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ЕЖЕМЕСЯЧНЫЙ НАУЧНЫЙ ЖУРНАЛ

Медицинские новости Грузии
საქართველოს სამედიცინო სიახლენი

GEORGIAN MEDICAL NEWS

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GMN: Georgian Medical News is peer-reviewed, published monthly journal committed to promoting the science and art of medicine and the betterment of public health, published by the GMN Editorial Board since 1994. GMN carries original scientific articles on medicine, biology and pharmacy, which are of experimental, theoretical and practical character; publishes original research, reviews, commentaries, editorials, essays, medical news, and correspondence in English and Russian.

GMN is indexed in MEDLINE, SCOPUS, PubMed and VINITI Russian Academy of Sciences. The full text content is available through EBSCO databases.

GMN: Медицинские новости Грузии - ежемесячный рецензируемый научный журнал, издаётся Редакционной коллегией с 1994 года на русском и английском языках в целях поддержки медицинской науки и улучшения здравоохранения. В журнале публикуются оригинальные научные статьи в области медицины, биологии и фармации, статьи обзорного характера, научные сообщения, новости медицины и здравоохранения. Журнал индексируется в MEDLINE, отражён в базе данных SCOPUS, PubMed и ВИНТИ РАН. Полнотекстовые статьи журнала доступны через БД EBSCO.

GMN: Georgian Medical News – საქართველოს სამედიცინო სიახლენი – არის ყოველთვიური სამეცნიერო სამედიცინო რეცენზირებადი ჟურნალი, გამოიცემა 1994 წლიდან, წარმოადგენს სარედაქციო კოლეგიისა და აშშ-ის მეცნიერების, განათლების, ინდუსტრიის, ხელოვნებისა და ბუნებისმეტყველების საერთაშორისო აკადემიის ერთობლივ გამოცემას. GMN-ში რუსულ და ინგლისურ ენებზე ქვეყნდება ექსპერიმენტული, თეორიული და პრაქტიკული ხასიათის ორიგინალური სამეცნიერო სტატიები მედიცინის, ბიოლოგიისა და ფარმაციის სფეროში, მიმოხილვითი ხასიათის სტატიები.

ჟურნალი ინდექსირებულია MEDLINE-ის საერთაშორისო სისტემაში, ასახულია SCOPUS-ის, PubMed-ის და ВИНТИ РАН-ის მონაცემთა ბაზებში. სტატიების სრული ტექსტი ხელმისაწვდომია EBSCO-ს მონაცემთა ბაზებშიდან.

WEBSITE

www.geomednews.com

К СВЕДЕНИЮ АВТОРОВ!

При направлении статьи в редакцию необходимо соблюдать следующие правила:

1. Статья должна быть представлена в двух экземплярах, на русском или английском языках, напечатанная через **полтора интервала на одной стороне стандартного листа с шириной левого поля в три сантиметра**. Используемый компьютерный шрифт для текста на русском и английском языках - **Times New Roman (Кириллица)**, для текста на грузинском языке следует использовать **AcadNusx**. Размер шрифта - **12**. К рукописи, напечатанной на компьютере, должен быть приложен CD со статьей.

2. Размер статьи должен быть не менее десяти и не более двадцати страниц машинописи, включая указатель литературы и резюме на английском, русском и грузинском языках.

3. В статье должны быть освещены актуальность данного материала, методы и результаты исследования и их обсуждение.

При представлении в печать научных экспериментальных работ авторы должны указывать вид и количество экспериментальных животных, применявшиеся методы обезболивания и усыпления (в ходе острых опытов).

4. К статье должны быть приложены краткое (на полстраницы) резюме на английском, русском и грузинском языках (включающее следующие разделы: цель исследования, материал и методы, результаты и заключение) и список ключевых слов (key words).

5. Таблицы необходимо представлять в печатной форме. Фотокопии не принимаются. **Все цифровые, итоговые и процентные данные в таблицах должны соответствовать таковым в тексте статьи**. Таблицы и графики должны быть озаглавлены.

6. Фотографии должны быть контрастными, фотокопии с рентгенограмм - в позитивном изображении. Рисунки, чертежи и диаграммы следует озаглавить, пронумеровать и вставить в соответствующее место текста **в tiff формате**.

В подписях к микрофотографиям следует указывать степень увеличения через окуляр или объектив и метод окраски или импрегнации срезов.

7. Фамилии отечественных авторов приводятся в оригинальной транскрипции.

8. При оформлении и направлении статей в журнал МНГ просим авторов соблюдать правила, изложенные в «Единых требованиях к рукописям, представляемым в биомедицинские журналы», принятых Международным комитетом редакторов медицинских журналов - <http://www.spinesurgery.ru/files/publish.pdf> и http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html В конце каждой оригинальной статьи приводится библиографический список. В список литературы включаются все материалы, на которые имеются ссылки в тексте. Список составляется в алфавитном порядке и нумеруется. Литературный источник приводится на языке оригинала. В списке литературы сначала приводятся работы, написанные знаками грузинского алфавита, затем кириллицей и латиницей. Ссылки на цитируемые работы в тексте статьи даются в квадратных скобках в виде номера, соответствующего номеру данной работы в списке литературы. Большинство цитированных источников должны быть за последние 5-7 лет.

