
Effectiveness of a *Moringa Oleifera* Seed Extract in Treating a Skin Infection

In EDN 35-3 Dr. Morton referred to the powerful antibiotic and fungicidal effects of pterygospermin from the flowers and roots of the moringa tree. Now Axel Bosselmann has brought to our attention a study by Drs. Caceres and Lopez at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala.

The article is summarized below.

Herbal applications are commonly used to treat skin infections in developing countries, although few investigations are conducted to validate scientifically their popular use. You have read about *Moringa oleifera* (moringa) in many past issues of EDN. This small drought resistant tree produces edible leaves, pods, flowers and roots. A previous study had showed that seeds are effective against skin infecting bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* in vitro (i. e. in a test tube). This study showed that mice infected with *S. aureus* recovered as quickly with a specially prepared aqueous extract of moringa seed as with the antibiotic neomycin.

This study proves only the effectiveness of moringa as they prepared it. That preparation could be done in any country, but not with just household utensils. It was prepared by infusing 10 g powdered moringa seeds in 100 ml of 45°C water for 2 hours. The part that is a bit more complicated is reducing the 100 ml down to 10 ml by placing it in a rotavaporator. This is a very common piece of laboratory equipment which continually rotates a flask containing the liquid. An aspirator attached to a faucet produces a modest vacuum when the water is turned on. A rubber tube from the aspirator is connected to the rotavaporator, reducing the pressure and causing the water to evaporate rather quickly without boiling it. The ointment was prepared by placing 10% of the extract in vaseline.

Are you in a situation where there is a shortage of antibiotics? This ointment could be prepared for use in the local community anyplace where there is electricity and running water. I would not be surprised if much simpler methods, better suited to preparation as needed in the home, might not also be effective. I hope someone will devise and test such preparations.

Comments: