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EXPERIMENTAL PAPER

# Evaluation of phytochemical constituents and antioxidant potential of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of *Murraya koenigii* L. and *Ficus carica* L.

SHAH ASMA FAROOQ<sup>1</sup>, RANDHIR SINGH<sup>1\*</sup>, VIPIN SAINI<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M.M. College of Pharmacy  
Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be) University  
Mullana, Ambala  
Haryana, India 133207

<sup>2</sup>Maharishi Markandeshwar University  
Solan, H.P. India

\*corresponding author: phone: +91-9896029234, e-mail: randhirsingh.dahiya@gmail.com

## Summary

**Introduction:** *Murraya koenigii* L. and *Ficus carica* L. have been traditionally used in folk medicine for treating several diseases.

**Objective:** The present study was proposed to investigate the phytochemical constituents and antioxidant potential of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of leaves of *M. koenigii* and dried fruits of *F. carica*.

**Methods:** Phytochemical screening was performed using different methods and antioxidant activity was evaluated by measuring total phenolic content, total antioxidant capacity (TAOC), hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>) scavenging activity, DPPH radical-scavenging activity, reducing power assay, nitric oxide radical scavenging activity, and superoxide radical-scavenging activity.

**Results:** The results showed that the hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of leaves of *M. koenigii* and dried fruits of *F. carica* possess a significant quantity of flavonoids, saponins, terpenoids (9.0%, 0.9%, 0.6% and 7.3%, 8.7%, 0.44%, respectively) and also possess a significant antioxidant activity as evaluated by employing different antioxidant assays.

**Conclusion:** It may be concluded that the hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of leaves of *M. koenigii* and dried fruits of *F. carica* exhibit significant antioxidant activity.

Key words: **antioxidant activity, *Ficus carica*, *Murraya koenigii***

Słowa kluczowe: **aktywność antyoksydacyjna, *Ficus carica*, *Murraya koenigii***

## INTRODUCTION

Oxidative stress is a state in which the level of oxidants increases and the level of antioxidants decreases resulting in the generation of free radicals [1]. Oxidative stress results in the production of reactive oxygen species (ROS), such as hydrogen peroxide, nitric oxide, superoxide, organic hydroperoxides, hydroxyl radicals, etc. Accumulation of ROS and reactive nitrogen species (RNS) results in a number of hazardous effects like protein oxidation, lipid peroxidation, and DNA damage [2]. Oxidative stress is known to be involved in the pathogenesis of various diseases, including hypertension, atherosclerosis, diabetes mellitus, Alzheimer disease, ischaemic diseases, malignancies and parkinsonism [3, 4]. Therefore, the attenuation of the oxidative stress may be considered as a profound approach to diminish the progression of diseases.

*Murraya koenigii* L. Sprengel, (*Rutaceae*), is commonly called as 'Curry patta' in India [5]. Various parts of *M. koenigii* have been used in traditional and folk medicine for treating traumatic injury, snake bite and rheumatism. Moreover, various phytoconstituents (alkaloids and coumarin glycoside) isolated from the leaves of *M. koenigii* were found to possess antioxidant, anti-hyperlipidaemic, anti-fungal, antibacterial, larvicidal, anti-carcinogenic, anti-hyperglycaemic, anti-lipidperoxidative, and hypotensive activity [6]. Curry leaves are used as a stimulant, and in the management of diabetes mellitus in traditional medicine [7].

*Ficus carica* L. (*Moraceae*), known as Anjir (or fig), is widely used in Ayurveda, homoeopathy and siddha systems of medicine [8]. The bark, leaves and fruits are traditionally used to treat different disorders such as respiratory diseases, gastrointestinal diseases, diabetes, skin diseases, ulcers, dysentery and hemorrhoids [9]. *F. carica* has anti-inflammatory, cytotoxic, and anti-hyperlipidaemic activities. Various phytoconstituents such as amino acids, phytosterols, anthocyanins, organic acid, hydrocarbons, aliphatic alcohols, volatile components, fatty acids, phenolic components, etc. have been isolated from different parts of *F. carica* [10, 11].

