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ARTICLE



Luteolin Attenuates Glycerol-Induced Acute Renal Failure and Cardiac Complications Through Modulation of Kim-1/NF- κ B/Nrf2 Signaling Pathways

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ABSTRACT

Acute renal failure (ARF) has been documented as a life-threatening disease with high morbidity and mortality. We investigated the protective effect of Luteolin against ARF. In this study, forty-five male Wistar albino rats were randomly divided into four groups ($n = 10$). Group A received normal saline. Group B received glycerol (10 ml/kg BW, 50% v/v in sterile saline, i.m.). Groups C and D were pretreated with Luteolin 100 and 200 mg/kg for 7 days, and thereafter administered Glycerol (10 ml/kg BW, 50% v/v in sterile saline, i.m.). Administration of glycerol significantly increased systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and mean arterial pressure. Renal protein carbonyl and xanthine oxidase increased significantly while significant reduction in the activity of renal glutathione peroxidase, glutathione S-transferase and glutathione reductase was observed in the glycerol intoxicated rats. Furthermore, administration of glycerol led to significant increases in serum creatinine and blood urea nitrogen together with reduction in nitric oxide (NO) bioavailability. Immunohistochemistry revealed that glycerol intoxication enhanced expressions of kidney injury molecule 1, nuclear factor kappa beta and cardiac troponin (CTnI). However, Luteolin pretreatment normalized blood pressure, reduced markers of oxidative stress, renal

KEYWORDS

Acute renal failure; glycerol; Luteolin; phytochemicals

damage, and improved NO bioavailability. Luteolin also downregulated the expressions of kidney injury molecule 1, nuclear factor kappa beta and cardiac troponin. Together, Luteolin might open a novel therapeutic window for the treatment of acute renal failure and cardiac complication.

Introduction

Acute renal failure (ARF) has been documented as a life-threatening disease with high morbidity and mortality (Kim et al. 2010; Wang et al. 2011; Park et al. 2012; Boozari and Hosseinzadeh 2017). Rhabdomyolysis is a leading cause of acute kidney injury (AKI) and its pathophysiological process has been shown to involve oxidative stress and inflammation (Gu et al. 2014; Xu et al. 2015; Cebi et al. 2016). The clinical syndrome of rhabdomyolysis is caused by injury of skeletal muscles, leading to the release of various intracellular muscle constituents, including severe electrolyte disorders and precipitation of ARF (Polderman 2004). However, oxidative stress has been reported to be involved in the pathogenesis of rhabdomyolysis-induced ARF (Basnakian et al. 2002; Liu et al. 2013). ARF has been reported as one of the most common problems observed in hospitalized critically ill patients with renal failure (Unis 2015). Iron, free radicals and nitric oxide (NO) have also been reported to play a critical role in the pathogenesis of glycerol-induced myoglobinuric ARF (Aydogdu et al. 2006). Despite several years of research, effective treatments have not been identified against ARF-induced pathologies. The herbal medicine and the use of phytochemicals have been introduced as a novel therapeutic agents for prevention of ARF (Unis 2015).

There has been much effort to develop beneficial agents and plant derived products from medicinal plants with the aim of achieving nephroprotective effect. Luteolin (3',4',5,7-tetrahydroxyflavone), is a flavonoid that is abundantly present in fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs, with various pharmacology and medicinal proprieties for treating various diseases, such as hypertension, inflammatory disorders, and cancer (Chen et al. 2018; Roy and Chakraborty 2018).

Luteolin has been found to protect against myocardial ischemia/reperfusion (I/R) injury and improves cardiac dysfunction (Zhang et al. 2017). The anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective effects of Luteolin has also been reported (Nabavi et al. 2015; Kooti and Daraei 2017). Furthermore, Luteolin has been reported to protect against colistin/cisplatin-induced nephrotoxicity, diabetic nephropathy, and lipopolysaccharide- (LPS-) induced acute renal injury (Kang et al. 2011; Domitrović et al. 2013; Arslan et al. 2016; Xin et al. 2016). Previous studies have demonstrated the antihypertensive and vasorelaxation effects of Luteolin (Qian et al. 2010; Lv et al. 2013; Si et al. 2014; Yang et al. 2017). The global incidence of ARF and hypertension is increasingly becoming worrisome in the last two decades, and this has necessitated the use of phytonutrients as novel therapeutic agents for preventing, ameliorating, mitigating or treating ARF in human (Atwa et al. 2016; Gois et al. 2016; Wu et al. 2017; Yalçinkaya et al. 2018). Recently, luteolin has been suggested as a potential chemopreventive and chemotherapeutic agent against human colon cancer (Chen et al. 2018). In this study, the protective effect of Luteolin against ARF might provide a new insight into the treatment of glycerol-induced rhabdomyolysis-related ARF.

Materials and methods

Chemicals

Luteolin, glycerol, xylenol orange (XO), potassium hydroxide, reduced glutathione (GSH), oxidized glutathione (GSSG), sodium fluoride, thiobarbituric acid (TBA), trichloro acetic acid (TCA), sodium hydroxide, O-dianisidine, hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂), and 1,2-dichloro-4-nitrobenzene, were purchased from Sigma (St. Louis, MO, USA). Normal goat serum, Biotinylated antibody and Horse Radish Peroxidase (HRP) System were purchased from (KPL, Inc., Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA). The kidney injury molecule I (Kim-1), nuclear factor kappa beta (NF- κ B), cardiac troponin I (CTnI) together with nuclear factor erythroid 2-related factor 2 (Nrf2) antibodies were purchased from (Bioss Inc. Woburn, Massachusetts, USA) while 3, 3'-Diaminobenzidine (DAB) tablets were purchased from (AMRESCO LLC. OHio, USA). All other chemicals were of analytical grade.

Experimental animals and design

In the study, forty-male Wistar albino rats were randomly divided into four groups with 10 rats in a group. Group A was administered normal saline, Glycerol-induced acute kidney injury (AKI) in rats was established by the administration of Glycerol (10 ml/kg BW, 50% v/v in sterile saline, i.m.) as described (Cebi et al. 2016) to Group B rats. Rats in Groups C and D were pretreated with Luteolin 100 and 200 mg/kg for 7 days and thereafter administered Glycerol (10 ml/kg BW, 50% v/v in sterile saline, i.m.). The dosage of Luteolin was adopted from our previous study (Oyagbemi et al. 2018). The rats were kept in wire mesh cages under controlled light cycle (12 h light/ 12 h dark) and fed with commercial rat chow *ad libitum* and liberally supplied with water. The blood of the rats was taken on the 8th day and rats were sacrificed on the 9th day. All the animals received humane care according to the criteria outlined in the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" (National Institute of Health, 1996).

