



Received on 06 September 2025; received in revised form, 27 September 2025; accepted, 29 September 2025; published 30 September 2025

A REVIEW ON PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES OF *ALSTONIA* AND *VITEX NEGUNDO*

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Keywords:

Alstonia scholaris, *Vitex negundo*,
Antibacterial, Anti-inflammatory,
Antimalarial

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ABSTRACT: Two extensively researched medicinal plants having important ethnopharmacological significance in traditional medical systems like Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine are *Alstonia scholaris* and *Vitex negundo*. Because of its high concentration of alkaloids, flavonoids, and triterpenes, *Alstonia*, and especially *Alstonia scholaris*, is well-known for its antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antimalarial qualities. Comparably, *Vitex negundo*, sometimes referred to as the five-leaved chaste tree, offers a variety of medicinal properties, such as hepatoprotective, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antioxidant actions. Bioactive substances like flavonoids, iridoid glycosides, and essential oils are mostly responsible for these effects. This abstract highlights the potential for *Alstonia scholaris* and *Vitex negundo* to be developed into new medicinal medicines by reviewing their phytochemical profiles and pharmacological actions.

INTRODUCTION: The scientific field of phytochemistry explains the characteristics of herbs and their therapeutic uses. Numerous plant species that possess these phytochemicals have been proven to be a variety of therapeutic herbs. Despite the widespread use of a number of traditional chemical-based medications, herbal and plant-based medications, commonly referred to as herbal medicine. Even though pharmaceutical companies are increasingly using synthetic and combinatorial chemistry techniques to develop new drugs, medicinal plants remain a significant source of novel chemical entities. Nature has long been a major source of medicinal compounds. Natural resources have served as the foundation for the development of many modern medications.

Numerous bioactive agents have been isolated from plants based on their application in traditional medicine. Many medicinal plants have been discovered thanks in large part to ethnobotanical knowledge of traditional plant uses. Because of the numerous active phytochemicals it contains, one such plant, *Alstonia scholaris*, has the pharmacological potential to treat a number of illnesses, including cancer, digestive and respiratory issues, cardiovascular issues, and reproductive issues ¹. A member of the Verbenaceae family, *Vitex negundo* is a small, slender, hardy tree or shrub that grows in Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Afghanistan, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Eastern Africa.

It is commonly known as Nirgundi in Tamil and Nika in Sinhalese in Sri Lanka. *Vitex negundo* is primarily found in humid areas, mixed open forests, and along the edges of streams. It blooms all year long and has bluish purple flowers. It has a typical five-foliated leaf pattern, with the lower leaves being smaller and almost sessile, and the

<p>QUICK RESPONSE CODE</p> 	<p>DOI: 10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.12(9).716-24</p> <p>Article can be accessed online on: www.ijpjournal.com</p>
<p>DOI link: https://doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.12(9).716-24</p>	

remaining leaves being long-stemmed, ranging in length from 7.5 to 10 cm. *Vitex negundo*'s medicinal qualities have been thoroughly studied, and among many other qualities, it has been found

to have anti-inflammatory, analgesic, antioxidant, anti-convulsive, anti-bacterial, anti-fungal, cardio-protective, antitumor, anti-allergic, and hepatoprotective effects ².



FIG. 1: ALASTONIA SCHOLARIS



FIG. 2: VITEX NEGUNDO

Cultivation: *Alstonia scholaris* is a hardy tree that prefers soils with good drainage. It takes eight to ten years to reach adulthood. Cuttings (which easily root in soil), air-layering and implanting (cleave and upturned T-grafting), and seeds (collected from mature unsplit shells) are some of the ways it can be propagated. It served as a moderator plant for the psyllid *Pauropsylla tuberculata*, which produces galls above the folio exterior, giving the appearance of an unsightly pocket. One of the best propagation techniques for increasing harvest is seeding; in most cases, no pre-treatment is required to grow the crop. Fruits can be picked all summer long before the thin, rigid pods split. Although they are fluffy, seeds cannot spread easily or unintentionally. It could be grown ³.

