

1           **Effect of Light Wavelength on the Sexual and Asexual Reproduction of the**  
2                                   **Monogonont Rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas***

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4                                   Hee-Jin KIM, Koushirou SUGA and Atsushi HAGIWARA\*<sup>1</sup>

5  
6   **Abstract:** The monogonont rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas* (Australian strain) showed  
7 a steadily increasing population growth and larger number of resting egg production  
8 under continuous white light compared to under total darkness when they were batch  
9 cultured. By comparing different wavelength of light, such as white (control), 470  
10 (blue), 525 (green) and 660 (red) nm, rotifers showed no significant differences in  
11 specific population growth rate, but sexual reproduction showed different patterns  
12 associated with light wavelengths. Although there were no significant differences with  
13 regard to mixis induction, the resting egg formation actively occurred at 525 nm. We  
14 further observed the movement of female rotifers to find the influential factor of  
15 different sexual reproduction. There was no significant difference in the mean  
16 swimming speed of 10 female rotifers, but the proportion of settling individuals varied  
17 with light wavelength. Under 525 nm light, no individuals continuously settled for one  
18 minute, while under other light wavelengths the percent of settling females for a minute  
19 ranged between  $6.1\pm 5.4$  and  $23.8\pm 6.5\%$ . The higher ratio of swimming females at 525  
20 nm should enhance the male/female encounters, which resulted in higher resting egg  
21 formation.

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Graduate School of Fisheries Science and Environmental Studies, Nagasaki University,  
Bunkyo 1-14, Nagasaki 852-8521, Japan.

\* Corresponding author: E-mail, hagiwara@nagasaki-u.ac.jp (A. Hagiwara).

23 **Key words:** *Brachionus manjavacas*; Light wavelength; Reproduction; Behavior

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26 Aquatic organisms living near the surface such as planktonic metazoan including  
27 zooplankton and marine invertebrate larvae are exposed to solar light, and they show the  
28 phototactic responses such as the diel and ontogenetic vertical distribution (Forward  
29 1988; Ringelberg 1999; Jékely et al. 2008). They have eyespots that cannot form  
30 images but can sense the direction of light (Jékely et al. 2008). The common  
31 planktonic invertebrate, the monogonont rotifer *Brachionus*, has a cerebral eye (red eye  
32 spot) consisting of two types of pigment-bearing cells: epithelial cells consisting of cup-  
33 shaped pigmented cells (accessory pigments), and sensory neurons to process a  
34 specialized membranous structure associated with the photoreceptor pigment (sensory  
35 pigment) (Clément 1980; Clément et al. 1983; Cornillac et al. 1983). Rotifers can  
36 detect the direction of light with the functional cerebral eye. They show sensitivity to  
37 direction, quantity, quality, duration and wavelength of light (Clément et al. 1983).  
38 We focused on the light wavelength-dependent phototaxis (Clément 1980; Clément et al.  
39 1983; Cornillac et al. 1983) effect on rotifer reproduction in the present study.

40 Euryhaline monogonont rotifers have a cyclically parthenogenetic life cycle with both  
41 asexual (amictic) and sexual (mictic) reproduction and it is affected by various internal  
42 and external factors (Ricci 2001; Serra et al. 2004; Hagiwara et al. 2007; Gilbert 2010).  
43 Asexual reproduction predominates in the rotifer's life cycle, while sexual reproduction  
44 results from stimulation by various environmental factors such as light, temperature and  
45 food density. In sexual reproduction, mictic females produce haploid males, or if  
46 fertilized, they produce diploid resting eggs (Gilbert 2004, 2010; Hagiwara et al. 2007).  
47 The produced resting eggs can be used as *Artemia* cyst in aquaculture. Among the

48 environmental factors, light plays an important role in the behavior of numerous  
49 plankton species with phototaxis (Forward 1988; Buskey et al. 1989; Storz and Paul  
50 1998). In the case of rotifers, the light affects reproduction as well as behavior. In  
51 the light, *Asplanchna brightwelli* swims at higher speeds and with fewer turns than  
52 darkness as a phototactic response (Mimouni et al. 1993). *B. rubens* shows sensitivity  
53 to light cycles in male production (Laderman and Gutman 1974; Gilbert 2004) and  
54 *Notommata* sp. and *Trichocera* sp. are affected by a long photoperiod in mictic female  
55 production (Gilbert 2004). The previous studies have been made on freshwater rotifers  
56 and little attention has been given to euryhaline rotifers. Euryhaline rotifer *Brachionus*  
57 species, they are widely used as the live food in marine larviculture, and the  
58 optimization of these rotifer culture condition has a primary importance. In this study,  
59 we tried to optimize the rotifer culture condition by the regulation of illuminating light  
60 wavelength.

