

Antiplasmodial Activity of *Carica Papaya* L. Leaf Ethanollic Extracts in Swiss Albino Mice Infected with *Plasmodium berghei*

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Abstract:

Malaria is a vector-borne illness that had become the primary cause of sickness and large-scale death in Nigeria. The effects of *Carica papaya* leaf ethanollic extracts on Swiss albino mice infected with *Plasmodium berghei* were therefore the subject of a study. For the study, 15 Swiss albino mice of both sexes, weighing 140-260 g, were divided into five groups. *C. papaya* fresh leaves were air-dried at 28 °C for three weeks before being ground into powder. The crushed powder was weighed using a balance before being placed in 150 ml of 95% ethanol for 72 hours. By utilizing a rotary evaporator, the powder was transformed into an ethanollic extract. For the investigation, 15 Swiss albino mice were housed in typical settings. About 1×10^6 intraperitoneal injections of *P. berghei*-infected blood were given to the animals. After 48 hours of infection, animals in group 1 got 0.2 ml of normal saline, group 5 received 5 mg/kg of chloroquine diphosphate intraperitoneally, and groups 2, 3, and 4 received oral doses of 100, 200, and 400 mg/kg of ethanollic extracts from *C. papaya* leaf, respectively. Standard protocols were used to examine the haematological profiles of the infected mice before, during, and after treatment periods. To determine the impact of the plant extract on *P. berghei* in Swiss albino mice, a 4-day curative test was conducted. The data was examined using one-way analysis of variance, and Duncan's New Multiple Range Test was used to identify significant means. The findings demonstrated that as concentrations increased, the PCV, RBC, and WBC values significantly varied between treatment groups. To combat and overcome the parasitemia, the body produces more lymphocytes, neutrophils, monocytes, eosinophils, and basophils during the infection stage. The number of parasitized erythrocytes significantly ($P \leq 0.05$) decreased with increase in concentration. It was inferred that 400 mg/kg of *C. papaya* stem extracts could serve as alternative to chloroquine diphosphate in the treatment of malaria.

Keywords: *Carica papaya*, Curative Test, Parasitemia, Albino Mice.

1. INTRODUCTION

In nations where malaria transmission is a frequent occurrence as well as regions where it has been mostly controlled or eradicated, malaria remains a serious public health concern (WHO, 2019). In Africa, it is the main factor contributing to incidence and death (Badmos *et al.*, 2021). Every year, 300 million to 500 million illnesses and one to three million fatalities are caused by malaria (Verma *et al.*, 2011). Pregnant women and youngsters below five are more vulnerable to malaria. Every two minutes a youngster with the illness dies (WHO, 2018). In 2016, Nigeria had 27% of the world's malaria cases and 24% of the deaths due to malaria (WHO, 2018). A protozoan of the species *Plasmodium falciparum*, *P. vivax*, and *P. berghei* is mostly responsible for the

sickness (Alebie *et al.*, 2017) transmitted via bites of female mosquito of the genus *Anopheles* (Waiganjo *et al.*, 2020).

Several conventional drugs were used for the treatment of malaria over the years with no proper fruitful results attributed to the increasing rate of resistance conferred by the parasites to the conventional drugs (Nyandwaro *et al.*, 2020; Tajbakhsh *et al.*, 2021) and evolving resistance of the vector to insecticides (Uzor *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, new creative strategies to manage and control malaria are required in light of recent reports of *P. falciparum* that are artemisinin-resistant (Cudjoe *et al.*, 2020). In Nigeria, various treatments are needed to treat malaria. In most parts of the world, plant-derived medications have long been used in traditional medicine and use it to treat microbial infections. Herbal therapy is widely accessible in our varied grasslands, affordable, and, most importantly, has the ability to innovate modern medicines (Akinyemi *et al.*, 2005).

Several tropical plants were shown to have specific antimalarial potentials, according to ethnopharmacological research (Rasoanaivo *et al.*, 2011). Despite the fact that the mechanism of action of *C. papaya L.* against the malarial parasites is not yet fully known, it has been utilized in Nigeria in traditional settings to cure malaria. Therefore, the objective of this work was to investigate the mechanism of action of *C. papaya* leaf ethanolic extracts against *P. berghei*-infected mice in order to shed some light on how they behave.

