

Effect of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* and Camel Milk on the Reproduction of Diabetic Male Albino Rats – A Review

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ABSTRACT:

Diabetes mellitus is a long-term medical condition identified by high blood sugar levels. Two forms of diabetes most commonly occur. Type I diabetes occurs in children and type II diabetes is normally found in adults. Although diabetes affects the whole body's function surprisingly, it gives rise to male infertility. Diabetes causes impotency, and ejaculatory disorders and decreases libido in males. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* and camel milk both are known for their anti-diabetic properties. Both are able to deal with the oxidative stress caused by diabetes because of their antioxidant properties. Both have other properties like antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antifungal, antimicrobial, antitumor, cardio-protective, hepato-protective etc. The crude extract of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* has insulin-secreting activity, significantly lowering the glucose level of blood in diabetic rats. Camel milk contains insulin-like protein which is also reported to positively decrease the blood sugar level.

Keywords:

Diabetes mellitus, Blood glucose, Reproduction, *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*, Camel milk.

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INTRODUCTION

Diabetes Mellitus (DM) is a chronic progressive disease characterized by hyperglycemia, mainly divided into three categories type I DM, type II DM and gestational DM. Type I DM occurs when beta cells are destroyed, causing insufficient insulin production by the pancreas. And when the body becomes resistant to insulin, it results in Type II DM. (Omolaoye *et al.*, 2018). Gestational DM occurs during pregnancy, females become intolerant to glucose (American Diabetes Association, 2004). Other less-known

forms of diabetes are monogenic diabetes (congenital method of diabetes) and diabetes occurs in patients with cystic fibrosis (Yang & Chan, 2016). Type II DM is the most prevailing form of diabetes and accounts for 90% of cases. It is also known as a lifestyle disorder because it is commonly linked with obesity and advanced age. Diet and exercise are most commonly recommended for this type of diabetes (Ansari *et al.*, 2020).

In the year 2011, there were 366 million people affected by diabetes globally as per the report of

the International Diabetes Federation and by the year 2030, there will be 522 million people expected to have diabetes (Whiting *et al.*, 2011). India, the United States and China have the maximum number of individuals with diabetes. (Wild *et al.*, 2004). Uncontrolled diabetes could bring about numerous diseases, namely retinopathy, neuropathy, nephropathy, kidney failure, cardiovascular diseases, and male impotence (Atkinson & Maclaren, 1994).

OXIDATIVE STRESS

Diabetes mellitus affects the process of signal transduction. The most important participant in the development of diabetes and its complications is Oxidative Stress. It performs a pivotal role in all cases of diabetes mellitus. Oxidative stress was first observed in experimental diabetes in 1982 (Matkovic *et al.*, 1982). Hyperglycemia leads to the generation of free radicals [mainly reactive oxygen species (ROS)], which are responsible for inducing oxidative stress (Sakuraba *et al.*, 2002). Oxidative stress was reported as an important cause in the development of many diseases including diabetes (Fig. 1). It ordinarily occurs when the amount of ROS generation is higher than the amount which is generally removed by the

defence system. Oxidative stress contributes significantly to diabetes development and its complications in the macrovascular and microvascular systems (Pitocco *et al.*, 2010). Although the precise mechanism is still unknown. When there is oxidative stress, it can cause the oxidation of DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid), proteins, and lipids (Wei *et al.*, 2009). Endothelial cells in both large and small vessels produce excess mitochondrial superoxide due to diabetes-related metabolic anomalies (Tiwari *et al.*, 2013). Oxidative stress damages the cell indirectly by the activation of different pathways or signalling processes which promotes diabetic complications and insulin resistance (Giorgi *et al.*, 2010). The hyperglycemic situation will activate insulin which in turn activates insulin receptors that exist in skeletal muscles, adipose tissue, liver etc. This insulin signalling endorses glucose uptake and metabolism. Oxidative stress interrupts insulin signalling and leads to insulin resistance which is responsible for the development of diabetes mellitus (Zhang *et al.*, 2020). Antioxidant treatment is recommended by researchers to counter this oxidative stress induced by diabetes.

