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# Selected Biological Effects of Ultrasound

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## 1. Introduction

That ultrasound could produce effects in biological systems became apparent at its inception near the end of World War I when techniques for locating submarines were being developed. Among such pursuits were those of Langevin (Wood and Loomis, 1927) who was investigating an acoustic method in which a piezoelectric transducer was excited by a Poulsen arc converter to vibrate at the resonance frequency of the structure and emit ultrasound into the bay at Toulon. Since the electric potentials applied to the quartz plate at times were as high as 40,000 V, the amplitude of the acoustic wave was appreciable and small fish and other marine animals were found dead in the vicinity of this radiation. Because of its inherent instability, the Poulsen arc was unsuitable for detailed investigation of these phenomena, and serious study awaited the development of the vacuum-tube oscillator for use as the piezoelectric transducer driver.

The first extensive investigation of the phenomena observed by Langevin was conducted by Wood and Loomis (1927). They described the destruction of *Spirogyra* and the killing of small fish and frogs exposed to 300 kHz ultrasound for several minutes at an intensity believed to be in the neighborhood of 10 W/cm<sup>2</sup>. Subsequently, events were viewed with a light microscope and, at 406 kHz, streaming within cells and cellular destruction were observed, with an attendant increase in temperature (Harvey and Loomis, 1928).

Following the introduction of piezoelectric materials into acoustics and the subsequent rapid developments in electronics during the next three decades, it became feasible to construct instruments for precise measurement of the velocity of propagation and the absorption coefficient of ultrasonic waves in liquids and liquid-like media. An additional advance occurred after 1945 when the adaptation of radar techniques yielded pulsed ultrasonic instrumentation operating in the multi-megahertz range. Numerous techniques have been developed since that time permitting utilization of ultrasound in the frequency range from about  $2 \times 10^4$  Hz (the arbitrary upper bound for the "audio" range) to  $10^9$  Hz; extension to beyond  $10^{11}$  Hz is emerging with the continued development of Brillouin scattering techniques. Simultaneous development of piezoelectric materials, lens-focusing systems, and field-measuring schemes, have allowed high-intensity ultrasonics to be employed for the precision production of reversible and irreversible effects in biological media.

As a result, two distinct modes of operation have emerged, viz., passive uses, in which the acoustic field does not significantly alter structure and/or function of the interrogated systems, and active uses, in which reversible or irreversible alteration of the system is the objective. For the latter, an initial motivation for serious study was the early observation that ultrasound provided an opportunity for true deep heating in tissues and not simply the superficial heating that attended irradiation with infrared and the like (Dunn and O'Brien, 1976). In attempts to understand details of the mechanisms of the interaction of ultrasound with biological materials, experimental studies have been conducted at various levels of biological complexity. Some attention has been devoted to interaction studies in solutions of macromolecules and suspensions of microorganisms and cells, with the hope that these would provide simpler models. Herein, a principal question deals with the necessity for the presence of cavitation to affect the biological endpoint. By experimental design, thermal mechanisms are gen-

erally minimized. It is used to describe an acoustic phenomenon of two types: *cavitation*, the rupture of bubbles, and the possibility of the rupture of biological cells. It may be produced by procedures called *stable cavitation*, rather grossly, and its influence in the vicinity of biological cells is affecting biological processes.

Interactions of biological tissues, organs, and systems of the body with structural changes, such effects, the probability of the central nervous system, also been studied, and properties of biological systems.

The use of ultrasound has emerged for conversion of energy and organ systems. It has been made possible to study ultrasonic waves at low megahertz frequencies, are omitted, and ultrasonic waves are investigated.

Regulation of high intensity ultrasound in the human body, nature (1967). The duration of exposure changes with a minimum survey (Kinsler et al. 1967) to 110-120 dB, rarely (Acoustic Society of America, 1967).

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erally minimized in these systems. Cavitation is the general term used to describe the growth and subsequent behavior of cavities in an acoustically perturbed medium. It is useful to think in terms of two types of cavitation. The violent type, called *transient* or *collapse cavitation*, produces intense hydrodynamic forces within the vicinity of the collapsing bubble, which are capable of severely disrupting biological structures. Highly reactive free radicals can also be byproducts of transient cavitation. For the less violent type, called *stable cavitation*, the bubble (or cavity) does not collapse, but rather grows to a resonant size and oscillates or pulsates under the influence of the ultrasonic field. The hydrodynamic forces in the vicinity of the oscillating bubble are considered responsible for affecting biological materials (Flynn, 1964; Nyborg 1965).

Interest in the interaction of ultrasound with biological tissues, organs, and whole animals has been dominated by investigations of the role of thermal events in the production of irreversible structural changes and by determinations of levels of threshold for such effects. The motivation for these pursuits has, of course, been the probable application to medical problems and the choice of central nervous tissue as an often-employed tissue specimen has also been promoted by its relatively static acoustic and biological properties.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify findings that have emerged from these kinds of studies, with progression extending, for convenience, from whole organism studies, through tissues and organs, to the cellular and molecular levels. No attempt has been made to be exhaustive, rather to illustrate the nature of the studies undertaken and the character of the results obtained at the low megahertz frequencies. Thus, two otherwise important topics are omitted completely, viz., studies dealing with the interaction of ultrasound and plant systems and kilohertz ultrasound investigations.

