

## In vivo Anticandida Activity of Three Traditionally Used Medicinal Plants in East Africa

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**Abstract :** Crude extracts of *Dracaena steudneri* bark (DSB), *Sapium ellipticum* bark (SEB) and *Capparis erythrocarpos* root (CER) were investigated for their antifungal activity in immunocompromised mice infected with *Candida albicans* in an in vivo mice infection model. The results revealed a substantial dose dependency in all treatments given, with mice survival to the end of the experiment correlating well to the dose levels. At a dose of 400 mg/kg, *C. erythrocarpos* was the most effective with mice survival of 60% and organ burden clearance ranging from 64.0%-99.9% ( $P < 0.0001$ ) in all treatments. At the same dose, the least effective plant was *S. ellipticum* which had a mice survival of 20% and organ burden clearance ranging from 78.0%-96.6% ( $P > 0.05$ ). Mice survival for *D. steudneri* was 30% with organ burden clearance ranging from 89.0%-99.9% ( $P < 0.05$ ). All mice receiving no active treatment died before ten days post infection. In all treatment groups, there was a steady decline in mean weights of mice immediately after immunosuppression followed by gradual recovery in some cases which appeared to be dose dependent a few days post infection. Thus, extracts of *D. steudneri* and *C. erythrocarpos* portrayed the most significant potential as sources of antifungal drugs.

**Keywords :** antifungal activity, medicinal plants, *candida albicans*, East Africa