



Pharmacological effects of purple basil extract on isolated mouse bladder functions and underlying molecular mechanisms

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Academic editor: Oleg Gudyrev ♦ Received 01 June 2024 ♦ Accepted 21 October 2024 ♦ Published 30 December 2024

Citation: Beyza NA, Naciye YD (2024) Pharmacological effects of purple basil extract on isolated mouse bladder functions and underlying molecular mechanisms. *Research Results in Pharmacology* 10(4): 113–124. <https://doi.org/10.18413/rrpharmacology.10.507>

Abstract

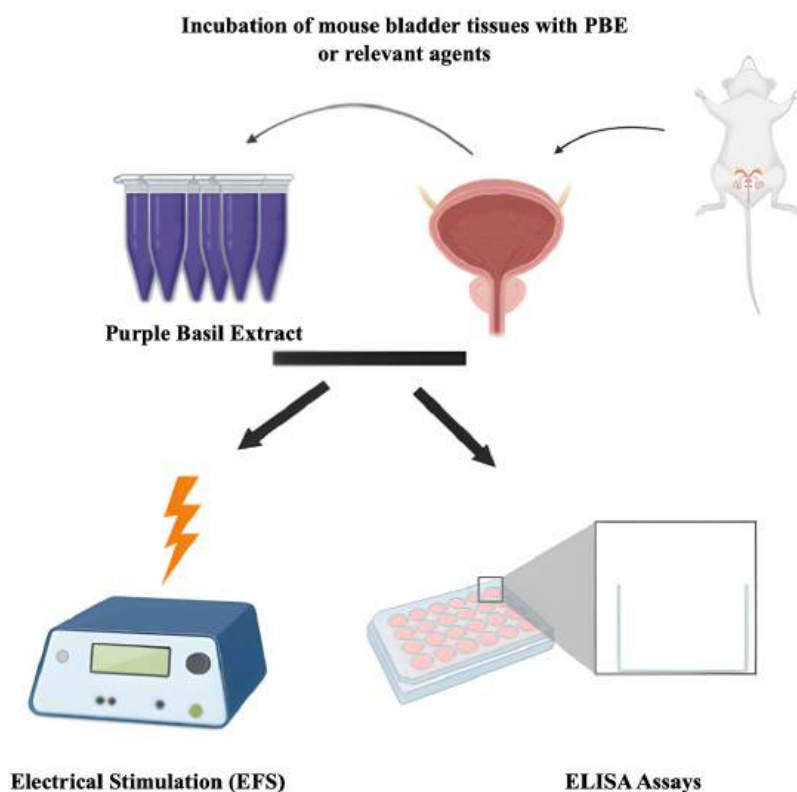
Introduction: In this study, the pharmacological effects of purple basil (*Ocimum basilicum* var. *purpurascens*) extract (PBE) in isolated mouse bladder strips were investigated. The effects of PBE on contractile responses induced by electrical field stimulation (EFS) in bladder strips and the molecular mechanisms involved in these effects were investigated. Anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects of PBE in isolated tissues were investigated.

Materials and Methods: PBE was prepared. Mice were sacrificed under [ketamine-xylazine](#) anesthesia, bladder tissues were isolated. The isolated bladder tissues were cut into strips and suspended in an organ bath. The bladder strips were then incubated with the relevant agents, the contractile responses were examined by applying EFS. Then, COX and SOD enzyme levels in bladder strips incubated with the relevant agents were determined by ELISA method.

Results: EFS-induced contractions were statistically significantly inhibited by PBE. [Atropine](#), [N \$\omega\$ -nitro-L-arginine](#), [Tetraethylammonium](#) similarly caused a significant increase in EFS-induced contraction responses compared to control. PBE reversed these effects of the respective agents in a statistically significant manner. In contrast, [verapamil](#) significantly decreased the contractile responses of the respective tissues compared to the control, whereas PBE potentiated this inhibitory effect of [verapamil](#). PBE significantly increased COX and SOD enzyme levels compared to the control group.

Conclusion: The experimental findings suggest that PBE has an inhibitory effect on contractile responses and that cholinergic and nitrergic pathways, potassium channel activation and calcium channel inhibition play a role in this inhibitory effect. It also suggests that PBE has antioxidant but not anti-inflammatory effects at the administered concentrations.

Graphical abstract



Keywords

antioxidant, bladder, EFS, purple basil extract, relaxation

Introduction

The use of plants as healing agents predates human history and is the origin of most forms of treatment in modern medicine. Many traditional medicines are plant-based; for example **aspirin** (willow bark), **digoxin** (foxglove), **quinine** (Cinchona bark) and **morphine** (poppy) (Vickers and Zollman 1999). Furthermore, although the use of synthetic drugs in treatment is widespread, there is an increasing interest in herbal treatment and the underlying mechanisms of their pharmacological effects.

Medicinal plants used for treatment have many therapeutic effects. For example; basil has anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antimicrobial, immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory effects due to its important pharmacophore groups such as flavonoids, anthocyanins. For this reason, it is recognized as an important medicinal plant in herbal therapy (Güez et al. 2017).

Basil (*Ocimum basilicum* L.), is an important essential oil crop, medicinal plant and culinary herb, belongs to the Lamiaceae family (Saha et al. 2016; Aldarkazali et al.

2019). Basil species have been used for many years in the food industry and also for therapeutic purposes (Gurav et al. 2022). For example, sweet basil is mostly used in the food sector (Simon et al. 1990), while purple basil is mostly used for medical treatment (Le Claire et al. 2005; Park et al. 2008; Petersen et al. 2009).

Purple basil (*Ocimum basilicum* L. var. *purpurascens*) is a good source for phenylpropanoid metabolites, secondary metabolites, mainly including anthocyanins, caffeic acid, chichoric acid and rosmarinic acid (Gang et al. 2001; Allan et al. 2008; Kiferle et al. 2011; Bertoli et al. 2013; Flanigan and Niemeyer 2014). Since secondary metabolites play a key role against oxidative damage and various environmental stress factors (La Camera et al. 2004), plants rich in secondary metabolites are considered to have various pharmacological effects such as antioxidant, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory activities (Zheng and Wang 2001; Javanmardi et al. 2002; Shan et al. 2005; Lee and Scagel 2009).

