

Abstract Searching for new types of biological activities among preliminarily identified hit compounds is a key challenge in modern medicinal chemistry. In our study, a previously studied 3-[5-(1*H*-indol-3-ylmethylene)-4-oxo-2-thioxothiazolidin-3-yl]-propionic acid (Les-6614) was screened for antimicrobial, antifungal, anti-allergic, and antitumor activities. Moreover, cytotoxicity, molecular [...] **Read more.**

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Preclinical In Vitro Investigation of MDM2 Inhibition in Combination with Antiangiogenic Therapy for Breast Cancer Treatment ([/2218-0532/91/1/12](https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010012))

by [Ali M. Alaseem](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2684652) (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2684652>), [Khalid Alhazzani](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1373267) (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1373267>),

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Sci. Pharm. **2023**, *91*(1), 12; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010012> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010012>) - 20 Feb 2023

Abstract Background: Combining antiangiogenic drugs with other chemotherapeutic drugs has been found to produce superior therapeutic outcomes and prevent drug resistance in a variety of cancers. Methods: Experimental assays such as the MTT assay, flow cytometry, western blotting, and qPCR have been used to [...] **Read more.**

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Long-Term Paracetamol Treatment Impairs Cognitive Function and Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor in Adult Rat Brain ([/2218-0532/91/1/11](https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010011))

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[Supang Maneesri-le Grand](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2700639) (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2700639>)

Sci. Pharm. **2023**, *91*(1), 11; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010011> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010011>) - 13 Feb 2023

Abstract Paracetamol (acetaminophen, APAP) is known as a safe pain reliever; however, its negative effects on the central nervous system have gradually been reported. We examined alterations in learning and memory, and brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) expression in the frontal cortex and hippocampus at [...] **Read more.**

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Comparison of Substance Susceptibility Experiments) Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing ([/2218-0532/91/1/10](https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010010))

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[Małgorzata Brauncajs](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/K3J2REU3Qm9VZ2IuBvIGMW9kZVN6V1hxcDVzODBaS21lYXErQXB4R3e262VQTKVXc) (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/K3J2REU3Qm9VZ2IuBvIGMW9kZVN6V1hxcDVzODBaS21lYXErQXB4R3e262VQTKVXc>)

and

 [Dorota Pastuszek-Lewandoska \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1425378\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1425378)

Sci. Pharm. 2023, 91(1), 10; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010010> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010010>) - 09 Feb 2023

Abstract Funding is often a constraint when planning research, especially in countries where basic research is underfunded. Researchers must take into account these limitations, e.g., in relation to the selection of appropriate reagents, the source of which may affect the study's final results. The [...] [Read more](#).

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Antimicrobial Activity of Novel Deep Eutectic Solvents (*/2218-0532/91/1/9*)

by  [Noor Akbar \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2520403\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/2520403),  [Naveed Ahmed Khan \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/360259\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/360259),

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Sci. Pharm. 2023, 91(1), 9; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010009> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010009>) - 08 Feb 2023

Abstract Herein, we utilized several deep eutectic solvents (DES) that were based on hydrogen donors and hydrogen acceptors for their antibacterial application. These DES were tested for their bactericidal activities against Gram-positive (*Streptococcus pyogenes*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* [...]) [Read more](#).

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Acknowledgment to the Reviewers of *Scientia Pharmaceutica* in 2022 (*/2218-0532/91/1/8*)

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Sci. Pharm. 2023, 91(1), 8; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010008> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010008>) - 29 Jan 2023

Abstract High-quality academic publishing is built on rigorous peer review [...] [Full article \(/2218-0532/91/1/8\)](#)

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Phytochemical Characterization of *Pterocephalus frutescens* with In-Silico Evaluation as Chemotherapeutic Medicine and Oral Pharmacokinetics Prediction Study (*/2218-0532/91/1/7*)

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Sci. Pharm. 2023, 91(1), 7; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010007> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010007>) - 28 Jan 2023

Abstract Virtual screening of the potential lead chemotherapeutic phytochemicals from medicinal plants has useful application in the field of in-silico modelling and computer-based drug design by orienting and scoring ligands in the active binding site of a target protein. The phytochemical investigation of the [...] [Read more](#).



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A Review of the Biological Properties of Purple Corn (*Zea mays* L.) (*/2218-0532/91/1/6*)

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Sci. Pharm. 2023, 91(1), 6; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010006> (https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010006) - 19 Jan 2023

Abstract In the food and beverage industries, replacing synthetic colorants with plant-based colorants has become popular in recent times. Purple corn (*Zea mays* L.) is an important source of natural colorants due to its range in color from orange to purple. The whole [...] [Read more.](#)

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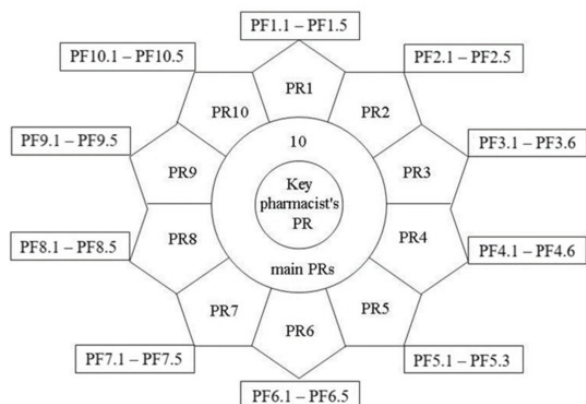
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Detailing the Ten Main Professional Roles of a Pharmacist to Provide the Scope of Professional Functions (2218-0532/91/1/5)

by [Yuliia Kremin \(search?authors=Yuliia%20Kremin&orcid=\)](#) et al.

Sci. Pharm. **2023**, *91*(1), 5; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010005> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010005>).