Blood pressure measurement

Twenty-four hours after the last administration of Glycerol, blood pressure parameters, including systolic (SBP), diastolic (DBP), and mean arterial (MAP) blood pressures were determined non-invasively in conscious animals by tail plethysmography using an automated blood pressure monitor for rats (CODA S1, Kent Scientific Corporation, Connecticut, USA).

Blood sample collection and plasma preparation

Approximately three milliliters of blood was collected by retro-orbital venous puncture with heparinized capillary tubes into plain bottles and allowed to clot. The clotted blood was then centrifuged at 4,000 g for 10 min. Clear serum was separated with Pasteur pipette into another plain tube and then stored at 4 °C until needed.

Preparation of renal and cardiac homogenates

The organs (kidneys and hearts) excised were rinsed and homogenized with 50 mM Tris-HCl buffer (pH 7.4) containing 1.15% KCl. The resultant homogenates were subjected to cold centrifugation at 4 °C using a speed of 10, 000 g for 15 min. The post mitochondrial fractions (PMFs)/cytosolic fractions from cardiac and renal homogenates were used for biochemical assays.

Biochemical assays

Renal and cardiac makers of oxidative stress

Hydrogen peroxide generation was determined according to the method of Wolff (1994). The reaction mixture was subsequently incubated at room temperature for 30 min. The mixtures were read at absorbance of 560 nm and H₂O₂ generated was extrapolated from H₂O₂ standard curve. The malondialdehyde (MDA) content as an index of lipid peroxidation was quantified in the PMFs of cardiac and renal tissue according to the method of Varshney and Kale (1990). The absorbance was measured at 532 nm. Lipid peroxidation was calculated with a molar extinction coefficient of 1.56×10^5 M/cm. Protein carbonyl (PCO) contents in the renal and cardiac tissues were measured using the method of Reznick and Packer (1994). The absorbance of the sample was measured at 370 nm. The renal and cardiac carbonyl content was calculated based on the molar extinction coefficient of DNPH (2.2×10^4 cm¹ M¹) and expressed as nmoles/mg protein while vitamin C contents were measured as earlier described (Jacques-Silva et al. 2001).

Renal and cardiac antioxidants

The superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity was carried out by the method of Misra and Fridovich (1972), with slight modification (Oyagbemi et al. 2015). The increase in absorbance at 480 nm was monitored every 30 s for 150 s. The one unit of SOD activity was given as the amount of SOD necessary to cause 50% inhibition of the auto-oxidation of adrenaline to adrenochrome. The reduced glutathione (GSH) was estimated by the method of Jollow et al. (1974) while catalase (CAT) activity was determined according to the method of Sinha (1972). One unit of CAT activity represents the amount of enzyme required to decompose 1 µmol of H₂O₂/min. Glutathione peroxidase (GPx) activity was also measured according to Beutler et al. (1963). Glutathione S-transferase (GST) was estimated by the method of Habig et al. (1974) using 1-chloro-2, 4-dinitrobenzene as substrate. The activity of glutathione reductase (GRed) was according to the method of Racker (1954). The decrease in absorbance at 340 nm was measured and enzyme activity was calculated with a molar extinction co-efficient of 6.1 mmol/L⁻¹ cm. The protein (PSH) and non-protein thiol (NPSH) contents were determined as described by Ellman (1959). Protein concentration was determined by the method of Gornal et al. (1949), using bovine serum albumin (BSA) as standard.

Determination of serum markers of renal damage and hypertension

The serum nitric oxide concentrations were measured spectrophotometrically at 548 nm according to the method of Olaleye et al. (2007). The serum myeloperoxidase (MPO)

activity was determined according to the method of Xia and Zweier (1997). The advanced oxidation protein product (AOPP) contents were determined as described by Kayali et al. (2006). Briefly, 0.4 ml of cardiac and renal PMFs were treated with 0.8 ml phosphate buffer (0.1 M; pH 7.4). The absorbance of the reaction mixture was immediately recorded at 340 nm wavelength. The content of AOPP for each sample was calculated using the extinction coefficient of $261 \text{ cm}^{-1} \text{ mM}^{-1}$ and the results were expressed as $\mu\text{moles/mg protein}$. The activity of xanthine oxidase was determined according to the method of Akaike et al. (1990). The blood urea nitrogen (BUN) was determined using Randox kits following manufacturer's instructions.

Histopathology

Small pieces of kidney and heart were fixed in 10% formalin, embedded in paraffin wax, and sections of 5-6 mm in thickness were made and thereafter stained with hematoxylin and eosin for histopathological examination according to the methods as previously described (Drury and Wallington 1976). Thereafter, the sections were examined with light microscopy.

Immunohistochemical staining

The immunolocalization of kidney injury molecule I (Kim-1), nuclear factor kappa beta (NF- κ B), cardiac troponin I (CTnI) and nuclear factor erythroid 2-related factor 2 (Nrf2) in the kidney and heart, respectively was determined as earlier reported by Oyagbemi et al. (2017). Fixed tissues (heart and kidney) in 10% buffered formalin were embedded in paraffin and sectioned at a thickness of $5 \mu\text{m}$. The immunoreactive positive expressions of Kim-1, NF- κ B, Nrf2 and CTnI anti-rabbit intensive regions were viewed starting from low magnification on each slice then with $400\times$ magnifications using a photo microscope (Olympus) and a digital camera (Toupcam®, Touptek Photonics, Zhejiang, China). Immunoreactivity was quantified using Image J software.

Statistical analysis

Data obtained were analyzed with One-way ANOVA with Dunnett's post-test at a 95% confidence limit. All values are expressed as mean $\pm$ S.D. The test of significance between two groups was estimated by Student's t test.

Results

From Table 1, the results show that glycerol administration significantly reduced the relative organ weight (kidney and heart) in comparison to the control. Interestingly, pretreatment with Luteolin at 100 and 200 mg/kg significantly increased the relative kidney weight when compared to glycerol alone while no statistically significant changes were observed in the kidney and heart weights (Table 1).

The administration of glycerol significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased cardiac markers of oxidative stress viz: hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) generation, (malondialdehyde (MDA)

Table 1. The effect of Glycerol toxicity on organ weight and relative organ weight.

