

## EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION OF LIVE LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES VACCINE IN SHEEP AND RABBIT

BY

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### ABSTRACT

This study was carried out on apparently, healthy 20 lambs (4-6 months old) were selected from private flock in Dakahalia governorate without previous history of nervous manifestations and 30 rabbits were used for experimental vaccination with live *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine and were classified into three groups(10 in eachgroup). The vaccine was evaluated humerally by detection of antibodies titer and cellular activity through measuring of Nitric oxide and lysozyme in sheep and rabbit. While the protection aganist challenge and reisolation were used in rabbits

Immune response of sheep vaccinated with *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine showed increase in serum neutralizing antibody titers which gradually increased after 2nd dose of injection till reach maximum level at 15 days of the second dose compared with non vaccinated control sheep.

This result stated that the Vaccination of rabbits and sheep with live *Listeria monocytogenes* (1/2a and 1/2b) vaccine induce cellular and humeral response and protect the vaccinated rabbits against challenge with *Listeria monocytogenes*.

**Key words:** Listeriosis , Sheep, *Listeria monocytogenes*, Listeriosis vaccination

### INTRODUCTION

Sheep and goats are the main livestock in the Middle East (El- Sukhon and Nareman 2004). In Egypt sheep represent an important source of meat and thrift; their number was estimated in 1996 to be 3.491 million sheep (FAO 1996).

Listeriosis is one of the most lethal bacterial diseases for fetuses and infants (Hardy, et al; 2012). *Listeria monocytogenes* is a zoonotic agent, and the decisive role in the prevention of food-borne listeriosis in humans is the reduction of the presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in all the critical stages of the food production and the distribution chain, including the epidemiological surveillance of livestock (Fthenakis et al., 1998; Wagner et al., 2000).

Among farm animals, sheep appear to be particularly susceptible to listeriosis. The organism is spread world-wide in nature (decaying herbage, soil, feces, sewage) and occurs usually in low numbers (Fenlon 1988 and Woolford 1990). *Listeria* is an intracellular organism, only live vaccines can confer adequate immunity to effectively protect animals from the disease (Linde et al., 1995). Gudding et al., (1989) Immunized against listeriosis in sheep using a live attenuated vaccine showed that the incidence of listeriosis decreased from approximately 4.0 per cent before the introduction of the vaccine to 1.5 percent after vaccination started. The incidence of abortions was 0.7 percent in vaccinated flocks compared to 1.1 percent in unvaccinated flocks. As *Listeria* is an intracellular organism, only live vaccines can confer adequate immunity to effectively protect animals from the disease.

Vaccinology is the most effective and efficacious of medical interventions for eradication or management of many infectious diseases, the generation of cellular immune response is key to survival against a variety of viral and intracellular bacterial pathogens, therefore the development of safe vaccine capable in inducing strong cellular immunity continues to be a pressing challenge for medicine (Zhongxia et al., 2005).

The first positive step in elimination of human listeriosis is the elimination of animal listeriosis so; this work was designed to throw some lights on evaluation of local prepared live *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine in experimentally vaccinated sheep and rabbit as trial for control.

## II- MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 1- Animals

Apparently, healthy 20 lambs (4-6 months old) were selected from private flock in Dakahalia governorate without history of nervous manifestation and 35 *Tyland* rabbits, one month old (800-900 gm weight) used for evaluation of local prepared live *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine.

