Mast Cell Stabilizing Effect of *Elaeocarpus sphaericus* (Rudraksha fruit): Possible Role in Bronchial Asthma

Dr. Rajendra K. Singh  
Head, Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science  
Govt. M.L.S. College, Seepat, Bilaspur-495555, Chhattisgarh, India  
rk20singh@gmail.com

Dr. Satya B. Acharya  
Ex.Prof. & Head, Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine  
Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005, India  
dr.s.b.acharya@gmail.com

**Abstract:** Ethanolic extract of the fruits of *Elaeocarpus sphaericus* was found to have protective actions against (i) histamine aerosol induced bronchoconstriction (ii) mast cells degranulation induced by Compound 48/80 and (iii) active anaphylaxis. The findings are suggestive of potential use of *E. sphaericus* in bronchial asthma.

**Keywords:** *Elaeocarpus sphaericus*: Active Anaphylaxis : Mast Cell Stabilization: Bronchoconstriction

1. INTRODUCTION

*Elaeocarpus sphaericus* (Syn: *E.ganitrus*, Family: *Elaeocarpaceae*) [1] commonly known as Rudraksha is abundantly grown in the Himalayan region of India and is known for its medicinal properties [2,3,4]. A wide range of indigenous drugs of plant origin have been recommended by Indian system of medicine for the treatment of bronchial asthma [5]. Earlier studies from our laboratory indicated protective action of *E. sphaericus* on histamine and acetylcholine induced bronchoconstriction in Guinea –pig[6].

An attempt to substantiate the possible protective role of *E. sphaericus* in bronchial asthma. The present investigation was undertaken on mast cell stabilization and active anaphylaxis models in experimental animals.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Plant Material

*E. sphaericus* fruit was obtained from the Regional Research Centre (Ay) Guwahati, Assam, India. The voucher specimens have been preserved.

2.2. Extraction

The dried powder (1.0 Kg) *E. sphaericus* fruits were extracted with ethanol and concentrated in a steam bath to a final yield 11.0g (1.1%). The chemical test showed the presence of glycoside, alkaloids and flavonoids.

2.3. Ethical Clearance

All the experiments were conducted following the CPCSEA after the approval of Institutional Animal Ethics Committee.

2.4. Animals

Albino rat (CF strain) 100-110g and guinea –pig 300-500g of either sex, were obtained from the Central Animal House of the Institute, B.H.U. They were housed in colony cages and fed standard...
Hind Liver pellet chow and kept at an ambient room temperature of 25 °C ± 2°C and relative humidity 45-55% with 12 h light/12 h dark cycle.

2.5. Treatment

*E. sphaericus* extracts were suspended in 3% tween-80 in double distilled water was given either ip(intraperitoneally) or po(orally) for either 30 min or 45 min before or otherwise mentioned in table details, before experimentation.

2.6. Effect of *E. sphaericus* on Histamine Aerosol Induced Bronchospasm in Guinea-Pig

Armitage et al (1961) described that guinea-pig exposed to an aerosol of 1% histamine show progressive signs of difficulty in breathing leading to convulsion and death. The time until signs of convulsion appeared is calls pre – convulsion time. In the present experiments the criterion used was time to onset of dyspnea and percent protection was calculated [7].

2.7. Effect of *E. sphaericus* on In-Vitro Mesenteric Mast Cell of Rats

Albino rats (CF strain) were sacrificed by cervical dislocation. The abdomen was opened and mesentery of the jejunum and ileum were carefully exposed. The mesentery along with small pieces of jejunum or ileum were removed and placed in a petri dish containing oxygenated Ringer Locke’s solution (NaCl 9.0, KCl 0.42, CaCl₂ 0.24, NaHCO₃ 0.5 and glucose 1.0 g/L of double distilled water ph 7.4) at 37.0°C ± 0.5°C. Tissue transferred to different dose (0.5, 1.0 & 2.0 mg/ml) for 30 min and then challenged by Comp 48/80 (2.5 µg/ml) for 10 min. The tissue was then stained 0.1% Toludine blue in 4% Formaldehyde in saline for 15-20 min[8]. The tissue was next transferred and kept in acetone (two changes) and then mounted on slides. Before mounting, excess pieces of fats were trimmed and the mesentery was stretched from the edges with the help of a needle.

Each cell was considered either disrupted or not disrupted. The term disrupted was selected instead of fragmented because granules were found around many cells which did not appear to be in fragments. The sole criterion for calling a cell disrupted was the presence of granules outside the cell. Many cell did not show extrusion of granules but appear swollen at low concentration of Comp. 48/80. For each dose concentration 100 to 150 mast cell were examined and average percentage of disruption was calculated.

2.8. Effect of *E. sphaericus* on Mast Cell Degranulation in Actively Sensitized Rats

Rats were sensitized by injecting subcutaneously 0.5 ml of horse serum with 0.5 ml of triple antigen containing 20,000 million Bordetella pertussis organism (CRI, Kasuli, India)[9]. The sensitized rats were divided into 4 groups of 6 animals each. Rats of group I received double distilled water and served as control. Rats of group II, III and IV were administered *E. sphaericus*(0.5, 1.0 and 2.0 mg/kg, p.o.) once a day for 14 days. On day 14 rats were sacrificed 1h after treatment and the intestinal mesentery was taken for the study of mast cell. In vitro mesenteric pieces were challenged with 5% horse serum for 10 min after which the mast cells were stained and examined microscopically.

