

Evaluation of *Stryphnodendron polyphyllum* Mart. pollen as antioxidant and antibacterial potential

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Resumen

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Evaluación del polen de Stryphnodendron polyphyllum (Mart.) como potencial antioxidante y antibacteriano

El polen de *Stryphnodendron polyphyllum*, conocido como barbatimão, es un problema para los apicultores con apiarios cerca de la planta, por la toxicidad para las abejas. El objetivo fue evaluar la actividad antioxidante, antibacteriana y determinar fenoles totales y taninos en el extracto etanólico. La actividad antioxidante se evaluó por método DPPH. La actividad antibacteriana por método de microdilución. Los taninos totales y fenoles se determinaron por método espectrofotométrico. Se identificó actividad inhibitoria y bactericida para *E. coli*, *P. aeruginosa*, *S. mutans*, *S. sobrinus*, *S. sanguinis*, *S. salivarius* y *L. paracasei*. Se determinó EC₅₀ de 7.42-mg/mL en la actividad antioxidante. Para compuestos fenólicos y tánicos, por comparación con curva de calibración, 3,12±0,005g/100g de muestra como ácido gálico y 7,3±0,03g/100g como ácido tánico. Se realizó cromatografía líquida de alta resolución para obtener el perfil cromatográfico.

Palabras clave: Actividad bactericida; Barbatimão; Apicultura; Polen, Fenoles totales; Taninos totales.

Abstract

Pollen from *Stryphnodendron polyphyllum*, known as barbatimão, is a problem for beekeepers who have apiaries close to the plant, due to toxicity for bees. The objective was to evaluate the antioxidant, antibacterial activity and determine total phenols and tannins in ethanolic extract. Antioxidant activity was evaluated by DPPH method. Antibacterial activity was performed by microdilution method. Total tannins and phenols were determined by spectrophotometric method. We had results inhibitory and bactericidal activity for *E. coli*, *P. aeruginosa*, *S. mutans*, *S. sobrinus*, *S. sanguinis*, *S. salivarius* and *L. paracasei*. EC₅₀ of 7.42mg/mL was determined in the antioxidant activity. For phenolic and tannic compounds, the results, by comparison of calibration curve, were 3.12±0.005g/100g expressed as gallic acid and 7.3±0.03g/100g expressed as tannic acid. High performance liquid chromatography was performed to obtain the chromatographic profile.

Key words: Bactericidal activity; Barbatimão; Beekeeping; Pollen, Total phenols; Total tannins.



Introduction

Medicinal plants are part of human evolution and part of the first therapeutic resources used by humanity. The use of herbal and medicinal plants is still common by the population, mainly due to the side effects caused by synthetic drugs (Monteiro & Brandelli 2017, Badke *et al.* 2019). About 25,000 plant species are used worldwide for the production of medicines from natural products and also marketed as herbal medicines. Currently, 85 species represent 236 herbal medicine formulations (Brasil 2021). Brazil has many species and great acceptance of the use of medicinal plants among the population, which generates revenue of approximately US\$ 160 million annually, it is a promising and rapidly expanding market (Rodriguez 2016, Sanchez 2018, Medeiros *et al.* 2019).

Among the phytotherapeutic plants, the *Stryphnodendron polyphyllum* Mart. species stands out, belonging to the Fabaceae family, popularly known as barbatimão or barba-de-timão, bark-da-vingindade and faveira, occurring in the Cerrado and Caatinga biomes, in the states of Paraná, Minas Gerais, Bahia, São Paulo, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, Distrito Federal and Tocantins, according to information deposited in the National Botanical Database Re flora (Forzza 2012, Zappi *et al.* 2015, Re flora, 2022).

The barbatimão, is native to the Brazilian cerrado, has a length of 4 to 5 meters, has an arboreal size, tortuous and thick trunk and an elongated crown, has an inflorescence with a variable number of small flowers, arranged in dense spikes, axillary, measuring about 10 cm in length and pod-like fruits, containing several light brown and slightly flattened seeds, being commonly found in the north of Minas Gerais, Brazil (Lorenzi 2010, Meira *et al.* 2016).