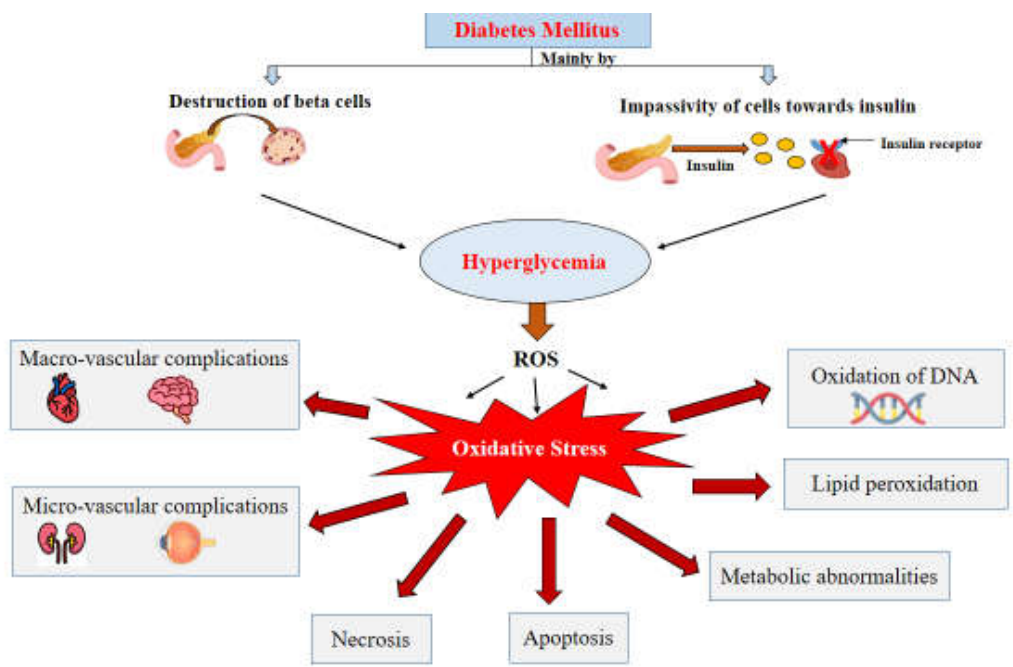


Figure 1: Diabetes and oxidative stress

THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF DIABETES ON THE MALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

Diabetes mellitus adversely affects reproduction in both diabetic men and models of animals. It is closely associated with male infertility (Fig. 2). DM causes histological damage to the testis (Ghanbari *et al.*, 2015). It also decreases sperm motility, sperm count and testosterone level (Saumya & Basha, 2017). Sperm morphology is severely disrupted by diabetes (Rashid & Sil, 2015). There are several studies that show that diabetes alters the process of spermatogenesis (Scarano *et al.*, 2006). Also, males with diabetes suffered from reduced sexual libido, impotence (Escrig *et al.*, 2002), difficulties in ejaculation, hypogonadism and erectile dysfunction (Dinulovic & Radonjic, 1990). Experimental

diabetic animals have decreased levels of LH, FSH, and testosterone in their serum, according to studies (Ballester *et al.*, 2004). Both types of diabetes mellitus affect the function of reproductive organs in males. However, the type I form is mostly detected before reaching the age of 30 years. And type- II diabetes occurs during the reproductive phase of life (Williams & Pickup, 2004). Shrilatha (2007) observed an escalation in the DNA destruction of sperms and a decrease in the number of sperms in STZ-induced diabetic rats. DM contributes to oxidative stress in the body by generating free radicals. These free radicals alter the process of sperm maturation and cause DNA damage (Nna *et al.*, 2017).

