


Effects of multiple stressors on northern leopard frogs in agricultural wetlands

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Research Article

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Abstract

Natural and anthropogenic stressors, including parasites and pesticides, may induce oxidative stress in animals. Measuring oxidative stress responses in sentinel species that are particularly responsive to environmental perturbations not only provides insight into host physiology but is also a useful readout of ecosystem health. Newly metamorphosed northern leopard frogs (*Lithobates pipiens*), a sentinel species, were collected from agricultural and non-agricultural wetlands exposed to varying concentrations of the herbicide atrazine. Significant effects of certain parasites' abundance and their interaction with atrazine exposure on frog oxidative stress were identified. Specifically, increased protein levels were detected in frogs infected with echinostome metacercariae. In addition, the nematode *Oswaldocruzia* sp. was significantly associated with increased thiol concentration and catalase activity. Significant parasite × atrazine interactions were observed for atrazine exposure and the abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. on thiol, as thiol concentrations increased with parasite abundance at low atrazine localities and decreased in high atrazine wetlands. In addition, a significant interaction between the abundances of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. and gorgoderid trematodes on thiol concentrations was observed. These findings demonstrate that studies of oxidative stress on animals in natural ecosystems should account for the confounding effects of parasitism, particularly for amphibians in agricultural landscapes.

Introduction

It is well established that organisms are exposed to a multitude of biotic and abiotic stressors in their natural environments (Sih *et al.*, 2004; Holmstrup *et al.*, 2010). There is a growing recognition that cumulative stressors are important, not only for the health and well-being of individual organisms, but also their populations (Relyea, 2003; Szuroczki and Richardson, 2009; Blaustein *et al.*, 2011). Knock on or cascading effects subsequently can be detrimental not only to biological communities but to food webs and ecosystems, either directly or indirectly (Relyea and Hoverman, 2008; Blaustein *et al.*, 2011). Such combined effects are particularly relevant for anthropogenically impacted habitats. For example, wetlands in agricultural landscapes are affected by pesticides and other contaminants, eutrophication, fragmentation and landscape alteration, among others, in addition to any natural stressors which may exist there (Blaustein *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, synergistic interactions between environmental contaminants and natural stressors were found in over half of more than 150 studies reviewed across invertebrate and vertebrate taxa (Holmstrup *et al.*, 2010). One such natural stressor is parasitism. Parasitism can alter interactions with other stressors, either synergistically or antagonistically (Marcogliese and Pietrock, 2011; Sures *et al.*, 2017), and exposure to one stressor may affect vulnerability to the other (Morley *et al.*, 2006).

There are numerous examples of combined effects of parasites and contaminants causing enhanced mortality in a multitude of phylogenetically diverse animals compared to those exposed only to a single stressor (Marcogliese and Pietrock, 2011). However, more commonly impacts will be sublethal, and thus more difficult to detect (Marcogliese and Pietrock, 2011). Most studies have been conducted on fish (see Marcogliese and Pietrock, 2011; Sures *et al.*, 2017), with relatively fewer on amphibians. A few studies reported reduced growth and/or survival, and increased levels of malformations in anurans exposed to both pesticides and parasites compared to one or both stressors alone (Kiesecker, 2002; Koprivnikar, 2010; Jayawardena *et al.*, 2016), although results were variable in other studies (Jayawardena *et al.*, 2017). However, it is difficult to measure growth and survival in the field, and often researchers rely on non-specific biomarkers of animal health to evaluate the sublethal effects of different stressors, including parasites, on organisms (Marcogliese *et al.*, 2010; Marcogliese and Pietrock, 2011). For example, in a field study on bullfrogs (*Lithobates catesbeianus*), infection with >2 lungflukes (*Haematoloechus* sp.) affected acetylcholinesterase activity, but the direction of the effect varied with the level of agricultural activity (Marcogliese *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, not only differential blood cell counts were altered by the same parasite, but also in different directions, depending on agricultural activity.

For more than two decades, ecotoxicologists have used oxidative stress as an indicator of general animal health (Di Giulio *et al.*, 1989; Martínez-Álvarez *et al.*, 2005), and more recently, ecologists have adopted these methods to examine stress responses in their study organisms in the field (Costantini, 2008; Monaghan *et al.*, 2009). Reactive oxygen species (ROS) are produced upon exposure to contaminants and inflammation. They are damaging to DNA, lipids and proteins when in excess (Storey, 1996; Sorci and Faivre, 2009). Organisms possess enzymatic mechanisms to deal with ROS, but oxidative stress occurs when redox signalling and control are disrupted and ROS production surpasses the organism's capacity to metabolize them (Winston and Di Giulio, 1991; Sies, 1997; Monaghan *et al.*, 2009). Oxidative stress can be evaluated by measuring substrates, enzymes and end-products involved in oxidative stress metabolism (Martínez-Álvarez *et al.*, 2005).