The reproductive characteristics of the barbatimão are marked by the existence of hermaphrodite flowers in the same specimen and they produce small amounts of nectar, attracting insects such as bees as the main pollinators (Felfili *et al.* 1999).

The present species represents a genetic resource of wide economic and medicinal importance, several applications are derived from barbatimão. The stem bark is the main used part of the plant, presents major constituents with high phenolic or tannic contents, demonstrating antioxi-

dant, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial effects (Ministério da Saúde 2014, Souza *et al.* 2018).

Only a small amount of research evaluates antimicrobial effects on microorganisms related to oral diseases using hydroalcoholic extracts of barbatimão (Soares *et al.* 2008, Ferreira *et al.* 2013). When it comes to bacterial resistance, some of the most important microorganisms are the Gram-positive *Staphylococcus aureus* Rosenbach and *Enterococcus faecalis* (Andrewes & Horder) and the Gram-negative *Escherichia coli* (Migula) and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (Schroeter), these are found more frequently in studies related to herbal medicines (Alves *et al.* 2016).

Studies with different parts of the plant are found in the literature, such as derivatives of bark, stem bark, stems, inner bark, leaves, broad beans, roots, fruits and seeds. However, the greatest concentration of studies is directed to the bark of the species (Miranda 2010, Thomazi 2010, Ministério da Saúde 2014).

Barbatimão pollen has unfavorable toxic effects for beekeeping, due to the content of tannins in the composition, the material can cause damage to the development of bee larvae, concentrations and pollen constituents are dependent on some factors such as: botanical origin, nature of the soil, genetic property of the plant and climatic condition (Amâncio 2014). The toxic effects may be associated with tannic acid (Santos 2000, Mendes *et al.* 2019), also known as gallotannic acid or gallotannin (3,4-dihydroxy-5-((3,4,5-trihydroxybenzoyl)oxy)benzoate), is a typical hydrolysable tannin with molecular formula $C_{76}H_{52}O_{46}$, a complex substance composed of a central glucose molecule and ten gallic acid molecules linked by esterification, it is easily soluble in water or alcohol and is obtained from plant sources (Santos 2007).

Diseases that especially attack the brood can cause more damage to the hives. The Brazilian Creates Bagged Disease (CBD) is one of the most common diseases, and it does not have a virus as the cause of the disease (Teixeira *et al.* 2003, Lopes *et al.* 2004, Castagnino *et al.* 2011), according to researchers, the disease is caused by the pollen of the barbatimão plant (Teixeira *et al.* 2003, Lopes *et al.* 2004, Cintra *et al.* 2005).

Intoxication by barbatimão pollen occurs at the time of feeding bee larvae, which prevents their development and leads to the loss of the larva (Castagnino *et al.* 2011). Such toxicity found in

pollen is due to a toxin from the tannin group, tannic acid, a polyphenol, a non-nutritive compound due to molecular complexity, even in small concentrations it can cause the disease (Teixeira *et al.* 2003).

At the time of barbatimão flowering, Creases Bagged Disease represents a big problem for beekeepers due to losses in the swarm, therefore, the present study aimed to analyze the pollen from the barbatimão plant to add value and encourage investments in the rational use of pollen in order to maintain the sustainability of the plant and minimize the impact caused to beekeepers.

Materials and methods

Material extraction

Barbatimão pollen was collected in the rural region of the city of Bocaiúva, north of Minas Gerais, in November, when the plant blooms. The material was extracted from the natural environment with registration in the National System for the Management of Associated Traditional Genetic Heritage (SisGen) with number AAE86b9.

Preparation of the hydroethanolic crude extract

The crude hydroethanolic pollen extract was obtained with the addition of 10 g of pollen in 75 mL of ethanol 70% v/v, heated in a water bath at 70°C for 30 minutes. After it was submitted to filtration and taken to an oven to dry the solvent, after the extract was weighed, the yield was calculated and stored in a refrigerator at 5°C (Carpes *et al.* 2008).

