Research Article



The use of dietary probiotics in long-term exposure to treat the effect of the nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) naproxen causes thyroid dysfunction in zebrafish (Danio rerio)

Ebrahim A.¹; Panahi N.^{1*}; Kazempoor R.^{2*}; Khajehrahimi A.E.²; Hadizadeh Shirazi N.³

Received: June 2022 Accepted: Junary 2023

Abstract

Naproxen (NPX) is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that has been identified in aquatic environments. It has led to growing concerns about endocrine disruption in aquatic organisms exposed to its drug residues. This study aimed to evaluate the disruptive effects of NPX and the improving effects of probiotic nutrition on thyroid, and zebrafish growth. The fish were fed for 60 days by basic diet (TN, Control) basic diet with probiotics (TP, TPN) (Lactobacillus reuteri, CFU/1.5×108) and simultaneously exposed to NPX (100 μg/L) (TN, TPN). During the experiment, Triiodothyronine (T3), Thyroxine (T4), Thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH), Iodothyronine Deiodinase-1 (DIO1), and Iodothyronine Deiodinase-2 (DIO2), in addition to growth rate factors were evaluated with ELISA and Quantitative real-time PCR assay. The results showed probiotic feeding and NPX exposure did not affect T3 levels (p>0.05), but decreased T4 (p<0.05). TSH gene transcription expression increased as a result of probiotic feeding and NPX exposure (p<0.05) while DIO1 and DIO2 gene expression decreased (p<0.05). Weight gain and growth rate were also observed as a result of probiotic feeding, while exposure to NPX decreased growth rate (p<0.05). Generally, the results showed that NPX increased the risk of thyroid dysfunction and reduced growth rate in zebrafish, while probiotic feeding improved these factors. Therefore, the use of probiotic supplements in rearing centers is recommended due to the continuous increase in the consumption and distribution of drugs. Prolonged exposure to drug concentrations causes thyroid dysfunction and consequently reduced growth in fish, which will lead to significant economic losses.

Keywords: Naproxen, *Lactobacillus reuteri*, Probiotic, Zebrafish, Thyroid Hormones

¹⁻Department of Veterinary Basic Sciences, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

²⁻Department of Hygiene, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

³⁻Department of Biology, Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran

^{*}Corresponding author's Email: n.panahi@srbiau.ac.ir; r.kazempoor@riau.ac.ir

Introduction

Water pollution by pharmaceutical contaminants is one of the most disturbing environmental problems (Brausch et al., 2012; Li, 2014; Comber et al., 2018). Increases in drug use and incomplete disposal in wastewater treatment plants lead to the continuous release of drugs into groundwater, surface water, and drinking water (Benotti et al., 2009; Li, 2014; Comber et al., 2018). To avoid potential risks, the removal of pharmaceuticals at sewage treatment plants before final release into receiving waters is utterly imperative. Meanwhile, the Technologies for the removal of pharmaceuticals have very high economic costs (Silva et al., 2018).

Aquaculture or the farming of aquatic organisms (fish, crustaceans, molluscs, aquatic plants) is a rapidly growing food production sector at a rate of 6% per year in the world and is becoming the main source of protein for human nutrition, while in recent decades the contamination with of waters pharmaceuticals has caused significant economic losses in the aquaculture industry by disrupting growth performance and increasing losses (DDTTD et al., 2021). Prolonged exposure can have several adverse effects on aquatic organisms (Fabbri and Franzellitti, 2016; Ebele et al., 2017). Interference with the endocrine system and disruption of homeostasis in nontarget organisms is one of the main concerns of drug contaminants (Ebele et 2017). Nonsteroidal antial.. inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are among the endocrine disruptors that have been reported to contaminate aquatic environments (Mezzelani *et al.*, 2016). Although knowledge of the NSAID's effects on aquatic organisms is limited, recent studies have reported dysfunction of the endocrine system (including the thyroid gland) in fish (Xu *et al.*, 2019). The thyroid is an important component of the endocrine system that has a significant impact on the growth and development of fish (Nelson and Habibi, 2009).

NPX is a derivative of bicyclic propionic acid and a known nonselective and non-steroidal antiinflammatory drug (Dzionek et al., 2018). It is one of the most common **NSAIDs** detected in aquatic environments. The action mechanism is on the inhibition of two based cyclooxygenase isoforms involved in the synthesis of prostaglandins, prostacyclin, and thromboxane from arachidonic acid (Angiolillo Weisman, 2017; Barcella et al., 2019). Previous studies have examined the adverse effects of NPX on antioxidant function (Stancová et al., 2015; Neal and Moore, 2017; Sehonova et al., 2017), reproduction (Kwak *et al.*, 2018), and endocrinology (Kwak et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2019) in fish.

Probiotics are live microbial feed additives that increase survival and growth rates by entering the host gastrointestinal tract and improving intestinal microbial flora (Liu *et al.*, 2018; Alavinezhad *et al.*, 2020). Probiotics also competitively eliminate harmful bacteria (Liu *et al.*, 2018; Mirabdollah Elahi *et al.*, 2020), improve

immune function (Hoseinifar et al., and improve physiological 2021), functions including endocrine system function (Kanwal and Tayyeb, 2019). Lactobacillus is one of the most widely used probiotics among probiotic The genus Lactobacillus bacteria. includes a large heterogeneous group of gram-positive. non-sporulating, anaerobic bacteria that includes lactobacillus acidophilus, lactobacillus rhamnosus, lactobacillus bulgaricus, lactobacillus casei, and lactobacillus reuteri (Mu et al., 2018). L. reuteri is a species of Lactobacillus that has been isolated from the gastrointestinal tract of humans and fish and Its beneficial effects on host health have been reported in several studies (Mu et al., 2018; Ahmad et al., 2022).

Based on the previous studies, it was hypothesized that exposure to NPX leads to impaired growth and production of thyroid hormones (TH) (Xu et al., 2019). According to Kanwal and Tayyeb (2019), the use of probiotics improves the growth function and function of the thyroid gland. In this study, zebrafish was used as a model to investigate the effect of probiotic nutrition on reducing the adverse effects of NPX on growth and TH. The results of this study will show the risks of NPX, the benefits of using probiotics in the fish diet, and the process of recovery and thyroid dysfunction after feeding with probiotics and long-term exposure to NPX.

