



Effect of Ginger Essential Oil on *in Vitro* Gas Production, Rumen Fermentation and Methane Production

Erdoğan ALTINÇEKİÇ^{a*} , Önder CANBOLAT^b , Şeniz ÖZİŞ ALTINÇEKİÇ^b 

^aRepublic of Turkey Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Central Research Institute of Food and Feed Control, 16160, Bursa, TURKEY

^bDepartment of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, Bursa Uludağ University, 16059, Bursa, TURKEY

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Corresponding Author: Erdoğan ALTINÇEKİÇ, E-mail: ealtincekic@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

In this study, control (0), 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1000 mg L⁻¹ ginger essential oil (GEO) (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe) was added to rumen liquid (RL). Then, the effects of the GEO added to the RL *In vitro* gas production, organic matter digestibility (OMD), metabolisable energy (ME), rumen fermentation parameters and methane (CH₄) production were examined on these samples. It was determined that the addition of the GEO to RL decreased the *in vitro* gas production of *Trifolium pratense* hay (TPH), the OMD and ME contents, total volatile fatty acids (TVFA), acetic acid (AA), propionic acid (PA), butyric acid (BA) and other volatile

fatty acids (OVFA) (P<0.05). Moreover, it was determined that while the productions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), CH₄ and ammonia nitrogen (NH₃-N) decreased, the ratios of the rumen pH and AA/PA increased (P<0.05) depending on the increase in the dose of GEO. In conclusion, it was determined that the GEO dose which had the highest negative effect on the *in vitro* gas production, the rumen fermentation, the nutrient digestibility, the CH₄ and the CO₂ production was 1000 mg L⁻¹. It was concluded that since high doses of GEO affect rumen fermentation and digestion of feeds negatively, it would be appropriate to use 200 mg L⁻¹.

Keywords: Ruminant nutrition, Zingiber, Rumen parameters, Methane, Fatty acids

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1. Introduction

In livestock sector, antibiotics have been commonly used with the aim of increasing the feed conversion and preventing diseases and metabolic disorders (Jouany & Morgavi 2007). However, the use of antibiotics in animal feeding was banned after January of 2006 as required by the decision made by the European Union in 2003 on the grounds that they pose a risk for human health (Chesson 2006). In order to solve this problem, the number of studies carried out with the aim of developing feed additives as an alternative to antibiotics has increased. As a result of these studies, it was put forward that aromatic plants and essential oils extracted from these plants would be an alternative to antibiotics (Chao et al. 2000; Meliani et al. 2014; Sharma et al. 2016; Mahboubi 2019).

There are many active metabolites such as zingiberene in the structure of the essential oils obtained from the ginger plant (Raina et al. 2005; Sharma et al. 2016). It is reported that these active compounds existing in the ginger essential oil (GEO) do not only have antiseptic, antimicrobial, antioxidant features, but they are also effective against common cold, vomiting control, heart diseases, stomach ulcers, tumor growth, rheumatism and migraine (Raina et al. 2005; Meliani et al. 2014; Mahboubi 2019). It is also stated that the GEO shows antibacterial feature against gram positive and gram negative bacteria (Chao et al. 2000; Meliani et al. 2014; Nanon et al. 2015; Faniyi et al. 2019).

It is reported that the GEO with above-mentioned features will be used to manipulate the rumen fermentation (Soroor & Moeini 2015; Faniyi et al. 2016; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018; Faniyi et al. 2019). Moreover, it was also determined that the GEO has an effect on the digestibility of feeds, metabolisable energy (ME) and methane (CH₄) production (Nanon et al. 2015; Soroor & Moeini 2015; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018; Faniyi et al. 2019). For this reason, it is important to reveal the effects of GEO on rumen fermentation, digestion of feeds and the CH₄ production in rumen.

This study was carried out with the aim of determining the effects of different doses of GEO (0, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1000 mg L⁻¹ to rumen liquid (RL)) on *in vitro* gas production, the digestibility of feeds, the rumen fermentation and CH₄ production.

