Serum biomarkers of physiological defense against reactive oxygen species during environmental stress in Indian dromedaries

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Abstract. Objective: an investigation was carried out in Indian dromedaries (Camelus dromedarius) (Linnaeus 1758) in order to find out the defence against reactive oxygen species during environmental stress. Material and Methods: serum levels of reactive oxygen species scavengers like vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, glutathione, catalase, superoxide dismutase, monoamine oxidase, glutathione reductase, xanthine oxidase, oxidase and peroxidase were determined. Environmental stress included hot and cold environmental temperature periods. These findings were compared with those obtained during moderate environmental temperature period serving as control. Results: vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E and glutathione activity decreased significantly during hot and cold environmental temperature periods. Serum catalase, superoxide dismutase, monoamine oxidase, glutathione reductase, xanthine oxidase, oxidase and peroxidase activities increased significantly during hot and cold environmental temperature periods. Conclusion: environmental stress induced marked changes in the levels of reactive oxygen species scavengers in the serum of Indian dromedaries.

Key Words: dromedaries, reactive oxygen species scavengers, extremely high and low environmental temperatures.


Cuvinte cheie: dromaderi, antioxidanți, temperaturi externe scăzute și ridicate.

Introduction. Reactive oxygen species (ROS) are free radicals that contain the oxygen atom and are highly reactive due to the presence of unpaired valence shell electrons. During environmental stress ROS levels can increase dramatically producing oxidative stress, which is a large rise in the cellular reduction potential (Schafer & Buettner 2001). It can result in a decrease in antioxidant defense contributing to health disorders. Heat and cold are common stressors to the animals in arid and semi-arid tracts. To combat the stress, physiological changes occur according to the priorities of the body (Kataria & Kataria 2005).

Dromedary camels contribute immensely in short distance transport in western states of India and face extreme variations in environmental temperatures. Oxidative stress is extremely dangerous (Kataria et al 2010a) and can be a prelude to many...
disease conditions. To save the animals from such situations, their stress free management in arid tracts is very essential. For this assessment of oxidative stress is mandatory. As it can be identified by means of laboratory tests only, several serum biomarkers are available to monitor the oxidative stress in the form of antioxidants and pro-oxidants which can be assessed in blood (Kataria et al 2010c). Superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase, xanthine oxidase, peroxidase, monoamine oxidase, oxidase, glutathione reductase, vitamin E, vitamin C, and glutathione are considered as measures of oxidative stress allowing the assessment of real status of physiological defenses against reactive oxygen species or oxidative stress. Further the changes in serum biomarkers of oxidative stress can alter the immune status of animals by increasing susceptibility to infectious agents and by reducing the rate of wound healing (Kataria et al 2010b). Looking towards the paucity of literature on this aspect in Indian dromedaries, the present investigation was planned to find out the physiological defense against reactive oxygen species during environmental stress.

This investigation attempted at providing biomarkers of physiological defense against ROS at one platform. This will provide normal range for future studies and will be helpful in making the strategies to protect the animals from oxidative stress.

**Material and Method.** The blood samples were collected to harvest the serum during morning hours from 150 adult healthy dromedaries (C. dromedarius) of either sex of arid region (Rajasthan, India) managed in similar conditions of feeding and watering by the private farmers kept for the purpose of farming and load carrying. The samples were collected during moderate environmental temperature period (Mean maximum temperature ranged from 27 to 29°C), hot environmental temperature period (Mean maximum temperature ranged from 45 to 47°C), and cold environmental temperature period (Mean minimum temperature ranged from 0.5 to 3°C). Each environmental temperature period consisted of 25 male and 25 female dromedaries.

