

THE ROLE OF NATURAL PRODUCTS AGAINST COVID-19: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic COVID-19 is an infectious respiratory illness caused by SARS CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2) and it spreads human-to-human. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the world is facing an unprecedented loss of lives around the globe and highlighted an effective treatment to deal with the virus. Natural products have historically been utilized for respiratory disease and display promising toxicity. Natural products have been reported for several antiviral activities of viruses, like influenza, HIV and some coronaviruses SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV. Therefore, natural products could be a vital resource for developing efficient and safe antiviral drugs against COVID-19. This review summarized the inhibition of isolated compounds from medicinal plants against different coronaviruses which could lead to the development of effective antiviral drugs to counter COVID-19.

Keywords: COVID-19, CoVs, Plant, Compound, IC₅₀/EC₅₀.

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a communicable respiratory illness affected by the latest class of coronavirus (CoV), recognized as SARS CoV-2, in the Coronaviridae family. It has spread around the globe in a short duration and this pandemic, according to WHO, affects more than four hundred million people with over 5 million deaths.¹ Because of this virus, symptoms like fever, dry cough, loss of smell and tiredness are shown by mild infected COVID-19 patients. In severe infected patients, the symptoms like shortness of breath, dry cough and pneumonia are observed. However, in case of critical situation, patients show the complete failure of respiratory and multiple organ dysfunction.² This virus spreads person-to-person mainly due to contact with symptomatic patients of this virus, as well as via respiratory droplets released by patients.²⁻⁴ In 1931, first diagnosed was performed related to CoV and the first human CoV was identified in 1965.³⁶ Recently, few vaccines like Pfizer, BioNTech, Moderna, BBIBP-CoV, CoronaVac and Sputnik V are available for the treatment of COVID-19, however, they have few side effects.³ Keeping this in mind we can think that natural products could be a vital resource for dealing with COVID-19, as they have displayed prominent antiviral activity towards other viruses, like HIV, MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, HCoV-229E, TGEV, FCoV, SARS-CoV 3CL, HCoV-OC43, HCoV-NL63 and influenza.³⁵⁻⁴³ The plant products have therapeutic benefits against infectious respiratory illnesses including pneumonia, septic shock, lung injury, pulmonary fibrosis, diffuse alveolar damage and kidney injury, all of which have symptoms correlated with COVID-19.⁴⁴⁻⁵¹ The present review intends to systematically evaluate the reported inhibition of molecules isolated from plants against different CoVs which could be lead towards effective drug entrants to hinder SARS-CoV-2 and results are discussed below. The authors reviewed and interpreted the articles on antiviral activities of naturally occurring compounds which have been already accounted effective against various CoVs. The diverse antiviral compounds isolated from various medicinal plants were searched extensively in online databases like PubMed, Science Direct etc. to collect data.

Natural Products against CoVs

Natural compounds belonging to chemical groups including alkaloid, coumarin, diarylheptanoid, flavonoid, polyphenol, saponin, and terpenes have shown promising antiviral activity (Table-1 & Fig. 1-8). More than 200 Chinese medicinal plants were studied against SARS-CoV using MTS assay in Vero E6 cells, and their results demonstrated that the alkaloid-rich fraction from *Artemisia*, *Lycoris*, *Pyrrosia* and *Lindera* species

were reported antiviral activity.⁴² A study on 221 lignin- and terpene-derivatives of natural products for their antiviral activity reported that 20 compounds showed promising activity against SARS CoV using CPE assay in Vero E6 cell.³⁴ Over 312 plant species of Taiwan were studied against SARS-CoV by MTT assays in Vero E6 cells and found that the plants of the Polygonaceae family, *Rheum officinale* and *Polygonum multiflorum* exhibited effective antiviral activity.³² Nine alkylated chalcones and four coumarins reported from the Apiaceae family against SARS-CoV3CL^{pro} and PL^{pro} reported they exhibited an effective inhibition against SARS-CoV3CL^{pro}. Some diarylheptanoid derivatives showed inhibition against SARS-CoVPL^{pro} compared with reference curcumin.⁹ They also demonstrated that if catechol group with a α , β -unsaturated carbonyl group is present, these compounds showed greater inhibition, whereas mono hydroxyl substitution lower the inhibitory effect.

