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### Economic status of agriculture labour: A case study of Rajasthan

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#### ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to examine the socio-economic status of agricultural labours, analyze wage and employment patterns, assess income and expenditure patterns, and investigate gender discrimination among agricultural labour in Rajasthan. The collected data revealed that the socio-economic status of agricultural labour was below the average compared to workers in other sectors. The highest level of employment was generated through crop harvesting activities. Annual employment in agriculture averaged 214 days. The average wage rate was ₹ 332.64 in the agricultural sector and ₹ 406.73 in the non-agricultural sector. The total annual family income and total family expenditure were ₹ 194,957 and ₹ 157,857, respectively.

#### Introduction

India is the world's second-most populous country, and it covers the 17.70% population comparison to the world. India has 1,210,193,422 population were reported of India (Census, 2011). Agriculture is primary sector of the Indian economy. The data provided by the census (2001) of India reveals that about 69 per cent of the total workers were engaged in agriculture and allied activities in the year 1981; while in the year 1991 the share of agriculture in total employment slightly declined to 68 per cent and nearly 70 per cent of the rural and 8 per cent of the urban households still depend on it employment and livelihood (Bhakar *et al.*, 2007). Agriculture is the major sector of this state economy which plays an important role in the national income, providing large employment opportunities, supplying adequate food grains to the growing population and giving a scope for earning foreign exchange through export (Kekani,

2013). It still remains the most acceptable fact that agriculture continues to play greater role in the socio-economic development of the country (Raju, 2017). Out of 28 states and 8 Union Territory of India, Rajasthan covers 3,42,239 km<sup>2</sup> or 10.4 per cent of India's total geographical area. Rajasthan has total population 68,548,437 were recorded (Census, 2011). Labour is one of the most important components out of four factors of production (Land, labour, capital and organization). In growth of any country, human labour play important role. Human labour constitutes the most neglected category in India's rural structure. Their income is low and employment is irregular. Since, they have no skill or training and no alternative employment opportunities (Vetrivel and Manigandan, 2013). The majority of the Indian rural workers are dependent on agriculture, and among the workers the number of agricultural labours is quite high (Singh, 2017). As per the survey carried out by the National Sample Survey Organization in the year

2009-10, the total employment, in both organized and unorganized sectors in the country was out of the order of 46.5 crore comprising around 2.8 crore in the organized sector and the balance 43.7 crore workers in the unorganized sector. Out of 43.7 crore workers in the unorganized sector, there are 24.6 crore workers employed in the agricultural sector, about 4.4 crore in construction work and remaining in manufacturing and service. Agricultural labours are mainly economically and socially backward people. They are working on various farms for wages. The productivity in agriculture depends upon the efficiency of agricultural labours, which in turn depends upon their socio-economic conditions (Singh, 2019). Most of the agricultural labours in the village are landless and so they depend on wage paid employment. Employment and wages are the important factors which influence the livelihood status of agriculture labour.

The problem of agricultural labours is not only a critical problem but also a puzzling problem for India. When one has to primarily think of millions of people involved in agricultural operations. The present study is focused on the socio-economic conditions, employment, income and expenditure pattern of agricultural labours in Rajasthan.

### Methodology

On the basis of population of agricultural labour, Bikaner (Hyper Arid Partial Irrigated Zone- IC) and Jaipur (Semi-Arid Eastern Plain Zone-III A) districts Rajasthan state were selected. 120 agriculture labours were selected randomly for the present study. The primary data (July 2020 to June 2021) was collected from the selected agriculture labour through personal interview method. The secondary data were collected from various published sources.

### Analysis of data

#### (i) Analysis of socio-economic status of agricultural labour in Rajasthan

Tabular analysis was used for the study of socio-economic status of agriculture labour. The statistical tools like average, percentage etc. were employed to summarize and compare various socio-economic characteristics in the present study.

#### (ii) Employment pattern and wages of agricultural labour in Rajasthan

To find out employment patterns wages of agriculture labour chi-square test was used.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

$\chi^2$  is the chi-square test statistic

$\Sigma$  is the summation operator (it means “take the sum of”)

O is the observed frequency

E is the expected frequency

### (iii) Regression analysis of income and expenditure pattern of agriculture labour in Rajasthan

Estimate the income and expenditure functions with the help of multiple linear regression analysis. The following functional forms were used with different variables.

