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GLOBAL HEALTH AND NATURAL THERAPEUTICS: CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

AUTHORS
Prof. Dr. Olimpia PINO
Radhia BOUZID
Mourad HANFER
Imen DAAS
Viviane DASILVA
Iza ALMAS
Wafa MAJEED
Khadija ALMAS
Kashif JILANI
Ayesha
Meerab WASEEM

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PREFACE

This volume brings together a collection of scholarly contributions that explore important issues in health sciences, preventive medicine, and natural therapeutics. In an era shaped by emerging diseases, environmental risks, and growing interest in holistic healthcare, interdisciplinary approaches to health and wellbeing have become increasingly valuable.

The chapters in this book address key themes related to disease prevention, biological health systems, and therapeutic innovation. The study of medicinal plants highlights the pharmacological potential of natural bioactive compounds and their relevance to modern healthcare research. The discussion on mental rate variability reflects the growing importance of understanding mind–body interactions in health assessment and wellbeing. In addition, the examination of water-borne diseases underscores the continuing global burden of infectious diseases and the need for effective prevention strategies.

By adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, this volume integrates insights from pharmacology, public health, physiology, and complementary medicine. It contributes to academic discourse while also offering practical implications for researchers, healthcare professionals, and policymakers seeking innovative and preventive approaches to health challenges.

It is hoped that this book will serve as a valuable resource for scholars, practitioners, and students interested in health sciences and therapeutic innovation, while encouraging further research on sustainable and human-centered healthcare solutions.

Editorial Team
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CHAPTER 1
PHYTOCHEMICAL AND PHARMACOLOGICAL PROPERTIES OF TWO ALGERIAN MEDICINAL PLANTS : IN *VITRO* STUDY

[1]Radhia BOUZID
[2]Mourad HANFER
[3]Imen DAAS

[1]Faculty of Naturel and Life Sciences, University of Batna 2, Batna, Algeria, r.bouzid@univ-batna2.dz, ORCID ID: 0009-0008-8937-0652
[2]Faculty of Naturel and Life Sciences, University of Batna 2, Batna, Algeria, m.hanfer@univ-batna2.dz, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4757-0150
[3]Faculty of Naturel and Life Sciences, University of Batna 2, Batna, Algeria, i.daas@univ-batna2.dz, ORCID ID: 0009-0009-3052-2778

INTRODUCTION

Since Antiquity, the therapeutic properties of medicinal plants have been widely exploited to treat various human pathologies (Torres-León et al., 2023), thanks to their natural substances and phytochemical components possessing antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-apoptotic, and modulatory properties, influencing cellular processes to generate beneficial effects on health (Oladiji & Oladele, 2023; Oyeleke et al., 2021). It has been reported that polyphenolic compounds are among the active substances in these plants and play a crucial role in protecting against oxidative stress, which is involved in cellular aging, neurodegenerative diseases, and skin damage caused by ultraviolet (UV) rays (Chaira et al., 2024).

Plant extracts constitute a promising source of complementary therapies aimed at mitigating damage caused by reactive oxygen species (ROS) and supporting the management of associated diseases. Additionally, the isolation of their bioactive components allows for their direct use as therapeutic agents or as precursor molecules in the creation of more effective drugs. In this context, flavonoids have garnered increasing interest in recent years due to their high pharmacological potential (Gulcin, 2025).

In this context, Echium paniculatum and Anchusa azurea Mill. are plants belonging to the Boraginaceae family, widely present in the Mediterranean region (Al-Qaisi et al., 2024; Jin et al., 2020). They are traditionally used to treat various conditions such as wounds and inflammations, and their extracts contain phytocompounds responsible for various pharmacological activities, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, anxiolytic, antiviral, and immunomodulatory activities (Hussain et al., 2021; Jin et al., 2020; Parvaneh et al., 2025).

Due to these characteristics, hydroethanolic extracts of E. paniculatum and Anchusa azurea could serve as a natural source of bioactive compounds for pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications. This study aims to evaluate the phenolic and flavonoid composition of its extracts, their antioxidant activity through various in vitro tests, their photoprotective potential (SPF), and their ability to selectively inhibit cholinesterase enzymes (AChE and BChE), thus providing an integrated approach to examine the pharmacological and cosmetic benefits of this plant.

1. MATERIALS AND METHODS

1.1 Plant Material

The studied plants, Echium paniculatum lag. and Anchusa azurea Mill., were collected in June 2023 from the Fesdis region (Wilaya of Batna, Algeria). The identification of plants was made by Pr. Oudjhih at Batna 1 University. The plant materials used in this study correspond to the aerial parts, which were dried at room temperature in a dry place away from direct sunlight for 40 days and then reduced to powder.

1.2 Extract Preparation

100 g of Echium paniculatum and Anchusa azurea powders were subjected to triple maceration using an ethanol-water mixture (70/30 ; v/v) for 24 h at room temperature. following filtration, the combined filtrates were concentrated under reduce pressure at 40°C and then dried. The extraction yield was determined using the following formula :

Yields% = (Mass of the extract obtained / Initial powder mass) X 100

1.3 Determination of Total Polyphenols

The total phenolic compounds in the examined extracts were quantified using Folin-Ciocalteu assay (Tian et al., 2021). A 20 µl of extract was combined with 100 µL of 1 :10 diluted Folin-Ciocalteu reagent, followed by the addition of 75 µL of 7.5% sodium carbonate. After 2 hour of incubation at room temperature, the absorbance was recorded at 765 nm. Gallic acid served as the standard. The concentration of total polyphenolic compounds was expressed as micrograms of Gallic acid equivalents per milligram of extract (µg GAE/ mg).

1.4 Determination of Total Flavonoids

The total flavonoid content was assessed using the aluminum chloride technique (Nurcholis et al., 2021). In brief, 20 µL of 5% sodium nitrite was combined with extracts, then followed by 20 µL of 10% aluminum chloride ($AlCl_3$) and 100 µL of 4% sodium hydroxide (NaOH). After 40 min of incubation at ambient temperature, the absorbance was measured at 415 nm.

The total flavonoid concentration was quantified as micrograms of quercetin equivalents per milligram of extract (µg QE/mg extract).

1.5 Antioxidant Activity

1.5.1 DPPH Radical Scavenging Assay

In test tubes, 40 µL of each extract or standard (BHT, BHA, or ascorbic acid) was combined with 160 µL of DPPH solution (0.04% in methanol). The resultant combinitions were incubated in darkness for 30 minutes, than analyzed spectrophotometrically at 517 nm. The antioxidant activity was determined as IC_{50} (µg mL–1) (Blois, 1958). The percentage of free radical scavenging was determined using the subsequent formula:

$$\text{DPPH inhibition \%} = (Ac - As) / Ac \times 100$$

where Ac represents the absorbance of the control, and As denotes the absorbance of the samples.

1.5.2 ABTS Radical Scavenging Assay

A 3 mL volume of ABTS (7 mM) was combined with 3 mL of potassium persulfate (2.45 mM), stored in the darkness at ambient temperature for 15 h, and than diluted with ethanol to achieve an absorbance of 0.80 ±0.02 at 734 nm before application. The scavenging activity was assessed by combining 40 µL of material at different concentrations with 160 µL of ABTS●+ solution. After 10 min of incubation, the absorbance was read at 734 nm. The antioxidant activity was evaluated as IC_{50} (µg mL–1) (Re et al.,1999). The inhibition percentage of the samples was determined by measuring the decolorization of the ABTS radical cation using the subsequent equation :

$$\text{ABTS Inhibition\%} = [(Ac - As) / Ac] \times 100$$

where Ac denotes the absorbance of the control, and As denotes the absorbance of the samples.

1.5.3 Reducing Power Assay

10 µL of each extract or standard at varying concentrations, 40 µL of phosphate buffer (pH 6.6) and 50 µL of potassium ferricyanide solution (1%, w/v) were included. Following 20-minute incubation at 50 °C, 50 µL of trichloroacetic acid solution (10%), 40 µL of distilled water, and 10 µL of freshly prepared $FeCl_3$ solution (0.1%) were included. The absorbance of the mixes was recorded at 700 nm after gentle agitation. The reducing power was quantified as $A_{0.50}$ (µg mL–1) (Oyaizu, 1986).

1.5.4 Phenanthroline Assay

In a 96-well microplate, 10 µL of each extract and standard at varying concentrations was mixed with 50 µL of 0.2% ferric chloride (FeCl3), 30 µL of 0.5% phenanthroline and 110 µL of methanol, followed by incubation at 30°C for 20 minutes. The absorbance was determined at 510 nm and the results were expressed as A0.5 (µg/mL) (Szydłowska-Czerniak et al., 2008).

1.6 Photoprotective Activity

Economical and rapid spectrophotometric technique was employed to evaluate the sun protection factor (SPF) of the extracts. For this, 2 mg of each sample or the reference product (Venus) was dissolved in 1 mL of ethanol to obtain a final concentration of 2 mg/mL. Absorbance was measured within wavelength range of 290-320 nm, at 5 nm intervals, with three replicates at each measurement point (Reis Mansur et al., 2016). Subsequently, the values of SPF were computed for each sample utilizing the subsequent equation :

$$\mathrm{SPF} = CF \sum_{290}^{320} \mathrm{EE}(\lambda)\ I(\lambda)\ abs(\lambda)$$

Where CF is a correction factor, EE(λ) is the erythemal effect of the radiation, abs(λ) is the absorbance of the sample at the appropriate wavelength. The values of EE(λ) and I(λ) are predetermined and fixed.

1.7 Enzyme Inhibition Activities

1.7.1 Cholinesterase Inhibition Activity

The extracts inhibitory capacity against cholinesterase enzymes was evaluated for their potential inhibition of AchE and BChE (Ellman et al., 1961), using galantamine as a reference inhibitor. In brief, 10 µL of samples at vaying concentrations and 150 µL of sodium phosphate buffer (100 mM, pH 8.0) were mixed. Then, 20 µL of either acetylcholinesterase (AChE, 5.32×10^{-3} U) or butyrylcholinesterase (BChE, 6.85×10^{-3} U) was introduced. Following a 15 minutes incubation at 37 °C, 10 µL of 0.5 mM 5,5′-dithiobis-(2-nitrobenzoic acid) (DTNB) was introduced, succeeded by 10 µL of 0.71 mM either acetylthiocholine iodide or 0.2 mM butyrylthiocholine chloride, contingent upon the enzyme tested. Absorbance was recorded at 412 nm, and IC_{50} values were determined. The formula employed to determine the percentage of inhibition was:

$$\text{Inhibition\%} = (E - S) / E \times 100$$

Where E denotes the enzyme activity in the absence of sample, and S signifies the enzyme activity in the presence of sample.

1.7.2. Alpha-amylase Inhibition Activity

The inhibition activity of alpha-amylase was assessed utilizing the iodine/potassium iodide (IKI) method as described by Sandeli et al. (2021). In this assay, 25 µL of the extracts and the reference standard (acarbose) at various concentrations mixed with 50 µL of α-amylase solution (1U) in sodium phosphate buffer (pH 6.9 containing 6 mM NaCl) and incubating at 37 °C for 10 minutes. Subsequently, 50 µL of 0.1% starch was added. In a similar manner, a blank was generated by including a sample solution into all reaction reagents, excluding the enzyme (α-amylase) solution. The reaction mixture was incubated at 37 °C for 20 minutes. Following incubation, the reaction was stoped by adding of 25 µL of 1 M HCl, followed by addition of 100 µL of iodine-potassium iodide (IKI) solution. The absorbance was quantified at 630 nm, and The data were presented as IC50 values. The percentage of inhibition (%) was computed by the following equation :

$$I\,\% = 1 - [(Ac - Ae) – (As – Ab) / (Ac – Ae)]$$

Where : As represents the absorbance of the complete reaction mixture ; Ab corresponds to the absorbance of the blank containing extract, sodium phosphate buffer, and IKI ; Ae represents the absorbance of control containing solvant instead of extract, enzyme, strach, HCl and IKI ; Ac corresponds to the absorbance of the control containing solvant instead of extract, sodium phosphate buffer, strach, HCl and IKI.

1.7. 3 Urease Inhibition Activity

The inhibition of urease was evaluated by mesuring ammonia (Taha et al., 2018). Consequently, 25 µL of urease solution (1 mg mL–1), 10 µL of each extract or thiourea (reference inhibitor), 50 µL of buffered urea solution (substrate), 45 µL of phenolic reagent comprising sodium nitroprusside (0.0125%) and phenol (1%), and then 70 µL of alkalin reagent (composed 0.5% NaOH and 0.2% sodium hypochlorite) were mixted. Following by incubation for 50 minutes at 30 °C, the absorbance was recorded at 630 nm. The inhibitory activity was determined by the identical equation employed for the ChE inhibition experiment, and IC_{50} values were calculated.