Table-1: Some Natural Compounds with Anti-CoVs Effects

Plant	Coronavirus	Compound	Coronavirus Type targeted	IC ₅₀ /EC ₅₀ Values	References
<i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i>	Saponin	Aescin 44	SARS-CoV	3.4 μ mol/L	[7]
<i>Allium sativum</i>	Alkaloid	Capsaicin 1	SARS-CoV-2	-	[48]
<i>Alnus japonica</i>	Diarylheptanoid	Hirsutenone 40	SARS-CoV	4.1 μ mol/L	[9]
		Rubranoside 38		7.2 \pm 2.2 μ M	[9]
		Curcumin 39		5.7 μ M	[9]
<i>Angelica keiskei</i>	Chalcone	Xanthoangelol 35	SARS-CoV	11.4-130 μ M	[10]
		Chalcones I-IX 37			
Black tea	Polyphenol	Theaflavin 42	SARS-CoV	-	[12]
<i>Broussonetia papyrifera</i>	Flavonoid	Isoliquiritigenin 18	SARS-CoV	61.9 \pm 11.0 μ M	[11]
		Kaempferol 19		116.3 \pm 7.1 μ M	
		Kazinol F 20		43.3 \pm 10.4 μ M	
		Brousochalcone B 36		57.8 \pm 0.5 μ M	
		Papyrifavonol A 22		103.6 \pm 17.4 μ M	
<i>Boeninghausenia sessilicarpa</i>	Coumarin	Leptodactylone 68	SARS-CoV	100 μ g/mL	[13]
<i>Bupleurum chinense</i>	Glycoside	Saikosaponin A 46	SARS-CoV	8.6 mmol/L	[14]
	Saponin	Saikosaponin B ₂ 47	HCoV-229E	1.7 μ mol /L	
<i>Calophyllum Blancooi</i>	Xanthone	Blancoxanthone 61	HCoV 229E	3 μ g/ml	[15]
		Pyranojacareubin 62		15 μ g/ml	
<i>Cinnamomum Verum</i>	Proanthocyanidin	Procyanidin A2 70	wtSARS-CoV	29.9 μ M	[46]
		Procyanidin B1 71		41.3 μ M	
		CinnamtanninB1 72		32.9 μ M	
<i>Cynanchum genus</i>	Alkaloid	Tylophorine 5	TGEV	58 \pm 4 μ M	[5]
		7-Methoxy cryptopleurine 8		20 \pm 1 μ M	
<i>Euphorbia neriifolia</i>	Terpenoid	3 β -friedelanol 56	HCoV	132.4% at 5 μ g	[47]
		3 β -acetoxy- friedelane 57		80.9% at 5 μ g	
		Friedelin 58 Epitaraxerol 59		109.0% at 5 μ g 111.0% at 5 μ g	
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Flavonoid	Quercetin-3- β -galactoside 32	SARS-CoV	42.79 μ mol/L	[14]
<i>Galanthus nivalis</i>	Alkaloid	Agglutinin	FCoV	0.0088 nM	[17]
		Nelfinavir 9		8.19 μ M	

<i>Isatis indigotica</i>	Polyphenol Flavonoid Alkaloid	Sinigrin 43 β -Sitosterol 63 Hesperetin 21 Indirubin 2 Indican 3	SARS-CoV SARS-CoV 3CL	217 μ M 1210 μ M 8.3 μ M 217 and 8.4 M	[18]
<i>Licorice Root</i>	Saponin	Glycyrrhizin 45	SARS-CoV	364.5 μ M	[19]
<i>Lycoris Radiata</i>	Alkaloid	Lycorine 4	SARS-CoV	15.7 nmol/L	[42]
<i>Myrica rubra</i>	Alkaloid	Myricetin 64	SARS-CoV	2.71 μ mol/L	[20]
<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>	Stilbenoid	Resveratrol 65	MERS-CoV	-	[27]
<i>Panax ginseng</i>	Ginsenoside	Ginsenoside-Rb1 60	SARS-CoV	100 μ mol/L	[7]
<i>Psoraleacorylifolia</i>	Chalcone	Isobavachalcone 34	SARS-CoV	7.3 \pm 0.8 μ M	[28]
<i>Psoralea corylifolia</i>	Flavonoid	Psoralidin 26	SARS-CoV	4.2 \pm 1.0 μ M	[28]
<i>Paulownia tomentosa</i>	Flavonoid	Tomentin A 23 Tomentin B 24	SARS-CoV	6.2 \pm 0.04 μ M 6.1 \pm 0.02 μ M	[33]
		Tomentin E 25		5.0 \pm 0.06 μ M	
		3'-O-Methyl diplacol 33		9.5 \pm 0.10 μ M	
<i>Rauvolfia serpentina</i>	Alkaloid	Reserpine 13	SARS-CoV	6.0 μ mol/L	[7]
<i>Rheum palmatum</i>	Anthraquinone	Emodin 66	SARS-CoV	200 μ mol/L	[32]
<i>Salvia miltiorrhiza</i>	Diterpenoid	Dihydrotanshinone I 48	MERS-CoV	1 μ g/mL	[29]
<i>Stephania tetrandra</i>	Alkaloid	Tetrandrine 11	HCoV-OC43	0.33 μ mol/L	[30]
<i>Stephania japonica</i>	Alkaloid	Cepharanthine 14	SARS-CoV-2	0.98 μ mol/L	[31]
<i>Salvia miltiorrhiz</i>		Tanshinone 67	SARS-CoV	0.7–30 μ mol/L	[8]
<i>Strobilanthes cusia</i>	Alkaloid	Indirubin 10 Tryptanthrin 12 Indigodole A-B 15-16	HCoV-NL63	0.32 μ M	[17]
<i>Scutellaria baicalensis</i>	Flavone	Scutellarein 27	SARS-CoV	0.86 μ mol/L	[20]
<i>Triterygium regelii</i>	Triterpenoid	Celastrol 51	SARS-CoV	10.3 μ mol/L	[21]
		Pristimerin 52		5.5 μ mol/L	[21]
		Tingenone 53		9.9 μ mol/L	[21]
		Igesterin 54		2.6 μ mol/L	[21]
	Polyphenol	Tetra-O-galloyl- β -D-glucose 41		4.5 μ M	[23]
	Flavonoid	Luteolin 28		10.6 μ M	[23]
<i>Torreya nucifera</i>	Flavonoid	Amentoflavone 31	SARS-CoV	8.3 μ M	[22]
		Luteolin 28		20.2 μ M	
		Quercetin 29		23.8 μ M	
		Apigenin 30		280.8 μ M	
<i>Salvia miltiorrhiza</i>	Diterpene	Dihydrotanshinone I 48	SARS-CoV	4.9 \pm 1.2 μ M	[8]
		Cryptotanshinone 50		0.8 \pm 0.2 μ M	
		Tanshinone IIA 49		1.6 \pm 0.5 μ M	
	Triterpene	Schimperinone 55	PEDV	0.28 \pm 0.09 μ M	
<i>Torreya Nucifera</i>	Triterpene	Tingenone 53	SARS-CoV	9.9 \pm 0.1 μ M	[22]
		Igesterin 54		2.6 \pm 0.3 μ M	
<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>	Cinnamic amide	Terrestimine 69	SARS-CoV	15.8 \pm 0.6 μ M	[24]
<i>Ziziphus jujuba</i>	Alkaloid	Jubanine G 6	PEDV	13.41 \pm 1.13 μ M	[25]
		Jubanine H 7		4.49 \pm 0.67 μ M	
		Nummularine B 16		6.17 \pm 0.50 μ M	

