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PHYTOCHEMICAL EVALUATION AND GC-MS ANALYSIS OF ETHANOLIC LEAVES EXTRACT OF *STRYCHNOS COLUBRINA*.

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Abstract:

Medicinal plants play a foremost role in the basic healthcare systems of countries. The therapeutic properties of the plant are determined by the biological substances present in the plant components that are used to produce medicinal remedies.

Strychnos colubrina belongs to the Loganiaceae family. It is generally spread in the Chittoor District exactly at Kambakkam hills, Ambakkam, Sadhumalamma kotta, Bramhadevudigundem (Mamandur). Traditionally, plant have been significantly used to treat fever, rheumatism, anthelmintic, cutaneous disorders, and mania. Objective: The current research aimed to explore the phytochemical constituents of the leaves of *Strychnos colubrina* through phytochemical evaluation, and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) analysis. Methods: The shade-dried leaves were powdered and extracted with ethanol using the cold maceration method; we conducted a phytochemical examination to evaluate the characteristics of secondary metabolites and used gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) to find the individual phytocompounds in the ethanolic leaf extract. Phytochemicals were determined using molecular weights (m/z) obtained from GC-MS chromatograms. Phytocompounds were identified using the NIST library and spectral peak interpretation.

Results: The phytochemical evaluation detected the presence of alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, phenols, steroids, glycosides, and anthraquinone. GC-MS analysis, eighteen various phytochemical compounds were found in *Strychnos colubrina* leaf extract. The percentage of main bioactive compounds were n-Hexadecanoic acid (5.84%), Hexadecanoic acid, ethyl ester (5.00%), Phytol (13.867%), Ethyl. Alpha-linolenate (5.37%), gamma.

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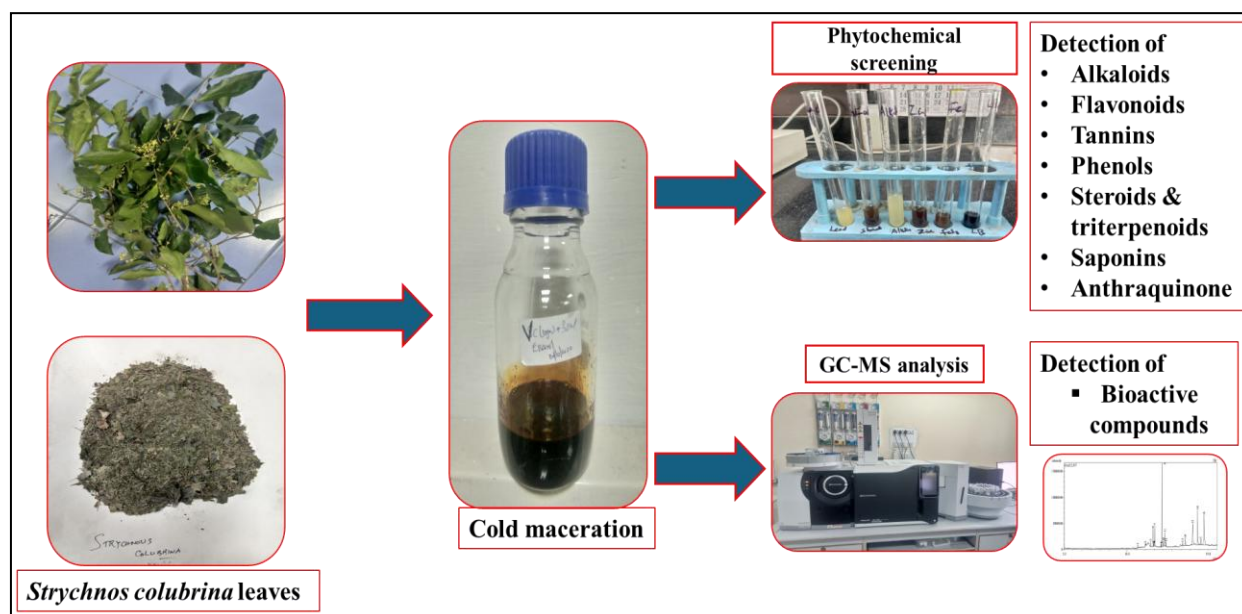
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-Sitosterol (13.22%), squalene (11.58%), Lupeol (20.06%) was observed as the 7 major constituents in the ethanol extract, the six minor constituents such as 1, 2-O-Isopropylidene-D-xylofuranose, TBDMS derivative (1.47%), Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester (1.22%), alpha. - Linolenic acid (2.26%), Glycerol. Beta. - palmitate (1.16%), Stigmasterol (4.40%), beta. -Amyrone (2.76%). The detection of bioactive compounds is based on the retention time, peak area, molecular formula, and probability. Conclusion: After the results, it could be determined that *Strychnos colubrina* may have anti-cancer, anti-diabetic, antioxidant, anti-microbial, and hepatoprotective and hypocholesterolemic due to the presence of secondary metabolites in the ethanol extract.

