

An Insight into the Physicochemical, Drug-likeness, Pharmacokinetics and Toxicity Profile of *Kigelia africana* (Lam) Bioactive Compounds

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ORIGINAL STUDY

An Insight into the Physicochemical, Drug-likeness, Pharmacokinetics and Toxicity Profile of *Kigelia Africana* (Lam) Bioactive Compounds

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Abstract

Kigelia africana plant is multipurpose plant whose therapeutic potential has been thoroughly investigated. The physicochemical, solubilities, ADMET, pharmacological, and drug-like properties of this plant have not been reported in details. This study makes use of the information that is currently known on the chemical make-up of the plant to forecast its overall toxicity as well as the potential for the phytochemicals it contains to be employed in medication discovery. The study also employed free web servers for the lipophilicity, water solubility, drug-likeness, bioavailability score, medicinal chemistry and toxicological profiling of the compounds of *K. africana*. Artemether, a known antimalaria drug was used to validate the potentials of the phytochemicals to serve as precursor to valuable drugs. Findings from our study revealed that a larger percentage of these compounds passed the physicochemical properties analysis, low lipophilicities, high-water solubilities, obeyed the drug-likeness rules, had high gastrointestinal absorption, high blood-barrier permeant, low permeability glycoprotein and hence bioavailable. The toxicological profile additionally showed that majority of the compounds possessed low toxicities and thus can be a potential drug candidate in the drug development industry. The profile of the well-known artemether supported the study's findings that a higher proportion of the *K. africana* compounds have potential drug-like molecules.

Keywords: Physicochemical, Drug-likeness, Pharmacokinetics, Toxicity profile, *Kigelia africana*

1. Introduction

Over the years, traditional medicine continues to play crucial role in local health care systems especially in low or middle-income regions, underdeveloped or developing countries. In Africa, the high number of traditional practitioners makes herbal medicines easily accessible and affordable [1]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 65–80 % healthcare practice integrates traditional medicine at one point or the other

leading to an increase in its demand [2]. Various plants parts such as root, stem bark, leaves, flowers, seeds are being used for different medicinal purposes. Due to the advantages of herbal medicine, attention is now shifting from conventional drugs to herbal medicine as also supported by scientific efforts that validate different ethnobotanical and ethnomedicinal uses of these plants.

To bolster drug discovery, authentic data on pharmacokinetics properties of the molecule must be attainable at the earliest which eventually

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contributes to the success or failure of the compound. The present study will be the first of its kind reporting the ADME (Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism and Excretion) properties of *Kigeli africa* using freely available web tool Swiss ADME following the works of [3–7]. Twenty-five [25] isolated compounds reported in their earlier work were screened for ADME and toxicities properties [8].

Kigelia africana (Lam) Benth synonymous to *Kigelia pinnata* has been reported in literature as a multi-purpose medicinal plant with many attributes [3]. Locally, the plant is been use for antiulcer [7], anti-aging, antioxidant [9], and anti-malarial treatments [10]. It is also globally used in the treatment of genital infections, gynecological disorders [7], renal ailments [11], sickle-cell anemia, psoriasis [12], eczema, central nervous system [13], respiratory ailment, skin complaint, body weakness, leprosy, impetigo, worm infestation [14], scalp, athlete's foot, tumours [15,16] etc., especially in developing nations where orthodox medicine are meager, expensive or inaccessible.

Olawale, Olofinsan [6] described the use of *K. africana* in the treatment of erectile dysfunction using molecular modeling approach. However, there is paucity of information on the ADMET and pharmacokinetics properties of the compounds isolated so far from this wonderful plant which will make it a potential effective drug candidate. This study thus seeks to provide information on the ADMET, pharmacokinetics profile and drug-likeness properties of some of the identified compounds in *K. Africana* for drug discovery and development purposes. The validity of this methods in identifying potential drugs candidate was confirmed using artemether, a known drug for malaria treatment.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Data mining of *K. africana* compounds

Bioactive phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana* were obtained from literature work of [3–7]. A dataset of twenty-five [25] compounds were used for this study.

2.2. Physicochemical, lipophilicity and water solubility properties of *K. africana* compounds

Canonical SMILES formular of the phytochemicals obtained from PerkinElmer ChemDraw was used to determine the properties using SWISSADME

available on this site <http://www.swissadme.ch/index.php>.

2.3. Structural optimization and toxicity profiling of *K. africana* compounds

PerkinElmer ChemDraw software was used to draw the molecular structures of various phytochemicals, the Canonical SMILES formular was then obtained using the same software. The Resulting Canonical SMILES formular was the used to determine the ADME properties using SWISSADME available on this site <http://www.swissadme.ch/index.php>. The Toxicities profile was done using the Canonical SMILES formula using Prottox II available on this site https://tox-new.charite.de/prottox_II/index.php?site=compound_input.

3. Results and discussion

The process of drug discovery and development involves several stages such as target identification, target validation, lead identification and optimization among others [17]. In this study, the first stage which is target identification for potential druggable compounds was investigated using the bioinformatics (data mining and computer-aided drug design) approach. Currently, computer-aided drug development (CADD) has facilitated the estimation of drug absorption, distribution, metabolism, and excretion (ADME). They provide reliable data relatively rapidly and support experimental methods [18,19]. The percentage of pharmacokinetics-related failures in the clinical phase has been found to be significantly reduced by the first assessment of ADME properties in the discovery phase [19,20].

