



Received on 29 December 2025; received in revised form, 27 January 2026; accepted, 28 January 2026; published 31 January 2026

RAUWOLFIA SERPENTINA: PHYTOCHEMISTRY, MECHANISMS OF ACTION, AND CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS – A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

Anubhav Dubey ^{*} ¹, Vinay Kumar Patel ¹, Vikram Kumar Sahu ¹, Sribatsa Lanchhana Dash ¹ and Amit Mishra ²

Maharana Pratap College of Pharmacy Kothi ¹, Mandhana, Kanpur - 209217, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Maharana Pratap College of Pharmaceutical Sciences ², Kothi, Mandhana, Kanpur - 209217, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Keywords:

Rauwolfia serpentina, *Sarpagandha*,
Reserpine, Indole alkaloids,
Traditional Indian medicine,
Medicinal plants

Correspondence to Author:

Dr. Anubhav Dubey

Assistant Professor,
Maharana Pratap College of
Pharmacy Kothi, Mandhana, Kanpur -
209217, Uttar Pradesh, India.

E-mail: anubhavdwivedi803@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The Indian medical system has been using the medication *Rauwolfia serpentina* for many generations. The medication has been referred to as *Sarpagandha* due to its snake-like structure. Reserpine is the main alkaloid found in *Rauwolfia serpentina*, despite the fact that it contains over 50 alkaloids. Even at lower dosages, reserpine is an effective antihypertensive medication. In addition to its antihypertensive and hepatoprotective properties, the stems and leaves of *Rauwolfia serpentina* have numerous other therapeutic applications, such as sedative, antipsychotic, antidiuretic, and anticancer (in breast), among others. Although the herb *Rauwolfia serpentina* contains the principal four Indole alkaloids, the primary goal of this context is to provide information about the primary active alkaloid Reserpine, which is more concentrated in the plant's root and plays a significant part in the plant's antihypertensive activity. Reserpine must be used at a considerably lower level in order to have an antihypertensive effect; otherwise, it may have major side effects such as sedation, lethargy, psychological depressive disorders, hypotension, nausea, bradycardia, bronchospasm, and withdrawal psychosis.

INTRODUCTION: Approximately 300 million individuals globally, or 7% of the total population, suffer from asthma, a disease that is frequently becoming worse. Additionally, it is predicted that by 2025, an additional 100 million people will be impacted ¹. Approximately 80% of the population still relies on herbal medicines for appropriate medical care. Nearly 45,000 herbal plants are found in India, and they are crucial in the treatment of numerous illnesses ².

This article provides a brief overview of the therapeutic potential of particular medicinal plants used to treat bronchial asthma. Coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and tightness in the chest are all recurring symptoms of asthma, a chronic inflammatory illness of the airways. Allergies are closely associated with asthma and other respiratory conditions ^{3,4}. Periodic, adjustable bronchial constriction is the hallmark of bronchial asthma ⁵.

Some tests, such as spirometry, maximum expiratory flow (PEF), and chest x-rays, can be used to identify bronchial asthma ⁶. Both hereditary and environmental variables are known to be responsible for asthma ⁷. Asthma-causing substances are referred to as allergens. Smoking and second-hand smoke, infections like the flu and



DOI:
10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.13(1).1-12

Article can be accessed online on:
www.ijpjournal.com

DOI link: [https://doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.13\(1\).1-12](https://doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.13(1).1-12)

cold, allergens like dust, pollen, and exercise, air pollution and pollutants, medicines, weather, food additives, and emotional stress and worry are a few of the potential triggers. Often referred to as devil hot pepper, Indian snake root, or *Sarpagandha*, *Rauwolfia serpentina*, (Linn.) Plant Ex Kurz is a member of the plant *Apocynaceae* family. The majority of the more than 100 different species that have been identified under the category of *Rauwolfia* are indigenous to tropical and subtropical regions, which include Central and South America, Australia, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Southeast Asian moist, deciduous woodlands, such as those in Bangladesh, Burma, Malaysia, India, and Sri Lanka, are home to *R. serpentina*, an evergreen and smooth shrub that can reach a height of 60 meters. *R. serpentina* is extensively utilized in the allopathic, folk, Ayurvedic, and Unani medical systems. The root preparations of *R. serpentina* have been employed in folk and regional medicine as a laxative, uterine stimulant, diuretic, antidote, expectorant, and febrifuge since the pre-Vedic era⁸.

Respiratory infections, malaria, asthma, skin conditions, parasites, organ diseases, eye conditions (opacity of the cornea), circulatory problems, AIDS, rheumatism, diarrhoea, and dysentery are all treated using root extracts. *R. serpentina* is a rich source of different varieties of chemical constituents. The root of this plant contains several

alkaloids, which include ajmalicine, reserpine, serpentine, ajmaline, yohimbine, ajmalicine, reserpine, desipramine, rescinnamidine, indolizine, rescanning, and serpentine⁹. Among the alkaloids, reserpine has attracted attention of researchers in the field of drug development throughout the globe. It is also useful in treating sedative insomnia, psychological disorders, excitement, epilepsy, traumas, anxiety, schizophrenia, insanity and in reducing blood pressure. Reserpine exerts antihypertensive property by depleting the catecholamine¹⁰. Rescanning has the same activity as reserpine. however, it inhibits angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) that converts the angiotensin I, resulting in a decrease of plasma angiotensin II. Ajmaline possesses antiarrhythmic effect by blocking the sodium channel. Because serpentine affects type II topoisomerase activity, it possesses antipsychotic properties. Yohimbine treats erectile dysfunction by acting as a selective alpha-adrenergic inhibitor in blood vessels¹¹.

Significant antidiabetic, hypolipidemic, and antibacterial effects were found in high concentrations of *R. serpentina* phenols. *R. serpentine*'s flavonoids have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anticancer qualities in addition to helping to prevent oxidative cell damage¹². The homolytic effect and bind to cholesterol characteristic are caused by the presence of saponins in the system¹³.

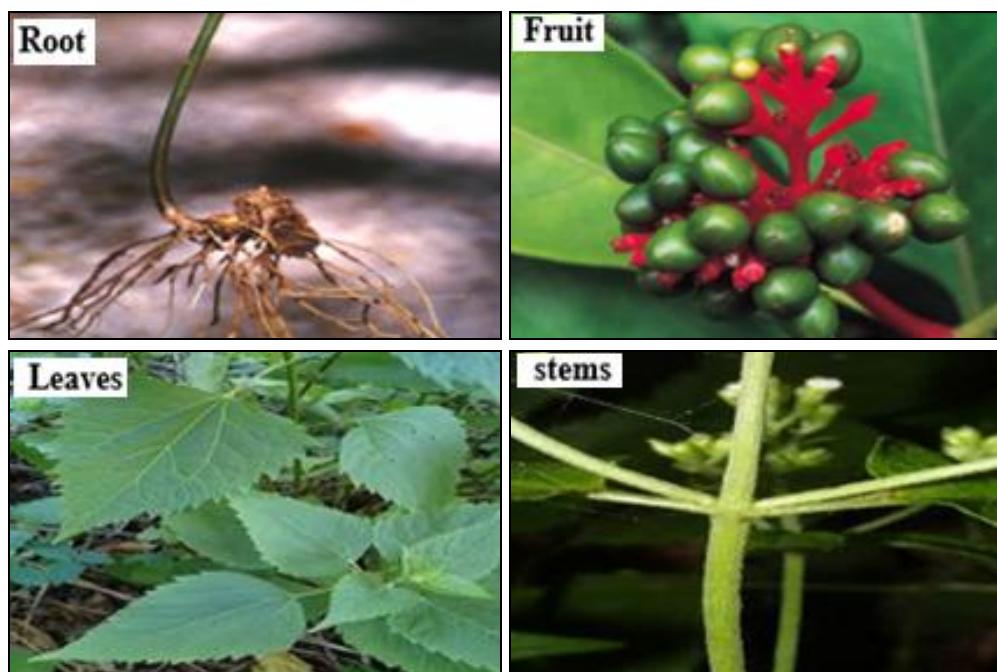


FIG. 1: RAUWOLFIA SERPENTINA PLANT (SARPAGANDHA)