Regarding the latter, individuals exposed to substantial levels of high audible frequency noise complain of an unpleasant pressure in the ears, headaches that do not remain after exposure, tinnitus, nausea, and mild vertigo (Skillern, 1965; Acton and Carson, 1967). These effects do not appear to be intimately related to the duration of exposure. Permanent physiological and psychological changes in users of industrial ultrasonic equipment, compared with a matched control group, were not found in a retrospective survey (Knight, 1968). Industrial workers exposed to levels of up to 110–120 dB low frequency ultrasound exhibited neither temporary (Acton and Carson, 1967) nor permanent (Knight, 1968)

hearing loss. Temporary threshold shifts can occur at subharmonic frequencies associated with exposure to 148–154 dB levels at discrete frequencies in the range 17–37 kHz (Parrack, 1966). Acton (1974) has reviewed the effects of industrial airborne ultrasound and readers are referred to his study for more detail.

Since sufficient detail cannot be included for all readers, important literature references are provided. Studies were carried out for a variety of purposes, satisfying specialized interests in specific topics, and leading to a very scattered literature. Thus, crucial questions directed toward a specified purpose may not be answerable simply because the pertinent experiments and measurements have not been carried out.

## 2. Whole-Body Radiation

In the low megahertz frequency range, the wavelength of sound in soft tissues is of the order of a millimeter. Since the half-power beam width of transducers designed for clinical purposes rarely extends beyond about a centimeter, it is apparent that whole body exposure of animals to ultrasound will be limited to a few cases. Foremost among these is the mammalian fetus, though model studies have included insects and microorganisms.

### 2.1. *Vertebates*

A number of studies have been conducted following the report of Shoji et al. (1972) that pregnant mice irradiated for 5 h with 40 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>, 2.25 MHz ultrasound on the ninth day of gestation exhibited a significant increase in fetal mortality. They also observed some increase in fetal abnormalities, but no significant alteration in fetal weight. Lele (1976) has suggested that the unusual irradiation conditions could result in a uterine temperature increase sufficient to produce the observed abnormalities. Mannor et al. (1972) were unable to detect differences in abnormality rates in fetuses between days 8 and 20 of gestation, as well as in subsequent brother-sister cross-matings, of mice irradiated for as much as 60 min/day for up to 5 days, to intensities as high as 1 W/cm<sup>2</sup> with 2.25 MHz ultrasound. Taylor and Dyson (1974) found early chick embryos (corresponding to approximately 3-week human development) to be affected by 5 min exposure to pulsed 1 MHz ultrasound of 2.5 W/cm<sup>2</sup> average intensity, but not to 1 W/cm<sup>2</sup> average intensity. More advanced embryos (corresponding to approximately 6-week human development) were unaffected at 10 W/cm<sup>2</sup> average intensity. They further found no effects upon developing

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Following the report of irradiated for 5 h with 40 h day of gestation ex- ty. They also observed o significant alteration at the unusual irradi- perature increase suf- alities. Mannor et al. bnormality rates in fe- s well as in subsequent ated for as much as 60 h as 1 W/cm<sup>2</sup> with 2.25 found early chick em- week human develop- o pulsed 1 MHz ultra- not to 1 W/cm<sup>2</sup> average sponding to approxi- unaffected at 10 W/cm<sup>2</sup> effects upon developing

embryos exposed for 24 h to irradiation from a 2.25-MHz Doppler diagnostic instrument having an electrical input power of 100 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>. Others have reported finding no effects upon mice (Kirsten et al., 1963; Smyth, 1966; Warwick et al., 1970), rats (McClain et al., 1972; Takeuchi, 1970; Woodward et al., 1970), or rabbits (Holmes, 1962).

More recently O'Brien (1976) has shown that the mean weight per fetus is reduced significantly when pregnant mice are exposed to 1 MHz ultrasound for 5 min at an average intensity as low as 1 W/cm<sup>2</sup>. Further, while Curto (1976) found irradiation of pregnant mice with 1 MHz, 0.35 W/cm<sup>2</sup> average intensity for 3 min to result in a significant increase in mortality in litters observed up to 21 days post partum, Edmonds et al. (1979) find no such increase. This discrepancy may be accounted for by the day of gestation on which exposure to the ultrasound was perpetrated and other differences in specimen preparation and procedure.

Sikov et al. (1976), in a reporting of work-in-progress, believe they observed delayed neuromuscular development in the rat on exposure to 5 min of cw ultrasound of 10 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>.

