Author's response to reviews

Title: Antimicrobial activity of selected South African medicinal plants

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editor, thanks for sending to me the reviewer’s comments on the above manuscript. All corrections have now been done according to their recommendations. Below is point-by-point the revision made. They are also highlighted in recolor in the manuscript.

Editorial requests:

1. Copyediting

Please note that BioMed Central journals are not copyedited prior to publication. We advise you to pay close attention to language during revision of this manuscript. If necessary, please seek the assistance of a fluent English speaking colleague, or have a professional editing service correct your language. For authors who wish to have the language in their manuscript edited by a native-English speaker with scientific expertise, BioMed Central recommends Edanz (www.edanzediting.com/bmc1). BioMed Central has negotiated a 10% discount to the fee charged to BioMed Central authors by Edanz. Use of an editing service is neither a requirement nor a guarantee of acceptance for publication. For more information, see our FAQ on language editing services at http://www.biomedcentral.com/info/authors/authorfaqs#12.

Answer: the language have been corrected

2. Please clarify whether the clinical isolates employed for the study were pathological specimens already available or whether they were obtained for the purposes of this research. If the specimens were already available, please clarify if these were collected as part of the patients' standard care and whether they were made available to you in a de-identified manner.

Answer: These were specimens obtained for research and are available in our Laboratories. This was already stated in the manuscript

3. Abstract

Please ensure that you include an abstract in the manuscript file, and that the abstract is identical in the manuscript file and on the submission system. Abstracts should not cite references, nor refer to figures or tables. Please check the instructions for authors to ensure that your abstract follows the correct structure for this journal and article type.

Answer: ok

Reviewer#1: Jules-Roger Kuiate

Minor Essential Revisions

Title: Antimicrobial activity of selected South African medicinal plants.

1. The manuscript is overall well written and data is presented in tabular form.

Answer: done

2. Line 3. Author’s name: You should write Lall3** instead of Lall3*

Answer: done

Abstract section:


4. Line 33 .Delete ‘;’. Use instead ‘and’.

Answer: done
Background section:
5. Line 61, precise the criteria of choosing the tested plants.
Answer: It is indicated in this section that plant used are medicinal plants and their use is provided in Table 1.
6. The last sentence of the background should be deleted. ‘The study was carried out on a panel of microorganisms including fungi, mycobacteria and resistant Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacterial species’.
Answer: done

7. Authors should give much background on antimicrobial activity of selected plants.
Answer: we provided the available data on the plants

Materials and methods section:
8. Line 70 write materials instead of material.
Answer: corrected
Answer: done
10. Line 103, the word ‘determinations’ should be deleted.
11. Line 117, the year 1996 should be also deleted.
12. Lines 148 and 149, it’s 1x10^2 and 14CO2 instead of 1x10^2 and 14CO2.
Answer: done

Results and discussion section:
13. Line 179, it’s ‘determinations’ instead of ‘detrminations’
Answer: done
14. Authors should compare antimicrobial activities of their extracts with those of the literature References are not in the correct format.
Answer: done

Major Compulsory Revisions
16. In MIC determinations, only six extracts were tested against M. tuberculosis, meanwhile in MMC determinations twenty extracts were tested on the same microorganism. How can you explain this?
Answer: The assay on M. smegmatis is a preliminary step to select samples for M. tuberculosis tests. This is indicated in the manuscript. Only samples that showed signals in the preliminary assays are therefore tested on T. tuberculosis.

for the same plants.
Answer: there are no such data available
15. Line 222, delete ‘;’ after TRH and VK wrote the manuscript.
Answer: This is well written

Reviewer#2: Eduardo Ruiz-Bustos

- Major Compulsory Revisions
Some inconsistencies or confusions were found in the manuscript:
1) The methods described are micromethods. When the radiometric assay is described, on lines 150 and 151 mention the use of bottles for cultures, but no description is evident, if this is the case, on how the culture was passed from vials, to bottles.
Answer: Dear reviewer, in Bactec techniques, samples are introduced in vials using needles. Bottles is just another term used for vials; however, I replaced it to vials to avoid confusions
2) The authors compare the effect of eight extracts with activity against M. smegmatis, in relation to their activity against M. tuberculosis. They state that interestingly the plants had effect against both species of micobacteria. A further explanation is required, comparing with other publications.