1.7.4 Tyrosinase Inhibition Activity

The Tyrosinase enzyme inhibitory was assessed by spectrophotometric method and using L-DOPA as a substrate according to Deveci et al. (2018). A reaction mixture containing 10 µL of each extract or reference inhibitor (kojic acid), 150 µL phosphate buffer (pH 6.8), and 20 µL tyrosinase solution was prepared in a 96 well plate. After 10 minutes of incubation at 37 °C, 20 µL substrate L-DOPA was added, followed by a second incubation for 10 minutes at 37 °C. Absorbance was measured at 475 nm. The inhibitory effect was expressed as IC_{50} values. The inhibition percentage was calculated using the same approach as described in the cholinesterase inhibition assay.

1.8 Statistical Analysis

All data were presented as means ± SD from three replicates. IC50 values were determined by regression analysis.

A one-way ANOVA test was used for statistical evaluation. The values were considered different when the p-value was below 0.05.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1 Yields of Extraction

Extraction is an essential phase in phytochemistry, as it directly influences the recovery, concentration, and biological efficacy of plant-derived chemicals. The Table 1 indicates that the extraction yields of the two examined plants were comparatively similar. These results demonstrate the efficacy of the solvents employed and may signify discrepancies in chemical composition and ensuing biological activities, that should be further explored in the subsequent sections.

The extraction method (maceration, decoction, infusion), the choice of solvents, the conditions of the extraction, and the chemical properties of the molecules to be extracted all have an effect on the yield and chemical composition of the extracts, which in turn affects the biological activities that these metabolites cause.

Maceration was the main method used to get the substance out. In this traditional process, plant material is soaked in a suitable solvent at ambient temperature for a certain duration. This lets soluble parts of the plant material penetrate into the solvent. Maceration is easy, cheap, and works well for keeping thermolabile chemicals, but it usually takes longer to extract and needs more solvent than newer methods like ultrasound or microwave-assisted extraction (addo et al., 2021).

Therefore, the combination of water and a solvent proves to be more efficient for the extraction of bioactive compounds than the use of a pure solvent, as it promotes molecular diffusion thru high mass transfer, thereby improving cellular porosity (Zardo et al., 2021).

Table 1. Yields extraction of Echium paniculatum and Anchusa azurea aerial parts

Extracts	Yields (%)
E. paniculatum	10.45
A. azurea	9.87

2.2 Total Ploypphenols and Flavonoids

This study assessed total phenolic content using the Folin-Ciocalteu method and total flavonoid content by the aluminum chloride colorimetric assay. These methodologies are broadly recognized and commonly utilized in phytochemical analysis owing to their simplicity, reproducibility, and uniformity.

In terms of total phenolic content (TPC), Echium paniculatum had a superior value (97.61 ± 0.57µg GAE mg^{-1} of extract) relative to Anchusa azurea. In contrast, The total flavonoid conctent (TFC) in Anchusa azurea (46.18± 0.29 µg QE mg^{-1} of extract) was higher than in Echium paniculatum.

The data reveal a notable disparity in the distribution of secondary metabolites between the two extracts, with Echium paniculatum demonstrating a higher total polyphenol concentration, whereas Anchusa azurea is characterized by a greater flavonoid concentration.

The variance in the distribution of TPC and TFC can be ascribed to multiple factors: the polarity and type of solvent employed, which affect the selectivity and solubility of phenolic compounds; and the physiological functions of these secondary metabolites in plants, including defense and respiration. Indeed, flavonoids contribute to these processes by modulating electron transport in photosynthesis, shielding leaf tissues from UV radiation (Ghitti et al., 2022), and offering protection against biotic and abiotic stressors. Furthermore, flavonoid biosynthesis has demonstrated itself as a practically universal stress response mechanism, triggered by many stressors, and aiding in plant defense through the production of phytoalexins in reaction to microbial assaults (Pucker & Selmar, 2022 ; Tiku, 2020).

Table 2. Phenolic and flavonoid contents of Echium paniculatum and Anchusa azurea aerial parts

Extracts	**TPC**	**TFC**
	(µg GAE mg^{-1} extract)	**(µg QE mg^{-1} extract)**
E. paniculatum	97.61 ± 0.57	28.68 ± 0.22
A. azurea	83.40 ± 1.35	46.18± 0.29

GAE : Galic Acid Equivalent ; QE : Quercetine Equivalent. All values represent the mean ± SD (n=3).

2.3.Antioxidant Activity

The assessment of antioxidant activity of Echium paniculatum lag. and Anchusa azurea Mill through multiple complementary assays indicates that both plants demonstrate significant but moderate activity, revealing distinct differences based on the employed mechanism of action (Table 3).

Table 3. Results of antioxidant activity of Echium paniculatum lag. and Anchusa azurea Mill extracts

Samples	**DPPH Assay**	**ABTS· Assay**	**Reducing Power Assay**	**Phenanthroline Assay**
	IC_{50} (µg mL^{-1})		**$A_{0.50}$ (µg mL^{-1})**	
E. paniculatum	50.02 ± 1.10^{dhi}	31.12 ± 0.18^{dhi}	44.98 ± 2.00^{bfj}	20.67 ± 0.51^{dhi}
A. azurea	51.14 ± 1.48^{dhi}	32.01 ± 0.30^{dhi}	41.82 ± 0.65^{dhi}	10.60 ± 0.71^{cgk}
Ascorbic Acid	9.02 ± 0.08	2.43 ± 0.01	5.84 ±0.02	2.82 ± 0.02
BHA	9.01 ± 0.04	2.21 ± 0.03	5.02 ±0.08	2.43 ± 0.08
BHT	12.89 ± 0.45	3.40 ± 0.14	11.21 ± 0.24	4.79 ± 0.33

IC_{50} and $A_{0.50}$ values were ascertaine by linear regression and are presented as mean ± SD (n = 3). The statistical significance of the extracts in comparison to the standards: Ascorbic Acid (ap < 0.05, bp < 0.01, cp < 0.001, dp < 0.0001); BHA (ep < 0.05, fp < 0.01, gp < 0.001, hp < 0.0001); BHT (ip < 0.05, jp < 0.01, kp < 0.001, lp < 0.0001).

In the DPPH and ABTS tests, Echium paniculatum was more active than Anchusa azurea, with IC50 of 50.02 and 31.12 µg mL–1, respectively. This could be explored by the distinct chemical composition of each extract, especially concerning the polarity of the phenolic compounds. The difference in values between these two tests is because they work in different ways: DPPH is more responsive to lipophilic substances, whereas ABTS can identify both hydrophilic and lipophilic molecules (Re et al., 1999).

In terms of reducing power (RP), Echium paniculatum had modestly superior activity compared to Anchusa azurea, indicating a stronger ability to donate electrons and reduce oxidized intermediates. Multiple studies have demonstrated a good association between reducing power and polyphenol content (Oyaizu, 1986).

The phenanthroline assay, which assesses the compounds' capacity to chelate metal ions or reduce Fe^{3+} to Fe^{2+}, demonstrates a significant distinction between the two plants. Echium paniculatum has markedly superior activity compared to Anchusa azurea, indicating an enhanced ability for metal chelation or iron reduction. This characteristic is significant as metal ions like iron can stimulate the generation of free radicals through Fenton-type reactions (Xiao et al., 2024). Consequently, elevated activity in this assay signifies a protective capacity against metal-induced oxidative damage.

Additionally, the comparison with the standards (ascorbic acid, BHA, and BHT) shows that the standards have much stronger antioxidant activities in all tests. This difference can be explained by the high reactivity and purity of standard compounds, while plant extracts are complex mixtures where active compounds may be present in lower amounts (Prior et al., 2005). In summary, these results demonstrate that antioxidant activity depends on both the quantity and structure of the bioactive compounds present in the extracts.

2.4 Photoprotective Effect

Defense against detrimental sun radiation, specifically ultraviolet B (UVB, 290-320 nm) and ultraviolet A (UVA, 320-400 nm), is predominantly facilitated by the skin's inherent protective systems, including melanin production. Nonetheless, these innate defenses may become inadequate with severe or extended exposure.

In these instances, exterior protective measures are crucial to mitigate sunburn, premature skin aging, and skin cancer (Verma et al., 2024).

The data presented in Table 4 indicate that the extracts from both plants possess significant photoprotective potential, categorised as "high protection." The slight superiority of Echium paniculatum over Anchusa azurea can be ascribed to its phytochemical profile, particularly its higher concentration of total polyphenols, acknowledged for their ability to absorb UV radiation and neutralise free radicals induced by solar exposure (Ghazi, 2022 ; Rao & Zheng, 2025). The flavonoids found in Anchusa azurea aid in UV absorption and cellular protection ; nevertheless, their quantity and molecular structure, such as an increase in hydroxyl groups and certain ring structures shifts the absorption peak and can alter the intensity, thereby affecting UV-screening efficiency may account for the observed variances (Laoué et al., 2022 ; Taniguchi et al., 2023).

Although the measured sun protection factor is inferior to that of the Venus reference (50.31), these findings are nonetheless significant for application as natural photoprotective agents, particularly in cosmetic formulations.

Table 4. Results of photoprotective activity of Echium paniculatum and Anchusa azurea Extracts

Samples	**SPF**	**Protection category**
E. paniculatum	38.77 ± 0.30	High protection
A. azurea	36.92 ± 0.41	High Protection
Venus	50.31 ± 0.20	Very high protection

All measures were expessed as mean ± SD (n=3)

2.5 Cholinesterase Inhibition Activity

The intricate human neurological system coordinates physiological activities, however its gradual degradation may result in severe neurodegenerative disorders, including Alzheimer's disease (Salman et al., 2021). The modulation of acetylcholine (ACh), a neurotransmitter vital for cognitive activities, is essential in this setting.

This regulation is facilitated by cholinesterases, especially acetylcholinesterase (AChE), which hydrolyzes acetylcholine (ACh) (Masondo et al., 2019). Excessive enzymatic activity can diminish the availability of ACh at the synaptic level, hence contributing to memory problems and cognitive decline (Villeda-González et al., 2024). Consequently, the inhibition of cholinesterases represents a promising therapeutic approach.

The inhibitory activity of the extracts on cholinesterase enzymes was measured by the 50% inhibitory concentration (IC_{50}). Regarding butyrylcholinesterase (BChE), both plants offer selective inhibition, with moderate efficacy for E. paniculatum (212.90 ± 2.60 µg mL–1), while A. azurea demonstrates lower inhibition compared to galantamine (Table 5). This partial inhibition indicates the presence of compounds likely to interact with the enzyme, but at relatively low concentrations, which explains the notable difference with galantamine, a specific and potent inhibitor. Regarding acetylcholinesterase (AChE), E. paniculatum showed no significant inhibition at the tested concentration (IC_{50} > 500 µg/mL), and no inhibition was observed for A. azurea. This enzymatic selectivity could be attributed to the chemical nature of the compounds present in the extracts, such as flavonoids and polyphenols, known to interact differently with the active sites of BChE and AChE (Uçar Akyürek et al., 2025). E. paniculatum, exhibiting a high concentration of total polyphenols, appears to contain metabolites more effective in inhibiting BChE, suggesting that it could be a potential source of natural selective BChE inhibitors, thereby justifying further phytopharmacological studies to identify the active compounds and evaluate their mechanism of action.

Table 5. Results of cholinesterase inhibitory activity of E. paniculatum and A. azurea extracts

Samples	**BChE**	**AChE**
	IC_{50} (µg mL^{-1})	**IC_{50} (µg mL^{-1})**
E. paniculatum	212.90 ± 2.60	> 500
A. azurea	330.03 ± 2.38	NA
Galantamine	34.76 ± 1.98	6.27 ± 1.15

IC50 values were calculated by linear regression analysis and expressed as mean ± SD (n = 3). The statistical significance of the extracts in relation to the galantamine was: $p < 0.0001$. NA : not active.

The inhibition results for α-amylase, urease, and tyrosinase indicated that neither extract demonstrated any measurable inhibitory activity against these enzymes under the experimental conditions when compared to the standards acarbose, thiourea, and kojic acid with values of 290.01, 95.95, and 74.49 μg mL–1, respectivily, implying that the compounds in these extracts either lack significant affinity for the active sites of these enzymes, are present in insufficient concentrations to elicit a detectable effect, or are inadequately extracted by the solvent employed, notwithstanding the possible presence of flavonoids or other polyphenols.

This biological selectivity highlights the significance of the chemical properties of secondary metabolites and their particular interaction with enzyme targets. Subsequent investigations, encompassing concentration variations, alternative solvents, or the isolation of individual compounds, may provide a more comprehensive examination of their inhibitory capability.

