

**Hematological and Histopathological Effects of Combined Turmeric and Ginger Methanol Extracts in Experimental Diabetic Rats**

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**Abstract**

Diabetes mellitus is associated with hematological disturbances, immune dysfunction, and progressive organ damage. This study evaluated the hematological, immunological, and histopathological effects of combined curcumin and gingerol administration in experimental diabetic rats. Diabetes was induced in rats and the animals were divided into normal control, diabetic untreated (negative control), metformin-treated (100 mg/kg), and curcumin–gingerol co-treated groups at doses of 100, 200, and 400 mg/kg. Hematological parameters including hemoglobin concentration, packed cell volume, red blood cell indices, total white blood cell count, and differential leukocyte counts were assessed via standard methods. Histopathological examinations of the liver, kidney, pancreas, heart, and spleen were also conducted using hematoxylin and eosin staining. Diabetic untreated rats showed significant alterations in hematological indices, characterized by reduced hemoglobin, packed cell volume, and red blood cell counts, alongside elevated total white blood cell counts and marked changes in differential leukocyte profiles. These alterations were accompanied by pronounced histopathological lesions, including hepatic sinusoidal dilatation, renal tubular degeneration, pancreatic islet necrosis, myocardial degeneration, and lymphocytic necrosis in the spleen. Treatment with metformin and curcumin–gingerol combinations significantly ameliorated these abnormalities in a dose-dependent manner. Notably, the combined administration of curcumin and gingerol at 400 mg/kg restored most hematological and immunological parameters towards normal values and preserved tissue architecture comparable to the normal control and metformin-treated groups. Therefore, combined curcumin and gingerol therapy demonstrates protective and restorative effects on blood parameters, immune status, and vital organ histology in diabetic rats, suggesting a synergistic therapeutic potential in the management of diabetes-associated complications.

**Keywords:** Hematological, Histopathological, *Curcumin*, *Gingerol*, Diabetic Rats

## Introduction

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a chronic metabolic condition characterized by hyperglycemia resulting from impaired insulin secretion and/or action. This persistent elevation of glucose levels leads to oxidative stress, inflammation, and multi-organ complications involving the liver, kidneys, pancreas, heart, and hematological systems [1-2]. The pathogenesis of diabetic complications involves excessive production of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and inflammatory cytokines, which further intensify cellular damage [1,3]. Hematological alterations in diabetes include reduced hemoglobin (Hb) levels, altered packed cell volume (PCV), and red blood cell (RBC) count, often attributed to glycation of hemoglobin and compromised erythropoietic activity. These changes can impair oxygen delivery and exacerbate disease progression [4-5].

Turmeric, a plant material derived from the root of *Curcuma longa*, has received extensive research attention for its multifaceted therapeutic potential in diabetes. Multiple studies have documented its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic effects, often linked to suppression of oxidative stress and modulation of inflammatory pathways [6-7]. In systematic reviews, turmeric supplementation significantly reduced fasting blood glucose, glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c), and inflammatory markers such as C-reactive protein in subjects with type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) [8-9]. Turmeric also improved antioxidant status by enhancing endogenous antioxidant enzyme activities and reducing lipid peroxidation, suggesting a protective role against diabetes-related oxidative damage [1,10]. In experimental models, curcumin demonstrated histoprotective effects on pancreatic islets, liver, and kidney tissues, likely through attenuation of ROS production and inflammatory signaling cascades that contribute to organ damage in diabetes [11-12].

*Zingiber officinale* (ginger) is rich in bioactive compounds including gingerols, shogaols, and paradols. These constituents exhibit significant antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activities that are relevant in the context of diabetes [13]. Ginger supplementation has been associated with improvements in glycemic control, reductions in inflammatory markers, and enhancement of antioxidant defenses in diabetic models [14]. Specifically, 6-gingerol demonstrated renal protective effects in streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats by normalizing lipid profiles, reducing inflammation, and increasing antioxidant enzyme activities such as superoxide dismutase (SOD) [15-16]. Ginger's effects on hematological parameters have further been explored, indicating potential improvements in RBC counts, hemoglobin, and leukocyte distribution, though detailed mechanistic pathways remain an active area of research [17].

Recent studies have focused on the combined actions of *curcumin* and *ginger* bioactives, particularly turmeric-ginger synergy, to harness complementary antioxidant and antidiabetic properties. Turmeric and ginger combinations have been shown to enhance endogenous antioxidant defenses, reduce oxidative damage, and improve metabolic outcomes more effectively than individual compounds in diabetic models [18-19]. Alaebo et al. [18] conducted *in-vitro* and *in-vivo* studies on turmeric-ginger synergy in diabetic oxidative stress management, demonstrating significant increases

in antioxidant enzymes such as SOD and catalase with combined *curcumin* and *gingerol* treatment compared to lower doses and individual constituents. Glutathione levels were also improved, highlighting enhanced overall antioxidant capacity [18]. These findings align with the notion that combinatorial phytotherapy may potentiate therapeutic effects by targeting multiple pathogenic pathways of diabetes [19]. The study by Alaebo et al. [18] further supports that combined treatment not only enhances oxidative defense but may also mitigate inflammatory responses and histopathological changes in tissues affected by diabetic complications, a conclusion consistent with other preclinical reports on plant bioactives [1, 12].

Hematological disruptions in diabetic conditions are well documented, with significant reductions in erythrocyte count, hemoglobin concentration, and hematocrit values observed in diabetic animals compared to healthy controls. Elevated total white blood cell (TWBC) counts and altered differential leukocyte distributions reflect chronic inflammation and immune activation in diabetic states [1, 3]. Several studies report that herbal interventions, particularly those involving antioxidant phytochemicals, contribute to normalization of hematological parameters by enhancing erythropoiesis and reducing systemic inflammation. Turmeric and ginger both demonstrate immunomodulatory effects, reducing elevated TWBC counts and restoring balanced lymphocyte and neutrophil proportions in experimental diabetes [2, 13]. While individual studies vary in specific outcomes, the general consensus supports the beneficial role of plant compounds in ameliorating diabetic hematological dysregulation.