2.9. Data analysis

All the data was analyzed by student's t-test followed by ANOVA.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Effect of *E. sphaericus* on Histamine Aerosol Induced Bronchospasm in Guinea-Pig

It shows significant delay in the onset of bronchospasm in all the doses of *E. sphaericus* and comparable to mepyramine maleate (Table1).

3.2. Effect of *E. sphaericus* on In-Vitro Mesenteric Mast Cell of Rats

*E. sphaericus* pretreatment with three doses reduced mast cell degranulation significantly(Table 2).

3.3. Effect of *E. sphaericus* on Mast Cell Degranulation in Actively Sensitized Rats

All the three doses show decrease in mast cell degranulation in sensitized and horse serum challenged model (Table3).
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**Table1.** Effect of ethanol extract of *E. sphaericus* (Rudraksha) on 1% histamine induced bronchospasm in Guinea-pig.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment (mg/kg, ip, 30min)</th>
<th>% delay in onset of dyspnoea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control (3% Tween-80)</td>
<td>16.37 ±0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meipyramine Malate 2.0</td>
<td>28.12±0.11 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>E. sphaericus</em> 0.5</td>
<td>20.87 ± 0.96 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>21.98 ± 1.37 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>23.16 ±1.08 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values are mean±SE of 6 animals in each group.

**Table2.** Effect of ethanol extract of *E. sphaericus*(0.5, 1.0 and 2.0 mg/ml) and Comp. 48/80 (2.5µg/ml) on rat mesenteric mast cell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment (mg/ml+2.5 µg/ml Comp. 48/80)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>% degranulation</th>
<th>% inhibition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control (3% Tween-80)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.62 ± 0.16</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp. 48/80</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90.79±0.21</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>E. sphaericus</em> 0.5+Comp. 48/80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.14 ± 0.56*</td>
<td>70.16*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0+Comp. 48/80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32.67 ± 2.07a</td>
<td>64.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0+Comp. 48/80</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40.73 ± 1.66a</td>
<td>55.13*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values are mean±SE % degranulation. Figures in parentheses indicate number of animals used.

*a*P<0.001 in respect to control.

**Table3.** Effect of mast cell degranulation in actively sensitized rats (*E. sphaericus*0.5, 1.0 and 2.0 mg./kg x 14 days).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment(mg/kg,po,45 min)</th>
<th>% degranulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control (3% Tween-80)</td>
<td>94.02 ± 0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>E. sphaericus</em> 0.5</td>
<td>62.14 ± 0.16 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>67.21 ± 0.71 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>75.10 ± 0.53 *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values are mean ± SE of 6 animals in each group.

*P<0.01 in respect of Control.

### 4. DISCUSSION

There has been phenomenal increased incidences of asthma leading to hospitalization and asthma related deaths. The available agents for this disease of allergic origin often limited action when used either alone or in combinations. Individual agents usually produce beneficial effect by acting as some component of pathological process of bronchial asthma. The present findings of mast cell protective effects of *E. sphaericus* in against Compound 48/80 challenge and horse serum challenge in sensitized rats are further elaborative of our earlier reported bronchoprotective action of *E. sphaericus*. However comparatively less protection at higher dose levels of *E. sphaericus* remain difficult to explain. The mast cell protective action of *E. sphaericus* may well be attributed to its alkaloids, glycoside and flavonoids components. Immunological interactions including mast cell and other excitable tissue interactive responses are dependent on glycoprotein receptors. Number of quinolone alkaloids of plant origin have glycosidase inhibitory activity and could modify glycosylation physiology and membrane interaction with ligands. *E. sphaericus* is rich in quinolizidine and indolizidine alkaloids.[10,11,12].

The present study thus suggests possible use of *E. sphaericus* in bronchial asthma in light of present finding and earlier reported safety margin[6].

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REFERENCES


AUTHORS’ BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Rajendra K. Singh received his Ph.D. in Zoology-Pharmacology from Department of Pharmacology, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University of Varanasi, India. His M.Sc. degree was awarded in Zoology (Fishery- Biology) from Gorakhpur University, India. He is presently working as an HOD and Assistant Professor of Zoology at Govt MLS College, Seepat, Bilaspur under Bilaspur University (C.G., India). He has previously worked as a Senior Research Scientist at Department of Pharmacology, National Research Institute of Ayurvedic Drug Development, CCRAS, Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, New-Delhi, Government of India. He has served as editorial board member for various journals like Journal of Medicinal & Aromatic Plant Sciences, Indian Journal of Pharmacology and Indian Journal of Physiology and Pharmacology. He has published sixty-seven papers in international and national journals on Ethnopharmacology, Cardio-Vascular Pharmacology, Neuropsychopharmacology and Toxicology.

Dr. Satya B. Acharya, MD Pharmacology (1972), BHU, India. Commonwealth Medical Fellow. Served as Professor and HOD, Department of Pharmacology, IMS, BHU. SGRRMHS, Dehradun and Visiting Professor, Pharmacology, University Science Malaysia. Was engaged as Associate Editor, Indian Journal of Pharmacology and member, editorial board of number of scientific journals including Journal of Natural remedies. Field of research interest includes Indigenous herbal products and neuropsychopharmacology. Sixty three publications in various national and international journals.