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AAS and GC-MS Analysis of Phytocomponents in the Leaf, Stem and Root of *Azadirachta indica A. Juss* (Dongoyaro)

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author MJO designed the methodology and study, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript and contributed to the discussions and corrections. Authors AMO and AOR managed the literature searches and the medicinal functions of the phytocomponents found in the plant. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

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Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the mineral component using AAS and screen for the presence of bioactive phytoconstituents in hexane extract of *Azadirachta indica A. Juss* leaf, stem and root using the GC-MS technique.

Methods: Mineral analysis was carried out using AAS. The leaf, stem and root hexane extracts of *A. indica* were prepared by standard procedure and concentrated at 40°C using hot air oven. The concentrated hexane extracts were subjected to phytochemical analysis using GC-MS.

Results: The result of mineral analysis shows that *Azadirachta indica A. Juss* leaf, stem and root contain potassium, iron, copper, calcium, magnesium and sodium. The GC-MS analysis of the

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neem leaf, stem and root extract revealed the existence of the GC-MS chromatogram of twenty three peaks present. Ten chemical constituents were identified in the leaf of *A. indica*, six were found in the stem while seven were identified in the root of the plant by Gas Chromatogram Mass spectrometry (GC-MS) analysis.

Conclusion: The result of the analysis showed that the plant contains important minerals and many pharmacologically important bioactive compounds. The presence of various bioactive compounds justifies the uses of Neem for various traditional medicines.

Keywords: AAS; Azadirachta indica A. Juss; GC-MS analysis; biological activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The medicinal value of plants lies in some chemical substances that produce a definite physiological action on the human body. The most important of these bioactive constituents of plants are alkaloids, tannins, flavonoids, and phenolic compounds [1].

Neem (family Meliaceae, genus Azadirachta) is an evergreen tree grown in Nigeria and other countries in Africa. In Nigeria, neem is locally called Dongovaro and is used for the treatment of malaria. It is one of the most well known plants indigenous to India and is cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide [2,3]. Every part of the tree has been used as traditional medicine for household remedy against various human ailments, from antiquity [4-8]. Study has shown that the various chemical compounds, antioxidants, fatty acids, flavonoids, biological activities etc. in the various components of Azadirachta indica can be evaluated from the flower, leaves and barks [9]. Dholi et al. [10] reported on the antidiabetic activity of the plant. In addition, the aqueous extract of Neem leaves had shown a good therapeutic potential as anti- hyperglycemic agent [11]. Saseed et al. [12] and El-Mahmood et al. [13] supported the use of Neem seeds for treatment of infectious diseases especially those involving the eye and ear. Antimicrobial activities of Neem against human pathogenic bacteria have been studied [14-15]. The aim of this study is to determine the mineral components of Azadirachta indica and to screen the hexane extract of the plant using GC-MS technique with the possibility of discovering compound(s) of therapeutic value.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Collection and Identification of Plant Extract

The *Azadirachta indica A. Juss* plant was obtained from Ikorodu in Lagos State, Nigeria.

The plant was authenticated from the department of Botany, University of Lagos, Lagos-Nigeria. Authentication number for the *A. indica* was given (6967). The plant name corresponds to the official botanical plant name in "The Plant List" (www.theplantlist.org).

2.2 Mineral Analysis of Azadirachta indica A. Juss

The mineral composition of the plant was analyzed on aliquots of dry-ashing. 2 g of the *A*. *indica* leaf, stem and root were separately weight into 250 ml conical flasks, 10 ml of aqua regia was added (HNO₃ and HCl in the ratio 1:3), the mixture was heated on porcelain crucible until the brown fumes disappeared leaving white fumes. It was later filtered with whatman filter paper into universal bottle; the mineral elements in the samples were determined by Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer (Model Perkin Elmer AAnalyst 400).

2.3 Preparation of Leaf, Stem and Root Extract of Azadirachta indica A. Juss

The leaf, stem and root of *A. indica* were washed separately, air dried under shade in the Biochemistry Laboratory, pulverised to coarse power using industrial blender.

