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2	Effect of milk toward antibacterial activity of tetracycline
3	against Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus isolated
4	from bovine mastitis
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1 Abstract

The susceptibility of mastitis-causing Escherichia coli and Staphylococcus aureus to two $\mathbf{2}$ 3 commonly used antibiotics, tetracycline and penicillin G was tested in raw milk and in Muller-Hinton medium by introducing a pH indicator, Bromocresol purple, which was 4 shown to be a simple, sensitive and quick method. The minimum inhibitory concentration $\mathbf{5}$ (MIC) of penicillin G in milk were the same as those in MH, whereas the MIC of 6 tetracycline in milk were 4-32 times those in MH. An irreversible binding between $\overline{7}$ 8 tetracycline and large molecules of milk which might probably due to the hydrophobic interaction was demonstrated by a dialysis test, suggesting the observed impairing effect 9 was due to the action of milk on the tetracycline being tested. Further investigation reveled 10 that much of the reduction of tetracycline's activity in milk appears to be attributed to the 11 milk casein protein while other heat-sensitive components in milk also play some role. 12

13 Introduction

Bovine mastitis has generally been considered as the most costly disease in dairy industry, loses caused by mastitis have been estimated at 100 million dollars annually in Hokkaido, one of Japan's main milk production areas (Yamane et al. 2006). The economic impacts, together with diversified bacterial etiologies of disease, have led to development of various therapeutic strategies. Among them, the identification of pathogens along with their antibiotic treatment is the most frequently used therapy (Grave et al. 1999), of which

1	tetracycline is one of the most extensively used drugs because its relative safety, low cost
2	and broad-spectrum activity against Gram-positive bacteria, Gram-negative bacteria, and
3	atypical organisms such as Mycoplasmas (Al-Nazawi 2006). However, results from in
4	vitro susceptibility tests for mastitis pathogens were not comparing well with therapeutic
5	outcomes. The inefficacy has been considered to be due to the factors such as limited
6	knowledge of its pharmacokinetic properties for lactating dairy cows, decreased antibiotic
7	activity in the milk phase and appearance of resistant bacteria (Constable et al. 2003).
8	Currently, methods for determining the antibiotic susceptibility are based on dilution of
9	selected substances in artificial broth or agar to determine the minimum inhibition
10	concentration (MIC) of antibiotics. However, it is accepted that the closer the test medium
11	to the real environment of bacterial infections, the more relevant the test results would be
12	to the clinical outcome, but technical issues need to be considered when determining
13	bacterial growth inhibition in milk because milk is a turbid fluid. Previously, direct plate
14	counting was frequently used to determine the bacterial growth, but it is time-intensive and
15	labor-consuming. In view of this, many assays such as reduction of triphenyltetrazolium
16	chloride (Ali-vehams et al. 1997) and β -glucuronidase assays (Fang et al. 1995a) have
17	been developed. However, these methods can only apply to a specific group of pathogens.
18	Traditionally, pH indicator method is frequently employed to monitor the contamination of
19	phage in the dairy fermentation industry due to its simplicity and easiness to handle (Kutter

1	and Sulakvelidze 2005). Based on this concept, a commercially available MASTik test was
2	also developed for antibiotic susceptibility test for mastitis which demonstrates a
3	wide-range application for most mastitis pathogens (George et al 1993).
4	Up to now, many researchers have reported reduced activity of tetracycline in milk in
5	vitro compared with activity in artificial broth media (Owens et al. 1986, Fang et al. 1995b,
6	1996)., but the reason why tetracycline behave differently in milk is till unknown.
7	Concerning this issue, hypotheses have been proposed as following: the decreased activity
8	of tetracycline could be ascribed to its binding to casein micelles and cream or its chelating
9	by bivalent calcium in milk. However, no reliable study has been reported to verify the
10	hypotheses (Fang et al. 1995b, 1996).
11	In this study, we investigated the antibacterial activity of tetracycline against bovine
12	mastitis isolates in raw milk by using a pH indicator, bromocresol purple. As a comparison,
13	the activity of another widely used antibiotic, penicillin G, was also examined in parallel.
14	Finally, we attempted to clarify the mechanism of the effect of raw milk toward these
15	antibiotics` activity.
16	Materials and methods
17	Bacterial isolates