2. METHODOLOGY

Plant samples collection

Fresh *C. papaya* leaf was taken from the Botanical garden, ABU Zaria, and transported to the Herbarium, Department of Botany, ABU Zaria for authentication; voucher number ABU01203 was given.

Plant ethanolic extraction

The procedure goes with the recommendations made by Sasidharan *et al.* (2011). Gathered samples were properly cleaned before being air-dried for three weeks at room temperature (28 °C) in the shade. Using a mortar and pestle, the dried leaves were pounded into a fine powder, which was then kept in dry containers until needed. To make the ethanolic extracts, 100 g for each powder were soaked in 150 ml of 95 per cent ethanol and then agitated in an orbital shaker at 120 rpm. After being unfiltered for another 24 hours, the mixture was run through gauze and Whatman No. 1 filter paper. Three distinct concentrations of 100, 200, and 400 mg/kg were prepared from the stem extract stock solution.

Phytochemical analysis

According to the procedures outlined by Adegoke *et al.* (2010), the phytochemical screening of the ethanolic extract of *C. papaya* was done to ascertain the existence of active ingredients in the plant stem. The tests include: Wagner's test for alkaloids, Molisch's test for carbohydrates, and the lead subacetate test for tannins. The frothing/foaming test for saponins, the Keller-Killiani's test for the detection of cardiac glycosides, Triterpene and steroid identification by the Libermann-Burchard test, alkaline test for flavonoid detection, ferric chloride test for phenol detection, copper

acetate test for the detection of diterpenoids, Xanthoproteic assay for protein detection and Borntrager's test for anthraquinones detection.

Experimental animals

The Agaric ministry, Kano State approved the transaction ethically. The approach followed the guidelines for good laboratory practice (GLP) as set forth by the World Health Organization. Fifteen (15) healthy white swiss albino mice of both sexes weighing between 140 and 260 g were obtained from ABU Zaria. The mice were housed in metal cages in ventilated rooms with a 12-hour cycle of darkness and light. They were given regular feed pellets and unlimited access to water. Before beginning the investigation, the animals underwent a two-week acclimatization period.

Animal inoculation

A Swiss albino mouse was intraperitoneally injected with *P. berghei* at the Department of Parasitology and Entomology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, at maximal parasitemia and the parasite was allowed to attained a 40-50% parasitemia. A myocardial puncture was performed on the donor mouse after it was sacrificed, and 0.1 ml of acid citrate dextrose was poured into the syringe. The inoculum used to infect the test animals was created by diluting the blood with isotonic saline. The experimental mice were given 0.2 ml of diluted parasitized red blood cells with 109 parasites per ml as an inoculation. A 0.2 mL intraperitoneal injection of infected blood solution containing 1×10^6 red blood cells parasitized by *P. berghei* was given to each experimental mouse.

Determination of extracts toxicity

According to the Lorke method (1983), the lethal dose (LD₅₀) of the extracts was calculated to estimate the acute toxicity of the *C. papaya* extracts. The procedure involved giving three groups of swiss albino mice various doses (100, 200, and 400 mg/kg) of the extracts intraperitoneally. Following that, the occurrence of physical symptoms and mortality in mice for potential toxicity was observed.

Curative test

According to the method outlined by Iyiola *et al.* (2011) the chemotherapeutic activity of *C. papaya* leaf ethanolic extracts was tested in established infection. The albino mice were given 0.2 ml standard inocula of 1×10^6 -infected erythrocytes intraperitoneally on the first day (Day 0). Mice were put into three test groups (II, III, and IV) of three mice each 72 hours later (Day 3). As negative and positive controls, respectively, Groups I and V were allocated. The test groups were then given doses of the extract equal to 100, 200, or 400 mg/kg/day. Positive and negative controls each received 0.2 ml of saline and 25 mg/kg/day of chloroquine orally via cannula. 24 hours after the parasite inoculation, the parasitemia was first monitored. Each experimental mouse had their tail severed, from which blood was drawn to make thick and thin smears. The thick and thin films were both stained with 10% Giemsa stain for 15 minutes after the smear had dried and the thin smear had been fixed with 100% methanol. The compound microscope's oil immersion resolutions were used to see the slides (Vickers Instruments). Each slide was examined, and both the parasitized and non-parasitic red blood cells (RBCs) were noted.

