



## Lead nitrate induced histochemical alteration in the liver of freshwater fish *Mystus bleekeri* (Day)

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### Manuscript details:

Received : 27.11.2017  
Accepted : 10.02.2018  
Published : 04.03.2018

**Editor: Dr. Arvind Chavhan**

### Cite this article as:

Khodake SP and Borale RP (2018) Lead nitrate induced histochemical alteration in the liver of freshwater fish *Mystus bleekeri* (Day), *Int. J. of Life Sciences*, Volume 6(1): 131-136.

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Available online on  
<http://www.ijlsci.in>

ISSN: 2320-964X (Online)

ISSN: 2320-7817 (Print)

### ABSTRACT

The present investigation deals with the effect of treatment of Lead nitrate, on the histochemical components of liver from freshwater fish, *Mystus bleekeri*. This fish was exposed to the 1/5<sup>th</sup> of LC<sub>50</sub> concentration of Lead nitrate in laboratory conditions for duration of 24, 48 and 96 hrs. The histochemical observation revealed that the proteins, lipids and glycogen were depleted. Lead nitrate toxicity was found time dependent. As the fish, *Mystus bleekeri* is consumed by people; it is essential to know the effect Lead nitrate on histochemical changes in liver.

**Keywords-** *Mystus bleekeri*, Lead nitrate, histochemical alteration, sublethal toxicity

### INTRODUCTION

Heavy metals have long been recognized as serious pollutants of the aquatic environment. They cause serious impairment in metabolic, physiological and structural system of aquatic organism, when present in high concentration (Strmac and Braunbeck, 2000; Javed, 2003). Fish are largely being used for the assessment of the quality of aquatic environment and serve as bioindicators of environmental pollution (Lopes *et al.* 2001; Dautremepuits *et al.* 2004). Heavy metals accumulated in the tissues of fish may catalyses reactions that generate reactive oxygen species (ROS) which may lead to environmental oxidative stress.

The tremendous increase in the use of heavy metals over the past few decades has inevitably resulted in an increased flux of metallic substances in the aquatic environment (Yang and Rose, 2003). Heavy metals are rapidly discharged into water bodies as wastes and agricultural run-off. Heavy metals are trace metals with a density at least five times that of water, they cannot be metabolized by the organism and hence they are bio-accumulative and inhibit biological processes (Das and Gupta, 2010). An increase of heavy metals toxicity and its bio-accumulation in various tissues of aquatic organisms threatens the biodiversity of ecosystems and health of consumers (Vinodhini and Narayanan,

2008a; George *et al.* 2011). However, accumulation of metals in fish tissues depends on many factors including environmental factors, type of heavy metals, metal concentration, time of exposure and biological characteristics of fish (Jeziarska and Witeska, 2006). In fishes, accumulation of Lead in various tissues and alterations in biochemical and hematological parameters has been reported (Ates *et al.* 2008). Moreover, Lead-induced changes in the histological structure of gills and kidneys have also been reported (Adeyemo, 2008; Palaniappan *et al.* 2008). The present study is, thus, aimed at examining histochemical alterations due to toxic stress.

## METHODOLOGY

After calculation of the 96-h LC<sub>50</sub> (459.2ppm) of Lead nitrate, fish (*Mystus bleekeri*) were exposed to sub-lethal concentration (1/5<sup>th</sup> of LC<sub>50</sub>) of Lead nitrate for 96-h. After exposure, at 24-h, 48-h and 96-h interval, fish was removed from aquarium. The survived fishes were sacrificed and their liver was quickly excised and utilized for histochemical studies from both the control and experimental fishes. After fixation, the tissues were dehydrated through 30 - 100 % alcohol grades and cleared in xylene. Cold and hot impregnations were followed by embedding the tissue in paraffin wax (M. P. 58-60<sup>o</sup> C). Serial sections were cut at 7 µm serial using rotary microtome.

