



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Role of *Ficus carica* Leaf Extract in Modulation of the experimentally induced Hepatotoxic Damage in Male Rats

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History:

Received: 14 October 2015

Final Accepted: 25 November 2015

Published Online: December 2015

Key words:

Ficus carica- Hepatotoxic damage-
CCl₄- Oxidative stress markers-
Antioxidants-Hepatic enzymes-
Lipid profiles- Male rats

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Abstract

Background: Hepatic diseases remain problems throughout the world. Egypt has the highest country prevalence of hepatic C virus, there are no completely effective drugs that stimulate hepatic function and help to regenerate liver cells. Thus, it is necessary to obtain pharmaceutical alternatives for liver diseases. **The aim of this study** was to estimate the hepatoprotective activity of methanolic leaves extract of *Ficus carica* in a rat model of CCl₄-induced liver damage. **Animal grouping:** Adult male rats weighting 100-120g, were divided into five groups as the following (1) Control group. (2) Olive oil treated group (2.5ml/ kg bw) day after day for 8 weeks. (3) *Ficus carica* extract treated group (500mg/kg) orally by the same manner and duration. (4) Carbon tetrachloride intoxicated group (CCl₄): CCl₄ dissolved in olive oil (V/V) at a dose (2.5ml /kg body weight) orally by the same manner and duration. (5) *Ficus carica* extract administered orally before CCl₄-intoxication by the same dose, manner and duration.

Results: CCl₄-significantly altered serum and hepatic enzymes, total protein, albumin, globulin, oxidative stress markers and lipid profiles. The *Ficus* extract showed a notable amelioration in all biochemical alteration comparing with normal control rats. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded that supplementation of *Ficus* extract can exert a hepatoprotective effect in rat model of CCl₄-induced liver damage, which was attributed to the strong antioxidant power.

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INTRODUCTION

Hepatotoxicity is a main problem worldwide. Thus, it is necessary to obtain pharmaceutical alternatives for liver diseases. This study was conducted to explore the possible protective effect of methanolic leaves extract of *Ficus carica* on carbon tetrachloride (CCl₄)-induced hepatotoxicity, haemotoxicity and oxidative stress in experimental animal models. Hepatic fibrosis is a dynamic process caused by chronic liver injury, eventually leading to cirrhosis. It is predominantly characterized by excessive accumulation of extracellular matrix. Egypt is one of the countries suffering from hepatitis C virus (HCV) in the world, with an estimated 8–10 million among a population of 68 million having been exposed to the virus and 5–7 million active infections (Frank *et al.*, 2000). Carbon tetrachloride is one of the most widely used hepatic toxins for experimental induction of hepatic fibrosis and cirrhosis in experimental animals (Jiang *et al.*, 2004; Singab *et al.*, 2005). CCl₄ is frequently found as a byproduct in drinking water, which remains a potential health hazard to humans. Furthermore, most CCl₄ in food is residual contamination from fumigation as a pesticide (Weber *et al.*, 2003). CCl₄ prompted cirrhosis or fibrosis in experimental animals resembles cirrhosis of human in some features of morphology and pathophysiology. CCl₄ is widely used as a model compound to induce hepatotoxicity and elucidate its mechanisms of action following exposure to these compounds (Kim *et al.*, 2010).

There has been a great deal of interest recently in role of alternative and complementary medicines for the treatment of various acute and chronic diseases (seeff *et al.*, 2001).

Ficus carica Linn. has been used for metabolic, cardiovascular, respiratory, antispasmodic and anti-inflammatory disorders (Patil Vikas, *et al.*, 2010). It has high minerals, vitamins, dietary fibers and phenolic contents which play an important role in its antioxidant capacity (Veberic, *et al.*, 2008).

Analysis of antioxidants in fig revealed that it contains significant amounts of the antioxidant vitamins; vitamin A and vitamin C. Lattanzio, (2003) reported that besides antioxidant effects, phenolic compounds have a wide variety of biochemical properties and can also have a useful effect in preventing the development of ailment like cancer and cardiovascular diseases. There is linear correlation between the total content of phenolics and the antioxidant capacity (Cai *et al.*, 2004; kumaran and karunakaran, 2006).

The present work was mainly conducted to examine the effect of antioxidant and hepatoprotective activity of *Ficus carica* leaves methanolic extract against carbon tetrachloride induced hepatotoxic damage in male rats the biochemical parameters will be assayed to evaluate the protective effect of *Ficus carica* leaves extract.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Materials

1.1. Chemicals:

Carbon tetrachloride (CCl₄) from BDH Laboratory supplies Poole, BH15 1TD England; Methyl Alcohol (pure reagent analysis) was obtained from El-Nasr Pharmaceutical Chemicals Company, Olive Oil.

1.2. Animals and experimental protocol:

Adult male rats, eight weeks old weighing 100-120 g, were kept under normal condition. They were housed in stainless cages with air-conditioned temperature (22-25°C). The animals received standard chow diet and water *ad libitum*. After 2 weeks of acclimatization, rats were divided into five groups each comprising of ten animals. Animal were treated agreeing with "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" prepared by the National Academy of Sciences and published by the US National Institutes of Health (1985).

