Ameliorative effects of L-carnitine on rats raised on a diet supplemented with lead acetate

El-Said El-Sherbini a, Gehad El-Sayed a, Rehab El Shotory a, Nervana Gheith b, Mohamed Abou-Alsoud c, Steve Mustapha Harakeh f, Gamal I. Karrouf d,e,*

a Biochemistry and Chemistry of Nutrition, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Mansoura University, Egypt
b Public Administration Departments, Faculty of Economic and Administration, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia
c Faculty of Meteorology, Environment and Arid Land Agriculture, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia
d Medical Physics Department, Faculty of Science, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah 21589, Saudi Arabia
e Surgery, Anesthesiology and Radiology Department, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Mansoura University, Mansoura 35516, Dakahlia, Egypt
f Special Infectious Agents Unit – King Fahd Medical Research Center, King Abdulaziz University, P.O. Box: 80216, Jeddah 21589; Saudi Arabia

Received 9 September 2015; revised 2 May 2016; accepted 24 August 2016
Available online 1 September 2016

KEYWORDS
L-Carnitine; Sprague–Dawley rats; Lead toxicity; Antioxidants; Lead acetate

Abstract
Lead intoxication has been a major health hazard in humans. It affects people at all ages. Its toxicity is associated with various organs of the body and affects different metabolic pathways. Based on histological data, L-carnitine reduced the severity of tissue damage produced as a result of exposure of rats to lead acetate. The main objective of this study was to evaluate the underlying mechanism of protection offered by L-carnitine against lead acetate intoxication using male Sprague–Dawley rats.

Forty male Sprague–Dawley rats were randomly divided into four groups with ten rats in each. The first group (G1) served as the control group and animals received standard diet only. The second group (G2) received lead acetate in their diet. The third group (G3) was the L-carnitine treated group and received the normal standard diet supplemented with L-carnitine. While the fourth group (G4) had a diet supplemented with both lead acetate and L-carnitine. At the end of each experiment, blood (serum and whole blood) were collected from each animal and analyzed for the following parameters: serum testosterone levels, serum nitric oxide and serum malondialdehyde. This is in addition to looking at the enzymatic activities of two important enzymes (superoxide dismutase...
and catalase) and on (glutathione reductase) which are indicative of the antioxidant activities in the whole blood. The results indicated that l-carnitine will counteract the undesirable effects of lead intoxication. It exerted its antioxidant potential by reducing the production of ROS and scavenging free radicals by maintaining and protecting the level of the of antioxidant enzymes SOD, CAT and glutathione peroxidase.

Conclusion: l-Carnitine may play an important role in reversing the undesirable effects of lead intoxication. Future studies should be conducted to see whether such an effect is applicable in humans exposed to lead poisoning.

© 2016 Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. on behalf of King Saud University. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

1. Introduction

Lead toxicity has been recognized as a major environmental health hazard worldwide affecting both humans and animals at all ages especially young children in humans for a long time (Lalith Kumar and Muralidhara, 2014). Lead does not have any beneficial effects to humans, and its presence at high concentrations produce very undesirable toxic consequences to humans affecting all the body organs (Ibrahim et al., 2012; Markowitz, 2011; Mcguigan, 2012). The proposed mechanisms for lead toxicity involve fundamental biochemical processes including its ability to inhibit metabolic activities, mimic the action of calcium (which can affect calcium-dependent processes in the body) and interact with proteins (including those with sulfhydryl, amine, phosphate, and carboxyl groups (ASTDR, 2007).

Lead toxicity results in reducing the levels of antioxidants in the blood as well certain enzymes like catalase and superoxide dismutase (Bennet et al., 2007; Singh et al., 2013). It also decreases the blood concentration of nitric oxide due to its interference with calcium dependent enzyme like the nitric oxide synthase and thus causes hypertension in animal models (Nava-Ruiz et al., 2012; Vaziri, 2008). Lead toxicity results in an elevation in malondialdehyde (MDA) levels (Dogru et al., 2007; Sharma et al., 2014). The catalase and superoxide dismutase (SOD) activities and MDA levels were significantly higher in animals drinking water contaminated with lead acetate compared to controls. The administration of l-carnitine did not reverse the effects on HB and HCT levels, while it corrected the decrease in RBC and the increase in WBC, AST, ALT and creatinine as compared to controls. The administration of l-carnitine did not reverse the effects on HB and HCT levels, while it corrected the decrease in RBC and the increase in WBC, AST, ALT and creatinine. These data showed that l-carnitine may reduce the severity of tissue damage caused by PbAc (Ozsoy et al., 2011).

