Ficus exasperata Vahl: A Health Resource for Diabetes

Lawal, Balikis (School: Doregos Private Academy)

In traditional Nigerian medicine, different parts of Ficus exasperata Vahl, are used as analgesic, diuretic, wound healing, anti-parasitic and for treating hemorrhoids. However, much documentation have not been done to determine the appropriate doses safe for human consumption. Preliminary phytochemistry of the leaves showed that it contains tannins, flavonoids, phenolics and saponins with no traces of alkaloids or anthraquinones. Aqueous leaf extract of F. exasperata at the doses of 25, 50 and 75 mg/kg body weight was investigated for its acclaimed antidiabetic activity using alloxan-induced diabetic rats. Thirty six rats albino rats (Rattus norvegicus) weighing between 182 g to 193 g were randomly assigned into 6 groups of six animals each. All the rats were fed rat pellets and water ad libitum, thrice daily for 8 days. No other treatment for rats in Group 1 (control) while those in Group 2 to 6 were made diabetic by administering 85 mg/ kg body weight of alloxan. Group 2 received no further treatment. Group 3 was treated with 50 mg/kg body weight of glibenclamide (standard diabetic drug) while Group 4, 5 and 6 received 25 mg/kg, 50 mg/kg and 75 /mg/kg body weight respectively of F. exasperata extract. Fasting blood glucose was used to access the diabetic level. The fasting blood glucose of the diabetic rats at the end of the experimental period reduced significantly ($P<0.05$) following the administration of all the doses of the extract. Those that received 50 and 75 mg/kg body weight were similar in the blood glucose level with the control. Further research in determining possible side effect and toxicity of Ficus exasperata Vahl, is suggested.

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