Although some pharmacological effects of purple basil have been investigated, scientific studies investigating its effects on muscle functions are not

sufficient. And also, there is no study investigating the effects of purple basil on bladder smooth muscle functions. So in the present study, we aimed to investigate the effects of purple basil on mouse bladder functions and the underlying molecular mechanisms.

Materials and Methods

Animals

Swiss albino mice (Male, 10-12 weeks, weighing 25-30 gr) were used in all experiments. Mice were kept at room temperature, on a 12-hour light-dark cycle, with ad libitum access to water and food. Mice were bred at Çukurova University Health Sciences Experimental Application and Research Center.

This study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by Çukurova University Animal Experiments Local Ethics Committee (20.01.2022/Meeting number: 1/Decision number: 4).

Mice were anesthetized by intraperitoneal injection of *ketamine* (200 mg/kg) and *xylazine* (10 mg/kg) and sacrificed by cervical dislocation.

Experimental groups

Swiss albino mice were used for studies with the MP35 data acquisition system. Mice were divided into 6 groups, the number of mice in each group was between 5-11 (n=5-11). 10 ml Krebs-Henseleit solution was added to the organ baths. Isolated bladder tissues were then suspended in the organ baths. In each experimental group, 400 µl PBE and 60% ethanol (the final concentration of 60% ethanol and PBE in the bath medium is 40µl/ml for all the experimental groups) was added to the organ bath and incubated for 40 min. The experimental groups were as follows:

Group 1: Extract Control Group (Half of the bladder was used for control work and the other half for Purple Basil work).

Group 2: Negative Control (NC) Group (400 µl of 60% ethanol was applied to one half of the bladder and 400 µl of PBE to the other half and incubated for 40 min).

Group 3: Tetraethylammonium (TEA) Group (One half of the bladder was treated with 400 µl PBE only, the other half with 400 µl PBE+50µM TEA and incubated for 40 min).

Group 4: Verapamil Group (Only 400 µl PBE was applied to one half of the bladder and 400 µl PBE+50 µM verapamil was applied to the other half and incubated for 40 min).

Group 5: N ω -Nitro-L-arginine (L-NOARG) Group (One half of the bladder was treated with 400µl PBE only, the other half with 400 µl PBE+50 µM L-NOARG and incubated for 40 min).

Group 6: Atropine Group (Only 400 µl PBE was applied to one half of the bladder and 400 µl PBE+50 µM atropine was applied to the other half and incubated for 40 min).

Reagents and chemicals

Ketasol 10% (Richter pharmaag); Xylazinbio 2% (Bioveta); Tetraethylammonium chloride (TEA), (\pm)-Verapamil hydrochloride, Atropine sulfate salt, N ω -Nitro-L-arginine (L-NOARG), RIPA buffer, Phenylmethylsulfonyl fluoride (PMSF), Sodium orthovanadate (Sigma-Aldrich); Protease inhibitor

cocktail (Thermo Scientific) were purchased from commercial sources. The dried purple basil plant used in our experiments was obtained from a reliable herbalist where medicinal and aromatic plants are sold and where specialists trained in this field work.

Preparation of purple basil extract

The method of obtaining purple basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) extract (PBE) was prepared with the support of the literature (Bunwijit et al. 2017; Baković et al. 2023; Mansour et al. 2023). To prepare PBE, dried purple basil leaves were crushed into fine powder. Weighed 5g of this powder mixture. 100ml of 60% ethanol was added and mixed well. It was left to macerate in a cool, dry and sun-free place for a total of 3 days, stirring once a day. At the end of 72 hours, the solution was boiled in boiled water in a glass flask over low heat for 20 min. After boiling, 1ml of extract was added to 1.5ml eppendorfs. The eppendorfs were tightly sealed with parafilm and stored at -20°C until use.

Content analysis of purple basil extract by headspace solid phase microextraction gas chromatography mass spectrometry (HS-SPME-GC-MS)

Volatile component analysis was determined by Agilent Brand 7890B GC, 7010B MS system. By Solid Phase Microextraction (SPME) method, 3mL of sample was placed in a 20mL vial and kept at 60°C for 15 minutes, then the volatile components were adsorbed for 30 minutes with a 50/30µm Divinylbenzene/Carboxene/Carboxene/Polydimethylsiloxane (DVB/CAR/PDMS, 1cm) coated fiber in a Solid Phase Microextraction (SPME) apparatus. Then DB-Wax (60m x 0.25mm i.d. x 0.25µm, Jamp; WScientific-Folsom, USA) was desorbed and injected into the capillary column for 5 min. The injection temperature was 250°C, the column temperature was increased by 3°C per minute to 90°C after 4 min at 40°C, then by 4°C per minute to 130°C, and after 4 min at this temperature, the temperature was increased by 5°C per minute to 240°C and kept at this temperature for 8 min. He was used as the carrier gas. The electron energy is 70 eV and the mass range is 30-600 m/z. The split ratio is 1:10.

Qualitative studies: evaluation of smooth muscle contractions in isolated mouse bladder strips

Smooth muscle function of the bladder was evaluated using the MP35 data acquisition system. After the mice were euthanized by cervical dislocation under anesthesia, bladder tissues were isolated by abdominal incision. The isolated tissues were then striped and suspended longitudinally under 0.5g tonus in organ baths containing fresh Krebs-Henseleit solution (NaCl 118 mM; KCl 4.7 mM; MgSO₄ 1.2 mM; NaHCO₃ 25 mM; KH₂PO₄ 1.2 mM; CaCl₂ 2.5 mM; and C₆H₁₂O₆.H₂O 12.7 mM; pH 7.4) gassed with 95% O₂+5% CO₂. The experimental findings were recorded using a computerized recording system with a computerized isometric force transducer (Force Displacement Transducer, May, FDT 0.5). For EFS application, bladder tissues were placed between two platinum electrodes and connected to the stimulator (Grass S88 Stimulator). Stimulator parameters; Delay: 1 ms, Duration: 1 ms, Voltage: 40 V, Rate: 5, 10, 20 Hz. The function of the stimulator was set to "Repeat". Frequencies (5, 10, 20 Hz) were applied for 1 min at

10 min intervals. Then, after a 40 min incubation period, the first application was repeated (Control group). In the test 9 groups, after washing after the first application, the experiment was repeated as in the control group in the presence of purple basil extract (PBE, 40 μ l/ml; control group) or PBE (40 μ l/ml)+chemical agent (50 μ M atropine, L-NOARG, TEA or verapamil).

