



Evaluation of the memory enhancing activity of Dichloromethane fraction of the methanolextract of *Pycnanthus angolensis* stem bark in mice.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Numerous health benefits have been ascribed to the use of different parts of *Pycnanthus angolensis* (Welw) Warb., Myristicaceae, in ethnomedicine including its role in cognition enhancement and inflammation.

Objectives: This study was undertaken to investigate the stem bark of the plant for memory enhancing activity in mice.

Materials and Methods: The plant material was extracted by maceration with 80% methanol and fractionated using N-hexane, Dichloromethane (DCM), and Ethyl acetate. The Dichloromethane (DCM) fraction-the most potent fraction- (25, 50, and 100mg/kg) was evaluated for memory enhancing activity using the Y maze, Morris Water Maze (MWM) and the Novel Object Recognition Test (NORT), on the scopolamine and lipopolysaccharide (LPS) induced amnesia model. The antioxidant markers and acetyl cholinesterase inhibiting effect of DCM were also evaluated.

Results: The results obtained from the study indicate that the DCM significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased the alternation behaviour of the mice in the Y maze, increased the discrimination index in the NORT and decreased the escape latency in the MWM paradigm. Biochemically, DCM increased Glutathione (GSH), and superoxide dismutase (SOD), but decreased Malondialdehyde (MDA) and acetylcholinesterase (AChE) activity in the brain. The histopathological results revealed that the DCM protected against the decreased neuronal density induced by scopolamine and LPS.

Conclusions: The study suggests that the DCM fraction may possess significant memory enhancing activity which could be through enhancing cholinergic action, combating inflammatory responses by reducing influence of LPS and increasing anti-oxidant status of the brain. Also DCM protected against decreased neuronal density.

Key words

Memory, *Pycnanthus angolensis*, Alzheimer's disease, percentage alternation, escape latency.

Received 04 Oct., 2023; Revised 14 Oct., 2023; Accepted 16 Oct., 2023 © The author(s) 2023. Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

I. Introduction

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a specific brain disease that results in the death of brain cells it ranks as the highest reason of dementia in the aged. It is a condition that involves disorder in protein conformation, two main neuropathological features describes this disease: amyloid- β peptides and neurofibrillary tangles (NFT). Amyloid- β peptides occur as accumulation of extracellular plaques, NFT consist of intracellular tangles resulting from high-phosphorylation of tau proteins. (Prince *et al.*, 2011).

Memory loss, cognitive impairment and behavior dysfunction to death are the characteristic symptoms of the disease. People with AD develop physiological malfunctions like bladder control, swallowing and balance. Depression and other psychological symptoms may also be seen. Alzheimer's disease is a chronic,

neurodegenerative and fatal disease currently affecting 35 million people in the world. The prevalence of the disease shows an age dependent pattern with 3% of people in the age group 60-69 years, 5% in that of 70-79 and 30-50% in the age group 80-89 years being affected (YoungSooet. al.,2012).

Suggested causes of AD include increased levels of aggregated proteins (amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles), mitochondria dysfunction, decreased production of neurotransmitters (acetylcholine (ACh), norepinephrine (NE), and serotonin) (Barner et. al., 1998; Bryne, 1998) inflammation and oxidative imbalance (YoungSooet. al.,2012).

In AD a substantial number of postsynaptic cholinergic receptors are left undamaged even with the loss of cholinergic neurons (Avery et. al., 1997). Cognitive decline is related to degeneration of cholinergic neurons which results in cholinergic neurotransmission deficits consequently research on cognitive improvement have focused on elevating cholinergic activity in the brain (Brodaty, 1999; Bryne, 1998).Cholinesterase inhibitors, have been employed in an effort to enhance cholinergic activity in the treatment of AD (Bryne 199; Wiart, 2006). Several compounds that affect behavior (antidepressants, anxiolytics and antipsychotics) are also involved in the management of the disorder.

Currently five medications (Donepezil (Aricept[®]), Galantamine (Razadyne[®]), Memantine (Namenda[®]), Rivastigmine (Exelon[®]) and Tacrine) are approved for the management of AD. Notwithstanding, they do not effect cure but only slows the disease progression or produce a short term improvement in cognitive functions (YoungSooet. al.,2012).Though, AD is currently managed with orthodox drugs, ethnomedicinal plants have not been extensively evaluated for natural product. Plants have a reservoir of potential compounds for managing many diseases including those involving cognitive abilities like AD. Resort to plants for drugs is not misplaced, hence the study of *Pycnanthus angolensis* for the evaluation of its effect on neurodegenerative diseases.

Pycnanthus angolensis (Welw) Warb, Myristicaceae, belongs to the order Magnonliflorae and is popularly known as 'African nutmeg' or 'false nutmeg'. The plant is widely used in ethnomedicine as a memory enhancing agent, antimicrobial, analgesic, anthelmintic, antidote for poisoning, antihaemorrhagic, anti-inflammatory and ashyoglycaemic agent (Sofidiyaet. al., 2015; Achelet. al., 2012). It has been identified as having the following major chemical constituents; Fatty acids, Steroids, Cerobrosides (Pycnangloside), Allantoin, Lignans, Plastiquinones and Ubiquinones, Glyceryl-1,3-ditetradecanoate, Terpenes and Sesquiterpenes(Jaijoyet. al., 2010),and is now being evaluated for its effects on amnesia.

II. Materials and method

Collection

Fresh stem bark of *Pycnanthus angolensis* was collected from Opa village in Ile-Ife. A specimen was identified by Mr. Ibhanebor Gabriel and was deposited at the IFE Herbarium, Department of Botany, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, with the voucher number; IFE 17635.