61 We predicted the effect of continuous lighting on the reproduction of the euryhaline  
62 rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas* as a function of rotifer eyespot. We firstly investigated  
63 the effect of presence of light on the reproduction of rotifers using continuous white  
64 light composed of broad range of wavelength including blue, green and red regions.  
65 Secondly, the effect of specific wavelength on the behavior and reproduction of the  
66 rotifer *B. manjavacas* was studied. If the rotifers show different reproductive patterns  
67 against light wavelengths, different behavior such as swimming and settlement  
68 movements associated with four light wavelengths may affect those patterns. Thus,  
69 we monitored the movements of female rotifers associated with different light  
70 wavelengths.

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72

## Materials and Methods

73

74 *Lighting effects on rotifer reproduction*

75 We employed Australian strain of the monogonont rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas*  
76 (Fontaneto et al. 2007), which belongs to *B. plicatilis* species complex for this study.  
77 This strain shows both active sexual and asexual reproduction (Araujo and Hagiwara  
78 2005; Kim and Hagiwara 2011). The resting eggs of rotifers were produced at 11 psu,  
79  $25.0 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$ , and the eggs were hatched under  $1.4 \text{ W/m}^2$  of fluorescence light with  
80 photoperiod at 24L:0D. New born neonates from resting eggs were inoculated into 30  
81 ml mayonnaise bottles containing 20 ml of 11 psu culture medium at 1 ind/ml. The  
82 culture medium was prepared by the dilution of natural seawater with mili-Q water  
83 (Millipore  $0.22 \mu\text{m}$ ) followed by GF/C filtration (Whatman) and sterilization ( $121^\circ\text{C}$ , 20  
84 minutes). The rotifers were cultured at  $25.0 \pm 0.5^\circ\text{C}$  with the daily feeding of  
85 *Tetraselmis tetrathele* ( $0.24 \times 10^6$  cells/ml) and no aeration for 8 days in triplicates. The  
86 food of rotifer, *T. tetrathele* cultured in Erd-Schreiber medium was centrifuged at 2,000  
87 xg for 10 minutes, and resuspended in the rotifer culture medium. *T. tetrathele* is  
88 effective for enhancing both sexual and asexual reproduction of *B. plicatilis* species  
89 complex (Korstad et al. 1989; Hagiwara and Hino 1990). Light-emitting diodes  
90 (LEDs, Keystone Technology Inc., Japan) were used for the light source, and the  
91 rotifers were equally illuminated from side of a bottle and the light intensity was equal  
92 in triplicate cultures. Control rotifers were cultured in total darkness, and treatments  
93 were under continuous white-LED light (with peaks at 460 and 570 nm, also see Fig. 1)  
94 at  $1.4 \text{ W/m}^2$  measured by fiber optic spectrometer (USB 4000, Ocean optics Inc., USA).  
95 The mean number of rotifers was estimated by daily count of female and male rotifers  
96 without fixation by pipetting out 1 ml samples from triplicate cultures. Female rotifers  
97 were classified into 4 types on the basis of carrying egg types: non-egg carrying female,

98 female-producing amictic female ( $F_{\text{♀}}$ ), male-producing mictic female ( $M_{\text{♀}}$ ), and  
 99 resting egg-producing mictic female ( $R_{\text{♀}}$ ). The category non-egg carrying female  
 100 includes immature females before laying eggs, post-reproductive females, and non-  
 101 spawning adult females (Hagiwara et al. 1988). The mean values of triplicates were  
 102 used for estimating population growth ( $r$ ), mixis (%) and fertilization (%). We  
 103 calculated these reproduction parameters by the following three equations (Hagiwara  
 104 and Hino 1988):