1.2.1. Animal grouping:

- i. **Control group:** Animals did not receive any treatment.
- ii. **Olive oil treated group:** Animals were orally received (2.5ml /kg body weight) day after day for 8 weeks.
- iii. ***Ficus carica* extract treated group:** Animals were received *Ficus carica* leaf methanolic extract at dose (500mg/kg) orally day after day for 8 weeks (Mohan *et al.*, 2007).
- iv. **Carbon tetrachloride intoxicated group(CCl₄):**Animals were received CCl₄ dissolved in olive oil (V/V) at a dose (2.5ml /kg body wt) orally day after day for 8 weeks(Fischer-Nielsen *et al.*, 1991).
- v. ***Ficus Carica* extract+ CCl₄intoxicatedgroup:** Animals were received CCl₄ dissolved in olive oil (V/V) at a dose (2.5ml /kg body wt) orally day after day for 8 weeks that previously administered *Ficus carica* leaf methanolic extract at dose (500mg/kg) orally (Mohan *et al.* , 2007).

1.2.2. Plant Extract:

Leaves of *Ficus carica* were dried in shadow at room temperature for 15 days. The dry materials were ground in electric grinder. Dried leaf powder (200 g) was extracted with methanol by maceration in absolute methanol with stirring. After ten days the extract was filtered and concentration. After ten days the sample was filtered with filter paper. The filtrate was then transferred and concentrated which gave a greenish oily crude methanol extract of 16.6 g (Trease and Evan 1983).

2. Methods

2.1. Sampling:

At the end of the experimental period (8 weeks), overnight fasted rats were sacrificed using a sharp razor blade. Two blood samples from each rat were collected into clean centrifuge tube; the first was collected on EDTA for hematological studies, while the second was allowed to clot, then centrifuge at 3000r.p.m for 20 min for biochemical analysis. Blood sera were carefully separated and were kept at - 20°C for subsequent analysis future estimations. The rats were sacrificed 24 h after the last treatment and the liver of each rat was removed and weighed then frozen for biochemical analysis.

2.2. Preparation of Liver homogenate:

A tissue sample from a known portion of the liver was accurately weighed and homogenized in distilled water to form 10 % (w/v) homogenate, after labeling the samples, there were kept at -20°C.

2.3. Biochemical studies:

Liver index calculate by divide liver weight and body weight then multiply 100 Liver body weight ratio = liver weight / body weight \times 100.

AST , ALT , ALP, γ -GT and LDH activities in serum and liver were estimated according to the method **Reitman and Frankel, (1957)**, **Belfield and Goldberg (1971)**, **Persijn and van der Silk (1976)**, and **Koh and Choi (1987)** , respectively.

T.Bil , T.P , Alb , T.Chol and TG were estimated by a colorimetric method of **Walter and Gerade (1970)** , **Henry (1964)**, **Doumas et al. (1971)**, **Kim and Goldner (1969)** , **Fassati and prencipe (1982)** respectively . The concentration of **(HDL-C)** in serum was estimated by the method of **(Grove, 1979)**, **(LDL-C)** in serum was calculated from the total cholesterol concentration (TC), the HDL-cholesterol concentration (HDL-c) and triglycerides concentration (TG) according to the method described by **Friedewald et al., (1972)**. Serum very low-density lipoprotein **(VLDL-C)** level was calculated according to the following equation: $VLDL-C = TG/5$, as described by **Satheesh and Pari (2008)** Where, 5 is a calculation factor.

MDA, TAC, GSH, GSH-PX, SOD and CAT were estimated by methods of **Ohkawa et al., (1982)**, **Koracevic et al. (2001)**, **Beutler et al., (1963)**, **Paglia and Valentine (1967)**, **Nishikimiet al. (1972)**, and **Aebi (1984)**; **Fossatiet al. (1980)**, respectively.

2.4. Haematological studies:

Hematological parameters including the count of red blood corpuscles (RBCs), white blood cells (WBCs), haemoglobin (Hb) content, platelets count and haematocrit percent were conducted using hematological analyzer (Sysnex Ts-21) Japan (**Dacie and Lewis, 1999**).

2.5. Statistical analysis

Results were expressed as means \pm SE. Statistical significance was calculated using one- way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by post comparison was carried out with LSD test and tukey test using SPSS program (Statistical Package for Social Science). All the statistical analysis was carried out with the use of SPSS 17.00 software. Differences were considered significant at $P \leq 0.05$ (**Sendecor and Cochran, 1980**).