9. Для получения права на публикацию статья должна иметь от руководителя работы или учреждения визу и сопроводительное отношение, написанные или напечатанные на бланке и заверенные подписью и печатью.

10. В конце статьи должны быть подписи всех авторов, полностью приведены их фамилии, имена и отчества, указаны служебный и домашний номера телефонов и адреса или иные координаты. Количество авторов (соавторов) не должно превышать пяти человек.

11. Редакция оставляет за собой право сокращать и исправлять статьи. Корректур авторам не высылаются, вся работа и сверка проводится по авторскому оригиналу.

12. Недопустимо направление в редакцию работ, представленных к печати в иных издательствах или опубликованных в других изданиях.

При нарушении указанных правил статьи не рассматриваются.

REQUIREMENTS

Please note, materials submitted to the Editorial Office Staff are supposed to meet the following requirements:

1. Articles must be provided with a double copy, in English or Russian languages and typed or computer-printed on a single side of standard typing paper, with the left margin of 3 centimeters width, and 1.5 spacing between the lines, typeface - **Times New Roman (Cyrillic)**, print size - 12 (referring to Georgian and Russian materials). With computer-printed texts please enclose a CD carrying the same file titled with Latin symbols.

2. Size of the article, including index and resume in English, Russian and Georgian languages must be at least 10 pages and not exceed the limit of 20 pages of typed or computer-printed text.

3. Submitted material must include a coverage of a topical subject, research methods, results, and review.

Authors of the scientific-research works must indicate the number of experimental biological species drawn in, list the employed methods of anesthetization and soporific means used during acute tests.

4. Articles must have a short (half page) abstract in English, Russian and Georgian (including the following sections: aim of study, material and methods, results and conclusions) and a list of key words.

5. Tables must be presented in an original typed or computer-printed form, instead of a photocopied version. **Numbers, totals, percentile data on the tables must coincide with those in the texts of the articles.** Tables and graphs must be headed.

6. Photographs are required to be contrasted and must be submitted with doubles. Please number each photograph with a pencil on its back, indicate author's name, title of the article (short version), and mark out its top and bottom parts. Drawings must be accurate, drafts and diagrams drawn in Indian ink (or black ink). Photocopies of the X-ray photographs must be presented in a positive image in **tiff format**.

Accurately numbered subtitles for each illustration must be listed on a separate sheet of paper. In the subtitles for the microphotographs please indicate the ocular and objective lens magnification power, method of coloring or impregnation of the microscopic sections (preparations).

7. Please indicate last names, first and middle initials of the native authors, present names and initials of the foreign authors in the transcription of the original language, enclose in parenthesis corresponding number under which the author is listed in the reference materials.

8. Please follow guidance offered to authors by The International Committee of Medical Journal Editors guidance in its Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals publication available online at: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html
http://www.icmje.org/urm_full.pdf

In GMN style for each work cited in the text, a bibliographic reference is given, and this is located at the end of the article under the title "References". All references cited in the text must be listed. The list of references should be arranged alphabetically and then numbered. References are numbered in the text [numbers in square brackets] and in the reference list and numbers are repeated throughout the text as needed. The bibliographic description is given in the language of publication (citations in Georgian script are followed by Cyrillic and Latin).

9. To obtain the rights of publication articles must be accompanied by a visa from the project instructor or the establishment, where the work has been performed, and a reference letter, both written or typed on a special signed form, certified by a stamp or a seal.

10. Articles must be signed by all of the authors at the end, and they must be provided with a list of full names, office and home phone numbers and addresses or other non-office locations where the authors could be reached. The number of the authors (co-authors) must not exceed the limit of 5 people.

11. Editorial Staff reserves the rights to cut down in size and correct the articles. Proof-sheets are not sent out to the authors. The entire editorial and collation work is performed according to the author's original text.

12. Sending in the works that have already been assigned to the press by other Editorial Staffs or have been printed by other publishers is not permissible.

**Articles that Fail to Meet the Aforementioned
Requirements are not Assigned to be Reviewed.**

ავტორთა საქურაღებოლ!

რედაქციაში სტატიის წარმოდგენისას საჭიროა დაიცვათ შემდეგი წესები:

1. სტატია უნდა წარმოადგინოთ 2 ცალად, რუსულ ან ინგლისურ ენებზე დაბეჭდილი სტანდარტული ფურცლის 1 გვერდზე, 3 სმ სიგანის მარცხენა ველისა და სტრიქონებს შორის 1,5 ინტერვალის დაცვით. გამოყენებული კომპიუტერული შრიფტი რუსულ და ინგლისურენოვან ტექსტებში - **Times New Roman (Кириллица)**, ხოლო ქართულენოვან ტექსტში საჭიროა გამოვიყენოთ **AcadNusx**. შრიფტის ზომა – 12. სტატიას თან უნდა ახლდეს CD სტატიით.