Experimental Groups	Group A (Control)	Group B (Glycerol)	Group C (Glycerol + luteolin 100 mg/kg)	Group D (Glycerol + luteolin 200 mg/kg)
Heart weight (g)	0.46 ± 0.15	0.4 ± 0.05	0.4 ± 0.11	0.37 ± 0.12
Heart/body (g/g)	0.004 ± 0.001	0.003 ± 0.0005 ^a	0.004 ± 0.001	0.003 ± 0.0009
Kidney weight (g)	0.74 ± 0.15	0.64 ± 0.15	0.67 ± 0.12	0.71 ± 0.13
Kidney/body (g/g)	0.007 ± 0.002	0.005 ± 0.0007 ^a	0.006 ± 0.001 ^b	0.0065 ± 0.001 ^b

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation. Group A (Control), Group B (Glycerol), Group C (Glycerol + Luteolin 100 mg/kg), Group D (Glycerol + Luteolin 200 mg/kg). Superscript ^a indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ (Group B compared with group A) and superscript ^b indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ compared (groups C, D are compared with group B) in each row. (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

Table 2. Effect of Glycerol on cardiac markers of oxidative stress.

Experimental Groups	Group A (Control)	Group B (Glycerol)	Group C (Glycerol + luteolin 100 mg/kg)	Group D (Glycerol + luteolin 200 mg/kg)
H ₂ O ₂ generated	31.81 ± 0.85	30.17 ± 1.47 ^a	29.66 ± 1.38	29.91 ± 1.96
MDA	2.76 ± 0.12	3.38 ± 0.28 ^a	3.00 ± 0.81	2.91 ± 0.84
Protein Carbonyl	51.37 ± 6.42	74.86 ± 9.91 ^a	66.19 ± 8.99 ^b	66.94 ± 7.65 ^b
Total thiol	188.44 ± 29.32	177.23 ± 32.10	253.68 ± 31.66 ^b	277.07 ± 29.51 ^b
Non-Protein thiol	222.55 ± 32.41	185.71 ± 34.48 ^a	231.45 ± 33.97 ^b	203.40 ± 35.74 ^b
GSH	79.94 ± 6.41	77.09 ± 8.55	81.29 ± 6.74	73.29 ± 9.07
Vitamin C	0.38 ± 0.05	0.33 ± 0.10	0.34 ± 0.09	0.30 ± 0.07

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation. Group A (Control), Group B (Glycerol), Group C (Glycerol + Luteolin 100 mg/kg), Group D (Glycerol + Luteolin 200 mg/kg). Superscript (^a) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ (Group B compared with group A) and superscript (^b) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ compared (groups C, D are compared with group B) in each row. (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

H₂O₂ (hydrogen peroxide generation; µmol/mg protein), MDA (malondialdehyde; µmol of MDA formed/mg protein), GSH (Reduced Glutathione; µmol /mg protein), Protein Thiol (nmol /mg protein); Non-Protein Thiol (nmol /mg protein), Protein Carbonyl (nmol /mg protein), vitamin C (µmol /mg protein). (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

and protein carbonyl (PCO) content) and significantly ($p < 0.05$) reduced cardiac total thiol and non-protein thiol, respectively when compared with the control (Table 2). However, there was no statistically significant difference in the content of cardiac (malondialdehyde (MDA), hydrogen peroxide generated (H₂O₂), reduced glutathione (GSH) and vitamin C of glycerol alone as with Luteolin pretreated rats. In contrast, pretreatment with Luteolin (100 and 200 mg/kg) statistically showed significant ($p < 0.05$) reduction PCO content with concomitant improvement in cardiac total thiol and non-protein thiol vitamin C as indicated in Table 2.

The administration of glycerol alone caused statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) increase in renal hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) generation, and protein carbonyl (PCO) content while statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) reduction in reduced glutathione (GSH), non-protein thiol and vitamin C contents were obtained when compared with the control (Table 3). In another experiment, pretreatment with Luteolin at 100 and 200 mg/kg caused significant ($p < 0.05$) reduction in renal markers of oxidative stress (MDA levels, (H₂O₂) generation and PCO content with significant ($p < 0.05$) increase GSH, non-protein thiol and vitamin C with 200 mg/kg of Luteolin showing better protection as indicated in Table 3 when compared with glycerol alone group.

From this study, glycerol alone significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased cardiac glutathione peroxidase (GPx) and superoxide dismutase (SOD) activities together with significant ($p < 0.05$) reduction in the activities of cardiac glutathione S-transferase (GST) and

Table 3. Effect of Glycerol on renal markers of oxidative stress.

Experimental Groups	Group A (Control)	Group B (Glycerol)	Group C (Glycerol + luteolin 100 mg/kg)	Group D (Glycerol + luteolin 200 mg/kg)
H ₂ O ₂ generated	32.09 ± 1.58	34.07 ± 1.95 ^a	33.82 ± 1.44	31.94 ± 1.55 ^b
MDA	2.34 ± 0.28	2.43 ± 0.35	2.11 ± 0.28 ^b	2.36 ± 0.44
Protein Carbonyl	26.95 ± 2.43	32.02 ± 3.39 ^a	26.89 ± 6.84 ^b	25.42 ± 8.40 ^b
Protein thiol	295.40 ± 61.98	294.89 ± 77.12	303.73 ± 88.99	178.28 ± 34.08 ^b
Non-Protein thiol	155.01 ± 14.25	103.24 ± 12.04 ^a	109.46 ± 18.38	109.13 ± 22.57
GSH	90.65 ± 8.36	93.26 ± 9.82 ^a	86.80 ± 11.05 ^b	93.35 ± 11.3
Vitamin C	0.24 ± 0.03	0.19 ± 0.02 ^a	0.21 ± 0.02 ^b	0.22 ± 0.02 ^b

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation. Group A (Control), Group B (Glycerol), Group C (Glycerol + Luteolin 100 mg/kg), Group D (Glycerol + Luteolin 200 mg/kg). Superscript (^a) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ (Group B compared with group A) and superscript (^b) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ compared (groups C, D are compared with group B) in each row. (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

H₂O₂ (hydrogen peroxide generation; $\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg}$ protein), MDA (malondialdehyde; μmol of MDA formed/mg protein), GSH (Reduced Glutathione; $\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg}$ protein), Protein Thiol ($\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg}$ protein); Non-Protein Thiol ($\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg}$ protein), Protein Carbonyl ($\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg}$ protein), vitamin C ($\mu\text{mol}/\text{mg}$ protein). (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

glutathione reductase (GRed) as shown in Table 4 in comparison to the control. However, significant improvement in cardiac GRed activity was obtained in rats pretreated with Luteolin (100 and 200 mg/kg) when compared with glycerol alone (Table 4). The renal GST activity was found to reduce significantly while that of GRed increased in glycerol alone group as compared to the control (Table 5). However, appreciable improvement was noticeable in renal GST activity of rats pretreated with 100 mg/kg of Luteolin when compared with that of rats that received only glycerol (Table 5). This shows that Luteolin antioxidant capacity has more effect on GST and GRed in glycerol-induced ARF.