Published: 13 January 2023



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Long-Term Paracetamol Treatment Impairs Cognitive Function and Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor in Adult Rat Brain (2218-0532/91/1/11)

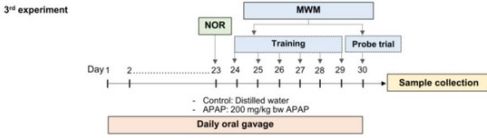
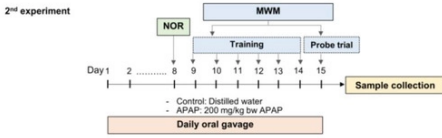
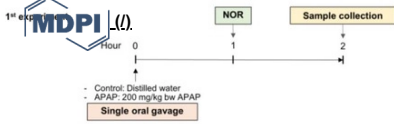
by [Laddawan Lalert \(search?authors=Laddawan%20Lalert&orcid=\)](#) et al.

Sci. Pharm. **2023**, *91*(1), 11; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010011> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm91010011>).

Published: 13 February 2023

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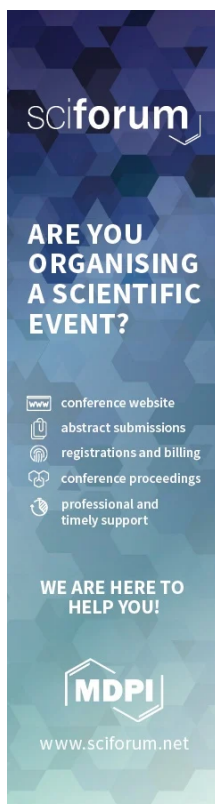
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[Lina Perekhoda \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/ZG9VMHZra2RiYmNQWUFWalRJWE5SYVh3QVoyVmhzSVMvbVFLRzU2dkloWT0=\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/ZG9VMHZra2RiYmNQWUFWalRJWE5SYVh3QVoyVmhzSVMvbVFLRzU2dkloWT0=),

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[Svitlana Taran \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/YzNaeWk0RTcrL1hOVlpHRGM5emxNbDMrTFA0M255Ym1lQTJWekdDOVIHVT0=\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/YzNaeWk0RTcrL1hOVlpHRGM5emxNbDMrTFA0M255Ym1lQTJWekdDOVIHVT0=),

[Nataliya Seredynska \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/Y1czeTNzNEN5c1Z4NEpZbGVnVGhqUTITdGV0ZUxVVMWxZnFZSkRtbHJ5VT0=\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/Y1czeTNzNEN5c1Z4NEpZbGVnVGhqUTITdGV0ZUxVVMWxZnFZSkRtbHJ5VT0=)

and

[Inna Gerashchenko \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/402872\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/402872)

Sci. Pharm. **2019**, *87*(1), 7; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010007> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010007>) - 18 Mar 2019

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Abstract: The synthesis of 2-arylimino-1,3-thiazoles via Hantzsch reaction of thioureas and 3-chloropentane-2,4-dione was confirmed by LCMS, ¹H, and ¹³C NMR spectra. Cardioprotective activity of synthesized thiazole derivatives were studied in vitro [...]. [Read more.](#)

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Overcoming the Blood–Brain Barrier. Challenges and Tricks for CNS Drug Delivery [\(/2218-0532/87/1/6\)](https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010006)

by Luca Anna Bors (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/ZytiVkdzTDZjWWJldkNzM1REaGJWV0w0ZWdtOFNsRWWiSllxK0xzWmlpbz0=>) and Franciska Erdő (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/608748>)

Sci. Pharm. **2019**, *87*(1), 6; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010006> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010006>) - 28 Feb 2019

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Abstract Treatment of certain central nervous system disorders, including different types of cerebral malignancies, is limited by traditional oral or systemic administrations of therapeutic drugs due to possible serious side effects and/or lack of the brain penetration and, therefore, the efficacy of the drugs [...]

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FT-IR Spectroscopy for the Identification of Binding Sites and Measurements of the Binding Interactions of Important Metal Ions with Bovine Serum Albumin [\(/2218-0532/87/1/5\)](https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010005)

by Hassan A. Alhazmi (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/b0xvOFZoSE8yZFRsY3BvaUFJUHVHeTY0SisrYzd1M20yMWnuT21mNjJ3ST0=>)

Sci. Pharm. **2019**, *87*(1), 5; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010005> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010005>) - 20 Feb 2019

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Abstract Proteins play crucial roles in the transportation and distribution of therapeutic substances, including metal ions in living systems. Some metal ions can strongly associate, while others show low affinity towards proteins. Consequently, in the present work, the binding behaviors of Ca²⁺, [...]

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Abstract Rigorous peer-review is the corner-stone of high-quality academic publishing [...]

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The Antimicrobial Activity of *Wedelia saligna* Sticks [\(/2218-0532/87/1/3\)](https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010003)

by Lusi Putri Dwita (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/554296>), Kori Yati (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/689356>) and Sri Nevi Gantini (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/c0I5THpMWGtvbndCZVRPZGp2d1FudHppT1VNWTM5d3FAScHmIZtUdZwdo0=>)

Sci. Pharm. **2019**, *87*(1), 3; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010003> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010003>) - 14 Jan 2019



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Abstract *Nigella sativa* oil has been known to have potent anti-inflammatory activity. This research aimed to determine the anti-inflammation activity of *Nigella sativa* oil in a simple balm stick by topical application. The activity was checked using two methods: carrageenan-induced paw oedema and granuloma [...]. [Read more.](#)

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Preliminary Phytochemical Analysis of *Berberis goudotii* Triana & Planch. ex Wedd. (Berberidaceae) with Anticariogenic and Antiperiodontal Activities ([/2218-0532/87/1/2](#))

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[Fredy Gamboa](#) (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/WWZLQXA2VkJwQd0dZZ1p4OFZsQINCD2FGaE5zZmZtaG1sTmY4ODAxRG01MD0=>)