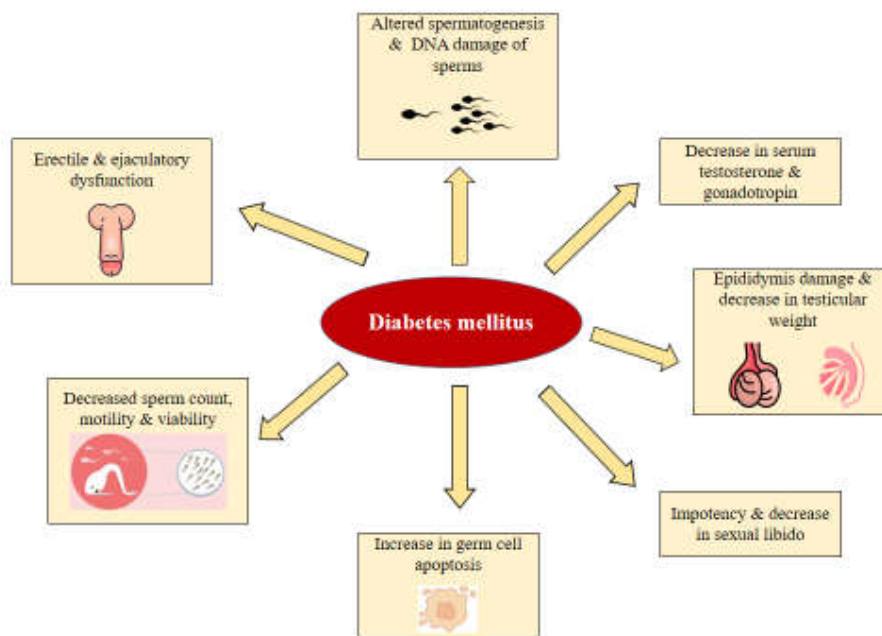


Figure 2: Effect of diabetes mellitus on the male reproductive system.

Oxidative stress caused by diabetes can result in apoptosis of spermatozoa or sperms (Kothari *et al.*, 2010). Diabetes causes oxidative degradation of lipids, and disturbances in the metabolism of proteins and carbohydrates (Davis, 2006). A large number of studies were conducted on rats with diabetes induced by streptozotocin to assess its impact on their reproductive system.

Vikram *et al.*, (2008) observed that the dose of 45 mg per kg of body weight of streptozotocin in rats causes biochemical changes in the accessory sex organs. A further study accompanied by Navarro-Casado *et al.*, (2010) where diabetic rats were treated with streptozotocin at two different doses: 45 mg/kg and 60 mg/kg of body weight. This shows the decrease in motility of sperms

and weight of testis, and epididymis also decreases. Studies reported that DM triggered changes in semen quality and decreased sperm density (Imani *et al.*, 2021). And increased sperm DNA disintegration, and apoptosis of germ cells (Maresch *et al.*, 2018).

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis

Diabetes mellitus is a lasting state therefore its management needs strict control of glucose levels and regular treatment to reduce the risk of diabetes-associated complications (Wong, 2005). Oral hypoglycemic drugs are commonly used to control high blood glucose levels. But these drugs have several side effects including nausea and vomiting. In Indian medicine, plants or plant-based products have been used since ancient times to treat diabetes mellitus. Because plant-based products or herbal products are less toxic and does not have any side effect like chemical drugs (Rao *et al.*, 2003). The WHO also recognizes the importance of medicinal plants which have anti-diabetic properties in the effective treatment of diabetes. Many indigenous plants have been recognized in folk medicine which has anti-diabetic properties, one of them is *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* (Jadhav *et al.*, 2009). *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* is a widely cultivated evergreen shrub for its ornamental value worldwide. It has several different colors of flower out of which the red flower variety is