Keywords: *Strychnos colubrina*, phytochemical, GC-MS analysis, ethanol extract.

Graphical abstract:



1. INTRODUCTION:

Plants have discovered a rich reservoir of natural resources in the form of herbal remedies. Several medicinal plants have long been utilised in traditional medicine to cure a number of illnesses. Plant-based therapies have demonstrated efficacy in treating and controlling illnesses and are widely utilised in ethnomedicinal traditions [1-3]. The exorbitant expense of conventional medications and their restricted accessibility, particularly in rural populations worldwide and specifically in developing nations, have led to a persistent reliance on traditional therapies. Approximately 75-90% of the global population continues to depend on plants and plant extracts as their major source of healthcare. The extensive use of plant-based medications for treating diseases has generated a global interest in evaluating the

bioactive phytochemical components and pharmacological effectiveness of medicinal plants. The majority of medicinal plant components are utilised as unprocessed pharmaceuticals and have been documented to exhibit diverse therapeutic qualities [4, 5]. Medicinal plants, adaptable to various climates, provide both treatments and livelihoods for many rural areas. Their chemical compounds confirm their therapeutic potency. The plant resources are providing us essential raw material for food, shelter, climatic balance and medicine. The existence of life on earth cannot be imagined without plants. The medicinal value of plant kingdom is only partially exploited. The various parts of the plants such as leaves, fruits, barks, roots, rhizomes or even flowers are used as medicines. All these plant parts are packed with active biomolecules like flavonoids, sterols, terpenes, nucleic acids, saponins, glycosides, alkaloids etc.

In traditional medicine, medicinal plants are considered an essential component of drugs for treatment. The kingdom of plants is an ideal spot for finding new potential medications, and the importance of medicinal plants has come to prominence in recent years. Medicinal plants generate a diversity of bioactive molecules and are significant providers of several medicinal compounds. Herbal plant extracts are immensely helpful as well as one of the main forms of medicine. These serve as vital to fostering production and preventing an array of illnesses. These are the lower-cost sources for effective therapies and treatments for multiple infections. Because they hold an extensive number of secondary metabolites, like flavonoids, alkaloids, phenolics, and tannins, which enhance innate immune response, growth, and resistance to disease toward pathogenic microorganisms in humans and other organisms, extracts from medicinal plants have recently gained attention as a viable substitute. Approximately 80% of people in affluent nations utilize a variety of medicinal plants as traditional medicines, such as antifungals, anticancer medications, and antibacterial pharmaceuticals, in a variety of ways. Secondary metabolites, which are incredibly varied chemically and taxonomically with unknown roles, are abundant in medicinal plants. Numerous phytochemicals are employed extensively in scientific study, veterinary medicine, agriculture, and human therapy [6-9].

Strychnos colubrina, an endemic tree in peninsular India, is a large, climbing woody shrub with bifid tendrils. Its ovate-elliptic leaves are undulate or entire, acute or acuminate, rounded at the base, 3-nerved, coriaceous, and shiny. Flowers grow in cymes with corolla tube and lobes of equal length, and a woolly throat. The hirsute ovary and style measure 2.5-3 mm across. Creamy white flowers are 2-3 cm long. Axillary and old wood cymes produce globose orange-yellow berries, 1-1.8 cm across, with crustaceous pericarp. Seeds are 1-3, circular, flat, and 0.6-1.2 cm in diameter. Flowering and fruiting occur from September to November. The roots used in dyspepsia, intermittent fevers, malaria, swellings in chicken pox, joint

discomfort, and diarrhoea, snake bite. The fresh leaves used in tumor and the bark is used as a febrifuge, dyspepsia, intermittent fever, and malarial cachexia. Fruits used in the treatment of mania. The stem decoction is used as a therapy for whooping cough, the dried leaf powder is smoked to alleviate asthma, the leaf paste is applied to cleanse scars from pox wounds, the root bark is employed to lower fever, fresh twigs serve as insecticides, and the dry leaf powder is utilised to preserve food grains.

Native healers also suggest using leaf extract to prevent the rise in blood sugar levels. It is employed as a traditional remedy for curing headaches and catarrh. The pharmacological studies exposed anti-depressant, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anti-parkinsonian, and anti-microbial activities. The anti-inflammatory and wound healing activities of aqueous and ethanolic extracts of *Strychnos colubrina* leaves have been examined using an acute inflammation paradigm. This research presents phytochemical evaluation and GC-MS analysis of bioactive compounds in the ethanolic leaf extract of *Strychnos colubrina* [10-17].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Plant material.

