

Zoonotic Diseases: Trypanosomiasis –An Overview

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Abstract

Trypanosomes include various groups of parasitic hemoflagellates that infect animals and humans, with extensive worldwide distribution. Trypanosoma are parasitic protozoa that reside in the blood and cause trypanosomiasis, a prevalent disease in animals such as sheep, goats, horses, camels, and cattle. This illness is mostly transmitted by the tsetse fly, although other blood-sucking insects may also carry it. Surra is an animal trypanosomiasis caused by *Trypanosoma evansi* infection, which results in significant economic loss owing to death and morbidity. Surra's epidemiology and management receive far less attention than tsetse-transmitted animal trypanosomiasis. Understanding its epidemiology is the first step toward disease control on a local and global scale. Medicinal plants have always been recognized as an alternate source of medicine due to the presence of secondary metabolites that confer activities like antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-hypertensive, antibacterial and antiviral and antiprotozoal activities. Medicinal plants have been linked to the discovery of natural bioactive substances capable of slowing disease development and inhibiting protozoal enzyme activity.

Keywords: *T. evansi*, Trypanosomiasis, Medicinal plants, Transmission, Control

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Introduction

Zoonotic illnesses, or zoonoses, are infectious diseases that may transmit from animals (vertebrates) to people. They may be caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses, fungus, or prions. Zoonotic ill water and transmitted by contact with diseased bodily fluids, animal bites, contaminated water, and eating sick meat. Bats, cattle, rats, birds, and other vertebrates can transport them. The symptoms of zoonotic infections differ based on the individual ailment. Some typical symptoms are fever, lethargy, headaches, body pains, rash, diarrhea, and vomiting (Qureshi et al., 2023).

Zoonoses have several mechanisms of transmission. Direct zoonosis occurs when a disease is transferred directly from non-humans to humans by media such as air (influenza) or bites and saliva (rabies). In contrast, transmission can occur through an intermediary species (known as a vector), which carries the disease pathogen without becoming ill (Warren & Sawyer, 2019).

Numerous pathogens can produce zoonoses. These include bacteria, parasites, viruses, fungus, and prions. Most zoonotic diseases are bacterial, parasitic, or viral. Other zoonoses include ringworm (a fungal illness) and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD, also known as "mad cow disease"), a kind of prion disease (Elsohaby and Villa, 2024). According to Rahman et al. (2024), zoonotic illnesses can spread by contact with diseased animals' bodily fluids, including blood, feces, saliva, tick, mosquito, and flea bites.

Trypanosomiasis – “Surra”

Trypanosomes are protozoan parasites that are members of the genus *Trypanosoma* and the family Trypanosomatidae. Many species of *Trypanosoma*, including *T. brucei*, *T. congolense*, *T. equiperdum*, *T. evansi*, *T. simiae*, *T. suis*, and *T. vivax*, produce trypanosomiasis, which are illnesses that affect a variety of animal hosts, including humans (Stevens & Brisse, 2004).

Trypanosomes are a broad group of parasitic hemoflagellates that cause trypanosomiasis, a disease that is prevalent in livestock species like sheep, goats, horses, camels, and cattle. In essence, the tsetse fly is the vector that spreads this disease, however other blood-sucking insects also occasionally do so. Depending on the species, these infections may be mechanically transmitted or go through complicated developmental stages in the dipteran vector, which is how these pathogens are often transmitted by hematophagous invertebrates (Peacock et al., 2011, Dyary et al., 2019).