Sci. Pharm. **2019**, *87*(1), 2; <https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010002> (<https://doi.org/10.3390/scipharm87010002>) - 12 Jan 2019

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Abstract *Berberis goudotii* is an endemic Colombian plant found in the paramo ecosystem. It has been used in food preparation and as a medicinal plant for diverse treatments. Additionally, it is used as a mouthwash to strengthen the gums and combat throat irritations and [...]. [Read more.](#)

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Hydrogel Formulation of Usnic Acid and Antibacterial Activity Test Against *Propionibacterium acne* ([/2218-0532/87/1/1](#))

by [Lili Fitriani](#) (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/558635>),

[Afifah](#) (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/author/UXRtcERGZzIQVHJMMDM0RzVocGx1SVdLcEFITTJNQ0dEb3lkZ0Fiam5UND0=>),

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Abstract Usnic acid is known for its remarkable antimicrobial activity. The aim of this research was to formulate hydrogel of usnic acid and evaluate the antibacterial activity against *Propionibacterium acne*. Due to low solubility of usnic acid, solid dispersion was prepared using PVP [...]. [Read more.](#)

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1. Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing, Kingston University London; Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames, London KT1 2EE, UK

2. Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, The University of Auckland, Auckland CBD, Auckland 1010, New Zealand

Interests: ophthalmic drugs and delivery systems; veterinary pharmaceuticals

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Interests: natural product chemistry; isolation and structure elucidation of bioactive secondary metabolites of bryophytes, pteridophytes, inedible mushrooms, medicinal and aromatic plants and insects and their bioassay; biotransformation of secondary metabolites by fungi and mammals; total synthesis of natural products; chemical reaction of organic per-acids; chemical phylogeny of spore-forming plants

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Interests: chemistry of heterocyclic compounds; microwave-assisted chemistry; sustainable methodologies; green chemistry applied to bioactive compounds: kinase inhibitors; Alzheimer's disease; Down syndrome; cancer

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2. Center for Applied Biomedical Research (CRBA), University of Bologna, 40126 Bologna, Italy

Interests: pharmaceutical nanotechnology; nanomedicine; pulmonary drug delivery; cell encapsulation; tissue engineering

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Website (<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Gerrit-Borchard>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/139717>)

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Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences of Western Switzerland, Section of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland

Interests: nanostructured drug delivery systems; quality and safety assessment of nanomedicines; nonbiological complex drugs; vaccines and vaccine adjuvants; cancer research

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Website (<https://bracher.cup.uni-muenchen.de/>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/145194>)

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Department of Pharmacy, Center for Drug Research, Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich, Butenandtstraße 5-13, 81377 Munich, Germany

Interests: medicinal chemistry; steroids; natural products; antifungals; epigenetic targets; cation channels

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Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Department of Pharmacognosy, University of Graz, Universitaetsplatz 4/1, A-8010 Graz, Austria

Interests: phytochemistry; antimicrobial plant natural products



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Department of Pharmacy, University of Pisa, 56126 Pisa, Italy

Interests: pharmaceutical formulation development and evaluation, ocular drug delivery, mucosal drug delivery, mucoadhesive formulations

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Department of Clinical Biochemistry and Pharmacology, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva 84105, Israel

Interests: acute myeloid leukemia; cell differentiation; vitamin D; vitamin D analogs; plant-derived bioactive compounds; redox signaling and regulation; calcium signaling; cell cycle regulation, apoptosis

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Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Transplantation, KU Leuven, Rega Institute for Medical Research, Herestraat 49, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium

Interests: HIV/AIDS; antiretroviral therapy

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Department of Nuclear Medicine, Medical University Innsbruck, Anichstrasse 35, 6020 Innsbruck, Austria

Interests: radiopharmaceuticals; radiometal labelled peptides for theranostics; Gallium-68, Siderophores based radiopharmaceuticals; radiopharmaceutical tracers

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Department of Chemistry, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881, USA

Interests: medicinal chemistry; drug design; natural products; estrogen receptors; pyruvate carboxylase inhibitors



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Website (<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/duf%C3%A8schristinedr/>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1097663>)

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Strathclyde Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences, University of Strathclyde, 161 Cathedral Street, Glasgow G4 0RE, UK

Interests: nanomedicine; cancer; brain tumours; neurodegenerative diseases; drug delivery; gene delivery



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Website1 (<http://www.neurociencies.ub.edu/antoni-camins-espuny/>) **Website2** (<https://ciberned.es/grupo-camins.html>) **Website3** (<https://webgrec.ub.edu/webpages/000003/cas/camins.ub.edu.html>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/367868>)

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2. Institut de Neurociències, University of Barcelona, 08028 Barcelona, Spain

3. Biomedical Research Networking Centre in Neurodegenerative Diseases (CIBERNED), Instituto de Salud Juan Carlos III, 28031 Madrid, Spain

Interests: Alzheimer's disease; aging; apoptosis; neuropharmacology; epilepsy

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Website ([https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/brian-green\(4c1a7af6-98d4-4215-be32-6c780c2442ae\).html](https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/brian-green(4c1a7af6-98d4-4215-be32-6c780c2442ae).html))

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Interests: metabolomics; neurodegenerative disease; diet; nutrition; Alzheimer's disease

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Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Universität Basel, Klingelbergstrasse 50, CH-4056 Basel, Switzerland

Interests: natural products; drug discovery; phytomedicines

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Interests: drug metabolism; drug transporter; pharmacokinetics



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Interests: analytical methods; natural products; metabolomics; nutrition; medicinal plants



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Interests: targeted drug delivery; minimally invasive drug delivery; fractional laser ablation; iontophoresis; development of innovative formulations; nanoformulations; design of novel biological barrier models