Collection and identification of plant material

Strychnos colubrina used for the research was collected from Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, India. The plant was authenticated by Dr. Sankararao Mudadla, Botanical Survey of India, Hyderabad. The voucher number is BSI/DRC/2021-22/Tech./Identification/522. The botanical specimen of *Strychnos colubrina* was cleansed using tap water and dried by exposure to air.



Fig: 1. *Strychnos colubrina*

2.2. Preparation of extract

The plant material was dried and ground to powder in a mechanical grinder. The leaf powder of *Strychnos colubrina* was weighed, immersed in ethanol, incubated for 72 hours, and filtered through Whatman No.41 paper. The extracts were concentrated by evaporating under

reduced pressure with a rotary evaporator. Prior to conducting phytochemical and GC/MS analysis, the concentrated extracts were stored at 4°C in an airtight container [18-20].

2.3. Phytochemical evaluation:

The ethanolic leaf extract of *Strychnos colubrina* was qualitatively analyzed for secondary metabolites using standard methods [21-25].

2.4. GC/MS Experimental System and Measurements

GC/MS analysis was conducted using a Shimadzu TQ8040 NX GS-MS instrument coupled with a silica capillary column TG-5-MS (30.0 m×0.25 mm, film thickness 0.25µm). For GC/MS detection, an electron impact ionization system with an ionizing energy of 70 eV was used, with a scanning mass range set at 29–400 (m/z). Helium carrier gas with a flow rate of linear velocity (41.4 cm/s) was utilized. Prior to initiating the phytochemical analysis, the oven temperature was set at 60°C for a duration of 1 minute. After this phase, the temperature was increased to 300°C at a rate of 3°C/min and maintained isothermally for 15 minutes. The temperature specifications for the injector port, ion source, and detector were 280°C, 220°C, and 280°C, respectively. The total GC run time was 20 minutes. The NIST Library database was employed to retrieve the components' names, molecular weights, and structures [26-28].

2.5. Statistical Analysis:

All qualitative tests/analyses were done in triplicate.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Qualitative phytochemical screening

The qualitative analysis *Strychnos colubrina* ethanolic extract showed the presence of phytochemical constituents which is shown in Table 3.

Table 1: Qualitative phytochemical analysis of *Strychnos colubrina* leaf extract

S. No	Phytochemicals	Tests/Reagents	Results
1	Alkaloids	Mayer's test, Wagner's test, Hager's test, Dragendorff's test, Tannic acid test	+
2	Flavonoids	Lead acetate test, Shinoda test, Alkaline test, Zinc Hcl test	+
3	Tannins & Phenols	FeCl ₃ test, Lead acetate test	+
4	Steroids	Liebermann-Buchard test, Salkowski test	+
5	Anthocyanins	Anthocyanins test	-
6	Glycosides	Glycoside test	+
7	Saponins	Honeycomb test, Foam test	+

8	Anthraquinone	Bontrager's test	+
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Note: + indicates the presence of constituents and – indicates the absence of constituents.

It is evident from the table.1 that the ethanol extract recorded the maximum number of chemical constituents including alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, phenols, glycosides and anthraquinone. Presence of alkaloids compounds is of importance in pharmaceutical application as these compounds are responsible for several biological functions like antimalarial, antiasthma, anticancer, cholinomimetic, vasodilatory, antiarrhythmic, analgesic, and antibacterial in the human body. The presence of flavonoids, known to be effective free radical scavengers, indicates that this plant may have antioxidant qualities. Tannins and phenols are linked to anticancer, virucides, antioxidant, antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory, antidiabetic, wound healing, cardiovascular protection and antidiarrhoeics. Saponins have been associated in antiinflammatory. Glycosides have been shown to be linked to the reduction of blood pressure, saponins are responsible for antifungal, antiparasitic and antimicrobial and anthraquinones act as chemotherapeutic agent used for the treatment of secondary progressive, progressive relapsing, or worsening relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis.

