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**ANÁLISE DO PERFIL FITOQUÍMICO E DA ATIVIDADE ANTIOXIDANTE E  
CITOTÓXICA DO ÓLEO ESSENCIAL DE GENGIBRE (*Zingiber officinale*)**

**São Leopoldo**

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Orientadora: Profa. Dr. Juliana de Castilhos

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## **ANÁLISE DO PERFIL FITOQUÍMICO E DA ATIVIDADE ANTIOXIDANTE E CITOTÓXICA DO ÓLEO ESSENCIAL DE GENGIBRE (*Zingiber officinale*)**

Moara Farina Pierotto\*

Juliana de Castilhos\*\*

**Resumo:** No Brasil, o Instituto Nacional do Câncer (INCA) estima cerca de 600.000 novos casos de câncer entre os anos de 2016 e 2017. O óleo essencial de gengibre (OEG) é conhecido por apresentar importantes atividades farmacológicas, como atividades antioxidante, anti-inflamatória, anti-bacteriana e anticâncer. O objetivo deste trabalho é identificar os principais componentes presentes no OEG, bem como analisar o potencial antioxidant e citotóxico do óleo essencial de gengibre *in vitro*.

**Métodos:** o OEG foi extraído por hidrodestilação e foi analisado por cromatografia gasosa (GC/MS). A atividade antioxidante foi determinada via testes de captura dos radicais DPPH e ABTS. A atividade citotóxica foi determinada através do ensaio MTT, utilizando linhagens celulares de adenocarcinoma do colón humano (HT-29), hepatocarcinoma humano (HepG2) e câncer de mama (MDB-MA-231). **Resultados:** o OEG foi caracterizado pela presença dominante de α-citral (29,1%), β-citral (16,6%) e geraniol (10,84%). O efeito antioxidant na inibição do radical DPPH, foi de valores de IC<sub>50</sub> de 4,43 ± 0,20 mg/mL. Além disso, o OEG testado apresentou excelentes propriedades de eliminação de radicais livres contra o radical de cátions ABTS, 0,74 ± 0,05 mg/MI, quando comparado ao potencial de eliminação de radicais DPPH. Os valores IC<sub>50</sub> do OEG nas células HT-29, HepG2 e MDA-MB-231 foram 37,41 ± 0,38 µg/mL, 3,73 ± 0,10 µg/mL e 145,19 ± 0,95 µg/mL, respectivamente. Portanto, o OEG mostrou boa inibição da proliferação de todas as linhagens celulares em concentrações variando de 4,11 a 1000 µg/mL. O efeito inibitório foi dependente da dose, e quanto maior a concentração de OEG, melhor foi a inibição.

**Conclusão:** O OEG possui boas propriedades biológicas demonstrando excelente atividade antioxidant e citotóxica. No entanto, mais pesquisas são necessárias para tornar este rico componente biológico capaz de colaborar adequadamente com a saúde humana.

**Palavras-chave:** Gengibre. Óleo essencial. Câncer. Antioxidantes.

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## 1 INTRODUÇÃO

Diversos estudos têm reportado a importante influência de ervas e raízes no tratamento e prevenção de doenças crônicas não transmissíveis. (GORZYNIK-DEBICKA et al., 2018; LANGHANS, 2018; ONDIEKI et al., 2017). Algumas ervas aromáticas e rizomas comumente utilizados na culinária destacam-se por apresentarem compostos bioativos que demonstram atividade antioxidante, antimicrobiana e antitumoral. (ZHENG et al., 2016).

O gengibre (*Zingiber officinale*) é uma planta que vem sendo cultivada por séculos e tem espaço tanto em receitas gastronômicas quanto em terapias alternativas. Seu uso na medicina tradicional chinesa tem sido descrito desde 400 anos a.C., com o objetivo de tratar alterações do trato gastrointestinal, como indigestão, náuseas e vômitos. (SAIAH et al., 2018; GIACOSA et al., 2015; ULLAH et al., 2015).

Diversos trabalhos demonstram que os principais compostos bioativos do gengibre são o gingerol, zingerone, shogaol, paradol, citral, nerol e geranal (MARX et al., 2017; LAI et al., 2016; MOJANI et al., 2014; YEH et al., 2014) e que estes compostos podem possuir propriedades anti-inflamatórias, antidiabéticas, antitrombóticas, antidiarreicas, além de servirem como proteção contra radiação e como estimulantes do sistema imunológico, bem como serem capazes de inibir a formação de radicais livres (MARX et al., 2017). Além disso, diversos estudos têm demonstrado que estes compostos estão presentes principalmente no óleo essencial de gengibre, e que os mesmos seriam responsáveis por exercer propriedades substanciais para a promoção a saúde, tais como ação anticarcinogênica e quimioprotetora. (MARX et al., 2017; POURNADERI et al., 2017).

Segundo a Organização Mundial de Saúde (2018), o câncer é a segunda maior causa de mortes no mundo, sendo que, anualmente, 8,8 milhões de pacientes vêm a óbito. Aproximadamente 14 milhões de novos casos são registrados por ano globalmente, e a OMS calcula que essas notificações devam subir 70% nas próximas duas décadas. Estima-se que mais de 30% das mortes por câncer poderiam ser evitadas de forma preventiva, como mudanças de hábitos e estilo de vida, minimizando assim os fatores de risco. (OMS, 2018).

Visto que o uso de ervas e especiarias poderiam atuar como coadjuvantes no tratamento contra o câncer, este trabalho avaliará a ação do óleo essencial de gengibre como um agente antioxidante e antitumoral em diferentes linhagens de células de câncer.

## 2 FUNDAMENTAÇÃO TEÓRICA

Nos capítulos a seguir será apresentado uma revisão de literatura sobre câncer, metabolismo secundários das plantas e óleos essenciais.

### 2.1 Câncer

O câncer é o resultado de alterações que ocorrem na sequência do ácido desoxirribonucleico (DNA) das células, ocasionando um crescimento descontrolado destas, que pode levar à invasão de órgãos e tecidos, causando metástases. (SIEGEL; MILLER; JEMAL, 2018; INCA, 2017). O desenvolvimento do câncer ocorre basicamente através de dois processos: 1) variação genética hereditária em células individuais por mutação aleatória, e, 2) seleção natural, agindo sobre a diversidade fenotípica resultante. Acidentalmente, uma única célula pode adquirir um conjunto de mutações que lhe permitem autonomia para se multiplicar e invadir tecidos, ocasionando metástases. (SHEIKH et al., 2017).

Os índices de câncer no Brasil e no mundo vêm crescendo de forma substancial. Conforme estimativa realizada pelo Instituto Nacional do Câncer (INCA), a expectativa é que sejam registrados 596 mil novos casos de câncer entre 2016 e 2017 no Brasil. (INCA, 2017). A projeção mundial divulgada pela OMS é de que 21 milhões de pessoas desenvolvam câncer até 2030. (OMS, 2018). De acordo com o INCA, existem mais de 100 tipos de câncer e as causas são variadas, podendo ser externas, ou seja, relacionadas a fatores ambientais, como hábitos e estilo de vida, ou internas, que são em sua maioria relacionadas a carga genética pré-determinada. (INCA, 2017).

As terapias tradicionais para tratamento de diversos tipos de câncer envolvem quimioterapia e radioterapia, que por sua vez ocasionam reações adversas nos pacientes e normalmente requerem o uso de medicamentos para controle de

sintomas, ocasionando uma cascata iatrogênica. (HOSOKAWA; TAKEBAYASHI; MINETA, 2018; WEINGART et al., 2018). Portanto, é crescente o interesse por terapias alternativas como coadjuvantes no tratamento de câncer nas últimas décadas, o que impulsiona pesquisas relacionadas ao uso de compostos naturais, tanto para alívio de sintomas, quanto estudos sobre a inibição de fatores relacionados ao desenvolvimento da doença. (JOHNSON et al., 2018; YANKUZO et al., 2018; JEENA, 2013).