Considering this point of view, present study was designed to estimate the antioxidant potential of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of *M. koenigii* leaves and dried fruits of *F. carica*.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Plant material used

Fresh leaves of *M. koenigii* and dried fruits of *F. carica* were purchased from local market of Ambala, Haryana, India and were authenticated by Dr. K. Madhava Chetty, Department of Botany, Sri Vankatesh-wara University, Tirupati, India. The vouchers of plant specimen (0384 and 1296) are available in the herbarium of the University for future reference.

### Preparation of extracts

Fresh leaves of *M. koenigii* were shade dried and crushed to powder. 100 g of powdered leaves were extracted sequentially with hydro-alcohol *i.e.* aqueous ethanol (40%) and water by maceration using an electric stirrer for 48 hrs. Similarly, the fruits of *F. carica* were further dried, powdered and extraction (100 g) was carried out sequentially with above-mentioned procedure using hydro-alcohol (40%) and water. The extracts were then filtered and were concentrated using rotary evaporator (40°C) under reduced pressure. These crude extracts were used for the phytochemical analysis and *in vitro* antioxidant assays.

### Phytochemical screening

Phytochemical analysis was performed to determine the chemical constituents like alkaloids, fixed oils, steroids, phenolic compounds, fats, terpenoids, tannins, saponins, glycosides and flavonoids present in hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of *M. koenigii*

leaves and *F. carica* fruits according to the methods given by Trease, Evans, and Harborne [12, 13].

**Test for alkaloids:** Few ml of extract was added into 1 ml of Dragendorff's reagent, 0.2 ml of acetic acid and then noted for the formation of reddish-brown precipitates.

**Test for terpenoids and steroids:** Chloroform solution of the extract was shaken with concentrated sulphuric acid which on standing yields red colour indicating the presence of terpenoids. The lower layer turns to yellow on standing indicates the presence of steroids.

**Test for saponins:** Few ml of extract was added to 5 ml of distilled water and then shaken vigorously for 3 min and checked for the formation of foam.

**Test for glycosides:** Chloroform solution of extract was added to 0.4 ml of glacial acetic acid, few drops of ferric chloride and 0.5 ml of concentrated sulphuric acid and observed for the formation of blue colour.

**Test for flavonoids:** Few ml of extract was treated with 1% alcoholic ferric chloride and observed for green colour formation.

**Test for tannins:** Few ml of extract was added with 1% gelatin solution containing 10% sodium chloride and observed for the formation of precipitates.

### Quantitative estimation of phytoconstituents

**Total flavonoid content [14].** 10 g of plant material was extracted with 100 ml of 80% aqueous methanol in triplicate at room temperature, filtered and transferred to a crucible, dried and further weighed to constant weight.

**Terpenoid content [15].** 50 g of plant material was macerated with methanol and water in ratio of 4:1 at 37°C for 24 h, filtered and then concentrated at a temperature of 40°C and further acidified with sulphuric acid (2M). The mixture was further extracted with chloroform and non-aqueous layer was separated and dried by evaporation.

**Determination of total saponins [16].** 20 g of plant material and 20% aqueous ethanol (100 ml) were mixed in conical flask and heated for 4 h in a hot water bath (55°C) with continuous mixing and filtered. The residue was further re-extracted with 20% aqueous ethanol (200 ml). The extracts were combined and concentrated to 40 ml. The concentrate was taken in a separating funnel and diethyl ether (20 ml) was added and vigorously shaken. Aqueous layer was further purified and ether layer was discarded. Concentrate was fractionated with

n-butanol (60 ml) repeatedly three times. Butanol fractions were combined and washed with 5% aqueous sodium chloride (10 ml) twice. Purified butanol fractions were dried to a constant weight and saponin content was estimated as percentage.

### In-vitro antioxidant assays

**Estimation of total phenolic content [17].** In this method, gallic acid was used as a standard. Hydro-alcoholic extract solution (1 g/ml) was diluted with water (46 ml) and Folin-Ciocalteu reagent (1 ml) was added and kept for 3 min. Sodium carbonate was added and this mixture was kept with occasional shaking for 180 min. The absorbance was measured at 760 nm after development of blue colour. Phenolic compounds were calculated as  $\mu\text{g}$  of gallic acid equivalent.

