Biological Science



EVALUATION OF XANTHIUM INDICUM LEAF EXTRACT AND α - TOCOPHEROL ON ANTIOXIDANT DEFENCE SYSTEM AND ON SELECTED RENAL MARKERS IN STZ INDUCED DIABETIC RATS

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ABSTRACT *Introduction:* Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a major public health problem, especially for people suffering with diabetes. Herbal formulations have attained widespread acceptability as therapeutic agents in many developing countries as anti-diabetic as well as renoprotective agents. *Xanthium indicum* (Asteraceae) has been reported with number of medicinal properties and α -tocopherol is a well known antioxidant cause nephro protection by improving the antioxidant enzyme activity and also lowering the levels of urine microalbumin and serum cystatin C in diabetic rats. The present study was to investigate the ameliorative property of hydromethanolic leaf extract of *Xanthium indicum* and α -tocopherol under hyperglycemic condition associated with kidney damage.

Methods: seven groups of male albino rats six in each group, received the following treatment scheduled for 4 weeks: Normal control, *Xanthium indicum*, α -tocopherol, Diabetes control, Glibenclamaide8 treated diabetic, α -tocopherol treated diabetic and *Xanthium* treated diabetic. Evaluations were made for the activities of antioxidant enzymes like SOD, CAT, GP_x and levels of urine microalbumin and serum cystatin C by the method of nephelometry in all experimental rats.

Results: A significant improvement in the activities of SOD (P < 0.05), CAT (P < 0.001) and GPx (P<0.001) and microalbumin in urine (P<0.001) and serum cystatin C levels (P<0.001) were significantly decreased with the treatment of plant extract and α -tocopherol in diabetic rats.

Conclusion: Hydromethanolic extract of Xanthium indicum leaves and α -tocopherol possesses a potent capacity that attenuated the nephrotoxicity by lowering urine microalbumin and serum cystatin C levels in diabetic conditions.

KEYWORDS : Xanthium indicum, α-tocopherol, SOD, CAT, GPX microalbumin, cystatin C, diabetes.

Introduction

Diabetes is a metabolic disorder characterized by chronic hyperglycaemia, disturbances in carbohydrate, fat, protein metabolism results from defects in Insulin action.¹ Approximately 40% of patients with type I diabetes and 5-15% of patients with type II diabetes eventually develop End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD).² GFR (Glomerular filtration rate) estimation is essential for the evaluation of patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and is useful to scrutinize chronic kidney disease also in high-risk groups as persons with diabetes mellitus.³

Oxidative stress is said to be an increase in the steady-state levels of reactive oxygen species. It has been concerned in the pathogenesis of diabetic nephropathy.⁴ Natural defence mechanism exists against oxidative stress through endogenous or exogenous antioxidant substances. Superoxide Dismutase (SOD) is the most important antioxidant enzyme because it is found virtually in all aerobic organisms. It immediately converts superoxide anion (O_2) to hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) which is then detoxified to water either by catalase (CAT) in the lysosomes or by glutathione peroxidise (GPx) in the mitochondria. ⁵ Hyperglycemia not only generates more reactive oxygen metabolites but also attenuates antioxidant enzymes.⁶

Microalbuminuria arises from the increased passage of albumin through the glomerular filtration barrier. This is due to glomerular endothelial dysfunction and in particular damage to its glycocalyx in diabetic conditions.⁷ Microalbuminuria is the strong predictor of diabetic nephropathy, which is the main cause of morbidity and mortality in patients with diabetes mellitus.⁸ Cystatin C is another good marker for estimating GFR, particularly in patients with mild to moderate renal impairment.⁹ Serum cystatin C low-molecular-weight (13.3K) protease inhibitor, positive charge at physiological pⁱⁱ levels facilitate the glomerular filtration that is freely filtered across the glomerular membrane and then reabsorbed and metabolized in the proximal tubule, was proposed as a new endogenous marker of GFR.^{10,11}