Common Names of Alstonia: Blackboard tree, Scholar tree, Milkwood, Devil’s tree, Indian pulai, White cheesewood, Dita bark, Bitter bark, Saptaparna, Saptachada, Chatraparna .

Parts Used: Stem, bark, root, leaves ⁴.

TABLE 1: SYSTEMATIC POSITION ⁵

Kingdom	Plantae
Order	Gentianales
Family	Apocynaceae
Tribe	Plumeriae
Subtribe	Alstoniinae
Genus	Alstonia
Species	Alstonia scholaris

Phytochemistry of Alstonia scholaris: The plant is rich in a variety of chemical compounds. It is well

known for having a high concentration of alkaloids, which have therapeutic uses. Since alkaloids have a wide range of chemical structures and have been found to be the cause of the pharmacological properties of medicinal plants, they represent a class of significant importance in the development of new medications. Echitamine, a new glycoside-renoterpine, glucoside triterpenes, amyring acetate, echitamidine, echitenine, and ditamine are all found in stem bark.

Root: It contains hydroxyl-19, akuammigine, tubaitowine, and akuammigine. The indole alkaloids found in leaves include picrinine, botalin, ursolic acid, β -sitosterol, and the recently discovered alkaloid Scholarin.

Flowers: Flowers contain strictamine and picrinine. Fruits: (rhazine) ⁶.

Traditional Uses: *Alstonia scholaris* bark is used in treating malarial fevers, stomach complaints, dyspepsia, and skin diseases. The bark possesses bitter, astringent, digestive, laxative, anthelmintic, antipyretic, stomachic, cardi tonic, and tonic actions. The bark extract possesses antiplasmodial, immune stimulant, anticancer, hepatoprotective activities. Ayurveda, overnight soaking of the plant bark in water reduces blood glucose levels upon oral administration. Bark is used as a febrifuge, depurative, or galactagogue. It is used in treating leprosy, skin diseases, pruritus, chronic and foul ulcers, asthma, bronchitis, agalactia, and debility.

Milky juice in folkloric medicine is given to wounds, ulcers, and rheumatic pain; in oil and ear poured, it is used to treat ear pain.

Leaves have been used as folk medicines for centuries to treat a variety of diseases, including diarrhea, dysentery, malaria, and snake bites. In some cases, the liquid from the leaves is an excellent galactagogue. Leaves are used to treat beriberi, dropsy, and an obstructed liver.

Latex is used to treat sores, ulcers, tumors, and rheumatic swellings.

Pharmacological Activity: There is growing recognition of *Alstonia scholaris* diverse potential in the field of pharmacology. Its wide range of pharmacological activities have been revealed by contemporary scientific research, making it a topic of interest in several medical specialties⁷.