Botanical Description:

Synonym's:

TABLE 1: DIFFERENT PLACES THE PLANT IS KNOWN AS DIFFERENT NAMES LIKE

Hindi	Sarpagandha, Chandrabhaga
English	Rauwolfia or Indian snake roots
Latin	Rauwolfia serpentina
Kannada	Keramaddinagaddi
Bengali	Chandra
Tamil	Chevanamalpodi
Chinese	Lu fu mu
Sanskrit	Sarpagandha

TABLE 2: TAXONOMICAL CLASSIFICATION

Kingdome	Plantae
Phylum	Angiosperms
Subphylum	Eudicots
Order	Gentianellas
Family	Apocynaceae
Genus	Rauwolfia
Species	Serpentina

Cultivation of *Rauwolfia serpentina*: Tropical and subtropical areas with humid, warm temperatures and evenly distributed rainfall are the primary locations for the cultivation of *Rauwolfia serpentina*. It thrives in loamy soil that is deep, rich in organic matter, well-drained, and has a pH that ranges from slightly acidic to neutral.

Cuttings of seeds, root trimmings, or stem cuttings are frequently used for propagation; despite low germination rates, seed propagation is the most popular method. Following the rainy season, seeds are planted in nursery beds. After 6 to 8 weeks, healthy seedlings are moved to the field at the proper intervals. During the early phases of growth, regular drip irrigation, cultivation, and biodegradable manuring are crucial. The crop needs protection from water logging and some shade. After 18 to 24 months, when the alkaloid content is high enough, the roots are collected, washed, dried, and kept for use in medicine.

Collection of *Rauwolfia serpentina*: The collection of *Rauwolfia serpentina* is usually carried out after the plant has reached full maturity, which occurs about 18–24 months after planting, when the roots contain maximum alkaloid content. Harvesting is done by carefully uprooting the entire plant or digging out the roots to avoid damage. The collected roots are washed thoroughly to remove soil and other impurities, then cut into suitable pieces. These pieces are dried in shade or in well-

ventilated areas to preserve the active constituents. After complete drying, the roots are packed in moisture-free containers and stored in a cool, dry place for medicinal use.

Chemical Constituents

Alkaloids: Alkaloids are broad group of chemical compounds which contain a structural nitrogen ring. These are caused by a variety of creatures, including bacteria and mammals, but plants create a particularly wide variety of alkaloids. About 10 % of plants species are considered to contain alkaloid as secondary metabolites, in which they operate largely in providing defence towards herbivores and pathogens. Pure isolated alkaloids and their synthesis derivatives are employed as medicinal compounds for analgesic, antispasmodic and bactericidal properties ¹⁴.

Unlike other blood pressure-reducing medications, the alkaloids derived from the root extract directly affect the central nervous system, lowering blood pressure. According to reports, the root of *R. serpentina* contains 0.7–3.0% of total alkaloids and roughly 0.1% of the active ingredient, reserpine, an indole alkaloid. Hence, stem biomass production of these plants could be of economic importance. On the basis of the structural there are three types of compounds namely, weak basic dimethyl alkaloids, alkaloids of moderate basicity and strong an hydronium bases ¹⁵. Ajmaline, ajmalimine, ajmalicine deserpidineinosine, indolizine, Reserpine, reserpine, reserpine, rescanning, rescinnamidine, serpentine, serpentine, & yohimbine are among the several alkaloids found in the *Rauwolfia* plant **Fig. 1** ¹⁶. Reserpine is the primary alkaloid that exhibits a wide range of therapeutic uses ^{17, 18}. Along with the drugs reserpine, yohimbine, snakebite, deserpidine, ajmalicine and ajmaline, these drugs are used to treating hypertension and breast cancer ^{19, 20}.

Reserpine: It is a purified crystalline mono alkaloid, obtained from the roots of the *Rauwolfia* plant and was originally identified in 1952. The oleoresin fraction of the roots contains this relatively weak tertiary base, which is helpful in the treatment of neurological, cardiovascular, and hypertensive disorders ²¹. The antihypertensive benefits of *Rauwolfia* roots are related to reserpine (3,4,5-trimethyl benzoic acid an ester of reserpine

acid, an indole compound of 18-hydroxy yohimbine plant type). It is a very well-known alkaloid and is mostly used as a natural sedating agent^{22, 23}. Reserpine is presently being exploited as a tool in physiologic investigations of bodily functioning and in medicinal studies by attaching to catecholamine storage vesicles found in nerve cells, reserpine has a depressive effect on both the brain (CNS) and the peripheral nerves, which results in its antihypertensive effects.

This stops serotonin and catecholamines from being stored normally when catecholamines fall. By depleting the transmitter material from the catecholamine neurons and potentially triggering the central parasympathetic nervous system, it disrupts the autonomic nervous system²⁴. These chemicals are largely concerned in controlling the heart rate, cardiac contract and peripheral resistance. It also assists in sedation and decreasing of blood pressure, especially in situations of hypotension exacerbated by stress and antagonistic nervous system activity. Reserpine increases urine metabolites and releases 5-hydroxytryptamine (5-HT) from all tissues where it is typically kept.

Ajmaline: The chemical was first identified by Sacituzumab Siddiqui from the origins of R in 1931 serpentine. He was named it an ajmaline after Hakim Ajmal, the Khan, one of the South Africa's most renowned Unani practitioners Asia²⁵. Composed from roots of *R. serpentine* pattern as a class I antiarrhythmic medication, it is very helpful in identifying Brugada Syndrome (hereditary cardiovascular disease), and discriminating between categories of patients with this disease²⁶.

