HEPATOPROTECTIVE ACTIVITY OF ANOGEISSUS LATIFOLIA LEAF AND BARK EXTRACTS AGAINST CARBON TETRACHLORIDE INDUCED HEPATOTOXICITY IN RATS

K. M. M. PARVATHI1, C. K. RAMESH*, V. KRISHNA, K. SHANKARMURTHY,2 I. J. KUPPAST3 AND N. M. SHAKUNTALA4
Department of P.G. studies in Biotechnology, Sahyadri Science College (Autonomous), Kuvempu University, Shivamogga - 577 203, Karnataka, INDIA
1Department of Biotechnology, S. R. N. M. National College of Applied Sciences, Shivamogga - 577 201, Karnataka, INDIA
2Department of P G studies in Biotechnology and Bioinformatics, Kuvempu University, Jnana Sahyadri, Shankaraghatta - 577 202, Shivamogga (D.) Karnataka, INDIA
3Department of Pharmacology, National College of Pharmacy, Shivamogga - 577 201 Karnataka, INDIA
4Department of Seed Science and Technology, College of Agriculture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur- 584 102, Karnataka, INDIA
e-mail: ckramck@yahoo.co.in

INTRODUCTION

Some plants have been found, scientifically, to possess hepatoprotective activity and the underlying mechanism of action involves their antioxidant property (Anonymous, 1985). Free radicals or oxidative injury now appears to be the fundamental mechanism behind a number of human diseases and disorders (Atawodi, 1971). Oxidative stress has been implicated in the pathogenesis of acute and chronic liver injury in a variety of pathophysiological conditions such as hepatotoxic exposure, intrahepatic cholestasis, alcoholic liver injury, liver ischemia and viral hepatitis (Atawodi,1971; Stehbens, 2003; Jaeschke et al., 2003 and McDonough, 2003). Overproduction of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and nitrogen species (RNS), along with significant decrease of antioxidant defense in these pathological conditions, impairs various cellular functions through the process of lipid peroxidation, protein oxidation and nucleic base oxidation. Lipid peroxidation causes changes in the physical and chemical properties of cellular membranes, thus altering their fluidity and permeability, leading to impairment in membrane signal transduction and ion exchange, resulting in swelling, cytolysis and finally cell death. The oxidation of proteins and DNA also relates directly to cellular dysfunction and death (Jaeschke et al., 1988). Accordingly, effects of antioxidants or free radical scavengers have been widely tested for the prevention and treatment of acute and chronic liver injuries. In some of the studies, antioxidants have shown beneficial effects, specifically for prevention and treatment of chronic liver injury (Kukongviriyapan et al., 2003; Gupta et al., 2004a, b).

Anogeissus latifolia (Roxb) Wall. ex. BEDD (Family Combretaceae) is a large tree or moderate sized tree characteristic of dry deciduous forests and available throughout India. The plant is traditionally used for the treatment of dysentery, snakebite, leprosy, diabetes, wounds and ulcers and skin diseases, in addition to hepatopathy (Anonymous, 1985). The hydroalcoholic extract is reported to have antioxidant activity. It has been studied for total antioxidant activity, hydrogen donating ability nitric oxide, superoxide scavenging activity and hydrogen peroxide decomposition activity, integral antioxidative capacity has been determined by chemiluminescence assay. It has also been studied in a lipid peroxidation assay with a thiobarbituric acid reactive

KEYWORDS
Hepatoprotective activity
Anogeissus latifolia
Hepatotoxicity
Leaf and bark extracts

ABSTRACT
The study was designed to evaluate the hepatoprotective activity of Anogeissus latifolia leaf and bark extracts by using solvents viz. petroleum ether, chloroform and methanol. Hepatotoxicity was induced in Wistar rats by intraperitonial injection of CCl4 (0.1mL/kg/day for 10 days). The standard drug used was silymarin. Various extracts were given in the dose of 300mg/mL of all the extracts except chloroform leaf and methanolic bark which were prepared @ 200mg/mL, for 14 days. The hepatoprotective effect of these extracts was evaluated for liver function biochemical parameters (total bilirubin, serum protein, alanine aminotransaminase, aspartate aminotransaminase and alkaline phosphatase activities) and histopathological studies of liver. Treatment with methanolic leaf and bark extract significantly prevented the functional, physical, biochemical and histological changes induced by CCl4, indicating the recovery of hepatic cells. The results suggest that methanolic leaf and bark extract of Anogeissus latifolia possesses potential hepatoprotective activity.

