

Full Length Research Paper

Study on ultrastructure of *Leishmania major* and *Lizard leishmania*

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We compared ultrastructure of *Lizard Leishmania* and *Leishmania major* promastigotes by electron microscope. *Leishmania major* (MRHO/R64/Nadim1) and *Lizard leishmania* promastigotes were mass cultured, collected by centrifugation and washed by PBS buffer three times, the ultrastructural features of both *Leishmania* promastigotes were observed by transmission electron microscope. Their subpellicular microtubules diameter and cytoplasmic membrane thickness are identical, but there is difference in two parasites in respect of distance between kinetoplast and flagella. We could not find golgi apparatus in *Lizard Leishmania*.

Key words: *Lizard Leishmania*, *Leishmania major*, Transmission Electron Microscope

INTRODUCTION

Leishmaniasis is the result of infection with *Leishmania* species differently manifested due to infection with different types of the parasite (Modabber 1991). The disease is considered as one of the important health problems in 82 countries, since 12 million people are already affected and 1.5 - 2 million people get involved every year (WHO, 1997).

There are some studies (Lewis, 1975, al-Shammary et al., 1995, Anderson and Ellis 1965, Angelopoulos 1970 and Burton 1966) on ultrastructure of *Leishmania* spp. We have isolated a *Leishmania* promastigote by lizard cardiac blood culture (Kazemi et al., 2004b) and used for mice immunization by whole lysate (Kazemi et al., 2002) or fractionated antigen (Kazemi et al 2004a). This *Leishmania* have different habitation in its host as compared with human *Leishmanias* (*Leishmania major*, *Leishmania tropica* and *Leishmania infatum*) which are prevalent in Iran (Kazemi et al., 2004b) and some investigators reported *Lizard leishmania* and its importance in epidemiological studies of leishmaniasis (Paperna et al., 2001; Belova, 1971; Heish, 1958; Seyedi-Rashti, 1971; Telford, 1979; Belova, 1966;

Edeson and Himo, 1973, Pozio et al., 1983; Elwasilia, 1988). For this reason we interested to study ultrastructurally differences between *Leishmania major* and *Lizard leishmania* promastigotes. We have designed to study ultrastructurally differences between *Leishmania major* and *Lizard leishmania* promastigote in respect to Golgi apparatus, distance from kinetoplast to flagella, subpellicular microtubules diameter and cytoplasmic membrane thickness by electron microscopy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Parasites

L. major (MRHO/IR/64/Nadim 1) has given from School of Public Health, Tehran University of Medical Sciences and *Lizard leishmania* (was frozen) has given from Cellular and Molecular Biology Research Center (Kazemi et al 2004b). *Leishmania* promastigotes have been cultured on NNN medium and mass culture has carried out on RPMI₁₆₄₀ culture medium supplemented with 20% fetal calf serum, but *Lizard Leishmania* promastigote has been mass cultured on LB broth bacterial culture medium. *Leishmania* promastigotes have collected by centrifugation and washed by PBS buffer three times.

Electron microscopy processing

The centrifuged promastigotes were fixed by 2.5% glutaraldehyde in 0.1M phosphate buffer (pH 7.4) at 4°C for 24 h, then washed by

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Table 1. Comparison between means of subpellicular microtubules diameter of *L. major* and *Lizard leishmania*.

Variables	df	Mean	SD	SDE	T	Significant level	
						90%	99%
Subpellicular microtubule measurement of <i>lizard leishmania</i>	90	0.0025	0.0004	0.00005	1.39	1.98	2.86
Subpellicular microtubule measurement of <i>L. major</i>	90	0.0024	0.0002	0.00003	1.39	1.98	2.86

SD – standard deviation; SDE- standard deviation error; df – degree of freedom; T = t-test