Diante deste cenário, a biodiversidade pode representar estratégias vantajosas na obtenção de substâncias com propriedades terapêuticas, e, considerando que a natureza proporciona uma gigantesca variedade química, com estruturas complexas e de difícil reprodução sintética, explorar estes recursos através de pesquisas científicas se torna uma importante ferramenta em busca de terapias mais eficazes. (PIMENTEL, 2015).

## **2.2 Metabolismo secundário das plantas e óleos essenciais (OEs)**

O conjunto de reações químicas e enzimáticas que buscam o aproveitamento de nutrientes para o crescimento e manutenção da vida de um organismo é denominado metabolismo. (VALLI; RUSSO; BOLZANI, 2017). Ao longo do processo de evolução natural das espécies, as plantas adquiriram mecanismos de defesa para sua sobrevivência e proteção, desenvolvendo rotas metabólicas alternativas, capazes de sintetizar compostos nocivos a parasitas e predadores. Estes compostos, denominados de metabólitos secundários, são importantes para a adaptação e propagação das espécies vegetais (GRUBER et al., 2018) e têm despertado o interesse de pesquisadores por representarem um vasto conjunto de substâncias bioativas potencialmente úteis para saúde do homem. (FIGUEIREDO; PEDRO; BARROSO, 2014; KAMTE et al., 2017).

Diversos estudos demonstram que a produção dos metabólitos secundários pode ser afetada por interações com o meio ambiente. (TOHGE; BORGHI; FERNIE, 2018; MARX et al., 2017). Fatores ambientais como clima, radiação ultravioleta, qualidade do solo e disponibilidade hídrica podem influenciar tanto na variedade quanto na quantidade dos compostos produzidos pelo metabolismo secundário. (TOHGE; BORGHI; FERNIE, 2018). Um caso frequentemente relatado na literatura é

sobre o Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*) que apresenta um grande aumento da concentração de suas substâncias bioativas, tais como o ginsenosídeo e a damarano-saponina durante o período de verão. (XIAO et al., 2017).

Dentre os compostos produzidos pelas plantas, os óleos essenciais (OEs) são metabólitos secundários que fazem parte da defesa sistema das plantas, defendendo-as contra animais herbívoros e microrganismos, e que se destacam por serem produtos naturais biodegradáveis, exibirem baixa toxicidade aos mamíferos e apresentarem propriedades farmacológicas reconhecidas, tais como ação antioxidant, anti-inflamatória e antifúngica. (SHARIFI-RAD et al. 2017; MOHAMMAD et al., 2016).

Os OEs são obtidos principalmente através da destilação por arraste de vapor de matérias vegetais, caracterizando-se como misturas voláteis e complexas que apresentam instabilidade na presença de calor, luz, umidade e metais. (HONG et al., 2016). Além disso, normalmente possuem aroma agradável e intenso, sabor acre e picante, coloração transparente ou leve pigmentação amarelada, boa solubilidade em solventes orgânicos e solubilidade limitada em água. (SHARIFI-RAD et al., 2017).

Os OEs têm sido propostos em diversos tratamentos alternativos, dentre eles a aromaterapia, baseado em propriedades que aliviam os efeitos colaterais da quimioterapia. (MARX et al., 2018; LEE, 2016; GIACOSA et al., 2015; OLIVEIRA, 2011). Além disso, muitos estudos também têm descrito suas propriedades antioxidant, anti-inflamatória, antibacteriana, antifúngica e antitumoral. (KAMTE et al., 2017; ZHENG et al., 2016; JENNA et al., 2013; DE MELO et al., 2011).

Evidências crescentes sugerem que o acúmulo de espécies reativas de oxigênio (ERO) e nitrogênio (ERN) no organismo desencadeiam processos inflamatórios que resultam em danos celulares podendo levar ao desenvolvimento de várias doenças crônicas não-transmissíveis (DCNT), incluindo o câncer. (MEDIÉSSE et al., 2018; MOHAMMAD et al, 2016; JENNA et al., 2013). Os OEs poderiam então atuar como potencializadores do sistema imune, contribuindo para prevenção de doenças relacionadas à inflamação. (PÉRES-ROSES, et al., 2016). Alguns estudos demonstram que o OE extraído da casca de frutas cítricas possui alta atividade antioxidant e propriedades anti-inflamatórias importantes. (XINMIAO et al., 2017; TSAI et al., 2017). Ensaios *in vitro* reportaram que o limoneno, principal composto bioativo dos óleos essenciais das frutas cítricas, seria capaz de inibir

agentes potencialmente inflamatórios, como a interleucina-6 e interleucina-8. (XINMIAO et al., 2017; NITHITHEP; JIRAUNGKOORSKUL, 2016).

Um estudo recente avaliou a atividade antiproliferativa do óleo essencial de cúrcuma contra linhagens celulares selecionadas de carcinoma de mama humano (MCF-7), células de carcinoma cervical humano (CaSki), células de carcinoma de pulmão (A549), células de adenocarcinoma do cólon humano (HCT116 e HT-29) e fibroblastos normais (MRC-5). O óleo essencial do rizoma de cúrcuma exibiu forte citotoxicidade contra células HT-29 ( $IC_{50} = 4,9 \pm 0,4 \mu\text{g/mL}$ ), moderada citotoxicidade contra as células normais de pulmão ( $IC_{50} = 32,5 \pm 1,1 \mu\text{g/mL}$ ) e baixa toxicidade contra as demais células ( $IC_{50} = 46,3 \pm 0,7 \mu\text{g/mL}$ ). (HONG et al., 2014).

Em um estudo conduzido por Jardak e colaboradores, foi avaliada a citotoxicidade do óleo essencial de alecrim de através do ensaio MTT em linhagens celulares de adenocarcinoma de mama humano (MCF-7) e linhagens de células derivadas do câncer do colo do útero (Hela). O resultado dos testes demonstrou que o óleo essencial inibiu fortemente a proliferação de células Hela e MCF-7 com valores de  $IC_{50}$  de 0,011 e 0,253  $\mu\text{L/mL}$ , respectivamente. (JARDAK et al., 2017). Outro estudo conduzido por Zu e colaboradores (2010) avaliou a ação de dez tipos de OEs, incluindo menta, limão, gengibre, canela e tomilho, em células de câncer de pulmão, mama e próstata. Os resultados demonstraram alta toxicidade de praticamente todos os OEs, resultando em uma viabilidade celular inferior 6% após a intervenção com o OE. (ZU et al., 2010).

## 2.3 Gengibre

O gengibre (*Zingiber officinale*) é cultivado mundialmente, sendo que os maiores produtores são a Índia, China, Austrália e Nigéria. (KIRAN et al., 2013). Amplamente utilizado em preparações culinárias na forma de pastas, pó, xaropes, doces e chás, o gengibre confere sabor picante característico e pungente, e tem sido usado há mais de 2500 anos, tendo um papel importante tanto na medicina tradicional chinesa, como em terapias alternativas para tratamento de dores, inflamação, artrite, infecções urinárias, e desordens do trato gastrointestinal. (LEE, 2016; LI, 2013; KIRAN et al., 2013). Além disso, hoje sabemos que o gengibre possui propriedades farmacológicas reconhecidas, tais como atividade antioxidante

e antimicrobiana. (MARX et al., 2017; LAI et al., 2016; MOJANI et al., 2014; KIRAN et al, 2013).

