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**MICROWAVE ASSISTED SYNTHESIS OF CARBAZOLE MANNICH BASES AND  
NATURAL CARBAZOLE ALKALOIDS FROM *MURRAYA KOENIGII* LEAVES: AN  
*INSILICO* AND EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH**

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**ABSTRACT**

The spread of drug resistant bacteria has badly affected the efficiency of many known antibacterial agents. Thus, the need of new antibacterial drugs is increased. Plant based drugs are gaining more importance because herbal drugs are considered safe and dependable. Comparison between antibacterial activity of synthetic and natural carbazole derivatives were carried out. Microwave assisted synthesis of synthetic carbazole derivatives and Soxhlet extraction of carbazole alkaloid from *Murraya koenigii* were carried out. Binding scores obtained from molecular docking studies, zone of inhibition from the experimental antibacterial study are used as the parameters for comparison.

**Keywords: Docking, N-mannich base of carbazole, carbazole alkaloid, *Murraya koenigii*, Zone of inhibition, Binding energy**

**INTRODUCTION**

Drugs are chemicals that prevent disease or assist in restoring health to diseased individual. In ancient time most of the drug used in the treatment of disease were derived from naturally occurring substance of the plant origin. Example: opium from poppy, quinine from cinchona, digitalis from foxgloves. Presently majority of new therapeutic agents are synthetic in nature.

Antibiotic resistance is one of the leading public health concerns of this century [1]. This is particularly worrisome in the case of gram-negative bacteria for which treatment is already limited [2]. The spread of drug resistant bacteria has badly affected the efficiency of many known antibacterial agents [3]. This clearly highlights the urgent need for new and improved

antibacterial drugs with a novel target and new molecular structure agent to obviate resistance [4]. Interest in natural product as drug leads is being revitalized, particularly for tackling antimicrobial resistance [5]. Drug discovery can be described as the process of identifying chemical molecules that has the potential to become therapeutic agent. Drug discovery is a tedious process which is expensive and time consuming. Drug development is a process of bringing a new chemical molecule to the clinical practice [6]. Drugs have often been discovered starting from endogenous ligands or natural products followed by chemical modifications to improve in vivo efficacy [7]. Computer assisted drug design also called computer assisted molecular design represents more recent application of computer as a tool in the drug design process. It is important to emphasize that computer cannot substitute for a clear understanding of the system being studied. That is, computer is only an additional tool to gain better insight into the chemistry and biology of the problem at hand [8]. Molecular docking has become an important tool for drug discovery [9]. Docking enables the identification of novel compounds of therapeutic interest via predicting ligand-target interaction [10]. The organic compounds specifically N-heterocyclic compounds exhibit various pharmacological activities through

effective binding to enzyme receptor site [11]. Carbazole skeleton is the key structural motif of many biologically active compounds including synthetic and natural product [12]. Carbazole and its derivatives are nitrogen containing aromatic heterocyclic compound that are found in nature or synthesized chemically [13]. Literature review revealed that tetrahydrocarbazole having the nitrogen atom and rigid aromatic moiety helps to the electronic transfer in the  $\pi$ -conjugated system possess the wide range of pharmacological activity [14]. Most carbazole alkaloids have been isolated from the taxonomically related higher plants of the genus *Murraya*, *Glycomis*, and *Clausena* from the family Rutaceae [15]. *Murraya koenigii* (Linn.) Spreng. (Family: Rutaceae) commonly called curry leaves occur throughout India [16]. *Murraya koenigii* is one the plant species with potential medicinal properties [17]. *Murraya koenigii* is a rich source of carbazole alkaloid [18]. The plant has been reported to exhibit antimicrobial, antitumor, antiepileptic, antioxidative, anti-inflammatory, anti-diarrheal, antihistaminic, analgesics properties [19]. Today there is a wide spread interest in drugs derived from plant [20], herbal drugs symbolize safety, in contrast to the synthetic that are regarded as unsafe to

humans and the environment [21]. In our study the potential of synthetic and natural carbazole derivatives to become antibacterial agent was studied through insilico approach and experimental studies. For this purpose, microwave assisted synthesis of N-mannich bases of 1,2,3,4-tetrahydrocarbazoles (synthetic carbazole derivatives) and chloroform extraction of carbazole alkaloid from *Murraya koenigii* were carried out. The antibacterial activity of synthetic and natural carbazole derivatives were evaluated and compared.