Phytochemicals are gaining more attention due to their various benefits in drug development, they are rich in drug candidate molecules, less toxic and produce minimum side effects compared to the synthetic drugs [21]. The structures of the phytochemical compounds identified in *Kigelia africana* is presented in Fig. 1. The plant contained several compounds including kigelinone, isokigelinone, kigelinol, pinnata, isopinnata, avanafil, caffeic acid, luteolin, naphthodione, metronidazole, sitosterol, quinine among others. These compounds have been reported to be pharmacologically active [22]. Avanafil is reportedly active against erectile dysfunction [6].

The physicochemical properties of compounds are indicators of the probable success of such compounds as drug candidates. It is believed that compounds with high molecular weight and lipophilicity present poor drug-like potential [23].

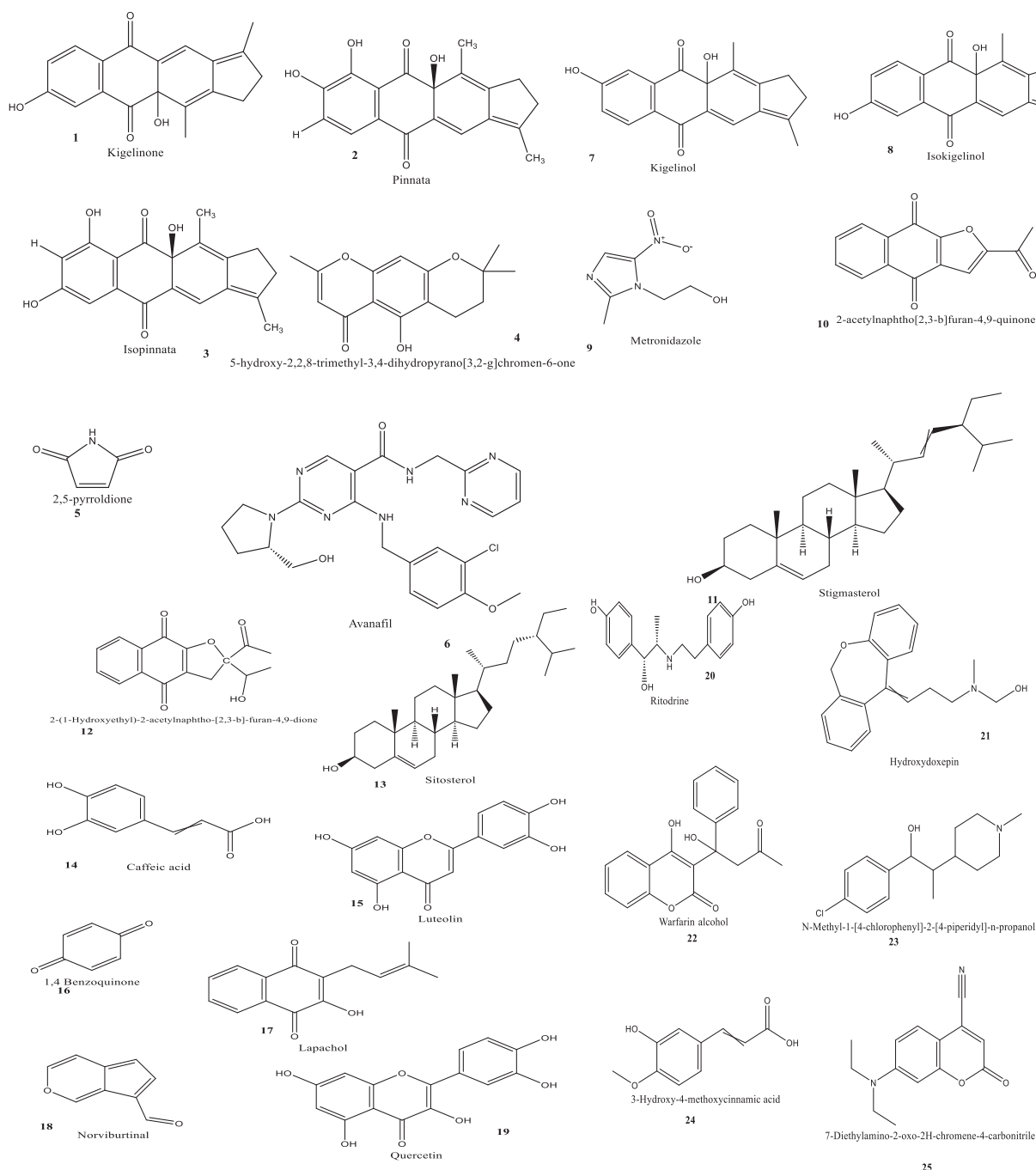


Fig. 1. Structures of Phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

The Lipinski rule of five gives a guide on oral bioavailability which states that the compound should have no more than 5 hydrogen bond donors and 10 hydrogen bond acceptors and molecular weight $<500 \text{ g mol}^{-1}$ and a $\log P < 5$ [24]. Tables 1 and 2 show the physicochemical properties and lipophilicity characteristics of the phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana* respectively. Interestingly, all the

compounds met the physicochemical conditions, avanafil has the highest molecular weight of $483.95 \text{ g mol}^{-1}$ while 2,5-pyrroldione shows the least molecular weight of 97.07 g mol^{-1} . Equally, the amount of hydrogen bond donor and hydrogen bond acceptors of the phytochemicals are within the number recommended for potential drugs and for available generic drugs. The total polar surface area