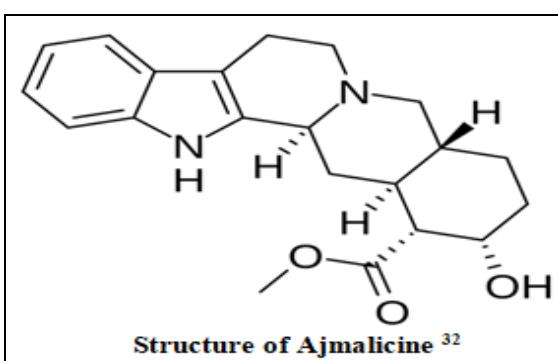
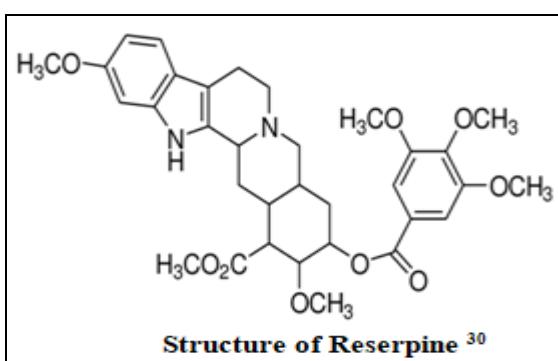
These agents are essentially categorized into four primary groupings on the basis of their mode of action i.e. calcium channel blockade, beta-adrenergic receptor blockade, depolarization delay

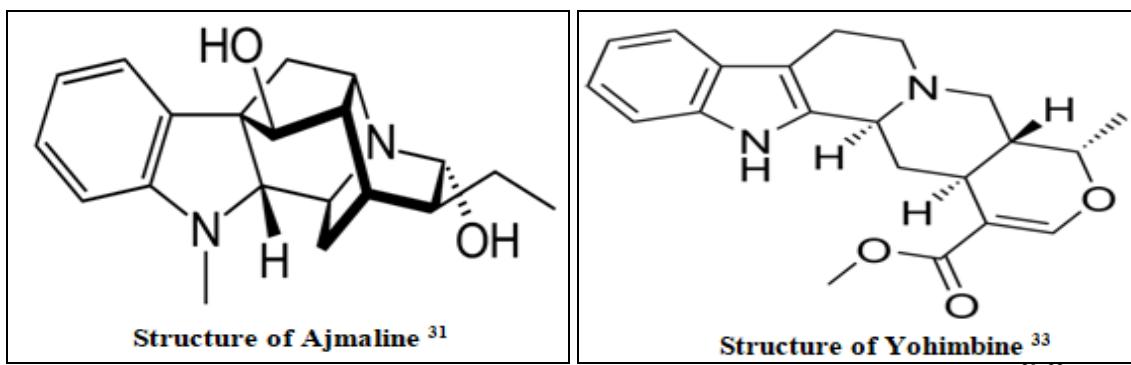
and calcium channel blockages blockade. Ajmaline is a calcium channel blocker that demonstrates instant activity when taken intravenously, which makes it useful for diagnostic reasons.

Ajmalicine: Alkaloid, ajmalicine, and its derivatives have a great variety of uses in the treatment of cardiovascular disorders, notably in providing relief to regular cerebral blood flow. It has an impact on the smooth muscle's ability to prevent strokes and in reducing blood pressure²⁷. Approximately 3500 kg of the compound is obtained annually from either the species *Rauwolfia* or *Catharanthus spp.* by the pharmaceutical sector for the therapy for circulatory conditions. The synthetic route begins with geraniol, followed by iridodial smell and industrial by the the synthesis of loaning, which on oxidized produces loaning into serotonin. This helps the tryptamine to develop coronate class nucleus that culminates in the production of Tryptophan is the source of ajmalicine²⁸ which is converted to tryptamine by serotonin, cat enamine and strictosamide.

Yohimbine: Yohimbine, a pharmacologically well-characterized alkaloid, is used to treat erectile dysfunction by acting as a particular Alpha-adrenergic receptor antagonist or a beta-blocker in the blood vessels. It dilates blood vessels and improves blood movement in the penis, which assists in improving erectile function²⁹.

Additionally, yohimbine was investigated as a treatment for diabetes in human and animal models with α 2A-adrenergic receptor gene polymorphisms. Blood pressure is lowered and smooth muscle is relaxed when these receptors are antagonistic. It dilates the pupils of the eye by raising specific substances in the body.



FIG. 2: CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS OF *RAUWOLFIA SERPENTINA* PLANT ^{30,33}

Clinical Trial: A cursory review of literature on hypertension reveals well more than 100 so-called hypertensive therapies that are said to have the ability to lower blood pressure. In 1930, Ayman Ali could collect almost two hundred testimonies on the effective treatment of hyperpiesia through different hypotensive treatments. Considering the consistently high death rate from hypertension despite the numerous interventions suggested for this condition, the best course of action is still unknown.

Evans and Loughnan, after a rigorous analysis or trial of thirteen various preparations in seventy instances involving elevated blood sugar levels (essential hypertension), were obliged to confess the uselessness of them all. In their perspective, modest sedative measures are sometimes better than the considerably more expensive and stylish goods actively exhibited on the market. The choice of *R. Serpentine* for the present investigation has not been wholly coincidental. A number of things have prompted me to conduct this investigation.

The demand for tablets made from dried roots of the *serpentine* plant has increased in India during the brief ten years that these pills have been available. *Serpentina* root preparations have become incredibly popular for cases of hypertension in the country that almost every patient without high blood pressure has experienced its effects in one way or another. Over 50 million capsules of the drying root have reportedly been sold by one manufacturing company alone.

One of the focuses of the present study has consequently been to assess if this enthusiastic response of the medicine is justifiable. As early ago 1940, I had made another mention to regarding the topic of *R. serpentina* as therapy in those with hypertension: Following an exploration of this medication one finds it effective in a percentage of hypertension cases only; the drug's indications and case suitability have not yet been determined." Since then, I've had the chance to witness this medication's effects in numerous instances ³⁴.

TABLE 3: CLINICAL TRIAL DATA

Study/Trial Title	Authors	Indication/Outcome	Summary	Ref.
A clinical trial of <i>Rauwolfia serpentina</i> in essential Hypertension	Rustom Jal Vakil et al., 1949	Hypertension	One of the earliest clinical trials showing <i>R. serpentina</i> root extract (containing active alkaloids like reserpine) lowers blood pressure in patients with essential hypertension.	[35]
<i>Rauwolfia serpentina</i> in the control of anxiety	Paul Leninger, et al, 1957	Anxiety Control	Compared formulations (reserpine, scleroxylon, crude root) in anxiety patients, showing equivalent effectiveness for overt anxiety; reported minor toxic symptoms manageable clinically	[36]
Antidiabetic Potential of <i>R. serpentina</i> (<i>in-vitro</i> & <i>invivobut not human clinical</i>)	R. Kavitha, et al., 2025	Diabetesmodels	Demonstrated inhibition of α - amylase / α -glucosidase and reduced blood glucose in alloxan-induced diabetic rats; suggests potential antidiabetic effects requiring clinical validation.	[37]
<i>Rauwolfia serpentina</i> antioxidant & antidiabetic evaluation (preclinical)	Saveena Chauhan, et al. 2017	Antioxidant & antidiabetic assays	Compared wild and cultivated plant extracts <i>in-vitro</i> for antioxidant & alpha-amylase inhibition; not a human clinical trial but pharmacological evaluation.	[38]

Pharmacological Activity:

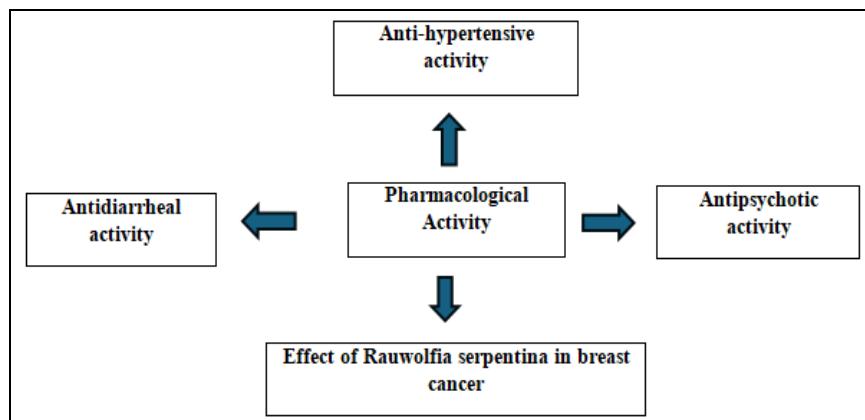


FIG. 3: PHARMACOLOGICAL PARAMETERS OF *RAUWOLFIA SERPENTINA*

Antihypertensive Activity: *Rauwolfia serpentina* contains an alkaloid called reserpine, it is most likely recognized to be an antihypertensive medication.