T. evansi cause a chief parasitic sickness to recognize as “Surra”. Griffith Evans made the initial discovery of Surra in 1880 in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, and area of Dera Ismail Khan (Luckins et al., 2004). According to several studies (Tehseen et al., 2015; Hussain et al.,

2016; Tehseen *et al.*, 2017), it is a common ailment in Pakistani camels and horses. There have also been recent cases involving animals (Muhammad *et al.*, 2007; Shahid *et al.*, 2013). Prior reports of canine trypanosomiasis in the nation have also been made, but (Gadahi *et al.*, 2008; Rashid *et al.*, 2008) the identification of the etiology at a species level has been disregarded. Dogs are particularly vulnerable to surra, which can manifest fatal clinical symptoms. Direct microscopy of a peripheral blood smear along with an enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay, a card agglutination test, and polymerase chain reaction are some of the diagnostic methods (OIE, 2019; Asif *et al.*, 2020).

Worldwide Distribution

Trypanosomiasis is a widespread disease across all of Asia, Africa, and Central and South America (Table 1). It was first discovered in Southeast Asia almost a century ago (Luckins, 1988). Recent findings indicate that the illness is widespread in Peninsular Malaysia due to the high prevalence of the disease in cattle, buffalos, and other domesticated animals there (Chin, 2006; Adrian *et al.*, 2010).

Table 1: Prevalence of Surra caused by *Trypanosoma evansi* in different countries of the world.

Country	Prevalence (%)	References
Jordan	33	(Al-Rawashdeh <i>et al.</i> , 2000)
Sudan	33	(Jilo <i>et al.</i> , 2017)
Niger	29	(Pacholek <i>et al.</i> , 2001)
Kenya	28	(Njiru <i>et al.</i> , 2002)
Nigeria	27	(Enwezor <i>et al.</i> , 2005)
Mauritania	24	(Jilo <i>et al.</i> , 2017)
India	22	(Jilo <i>et al.</i> , 2017)
Ethiopia	21	(Zelege and Bekele, 2001)
Iran	10	(Zarif-Fard, 2001)
Chad	30	(Delafosse <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
Saudi Arabia	13.2	(Jilo <i>et al.</i> , 2017)
Pakistan	10	(Shah <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
Morocco	43.3	(Rami <i>et al.</i> , 2003)
Egypt	65.9	(El-Naga <i>et al.</i> , 2016)

A Causative agent - *Trypanosoma evansi*

T. evansi can only exist as the long, thin monomorphic trypomastigote type. From 15-36µm in length. *T. evansi*, *T. b. rhodesiense*, *T. b. brucei*, *T. b. gambiense* and *T. equiperdum* cannot be separated from one another, according to 18S rDNA of *Trypanosoma* phylogenetic analysis. This result supports that *T. evansi* diverged from *T. b. brucei* (Stevens & Brisse 2004). The distinct kinetoplast DNA of *T. evansi*, which exhibits a lack of minicircle sequencing heterogeneity, can be used to identify it from *T. b. brucei*. *T. evansi* may be divided into a pair of strain groups, which are a camel type and a typical type, based on the traits of kDNA (Saw *et al.*, 2010). A typical member of the genus, *T. evansi*, causes "Surra" illness in both domestic and wild animals (Dyary *et al.*, 2014). *Trypanosoma evansi*, the pathogenic trypanosome species with the widest geographic range, may infect both domestic and wild animals. With various degrees of virulence, *Trypanosoma evansi* infects both domestic animals (such as equines, camels, bovines, dogs, goats) and also wild animals. Equines are crucial to the agricultural economy in locations with inadequate infrastructure. The trypanosome species *T. evansi*, *T. vivax*, *T. congolense*, *T. brucei*, and *T. equiperdum* can all infect these animals. Due to the disease's devastating impact on the health of working horses, it has drawn a lot of thought and concern. While the condition is chronic in camels and causes gradual weakening and emaciation of the animals, it is acute and lethal in equines (Desquesnes *et al.*, 2013 a & b).

