

1 *Review*

2 **Low-intensity Exposures via Luminescent Bioassays** 3 **of Different Complexity: Cells, Enzyme Reactions** 4 **and Fluorescent Proteins**

5 **Nadezhda S. Kudryasheva**^{1,2*} and **Ekaterina S. Kovel**^{1,3}

6 ¹ Institute of Biophysics SB RAS, FRC KSC SB RAS, Krasnoyarsk, 660036, Russia; n-qdr@yandex.ru (N.S.K.);
7 kkovvel@yandex.ru (E.S.K.);

8 ² Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, 660041, Russia;

9 ³ Institute of Physics SB RAS, FRC KSC SB RAS, Krasnoyarsk, 660036, Russia

10 * Correspondence: n-qdr@yandex.ru; Tel.: +7-3912-494-242

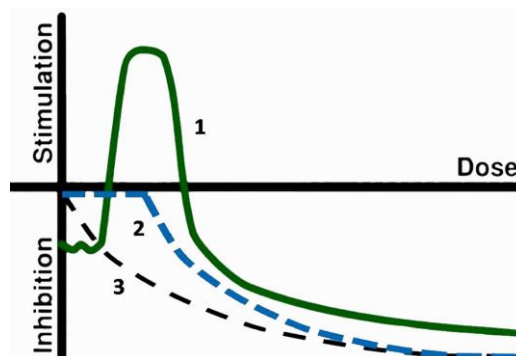
11 **Abstract:** Current paper reviews applications of luminescence bioassays for monitoring
12 low-intensity factors, namely, radioactivity of different types (alpha, beta and gamma), and
13 bioactive compounds (humic substances and fullerenols). Luminescence intensity is taken as a
14 physiological parameter of luminous organisms. High rates of luminescence response can provide
15 (1) a proper number of experiments under comparable conditions and, therefore, proper statistical
16 processing, with this being highly important for ‘noisy’ low-dose exposures; (2) non-genetic, i.e.
17 biochemical and physicochemical mechanisms of cellular response, in accordance to “exposome”
18 concept. Bioassays based on luminous marine bacteria, their enzymes, and fluorescence
19 coelenteramide-containing proteins were used to compare results of low-intensity exposures at
20 cellular, biochemical and physicochemical levels, respectively. Results of the cellular exposures
21 were discussed in terms of hormesis concept. Bioluminescence time dependence under low-dose
22 radiation exposures corresponded to hormesis or threshold models; no bioluminescence monotonic
23 dependency on intensity of exposure (dose rate, radioactivity, concentration) was found.
24 Bioluminescence activation and absence of its dependency on intensity of exposure can be accepted
25 as features of cellular adaptive response. Changes of biological luminescence were analyzed and
26 discussed for bioassays of lower organization level – enzymes and fluorescent protein.

27 **Keywords:** luminescence bioassays; bacterial cells, enzymes; fluorescent protein; low-intensity
28 factors; hormesis; radiation; bioactive compounds; antioxidant activity

29

30 **1. Introduction**

31 All biological objects on the Earth are exposed to low-intensity factors – radioactive, chemical,
32 and electromagnetic. Currently, accumulation of evidence of the inhibitory and activating effects of
33 these factors is ongoing. Activation of physiological functions of organisms is associated with term
34 “hormesis”, which implies a favorable biological response to the low impact of toxins and other
35 stressors. This term was introduced by Southam and Ehrlich in 1943 [1-2] based on observations that
36 “extracts from the Red Cedar tree enhanced the metabolism of fungal species”. Over the past
37 decades, an exponential increase in citation for hormesis in the biomedical community has been
38 observed [2-5]. Hormesis model is based on non-linear dependence of effect on dose of toxic
39 compounds, as shown schematically in Figure 1. Hormesis is considered as the basic model; two
40 other models (linear and threshold) can be considered as particular cases of hormesis [2,5].



41 **Figure 1.** Scheme of dose-effect models: 1 – hormesis, 2- threshold, 3- linear.

42 There exist evidences that hormesis is highly generalized phenomenon; it does not depend on
43 the level of biological organization (cells, organs, or organisms). There exists an urgent need to
44 understand and predict responses of organisms to low-intensity exposures. This understanding
45 should be based on molecular mechanisms of these effects, which are not clear yet. We suppose that
46 simple bioassay systems, such as cells and enzymes, will allow understanding the low-intensity
47 effects at cellular and biochemical levels, respectively. The next stage of investigation should be
48 concerned with the level of physicochemical processes (energy, electron or hydrogen transfer) and
49 application of the simplest bioassay systems.

50 Current review considers application of luminescence bioassay systems of different level
51 organization (cells, enzyme reactions, and fluorescent proteins) for study mechanisms (cellular,
52 biochemical, and physicochemical, respectively) of low-intensity exposures.

53 Luminescence feature of bioassay systems provide a proper registration of biological responses.
54 Luminescence intensity is a testing physiological parameter of these bioassays. The advantages of the
55 luminescence are high rates of analysis (down to 1-3 min), ease of use, high sensitivity, and
56 availability of instruments and reagents. Since the luminescent type of registration is not time
57 consuming, it provides a lot of experimental results under comparable conditions, with this being
58 essential for their statistical processing. This advantage is very important for biological analyses,
59 which are usually characterized by lower reproducibility than chemical or radiometric assays. This
60 advantage is of particular importance in study of the low-intensity exposures that are usually can be
61 described in terms of “stochastic effects” [6]. Additionally, quick response can contribute to
62 investigation of non-genetic mechanisms of low-intensity exposures.

63 The most known luminescent cellular bioassay is based on luminous marine bacteria. Bacterial
64 luminescence is sensitive to toxic compounds; this is a reason why the marine bacterium has been
65 used for several decades to assess environmental toxicity [7-13].

66 Current tendency to simplification of bioassay systems resulted in development of enzymatic
67 assays. As opposite to the cell-based assay, enzymatic assays estimate rates of biochemical reactions
68 under toxicant influence. Enzymatic bioluminescence assay based on the bacterial enzymes,
69 progresses from early 90-s [14-17]. Solid immobilized enzymatic and bacterial preparations develop
70 now as a basis for bioluminescent biosensors [14,17-20]. Classification of toxic effects was suggested
71 first in [21] and developed later in [22-25]. This classification describes (1) physicochemical, (2)
72 chemical, and (3) biochemical processes in the bioluminescence assay systems at exposure to toxic
73 compounds.