Reserpine is main alkaloids present greatest in root and leaflets and also the lowest portion of stem. After a given injectable administration, the onset of hypotension effect normally begins in roughly 1 hour.

The maximum effect happens about four hours after an intramuscular shot and lasts for the strongest effect happens within approximately 2 weeks it may persist for a maximum of four weeks after your final dose. When used in conjugation with other underweight drugs for the treatment of serious hypertension, the usual intake ranges from 100 to 250.

Mechanism of Action: Reserpine is a drug that decreases the circulatory system pulse by depleting the reserves of catecholamine at nerves terminating. It stops the reabsorption of neither enzyme at storage locations, allowing enzymatic degradation of neural transmitter³⁹. Vesicular monoamine is bound by reserpine transporter (VMATs) in the organelle membranes with presynaptic Neurons^{40, 41}. Reserpine irreversibly inhibits the H⁺ coupled VMAT1 alongside and VMAT2 are circular norepinephrine transporters. VMAT1 is rich in brain and endocrine cells. VMAT2 is high in neurons. Reserpine, then, suppresses the neural system that uptake and lowers monoamine neurotransmitter reserves, nor serotonin, dopamine, histamine, or adrenaline in the synaptic vesicles of neurones.

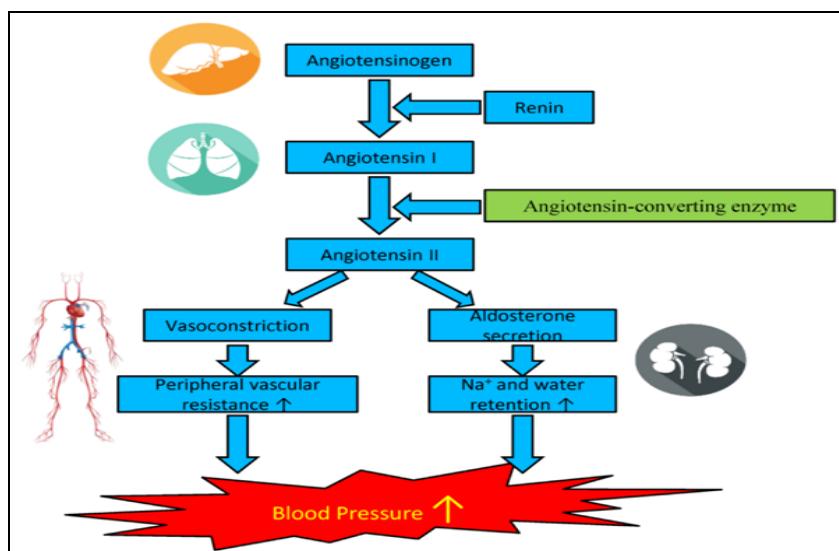


FIG. 4: THE RENIN-ANGIOTENSIN-ALDOSTERONE SYSTEM (RAAS) IN THE REGULATION OF BLOOD PRESSURE AND THE FUNCTION OF ANGIOTENSIN-CONVERTING ENZYME (ACE)⁴²

Anti-diarrhoeal Activity: In an investigation into the anti-diarrheal properties of a methanolic extract of *Serpentine rauwolfia* leaves in mice with peanut oil-induced diarrhoea, Dr. Ezeigbo, II discovered shows the extracts of its *serpentine* leaves has substantial Anti-diarrhoeal action.

Mechanism of Action: Many alkaloids in the plant (particularly rescindment, ajmaline, serpentine) inhibit calcium influx into smooth muscle cells. Reduced intracellular Ca^{2+} → decreased muscle contraction → slowed intestinal transit.

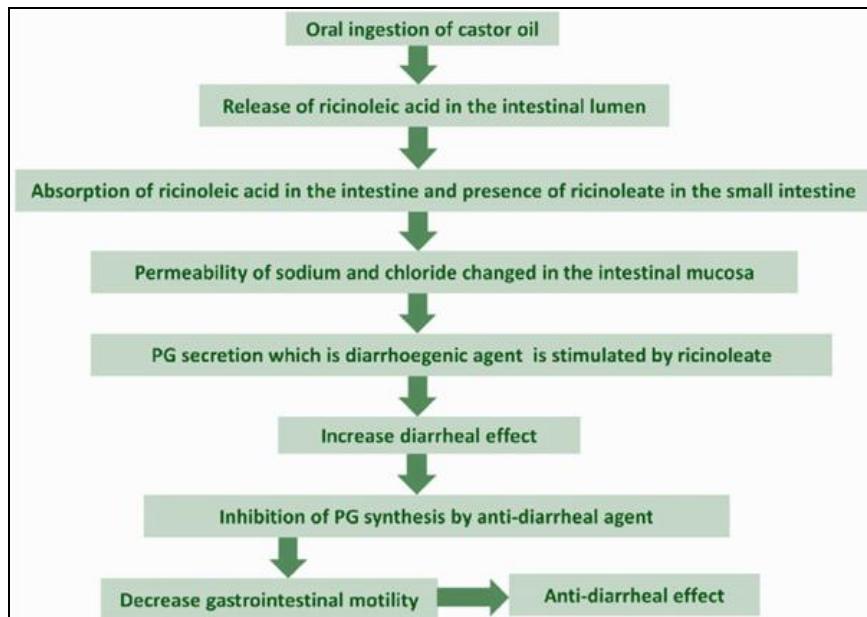


FIG. 5: MECHANISM OF ACTION OF ANTDIARRHEAL ACTIVITY WITH SERPENTINE ^{43, 46}

Effect of *Rauwolfia serpentina* in Breast Cancer: In 1960 to 1970 A.D. and a purported association to breast carcinoma was established in medical literature in 3 case-controlled investigations, thus the employment with *Rauwolfia* and the Reserpine products was reduced. However, studies and analysis that remove exclusion bias reveal that *Rauwolfia* has no bearing on the incidence of cancer of the breast in patients. Rather than

generating cancer it possesses antitumor activity ^{47, 48}.

Mechanism of Action:

Mitochondrial-mediated Apoptosis: Alkaloids can disrupt mitochondrial membrane potential., This leads to cytochrome-c release → activation of caspase-9 and caspase-3 → apoptosis.