O cultivo do gengibre no Brasil teve início há poucas décadas, através de grandes agricultores japoneses, possibilitando sua produção comercial. Cerca de 70 a 80% do gengibre produzido no Brasil é direcionado para exportação e a maior produção se concentra nos estados do Sul e Sudeste. (SANTOS et al., 2016). Em relação aos aspectos nutricionais, o gengibre apresenta densidade calórica baixa (80 calorias a cada 100 g) é composto por aproximadamente 79% de água, 17% carboidratos, 2% de fibra alimentar e 1 % de proteína. Além disso, é fonte de vitamina C, ácido fólico, colina, potássio e magnésio. (TACO, 2014).

A percepção sensorial do gengibre se deve a dois grupos químicos distintos: os óleos voláteis – formados por hidrocarbonetos como zinzerbeno, citral e neural, que são responsáveis pelo sabor e aroma; e compostos pungentes não voláteis, representados pelo gengérols e zingerone, que são os compostos bioativos aos quais diversos estudos atribuem as características picantes e propriedades medicinais. (MARX et al., 2017; SANTOS et al., 2016; ZHENG et al., 2016)

O gengibre contém cerca de 1 a 3% de óleo essencial e alguns estudos demonstram que o componente em maior proporção o é o 6-gingerol. Em menor proporção, o óleo essencial de gengibre (OEG) seria composto pelos 4, 8 e 10-gingerol, que são instáveis na presença de calor e sofrem desidratação, se transformando em shogaols. Estes, por sua vez, quando sofrem hidrogenação, se transformam em paradols. (NETO, 2012). Em contrapartida, é importante ressaltar que a composição do óleo pode variar de acordo com a localização geográfica, época da colheita e tipo de adubação. (HONG, 2016; LI, 2013).

Pesquisas recentes demonstram que o 6-gingerol também seria responsável pela inibição da expressão de substâncias pró-inflamatórias relacionadas ao surgimento de tumores, tais como lipoxigenases, fator nuclear kappa B (NF- $\kappa$ B), óxido nítrico sintase (NOS) e fator de necrose tumoral alfa (TNF- $\alpha$ ). (POURNADERI, 2017; VOLKMAN et al, 2014).

Inúmeros ensaios indicam que o OEG estimula uma proteína que induz a apoptose de células tumorais, a Bax, ao mesmo tempo que inibe a proteína Bcl-2, que seria responsável por impedir a morte celular em células de câncer. (LI et al., 2017; VOLKMAN et al, 2014; OLA et al, 2011). Além disso, o 6-gingerol também estaria relacionado com a inibição da expressão da enzima NOS e com a

angiogênese de células endoteliais dos vasos sanguíneos, prevenindo mutações que levariam ao desenvolvimento de células cancerígenas e inibindo o suprimento sanguíneo adequado necessário para tumor crescer. (SANTOS et al., 2016).

Portanto, frente a estas evidências científicas, torna-se interessante a investigação sobre os componentes do OEG, bem como seu potencial antioxidante e antitumoral, o que proporcionará um melhor entendimento sobre suas propriedades bioativas, aprimorando o conhecimento científico na área de nutrição, alimentos e metabolismo humano.

### **3 MATERIAIS E MÉTODOS**

Neste capítulo serão apresentadas as metodologias utilizadas na extração do óleo essencial de gengibre, bem como a descrição das análises de composição química, atividade antioxidante e atividade citotóxica.

#### **3.1 Obtenção do óleo essencial de gengibre (OEG)**

O OEG foi obtido a partir do rizoma fresco e orgânico, reduzidos com auxílio de triturador mecânico e submetidos à hidrodestilação em processo contínuo utilizando aparelho de Clevenger durante 3h, conforme descrito pela Farmacopéia Brasileira (ANVISA, 2010). O óleo foi retirado com uma pipeta Pasteur e armazenado em recipiente de vidro âmbar e mantido a -18 °C até ser analisado.

#### **3.2 Cromatografia gasosa acoplada a espectrometria de massas (GC-MS)**

O OEG foi analisado através de cromatografia em fase gasosa acoplada a um espectrômetro de massas (Shimadzu GC-2010 Plus e um Shimadzu GCMS-QP2010 Ultra) equipado com um autoinjetor Shimadzu AOC-20i. As condições cromatográficas para a identificação dos componentes dos óleos foram: coluna capilar HP-5MS (30 m x 0.25 mm de diâmetro interno, Agilent-Technologies, USA), gás de arraste hélio a uma velocidade de fluxo de 1,5 mL/min e temperatura do injetor e detector 80 °C a 220 °C, respectivamente. A temperatura da coluna foi programada de 80 °C a 220 °C a uma velocidade de 4 °C/min e, após, 180 a 280 °C a 20 °C/min. Foi injetado 1 µL de amostra em modo *split* (razão 1:100). As composições dos componentes da amostra foram medidas como percentagem relativa do pico total utilizando detector FID.

Os espectros de massas foram produzidos por ionização eletrônica (70 eV). A temperatura do injetor e o MS *transfer line* foi 220 e 290 °C, respectivamente.

#### **3.3 Identificação dos Componentes do OEG**

Para realizar os índices de Kovats, a identificação dos constituintes do óleo essencial baseou-se na comparação dos seus índices de retenção relativos para C8-

C20 n-alcanos, com os dados e espectros já publicados de compostos autênticos. Os compostos foram ainda identificados e confirmados usando os dados de espectro de massas com a biblioteca espectral de massa da biblioteca NIST11. (ADAMS, 2017).

### **3.4 Análise da Atividade Antioxidante**

Os ensaios de captura dos radicais DPPH e ABTS têm sido largamente empregados na determinação das capacidades antioxidantes de extratos vegetais. São ensaios que envolvem uma reação de oxirredução com a transferência de um elétron, tendo o agente oxidante como indicador do ponto final da reação (HUANG et al., 2005). Para avaliar o potencial antioxidante do óleo essencial de *Zingiber officinale*, foram empregadas as técnicas de DPPH e ABTS. O DPPH é um radical estável, com baixa taxa de deterioração e reatividade com a maioria dos compostos, já o ABTS permite medir a atividade de compostos de natureza hidrofílica e lipofílica. (BRAND-WILLIANS et al., 1995; RE et al., 1999).

#### **3.4.1 Determinação da Atividade de Captura do Radical DPPH<sup>•</sup>**

A determinação da atividade antioxidante pelo método de DPPH<sup>•</sup> foi baseada na redução do cátion DPPH<sup>•</sup>, segundo o método descrito por Brand-Williams, Cuvelier e Berser (1995), com algumas modificações. Este método é um dos mais utilizados para verificar a capacidade antioxidante e consiste em avaliar a atividade sequestradora do radical 2,2-difenil-1-picril-hidrazila (DPPH<sup>•</sup>), de coloração púrpura, que absorve em um comprimento de onda de 515 nm. Por ação de um antioxidante ou uma espécie radicalar (R<sup>•</sup>), o DPPH<sup>•</sup> é reduzido formando 2,2-difenilpicril-hidrazina (DPPH-H), de coloração amarela, com consequente desaparecimento da banda de absorção, sendo a mesma monitorada pelo decréscimo da absorbância. Os antioxidantes doam hidrogênio para o DPPH<sup>•</sup> estabilizando-o e, em seguida, tornam-se radicais que são facilmente estabilizados por ressonância.

Para mensurar a atividade antioxidante das amostras, foi realizada uma curva padrão de Trolox em diferentes concentrações (0 – 0,3125 µmol/mL), sendo o ponto

1 referente ao controle da técnica. A partir das absorbâncias obtidas, calcula-se o percentual de inibição, conforme a fórmula abaixo:

$$\% \text{ de inibição} = [1 - (\text{Abs}_{\text{amostra}} / \text{Abs}_{\text{controle}})] \times 100$$

A atividade de captura do radical DPPH<sup>•</sup> nos extratos foi expressa em µM de equivalentes de Trolox (ET) por mL de OE. Todas as análises foram realizadas em triplicata.