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the underlying mechanism of the ameliorative effects of l-carnitine, using male Sprague–Dawley rats exposed to lead acetate.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Experimental design

Animals: 12–16 weeks old 40 male Sprague–Dawley rats with an average body weight 140–190 g were used. Rats were obtained from laboratory animal research center, Faculty of veterinary medicine, Mansoura University, Mansoura, Egypt. Animals were housed in separate metal cages. The animals were left for 14 days for acclimatization before the beginning of the experiment. Clean drinking water was provided ad-libitum. Rats were kept at constant environmental and nutritional conditions (12-h light: 12-h dark and 23 ± 2 °C, 60–65% humidity) for the duration of the experiment.

2.2. Compounds used

Lead acetate was obtained from El-Naser company, Egypt. l-Carnitine was obtained from Mepaco company, Cairo, Egypt. Diet: The rats were put on a diet containing nutrients at these concentrations: protein (150 g/kg), Fat (50 g/kg) with a total caloric value of 3800–4100 Kcal/kg.

The first group (G1) served as the control group and animals received standard diet only. The second group (2) received lead acetate in their diet at a concentration of 24 mg
2.3. Collection of blood samples

At the end of each experiment, animals were anesthetized and then sacrificed by decapitation in a very humane manner. Blood samples were then collected and divided into two parts: the first part was dispensed into heparinized tubes to prevent coagulation and used for the determination of reduced glutathione (GSH) (Beutler et al., 1963), Catalase activity (Fossati et al., 1980), and superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity (Nishikimi et al., 1972). The second part of blood sample was collected in sterile vial and centrifuged at 3000 rpm for 10 min for collection serum used for biochemical analysis of serum levels of Malondialdehyde (MDA) (Ohkawa et al., 1979), serum nitric oxide (NO) (Montgomery and Dymock, 1961) and serum testosterone level (Bayer, 1968).

2.4. Statistical analysis

The mean values and standard errors were calculated for the obtained data, and the significances for all means have been carried out by applying F-test using SPSS computer program. The values have been calculated according to Snedecor and Cochran (1989).

3. Results

3.1. Serum malondialdehyde (MDA) level

The mean value of MDA content in serum in-group (2) was (0.2 ± 0.01 μmol/L) which was higher than that of the control group (0.1601 ± 0.0002333 μmol/L). The mean value of MDA content in serum in group (3) was (0.284 ± 0.00403 μmol/L) which was lower than that of normal control animal (0.5275 ± 0.00357 μmol/L) as shown in Table 2. In group (4), the mean value of whole blood MDA was (0.3219 ± 0.00606 μmol/L) which was lower than that of normal control group (0.5275 ± 0.00357 μmol/L). The mean value of whole blood MDA content in group (3) was (0.2564 ± 0.0100 μmol/L) which was lower than that of normal control group (0.4472 ± 0.00849 μmol/L) as shown in Table 2. In group (4), the mean value for NO was (0.0464 ± 0.00535 μmol/L) and was lower than that of control as shown in Table 2.

3.2. Serum nitric oxide (NO) level

The mean value of NO content in serum in-group (2) was (0.0588 ± 0.00444 μmol/L) which was lower than that of control group (0.4472 ± 0.00849 μmol/L). The mean value of NO content in serum in group (3) was (0.1104 ± 0.0004 μmol/L) and is lower than that of normal control animal (0.4472 ± 0.00849 μmol/L) as shown in Table 2. In group (4), the mean value for NO was (0.0464 ± 0.00535 μmol/L) and was lower than that of control as shown in Table 2.

3.3. Whole blood reduced glutathione (GSH)

The mean value of whole blood GSH content in group (2) was (0.3219 ± 0.00606 μmol/L) which was lower than that of normal control group (0.5275 ± 0.00357 μmol/L). The mean value of whole blood GSH content in group (3) was (0.3953 ± 0.00158 μmol/L) which is lower than that of normal control rats (0.5275 ± 0.00357 μmol/L) but higher than that of lead acetate treated rats (0.3219 ± 0.00606 μmol/L). In group (4) the mean value of whole blood GSH was (0.4366 ± 0.00229 μmol/L) which was lower than that of normal control rats (0.5275 ± 0.00357 μmol/L) but higher than that car- nitine treated rats (0.3953 ± 0.00158 μmol/L) and lead acetate treated rats (0.3219 ± 0.00606 μmol/L) as shown in Table 3.