Received on : 21.02.2013
Accepted on : 28.04.2013
*Corresponding author
substances (TBARS) method using rat liver homogenate (Govindarajan et al., 2004). A variety of substances which might contribute to hepatoprotective activity has been identified in extracts of *Anogeissus latifolia* including tannins, gallic acid, ellagic acid and flavonoids such as lutin and quercetin, which are potential antioxidants (Reddy et al., 1965; Deshpande et al., 1976; Aruoma et al., 1993; Festa et al., 2001; Boyle et al., 2000; Boots and Haenen, 2008). The bark of the plant is also reported to possess several biological activity such as antiulcer, antimicrobial, antihyperglycemic, anthelmintic and wound healing activities (Govindarajan et al., 2006a; Boots and Haenen, 2008; Parvathi et al., 2009; Parvathi et al., 2009). Gastroprotective potential of *Anogeissus latifolia* has been studied in aspirin, cold-resistant stress (CRS), pylorus ligated and ethanol-inuced ulcers. The status of the antioxidant enzymes, superoxide dismutase and catalase, has also been studied in CRS-induced ulcers (Govindarajan et al., 2006; Boots and Haenen, 2008). The present study was undertaken to investigate the hepatoprotective activity of sequential extracts of *Anogeissus latifolia* leaf and bark in CCl₄ induced hepatotoxicity in rats.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Plant material**

The stem bark and leaf of *Anogeissus latifolia* were collected from Thyavarekoppa forest area of Shivamogga District, Karnataka. The plant was authenticated by comparing with the herbarium voucher specimen deposited at Kuvempu University Herbaria Ku/sd/Tk/206, Shankarghatta. The materials were air dried under shade, powdered mechanically and stored in the airtight containers. About 1kg of the powdered materials was refluxed successively with the solvents viz. petroleum ether, chloroform and methanol in a soxhlet extractor for 48h in four batches of 250g each. Every time before extracting with next solvent the marc was dried at room temperature. The extracts were pooled together and stored in the airtight containers. About 1kg of the powdered materials was refluxed successively with the solvents viz. petroleum ether, chloroform and methanol in a soxhlet extractor for 48h in four batches of 250g each. Every time before extracting with next solvent the marc was dried at room temperature. The extracts were pooled together and concentrated in vacuum using rotary flash evaporator (Buchi, Flawil, Switzerland).

**Animal selection**

The animals were procured from the Central Animal House, IISc, Bangalore. Healthy adult Wistar albino rats of either sex of 2-3 months old and weighing 150-200gm were used for study. These animals were maintained at standard housing conditions (temperature 27±1°C; relative humidity 60±5%) and were fed with commercial diet (Hindustan Lever Ltd., India). The animals were procured from the Central Animal House, IISc, Bangalore. Healthy adult Wistar albino rats of either sex of 2-3 months old and weighing 150-200gm were used for study. These animals were maintained at standard housing conditions (temperature 27±1°C; relative humidity 60±5%) and were fed with commercial diet (Hindustan Lever Ltd., Bangalore) and water *ad libitum*, during the experiment. The institutional animal ethical committee (IAEC/144/1999/ CPCSEA) permitted the study.