**Total antioxidant capacity (TAOC) [18].** Different concentrations of extract in water (12.5–400  $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ ) were prepared and extract (0.3 ml) was mixed with reagent (mixture of sulphuric acid (0.6 M), sodium phosphate (28 mM) and ammonium molybdate (4 mM)) (3ml). This mixture was incubated for 90 minutes at 95°C, cooled at a room temperature and absorbance was recorded at 695 nm against blank. The values of TAOC were evaluated as equivalents of ascorbic acid.

**Hydrogen peroxide ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ ) scavenging activity [19].** Mixture containing sample (1ml; different concentrations of extracts *i.e.* 12.5–400  $\mu\text{g}/\text{ml}$ ), 0.1 M phosphate buffer solution (PBS) (2.4 ml; pH 7.4) and 40 mM  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  solution (0.6 ml) was shaken vigorously and incubated for 10 min at room temperature. Absorbance was noted at 230 nm.

Ascorbic acid was used as a reference compound. The  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  scavenging activity was calculated as follows:

$$\% \text{ inhibition} = 1 - (A_1 - A_2) / A_0 \times 100$$

where  $A_0$ : absorbance of control (water instead of sample),

$A_1$ : absorbance of sample,

$A_2$ : absorbance of sample only (phosphate buffer instead of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  solution).

The  $\text{IC}_{50}$  value represented the concentration that inhibited 50% of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ .

**DPPH radical-scavenging activity [20.]** DPPH (2,2-diphenyl-2-picryl-hydrazil) solution (0.1 mM)

was added in ethanol and this solution (1 ml) and extract (3.0 ml) (concentrations 1–5 µg/ml) was incubated for 30 minutes in dark. The absorbance was recorded at 517 nm.

Ascorbic acid was considered as standard. Test was carried out thrice. The results were expressed as % DPPH scavenging effect and calculated by using the following formula:

$$\% \text{ inhibition} = A_0 - A_t / A_0 \times 100$$

where  $A_0$ : absorbance of control,

$A_t$ : absorbance in presence of extract.

**Nitric oxide radical scavenging activity [21].** 5 mM of sodium nitroprusside in phosphate buffer solution and extract (3 ml) (concentrations 12.5–400 µg/ml) was incubated for 2.5 hours at 25°C. Mixture of sulphanilamide (1%),  $H_3PO_4$  (2%) and naphthylethylenediamine dihydrochloride (0.1%) (Greiss reagent) was added and absorbance of the chromophore formed was noted at 546 nm.

Ascorbic acid was used as the reference compound. Percentage inhibition was calculated as:

$$\% \text{ inhibition} = A_0 - A_t / A_0 \times 100$$

where  $A_0$ : absorbance of the control (blank, without extract),

$A_t$ : absorbance in the presence of the test (extract).

**Reducing power assay [22].** Different concentrations of extracts (12.5–800 µg/ml) (2.5 ml) and 200 mM sodium phosphate buffer (2.5 ml) and 1% potassium ferricyanide (2.5 ml) was mixed and incubated for 20 minutes at 50°C. 10% w/v trichloroacetic acid (2.5 ml) was added, mixed well and centrifuged at 1000 rpm for 8 minutes. Upper layer was separated and added into deionized water (5 ml) and 0.1% ferric chloride (1 ml) was added and absorbance was noted at 700 nm.

This procedure was repeated thrice and the mean values  $\pm$ SD were calculated.  $EC_{50}$  value was calculated from concentration-absorbance graph and using ascorbic acid as standard agent.

**Superoxide radical-scavenging activity: [23].** Different concentrations of extract (12.5–400 µg/ml) were mixed with 50 mM sodium carbonate (1 ml), 24 mM NBT (0.4 ml) and 0.1 mM EDTA solutions (0.2 ml). 1 mM of hydroxylamine hydrochloride (0.4 ml) was added to start the reaction and incubated for 15 minutes at 25°C and absorbance recorded at 560 nm.