Organ damage in diabetes is characterized by structural degeneration involving the liver, kidneys, pancreas, heart, and spleen. For instance, streptozotocin-induced diabetic models display hepatic sinusoidal dilatation, renal tubular degeneration, pancreatic  $\beta$ -cell necrosis, and myocardial degeneration, corresponding with increased oxidative stress and impaired antioxidant defense [10-11]. Histopathological studies of diabetic animals treated with turmeric and ginger indicate substantial amelioration of tissue damage. Combined treatments preserved normal architecture in vital organs compared to untreated diabetic controls, supporting the idea that antioxidant phytochemicals can block or attenuate pathways leading to structural deterioration [11-12]. The antioxidant activity of these compounds reduces ROS-mediated injury, while anti-inflammatory actions limit infiltration of pro-inflammatory cells in affected tissues.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the protective effects of combined turmeric and ginger bioactives on hematological parameters and organ integrity in experimentally induced diabetic models.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Experimental Animals**

Adult male Wistar albino rats weighing between 150–200 g were used for this study. The animals were obtained from a standard animal breeding facility in Veterinary animal house of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, and were acclimatized for a period of two weeks under controlled

laboratory conditions, including a temperature of  $25 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$  and a 12-hour light/dark cycle. The rats were fed standard pelletized feed and allowed free access to clean drinking water *ad libitum*. All experimental procedures were carried out in accordance with established guidelines for the care and use of laboratory animals as described by the National Institutes of Health [13].

### Chemicals and Reagents

Curcumin and gingerol were obtained from reputable chemical suppliers and prepared in appropriate solvents prior to administration. Streptozotocin (STZ), used for the induction of diabetes, was freshly prepared in citrate buffer (pH 4.5) before use. Metformin hydrochloride was used as the reference antidiabetic drug. All chemicals and reagents used in this study were of analytical grade as recommended in experimental pharmacology studies [14, 15].

### Induction of Experimental Diabetes

Experimental diabetes mellitus was induced in overnight-fasted rats by a single intraperitoneal injection of streptozotocin at a dose of 50 mg/kg body weight dissolved in freshly prepared citrate buffer (pH 4.5). Streptozotocin selectively destroys pancreatic  $\beta$ -cells, leading to insulin deficiency and hyperglycemia [14]. After 72 hours of STZ administration, fasting blood glucose levels were measured using a glucometer, and rats with blood glucose levels equal to or greater than 250 mg/dL were considered diabetic and selected for the study [16].

### Experimental Design

Group	Experimental Description	Treatment Administered	Dose (mg/kg)	Number of Rats (n)
Group I	Normal control	Distilled water only	0	5
Group II	Diabetic control (negative control)	Untreated diabetic rats	-	5
Group III	Standard drug group	Metformin	100	5
Group IV	Treatment group	Curcumin + Gingerol	100	5
Group V	Treatment group	Curcumin + Gingerol	200	5
Group VI	Treatment group	Curcumin + Gingerol	400	5

All treatments were administered orally once daily for 21 days following standard experimental antidiabetic protocols [17].

### Preparation and Administration of Extracts

Curcumin and gingerol were combined in appropriate proportions and dissolved in a suitable vehicle to achieve the required concentrations. The mixtures were freshly prepared each day to ensure stability

and potency. The extracts were administered orally using an oral gavage to ensure accurate dosing, as previously described in phytochemical intervention studies [18].

### **Collection of Blood Samples**

At the end of the experimental period, the animals were fasted overnight and sacrificed under light anesthesia. Blood samples were collected via cardiac puncture into ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA) anticoagulant tubes for hematological analysis. This method is widely used for obtaining adequate blood volume for laboratory investigations in rodents [19].

### **Hematological Analysis**

Hematological parameters were evaluated using standard laboratory procedures. Hemoglobin concentration, packed cell volume, red blood cell count, total white blood cell count, and differential leukocyte counts were determined using either automated hematology analyzers or manual techniques where applicable. Red blood cell indices such as mean corpuscular volume, mean corpuscular hemoglobin, and mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration were calculated using standard formulae. These methods are consistent with established hematological assessment protocols [20,21].

### **Organ Collection and Histopathological Examination**

Following blood collection, vital organs including the liver, kidney, pancreas, heart, and spleen were carefully excised, rinsed in normal saline, and fixed in 10% buffered formalin for preservation. The fixed tissues were processed using standard histological techniques, embedded in paraffin wax, and sectioned at a thickness of 4–5  $\mu\text{m}$  using a microtome. The tissue sections were stained with hematoxylin and eosin (H&E) for microscopic examination. Histopathological evaluation focused on identifying structural alterations such as hepatic sinusoidal dilatation, renal tubular degeneration, pancreatic islet necrosis, myocardial degeneration, and splenic lymphocytic necrosis, in accordance with standard histological procedures [23].

### **Statistical Analysis**

Data obtained from the study were expressed as mean  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD). Statistical analysis was performed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), followed by Tukey's post hoc test to determine significant differences between groups. A value of  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant. This statistical approach is widely accepted for biomedical research involving multiple group comparisons [24].

### **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 shows the effect of turmeric and ginger co-administration on red blood cell indices, including hemoglobin concentration (Hb), packed cell volume (PCV), red blood cell (RBC) count, mean corpuscular volume (MCV), mean corpuscular hemoglobin (MCH), and mean corpuscular hemoglobin concentration (MCHC). These parameters are essential indicators of erythropoietic function and oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.