**Acute toxicity studies**

The acute toxicity studies were carried out as per stair case method (Ghosh, 1984). 50 albino mice of either sex weighing 20-25g and 90 days were used to determine LD₅₀ of various extracts. The mice were divided into 5 groups of 10 each and were administered with aliquot doses of the extracts orally (1000, 1500, 2000, 2500 and 3000mg/kg body weight). Mortality was not noticed upto 3000mg/kg for all the extracts except for chloroform leaf and methanol bark, wherein 100% mortality was observed at the dose of 2500 and 3000 mg/kg. Accordingly the LD₅₀ of the extracts was found to be 3000mg/Kg body weight for all the extracts except chloroform leaf and methanol bark which was noticed at 2000mg/Kg body weight. 1/100 of this dose was selected as the therapeutic dose for the evaluation of hepatoprotective activity. 1% Tween - 80 was used as the vehicle to suspend various fractions and administered orally.

Nine groups of animals containing six each were used for the study. The animals of Group I served as the control and received the vehicle 1% Tween - 80 w/v at a dose of 1mL/kg/day i.p. for 14 days. Group II - IX received 0.1mL /kg/day i. p. of CCl₄ (E-Merck, Mumbai, India) for 10 days (Iairprakash et al., 2006). The standard drug Silymarin (Ranbaxy Lab, Dewas) was administered to Group III animals @ 100mg/kg/day p.o. for 14 days. Group IV-IX was treated with various extracts p.o for 14 days as follows.

- **Group IV**: Pet ether leaf extract (300mg/kg body weight).
- **Group V**: Chloroform leaf extract (200mg/kg body weight).
- **Group VI**: Methanol leaf extract (300mg/kg body weight).
- **Group VII**: Pet ether bark extract (300mg/kg body weight).
- **Group VIII**: Chloroform bark extract (300mg/kg body weight).
- **Group IX**: Methanol bark extract (200mg/kg body weight).

**Assessment of hepatoprotective activity**

All the animals were sacrificed on day 14 under light ether anesthesia. The blood samples were collected separately by

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure 1**: a. Section of the liver tissue of control animals showing normal histology, portal tried (Hepatic duct-D) (H and E, 100 X); b. Section of the liver tissue of animals treated with CCl4 showing the Necrosis (N), Vein (V) and Fatty vacuoles (F) (H and E 100X); c. Section of the liver tissue of Silymarin treated animals showing normal hepatocytes (Hepatic duct D) (H and E 100X).
Carotid bleeding into sterilized dry centrifuge tubes and allowed to coagulate for 30 min at 37°C. The clear serum was separated at 2500 rpm for 10 min and biochemical investigations were carried out to assess liver function viz., total bilirubin (Mallory and Evelyn, 1937), total protein (Kingsley and Frankel, 1939), serum transaminases (Reitman and Frankel, 1957), and serum alkaline phosphatase (Bessey et al., 1964).

After draining the blood, liver samples were excised, washed with normal saline and processed separately for histological observations. Initially, the materials were fixed in 10% buffered neutral formalin for 48 h and then with bovine solution for 6 h. Paraffin sections were taken at 5mm thickness processed in alcohol-xylene series and was stained with alum hematoxyline and eosin (Galighter and Koyloff, 1971). The sections were examined microscopically for histopathological changes.

### Statistical analysis

The results are expressed as mean±SEM of six animals from each group. The data were evaluated by one-way ANOVA. Comparison of mean values of different groups treated with different extracts and positive control were estimated by Tukey's Multiple Comparison Test. *p<0.05* was considered significant and **p<0.01** as highly significant.