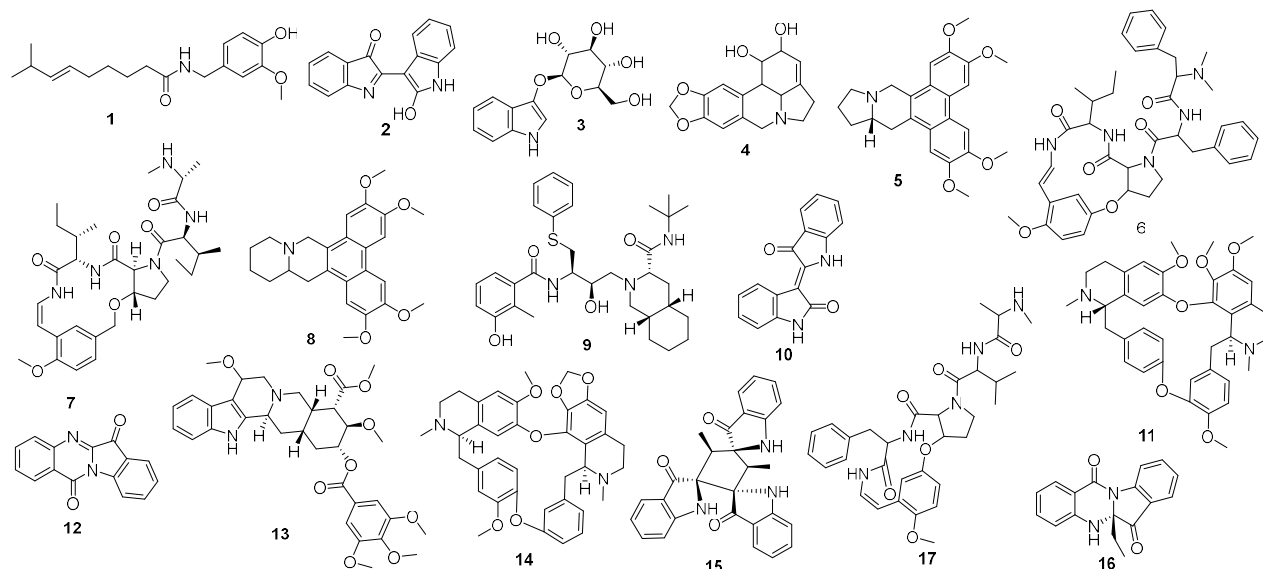


Fig.-1: Structures of Active Alkaloids Against Different CoVs

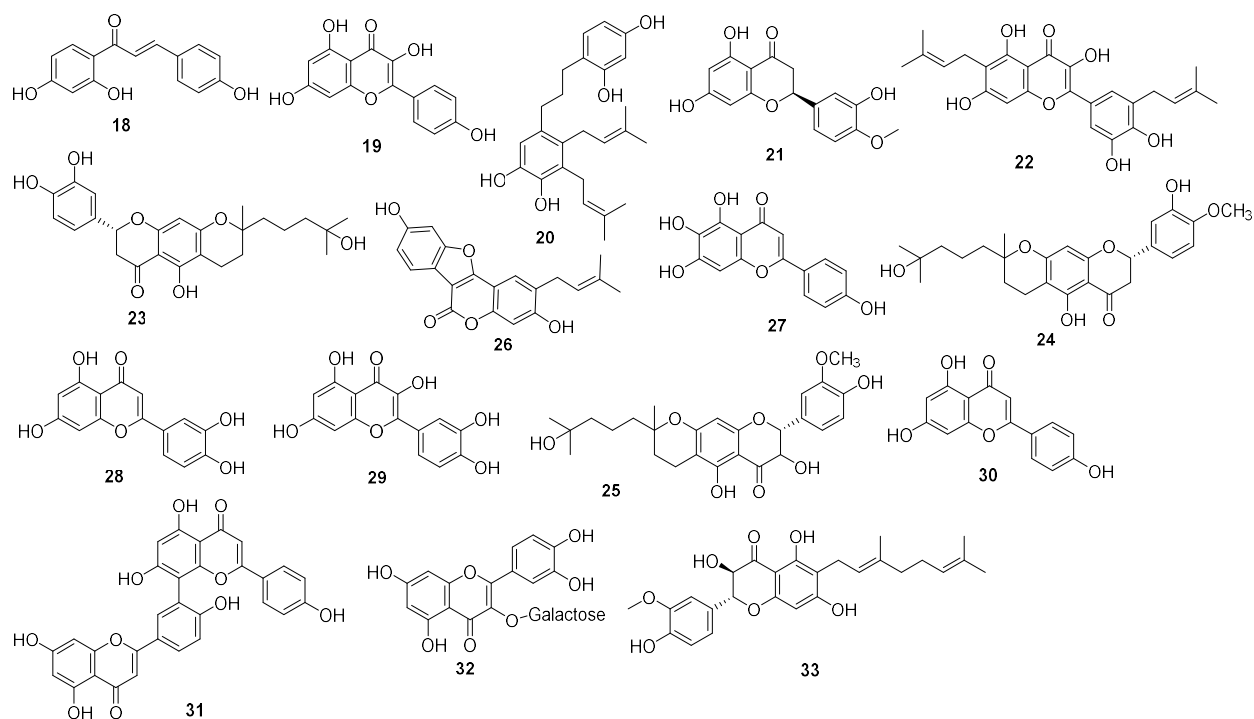


Fig.-2: Structures of Active Flavonoids Against Different CoVs