2 g each of the leaf, stem and root of the grounded *A. indica* plant material were placed in timble and later placed in a Soxhlet extractor with 30 mL hexane and heated using heating mantle at 100°C for 3 hours. The extracts were poured into separate beakers and concentrated with ultra sonic bath at 60°C for one hour. The remaining extract was treated with anhydrous sodium sulphate to absorb the water in the samples and later treated with silica gel which helps to remove impurities in the samples. The extract was later used for GC-MS analysis.

2.4 GC-MS Analysis of the Leaf, Stem and Root of *Azadirachta indica A. Juss*

GC-MS analysis of the plant was carried out on an Agilent technology 7890 GC system equipped

with a mass spectrometric detector (MSD). Ms model is agilent technology 5975 ms, the column used is HP-5MS agilent technology, length of the column is 30 m, internal diameter 0.320 mm, thickness of 0.25 μ m. Volume of sample injected is 1 μ L. Oven temperature program with initial temperature of 80°C to hold for 2 minutes at 10°C/min to final temperature of 240°C to hold for 6 minutes with injector temperature of 250°C. The mobile phase is helium gas while the stationary phase is the column.

2.5 Detection of Components

Analysis of mass spectrum GC-MS was conducted by the database of National Institute Standard and Technique (NIST) having more than 62,000 patterns. The spectrum of the unidentified component was compared with the spectrum of the identified components stored in the NIST library. The name, molecular weight, structure of the components in the test material were ascertained [16,17,18].

A quasi-linear equation for temperature programmed retention index was used to calculate I^{T} in the present work:

$$I^{T} = \frac{100(t_{x}-t_{n}+n)}{t_{n+1}-t_{n}}$$

where I^{T} is the temperature-programmed retention index of the interesting compound; t_n , t_{n+1} , and t_x are the retention times (in minute) of the two standard *n*-alkanes containing n and n + 1 carbons and the compound of interest respectively.

3. RESULTS

The macro and micro elements analysis of the leaf, stem and root of *Azadirachta indica A. Juss* shows that the leaf contains higher concentration of more of the minerals, followed by the root while the stem has the least (Table 1).

Twenty three compounds were identified in the *Azadirachta indica* plant by GC-MS analysis. The Peaks are indicating the presence of bio-active compounds. Ten, six and seven compounds were identified in the *A. indica* leaf, stem and root extract respectively by GC-MS analysis. The Peaks are indicating the presence of bio active compounds. The GC-MS chromatograms of the twenty three peaks of the bio compounds detected are shown in Figs. 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

The bioactive components were identified and characterized and interpreted on mass spectrum GC–MS conducted using the database of National Institute Standard and Technology (NIST) which is having more than 62,000 patterns. The bioactive principles with their molecular formulae, molecular weight, Retention Time (RT), Peak area (%), are shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

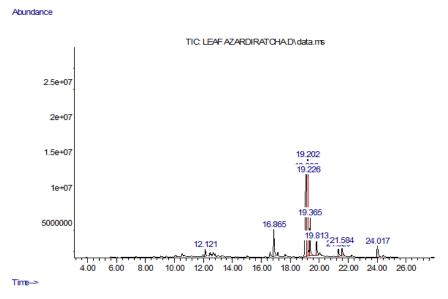


Fig. 1. GC-MS chromatogram of hexane leaf extract of Azadirachta indica A. Juss

Table 1. Mineral constituents of fresh leaf, stem and root of Azadirachta indica A. Juss

Sample	Iron	Copper	Potassium (mg/L)	Calcium	Magnesium	Sodium
-	(mg/L)	(mg/L)		(mg/L)	(mg/L)	(mg/L)
Leaf	42.2198	0.2632	10.5667	8.1372	8.9112	8.6701
Stem	17.3061	0.0046	10.3578	8.1425	6.8883	5.8487
Root	35.8699	0.1616	10.3994	8.1292	7.9143	8.0981

Table 2. Phytocomponents identified in the hexane leaf extract of Azadirachta indica A. Juss analysed by GC-MS