The decrease in absorbance of the reaction mixture indicated increase in superoxide anion scavenging activity. Ascorbic acid was used as reference compound.

Percentage inhibition was calculated as:

$$\% \text{ inhibition} = A_0 - A_t / A_0 \times 100$$

where  $A_0$ : absorbance of control,

$A_t$ : absorbance of samples.

*Ethical approval: The conducted research is not related to either human or animal use.*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Percentage yield and qualitative phytochemical analysis

The percentage yield of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extract of *M. koenigii* was found to be 24.45% and 17.7%, respectively. Whereas, the percentage yield of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extract of *F. carica* was found to be 34.57% and 28.42%, respectively.

The qualitative analysis of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of leaves of *M. koenigii* and dried fruits of *F. carica* showed the presence of various chemical constituents (alkaloids, terpenoids, saponins, etc.) as shown in table 1.

### Quantitative estimation of phytoconstituents

The percentage of the flavonoids in *M. koenigii* was found to be 9.0%, and that of saponins and terpenoids was found to be 0.9%, 0.6%, respectively. However, the quantity of flavonoids in *F. carica* was found to be 7.3%, and that of saponins and terpenoids was found to be 8.7%, 0.44%, respectively. Various studies have confirmed the antioxidant properties of plants in respect to different flavonoids, saponins and terpenoids and these studies emphasized that the flavonoids, saponins and terpenoids can be used as potential drugs to prevent oxidative stress [24–26]. Since *M. koenigii* and *F. carica* contain a good quantity of flavonoids, saponins and terpenoids hence they can act as potent inhibitors of free radicals.

### Total phenol content (TPC)

**Table 1.**Qualitative analysis of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extracts of *Murraya koenigii* and *Ficus carica*

Plant	Extract	Phytoconstituent								
		Alkaloids	Carbohydrates	Glycosides	Saponins	Fixed oils and fats	Terpenoids	Phenolic compounds	Proteins	Flavonoids
<i>Murraya koenigii</i>	Hydro-alcoholic	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	+
	Aqueous	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Hydro-alcoholic	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+
	Aqueous	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	+

+ present

- absent

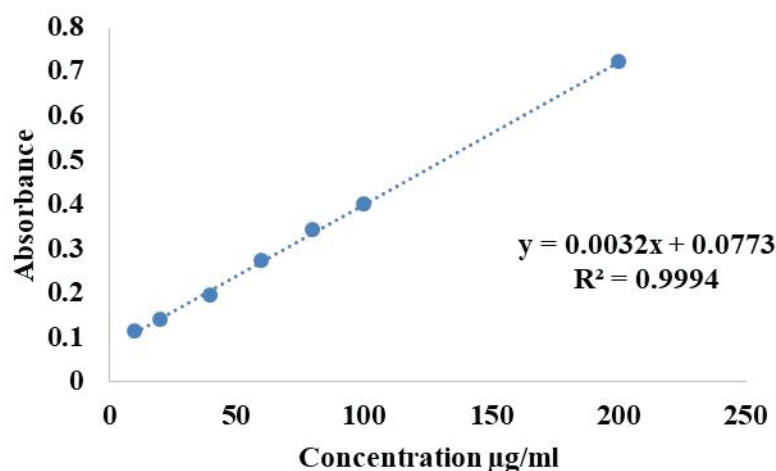
Phenolic compounds are among significant constituents of plant with antioxidant activity due to the presence of hydroxyl groups. These compounds produce antioxidant action by electron donation due the presence of hydroxyl groups [27]. Moreover, phenolic compounds are also reported to accelerate the synthesis of endogenous antioxidant molecules [28]. Several reports have indicated that phenolic compounds exhibit peroxide decomposition, free radical inhibition, metal inactivation or oxygen scavenging in biological systems and inhibit oxidative stress [29]. TPC in aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* leaves was found to be 137.01 and 172.30 mg/g gallic acid equivalent (GAE), respectively, as well as TPC in aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extracts of *F. carica* was found to be 214.95 and 244.38 mg/g GAE, respectively (fig. 1).

