



## Ethanol Extracts of *Terminalia ivorensis* (Chev A.) Stem Bark Attenuates the Positive, Negative and Cognitive Symptoms of Psychosis in Experimental Animal Models

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### Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author BBA wrote the protocol, managed the experimental process, performed the statistical analysis of the study, managed the literature searches, wrote the first draft of the manuscript and final version of the manuscript. Author AOA designed the study, managed the experimental process and managed the analyses of the study, author OAA identified the species and extraction of the plant. Author EOI managed the analyses of the study and final version of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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### ABSTRACT

**Aims:** This study was undertaken to evaluate the antipsychotic property of the ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* (EETI) stem bark in mice

**Study Design:** The study used experimental animal models predictive of human psychosis in mice

**Place and Duration of Study:** Neuropharmacology Laboratory, Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria,

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between June 2013 and July 2014.

**Methodology:** Antipsychotic activity of EETI [125-1000 mg/kg, per os (p.o.)] was assessed based on the inhibition of stereotyped behavior induced by apomorphine (1 mg/kg, i.p.) or ketamine (10 mg/kg, i.p.) and ketamine-induced hyperactivity for positive symptoms in mice. Ketamine-enhanced immobility in forced swim test (FST) and reversal treatment of ketamine-induced cognitive dysfunction for negative and cognitive symptoms in mice respectively, and drug-induced ptosis and catalepsy in mice were also employed to further evaluate the antipsychotic property of EETI.

**Results:** EETI (125-1000 mg/kg, p.o.) significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) inhibited apomorphine or ketamine-induced stereotypy, and ketamine-induced hyperactivity. Moreover, EETI significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) attenuated the enhanced immobility and ameliorated the cognitive dysfunction by ketamine (30 and 20 mg/kg, i.p.), respectively in mice. EETI also dose dependently depleted the monoamine as indexed by the ptosis paradigm, however did not demonstrate cataleptic behavior as indexed on the catalepsy scale which suggest lack of extrapyramidal symptoms.

**Conclusion:** This study provides valuable evidence which suggests that *T. ivorensis* contain biologically active constituents that possess antipsychotic activity. Thus, justifying its ethnomedicinal claims in the management of psychotic disorders.

**Keywords:** Psychosis; schizophrenia; antipsychotics; *Terminalia ivorensis*.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Psychosis (e.g. Schizophrenia) is a heterogeneous chronic neurological disease characterized by severe behavioral perturbations with distorted or non-existent sense of reality [1] that affects an average of approximately 1% of the World's population [2]. It commonly begins in late adolescence years [3] and often associated with polygenetic, environmental and neurodevelopmental vulnerability factors [4]. It is represented by a group of complex symptoms characterized by positive (hallucinations, delusions, disorganized speech and thought), negative (flat expressions, anhedonia), and cognitive (deficits in learning, working memory) symptoms [5].

The dopamine dysregulation with hyperfunction of the mesolimbic dopamine system was the original tenet theory underlying the basis of schizophrenia [6] and the first animal models were developed on the basis of pharmacological manipulation in an attempt to mimic this feature [7], which respond to drugs that affect majorly the dopaminergic system, but does not replicate the negative or cognitive symptoms seen in schizophrenia [8]. In contrast, a widely used animal model of schizophrenia involves the acute or repeated administration of sub-anaesthetic doses of ketamine [9]. In rodents, *N*-methyl-D-aspartic acid receptor (NMDAR) blockade induces hyperactivity, stereotypy behavior, deficits in prepulse inhibition [10,11], social interaction and memory [12], which models the positive, negative and cognitive symptoms of schizophrenia, respectively [13].

Drugs prescribed for the treatment of psychosis can be categorized as typical and atypical. The typical class of antipsychotics is effective against the positive symptoms, and also possesses extrapyramidal side effects. Whereas the atypical class are effective in ameliorating the positive, negative as well as the cognitive symptoms and possess lesser extrapyramidal side effects however, accentuates greater risk of metabolic disorders including diabetes, agranulocytosis etc. Long term use of these drugs may even cause oxidative imbalance and thereby further enhance the progression of the disease [14,15]. In this contest, we need drugs with lesser side effects. Hence, natural products become the drug of choice and investigations have been extended for the search of novel and better tolerated molecules from plant sources. Moreover, Natural products structurally have characteristic high chemical diversity, biochemical specificity and other medicinal properties that make them favourable as lead structures for the remedies of a number of disorders including neuropharmacological activity [16].