SN	Retention time	Retention index	Name of the compound	Molecular formulae	Molecular weight (g/mol)	Peak area (%)	Activity
1	12.122	1781	Caryophyllene oxide	$C_{15}H_{24}O$	220.35046	1.62	Used as preservative in food, drugs and cosmetics. It is used as antifungal agent against dermatophytes
2	16.865	2479	Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{17}H_{34}O_2$	270.4507	6.92	Anti-oxidant,antimicrobial, decrease blood cholesterol, anti- inflammatory [19,20].
3	19.097	2807	9-Octadecenoic acid(Z)-, methyl ester	$C_{19}H_{36}O_2$	296.4879	25.49	Antioxidant, anti cancer [20,21].
4	19.200	2822	13-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{19}H_{36}O_2$	296.48794	40.52	[34]
5	19.229	2826	9-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (E)	$C_{19}H_{36}O_2$	296.48794	6.04	Antioxidant, anti cancer [20,21].
6	19.366	2847	Methyl stearate	$C_{19}H_{38}O_2$	298.5038	6.99	They are used as solvents or cosolvents, oil carrier in agricultural industry.
7	19.812	2912	(E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester	$C_{20}H_{38}O_2$	310.5145	3.68	ŇĒ
8	21.317	3133	Cis-11-Eicosenoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{21}H_{40}O_2$	324.5411	2.29	NF
9	21.586	3173	Methyl 18- methylnonadecanoate	$C_{21}H_{42}O_2$	326.5570	2.65	NF
10	24.018	3531	Docosanoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{23}H_{46}O_2$	354.6101	3.79	NF

NF=Not found

SN	Retention Time	Retention index	Name of the compound	Molecular formulae	Molecular weight (g/mol)	Peak area (%)	Activity
1	16.854	2477	Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{17}H_{34}O_2$	270.4507	5.64	Anti-oxidant, antimicrobial, decrease blood cholesterol, anti-inflammatory [19,20].
2	19.102	2808	11-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{19}H_{36}O_2$	296.4879	78.39	NF
3	19.320	2840	Methyl stearate	$C_{19}H_{38}O_2$	298.5038 g/mol	6.29	They are used as solvents or cosolvents, oil carrier in agricultural industry
4	19.800	2910	(E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester	C ₂₀ H ₃₈ O ₂	310.5145 g/mol	2.81	NF
5	21.580	3172	Methyl 18-methylnonadecanoate	$C_{21}H_{42}O_2$	326.5570	2.62	NF
6	24.000	3528	Docosanoic acid, methyl ester	C ₂₃ H ₄₆ O ₂	354.6101	4.24	NF

Table 3. Phytocomponents identified in the hexane stem extract of Azadirachta indica A. Juss analysed by GC-MS

NF=Not found

Table 4. Phytocomponents identified in the hexane root extract of Azadirachta indica A. Juss analysed by GC-MS

SN	Retention Time	Retention index	Name of the compound	Molecular formulae	Molecular weight (g/mol)	Peak area (%)	Activity
1	16.854	2477	Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{17}H_{34}O_2$	270.4507	7.51	Anti-oxidant, antimicrobial, decrease blood cholesterol, anti-inflammatory [19,20].
2	19.177	2819	9-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{19}H_{36}O_2$	296.4879	70.14	Antioxidant, anti cancer [20,21].
3	19.349	2844	Methyl stearate	$C_{19}H_{38}O_2$	298.5038	6.78	They are used as solvents or cosolvents and oil carrier in agricultural industry.
4	19.795	2910	(E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester	$C_{20}H_{38}O_2$	310.5145	4.03	ŇĒ
5	21.294	3130	Cis-11-Eicosenoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{21}H_{40}O_2$	324.5411 q/mol	2.79	NF
6	21.575	3171	Methyl 18- methylnonadecanoate	$C_{21}H_{42}O_2$	326.5570	3.04	NF
7	24.006	3529	Docosanoic acid, methyl ester	$C_{23}H_{46}O_2$	354.6101	5.72	NF