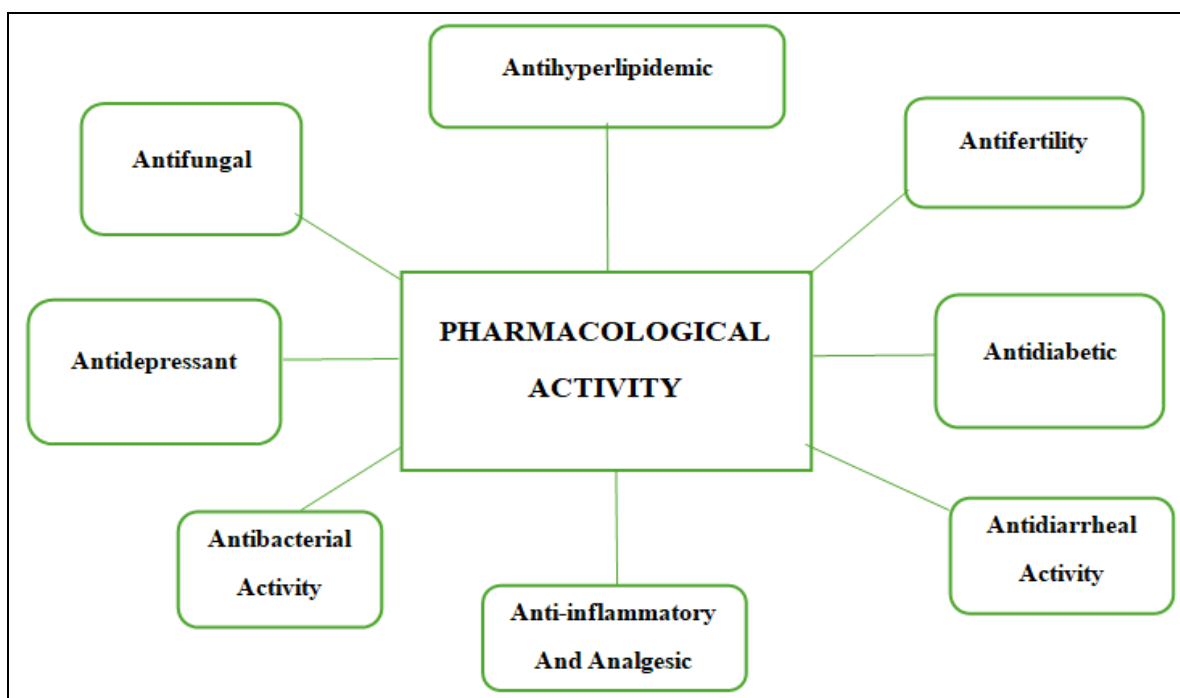


FIG. 3: PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITY OF *ALSTONIA SCHOLARIS*

Antidepressant: Molecular docking analysis and experimental studies have uncovered its ability to exert anti-psychotic effects through the modulation of dopamine levels in the frontal cortical regions of the brain, providing a glimpse into its utility in the treatment of mood disorders⁸.

Anti-inflammatory and Analgesic: According to a number of *in-vivo* tests, the three primary alkaloids found in *Alstonia scholaris* leaves picrinine, vallesamine, and scholaricine may have a peripherally analgesic and anti-inflammatory effect. Alkaloids showed inhibition of inflammatory mediators (COX-1, COX-2, and 5-LOX) in *in-vitro* tests, which is consistent with findings in animal models. Additionally, the experiment's COX-2/5-LOX dual inhibitors, including picralinal, tubotaiwine, and 16-formyl 5 α -methoxystrictamine, may be worth pursuing further⁹.

Anti-fungal Activity: Different plant parts, including leaves, stem and root bark, flowers, and fruits, were extracted using a range of solvents, from polar to non-polar, and their bioactivity was assessed. Only methanol and butanol extracts of each component were chosen for antifungal testing¹⁰.

Antibacterial Properties: The antibacterial profiles of the three extracts leaves, follicles, and latex. All of the tested extracts demonstrated reasonably good bactericidal activity against a set of Gram +ve bacteria, according to the results. But compared to the leaf and follicle extracts, the latex extract showed stronger antibacterial activity. With a zone of inhibition of 21 mm, latex extract (100 mg/ml) performed best against *B. subtilis*. With a measured zone of inhibition of 8 mm, the tested extracts were found to be the least effective against *P. aeruginosa*. The antibacterial potential of the

sample extracts was found to be moderately effective when compared to the commonly used antibiotics ¹¹.

Antidiarrheal Activity: The bark of *A. scholaris* showed cytotoxic and antidiarrheal properties in its ethanolic extract. At a dosage of 250 mg/kg of body weight, it reduced the frequency of bowel movements and postponed the onset of diarrhea in mice. In all four of the lower Mekong basin's countries, *Alastonia scholaris* is frequently used as a remedy for dysentery and diarrhea. The parts of the plant that were most frequently mentioned were the bark and leaves. *A scholaris* for the treatment of diarrheal illnesses. Regarding its pharmacological characteristics, a methanolic extract of *Alastonia scholaris* showed an antidiarrheal effect (a reduction in the frequency of defecation) in a mouse model of castor oil-induced diarrhea, and an isolated rabbit jejunum preparation was used to confirm its spasmolytic qualities ⁷.