Serum biomarkers included vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, catalase, monoamine oxidase, glutathione reductase, superoxide dismutase, glutathione, peroxidase, xanthine oxidase and oxidase. They were determined by the methods of Varley (1988) for vitamin A and vitamin C, Nair & Magar (1955), Goldblith & Proctor (1950), Green & Haughton (1961), King (1965), Winterbourn et al (1975), Owens & Belcher (1965), Snell & Snell (1954), Litwack et al (1953) and Snell and Snell (1954), respectively, with the modifications as described by Kataria et al (2010c). The mean values obtained during moderate environmenta l period were considered as control. The mean value of each parameter during hot and cold environmental period was compared from the respective control mean value. The statistical significance was determined as per Snedecor & Cochran (1967).

**Results.** The mean values of serum biomarkers of physiological defense against reactive oxygen species during environmental stress in Indian dromedaries are presented in Table 1.

Results indicated that vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E and glutathione activity decreased significantly (p≤0.05) during hot and cold environmental temperature periods in both male and female dromedaries as compared to moderate (control). Serum catalase, superoxide dismutase, monoamine oxidase, glutathione reductase, xanthine oxidase, oxidase and peroxidase activities increased significantly (p ≤ 0.05) during hot and cold environmental temperature periods in dromedaries as compared to moderate environmental temperature period.
Table 1

Mean ± SEM values of serum biomarkers of physiological defense against reactive oxygen species during environmental stress in Indian dromedaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serum Biomarkers</th>
<th>Moderate Environmental Temperature Period (50)</th>
<th>Hot Environmental Temperature Period (50)</th>
<th>Cold Environmental Temperature Period (50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (25)</td>
<td>Female (25)</td>
<td>Male (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A, µmol L(^{-1})</td>
<td>1.91 ± 0.03</td>
<td>1.8 ± 0.02</td>
<td>1.22(^b) ± 0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C, µmol L(^{-1})</td>
<td>25.70 ± 1.1</td>
<td>25.10 ± 1.0</td>
<td>18.2(^b) ± 1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin E, µmol L(^{-1})</td>
<td>6.20 ± 0.1</td>
<td>6.1 ± 0.1</td>
<td>5.0(^b) ± 0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glutathione, µmol L(^{-1})</td>
<td>4.5 ± 0.1</td>
<td>4.4 ± 0.1</td>
<td>3.1(^b) ± 0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superoxide dismutase, kU L(^{-1})</td>
<td>132.10 ± 6.1</td>
<td>130.2 ± 5.1</td>
<td>170.5(^b) ± 6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monoamine oxidase, U L(^{-1})</td>
<td>310.0 ± 9.34</td>
<td>309.0 ± 7.0</td>
<td>357(^b) ± 9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalase, kU L(^{-1})</td>
<td>75.00 ± 4.2</td>
<td>72.00 ± 2.2</td>
<td>97.0(^b) ± 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glutathione reductase, kU L(^{-1})</td>
<td>2.5 ± 0.1</td>
<td>2.3 ± 0.2</td>
<td>3.9(^b) ± 0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peroxidase, mU L(^{-1})</td>
<td>75.0 ± 5.8</td>
<td>72.0 ± 5.0</td>
<td>99.0(^b) ± 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xanthine oxidase, mU L(^{-1})</td>
<td>51.0 ± 2.5</td>
<td>50.0 ± 2.0</td>
<td>79(^b) ± 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxidase, U L(^{-1})</td>
<td>63.0 ± 4.1</td>
<td>62.0 ± 4.5</td>
<td>87.4(^b) ± 5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Superscript ‘b’ on the means showed the significant (p ≤ 0.05) difference from the respective mean value of moderate ambience (control). Figures in the parentheses indicate number of animals.
**Discussion.** In present study serum vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E and glutathione levels were lower during hot and cold environmental periods which indicated their depletion in the process to prevent oxidative stress. Low levels of antioxidants, or inhibition of the antioxidant enzymes, cause oxidative stress and may damage or kill cells along with alteration in the immune status of animals by increasing susceptibility to infectious agents (Kataria et al 2010b). Stress can use up large quantities of vitamin C (Kataria et al 2010a). Vitamin A has an effect on lipid peroxidation whereas Vitamin C protects the body against oxidative stress (Padayatty et al 2003). As ascorbate free radical reacts poorly with oxygen, a superoxide is not created. Instead two semi dehydro ascorbate radicals will react and form one ascorbate and one dehydroxy ascorbate. With the help of glutathione, dehydroxyascorbate is converted back to ascorbate. Therefore the presence of glutathione is crucial since it spares ascorbate and improves antioxidant capacity of blood (Gropper et al 2004). Glutathione (GSH) is the major endogenous antioxidant produced by the cells, participating directly in the neutralization of free radicals and reactive oxygen compounds, as well as maintaining other antioxidants such as vitamins C and E in their reduced or active forms. Vitamin E stops the production of reactive oxygen species during oxidation of fat. It protects cell membranes from oxidation by reacting with lipid radicals produced in the lipid peroxidation chain reaction. The oxidised o-tocopherylo radicals produced in this process may be recycled back to the active reduced form through reduction by other antioxidants, such as ascorbate, retinol or ubiquinol. These reactions made the vitamin E to be important in cell homeostasis and antioxidant pathways (Galli & Azzi 2010).