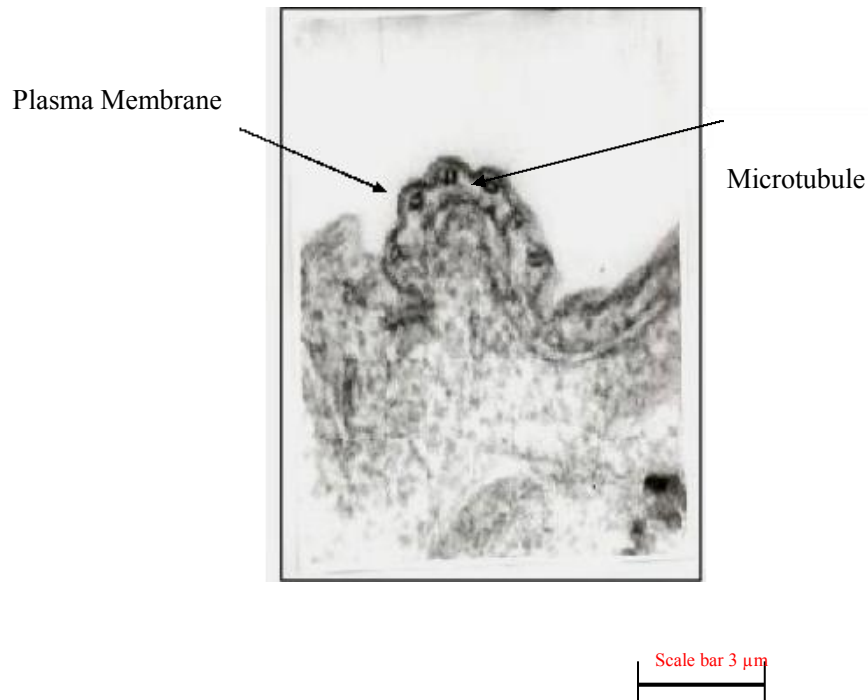


Figure 1. Electron micrograph of *Leishmania major*. It shows the bilayer plasma membrane and subpellicular microtubules. Original magnification: 35000X

phosphate buffer 3 times, post fixed in 1% osmium tetroxide in the same buffer for 1:30 h, dehydrated in graded acetone and embedded in epon 812 resin. Thin sections (50 - 70nm) were prepared and stained with uranyl acetate and lead citrate, and then used a Zeiss EM 900 transmission electron microscope operating at 80 KV for ultrastructural evaluation.

RESULTS

Transmission electron micrographs of both parasites were taken and some ultrastructural features have been measured by Motic software carefully and analyzed by informatics methods. (Motic software; National Optical and Scientific Instruments Inc, San Antonio, Texas, a software developed for digital cameras for vast assortment of functions allowing to view live video, capture images, manipulate, and measure). Subpellicular microtubules diameter of *Lizard leishmania* in respect to T= 1.39 and fd 95 is shorter than of *L. major* with T=1.98 and = 0.05, with 99% assurance, their subpellicular microtubules diameter are identical (Table 1, Figure 1 and 2).

Thickness of *Lizard leishmania* cytoplasmic membrane in respect to T = 1.985 and fd 147 is larger than of *L. major* with 1.98 and = 0.05, with 99% assurance there are difference between measurement of cytoplasmic membrane of both parasites. But in respect to measurement method this difference is described to error of worker and they are identical. (Table 2, Figures 1 and 2). Table 3 and Figures 3 and 4 show that distance from kinetoplast to flagella in *Lizard Leishmania* in respect to T = 1.12 and fd 88 is larger than of *Lizard major* with 2.86 and = 0.01. We didn't show Golgi apparatus for *Lizard leishmania*.

DISCUSSION

Because the lizard *Leishmania* can be maintained in laboratory culture medium without any risk of human, it is a useful model organism for studies in field of molecular biology and biochemistry of the genus *Leishmania* (Noyes et al. 1998).

Some investigators suggested that reptilian *Leishmania*

Table 2. Comparison between means of cytoplasmic membrane thickness of *L. major* and *lizard leishmania* promastigotes.

Variables	df	Mean	SD	SDE	T	Significant level	
						90%	99%
Measurement of cytoplasmic membrane of <i>lizard leishmania</i>	147	0.030	0.001	0.00035	1.985	1.98	2.86
Measurement of cytoplasmic membrane of <i>L. major</i>	147	0.0031	0.001	0.00040	1.985	1.98	2.86

SD – standard deviation. SDE- standard deviation error. df – degree of freedom. T = t-test

Table 3. Comparison of means distance from kinetoplast to flagellum in *L. major* and *Lizard leishmania* promastigote.