The total phenol content was found higher in hydro-alcoholic extract of both the plants and hence

may exhibit a good antioxidant potential. The equation of calibration curve of gallic acid was found to be  $y=0.0032x+0.0773$  and the  $R^2$  value was found to be  $R^2=0.9994$ .

### Total antioxidant capacity

Total antioxidant activity indicates the presence of water as well as fat soluble antioxidants in the extracts [30]. Total antioxidant capacity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* was found to be 488.75 and 458.98  $\mu\text{M/g}$  ascorbic acid equivalent respectively. Total antioxidant capacity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extracts of *F. carica* was found to be 170.53 and 84.55  $\mu\text{M/g}$  ascorbic acid equivalent respectively (fig. 2). The equation of calibration curve of gallic acid was found to be  $y=0.0058x+0.1846$  and the  $R^2$  value was found to be  $R^2=0.9974$ .

**Figure 1**

Standard curve of gallic acid for estimation of total phenol content

### DPPH scavenging activity

DPPH assay is considered as the most suitable and accurate method for evaluation of free radical scavenging activity of antioxidants [31]. It is a quick, simple and inexpensive method and hence widely used method to evaluate the antioxidant activity of plant and plant products. Moreover, DPPH can also be utilized for the quantification of antioxidants in complex biological systems, for solid or liquid samples. DPPH scavenging activity is based on one-electron reduction which shows the reducing activity of free radical by antioxidants [32]. At 5  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , DPPH scavenging activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *F. carica* was found to be  $56.53 \pm 0.10$  and  $54.15 \pm 0.17\%$ , respectively, whereas that of ascorbic acid was found to be  $89.48 \pm 0.25\%$ .  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of ascorbic acid was found to be 1.74  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extracts of *F. carica* was found to be 4.30  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 4.39  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively.

At 5  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , DPPH scavenging activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* was found to be  $63.95 \pm 0.17$  and  $67.05 \pm 0.10\%$ , respectively and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extracts of *F. carica* was found to be 3.58  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 3.37  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  respectively (fig. 3).

These results indicate significant antioxidant activity of both extracts and so could be advantageous in the treatment of various diseases [33].

### Hydrogen peroxide scavenging activity

Hydrogen peroxide ( $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ ) is one of free radicals which is injurious for the cells in higher concentrations and these free radicals can be scavenged by antioxidants [34]. Antioxidant activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *F. carica* against hydrogen peroxide radical was found to be  $77.569 \pm 0.78$  and  $79.69 \pm 0.99\%$ , respectively at 400  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , whereas that of ascorbic acid was  $97.214 \pm 0.23\%$ .  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of ascorbic acid was 45.62  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extracts of *F. carica* was found to be 217.52  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 186.16  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively.

Hydrogen peroxide radical scavenging activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* was found to be  $77.44 \pm 0.78$  and  $87.47 \pm 0.94\%$ , respectively, and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extracts of *M. koenigii* was found to be 160.14  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 95.53  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively (fig. 4). The  $\text{IC}_{50}$  values of the extracts of *M. koenigii* were less than that of the *F. carica* which indicate that *M. koenigii* has better hydrogen peroxide radical scavenging activity as compared to *F. carica*.

### Reducing power assay

The principle behind the reducing power assay method is that the compounds having reduction potential, reduce potassium ferricyanide ( $\text{Fe}^{3+}$ ) to

