



ISSN : 2347 - 2243

*Indo - American Journal of  
Life Sciences and Biotechnology*



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## ***In vitro* Studies on the Effect of *Prosopis cineraria* On the Motility and Acetylcholinesterase of *Cotylophoron cotylophorum***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Resulting from the paramphistome, paramphistomosis Diseases caused by the cotylophoron cotylophorum are common in ruminants kept as pets. Worm control strategies across the globe rely on chemical control of helminths in conjunction with better management. Nevertheless, screening medicinal plants for their anthelmintic activity has been proposed in response to the growing issue of helminth resistance to anthelmintics. In this study, the motility and acetylcholinesterase (AChE) enzyme of Cotylophoron cotylophorum were used to evaluate the anthelmintic effectiveness of Prosopis cineraria bark. Flukes were subjected to ethanol extract of Prosopis cineraria bark (PcEE) at doses of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5% for 2, 4, and 8 hours, respectively. We used an Electronic Micromotility Meter (EMM) to quantify the parasites' motility response after they were treated with drugs. Electronic monitoring of the parasites' motility after medication treatment reveals that the pharmaceuticals had a direct effect on the parasites' motility. After 8 hours of exposure to PcEE, the parasites' motility response was most inhibited at a dose of 5%. Analyzed was AChE. The activity of AChE was markedly reduced by PcEE. Because AChE is involved in neurotransmission, blocking it causes the parasite to lose its "biochemical hold-fast" and become paralyzed, making it easy to expel from the host. When it comes to C. cotylophorum, PcEE is a great anthelmintic. With its potential for safe and environmentally friendly usage, it might replace anthelmintic chemotherapeutic drugs. Additional in vivo research are need to determine the study's practical value, nevertheless.*

*Acetylcholinesterase (AChE), Electronic Micromotility Meter (EMM), Cotylophoron cotylophorum, Prosopis cineraria, are all terms that are useful in this context.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Paramphistomosis is one of the major pathogenic diseases in domestic animals and responsible for heavy economic loss in terms of reduced milk, meat and wool production. [1] *Paramphistomum epiclitum*, *Paramphistomum cervi*, *Gastrothylax crumenifer*, *Gigantocotyle explanatum*, *Cotylophoron cotylophorum* and *Fischoederius elongatus* are the predominant species in domestic ruminants. [2] Among these species, *Cotylophoron cotylophorum* is more prevalent in Tamilnadu. [3] Synthetic anthelmintics are used to combat helminth infection in livestock. However, synthetic drugs are usually associated with many limitations, such as non-availability of desired type, cost, drug resistance, environment pollution and presence of residues in milk, meat, wool and on pasture. Therefore, there is a need for developing cheaper,

less toxic and eco-friendly novel anthelmintic drug. The use of medicinal plants for the prevention and treatment of gastro-intestinal parasitism has its origin in ethnoveterinary medicine. [4] As, application of plant based anthelmintic drugs appears promising, an attempt has been made in the present study to elucidate the anthelmintic potential of bark of *Prosopis cineraria* against the paramphistome *C. cotylophorum*. Anthelmintic efficacy of *P. cineraria* has been assessed earlier using earthworm. [5] As the anatomy, physiology and mode of reproduction of earthworm which belongs to the phylum annelida and terrestrial in habitat entirely differ from endoparasitic helminths, use of earthworm as the animal model to elucidate anthelmintic efficacy of medicinal plants should be avoided.

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Hence, the anthelmintic efficacy of *P. cineraria* was investigated against *C. cotylophorum*, the endoparasite of domestic ruminants. *Prosopis cineraria* belong to the family Fabaceae, commonly called vanni. *P. cineraria* is used as antihyperlipidemic, antioxidative, anthelmintic, antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, anticancer, antipyretic and antidiabetic agent. [6-7] Phytochemical analysis of bark of *P. cineraria* by several investigators revealed the presence of flavonoids, tannins, alkaloids, diketones, phenolic substances, free amino acids, patulitrin, spicigerin, prosogerin, steroids namely campesterol, cholesterol,  $\beta$ -sitosterol, stigmasterol, alcohols namely octacosanol and triacontan-1-ol and alkanes hentriacontane, lipids, sugars and vitamins. [8-9] Tannins are known to produce anthelmintic activities and chemically tannins are polyphenolic compounds. [10]