For histochemical detection of protein Mercuric bromophenol blue method (Chapman, 1975) was used, for lipid Sudan black-B method (Baker, 1946) and mounted in glycerin jelly and for glycogen, PAS method (Hotchkiss, 1948) was employed. All the techniques followed as described by Pearse (1961).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Mystus bleekeri* were exposed to sublethal concentrations of Lead nitrate. The results showed marked histochemical changes, depending on the visualization of variations in intensity of the specific stains.

### Test for proteins:

In the liver cells of normal (control) fish, *Mystus bleekeri* (Figure 1A) were characterized by high concentration of proteins are visualized as intensely dark blue coloured

granules. The normal hepatocytes demonstrated intense positivity of Bromophenol blue stain, exhibited the presence of a basic and high concentration of total proteins. In the cellular cytoplasm, the Mercury bromophenol blue reaction was either in the form of bluish granules of different size, or in a diffused state, perinuclear or peripheral in position and particularly concentrated adjacent to blood sinusoids. Chromatin bodies and nucleoli exhibited a deep colouration with bromophenol blue.

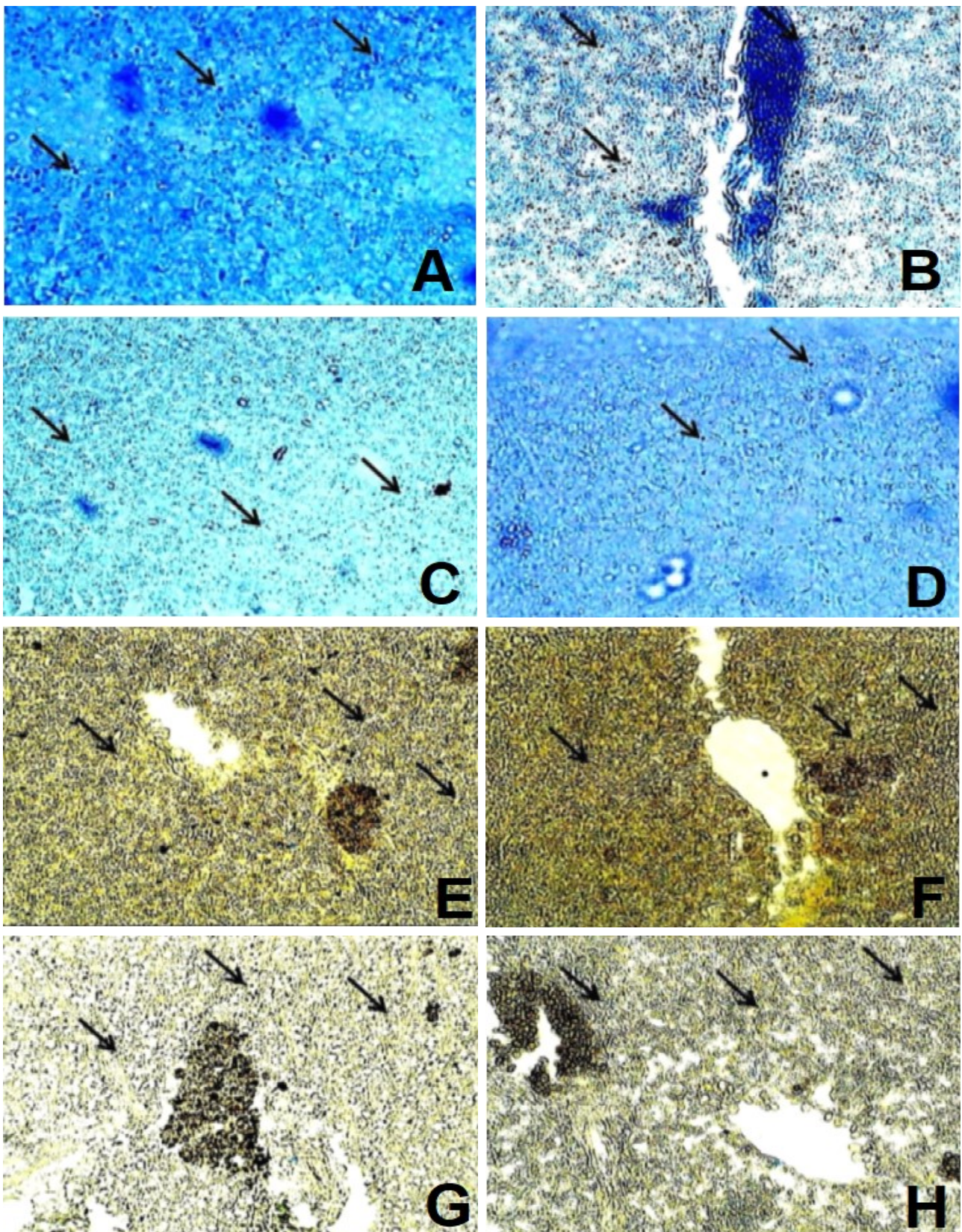
Total proteins were found to exhibit a noticeable decrease in cytoplasm and nucleus of the liver cells of *Mystus bleekeri*, after exposure to Lead nitrate. As duration of treatment increased, the diminutions in the protein contents are obvious and the hepatocytes showed cytoplasmic vacuolation. The liver of *Mystus bleekeri* after exposure to sublethal concentration 91.84 ppm Lead nitrate at 96-h, showed decreased bromophenol blue reaction as decrease in concentration of protein and their remnants were mainly located at the peripheries of the hepatic cells which showed cytoplasmic vacuolation (Figure 1B to D).