*Terminalia ivorensis* is an indigenous plant from the family Combretaceae [17]. It is commonly called idigbo in Nigeria and some African countries [18]. Many bioactive studies carried out on *T. ivorensis* stem bark revealed that the plant showed great promise as antioxidant [19,20], antibacterial activity [21], anti-inflammatory and anti-arthritis [22] activities. In ethno-medicine, the pulverized leaves of the plant are used as poultice to treat burns and bruises [18]. The decoction of the bark plant is also used in Ivorian traditional medicine for sores and other

numerous diseases including cough, diarrhea, hypertension, diabetes and tooth decay [18]. The stem bark of *T. ivorensis* is reported to be used as tranquilizers in the treatment of insomnia, epilepsy, and psychotic disorders in south Western Nigeria [23].

*T. ivorensis* stem barks are known to be rich in several phytochemicals including butilinic acid, oleanolic acid, terminolic acid, ellagic acid, glycyrrhetic acid, saponins (triterpenoid ivorenosides A, B, and C), quercetin, steroids, [22], polyphenols, flavonoids, saponins, steroids [19], punicalagin and punicalin [20], some of which have demonstrated different biological effects among such as sedative, antioxidant, anti-neuroinflammatory, and neuroprotective properties [24,25]. Recently, Adeoluwa et al. [26] reported the sedating and analgesic effect of the stem bark in mice. In the same contest, Ben-Azu et al. [27] also demonstrated the possible neuroprotective compensatory mechanism of action of stem bark extracts of *T. ivorensis* in the reversal treatment of ketamine-induced schizophrenia-like behavior and oxidative damage in mice.

To further investigate the medicinal claims and neuropharmacological effect of *T. ivorensis*, the present study hypothesized that administration of ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark might ameliorate some of the behavioral symptoms of schizophrenia. Hence, this study was undertaken to evaluate the effect of the ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark (EETI) on animal models predictive of human psychosis.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Plant Materials

The stem bark samples of *T. ivorensis* were collected in March, 2014 at the Olupkele Forest Reserve, Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. Taxonomical identification and authentication of the plant were done by Mr. O. S. Shasanya, at the herbarium section of the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN), Ibadan, Nigeria. A voucher specimen with identification number, FHI 109800, was deposited and compared with the reference specimen.

### 2.2 Extraction of Plant

The stem bark was air-dried for 6 to 7 weeks, and pulverized with an electric crusher. Pulverized stem bark (200 g) was macerated in

70% ethanol (2 L) for 48 h after which it was filtered on absorbent cotton and on Whatmann 3 mm paper under sterile conditions. The filtrate was concentrated using Rotary evaporator (BUCHI® Rotavapor Model R-215, Buchi Labortechnik AG, Flawil, Switzerland) at 40°C to give a semisolid residue. The dark brown paste obtained was dried to a constant weight (7.6 g) in a desiccator before storage in a sterilized glass vial for use.

### 2.3 Experimental Animals

Adult male Swiss albino mice weighing 20-25 g used for this study were obtained from the Central Animal House, College of Medicine, university of Ibadan. The animals were housed five per plastic cage (42 x 30 x 27 cm) in a controlled environment at room temperature (25±1°C) with a 12:12 h light/dark cycle. They were fed with standard rodent pellet food and water *ad libitum* throughout the experimental period. They were acclimatized for at least 1 week prior to commencement of the experiments. The experiments were performed after approval of the protocol by the Ethics Committee of the University of Ibadan according to the National institutes of Health Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Publication No. 85-23, revised 1985). Also, efforts were made to minimize the suffering of the animals.

### 2.4 Drugs

Apomorphine (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, USA), ketamine hydrochloride (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, USA), haloperidol (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, USA) and risperidone (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis, USA). Haloperidol was used as the positive control for apomorphine-induced schizophrenia while risperidone was used as the positive control antipsychotic for ketamine models, because ketamine-induced model of schizophrenia has been demonstrated to be more responsive to atypical antipsychotic [12]. Different doses of ketamine were used in this study: 10 mg/kg, i.p. for hyperactivity (positive symptom) [11], 20 mg/kg, i.p. for cognitive deficit (cognitive symptom) [5], and 30 mg/kg, i.p. for enhanced-immobility (negative symptom) [30]; as ketamine have been found to induced different schizophrenia-like behavioral phenotypes.

### 2.5 Acute Toxicity Study

The method described by Lorke [28] was used to determine the LD<sub>50</sub>, which is the index of acute

toxicity. Albino mice (20–25 g) of either sex were used. This method involved an initial dose finding procedure, in which the animals were divided into three groups of three animals. Doses of 10, 100 and 1000 mg/kg were administered p.o., one dose for each group. The treated animals were monitored for 24 h mortality and general behavior. From the results of the above step, four different doses of the extract (2000, 3000, 4000 and 5000 mg/kg) were chosen and administered per oral (p.o.), respectively to four groups of one mouse per group. The treated animals were monitored for 24 h. The LD<sub>50</sub> was calculated as the geometric mean of the lowest dose showing death and the highest dose showing no death.