Variables	df	Mean	SD	SDE	T	Significant level	
						90%	99%
From kinetoplast to flagellum in <i>lizard leishmania</i>	88	0.0039	0.002	0.00001	1.12	1.98	2.86
From kietoplast to flagellum in <i>L. major</i>	88	0.0014	0.0003	0.00003	1.12	1.98	2.86

SD – standard deviation SDE- standard deviation error df – degree of freedom. T = t-test

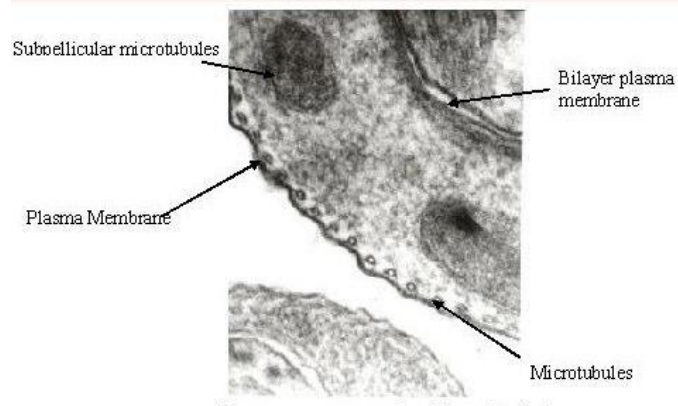


Figure 2

Figure 2. Electron micrograph of *lizard Leishmania*. It shows the bilayer plasma membrane and subpellicular microtubules. Original magnification: 85000X.

evolved from mammalian leishmania based on DNA and RNA polymerase gene sequences (Croan et al., 1997) and studies of DNA and lipid composition (Simpson and Holz, 1988). There are some reports on electron microscopy studies on some aspects of *Leishmania* (Ueda-Nakamura et al., 2007; Correa et al., 2007; Castro et al., 2006; Hiam et al., 2006; Uezato et al., 2005; Yoneyama et al., 2006), but there are little informations on comparative study between human *Leishmania* and *Lizard leishmania*. Some investigators like: Lewis (1975), al-Shammary et al. (1995), Anderson and Ellis (1965), Angelopoulos (1970), Burton (1966) were studied on ultrastructure of *Leishmania* sp. Lewis (1975) have been studied 4 species of reptilian *Leishmania* and one spe-

cies of human *Leishmania*. He suggests that there are no differences on ultrastructure of mentioned *Leishmania* but he showed differences in diameter of subpellicular microtubules. Lewis (1975) suggested that it can be classified *Leishmania* species by this difference. Lewis (1975) measured reptilian *Leishmania* microtubules at 26.5 nm but 45.6 nm for mammalian *Leishmania*, while we measured *Lizard leishmania* microtubules at 25.8 nm and of *L. major* at 24 nm, while of *plasmodium* sporozoite is 26 ± 1.2 nm (Cyrklaff et al., 2007) and for *Toxoplasma gondii* is 32 nm (Morrissette et al., 1997). Lewis` findings are different from our results, because there are many different species of reptilian *Leishmania* and Iranian *Lizard leishmania* is different from Lewis report.