### Test for Lipids:

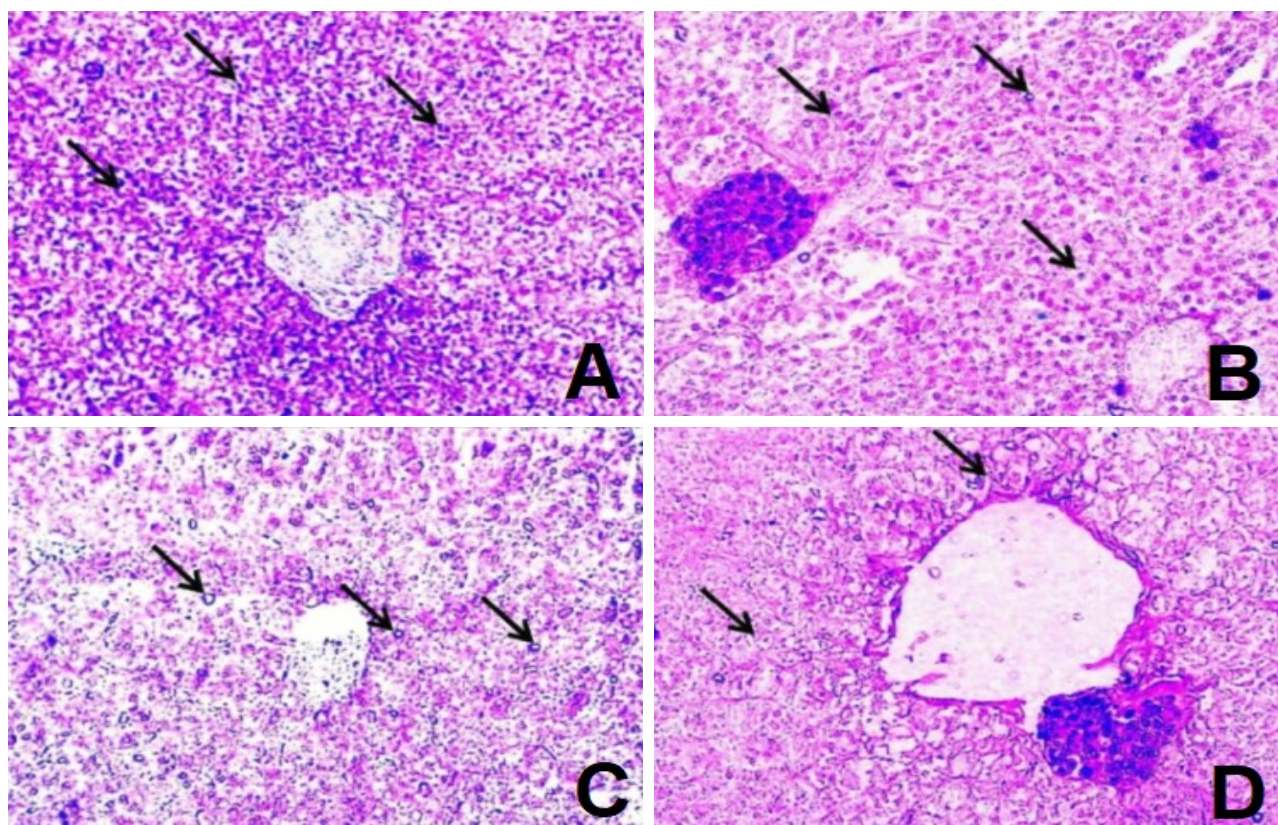
The hepatic cells of the control and treated fishes showed the presence of lipids in the studied tissues. The lipid content of liver tissues of normal (control) fish, *Mystus bleekeri* was appeared to be much more abundant than the treated fish (Figure 1E). It was observed that the individual hepatic cells have designated a variant trend of lipid localization. Some cells appeared more condensed with lipid than other ones.

