



*In vitro Assessment of the Insecticidal Activity of *Nerium oleander* Extract against German Cockroaches (*Blattella germanica*)*

Mohammed M. Mares¹, Mutee Murshed¹, Hossam M.A. Aljawdah¹,
Waleed Ali Hailan¹, Saleh Al-Quraishy¹

10.18805/IJAR.BF-1727

ABSTRACT

Background: German cockroaches are the most common cockroach species in the world. Although German cockroach infestations occur in many human-inhabited spaces, they are most commonly associated with restaurants, food processing facilities, hotels, nursing homes. It's also carried viruses, protozoa and infectious bacteria on the outside and inside of body surfaces and play a role in causing dizziness, asthma and nausea reactions in people. So, *Blattella germanica* is considered as an important medical and economic.

Methods: This study aimed to evaluate the efficacy of *Nerium oleander* extract against cockroaches and inhibition hatching eggs *in vitro* using a dipping method test. Two graduated concentrations of extract (50 and 100 mg/ml) were tested at different periods and changes over time in the viability of cockroaches were registered for (1 and 2 hours) and in relation to Inhibition hatching eggs after 30 days. Distilled water and cypermethrin (0.1%) were used as negative and positive control, respectively. A chemical assay was performed by FT-IR to investigate the presence of several anticipated active chemical compounds in *Nerium oleander* leaf extract.

Result: The analysis of phytochemicals by FT-IR for alcoholic extracts of *Nerium oleander* extracts revealed the presence of 12 effective chemical ingredients such as carbohydrates, alkaloids, flavonoids, glycosides and tannins. The results showed that the extract had high efficacy in killing Cockroaches that were exposed to a high concentration of extract (100 mg/mL), the mortality rate was (90 and 100%), compared to the (cypermethrin 0.1%), the mortality rate was (70 and 100%) during the periods (1 and 2 hr) respectively. While the eggs cockroaches that were exposed to concentration of extract (100 mg/mL) and positive control (cypermethrin 0.1%) the hatching rate was (60 and 60%) after 30 days period respectively. While the negative control (without treated) was the hatching eggs cockroaches rate is (100%) during that period.

Key words: German cockroaches, Insecticide, *Nerium oleander*, Plant extracts.

INTRODUCTION

German cockroaches are invasive pests and are widely distributed in households, hospitals, hotels and restaurants of worldwide, inhabiting in human communities (Tang *et al.*, 2019). German cockroach infestations are on the rise and play a role in causing dizziness, asthma and nausea reactions in people (Ladomni, 2001). It's also carry viruses, protozoa and infectious bacteria inside its body and on its external surface, causing health risks in many different environments (Mindykowski *et al.*, 2010; Nasirian, 2019). However, *B. germanica* is considered as an important medical and economic pest because it has a shorter generation time and higher fecundity than the other cockroaches, which makes it difficult to control (Scott *et al.*, 1990). Synthetic pesticides are effective tools for pest control but have potential negative effects such as pesticide resistance, environmental pollution and human health problems (Sparks and Nauen, 2015). Insecticide resistance has become one of the major interests for the development of new compounds. Cockroaches resistance has been reported to a wide range of chemicals, including pyrethroids, carbamates and organophosphates (Arthur,

¹Department of Zoology, College of Science, King Saud University, P.O. Box 2455, Riyadh 11451, Saudi Arabia.

Corresponding Author: Mohammed M. Mares, Department of Zoology, College of Science, King Saud University, P.O. Box 2455, Riyadh 11451, Saudi Arabia. Email: mmares@ksu.edu.sa

How to cite this article: Mares, M.M., Murshed, M., Aljawdah, H.M.A., Hailan, W.A. and Al-Quraishy, S. (2024). *In vitro Assessment of the Insecticidal Activity of *Nerium oleander* Extract against German Cockroaches (*Blattella germanica*)*. Indian Journal of Animal Research. 58(10): 1751-1757. doi: 10.18805/IJAR.BF-1727.