Table 1. Physicochemical properties of the phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

| Phytochemicals | MW | Heavy atoms | Aromatic heavy atoms | Fraction Csp3 | Rotatable bonds | H-bond acceptors | H-bond donors | MR | TPSA |
|---|--------|----------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------|--------|
| Kigelinone | 308.33 | 23 | 6 | 0.26 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 85.55 | 74.6 |
| Pinnata | 339.36 | 25 | 6 | 0.3 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 92.45 | 94.83 |
| Isopinnata | 322.35 | 24 | 6 | 0.3 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 90.52 | 74.6 |
| 5-hydroxy-2,2,8-trimethyl- 3,4-dihydropyrano[3, 2-g]chromen-6-one | 260.29 | 19 | 10 | 0.4 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 73.28 | 59.67 |
| 2,5-pyrroldione | 97.07 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 25.87 | 46.17 |
| Avanafil | 483.95 | 34 | 18 | 0.35 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 131.01 | 125.39 |
| Kigelinol | 308.33 | 23 | 6 | 0.26 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 85.55 | 74.6 |
| Isokigelinol | 308.33 | 23 | 6 | 0.26 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 85.55 | 74.6 |
| Metronidazole | 171.15 | 12 | 5 | 0.5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 43.25 | 83.87 |
| 2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]furan-4,9-quinone | 240.21 | 18 | 11 | 0.07 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 62.21 | 64.35 |
| Stigmasterol | 412.69 | 30 | 0 | 0.86 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 132.75 | 20.23 |
| 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)- 2-acetylnaphtho-[2,3-b]- furan-4,9-dione | 286.28 | 21 | 6 | 0.31 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 73.46 | 80.67 |
| Sitosterol | 414.71 | 30 | 0 | 0.93 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 133.23 | 20.23 |
| Caffeic acid | 180.16 | 13 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 47.16 | 77.76 |
| Luteolin | 286.24 | 21 | 16 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 76.01 | 111.13 |
| 1,4-Benzoquinone | 108.09 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 28.29 | 34.14 |
| Lapachol | 242.27 | 18 | 6 | 0.2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 69.38 | 54.37 |
| Norviburtinal | 146.14 | 11 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 40.72 | 30.21 |
| Quercetin | 302.24 | 22 | 16 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 78.03 | 131.36 |
| Ritodrine | 287.35 | 21 | 12 | 0.29 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 83.13 | 72.72 |
| Hydroxydoxepin | 295.38 | 22 | 12 | 0.26 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 88.84 | 32.7 |
| Warfarin alcohol | 324.33 | 24 | 16 | 0.16 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 89.63 | 87.74 |
| N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]- 2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol | 267.79 | 18 | 6 | 0.6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 80.73 | 23.47 |
| 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid | 194.18 | 14 | 6 | 0.1 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 51.63 | 66.76 |
| 7-Diethylamino-2-oxo-2H- chromene-4-carbonitrile | 242.27 | 18 | 10 | 0.29 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 71.02 | 57.24 |
| Artemether | 298.37 | 21 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 76.07 | 46.15 |

MW- Molecular weight, MR-Molar refractivity, TPSA: Total Polar Surface Area, H-bond – Hydrogen bond.

Table 2. Lipophilicity characteristics of the phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

| Phytochemicals | iLOGP | XLOGP3 | WLOGP | MLOGP | Silicos-IT Log P | Consensus Log P |
|---|-------|--------|-------|-------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Kigelinone | 2.08 | 1.15 | 2.87 | 1.62 | 3.45 | 2.23 |
| Pinnata | −5.73 | 1.04 | 3 | 1.02 | 3.96 | 0.66 |
| Isopinnata | 2.27 | 1.51 | 3.18 | 1.85 | 3.96 | 2.55 |
| 5-hydroxy-2,2,8-trimethyl- 3,4-dihydropyrano[3,2-g]chromen- 6-one | 3.01 | 3.09 | 2.91 | 1.31 | 3.72 | 2.81 |
| 2,5-pyrroldione | 0.5 | −0.29 | −1.18 | −0.58 | 0.34 | −0.24 |
| Avanafil | 3.66 | 2.58 | 1.56 | 0.89 | 2.44 | 2.22 |
| Kigelinol | 2.08 | 1.15 | 2.87 | 1.62 | 3.45 | 2.23 |
| Isokigelinol | 1.73 | 1.15 | 2.87 | 1.62 | 3.45 | 2.16 |
| Metronidazole | 1.16 | −0.02 | 0.09 | −1.19 | −1.62 | −0.32 |
| 2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]furan-4, 9-quinone | 1.83 | 2.28 | 2.26 | 0.09 | 3.31 | 1.95 |
| Stigmasterol | 5.08 | 8.56 | 7.8 | 6.62 | 6.86 | 6.98 |
| 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho- [2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione | 1.94 | 1.03 | 1.45 | −0.11 | 2.77 | 1.42 |
| Sitosterol | 5.07 | 9.34 | 8.02 | 6.73 | 7.04 | 7.24 |
| Caffeic acid | 0.97 | 1.15 | 1.09 | 0.7 | 0.75 | 0.93 |
| Luteolin | 1.86 | 2.53 | 2.28 | −0.03 | 2.03 | 1.73 |
| 1,4-Benzoquinone | 0.94 | 0.2 | 0.25 | −0.23 | 0.99 | 0.43 |
| Lapachol | 2.37 | 2.84 | 3.23 | 1.32 | 3.32 | 2.62 |
| Norviburtinal | 1.69 | 1.43 | 2.2 | 0.65 | 2.56 | 1.7 |
| Quercetin | 1.63 | 1.54 | 1.99 | −0.56 | 1.54 | 1.23 |
| Ritodrine | 2.37 | 2.32 | 2.03 | 1.97 | 2.62 | 2.26 |
| Hydroxydoxepin | 2.88 | 3.7 | 3.13 | 2.95 | 3.6 | 3.25 |
| Warfarin alcohol | 2.87 | 2.12 | 2.61 | 1.68 | 3.59 | 2.57 |
| N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2- [4-piperidyl]-n-propanol | 3.17 | 3.28 | 2.65 | 3.05 | 3.33 | 3.1 |
| 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid | 1.79 | 1.51 | 1.39 | 1 | 1.26 | 1.39 |
| 7-Diethylamino-2-oxo-2H- chromene-4-carbonitrile | 2.43 | 2.2 | 2.51 | 1.52 | 2.73 | 2.28 |
| Artemether | 3.35 | 3.53 | 2.84 | 2.6 | 1.75 | 2.81 |