Oxidative stress responses can be induced by exposure to pesticides (Abdollahi *et al.*, 2004; Oruc *et al.*, 2004; Zhang *et al.*, 2004; Valavanidis *et al.*, 2006) in a variety of animals, including amphibians (Dornelles and Oliveira, 2014; Gliniski *et al.*, 2018). However, infection with a diverse array of parasites also is known to induce oxidative stress in a variety of freshwater, marine and terrestrial organisms (Belló *et al.*, 2000; Neves *et al.*, 2000; Dautremepuits *et al.*, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Marcogliese *et al.*, 2005, 2010; Gismondi *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b; Orledge *et al.*, 2012; Stumbo *et al.*, 2012; Lilley *et al.*, 2014; Dallarés *et al.*, 2016; Lacaze *et al.*, 2019; Akinsanya *et al.*, 2020a). Nevertheless, few studies examine oxidative stress in animals from contaminated habitats (but see Marcogliese *et al.*, 2005, 2010; Lacaze *et al.*, 2019; Akinsanya *et al.*, 2020a).

Furthermore, contaminants such as pesticides also may modulate the immune response in amphibians and other organisms, causing immunosuppression (Carey and Bryant, 1995; Carey *et al.*, 1999; Fournier *et al.*, 2005; Martin *et al.*, 2010; Rehberger *et al.*, 2017). Such a reduction in immune capacity may increase susceptibility to disease and parasites (Carey and Bryant, 1995; Rollins-Smith and Woodhams, 2012). Pesticides typically affect innate, non-specific immune responses (Rehberger *et al.*, 2017) such as lysozymes, which disrupt bacterial cell walls and are considered an important index of innate immunity in fish (Tort *et al.*, 2003; Saurabh and Sahoo, 2008; Uribe *et al.*, 2011). Lysozyme activity responds to stress (Bols *et al.*, 2001; Fatima *et al.*, 2007) and often is suppressed following exposure to contaminants (Saurabh and Sahoo, 2008). However, exposure to parasites may either increase or decrease lysozyme activity in fish (Álvarez-Pellitero *et al.*, 2008).

Among pesticides, atrazine is one of the most commonly used herbicides globally (Rohr and McCoy, 2010). A meta-analysis of ecotoxicological studies on fish and amphibians demonstrated that atrazine consistently diminished immune capacity in fish and frogs at ecologically relevant concentrations, either alone or in mixtures (Rohr and McCoy, 2010). The same synthesis linked exposure to atrazine at ecologically relevant concentrations to an increase in various measures of disease (Rohr and McCoy, 2010).

There exists widespread concern for declining populations, extirpations and extinctions of amphibians globally. Numerous causes have been put forward to explain these declines, including threats from pesticides and disease (Stuart *et al.*, 2004; Blaustein *et al.*, 2011), which, of course, may act in concert. Amphibians are known hosts for a wide diversity of parasites (Koprivnikar *et al.*, 2012; Bower *et al.*, 2018), regardless of habitat. Given their susceptibility to environmental changes and disease, amphibians also make useful sentinels that can provide insight into overall ecosystem function and health (Hopkins, 2007). Using different measures of oxidative stress in addition to a measure of the innate immune response, the effects of parasites and agricultural

activity on the health of northern leopard frogs (*Lithobates pipiens*) were examined in agricultural wetlands. The following predictions were made: (1) exposure to high level of atrazine and/or certain parasites will induce an oxidative stress response, with potential interactive effects; and (2) exposure to high levels of atrazine and/or certain parasites will moderate lysozyme activity, with potential interactive effects.