Again, glycerol administration significantly increased serum xanthine oxidase activity, and at the same time significantly reduced nitric oxide (NO) bioavailability, when compared with the control group (Table 6). The activity of xanthine oxidase further reduced following pretreatment with Luteolin (100 and 200 mg/kg), while significant improvement in serum NO bioavailability was obtained when compared with glycerol alone (Table 6). There was observable statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) increase in the serum advanced oxidative protein product (AOPP), blood urea nitrogen (BUN) and creatinine of glycerol intoxicated rats when compared with the control (Table 6). However, Luteolin pretreatment showed protection against acute renal damage caused by glycerol by significantly lowering the serum creatinine relative to the glycerol alone (Table 6). Furthermore, 200 mg/kg of Luteolin pretreatment was able to significantly reduce the high values of AOPP in comparison to the glycerol alone as indicated in Table 6.

The administration of glycerol alone caused statistically significant increases in systolic, diastolic and mean arterial blood pressure when compared with the control (Figure 1). However, pretreatment with Luteolin (100 and 200 mg/kg), dose-dependently and significantly reduced the blood pressure parameters when compared to glycerol alone (Figure 1). It is worthy to note that 200 mg/kg Luteolin showed better antihypertensive action against glycerol induced hypertension. The histopathology of the kidney of rats administered only glycerol revealed disseminated glomerular hyperplasia and a focal area of interstitial infiltration by inflammatory cells and necrosis (Figure 2). Furthermore, focal area of congestion and mild area of cellular infiltration were

Table 4. Effect of Glycerol on cardiac antioxidant enzymes.

Experimental Groups	Group A (Control)	Group B (Glycerol)	Group C (Glycerol + luteolin 100 mg/kg)	Group D (Glycerol + luteolin 200 mg/kg)
GPx	120.80 ± 8.59	149.63 ± 8.28 ^a	154.19 ± 7.29	126.80 ± 6.00 ^b
SOD	43.11 ± 2.69	48.12 ± 7.24 ^a	53.19 ± 4.80	48.78 ± 7.9
GST	0.14 ± 0.04	0.10 ± 0.02 ^a	0.03 ± 0.01 ^b	0.04 ± 0.02 ^b
G.Red	0.36 ± 0.01	1.16 ± 0.35 ^a	3.16 ± 0.35 ^b	2.31 ± 0.62 ^b

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation. Group A (Control), Group B (Glycerol), Group C (Glycerol + Luteolin 100 mg/kg), Group D (Glycerol + Luteolin 200 mg/kg). Superscript (^a) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ (Group B compared with group A) and superscript (^b) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ compared (groups C, D are compared with group B) in each row. (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

GPx (Glutathione Peroxidase; units/mg protein); SOD (Superoxide Dismutase; units/mg protein); GST (Glutathione-S-transferase; mmole1- Chloro-2, 4-dinitrobenzene-GSH complex formed/min/mg protein); G.Red (Glutathione reductase; (units/min/mg protein⁻¹)). (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

Table 5. Effect of Glycerol on renal antioxidant enzymes.

Experimental Groups	Group A (Control)	Group B (Glycerol)	Group C (Glycerol + luteolin 100 mg/kg)	Group D (Glycerol + luteolin 200 mg/kg)
GPx	77.63 ± 11.22	72.99 ± 5.08	77.14 ± 5.95	75.96 ± 7.82
SOD	27.29 ± 3.44	25.72 ± 1.41	27.17 ± 1.68	26.40 ± 2.41
GST	0.15 ± 0.06	0.10 ± 0.03 ^a	0.62 ± 0.09 ^b	0.11 ± 0.03
G.Red	0.72 ± 0.15	1.37 ± 0.30 ^a	1.27 ± 0.09	1.52 ± 0.29

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation. Group A (Control), Group B (Glycerol), Group C (Glycerol + Luteolin 100 mg/kg), Group D (Glycerol + Luteolin 200 mg/kg). Superscript (^a) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ (Group B compared with group A) and superscript (^b) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ compared (groups C, D are compared with group B) in each row. (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

GPx (Glutathione Peroxidase; units/mg protein); SOD (Superoxide Dismutase; units/mg protein); GST (Glutathione-S-transferase; mmole1- Chloro-2, 4-dinitrobenzene-GSH complex formed/min/mg protein); G.Red (Glutathione reductase; (units/min/mg protein⁻¹)). (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

Table 6. Effect of Glycerol on serum markers of oxidative stress, inflammation and renal damage.

Experimental Groups	Group A (Control)	Group B (Glycerol)	Group C (Glycerol + luteolin 100 mg/kg)	Group D (Glycerol + luteolin 200 mg/kg)
AOPP	126.41 ± 16.83	140.05 ± 23.42	133.74 ± 13.29	111.77 ± 12.29 ^b
Xanthine oxidase	0.12 ± 0.02	0.14 ± 0.03 ^a	0.04 ± 0.02 ^b	0.06 ± 0.03 ^b
Nitric oxide	10.29 ± 1.25	9.06 ± 0.81 ^a	7.44 ± 1.02 ^b	8.37 ± 1.55 ^b
Urea	0.49 ± 0.13	0.55 ± 0.12 ^a	0.48 ± 0.14	0.51 ± 0.15
Creatinine	43.86 ± 5.54	48.85 ± 8.44 ^a	40.31 ± 2.12 ^b	44.27 ± 8.52

Values are presented as mean ± standard deviation. Group A (Control), Group B (Glycerol), Group C (Glycerol + Luteolin 100 mg/kg), Group D (Glycerol + Luteolin 200 mg/kg). Superscript (^a) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ (Group B compared with group A) and superscript (^b) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ compared (groups C, D are compared with group B) in each row. (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

AOPP (nmoles/mg protein); Xanthine Oxidase (Units/min/mg protein), Nitric oxide (μmol/mg protein); Urea (μmol/L); Creatinine Urea (μmol/L). (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

observed in rats pretreated with Luteolin (100 and 200 mg/kg) compared with glycerol alone (Figure 2).