## **2.6 Experimental Paradigms**

### **2.6.1 Apomorphine-induced stereotypy**

The anti-psychotic effect of EETI was assessed using the Apomorphine-induced stereotyped behavioral paradigm in mice predictive of human psychosis as previously described by Bourin et. al. [29]. The mice were randomly divided into six treatment groups (n = 5/group). Group 1 received vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.), group 2-5 were pretreated with EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.), while group 6 was pretreated with haloperidol (HLP) (1 mg/kg, p.o.) as positive control. Sixty minutes thereafter, each animal in group 1-6 received i.p. injection of apomorphine (APO) (1 mg/kg) and mouse were placed immediately in a transparent observation chamber (20 cm × 20 cm × 23 cm). Thereafter, stereotype behaviors were observed for 2 minutes at 10, 15, 30, 45 and 60 minutes after APO injection. Stereotype behaviors were scored as: 0 = absence of stereotype behavior; 1 = presence of stereotype movements of the head; 2 = intermittent sniffing; 3 = chewing; 4 = intense licking. After each mice session, the observation chamber was cleaned with 70% ethanol to remove residual odour.

### **2.6.2 Ketamine-induced stereotypy**

Ketamine-induced stereotypy was also employed to screen for the antipsychotic effect of EETI according to the method described by Yamamoto et. al.[11]. The mice were randomly divided into six treatment groups (n = 5/group). Group 1 received vehicle [10 mL/kg, (p.o.)], while group 2-5 were pretreated with EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.), while group 6 was pretreated with risperidone (RIS) (0.5 mg/kg, p.o.) as positive control. Sixty minutes thereafter, each

animal in group 1-6 received i.p. injection of sub-anaesthetic dose of ketamine (KET) (10 mg/kg), and mouse was placed immediately in a transparent observation chamber (20 cm × 20 cm × 23 cm) and stereotypy was observed for 2 minutes at 10, 15, 20, 30 and 45 minutes respectively. Stereotyped behaviors were scored as described above.

### **2.6.3 Ketamine-induced hyperlocomotion (Open field test)**

Ketamine-induced hyperlocomotion was also used to screen for the antipsychotic effect of extract as previous described by Yamamoto et. al.[11] with brief modification, the open field apparatus consisted of a wooden box measuring 35 x 30 x 23 cm with visible lines drawn to divide the floor into 36 (20 cm × 20 cm) squares with a frontal glass wall and placed in a sound free room. The mice were randomly divided into six treatment groups (n = 5/group) and treated as described in the above ketamine model of stereotypy. Thereafter, the animals were placed in the rear left square and left to explore it. The duration of immobility(s) and number of line crossed were recorded for 5 minutes using a stopwatch. After each mice session, the observation chamber was cleaned with 70% ethanol to remove residual odor.

### **2.6.4 Ketamine-enhanced immobility in forced swim test**

The antipsychotic effect of EETI was also screened using ketamine-enhanced immobility in forced swim test paradigm, that is predictive of the negative symptoms of schizophrenia, which is reflected as a state of despair in mice as described by Chindo et. al.[30]. The reduction in the immobility time serves as a specific and selective index of antidepressant activity that can be used to alleviate the negative symptoms of schizophrenia. The mice were randomly divided into seven (7) treatment groups (n = 5/group). Group 1 was pretreated with vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) once daily for 5 days while group 2-6 were pretreated with a sub-anaesthetic dose of KET (30 mg/kg, i.p.) once daily for 5 days. After which, each mice were placed in a standardized transparent glass cylinder (height 46 cm, diameter 20 cm) containing water at 25 °C to a depth of 30 cm and was forced to swim for 5 min (pretest session) 1 h after the last treatment (5<sup>th</sup> day) with ketamine for habituation. Twenty four hours (24 h) after the last treatment (6<sup>th</sup> day) with vehicle and KET respectively, group 2 received

vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) as a negative control, group 3-6 were treated with EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.), while group 7 was treated with RIS (0.5 mg/kg, p.o.) as positive control. Sixty minutes later, each animal was placed in the same transparent glass cylinder containing water at 25 °C to a depth of 30 cm and forced to for 6 minutes and the immobility time was recorded for a period of 5 minutes with a stopwatch (test session) after discarding activity in the first 1 minute, during which the animal tries to escape [31]. After each session, the mice was removed immediately from the cylinder, dried with a towel and kept in an open space until completely dried before returning the mice to their home cages.

