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**Original Research Article** 



# The Effect of Diallyl Trisulfide Administration on The Viability of MDA-MB-231 Cell Lines

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# ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

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**Copyright:** © 2024 Veterini *et al.* This is an openaccess article distributed under the terms of the <u>Creative Commons</u> Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. Diallyl trisulfide or DATS is an important organic sulphur compound (OSCs) of garlic that has been recognized for its ability to inhibit migration and invasion processes, promote programmed cell death, and impede the proliferation of breast cancer cells. However, the most effective dosage of DATS to decrease survival rate and cell viability of triple-negative breast cancer cell line has been undetermined. The present study aimed to discover the MDA-MB-231 (triplenegative breast cancer cell line) viability differences due to the addition of DATS in several doses. DATS was administered to 6 groups of MDA-MB-231 cell cultures at different concentrations (20, 40, 80, 160, and 320 µM), with a control group. Cell viability was evaluated using colorimetric MTT assay. The study reported that DATS effectively inhibited the cell line survival rate. Treatment with DATS at a dose of 20 µM or higher led to cell death and a significant MDA-MB-231 cell line viability reduction compared to the control group but not between the intervention groups. The findings demonstrated that DATS had the ability to trigger cell death and possess potential anti-cancer properties particularly in triple-negative breast cancer. A novel observation was made when low dose of DATS exhibited comparable efficacy to the large dose in reducing MDA-MB-231 cell line viability, while minimizing the potential for negative side effects.

Keywords: Breast Cancer, Diallyl trisulfide, Antioxidants, Cancer prevention

# Introduction

Allium sativum (garlic) was commonly utilized in ancient times to treat many health problems including cancer.<sup>1</sup> The beneficial effects of garlic on health are attributed to various organic sulphur compounds (OSCs) including allicin, *Diallyl sulfide* (DAS), *Diallyl disulfide* (DADS), and *Diallyl trisulfide* (DATS).<sup>2,3</sup> Moreover, research suggests that the biological activity of OSCs is influenced by the number of sulphur atoms enclosed. It has been proven that DATS, which has the highest number of sulphur atoms, is the most efficient chemical.<sup>4</sup> The previous *in silico* research has shown its ability as an anti-angiogenesis especially in breast cancer.<sup>5</sup> A prior study found a correlation between the decrease of breast cancer risk and the consumption of garlic. This study demonstrates that women who consume high quantities of garlic have a significantly lower probability of experiencing breast cancer than those who consume a modest number of garlic.<sup>6</sup>

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Women's breast cancer (BC) rises to the top of the global cancer incidence list. According to epidemiological data, in 110 out of 185 nations, women have died from cancer due to breast cancer.<sup>7</sup> Triple negative breast cancer (TNBC) is considered the highly malignant and aggressive mammary epithelial tumor due to its rapid proliferation, swift spread, and frequent incidence of aggressive, heterogeneous, and metastatic tumours.8 The primary challenge of TNBC is the lack of therapeutic targets for conventional treatments which result in limited therapy options. This is further exacerbated by the frequent occurrence of TNBC metastases, the development of resistance to regular chemotherapy, and poor prognoses with short survival rates despite receiving normal therapy.9 To prevent the development of chemotherapy resistance and increase the success of TNBC therapy, previous review study postulates that DATS and DADS compounds are sufficiently good to enhance therapeutic outcome and decrease the drug resistance process especially in TNBC woman.10

Cellular viability and proliferation assays are widely employed to evaluate the impact of potential anti-cancer treatments including substances that inhibit cell growth and those causing cell death.<sup>11</sup> DATS is an eminent chemical commonly utilized as a potential candidate for anti-cancer therapy.<sup>12</sup> Previous similar studies have used DATS in MDA-MB-231 cells as an anti-cancer therapy without focusing on cellular viability assessment,<sup>13</sup> or using a high dose of DATS (320  $\mu$ M).<sup>14,15</sup>

Despite the reported benefits of DATS treatment in the symptomatic treatment of malignancy especially in breast cancer *in vitro* or *in silico*, their efficacy and safety are still questionable. Therefore, the present study aimed to evaluate the MDA-MB-231 cell viability

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differences due to DATS treatment in dissimilar doses to determine the efficacy and optimal dose especially for discontinuing breast cancer cell lineage.

## **Materials And Methods**

### Methods

A quantitative longitudinal experiment was used as the research design along with a completely randomized design (CRD) to address the research objectives. *Diallyl trisulfide* (DATS) treatment was applied to MDA-MB-231 cultures as part of the experiment. DATS doses were separated into five groups: 20  $\mu$ M (K1), 40  $\mu$ M (K2), 80  $\mu$ M (K3), 160  $\mu$ M (K4), 320  $\mu$ M (K5), and control group (K0). Six samples of observations were made in each group. The study received ethical clearance from the Medical Faculty Ethics Committee of Airlangga University (Number 39/EC/KEPK/FKUA/2023).