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive assessment of the biological potential of hydroethanolic extracts of Echium paniculatum and Anchusa azurea, adopting an integrated approach that combines phytochemical analysis and the evaluation of various biological activities. Les résultats ont indiqué que les extraits sont riches en composés phénoliques et en flavonoïdes, corrélés avec une activité antioxydante modérée validée par plusieurs essais in vitro. Moreover, high SPF values indicate significant photoprotective potential, suggesting a potential application in the cosmetic sector.

Regarding enzyme inhibition, the extracts revealed moderate selective activity toward butyrylcholinesterase, while showing no significant effect on other enzymes such as α-amylase, urease, and tyrosinase. Cette sélectivité met en évidence la spécificité des interactions entre les métabolites secondaires et leurs cibles biologiques.

These results confirm that the analyzed plants represent promising sources of bioactive compounds with pharmacological and cosmetic potential.

However, further research is required, particularly the identification of active molecules and in vivo evaluation, to deepen the understanding of their mechanisms of action and optimize their use in therapeutic applications.

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CHAPTER 2
MENTAL RATE VARIABILITY: A NEW METRIC FOR MEASURING THE CONNECTION WITH THE BRAIN AND THE BODY SYSTEM

[1]Viviane DASILVA
[2]Prof. Dr. Olimpia PINO

[1]Department of Medicine and Surgery, University of Parma, Parma, Italy, vivianedasilva@brain-performance.eu, ORCID ID: 0009-0002-4611-0101
[2]University of Parma Department of Medice and Surgery Neuroscience Unit, olimpia.pino@unipr.it

INTRODUCTION

Biological organisms operate in a constant balance between internal order and adaptability to external change. This dynamic equilibrium emerges from nonlinear interactions and feedback loops, coupled with stochastic fluctuations originating from sensory variability, brainstem discharges, and thermal energy at the microscopic level. In the context of brain function, these processes manifest through neurophysiological properties, such as ion channel activity and dendritic filtering, integrated via short- and long-range axonal connections. The translation of these internal states into observable measurements requires precise mapping functions, connecting variables like neuronal firing rates to non-invasive signals, including scalp electroencephalography (EEG) or blood oxygen level dependent (BOLD) imaging. Such mappings enable empirical predictions and validation through experimental data. The complexity of Mental Rate Variability (MRV) can thus be framed within stochastic differential equation models, where the temporal evolution of brain states reflects both deterministic biophysical parameters and probabilistic influences (Roberts et al., 2017). Measurement reliability plays a decisive role in accurately capturing these associations. High reliability values have been reported for behavioural measures such as NIH Toolbox scores and CBCL, as well as structural MRI metrics like cortical thickness. By contrast, resting-state functional connectivity (RSFC) measurements show lower stability across major datasets (ABCD, HCP, and UKB), indicating that improvements in signal acquisition could enhance the precision in modelling MRV-related phenomena (Marek et al., 2022). EEG-based modalities offer unique advantages for real-time assessment of brain electrical activity due to their temporal resolution and reduced hardware requirements. The postsynaptic potentials reflected in EEG signals can be parsed into frequency bands—delta, theta, alpha—or waveform types including slow wave, fast wave, sharp wave, and spike wave. Intracranial EEG provides enhanced accuracy and signal-to-noise ratio given its proximity to neuronal populations, while scalp EEG enables broader clinical applications despite its lower spatial fidelity. Both rely on voltage amplification to capture electroneurographic patterns from cortex-aligned neuronal ensembles (Zhang et al., 2023).

Quantitative transformations of EEG into analyzable formats are fundamental when integrating metabolic or inflammatory biomarkers with neuroelectric outputs in MRV assessment. Approaches like Forward Backward Fourier Transform (FBFT) convert complex electrophysiological data into interpretable time–frequency image matrices, forming the basis for convolutional neural network classification schemes applied to disorders such as epilepsy or Alzheimer's disease. These transformations support both automated analysis pipelines and human visual inspection, though manual evaluations introduce subjective variability linked to assessor expertise (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). Signal segmentation techniques like Principal Component Analysis (PCA) have also been applied to EEG data to extract meaningful features across multiple channels, enhancing the interpretability of complex electrophysiological signals and potentially improving MRV assessment accuracy (Nakate & Bahirgonde, 2015).

Inflammatory signalling networks add another dimension to MRV modelling. Circulating cytokines modulate neurotransmitter metabolism, neuroendocrine interactions, and synaptic plasticity. An equilibrium between pro- and anti-inflammatory factors appears vital for optimal cognitive function; excessive pro-inflammatory activity, for example, during cytomegalovirus-associated inflammaging, can impair neuroendocrine balance and cognitive fluidity (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Neurogenic niches further influence brain dynamism relevant to MRV. Microglial activation shifts signalling balance between pro- and anti-inflammatory states, altering adult neurogenesis trajectories through cytokine release patterns such as TNF-\alpha, IL-6, or TGF-\beta with context-dependent outcomes. From an analytical standpoint, graph-theoretical frameworks allow integration of diverse biomarkers, metabolic factors such as C-reactive protein levels, alongside cognitive test outputs, into unified topologies where modular organisation of nodes reveals physiological interrelationships across hierarchical systems (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Dimensional reduction methods like Laplacian eigenmaps maintain the local geometry of population-level neural activity embeddings for detecting behaviorally relevant trajectories without distortion from global constraints (Mitchell-Heggs et al., 2023).

Age-related decline in neural stem cell (NSC) proliferation capacity also interacts with systemic inflammation in shaping MRV profiles. Increased quiescence periods for NSCs during ageing skew division modes away from neurogenesis-oriented asymmetry toward self-renewal symmetry, reducing regenerative throughput (Santos et al., 2025). This synthesis positions MRV as a composite parameter emerging from intertwined biochemical cascades, metabolic fluxes, inflammatory states, and electrophysiological rhythms. Clinicians equipped with biophysically grounded models can move beyond static categorical diagnoses toward an operational characterisation of brain dynamics that is actionable in real time. By focusing on biomarker ratios, for instance, cortisol-to-DHEA or IGF-1 to IGFBP-3, and their ideal physiological ranges, interventions including neuromodulation or mitochondrial bioenergetic optimisation may be guided by quantitative evidence rather than label-based heuristics (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Recent metabolomic analyses suggest that integrating plasma lipid and hydrophilic metabolite profiles with genetic risk factors such as APOE4 status may further improve the stratification of cognitive decline trajectories (Oka et al., 2024). Furthermore, the integration of psychiatric and neurological perspectives through interdisciplinary collaboration appears to enhance personalised treatment strategies, suggesting that MRV modelling may benefit from incorporating multifactorial clinical insights to better capture individual variability (Siraj, 2023). This methodological stance links practical assessments directly to mathematical representations of complex neural systems (Roberts et al., 2017) centring treatment on enhancing functional potential.

1. FOUNDATIONS OF MENTAL RATE VARIABILITY (MRV)-DEFINING MRV IN THE CONTEXT OF BIOPHYSICS

In a contemporary biophysical framework, mental rate variability (MRV) is conceptualised as the emergent property of coupled deterministic and stochastic neural processes. These dynamics are nonlinearly modulated by systemic biochemical and metabolic states, necessitating a multidisciplinary approach to their quantification.

Stochastic differential equations (SDEs) provide the requisite mathematical foundation for linking micro- and mesoscopic neural activity to observable brain signals. These models incorporate the temporal evolution of neuronal state variables under both fixed biophysical constraints such as voltage-gated ion channel kinetics and dendritic filtering and random perturbations originating from sensory inputs, brainstem discharges, and thermal noise. The mapping between latent neuronal states and measurable outputs, such as scalp electroencephalography (EEG) or blood oxygen level-dependent (BOLD) signals, enables empirical testing of MRV hypotheses using high-resolution functional neuroimaging data (Roberts et al., 2017) EEG, in particular, stands out for its capacity to record cortical electrical activity in real time, offering a fine-grained view of oscillatory patterns relevant to MRV stability (Yakovleva & Krysko, 2024). Transforming these raw signals into interpretable formats is essential for their quantitative integration within broader biophysical models. Advanced computational methods, such as the Forward Backward Fourier Transform (FBFT), convert raw neuroelectric data into time–frequency image matrices suitable for algorithmic processing or expert inspection. These representations can be paired with convolutional neural networks (CNNs) trained on disorder-specific datasets, yielding accuracy rates above 78% for certain conditions when evaluated visually by experts (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). Furthermore, hybrid feature extraction approaches that integrate linear, non-linear, and statistical descriptors capture both the predictable and irregular components of EEG rhythms, accurately reflecting the complexity inherent to pathological neural states, such as alcohol-dependence (Yakovleva & Krysko, 2024).

2. THE BIOCHEMICAL ARCHITECTURE OF MRV

By situating MRV within this analytical ecosystem, clinicians can transition from subjective categorical diagnostic labels toward parameter-driven assessments leveraging specific biochemical ratios. These markers directly influence network topology metrics in integrated biomarker-cognition graphs.

For instance, insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) interacts bidirectionally with pro-inflammatory cytokines: IGF-1 increases anti-inflammatory IL-10 secretion while suppressing pro-inflammatory signaling, whereas cytokines can attenuate IGF-1 activity by enhancing the production of IGF-binding protein-3 (IGFBP-3). In geriatric populations, reduced peripheral IGF-1 correlates strongly with diminished cognitive performance; consequently, supplementation has been proposed to mitigate these deficits. Within a graph-theoretical construct, IGFBP-3 may emerge as a critical hub node alongside cognitive measures, such as fluid intelligence or working memory, in optimally segregated neural networks (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Inflammatory status further shapes MRV profiles through chronic low-grade activation, a process termed "inflammaging," which disrupts neuroendocrine equilibrium and constricts mental bandwidth. Latent infections, such as Cytomegalovirus (CMV), modulate both immune mediator levels and cognitive associations. In CMV-negative cohorts, lower peripheral inflammation coincides with stronger cognitive hubs and shorter characteristic path lengths in biomarker networks, suggesting higher local and global efficiency. Conversely, networks in CMV-positive groups demonstrate an increase in connector nodes facilitating inter-modular flow but a decrease in highly autonomous modules (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). This modular imbalance is not merely a structural observation; it manifests in physiological throughput linked to entropy-information tradeoffs that dictate MRV stability and cognitive flexibility.

3. NEUROGENIC NICHES AND REGENERATIVE ADAPTABILITY

Neurogenic niche dynamics further entangle the biophysical determinants of MRV. Microglia regulate adult neurogenesis via context-dependent cytokine release: tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF-α) and interleukin-6 (IL-6) promote astrocytic-lineage specification under specific conditions, while transforming growth factor-beta (TGF-β) can either induce or inhibit neurogenesis depending on its source and the local microenvironment. Astrocytes contribute vital trophic support through D-serine release, guiding neural stem cells (NSCs) toward neurogenic fates.

Endothelial cells augment this process via soluble factors linked to vascular permeability in neurogenic regions. These cell-level interactions intersect with systemic nutrient-sensing pathways including the insulin/IGF-1 axis and mTOR signaling that respond to caloric restriction by shifting metabolism toward ketosis. This metabolic shift has been suggested to extend longevity and potentially enhance neural regenerative capacity. However, age-related decline in NSC proliferation introduces a degenerative dimension: increased quiescence periods favor symmetrical self-renewal divisions over asymmetrical, neurogenesis-oriented divisions, thereby reducing regenerative output. This decline stems from internal metabolic deficits in mitochondrial maintenance and proteostasis prominent hallmarks that limit cellular adaptability. This reduction parallels decreased MRV flexibility by attenuating the system's ability to integrate new neuronal elements into existing circuits (Santos et al., 2025). Modulating the NSC secretome offers a promising therapeutic avenue; factors such as IGF-II or Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) secreted from transplanted NSCs may confer neuroprotective benefits without the direct integration of cells, circumventing risks like tumorigenicity while providing anti-inflammatory activity that counters detrimental microglial states (Santos et al., 2025). Clinically, defining MRV biophysically implies quantifying how electrophysiological variability aligns with ratios of endocrine regulators (e.g., cortisol-to-DHEA) and metabolic indices like C-reactive protein (CRP) (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Notably, disruptions in the mTOR pathway can alter synaptic homeostasis, potentially modulating the stochastic elements embedded within MRV (Kútna et al., 2021). Recent metabolomic analyses also suggest that plasma metabolites, such as branched-chain amino acids and fatty acid profiles, serve as accessible biomarkers to refine MRV assessments and cognitive decline trajectories (Qiang et al., 2024).

4. COMPARATIVE DYNAMICS: MRV AND HEART RATE VARIABILITY (HRV)

Comparisons between MRV and heart rate variability (HRV) reveal conceptual resonance alongside distinct biological interpretations.