2. სტატიის მოცულობა არ უნდა შეადგენდეს 10 გვერდზე ნაკლებს და 20 გვერდზე მეტს ლიტერატურის სიის და რეზიუმეების (ინგლისურ, რუსულ და ქართულ ენებზე) ჩათვლით.

3. სტატიაში საჭიროა გაშუქდეს: საკითხის აქტუალობა; კვლევის მიზანი; საკვლევი მასალა და გამოყენებული მეთოდები; მიღებული შედეგები და მათი განსჯა. ექსპერიმენტული ხასიათის სტატიების წარმოდგენისას ავტორებმა უნდა მიუთითონ საექსპერიმენტო ცხოველების სახეობა და რაოდენობა; გაუტკივარებისა და დაძინების მეთოდები (მწვავე ცდების პირობებში).

4. სტატიას თან უნდა ახლდეს რეზიუმე ინგლისურ, რუსულ და ქართულ ენებზე არანაკლებ ნახევარი გვერდის მოცულობისა (სათაურის, ავტორების, დაწესებულების მითითებით და უნდა შეიცავდეს შემდეგ განყოფილებებს: მიზანი, მასალა და მეთოდები, შედეგები და დასკვნები; ტექსტუალური ნაწილი არ უნდა იყოს 15 სტრიქონზე ნაკლები) და საკვანძო სიტყვების ჩამონათვალი (key words).

5. ცხრილები საჭიროა წარმოადგინოთ ნაბეჭდი სახით. ყველა ციფრული, შემაჯამებელი და პროცენტული მონაცემები უნდა შეესაბამებოდეს ტექსტში მოყვანილს.

6. ფოტოსურათები უნდა იყოს კონტრასტული; სურათები, ნახაზები, დიაგრამები - დასათაურებული, დანომრილი და სათანადო ადგილას ჩასმული. რენტგენოგრამების ფოტოასლები წარმოადგინეთ პოზიტიური გამოსახულებით **tiff** ფორმატში. მიკროფოტოსურათების წარწერებში საჭიროა მიუთითოთ ოკულარის ან ობიექტივის საშუალებით გადიდების ხარისხი, ანათალების შედეგის ან იმპრეგნაციის მეთოდი და აღნიშნოთ სურათის ზედა და ქვედა ნაწილები.

7. სამამულო ავტორების გვარები სტატიაში აღინიშნება ინიციალების თანდართვით, უცხოურისა – უცხოური ტრანსკრიპციით.

8. სტატიას თან უნდა ახლდეს ავტორის მიერ გამოყენებული სამამულო და უცხოური შრომების ბიბლიოგრაფიული სია (ბოლო 5-8 წლის სიღრმით). ანბანური წყობით წარმოდგენილ ბიბლიოგრაფიულ სიაში მიუთითეთ ჯერ სამამულო, შემდეგ უცხოელი ავტორები (გვარი, ინიციალები, სტატიის სათაური, ჟურნალის დასახელება, გამოცემის ადგილი, წელი, ჟურნალის №, პირველი და ბოლო გვერდები). მონოგრაფიის შემთხვევაში მიუთითეთ გამოცემის წელი, ადგილი და გვერდების საერთო რაოდენობა. ტექსტში კვადრატულ ფხიხლებში უნდა მიუთითოთ ავტორის შესაბამისი N ლიტერატურის სიის მიხედვით. მიზანშეწონილია, რომ ციტირებული წყაროების უმეტესი ნაწილი იყოს 5-6 წლის სიღრმის.

9. სტატიას თან უნდა ახლდეს: ა) დაწესებულების ან სამეცნიერო ხელმძღვანელის წარდგინება, დამოწმებული ხელმოწერითა და ბეჭდით; ბ) დარგის სპეციალისტის დამოწმებული რეცენზია, რომელშიც მითითებული იქნება საკითხის აქტუალობა, მასალის საკმაობა, მეთოდის სანდოობა, შედეგების სამეცნიერო-პრაქტიკული მნიშვნელობა.

10. სტატიის ბოლოს საჭიროა ყველა ავტორის ხელმოწერა, რომელთა რაოდენობა არ უნდა აღემატებოდეს 5-ს.

11. რედაქცია იტოვებს უფლებას შეასწოროს სტატია. ტექსტზე მუშაობა და შეჯერება ხდება საავტორო ორიგინალის მიხედვით.

12. დაუშვებელია რედაქციაში ისეთი სტატიის წარდგენა, რომელიც დასაბეჭდად წარდგენილი იყო სხვა რედაქციაში ან გამოქვეყნებული იყო სხვა გამოცემებში.

