

PRELIMINARY STUDIES ON THE PROTECTIVE EFFECT OF
 MEMORDICA CHARANTIA FRUIT JUICE ON EXPERIMENTAL
 GASTRIC LESIONS IN RATS

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The fruit of Momordica charantia (Family cucurbitaceae) commonly called gam karawila is claimed to possess a wide spectrum of pharmacological activity, abortifacient, antidiabetic, purgative, antihelminthic against peptic ulcers (1). However, only the antidiabetic activity in the fruit has been scientifically proved (2).

This study was undertaken to evaluate it's claim as an antiulcerogenic agent. Liquidised extract of the fresh fruit devoid of seed and pulp was prepared and administered orally to rats having previously induced gastric lesions either by ethanol (99.7% Ethylalcohol) or aspirin (200mg/kg) (3,4). The Karawila extract produced significant antiulcerogenic activity in a dose related manner. This antiulcerogenic activity was not significantly affected by the cyclo oxygenase inhibitor indomethacin (2.5 mg/kg) (5). In addition the extract caused an increase in the thickness of the mucus gel layer of the gastric mucosa when administered orally (2ml/rat) to normal rats (6).

The precise mode of the antiulcerogenic activity is yet to be determined, but may possibly be due to an increase in mucus production which renders the gastric mucosa less susceptible to gastric injury.

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