Asian Journal of Biology

Volume 20, Issue 12, Page 9-17, 2024; Article no.AJOB.126492
ISSN: 2456-7124

Neuroprotective Role of Zingerone: Investigating the Effective Doses of Zingerone in Lead Acetate-Induced Brain Dysfunctions in Rats

Mohammed Ibrahim Younus [a*], Hind A. Hanoon [b], Ahmed Talib Yassen Aldossary [a] and Ahmed Neama Mahmood [c]

[a] Department of Physiology and Medical Physics, College of Medicine, Anbar University, Iraq.
[b] Department of Physiology and Medical Physics, College of Medicine, University of Fallujah, Iraq.
[c] Department of Microbiology, College of Medicine, University of Fallujah, Iraq.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: https://doi.org/10.9734/ajob/2024/v20i12457

Open Peer Review History:
This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/126492

Original Research Article

Received: 03/09/2024
Accepted: 07/11/2024
Published: 16/11/2024

ABSTRACT

This experiment was designed to determine the effective dose of zingerone against the sublethal dose of lead acetate that induced brain dysfunctions in rats through using different successive doses of zingerone on some parameters related to oxidative stress for 28 days. Thirty-six adult male rats were randomly selected and divided equally into six experimental groups and treated for 28 days as follows: Control group: administered (orally) sterile distilled water. G1 group: administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 25mg/kg for 4 weeks, the

**Corresponding author: E-mail: pe.alraw_53@uoanbar.edu.iq;*

Cite as: *Younus, Mohammed Ibrahim, Hind A. Hanoon, Ahmed Talib Yassen Aldossary, and Ahmed Neama Mahmood. 2024. "Neuroprotective Role of Zingerone: Investigating the Effective Doses of Zingerone in Lead Acetate-Induced Brain Dysfunctions in Rats". Asian Journal of Biology 20 (12):9-17. https://doi.org/10.9734/ajob/2024/v20i12457.*

rats were then dissected. G2 group: administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 50mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected. G3 group: administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 100mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected. G4 group: administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 150mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected. G5 group: administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 200mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected. Blood samples were collected, by heart punched under anesthesia, at the end of the experiment for measuring the serum malondialdehyde, neuroglobulin, and dopamine concentrations. The result showed a significant ($P<0.05$) positive correlation between successive doses of zingerone and dopamine and neuroglobulin concentrations, while a significant ($P<0.05$) negative correlation between successive doses of zingerone and the concentration of malondialdehyde in all animals that are treated with lead acetate compared to the control group. Concluded from this research show that the zingerone has potent antioxidants and neuroprotective effects at the dose 125 mg/kg BW may result in a significant improvement of the neurotransmitter levels and decrease in the production of oxidative stress to the brain tissue.

Keywords: Brain damage; effective dose; neurodegenration diseases; oxidative stress; zingerone.