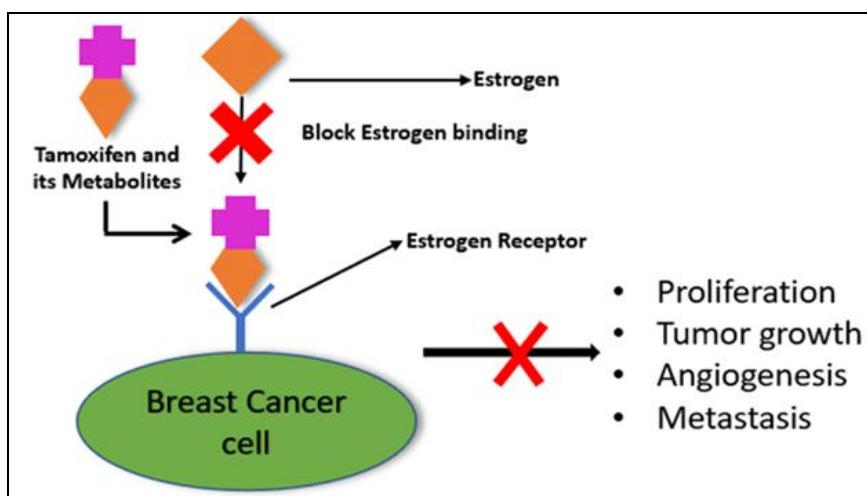


FIG. 6: MECHANISM OF ACTION OF TAMOXIFEN AND ITS METABOLITES ON BREAST CANCER CELLS. TAMOXIFEN AND ITS METABOLITES INHIBIT BINDING OF STROGEN HORMONE TO ESTRAGON RECEPTORS OF THE BREAST CANCER CELLS ⁴⁹

Antipsychotic Activity: Reserpine it was additionally employed for the treatment of schizophrenic and tardive dyskinesia. It relieves fever or acts as a febrifuge drug^{50, 51}.

The study found that a person with schizophrenia, Reserpine and chlorpromazine have comparable incidence of adverse effects however that the drug

was lesser effective than the drug chlorpromazine for enhancing an individual's worldwide condition.

Mechanism of Action:

Serotonin (5-HT): Reserpine irreversibly blocks VMAT2 (Vesicular Monoamine Transporter-2) in presynaptic neurons. This leads to depletion of: Dopamine (DA), Norepinephrine (NE),

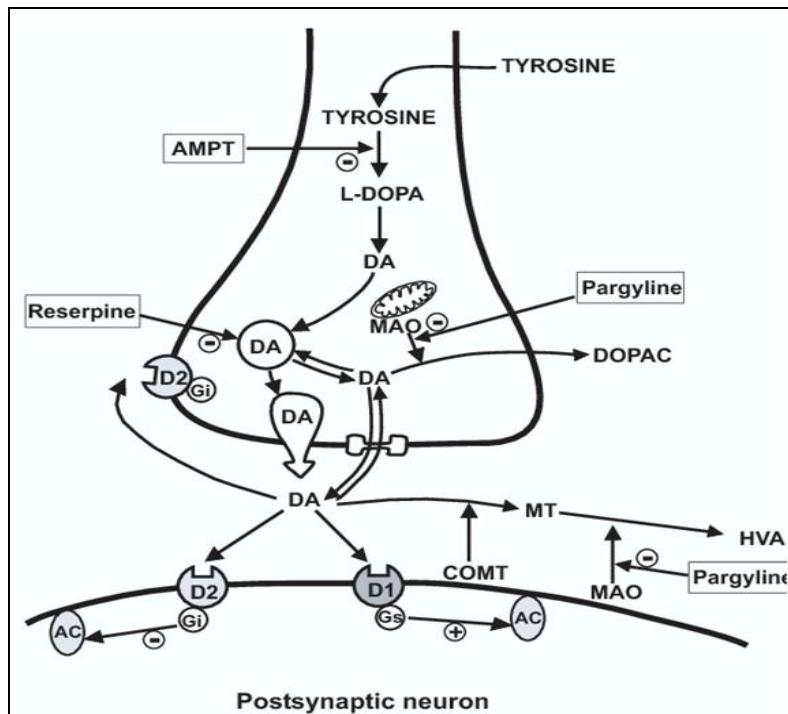


FIG. 7: SCHEMATIC DRAWING OF A DOPAMINERGIC NERVE TERMINAL. AMPT, RESERPINE AND PARGYLINE ARE DRUGS USED IN THE THESIS. ABBREVIATIONS: DA= DOPAMINE, D1= D1-LIKE RECEPTOR, D2= D2-LIKE RECEPTOR, GI= GI-PROTEIN⁵²

Other Pharmacological Activity:

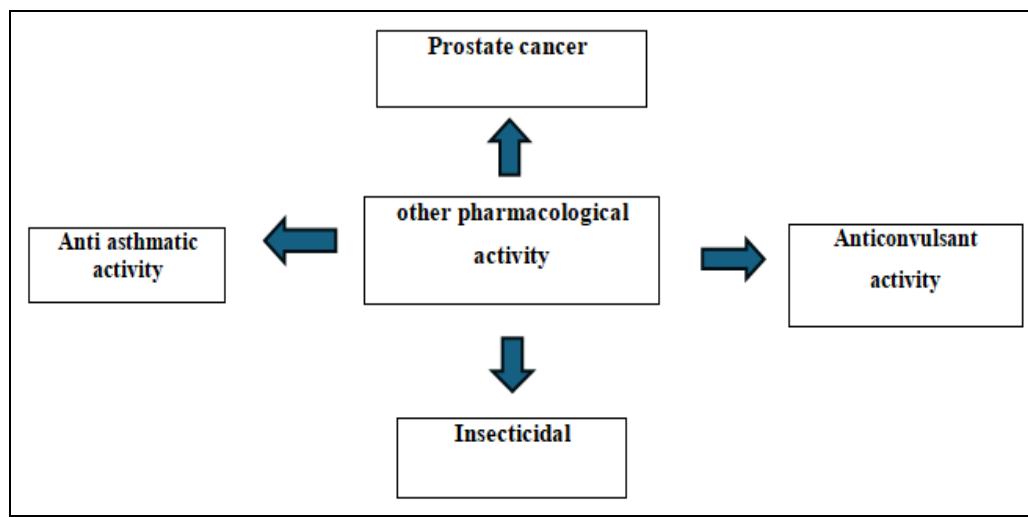


FIG. 8: SHOWING THE OTHER ACTIVITIES *RAUWOLFIA SERPENTINA*

Prostate Cancer: One of the main causes of cancer-related mortality in males is thought to be

prostate cancer. Patients with prostate cancer have not benefited significantly in terms of survival from

modern treatments like chemotherapy and radiation⁵³. Natural products have shown to be a major repository for identification of beneficial compounds used in the treatment of a number of maladies and diseases, including cancer as opposed to chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Various portions of this plant have been used as a medicinal medicine for ages to cure a variety of maladies including fever, generalized weakness, intestinal infections, liver difficulties and mental disorders⁵⁴. Extracts from the root bark of this plant are loaded with compounds of β -carboline, or alkaloid family of which its main constituent is a substance called alstonine. This substance has been shown to slow the growth of tumor cells in mice injected with Ehrlich ascitic cells or YC8 lymphoma cells. Based on examinations of treated prostate cancer cells' gene expression patterns⁵⁵. The plant extract's anti-prostate cancer efficacy in on both *in-vitro* and *in-vivo* model cultures may be influenced by its effects on DNA damage and cell cycle regulation signalling pathways.