Materials and methods

Sampling sites and frog collections

Sampling and subsequent analysis of parasites are described in King *et al.* (2007). There were seven sampling localities located in southwestern Quebec, Canada, which were categorized as low atrazine or high atrazine based on the highest atrazine concentration measured (means and ranges are presented in King *et al.*, 2007). Those with maximum measurements $>0.10 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ in either 2004 or 2005 were considered as high atrazine localities, while those with measures $<0.10 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ were considered as low atrazine localities (Table 1). The high atrazine localities were directly exposed to pesticide runoff, while the low atrazine localities were not. Atrazine use is relatively stable from 1 year to the next (Sass and Colangelo, 2006). Furthermore, atrazine use was consistent between 2001 and 2004–2005 at our study localities (King *et al.*, 2007, 2008), with the exception of a single locality (Île de la Commune) located in a provincial park, where atrazine was applied illegally in 2001, after which its use was subsequently halted. Thus, low atrazine localities included Étang John Sauro, Parc Le Rocher and Île de la Commune. High atrazine localities were Rivière St-François, Baie St-François, Ruisseau Fairbanks and Rivière Chibouet (Table 1).

The study species in our system was the northern leopard frog *L. pipiens*. Immature metamorph leopard frogs were collected by dip net or by hand from 26 July to 6 August 2004 (see King *et al.*, 2007). Collections were restricted to newly metamorphosed frogs ≤ 45 mm snout-vent length (SVL) (Seburn and Seburn, 1998). The restricted sampling period and size range accounted for potential confounding factors including season, age, size and reproductive status, which might affect biomarker analyses (Martínez-Álvarez *et al.*, 2005). Frogs were killed in buffered 0.8% tricaine methane sulphonate (MS 222), kept on ice, and returned to the laboratory within a few hours where they were frozen at -20°C . Frogs were partially thawed prior to parasitological examination and spleens were removed and frozen at -80°C for subsequent biomarker analysis. Handling and treatment of animals were in accordance with the guidelines of the Canada Council on Animal Care.

Parasite analyses

Each frog was thawed, weighed to the nearest 0.1 g and SVL measured to the nearest mm. The frogs were examined using a stereomicroscope for macroparasites using standard parasitological techniques (King *et al.*, 2007). First, the frogs were examined externally. Then their eyes were removed and dissected. The body cavity and viscera were examined. Organs (brain, liver, gall bladder, heart and urinary bladder) were removed, squashed between glass plates and examined. The stomach and intestine were opened longitudinally and examined. They were then squashed between glass plates to detect worms in the tissue. The skin was removed from the flesh, which was thin-sliced, squashed between glass plates, and examined. A total of 156 frogs were examined for parasites. Sample sizes for each locality are reported in Table 1. Helminth parasites were identified to genus and, if possible, species based on descriptions from the

Table 1. Geographic coordinates of sampling localities, maximum atrazine concentration ($\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$), prevalence (%) of target parasite taxa and number of frogs used for each biomarker

| Locality | Étang John Sauro | Parc Le Rocher | Île de la Commune | Rivière St-François | Baie St-François | Ruisseau Fairbanks | Rivière Chibouet |
|---|------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Location: Latitude | 45°04.6'N | 45°38.7'N | 45°37.1'N | 46°06.8'N | 46°05.4'N | 45°01.0'N | 45°47.4'N |
| Longitude | 73°09.6'W | 73°19.8'W | 73°28.3'W | 72°054.8'W | 72°56.5'W | 73°21.3'W | 72°49.5'W |
| Category | Low atrazine | Low atrazine | Low atrazine | High atrazine | High atrazine | High atrazine | High atrazine |
| Maximum atrazine concentration ($\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$) | 0.04 | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.13 | 0.80 | 0.35 | 3.70 |
| Parasite | Prevalence (%) | | | | | | |
| <i>Echinostoma</i> spp. | 100 | 100 | 97 | 13 | 42 | 82 | 97 |
| Gorgoderidae | 15 | 5 | 97 | 3 | 32 | 63 | 96 |
| <i>Oswaldocruzia</i> sp. | 0 | 5 | 40 | 50 | 16 | 19 | 3 |
| <i>Rhabdias</i> sp. | 38 | 0 | 63 | 30 | 21 | 9 | 3 |
| Biomarker | Number of frogs | | | | | | |
| Protein | 13 | 22 | 30 | 30 | 19 | 11 | 31 |
| Thiols | 13 | 22 | 30 | 29 | 19 | 11 | 30 |
| Glutathione-S-transferase | 13 | 17 | 29 | 30 | 15 | 30 | 27 |
| Glutathione reductase | 10 | 5 | 11 | 13 | 9 | 1 | 9 |
| Catalase | 12 | 12 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 5 | 17 |
| Lysozyme | 11 | 9 | 18 | 8 | 19 | 11 | 19 |

Parasite prevalence based on the maximum number of frogs included in biomarker analysis for each locality.

literature (Rau *et al.*, 1978; Prudhoe and Bray, 1982; McAlpine and Burt, 1998).