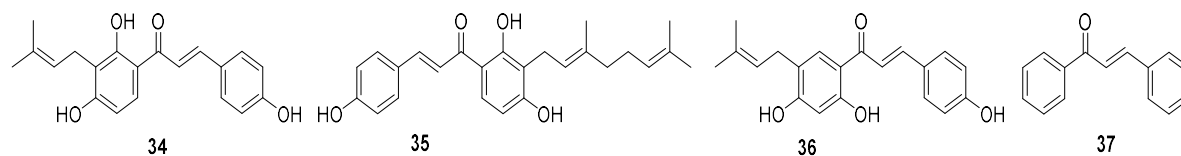


Fig.-3: Structures of Active Chalcones Against Different CoVs

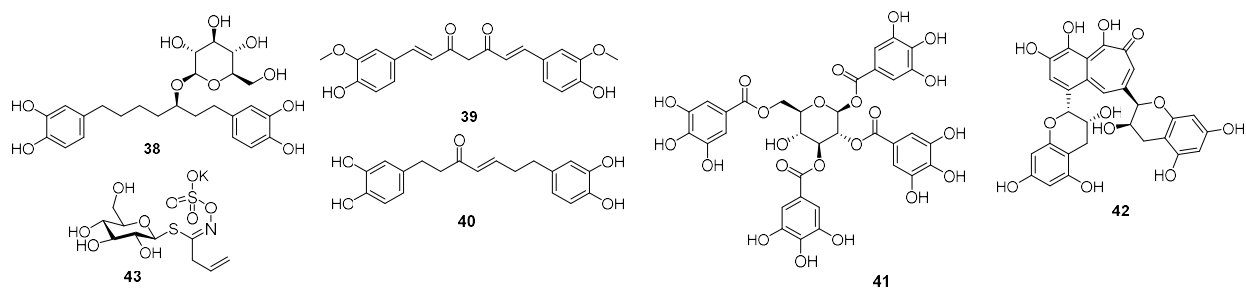


Fig.-4: Structures of Active Diaryl heptanoids And Polyphenols Against Different CoVs

