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Identification of Cholesta-7,24-dien-3β-ol and Desmosterol in Hamster Cauda Epididymal Spermatozoa*

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The sterol composition of hamster cauda epididymal spermatozoa was remarkably different from that of several other mammalian spermatozoa. Desmosterol and cholesta-7,24-dien-3β-ol account for as much as 90% of the total sterols. Cholesterol and desmosterol are the major components of mouse cauda epididymal spermatozoa, and rabbit, boar and bull ejaculated spermatozoa. Cholesta-7,24-dien-3β-ol was not detected. Furthermore, cholesterol was the main sterol in hamster caput epididymal spermatozoa, while only a trace amount of desmosterol was detected and cholesta-7,24-dien-3β-ol was hardly detected at all. The sterol content of cauda and caput epididymal spermatozoa was 0.17 ± 0.05 μmol/10^8 spermatozoa. During maturation, the desmosterol and cholesta-7,24-dien-3β-ol levels increase and the cholesterol level decreases. Cholesta-7,4-dien-3β-ol appears as a sterol in mature spermatozoa and seems to be a characteristic sterol of hamster cauda epididymal spermatozoa.

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