Quantitative studies: ELISA assays

Isolated mouse bladder tissues were incubated with 40 μ l/ml PBE for 40 min and stored at -20°C until used in Enzyme-Linked ImmunoSorbent Assay (ELISA) experiments. ELISA method was used to determine enzyme levels in mouse tissues using SOD and COX kits. ELISA experiments were performed according to kit protocols.

Statistical analysis

To evaluate the experimental results we used GraphPad Prism (5.1) statistical programs for analysis of experimental data [Analysis of Variance (ANOVA; Post hoc: Bonferroni) or Student's t test] was used. $P < 0.05$ values were considered statistically significant.

Results

HS-SPME-GC-MS analysis of PBE revealed the ratios and retention times of the constituents. Among the components, the highest percentage belonged to linalool (54.154%), while tau-cadinol (11.667%) and alpha-terpineol (4.708%) were the other high percentage components (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. HS-SPME-GC-MS analysis of the composition of PBE

No	Compound Names	RT (min)	Score (%)	Area (%)
1	Eucalyptol	19.99745	97.3	3.196
2	Fenchyl acetate	31.56745	94.6	1.168
3	Benzaldehyde	33.09617	89.49	1.969
4	(+)-2-Bornanone	33.46147	94.49	2.243
5	Linalool	34.47755	96.77	54.154
6	Bornyl acetate	36.5496	93.22	1.629
7	5-Isopropyl-2-methylbicyclo[3.1.0]hexan-2-ol	37.24028	79.82	1.662
8	Bicyclo[4.2.0]octa-1,3,5-trien-7-ol	38.7076	71.41	0.911
9	Cyclohexanemethanol-alpha-alpha-dimethyl-4-methylene	39.88328	89.57	0.588
10	alpha-Terpineol	40.80607	94.88	4.708
11	(+)-Sativin	42.0413	80.24	0.617
12	Cadina-1(10)-4-diene	43.52088	91.12	1.045
13	gamma-Muurolene	43.68972	93.82	0.719
14	2,7-dimethyl-2,6-Octadien-1-ol	45.45876	88.89	0.864
15	Butylated Hydroxytoluene	47.6005	93.61	0.979
16	2-Propenoic acid-3-phenyl-methyl ester	48.49992	86.06	0.624
17	Caryophyllene oxide	50.11679	92.14	0.779
18	Epicubenol	51.72613	82.53	3.490
19	(+)-Spathulenol	53.0921	96.22	1.760
20	Eugenol	53.50035	96.99	3.558
21	tau-Cadinol	54.1419	97.25	11.667
22	Carvacrol	54.3716	92.35	1.119
23	alpha-Methyl-beta-[2-thiosulfatoethyl]aminopropiophenone	60.60739	69.66	0.553

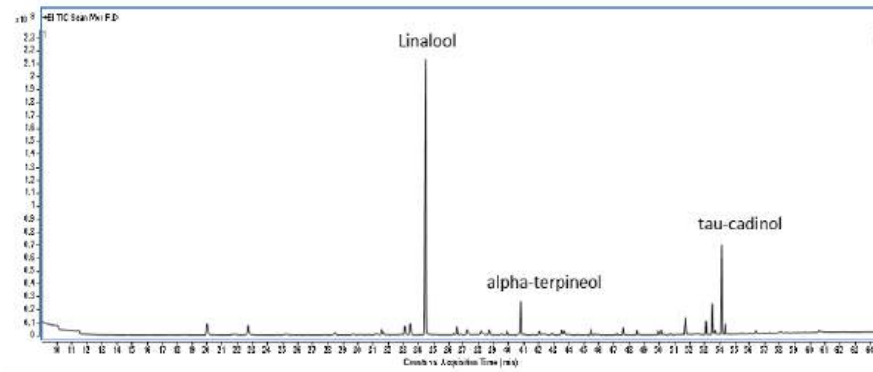


Figure 1. HS-SPME-GC-MS chromatograms showing peaks and retention time.

Discussion

In our study, PBE inhibited EFS-induced contractions. We investigated the molecular mechanisms involved in this inhibition and the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects of the related herbal extract in isolated mouse bladder.

Atropine, a nonselective antagonist of cholinergic muscarinic receptors, significantly increased EFS-induced isolated mouse bladder smooth muscle

contractile responses at all frequency ranges of EFS. PBE significantly decreased the contractile responses of EFS at all frequency ranges. In the **atropine**+PBE combination, PBE reversed the potentializing effects of **atropine** and produced a statistically significant decrease in contractile responses compared to the **atropine** group (Table 2, Figure 2A-a,b,c,d). These experimental results suggest that cholinergic muscarinic receptors are involved in the inhibitory effect of PBE on isolated mouse bladder smooth muscle contractions.