Results

Table (1): Body weight, liver weight and liver index of control and different treated animal groups:

Animal groups	Control	Olive Oil	Ficus. Ext	CCl ₄	Ficus Ext. + CCl ₄
Initial body weight (g)	110.33 \pm 4.04	120.50 \pm 2.07 (9.21 %)*	109.33 \pm 5.36 (-0.91%)*	112.6 \pm 3.71 (2.11%)*	119.17 \pm 4.91 (8.01%)* (5.8%)**
Final body weight (g)	237 \pm 10.43	194.58 \pm 2.70 (-17.9%)*	203 \pm 7.72 (-14.38%)*	155.5 ^a \pm 5.50 (-34.41%)*	175 ^a \pm 4.85 (-26.19%)* (+12.54%)**
Weight gain (g)	126.75 \pm 10.311	74.08 \pm 3.09 (-41.55)*	93.6 \pm 10.61 (-26.10)*	42.83 ^a \pm 5.89 (-66.21%)*	55.83 ^{a,b} \pm 4.46 (-55.9%)* (+30.35%)**
Liver weight (g)	5.66 \pm 0.16	5.88 \pm 0.37 (+3.82%)*	5.85 \pm 0.19 (+3.24%)*	8.11 \pm 0.43 (+43.24%)*	6.2 \pm 0.26 (+10.88)* (-22.59)**
Liver index(g)	2.42 \pm 0.14	3.04 \pm 0.22 (+25.66%)*	2.89 \pm 0.06 (+19.52%)*	5.29 ^a \pm 0.44 (+118.90%)*	3.61 ^{a,b} \pm 0.20 (+49.24%)* (-31.82%)**

Values are presented as means \pm SE. (n=6 rats per each group).

$P < 0.05$, a = significance as compared with control, b = significance as compared with CCl₄ group.

Table (1) illustrate body weights, liver weight and liver index (liver / body weight ratio) in the control and different treated animal groups. Data showed significant decrease in body weight of CCl₄ –intoxicated rat group and significant increase in liver weight as well as, liver index as compared with the control group. On the other hand, a significant decrease in liver weight and liver index was observed in Ficus extract administered as a protective agent for CCl₄-intoxication group, compared with the CCl₄-intoxicated group but, a significant increase in liver weight and liver index was detected when compared with control group.

Table (2): Serum and hepatic biochemical parameters in the control and different treated animal groups.

Parameters	Animal Groups				
	Control	Olive oil	Ficus. Ext	CCl ₄	Ficus.Ext+CCl ₄
S.ALT (U/L)	10.50±0.43	9.83 ±0.31	10.00 ±0.45	32.83 ^a ±2.82	19.50 ^{ab} ±0.41
S.AST (U/L)	19.50±0.99	18.33±0.99	18.67±1.05	58.67 ^a ±5.19	31.00 ^{ab} ±1.29
S.ALP (IU/L)	113.80±9.24	123.40±8.92	136.00±6.55	197.20 ^a ±8.76	166.80 ^{ab} ±10.59
S.LDH (U/L)	217.69±14.52	219.62 ±10.01	228.27±53.27	390.39 ^a ±34.43	262.74 ^{a,b} ±23.88
S. γ GT (U/L)	13.17 ±1.32	13.40 ±1.38	12.47 ±0.69	26.64 ^a ±0.69	18.55 ^b ±1.55
S .total Bilirubin (mg/dl)	0.53 ±0.03	0.49 ±0.06	0.47 ±0.05	0.71 ^a ±0.05	0.56 ^b ±0.04
S .total Protein (g/dl)	6.12 ±0.09	5.97 ±0.10	6.40 ±0.06	3.38 ^a ±0.17	5.95 ^b ±0.04
S .total Albumin(g/dl)	4.03 ±0.08	3.97 ±0.06	4.07 ±0.06	1.68 ^a ±0.13	3.92 ^b ±0.05
S .total Globulin (g/dl)	2.08 ±0.05	2.00 ±0.04	2.17 ±0.16	1.70 ^a ±0.18	2.03 ^b ±0.02
A/G ratio	1.94 ±0.06	1.99 ±0.02	1.95 ±0.21	1.08 ^a ±0.18	1.93 ^b ±0.04
H.ALT (U/g)	58.17±2.09	51.50±2.57	56±2.19	101.67±6.92	77.80±3.56
H.AST (U/g)	82.17±1.40	60.17 ±2.08	62.20 ±2.24	119.50±8.85	85.50 ^{ab} ±2.69
H. total protein (g/g wet tissue)	4.97 ±0.34	4.87 ±0.11	4.93 ±0.24	4.12 ^a ±0.16	4.75 ±0.22

Values are presented as means ±SE. (n=6 rats per each group).

P<0.05, a = significance as compared with control b = significance as compared with CCl₄ group.

Data on liver function were observed in table (2): Serum levels of ALT, AST, ALP, γ-GT, were significantly increased in CCl₄-intoxicated animal group compared to the control animals. Similar results were obtained in protein, albumin, globulin contents as well as liver -body weight ratio. Liver tissue levels of transaminases was significantly increased in animal treated with CCl₄ compared to the control rats. On the other hand, oral administration of Ficus extract (500mg /kg) for 8 weeks as a protective agent notably diminished CCl₄-induced damage that observed significant reducing levels of all the investigated parameters. The extract also restored protein, albumin and globulin levels compared to the normal rats.