74 Advanced experience in study the toxic effects on bioluminescence of bacteria and their enzymes
75 is one more advantage of their application for evaluation the effects of low-intensity exposures.

76 Biochemical and physicochemical approaches contribute to non-genetic aspect of toxic and
77 adaptive effects. These approaches are applicable in frames of novel “exposome” concept, where
78 “exposome complements the genome and encompasses the totality of environmental non-genetic
79 exposures” [26-28]. Exposome concept was originated as a challenge in molecular epidemiology [29]
80 and concerned with human exposures. Application of simple model organisms and biochemical

81 systems might provide human exposure sciences with fundamental support basing on molecular,
82 physicochemical, biochemical, and cellular investigations.

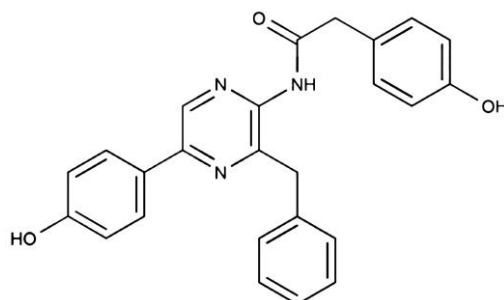
83 This review analyzes results of application the simplest luminescence bioassays (luminous
84 marine bacteria, their enzymes, and fluorescent coelenteramide-containing proteins) to study (i) the
85 effects low-dose radiation of alpha, beta and gamma type, and (ii) antioxidant effects of bioactive
86 compounds of natural and artificial origination – humic substances and fullerenols, respectively.

87 Next section of the review, Section 2, justifies an application of the coelenteramide-containing
88 fluorescent protein as a simplest multicolor bioassay based on physicochemical process in the protein
89 complex. Section 3 discusses application of luminescence bioassays in study the low-dose radiation
90 effects. Section 4 presents low-concentration antioxidant effects of bioactive compounds.

91 2. Coelenteramide-Containing Fluorescent Protein as a Simplest Multicolor Fluorescent Bioassay 92 for low-intensity exposures

93 Main structural components of fluorescent proteins are polypeptide and aromatic fluorophore;
94 the latter is responsible for light emitting. The most important representative of fluorescent proteins
95 is Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP). It was isolated in 1962 from jellyfish *Aequorea victoria* by
96 American scientist O. Shimomura. In 2008 Shimomura has got a Nobel Prize for the discovery and
97 development of GFP. A series of fluorescent proteins of different color, homologues to GFP, are
98 known now [30-31]. They are widely used in medical and biological research for labeling individual
99 molecules, intracellular structures, living cells, organs and whole organisms in order to visualize
100 intracellular processes [32-33].

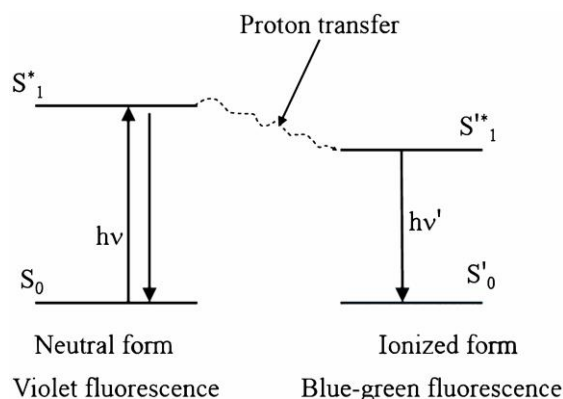
101 Coelenteramide-containing proteins are the other group of fluorescent proteins. “Discharged
102 aequorin”, a representative of this group, was isolated and studied by Prof. Shimomura too,
103 simultaneously with GFP. He called it Blue Fluorescent Protein (BFP). This group differs from the
104 GFPs with fluorophore formation: the fluorophore of GFPs is formed by amino acid residues, while
105 the fluorophore of BFP is a coelenteramide molecule (Figure 2). As opposed to GFPs, the
106 coelenteramide-containing proteins are not widely used, and their potential as color fluorescent
107 biomarkers is not evaluated yet.



108 **Figure 2.** Chemical structure of coelenteramide molecule.

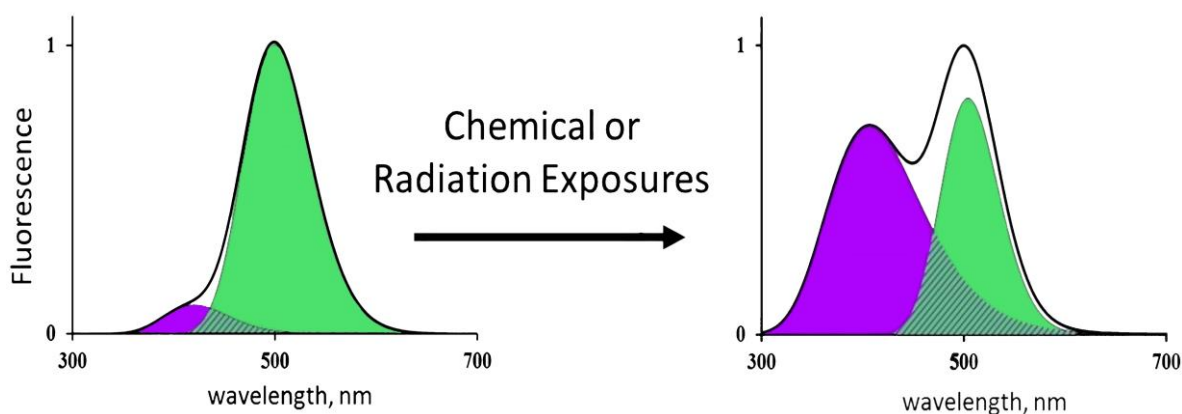
109 Coelenteramide-containing proteins are known to be products of bioluminescent reactions of
110 marine coelenterates. The reactions are Ca-dependent, and this is a basis for their biomedical
111 application [34-35]. Biochemical and photophysical mechanisms of the bioluminescence reactions
112 [36-41] and spectral characteristics of their products - coelenteramide-containing proteins [42-49] are
113 under intensive investigations now.

