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- 2 **Diethylnitrosamine in Male Balb/c Mice**
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Abstract

 Kombucha is a fermented tea beverage, made by the addition of symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeasts (SCOBY). This study utilized Javanese turmeric in a concentration of 0.4% (w/v) as a kombucha fermentation medium and evaluated its immunomodulatory activity, compared to non-fermented Javanese turmeric beverage. 42 healthy male 21 BalB/C mice (20-30 g, 2-3 weeks old) were divided randomly into five groups with seven mice each. The groups were fed: Normal diet; normal diet + Javanese turmeric kombucha; normal diet + diethylnitrosamine (DEN); DEN + non- fermented Javanese turmeric and DEN + Javanese turmeric kombucha. Kombuchas and non-fermented Javanese 24 turmeric were given at dose of 0.3 mL/20 g BW/day. The mice were injected with 100 mg/kg DEN intraperitoneally. 25 The spleen was collected and analyzed for CD4⁺, tumor necrosis factor α (TNF- α ⁺), interleukin-6 (IL-6⁺), CD8⁺, 26 CD11b⁺, and IL-10⁺. The statistical analyses included ANOVA and the Fischer's exact test. The percentage of CD8⁺, CD11b⁺, and CD8⁺ IL-10⁺ increased significantly (p <0.05) among DEN-induced groups, Javanese turmeric kombucha and these values were higher than non-fermented Javanese turmeric. These findings verify that Javanese turmeric kombucha possessed better immunomodulatory activity compared to non-fermented Javanese turmeric. **Keywords:** Kombucha, Javanese turmeric, fermentation, immunomodulatory, diethylnitrosamine

1. Introduction

 Inflammation is one of the body's defence mechanisms to return its tissues to their initial state. The existence of pathogen or faulty cells is recognized by lymphocytes B and T, causing the cells to signal other immune systems by releasing cytokines and interferons to resolve the damage [1]. However, if the damage persisted, prolonged unresolved inflammation could become chronic and induce fatal consequences to the host organism, therefore it should be prevented. The body provides its self-defence mechanism through the existence of anti-inflammatory mediators that limit exaggerated immune responses [2]. These anti-inflammatory mediators are produced by immune cells. Therefore, immunomodulatory agents, compounds that could modulate immune cells and responses, are needed to strengthen anti-inflammatory mediators to combat inflammation [3].

 Javanese turmeric is an Indonesian local rhizome that is mostly used for wound healing, boosting immunity, and as an anti-inflammatory and anti-carcinogenic ingredient [4]. Javanese turmeric extract is known to strongly reduce pro-inflammatory cytokine gene expressions such as tumor necrosis factor α (TNF- α^+), interleukin-6 (IL-6⁺), IL-1β, and C-reactive protein (CRP) in the liver, adipose tissue, and muscle [5]. Its functional activity is contributed by its 46 biologically active compounds such as xanthorrhizol, curcuminoid, flavonoid, ar-turmerone, α -turmerone, curcumene, bisacurone, curlone, lactone-germacrone, and germacrone [6]. However, the bioactivity of these compounds is suboptimal due to their binding with plant matrix and other components [7]. To release and enhance these bioactive compounds, processing steps such as fermentation can be carried out.

 Kombucha tea is a beverage fermented by symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeasts (SCOBY) which has been gaining popularity owing to its functional properties, one of them being its anti-inflammatory property [8]. Kombucha has been proven to inhibit 5-lipoxygenase activity, an enzyme that is involved with fatty acid conversion to 53 leukotrienes, which induces inflammation [9]. Kombucha has also been found to reduce the levels of TNF- α^+ , IL-6⁺, and IL-1β, as well as restore T cell levels and macrophages in lipopolysaccharide-challenged mice [10]. Recent research on kombucha has led to the utilization of other bioactive materials [11-18]. This study proposes the usage of Javanese turmeric as a kombucha fermentation medium to further intensify its immunomodulatory activity. The synergistic relation between kombucha microorganisms and Javanese turmeric active compounds is expected to boost Javanese turmeric immunomodulatory function.

88 days and weighing was done once every 3 days. Mice were given Javanese turmeric kombucha and Javanese turmeric 89 non-fermented beverage once a day on a regular basis for 3 weeks at a dose of 0.3 mL/20 g BW/day. The dose was applied in accordance with the average human dose of kombucha, which is 118 mL/day. Based on the data, the dose of kombucha for mice was calculated by multiplying 118 ml/day with 0.0026 (body surface area ratio convertible factor). The mice were given a standard diet and water ad libitum during the experiment. This study was approved by 93 the Brawijaya University Research Ethics Committee (Ethical Clearance No. 109-KEP-UB-2021).