Submitted: 09-11-2023 **Accepted:** 22-12-2023 **Online:** 02-01-2024

1996), especially in the most prevalent cockroaches such as German cockroaches (*Blattella germanica*) (Enayati and Motivali, 2007). The cockroaches' resistance to various pesticides is an important factor in its survival, reproduction and disease transmission (Nasirian, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to develop a new type of environmentally friendly pesticide. Plant extracts are certainly an ideal candidate due to their low toxicity to mammals, ease of biodegradation and low environmental risk (Rajendran and

Sriranjini, 2008). Many medicinal plant extracts are reported to have insecticidal properties against public health pests, such as mosquitoes (Kamaraj *et al.*, 2010), houseflies (Chauhan *et al.*, 2015) and German cockroaches (*B. germanica*) (Liu *et al.*, 2015). *Nerium oleander* is an ornamental evergreen shrub or small tree native to the Mediterranean region and Southeast Asia (Lans, 2007). All parts of the oleander plant are toxic to humans and animals and repel some insects (Bagari *et al.*, 2013). *N. oleander* has been used as a medicinal plant for the treatment of a variety of ailments. Traditional medicine uses oleander to treat epilepsy and cancerous tumors (Abbas *et al.*, 2012). *Nerium* is employed in the practice of traditional medicine. The flower makes a green dye that is beneficial for treating skin conditions. Moreover, this dye has the power to treat wounds and lessen skin inflammation (Lans, 2007). The juice prepared from the stem bark of *Nerium oleander* is used as an earache remedy in the local traditional medical systems in the Kancheepuram region of Tamil Nadu, India (Nanyingi *et al.*, 2008). It has also been found to have various medicinal activities such as antidiabetic (El Sawi *et al.*, 2010), immunomodulatory (Mwafy and Yassin, 2011) and cardiac tonic (Al-Farwachi, 2007). Since *Nerium oleander* extract has been shown to have several medicinal properties. The present study aimed to evaluate the insecticidal activity of *Nerium oleander* extract against German cockroaches.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Preparation of extracts

The *Nerium oleander* leaves were collected from Botanical Gardens in Riyadh city, Saudi Arabia. The leaves (1000 g) were air-dried at 40°C, ground into a powder, after which extracted powder totaling 500 g from the leaves was extracted with 70% ethanol as follows: 100 g of dry powder was added to 400 ml of 70% ethanol and mixed gently for 1 h using a magnetic stirrer. The obtained solution was left at room temperature for 24 h, then stirred again and filtered. The solvent was then evaporated on a rotary evaporator (Inter world highway, LLC). After obtaining the crude extract, it was lyophilized and kept at a temperature of -20 degrees Celsius until usage (Chen *et al.*, 2006).

Infrared spectroscopy

After the completion of the processing steps, a minute portion of the material was homogenized by mixing it with an excessive quantity of potassium bromide powder (1: 99 wt %). After that, the material went through a coarse crushing process before being loaded into a pellet-forming die. The infrared spectrum was analyzed using an optical spectrometer from Thermo Scientific called the NICOLET 6700 Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy (FT-IR). This allowed for the prediction of the most probable constituent classes. The greatest number of waves absorbed is denoted by the expression "a number of waves" (cm⁻¹).

Spectra were recorded at 25°C, with a resolution of 4 cm and the range of the spectrum was from 4000 cm⁻¹ to 400.

Collection Adult cockroaches and egg capsules

Adult cockroaches and egg capsules were collected from the kitchens of workers' apartments located in the city of Riyadh. They were placed in plastic tubes with holes that allowed air to enter the tube. After the collection process, they were transferred to the Parasitology Laboratory in the Department of Zoology, King Saud University.

Preparation of concentrations of *Nerium oleander* extract

The dry extract was diluted in distilled water to the concentrations coveted for biological assays (50 and 100 mg/ml) for the tested plant. The concentrations were used to test the insecticidal effect activity *Nerium oleander* extract against cockroaches and the eggs capsule cockroaches. Distilled water and cypermethrin (0.1%) were used as negative and positive control. The positive control, 0.1% cypermethrin was diluted in water according to the manufacturer's recommendation (1:1000) before being utilized for the further experiment (Heukelbach *et al.*, 2006).