Motility is an important parameter in assessing the anthelmintic efficacy of drugs. Electronic micromotility meter (EMM) provides quantitative measure of the motor activity of drug-treated parasites and could be used to assess motility of the parasites. [11] The enzyme AChE plays an essential role in neurotransmission. [12] The most common effect of the anthelmintic drugs given for worm infection is paralysis of the parasite musculature either by inhibiting neuromuscular transmission or enzymes involved in energy production. [13-15] AChE provides "biochemical hold-fast" to the parasite by causing local paralysis of the host gut and thus inhibiting the peristaltic movements of the host intestine required for parasite expulsion. [16] The drugs which affect neuromuscular activity and AChE are said to be associated with anthelmintic action. Hence, the present study was undertaken to evaluate the anthelmintic efficacy of bark of *P. cineraria* against *C. cotylophorum* based on its effect on the motility and on the enzyme acetylcholinesterase.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### *In vitro* maintenance of *Cotylophoron cotylophorum*

*Cotylophoron cotylophorum* (Fischoeder) [17] were collected from the rumen of infected sheep, slaughtered at Perambur abattoir, Chennai. Adult live worms were washed thoroughly in physiological saline and maintained in Hedon-Fleig solution (pH-7.0) which is the best medium for the *in vitro* maintenance of *C. cotylophorum*. [3]

### Collection and preparation of plant Extract

Bark of *Prosopis cineraria* were collected and shade dried. The dried bark was powdered and stored in closed bottles at room temperature in the dark until needed. Powdered bark of *P. cineraria* (2 kg) was soaked in ethanol. The extract was then filtered using Whatman No. 1 filter paper and concentrated by distillation using Rotary evaporator, (Evaporator). The concentrated extract was completely dried to remove the last traces of the solvent using Lyodol Freeze Dryer (DELVAC). Different concentrations of ethanol extract of bark of *P. cineraria* (*PcEE*) were prepared using Hedon-Fleig solution. Twenty five millilitre of Hedon-Fleig solution containing various concentrations (1, 3 and 5%) of the extracts were individually distributed to air tight containers. In each container five live flukes were introduced. The activities of the flukes were checked at various time intervals (5 min, 15 min, 30 min, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 12 and 24 h). Control was also maintained simultaneously in Hedon-Fleig solution without *PcEE*. Based on the motility of the flukes, the observations were categorized as very active (++++), active (+++), moderately active (++) , sluggish (+) and dead (-). The worms with no movement were regarded as dead. Based on the motility of the parasites for 24 h exposure to the plant extract, five different sub-lethal concentrations were selected for further *in vitro* studies.

### Quantitative measure of the fluke's motility using Electronic micromotility meter

The motility of the flukes in sub-lethal concentrations of *PcEE* was quantitatively assayed using Electronic micromotility meter (EMM). [11] The percentage of inhibition of motility of control and drug-treated flukes were calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage of inhibition of motility} = \frac{C-T}{C} \times 100$$

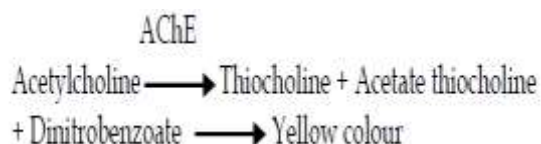
Where, C = Deviation of voltage signal caused by the control fluke

T = Deviation of the voltage signal caused by the fluke treated with plant extract

### Acetylcholinesterase



Acetylcholinesterase (AChE, EC 3.1.1.7) activity was assayed using photometric method. [18] AChE in the sample hydrolyses acetylcholine, which is the substrate and forms thiocholine that will react rapidly and irreversibly with 5, 5 Di thio-bis 2-nitrobenzoic acid (DTNB). The increase in colour intensity was measured spectrophotometrically at 412 nm.



