THE PUTATIVE HYPNOSEDATIVE ACTIVITY OF *P. alata*

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**Introduction:** *Passiflora alata* Curtis is a Brazilian species from Passifloraceae family popularly known as sweet passionfruit. Some species of this genus are used in folk medicine due to their tranquilizing properties. Moreover, the leaves of this species were included in the fifth edition of the Brazilian Pharmacopoeia. Hence, the aim of this work was to evaluate the hypnosedative activity of the aqueous extract from leaves, pulp and pericarp of *P. alata* in the ethyl ether-induced hypnosis test.

**Methods:** The extracts from leaves and pericarp were obtained by infusion in water (1:10 and 1:3 w/v, respectively) and the pulp was crushed, afterwards the extracts were filtered and lyophilized. Five groups of male Swiss mice (35-50g/ 3 months) were p.o. treated with the different extracts of *P. alata* (100, 300 and 600 mg/Kg) or vehicle (water) and, 1 h later, the animals were individually placed in an ethyl ether (6 mL during 13 min) saturated glass cage (20×15 cm). The latency to lose the righting reflex and the duration of sleep (in s) were recorded. Sleeping-time was measured by the loss of the righting reflex, with the recovery of this reflex. DZP (1 mg/kg, i.p.) was used as the positive control drug (standard anxiolytic/hypnosedative compound). The data were presented as mean ± S.E.M of the time (s) analized by one-way ANOVA followed by Dunnett’s test.

**Results:** Considering the treatments with all extracts, only the highest dose (600 mg/kg, p.o.) of the aqueous extract obtained from the pericarp of *P. alata* significantly enhances the duration of sleep (p = 0.05), suggesting a possible hypnosedative activity. **Conclusion:** This study showed that the aqueous extract of the pericarp of *P. alata* can be effective as hypnosedative, an activity that deserves further investigation, but neither the extracts obtained from leaves or pulp presented this activity.

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