114 We suggested application of coelenteramide-containing proteins as simplest bioassay system
115 basing on their ability to change fluorescence color under exposure to chemical toxicants, radiation,
116 and other destructive factors [50]. Peculiarities of this bioassay are concerned with photobiophysical
117 properties of the protein complex. Coelenteramide (CLM) molecule is a photochemically active
118 compound; its photoexcitation initiates a proton transfer out (Figure 3). Fluorescence color of CLM
119 and deprotonated CLM differ (violet and green spectral regions, respectively) (Figures 3,4).



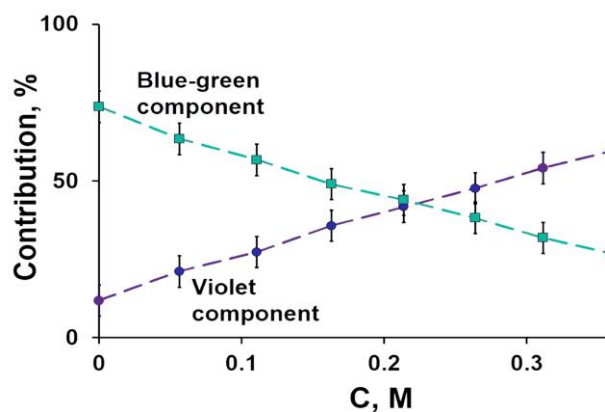
120 **Figure 3.** Chemistry in electron-excited states in coelenteramide molecule. Jablonski diagrams of
 121 two forms of coelenteramide.

122 Any destructive exposures can decrease the efficiency of the photochemical reaction (proton
 123 transfer out) in the protein complex, change contributions of fluorescence components, and hence,
 124 fluorescence color. Therefore, CLM-containing protein based bioassay provides relations of a toxic
 125 effect with a primary physicochemical process – proton transfer. Figure 4 shows schematically a
 126 result of the destructive exposures: chemical or radioactive exposures can change contributions of
 127 colored components to the fluorescence spectra of CLM-containing protein.



128 **Figure 4.** Change of fluorescence spectra of CLM-containing fluorescence proteins exposed to
 129 chemical agents or radiation.

130 Figure 5 presents fluorescent component contributions to CLM-containing protein spectra with
 131 glycerol taken as an example of chemical agent.



132 **Figure 5.** Contributions of spectral components to fluorescence spectra of CLM-containing protein at
 133 different concentrations of glycerol, C [51].

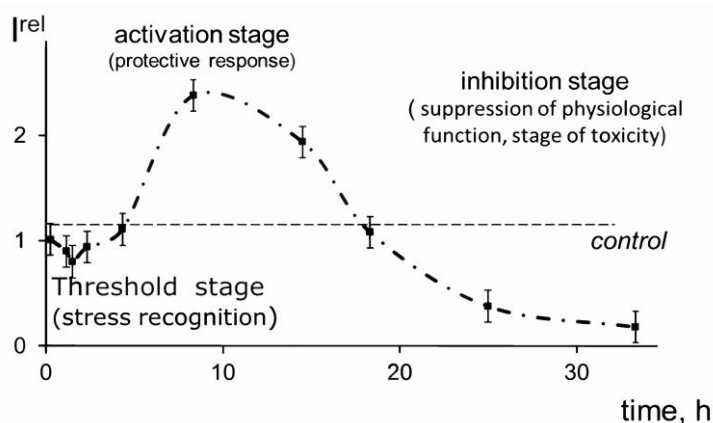
134 Therefore, variations of fluorescence color of CLM-containing proteins are the result of
 135 destructive protein exposures; toxicity monitoring, in this case, is concerned with the changes in
 136 protein structure; the toxicity evaluation takes place via efficiency of primary photochemical
 137 processes of proton transfer. Low-intensity exposures of CLM-containing proteins to radiation or
 138 chemical agents are of fundamental interest.

139 3. Luminescence bioassays as tools for study low-dose radiation effects

140 The intensity of studying radiobiological low-dose effects has been growing since the 70s [52-56],
 141 including effects on microorganisms [57-59]. Radiation hormesis is intensively discussed. The first
 142 radiation hormesis tutorial was written by Luckey in 1980 [60].

143 Luminous marine bacteria have been applied to monitor low-dose radiation effects for about one
 144 decade [13,15]. For this period, effects of alpha- and beta- emitting radionuclides americium-241,
 145 uranium-235+338, and tritium, as well as gamma radiation were investigated [13,15-16,61-63]. It was
 146 shown that the bacterial bioluminescence response to radionuclides americium-241 and tritium
 147 includes three stages: (1) threshold, (2) activation, and (3) inhibition. We have chosen these two
 148 radionuclides for presentation here due to their radioecological significance: both radionuclides are
 149 accumulated in environment now. Tritium is a by-product of a lot of radiochemical reactions in
 150 nuclear industry; americium-241 is a by-product of a plutonium decay with high radiation lifetime
 151 (432,6 years).

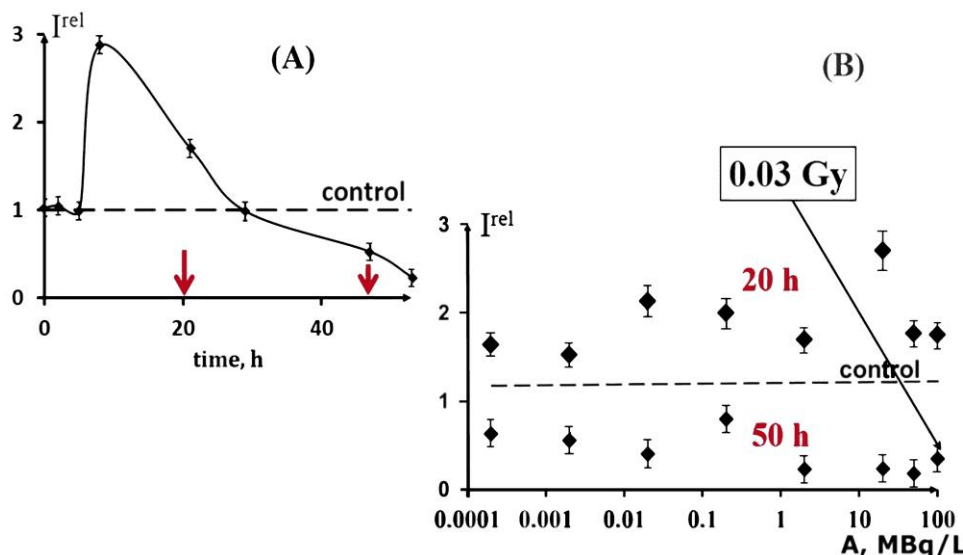
152 Bacterial bioluminescence kinetics in solution of americium-241, alpha-emitting radionuclide of
 153 high specific radioactivity, is presented in Figure 6.