### Materials

*Diallyl trisulfide* (DATS) (GlpBio Technology Inc, Montclair, CA, USA) (Synonyms: DATS, NSC 651936) was isolated from garlic extract with the purity of 98% as determined by HPLC. DATS was dissolved in 100% DMSO and stored at a temperature of -20°C. The administration of DATS was accomplished by delivering a pre-mixed combination of DATS and a substitute medium into a specified group cell. Heat-Inactivated Fetal bovine serum (FBS) and Thiazolyl Blue Tetrazolium Bromide (MTT) assay were obtained from Sigma (St. Louis, Missouri, USA).

# Cell lines and cell culture

The MDA-MB-231 cell lines, derived from human breast cancer, were obtained from the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC; Rockville, MD, USA). The cells were grown in DMEM medium supplemented with 10% foetal bovine serum, 100 IU/mL penicillin, and 100  $\mu$ g/mL streptomycin. The cells were maintained in a humidified incubator at 37°C with an atmosphere of 5% CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>16</sup> The cell lines were cultured in the Stem Cell Laboratory of Universitas Airlangga.

# Thiazolyl Blue Tetrazolium Bromide (MTT) Assay

Cells were seeded in 96-well microplates ( $5x10^3$  cells/well of 200 µL) and routinely cultured in a controlled environment for 24 hours to make a suspension of MSCs cells. This controlled environment was an ESCO CelCulture (Xiupu Road, Shanghai China) 5% CO2 atmosphere incubator, that maintained at 37°C. After a 24-hour pre-culture, the media was removed and replaced with medium containing different concentrations of DATS, ranging from 20 to 320  $\mu$ M. Cells were then re-incubated for 24 hours. Afterwards, 25 µL of MTT solution was added each well and re-incubated for 4 hours. After the incubation period, it was carefully aspirating the MTT solution from each well. The formazan crystals formed by viable cells would be visible as purple precipitates when observed under an inverted microscope (Olympus CKX-53). A total of 50 µL /well solution of DMSO was added. The Optical Density (OD, Absorbance) was quantified using a microplate reader (GloMax® Discover Microplate Reader, Promega) at a specific wavelength (595 nm) and monitored 24 hours after the treatment or exposure to DATS.

### Viability cell calculation

The viability of MDA-MB-231 cell lines was determined using viability calculation formula.<sup>17</sup> The cell viability proportion was expressed as a percentage, representing the numerical data scale of viability for MDA-MB-231 cell lines. This study used a nominal data scale with DATS doses divided into six groups as the independent variables.

The calculation of live cells was conducted using the following formula:  $^{17}\,$ 

Percentage of cell viability = 
$$\frac{A_{Treatment} - A_{Blank}}{A_{Control} - A_{Blank}} x 100\%$$

Note:

A <sub>Treatment</sub>	= OD value of test material sample
A <sub>Control</sub>	= OD value of cell control
ATreatment	= OD value of growth medium without cells

#### Statistical analysis

The study hypothesis posited a difference in the viability capacity of MDA-MB-231 cell lines when exposed to varied doses of DATS. The acceptance of a hypothesis was determined by a statistical test's *p*-value, which was significant at below  $\alpha$  ( $p < \alpha$ ). The study used a 95% of accuracy threshold, leading to an  $\alpha$  value of 0.05. The statistical test was performed by the assistance of IBM SPSS 27.

## **Results and Discussion**

Treatment with DATS at a concentration of 20  $\mu$ M or higher led to cell death and decreased MDA-MB-231 cell viability. Based on the findings from Figure 1 and Figure 2, it was observed that the administration of DATS at a greater dosage resulted in a significant drop in both cell viability and the percentage of living cells. Treatment with DATS at a concentration of 20  $\mu$ M or higher led to a mortality rate of 94.02% or greater in MDA-MB-231 cell lines. As compared to the baseline, cell live count also significantly decreased (see Figure 3). The figure also demonstrated that an increase in DATS doses resulted in a major decrease in the quantity of the cancer cell lines. Furthermore, Table 1 illustrates that the mortality of the MDA-MB-231 cell line rose as the dose of DATS increased. The data indicated a dosage response between the DATS dosages and the death of the MDA-MB-231 cell line.

Based on the Kruskal Wallis statistical test portrayed in Table 1, the statistical value was 26.024 with p<0.001 (p< $\alpha$ ). Therefore, it was hypothesized that there was a difference in the response of MDA-MB-231 cell lines to different doses of DATS, leading to a decrease in cell viability. The study verified that DATS possessed the capacity to eliminate cancer cells and might potentially be used as an anti-cancer agent.