The immunohistochemistry of kidney injury molecule 1 (Kim-1) showed higher expressions of Kim-1 in glycerol treated rats relative to the control (Figure 3). However, lower expressions of Kim-1 were observed in kidney of rats pretreated with Luteolin at 100 and 200 mg/kg, respectively (Figure 4). Further, higher immune-positive expressions of nuclear factor kappa beta (NF-κB) were observed in glycerol treated rats relative to the control and statistically significant lower expressions of NF-κB were observed in glycerol + 200 mg/kg of Luteolin as shown in Figure 4. In another experiment, higher

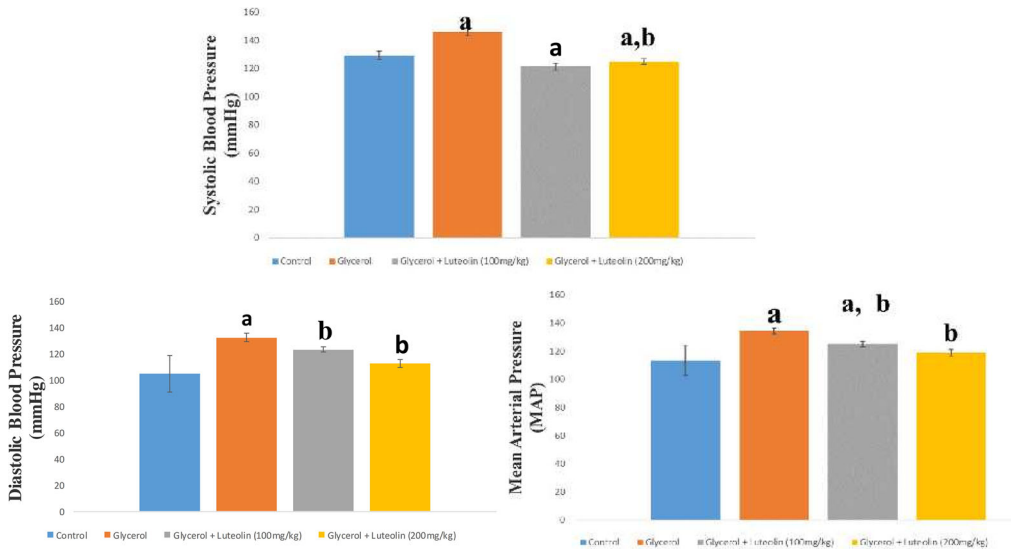


Figure 1. The effect of Glycerol on Mean arterial pressure. Values are presented as mean + standard deviation. Group A (Control), Group B (Glycerol), Group C (Glycerol + Luteolin 100 mg/kg), Group D (Glycerol + Luteolin 200 mg/kg). Superscript (^a) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ (Group B compared with group A) and superscript (^b) indicates significant difference at $p < 0.05$ compared (groups C, D are compared with group B). (One-way analysis of variance plus student's t-test was used).

expressions of Nrf2 were observed in glycerol alone treated rats while lower expressions of nuclear factor erythroid 2-related factor 2 (Nrf2) were recorded in rats pretreated with Luteolin (100 and 200 mg/kg) compared with Glycerol alone, but lower expressions when compared to the glycerol alone (Figure 5). We also observed that glycerol administration caused higher immune-positive expressions of cardiac troponin I (CTnI). This is indicative of cardiac damage accompanying renal damage and hypertension. Interestingly, Luteolin pretreatment (100 and 200 mg/kg) caused statistically significant reduction in the expressions of CTnI relative to glycerol alone (Figure 6). This might be indicative of cardioprotective effect of Luteolin in glycerol-induced ARF and cardiac complication.

Discussion

Myoglobinuric acute kidney injury is a uremic syndrome that develops due to damage of skeletal muscle (Yalçinkaya et al. 2018). Free radical generation and production of nitric oxide have been shown to play a critical role in the pathogenesis of myoglobinuric acute kidney injury (Singh et al. 2012; Yalçinkaya et al. 2018). Acute renal failure (ARF) has been reported as a life-threatening disease with high mortality mediated by inflammation and oxidative stress as mechanism of action (Boozari and Hosseinzadeh 2017). Recently, the association between renal failure and hypertension was reported (Di Nicolò 2018). From the present study, glycerol administration caused a significant increase in systolic, diastolic and mean arterial pressure which was indicative of hypertension. The mechanism of glycerol-induced ARF and its association with hypertension

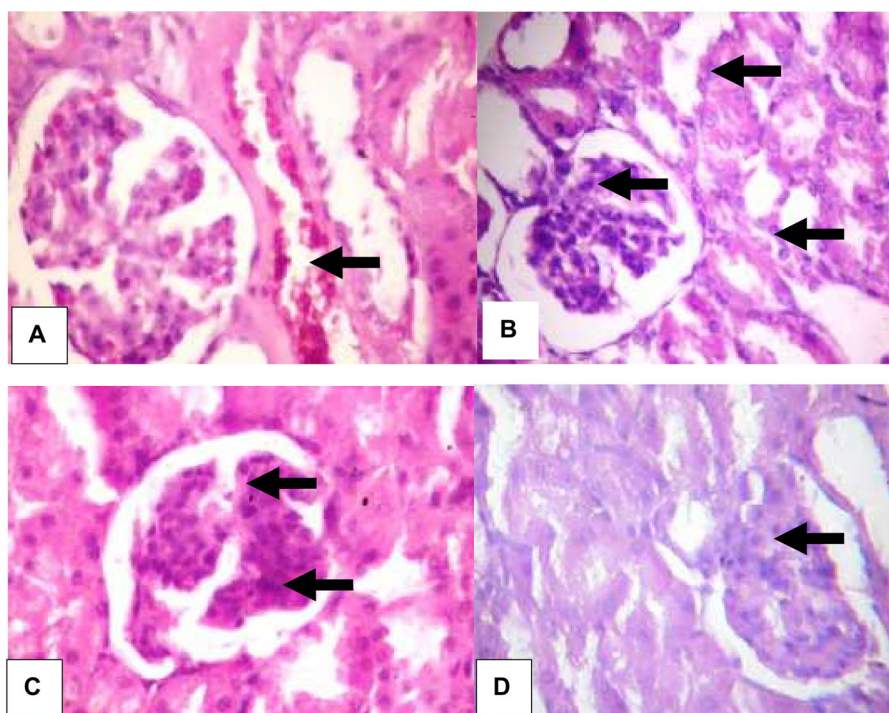


Figure 2. Photomicrograph showing kidney of rats (Group A)-Control: mild area of congestion and inflammation; (Group B) administered with (Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg) shows disseminated glomerular hyperplasia and a focal area of interstitial infiltration by inflammatory cells and necrosis (black arrow); (Group C: Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 100 mg/kg) mild area of cellular infiltration and congestion, (Group D: Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 200 mg/kg) focal area of congestion and mild area of cellular infiltration. Plates are stained with H and E stains and viewed with X 400 objectives.

has been reported elsewhere (Tsai et al. 2017). It was remarkable to note that the administration of Luteolin was able to reduce the high blood pressure parameters better than the values obtained for glycerol alone-induced hypertension. Our study therefore supports earlier reports on the use of Luteolin as anti-hypertensive and vasorelaxation effect (Jiang et al. 2005; Lv et al. 2013).