105

106 Population growth rate ( $r$ ):  $\ln(N_t/N_0) / t$

107 Mixis (%):  $[(M_{\text{♀}}+R_{\text{♀}})/(F_{\text{♀}}+M_{\text{♀}}+R_{\text{♀}})] \times 100$

108 Fertilization (%):  $[(R_{\text{♀}})/(M_{\text{♀}}+R_{\text{♀}})] \times 100$

109

110 Where  $t$  is the culture days, and  $N_0$  and  $N_t$  are the number of all the types of female  
 111 rotifers on Day 0 and  $t$ , respectively. The number of produced resting eggs was also  
 112 counted daily.

113

#### 114 *Light wavelength effects on rotifer reproduction*

115 To test the effect of light wavelength on the reproduction of rotifers, we cultured the  
 116 rotifers for 8 days under four different wavelength LED lights (Keystone Technology,  
 117 Inc., Japan): white (control), 470 (blue), 525 (green) and 660 (red) nm as shown in Fig 1.  
 118 Other culture conditions and observations were set up the same as in the experiment of  
 119 lighting effects.

120

#### 121 *Light wavelength effects on rotifer movement*

122 The swimming behavior such as swimming speed and the number of swimming and

Fig. 1

123 settling rotifers under control and three different wavelength lights (white, 470, 525 and  
124 660 nm) were monitored on Day 8. We pipetted out 300  $\mu$ l of medium from 20 ml  
125 cultures containing about 30 rotifers into a well of 48-well microplate with three  
126 replicates. Movements of rotifers were recorded for 1 minute under a  
127 stereomicroscope at x12.5 (SteREO Discovery V8, Carl Zeiss, Inc., USA). We  
128 analyzed swimming speed of 10 female rotifers and the proportion of settling  
129 individuals using Dipp Motion Pro version 2.01 (DITECT Co. Ltd., Japan).

130

### 131 *Statistical analysis*

132 We used *t*-test to evaluate the effect of presence of light on the pattern of  
133 reproduction and the movements of rotifers. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was  
134 performed to examine the effect of light wavelength followed by Tukey-Kramer multi-  
135 comparison test. All statistical analyses were performed using Statview version 5.0  
136 software (SAS Institute, Inc., USA).

137

## 138 **Results**

139

### 140 *Lighting effects on rotifer reproduction*

141 Initial population growth until Day 4 was higher in total darkness ( $r=1.21\pm 0.01/\text{day}$ )  
142 than with continuous light ( $r=0.98\pm 0.02/\text{day}$ ;  $n=3$ , *t*-test,  $P<0.05$ ). Rotifers under  
143 continuous light showed a steady increase of population growth until the end of culture,  
144 while no population growth was observed in total darkness since Day 5 (Fig. 2a). In  
145 the sexual reproduction, percent mixis ( $4.8\pm 0.8\%$  in total darkness and  $4.3\pm 1.2\%$  under  
146 continuous light) and fertilization ( $17.7\pm 5.3\%$  in total darkness and  $21.5\pm 1.5\%$  under  
147 continuous light) showed no significant differences between under lighting and

148 darkness. The rotifers cultured under continuous light formed a larger number of  
 149 resting eggs ( $0.9\pm 0.2$  eggs/ml) than those in total darkness ( $0.5\pm 0.3$  eggs/ml) for 8 days  
 150 (Fig. 2b).

Fig. 2

151

### 152 *Light wavelength effects on rotifer reproduction*

153 The population of total female rotifers (consisting of four female types) continuously  
 154 increased until the end of culture (see Fig. 3). There was no significant difference in  
 155 the population growth rate ( $r$ ) during the first five days among three different light  
 156 wavelengths and control (white), which ranged from  $0.98\pm 0.02$  to  $1.01\pm 0.02$ /day (Table  
 157 1). On the other hand, the initial population growth until Day 3 was higher at 470 nm  
 158 (Tukey-Kramer test,  $P<0.05$ ).