## 2.2. Insects

An early study with insects involved exposure of *Drosophila* eggs to 1 MHz, 0.5 W/cm<sup>2</sup> ultrasound with demonstration of a variety of developmental abnormalities appearing (Selman and Counce, 1953), most likely associated with undetected cavitation. In a more recent study involving large-scale breeding experiments, *Drosophila* survived the irradiation procedure and exhibited no significant increase in the frequency of recessive lethal mutations and chromosomal nondisjunction, even under exposure conditions sufficient to kill a substantial portion of the flies (Thacker and Baker, 1976).

Table 4.1 lists some of the significant findings regarding whole body ultrasound exposure.

## 3. Tissues and Organs

Much activity has occurred in the area of identification of specific effects to selected tissues and organs irradiated by particular ultrasonic exposure regimes, and of quantitative determination of threshold levels at which unique events manifest themselves. The following discussion illustrates the very appreciable range of interests exhibited by investigators and the breadth of their findings.

TABLE 4.1  
Effects of Whole-Body Exposure to Ultrasound

F, MHz	I(SPTA), W/cm <sup>2</sup>	T, min	Species	Effect	Reference
1	1 cw	5	Pregnant mouse	Fetal weight reduction	O'Brien, 1976
1	0.4 cw	3	Pregnant mouse	Post partum fetal mortality increase	Curto, 1976
2	0.5 cw	3	Pregnant mouse	No post partum fetal mortality increase	Edmonds et al., 1979
1	2.5 p	5	Chicken embryo= 3 week human development	Effected	Taylor and Dyson, 1974
1	10 p	5	Chicken embryo= 6 week human development	No effect	Taylor and Dyson, 1974

### 3.1. Central Nervous System

The mammalian central nervous system provides an acoustically static organ for study, viz., that the ultrasonic propagation properties remain largely unchanged in response to physiological and behavioral stimuli. Thus three laboratories have exhibited remarkable agreement in the determination of the relationship between the acoustic intensity in the tissue and the single-pulse duration necessary to produce threshold lesions in the brain (Fry et al., 1970; Pond, 1970; Robinson and Lele, 1972). The relationship  $It^{1/2} = 200$ , where  $I$  is the acoustic intensity ( $W/cm^2$ ) at the site of interest in the tissue and  $t$  is the duration of the single-pulse exposure (in seconds), defines a threshold in that exposures greater than  $200 W/cm^2s^{1/2}$  always produce optical-microscopically identifiable lesions, while those less than this value do not (Fig. 1). This relation has been determined experimentally to describe the threshold events over the range of exposure from 100  $\mu s$  to 10 min, beyond which it alters to approach an infinite-time exposure condition. Thermal processes have been shown to dominate in the low intensity-long pulse exposure region (Lerner et al., 1973), while evidence abounds for transient cavitation events to be most important in the highest intensity-shortest pulse exposure region. In the mid-intensity region, viz., about 700–1500  $W/cm^2$ , other mechanical mechanisms are believed to occur. Histologically, white matter exhibits a lower threshold than does gray matter, with the vascular structures being most resistant (Fry, 1958). The

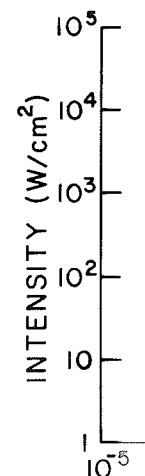


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provides an acoustically propagation proper-physiological and be exhibited remarkable relationship between single-pulse duration the brain (Fry et al., 2). The relationship  $I t^{1/2}$  ( $W/cm^2$ ) at the site of the single-pulse expo- at exposures greater microscopically iden- do not (Fig. 1). This ally to describe the e from 100  $\mu s$  to 10 finite-time exposure wn to dominate in the (Lerner et al., 1973), ion events to be most pulse exposure region.  $100-1500 W/cm^2$ , other occur. Histologically, an does gray matter, tant (Fry, 1958). The

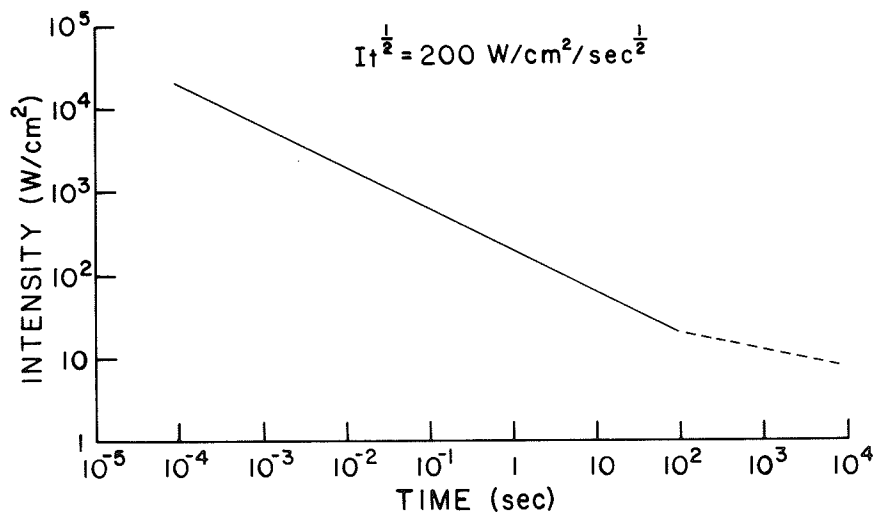


Fig. 1. Delivered acoustic intensity at the irradiation site vs single pulse duration of exposure to produce threshold lesions in the mammalian brain.