1. INTRODUCTION

Lead (Pb) is a heavy metal that is utilized extensively in many different forms despite concerns of its harmful effects being well established (Thangarajan et al., 2018). Pb exposure causes a number of negative effects, especially in the brain, even at low levels (Sharma et al., 2014). As a neurotoxicant, lead reaches the brain through the blood-brain barrier and causes oxidative stress (Barkur and Bairy 2015) morphologic damage, neurodegeneration, and cognitive impairment, especially in developing brains (Mason et al., 2014, Zhang et al., 2017). Zingerone is a nontoxic and inexpensive compound with varied pharmacological activities. It is the least pungent component of Zingiber officinale. Zingerone is absent in fresh ginger, but cooking or heating transforms gingerol to zingerone. Zingerone is closely related to vanillin from vanilla and eugenol from clove. Zingerone has potent antiinflammatory, antidiabetic, antilipolytic, antidiarrhoeic, antispasmodic, and so forth properties. Besides, it displays the property of enhancing growth and immune stimulation. It behaves as an appetite stimulant, anxiolytic, antithrombotic, radiation protective, and antimicrobial. Also, it inhibits the reactive nitrogen species, which are important in causing Alzheimer's disease and many other disorders (Huh et al., 2023, Yang et al., 2024). Ginger is a source of a large number of antioxidants and also plays an important role in the reduction of lipid oxidation and inhibits the pathogenesis of diseases. Previous studies reported that ginger extract possesses antioxidant characteristics and shows a role in scavenging superoxide anion and hydroxyl radicals (Shamsabadi et al., 2023) and gingerol inhibited ascorbate/ferrous complex-induced lipid peroxidation in rat liver microsomes (Afzal et al., 2024). Additionally, a fraction of the dried ginger powder abundant in polyphenols showed high antioxidant activity based on data from FRAP, oxygen radical absorbance capacity, and cellular antioxidant activity assays (Meyer et al., 2023). Several studies have indicated that ginger was effective for protection against oxidative stress. The underlying mechanisms of antioxidant action were investigated in cell models (Meyer et al., 2023). Ginger extract showed antioxidant effects in human chondrocyte cells, with oxidative stress mediated by interleukin-1β (IL-1β). It stimulated the expression of several antioxidant enzymes and reduced the generation of ROS and lipid peroxidation (Mehrzadi et al., 2021). Additionally, ginger extract could reduce the production of ROS in human fibrosarcoma cells with H2O2-induced oxidative stress (Ayustaningwarno et al., 2024). Recently, many investigations have revealed that ginger positively affects memory function and exhibits anti-neuroinflammatory activity, which might contribute to the management and prevention of neurodegenerative diseases (Im et al., 2022). Further experiments in mouse hippocampi and rat C6 glioma cells revealed that ginger extract promoted the formation of synapses in the brain through the activation of extracellular signal-regulated kinase (ERK) induced by nerve growth factor (NGF) and cyclic AMP response element-binding protein (CREB) (Yousefi et al., 2022). Another study found that 6-shogaol exhibited neuroprotective activity by activating Nrf2, scavenging free radicals, and elevating the levels

of several phase II antioxidant molecules, such as NQO1 and HO-1, in neuron-like rat pheochromocytoma PC12 cells (Pázmándi et al., 2024). The aim of the present study is to determine the effective dose of zengeron supplement as a natural antioxidant on the modulation of toxic effects and oxidative stress induced by sublethal doses of lead exposure in rats.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Zengerone Supplement

The ginger powder that was used in this study comes from ginger rhizomes from controlled organic cultivation in India. Naturally, no pesticides were used during the cultivation process. Each capsule is free from any sort of additive, including gelatin, making the product suitable for vegans, as shown in HPLC analysis (Fig. 1) with the following specifications: 450 mg organic ginger powder per capsule, 100% certified organic ginger, 180 capsules/bottle, 100% vegan, Made in Germany, Free from additives, pesticides, and non-GMO, Produced according to ISO 9001, HACCP, and GMP standards.

2.2 Experimental Design

Forty albino adult male rats, weighing 190–220 g, were used and housed in an animal house (College of Veterinary Medicine/Baghdad University). The animals were kept at 22–25˚C with a 12-hour light/dark cycle. Animals were allowed freely access to water and pellets along the experimental period. After acclimatization for 15 days, will be randomly selected and divided equally into six experimental groups and treated for 28 days as follows:

- **Control Group:** administered (orally) sterile distilled water.
- **G1 Group:** administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 25mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected.
- **G2 Group:** administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 50mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected.
- **G3 Group:** administered (orally) (1/280 from ld50) of lead acetate and treated with 100mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected.
- **G4 Group:** administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 150mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected.
- **G5 Group:** administered (orally) (1/280 from LD50) of lead acetate and treated with 200mg/kg for 4 weeks, the rats were then dissected.