3.4. Whole blood catalase activity

The mean value of whole blood catalase content in group (2) was (0.2564 ± 0.0100 μmol/L) which was lower than that of the control group (0.8138 ± 0.0350 μmol/L). The mean value of whole blood catalase content in group (3) was

| Groups | Range | Mean ± SEM | SEM = Standard error of mean. |
|--------|-------|------------|-----------------------------|
|        | Minimum | Maximum |                  |
| Group1 | 0.159 | 0.162 | 0.1601 ± 0.0002333^a |
| Group2 | 0.16 | 0.21 | 0.2 ± 0.00666^b |
| Group3 | 0.01 | 0.041 | 0.0284 ± 0.00403^c |
| Group4 | 0.169 | 0.183 | 0.1746 ± 0.00174^d |

Means with the same letter in each column are significantly differed (P < 0.05).

Means with different letter in each column are significantly differed (P < 0.05).

F-value = 368.69.

Table 2 Effect of l-carnitine on serum nitric oxide level in rats exposed to lead acetate toxicity (μmol/L).

| Groups | Range | Mean ± SEM |
|--------|-------|------------|
|        | Minimum | Maximum |                  |
| Group1 | 0.41 | 0.479 | 0.4472 ± 0.00849^a |
| Group2 | 0.045 | 0.08 | 0.0588 ± 0.00444^b |
| Group3 | 0.11 | 0.114 | 0.1104 ± 0.0004^c |
| Group4 | 0.025 | 0.065 | 0.0464 ± 0.0035^d |

Means with the same letter in each column are not significantly differed (P > 0.05).

Means with different letter in each column are significantly differed (P < 0.05).

F-value = 1192.71.
The mean value of testosterone content in serum in group (3) treated rats was (3.85 ± 0.302 μmol/L) which was higher than that of normal control rats (1.562 ± 0.0674 μmol/L) as shown in Table 6. In group (4) the mean value of testosterone in serum (5.598 ± 0.429 μmol/L) was higher than that of normal control group (1.562 ± 0.0674 μmol/L) as shown in Table 6.

4. Discussion

The results are consistent with what has been reported indicating that dietary supplementation of l-carnitine reduced malondialdehyde levels and provided a protective effect in rats exposed to lead (Löster and Böhm, 2001; Geng et al., 2004; Shokrzadeh et al., 2013). l-Carnitine attenuated free radical induced oxidative stress under various pathological conditions (Gülçin, 2006). It was hypothesized that l-carnitine may reduce intermittent hypoxia induced by oxidative stress and, thereby, improving the skeletal muscle performance, resulting in delaying muscle fatigue mediated by the reduction of free radical induced oxidative damage due to the antioxidant and anti-free radical activity of l-carnitine (Bin and Hussain, 2012).

The results concerning the inhibition of NO production in rats exposed to low levels of lead have been in concurrence

### Table 3 Effect of l-carnitine on blood GSH level in rats exposed to lead acetate toxicity (mg/100 ml).

| Groups | Range   | Mean ± SEM   |
|--------|---------|--------------|
|        | Minimum | Maximum      |
| Group1 | 0.439   | 0.661        |
| Group2 | 0.309   | 0.35         |
| Group3 | 0.389   | 0.402        |
| Group4 | 0.428   | 0.45         |

Means with the same letter in each column are not significantly differed (P > 0.05).
Means with different letter in each column are significantly differend (P < 0.05).
SEM = Standard error of mean.
F-value = 22.19.

### Table 4 Effect of l-carnitine on erythrocytes catalase activity in rats exposed to lead acetate toxicity (μg/mg).

| Groups | Range   | Mean ± SEM   |
|--------|---------|--------------|
|        | Minimum | Maximum      |
| Group1 | 0.74    | 1.02         |
| Group2 | 0.23    | 0.312        |
| Group3 | 0.41    | 0.47         |
| Group4 | 0.237   | 0.43         |

Means with the same letter in each column are not significantly differed (P > 0.05).
Means with different letter in each column are significantly differend (P < 0.05).
SEM = Standard error of mean.
F-value = 152.115.