Assay of insecticidal activity of *Nerium oleander* extract of adult cockroaches

In vitro testing commenced within 1 hr of cockroaches collection. Ten adult cockroaches active in three replicates were placed in a petri dish and 3 mL of each concentration was added directly to three repeat Petri dishes. 3 ml of distilled water and 0.1% cypermethrin 60 EC were used as negative and positive controls. The insects were maintained at room temperature. Cockroaches dead were determined in each petri dish at 1 hr and 2 hr periods from treatment. Adult cockroaches were considered dead if their appendages did not move when prodded with a brush.

Assay of insecticidal activity *Nerium oleander* extract of eggs capsule cockroaches

In vitro testing commenced within 1 hr of eggs capsule cockroaches collection. Five eggs capsule in two replicates were placed in a petri dish and 1 mL of concentration 100 mg/ml of *Nerium oleander* extract was added directly to two repeat. Five eggs capsule in Petri dishe negative control (without treated) and other Petri dishe contain 0.1% cypermethrin 60 EC was used as positive control. The egg capsules were maintained at 25±1°C and 60% RH. The hatching of the eggs was determined in each petri dish one month after they were collected from female cockroaches and treatment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of *Nerium oleander* leaf extracts using FT-IR explained main bands at 3383.10 cm⁻¹, N-H stretching, 2934.35 cm⁻¹, C-H stretching, 2124.09 cm⁻¹, N=C=N stretching, 1633.45 cm⁻¹, C=C stretching, 1515.92 cm⁻¹,

N-O stretching, 1423.03 cm⁻¹, O-H bending, 1273.79 cm⁻¹, C-O stretching, 1117.70 cm⁻¹, C=O stretching, 1048.87 cm⁻¹, CO-O-CO stretching, 926.30 cm⁻¹, bending, 828.28 cm⁻¹, C=C bending and 717.43 cm⁻¹, C=C bending (Fig 1 and Table 1).

The effects of the *N. oleander* extract on cockroaches and hatching of eggs cockroaches were studied *in vitro* at therapeutic doses of 50 and 100 mg/mL and compared it to a negative control (distilled water) and control positive cypermethrin 0.1%. Results showed that thorough Cockroaches examination after 1 and 2 hr of concentrations were given to test the cockroaches killer effects and see if it was still alive or dead. The Cockroaches exposed to a low concentration of extracts (50 mg/mL) had lower mortality rates during the periods 1 and 2 hr respectively (Fig 3 and 4). Compared to the positive control and concentration of 100 mg/mL extract.

While the Cockroaches that were exposed to a high concentration of extract (100 mg/mL), the mortality rate was (90 and 100%) during the periods (1 and 2 hr), respectively (Fig 2B, 3 and 4).

Compared to the positive control, the mortality rate was (70 and 100%) during the periods (1 and 2 hr) respectively (Fig 2 C, 3 and 4). While the negative control was not exposed to drugs only water, the death rate is almost zero during the periods (1 and 2 hr) (Fig 2A, 3 and 4). Through these results, it was found that the concentration of (100 mg/mL) from *Nerium oleander* extract are very similar to the positive control (cypermethrin 0.1%) and that the concentration of (50 mg/mL) is also considered effective in killing cockroaches when compared to the negative control (Fig 5).

30 days after exposure, concentrations of 100 mg/ml of *Nerium oleander* extract and cypermethrin 0.1% were