### **2.6.5 Ketamine-induced cognitive dysfunction**

The effect of the extract on spontaneous alternation performance was assessed using a Y-maze test (YMT), which allows the evaluation of cognitive searching behavior, as an index for the cognitive dysfunction of schizophrenia as described by Monte et. al.[5]. In this protocol, mice was divided into 6 groups (n=5/group). Group 1 was treated with vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) once daily, while group 2-6 were treated with sub-anaesthetic dose of ketamine (20 mg/kg) once daily i.p. for 14 days. From the 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> day of treatment onwards, group 2 was additionally treated with vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) once daily as negative control, while group 3-5 was treated additionally with extract (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.) once daily, and group 6 also received in addition RIS (0.5 mg/kg, p.o.) once daily as a positive control, with a 30 min interval between treatments. Twenty four hours (24 h) after the last treatment (15<sup>th</sup> day), each mouse was gently placed individually in the Y-maze apparatus, which consisted of three identical arms (33 × 11 × 12 cm each) in which the arms are symmetrically separated at 120° [32]. Specifically, each mouse was placed at the end of arm A, and allowed to explore all the three arms (labeled A, B, C) freely for 5 minutes, taking the following parameters: the number of arm visits and sequence (alternation) of arm visits visually. After each mice session, the observation chamber was cleaned with 70% ethanol to remove residual odor.

### **2.6.6 Ptois induction**

Drug-induced ptois in psychotic paradigm is used as a specific index to show the level of monoamine depletion or hypofunction as

described by Bourin et. al. [33]. Mice were divided into six groups (n=5/group). The group 1 was treated with vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) while group 2-5 were treated with EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.), and the sixth group was treated with HLP (1 mg/kg, p.o.). All animals were kept in individual transparent glass ptois observation chambers (20 cm above the bench top) immediately after treatment to allow for stable assessment of ptois. The degree of ptois of each animal was evaluated and recorded at 60, 90 and 120 minutes 60 minutes after treatment. The degree of ptois was rated according to the following rating scale: 0, eyes open; 1, eyes one-quarter closed; 2, eyes half closed; 3, eyes three-quarter closed; and 4, completely closed. The results obtained were compared with control groups treated with vehicle.

### **2.6.7 Catalepsy test**

In animals, a state of rigidity and immobility also known as catalepsy is a state in which the subject/experimental animal remain immobile in an unusual position. It is used as an index of extrapyramidal symptoms seen clinically from antipsychotic drugs [34]. The cataleptic effect of the EETI was investigated according to the modified version previously described by Costall and Naylor [35]. The animals was divided into six treatment groups (n = 5/group). The group 1 was treated with vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) while group 2-5 were treated with EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.), and the sixth group was treated with HLP (1 mg/kg, p.o.) 60 minutes before testing for catalepsy. The test was done by gently placing the fore limbs of each animal on a horizontal plane wood surface (H = 6 cm; W = 4 cm; L = 16 cm) and the duration of akinesia (period of time the animal remained in one position, before initiating any active movement) in seconds was recorded. An animal is considered cataleptic if it remains on the block for 60 sec [13].

## **2.3 Statistical Analysis**

The Data were expressed as Mean ± standard error of mean (S.E.M). The data were analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by *post hoc* test (Newman-Keul) for multiple comparisons where appropriate using GraphPad InStat® Biostatistics software (GraphPad Software, version 4.0). A level of *P* < 0.05 was considered as statistically significant for all tests.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Acute Toxicity Test

The LD<sub>50</sub> of the ethanol extract of *Terminalia ivorensis* stem bark was found to be 2236.06 mg/kg, p.o. body weight.

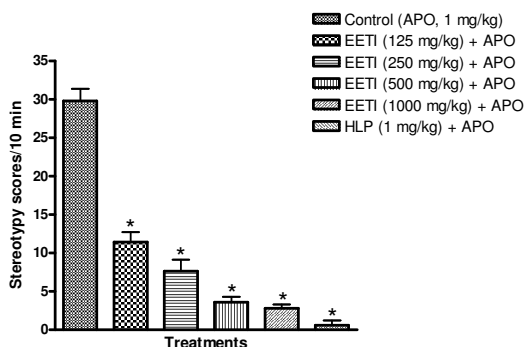
#### 3.2 Effect of EETI on Apomorphine- and Ketamine-induced Stereotypy, and Ketamine-Induced Hyperlocomotion

Apomorphine (1 mg/kg, i.p.) and ketamine (10 mg/kg, i.p.) significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) induced marked stereotyped behaviors characterized by head movements, intermittent sniffing, chewing and intense licking in mice. In the same contest, ketamine (10 mg/kg, i.p.) also significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) induced-hyperlocomotion as indexed by an increase in the number of line crossings and decrease in duration of immobility(s) compared to the vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) treated group, which are reflected in schizophrenic patient as a form of positive symptoms. Pretreatment with EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.) significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) prevented apomorphine-induced stereotyped (Fig. 1) or ketamine-induced stereotyped behaviors (Fig. 2), and ketamine-induced hyperlocomotion as indexed by a decrease in number of line crossings and duration of immobility(s) (Table 1) in a dose dependent manner compared to control. Similarly, effects were observed in animals treated with HLP (1 mg/kg, p.o.) or risperidone (0.5 mg/kg, p.o.), as they significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) prevented the manifestations of stereotyped behaviors induced by APO (1 mg/kg, i.p.) or ketamine (10 mg/kg, i.p.), and hyperlocomotion induced by ketamine (10 mg/kg, i.p.) in all paradigms, respectively.