### Table 5 Effect of l-carnitine on erythrocytes SOD activity in rats exposed to lead acetate toxicity (μg/mg).

| Groups | Range   | Mean ± SEM   |
|--------|---------|--------------|
|        | Minimum | Maximum      |
| Group1 | 0.25    | 0.482        |
| Group2 | 0.22    | 0.32         |
| Group3 | 0.32    | 0.43         |
| Group4 | 0.2     | 0.32         |

Means with the same letter in each column are not significantly differed (P > 0.05).
Means with different letter in each column are significantly differend (P < 0.05).
SEM = Standard error of mean.
F-value = 12.555.

### Table 6 Effect of l-carnitine on serum testosterone level in rats exposed to lead acetate toxicity (n mol/L).

| Groups | Range   | Mean ± SEM   |
|--------|---------|--------------|
|        | Minimum | Maximum      |
| Group1 | 1.36    | 1.86         |
| Group2 | 0.55    | 0.84         |
| Group3 | 3       | 5.47         |
| Group4 | 3.18    | 6.52         |

Means with the same letter in each column are not significantly differed (P > 0.05).
Means with different letter in each column are significantly differend (P < 0.05).
SEM = Standard error of mean.
F-value = 70.72.
with what has been reported earlier which indicated that such an effect resulted in increases in vascular resistance, decreases in renal blood flow and glomerular function and an enhancement of oxidative stress. It was suggested that lead-induced hypertension might be related to a decrease in NO and consequent vasoconstriction, rather than a decrease in renal blood flow or to decreases in renal sodium (Dursun et al., 2005; Sun et al., 2005; Nascimento et al., 2014). It was reported that nitric oxide synthase activity in the hippocampus, cerebellum and cerebral cortex were inhibited by exposure to low levels of lead and the level of inhibition was time as well as concentration dependent (Dong et al., 2003). The data indicated that the antioxidant activity of l-carnitine and its derivatives resulted in decreased endothelial NO synthase (eNOS) gene expression. This corroborates what was reported by others where a direct stimulatory effect of L-carnitine on the eNOS gene expression. This corroborates what was reported by others (Ellger et al., 2008). The data showed that lead resulted in significantly decreases in the levels of reduced glutathione. These findings were in agreement with published work that showed that lead significantly decreased reduced glutathione (GSH)/oxidative glutathione (GSSG) and protein sulphydryl groups (PSH)/glutathione-protein mixed disulfide (GSSP) ratio as well as glutathione reductase activities in a concentration-dependent manner (Chen et al., 2004; Suresh et al., 2011). It was reported that lead induced cell death involved in GSH deprivation with a significant decrease in the level of GSH, a critical intracellular antioxidant, observed at all the lead concentrations. These results suggested that the neurotoxic effect of lead may be mediated by apoptosis and prostaglandin E2 release, which could be potentially detrimental to neuronal survival. In another study, it was indicated that a reduction in the concentration of GSH in liver and kidney tissues after lead exposure resulted in a decrease in the liver and kidney concentrations of GSH due to oxidative action caused by lead (Jurczuk et al., 2006).

Acetyl l-carnitine protected against oxidative stress and was proposed as a therapeutic agent for several neurodegenerative disorders. Accordingly, it was suggested that treatment of astrocytes by acetyl-l-carnitine which induces hemeoxygenase-1 resulting in generating the vasoactive molecule carbon monoxide and the potent antioxidant bilirubin, which may explain the protective system potentially active against brain oxidative injury (Cao et al., 2014).

The data indicated that the catalase activity declined after an initial compensatory rise due to oral exposure of lead. Lead reduced the erythrocyte thiol content and antioxidant defense indicating possible role of free radicals in pathogenesis lead toxicity (López et al., 2007; Kasperczyk et al., 2014).

Published data indicated that the administration of l-carnitine resulted in elevation of antioxidant enzymes like catalase, SOD, and GSH (Uçüncü et al., 2006; Hisatomi et al., 2008). They reported that l-carnitine had an antioxidant potential, antioxidant defense enzyme in the cauda epididymis (Izgüüt-Uysal et al., 2001). In another study, l-carnitine treatment increased catalase activity in both blood and gastric mucosa due to its ability to scavenge oxygen free radicals in mammalian tissues (Gómez-Amores et al., 2006; Li et al., 2014). Data reported in the literature indicated that propionyl l-carnitine (PLC) protected cells from toxic oxygen reactive free radical species and enhanced the catalase activity. The antioxidant capacity of PLC in spontaneously hypertensive rats and its beneficial use protecting tissues from hypertension-accompanying oxidative damage (Gómez-Amores et al., 2006). Other studies also reported that the antioxidant properties of l-carnitine propionyl and l-carnitine on spontaneously hypertensive animals prevented endothelial dysfunction through their antioxidant activities (Sleem et al., 2014).