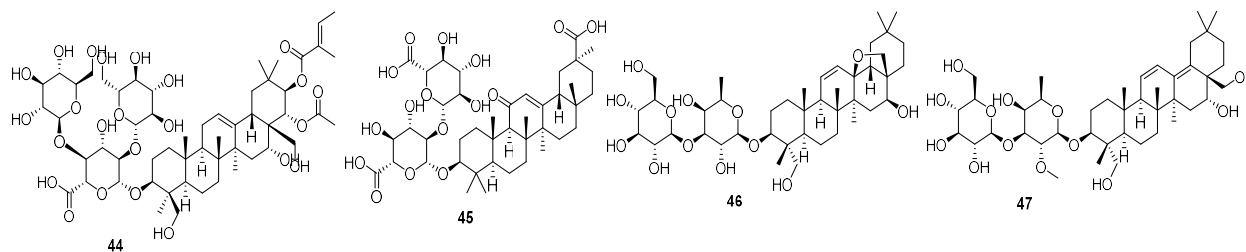


Fig.-5: Structures of Active Saponins Against Different CoVs

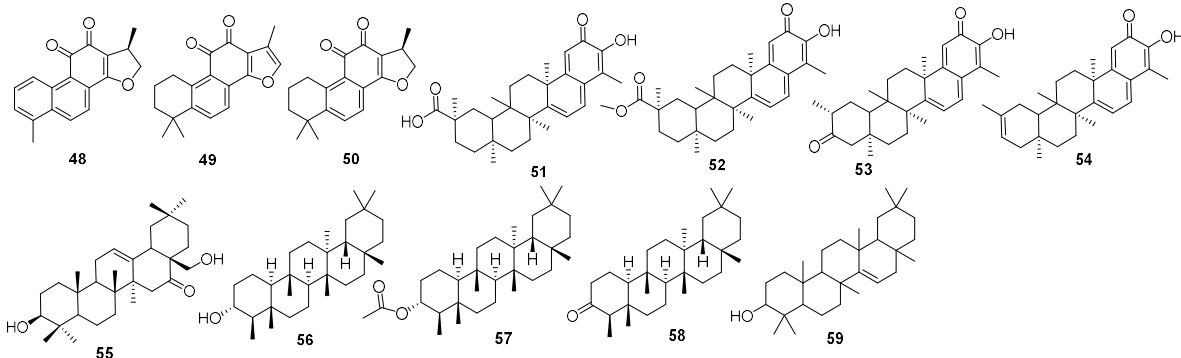


Fig.-6: Structures of Active Terpenoids Against Different CoVs

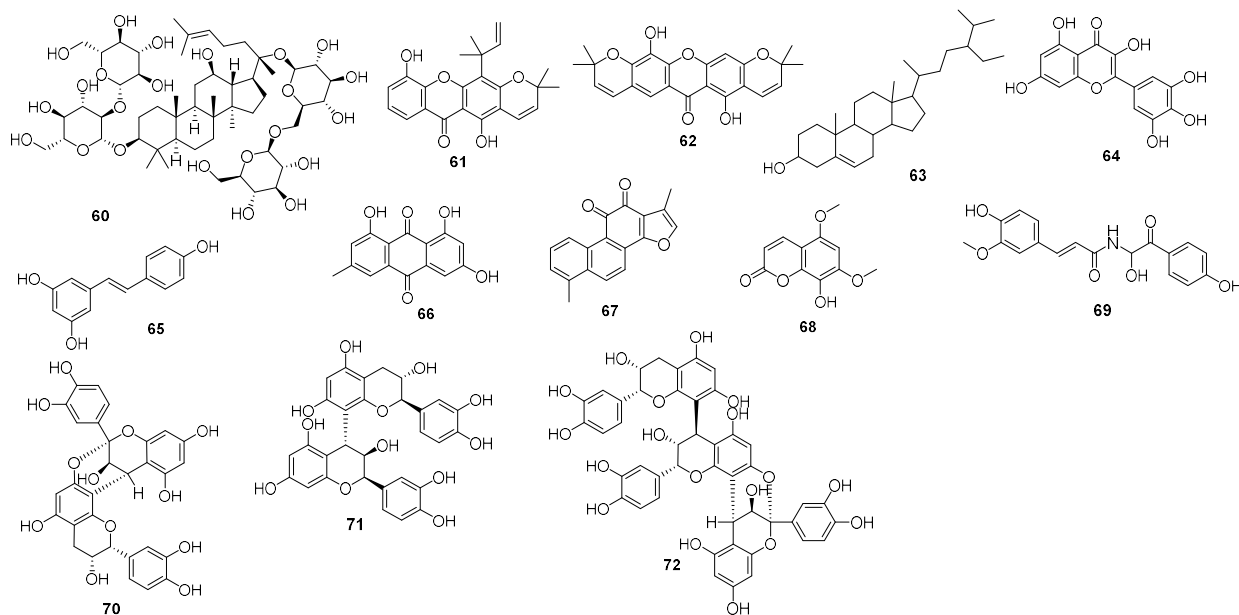


Fig.-7: Structures of Miscellaneous Molecules Against Different CoVs

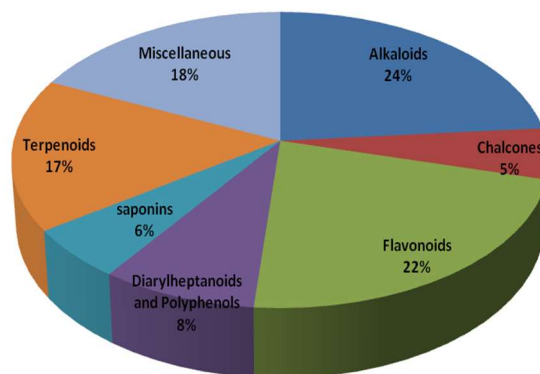


Fig.-8: Various Classes of Molecules from Plants Towards Different CoVs

CONCLUSION

In recent years, CoVs are associated with several infectious respiratory illness outbreaks in humans. Due to the side effects of the vaccine or drug to treat COVID-19, there is a requirement for effective treatment to deal with the virus. In present review, we discussed several naturally occurring compounds that have exhibited significant anti-CoV agents and potential for COVID-19 treatment. Diverse phytochemicals belonging to the classes including alkaloids, flavonoids, chalcones, diarylheptanoids, polyphenols, terpenoids, and saponins were reported inhibition towards several CoVs. Therefore, natural products could be a vital resource for the treatment of COVID-19, as they have been shown to promise antiviral inhibition against various viruses.

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