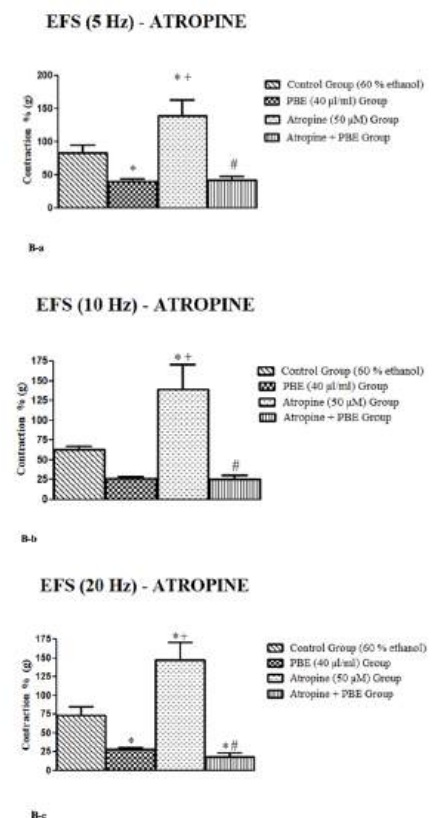
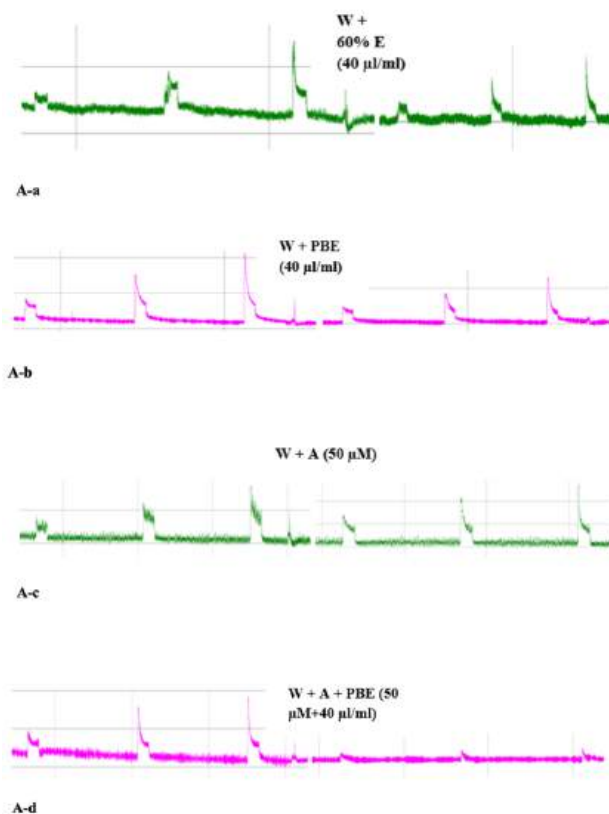


Figure 2A-2B. Effects of 60% ethanol, PBE, **atropine** and **atropine**+PBE on contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips. **Figure 2A.)** Traces of contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips, **Figure 2A-a)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with 60% ethanol incubation, **Figure 2A-b)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with PBE incubation, **Figure 2A-c)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with **atropine** incubation, **Figure 2A-d)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with **atropine**+PBE incubation. **Figure 2B.)** Effect of **atropine** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder (n=5-11), **Figure 2B-a)** Effect of **atropine** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 5 Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 2B-b)** Effect of **atropine** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 10Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 2B-c)** Effect of **atropine** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 20Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder. W:Washing, E:ethanol, PBE:Purple Basil Extract, A:**atropine**.

In the present study, **atropine** potentiated the contractile responses induced by EFS in the relevant tissues in the frequency dependent manner. We also observed that PBE reversed the **atropine** responses and inhibited the EFS-induced contractions in a statistically significant manner. The inhibitory effect of PBE was more pronounced at higher frequencies of EFS (Table 2, Figure 2B-a,b,c). These experimental results suggest that a greater involvement of the cholinergic pathway in

EFS-induced contractile responses at higher EFS frequencies. The findings of a study by Tong et al. (1997) support our hypothesis. In the related study, the authors reported that the cholinergic pathway plays a role in EFS-induced contractile responses in isolated rat bladder and that the role of the cholinergic pathway increased at high frequencies (Tong et al. 1997). Similarly, the another study made by Iguchi et al. (2021) also support our hypothesis.

Table 2. Statistical analysis data of experimental findings between groups (*Significance of other groups compared to the control group, +Significance of other groups compared to the group given PBE, #Significance of other groups compared to the group given **atropine/L-NOARG/TEA/verapamil**)

Groups	Control Group (60% ethanol) *	PBE (40 µl/ml) +	Atropine (50 µM) #	L-NOARG (50 µM) #	TEA (50 µM) #	Verapamil (50 µM) #
PBE (40 µl/ml)	P<0.05; 5 Hz P<0.05; 20 Hz					
Atropine (50 µM)	P<0.05; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.05; 20 Hz	P<0.001; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.001; 20 Hz				
Atropine+PBE	P<0.05; 20 Hz		P<0.001; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.001; 20 Hz			
PBE (40 µl/ml)	P<0.05; 5 Hz P<0.01; 10 Hz P<0.01; 20 Hz					
L-NOARG (50 µM)	P<0.01; 10 Hz	P<0.001; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.001; 20 Hz				
L-NOARG+PBE	P<0.05; 5 Hz P<0.01; 10 Hz P<0.01; 20 Hz			P<0.01; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.01; 20 Hz		
PBE (40 µl/ml)	P<0.05; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.05; 20 Hz					
TEA (50 µM)	P<0.05; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz	P<0.001; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.001; 20 Hz				
TEA+PBE	P<0.05; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.05; 20 Hz				P<0.001; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.001; 20 Hz	
PBE (40 µl/ml)	P<0.01; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.01; 20 Hz					
Verapamil (50 µM)	P<0.01; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.01; 20 Hz					
Verapamil+PBE	P<0.01; 5 Hz P<0.001; 10 Hz P<0.01; 20 Hz	P<0.001; 10 Hz				
PBE (400 µl) COX-2	P=0.0353; 400 µl					
PBE (800 µl) COX-2	P<0.0001; 800 µl					
PBE (400 µl) SOD1	P=0.0144; 400 µl					
PBE (800 µl) SOD1	P=0.0016; 800 µl					

All of the cholinergic muscarinic receptor subtypes (M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5) are present in the bladder. Although M2 receptors are more abundant, M3 receptors are more important in the related tissue for contractile function (Levin et al. 1988; Andersson and Wein 2004; Canda et al. 2006). M2, M4 receptors inhibit adenylacyclase via Gi (inhibitory G protein) protein (Caulfield and Birdsall 1998). M1, M3 and M5 receptors activate phospholipase C by interacting with Gq/11 proteins. Thus, they increase intracellular calcium level by inducing inositol phosphate cycle and mediate bladder contraction (Canda et al. 2006).

