

## PHYTOCHEMICAL ANALYSIS AND ANTIFUNGAL ACTIVITY OF SOME MEDICINAL PLANTS AGAINST *ALTERNARIA* SPECIE ISOLATED FROM ONION

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### ABSTRACT

Medicinal plants are the immense source of bioactive compounds and can be used for the treatment of various diseases of plants, animals and even human beings. Aim of the present study was to investigate the antifungal potency of leaf extracts of *Citrus limon*, *Cassia fistula* and *Euclaptus camaldulensis* against *Alternaria* specie associated with onion leaves through poisoned food technique. Based on the outcome of our results, methanolic leaf extracts of *C. limon* showed highest inhibition (61%) followed by *C. fistula* (53%) and *E. camaldulensis* (44%) respectively. Phytochemical analysis of best result oriented citrus extract was done with Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) technique. The results revealed the presence of antimicrobial compounds predominantly hexacosane (21.41%), delta-tocopherol (13.25%), gamma-tocopherol (9.61%), valproic acid (8.24%), gamma-sitosterol (3.98%), cetene (3.84%), isoquinoline,1-[(3,4-diethoxyphenyl)methyl]-6,7-diethoxy- (3.36%), nonadecanoic acid, methyl ester (3.05%), benzeneacetic acid (2.95%). Present study indicates that plant extracts could be a potential alternative in developing a potent plant-based fungicide which can be used in organic farming for the management of diseases in plants. Therefore, extensive research is required to detect more compounds in order to develop effective management approaches that significantly reduce the impact of the pathogens on human health as well as on environment.

**Key words:** Antifungal potential; poisoned food technique; biologically active compounds; GC-MS analysis; *Citrus limon*.

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### INTRODUCTION

From the ages, medicines made from the plants were used against various diseases. Usage of medicinal plant extracts became popular in late 1990s and still now a day, they are playing vital role in discovering the new drugs specially in developing countries. In nature medicinal plants are rich source of the antimicrobial compounds which can be effective against pathogens. Pakistan has blessed with large number of medicinal plants rich in anti-microbial compounds those possess antimicrobial activities. These plants are being used in preparation of various drugs since decades (Javed *et al.*, 2019; Riaz *et al.*, 2019).

Plant diseases can be checked completely using synthetic fungicides but due to residual toxicity, environmental pollution and development of resistance in the pathogens it is essential to improve the treatment methods so that these problems can be coped (Fankam *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, it is need of the day not only to improve the existing drugs but also discover the new effective ones. Many studies have proved that medicinal plants are having diverse antifungal and antibiotic properties. Extracts of medicinal plants are not only cost effective and has negligible side effect on environment but also minimize the health hazards of synthetic

chemicals or fungicides (Pu *et al.*, 2017; El-Shouny *et al.*, 2018). According to the WHO (World Health Organization) 70–80% of the population rely on herb plants in the world (Muhammad *et al.*, 2011). There is a list of compounds such as phenolics, alkaloids, flavonoids, and terpenoids which make them effective and open the new horizons to discover the novel complexes against the pathogens which leads towards new drug development (Kumar *et al.*, 2016; Nayak *et al.*, 2017; Ahmed *et al.*, 2018; Al-Tohamy *et al.*, 2018). *C. limon* (Rutaceae), *C. fistula* (Caesalpiniaceae) and *E. camaldulensis* (Myrtaceae) are diversified groups of medicinal plants, well known for its pesticidal and antifungal effects and can be used in treatment of different diseases of plants, animals and humans (Gupta *et al.*, 2000; Abdel-Hafez *et al.*, 2013; Siddiqua *et al.*, 2018).

