

Research Paper

Cytogenetic effect of agro-pesticides on sperm shape abnormality in *Channa punctatus* in vivo

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to determine the associations of cytogenotoxic effect of agro pesticides on sperm head morphology. The quality of sperm from *Channa punctatus* fish was assessed to determine as a suitable indicator of the effects of pollution in freshwater. The fish was exposed in vivo to three different concentrations (MC, MC/2 & MC/5) of eight pesticides (Dimethoate, Dichlorovos, chlorpyrifos and Malathion, Methylparathion, Fenvalerate, Cypermethrin and Cabaryl) belongs to Organophosphates, pyrethroid and Carbamate group in different time periods (5,10,15,20,25days). Sperm head analysis and tail used as simple bioindicator for monitoring aquatic pollution in *Channa punctatus* subjected to breeding soundness evaluation were designated as unsatisfactory solely on the basis of sperm morphology highlights its importance. Though insufficient data refrain us from significant statistical analysis but will play significant role in further research of cytogenotoxic and teratogenic end point of aquatic pollutants on male reproductive physiology in this species.

Keywords: genotoxicity, cytotoxicity, teratogenic, germ Cells, Pesticides, Semen, Sperm head analysis; sperm quality.

Introduction

The increased use of pesticides is necessary for better crop production¹⁻³ since the Green Revolution of the 1960s, hence it introduced new hazards to human being and animal⁴. A broad spectrum of pesticides are extensively being used in agriculture to enhance production⁵, minimize losses, protect food grains from fungal contamination, repel ecto-parasites, control vector borne diseases, repel household pests and as anti-helminthes⁶ with limited guidelines and restrictions. More and more use of pesticides in agricultural practices has resulted in contamination of food and food resources. These toxic chemicals influence the physiology of the numerous non-target species including man⁷. A number of animal species included humans have accumulated traces of pesticides through food chain or by occupational exposure⁸. Genetic abnormalities, including sperm abnormality, chromosome aneuploidy as well as structural aberrations, are one of the major causes of infertility. The effects of aquatic pollution on the reproductive endocrine system of fish are well documented⁹, but there have been very few studies of its effects on gamete quality. Computer Assisted Sperm Analysis (CASA) has been used for some years to assess the motility of mammalian sperm and during the last few years has been applied to fish^{10,11}.

Methods such as the measurement of the concentration of spermatozoa in the milt¹². Allow an estimation of the whole spermatozoa population without taking into account the individual spermatozoon status. Thus, techniques that focus on features of individual sperm cells, such as motility and morphology, should be fundamentally more discriminatory than bulk measurements of the whole milt. Teleost sperm is characterized by the absence of an acrosome, which contrasts with mammalian sperm, although an active acrosome is present in Acipenseriform fish¹³. The shape of the head and the nucleus is highly variable between species¹⁴⁻¹⁷ and the mid-piece containing a few

mitochondria is either well developed (guppy) or reduced (salmonid, cyprinid)^{18,19}. Some internally fertilizing fish like the ocean prout have biflagellate spermatozoa^{20,21} while in general fish with external fertilization have a simple flagellum, although some biflagellate spermatozoa have been reported in channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)²², So far there is no evidence that longer sperm achieve faster swimming velocities²³. However, sperm deformities are associated with functional deficiencies and cause reduced motility and fertilization ability. As an example, fish sperm directly exposed to Hg²⁺ ions is characterised by broken tails²⁴ and reduced motility and fertilising capacity²⁵. Exposure of zebra fish (*Danio rerio*) to tributyltin (TBT) during a critical period in early life resulted in the production of sperm lacking flagella at sexual maturity²⁶.

Now a days agro-pesticides are the main cause of cytotoxic, genotoxic and teratogenic²⁷⁻²⁹, enter into natural water destroying spawning ground, feeding area and reproductive capacity in fish. *Channa punctatus* is one of the most popular edible teleost fish in many parts of India and Bangaldesh³⁰ is now one of the most endangered fish species too. Sperm morphology has been identified as a characteristic that can be used to predict a male's semen quality. The overall aim of the work is to provide a simple non-invasive assessment of the effects of aquatic pollution on fish fertility using sperm shape morphology of fresh water live fish *Channa punctatus*.