Materials and methods

Potential Probiotic Strain

Lactobacillus reuteri ATCC 23272 strain was prepared through the Iranian Biological Resource Center. This strain was then cultured aerobically in Man, Rosaga, and Sharpe (MRS) broth for 24h at 37°C. The broth culture medium was centrifuged at 8000 g for 15 min at 4°C. The initial bacterial concentration was then diluted using saline phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) to a concentration of 0.5 McFarland $(1.5 \times 10^8 \text{ colony forming})$ units (CFU/mL)) (Giri et al., 2018). The prepared suspensions were stored at -20°C 20% adding glycerol until consumption (Barbour and Priest, 1986).

Experimental design

Zebrafish (average weight: 0.13±0.1 g) were purchased from an ornamental fish breeding center in Tehran. The fish were kept in aerated glass aquariums (120 L) and adapted to laboratory conditions for two weeks. During the adaptation period, the fish were fed with basic feed (Biomar, France) based on 2% of the body weight twice a day and about 30% of the aquarium water was changed daily. Water temperature, dissolved oxygen, and pH during the experimental period were 26±1°C, 6.9±0.5 mg/L, and 7±0.4, respectively. The light period was 12h of light to 12h of darkness. 600 fish were randomly divided into four groups (n=50 per group) with three replications to experiment. Control: Basic diet feeding; TP: Probiotic diet; TPN: Probiotic diet and NPX poisoning; TN: Basic diet and NPX poisoning. The total duration of the experiment was 60 days.

Preparation of feed

The probiotic diet was obtained by adding L. reuteri suspension to the basal final with a CFU/g concentration of 1.5×10^8 and then incubated in ice (for bacterial uptake) for 15 min. The basal diet was also prepared by combining commercial feed with sterile phosphate-buffered saline (PBS, Sigma-Aldrich) in an equivalent volume of bacterial suspension (Wang et al., 2016). Food preparation was done daily and feeding was performed twice a day (at 9 and 17 o'clock) based on 2% of the bodyweight of the fish.

Exposure to NPX

Exposure to NPX (Razak Pharma Co., Iran) was performed with a slight change based on the method of Xu *et al.* (2019). In this study, the NPX test concentration was 100 μg/L. NPX stock solution was obtained using methanol, and equivalent methanol concentration was used in TP and Control groups (no drug poisoning). About 80% of the aquarium water was changed daily and the desired drug and methanol concentrations were renewed.

Lactobacillus reuteri genetic analysis This phase was performed based on the methods of Alonso *et al.* (2019) and Shayan and Rahbari (2005) with some changes. At the end of the experiment, intestinal tissue samples of fish belonging to different groups were isolated under sterile conditions and transferred with ice to the laboratory. In the laboratory, the intestines were homogenized in 10 ml of sterile PBS using Stomacher for 5 min at room temperature. The obtained homogeneity with glass beads was dispersed in MRS agar containers with 1.5% NaCl and incubated at 30 °C for 3 to 7 days under aerobic conditions. After incubation, several colonies were randomly isolated based on their morphology, color, and brightness and stored at -80°C in 10% glycerol-MRS solution (v/v). DNA extraction was performed using a DNA isolation kit (MBST, Germany / Iran) and according to the manufacturer's instructions. The primers used to identify L. reuteri based on 16S rRNA gene sequences were retrieved from the National Biotechnology Information Center (NCBI) database (Table 1) and synthesized by SinaClon (Iran). PCR analysis and thermal program were adjusted based on Shayan and Rahbari (2005) method. PCR products were analyzed on 1.8% agarose gel in 0.5 times TBE buffer and observed using ethidium bromide and UV-illuminator.

Table 1: Primers specifications are based on 16S rDNA sequences used for *L. reuteri* (F=Forward primer, R=Reverse primer) (Kim *et al.*, 2020).

Lactobacillus reuteri F-lacto GAT TGA CGA TGG ATC ACC AGT	PCR roduct Size	Sequence (5' –3')	Primer	Target bacteria
	161	GAT TGA CGA TGG ATC ACC AGT	F-lacto	Lactobacillus reuteri
PCR assay R-lacto CAT CCC AGA GTG ATA GCC AA		CAT CCC AGA GTG ATA GCC AA	R-lacto	PCR assay

Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA)

Three fish were randomly separated from each treatment on days 0, 30, and 60. They were packed inside a zip-keep bag after being euthanized using clove oil (Wong et al., 2014) and transported with ice to the laboratory. Determination of T4 hormone from whole fish body homogeneity was performed by ELISA kit (Autobio Diagnostics, Co., China) with a sensitivity of 1.29 g/dL. Tissue hormone T3 was also determined using a commercial ELISA kit (Autobio Diagnostics, Co., China) with sensitivity of 49.5 pg/mL according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Quantitative real-time PCR assay

Three fish of each treatment were separated randomly at the end of the experiment (day 60). They were packed inside a zip-keep bag after being euthanized using clove oil (Wong et al., 2014) and transported with ice to the laboratory. Isolated samples were kept at -80°C for gene expression of Thyroidstimulating hormone (TSH), Iodothyronine Deiodinase-1 (DIO1), Iodothyronine Deiodinase-2 and (DIO2). First, the whole body of the fish was washed and homogenized twice with PBS (pH 7.4). Total RNA was

extracted using **TRIzol** reagent (Invitrogen, USA) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Total RNA concentration measured was spectrophotometry at 260 nm and RNA purity was confirmed at 280.260 nm ratios. RNA was then washed and used as a template for cDNA synthesis. Reverse transcription reactions for cDNA synthesis were performed using the cDNA Synthesis Kit (Thermo Scientific) according to the manufacturer's instructions. The primers used were retrieved from the National Biotechnology Information Center (NCBI) database (Table 2) and designed by Primer Express Version 2.0 (Applied **Biosystems** Inc.). It was then by the **SINACOLON** synthesized Company. Quantification of target genes was performed on Mastercycler® ep realplex (Eppendorf, Hamburg, Germany) using the SYBR Green PCR kit. Real-time **PCR** temperature conditions were initial denaturation at 95°C for 1 minute, followed by 40 cycles at 95°C for 15s and 60°C for 1 minute (Xu et al., 2019). mRNA levels were calculated using $2^{-\Delta\Delta CT}$ method and β actin was considered as endogenous reference (Livak and Schmittgen, 2001).

Table 2: Primers specifications used for DIO1, DIO2, TSH, and beta-actin genes (F=Forward primer, R=Reverse primer).