Table 1: Table 1: Effect of *curcumin* and *gingerol* co-administration on red blood cell indices of experimental diabetic rats

Group	HB (g/dL)	PCV (%)	RBC ( $\times 10^6/\text{mm}^3$ )	MCV (fL)	MCH (pg)	MCHC (dL/g)
Normal control	18.80 $\pm$ 0.12 <sup>a</sup>	50.00 $\pm$ 0.58 <sup>a</sup>	7.97 $\pm$ 0.10 <sup>a</sup>	62.77 $\pm$ 0.03	23.61 $\pm$ 0.14 <sup>b</sup>	37.61 $\pm$ 0.20 <sup>b</sup>
Negative control	16.70 $\pm$ 0.06 <sup>c</sup>	40.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>c</sup>	6.52 $\pm$ 0.04 <sup>d</sup>	62.16 $\pm$ 0.09	25.63 $\pm$ 0.06 <sup>a</sup>	41.24 $\pm$ 0.15 <sup>a</sup>
Metformin, 100 mg/kg	18.35 $\pm$ 0.17 <sup>abc</sup>	48.75 $\pm$ 0.48 <sup>ab</sup>	7.80 $\pm$ 0.08 <sup>ab</sup>	62.52 $\pm$ 0.08	23.53 $\pm$ 0.04 <sup>b</sup>	37.64 $\pm$ 0.09 <sup>b</sup>
<i>Curcumin</i> , 100 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 100 mg/kg	18.30 $\pm$ 0.17 <sup>abc</sup>	49.00 $\pm$ 0.58 <sup>ab</sup>	7.81 $\pm$ 0.09 <sup>ab</sup>	62.78 $\pm$ 0.02	23.45 $\pm$ 0.05 <sup>b</sup>	37.35 $\pm$ 0.09 <sup>b</sup>
<i>Curcumin</i> , 200 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 200 mg/kg	18.60 $\pm$ 0.12 <sup>ab</sup>	49.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>ab</sup>	7.94 $\pm$ 0.05 <sup>a</sup>	62.38 $\pm$ 0.07	23.44 $\pm$ 0.02 <sup>b</sup>	37.58 $\pm$ 0.01 <sup>b</sup>
<i>Curcumin</i> , 400 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 400 mg/kg	17.60 $\pm$ 0.12 <sup>cde</sup>	46.00 $\pm$ 0.58 <sup>ab</sup>	7.33 $\pm$ 0.09 <sup>abc</sup>	62.75 $\pm$ 0.05	24.02 $\pm$ 0.13 <sup>b</sup>	38.27 $\pm$ 0.23 <sup>b</sup>

The different superscript (<sup>a,b,c,d</sup>) are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 2 presents the effect of the combined treatment on total white blood cell (TWBC) count and relative differential leukocyte counts, including lymphocytes, neutrophils, monocytes, eosinophils, and basophils. These indices provide insight into immune status and inflammatory responses associated with diabetes and treatment interventions.

Table 2: Effect of *Curcumin* and *Gingerol* Co-administration on Total and Relative White Blood Cell Counts of Experimental Diabetic Rat

Group	TWBC ( $\times 10^3/\text{mm}^3$ )	RE lymphocyte (%)	RE neutrophil (%)	RE monocyte (%)	RE eosinophil (%)	RE basophil (%)
Normal control	9.98 $\pm$ 0.07 <sup>g</sup>	59.00 $\pm$ 0.00 <sup>a</sup>	33.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>cd</sup>	5.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>ab</sup>	2.00 $\pm$ 0.00 <sup>f</sup>	0.00 $\pm$ 0.00 <sup>b</sup>
Negative control	14.37 $\pm$ 0.30 <sup>a</sup>	50.00 $\pm$ 0.58 <sup>f</sup>	36.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>a</sup>	4.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>b</sup>	8.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>a</sup>	0.67 $\pm$ 0.33
Metformin, 100 mg/kg	10.93 $\pm$ 0.52 <sup>ef</sup>	56.50 $\pm$ 0.65 <sup>cd</sup>	34.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>bc</sup>	5.50 $\pm$ 0.50 <sup>ab</sup>	3.00 $\pm$ 0.41 <sup>ef</sup>	0.50 $\pm$ 0.29
<i>Curcumin</i> , 100 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 100 mg/kg	11.50 $\pm$ 0.17 <sup>de</sup>	56.00 $\pm$ 0.10 <sup>d</sup>	34.00 $\pm$ 0.00 <sup>bc</sup>	5.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>ab</sup>	4.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>cd</sup>	0.00 $\pm$ 0.00
<i>Curcumin</i> , 200 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 200 mg/kg	12.05 $\pm$ 0.03 <sup>cd</sup>	57.50 $\pm$ 0.29 <sup>bc</sup>	32.50 $\pm$ 0.87 <sup>d</sup>	6.00 $\pm$ 0.00 <sup>a</sup>	3.50 $\pm$ 0.87 <sup>de</sup>	0.67 $\pm$ 0.33

<i>Gingerol</i> 200 mg/kg						
<i>Curcumin</i> , 400 mg/kg +	12.73 ± 0.04 <sup>bc</sup>	± 54.50	± 34.50	± 5.00	± 5.50	± 0.67 ± 0.33
		0.29 <sup>e</sup>	0.29 <sup>bc</sup>	0.58 <sup>ab</sup>	0.29 <sup>bc</sup>	
<i>Gingerol</i> 400 mg/kg						

The different superscript (<sup>a,b,c,d</sup>) are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; RE = relative

Table 3 illustrates the effect of turmeric and ginger co-administration on absolute differential leukocyte counts, which include absolute lymphocyte, neutrophil, monocyte, eosinophil, and basophil counts. These parameters further reflect immune modulation and the extent of inflammatory response in experimental diabetic conditions.

