PHYTOCHEMICAL, ANTI-OXIDANT AND HPTLC ANALYSIS OF ALTERNANTHERA BRASILIANA (L.) KUNTZE

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Abstract

Medicinal plants have wide spread properties due to the presence of phytochemicals. The aim of the present study is the systematic study on the phytochemical composition and the biological activities to validate the pharmaceutical potential of Alternanthera brasiliana. Alternanthera brasiliana (L.) Kuntze is often referred to as "terramycin," "penicillin," or "benzetacil." It is used in traditional medicine to treat infections; the infusion of its leaves is used as a digestive, depurative, and diuretic; and the maceration of the entire plant is used to treat constipation. In the present study the whole plant was shade dried and ground to fine powder followed by organoleptic, physico-chemical and phytochemical analysis. HPTLC was conducted for determining the active components present in the plant. Antioxidant activity of the plant extract was tested using DPPH and Hydrogen peroxide scavenging assays. The organoleptic study was conducted in the plant powder in order to find out the colour, taste, odor and texture of Alternanthera brasiliana powder. The plant powder was subjected to soxhlet extraction using methanol. Phytochemical screening of the plant extract was done according to the standard biochemical procedures. The qualitative and quantitative analysis determined the presence of various phytochemicals such as tannins, saponins, flavonoids, alkaloids, phlobatannins, simple phenolics, coumarins, quinones, flavanols, lignin in the plant extract. The plant possessed good antioxidant activity comparable to the standard ascorbic acid. Determination of the natural antioxidants from plant extracts will help to develop new drugs for antioxidant therapy. However, further studies are needed to elucidate the *in vivo* potential of *Alternanthera brasiliana* in the management of human diseases.

Key words: Phenolics, Flavanols, Digestive, Accessible

Introduction

Traditional herbal medicine (or alternative herbal medicine) has played an essential role as a source of primary health care for many globally (Marovi and Cheikhvoussef, 2015). Traditional medicine has remained the most affordable and easily accessible source of treatment in primary health care system of poor communities where alternative therapy is the major means of medical treatment in such communities (Yingar & Yewhalaw, 2007). According to Azaizeh et al (2003) reported that about 80% of the world population depend on traditional medicine for their health care. Traditional medicines are usually cheaper than modern medicines and probably the only natural remedies available and accessible in the remote rural communities developing in countries (Popovicetal., 2016). Traditional herbal

medicine has been used to prevent many diseases. The term pharmacognosy was first used between 1811 and 1815, and originally referred to "materia medica", the knowledge of drug materials or pharmacology. It is derived from two Greek words, pharmakon (a drug) and gignosko (to acquirea knowledge of) (Evans 1996). Later on, pharmacognosy became restricted to that branch of pharmacy investigating "medicinal substances from the plant, animaland mineral kingdoms in their natural, crude, or unprepared state, or in the form of such primary derivatives as oils, waxes, gums, and resins" (Hocking 1997). In a further attempt to update the scope of this field in a manner consistent with scientific activities ongoing atthe beginning of the 21st century, pharmacognosy has recently been defined as "a molecular science that explores naturally occurring structure-activity relationships with a drug

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potential" (Bruhn & Bohlin 1997). The American Society for Pharmacognosy defines pharmacognosy as "the study of the physical, chemical, biochemical, and biological properties of drugs, drug substances, or potential drugs or drug substances of natural origin, and the search for new drugs from natural sources"(Sarker ,2012).

metabolic functions of the plant, otherwise nique where by special plates and instrumental called the secondary metabolites (Richter, resources for sampling are used and the quanti-1978). They are produced and used by the plants forprotection and repair processes within the natural environment (Bako et al., 2005). According to Heldt (2005), most of these phytochemicals are produced through biosynthesis in the metabolic pathways.Secondary metabolites have both a defensive roleagainst herbivory, pathogen attack and inter-plant competition and an attractant role towards beneficial organisms such as pollinators or symbionts (Kaufmann et al., 1999).