 DEN is an extremely potent liver carcinogen in mice and it was introduced intraperitoneally (100 mg/kg) once a week for 2 weeks. During two (2) weeks of induction, Javanese turmeric kombucha and non-fermented Javanese turmeric beverage were also administered. One week of incubation was completed after the induction. Javanese turmeric kombucha and Javanese turmeric non-fermented beverage were still be given during the incubation period. The diet arrangement is detailed in **Table 1**.

 After the treatments, the mice fasted for 1 day and scarified 24 hours after fasting. Scarification was performed 100 with 0.2 ml ketamine injection (0.1 mg/g BW). The spleen was taken for immunomodulatory analysis with a flow cytometer. The spleen was chosen because of its important role in mediating the immune response. It also ensures a protective response from the immune system towards harmful stimuli. The proliferation of splenocytes (mixture of various immune cells, such as T cells, B cells, dendritic cells, and natural killer cells) directly indicates cellular 104 immunity [22]. The parameters analyzed were $CD4^+$, TNF- α^+ , IL- 6^+ , CD 8^+ , CD11b⁺, and IL-10⁺.

2.4 Statistical analysis

 Statistical analysis was carried out by comparing all the groups data. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with Minitab 109 18.0 was employed in data analysis. Results that showed significant difference (p<0.05) were followed by Fisher's exact test.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Characteristics of kombucha versus non-fermented beverage

 The therapeutic properties of Javanese turmeric kombucha was investigated and compared to non-fermented Javanese turmeric beverage in the treatment for mice. According to the analysis conducted and reported by Zubaidah and 118 collaborators [19], the non-fermented Javanese turmeric beverage (8.17 ± 0.01) had a much lower pH value after 119 kombucha fermentation (3.45 \pm 0.02). This correlates to the formation of titratable acid (0.21 \pm 0.02%) previously not detected in the Javanese turmeric beverage before kombucha fermentation. Total microbial cells in Javanese turmeric 121 kombucha were 1.45×10^8 CFU/mL. Kombucha fermentation was found to enhance the total phenolic content by 58.67% and improve Javanese turmeric beverage's antioxidant activity by 38.93%.

 The bioactive compounds of Javanese turmeric beverage and Javanese turmeric kombucha were also identified using LC/MS which tracked down compound changes due to kombucha fermentation. The results are shown in **Table 2.**

 Javanese turmeric kombucha possessed more identified bioactive compounds compared to non-fermented Javanese turmeric. Organic acids (acetic acid, carbonic acid, pyruvic acid, glucuronic acid), D-saccharic acid-1,4- lactone (DSL), acetate, conjugated curcuminoids, and niacinamide were present due to microbial activity in kombucha fermentation. According to Martínez-Leal and collaborators [39], glucuronic acid was produced by yeasts and *Gluconoacetobacter sp.* This acid was conjugated with curcuminoid during fermentation and formed curcumin glucuronide. Tetrahydrocurcumin (THC) glucuronide was also found in Javanese turmeric kombucha due to lactic 132 acid bacteria (LAB) activity [40, 41]. THC-glucuronide was formed due to the reduction of curcumin and conjugation with glucuronic acid. Curcumin monoacetate was formed due to *Candida* spp. lipase enzyme. Esparan and collaborators [42] mentioned that *Candida* spp. lipase catalyzed the conjugation of acetic ions with -OH moieties of curcumin. Yeasts and bacteria also produced niacinamide during fermentation [9].

 More variety of terpenoids were detected in kombucha compared to the non-fermented beverage. Xanthorrhizol was the only terpenoid found in the non-fermented beverage, while xanthorrhizol and bisacurol were detected in kombucha. Bisacurol naturally exists in Javanese turmeric [7]. However, this compound was only identified in kombucha. It is predicted that microbes released bisacurol from plant matrix or other compounds. This ability enabled 140 bisacurol to exist in its free form and became easier to be detected [43].

3.2 Immunomodulatory Activity of Javanese Turmeric Kombucha

 The immune response analysis was conducted on the T cells' adaptive immune response from the spleen. The T cells 145 which were used as parameters are CD4⁺ and CD8⁺. TNF- α ⁺ and IL-6⁺ were used as the inflammatory indicators, 146 while CD11b⁺ and IL-10⁺ were used as the anti-inflammatory parameters. The results of the analysis are presented in **Table 3.**