HRV is a well-established indicator of Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) balance, capturing heartbeat fluctuations as proxies for sympathetic-parasympathetic interplay. Decreased HRV is documented in various neurocognitive and stress-related disorders, where specific indices like RMSSD and High Frequency (HF) power show coordinated reductions, acting as markers of generalised autonomic dysregulation. However, diversity emerges when multiple HRV parameters are examined simultaneously; distinct profiles across psychiatric diagnoses suggest that composite indices offer superior discrimination compared to singular metrics (Wang et al., 2025). MRV shares this multidimensional complexity: the integration of electrophysiological rhythms, inflammatory mediators, and endocrine ratios produces patterns specific to functional brain states rather than static labels. From a mechanistic standpoint, both systems are sensitive to stressor exposure. High mental workload reduces HRV power via sympathetic activation, mirroring MRV's sensitivity to systemic challenges that constrain regenerative output and disrupt oscillatory stability. Reductions in baroreflex sensitivity parallel diminished adaptive entropy-information balance observed when MRV networks lose integration efficiency (Delliaux et al., 2019). Stress physiology research indicates overlapping regulatory circuits; for example, ventromedial prefrontal cortex (vmPFC) inhibition over the amygdala reduces perceived threat and physiological stress responses. Vagal indices like HRV can assess the functional integration of these vmPFC–brainstem pathways, just as MRV quantifies cortical network integration via graph-theoretical metrics (Kim et al., 2018). The comparison between MRV and HRV extends to therapeutic implications. Intervention protocols—ranging from psychological therapies and pharmacological treatments to physical interventions like repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS)—have been shown to recalibrate RMSSD and LF/HF ratios (Wang et al., 2025). Similarly, neuromodulation techniques targeting EEG-defined oscillatory disarray can recalibrate biophysical parameters such as mitochondrial proteostasis (Santos et al., 2025). While systemic inflammation impairs both cardiac rhythm regulation and neural oscillatory coherence, the sampling domains differ: HRV captures peripheral cardiac dynamics, whereas MRV details the originating cortical-biophysical architecture.

Harmonising these modalities through multimodal assessments combining ECG-derived HRV and EEG-based MRV profiling creates richer datasets for machine learning stratification of physiological states (Castro Ribeiro et al., 2023). Ethically, both measures align with the shift away from stigmatising diagnostic labels toward function-oriented profiles grounded in measurable physiology (Delliaux et al., 2019). Furthermore, integrating neuroimaging biomarkers with electrophysiological measures enhances the early detection of subtle brain dysfunctions (Joseph, 2024). Emerging evidence also indicates that specific meditative practices, such as OM chanting, induce measurable changes in theta and alpha power, potentially reflecting enhanced attentional states that could be indexed via MRV (Rajput et al., 2023). Finally, the impact of comorbid metabolic conditions, such as diabetes mellitus, underscores the necessity of incorporating metabolic status into MRV and HRV analyses to improve the specificity of physiological profiling in neurocognitive disorders (Nagai et al., 2022).

5. THE BRAIN AS A THERMODYNAMIC MACHINE: A STOCHASTIC BIOPHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptualising the brain as a thermal machine draws directly on the formalism of stochastic dynamics, where temporal evolution emerges from the interplay between deterministic biophysical constraints and stochastic forces. Neural systems operate under constant bombardment from sensory fluctuations, intrinsic brainstem discharges, and microscopic thermal noise. This baseline stochasticity introduces an unavoidable background "heat" into the system, establishing the thermodynamic context for information processing. Ion channel kinetics and dendritic filtering set boundary conditions for energy transfer, while macroscopic feedback loops mediated by axonal connections govern network-level stability (Roberts et al., 2017). In this framework, mental bandwidth is mapped to the system’s capacity to maintain low-entropy informational structures despite continuous thermal perturbation. Stochastic differential equations (SDEs) allow for the explicit modelling of these states by incorporating drift terms (deterministic flows) and diffusion terms (variability from noise sources).

The coefficients in these equations represent measurable physiological parameters, integrating electrophysiological data with metabolic markers. EEG is particularly suited for this, as it captures macroscopic manifestations of microscopic energy fluctuations (Yakovleva & Krysko, 2024). When processed via Forward Backwards Fourier Transform (FBFT), oscillatory modes can be quantified based on their susceptibility to stochastic dispersion (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). High-amplitude, low-frequency components may indicate low-entropy states that conserve energy, but risk reduced adaptability, whereas broad spectral distributions signal heightened entropy that may lead to neural burnout without sufficient ATP resynthesis. Mitochondrial performance serves as the core of this "heat engine." Age-related decline in mitochondrial maintenance alters nutrient-sensing pathways, such as the insulin/IGF-1 and mTOR axes, shifting metabolic flux toward less efficient regimes (Santos et al., 2025). Conversely, caloric restriction-induced ketosis represents a shift toward higher-efficiency fuel usage, generating less "waste heat" per unit of informational throughput. Systemic inflammatory load functions similarly to turbulence in fluid thermodynamics; "inflammaging" increases the metabolic cost of maintaining synaptic order, effectively raising baseline entropy production (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Cytokines interact with neuroendocrine regulators like IGF-1 and IGFBP-3 in feedback loops that either buffer or exacerbate this energetic drain. Under inflammatory stress, regulatory hub nodes become underpowered, forcing compensatory overactivity in remaining circuits—a state akin to an engine running on fewer cylinders. The neurovascular niche acts as a heat exchanger, where endothelial cells and astrocytes regulate nutrient flow and provide metabolic support via gliotransmitters like D-serine. Microglial activation modulates local "temperature gradients" through cytokine release; their balance determines whether the system facilitates energy capture (regeneration) or energy dissipation (degradation). At a computational level, modular organisation affects how perturbations spread. High modular segregation confines entropy locally, preserving global order at a lower energetic cost, whereas high connector-hub prevalence increases resilience at a higher metabolic expense (Di Benedetto et al., 2019).

Clinically, the ratio between energetic input markers (e.g., mitochondrial output) and entropy indicators (e.g., spectral EEG dispersion) serves as a real-time performance metric. A low cortisol-to-DHEA ratio under stable oscillatory coherence signifies efficient thermodynamic conversion, while broad-spectrum desynchronization indicates unproductive heat generation. Ethically, this lens promotes non-labelling practice, evaluating patients on continuous scales of efficiency rather than categorical disorders. Interventions—ranging from neuromodulation to pharmacological targeting of nutrient-sensing pathways—aim to maximise bandwidth within safe operating limits (Santos et al., 2025). Furthermore, integrating peripheral metabolomic biomarkers (Tan et al., 2023) and wearable sensor data, such as PPG-derived heart rate variability (Singstad et al., 2021), offers a non-invasive window into the dynamic balance between energy supply and entropy production in real time

6. THE METABOLIC SHIFT TOWARD GLYCOLYTIC DOMINANCE: IMPACT OF LACTATE ACCUMULATION ON MENTAL PROCESSING

In the biophysical framework of neural dynamics, lactate accumulation serves as a critical indicator of substrate utilisation shifts within the brain's thermodynamic engine. These shifts have profound implications for both entropy generation and information retention. While explicit quantification of lactate levels is often absent in standard clinical assessments, the metabolic hallmarks of neural ageing including nutrient-sensing pathway dysregulation, mitochondrial maintenance deficits, and altered trophic signalling allow for a sophisticated inference of how lactate integrates into the broader Mental Rate Variability (MRV) model. Lactate is fundamentally linked to glycolytic flux. Under conditions of heightened cortical demand or impaired oxidative phosphorylation (OXPHOS), pyruvate is reduced to lactate to regenerate NAD^+, sustaining ATP production despite mitochondrial inefficiency. In ageing neural tissue, nutrient-sensing pathways such as the insulin/IGF-1 and mTOR axes skew toward less efficient regimes. Here, elevated lactate levels signal a compensatory reliance on anaerobic glycolysis, reflecting a thermodynamic state that prioritises immediate energy yield over long-term regenerative capacity (Santos et al., 2025).

This metabolic reconfiguration interacts synergistically with neuroinflammatory processes. Chronic low-grade inflammation, or "inflammaging," imposes a high energetic cost to maintain synaptic order. Pro-inflammatory cytokines, specifically TNF-\alpha and IL-6, exacerbate glycolytic reliance by impairing mitochondrial function and restricting oxygen utilisation via microvascular alterations (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Furthermore, elevated IGFBP-3 levels—driven by pro-inflammatory activity—sequester IGF-1, diminishing mitochondrial biogenesis and efficient oxidative metabolism. This feedback loop fosters a scenario where lactate production becomes chronic, correlating with diminished mental bandwidth as energy is dissipated as thermal waste rather than structured informational output. Neurogenic niches respond to these metabolic shifts in context-dependent ways. Endothelial cells in vascularized neurogenic regions regulate nutrient flow; when lactate dominates the microenvironment, permeability changes can alter neuroblast migration and neural stem cell (NSC) differentiation. Astrocytes, which typically shuttle lactate to neurons via monocarboxylate transporters (MCTs) for oxidative use, may instead become primary sources of glycolytic output if systemic conditions inhibit mitochondrial respiration. Simultaneously, pro-inflammatory microglia release cytokines that push NSCs toward astrocytic lineage specification rather than neurogenesis, compounding regenerative decline (Santos et al., 2025). In graph-theoretical terms, regenerative hubs become underpowered under glycolytic dominance. To compensate, connector nodes redistribute functional loads across modules at a higher energetic expense, leading to decreased global efficiency (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). This is further complicated by the proteostatic environment; quiescent NSCs depend on lysosome-autophagy pathways to maintain protein quality. Lactate accumulation in the aged brain often coincides with reduced lysosomal clearance due to ATP scarcity, tilting NSC division modes toward symmetrical self-renewal rather than asymmetrical neurogenesis.

7. CLINICAL MODELLING AND INTERVENTIONAL STRATEGY

Coupling EEG outputs with biochemical markers—such as the cortisol-to-DHEA ratio and C-reactive protein (CRP)—allows for the modelling of how electrophysiological patterns map onto integrated metabolic-inflammatory states. High-lactate conditions can be detected indirectly through correlations between spectral dispersion coefficients and ratios indicating oxidative stress. Advanced EEG signal processing, particularly hybrid deep learning frameworks and spiking neural networks, offers promising avenues for detecting subtle signatures of lactate dominance (Asha et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2023). Clinically, this framework supports a non-labelling practice, characterising patients by their metabolic-inflammation-electrophysiology profiles. Interventions aim to rebalance substrate utilisation toward oxidative metabolism by modulating nutrient-sensing pathways such as reducing mTOR hyperactivation while stimulating sirtuin activity (Santos et al., 2025). Anti-inflammatory protocols restore microvascular oxygen delivery and trophic signalling hubs. Ultimately, the successful reduction of pathological lactate should manifest as restored modular segregation in biomarker-cognition graphs, where regenerative hubs regain centrality and stochastic variability is minimised within actionable biophysical metrics (Roberts et al., 2017; Di Benedetto et al., 2019).

8. ALLOSTASIS AND BLOOD CHEMISTRY: AUTONOMIC AND NEUROENDOCRINE DYSREGULATION

Chronic adaptation to environmental, physiological, and internal stressors modifies multiple regulatory systems, increasing allostatic load—the cumulative biophysical cost of maintaining homeostasis amid persistent perturbation. Within a biochemical-metabolic framework, this cost emerges from sustained shifts in endocrine ratios, inflammatory cascades, autonomic control circuits, and neuroenergetic throughput.

Elevated allostatic load reflects a prolonged imbalance between energy input and entropy generation, where compensatory mechanisms themselves become sources of further physiological strain. From an autonomic perspective, prolonged sympathetic nervous system (SNS) activation coupled with parasympathetic (PNS) hypoactivity diminishes heart rate variability (HRV), a validated index of vagal function (Kim et al., 2018). Reduced HRV signifies lower regulatory efficiency and higher vulnerability to stress-induced pathology. In chronic maladaptive states, impaired vagal control increases susceptibility to sympathetically driven ischemia, creating a cycle where cardiovascular integrity fails to buffer further stressors (Siepmann et al., 2022). This mirrors Mental Rate Variability (MRV) degradation, where oscillatory dispersion increases while regenerative capacity declines, forcing neural modules into energetically expensive synchronisation patterns. Neuroendocrine interactions exacerbate this cost. Prolonged threat perception engages the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis, disrupting cardiac autonomic balance and altering cortisol-to-DHEA ratios. These shifts drive immune activation, increasing pro-inflammatory cytokines that predispose individuals to vascular stiffness and hypertension (Siepmann et al., 2022). Furthermore, cytokine activity promotes IGFBP-3 synthesis while reducing IGF-1 availability (Di Benedetto et al., 2019), shifting neurogenic niches toward decreased proliferation a hallmark of heightened allostatic load.

