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International Journal of Research in Environmental Science and Technology

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## Original Article

ISSN 2249-9695

# BIOCHEMICAL PROFILE OF CLARIAS GARIEPINUS EXPOSED TO SUB-LETHAL CONCENTRATIONS OF CHEMICAL ADDITIVES EFFLUENT.

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Received 05 October 2011; accepted 20 October 2011

### Abstract

Chemicals such as industrial effluents induces some level of alterations in the naturally occurring chemical composition of aquatic phase which in turn alters the behavioural, biochemistry, and general physiology of aquatic fauna among which is catfish, *Clarias gariepinus*. Chemical additives effluent was analysed to determine its physicochemical parameters. Part of the result conforms to the Federal Environmental Protection Agencies standard specification for effluent discharge into the aquatic environment while other parameters like TDS, TSS, and Alkalinity deviated from the standard. The fish, *Clarias gariepinus* was exposed to 0.25mg/L, 0.30mg/L, 0.35mg/L and 0.40mg/L concentrations of the effluent for 96 hours and the LC<sub>50</sub> value for the acute toxicity was found to be 0.335223mg/L. The impact of long term exposure to the effluent was also evaluated through changes of selected biochemical parameters using the 20%, 10%, 5% and 2.5% of the 96-h LC<sub>50</sub> value for 42 days. The parameters measured are glucose, total protein, cholesterol, albumin and globulin. All the parameters recorded a significant difference in their values as against the control except cholesterol. The alteration in all parameters was significantly concentration and time dependent and this could be attributed to stress behavioural response as a result of the toxicity of the effluent.

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**Keywords:** Effluent, biochemical, Toxicity, Concentration, Chemical additive.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Toxic substances may be introduced deliberately or accidentally into the aquatic ecosystem, impairing the quality of water and making it unsuitable for aquatic life. When the concentration of the toxic substance is higher than what the homeostasis of the aquatic organisms can control, it results in death/organ damages. In fish, organs such as opercula, the skin, liver and gill could be impaired [1]. A toxic substance is a chemical pollutant that is not a naturally occurring substance in aquatic ecosystems. The greatest contributors to toxic pollution are herbicides, pesticides and industrial compounds [2]. The effects of waste waters discharged into water bodies can be acute which occurs rapidly and are clearly defined as

fatal and rarely reversible or may be chronic which normally have lingering effects after long period of exposure and may ultimately cause death [3]. The entry of toxicants into aquatic media may affect the water quality parameter which in turn leads to changes in the haematological variables of fish, due to its close association with the external environment [4,5]. It has been reported that biological monitoring techniques like haematological and biochemical variables are attractive and useful for monitoring environmental quality, water pollution, and the health conditions of aquatic organisms [6-10]. Biochemical biomarkers like glucose, protein, and enzymes are frequently used as an indicator of the general state of health and early warning of stress in fish under stressful conditions [11,12,13]. Heavy metals have been reported to

have negative impact on all relevant parameters and caused histo-pathological changes in fish [14].

Pesticides are major causes of concern for aquatic environment because of their toxicity, persistency and tendency to accumulate in the organism [15]. These pesticides are posing a great threat to aquatic fauna especially to fishes, which constitutes one of the major sources of protein rich food for mankind [16]. Metals are transported in the blood by binding to specific plasma protein [15]. The fishes serves as bio-indicators of water quality and the impact of the pesticides can be well understood by analysing either blood or serum of the fish, because blood is a pathophysiological reflector of whole body [17].

Oil pollution is one of the environmental constraints that produce aqua-toxicological effects which are deleterious to aquatic life [18]. Martin-Skilton et al., [19] demonstrated that acute exposure of juvenile turbot; *Scophthalmus maximus* to the prestige fuel oil elicits alterations in some hepatic biotransformation enzymes with different sensitivities, and leads to decreased levels of testosterone in plasma of juvenile turbot which might threaten reproductive capability of exposed individuals. Many laboratory studies have shown the toxicity of plant extract to fish and changes in haematological and biochemical profiles leading to death of fish [20,21]. Botanical products when used extensively may enter aquatic systems such as streams, rivers, and lakes, which may have an effect on non-target organisms in due course of time [22-26].