148 The result of TNF- α^+ analysis showed a significant difference between the normal diet group and the DEN + 149 normal diet group ($p \le 0.05$). There were no significant differences on the result of IL-6⁺ analysis, although an increase 150 of IL-6⁺ was found in the normal diet + DEN group. The introduction of DEN increased TNF- α^+ . This proved that 151 inflammation did occur. TNF- α^+ and IL-6⁺ are pro-inflammatory cytokines that are responsible for the inflammatory signalling pathway. These cytokines were released in order to increase the amount of T helper cells (Th cells), cytotoxic cells, lymphocyte B, or other immune cells in the problematic site [1]. Between the groups, the normal diet $+$ DEN group possessed the highest percentage of CD4⁺ TNF- α^+ . DEN is a toxicant that undergoes biotransformation in the liver. This process resulted in reactive intermediates that induced DNA methylation, which subsequently induced depurination and guanine transversion into thymine [44]. If the cell is unable to repair itself due to DNA structural changes, cells are considered damaged and the immune system will be recruited to resolve the problem. It was reported that DEN induced the activation of macrophages and neutrophils. This activation was followed by the 159 production of pro-inflammatory cytokines such as IL-6⁺, IL-8, IL-1 β , TNF- α^+ , CCL2, COX-2, and CCL20, causing inflammation [45]. However, as the analysis was performed 14 days after the last induction, it was predicted that the 161 mice's immune system was beginning to resolve the inflammation in the given time. Thus, the data of IL- 6^+ did not 162 show any significant difference $(p>0.05)$.

163 Javanese turmeric kombucha and Javanese turmeric beverage showed lower percentages of $CD4+TNF-\alpha^+$ and CD4+ IL-6+ compared to normal diet + DEN. This meant that Javanese turmeric beverage and Javanese turmeric kombucha were able to reduce the inflammation of DEN-induced mice. Javanese turmeric contained xanthorrhizol and calebin-A. These compounds are known for their anti-inflammatory activities. Xanthorrhizol was able to suppress the phosphorylation of c-Jun N-terminal kinase (JNK) in the MAPK signalling pathway [28]. Thus, it prevented the transcription of COX-iNOS, c-fos, and p50, which then inhibited the binding of NF-κB and AP-1 with DNA and lowered inflammation. Calebin-A lowered the regulation of TNF-α, which consequently prevented the NF-κB activation [26]. Calebin-A also non selectively inhibited COX, an enzyme that contributes to inflammation [27].

171 The results also showed that anti-inflammatory parameters noted the immunomodulatory activity of the 172 treatments. The percentage of $CD8^+$ CD11b⁺ and $CD8^+$ IL-10⁺ significantly differed among groups (p<0.05). The 173 induction of Javanese turmeric kombucha increased CD8+ CD11b+ significantly, with the normal diet + Javanese 174 turmeric kombucha and DEN + Javanese turmeric kombucha groups reaching the highest percentages $1.46 \pm 0.04\%$ 175 and $1.05 \pm 0.20\%$ respectively. Similar results are reported with CD8⁺ IL-10⁺, where adding Javanese turmeric 176 beverage and kombucha increased the $CD8^+$ IL-10⁺ percentage significantly (p>0.05). The CD8⁺ IL-10⁺ analysis is 177 illustrated in **Fig. 1.**

178 Both $CD8^+ \text{CD}11b^+$ and $CD8^+$ and IL-10⁺, showed the same trends, where normal diet and DEN + normal diet 179 showed the least percentage of $CD11b^+$ and IL-10⁺, while Javanese turmeric beverage and kombucha showed higher 180 percentage. CD11b⁺ is an integrin family member which is highly expressed on monocytes, macrophages, neutrophils, 181 dendritic cells (DCs), natural killer cells (NK cells), and subsets of lymphocyte B and T cells. Higher CD11b⁺ is 182 associated with higher IL-10⁺ production which can prevent T-cell activation and subsequently reduce pro-183 inflammatory cytokines [46]. The high percentage of $CD8⁺$ that could bind into CD11b⁺ indicated that there was a 184 high amount of specific immune cells on the site. The normal diet + Javanese turmeric kombucha group showed 185 significantly higher ($p<0.05$) percentages of CD11b⁺ and IL-10⁺ compared to the normal diet group. This proved that 186 Javanese turmeric kombucha stimulated the production of specific immune cells. The existence of CD11b⁺ also 187 increased the production of IL-10⁺, which might inhibit inflammation.

188 The normal diet + DEN group showed the lowest percentages of CD11b+ and IL-10+ (0.33 \pm 0.20% and 0.48 \pm 189 0.19% respectively]. This indicated that there were fewer specific immune cells on the inflammatory site to combat 190 inflammation. Consequently, the number of pro-inflammatory cytokines was higher in the DEN + normal diet group. 191 While DEN decreased the percentage of CD11b⁺, Javanese turmeric beverage and Javanese turmeric kombucha 192 increased the percentages of CD8⁺ CD11b⁺. Javanese turmeric possessed curcuminoid fractions, crude 193 polysaccharides (glucose, galactose, arabinose, xylose, mannose, rhamnose), germacrone, curzerenone, curcumenol, 194 and xanthorrhizol that may reduce proinflammatory cytokines such as IL-1β, NF- κ B, and TNF- α^+ [4]. Javanese 195 turmeric also possessed calebin-A, a curcumin derivative that is able to lower the regulation of TNF- α^+ [26].