Plant extracts or bioactive herbal compounds have been reported scientifically for their biological activities. Phytochemicals are non-nutritive plant chemicals that have protective or disease preventive properties. Plants produce these chemicals to protect itself and many phytochemicals can protect humans against diseases.¹² Xanthium

indicum belongs to the family Asteraceae, is a coarse annual plant which has been reported for a number of medicinal properties such as control blood sugar in diabetic patients, treatment of rheumatic pain,¹³ anti-bacterial and cytoxic activities in methanolic extract of the plant leaves.¹⁴ It was also to be noted that antinociceptive activity of leaf extract of the plant has been reported before,¹⁵ improve the performance of growth and coccon characteristics of silkworm larvae,¹⁶ inhibitory activity of prostaglandins¹⁷ antioxidant and antidiarrhoeal activity¹⁸. The recent reports have been demonstrated that *X. indicum* stem has hypoglycemic activity.¹⁹ This plant is reported to contain α and γ -tocopherols, polyphenols, glucoside, xanthostrumarin and xanthonolides as the main constituents.²⁰

 α -tocopherol is widely used as adjuvant in the treatment of diabetic patients.²¹ As an antioxidant, α -tocopherol improves outcomes related to pancreas physiology in diabetes,²² which may improve functional outcomes of diabetes in animal models. α -tocopherol supplementation inhibits the glycation of haemoglobin, a biomarker for the diagnosis of diabetes in clinical studies, by interrupting glycosylation at an early step in the Maillard reaction²³ or by partially inhibiting the formation of advanced glycolated endproducts (AGEs).²⁴

The goal of the present study was to determine the effect of hydromethanolic leaf extract of *Xanthium indicum* and α -tocopherol on antioxidant enzymes like SOD, CAT, GPx and renal markers like urine microalbumin as well as serum cystatin C in STZ induced diabetic rats.

Material and methods

Collection of plant material and preparation of plant extract

The leaves of *Xanthium indicum* were collected from Tirumala hills, Chittoor district. The air-dried leaves of *Xanthium indicum* were grounded into a fine powder, and the extract was evaporated to dryness.

Procurement of chemicals

All the chemicals used in the present study were Analar Grade and obtained from the following scientific companies: Sigma (St. Louis, MO, USA), Fisher (Pitrsburg, PA, USA), Merck (Mumbai, India), Ranbaxy (New Delhi, India), Qualigens (Mumbai, India).

Experimental animal models

Wistar strain male albino rats (3 months of age, 200–230 g) were used in the present study. To induce diabetes rats were given a single intravenous injection of 50 mg/kg streptozotocin (STZ; Sigma-Aldrich, Inc., St. Louis, Mo., USA). The urine was collected for 24 hours under a layer of toluene (to inhibit bacteria growth) and stored at 4°C for later analysis. At the end of the four-week treatment, the blood samples were collected from a tail vein.

Grouping of animals

The rats were divided into 7 groups of six in each group and treated for four weeks as follows: Group I -Normal Control (NC), were administered with 0.9% of NaCl/kg body weight via orogastric tube, Group II - Xanthium indicum treated (Xit) rats received 200mg/kg body weight of plant extract, Group III – α -tocopherol treated rats (Tpt) received 100mg/kg body weight of α-tocopherol, Group IV -Diabetic Control (DC) rats received 50mg/kg body weight of STZ after fasting, Group V - Diabetic + Glibenclamide (Di + Glbt) Diabetic rats received 20 mg/kg body weight of glibenclamide, Groups VI -Diabetic+ α -tocopherol (Di+Tpt) Diabetic rats received 100 mg/kg body weight of α-tocopherol and Group VII - Diabetic + Xanthium indicum treatment (Di + Xit) Diabetic rats received 200 mg/kg body weight of Xanthium indicum leaf extract.

Biochemical Assays

The superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity was assayed in the kidney homogenates by the method of Misra and Fridovich.²⁵ The catalase (CAT) activity was determined at room temperature by using the method of Aebi.²⁶ Se-Dependant Glutathione Peroxidase (GPx) activity was determined by a modified version of Flohe and Gunzler²⁷ at 37°C. Urine micoalbumin and serum cystatin C levels were estimated by particle-enhanced Immunonephelometry.