Fish haematology is known to be an essential tool to the fisheries biologist, as it acts as a frontline sensitive indicator of vital physiological and biochemical functions as well as status of nutrition, health, diseases and stress responses of the organism subjected to changes in environmental conditions. Therefore, the striking alterations in the blood parameters and associated pathological changes in fishes under influence of various toxic agents have attracted the attention of workers in the field [27]. Bhatia et al., [28] reported that fish are highly sensitive to very low concentrations of endosulfan and that blood is the primary target of pesticides action. Blood being the medium of intercellular and intracellular transport, which comes in direct contact with various organs and tissues of the blood, the physiological state of an animal at a particular time is reflected in its blood [29].

The objectives of this study therefore are to investigate the toxic effect of chemical additives effluent on the biochemical indices of *Clarias gariepinus*.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. Test Chemical

The effluent used for this research was obtained from a chemical additive and synthetic resin producing factory located in, Sango-Ota Industrial Estate, Ogun State, Nigeria. The effluent after collection was refrigerated immediately to prevent further microbial growth.

### 2.2. Test Organism

*Clarias gariepinus* of sizes between 120g and 130g were procured from a commercial Agricultural farm in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. Aerators were employed for proper oxygen dissolution during the exposure period.

### 2.3. Physicochemical Analysis

This was carried out prior to the laboratory experiment to quantify the concentrations of the metals and other parameters in the effluent. The methods of [30] were adopted.

### 2.4. Toxicity Test

The test organisms were acclimatized for two weeks during which the water was renewed daily using a renewal bioassay procedure while the fishes were fed twice daily. The toxicity test was then carried out in two phases i.e the acute and the chronic evaluations.

#### 2.4.1. Acute Evaluation

After acclimatization, range finding following the method of [31] was conducted to determine the definitive concentrations to be used for the acute test. Four different concentrations were set up in replicates; these are 0.25mg/L, 0.30mg/L, 0.35 and 0.40mg/L. A total of ten fishes were introduced into each concentration including a control experiment. Mortalities were recorded at intervals and at the end of 96 hours, the following were determined;

- Total number of death (mortality) after 96 hours
- The percentage mortality at 96 hours
- The LC<sub>50</sub> which is the concentration at which half or 50% of the test organism died on exposure

Since the organisms were exposed for 96 hours, the 96-h LC<sub>50</sub> was determined from the graph of percentage mortality against concentration. Arithmetic Graphic method was used to determine the 96-h LC<sub>50</sub>.

#### 2.4.2. Chronic Evaluation

After the 96hrLC<sub>50</sub> was evaluated, four different concentrations were set up on the basis of the LC<sub>50</sub> value obtained. They are the 2.5%, 5%, 10% and the 20% of the LC<sub>50</sub> value respectively and these are. A control experiment was also set up. The solutions were renewed every 48 hours and the entire exposure period was 42 days. This was to allow the RBC of the test organisms undergo a complete cycle of maturation during the exposure period.

### 2.5. Biochemical Analysis

At the 42nd day, three organisms per concentration were randomly selected for biochemical analysis. Blood used was collected from the fish heart through cardiac puncturing with a needle and syringe, spun in a centrifuge for 5minutes at 5000rpm and biochemical indices like Total Cholesterol, Total serum protein, Serum Albumin, Globulin and Total Glucose level were analysed. The total Plasma protein was determined by the method of [32], Plasma Glucose by the method of [33]. Serum albumin was determined using the method of [34] while Total Cholesterol level was determined by the method of [35]. The Globulin content was measured by subtracting the value of Albumin from that of Total protein.