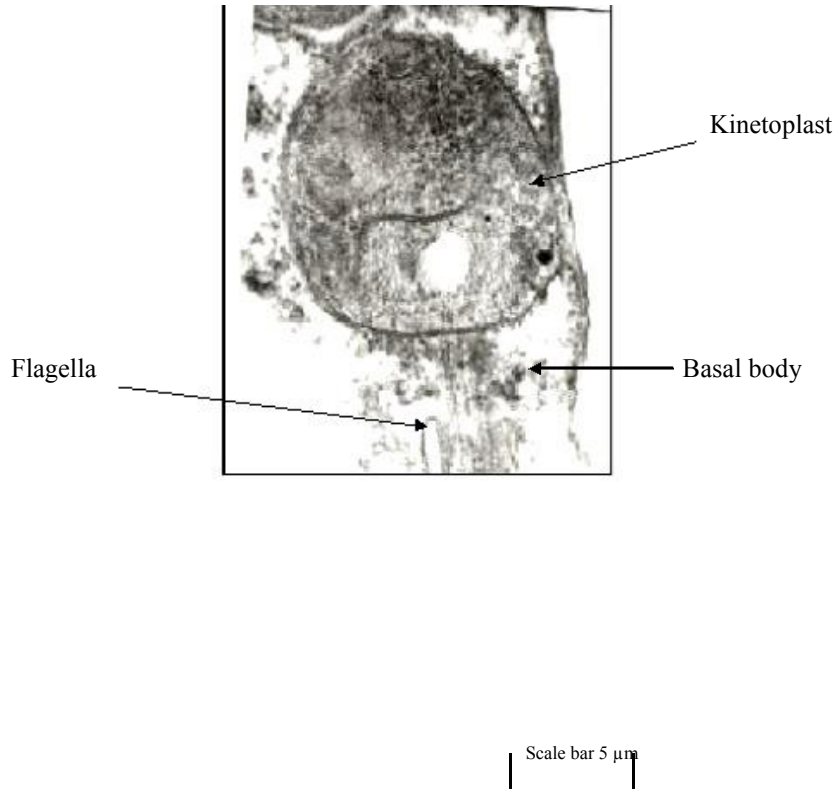


Figure 3. Electron micrograph of *Leishmania major*. It shows the distance from flagella to kinetoplast. Original magnification: 50000X.

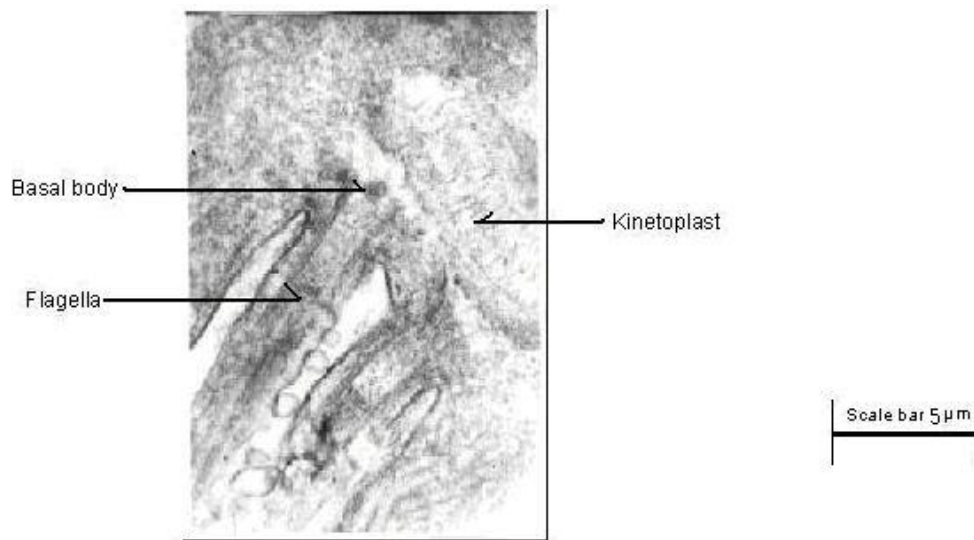


Figure 4. Electron micrograph of lizard *Leishmania*. It shows the distance from flagella to kinetoplast. Original magnification is 50000X.

There is no study on measurement of distance from kinetoplast to flagella in literature, but we showed that this parameter in *Lizard leishmania* promastigote is larger than of *L. major*.

Conclusion

We compared some parameters in *Lizard leishmania* and *Leishmania major* by electron microscope. Their subpli-

cular microtubuls are identical, but *Lizard leishmania* cytoplasmic membrane is thicker than *L. major* and distance from kinetoplast to flagella in *Lizard leishmania* is larger and there is no Golgi apparatus for *Lizard leishmania* promastigote.

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