Fig. 3

159 Male-producing females (unfertilized mictic females) initially appeared on Day 2.  
 160 The density of male-producing females showed no difference among all cultures, while  
 161 the density of resting egg-producing females at 525 nm was higher than others (Fig. 3).  
 162 Sexual reproductive parameters showed different patterns associated with light  
 163 wavelength (Table 1). Although there was no significant difference in mixis rate  
 164 ( $3.3\pm 0.5\%$  -  $4.9\pm 1.4\%$ ), the fertilization rate was the lowest under white light  
 165 ( $21.5\pm 1.5\%$ ). On the other hand, the rotifers produced more males at 660 nm  
 166 ( $126.6\pm 13.4$  males/ml; Fig 4a), while a higher number of resting egg was produced at  
 167 525 nm ( $3.2\pm 1.6$  resting eggs/ml, Fig 4b). Moreover, the initiation of resting egg  
 168 production was the earliest at 525 nm on Day 4, but the rotifers at other light  
 169 wavelengths started to produce resting eggs on Day 5 (Fig. 4b). The production of  
 170 resting eggs at 525 nm was also maintained at a high level ( $0.9\pm 0.5$  resting eggs/ml)  
 171 until the last day of culture.

Table 1

172

Fig. 4

173 *Light wavelength effects on rotifer movement*

174 The mean swimming speed of 10 female rotifers in each culture was not significantly  
175 different among all cultures (Table 2). However the proportion of settling rotifers was  
176 different associated with light wavelengths. No individuals continuously attached on  
177 the side and bottom of a well of multiwall plate at 525 nm light (0%) for a minute, while  
178 rotifers under other wavelengths showed  $6.1\pm 5.4$  (control) –  $23.8\pm 6.5\%$  (660 nm) of  
179 settlement.

Table 2

180

181 **Discussion**

182

183 The population growth of euryhaline rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas* (Australian  
184 strain) is affected by continuous irradiation of light. The population growth under  
185 continuous white light increased until the last day of culture in contrast to that in total  
186 darkness ceased on Day 4 (Fig. 2a). The rotifers under both treatments were daily fed  
187 on the same amount of food ( $0.24\times 10^6$  *T. tetrathele* cells/ml) during culture period.  
188 This feeding amount did not support increasing population, and the rotifers in total  
189 darkness maintained the density at the end of culture (Snell 1986; Kirk 1997). On the  
190 other hand, the rotifers cultured under white light showed continuous population growth  
191 under food limitation condition. The initial population growth (until Day 4) in  
192 complete darkness is higher than that under light. Freshwater rotifer *Asplancha*  
193 *brighwelli* exhibits photokinesis and they show active orthokinesis reaction (moving  
194 faster and more dispersion) under light (Mimouni et al. 1993). The same phenomenon  
195 was also reported with *B. calyciflorus* (Viaud 1940; Clément 1977). It is speculated  
196 that the tested rotifers spent more energy to move under light than darkness during the  
197 period of light adaptation (until Day 4), even though feeding amount was same.



198 Therefore, the rotifers under light might experience the energy shortage for reproduction  
199 resulting in lower population growth until Day 4. In the sexual reproduction, the  
200 higher number of produced resting eggs was shown under light. There were no  
201 significant differences in sexual reproductive parameters and in the number of produced  
202 resting eggs per each single sexual female (Table 3). Thus, the higher number of  
203 sexual female rotifers should affect the number of produced resting eggs.

Table 3

204 Light quality and quantity such as intensity and day length are important factors  
205 regulating the growth of phytoplankton (Aidar et al. 1994; Meseck et al. 2005).  
206 *Tetraselmis chui* cultured under longer day length (for 24 hours) and higher light  
207 intensities ( $220 \mu\text{Einst}/\text{m}^2/\text{s}$ ) showed higher biomass (Meseck et al. 2005), although  
208 phytoplankton loses energy by respiration in total darkness (Nybakken 2001).  
209 Moreover, *Tetraselmis gracilis* is more stimulated to synthesize pigments and protein  
210 when incubated under white light (Aidar et al. 1994). The nutrient value of *T.*  
211 *tetrathele* is expected to be higher under continuous white light as the same mechanisms  
212 of the reported *Tetraselmis* species. The rotifers under continuous light should obtain  
213 more chances of intake higher quality food and showed active population growth until  
214 the last day of culture (Fig. 2a).