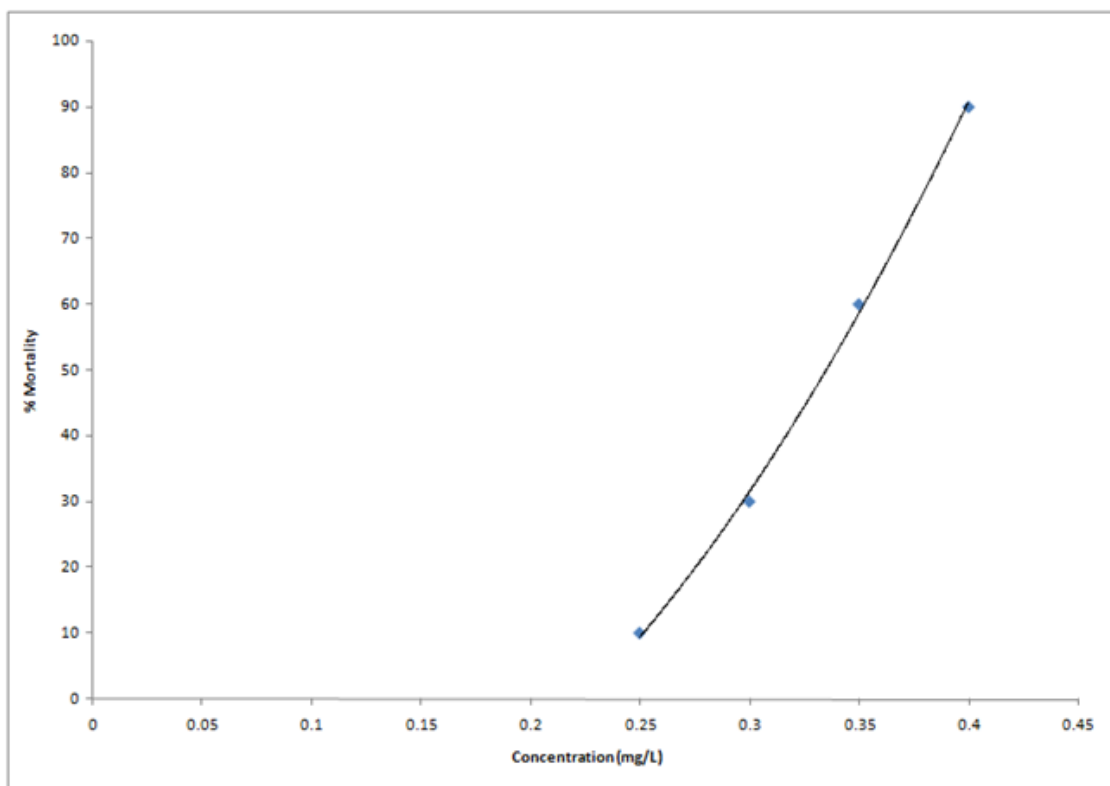


Fig 1. LC 50 for *Clarias gariepinus* exposed to sub-lethal concentrations of chemical additives effluent.

Table 1: Physicochemical characteristics of chemical additives effluent

| Parameters                | Experimental Values    | FEPA 1991 Specification |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ph                        | 6.7                    | 6.5-8.5                 |
| D.O mg/L                  | 2.6                    | 5.0                     |
| B.O.D mg/L                | 0.4                    | 50                      |
| T.S.S mg/L                | 72                     | 30                      |
| IRON $\mu\text{g/L}$      | 0.6387                 | <1.00                   |
| CADMIUM $\mu\text{g/L}$   | N.D                    | 5.00 $\mu\text{g/L}$    |
| CHROMIUM $\mu\text{g/L}$  | 0.05                   | <1.00                   |
| SULPHIDE                  | 0.25                   | 0.2                     |
| NITRATE                   | 3.3                    | 10                      |
| CYANIDE $\mu\text{g/L}$   | 14 $\mu\text{g/L}$     | 5.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$     |
| LEAD $\mu\text{g/L}$      | 9.5765                 | <1.00                   |
| COPPER $\mu\text{g/L}$    | 0.0775                 | 5.8-6.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$ |
| ZINC $\mu\text{g/L}$      | 0.3484                 | <1.00                   |
| TOTAL HARDNESSmg/L        | 52.0                   | N.D                     |
| Ca <sup>2+</sup> mg/L     | 20.8                   | N.D                     |
| Mg <sup>2+</sup> mg/L     | 0.5953                 | N.D                     |
| T.D.Smg/L                 | 32.4                   | 2000                    |
| T.Smg/L                   | 3.96                   | N.D                     |
| OIL AND GREASE            | 12.5                   | 10                      |
| ALKALINITY                | 65                     | N.D                     |
| MANGANESE $\mu\text{g/L}$ | 0.0250 $\mu\text{g/L}$ | 100 $\mu\text{g/L}$     |
| PHENOPHTHALENE            | N.D                    | 20                      |
| METHYL ORANGE             | 65                     | 20                      |

