

Methanol and water extracts of *Withania somnifera* roots has no abortifacient effect in rats

I. Ilayperuma¹ W.D. Ratnasooriya² and T.R. Weerasooriya¹

¹Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka.

²Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Correspondence to:

Prof W. D. Ratnasooriya

Department of Zoology, University of Colombo, Colombo-03, Sri Lanka.

Tel +94-1-503399

e-mail: wdrratna(@webmail.cmb.ac.lk

Received on 02.14.03

Accepted on 09.30.03

Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the effects of a methanolic and water extract of *Withania somnifera* (L.) Dunal roots on early pregnancy of rats. Female rats (n= 10/group) were orally administered with either 500 or 3000 mg/kg/day of methanolic extract or 500 mg/kg/day of water extract of root consecutively from days 1-7 of pregnancy. On day 14 of pregnancy, animals were laparotomised under mild ether anesthesia under aseptic conditions, and the number of implantation sites, resorption sites, viable embryos and corpora leutea were noted. *Withania somnifera* root extracts showed no abortifacient and antifertility effects when administered orally to female rats during early pregnancy. Further the extracts were well tolerated. The result obtained from this study is in contrast to its claimed effect as an abortifacient in traditional medicine in several countries.

Keywords: *Withania somnifera*, abortifacient; pregnancy; preimplantation loss; postimplantation loss

1. Introduction

Withania somnifera (L.) Dunal (Family: Solanaceae; Amukkara in Sinhala and Amukkiray in Tamil) is an erect hoary perennial or semi-woody shrub which grows in sunny dry places in several tropical countries including Sri Lanka⁽¹⁾. According to traditional medicine the root is used as an abortifacient and to produce criminal abortion^(1,2). It is also used to treat repeated

ing
P
6
15 -
20
28
35
45
42
66
63
77
91

ted for the first
onding values