(TPSA) is a physicochemical property that describes the relationship of compound with incidence of adverse events [25].

The partial coefficient (P) is a measure of how a compound dissolves in a mixture of water and non-polar/organic solvent whereas the log₁₀ value of P (LogP) describes the negative value for hydrophilic compounds and a positive value for lipophilic compounds, it is a component of Lipinski's rule of 5 guide; log P < 5; best between 1.35 and 1.8 for better oral and intestinal absorption. The low consensus log P (Clog P) also plays significant role in molecular discovery activities across a wide range of fields. All of the phytochemicals except stigmasterol and sitosterol had a higher Clog P value, 6.98 and 7.24 respectively. The low Clog P value indicates low lipophilic abilities and as such less likelihood to be used as a topical drug and more likely as an oral drug [26]. The lipophilicity study revealed that all the identified compounds had a ClogP <3 except sitosterol (7.24) and stigmasterol (6.98) while hydroxydoxepin and N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol had values slightly

higher than 3 (3.25 and 3.12 respectively). These values portray their low solubility in the system but potentiate them more as a topical drug while others that showed low lipophilicity would likely pass as internally used drugs.

The phytochemical water solubility characteristics is a crucial consideration since it guarantees that at least a minimal concentration of them will be present in the circulatory system, meaning higher absorption in the body. These characteristics influence its use for drug formulation and handling during drug development for easy absorption especially via oral administration [27]. The different models for evaluating water solubility include the ESOL-Ali and SILICOS-IT are usually predicted with the SWISSADME. The first two differ in seminal general solubility equation as they exclude melting point parameters; all demonstrate strong linear correlation between predicted and experimental values [28]. SwissADME predicts solubility (log S) using topological and fragmental approaches, where a value of −10 or below is deemed insoluble and a value of −4 or above is considered soluble. Table 3

Table 3. Water solubility characteristics of phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