Table 3: Effect of *Curcumin* and *Gingerol* Co-administration on Absolute Differential Leukocyte Counts of Experimental Diabetic Rats

Group	AB lymphocyte ( $\times 10^3 \text{mm}^3$ )	AB neutrophil ( $\times 10^3 \text{mm}^3$ )	AB monocyte ( $\times 10^3 \text{mm}^3$ )	AB eosinophil ( $\times 10^3 \text{mm}^3$ )	AB basophil ( $\times 10^3 \text{mm}^3$ )
Normal control	5.89 ± 0.04 <sup>c</sup>	3.34 ± 0.00 <sup>d</sup>	0.55 ± 0.03 <sup>b</sup>	0.20 ± 0.00 <sup>d</sup>	0.00 ± 0.00
Negative control	7.18 ± 0.07 <sup>a</sup>	5.25 ± 0.15 <sup>a</sup>	0.64 ± 0.03 <sup>ab</sup>	1.22 ± 0.07 <sup>a</sup>	0.07 ± 0.04
Metformin, 100 mg/kg	6.17 ± 0.29 <sup>bc</sup>	3.77 ± 0.15 <sup>c</sup>	0.61 ± 0.08 <sup>ab</sup>	0.33 ± 0.04 <sup>cd</sup>	0.06 ± 0.03
<i>Curcumin</i> , 100 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 100 mg/kg	6.44 ± 0.10 <sup>b</sup>	3.91 ± 0.05 <sup>c</sup>	0.63 ± 0.02 <sup>ab</sup>	0.52 ± 0.04 <sup>c</sup>	0.00 ± 0.00
<i>Curcumin</i> , 200 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 200 mg/kg	6.93 ± 0.02 <sup>a</sup>	3.92 ± 0.11 <sup>c</sup>	0.72 ± 0.00 <sup>a</sup>	0.42 ± 0.10 <sup>cd</sup>	0.06 ± 0.03
<i>Curcumin</i> , 400 mg/kg + <i>Gingerol</i> 400 mg/kg	6.94 ± 0.06 <sup>a</sup>	4.39 ± 0.02 <sup>b</sup>	0.64 ± 0.08 <sup>ab</sup>	0.70 ± 0.03 <sup>b</sup>	0.06 ± 0.04

The different superscript (<sup>a,b,c,d</sup>) are statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ ; AB = absolute

All values are expressed as mean ± standard deviation (SD), and statistical significance was determined at  $p < 0.05$ . Values bearing different superscripts within the same column are considered significantly different.

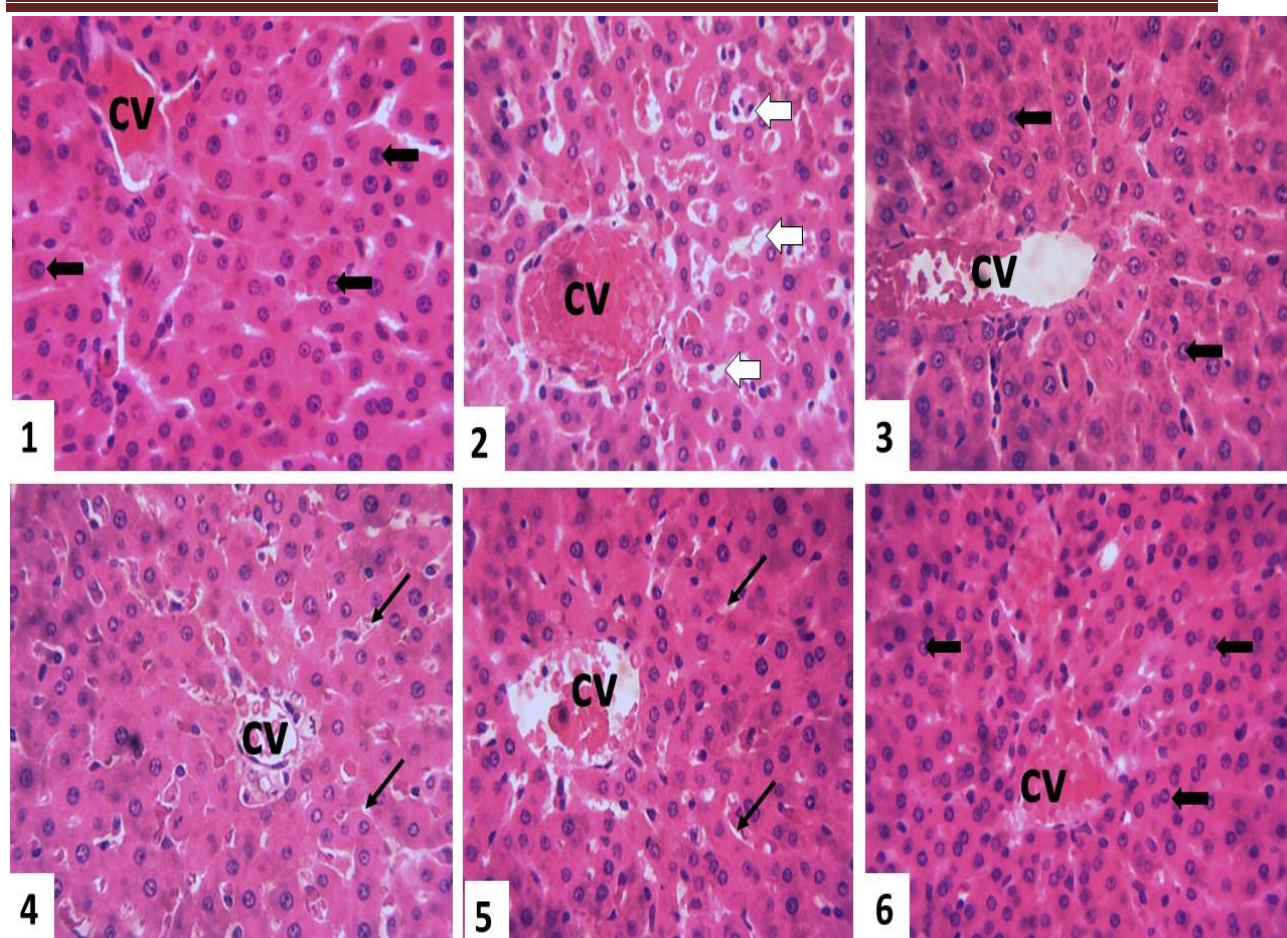


Figure 1: Photomicrograph of the liver sections of rats from experimental groups: 1 (normal control-saline) showing normal central veins (cv) and hepatocytes (black arrows); 2 (diabetic untreated) shows congestion of the central vein (cv) with marked dilatation of sinusoids (white arrows); 3 (diabetic+ 100 mg/kg metformin) and 6 (400 mg/kg *curcumin* + 400 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows normal central veins (cv) and hepatocytes (black arrows); 4 (100 mg/kg *curcumin* + 100 mg/kg *gingerol*) and 5 (200 mg/kg *curcumin* + 200 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows mild dilatation of sinusoids (thin arrows). H and E stain  $\times 400$ .