observed lack of frequency dependence (Johnston and Dunn, 1976) of the threshold boundary may result, at least in the thermal region, from the combined effects of the nearly linear dependence upon frequency of the absorption coefficient and the inverse frequency dependence of focal volume, which tend to balance each other, maintaining a relatively constant lesion volume that is independent of frequency (Lerner et al., 1973). A study involving exposure of the lumbar enlargement of the spinal chord of neonatal mice (maintained at 37°C), a preparation permitting temperature variation of the specimen and involving a functional rather than structural endpoint, yields threshold levels approximately one-eighth of those (above) for mature brain (Dunn, 1958; Dunn and Fry, 1971).

Taylor and Pond (1970) irradiated exposed rat spinal cords, as a function of ultrasonic frequency in the range 0.5–6 MHz, with 25  $W/cm^2$  in a pulsing regime of 10  $\mu s$  pulses and a 10% duty factor. They observed a decrease in damage with increase in frequency and increased damage under hypoxic conditions.

### 3.2. Liver

A recent study by Chan and Frizzell (1977) shows the threshold for irreversible structural changes in cat liver to be twice that for brain. Kremkau and Witkofski (1974) reported a significant reduction in the frequency of mitotic cells in surgically stimulated rat liver in re-

sponse to exposure to  $60 \text{ mW/cm}^2$ , 1.9 MHz ultrasound. However, Miller et al. (1976) were unable to confirm these findings with surgically stimulated rat liver irradiated 1 and 5 min with 2.2 MHz ultrasound in the range  $0.06\text{--}16 \text{ W/cm}^2$ . One major difference in the procedures employed by these two groups is that the latter involved a circular motion of the transducer over the animal's ventral surface, while the transducer was held stationary in the former case. Barnett and Kossoff (1977) have also obtained negative results for exposure of regenerating rat liver to 2.5 MHz ultrasound pulsed at 10–50 kHz pulse repetition frequency (prf) and  $33 \text{ W/cm}^2$  peak intensity. Taylor and Pond (1970), however, noted an increase in the frequency of hemorrhage at the lower frequencies (in the range 0.5–6 MHz) in surgically exposed liver, to  $56 \text{ W/cm}^2$  peak intensity ultrasound for 5 min under a pulsing regime, wherein a 10% duty factor and 10 ms pulses were employed. Though the temperature rise did not exceed  $5^\circ\text{C}$ , damage was particularly severe in the neighborhood of the central vein.

### 3.3. Testes

Conflicting reports have resulted from animal studies of the ultrasonic effects upon testes, viz., Kamocsay et al. (1955) and Fahim et al. (1975) have reported observing effects upon spermatogenesis and fertility while Lyon and Simpson (1974) and Urry et al. (1979) failed to make such observations. In a more recent study, mouse testes were exposed sequentially for 30 s at a spatial peak ultrasonic intensity (SPTA) of  $25 \text{ W/cm}^2$  at 1 MHz, removed at varying times post irradiation from immediately to 10 days, and examined histologically. The results suggest that two types of ultrasonically induced damage occur for different specimens under identical exposure conditions, viz., either seminiferous tubule disruption occurs with a suggestion of minor intertubule space involvement or a more severe form of tubule damage occurs with significant *interstitial* tissue involvement (O'Brien et al., 1979). Spermatocytes appear to be affected earlier than spermatogonia, contrary to the situation following exposure to ionizing radiation.

### 3.4. Blood Stasis

Dyson et al. (1974) have demonstrated that blood flow in the vessels of chick embryos can be arrested by exposure to ultrasound in the range of 1 to 5 MHz. Both cw and pulsed ultrasound are effective and the SATA intensity necessary to produce the stasis may be as low as  $0.5 \text{ W/cm}^2$  (at 3 MHz), depending upon blood vessel size,

type, and orientation of sound exposure. The stasis is produced with standing waves and short pulses (Dyson and Wyard, 1974).

Tissue regeneration was studied by Dyson (1974) in rabbit testes. Holes in rabbit testes were made three times per week under a pulsing regime. Significant regeneration was noted, extending temperature to a level suitable for the efficient regeneration were noted within three times (Dyson and Sullivan, 1974). Spermatogenesis generation in testes appeared, e.g., after the renewal of the testes at the opposite end of the testis and conditions of the testis.