Mechanism of Action: Extracts and alkaloids (especially reserpine, ajmaline, serpentine) have been shown to: Activate caspase-3 and caspase-9, Increase pro-apoptotic proteins (Bax), Increase pro-apoptotic proteins (Bax), Decrease anti-apoptotic proteins (Bcl-2).

Mental Illness, Schizophrenia, High Blood Pressure and Other Diseases: The plant's root is used as a sedative, to treat sleeplessness, high blood pressure, and mental agitation. The root extract obtained is believed to be the greatest treatment for high blood hypertension and has been accepted by the medical fraternity in various nations. The resulting alkaloids are frequently employed in medication production and have a direct impact on hypertension. Other illnesses include fever, malaria, eye conditions, pneumonia, asthma, AIDS, headaches skin diseases and spleen disorders can also be cured using *R. serpentina* extracts.

Antiasthmatic Activity: Bronchial asthma is characterised by hyper reactivity of tracheobronchial calm muscle towards range of stimuli resulting in constriction of air passages often associated by enhanced secretion, mucous edam and mucus plugging. Most cases of extrinsic asthma are episodic and less likely to result in

status asthmaticus. As asthmaticus is more prevalent, intrinsic asthma is more likely to be chronic. The understanding of herb botanical elements is very powerful and useful towards the treatment of numerous disorders including bronchial asthma. Among various respiratory diseases bronchial breathing problems is more typical and people suffer from chronic sickness in the respiratory⁵⁶.

Anticonvulsant Activity: *Rauwolfia serpentina* exhibits anticonvulsant activity by producing central nervous system depression through its indole alkaloids. These alkaloids reduce neuronal excitability and suppress excessive electrical discharges in the brain, thereby helping to prevent or control convulsions. This effect is mainly attributed to alkaloids such as reserpine and ajmaline, which decrease catecholamine levels and stabilize neuronal activity⁵⁷.

Mechanism of Action: The indole alkaloids present in the plant reduce neuronal excitability by interfering with neurotransmitter release and synaptic transmission in the brain. By depleting monoamines such as dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin, the alkaloids help stabilize neuronal firing and suppress abnormal electrical discharges responsible for seizures

Insecticidal: *Rauwolfia serpentina* possesses insecticidal properties due to the presence of bioactive alkaloids and other phytochemicals that are toxic to insects. Extracts of the plant interfere with the nervous system of insects, causing paralysis and eventual death. Traditionally, powdered roots and crude extracts have been used to repel or kill household and agricultural pests⁵⁸. The insecticidal effect is attributed to disruption of neurotransmission and metabolic processes in insects, making *Rauwolfia serpentina* useful as a natural insect control agent.

Mechanism of Action: The insecticidal activity of *Rauwolfia serpentina* is mainly due to its indole alkaloids, which act on the insect nervous system. These compounds interfere with normal neurotransmission by disrupting ion channel function and inhibiting nerve impulse conduction. This leads to loss of coordination, paralysis, and death of the insect. Additionally, the alkaloids may

inhibit key metabolic enzymes and disturb energy metabolism, further enhancing their toxic effect on insects⁵⁹.

Mechanism of Action: Reduces Stress-Induced Bronchospasm with respiration depletes serotonin, norepinephrine, dopamine in the CNS and Produces calmness and sedation and effect antiasthma effect triggered by stress, anxiety, emotional excitation

Future Purpose: Rich in secondary metabolites that are bioactive of the volatile indole alkaloid type, such as reserpine, ajmaline, the amino acid serpentine, and yohimbine, among others, *Rauwolfia serpentina* (L.) Benth. ex-Kurz., also known as Indian Snake roots or *Sarpagandha*, is a plant of great pharmaceutical significance (family *Apocynaceae*). Unauthorized extraction of the plant off the wild to suit the demands of medicine companies along with poor rooting capability and low seedling viability of 2015 plant render the cultivation of the plant vulnerable based on the IUCN list⁶⁰.

CONCLUSION: In addition to being a useful plant, *Rauwolfia serpentina* has excellent therapeutic applications as an antihypertensive medication. The utilization of cabbage serpentine and its compounds can be further researched to bring a benefit of society to heal the sickness.

The principal ingredient of *Rauwolfia serpentine*, or Reserpine has a considerable affinity for therapy of hypertension along with other biological activities as clearly defined in above full literature A. Although *Rauwolfia serpentina* is effective in hypertension however it is safe and highly effective when used at lesser dose. A patient having hypertension should consume less than 500 mg of medicine per day, yet in most of the instance's physician recommend 250 mg per day. *Rauwolfia serpentina* consists contains many photochemical like alkaloid, flavonoids, phenol compounds etc.

The plant may have antimicrobial properties due to its lack of phenolic compounds. Pure isolated alkaloids as well as for synthesized derivatives may utilized as basic medicinal treatment for their medicinal, therapeutic and bactericidal properties. When given to animals, they can indicate physiological activity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Nil

REFERENCES:

- Asmi S and Thangavelu L: Therapeutic aspects of goldenseal. International Research Journal of Pharmacy 2013; 2: 41-43. 10.7897/2230-8407.04909
- Dyer JR, Davis TM, Giele C, Annus T, Garcia-Webb P and Robson J: The pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of quinine in the diabetic and non-diabetic elderly. Br J Clin Pharmacol 1994; 38(3): 205-12.
- López-Lázaro M, de la Peña NP, Pastor N, Martín-Cordero C, Navarro E and Cortés F: Anti-Tumour Activity of *Digitalis purpurea* L. subsp. *heywoodii*. Planta Med 2003; 69(8): 701-4. <https://doi.org/10.1055/s-2003-42789>
- Abbas MM, Valizadeh H, Hamishehkar H and Zakeri-Milani P: Inhibition of P-glycoprotein expression and function by anti-diabetic drugs gliclazide, metformin, and pioglitazone *in-vitro* and *in-situ*. Res Pharm Sci 2016; 11(3): 177-86.
- Abuzenadah AM, Al-Sayes F, Mahafujul Alam SS, Hoque M, Karim S and Hussain IM: Identification of Potential Poly (ADP-Ribose) Polymerase-1 Inhibitors Derived from *Rauwolfia serpentina*: Possible Implication in Cancer Therapy. Evid Based Complement Alternat Med 2022; 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/3787162>
- Ahmad U and Ahmad RS: Antidiabetic property of aqueous extract of *Stevia rebaudiana* Bertoni leaves in Streptozotocin-induced diabetes in albino rats. BMC Complement Alternat Med 2018; 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-018-2245-2>
- Akileshwari C, Muthenna P, Nastasijević B, Joksić G, Petrasch JM and Reddy GB: Inhibition of aldose reductase by *Gentiana lutea* extracts. Exp Diabetes Res 2012; 147965. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/147965>
- Alder BJ and Wainwright TE: Studies in Molecular Dynamics. I. General Method. J Chem Phys 1959; 31(2): 459-66. <https://doi.org/10.1063/1.1730376>
- Al-Snafi A: Phytochemical constituents and medicinal properties of *Digitalis lanata* and *Digitalis purpurea* - a review. Indo American Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences 2017; 4: 225-34. 10.5281/zenodo.344926
- Azmi MB and Qureshi SA: Methanolic Root Extract of *Rauwolfia serpentina* Benth Improves the Glycemic, Antiatherogenic, and Cardioprotective Indices in Alloxan-Induced Diabetic Mice. Advances in pharmacological Sciences 2012; 376429. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2012/376429>
- Bohara M, Ghaju S, Sharma K, Kalauni S.K., Khadayat K. *In-vitro* and *in-silico* analysis of *Bergenia ciliata* and *Mimosa pudica* for inhibition of α -Amylase. Journal of Chemistry 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6997173>
- Chaudhary S, Chandrashekhar KS, Pai KSR, Setty MM, Devkar RA and Reddy ND: Evaluation of antioxidant and anticancer activity of extract and fractions of *Nardostachysjatamansi* DC in breast carcinoma. BMC Complement Alternat Med 2015; 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12906-015-0563-1>
- Chi S, She G, Han D, Wang W, Liu Z and Liu B: Genus *Tinospora*: Ethnopharmacology, Phytochemistry, and Pharmacology. Evid Based Complement Alternat Med 2016; 9232593. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2016/9232593>