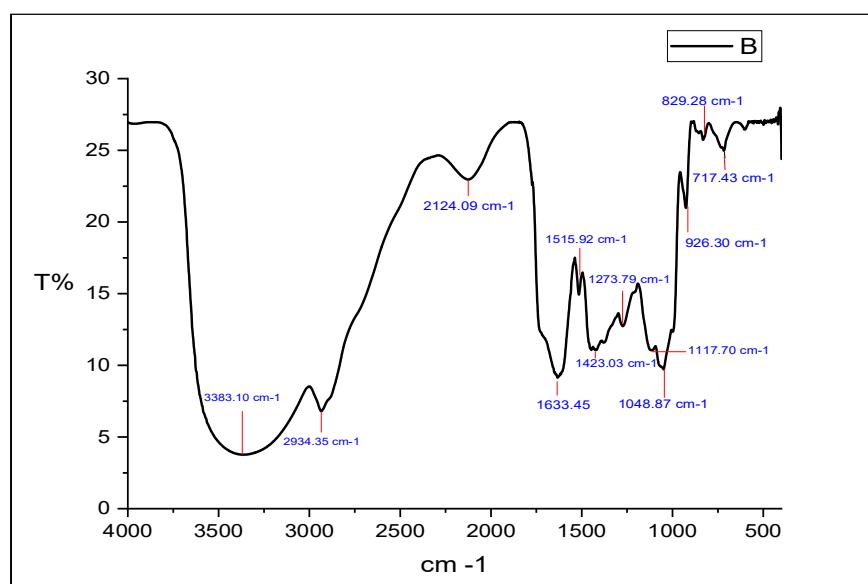


Fig 1: FT-IR chromatogram of *Nerium oleander* leaf extracts in methanolic medium showing the functional characteristic of the active chemical compounds.

Table 1: Analyze NOLE to identify potential active chemical compounds using FT-IR.

Compound class	Group	Transmittance (%)	Appearance	Absorption (cm ⁻¹)
Aliphatic primary amine	N-H stretching	4	Medium	3383.10
Alkane	C-H stretching	7	Medium	2934.35
Carbodiimide	N=C=N stretching	23	Strong	2124.09
Alkene	C=C stretching	9	Medium	1633.45
Nitro compound	N-O stretching	15	Strong	1515.92
Nitro compound	O-H bending	11	Medium	1423.03
Alkyl aryl ether	C-O stretching	12	Strong	1273.79
Secondary alcohol	C-O stretching	10	Strong	1117.70
Anhydride	CO-O-CO stretching	9	strong, broad	1048.87
Alkene	C=C bending	21	Strong	926.30
Trisubstituted	C=C bending	26	Medium	829.28
Disubstituted (cis)	C=C bending	25	Strong	717.43

more effective against hatching of eggs cockroaches than the negative control was not exposed to drugs, the not hatching of eggs cockroaches rate is almost zero during that period in negative control. While the eggs of cockroaches that were exposed to concentration of extract (100 mg/mL) (Fig 2D) and control positive cypermethrin 0.1% the hatching rate was (60 and 60%) after 30 days from exposed (Fig 6). While the negative control was the hatching rate is (100%) during that period (Fig 2E and 6).

The results obtained from this study are consistent with El-Sayed and El-Bassiony, (2016) that diethyl ether

extract of *N. oleander* leaves is potential control against to *Culex pipiens*. Also, aqueous extract of *Nerium oleander* flowers were reported for larvicidal activity against the filarial vector, *Culex quinquefasciatus* (Raveen et al., 2014). The aqueous *Nerium oleander* extract exhibited larval toxicity against the first to fourth instar larvae and pupae of *Anopheles stephensi* (Roni et al., 2013). These results are in line with obtained Rathi and Al-Zubaidi, (2011) that *N. oleander* has toxic effects on the development of larval and pupal stages for *Bemisia tabaci* species. Morsi et al. (2022) found the effect of *Nerium oleander* leaf extract on

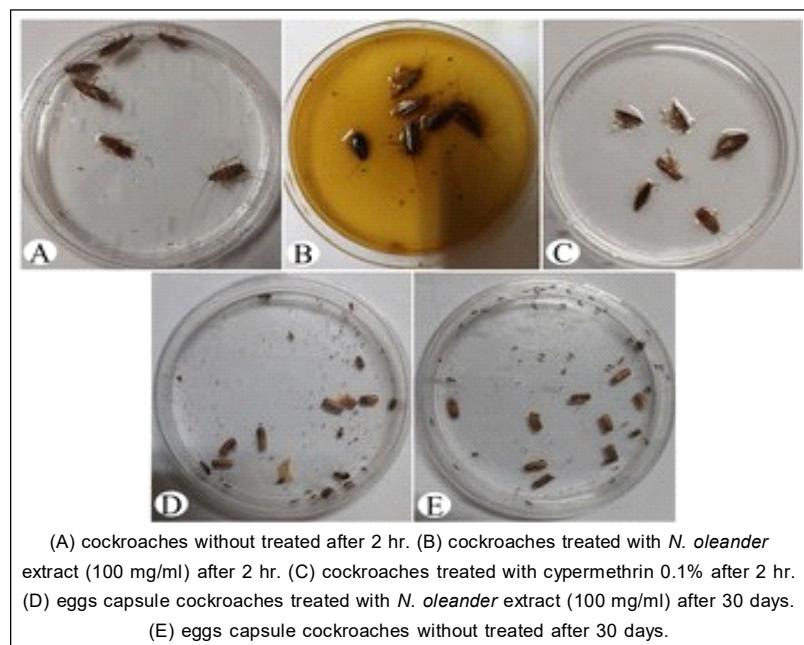


Fig 2: The effect of *Nerium oleander* extract on cockroaches and the eggs capsule cockroaches.