### 3.4

The effects of ultrasound on at least two lines of research, possibly involving blood flow, with other models of the irradiation of the testis with 1 MHz ultrasound. The survival time of the animals revealed nuclei with temperature increase. Lehmann and Dyson (1974) to produce regeneration. The reduced when the intensity was  $8.4 \text{ W/cm}^2$ , and



ultrasound. However, these findings with suramin with 2.2 MHz ultrasound show a major difference in response is that the latter involves the animal's venation in the former. In the former, negative results were obtained with 2.5 MHz ultrasound (frequency (prf) and 3300), however, noted an increase in the lower frequencies in the irradiated liver, to  $56 \text{ W/cm}^2$  under a pulsing regime, and various pulses were employed. At  $5^\circ\text{C}$ , damage was paracentral vein.

Animal studies of the effects of ultrasound (Dunn et al. (1955) and the effects upon the liver (Simpson (1974) and variations. In a more recent study, essentially for 30 s at a intensity of  $5 \text{ W/cm}^2$  at 1 MHz, results immediately to 10 minutes suggest that two different species, either seminiferous tubules or a severe form of tubule damage, tissue involvement to be affected earlier on following exposure

blood flow in the vessels exposed to ultrasound in the presence of ultrasound are effective. The stasis may be dependent upon blood vessel size,

type, and orientation. The stasis is reversible upon cessation of the sound exposure, though electron microscopy has revealed damage to some endothelial cells lining the embryonic vessels in which the stasis is produced. Since the production of the stasis is associated with standing waves, it can be avoided by either continual movement of the sound source or employment of sufficiently short pulses of irradiation in the exposure procedure (ter Haar and Wyard, 1978).

### 3.5. Tissue Regeneration

Tissue regeneration in response to ultrasonic irradiation has been studied by Dyson et al. (1968). The rate of repair of 10 mm square holes in rabbit ears exposed to 3.6 MHz ultrasound for 5 min three times per week, under either  $0.1 \text{ W/cm}^2$  cw application or various pulsing regimes with the intensity in the range  $0.25\text{--}8 \text{ W/cm}^2$ , was significantly more rapid than the untreated control ear. The attending temperature rise was considered too small to be responsible for the effects. Subsequently, patients with chronic varicose ulceration were treated with 3 MHz ultrasound at  $1 \text{ W/cm}^2$  for 10 min three times per week for 4 weeks with encouraging results (Dyson and Suckling, 1978). Other reports of enhanced tissue regeneration in response to ultrasonic irradiation have also appeared, e.g., Pizzarello et al. (1975) wherein slightly faster tissue renewal of the amputated prelimb of a newt occurred, over that of the opposite also amputated prelimb, though details are sparse and conditions complicated for identifying crucial dosage conditions.

### 3.6. Neoplastic Tissues and Synergism

The effects of ultrasound on neoplastic tissues have involved at least two lines of inquiry, viz., a direct effect upon the tissues possibly involving hyperthermic effects and a synergistic involvement with other modalities. A recent example of the former deals with the irradiation of subcutaneously implanted rat Wilm's tumors with 1 MHz ultrasound at  $1.5 \text{ W/cm}^2$  to achieve reduction in tumor volume, reduction in tumor weight, and increase in mean rat survival time (Longo et al., 1975). Histological observation revealed nuclei with condensed chromatin patterns. Substantial temperature increases also occurred. With regard to synergism, Lehmann and Krusen (1955) noted that the X-ray dosage required to produce regression in an experimental tumor was substantially reduced when simultaneously irradiated with 1 MHz ultrasound at  $8.4 \text{ W/cm}^2$ , and they believed the heating effect owing to attendant

sound absorption was responsible. Woeber (1965) has reported marked improvement in the treatment of human superficial cancer from simultaneous employment of ultrasound and X-rays. However, Clarke et al. (1970) failed to observe such synergistic effects using either cultured mouse lymphoma cells or implanted tumors in rats. Gavrilov et al. (1975), however, have found that a preliminary irradiation of transplanted sarcoma 37 tumors in mice with 1 MHz ultrasound in the range 0.5–2.5 W/cm<sup>2</sup> for periods of 1–5 min enhances the sensitivity of the tumor cells to subsequent gamma radiation. A synergism with chemotherapy has been suggested by Heimburger et al. (1975), who irradiated malignant brain tumors simultaneously through a bone flap with 1 MHz ultrasound at 3 W/cm<sup>2</sup>. Though the patient population was small, they believed the effectiveness of the chemotherapy was improved using ultrasound.

Enhanced DNA synthesis has been reported by Elmer and Fleischer (1974) in neonatal mouse tibiae exposed for 5 min, three times in 24 h, to 1.8 W/cm<sup>2</sup>, 1 MHz ultrasound. Observations revealed that growth, protein accumulation, and <sup>3</sup>H-proline incorporation remained unaffected. The DNA synthesis may have been affected by the temperature rise measured, attending absorption of the ultrasonic energy in the high absorbing bone, though the authors were not so convinced.

Table 4.2 summarizes effects observed upon tissues and organs.

#### 4. Cells and Microorganisms

Cells and microorganisms in suspension provide model systems of tissues and organs, having the advantage of being comprised of single cell lines, possibly even in mitotic synchrony, but with the disadvantage of not being constrained by tissue architectural features, though gel-caging can reduce the importance of this. Such systems have been attractive for studies dealing with the physical mechanisms by which ultrasound can produce alterations in more complex structures. Thus, it has emerged that ultrasonic exposure of cells and microorganisms in suspension can lead to cell death and that cavitation is important to the process.