Answer: more comments were provided

3) In the same respect, the authors mention that the “tested samples were less active than the reference antibiotics” but no further mention is done about this, especially since it is expected that a crude extract show less activity than a purified compound.

Answer: more comments were provided

4) The phrase between lines 198 and 200 is not clear.

Answer: this is now corrected

5) Discussion is limited with regard with the comparison of the results in the manuscript, to those previously reported with plants of Africa, or related species.

Answer: Dear reviewers, this is due to the fact that the criteria for antimicrobial assays of extracts are provided in the paper, and we think that is not useful to compare again our data with those find elsewhere.

• Minor Essential Revisions
The English-language of the manuscript needs to be reviewed, as several ideas are not fully clear. Next, some of the recommendations to improve the manuscript:

Line 25: Change “…with nearly 3,000 of species…” to “…with nearly 3,000 species…”
Line 31: Change “…against Mycobacterium tuberculosis meanwhile the…” to “…against Mycobacterium tuberculosis, and the…”
Line 34: Change “…Erythrophleum lasianthum, Salvia africana…” to “…Erythrophleum lasianthum and Salvia africana…”

Answer: done

Line 75: Change “…were then identification…” to “…were then identified”
Line 80: Eliminate “to give residues which constituted the crude extracts”, and change “…kept on 4oC…” to “…kept at 4oC…”
Line 86: Change to lowercase “tuberculosis”
Line 87: Missing finishing point
Line 99: Change “…LMP709U), Microsporum…” to “…LMP709U) and Microsporum…”

Answer: done

Line 103: Eliminate “determinations”
Line 105: Change “identify” to “identity”
Line 108: Change “4 oC” to “4oC” (eliminate space between value and degrees)
Line 115: Change “…using microplate dilution…” to “…using the microplate dilution…”

Answer: done

Line 117: Eliminate reference numbers, and leave years of publication (1996)
and (2002).
Line 121: Change “100 μl” to “One hundred μl”
Line 123: Change “...inhibitory effects on the growth of the M...” to “...inhibitory effect on the growth of M...”
Line 124: Change “37 oC” to “37oC” (eliminate space between value and degrees)
Line 125: Eliminate “of samples”

Answer: done

Line 126: Change “37 oC” to “37oC” (eliminate space between value and degrees)
Line 131: Change “37 oC” to “37oC” (eliminate space between value and degrees)
Line 140: Change “...of DMSO (1%) in...” to “...of DMSO at 1% in...”
Line 142: Add space between values and units, “0.1ml”
Line 143: Eliminate comma after parenthesis.
Line 144: Change “...as well as in the control vials...” to “...as well as controls...”
Line 148: Superscript in both bacterial population values.

Answer: done

Line 149: Superscripts and subscripts.
Line 151: Change “37 oC” to “37oC” (eliminate space between value and degrees)
Line 121: Change “100 μl” to “One hundred μl”, and “...concentration was added in a well...” to “...concentration were added to each well...”
Line 170: Change “...DMSO do not the growth...” to “...DMSO showed no effect on the growth...”
Line 171: Add space between value and units, “195μl” to “195 μl”

Answer: done

Line 173: Change “The MIC of samples...” to “The effect...”
Line 180: Change “...stem, S. africana...” to “...stem and S. africana...”
Line 186: Use abbreviated name in Klebsiella pneumonia (K. pneumoniae)
Line 191: Change “studied microorganisms” to “microorganisms studied”
Line 194: There is a double space in “156.25 μg/ml”
Line 202: Change “...important in regards of the...” to “...important with regard to the...”

Answer: done

Line 215: Eliminate “the studied” at the beginning of the line.
Line 222: Eliminate duplicated “;”

Answer: done

Table 1: Not clear why some uses are underlined, some spaces missing, usage of have instead of has and vice versa, spelling (haemorrhoids).

Answer: corrected

Table 2: Column heads, not in italics (Fungi and Mycobacteria), plant parts and antibiotics not in italics, and neither strain characteristics at the footnote (Ampicillin-resistant).

Answer: corrected
Table 3: Column heads, not in italics (Fungi and Mycobacteria), plant parts and antibiotics not in italics, and neither strain characteristics at the footnote (beta-lactamase positive, Ampicillin-resistant).