



# Effect of Ethanolic Extract of *Scurrula parasitica* L. on *in vivo* Antioxidant Status of Diabetic Rats

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** *Scurrula parasitica* L. is a herbaceous growing shrub of *Loranthaceae* family traditionally used for diuretic, tranquilizing and hypotensive activity. It shows anti-diabetic, cytotoxic, anticancer, anti-hepatotoxic and immunomodulatory activity as it has secondary metabolites like alkaloids, terpenoids, phenols, flavonoids, tannins, saponins, etc. The secondary metabolites have potential antioxidant activity as they have the ability to scavenge free radicals and also improve the *in vivo* antioxidant status. However, no study has been conducted to evaluate their effect on *in vivo* antioxidant status.

**Methods:** The *in vitro* antioxidant activity was estimated by three *in vitro* assay methods viz. DPPH free radical scavenging assay, Ferric reducing antioxidant potential (FRAP) assay and Total phenolic content (TPC) assay while the *in vivo* antioxidant status was evaluated by estimating the levels of SOD, Catalase, GPx and MDA.

**Result:** The ethanol extract of the leaves shows maximum *in vitro* antioxidant activity in case of DPPH free radical scavenging assay and 50% ethanol extract shows highest antioxidant activity for FRAP assay and Total phenolic content assays. The ethanol extract of the plants improves the *in vivo* antioxidant status viz. Superoxide dismutase (SOD), Catalase, Glutathione peroxidase (GPx) and Malondheyde (MDA) among the STZ induced diabetic rates.

**Key words:** Catalase, Gpx, MDA, *Scurrula parasitica* L., SOD.

## INTRODUCTION

Medicinal plants are found to have many therapeutic properties against certain diseases or serve as the origin of useful drugs (Ebadi, 2006). They are used for curing many ailments as they contain phytochemicals of various biological activities (Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2014). The medicinal value of the medicinal plants is because of the secondary metabolites which have definite physiological action on the human body (Akinmoladun *et al.* 2007). The phenolic compounds such as flavonoids, phenolic acids, tannins, etc. have potential antioxidant activity as they have the ability to scavenge free radicals. Further, these compounds have metal chelating, antimutagenic, anticarcinogenic and antimicrobial activities (Proestos *et al.*, 2005).

Antioxidants can scavenge free radicals and can raise the level of endogenous antioxidant defence. There is dynamic balance between the amount of free radicals generated in the body and antioxidants against their deleterious effects (Finkel and Holbrook, 2000; Ali *et al.*, 2013). However, the amounts of these protective antioxidant principles present under the normal physiological conditions are sufficient only to cope with the physiological rate of free radicals, either from environment or produced within the body. In order to maintain the level of antioxidant in the body for healthy living, external supplementation is necessary (Ali *et al.*, 2013). Recent studies have investigated the potential of plant products as antioxidants against various diseases induced by free radicals. The *in vivo* antioxidant defence system consists mainly of superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT), glutathione peroxidase (GPx) and glutathione reductase (GSSGR)

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(Ames *et al.*, 1993; Sardesai, 1995). These antioxidant enzymes are an important protective mechanism against Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS). Oxidative stress (OS) is essentially an imbalance between the production of free radicals, such as superoxide, hydroxyl (OH) and peroxy (ROO) radicals and the ability of the body to counteract or detoxify their harmful effects through neutralization by antioxidants. Oxidative stress leads to many chronic and degenerative diseases such as cancer, atherosclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, neurodegenerative disorders and aging (Yu, 1994; Choudhary and Tandon, 2009). As the antioxidant enzymes neutralize the reactive oxygen species in the body, higher level of *in vivo* antioxidant enzymes would lead to higher

protection of the body organs from the degenerative diseases.

