



Evaluation of anti-inflammatory and healing activities of dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum*

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to evaluate the anti-inflammatory activity of the dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of *Piliostigma reticulatum*, a medicinal plant from Côte d'Ivoire and widely used by traditional healers against inflammatory diseases. Inflammation is characterized by redness, pain and swelling. Anti-inflammatory drugs are agents that reduce inflammation. *In vivo* studies of reduction of wound diameter and the test of carrageenan 1% were used for this work. For reducing wound diameter, fraction effects were tested in wound induced rats. The percentage of wound reduction was determined. Furthermore, fraction effect on acute inflammation induced by carrageenan 1% was studied. The dichloromethane fraction at a dose of 200 mg/kg body weight reduces significantly the wounds surfaces at 61.88% of inhibition at 15 day and 94.33% of inhibition at 30 day. This action was similar to the one provoked by betadine with a wound surface of 97.63% of inhibition at the thirtieth day. The dichloromethane fraction like the diclofenac reduced significantly the volume of edema from 0.7 ± 0.2 to $0.2 \pm 0.1^*$ ml (71.42% of inhibition) for 600 mg/kg body weight, the high dose. The study of acute toxicity showed that the dichloromethane fraction at high doses, could reduced mobility in mice and provoked death. The observation of anti-inflammatory and healing activities suggest that the use of *Piliostigma reticulatum* in traditional medicine to treat inflammatory diseases could be justified. Phytochemical screening showed that the most active fraction contains: flavonoids, tannins, reducing sugars and polyphenols.

Keywords: *Piliostigma reticulatum*, Anti-inflammatory, Healing, Carrageenan, Côte d'Ivoire

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1. Introduction

Inflammation may happen in response to processes such as tissues injury, cell death, cancer, ischemia and degeneration (Azab et al., 2016). When there is injury to any part of human body, the arterioles in the encircling tissue dilate. There is a raised blood circulation towards the area (Burke et al., 2005; and Apu et al., 2012). These reasons are causing swelling and pain (Apu et al., 2012). It is also a biological response to protect the organism for elimination and to start the recovery (Middleton et al., 2000; and Etame Loé et al., 2018). Inflammation is in other way, an important source of radical oxygen produced directly by phagocyte cells (Etame Loé et al., 2018; and Luczkiewicz et al., 2001). The excess of radical in organism are the causes of certain diseases such as cancer, asthma, hepatic troubles and cardiovascular diseases (Ademiluyi and Oboh, 2008). The use of anti-inflammatory drugs provokes side effects. The study of plants anti-inflammatory plants followed by phytochemical screening to determine the constituents can be without side effects (Etame Loé et al., 2018). In the case, the study of the can necessary to have efficacies products without second effects.

Piliostigma reticulatum is traditionally used to treat many affections. According to Yelemou et al. (2007), this plant is used against diarrhea and tuberculosis. For Betti et al. (2011), *Piliostigma reticulatum* showed its efficacy against rheumatism. Betti and Mabere (2010) are reported that this plant had antidiarrheal and anti-fever activities. Also, Salawu et al. (2009) noticed an important utilization of *Piliostigma reticulatum* to treat wounds. Scientifically, previous studies of this plant showed its antidiarrheal activity (Dosso et al., 2012), anti-secretory activity (Dosso et al., 2012), anti-bacterial activity (N'guessan et al., 2015) and its toxicity (Dosso et al., 2014). The anti-inflammatory and healing activities of *Piliostigma reticulatum* can be necessary to scientifically confirm the activities of this plant against gastrointestinal disorders binding to inflammation diseases.

The aim of this current investigation was to determine the anti-inflammatory and healing activities of the dichloromethane fraction of a crude ethanol extract of the stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* in rats.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Plant collection

Stem barks of *Piliostigma reticulatum* (DC.) Horscht (Ceasalpiniaceae) were collected in Abidjan (South region of Côte d'Ivoire) in October 2018. The plant was identified and authenticated by the National Centre of Floristic of University of Cocody-Abidjan. A voucher specimen (N° 18033) of the plant was deposited in the herbarium of this centre.