NF=Not found

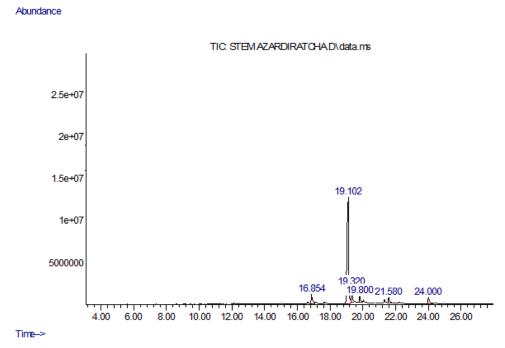


Fig. 2. GC-MS chromatogram of hexane stem extract of Azadirachta indica A. Juss

Abundance

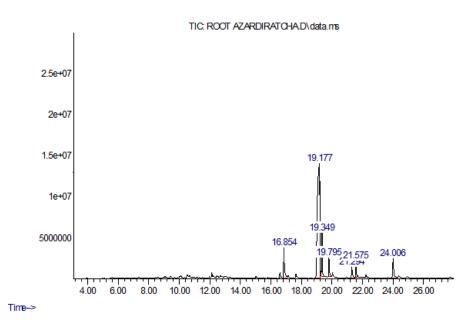


Fig. 3. GC-MS chromatogram of hexane root extract of Azadirachta indica A. Juss

Figs. 4-14 show the mass spectrograms of chemical bioactive compounds for Docosanoic acid, methyl ester, Methyl 18methylnonadecanoate, cis-11-Eicosenoic acid, methyl ester, (E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester, Methyl stearate, 9-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (E), cis-13-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester, 9-Octadecenoic acid (Z)-, methyl ester, Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester, Caryophyllene oxide and 11-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester respectively.

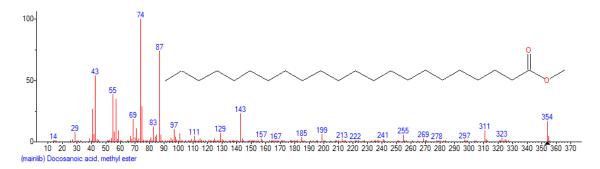


Fig. 4. Mass spectrum of Docosanoic acid, methyl ester structure (3.79%, RT 24.018)

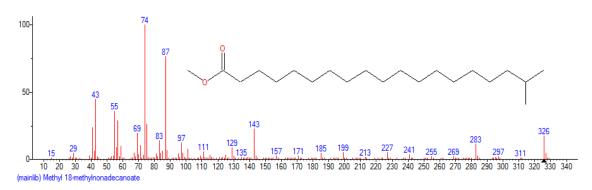
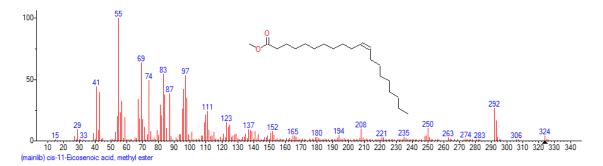


Fig.5. Mass spectrum of methyl 18-Methylnonadecanoate structure (2.65%, RT 21.586)





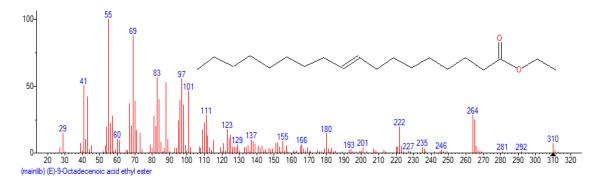


Fig. 7. Mass spectrum of (E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester structure (3.68%, RT 19.812)

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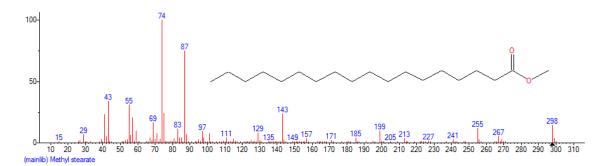