*Scurrula parasitica* L. is a herbaceous growing shrub of *Loranthaceae* family (Bambaradeniya *et al.*, 2002). It is a parasitic plant grown on *Dendrophthoe falcata* and on a wide range of hosts, including species of *Apocynaceae*, *Euphorbiaceae*, *Fabaceae*, *Fagaceae*, *Lythraceae*, *Moraceae*, *Punicaceae*, *Rosaceae*, *Rutaceae*, *Sapindaceae*, *Theaceae* and *Ulmaceae*. Traditionally it is used as diuretic, tranquilizing and hypotensive drug (Haque *et al.*, 2016). *Scurrula parasitica* plant shows anti-diabetic, cytotoxic, anticancer, anti-hepatotoxic and immunomodulatory activity (Mahajan *et al.*, 2013). Phenolic compound of *Scurrula parasitica* L. has important phytochemicals which possess anti-inflammatory, antiallergic, antithrombotic, antimicrobial and anticancerous and analgesic activities. (Purneetha and Amruthesh, 2016). Though many studies have been conducted on the medicinal properties of *Scurrula parasitica* L., the effects of this plant on the *in vivo* antioxidant enzymes have not been reported so far. In view of this, the present research work is planned to investigate the *in vitro* antioxidant capacity of the *Scurrula parasitica* L. extracts in different solvent and also the effect of ethanol extract on *in vivo* antioxidant status.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The experiment was carried out in the department of Veterinary Physiology and Biochemistry, College of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry, Central Agricultural University, Selesih, Aizawl, Mizoram, India during March to November, 2022. The use of experimental animals and the experimental protocol has been duly approved by the institutional Animal Ethics Committee of the college vide No. CVSC/CAU/IAEC/21-22/P-8 dated, the 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2022. Internationally acceptable methods/techniques/ protocols were followed during the present investigation and all the chemical/ drugs used were of high technical grades.

### Plant collection and authentication

The plants of *Scurrula parasitica* L. were collected from Mualvum, Kawnpui, Kolasib district of Mizoram, India.

### Chemicals and reagents

Streptozotocin, Metformin, Chloroform and Tween 80 were purchased from HiMedia Laboratories Pvt. Ltd., Ethanol, Petroleum ether, Methanol, Ferric Chloride, Sodium Potassium Tartarate, Folin Ciocalteu reagent were purchased from Merck Limited. 1,1-Diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH), 2,4,6-tri(2-pyridyl)-striazine (TPTZ), 6-hydroxy-2,5,7,8-tetramethyl chromane-2- carboxylic acid (Trolox) and Gallic acid from Sigma Chemicals Co. (St. Louis, USA). The kits for estimation of *in vivo* antioxidant enzymes *viz.* SOD, Catalase, GPx, MDA were from Wuhan Fine Biotech Co. Ltd. All the glassware used were of borosilicate quality.

### Wistar rat

Adult Wistar rats were procured from M/s. Ruata Enterprise, Aizawl. Animals were housed in polypropylene cages in

small groups of 6 rats per cage. Animals had free access to standard balanced ration and clean drinking water *ad libitum* and were maintained in standard laboratory conditions (12:12 hour light/dark cycle at ambient temperature ranging between 20-25°C).

### Processing of material

The *Scurrula parasitica* L. leaves were washed in running tap water and finally rinsed with distilled water. The leaves were air dried in shade till completely dried and then ground to powder by a mechanical grinder and then soaked in solvents (1:5 w/v) with intermittent stirring for 5 days at room temperature. The filtrate was concentrated under reduced pressure as per the method described by Zakaria *et al.* (2004) till the extract appears sufficiently dry and stored at -20°C.

### In-vitro antioxidant assay

The *in vitro* antioxidant content of the extracts was estimated by three *in vitro* assay methods *viz.* DPPH free radical scavenging assay as described by Leong and Shui (2001), Ferric reducing antioxidant potential (FRAP) assay according to the procedure of Benzie and Strain (1999) and Total phenolic content (TPC) assay by the Folin-Ciocalteu method of Singleton and Rossi (1965).