2.2. Animal material

Swiss albinos mice (male and female) weighing between 20 and 30 g and the young adult albinos rats *Wistar* (weighing 170-220 g) of both sexes were used. These animals, provided by the faculty of Biosciences (University of Felix Houphouet Boigny, Côte d'Ivoire) were housed in standard metal cages. They were kept under standard laboratory temperature conditions one week before experiments for acclimation. Animals were fed with food pellets (Ivograin®, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire) and were given water *ad libitum*. They were deprived from food for at least 24 h prior to experiments but allowed free access to drinking water (anti-inflammatory activity). The equipment usage handling and sacrificing of the animals were performed in accordance with the European Council legislation 87/609/EEC for the protection of experimental animals (Mitjans et al., 2008).

2.3. Preparation of dichloromethane fraction

Stem barks of *Piliostigma reticulatum* were washed with distilled water, cleaned, cut into small pieces and kept at room temperature for two weeks. Then they were ground into a fine powder. The powder (100 g) was extracted with two liters of ethanol (96%)/water (80:20) for 24 h under constant stirring (this operation was repeated twice). The extract was filtered twice through cotton wool, then through Whatman filter paper (N° 1). The filtrate was evaporated to dryness using a rotavapor (Buchi R110/NKE6540/2) at 45 °C, and dried under reduced pressure. Percentage yield was found to be 14.2%.

After successive liquid-liquid fractionations, five fractions (heptane, dichloromethane, ethyl acetate, butanol and water) were obtained from the crude ethanol extract (Harborn, 1984; and Samsam-Shariat, 1992).

2.3.1. Effects of dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* in wounds induced rats

The solutions were been administrated by oral route. The dose of 200 mg/kg body weight of this fraction was used after obtaining the powder of plant. According to the protocol described by Sagliyan *et al.* (2010), a circular wound of 2 centimeter (cm) of diameter was realized on the thoracolumbar shoulder blade region of each rat anesthetized with ether. Three groups of five rats were put in individual cage. Groups received respectively normal saline (0.9%) at 10 ml/kg (group 1, control group), 2 ml of betadine (group 2, reference group) and 200 mg/kg body weight of the fraction (group 3, test group). The study (treatment and diameter measures of wounds) was realized each three days for 30 days. Measures were realized with a ruler to calculate wound surfaces. During experiment, animals received food and water and rat skin wounds were disinfected by alcohol 95 °C. The percentage of reduction of wounds was obtained by the following formula:

$$\text{Percentage of reduction} = \frac{\text{Surface of initial wound} - \text{Surface of wound treated}}{\text{Surface of initial wound}} \times 100$$

2.3.2. Effects of dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* on acute inflammation induced by carrageenan 1% in rats

Solutions were given by oral route. The solutions were been administrated by oral route by gavage. The method described by Elion Etou *et al.* (2014) and Charles *et al.* (2015), was used. Thus, 25 rats deprived of food and water 24 h before experimentation were divided into 5 groups of five rats. The group 1 and 2 received respectively NaCl 0.9% at 10 ml/kg (control group) and diclofenac at a dose of 5 mg/kg body weight (reference group). The groups 3, 4 and 5 received respectively the fraction at the doses of 200, 400 and 600 mg/kg body weight. One hour after treatment, the carrageenan (1%) was injected in the hind paw (foot pad) at 0.1 ml. The anti-inflammatory effect of the fraction was evaluated by measuring the volume of edema of the hind paw which received the carrageenan 1% carrageenan (1%) at 1 h, 2 h, 3 h, 4 h, 5 h, and 6 h using a plethysmometre Ugo Basile 7140 (Elion Etou *et al.*, 2014).

2.3.3. Acute toxicity effects of dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum*

Forty eight mice were divided into seven groups of six animals. The dichloromethane fraction was orally given at doses of 500; 800; 1,000; 2,000; 3,000; 5,000 and 7,000 mg/kg body weight, to animal groups (one dose per group). Simultaneously, the control group received 1 ml of normal saline (0.9%). General signs of weakness, symptoms of toxicity and mortality were noticed for a period of 48 h and then 14 days (Lorke, 1983). The LD₅₀, LD₅₀ and LD₉₅ of the fraction were calculated using the arithmetic method of Karber as modified by Aliu and Nwude (1982).

2.4. Phytochemical analysis of the dichloromethane fraction

The dichloromethane fraction was screened for the presence of tannins, flavonoids, alkaloids, sterols, saponins, polyphenols, polyterpenes and anthraquinones. Detection of these components was performed to the method of Bekro *et al.* (2007).