| Compounds | ESOL | | | | Ali | | | | SILICOS-IT | | | |
|---|--------------|------------|----------|-------|-------------|------------|----------|-------|------------------|------------|----------|-------|
| | Log S (ESOL) | Solubility | | Class | Log S (Ali) | Solubility | | Class | Log S SILICOS-IT | Solubility | | Class |
| | | mg/ml | mol/L | | | mg/ml | mol/L | | | mg/ml | mol/L | |
| Kigelinone | −2.67 | 6.60E-01 | 2.14E-03 | S | −2.31 | 1.51E+00 | 4.88E-03 | S | −4.51 | 9.46E-03 | 3.07E-05 | MS |
| Pinnata | −2.78 | 5.67E-01 | 1.67E-03 | S | −2.62 | 8.11E-01 | 2.39E-03 | S | −4.89 | 4.34E-03 | 1.28E-05 | MS |
| Isopinnata | −2.97 | 3.42E-01 | 1.06E-03 | S | −2.68 | 6.66E-01 | 2.07E-03 | S | −4.89 | 4.12E-03 | 1.28E-05 | MS |
| 5-hydroxy-2,2,8-trimethyl-3,4-dihydropyrano[3,2-g]chromen-6-one | −3.79 | 4.22E-02 | 1.62E-04 | S | −4.01 | 2.54E-02 | 9.76E-05 | MS | −4.76 | 4.52E-03 | 1.74E-05 | MS |
| 2,5-pyrroldione | −0.26 | 5.34E+01 | 5.51E-01 | VS | −0.22 | 5.85E+01 | 6.03E-01 | VS | −0.27 | 5.26E+01 | 5.42E-01 | S |
| Avanafil | −4.2 | 3.07E-02 | 6.34E-05 | MS | −4.86 | 6.65E-03 | 1.38E-05 | MS | −7.43 | 1.79E-05 | 3.70E-08 | PS |
| Kigelinol | −2.67 | 6.60E-01 | 2.14E-03 | S | −2.31 | 1.51E+00 | 4.88E-03 | S | −4.51 | 9.46E-03 | 3.07E-05 | MS |
| Isokigelinol | −2.67 | 6.60E-01 | 2.14E-03 | S | −2.31 | 1.51E+00 | 4.88E-03 | S | −4.51 | 9.46E-03 | 3.07E-05 | MS |
| Metronidazole | −1 | 1.72E+01 | 1.00E-01 | VS | −1.29 | 8.74E+00 | 5.11E-02 | VS | −0.41 | 6.69E+01 | 3.91E-01 | S |
| 2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]furan-4,9-quinone | −3.15 | 1.69E-01 | 7.05E-04 | S | −3.27 | 1.29E-01 | 5.39E-04 | S | −4.8 | 3.82E-03 | 1.59E-05 | MS |
| Stigmasterol | −7.46 | 1.43E-05 | 3.46E-08 | PS | −8.86 | 5.71E-07 | 1.38E-09 | PS | −5.47 | 1.40E-03 | 3.39E-06 | MS |
| 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione | −2.34 | 1.30E+00 | 4.54E-03 | S | −2.31 | 1.39E+00 | 4.85E-03 | S | −3.73 | 5.38E-02 | 1.88E-04 | S |
| Sitosterol | −7.9 | 5.23E-06 | 1.26E-08 | PS | −9.67 | 8.90E-08 | 2.15E-10 | PS | −6.19 | 2.69E-04 | 6.49E-07 | PS |
| Caffeic acid | −1.89 | 2.32E+00 | 1.29E-02 | VS | −2.38 | 7.55E-01 | 4.19E-03 | S | −0.71 | 3.51E+01 | 1.95E-01 | S |
| Luteolin | −3.71 | 5.63E-02 | 1.97E-04 | S | −4.51 | 8.84E-03 | 3.09E-05 | MS | −3.82 | 4.29E-02 | 1.50E-04 | S |
| 1,4-Benzoquinone | −0.64 | 2.50E+01 | 2.31E-01 | VS | −0.48 | 3.62E+01 | 3.34E-01 | VS | −0.32 | 5.15E+01 | 4.76E-01 | S |
| Lapachol | −3.25 | 1.38E-01 | 5.68E-04 | S | −3.64 | 5.55E-02 | 2.29E-04 | S | −3.96 | 2.69E-02 | 1.11E-04 | S |
| Norviburtinal | −2.19 | 9.51E-01 | 6.51E-03 | S | −1.67 | 3.13E+00 | 2.14E-02 | VS | −3.21 | 8.95E-02 | 6.12E-04 | S |
| Quercetin | −3.16 | 2.11E-01 | 6.98E-04 | S | −3.91 | 3.74E-02 | 1.24E-04 | S | −3.24 | 1.73E-01 | 5.73E-04 | S |
| Ritodrine | −3.11 | 2.23E-01 | 7.76E-04 | S | −3.49 | 9.39E-02 | 3.27E-04 | S | −4.53 | 8.50E-03 | 2.96E-05 | MS |
| Hydroxydoxepin | −4.14 | 2.13E-02 | 7.21E-05 | MS | −4.08 | 2.47E-02 | 8.37E-05 | MS | −5.59 | 7.59E-04 | 2.57E-06 | MS |
| Warfarin alcohol | −3.42 | 1.25E-01 | 3.84E-04 | S | −3.59 | 8.27E-02 | 2.55E-04 | S | −5.74 | 5.85E-04 | 1.80E-06 | MS |
| N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol | −3.62 | 6.49E-02 | 2.42E-04 | S | −3.45 | 9.55E-02 | 3.57E-04 | S | −3.81 | 4.20E-02 | 1.57E-04 | S |
| 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid | −2.11 | 1.49E+00 | 7.68E-03 | S | −2.52 | 5.86E-01 | 3.02E-03 | S | −1.42 | 7.43E+00 | 3.83E-02 | S |
| 7-Diethylamino-2-oxo-2H-chromene-4-carbonitrile | −2.94 | 2.77E-01 | 1.14E-03 | S | −3.04 | 2.23E-01 | 9.20E-04 | S | −4.62 | 5.76E-03 | 2.38E-05 | MS |
| Artemether | −3.85 | 4.24E-02 | 1.42E-04 | S | −4.18 | 1.96E-02 | 6.55E-05 | MS | −2.04 | 2.75E+00 | 9.20E-03 | S |

S – Soluble, MS – Moderately Soluble, VS – Very Soluble, PS – Partially Soluble.

Table 4. Pharmacokinetics properties of phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

| Phytochemicals | GI absorption | BBB permeant | Pgp substrate | CYP1A2 inhibitor | CYP2C19 inhibitor | CYP2C9 inhibitor | CYP2D6 inhibitor | CYP3A4 inhibitor | log Kp (cm/s) |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Kigelinone | High | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | -7.36 |
| Pinnata | High | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | -7.63 |
| Isopinnata | High | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | -7.19 |
| 5-hydroxy-2,2,8-trimethyl-3,4-dihydropyrano[3,2-g]chromen-6-one | High | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | -5.69 |
| 2,5-pyrroldione | High | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | -7.1 |
| Avanafil | High | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | -7.42 |
| Kigelinol | High | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | -7.36 |
| Isokigelinol | High | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | -7.36 |
| Metronidazole | High | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | -7.36 |
| 2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]furan-4,9-quinone | High | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | -6.15 |
| Stigmasterol | Low | No | No | No | No | Yes | No | No | -2.74 |
| 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione | High | No | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | -7.32 |
| Sitosterol | Low | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | -2.2 |
| Caffeic acid | High | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | -6.58 |
| Luteolin | High | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | -6.25 |
| 1,4-Benzoquinone | High | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | -6.82 |
| Lapachol | High | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | -5.76 |
| Norviburtinal | High | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | -6.18 |
| Quercetin | High | No | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | Yes | -7.05 |
| Ritodrine | High | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | -6.41 |
| Hydroxydoxepin | High | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | -5.47 |
| Warfarin alcohol | High | No | No | No | No | No | No | No | -6.77 |
| N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol | High | Yes | No | No | No | No | Yes | No | -5.6 |
| 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid | High | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No | -6.41 |
| 7-Diethylamino-2-oxo-2H-chromene-4-carbonitrile | High | Yes | No | Yes | Yes | No | No | No | -6.22 |
| Artemether | High | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No | No | -5.61 |