Histological analysis

The kidney tissues were fixed in neutralized formalin, dehydrated with ethanol and embedded in paraffin wax (56°C). Serial sections (5µm) were taken and stained with haematoxylin and eosin following the earlier described methods of Ross and Reith (1989).

Statistical analysis

The data are expressed as mean of 6 determinations ± standard deviation (SD). The differences among groups were analysed by oneway analysis of variance (ANOVA). Inter-group comparisons were done using Duncan's Multiple Range Test (DMRT) with 95% confidence intervals. The SPSS 13.5, SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA, was used for this analysis.

Results

Table 1 and 2 shows a statistically significant increase (***P<0.001) in urine microalbumin levels and serumCystatin C levels in streptozotocin induced diabetic rats with respect to normal control and there was a significant decrease (***P<0.001) in urine microalbumin levels in diabetic rats treated with plant extract and α -tocopherol.

A significant reduction in SOD (*P< 0.05), CAT (***P< 0.001) and GPx (***P<0.001) activities were observed in diabetic control rats when compared to normal control rats. The activities of these antioxidant enzymes were significantly increased in diabetic rats by treating with plant extract and α -tocopherol (Figure 1, 2 and 3).

In STZ-induced diabetic control rats, degenerative changes in Glomeruli/ Bowman's capsules and focal necrosis of Renal tubules in the kidney tissue were observed. The cytoplasm resolution of abnormal cells changed and vacuolar modifications occurred. According to the association between cell shape and cell function, these changes may correspond to an adaptation of cells to a new situation such as increased load due to congestion. Diabetic rats were treated with plant leaf extract and α-tocopherol, the kidney renal parenchyma showing regeneration changes in distal tubules (D) and bowman's capsule (BC) where necrosis takes place (Figure 4).

Discussion

Diabetic nephropathy (DN) is the most common cause of renal damage in the World that often progresses to end-stage renal disease.28 The balance between hyperglycemia and the different genetically determined antioxidant cellular defences, mainly enzymatic ones (superoxide dismutase, catalase, Glutathione peroxidise), account for the different effects of hyperglycemia related free radical production in the development of diabetic complications, the increased susceptibility to oxidant injury.²⁹ In the present investigation, it was found that activity of SOD is significantly decreased in diabetic rats.

Superoxide anion is one of the initiators of free radical reactions plays an important role in the determination of SOD levels and the products of membrane lipid peroxidation and other oxidants like H₂O₂ may react with SOD, resulting in oxidative modification, thereby its activity is reduced.³⁰ Hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) is a by-product of normal cellular respiration and is also formed from superoxide anion by the action of superoxide dismutase.³¹ The increased frequency of diabetes associated with catalase deficiency and the observed low catalase activity due to accumulation of free radicals, superoxide radicals and hydrogen peroxide. GPx catalyzes the reduction of H₂O₂ to H₂O and O₂ at the expense of glutathione (GSH).32 Optimum level of GSH is required in body which in turn potentiates GPx activity to stay healthy.³³ GPx activity is also reduced in diabetic condition; this may be due to inactivation of the enzyme involved in disposal of oxygen species and also insufficient availability of GSH.34 The high flux of glucose through the activated polyol pathway in diabetes may consume NADPH, which results in decreased level of reduced GSH and consequent decrease in the activity of GPx.³⁵ The reduced availability of NADPH, which could be either due to reduced synthesis or increased metabolization of NADPH through some other pathway, could be also responsible for low levels of reduced glutathione³⁶ there by GPx activity is reduced in diabetic rats. Amassing of superoxide (O2) radicals, H2O2 in kidney of diabetic rats demonstrate reduced activities of SOD, CAT and GP_x.