In our study, the reason why *atropine* potentiated EFS contractile responses in the relevant tissues may have been due to the blockade of inhibitory M2, M4 receptors by *atropine*. Here, since M2 receptors are muscarinic type receptors that are abundant in the bladder and mediate relaxation responses, potentialization of *atropine*-induced contraction responses is expected by blocking these receptors with *atropine*. In our study, the reason for the reversal of *atropine* responses by PBE in the related tissue, may be its greater affinity for muscarinic receptors and its competition with *atropine* to activate Gi-mediated muscarinic receptors (M2, M4) or inhibit Gq/11-mediated muscarinic receptors (M1, M3, M5). Furthermore, PBE

may have inhibited the effect of *atropine* through another mechanism. In our literature search, we did not find any other study investigating this effect of PBE. Further studies are needed to elucidate the molecular mechanism(s) underlying the interaction of PBE with *atropine* in the relevant tissue.

In our study, PBE significantly inhibited isolated mouse bladder smooth muscle contractions induced by EFS. In contrast, *L-NOARG* (50µM), an inhibitor of NO synthase, potentiated EFS contractions. Moreover, PBE inhibited the effect of *L-NOARG* in a statistically significant manner (Table 2, Figure 3A-a,b,c,d). These experimental findings suggest that the nitric oxide pathway is involved in the inhibitory effect of PBE on the EFS contractions. In a study conducted by Blanco-Rivero et al. (2021), N(gamma)-nitro-L-arginine methyl ester (*L-NAME*), an NO synthase inhibitor, potentiated EFS induced contractile responses in isolated rat superior mesenteric artery rings. The finding that inhibition of the nitric oxide system by *L-NAME* in the related tissue enhances the contractile responses of EFS (Blanco-Rivero et al. 2021). This study supports our experimental data that *L-NOARG* potentiated the EFS-induced contractions. Here, the reversal of the *L-NOARG* effect by PBE suggests that PBE increases nitric oxide synthesis by inhibiting the *L-NOARG* effect (Figure 3B-a,b,c).

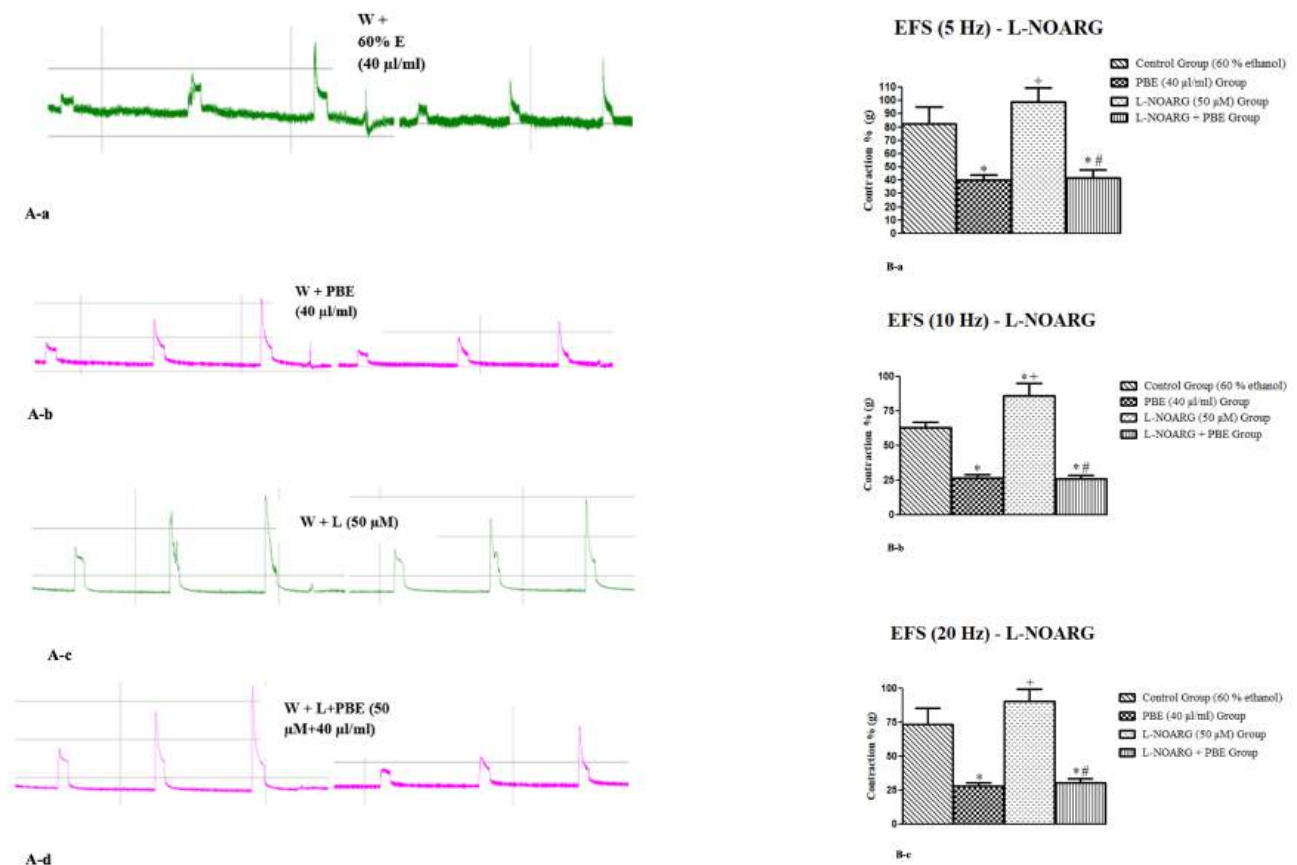


Figure 3A-3B. Effects of 60% ethanol, PBE, *L-NOARG* and *L-NOARG*+PBE on contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips. **Figure 3A.)** Traces of contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips, **Figure 3A-a)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with 60% ethanol incubation, **Figure 3A-b)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with PBE incubation, **Figure 3A-c)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with *L-NOARG* incubation, **Figure 3A-d)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with *L-NOARG*+PBE incubation. **Figure 3B.)** Effect of *L-NOARG* incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder (n=5-11), **Figure 3B-a)** Effect of *L-NOARG* incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 5Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 3B-b)** Effect of *L-NOARG* incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 10Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 3B-c)** Effect of *L-NOARG* incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 20Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder. W:Washing, E:ethanol, PBE:Purple Basil Extract, L:*L-NOARG*.