shows the water solubility characteristics of *K. africana* compounds. As anticipated, both Sitosterol (−7.9) and Stigmasterol (−7.46) are weakly soluble due to their non-polar nature, metronidazole (−1), 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid (−2.11), Kigelinol (−2.67) and Isokigelinol (−2.67) shows the maximum solubilities, the entire phytochemicals are soluble and moderately soluble depicting their bio-absorption potential.

An important step in determining the overall toxicity of a substance is to examine the toxicological profile of the product. Predictive (*in silico*) models have been employed in recent years to assess the potential toxicity of food substances based on their chemical makeup. To forecast and confirm the pharmacological activity and toxicological profile of chemical compounds found in *Kigelia africana* found in the literature, *in silico* (computational) approaches were employed. Protox II software, which integrates, captures, and analyzes compounds from many databases around the world, was used to evaluate the compounds while SWISSADME was used for the ADME, pharmacokinetics and druglike properties of the phytochemicals. In the toxicities profile, the compounds were screened for their ability to induce immune toxicity, ability to cause cancer, ability to affect the cell and general toxicity [29].

The pharmacokinetic parameters including gastrointestinal (GI) absorption, BBB permeability, PGP substrate, inhibitor of Cytochrome P450 isoenzymes, and skin permeation as a Log K_p value are displayed on Table 4. GI absorption of compounds particularly those administered via oral route may be affected by factors such as age, genes, health status, ethnicity and thus affect the pharmacokinetics of drug [30]. Low GI absorption may be attributed to non-polar nature of the compound, thus low solubility in the intestinal lumen and overall their reduced bioavailability [31]. With the exceptions of both sitosterol and stigmasterol, which had minimal GI absorption, the pharmacokinetics and drug similarity studies utilizing SwissADME demonstrated high levels of GI absorption for all other phytochemicals.

The blood vessels which line the vascular central nervous system are the blood–brain barrier (BBB) and specifically regulates transport of molecules between the brain and blood; the BBB prevents circulation of drugs to the brain [32]. Thirteen [13] of the enlisted compounds (52 %) are permeable to the BBB while the remaining twelve [12] (48 %) namely pinnata, 2,5-pyrroldione, avanafil, metronidazole, 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho-[2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione, sitosterol, stigmasterol, caffeic acid, luteolin, quercetin and warfarin alcohol are not BBB

permeant. Small molecule compounds may be able to cross this barrier provided their molecular weight is < 400 g/mol and hydrogen bond formation <8. The “No” BBB permeant observed in avanafil, stigmasterol and sitosterol is corroborated by their high molecular weight which were >400 g/mol, other molecules with no BBB permeant may be due to difference in other parameters. The “Yes” indicates possibly movement across the BBB for pharmacological effects pertaining brain diseases. Additionally, the permeability glycoprotein (Pgp) substrate is a transporter expressed primarily in the intestine functions to protect the central nervous system against foreign substances by sending them back into the intestinal lumen to restrict the absorption of the substance. However, overexpression of the Pgp substrate results in multidrug-resistant malignancy [28,33,34]. Fortunately, most of the compounds are not Pgp substrate depicting their potential bioavailability except ritodrine, isokigelinol, kigelinol, avanafil, issopinnata and pinnata.

The biotransformation or metabolism of drug into polar excretable form is initially (phase 1) carried out by the cytochrome P450 super family of five isoenzymes (CYP1A2, CYP2C19, CYP2C9, CYP2D6, and CYP3A4) (Ilieva et al., 2018). The predictors for the isoenzymes CYP2C9, CYP2D6 and CYP3A4 present fewer inhibitory compounds compared to CYP1A2, CYP2C19. Hence, most of the compounds are not likely to affect cytochrome P450 reactions in drug metabolism. The fewer the inhibition the better the phase 1 reaction of drug biotransformation in the liver would occur.

A multivariate linear regression called the skin permeability coefficient (Log K_p) shows how permeant a molecule is to the skin. The less permeant the molecule is to the skin, the lower the log K_p (with K_p in cm/s). The skin permeability standard compass is −8.0 to −1.0 [28].

