

Organochlorine Contamination in Three Species of Diurnal Raptors in León, Spain

Matilde Sierra,¹ María Teresa Terán,¹ Ana Gallego,² María José Díez,³ and Diego Santiago⁴

¹Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Biology, Physiology and Pharmacology, Faculty of Veterinary, The University of León, 24071 León, Spain; ²Titular Veterinary Municipal Slaughterhouse of Pontevedra, 36071 Pontevedra, Spain; ³Department of Hygiene and Food Technology and Toxicology, Faculty of Veterinary, The University of León, 24071 León, Spain; and ⁴Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Faculty of Veterinary, The University of Cordoba, 14071 Cordoba, Spain

The purpose of this paper is to give new data on the levels of organochlorine pesticides residues in birds of prey collected in the province of Leon, in the North-West of Spain.

This study was undertaken to determine organochlorine residual levels in tissues and organs (muscle, liver, kidney, fat and brain) of 9 diurnal raptors, including kestrel, Falco tinnunculus, L., sparrow hawk, Accipiter nisus, L. and red kite, Milvus milvus, L.

The use of organochlorine pesticides has been restricted because of their persistence in the environment and potential for environmental impact. Even with the restrictions on their use in this country, organochlorine pesticides residues are present in animal population in the province of Leon (Sierra et al., 1984, Sierra and Santiago, in press) due to their slow rate of degradation (Edmundson, 1972, Nash and Woolson, 1967).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A total of 35 samples of muscle, liver, kidney, brain and fat were obtained from 4 kestrels, 3 sparrow hawks and 2 red kites.

Portions of about 4 grams were taken from liver, muscle and kidney and the whole of the brain was removed for organochlorine residues analysis. The weight of perivisceral fat samples was variable depending on the body fat reserves. It was only possible to obtain 5 samples of fat (2 of them were from kestrels, 2 from sparrow hawks and 1 from red kites). All samples were frozen to -20°C until analyses could be conducted.

Each sample was individually homogenized (Ahmad, 1979). Subsequent extraction and clean-up were the same as those described by Richardson et al., 1971.

Send reprint requests to Matilde Sierra at the above address.

TABLE 1.- Average, range (in ppm/wet weight) and incidence percent of organochlorine pesticides in sparrow hawks.

	KIDNEY	LIVER	BRAIN	FAT	MUSCLE
1	0.510 0.393-0.607 100	0.385 0.078-0.991 100	0.642 0.352-1.207 100	0.829 0.563-1.094 100	0.341 0.341 100
2	0.027 0.017-0.036 66.67	0.203 0.004-0.597 100	0.059 0.008-0.109 66.67	0.216 0.216 50	0.012 0.012 100
3	0.014 0.014 33.33	0.035 0.035 33.33	0.019 0.008-0.030 66.67	0.285 0.285 100	0.028 0.028 100
4	— — —	— — —	— — —	0.009 0.009 50	— — —
5	0.400 0.400 33.33	0.139 0.007-0.270 66.67	0.031 0.031 33.33	1.068 0.174-1.961 100	0.047 0.047 100
6	0.445 0.445 33.33	0.364 0.364 33.33	0.130 0.042-0.217 66.67	17.338 17.338 50	— — —
7	0.541 0.541 33.33	— — —	— — —	— — —	— — —
8	1.922 1.415-2.429 66.67	0.368 0.150-0.492 100	0.035 0.012-0.057 66.67	4.543 3.896-5.189 100	9.969 9.969 100
9	5.152 1.842-9.099 100	7.543 1.147-18.62 100	3.388 0.177-9.028 100	48.588 31.14-66.03 100	7.381 7.381 100
10	1.323 0.234-2.412 66.67	0.583 0.036-1.129 66.67	0.057 0.022-0.091 66.67	8.557 6.469-10.64 100	— — —

1: α -HCH; 2: Lindane; 3: Heptachlor-epoxide; 4: Aldrin; 5: Endrin
6: Dieldrin; 7: o,p'-TDE; 8: p,p'-TDE; 9: p,p'-DDE; 10: p,p'-DDT

TABLE 2.- Average, range (in ppm/wet weight) and incidence percent of organochlorine pesticides in red kites.

	KIDNEY	LIVER	BRAIN	FAT	MUSCLE
1	0.010	0.020	0.450	—	—
	0.010	0.013-0.026	0.162-0.738	—	—
	100	100	100	—	—
2	0.006	0.007	0.011	0.437	0.005
	0.006	0.007	0.010-0.011	0.437	0.005
	100	50	100	100	100
3	—	—	0.056	—	—
	—	—	0.034-0.078	—	—
	—	—	100	—	—
4	—	—	0.014	—	—
	—	—	0.014	—	—
	—	—	50	—	—
5	0.005	—	0.103	2.035	—
	0.005	—	0.103	2.035	—
	100	—	50	100	—
6	0.155	0.099	0.017	0.197	0.013
	0.155	0.077-0.120	0.016-0.018	0.197	0.013
	100	100	100	100	100
7	0.020	—	0.077	0.124	—
	0.020	—	0.025-0.129	0.124	—
	100	—	100	100	—
8	0.665	0.018	0.152	2.684	—
	0.665	0.018	0.025-0.279	2.684	—
	100	50	100	100	—
9	0.028	0.875	0.056	—	0.208
	0.028	0.112-1.638	0.018-0.093	—	0.208
	100	100	100	—	100
10	2.496	0.160	1.610	0.762	0.063
	2.496	0.160	1.610	0.762	0.063
	100	50	50	100	100

1: α -HCH; 2: Lindane; 3: Heptachlor-epoxide; 4: Aldrin; 5: Endrin
6: Dieldrin; 7: o,p'-TDE; 8: p,p'-TDE; 9: p,p'-DDE; 10: p,p'-DDT

TABLE 3.- Average, range (in ppm/wet weight) and incidence percent of organochlorine pesticides in kestrels.