აღნიშნული წესების დარღვევის შემთხვევაში სტატიები არ განიხილება.

Ruslan Karimulin, Semenenko Andrey Igorevich. EFFECT OF INVESTIGATIONAL COMBINATIONS OF NEUROPROTECTANTS ON THE LEVEL OF S 100 AND NSE PROTEIN IN THE BLOOD SERUM OF PATIENTS WITH MODERATE AND SEVERE ISCHEMIC STROKE.....	6-10
Yurii Soroka, Solomiia Kramar, Zoriana Smahlii, Tetyana Lyebyedyeva, Yuliana Kvasha, Iryna Andriichuk, Zoia Nebesna, Nataliya Lisnychuk. NANOPARTICLES AND COLORECTAL CANCER: CAN THE USE OF METAL NANOPARTICLE COMPOSITIONS AFFECT OXIDATIVE STRESS MARKERS AND COLON HISTOLOGICAL CHANGES UNDER DMH-INDUCED CARCINOGENESIS.....	11-20
Geetika Patel M, Uzma Noor Shah, Aditi Jane, Samir Sapkota, Anurag Verma, Shiv Shankar. UNDERSTANDING THE LONG-TERM INTERPLAY BETWEEN GLUCOCORTICOIDS, PARATHYROID HORMONE LEVELS, AND OSTEOPOROSIS IN PATIENTS.....	21-25
Georgi Tchernev, Lozev I, Ivanov L. MORPHEAFORM BCC OF ALA NASI: A SUCCESSFUL DERMATOSURGICAL APPROACH BY TRANSPOSITION FLAP FROM THE ADJACENT AREA. CONTAMINATION OF VENLAFAXINE, BISOPROLOL AND OLANZAPINE WITH NITROSAMINES/NDSRIS: THE MOST LIKELY CAUSE OF SKIN CANCER DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION.....	26-29
Ashish Chander, Sanjeev Verma, Devanshu Patel J, Roopashree, Dimple, Dilip Kumar Pati. THE CORNEAL ENDOTHELIUM IN OCULAR SURFACE DISEASE AND GLAUCOMA: MECHANISMS OF DYSFUNCTION AND TREATMENT STRATEGIES.....	30-35
Tinatn Gibradze, Tina Kituashvili, Mariana Lomidze. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFICACIES OF BOTULINOTOXIN A THERAPY AND FRACTIONAL RADIO-FREQUENCY-LIFTING IN THE TREATMENT OF PRIMARY HYPERHYDROSIS.....	36-41
Muataz Lafta Jabbar, Majed A Mohammad, Ali Malik Tiryag. CHANGES IN MALE REPRODUCTIVE HORMONES IN PATIENTS WITH COVID-19.....	42-46
Georgi Tchernev. NITROSOGENESIS, ANTIDEPRESSANTS AND THE SERTRALIN INDUCED NEVUS ASSOCIATED CUTANEOUS MELANOMA: THE NDMA/ NNK (NDSRIS) CONTAMINATION AS MOST POTENT MELANOMA INDUCTORS: ALEA IACTA EST.....	47-53
Ibrahim Rudhani, Naim Morina, Lirim Spahiu, Gresa Elezi, Ahmet Avdullahu, Aderim Avdullahu, Mimoza Berbatovci-Ukimeraj. CARDIORENAL SYNDROME AND COVID-19.....	54-57
Khaldoon S. Alhadad, H. N. K. AL-Salman. CHROMATOGRAPHIC SPECTROPHOTOMETRIC DETERMINATION USING REVERSE PHASE HPLC TECHNIQUE FOR MESALAZINE OR MESALAMINE (MESA).....	58-65
Suray W. Madeeh, Saad S. Gasgoos. EVALUATION OF DENTAL CHANGES AFTER MINI-IMPLANT ASSISTED RAPID MAXILLARY EXPANSION IN YOUNG ADULTS: CBCT STUDY.....	66-73
Georgi Tchernev. NITROSOGENESIS LESSONS FROM DERMATOLOGISTS-NITROSAMINES/ NDSRIS CONTAMINATION OF THE POLIMEDICATION IN POLIMORBID PATIENTS AS THE MOST POWERFUL SKIN CANCER INDUCTION: DOUBLE HATCHET FLAP FOR SCC OF THE SCALP OCCURRING DURING TREATMENT WITH VALSARTAN/ HYDROCHLOROTHIAZIDE AND LERCANIDIPINE.....	74-79
Abetova A.A, Raspopova N.I, Yessimov N.B, Prilutskaya M.V, Cherchenko N.N, Kachiyeva Z.S. CLINICAL AND GENETIC FEATURES OF PERSONALIZED ANTIPSYCHOTIC THERAPY OF PATIENTS WITH PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIA OF THE KAZAKH ETHNIC GROUP IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN.....	80-90
Thamir F. Alkhiat, Abdulkareem Z. Al-Musawi, Mohammed Sanna Al-Shukoor, Adel Makki Alyasiri. THE OUTCOME OF PULSELESS PINK HAND FOLLOWING CLOSED SUPRACONDYLAR FRACTURE HUMERUS IN PEDIATRICS.....	91-100
Malathi H, Dhananjoy L, Anupama Nanasahab Tarekar, Krishana Kumar Sharma, Deepak Mewara, Devanshu J. Patel. NEUROPLASTICITY AND BRAIN STIMULATION: DEVELOPING INTERVENTIONS TO PROMOTE RECOVERY FROM STROKE AND TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY.....	101-107
K.A. Ivantsov, V.G. Lim, I.V. Kukes, K.S. Ternovoy, O.V. Khripunova. FATIGUE IN PATIENTS WITH LONG COVID.....	108-112
Abdulkhakim Mussema, Dawit Admasu, Solomon Gebre Bawore, Ritbano Ahmed Abdo, Abdurezak Mohammed Seid. BACTERIAL PROFILE, ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE, AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH URINARY TRACT INFECTION AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN AT HOSANNA TOWN HEALTH FACILITIES, CENTRAL ETHIOPIA.....	113-121
Tamara Tregub, Marianna Lytvynenko, Vitalii Kukushkin, Chebotarova Svitlana, Nina Oliynyk, Olga Gulbs, Rozana Nazaryan, Marianna Lytvynenko. PHARMACOLOGY OF POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER.....	122-124