Extraction

After collection, the stem bark was further cut into smaller pieces and air dried at room temperature for three weeks. The air dried material (2.3 kg) was grinded into powder using a milling machine, extracted thrice by maceration with 80% methanol at room temperature for 72 h. The combined methanolic extract was filtered with double-layered muslin cloth and concentrated on a water bath at 40°C to yield a blackish-brown solid (64.4 g).

Acute toxicity

The method of acute toxicity test described by Jaijoyet. al.,2010 was employed in the acute toxicity study of *P. angolensis*. The procedure involved the administration of a single oral dose of 5000 mg/kg to seven male mice which had fasted for 12h. The behavioral parameters monitored, over a period of seven days include; convulsion, hyperactivity, sedation, grooming, increased or decreased respiration.

Phytochemical screening

Phytochemical investigation for the extract was conducted using the standard methods

Partitioning of the crude extract into fractions

A suspension of the dried extract was obtained by the addition of 80% methanol. The partitioning was done using a separating funnel, the solvents used were N-hexane, dichloromethane and ethyl acetate. Sodium anhydrous sulfate was used to make the three recovered liquid phases clear. Each organic phase was then filtered into a round-bottom flask. The filtered extracts were concentrated to dryness under reduced pressure at ≤40 °C using a rotary evaporator.

Preparation of the extract for administration

A suspension of the extract of *P. angolensis* was prepared fresh on each day of the experiment, using 5% Tween 80 and distilled water as vehicle. Dilutions of the standard drugs were made with distilled water.

Chemicals

Scopolamine (Embassy Nigeria Ltd), Donepezil, Tween 80

Animals

Male and female mice weighing 20-25 g were selected for the study. They were randomly divided into groups of six animals and were housed in clean cages laden with fresh wood shavings. They were allowed to acclimatize for a period of one week before the commencement of the experiments. They were fed with growers mash (manufactured by UAC Foods Nigeria Plc.) and water was provided *ad libitum*. This research work was carried out in compliance with the University of Ibadan Animal Care and Use Research Ethics Committee (UI-ACUREC) regulations for animal use with ethical number: UI- ACUREC/16/0041

Behavioural studies

(1) Y-maze Test

Six groups of six mice each were used for this experiment. Group 1-3 received 25, 50 and 100 mg/kg of the DCM fraction per oral. The fourth group was also administered orally with 5% Tween 80 in normal saline which served as the negative control. Group (5) received Donepezil (1 mg/kg) ip, while group six received scopolamine. Thirty (30) minutes later, scopolamine (scop) (3 mg/kg) ip was administered to each mouse. The treatment was done acutely and daily for seven days. One hour after the administration of the extract, the vehicle or the standard, each mouse was placed at the center of the Y- maze and was allowed to roam the different arms of the maze for six minutes, records of the arms visited and the sequence of the arms the animal entered were manually recorded. An arm entry is defined as the entry of the body of the mouse completely into an arm compartment except for its tail while an alternation consists of entering the three different arms consecutively.

(2) Morris Water Maze test

The Morris water maze (MWM) procedure was carried out according to the method described by Logue *et al.*, 1997. In this experiment, six groups of six mice each were used. Group 1-3 received 25, 50 and 100 mg/kg of the DCM fraction. The fourth group was administered 5% Tween 80 in normal saline which served as the control. Group (5) received Donepezil (1 mg/kg) ip, while group six received scopolamine. Thirty (30) minutes later, scopolamine (3 mg/kg) ip was administered to each mouse. The treatment was done acutely and daily for seven days. After 30 minutes of the administration of Scopolamine each mouse was gently placed in the water. The time taken for the mouse to reach the platform and climb it (escape response) was measured.

(3) The Novel object recognition test. (NORT)

The effect of *P. angolensis* was further evaluated using the NORT (Wang *et al.*, 2009). In which the open field chamber (60 cm x 50 cm x 40 cm) was used. Also identically sized (4.5 cm diameter and 11.5 cm height) cylindrical bottles labeled A, B and C were used as the discriminated objects. Objects A and B were white, while object C had a multi-colour pattern. The test consists of two phases: the trial and the test phases with six groups of six mice each used for each experiment. The treatment was as described for MWM test above. After which each mouse was first placed in the open field chamber for five minutes in order to acclimatize to the experiment set up. The trial phase commenced with the identical objects (A and B) placed on opposite sides (at a distance of 8 cm from the walls and 34 cm from each other). Each mouse was then individually placed in the open field chamber in the middle of the two objects for five minutes and thereafter, returned to their home cages for an interval of 30 mins. In the test phase object B was replaced with object C, (which was novel to the mice and different from objects A and B) and mice were left to explore objects A and C for five minutes, the result was recorded.

Preparation for histological and biochemical assays

After the last treatment the animals were sacrificed by cervical dislocation and the brains were immediately removed and kept in a cooler with ice blocks for 30 mins. Thereafter whole brains were weighed and divided into two portions. One portion was placed in formalin and used for histo-morphology while the other was homogenized with 10% phosphate buffer (0.1M, pH 7.4), cold centrifuged and the supernatant was separated and divided into portions for the different biochemical assays as follows:

The biochemical assays

1. Determination of acetylcholinesterase (AChE) activity in mice brain

Acetylcholinesterase activity, which is a marker for cholinergic neurotransmission was assayed in the mouse using the method of Ellman *et al.*,1961. The change in colour produced when thiocholine reacts with DNTB was used as a measure of the rate of acetylcholinesterase activity. The change in absorbance per minute was determined and the rate of acetylcholinesterase activity was calculated and expressed as $\mu\text{moles}/\text{min}/\text{g}$ tissue.