Primers	Primer sequence	
DIO1-F	5-GTTCAAACAGCTTGTCAAGGACT-3	
DIO1-R	5-AGCAAGCCTCTCCAAGTT-3	
DIO2-F	5-GCATAGGCAGTCGCTCATTT-3	
DIO2-R	5-TGTGGTCTCTCATCCAACCA-3	
TSH _B -F	5-GCAGATCCTCACTTCACCTACC-3	
TSHß-R	5-GCACAGGTTTGGAGCATCTCA-3	
ß-Actin-F	5-ATGGATGAGGAAATCGCTGCC-3	
ß-Actin-R	5-CTCCCTGATGTCTGGGTCGTC-3	

Growth measurements

The weight of 20 fish from each group was randomly recorded on days 0, 30,

and 60 of the experimental period. Growth performance indices were then measured using formula:

Weight gain=Final Weight-Initial weight
Weight gain percentage (%)= Final Weight-Initial weight/Initial weight×100

Specific Growth Ratio = ((ln Final weight–ln Initial weight)/time in days) ×100

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS 21 and Microsoft Office Excel 2013 software. All data were reported as Mean±SE. The normality of the data was determined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Significant differences between treatments were considered by one-way analysis of variance (One-way

ANOVA). Duncan's test was used at a significant level of 0.05 to compare means.

Results

Lactobacillus reuteri genetic analysis 16S rDNA gene sequencing results indicated the identification of *L. reuteri* in the intestines of the study groups (Fig. 1).

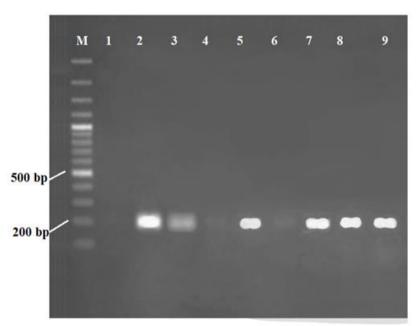


Figure 1: Left to right, 1: bp100 marker, 2-8: set-up samples at different temperatures. 9: Negative control of PCR, 10: Negative control of ctrl, 11: Positive control of *L. reuteri*, 12: TN, 13: TPN, 14: TP.

ELISA

Mean comparison results of Triiodothyronine (T3) showed that no significant difference was observed between different treatments on the experimental days (p>0.05) (Fig. 2).

Mean comparison results of Thyroxine (T4) showed that no significant difference was observed between different treatments on day 0 of the experiment (p>0.05). On day 30 of the experiment, there was a significant

difference between TPN treatment and TP and control treatments (p<0.05). On this day, the highest value was reported in the control treatment and the lowest value was reported in the TN treatment (p<0.05). Also, on this day, no

significant difference was recorded between TPN and other treatment (p>0.05).

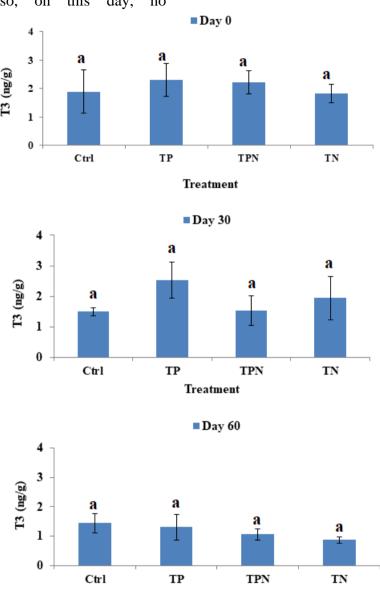


Figure 2: Levels of T3 in zebrafish after 0, 30 and 60 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The same letters mean no difference (p>0.05) and different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05).

Treatment

On day 60 of the experiment, there was a significant difference between TPN and TP treatments with TN and control treatments on day 60 (p<0.05). On this day, the highest value was reported in

the control treatment and the lowest value was reported in the TN treatment (p<0.05). Also, on this day, no significant difference was recorded between TPN and TN (p>0.05) (Fig. 3).

Ouantitative real-time PCR

The results of the mean comparison showed that there was a significant difference between all treatments (p<0.05). Based on these results, the highest value was recorded in TN and the lowest value was recorded in the control

treatment (p<0.05). DIO1 treatments showed that there was a significant difference between TN and TPN treatments and control treatments (p<0.05).

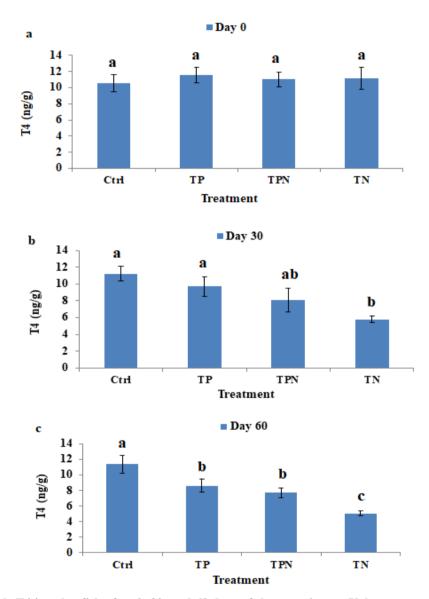


Figure 3: Levels T4 in zebrafish after 0, 30 and 60 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The same letters mean no difference (p>0.05) and different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05).

Based on these results, the highest value was recorded in control and the lowest value was recorded in the TN group (*p*<0.05). Also, no significant difference was recorded between TP, TPN and TN and between control and TP treatment

(p>0.05). DIO2 treatments also showed that there was a significant difference between TN treatment and control treatment (p<0.05). Based on these results, the highest value was recorded in control and the lowest value was recorded in the TN treatment (p<0.05). Also, no significant difference was recorded between TP, TPN and TN and between control, TP and TPN treatment (p>0.05) (Fig. 4).

Growth analysis

Mean comparison results of weight showed that no significant difference was observed between different treatments on day 0 of the experiment (p>0.05).

