

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**HOMO AND HETEROTYPIC
STRESSOR INDUCED
IMMUNOMODULATORY CHANGES
IN THE LYMPHOID ORGANS OF THE
RATS AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF
EARLY POSTNATAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

Faculty Of Medicine

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

Stress is a part of modern life. It causes serious alterations in the nervous, endocrine, immune, cardiovascular, reproductive and digestive systems. Different types of stress with different types of stressors induce diverse changes in the body. Heterotypic stress with variable stressors triggers an activation pattern in the neuroendocrine system which is different from the homotypic stressor with comparable characteristics (intensity, duration, etc). Immune system is the one most sensitive to stress. Research on the effect of heterotypic stress on the immune system is scarce. Data regarding effect of heterotypic stress on the immune system during prepubertal period of postnatal development are few, mainly involving weight of the lymphoid organs. These data might help to develop addressed measures of prophylaxis of post-stress immunosuppression in children. The objectives of this research are to evaluate immunomodulatory effect of heterotypic vs. homotypic stress on the morphology of the lymphoid organs in the prepubertal experimental animals of different age groups. Sprague Dawley rats aged 15, 30 and 60 days were chronically exposed to homo- or heterotypic stress. Thymus, spleen and lymph nodes were evaluated using immunohistochemical morphometry of cells expressing markers of immunocytes, stromal cells, proliferation and apoptosis respectively. Chronic heterotypic stress exposure showed more significant immunosuppressive effect in the central and peripheral immune organs compared to the homotypic stress, as demonstrated by image analysis of histological slides stained for markers of T-lymphocytes; B-lymphocytes, apoptosis and proliferation. The dominating mechanism of cell depletion in the preweaning and infant animals was reduced recirculation rate of T-lymphocytes in the thymus while in the juvenile rats was increased apoptotic rate of lymphoid cells and decreased immigration rate of T-lymphocytes from the thymus to the peripheral immune organs. Heterotypic stress also affected interplay of stromal and lymphoid cells in the age-related manner. Thus, in chronic heterotypic stress central and peripheral lymphoid organs exhibited complex age-dependent immunomodulatory changes associated with a crosstalk of the developmental and post-stress changes in the neuroimmunoendocrine axis of the growing body.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES -	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background Of The Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement	2
1.3 Research Objective	3
1.4 Significance Of The Study	4
1.5 Scope And Limitations Of The Study	4
1.6 Definition Term Use In This Study	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Stress And Immune System	6
2.1.1 Definition And Type Of Stress	6
2.2 Microscopic Anatomy Of The Immune Organs.	9
2.2.1 Microscopic Anatomy Of The Central Immune Organs.	10
2.2.2 Microscopic Anatomy Of The Peripheral Immune Organs.	11
2.3 Neuroimmunoendocrinology Of Stress	14
2.4 Age-Related Issues Of Stress And Immunity	17
2.4.1 Stress-Related Changes Of Immunity In The Most Vulnerable Groups.	17