Oxidative stress is hazardous to the body because it causes peroxidation of membrane lipids, which leads to membrane integrity loss and cell death, as well as denaturation of proteins such as enzymes, ion channels, and DNA strand breaks. As a result, they may be associated with specific pathophysiological ailments such as arthritis, hemorrhagic shock, coronary artery disease, cataract, cancer, AIDS, and age-related degenerative brain problems. Antioxidants are substances that can reduce oxidative stress and the occurrence of oxidant-related disease disorders(Murota and Terao 2003).

High-performance thin-layer chromatography (HPTLC) is an efficient, sophisticated and automated form of the thin-layer chromatography (TLC) with better and advanced separation efficiency and detection limits (Saibaba and Shanmuga, 2016). It is faster, easier and more flexible as compared to any other chromatographic technique (Eike and Anne 2006). Modern highperformance TLC (HPTLC) is an efficient instrumental analysis, and optimised quantitative HPTLC using a densitometric evaluation can

produce results analogous to those obtained with gas chromatography (GC) and high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) (Wagner and Bladt, 2001 and Medic-Saric etal.,2008). Thus, HPTLC 'fingerprint analysis' may be a powerful tool for the quality control of raw plant material and may be an alternative technique, particularly in the analysis of crude plant extracts. An improvement over conven-Phytochemicals are by-products of primary tional TLC, HPTLC is an instrumental techtative evaluation of separations is aided by densitometry(Nile andPark, 2014).

> The inflorescence is cymes, composed of hermaphrodite, actinomorphous and Monocyclic flowers (Duarte and Debur, 2004). Alternanthera brasiliana is popularly used against inflammation, cough and diarrhoea in Brazilian medicines (Brochadoetal., 2003). It constitutes various nutritional and anti-nutritional components in addition to the therapeutically important secondary metabolites (Dingman, 2002).

> The aim of the present work is therefore a systematic study on the phytochemical composition and the biological activity to validate the pharmaceutical potential of Alternanthera brasiliana.

Materials and Methods

Plant material

The plant selected for the study, Alternanthera brasiliana was collected from Punalur, Kollam. The whole plant was used for the present study.

A Powder analysis: Fresh plant of Alternanthera brasiliana was collected in a polythene bag. The collected materials were washed under tap water to remove dirt. Then it was shade dried and powdered in a mixer grinder and sieved with a fine mesh sieve. The powder was then used for the organoleptic study, physicochemical analysis and solvent extraction.

1. Organoleptic study

Organoleptic (literally "impression on the or- 2001) gans") refers to the evaluation by means of the b. Hydrogen Peroxide Scavenging Assay (Ruch organs of sense and includes the macroscopic et al., 1989) appearance of the plant material, its color, odor, Statistical analysis and taste, occasionally the sound of 'snap' of its Experimental results were analyzed statistically fracture and the 'feel' of the powder to the by Probit (IC50 values) and Regression analytouch (Wozniak et al., 1997). The plant powder sis. characteristics like the color, odor, taste and 5. HPTLC (High Performance Thin Layer nature were evaluated.

2. Physico-chemical characterization

Different physicochemical parameters were de- different concentrations of width 8 mm each on termined according to the official methods and silica gel 60 F254 pre-coated aluminium sheets guidelines on quality control for medicinal through CAMAG micro litre syringe using plant materials.

1992)

b. Foaming index (WHO, 1992)

c. Swelling index (WHO, 1992)

1996)

e pH (Iqbal et al., 2010)

B. Phytochemical Screening

pharmacopoeia, 1996)

About 15 g of the powdered plant material was win CATS software associated with the scansubjected to extraction by Soxhlet apparatus ner. The plate was derivatized using vanillinusing 100 ml methanol. The extract was con- sulphuric acid reagent, heated at 105° C by centrated under reduced pressure and preserved placing on CAMAG TLC plate heater till the in refrigerator until further use. The percentage colour of the bands appeared. Then the plate of the crude extract was determined using the was visualized under white light and the chrofollowing equation.

extract/weight of the sample) X100

2. Qualitative analysis

Different phytochemical constituents (15) were tested using standard biochemical procedures (Harborne, 1973).