#### Income function

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + u$$

Where,

Y = Annual total family income (₹)

a = Intercept

$X_1$  = Total employment (man days)

$X_2$  = Earners (Number per family)

$X_3$  = Livestock (Number per family)

$b_i$ 's = Regression coefficients of respective explanatory variables

u = Error term in sufficient independence variables

#### Expenditure function

$$Y = a + b_1 X_1 + b_2 X_2 + b_3 X_3 + u$$

Where,

Y = Expenditure (₹)

a = Intercept

$X_1$  = Total income per family (₹)

$X_2$  = Family size ((Number per family)

$X_3$  = Value of fixed capital assets (₹)

$b_i$ 's = Regression coefficients of respective explanatory variables

u = Error term in sufficient independence variables

### Results and Discussion

The data presented in Table 1 shows that female labour were more than male labours in agriculture sector because there are social restrictions on female in villages, due to which they do not work away from village and female labour work around the village. Almost similar results were reported by Swamikannan and Jeyalakshmi (2015). In the present study, it was found that out of the total 120 respondents 59 respondents were belong to young age, 39 respondents were belong to middle age and 22 respondents were belong to old age. The result shows that young age agricultural labours were more than old age and middle age agricultural labours because the young agricultural labours were more efficient so first people prefer young people to work in the field. During this study it was found that the majority of the agricultural labours were belong to schedule caste and constituted 58.30 per cent of the sample respondent, 23.30 per cent were belong to other backward caste, 16.70 per cent were belong to schedule tribe caste and 1.70 per cent were belong to general caste in Jaipur district. In Bikaner district 56.70 per cent sample respondents were belong to schedule caste, 33.30 per cent were other backward

caste, 1.70 per cent were schedule tribe caste and 8.30 per cent were general caste.

Most of the agricultural labours were belong to high school education group. 46 respondents were belong to high school education group, 29 respondents were belong to illiterate group, 24 respondents were belong to middle education group, 14 respondents were belong to primary education group and 7 respondents were belong to graduated education group out of 120. The result shows that the a few labours were achieved higher level education due to poor family condition and they belong from rural background and the peoples of the villages give less importance to the

education. During the analysis of the data, it was observed that the majority of the agricultural labours were belonging to joint family, because in villages the family does not consist only of husband, wife and their children but also of uncle, aunts and cousin and grandsons. Living in a joint family has many advantages such as sharing responsibility; managing financial burdens, teamwork, and strong support system. The analysis of the data collected from the agricultural labours shows that majority of the agricultural labours have 4 to 6 members in family in both the districts.

**Table 1.** Social status of agricultural labours in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Particulars	Jaipur (n = 60)	Bikaner (n = 60)	Overall (n = 120)
Gender			
Male	17 (28.20)	36 (60.00)	53 (44.20)
Female	43 (71.80)	24 (40.00)	67 (55.80)
Age			
Young (< 35year)	29 (48.30)	30 (50.00)	59 (49.20)
Middle (35 to 50 year)	21 (35.00)	18 (30.00)	39 (32.50)
Old (> 50 year)	10 (16.70)	12 (20.00)	22 (18.30)
Social caste			
ST	10 (16.70)	1 (1.70)	11 (9.20)
SC	35 (58.30)	34 (56.70)	69 (57.50)
OBC	14 (23.30)	20 (33.30)	34 (28.30)
General	1 (1.70)	5 (8.30)	6 (5.00)
Education			
Illiterate	16 (26.70)	13 (21.70)	29 (24.20)
Primary	11 (18.30)	3 (5.00)	14 (11.70)
Middle	11 (18.30)	13 (21.70)	24 (20.00)
High school	19 (31.70)	27 (45.00)	46 (38.30)
Graduate	3 (5.00)	4 (6.60.)	7 (5.80)
Marital status			
Married	47 (78.30)	53 (88.30)	100 (83.30)
Unmarried	13 (21.70)	7 (11.70)	20 (16.70)
Type of family			
Nuclear	14 (23.30)	17 (28.30)	31 (25.80)
Joint	46 (76.70)	43 (71.70)	89 (74.20)
Family size			
Below 4	1 (1.70)	3 (5.00)	4 (3.30)
4 to 6	32 (53.30)	33 (55.00)	65 (54.20)
Above 6	27 (45.00)	24 (40.00)	51 (42.50)
Social participation			
No participation	43 (71.70)	48 (80.00)	91 (75.80)
Cooperative society/NGO	17 (28.30)	12 (20.00)	29 (24.20)