Fig. 8. Mass spectrum of Methyl stearate structure (6.99%, RT 19.366)

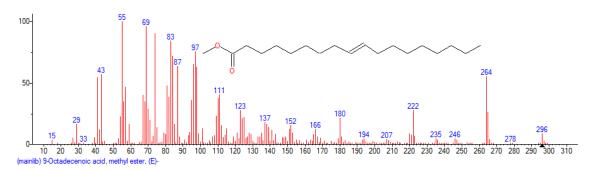


Fig. 9. Mass spectrum of 9-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (E) structure (6.04%, RT 19.229)

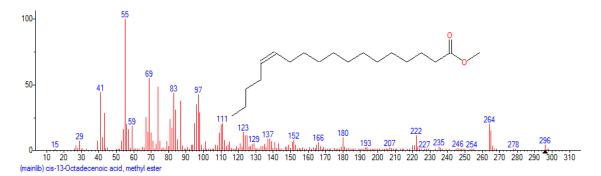


Fig. 10. Mass spectrum of 13-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester structure (40.52%, RT 19.200)

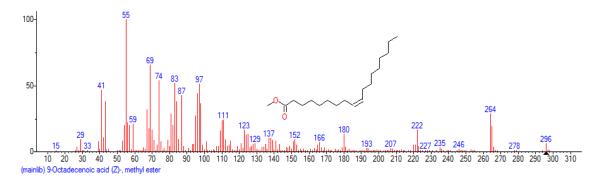


Fig. 11. Mass spectrum of 9-Octadecenoic acid (Z)-, methyl ester structure (25.49%, RT 19.097)

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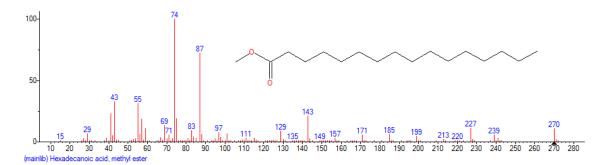


Fig. 12. Mass spectrum of Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester structure (6.92%, RT 16.865)

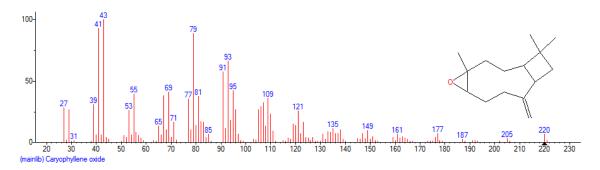
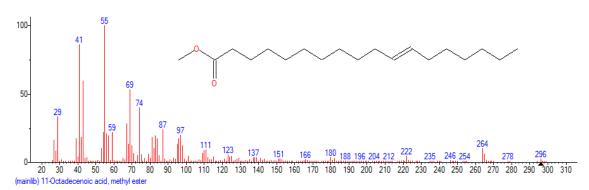


Fig. 13. Mass spectrum of Caryophyllene oxide structure (1.62%, RT 12.122)





4. DISCUSSION

Plants contain numerous phytochemical constituents, many of which are known to be biologically active compounds and can be used in the synthesis of drugs. The result for mineral analysis of fresh neem leaf, stem and root show the concentration of minerals such as Fe, Cu, Na, Mg, K, and Ca in the plants. Other research work also confirms the presence of vital minerals in *A. indica* plant [22]. The Na⁺/k⁺ ration of *A. indica* leaf, stem and root is also less than one, based on daily recommendation which suggest that *A. indica* could be suitable for reducing high

blood pressure. The mineral contents of *A. indica* in this study are lower than the percentage recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organization [23]. Sodium is 2400 mg, potassium (4700 mg) and calcium (1000 mg). This suggests the need to supplement a diet base on *A. indica* with complementary mineral elements to make it more nutritious.