## 2- Preparation of *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccines

The vaccine is locally prepared in Microbiology Department, Veterinary animal Research Institute, Dokki, Giza. Pool of local isolated strain 1/2a and 1/2b of *Listeria monocytogenes* were used for preparation of live vaccine (equal volume). (**Gudding et al., 1989**) and equal volumes of diluted  $8 \times 10^9$  CFU/ ml by using McFarland nephelometer barium sulphate standard *Listeria monocytogenes* 1/2a and 1/2b and saponine adjuvant (Riedel-Dde-Haën Batch No.16109) was mixed and emulsified together (**Baily and Scott 1990**)

### Vaccine purity:

The listeria strain vaccine was checked for purity before use by microscopical examination of Gram's stained smears. It was recultivated on nutrient, blood agar and brain heart infusion agar for 24 – 48 hours at 37 °c. (**Cruickshank, et,al;1975**)

### Vaccine safety test:

The safety of the prepared vaccine was checked by injection of 1/2 ml vaccine subcutaneously to five small rabbits (800 – 900g). These rabbits were inspected daily for seven successive days and survivability in comparison with the 2 control rabbits (**Cruickshank, et, al;1975**)

## 3 - Experimental design

### Lambs Vaccination :

**GroupI:** Containing 10 lambs (4-6 months old) each one were twice subcutaneous injected by 2 ml with 2 weeks intervals by prepared live *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine.

**GroupII :** Containing 10 lambs of the same age each one were twice subcutaneous injected by 2 ml with 2 weeks intervals by normal saline and kept as non-vaccinated control group .All the lambs were kept under the same condition of feeding and housing with clinical observation for one year post vaccination. Sera samples were collected from the all lambs at day 0, 14; 30 days post vaccination and monthly till reach the 4th month then at 6th, 9th and 12th months after the first dose to follow up the level of antibodies.

### Rabbits Vaccination:

**Group RI:** Containing 10 rabbits were injected subcutaneously, each one with 0.5 ml S/C of prepared live *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine.

**Group RII:** Containing 10 rabbits were injected subcutaneously, each one with 0.5 ml S/C of normal saline and kept as non-vaccinated positive control. Vaccinated and non-vaccinated rabbits were kept under clinical observation for 3 months post vaccination. Sera samples were collected from the vaccinated and control rabbits at day 0, 2 weeks post 1st dose, 2 weeks post 2nd dose and 2 weeks post challenge.

**Group RIII:** Containing 10 rabbits were kept as non-injected and unchallenged group (Negative control) Fecal samples were collected daily for 7 successive days from vaccinated lambs and rabbits and examined bacteriologically to record the shedding of *Listeria monocytogenes* in feces.

#### **4- Challenge of vaccinated rabbits:**

Group RI and group RII were challenged subcutaneously with 1/2 ml of *Listeria monocytogenes* strains suspensions  $2 \times 10^2$ , 10 days after second dose of vaccination Rabbits were clinically observed for 3 weeks after challenge, serum samples were collected at different times before vaccination, before challenge, 2 weeks after challenge (Soumaya S.A. et.al; 2002). The dead rabbits were postmortem examined and brain, liver, spleen, and kidney tissues were collected from all dead rabbits. The selected samples were divided into two parts, one was bacteriological processed for isolation of listeria species and the other part was preserved in formalin 10% for histopathological examination

#### **5- Reisolation of L. monocytogenes from vaccinated lambs and rabbits.**

Fecal samples were collected from vaccinated lambs and rabbits and examined bacteriologically to record the shedding of *Listeria monocytogenes* in feces and from organs of dead rabbits.

#### **6 – Histopathological examination:**

Tissue specimens (brain stem, pons, and medulla oblongata, spleen, liver) collected from dead, sacrificed sheep and challenged rabbits were fixed in 10% formalin, after fixation the tissue specimens were processed by conventional paraffin embedding techniques and stained by hematoxylin and eosine for routine histopathological examination ( Harris, H.E. 1998)

#### **7-Estimation of nitric oxide assay**

100 µl of serum samples were mixed with an equal volume of freshly prepared Greiss reagent (0.5% sulfanilamide in 2.5 % phosphoric acid and 0.05 % N (1-naphthyl ethylene

diamine dihydrochloride) incubated for 10 minutes at room temperature and absorbency measured at 570 nm using a microtiter plate reader. The nitric level in serum samples was calculated by comparing the optical density against the nitrite standard curve of sodium nitrite in distilled water. (Green, et al; (1982)

### **8- Lysozyme estimation in sera of sheep and rabbits:**

Lysoplates were prepared by dissolving 1% agarose in 0.0067 M PBS at pH 6.3 at 100°C. Lower temperature to 60°C then 500 mg /L of lyophilized *Micrococcus lysodeikticus* (Kindly obtained from Immunity Department- Animal Health Research Institute. Dokki Giza.Egypt ) in 5 ml saline was added.