18 A total of 6 *S. aureus* isolates and 6 *E.coli* isolates from bovine mastitis were studied.
19 Mastitic milk samples were aseptically taken from affected quarter of cows by Rakuno

1	Gakuen University in Hokkaido. 100µl of properly diluted samples were plated onto
2	selective agar including brain-heart agar and Chromocult® Coliform(CC). Isolates were
3	presumptively identified as S. auresus and E. coli by phenotypic methods like morphology,
4	catalase, oxidase and coagulase assays. E. coli K12 and S. aureus JCM 2151 (ATCC6538)
5	were used as reference strains.
6	Milk and milk fraction preparation
7	Raw bovine milk was aseptically collected from clinically healthy cows with milk somatic
8	cell counts 70,000 cells/ml by Rakuno Gakuen University in Hokkaido.
9	For preparation of skim milk, milk samples were centrifuged at 3,000×g at 4°C for 10
10	min, the fat layer removed with a sterile spatula and the skim milk was transferred into
11	another sterile tube, the procedure was repeated until all the fats have been removed.
12	For preparation of whey, skim obtained above was subsequently subjected to
13	centrifugation at 45,000×g at 4°C for 60min and translucent supernatant was collected,
14	followed by filter-sterilization using pore size 0.22µm (Fang et al 1995a).
15	For preparation of boiled whey, whey was heated to 100°C for 30min in a water bath,
16	followed by centrifugation at 8,000×g for 10min at 4°C to remove the precipitate.
17	Comparison of pH indicator-based technique and the plate counting method in
18	evaluation of the bacterial growth in milk
19	50mL raw milk was 0.1% inoculated with overnight culture of E.coli K12 and S. aureus

 $\mathbf{5}$

1	ATCC 6538 respectively. The inoculated samples were incubated at 37°C for 25h. Aliquot
2	samples were taken immediately at different time intervals for parallel pH measurement
3	and plate counting.
4	Fluorescence microscopy
5	Staining of bacteria by DAPI (Wako, Japan) was performed as described previously with
6	some modification (Miyanaga et al. 2007). Briefly, Overnight culture of <i>E.coli K12</i> and <i>S</i> .
7	aureus ATCC 6538 mixed with same volume of DAPI (final concentration: 0.05mg/mL),
8	and incubated in the dark at room temperature for 5min. The stained cells were observed
9	through fluorescent microscope with a cooled charge coupled device camera (DP70,
10	Olympus, Japan) at UV light (330-385nm). All images were captured on the identical
11	conditions (magnification: $100 \times objective$, sensitivity: ISO200, exposure time: 10^{-1} s)
12	Broth microdilution assay for antimicrobial susceptibility

Susceptibility test was carried out in parallel in Muller Hinton broth (Becton Dickinson, USA), raw milk, skim, whey or boiled whey using standard broth microdilution method. Firstly, tetracycline-HCl (Wako, Japan) and penicillin G (Nacalai tesque Ltd. Japan) stock solutions were prepared in saline, filter-sterilized and stored in -20°C. They were diluted 2-fold serially in saline to cover the possible susceptibility range on test day. Secondly, single colonies of *E.coli* and *S.aureus* isolates were subcultured in LB and brain-heart medium respectively (37°C for 12-14h), then bacterial solution was adjusted by saline to

1	achieve turbidity equivalent to 0.5 McFarland standard which is an index of bacterial
2	concentration approximately 10 ⁸ CFU/mL (NCCLS, 2002). The bacterial suspension was
3	further diluted 10-fold in saline to reach a final inoculum concentration of 10 ⁷ CFU/ml.
4	25µl of the inoculum were added to individual wells within a sterile 96-well polyethlene
5	plate (Becton Dickinson, USA), and mixed with 200µl of MH broth or 1% Bromocresol
6	purple (Nacalai tesque Ltd. Japan) supplemented milk, skim, whey or boiled whey, finally
7	25µl of serially diluted antibiotics were added to each well. A negative control column was
8	included in the plate that included 250 μ l of medium alone or with 1% Bromocresol purple
9	only. The plates were incubated for 18 h at 37°C with ambient air circulation and without
10	shaking. The MIC was determined as the lowest antibacterial concentration at which no
11	cloudiness or no color change in a given well. All assays were replicated in three times.
12	HPLC analysis
13	Antibiotic concentrations were analyzed by a reversed phase HPLC method utilizing a
14	Shimazu name series (Shimazu Co., Japan). The analysis column was a 4.6×75mm Zorbax
15	SB-C18 3.5µm (Agilent technology Co., USA) with a reliance cartridge guard column.
16	Injection of sample $(5\mu l)$ onto the HPLC was by the use of autosampler. All solvents were
17	of HPLC grade and/or prepared with doubly deionized ultra-high purity (18.2 M Ω) water.
18	Mobile phase buffers were filtered through $0.22 \mu m$ filters and degassed by sonication prior
19	to use.