Coakley et al. (1971) have been able to associate the destruction of amoebae with the specific number of discrete cavitation events occurring during the irradiation procedure. This apparent necessity for the presence of cavitation is most important in attempts to determine risk in clinical employment of ultrasound

TABLE 4.2  
Ultrasound-Induced Effects on Various Tissues and Organs

<i>F</i> , MHz	<i>I</i> (SPTA), W/cm <sup>2</sup>	<i>t</i> , min	Organ	Effect	Reference
1–9	$2 \times 10^4$ –1 cw	10 $\mu$ s–10 min	Brain	Lesion threshold; $tI^{1/2} = 200 \text{ W/cm}^2/\text{s}^{1/2}$	Lerner et al., 1973 Fry et al., 1970; Pond, 1970;

TABLE 4.2  
Ultrasound-Induced Effects on Various Tissues and Organs

$F$ , MHz	$I$ (SPTA), $W/cm^2$	$t$ , min	Organ	Effect	Reference
1-9	$2 \times 10^4$ -1 cw	10 $\mu$ s-10 min	Brain	Lesion threshold; $I t^{1/2} = 200 W/cm^2/s^{1/2}$	Lerner et al., 1973 Fry et al., 1970; Pond, 1970; Robinson and Lele, 1972
3	$2 \times 10^4$ - $3 \times 10^2$ cw	10 $\mu$ s-1 s	Liver	$I t^{1/2} = 400 W/cm^2/s^{1/2}$	Chan and Frizzell, 1977
1	200-1 cw	$10^{-2}$ -10	Neonatal cord	Hind limb paralysis, $1/8$ that of brain	Dunn, 1958; Dunn and Fry, 1971
0.5-6	25 p	0.5-2	Laminectomized cord	Greater damage at lower frequencies	Taylor and Pond, 1972
1	25 p	0.5	Testis	Spermatozoa affected earlier than spermatogonia (contra. ioniz. rad.)	O'Brien et al. 1979
1-5	1 cw	Instantaneous	Chick embryo	Blood flow stasis	Dyson et al., 1974
3.6	0.1 cw	5(3/week)	Rabbit ear	Hole repair	Dyson et al., 1968
3	1 cw	10 (3/week, 4 weeks)	Human	Treatment for varicose ulcerations	Dyson and Suckling, 1978
1	1.5 cw		Wilm's tumor	Hypothermia/reduced tumor weight	Longo et al., 1975
1	8 cw		Experimental tumors	Reduced X-ray dosage for tumor regression (synergism)	Lehman and Krusen, 1955
1	1.8 cw	5(3/day)	Neonatal mouse tibia	Enhanced DNA synthesis (hyperthermia)	Elmer and Fleischer, 1974

since virtually nothing is known of cavitation phenomena in tissues. It appears that cell disintegration occurs preferentially, at least when cavitation is allowed to occur, during the mitotic phase of the cell cycle, e.g., mouse leukemia cells in aqueous suspension were more susceptible to damage in M phase when exposed to 1 MHz ultrasound having spatial peak intensity of  $15 \text{ W/cm}^2$  for 10 s (Clarke and Hill, 1969). It has been suggested that there may occur variations in the mechanical strength of the cell membrane during the cell cycle. An interesting report is that of Brown and Coakley (1975) who exposed gel-caged suspensions of an ameba to 1 MHz ultrasound sufficient to produce irreversible alterations in mammalian tissues. Though they employed cw and pulsed regimes, samples from logarithmically growing and from synchronous cultures treated in free field and standing wave field conditions failed to exhibit differences in their growth patterns compared to controls.

Nonlethal effects upon cells have also been investigated. Repacholi et al. (1971) and Taylor and Newman (1972) observed a reduction in the electrophoretic mobility of Ehrlich ascites cells following exposure to low megahertz ultrasound, implying alteration of the electric charge density of the cellular surface. Ultrasonic irradiation, at 1.8 MHz with intensities greater than  $1 \text{ W/cm}^2$ , of rat thymocytes was followed by an immediate decrease in potassium content, suggesting a sublethal alteration in the structures intimate to permeability (Chapman, 1974). Additionally, investigation of the details of ultrastructure has revealed mitochondrial modifications in cells exposed to ultrasound (Hrazdira, 1970).

Microorganisms have been employed in genetic studies without positive results. Thus Combes (1975) did not find an increase in the back-mutation of an auxotrophic strain of *Bacillus subtilis* in response to 2-MHz ultrasonic irradiation for 5 min at intensities up to  $60 \text{ W/cm}^2$ , in a pulsing regime. Also, Thacker (1974) found that abnormal genetic effects did not occur in ultrasonically irradiated yeast cells, even when treated in such a manner that the cells were killed to 0.1% of the survival rate of the controls.