2. Determination of reduced glutathione (GSH) concentration

The concentration of reduced glutathione (GSH) was determined using the method of Moron *et al.* 1979. The absorbance was, read at 412nm against a blank in the spectrophotometer. Subsequently the concentrations of reduced GSH in the brain tissues were calculated and expressed as micromoles pergram tissue ($\mu\text{moles}/\text{g}$ tissue).

3. Determination of lipid peroxidation

The assay of the MDA level was done according to the method of Adam-Vizi and Seregi1982. The absorbance of the clear supernatant was measured against a blank at 532nm in spectrophotometer. The MDA was calculated using a molar extinction coefficient of $1.56 \times 10^5 \text{ M}^{-1}\text{cm}^{-1}$ and values were expressed as μmoles of MDA per gram tissue.

4. Determination of superoxide dismutase (SOD) activity

The assay of the level of SOD activity in mice brain was done according to the method of Misra and Fridovich,1972. The absorbance was read at 480nm every 30 seconds for 150 seconds.

Statistical analysis

The data were analyzed using the GraphPad® prism 4.0 statistical software. The test doses were compared with control by one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) followed by post hoc analysis using StudentNewman-Kuels multiple comparison tests. Test doses were also compared with the standard drug. All results were expressed as mean \pm standard error of mean (SEM). P values less than 0.05 were taken as significant (i.e. $p < 0.05$). Appropriate tables and figures were used to display the data.

III. RESULTS

Acute toxicity

Following a single dose administration of 5000mg/kg (Gregory *et al.*, 2009) of the extract of *Pycnanthus angolensis* mortality or visible signs of toxicity or abnormal behavior were observed at the end of 24 hours and through seven days.

Phytochemical analysis of the stem bark extract of *Pycnanthus angolensis*

Table 1 : Phytochemical composition of *Pycnanthus angolensis*

Class of phytocompounds	Inference
Saponins	+
Flavonoids	++
Alkaloids	++
Steroids	+
Terpenoids	++
Tannins	+
Anthraquinones	+
Cardiac-glycosides	+
phenols	+

Effect of dichloromethane (DCM) fraction on memory performance

(a) Effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on spatial working memory

The effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on spatial working memory as measured by percentage alternation and escape latency using the y maze and Morris water maze are shown in figures 1 and 2. Figure 1 shows that the DCM fraction ($F_{(5, 30)} = 5.56$; $p < 0.05$) at all the dose levels used, 25, 50 and 100mg/kg produced a significant increase in the percentage alternation when compared with the scopolamine group. A similar pattern was repeated in the Morris water maze result (figure 2).

(b) Effect of the dichloromethane (DCM) fraction of *P. angolensis* on recognition memory

The result for the effect of the DCM fraction on recognition memory is as shown in figure 3. It shows that when compared with the scopolamine group the 25mg/kg and the vehicle group produced a significant increase in the discrimination index.

Effect of the dichloromethane (DCM) fraction of *P. angolensis* given for seven days on scopolamine induced amnesia

The result for the effect of the DCM fraction given for seven days on scopolamine induced amnesia is as shown in figure 4 and 5, all the doses of the DCM used (25, 50 and 100mg/kg) significantly ($F_{(5, 30)} = 5.86$; $p < 0.05$) increase the level of alternation in mice thereby countering the amnesia induced by scopolamine. While in the MWM test figure 5, the 25 and 50mg/kg doses reversed the amnesia induced by scopolamine by significantly reducing the escape latency. DPZ group produced a significant decrease in escape latency

Effect of the dichloromethane (DCM) fraction of *P. angolensis* given for seven days on lipopolysaccharide (LPS) induced amnesia

The results of the effect of the DCM fraction given for seven days on LPS induced amnesia in mice are as shown in figures 6 and 7. The three dose of the DCM fraction used (25, 50 and 100mg/kg) effectively reversed the amnesia induced by LPS by significantly ($F_{(5, 30)} = 18.46$; $p < 0.05$) increasing the percentage alternation.