Source: Primary survey (2020-21)

\*Figures in parameters show in per cent of total labour

### ***Economic status of agricultural labour***

In this study, the data collected from the respondents, majority of the respondents were lived in *pakka* house

in both the districts (Table 2). The possible region of this was several government schemes for houses like PM *Awas Yojna*, for weaker section. The data showed that the majority of agricultural labours in both districts

were casual labours, as employment in agriculture is seasonal in nature. On an average 81 respondents were casual labours and 39 respondents were permanent labours. The result shows that the majority of the agricultural labours were have 2 to 4 earners in family in both the districts. In the present study, the data shows that the income of 66 agricultural labours were ₹ 100000 to ₹ 200000, 21 respondent's income ₹ 50000 to ₹ 100000 and 33 respondent's income were more than ₹ 200000 as a whole. The result shows that the most of agricultural labour

family income was low due to seasonal nature of employment in agriculture sector and wage rate was also low compared to another sector.

The results show that most of the agricultural labours have no land and some agricultural labours have small piece of land because people sell out their land due to poor irrigation facility, money requirement for family and urbanization. The results also show that the most of agricultural labour borrowed money from non-institutional sources due to lack of knowledge.

**Table 2.** Economic status of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Particulars	Jaipur (n=60)	Bikaner (n=60)	Overall (n=120)
Type of house			
<i>Kachha</i> house	4 (6.70)	17 (28.30)	21 (17.50)
<i>Pakka</i> house	56 (93.30)	43 (71.70)	99 (82.50)
Occupation			
Permanent labour	26 (43.30)	13 (21.70)	39 (32.50)
Causal labour	34 (56.70)	47 (78.30)	81 (67.50)
Number of earners			
Only 1	5 (8.30)	16 (26.70)	21 (17.50)
2 to 4	55 (91.70)	44 (73.30)	99 (82.50)
Annual income			
₹ 50,000 to ₹ 100000	10 (16.70)	11 (18.30)	21 (17.50)
> ₹ 1,00,000 to ₹ 200000	32 (53.30)	34 (56.70)	66 (55.00)
> ₹ 200000	18 (30.00)	15 (25.00)	33 (27.50)
Land holding			
0 to 0.5 ha	45 (75.00)	51 (85.00)	96 (80.00)
> 0.5 to 1 ha	15 (25.00)	09 (15.00)	24 (20.00)
Source of borrowing money			
Bank	05 (8.34)	05 (8.34)	10 (8.34)
Cooperative society	05 (8.33)	04 (6.66)	09 (7.50)
Relative and friend	39 (65.00)	42 (70.00)	81 (67.50)
No borrowing money	11 (18.33)	09 (15.00)	20 (16.66)

Source: Primary survey (2020-21), \*Figures in parameters show in per cent of total labour

### ***Employment pattern and wages of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts***

Employment was one of the most important aspects for livelihood. As the employment patterns were strong, they have good income which makes their standard of living better. Overall situation shows that non agriculture sector provided 241.74 days of employment. The significant Chi-square value 5.78

indicates that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the observed distribution is not the same as the expected distribution. The result shows that in agriculture sector, employment days less than the other sector because the employment in agriculture sector depends on seasons. The highest employment received for agricultural labour when agricultural labour work in both the sectors. Similar results were reported by Swamikannan and Jeyalakshmi (2015).