Antipyretic Activity: Fever, also known as pyrexia, is the body's natural defense mechanism to produce an environment in which damaged tissue or infectious agents cannot survive. The antipyretic properties of *Alstonia macrophylla* leaf extract and its fraction have been investigated up to this point. The antipyretic properties of *Alstonia macrophylla* leaf methanol extract (at 200 and 300 mg/kg, p.o.) and its n-butanol fraction fractions (at 50 mg/kg, p.o.) containing β -sitosterol, ursolic acid, and β -sitosterol glucoside were investigated in Wistar albino rats with normal body temperature and pyrexia induced by yeast. When compared to the common antipyretic medication paracetamol, all extracts and portions demonstrated a significant

antipyretic effect in a dose-dependent manner. However, when the two factions were given together, the observed antipyretic effect was stronger, meaning that they had an additive effect ¹⁰.

Antifertility: By considerably lowering the weights of the testes, epididymis, seminal vesicle, and ventral prostate, one study demonstrated that *Alastonia scholaris* has an antifertility effect. According to research by Gupta et al., rats that are fed the bark extract for 60 days in a row experience antifertility. Without changing the overall body weight, the extract specifically reduced the weight and protein content of the testes, epididymis, seminal vesicle, and ventral prostate. Male rats treated with *Alastonia scholaris* showed decreased fertility, as evidenced by a significant decrease in sperm concentration and decreased sperm motility in the testes and cauda epididymides. The antifertility properties of *Alastonia scholaris* may be explained by luteol acetate, a component of the plant, which exhibited comparable cellular, biochemical, and histological manifestations to those observed with the entire extract ⁷.

Anti-hyperlipidemic: Without causing hypoglycemia in normal rats, the aqueous extract of *Alstonia scholaris* dramatically lowered elevated blood glucose levels in streptozotocin (STZ)-diabetic rats. Increased glucose uptake by peripheral tissues, enhanced insulin sensitivity in target tissues, or better glucose metabolic regulation could all contribute to the extract's antidiabetic effects. The bark of *Alstonia scholaris* considerably decreased serum ¹⁰.

TABLE 2: PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITY OF ALSTONIA SCHOLARIS

Activity	Part/extract	Animal model / cell line
Anti-malarial	Methanol extracts prepared from various parts of <i>A. scholaris</i> , <i>A. macrophylla</i> and <i>A. glaucescens</i> . The bark's methanol and petroleum ether extracts	Anti-plasmodial activity against the human erythrocyte-cultured K1 strain of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> , which is resistant to multiple drugs ¹¹ Antimalarial activity in <i>Plasmodium berghei</i> -infected mice ¹²
Anti-fertility	<i>A. scholaris</i> benzene extract was used to isolate luteol acetate. Plant-derived α -amyrin acetate. Bark extract	Weights of the body and reproductive organs, such as the testes, epididymis, seminal vesicle, and ventral prostate, were measured. Male albino rats were also used to assess motility, testicular sperm count, and epididymal sperm count ¹³ The effect on fertility was studied using male albino rats ¹⁴ At this dose level, the drug had a significant antifertility effect on male rats. Meiotic germ cells might be the main site of action ¹⁵
Antileishmanial	Plant extract	Hamsters infected with <i>Leishmania donovani</i> were used to test

Hepatoprotective	Plant extract	the antileishmanial properties of plants ¹⁶
Toxicological profile	Different doses up to 2000 mg/kg.	Serum biochemical and histopathologic analyses were used to look into liver damage brought on by carbon tetrachloride (CCl4), β-dgalactosamine, acetaminophen, and ethanol ¹⁷
	Hydro-alcoholic extract	Mice and rats were used to test the acute and subacute toxic effects of different dosages of A. scholaris (ASE) hydro-alcoholic extract ¹⁸
		Hematological analysis showed a marked increase in lymphocytes, eosinophils, and basophils along with a dose-dependent decrease in RBC, WBC, hemoglobin, neutrophils, and monocytes. The observed toxic effect of ASE may be explained by the presence of echitamine ¹⁹
Teratogenic effect	Hydro-alcoholic extract	On Day 11 of gestation, the teratogenic effect was examined in Swiss albino mice that were pregnant ¹⁹