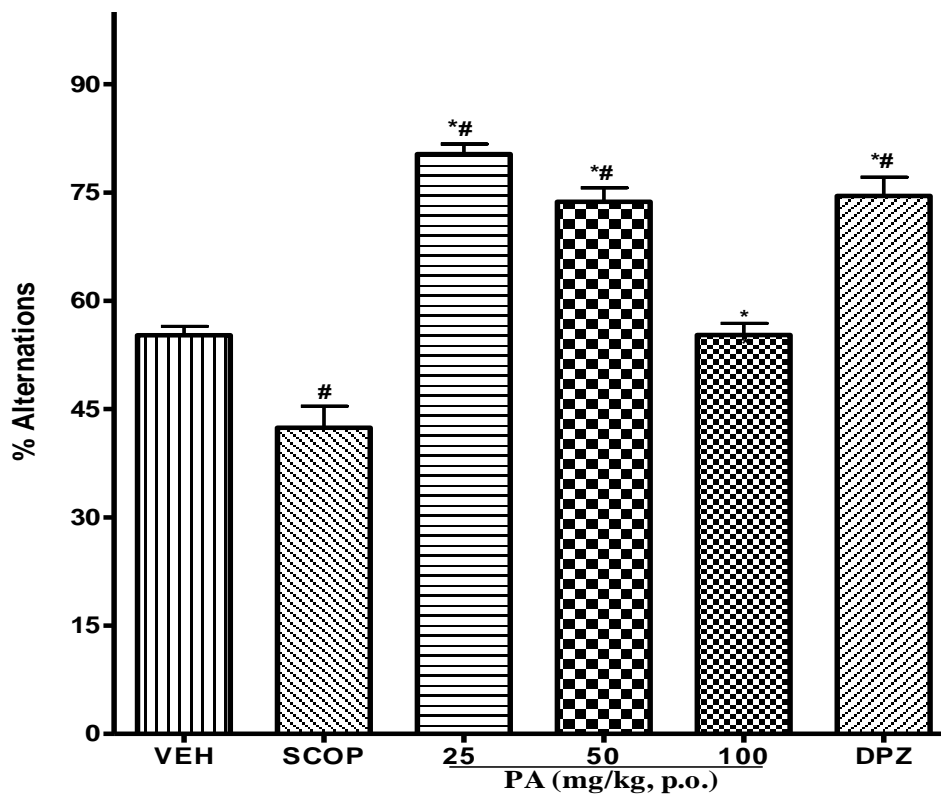


Figure 1: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA on memory performance in the y-maze paradigm.

Each bar represents the Mean \pm S.E.M for 6 animals per group. These values are significant at $*p < 0.05$ when compared with scopolamine (SCOP) group (ANOVA followed by Newman Keul post hoc test). $\#p < 0.05$ when compared with control group (VEH) (ANOVA followed by Newman Keul post hoc test). And the treated 25, 50 and 100 mg/kg of the DCM fraction of PA, Donepezil (DPZ) 1mg/kg- a cholinesterase inhibitor.

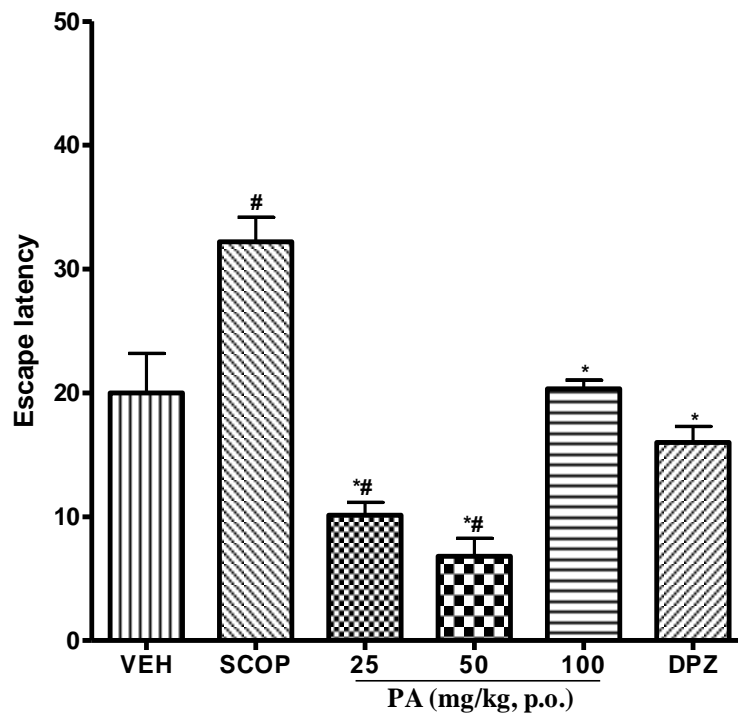


Figure 2: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA on memory performance in the Morris Water Maze paradigm

(Foot note as for fig. 1)

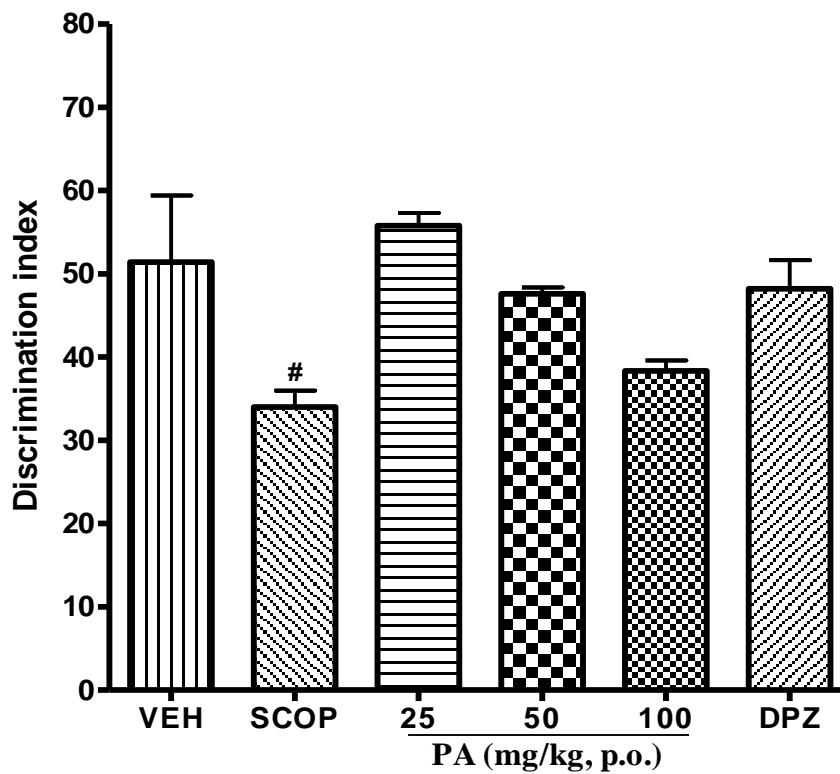


Figure 3: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA on memory performance in the novel object recognition test paradigm

(Foot note as for fig. 1)