#### 3.3 Effect of EETI on Ketamine-enhanced Immobility in Forced Swim Test in Mice

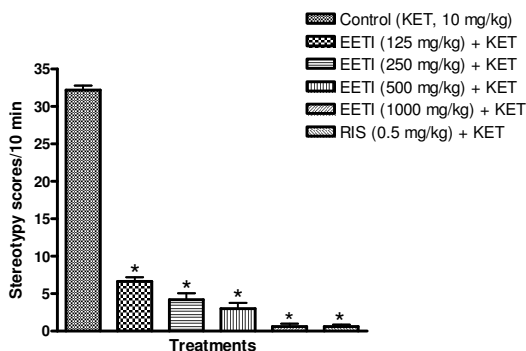
Effect of EETI on ketamine-enhanced immobility in forced swim test, as measured by the duration of immobility time in forced swim test in mice is shown in Fig. 3. Ketamine (30 mg/kg, i.p.) significantly enhanced the immobility ( $P < 0.05$ ) compared to the group treated with vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) in the forced swim test in mice. EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.) significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) decreased immobility time in a dose-dependent manner compared to the group treated with ketamine (30 mg/kg, i.p.)

alone (negative control). Similar effect was also observed in the group treated with RIS (0.5 mg/kg, p.o.), as it significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) decreased immobility time compared to the ketamine treated group (Fig. 3).



**Fig. 1. Effects of EETI on apomorphine-induced stereotyped behavior**

Value represents the mean±S.E.M of 5 animals / group. One way ANOVA revealed that there is significant [ $F(5, 24) = 92.23, P < 0.0001$ ] differences between various treatment groups. \* Denotes  $P < 0.05$  as compared with APO group, APO = Apomorphine, HLP = Haloperidol, EETI = Ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark



**Fig. 2. Effects EETI on ketamine-induced stereotyped behavior**

Value represents the mean±S.E.M of 5 animals / group. One way ANOVA revealed that there is significant [ $F(5, 24) = 391.0, P < 0.0001$ ] differences between various treatment groups. \* Denotes  $P < 0.05$  as compared with KET-treated group, KET = Ketamine, RIS = Risperidone, EETI = Ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark

#### 3.4 Effect of EETI on Ketamine-induced Cognitive Dysfunction

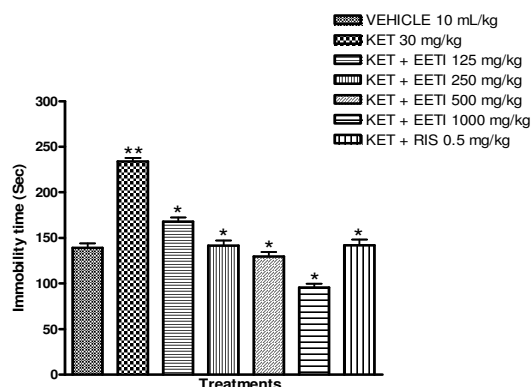
The effect of ethanol extract on reversal treatment of ketamine-induced cognitive dysfunction was assessed by sequence of arm entry and number of arm entries in the Y-maze

**Table 1. Effects of EETI on ketamine-induced hyperlocomotion**

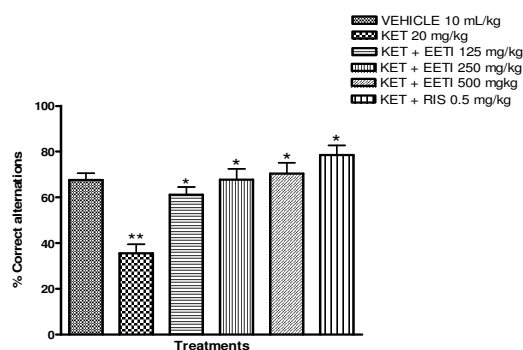
| Treatments | Dose (mg/kg) | Number of line crossings | Duration of immobility |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| VEH        | 10 mL/kg     | 71.80±4.283              | 163.8±7.385            |
| KET        | 10           | 232.8±8.628**            | 60.80±4.017**          |
| EETI       | 125          | 70.80±7.664*             | 198.4 ±4.966*          |
| EETI       | 250          | 59.00±7.635*             | 252.4±14.13*           |
| EETI       | 500          | 32.00±2.720*             | 269.2±7.130*           |
| EETI       | 1000         | 22.80±4.620*             | 283.6±4.622*           |
| RIS        | 0.5          | 17.60±4.707*             | 289.0±7.906*           |