Plates were poured with 4 mm depth. Adding 25 µl of each serum sample and standard lysozyme solution were poured in each well and incubated at room temperature for 12-18 hr. Clear zone ring diameter was measured. The lytic zones were proportional to the concentration of lysozyme (Osserman and Lawlor; 1966).

### **8-Indirect Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA):**

The test was applied in diagnosis of *L. monocytogenes* in diseased and apparently healthy sheep and in measuring the titer of antibody in vaccinated, and unvaccinated control sheep and rabbits after Engvall and Perlmann. (1971)

### **9-Statistical analysis:**

The obtained data in ELISA test were statistically analyzed. According to Snedecor and Cochran ( 1973)

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The present work was undertaken to study the humeral immune response to *Listeria monocytogenes* in sheep and rabbits and its response to vaccination with live prepared vaccine in sheep and rabbits.

Clinical closely observation of vaccinated lambs and rabbit revealed the safety of the prepared vaccine as the animal don't showed any clinical signs after using the vaccine either or after 1<sup>st</sup> dose or 2<sup>nd</sup> dose and this supported by Low and Donachie (1991) which recorded that the live *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine are necessary for the production of immunity to listeric infection and the killed strains are incapable of stimulating any protection.

The antibodies titers in rabbit serum vaccinated with the live prepared vaccine was observed that there were a significant increase in antibodies level in post vaccinated rabbits than control ones and also there was no significance difference between titers post vaccination and post challenge **Table (1)**. These results were in agreement with **Gudding et al., (1989)** and **Soumaya and Amer (2002)** who reported the efficacy of the prepared live vaccine in sheep.

Measurements of some serum parameters can detect the activity of macrophage and neutrophils against the antigens as Nitric oxide (NO) and lysozyme level in the serum, as shown in **Table (2)**, estimation of nitric oxide and lysozyme mean level in sera of rabbits we observed that Significant difference nitric oxide level between control group and post challenged group no significant difference between control and vaccinated group, and significant difference lysozyme level between control group and other groups but no significant difference between vaccinated group and after challenge.

**Table (3) and (Photos 1,2,3,4,5 and 6)** revealed the number of survived rabbits after challenge of the vaccinated and nonvaccinated rabbits, where one of vaccinated rabbits died after challenge by one week and was negative bacteriologically and histopathological lesions revealed that death may due to other cause than *Listeria monocytogenes*. While all the unvaccinated ones died within 7 days of challenge and by bacteriological examination *Listeria monocytogenes* was reisolated from internal organs of dead rabbits. These results revealed the efficacy of live prepared vaccine of pooled *Listeria monocytogenes* (1/2a and 1/2b) in protecting both rabbits and sheep. These results coincided with **Gudding et al., (1989)** and **Soumaya and Amer (2002)** who succeeded in using prepared live vaccine from Egyptian local strains in protection of experimental infected pregnant ewes and their offspring from listeriosis.

**Table (4)** showed the titer of antibodies against *Listeria monocytogenes* in vaccinated and control sheep. It was clarified that the significant high level of antibodies titer were recorded after poster dose of vaccination by two weeks and the titer still high till 9<sup>th</sup> month post the second vaccination dose and there was significance variance between the antibodies at two weeks post the second dose of vaccination and 9<sup>th</sup> month post the second dose and the titers were decreased after one year of vaccination. These results revealed the efficacy of the vaccination with live prepared vaccine is suitable until one year. **Mietinen et al., (1990)** and **Gudding et al., (1989)** who reported that the specific immunological protection against

listeriosis is primarily based on the cell-mediated immune system and the cell-mediated immunity is most effectively stimulated by live vaccine

**Table (5)** revealed significant variance between vaccinated sheep and other groups, and significant variance between vaccinated group and contact apparently healthy sheep.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to study if the high level in antibodies titers against *Listeria monocytogenesis* efficient to prevent the infection by challenge in sheep. These pointed to apply the experiment in the rabbits to study the efficacy of live prepared vaccine when actually the animal exposed to infection.