	KIDNEY	LIVER	BRAIN	FAT	MUSCLE
1	0.456 0.216-0.735 100	0.255 0.053-0.455 75	0.343 0.078-0.929 100	1.368 0.583-2.153 100	1.266 1.122-1.410 100
2	— — —	0.024 0.012-0.035 100	0.015 0.003-0.019 100	— — —	0.156 0.079-0.232 100
3	1.132 0.589-2.042 75	0.031 0.003-0.080 100	0.033 0.012-0.051 100	2.040 0.284-3.795 100	0.183 0.139-0.226 100
4	0.217 0.140-0.371 75	0.048 0.043-0.053 50	0.030 0.018-0.038 75	0.654 0.654 50	0.074 0.020-0.127 100
5	0.027 0.013-0.040 50	0.010 0.010 25	0.016 0.016 25	— — —	0.054 0.054 50
6	— — —	0.151 0.009-0.292 50	0.005 0.005 25	— — —	0.046 0.046 50
7	0.288 0.288 25	— — —	— — —	0.691 0.691 50	— — —
8	0.028 0.028 25	0.006 0.006 25	0.012 0.012 25	— — —	— — —
9	0.238 0.124-0.320 100	0.063 0.011-0.161 75	0.046 0.007-0.092 100	2.889 1.668-4.110 100	0.149 0.032-0.266 100
10	0.045 0.028-0.064 75	0.015 0.007-0.022 50	0.057 0.057 25	1.250 0.483-2.017 100	0.091 0.013-0.168 100

1: α -HCH; 2: Lindane; 3: Heptachlor-epoxide; 4: Aldrin; 5: Endrin
6: Dieldrin; 7: o,p'-TDE; 8: p,p'-TDE; 9: p,p'-DDE; 10: p,p'-DDT

A florisil column conditioned for 24 hours at 130°C was used to remove interfering substances and to separate the pesticides in two fractions.

The eluates were concentrated for analysis by electron capture gas chromatography, which was performed on a Hewlett Packard gas chromatograph fitted with a nickel 63 electron capture detector.

The chromatographic parameters were: 1.- Columns: (a) 6 feet long and 1/4 inch inside diameter, containing a 1.5% coating of OV-17/1.95% of QF-1 on 100-120 mesh chromsorb W (AW/DMCS) and (b) 3.8% of SE-30 on 80-100 mesh chromsorb W (AW/DMCS). 2.- Carrier gas: 5% argon-methane at a flow rate of 25 ml/min. 3.- Operating temperatures: Inlet, 250°C; Detector, 300°C; Column (a) 200°C and Column (b) 180°C.

In order to identify the pesticides and quantify the residual levels, we have compared the problem solutions with a standard solution containing the following pesticides: α -HCH, lindane, heptachlor-epoxide, aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, o,p'-TDE, p,p'-TDE, p,p'-DDE and p,p'-DDT.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The incidence percent of organochlorine pesticides in the five types of samples and the mean residue levels and ranges (in parts per million, ppm, by weight of wet sample) are given in Tables 1 to 3.

Our results show that sparrow hawk is the most contaminated species.

α -HCH was present in all the samples of organs and tissues analyzed in these raptors. We have obtained identical results in earlier studies in buzzards (Sierra et al., 1984). The incidence percent detected for lindane, dieldrin and heptachlor-epoxide was similar to those reported by Joiris et al., 1979, in liver, stomach content and muscle samples: 80% for lindane, 60% for dieldrin and 50% for heptachlor-epoxide.

The mean residue levels of DDT and related compounds (o,p'-TDE, p,p'-TDE, p,p'-DDE and p,p'-DDT) detected in sparrow hawks were 8 times higher than those indicated by Joiris et al., 1979.

p,p'-DDE was detected at high concentrations in all the organs and tissues samples, specially in fat in which the average for this pesticide was 48.6 ppm. The accumulation of important levels of DDE in this species can be explained because birds are included in its diet.

However, the residual levels of p,p'-DDE detected in liver samples are lower than those reported by Newton et al., 1982. These authors found more than 100 ppm of p,p'-DDE in liver samples of sparrow hawks collected in England, U.K. The highest

concentration we have detected was 18.6 ppm. Juillard et al., 1978, detected 195 ppm of p,p'-DDE in liver samples from sparrow hawks collected in Lausanne (Switzerland), this concentration is more than 25 times higher than ours (7.5 ppm).

The red kite was the species least contaminated. The bibliographic references found about this species are limited. Joiris et al., 1974, detected in liver and muscle samples a burden of organochlorine pesticides of 0.63 ppm; this amount is similar to 0.69 ppm obtained by us averaging the residual levels detected in both types of samples. The mean residue levels of DDT and related compounds, 0.62 ppm, are higher than those reported by these authors, 0.26 ppm.

The residual levels detected in organs and tissues of red kite are not very high and this fact is probably due to diversified feeding.

Compared to the other two species, kestrels had intermediate mean residue levels.

Joiris et al., 1979 and Juillard et al., 1978, indicate organochlorine pesticide residual levels in this species higher than ours. Newton et al., 1982, found more than 100 ppm of p,p'-DDE and dieldrin in liver samples of kestrels collected in England, U.K. The higher concentrations we have detected were 0.29 ppm for dieldrin and 0.16 ppm for p,p'-DDE.

However, heptachlor-epoxide was detected in every sample of liver, brain, muscle and fat and in 75% of kidney samples. In a similar way, high incidence percent of this pesticide was also indicated by Lavaur de and Arnold, 1977, in several species of birds in France.

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