All the phytochemicals show appreciable permeability in the range of −2.2 cm/s to −7.63 cm/s. Pinnata had the lowest log K_p (−7.63 cm/s), followed by avanafil (−7.42 cm/s). kigelone, kigelinol, isokigelinol and metronidazole had the same value of −7.36 cm/s, other compounds had lesser negative values with stigmasterol and sitosterol shows the best permeability coefficient of and −2.7 and −2.2 cm/s respectively indicating excellent transdermal medicinal and aesthetic prospects [35,36]. This result is in tandem with the other pharmacokinetics parameters for stigmasterol and sitosterol where they presented low GI, no BBB permeant nor a Pgp substrate. Its inhibitory effect on the cytochrome P450 isoenzymes further

Table 5. Drug-likeness and bioavailability score of phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

| Phytochemicals | Lipinski violations | Ghose violations | Veber violations | Egan violations | Muegge violations | Bioavailability Score |
|---|---------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Kigelinone | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Pinnata | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Isopinnata | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| 5-hydroxy-2,2,8-trimethyl-3,4-dihydropyrano[3,2-g]chromen-6-one | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| 2,5-pyrroldione | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0.55 |
| Avanafil | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Kigelinol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Isokigelinol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Metronidazole | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.55 |
| 2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]furan-4,9-quinone | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Stigmasterol | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0.55 |
| 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho-[2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.56 |
| Sitosterol | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0.55 |
| Caffeic acid | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.56 |
| Luteolin | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| 1,4-Benzoquinone | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.55 |
| Lapachol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.85 |
| Norviburtinal | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.55 |
| Quercetin | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Ritodrine | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Hydroxydoxepin | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Warfarin alcohol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.85 |
| 7-Diethylamino-2-oxo-2H-chromene-4-carbonitrile | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |
| Artemether | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.55 |

Table 6. Medicinal chemistry properties of phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

| Phytochemicals | PAINS alerts | Brenk alerts | Leadlikeness violations | Synthetic Accessibility |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kigelinone | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3.96 |
| Pinnata | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4.14 |
| Isopinnata | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4.07 |
| 5-hydroxy-2,2,8-trimethyl-3,4-dihydropyrano[3,2-g]chromen-6-one | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3.04 |
| 2,5-pyrroldione | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1.88 |
| Avanafil | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3.81 |
| Kigelinol | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3.96 |
| Isokigelinol | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3.96 |
| Metronidazole | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2.3 |
| 2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]furan-4,9-quinone | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3.09 |
| Stigmasterol | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6.21 |
| 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho-[2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4.18 |
| Sitosterol | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6.3 |
| Caffeic acid | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1.81 |
| Luteolin | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3.02 |
| 1,4-Benzoquinone | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2.87 |
| Lapachol | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2.92 |
| Norviburtinal | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2.81 |
| Quercetin | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3.23 |
| Ritodrine | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.5 |
| Hydroxydoxepin | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3.7 |
| Warfarin alcohol | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3.8 |
| N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.53 |
| 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1.9 |
| 7-Diethylamino-2-oxo-2H-chromene-4-carbonitrile | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2.9 |
| Artemether | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6.65 |

Table 7. *In silico* toxicological profile of phytochemicals in *Kigelia africana*.

| Compound Name | LD ₅₀ value and Tox Class | Prediction Accuracy (%) | Immunotoxicity | Carcinogenicity | Mutagenicity | Cytotoxicity |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Kigelinone | 450 mg/Kg 4 | 67.38 | Active (0.79) | Active (0.52) | Active (0.70) | Inactive |
| Pinnata | 1,000 mg/Kg 4 | 67.38 | Active (0.97) | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| Isopinnata | 1000 mg/Kg 5 | 67.38 | Inactive (0.55) | Active (0.52) | Inactive | Inactive |
| 5-hydroxy-2,2,8-trimethyl-3,4-dihydropyrano[3,2-g]chromen-6-one | 100 mg/Kg 3 | 67.38 | Inactive | Inactive | Active (0.56) | Inactive |
| 2,5-pyrroldione | 80 mg/Kg 3 | 100 | Inactive | Active (0.68) | Active (0.73) | Inactive |
| Avanafil | 1190 mg/Kg 4 | 54.26 | Active (0.86) | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| Kigelinol | 1000/Kg 4 | 67.38 | Active (0.78) | Active (0.51) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Isokigelinol | 1000 mg/Kg 5 | 68.07 | Active (0.88) | Active (0.51) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Metronidazole | 1500 mg/Kg 4 | 69.26 | Inactive | Active (0.87) | Active (0.97) | Inactive |
| 2-acetylnaphtho[2,3-b]furan-4,9-quinone | 2400 mg/Kg 5 | 67.38 | Inactive | Active (0.52) | Active (0.57) | Inactive |
| Stigmasterol | 890 mg/Kg 4 | 70.97 | Active (0.99) | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho-[2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione | 2000 mg/Kg 4 | 68.07 | Inactive | Active (0.50) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Sitosterol | 890 mg/Kg 4 | 70.97 | Active (0.99) | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| Caffeic acid | 2980 mg/Kg 5 | 70.97 | Inactive | Active (0.78) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Luteolin | 3919 mg/Kg 5 | 70.97 | Inactive | Active (0.68) | Active (0.51) | Inactive |
| 1,4-Benzoquinone | 25 mg/Kg 2 | 100 | Inactive | Active (0.72) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Lapachol | 487 mg/Kg 4 | 100 | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| Norviburtinal | 2000 mg/Kg 4 | 54.26 | Inactive | Active (0.63) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Quercetin | 159 mg/Kg 3 | 100 | Inactive | Active (0.68) | Active (0.51) | Inactive |
| Ritodrine | 687 mg/Kg 4 | 100 | Active (0.64) | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| Hydroxydoxepin | 135 mg/Kg 3 | 72.90 | Inactive | Active (0.78) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Warfarin alcohol | 21 mg/Kg 1 | 70.97 | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol | 400 mg/Kg 4 | 69.26 | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid | 7900 mg/Kg 6 | 100 | Active (0.95) | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |
| 7-Diethylamino-2-oxo-2H-chromene-4-carbonitrile | 1691 mg/Kg 4 | 69.26 | Inactive | Active (0.50) | Inactive | Inactive |
| Artemether | 567 mg/Kg | 100 | Active (0.92) | Inactive | Inactive | Inactive |

explains that their metabolism into more polar metabolites might be difficult. Pinnata with the highest negative log K_p value presented high GI absorption, no inhibition of the cytochrome P450

isoenzymes, thus easily metabolized into a more polar and easily excretable form.