preferably used in traditional medicine. It comes under the Malvaceae family and it is locally called ‘china rose’ (Usmanghani *et al.*, 1997). There are several uses of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* including pharmaceutical, pharmacological, cosmetical etc. It also possesses anti-cancer, anti-fungal, antioxidant and analgesic properties (Sivaraman & Saju, 2021). *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* when compared to other species like *Hibiscus sabdariffa* contains more amounts of phenolics, anthocyanins, and flavonoids (Murillo Pulgarin *et al.*, 2017) and these compounds play an important role in the pharmacological effects of the plant (Patel & Adhav, 2016). The *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* has been traditionally used for its anti-diabetic properties in medicine. (Fig. 3). It also has other properties like antioxidant, antitumor, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, antifungal, antimicrobial etc (Vastrad & Byadgi, 2018). The compounds present in it are terpenoids, saponins, riboflavin, thiamine, niacin etc (Kadve *et al.*, 2012). Diabetes generates free radicals causing oxidative stress. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* is rich in flavonoids and phenolic compounds, making it a potent antioxidant. Plant-derived antioxidants proved beneficial for reversing the impairment triggered by diabetes (Bhaskar *et al.*, 2011).

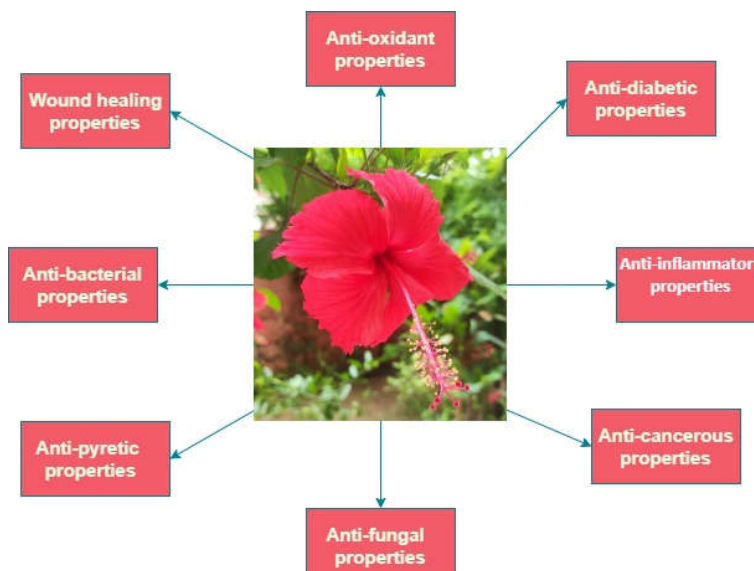


Figure 3: Different properties of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*

Camel milk

Camel milk is usually used in traditional medication due to its anti-diabetic properties. Camel milk is far better than bovine milk because it contains more amount of manganese, copper, zinc, and vitamins A, C and E. Therefore, camel milk has better antioxidant properties (Akbar, 2011). It does not cause any milk allergies because of the absence of β -casein and β -lactoglobulin which are the main reason for milk allergies (Fig. 4). The percentage of lactose in camel milk is lower than in the milk of other species (Al Kanhal & H. A., 2010). So, children suffering from lactose intolerance can

easily digest camel milk (Shabo *et al.*, 2005). When human milk is not available, camel milk can be used as a substitute. Camel milk contains an adequate amount of essential amino acids that are crucial for human health (Ho *et al.*, 2021). Compared to cow milk, camel milk has significantly higher levels of insulin. Therefore, camel milk is more helpful in lowering blood glucose levels as compared to cow milk (Singh *et al.*, 2006). The distinctive qualities are antimicrobial, antidiabetic and hepatoprotective properties (Althnaian *et al.*, 2013).



Camel Milk 	Cow Milk 
Low lactose content	High lactose content
More protein	Less protein
Lower cholesterol	Higher cholesterol
More unsaturated fatty acids	Less unsaturated fatty acids
Less saturated fats	More saturated fats
Higher content of vitamin C, vitamin A and vitamin B	Lower content of vitamins
Not contain beta-lactoglobulin	Contains beta-lactoglobulin
Low in calories	High in calories
Not contain A1 beta-casein	Contains A1 beta-casein
High concentration of many minerals like magnesium, calcium, iron etc.	Low concentration of minerals

Figure 4: Camel milk Vs. Cow milk

Camel milk is widely used in the field of therapy because of its unique properties. It has a higher concentration of minerals including magnesium, sodium, potassium, iron, copper, and zinc but low cholesterol levels and sugar as compared to other ruminant milk (Fig. 4). Compared to cow's milk, camel milk contains greater vitamin C which boosts immunity (Yadav *et al.*, 2015).