154 **Figure 6.** Bioluminescence kinetics of bacteria in solution of americium-241, 3 kBq/L.

155 Similar kinetic changes were obtained at exposure to beta-emitting radionuclide, tritium
 156 [16,63]. Figure 7A reveals the same three stages in bacterial luminescence response, with activation
 157 included. Hence, activation is a main peculiarity of the response of bacteria to low-dose radiation of
 158 alpha and beta emitting radionuclides - americium-241 and tritium, respectively. The responses can
 159 be discussed in terms of "radiation hormesis", as well as "protective response of organisms".

160 Additionally, independence of bioluminescence bacterial response on tritium activity
 161 concentration was found for low-dose exposures. To demonstrate this peculiarity, the time of
 162 exposure to tritium was fixed 20 and 50 hours, corresponding to activation and inhibition stages of
 163 bioluminescence (Figure 7A). The bioluminescence intensity at different concentrations of tritium is
 164 presented in Figure 7B for 20 and 50 h exposure times. It is seen here that the monotonic
 165 dependence is absent in a wide interval of activity concentrations of tritium – five orders. The result
 166 can be explained in terms of adaptation ability of the bacterial cells. It should be paid attention that
 167 the conventional limit of low-dose interval (0.1 Gy) was not exceeded in this experiment.



168 **Figure 7.** Effect of tritiated water on bioluminescence of bacteria. (A) Bioluminescence kinetics of
 169 bacteria in tritiated water, 2 MBq/L; (B) bioluminescence intensity vs. activity concentration of
 170 tritiated water, A , at 20 and 50 h exposures.

171 Activation of the bacterial bioluminescence by tritium was demonstrated in a series of
 172 experiments. Bi-phasic dependence (activation+ inhibition) was found in [16,63]; and mono-phasic
 173 dependence (only activation) was found in [64-65].

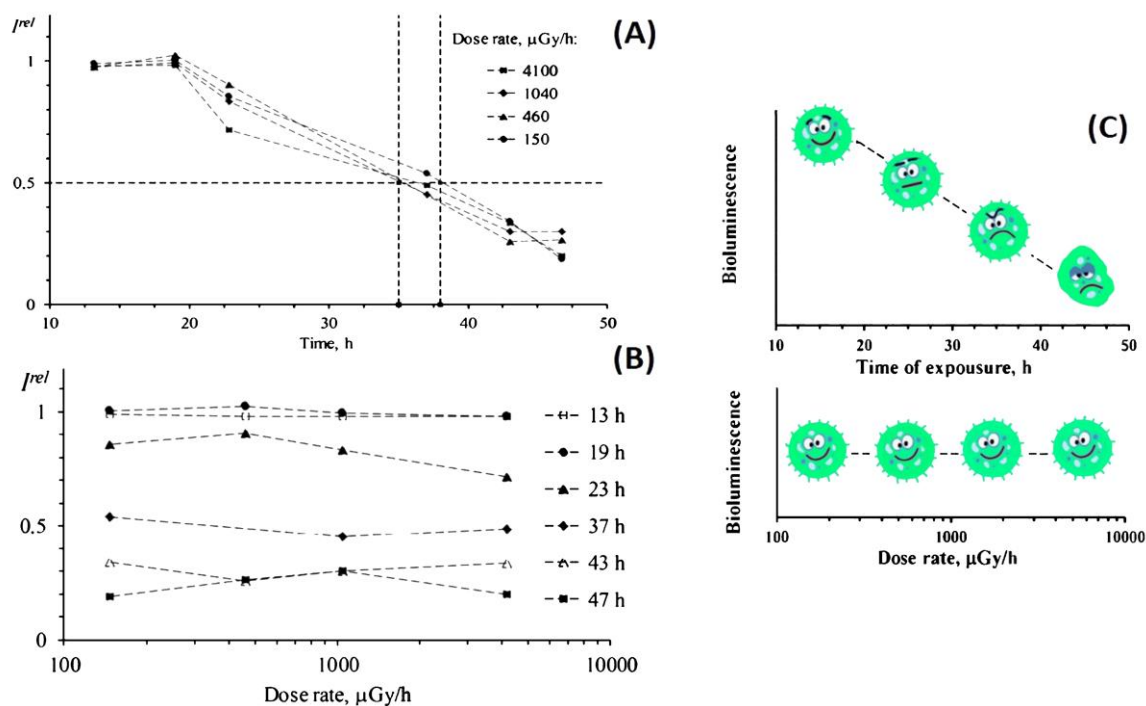
174 To date, there are two hypothetical mechanism that describe radiation hormesis: this
 175 phenomenon is associated with either DNA damage or membrane processes [52,55-56,66-67].
 176 Original approach was applied in [64] to test involvement of genetic changes to activation of the
 177 bacterial bioluminescence by tritium: using tritium labeled films as a solid source of tritium
 178 radiation, the authors demonstrated that tritium activates bacterial luminescence without
 179 penetration to the cells. Additionally, no mutations were found in bacterial DNA (16S rRNA gene
 180 responsible for vital functions of bacterial cells [68] under the low-intensity irradiation of alpha,
 181 beta, and gamma type [65]. A conclusion was made that bioluminescence response is not associated
 182 with mutations in the tested gene. Alternative mechanism of biological regulation should be
 183 considered, which is related to cell membrane processes, water media ionization, and formation of
 184 Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) under low-dose radiation exposures. Recent results [69]
 185 demonstrated that the exposure of marine bacteria to low-intensity irradiation of tritium increases
 186 ROS content in the bacterial environment considerably; and a rise of the ROS content correlates with
 187 intensification of bacterial bioluminescence intensity. These correlations were explained with
 188 "trigger" function of products of tritium decay, signaling role of ROS, and "bystander effect" in the
 189 bacterial suspension.

