

Uncaria tomentosa extract exhibits antifungal activity against Candida species: a phytochemical and in vitro study

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Introduction: Fungal infections represent a growing global health concern, especially among immunocompromised individuals and are associated with high morbidity and mortality rates. Treatment of these infections remains a challenge due to the limited number of effective antifungal agents, the emergence of resistant strains and the biological similarity between fungal and human cells, which restricts the availability of selective therapeutic targets. In this context, natural products have emerged as promising sources of new bioactive compounds. *Uncaria tomentosa*, known as cat's claw, has been extensively studied due to its pharmacological properties, including immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory activities. **Objective:** To evaluate the antifungal activity of *Uncaria tomentosa* extract against *Candida* spp. strains, as well as to determine its minimum inhibitory concentration and analyze its phytochemical composition. **Methods:** The extract was obtained by hydroethanolic maceration at 70%, followed by solvent evaporation. Phytochemical characterization was performed using spectrophotometric methods to quantify phenolic compounds, flavonoids, quercetin, and tannins. Antifungal activity was evaluated *in vitro* against *Candida albicans*, *Candida tropicalis*, *Candida krusei*, and *Candida parapsilosis* at different concentrations (75, 125, 250, and 500 mg/mL) for 24, 48, and 72 hours. **Results:** A significant reduction in the number of viable fungi was observed in all evaluated species, with the greatest effect at the 500 mg/mL concentration. The extract showed predominantly fungistatic activity, with a fungicidal effect especially against *C. krusei*. Phytochemical analysis confirmed the presence of phenolic compounds, flavonoids, quercetin, and tannins, associated with mechanisms such as plasma membrane disruption, cell wall inhibition, and interference in the synthesis of essential biomolecules. **Conclusion:** The findings corroborate evidence from the literature on the antifungal potential of plant metabolites against *Candida* spp. species, including resistant strains. It is concluded that the extract of *Uncaria tomentosa* exhibits relevant antifungal activity, standing out as a potential source of bioactive compounds for the development of new therapeutic strategies.

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