Vitex Negundo:

Medicinal Uses of Vitex negundo: Medicinal herbs can improve general health because of the variety of phytochemicals they contain. A sizable portion of the populace in nations like Bangladesh, China, India, and Nepal continues to use folk and traditional medicine in spite of the progress made in modern medicine. Chinese Pharmacopeia, Arabic Unani, and Indian Ayurveda are the main categories of traditional medicine. The great Ayurvedic texts Charaka Samhita and Anubhoga Vaidya Bhaga go into detail about how to use *vitex negundo* to treat rheumatism, sinusitis, catarrhal fever, syphilitic skin disease, and dysmenorrhea. In

Unani medicine, the seeds of *Vitex negundo* are used to treat swellings and as an aphrodisiac. The *Vitex negundo* fruit is used in Chinese medicine to treat headaches, arthritis, and puffy eyes²⁰. Chinese Pharmacopeia, Arabic Unani, and Indian Ayurveda are the main categories of traditional medicine. *Vitex negundo* is used to treat sinusitis, syphilitic skin disease catarrhal fever, dysmenorrhea, and rheumatism, according to the great Ayurvedic texts Charaka Samhita and Anubhoga Vaidya Bhaga²¹. In Unani medicine, *Vitex negundo* seeds are used to treat swellings and as an aphrodisiac²². The *Vitex negundo* fruit is used in Chinese medicine to treat headaches, arthritis, and puffy eyes²³.

TABLE 3: AYURVEDIC FORMULATIONS CONTAINING VITEX NEGUNDO²⁴

S. no.	Formulation	Major Plant Drug	Indication
1	Nirgundi Thailam	Nirgundi (<i>Vitex negundo</i>)	Peenisarogum
2	Nirgundi Patra pinda sweda	Nirgundi (<i>Vitex negundo</i>)	Sandhigata vata(osteoarthritis)
3	Nirgundi churna	Nirgundi (<i>Vitex negundo</i>)	Kidney pain
4	Dashamoola Taila	Bilva (<i>Aegle marmelos</i>)	Kashtartava (dysmenorrhea)
5	Trivikrama Rasa	Nirgundi (<i>Vitex negundo</i>), tamra (copper)	Mutrashmari (Urolithiasis)
6	Vishatinduka Taila	Vishatinduka (<i>Strychnous nux-vomica</i>)	Vatarakta (gout)
7	Manasamitra Vataka	Bala moola (<i>Sida acuta</i>)	Generalized anxiety disorder
8	Vatagajankush Rasa	Hartaki (<i>Terminalia Chebula</i>)	Gridhrasi (sciatica)

Traditional Uses: The leaves of *Vitex negundo* were used by Roman women in antiquity to lessen their libido; monks also chewed the plant's berries for the same purpose, which is why it was also known as monks pepper or monks berry. The most ancient Ayurvedic treatise, the Charaka Samhita, describes the applications of *Vitex negundo* and classifies it as a visaghna-antitoxin and a krmighna-anthelminthic. The plant *Vitex negundo* has rasa katu (pungent), tikta (bitter), virya ushna (hot), ruksha (causes dryness), guna laghu (light for digestion), vipaka katu (pungent in post digestion), and doshakarma kapha-vata shamaka, according to the Ayurvedic medical system.