**Table 3.** Season wise distribution of employment days in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Season	Jaipur (n = 60)			Bikaner (n = 60)			Overall (n = 120)		
	Agriculture	Non-agriculture	Both Sector	Agriculture	Non-agriculture	Both Sector	Agriculture	Non-agriculture	Both Sector
<i>Kharif</i>									
July	15.03	19.41	21.25	11.00	14.18	22.50	14.40	16.91	21.66
August	18.92	15.66	17.20	15.12	19.00	21.94	17.65	18.23	20.86
September	21.03	15.00	19.16	21.57	23.33	21.37	21.30	19.16	20.42
October	22.35	15.00	19.00	24.03	26.00	22.00	23.19	20.50	20.50
Total	77.33	65.07	76.61	71.72	82.51	87.81	76.54	74.8	83.44
<i>Rabi</i>									
November	22.03	17.00	22.66	21.98	24.00	24.14	22.01	20.50	23.46
December	17.37	16.67	21.56	12.59	22.33	23.40	15.60	21.52	22.21
January	18.96	20.00	20.00	13.09	23.00	24.00	17.11	22.44	22.00
February	19.96	21.75	21.00	21.23	23.08	21.00	20.49	22.76	21.00
Total	78.32	75.42	85.22	68.89	92.41	92.54	75.21	87.22	88.67
<i>Zaid</i>									
March	21.52	17.50	22.5	25.07	25	22.5	23.08	23.75	22.5
April	14.66	23.28	24.75	11.12	20.33	20.00	12.96	21.42	23.8
May	13.44	21.47	21.50	2.00	14.00	0.00	12.30	17.73	21.5
June	9.14	16.46	23.33	2.00	15.00	0.00	8.25	16.40	23.33
Total	58.76	78.71	92.08	40.19	74.33	42.5	56.59	79.30	91.13
Grand total	214.41	219.92	253.91	180.80	249.25	222.85	208.34	241.74	263.24
<i>Chi-square value</i>							5.78*		

Source: Primary survey (2020-21), \*Significant at 1 per cent level of significance

**Table 4.** Distribution of mode of payment of wages of agricultural labour In Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Mode of payment	Jaipur (n=60)	Bikaner (n=60)	Overall (n=120)
Cash	45 (75.00)	43 (71.70)	88 (73.40)
Kind	4 (6.70)	3 (5.00)	7 (5.80)
Both (cash and kind)	11 (18.30)	14 (23.30)	25 (20.80)

Source: Primary survey (2020-21), \*Figures in parameter show in per cent of total labours

### **Mode of payment**

Result shows that most of the agricultural labour received wages in cash because in kind they only found grain and vegetables to eat from the field while most of family's requirement goes to non-food items such as cloth, fuel and light, education, health, social function, narcotics, etc.

Table 5 shows that the average wage rate in Jaipur district were ₹ 329.64 in *kharif* season, ₹ 325.79 in *rabi* season and ₹ 329.15 in *zaid* season. In case of Bikaner district average wage rate were ₹ 352.48 in *kharif* season, ₹ 335.42 in *rabi* season and ₹ 351.48 in *zaid* season. Annual average wage rate in Jaipur district was ₹ 328.19 and ₹ 346.46 in Bikaner district in agriculture sector. In non-agricultural sector,

annual average wage rate was ₹ 391.67 in Jaipur and ₹ 421.83 in Bikaner district. The results shows that the wage rate was low in compared to last year in agriculture sector. The possible reason may be COVID- labour migration. In the study period many labours return to their village and engaged in farming work. The migration of labour effect the demand-supply of labour and another reason was that were no need working experience and education in agriculture so most unemployed labour work in agriculture sector. The chi square value was non-significant. The chi square value indicates that the difference between expected and actual value is likely just due to chance. Thus, it is concluded that the collected sample does not support the hypothesis of a difference. Two variables are equally likely.