The positive findings above are listed in Table 4.3.

### 5. Biomacromolecules and Their Assemblages

The response of large molecules of biological importance, to ultrasonic exposure, has been studied in aqueous solution for details of tissue interaction mechanisms. The findings that ultrasonic absorption is largely attributable to tissue protein content (Car-

on phenomena in tissues preferentially, at during the mitotic phase in aqueous suspension when exposed to 1 of 15 W/cm<sup>2</sup> for 10 s that there may occur cell membrane during of Brown and Coakley of an ameba to 1 MHz e alterations in mam- and pulsed regimes, om synchronous cul- field conditions failed patterns compared to

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genetic studies with- not find an increase a of *Bacillus subtilis* in 5 min at intensities hacker (1974) found ultrasonically irradi- manner than the cells e controls.

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TABLE 4.3  
Reported Effects of Ultrasound on Various Cell Lines

$F$ , MHz	$I$ , W/cm <sup>2</sup>	$T$ , min	Cells	Effect	Reference
1	15 (SPTA)	0.1-0.2	Mouse leukemia	Disintegration preferentially during mitosis	Clark and Hill, 1969
1	1 (SATA)	5	Ehrlich ascites	Reduction in electrophoretic mobility	Repacholi et al., 1971 Taylor and Newman, 1972
2	10 (SPTA)		Rat thymocytes	Immediate decrease in potassium content	Chapman, 1974

stensen et al., 1953) and that tissue interactions resulting in irreversible structural changes must occur at levels of structure below that identifiable with the light microscope (Dunn, 1958), encouraged some of these studies.

### **5.1. Biomacromolecules**

For molecules having molecular weights below about  $10^4$ , i.e., proteins, in aqueous solution, it appears that degradation occurs only in the presence of cavitation in the ultrasonic frequency range 1–27 MHz (Macleod and Dunn, 1968). For larger molecules in aqueous solution, e.g., DNA with molecular weights greater than about  $10^6$ , it has been possible to demonstrate degradation in the absence of any phenomena suggesting the presence of cavitation (Hawley et al., 1968). Herein intensities as high as  $30 \text{ W/cm}^2$  were employed and essentially monodisperse fragments were produced with the limiting value depending upon intensity, i.e., greater intensities of exposure produced smaller fragments. The molecular weight dependencies on cavitation are illustrated in Table 3.4. This sequential halving of the molecules, with continued irradiation time, is also a characteristic feature of the much more prevalent studies of degradation of DNA in the presence of cavitation (Peacocke and Pritchard, 1968). The breaking of the DNA molecules preferentially at the midpoints of their extended conformation in solution suggests a mechanical mechanism being responsible, though chemical effects, largely resulting from free radical production in the presence of cavitation, have been described extensively (El'piner, 1964), in particular in the low megahertz frequency range (Hill, 1972). Nonetheless, although it is an easy task to degrade nucleic acid molecules in solution, it has not been possible to produce mutagenic lesions following in vitro irradiation of transforming DNA (Combes, 1975). The apparent necessity for the extended conformation of DNA molecules in solution to affect degradation implies the much lesser opportunity for denaturation of cellular DNA to occur.

### **5.2. Macromolecular Assemblages**

An interesting finding from two laboratories is that the order of ultrasonic reactivity obtained by observing spectral changes in nucleic acid bases in solution at 1 MHz and less than  $5 \text{ W/cm}^2$ , viz., Thy > Ura > Cyt > Gua > Ade (McKee et al., 1977) seems to be the same as that obtained by chromatography in dilute solutions of nucleic acids at 800 kHz and approximately  $10 \text{ W/cm}^2$  (Bragin-

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TABLE 4.4  
Effects of Ultrasound on Macromolecules Exposed "In Vitro"

$F$ , MHz	$I$ (SPTA), $\text{W/cm}^2$	$T$ , min	Structure	Effect	Reference
1-27			Proteins, mw $< 10^4$	Cavitation necessary for destruction	Macleod and Dunn, 1968
1	30		DNA, mw $> 10^4$	Degradation in absence of cavitation	Hawley et al., 1968

skaya et al., 1964). No information exists with regard to the occurrence of such events intracellularly.

A very considerable attention has been devoted to the concern over possible ultrasonic effects on chromosomes. Much of this interest has been associated with studies involving human lymphocyte chromosomes from cultured preparations, with overwhelming evidence from the results that ultrasound does not produce an increase in aberrations even at much greater exposure intensities and longer irradiation times than are likely to occur during medical diagnostic procedures (Coakley et al., 1972; Hill et al., 1972; Watts et al., 1972; Rott and Soldner, 1973; Bucton and Baker, 1972; Macintosh et al., 1975), though a synergistic effect with X-ray may occur (Kunze-Mühl, 1975). Liebeskind et al. (1979a) report an increased immunoreactivity to antinucleoside antibodies in  $G_1$  cells and repair replication in the DNA of mammalian HeLa cells exposed for 20–30 min to 2.5 MHz ultrasound with a prf of 200 Hz, pulse duration 200  $\mu$ s, SPTA intensity of 6.6 mW/cm<sup>2</sup> and SPTP intensity of 35.4 W/cm<sup>2</sup>. However, problems arise with the interpretation of the results in the antiguanosine antibody method since it is subject to high background and high variability. Further, although increased repair synthesis of DNA is reported, the authors were unable to demonstrate DNA strand damage by the sensitive technique of alkaline–sucrose gradients.