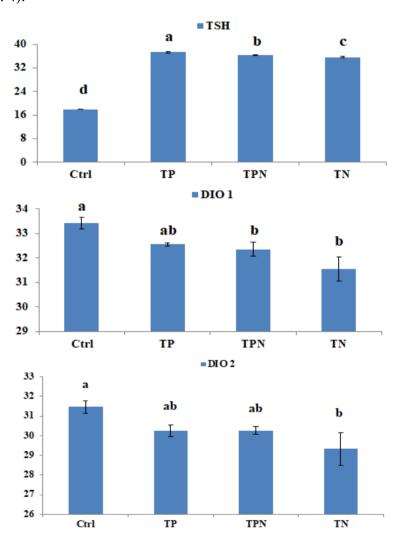


Figure 4: Levels of TSH, DIO1, and DIO2 in zebrafish after 60 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The same letters mean no difference (p>0.05) and different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05)

On day 30 of the experiment, there was a significant difference between TP treatment and TN and control treatments

(p<0.05). On this day, the highest value was reported in the TP treatment and the lowest value was reported in the Control

treatment (p<0.05). Also, on this day, no significant difference was recorded between Control, TPN and TP and between TPN and TN (p>0.05). On day 60 of the experiment, there was a significant difference between TP treatment with TN and control treatments (p < 0.05). On this day, the highest value was reported in the TP treatment and the lowest value was reported in the Control treatment (p < 0.05). Also, on this day,

significant difference was recorded between Control, TPN and TP and between TPN and TN (p>0.05) (Figs. 5 to 9). The results of Weight Gain (g) and Percentage weight gain (%) after 60 days and Specific Growth Rate (g) after 30 and 60 days showed that significant difference between TP and TN and control treatments (p<0.05).

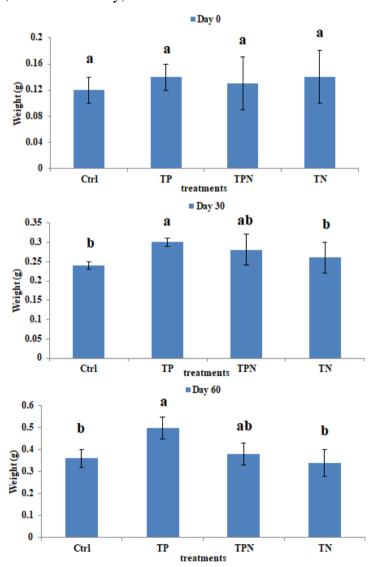


Figure 5: Weight (g) in zebrafish after 0, 30 and 60 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05).

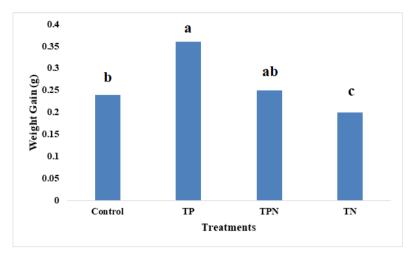


Figure 6: Weight Gain (g) in zebrafish after 60 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05).

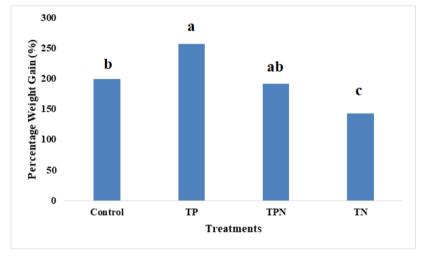


Figure 7: Percentage weight gain (%) in zebrafish after 60 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05).

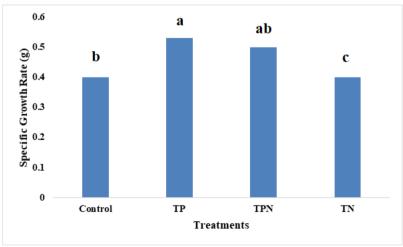


Figure 8: Specific Growth Rate in zebrafish after 30 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05).

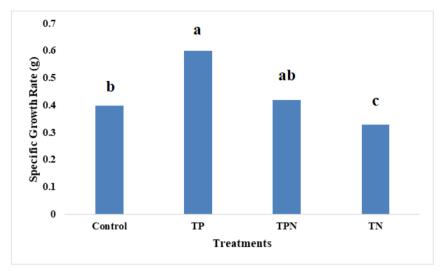


Figure 9: Specific Growth Rate (g) in zebrafish after 60 days of the experiment. Values are expressed as the mean \pm SD. The different letters mean a significant difference at the 5% level (p<0.05).

The highest value was reported in the TP and the lowest value was reported in the TN treatment (p<0.05). Also, no significant difference was recorded between Control, and TPN.

Discussion

TH is secreted from the hypothalamicpituitary-thyroid (HPT) axis and is involved in the body's metabolism, growth, behavior, immune regulation, and stress response in fish (Shkil et al., 2019). Therefore, changes in TH (T3, T4, and TSH) and factors involved in the metabolism of these hormones (DIO1, DIO2) are effective in the biological function (like metabolism of the body, protein synthesis, carbohydrate and fat metabolism, neural development) of fish. So far, no study has been done on the effect of using probiotic supplements on reducing the adverse effects of drug poisoning in fish. The present study was performed to investigate the role of L. reuteri probiotic and NPX exposure on thyroid and growth rate in zebrafish.

TH results did not show significant changes in NPX exposure at T3 levels but decreased T4 levels and increased TSH gene transcription were observed in fish. Published articles on thyroid dysfunction due to drug poisoning in aquatic organisms are limited, but the effects of some NSAIDs on fish thyroid disorder have been published (Saravanan et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2019; Zloh et al., 2016). In similar studies, decreased T4 levels and increased TSH gene transcription were reported as a result of prolonged exposure to NPX in zebrafish (Xu et al., 2019). Saravanan et al. (2014) reported decreased T4 levels and increased TSH levels in Cirrhinus mrigala after prolonged exposure to NSAIDs including clofibric acid and diclofenac (Saravanan et al., 2014). According to the study of Xu et al. (2019), the reduction of T4-negative feedback is due to the positive regulation of tshβ genes in fish exposed to NPX, All these results are consistent with our study. In this regard, due to the limited

studies on the effects of NPX on TH in fish, the mechanisms involved in the effect of NSAIDs on mammalian thyroid will be investigated. According to the model used (zebrafish), its genetic similarities with humans, and the importance of this fish in evaluating the effects of drugs (Chakraborty et al., 2009), it is necessary to review the relevant articles. The first mechanism is due to the structure of many NSAIDs, which include carboxylic acid and is the site of metabolism and formation of acvl glucuronides (esters). These ester glucuronides are rapidly hydrolyzed after contact with intestinal microbiota to release aglycone. This process damages the intestinal mucosa in animals and causes the toxic action of NSAIDs (Wilson and Nicholson, 2017). Nicholson Wilson and (2017)recommend the study of intestinal mucosal histopathology in fish exposed NPX. Alterations in intestinal microbiotas (such reduced lactobacilli) have been reported in humans and mice due to NSAIDs (Mäkivuokko et al., 2010; Liang et al., effect 2015). The of intestinal microbiota and metabolites on TH regulation has been demonstrated by studying the effect on the intestinalintestinal-thyroid, brain, and hypothalamic-pituitary (HPA) axes (Huo et al., 2021), The mentioned items can be the reason mechanisms in the results of our study.