### 3.4.2 Captura do Radical ABTS<sup>•+</sup>

A determinação da atividade antioxidante pelo método de captura do radical ABTS<sup>•+</sup> é realizada através da redução do cátion ABTS<sup>•+</sup> segundo o método descrito por Re e colaboradores (1999), com algumas modificações.

O OE foi diluído em etanol para a realização da análise, e a absorbância (Abs) medida no comprimento de onda de 734 nm após trinta minutos, utilizando espectrofotômetro (UV-2600, Shimadzu). Para mensurar a atividade antioxidante das amostras, realizou-se uma curva padrão de Trolox em diferentes concentrações (0 – 15 µmol/L), sendo o ponto 1 referente ao controle da técnica. A partir das absorbâncias obtidas, calculou-se o percentual de inibição, conforme a fórmula abaixo:

$$\% \text{ de inibição} = [1 - (\text{Abs}_{\text{amostra}} / \text{Abs}_{\text{controle}})] \times 100$$

A atividade antioxidante foi expressa em µmol de equivalente de Trolox (ET) por mL de óleo essencial que é diretamente proporcional ao percentual de inibição. Todas as análises foram realizadas em triplicata.

## 3.5 Cultura de células

As linhagens celulares de adenocarcinoma de cólon humano (HT-29), adenocarcinoma hepático (HepG2) e câncer de mama (MDB-MA-231) e foram

obtidas do Banco de Células do Rio de Janeiro (BCRJ). A linhagem HT-29 foi cultivada em meio McCoy's 5A (Gibco BRL Grand Island, US), e as linhagens de HepG2 e MDB-MA-231 foram cultivadas em meio DMEM (Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium; Sigma-Aldrich, USA), ambos suplementados com 10% de soro fetal bovino (SFB; Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA) e 200 U de penicilina e 50 mg de estreptomicina/L (Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, MO 63103, USA). O meio era trocado a cada dois dias. Todas as células cresceram em frascos de 75 cm<sup>2</sup> em atmosfera umidificada com 5% CO<sub>2</sub> e temperatura de 37 °C.

### **3.6 Ensaios de Viabilidade e Citotoxicidade**

A atividade citotóxica *in vitro* do EOG foi determinada utilizando o ensaio de MTT (brometo de 3- [4,5-dimetiltiazol-2-il]-2,5-difeniltetrazólio) (Riss et al., 2013) com pequenas modificações. Resumidamente, 100 µL de meio contendo 1,5x10<sup>5</sup> células foram semeadas em placas de 96 poços e mantidas em 5% de CO<sub>2</sub> e à 37 °C *overnight* para permitir a aderência das células aos poços. Em seguida, o meio foi substituído por 100 µL do EOG diluído em série (1,37 – 1000 µg/mL) e levadas à incubação por mais 24 h. Em seguida, 10 µL de solução de MTT (5 mg/mL, Sigma-Aldrich) foram adicionados em cada poço. As placas foram incubadas a 37 °C durante 2 h. Após este período, foram adicionados 100 µL de dimetilsufóxido (DMSO) em cada poço e as placas foram incubadas durante mais 30 minutos para dissolver os cristais de formazan. A absorbância de cada poço foi determinada por um espectrofotômetro (SpectraMax M5, Molecular Devices) a 570 e 690 nm. Para o grupo controle positivo e negativo utilizou-se DMSO 3% e 0,1%, respectivamente. A porcentagem de viabilidade celular foi calculada pela seguinte fórmula: a citotoxicidade é expressa como a concentração de OE inibindo o crescimento celular em 50% (IC<sub>50</sub>), e foi calculada a partir de um gráfico representando a percentagem de inibição contra diferentes concentrações de OE. Cada condição experimental foi analisada em triplicata, com três experimentos separados para cada OE. A inibição do crescimento foi calculada da seguinte fórmula:

$$\% \text{ viabilidade} = (\text{Abs}_{\text{amostra}} - \text{Abs}_{\text{branco}}/\text{Abs}_{\text{controle}} - \text{Abs}_{\text{branco}}) \times 100$$

### 3.7 Análise Estatística

Inicialmente, a distribuição dos dados foi realizada pelo teste de normalidade de Shapiro-Wilk. Os dados obtidos foram então analisados estatisticamente pelo programa GraphPad Prism versão 6.0 para Windows (GraphPad Software, Inc., La Jolla, Califórnia, EUA) através da análise de variância (ANOVA) de uma via seguida pelo teste *post hoc* de Tukey. Os valores de IC<sub>50</sub> foram calculados por regressão não linear. O nível de significância foi definido quando P < 0,05. Todos os dados são descritos como o média ± desvio padrão (DP). Todos os experimentos foram realizados em triplicata.

## 4 RESULTADOS

### PHYTOCHEMICAL PROFILE, ANTIOXIDANT AND CYTOTOXIC ACTIVITY OF ESSENTIAL OIL GENGIBRE (*Zingiber officinale*)

Moara Farina Pierotto\*

Juliana de Castilhos\*\*

**Abstract:** In Brazil, the National Cancer Institute (INCA) estimates between the years 2016 and 2017 about 600,000 new cases of cancer. The essential oil of ginger (GEO) is known to present important pharmacological activities, such as antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial and anticancer activities. The objective of this work is to identify the main components present in the GEO, as well as analyze the antioxidant and cytotoxic activity of the essential oil of ginger *in vitro*. **Methods:** GEO was analyzed by gas chromatography (GC/MS). The antioxidant activity was determined via the DPPH and ABTS radical scavenging. Cytotoxic activity was determined using the MTT assay in adenocarcinoma colorectal (HT-29), hepatocarcinoma (HepG2) and breast cancer (MDB-MA-231) cell lines. **Results:** GEO was characterized by the presence of α-citral (29.1%), β-citral (16.6%) and geraniol (10.84%). The antioxidant effect on DPPH radical inhibition was IC<sub>50</sub> values of 4.43 ± 0.20 mg/mL. The GEO tested also showed excellent free radical scavenging properties against the ABTS cation radical, 0.74 ± 0.05 mg/mL compared to the DPPH radical scavenging potential. The IC<sub>50</sub> values of the GEO in HT-29, HepG2 and MDA-MB-231cells were 37.41 ± 0.38 µg/mL, 3.73 ± 0.10 µg/mL and 145.19 ± 0.95 µg/mL, respectively. GEO showed good inhibition of proliferation of all cell lines at concentrations ranging from 4.11 to 1000 µg/mL. The inhibitory effect was dose-dependent, and the higher the GEO concentration, the better the inhibition. **Conclusion:** GEO has good biological properties demonstrating excellent antioxidant and antitumor activity. However, further research is needed to make this rich biological component capable of adequately collaborating with human health.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Cancer is the result of changes that occur in the DNA sequence of cells, leading to uncontrolled growth of these cells, which can lead to invasion of organs and tissues, causing metastasis. (SIEGEL; MILLER; JEMAL, 2018; INCA, 2017). The development of cancer occurs basically through two processes: 1) hereditary genetic

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variation in individual cells by random mutation, and 2) natural selection, acting on the resulting phenotypic diversity. Accidentally, a single cell can acquire a set of mutations that allow it autonomy to multiply and invade tissues, causing metastases. (SHEIKH et al., 2017).