Table (3): Hematological parameters in the control and different treated animal groups

Parameters	Animal Groups				
	Control	Olive oil	Ficus. Ext	CCl ₄	Ficus.Ext+CCl ₄
RBCS (10 ⁶ /mm ³)	5.61±0.95	6.80±0.29	6.11±0.50	2.17 ^a ±0.82	5.91 ^b ±0.94
WBCS (10 ³ /mm ³)	5.56±0.98	7.01±0.78	6.36±0.65	9.16 ^a ±1.12	8.27±1.48
Platelets count (10 ³ /mm ³)	718.60±52.72	570.53±64.33	605.60±60.90	403.20 ^a ±50.21	565.60 ^{a,b} ±43.44
Hb content (g/dl)	12.34±0.40	11.68±0.54	13.06±0.25	10.36 ^a ±0.28	11.42 ^b ±0.77

Values are presented as means \pm SE. (n=6 rats per each group). $P < 0.05$,
a = significance as compared with control, b = significance as compared with CCl_4 group.

The effect of CCl_4 -intoxication and the protective effect of *Ficus carica* leaves extracts on hematological parameters of the rats are showed in table (3): There was a significant reduction in Hb concentration, RBCs, platelets count, while WBCs, was higher in the rats that were exposed to CCl_4 without pretreatment with *Ficus* extracts where compared to the normal control group. However there was a moderate increase in these parameters in the rats that were pretreated with the extract except WBCs count that observed a significant decrease in number.

Table (4): Lipid profile in control and different treated animal groups.

Parameters	Animal Groups				
	Control	Olive oil	Ficus. Ext	CCl_4	Ficus.Ext+ CCl_4
S Total Cholesterol(mg/dl)	107.00 \pm 2.39	107.33 \pm 2.60	102.50 \pm 2.00	120.50 ^a \pm 1.88	112.00 ^b \pm 1.24
S. Triglycerides(mg/dl)	85.33 \pm 2.54	86.50 \pm 2.26	85.17 \pm 2.80	105.67 ^a \pm 3.27	97.17 ^{ab} \pm 3.44
S.HDL- Cholesterol (mg/dl)	35.50 \pm 1.39	33.67 \pm 0.95	34.00 \pm 1.73	24.33 ^a \pm 1.63	31.00 ^{a,b} \pm 0.77
S.LDL-Cholesterol (mg/dl)	54.43 \pm 2.95	56.37 \pm 1.83	53.13 \pm 1.65	75.03 ^a \pm 3.04	61.57 ^{ab} \pm 2.27
S.VLDL-Cholesterol(mg/dl)	17.07 \pm 0.51	17.30 \pm 0.45	17.03 \pm 0.56	21.13 ^a \pm 0.65	19.43 ^{ab} \pm 0.69
H. Total Cholesterol(mg/g)	100.67 \pm 3.90	107.17 \pm 3.87	105.60 \pm 3.41	115.92 ^a \pm 3.77	108.00 ^b \pm 2.57
H. Triglycerides(mg/g)	287.83 \pm 13.94	273.17 \pm 16.35	286.83 \pm 7.87	332.67 \pm 17.18	288.67 \pm 6.32

Values are presented as means \pm SE. (n=6 rats per each group). $P < 0.05$, a = significance as compared with control, b = significance as compared with CCl_4 group. Table (4): showed the effect of *Ficus* extract on lipid profile in control and different treated animal groups. CCl_4 -intoxicated group showed a significant elevation in level of hepatic total cholesterol and triglycerides. *Ficus* supplementation resulted in a significant decrease compared to normal control rats. On the other hand, serum total cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL cholesterol, showed significant increase in CCl_4 -intoxicated rats but S. HDL cholesterol observed increase in the same group. The administration of *Ficus* extract as a protective agent against CCl_4 -induced group restored the levels of these parameters.

Table (5): Malondialdehyde (MDA) levels and Antioxidant parameters in control and different treated animal groups

Parameters	Animal Groups				
	Control	Olive oil	Ficus. Ext	CCl_4	Ficus.Ext+ CCl_4
MDA(n mol/g Tissue)	931.23 \pm 203.65	1057.95 \pm 193.93	622.91 \pm 67.26	2591.28 ^a \pm 329.13	1887.11 ^{ab} \pm 294.27
Total antioxidant capacity(m M/g)	1.49 \pm 0.00	1.46 \pm 0.01	1.59 ^a \pm 0.07	1.14 ^a \pm 0.10	1.48 \pm 0.01
GSH (mg/g tissue)	156.20 \pm 8.33	165.09 \pm 7.99	263.18 \pm 9.07	83.99 ^a \pm 9.30	125.07 ^{ab} \pm 13.58
GPX (U/g tissue)	833.28 \pm 14.47	851.24 \pm 13.53	869.14 \pm 10.55	680.21 ^a \pm 15.10	743.70 ^{ab} \pm 27.30
Catalase (U/g tissue)	130.00 \pm 13.42	115.17 \pm 11.55	160.00 \pm 5.16	73.33 ^a \pm 8.43	126.67 ^b \pm 15.20
SOD (U/g tissue)	188.33 \pm 13.52	181.83 \pm 17.51	208.67 \pm 22.28	100.50 ^a \pm 19.29	160.00 ^{a,b} \pm 7.30

Values are presented as means \pm SE. (n=6 rats per each group). $P < 0.05$,
a = significance as compared with control, b = significance as compared with CCl_4 group.