N.D = Not Detected

**Table 2.** Mean and standard deviations for biochemical parameters of *Clarias gariepinus* exposed to different concentrations of chemical additives effluent for 42 days

| Parameters    | Concentration                   |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|               | Control                         | 0.020952                        | 0.041904                        | 0.083808                        | 0.167617                        |
| Glucose       | 43.333<br>±8.819 <sup>b</sup>   | 40.000<br>±11.547 <sup>a</sup>  | 40.000<br>±5.773 <sup>b</sup>   | 66.666<br>±13.333 <sup>b</sup>  | 80.000<br>±23.094 <sup>b</sup>  |
| Total Protein | 2.4333<br>±0.088 <sup>c</sup>   | 3.3000<br>±0.264 <sup>a</sup>   | 2.6667<br>±0.033 <sup>bc</sup>  | 3.1000<br>±0.057 <sup>ab</sup>  | 3.0000<br>±0.152 <sup>ab</sup>  |
| Albumin       | 1.5667<br>±0.088 <sup>b</sup>   | 2.2333<br>±0.176 <sup>a</sup>   | 1.5333<br>±0.176 <sup>b</sup>   | 2.0000<br>±0.057 <sup>ab</sup>  | 1.8000<br>±0.251 <sup>ab</sup>  |
| Globulin      | 0.8667<br>±0.088 <sup>b</sup>   | 1.0667<br>±0.088 <sup>a</sup>   | 1.1333<br>±0.145 <sup>ab</sup>  | 1.1000<br>±0.000 <sup>ab</sup>  | 1.2000<br>±0.100 <sup>a</sup>   |
| Cholesterol   | 150.000<br>±15.275 <sup>a</sup> | 147.000<br>±13.316 <sup>a</sup> | 139.333<br>±41.462 <sup>a</sup> | 140.666<br>±21.827 <sup>a</sup> | 134.667<br>±20.827 <sup>a</sup> |

Note: mean or values with the same alphabet for same parameter are not significantly different (P<0.05)

### 2.6. Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis of the biochemical parameters was done using the SPSS 10 package. The values obtained were confirmed using one-way ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance. Further test on those found to be significant was done using Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMRT).

## 3. RESULTS

Physicochemical Characteristics of chemical additives Effluent:- This is shown in table 1. The data obtained have some of its values conforming to [36] specifications for maximum limits allowed for effluent discharge into water bodies while the values for lead, cyanide, total hardness, calcium, oil and grease and alkalinity do not conform to the standard.

### 3.1. Behavioural Responses

During the toxicity test, *Clarias gariepinus* exhibited distress behavioural responses due to the effects of the chemical additives effluent. These were noticed by the sudden change in the organism's response to the environment such as erratic swimming, gasping for breath and frequent surfacing which increases as the concentration increases. As the experiment progressed, the test organisms were seen to get weaker and those that couldn't tolerate the concentrations any longer went into comatose. Normal behaviour was however observed in the control.

### 3.2. Mortality

The result of the acute toxicity shows the absence of mortality in the lower concentrations while maximum mortality was observed in the highest concentration.