The cancer rates in Brazil and in the world, have been growing substantially. As estimated by the National Cancer Institute (INCA), the expectation is that 596 thousand new cases of cancer will be registered between 2016 and 2017 in Brazil. (INCA, 2017). The worldwide projection released by the WHO is that 21 million people develop cancer by 2030. (WHO, 2017). According to INCA, there are more than 100 types of cancer and the causes are varied, and may be external, related to environmental factors such as habits and lifestyle, or internal, mostly related to predetermined genetic load. (INCA, 2017).

Traditional therapies for treating various types of cancer involve chemotherapy and radiation therapy, which in turn cause adverse reactions in patients and usually require the use of medication to control symptoms, causing an iatrogenic cascade. Therefore, there is a growing interest in alternative therapies in the treatment of cancer in the last decades, which promotes research related to the use of natural compounds, both for symptom relief and in studies on the inhibition of factors related to the development of the disease. (HOSOKAWA; TAKEBAYASHI; MINETA, 2018; WEINGART et al., 2018). Given this scenario, biodiversity can represent advantageous strategies in obtaining substances with therapeutic properties and considering that nature provides a gigantic chemical variety with complex structures and difficult to reproduce synthetic, exploring these resources through scientific research becomes an important tool in search of more effective therapies. (POURNADERI et al., 2017; PIMENTEL, 2015).

The set of reactions and enzymes that use nutrients for growth and maintenance of an organism's life is called metabolism. (VALLI; RUSSO; BOLZANI, 2017). Throughout the process of natural evolution of the plants, the plants acquired defense mechanisms for their survival and protection, developing alternative metabolic routes capable of synthesizing harmful compounds to parasites and predators. (FIGUEIREDO; PEDRO; BARROSO, 2014; KAMTE et al., 2017). These compounds are termed secondary metabolites and have aroused the interest of researchers as they represent a vast array of bioactive substances potentially useful for human health. (GRUBER et al., 2018).

Studies have shown that the production of secondary metabolites is affected by interactions with the environment. (MARX et al., 2017). Environmental factors such as climate, ultraviolet radiation, soil quality and water availability can influence both the variety and the amount of compounds produced by secondary metabolism. An often-reported case in the literature is about Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*) which shows a large increase in concentration if its bioactive substances, such as ginsenoside and damarane-saponin, in the summer. (TOHGE; BORGHI; FERNIE, 2018).

Among the compounds produced by plants, essential oils (OEs) are secondary metabolites that are part of the defense system of plants, defending them against herbivorous animals and microorganisms, and which stand out as natural biodegradable products, exhibit low toxicity to mammals and have recognized pharmacological properties, such as antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antifungal action. (SHARIFI-RAD et al. 2017; MOHAMMAD et al., 2016)

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) is cultivated worldwide, India, China, Australia and Nigeria are the biggest producers. Widely used in culinary preparations in the form of pastes, powders, syrups, sweets and teas, ginger imparts pungent and characteristic pungent flavor, and has been used for more than 2500 years, representing important role in traditional Chinese medicine as in alternative therapies for treatment of pain, inflammation, arthritis, urinary tract infections, and disorders of the gastrointestinal tract. (KIRAN et al., 2013). In addition, ginger has been recognized to have pharmacological properties, such as antioxidant and antimicrobial activity. (MARX et al., 2017; LAI et al., 2016; MOJANI et al., 2014; KIRAN et al, 2013).

The cultivation of ginger in Brazil began a few decades ago, through large Japanese farmers, enabling their commercial production. About 70 to 80% of the ginger produced in Brazil is directed to export and the largest production is concentrated in the southern and southeastern states. (BEAL, 2006).

In terms of nutritional aspects, ginger has a low-calorie density (80 calories per 100g) and consists of approximately 79% water, 17% carbohydrates, 2% dietary fiber and 1% protein. In addition, it is a source of vitamin C, folic acid, choline, potassium and magnesium. (TACO, 2014). Sensory perception of ginger is due to two distinct chemical groups: volatile oils - formed mainly by hydrocarbons such as zinzerbene, curcumene and farnesene, which are responsible for flavor and aroma; and non-volatile pungent compounds, represented by gingerols, shogaols, paradols and

zingerone, bioactive compounds to which several studies attribute the spicy characteristics and medicinal properties of ginger. (MARX et al., 2017; SANTOS et al., 2016; ZHENG et al., 2016)

## 2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

All analyses were carried out at the Technology Institute of Food for Nutrition and Health (itt Nutrifor) at Unisinos University.

### 2.1 Extraction and Characterization of Ginger Essential Oil (GEO)

The essential oil of ginger (GEO) was obtained from the fresh and organic rhizome, reduced with the aid of mechanical crusher and submitted to hydrodistillation in a continuous process using Clevenger apparatus for 3h, as described by the Brazilian Pharmacopoeia (ANVISA, 2010). The oil was withdrawn with a Pasteur pipette and stored in amber glass vessel and maintained at -18 °C until analysis.

### 2.2 Gas chromatography coupled to mass spectrometry (GC-MS)

GEO was analyzed by gas chromatography coupled to a mass spectrometer (Shimadzu GC-2010 Plus and Shimadzu GCMS-QP2010 Ultra) equipped with a Shimadzu AOC-20i autoinjector. Chromatographic conditions for identification of the components of the oils were: Rtx- 5MS Crossbond 5% diphenyl-95% dimethyl polysiloxane capillary column (30 m × 0.25 mm i.d., film thickness 0.25 µm, Thames Restek, UK). Injector and detector temperatures were set at 220 and 250 °C, respectively. Column temperature was programmed from 80 °C to 220 °C at a rate of 4 oC/min, lower and upper temperatures were held for 3 and 10 min, respectively. Helium (99.999%) was used as carrier gas with a constant flow rate of 1.5 mL/min. For MS detection, an electron ionization mode with ionization energy of 70 eV was used. Injector and MS transfer line temperatures were set at 220 and 290 °C, respectively. A sample of 1.0 µL was injected, using split mode (split ratio, 1:100).

The composition was reported as a relative percentage of the total peak area using the FID detector.

### **2.3 Identification of essential oil constituents**

To perform Kovats indices, the identification of the essential oil constituents was based on a comparison of their retention indices relative to (C8-C20, Sigma) n-alkanes, compared to published data and spectra of authentic compounds. Compounds were further identified and authenticated using their MS data compared to the NIST11 mass spectral library and published mass spectra (Adams, 2017).

### **2.4 Radical Scavenging Activity**

The radical scavenging activity of samples were evaluated using 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH<sup>•</sup>) and 2,2'-azinobis-3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid (ABTS<sup>•+</sup>) assay.

#### **2.4.1 DPPH free radical scavenging assay**

Free radical scavenging activity of GEO was evaluated quantitatively using 1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) free radical scavenging assay method, as described by Brand-Williams and cols. (1995) with minor modifications. Briefly, 100µL of GEO in varying concentrations (0 - 0.3125 µmol/mL), I) were taken in test tubes and 3.9 ml of 0.1mM solution of DPPH in methanol was added to these tubes and shaken vigorously. The tubes were then allowed to stand in dark at room temperature for 30 min. The control was prepared as above without the essential oil and methanol was used for zero adjustment. Absorbance of the samples were measured at 517 nm. Inhibition of the DPPH radical by GEO was calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Free radical scavenging (\%)} = (\text{Abs}_{\text{blank}} - \text{Abs}_{\text{sample}}) \times 100 / \text{Abs}_{\text{blank}}$$

Where  $\text{Abs}_{\text{sample}}$  is the absorbance of DPPH solution after reacting with a given concentration of essential oil and  $\text{Abs}_{\text{blank}}$  is the absorbance of DPPH solution with methanol blank instead of essential oil. The percentage of DPPH radical scavenging capacity was plotted against the concentration of GEO and their IC<sub>50</sub> values were calculated. All tests were performed in triplicate.