14. Choi YH, Lee DC, Lee I and Lee MG: Changes in metformin pharmacokinetics after intravenous and oral administration to rats with short-term and long-term diabetes induced by streptozotocin. *Journal of Pharmaceutical Sciences* 2008; 97(12): 5363–75. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jps.21349>

15. Chu XY, Bleasby K, Yabut J, Cai X, Chan GH and Hafey MJ: Transport of the Dipeptidyl Peptidase-4 Inhibitor Sitagliptin by Human Organic Anion Transporter 3, Organic Anion Transporting Polypeptide 4C1, and Multidrug Resistance P-glycoprotein. *J Pharmacol Exp Ther* 2007; 321(2): 673–83. <https://doi.org/10.1124/jpet.106.116517>

16. Ding F, Buldyrev SV and Dokholyan NV: Folding Trp-Cage to NMR Resolution Native Structure Using a Coarse-Grained Protein Model. *Biophysical Journal* 2005; 88(1): 147–55. <https://doi.org/10.1529/biophysj.104.046375>

17. El-Sawi N, Hefny M and Al-Seenin MN: Evaluation of antidiabetic activity of Ipomoea aquatic fractions in streptozotocin induced diabetic in male rat model. *Journal of Science* 2017; 2(1): 9–17.

18. Fuchs H, Runge F and Held HD: Excretion of the dipeptidyl peptidase-4 inhibitor linagliptin in rats is primarily by biliary excretion and P-gp-mediated efflux. *Eur J Pharm Sci* 2012; 45(5): 533–38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejps.2011.11.0188>

19. Gad-Elkareem MA, Abdelgadir EH, Badawy OM, Kadri A: Potential Antidiabetic effect of ethanolic and aqueous-ethanolic extracts of *Ricinus communis* leaves on streptozotocin-induced diabetes in rats. *Peer J* 2019; 7: e6441. <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.6441>

20. Ganesan M, Kanimozhhi G, Pradhapsingh B, Khan HA, Alhomida AS and Ekhzaimy A: Phytochemicals reverse P-glycoprotein mediated multidrug resistance via signal transduction pathways. *Biomed Pharmacother* 2021; 139: 111632. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bioph.2021.111632>

21. Gao X, Liu Y, An Z and Ni J: Active Components and Pharmacological Effects of *Cornus officinalis*: Literature Review. *Front Pharmacol* 2021; 12: 633447. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2021.633447>

22. Hariyanti H, Mauludin R, Sumirtapura YC and Kurniati NF: A Review: Pharmacological Activities of Quinoline Alkaloid of *Cinchona* sp. *Biointerface Res Appl Chem* 2023; 13(4): 319. <https://doi.org/10.33263/briac134.319>

23. Hassan HM, Mohamed TEI, Ahmed EMM, Mohamed AEH and Sirag N: Effects of methanolic extract of *Pausinystalia yohimbe* bark on blood glucose level in normal fasting rats. *Health* 2012; 4(12): 1225–28. <https://doi.org/10.4236/health.2012.412180>

24. Hemauer SJ, Patrikeeva SL, Nanovskaya TN, Hankins GD and Ahmed MS: Role of human placental apical membrane transporters in the efflux of glyburide, rosiglitazone, and metformin. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2010; 202(4): 383.e1–383.e7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2010.01.0356>

25. Iatridis N, Kougoumtzi A, Vlatakis K, Papadaki S and Magklara A: Anti-Cancer Properties of *Stevia rebaudiana*; More than a Sweetener. *Molecules* 2022; 27(4): 1362. <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules27041362>

26. Igwe KK, Madubuike AJ, Chika I, Otuokere IE and Amaku FJ: Studies of the medicinal plant *Pausinystalia yohimbe* ethanol leaf extract phytocomponents by GCMS analysis. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management*. 2016; 4(5). <https://ijsrm.net/index.php/ijsrm/article/view/322>

27. Iheagwam FN, Ogunlana OO, Ogunlana OE, Isewon I and Oyelade J: Potential anti-cancer flavonoids isolated from *C. bonduc* Young Twigs and Leaves: Molecular Docking and *In-silico* Studies. *Bioinform Biolnsights* 2019; 13: 117793221882137. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177932218821371>

28. Karmakar SR, Biswas SJ and Khuda-Bukhsh AR: Anticarcinogenic potentials of a plant extract (*Hydrastis canadensis*): I. Evidence from *in-vivo* studies in mice (*Mus musculus*). *Asian Pac J Cancer Prev* 2010; 11(2): 545–1.

29. Kim Y and Chen J: Molecular structure of human P-glycoprotein in the ATP-bound, outward-facing conformation. *Science* 2018; 359(6378): 915–19. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aar7389>

30. Kirana H and Srinivasan BP: Effect of *Cycleapeltata Lam.* roots aqueous extract on glucose levels, lipid profile, insulin, TNF-alpha and skeletal muscle glycogen in type 2 diabetic rats. *Indian J Exp Biol* 2010; 48(5): 499–502.

31. Koriem KM, Aminuddin M, Kader A and Sheikh N: Antihyperglycemic, antihyperlipidemic and antiapoptotic activities of *Micromelum minutum* seeds in diabetic rats. *J Mol Genet Med* 2013; 2013: 1–8.

32. Kovacs JA, Chacón P and Abagyan R: Predictions of protein flexibility: First-order measures. *Proteins: Structure, Function, and Bioinformatics* 2004; 56(4): 661–68. <https://doi.org/10.1002/prot.201>

33. Lee CK, Choi JS and Bang JS: Effects of Fluvastatin on the Pharmacokinetics of Repaglinide: Possible Role of CYP3A4 and P-glycoprotein Inhibition by Fluvastatin. *Korean J Physiol Pharmacol* 2013; 17(3): 245–51. <https://doi.org/10.4196/kjpp.2013.17.3.2459>

34. Li C, Choi DH and Choi JS: Effects of efondipine on the pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics of repaglinide: possible role of CYP3A4 and P-glycoprotein inhibition by efondipine. *J Pharmacokinet Pharmacodyn* 2012; 39(1): 99–108. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10928-011-9234-0>

35. Lilja JJ, Niemi M, Fredrikson H and Neuvonen PJ: Effects of clarithromycin and grapefruit juice on the pharmacokinetics of glibenclamide. *Br J Clin Pharmacol* 2007; 63(6): 732–40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2125.2006.02836.x>

36. Majumder M, Debnath S, Gajbhiye RL, Saikia R, Gogoi B and Samanta SK: *Ricinus communis* L. fruit extract inhibits migration/invasion, induces apoptosis in breast cancer cells and arrests tumor progression *in-vivo*. *Scientific Reports* 2019; 9(1): 14493

37. Marchut AJ and Hall CK: Side-Chain Interactions Determine Amyloid Formation by Model Polyglutamine Peptides in Molecular Dynamics Simulations. *Biophysical Journal* 2006; 90(12): 4574–84. <https://doi.org/10.1529/biophysj.105.079269>

38. Mishra R and Kaur G: *Tinospora cordifolia* induces differentiation and senescence pathways in neuroblastoma cells. *Molecular Neurobiology* 2015; 52(1): 719–33. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12035-014-8892-5>

39. Nguyen HD and Hall CK: Molecular dynamics simulations of spontaneous fibril formation by random-coil peptides. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 2004; 101(46): 16180–85.