# Cell viability measure

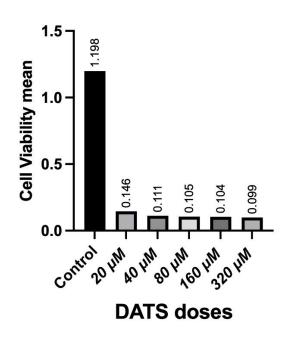
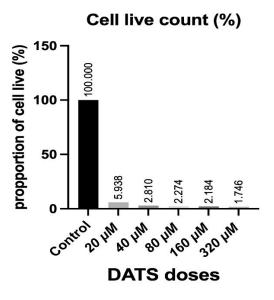


Figure 1: Column diagram illustrating cell viability measurement (mean) between DATS doses determined by optical density. The diagram illustrates that treatment with DATS at a concentration of 20  $\mu$ M or higher decreases breast cancer cell line viability



**Figure 2:** Column diagram presenting the percentage (%) of live cells between DATS doses determined by an Automated Cell Counter. The diagram illustrates that treatment with DATS at a concentration of 20  $\mu$ M or higher leads to breast cancer cell line death

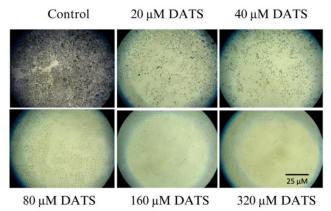
DATS, a constituent found in garlic, had been identified as a potential anti-carcinogenic agent with the capacity to impede the growth,18 migration, and invasion of cancer cells.<sup>19</sup> Numerous investigations provided evidence of the anti-carcinogenic and anti-metastatic properties of DATS.<sup>4,18,20</sup> Nevertheless, it was hypothesized that variations in the DATS dosage might impact its efficacy in manifesting its anti-cancer characteristics. Previous research indicated that the administration of DATS at moderate concentrations of 40 µM, 60 µM, and 80 µM, or similar to the daily intake limit in humans, specifically 3.5 mg, 5.2 mg, and 7.07 mg, effectively exhibited anticarcinogenic properties by inducing DNA damage, arresting the cell cycle, and causing cell death, which then resulted in reduced viability of cancer cells<sup>21</sup>. The present study was objected to evaluate the efficacy of different dosages of DATS on cell viability and the decrease in the percentage of viable MDA-MB-231 cells. Several commonly employed doses would be examined including low-dose DATS at 20  $\mu M,^4$  moderate dose at 40  $\mu M,$  80  $\mu M,^{21,22}$  and 160  $\mu M,^{4,23}$ and high-dose at 320  $\mu M.^{24}$  It was anticipated that the administration of several doses of DATS would yield preliminary findings regarding the most effective dosage for reducing cell viability and their proportion of living cells. The study demonstrated that the administration of DATS at low, moderate, or high doses dramatically lowered the viability of the MDA-MB-231 cell line. Conversely, no appreciable variations were revealed between the low-dosage group and the other treatment groups, which were the moderate and high dose groups. Thus, it may be postulated that the administration of DATS at a low concentration (20 µM) was sufficient to exhibit its anticancer properties, leading to a reduction in cell viability and the number of viable cancer cells.

Two processes were thought to be responsible for the decrease in viability of the MDA-MB-231 cell line following the DATS administration, even at a low dose. The first mechanism was based on the ability of DATS to suppress the metastasis process of breast cancer tissue, particularly the MDA-MB-231 and HS 578T cell lines. According to the previous study, DATS could prevent metastasis by reducing the activity and production (down-regulating) of ERK/NFkB/MMP-2/MMP-9.<sup>4</sup>

Second, the Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) pathway was thought to be the reason why DATS was able to reduce the viability of cancer cells.<sup>25</sup> In many forms of cancer, alterations in the dynamics and function of the mitochondria were linked to malignancy.<sup>26</sup> The formation of ROS was one of the consequences of mitochondrial malfunction, which was involved in various aspects of carcinogenesis and an elevated amount of ROS had been detected in tumor cells.<sup>27,28</sup> In comparison to normal cells, cancer cells had an elevated concentration of ROS because of hyper-metabolism. Nevertheless, cancer cells were able to maintain redox balance as a result of their substantial antioxidant capability. The rapid buildup of ROS disturbed the balance of redox reactions and caused significant harm to cancer cells.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, the results of this study showed a decrease in the number of viable cells in the low, moderate, and high-dose groups. The low-dose group (20  $\mu$ M) exhibited a significant decrease of over 90% of MDA-MB-231 viable cells, indicating the DATS potential in inducing cell death and exhibiting anti-cancer properties. One important type of cell death in cancer cells was apoptosis. Research had revealed a strong correlation between apoptosis and the survival of cancer cells. Thus, this made it a key focus for the identification and advancement of novel anti-cancer medications. Various studies had shown that targeting the apoptosis signaling pathway by anti-cancer drugs was a crucial mechanism in anti-cancer therapy.<sup>30</sup>