196 This study proved that fermentation into kombucha increases Javanese turmeric immunomodulatory activity. 197 Javanese turmeric kombucha was able to increase the percentage of CD11b⁺ and IL-10⁺ in comparison to non-198 fermented Javanese turmeric beverage. It is also important to note that the CD11b⁺ and IL-10⁺ percentages of DEN +

 Javanese turmeric kombucha group were not significantly different from normal diet + Javanese turmeric kombucha. This showed that Javanese turmeric kombucha strengthened specific immune cells and increased anti-inflammatory mediators. Javanese turmeric kombucha might have helped reduce inflammation in DEN-induced groups and restore the system into a normal condition. In accordance with the findings, fermentation of Javanese turmeric into ciders by 103 the addition of *Acetobacter xylinum* was able to downregulate the gene expression of IL-1β, TNF-α⁺, and chemokines and inhibit inflammation better than curcuminoid fractions [34].

 Javanese turmeric kombucha increased immunomodulatory function due to bioactive compounds and enzymes [such as reductase and cellulase] that were released during fermentation [47, 48]. THC, a metabolite of curcumin, was formed after curcumin reduction with reductases from SCOBY as its catalyst. THC underwent glucuronidation catalyzed by conjugative enzymes to produce THC-glucuronide [39, 49, 50]. THC-glucuronide 209 exhibits competent activity in the inhibition of TNF- $α⁺$, IL-6⁺, and NF-κB translocation to the nucleus [51]. Glucuronidation also produced curcumin glucuronide, another curcumin metabolite with anti-inflammatory properties [39]. These metabolites enhanced the immunomodulatory activity of Javanese turmeric kombucha.

4. Conclusions

Kombucha fermentation enhanced the immunomodulatory activity of Javanese turmeric due to the release of bioactive

216 compounds (THC-glucuronide). Javanese turmeric kombucha produced superior outcomes in reducing CD4⁺ TNF- α^+

217 and strengthening $CD8^+$ CD11b⁺ and CD8⁺ IL-10⁺ compared to non-fermented Javanese turmeric.

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- Figure legends
- **Fig. 1** Innate immunomodulatory activity of kombucha: CD8+ IL-10+ macrophage at different treatments: normal
- diet, normal diet + Javanese turmeric kombucha, normal diet + DEN, DEN + Javanese turmeric beverage, and DEN
- + Javanese turmeric kombucha

388 **Table 2** Identified compounds of Non-fermented Javanese Turmeric Beverage and Javanese Turmeric Kombucha with LC/MS

391 **Table 3** Immunomodulatory activity of Javanese Turmeric Kombucha

Treatments	CD4 ⁺ TNF- α ⁺ (%)	$CD4^+$ IL-6 ⁺ (%)	$CD8^+$ CD11b ⁺ (%)	$CD8^+$ IL10 ⁺ (%)
Normal diet	0.06 ± 0.04^b	$0.27 \pm 0.35^{\rm a}$	$0.48 \pm 0.14^{\circ}$	0.59 ± 0.09^b
Normal diet $+$ Javanese	0.14 ± 0.04^{ab}	$0.25 \pm 0.08^{\rm a}$	$1.46 \pm 0.04^{\circ}$	$2.50 \pm 0.42^{\circ}$
turmeric kombucha				
$DEN + normal$ diet	$0.20 \pm 0.09^{\rm a}$	$0.65 \pm 0.34^{\circ}$	$0.33 \pm 0.20^{\circ}$	0.48 ± 0.19^b
+ Javanese turmeric DEN	0.16 ± 0.04^{ab}	$0.25 \pm 0.07^{\rm a}$	1.05 ± 0.20^b	$1.65 \pm 0.75^{\text{a}}$
beverage				
Javanese turmeric DEN $+$	0.14 ± 0.09^{ab}	0.28 ± 0.12^a	$1.47 \pm 0.17^{\rm a}$	$2.44 \pm 0.71^{\circ}$
kombucha				

392 $\overline{\text{*TNF-}\alpha^+}$: tumor necrosis factor α^+ ; IL-6⁺: interleukin-6; IL-10⁺: interleukin-10

393 **data followed by different letters shows significant difference on Fischer's exact test (confidence interval 95%)

395 Figure 1

396

397 **Fig. 1** Innate immunomodulatory activity of kombucha: CD8+ IL-10+ macrophage at different treatments: normal 398 diet, normal diet + Javanese turmeric kombucha, normal diet + DEN, DEN + Javanese turmeric beverage, and DEN 399 + Javanese turmeric kombucha