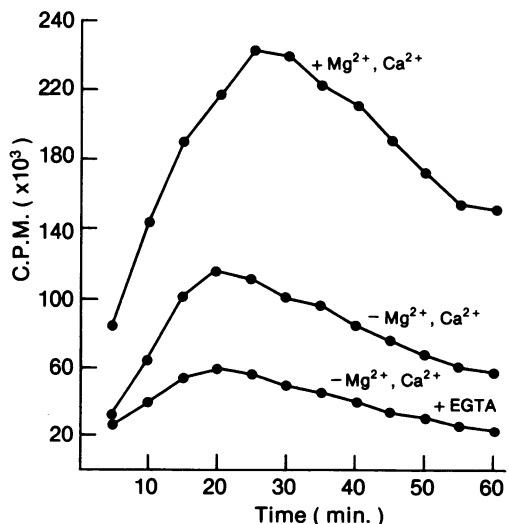


FIG. 5. Effect of divalent cations on the ConA-induced chemiluminescence of PMN. ConA was added to a final concentration of 100 $\mu g/ml$. Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} concentrations were 1.4 and 0.7 mM, respectively. EGTA was added to a final concentration of 1 mM. These data are from a single experiment which is representative of three separate experiments.

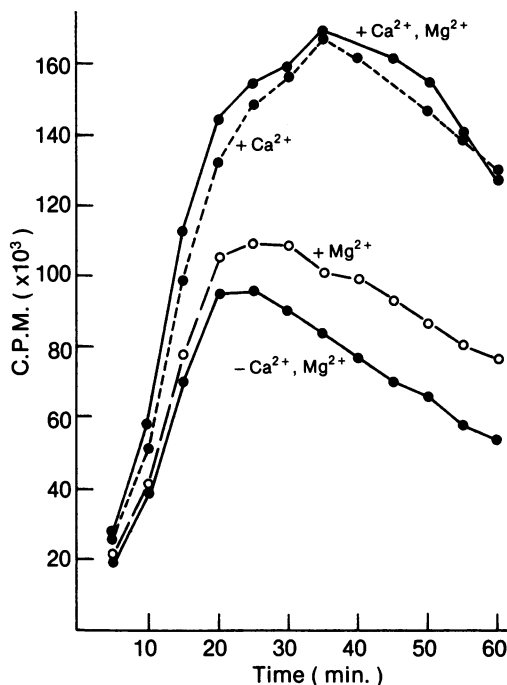


FIG. 6. Effect of addition of divalent cations on the ConA-induced chemiluminescence of PMN. ConA was added in all cases to a final concentration of 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$. Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} were added, where indicated, to give a final concentration of 1.0 mM each. Similar results were obtained with a Ca^{2+} concentration of 1.4 mM and an Mg^{2+} concentration of 0.7 mM. The data are from a single experiment which is representative of five separate experiments.

ploy luminol, and Westrick et al. (24) had previously demonstrated the need for a secondary emitter when using soluble stimuli. Thus, the chemiluminescent response to A23187 is much greater than was previously appreciated. The stimulation of chemiluminescence by A23187 was entirely dependent upon the presence of extracellular Ca^{2+} . No chemiluminescence above background was noted in the absence of Ca^{2+} even if Mg^{2+} was present (Fig. 8). Thus, this phenomenon appeared to be related to the Ca^{2+} -transporting properties of the ionophore and not simply to alterations secondary to the insertion of the organic molecule into the membrane.

The three soluble stimuli employed gave three distinct profiles with regard to Ca^{2+} ion requirement for the luminol-dependent chemiluminescence. PMA generated a chemiluminescence response which was completely independent of extracellular divalent cations and, in fact, occurred in the presence of a potent chelator of Ca^{2+} . This observation suggests that initiation of the respiratory burst does not require the influx of extracellular calcium into the cell. On the

other hand, the results with the calcium ionophore demonstrated that an influx of Ca^{2+} would, indeed, cause initiation of the respiratory burst. Thus, calcium influx appears to be a sufficient, but not necessary, condition for activation of the oxidative response of the cell. Results with ConA were intermediate between these two extremes. Some chemiluminescence was observed in the absence of divalent cations, but this was markedly stimulated when Ca^{2+} was present. The stimulation by calcium in this case is probably related to the need for this cation for binding of ConA to the cell membrane (12) and not to transport of calcium into the cell.