### Preparation of oral suspension

The ethanol extract of the *Scurrula parasitica* L. leaves was dissolved using 2% Tween 80. As per the requirement, 10% (100mg.ml<sup>-1</sup>) and 20% (200mg.ml<sup>-1</sup>) solutions were prepared for oral administration.

### Dose rate for evaluation of in vivo antioxidant activity

The dose rate of (100 mg/bw kg<sup>-1</sup> and 200 mg/bw kg<sup>-1</sup>) for evaluation of *in vivo* antioxidant status were chosen as reported by Laldingngheta *et al.* (2019).

### Diabetes induction

Thirty healthy male Wistar rats were selected and divided into 5 groups of 6 animals each. The rats were kept off the feed for 24 hours and then the rats except from Group-I was administered streptozotocin at a dose of 40mg.kg<sup>-1</sup> intraperitoneally as per the method of Kalaivanan and Pugalendi (2011). The rats which have blood glucose level of 250 mg/dl or more after 72 hours of administration of streptozotocin were considered as diabetic rats. The Group-I rats served as normal control while Group II rats served as untreated diabetic control and received vehicle only. Rats in Group III received the standard drug, metformin at dose rate of 5 mg/kg body weight. Group IV and Group V rats received plant extracts at the dose rate of 100 mg/kg b.w. and 200 mg/kg b.w.

### Assessment of in vivo antioxidant status

The blood samples of the rats in different groups were collected on 24<sup>th</sup> day of treatment and the *in vivo* antioxidant status of the rats were estimated. The levels of the Superoxide dismutase (SOD), Catalase, Glutathione

peroxidase and Malondialdehyde (MDA) of the rats were estimated with kits manufactured by M/s. Wuhan Fine Biotech, Co. Ltd. The SOD, Catalase and GPX were estimated by Sandwich enzyme immunoassay. The microtiter plate was pre-coated with antibody specific to SOD, CAT and GPX respectively. Briefly, 100  $\mu$ L each of working solution or samples were added into appropriate wells, covered with plate cover and incubated for 80 min at 37°C. Pour out the liquids and washed three times with 200  $\mu$ L wash solutions. Added 100  $\mu$ L Biotinylated Antibody working solution in each well, covered with plate cover and incubated for 50 min at 37°C. Aspirated and washed 3 times. Added 100  $\mu$ L Streptavidin-HRP working solution in the wells, covered with plate sealer and incubated for 50 min at 37°C followed by aspiration and 5 times washing. Added 90  $\mu$ L of TMB substrate solution to the wells, covered with plate cover and incubate for 20 min at 37°C. Added 50  $\mu$ L stop reagent and took reading at 450 nm in ELISA plate reader. The MDA was estimated by competitive inhibition enzyme immunoassay technique. Briefly, added 50  $\mu$ L of standard reagent or samples into the wells and 50  $\mu$ L Biotinylated-conjugate in each well, mixed well, covered with plate cover and incubated for 60 min at 37°C. Poured out the liquid, aspirated and washed with 200  $\mu$ L wash solution. Added 100  $\mu$ L Streptavidin- HRP working solution in the wells, covered with plate sealer and incubated for 60 min at 37°C followed by aspiration and 5 times washing. Added 90  $\mu$ L of TMB substrate solution to the wells, covered

with plate cover and incubate for 20 min at 37°C. Added 50  $\mu$ L stop reagent and took reading at 450 nm in ELISA plate reader.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *in vitro* antioxidant status of the leaves of *Scurrula parasitica* L. extracted in different solvents and the effect of the ethanol extract on the *in vivo* antioxidant status of the STZ induced diabetic rates were evaluated. The *in vitro* antioxidant activity of the extracts was estimated by assessing the DPPH free radical scavenging activity, Ferric Reducing Antioxidant Potential (FRAP) assay and Total Phenolic content assay. The antioxidant activity of the different extracts is presented in Table 1 and Fig 1.