#### 2.4.2 ABTS cation radical-scavenging activity

The radical scavenging capacity of the GEO was assayed ABTS assay (Sigma-Aldrich, EUA) according to the protocol of Re and cols. (1998) with some modifications. Briefly, the ABTS cation radical (ABTS<sup>•+</sup>) was obtained in the reaction of 7 mmol/L stock solution of 2,2'-Azino-bis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid) diammonium salt with 2.45 mmol/L potassium persulfate (K<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>8</sub>) stock solution (1:1, v/v). The mixture was left for 16 h in the dark at room temperature before use. Then, ABTS<sup>•+</sup> reagent was diluted with ethanol to obtain an absorbance of 0.700 ± 0.02 at 734 nm. For the study, different concentration (0.1 – 0.5 mg/mL) of GEO (2.0 µL) were mixed with 198 µL of ABTS<sup>•+</sup> radical cation solution in 96-well plates. The mixture was stirred and left to stand for 10 min in dark, then the absorbance was taken at 734 nm against a blank using iith UV/VIS spectrophotometer plate reader (SpectraMax M5, Molecular Devices, CA). The free radical-scavenging capacity was calculated by the following equation:

$$\text{ABTS radical scavenging (\%)} = (\text{Abs}_{\text{blank}} - \text{Abs}_{\text{sample}}) \times 100 / \text{Abs}_{\text{blank}}$$

Where  $\text{Abs}_{\text{sample}}$  is the absorbance of ABTSsolution after reacting with a given concentration of essential oil and  $\text{Abs}_{\text{blank}}$  is the absorbance of ABTS solution with methanol blank instead of essential oil. The percentage of ABTS radical scavenging capacity was plotted against the concentration of GEO and their IC<sub>50</sub> values (the concentration required for scavenging 50% of the ABTS) were calculated. All tests were performed in triplicate.

## 2.5 Cell Culture

The colorectal adenocarcinoma HT-29 (ATCC HTB-38), breast adenocarcinoma MDA-MB-231(ATCC HTB-26) and hepatocellular carcinoma HepG2 (ATCC HB-8065) cell lines were obtained from the Cell Bank of Rio de Janeiro (BCRJ, Brazil). HT-29 was cultured using McCoy's 5A medium modified (Gibco BRL Grand Island, US), and Hep-G2 and MDA-MB-231were cultured using DMEM (Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium) medium (Sigma-Aldrich, USA), both supplemented with fetal bovine serum (Life Technologies, Carlsbad, CA) to a final concentration of 10% and antibiotics (200 U of penicillin and 50 mg of streptomycin per liter, Sigma-Aldrich, Saint Louis, MO 63103, USA). All cells were grown in T-75 cm<sup>2</sup> flask in a humidified atmosphere of 5% CO<sub>2</sub> in air at 37 °C and media were changed every other day.

## 2.6 Cytotoxicity assay

Cytotoxicity assay was performed using the standard MTT assay (3-[4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl]-2,5-diphenyl tetrazolium bromide) (MOSMANN, 1983) with some modifications. The MTT assay consisted of the conversion of water soluble MTT to the insoluble formazan. Briefly, 100 µL of medium containing cells at a density of 1.5 × 10<sup>5</sup> cells/well were seeded in a flat-bottom 96-well plate and kept in 5% CO<sub>2</sub> at 37 °C for one night before treatment to allow adherence. Then, the medium was replaced with a 100 µL of a serially diluted of GEO (1,37 – 1000 µg/mL) and incubated for another 24 h. After that, 10 µL of MTT solution (5 mg/mL, Sigma-Aldrich) was added in each well. Plates were incubated at 37 °C for 4 h. Cultures were removed from incubator and the resulting formazan crystals were dissolve by adding 100 µL of dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO). After this period, plates were incubated for another 30 minutes in a shaker to dissolve formazan crystals. The absorbance of each well was determined by a spectrophotometer at dual wavelengths of 570 and 690 nm for the background on a multi-well plate reader with software (SpectraMax M5, Molecular Devices). As positive and negative control, was used DMSO 3% and 0,1%, respectively. The viability percentage was calculated by the following formula:

$$\% \text{ Viability} = (\text{Abs}_{\text{sample}} - \text{Abs}_{\text{blank}}/\text{Abs}_{\text{control}} - \text{Abs}_{\text{blank}}) \times 100$$

The concentration providing 50% inhibition ( $\text{IC}_{50}$ ) was calculated from a graph plotting inhibition percentage against different EOs concentration. Each experimental condition was analyzed in triplicate, with three experiments for each EO. Growth inhibition was calculated as follows: cytotoxic activity of the essential oil was defined as a 50% reduction in viability of cells ( $\text{IC}_{50}$  value).

## 2.7 Statistical analysis

All data are reported as the mean value  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD). A minimum of three replicates were performed for each experiment. The Gaussian distribution was checked by the Shapiro–Wilk normality test. Statistical analysis was performed using the two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Tukey was used as a *post hoc* analysis. Differences at  $P < 0.05$  were considered statistically significant. The  $\text{IC}_{50}$ 's values were calculated by nonlinear regression. Statistical values and figures were obtained using GraphPad Prism version 6.0 for Windows (GraphPad Software, Inc., La Jolla, CA, USA).

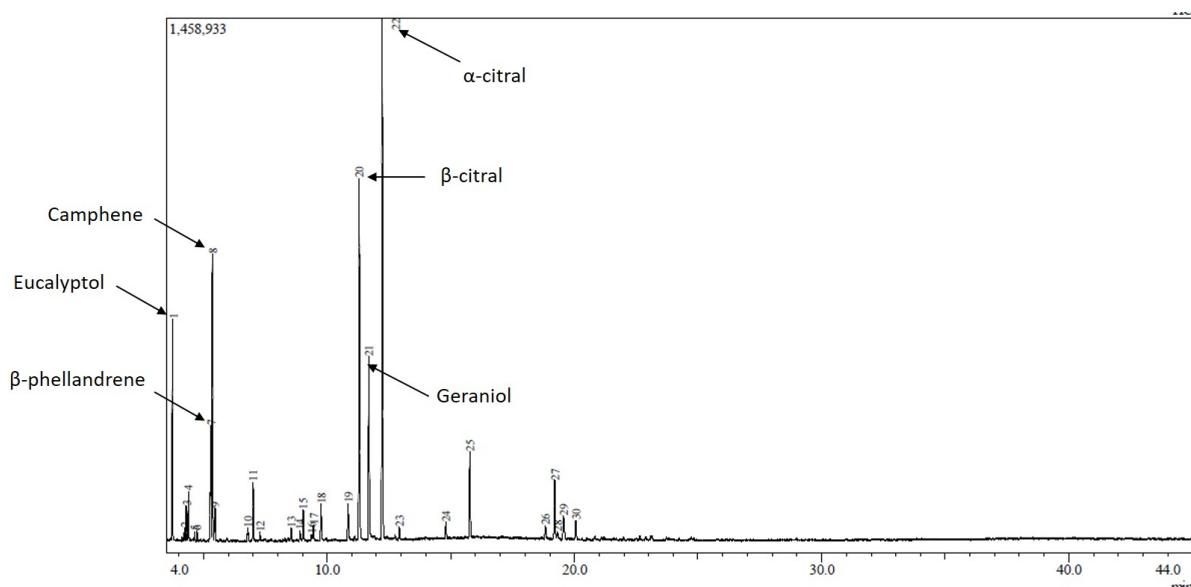
## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Chemical composition of the *Zingiber officinale* essential oil

The essential oil *Zingiber officinale* obtained by hydrodistillation showed amber color with a strong aromatic odor. The average yield was 0.061% on fresh weight basis. In GEO chromatographic analysis (Fig. 1), 30 compounds were identified based on comparison of the mass spectrum with the NIST11 database representing 93.97% of the total oil (Table 1). The GEO was characterized by the dominant presence of  $\alpha$ -citril, also called geranal (29.1%),  $\beta$ -citril, also called neural (16.6%) and geraniol (10.84%). Other significant constituents in GEO included eucalyptol (6.75%), beta-phellandrene (6.5%), camphene (5.51%) and neurol acetate (4.64%). These results agree with other authors, such as Kiran e cols. (2013) who identified as

major volatile constituents of GEO including camphene (8.49%), nerol (4.95%), geranal (12.36%), zingiberene (20.98%) and  $\beta$ -sesquiphellandrene (7.96%).

