**Supplementary Table-1**

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|  |  | **Mean Ct ± S.D. (10 copies/PCR)** |
|  |  | **VTM** | **PBS** |
| **N1** | **0-Hrs.** | 34.53 ± 0.56 | 33.82 ± 0.48 |
| **24-Hrs.** | 33.96 ± 0.46 | 34.07 ± 0.48 |
| **96-Hrs.** | 34.47 ± 0.78 | 34.01 ± 0.29 |
| **N2** | **0-Hrs.** | 35.55 ± 0.45 | 35.50 ± 0.27 |
| **24-Hrs.** | 35.10 ± 0.29 | 34.87 ± 0.52 |
| **96-Hrs.** | 35.80 ± 0.59 | 34.70 ± 0.44 |