GC-MS analysis of *Strychnos colubrina*

Eighteen compounds have been detected by GC-MS analysis in the studies on the active constituents in the plant *Strychnos colubrina* leaf ethanolic extract. The active compounds with their retention time (RT), molecular formula, molecular weight (MW), and concentration (peak area%) are presented in Table-1. The GC-MS chromatogram of the eighteen peaks of the compounds detected is shown in Figure-1. The compounds which the mass spectroscopy identified were presented. The GC-MS revealed a total number of components in the ethanol extract. The results revealed that Phytol (19.72 %), Lupeol (20.06%), Squalene (11.58%) and gamma.-Sitosterol (13.22%) was found as the 4 major components in the ethanol extract, the seven minor compounds such as n-Hexadecanoic acid (5.84%) Hexadecanoic acid, ethyl ester (5.00%), Ethyl .alpha.-linolenate (5.37%), alpha.-Linolenic acid (2.26%), Stigmasterol (4.40%), and beta.-Amyrone (2.76%).

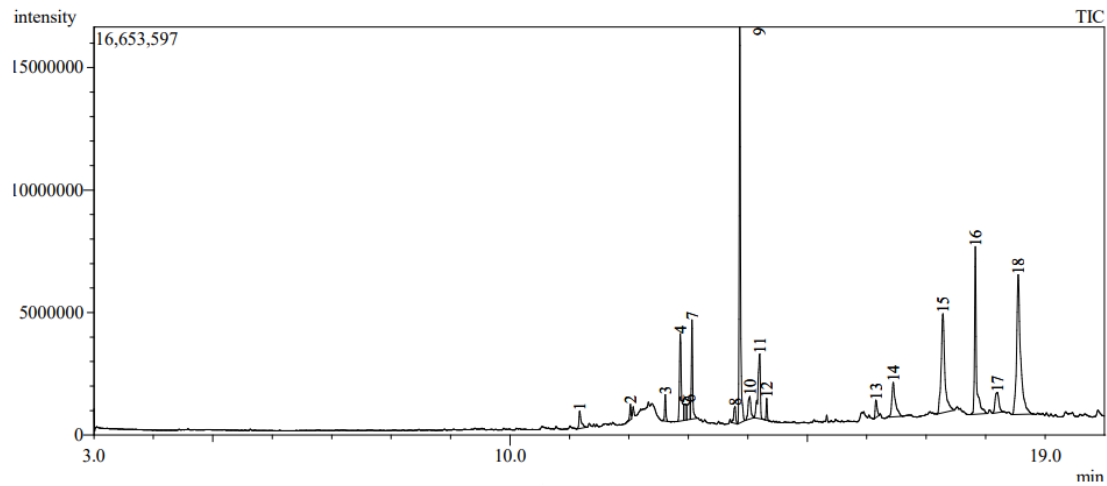


Fig:1 GC-MS spectral analysis of leaf ethanolic extract of *Strychnos colubrina*

Table:2 Bioactive compounds identified in the ethanolic extract of *Strychnos colubrina*

S. No	Bioactive compound name	Retention time (min)	Peak area %	Molecular formula	Si mil ari ty	Biological activity reported	Ref ere nce
1	1,2-O-Isopropylidene-D-xylofuranose, TBDMS derivative	11.170	1.47	C ₁₄ H ₂₈ O ₅	72	Not reported	
2	Neophytadiene	12.023	0.77	C ₂₀ H ₃₈	95	antioxidant compound, antipyretic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial.	29
3	Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester	12.612	1.22	C ₁₇ H ₃₄ O ₂	96	Antimicrobial, Antioxidant, Antiandrogenic 5-Alpha reductase inhibitor activity, anti-hypercholesterolemic	30

4	n-Hexadecanoic acid	12.865	5.84	$C_{16}H_{32}O_2$	94	5-Alpha reductase inhibitor activity, Anti-inflammatory property. Antioxidant, Hypocholesterolemic	31
5	Benzoic acid, 4-methyl-2-trimethylsilyloxy-, trimethylsilyl ester	12.944	1.29	$C_{14}H_{24}O_3$ Si_2	55	Anti inflammatory	32
6	trans-2-undecenoic acid	13.020	1.73	$C_{11}H_{20}O_2$	76	Antifungal, antibacterial	33
7	Hexadecanoic acid, ethyl ester	13.061	5.00	$C_{18}H_{36}O_2$	94	Anti-bacterial, Antitumour, Antifungal,	34
8	Linolenic acid, methyl ester	13.784	1.24	$C_{19}H_{32}O_2$	92	antifungal, cytotoxic, antioxidant, antibacterial.	35
9	Phytol	13.867	19.72	$C_{20}H_{40}O$	97	Anticancer, Anticonvulsant activity Anti-diabetic, Antimicrobial, Anti-diuretic properties, Neuroprotective, Antioxidant, Antiinflammatory Antidepressant,	36