Transmission

The parasite begins its life in the fly's midgut before migrating to the salivary glands, where it waits to be injected into the mammalian host upon biting. The parasite bloodstream form, which may re-infect the fly vector after biting, resides in the blood (Roditi & Lehane 2008). *T. evansi* spread by biting flies from one infected host to another, particularly stable and horse flies (*Tabanus*). However, there are some situations when vectors may serve a specific purpose. *Tsetse flies* (*Glossina*), like other bloodsucking insects, are common in areas of Africa where *T. evansi* also thrives. North America is the only region where *Trypanosoma evansi* is not present. In South and Central America, vampire bats which act as both vectors and reservoir hosts, can spread *T. evansi* (Stevens & Brisse, 2004).

Clinical Signs in Domestic Animals

The health, productivity, and working efficiency of camels are severely impacted by blood-borne protozoan infections like trypanosomiasis in several camel-rearing countries of the world, including Pakistan. Several clinical symptoms, including pyrexia, infrequent shivering, in appetite, urticarial swelling, lethargy, deterioration of health, and pad edoema, were noted a small number of patients. The majority of domestic and wild animals exhibit anemia and fever as the initial clinical signs of surra, which includes oedema, cachexia, emaciation, and the lymph spleen/nodes enlargement. The impact of *T. evansi* on the host is contingent upon the host's species, the infectiousness of the trypanosome strains, and other variables such as coexisting diseases, overall host stress, and regional epizootiological conditions. Other clinical signs that have been seen in water buffalo and cattle include salivation, jaundice, diarrhea, fever, lacrimation, oedema, urticaria, conjunctivitis, dyspnea, nasal discharge, superficial lymph nodes swelling, alopecia, less milk yield, infertility or abortion, weakness, incoordination and paralysis (Riaz *et al.*, 2021).

Table 2: Medicinal plants involved in treatment of Trypanosomiasis.

Plants	Family	Country	References
<i>Acmellacaulirhiza</i> Del.	Asteraceae	Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Tridax procumbens</i>		Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Artemisia scoparia</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Artemisia maritima</i>		Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Bidens pilosa</i>		Kenya	(Ogoti et al., 2009)
<i>Inula grantioides</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Artemesia annua</i>		Kenya	(Ogoti et al., 2009)
<i>Tithonia diversifolia</i>		Nigeria	(Olukunle et al.,2010)
<i>Saussurea costus</i>		Egypt	(Okba et al., 2018)
<i>Echinops amplexicaulis</i>		Ethiopia	(Kitata et al., 2017)
<i>Commiphora wightii</i>	Bursuraceae	Egypt	(Okba et al., 2018)
<i>Maytenus parviflora</i>	Celasteraceae	Egypt	(Okba et al., 2018)
<i>Anogeissus leiocarpus</i>	Combretaceae	Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Terminalia avicennioides</i>		Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Terminalia superba</i>		Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Citrullus colocynthis</i>		Pakistan	(Mirani et al., 2014)
<i>Euphorbia poisonii</i>		Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Alchornea cordifolia</i>		India	(Guadani et al., 2010)
<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>		Nigeria	(Mgbemena et al., 2016)
<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>		Egypt	(El-Hawary et al., 2021)
<i>Euphorbia hirta</i>		Japan	(Saw et al., 2010)
<i>Euphorbia prostrata</i>	Euphorbiaceae	Pakistan	(Jamel & Ashfaq, 2016)
<i>Euphorbia caducifolia</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Acalypha wilkesiana</i>		Nigeria	(Olukunle et al.,2010)
<i>Acacia nilotica</i>		Nigeria	(Anyam et al., 2021; Goronyo et al., 2022)
<i>Acacia nilotica</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Acacia senegal</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Acacia jacquemontii</i>		Pakistan	(Jamel & Ashfaq, 2016)
<i>Acacia modesta</i>		Pakistan	(Jamel & Ashfaq, 2016)
<i>Prosopis africana</i>		Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Prosopis cineraria</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Prosopis juliflora</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Cassia sieberiana</i>		Africa	(Iwaka et al., 2022)
<i>Parkia biglobosa</i>		Africa	(Traoré et al., 2020)
<i>Parkia clappertoniana</i>		Nigeria	(Banwo et al., 2004)
<i>Detarium microcapum</i>		Africa	(Dassou et al., 2015)
<i>Acacia polyacantha</i> Wild.		Africa	(Noudèkè et al., 2017)
<i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i>		Africa	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Solanecio angulatus</i>		Tanzania	(El-Hawary et al., 2021)
<i>Piliostigma reticulatum</i>		Africa	(Dassou et al., 2015)
<i>Afrormosia laxiflora</i>		Nigeria	(Atawodi et al., 2003)
<i>Ocimum grattissimum</i>	Lamiaceae	Nigeria	(Olukunle et al.,2010)
<i>Khaya senegalensis</i>	Meliaceae	Nigeria	(Adeiza et al., 2009)
<i>Khaya senegalensis</i>		Africa	(Iwaka et al., 2022)
<i>Melia Azedarach</i>		Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Melia Azedarach</i>		UK, China	(El-Hawary et al., 2021)
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>		Nigeria	(Tauheed et al., 2022)
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>		Kenya	(Ogoti et al., 2009)
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>		Africa	(Iwaka et al., 2022)
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>		Pakistan	(Mirani et al., 2014)
<i>Azadirachta indica</i>		Japan	(Saw et al., 2010)
<i>Pseudocedrela kotschy</i>		Africa	(Nwodo et al., 2015)
<i>Khaya anthotheca</i>		Uganda	(Obboh et al., 2013)
<i>Toona ciliata</i>		Iran	(Nekoei et al., 2022)
<i>Zapoteca portoricensis</i>		Cameroon	(Kitata et al., 2017)
<i>Moringa oleifera</i>	Moringaceae	Nigeria	(Nwodo et al., 2015)