### Preliminary phytochemical Screening

Standard methods (Thorn et al., 1977) were used for preliminary phytochemical screening of the individual fractions to know the nature of phyto-constituents present in

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups (n)</th>
<th>Total Protein (g/dl)</th>
<th>Bilirubin (g/dl)</th>
<th>AST (IU/I)</th>
<th>ALT (IU/I)</th>
<th>ALP (IU/I)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>9.75±0.17</td>
<td>0.52±0.09</td>
<td>52.30±1.15</td>
<td>146.63±5.79</td>
<td>176.24±5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCl4 treated</td>
<td>5.69±0.09</td>
<td>2.61±0.27</td>
<td>1072.14±13.17</td>
<td>2062.17±28.82</td>
<td>513.04±13.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>8.74±0.64***</td>
<td>0.54±0.05**</td>
<td>90.14±2.89**</td>
<td>305.29±28.86**</td>
<td>354.13±7.88**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum ether leaf</td>
<td>6.63±0.18***</td>
<td>0.99±0.17**</td>
<td>103.59±2.63*</td>
<td>377.00±12.97</td>
<td>371.47±5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloroform leaf</td>
<td>5.99±0.58</td>
<td>1.60±0.21</td>
<td>114.53±5.76</td>
<td>379.94±7.11</td>
<td>378.51±2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methanol leaf</td>
<td>7.76±0.58**</td>
<td>0.72±0.01**</td>
<td>99.16±2.78**</td>
<td>354.76±28.87**</td>
<td>358.40±2.88**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum ether bark</td>
<td>6.42±0.28*</td>
<td>1.21±0.30*</td>
<td>110.17±2.89*</td>
<td>368.09±9.31*</td>
<td>369.83±13.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chloroform bark</td>
<td>7.10±0.58*</td>
<td>1.76±0.23</td>
<td>198.66±18.78</td>
<td>700.30±28.88</td>
<td>492.69±27.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methanol bark</td>
<td>8.23±0.57**</td>
<td>0.59±0.03**</td>
<td>94.80±2.88**</td>
<td>343.1±12.27**</td>
<td>361.54±5.78**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values are expressed as mean±SE, n= 6, *p<0.05 and **p<0.01 vs CCl4 treated group.
the leaves viz. steroids, flavonoids, alkaloids, saponins, tannins, glycosides etc.

RESULTS

The effect of various extracts of *Anogeissus latifolia* on total protein, bilirubin, serum transaminases and alkaline phosphatase in toxicity induced rats are summarized in Table 1. Administration of CCl₄ showed significant increase in (p<0.01) elevation of liver marker enzymes in serum namely AST (1072.14±13.17), ALT (2062.17±28.82), ALP (513.04±13.20) and total bilirubin (2.61±0.27) when compared to normal control respectively. Methanolic leaf and bark extracts at a dose of 300 and 200mg/kg body weight showed significant (p<0.01) reduction of AST (99.16±2.78, 94.80±2.88), ALT (354.76±28.87, 343.1±12.27), ALP (358.40±2.88, 361.54±5.78) and total bilirubin (0.72±0.01, 0.59±0.03) levels respectively when compared to CCl₄ intoxicated rats. Petroleum ether leaf extract also showed significant reduction in AST (103.59±2.63 (p<0.01) and total bilirubin level (0.99±0.17) only while, petroleum ether bark extract showed significant (p<0.05) reduction in AST (110.17±2.89), ALT (368.09±9.31) and total bilirubin level (1.21±0.30) when compared to CCl₄ intoxicated rats. Standard drug silymarin showed significant (p<0.01) reduction in the levels of AST (90.14±2.89), ALT (300.29±28.86), ALP (354.13±7.88) and total bilirubin (0.54±0.05). However, chloroform bark and leaf did not show significant reduction for any of the parameters.

Total protein was significantly reduced following CCl₄ administration (5.69±0.09) when compared to normal control rats. Methanolic leaf and bark extract at a dose of 300 and 200mg/kg body weight showed significant (p<0.01) increase in total protein (7.76±0.58, 8.23±0.57) levels when compared to CCl₄ intoxicated rats. Both petroleum ether leaf and bark also showed significant raise in total protein level (6.63±0.18 and 6.42±0.28) (p<0.01). However among the chloroform extracts, only bark showed significant raise (7.10±0.58) in total protein (p<0.05). Standard drug silymarin showed significant (p<0.01) rise in the levels of total protein (8.74±0.64).