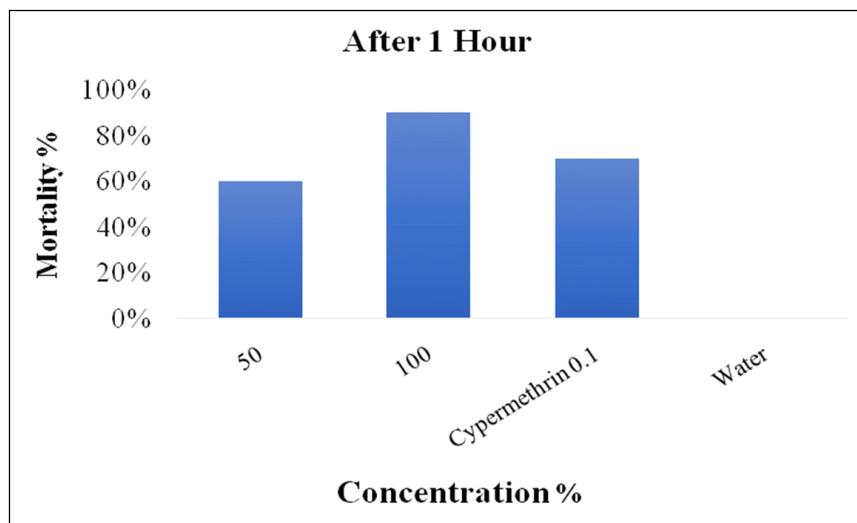


Fig 3: The influences of various concentrations of leaf extracts (50, 100 mg/ml) of *Nerium oleander* with positive and negative controls cypermethrin 0.1% and water on the mortality rate of cockroaches after 1 hr.

the schistosomiasis parasite. confirmed Siddiqui *et al.* (2012) the extract of *N. oleander* leaves contains many effective compounds, including flavonoid glycosides, oleanderocinoic acid, a cardenolide, oleandigoside, neridiginoside and odoroside-H and these compounds have CNS depressant effects and growth inhibitory and cytotoxic activities, leading to paralysis and killing cockroaches. Also, the cockroaches work to swallow the extract, which in turn works to cause cockroaches poisoning, which results in the death of the cockroaches and effect hatching of eggs cockroaches. This is consistent with the mention in Bandara *et al.* (2010) that

Nerium oleander is a plant that can be fatal if ingested. All parts of the plant are toxic and contain various cardiac glycosides. Ingestion of *oleander* causes nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, cardiac arrhythmias and hyperkalemia in animals. In a study that proved the presence of a group of effective compounds in the *Nerium oleander* extract, such as alkaloids, phenols, flavonoids, tannins and actins (Huang *et al.*, 2009), as for flavonoids, they act to reduce sugars, causing an imbalance in carbohydrate metabolism and re-ducing the amount of energy units (ATP) supplied in the Organisms vital activity (Hamad, 2021).

