






Histological and histochemical study of neurohypophysis of pituitary gland in HEDGEHOG(*Hemiechonus auritus*)

¹Hiba M. Abd Alrahman , ²Zainab A. Musa , ³Nadhim A. Shehan , ⁴Mustafa S. Ghaji 
, ⁵Ashraff W. Abdulrazaq. 

^{1,2,3,4,5}Department of Anatomy and Histology, College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Basrah, Basrah, Iraq.

Email: heba.mohammed@uobasrah.edu.iq

Abstract

In this designated study, five samples of pituitary gland (neurohypophysis) were collected from HEDGEHOG(*Hemiechonus auritus*). Isolated and prepared for histological and histochemical studies. Results revealed a thin connective tissue capsule was enclosed pars nervosa containing mainly fine reticular and collagen fibers stained red to purple with H&E stain. The parenchyma containing two types of pituitary cells (astrocytes, associated glial cells) and located between the sinusoids. Unmyelinated nerve fibers originated from the hypothalamus and arranged in different directions and surrounded the sinusoids, hearing bodies appear as large secretory granules for hormone storage resemble to the cell structure but without a nucleus found in the posterior part of the pituitary gland.

I. Introduction

Hemiechonus auritus is a long eared hedgehog species of native [Central Asian](#) and [Middle East countries](#). This animal lives in burrows that it either builds or finds and is characterized by long ears. It is the smallest Middle Eastern hedgehog. The insects, small vertebrates and plants are the source of the feeding for this species (1) and (2).

The most important of physiological processes in the body is regulated by the pituitary gland that results from the interaction between the nervous and endocrine systems(3).

The embryological development of the pituitary gland differs according to structure type. Of which it consists, it is involved in two parts: the adenohypophysis that originated from Rathke's pouch (probably ectoderm from the roof of the mouth), and the neurohypophysis that developed from the infundibulum (an outgrowth of the brain).(4)and (5).

Many activities in the body are controlled by hormones released from an endocrine structure within the pituitary gland such as growth, metabolism and sexual function. Because it has a physiological effect on other glands indirectly, therefore it is called the master gland. The hypothalamus releases soluble mediators that in turn control the activity of this gland. The anterior lobe of the pituitary gland is supplied by these mediators via a capillary network called the **hypophalamo-**



pituitary portal system. The posterior lobe directly connected with the hypothalamus a bundle of nerve fibers named the **hypothalamo-hypophyseal tract (6)and(7).**

The location of this gland within sella turcica of the basisphenoid bone body and consisted of adenohypophysis and neurohypophysis, the dura mater covered the pituitary gland was completely and surrounded by capsule by called (diaphragm sella) , except for a small opening, which allows passage of pituitary stalk ,(8), (9) and (10). Neurohypophysis: The posterior hypophysis cerebri consists of neural lobe, the infundibular stem and the median eminence was composed of thin non-myelinated nerve fibers and associated neuroglial cells(11).

II. Materials and methods

The samples for this study was collected from five HEDGEHOG(*Hemiechonus auritus*) after dissected all the structures **that surround it and removed gently then fixed for 2-3 days in neutral buffered formalin10%** , a serial dilution of alcohols used for dehydrated from 70% to 100% and then used xylene and paraffin wax for cleared and embedded respectively (12). Haematoxylin and eosin stain were used to stained the prepared and cutting tissues for general structures, special stains (Alcian blue, PAS(periodic acid- schiff stain and Mellory stain to demonstration of specific structures (13)(14)and (15).

III. Results:

this study was focusing on the neurohypophysis of pituitary gland of the **HEDGEHOG(*Hemiechonus auritus*)** , this part of the gland enclosed by a thinner layer of connective tissue capsule consisting mainly of collagen fibers stained red to purple with H&E stain figure(1) , The fine reticular fibers that can distinguished in the capsule of gland that appeared blue color with mallory stain (2), neurohypophysis composed of pars nervosa, the infundibular stem and the median eminence and its parenchyma composed of pituicytes and non-myelinated nerve fibers .The pituicytes is a type of astrocytes (associated glial cells) and located between the sinusoids that are not filled with blood and divided into two types :protoplasmic astrocytes that was elliptical or elongated in shape and large in size and more abundant, other one was the fibrous astrocytes which oval in shape, smaller in size and less abundant with lipid droplets and pigments that was seen with hematoxyline and eosin stain figure(1) and (3)

un myelinated nerve fibers is originated from the hypothalamus and arranged in different direction extended from the internal to external neurohypophysis and stained deeply with H& E figure(3).