Onion (*Allium cepa*) is an everyday used crop and grown all over the world. It is a rich source of dietary fiber, energy, vitamins (A and C) and minerals such as calcium, manganese and iron (Priya *et al.*, 2015; Pareek *et al.*, 2017). More than 66 diseases attack on the onion plant at different growth stages. Purple blotch of onion caused by *Alternaria* sp. is among the drastic diseases and attacks on every onion growing pocket of the world. According to Maini *et al.* (1985) 5 to 50% losses are

recorded due to this disease in all over the world. Now a day's exploration of neglected plants as a potent source of alternative biomedicine become a hot issue. In our study, we assessed the effectiveness of three native tree leaves such as *C. limon*, *C. fistula* and *E. camaldulensis* against *Alternaria* sp. isolated from diseased onion leaves. Moreover, different compounds present in citrus plant were determined through GC-MS analysis.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Preparation of plant extracts:** Leaves of three medicinal plants (*C. limon*, *C. fistula* and *E. camaldulensis*.) were collected from the Multan region, washed with tap water, shade dried and then homogenized into fine powder. This fine powder was used to make the methanolic extract of these plants according to the method described by Rafiq *et al.* (2017). Twenty-five grams of each plant powder was dipped into 100 ml of methanol for 10 days. After that, extracts were passed through muslin cloth, filtered and dried at 45 °C on hot water bath. The resultant pastes were stored in brown bottles at 4 °C till use.

**Procurement of fungus:** Diseased onion leaves (*Allium cepa*) showing typical purple blotch symptoms were collected from onion field. The fungus was isolated and purified from the diseased leaves on potato dextrose agar medium (PDA) according to the standard procedures. The isolated fungus was identified based on morphological characteristics as suggested by Ellis, (1971).

**Antifungal effect of plant extracts:** Different concentrations (100%, 75%, 50%, 25%, 15%, 5%) of plant extracts were prepared by dissolving the resultant extract paste in Dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO). They were used against isolated fungus by food poisoned technique. Plant extracts were mixed in PDA medium were poured into sterilized petri plates and mycelial disc (6mm) was placed on the center of solidified plate. Plates without plant extracts (having only DMSO) served as negative control. Recommended dose (6g/L) of Mancozeb was kept as positive control. Each treatment was replicated thrice. Plates were incubated for 15days at 28± 2 °C at alternate light and dark condition. The radial growth of fungal colony was measured on alternate days and percentage inhibition was calculated by this formula of Vincent (1947):

$$I = (C - T)/C \times 100$$

Where 'I' is percentage growth inhibition, 'C' is mean diameter (cm) of fungal colony in control and 'T' is mean diameter (cm) of fungal colony with plant extract.

**GC-MS analysis of plant extracts:** GC-MS analysis of methanolic extracts of citrus showing most promising antifungal activity was carried out by using an Agilent

7890C gas chromatograph in tandem with a 5975C MSD and HP5MSI separation column whose length was 30 m, ID was 0.250 mm and its film thickness was 0.25 µm. Identification and quantification of compounds were conducted using AMDIS with a manually curated retention indexed GC-MS library while additional identification of compounds was performed using the NIST17 and Wiley 11 GC-MS spectral libraries.

**Statistical analysis:** One-way ANOVA was applied by using statistics 8.1 software program. Mean and standard errors were calculated for three replicates. Means were compared by the LSD tests at significant level (≤ 5%).

## RESULTS

**Antifungal activity of plant extracts:** The antifungal activity of different plant leaf extracts (*C. limon*, *C. fistula* and *E. camaldulensis*) were investigated by using food poisoned technique against purple blotch disease of onion. The results indicated that all plant extracts have shown good antifungal activities as compared to the negative control while mancozeb gave complete inhibition. Among the tested plants *C. limon*, performed best as compare to *C. fistula* and *E. globulus*. Different concentrations of methanolic leaf extracts of *C. limon* from 5 to 100% significantly reduced fungus growth by 34.35-60.62% respectively while in case of *C. fistula* the reduction value is from 19.20 to 52.92 % and *E. camaldulensis* gave inhibition value from 14.18 to 44.29 % over the negative control (Fig. 1).

