ANTI-INFLAMMATORY AND ANTINOCICEPTIVE EFFECTS OF A FRACTION FROM *Calotropis procera* LATEX (CP) ON ZYMOSAN-INDUCED ARTHRITIS IN RATS

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Calotropis procera, (Asclepiadaceae family), a plant largely found in Northeast of Brazil, exhibits a variety of biological effects**.** The anti-inflammatory and anti-nociceptive activities of a non-dialised proteic fraction of CP was studied in zymosan-induced arthritis model, in male *Wistar* rats. The arthritis was induced by intra-articular injection of zymosan (1mg/animal; 50ul). Thirty minutes before and 2h after the animals were treated (i.v.) with CP (3,10,30 and 100mg/kg). The anti-inflammatory activity was estimated by:cells migration (CM), adenosine deaminase activity (ADA), histopathological analysis of synovial tissue (HA) and vascular permeability (VP) by Evans' blue method. The anti-nociceptive activity was estimated by paw elevation time (PET, in seconds) in an articular incapacitation model. CP reduced PET ($p<0,01$) with a maximum effect in dose of 3mg/kg (3,89±1,06;85,3%; control=26,44±3,49). The CM was reduced ($p<0,01$) with maximum effect in dose of 3mg/kg (2042±1105;83,1%; control=12119±1208). ADA activity in synovial fluid was reduced ($p<0,05$) in doses of 10mg/kg (11,09±2,42;51,6%) and 30mg/kg (12,15±1,87;46,9%) -control group (22,92±3,08). The HA showed a significant reduction of scores in all doses. CP did not change VP. The antinociceptive and anti-inflammatory effects of CP entitle it as a potential pharmacological drug in the treatment of arthritis. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: CNPq/FUNCAP. KEYWORDS: arthritis, *calotropis procera*, zymosan.