The ethanol extract showed comparatively higher DPPH free radical assay of  $4.299 \pm 0.02$  mg TE while the FRAP assay and total phenolic content assay shows highest activity in 50% ethanol extract. The observed activity in FRAP assay and total phenolic content in 50% ethanol extract were  $0.482 \pm 0.01$  mg TE and  $24.489 \pm 1.41$  mg GAE respectively. The high antioxidant content of the *Scurrula parasitica* L. leaves were also reported in previous studies (Ali *et al.*, 2013; Atun *et al.*, 2017; Muhammad *et al.*, 2019, Laldingngheta *et al.* 2020). Atun *et al.* (2017) observed that the leaves of the plant *S. parasitica* contain quercitrin (quercetin-3-O-rhamnoside) which showed high antioxidant activity. Laldingngheta *et al.* (2020) also reported high antioxidant activity *i.e.* high total phenolic content and DPPH radical scavenging activity. The total phenolic content of

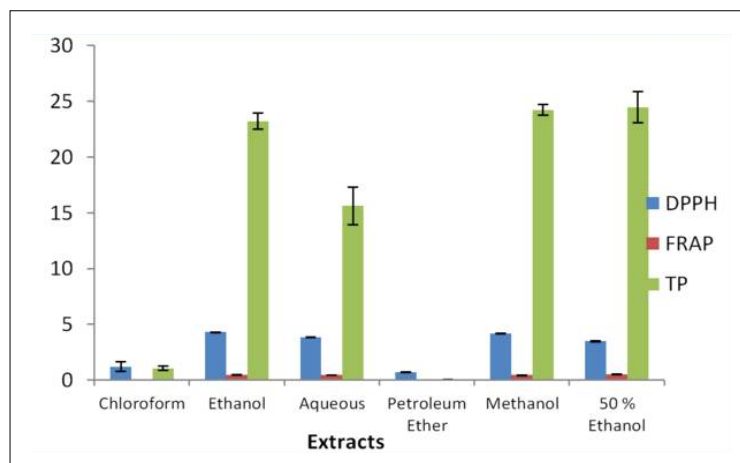


Fig 1: Antioxidant activity of the *Scurrula parasitica* L. leaves extract in different solvents.

Table 1: Antioxidant activity of the *Scurrula parasitica* L. leave extract in different organic solvents and water.

Extracts	DPPH(mgTE/gm)	FRAP (mgTE/gm)	Total phenolic content(mg GAE/gm)
Chloroform	1.197±0.43	0.00±0.00	1.053±0.19
Ethanol	4.299±0.02	0.482±0.01	23.227±0.70
Aqueous	3.850±0.03	0.465±0.00	15.623±1.70
Petroleum Ether	0.734±0.02	0.00±0.00	0.039±0.01
Methanol	4.188±0.01	0.459±0.01	24.224±0.48
50% Ethanol	3.485±0.04	0.513±0.02	24.489±1.41

the ethanolic extract estimated was around 101.0 to 379.1 ( $\mu\text{g/gm}$  tissue) at concentrations from 5 to 100  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  plant extract. As for DPPH, the value of IC<sub>50</sub> was found to be 53.28  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  (Laldingngheta *et al.*, 2020). The high antioxidant activity of the plant extract may be due to high content of polyphenolic compounds, flavonoids *etc.* (Okudu *et al.*, 1994; Laldingngheta *et al.*, 2020).

The antioxidant activity of the plant extract in all the three methods is more or less the highest in ethanol extract therefore ethanol extract was used for evaluation of *in vivo* antioxidant status. The *in vivo* antioxidant status *viz.* Superoxide dismutase, Catalase, Glutathione peroxidase and Malondialdehyde of the rats is altered on induction of diabetes. Treatment of the diabetic rats with metformin or the ethanol extract improves the *in vivo* antioxidant status. The *in-vivo* antioxidant profile of Streptozotocin induced Wistar rats treated with *Scurrula parasitica* L. extract is given in Table 2.