The leaves of Xanthium indicum was reported to have anti diabetic activity due the presence of phenolic compounds.³⁷ leaf extract of Xanthium indicum treated diabetic rats shown the improved activities of SOD, CAT and GP_x because presence of phenolic compounds such as tannins and flavonoids, and also polyphenols because of their scavenging ability with reactive oxygen species (ROS) and chelating ability with divalent cations due to hydroxyl groups.³⁸ The antioxidant activity of phenolic compounds is mainly due to their redox properties, which can play an important role in adsorbing and neutralising free radicals, quenching singlet and triplet oxygen, or decomposing peroxides.⁹⁹ Diabetic rats were treated with α -tocopherol increases the activities of SOD, CAT and GPx. α-tocopherol was considered to be a potent antioxidant, by preventing oxidative injury and restoring renal tissue antioxidants and glutathione redox balance.⁴⁰ Treatment with α tocopherol has also been demonstrated to improve functional outcomes, like insulin sensitivity in type 2 diabetic subjects.⁴¹αtocopherol promoted a reduction in the indicators of oxidative stress, protein glycation, lipid peroxidation thus an increase in SOD⁴² CAT and GP_xactivity. α-tocopherol is the lipid soluble, chain breaking, antioxidant in mammalian tissue⁴³ and in particular is capable of quenching the propagation of free radical reaction within cell membranes without altering the production of free radicals compounds through the donation of a hydrogen atom from the phenolic hydroxyl group with subsequent formation of tocopherol dimmers or quinines.⁴⁴ In diabetic nephropathy, α -tocopherol significantly reduce the lipid peroxidation there by GPx activity was increased.4

The elevated microalbumin in urine is indicator of renal disease, especially in diabetics.⁴⁶ We examined in the present research work the albumin levels in urine were increased to drastically 7 fold in diabetic rats (P<0.001) than the normal controlled rats. The proteinuria that develops after induction of diabetes is mainly due to an increased excretion of low molecular weight proteins.47 Albumin is normally excreted as a mixture of intact protein and fragments that are produced during renal passage.48 Increase in albumin excretion rate in early diabetes due to the disproportionate increase in the excretion of intact albumin.⁴⁹ The change in the ratio of intact versus degraded excreted albumin that accompanies the increase in albumin excretion rate in early diabetes is due to the inhibition of degradation of albumin at a post-glomerular site; that is, after the albumin has passed the glomerular filtration barrier.⁴⁸ Cystatin C is produced by all nucleated cells at a constant rate and its serum level is relatively unaffected by age, sex, body composition, diet, and exercise.⁵⁰ Due to the uncontrolled blood glucose levels, metabolic wastes may deposit in the vital organs such as kidneys, the toxic concentration of blood sugar damages the kidney tissue. Serum cystatin C might meet the need for detecting trends in renal function over time when glomerular filtration rate (GFR) is normal or elevated.⁵¹ In some conditions like diabetes with ischemic nephropathy, nodular glomerulosclerosis and renal failure, serum cystatin C levels were significantly increases.⁵² From the present experiment, it was observed that serum cystatin C levels were increased nearly 7 fold in diabetic rats when compared to the

normal controlled rats.