Ketevan Akhobadze, Nino Chkhaberidze, Nato Pitskhelauri, Maia Kereselidze, Nino Chikhladze, Nino Grdzeldze, Madalina Adina Coman, Diana Dulf, Corinne Peek-Asa. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF INJURIES IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL OF GEORGIA.....	125-129
Krutikova A.D, Krutikova E.I, Petrushanko T.O, Boichenko O.M, Moshel T.M, Ivanytskyi I.O. COMPARISON OF THE IMPACT OF ANTISEPTIC AGENTS ON GARDNERELLA VAGINALIS AND ATOPBIUM VAGINAE DETECTED IN THE ORAL CAVITY OF WOMEN WITH BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS.....	130-132
Yogesh Verma, Himanshu Sachdeva, Sunishtha Kalra, Praveen Kumar, Govind Singh. UNVEILING THE COMPLEX ROLE OF NF-KB IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: INSIGHTS INTO BRAIN INFLAMMATION AND POTENTIAL THERAPEUTIC TARGETS.....	133-141
Valentyna Chorna, Maksym Rybinskyi, Lyudmyla Hudzevych, Kyrlo Savichan, Liliya Hmel, Anatolii Shevchuk. PSYCHOLOGICAL/PSYCHIATRIC CARE SERVICES IN UKRAINE DUE TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF FULL-SCALE WAR...	142-148
Georgi Tchernev. NITROSAMINES IN COMMONLY PRESCRIBED ANTIHYPERTENSIVES AND THE (UN)CONTROLLED DRUG-INDUCED SKIN CANCER: SIMULTANEOUS DEVELOPMENT OF CUTANEOUS MELANOMA AND MULTIPLE BCC AFTER CONCOMITANT ADMINISTRATION OF BISOPROLOL AND FUROSEMIDE.....	149-151
Georgi Tchernev. NITROSAMINE CONTAMINATION WITHIN CARDIAC MULTIMEDICATION - SARTANS (VALSARTAN), CALCIUM CHANNEL BLOCKERS (AMLODIPINE AND NIFEDIPINE), AND ANTIARRHYTHMICS (PROPAFENONE) AS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESSION OF MULTIPLE KERATINOCYTIC CANCERS: ADVANCEMENT ROTATION FLAP FOR KERATOACANTHOMA OF THE UPPER LIP AND UNDERMINING SURGERY FOR BCC OF THE SHOULDER AS AN OPTIMAL DERMATOSURGICAL APPROACH.....	152-155
Minashvili A, Rekhviashvili A, Lomtadidze G, Tsverava M. INFLUENCE OF ESSENTIAL HYPERTENSION ON RIGHT VENTRICULAR MORPHOLOGY AND FUNCTION.....	156-162

CHANGES IN MALE REPRODUCTIVE HORMONES IN PATIENTS WITH COVID-19

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Abstract.

Background: COVID-19 is a global, highly contagious, predominantly respiratory viral illness caused by coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV2). Although COVID-19 is mainly a respiratory disease, it can affect other organ systems causing a lot of extrapulmonary manifestations and multiple organ dysfunctions.

Aim: The aim of the study is to discover if COVID-19 affects male reproductive hormones (testosterone and luteinizing hormone) or not, and whether this effect (if present) is negatively associated with the severity of the disease.