On the other hand, in this study, T3 levels did not change significantly due to probiotic feeding. T4 levels decreased and TSH transcription increased, which

is consistent with the results of Kanwal and Tayyeb (2019). Kanwal and Tayyeb (2019) reported decreased T4 levels and increased TSH regulation in Labeo rohita as a result of feeding with commercial probiotics. **Probiotics** increase TSH in the host by reducing the production of bile acids. In this regard, there have also been limited studies on the mechanism of probiotic action on fish thyroid. Based on our reviews, the most important and first mechanism of probiotic action is the regulation of microbiota and intestinal metabolites. mechanism improves thyroid function, reduces T3, and T4, and increases TSH in the host by affecting intestinal-brain and intestinalthyroid axes (Huo et al., 2021). As, Huo et al. (2021) observed the presence of Lactobacillus reuteri in the intestinal microbial flora, and expressed that probiotics enhance the secretion of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) by regulating intestinal microbiota. SCFA also affects host neurotransmitters (such as dopamine) in the brain. in such a way that regulates HPA and increases TSH by decreasing the concentration of thyrotropin receptor antibody (TRAb) (Farzi et al., 2018). In addition, the effect of probiotics on TH levels can be attributed to their effect on regulating blood iron levels. Thyroid dysfunction is associated with abnormal levels of this mineral (Huo et al., 2021). All the mentioned cases can be the causes of the observed changes in the level of TH in the present study, and the authors recommend that they be taken into consideration in the next investigations.

Regarding the simultaneous effect of feeding with probiotics and exposure to NPX, the results of this study showed that T4 levels and TSH gene expression were higher in the probiotic-fed group compared with the basal-fed and NPXexposed groups. These results were more similar to the non-toxic groups, which shows the positive effect of feeding with probiotics on endocrine function during poisoning. In this regard, the benefits of using probiotics to prevent NSAID-induced disorders in host have been reported in several studies (Mäkivuokko et al., 2010). The effect of NSAID poisoning on intestinal mucosal damage (Wilson and 2017) and changes in Nicholson, intestinal microbiota (Mäkivuokko et al., 2010; Liang et al., 2015) has been reported. On the other hand, based on previous studies the use of probiotics improves the function of the microbial flora and intestinal structure in fish (Alavinezhad et al., 2020; Mirabdollah Elahi et al., 2020). Which can be the cause of the observed changes in T4 level and TSH gene expression in our study. As Farzi et al. (2018) and Huo et (2021)and emphasized significant effect of microbial flora on the thyroid. Of course, as it is clear in the results section the modification of the intestinal microbial flora of zebrafish in this study was due to feeding with L. reuteri as probiotic.

Deiodinases are important regulators of thyroid hormone levels in vertebrates. Their transcriptional level is considered a sensitive biomarker in thyroid disorders due to the sensitivity of deiodinases to environmental chemicals (Picard-Aitken et al., 2007). In the present study, the results of DIO1 and DIO2 did not show significant changes due to probiotic feeding, while they decreased during exposure to NPX. Probiotic feeding improved DIO1 and DIO2 levels compared to basal feeding, and the data were more normal. Xu et al. (2019) reported a decrease in the transcription levels of DIO1 and DIO2 as a result of prolonged exposure to NPX in zebrafish, which was consistent with our results. The conversion of T4 to biologically active T3 in fish is mainly controlled by the activities of DIO1 and DIO2 (Xu et al., 2019). DIO2 plays a thyroid major role in hormone homeostasis and active T3 production (Yu et al., 2010). In this study, Not seeing significant changes in T3 levels at the time of NPX exposure were due to a decrease in deiodinases.

Also, an increase in weight index and growth factors was observed in the groups fed with L. reuteri. Numerous studies have reported an increase in the weight and growth rate of Lactobacillusfed zebrafish (Falcinelli et al., 2015; Mohammadian et al., 2019; Alavinezhad et al., 2020). In stating the reason for the above observations various studies have been performed on the mechanisms involved in increasing probiotic-induced growth enhancement, all of which can be the reasons for increased growth as a result of feeding with probiotics in the present study. Eleraky et al. (2014) reported an increase in fat and total protein in probiotic-fed content Cyprinus carpio fish. The increased

growth rate in probiotic-fed fish can be attributed to better digestion (Kanwal and Tayyeb, 2019). According to El-Haroun *et al.* (2006), the use of the commercial probiotic *B. Subtilis* had a positive effect on the production of digestive enzymes (lipase, amylase, and protease) in Nile tilapia and increased its growth rate. These mechanisms were not investigated in our study, but it is interesting to investigate them in zebrafish fed with *L. reuteri*. in future studies.

On the other hand according to the results, long-term exposure to NPX reduced the growth rate in zebrafish. The inhibitory effect of exposure to drug residues on growth in aquatic organisms has been reported in previous studies (Wang et al., 2021). Weight loss of zebrafish exposed to NPX has been reported in the study of Xu et al. (2019). Xu et al. (2019) identified thyroid dysfunction due to prolonged exposure to NPX as a possible reason for growth inhibition in zebrafish. Toxins affect the levels of TH and lead to significant impairment of zebrafish growth (Tu et al., 2016; Cheng et al., 2017; Xu et al., 2019). The importance of thyroid hormones in fish metabolism and growth (Shkil et al., 2019) and the obtained results in our study about TH confirm this theory.

Furthermore, the increase in growth was significantly higher in the probiotic-fed group compared with the basal-fed group exposed to NPX. Probiotic nutrition improves intestinal bacterial flora, increases feed intake (Eleraky *et al.*, 2014), and improves digestion

(Kanwal and Tayyeb, 2019). While, exposure to NPX (as an NSAID) changes the gut microbiota and reduces lactobacilli (Mäkivuokko et al., 2010). Therefore, an increase in the growth rate of fish-fed probiotics compared to fishfed basal diets exposed to NPX in our study will not be unexpected. In this study, probiotic feeding improved TH levels exposed to NPX. These results justify the increase in growth due to the effect of thyroid hormones on growth factors such as epidermal growth factor (EGF), nerve growth factor (NGF) and growth hormone (Cabello and Wrutniak, 1989). Generally, probiotic nutrition improved thyroid function and reduced the adverse effects of NPX on this endocrine gland. Also, the probiotics used increased growth factors and improved growth rate by increasing consumption and digestion of food.