The aim of the present study includes

- Microwave assisted synthesis of mannich bases from 1,2,3,4-tetrahydro carbazole
- Soxhlet extraction of carbazole alkaloids from curry leaf
- Study of antibacterial activity through *in-silico* approach
- Evaluation of antibacterial activity through experimental method.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### PHARMACOGNOSTIC STUDY OF CURRY LEAF

**Biological source:** *Murraya koenigii* (Linn.) Spreng [22]

**Family:** Rutaceae [22]

**Taxonomical status [23]**

**Kingdom:** Plantae

**Subkingdom:** Tracheobionta

**Super division:** Spermatophyta

**Division:** Magnoliophyta

**Class:** Magnoliospida

**Sub class:** Rosidae

**Order:** Sapindales

**Family:** Rutaceae

**Genus:** *Murraya*

**Species:** *Murraya koenigii*L. Spreng

### Description

*Murraya koenigii* is semi deciduous, unarmed aromatic small spreading shrub or tree with strong woody stem but slender with the stem which is darker green to brownish in color. The tree is 4-8.7m tall, with a trunk up to 81 cm diameter. The diameter of main stem is about 16cm. Leaves are aromatic in nature. Leaves are pinnate, exstipulate, having reticulate venation and having ovate lanceolate with an oblique base, with 11-21 leaflets whose size description is each leaflet is 0.79-1.57 inch long and 0.39-0.79-inch broad [24].

### Habitat profile of curry leaf



**Figure 1: Habitat profile of curry leaf, Location: Alappad, Kerala, India**

### Microscopy of curry leaf



Figure 2: Microscopy of curry leaf

### Powder microscopy of curry leaf



Figure 3: Powder microscopy of curry leaf

## PREPARATION OF *Murraya koenigii* EXTRACT

### Collection of curry leaf

Curry leaves were collected from the local houses of Alappad village in Kerala. These were washed thoroughly in order to remove the dirt and dust [25]. Then it was dried in the shade to protect leaves from losing the medicinal properties. The dried curry leaves were pulverized with mixer grinder. The powdered leaves were used for the study.

### Soxhlet extraction

**Requirements:** RB flask, heating mantle, thimble, condenser, Soxhlet apparatus, dried curry leaf powder, chloroform.

### Procedure

Curry leaves powder is placed inside a thimble made from thick filter paper, which is loaded into the main chamber of the Soxhlet extractor. The Soxhlet apparatus is positioned into the flask containing the chloroform. The Soxhlet is then fitted with a condenser. The solvent is heated to reflux. The solvent vapor travels up a distillation tube and flood into the chamber housing the thimble holding the sample. The condenser ensures that solvent vapors condenses and drip back down into the chamber housing the sample. The chamber containing the sample slowly fills with warm solvent. When the Soxhlet sample is

almost full, the chamber is automatically emptied by a siphon side arm, with the solvent running back down to the distillation flask. The cycle is allowed to repeat many times [26]. The content in flask is then concentrated to get the extract.

#### PREPARATION OF 1,2,3,4 -TETRAHYDRO CARBAZOLE

Take 4ml of cyclohexanone in RB flask and add 12ml of glacial acetic acid to it. Reflux with frequent shaking. Add 4g of phenyl hydrazine slowly to the RB flask. Heat for 5min under reflux. Cool with vigorous shaking. Filter the product and wash with cold water [27].

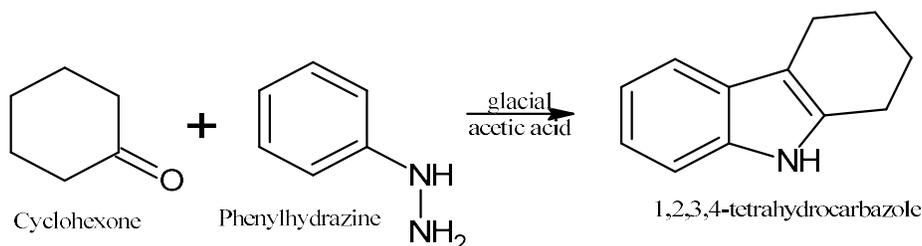


Figure 4: preparation of 1,2,3,4-tetrahydrocarbazole

#### MICROWAVE ASSISTED SYNTHESIS OF MANNICH BASES FROM 1,2,3,4 -TETRAHYDROCARBAZOLE

1.7 g of 1,2,3,4 - tetrahydro carbazole was taken in a beaker and 6ml of ethanol and 1ml of formaldehyde were added.