190 Previously [62], effect of americium-241 on luminous bacterium was attributed to ROS
 191 generated in aqueous solutions as secondary products of the radioactive decay. The effects of
 192 americium-241 and tritium on luminous bacteria were compared in [63] at comparable radiation
 193 doses, higher impact of alpha-irradiation of americium-241 was found. The result was related with
 194 different energy of radioactive decay of americium-241 and tritium (5637.8 and 18.6 keV [70],
 195 respectively) and much higher ROS concentration in americium-241 water solutions as compared to
 196 tritiated water. The authors discuss [62] a biological role of ROS generated in aqueous solutions at
 197 low-dose exposures.

198 Diffuse reflectance fourier-transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopic studies [71] showed that the
 199 alpha-radioactivity effect of americium-241 "to be transmitted by live cells mainly to the bacterial
 200 bioluminescence enzyme system, with negligible structural or compositional changes in cellular
 201 macrocomponents."

202 For the first time, bioluminescence of bacteria was used to monitor toxicity of gamma-rays in
 203 [72]; effects of average and high doses were under investigation. Exposure of luminous bacteria to

204 low-dose (≤ 250 mGy) gamma radiation was studied in [61]. Dose-effect dependencies were of
 205 stochastic character here, however, the dependencies: exposure time-effect were evident (Figure
 206 8A). Bioluminescence activation was not found under low-dose gamma-radiation exposure; the
 207 bioluminescence kinetics corresponded threshold model (Figure 8A), which is supposed as a
 208 particular case of hormesis model [2,5]. Probably, lower ionization ability of gamma rays (as
 209 compared with alpha and beta particles) is responsible for reducing the bacterial adaptive response.



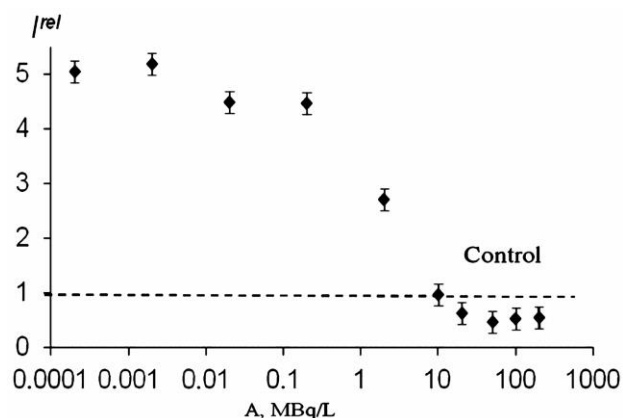
210 **Figure 8.** Bioluminescence intensity (I^{rel}) of *P. phosphoreum* exposed to gamma radiation, ^{137}Cs , 20°C.
 211 An error for I^{rel} was 10% [61]. (A) Bioluminescence intensity vs. exposure time; (B) bioluminescence
 212 intensity vs. dose rate; (C) schematic presentation of the dependence of bioluminescence intensity
 213 on exposure time and dose rate.

214 Independence on dose rate of the gamma irradiation was found at the experimental conditions,
 215 Figure 8B, similar to low-dose effect of tritium (Figure 7B). The schematic dependency of
 216 bioluminescence intensity on exposure time and dose rate is presented in Figure 8C.

217 One more finding for gamma radiation effects was demonstrated in [61]: lowering
 218 temperature (from 20°C down to 10°C and 5°C) decreased sensitivity of the bacteria cells to
 219 low-dose gamma-radiation; bioluminescence inhibition was not observed at 10°C and 5°C. This
 220 result was generally explained by the temperature dependence of metabolic processes including
 221 radiation-induced ones.

222 Hence, experiments with bacterial cells demonstrated independence of their bioluminescence
 223 response on intensity of irradiation (activity concentration for alpha/beta radionuclides
 224 americium-241/tritium, and dose rate for gamma radiation) under low-dose exposures; however,
 225 time dependence was evident corresponding to hormesis (for alpha/beta radionuclides
 226 americium-241/tritium) or threshold (for gamma radiation) models. Independency of the response
 227 on irradiation intensity (1) and hormesis/threshold type of response vs. time (2) can be considered
 228 as a basis for “cellular adaptive response”.

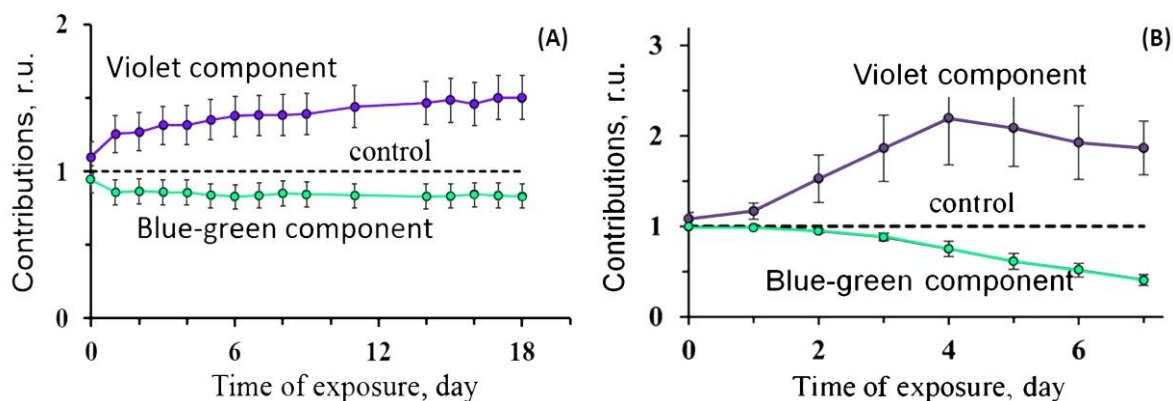
229 The question is whether these two peculiarities are inherent in a biological system of lower
 230 level of organization – enzymatic reactions. Effects of alpha- and beta- emitting radionuclides
 231 (americium-241 and tritium) on bioluminescence system of coupled enzyme reactions catalyzed by
 232 bacterial luciferase and NADH:FMN-oxidoreductase were studied in [15-16]. Bioluminescence
 233 activation and inhibition were observed. Monotonic dependence on concentration of radionuclides
 234 was found, too. An example of this dependence is shown in Figure 9.



235 **Figure 9.** Bioluminescent intensity of enzyme system, I^{rel} , vs. specific radioactivity of tritiated
 236 water, A [16].