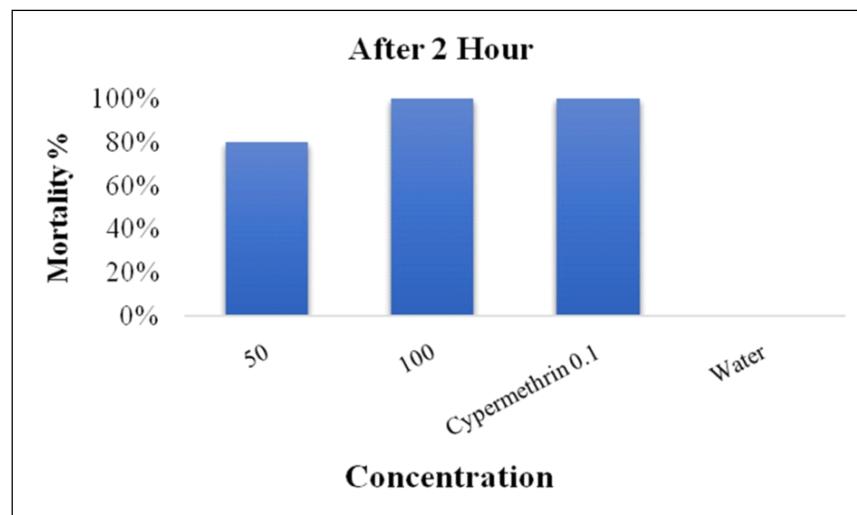


Fig 4: The influences of various concentrations of leaf extracts (50, 100 mg/ml) of *Nerium oleander* with positive and negative controls cypermethrin 0.1% and water on the mortality rate of cockroaches after 2 hr.

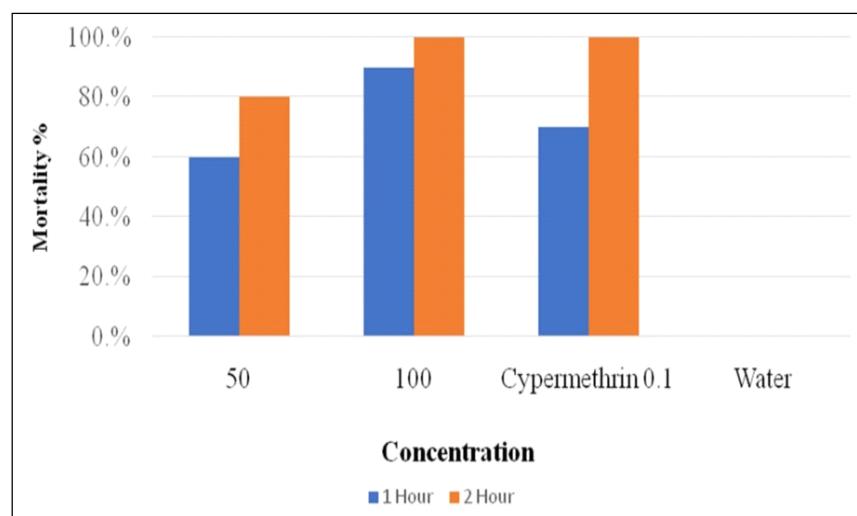


Fig 5: The difference between the general influences of various concentrations of leaf extracts (50, 100 mg/ml) of *Nerium oleander* with positive and negative controls cypermethrin 0.1% and water on the mortality rate of cockroaches of 1 to 2 hr.

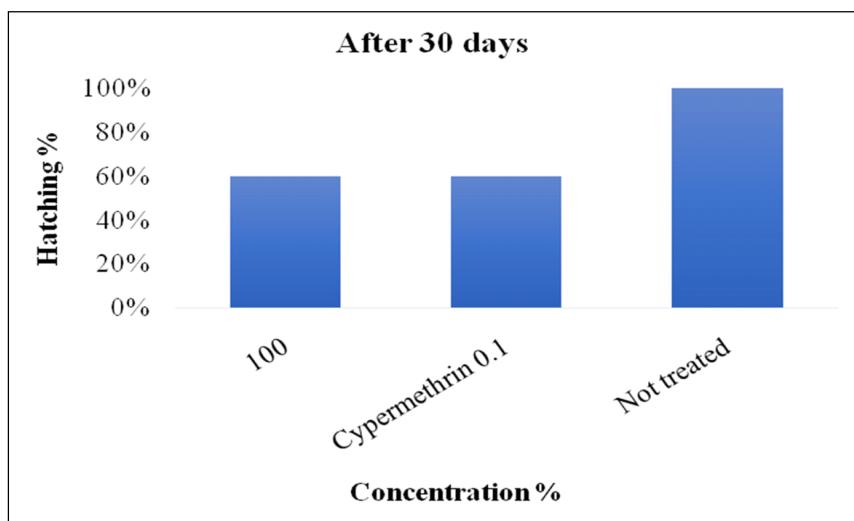


Fig 6: The influences of concentration of leaf extracts (100 mg/ml) of *Nerium oleander* with positive and negative controls on the hatching eggs capsule cockroaches rate after 30 day.