Appropriate primary or secondary amine was also added to it shown in table 1. Mixture was heated in a microwave at power of 300 watt for 10 seconds. the product is kept overnight in refrigerator and is filtered [28].

Table 1: amines used for preparation and their weight

Amine	Weight taken or volume taken
Primary amine	
Aniline	0.9ml
Secondary amines	
Piperazine	0.86g
N-methyl piperazine	1ml
Diphenylamine	1ml

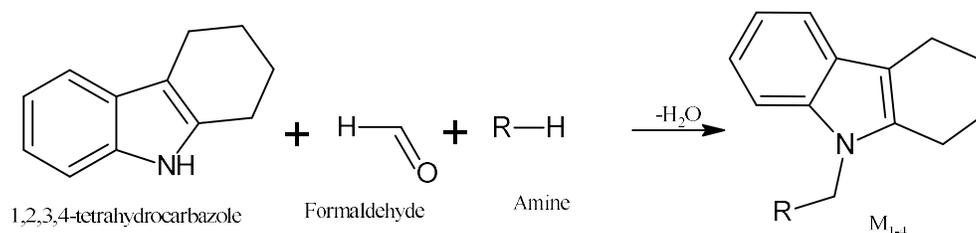
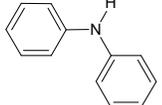
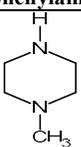
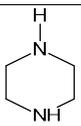


Figure 5: preparation of mannich bases from 1,2,3,4-tetrahydrocarbazole

Table 2: structure of amines used in the preparation

	Amine	Product
R—H	 Aniline	M <sub>1</sub>
	 Diphenylamine	M <sub>2</sub>
	 N-methyl piperazine	M <sub>3</sub>
	 Piperazine	M <sub>4</sub>

M<sub>1</sub> -N-Mannich base of aniline  
M<sub>2</sub> -N-Mannich base of diphenylamine  
M<sub>3</sub> -N-Mannich base of N-methyl piperazine  
M<sub>4</sub> -N-Mannich base of piperazine

## IN – SILICO STUDIES

### Software and databases used

- ❖ Auto Dock 4.2 combines
- AutodockTools 1.5.4
- Python Molecule viewer 1.5.4
- Vision 1.5.4
- ❖ Python 2.5
- ❖ Accelrys discovery studio viewer
- ❖ Pre ADMET software
- ❖ Molinspiration server
- ❖ RCSB protein data bank
- ❖ Online SMILES translator

All *in-silico* studies were carried out at Sanjo college of pharmaceutical studies, Vellapara, Palakkad.

## DOCKING STUDIES OF MANNICH BASES FROM 1,2,3,4-

## TETRAHYDROCARBAZOLE AND CARBAZOLE ALKALOID FROM CURRY LEAF

### Enzyme preparation

Enzyme: Glutamate racemase of *Escherichia coli*

PDB ID: 2JFN

Resolution : 1.90 Å<sup>0</sup>

Sequence length: 285

Chain A

X -ray crystalline structure of protein was downloaded from protein data bank ([www.rcsb.pdb.org](http://www.rcsb.pdb.org)) [29] and refined using

Biovia discovery studio.

### Ligand preparation

Calculation of pharmacokinetic parameters through Molinspiration cheminformatics software

Lipinski's rule of five is commonly used in drug design to predict oral bioavailability of drug candidates [30]. Smile notations generated by ACD labs chemsketch software were fed in the molinspiration software for calculation of molecular properties [31] ([www.molinspiration.com](http://www.molinspiration.com)) [32] of carbazole derivatives and carbazole alkaloids. Online smile translator was used for preparing ligand in the pdb format.

◆ After optimization of lead docking studies were carried out using Autodock4.

## ANTIBACTERIAL STUDY OF MANNICH BASES AND PLANT EXTRACT

### Chemicals and apparatus required

Nutrient media: Muller-Hinton agar

Sterile swab: non adsorbent cotton

Conical flask, test tubes, petri dishes, micropipettes, Autoclave, Laminar air flow unit, Micro tips.