Patients and methods: In this prospective case-control study we recruited 120 reproductive-aged male patients, they represent group (A) which is subdivided into 3 groups according to the severity of the disease (mild, moderate, and severe). A control group consisting of another 120 age-matched males was randomly selected and they represent group (B). The hormone profile of the diseased group is then compared to that of the control group. The testosterone/LH ratio of both groups was calculated and compared.

Results: The age of cases had a mean of 41.96 ± 10.18 and that of the control was 41.85 ± 10.2 years. The age distribution of both groups did not show significant statistical differences (0.937). Patients with COVID-19 exhibited considerably lower levels of total blood testosterone (P value = 0.043) and T/LH ratio (P value 0.0001) compared to the control group, although serum LH levels were significantly higher in the COVID-19 group (P value 0.0001).

Conclusions: In addition to the hematological, biochemical, inflammatory, and immune biomarkers abnormality in patients with COVID-19, the current study demonstrated that total testosterone level, LH level, and T/LH ratio might be affected by the disease according to severity.

Recommendations: Due to the novelty of COVID-19, only a few studies about its effect on male reproductive hormones are available worldwide, and no similar study in our locality. Further studies are required for a better understanding of this issue.

Key words. Male, reproductive hormones, patients, Covid-19.

Introduction.

COVID-19 emerged in China in December 2019 and showed a high rate of infection and mortality. Patients developed pneumonia similar to SARS-CoV [1,2]. The International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses renamed the virus as SARS-CoV2 and declared as a pandemic by the WHO on 11 March 2020 [3]. The origin is unknown, but it is assumed that it originates in the animal market in China [1]. Old age patients more than 65 years developed more severe disease, among them males showed higher mortality rates than females [4,5].

Data from 29 countries showed clear sex-specific mortality with a higher mortality rate among men compared to women [6]. Previous studies showed that many viruses may attack the testis and induce orchitis, which in turn affects the male reproductive function and may cause infertility, these viruses include influenza, mumps virus, HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, Coxsackie virus, zika virus, and SARS-COV [7,8]. Apart from the direct damage of the viruses on the testis, other factors such as inflammation, fever, and dysregulation of the HPG axis could impair male reproductive function [7,9].

SARS-CoV2 uses ACE2 receptors and the trans-membrane serine protease (TMPRSS) as an entry into the host cells [10]. ACE2 is expressed in Sertoli cells, Leydig cells, and spermatogonia, while TMPRSS is found more in Sertoli cells as reported by Wang and colleagues [11]. The high expression of ACE2 in the major cells of the testis enhances the virus entry and colonization, which may negatively impact spermatogenesis and reproductive hormones [12], so, for a better understanding of SARS-CoV2 effect on male reproductive hormones, the male reproductive hormone profile (total serum testosterone hormone, luteinizing hormone, and T/LH ratio).

Testosterone hormone is the major male sex and anabolic hormone, it is essential for the development and maintenance of reproductive tissues in human males such as testis, epididymis, seminal vesicles, prostate, and penis as well as male secondary sexual characteristics such as the growth of body hair and increased bone and muscle mass [13]. The testis secretes more than 95% of testosterone (about 6-7 mg per day), and a small amount of testosterone is produced by the adrenal cortex [13]. Several metabolic steps in about 500 million Leydig cells in the testis are responsible for the production of testosterone from cholesterol, which is converted into inactive metabolites in the liver, then it acts by binding to and activating androgen receptors [14].

The process of testosterone production is regulated by a finely controlled system called Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Gonadal (HPG) Axis, in this axis a hormone called Gonadotropin-Releasing Hormone (GnRH) is secreted by the hypothalamus in the brain in a pulsatile manner into the blood circulation, then GnRH stimulates the anterior pituitary gland to release luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) into the peripheral circulation, LH triggers the synthesis of testosterone and other sex hormones by the Leydig cell in the testis, on the other hand, FSH acts on Sertoli cells to regulate seminiferous tubules and spermatogenesis in the testis [15]. When testosterone level increases, it acts on the anterior pituitary gland and hypothalamus through a negative feedback loop to inhibit the secretion of GnRH and in turn FSH and LH [16].

Like all other steroids, cholesterol is the precursor substance for the synthesis of testosterone. The first step in the biosynthesis of testosterone is a side-chain cleavage of cholesterol and loss of 6 carbon atoms by the effect of cholesterol side-chain cleavage enzyme (P450_{scc}, CYP11A1) to yield pregnenolone. Pregnenolone loses two carbon atoms to produce a variety of C19 steroids by the effect of 17 α -hydroxylase/17,20-lyase enzyme in the endoplasmic reticulum [17]. In the next step, 3 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase oxidize the 3 β -hydroxyl group to produce androstenedione, which in turn is converted by 17 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase into testosterone [18].

