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4.	Name of the Research Guide	Dr. P.A. Raajeswari
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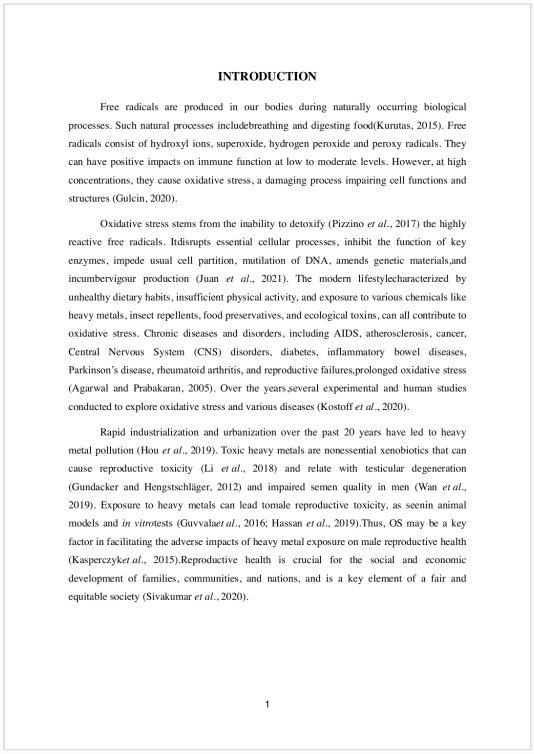

INTRODUCTION

Free radicals are produced in our bodies during naturally occurring biological processes. Such natural processes includebreathing and digesting food(Kurutas, 2015). Free radicals consist of hydroxyl ions, superoxide, hydrogen peroxide and peroxy radicals. They can have positive impacts on immune function at low to moderate levels. However, at high concentrations, they cause oxidative stress, a damaging process impairing cell functions and structures (Gulcin, 2020).

Oxidative stress stems from the inability to detoxify (Pizzino *et al*., 2017) the highly reactive free radicals. Itdisrupts essential cellular processes, inhibit the function of key enzymes, impede usual cell partition, mutilation of DNA, amends genetic materials,and incumbervigour production (Juan *et al*., 2021). The modern lifestylecharacterized by unhealthy dietary habits, insufficient physical activity, and exposure to various chemicals like heavy metals, insect repellents, food preservatives, and ecological toxins, can all contribute to oxidative stress. Chronic diseases and disorders, including AIDS, atherosclerosis, cancer, Central Nervous System (CNS) disorders, diabetes, inflammatory bowel diseases, Parkinson's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and reproductive failures,prolonged oxidative stress (Agarwal and Prabakaran, 2005). Over the years,several experimental and human studies conducted to explore oxidative stress and various diseases (Kostoff *et al*., 2020).

Rapid industrialization and urbanization over the past 20 years have led to heavy metal pollution (Hou *et al*., 2019). Toxic heavy metals are nonessential xenobiotics that can cause reproductive toxicity (Li *et al*., 2018) and relate with testicular degeneration (Gundacker and Hengstschläger, 2012) and impaired semen quality in men (Wan *et al*., 2019). Exposure to heavy metals can lead tomale reproductive toxicity, as seenin animal models and *in vitro*tests (Guvvala*et al*., 2016; Hassan *et al*., 2019).Thus, OS may be a key factor in facilitating the adverse impacts of heavy metal exposure on male reproductive health (Kasperczyk*et al*., 2015).Reproductive health is crucial for the social and economic development of families, communities, and nations, and is a key element of a fair and equitable society (Sivakumar *et al*., 2020).

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Antioxidant Potential of Cucurbita pepo L. (Pumpkin) Seed Extract in the Treatment of Stress Induced Male Infertility: An In Vivo Study

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