EFFECT OF *HIBISCUS ROSA-SINENSIS* ON REPRODUCTION OF DIABETIC MALE ALBINO RATS

A large number of studies reported that the extract of hibiscus used to treat inflammatory diseases, also positively affects male fertility and spermatogenesis (Reddy *et al.*, 1997). Hibiscus is widely used in traditional medicine, as its extract is recognized for its anti-diabetic properties. (Ojiako *et al.*, 2016). This extract significantly lowers the blood sugar level in experimental animals (Kumar *et al.*, 2011). The genus *Hibiscus* has been used to treat colds since ancient times and it also has wound healing

properties. It also helps in skin rejuvenation and is used to treat damaged tissue (Shivananda Nayak *et al.*, 2007). Sachdewa and Khemani observed that in diabetic experimental rats, the ethanol flower extract of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* significantly lowers the sugar level of blood (Sachdewa & Khemani, 2003). Its extract has tumour-suppressing properties which help in the reduction of tumour growth. Sharma *et al.*, (2004) reported the anticancerous properties of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* in the mouse when ultraviolet radiation caused the production of tumour cells in the skin of the mouse. The antidiabetic potential of flower extract has also been observed in pregnant rats suffering from diabetes (Afiune *et al.*, 2017). Venkatesh & Thilagavathi (2008) reported that in the experimental models, flower extract shows antidiabetic potential which remarkably decreases the blood glucose level. *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* blossoms have the potential to treat diabetes along with other diseases like heart disease without producing any kind of cytotoxic effect because of the presence of antioxidants. It has an advantageous effect on myocardial ischemic disease (Gauthaman *et al.*, 2006). Sharma *et al.*, (2016) also investigated the hypoglycemic outcome of the flowers of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* in type- II diabetic patients. According to Sankaran & Vadivel (2011), the *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* flower extract has antioxidant and anti-diabetic properties. In rabbits also, its flower extract is recognized for its antioxidant and anti-diabetic properties (Pethe *et al.*, 2017). Along with flowers, the foliage of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* also known for having antidiabetic potential (Moqbel *et al.*, 2011, Mamun *et al.*, 2013). Its leaf extract shows insulin-secreting activity in diabetic Wistar rats (Vimala *et al.*, 2008, Sachdewa *et al.*, 2001). The hypoglycemic effect and antioxidant potential of the foliage of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* have also been calculated by Zaki *et al.*, 2017. The antioxidant qualities of *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* roots are well established and are reported to tackle diabetes-induced oxidative stress in diabetic rats (Kumar *et al.*, 2013). Alam *et al.*, (1990) show that in traditional medicine, rural communities use *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* as a treatment for diabetes mellitus. Its crude extract is known for treating constipation and diarrhoea. They have also been used in healing

ulcers since ancient times. Leaves and flowers are also used for promoting the growth and colour of hairs (Adhirajan *et al.*, 2003). Different excerpts of *Hibiscus* show the positive effect on the diabetic male rat's reproductive system. A study by Idris *et al.*, (2012) reported that the treatment of *Hibiscus rosa sinensis* in experimental animals with high blood sugar levels considerably amplified the number of sperms and motility. They also observed a remarkable decline in sperm abnormalities. *Hibiscus* extract protects testis morphology in diabetic rats, according to histological analysis. This extract reduces the oxidative destruction triggered by diabetes on the testis of diabetic rats (Budin *et al.*, 2018). Anthocyanin, a phytopigment found in the *Hibiscus* flower has been observed to have defensive properties against testicular toxicity in rats (Amin *et al.*, 2008). *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* has been reported to provide protection against genotoxicity in Swiss albino mice because of the presence of free radical scavenging properties (Khatib *et al.*, 2009).