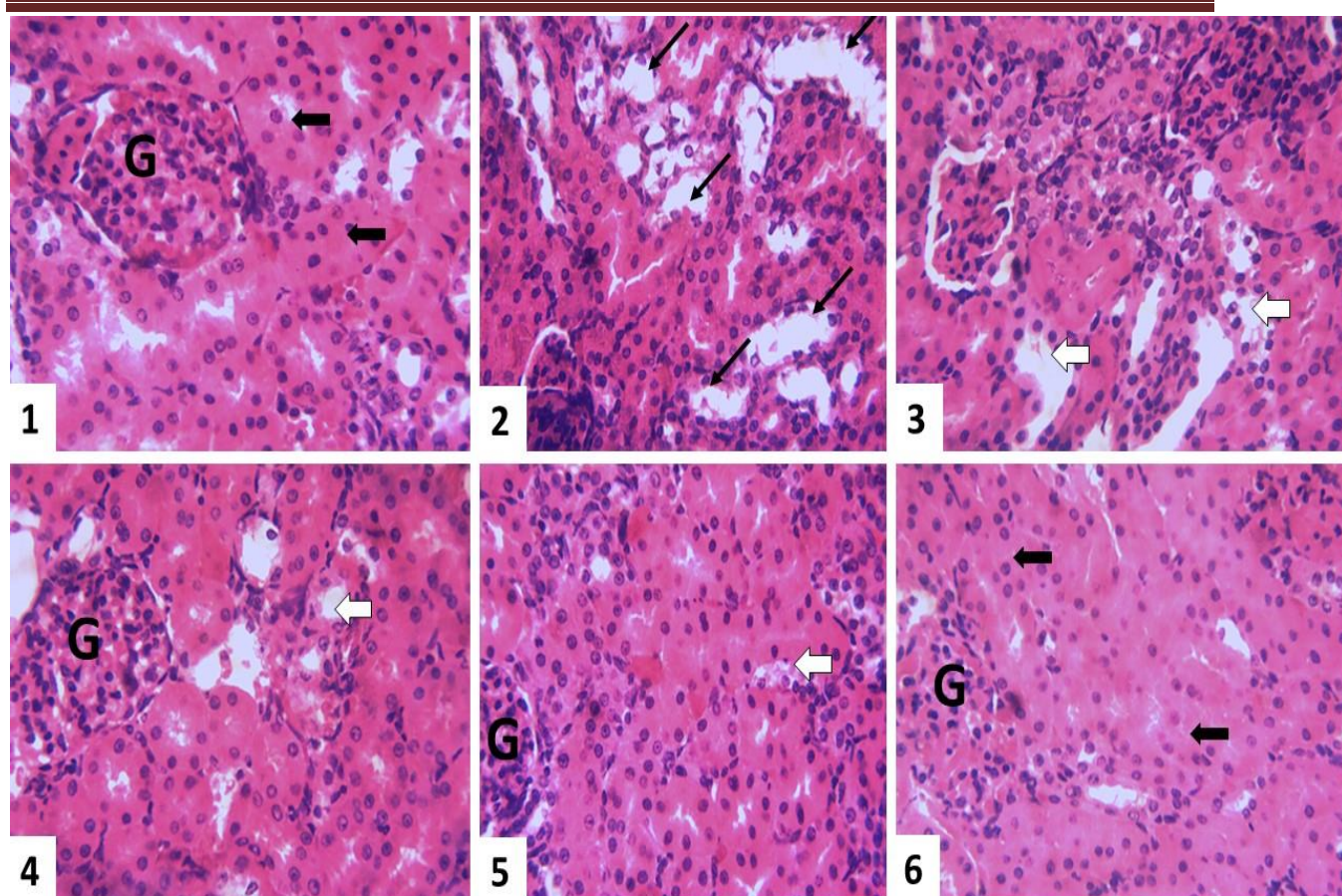


Figure 2: Photomicrograph of the kidney sections of rats from experimental groups: 1 (normal control-saline) showing normal glomerulus (G) and renal tubules (black arrows); 2 (diabetic untreated) shows moderate degeneration of the renal tubular epithelium (thin arrows); 3 (diabetic+ 100 mg/kg metformin); 4 (100 mg/kg *curcumin* + 100 mg/kg *gingerol*) and 5 (200 mg/kg *curcumin* + 200 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows mild focal degeneration of the renal tubular epithelium (white arrows); while 6 (400 mg/kg *curcumin* + 400 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows normal glomerulus (G) and renal tubules (black arrows). H and E stain  $\times 400$ .