Gas chromatography coupled with mass spectrometry (GC-MS) is an established technique for reliable identification of bioactive compounds existing in medicinal plants including volatile matter, long chain and branched chain hydrocarbons, alcohols, acids, esters [24-27]. For quantitative determination, gas chromatography with flame ionization detector (GC-FID) and GC-MS are preferred [28,29]. The GC-MS analysis was based on the computer evaluation of mass spectra of samples through NIST by direct comparison of peaks and retention time with those for standard compounds, with eight peak index [30] and computer matching with the NIST. Besides that, the characteristic fragmentation patterns greatly helped in the identification of a particular class of compounds [30]. The identified compounds of the hexane extract of the leaf, root and stem of Azadirachta indica A. Juss. their retention time, peak area, molecular formulae, molecular weight, and their activities are given in the result. The GC-MS results showed the presence of twenty three compounds in the different parts of the plant. Out of which 10 compounds are found in leaf: Carvophyllene oxide (1.62%), the Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester (6.92%), 9-Octadecenoic acid(Z)-, methyl ester (25.49%), cis-13-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (40.52%), 9-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (E) (6.04%), Methyl stearate (6.99%), (E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester (3.68%), cis-11-Eicosenoic acid, (2.29%), methyl ester Methyl 18methylnonadecanoate (2.65%) and Docosanoic acid, methyl ester (3.79%). The stem contain six compounds: Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester (5.64%), 11-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (78.39%), (E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester (2.81%), Methyl stearate (6.29%), Methyl 18methylnonadecanoate (2.62%), Docosanoic acid, methyl ester (4.24%). Seven compounds were found in the root, they are: Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester (7.51%), 9-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (70.14%), Methyl stearate (6.78%), (E)-9-Octadecenoic acid ethyl ester (4.03%), cis-11-Eicosenoic acid, methyl ester (2.79%), Methyl 18-methylnonadecanoate (3.04%)and Docosanoic acid, methyl ester (5.72%). The GC-MS of A. indica has also been reported by other research studies to contain bioactive compounds [31-32]. Chenganmal and Yamalai shows that neem flower extract revealed the existence of GC-MS chromatogram of thirty peaks present. Eight chemical components were identified by GC-MS analysis. The major constituents were Caryophyllene(4.29%), n-Hexadecanoic acid(27.41%). 9.12.15-Octadecatrienoic acid. (Z,Z,Z) (3.74%), 9,12-Octadecadienoic acid (Z,Z) (3.58%), which possess many biological activities [33]. Mohammad (2016) explains the medicinal important of Azadirachta indica (Neem) as anti-Inflammatory, hepatoprotective follows:

effect, wound healing effect, antidiabetic activity, antinephrotoxicity effect, neuroprotective effects, antimicrobial effect, immunomodulatory and growth promoting effect and that A. indica mouth rinse is equally effective in reducing periodontal indices [34]. In the compounds obtained, some components were biological active; of antiinflammatory, antifungal, antioxidant and anticancer. All these compounds are important in the formulation of different medicines. Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester is used as antioxidant. anti-inflammatory, possess hypolipidemic properties and is also used as an antimicrobial agent [19,20]. 9-Octadecenoic acid (Z)- methyl ester has antioxidant activity, is anticarcinogenic; used as dermatitigenic flavour and exists in human blood and urine where it serves as endogenous peroxisome proliferatoractivated receptor ligand [20,21]. 9-Octadecenoic acid, methyl ester (E) posses antioxidant properties and anti cancerous activities [20,21]. Methyl stearate is used as solvents or cosolvents and oil carrier in agricultural industry. 13-Octadecenoic acid methyl ester is used as fatty acids, which selectively inhibit eukaryotic DNA polymerase activities in vitro [35]. The a quasilinear equation proposed by van Den Dool and Kratz [36] for temperature programmed retention index was used to calculate I^{T} in the present work as shown above.

This study shows the formulae and structures of active compounds which may be used in the synthesis of drugs. This result also enhances the traditional usage of *A. indica* which possesses a number of bioactive compounds.

5. CONCLUSION

The result of the GC-MS analysis showed that the hexane extract of *Azadirachta indica A. Juss* contains many pharmacologically important biological bioactive compounds.

CONSENT

It is not applicable.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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