In men aged between 19-39 years, the total testosterone level is 264-916 ng/dl [19] with a mean of about 630 ng/dl [20], while it is about 32.6 ng/dl in adult females [21]. Circulating testosterone has three main fractions: free testosterone, sex hormones binding globulin (SHBG) bound, and albumin-bound testosterone [22]. Free or unbound testosterone represents 1.5-2% of total testosterone, while the plasma protein bound represents 98-98.5% [23].

Patients and Methods.

Study design:

The present prospective case-control study was done in Al-Basrah Teaching

Hospital under the supervision of the Scientific Council of Urology during the period between November 10, 2020, and June 2021.

Study population:

We recruited 120 reproductive-aged (median age 36.5 years, ranging from 18-55) male patients for testosterone and luteinizing hormone analysis, who were admitted to Al-Basrah Teaching Hospital, and they represent group (A), a proper sampling strategy was utilized. COVID-19 patients were divided into three subgroups: Group 1: represents 33 patients with mild COVID-19. Group2: represents 41 patients with moderate COVID-19. Group 3: represents 46 patients with severe COVID-19.

The degree of COVID-19 severity [mild (which is defined as those who exhibit any of the different COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, malaise, headache, muscular pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of taste and smell), but who do not exhibit shortness of breath, dyspnea, or abnormal chest imaging) moderate, severe] was determined according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) classification of severity [24]. A control group consisting of another 120 age-matched males (median age 36.5 years, ranging from 18-55) were randomly selected as consecutive volunteers whose ages almost matched the ages of the patients and they had neither preexisting illness nor other viral infection. Written informed consent was obtained from them and they represent a group (B). The blood samples collected from patients in group A on the 1st day of hospital admission.

Ethical consideration: They provided written informed permission and are a group, therefore (B).

Procedure.

Records from patients with COVID-19 were used to gather clinical data, laboratory results, and radiographic characteristics.

The blood samples were obtained from the patients for medical purposes, after the necessary lab tests were finished, the remaining serum was gathered for hormone profile assessment (total serum testosterone, luteinizing hormone, and T/LH ratio). A written informed agreement was acquired for this portion of the trial since the remaining serum samples were often discarded as medical waste and the technique did not place an extra burden or damage on the participants.

The blood levels of luteinizing hormone and testosterone hormone were measured in the control group, and the T/LH ratio was computed. The age-matched control group's men were all detected in the morning due to the sex-related hormones' diurnal pattern. Only blood samples taken in the morning were chosen for the COVID-19 group.

According to the manufacturer's instructions, electrochemiluminescent immunoassays (Cobas e411; Roche, Switzerland) were used to measure the total levels of serum LH and testosterone. The results of the patient's hormone profile and T/LH ratio were compared to that of the age-matched control group.

Statistical analysis: All statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (26-All platforms); continuous variables were expressed as means \pm standard deviations. The student's t-test results were used to compare the two groups' differences. Differences between multiple groups or sub-groups were analyzed by one-way ANOVA test with Bonferroni correction (Bonferroni Post hoc test). Statistical significance was defined as a P value of < 0.05.

Results.

This study involved 120 patients with COVID-19 of various severities (group A) and carefully matched an equal number of healthy individuals (group B). The age of group A had a mean of 41.96 \pm 10.18 and that of group B was 41.85 \pm 10.2 years. The age distribution of both groups did not show significant statistical differences (P value = 0.937). Compared to group B, COVID-19 patients had significantly lower total serum testosterone levels (P value = 0.043), and T/LH ratio (P value < 0.0001), whereas serum LH level was significantly elevated in the COVID-19 group (P value < 0.0001). (Table 1).

By comparing the COVID-19 group as subgroups (mild, moderate, and severe) to the age-matched control group, a similar result was found significantly higher LH (P value < 0.0001), lower testosterone (P value = 0.006), and significantly lower T/LH ratio (P value < 0.0001).

For a more detailed comparison between each COVID-19 sub-group with the control group and the other COVID-19 sub-groups, Post hoc analysis (Bonferroni correction) is used, and the results were as follows:

Regarding testosterone hormone, there was no statistical difference when comparing the control group to the mild (P value = 1.000) or moderate group (P value = 0.202), but the difference was significant between the control group and severe group (P value = 0.045). No significant statistical difference was found in serum testosterone between mild and moderate groups (P value = 0.116), but it was significantly lower in the severe group compared to the mild group (P value = 0.036). No statistical difference between moderate and severe groups was found (P value = 1.000) (Table 3).

Table 1. Male reproductive hormones profiles and age in the COVID-19 group and the control group.

Variables	Cases	Control	P value*
Age	41.96 ± 10.18	41.85 ± 10.2	0.934
Testosterone	4.25 ± 1.3	4.58 ± 1.22	0.043
LH	4.39 ± 1.75	2.91 ± 0.64	0.0001
T/LH ratio	1.11 ± 0.54	1.63 ± 0.48	0.0001

*Student's t-test

Table 2. Comparing hormone profiles in COVID-19 subgroups and control group.