The results indicated that lead resulted in a decrease in SOD activity, while an increase in this enzyme’s activity was noted in rats fed with l-carnitine in their diet. It is well known that SOD represents the first line of defense against oxygen toxicity. It catalyzes the dismutation of superoxide anion producing hydrogen peroxide. These data are consistent with what has been reported in the literature whereby a significant decrease in SOD activity was noted in adult rats that received lead as lead acetate solution and that Lead induced oxidative stress in a dose dependent manner (Annabi Berrahal et al., 2007). Other studies confirmed those findings and reported a significant decrease in the activities of antioxidant enzymes such as erythrocervy-SOD and erythrocervy-catalase in battery manufacturing workers of Western Maharashtra (India) who were occupationally exposed to lead over a long period of time (Patil et al., 2006). A decrease in erythrocyte-SOD and erythrocervy-catalase activities had an adverse effect on heme biosynthesis and imbalance of pro-oxidant resulting in an increase in lipid peroxidation. l-Carnitine increased SOD levels and other antioxidant enzymes. These results were supported by those of others (Tan et al., 2008) who reported that the change in the antioxidant potential of retinal pigment epithelium cells was induced by an increase in SOD and GSH. It was indicated that l-carnitine enhanced T-cell proliferative responses, and may have a vital role in improving functions immune system cells particularly the lymphocytes due to its antioxidant activities. Also, l-carnitine had a radioprotective role in addition to its antioxidant abilities (Thangasamy et al., 2008). Studies on l-carnitine supplementation either individually or in combination with vitamin E reversed brain and retinal damage caused by radiation via increasing the activity of SOD and catalase enzymes in the brain (Sezen et al., 2008). l-Carnitine and alpha-lipoic acid seemed to have protective effects against oxidative damage in adjuvant arthritis model (Cabral et al., 2014).

The results indicated that lead acetate reduced the testosterone levels, while l-carnitine had an opposite effect. Published work on lead showed that it influenced Leydig cell...
steroidogenesis, which resulted in a reduction of testosterone levels resulting in a low sperm count in both human beings and animals. Lead acetate significantly inhibited human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) and dibutylryl cAMP (dbcAMP) stimulated progesterone production from 20 to 35% in MA-10 cells (Liu et al., 2003). A study on testosterone levels in serum of aged rats, showed a significant decrease in those levels in relation to age (P ≤ 0.05). However, l-carnitine and l-arginine reversed this effect and returned testosterone levels near to the levels of that of the control in the young rats (Masi et al., 2003; El-Sayed et al., 2005). It was also found that acetyl l-carnitine protects against the decreases in dopamine and testosterone that normally occur after exposure to both acute and chronic stresses and decreases other markers of stress. These results are supported by Rani and Panneerselvam (2002) who found that neuro-protective effect on the brain in old rats was achieved by the elevation of antioxidants with l-carnitine. l-Carnitine has also antioxidant properties that protect sperm membranes against toxic reactive species and may preserve sperm membranes in roosters, thereby extending the life span of sperm and thus increasing male fertility (Neuman et al., 2002). It was reported that the level of free l-carnitine in seminal plasma, significantly correlated with sperm concentration, motility, and viability. As a result, l-carnitine levels can be taken as a biochemical index used for guidance for clinical treatment of male infertility as well as for studying the mechanisms of male reproduction (Banhani et al., 2014; Manee-In et al., 2014, Pons-Rejraji et al., 2014).

5. Conclusion

Based on the above, it would be obvious to conclude that l-carnitine has a protective power to counteract the effect of lead acetate in rats. Future study should focus on the use of l-carnitine in workers who are exposed to lead toxicity.

References

Ahmed, M.M., Ibrahim, Z.S., Alkaafy, M., El-Shazly, S.A., 2014. l-Carnitine protects against testicular dysfunction caused by gamma irradiation in mice. Acta Histochem. 116, 1046–1055.

Annabi Berrahal, A., Nehdi, A., Hajjaji, N., Gharbi, N., El-Fazaìa, S., 2013. Antioxidative effects of l-carnitine and its short chain esters: relevance for the protection from oxidative stress related cardiovascular damage. Int. J. Cardiol. 107, 54–60.