**GC-MS analysis:** Superlative result-oriented extract of *C. limon* was further subjected to GC-MS analysis (Fig 2). The compounds identified from the extract along with their molecular weight, molecular formulae, retention time and peak area (%) are presented in Table 1. Among them dominant compounds which share more peak area are enlisted with their nature and biological activity in Table 2.

The dominant compounds present in methanolic extracts in *C. limon* were hexacosane (21.410 %), delta-tocopherol (13.252%), gamma-tocopherol (9.614%), valproic acid (8.241%), gamma-sitosterol (3.98%), cetene (3.840%), isoquinoline, 1-[(3,4-diethoxyphenyl)methyl]-6,7-diethoxy- (3.36%), nonadecanoic acid, methyl ester (3.052%), benzeneacetic acid (2.951%), (2S)-1-Hydroxy-3-(palmitoyloxy)-2-propanyl (9Z)-9-hexadecenoate (2.136%), octacosane (2.018%), niacin, (1.975%), octadecanoic acid (1.834%), phloretic acid (1.640%), 2,2,5,5-tetramethyl-4-ethyl-3-imidazoline-1-oxyl (1.612%), pentanedioic acid, 3-methyl-3-[(trimethylsilyl)oxy]-, bis(trimethylsilyl) ester (1.474%), methyl tetradecanoate (1.346%), l-isoleucine, N-trifluoroacetyl-(0.999%), 9,12-octadecadienoic acid (Z,Z) (0.978%). Different phenolic compounds were detected from citrus leaves which proved their medicinal value.

These phenolics are widely used as antimicrobial agent and their presence in the plant make it resistant.

**Table 1. Compounds identified from methanolic inflorescence extract of *Citrus limon* through GC-MS analysis.**

Sr. No.	Names of compounds	Formula	Mol. Wt.	Retention time (min)	Peak area (%)
1	Hexacosane	C <sub>26</sub> H <sub>54</sub>	366.42	13.76	21.410
2	delta.-Tocopherol	C <sub>27</sub> H <sub>46</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	402.65	16.86	13.252
3	gamma.-Tocopherol	C <sub>29</sub> H <sub>50</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	430.71	17.33	9.614
4	Valproic acid	C <sub>8</sub> H <sub>16</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	144.21	4.61	8.241
5	.gamma.-Sitosterol	C <sub>29</sub> H <sub>50</sub> O	414.39	19.41	3.986
6	Cetene	C <sub>16</sub> H <sub>32</sub>	224.25	8.98	3.840
7	Isoquinoline, 1-[(3,4-diethoxyphenyl)methyl]-6,7-diethoxy-	C <sub>24</sub> H <sub>29</sub> NO <sub>4</sub>	395.21	13.37	3.363
8	Nonadecanoic acid, methyl ester	C <sub>20</sub> H <sub>40</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	312.30	13.29	3.052
9	Benzeneacetic acid	C <sub>8</sub> H <sub>8</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	136.15	6.52	2.951
10	(2S)-1-Hydroxy-3-(palmitoyloxy)-2-propanyl (9Z)-9-hexadecenoate	C <sub>35</sub> H <sub>66</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	566.9	19.23	2.136
11	Octacosane	C <sub>28</sub> H <sub>58</sub>	394.45	16.28	2.018
12	Niacin	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>5</sub> NO <sub>2</sub>	123.11	6.48	1.975
13	Octadecanoic acid	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>36</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	284.27	12.90	1.834
14	Phloretic acid,	C <sub>9</sub> H <sub>10</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	166.17	10.33	1.640
15	2,2,5,5-Tetramethyl-4-ethyl-3-imidazoline-1-oxyl	C <sub>9</sub> H <sub>17</sub> N <sub>2</sub> O	169.13	4.87	1.612
16	Pentanedioic acid, 3-methyl-3-	C <sub>6</sub> H <sub>10</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	162.17	9.15	1.474
17	Methyl tetradecanoate	C <sub>15</sub> H <sub>30</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	242.22	9.99	1.346
18	l-Isoleucine, N-trifluoroacetyl-	C <sub>8</sub> H <sub>12</sub> F <sub>3</sub> NO <sub>3</sub>	227.08	6.49	0.999
19	9,12-Octadecadienoic acid (Z,Z)-	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>32</sub> O <sub>2</sub>	280.24	12.78	0.978