2. Material and Methods

2.1. Feed and animal material

The feed material of the study was *Trifolium pratense* hay (TPH) and it was used in the study after being ground in the grinder with a sieve-diameter of 1 mm. The GEO used in the study was obtained from the market in pure form (catalogue no: W252204-8007-08-7) (Sigma-Aldrich). The RL used in the study was taken from 3 rams, Kivircik breed, with a rumen canula. During the study, the animals were fed with complete ration (TMR) composed of 60% of alfalfa hay and 40% of concentrate feed mix (18% crude protein and 2750 kcal kg⁻¹ ME Dry Matter⁻¹ (DM)) and water was continuously available in front of them.

2.2. Implementation of *in vitro* gas production technique

In the determination of the TPH's *in vitro* gas production and the levels of organic matter digestibility (OMD) and ME, the *in vitro* gas production technique developed by Menke & Steingass (1988) was used. In order to determine the *in vitro* gas production, special glass tubes with a volume of 100 mL (Model Fortuna, Häberle Labortechnik, Lonsee-Ettlenschieß, Germany) were used and about 200±10 mg of feed samples were put into the syringes for each dose of GEO (0, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1000 mg L⁻¹ to RL) in triplicates. 30 mL of RL/buffer solution prepared in accordance with the method reported by Menke et al. (1979) was added into the syringes. Following this procedure, the syringes were taken into incubation in the water bath of 39°C and the *in vitro* gas productions were measured at the intervals of 3, 6, 12, 24, 48, 72 and 96 hours, respectively.

At the 96 hours of the incubation, the pH, the total volatile fatty acid (TVFA) and the ammonia nitrogen (NH₃-N) levels in the RL in the syringes were determined. Moreover, the carbon dioxide (CO₂) and the CH₄ gases produced were calculated using the concentration of the individual volatile fatty acids (VFA) via the following equations (Blümmel et al. 1999).

$$\text{CO}_2 = \text{Acetic acid (AA)} / 2 + \text{Propionic acid (PA)} / 4 + 1.5 \times \text{Butyric acid (BA)}$$

$$\text{CH}_4 = (\text{AA} + 2 \times \text{BA}) - \text{CO}_2$$

The concentration of VFA was taken as mmol.

The OMD of the feed raw materials and their ME were determined via the following equations reported by Menke & Steingass (1988).

$$\text{OMD, \%} = 15.38 + 0.8453 \times \text{GP} + 0.0595 \times \text{VP} + 0.0675 \times \text{CA}$$

$$\text{ME, MJ/kg DM} = 2.20 + 0.1357 \times \text{GP} + 0.0057 \times \text{CP} + 0.0002859 \times \text{EE}^2$$

(GP: The net gas production at the end of the 24-hour of incubation duration of 200 mg of dry forage sample, CP: % Crude protein, EE: % Ether extract and CA: % Crude ash).

The true dry matter of NDF digestibility were determined by using the Ankom Daisy^{II} incubator (ANKOM Technology Corp., Fairport, NY, USA, 2008).

2.3. Chemical analysis

The dry matter, CA, CP and EE analyses of TPH were determined with the methods reported by AOAC (2000); the analysis of the cell wall components was determined with the methods reported by Van Soest et al. (1991) using the ANKOM 200 Fiber Analyzer device (ANKOM Technology Corp., Fairport, NY, USA, 2008).

The pH of the RL was determined via a digital pH-meter (Sartorius PB-20, Goettingen, Germany). Ruminal ammonia nitrogen (NH₃-N) analysis was done in RL used in *in vitro* gas production at 96th hour. RL was taken 10 mL and put into tubes (15 mL). Then, 0.1 mL of 1 M hydrochloric acid (HCl) was added to stop the microorganism activity. Ruminal NH₃-N analysis was distilled by Kjeldahl method. For this purpose, 10 mL of RL was placed in the sample setting unit of the Kjeldahl device and 3 mL of 1 N sodium hydroxide (NaOH) solution was added. For distillate 50 mL of 2% boric acid was placed and 3-4 drops of indicator were placed on it. Subsequently, 175 mL of distillate were collected. The distillate collected was titrated with 0.1 N sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄). The amount of sulfuric acid spent in titration (mL) was determined. Then NH₃-N was calculated in mg (Blümmel et al. 1997).