Table (5): showed the effect of *Ficus* leaves methanolic extract on oxidative stress marker and antioxidants in control and different treated animal groups. Among the CCl₄-intoxicated group a significant increase in MDA levels in liver suggest enhanced lipid peroxidation leading to tissue damage as well as decreasing the antioxidants. On the other hand, supplementation of Ficus extract resulted in significant decrease in the level of hepatic MDA, where as it resulted in higher GSH, GPX, CAT and SOD levels in the liver compared to the normal control group.

DISCUSSION

Herbal medicine is progressively achievement acceptance from the public and medical professionals due to advances in the understanding of the mechanisms by which herbs positively influence health and quality of life (Panda and Naik, 2009). The pathogenesis of liver diseases as well as the role of oxidative stress and inflammation there is well recognized (Tacke, et al., 2009), and consequently, blocking or retarding the chain reactions of oxidation and inflammation development could be promising therapeutic strategies for prevention and treatment of liver damage.

Hepatoprotective results showed that plants have active ingredients that are capable of free radical scavenging in living system (Nikolova et al., 2011; Kumar, 2012). Phenolic compound are promising bioactive secondary metabolites playing an important role in detoxification of free radicals (Shanmugas undaram et al., 2006; Chon et al., 2008).

Antioxidative action plays an important role in protection against CCl₄- induced liver injury (Xiong et al., 1998). There is increasing evidence for the hepatoprotective role of hydroxyl- and polyhydroxy organic compounds, particularly from vegetables, fruits and herbs (Bass, 1999).

Rats intoxicated with CCl₄ developed a significant liver damage and showed elevated serum levels of hepato-specific enzymes as well as severe alteration in other biochemical parameters, oxidative damage and histological changes. Values of the biochemical parameters were observed to be increased in the CCl₄ intoxicated rats. Liver damage induced by CCl₄ is commonly used model for the screening of hepatoprotective drugs (Slater, 1965). CCl₄ is known to undergo reductive metabolism by CYP2E1 into a highly reactive trichloromethyl radical (.CCl₃) that initiates lipid peroxidation, disrupts membrane integrity and causes cell death (Pohl et al., 1984; Fadhel and Amran, 2002; Basu, 2003). Literature shows that oxidative stress has been implicated in the aetiopathogenesis of CCl₄ organ injury and carcinogenesis (Slater, 1984; Stal and Olston, 2000). However, when the oxidative stress is overwhelming, the various inherent defense mechanisms (such as the antioxidant defense mechanisms, intracellular concentration of glutathione, superoxide dismutase (SOD) and catalase (CAT) activities become significantly impaired and insufficient (Szymonik-Lesiuk et al., 2003).

In the present experimental conditions, the methanolic leaves extract of *Ficus carica*, administered prophylactically at a dose 500mg/kg b.w for 8 wks. It was found to be practically non-toxic since no mortality was observed, the Ficus extract exhibited significant protection against CCl₄-induced liver injury as manifested by the reduction in toxin mediated rise in serum transaminases, ALP and total bilirubin in rats.

Liver/body weight ratio:

The results of the present study showed that CCl₄ caused an increase in liver weight and a decrease in body weight. So it is clear that, the weights ratios (LW/BW) significantly increased in rats treated with CCl₄, also it could be noticed that the toxicity of CCl₄ is related to loss in weight and increase in liver weight in rats. These results go in parallel with Honma (1990) who observed that liver to body weight ratio and liver weight were raised with increase doses of CCl₄, furthermore the liver enlargement appeared to be a sensitive marker of hepatotoxicity related to the changes in lipoproteins. Also, the increase in body weight after drug administration usually indicate to absence of toxicity, but decrease in body weight is an index of toxic effect of a compound or drug (Kiran et al., 2012). On the other hand weights ratios (LW/BW) reversed significantly in rats treated with ficus extract prior the CCl₄-intoxication. These results are agreed with Raj Kapoor et al. (2002) who Found that the liver was pale reddish brown and enlarged in CCl₄-intoxicated rats and normal in other groups, Also Chronic administration of CCl₄ caused a significant increase in relative liver weight this may be related to liver triglycerides accumulation as reported by Ohta et al. (1997).