1	The optimal HPLC-UV/Vis condition for tetracycline analysis was to use a mobile phase
2	consisted of 0.025M aqueous KH ₂ PO ₄ (pH 3.0): acetonitrile (85:15 by volume) with a flow
3	rate of 1ml/min. Detector wavelength and column compartment temperature was adjusted
4	to 350nm and 25°C respectively.
5	For analyses of penicillin G, the mobile phase used was 0.025M aqueous $\rm KH_2PO_4$ (pH
6	3.0): acetonitrile (70:30 by volume) with a flow rate of 1mL/min. Detector wavelength and
7	column compartment temperature was adjusted to 204nm and 40°C respectively.
8	The limit of quantitation for each antibiotics was $1\mu g/mL$ and the standard curve was
9	linear within the range from 1 to $10\mu g/mL$ (Coefficient of correlation was 0.9989 for
10	tetracycline and 0.9958 for penicillin G).
11	Dialysis model
12	The study was performed in two stages: (1) Transfer of antibiotic from MH broth to saline
13	(0.85% Nacl solution); (2) transfer of antibiotic from raw milk to saline. The dialysis
14	system utilized dialysis tube (Spectrum Laboratories Inc., USA) with a cut-off point at
15	molecular weight of 5,000Da. All the conditions were the same, except that 2mL of MH
16	broth or raw milk containing 1mg/mL antibacterial were introduced into each dialysis tube.
16 17	broth or raw milk containing 1mg/mL antibacterial were introduced into each dialysis tube. Then the tube was placed in a beaker containing 200mL saline and dialyses were
16 17 18	broth or raw milk containing 1mg/mL antibacterial were introduced into each dialysis tube. Then the tube was placed in a beaker containing 200mL saline and dialyses were undertaken at room temperatures. A sample (0.5mL) from the outer fluid was taken at a

1 method described above. Each stage was replicated three times.

2 Relative surface hydrophobicity measurements

3 The relative surface hydrophobicity which was defined by the partition between aqueous solution and organic solvent was investigated. The organic solvents used in this study were 4 hexadecane (Wako, Japan) and chloroform (Naccalai tesque. Ltd, Japan). Briefly, $\mathbf{5}$ antibiotic solutions (10µg/mL) were prepared in distilled water. 1mL of organic solvent 6 was added to 1mL of aqueous solution, mixed by votex 30s, centrifuge for 10min at $\overline{7}$ 8 8000×g. The antibiotics concentration of the aqueous layer was measured by HPLC method. The partition value was calculated from the change of antibiotic's concentration in 9 aqueous solution as follows (C₀: concentration of antibiotics in aqueuous solution before 10 treatment. C_1 : concentration of antibiotics in aqueous solution after treatment) 11

- 12

Partition (%) =
$$\frac{C_0 - C_1}{C_0} \times 100\%$$

13 Results

14 pH indicator-based assay for analysis of the bacterial growth in milk

To compare the ability of pH-indicator based method and plate counting method to estimate the bacterial growth in milk, both the pH and cell counts were monitored by using two reference strain *E.coli K12* and *S. aureus* ATCC 6538 (Fig. 1). With the growth of each bacterium, the progressively reduction of pH in raw milk from 6.81 to 5.69 or 5.61 was observed as the incubation time going, which is within the transition pH range of Bromocresol purple. On the other hand, the plate-count technique shows that the number of *E.coli K12* increased, however, *S. aureus ATCC 6538* cell counts decreased at certain time. Examination of *S. aureus ATCC 6538* by fluorescent staining method clearly indicated cell agglutination occurred in raw milk (Fig. 2e and f)