10	alpha. Linolenic acid	- 14.034	2.26	C ₁₈ H ₃₀ O ₂	91	Anticancer	37
11	Ethyl. alpha. linolenate	- 14.198	5.37	C ₂₀ H ₃₄ O ₂	96	Antimicrobial	38.
12	Octadecanoic acid, ethyl ester	14.317	0.90	C ₂₀ H ₄₀ O ₂	94	Antibacterial	39
13	Glycerol. beta. -palmitate	16.155	1.16	C ₁₉ H ₃₈ O ₄	93	Anti inflammatory	40
14	Stigmasterol	16.447	4.40	C ₂₉ H ₄₈ O	85	Neuroprotective, anti-osteoarthritis, anticancer, anti- diabetic, anti- inflammatory, antiparasitic, immunomodulatory, antifungal, antioxidant antibacterial,	41
15	gamma. Sitosterol	- 17.280	13.22	C ₂₉ H ₅₀ O	80	Antifungal, antibacterial	42
16	Squalene	17.826	11.58	C ₃₀ H ₅₀	95	Antitumor, antioxidant	43
17	beta. Amyrone	- 18.194	2.76	C ₃₀ H ₄₈ O	84	Antifungal	44
18	Lupeol	18.547	20.06	C ₃₀ H ₅₀ O	91	Antiprotozoal, anticancer, anti- inflammatory.	45

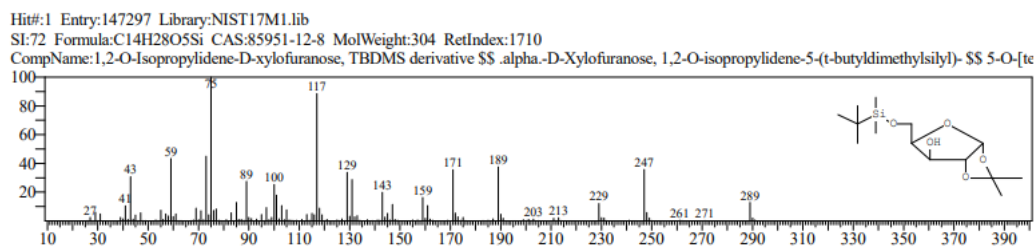


Fig: 2 GC-MS spectra of 1,2-O-Isopropylidene-D-xylofuranose, TBDMS derivative

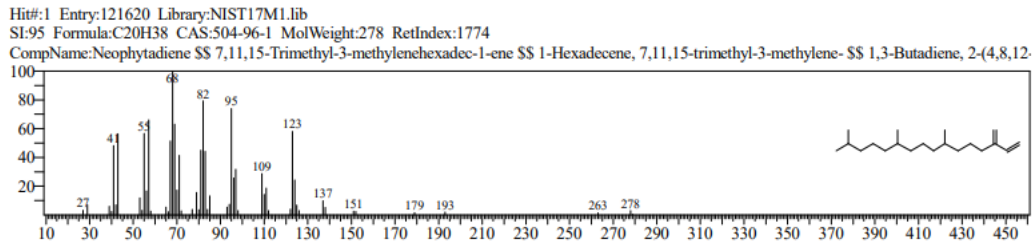


Fig: 3 GC-MS spectra of Neophytadiene

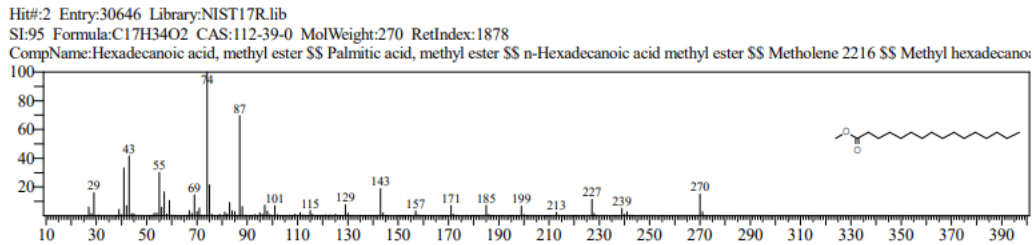


Fig: 4 GC-MS spectra of Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester

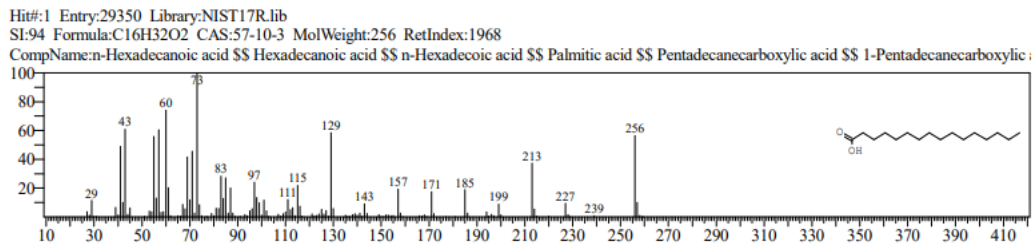


Fig: 5 GC-MS spectra of n-Hexadecanoic acid

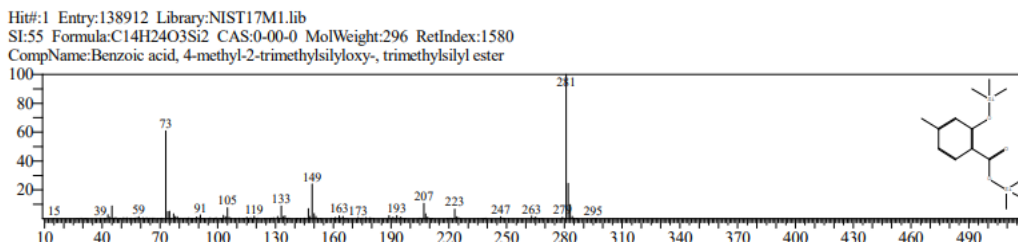


Fig: 6 GC-MS spectra of Benzoic acid, 4-methyl-2-trimethylsilyloxy-, trimethylsilyl ester