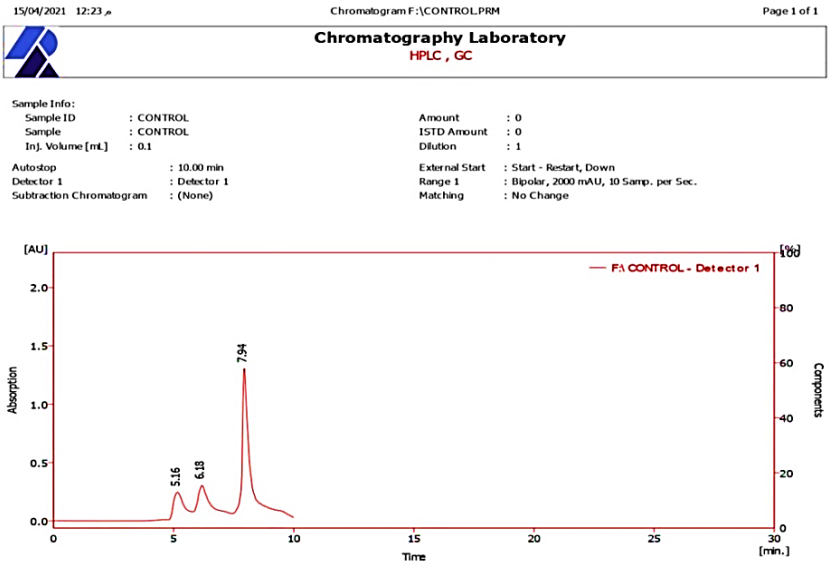


Fig. 1. HPLC analysis

2.3 Blood Samples

Blood samples were collected, by heart punched under anesthesia by using ketamine and xylene, at the end of the treatment for measuring the following criteria: Serum malondialdehyde (MDA); the level of serum MDA was determined by a modified procedure described by (Guidet and Shah 1998) the serum neuroglobulin and dopamine concentration (pg/mL) was measured by using the commercially available ELISA Kit (CEA851Ge, Cloud-Clone Corp., USA) according to the manufacturer's instructions.

2.4 Ethical Approval

The local ethics group confirms that these experiments were approved by the College of Medicine Board, University of Fallujah, Ramadi.

2.5 Statistical Analysis

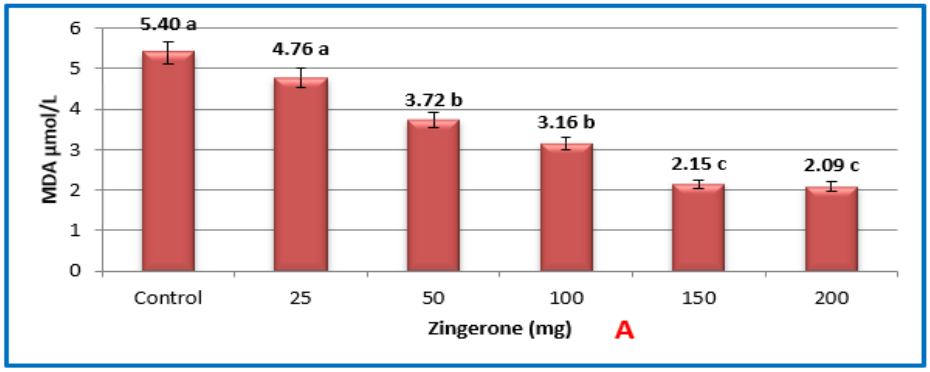
Data was performed using SAS (Statistical Analysis System - version 9.1). One-way ANOVA and least significant differences (LSD) post hoc test were performed to assess significant differences among means. $P < 0.05$ is considered statistically significant (Abdul et al., 2023).