5 Effect of raw milk on the antibacterial activity of tetracycline and penicillin G

6 S.aureus and 6 E.coli strains, both of which were major pathogens associated with 6 mastitis, were isolated from mastitic milk of infected cows from Hokkaido. The broth $\overline{7}$ 8 microdilution susceptibility assay was used to compare the activity of two widely used antibiotics against these pathogens in raw milk and ordinary MH broth. Of the 14 isolates 9 together with references strains, 13 were sensitive to tetracycline in MH broth. The 10 tetracycline's MIC value was estimated to be $\leq 0.5 \mu g/mL$ for all the gram-positive *S.aurues*, 11 12and $\leq 1 \mu g/mL$ for six of seven gram-negative *E.coli*. However, the MIC values of tetracycline on all the test organisms were 4-32 times those in MH (Table 1), indicating the 13inhibition effect of milk toward the interaction between tetracycline and tested organisms. 14In the case of penicillin G, no significant differences were observed between the MICs 15

measured in MH and those measured in raw milk (Table 1). However, it had the demonstrable growth inhibitory effect toward only 6 strains. All the gram-negative *E.coli* exhibited resistance to penicillin G, with MIC $\geq 16\mu$ g/mL. What's more, even within the group of gram-positive *S. aureus* isolates, there was also strain-related variation in their susceptibility to penicillin G., for example, *S. aureus* isolate 26 was shown to be quite
 resistant to penicillin G.

3 Binding of tetracycline to components of raw milk

To further understand the inhibition effect of milk toward the interaction of tetracycline 4 and tested organisms, a series of experiments were performed by focusing on the $\mathbf{5}$ interaction between antibiotics and milk while no bacterium was involved in. In the first 6 experiment, diffusion of tetracycline or penicillin G through the dialysis membrane in two $\overline{7}$ 8 different dialysis systems: MH to saline and raw milk to saline are depicted in Fig. 3. In the MH system, the tetracycline concentration outside reached 9.5µg/mL after incubated for 9 31h and stayed constant then. This value was also comparable with that calculated 10 according to noninteracting equilibrium dialysis theory which is nearly 9.9µg/mL. 11 However, in the presence of raw milk, the diffusion rate of tetracycline across the 12membrane markedly decreased. At 31h, when the steady-state attained in MH system, the 13tetracycline concentration in the outer fluid was 5.53µg/mL, only 58.2% of the 14concentration measured in MH system. And even after 45h of incubation, at which the 15steady-state reached, less than 70% of the tetracycline introduced into the inner dialysis 16tube had diffused across the membrane. A comparison of the two diffusion patterns 17indicates a rapid and high degree binding of tetracycline to components with large 18molecules in raw milk by the irreversible way. 19

On contrary, the equilibrium dialysis patterns of penicillin G in two systems did not demonstrate big difference, although the diffusion rate in raw milk system was a little slower, which might due to lesser extent of binding of penicillin G to milk components. However, it was observed that concentration of penicillin G in MH system stabilized at 9.9µg/mL by 25h, and the same concentration reached in raw milk system 5h later, indicating this binding might be reversible if it happened.

The physical-chemical properties of antibiotics are generally considered the major $\overline{7}$ 8 determinants for the extent of their interactions with other substances. The relative surface hydrophobicity of tetracycline and penicillin G, one of important physical-chemical 9 parameters, was also evaluated by examining the ratio of antibiotics absorbed by organic 10 solvent respectively in current study. The partition of tetracycline and penicillin G between 11 12organic solvent and water in terms of partition value was shown in Table 2. Penicillin G possessed very poor solubility in organic solvent, while tetracycline has 7 times or 10 13times higher solubility than that of penicillin G., meaning that relative surface 14hydrophobicity of tetracycline is higher. This difference observed might account partly for 15the different behavior of two antibacterial in raw milk, and the adhesion of tetracycline to 16large molecules in milk might due to hydrophobic bindings. 17