CONCLUSION

Our study indicates that *Nerium oleander* leaf extract had strong Inhibition activity hatching of eggs cockroaches and killer it greatly comparable to the effect of cypermethrin 0.1% at higher concentrations. Also, further studies are needed to isolate the pharmacologically active compounds responsible for these activities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was supported by Researcher supporting program (RSPD2023R/1084). King Saud University.

Data availability statement

All the datasets generated or analyzed during this study are included in this published article.

Conflict of interest statement

The author(s) declare that they have no conflict of interest regarding the content of this article.

REFERENCES

Abbas, R.Z., Colwell, D.D., Gillear, J. (2012). Botanicals: An alternative approach for the control of avian coccidiosis. World's Poultry Science Journal. 68(2): 203-215.

Al-Farwachi, M. (2007). *In vivo* and *in vitro* immunmodulatory activities of *Nerium oleander* aqueous leaf extract in rabbits. Journal of Animal and Veterinary Advances. 14: 1047-50.

Arthur, F.H. (1996). Grain protectants: Current status and prospects for the future. Journal of Stored Products Research. 32(4): 293-302.

Bagari, M., Bouhaimi, A., Ghaout, S., Chihrane, J. (2013). The toxic effects of *Nerium oleander* on larvae of the desert locust *Schistocerca gregaria* (Forskål, 1775) (Orthoptera, Acrididae). Zoologica Baetica. 24(1): 193-203.

Bandara, V., Weinstein, S.A., White, J., Eddleston, M. (2010). A review of the natural history, toxinology, diagnosis and clinical management of *Nerium oleander* (common oleander) and *Thevetia peruviana* (yellow oleander) poisoning. Toxicology. 56(3): 273-281.

Chauhan, N., Kumar, P., Mishra, S., Verma, S., Malik, A., Sharma, S. (2015). Insecticidal activity of *Jatropha curcas* extracts against housefly, *Musca domestica*. Environmental Science and Pollution Research. 22: 14793-14800.

Chen, Y., Fan, G., Chen, B., Xie, Y., Wu, H., Wu, Y., Wang, J. (2006). Separation and Quantitative Analysis of Coumarin Compounds from *Angelica dahurica* (Fisch. ex Hoffm) Benth. et Hook. by Pressurized Capillary Electrochromatography. Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis. 41(1): 105-116.

El Sawi, N.M., Geweely, N.S., Qusti, S., Mohamed, M., Kamel, A. (2010). Cytotoxicity and antimicrobial activity of *Nerium oleander* extracts. Journal of Applied Animal Research. 37(1): 25-31.

El-Sayed, S.H., El-Bassiony, G.M. (2016). Larvicidal, biological and genotoxic effects and temperature-toxicity relationship of some leaf extracts of *Nerium oleander* (Apocynaceae) on *Culex pipiens* (Diptera: Culicidae). Journal of Arthropod-borne Diseases. 10(1): 1-11.

Enayati, A.A., Motevali, H.F. (2007). Biochemistry of Pyrethroid Resistance in German Cockroach (Diptera, Blattellidae) from Hospitals of Sari, Iran.

Hamad, R.M. (2021). The effect of aqueous and alcoholic extract of nerium oleander on biochemical parameters of rats infected with *echinococcus granulosus*. Annals of the Romanian Society for Cell Biology. 15-24.

Heukelbach, J., Oliveira, F.A., Speare, R. (2006). A new shampoo based on neem (*Azadirachta indica*) is highly effective against head lice *in vitro*. Parasitology Research. 99: 353-356.

Huang, W.Y., Cai, Y.Z., Zhang, Y. (2009). Natural phenolic compounds from medicinal herbs and dietary plants: Potential use for cancer prevention. Nutrition and Cancer. 62(1): 1-20.

Kamaraj, C., Rahuman, A.A., Mahapatra, A., Bagavan, A., Elango, G. (2010). Insecticidal and larvicidal activities of medicinal plant extracts against mosquitoes. *Parasitology Research*. 107: 1337-1349.

Ladonni, H. (2001). Evaluation of three methods for detecting permethrin resistance in adult and nymphal *Blattella germanica* (Diptera: Blattellidae). *Journal of Economic Entomology*. 94(3): 694-697.