<i>Ranunculus multifidus</i> Forssk	Ranunculaceae	Ethiopia	(Seifu et al., 2018)
<i>Morinda morindiodes</i>	Rubiaceae	Nigeria	(Olukunle et al., 2010)
<i>Withaniasomnifera</i> (L.) Dunal	Solanaceae	Ethiopia	(Seifu et al., 2018)
<i>Nicotiana tabacum</i>		Ethiopia	(Kitata et al., 2017)
<i>Solanum dasyphyllum</i>		Ethiopia	(Odongo et al., 2018)
<i>Withania somnifera</i>		Pakistan	(Qasim et al., 2014)
<i>Salvadora oleoides</i>	Salvadoraceae	Pakistan	(Nisar et al., 2014)

Prevention and Control

Since there is no vaccination for trypanosomiasis due to the great antigenic variation displayed by this protozoan parasite, chemotherapy appears to be the sole means of treatment currently in use (Brun et al., 2010). The mainstay of trypanosomiasis management by the preventative or curative administration of trypanocidal drugs to animals.

i- Chemoprophylaxis

Currently, diminazene aceturate, suramin, isometamidium, homidium, and cymelarsan are the most often prescribed medications for treating *T. evansi* infections. The ability of quinapyramine to cause multiple drug resistance led to its discontinuation (Holmes et al., 2004). Currently, Diminazene (aromatic diamidine) is the preferred medication for treating trypanosomiasis in domestic animals which originates from Surfen C. Diminazene. Infections of *Babesia species*, *T. vivax* and *T. congolense* are very resistant to them, while infections of *T. evansi* and *T. b. brucei* are less resilient. But for quinapyramine, trypanosomes resistant to other medications are frequently vulnerable to diminazene (Holmes et al., 2004; Saw et al., 2010). Suramin is water soluble, and its solutions quickly deteriorate in the air. Although it works slowly in *in-vitro*, but exhibits strong clinical effectiveness against *T. b. rhodesiense* and *T. b. gambiense* (Suzuki et al., 2004).