Biomarker analyses

All analyses were performed at the INRS – Institut Armand Frappier, Pointe-Claire, Quebec. Originally, 30 spleen samples were collected from each locality, but a laboratory accident resulted in the loss of a large number of samples. The final sample sizes are given in Table 1. Consequently, the results of glutathione reductase (GRd) were not retained due to small sample sizes at two localities. Once thawed, all samples were kept on ice throughout the preparation and analyses. Samples were processed and analysed as described in Dautremepuits *et al.* (2009). Frozen samples of spleen tissue were homogenized by suspending 0.2 g of tissue in 3 mL of phosphate buffer saline (PBS) (Dulbecco's, Sigma, USA) in a potter-pestle homogenizer (Sigma, USA). Homogenates were centrifuged at 4000 rpm for 30 min at 4°C. The supernatants were immediately analysed for antioxidant enzyme and immune activities. The total protein content (mg mL^{-1}) of each sample was measured with a Bio-Rad DC protein assay kit (Bio-Rad Laboratories, Canada).

The thiol glutathione (GSH) is an important antioxidant that neutralizes hydroxyl radicals (Di Giulio *et al.*, 1989; Monaghan *et al.*, 2009). Thiol (SH) groups were measured spectrophotometrically using the DTNB method. Four μL of the sample were added to 46 μL of phosphate buffer (0.2 M, pH 6.8) and 50 μL of phosphate buffer containing 1 mM DTNB (5,5'-dithiobis-2-nitrobenzoic acid, Sigma, USA) in a 96-well tissue-culture plate. Absorbance was measured at 412 nm after 10 min of incubation at room temperature, using GSH (reduced glutathione) commercial solution (Sigma, USA) as a standard.

Glutathione S-transferase (GST) catalyzes reactions involving the GSH; measurement of GST activity was adapted from Habig *et al.* (1974). The reaction mixture consisted of 100 μL PBS (0.1

M, pH 6.5), 50 μL reduced GSH (Sigma, CA.) (1 mM), 25 μL H_2O , 10 μL 1-chloro-2,4-dinitro-benzene (CDNB) (Sigma, Ca.) (1 mM) and 15 μL of sample in a total volume of 200 μL . The change in absorbance was recorded at 340 nm during 5 min and the enzyme activity calculated as μmol of CDNB formed min^{-1} mg protein^{-1} using a molar extinction coefficient of $9.6 \times 10^3 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

Catalase breaks down H_2O_2 , an endproduct of oxidative stress (Di Giulio *et al.*, 1989). Catalase activity was assayed according to Claiborne (1985) and Giri *et al.* (1996). The assay mixture consisted of 190 μL PBS (0.05 M, pH 7.0), 100 μL hydrogen peroxide (Prolabo, CA) (0.01 M) and 10 μL of the sample in a final volume of 300 μL . Change in absorbance was recorded at 240 nm. Catalase activity was calculated as $\text{nmol H}_2\text{O}_2$ consumed min^{-1} mg protein^{-1} using a molar extinction coefficient of $43.6 \text{ M}^{-1} \text{ cm}^{-1}$.

Lysozyme activity was measured by a turbidimetric assay (Studnicka *et al.*, 1986). A 10 μL sample was added to 200 μL of *Micrococcus lysodeikticus* (0.2 g L^{-1} in 0.05 M, pH 6.2 phosphate buffer) suspension and the decrease in absorbance was recorded at 450 nm by spectrophotometry (PowerWave X, Bio-Tek Instruments, Vermont, USA) for 30 min in a 96-well tissue culture plate (Sarstedt, USA). One unit of lysozyme activity was defined as the amount of enzyme that catalysed a decrease in absorbance of 0.001 min^{-1} . A commercial solution of lysozyme (Sigma, Canada) was used as a standard.

Statistical analyses

To determine if parasites or high/low atrazine exposure affected the expression of biomarkers in the spleen of leopard frogs and whether there was an interaction with the herbicide, criteria were established for further analyses. The same individual frogs were used for both parasites and biomarkers. To ensure an adequate sample size at each locality, only parasites present at six of the seven

localities were considered further. These included the trematodes *Echinostoma* spp. (metacercariae) and Gorgorderidae gen. (adults and larval stages), and the adult nematodes *Oswaldocruzia* sp. and *Rhabdias* sp. Adult gorgorderids infect the urinary bladder, whilst metacercariae encyst in the kidneys and muscle tissues. It is unclear whether the different stages cause different or similar pathologies, or indeed, any pathology at all, so they were combined (Koprivnikar et al., 2012). For the purposes of analyses, localities were combined into high atrazine (Rivière St-François, Baie St-François, Ruisseau Fairbanks, Rivière Chibouet) and low atrazine (étang John Sauro, Parc le Rocher, Île de la Commune), based on the maximal concentration of atrazine measured in each system (King et al., 2007).

