THE EFFECTS OF MAGNETISM ON LIVING ORGANISMS

Mutalimova Zulfizar Burxonovna

**Navoi State University of Medicine, Student Faculty of Medicine*

***Abstract**: Magnetic fields (MFs) have been shown to influence various biological systems, from microorganisms to humans. This article reviews the current understanding of how static and dynamic magnetic fields affect cellular processes, growth, and behavior in living organisms. Studies suggest that magnetism can alter enzyme activity, gene expression, and neural functions, though the mechanisms remain under investigation. Further research is needed to fully understand the biological implications of magnetic exposure fully.*

***Keywords**: Magnetism, biomagnetic effects, static magnetic fields (SMF), electromagnetic fields (EMF), cellular response.*

1. Introduction

Magnetism has been a subject of scientific curiosity for decades, particularly its interaction with biological systems. Both natural (e.g., Earth's geomagnetic field) and artificial (e.g., MRI, power lines) magnetic fields influence living organisms at cellular and systemic levels.

Previous studies indicate that magnetic fields can:

- Affect ion transport across cell membranes (Pang et al., 2020).
- Modify free radical concentrations, impacting oxidative stress (Zhang et al., 2019).
- Influence circadian rhythms and migration in animals (Wiltschko & Wiltschko, 2005).

This paper examines the known biological effects of magnetism and discusses potential mechanisms behind these phenomena.

2. Methods

A systematic review of peer-reviewed studies (2000–2023) was conducted using PubMed, ScienceDirect, and IEEE Xplore. Keywords included *"magnetic fields AND cells," "biomagnetism,"* and *"magnetoreception."*

Experimental Models:

- **In vitro**: Cultured neurons, fibroblasts, and bacteria exposed to SMFs (0.1–10 T).
- **In vivo**: Animal studies (birds, rodents) assessing navigation and behavioral changes.
- **Human studies**: MRI-related exposure and occupational EMF effects.

3. Results

3.1. Cellular and Molecular Effects

- **Enzyme Activity**: Cytochrome oxidase efficiency decreases under high SMF (5 T) (Ghodbane et al., 2013).
- **Gene Regulation**: Upregulation of stress-responsive genes (e.g., *HSP70*) in *Drosophila* (Wyszkowska et al., 2018).

3.2. Behavioral Changes

- Birds and sea turtles use geomagnetic fields for navigation (Lohmann et al., 2004).
- Rodents exposed to 50 Hz EMFs show reduced exploratory behavior (Li et al., 2021).

3.3. Human Health Implications

- No conclusive evidence links low-frequency EMFs to cancer (WHO, 2022).
- High-field MRI (7 T+) may cause vertigo due to inner ear stimulation (Theysohn et al., 2008).

4. Discussion

The biological effects of magnetism vary by field strength, exposure duration, and organism type. Proposed mechanisms include:

- **Radical Pair Mechanism**: Magnetic fields influence electron spins in reactive oxygen species (ROS).

- **Ion Cyclotron Resonance**: Specific frequencies alter calcium ion channels (Liboff, 2004).

Limitations: Many studies lack standardized protocols, and long-term effects remain unclear.

5. Conclusion

Magnetism exerts measurable but complex effects on living organisms. While some applications (e.g., magnetotherapy) show promise, further research is essential for safety guidelines and biomedical innovations. The study of magnetic fields and their biological interactions has revealed significant but complex effects across various organisms, from bacteria to humans. Experimental evidence demonstrates that static and dynamic magnetic fields can influence cellular processes, physiological functions, and behavior. Key findings include alterations in enzyme activity, gene expression, ion channel dynamics, and navigation capabilities in magnetosensitive species.

Key Takeaways

1. **Cellular & Molecular Impact**:
   - Magnetic fields (MFs) modulate redox reactions and free radical concentrations, potentially affecting oxidative stress and aging.
   - Certain intensities (e.g., 0.1–10 T SMF) disrupt cytoskeleton organization and cell division in vitro.
2. **Behavioral & Ecological Effects**:
   - Geomagnetic fields are critical for animal navigation (e.g., migratory birds, sea turtles).
   - Chronic exposure to low-frequency EMFs may alter circadian rhythms and stress responses in mammals.
3. **Human Health Considerations**:
   - No definitive causal link exists between low-level EMFs (e.g., power lines) and diseases like cancer, but long-term studies remain inconclusive.
   - High-intensity MFs (e.g., MRI) can induce transient physiological effects (e.g., vertigo, metallic taste).

Mechanistic Uncertainties

While mechanisms such as the **radical pair hypothesis** and **ion cyclotron resonance** offer plausible explanations, no universal model fully explains magnetobiological phenomena. Variability in species sensitivity, field parameters, and experimental conditions complicates consensus.

Future Research Directions

- **Standardized Protocols**: Develop uniform exposure systems to compare studies.
- **Long-Term Studies**: Investigate chronic MF exposure in humans and ecosystems.
- **Medical Applications**: Explore therapeutic uses (e.g., PEMF for bone healing, magnetic stimulation for depression).
- **Quantum Biology**: Assess whether quantum effects (e.g., electron spin) play a role in magnetoreception.

Final Remarks

Magnetism is a potent environmental factor with underappreciated biological significance. As technology increases artificial MF exposure, interdisciplinary research must clarify risks and harness benefits. Bridging physics, biology, and medicine will be essential to unlock the full potential—and mitigate the uncertainties—of magnetism's role in life processes.

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