Antioxidant Potential and Phytochemical Screening of Aristolochia braceelata: An in vitro Approach

Fayyad Alzain¹, Mohamed Nasraldeen², Sufyan Awadalkareen¹,², Alsiddig Osama¹, Mohamed Ezeldin¹,², Omer M. Eltayeb², Ahmed Ibrahim¹, Alshareef Algasim¹, Hashim Saeed¹

¹Chemistry Department, Omdurman Islamic University, Khartoum, Sudan
²Medical Biochemistry Research Department, Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Research Institute, National Center for Research, Khartoum, Sudan

Email address: wadalmsna3.com@gmail.com (M. Ezeldin)

Corresponding author

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Abstract: The present study was designed to investigate the antioxidant activity of Aristolochia braceelata whole plant and fruit. Phytochemical study was piloted to detect the bioactive compounds, which have been responsible for the biological activities. The antioxidant activities were conducted via DPPH radical scavenging assay. Potential antioxidant activity was presented by ethanol crude extract was motivated to evaluate the fractions of n-hexane chloroform, ethyl acetate, n-butanol and water, the radical scavenging activities of whole plant were found to be 84 ± 0.02, 82.5 ± 0.04, 78.2 ± 0.04, 92.9 ± 0.03, 88.9 ± 0.02, 77.3 ± 0.05 respectively, while the fruit extracts displayed a higher potentials in crude and lower with fractions. The results of phytochemical screening showed the presence of Flavonoids, Saponins, Alkaloids, Tannins, Phenols, Triterpene, Phytosterol, Anthraquinones and Carbohydrates. This study give rise to antioxidant property of studied plant, and showed interesting correlation with the phytochemical constituents and biological activities.

Keywords: Aristolochia braceelata, Antioxidant, Phytochemical Screening, Radical Scavenging

1. Introduction

Oxidation is a chemical reaction that transfers electrons from a substance to an oxidizing agent. Oxidation reactions can produce free radicals, which start chain reactions that damage cells. Antioxidants terminate these chain reactions by removing free radical intermediates and inhibit other oxidation reactions by being oxidized themselves. As a result, antioxidants are often reducing agents such as thiol, ascorbic acid or polyphenols (Sies, 1997). Oxidative stress refers to the physiological condition at which the capacity of the endogenous antioxidant system fails to cope with the damaging effects of free radicals. Strong experimental evidences have been established about the oxidative stress theory of Alzheimer’s disease pathogenesis where oxidative damage plays a major role in neurological degeneration (Mariani et al., 2005).

All plants produce chemical constituents, part of their normal metabolic activities (Tyler et al., 1981, Rosenthal et al., 1979). These, can be divided into primary metabolites, such as sugars, amino acids, nucleotides and fats, found in all plants, and secondary metabolites which have no obvious function in a plant’s primary metabolism as well as in growth, photosynthesis, or other “primary” functions of the plant cell. They may possess an ecological role, as pollinator attractants, represent chemical adaptations to environmental stresses, or to be responsible for the chemical defence of the plant against microorganisms, insects and higher predators (Harborne et al., 1982, Evans et al., 1989). Many plant compounds have an outstanding role in medicine as drugs or as chemical model for the design and synthesis of new drugs (semisynthesis) or of new drug molecules such as the opiates (from morphine and codeine models), aspirin from the naturally occurring salicylic acid (from willow-Salix spp.), or etoposide (semisynthetic...
antineoplastic agent derived from the mayapple-
Podophyllumpeltatum). Their pharmacological and
economical value has lost nothing of its importance until
today (Balandrin et al., 1985, Mann et al., 1994, Cassady et
al., 1980). Phytotherapyhas been found to show potential in
the treatment of ailments. Furthermore, the advantage of
using phytotherapy resides in the concoction of chemicals
found within plants, which potentially provide protection
against a wide range of aetiological factors (Prerna and
Vikas, 2010). The chemical diversity of the compounds
found in nature makes plant and marine materials important
potential sources of new drugs (Gareth Thomas, 2007).
Almost all the medicinal plants available in the world have
great potential sources for discovery as well as protection of
new drugs of benefit to mankind. Presently, there is lot of
approaches available to reach for new biologically active
ingredients in the medicinal plants for the preparation of
safe drugs. In ethnomedicine it is very common for a single
plant species to be used to treat various ailments due to the
multiplicity of bioactive molecules they contain. In this
respect, medicinal plants provide a rich source of
biologically active constituents with multiple activities.
Check and need to check or systematic screening of these
available traditional herbs may result in the discovery of
novel effective bioactive compounds for the formulation of
drugs. Phytochemical screening of the active morphological
samples is extremely valuable in giving us information
about the nature of constituents found in each plant sample
(Tiwari et al., 2011).