The flukes were incubated in 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5% concentration of *PcEE* for 2, 4 and 8 h. The enzyme samples were prepared by homogenizing 100 mg of control and drug-treated flukes in 1 ml of 0.1M phosphate buffer (pH 8.0). The homogenate was centrifuged at 1000 rpm for about 5 min. To 100 $\mu$ l of the supernatant, 1.3 ml of 0.1M phosphate buffer (pH 8.0) and 0.05 ml of 0.01M DTNB solution was added and transferred to quartz cuvette. The absorbance at 412 nm was set to zero in a UV visible double beam biospectrophotometer. 0.02 ml of 0.075M acetylthiocholine iodide was added to the reaction mixture in the cuvette and mixed well and the absorbance was noted for 5 min at 15 sec interval. The change in absorbance per minute was recorded. AChE activity was calculated using the formula

$$R = 5.74 \times 10^{-4} \times \frac{\Delta A}{\text{Protein content of the sample}}$$

Where, R- Rate of activity;  $\Delta A$ - Increase in absorbance

The enzyme activity was expressed as number of moles of acetylthiocholine iodide hydrolyzed /min/mg protein.

### Estimation of protein

Total protein content was estimated following the method of Lowry. [19] The carbamyl group of protein molecules reacts with copper and potassium of the reagent to give a blue coloured complex. This complex together with tyrosine and phenolic compounds present in the protein reduce the phosphomolybdate of the folin phenol reagent to intensify the colour of the reagents. To 0.1 ml of

the sample, 0.9 ml of 10% TCA (Trichloro acetic acid) was added to precipitate the protein. The sample was then centrifuged at 3000 rpm for 5 min and the supernatant was decanted. To this 5 ml of alkaline copper sulphate was added and mixed well and allowed to stand for 10 min. To this solution 0.5 ml of folin phenol reagent was added and mixed rapidly and allowed to stand for 30 min. 1N NaOH solution was used as blank and 100, 200 and 300 mgml<sup>-1</sup> of bovine serum albumin (BSA) were used as standard. The protein content in the sample was directly observed with the aid of UV-Visible double beam biospectrophotometer (ELICO), which is an autoanalyser. It automatically quantifies the protein content in the sample.

### Statistical analyses

Statistical analyses were performed with the statistical program for the social sciences SPSS version 16.0. The significance of drug induced inhibition in the motility and AChE activity of the parasites was assessed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) for different concentrations of ethanol extract of *Prosopis cineraria* (*PcEE*). The term significant had been used to indicate difference for which  $P < 0.005$ .

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present *in vitro* studies on the effect of *PcEE* against *Cotylophoron cotylophorum* elucidated the anthelmintic potential of *PcEE*. From the visual observation on the motility of the parasite, it was found that *PcEE* was effective against *C. cotylophorum* causing 100% mortality at 5% concentration after 12 h exposure (Table.1). Based on the motility and survival of the parasite for 8h of exposure to *PcEE*, five different sub lethal concentrations (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5%) were selected for further investigation. The inhibition of the motility recorded with the aid of EMM showed that the percentage inhibition of motility is directly proportional to the concentration and period of incubation; Maximum inhibition (93.54%) of the motility was observed at 5% concentration after 8h of exposure (Fig. 1). The inhibitory effects *PcEE*, of on the motility at different concentrations, for each period of incubation are significant ( $P < 0.005$ ). Dose and time dependent inhibition in AChE activity was observed in drug-treated parasites. AChE activity was inhibited to 25.19, 59.09 and 67.12% at 1% concentration after 2h, 4h and 8h exposure to *PcEE* respectively. The maximum level of inhibition was observed at 5% after 8h of exposure of *PcEE* (Fig. 2). Inhibitory effects of the



extracts among the different concentrations of PcEE are significantly different for each period of incubation ( $P < 0.005$ ).

