Antiplasmodial and Radical Scavenging Activities of Flavonoids from Kenyan Erythrina species

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The success of quinine and artemisinin as potent natural antimalarial drugs demonstrates the importance of plants, especially those used in traditional medicine, as potential source of antimalarial agents. Erythrina abyssinica (Leguminosae) is one of the most widely used plants to treat malaria in East Africa. The root bark of this plant showed antiplasmodial activity against the chloroquine sensitive (D6) and chloroquine resistant (W2) strains of Plasmodium falciparum, with IC\textsubscript{50} values of 0.64 and 0.49 \textmu g/ml, respectively (Yenesew et al., 2003). Several compounds isolated from this plant (Kamat et al., 1981; Yenesew et al., 2003) were also tested (Yenesew et al., 2003; 2004). Activity was observed among pterocarps (e.g. erythrabyssin-II, IC\textsubscript{50} 8.1 and 6.5 \textmu M against the D6 and W2 strains, respectively), and flavanones (e.g. abyssinone-IV, IC\textsubscript{50} 9.0 and 7.7 \textmu M against D6 and W2 strains, respectively). However the activities of these compounds individually are much lower than that of the crude extract, indicating that these flavonoids and isoflavonoids may be more effective as mixtures.

![Erythrabyssin II](image1)

![Abyssinone-IV](image2)

Four additional Erythrina species of Kenya, namely E. burtii, E. melanacantha and E. sacleuxii, have been tested for antiplasmodial activities. Among these the root bark of E. burtii showed good antiplasmodial activity with IC\textsubscript{50} value of 0.97 and 2.0 \textmu g/ml against the D6 and W2 strains of...