The level of malondialdehyde increased on induction of diabetes. The observed level of MDA in normal rats was  $140.00 \pm 10.00$  ng/mL and the level increased to  $410.00 \pm 20.81$  ng/mL among the diabetic group. Treatment of the diabetic rats with metformin or the plant extract significantly reduces the level of MDA. The level observed for metformin, 100 mg and 200 mg/kg b.wt plant extract were  $141.67 \pm 6.00$  ng/mL,  $160.00 \pm 15.27$  ng/mL and  $170.00 \pm 15.27$  ng/mL, respectively.

The level of catalase, GPx and SOD decreases on induction of diabetes. The catalase activity among normal rats was  $2166.70 \pm 0.02$  U/mL and decreased to  $1300.00 \pm 0.01$  U/mL on induction of diabetes. Treatment with metformin or 100 mg or 200 mg/kg b.wt plant extract significantly increases the activity to  $1933.30 \pm 0.02$  U/mL,  $1733.33 \pm 0.02$  U/mL and  $2117.30 \pm 73.20$  U/mL respectively. The GPx activity among the normal rats was  $2050.00 \pm 0.01$  U/mL which decreased to  $1633.30 \pm 33.30$  U/mL on induction of diabetes. Treatment with metformin or 100 mg or 200 mg/kg b.wt plant extract significantly increases the activity. The activity level among the metformin or 100 mg or 200 mg/kg b.wt plant extract treated groups were  $2033.30 \pm 44.09$  U/mL,  $1766.70 \pm 0.01$  U/mL and  $1993.30 \pm 29.62$  U/mL, respectively. The Superoxide Dismutase activity among normal rats was  $2.12 \pm 0.02$  U/mL and the level decreased to  $1.80 \pm 0.00$  U/mL in case of diabetic rats. The activity for metformin or 100 mg

or 200 mg/kg b.wt plant extract treated groups were  $2.57 \pm 0.17$  U/mL,  $1.9 \pm 0.02$  U/mL and  $2.02 \pm 0.03$  U/mL respectively.

Hyperglycemia in diabetes can increase production of free radicals through Amadori rearrangement (Giugliano *et al.*, 1996). Increased oxidative stress is observed in diabetic subjects (Waggiallah and Alzohairy, 2011; West, 2000; Jakus, 2000; Ceriello, 1997) and this is linked to reduced enzymatic and non-enzymatic antioxidants (Lapena *et al.*, 2018). Peroxidation of lipids produces highly reactive aldehydes, including MDA, acrolein, 4-hydroxynonenal (HNE), 4-oxononenal (ONE) and isolevuglandins (IsoLGs) (Guo *et al.*, 2012). The increased in the level of MDA in diabetes is reported in literature (Mahreen *et al.*, 2010; Shawki *et al.*, 2021; Moussa, 2008; Bandeira *et al.*, 2012). Increased level of MDA in diabetics suggests that peroxidative injury may be involved in the development of diabetic complications. It is also an indication of decline in defense mechanisms of enzymatic and nonenzymatic antioxidants (Saddala *et al.*, 2013). The depletion of GSH impairs the activity of antioxidant enzymes as well as that of chain breaking aqueous and lipid phase antioxidants (Bhatia *et al.*, 2003). The decreased level of blood SOD in diabetes is also reported in literature (Bhatia *et al.*, 2003; Blum and Fridovich, 1985; Sundraram *et al.*, 1996; Kumawat *et al.*, 2013). The reduction in serum SOD activity could be due to excessive consumption in the autoxidation process and increased excretion from the inflammatory kidney in nephropathy and also could be linked to progressive glycation of enzymatic proteins. About 50% of SOD in erythrocytes of diabetic patients is glycated, resulting in low activity of SOD (Arai *et al.*, 1985). The decreased serum catalase in diabetes is also reported in literature (Goth *et al.* 2006; Tiedge *et al.*, 1997; Syeeda Anees, 2014).