In conclusion, the identification of NPX in surface waters and the adverse effects of drug residues on the biological and physiological functions of fish have made it necessary to introduce dietary supplements to reduce these effects. The results showed that long-term exposure to low concentrations of NPX could cause significant thyroid dysfunction and growth inhibition in zebrafish. NPX poisoning disrupted gene transcription and thyroid hormone levels which were consistent with the observed effects on growth. While, Probiotic-fed groups improved thyroid function and growth rate in fish. These results indicate the importance of evaluating the thyroid disorder of aquatic organisms exposed to a variety of medicinal compounds in the environment. This study also shows the need to use dietary supplements (including probiotics) in fish farms contaminated with drug Finally, it is recommended to study effective mechanisms thyroid function and growth regulation in probiotic-fed fish exposed to NPX in future studies. On the other hand zebrafish is an animal model with genetic compatibility with humans. Due to the identification of NPX in drinking water (Wojcieszyńska and Guzik, 2020), and the adverse effects of drug residue in humans, including development of drug disruption of resistance. normal intestinal flora, drug hypersensitivity reaction, mutagenic, carcinogenic, and teratogenic effects (Okocha et al., 2018), the results obtained can be generalized to humans and the use of oregano essential oil in humans as a functional food supplement is recommended to reduce the adverse effects of drug residues on endocrine function.

Acknowledgements

We thank Dr. Seyedeh Shiva Alavinejad, Department of Aquatic animal Health and Diseases, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Tehran, for her assistance in the field.

References

Ahmad, W., Nasir, A., Sattar, F., Ashfaq, I., Chen, M.H., Hayat, A., Rehman, M.U., Zhao, S., Khaliq, S., Ghauri, M.A. and Anwar, M.A., 2022. Production of bimodal molecular weight levan by a *Lactobacillus reuteri* isolate from

- fish gut. *Folia Microbiologica*, 67(**1**), 21-31. DOI:10.1007/s12223-021-00913-w.
- Alavinezhad, S. S., Kazempoor, R., Kakoolaki, S. and Anvar, S.A.A., 2020. Research Article: The effect of different concentrations Lacticaseibacillus casei the growth performance and intestinal morphology of zebrafish (Danio rerio). The Sustainable Aquaculture and Health Management Journal (SAHMJ), 6(2), 60-70. DOI:10.52547/ijaah.6.2.60.
- Alonso, S., Carmen Castro, M., Berdasco, M., de la Banda, I.G., Moreno-Ventas, X. and de Rojas, A.H., 2019. Isolation and Partial Characterization of Lactic Acid Bacteria from the Gut Microbiota of Fishes for Potential Marine **Application Probiotics** as in Aquaculture. **Probiotics** and Antimicrobial Proteins, 11(2), 569-579. DOI:10.1007/s12602-018-9439-2.
- Angiolillo, D.J. and Weisman, S.M., 2017. Clinical Pharmacology and Cardiovascular Safety of Naproxen. *American Journal of Cardiovascular Drugs*, 17(2), 97-107. DOI:10.1007/s40256-016-0200-5.
- Barbour, E.A. and Priest, F.G., 1986. The preservation of lactobacilli: A comparison of three methods. *Letters in Applied Microbiology*, 2(4), 69-71. DOI:10.1111/j.1472-765X.1986.tb01518.x.
- Barcella, C.A., Lamberts, M., McGettigan, P., Fosbøl, E.L., Lindhardsen, J., Torp-Pedersen, C., Gislason, G.H. and Olsen, A.M.S., 2019. Differences in cardiovascular safety with non-

- steroidal anti-inflammatory drug therapy—A nationwide study in patients with osteoarthritis. *Basic & Clinical Pharmacology & Toxicology*, 124(5), 629-641. DOI:10.1111/bcpt.13182.
- Benotti, M.J., Trenholm, R.A., Vanderford, B. J., Holady, J.C., Stanford, B.D. and Snyder, S.A., 2009. Pharmaceuticals and Endocrine Disrupting Compounds in U.S. Drinking Water. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 43(3), 597-603. DOI:10.1021/es801845a.
- Brausch. J.M., Connors. **K.A.**. Brooks, B.W. and Rand, G.M., 2012. Human Pharmaceuticals in the Aquatic Environment: A Review of Recent Toxicological Studies and Considerations for Toxicity Testing. In: Environmental Reviews of Contamination and Toxicology Volume 218, in: Whitacre, D. M. (Ed.), Springer US, Boston, MA, pp. 1-99. DOI:10.1007/978-1-4614-3137-4 1.
- Cabello, G. and Wrutniak, C., 1989. Thyroid hormone and growth: relationships with growth hormone effects and regulation. *Reproduction Nutrition Development*, 29(4), 387-402.
- Chakraborty, C., Hsu, C. H., Wen, Z.H., Lin, C.S. and Agoramoorthy, G., 2009. Zebrafish: A Complete Animal Model for In Vivo Drug Discovery and Development. *Current Drug Metabolism*, 10(2), 116-124. DOI:10.2174/138920009787522197.
- Cheng, H., Yan, W., Wu, Q., Liu, C., Gong, X., Hung, T.C. and Li, G., 2017. Parental exposure to microcystin-LR induced thyroid endocrine disruption in zebrafish

- offspring, a transgenerational toxicity. *Environmental Pollution*, 230, 981-988. DOI:10.1016/j.envpol.2017.07.061.
- Comber, S., Gardner, M., Sörme, P., Leverett, D. and Ellor, B., 2018. Active pharmaceutical ingredients entering the aquatic environment from wastewater treatment works: A cause for concern? *Science of The Total Environment*, 613-614, 538-547.

DOI:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2017.09.10

- DDTTD, S., Abeysooriya, K.H.D.N. and Vithushana, T., 2021. Veterinary pharmaceuticals in aquaculture wastewater as emerging contaminant substances in aquatic environment and potential treatment methods. *MOJ* Ecology & Environmental *Sciences*, 6, 98-102.
- Dzionek, A., Wojcieszyńska, D., Hupert-Kocurek, K., Adamczyk-Habrajska, M. and Guzik, U., 2018. Immobilization of *Planococcus* sp. S5 Strain on the Loofah Sponge and Its **Application** in Naproxen Removal. Catalysts, 8(5), 176. DOI:10.3390/catal8050176.
- Ebele, A.J., Abou-Elwafa Abdallah, M. and Harrad, S., 2017. Pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs) in the freshwater aquatic environment. *Emerging Contaminants*, 3(1), 1-16. DOI:10.1016/j.emcon.2016.12.004.
- Eleraky, W.M.Y., Reda, R. and Rasha M. Reda, S.E., 2014. Evaluation of prebiotic and probiotic dietary supplementation on growth performance and some blood parameters of Cyprinus carpio Frys.