Oxidative stress can be defined as imbalance between reactive oxygen species (ROS) and antioxidant defence system with a shift more toward production of ROS. The MDA is a by-product of lipid peroxidation of polyunsaturated fatty acid and a marker of oxidative stress (Benoist d'Azy et al. 2016; Tsikas 2017). Hence, oxidative stress has been identified as a major player in the pathogenesis of ARF and hypertension (Pouvreau et al. 2018). Luteolin pretreatment prevented glycerol-induced ARF and hypertension and this demonstrated the antioxidant and antihypertensive effect of Luteolin. Protein carbonyl is another marker of nitrosative stress, and there is a causal link between hypertension and nitrosative stress (Gaikwad et al. 2017; Mozos and Luca 2017). The ability of glycerol to cause lipid peroxidation was demonstrated by excessive production of MDA, PCO and H_2O_2 in cardiac while exaggerated production of PCO and H_2O_2 was observed in renal tissues. The significant reduction in renal non-enzymic antioxidant such as GSH, vitamin C and non-protein thiol (NPSH) by glycerol toxicity was an

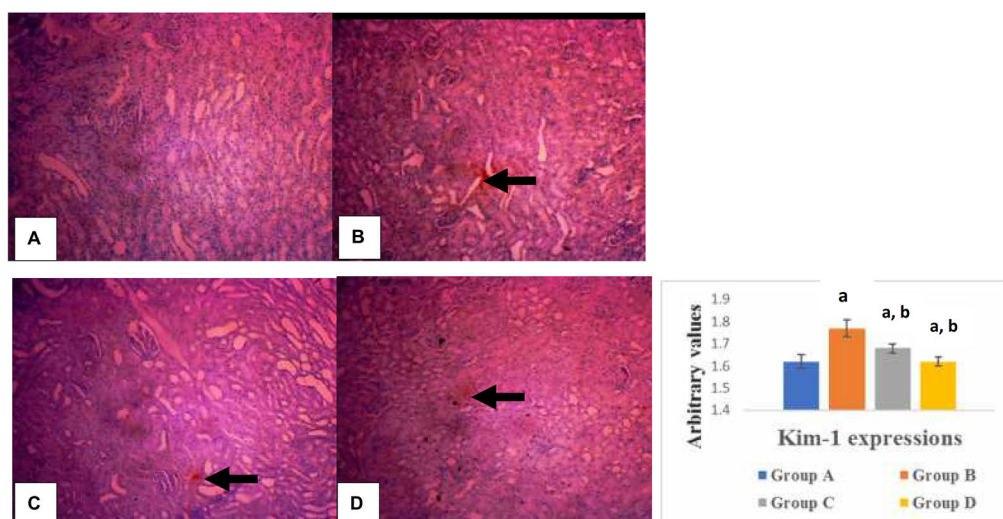


Figure 3. Immunohistochemistry of Kim-1 of rats. A — Control: There is lower immune-positive expressions of Kim-1. Group B (Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg) shows higher immune-positive expressions of Kim-1 when compared to the control. (Group C); Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 100 mg/kg) shows lower expressions of Kim-1 when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow) and (Group D) administered Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 200 mg/kg; also shows lower expressions of Kim-1 when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow). The slides were counterstained with high definition hematoxylin and viewed x 100 objectives.

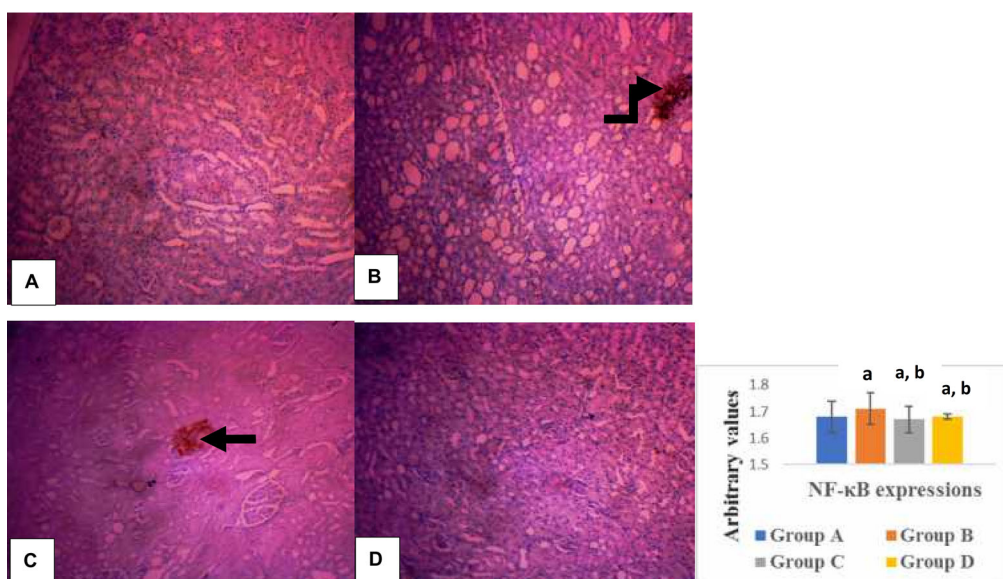


Figure 4. Immunohistochemistry of NF-κB in kidney of rats. A — Control: There is lower immune-positive expressions of NF-κB. Group B (Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg) shows higher immune-positive expressions of NF-κB when compared to the control. (Group C); Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 100 mg/kg) shows lower expressions of NF-κB when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow) and (Group D) administered Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 200 mg/kg; also shows lower expressions of NF-κB when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow). The slides were counterstained with high definition hematoxylin and viewed x 100 objectives.

