

The animal protocol was designed to minimize pain or discomfort to the animals. The animals were acclimatized to laboratory conditions (23°C, 12h/12h light/dark, 50% humidity, ad libitum access to food and water) for two weeks prior to experimentation. Intragastric gavage administration was carried out with conscious animals, using straight gavage needles appropriate for the animal size (15-17 g body weight: 22 gauge, 1 inch length, 1.25 mm ball diameter). All animals were euthanized by barbiturate overdose (intravenous injection, 150 mg/kg pentobarbital sodium) for tissue collection.

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