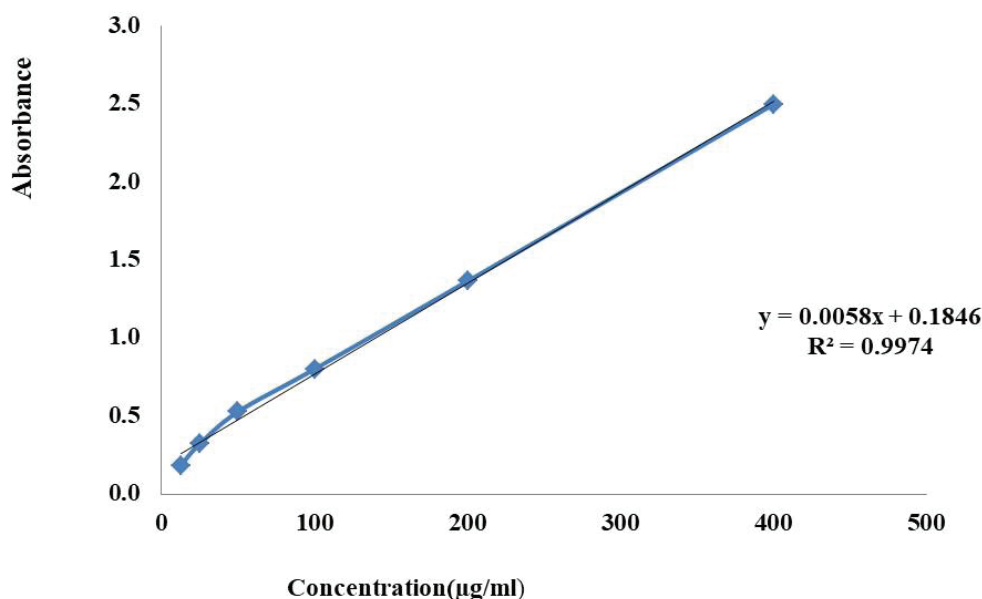


Figure 2

Standard curve of gallic acid for estimation of total phenol content

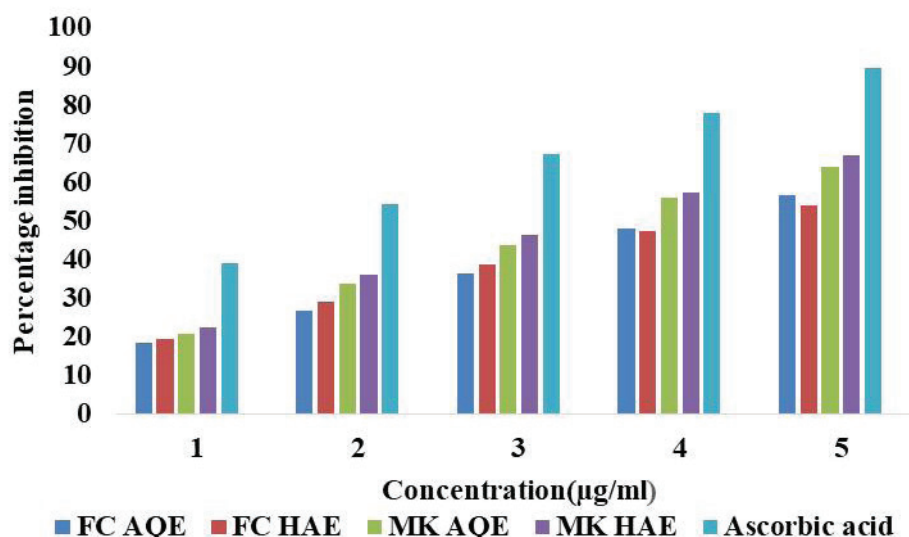


Figure 3

DPPH radical scavenging activity of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extract of *F. carica* and *M. koenigii*.