Determination of total tannins

Total tannin contents were obtained by adapting the methodology of Pansera *et al.* (2003). Dilutions of the crude extract at concentrations of 1000 µg/mL, 500 µg/mL, 250 µg/mL, 125 µg/mL and 62.5 µg/mL were performed in water. To a 2 mL aliquot of the sample solutions, 2 mL of Folin-Denis reagent was added. The resulting solution was stirred vigorously and allowed to stand for 3 minutes. Afterwards, 2 mL of aqueous sodium carbonate solution 8% was added to the mixture, stirred and allowed to stand for 2 hours. Then, the sample was centrifuged at 2000 rpm to remove suspended materials. In parallel, tannic acid dilutions at concentrations of 0.004; 0.01;

0.04; 0.1; and 0.2 g/mL in water were prepared to run the analytical calibration curve. Dilutions of samples and standards were analyzed in a spectrophotometer at a wavelength of 725 nm. The total tannin content in the extract was quantified through the calibration curve of the tannic acid standard and expressed as equivalent to tannic acid per gram of extract.

Determination of total phenols and antioxidant activity

For the test, a 51 mg/mL solution of the crude extract in ethanol 70% v/v was used as an initial solution and different dilutions of it. The test was performed according to the adaptation of the methodology by Barth, *et al.* (2018), determined by spectrophotometry by the DPPH method, the results were compared to the gallic acid standard. A 20 µg/mL gallic acid solution was prepared and dilutions were performed to obtain the curve. The tests were performed in triplicate, the averages of the results were plotted in a graph of concentration versus absorbance, in parallel a control was performed using DPPH solution and ethanol 70%, the reading in the spectrophotometer was at a wavelength of 517 nm. The reduction of DPPH was observed through the absorbance and the results of total phenols were presented as equivalence of gallic acid through the equation derived from linear regression. The percentage of antioxidant activity (AA%) was obtained through the next equation and then expressed as CE₅₀, which is the efficiency of an antioxidant to reduce the initial concentration of DPPH by 50%:

$$\%AA = \left(1 - \frac{\text{Abs}_{\text{Sample}}}{\text{Abs}_{\text{Control}}}\right) * 100$$

%AA: Percentage of Antioxidant Activity

Abs Sample: Sample absorbance

Abs Control: Control absorbance

Antibacterial activity

The Minimum Inhibitory Concentration (MIC) is defined as the lowest concentration of the antimicrobial agent capable of inhibiting bacterial growth. To determine the MIC of the aerobic and microaerophilic bacteria included in the study, the microdilution method recommended by the CLSI (2012) was performed, with some modifications.

Samples were dissolved in dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO) and diluted with Brain Heart Infusion broth. Then, twelve concentrations of isolated compounds ranging from 0.9765 to 2000 µg/mL

were tested in a 96-well microplate.

The bacteria used in this study were obtained from the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC), aerobic bacteria: *S. aureus* (ATCC BAA44), *S. aureus* (ATCC 6538), *P. aeruginosa* (ATCC 29853), *E. coli* (ATCC BAA198), *E. coli* (ATCC 25922), *Streptococcus salivarius* (Orla-Jensen) (ATCC 25975) and *E. faecalis* (ATCC 4082); microaerophilic bacteria: *Streptococcus mutans* Clarke (ATCC 25175), *Streptococcus sobrinus* Coykendall (ATCC 33478), *Streptococcus sanguinis* White & Niven (ATCC 10556), *S. salivarius* (ATCC 25975) and *Lactobacillus paracasei* Collins *et al.* (ATCC 11578). Inoculums were adjusted to a cell concentration of 5×10^5 CFU/mL.