Histological profile of the control animals showed normal hepatocytes (Fig. 1a). Group II animals treated with CCl₄ exhibited intense centrilobular necrosis, vacuolization and macrovesicular fatty changes (Fig. 1b). The sections of liver taken from the animals treated with standard drug silymarin showed the hepatic architecture, which was similar to that of control (Fig.1c). The animals treated with methanolic leaf and bark extracts exhibited significant liver protection against the toxicant as evident by the presence of normal hepatic cords, absence of necrosis and lesser fatty infiltration (Fig. 2c, 3c.). However moderate accumulation of fatty lobules was noticed in the sections of animals treated with the Petroleum ether leaf and bark extracts (Fig. 2a, 3a.). No recovery from the damage was observed in case of chloroform leaf and bark extracts (Fig. 2b, 3b). Further, among the bark extracts highest hepatoprotective activity was noticed in methanol followed by petroleum ether. Similar effect was noticed in leaf extracts also. From the data it is also evident that, among all the sources of extracts methanolic bark proved to be more effective when compared to methanolic extracts from leaf in terms of hepatoprotective activity.

DISCUSSION

The bark of *Anogeissus latifolia* was selected to evaluate its antihapatotoxic effect in CCl₄ induced hepatotoxic rat model. A survey of literature suggested that it has been used for different diseases including inflammation, diabetes, diarrhea and skin diseases, as well as hepatopathy. The bark has been evaluated scientifically for its antioxidant and wound healing activity. A qualitative chemical examination showed the presence of carbohydrates, glycosides, phenolic compounds, flavonoids and tannins. The presence of polyphenols and flavonoids supports its antioxidant potential. The high percentage of quercetin, rutin and gallic acid in the extract justifies the potent antioxidant activity (Arumugam et al., 1993; Boyle et al., 2000; Boots and Haenen, 2008) which results in the hepatoprotective potential of the extract. Quercetin and rutin are reported to be potential therapeutic agents as they reduce oxidative DNA damage, lipid peroxidation and quench free radicals (Alfanasev et al., 1989; Noroozi et al., 1998). The drug, thus, is a rich source of various antioxidant chemicals which may exert a cumulative antioxidant effect producing favourable actions in various disease conditions such as hepatopathy, diabetes, inflammation and wound healing.

The CCl₄ has been used as a tool to induce hepatotoxicity in experimental animals (Recagni, 1983; Okuno et al., 1986). The hepatotoxicity induced by CCl₄ due to metabolite CCl₃ a free radical that binds to lipoprotein and leads to peroxidation of lipids of the endoplasmic reticulum (Recknagel, 1967). This toxic chemical caused peroxidative degradation in the adipose tissue resulting in fatty infiltration of the hepatocytes. The increase in the levels of serum bilirubin reflected the depth of jaundice and the increase in serum transaminases and alkaline phosphatases was the clear indication of cellular damage and loss of functional integrity of the cell membrane (Sarwaith et al., 1993).

The lowering of enzyme levels is a definite indication of hepatoprotective action of the drug. The serum AST, ALT and ALP levels are reliable markers of liver function (Mulanadar et al., 1955). In our study, the significant elevation of marker enzymes following administration of CCl₄ indicated serious toxicity produced by the chemical. In CCl₄ induced hepatitis, administration of leaf and bark methanolic extracts of *Anogeissus latifolia* produced significant reduction in AST, ALT and ALP activities and total bilirubin levels while exhibiting a significant increase in total protein. Thus it could be suggested that, *Anogeissus latifolia* possess hepatoprotective activity in this model, a concept which was further supported by the histopathological studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors express their gratitude to Principal, S.R.N.M.N. College, Shivamogga, Secretary, N.E.S. Shivamogga, Prof. B. R. Siddaramappa, Principal, Sahyadri Science College (Autonomous), Shivamogga, Principal, National Pharmacy College, Shivamogga, for providing lab facility and encouragement.
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