ABSTRACT

The oxidative stress parameters viz malondialdehyde level, reduced glutathione and the activities of antioxidative enzymes (superoxide dismutase, glutathione peroxidase and catalase) and Haemato-biochemical profile were compared between fetotomy operated and normally calved buffaloes. 40 buffaloes were used in the present study and were classified into two groups. Group I comprised of 30 buffaloes subjected to fetotomy operation. Group II comprised of 10 normally calved buffaloes. The levels of malondialdehyde, superoxide dismutase, reduced glutathione and catalase were significantly higher (p<0.05) and the activity of glutathione peroxidase was significantly lower (p<0.05) in fetotomy operated buffaloes as compared to normally calved buffaloes. Similarly the concentration of haemoglobin, calcium, phosphorus, total protein and packed cell volume were significantly (p<0.05) lower in fetotomy operated buffaloes as compared to normally parturiated buffaloes. The findings in the present study indicate that dystocia leads to increased systemic oxidative stress as evidenced by increased malondialdehyde level and reduced glutathione peroxidase activity. Dystocia leads to stress and prolonging the duration of dystocia further aggravates the problem; hence it is suggested that dystocia should be corrected as early as possible to avoid oxidative stress and further complications.

Key words: Fetotomy, buffalo, oxidative stress, dystocia
INTRODUCTION

Dystocia is defined as the prolonged parturitions that require assistance of farmer or veterinarian for the extraction of fetus. In dairy cattle frequency of dystocia varies from 2-23% (Mee, 2008). The main causes of occurrence of dystocia are the failure of expulsive forces during parturition, birth canal inadequacy, foetal mal-positioning, disproportionate calf size to the dam’s pelvic size and uterine torsion (Noakes, 2001). Although parturition is a physiological process, dystocia is of great stress for both the dam and foetus (Prabhakar, 1995). Due to this stress there is generation of free radicals or reactive oxygen species (ROS) during normal birth as well as dystocia. The uncontrolled increase in free radicals leads to damage of cells and tissues through oxidative chain reactions and lipid peroxidation which results in oxidative stress. Enzymatic antioxidants like glutathione-peroxidase, super-oxide dismutase, together with catalase and non-enzymatic antioxidants like glutathione and vitamins like A, E and β-carotene protect living organisms from damages of reactive oxygen species (Miller, 1993). There is little literature regarding oxidative stress in buffaloes subjected to fetotomy operation for relieving dystocia and its comparison with normal parturition. Therefore, keeping these points in view present study was designed to assess the levels of antioxidant enzymes and extent of oxidative stress in fetotomy operated buffaloes compared to normally calved buffaloes.

Materials and Methods

Selection of animals: This study was conducted on 30 Murrah buffaloes, presented to Teaching Veterinary Clinics of Guru Angad Dev Veterinary & Animal Science University (GADVASU) Ludhiana. Complete history regarding gestation, duration of labour and previous handling or medication of the buffaloes, was recorded. In all the buffaloes, dystocia was corrected by fetotomy once mutations failed to deliver the foetus. For comparison 10 Murrah buffaloes maintained at GADVASU Dairy Farm served as the control group. These buffaloes were having normal parturition.

Sampling: 5 ml blood samples were collected aseptically in heparinised vials. In addition 1 ml blood was collected in sodium fluoride vial and was used for blood glucose estimation. Immediately after collection, all the blood samples were brought to the laboratory in an ice box. Thereafter, the samples were centrifuged for 15 minutes at 3000 rpm; upper meniscus was marked, blood plasma was separated and stored immediately at -20°C till further analysis.

Preparation of Haemolysate: For the preparation of haemolysate, the erythrocyte pellet was washed thrice with normal saline. Thereafter ice cooled distilled water was added to the pellet with constant stirring up to the marked level to prepare haemolysate.

Estimation of oxidative stress: Oxidative stress parameters Malondialdehyde (MDA), reduced glutathione (GSH) levels, superoxide dismutase (SOD), Glutathione peroxidase (GPx) and catalase (CAT) activity were analysed as per the
methods (Shafiq-U-Rehman, 1984, Hafeman et al., 1974, Nishikimi et al., 1972, Hafeman et al., 1974 and Aebi, 1983). Haemoglobin (Hb), Packed Cell Volume (PCV), Total Leukocyte Count (TLC), Total Erythrocyte Count (TEC) was estimated by using Automatic Analyzer (SIEMENS-ADVIA 2120 HEMATOLOGY SYSTEM). VITROS DT-II Chemistry system (Ortho-Clinical Diagnostics, Johnson & Johnson Company) was used for estimation of serum calcium, phosphorus, total protein and blood glucose concentrations were estimated by using VITROS DT Slides.