215 The white LED light which is composed of three dominant light wavelengths, blue  
216 (470 nm), green (525 nm) and red (660 nm, Fig. 1, Thornton 1971) enhanced the  
217 reproduction of rotifers in this study. The rotifer *B. manjavacas* shows light  
218 wavelength-dependent phototaxis and we hypothesized that the irradiation of different  
219 wavelengths should lead to different reproductive patterns caused by their phototaxis.  
220 As the results of this study, the asexual reproduction showed the same pattern of  
221 population growth among light treatments. On the other hand, the sexual reproduction  
222 was different by four different light wavelengths. The sexual reproduction initiated on

223 Day 2 and significantly affected the logistic population growth after Day 5 (Fig. 3). A  
224 large number of fertilized mictic females appeared at 525 nm on Day 5 with the earliest  
225 production of resting eggs on Day 4 (Fig. 4). On the other hand, a number of sexual  
226 females at 660 nm remain unfertilized (Fig. 3) and the males actively appeared on Day 5  
227 (Fig. 4). We postulated that the key factor of active resting egg production is the  
228 mechanism of fertilization, and observed female behaviors under four different light  
229 wavelengths. There were no significant differences in swimming speed against four  
230 different light wavelengths, while no individuals continuously settled on a wall of  
231 microplate at 525 nm (Table 2). Rotifer males continue to swim (Hagiwara et al.  
232 1988), so that they may have more chances to encounter with swimming females than  
233 settling ones and these movements could lead to active fertilization. To support this  
234 view, it is required to examine the behavior of male rotifer under different light  
235 wavelengths. Because, male rotifers also have an eyespot and are possible to show  
236 different movement patterns associated with light wavelengths. In this study, *T.*  
237 *tetrathele* was employed as a food source for the tested rotifers. The flagellated  
238 phytoplankton *Tetraselmis* species show strong phototactic response (Melkonian and  
239 Robenek 1979; Foster and Smyth 1980) and these effects on the rotifer reproduction  
240 cannot be ignored. Therefore, the further study with other phytoplankton having no  
241 phototaxis such as *Chlorella* is needed to make use of the light regulating culture  
242 system of rotifer in aquaculture.

243

244

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353 **Tables**

354

355 **Table 1.** Reproduction parameters of the Australian rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas*  
 356 under different light wavelengths

Light wavelength	Population growth (/day)	Mixis (%)	Fertilization (%)
White	0.98±0.02	4.3±1.2	21.5± 1.5 <sup>b</sup>
470 nm	1.01±0.02	3.3±0.5	31.5± 0.2 <sup>a</sup>
525 nm	0.98±0.03	4.9±1.4	38.4±11.2 <sup>a</sup>
660 nm	1.00±0.00	4.1±0.3	34.4± 9.5 <sup>a</sup>

357 Values are mean ± standard deviations of three replicates. Superscript letters  
 358 indicate the significant differences (a>b, Tukey-Kramer test,  $P<0.05$ ).

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363 **Table 2.** Movements of the Australian rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas* (swimming  
 364 speed of 10 female rotifers and the number of attached individuals in triplicates) at  
 365 different light wavelengths

	White	470 nm	525 nm	660 nm
Swimming speed (mm/sec)	0.46±0.24	0.77±0.21	0.49±0.25	0.52±0.36
Settling individuals (%)	6.1±5.4 <sup>b</sup>	7.6±0.8 <sup>b</sup>	0 <sup>b</sup>	23.8±6.5 <sup>a</sup>

366 Values are mean ± standard deviations. Superscript letters indicate the significant  
 367 differences (a>b, Tukey-Kramer test,  $P<0.05$ ).

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371

372 **Table 3.** The number of produced resting eggs per a sexual female from the initial  
373 day of resting egg production to the end of culture

	Darkness	Light
Day 5	0.11±0.19	0.06±0.06
Day 6	1.39±0.79	0.52±0.19
Day 7	2.67±2.31	1.48±0.67
Day 8	0	1.54±1.28

374 Values are mean ± standard deviations.

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377

**Figure captions**

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380 **Fig. 1.** Luminescence spectrum of four LEDs: white, blue, green, and red from  
381 Keystone Technology Inc (Japan). Lines indicate light wavelengths such as black,  
382 blue, green and red lines indicate the white (with peaks at 460 and 570 nm), blue (470  
383 nm), green (525 nm), and red (660 nm) LED's spectrum, respectively.