Superoxide dismutase, monoamine oxidase, catalase, glutathione reductase, xanthine oxidase, oxidase and peroxidase activities showed similar trends. The activities in the serum increased during hot and cold environmental temperature periods. Superoxide dismutase is responsible for the quenching of superoxide radicals which are released during the chemical reactions of the various metabolic pathways and its higher concentration in the serum is an indicator of oxidative stress (Bauer & Bauer 1999). It is considered as the key antioxidant enzyme and known to reverse fibrosis, perhaps through reversion of myofibroblasts back to fibroblasts (Vozenin-Brotons et al 2001).

Monoamine oxidases catalyse the oxidative deamination of monoamines and play an important role in the inactivation of neurotransmitters. During stress activity of MAO increases (Kataria et al 2010c). This could be the possible reason of maximum activity in the camels during hot and cold environmental temperature periods.

Catalase functions to catalyze the decomposition of hydrogen peroxide to water and oxygen (Chellikani et al 2004). Hydrogen peroxide is a harmful by-product of many normal metabolic processes: to prevent damage, it must be quickly converted into other, less dangerous substances. Catalase is frequently used by cells to rapidly catalyze the decomposition of hydrogen peroxide into less reactive gaseous oxygen and water molecules (Gaetani et al 1996). Glutathione reductase (GSR or GR) is an enzyme that reduces glutathione disulfide (GSSG) to the sulfhydryl form GSH, which is an important cellular antioxidant (Meister 1988). The activity of glutathione reductase is used as an indicator for oxidative stress.

Xanthine oxidase (XO) is a form of xanthine oxidoreductase that generates reactive oxygen species (Ardan et al 2004). It is not a scavenger of free radical but along with free radical scavengers it can be used as a marker of oxidative stress. Serum XO is more sensitive than serum aminotransferases in detecting acute liver damage (Ramboer et al 1972). An oxidase is any enzyme that catalyzes an oxidation/reduction reaction involving molecular oxygen (O₂) as the electron acceptor. In these reactions, oxygen is reduced to water (H₂O) or hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂). Therefore it is considered as good marker of oxidative stress. Peroxidase is a hemoprotein catalyzing the oxidation by hydrogen peroxide of a number of substrates such as ascorbate, ferrocyanide, cytochrome C etc. Serum peroxidase activity is considered as the main indicator of the antioxidant activity (Podil’chalk et al 1996).

**Conclusions.** It was concluded that environmental stress was able to induce marked changes in the levels of serum biomarkers in an order to evoke physiological defense.
Decrease in the levels of antioxidants strongly pointed towards the existence of oxidative stress in dromedaries. The present investigation also attempted to provide baseline values of serum biomarkers of physiological defense against oxidative stress in healthy dromedary camel for future studies to help in the clinical diagnosis, as there is paucity of these values in dromedaries. It is suggested that decrease in the levels of antioxidants can be prevented by supplementing them during extreme temperature periods.

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