Materials and Methods

Table 1: List of pesticides used in the present study along with their LC50, MC, MC/2 and MC/5 concentrations

Pesticide (Trade name)	Manufacturer	LC50 (inµg/liter)	MC/2 (inµg/liter)	MC/2 (inµg/liter)	MC/5 (inµg/lite)
Dimethoate (Roger-30E)	Rallies India Ltd.,21,D,Sukhadev Marg,Mumbai-400001,India.	100	50	25	10
Dichlorovos (Nuvan)	Hinustan Ciba-Geigy Limited,14.J.Tata Road,Mumbai-400020,India.	500	250	125	50
Chlorpyriphos (Tafaban-20E)	Rallies India Ltd.,21,D,Sukhadev Marg,Mumbai-400001,India	10	5	2.5	1
Methyl Parathion (Metacid-50)	All India Medical Corporation, 185, Princess Street,P.B.No.239,Mumbai,India.	300	150	75	30
Malathion (Mal-Tox)	All India Medical Corporation, 8thRoad, Akhand Jyoti Building, SantaCruetz East Mumbai-400020,India.	250	125	67.5	25
Fenvalerate (Sumicidin)	Rallies India Ltd.,21,D,Sukhadev Marg,Mumbai-400001,India	250	125	67.5	25
Cypermethin (Polytren-20E)	Solar FARMACHEM Ltd.Sorodhi, Valsad, Gujarat.	10	5	2.5	1
Carbaryle (Sevin)	Rallies India Ltd.,21,D,Sukhadev Marg,Mumbai-400001,India	250	125	67.5	25

Doses and route of exposure

From among the specimens acclimatized for at least a fortnight in the laboratory aquaria, only strong and active fishes were released into different aquaria containing pesticides correspond to LC50,MC, MC/2 and MC/s doses respectively as per table-1. MC represent the maximum tolerable concentration of the test compound at which no death of animal beyond 5% was observed during the period of treatment and was determined from preliminary experiments on groups of 20 specimens in aquaria containing 100 litre of water. The test lasted for 25 days with change of water, chemical and food every alternate day. The lowest concentration leading to 50 % death after the treatment was considered as LC50 and half of this corresponds of MC. MC/2 and MC/5 represent 1/2 and 1/5 of MC. The treated specimens received an intramuscular injection of 0.02% colchicine solution at the rate of

1ml per 100 mg body weight 2 h prior to their sacrifice on completion of 5,10,15,20 and 25 days of exposure to the test chemical.

Sperm Shape analysis

The best technique for cytological preparation of germ cells is those of ³¹, with few modifications the method. We used in this study, good sperm head preparations could only be obtained after teasing out the testis of sexually mature healthy specimens of *Channa punctatus* in normal saline(2.24% trisodium citrate)prepared the cell suspension and making a squash preparation, fixed the slides in 1:3 aceto-alcohol for one hour followed by staining in 2% Giemsa for 15 minutes. Wash in deionised water to remove excess stain, dry the slides and used for the examination of sperm head and tail abnormalities under Zeiss-Jana microscope in 40x lens and microphotographs taken under 100xlens by overhead camera. For each animal 500 hundred sperms were scored³².