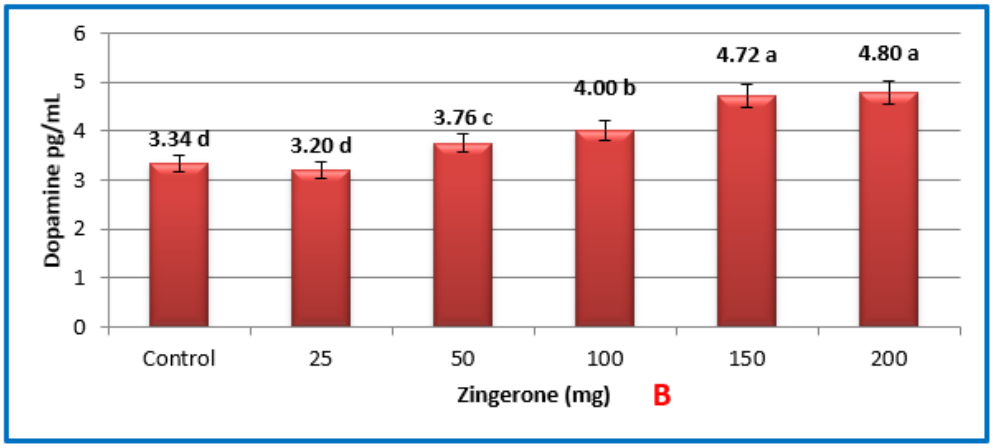
3. RESULTS

The results shown in Fig. 1 (A, B, and C) after treatment of rats with zingerone supplement (25, 50, 100, 150, and 200 mg/kg B.W.) against LD50 of lead acetate (1/280 from rats in the previous experiment) for 28 days. A significant ($P<0.05$) decrease is shown in MDA concentration (Fig. 1-A) with successive zingerone supplement doses in all treated groups, while there were no differences noticed between G1 (25 mg) and control, between G2 (50 mg) and G3 (100 mg), and between G4 (150 mg) and G5 (200 mg). The data in Fig. 1-B showed a significant ($P<0.05$) increase in the concentration of dopamine concomitant with a zingerone supplement dose increase. Besides, the results showed no-significant ($P > 0.05$) differences between G1 (25 mg) and control and between G4 (150 mg) and G5 (200 mg), while there were significant differences between G2 (50 mg) and G3 (100 mg). Concerning neuroglobine, Fig. 1-C showed no significant ($P > 0.05$) increase in neuroglobine concentration in G1, G2, and G3 rats treated with a zingerone supplement against a sublethal dose of lead acetate (1/280 from the LD50 of PbAc) compared to the control. There is a significant increase in neuroglobine concentration related to a zingerone dose increase in G4 (150 mg) and G5 (200 mg) treated groups compared to control and other treated groups.

3.1 Determination the Effective Dose (ED) of Zingerone

Depending on the results shown in Fig. 2 (A, B, and C), maximally significant changes in the above parameters were recorded after 28 days of zingerone supplement with a sublethal dose (1/280 of LD50) of Pb-treated rats. Accordingly, the results show the estimation of ED of zingerone as follows: Fig. 2-A explains highly significant ($P<0.05$) decreases in serum MDA concentration accompanied by successive increases in the dose of zingerone supplement. Were the estimated ED of zingerone equal to 125 mg/kg B.W., a positive relationship was observed between serum dopamine and neuroglobulin concentrations and successive doses of zingerone, as shown in Fig. 2 (B and C). To determine the ED of zingerone, which was obtained from the equations of the straight line for the previous parameters, the arithmetic mean of ED of zingerone in rats received a sub-lethal dose (1/280 of LD50) of Pb on serum MDA, dopamine, and neuroglobulin concentrations, which equaled 125 mg/kg BW according to probit analysis.