Aristolochiabraceelatais commonly called “worm killer”
in English due to supposed anthelmintic activity
and trypanocidal effect. It is used in traditional medicine as a
gastric stimulant and in the treatment of cancer, lung
inflammation, dysentery, and snakebites. Aristolochiaceae has been used by Sudanese people as
analgesic, antiscorpion, and antiantisnake. It is also used in the
treatment of tumors and malaria and for fevers.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Plant Material

The Aristolochiabraceelata were purchased from the local
market in Omdurman. The plant was identified in the Botany
department, Faculty of science and technology, Omdurman
Islamic University, by comparison with herbarium of the
department. The plant was spread and dried in the shade for
ten days and then pulverized with mechanical grinder.

2.2. Extraction

Extraction was carried out according to the method
described by (Harbone., 1984). The fresh samples were dried
in shades for 7 days, powdered then used for extraction. The
shade-dried samples were soaked in 80% ethanol in the ratio
of (1:10) at room temperature for 3 days then filtered and
they were left to dry at room temperature this process was
repeated till the solvent at the last time returned to colourless.
The weight of the solid residues were recorded and taken as
yield of crude extracts. The yield a percentage was calculated
as follows:

Percentage = (weigh of extract/weigh of sample) X 100.

2.3. Fractionation

The crude extracts were fractionated using liquid-liquid
extraction methodology, which were carried by dissolving the
samples in dist. H₂O then they were partitioned between n-
hexane chloroform, ethyl acetate, and n-butanol using
separation funnel apparatus.

2.4. DPPH Free Radical Scavenging Activity

The DPPH radical scavenging was determined according
to the method of (Shimada et al., 1992), with some
modification. The test samples were allowed to react with 2.2
di(4-tretoctylphenyl)-1-picryl-hydrazyl stable free radical
(DPPH) for half an hour at 37°C in 96-wells plate. The
concentration of DPPH was kept at (300µM). The test sample
was dissolved in DMSO while DPPH was prepared in
ethanol. After incubation decrease in absorbance was
measured at 517nm using multiplat reader spectrophotometer.
Percentage of radical scavenging activity of the sample was
determined in comparison with a DMSO treated control. All
tests were conducted triplicate.

2.5. Qualitative Phytochemical Evaluation

Phytochemical screening was conducted to determine the
presence of natural products in the extract an obtained from the
Aristolochiabraceelatafruit and whole plant.

The extracts obtained were subjected to following
chemical tests for identification of various phytocconstituents
using standard methods of (Trease and Evans, 1989; Odebiyi
and Sofowora, 1978).

2.5.1. Test for Carbohydrates

Molisch’s test.

To the extract 1ml of the Molisch’s reagent was added then
along the walls of the test tube carefully cone H₂SO₄ was
added. Formation of a brown ring at the junction of the two
liquids was observed.

Benedict’s Test.

Filtrates were treated with Benedict’s reagent and heated
gently. Orange red precipitate indicates the presence of
reducing sugars.

Barfoed’s test.

To the extract in a test tube 1ml of Barfoed reagent was
added and boiled on the water bath. The solution was
observed for the colour change reaction.

2.5.2. Detection of Phenols

Ferric Chloride Test: Extracts were treated with 3-4 drops
of ferric chloride solution. Formation of Bluish black colour
indicates the presence of phenols.