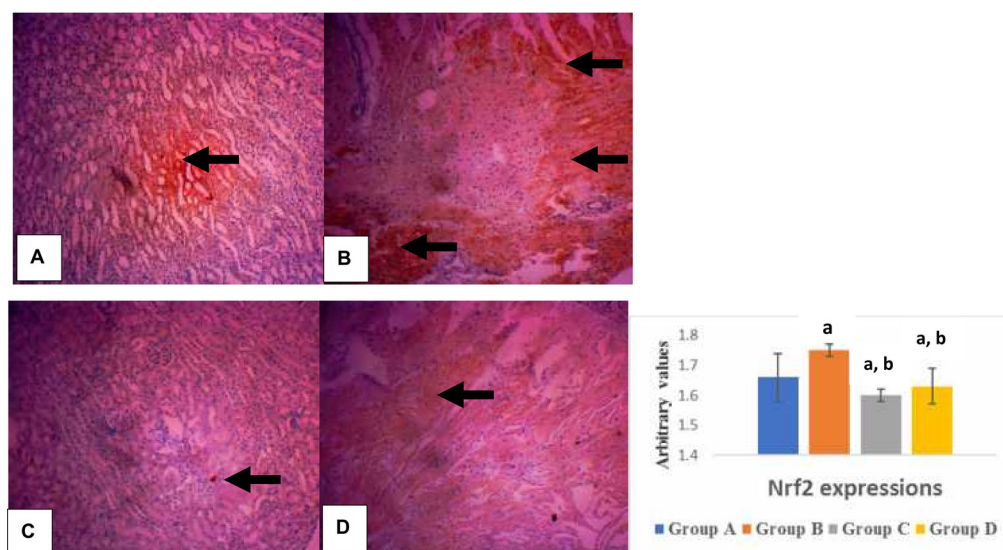


Figure 5. Immunohistochemistry of Nrf2 of Kidney of rats. A — Control: There is lower immune-positive expressions of Nrf2. Group B (Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg) shows higher immune-positive expressions of Nrf2 when compared to the control. (Group C; Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 100 mg/kg) shows higher expressions of Nrf2 when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow) and (Group D) administered Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 200 mg/kg; also shows lower expressions of Nrf2 when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow). The slides were counterstained with high definition hematoxylin and viewed x 100 objectives.

indication of oxidative stress. The non-enzymic antioxidants are known to complement the enzymic antioxidants to quench and scavenge free radicals and reactive oxygen species (ROS), thereby attenuating oxidative stress. But we observed significant improvement in renal GSH (100 mg/kg Luteolin), vitamin C contents in rats pretreated with 200 mg/kg of Luteolin, indicating importance of nutraceutical such as Luteolin as antioxidant in mitigating oxidative stress. On the other hand, glycerol intoxication precipitated reduction in cardiac GSH, vitamin C, and protein thiol (PSH) though, not statistically significant. However, significant reduction in cardiac non-protein thiol (NPSH) in glycerol alone treated rats was observed when compared to the control. Going forward, the administration of glycerol alone caused severe oxidative stress which was indicated with significant increases in renal hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) generation, protein carbonyl (PCO) contents together with significant decreases in non-protein thiol (NPSH), reduced glutathione (GSH) and vitamin C content, respectively. However, cardiac oxidative stress was indicated with statistically significant increase in cardiac MDA, PCO and H_2O_2 generation, indicating complication arising from glycerol-induced ARF. Further, mitigation of cardiac oxidative stress was more pronounced in cardiac total thiol at 100 and 200 mg/kg while 100 mg/kg of Luteolin was able to cause noticeable improvement in cardiac antioxidant capacity. Hence, Luteolin pretreatment was able to offer better protection against nephrotoxicity than cardiotoxicity caused by glycerol intoxication.

Apart from the aforementioned markers of oxidative stress; advanced oxidative protein products (AOPPs) contents, and xanthine oxidase activities were significantly

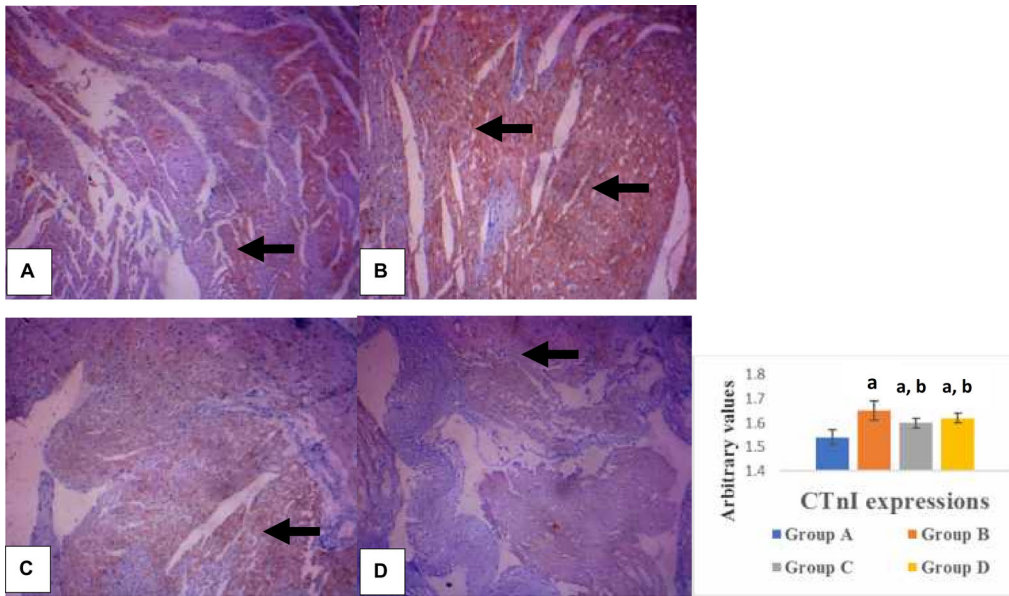


Figure 6. Immunohistochemistry of cardiac troponin (CTnI) of rat's heart. A — Control: There is lower immune-positive expressions of CTnI. Group B (Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg) shows higher immune-positive expressions of CTnI when compared to the control. (Group C); Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 100 mg/kg) shows lower expressions of CTnI when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow) and (Group D) administered Glycerol; 8 ml/Kg + Luteolin 200 mg/kg; also shows lower expressions of CTnI when compared with the Glycerol only treated group (black arrow). The slides were counter-stained with high definition hematoxylin and viewed x 100 objectives.