Antibacterial study was performed in pharmaceutical microbiology laboratory, Sanjo college of pharmaceutical studies, Vellapara, Palakkad

### Procedure

Anti-bacterial activity was studied using well agar disc diffusion method. Bacterial growth inhibition was investigated against gram negative bacteria *Escherichia coli*. 50mg/ml of samples (M<sub>1-4</sub>) was prepared using DMF (dimethylformamide). Inoculate the Muller- Hinton agar plate by

streaking the swab over the surface. Allow it to dry. Wells are created and samples are applied using micropipette. Plates are incubated at 37<sup>0</sup>C for 12- 18hr. DMF is used as negative control and ciprofloxacin is used as positive control. Zone of inhibition was measured and compared with that of standard. Similarly antibacterial activity of plant extract was also performed. The zone of inhibition measured was tabulated.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Microwave assisted synthesis of N-mannich base of tetrahydrocarbazole

Microwave assisted synthesis of N-mannich base of tetrahydrocarbazole were carried out and Characterization of synthesized carbazole derivatives is given in **Table 3**.

### RESULT OF ANTIBACTERIAL STUDY

The zone of inhibition of synthesized carbazole derivatives and that of carbazole alkaloid from curry leaf are shown in **Figure 6** and the diameters are entered in **Table 4**. The results are compared with standard.

In experimental study of antibacterial activity, all carbazole derivatives (M<sub>1-4</sub>) and plant extract (carbazole alkaloid) have zone of inhibition lesser than that of the standard ciprofloxacin. Among the synthetic carbazole derivatives N-mannich base of N- methyl piperazine has greater zone of

inhibition. The anti-bacterial activity of plant extract is lesser than that of the synthetic carbazole derivatives. Still, it has the antibacterial activity (zone of inhibition =10mm)

### RESULT OF DOCKING STUDIES

Drug likeness score of ligands were computed using Molinspiration software to predict the oral activity and are shown in **Table 5 & 6**.

Docking results of glutamate racemase of *E. coli* (2JFN) with mannich bases of carbazoles ( $M_{1-4}$ ) and plant extract are shown in the **Table 7**. The best docked structure should have binding energy lesser than that of standard ciprofloxacin. The binding site of enzyme and ligands are shown in the snap shots given in **Figure 7-12**. The binding energy was compared with that of the standard ligand.

N- mannich base of carbazoles ( $M_{1-4}$ ) and carbazole alkaloids of curryleaf shows good binding interaction with glutamate racemase. N-mannich base of diphenylamine shows least binding energy (-7.04) than ciprofloxacin (-5.67). All other mannich bases also have least binding energy ( $M_1=-6.77$ ,  $M_3=-6.59$ ,  $M_4=-6.54$ ) than ciprofloxacin(-5.67). Binding energy of plant extract(-6.06) is also lesser than the ciprofloxacin. Carbazole derivatives and carbazole alkaloids have greater binding interaction with glutamate racemase than standard ciprofloxacin. Among them binding interaction of N-mannich base of diphenylamine predominates. Binding energy of plant extract is higher than that of synthetic carbazole derivatives. However it also have antibacterial activity since the binding energy is lesser than that of standard.

**Table 3: Characterization of synthesized N-mannich bases from 1,2,3,4-tetrahydrocarbazole**

Compound code	Molecular weight	Molecular formula	Practical yield (grams)	Solubility	
				Water	DMF
M <sub>1</sub>	276.38	C <sub>19</sub> H <sub>20</sub> N <sub>2</sub>	5.50	insoluble	soluble
M <sub>2</sub>	352.48	C <sub>25</sub> H <sub>24</sub> N <sub>2</sub>	1.02	insoluble	Soluble
M <sub>3</sub>	283.42	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>25</sub> N <sub>3</sub>	3.62	insoluble	Soluble
M <sub>4</sub>	269.39	C <sub>17</sub> H <sub>23</sub> N <sub>3</sub>	1.96	insoluble	soluble



**Figure 6: Antibacterial activity of  $M_{1-4}$  &  $C_1$  in *Escherichia coli***

Table 4: Zone of inhibition of synthetic carbazole derivatives and plant extract

Compound code	Zone of inhibition diameter (mm)
M <sub>1</sub>	11
M <sub>2</sub>	12
M <sub>3</sub>	21
M <sub>4</sub>	11
Plant extract	10
Ciprofloxacin	30
DMF	8

Table 5: Drug likeness score of M<sub>1-4</sub> using molinspiration server

S. No.	Compound code	mi Log P	Molecular weight	No. of H bond acceptor	No. of H bond donor	No. of violations
1	M <sub>1</sub>	4.87	276.38	2	1	0
2	M <sub>2</sub>	6.82	352.48	2	0	1
3	M <sub>3</sub>	3.31	283.42	3	0	0
4	M <sub>4</sub>	2.72	269.39	3	1	0