9. NEUROGENIC ATTRITION AND NETWORK TOPOLOGY

The inflammatory state known as "inflammaging" becomes embedded within the allostatic profile. Pro-inflammatory bias skews microglial activation, dampening neural stem cell (NSC) proliferation. Concurrently, astrocytes may redirect resources toward glial lineage production rather than neuronal integration (Santos et al., 2025). This reduces metabolic adaptability, translating into lower mental bandwidth and heightened risk for neural burnout. Graph-theoretical analysis provides a quantitative window into these structural costs. Optimally segmented networks, such as those in low-inflammation cohorts, feature tightly interacting hub nodes within modules.

Conversely, chronic load shifts topology toward connector node prevalence, reducing segregation and increasing the global propagation of perturbations (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). While connectors may offer resilience against localized failure, they raise systemic energetic expense by spreading disturbances, a process paralleling thermodynamic "heat loss" observed in MRV spectral dispersion (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024).

10. METABOLIC INEFFICIENCY AND CLINICAL METRIC

Sustained dysregulation of nutrient-sensing pathways, such as mTOR hyperactivation, inhibits autophagic clearance and mitochondrial turnover (Santos et al., 2025). This leads to decreased oxidative phosphorylation yields and increased glycolytic reliance, raising baseline entropy production per unit of informational work. Additionally, reduced baroreflex sensitivity compromises sympatho-vagal balance, contributing to elevated load scores in integrated MRV-HRV models (Siepmann et al., 2022). Clinically, allostatic load should be assessed via a multimodal architecture combining ECG-derived HRV, Fourier-transformed EEG outputs, and blood chemistry (CRP, cortisol/DHEA, IGF-1/IGFBP-3) (Castro Ribeiro et al., 2023; Di Benedetto et al., 2019). This reframes patient evaluation away from static labels toward continuous-scale profiles of energetic efficiency. Targeted interventions including neuromodulation, pharmacological stabilisation of nutrient sensing, and anti-inflammatory therapeutics aim to restore regenerative throughput (Santos et al., 2025). Emerging strategies in NSC delivery may further counteract the trophic deficits characteristic of high allostatic states (Chawla, 2021), ultimately expanding human potential by lowering the biophysical cost of adaptation.

11. INTEGRATED BIOPHYSICAL CHARACTERISATION OF ALLOSTATIC LOAD AND NEURAL DYNAMICS

Chronic adaptation to environmental and physiological stressors necessitates a cumulative biophysical expenditure known as allostatic load.

Within a unified neuroenergetic framework, this cost manifests as sustained dysregulation across endocrine ratios, inflammatory signalling, and autonomic control. Elevated allostatic load represents a thermodynamic imbalance where energy consumption for homeostatic maintenance exceeds efficient output, leading to heightened entropy and systemic attrition. From an autonomic perspective, the transition to high allostatic states is marked by diminished heart rate variability (HRV). A persistent shift toward sympathetic dominance and parasympathetic withdrawal reduces vagal tone, compromising the physiological buffer against cardiovascular ischemia and arrhythmias (Kim et al., 2018; Siepmann et al., 2022). This peripheral instability mirrors the degradation of Mental Rate Variability (MRV), where neural networks exhibit increased oscillatory dispersion and reduced regenerative flexibility. Neuroendocrine shifts specifically altered cortisol-to-DHEA ratios—drive systemic inflammation ("inflammaging"), which further constrains neural function. Pro-inflammatory cytokines (TNF-\alpha, IL-6) disrupt neurogenic niches by promoting IGFBP-3 synthesis, thereby sequestering IGF-1 and limiting mitochondrial biogenesis (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Graph-theoretical analysis reveals that these constraints shift network topology from efficient modular segregation toward an over-reliance on connector nodes. While this increases resilience to localised failure, it raises the global energetic cost of informational processing (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). Metabolically, chronic load hyperactivates mTOR signalling, inhibiting autophagic clearance and compromising proteostasis within neural stem cells (Santos et al., 2025). This leads to decreased oxidative phosphorylation efficiency and increased glycolytic reliance. Multimodal assessment—integrating ECG-derived HRV, Fourier-transformed EEG, and biochemical markers (CRP, IGF-1/IGFBP-3)—allows clinicians to quantify these costs on a continuous scale. Targeted interventions, including neuromodulation and pharmacological stabilisation of nutrient-sensing pathways, aim to restore regenerative throughput and lower the biophysical cost of adaptation (Chawla, 2021; Santos et al., 2025)

12. FOURIER ANALYSIS AND SPECTRAL DECOMPOSITION

Fourier analysis provides the formal mechanism to convert recorded neurophysiological signals from their time-domain representation into the frequency domain. This enables the characterisation of oscillatory components delta, theta, alpha, and beta bands—that are otherwise obscured in raw traces. Electroencephalography (EEG) signals reflect postsynaptic potentials generated by neurotransmitter binding; while scalp EEG suffers from reduced spatial resolution due to volume conduction through the skull, it retains the high temporal precision necessary for spectral decomposition (Zhang et al., 2023). In signal processing pipelines, the Fast Fourier Transform (FFT) is standard for examining spectral power density (SPD). Advanced iterations, such as the Forward–Backward Fourier Transform (FBFT), partition signals into subarrays and utilise zero-padding to enhance frequency resolution. By evaluating minimum magnitude values jointly from both transforms, FBFT isolates dominant frequency components while eliminating harmonic interference (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). This methodology yields two-dimensional time–frequency images that improve the classification of pathological states, such as epilepsy or alcohol dependence, where high-frequency oscillations often dominate parietal and occipital regions (Yakovleva & Krysko, 2024) . Fourier-derived features are frequently integrated with nonlinear dynamics, such as Lyapunov exponent computations, to capture the transition between signal predictability and chaos. While techniques like Short-Time Fourier Transform (STFT) and Wavelet Transforms offer distinct trade-offs in temporal-spectral detail, Fourier-based models remain a cornerstone for clinical diagnostics, provided that windowing strategies are optimised to minimise spectral leakage. Mathematically, the continuous Fourier transform decomposes a function x(t) into constituent frequencies according to

$$X(f) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} x\,(t) e^{-j2\pi f t}\,\mathrm{d}t$$

where X(f) encodes amplitude and phase information for each frequency f. The inverse transform reconstructs the original signal:

$$x(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} X\,(f)e^{j2\pi ft}\,\mathrm{d}f$$

These formulations underpin both simple FFT implementations and more complex FBFT workflows. In FBFT's case, integration over constrained time intervals is operationalized using unit functions whose transforms involve Dirac delta functions, a critical mathematical construct for sampling theory and signal reconstruction (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024).

13. SPECTRAL DECOMPOSITION AND SOURCE LOCALISATION IN NEUROPHYSIOLOGY

In modern neurophysiology, the mathematical characterisation of neural waves is essential for translating raw bioelectric signals into actionable biomarkers. This process primarily involves frequency-domain transformation via Fourier analysis and the three-dimensional reconstruction of neural generators through source localisation techniques like sLORETA. To address the "inverse problem"—identifying the cortical sources of scalp-recorded potentials—Standardised Low-Resolution Electromagnetic Tomography (sLORETA) is employed. Unlike conventional LORETA, sLORETA incorporates specific mathematical smoothing and weighting assumptions that provide zero localisation error in single-dipole scenarios. The mathematical foundation of sLORETA relies on the lead field registered densities (J)through head tissEnsuringegistered potentials (φ). This relationship is regularized, ensuring a discrete Laplacian operator (L) and a Tikhonov parameter a ensuring physiological plausibility:

$$J = T\Phi$$

where T is the transformation matrix derived from inverse Laplacian-weighted lead fields. The inclusion of a mean reference operator stabilises these estimates by correcting spatial bias inherent to scalp distributions. sLORETA is particularly robust when head models are standardised via structural MRI, allowing for the mapping of nuanced alterations in cortical sources associated with Alzheimer's, depression, or schizophrenia.

14. INTEGRATIVE BIOMARKERS AND CLINICAL APPLICATION

The efficacy of these mathematical tools is enhanced when coupled with systemic biomarkers. For example, a reduction in baseline entropy production (measured via spectral dispersion) may coincide with strengthened localised sources in the prefrontal cortex following anti-inflammatory therapy. Furthermore, autonomic measures such as Heart Rate Variability (HRV) reflect the cognitive engagement and fatigue states that modulate cortical activation patterns (Falk et al., 2023). Integrating source localisation with peripheral biomarkers allows clinicians to move beyond symptomatic relief toward the sustainable enhancement of "mental bandwidth," provided that context-specific calibration is applied to account for methodological heterogeneity (Weigand et al., 2022; Qin et al., 2021).

Visceral Bioenergetics and Brain Circuits: The Gut-Brain Axis in MRV

The gut–brain axis represents a bidirectional biochemical and neurophysiological communication network in which intestinal microbiota composition and metabolic activity exert measurable effects on neural regenerative capacity, oscillatory coherence, and overall mental bandwidth. This integration aligns with the bioenergetic framework where systemic biochemical inputs act as upstream determinants of cortical entropy versus information balance. Adult neurogenesis, central to Mental Rate Variability (MRV) adaptability, is highly sensitive to microbial-derived neurotrophins and neurotransmitters produced in the enteric environment. These signaling molecules directly influence neural stem cell (NSC) survival, differentiation pathways, and integration into existing circuitry.

15. MICROBIAL METABOLISM AND NEUROGENIC NICHE HOMEOSTASIS

Alterations in gut microbiome composition, coupled with shifts in metabolite profiles driven by dietary variables, modulate neurogenic effects. For example, high-fat diets induce dysbiosis resulting in elevated short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), such as propionate and butyrate.

Such shifts can paradoxically increase reactive oxidative species (ROS) production and mitochondrial overactivity within NSCs, accelerating premature differentiation and depleting the progenitor pool in adult neurogenesis niches (Santos et al., 2025). Age-related dysbiosis compounds these metabolic perturbations. Older populations exhibit reduced microbial diversity alongside a higher prevalence of opportunistic, disease-associated species. This skew toward a pro-inflammatory microbial community suppresses beneficial commensal growth, increasing intestinal permeability ("leaky gut"). The resulting translocation of endotoxins into the bloodstream triggers systemic inflammatory cascades that elevate baseline entropy production across coupled physiological systems (Santos et al., 2025). In cognitive terms, chronic inflammation from this source constrains mental bandwidth by diminishing regenerative throughput and forcing neural modules into energetically expensive synchronisation states.

16. EPIGENETIC MODULATORS AND SENESCENCE

The gut–brain axis further integrates with regenerative biology through epigenetic modulation. NSCs involved in adult neurogenesis undergo coordinated transcriptional changes regulated via covalent histone modifications and DNA methylation. These mechanisms are susceptible to microbiota-derived metabolites acting as epigenetic modulators; thus, dysbiosis-driven metabolite alterations feed indirectly into lineage specification processes. Aging amplifies this vulnerability: accumulated DNA damage from systemic oxidative stress reduces NSC proliferation capacity and increases the prevalence of the senescence-associated secretory phenotype (SASP). Senescent cells enrich systemic circulation with pro-inflammatory cytokines and proteases that disrupt niche homeostasis (Santos et al., 2025). This feedback loop is measurable through integrated biomarker networks where hubs representing regenerative capacity lose centrality as entropy-generating inflammatory connectors become more prevalent (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). Graph-theoretical metrics quantify these shifts; reduced modular segregation implies a wider spread of stochastic perturbations across cognitive modules, signaling operational inefficiency analogous to fuel wastage in thermal engine models of brain function.

17. MULTIMODAL ASSESSMENT AND CLINICAL INTERVENTION

Clinically feasible measurement architectures integrate microbiota sequencing with electrophysiological analytics, such as Fourier-based spectral dispersion coefficients from EEG, to link gut-derived biochemical states with cortical oscillatory patterns (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). Refined nonlinear metrics, such as Mean Short-Windowed Surrogate Analysis (MSWSA), offer enhanced resolution in capturing alterations in cortical dynamics associated with systemic physiological states (Caza-Szoka & Massicotte, 2022). Furthermore, autonomic nervous system function, reflected in Heart Rate Variability (HRV), fluctuates in response to gut-derived systemic inflammation. HRV parameters (SDNN, RMSSD, and the LF/HF ratio) provide a quantifiable window into these dynamics, reflecting the complex interplay between central and peripheral systems under high cognitive demand (Sarhaddi et al., 2022; Durantin et al., 2014). Ethical practice demands translating these correlations into adjustments for individual parameter sets: microbial diversity indices, metabolite ratios (SCFA levels), and trophic factor balances (IGF-1:IGFBP-3). Interventions include targeted prebiotic/probiotic administration to restore specific taxa, anti-inflammatory nutritional strategies to reduce SASP prevalence, and metabolic support to enhance mitochondrial turnover (Santos et al., 2025). By leveraging meta-learning and state-space modeling, clinicians can dynamically modulate gut–brain axis effects, optimizing regenerative and cognitive outcomes through precisely calibrated, non-invasive alignments (Vermani et al., 2024; Al-Saegh, 2023).