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[Website \(http://www.pharmacy.ohio-state.edu/faculty-staff/users/kinghorn4\)](http://www.pharmacy.ohio-state.edu/faculty-staff/users/kinghorn4)

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Interests: pharmacognosy; natural products; anticancer agents



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[Website \(https://pharmakognosie.univie.ac.at/people/krenn-liselotte/\)](https://pharmakognosie.univie.ac.at/people/krenn-liselotte/) [SciProfiles \(https://sciprofiles.com/profile/5763\)](https://sciprofiles.com/profile/5763)

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Institute of Pharmacognosy, PharmaCenter Vienna, University of Vienna, Althanstr. 14, A-1090 Vienna, Austria

Interests: flavonoids; anthraquinones; isolation and structure elucidation; analysis (LC-DAD; LC-MS); in vitro assays (antioxidant properties; acetylcholinesterase inhibition; histone deacetylase modulation)

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Laboratory of Growth Regulators, Palacký University and Institute of Experimental Botany AS CR, Šlechtitelů 27, 783 71 Olomouc, Czech Republic

Interests: molecular pharmacology; biochemistry; molecular biology; targeted cancer therapy; protein phosphorylation; kinase inhibitors

Dr. Reinhard Länger

Editorial Board Member

Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Division of Clinical Pharmacy and Diagnostics, University of Vienna, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna, Austria

Interests: drug metabolism; drug transporter; pharmacokinetics

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Interests: medicinal chemistry; drug design; heterocyclic chemistry; thiazolidinones; biological activity; SAR

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Website (http://www.cosm.pu.edu.tw/index.php/teacher/info/chchlin) **SciProfiles (https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1098)**

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Interests: biotechnology; cosmeceuticals; cell biology

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Editorial Board Member

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Department of Life and Environmental Sciences, Unit of Pharmaceutical, Pharmacological and Nutraceutical Sciences, University of Cagliari, University Campus, I-09042 Monserrato, Cagliari, Italy

Interests: medicinal chemistry; nitrogen heterocycles; antiproliferative compounds; enzyme inhibitors

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Department of Chemistry and Physics, Augusta University, Augusta, GA, USA

Interests: bioorganic & medicinal chemistry; computer-aided drug design and synthesis; green chemistry

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Website (<https://www.reading.ac.uk/pharmacy/about/staff/nilesh-patel.aspx>)

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Interests: clinical pharmaceuticals; pharmacy practice; drug delivery; qualitative research; pharmacy

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Interests: sexual selection; Host-Parasite evolutionary ecology

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Department of Pharmacology, Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology, Faculty of Medicine; University of Belgrade, PO Box 38 - Dr Subotica 1, 11129 Belgrade, Serbia

Interests: pharmacology; endothelium; diabetes; atherosclerosis

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SciProfiles (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/869441>)

Editorial Board Member

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Website (<https://pharmakognosie.univie.ac.at/people/reznicek-gottfried/>)

Editorial Board Member

Department of Pharmacognosy, Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Vienna, Althanstrasse 14, A-1090 Vienna, Austria

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Laboratory of Molecular Modeling and Computational Structural Biology, Center of Health Sciences, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, IPPN, Av. Carlos Chagas Filho 373, Bloco H, Rio de Janeiro 21941-599, RJ, Brazil

Interests: molecular modeling; computational and medicinal chemistry; molecular simulations; structural biology

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SciProfiles (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/114622>)

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INEB - Instituto Nacional de Engenharia Biomédica, Universidade do Porto, Rua Alfredo Allen 208, 4200-180 Porto, Portugal

Interests: biomedicine and biomedical sciences; biomaterials; development of new drug delivery systems using colloidal nanoparticles; physical and chemical characterization of pharmaceutical dosage forms; cell-culture models for drug absorption studies; in vitro and in vivo models of drug bioavailability; classical pharmaceutical dosage forms

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Website (<https://pharmacy.rutgers.edu/directory/sinko-patrick/>) **SciProfiles** (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/11908>)

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Department of Pharmaceutics, Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, Rutgers University, Piscataway, NJ 08854, USA

Interests: drug delivery; nanotechnology; biopharmaceutics; pharmacokinetics; absorption; permeability; AIDS; cancer

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Website (http://uit.no/ansatte/organisasjon/ansatte/person?p_document_id=81380&p_dimension_id=88118)

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Drug Transport and Delivery Research Group, Department of Pharmacy, University of Tromsø, Universitetsveien 57, 9037 Tromsø, Norway

Interests: drug delivery; nanomedicine; liposomes; skin therapy; vaginal therapy

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Dr. Rostyslav Stoika

SciProfiles (<https://sciprofiles.com/profile/1949844>)

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Article

The Anti-Inflammatory Activity of *Nigella sativa* Balm Sticks

Lusi Putri Dwita *, **Kori Yati** and Sri Nevi Gantini

Department of Pharmacy and Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr HAMKA (UHAMKA), Jakarta 13460, Indonesia; koriyati@uhamka.ac.id (K.Y.); sri_nevigantini@uhamka.ac.id (S.N.G.)

* Correspondence: lusi_putridwita@uhamka.ac.id; Tel.: +62-813-224-08072

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Abstract: *Nigella sativa* oil has been known to have potent anti-inflammatory activity. This research aimed to determine the anti-inflammation activity of *Nigella sativa* oil in a simple balm stick by topical application. The activity was checked using two methods: carrageenan-induced paw oedema and granuloma pouch on rats. The results showed that balm sticks which contained 10% *Nigella sativa* could overcome both acute and sub-acute inflammation showing by high oedema inhibition (60.64%), low leucocytes count (43.55% lower than control) as well as a notable TNF- α concentration (50% lower than control) on the inflamed area. In conclusion, topical application of a *Nigella sativa* balm stick was effective for both acute and sub-acute forms of inflammation.

