

Evaluation of the Ulcer-healing potential of *Chromolaena odorata* (Independent plant) in Wistar rats

Abstract

Gastric ulcer is a disease that affects the GIT notably the stomach. It has been implicated in numerous deaths both in the developing and developed countries. Plants are endowed with variety of compounds of immense health significance and could account for the multi-therapeutic potential of many medicinal plants. Thus, the aim of this study was to assess the ability of the *Chromolaena odorata* (Independent plant) to heal gastric ulcer and also protect the liver against damage. Freshly harvested *C. odorata* leaves were processed and extracted. A total of 25 adult wistar rats were divided into five groups of five rats. Group I: normal control was administered 2 mL of distilled water, Groups II-V were administered 300 mg/kg of aspirin to induce gastric ulceration. However, while group II was not administered the said plant extract, group III and IV were administered 200 and 400 mg/kg of extract respectively, group V was administered 20 µg/kg of mistoprostol. Animals were treated for 10 days and afterwards, sacrificed. The stomach was harvested and opened, blood sample was collected. While ulcer index was performed on all groups, the activity of the serum hepato-markers was restricted to Group I, II and III. The parameters were evaluated using standard procedures. The activities of alanine transaminase (ALT), aspartate transaminase (AST) and alkaline phosphatase (ALP) reported for rats administered extract were not significantly ($P > 0.05$) different from those reported for the normal control. It was also observed that methanol leaf extract of *C. odorata* significantly reduced ulcer index in a dose dependent manner. In conclusion, it can be deduced from this study that methanol leaf extract of *C. odorata* has the potential to heal gastric ulcer and as well protect the liver against insult.

Keywords: *Chromolaena odorata*, mistoprostol, ulcer index, alkaline phosphate

Introduction

The gastrointestinal is a highly specialized organ system that allows consumption of diverse array of food stuff in discrete meals to meet nutrient needs. In addition, In addition, the GIT participates in the metabolism and elimination of non-nutrients as well as toxic compounds [1]. Thus, a properly functioning GIT is translated into a healthy nutrition hence, the overall wellbeing of an individual

The stomach is a sack-like organ and an important segment of the gastrointestinal tract that aid in the digestion of food through its muscular activities which results in mixing of food with juice. Gastric ulcer as the name implies is an ulcer in the stomach. It occurs in both developed and developing countries of the world [2]. An estimated 80% of the populations of the developing countries suffer from this disease [3]. Risk factors for the development of ulcers include excessive use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs among others [4]. Among other symptoms, loss of appetite that generally characterizes ulcer conditions can result to inadequate food intake and consequently malnutrition. Although the etiology of gastric ulcer is not clearly defined, it is generally accepted that it results from an imbalance between the protective and aggressive factors [5].

Synthetic drugs available for the treatment of gastric ulcer have some shortcomings such as high cost, relapses after treatment, drug interactions and side effects such as arrhythmias, gynaecomastia and hematopoietic changes [6].

Natural products have been used for combating human diseases since they exhibit a wide range of biological activities that can be exploited for medical applications [7]. Plants have been a recognized source of natural product for the treatment of human and animal diseases.

The plant *Chromolaena odorata* popularly known as siam weed is a native to South and Central. It is a fast growing, invasive perennial plant that was introduced into the tropical region of Asia, Africa and other parts of the world [8]. The economic value of *C. odorata* is low [9]. Consequently, there is relatively paucity of research work on it [10].

Leaf extract of *C. odorata* has demonstrated wound healing activity. It is endowed with constituents that wield the potential to modulate one or more of the overlapping wound healing

stages [11]. It has been established viainvitro and in vivo studies that extracts of the said plant enhances wound healing activities such as fibroblast, endothelial cell and keratinocyte proliferation [11]. On the basis of these findings, it is not out of place to investigate the possibility of its ability to address internal wound (gastric ulcer).

Materials and Methods

Collection of plant material

Fresh leaves of *Chromolaena odorata* (Independent plant) were obtained from a bush within a residential area inUturu, Isiukwuato Local Government Area of Abia State, and Southeastern part of Nigeria. The leaves were conveyed in a dark polythene bag to the herbarium unit of the

Department of Forestry, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike Abia State Southeast Nigeria for identification.

Extraction of plant material

Thoroughly washed leaves of *Chromolaena odorata* were spread on a flat surface in the laboratory to dry at room temperature. The dried leaves were subsequently transformed into a fine powder by grinding with the aid of an electrical blender. Exactly 500 g of powdered *C. odorata* powdered leaf sample was soaked for 3 days in a litre of 50% methanol for a period of 72 h. The mixture was shaken twice daily and the solvent ridded through a layer of gauze, the filtrate was subjected to evaporation to dryness in vacuo at 55°C.

Median Lethal Dose

The median lethal dose determination was performed in two phases. The initial phase was characterized by the division nine rats into three groups of three rats each of which was separately administered with 10, 100 and 1000 mg/kg of extract orally. This was followed by the observation of the animals for 24 hr. for possible signs of toxicities. Being that mortality was not recorded at the first phase, the second phase which involved three groups of one rat per group were separately administered 1600, 2900 and 5000 mg/kg of extract, after which signs of toxicities were watched for on the animals which were observed for 48 h for signs of toxicity according to Lorke [12].