The plates containing the aerobic bacteria and the plates containing the microaerophilic bacteria were incubated at 37 °C for 24 hours in (10% CO₂ - flask with candle). After incubation, 30 µL of 0.02% aqueous resazurin (7-hydroxy-3H-phenoxazin-3-one) solution was added to each well to reveal bacterial growth (Sarker *et al.* 2007). DMSO 5% (v/v) was used as a negative control. As a positive control, tetracycline and vancomycin (0.0115 to 5.9 µg/mL) and chlorhexidine (0.115 to 59.0 µg/mL) were used. Inoculum was included to monitor bacterial growth. To determine the Minimum Bactericidal Concentration (MBC), defined as the lowest concentration of the test sample without any bacterial growth, a 10 µL aliquot of the inoculum was removed from each well prior to the addition of resazurin and plated on Brain Heart Infusion Agar plates, being observed absence/presence of bacterial growth after incubation for 24 hours at 37 °C. The experiments were performed in triplicate in three different experiments.

Chromatographic profile

The investigation of the chromatographic profile was carried out using high performance liquid chromatography. The equipment used was the Waters liquid chromatograph, equipped with a model 1525 binary pump, model 717 automatic injector, model 2996 photodiode array detector and Empower Pro software. A C18 column, 250 mm × 4.6 mm and 5 µm particle Spherisorb, Waters, was used in the separation of compounds. The mobile phase used was a mixture of methanol:water (70:20) according to Pellenz *et al.* (2018), being pumped in isocratic mode, and the reading was

performed at a wavelength of 220 nm.

Results and discussion

Determination of total tannins

The result obtained in the test is showed in Table 1. The linearity coefficient for the determination of the tannic acid calibration standard curve was 0.9928, and a tannic acid equivalence of 7.30 ± 0.030 g/100 g of sample, expressed as total tannins, could be quantified. Tannins are found in almost all plants throughout the world, however concentrations vary with significant proportions in some plants, usually found in large amounts in tree bark (Ashok & Upadhyaya 2012). According to Brasil (2019), the bark of the barbatimão plant has at least 8% of total tannins. Other references report concentrations of approximately 20% of total tannins found in the plant bark (Audi *et al.* 2004, Lopes *et al.* 2009, ANVISA 2022). In the present work, approximately 7.3% of total tannins present in the pollen extract were quantified, a result similar to that reported by Santos (2000), who quantified the total tannins of pollen and inflorescence of the barbatimão, finding 8 and 21% respectively.

Pollen extract (100g)		
	Equivalence	Deviation
Tannic Acid	7.30 g	0.030
Gallic Acid	3.12 g	0.005
CE ₅₀	7.42 mg/mL	-

Table 1. Equivalencia de ácido tánico y ácido gálico del extracto de polen.

Table 1. Equivalence of tannic and gallic acid from pollen extract.

The quantification of the total tannins was evaluated comparing with the standard of tannic acid because it has a high concentration in the extract as reported by several authors (Lopes *et al.* 2009, Ricardo & Brandão 2018, ANVISA 2022). The presence and high concentration of tannins found in the extract, according to Silva *et al.* (2010) add to this, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties.

Total phenols and antioxidant activity

The result of 0.9948 of the linearity coefficient of the calibration curve of the gallic acid standard was expressed in relation to absorbance and concentrations. A gallic acid equivalence of $3.12 \pm$

0.005 g/100 g of sample can be quantified, expressed as total phenols. For the antioxidant activity, an EC50 value of 7.42 mg/mL was obtained (Table 1). The phenolic compounds of plants have received attention because they fit into several categories such as simple phenols, phenolic acids, flavonoids, tannins and lignins, which stand out for their reducing capacity acting in the neutralization of the oxidative process (Santos 2007). The amount of phenols found in the extract of the present study was approximately 3.12 g of gallic acid for every 100 g of extract. The literature presents phenol content in the bark, leaves and roots of different plants from the Brazilian Cerrado, finding results between 70.6 and 20.5 g of gallic acid for every 100 g of extract (Sousa *et al.* 2007). For barbatimão bark extract 15.8 g of gallic acid for every 100 g of extract (Silva 2018). The high concentrations found by the authors are justified by the fact that they are quantified in plant barks, where the concentration of phenols is higher (ANVISA 2022). Also, the higher the content of phenolic compounds, the greater the antioxidant capacity. The result of the antioxidant activity of the pollen extract made it possible to calculate the CE₅₀ through the straight line equation (Fig. 1). CE₅₀ is the ability of the antioxidant to reduce the initial concentration of DPPH present in the solution by 50%.

