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Pharmacological basis for the use of the antivenene water soluble extract of *Diodia scandens* as a laxative, oxytocic agent and a possible aphrodisiac in traditional medicine practice in eastern Nigeria.

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Author information

Abstract

The effects of the antivenene fraction of an ethanol extract of *Diodia scandens* on some mammalian smooth muscles were investigated. On the guinea-pig ileum, the extract was shown to be a partial agonist acting via muscarinic receptors. Acetylcholine (ACh) was 2.5 x 10⁽⁵⁾ times more potent. On the pregnant guinea-pig uterus, the extract induced concentration-dependent increases in the force of contraction and tonus. Oxytocin and ergometrine were respectively 10⁽⁶⁾ and 10⁽³⁾ times more potent. The extract, at subliminal concentrations, potentiated ACh and adrenaline-induced contractions in the guinea-pig vas deferens. It also induced dose-related vasodilatation in the rat hindquarters and depressed the blood pressure in the anaesthetized cat. It was concluded that these pharmacological actions offer some scientific explanation for the use of *Diodia scandens* in traditional medicine as a laxative and as an oxytocic agent. It is suggested that the extract could enhance erection and ejaculatory processes in the male, thus accounting for its regular use by some elderly males.

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Plants with a reputation against snakebite.

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Abstract

Many plants are recommended in traditional medicine as active against various effects of snakebite. Few attempts have been made to investigate the veracity of these assertions in controlled

experiments. Several workers, mainly Oriental, have investigated the reputation of such plants by performing *in vitro* and *in vivo* experiments in order to demonstrate whether there was any protective effect, using drugs or mixtures of drugs prepared using traditional formulae. In some studies, these extracts were administered to mice before or after treatment with different elapid or crotalid venoms. Other papers deal with selected compounds isolated from *Schumannia phyton magnificum*, *Eclipta prostrata* or *Aristolochia shimadai*, and their capacity to inhibit phospholipase A2 or other enzymes (e.g. ATPase) or for physiological and biochemical properties (such as effects on uterine tone or the protection of mitochondrial membranes). Japanese workers have described the antihemorrhagic effect of persimmon tannin from *Diospyros kaki*. Atropine has been attributed a life-prolonging effect after black mamba venom treatment. Prolonged survival was also observed after pretreatment with extracts of *Diodia scandens* and *Andrographis paniculata*. Some authors have found little or no beneficial effects. The papers collected so far show that there are no systematic investigations in this field.

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