**Table 2. Major compounds identified from methanolic extract of *Citrus limon* through GC-MS analysis with their nature and biological activity.**

No.	Name	Nature	Biological Activity	Reference
1.	Hexacosane	Acyclic alkanes	Anti-microbial, anti-bacterial.	Yasin <i>et al.</i> (2019)
2	delta.-Tocopherol	Phenolic	Anti- fungal, anti- bacterial, Anti-oxidants	Arulmozhi <i>et al.</i> (2018)
3	γ-Tocopherol	Phenolic	Anti-tumor, Anti-oxidant, Anti-microbial	Kalita <i>et al.</i> (2018)
4	Valproic acid	long chain fatty acid.	Antiepileptic	Majnooni <i>et al.</i> (2016)
5	γ-Sitosterol	Steroids	Antimicrobial	Rafiq <i>et al.</i> (2017).
6	Cetene or 1-Hexadecene	aliphatic compound, long chain fatty acid.	Antibacterial, antifungal, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory,	Senthil <i>et al.</i> (2016); Egbung <i>et al.</i> (2017)
7	Isoquinoline, 1-[(3,4 diethoxyphenyl)methyl]-6,7-diethoxy-	alkaloid,	antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory	Gopalakrishnan and Rajameena (2012)
8	Nonadecanoic acid, methyl ester	fatty acids	Anti-inflammatory, anti-acne, insecticide.	Omorieg <i>et al.</i> (2018)
9	Benzeneacetic acid,	Phenols	antibacterial, antifungal, antioxidant, anticancer.	Rafiq <i>et al.</i> (2017); Valsalam <i>et al.</i> (2018)
10	(2S)-1-Hydroxy-3-(palmitoyloxy)-2-propanyl (9Z)-9-hexadecenoate	Aldehyde	Not Known	
11	Octacosane	acyclic alkanes	Mosquitocidal, antibacterial, antifungal activity.	Ghosh <i>et al.</i> (2012); Khatua <i>et al.</i> (2016)
12	Niacin	Carboxylic acid	Anticancer.	Jacobson <i>et al.</i> (1995)
13	Octadecanoic acid		Antioxidant, nematicide, Anti-inflammatory, Anti-cancer, Antimicrobial activities	Hema <i>et al.</i> (2011)
14	Phloretic acid	Polyphenols	Antioxidant, antimicrobial,	Kogiannou <i>et al.</i>

			anticancer, reduce cardiovascular diseases.	(2013); Ahmad <i>et al.</i> (2016).
15	2,2,5,5-Tetramethyl-4-ethyl-3-imidazoline-1-oxyl	Phenolics	Not reported	
16	Pentanedioic acid, 3-methyl-3-[(trimethylsilyl)oxy]-, bis(trimethylsilyl) ester	steroidal saponins	anti-inflammatory	Hong <i>et al.</i> (2012); Thi <i>et al.</i> (2018).
17	Methyl tetradecanoate	Myristic acid ester	Antioxidant, Anti-Cancerous Hypercholesterolemic, Nematicide activities.	Elaiyaraja and Chandramohan (2016).
18	l-Isoleucine, trifluoroacetyl-	N- Long branched amino acid	Antitumor	Wang <i>et al.</i> (2015)
19	9,12-Octadecadienoic (Z,Z)-	acid Fatty acid ester	Antioxidant, Nematicide, Anti-inflammatory, Antimicrobial, antiarthritic.	Elaiyaraja and Chandramohan (2016)