Additionally, applying a crushed leaf poultice to pillows filled with *Vitexnegundo* leaves helps treat sinus infections, neck gland sores, tubercular neck swelling, and catarrh and headaches. Rheumatism, irritable bladder, and dysmenorrhea can all be relieved with a solution made from the root bark of *Vitexnegundo*. Gridhrasi can also be effectively treated with the plant's bark. In the Unani medical system, *Vitex negundo* is referred to as Nishinda. It functions as an aphrodisiac when taken with milk and dry ginger; the powdered seeds are used to treat spermatorrhea²⁵. Ancient Greek medicine, Chinese traditional medicine, Malay traditional medicine, Ayurveda, Unani medicine, and

European medicine were among the numerous health approaches that acknowledged and used the Vitex plant as a herbal remedy. They listed a variety of ailments for which Vitex can be used,

including reproductive difficulties in women, postpartum health, libido suppression, skin issues, gastrointestinal disease symptoms, fever reduction, and rheumatism²⁶.

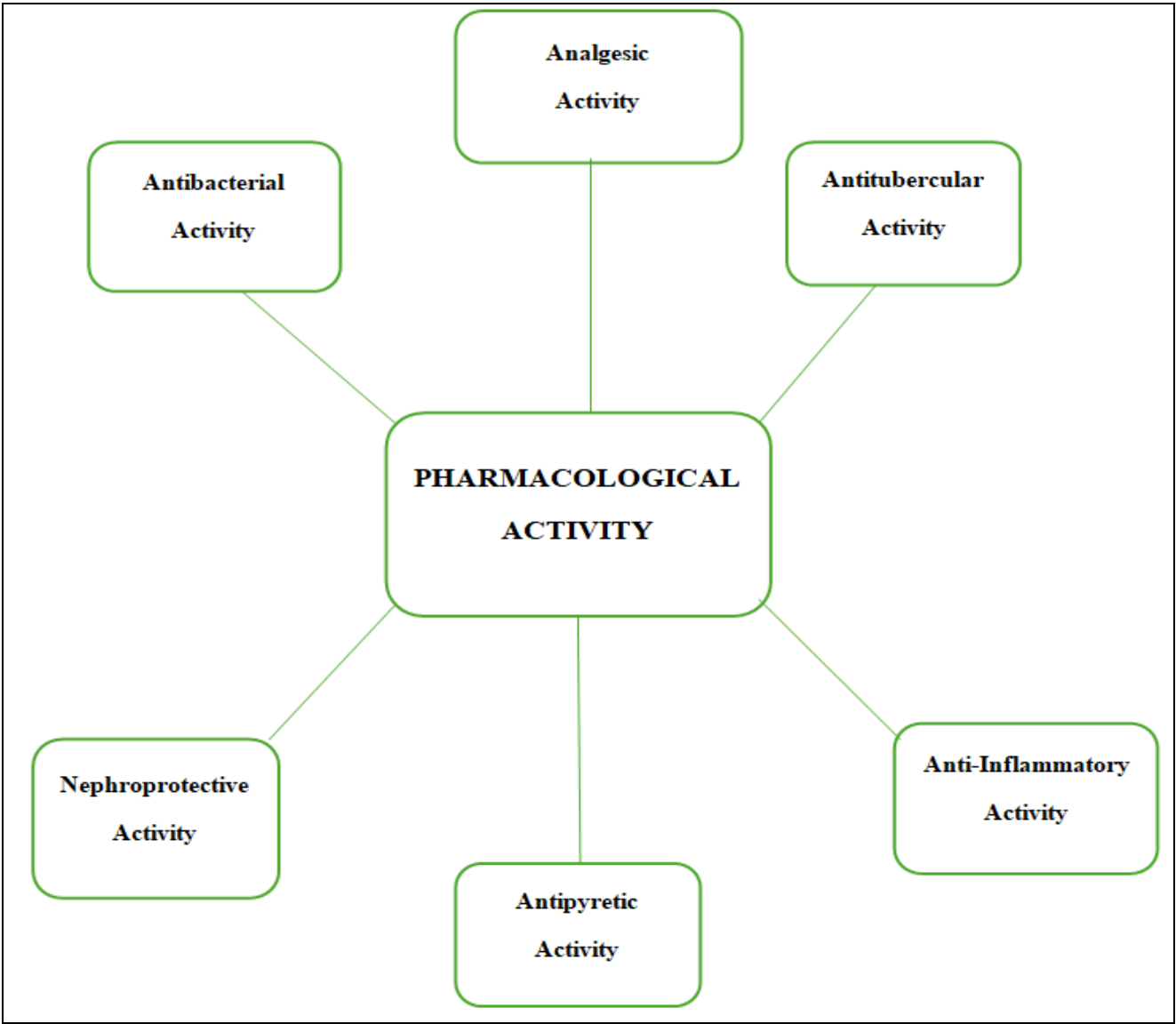


FIG. 4: PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITY OF *VITEX NEGUNDO*

Antibacterial Activity: Disc diffusion method for antibacterial activity: The disc diffusion method was used to test the antibacterial activity of *Vitex negundo*. In order to create solutions with the appropriate concentration, a predetermined volume of solvent was used to dissolve a measured quantity of the test samples. Using a micropipette, the sterile Matricel (BBL, Cocksville, USA) filter paper discs were impregnated with a known quantity of test substances before being dried. The standard dosage was 5µg/disc of ciprofloxacin. The sample, standard, and control disks were then put into 120 mm-diameter petridishes that contained an

appropriate agar medium that had been seeded with the test organisms using a sterile transfer loop. After two hours at 40 C to promote maximum diffusion, the plates were placed in an incubator for 12 to 18 hours to allow the microorganisms to grow. The diameter of the zone of inhibition was measured in millimeters following the incubation period.

Analgesic Activity: Using a mouse model of acetic acid-induced writhing, the analgesic properties of the crude extract and fractionated parts were verified. Twelve groups of five mice each were