Although these investigators were unable to demonstrate an increase in sister chromatid exchanges (SCEs) from exposure of HeLa cells to diagnostic ultrasound, they later reported (Liebeskind et al., 1979b) SCEs in human lymphocytes exposed for 30 min to 2 MHz ultrasound at a SATP intensity of 5 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>. This is in contrast to the previously reported work of Morris et al. (1978), who were unable to demonstrate any effect on SCE in human leucocytes exposed for 10 min to 1.05 MHz cw ultrasound at intensities from 15.3–36 W/cm<sup>2</sup>. More recently, Wegner et al. (1980) found no increase in the frequency of structural chromosomal aberrations or in SCEs in Chinese hamster ovary cells treated with 2.2 MHz ultrasound from a fetal pulse detector operated at 10mW/cm<sup>2</sup> for substantial periods of time. Also, there was no indication of single-strand breaks induced in the  $G_2$  phase.

A few studies have treated membranes and membrane models. Thus Rohr and Rooney (1978) were able to increase the permeability of membranes formed from oxidized cholesterol exposed to 1 MHz ultrasound at intensities greater than 1.5 W/cm<sup>2</sup>. Liver plasma membranes exhibited decreased 5'-nucleotidase ac-

tivity and altered in the range 0.7 min (Montmory found an unlin current to occur sound differed, ously for expos tential reached increased durati intensity range 1- Williams et al. ( platelet-rich pla W/cm<sup>2</sup> (spatial p

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tivity and altered morphology in response to 0.87 MHz ultrasound in the range 0.75–3 W/cm<sup>2</sup> for exposures ranging from 2 to 10 min (Montmory and Pourhadi, 1976b). Coble and Dunn (1976) found an unlinking of the membrane potential and short circuit current to occur in that their time courses in response to ultrasound differed, i.e., the short circuit current increased continuously for exposures of 0.5 s and longer, while the membrane potential reached its maximum within 0.5 s and did not alter with increased duration of exposure. This occurred at 1 MHz in the intensity range 1–100 W/cm<sup>2</sup> for isolated frog skin preparations. Williams et al. (1976) were able to alter the recalcification time of platelet-rich plasma with 1 MHz ultrasound at approximately 0.2 W/cm<sup>2</sup> (spatial peak) in 5 min.

## 6. Concluding Remarks

From the investigations that have been conducted, it appears that ultrasound can be considered to be a very inefficient mutagenic agent. Chromosome damage that does occur in response to ultrasonic irradiation is most likely to be lethal. Because of the particular molecular conformation necessary to bring about effects in vitro, it does not appear likely that selective effects can be produced in cellular nucleic acids.

Since ultrasound appears to induce embryological effects, treatment of pregnant women in the abdominal area, e.g., possibly for lower back pain, should be avoided (see Chapter 6).

A systematic analysis of existing reliable data for mammalian tissues has led to the following two summary statements (Nyborg, 1977):

No substantial bioeffects have been demonstrated for spatial peak-temporal average intensities less than 100 mW/cm<sup>2</sup>.

No substantial bioeffects have been demonstrated for which the product of  $It$  is less than 50 J/cm<sup>2</sup> where, for pulsed operation,  $t$  is the total ("on" + "off") time.

The spatial peak intensities referred to in the statements are typically very much greater than the spatial average values of intensity used in the specification of ultrasonic instrumentation (see Chapter 3). The statements, while providing terse and compendious rendering of a huge literature, may need to be modified as new data appear since most of the data are from mammals other than man and the extrapolation to man is not always clear, the influence

of exposure factors such as pulsing conditions and acoustic frequency are not included, and the most sensitive biological tests may not have been employed.

No fully satisfactory epidemiological study has as yet been performed. However, a retrospective survey, but not case-controlled, of more than 1000 apparently normal women examined with ultrasound during various stages of pregnancy exhibited a 2.7% incidence of congenital abnormalities on newborn physical examination, as compared with a figure of 4.8% exhibited in a separate and unmatched survey of women not having received ultrasonic diagnosis (Hellman et al., 1970). Neither the gestation period at which the first ultrasonic examination occurred, nor the number of examinations, appeared to increase the risk of fetal abnormality occurring. A smaller study has also yielded no indication of either congenital malformations or chromosomal aberrations in the fetus (Koranyi et al., 1972).

Finally, though not scientifically objective, it must be noted that a very substantial number of persons receiving ultrasonic diagnosis also undergo subsequent clinical examinations, and undesirable effects from such procedures, or suspicions thereof, have not been reported (Dunn and Fry, 1971).

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