3. Quantitative analysis

a. Determination of Alkaloids (Harborne, 1973) b. Determination of total flavonoids (Harborne 2. Physico- chemical characterization A total and Williams, 2000)

4. Biological activity—Antioxidant assay

a. DPPH (1-1-diphenyl-2-picryl hydrazine)

Free Radical Scavenging Assay (Mensor et al.,

Chromatography)

The extracts were applied as different tracks of Automatic TLC Sampler 4 (ATS4). After sama. Loss on drying (Indian Pharmacopoeia, ple application the plate was introduced vertically in a CAMAG developing chamber (10 cm x 10 cm) pre-saturated with the mobile phase selected. The developed chromatogram was air d. Foreign matter (Indian Pharmacopoeia, dried to evaporate solvents from the plate and the plate was kept in CAMAG Vizualizer and the images were captured under UV light at 254 nm and 366 nm. The plate was scanned at 254 nm and 366 nm using TLC Scanner 4 and the 1. Preparation and yield of extract (Indian finger print profiles were documented. The Revalues and finger print data were recorded with matograms were documented. The plate was Percentage yield (%) = (weight of the crude scanned at 575 nm and the Rf values and finger print data were documented (Sisodiva and Srivastava, 2017).

Results

A. Powder analysis

1. Organoleptic study

The organoleptic characteristics like color, odor, taste and texture of Alternanthera brasiliana were determined (Table 1).

of five phytochemical parameters were evaluated in Alternanthera brasiliana. The amount of matter was low in Alternanthera brasiliana.

to be more than 100 units indicating the pres- amounts in the extract. ence of saponins. No considerable swelling was observed due to the absence of gums and muci- Table 3. Phytochemicals tested in Alternanthera bralage in the plant powder. The value of pH indi- siliana cated the basic nature of the powder (Table 2).

Table 1. Organoleptic characters of Alternanthera brasiliana

Characters	Alternanthera brasiliana
1. Color	Olive green
2. Odor	Pungent
3. Taste	Bitter
4. Texture	Rough

Table 2. Physio- chemical characters of Alternanthera brasiliana

Parameters	Values
Foreign matter	0.61%
Loss on drying	6.50%
Swelling index	Nil
Forming index	>100ml
рН	7.5

B. Phytochemical Screening

1. Yield of the extract

The methanol extract of Alternanthera bra-brasiliana siliana was prepared by Soxhlet extraction. The yield of the methanol extract was 4.2%.

2. Quantitative analysis

A total of 15 phytochemicals were qualitatively assessed. Terpenoids, glycosides, acid, steroids, 4. Antioxidant assay gum, and mucilage were absent in the plant ex- a. DPPH (1-1-diphenyl-2-picryl hydrazine) tract. Tannins, saponins, flavonoids, alkaloids, Free Radical Scavenging Assay phlobatannins, Simple phenolics, Coumarins, An examination of the total antioxidant activity Quinones, Flavanols, Lignin were detected in of the methanol extract of Alternantherabramethanol extract of Alternanthera brasiliana siliana was determined by the DPPH method is (Table 3).

3. Quantitative analysis

The quantitative estimation of two phytochemicals was performed in the methanol extract of the plant Alternanthera brasiliana using con-

The moisture content was reported to be in low ventional procedures (Table 4). Flavonoids and amount in the plant. Foaming index was found alkaloids were found to be in considerable

SL. No.	Phytochemicals	Present/	
		Absent	
1	Tannins	+	
2	Saponins	+	
3	Flavonoids	+	
4	Alkaloids	+	
5	Terpenoids	-	
6	Phlobatannins	+	
7	Glycosides	-	
<u>8</u>	Simple phenolics	+	
9	Coumarins	+	
10	Quinones	+	
11	Acids	-	
<u>12</u>	Flavanols	+	
13	Lignin	+	
14	Steroids	-	
15	Gums and mucilage	-	

Table 4. Quantitative analysis in Alternanthera

Phytochemicals	Amounts (mg/g)	
Flavonoids	5.62	
Alkaloids	1.48	

indicated in Table 5. The standard for assay is ascorbic acid. Through probit analysis, IC50 value of the standard was found to be 48.6µg/ mL and for the sample it was 52µg/mL.