randomly selected from among the experimental laboratory mice. The first group, which served as the control group, received 10 milliliter per kilogram of body weight of 1% (v/v) Tween-80 diluted in distilled water orally. Standard dosages of diclofenac sodium (25 mg/kg) were administered to the second group. The crude extract was administered to the third group at doses of 250 and 500 mg/kg body weight. Different fractions of crude extract were administered to the fourth through eleventh groups at doses of 250 and 500 mg/kg body weight. Thirty minutes prior to the intraperitoneal injection of 0.7% acetic acid, test samples, the standard medication, and the control vehicle were given orally ²⁷.

Antitubercular Activity: In order to ascertain the antitubercular activity of their isolated compounds using the nitrate reductase assay method, Antitubercular Activity examined the identification, isolation, and characterization of lead constituents. Petroleum ether, chloroform, and methanol were used to separate the ethanol extract from the leaves using Soxhlet extraction. The ethanol extract's petroleum ether and chloroform fractions exhibit anti-tuberculosis properties. According to this study, the ethanolic extract exhibited strong anti-tubercular properties.

Antipyretic Activity: Antipyretic action investigate the antipyretic activity of leaf extracts of *Vitex negundo* Linn by using yeast induced pyrexia model in Wistar Albino rats. According to the data, oral administration of petroleum ether and methanolic extracts of *Vitex negundo* leaves resulted in a significant decrease in yeast-induced elevated temperature. Methanolic and petroleum ether extracts both exhibited strong antipyretic properties ²⁸.

Anti-inflammatory Activity: Dermatitis is an inflammation of the skin, arthritis is an inflammation of the joints, and othitis is an inflammation of the ears. As a result, a compound's anti-inflammatory properties are valued. *Vitex negundo* leaves have anti-inflammatory properties. The carrageenan and formaldehyde models demonstrated the dose-dependent anti-inflammatory properties of mature fresh leaves of *Vitex negundo*. Additionally, mature fresh leaf extract of *Vitex negundo* showed antihistamine,

membrane-stabilizing, and dose-dependent inhibition of prostaglandin (PG) synthesis. Acute anti-inflammatory, antihistamine, PG synthesis inhibition, and membrane stabilizing activities all exhibit an inverse dose-response relationship, which may be caused by the active principle's diminished efficacy at high concentrations ²⁹. The carrageenan-induced rat paw edema model and the rat peritonitis model were used to assess the acute anti-inflammatory activity of *Vitex negundo* leaves ³⁰.