- Egyptian Journal of Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, 18(2), 29-38. DOI:10.21608/ejabf.2014.2203.
- El-Haroun, E.R., Goda, A.M.A.S. and Kabir Chowdhury, M.A., 2006. Effect of dietary probiotic Biogen® supplementation growth as a promoter on growth performance and feed utilization of Nile tilapia Oreochromis niloticus Aquaculture Research, 37(14), 1473-1480. DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2109.2006.01584.x.
- Fabbri, E. and Franzellitti, S., 2016. Human pharmaceuticals in the marine environment: Focus on exposure and biological effects in animal species. *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*, 35(4), 799-812. DOI:10.1002/etc.3131.
- Falcinelli, S., Picchietti, S., Rodiles, A., Cossignani, L., Merrifield, D. L., Taddei, A.R., Maradonna, F., Olivotto, I., Gioacchini, G. and Carnevali, O., 2015. Lactobacillus rhamnosus lowers zebrafish lipid content by changing gut microbiota and host transcription of genes lipid metabolism. involved in Scientific Reports, 5(1), 9336. DOI:10.1038/srep09336.
- **Farzi, A., Fröhlich, E.E. and Holzer, P., 2018.** Gut Microbiota and the Neuroendocrine System.

 Neurotherapeutics, 15(1), 5-22.

 DOI:10.1007/s13311-017-0600-5.
- Giri, S.S., Yun, S., Jun, J.W., Kim, H.J., Kim, S.G., Kang, J.W., Kim, S.W., Han, S.J., Sukumaran, V. and Park, S.C., 2018. Therapeutic Effect of Intestinal Autochthonous Lactobacillus reuteri P16 Against Waterborne Lead Toxicity in Cyprinus carpio. Frontiers in

- *Immunology*, 9, 1824. DOI: 10.3389/fimmu.2018.01824.
- Hoseinifar, S.H., Yousefi, S., Van Doan, H., Ashouri, G., Gioacchini, G., Maradonna, F. and Carnevali, O., 2021. Oxidative Stress and Antioxidant Defense in Fish: The Implications of Probiotic, Prebiotic, and Synbiotics. *Reviews in Fisheries Science & Aquaculture*, 29(2), 198-217.
 - DOI:10.1080/23308249.2020.17956 16.
- Huo, D., Cen, C., Chang, H., Ou, Q., Jiang, S., Pan, Y., Chen, K. and Zhang, J., 2021. Probiotic Bifidobacterium longum supplied with methimazole improved the thyroid function of Graves' disease patients through the gut-thyroid axis. Communications Biology, 4(1), 1046. DOI:10.1038/s42003-021-02587-z.
- Kanwal, Z. and Tayyeb, A., 2019. Role of dietary probiotic Ecotec in growth enhancement, thyroid tuning, hematomorphology and resistance to pathogenic challenge in *Labeo rohita* juveniles. *Journal of Applied Animal Research*, 47(1), 394-402. DOI:10.1080/09712119.2019.16500 50.
- Kim, E., Yang, S.M., Lim, B., Park, S.H., Rackerby, B. and Kim, H.Y., 2020. Design of PCR assays to specifically detect and identify 37 Lactobacillus species in a single 96 well plate. *BMC microbiology*, 20(1), pp. 1-14. DOI:10.1016/j.mimet.2020.106064
- Kwak, K., Ji, K., Kho, Y., Kim, P., Lee, J., Ryu, J. and Choi, K., 2018. Chronic toxicity and endocrine disruption of naproxen in freshwater waterfleas and fish, and steroidogenic

- alteration using H295R cell assay. *Chemosphere*, 204, 156-162. DOI:10.1016/j.chemosphere.2018.04 .035.
- **Li, W.C., 2014.** Occurrence, sources, and fate of pharmaceuticals in aquatic environment and soil. *Environmental Pollution*, 187, 193-201. DOI:10.1016/j.envpol.2014.01.015.
- Liang, X., Bittinger, K., Li, X., Abernethy, D.R., Bushman, F.D. and FitzGerald, **G.A.**, 2015. Bidirectional interactions between indomethacin and murine the intestinal microbiota. Elife, 4. e08973. DOI:10.7554/eLife.08973.
- Liu, C.H., Wu, K., Chu, T.W. and Wu, T.M., 2018. Dietary supplementation of probiotic, *Bacillus subtilis* E20, enhances the growth performance and disease resistance against *Vibrio alginolyticus* in parrot fish (*Oplegnathus fasciatus*). *Aquaculture International*, 26(1), 63-74. DOI:10.1007/s10499-017-0189-z.
- **Livak, K.J. and Schmittgen, T.D., 2001.** Analysis of Relative Gene Expression Data Using Real-Time Quantitative PCR and the $2^{-\Delta\Delta CT}$ Method. *Methods*, 25(4), 402-408. DOI:10.1006/meth.2001.1262.
- Mäkivuokko, H., Tiihonen, K.. Tynkkynen, S., Paulin, L. and Rautonen, N., 2010. The effect of age and non-steroidal antiinflammatory drugs human intestinal microbiota composition. British Journal of Nutrition, 103(2), 227-234.
 - DOI:10.1017/S0007114509991553.
- Mezzelani, M., Gorbi, S., Da Ros, Z., Fattorini, D., d'Errico, G., Milan, M., Bargelloni, L. and Regoli, F., 2016. Ecotoxicological potential of

- non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) in marine organisms: Bioavailability, biomarkers and natural occurrence in *Mytilus galloprovincialis. Marine Environmental Research*, 121, 31-39. DOI:10.1016/j.marenvres.2016.03.0 05.
- Mirabdollah Elahi, S.S., Mirnejad, R., Reza Kazempoor and Sotoodehnejadnematalahi, F.. 2020. Study of the Histopathologic Effects of Probiotic Lactobacillus acidophilus in Exposure to E. coli O157: H7 in Zebrafish Intestine. Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal, 22(4), e99400. DOI: 10.5812/ircmj.99400
- Mohammadian, T., Nasirpour, M., Tabandeh, M.R., Heidary, A.A., Ghanei-Motlagh, R. and Hosseini, 2019. Administrations S.S., autochthonous probiotics altered juvenile rainbow trout Oncorhynchus mykiss health status, growth performance and resistance to Lactococcus garvieae, an infection. Fish experimental & Shellfish Immunology, 86, 269-279. DOI:10.1016/j.fsi.2018.11.052.
- Mu, Q., Tavella, V.J. and Luo, X.M., 2018. Role of *Lactobacillus reuteri* in Human Health and Diseases. *Frontiers in Microbiology*, 9, 757. DOI:10.3389/fmicb.2018.00757.
- Neal, A.E. and Moore, P.A., 2017.