EFFECT OF CAMEL MILK ON REPRODUCTION OF DIABETIC MALE ALBINO RATS

Camel milk is consumed in camel-rich regions to lower blood glucose levels and treat diabetes mellitus (Mohamad *et al.*, 2009). In India, it was discovered that the Rajasthani population that drank camel milk had a lower incidence of diabetes than the other communities that did not (Agarwal *et al.*, 2003). Drinking camel milk daily has been shown to help treat type I diabetes. (Agrawal *et al.*, 2005). Nanoparticles safeguard insulin in the stomach which is present in camel milk, therefore it safely passes into the blood. Due to this reason, camel milk is able to lower the sugar level of blood (Malik *et al.*, 2012). In various animal models, blood sugar levels have been observed to be reduced by camel milk. The sugar level in the bloodstream of diabetic rabbits is reduced by 78 per cent after 4-5 weeks of treatment with camel milk (EL SAID *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, camel milk treatment lowers diabetic dogs' blood glucose levels by 47% (Sbouy *et al.*, 2010). Diabetes induces oxidative stress, camel milk contains RQ-8 peptide which is known for its antioxidant properties.

Therefore, camel milk reduces the oxidative damage caused by diabetes mellitus. Camel milk contains unique fatty acids that improve insulin sensitivity in the body and are thus able to slow down the development of type- II diabetes (Shahriari *et al.*, 2018). Ebaid *et al.*, (2015) concluded that camel milk improves wound healing potential and increases immunity in diabetic rats. Camel milk helps in boosting the health of diabetic patients. Clinical studies show that daily intake of camel milk by patients suffering from type I diabetes decreases the insulin requirement by 30 % and significantly lowers the glucose level of blood. This is due to insulin-like proteins present in camel milk (Agrawal *et al.*, 2007). Camel milk comprises antioxidants that are helpful in regulating the glucose level of humans (Limon *et al.*, 2014). Camel milk drinking has been demonstrated to increase epididymal sperm count and motility in rats. And significantly decreases sperm abnormalities. Histological study of the testis shows that camel milk improves the structure of the testis by increasing the diameter of seminiferous tubules. It raises the amount of testosterone in rats' testicles and serum (Gad *et al.*, 2018). The semen characteristics are also improved by camel milk (Zakaria *et al.*, 2016). Camel milk shows a protective effect on the morphology of the testis and sperms of rats (El-Azab & Elmahalaway, 2020). Mohamed *et al.*, (2019) reported that camel milk effectively improves testicular and sperm damage in rats.

CONCLUSION

Diabetes mellitus is a disease that gradually worsens over time and affects millions of people worldwide. It affects the overall body functions and it also causes male infertility. Its treatment by oral drugs or chemicals has several side effects. Natural products or herbal products have been used to treat diabetes since ancient times. Both camel milk and *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* are well acknowledged for having anti-diabetic effects. They have other properties also like antioxidants and wound healing. A large number of studies reported their hypoglycemic activity on experimental models. The extract flowers and leaves of *Hibiscus* have the insulin-secreting activity which lowers the blood

glucose level. Camel milk contains insulin-like protein and therefore also reduces the blood glucose level in diabetic patients. Camel milk also increases immunity because of the presence of a high amount of vitamin C. Studies conducted on diabetic male rats show that *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* can modify how diabetes affects the reproductive system. It significantly increases the motility, count and viability of sperm after treatment in albino rats with diabetes. Camel milk improves the morphology of the testis and also increases the level of testosterone in diabetic male albino rats. It also shows a protective effect on reproductive damage caused by insecticides or nanoparticles. So we can say that both *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* and camel milk has significant potential to decrease blood sugar level. Also, both have antioxidant properties useful for tackling diabetes-induced oxidative stress.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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