To determine the effects of atrazine exposure and parasite abundance on biomarker concentration/activity separate linear mixed effects models were performed for each biomarker using the lme4 package (Bates et al., 2015) in R version 3.6.0 (<http://www.r-project.org/>). We assessed the significance of parameters using the Satterthwaite method, implemented in the R package lmerTest (Kuznetsova et al., 2017). Variables included high/low atrazine exposure, parasite abundance, pairwise interactions between high atrazine exposure and parasite abundance and pairwise interactions between each parasite as fixed effects. Host population was included as a random intercept term. Parasite abundance data were $\log_{10} + 1$ transformed and protein, lysozyme and catalase concentration/activity were \log_{10} transformed to improve normality and model fit. Two-way interactions were included in each model initially with non-significant interactions with the highest P value removed and the models re-run until only significant interaction terms remained ($P < 0.05$). Model fit was graphically assessed. Figures were produced using sjPlot (Lüdtke, 2021).

Terminology

The definitions of parasite population parameters are in accordance with Bush et al. (1997). Prevalence is the proportion of frogs infected with a particular species at a locality, expressed as a per cent. Abundance refers to the number of parasites in a host from a particular locality, be it infected or not. Intensity refers to the number of parasites of a given species in an infected host from a particular locality.

Results

Results of linear mixed effects models demonstrate that abundance of *Echinostoma* spp. was associated with a significant increase in protein concentration ($F_{(1,26.67)} = 6.68$, $P = 0.02$, Fig. 1, Supporting Information Table 1). Abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. was associated with increased thiol concentration ($F_{(1,145.91)} = 10.92$, $P = 0.001$, Fig. 2, Supporting Information Table 2). However, the interactions of *Oswaldocruzia* sp.*High atrazine exposure and *Oswaldocruzia* sp.*Gorgorderidae gen. were associated with reduced thiol concentration (*Oswaldocruzia* sp.*High atrazine: $F_{(1,145.96)} = 7.96$, $P = 0.005$, Fig. 2, Supporting Information Table 2; *Oswaldocruzia* sp.*Gorgorderidae: $F_{(1,145.17)} = 9.03$, $P = 0.003$, Supporting Information Table 2). Lastly, abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. was associated with increased catalase activity ($F_{(1,91.01)} = 10.35$, $P = 0.002$, Fig. 3, Supporting Information Table 3). Models for GST and lysozyme were not statistically significant (Supporting Information Tables 4 and 5).

Discussion

Our results failed to demonstrate an effect of herbicide exposure as a single predictor of oxidative stress, however we do

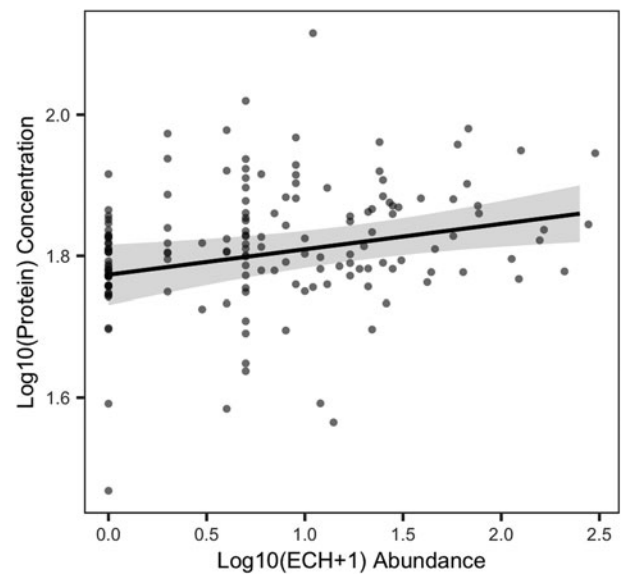


Fig. 1. Plot of \log_{10} abundance of *Echinostoma* spp. (\log_{10} ECH + 1) against \log_{10} total protein concentration (mg g^{-1} F.W.) in spleens of northern leopard frogs (*Lithobates pipiens*) collected from agricultural and non-agricultural wetlands in Quebec, Canada in 2004. Results show linear mixed effects model predictions showing 95% confidence interval (shaded area) of marginal effects and raw data points.