18 Inhibitors to the antibacterial activity of tetracycline in raw milk

19 To determine which components of milk might be responsible for the irreversible binding

1	and thus inhibit tetracycline bioavailability. A reference strain E.coli K12 was chosen, and
2	susceptibility of it toward tetracycline in skim and whey was investigated (Table 3). A
3	16-fold increase in tetracycline concentration was required to eliminate the growth of
4	E.coli K12 in skim, which is devoid of fat. The level of inhibition exhibited by skim was
5	the same as that by raw milk. However, whey had less inhibition level by removing the
6	casein, the activity of tetracycline in whey increased by 8 times than that in raw milk, and
7	further treatment of the whey by boiling increased bioavailability of tetracycline to the
8	levels comparable with those found in MH broth.
9	Discussion
10	The problem of antibiotic therapy toward bovine mastitis has been recognized for some
11	time (Craven 1987), there is suspicion that antimicrobial susceptibility testing of mastitis
12	pathogens has not been adequately validated for most mastitis pathogens and antibiotics.
13	This has led to a search for alternative explanations for failure mechanisms (Sandholm et al.
14	1990). Our results confirm the problem of artificial susceptibility test in bovine mastitis.
15	We found direct analysis of bacterial growth in milk is very difficult and inaccurate by
16	plating count method, because some bacteria such as S. aureus tend to aggregate in raw
17	milk as observed in this study, and also demonstrated by other group (Korhonen et al.
18	2000). While pH indicator-based method was clearly shown to be sensitive and reliable for
19	antibacterial susceptibility testing in milk. Since most mastitis pathogens are

1 lactose-fermentation bacteria, the growth of these bacteria will ferment the lactose in milk 2 to lactic acid, with an accompanying decrease in pH (George et al. 1993). As a 3 consequence, the color change from purple to yellow will occur, which can be used to 4 determine the MIC. In this study, the pH-indicator-based techniques showed good 5 agreement with the turbid-metric method in testing bacterial susceptibility in MH (data not 6 show).

Penicillin G and tetracycline are both long-established antibacterial agents and have $\overline{7}$ 8 been widely used in the treatment of bovine mastitis. For penicillin G, on the condition that intramammary was infected with penicillin-sensitive strains, it is generally considered a 9 first-line antibiotic due to its therapeutic advantages compared with β -lactamase-stable 10 penicillins (Grave et al. 1999). However, the appearances of mastitis-causing 11 Staphylococci resistant cells have been reported repeatedly. In some country, the 12percentage of resistant isolates reached to even 50% (Gentilini et al. 2000, Erskine et al. 132002). Our study also detected the existence of staphylococci isolates from bovine mastitis 14in Hokkaido of Japan which is resistant to penicillin G. This result together with the fact 15that penicillin G has narrowed spectrum activity might limit its future application. For 16tetracyclines, because of their broad spectrum activity and low cost, they have emerged as 1718 a second choice of antibiotics to beta-lactams for the management of mastitis in dairy herds in certain regions of the world, 19

1	However, our results showed the activity of tetracycline, one of the most-widely used
2	antibiotic in tetracycline group, decreased markedly when presented in milk. About 4-16
3	fold higher concentration of tetracycline was required in milk compared with MH broth to
4	inhibit growth of isolated pathogens. A possible explanation might be that bacterial growth
5	rate is lowered in milk since fast growing bacteria was reported to be more susceptible to
6	the slow growing ones (Fang 1996), or the aggregation of bacteria in milk. But in this
7	experiment, milk didn't impaired activity of penicillin G which was tested in parallel. This
8	led to our assumption that the cause of the inhibition might be largely due to
9	physical-chemical and pharmacological properties of tetracycline itself. As demonstrated
10	by our results, tetracycline exhibited a higher hydropobicity compared to penicillin G and a
11	strong irreversible binding took place between it and large molecules in milk. As a result,
12	the concentration of free tetracycline molecules in milk which is accessible to bacteria
13	reduced to a high degree, rendering more tetracycline are required to be added in milk to
14	achieve the same inhibition effect as that in MH broth.