Keywords: *Nigella sativa*; anti-inflammatory; balm; topical

1. Introduction

Nigella sativa (*Ranunculaceae* family) or commonly known as black cumin has long been used as a phytomedicine for antidiarrhea, appetite enhancer, diuretic, antibacterial, analgesic, anthelmintic, various skin diseases, anti-inflammatory, back pain, hemiplegia (paralysis of the hands or feet), and rheumatism [1–3]. The bioactive content of *Nigella sativa* included *p-cymene*, *α -thujene*, *longifolene*, *β -pinene*, *α -pinene*, *carvacrol* and the main compound is *thymoquinone* [4–6].

Both *Nigella sativa* oil and thymoquinone are potent anti-inflammatory agents that have been demonstrated in various disease models such as encephalomyelitis, colitis, peritonitis, oedema and arthritis through suppression of inflammatory mediators such as prostaglandins and leukotrienes [7]. Orally gavage of 4 mL/kg/day *Nigella sativa* oil for 31 days showed a reduction of IL-4 and NO production in rats [8]. Thymoquinone at a dose of 10 mg/kg body weight of rats showed anti-inflammatory activity through inhibition of cyclooxygenase (COX) and 5-lipoxygenase (5-LPO) pathways [9,10] and at a dose of 5 mg/kg body weight of rats could lower TNF- α and IL-1 β levels in arthritis [11]. Anti-inflammatory activity of *Nigella sativa* also has been shown in humans, for example the use of the oil for geriatric patients with osteoarthritis [12].

However, there are only a few studies showing the use of *Nigella sativa* oil topically. For instance, topical *Nigella sativa* could be effective treatment for psoriasis [13], application of 50% *Nigella sativa* oil in cream could heal burn wounds in rats [14], while *Nigella sativa* essential oil nanoparticles have also been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties in combination with indomethacin [15]. The topical use of *Nigella sativa* oil needs to be developed in the form of a practical dosage form such as a balm stick. In this study, a *Nigella sativa* balm stick was tested on acute and subacute inflammatory models.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Materials

Nigella sativa seed oil (PT. Saraswanti Indo Genetech, Bogor, Indonesia) was produced by cold press method without chemicals. According to the COA, the *Nigella sativa* seed fixed oil contain vitamin E, Calcium, Fe, Omega 3, 6 and 9. Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GCMS) analysis showed that the *Nigella sativa* seed oil contained 23.75% Thymoquinone. The other materials were cera alba, adeps lanae, vaselin alba, lanolin hydrate, cetyl alcohol, butyl hidroxitoluen (BHT) (PT. Brataco, Jakarta, Indonesia), virgin coconut oil (VCO) and oleum sesame (Herba Bagoes, Jakarta, Indonesia), hydrocortisone cream 2.5% (Kalbe Farma, Jakarta, Indonesia) Turk solution (PT. Gresik Sarana Tirta, Jakarta, Indonesia), carrageenan (Sigma, St. Louis, MO, USA), and TNF- α Kit (Sigma).

2.2. Balm Stick Preparation

Balm sticks were made with three formulas with variations of *Nigella sativa* oil content (Table 1). BHT (butyl Hydroxytoluene) was dissolved in VCO (mass 1). Cera alba was melted on water bath at 65 °C and stirred (mass 2). Setil alcohol was added into mass 2, followed by adeps lanae and melted into a homogeneous mixture. The mixture was removed from the water bath, then added with mass 1 and stirred well. Finally, *Nigella sativa* oil was added and stirred to the homogeneous mixture, then formed into sticks (Figure 1).

Table 1. *Nigella sativa* balm stick formula.

No.	Materials	NB 5% (%)	NB 7.5% (%)	NB 10% (%)	Control (%)
1	<i>Nigella sativa</i> oil	5	7.5	10	-
2	<i>Cera alba</i>	30	30	30	30
3	<i>Adeps lanae</i>	10	10	10	10
4	Setil alcohol	10	10	10	10
5	Butyl Hydroxytoluene	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
6	VCO	ad 100	ad 100	ad 100	ad 100



Figure 1. *Nigella sativa* Balm Stick.

2.3. Animal

Wistar rats (*Rattus norvegicus* L.) aged 2–3 months with weights of ± 200 g were used in this study, 50 rats in total. The study protocol was approved by the Research Ethics Commission, Faculty of Medicine, University of Indonesia by applying the principles of replacement, reduction and refinement (the 3Rs) with approval under ethics number 516/UN2.F1/ETIK/2018 and 517/UN2.F1/ETIK/2018. All animals were acclimatized in the cage with a temperature of ± 23 °C for one week.

2.4. Acute Anti-Inflammatory Test (Carrageenan-Induced Paw Oedema)

The procedure of carrageenan-induced paw oedema in accordance with Pise and Padwal (2017) [16] with modification. The right foot of the rat was measured using a plethysmometer, then recorded as the initial volume (Vo). The feet were then smeared with the test substances topically in accordance by the group. The negative control group was smeared with control balm, positive control was smeared with 2.5% hydrocortisone cream, the NB (*Nigella sativa* balm stick) groups was smeared with the balm containing 5%, 7.5% and 10% *Nigella sativa* oil respectively. All test substances were applied topically 50 times on the right foot of each rat. Then immediately, the feet were injected intraplantar with 0.1 ml of 1% *w/v* carrageenan solution (in oleum sesame) [17]. The oedema volume was measured using plethysmometer at minutes 30, 90, 150, 210, and 270 after carrageenan injection, and recorded as Vt. The oedema volume data of each time measured were then used to calculate the inhibition percentage.

$$\text{inhibition \%} = \frac{\text{mean increment volume of control} - \text{mean increment volume of test substance}}{\text{mean increment volume of control}} \times 100\%$$

2.5. Sub-Acute Anti-Inflammatory Test (Granuloma Pouch Method)

The back of rats was shaved, then the rats were anaesthetized with ketamine (i.m, 40 mg/kg BW). The back of each rat was then injected with 20 mL sterile air subcutaneously to form a pouch. 24 h later, the pouch was injected with 3 mL of 2% (*w/v*) carrageenan solution (in oleum sesame). The inflamed areas were then smeared with the test substances twice a day. The second day, the pouch was rinsed with 2 mL phosphate buffered saline (PBS) (0.01 M, pH 7.4), then total exudate was taken. The exudate was then used to determine the number of leukocyte cells and TNF- α levels of each group [18].