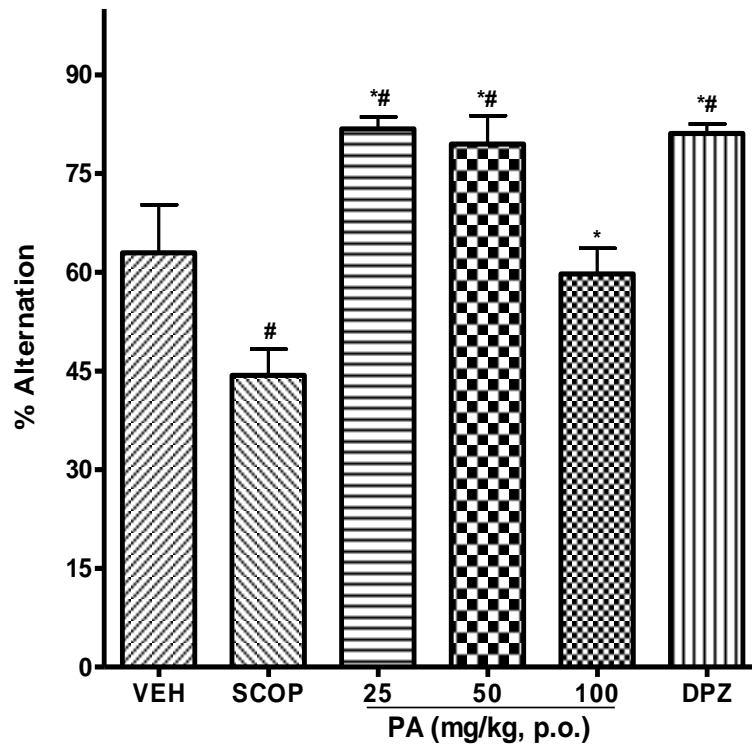


Figure 4: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA given for seven days on scopolamine induced amnesia in the Y- maze paradigm

(Foot note as for fig. 1)

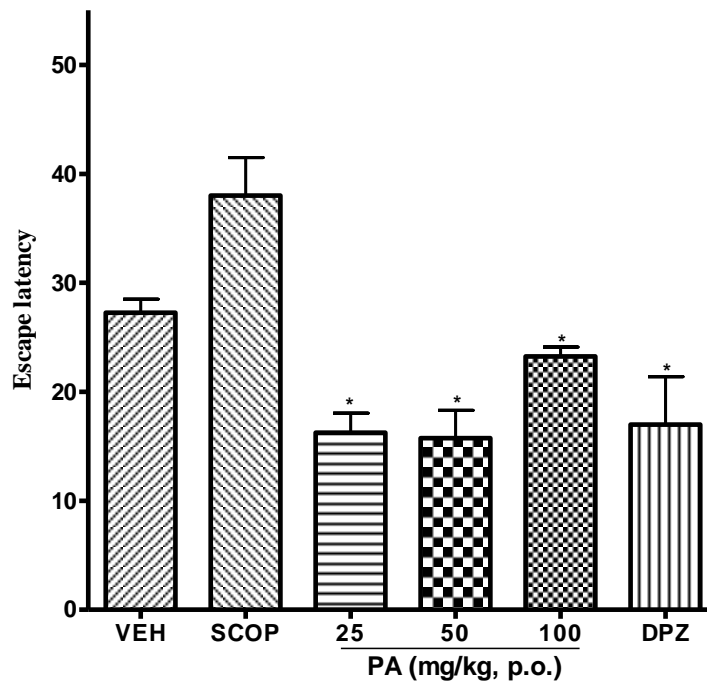


Figure 5: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA given for seven days on scopolamine induced amnesia in the Morris water maze paradigm

(Foot note as for fig. 1)

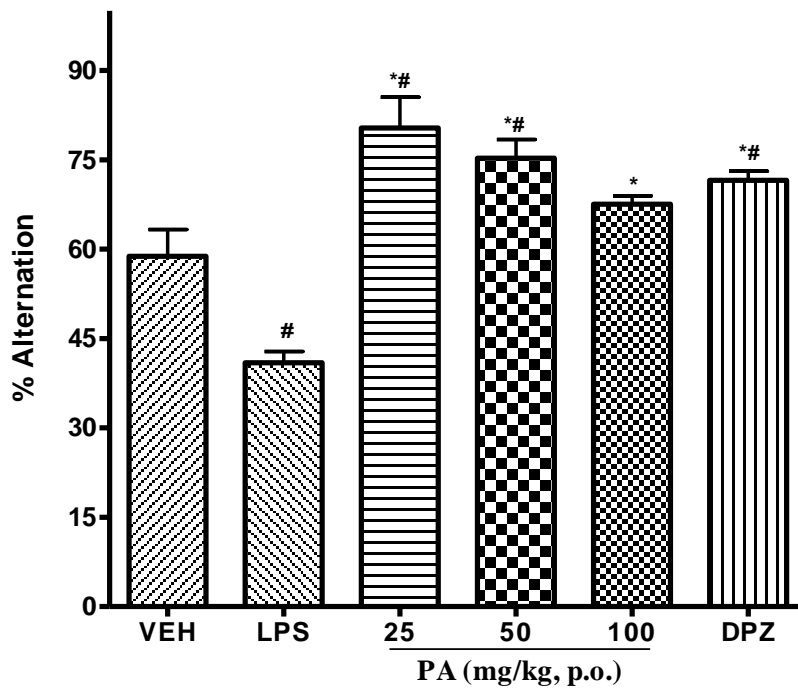


Figure 6: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA given for seven days on LPS induced amnesia in the Y- maze paradigm

(Foot note as for fig. 1)