Regarding to immune secretory molecule As shown in **Table (6)** estimation of nitric oxide and lysozyme mean level in sera of sheep we observed that there is a significant difference in nitric oxide level between control group and vaccinated and diseased groups and no significant level between vaccinated group and diseased group . There is significant difference in lysozyme level between the three groups of sheep.

The increase in nitric oxide may be attributed to the macrophage respond to bacterial antigen by synthesize and releases of nitric oxide which in turn enhances macrophage mediated cytotoxicity against variety pathogen including intra-cellular bacteria in addition Nitric oxide is generated during immune and inflammatory responses. It is involved in innate immunity as a toxic agent towards infectious organisms, but can induce or regulate death and function of host immune cells as mentioned by **Coleman (2001)**. Nitric oxide (NO) is a critical molecule in host defense to infection and a necessary component of non-specific defense mechanisms against several pathogens, including bacteria as reported by **Cifone et al., (2001)**. Moreover, produced at high levels by macrophages through activation of the inducible enzyme iNOS and its production is triggered as non-specific immune mechanism, this activation occurs after infection or vaccination **Aouatef et al., (2002)**.

Lysozyme is a major component of the specific granules in phagocytic cell and has a role in defense system due to its antimicrobial activity **Ellison and Giehl (1991)**. Lysozyme is a cationic enzyme that attacks the  $\beta$ -1, 4 glycosidic bond in the peptidoglycan of bacterial cell walls. This enables lysozyme to lyse certain Gram-positive bacteria **Paulsen, et al., (2001)**.

Our result can be explained by that lysozyme was actively secreted by polymorphonuclear cell and monocyte into the external environment as this cell releases the content of its secondary granules as supported by **Ellison and Giehl (1991)**.

This results revealed that the vaccination of rabbits with live *Listeria monocytogenes* vaccine and challenge gave good results for protection against listeriosis, while in sheep recorded high titer of antibodies in vaccinated lambs

**Table (1):** Mean antibody titers against *L. monocytogenes* in vaccinated rabbits

Groups	Prevaccinated	2 weeks post 1st dose	2 weeks post 2nd dose <sup>a</sup>	2 weeks post challenge <sup>b</sup>
Group RI	43.4	660	844.3	2160
Group R II	45.4	55	58	58.2
Group RIII	48.2	52.4	40	56

a: significant increase at 2 weeks post 2<sup>nd</sup> dose in vaccinated group (RI) in compared with prevaccinated and control groups.

b: no significant increase at 2 weeks post 2<sup>nd</sup> dose and 2 weeks post challenge

**Table (2):** Comparison of nitric oxide and lysozyme mean level in sera of rabbits Post-challenged

Group	Nitric oxide( $\mu\text{mol/ml}$ )*	Lysozyme ( $\mu\text{g/ml}$ )**
Vaccinated (G. RI)	6.987 $\pm$ 1.082 <sup>AB</sup>	329.700 $\pm$ 9.721 <sup>B</sup>
Control positive (G. RII)	8.178 $\pm$ 0.966 <sup>B</sup>	355.850 $\pm$ 22.155 <sup>B</sup>
Control negative (G. RIII)	5.110 $\pm$ 0.220 <sup>A</sup>	267.890 $\pm$ 7.129 <sup>A</sup>

A-Significant difference nitric oxide level between control negative group and control positive group, no significant difference between control negative and vaccinated group.