RL volatile fatty acids (acetic, butyric, propionic, valeric, isovaleric and isobutyric acid) analysis was done in RL used in *in vitro* gas production at 96th hour. RL was taken 10 mL and put into tubes (15 mL). Then, 1.0 mL of 25% phosphoric acid was added to RL (Wiedmeier et al. 1987). RL was centrifuged at 14000 rpm and determined by gas chromatography (Agilent Technologies 6890N gas chromatography, Stabilwax-DA, 30 m, 0.25 mm ID, 0.25 µm df. Max. Temp: 260 °C. Cat. 11023) RL volatile fatty acids.

2.4. Statistical analyses

The research was conducted by a completely randomized design with three replications. The data obtained from the research was subjected to analysis of variance (Snedecor & Cochran 1967) and the differences between means was determined with

Duncan multiple comparison test using SAS programme (2004).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Chemical composition of TPH

The organic matter, CA, CP, EE, NDF, ADF, ADL, cellulose and hemicellulose contents of TPH were calculated as 93.82%, 6.18, 17.38, 3.81, 51.08, 36.66, 8.56, 14.43 and 28.10 respectively. The chemical composition of TPH was found similar to that reported by NRC (2007).

Table 1- Chemical composition of TPH, %

Ingredients	%
Organic matters	93.82
Crude ash	6.18
Crude protein	17.38
Ether extract	3.81
Neutral detergent fiber, (NDF)	51.08
Acid detergent fiber, (ADF)	36.66
Acid detergent lignin, (ADL)	8.56
Cellulose	28.10
Hemicellulose	14.43

3.2. Effect of GEO on *in vitro* gas production

The GEO addition decreased the *in vitro* gas production of TPH in all the incubation periods ($P < 0.05$). The lowest *in vitro* gas production was found in the group with 64.89 mL and 1000 mg L⁻¹ addition and the highest *in vitro* gas production was found in the control group with 74.66 mL and without GEO addition. The decrease in the *in vitro* gas production occurring depending on the increase in the GEO dose added to RL can be explained by the antimicrobial features of active components existing in the structure of GEO and, as a result of this, their limiting rumen microorganisms (Chao et al. 2000; Meliani et al. 2014; Nanon et al. 2015; Soroor & Moeini 2015; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018; Faniyi et al. 2019). In many previous studies, it was reported that GEO decreased the *in vitro* gas production (Tag El-Din et al. 2012; Meliani et al. 2014; Nanon et al. 2015; Soroor & Moeini 2015; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018; Faniyi et al. 2019). The findings of this study support the results reported by Tag El-Din et al. (2012), Kurniawati et al. (2018), Mekuiko Watsop et al. (2018). However, Nanon et al. (2015) showed that GEO addition (1600 mg/kg DM) affected the *in vitro* gas production negatively.

Table 2- Effects of GEO and its different doses on the *in vitro* gas production of TPH, mL

Incubation duration, hour	GEO, mg L ⁻¹							SEM*
	Control (0)	50	100	200	400	800	1000	
3	18.80 ^a	18.41 ^{ab}	17.83 ^{ab}	17.35 ^b	16.17 ^c	14.95 ^d	14.48 ^d	0.625
6	29.76 ^a	28.65 ^b	27.77 ^{bc}	27.65 ^c	25.48 ^d	23.90 ^e	22.71 ^f	0.549
12	45.43 ^a	44.47 ^{ab}	43.14 ^{bc}	41.29 ^{cd}	40.29 ^d	39.21 ^d	36.71 ^e	1.268
24	57.77 ^a	56.02 ^b	55.34 ^b	63.60 ^c	51.76 ^d	49.93 ^e	48.67 ^e	0.880
48	67.70 ^a	64.61 ^b	61.36 ^c	59.18 ^{cd}	57.65 ^{de}	55.67 ^e	53.11 ^f	1.401
72	71.62 ^a	70.06 ^b	69.62 ^{bc}	68.42 ^{cd}	67.41 ^d	65.86 ^e	63.33 ^f	0.746
96	74.66 ^a	72.22 ^b	71.10 ^c	69.55 ^d	69.16 ^{de}	68.25 ^e	64.89 ^f	0.608