Anti-Fungal Activity: Bioactivity Together with five other known compounds, a new flavone glycoside was isolated through guided fractionation of an ethanolic extract of *Vitex negundo* Linn. leaves. The antimicrobial properties of each isolated compound were assessed. At MIC 6.25 µg/ml, the novel flavone glycoside and compound 5 demonstrated strong antifungal activity against Trichophyton mentagrophytes and Cryptococcus neoformans ³¹.

Anti-cancer Activity: The anti-cancer properties of *Vitex-negundo*, or Negundo Chloroform demonstrated potent anticancer effects on some cancer cell lines in the current investigation. ethanol as well as water-based extracts made from *Vitex negundo*. The objective of this work is to extract negundoside from dried *Vitex negundo* leaves and use *in-vitro* MTT (3-(4,5) dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium) test and *in-silico* activity to establish its anticancer efficacy ³². The microculture tetrazolium (MTT) experiment was carried out as previously described in order to evaluate cell viability ³³.

Hepatoprotective activity: Recent studies on Negundo demonstrate the drug's many uses. Negundo leaf ethanolic extract shown hepatoprotective properties against hepatotoxicity. According to cell-based testing, the negundo (*vitex negundo*) had the highest estrogenic activity ³⁴.

Immuno-stimulant Activity: *Vitex negundo* extracts were shown to have immunostimulatory action in an oxyburst phagocytic experiment employing human polymorph nuclear cells ³⁵. According to J.L. Suri et al., two iridoid glucosides from *Vitex negundo* leaves have immunostimulatory properties ³⁶.

TABLE 4: VITEX NEGUNDO PARTS AND USES ³⁷

S. no.	Plant Part	Used Form	Disease/Usage
1	Flower	As Astringent and tonic	Fever, Cholera, Gastrointestinal disorders, Diarrhea, Jaundice/ Liver disorders
2	Leaf	Leaf juice	Common cold, Flu, Sore throat, Whooping cough, Respiratory disorders, Cough, Dysmenorrhea, Gonorrhea, Dysfunctional uterine, Rheumatism, Gout, Wounds and ulcers, As Diuretic, Insecticide
3	Root	Powdered form	Dyspepsia, Colic, Dysentery, Piles, Skin diseases, Eczema, Carbuncles, Abscesses, Leprosy, Rheumatism
4	Stem and Bark	Decoction As Tincture	Burns, Cancer Flatulence/ Irritable bladder, Dysentery, Rheumatism

Toxicity of *Vitex negundo*: Tandon and Gupta's preliminary acute toxicity study of ethanolic leaf extract administered orally to albino rats showed that it was essentially nontoxic, with an LD₅₀ dose of 7.5 g/kg/wt. No histomorphological alterations were observed in the stomach at any of the extract dosages examined. However, the liver, lung, and heart specimens showed dose-dependent histomorphological changes ³⁷.

CONCLUSION: *Vitex negundo* offers promising antioxidant and anti-inflammatory potential, with adjunctive benefits in antimicrobial and anticancer areas. More targeted clinical studies are needed to confirm efficacy. *Alstonia scholaris* exhibits a multifaceted therapeutic profile, especially in respiratory health, pain/inflammation modulation, GI relief, and neuroprotection. Early clinical data on safety is encouraging, but continued research is required to define optimal dosing, safety thresholds, and therapeutic indications.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Nil

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Nil

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How to cite this article:

Sharma C, Devi M, Verma KK and Sharma A: A review on pharmacological activities of *Alstonia* and *Vitex negundo*. Int J Pharmacognosy 2025; 12(9): 716-24. doi link: [http://dx.doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.12\(9\).716-24](http://dx.doi.org/10.13040/IJPSR.0975-8232.IJP.12(9).716-24).

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