384



385 **Fig. 2.** Lighting effect on the reproductive pattern of the Australian rotifer *Brachionus*  
386 *manjavacas*; (A) variation of total female density. Closed and open circles indicate the  
387 density of total female rotifers in a total darkness and light, respectively. (B) Total  
388 number of produced resting eggs for 8 days. Black and white columns indicate the  
389 number of produced resting eggs in a total darkness and light, and vertical bars  
390 represent standard deviations. Asterisk on (B) shows statistically significant difference  
391 (*t*-test,  $P < 0.05$ ).

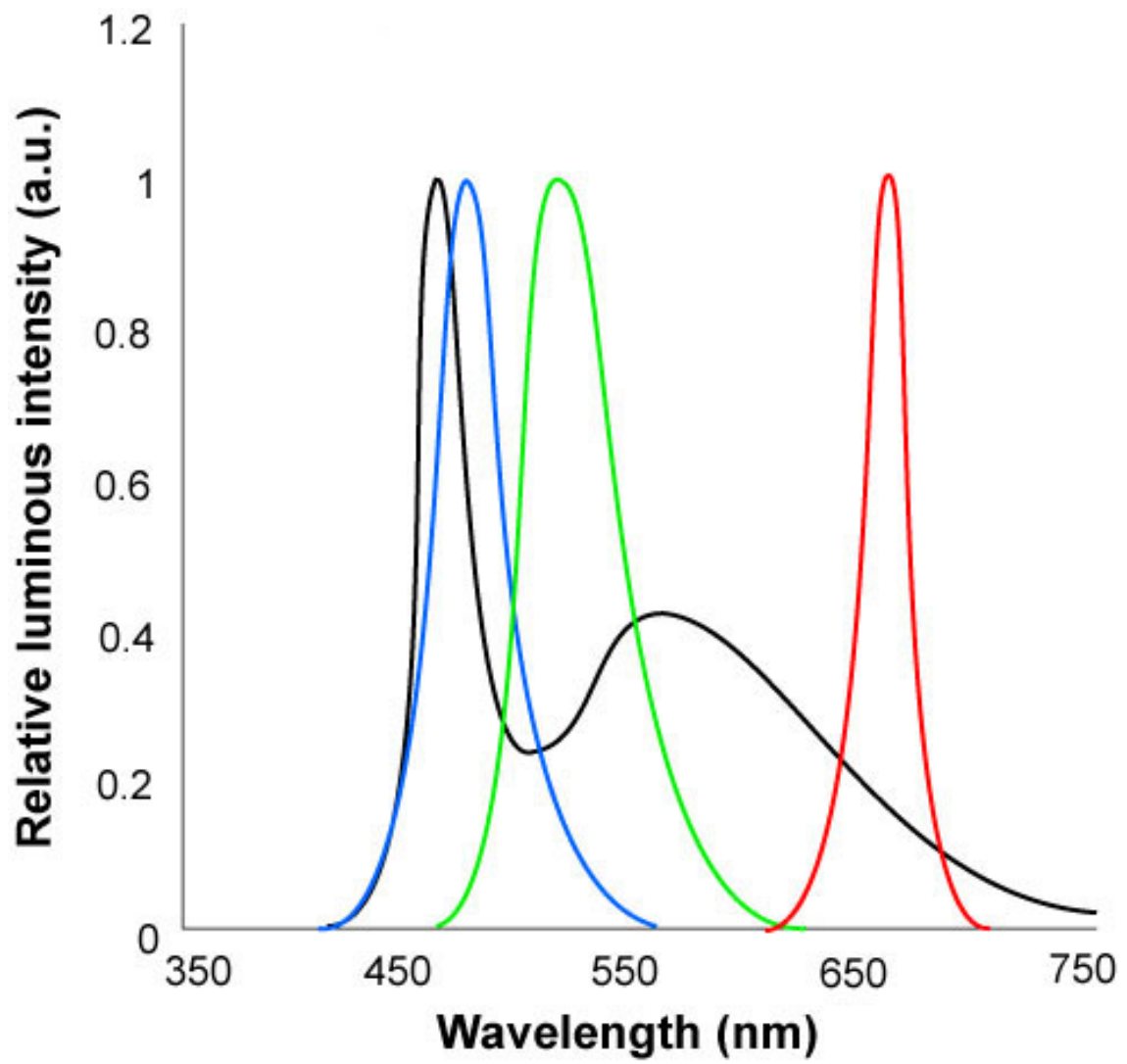
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393 **Fig. 3.** Density variations of total females and these female types of rotifers for 8 days  
394 associated with different light wavelengths. Closed circles, open diamonds, closed  
395 squares, and open triangles indicate the population growth of each female rotifers under  
396 white, 470, 525 and 660 nm light, respectively.