Packed Cell Volume Determination (PVC)

PCV was estimated using the microhaematocrit technique described by Cole (1986) . In a nutshell, capillary activity filled blood samples into heparinized capillary tubes to a depth of 75% (34) of their length. The outside of the tubes was gently dried with gauze while the other end of the tubes was being sealed with flame. The tubes were then mounted on a microhematocrit centrifuge and spun at 3000 rpm for ten minutes.

Haematological parameters evaluation

The sum of Erythrocytes count was assessed using Cole's (1986) method. Blood samples were carefully aspirated using the pipette's 0.5 mark before being transferred into a clean cuvette containing diluent (0.9% normal saline). The diluted blood was released into the haemocytometer counting chamber and allowed to settle after being thoroughly mixed with a different pipette's dilution fluid. The total number of erythrocytes per microliter (L) was determined. The automated hematology analyzer technique illustrated by Asangha *et al.*(2017) was used to do the rest of the haematological measurements, like the counts of white blood cells (WBCs), monocytes (MON), neutrophils (NEU), lymphocytes (LYM), basophils (BAS) and eosinophils (EOS). Before the infection, during the infection, and after the completion of treatment, the haematological data were gathered.

Statistical analyses

ANOVA was employed to analyse the data, and Duncan's New Multiple Range Test was used to separate the means that were significant at the 5% level (DMRT). To calculate the extracts' lethal dose (LD₅₀), probit analysis was utilized.

3. RESULT

Table 1 lists the findings for the phytochemical components of *C. papaya* leaf ethanolic extract. Eight (8) active compounds were found in the extract, including carbohydrates, saponins, proteins, anthraquinones, phenols, flavonoids, terpenoids/steroids, and alkaloids.

Table 1: Phytochemical constituents in *Carica papaya* leaf ethanolic extract

Extract	Constituent	Test	Result
<i>Carica papaya</i>	Flavonoids	Alkaline	+
	Phenols	Ferric chloride	+
	Proteins	Xanthoproteic	+
	Alkaloids	Wagner's	+
	Anthraquinones	Borntrager's	+
	Saponins	Frothing/Foami	+
	Tannins	Lead subacetate	-
	Terpenoids/Steroids	Libermann-Burchard's	+
	Diterpenoids	Copper Acetate's	-
	Cardiac glycosides	Keller-Killiani's	-
	Carbohydrates	Molisch's	+

KEY: + = PRESENT

= ABSENT

The outcome of the extracts' acute toxicity tests showed that there was absence of mortality in the dose range from 100 to 400 mg/kg in either the first 24 or the next 72 hours. This indicates that the doses used were appropriate. There were no overtly toxic physical or behavioral abnormalities, like a decreased motor activity, body or limb tone,

writhing, breathing issues, or death. The results show that the extract's LD₅₀ exceeds 1000 mg/kg.

The effects of *C. papaya* ethanolic extracts on the haematological profile of *P. berghei*-infected mice are illustrated in Table 2. The results revealed a difference in the effects of various extract concentrations on the blood parameters of infected mice that was statistically significant (P 0.05). (except for basophils). During the periods of infection, the extracts significantly lower PCV values by a range of 50.5 to 43.7%. The WBC counts rise from 9.7x10³ to 10.6 x10³/L during the infection period. Following treatment, these values decreased from 10.9x 10³ to 11.6x10³/L, similar to how RBC counts rise during an infection and following extract therapy. The outcome also demonstrated that the extracts had a substantial impact on neutrophils and lymphocytes. During the infection phase, the neutrophils were reported to decline from 49.00 to 53.00% with a drop in concentration. However, following therapy, neutrophil levels drop from 46.2 to 45.3% with a reduction in concentration. A similar pattern was observed in the lymphocyte count. Furthermore, the extracts revealed that Eosinophil and Basophil numbers rose during the infection phase.

Table 2: Effect of *C. papaya* extracts on blood parameters in mice infected with *P. berghei*