**Table 5.** Season wise wage rate of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Season	Jaipur (n = 60)		Bikaner (n = 60)		Overall (n = 120)	
	Agriculture	Non- agriculture	Agriculture	Non- agriculture	Agriculture	Non- agriculture
<i>Kharif</i>						
July	328.92	352.33	349.14	357.52	339.03	354.92
August	324.66	381.25	337.21	366.38	330.93	373.81
September	325.23	390.50	360.49	379.09	342.86	384.79
October	339.77	392.00	363.09	458.06	351.43	425.03
Avg. wage	329.64	379.02	352.48	390.26	341.06	384.64
<i>Rabi</i>						
November	338.03	370.00	370.25	430.94	354.14	400.47
December	315.93	415.08	310.59	455.83	313.26	435.45
January	318.71	410.69	309.19	467.82	313.95	439.25
February	330.49	438.59	351.68	467.80	341.08	453.19
Avg. wage	325.79	408.59	335.42	455.59	330.60	432.09
<i>Zaid</i>						
March	341.91	370.93	358.83	471.04	350.37	420.98
April	322.40	408.41	367.10	452.84	344.75	430.62
May	330.70	409.65	350.00	389.28	340.35	399.46
June	321.62	360.71	330.00	365.00	325.81	362.85
Avg. wage	329.15	387.42	351.48	419.64	340.32	403.48
Annual Avg. wage	328.19	391.67	346.46	421.83	337.32	406.73
<i>Chi square value</i>					2.07 <sup>NS</sup>	

Source: Primary survey (2020-21), NS-non significant

**Table 6.** Average annual family income of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Particulars	Jaipur (n = 60)	Bikaner (n = 60)	Overall (n = 120)
Wage earning	70838 (33.38)	65513 (36.85)	68175 (34.96)
Crop production	14250 (6.71)	13633 (7.67)	13941.50 (7.15)
Livestock production	10841 (5.10)	15483 (8.71)	13162 (6.75)
Petty business	600 (0.28)	791 (0.45)	695.50 (0.35)
Business and services	14766 (6.95)	6000 (3.37)	10383 (5.32)
Other earners	100883 (47.54)	76316 (42.93)	88599 (45.44)
Total	212178 (100)	177736 (100)	194957 (100)

Source: Primary survey (2020-21), \*Figures in parameters show in per cent of total income

Table 6 shows that the total income from wage earning was ₹ 68175 and it contributes 34.96 per cent of total family income. Crop production was ₹ 13941.50 and share 7.15 per cent of total family income. The income from livestock contributed ₹ 13162 and share 6.75 per cent of total family income. Petty business contributed ₹ 695.5 and share 0.35 per cent of total family income. The income from business and services contributed ₹ 10383 and share 5.32 per cent of total family income. The total family income was ₹ 194957, in which 45.44 per cent income contribute by other family earners in Rajasthan as a whole.

**Table 7.** Income functions of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Particulars	Jaipur		Bikaner	
	Coefficients	Standard error	Coefficients	Standard error
Intercept	-29353.89	6262.52	6244.59	8234.94
Total employment days (X <sub>1</sub> )	511.30*	42.68	414.90*	35.83

Number of earners (X <sub>2</sub> )	3697.32*	3735.55	7939.23*	2139.61
Number of livestock (X <sub>3</sub> )	572.07	769.71	306.66	467.59
R <sup>2</sup>	0.83		0.72	

\*Significant at 1 percent

The study revealed that, all the three variables have jointly explained 83 per cent variation in Jaipur district and 72 per cent variation in Bikaner district of total income received from various sources (Table 7). In Jaipur district the coefficients of independent variables viz., total employment days positive, number of earners was negative and number of livestock positive. X<sub>1</sub> and X<sub>2</sub> was significant at 1 per cent level of significant and same pattern follow in Bikaner district by all the independent variable. Table 8 revealed that the expenditure on food items were ₹ 52741 and non-food items was ₹ 113506 and annual expenditure of agricultural labour family were ₹ 166247 in Jaipur district. The maximum share in

expenditure on food (31.72%) followed by fuel and light (16.56%), social function (9.62%) health (9.91%), narcotics (8.44) education (6.70%), transportation (4.96%) and narcotics (4.53%). In Bikaner district the total expenditure on food items were ₹ 45233 and total non-food items were ₹ 104223 and total expenditure of agricultural labour family were ₹ 1494677. The maximum share of expenditure on food (31.03%) followed by fuel and light (16.02%), narcotics (10.72%), health (8.72%), social function (8.21%), transportation (8.04%), education (7.52%), and cloth (7.39%). Result shows that the maximum share of expenditure on food, fuel and light.