The SwissADME database evaluation of bioavailability score and drug-likeness for compounds were

also conducted, the latter uses five rule-based filters (Lipinski rule of five, Ghose, Veber, Egan and Muegge), each of which has a unique set of characteristics that define whether a molecule qualifies as a drug-like compound [32]. The drug-likeness and bioavailability score as well as medicinal chemistry properties result for the *K. africana* compounds are displayed on [Tables 5 and 6](#) respectively.

Our result showed that with the exception of 2, 5-pyrroldione which showed 4 violations of rules a drug-like compound must possess according to Veber rule, other compounds obeyed the rule. Two compounds; sitosterol and stigmasterol showed 1 (Lipinski), 3 (Ghose), 1 (Egan) and 2 (Muegge) drug-like violations while 1,4-Benzoquinone 3 (Ghose), 1 (Muegge), avanafil 2 (Ghose) violations, norviburtinal 2 (Ghose) and 1 (Muegge) violations and 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid 1 (Muegge) violation. All other phytochemicals showed agreement with Ghose (Amgen), Egan (Pharmacia), Veber (GSK), Lipinski (Pfizer) and Muegge rules a drug-like entity must possess. For a drug or compound to be viable as orally, its bioavailability score must be 0.55 (Martin). Interestingly, findings from this study shows that all compounds the met the condition of a viable oral drug except 2-(1-Hydroxyethyl)-2-acetylnaphtho-[2,3-b]-furan-4,9-dione (0.56), 3-Hydroxy-4-methoxycinnamic acid (0.85), caffeic acid (0.56) and lapachol (0.85). The *in silico* methods successfully identified the FDA-approved anti-malarial drug artemether as a potential source of bioactive principles, demonstrating the accuracy of the methods' predictions of bioactive phytochemicals and the consequent savings in time compared to manually screening millions of potential plant compounds for pharmacologically active principles.

The toxicological profile of a compound in drug development is highly importantly due to some effects they may pose on the health of humans. Mutagenicity depicts toxicity relating to changes in the DNA sequence of an organism either spontaneously or inducible and maybe passed on to offspring [37]. A drug candidate that fails a mutagenicity test is likely to cause chromosomal aberrations, frameshift or point mutations. Mutagenicity is closely related to carcinogenicity as some mutagenic agents can also be carcinogenic and genotoxic. Immunotoxicity on the other hand describes compounds that are toxic to organisms. Several pathological diseases can ensue from these various toxicities, these include inflammation, neurological disorders, aging, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, organ disorders, cancers of different types among others [38]. The ProTox-II is a free web server that can predict the end points toxicities (acute or

targeted) of compounds to be used in drug development as binary (active or inactive), the minimum dose that can cause death in 50 % of a population (LD_{50}) as well as the toxicity classes [39]. The *in silico* toxicological evaluation of *Kigelia africana* phytochemicals is shown on [Table 7](#). The result showed that kigelone with a lethal dosage of 450 mg/kg has tendency to induce immunotoxicity at a prediction probability of 0.79, Carcinogenicity at a prediction probability of 0.52, and Mutagenicity with a prediction probability of 0.70. Of the twenty-five phytochemicals, lapachol, warfarin alcohol, and N-methyl-1-[4-chlorophenyl]-2-[4-piperidyl]-n-propanol shows no tendencies to induce immunotoxicity, carcinogenicity, mutagenicity and general toxicities. 2,5-pyrroldione shows a fatal LD_{50} dose of 80 mg/kg, a class 3 toxic substance that is largely known to be toxic if swallowed. Similarly, 1,4-Benzoquinone, a class 2 toxic substances show a fatal dose level of 25 mg/kg, at 100 % prediction accuracy, and capable of inducing carcinogenicity at a prediction probability level of 0.72. Compounds of *K. africana* demonstrated reasonably low toxicity across the end point toxicities reported.

4. Conclusion

Natural products have continually shown to be better potential novel drug candidates due to the abundant active compounds contained in them. *K. africana* is indigenous to Africa has been traditionally used against certain diseases such as cancer, digestive disorders, sexual dysfunctions among others. Scientific efforts have attempted to validate some of these acclaimed traditional medicinal uses. Several important compounds have been isolated to include sterols, flavonoids, caffeic acid, naphthoquinones, fatty acids, norviburtinal, coumarins and lots more. The study's conclusions that a higher percentage of the *K. africana* compounds have potential drug-like molecules were corroborated by the profile of the well-known artemether which can be isolated and used in the development of drugs for which the plant has been pharmacologically reported to be used for. However, further clinical studies on the druggability of these compounds are recommended.

Consent for publication

Not Applicable.

Availability of data and material

All data generated or analyzed during this study are included in this article.

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