Statistical analysis: All data was expressed as mean values with standard error (±SE). Comparison between the two groups was evaluated by student’s t-test. P value of 0.05 was selected as a criterion for statistically significant differences.

Result and Discussion

The present study was conducted in animals subjected to fetotomy operation. The animals with dystocia were anesthetised with epidural anaesthesia. The majority of dystocia cases were caused by head and limb deviations, carpal and hock flexion, foetal emphysema and foetal monstrosities.

Changes in oxidative stress parameters viz lipid peroxidation level, reduced glutathione level, superoxide dismutase, glutathione peroxidase and catalase activity are shown in Table 1. MDA level, SOD activity, GSH level and erythrocytic catalase activity were significantly (P < 0.05), higher in buffaloes subjected to fetotomy than the normally parturient buffaloes. Haematological and biochemical values are presented in Table 2 for fetotomy operated and normally parturient buffaloes. The mean value of Hb and PCV were significantly (P<0.05) lower in buffaloes subjected to fetotomy, than the eutocic buffaloes on the day of parturition. TEC and TLC were found to be non-significant in both groups. The serum concentrations of calcium, inorganic phosphorus and total protein was significantly (p<0.05), lower whereas serum glucose level was significantly (p<0.05) higher in dystocia affected buffaloes as compared to normally parturient group on the day of parturition.

Malondialdehyde level and Superoxide dismutase activity: In the present study MDA levels were found to be increased which might be due to physical efforts of calving. These results are in consonance with that of (Bansal et al., 2011), who also observed higher levels of MDA in dystocia affected buffaloes. The problems of dystocia and the obstetrical operations like rolling, mutations and fetotomy enhance the level of stress (Noakes, 2001). This leads to generation of (ROS) which causes peroxidation of placental membrane lipids especially polyunsaturated fatty acids thus culminating into lipid peroxidation/oxidative stress (Anand and Kumar, 2001). So a high level of MDA in dystocia affected animals could be used as an indicator for oxidative stress owing to abnormalities in birth as in the present study. In the present study dystocia affected buffaloes had higher SOD
activity than eutocic buffaloes, which is supported by that of (Ahmed et al., 2009). Stress leads to oxidation of oxyhaemoglobin to methaemoglobin leading to generation of superoxide ions \((O_2^-)\), which in turn enhances the activity of SOD (Jens and Ove, 2006). In the present study this stands true for the dystocia affected buffaloes both due to high degree of inflammation in the reproductive tract at the time of calving as well as higher degree of stress due to difficulty in birth.

Glutathione Peroxidise, Reduced Glutathione and Catalase activity: GPx activity was significantly lower \((p<0.05)\) in fetotomy operated buffaloes than the normally calved buffaloes. The results of the present study are in consonance with that of (Bansal et al., 2011) who also observed lower levels of GPx in dystocia affected buffaloes on the day of parturition. GPx is a selenium containing enzyme that acts as an antioxidant in reducing the oxidative damage caused by dystocia (Sathya et al., 2007). ROS production causes reduction in selenium intake by the buffalo erythrocytes which may lead to relative deficiency of GPx thereby resulting into increased oxidative stress (Erisir et al., 2006).

The findings of the present study are in concurrence with that of (Bansal et al., 2011 and Hamit et al., 2011), who also observed lower levels of GSH in dystocia affected buffaloes. Glutathione is the major endogenous antioxidant produced by the cells, participating directly in the neutralization of free radicals and reactive oxygen compounds. It annihilates oxygen toxicity by interrupting the reaction leading to superoxide formation (Yoda et al., 1986).

In the present study the activity of catalase was significantly higher in fetotomy operated buffaloes than the normally parturiated buffaloes which is in consonance with that of (Bansal et al., 2011 and Hamit et al., 2011). Catalase detoxifies \(H_2O_2\) produced during different metabolic processes/stressful conditions by reducing it to \(H_2O\) and \(O_2\) (Kumar et al., 2010 and Switala and Loewen., 2002). It is clear that higher the generation of free radicals, higher is the production of \(H_2O_2\), which in turn leads to increased catalase activity to detoxify the peroxide radicals.