Hematological parameters:

In the present study, oral administration of CCl₄ greatly affected all hematological parameters, as decrease in RBCs count, Hb content, and platelets count, these data go in parallel with the results observed by (Mandal et al., 1998). The depression in RBCs count and Hb content recorded in the present work could be attributed to disturbed hematopoiesis, destruction of erythrocytes, and reduction in the rate of their formation and/or their enhanced

removal from circulation (**Tung et al., 1975**). Moreover, administration of CCl₄ induced macrocytic, hypochromic anemia as CCl₄ caused a significant increase lipid peroxidation, degradation of membrane proteins, alteration of membrane-bound enzymes as well as erythrocyte osmotic fragility (**Makni et al., 2012**). The destruction of red cells may be supposed that the free radicals resulting from CCl₄ metabolism caused liver injury resulting in free radicals liberation from the liver into the blood (**Sherlock and Dooley, 1993**).

The protective effect of *Ficus* extract administered as protective agent for CCl₄ intoxicated group may be due to its role to decrease the production of reactive oxygen species (**Perez-Garcia et al., 2000**), the oxidation of low-density, lipid peroxidation and protein oxidation (**Jimenez-Escrig et al., 2003**). However, *Ficus* elevated the number of these parameters compared with CCl₄ intoxication group including the platelets which suggest that the extract has anti-anemic property which may be due to its high iron content (**Saliu, et al., 2012**) and the ability to improve bone marrow functions, a major site for erythropoiesis (**Orhue, et al., 2008**).

The present results showed that CCl₄-intoxicated rats significantly increase the level of WBC as compared to normal. Our findings are in agreement with that reported by **Sule et al. 2012** and **Elshater et al 2013**, who found that the administration of CCl₄ to rats led to significant decrease of RBC counts and Hb level and significant increase of WBC counts in respect to normal control. Also, the abnormal hematologic parameters caused by CCl₄ were decreased by *Ficus* extract administered as protective agent for CCl₄ intoxicated group may be due to the role of flavanoids one of its active components, are known to be vasculo-protector and powerful antioxidant (**Sule et al., 2012**), as well as the flavanoids probability did so by reducing the accumulation of toxic CCl₄ derived metabolites (**Mada et al., 2014**). Blood parameters were found to be positively affected by using *ficus extract* as a therapeutic agent.

In the present study, it was found that CCl₄-intoxication for 8 weeks has a significant effect on the alteration of liver function, since the activities of serum and hepatic AST, ALT and ALP were significantly increase than those of normal value. These views are in agreement with those of **Zhao et al. (2002)**, **Wang et al. (2009)**, **Motawi et al. (2011)** they observed high activities of AST & ALT and ALP after CCl₄-intoxication. Leakage of large quantities of enzymes into the blood stream is often associated with massive fibrosis of the liver (**Shymal et al., 2006**). Higher level of marker enzymes notice that CCl₄ induced liver dysfunction and denotes damage to the hepatic cells (**Pari and Murgavel, 2004** and **Ohta et al., 2005**). This elevation in serum hepatic enzymes indicated deterioration in hepatic function due to parenchymal injury after CCl₄ intoxication. Elevation may be explained by the basis of increase in hepatic cell membrane fluidity and permeability that lead to enzymes release into circulation (**El-Hawary et al., 2011**). The rise in serum levels of AST, ALT, ALP and LDH has been attributed to the damaged structural integrity of the liver, because they are cytoplasmic in location and released into circulation after cellular damages (**Sallie, et al., 1991**).

Lactate dehydrogenase is a well-known marker for cell toxicity. When cells are damaged due to oxidative stress, the membrane becomes permeable or may rupture which results in the leakage of this enzyme. This enzyme enters into the blood stream thus increasing its concentration in the serum (**Ganie, et al., 2011**). In the present study, LDH leakage is significantly increased in the serum of rats exposed to CCl₄. *Ficus carica* extract administration to significantly decreased LDH level in serum compared to rats treated with CCl₄ alone. Further, the results of our study showed that coadministration of *Ficus carica* extract diminished CCl₄-induced oxidative stress by increasing antioxidant status. In addition, our result indicated that *Ficus carica* extract administration significantly alleviated the increased serum enzymes induced by CCl₄ indicating improvement of the functional status of the liver. Also, *Ficus carica* leaves highly antioxidative characters, which reduce the leakage of these enzymes in blood, this might be due to accelerated regeneration of parenchymal cells that help to prevent membrane fragility and subsequently decrease the leakage of marker enzymes into circulation.

The present results demonstrated also that there was a significant decrease in the serum and hepatic total protein content after CCl₄-intoxication for 8 weeks as compared to control group. This result agrees with the result of **Ohta et al. (1999)** who reported that the concentration of serum albumin and hepatic protein synthesis decrease post treatment with CCl₄ for 8 weeks. Similarly, impairment of protein synthesis in CCl₄-intoxicated rats was reported by other investigators (**Lamb et al., 1984** and **Pappas et al., 1994**). It was thought that the inhibition of protein synthesis may be involved in cell injury or death mediated by free radicals (**Halliwall and Gutteridge, 1984**). CCl₄ intoxication leads to damage of Golgi apparatus damage this in turn adversely affects packaging and release of protein from the hepatocytes. In the present study, co administration of *Ficus* extract with CCl₄ protected the intoxicated animals against hepatotoxic effect of CCl₄ as proved by a significant elevation in serum and liver total protein as well as serum albumin contents when compared to rats intoxicated with CCl₄.