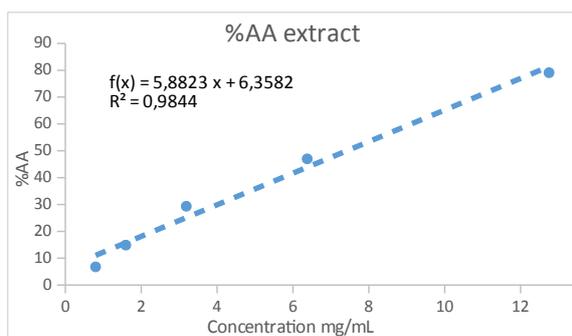


Figura 1. Extracto de actividad antioxidante.

Figure 1. Extract antioxidant activity.

The pollen extract concentration capable of reducing the DPPH solution by 50% was 7.42 mg/mL, a result found using a low extract concentration. It is also worth mentioning that a slightly higher concentration of 12.75 mg/mL of the same extract was effective to reduce DPPH by approximately 80%. On the other hand, results pointed out by researchers showed that the antioxidant activity for barbatimão bark is found with an

CE50 of approximately 10 µg/mL (Farias *et al.* 2013, Baldivia *et al.* 2018, Silva 2018). This comparison is possibly expected since the plant pollen has lower concentrations of flavonoids as reported in the present work.

Antibacterial activity

When evaluating the in vitro antimicrobial activity of the crude extract (Table 2), positive results can be observed in the inhibition of different bacteria used in the study. The action of barbatimão bark against bacteria has already been reported and shows positive results against different types of bacteria, and is due to the richness in tannins, flavonoids and the set of substances present in the plant (Soares *et al.* 2008, Da Costa *et al.* 2020, Santos *et al.* 2021).

Most oral bacteria were used in the present study, and the results of MIC and MBC against bacteria are mostly favorable. Because the chromatographic profile of the extract has similarity to the flavonoid rutin, the antimicrobial activity of rutin was also evaluated in the investigation (as shown in Table 2), the similarity can also be noted in the results compared to the concentrations of MIC and MBC in most of the cases. Chemical structures of flavonoids and phenolics found in extracts of some plants may demonstrate significant antimicrobial activity (Mahmood *et al.*

	Barbatimão Extract		Rutin	
	MIC	MBC	MIC	MBC
<i>Escherichia coli</i> ATCC 25922	2000	2000	2000	2000
<i>Escherichia coli</i> ATCC BAA 198	2000	2000	2000	2000
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> ATCC 29853	1000	2000	2000	2000
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> ATCC 6538	>2000	>2000	>2000	>2000
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> ATCC BAA 44	>2000	>2000	>2000	>2000
<i>Streptococcus mutans</i> ATCC 25175	2000	2000	2000	>2000
<i>Streptococcus sobrinus</i> ATCC 33478	2000	2000	2000	2000
<i>Streptococcus sanguinis</i> ATCC 10556	500	1000	1000	1000
<i>Streptococcus salivarius</i> ATCC 25975	2000	2000	2000	2000
<i>Lactobacillus paracasei</i> ATCC 11578	2000	2000	2000	2000
<i>Enterococcus faecalis</i> ATCC 4082	2000	>2000	2000	>2000

Table 2. MIC and MBC of barbatimão extract and rutin (µg/mL).