Table 5. DPPH Assay

S1.	Concentration	Standard	Plant
No.	(µg/mL)	(percentage of	e x t r a c t
		inhibition) (%)	(percentage
			of inhibi-
			tion) (%)
1	62.5	68	64.65%
2	125	70	67.53%
3	250	73	69.81%
4	500	80	78.68%
5	1000	89	85.95%

b. Hydrogen Peroxide Scavenging Assay

The hydrogen peroxide scavenging activity of *Alternanthera brasiliana's* methanol extract was conducted. Ascorbic acid served as the standard for hydrogen peroxide assay. The extract's IC₅₀ value was 73.166 μ g/mL and that of standard was 61.8 μ g/mL calculated by probit analysis. The sample shows good scavenging activity to hydrogen peroxide indicating potential antioxidant activity.

Table 6. Hydrogen	peroxide assay
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S1.	Concentration	Standard	Plant
No.	(µg/mL)	(percentage of	e x t r a c t
		inhibition %)	(percentag
			e of inhibi-
			tion %)
1	62.5	52	47.81
2	125	61	57.17
3	250	65	63.04
4	500	75	69.31
5	1000	86	79.37

Statistical Analysis

Regression analysis was carried out for the methanol extract of *A. brasiliana* and Ascorbic acid (Standard) and the values were recorded (Table 7)The results of R^2 values (>0.1) showed statistical significance and indicated an adequate goodness of fit.

Assays	Regression values (R^2)		Regression equation	
	Plant	Standard	Plant	Standard
D P P H Assay	0.934 2	0.989	7.7545ln (x) + 30.508	0.0224x + 67.333
Hydro- g e n perox- i d e s c a v - enging assay	0.990	0.9295	10.858ln (x)+ 33.895	0.0331x+ 54.958

5. HPTLC Analysis A(High Performance Thin Layer Chromatography)

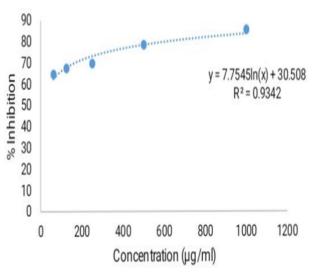
HPTLC analysis of hydromethanolic extract of *Alternanthera brasiliana* was done with the solvent system Toluene: ethyl acetate: methanol in the ratio 8: 3:1. Different Rf values were observed at three different wavelengths indicating the presence of different phytocompounds (Fig 3, Graph 3,4,5).

Solvent system: Toluene: Ethyl acetate: Formic acid (5:3:0.1)

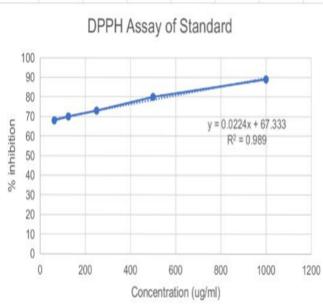
Track 1- 5µl, Track 2- 7µl

Graph – 1 DPPH assay

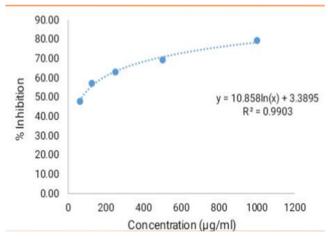
DPPH activity of sample



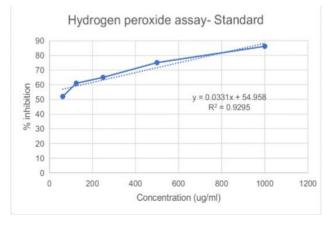
DPPH activity of standard



Graph 2 – Hydrogen peroxide assay Hydrogen peroxide assay of sample



Hydrogen peroxide assay of standard



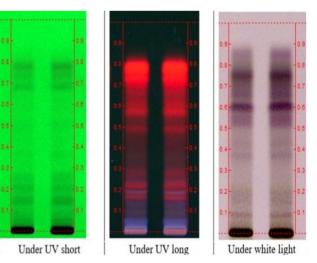


Figure 3. HPTLC test for Alternanthera brasiliana

Discussion

Alternanthera brasiliana is a variegated green and vellow, or bronze and green, or red and pinkish brown, perennial plant (Kumar et al., 2011) belonging to the family of Amarathaceae. In traditional medicine, the plant has been reported to be good fodder which increases milk in cattle, and used in the treatment of cough, diarrhea (Brochado et al., 2003), decreases blood viscosity and reduces hypertension (Christian et al., 2006). Pharmacological studies of the leaves of the plant show that it has anti-oxidant, anti-microbial, anti-viral, antiinflammatory and anti-nociceptive properties (Kumar et al., 2011; Barua et al., 2012) which could be attributed to the presence of flavonoids and phenols in the plant (Attaugwu and Uvere, 2017).