Albumin synthesis is extremely sensitive to CCl₄ probably secondary to the alterations in the cytoplasmic protein-synthesizing system (**Rui et al., 2012**). The liver loss its ability to synthesize albumin, as albumin is

produced on a polysome bound to the endoplasmic reticulum (**Kaneko, 2008**). The significant depression of serum albumin levels due to CCl₄ intoxication was possibly associated with the apparent dissociation of albumin protein into smaller subunits (**Folmar et al., 1993**).

The present study demonstrated a significant elevation in oxidative stress markers causing in a cell, tissue, or organ damage can affect a specific molecule such as proteins, lipids and DNA. In the current study, rats that treated with CCl₄ showed a significant increase in malondialdehyde (MDA), the end product of lipid peroxidation levels in liver. Consistent evidences supported the hypothesis that progressive accumulation of oxidative damage to the important cellular molecules is a fundamental mechanism involved in most cellular alterations.

The present results also run in parallel with the findings of **Fruehauf and Meyskens (2007)** who reported that MDA appears at significant higher concentrations in the liver and alters antioxidant levels. According to the present data, hepatic GSH content as well as GST activity were significantly decreased by CCl₄-intoxication. These results run in parallel with that of **Cabre et al. (2000)** they reported that induction of cirrhosis by using CCl₄ produces a decrease in the components of hepatic glutathione antioxidant system. Generation of reactive oxygen species via LPO is one of the mechanisms involved in tissue damage. The detoxication pathway involves GSH depletion by conjugation with trichloromethyl-free radicals (**Biosset et al., 2004**). Previous studies was mentioned that mechanism of CCl₄-induced hepatotoxicity have shown that GSH plays a key role in eliminating the reactive toxic metabolites of CCl₄. Liver fibrosis commences when the GSH stores are substantially depleted and this depletion of mitochondrial GSH is a crucial determinant for cell survival or death in oxidative stress conditions (**Hidaka et al., 2007**).

This decrease might be due to the increased utilization of the hepatocytes in scavenging toxic radical of CCl₄. It has been reported that most covalent binding of toxicant to hepatic protein occurs only after depletion of GSH, and the severity of hepatic necrosis was related to the degree of covalent binding (**Jollow et al., 1973**).

In addition the antioxidant activity and/or the inhibition of free radical generation is one of the important steps in terms of protecting the liver from CCl₄-induced damage (**Borek, 2001 and Manibusan et al., 2007**). Generally, antioxidant enzymes such as catalase, SOD and GST were easily inactivated by lipid peroxides or reactive oxygen species, as observed in decreased activities of these enzymes in CCl₄ toxicity. Free radicals in CCl₄ intoxication are a major pathway of non-enzymatically induced lipid peroxidation, which subsequently affect various enzyme activities in the body and therefore may also be linked to enzymatically induced lipid peroxidation (**Basu, 2003**).

Administration of Ficus extract inhibited LPO as an effective chain breaking antioxidant and helped in preventing CCl₄ -induced peroxidative damage. Also, the present results indicated that the treatment with Ficus extract cause an increase in the activity of antioxidant enzymes.

On the other hand, the present data showed that Ficus extract administered as a protective agent for CCl₄ -intoxication, prior to CCl₄ exposure for 8 weeks caused a significant protection observed by reduction in MDA when compared with the high significant elevation of these in CCl₄intoxicated rats. The rise in lipid peroxides in liver tissue homogenate was prevented significantly. The decrease in lipid peroxides may be due to the antioxidant effect of the extract. A possible mechanism of the *Ficus carica* extract as hepatoprotective may be due to its antioxidant effect or inhibition of cytochrome P450s which impair the bioactivation of CCl₄ (**Recknagel et al., 1989**) into their corresponding reactive species.

The hepatoprotective expected mechanism of the effect of *Ficus carica* leaf, against CCl₄-induced liver damage, is the ability of its flavonol glycoside content to act as strong free radical scavengers intercepting those radicals involved in CCl₄ metabolism by microsomal enzymes. Consequently, the flavonol glycosides of *Ficus* extract could hinder the free radical interaction with polyunsaturated fatty acids and would abolish the enhancement of the lipid peroxidative process leading to hepatic cell damage. The present results agree with reported data (**Hewawasam et al., 2004; Orhan et al., 2007**).