Results and Discussion

Ever since the development of technique for cytological preparation of germ cells of mouse by³¹, the sperm head abnormality as a mutagenicity testing protocol has received the attention of large number of workers to analyse the genotoxicity of a variety of toxicants. According to^{33,34}, the sperms are the important cells in the reproductive toxicology which could be used in assessing spermatogenic damage and fertility effect not only treated specimens but also in F₁ and F₂ progeny in view of this, efforts we made to develop sperm head abnormality protocol employing *Channa punctatus* as test model to evaluate the genotoxic potentiality of water-borne pollutants. The results obtained were encouraging and similar to those described by³⁵, in fresh water Cichlilid species of tilapia *Oreochromis mosambicus*. However technique used by³⁵ did not yield satisfactory results. Morphological analysis from control groups showed that sperms with normal histological structure(Figure 1.a)but in treated groups enlarged and multi nucleated head and biflagellated sperms were found (Fig.1.a,b,c)Sperm morphology is still a standard laboratory analysis in diagnosing infertility in men³⁶. The germ cells determine the fertility potential of an individual because they form the spermatozoa. Failure of the germ cell to survive during the development may lead defective or no gamete production and hence can lead to infertility³⁷.



Figure 1: a. Normal spermatozoa b. Enlarged nucleated spermatozoa c. Multinuclear headed spermatozoa d. Biflagellated spermatozoa

The pycnotic nuclei, chromolysis, vacuoles of various shapes and sizes were observed in the cytoplasm of germ cells and somatic cells on exposure of Endosulphan³⁸. Chlorpyrifos cause accumulation of exfoliated germ cells within the affected tubules and appearance of cytoplasmic vacuolation³⁹⁻⁴¹. The Methyl parathion also caused a pronounced cytoplasmic vacuolization and pycnosis in germ cells⁴²⁻⁴⁴, demonstrated the adverse effects of dimethoate on the reproductive performance of male mice. The sperm viability, motility and density were reduced in dimethoate treated mice. Pyrethroid⁴⁵ Deformed and disordered arrangement of germ cells was observed after exposure of Cypermethrin⁴⁶ and Malathion^{47,48} Sloughing off germ cells was recorded in many experiments after exposure of different pesticides. The exposure of Endosalphan, Methyl Parathion, Carbaryl, Malathion and Cypermethrin⁵⁴ resulted in the decrease in the numbers of germ cells in testicular tissue⁴⁸⁻⁵⁴. Spermatogenesis is the process by which mature spermatozoa is develop from germ cell inside seminiferous tubule. Damage to the spermatozoa or their precursors can result in reversible or irreversible impaired spermatogenesis, depending on the stage of differentiation affected by the chemical. Damage to spermatogonia causes impaired sperm production and decreased fertility because of changes in the cell number, structure, motility, or viability of spermatozoa⁵⁵.

Exposure to pesticides lowers sperm levels well below the limit for male fertility⁵⁶. Fish sperm physiology is under control of various parameters of the external milieu⁵⁷, latter sperm cells are subjected to changes due to the different environmental conditions⁵⁸, Pesticides may operate through

hormonal or genotoxic pathways to effect male reproduction⁵⁹. The Semen quality is determined by the semen volume, sperm motility and by number of normal sperm. The good quality semen enhances the chances of fertilization and semen with depleted quality are generally fail to cause the fertilization⁶⁰.

Genetic studies define a relationship between sperm abnormalities and meiotic errors⁶¹, These errors are associated with mutations in meiosis-specific genes, such as those involved in the processes of DNA recombination and repair⁶², Environmental factors are also hypothesized to result in meiotic deficiencies⁶³, Abnormal meiotic recombination, which causes the production of aneuploid gametes, may also give rise to different degrees of meiotic arrest many times occurring at specific stages of meiosis^{64,65}. Occupational exposure of male agricultural workers to organophosphate pesticides was associated with an increased frequency of sperm aneuploidy and sex chromosome disomy^{66,67}.

Conclusion

Toxic pesticides are known to cause Germ cells disintegration, alternation in spermatogenesis, depletion in semen quality, teratospermia and sperm motility. These data represents as pesticides are testicular toxicant in fish, human and other laboratory animals and it has been subjected to disturbed reproductive functions. The data obtained by us is insufficient enough for statistical analysis and hence we refrain ourselves presenting in a tabular form and statistical analysis. *Channa punctatus* may be used as test model for both as a basis of laboratory cytogenotoxicity test for monitoring the reproductive viability of wild populations exposed to water born pollutants.

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