Figure 1 shows the arithmetic graph of percentage mortality against concentration for the acute evaluation. The 96-h LC<sub>50</sub> was calculated to be 0.335223mg/L

Table 2 reveals the biochemical parameters of *C. Gariepinus* after 42 days exposure. The glucose and total protein

increases with concentration, while the cholesterol decreases with increase in concentration.

## 4. DISCUSSION

The work shows the chemical additives effluent to be high in total suspended solid (TSS), lead and cyanide, low biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), lower dissolved oxygen (DO), lower total dissolved solids (TDS) and high alkalinity content which shows the effluent to be toxic for discharge into our immediate environment. This corresponds to the findings of (Adewoye et al., 2005) that the observed characteristics features may have resulted from the organic loads in the wastewater. The abnormalities observed prior to mortality are an indication of depleted oxygen content due to higher demand for oxygen. Consequently, it was observed in this study that the abnormal behaviour and mortality rate of the test organism's increased with increase in the concentrations of pollutant. This corresponds to the findings of [37] that the behaviour and mortality rate of *C. catla* during experimentation was found to depend on both duration of exposure and concentration of the toxicant.

The introduction of the effluent at different concentrations impair the swimming pattern, skin colouration, feeding rate and general behaviour of fish. Also, the variation in the behavioural responses and mortality in the sub-lethal test compared with the Acute test can be attributed to the low level of accumulation of the effluent. This suggests that fish can tolerate low concentrations of pollutants with reduced mortality.

The significant (P < 0.05) increase in glucose which was concentration and time dependent may be considered to be manifestations of stress induced by the chemical additives effluent. Glucose increase is a general response of fish to acute and sub-lethal pollutant effects [38]. Increase in serum glucose levels in fish under stress was reported by [39,40,41].

This can be attributed to several factors and one of them is the decrease in the specific activity of some enzymes like phosphofructokinase, lactate dehydrogenase and citrate kinase that decrease the capacity of glycolysis [39].

There is an increase in serum protein recorded in this work. is in agreement with [42] who reported increase in liver protein followin exposure to 2,4 Diamine for 30 days. There is a significant decrease in serum protein observed in the 0.041904mg/L and this may be due to the toxic stress which may reduce protein content in tissues. This is supported by [43,44] that proteins are mainly involved in the architecture of the cell. During chronic period of stress, they are also a source of energy. During stress condition, fish need more energy to detoxify the toxicant and to overcome stress. Since fish have fewer amount of carbohydrate, the next alternative source of energy is protein to meet the increased energy demand. The depletion of protein may have been due to their degradation and possible utilization of degraded products for metabolic purposes. Shobha et al., [37] also observed that decrease in the protein content as observed in most of the fish tissues may be due to metabolic utilization of the ketoacids to gluconeogenesis pathway for the synthesis of glucose, or due to directing the free aminoacids for the synthesis of proteins, or for the maintenance of osmo and ionic regulation. It could also be due to the production of heat shock proteins or destructive free radicals or could be a part of heavy metal induced apoptosis. [45] also recorded serum protein decrease in fish exposed to phenol.

Cholesterol was found to decrease considerably in this work which may be due to utilization of stored and circulatory cholesterol and other lipid fractions in the treated fish to counteract toxic effects produced. This result conforms closely with [46] who observed a decrease level of cholesterol in *Channa punctatus* exposed to phorate. Rani, et al., [47], and Shankar and Kulkarni [48], also observed the same trend in *Notopterus notopterus* during stress. There is also time dependent significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) serum albumin and globulin elevation due to the effluent exposure.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it's evident from this study that increasing concentration of the chemical additives effluent when present in any water body could lead to abnormal behavioural responses, haematological and biochemical dysfunction in fish health and general condition. There is therefore a need for preventive measures to be taken in order to prevent the indiscriminate discharge of this effluent into nearby streams and ponds. Man is the final recipient of toxic bioaccumulated chemicals via the food chain and environment, effective application of hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) monitor is stressed. It is recommended that the application of appropriate effluent technology be adopted by the concerned industries and

individuals.

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Source of support: Nil; Conflict of interest: None declared