

EFFECTS OF CROTOXIN ON RAT'S ANXIETY MEASURED IN ELEVATED PLUS-MAZE. Moreira, E.G.¹, Vassilief, V.S.¹, Rogero, J.R.², Nascimento, N.³, Rosa, G.J.M.² - ¹Pharmacology Dep., ²Biostatistic Dep., IB, UNESP, Botucatu - SP; ³Radiobiology Division, IPEN/CNEN, São Paulo - SP, Brazil.

BACKGROUND: Crotoxin is the most toxic and abundant substance among the pharmacological active components of *Crotalus durissus terrificus* venom. Considering that in a previous study crotoxin increased the emotionality of rats (FESBE, 1995), the objective was to investigate whether this effect can be attributed to anxiety, using the elevated plus maze test.

RESULTS: Male Wistar rats weighing 180-220 g and housed under 12-hour light-dark cycle, were used. Crotoxin (100, 250 or 500 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$), or saline, ip, were administered 2-hour before the test. It was measured the number of entries in and time spent (s) on both open and closed arms. Crotoxin decreased the number of open arm entries ($y=2.45-3.6(10^{-3})x+6.9(10^{-6})x^2$; $R^2=66.8\%$) and time spent on them ($y=73.8-2.3(10^{-1})x+4.3(10^{-4})x^2$; $R^2=83.6\%$). The statistical analysis was ANOVA for one way classification, using orthogonal polynomial ($p<0.05$).

CONCLUSION: It is strongly suggested that the previously demonstrated crotoxin-increased emotionality in rats is due to an anxiogenic effect of this compound.