Cao, Y., Li, X., Shi, P., Wang, L.X., Sui, Z.G., 2014. Effects of l-carnitine on high glucose-induced oxidative stress in retinal ganglion cells. Pharmacology 94, 123–130.

Chen, L., Yang, XianQiang, Jiao, Hongli, Zhao, Baolu, 2004. Effect of tea catechins on the change of glutathione levels caused by Pb(+/+) in PC12 cells. Chem. Res. Toxicol. 17, 922–928.

Dong, G.J., Zhao, Z.Y., Zhu, Z.W., 2003. Effect of lead exposure on nitric oxide synthase activity in different brain regions of developmental rat. Zhonghua Lao Dong Wei Sheng Zhi Ye Bing ZaZhi 21, 263–265.

Dunlap, T., Bdul-Hay, S.A., Chandrasen, R.E., Hagos, G.K., Sinha, V., Wang, Z. Wang, H., Thatcher, G.R., 2008. Nitrates and NSAIDs in cancer chemoprevention therapy: in vitro evidence querying the NO donor functionality. Nitric Oxide: University of Illinois at Chicago, 533 S. Wood Street, Chicago, IL 60612, USA.

Dunning, K.R., Robker, R.L., 2012. Promoting lipid utilization with l-carnitine to improve oocyte quality. Anim. Reprod. Sci. 134 (1–2), 69–75.

Dursun, N., Arifoglu, C., Sier, C., Keskinol, L., 2005. Blood pressure relationship to nitric oxide, lipid peroxidation, levels. Biol. Trace Elem. Res. 104, 141–149.

Ellger, B., Langouche, L., Richir, M., Debaveye, Y., Vanhorebeek, L., Van Leeuwen, P.A., Van den Berghe, G., 2008. Modulation of regional nitric oxide metabolism: blood glucose control or insulin. Intensive Care Med., 3000.

El-Sayed, G., Laila, A., El-Shaeib, A., 2005. Effect of l-carnitine and l-arginine supplementation on fertility by reduction of oxidative stress in rats. In: 4th Intern Sc Conf, Fac Vet Med, Mansoura Univ., pp. 923–942.

Fossati, P., Prencipe, L., Berti, G., 1980. Determination of catalase value. Colorimetric method. Clin. Chem. 26, 227–231.

Geng, A., Guo, Y., Yuan, J., 2004. Effect of dietary l-carnitine and coenzymes Q10 supplementation on performance and asscities mortality of broilers. Arch. Anim. Nutr. 58, 473–482.

Gómez-Amores, L., Mate, A., Revilla, E., Sant-Maria, C., Vázquez, C. M., 2006. Antioxidant activity of propionyl-l-carnitine in liver and heart of spontaneously rats. Life Sci. 78, 1945–1952.

Gómez-Amores, L., Mate, A., Miguel-Carrasco, J.L., Jiménez, L., Jos, A., Cameán, A.M., Revilla, E., Santa-Maria, C., Vázquez, C.M., 2007. l-Carnitine attenuates oxidative stress in hypertonves rats. J. Nutr. Biochem. 18, 533–540.

Gülcin, L., 2007. Antioxidant and antiradical activities of L carnitine. Life Sci. 78, 803–811.

Hisatomi, A., Sakuma, S., Fujiiwara, M., Seki, J., 2008. Effect of tacrolimus on the cauda epididymis in rats: analysis of epidydmal biochemical markers or antioxidant defense enzymes. Toxicology 243, 23–30.

Huang, B.M., Lai, H.Y., Liu, M.Y., 2002. Concentration dependency in lead-inhibited stereoidogenesis in MA-10 mouse Leydig tumor cells. J. Toxicol. Environ. Health A 65, 557–567.
Ibrahim, N.M., Eweis, E.A., El-Beltagi, H.S., Abdel-Mobdy, Y.E., 2012. Effect of lead acetate toxicity on experimental male albino rat. Asian Pac. J. Trop. Biomed. 2, 41–46.

Izgıt-Uysal, V.N., Ağaoğlu, A., Karadöğan, I., Derin, N., 2003. Effects of l-carnitine on neutrophil functions in aged rats. Mech. Ageing Dev. 124, 341–347.

Izgıt-Uysal, V.N., Agac, A., Derin, N., 2001. Effect of carnitine on stress-induced lipid peroxidation in rat gastric mucosa. J. Gastroenterol. 36, 231–236.