397

398 **Fig. 4.** Male (A) and resting egg production (B) in response to different light  
399 wavelengths by the Australian rotifer *Brachionus manjavacas*. (A): Closed circles,  
400 open diamonds, closed squares, and open triangles indicate the production of male  
401 rotifers under white, 470, 525 and 660 nm light, respectively. (B): Marks on bars  
402 indicate resting egg production on Day 4 , Day 5 , Day 6 , Day 7

403  and Day 8 . The arrow and alphabets on (B) indicate the production of  
404 resting eggs on Day 4 and significant differences ( $a>b$ , Tukey-Kramer test,  $P<0.05$ ),  
405 respectively.  
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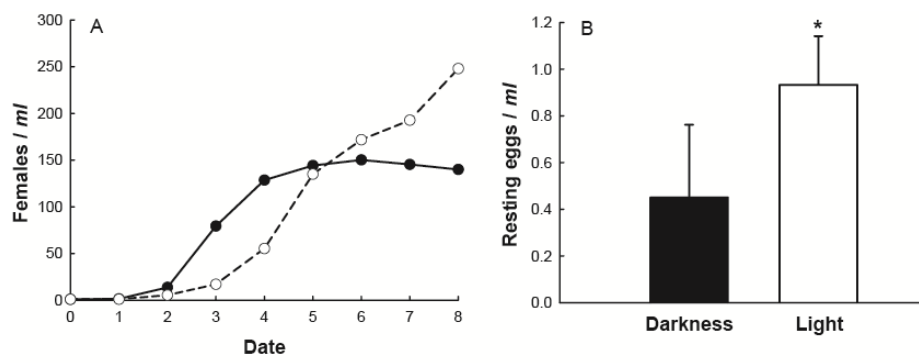
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Fig. 1

Kim et al. (50%)



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Fig. 2

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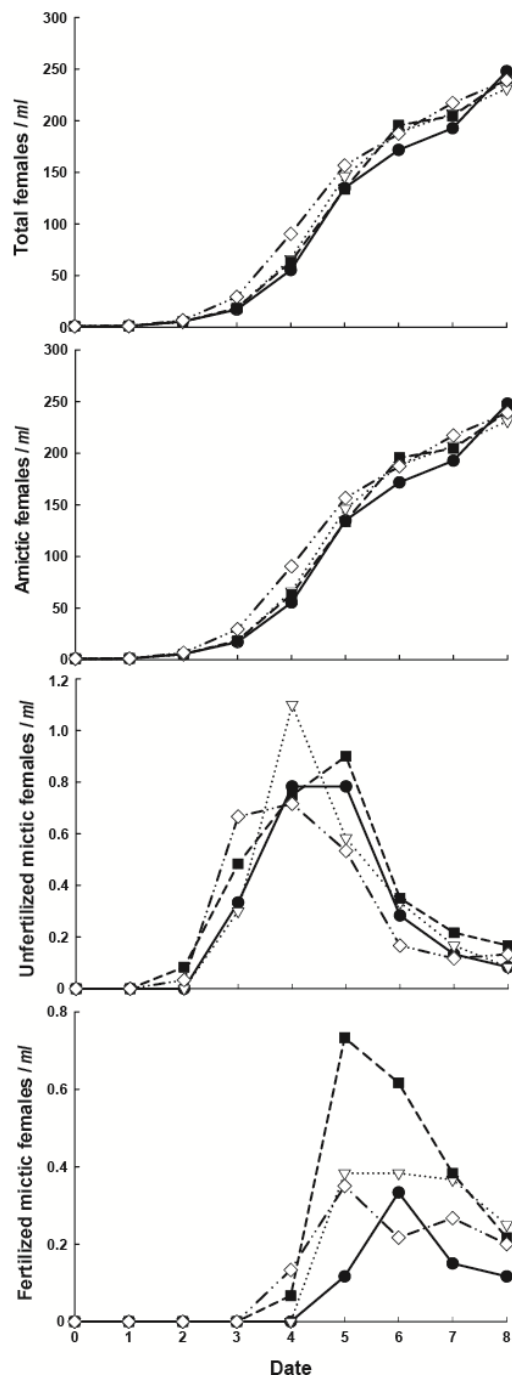
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Kim et al. (100%)