3. Data analysis

Graph Pad Prism Version 7.0 for Windows (GraphPad Software, San Diego, CA, USA) was used for all statistical analyses. Graphs were plotted using Sigma Plot for Windows Version 11.0 (Systat Software Inc., Germany). Comparisons between means were done used ANOVA (one way) followed by Turkey's multiple comparison. $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant in all analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Effects of betadine and dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* in wounds induced rats

Table 1 shows the delay of healing of wounds healing for 30 days. In control group, wounds surfaces diminish slowly and pass of 263 ± 2 to 127 ± 11 mm² at day 15 with 57.71% as percentage of inhibition. At day 30, this percentage was 77.95%. Wound surfaces in rats treated with betadine were quickly and significantly reduced and 62.99% of inhibition at day 15 was observed. Also, this surface fell to 6 ± 4.9 mm² with 97.63% of inhibition at day 30. The fraction at a dose of 200 mg/kg body weight significantly reduced wound surfaces at 61.88% of inhibition at day 15. This surface remained 15 ± 5.1 mm² with 94.33% of inhibition at day 30.

Table 1: Effects of betadine and dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* on the wounds induced in rats

Groups	Wound Surfaces (mm ²) and percentage of reduction										
	Day 1	Day 3	Day 6	Day 9	Day 12	Day 15	Day 18	Day 21	Day 24	Day 27	Day 30
Control (Normal Saline)	263 ± 2	255 ± 1 (3.04%)	202 ± 5 (23.19%)	143 ± 0.3 (45.62%)	135 ± 4.2 (48.67%)	127 ± 11 (57.71%)	105 ± 3.5 (60.07%)	80 ± 5 (69.58%)	69 ± 3.5 (73.76%)	65 ± 9.1 (75.26%)	58 ± 4.5 (77.95%)
Reference (Betadine)	254 ± 3.6	189 ± 2.7 (25.59%)	167 ± 4.2 (34.25%)	143 ± 2.8 (43.7%)	134 ± 8.1 (47.24%)	94 ± 4.3* (62.99%)	67 ± 6.7* (73.62%)	54 ± 2.4* (78.74%)	36 ± 4.9** (85.82%)	15 ± 2.5*** (94.1%)	6 ± 4.9*** (97.63%)
Fraction (200 mg/kg)	265 ± 4.3	254 ± 7.2 (4.1%)	222 ± 6.7 (16.22%)	151 ± 4.6 (43.02%)	132 ± 3.8 (50.19%)	101 ± 9.1* (61.88%)	78 ± 3.6* (70.56%)	47 ± 5.5* (82.26%)	28 ± 4.7* (89.43%)	19 ± 4.8** (92.83%)	15 ± 5.1** (94.33%)

Note: Data are mean ± SEM (n = 5). *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, and ***p < 0.001 compared to vehicle treated group (one-way ANOVA followed by Turkey's multiple comparison test).

4.2. Effects of diclofenac and dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* on the volume of edema induced in rats by carrageenan 1%

The volume of edema in control group increased regularly from 0.3 ± 0.2 to 1.9 ± 0.1 ml the sixth hour. The percentage was zero. For the group treated by diclofenac, the volume of edema was significantly reduced from 0.4 ± 0.1 to 0.1 ± 0.1** ml with 75% of inhibition. The fraction significantly reduces the volume of edema respectively from 0.8 ± 0.3 to 0.7 ± 0.3 ml (12.5% of inhibition) for 200 mg/kg body weight, from 0.8 ± 0.4 to 0.5 ± 0.1ml (37,5% of inhibition) for 400 mg/kg body weight and from 0.7 ± 0.2 to 0.2 ± 0.1* ml (71.42% of inhibition) for 600 mg/kg body weight (Figure 1).

