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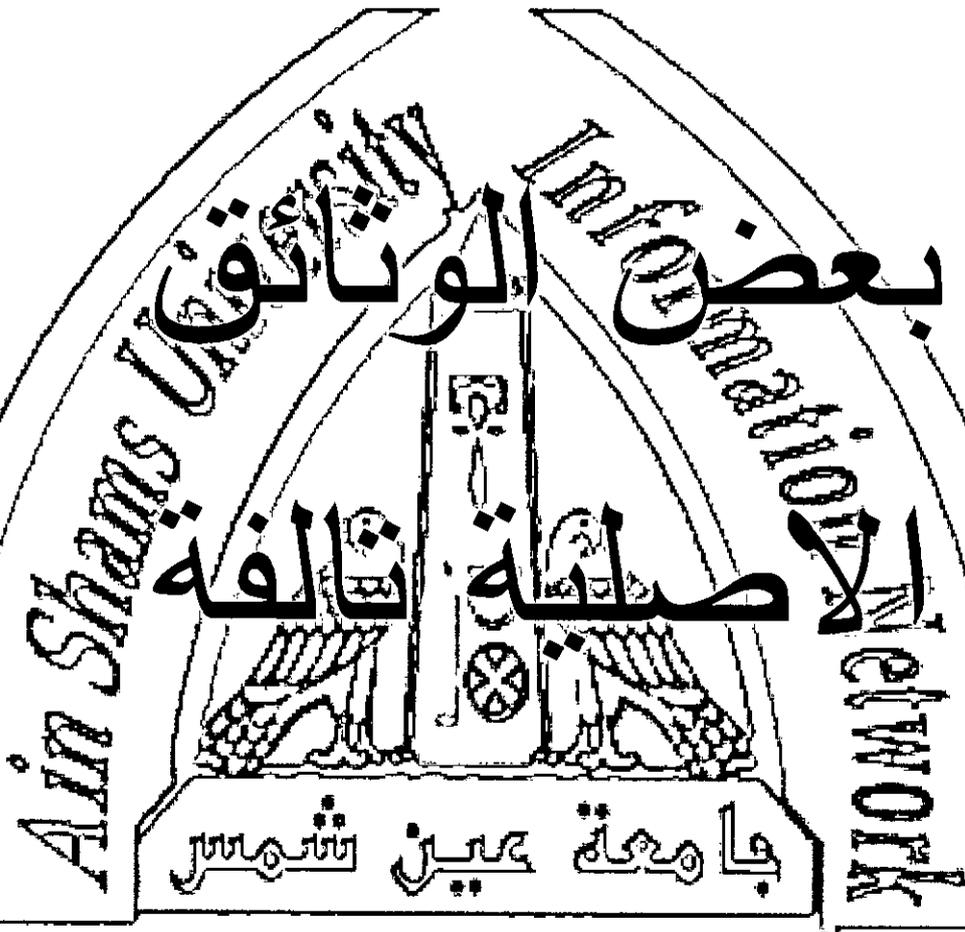
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**NITRIC OXIDE SERUM LEVEL IN PROGRESSIVE
SYSTEMIC SCLEROSIS IN RELATION TO
THE DISEASE PROFILE**

THESIS

**SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR (M.SC.) DEGREE IN
RHEUMATOLOGY AND REHABILITATION**

By

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Abstract

Systemic sclerosis is a multisystem disorder characterized by Raynaud's phenomenon, proliferative vascular lesions, and fibrosis of the skin and organs. Recently, nitric oxide, a short lived, gaseous free radical, synthesized from L-arginine by nitric oxide synthases, was implicated as a mediator of immune and inflammatory responses, and reported to play a role in autoimmune disorders. The aim of this study is to determine nitric oxide serum level of patients with systemic sclerosis, and nitric oxide correlation with the different laboratory and clinical presentations of the disease. Thirty patients with systemic sclerosis (mean age 43.13 years \pm 11.18 SD), were examined. In addition, sixteen healthy volunteers (mean age 41.50 years \pm 15.68 SD), were included in this study. Nitric oxide serum level was assayed spectrophotometrically using the Griess reagent. In serum, mean nitric oxide level was higher in patients with systemic sclerosis (12.53 μ mole/ L \pm 5.53 SD) than the control group (9.25 μ mole/ L \pm 2.51 SD), and this was statistically significant (P= 0.008). Furthermore, there were statistically significant positive correlations between mean nitric oxide serum level of patients with systemic sclerosis and; Rodnan's skin thickness score (P= 0.003), and the erythrocyte sedimentation rate (P= 0.016).

Key Words:

Systemic sclerosis - Nitric oxide - Immunity and inflammation - Rheumatic diseases.