2.5.1. Leucocyte Count

The exudate of each rat was diluted with Turk solution (1:20) and mixed homogeneously. The solution was then dripped to the hemocytometer and left to be distributed throughout the area of the count room. Preparations were examined under a microscope with 40 \times magnification. The number of leukocytes was calculated by the following formula [19]:

$$\text{Leucocytes count (mm}^3\text{)} = \frac{N \times \text{Dilution factor}}{\Sigma \text{ Chamber Volume}}$$

2.5.2. Determination of TNF- α

The exudate was centrifuged at 5400 g for 10 min at 4 °C to obtained supernatant aliquoted and then stored at -8 °C [19]. TNF- α was determined using an ELISA kit (Sigma, St. Louis, MO, USA), according to the manufacturer's instructions.

2.6. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using One-Way ANOVA followed by Tukey and Duncan tests.

3. Results

3.1. Carrageenan-Induced Paw Edema

The study showed that the injection of 0.1 ml of 1% carrageenan via intraplantar resulted in oedema, which was observed to show signs of inflammation starting from minute 30. Afterwards, the volume of oedema continued to increase. Hydrocortisone was used as the reference drug [20]. Data in Table 1 demonstrate that there is a difference in the percentage of oedema that occurs due to changes in time in all groups. The *Nigella sativa* Balm (NB) group showed an anti-inflammatory activity as indicated by the decrease in oedema volume at minute 150. However, in the control group, the volume of oedema continued to increase. The results of statistical tests showed significant differences in the

paw oedema of NB group against control starting at minute 90 (Table 2). The oedema inhibition in the NB 10% group showed the highest percentage compared to 5% and 7.5% NB. The three groups showed comparable results with hydrocortisone 2.5% (Figure 2).

Table 2. Oedema percentage of Carrageenan-induced paw oedema.

Groups	Edema percentage (%)				
	At 30 min	At 90 min	At 150 min	At 210 min	At 270 min
Control	110 ± 13.69	135 ± 13.69	170 ± 27.39	205 ± 13.69	210 ± 11.18
Hydrocortisone 2.5%	96 ± 8.94	96 ± 8.94 ^a	77 ± 14.40 ^a	58 ± 16.05 ^a	10 ± 13.69 ^a
NB 5%	92 ± 10.95 ^b	92 ± 10.95 ^{a,b}	74 ± 16.36 ^{a,b}	51 ± 14.32 ^{a,b}	28 ± 12.55 ^a
NB 7.5%	100 ± 0	100 ± 0 ^{a,b}	85 ± 13.69 ^{a,b}	65 ± 13.69 ^{a,b}	25 ± 0 ^{a,b}
NB 10%	96 ± 8.94 ^b	96 ± 8.94 ^{a,b}	82 ± 17.54 ^{a,b}	58 ± 16.05 ^{a,b}	15 ± 13.69 ^{a,b}

^a The mean difference is significant at $p < 0.05$ compared to Control; ^b The mean is comparable with hydrocortisone 2.5% ($p > 0.05$).

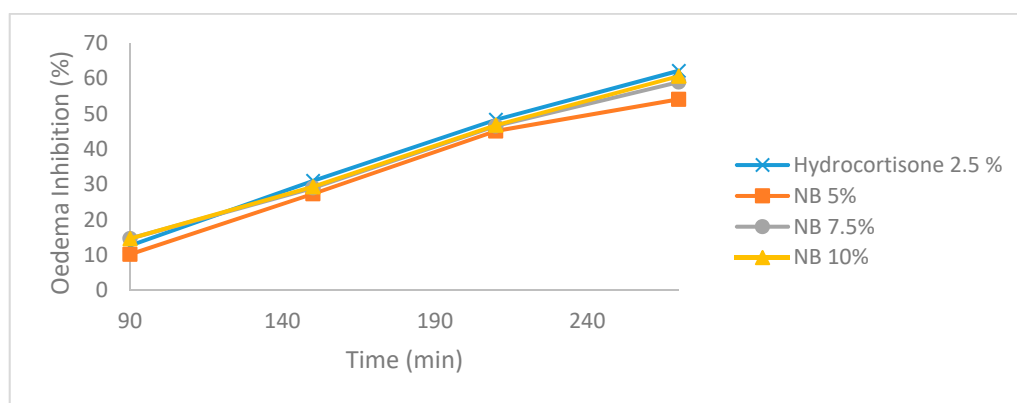


Figure 2. Oedema inhibition percentage of paw edema.

3.2. Sub-Scute Inflammation (Granuloma Pouch)

The results of the exudates volume measurements show that NB 7.5% and 10% groups comparable to hydrocortisone 2.5%, while the number of leukocytes in exudates showed a decrease of 22.02%; 32.14% and 43.55% in the NB 5%, 7.5%, and 10% groups respectively (Table 3). Statistically, only NB 10% group showed a decrease of leucocyte percentage comparable to hydrocortisone 2.5% (47.64%).

Table 3. Granuloma pouch exudate examination.