15 Currently, only the pharmokinetics of tetracycline which are based solely on achievable 16 serum and interstitial fluid concentrations in humans after oral administration are available 17 (Kenneth et al. 2006). Neuvonen PJ (1976) had shown tetracyclines can form insoluble 18 complexes with calcium, magnesium, iron and aluminum, which markedly reduces its 19 absorption in serum. Peter G et al (1977) reported that protein, fat and carbohydrate meals

in food reduce the absorption of tetracycline by about 50% in human serum. Since bovine 1 $\mathbf{2}$ milk is a complex medium, composed of water, proteins (caseins, β-lactoglobulins, 3 α -lactoglobulins, immunoglobulins, bovine serum albumin and various enzymes), lipids, lactose, metal ions, minerals, vitamins, acid and gases (O'Flaherty et al. 2005), a parallel 4 mechanism may be at work in the case of tetracycline in milk. By comparing the MIC of $\mathbf{5}$ tetracycline against E.coli K12 in different fractions prepared from raw milk, we found that 6 fat was not the possible factor for impairing effect because remove fat alone did not $\overline{7}$ 8 influence the MIC value as compared with that in milk, while the strongest reduction of MIC value was observed after removing the casein, implying it might be the major 9 inhibitor in milk. Casein, which account for nearly 80% of milk protein is organized in 10 micelles and has very porous and hydrophobic structures. It is very likely that tetracycline 11 12was tightly entrapped into porous casein micelles through hydrophobic interaction, thus reducing its antibacterial activity. In addition to potential inhibitory roles of casein to 13tetracycline, the existing 2-fold difference of MIC in whey and MH broth revealed the 14presence of other inhibitors. Though the detailed information of these inhibitors is 15unknown, the sensitivity of them to heat indicates it is probably mediated by a protein or a 16group of proteins. Further characterization of these inhibitors is deserved. 17

18 Results

19 It is clear that tetracycline behaves quite differently in raw milk as compared with MH

1	broth, an irreversible binding between tetracycline and milk components which might due
2	to the hydrophobic interaction was observed and thus might account for the tetracycline
3	decreased bioavailability in raw milk. Removing the casein and heat-sensitive substances
4	in raw milk, the activity of tetracycline can be recovered as that in MH broth, suggesting
5	the role of these components in decreasing the activity of tetracycline in raw milk.
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	Penicillin G MI	C (µg/mL)	Tetracycline MIC (µg/mL)	
	MH broth	Raw milk	MH broth	Raw milk
Staphylococcus. aureus				
isolate 2	0.015125	0.015125	0.5	2
isolate 3	0.03125	0.03125	0.25	2
isolate 19	0.015125	0.015125	0.25	1
isolate 20	0.015125	0.015125	0.25	2
isolate 21	1	1	0.25	2
isolate 26	16	16	0.25	2
ATCC 6538	0.03125	0.03125	0.25	2
Escherichia coli				
isolate 1	16	16	0.25	8
isolate 2	128	128	8	128
isolate 12	32	32	0.5	8
isolate 14	32	32	0.5	8
isolate 15	64	64	0.5	8
isolate 20	32	32	0.5	8
K12 (W3110)	1024	1024	1	16

Table 1 Antimicrobial activity of penicillin G and tetracycline in MH broth and raw milk

Table 2 The partition values of penicillin G and tetracycline in two organic solvent/water combinations

	Partition value (%)		
	Tetracycline	Penicillin G	
Hexadecane/H ₂ O	8%	0.6%	
Chloroform/ H ₂ O	35%	4%	

Table 3 Antimicrobial activity of tetracycline against *E.coli K12* in different fraction of raw milk

	MH broth	raw milk	skim	whey	heated whey
MIC (µg/mL)	1	16	16	2	1



Fig. 1 Change of pH and cell counts in the raw milk cultures. Δ pH of raw milk inoculated with *S.aureus ATCC 6538*, \Box pH of raw milk inoculated with *E.coli K12*, \blacktriangle Cell counts of *S.aureus ATCC 6538* in raw milk, \blacksquare Cell counts of *E.coli K12* in raw milk. Data reported are mean \pm standard deviations.



Fig. 2 Observation of *E.coli K12* and *S.aureus ATCC 6538* grown in LB and raw milk. (a) fluorescent image of *E.coli K12* in LB, (b) fluorescent image of *E.coli K12* in raw milk (c) light field image of *E.coli K12* in raw milk (d) fluorescent image of *S.aureus ATCC 6538* in LB, (e) fluorescent image of *S.aureus ATCC 6538* in raw milk, (f) light field image of *S.aureus ATCC 6538* in raw milk (The scale bar under pictures represents 5μm).





Fig. 3 Tetracycline (A) or penicillin G (B) concentration in the dialysis fluid (out fluid) as a function of time (mean of 3 replicates) in two different dialysis systems: MH broth to saline solution and raw milk to saline solution.