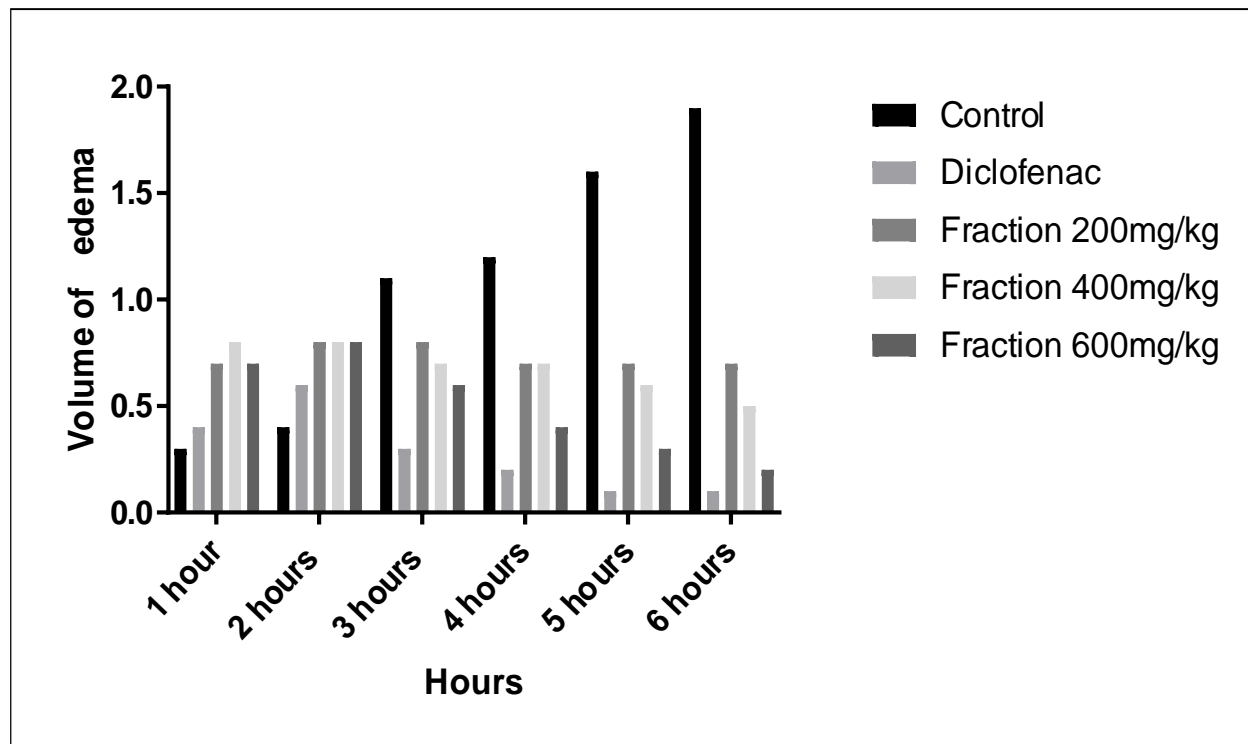


Figure 1: Effects of diclofenac and dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* on the volume of edema induced in rats by carrageenan

Note: One-way ANOVA followed by a Turkey's multiple comparison test.

4.3. Acute toxicity effects of dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum*

After treatment, mobility was observed in mice at a dose of 1,000 mg/kg body weight. However, death in animals intervened at a dose of 2,000 mg/kg body weight (Table 2). At a dose of 3,000 mg/kg body weight, 50% of death in mice was observed (Table 3). The DL50 was therefore 3,000 mg/kg body weight. The DL5 and the DL95 were respectively 1,217 mg/kg body weight and 6,543 mg/kg body weight. The quotient DL5/DL95 was 0.18. This result is far from 1.

Groups	Acute toxicity signs	
	Mobility	Death
Control	+	-
Fraction 500 mg/kg	+	-
Fraction 800 mg/kg	+	-
Fraction 1000 mg/kg	-	-
Fraction 2000 mg/kg	-	+
Fraction 3000 mg/kg	-	+
Fraction 5000 mg/kg	-	+

Groups	Number of animals	Doses	Number of death	Mortality (%)
1	6	Control	0	0
2	6	Fraction 500 mg/kg	0	0
3	6	Fraction 800 mg/kg	0	0
4	6	Fraction 1000 mg/kg	0	0
5	6	Fraction 2000 mg/kg	2	33.33
6	6	Fraction 3000 mg/kg	3	50
7	6	Fraction 5000 mg/kg	5	83.33
8	6	Fraction 5000 mg/kg	6	100

4.4. Phytochemical analysis of dichloromethane fraction of an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum*

Phytochemical screening tests of dichloromethane fraction revealed the presence of major components such as tannins and flavonoids. Polyphenols and reducing sugars were present, and anthraquinones, alkaloids, coumarins, polyterpenes and sterols were absent (Table 4).

Chemical components	Dichloromethane fraction
Anthraquinones	-
Alkaloids	-

Table 4 (Cont.)