2021). For the bacterium *S. sanguinis* the MIC and MBC were only 500 and 1000 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ respectively, for all other bacteria studied the MIC and MBC were approximately 2000 $\mu\text{g/mL}$. The MIC of the ethanol extracts in different parts of the *Moringa oleifera* Lam. plant showed concentrations of 50 mg/mL of the ethanol extract for *P. aeruginosa*, and CBM was not reported in the study (Prabakaran *et al.* 2018), with the concentration of the plant extract being about 25 times higher than that used in the present study. The MIC and MBC in ethanol extract of *Eugenia involucrata* DC leaves for the bacteriae *P. aeruginosa*, *S. aureus*, *E. coli* and *E. faecalis* were 12.5 and 12.5, 3.12 and 6.25, 12.5 and 25, 12.5 and 50 mg/mL , respectively (Toledo *et al.* 2021), the author reports excellent antimicrobial activity for the bacteria studied, and for most of the bacteria studied the concentration of the plant extract was about 10 times higher than the concentration used in the present study. On the other hand, MIC and MBC of barbatimão ethanol extract were not observed within the concentrations studied for the *S. aureus* bacterium, and MBC for the *E. faecalis*.

The MIC of barbatimão bark against oral bacteriae *E. faecalis*, *S. salivarius*, *S. mutans*, *S. sanguinis*, *S. sobrinus* and *L. paracasei* was reported in the literature, showing promising results with concentrations close to 500 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ of the plant (Soares *et al.* 2008). Values relatively close to those found in the present work were reported, however, in the present work plant pollen was used, generating results that demonstrate great antimicrobial activity of the barbatimão pollen extract.

The extract results presented were not directly compared with the positive controls (Table 3), since the positive controls are pure substances and the extract is a complex mixture. The positive control was used only for comparison with the conventional treatment.

S. sanguinis is one of the first bacteria to adhere to tooth enamel, it favors the colonization of the tooth surface by other bacteria (Buischi 2000), in which the plant extract obtained greater antimicrobial activity, thus, the results demonstrate a proposal for the development of products capable of reducing or inhibiting the growth of the bacteria studied, preventing dental caries. The use of the crude plant extract could offer the removal of the actives purification process, reducing costs and enabling the possible use of the extract as a phytotherapeutic.

Chromatographic profile

The chromatographic profile evaluated can be observed (Fig. 2), and it was evaluated against the chromatographic profile of rutin, demonstrating significant similarity to this flavonoid. The chromatographic profile of the extract was collected with good resolution and evaluated against the rutin standard (Fig. 2). Similarity of peaks was observed between 2.5 and 3.5 minutes, confirming the presence of flavonoids with the chemical skeleton similar to rutin. The chromatographic profile obtained is similar to that found in the literature, according to a study carried out by Sabino (2018), where the chromatographic profile of the barbatimão leaf showed the two highest intensity peaks, described as polyphenols, gallic acid and

	Positive control results in $\mu\text{g/mL}$					
	Tetracilin		Chlorhexidine		Vancomicin	
	MIC	MBC	MIC	MBC	MIC	MBC
<i>Escherichia coli</i> ATCC25922	0.3688	0.3688	-	-	-	-
<i>Escherichia coli</i> ATCC BAA 198	0.7375	0.7375	-	-	-	-
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> ATCC 29853	5.9	5.9	-	-	-	-
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> ATCC 6538	0.0922	0.0922	-	-	-	-
<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> ATCC BAA 44	-	-	-	-	0.7375	0.7375
<i>Streptococcus mutans</i> ATCC 25175	-	-	0.922	0.922	-	-
<i>Streptococcus sobrinus</i> ATCC 33478	-	-	3.88	3.688	-	-
<i>Streptococcus sanguinis</i> ATCC 10556	-	-	1.844	1.844	-	-
<i>Streptococcus salivarius</i> ATCC 25975	-	-	1.844	1.844	-	-
<i>Lactobacillus paracasei</i> ATCC 11578	-	-	14.75	14.75	-	-
<i>Enterococcus faecalis</i> ATCC 4082	-	-	1.844	1.844	-	-

Tabla 3. MIC y MBC de los controles positivos. (-) no realizado.