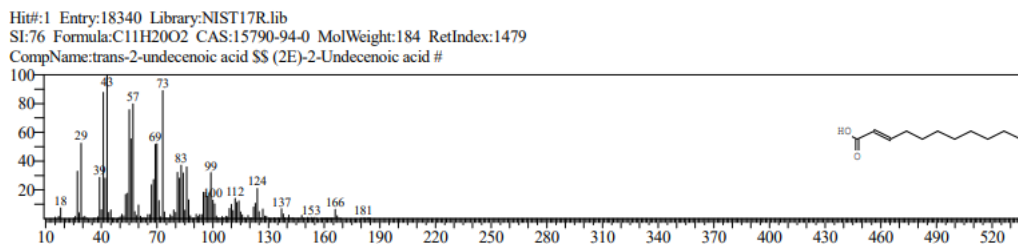


Fig: 7 GC-MS spectra of trans-2-undecenoic acid

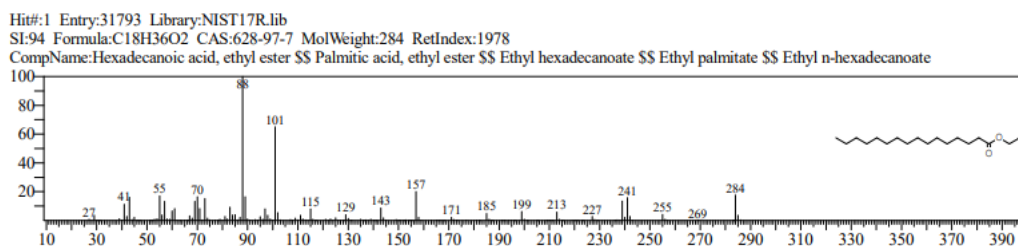


Fig: 8 GC-MS spectra of Hexadecanoic acid, ethyl ester

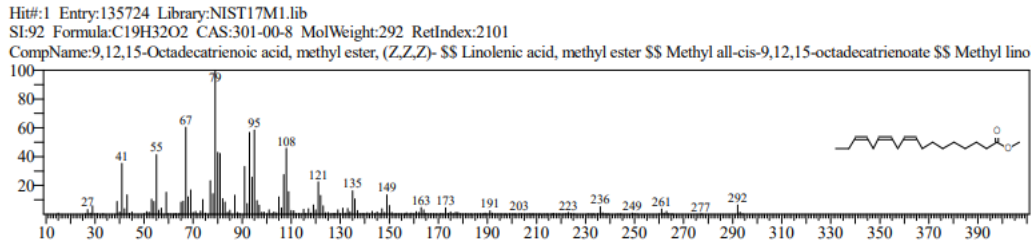


Fig: 9 GC-MS spectra of Linolenic acid, methyl ester

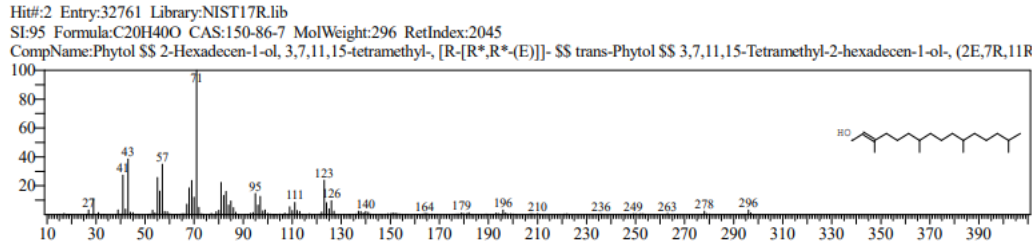


Fig: 10 GC-MS spectra of Phytol

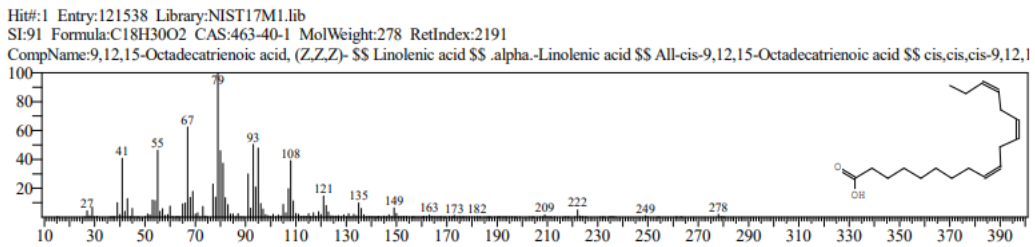


Fig: 11 GC-MS spectra of alpha.-Linolenic acid

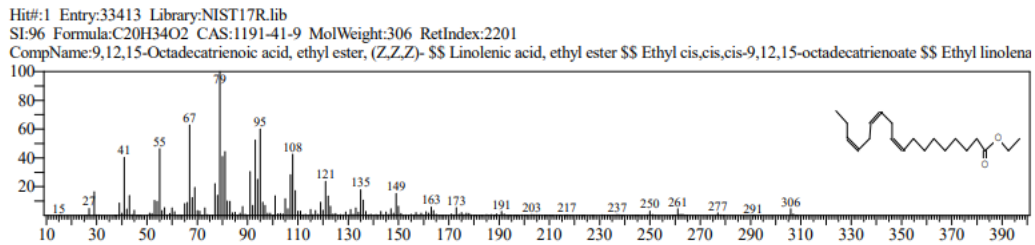


Fig: 12 GC-MS spectra of Ethyl. alpha.-linolenate

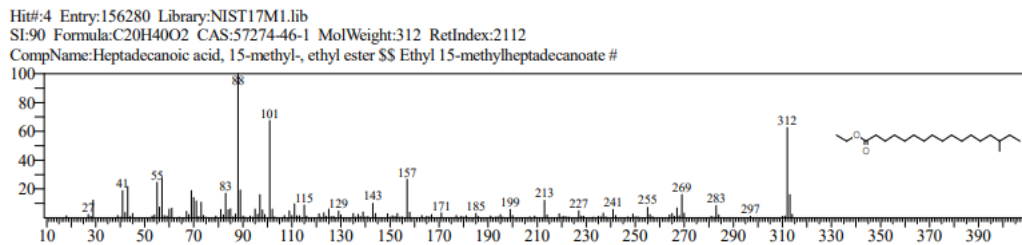


Fig: 13 GC-MS spectra of Octadecanoic acid, ethyl ester

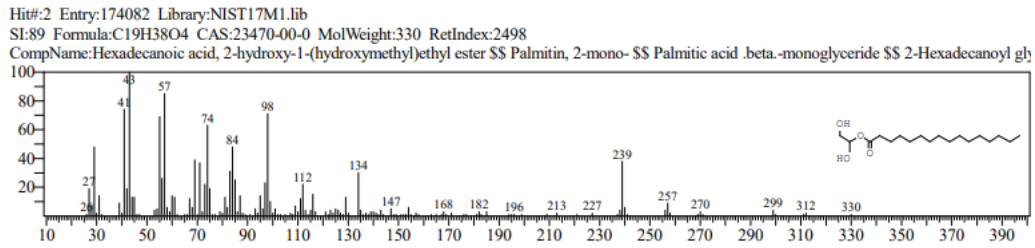


Fig: 14 GC-MS spectra of Glycerol. beta. -palmitate

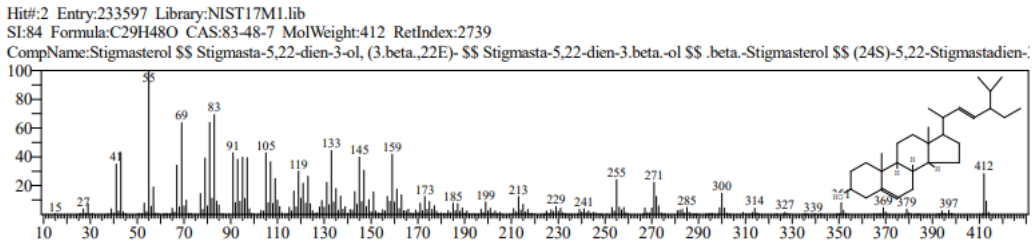


Fig: 15 GC-MS spectra of Stigmasterol

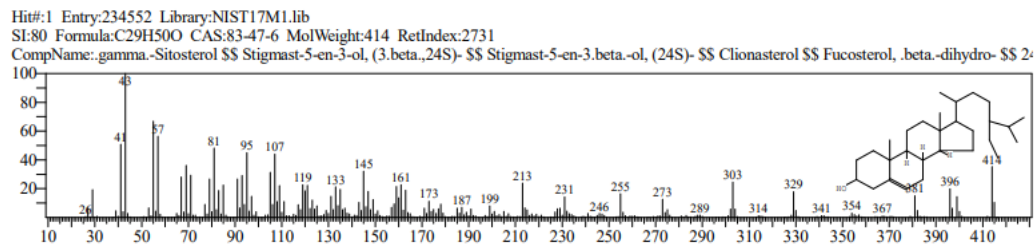


Fig: 16 GC-MS spectra of gamma. -Sitosterol

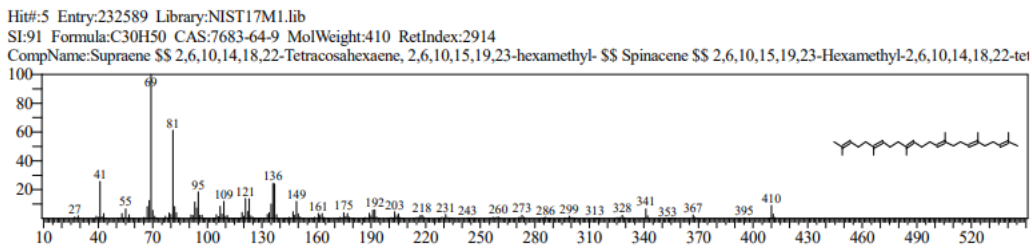


Fig: 17 GC-MS spectra of Squalene

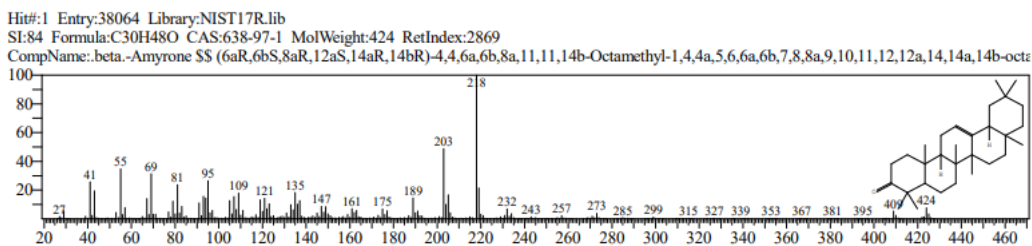