*: Standard error mean. Differences between the means shown with different letters on the same line are significant ($P < 0.05$)

The positive effect of the GEO added to RL on the digestibility of feeds can be explained by the GEO's showing antimicrobial activity against microorganisms (Tag El-Din et al. 2012; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018). The organic components existing in GEO are reported to show an antibacterial effect by breaking the cell wall structure of microorganisms as it is in other essential oils (Sharma et al. 2016; Mahboubi 2019). It can be stated that the development of rumen microorganisms is limited via a similar mechanism (Tag El-Din et al. 2012; Soroor & Moeini 2015; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018) and, depending on this, *in vitro* gas production decreases.

3.3. Effect of GEO on the OMD and ME

Supplementation of GEO significantly affected OMD and ME content of TPH. The OMD and ME content ranged from %78.72 to 71.03 and 11.44 to 10.21 MJ/kg DM respectively ($P < 0.05$). These parameters significantly decreased with increasing level of GEO supplementation.

Table 3- Effects of GEO and its different doses on the OMD of TPH under *in vitro* conditions and ME

Parameters	GEO, mg L ⁻¹							SEM*
	Control (0)	50	100	200	400	800	1000	
OMD, %	78.72 ^a	77.25 ^b	76.67 ^b	75.20 ^c	73.65 ^e	72.10 ^e	71.03 ^e	0.743
ME, MJ/kg DM	11.44 ^a	11.21 ^b	11.11 ^b	10.88 ^c	10.63 ^d	10.38 ^e	10.21 ^e	0.118

OMD: Organic matter digestion; ME: Metabolisable energy; *: Standard error mean. Differences between the means shown with different letters on the same line are significant (P<0.05).

It can be explained by the finding that the GEO added to RL in increasing doses caused a low level of *in vitro* gas production by showing antimicrobial effect (Tag El-Din et al. 2012; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018; Mahboubi 2019). However, Soroor & Moeini (2015) found that the GEO increased the *in vitro* gas production. The finding that the *in vitro* gas production was found high in the mentioned study can be explained by the use of a different ration and the low dose of GEO (60 mg L⁻¹).

The decrease in the OMD determined in the study was also found in the studies made by Tag El-Din et al. (2012) and Mekuiko Watsop et al. (2018), Mahboubi (2019) working with different feeds and GEO doses. However, in the studies carried out by Soroor & Moeini (2015), Medjekal et al. (2017) and Kurniawati et al (2018), the GEO affected the digestibility of feeds positively. This can be explained by the fact that these researchers worked with low doses (60 mg L⁻¹, 50 mg L⁻¹ and 100 mg L⁻¹, respectively). Nanon et al (2015) reported in their study that the GEO addition (1600 mg/kg DM) to the ration did not affect the digestion of dry matter negatively.

With the GEO addition in different doses to RL, the ME content of TPH changed between 11.44 and 10.21 MJ/kg DM. As the GEO dose increased, the ME level decreased. Similarly, Tag El-Din et al. (2012) determined in their study that the addition of ginger decreased the ME level.

3.4. Effect of GEO on rumen fermentation

The addition of GEO to RL decreased the TVFA and the AA, PA and BA significantly (P<0.05). Depending on the GEO doses, the TVFA ranged from 90.05 to 68.88 mmol/L. The lowest TVFA was determined in the experimental group into which the GEO was added in the dose of 1000 mg L⁻¹. Moreover, the AA, PA and BA levels of RL varied between 47.92-35.69 mmol/L, 21.13-18.37 mmol/L and 15.39-7.56 mmol/L, respectively. The most effective GEO dose on TVFA, AA, PA and BA was determined as 1000 mg L⁻¹ (P<0.05). The addition of GEO to RL affected the rumen fermentation significantly. This can be explained by the finding that GEO had an antibacterial effect on the rumen microorganisms (Tag El-Din et al. 2012; Kurniawati et al. 2018; Mekuiko Watsop et al. 2018; Mahboubi 2019). Especially, the increase in the GEO dose decreased the production of TVFA and the individual VFA. In their study, Soroor & Moeini (2015) added 30 and 60 mg of GEO to RL and reported as a result of the study that the propionic acid rate increased, but the TVFA and AA rates decreased depending on the increase in the GEO doses. Similar findings were found in the study reported by Tag El-Din et al. (2012) in relation to the TVFA, too. However, Nanon et al. (2015) reported in their study that the GEO did not affect the contents of TVFA, AA and PA.