Tetraethylammonium (TEA), a nonselective blocker of potassium channels (Weatherall et al. 2010; Zhang et al. 2012), was used to investigate the role of potassium channels. **TEA** significantly increased EFS contractions compared to the control. In the combination of **TEA+PBE**, PBE inhibited the effect of **TEA** in a statistically significant manner (Table 2, Figure 4A-a,b,c,d and Figure 4B-a,b,c). These results suggest that

potassium channel activation plays a role in the inhibitory effect of PBE on EFS-induced contractile responses in the relevant tissues. Holt et al. (1985) applied electrical stimulation (10 Hz, 2 ms and 8 V) to isolated mouse bladder strips in a study. The researchers reported that isolated bladder voltage responses increased in a **TEA** concentration dependent manner (Holt et al. 1985). The results of this study support our findings.

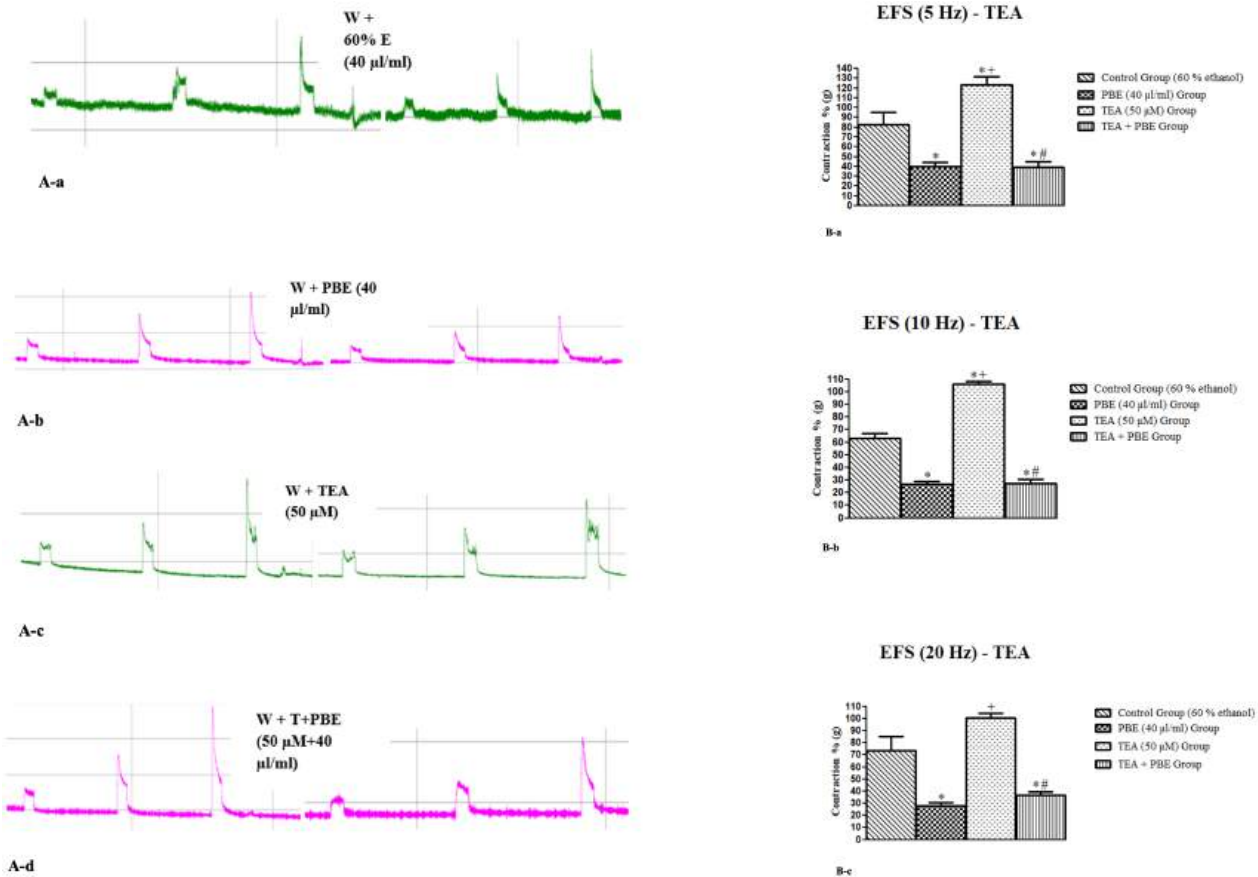


Figure 4A-4B. Effects of 60% ethanol, PBE, **TEA** and **TEA+PBE** on contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips. **Figure 4A.)** Traces of contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips, **Figure 4A-a)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with 60% ethanol incubation, **Figure 4A-b)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with PBE incubation, **Figure 4A-c)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with **TEA** incubation, **Figure 4A-d)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with **TEA+PBE** incubation. **Figure 4B.)** Effect of **TEA** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder (n=5-11), **Figure 4B-a)** Effect of **TEA** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 5Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 4B-b)** Effect of **TEA** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 10Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 4B-c)** Effect of **TEA** incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 20Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder. W:Washing, E:ethanol, PBE:Purple Basil Extract, **TEA**:Tetraethylammonium.

To investigate the role of L-type calcium channels, the L-type calcium channel blocker **verapamil** (50 µM) was used. **Verapamil** caused a statistically significant decrease in EFS-induced contractile responses in isolated mouse bladder strips compared to the control. In the combination of **verapamil+PBE**, PBE was observed to potentiate the inhibitory effect of **verapamil** (Table 2, Figure 5A-a,b,c,d and Figure 5B-a,b,c). This experimental result suggests a role for calcium channel in the inhibitory effect of PBE on EFS-induced contractile responses in the relevant tissues. In a study by Han et al. (2018) support our

hypothesis. In that study the authors examined the contractile responses by applying EFS to bladder strips after inducing a diabetes model in rats. **Verapamil** incubation reduced the contractile responses to EFS application in both normal and diabetic rat bladder smooth muscle (Han et al. 2018).