Haematology: Hb and PCV were lower in fetotomy operated buffaloes on the day of parturition. These findings are in consonance with that of (Ahmed et al., 2009). The lower levels of Hb and PCV in dystocia affected animals could be due to the higher levels of ADH due to stress causing increased retention of fluid (Moran et al., 1964 and Kinney, 1967). In the present study lower serum levels of Calcium \((7.26\pm0.19 \text{ mg/dl})\) and phosphorus \((3.07\pm0.24 \text{ mg/dl})\) in dystocia affected animals as compared to normally calving animals \((7.26\pm0.19 \text{ mg/dl} \text{ and } 3.07\pm0.24 \text{ mg/dl})\) have also been reported by (Husnain et al., 2001, Mulle et al., 1983 and Ciani et al., 1964). Since Ca plays an important role in neuromuscular excitability, cell membrane permeability, muscle contraction and nerve impulse transmission, its deficiency may lead to reduced vaginal and uterine muscle tone which predisposes the animals to dystocia as proposed by (Roberts, 1980). Rise in blood glucose concentration in dystocia affected buffaloes \((137.70\pm17.50\text{ mg/dl})\) was significantly higher \((p<0.05)\) in fetotomy operated buffaloes than the normally calved buffaloes which is in consonance with that of (Ahmed et al., 2009). Glucose is a major source of energy for the mother during dystocia leading to an increased blood glucose concentration in the buffaloes.
mg/dl) has also been reported by (Varshney et al., 1992, Prabhakar, 1995, Sathya et al., 2007 and Wani et al., 2018). The elevated blood glucose level could be attributed to elevated cortisol and catecholamines, which occurs following various obstetrical procedures in animals, as a response to stress (Singh, 2002 and Breazile, 1987). The lower total protein concentration in fetotomy operated animals could be because of manipulation or haemorrhage during obstetrical manoeuvre, with subsequent extraction of intestinal fluid into the circulation as concluded by (Nakao J, Grunter, 1997).

From the above observations it is clear that dystocia leads to stress and prolonging the duration of dystocia further aggravates the problem which leads to increased systemic oxidative stress as evidenced by increased malondialdehyde level and reduced glutathione peroxidase activity as compared to normal parturition. Hence it is suggested that dystocia should be corrected as early as possible to avoid oxidative stress and further complications. In addition to this measurement of oxidative stress must be a keystone in obstetrical research because it yields quantitative information which gives better understanding of the causes of the oxidative stress and help in devising the necessary corrective measures to ensure sustained productivity.

### Table 1. Oxidative stress parameters in fetotomy operated buffaloes (Mean±SE) in comparison with normally calved buffaloes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Normally calved buffaloes</th>
<th>Fetotomy operated buffaloes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDA (nmol/gHb)</td>
<td>4.6±0.59&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.70±0.65&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOD (U/mg Hb)</td>
<td>41.91±5.96&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>55.77±6.69&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPx (U/mg Hb)</td>
<td>119.70±3.14&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>90.98±18.51&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSH (µmol/ml)</td>
<td>1.73±0.56&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3.76±1.99&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAT (K/mg Hb)</td>
<td>290.79±2.39&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>336.69±2.83&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values with different superscripts differ significantly (P≤0.05) within a row.
Table 2. Haematological and biochemical profile in fetotomy operated buffaloes (Mean±SE) in comparison with normally calved buffaloes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Normally calved buffaloes</th>
<th>Fetotomy operated buffaloes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hb (g/dl)</td>
<td>14.12±0.97^b</td>
<td>11.28±0.61^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCV (%)</td>
<td>36.86±2.86^b</td>
<td>29.50±1.26^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC X10^3 (cells/µl)</td>
<td>12.80±0.29^a</td>
<td>12.95±0.24^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEC X10^6 (cells/µl)</td>
<td>6.36±0.21^a</td>
<td>6.06±0.41^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium (mg/dl)</td>
<td>9.52±0.14^b</td>
<td>7.26±0.19^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phosphorus (mg/dl)</td>
<td>4.84±0.10^b</td>
<td>3.07±0.24^a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glucose (mg/dl)</td>
<td>47.20±3.15^a</td>
<td>137.70±17.50^b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total protein (g/dl)</td>
<td>8.98±0.21^b</td>
<td>7.56±0.14^a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values with different superscripts differ significantly (P≤0.05) within a row.

References


