Author’s response to reviews

Title: Carica papaya extract in dengue: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Authors:

Senaka Rajapakse (senaka@med.cmb.ac.lk)
Nipun Lakshitha de Silva (nipunlak@gmail.com)
Praveen Weeratunga (prav782@yahoo.com)
Chaturaka Rodrigo (chaturaka.rodrigo@gmail.com)
Chathurani Sigera (chathuranispt@gmail.com)
Sumadhya Deepika Fernando (ferndeep@gmail.com)

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Author’s response to reviews:

Editor Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to handle this manuscript through the peer review process. In addition to the reviewer comments, there are several other points that require attention.

Thank you for the positive and useful comments. We have made several significant revisions to this paper based on the editor’s and reviewers’ comments. The changes made have been left as track changes, and a point to point response to the comments is given below.

1. The results of meta-analysis for platelet count needs to be reviewed. Figure 3 shows platelet count to be higher among people who received Carica papaya extract (MD 35.45, 95% CI 23.74 to 47.15). But in both the abstract and the manuscript the result reported indicates no statistical difference between the two groups (MD -35.45, 95% CI -23.74 to 47.15). The interpretation in text is correct based on the figure, there are extra '-'s that should not be there.

Thank you. This was a typographical error, which is regretted. We have corrected this.
2. In the introduction, the descriptions of actions of Carica papaya extract require rephrasing to reduce similarity with the quoted references (references 7, 8 and 11).

Done

3. The characteristics of results are presented study by study rather than as a synthesis of studies. This is not necessarily a problem, there are many ways to present characteristics. However, there is much duplication between the text and Table 1. This could be revised to avoid duplication of information in text and tables.

Since this is a systematic review, the authors are of the opinion that the discussion should include a study by study discussion, similar to those in the Cochrane reviews. However, the text has been shortened to avoid duplication.

4. I suggest Figure 3 be revised so that the group labels and X axis label matches with Figure 4.

We have left these unchanged. The scale of figure 3 is positive as it denotes an increase in platelet counts as a satisfactory outcome measure, while figure 4 is negative as shorter hospital stay is more satisfactory. Arbitrarily changing the axes will be misleading.

7. As per requirements for BMC Complementary & Alternative Medicine, please add a subheading for the conclusion.

Done

8. Some of the content presented in the conclusion would be better placed in the discussion, and would assist in addressing comments of Reviewer 1 (to highlight specific areas for future research).

the last paragraph has been moved to the discussion
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Reviewer reports:

Arun K. Yadav, PhD (Reviewer 1):

Attempts have been made in this paper to collect information from previously published work and present a critical review about importance of role of Carica papaya extract in dengue. The paper identifies that in its present form evidence is insufficient to suggest a significant role of CP extract in dengue. Here it is suggested that authors should include some specific future research areas to fill this vacuum in the abstract section itself.

This has been added (abstract, last paragraph)

In addition following issues may also be considered:

Cite more recent information about global burden or mortality etc. about dengue.

Done. Two new references (Stanaway 2016 and Bhatt 2013) have been added.

Authors say that there is no commercial preparation in drug form available in market. Please note that 'Caripill', which is made up from CP extract is commercialized and is also approved by regulatory authority in India.

Therefore, suitable modification be made about same.

We have deleted the statement that there are no approved commercial forms.

In its present form, the Discussion is appear rather weak. It us suggested it should be strengthened more by comparing the data reported for different studies.
The comparison of the different studies is in Table 1, and each study is discussed in detail in the results section. We have confined the discussion to the findings of the systematic review and meta-analysis, and the authors feel that including further details will be repetitive and will not add to the overall discussion. We have kept the discussion succinct and to the point. We have moved sections of the conclusion to the discussion in order to strengthen the discussion.

Unavailability of full text paper should not be considered an excuse to review and conclude about a specific topic, please correct same.

We were unable to obtain the full text despite repeated attempts to contact the authors. A statement to this effect has been included (page 8 para 2).

Shabnum Shaheen (Reviewer 2): The chosen research work is interesting and fulfills the need of the time as Dengue is a critical emerging problem particularly in developing and Asian countries. The background and introduction are well explained and methodology is also comprehensive. Results are well described. Only a bit effort is needed to improve the language and a effort to check the references again is required.

We have double checked and corrected minor errors.

Senaka Rajapakse

Corresponding author