In our experimental studies to investigate the anti-inflammatory effects of PBE, we observed that PBE increased COX enzyme levels at the concentrations used (40 and 80 µl/ml) compared to the control group and this increment was statistically significant (Table 2 and Figure 6A-a,b).

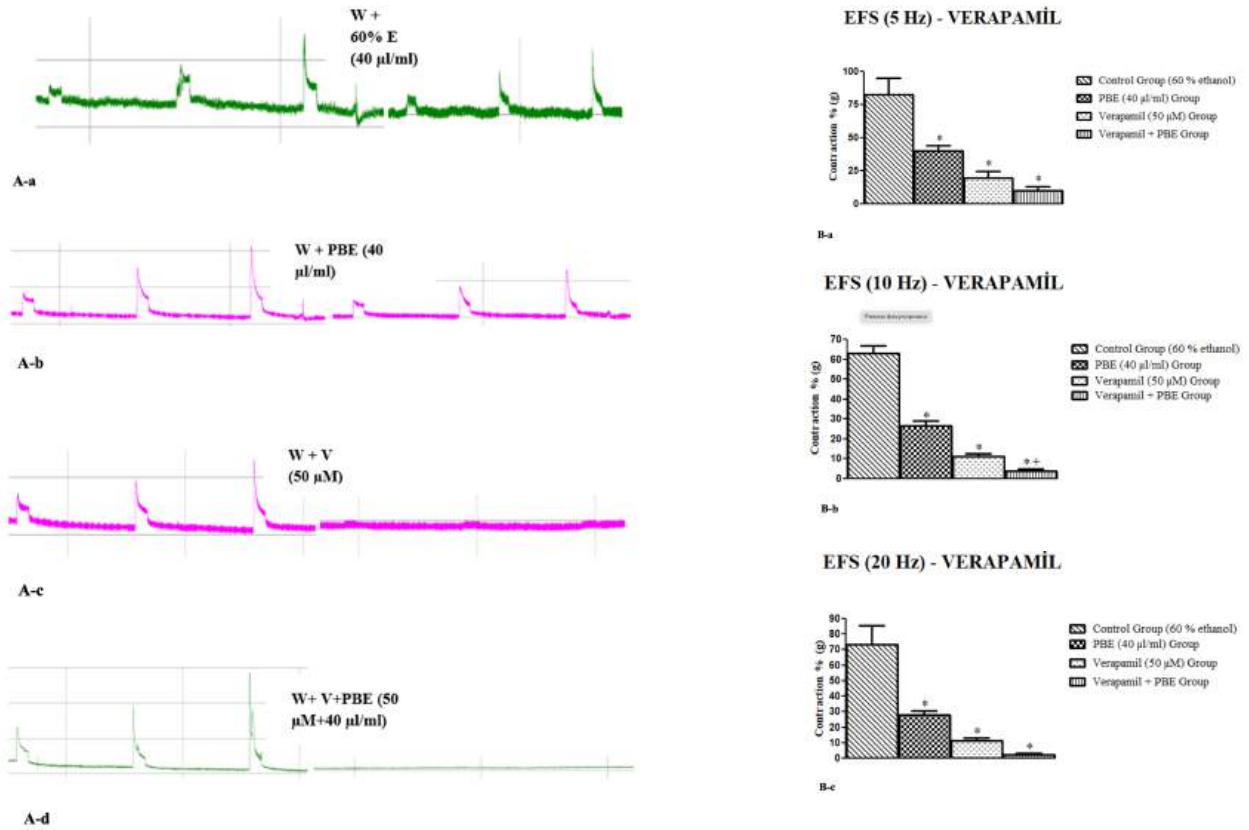


Figure 5A-5B. Effects of 60% ethanol, PBE, verapamil and verapamil+PBE on contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips. **Figure 5A.)** Traces of contraction responses induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder strips, **Figure 5A-a)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with 60% ethanol incubation, **Figure 5A-b)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with PBE incubation, **Figure 5A-c)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with verapamil incubation, **Figure 5A-d)** Contractile responses of isolated mouse bladder strips to EFS at frequencies of 5-10-20Hz with verapamil+PBE incubation. **Figure 5B.)** Effect of verapamil incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by EFS in isolated mouse bladder (n=5-11), **Figure 5B-a)** Effect of verapamil incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 5Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 5B-b)** Effect of verapamil incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 10Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder, **Figure 5B-c)** Effect of verapamil incubation on smooth muscle contractions induced by 20Hz EFS in isolated mouse bladder. W:Washing, E:ethanol, PBE:Purple Basil Extract, V:verapamil.