Groups	Exudate Volume (mL)	Leucocytes Count (mm ³)
Control	4.3 ± 0.83 ^b	52,525 ± 9787.87 ^b
Hydrocortisone 2.5%	0.62 ± 0.26 ^a	27500 ± 1388.64 ^a
NB 5%	3.8 ± 0.40 ^{a,b}	41816.67 ± 483.39 ^{a,b}
NB 7.5%	1.4 ± 0.68 ^a	35641.66 ± 638.29 ^{a,b}
NB 10%	0.9 ± 0.49 ^a	29650 ± 463.68 ^a

^a The mean difference is significant at $p < 0.05$ compared to Control; ^b The mean is significant at $p < 0.05$ compared to Hydrocortisone 2.5%.

Granuloma pouch tissue of rats could also be used as an assessment of inflammation. Biochemistry observation of exudates was carried out on TNF- α levels. Test results showed 7.5% and 10% NB groups could significantly reduce TNF- α levels ($p < 0.05$) (Figure 3), with reductions of around 39% (NB 7.5%) and 50% (NB 10%) compared to control. The NB 10% group was able to lower TNF- α levels comparable to 2.5% hydrocortisone.

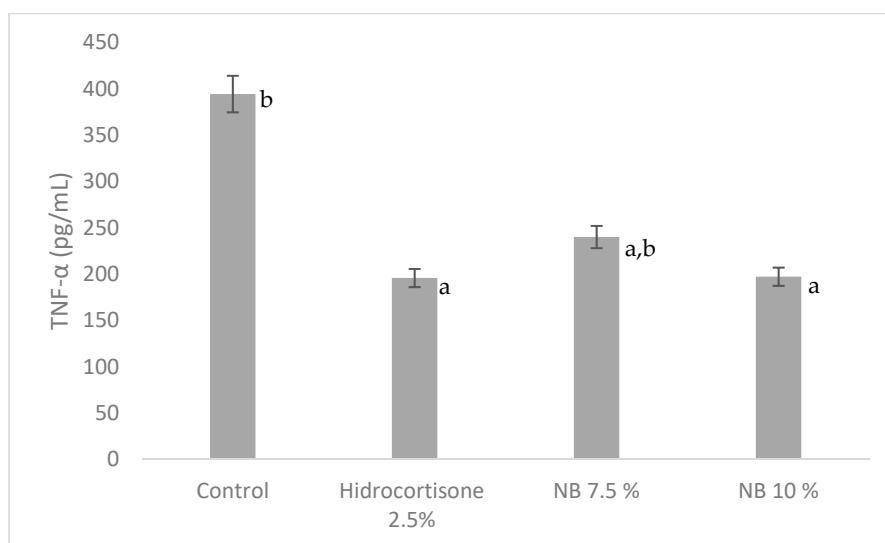


Figure 3. TNF- α concentration of the exudate from granuloma pouch. ^a The mean difference is significant ($p < 0.001$) compared to Control; ^b the mean difference is significant ($p < 0.05$) compared to Hydrocortisone 2.5%.

4. Discussion

Acute inflammation is an initial inflammatory response that begins with vasodilation and increased capillary permeability, involving a process of fluid exudation (oedema) and migration of polymorphonuclear cells from blood to damaged tissue, especially neutrophils. This response is relatively short, lasting for only a few hours or days [21].

In this study, the acute anti-inflammatory activity test was carried out using the carrageenan-induced paw oedema method. Carrageenan caused inflammation by a mechanism involving phospholipase A2 and production of the inflammatory mediator such as cytokines, serotonin, histamine, prostaglandins and leukotrienes, which facilitate the migration of leukocytes to inflammatory sites [17,22]. Oedema occurs due to increased capillary permeability so that the flow of fluid rises continuously to the inflammatory tissue. At 0–1 h after injection of carrageenan, basophils and thrombocytes release of histamine and serotonin from the site of inflammation, therefore oedema was formed. The process of acute inflammation reaches the peak within 2–3 h after injection of carrageenan [23]. In this research, a Nigella contained balm stick has been proven to reduce oedema in carrageenan-induced paw. Table 2 showed a decrease in the percentage of oedema in all groups except control. Significant oedema inhibition of all NB groups starts at 150 min, which was around 28% and the total inhibition of oedema in the NB 10% group at 270 min was 60.64%. As seen in the result, the percentage of oedema in the NB group was 5%, 7.5%, and 10%, continued to decrease to 270 min drastically, and the oedema inhibition had the same trend as hydrocortisone (Figure 2).

Observation on rat's granuloma pouch also showed the anti-inflammatory activity of NB. In sub-acute inflammation, leukocyte and phagocytic infiltrates to the site of injury. Carrageenan caused an increase in the number of leukocytes in inflammatory tissue due to vascular permeability in the inflammatory area, which increases fluid flow resulting in the migration of inflammatory cells [10]. This mediator activates cells from the tissue that are followed by the release of metalloproteinase which causes pain or inflammation. Tumor necrosis factor (TNF) α is considered to be the main inflammatory mediator [24]. The number of leukocytes in granuloma pouch (Table 3) showed that the lowest leukocyte count was obtained in the hydrocortisone 2.5% group followed by NB 10%, 7.5% and 5% respectively. This therefore showed NB anti-inflammatory activity in inhibiting leukocyte migration to the site of inflammation. The best activity was seen in NB 10% with a leukocyte number that was 43.55% lower than control. This result was in line with Table 3 as well as in Figure 3 where the amount of pouch exudate and TNF- α in this group was also the lowest among the three NB

groups. These results indicate the ability of NB 10% to overcome sub-acute inflammation equivalent to hydrocortisone 2.5%.

Topical *Nigella sativa* balm activity shows comparable results to Pise and Padwal (2017) research [16], where *Nigella sativa* oil with a dose of 10 ml/kg rats BW p.o showed a 39.64% oedema inhibition. These results indicate that the anti-inflammatory activity of *Nigella sativa* is clear whether it is given topically or orally. Haj-allahyari et al. (2018) also reported that *Nigella sativa* alcohol extract could decrease COX-2 expression by 36.64% and TNF- α by 34.02%, while in this research NB 10% showed higher (50%) TNF- α inhibition. In conclusion, despite many advance formulations on *Nigella sativa* oil, a simple formula like a balm stick could also result in similar anti-inflammatory activity.