increased in the serum of rats administered only glycerol. More so, that increase in AOPP and xanthine oxidase has been linked to oxidative stress, inflammation and renal damage (Zhang et al. 2010; Su et al. 2018). Additionally, high levels of serum AOPP and xanthine oxidase have been directly related to renal damage while xanthine oxidase activity has been positively correlated, thereby directly proportional to uric acid production (Park et al. 2014; Perez Gutierrez & de Jesus Martinez Ortiz 2014). Hence, dysregulation in the xanthine oxidase activity in the present study might contribute to endothelial dysfunction, reduced glomerular filtration and ultimately renal failure. Since, nitric oxide (NO) helps in the maintenance of vascular tone and blood pressure, therefore, the beneficial effects of Luteolin was observed as it improved NO bioavailability, and that also attests to the anti-hypertensive effect of Luteolin. Myeloperoxidase (MPO) has been documented elsewhere to participate in inflammation, oxidative, cardiac and renal damage (Dkhil et al. 2018; Pan et al. 2018; Rodrigues de Carvalho *et al.*, 2018). In this study, glycerol administration was able to cause increase in the activity of MPO which concomitantly precipitated inflammation, oxidative stress, and ARF. However, pretreatment with Luteolin prior to the administration of glycerol mitigated the activity of MPO; this also, might be responsible for the anti-inflammatory and renoprotective effect of Luteolin in glycerol-induced ARF. The renoprotective effect of Luteolin was also demonstrated by reduction in the serum creatinine and blood urea nitrogen levels compared to values obtained for glycerol alone.

The administration of glycerol significantly reduced the activities of renal glutathione S-transferase (GST) and glutathione reductase (GRed). On the contrary, statistically significant increase in cardiac glutathione peroxidase (GPx), superoxide dismutase (SOD) and glutathione reductase (GRed) together with statistically significant decrease in cardiac glutathione S-transferase (GST) was observed. This possibly implies that renal tissues are more prone to glycerol toxicity than the cardiac tissues. Also, the increase in the activity of SOD, GPx and GRed could be hypothesized as adaptive response from glycerol toxicity. Together, oxidative stress was more pronounced in the kidney and this might also be responsible and accountable for the pathophysiology and pathogenesis of glycerol-induced ARF.

The SOD is the first line of defence against oxidative stress while the GPx and CAT participate in the final detoxification of H_2O_2 to H_2O and O_2 . During oxidative stress, the inhibition or inactivation of SOD, GPx and CAT will allow O_2^- and H_2O_2 to accumulate, thereby causing peroxidation of polyunsaturated fatty in the biological membranes. The formation of peroxynitrite (ONOO^-) from O_2^- and NO has been reported to contribute to arterial stiffness, endothelial dysfunction and hypertension (Khan et al. 2018; Malakul et al. 2018). The formation of ONOO^- also facilitates the uncoupling of endothelial nitric oxide synthase (eNOS), reduction in NO bioavailability with resultant formation of clinical hypertension (Kröller-Schön et al. 2018). Histopathology revealed disseminated glomerular hyperplasia and a focal area of interstitial infiltration by inflammatory cells and necrosis in rats administered only glycerol while pretreatment with Luteolin almost restored the observed histopathological changes as evidenced by mild area of cellular infiltration and congestion of the renal tissues. Kidney injury molecule 1 (Kim-1) is one of the recent markers of acute kidney injury (Wanigasuriya et al. 2017; Beker et al. 2018; Kim et al. 2018). From the present study, the level of Kim-1 correlated with the level of damage induced by glycerol administration. The immunohistochemistry revealed higher expressions of Kim-1 in glycerol alone treated rats while the expressions of Kim-1 were lowered relative to the control and groups pretreated with Luteolin. The higher expressions of Kim-1 was also proportional to the histopathological lesions in the kidney of glycerol intoxicated rats. Hence, administration of Luteolin provided a meaningful protective effect against glycerol-induced ARF. We therefore infer that Luteolin is a potential drug candidate and a novel strategy for the prevention of glycerol-induced ARF. We therefore suggest that patients with renal injury can take more fruits and vegetables that are rich in Luteolin for the treatment of ARF.

The nuclear factor kappa-light-chain-enhancer of activated B cells ($\text{NF-}\kappa\text{B}$) is a transcription factor which plays a leading role in oxidative stress, apoptosis, cytokine production and arrays of disease conditions such as hypertension and ARF (Fattori et al. 2017; Tomar et al. 2017; Chen et al. 2018). The activation of $\text{NF-}\kappa\text{B}$ has been reported in cisplatin and diclofenac-induced acute kidney injury (Fattori et al. 2017; Humanes et al. 2017). Pretreatment of Luteolin prior to the administration of glycerol reduced the expressions of renal $\text{NF-}\kappa\text{B}$, this is indicative of anti-inflammatory and renoprotective effects of Luteolin. This observation is consistent with the anti-inflammatory and nephroprotective effects of Luteolin as previously described (Abu-Elsaad and El-Karef 2018; Kim et al. 2018). The nuclear factor-erythroid-2-related factor 2 (Nrf2), has been

described as a redox-sensitive master regulator of oxidative stress (Arafa Keshk et al. 2017). Surprisingly, glycerol administration caused over expressions of Nrf2 relative to the control and that Nrf2 expressions in rats pretreated with Luteolin were less compared to that of glycerol alone. Over expressions of Nrf2 have been reported in conditions associated with oxidative stress signifying adaptive response (Hu et al. 2013; Zheng et al. 2015; Jeddi et al. 2018). The observed over expressions of Nrf2 is reported for the first time in glycerol-induced ARF. Hence, results from the present study as indicated with increase cardiac SOD and GPx could align with the observed over expressions of Nrf2, confirming the aforementioned adaptive response. Cardiac complications of glycerol toxicity were also assessed in this study. The immunohistochemistry of cardiac troponin I (CTnI) was assessed, and glycerol administration caused higher expressions of CTnI. This observation could therefore be extrapolated that cardiac complication could arise from glycerol toxicity. The elevated CTnI might suggest rhabdomyolysis which was responsible for the observed ARF, and thereafter, account for the pathophysiology of glycerol-induced renal failure. The cardio and reno-protective effect of Luteolin might be ascribed to the ability of Luteolin to suppress myoglobinuric acute kidney injury which was characterized by inflammation, oxidative stress and hypertension.

Conclusion

Taken together, Luteolin pretreatment reduced high blood pressure and ameliorated acute renal failure caused by the administration of glycerol. Luteolin administration also reduced markers of oxidative stress, inflammation and renal damage, improved nitric oxide bioavailability, suppressed the expressions of kidney injury molecule 1, nuclear factor kappa beta, cardiac troponin I and nuclear factor erythroid 2-related factor 2 in the kidney and heart, respectively. Hence, Luteolin is a drug candidate for patients with kidney injury and associated cardiovascular complications. The mechanism of renoprotective effect of Luteolin might be through modulation of Kim-1/NF- κ B/Nrf2 signaling pathways.

Declaration of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest whatsoever.

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