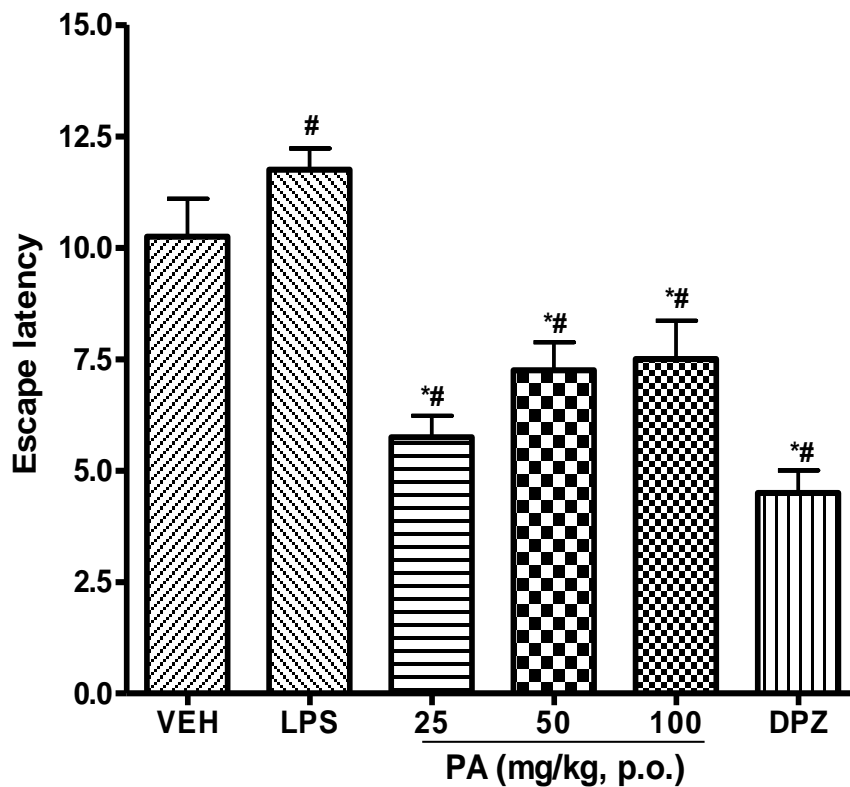


Figure 7: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA given for seven days on LPS induced amnesia in the Morris water maze paradigm

(Foot note as for fig. 1)

Biochemical Assays

Scopolamine Model

(a) Effect of DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on acetylcholinesterase activity (AChE) in mice brains

The effect of DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* administered daily for seven days in scopolamine treated mice is shown in table 1, whereas scopolamine (3 mg/kg, i.p.) significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased the activity of the enzyme when compared to the vehicle, the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* (25-100mg/kg p.o.) significantly ($p < 0.05$) suppressed AChE activity caused by scopolamine. DPZ a standard anti-amnesic drug, also demonstrated a significant inhibition of AChE activity in mice brains (Table 1)

(b) Effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on malondialdehyde (MDA) content in mice brains

Scopolamine (3mg/kg i.p) significantly ($p = 0.05$) increased the concentration of MDA in the brain of mice in comparison with the vehicle (table 1). The increased concentration of MDA induced by scopolamine was significantly suppressed by the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* (25-100mg/kg o.p.) in mice brains. Also DPZ (1mg/kg i.p) the positive control significantly decreased the concentration of MDA in mice brain.

(c) Effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on reduced glutathione concentration in mice brains.

Table 1 shows the effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on GSH concentration in the brains of mice treated with scopolamine. Scopolamine (3mg/kg) significantly ($p = 0.05$) decreased the concentration of GSH in mice brains. This decrease was however significantly ($p = 0.05$) attenuated by the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis*. Similar effect was also observed in the group treated with DPZ.

Table 2: The effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on the concentration of the biochemical markers; AChE MDA, and GSH in the brains of mice treated with scopolamine.

Treatment	AChE activity (mmol/min/g tissue)	MDA level (nmol/g tissue)	GSH conc. ($\mu\text{mol/g}$ tissue)
Control	0.495 \pm 0.048	0.101 \pm 0.003	7.450 \pm 0.574
SCOP	0.718 \pm 0.068 [#]	0.311 \pm 0.009 [#]	2.931 \pm 0.560 [#]
25mg/kg	0.167 \pm 0.032 [*]	0.130 \pm 0.006 [*]	9.606 \pm 0.312 [*]
50mg/kg	0.205 \pm 0.054 [*]	0.152 \pm 0.004 [*]	7.427 \pm 0.860 [*]
100mg/kg	0.247 \pm 0.047 [*]	0.243 \pm 0.24 [#]	6.716 \pm 0.369 [*]
DPZ	0.263 \pm 0.009 [*]	0.102 \pm 0.004 [*]	7.725 \pm 0.504 [*]

Values represent the Mean \pm S.E.M for 6 animals per group. These values are significant at; * $p < 0.05$ when compared with scopolamine (SCOP) group (ANOVA followed by Newman Keul post hoc test), [#] $p < 0.05$ when compared with control group (VEH) (ANOVA followed by Newman Keul post hoc test). And the treated 25, 50 and 100 mg/kg of the DCM fraction of PA, Donepezil (DPZ) 1mg/kg- a cholinesterase inhibitor.

Lipopolysaccharide Model

(a) Effect of DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on acetylcholinesterase activity (AChE) in mice brain

The effect of DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* administered daily for seven days in LPS treated mice is shown in table 2. Whereas LPS (3 mg/kg, i.p.) significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased the activity of the enzyme when compared to the vehicle, the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* (25-100mg/kg p.o.) significantly ($p < 0.05$) suppressed the increase in AChE activity caused by LPS (Table 2). DPZ a standard anti-amnesic drug also demonstrated a significant inhibition of AChE activity in mice brains.