Variables	Control (N= 120)	Mild (N= 33)	Moderate (N=41)	Severe (N=46)	P value*
Testosterone	4.58 ± 1.22	4.79 ± 0.86	4.10 ± 1.12	4.01 ± 1.59	0.006
LH	2.91 ± 0.64	2.73 ± 0.57	4.93 ± 1.28	5.10 ± 1.91	0.0001
T/LH ratio	1.63 ± 0.48	1.81 ± 0.45	0.85 ± 0.23	0.84 ± 0.33	0.0001

*One-way ANOVA

Table 3. Comparing testosterone of each COVID-19 sub-group with that of the control group and the other sub-groups.

Group		Mean difference	P value*
Control	Mild	-0.20481	1.000
	Moderate	0.48133	0.202
	Severe	0.58270*	0.045
Mild	Moderate	0.68614	0.116
	Severe	0.78751*	0.036
Moderate	Severe	0.10137	1.000

*Bonferroni correction (Post hoc test)

Table 4. Comparing LH of each COVID-19 sub-group with that of the control group and the other sub-groups.

Group		Mean difference	P value*
Control	Mild	0.17839	1.000
	Moderate	-2.02287*	0.0001
	Severe	-2.18520*	0.0001
Mild	Moderate	-2.20126*	0.0001
	Severe	-2.36360*	0.0001
Moderate	Severe	-0.16233	1.000

*Bonferroni correction (Post hoc test)

Table 5. Comparing the T/LH ratio of each COVID-19 sub-group with that of the control group and the other sub-groups.

Group		Mean difference	P value*
Control	Mild	-0.18183	0.168
	Moderate	0.77280*	0.0001
	Severe	0.78230*	0.0001
Mild	Moderate	0.95463*	0.0001
	Severe	0.96413*	0.0001
Moderate	Severe	0.00950	1.000

*Bonferroni correction (Post hoc test)

Regarding LH, no statistical difference was found between the mild group and the control group (P value =1.000). Serum LH was significantly higher in moderate and severe groups as compared to control or mild groups (P value < 0.0001). No significant difference was identified between the LH of the moderate group and that of the severe group (P value = 1.000) (Table 4).

Regarding the T/LH ratio, no statistical difference was found between the mild group and the control group (P value =0.168). The T/LH ratio was significantly lower in moderate and severe groups as compared to control or mild groups (P value < 0.0001). No significant difference was seen between the T/LH

ratio in the moderate group and that in the severe group (P value = 1.000) (Table 5).

Discussion.

The result of this study showed that neither T nor LH in the mild group was significantly changed as compared to the control group; hence the T/LH ratio was not affected. In the moderate disease group, T is not remarkably decreased, LH is significantly increased, and the T/LH ratio is significantly decreased. In the severe disease group, T is significantly decreased, LH is significantly increased, and T/LH ratio is significantly decreased.

Several studies investigated the impact of COVID-19 on male sex hormones, the first evidence showing disturbance in male reproductive hormones in COVID-19 patients was reported in China by Ma et al. [25], showing that testosterone is not remarkably changed, LH is significantly increased, while T/LH ratio is significantly reduced. Also, another study reported there is reduced testosterone/LH ratios have been seen in COVID-19 individuals, suggesting probable subclinical impairment to male gonad function [26] which agrees with the current study.

Another study in China in 2020 showed similar results [27], the results of our study agreed with these findings with the exception that testosterone levels are significantly decreased in the severe COVID-19 group. Rastrelli et al. in Italy reported that low testosterone levels are observed in the most severe cases of COVID-19 [28], the current study agrees with this result. In a study in Germany Schroeder et al reported that testosterone is low in the majority of COVID-19 patients [29], as found in this study. Another study done in Mersin City, Turkey 2020, also reported that testosterone might be decreased in COVID-19 patients [30], the present study showed similar findings. The virus attack on the endocrine glands, cytokines storm, and medication used to manage COVID-19 may disrupt the normality of endocrine coordination.

Conclusion.

The limitations of this study were the lack of long-term follow-up and also development of many variants of the virus, This study demonstrated that total testosterone level, LH, and T/LH ratio might be affected by the disease according to severity. In the severe disease group, T is decreased, LH is significantly increased, and T/LH ratio is significantly decreased. In the moderate group, there is no remarkable decrease in T and a significant increase in LH, while the T/LH ratio is significantly decreased. On the other hand, the hormone profile in the mild group is not affected as compared to the control group. Preexisting medical illnesses, age, viral load, and severity of symptoms all may affect the duration of hormone changes.

Recommendations.

Due to the novelty of COVID-19, only a few studies about its effect on male reproductive hormones are available worldwide and no similar study in our locality. Further studies are required for a better understanding of this issue.

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