B- Significant difference lysozyme level between control negative group and other groups but no significant difference between vaccinated group and control positive

**Table (3):** Rabbits challenge experiment after vaccination .

Percent of survivors after challenge					
Vaccinated rabbits		Control rabbits (20)			
Group RI (10)		Group R II (10)Control positive		Group RIII (10)Control negative	
NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
9	90	1	10	10	100

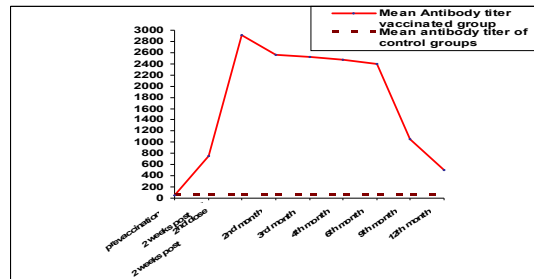
**Table (4):** Mean of Anti-*Listeria monocytogenes* antibody titers in vaccinated sheep

	Prevaccination	Mean antibody titer in vaccinated sheep							
		2 weeks post 1st dose	2 weeks post 2nd dose*	2 <sup>nd</sup> month	3 <sup>rd</sup> month	4 <sup>th</sup> month	6 <sup>th</sup> month	9 <sup>th</sup> month	12 <sup>th</sup> month
Group I	45.77	754.18	2913.3	2557.5	2525	2477.5	2392.5	1055	500
Group II	45.77	57.23	83.12	76.34	63.21	89.36	76.34	74.35	70.22
SD	23.8	300.7	765.4	2045.660	1958.686	2025.861	2103.643	141.421	358.614

- Significance variance between 2 weeks post 2<sup>nd</sup> dose in vaccinated group and other weeks The peak of antibodies titer was at 2 weeks post the second dose of vaccination and still high till the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> month of the experiment.