Value represents the mean±S.E.M of 5 animals / group. One way ANOVA revealed that there is significant [F (6, 28) = 147.7, P < 0.0001] and [F (6, 28) = 111.8, P < 0.0001] differences between various treatment groups for number of line crossing(s) and immobility time, respectively. \* Denotes P < 0.05 as compared with ketamine group, KET = Ketamine, RIS = Risperidone, EETI = Ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark, VEH = Vehicle

apparatus. Chronic ketamine (20 mg/kg, i.p.) treatment significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) induced cognitive dysfunction (memory impairment) compared to the group that received vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.) only following 14 days treatment. EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.) significantly reversed in a dose-dependent manner the cognitive dysfunction following treatment from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> day of treatment compared to the ketamine treated group. RIS (0.5 mg/kg, p.o.) compared to the ketamine treated group, significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) reversed the cognitive dysfunction following treatment from the 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> day of treatment (Fig. 4).

**Fig. 3. Effect of EETI on ketamine-enhanced immobility in forced swim test in mice**

Value represents the mean±S.E.M of 5 animals / group. One way ANOVA revealed that there is significant [F (6, 26) = 72.64, P < 0.0001] difference between various treatment groups. \*\* Denotes P < 0.05 as compared to vehicle group. \* Denotes P < 0.05 as compared with ketamine group. KET = Ketamine, RIS = Risperidone, EETI = Ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark

**Fig. 4. Effect of EETI on reversal treatment of ketamine-induced cognitive dysfunction**

Value represents the mean±S.E.M of 5 animals / group. One way ANOVA revealed that there is significant [F (6, 28) = 77.33, P < 0.0001] difference between various treatment groups. \*\* Denotes P < 0.05 as compared to vehicle group. \* Denotes P < 0.05 as compared with ketamine group. KET = Ketamine, RIS = Risperidone, EETI = Ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark

### 3.5 Effect of EETI on Ptoxis Induction

Evaluation of EETI-induced ptoxis at 60<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, and 120<sup>th</sup> minutes post treatment, as evaluated on the ptoxis scale is shown in Table 2. EETI (125, 250 mg/kg, p.o.) showed no significant ( $P > 0.05$ ) induction of ptoxis compared to the vehicle (10 mL/kg, p.o.). However, EETI (500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.), significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) induced ptoxis when compared to the control (vehicle, 10 mL/kg, p.o.). HLP (1 mg/kg, p.o.) was shown to significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) induce ptoxis compared to control (vehicle, 10 mL/kg, p.o.). However, there was a dose-dependent induction of ptoxis with EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.), but significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) induction of ptoxis was only observed with doses of EETI (500, 1000 mg/kg,

**Table 2. Effect of EETI on ptosis induction**

| Treatments | Dose (mg/kg) | 60 min     | 90 min     | 120 min    |
|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| VEH        | 10 mL/kg     | 0.00±0.00  | 0.00±0.00  | 0.20±0.20  |
| EETI       | 125          | 0.60±0.24  | 0.40±0.24  | 0.60±0.24  |
| EETI       | 250          | 0.20±0.20  | 0.40±0.24  | 0.80±0.20  |
| EETI       | 500          | 1.60±0.40* | 2.00±0.00* | 2.00±0.00* |
| EETI       | 1000         | 2.80±0.20* | 3.00±0.00* | 3.00±0.00* |
| HLP        | 1            | 2.20±0.20* | 2.40±0.24* | 3.00±0.00* |

The results are expressed as mean±SEM (n= 5). One way ANOVA revealed that there is significant [F (5, 24) = 22.99 P<0.0001 at 60 min; F (5, 24) = 52.49 P < 0.0001; F (5, 24) = 65.83 P<0.0001] at 60, 90 and 120 min respectively difference between various treatment groups.

HLP = Haloperidol, EETI = Ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark, VEH = Vehicle

p.o.), when compared the control (vehicle 10 mL/kg, p.o.) (Table 2).

### 3.6 Effect of EETI on Cataleptic Behavior

The EETI (125, 250, 500 and 1000 mg/kg, p.o.) showed no significant ( $P > 0.05$ ) prolongation in the duration of akinesia (cataleptic effect, an index of impaired extrapyramidal system), compared with the vehicle treated group (10 mL/kg, p.o.). However, HLP (1 mg/kg, p.o.) significantly ( $P < 0.05$ ) prolonged the duration of akinesia above 60 seconds in comparison with the group treated with vehicle (Table 3).