Table 3. MIC and MBC of the positive controls. (-) unrealized.

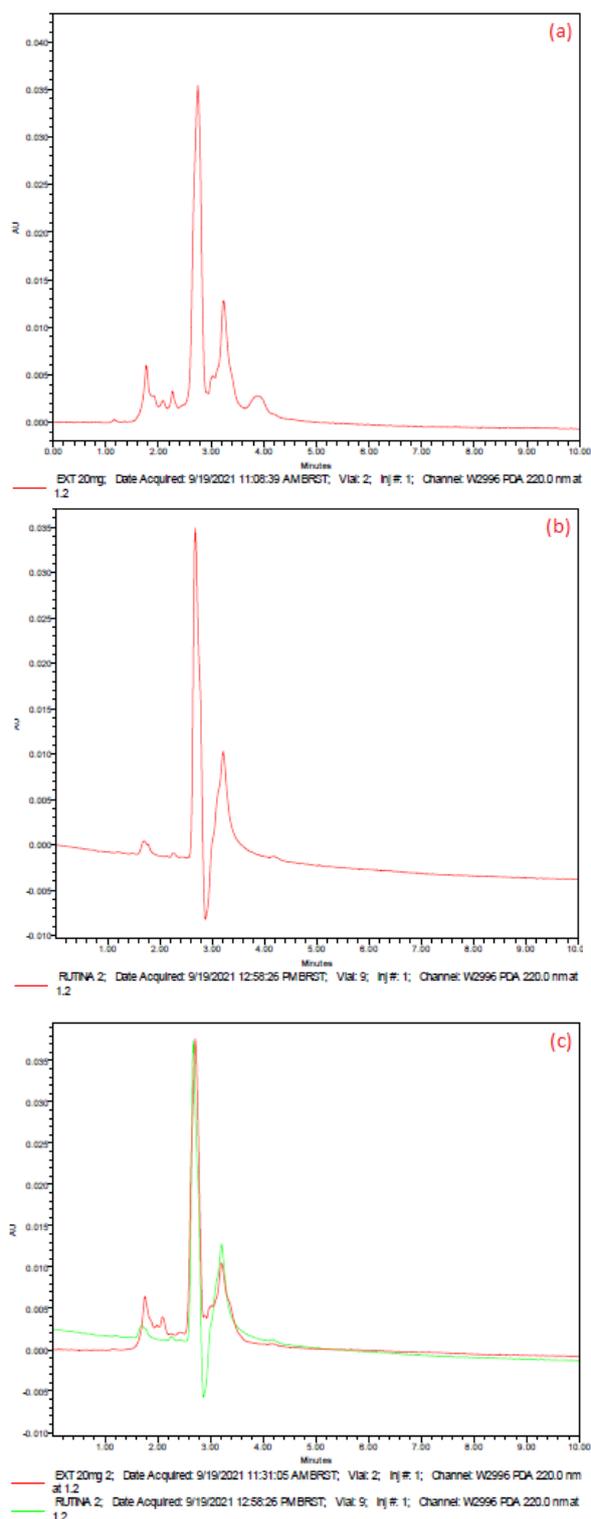


Figura 2. Perfil cromatográfico. A: extracto de barbatimão; B: rutina; C: extracto de barbatimão contra la rutina.

Figure 2. Chromatographic profile. A: barbatimão extract; B: rutin; C: barbatimão extract against rutin.

proanthocyanidin, respectively. As can be seen (Fig.2), image (a), the separation of the compounds present in the extract can be easily observed, on the other hand, it was not complete,

resulting in approximately 1.5% of rutin present in the extract. Due to the non-complete separation of the peaks, the result obtained via chromatography was expressed as approximate.

Conclusion

The results calculated in this research show that the barbatimão pollen extract has significant amounts of phenolic and tannic compounds, which may be responsible for the remarkable antibacterial and antioxidant action. These are the main findings of this study, which will serve to encourage development research for products derived from plant pollen, as few studies directed to barbatimão pollen are available in the literature.

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