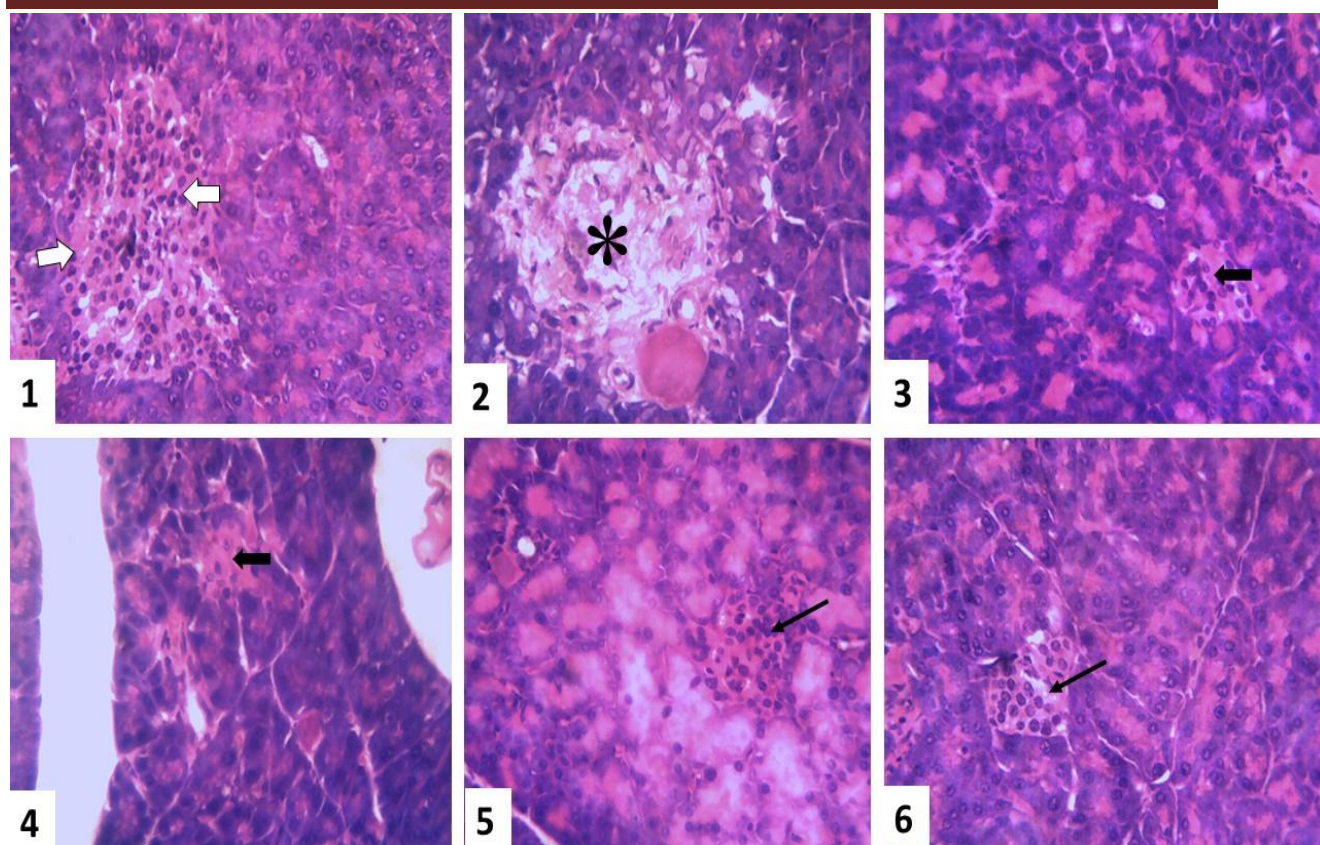


Figure 3: Photomicrograph of the pancreas of rats from experimental groups: 1 (normal control- saline) showing intact pancreatic islet cells (white arrows); 2 (diabetic untreated) shows degeneration and necrosis pancreatic islets of Langerhans (asterik); 3 (diabetic+ 100 mg/kg metformin) and 4 (100 mg/kg *curcumin* + 100 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows moderate atrophy of pancreatic islets of Langerhans with few cells (black arrows) while 5 (200 mg/kg *curcumin* + 200 mg/kg *gingerol*) and 6 (400 mg/kg *curcumin* + 400 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows mild atrophy of pancreatic islets of Langerhans with many cells (thin arrows). H and E stain  $\times 400$ .