In the liver cells of normal (control) fish, *Mystus bleekeri*, lipid inclusions were uniformly distributed throughout the cytoplasm, perinuclear and peripheral in position, and particularly accumulated in the cytoplasm adjacent to sinusoids. Most of the hepatic cells exhibited extremely strong diffuse patterns of Sudan black stainability. The sudanophilic granules were coarser and showed a tendency to aggregate into patches either surrounding the nucleus or lying at the periphery of the cells.

It was observed that, lipid inclusions were reduced in liver cells of *Mystus bleekeri* of treated fish with sublethal concentration of Lead nitrate. Occasional scattered lipid change was observed in some hepatocytes adjacent to the central vein. At 24-h stage



**Fig. 1 – A:** The liver cells of normal (control), **B-D:** hepatic cells which showed cytoplasmic vacuolation **E:** The lipid content of liver tissues of normal (control) fish **F:** section showed a slightly reduced Sudan black reactivity and so slight decrease in lipid content **G:** liver cells showed detectable alterations and reduced in the quantity of lipid inclusions, **H:** depletion of lipid in liver after exposure to sublethal concentration of 91.84 ppm Lead nitrate at 96-h treatment.



**Fig. 2-A:** The PAS preparations of the liver cells of normal (control), **B:** hepatocytes showed very slight decrease in the glycogen, **C:** hepatocytes showed slight decrease in the glycogen, **D:** hepatic cells showed very less amount of glycogen.

(Figure 1F) section showed a slightly reduced Sudan black reactivity and so slight decrease in lipid content, as compared to control. At 48-h stage (Figure 1G), some of the liver cells showed detectable alterations and reduced in the quantity of lipid inclusions. Such depletion of lipid is more pronounced in liver after exposure to sublethal concentration of 91.84 ppm Lead nitrate at 96-h treatment (Figure 1H).

#### Test for Glycogen:

Histochemical analysis with Periodic Acid Schiff reaction, glycogen deposits were identified in liver of *Mystus bleekeri*. The PAS preparations of the liver cells of normal (control) fish species, *Mystus bleekeri*, revealed that glycogen was observed in the cytoplasm of the hepatic cells as indicated by large number of reddish or magenta coloured fine granules of different sizes. It is distributed densely in the hepatic cells around the portal area. (Figure 2 A)

On the other hand, after exposure of fishes to sublethal concentrations of Lead nitrate for 24-h, 48-h and 96-h, glycogen content of the liver cells decreased. After 24-h,

the hepatocytes showed very slight decrease in the glycogen content in histological section (Figure 2B). After 48-h, the hepatocytes showed slight decrease in the glycogen in histological section (Figure 2C). This diminution was quite evidenced in the amount and stainability. This reduction of glycogen inclusion becomes more pronounced at 96-h. At 96-h, the hepatic cells showed very less amount of glycogen (Figure 2D).