**Table 8.** Annual family expenditure of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Particulars	Jaipur (n = 60)	Bikaner (n = 60)	Overall (n = 120)
Food	52741 (31.72)	45233 (30.26)	48987 (31.03)
Cloth	13068 (7.86)	11055 (7.39)	12051 (7.63)
Fuel and light	27540 (16.56)	23063 (15.43)	25301 (16.02)
Health	14820 (8.91)	12950 (8.66)	13885 (8.79)
Education	11143 (6.70)	11241 (7.52)	11192 (7.09)
Transportation	8255 (4.96)	12025 (8.04)	10140 (6.42)
Social function	15996 (9.62)	12271 (8.21)	14133 (8.95)
Narcotics	14044 (8.44)	16025 (10.72)	15035 (9.52)
Other	8640 (5.19)	5604 (3.74)	7122 (4.46)
Total	166247 (100)	149467 (100)	157857 (100)

Source: Primary survey (2020-21), \*Figures in parameters show in per cent of total expenditure

Table 9 shows that the monthly average family expenditure of agricultural labour of the both of district. Highest expenditure ₹ 16245.44 in month of March followed by ₹ 15237.27 in month of October and ₹ 14578.44 in month of April in Jaipur district. Whereas in Bikaner district, highest expenditure ₹ 15474.10 in month of October followed by ₹ 14575.33 in month of March and ₹ 13577.79 in month of April.

Total expenditure was ₹ 166247.00 in Jaipur district and ₹ 149466.90 in Bikaner district. Overall total expenditure were ₹ 157857.00. Result shows that the expenditure of the family were different every month because of the requirement of family was different at different months and depends on food, light and fuel, education, health, social function, narcotics, transportation etc.

**Table 9.** Monthly average family expenditure of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Month	Jaipur	Bikaner	Overall
July	12827.42	11664.04	12245.73
August	13265.65	12670.80	12968.23
September	14586.54	12534.20	13560.37
October	15237.27	15474.10	15355.69

November	14410.78	12854.48	13632.63
December	12325.32	11398.64	11861.98
January	12520.78	11458.45	11989.62
February	14257.90	11245.27	12751.59
March	16245.44	14575.33	15410.39
April	14578.20	13577.79	14078.00
May	13512.47	12723.35	13117.91
June	12479.22	9290.44	10884.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>166247.00</b>	<b>149466.90</b>	<b>157856.90</b>

Source: Primary survey (2020-21)

The Table 10 shows that, all the three independent variables have jointly explained 65 per cent variation in Jaipur district and 61 per cent variation in Bikaner district of total income received from various sources.

In Jaipur, the family size was significant at 5 per cent level of significance. Whereas in Bikaner, the family size and fixed capital assets were significant at 1 per cent level of significance.

**Table 10.** Expenditure functions of agricultural labour in Jaipur and Bikaner districts of Rajasthan

Particulars	Jaipur		Bikaner	
	Coefficients	Standard error	Coefficients	Standard error
Intercept	-16084.30	19038.19	24664.57	16752.04
Total income $X_1$	-0.07	0.15	-0.08	0.14
Family size $X_2$	23091.79**	2476.43	14490.70*	2255.99
Fixed capital assets $X_3$	0.01	0.01	0.03*	0.03
$R^2$	0.65		0.61	

\*Significant at 1 per cent level of significance, \*\*Significant at 5 per cent level of significance

## Conclusion

The present study shows that the socio-economic status of agricultural labour in Rajasthan state. Agricultural labour comes from a poor background and low social-economic background. Majority of agricultural labour belong to female category. Majority of agricultural labour have 2 to 4 earners in family and total family income were between to 1-2 lakh rupees. Wage rates are low in the agriculture sector compared to other sectors. The highest income comes from other then agricultural earners in the family. The total family incomes were ₹ 194957 and total family expenditure were ₹ 157857.

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## Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest.

## Data Sharing

All relevant data are within the manuscript.

## References

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