Jurczuk, M., Moniuszko-Jakoniuk, J., Brzóska, M.M., 2006. Involvement of some low-molecular thiols in peroxidative mechanisms of lead and ethanol action on rat liver and kidney. Toxicology 219, 11–21.

Kasperekzy, S., Dobrakowski, M., Kasperekzy, A., Machnik, G., Birken, E., 2014. Effect of N-acetylcysteine administration on the expression and activities of antioxidant enzymes and the malondialdehyde level in the blood of lead-exposed workers. Environ. Toxicol. Pharmacol. 37, 638–647.

Lalith Kumar, V., Muralidhara, 2014. Ameliorative effects of ferulic acid against lead acetate-induced oxidative stress, mitochondrial dysfunctions and toxicity in prepubertal rat brain. Neurochem. Res. 39, 2501–2515. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11064-014-1541-7.

Li, J.L., Wang, Q.Y., Luan, H.Y., Kang, Z.C., Wang, C.B., 2012. Effects of L-carnitine against oxidative stress in human hepatocytes: involvement of peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor alpha. J. Biomed. Sci. 21 (19), 32.

Li, H.T., Zhao, Z.H., Ding, H.Y., Wang, L.X., Cao, Y., 2014. Effect of carnitine on concentration in isolated rat hearts in dependence on perfusion conditions. Mol. Cell. Biochem. 217, 83–90.

Manee-In, S., Parnomsupornvichit, S., Kraiprayoon, S., Tharasant, T., Chanapwiat, P., Kaeoket, K., 2014. L-carnitine supplemented extender improves cryopreserved-thawed cat epididymal sperm motility. Asian-Australas. J. Anim. Sci. 27, 791–796. http://dx.doi.org/10.5713/ajas.2013.13565.

Markowitz, M., 2011. Lead poisoning. In: Kliegman, R.M. et al. (Eds.), Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics. 19th ed. Saunders, Philadelphia, pp. 2448–2453.

Nascimento, R.A., Mendes, G., Possomato-Vieira, J.S., Gonçalves-Rizzhi, V.V., Kushima, H., Delella, F.K., Dias-Junior, C.A., 2014. Metalloprotease inhibition protects against reductions in circulating adrenomedullin during lead-induced acute hypertension. Basic Clin. Pharmacol. Toxicol. 116, 508–515. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/bcpt.12337.

Naya-Ruiz, C., Méndez-Armenta, M., Rios, C., 2012. Lead neurotoxicity: effects on brain nitric oxide synthase. J. Mol. Histol. 43, 553–563.

Neuman, S.L., Lin, T.L., Heste, P.V., 2002. The effect of dietary carnitine on semen traits of white Leghorn roosters. Poult. Sci. 503, 81.

Nishikimi, M., Roa, N.A., Yogi, K., 1972. The occurrence of superoxide anion in the reaction of reduced phenazine methosulfate and molecular oxygen. Biochem. Biophys. Res. Commun. 46, 849–854.

Ohkawa, H., Ohishi, W., Yagi, 1979. Determination of lipid peroxide (Malondialdehyde) value. Colorimetric method. Anal. Biochem. 95, 351–358.

Ozsoy, S.Y., Ozsoy, B., Ozyildiz, Z., Aytekin, I., 2011. Protective effect of l-carnitine on experimental lead toxicity in rats: a clinical, histopathological and immunohistochemical study. Biotech. Histochem. 86, 436–443.

Patil, A.J., Bhagwat, V.R., Patil, J.A., Dongre, N.N., Ambekar, J.G., 2006. Effect of lead (Pb) exposure on the activity of superoxide dismutase and catalase in battery manufacturing workers (BMW) of Western Maharashtra (India) with reference to heme biosynthesis. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 3, 329–337.

Pillai, P., Pandya, C., Gupta, S., Gupta, S., 2010. Biochemical and molecular effects of gestational and lactational coexposure to lead and cadmium on ovarian steroidogenesis are associated with oxidative stress in F1 generation rats. Biochem. Mol. Toxicol. 24, 384–394. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/bmt.20351.

Polak, J.O., Flaherty, E.J., Freeman, G.B., Johnson, J.D., Liao, S.C., Bergstrom, P.D., 1996. Evaluating lead bioavailability data by means of a physiologically based lead kinetic model. Ohio 45267–0056, USA.