2.5.3. Test for Tannins (Ferric Chloride)

0.5ml of the extract was boiled with 10ml of Distilled
water in a test tube and then, few drops of 0.1% Ferric Chloride solution was added and the reaction mixture was observed for blue, greenish black colour change.

2.5.4. Test for Saponins (Frothing Test)

0.5ml of the extract was added to 5ml of Distilled water in a test tube. The solution was shaken vigorously and observed for the stable persistent froth.

2.5.5. Test for Flavonoids

Three Different Tests Were Used for the Flavonoid Identification.

Alkaline reagent test.

To 0.5ml of extract was treated with few drops of sodium hydroxide solution. Formation of intense yellow colour, which becomes colourless on addition of dilute hydrochloric acid, indicates the presence of flavonoids.

Lead acetate Test.

Extracts were treated with few drops of lead acetate solution. Formation of yellow colour precipitate indicates the presence of flavonoids.

KOH test.

To 0.5ml of extract was treated with few drops of alcoholic potassium hydroxide solution. Formation of intense yellow colour.

2.5.6. Test for Terpenoid and Steroids

Salkowski test was used to identification steroid and terpenoid.

To 0.5ml of each of the extract 2ml of chloroform was added and then 3ml of concentrated H$_2$SO$_4$ was carefully added to form a layer. A reddish brown colouration of the interface indicates the presence of terpenoids and steroids.

2.5.7. Test for Alkaloids

Two different tests were used for the identification of alkaloids

Dragendorff’s Test.

Filtrates were treated with Dragendorff’s reagent (solution of Potassium Bismuth Iodide). Formation of red precipitate indicates the presence of alkaloids.

Wagner’s Test.

Filtrates were treated with Wagner’s reagent (Iodine in Potassium Iodide). Formation of brown/reddish precipitate indicates the presence of alkaloids.

2.5.8. Test for Anthraquinones (Borntragor’s Test)

To 0.5ml of the extract 5 - 10ml of dilute HCL was added and boiled on water bath for 10 minutes and filtered. Then the filtrate was extracted with carbon tetrachloride and the equal amount of ammonia was added. Aftershaking the reaction mixture was observed for the formation of pink – red colour in the ammonia layer.

3. Results and Dissection

Aristolochiabraceelata ethanolic extracts of fruit and whole plant were able to inhibit the DPPH activity with 86 ± 0.05 and 84 ± 0.02 respectively theirs fractions was showed varied potentials shown in table (1). Ethyl acetate was mainly the most active maybe due the polarity of the active constituents.

Table 1. Antioxidant activity Aristolochiabraceelata extracts.

| sample        | Antioxidant activity percentage |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
|               | crude  | hexane | CHCl$_3$ | EtOAc | BuOH | H$_2$O |
| fruit         | 86 ± 0.05 | 41.4 ± 0.09 | 51.4 ± 0.06 | 87.2 ± 0.01 | 87.9 ± 0.01 | 77.3 ± 0.01 |
| Whole plant   | 84 ± 0.02 | 82.5 ± 0.04 | 78.2 ± 0.04 | 92.9 ± 0.03 | 88.9 ± 0.02 | 77.3 ± 0.05 |

Table (2 and 3) indicate the presence of pharmacologically useful classes of compounds (Flavonoids, Saponins, Alkaloid, Tannins, Phenols, Triterpene, Phytoesterol, Anthraquinones) tested for. These secondary metabolites have been shown to have therapeutic activities in plants and function in a synergistic or antagonistic fashion for the treatment of diseases (Trease and Evans, 1996).