Lans, C. (2007). Ethnomedicines used in Trinidad and Tobago for reproductive problems. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*. 3(1): 1-12.

Liu, X.C., Liu, Q., Chen, H., Liu, Q.Z., Jiang, S.Y., Liu, Z.L. (2015). Evaluation of contact toxicity and repellency of the essential oil of *Pogostemon cablin* leaves and its constituents against *Blattella germanica* (Blattodae: Blattellidae). *Journal of Medical Entomology*. 52(1): 86-92.

Mindykowski, B., Jaenicke, E., Tenzer, S., Cirak, S., Schweikardt, T., Schild, H., Decker, H. (2010). Cockroach allergens Per a 3 are oligomers. *Developmental and Comparative Immunology*. 34(7): 722-733.

Morsi, E.A., Abdel-Hameed, E.S., El-Sayed, M.M., Rabia, I.A. (2022). HPLC-ESI-MS characterization of certain compounds of methanolic extract of *Nerium oleander* and its fractions as well as evaluation of their potential against *Schistosomiasis mansoni*. *Egyptian Journal of Chemistry*. 65(2): 133-143.

Mwafy, S.N., Yassin, M.M. (2011). Antidiabetic activity evaluation of glimepiride and *Nerium oleander* extract on insulin, glucose levels and some liver enzymes activities in experimental diabetic rat model. *Pakistan Journal of Biological Sciences: PJBS*. 14(21): 984-990.

Nanyangi, M.O., Mbaria, J.M., Lanyasunya, A.L., Wagate, C.G., Koros, K.B., Kaburia, H.F., Ogara, W.O. (2008). Ethnopharmacological survey of Samburu district, Kenya. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*. 4(1): 1-12.

Nasirian, H. (2010). An overview of German cockroach, *Blattella germanica*, studies conducted in Iran. *Pakistan Journal of Biological Sciences*. 13(22): 1077.

Nasirian, H. (2019). Recent cockroach bacterial contamination trend in the human dwelling environments: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Bangladesh Journal of Medical Science* 18(3): 540-545.

Rajendran, S., Sriranjini, V. (2008). Plant products as fumigants for stored-product insect control. *Journal of Stored Products Research*. 44(2): 126-135.

Rathi, M.H., Al-Zubaidi, F.S. (2011). Effect of crude phenolic extracts of *Nerium oleander* L. leaves on the biological performance of *Bemisia tabaci* (Genn) (Homoptera: Aleyrodida). *Diyala Journal for Pure Sciences*. pp. 214-226.

Raveen, R., Kamakshi, K.T., Deepa, M., Arivoli, S., Tennyson, S. (2014). Larvicidal activity of *Nerium oleander* L. (Apocynaceae) flower extracts against *Culex quinquefasciatus* Say (Diptera: Culicidae). *International Journal of Mosquito Research*. 1(1): 38-42.

Roni, M., Murugan, K., Panneerselvam, C., Subramaniam, J., Hwang, J.S. (2013). Evaluation of leaf aqueous extract and synthesized silver nanoparticles using *Nerium oleander* against *Anopheles stephensi* (Diptera: Culicidae). *Parasitology Research*. 112: 981-990.

Scott, J.G., Cochran, D.G., Siegfried, B.D. (1990). Insecticide toxicity, synergism and resistance in the German cockroach (Diptera: Blattellidae). *Journal of Economic Entomology*. 83(5): 1698-1703.

Siddiqui, B.S., Khatoon, N., Begum, S., Farooq, A.D., Qamar, K., Bhatti, H.A., Ali, S.K. (2012). Flavonoid and cardenolide glycosides and a pentacyclic triterpene from the leaves of *Nerium oleander* and evaluation of cytotoxicity. *Phytochemistry*. 77: 238-244.

Sparks, T.C., Nauen, R. (2015). IRAC: Mode of action classification and insecticide resistance management. *Pesticide Biochemistry and Physiology*. 121: 122-128.

Tang, Q., Bourguignon, T., Willenmse, L., De Coninck, E., Evans, T. (2019). Global spread of the German cockroach, *Blattella germanica*. *Biological Invasions*. 21: 693-707.