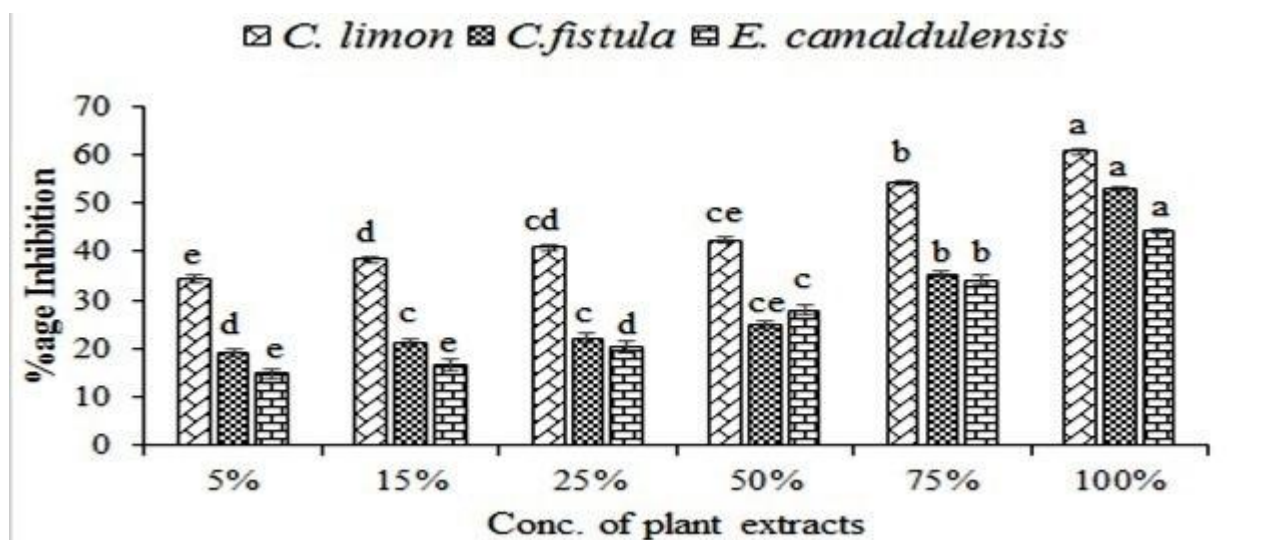


Fig. 1. Antifungal activity of tested plant extracts at different concentrations.

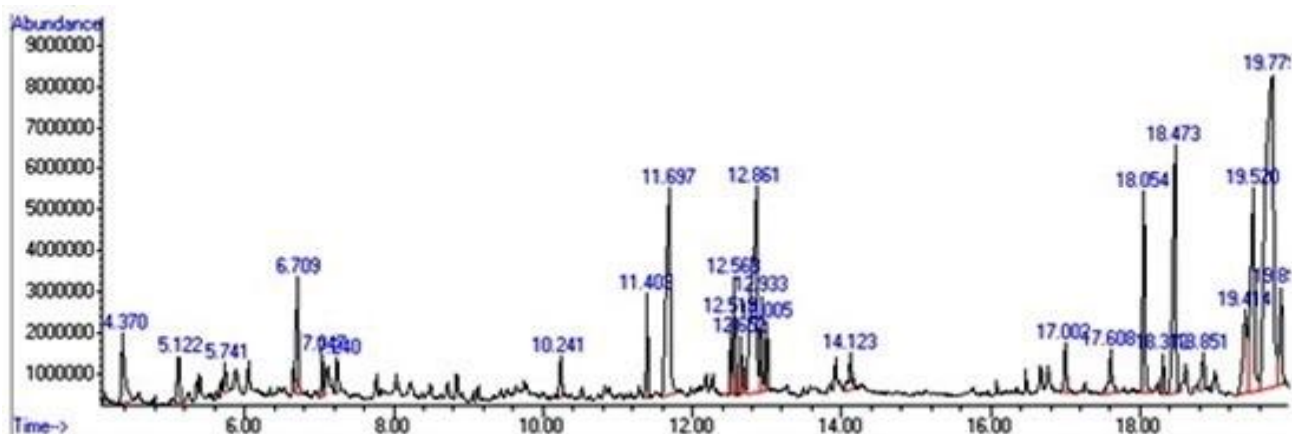


Fig. 2. GC-MS chromatograms of methanolic extracts of *Citrus limon*.