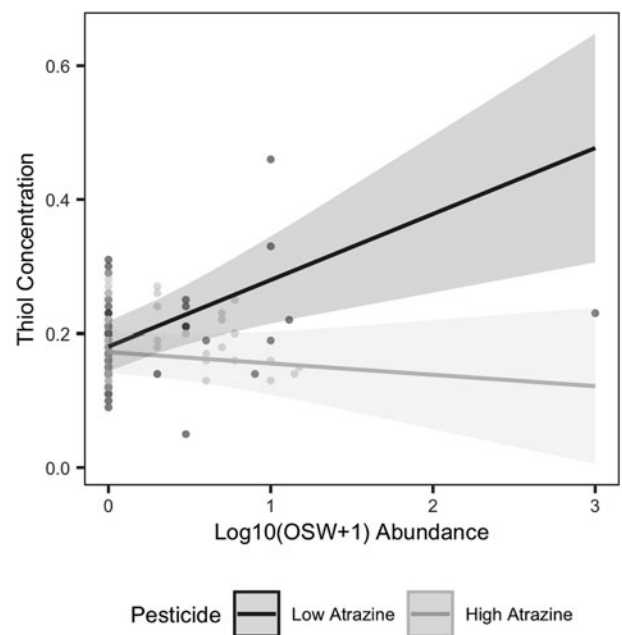


Fig. 2. Plot of \log_{10} abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. (\log_{10} OSW + 1) against thiol concentration ($\text{U.I.} \times 10^{-3} \text{mg}^{-1}$ protein) in spleens of northern leopard frogs (*Lithobates pipiens*) collected from (A) low-atrazine and (B) high-atrazine wetlands in Quebec, Canada in 2004 and its interaction with atrazine exposure. Results show linear mixed effects model predictions showing 95% confidence interval (shaded area) of marginal effects and raw data points.

demonstrate a clear interaction between high atrazine exposure and parasite abundance. Moreover, the abundance of certain parasites was associated with the levels of different biomarkers of oxidative stress. Thus, we fail to reject hypothesis one. We find no effect of atrazine levels or parasite exposure and their interaction on lysozyme, and therefore we reject hypothesis two. We show that frogs with high intensities of echinostomes possessed higher protein concentrations in spleen tissue. Frogs with high intensities of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. had greater catalase activity than those with lower infection intensities. Thiol levels were also

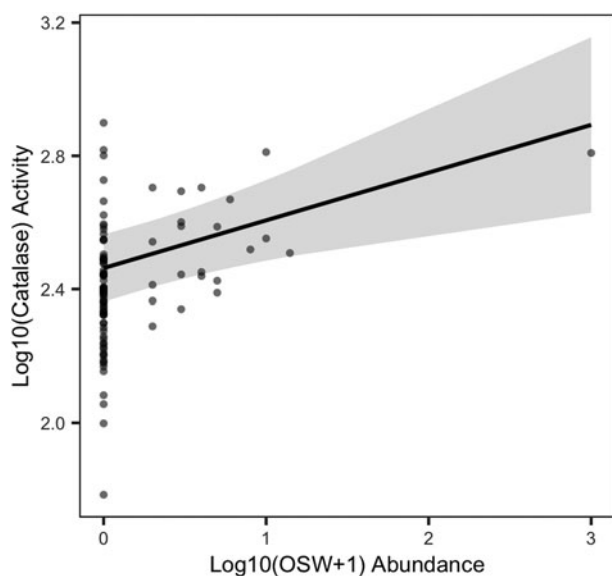


Fig. 3. Plot of log₁₀ abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. (log₁₀ OSW + 1) against log₁₀ catalase activity (nmol H₂O₂ min⁻¹ mg protein⁻¹) in northern leopard frogs (*Lithobates pipiens*) collected from agricultural and non-agricultural wetlands in Quebec, Canada in 2004. Results show linear mixed effects model predictions showing 95% confidence interval (shaded area) of marginal effects and raw data points.

associated with the abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. However, the direction of the relationship differed between frogs exposed to high atrazine concentrations and those exposed to low levels. Interactions also were observed between the abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. and gorgoderids on thiol concentration. While we did not measure growth or other related parameters, oxidative stress can lead to decreased growth rates in amphibians (Szuroczi *et al.*, 2019) and thus reduced fitness. We caution that results should be interpreted with care, as there may be other unmeasured factors associated with the study system that could affect the biomarker responses.