Figure 1. GC-MS analysis of essential oil from *Zingiber officinale*



Another study that evaluated the biological activity of ginger from the South of Brazil found similar results with those of our study, observing high concentrations of geranal (20.92%) and nerol (14.34%). (SOARES, 2009). The studies conducted by Santos and cols. (2011) showed geranal as one of the main components of GEO but also found significant concentrations of camphene,  $\beta$ -phellandrene and eucalyptol. (SANTOS, 2011).

Although the contents of these main constituents in essential oil derived from *Z. officinale* are similar to the results found in this study, there is a difference in chemical composition of GEO compared with those grown in other regions of the world. This variation in chemical composition may be attributed to various factors in growing conditions, such as temperature, humidity, radiation, climate and harvest seasons. (SANTOS et al., 2016).

Table 1. Chemical composition of the *Zingiber officinale* essential oil

No.	Name	RT	KI	MW (g/mol)	Conc. (%)
1	Camphene	3.738	-	136	5.513
2	beta-pinene	4.235	-	136	0.437
3	6-methyl-5-hepten-2-one	4.304	-	126	1.187
4	beta-myrcene	4.379	-	136	1.692
5	octanal	4.626	1009	128	0.186
6	alpha-phellandrene	4.730	1013	136	0.451
7	beta-phellandrene	5.299	1036	136	6.503
8	eucalyptol	5.363	1039	154	6.754
9	2-heptanol acetate	5.458	1042	158	2.194
10	2-nonenone	6.793	1097	142	0.608
11	beta-linalool	6.999	1104	154	1.212
12	2-butene ozonide	7.279	1114	104	0.478
13	beta-citronellal	8.549	1156	154	0.398
14	cis-verbenol	8.891	1167	152	0.187
15	endo-borneol	9.026	1172	154	2.256
16	terpinel-4-ol	9.363	1183	154	0.219
17	trans-carene-4,5-epoxy	9.450	1186	152	0.348
18	L-alpha-terpineol	9.754	1196	154	1.421
19	beta-citronellol	10.851	1231	156	1.454
20	beta-citral	11.291	1245	152	16.609
21	geraniol	11.687	1257	154	10.837
22	alpha-citral	12.221	1274	152	29.098
23	2-undecanone	12.926	1297	170	0.721
24	citronellol acetate	14.802	1356	198	0.362
25	neurol acetate	15.768	1387	196	4.640
26	alpha-curcumene	18.820	1486	202	0.388
27	(-)-zingiberene	19.202	1499	204	2.600
28	gamma-muurolene	19.311	1503	204	0.139
29	alpha-famesene	19.567	1511	204	0.886
30	beta-sesquiphellandrene	20.049	1528	204	0.696
Total					93.970

RT: Retention time (min). KI: Kovats index relative to n-alkanes (C8–C20) on DM-5MS column.

### 3.2 Antioxidant Activity of GEO

Oxidation of biological molecules induces a variety of pathological disease including atherosclerosis or cancer and it's been suggested as the central cause for the pathogenesis of manifold inflammatory conditions including cancers, neuronal cell injury, hemorrhage, and septic shock. (JENNA et al. 2013) These damages are caused due to the presence of free radicals. For that reason, the concept of pharmacological supplements to defend against free radicals with antioxidants has become an intense area of research (GOUNDER; LINGMALLU, 2012). It is known that the antioxidant activity of plants is due to their capacity to be donors of hydrogen atoms or electrons and to capture the free radicals. The 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl

(DPPH) and 2,2-azino-bis(3-ethylbenzthiazoline-6-sulfonic acid (ABTS) assays are the classic methods to detect the antioxidant activity of chemical compounds.

*Zingiber officinale* has shown important antioxidant properties. This is due to a notable property of cross of reactive oxygen species (ROS), free radicals, peroxides and various other oxidants. such properties are primarily found on GEO. (AHMAD, 2015). In our estudy, GEO showed antioxidant effect in inhibiting DPPH radical, with  $IC_{50}$  values of  $4.43 \pm 0.20$  mg/mL. The GEO tested also exhibited excellent free radical scavenging properties against ABTS cation radical,  $0.74 \pm 0.05$  mg/mL if compared to DPPH radical scavenging potential. The obtained results are presented in Table 2.

These results demonstrate that the essential oil has antioxidant power due to the reduction of radicals. Several studies have shown that antioxidant effects increase significantly with higher concentrations of both ginger extracts and with oleoresin essential oils. (SINGH et al, 2008; BELLIK, 2014) when compared the ABTS antioxidant capacity between oleoresin and GEO. In general, oleoresin showed higher antioxidant activity ( $IC_{50} = 1.820 \pm 0.034$  mg/mL) when compared to the essential oil of ginger ( $IC_{50} = 110.14 \pm 8.44$  mg/mL. (BELLIK, 2014). The antioxidant potential of ginger oil may be due to the mixture of dozens of compounds of different functional groups, polarity and chemical behavior that produces synergism or antagonistic effect on antioxidant activity. (JENNA et al, 2013).

Table 2. Scavenging effects of GEO on DPPH and ABTS radical assays.

Methods of antioxidant determination		
	DPPH	ABTS
$IC_{50}$ (mg/mL)	$4.43 \pm 0.20$	$0.74 \pm 0.05$

Results are means  $\pm$  SD (n=2)

Although, different results of  $IC_{50}$  value between tested methods was probably caused unequal structure and mechanism of action of both molecules as ABTS cation radical as DPPH radical. DPPH reactions are highly sensitive to reaction environment, i.e. water and solvent, pH, oxygen, light exposure (SCHAICH, 2015).

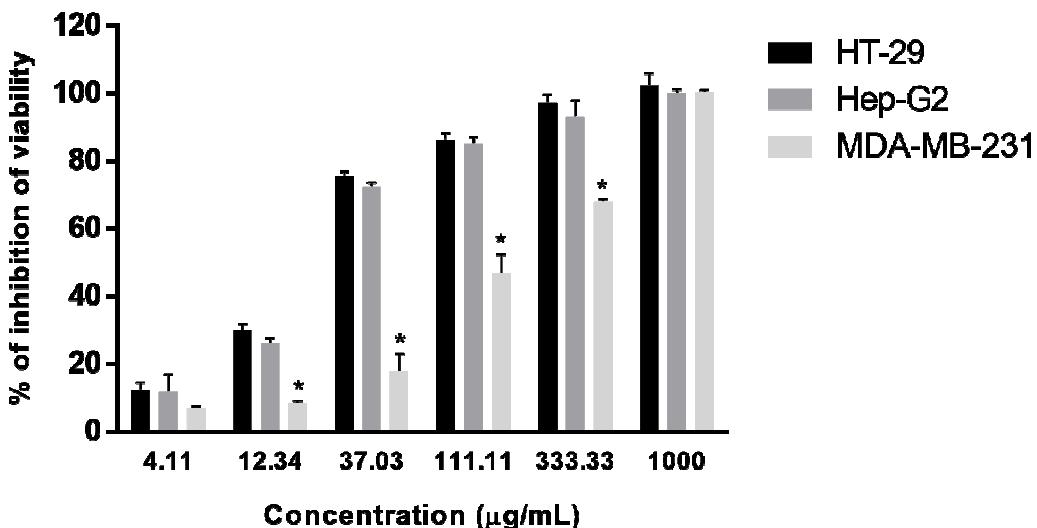
ABTS radical cation is reactive to most antioxidants (MOŠOVSKÁA; NOVÁKOVÁ; KALIŇÁKB, 2015; CANO et al., 2000).