Phytochemical screening

Methanol leaf extract obtained from the leaf of *Chromolaena odorata* (Independent leaf) was screened to identify the inherent phytochemicals according to the method of Trease and Evans [13].

Animals

Adult male Wistar rats weighing 130-160 g were obtained from a commercial Animal House in Okigwe, Imo State. The rats were kept in plastic cages under standard laboratory conditions. They were allowed access to food and water *ad-libthum*. Animals were allowed to acclimatization for 21 days.

Experimental Design

Twenty five adult wistar rats were divided into five groups of five rats each.

Group I: (Normal control) was administered 2 ml of distilled water

Group II: was induced ulcer without treatment (IGUWT)

Group III: Rats with ulcerated stomach treated with 200 mg/kg of INDPE

Group IV: Rats with ulcerated stomach treated with 400 mg/kg of INDPE

Group V: Rats with ulcerated stomach treated with 20 μ g /kg of INDPE

Animals with ulcerated stomach were treated for 10 days after which they were sacrificed and processed for the determination of ulcer index.

Determination of ulcer index

Gastric lesions in the glandular region of the stomach were located in the gastric mucosa as elongated dark red lines parallel to the long axis of the stomach. The length (mm) of each lesion was measured and lesion index was calculated by adding the length of all lesions in the fundic region of the stomach [14].

Liver function test

To perform liver function tests, exactly 2 mL of blood introduced into the EDTA tube was centrifuge at 4,000 rpm for 15 min and the resulting plasma was analysed using kits to determine

the activity of aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alanine transaminase (ALT), alkaline phosphatase (ALP).

Statistical Analysis

Data obtained from the study were expressed as mean \pm standard deviation using SPSS (Ver. 23). Data were analysed using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Variation in mean values was compared using Turkey Test. *P-values* less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Table 1: Outcome of Qualitative Phytochemical Screening on the Methanol Leaf Extract of *Chromolaena odorata*

Phytochemicals Result

Alkaloids	++
Flavonoids	+++
Glycosides	+

Tannins	++
Saponins	+
Phenols	+

+ [abundant] ++ [more abundant] +++ [most abundant]

Table 2: Effect of oral administration of *Chromolaena odorata* on the Hepatic Health

Groups	ALT (μL)	AST (μL)	ALP (μL)
Normal control	61.96 ± 1.10^a	181.10 ± 0.80^a	223.32 ± 1.20^a
INDP 200mg/kg	62.31 ± 3.10^a	180.12 ± 2.90^a	225.22 ± 1.50^{ab}

INDP 400mg/kg

63.21± 2.16^a

182.22± 2.80^{ab}

224.01 ± 2.10^a

Results are expressed as mean ± standard deviation of three determinations. Values with the same superscript in a column are not significantly (P>0.05) different

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Table 3: Ulcer Index of the Ulcerated Stomach of rats administered Methanol Leaf Extract of *C. odorata*

Grouping	Treatment	Ulcer index
Group I	2 ml of distilled water	0.00±0.00 ^a

Group II	300 mg/kg of asprin	7.82±0.96 ^d
Group III	Asprin + 200 mg/kg INDP	5.28±0.27 ^c
Group IV	Asprin + 400 mg/kg INDP	3.64±0.56 ^{bc}
Group V	Asprin + 20µg/kg Mistoprostol	3.02±0.36 ^b

Results are expressed as mean ± standard deviation of three determinations. Values with the same superscript in a column are not significantly (P>0.05) different

Results and Discussion

The efficiency with which a plant extract achieves wound healing is indisputably a function of the inherent antioxidants which facilitates the conservation of the fibroblast and keratinocyte

proliferation on wounds [15]. Table 1 shows the result obtained following a qualitative phytochemical screening on *C. odorata* leaf showing that alkaloids, flavonoids, glycosides, tannins, saponins and phenols were reportedly present in the leaf of *Chromolena odorata*. However, of all the phytochemicals revealed through this study, flavonoids was the most abundant. This is consistent with the finding with the finding of Ukwueze et al. [8] which revealed that aqueous extract of *C. odorata* leaf salvigenin, sakuranetin, isosakuranetin, kaempferide and betulenol all of which are flavonoids. It is in tandem with the outcome of a work by Wenji et al. [16] which showed that flavonoids exhibit gastroprotective effects against peptic ulcer both in vivo and in vitro. Liver enzymes are membrane bound in the liver, and a distortion in the membrane architecture is implicated in their spillage into blood circulation [17]. Table 3 shows the activities the liver enzymes (AST, ALP and ALT) of rats administered methanol leaf extract of *C. odorata* (independent plant) indicating that the activities of the liver enzymes in groups administered extract were not significantly ($P < 0.05$) different from that reported for the control. This is consistent with the finding of Fidelis and Charlse [18] which reported decreased activity of AST, ALT and ALP in rats feed crude petroleum tainted feed that was treated with *C. Odorata*. Table 4 shows the ulcer index reported on the stomach of rats induced ulcer prior to treatment with the said extract indicating that oral administration of 300 mg/kg body weight of aspirin significantly ($P > 0.05$) increased ulcer index in rats. However, administration of extract significantly ($P > 0.05$) reduced ulcer index in a dose dependent manner. This could be attributed to the presence of flavonoids reportedly present in the extract which had been substantiated by Wenji et al. [17].

Conclusion

It can be deduced from this study that methanol leaf extract of *Chromolaena odorata* could heal wound and does not inflict damage on the liver.

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