The histochemical tests revealed the localization of chemical products of cellular activity. The altered state of cell constituent can be studied by using histochemical reactions. The intensity of staining can be used for comparing the protein, lipid, glycogen content present the hepatic cells of the normal and treated fishes with Lead nitrate at different duration. The liver is the primary organ for detoxication of toxicants; particularly heavy metals.

In the present histochemical study, normal (control) fish, *Mystus bleekeri* were characterized by high concentration of proteins, lipids and glycogen in hepatic cells as compare to treated fish with sublethal

concentrations of Lead nitrate. The treated fish showed decreasing trends of proteins, lipids and glycogen in hepatic cells. The depletion of metabolites in this tissue indicates that the whole metabolic pool of the fish gets disturbed or altered under toxic stress. The change in the histochemical contents indicates their rapid utilization to provide excess energy in order to cope with stressful conditions. According to present results on *Mystus bleekeri*, it is suggestive that decreased level of protein, lipid and glycogen in studied tissues may be due to toxic effect of Lead nitrate or which may impose stress condition. Similar decreasing pattern was noticed by other workers. Verma and Chand (1986) observed similar histochemical alterations in the fish *Notopterus notopterus* due to the toxic effect of mercuric chloride. The carbohydrate content of liver in the fish species, *Colisa lalia* showed progressive decrease in staining intensity to PAS when treated at sub-lethal and median lethal concentrations of lindane treatment was studied by Karpaganapthy *et al.* (1988). Palanichamy *et al.* (1989) studied the effect of chemical effluent on fish species *Mystus vittatus* and found that body constituents like protein, lipid and carbohydrate content of liver, gill, muscles and intestine decreased with increasing concentration of effluent.

Naik *et al.* (2004) reported the total protein, lipid and glycogen content underwent depletion in the tissue of the tannery effluent treated fish, *Cyprinus carpio*. Khare and Singh (2004) studied histochemical changes in the gill of the fish, *Nandus nandus* exposed to sublethal concentration of endosulfan and carbaryl for one month. After long term exposure to both the pesticides, they observed that there is reduction in the carbohydrate contents in all parts of the gills. Tripathi and Verma (2004) reported that exposing of the fish *Clarias batrachus* to fenvalerate resulted in a highly significant decrease of protein contents of the liver, brain and muscle. Sakr and Laial (2005) noticed the marked reduction in glycogen content of the liver cell as compared to the control fish.

Anandhi and Murthy (2006) studied the localization of protein, lipid and glycogen in the liver cells of *Glossogobius giuris* at different period of reproductive cycle after malathion treatment. They reported significant decrease in protein, lipid and glycogen in the liver of malathion treated fish. Sabry *et al.* (2009) studied the histochemical alterations in juvenile fish *Oreochromis aureus* treated with phenol. They have subjected the sublethal doses of LC<sub>50</sub> for 7 days and

studied histochemical changes. The result of their investigation after induction of phenol resulted drastic reduction in overall carbohydrates from various tissues. Pathan *et al.* (2009) showed that paper mill effluent induce reduction in glycogen from liver of freshwater fish, *Rasbora daniconius*. Bagale *et al.* (2015) studied histochemical change in liver of *Tilapia mossambica*. Their investigation shows that carbohydrate reserves were severely depleted during exposure to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of LC<sub>50</sub> concentration of sodium fluoride in the liver of fish.

## CONCLUSION

The use of histochemical reactions is very realistic approach. The histochemical results from the present study indicate that the Lead nitrate causes different degrees of injuries to the fish liver. According to present studies on *Mystus bleekeri*, it is suggestive that decreased level of protein, lipid and glycogen, in the liver may be due to toxic effect of Lead nitrate and or may be due to toxicant imposed stress condition. It is recommended to lessen the use of agriculture chemical fertilizers and pesticides in the fields therefore; the agricultural run-off meet to water reservoirs contains fewer amounts of heavy metals which avoid negative impact on aquatic biota.

## Acknowledgement

The authors are very thankful to the Principal, JET's ZB Patil College, Dhule and Head, Department of Zoology for providing Laboratory facilities, necessary chemicals and instruments to conduct the experiment.

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