



Biokemistri

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Editorial

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This issue of *Biokemistri* features papers covering a wide variety of biochemical themes. **Salman *et al.*** (pp. 39–44) shows a link between increase in testosterone production and the spermatogenic effect of honey in albino rats. A short communication from **Williams *et al.*** (pp. 92–95) reported that glycosidic constituents extracted from the fruits of *Piper guineense* exerted a tocolytic effect on rat uterine tissue by inhibiting the action of oxytocin.

Vwioko *et al.* (pp. 31–38) described the use of phytochemicals from garlic and ginger as natural food preservatives. The paper from **Ebesunun *et al.*** (pp. 45–51) surveyed plasma lipids and lipoproteins profile in cardiovascular patients in Southwestern Nigeria.

Two papers published in this issue focus on *Clarias gariepinus*, the African catfish. **Adeyemi & Adewale** (pp. 26–30) show how environmental pollutants can have a synergistic effect on aquatic organisms. The authors reported that the exposure of the African catfish to both lead and cypermethrin (a widely used insecticide) led to significant increase in indices of biochemical stress. This study is of significant environmental interest; the synergistic effects of apparently 'safe' levels of several toxicants, when used together, could lead to harmful consequences in farmed fish and possibly in the consumers. In the second report, **Abalaka *et al.*** (pp. 79–84) studied the toxic effect of aqueous extracts of *Parkia biglobosa* pods on the African catfish. While these extracts could be used to harvest fish from water bodies, unrestricted or disproportionate use could result in accumulation of toxic substances that may pose health risks to the human consumers.

The interest in *Clarias gariepinus* as shown by the two reports in this issue underscores the economic importance of the fish as a means of filling a major nutritional gap in developing countries.

Igwo-Ezikpe *et al.* (pp. 61–71) described the ability of two *Acinetobacter* species to use chrysene or diesel oil as media and degrade them by secreting extracellular biosurfactants. Studies of this nature are of significant interest from an environmental perspective since they could offer new ways or insights into finding biological solutions to degrading organic pollutants.

The mechanism behind the proliferation of endothelial cells as a result of oxidative stress has been attributed to both superoxide ions as well as peroxynitrite. In this issue, **Ejaife Agbani** (pp. 85–91) reported that nitric oxide is intrinsically linked with superoxide mediated oxidative stress in pulmonary endothelial cells. This study suggests that peroxynitrite and not superoxide radicals cause such proliferation in endothelial cells.

Ehigie *et al.* (pp. 52–60) investigated the effect of extracts of *Momordica charantia* on mitochondrial membrane permeability. This detailed biochemical study reveals findings that could have implications for the mechanism by which constituents of this plant exert their reported anti-cancer action. **Ojewunmi *et al.*** (pp. 72–78) show that aqueous extracts of the leaves of *Morinda lucida* and *Saccharum officinarum* possess antioxidant properties that have potential beneficial effects and may protect against conditions that are caused by cellular oxidative stress.

Maintaining standards and scientific integrity

The increase in the number of manuscripts submitted to *Biokemistri* is fully welcome by the Editorial Board. This renewed interest from authors who are members of Nigerian Society of Experimental Biology (NISEB) as well as an expanding global authorship presents a challenge of maintaining standards and scientific integrity. The editors and reviewers of *Biokemistri* are committed to providing as much support as possible to our authors with a view to producing good-quality original papers. However, the responsibility for good papers rests primarily with authors. Authors that report well-designed experiments and present data that are interpreted accurately simplify the review process for the Editorial Board.

A more challenging task is that of keeping out manuscripts that fail to adhere to the high standard of scientific integrity we desire to achieve and maintain. The Editorial Board frequently have reasons to turn down manuscripts due to concerns about the quality of the work, or the genuineness of the claims. It is reassuring that our diligent editors have succeeded in keeping out the vast majority of these ‘unusual’ submissions. In the past 12 months, we have stopped the publication of an approved paper after it became apparent that the same paper has appeared in another journal, we have had a retraction (Vol. 24(3): 97–107; chloroplast plastid transformation of protoplast plants) due to serious concerns about plagiarism and identity fraud, and we have put on hold several manuscripts which our reviewers and editors have some doubts about.

The Board of Trustees of the Nigerian Society of Experimental Biology (NISEB) and the Editorial Board of *Biokemistri* will continue to explore ways of improving the quality and ethical standards of the journal. We need the active support of our contributors to achieve and maintain the standards expected of a journal with an expanding global readership.

New members of the Editorial Board

The responsibility of scrutinizing new submissions and ensuring the quality of papers published in *Biokemistri* has necessitated that we expand the range of skills and research interest of the Editorial Board. We are

working on an innovative approach that incorporates interactive peer review and editing of manuscripts submitted to *Biokemistri*. This will involve more open two-way interactions between authors and editors/reviewers. It is expected that this initiative will lead to a more efficient and productive peer review process. To this end, more skilled scientists have been enlisted to join the Editorial Board, and their contribution to this issue is well appreciated. Our new editors will be working along with the existing Board members to deliver high-quality assessments and thorough peer review of manuscripts submitted to *Biokemistri*.

Here is a brief description of the scientific backgrounds and research interests of our new editors.

Joseph Adeyemi (Osun state University, Osogbo, Nigeria) obtained his PhD from University of Louisiana at Lafayette, US. His current research interest is on the response of organisms to biotic and abiotic stress.

Chukwunonso Ejike (Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Nigeria) has a PhD from University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Dr Ejike's interests are in nutritional and clinical biochemistry with emphasis on biochemical and molecular epidemiology of chronic diseases.

Florence Jimoh (University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK) did her PhD work at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Her research activities cover nutritional biochemistry and characterization of phytochemicals of medicinal importance.

Hui Li (Department of Pathology, University of Washington) has a PhD in Chemical Biology from Pennsylvania state university. He works on structural and molecular biology of protein-DNA interactions.

Nianwei Lin (Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, US) obtained a Ph.D. degree from the University of Florida, US. He has expertise in gene regulation, microbiology, apoptosis, and RNA biology.

Akhore Omonkhua (Department of Medical Biochemistry, University of Benin) obtained her PhD from University of Benin, and works on the use of phytochemicals in the management of diseases.

Zhuoxin Yu (Brightech International USA) obtained his PhD from Rutgers University, US, with research interest in molecular biology, protein biochemistry and protein biophysics.