Several plant extracts have positive effect on the serum antioxidant enzymes of diabetic rats (Sani *et al.*, 2012; Dhalwal *et al.*, 2008; Kukic *et al.*, 2008). Flavonoids in plant extracts are very effective in reducing the lipid peroxidation in hypercholesterolaemic rats (Mateos *et al.*, 2005). The beneficial effect of flavonoids may be mediated by one or more mechanisms such as by inhibiting lipid per-oxidation, platelet aggregation and enhancing of antioxidant defense (Mateos *et al.*, 2005; Lin *et al.*, 1998). Further, the other

**Table 2:** *In vivo* Antioxidant profile of Streptozotocin induced Wistar rats treated with *Scurrula parasitica* L. extract.

Antioxidant enzymes	Treatment groups					P value
	Control	Diabetic	Metformin Treated	100 mg/Kg body weight	200 mg/kg body weight	
MDA (ng/mL)	$140 \pm 10.00^a$	$410 \pm 20.81^b$	$141.67 \pm 6.00^a$	$160 \pm 15.27^a$	$170 \pm 15.27^a$	0.00**
Catalase (U/mL)	$2166.7 \pm 0.02^b$	$1300 \pm 0.01^a$	$1933.3 \pm 0.02^b$	$1733.3 \pm 0.02^{ab}$	$2117.3 \pm 73.2^b$	0.04*
SOD (U/mL)	$2.12 \pm 0.02^b$	$1.8 \pm 0.00^a$	$2.57 \pm 0.17^c$	$1.9 \pm 0.02^{ab}$	$2.02 \pm 0.03^{ab}$	0.00**
GPX (pg/mL)	$2050 \pm 0.01^b$	$1633.3 \pm 33.3^a$	$2033.3 \pm 44.09^b$	$1766.7 \pm 0.01^{ab}$	$1993.3 \pm 29.62^b$	0.02*

Values are mean  $\pm$  SEM, n=6 in each group. NS: Non-significant. \*:  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*:  $P < 0.01$ . The means with different superscript in small letters differs significantly ( $P \leq 0.05$ ) between the columns.



secondary metabolites *i.e.* polyphenols such as phenolic acids, proanthocyanidins are potent antioxidants. They act as chain breaking antioxidants, meaning that they can directly interact with and neutralize lipid radicals, halting the propagation of lipid peroxidation (Zhu *et al.*, 2013), thereby preventing the formation of harmful lipid peroxidation products like malondialdehyde (MDA) (Gorelik *et al.*, 2008). Thus polyphenols might be responsible for suppressing the extent of lipid peroxidation and enhancing the antioxidant capacity in the liver. In the present investigation, the improvement in serum antioxidant status of the diabetic rats on treatment with extract of *Scurrula parasitica* L. may be due high content of secondary metabolites like alkaloids, flavonoids, terpenoids, phenols, tannins, saponins, curcumins *etc.*

## CONCLUSION

The leaves of *Scurrula parasitica* L. have high *in vitro* antioxidants. Ethanol extract shows highest activity in DPPH free radical scavenging activity while highest activity in ferric reducing antioxidant potential (FRAP) assay and total phenolic content assay was observed in 50% ethanol extract. Diabetes reduces the antioxidant level of the body. The level of SOD, Catalase, GPx decreased while the level of MDA was increased on induction of diabetes. Flavonoids and other plant secondary metabolites are very effective in reducing the lipid peroxidation by inhibiting lipid peroxidation, platelet aggregation and enhancing of antioxidant defense. Thus treatment with *Scurrula parasitica* L. extract improves the *in vivo* antioxidant status.

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## Conflict of interest

All authors declared that there is no conflict of interest.

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