Xanthium indicum possess diuretic properties.53 The Xanthium indicum extract exerted its diuretic activity possibly by inhibiting tubular reabsorption of water and accompanying anions, as such action has been hypothesized for some other plant species.54 Therefore Xanthium indicum extract significantly increased the GFR due to (a) A detergent like interaction with structural components of glomeruluar membranes. (b) A decrease in renal perfusion pressure, attributable to decrease in the resistance of the afferent arteriole and/or an increase in the resistance of the efferent arteriole and/or. (c) The direct effect on the arteriole wall affecting glomerular blood flow.⁵⁵ X. indicum treated diabetic rats shown 68% decrease in microalbuminuria when compared to the diabetic controlled rats. Shravani et al.,⁵⁶ studied the diuretic activity of Xanthium indicum in albino rats. The petroleum ether extract in normal saline showed significant increase in diuresis, natriuresis, kaliuresis, glomerular filtration rate. All extract causes increase in urine elimination and increase in Na⁺, K⁺, Cl⁻ excretion compared to normal saline. They reported that the diuretic activity of the extract may be due to the presence of flavanoides, saponins, and Organic acids. Treatment of hydromethanolic leaf extract of Xanthium indicum (200 mg/kg/day) for four weeks causes 42% reduction of serum cystatin C levels when compared to STZ rats. a-tocopherol reduce the serum levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) and advanced glycation end products, expression of cell adhesion molecules and inflammatory mediators.⁵⁷ Koya *et al.*,⁵⁸ reported that hemodynamic abnormalities in diabetic rats were normalized by treatment with atocopherol. The hypertrophic response usually found in diabetes was prevented by α -tocopherol administration; tubular acidification, which was significantly changed by diabetes. α-tocopherol is able to protect the harmful effects of diabetes on renal function.⁵⁹ Treatment with α tocopherol has all been shown to significantly reduce urinary albumin excretion ratio among diabetics.⁶⁰ The present work reveals that α tocopherol treated diabetic rats shown nearly 71% decrease in microalbumin levels were observed than the diabetic controlled rats. Chronic use of α -tocopherol can enhance antioxidant enzymes, resulting in vasodilatation of afferent and/or efferent arterioles, decreased pre and/or post-glomerular resistances, and reduced changes observed in renal morphology of glomerular and vascular hypertrophy. It is known that glomerular hypertrophy is related to the development of glomerulosclerosis⁶¹ where the prevention of this alteration can contribute toward preventing the development of kidney disease. Increased renal vascular resistance is also related to the reduced levels of renal plasma flow (RPF) and Glomerular filtration rate (GFR). From the study, it was observed that α-tocopherol treated diabetic rats exhibited nearly 50% decreased levels when compared to the diabetic rats.

Conclusion

Accumulation of free radicals and increased formation of advanced glycation end-products (AGE) in the renal system leads to decline the activities of antioxidant enzymes like SOD, CAT, GPx and also GFR. The present investigation reveals that *X. indicum* extract anda-tocopherol may improve the antioxidant status in diabetes and decrease the levels of serum cystatin C, in this manner both plant extract and α -tocopherol might improve GFR in diabetic condition.

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Ethical issues

The usage of animals was approved by the Institutional Animal Ethics Committee in its resolution No: 09/ (i)/a/CPCSCA/IAEC/SVU/KSR-TL/dated 26-06-2008.

Tables Table 1

TADIC I.

Effect of hydromethanolic leaf extract of *Xanthium indicum* and α -tocopherol on Urine micro albumin levels in Normal control (NC), *Xanthium indicum* (*Xit*), α -tocopherol (Tpt), Diabetes control (DC), Glibenclamaide treated diabetic (Di+ Glbt), α -tocopherol treated diabetic (Di+ Tpt) and *Xanthium indicum* treated diabetic (Di+*Xit*) male albino rats.

Urine Microalbu- min levels	Experimental Groups (Treatment)						
	NC	Xit	Tpt	DC	Di+Glbt	Di+Tpt	Di+Xit

Mean	2.466	2.760	3.157***	18.821*	9.498**	5.485**	6.048**
$\pm SD$	±0.15	±0.145	±0.211	**	*	*	*
	6			±1.852	±0.760	±0.534	±0.660
Percent							
Change		(+11.92	(+28.021)	(+663.2)	(+285.1	(+122.4	(+145.2
(%)		2)		19)	58)	29)	55)

All values are expressed as mean \pm SD values with six replicates. ***P<0.001 compared with normal control. The values are expressed micro albumin levels in mg/l.

Table 2.

Effect of hydromethanolic leaf extract of *Xanthium indicum* and α -tocopherol on Serum cystatin C levels in Normal control (NC), *Xanthium indicum* (*Xit*), α -tocopherol (Tpt), Diabetes control (DC), Glibenclamaide treated diabetic (Di+ Glbt), α -tocopherol treated diabetic (Di+ Tpt) and *Xanthium indicum* treated diabetic (Di+*Xit*) male albino rats.

