SCIENTIFIC RATIONALE FOR USING AGBO-JEDI AS A COMPLEX HERBAL REMEDY IN NIGERIA

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Nigerian traditional medicine is a form of medicine that consists of three spheres: religion, phytotherapy and divination. The western world views phytotherapy as archaic and primitive, however its use in Nigeria is a major part of her culture. Many therapeutic effects have been documented from the most common agbo- jedi which is believed to cure malaria, typhoid fever, stomach aches and others. Speaking of its advantages has totally clouded the dangers of using herbal medicines. The side effects of such unrefined products arise from its unknown constituent, improper titration, poor quality of production and environmental contamination. The purpose of this research is to study phytochemical properties, effects on the human system and toxicological evaluation of the herbal medicine agbo-jedi. The study of two researches conducted to determine the biochemical properties and toxicological effect of the drug agbo-jedi. The first research was conducted at the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Research and Development, Abuja and the Department of Biochemistry, Federal University of Technology Minna, Niger state. Two main methods were used, phytochemical test to investigate its chemical constituents and secondly a toxicological study using Swiss albino mice. The second research was conducted at the laboratory of Department of Biochemistry, College of Medicine, University of Lagos. A phytochemical analysis was conducted as well as measurement of its antioxidant properties. Both investigations yielded similar results. The phytochemical analysis revealed the mixture to contain a variety of substances predominantly alkaloids, cardiac glycosides, tannins and flavonoids with a little concentration of caffeine and volatile oils. Agbo–jedi has positive reducing potential, good scavenging activities and a high antioxidant ability. Serum glucose level weekly increased and the highest peak recorded in the 5^{th} week. Total serum protein and triglyceride levels also showed a weekly increase and a higher value in comparison with control however, a decrease in its values was observed over the 5 week period. The chemical constituents of agbo-jedi can have a positive influence on the human physiology acting as an antibacterial agent, analgesic, pain relief and a strong antioxidant. Biochemical studies showed a mild hyperglycemic effect, hyperproteinemia which is believed to be due to a compromise of kidney function and elevated triglyceride suggesting a hyperlipidemia property. Adequate measure of titration and dosage to control lethality should be constituted to prevent adverse effects.