According to previous study,<sup>21</sup> the intrinsic apoptosis pathway, had been extensively studied as the most well-documented cell death process in response to genotoxic stress. DATS was found to induce a dose-dependent decrease of anti-apoptotic Bcl-2 protein and had a minor impact on the production of the pro-apoptotic protein Bak (Bcl-2 homologue antagonist). In addition, DATS had been observed to enhance the permeability of the mitochondrial membrane and induced the release of cytochrome c by dose-dependent manner.<sup>21,31</sup> In the end, these activities resulted in the creation of the apoptosome, which was composed of an Apaf-1 and cytochrome c complex.<sup>32,33</sup> This complex was responsible for activating apoptosis executioner caspases 3 and 7 by causing more cleavage of procaspase forms.<sup>21,32</sup>



**Figure 3:** A visible decrease in breast cancer cell line following an increase in DATS dose using an inverted microscope at a magnification of 40x. The image portrays a negative correlation between DATS dosage and the count of visible MDA-MB-231 cell lines. This indicates that higher DATS dosage results in a drop in cell line count.

*Diallyl trisulfide*, which became the predominant bioactive molecule present in garlic, had been scientifically demonstrated to exhibit antioxidant characteristics, mitigate double-strand DNA damage, and trigger cell cycle arrest and apoptosis.<sup>18</sup> The induction of cell cycle arrest mediated by reactive oxygen species (ROS) and apoptosis, as well as the activation of caspases, had been provided by DATS in various cancer models, including breast cancer.<sup>34</sup> Numerous studies have demonstrated diverse inhibitory effects of DATS on tumor growth through multiple mechanisms, including the induction of

ROS, cell cycle arrest, promotion of apoptosis, suppression of proliferation, and inhibition of tumor cell invasion and metastasis in a dose-dependent manner.<sup>21,24</sup> These findings aligned with our research's finding that higher doses led to reduced cell viability and a decrease in viable cells.

Table 1: Comparison of Average Viability of MDA-MB-231 Cells

Group	Average Viability of	P Values
	MDA-MB-231 Cells (MTT	(Kruskal Wallis
	Assay)	test)
Control (K0)	1.198	
DATS Dose of 20 $\mu M$	0.146	
(K1)		
DATS Dose of 40 $\mu M$	0.111	
(K2)		
DATS Dose of 80 $\mu M$	0.105	p<0.001
(K3)		
DATS Dose of 160 µM	0.104	
(K4)		
DATS Dose of 320 $\mu M$	0.099	
(K5)		

*p*-value obtained from Kruskal Wallis test and the average viability of live cell MDA-MB-231 in each group showed a significant result. An observed disparity in the mean viability of MDA-MB-231 cells was found between the intervention group and the baseline, as indicated by the data.

Additionally, it was important to note that administering DATS in large doses did not come without risks and side effects. An overview of in vitro toxicity experiments conducted on MDA-MB-231 cells revealed that DATS had more potency compared to DADS and DAS in the induction of mitochondria-mediated cell death and the formation of ROS.35 The cytotoxicity of DATS was enhanced when taken in specific doses due to its dose-dependent,  $^{21,36}$  and concentration-dependent,  $^{37}$  characteristics. According to a previous study, the administration of DATS within the concentration range of 50-80 µM to MDA-MB-231 cells led to an elevation in intracellular ROS, which then triggered its cytotoxic properties.<sup>36</sup> An In-vivo study also discovered that consuming garlic over a period of 4 weeks could have a detrimental impact on the gastrointestinal tract.<sup>38</sup> A toxicity study of DATS on animal models (mice) showed that the LD50 of DATS was 100mg/bw.39 A systematic literature review assessing in vitro toxicity studies of DATS,35 explained that there was no conclusive evidence of potential DATS toxicity due to the variety of cell models used and the justification of DATS potential as a chemoprotective agent against carcinogenesis rose the need for more genotoxicity studies on DATs in the future.

### Conclusion

Regarding the present study's findings, administration of *Diallyl* trisulfide (DATS) at a dose over 20  $\mu$ M effectively decreases the viability of the MDA-MB-231 breast cancer cell line. However, doses greater than 20  $\mu$ M do not demonstrate significant differences from other treatment groups and may have unknown effects on cells. The findings of this study suggest that low-modest intake of DATS may help to reduce the viability of MDA-MB-231 breast cancer cell line to minimize unpredicted side effects. While the *in vitro* findings have been established, further investigation is required through *in vivo* or *in vitro* studies to explore additional cellular parameters that contribute to the decline in cell viability. Additional research is required to demonstrate its genotoxicity and safety in normal cells at certain

dosages.

# **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Authors' Declaration**

The authors hereby declare that the work presented in this article is original and that any liability for claims relating to the content of this article will be borne by them.

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