237 Paper [63] compared rates of redox processes exposed to americium-241 and tritium: the
 238 NADH auto-oxidation rates were much higher in highly-diluted americium-241 solutions, thus
 239 contributing to inhibition of NADH-dependent enzymatic processes. This result was compared to
 240 ROS concentration in these solutions; a conclusion was made about ROS involvement to the redox
 241 transformations of biological low-weight molecules under the low-intensity radiation exposures.

242 The simplest luminescent bioassay based on CLM-containing protein ("discharged obelin"
 243 from *Obelia longissima*) did not demonstrate even activation stage under low-intensity exposures.
 244 Figure 10 presents time-courses of colored fluorescence contributions under exposure to beta (A)
 245 and gamma (B) irradiation according to [73-74]. The increase of contributions of violet component in
 246 both cases is an evidence of proton transfer inhibition in the excited CLM-apoprotein complex, due
 247 to the destructive effect of the low-intensity radiation (see Section 2).



248 **Figure 10.** Relative contributions of spectral components to fluorescence spectra of CLM-containing
 249 protein ("discharged obelin" from *Obelia longissima*) exposed to (A) tritiated water, 200 MBq/L [73];
 250 (B) gamma radiation, ^{137}Cs , 2 mGy/h, 20°C [74].

251 Dependence of the response of CLM-containing protein to low-intensity gamma radiation on
 252 temperature was demonstrated in [74] as well.

253 Hence, simplest bioassay systems (based on enzymatic reaction and physicochemical processes
 254 in protein complex) show lower ability for adaptive response to low-dose radioactive exposures. In
 255 contrast to bacterial cells, they can demonstrate dependence on intensity of irradiation or absence of
 256 the activation stage in the course of chronic exposure. However, a lack of experimental results does
 257 not allow making definite conclusions. The study should be developed in this direction.

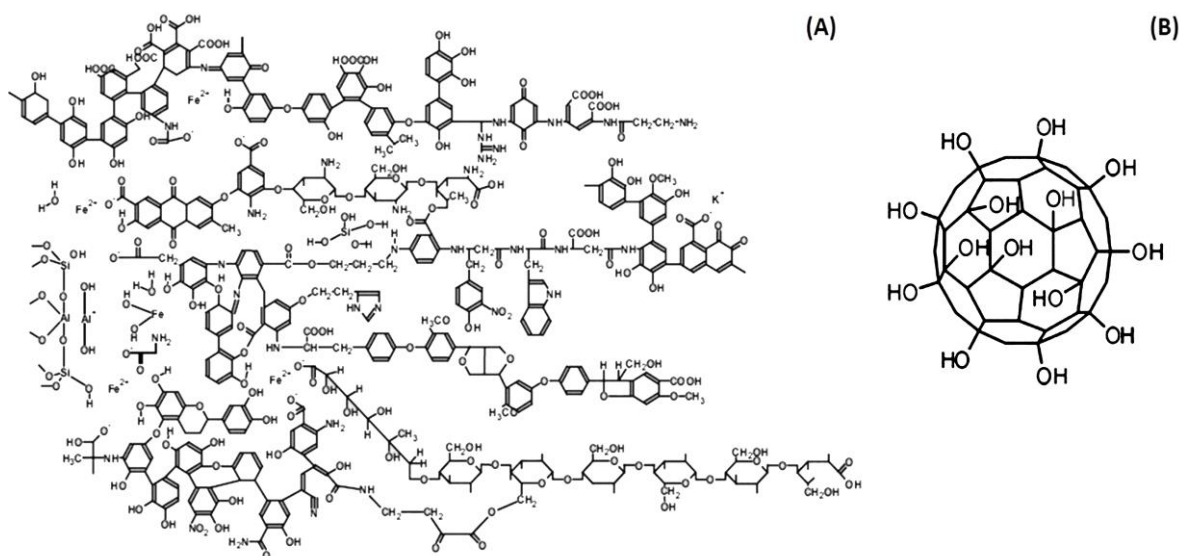
258 4. Low-concentration effects of bioactive compounds: antioxidant activity via bioluminescence 259 bioassays

260 Investigation of low-concentration effects of bioactive compounds has been developed from
 261 60th of the previous century [52,75-77] Hormesis concept progresses to describe intensification of
 262 physiological functions of organisms under low-concentration exposures [2-4,76-79].

263 Bioluminescence bioassays based on luminous marine bacteria and their enzymes are excellent
 264 tools for study low-concentration effects due to their features mentioned before:

- 265 1. high rates of test procedure which
 - 266 • provide statistical reliability of the bioassay results and
 - 267 • exclude genetic level of analysis and appeal to biochemical, chemical and physicochemical
 - 268 processes in cells;
- 269 2. possibility to compare effects of bioactive compounds at different organization levels – cellular
 270 and enzymatic.

271 The bioassays based on luminous marine bacterium and bacterial enzymes were used to study
 272 antioxidant properties of the bioactive compounds of natural and artificial origination. Humic
 273 substances and fullerlenols were chosen as examples of these compounds, Figure 11. Humic
 274 substances are products of natural oxidative transformation of organic matter in soils and sediments,
 275 attenuators of toxicity in natural water bodies and soils. Fullerlenols are specific allotropic form of
 276 carbon, nanosized polyhydroxylated water-soluble derivatives of fullerenes, bioactive compounds,
 277 and perspective pharmaceutical agents. Hypothetical structures of humic substances and fullerlenol
 278 are presented in Figure 11. Antioxidant activity of humic substances was studied in [80-84] and
 279 fullerlenols – in [84-87].