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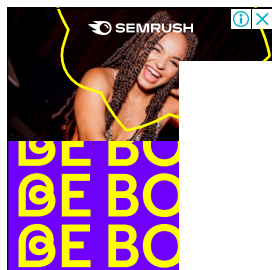
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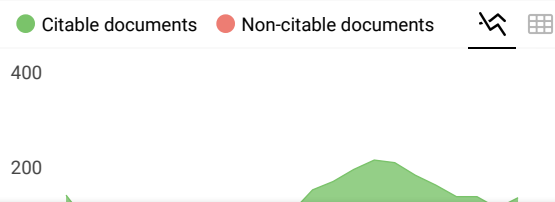
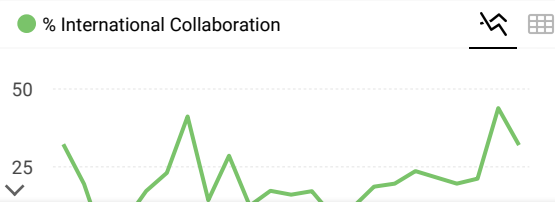
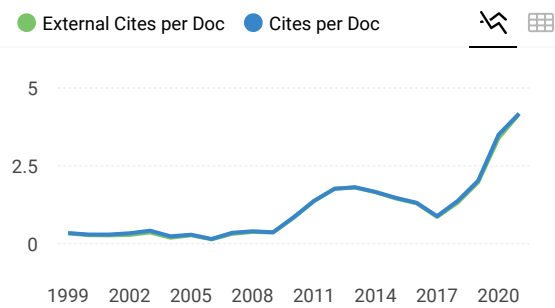
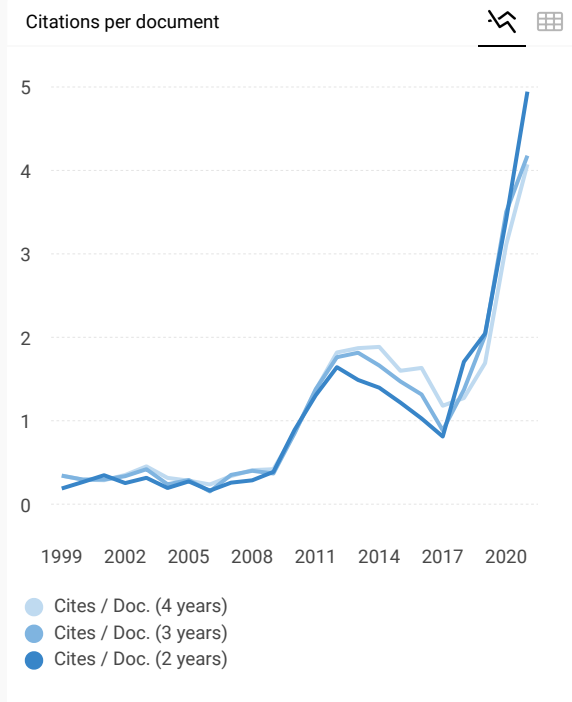
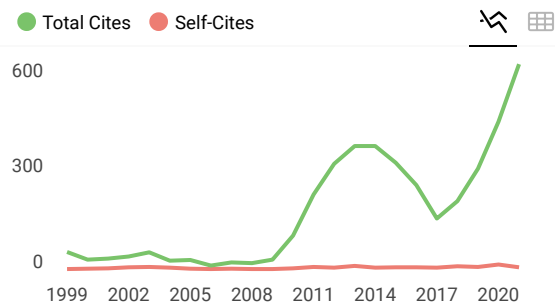
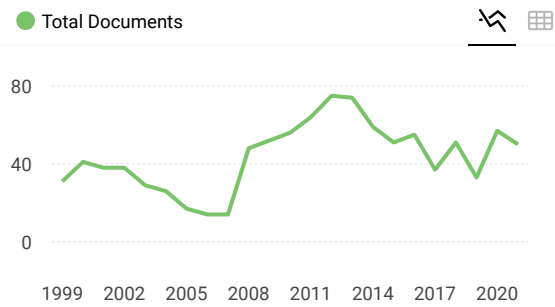
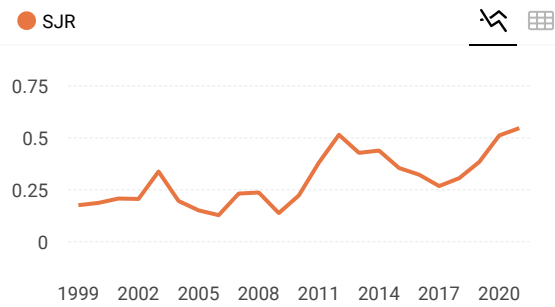
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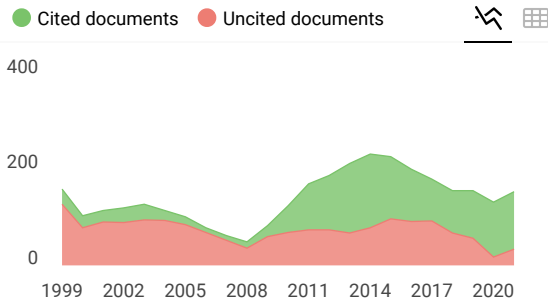
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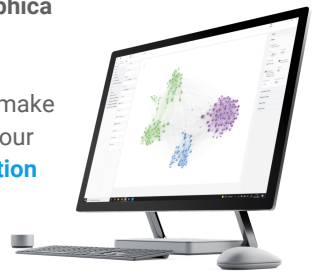
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