Herring bodies are large neurosecretory granules resemble to the cell structure but without a nucleus found in the posterior part of the pituitary gland. this granules is a termination of the axone from the hypothalamus and serve as a

storage for the hormone temporarily before secreted figure (3).



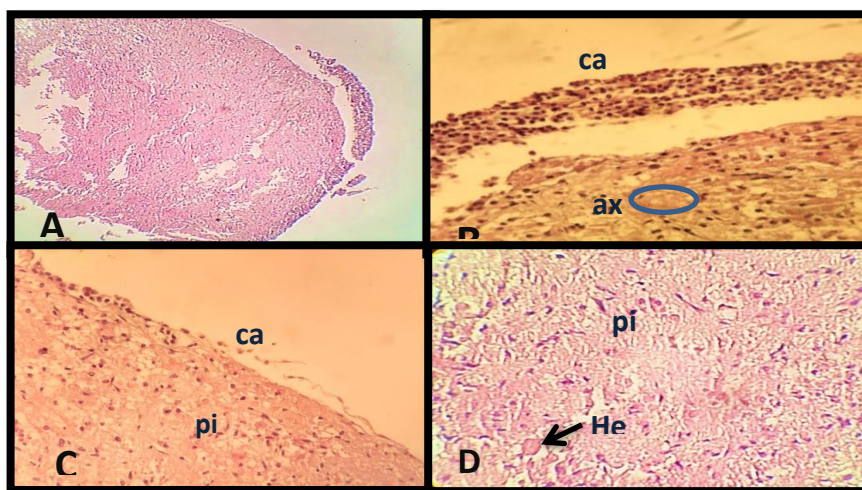


Figure 1: Histological structure of the pars nervosa of HEDGEHOG (*Hemiechonus auritus*) pituitary gland in ca: capsule, pi: pituitocytes (protoplasmic and fibrous), ax: axon of unmyelinated nerve fibers,

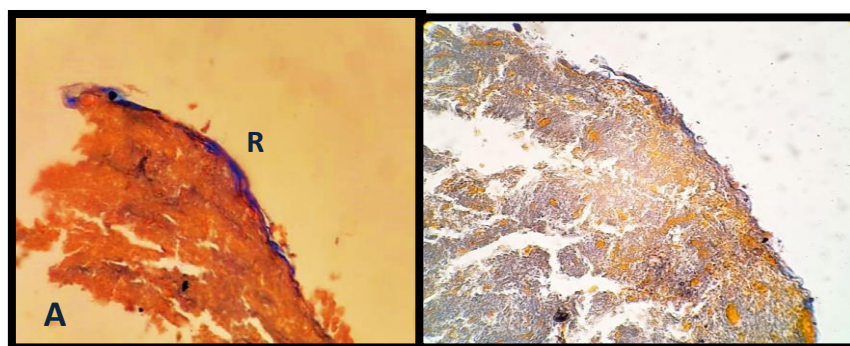


Figure 2: light microscopic structures of neurohypophysis of the pituitary gland in HEDGEHOG (*Hemiechonus auritus*): A,B: Re: Reticular fiber blue in color .Mallory stain. 10X.