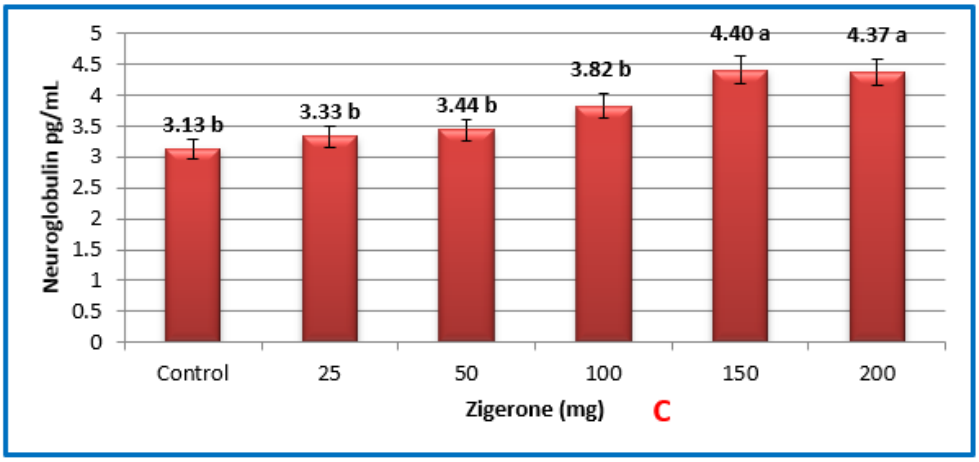
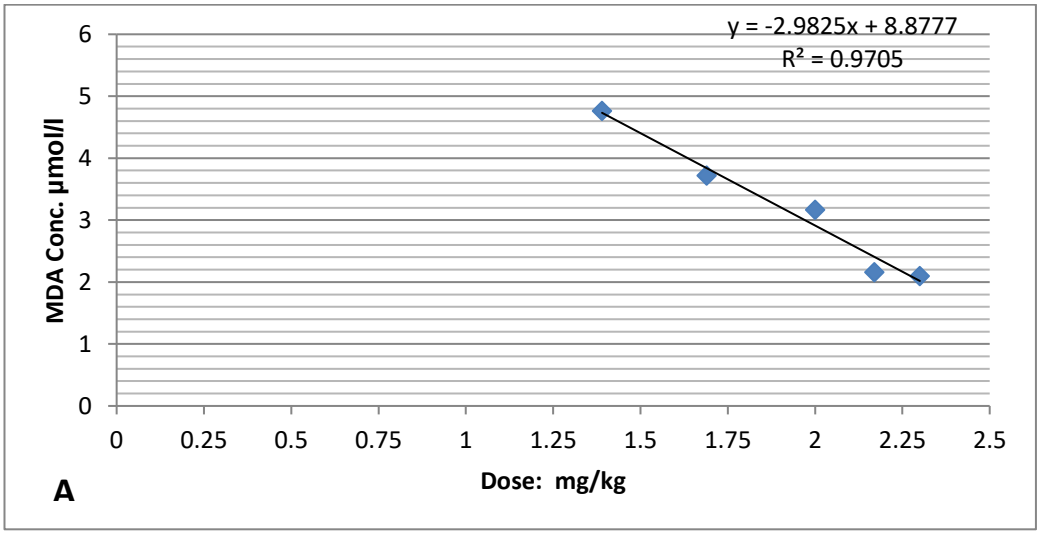


Fig. 2. Shows the effect of different successive doses of zingerone supplement on MDA (Fig. 1-A), dopamine (Fig. 1-B) and neuroglobulin concentrations after 28 days in adult male rats

Values are expressed as mean ±SE. n= 6. Small letters denote significant differences between groups (P< 0.05).