In order to verify this finding the antioxidant activity of *Ficus* extract Leaves was determined the significant amelioration in the antioxidant parameters might result in the hepatoprotective action of flavonol glycosides against oxidative stress induced by CCl₄. Consequently, the flavonol glycosides content of *F. carica* leaf are responsible for the abolishment of CCl₄-induced hepatic damage through their strong antioxidant activity. Also, **Pukkumani et al., (2004)** reported that ferulic acid (FA) is an efficient hepatoprotective agent against alcohol and heated polyunsaturated fatty acid-induced liver damage. **El-Shobaki et al., (2010)** reported that ferulic acid a most

abundant natural phenolic compound in *Ficus carica* leaves. Ferulic acid is an effective scavenger of free radicals exerts its protective effect by modulating lipid peroxidation and augmenting antioxidant defense system in tissues (Sudheer *et al.*, 2007).

Serum level of γ -GT has been employed for the measurement of hepatic damage. Elevation of γ -GT level might occur due to CCl_4 induced physiological imbalance in liver. These results run in parallel with the study of Lee, (2004), who reported that, increased γ -GT activity may be a response to oxidative stress, one which can increase the transport of glutathione precursors into cell. In the present experiment, *Ficus* extract inhibited the level of γ -GT activity confirming the preventing CCl_4 induced peroxidative damage. Also, the present results indicated that the treatment with *Ficus* extract cause an increase in the activity of antioxidant enzymes.

The results of the present study showed that administration of CCl_4 to the normal rats induced a significant disturbance in the various lipid components. These findings are in agreement with the observation of Dwived *et al.* (1990) who reported that CCl_4 causes a significant increase in the hepatic lipids. The inhibition of protein synthesis and nucleic acid hypomethylation after CCl_4 exposure may play a role in the impairment of lipid components (Weber *et al.*, 2003). According to the present results, significant increase in serum total cholesterol was accompanied with accumulation of total cholesterol in the liver. This observation may be due to the oxidative modification of LDL which is the major carrier of cholesterol in the blood (Aviram, 1996).

On the other hand, the present data showed also a significant decrease in the serum triglycerides after CCl_4 -exposure for 8 weeks. These results run in parallel with Ohta *et al.*, (2000) who reported that rats injected with CCl_4 -show a decrease in serum (TG) concentration. Since, CCl_4 is metabolized in liver to yield highly reactive trichloromethyl peroxy radical which can react with phospholipids of hepatocyte membrane therefore, a chain of extensive intrahepatic destructive peroxidation reactions is initiated (Yamamoto, 1990 and Weber *et al.*, 2003). Moreover, the present data showed that, CCl_4 -intoxication causes a significant decrease in HDL associated cholesterol (HDL-cholesterol), while, a significant increase in low-density lipoprotein (LDL-cholesterol) is observed. This might be supported with the findings of Bauer *et al.* (1990) and Gergely *et al.* (1995) who found an increase in very low density lipoprotein cholesterol concentration and decrease in high-density lipoprotein cholesterol concentration after hepatocellular damage using a nonlethal dose of CCl_4 . This may be attributed to the covalent binding of CCl_4 metabolites, CCl_3^\bullet and $\text{CCl}_3\text{OO}^\bullet$, to cell constituents. In addition, the inhibition of phospholipids (Weber *et al.*, 2003) as well as increased activities of AST and ALT (Honma, 1990) played a role in the disturbances of lipoprotein secretion. In the present experimental conditions, the methanolic extract of *Ficus carica* leaves, administered prophylactically, exhibited significant amelioration of lipid profile.

In this respect Asadi *et al.*, (2006) reported that the extract of *Ficus carica* leaves, could be used to decrease hepatic Triglycerides content and secretion of Triglycerides and Cholesterol from the liver. Also, Lee *et al.*, (2004) indicated that Cinnamic acid related flavanoids are present in *Ficus carica* leaves. A series of Cinnamic acid derivatives possess useful biological activity as an antiatherosclerotic agent. Many study showed that total phenolics were important antioxidants in *Ficus carica* extract. Moreover, these findings supported the beneficial effect of *Ficus carica* in maintaining the hepatocytes integrity and function. It is conceivable that these effects may be due, at least in part, to its antioxidant activity. The antioxidant enzyme (SOD, CAT, and GPx) activities were increased by *Ficus* extract in liver tissues when compared with those administered with CCl_4 only. In another study, Patil *et al* (2011) also found that *Ficus carica* extract possess anti-inflammatory effects. In another study, *Ficus carica* fruit ethanolic extract was also shown to have anti-inflammatory effects (Patil *et al.*, 2011 Koka, *et al.*, 2013).

In conclusion, CCl_4 - intoxication developed liver damage and showed an elevated serum levels of hepato-specific enzymes which lead to severe alteration in biochemical parameters and oxidative stress markers. In the present experimental conditions, the *Ficus* extract of administered prophylactically, exhibited significant protection against liver injury as evidenced by remarkable amelioration in all investigated parameter of serum and liver. Presence of flavonoids, triterpenoids and steroids has protective effect on liver due to its antioxidant properties. *Ficus* extract may be responsible for the protective effect on CCl_4 induced liver damage in rats. Pre-treatment of the animals with *Ficus* extract improve the deleterious effect that previously produced with experimental liver damage and indicate to their potential role in improving the quality of life of hepatic patients.

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