Pons-Rejraji, H., Brugnon, F., Sion, B., Maqdasy, S., Goubey, G., Pereira, B., Marceau, G., Greume, A.S., Drevet, J., Grizard, G., Janny, L., Taueron, I., 2014. Evaluation of atorvastatin efficacy and toxicity on spermatozoa, accessory glands and gonadal hormones of healthy men: a pilot prospective clinical trial. Reprod. Biol. Endocrinol. 12, 65. http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1477-7827-12-65.

Rani, P.J., Panneerselvam, C., 2002. Effect of l-carnitine on brain lipid peroxidation and antioxidant enzymes in old rats. Gerontol. A Biol. Sci. Med. Sci. 57, 134–137.

Ronis, M.J., Badiquer, T.M., Shema, S.J., Roberson, P.K., Templer, L., Ringer, D., Thomas, P.E., 1998. Endocrine mechanisms underlying the growth effects of developmental lead exposure in the rat. J. Toxicol. Environ. Health A 54, 101–120.

Saedina, S., Abdollahi, M., 2013. Antioxidants; Friends or foe in radiation-induced brain and retinal damages. Neurosurg. Rev. 31, 205–213.

Sharma, S., Raghuvanshi, B.P., Shukla, S., 2014. Toxic effects of lead exposure in rats: involvement of oxidative stress, genotoxic effect, and the beneficial role of N-acetylcysteine supplemented with selenium. J. Environ. Pathol. Toxicol. Oncol. 33, 19–32.
Shokrzadeh, M., Ahangar, N., Zargari, M., Gilani, Z., Shadboorestan, A., Omidi, M., 2013. Protective effect of L-carnitine on level of malondialdehyde in diazinon-induced lipid peroxidation in rats. J. Mazandaran Univ. Med. Sci. 22, 198–206.

Singh, Z., Chadha, P., Sharma, S., 2013. Evaluation of oxidative stress and genotoxicity in battery manufacturing workers occupationally exposed to lead. Toxicol. Int. 20, 95–100.

Sleem, M., Taye, A., El-Moselhy, M.A., Mangoura, S.A., 2014. Combination therapy with losartan and l-carnitine protects against endothelial dysfunction of streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats. Eur. J. Pharmacol. 744, 10–17.

Snedecor, G.W., Cochran, W.G., 1989. Statistical Methods. Iowa State University Press.

Soltaninejad, K., Kebriaeezadeh, A., Minaiee, B., Ostad, S.N., Hosseini, R., Azizi, E., Abdollahi, M., 2003. Effect of L-carnitine administration on the seminal characteristics of oligoasthenospermic stallions. Theriogenology 62, 761–777.

Sun, L., Zhao, Z.Y., Hu, J., Zhou, X.L., 2005. Potential association of ead exposure during early development of mice with alteration of hippocampus nitric oxide levels and learning memory. Biomed. Environ. Sci. 18, 375–378.

Suresh, C.J., Johnson, T.M., Modeste, C.S., Chetty, 2011. Protective role of epigallocatechin 3-gallate against lead-induced toxicity in human neuroblastoma cells. Toxicol. Environ. Chem. 93, 1018–1027.

Tan, X., Hu, S.H., Wang, X.L., 2008. The effect of dietary l-carnitine supplementation on pulmonary hypertension syndrome mortality in broilers exposed to low temperatures. J. Anim. Physiol. Anim. Nutr. (Berl) 92, 203–210.

Thangasamy, T., Subathra, M., Sittadjody, S., Jeyakumar, P., Joyee, A.G., Mendoza, E., Chinnakkana, P., 2008. Role of L-carnitine in the modulation of immune response in aged rats. Clin Chim Acta. 389, 19–24.

Uçüncü, H., Ertekin, M.V., Yöruk, O., Sezen, O., Ozkan, A., Erdoğan, F., Kiziltunc, A., 2006. Vitamin E and l-carnitine, separately or in combination in the prevention of radiation-induced oral mucositis and myelosuppression: a controlled study in a rat model. J. Radiat. Res. 47, 91–102.

Vaziri, N.D., 2008. Mechanisms of lead-induced hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Am. J. Physiol. Heart Circ. Physiol. 295, H454–H465.

Xiang, Y., Piao, S.G., Zou, H.B., Jin, J., Fang, M.R., Lei, D.M., Gao, B.H., Yang, C.W., Li, C., 2013. L-Carnitine protects against cyclosporine-induced pancreatic and renal injury in rats. Transplant. Proc. 45, 3127–3134.