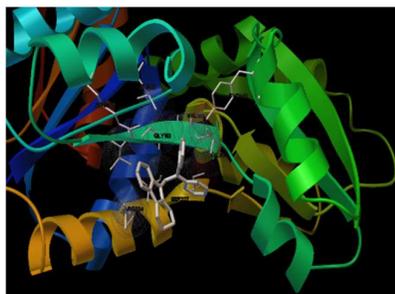
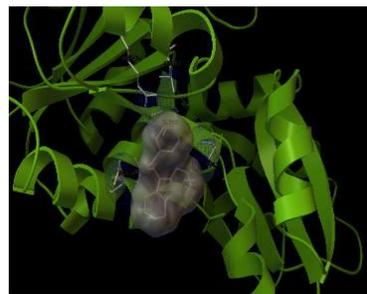
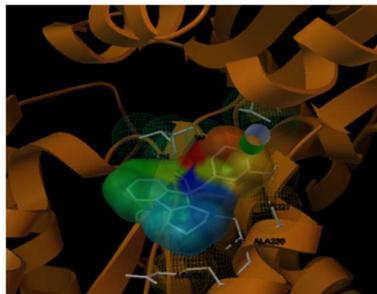
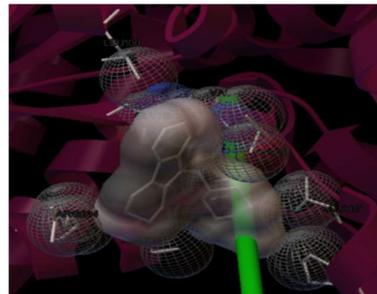
Table 6: Drug likeness score of carbazole alkaloid in *Murraya koenigii*

S. No.	Compound code	mi Log p	Molecular weight	No. of H bond acceptor	No. of H bond donor	No. of violations
1	C <sub>1</sub>	2.40	241.25	4	1	0

C<sub>1</sub> -Carbazole alkaloid 1 - Koenigine Quinone A - 7-methoxy-3-methylcarbazole-1,4-quinone

Table 7: Binding energy of M<sub>1-4</sub> and C<sub>1</sub> with 2JFN

Compound code	Binding energy (Kcal/mol)	Hydrogen bond
M <sub>1</sub>	-6.77	0
M <sub>2</sub>	-7.04	0
M <sub>3</sub>	-6.59	1
M <sub>4</sub>	-6.54	1
Plant extract	-6.06	1
Ciprofloxacin	-5.67	0

Figure 7: Binding interaction of 2JFN with M<sub>1</sub>Figure 8: Binding interaction of 2JFN with M<sub>2</sub>Figure 9: Binding interaction of 2JFN with M<sub>3</sub>Figure 10: Binding interaction of 2JFN with M<sub>4</sub>

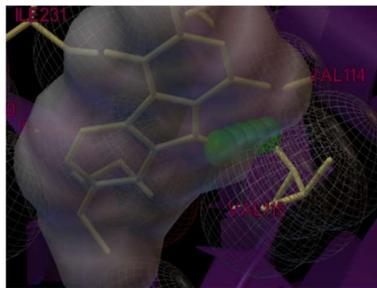


Figure 11: Binding interaction of 2JFN with C1

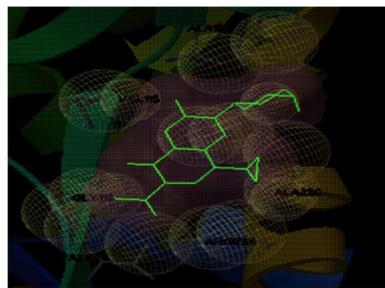


Figure 12: Binding interaction of 2JFN with ciprofloxacin

## CONCLUSION

Computer aided drug design helped to minimize the complications associated with traditional drug design process. Drug likeness score of ligand observed through molinspiration software helped to predict the pharmacokinetic activity of the drug. Microwave assisted synthesis were carried out for the preparation of carbazole derivatives and it make the preparation easier than the reflux method. Antibacterial activity of synthetic carbazole derivatives and that of carbazole alkaloid from the plant extract was confirmed by insilico (docking studies) and experimental met(agar disc diffusion method). Comparison of anti bacterial activity between natural and synthetic derivatives were carried out using parameters such as binding scores and zone of inhibition obtained from present study. In silico study proved that the both the synthetic and natural derivatives have the potential to become antibacterial agent. Synthetic derivatives shows more antibacterial activity than natural ones. In future, isolation of natural carbazole alkloid from

*Murraya koenigii* will become more effective and we can avoid adverse reactions.

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