**Table 3. Effect of EETI on cataleptic behavior**

| Treatments | Dose (mg/kg) | Duration of akinesia / 60 secs |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| VEH        | 10 mL/kg     | 6.40±0.927                     |
| EETI       | 125          | 7.80±1.393                     |
| EETI       | 250          | 10.60±0.678                    |
| EETI       | 500          | 12.00±1.140                    |
| EETI       | 1000         | 23.80±1.497                    |
| HLP        | 1            | 62.00±2.915*                   |

Value represents the mean±S.E.M of 5 animals / group. \* Denotes  $P < 0.05$  compared to vehicle group (ANOVA followed by Newman Keuls post hoc test).

HLP = Haloperidol, EETI = Ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark, VEH = Vehicle

## 4. DISCUSSION

Herein we demonstrated that the acute toxicity test conducted in the study revealed that ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark (EETI) was relatively safe for the animals, with an LD<sub>50</sub> of 2236.06 mg/kg, p.o. body weight, as no sign of toxicity and death was observed at the chosen doses of 125-1000 mg/kg, p.o. for this experiment in mice. In this study, *T. ivorensis* was

found to attenuate psychotic manifestations (positive, negative and cognitive symptoms) in mice.

Animal models used to study schizophrenia include both models of the full syndrome and models of specific signs of symptoms [36]. The behavioral studies using antagonism of stereotypy and hyperlocomotion induced by dopaminergic agonists (apomorphine) [37] and NMDA receptor antagonists (ketamine) [11] have traditionally been used to screen antipsychotic activity of novel antipsychotic agents. Stereotyped behaviors, which present itself as repetitive, ritualistic and functionless motor behavior [38], are one of the most prominent positive symptoms of psychosis [39]. Apomorphine activates post-synaptic dopamine D-2 receptors in the brain directly, and through this mechanism apomorphine accentuates locomotor activity leading to stereotypic behavior, resulting to repetitive and ritualistic functionless behavioral pattern [40,41]. Blockade of apomorphine-induced stereotyped behavior suggests neuroleptic activity [42,43]. The effect of the ethanol extract prepared from the stem bark of *T. ivorensis* (EETI) against apomorphine is therefore suggestive of possible interference with central dopaminergic neurotransmission and neuroleptic effect. This observation is consistent with earlier findings on the inhibition of apomorphine-induced stereotypy by the leaf extract of *Crassocephalum bauchiense* [41] and *Viscum album* [44]. In the same contest, Sonibare et al. [45] reported the inhibition of amphetamine-induced stereotypy by ethanol extract of *Lonchocarpus cyanescens*.

The finding that EETI significantly antagonized the stereotypy and hyperactivity (hyperlocomotion) induced by ketamine in a dose-dependent manner, also suggest that the



plant possess antipsychotic property. Increased motor activity is a validated animal paradigm employed in the evaluation of compounds suspected to have antipsychotic property [46]. Hyperactivity produced by ketamine at sub-anaesthetic doses is closely related to the psychotic agitation seen in patients with psychosis [47]. It is well known that dopaminergic mechanism play a central role in the mediation of stereotypic and locomotion activity, and ketamine may influence dopamine transmission and receptor activation via multiple mechanisms [48]. It is important to stress that biochemical data have shown that ketamine enhance dopamine release [49] and inhibit dopamine uptake [13] in the striatum and cortex respectively. Also, a possible mechanism by which ketamine might produce this adverse behavioral effects, at least partially, have been related to the blockade of NMDA receptors located on inhibitory GABAergic neurons in the limbic and subcortical brain regions [50]. This disinhibitory action has been reported to increase the neuronal activity and excessive dopamine release in the limbic striatal regions [51]. This hypothesis can explain some studies which have revealed a lower density of glutamatergic receptors in brain of schizophrenic patients [52]. The finding that the EETI significantly antagonized in a dose-dependent manner the hyperactivity (hyperlocomotion) and stereotypy-induced by ketamine, further suggest that the antipsychotic property of EETI might be due to its atypical mechanism of action via NMDA receptor thus, leading to the modulation of dopamine activity and hence the ability to show efficacy against positive symptoms. This observation is also consistent with earlier findings on the effect of ketamine on locomotion and stereotyped behavior, and inhibition of ketamine-induced stereotypy and hyperlocomotion by the root extract of *Panax quinquefolium* [13].

Behavioral despair including flattening of affect and avolition are some of the major negative symptoms of schizophrenia, and forced swim test-induced immobility in rodent is an acceptable animal model of depression [53] that reflects a state of 'despair' in mice, and reduction in immobility time serves as a specific and selective index of antidepressant activity [30]. Therefore, the increase in immobility time in FST following repeated administration of a sub-anaesthetic dose of ketamine in the negative control group treated with ketamine alone in this study corroborates with previous studies [13,30]. In this contest, the antipsychotic property of the extract

was further demonstrated by the reduction of ketamine-enhanced immobility in forced swim test. Although, the mechanisms by which negative symptoms are induced in ketamine psychosis are not fully understood, previous studies have reported the involvement of 5-hydroxytryptaminergic (5-HT) system in the negative symptoms of schizophrenia [13,54]. The findings by Chindo et. al. [30] suggests that ketamine-enhanced immobility in the FST might be mediated, at least in part, via 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> receptors blockade, since 5-HT<sub>2A</sub> receptor blockers such as clozapine, risperidone and paroxetine attenuated the ketamine-enhanced immobility time. Therefore, our finding that EETI demonstrated significant reduction of ketamine-enhanced immobility in FST in a dose-dependent manner with a comparable result to that of risperidone, further suggest that the extract may possess antipsychotic capability that may attenuate the negative symptoms of schizophrenia.