Various parasites are known to induce oxidative stress in their host (see Introduction section for references). For example, parasites have been shown to induce higher catalase activity, a known biomarker of oxidative stress (Di Giulio *et al.*, 1989; Brodeur *et al.*, 2011), in fishes. These include carp (*Cyprinus carpio*) infected with the intestinal cestode *Ptychobothrium* sp. (Dautremepuits *et al.*, 2002a, 2002b, 2003), *Heterotis niloticus* infected with the intestinal acanthocephalan *Tenuisentis niloticus* (Akinsanya *et al.*, 2020a), and yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) infected with the larval trematode *Diplostomum* spp. (Marcogliese *et al.*, 2010), although in the latter study effects were only observed in polluted waters, but not at reference localities. Infection with the parasitic isopod *Anilocra frontalis* increased catalase activity in the marine fish *Pomatoschistus microps*, but only at a higher acclimation temperature (Cereja *et al.*, 2018). In contrast, in amphibians, catalase activity was lower in African common toads (*Amietophrynus regularis*) infected with the intestinal nematode *Amplichaecum africanum* from localities exposed to trace metal pollution but not those from a reference locality (Akinsanya *et al.*, 2020b). The later result was interpreted as depuration of metals in the anuran host due to bioaccumulation by the nematode (Akinsanya *et al.*, 2020b). Clearly, catalase activity depends not only on the host but varies with parasitic infection and environmental context.

Thiol levels in leopard frogs from reference localities were positively associated with the abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp., implying enhanced synthesis of antioxidants. This relationship was reversed in those frogs from high atrazine localities, suggesting potential environmental stress (Peña-Llopis *et al.*, 2003). GSH

was also higher in *H. niloticus* infected with *T. niloticus* in a polluted lagoon in Nigeria (Akinsanya *et al.*, 2020a). Curiously, there was a significant interaction between *Oswaldocruzia* sp. and gorgoderids, associated with a reduction in thiol concentration. This implies that the effects of one parasite species may be moderated by a second infection (Bordes and Morand, 2009; Blaustein *et al.*, 2011, 2012).

There are no studies on oxidative stress in amphibians or reptiles infected with *Oswaldocruzia* sp. However, infections with *Oswaldocruzia* sp. and other intestinal nematodes can lead to host starvation, peritonitis and mortality at high intensities (Reichenbach-Klinke and Elkan, 1965). Larval *Oswaldocruzia filiformis* cause necrosis and atrophy of the stomach mucosa and epithelium (Hendriks and van Moppes, 1983). Other intestinal nematodes induce oxidative stress in their hosts. For example, ring-necked pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) experimentally infected with *Heterakis gallinarum* displayed higher levels of lipid peroxidation in plasma after 8 weeks (Orledge *et al.*, 2012).

The abundance of echinostome trematodes was associated with higher protein levels. This result seems counterintuitive, as stress would be expected to lead to a decrease in proteins due to greater energy consumption in response (Dornelles and Oliveira, 2014). However, an increase in protein may reflect the activation of biochemical processes (Dautremepuits *et al.*, 2009). Larval echinostomes commonly infect the kidneys and are pathogenic in amphibians, especially at high intensities (Johnson and McKenzie, 2008; Koprivnikar *et al.*, 2012). Effects include oedema, reduced growth, kidney malfunction, pathology and mortality (Johnson and McKenzie, 2008). Thus, it is not surprising that they may affect oxidative stress. Other larval trematodes shown to induce oxidative stress in their hosts include the fish parasites *Apophallus brevis*, *Diplostomum* spp. and *Ornithodiplostomum ptychocheilus* (Marcogliese *et al.*, 2005, 2010; Stumbo *et al.*, 2012; Lacaze *et al.*, 2019).

Although we did not detect any direct effect of high atrazine exposure alone, pesticides, in general, are known to induce oxidative stress (Abdollahi *et al.*, 2004; Dornelles and Oliveira, 2014; Luschnik, 2016). Bullfrog tadpoles experimentally exposed to atrazine experienced large increases in lipid peroxidation, a measure of damage resulting from oxidative stress, and a decrease in protein concentration, albeit at higher atrazine concentrations than at any of our sites (Dornelles and Oliveira, 2014). In studies of exposure to other pesticides, catalase activity increased in some, but not all, anurans (Costa *et al.*, 2008; Brodeur *et al.*, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2017). Notably, a recent synthesis suggests that results may vary with class of pesticides (Rumschlag *et al.*, 2019).