 Mimicking natural systems: Changes in behavior as a result of dynamic exposure to naproxen. *Ecotoxicology and Environmental Safety*, 135, 347-357.

 DOI: 10.1016/j.ecoenv.2016.10.015.
- Nelson, E.R. and Habibi, H.R., 2009. Thyroid receptor subtypes: Structure

- and function in fish. *General and Comparative Endocrinology*, 161(1), 90-96.
- DOI:10.1016/j.ygcen.2008.09.006.
- Okocha, R.C., Olatoye, I.O. and Adedeji, O.B., 2018. Food safety impacts of antimicrobial use and their residues in aquaculture. *Public health reviews*, 39(1), pp. 1-22. DOI:10.1186/s40985-018-0099-2
- Picard-Aitken, M., Fournier, H., Pariseau, R., Marcogliese, D.J. and Cyr, D.G., 2007. Thyroid disruption in walleye (*Sander vitreus*) exposed to environmental contaminants: Cloning and use of iodothyronine deiodinases as molecular biomarkers. *Aquatic Toxicology*, 83(3), 200-211. DOI:10.1016/j.aquatox.2007.04.004.
- Saravanan, M., Hur, J.H., Arul, N. and Ramesh, M., 2014. Toxicological effects of clofibric acid and diclofenac on plasma thyroid hormones of an Indian major carp, Cirrhinus mrigala during short and long-term exposures. Environmental *Toxicology* and Pharmacology, 948-958. 38(3), DOI:10.1016/j.etap.2014.10.013.
- Sehonova, P., Plhalova, L., Blahova, J., Doubkova, V., Prokes, M., Tichy, F., Fiorino, E., Faggio, C. and Svobodova, Z., 2017. Toxicity of naproxen sodium and its mixture with tramadol hydrochloride on fish early life stages. *Chemosphere*, 188, 414-423.
 - DOI:10.1016/j.chemosphere.2017.08 .151.
- Shayan, P. and Rahbari, S., 2005. Simultaneous differentiation between *Theileria* spp. and *Babesia* spp. on stained blood smear using PCR. *Parasitology Research*, 97(4), 281-

- 286. DOI: 10.1007/s00436-005-1434-3.
- Shkil. F., Siomava. N., Voronezhskaya, E. and Diogo, R., **2019.** Effects of hyperthyroidism in the development of the appendicular skeleton and muscles of zebrafish, with notes evolutionary on developmental pathology (Evo-Devo-Path). Scientific Reports, 9(1), DOI:10.1038/s41598-019-5413. 41912-9.
- Silva, C.P., Jaria, G., Otero, M., Esteves, V.I. and Calisto, V., 2018. Waste-based alternative adsorbents for the remediation of pharmaceutical contaminated waters: has a step forward already been taken?. *Bioresource technology*, 250, pp. 888-901.
 - DOI:10.1016/j.biortech.2017.11.102
- Stancová, V., Ziková, A., Svobodová, Z. and Kloas, W., 2015. Effects of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug(NSAID) naproxen on gene expression of antioxidant enzymes in zebrafish (Danio rerio). Environmental Toxicology and Pharmacology, 40(2), 343-348. DOI:10.1016/j.etap.2015.07.009.
- Tu, W., Xu, C., Lu, B., Lin, C., Wu, Y. and Liu, W., 2016. Acute exposure to synthetic pyrethroids causes bioconcentration and disruption of the hypothalamus–pituitary–thyroid axis in zebrafish embryos. *Science of The Total Environment*, 542, 876-885.
 - DOI:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2015.10.13 1.
- Wang, H., Xi, H., Xu, L., Jin, M., Zhao, W. and Liu, H., 2021. Ecotoxicological effects, environmental fate and risks of

- pharmaceutical and personal care products in the water environment: A review. *Science of The Total Environment*, 788, 147819. DOI:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2021.147819.
- Wang, Y., Ren, Z., Fu, L. and Su, X., 2016. Two highly adhesive lactic acid bacteria strains are protective in zebrafish infected with *Aeromonas hydrophila* by evocation of gut mucosal immunity. *Journal of Applied Microbiology*, 120(2), 441-451. DOI:10.1111/jam.13002.
- Wilson, I.D. and Nicholson, J.K., 2017. Gut microbiome interactions with drug metabolism, efficacy, and toxicity. *Translational Research*, 179, 204-222. DOI: 10.1016/j.trsl.2016.08.002.
- Wojcieszyńska, D. and Guzik, U., 2020. Naproxen in the environment: its occurrence, toxicity to nontarget organisms and biodegradation. *Applied microbiology and biotechnology*, 104(5), pp.1849-1857. DOI: 10.1007/s00253-019-10343-x.
- Wong, D., von Keyserlingk, M.A.G., Richards, J.G. and Weary, D.M., 2014. Conditioned Place Avoidance of Zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) to Three Chemicals Used for Euthanasia and Anaesthesia. *PLOS ONE*, 9(2), e88030.

 DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0088030.

- Xu, C., Niu, L., Guo, H., Sun, X., Chen, L., Tu, W., Dai, Q., Ye, J., Liu, W. and Liu, J., 2019. Longterm exposure to the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) naproxen causes thyroid disruption in zebrafish at environmentally relevant concentrations. *Science of The Total Environment*, 676, 387-395. DOI:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2019.04.32
- Xu, C., Sun, X., Niu, L., Yang, W., Tu, W., Lu, L., Song, S. and Liu, W., Enantioselective 2019. thyroid disruption in zebrafish embryo-larvae exposure to environmental concentrations of the chloroacetamide herbicide acetochlor. Science of The Total 653. 1140-1148. Environment, DOI:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.11.03 7.
- Yu, L., Deng, J., Shi, X., Liu, C., Yu, K. and Zhou, B., 2010. Exposure to DE-71 alters thyroid hormone levels and gene transcription in the hypothalamic–pituitary–thyroid axis of zebrafish larvae. *Aquatic Toxicology*, 97(3), 226-233. DOI:10.1016/j.aquatox.2009.10.022.
- Zloh, M., Perez-Diaz, N., Tang, L., Patel, P. and Mackenzie, L.S., 2016. Evidence diclofenac that and celecoxib are thyroid hormone receptor beta antagonists. Life Sciences. 146. 66-72. DOI:10.1016/j.lfs.2016.01.013.