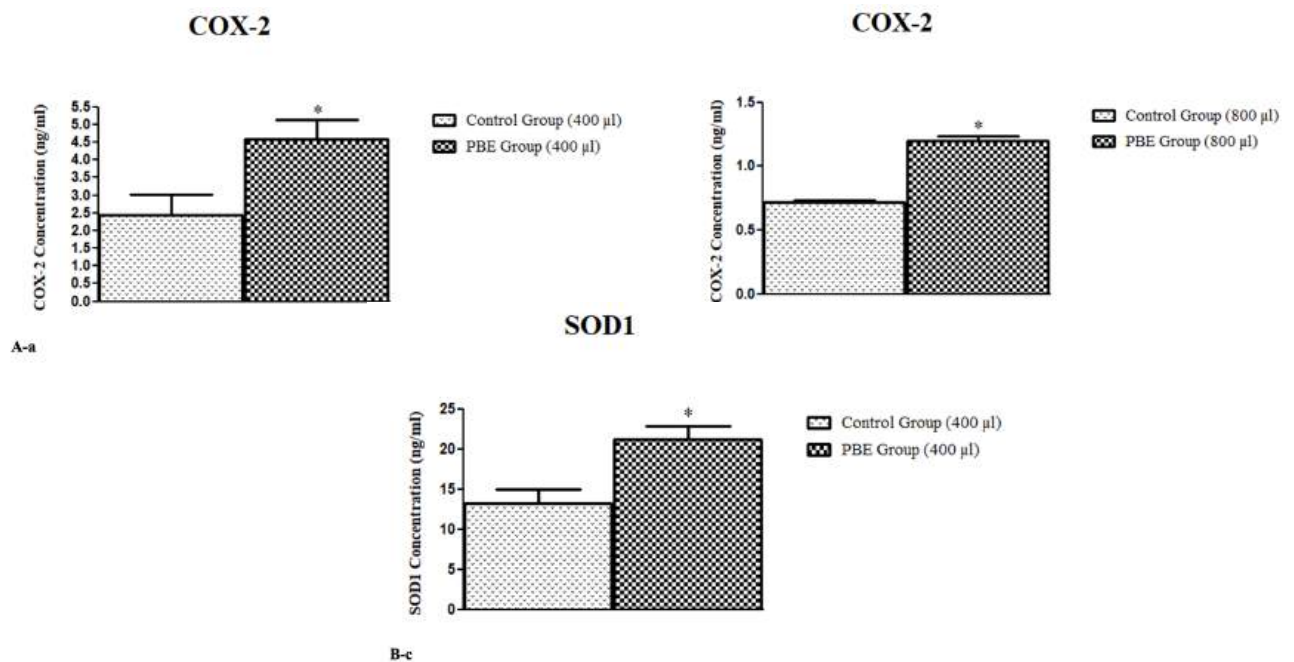


Figure 6A-6B. Effect of PBE on COX-2 enzyme and SOD1 enzyme levels in isolated mouse bladder tissues (n=4-5). **Figure 6A.)** Effect of PBE on COX-2 enzyme levels in isolated mouse bladder tissues, **Figure 6A-a)** Effect of 400 µl PBE on COX-2 enzyme levels in isolated mouse bladder tissues, **Figure 6A-b)** Effect of 800 µl PBE on COX-2 enzyme levels in isolated mouse bladder tissues. **Figure 6B.)** Effect of PBE on SOD1 enzyme levels in isolated mouse bladder tissues, **Figure 6B-a)** Effect of 400 µl PBE on SOD1 enzyme levels in isolated mouse bladder tissues, **Figure 6B-b)** Effect of 800 µl PBE on SOD1 enzyme levels in isolated mouse bladder tissues

As known, COX enzymes are important regulators of angiogenesis, inflammation and carcinogenesis (Clària 2003). There are three isoforms of cyclooxygenase; COX-1, COX-2 and COX-3 (Pang et al. 2016). COX-1 is constitutively expressed in most tissues (Soh and Weinstein 2003; Pang et al. 2016). COX-3 is a variant of COX-1 (Kis et al. 2003; Sarkar et al. 2007). COX-2 is found in normal tissues such as kidney, reproductive organs and stomach (Su et al. 2016; Obermoser et al. 2018) and is an inducible isoform (Gurram et al. 2018). In carcinogenesis-adenocarcinoma, cholangiocarcinoma, hepatocellular carcinoma, etc. (Dannenberg et al. 2005; Mortezaee 2018)-increased levels of COX-2 have been reported (Gurram et al. 2018; Raj et al. 2019). There are other studies examining the effect of PBE on COX. In their study, Szymanowska et al. (2015) examined the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities of purple basil leaves. The researchers reported that jasmonic acid, one of the anthocyanins contained in purple basil, inhibited COX enzyme (Szymanowska et al. 2015). Güez et al. (2017) investigated the oxidative, antigenotoxic and anti-inflammatory effects of basil extract in human leukocyte cell culture. The researchers reported that basil extract inhibited COX-2 enzyme. However, in our experimental findings, we observed that PBE significantly increased COX enzyme levels at the concentrations used. The underlying mechanisms of PBE increasing COX in our study need to be investigated.

In our experimental studies to investigate the antioxidant effects of PBE, we observed that PBE caused a significant increase in SOD enzyme levels at the concentrations used (40 and 80 µl/ml) and this increment was statistically significant (Table 2 and Figure 6B-a,b). SOD enzymes are metalloenzymes with antioxidant effect in the body and constitute the front line in defence against reactive oxygen species-mediated damage in the body (Kangralkar et al. 2010). SOD enzyme catalyses the reduction of superoxide anion radical to hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) (Yasui and Baba 2006). There are 3 different isoforms of SOD enzyme. These are Cu-Zn-SOD (SOD1), Mn-SOD (SOD2) and Cu-SOD (SOD3) (Sanyal et al. 2009). SOD1 is found in the cytoplasm,

nuclear compartments and lysosomes. SOD2 is found in the mitochondria of aerobic cells (Takada et al. 2002; Zelko et al. 2002). SOD3 is found in plasma, lymph and synovial fluid. It has been shown that vascular smooth muscle cells synthesise SOD3 to a great extent (Fattman et al. 2003). In a study conducted by Gulcin et al. (2007), the antioxidant effects of basil were investigated. The study revealed that water and ethanol extracts of basil had concentration-dependent antioxidant activities (Gulcin et al. 2007). The results of this study support our results.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the experimental findings of our study suggest that PBE has an inhibitory effect on EFS-induced contractile responses in isolated mouse bladder and that cholinergic, nitrenergic pathways, potassium channel activation and calcium channel inhibition may play a role in this inhibitory effect. In addition, in the concentrations we used in our study, PBE was found to have antioxidant effect but not antiinflammatory effect. In fact, since PBE increased COX-2 expression in a concentration-dependent manner at the concentrations we used in this study, further studies are needed to elucidate the molecular mechanism of this phenomenon.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare the absence of a conflict of interests.

Funding

The authors have no funding to report.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge financial support from Çukurova University Scientific Research Projects Unit (TYL-2022-14595, TSA-2023-16116).

Data availability

All of the data that support the findings of this study are available in the main text.

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