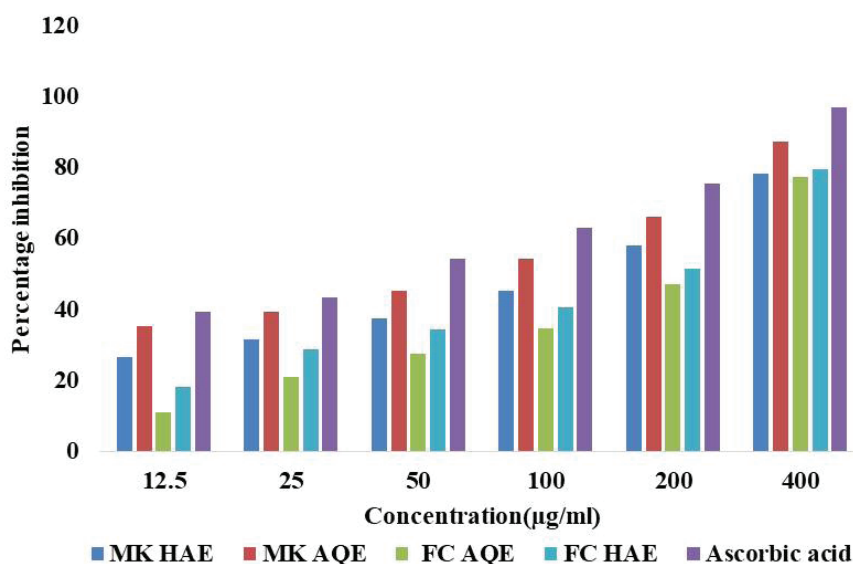


Figure 4

Hydrogen peroxide scavenging activity of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extract of *F. carica* and *M. koenigii*.

potassium ferrocyanide ( $\text{Fe}^{2+}$ ), which then forms ferric-ferrous complex after reacting with ferric chloride which has an absorption maximum at 700 nm [35]. The reducing capacity of a compound serves as an important indicator of its potential antioxidant activity [36].  $\text{EC}_{50}$  was calculated and was found to be 222.44 and 315.25  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively for aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *F. carica* and 20.08  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  for ascorbic acid.

$\text{EC}_{50}$  value for the aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* was found to be 135.66  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 171.63  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively (fig. 5).

$\text{EC}_{50}$  values of *M. koenigii* were found to be

lesser than that of *F. carica* hence *M. koenigii* L. has a better reducing capability as compared to *F. carica*.

#### Nitric oxide scavenging activity

Nitric oxide scavenging method involves the decrease of NO release from sodium nitroprusside due to competition between NO and scavengers for oxygen. Antioxidant activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *F. carica* against nitric oxide radical was found to be 56.94 $\pm$ 0.33 and 65.198 $\pm$ 0.19%, respectively at

400  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ .  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of ascorbic acid was 61.90  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and antioxidant activity was found to be  $99.09 \pm 0.19\%$  and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *F. carica* was found to be 327.53  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 257.05  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ .

Antioxidant activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* against nitric oxide radical was found to be  $74.56 \pm 0.33$  and  $69.15 \pm 0.33\%$ , respectively, at 400  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ .  $\text{IC}_{50}$  of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* was found to be 199.45  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 177.66  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  (fig. 6).

### Superoxide scavenging activity

The superoxide radical is present in all aerobic

cells. Even though it has a mild reactivity towards the biological molecules, it may be transformed to a highly reactive and damaging hydroxyl radical [37]. Antioxidant activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *F. carica* against superoxide dismutase was found to be  $58.53 \pm 0.47$  and  $61.42 \pm 0.30$  and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  was found to be 304.02  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 280.94  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively. Antioxidant activity of ascorbic acid was found to be  $96.50 \pm 0.17 \mu\text{g/ml}$  and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  was found to be 30.03  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ .

Antioxidant activity of aqueous and hydro-alcoholic extract of *M. koenigii* against superoxide dismutase was found to be  $73.76 \pm 0.30$  and  $79.83 \pm 0.47$  and  $\text{IC}_{50}$  was found to be 215.45  $\mu\text{g/ml}$  and 186.51  $\mu\text{g/ml}$ , respectively (fig. 7).

