Progress towards inline spectral sensing of lactate in pig blood at exsanguination

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Background

- When pigs are stressed or handled improperly at the lead-in to the stunning process their muscles may use more energy than usual, leading to an increase in blood lactate levels. This increase in blood lactate levels may coincide with an increased post-mortem glycolysis, leading to a faster decrease in muscle tissue pH. This increase in post-mortem pH-fall can cause meat to become tougher and less palatable (Xing *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, it is important to minimize stress during preslaughter handling and transportation of animals to slaughterhouses in order to maintain good meat quality (Hambrecht *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, blood lactate levels can be used as an indicator of animal welfare.
- Optical spectroscopy is a technique that can be used to measure lactate in animal blood. It involves the use of light to analyse the properties of a sample, including its chemical composition. Commonly used spectral techniques for lactate assessment in blood are near infrared (NIR) (Baishya *et al.*, 2021), and Raman spectroscopy (Olaetxea *et al.*, 2020). Spectroscopic techniques offer several advantages over other methods for measuring lactate in animal blood, including non-invasiveness and the ability to analyse multiple samples simultaneously inline at exsanguination.

Objective

- The aim of the present study was to explore different optical spectroscopy techniques to predict the blood lactate content in pig blood at exsanguination.

Material and Methods

- The study involves three different trials carried out at different slaughterhouses of Vion Food in, The Netherlands. The first trial was from year 2020, where blood samples immediately after stunning and sticking were measured with a hand-held lactate analyser (Lactate Scout 4, EFK Diagnostics, United Kingdom) and near-infrared (NIR) spectrometer (Labspec, ASD, Malvern Panalytical, USA). The NIR spectrometer had an inbuilt halogen light source for illuminating the blood samples. The NIR measurement was carried out in plastic cups filled with fresh blood and the NIR reflection probe was placed with ~ 2 cm of distance between probe head and blood. Hand-held lactate measurements were performed before spectral measurements. During the second trail in 2022, the blood samples were measured with the lactate analyser and a dip probe Raman spectrometer (Wasatch, Photonics, USA) using 785 nm laser source. Blood samples were presented in plastic cups and measured with the dip probe. Between scans, probe was cleaned to remove remaining of blood from earlier samples. The integration time was 5 seconds. Partial least-squares (PLS) was performed to relate spectra with lactate. PLS was optimised with leave-one-sample-out (LOO) cross-validation analysis.

Results and dicussion

- The blood lactate ranges from the two trails had a mean±standard deviation range of 10±3.45 mMol/L, where for NIR modelling, the lactate range was 11.32±3.24 mMol/L (80 blood samples), and for Raman data modelling, the lactate range was 9.92±3.58 mMol/L (57 blood samples). For both the NIR and Raman, the lactate range was similar. The PLS regression cross-validation analysis results are shown in Figure. 1.
- Both techniques carried variation related to lactate, but Raman carried higher variation than the NIR. A reason for better explain of lactate variation by Raman could be high sensitivity towards analytes, while NIR signals are usually attenuated by water.

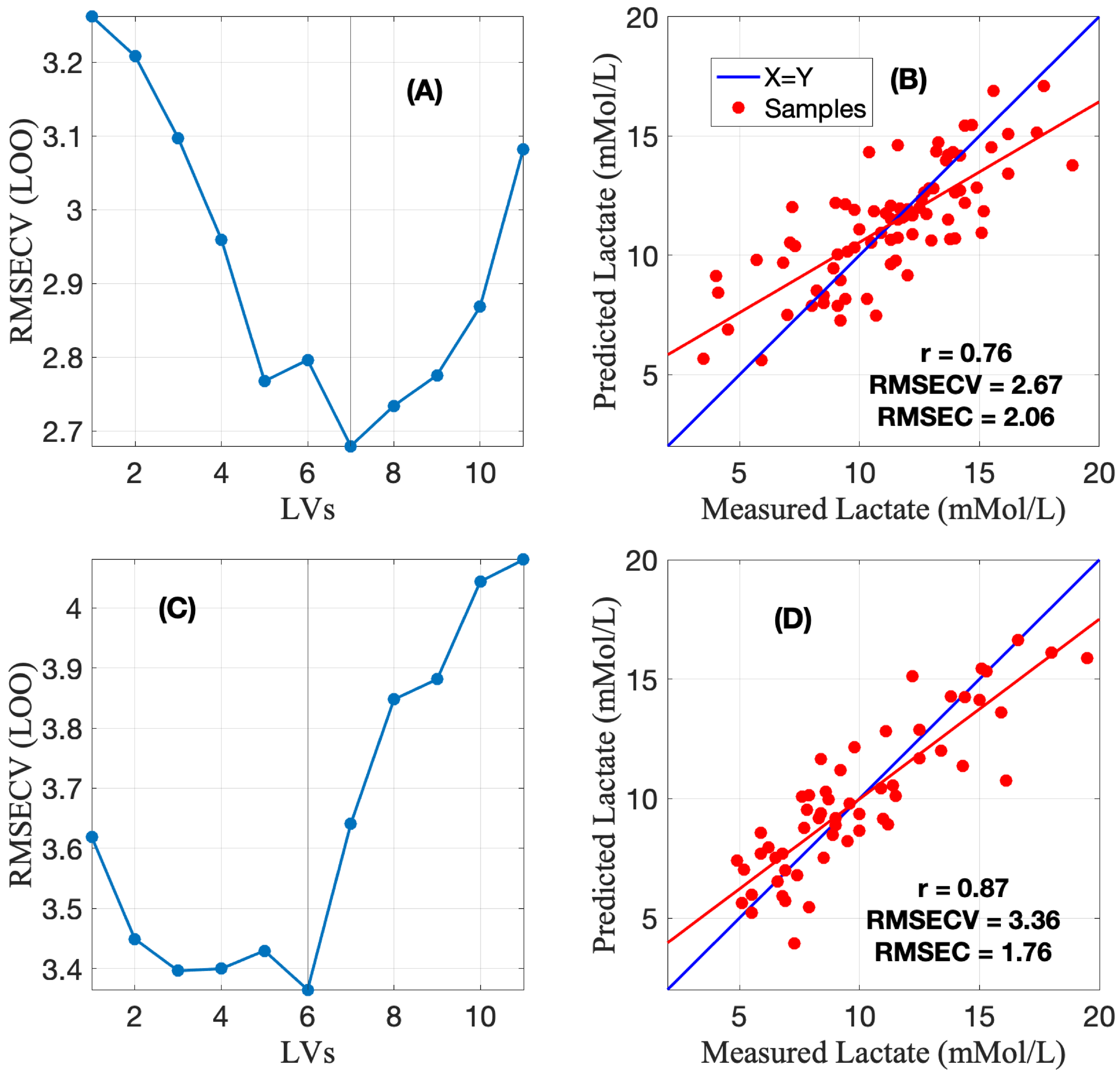

Figure 1. (A) PLS cross-validation for NIR, (B) prediction plot for NIR, (C) PLS cross-validation for Raman, and (D) prediction plot for Raman.

Conclusions

- The study aimed to explore optical spectroscopy for predicting lactate levels in pig blood during after stunning at exsanguination. The results suggests that both techniques, NIR and Raman, carry variation related to lactate but Raman spectroscopy appears to be more sensitive to predict lactate.

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