

Aphrodisiac activity of oils from *Anacardium occidentale* L. seeds and seed shells

Valentine Chi Mbatchou*, Isaac Kosoono

Department of Applied Chemistry and Biochemistry, University for Development Studies, P.O. Box 24, Navrongo, Ghana

*Corresponding Author: Email: mbatcham@yahoo.fr

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Abstract

Oils from the seeds and seed shells of *Anacardium occidentale* L. were obtained by the use of a soxhlet extractor. Phytochemical analysis of the seed-oil revealed the presence of saponins, alkaloids, flavonoids, steroids and terpenoids, while tannins were absent. The seed-oil was later tested on male albino rats for sexual behavior which resulted to significant increase in mount and intromission frequencies, and decrease in mount latency which are considered as the indices of both libido and potency. Also, the seed shell oil of *Anacardium occidentale* L. was tested on both male and female albino rats for toxicity which demonstrated mortalities at various doses (0.10, 0.60 and 1.10 ml). Results of this study revealed that the seeds and seed shells of *Anacardium occidentale* L. have pharmacological and toxicological attributes. Thus, the seed oil of this plant should be used to manage impotency in male humans, while its seed shell oil should be used to kill mice in our homes by application on foods eaten by mice.

Keywords: seed-oil; seed-shell oil; aphrodisiac; Phytochemicals; toxicant; albino rats; *Anacardium occidentale*

Introduction

The cashew *Anacardium occidentale* L. is a tree in the flowering plant family, *Anacardiceae*. The plant is native to North-Eastern Brazil where it is called by its Portuguese name caju (the fruit) or cajueiro (the tree). What appears on the tree to be the true fruit of cashew is an oval pear-shaped pseudo fruit or false fruit that develops from the receptacle of cashew flower (Varghese and Pundir, 1964). Within the true fruit is a single seed, the cashew nut. The seed or nut is surrounded by a double shell containing a caustic phenolic resin (Tyman and Morris, 1989). Cashew plant is modest in its soil requirements and can adapt to varying soil conditions without impairing productivity. It grows best on deep friable well drained sandy loams without a hard pan, and thrives on pure sandy soils although mineral deficiencies are likely to occur. It is a tropical plant that thrives at high temperatures. Areas