Sample (mg/kg)	PCV (%)	WBCx10 ³	RBCx10 ⁶	MON	NEU	LYM	EOS	BAS
Saline _{DI}	47.5±2.6 ^a	11.3±0.6 ^a	11.5±0.6 ^a	1.7±0.8 ^a	49.0±1.8 ^a	45.0±1.4 ^a	3.2±1.2 ^a	1.2±0.4 ^a
Saline _{DI}	44.7±3.1 ^a	10.2±0.6 ^a	12.6±2.7 ^a	1.5±0.6 ^a	44.8±19.3 ^b	39.5±4.6 ^b	2.7±1.0 ^a	2.3±1.4 ^a
Saline _{AT}	40.5±3.5 ^{ab}	11.0±0.3 ^a	12.1±0.6 ^a	1.8±0.6 ^a	52.8±4.9 ^a	40.2±4.9 ^b	2.0±1.0 ^a	3.2±0.8 ^a
100 _{DI}	49.5±2.5 ^a	11.3±0.5 ^a	11.9±0.5 ^a	2.2±1.3 ^a	50.8±6.8 ^a	42.3±7.2 ^b	2.5±0.6 ^a	2.2±0.4 ^a
100 _{DI}	47.2±2.4 ^b	10.4±0.8 ^b	11.7±0.5 ^a	1.6±0.8 ^a	50.8±4.9 ^a	42.7±4.9 ^b	2.7±1.6 ^a	2.3±1.0 ^a
100 _{AT}	46.2 ± 1.9 ^a	11.4±0.8 ^a	11.2±0.4 ^b	1.8±0.8 ^b	46.2±1.5 ^b	46.7±2.3 ^a	2.3±1.0 ^a	3.0±1.1 ^a
200 _{DI}	46.8±1.9 ^a	10.9±0.4 ^a	11.1±0.3 ^b	1.3±0.5 ^b	51.0±5.4 ^a	42.8±5.6 ^b	3.2±0.8 ^a	1.5±1.2 ^a
200 _{DI}	43.8±2.5 ^b	9.7±0.2 ^b	11.8±0.6 ^a	2.0±0.8 ^a	48.5±2.3 ^b	44.2±2.3 ^a	2.3±0.5 ^b	3.0±0.9 ^a
200 _{AT}	43.7±2.9 ^b	10.9±0.4 ^a	11.9±0.4 ^a	1.2±0.4 ^a	48.2±2.8 ^b	44.8±1.9 ^a	2.5±0.5 ^b	3.3±0.8 ^a
400 _{DI}	50.5±1.6 ^a	11.4±0.2 ^a	12.0±0.5 ^a	2.8±1.2 ^a	53.0±6.4 ^a	40.7±5.3 ^c	1.7±0.8 ^a	1.8±0.8 ^a
400 _{DI}	48.0±1.0 ^b	10.6±0.5 ^b	12.0±0.2 ^a	1.5±0.5 ^b	48.7±1.5 ^b	44.2±1.9 ^b	2.7±1.0 ^b	2.7±0.8 ^a
400 _{AT}	46.0±1.7 ^c	11.6±0.3 ^a	10.7±4.1 ^b	1.7±0.8 ^b	45.3±1.8 ^b	46.8±1.6 ^a	3.2±1.5 ^a	3.0±1.0 ^a
Ch _{DI}	47.5±1.8 ^a	10.5±0.2 ^a	11.4±0.7 ^b	2.8±1.2 ^a	47.7±2.1 ^a	46.5±2.9 ^b	2.8±1.2 ^b	1.7±0.8 ^a
Ch _{DI}	44.2±1.2 ^b	10.1±0.5 ^b	11.8±0.7 ^b	1.5± 0.5 ^b	44.2±1.5 ^b	49.1±1.4 ^a	2.7±0.8 ^b	2.7±1.0 ^a
Ch _{AT}	47.2±1.7 ^a	10.9±0.8 ^a	12.0±0.5 ^a	1.7±0.8 ^b	43.8±1.9 ^b	49.7±1.2 ^a	3.2±0.8 ^a	2.0± 1.1 ^a

Table 3 displays the findings of how *C. papaya* extracts affected *P. berghei* parasitemia. With an increase in concentration, the number of infected RBCs significantly decreased, falling from 2.1x10⁶/L to as low as 0.9x10⁶ /L. Additionally, there is a considerable increase in the percentage parasitemia cure with increasing concentration; 400 mg/kg exhibited high curative effect from 36.1-71.7% with increase in concentration.