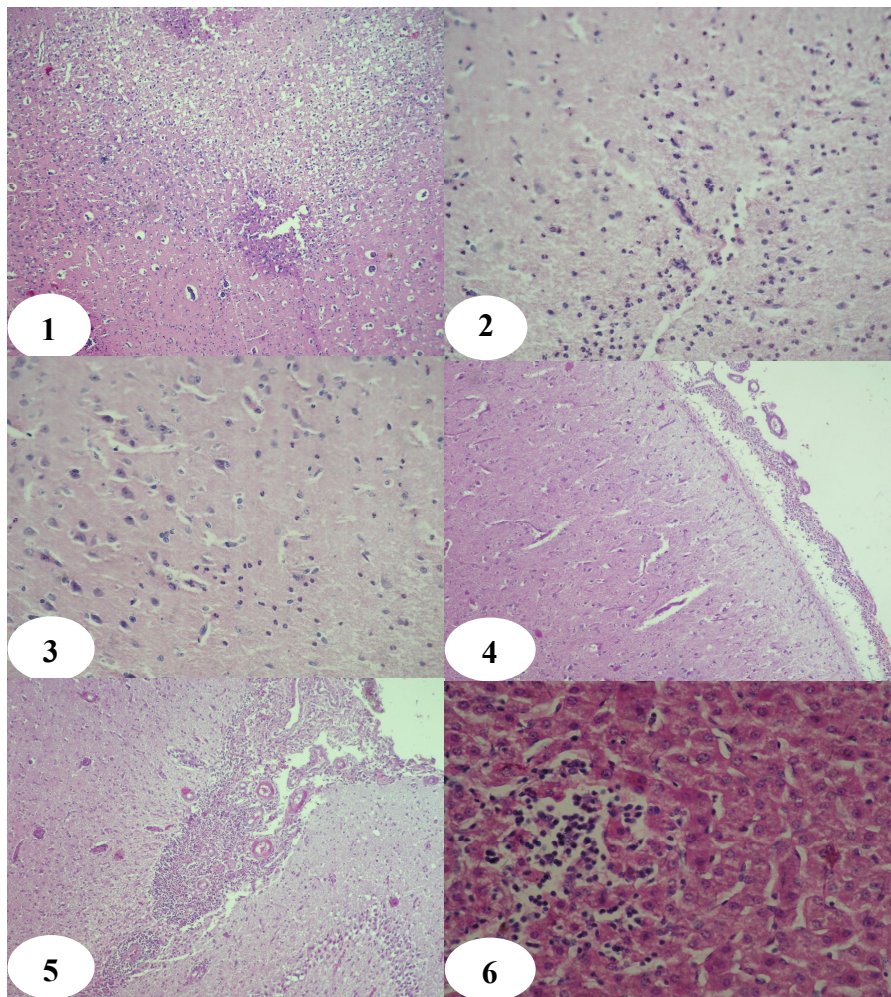


28 - 30 August 2012



**Figure (4):** Anti-*Listeria monocytogenes* antibody titers in vaccinated sheep compared by non vaccinated control

### Histopathological picture of tissues from challenged control positive rabbits ((GRII))



**Photo (1)** Brain showed diffuse degeneration of neurons with pericellular edema

**Photo (2)** Brain showed microabscess in white matter

**Photo (3)** Brain showed microabscess in grey matter

**Photo (4)** Brain showed submeningeal aggregation of round cells.

**Photo (5)** Brain showed perivascular cuffing particularly round cells.

**Photo (6)** Liver showed focal replacement of necrotic hepatocytes with round cells.

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## التقييم التجريبي للقاح الليستريا مونوسيتوجين الحي في الأغنام والأرانب

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### الملخص العربي

تعتبر الاغنام مصدر هام للتوفير والربح السريع للفلاح المصرى كما تعتبر مصدر للبروتين الحيوانى حيث يزيد الاقبال عليها وخاصة فى المناسبات الدينية ومرض السيتيريا هو مرض خطير يصيب المغترات وخاصة الاغنام ويسبب خسائر اقتصادية تتمثل فى النفوق او الذبح الاطرارى والاجهاض وعادة ما تفشل محاولات العلاج فى مواجهة المرض او تقليل خسائره لذا استهدفت الدراسة محاولة تجريبية لتقييم لقاح حى محضر من عترات السيتيريا مونوسيتوجين المعزولة من الاغنام المصرية فى الحملان والارانب واستخدم فى هذه التجربة ٢٠ حمل مقسمة الى مجموعتين الاولى حقنت مرتين بالقاح (٢ملى تحت الجلد) بينهم اسبوعين والاخرى حقنت فى نفس الوقت بمحلول ملهى معقم وحفظت كمجموعة ضابطة واستخدم ايضا عدد ٣٠ ارنب لتقييم اللقاح مقسمة الى ٣مجموعات تم حقن الاولى بالقاح ٢/١ملى تحت الجلد فى جرعتين والثانية حقنت بمحلول ملهى معقم وحفظت كضابط ايجابى والمجموعة الخير لم تحقن وتم التحفظ عليها كضابط سلبى تم تقييم المناعة السائلة عن طريق مستوى الاجسام المناعية فى الدم للحملان والارانب وكذلك المناعة الخلوية عن طريق قياس مستوى نيتريك اوكسيد واليزوسوم فى مصل الحملان والارانب وتم قياس الحماية فى الارانب عن طريق التحدى باستخدام اللستريا مونوسيتوجين ووجدت زيادة معنوية فى نسبة الاجسام المضادة كانت اعلاها فى الاسبوع الثانى من بعد الحقنة الثانية واتسم بارتفاع الاجسام المناعية على مايقرب من نهاية الشهر الثامن واستطاعت مجموعة الارانب المحصنة ان تصد العدوى فى حين فشلت المجموعة الاخرى الغير محصنة وتم عزل الميكروب منها وتشخيص التأثير الباثولوجى عليها ،لذلك نوصي بإمكانية استخدام اللقاح الحى من الليستريا مونوسيتوجين فى الأماكن الموبوءة بالمرض للحد من انتشاره و الحد من الخسائر الناجمة عنه.