18. IMMUNE SYSTEM ACTIVATION AND MICROGLIAL RESPONSE: A BIOPHYSICAL PERSPECTIVE

Immune system activation within the central nervous system (CNS) modulates neural regenerative capacity, oscillatory coherence, and metabolic efficiency through complex molecular and cellular cascades. These processes are increasingly quantified within a biophysical framework that conceptualizes the brain as an adaptive ecosystem where immune-driven "noise" or "turbulence" affects the entropy versus information balance of neural networks. Microglial Homeostasis and the Neurogenic Niche.

Microglia, the resident immune cells of the CNS, are uniformly distributed across neurogenic regions such as the dentate gyrus (DG). They maintain niche homeostasis through phagocytic clearance of apoptotic newborn neurons and the secretion of signaling factors. The functional state of microglia—ranging from pro-inflammatory (M1-like) to anti-inflammatory (M2-like) phenotypes—is determined by environmental cues and dictates the fate of adult neurogenesis. Pro-inflammatory mediators, such as tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF-\alpha) and interleukin-6 (IL-6), bias neural stem cell (NSC) lineage selection toward an astrocytic fate, thereby reducing the output of functional neurons. Conversely, factors like transforming growth factor-beta (TGF-\beta) exhibit dual regulatory roles. While microglial-derived TGF-\beta is essential for new neuron production in the DG, astrocyte-delivered (TGF-\beta) in the aged hippocampus has been shown to impair neurogenesis and vascular formation, highlighting the context-dependent nature of identical molecular signals (Santos et al., 2025).

Multicellular Synergy and the Vascular Dimension is an important observation. Astrocytes and endothelial cells further modulate this immune-niche equilibrium. Astrocytes integrate newborn neurons into existing circuits via the vesicular release of gliotransmitters like D-serine. Endothelial cells provide a vascular dimension; neurogenic regions exhibit greater blood–brain barrier (BBB) permeability and slower blood flow, increasing the brain's exposure to systemic, blood-derived immune signals. Sustained immune activation shifts this balance toward chronic reactivity. However, the NSC secretome provides a counter-regulatory mechanism, enriched with anti-inflammatory factors like IL-10 and extracellular vesicles that engage in mitochondrial transfer to dampen metabolic inflammation. Ageing acts as a systemic amplifier of immune-derived entropy. Advancement in age leads to "inflammaging," a chronic pro-inflammatory state where elevated circulating molecules alter the NSC secretome, creating a feedforward loop of inflammation. From an energy-systems perspective, this turnover drains ATP reserves otherwise available for ordered informational processing, manifesting as cognitive decline and oscillatory coherence degradation (Di Benedetto et al., 2019).

Clinical Monitoring and Non-invasive Biomarkers are described here. Therapeutic strategies focus on shifting microglial phenotypes or biasing the NSC secretome toward trophic factors like IGF-II or BDNF. In graph-theoretical frameworks, these interventions aim to restore hub centrality for regenerative capacity and reduce energetically costly connector nodes (Miri et al., 2024). Recent advancements suggest that integration of multi-modal physiological markers can refine these clinical assessments:

Heart Rate Variability (HRV): Metrics such as RMSSD and high-frequency power are sensitive to systemic stress states that parallel central immune activation. HRV serves as a non-invasive window into the pro- and anti-inflammatory balance (Beatrice et al., 2022; Lischke et al., 2021).

EEG Analytics: Targeted monitoring of frontal lobe channels (e.g., F3, AF4) and the application of attention-based CNN-LSTM architectures can detect functional consequences of immune activation on brain network dynamics with high accuracy (Sellami & Neubig, 2019; Prasath & Vasuki, 2023).

By anchoring patient status in measurable parameters—such as IL-10/TNF-α ratios and EEG spectral coherence—clinicians can move beyond diagnostic labels to a biophysical optimization of the brain–immune ecosystem, focusing on reducing entropy and restoring regenerative potential (Santos et al., 2025; Matuz et al., 2022).

19. REHABILITATION PROTOCOLS: VAGAL MODULATION AND MITOCHONDRIAL OPTIMIZATION

Rehabilitation strategies within the Mental Rate Variability (MRV) framework focus on restoring biophysical efficiency by lowering entropy and enhancing regenerative throughput. This is achieved through two primary clinical protocols: Transcutaneous Vagus Nerve Stimulation (tVNS) and Zone 2 metabolic training. Both interventions aim to shift the brain-body system from a state of allostatic strain toward high-information, low-entropy operational modes. The quantification of tVNS efficacy integrates electrocardiogram-derived Heart Rate Variability (HRV) with EEG, electrodermal activity (EDA), and respiration. Collectively, these signals supply real-time indices of autonomic flexibility.

Improvements in RMSSD or high-frequency (HF) HRV power indicate enhanced parasympathetic tone, while a concurrent narrowing of EEG spectral dispersion (via Fourier-based analysis) signifies restored cortical coherence (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). From a biophysical standpoint, tVNS attenuates sympathetic dominance and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. This reduction in systemic stress alleviates impairments in nutrient-sensing pathways (e.g., insulin/IGF-1) and cytokine-mediated inflammatory loads that otherwise erode regenerative throughput (Santos et al., 2025). Biomarkers such as cortisol/DHEA ratios and C-reactive protein (CRP) are monitored to confirm systemic shifts toward lower allostatic load. Graph-theoretical analysis of biomarker-cognition networks provides structural validation; successful tVNS protocols manifest as increased hub centrality for regenerative capacity nodes and a reduced prevalence of energetically costly connector nodes (Di Benedetto et al., 2019). This shift favors anti-inflammatory outputs (e.g., IL-10) over disruptive cytokines (TNF-\α, IL-6), optimizing the neural stem cell (NSC) secretome without invasive procedures Zone 2 Training and Mitochondrial Bioenergetics. Zone 2 training—sustained, moderate-intensity aerobic activity—directly addresses mitochondrial maintenance, a primary determinant of mental bandwidth. This mode of exercise preferentially engages oxidative phosphorylation, signaling for mitochondrial biogenesis and elongated morphology in the NSC lineage (Santos et al., 2025). The metabolic cascade initiates regulators such as PGC-1\α, which protects NSCs from oxidative stress and promotes neuronal differentiation. By restoring oxidative phosphorylation, Zone 2 training reverses the age-related glycolytic dominance that increases baseline entropy. This metabolic shift reduces "inflammaging" by lowering systemic oxidative stress and improving the anti-inflammatory profile of the NSC secretome. Furthermore, stabilised ATP supply supports the lysosome-autophagy pathways required for proteostasis in quiescent NSCs, preventing the protein aggregate accumulation typically seen in cognitive decline.

20. INTEGRATIVE MONITORING AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

Personalised rehabilitation requires longitudinal tracking of biochemical, autonomic, and electrophysiological markers. The efficacy of these protocols is validated against:

- Autonomic Metrics: Monitoring VLF and HF power to refine training intensity and recovery (Hsin et al., 2023).
- Spectral Analysis: Utilising wavelet transforms and QEEG to track neural oscillatory shifts in coherence and power ratios (Fiscon et al., 2018).
- Network Topology: Quantifying shifts in graph modularity where regenerative hubs regain centrality (Popa et al., 2020).

Ethical application emphasizes a non-labeling approach; patients are not defined by diagnostic categories but by dynamic operational metrics. In stochastic differential equation (SDE) terms, these interventions upwardly adjust "drift" coefficients (regeneration flows) while minimising "diffusion" coefficients (inflammatory noise) (Roberts et al., 2017). This precise biophysical recalibration ensures the sustainable expansion of human potential through optimised energy use and information retention.

21. CLINICAL APPLICATION OF THE MENTAL RATE VARIABILITY (MRV) FRAMEWORK

Applying the Mental Rate Variability (MRV) framework to clinical practice requires the translation of integrated biochemical, metabolic, neuroinflammatory, and electrophysiological metrics into actionable protocols. This paradigm operates on a biophysical foundation that bypasses categorical psychiatric labelling in favour of quantifying the entropy-versus-information balance across coupled body–brain systems. The clinical objective is to optimise the brain as an energy-dependent adaptive engine, ensuring mental bandwidth expansion through measurable physiological recalibration. Patient assessment begins with the collection of high-granularity data to define the individual's current biophysical state.

Core biochemical measurements prioritise endocrine ratios, specifically cortisol-to-dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) and trophic factor balances such as insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) relative to its binding protein, IGFBP-3. These are paired with metabolic indicators like the triglyceride-to-high-density lipoprotein (TG/HDL) ratio, which serves as a validated proxy for insulin sensitivity and cerebral glucose utilisation (Soldevila-Domenech et al., 2024). These biochemical outputs are synchronised with electrophysiological indicators. Electroencephalography (EEG) data, transformed via Forward-Backwards Fourier Transform (FBFT), provides precise spectral dispersion mapping to detect oscillatory coherence or fragmentation (Amer & Belhaouari, 2024). Furthermore, the integration of standardised low-resolution electromagnetic tomography (sLORETA) allows clinicians to spatially map cortical current density. When sLORETA identifies hypoactivity in executive regions concurrent with elevated TG/HDL ratios—clinicians can infer that systemic insulin resistance is constraining mitochondrial energy supply in specific neural networks.

22. GRAPH-THEORETICAL DECISIONS AND NETWORK TOPOLOGY

The structural backbone of the MRV clinical paradigm is graph-theoretical analysis. All data streams are embedded into biomarker–cognition graphs, where nodes represent physiological parameters and edges represent their functional correlations.

- Regenerative Hubs: Identified by high degree centrality, these nodes (e.g., IGF-1, IL-10) represent the system's capacity for repair and information retention.
- Connector Nodes: An over-prevalence of connectors signals impaired entropy containment, where stochastic perturbations spread globally across cognitive modules, leading to operational inefficiency (Di Benedetto et al., 2019).

Interventions are designed to shift topology from energetically expensive connector-heavy configurations toward modular, hub-centric architectures. This transition reflects a thermodynamic optimisation, effectively reducing the "waste heat" (stochastic noise) generated by the neural system.

23. ACTIONABLE PROTOCOLS AND LONGITUDINAL TRACKING

Interventions focus on restoring oxidative phosphorylation efficiency and reducing cytokine turbulence.

- Mitochondrial Support: Zone 2 training is employed to reinforce mitochondrial biogenesis and transition the system away from glycolytic dominance (Santos et al., 2025).
- Nutritional Correction: Mediterranean diet protocols are utilized to improve insulin sensitivity and stabilize the lipid profile (TG/HDL), reducing systemic inflammation (Soldevila-Domenech et al., 2024).
- Neuromodulation: Transcutaneous vagus nerve stimulation (tVNS) is integrated to enhance autonomic balance, as measured by heart rate variability (HRV) indices such as RMSSD and high-frequency power (Castro Ribeiro et al., 2023).

Longitudinal tracking is mandatory. A successful trajectory is evidenced when a reduction in pro-inflammatory IL-6 relative to anti-inflammatory IL-10 coincides with a narrowing of spectral dispersion coefficients in EEG. Such shifts provide concrete, non-categorical evidence of enhanced operational efficiency in brain circuits.

24. ADVANCED MODELING AND ETHICAL NON-LABELING

As this work has moved forward, it has become increasingly obvious that understanding the relationship between the signals generated by these imaging devices and the underlying physiology of the brain is critically important to the success and long-range goals of this enterprise. (Raichle & Gusnard, 2002). The MRV paradigm suggests using patient-derived induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC) neural cultures to model niche-level responses. By introducing microglia-like cells to these cultures, clinicians can test how specific inflammatory loads matching the patient's blood chemistry alter regenerative throughput at the cellular level (Santos et al., 2025).

Furthermore, computational surrogates and neural network classifiers, such as Blackman-windowed Fourier transformations, are increasingly used to refine mood state detection and predict neural trajectories (Adhikary et al., 2023; Ezhov et al., 2021). Ethically, this approach avoids stigmatising diagnostic constructs. Patients are characterised by continuous-scale parameters defining performance under unique adaptive loads. Reports document improvements such as an "entropy reduction from a spectral dispersion baseline of 0.38 to 0.21" rather than assigning a deficit-based label. By integrating cardiometabolic biomarkers with real-time neural dynamics, MRV offers a transparent, precision-oriented methodology for sustaining human potential (Coates et al., 2020; Roberts et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

This work integrates diverse biophysical, biochemical, and neurophysiological dimensions to articulate a comprehensive framework for mental rate variability (MRV). By situating cognitive function within a multidimensional parameter space, it emphasises the dynamic interplay between mitochondrial energy metabolism, autonomic nervous system regulation, neuroinflammatory states, and neural representational geometry. The detailed examination of cellular energy pathways, particularly the role of the Krebs cycle and mitochondrial membrane potential, highlights how neuronal voltage generation and metabolic endurance set fundamental limits on cognitive throughput and susceptibility to burnout. Concurrently, systemic factors such as lipid profiles and inflammatory cytokine ratios emerge as accessible biomarkers that influence cerebral glucose utilisation and neural network efficiency, linking peripheral metabolic states to central nervous system function. The integration of electrophysiological measures, including heart rate variability and phase coherence derived from EEG and MEG signals, provides quantifiable indices of autonomic adaptability and neural synchrony. These metrics serve as proxies for the entropy-information balance critical to maintaining cognitive efficiency, with deviations signalling increased neural noise and reduced mental bandwidth.