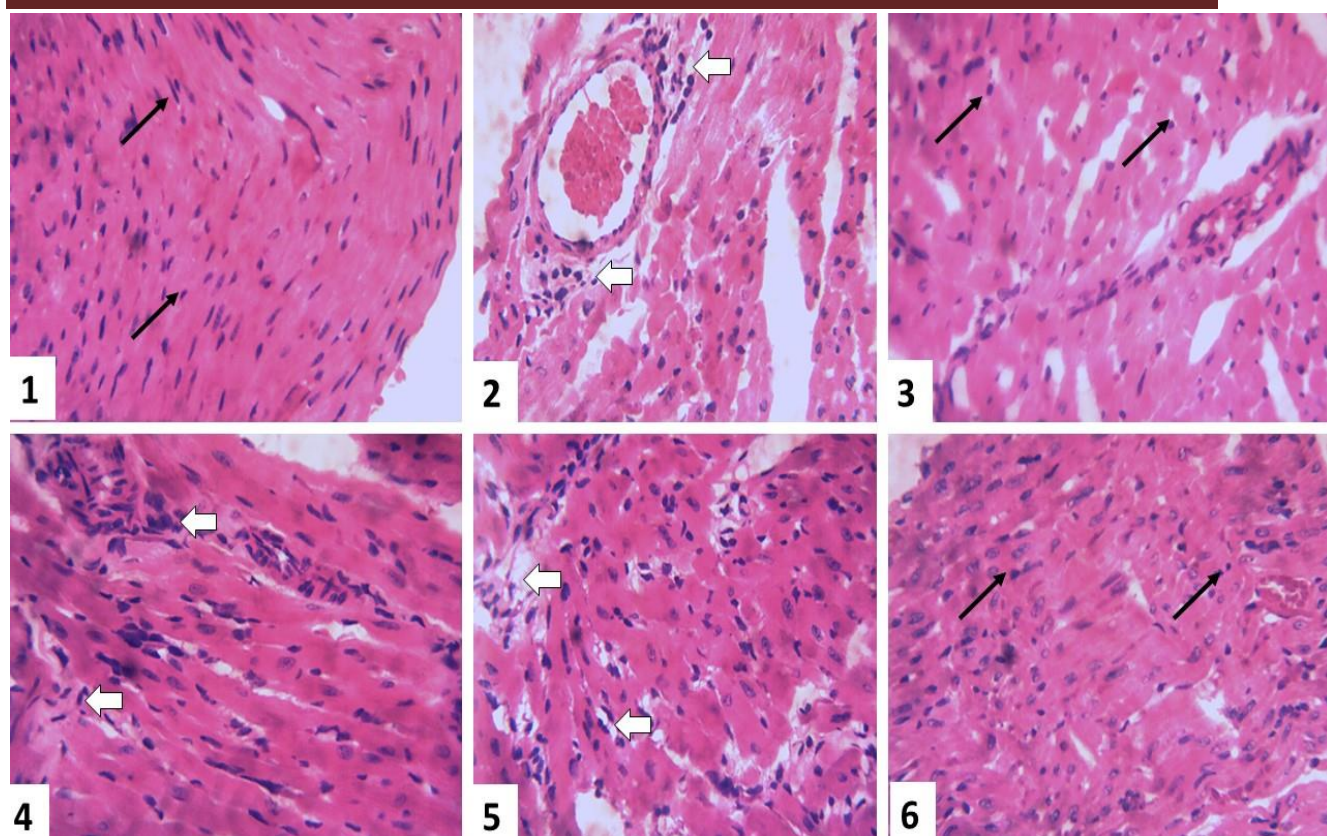


Figure 4: Photomicrograph of the heart of rats from experimental groups: 1 (normal control- saline) showing normal cardiomyocytes (black arrows); 2 (diabetic untreated); 4 (100 mg/kg *curcumin* + 100 mg/kg *gingerol*) and 5 (200 mg/kg *curcumin* + 200 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows mild myocardial degeneration (white arrows); 3 (diabetic+ 100 mg/kg metformin) and 6 (400 mg/kg *curcumin* + 400 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows normal cardiac muscle fibres (thin arrows). H and E stain  $\times 400$ .

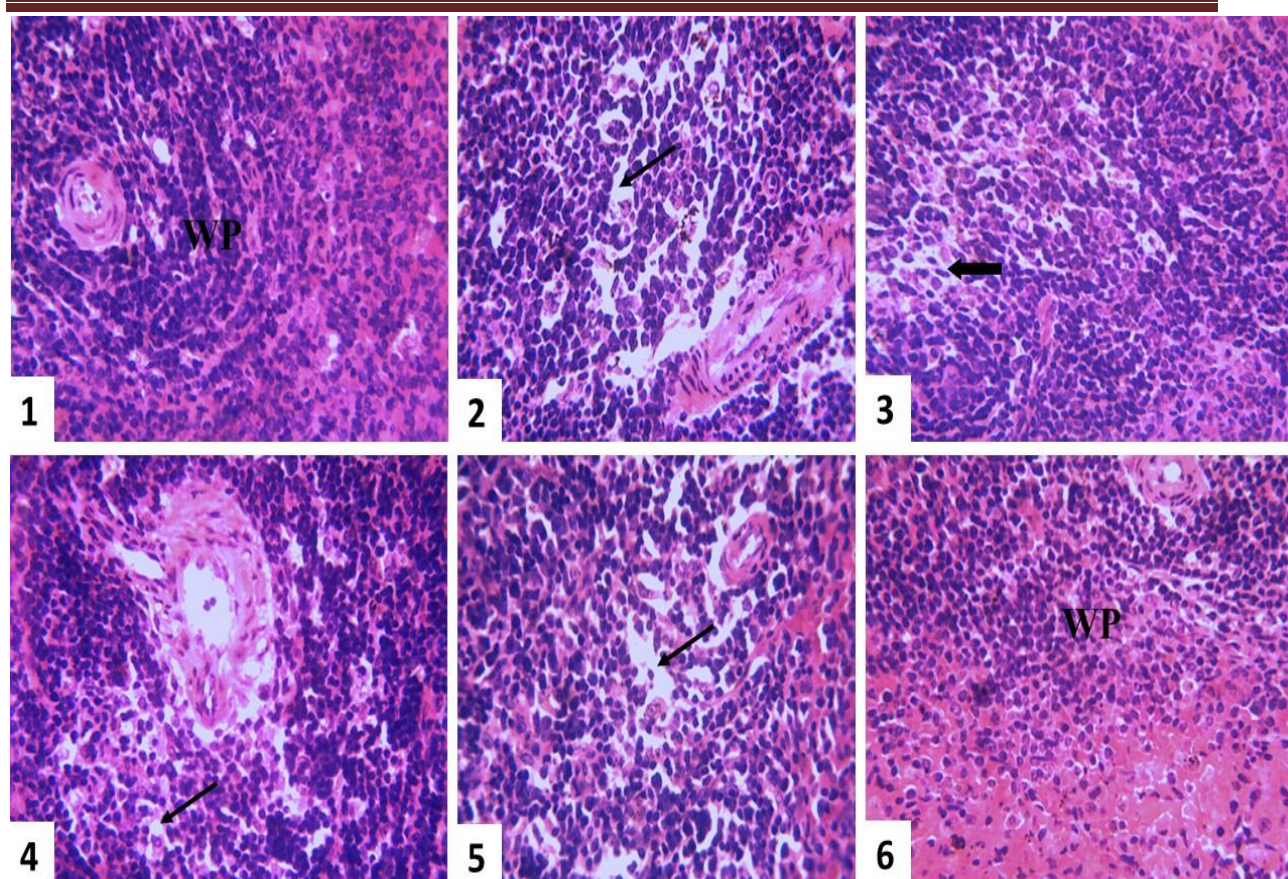


Figure 5: Photomicrograph of the spleen of rats from experimental groups: 1 (normal control- saline) and 6 (400 mg/kg *curcumin* + 400 mg/kg *gingerol* showing normal lymphoid nodules or white pulp (WP); 2 (diabetic untreated); 4 (100 mg/kg *curcumin* + 100 mg/kg *gingerol*) and 5 (200 mg/kg *curcumin* + 200 mg/kg *gingerol*) shows moderate lymphocytic necrosis (thin arrows) while 3 (diabetic+ 100 mg/kg metformin) shows mild lymphocytic necrosis (thick arrows). H and E stain  $\times 400$ .