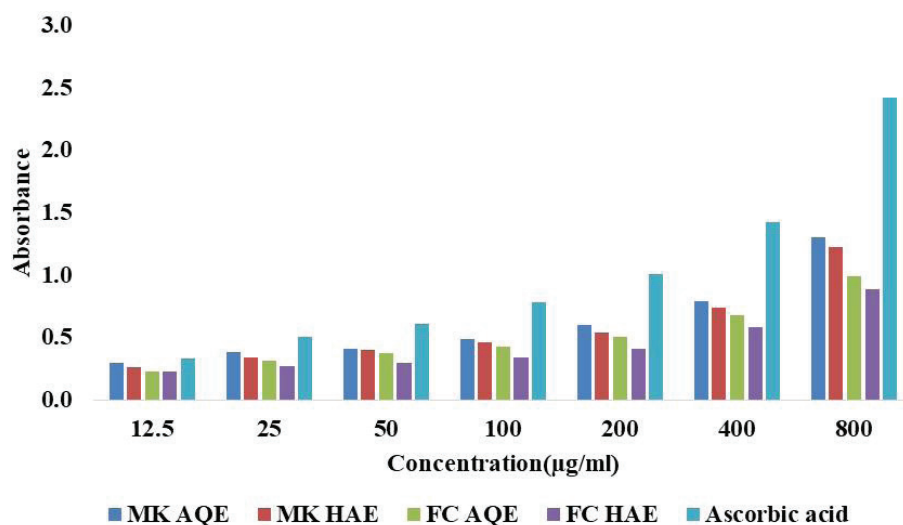


Figure 5

Reducing power assay of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extract of *F. carica* and *M. koenigii*.

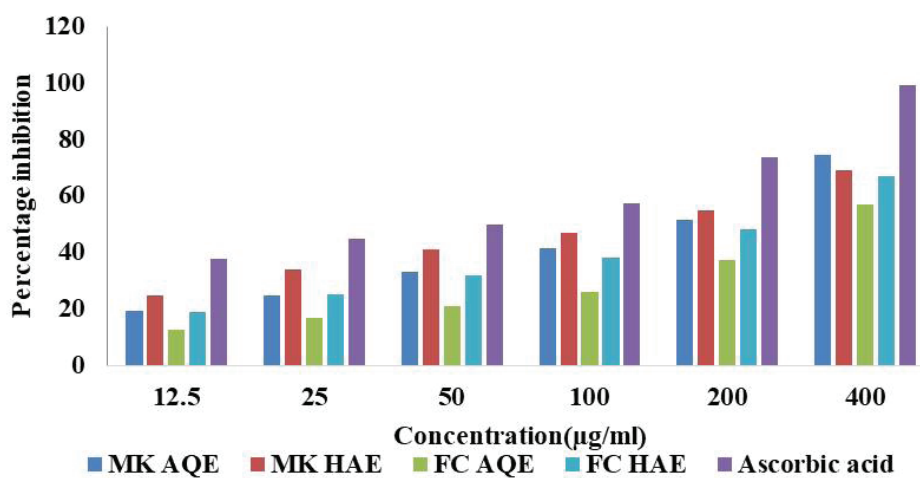


Figure 6

Nitric oxide scavenging activity of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extract of *F. carica* and *M. koenigii*.



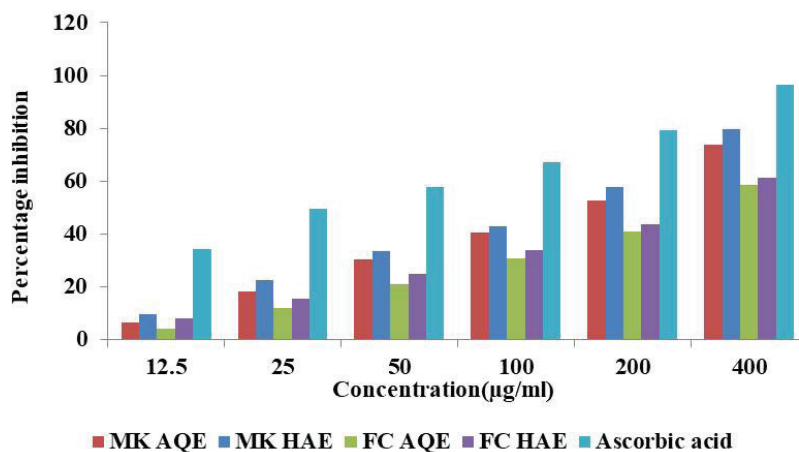
## CONCLUSION

From the results, it can be concluded that hydro-alcoholic extracts of leaves of *M. koenigii* and dried fruits of *F. carica* have higher antioxidant activity as compared to the aqueous extracts of leaves of *M. koenigii* and dried fruits of *F. carica*.

*Conflict of interest: Authors declare no conflict of interest.*

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**Figure 7**

Superoxide scavenging activity of hydro-alcoholic and aqueous extract of *F. carica* and *M. koenigii*.

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