Serum	Experimental Groups (Treatment)							
Cystatin C								
levels	NC	Xit	Tpt	DC	Di+Glbt	Di+Tpt	Di+Xit	
Mean	0.072	0.141	0.182*	0.514*	0.374***	0.261*	0.299***	
±SD	± 0.03	±0.032	**	**	±0.026	**	±0.014	
	1		±0.010	±0.142		±0.025		
Percent								
change		(+95.8	(+152.	(+651.	(+419.44	(+262.	(+315.27)	
(%)		33)	77)	388))	5)		
						Ĺ		

All values are expressed as mean \pm SD values with six replicates. ***P<0.001 compared with normal control. The values are expressed micro albumin levels in mg/l.

Figures

Figure 1.

Effect of hydromethanolic leaf extract of *Xanthium indicum* and α -tocopherolon Superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity in Normal control (NC), *Xanthium indicum* (*Xit*), α -tocopherol (Tpt), Diabetes control (DC), Glibenclamaide treated diabetic (Di+ Glbt), α -tocopherol treated diabetic (Di+ Tpt) and *Xanthium indicum* treated diabetic (Di+Xit) male albino rats. All values are expressed as mean \pm SD values with six replicates. *P<0.05 compared with normal control. The values are expressed superoxide ion reduced/mg protein/min.

Figure 2.

Effect of hydromethanolic leaf extract of *Xanthium indicum* and α -tocopherolon Catalase (CAT) activity in Normal control (NC), *Xanthium indicum* (*Xi*t), α -tocopherol (Tpt), Diabetes control (DC), Glibenclamaide treated diabetic (Di+ Glbt), α -tocopherol treated diabetic (Di+ Tpt) and *Xanthium indicum* treated diabetic (Di+*Xi*t) male albino rats. All values are expressed as mean ± SD values with six replicates. ^{**}P<0.001 compared with normal control. The values are expressed µmoles of H₂O₂ degraded/mg protein/min.

Figure 3.

Effect of hydromethanolic leaf extract of *Xanthium indicum* and α -tocopherolon Glutathione Peroxidase (GPx) activity in Normal control (NC), *Xanthium indicum* (*Xit*), α -tocopherol (Tpt), Diabetes control (DC), Glibenclamaide treated diabetic (Di+ Glbt), α -tocopherol treated diabetic (Di+Tpt) and *Xanthium indicum* treated diabetic (Di+*Xit*) male albino rats. All values are expressed as mean \pm SD values with six replicates. ^{***}P<0.001 compared with normal control. The values are expressed µmoles of NADPH oxidised /mg protein/min.

Figure 4.

Histopathology of kidney tissue of Normal control (NC), *Xanthium indicum* (*Xit*), α -tocopherol (Tpt), Diabetes control (DC), Glibenclamaide treated diabetic (Di+ Glbt), α -tocopherol treated diabetic (Di+ Tpt) and *Xanthium indicum* treated diabetic (Di+*Xit*) male albino rats. The changes were observed as follows

A. The normal architecture of the kidney tissue with lower magnification (10X).

B. The normal architecture of the kidney tissue with lower magnification (10X).

C. The normal architecture of the kidney tissue with lower magnification (10X).

D. Degenerative changes in Glomeruli/Bowman's capsules and Renal

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tubules along with necrotic changes in kidney tissue with lower magnification (10X). E. Regeneration changes in Glomeruli and necrosis takes place and

tissue shows similar to normal cyto-architecture with lower magnification (10X).

Regeneration of necrosis and congestion takes place and tissue F. shows similar to normal cyto-architecture with lower magnification (10X).

G. Regenerative changes shows similar to normal cyto-architecture of kidney tissue with lower magnification (10X).

Figure 1.

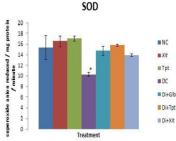


Figure 2.

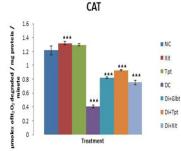
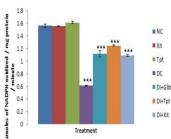
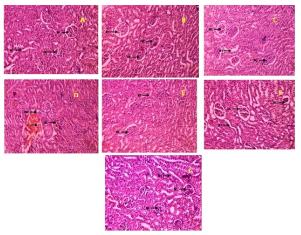


Figure 3.



GPx

Figure 4.



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