Table 4- Effects of GEO and its different doses on the features of rumen fermentation

RL Parameters	GEO, mg L ⁻¹							SEM*
	Control (0)	50	100	200	400	800	1000	
pH	5.99 ^f	6.08 ^e	6.10 ^e	6.27 ^d	6.36 ^c	6.45 ^b	6.57 ^a	0.026
NH ₃ N, mg N/100 mL	31.31 ^a	31.52 ^a	29.23 ^b	28.28 ^b	24.03 ^c	23.66 ^c	21.28 ^d	1.081
TVFA, mmol/L	90.05 ^a	86.38 ^b	84.40 ^c	80.55 ^d	75.68 ^e	72.03 ^f	68.88 ^g	1.068
AA, mmol/L	47.92 ^a	46.27 ^{ab}	44.91 ^b	40.43 ^c	35.69 ^d	38.12 ^c	39.13 ^c	1.348
PA, mmol/L	20.07 ^a	19.04 ^{abc}	21.13 ^b	18.62 ^{bc}	18.37 ^c	19.65 ^{ab}	19.67 ^b	0.595
BA, mmol/L	13.55 ^a	13.29 ^a	13.39 ^a	15.39 ^a	15.15 ^a	10.68 ^b	7.56 ^c	1.199
OVFA, mmol/L	8.47 ^a	7.78 ^{ab}	7.48 ^b	6.36 ^c	6.44 ^c	3.58 ^d	2.2 ^e	0.392
AA/PA	2.38 ^a	2.43 ^a	2.13 ^b	2.20 ^b	1.95 ^c	1.94 ^c	1.99 ^c	0.099

NH₃N: Ammonia nitrogen; TVFA: Total volatile fat acids; OVFA: Other volatile fat acids; AA/PA: acetic acid/propionic acid; *: Standard error mean. Differences between the means shown with different letters on the same line are significant (P<0.05)

The rate of AA/PA determined in the study varied between 2.38 and 1.94 depending on the increase in the GEO dose and the differences between the GEO doses were found significant (P<0.05). The highest AA/PA rate was found in the control group not including GEO. The AA/PA rate determined in the study was found lower than the values of (3.33-3.34) obtained by Nanon et al. (2015) working with GEO and the ones (2.3-2.6) determined by Soroor & Moeini (2015) but higher than the values (1.8-1.7) reported by Benchaar et al. (2008) working with a different essential oil (garlic essential oil).

Depending on the GEO dose, RL pH level varied between 5.99 and 6.57 and the differences between the GEO doses were found significant ($P<0.05$). The highest rumen pH was found in the group including 1000 mg L⁻¹. That the pH increased depending on the increase in the GEO dose can be explained by the finding that the GEO addition decreased the VFA turning the RL into an acid character (Table 4). While the rumen pH determined in the study was found lower than the ones found by Kurniawati et al. (2018) working with GEO, it was found similar to the results reported by Busquet et al. (2006).

Moreover, ruminal NH₃N level changed between 31.31 and 21.28 mg N/100 mL depending on the increase in the GEO dose. The highest NH₃N levels were determined in the control and 50 mg L⁻¹ group not including GEO with the value of 31.31 and 31.52 mg N/100 mL and the lowest NH₃N level was determined in the group including 1000 mg L⁻¹ with the value of 21.28 mg N/100 mL ($P<0.05$). The decrease in NH₃N level resulted initially from the decrease in the activity of RL microorganisms as well as the essential oils' preventing the deamination of amino acids (Nanon et al. 2015; Soroor & Moeini 2015). It is reported that the decrease in the nitrogen loss in the rumen in the form of ammonia (NH₃) will be beneficial in terms of animal feeding and increase the benefiting from the energy and nitrogen of the feed (Nanon et al. 2015; Soroor & Moeini 2015). NH₃N level determined in the study was lower than the results reported by Nanon et al. (2015) working with GEO, but it was similar to the findings obtained by Soroor & Moeini (2015). Mekuiko Watsop et al. (2018) reported in their study that the GEO addition decreased NH₃N level. Busquet et al. (2006) reported that the GEO addition to RL did not affect NH₃N level.