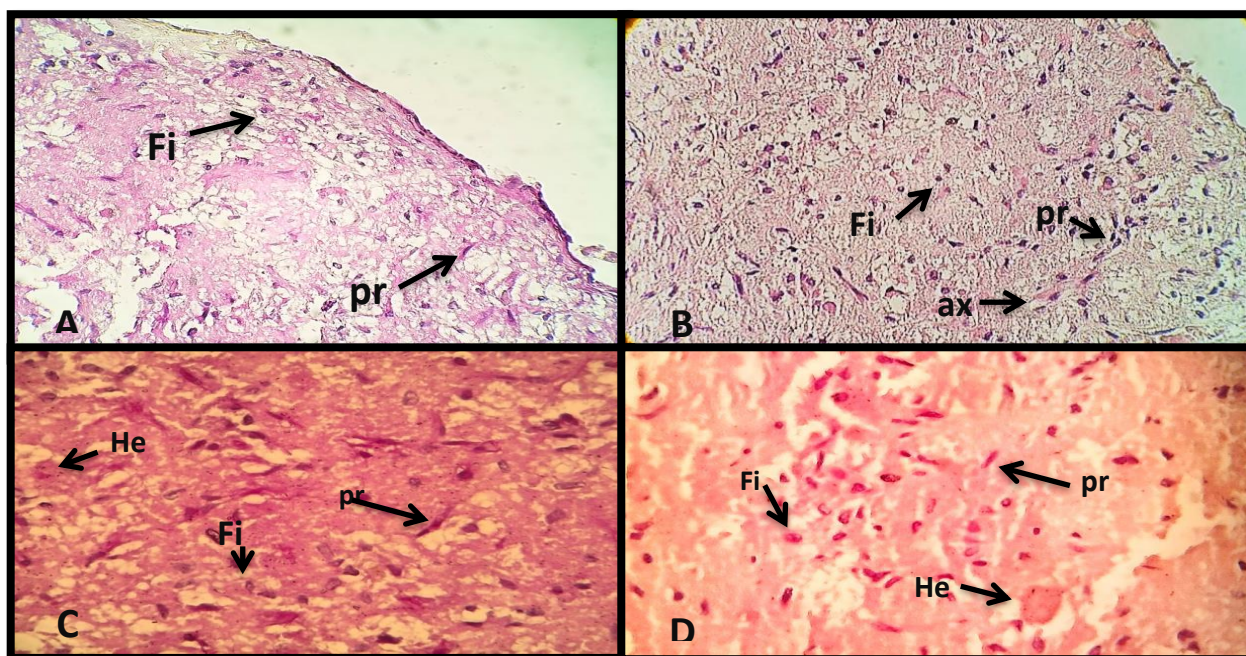


Figure 3: light microscopic structure of pituitary gland in **HEDGEHOG (*Hemiechonus auritus*)**, pitucytes (Fi:fibrous, Pr: protoplasmic),ax: axon of un myelinated nerve fiber, He: hering bodies. A:Alcin blue stain 10X, B:H&E stain 10X, C:PAS stain 40X, D: H&E stain 40X.

IV. Discussion:

the pituitary gland of **HEDGEHOG (*Hemiechonus auritus*)** located in the bony structures called sella turcica that enclosed by a thick connective tissue capsule extended from dura matter, for these reasons the gland was protected very well so that it covered by a thin connective tissue capsule this diverge with (16) and (17) and agree to the (18), (19)and (20) (21)in Iraqi rats.

the pituicytes and the nerve fiber without myeline and sinusoids was located in pars nervosa of parenchyma part of the of pituitary gland in the HEDGEHOG (*Hemiechonus auritus*) this agreement with (22) in the adult male donkeys

there are two types of pituicytes : small rounded fibrous pituicytes and and large elongated protoplasmic pituicytes this ressemble to the (23) in the Bactrian camels (*Camelus bactrianus*) .

Herring-bodies can be identified on routine stains as a large distended nerve endings as so-called named after Percy Theodore Herring who described them as the 'physiologically active principle' of the posterior gland in1908 .(24).

The nerve endings of the neurohypophysis containing producing cells of the oxytocin and vasopressin in the hypothalamus (24), (25)and(26) . The supraoptic and paraventricular nuclei of the hypothalamus are the site for The peptide hormones vasopressin and oxytocin synthesized and transported into the circulation by axoplasmic flow of the posterior lobe for subsequent release(27).

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