(b) Effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on malondialdehyde (MDA) content in mice brains

LPS (3mg/kg i.p) significantly ($p = 0.05$) increased the concentration of MDA in the brain of mice in comparison with the vehicle (table 2). The increased concentration of MDA induced by LPS was significantly suppressed by the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* (25-100mg/kg o.p.) in mice brains. Also DPZ (1mg/kg i.p) the positive control significantly decreased the concentration of MDA in mice brain.

(c) Effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on reduced glutathione concentration in mice brains.

Table 2 shows the effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on GSH concentration in the brains of mice treated with LPS. LPS (3 mg/kg) significantly ($p = 0.05$) decreased the concentration of GSH in mice brains. This decrease was however, significantly ($p = 0.05$) attenuated by the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* (25-100mg/kg). Similar effect was also observed in the group treated with DPZ.

(d) Effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on superoxide dismutase (SOD)

The effects of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on SOD activity in the brain of mice treated with LPS are as shown in Table2. LPS significantly decreased the activity of SOD in mice brains. Whereas the DCM fraction of

P. angolensis (25-100mg/kg p.o.) significantly (p=0.05) increased the Sod activity in mice brain. DPZ demonstrated similar effect.

Table 3: The effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on the concentration of the biochemical markers; AChE, MDA, and GSH in the brains of mice treated with LPS.

Treatment	AChE activity (mmol/min/gtissue)	MDA level (nmol/g tissue)	GSH conc. (μmol/g tissue)	SOD activity (units/mg protein)
Control	0.495 ± 0.048	0.101 ± 0.003	7.519 ± 0.627	22.26 ± 2.904
LPS	0.737 ± 0.041 [#]	0.261 ± 0.002 [#]	2.060 ± 0.627 [#]	8.11 ± 1.149 [#]
25mg/kg	0.204 ± 0.021 [*]	0.143 ± 0.010 [*]	8.000 ± 0.290 [*]	41.81 ± 1.663 [*]
50mg/kg	0.187 ± 0.017 [*]	0.192 ± 0.001 [*]	7.358 ± 0.307 [*]	35.59±3.715 [*]
100mg/kg	0.237 ± 0.026 [*]	0.241 ± 0.024 [*]	6.808 ± 0.215 [*]	26.73± 6.012 [*]
DPZ	0.194 ± 0.013 [*]	0.192 ± 0.013 [*]	8.229 ± 0.691 [*]	22.99 ± 1.246 [*]

(Table Footnote as for table 2)

Effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on hippocampal neuronal cell density in Scopolamine treated and lipopolysaccharide (LPS) treated mice.

The result of the effect of the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* on hippocampal neuronal cell density in scopolamine treated mice is as shown in figure 8 while figure 9 shows that of LPS. In both cases the DCM fraction countered the amnesic activities of scopolamine and LPS

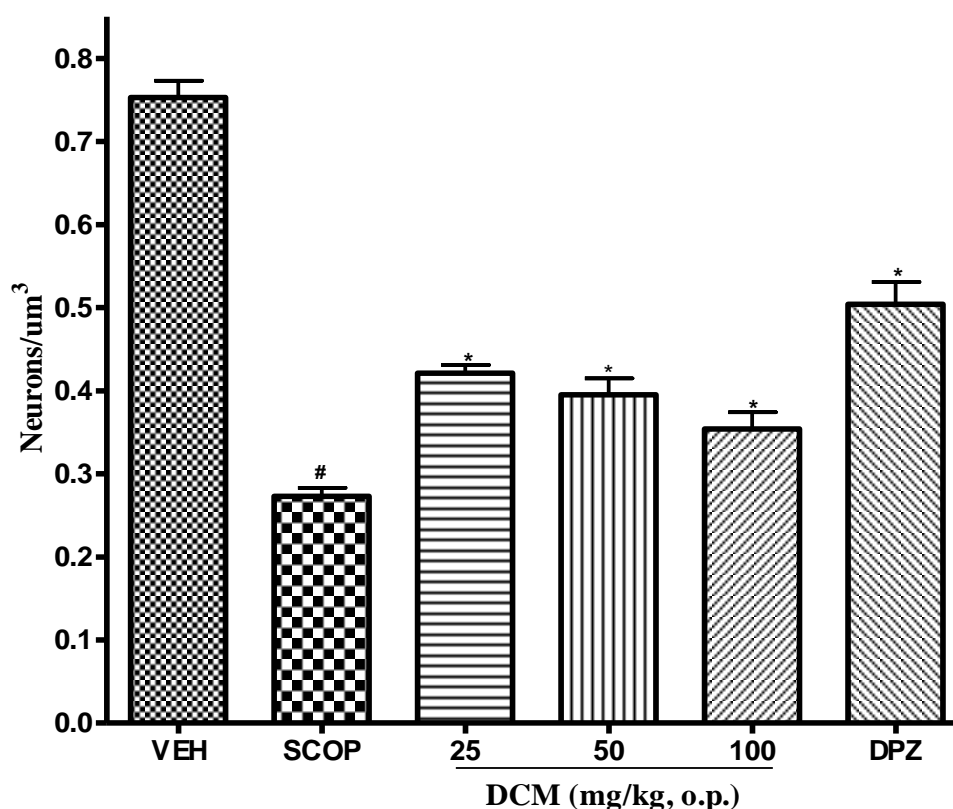


Figure 8: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA on hippocampal neuronal cell density in scopolamine treated mice.