3.5. Effect of GEO on CO₂ and CH₄ gas production

In the study, depending on the increase in the dose of GEO added to RL, the *in vitro* CO₂ gas production decreased ($P<0.05$). The highest CO₂ gas production was found in the control group with the value of 49.30 mmol/L and the lowest CO₂ gas production was determined in the 1000 mg L⁻¹ group with the value of 38.11 mmol/L ($P<0.05$). Moreover, the *in vitro* CH₄ gas production decreased depending on the GEO dose increase, varied between 25.18 and 18.43 mmol/L and the differences between them were found significant ($P<0.05$).

Table 5- Effects of GEO and its different doses on CO₂ and CH₄ productions

Parameters	GEO, mg L ⁻¹							SEM*
	Control (0)	50	100	200	400	800	1000	
CO ₂ , mol/L	49.30 ^a	47.89 ^a	57.83 ^a	47.19 ^{ab}	45.17 ^b	39.99 ^c	35.83 ^c	1.365
CH ₄ , mol/L	25.18 ^a	25.01 ^{ab}	24.49 ^b	23.32 ^c	20.82 ^d	19.49 ^e	18.43 ^f	0.537

*: Standard error mean. Differences between the means shown with different letters on the same line are significant ($P<0.05$).

The CO₂ and CH₄ productions in the ruminants are made by the methanogenic bacteria existing in the rumen via the use of VFA and hydrogen ions (H⁺) (Demeyer et al. 1996; Nanon et al. 2015). GEO decreases the CH₄ gas formation by showing an antimicrobial effect on methanogenic bacteria, as it has on other rumen bacteria. CH₄ is one of the most important greenhouse gases. It is reported that the greenhouse effect of CH₄ is 23 times as much as that of CO₂ (Kim et al. 2012). It is also reported that the contribution of farm animals to the emission of greenhouse gases is 18%. It was determined that about 15% of this part resulted from the fermentation occurring in the rumens and manures of ruminant animals (Takahashi et al. 2005).

It is reported that 2 - 15% of feed energy is lost in the form of CH₄ via the fermentation of feeds in rumen (Kim et al. 2012). It is stated that essential oils have a potential in decreasing energy loss and greenhouse gas emission via CH₄ gas (Chaouki Benchaar & Greathead 2011; Nanon et al. 2015; Ratika & Singh 2018). It was also revealed in many previous studies that GEO led to the decrease in CH₄ production by limiting the number of methane-producing bacteria in rumen (Tag El-Din et al. 2012; Nanon et al. 2015). In the study, the GEO addition in different doses to RL decreased the *in vitro* CH₄ gas production significantly ($P<0.05$). These results show similarity to the findings obtained by Tag El-Din et al. (2012) and Kurniawati et al. (2018) working with GEO and the ginger plant.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the addition of GEO in different doses to RL under *in vitro* conditions decreased the *in vitro* gas production and OMD and the ME content significantly ($P<0.05$). Similarly, the increase in the dose of GEO added to RL decreased the TVFA and the individual VFA, two of the rumen metabolites, and the production of NH₃N, CO₂ and CH₄ gases but increased the rumen pH. It can be stated that GEO can prevent nitrogen loss in the rumen by decreasing NH₃N level in the rumen and it can be benefited from the feed energy more effectively by decreasing the loss of CH₄ gas. However, since feeds negatively affect OMD and ME content, it is recommended to use GEO at low doses (200 mg L⁻¹) in ruminant feeding. It was concluded that more *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies with more intensive content are needed to shed light on the matter.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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