The analysis of medicinal plants has a long history in assessing the quality of a plant and the first analyses performed were organoleptic (Fitzgerald et al., 2020). Organoleptic is defined as being perceivable by the senses such as smell, appearance, taste, touch, odor etc. (Arya and Raneev, 2012). There are several ways in which to test the organoleptic properties of dried samples, including chemical or microscopic testing as well as by perceiving it directly through the senses. Organoleptic evaluation can be done by means of organs of sense and thereby define some specific characteristics

of the material which can be considered as a ability of plant material and their extract is first step towards establishment of identity and measured in terms of foaming index (Abdul et degree of purity (Jarald and Jarald, 2007). The *al.*,2013). The swelling index was calculated to organoleptic study was conducted using Alter- know that how much plant material can swell nanthera brasiliana powder. It has an olive after putting in water and also to know that the green colour, pungent smell, a bitter taste and a plant material contains some mucilaginous conrough texture (Table 1).

check the quality, purity and adulteration of nanthera brasiliana the forming index was given crude drug. The physiochemical charac- greater than 100 units. This indicates the presteristics were determined in Alternanthera ence of saponin glycosides in Alternanthera (Table 2). Foreign organic matter is matter or brasiliana. The pH is really a measure of relapart of the matter other than the crude drug tive amount of free hydrogen and hydroxyl ions which is not defined and described in the pre- in the water. Here the pH is 7.5, which indicates scribed monograph of sample is known as for- slightly alkaline nature of the drug powder. eign organic matter. High percentage of foreign organic matter is considered as a more deterio- Phytochemical screening is the most popular rating quality of drug or (Mukherjee ,2002). In the present study, small Studying, researching, extracting, and experiamount of foreign matter could be observed in menting to identify various classes of phyto-Alternanthera brasiliana

amount of water present in the formulation and toconstituents present in various plant sections presence of excess moisture in the plant acts as (Sharma et al., 2020). The existence of bioacan adulterant. If the water content is high, the tive substances produced by plants, such as flaformulation can be easily deteriorated due to vonoids, alkaloids, tannins, terpenoids, saponfungal colonies. The moisture content was de- ins, glycosides, phenolic compounds, etc., is termined with reference to air-dried sample by confirmed by phytochemical screening (Shad et loss on drying method which detects the net al., 2014). weight of a substance after drying at a specified temperature. It is an inevitable component of crude drug which helps in its preservation. The moisture content of this species in the present study was low (<14%) indicating that it could discourage bacterial, fungal or yeast growth (Raad,2014). A drug containing excess water leads to the activation of enzymes and will lead to the proliferation of living organisms. Although the loss in weight, in the sample so tested, principally is due to water, small amounts of other volatile materials will also contribute to the weight loss.

The medicinal plant materials contain saponins that cause the persistent foam formation when

an aqueous decotion is shaken. The foaming tent (Ahemed et al., 2009). Swelling index was zero, due to the lack of gums and mucilage in The physicochemical standards are important to Alternanthera brasiliana. In the case of Alter-

sample method of isolating medicinal principles. constituents is a scientific process. It is a scientific method for examining, extracting, experi-Deterioration time of the drug depends upon the menting, and identifying diverse types of phy-

> Alternanthera brasiliana extract is used for phytochemical screening. The whole plant is used for extraction. The methanol extract of the plant was performed using the Soxhlet extraction method. Extraction methods used pharmaceutically involves the separation of medicinally active portions of plant tissues from the inactive/inert components by using selective solvents. The factors affecting the choice of the solvent are quantity of phytochemicals to be extracted, rate of extraction, diversity of different compounds extracted, diversity of inhibitory compounds extracted, ease of subsequent handling of the extracts, toxicity of the solvent

in the bioassay process and potential health hazards of the extractants (Antro et al., 2013). The hydrogen peroxide involved the scaveng-Since the end product will contain traces of the ing potential of the extract on the free radicals residual solvent, the solvent should be non- of peroxide. The ability of any compound or toxic and should not interfere with the bioassay substance to be able to mop up H2O2 in any (Tiwari et al., 2011). This technique produced a chemical reaction is a proof that such a subvield of 4.6%.