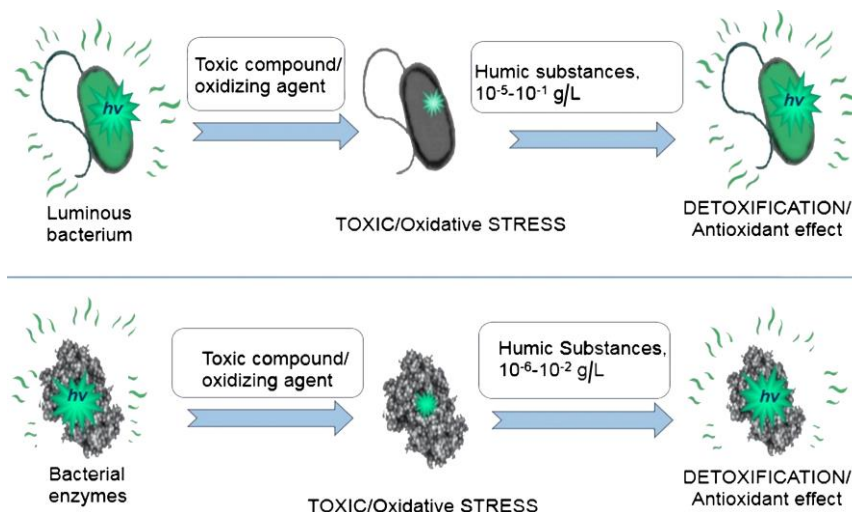


280 **Figure 11.** Hypothetical structure of bioactive compounds: A –fragment of humic substances [88], B –
 281 fullerlenol C-60.

282 Cellular and enzymatic assays were used to evaluate a General Toxicity (GT) under conditions
 283 of the oxidative stress; this stress was modeled in the solutions of exogenous organic or inorganic
 284 oxidizers (1,4-benzoquinone or potassium ferricyanide, respectively). Additionally, enzymatic
 285 bioassay was shown to be specific to oxidizers [25,89]; it can be used to monitor an oxidative toxicity
 286 (OxT) of the solutions. This toxicity type characterizes the redox properties of toxic compounds,
 287 while the other type of toxicity, general toxicity (GT) mentioned before, integrates all the interactions
 288 of toxic compounds with bioassay system: redox reactions, non-polar and polar interactions, so on.
 289 The GT is concerned with suppression of maximal bioluminescence intensity, while the OxT uses a
 290 specific kinetic parameter, induction period of bioluminescence. The latter appears in the presence of

291 exogenous oxidizers, depending on their redox potential and concentration [25]. Justification for GT
 292 and OxT application to evaluate toxicity of bioactive compounds is presented in [80-87].

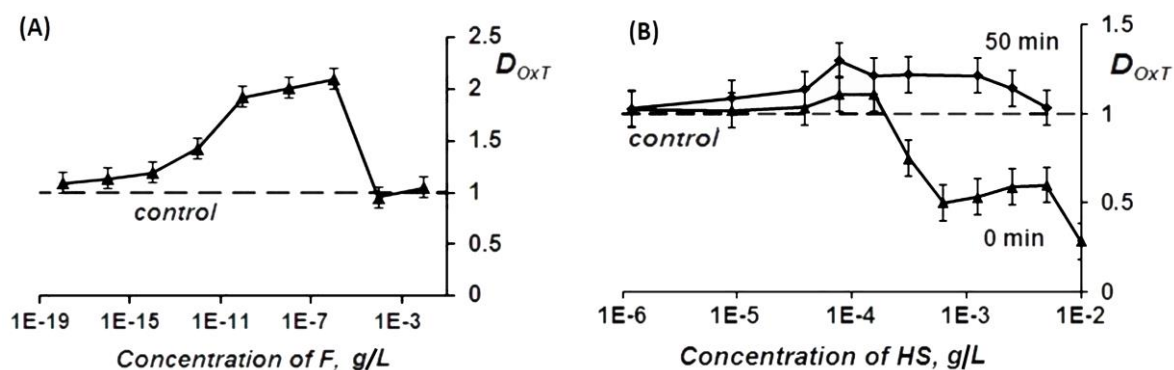
293 Principle of antioxidant efficiency evaluation is presented in Figure 12 for bacteria-based
 294 (upper line) and enzyme-based (lower line) bioassays; humic substances are chosen here as an
 295 example of an antioxidant agent.



296 **Figure 12.** Principle of antioxidant efficiency evaluation using bacteria-based (upper line) and
 297 enzyme-based (lower line) bioluminescent assays.

298 Antioxidant efficiency of bioactive compounds was characterized by antioxidant coefficients
 299 D_{GT} or D_{OxT} , corresponding to GT or OxT monitoring. Values of $D_{GT} > 1$ or $D_{OxT} > 1$ revealed
 300 antioxidant effects of the bioactive compounds.

301 Paper [86] compares biological activity of carbon nano-structures of natural and artificial
 302 origination, i.e. humic substances and fullerenols. The representative of the group of fullerenols,
 303 $C_{60}O_y(OH)_x$ where $y+x = 20-22$, was chosen. Both bioassays were used to monitor toxicity and
 304 antioxidant activity of the bioactive compounds. Toxic concentrations of humic substances and
 305 fullereneol, inhibiting bioluminescence of the assay systems were determined and excluded from
 306 further antioxidant experiments. Antioxidant coefficients of the bioactive compounds and ranges of
 307 their active concentrations were determined in solutions of model oxidizers. Figure 13 presents an
 308 example of dependencies of antioxidant coefficients D_{OxT} on concentration of fullereneol, F (A) and
 309 humic substances, HS (B).



310 **Figure 13.** Antioxidant coefficients D_{OxT} of fullereneol, F (A), and humic substances, HS (B) in model
 311 solution of organic oxidizer (1,4-benzoquinone) [86]. Time of incubation of humic substances with
 312 oxidizer (0 min and 50 min) is indicated in Figure (B). Enzymatic assay.

313 Both *HS* and *F* demonstrated low-concentration antioxidant activity ($D_{OxT} > 1$); however,
314 quantitative antioxidant characteristics were different: fullereneol' D_{OxT} -values were higher, its
315 antioxidant activity covered wider concentration range as seen from Figure 13. Antioxidant activity
316 of *HS* was found to be time-dependent, Figure 13(B), while the *F*' antioxidant effect showed
317 independency on time. The *HS*' antioxidant effect did not depend on amphiphilic characteristics of
318 the environment (D_{OxT} -values were 1.3 in the solutions of inorganic and organic oxidizers), while
319 D_{OxT} of *F* was maximal in solutions organic oxidizer ($D_{OxT} = 2.0$). The difference in effects of bioactive
320 compounds in solutions of organic and inorganic oxidizers can be concerned with their
321 hydrophobic interactions in enzymes or cellular membranes. Changes in fluidity and structural
322 organization of lipid bilayers in hydrophobic fragments of membranes by fullereneol F-60 were
323 previously reported in [90].