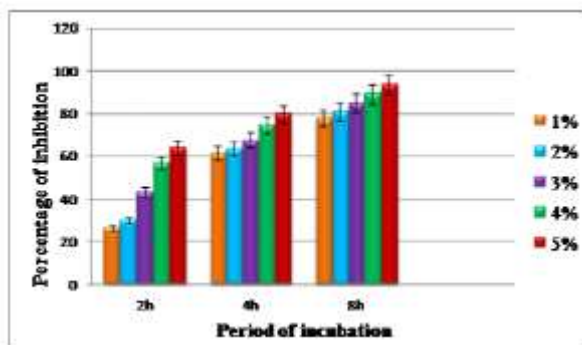
The survival status of any living organism depends on the motility. Several synthetic anthelmintic drugs were assessed for their efficacy based on their inhibitory effect on the motility of the parasites against helminth parasites. [20-23] The motility response of PcEE-treated flukes recorded with the aid of EMM is highly supportive of the gross visual observation. The quantitative measurement of motility of drug-treated parasites clearly indicates the impact of the drugs on the motility of the parasite. Similar inhibitory effect of flukicidal drugs on the motility of *F. hepatica* and *C. cotylophorum* was reported by several investigators. [21-23]

The neuromuscular system of the parasites is particularly sensitive to the action of many anthelmintic drugs. [24-25] Acetylcholinesterase (AChE) is an enzyme broadly distributed in many species, including parasites. It occurs in multiple molecular forms that differ in their quaternary structure and mode of anchoring to the cell surface. It terminates nerve impulses by catalyzing the hydrolysis of neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Initially, it was proposed that AChE was acting as a “biological hold-fast” by causing local paralysis of the host gut and thus inhibiting the peristaltic movements of the intestine required for parasite expulsion. [16]

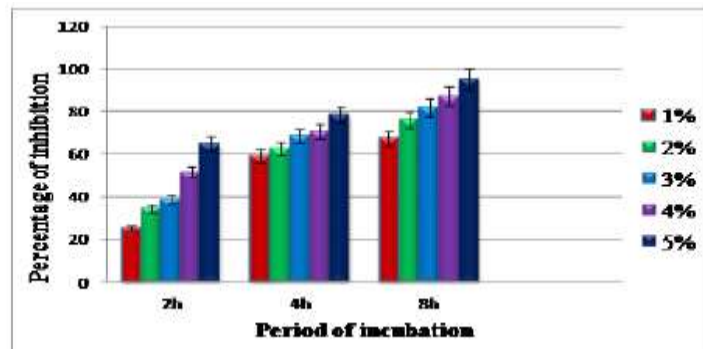
**Table 1: Gross visual observation on the motility of *C. cotylophorum* treated with PcEE**

Extract	Concentration (%)	5min	15min	30min	1h	2h	4h	6h	8h	11h	24h
Control	1	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++
PcEE	3	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++
	4	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++
	5	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	+++	++	++

+++ Very active ++ Moderately active + Slightly active - Stagnant - Dead PcEE: *Prunella corymbosa* ethanol extract



**Fig. 1: Effect of PcEE on the motility of *Cotylophoron cotylophorum***



**Fig. 2: Effect of PcEE on the AChE activity of *Cotylophoron cotylophorum***

Later, it has been hypothesized that AChE may contribute to parasite survival by interfering with the process of mucus secretion from intestinal goblet cells. [26] It has also been proposed that AChE may be capable of regulating the immune and inflammatory response through messenger and membrane receptor modulation. [27] Therefore, it appears that if the host is to expel the parasite, inactivating the parasite AChE, it not only dislodge the parasite but also elevate the immune response of the host. Inhibition of AChE increases the concentration of endogenous acetylcholine, which results in the inhibition of motor activity of *C. cotylophorum*. This may lead to the expulsion of the parasite from the host. PcEE possesses a remarkable anthelmintic activity against *C. cotylophorum*. It may serve as an alternative for anthelmintic chemotherapeutic agents to avoid their toxic side effects and development of resistance in a safe and eco friendly manner. However, this study warrants further *in vivo* studies for practical utility. In depth field trials of plant based anthelmintics along with best farm management practices can play a great role in parasite control strategies and in enhancing productivity of livestock farming.

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