Contaminants can lead to a decrease in thiol concentration (van der Oost *et al.*, 2003). GSH is considered to be a biomarker of oxidative or environmental stress (Peña-Llopis *et al.*, 2003; Brodeur *et al.*, 2011; Hellou *et al.*, 2012). We found no effect of high atrazine exposure alone on total thiols in leopard frogs. Nor was any effect observed on GSH from other amphibians in agricultural landscapes (Brodeur *et al.*, 2011), although levels were reduced in tadpoles of *Bufo arenarum* (Venturino *et al.*, 2003). Curiously, high atrazine exposure changed the relationship between thiol concentration and abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp., demonstrating that effects of multiple stressors may be non-additive and unpredictable, rendering interpretation problematic (Sures *et al.*, 2017).

Numerous studies have shown higher GST activity in amphibians from agricultural localities exposed to other pesticides (Venturino *et al.*, 2003; Greulich and Pflugmacher, 2004; Attademo *et al.*, 2007), while others show reductions in GST activity (Brodeur *et al.*, 2011), and still, others show no effect (Brodeur *et al.*, 2012), as in our study. As stated above, effects may vary with pesticide class (Rumschlag *et al.*, 2019).

No evidence of additive or synergistic effects of pesticides and parasites on oxidative stress were observed in leopard frogs. In contrast, lipid peroxidation was induced in yellow perch from a polluted site, while it was higher still in those infected with the larval nematode *Raphidascaris acus* or high numbers of the larval trematode *A. brevis* at the same site suggesting additive effects (Marcogliese *et al.*, 2005). Similarly, GRd activity in gills, and catalase activity in the head kidney of yellow perch infected with *A. brevis* and *Diplostomum* spp. respectively, were intensity dependent at polluted localities, suggesting combined effects of pollution and parasitism on oxidative stress metabolism (Marcogliese *et al.*, 2010). It is likely that the combined effects of multiple stressors depend on the relative intensity of the different stressors, their toxicity and/or their pathogenicity. Results herein suggest that parasitism should be considered in any studies of oxidative stress in amphibians from different habitats, whether polluted or not.

Lysozymes are considered an important index of innate immunity in fish (Tort *et al.*, 2003; Saurabh and Sahoo, 2008; Uribe *et al.*, 2011). Although infections with parasites can modify the immune response (Martin *et al.*, 2010), effects of parasites on lysozyme activity are equivocal (Alvarez-Pellitero, 2008). Previous researchers have suggested that contaminants, and pesticides in particular, can decrease the immune response in amphibians (Carey and Bryant, 1995; Carey *et al.*, 1999; Fournier *et al.*, 2005; Saurabh and Sahoo, 2008; Mann *et al.*, 2009; Martin *et al.*, 2010; Rollins-Smith and Woodhams, 2012; Rumschlag *et al.*, 2019). Pesticides typically affect innate, non-specific immune responses (Rehberger *et al.*, 2017). However, while we did not detect any effects of exposure to atrazine on lysozyme activity, it represents only a small component of the innate immune response (Tort *et al.*, 2003; Magnadottir, 2010; Uribe *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, northern leopard frogs collected from some of the same localities as in this study had reduced numbers of splenocytes and phagocytic response in the agricultural wetlands (Christin *et al.*, 2013).

In conclusion, infection with certain parasites is associated with oxidative stress in northern leopard frogs. Specifically, abundances of larval echinostomes and the nematode *Oswaldocruzia* sp. were associated with oxidative stress, regardless of the habitat's agricultural status. Furthermore, interactions were detected between the abundance of *Oswaldocruzia* sp. and the degree of atrazine exposure. Lastly, an effect of the parasite \times parasite interaction was detected between *Oswaldocruzia* sp. and gorgoderid abundance. In contrast, no effect of any parasite, or high atrazine exposure, or their interaction was observed on lysozyme activity. Clearly, environmental studies on oxidative stress and other biomarkers of animal health in amphibians from agricultural habitats should account for parasitism. Indeed, parasitism may affect biomarkers of animal health in any environment (Marcogliese and Pietrock, 2011; Sures *et al.*, 2017), but at this point in time it is difficult to predict with certainty which parasites will affect the biomarkers used in any particular host–parasite system, or how they will interact with different contaminants and other anthropogenic stressors.

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Ethical standards. Handling and treatment of animals were in accordance with the guidelines of the Canada Council on Animal Care, and protocols were approved by Environment and Climate Change Canada's Animal Care Committee.

Data. Data are available from DJM upon request.

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