For animal trypanosomiasis treatment in 1950s, quinapyramine (bis-quaternary chemical) was developed and *T. congolense*, *T. vivax* and *T. b. brucei* infections in cattle, sheep and goats have been effectively treated with it. *T. evansi*, *T. equinum* and *T. equiperdum* infections were also treated with Quinapyramine. In the 1970s, medicine was taken off the market in many regions of Africa due to the emergence of drug resistance. However, the medication has since been re-released on the market under two alternative names. Trypacide Pro-salt is advised for prophylaxis and Clinical instances should be treated subcutaneously with trypacide sulphate (Saw et al., 2010). The melaminyl thioarsenite group of chemicals, which was created in the 1940s, includes melarsenoxide cysteamine. The medication's primary ingredient is a white powder that is very soluble in water. Camels, cattle, horses, and buffaloes are the main species in which melarsenoxide cysteamine is most effective against *T. evansi* infections. Melarsenoxide cysteamine has been proven to be extra efficient against *T. equiperdum* and *T. evansi* than suramin, isometamidium, and diminazene (Saw et al., 2010).

Phenanthridinium derivatives include isoetamidium and homidium. Isoetamidium and homidium can be separated from each other by possessing an extra m-amidinophenyl-azo-amine moiety, which is really a component of the diminazene molecule. *T. congolense* and *T. vivax* are successfully eradicated by homidium and isometamidium. Infections caused by *T. b. brucei* and *T. evansi* in camels, horses, and donkeys can similarly be treated with isotamidium. Homidium was extensively used in the 1960s and 1970s, but its efficacy has been greatly reduced as a result of strong resistance (Saw et al., 2010). Research on novel compounds to cure surra, sleeping sickness, and nagana is crucial because of the negative side effects of currently available trypanocidal medicines or the spread of drug-resistant trypanosomes in vast regions. (Anene et al., 2001; Matovu et al., 2001; Kibona et al., 2006, Saw et al., 2010).

ii- Medicinal plants Involved in the Treatment of Trypanosomiasis

A range of important natural elements are thought to be abundant in existing plants and medicinal herbs. Since natural compounds are considered to be the ethically upstanding and plentiful source of bioactive molecules with anti-trypanosomal action, it is required to discover and evaluate a variety of natural products originating from numerous medicinal plants (Kayser et al., 2003; Abbas et al., 2025).

The three main basic sources of natural commodities are plants, sea life, and microorganisms. (Benarba & Pandiella, 2020; Bagherniya et al., 2021) (Table 2). Various anti-effects, including antioxidant, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, anti-diabetic, anti-ulcer, anti-tumor, anti-hypertensive, and antiviral qualities, were demonstrated by secondary metabolites derived from medicinal plants (Karthick & Akram, 2020).

T. evansi is the most common parasite in Asia, and it is resistant to a number of the current commercial treatments and therapies, including quinapyramine, diminazene, and suramin (Steverding, 2010; Dyary et al., 2014). As a result, more people are using various herbal medications and conventional treatments for trypanosomiasis. The utilization of natural products is the main potential source for such economic therapy. Almost 50% of all useful drugs have been derived from natural sources since ancient times. In many parts of the world plants were used in traditional medicine. To produce semi-synthetic and synthetic drugs with great safety and effectiveness against parasitic infections plant based substance have been used as lead compounds (Tagboto and Townson, 2001).

Conclusion

A significant zoonotic hazard is the parasite illness surra, which affects a wide variety of domestic animals. The possibility of human illnesses emphasizes the significance of all-encompassing approaches to disease prevention, vector management, and education. To lessen the disease's effects on animal and human populations, cooperation between veterinary and public health authorities is essential, as is research to comprehend the zoonotic components of surra. Recognizing and treating zoonotic illnesses like surra is crucial for the health of both people and the animals that coexist in our habitats as international contacts and travel grow. It is critical that the risk of human infection by animal trypanosomes, which could become a new zoonosis, be regarded seriously and given greater consideration. In order to reduce unintentional infection, livestock should also be handled carefully. Innovative drug development is required to treat trypanosomiasis.

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