

Qualitative phytochemical profile of aqueous extracts of *Aspidosperma pyrifolium* Mart.

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Introduction: *Aspidosperma pyrifolium* Mart. (Apocynaceae), known as pereiro, is one of the most important toxic plants of Caatinga. For this species, it have been reported cases of natural abortion involving goats, sheep and cattle, but confirmed experimentally only in goats. *A. pyrifolium* extracts are popularly used by humans in cases of heart problems, diarrhea and as a sedative. They are also applied in the control of plant pathogens and as anti-malarial moderate, the effect of which is attributed to its indole alkaloid, which are associated with insecticides effects.

Objectives: Characterize the qualitative biochemical profile of aqueous extract of *A. pyrifolium*. **Material and Methods:** Samples of *A. pyrifolium* were collected in Russas (Ceará, Brazil), dried at ambient temperature and powdered. Extractions were performed in distilled water (1:10, w/v). After constant agitation (24 h, 4 °C), materials were filtered in mesh thin fabric, followed by vacuum filtration with filter paper (14 µM); supernatants (crude extracts) were submitted to methodologies described by Matos (2009) and Barbosa (2001) for determining the presence of organic acids, sugars, alkaloids, anthraquinone, azulenes, quaternary bases, phenolic compounds, steroids, lactones, saponins and terpenes. **Results and Discussion:** Qualitative biochemical tests revealed the presence of primary compounds of metabolism, such as organic acids and carbohydrates (reducing sugars). *A. pyrifolium* presented alkaloids, that have been widely studied for these species, and carotenoids, generally associated with photoreception, photoprotection, antioxidant protection and cytotoxicity of cancer cells. Azulenes and steroids, having anti-inflammatory properties, have also been found. Phenols, tannins and flavonoids were also observed. Flavonoids have anti-proliferative effects and antioxidant together with tannins, saponins, terpenes, and phenols. **Conclusion:** The biochemical profile revealed novel substances for the species. However, new extraction conditions should be tested to better characterize the biochemical profile of *A. pyrifolium*.

Keywords: Pereiro, secondary metabolites, toxic plant.

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