The framework also incorporates the gut-brain axis and its modulation of endocrine and immune pathways, underscoring the importance of microbiota-derived signals in shaping neural adaptability and allostatic load. Neuromodulation strategies, exemplified by transcutaneous vagus nerve stimulation, are positioned as interventions capable of modulating autonomic tone, inflammatory profiles, and metabolic support in a coordinated manner. By mapping these effects onto MRV's multidimensional axes, clinicians can monitor and adjust treatment parameters based on objective physiological and biochemical data rather than categorical diagnoses. This approach aligns with ethical principles that regard individuals as dynamic systems, emphasising measurable shifts in state vectors over fixed labels. Furthermore, the incorporation of advanced analytical techniques such as representational similarity analysis and multivariate EEG source modelling enriches the capacity to detect subtle changes in neural network configuration and cognitive control mechanisms. These tools enable the identification of early markers of cognitive vulnerability and the assessment of intervention efficacy with high temporal and spatial resolution. Overall, this integrative model offers a pathway for personalised assessment and intervention that bridges molecular, cellular, systemic, and network-level processes. It provides a framework for quantifying mental bandwidth and cognitive resilience in the face of metabolic, inflammatory, and environmental challenges. By emphasising continuous measurement and dynamic adjustment, it supports the development of strategies aimed at preserving neural function and optimising cognitive performance across diverse populations and clinical contexts.

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CHAPTER 3
GLOBAL BURDEN OF WATER-BORNE DISEASES AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

[1]Iza ALMAS
[2]Wafa MAJEED
[3]Khadija ALMAS
[4]Kashif JILANI
[5]Ayesha
[6]Meerab WASEEM

[1]National Institute of Food Science and Technology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan, Izaaalmas147@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0007-8707-6284
[2]Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Health and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Faisalabad 38000, Pakistan, wafa.majeed@uaf.edu.pk, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6983-4474
[3]Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan, Khadijaalmas147@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0007-6155-3118
[4]Department of Biochemistry, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Faisalabad 38000, Pakistan, Kashif.jillani@uaf.edu.pk, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1761-4100
[5]Institute of Physiology and Pharmacology, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Faisalabad 38000, Pakistan, ayeshanazar117@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0006-1446-3980
[6]Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, Pakistan, meerabwaseem271@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0009-0009-3345-3456

INTRODUCTION

A significant and ongoing global public health issue, water-borne illnesses are brought on by drinking water tainted with bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. The fecal–oral pathway, which happens when human or animal faeces contaminate drinking water sources as a result of inadequate sanitation infrastructure, improper wastewater disposal, and poor hygiene habits, is the main way that these diseases are spread. Diseases transmitted through water remain among the leading determinants of morbidity and mortality in the environment. As per (Troeger et al., 2021), enteric diseases remain among the key drivers of mortality related to infections worldwide, especially in developing countries with poor sanitation conditions. This is because of weak immune systems, malnutrition, and frequent contact with contaminated environments. Such diseases affect disadvantaged communities such as children below five years of age.

As stated by the Global Burden of Disease Study, there are more than one million deaths that occur annually because of diarrhoeal diseases, and this makes it one of the largest causes of death that could have been prevented across the globe (GBD 2021 Diarrhoeal Diseases Collaborators, 2024). Besides the impact of diarrhoeal diseases on deaths, there is also an influence of such diseases on DALYs.The most common environmental health threat around the globe is unsafe water supply. As reported by (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2019) the disease burden caused by communicable ailments, including diarrhea, gastroenteritis, and other intestinal infections, is greatly impacted by the insufficient availability of water and sanitary infrastructure. Due to the shortage of proper water supplies, the people are compelled to use contaminated surface waters, unsecured wells, or inefficiently managed water distribution networks, thereby increasing the probability of contracting diseases.

Water-borne diseases become even more challenging due to climatic and environmental factors. It has been proven that the behavior of infectious diseases is affected by climate change owing to increased temperatures, floods, and droughts. The survival of pathogens and water quality become directly affected by such changes in the environment. As (Watts et al., 2021) state, climate variability increases the risk of water pollution, hence causing outbreaks of water-borne diseases.

The process of disease transmission is also highly affected by the phenomena of urbanization and population increase. Fast urbanization often leads to the development of slums where waste management systems are poor, water supply systems are not good enough, and housing is crowded. Such an environment is ideal for rapid transmission of water-borne diseases.

In addition, socio-economic inequalities remain an essential underlying cause. Illiteracy, poverty, and limited access to health care services increase the chances of getting infected and prevent one from taking preventive measures. The process of transmission of infections will become harder to break in communities that have very little resources since they cannot afford treatment facilities, hygiene awareness programs, and medical attention. Generally, water-borne diseases constitute not only a medical problem but also a socio-economic one. Proper water infrastructural, sanitation measures, hygiene, vaccination, and resilience building in terms of climate are all required for proper control over the matter. SDG6, aimed at ensuring access to safe water and sanitation, is dependent upon these factors being addressed properly.

1. GLOBAL EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BURDEN OF WATER-BORNE DISEASES

It is clear from the epidemiology of these waterborne infections globally that there is a very uneven distribution of cases across the various parts of the globe. It is observed that low and middle-income countries are most affected by this category of diseases as compared to other parts due to the scarcity of access to safe drinking water in such nations. This trend can be observed in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, diarrhea remains one of the leading causes of death in the world, causing more than a million fatalities annually (GBD 2021 Diarrhoeal Diseases Collaborators, 2024). Being at a high risk because of their underdeveloped immunity and lack of proper nutrition, coupled with greater exposure to dirty environments, young kids under five years of age suffer disproportionately from them. Cholera remains one of the most dangerous diseases transmitted through water which can spread rapidly across the globe. It is caused by Vibrio cholerae bacteria and associated with various humanitarian crises like floods, refugee movements, contaminated drinking water, and poor sanitation facilities.

According to (Ali et al., 2020), millions of cases of cholera are believed to be reported globally annually, and epidemics are frequently observed in South Asia and Africa. The disease's seasonal transmission pattern is highly dependent upon environmental variables such as temperature changes and rainfall.

Typhoid fever is yet another type of bacteria-caused disease that affects people via contaminated water. Salmonella typhi is the causative organism of this disease. This disease has remained endemic in some regions in Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. Food and water consumption leads to its spread. Poor water quality has been found to be associated with a greater risk of acquiring typhoid among children and young people, according to recent findings (Kim et al., 2023). Widespread resistance has been identified as one of the challenges facing the condition (Stanaway et al., 2019).

Hepatitis A and other viral diseases transmitted through contaminated water account for a large portion of the global disease burden. HAV infection may occur from contaminated water or food sources in regions where proper sanitation facilities are lacking. Based on epidemiological studies, low socio-economic regions with limited water infrastructure availability report a higher incidence rate (Kuo et al., 2024). Cases continue to occur in vulnerable populations despite vaccine campaigns lowering incidences in many countries.

Infections due to protozoa include giardiasis caused by Giardia lamblia and cryptosporidiosis due to Cryptosporidium spp., which are common around the world, especially in developed and developing nations. Protozoa are resistant to regular chlorine treatment, thereby becoming hard to remove from drinking water sources. Contamination of surface water and insufficient filtration were found to be high-risk factors for disease development through a meta-analysis conducted by Efstratiou et al., 2017.In fact, diseases that affect people via water are directly related to factors such as poverty, education, population density, and health care provision as indicated by a broader view on public health. As (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2019) state, there is an enormous number of infections throughout the world due to poor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). The global pattern of water-borne disease epidemics is deteriorating because of the impact of climate change.

As the number of extreme weather conditions such as droughts and floods cause an increase in water pollution, temperature rises encourage pathogens' survival and proliferation within aquatic systems. The possibility of experiencing water-borne diseases is expected to escalate significantly in vulnerable regions in the coming years, according to (Watts et al., 2021).

2. MAJOR WATER-BORNE DISEASES

There are several diseases which arise because of the presence of microorganisms in food and water, and such infections have been classified as "water-borne diseases." These have been a cause for grave concern due to their high incidence rates in developing countries which do not have good sanitation facilities. Some of the most serious water-borne diseases from the perspective of medicine are Hepatitis A, cholera, typhoid, shigella, and giardia.

2.1 Cholera

Cholera is a communicable condition that results from the Vibrio cholerae. The Vibrio cholerae is a Gram-negative bacterium that causes rapid diarrhea when one ingests food or water containing these bacteria. CTX is released by Vibrio cholerae during the production process. Activation of CTX will result in increased activities of adenylate cyclase enzyme, and therefore more amount of cAMP will be produced. Diarrhea occurs when chloride and then sodium ions are released into the colon followed by water.

From an epidemiological perspective, outbreaks of cholera are associated with humanitarian disasters such as floods and refugees camps, among others, as well as unsanitary conditions and pollution of drinking water. Each year there are millions of cases of cholera reported all over Africa and South Asia, as stated by (Ali et al., 2020). The environment and the climate play a major role in the transmission of cholera. Cholera bacteria flourish in warm climates and in waters where there are many planktons while heavy rains and floods facilitate the contamination of water resources.

2.2 Typhoid Fever

S. enterica serovar Typhi is the cause of typhoid fever. This is caused by an ailment that causes harm to all systems in the body.

It arises as a result of eating and drinking contaminated foodstuffs and fluids. Upon ingestion, the bacterium will spread through the body using the blood stream by infecting the intestinal epithelial cells and invading the macrophages. S. Typhi can escape the immune system of the host because it resides inside the host cell, hence increasing the duration of infection.

The emergence of XDR and MDR strains of S. Typhi, particularly in South Asia, poses a serious health threat to the entire globe due to the hindrance of the treatment methods employed for this disease Stanaway et al., (2019). It calls for the necessity of implementing preventive strategies such as improving water sanitation and vaccination programs.

2.3 Shigellosis (Bacillary Dysentery)

As a result of the extremely low dose that causes infection (10-100 organisms), Shigellosis, which is an intestinal disease caused by Shigella bacteria, is one of the most contagious diseases spread through water. The infection can be transmitted via contaminated water or food, as well as through contact between hands with faeces. Shigella produces inflammation and ulceration of tissue upon entering the intestinal mucosa.

Symptoms of Shigellosis include fever, a feeling of rectal pressure, abdominal cramps, and bloody diarrhea. This condition primarily affects children with poor sanitary practices and living in overcrowded homes in low socioeconomic areas (Kotloff et al., 2018).

2.4 Hepatitis A

Hepatitis A virus (HAV) causes an infection of the liver known as hepatitis A, which is caused by the virus. The principal mode of transmission for this disease is through contaminated food and water ingestion.On infection in the body, HAV attacks hepatocytes leading to inflammation of the liver, although this disease is usually self-limiting in nature, severe symptoms may occur in adults like jaundice, fatigue, nausea, and abdominal discomfort.

There is an epidemiological association between hepatitis A and insufficient sanitation as well as contaminated water supplies, particularly within developing countries (Kuo et al., 2024).

There are still outbreaks of disease occurring in areas with low immunization levels, although vaccination has greatly reduced cases of infection in other locations.

2.5 Protozoal Infections (Giardiasis & Cryptosporidiosis)

Giardiasis and cryptosporidiosis are waterborne protozoal infections that are prevalent all around the globe and are among the main causes of diarrhea diseases. The consumption of cysts or oocysts from contaminated water may transmit these pathogens. Chlorination resistance, which allows these pathogens to survive in chlorinated water if the filtration process fails, is one of the major public health concerns.

Cryptosporidium infection affects the intestinal absorptive lining, leading to malabsorption, resulting in prolonged diarrhoea. Bloating, diarrhoea, and weight loss are some of the prolonged symptoms associated with giardiasis. One of the greatest risk factors for contracting protozoal infection globally is contaminated surface water as well as faulty water filtering system, states (Efstratiou et al., 2017).

3. TRANSMISSION PATHWAYS OF WATER-BORNE DISEASES

The mode of transfer where infectious bacteria in the faecal matter of either animals or humans find their way into the digestive system via contaminated water or food items falls under the category of the fecal-oral mode of transfer, which is the most common form of transferring waterborne infections. The factors associated with the transmission of the infection are dependent on numerous aspects that influence the whole process of transmission in the environment. Large outbreaks become significantly more common if there is any disruption to the water cycle at any stage, particularly in areas where there is scarcity of resources. As noted by (Leclerc et al., 2020), waterborne viruses survive in a variety of environments such as the soil, aquatic environment, and food sources.