It seems likely that stimuli such as PMA which act independently of extracellular calcium still work through this ion by increasing the free intracellular Ca^{2+} concentration, perhaps by liberating the ion from some binding protein (11); the possible involvement of calmodulin in the regulation of oxidative metabolism has also been suggested (23). This involvement of intracellular Ca^{2+} concentrations in initiation of the respiratory burst is also suggested by recent studies

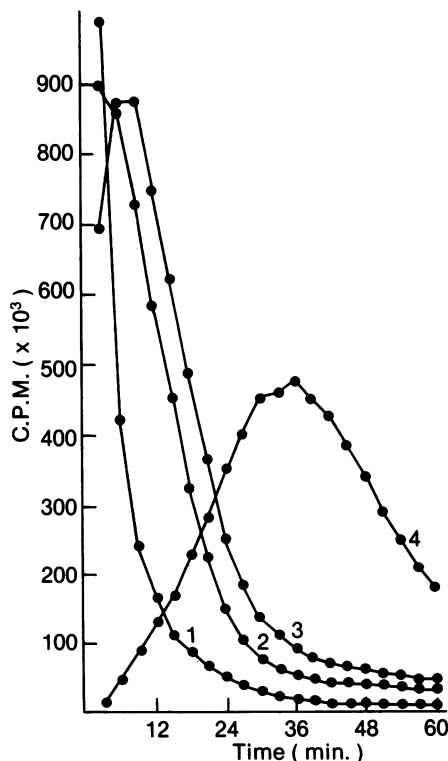


FIG. 7. Effect of concentration of A23187 on the luminol-dependent chemiluminescence of PMN. Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} were present in all vials to a final concentration of 1.0 mM. Curve 1, 1 μM A23187; curve 2, 0.10 μM ; curve 3, 0.05 μM ; curve 4, 0.10 μM . The data are from a single experiment which is representative of two separate experiments.

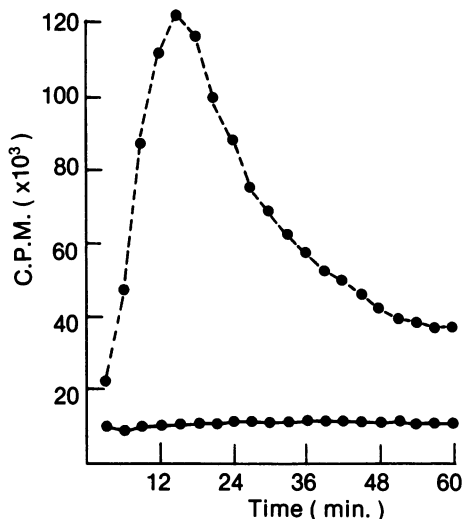


FIG. 8. Effect of divalent cations on the chemiluminescence of neutrophils stimulated with $0.01 \mu\text{M}$ A23187. Dotted line, Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} present to a final concentration of 1.0 mM each; solid line, Ca^{2+} and Mg^{2+} omitted. The addition of Mg^{2+} alone gave results which were superimposable on those obtained in the absence of both cations. Results are from a single experiment which is representative of two separate experiments.

employing TMB-8, a compound purported to chelate intracellular Ca^{2+} (21). In the presence of TMB-8, but not of EGTA, the PMA-dependent generation of superoxide anion was found to be markedly inhibited. Caution must be exercised in interpreting such data based on inhibitor studies, however, since there is no assurance that the compound is acting only via the intracellular calcium pool.

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