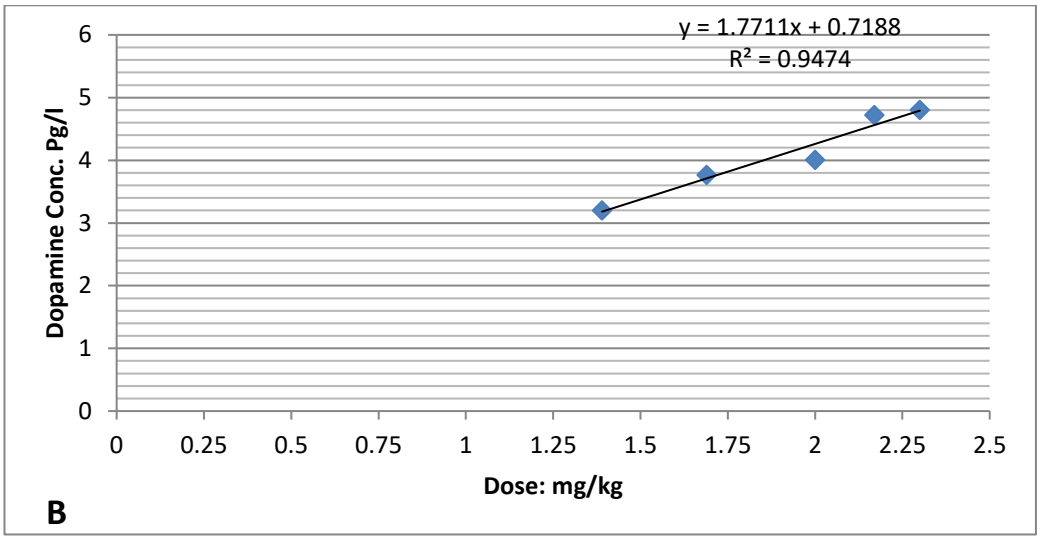


Fig. 3. Reveals effect of different successive doses of zingerone supplement on serum MDA (A), dopamine (B) and neuroglobuline (C) concentrations after 28 days in rats . n= 6, ED= 125 mg / kg, BW

4. DISCUSSION

Lipid peroxidation is the most important cause of reperfusion injury. Increased free radicals initiate lipid peroxidation in neuronal cells, plasma, organelle membranes, vascular endothelial cell membrane and myelin (Mori et al., 2004). Administration of zingerone ED with lead acetate sublethal dose 1/280 of LD50 showed a significant decrease in serum MDA concentration at dose 125 mg/kg B.W. according to probit method, as compared with lower and higher doses; the current results were in line with results of (El-Sharaky et al., 2009, Amin et al., 2021) who reported that ginger suppresses lipid peroxidation and recovers antioxidant concentration. Also (Alibakhshi et al., 2018) found that ginger lead to lowered Lipid peroxidation by maintaining the activities of antioxidant enzymes such as SOD, catalase, and glutathione peroxidase (GPx) in rats. So, current results confirm the ability of zingerone to reduce the oxidative stress induced by PbAc exposure (Wali et al., 2020, Hassanpour 2023). The result showed a significant increase in the concentrations of dopamine and neuroglobine in treated groups, which indicates the zingerone supplement works on the neuronal function improvement and inhibits the neurodegenerative disorders. The results are going in line with (Rashid 2021) who reported a neuroprotective effect of ginger through protecting dopaminergic

cells via the inhibition of neuroinflammatory responses of microglia (Moon 2014) suggested that 6-shogaol may play a role in inhibiting glial cell activation and reducing memory impairment. It has been suggested that ginger crude extract might be a potential neuroprotective agent for the treatment of lipopolysaccharide (Kongsui 2020) and monosodium glutamate (MSG)-induced neurodegenerative diseases (Boarescu 2024) due to the polyphenolic compounds content of ginger. Ginger has a high antioxidant activity to inhibit the hydroxyl radicals, due to the presence of bioactive phytochemicals like zingerone gingerols, shogaols, paradols, and gingerdiols. Zingerone superoxide anion scavenges peroxyl radicals and also inhibits the production of NO; it is the major bioactive constituent responsible for the antiinflammatory and antioxidant activities of ginger (Odo et al., 2020, Angelopoulou 2022). It seems that ginger, given its antioxidant, immunomodulatory, and anti-inflammatory capacity, has the ability to intercept all the main elements involved in the development of multiple sclerosis as well as to attenuate the symptoms of neurological diseases (Arcusa 2022, Pázmándi 2024). The prophylactic role of ZS against the oxidative stress caused by a sublethal dose of PbAc counteracts the progression of neurodegenerative diseases. These results are in agreement with (Almohaimeed 2021). who showed that ginger can be a candidate to treat neurodegenerative diseases through bioactive compounds and may improve neurological symptoms and pathological conditions by modulating cell death or cell survival signaling molecules. Collectively, our findings may be helpful in understanding the modulation of brain injury under lead acetate toxicity. Zingerone is considered a promising edible option for reducing the deleterious effects of lead due to its strong antioxidant and modulatory capabilities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Zingerone has potent antioxidants and neuroprotective effects at the dose of 125 mg/kg BW, which may result in a significant improvement of the neurotransmitter levels and a decrease in the production of oxidative stress in the brain tissue.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study was funded by the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq. The animals have adapted to the animal's habitat, which is within the aforementioned college, and tests were conducted within its laboratories.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/126492