### 3.3 MTT Cytotoxicity Assay

From the most recent studies, constituents of ginger have been reported to have a vital effect on the control of tumor development through positive regulation of the tumor suppressor gene and induction of apoptosis. For example, 6-gingerol has been found to play a role in the suppression of hyperproliferation, transformation and inflammatory pathways that participate in numerous stages of carcinogenesis, angiogenesis and metastasis; in addition, it acts at the beginning of apoptosis in the cell line of prostate cancer through inhibition of the reduction of the cellular invasion. In addition, 6-gingerol stimulates apoptosis through up-regulation of the cell cycle not activated by anti-inflammatory drugs (NAG-1). In addition, other abundant terpenoids have also been found present in ginger, such as geranal, zingerberene, camphene and other oxygenated monoterpenes that may exert synergistic anticancer activity. (MOHAMMAD et al, 2016; CHAGONDA; CHALCHAT, 2016).

These evidences suggested that GEO might have good anticancer activity as well. In our study, the MTT (3-[4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl]-2,5-diphenyl tetrazolium bromide) assay was used to evaluate the effect of GEO on the cell viability of HT-29 (colorectal adenocarcinoma), HepG2 (hepatocellular carcinoma) and MDA-MB-231 (breast adenocarcinoma) cell lines as an assessment of anticancer activity. IC<sub>50</sub> values of GEO on HT-29, HepG2 and MDA-MB-231 cells were  $37.41 \pm 0.38 \mu\text{g/mL}$ ,  $3.73 \pm 0.10 \mu\text{g/mL}$ , and  $145.19 \pm 0.95 \mu\text{g/mL}$ , respectively. The results (Figure 2) showed that GEO had good inhibition of proliferation of all cell lines at concentrations ranging from 4.11 to 1000  $\mu\text{g/mL}$ . The inhibitory effect was dose-dependent, and the higher the concentration of GEO, the better was the inhibition.

Figure 2. Effect of different concentrations of GEO on viability of HT-29, HepG2 and MDB-MA-231.



Bar graph shows the mean percentage  $\pm$  standard deviation (SD) \* $P<0.01$  when compare each concentration with HT-29 and Hep-G2 cells.

A recent study evaluated the action of an isolated compound of ginger essential oil, citral, on colorectal cancer cells. The MTT cell viability data illustrated that citral suppressed the growth of HCT116 and HT29 cells with a dose dependent response. In addition, citral treatment did not exhibit cytotoxicity when analyzed in normal colon cells. (SHEIKH et al, 2017). Another study has identified that the action of citral-related apoptosis is mitochondrial and acts in a dose-dependent and time-dependent. It is known that the disruption of mitochondrial membrane integrity is regulated by the interaction between pro and anti-apoptotic Bcl-2 proteins. Proapoptotic proteins, such as Bax and Bid, act as promoters of apoptosis, while anti-apoptotic proteins, such as Bcl-2 and Bcl-xL, function as inhibitors of apoptosis. Some components of the essential oils act as apoptotic stimuli, provoking pro-apoptotic proteins (Bax), that can move to the external mitochondrial membrane and promote the elevation of the mitochondrial permeability transition pores, leading to the extravavaamento of apoptogenic factors such as cytochrome c, inducing factor of apoptosis. (VOLKMAN et al., 2014; OLA et al., 2011)

The effects of bioactive compounds from other similar roots are also being studied against tumors. A recent study evaluated the antiproliferative activity of

turmeric essential oil against selected human breast cancer cell lines: (MCF7), human cervical carcinoma (Ca Ski) cells, lung carcinoma cells (A549), human colon carcinoma (HCT116 and HT29) and non-cancerous human lung fibroblasts (MRC5). Turmeric rhizome essential oil exhibited strong cytotoxicity against HT29 cells (IC<sub>50</sub> value of  $4.9 \pm 0.4 \mu\text{g/mL}$ ), moderate cytotoxicity against normal lung cells and low toxicity against the remaining cells. (HONG et al., 2014)

Hepatocellular carcinoma, the predominant primary liver cancer in most countries, is the fifth most frequent cancer in the world. (RAHIMLOU et al., 2016) Hepatic steatosis is characterized by overload of triglycerides in hepatocytes that can injure and subsequently lead to liver cancer. (LIU et al., 2013). Animal studies have shown that the active compounds in ginger can enhance the antioxidant defense systems, such as glutathione peroxidase and glutathione S-transferase, protecting the liver against oxidative damage and reduce levels of hepatic steatosis. (RAHIMLOU et al., 2016).

A study from University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute described that other species of ginger may also act as antitumor agents. This study evaluated the action of zerumbone, a subtropical ginger essential oil isolate, against MDA-MB-231 breast cancer. The researchers identified that the compound exerts a cytotoxic, antiproliferative and proapoptotic response in the cell breast cancer studied. (SEHRAWAT et al., 2014). Recently, another team of researchers from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences in Malaysia evaluated the effect of the citral compound isolated on breast cancer cells. The cytotoxic effect of citral on MDA-MB-231 cells was evaluated by the MTT assay. Survival was observed as the citral concentration increased. The IC<sub>50</sub> (citral concentration which reduced 50% cell viability relative to vehicle control) was  $10.00 \pm 0.14 \mu\text{g/mL}$  for MDA-MB-231 cells in 48 hours of incubation. The results suggest that citral could be a potential new agent which can eliminate breast cancer cells. (NIGJEH et al., 2018).

#### 4 CONCLUSIONS

The current cancer epidemic has drastically increased the search for compounds that can prevent the onset of the disease as well as the search for natural alternative compounds that lead to fewer side effects to patients. This study provided important evidence on the composition of ginger essential oil as a positive antioxidant action bioactive natural compounds and showed that the essential oil exhibited a strong inhibition against cancer cells. The GEO was characterized by the presence of  $\alpha$ -citral, also called geranal (29.1%),  $\beta$ -citral, also called neural (16.6%) and geraniol (10.84%). According to literature data, these major compounds may be responsible for the medicinal properties attributed to ginger. The GEO also presented excellent free radical scavenging in DPPH and ABTS radicals ( $IC_{50}$  values of  $4.43 \pm 0.20$  mg/mL and  $0.74 \pm 0.05$  mg/mL), respectively. Furthermore, the inhibitory effect of this essential oil on HT-29 (colorectal adenocarcinoma), HepG2 (hepatocellular carcinoma) and MDA-MB-231 (breast adenocarcinoma) cell lines was conducted. The results showed that GEO has inhibition of proliferation of all cell at concentrations ranging from 4.11 to 1000  $\mu$ g/mL. The inhibitory effect was dose-dependent, and the higher the GEO concentration, the better the inhibition. This suggests that GEO is a promising essential oil with biological properties demonstrating an excellent antioxidant and cytotoxic activity. However, further studies are needed to understand the origin of the activity. Particularly, major constituents of the essential oil need to be tested individually for their antioxidant and cytotoxic activity.

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