Fig: 18 GC-MS spectra of beta. -Amyrone

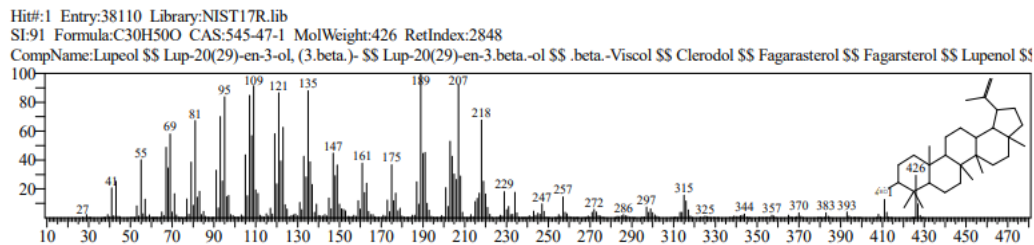


Fig: 19 GC-MS spectra of Lupeol

4. CONCLUSION:

In this work, phytochemical screening indicated the existence of various phytochemicals like alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, phenols, glycosides, and anthocyanins. Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) analysis was used to recognize eighteen chemical components from an ethanolic extract of *Strychnos colubrina* leaves. Traditional healers utilize plant leaves for a variety of illnesses, which is justified by the existence of several bioactive chemicals.

Based on the results found in the present investigation, it may be concluded that the biological activities of the associated phytocomponents used for antioxidant, anti-microbial, antiinflammatory, hepatoprotective, and anti-cancer activities. Therefore, *Strychnos colubrina* is recommended as a source of phytopharmaceutical value.

Acknowledgement:

None

Conflict of an interest:

None

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