### DISCUSSION

Medicinal plants are rich in natural antimicrobial compounds and play a vital role in development of new

of drugs. In literature antimicrobial properties of these plants are reported against many human and plant pathogens (Arulmozhi *et al.*, 2018; Vijayalakshmi *et al.*, 2019) but are difficult to evaluate due to choose of solvents used, method of extraction, microbes used and

procedures of antimicrobial test. In the present study, antimicrobial activities of all extracts of *C. limon*, *C. fistula* and *E. camaldulensis* were used against *Alternaria* sp. isolated from purple blotched onion leaves. Dry leaves of these plants were extracted by using the methanol as a solvent. Nearly all antimicrobial compounds of plants are either aromatic or saturated organic in nature, so they were easily extracted by using ethanol or methanol. It also has been known that different solvents have different solubility capacities for diverse phytochemicals (Cowan, 1999).

All the tested extracts showed antifungal activity against isolated fungus. Among them, leaf extract of *C. limon* showed maximum inhibition (60.62%) while *C. fistula* and *E. camaldulensis* showed inhibition of 52.92 % and 44.29% respectively. Mishra *et al.* (2008) evaluated leaf extracts of *C. limon* and *C. fistula* against *A. porri* and *Stemphylium* sp. and observed 72% and 62% of growth inhibition respectively. However, Abdel-Hafez *et al.* (2013) indicated that *Eucalyptus* leaf extracts (500µl) formed maximum zone inhibition (8.6 mm) against *A. porri*. while Meena, (2012) observed that *Eucalyptus globulus* at 5% conc. gave 92.64% inhibition against *A. porri*.

Different concentrations of plant extracts were used in present experiment. The results indicated that as the concentration of plant extract increased, it became more toxic towards fungus. This is not only true in case of *C. limon* whose percent inhibition increased ranging from 33.66 to 63.27% but also in case of *C. fistula* and *E. camaldulensis* as their fungal inhibition percentage was increased from 18.16 to 51.76 % and 20.99 to 45.31% respectively, when their concentration doses were increased. (Abdel-Hafez *et al.*, 2013; Gaikwad *et al.*, 2014).

The antimicrobial activity of extracts is due to presence of different chemicals such as steroids, alkaloids, flavonoids, triterpenoids and phenolic compounds or free hydroxyl groups. The presence and active release of these secondary compounds is usually responsible for biocontrol as they may interfere in enzyme system, permeability of cell membrane, synthesis of vital structures and in energy production (Tshabalala *et al.*, 2019; Vijayakumar *et al.*, 2019). GC-MS analysis is a potential means for identification of compounds present in the plant extracts. In this study, nineteen major compounds were identified from the methanolic leaf extract of *C. limon* while fifty other compounds shared minor peak area. Pandian and Noora, (2019) observed sixteen phytochemicals present in the methanolic leaf extracts of *Citrus medica* while Hojjati and Barzegar, (2017) identified twenty-seven compounds including linalool, geraniol,  $\alpha$ -terpineol and linalyl acetate. The biological activity of *C. limon* documented by different scientists is elaborated in Table 2.

**Conclusion:** Present study indicated that traditional use of medicinal plants was effective for antimicrobial activities. It is concluded that methanolic leaf extract of *C. limon* showed potential antifungal activity against *Alternaria* sp. associated with blotched leaves of onion, might be due to presence of bioactive compounds. Thus, the extensive research is required to detect more compounds for formation of stable products in order to develop effective management approaches that significantly reduce the impact of the pathogens on human health as well as on environment.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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