This study evaluated the hematological, immunological, and histopathological effects of combined curcumin and gingerol treatment in experimental diabetic rats. The findings demonstrate that diabetes induced significant alterations in blood parameters, immune cell profiles, and tissue architecture of vital organs, while treatment with *curcumin-gingerol* combinations produced marked restorative effects, comparable to or better than metformin in some parameters. Diabetic untreated rats showed significant reductions in hemoglobin concentration, packed cell volume, and red blood cell counts compared to the normal control group. These findings are consistent with previous reports indicating that chronic hyperglycemia leads to oxidative damage of erythrocyte membranes, reduced erythropoiesis, and increased hemolysis [1, 4,17]. Glycation of hemoglobin and impaired iron metabolism in diabetes have also been implicated in anemia development [24, 25].

Administration of metformin and *curcumin-gingerol* combinations significantly improved Hb, PCV, and RBC values. The higher doses of *curcumin* and *gingerol* (200 and 400 mg/kg) showed better normalization of hematological indices, suggesting a dose-dependent effect. These improvements may

be attributed to the antioxidant properties of *curcumin* and *gingerol*, which protect erythrocytes from oxidative stress and enhance bone marrow activity [26, 28].

Red blood cell indices (MCV, MCH, and MCHC) remained relatively stable across groups, indicating that diabetes primarily affected erythrocyte quantity rather than morphology. Similar observations have been reported in diabetic animal models treated with plant-derived antioxidants [11, 29]. Total white blood cell (TWBC) count was significantly elevated in diabetic untreated rats, reflecting systemic inflammation and immune activation. Increased neutrophil and eosinophil count further indicate inflammatory and oxidative stress-related responses commonly associated with diabetes [2-3]. *Curcumin-gingerol* treatment significantly reduced TWBC levels and normalized differential leukocyte counts, particularly lymphocytes and neutrophils. This immunomodulatory effect aligns with the known anti-inflammatory actions of curcumin and gingerol, which suppress pro-inflammatory cytokines such as TNF- $\alpha$  and IL-6 [13, 9]. Absolute leukocyte counts followed a similar trend, reinforcing the ability of the combined therapy to restore immune homeostasis.

Notably, the combined phytochemical treatment showed better regulation of immune parameters than metformin alone at certain doses, suggesting complementary mechanisms beyond glycemic control. Alaabo et al. [30] similarly reported enhanced antioxidant and immunoprotective effects when curcumin and ginger were used synergistically, a concept also emphasized in broader reviews of antidiabetic phytotherapy [7].

Histopathological examination revealed severe tissue damage in diabetic untreated rats. The liver showed congestion of central veins and dilatation of sinusoids, indicative of hepatic injury and impaired circulation. Such changes are commonly linked to lipid accumulation, oxidative stress, and inflammatory infiltration in diabetic states [11, 31].

Kidney sections from diabetic untreated rats displayed moderate degeneration of renal tubular epithelium, consistent with early diabetic nephropathy. Pancreatic sections revealed degeneration and necrosis of the islets of Langerhans, confirming  $\beta$ -cell destruction due to oxidative stress, as also reported in previous studies [31]. Cardiac and splenic tissues also exhibited degenerative changes and lymphocytic necrosis, respectively, highlighting the multisystemic nature of diabetes-induced damage. Treatment with *curcumin-gingerol* combinations markedly ameliorated these histological abnormalities. The highest dose (400 mg/kg) restored near-normal architecture in the liver, kidney, pancreas, heart, and spleen. These findings corroborate earlier reports that curcumin and gingerol protect tissues by scavenging free radicals, inhibiting lipid peroxidation, and enhancing endogenous antioxidant defenses [12, 25, 28].

The observed improvement in pancreatic histology suggests possible  $\beta$ -cell preservation or regeneration, which may contribute to improved metabolic control. Similar pancreatic protective effects of curcumin and ginger extracts have been documented in streptozotocin-induced diabetic models [29]. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated evaluation of hematological, immunological, and multi-organ histopathological outcomes following combined *curcumin* and *gingerol* treatment in diabetes.

While previous studies have investigated *curcumin* or *ginger* individually, limited data exist on their dose-dependent synergistic effects across blood indices, immune parameters, and multiple organs simultaneously.

Furthermore, this study provides additional experimental support to earlier work by Alaebo et al. [30], extending the evidence of turmeric–ginger synergy beyond oxidative stress markers to include comprehensive hematological and histological outcomes. The findings suggest that combined phytotherapy may offer broader systemic protection than conventional monotherapy, consistent with accumulating evidence on the therapeutic synergy of plant-derived bioactive compounds [31, 33, 9].

## Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that diabetes induces significant hematological derangements, immune dysregulation, and structural damage to vital organs. Combined *curcumin* and *gingerol* treatment significantly ameliorated these alterations in a dose-dependent manner, with the highest dose (400 mg/kg) producing effects comparable to or better than metformin.

The protective effects observed are likely mediated through antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory mechanisms, resulting in restoration of blood parameters, immune balance, and tissue integrity. These findings highlight the therapeutic potential of *curcumin–gingerol* combinations as complementary agents in the management of diabetes and its complications.

This study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating that the combined administration of *curcumin* and *gingerol* significantly ameliorates diabetes-induced hematological abnormalities, immune dysregulation, and organ damage in a dose-dependent manner, with the highest dose showing effects comparable to or better than metformin, thereby highlighting the potential of this phytochemical combination as a complementary therapeutic strategy for the management of diabetes and its associated complications.

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