3.1 Fecal–Oral Transmission Route

The key method of transmission of waterborne diseases is the fecal-oral route. The contamination occurs when water supplies become contaminated by the faeces of the sick individuals and then ingested by susceptible individuals.

Typically, the contamination occurs due to:

- Open defecation
- Leaks in the sewerage system
- Unsanitary release of wastewater without proper treatment
- Floods leading to the contamination of water sources by sewage

This approach is commonly used to introduce the pathogens such as Shigella spp., Salmonella Typhi, and Vibrio cholerae into the susceptible individuals. After being ingested and introduced into the body, the mentioned organisms will produce diverse clinical manifestations varying from diarrhea to systemic disease. As suggested by (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2019), poor sanitation leads to a high level of exposure to the pathogens of enteric diseases.

3.2 Contaminated Drinking Water Supplies

The major source of infections for waterborne diseases is the consumption of contaminated water. There are various phases at which this contamination can occur:

- Contaminations of the sources of water (rivers, lakes, and wells)
- Contaminations of the water transmission network (pipeline leakage, cross-contamination)
- Contamination of homes due to unsafe storage.

According to (Wolf et al., 2018) people who access piped water systems with adequate management structures have fewer chances of contracting diarrheal diseases compared to those who depend on water sources which are not well treated.

Water pollution is able to find its way into the system as a result of leakage in pipes caused by negative pressure, hence making irregular water supply risky in many developing nations.

3.3 Food-Borne Transmission Via Water Contamination

Contaminated water used for cooking, irrigation, or cleaning raw fruits can act as a second mode of transmission of waterborne illnesses through the food.In particular, the major source of infection is contamination with irrigation water. On a related note, food mishandling in the domestic setting and outside also contributes to the risk of contracting such illnesses. According to (Kirk et al., 2015) contaminated water used for irrigation is responsible for increased levels of foodborne infections in many parts of the world.

3.4 Environmental and Seasonal Factors

There are various environmental elements that impact the transmission of diseases. The process of transmission can be affected by changes in season such as rainfall, temperature changes, floods, and droughts.

- Floods: Pollutes drinking water sources through overflowing sewerage systems.
- Drought: Forces individuals to consume polluted water sources
- Increase in temperature allows microorganisms to thrive in water sources.

As indicated by (Wagner & Lanoix, 2021), the epidemiological aspects of water-borne diseases are significantly affected by climate-sensitive changes in water supply and water quality. (Watts et al., 2021) argue that climate change will affect water and sanitation services, thereby contributing to an increase in cases of water-borne diseases.

3.5 Human Behavior and Hygiene Practices

Another critical aspect in the transmission of water-borne diseases is human behavior. The chances of becoming infected are extremely high when there are poor hygiene behaviors, especially in communities where there is no education on sanitation practices.

Key behavior risk factors include:

- Lack of soap use in hand washing
- Poor water storage methods
- Consumption of non-purified water
- Poor food handling procedures

The importance of behavioral measures in health protection was illustrated by (Curtis & Cairncross, 2020), who found that just proper hand washing reduces the prevalence of diarrhea by up to 30% to 40%.

4. PREVENTION AND CONTROL STRATEGIES OF WATER-BORNE DISEASES

It is important to have an integrated approach to public health that addresses all the environmental, infrastructural, behavioural and biological aspects of disease transmission. Programs related to WASH have continued to serve as the pillar in global preventive approaches since most of these conditions occur due to contaminated water and poor sanitary practices.

According to (Fewtrell et al., 2019), integrated WASH interventions play a key role in reducing the prevalence of diseases associated with the gastrointestinal tract and diarrhea among other illnesses. They have achieved these reductions even in places with few resources.

4.1 Safe Drinking Water Management

Access to clean drinking water is perhaps the simplest way of preventing illnesses from water. Some examples of the processes that could be undertaken include boiling, filtering, chlorination, and UV treatment.As shown by (Wolf et al., 2018), point-of-use water treatments have been proven to dramatically reduce cases of diseases and microbial contamination. As per (Wolf et al., 2018), these processes have been known to reduce diarrhea among poor communities up to 39%.

Apart from treating water, ensuring proper maintenance of the distribution network is also important in order to avoid waterborne diseases. Leaks, cross-contamination, and irregular flow due to faulty distribution systems tend to increase the probability of microbe invasion of the water system.

4.2 Sanitation and Waste Management

The method of fecal-oral transmission for waterborne diseases should be prevented by increasing the sanitation, where the disposal of human feces should take place without affecting the water bodies.

In several underdeveloped nations, the practice of open defecation is one of the serious public health issues, which increases the chances of intestinal infections. Sanitation, which according to (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2019)is one of the contributors to infectious diseases in the world, can play a critical role in decreasing the pathogens found in the surroundings.

4.3 Hygiene Practices and Behavioral Interventions

Hygiene is necessary in order to prevent diseases caused by water contamination. Hand washing with soap is one of the most effective and cost-efficient interventions that help prevent the spread of infection.As (Curtis & Cairncross, 2020), good hand hygiene can reduce the risk of developing diarrhea by 30%–40%. It highlights the importance of hygiene education programs to improve public health.

In addition to behaviour modification, other strategies involve:

- Proper storage of drinking water
- Adequate food handling techniques
- Hygienic use of cooking water and tool
- Awareness programs about hygiene in communities

Behavioral change is best achieved when interventions go hand in hand with development in infrastructures.

4.4 Vaccination and Medical Interventions

To prevent some water-related infections, the importance of vaccination cannot be underestimated. At the moment, there exist vaccinations for several illnesses such as cholera and hepatitis A.

It has been proven that cholera vaccinations administered orally (OCV) help reduce the number of cases and their severity, especially during emergencies and in endemic regions. In those countries where the hepatitis A vaccine is included in immunization programmes, the number of cases of the disease has significantly decreased (Stanaway et al., 2019). Oral rehydration solution therapy (ORS) is an important measure to deal with diarrhoea along with vaccination. Worldwide, the use of this method has significantly reduced deaths caused by dehydration due to acute diarrhea.

4.5 Policy, Surveillance, and Health System Strengthening

Management of such water-borne diseases needs appropriate public health policies and systems to detect them. Detection of any outbreak in the early stages would minimize their transmission and provide an opportunity to intervene immediately. Disease surveillance systems help in monitoring disease trends and hotspots as well as implementation of targeted interventions. In addition, preventive measures against long-term outbreaks require funding and improvement of infrastructures and the law. International bodies have highlighted the importance of accomplishing Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) of ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for everyone. In addition, according to (Watts et al., 2021), since climate change has led to the occurrence of more frequent outbreaks, strategies for adaptation to climate change need to be considered in public health measures.

5. CLIMATE CHANGE AND FUTURE CHALLENGES IN WATER-BORNE DISEASE CONTROL

Management of such water-borne diseases needs appropriate public health policies and systems to detect them. Detection of any outbreak in the early stages would minimize their transmission and provide an opportunity to intervene immediately. Disease surveillance systems help in monitoring disease trends and hotspots as well as implementation of targeted interventions. In addition, preventive measures against long-term outbreaks require funding and improvement of infrastructures and the law. International bodies have highlighted the importance of accomplishing Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) of ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for everyone. In addition, according to Watts et al. (2021), since climate change has led to the occurrence of more frequent outbreaks, strategies for adaptation to climate change need to be considered in public health measures

5.1 Impact of Rising Temperatures

Most virus pathogens that thrive in water will easily replicate and stay in the environment in cases where there are rising temperatures across the world.

The growth rates of pathogens such as Vibrio cholerae are increased in warmer conditions, particularly in aquatic environments including coastal areas. Furthermore, temperature increases metabolism of the pathogens hence making the contaminated water rich in disease-causing microorganisms that can easily cause diseases. Increased temperature causes a lack of water in some parts, therefore, increasing vulnerability to contamination.

5.2 Floods and Water Contamination

One of the key causes of water-borne disease epidemics, in connection with the climate factor, is floods. Sanitation services are often unable to cope with the influx of flood waters, resulting in sewage getting mixed with drinking water sources. Hepatitis A virus, Shigella and Vibrio cholerae are some of the pathogens that get exposed because of such a mixture. Floods epidemics are reported frequently in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, due to poor infrastructural resilience in those regions. As per (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2019), extreme weather conditions affect the integrity of sanitation and water supply systems, hence making people prone to enteric diseases.

5.3 Drought and Water Scarcity

Drought is another serious problem which is associated with climate change. There may be little choice left for the people other than using the unsafe sources of water, like contaminated surface water, dug-wells, and still ponds in conditions of shortage of water. Shortage of water results in the risk of spread as it impedes hygiene behavior, such as hand washing. Also, shortages of water create pathogen concentration in water because of increased pathogen concentration in less water volume. Therefore, there are many instances of diarrhea and enteric diseases during drought periods (Mishra et al., 2021).

5.4 Sea-Level Rise and Coastal Contamination

Droughts are another challenge that results from climate change. The people have no option but to drink unsafe water sources, such as surface water and shallow water obtained from standing water bodies due to lack of water. Lack of water is dangerous since it hinders basic practices such as washing hands properly.

Lack of water also encourages diseases to easily thrive in the water sources available. This is so since lack of water causes an increase in the number of pathogens present in the limited water.

5.5 Future Public Health Challenges

The future control of diseases that are transmitted through water would be faced by several problems:

- Increase in variability in climate
- Population growth and urbanization
- Poor state of water infrastructure
- Antibiotic resistance of enteric bacteria
- Unequal access to toilets and drinking water

Furthermore, AMR is now considered one of the world's most serious problems. This problem is especially relevant for pathogenic bacteria like Salmonella Typhi Treatment failures caused by the drug resistance are alarmingly high, states (Stanaway et al., 2019). The necessity for preventive actions becomes obvious.

The process of urbanization, especially within countries where resources are limited, creates favorable conditions for disease transmission by creating informal urban areas with poor infrastructure for water and sanitation.

5.6 Need For Climate-Resilient Wash Systems

The development of WASH services that can withstand climate change impacts is key to solving these problems. The WASH facilities must be designed to withstand extreme weather events and ensure a consistent supply of clean water. As indicated by (Watts et al., 2021), early warning systems, infrastructural reinforcement, and sustainable water management are some of the climate adaptation strategies that can be adopted in public health initiatives.

CONCLUSION

Water-borne diseases remain one of the most prevalent disease types throughout the world, mainly in countries where there is inadequate provision of clean water sources and proper sanitary facilities.

Despite the fact that there has been much improvement in terms of vaccinations, health behavior, and development of the process of water treatment, the prevalence of these diseases remains quite high and it is not uniformly distributed across the world.

According to the findings generated from the study, the water-borne diseases are believed to result from environmental pollution, inadequacy in accessing water and sanitation facilities, and socio-economic disparities. In addition, it has been found that diarrhea remains one of the most preventable causes of death, according to (GBD 2021 Diarrhoeal Diseases Collaborators, 2024).

In terms of science, the causation for water-borne illnesses arises from a complicated process involving a mixture of biological, environmental, and behavior-based components. Biological agents, including Vibrio cholerae, Salmonella Typhi, Shigella spp., Hepatitis A virus, and parasitic protozoa, survive in environments where sanitation methods are poor and there is contaminated water. This type of microorganism can survive in many different environments, making it very hard to eliminate without improvements to the environment.

There have been more cases of water-borne diseases due to climate change. Issues such as sea-level rise, drought, floods, and temperature increase are affecting the water systems and thus causing water contamination problems. As per (Watts et al., 2021), the changes in the climate can make infectious diseases spread easily around the world.

Thus, there is a need for future measures of disease control to be based on an approach that is holistic, sustainable, and resilient to climate impacts. The most effective measure of reducing the prevalence of disease is to build strong infrastructures for WASH services. Overcoming the problem of fecal-oral pathogen transmission calls for investment in sanitation, better waste management, and water supplies.

To aid rapid identification and containment of outbreaks, there is also need to improve surveillance and early warning systems as well as digital health technology. In an effort to reduce morbidity and severity of epidemics, more vaccinations should be implemented particularly in cases of cholera and hepatitis A infections.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is another challenge that has emerged, particularly with respect to the typhoid fever infection. The emergence of multiple drug resistant cases in the disease underscores the need for preventive strategies from public health perspectives rather than treatment approaches alone (Stanaway et al., 2019).

Further research can also be conducted in developing cost-effective water purification technologies, improved diagnostics tools, and predictive epidemiology which considers environmental variables. This requires coordinated efforts from various stakeholders such as governments, international health organizations, environmental agencies, and communities.

Finally, the removal of the global health challenge posed by waterborne diseases is contingent on achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation for all). In cases where individuals lack access to clean water and sanitation services, the cycle of sickness, poverty, and underdevelopment is destined to continue.

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