324 In [86], the differences in toxic and antioxidant effects of fullereneol and humic substances were
325 attributed to the structure of these compounds. Non-rigidity of humic macromolecules determines
326 their diffusion restrictions, which result in higher toxicity and time-dependence of their antioxidant
327 coefficients. The ability to decrease ROS content in water solutions probably contributes to higher
328 toxicity of humates, as well. Non-rigidity and polyfunctionality can be responsible for unification of
329 humate' properties in solutions of oxidizers of different hydrophilic/hydrophobic characteristics.
330 Low-concentration antioxidant activity was explained by catalytic redox activity of π -fragments of
331 the bioactive structures.

332 Antioxidant property of highly diluted solutions of fullerenols was attributed [85] to hormesis
333 phenomenon. The bacteria-based and enzyme-based assays demonstrated similar peculiarities of the
334 antioxidant processes: "(1) ultralow concentrations of fullerenols were active (*ca* 10^{-17} – 10^{-4} and
335 10^{-17} – 10^{-5} g/L, respectively), (2) no monotonic dependence of detoxification efficiency on fullereneol
336 concentrations was observed, and (3) detoxification of organic oxidizer solutions was more effective
337 than that of the inorganic oxidizer". The antioxidant properties were concerned with adaptive
338 cellular response under low-dose exposures. The sequence analysis of 16S ribosomal RNA was
339 carried out for long-term exposures; mutations in bacterial DNA were not revealed. The conclusion
340 was suggested that hydrophobic interactions might be involved to the antioxidant mechanism.

341 Biological efficiency of low and ultralow concentrations of hydrated fullerenes was studied
342 and discussed earlier in [91-92]. This effect was attributed to the fullerene' ability to regulate
343 dynamic structure of aqueous media and to adjust "redox processes (especially those involving
344 oxygen) in aqueous systems". Earlier [93], a role of aqueous media in fullereneol' antiradical activity
345 was discussed. Probably, ROS in aqueous media are able to contribute to the antioxidant effect of
346 fullerenols.

347 In [84,87] the antioxidant activity of fullerenols was related with modification of their surface by
348 oxygen substituents, as well as presence of exo- or endo-hedral metal atoms. Difference in the
349 antioxidant activity of these fullerenols was explained through their electron donor/acceptor
350 properties and different catalytic activity.

351 Paper [81] studied combined influence of humic substances (HS) and salts of aliovalent metals
352 on the bioluminescent assay systems, the rates of biochemical reactions and bacterial ultrastructure
353 were analyzed. The detoxifying/antioxidant effects of HS were explained [81-83] by: (1) "a decrease
354 of free metal content in water solutions under metal-HS binding; (2) increase of biochemical reaction
355 rates in a bioluminescent assay system under HS effect; (3) enhancement of mucous layers on cell
356 surface as a response to unfavorable impact of toxicants. Detoxifying mechanisms (2) and (3) reveal
357 the active role of bioassay systems in detoxification processes".

358 As an outlook:

359 1. Bioactive compounds can produce toxic (inhibiting) and antioxidant effects. Toxic effect of
360 humic substances was found at higher concentrations (>0.1 g/L for bacterial assay and >0.01 g/L for
361 enzymatic assay), an antioxidant effect was found at lower concentrations. All fullerenols showed
362 toxic effects at higher concentrations: from >0.01 to >0.001 g/L; their antioxidant effect was found at
363 low and ultralow concentrations: *ca* 10^{-17} – 10^{-4} and 10^{-17} – 10^{-5} g/L for bacteria-based and enzyme-based

364 assays, respectively. The range of active fullereneol' concentrations might correspond to several tens
365 of molecules per liter.

366 2. No monotonic dependencies of antioxidant coefficients on concentration of bioactive
367 compounds were found in a wide concentration range (up to 15-17 orders for fullereneols).

368 3. Both bacterial and enzymatic assays demonstrated antioxidant effect of bioactive compounds.
369 This result reveals role of biochemical and physicochemical processes in low-concentration
370 antioxidant effects of bioactive compounds.

371 4. Cellular and enzymatic bioluminescent assays showed that detoxification of solutions of
372 organic oxidizers was more effective than inorganic oxidizers, with this indicating the importance of
373 hydrophobic interactions in the antioxidant mechanism.

374 Hence, similar to low-dose radiation effects, antioxidant effects of bioactive compounds
375 (fullereneols and humic substances) showed (a) positive response of the luminous bacteria and
376 their enzymes to low-concentration exposure and (b) absence of linear concentration-effect
377 dependencies.

378 5. Conclusions

379 Luminescence bioassay systems can provide non-genetic approach to low-intensity exposures
380 due to high rate of registration of luminescence response. Possibility to study biochemical, chemical
381 and physicochemical (polar, apolar, hydrophobic) processes using luminescence signaling is a
382 contribution to exposomic concept [28-31].

383 As we assume, the biochemical, chemical and physicochemical processes have not attract, until
384 now, much attention in frames of hormesis conception. However, compensatory effects can be
385 strictly studied in terms of chemical equilibrium, by analyzing the individual equilibrium constants
386 in complex systems of coupled chemical reactions. The compensatory effects can be considered, in
387 this case, as a result of equilibrium disturbing followed by concentrational reconstruction of the
388 whole system, streaming to the new equilibrium with the new equilibrium concentrations. While
389 streaming to the new balance, fluctuations of concentrations are possible, as well as involvement of
390 new processes to the system of coupled reactions, with this providing "over-compensative"
391 response to the exposures.

392 The results presented in this review reveal the dependences of the biological response on time
393 of exposure to low-intensity factors, as well its independencies on radioactivity or concentration.
394 Uncertainty of dose-response relations was paid attention, too. Differences in dependencies of
395 luminescence responses on time and exposure intensity should be analyzed in detail at molecular
396 level in further experiments.

397 **Funding:** This work was supported by PRAN-32, Program: "Nanostructures: physics, chemistry, biology,
398 technological basis"; RFBR N 18-29-19003; RFBR-Krasnoyarsk Regional Foundation N 18-44-240004,
399 18-44-242002.

400 **Conflicts of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the writing of the
401 manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

402 Abbreviations

CLM	Coelenteramide
F	Fullereneol
FTIR	Fourier-transform infrared
GT	General Toxicity
HS	Humic Substances
NADH	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide
OxT	Oxidative Toxicity
ROS	Reactive oxygen species

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