Cognitive impairments such as deficits in attention, executive function, working (short-term) memory, and long-term memory, are core symptoms in patients with schizophrenia [55]. Among these, learning and memory impairments are known to be particularly severe, and they are suggested to be major determinants of the amount of disability patients with schizophrenia experience in social and occupational functioning and in independent living [56]. The Y-maze test (YMT) paradigm has been used previously to evaluate the effects of antipsychotic drugs (e.g., risperidone) on learning and memory function in rodents [5]. Our findings also depict the memory impairing properties of ketamine as indexed by decreased percentage correct alternations on the YMT, which was reverted by EETI treatment and also by standard atypical drug, risperidone. Mechanistically, learning is associated with phosphorylation by calcium/calmodulin-dependent protein Kinase II (Ca<sup>2+</sup>/CaMKII). Inhibition of NMDA receptor as a ligand-gated Ca<sup>2+</sup> channel decreases this phosphorylation, which may explain the deficits in cognitive function induced by ketamine due to disruption of long-term potentiation (LTP) [57]. Moreover, ketamine also inhibits acetylcholine; a key player in the initial stages of memory formation [58] by antagonizing nicotinic acetylcholine receptor  $\alpha$ -7nAChR [59]. Therefore, the learning and memory impairment by ketamine via NMDA receptor and reversal by EETI can also correlate its memory improving capability in this disorder.

Adversely, extrapyramidal symptoms (EPSs) are thought to result from decreased dopamine activity in the striatum, a preferential action of a novel agent against dopamine agonist-induced hyperactivity or stereotypy might serve as an indicator of a lower propensity to induced EPSs in patients [60]. This is because preferential blockade of D<sub>2</sub> receptors in the limbic system confers antipsychotic effects with little or no tendency to cause EPSs [43,60]. The EPSs or catalepsy test is a paradigm established in rodents to test the tendency of antipsychotics (e.g., haloperidol) to induce EPSs based on the prolongation of the duration of akinesia or immobility time upon an imposed posture [61]. However, the test for catalepsy demonstrated that the extract is devoid of catalepsy on the animals, as indexed by the duration of akinesia below 60 seconds compared to the vehicle-treated group. Also, the test for drug-induced ptosis, demonstrated that the extract elicited dose-dependent ptosis induction, as indexed by the dropping of the eye-lid of the animals, which is further suggestive of the suppression of the monoaminergic system [62] by EETI.

Taken together, these findings reveals that the ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* stem bark contains biologically active substance(s) that might be acting centrally through the inhibition of dopaminergic pathway or the modulation of other pathway(s) including NMDA receptor of glutamatergic system linked to this dopaminergic transmission. The anti-psychotic potential of this extract need further investigation since drug used in the treatment of various psychosis abolished apomorphine- and ketamine-induced stereotyped behavior, ketamine-induced hyperactivity, ketamine-enhanced-immobility, and ketamine-induced cognitive deficit. It is known that this plant contains various phytochemical antioxidant constituents, many of which are flavonoid-based and have been shown to be ligands for the type A GABA (GABA<sub>A</sub>) receptors where they exert their sedative and tranquilizing activities [63]. Other possible effects of these phytochemicals may include anti-neuroinflammatory, neuroprotective, chemoprevention, anti-oxidation actions [64,65]. Of note, a recent study demonstrated that ethanol extract of *T. ivorensis* treatment restores GSH levels and to a great extent reverses antioxidant defense alterations in the brain of mice treated with ketamine [27], hence may explain some of the beneficial behavioral effect (against the positive, negative and cognitive symptoms) demonstrated herein. Moreover, it is known that most psychotic

patients are in a dangerous state of psychomotor excitement thus, requiring the use of drugs with tranquilizing or sedative properties [42,66].

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable evidence that suggests that *T. ivorensis* contain biologically active constituents that possess antipsychotic activity. Thus, justifying its ethnomedicinal claims in the management of psychotic disorders.

## CONSENT

It is not applicable.

## ETHICAL APPROVAL

The experiments were performed after approval of the protocol by the Ethics Committee of the University of Ibadan according to the National institutes of Health Guide for Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (Publication No. 85-23, revised 1985). Also, efforts were made to minimize the suffering of the animals.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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