(Footnote as for fig. 1)

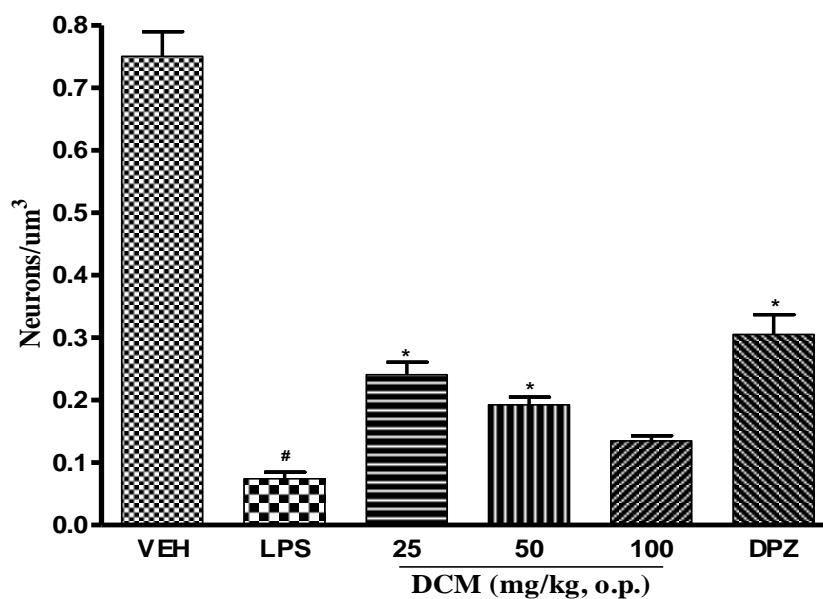


Figure 9: Effect of the DCM fraction of PA on hippocampal neuronal cell density in LPS treated mice. (Footnote as for fig. 1)

IV. Discussion

The present study evaluated the effect of the methanolic extract of *P. angolensis* on memory in Scopolamine and LPS treated mice, using three behavioural models namely Y-maze, Morris water maze and the Novel object recognition paradigms.

The Y maze is a symmetrical maze that measures continuous spontaneous alternation it is widely accepted as an entry test for screening cognitive enhancers. In the Y maze test rodents alternate the arms they enter suggesting they remembered the previously entered arm this ability is referred to as spontaneous alternation. This behavior measures the ability of rodents to remember the sequence of arms entry in the Y maze and serves as a measure of short term memory (Blokland, 2005). In this study the DCM of *P. angolensis* significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased the percentage alternation in the Y-maze paradigm. This suggests enhanced spatial memory. Scopolamine when administered intraperitoneally would generate deficits of performance in the Y maze. The resulting deficit could be prevented by acetylcholine esterase inhibitors and sigma-1 agonists (Heo *et al.*, 2004). The increase in alternation behavior produced by the treatment in the present study may be an indication that it may possess acetylcholinesterase inhibitory activity this is corroborated by the work of Elufioye *et al.*, 2010 which demonstrated that the crude stem bark extract of *Pycnanthus angolensis* has acetylcholinesterase inhibitory activity.

The Morris Water Maze (MWM) test assesses spatial learning in rodents. In this test the animals swims from a start location and uses distal cues to find a submerged platform which is the only escape route in the swimming arena (Vorhees *et al.*, 2006). If an agent is amnesic it will produce escape latency that is not significantly different between the first training and the test sessions or this figure could be significantly higher than the control but still smaller than its training value (partial amnesia). A facilitatory treatment will produce a test latency that is significantly smaller than the control- group test value (Vorhees *et al.*, 2006). The results of the Morris water maze test show that the DCM of *P. angolensis* significantly ($p < 0.05$) reduced the escape latency, this is collaborated by the work done by Elufioye and Oyelude in which it was found that the escape latency in the *Pycnanthus angolensis* treated group decreased through days 1 to 3 when compared with the scopolamine group showing their memory enhancing potential (Elufioye and Oyelude, 2015).

The effect of the extract of *P. angolensis* on recognition memory was evaluated using the novel object recognition test. Naturally rodents would spend more time exploring a novel object than a familiar one however, any impairment in memory may cause a deviation from this normal pattern. An absence of any difference in the time spent exploring the two objects in the test phase could be interpreted as a memory deficit. The results from this study show that the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* increased the exploration time of the novel objects by the mice, implying memory enhancing activity.

The outer membrane of gram-negative bacteria contain the endotoxin, LPS, which causes the release of various pro-inflammatory and immunoregulatory cytokines and free radicals (Dentener *et al.*, 1993; Medvedev *et al.*, 2000), inflammatory processes have detrimental effects on brain cells. The up regulation of pro-inflammatory factors lead to neuronal death in the brain (McGuire *et al.*, 2001; Ramesh *et al.*, 2013). The neuronal death in-turn induces memory impairment. In the present study the DCM of *P. angolensis* reversed the amnesia induced by LPS this suggests that the extract may possess anti-inflammatory activity which must have countered the neuronal death produced by LPS and the resulting memory impairment.

The accumulation of reactive oxygen species (ROS) to toxic levels in cells otherwise known as oxidative stress results in injury to DNA, lipids and protein. Brain tissue contain smaller amount of protective antioxidant defense system than other tissues this makes them more susceptible to the damaging effects of ROS (Jimenez-Jimenez *et al.*, 2006). Findings from the present study show that the brain levels of the antioxidant enzymes superoxide dismutase and glutathione were significantly ($p < 0.05$) increased by the DCM fraction of *P. angolensis* this may have reversed the oxidative imbalance thereby, improving neuronal function by protecting the neuron against further attack and damage by ROS. Furthermore, the brain level of lipid peroxidation (malondialdehyde) was decreased by the plant under investigation validating its positive effects on the oxidative imbalance.

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