40. Nyakudya E, Jeong JH, Lee NK and Jeong YS: Platycosides from the Roots of *Platycodon grandiflorum* and Their Health Benefits. *Prev Nutr Food Sci* 2014; 19(2): 59–68. <https://doi.org/10.3746/pnf.2014.19.2.0594>

41. Ondieki G, Nyagblordzro M, Kikete S, Liang R, Wang L and He X: Cytochrome P450 and P-Glycoprotein-Mediated Interactions Involving African Herbs Indicated for Common Noncommunicable Diseases. *Evid Based*

Complement Alternat Med 2017; 2582463. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/2582463>

42. Palliyaguru DL, Singh SV and Kensler TW: *Withania somnifera*: From prevention to treatment of cancer. Mol Nutr Food Res 2016; 60(6): 1342-53. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mnfr.201500756>

43. Patel MB and Mishra S: Hypoglycemic activity of alkaloidal fraction of *Tinospora cordifolia*. Phytomedicine 2011; 18(12): 1045-52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.phymed.2011.05.006>

44. Patil S, Ashi H, Hosmani J, Almalki AY, Alhazmi YA and Mushtaq S: *Tinospora cordifolia* (Thunb.) Miers (Giloy) inhibits oral cancer cells in a dose-dependent manner by inducing apoptosis and attenuating epithelial-mesenchymal transition. Saudi J Biol Sci 2021; 28(8): 4553-59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sjbs.2021.04.056>

45. Prajapati DD, Patel NM, Patel SS, Patel MS, Savadi RV and Akki KS: Pharmacognostic studies on *Actinodaphne hookeri* Meissn leaves. J Pharm Res 2008; 1: 48-54.

46. Reddy VS and Brooks CL: Deciphering the Kinetic Mechanism of Spontaneous Self-Assembly of Icosahedral Capsids. Nano Lett 2007; 7(2): 338-44. <https://doi.org/10.1021/nl062449>

47. Robinson K and Tiriveedhi V: Perplexing Role of P-glycoprotein in Tumor Microenvironment. Front Oncol 2020; 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fonc.2020.002652>.

48. Rodrigues C, Karmali A and Machado J: The extracts of *Gentiana lutea* with potential cytotoxic effects on human carcinoma cell lines: A preliminary study. Eur J Integr Med 2019; 27: 34-38.

49. Roy C and Ghosh P: Co-administration of herbal inhibitors of P-glycoprotein with renal drugs enhance their bioavailability – *In-silico* approach. J Herbmed Pharmacol 2023; 12(2): 241-49. <https://doi.org/10.34172/jhp.2023.26>

50. Sakunpak A, Matsunami K, Otsuka H and Panichayupakaranant P: Isolation of new monoterpenic coumarins from *Micromelum minutum* leaves and their cytotoxic activity against Leishmania major and cancer cells. Food Chemistry 2013; 139(1-4): 458-63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodchem.2013.01.031>

51. Salehi B, Ata A, V Anil Kumar N, Sharopov F, Ramírez-Alarcón K and Ruiz-Ortega A: Antidiabetic Potential of Medicinal Plants and Their Active Components. Biomolecules 2019; 9(10): 551. <https://doi.org/10.3390/biom9100551>.

52. Sasikala M, Mohan, Swarnakumari S and Nagarajan A: Evaluation of the Role of Merremoside from *Ipomoea aquatica* Forsskal Hydroalcoholic Extract in the Downregulation of ROS Species in Overcoming MDR in Breast Cancer. Asian Pac J Cancer Prev 2022; 23(11): 3657-63. <https://doi.org/10.31557/apjcp.2022.23.11.3657>

53. Scheen AJ: Pharmacokinetics of dipeptidylpeptidase-4 inhibitors. Diabetes Obes Metab 2010; 12(8): 648-58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1463-1326.2010.01212.x>

54. Spriha SE and Rahman SMA: *In-silico* Evaluation of Selected Compounds from *Bergenia ciliata* (Haw.) Sternb against Molecular Targets of Breast Cancer. Indian Journal of Pharmaceutical Education and Research 2022; 56(1s): 105-s114. <https://doi.org/10.5530/ijper.56.1s.49>

55. Sun H, Saeedi P, Karuranga S, Pinkepank M, Ogurtsova K and Duncan BB: IDF Diabetes Atlas: Global, regional and country-level diabetes prevalence estimates for 2021 and projections for 2045 Diabetes Res Clin Pract 2022; 183: 109119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.diabres.2021.109119>.

56. Une HD and Bhagure LB: The anti-leukemic potential of cycloapteltatas validated by phytochemical and cell line studies. Res J Pharm Technol 2022; 15(3): 1064-0. <https://doi.org/10.52711/0974-360X.2022.00178>

57. You HN, Park MH, Hwang SY and Han JS: Nardostachys jatamansi DC extract alleviates insulin resistance and regulates glucose metabolism in C57BL/KSJ-DB/DB Mice through the AMP-activated protein kinase signaling pathway. J Med Food 2018; 21(4): 324-31. doi:10.1089/jmf.2017.4015

58. Zhang Y, Li C, Sun X, Kuang X and Ruan X: High glucose decreases expression and activity of p-glycoprotein in cultured human retinal pigment epithelium possibly through iNOS induction. PloS one 2012; 7(2): e31631. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0031631>.

59. Zheng J, He J, Ji B, Li Y and Zhang X: Antihyperglycemic effects of Platycodon grandiflorum (Jacq.) A. DC. extract on streptozotocin-induced diabetic mice. Plant Foods Hum Nutr 2007; 62: 7-11.

60. Zhou SF: Structure, function and regulation of P-glycoprotein and its clinical relevance in drug disposition. Xenobiotica 2008; 38(7-8): 802-32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00498250701867889>

How to cite this article:

Dubey A, Patel VK, Sahu VK, Dash SL and Mishra A: *Rauwolfia serpentina*: phytochemistry, mechanisms of action, and clinical implications – a comprehensive review. Int J Pharmacognosy 2026; 13(1): 1-12. doi link: [http://dx.doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.13\(1\).1-12](http://dx.doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.13(1).1-12).

This Journal licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.

This article can be downloaded to **Android OS** based mobile. Scan QR Code using Code/Bar Scanner from your mobile. (Scanners are available on Google Playstore)