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Analytical Toxicology and Case Reports in Forensic Toxicology with a Focus on Human Poisoning from Toxic Higher Fungi

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Introduction

Mycotoxins are poisonous compounds found in a number of higher fungus families that can harm humans severely or even fatally. This review's objective is to compile an analytical inventory of poisoning incidents involving a number of very poisonous mycotoxins, including orellanine, amanitins A and B, muscarine, ibotenic acid and muscimol and gyromitrin. Clinicians are demanding that toxicological analyses be used to record the cases. Therefore, this document reviews poisoning incidents involving these mycotoxins that have been documented in the literature and makes a list of the analytical methods that can be used to identify and measure them. It appears that toxicological study of these poisonings is only occasionally recorded, primarily due to a dearth of analytical techniques in biological matrices.

Description

There is a huge variety of fungus, yet little is known about them. In 2002, there were one million five hundred thousand species known. By 2005, there were 5.1 million and by 2018, there were 13.5 million. Since humans are only aware of a small percentage of this diversity—of which only 100,000 species have been described—the precise number of fungal species on Earth is still unknown. There are roughly 5000 species of these so-called higher fungi, which are fungi whose sporophores (the reproductive organ) are visible to the unaided eye. Fewer than a dozen of them contain mycotoxins, which, when consumed, may result in poisoning of varied degrees of severity and even death [1].

There are 14 distinct syndromes that can be used to categorise these poisonings, some of which are more severe than others. These syndromes include acromelalgia, cerebellar, coprinic, digestive (and resinoid), encephalopathy, gyromitrin, muscarinic, orellanus, pantherina, paxillus, phalloidin, proximien, psilocybin (or narc A new classification of mycotoxic syndromes based on the primary clinical symptoms rather than toxins was developed by White et al. in 2019. The new classification is composed of six sections, each of which is further divided into a number of subgroups: 1. cytotoxic damage, 2. neurological damage, 3. muscle damage, 4. metabolic damage, 5. gastrointestinal irritation and 6. additional indicators [2].

According to several case studies, poisonings primarily occur between August and November, when mushrooms grow best due to the suitable climate. Because of its potent nephrotoxic effects, which can cause abrupt renal failure, orellanine is toxic (group 1C in the White et al. classification). Its exact harmful mechanism has not yet been determined. However, experiments on Madin-Darby canine renal cells by Richard and his team have demonstrated that orellanine is responsible for the suppression of proteins in the cytoplasm and mitochondria of renal cells. Other theories have been put forth, including those that claim glutathione depletion, inhibition of mitochondrial adenosine triphosphate generation and suppression of DNA and RNA in the renal cells [3].

The amatoxins are categorised in the cytotoxic group (1A) under the new classification because they interfere with messenger RNA to prevent RNA polymerase II from functioning and the transcription of DNA into RNA. As a result, protein synthesis is inhibited, which causes cell necrosis. Enterocytes, hepatocytes and proximal renal cells are among the first cells to be impacted because of their high rate of protein synthesis. Renal lesions only manifest in amatoxin poisoning with low levels, according to studies in mice. When there is a high amount of poisoning, the victim dies from acute liver failure or hypoglycemia before the renal abnormalities manifest. Although enterohepatic cycle prolongs the hepatoxic activity, amatoxins are primarily removed in the bile [4].

Amanita phalloide, often known as "death cap" in English-speaking nations and unquestionably the most well-known poisonous mushroom in the world, is hazardous because of a group of chemicals called amatoxins. Probability lethal concentrations of amanitins are present in all Phalloideae members. Other species including *A. verna, A. virosa, A. bisporigera* and *A. ocreata* also contain these mycotoxins. Within the major species of concern are amatoxins from the genera *Galerina* (*G. marginata* and *G. autumnalis*) and *Lepiota* (*L. brunneoincarnata* and *L. helveola*) [5].

The primary toxin in mushrooms belonging to the genus *Gyromitra* in the family Discinaceae is gyromitrin. *Gyromitra esculenta*, the most prevalent mushroom, is frequently mistaken for a morel, earning it the moniker "false morel." It belongs to the same subgroup as *G. fastigiate* and *G. ambigua*. There is no proof that *Gyromitrin* is present in *G. gigas*. *Gyromitrin* appears to be present in a sizable section of the genus *Gyromitra*. *G. esculenta* also includes the toxins pentanal N-methyl-N-formylhydrazone, 3-methylbutanal N-methyl-N-formylhydrazone and hexanal N-methyl-N-formylhydrazone in addition to gyromitrin. By hydrolysis, all of these substances result in the creation of methylhydrazine.

Conclusion

The very hazardous mycotoxins orellanine, - and - amanitin, muscarine, ibotenic acid, muscimol and gyromitrin were the subject of this evaluation of the literature, which was analytical in nature. The gaps in knowledge are identified. Although there is a dearth of scientific information, particularly with regard to the metabolism of mycotoxins in biological matrices, there is also a dearth of analytical resources. The creation and validation of specialised analytical techniques tailored for the examination of these mycotoxins in distinct matrices are actually in dire demand.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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