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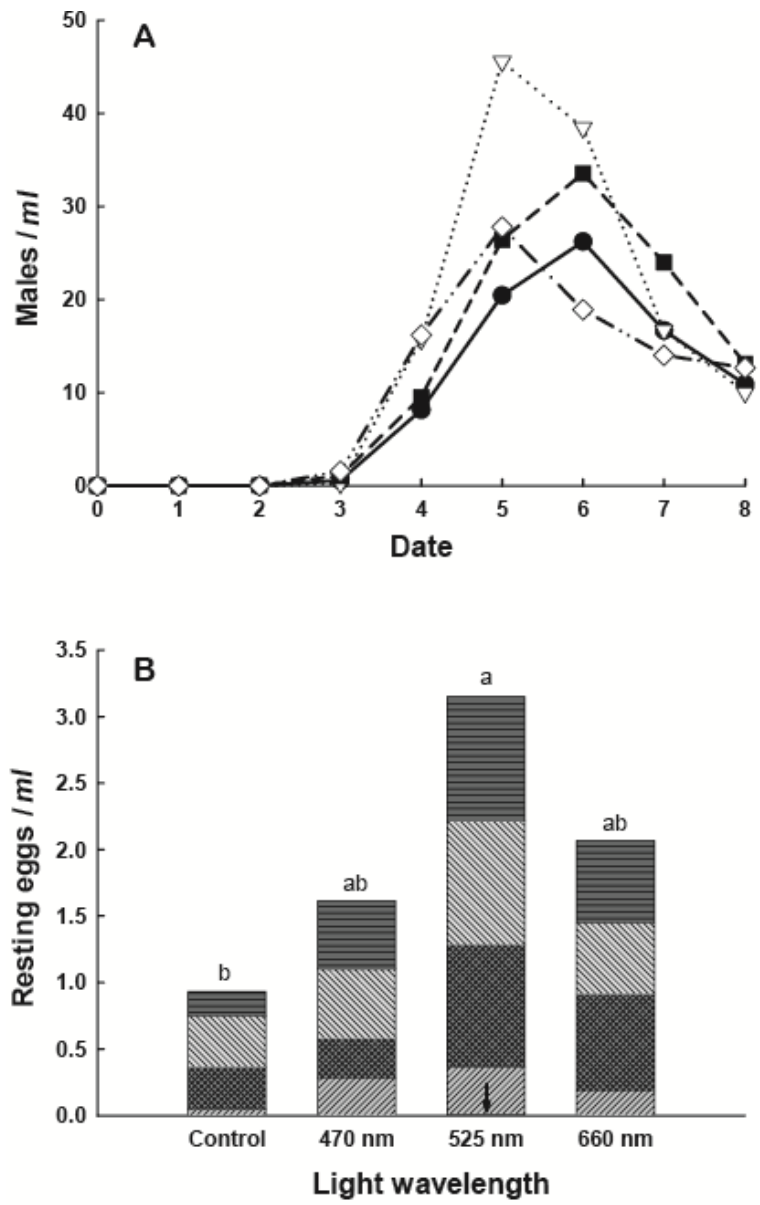
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Fig. 3

Kim et al. (100%)



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Fig. 4  
 Kim et al. (70%)