Table 3: Impact of *C. papaya* extracts in lowering parasitemias in mice infected with *P. berghei*

Sample (mg/kg)	Total RBC	Infected RBC	Average Parasitemia	% Curative
Saline _{DI}	544.4	2.1	21.9	-
Saline _{AT}	534.4	1.4	20.3	-
100 _{DI}	470.8	1.9	20.1	8.2
100 _{AT}	431.7	1.1	14.0	36.1
200 _{DI}	472.6	1.8	17.7	19.2
200 _{AT}	433.9	1.25	9.5	56.6
400 _{DI}	438.6	1.85	19.9	9.1
400 _{AT}	563.4	0.9	6.2	71.7
Ch _{DI}	472.5	1.9	17.3	5.8
Ch _{AT}	603.1	0.7	3.5	84.0

4. DISCUSSION

The leaves of *C. papaya* contained eight active compounds that most likely played a big part in reducing *P. berghei* parasitemia. There is evidence that alkaloids, saponins,

tannins, flavonoids, and steroids are biological activity (Nethathe and Ndip, 2011). These phytochemicals may be responsible for the extracts' antiplasmodial efficacy, as this study found (Abdulelah and Zainal-Abidin, 2007). The quinine, which is an antimalarial, is among the alkaloids reported by Baskaran *et al.* (2012) to be of high antiplasmodial efficacy. Earlier studies (Kayano *et al.*, 2011) have linked the presence of flavonoids, tannins, and triterpenes to the antimalarial activities of plants. The observed antimalarial activity of these chemicals may be the result of their individual or combined action. The non-toxic effects of the *C. papaya* extracts according to this study agrees to the outcome of Jayasinghe *et al.* (2008) who reported non-toxicity of a plant extract as the primary concern of indigenous therapeutic medicines used to treat malaria fever that meet the CDER's (1996) criterion for lack of acute toxicity. To assess the efficiency of the extracts in avoiding haemolysis brought on by an increasing parasitemia level, PCV was assessed. The current investigation found that treatment with *C. papaya* extracts decreased PCV readings. This outcome is in agreement with that of Bantie *et al.* (2014), Nardos and Makonnen (2017) who individually reported malaria parasites caused the PCV to decline 48 hours after infection, on average. When mice are infected with *P. berghei*, their erythrocytes are destroyed either by the parasite's growth or by the activity of reticuloendothelial cells in the spleen, which are stimulated to create an abundance of phagocytes when there are a lot of aberrant erythrocytes present (Chinchilla *et al.*, 1998). These mechanisms are responsible to treat mice and people with malaria-induced anemia (Lamikanra *et al.*, 2007).

The leucocytes (WBCs) counts were reported to increase in the treated groups with increase in dose. This complies with the report of Ihedioha *et al.* (2012) who observed that the blood profile of albino mice had an increased amount of distinct WBCs over the normal range. The rise in the variety of WBCs can likely be ascribed to the extracts' immunostimulatory effects on blood that has been parasitized by *P. berghei*. This result is consistent with that of Silitonga (2017), who found that rats given BCG plus *Plectranthus amboinicus* leaf extract had higher leucocyte counts in their hematological profiles. According to the current study, *C. papaya* extracts alter the immune system by raising the number of lymphocytes, monocytes, and neutrophils in the blood of infected mice to fight *P. berghei* parasitemia.

Ethanolic extracts of *C. papaya* leaves greatly reduced parasitemia as compared to the controls, demonstrating their efficacy in the treatment of malaria. Similar to this, Francois *et al.* (1996) discovered that *Neutolaena lobata* leaf extracts had a greater than 50% cure. Furthermore, earlier studies have suggested that *C. papaya* may have antimalarial properties both *in vitro* and *in vivo*. Ali *et al.* (2002) also reported on the inhibitory effectiveness of *Salvadora persica* methanolic and chloroform extracts against *P. berghei* proliferation.

5. CONCLUSION

The ethanolic extracts of *C. papaya* leaves have been found to have antiplasmodial potentials. They cause immune-stimulating reactions by greatly increasing the amounts of various WBCs, like neutrophils, eosinophils, lymphocytes, basophils and monocytes. In comparison to the control groups, the treated groups have more lymphocytes, neutrophils, and monocytes. With *C. papaya* having the biggest impact, high quantities of the extracts considerably decreased the generation of *P. berghei* parasitemia. The extract from *C. papaya* may have antiplasmodial properties because of its active

phytochemicals. Because it shows no host toxicity, we advised 400 mg/kg of *C. papaya* extract against malarial infections brought on by *Plasmodium spp.*

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Sakina Muhammad Babangida, Salamatu Ibrahim Zakari, Nura Salisu– *Antiplasmodial Activity of Carica Papaya L. Leaf Ethanolic Extracts in Swiss Albino Mice Infected with Plasmodium berghei*

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