determined by specific colored products pro- to be engendering cytotoxicity in living tissues duced in reactions on the addition of specific (Al-Owaisi et al., 2014). The hydrogen peroxchemicals. The procedure is simple and a pre- ide assay in the present study of Alternanthera liminary pre-requisite before going for a de- brasiliana revealed that it had high scavenging tailed phytochemical investigation. Various activity towards hydrogen peroxide by having a pharmacological activities are expressed by me- IC₅₀ value of 73.16ug/ml comparable to standicinal plants based on the type and amount of dard (Table 7, Graph 2) biologically active secondary metabolites such as terpenoids, flavonoids, alkaloids and gly- The IC₅₀ values obtained by probit analysis recosides (Jegede et al., 2011).

was used to conduct preliminary phytochemical tistically significant (>0.1) on regression analyscreening. The phytochemicals found in the ex- sis conducted in the plant and standard and intract included tannins, saponins, flavonoids, dicated an adequate goodness of fit (Table.7) alkaloids, phlobatannins, simple phenolics, coumarins, quinones, flavanols, and lignin (Table HPTLC (high-performance thin layer chroma-3). Quantitative estimation was also done for tography) is an advanced type of TLC that flavonoids (5.62 mg/g) and alkaloids (1.48 mg/ gives high resolution and accurate results. The g) in Alternanthera brasiliana (Table 4).

method to evaluate free radical scavenging ac- by comparing them with the reference stantivity. DPPH is able to accept an electron or dards, and from the values of peak area, the hydrogen radical to form a stable diamagnetic concentration of the compounds can be determolecule. Changes in color, from purple to yel- mined. The bands of separated compounds can low indicates a decrease in absorbance of be seen (Figure 3) on the TLC plates visualized DPPH radical. This demonstrates that the anti- under UV short, UV long and white light of oxidant found in a mixture solution interact wavelengths 254 nm, 366 nm and 575nm rewith the free radicals (S. B. Kedare and R. P. spectively. Singh,2011). DPPH assay was done in Alternanthera brasiliana for determining the anti- Alternanthera brasiliana clearly indicates the oxidant activity (Table 5). The methanol extract potential utilization of the plant singly or in cerwas taken for the assay. Ascorbic acid was used tain formulation to treat several disease or disas the standard. The IC₅₀ value of the plant ex- orders of humans. The plant can be grown in tract was 52µg/ml by probit analysis compara- available area for medicinal purposes. Neverble to standard. Thus the methanol extract of theless, based on the above presented results, Alternanthera brasiliana exhibited good anti- the plant could be investigated as a possible

oxidant activity (Table 5, Graph 1).

stance will have protective activity against the hydroxyl radicals being generated by hydrogen The presence/ absence of specific compounds is peroxide. Hydrogen radicals have been reported

vealed that the methanol extract of A.brasiliana possessed good antioxidant activity comparable Alternanthera brasiliana's methanolic extract to the drug ascorbic acid. The results were sta-

Rf values calculated for the phytoconstituents present in the tested sample would be helpful in DPPH assay is relatively rapid and efficient the identification of the unknown compounds

new source of natural antioxidants in the food. nutraceuticals and cosmetic industry.

Conclusion

The present study on pharmacognostical evaluation of Alternanthera brasiliana will provide useful information for its identification Indian Pharmacopoeia. 1992. Volume II. Part I. The Conand these parameters can used in future to assess the quality and purity of Alternanthera brasiliana. The phytochemical parameters and analytical methods will provide useful information in the field of crude drug development. The tors, New Delhi, India, 2007; 6. results of the present study provided suitable standards for identification of this medicinally important plant drug material for future investigations and applications. The in vivo studies should be followed by clinical trials in man. Medicinal Plants Research, 5(26): 6136-6139. The data obtained in the present work will be useful in the synthesis of new drugs of pharmaceutical importance from A. brasiliana.

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