Chemical constituents	Dichloromethane fraction
Polyphenols	+
Tannins	++
Coumarins	-
Reducing sugars	+
Polyterpenes	-
Flavonoids	++
Sterols	-
Note: (-) absent, (+) present, and (++) major chemical constituents	

5. Discussion

The healing properties were investigated using model of wounds skin. The surface of wound is a parameter often used to evaluate scar on skin (Suntar et al., 2011; and Ghashghaii et al., 2017). Scar is a complex phenomenon generates by the organism to reply to damage putting back the functions of tissues disturbed and can be sum up in three phases: phase of inflammation (0-3 days), phase of multiplication (3-12 days) and phase of reconstitution (3-6 months) (Priya et al., 2002; and Oliveira et al., 2016). Scar provokes also the formation of the fibrinogen and the integrin protein (Suriyamoorthy et al., 2014).

The dichloromethane fraction induced a significantly reduction of wounds surfaces. This healing action was intense in rats treated with the betadine used as a reference drug. Many healing medicines like the cicatrol arise from plants extracts. The healing effect of plants extracts could be attributed to the presence of flavonoids and tannins which have ability to accelerate the tissue regeneration (Priya et al., 2002; and Suriyamoorthy et al., 2014). The screening of the dichloromethane fraction showed a significant presence of flavonoids and tannins. These flavonoids and tannins could be responsible of healing activity observed in our study.

The results of this study showed that the dichloromethane fraction reduces significantly the volume of edema induced by carrageenan 1% in rats. Carrageenan is a mucopolysaccharide which inducing maximum edema three hour after following its injection (Elion Etou et al., 2014; and Charles et al., 2015). The molecular mechanism of carrageenan is the release of many mediators provoking inflammation (Ouedraogo et al., 2012).

The anti-inflammatory effects of the dichloromethane fraction were therefore illustrated by the diminution of the volume of edema. Previous studies showed the anti-inflammatory effects of some plant extracts like the essential oil of *Lippia multiflora* (Verbenaceae) by Abena et al. (2003); the extract of *Treulia africana* (Moraceae) by Ayoola et al. (2011) and the ethanol extract of stem bark of *Buchholzia coriacea* (Capparidaceae) by Charles et al. (2015). The anti-inflammatory effects are often attributed to phenolic components (Chika et al., 2012; Duru et al., 2013; and Enechi and Nwodo, 2014). Thus, flavonoids, tannins and phenols have anti-inflammatory properties (Mota et al., 1985; Capiralla et al., 2012; Quinone et al., 2013; and Alinejhad et al., 2016). Indeed, some components of flavonoids like quercetin and myricetin have a strong inhibition on the COX and LOX (Kim et al., 1993). Also, other flavonoids like flavonol and flavone have an anti-inflammatory activity (Lee et al., 1993). The presence of tannins, flavonoids and polyphenols during the phytochemical screening in fraction could be responsible of its anti-inflammatory effects.

The acute toxicity study of dichloromethane fraction showed that the LD₅₀ was 3,000 mg/kg body weight. Animals showed toxicity signs in a dose-dependent manner. At a dose of 7,000 mg/kg body weight there were no survivors. These results are consistent with those of Diallo and Diouf (2002), and Dosso et al. (2014). The quotient DL₅/DL₉₅ is far from 1. These results indicate that the use of this fraction is not safe in its therapeutic use with the understanding that the therapeutic dose is not distinct from its toxic dose (Tamboura et al., 2005). The active compounds observed in this fraction could be explained by the toxicity signs observed in rats. Thus, when in excess in the body, some chemical compounds may exceed their therapeutics activities; incite some malfunctions or lethal disorders (Lohoues et al., 2006). For instance, astringent tannins have a role in

reducing foods in animals (Agaie et al., 2007). This causes weakness in animals leading to immobility. Polyphenols are endowed with surfactant and hemolytic properties (Lohoues et al., 2006). Thus, according to the same authors, compounds that are swallowed or even inhaled, are known to cause among others, digestive tract burns, cyanosis, hypoxia and seizures. Schultz and Rigglin (1985) stated in this regard that the phenol poisoning lead to death by acute respiratory failure. These explications explanations could have caused immobility and death of animals in our study.

6. Conclusion

Dichloromethane fraction of limit an ethanol extract of stem bark of *Piliostigma reticulatum* possesses anti-inflammatory and scaring activities. These results showed that the fraction contains biological active compounds such as tannins and flavonoids which according to scientific studies, have anti-inflammatory and healing properties. These results justify the use of *Piliostigma reticulatum* against inflammation diseases and wounds by traditional healers. However, bioassay-guided fractionation studies are necessary to highlight the active principles and their mechanism of action. Moreover, the use of aerial parts of the plant could be a solution than its roots, therefore the biodiversity degradation.

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