Table 2. Phytochemical screening of Aristolochiabraceelata fruit.

| Family of compounds | Type of test | Inference |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------|
|                     |              | Hexane | CHCl$_3$ | EtOAc | BuOH | H$_2$O |
| Carbohydrates       | Molish’s     | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
|                     | Bendect test | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
|                     | Barafoids    | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
|                     | Lead acetate | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
|                     | KOH          | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
|                     | Alkaline test| +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
| Saponins            | Forth        | -v     | +v     | -v    | -v    | +v    |
| Alkaloid            | Dragendorff’s| +v     | +v     | +v    | -v    | -v    |
| Tannins             | FeCl$_3$     | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
| Phenols             | FeCl$_3$     | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
| Triterpene          | Salkowski    | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
| Phytoesterol        | Salkowski    | +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |
| Anthraquinones      | Borntragor’s| +v     | +v     | +v    | +v    | +v    |

$^+ve$ = positive result $^-ve$ = negative result.
The various phytochemical compounds detected are known to have beneficial importance in industrial and medicinal sciences. Plant phenolic compounds especially flavonoids are currently of growing interest owing to their supposed properties in promoting health (anti-oxidants) (Rauha et al., 2000); Flavonoids have been demonstrated to have anti-inflammatory, anti-ergic, anti-viral, anti-aging, and anti-carcinogenic activity. The broad therapeutic effects of flavonoids can be largely attributed to their antioxidant properties. In addition to an antioxidant effect, flavonoid compounds may exert protection against heart disease through the inhibition of cyclooxygenase and lipoxygenase activities in platelets and macrophages (Mark Percival, 1998). Tannins are reported to possess physiological astrignent and haemostatic properties, which hasten wound healing and ameliorate inflamed mucus membrane and also inhibit the growth of microorganisms by precipitating microbial proteins and making nutritional proteins unavailable for them; they form irreversible complexes with proline rich proteins, resulting in the inhibition of the cell protein synthesis. They have important roles such as stable and potent anti-oxidants (Trease and Evans, 1989; Awosika, 1991; Ogunleye and Ibitoye, 2003). They act as binders and for treatment of diarrhea and dysentery (Dharmananda, 2003). Tannin also reported to exhibit antiviral, antibacterial, anti-tumor activities. It was also reported that certain tannin are able to inhibit HIV replicationselectivity and is also used as diuretic (Heslem, 1989). Plant tannin has been recognized for their pharmacological properties and is known to make trees and shrubs a difficult meal for many caterpillars (Aiyeaagbe and Osamudiamen, 2009). Plant steroids are known to be important for their cardiotonic, insecticidal and anti-microbial properties. They are also used in nutrition, herbal medicine, cosmetics and they are routinely used in medicine because of their profound biological activities (Denwick, 2002). Saponins have expectorant action which is very useful in the management of upper respiratory tract inflammation; saponins present in plants are cardiotonic nature and are reported to have anti-diabetic and anti-fungal properties (Finar, 1989; Trease and Evans, 1989; Kamel, 1991).

| Family of compounds | Type of test | Interference | CHCl₃ | EtOAc | BuOH | H₂O |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|------|-------|------|-----|
| Carbohydrates       | Molish’s    | +v          | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
|                     | Bend       | +v          | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
|                     | Barafoinds | +v          | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
| Flavonoids          | Lead acetate | +v         | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
|                     | KOH         | +v          | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
|                     | Alkiline test | +v       | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
| Saponins            | Forth      | +v          | +v   | +v    | -v   | +v  |
| Alkaloid            | Dragendorff’s | +v        | +v   | +v    | -v   | -v  |
| Tannins             | FeCl₂      | +v          | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
| Phenols             | FeCl₂      | -v          | -v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
| Triterpene          | Saikowskí   | +v          | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
| Phytosterol         | Saikowskí   | +v          | +v   | +v    | +v   | +v  |
| Anthraquinones      | Borntragor’s | +v      | +v   | +v    | -v   | -v  |

+ve = positive result -ve = negative result.

4. Conclusion

All extracts of *Aristolochiabraceelata* fruit and W. P showed potent antioxidant activity. This might be attributed to the presence of phenols, flavonoids and tannins compounds in this plant. The effect of this plant bioactivities, and toxicological investigation and Further purification, need to be carried out also further phytochemical investigation of active constituents might be present is required.

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