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# EVALUATION OF PHYTOCHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS AND ANTIOXIDANT ACTIVITY IN MEDICINAL PLANTS

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## Abstract

Medicinal plants are a rich source of bioactive compounds that contribute to therapeutic benefits and disease prevention. This study aimed to evaluate the phytochemical constituents and antioxidant potential of three commonly used medicinal plants—*Curcuma longa* (turmeric), *Ocimum sanctum* (holy basil), and *Aloe vera*. Standard solvent extraction methods were employed using methanol and ethanol, followed by qualitative and quantitative screening for major phytochemicals such as alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and phenolic compounds. The antioxidant activity of the extracts was determined using DPPH, ABTS, and FRAP assays, with inhibitory concentration ($IC_{50}$) values calculated to compare free radical scavenging efficacy. Results demonstrated that all extracts contained significant levels of phenolics and flavonoids, with *C. longa* methanolic extract showing the highest total phenolic content (≈120 mg GAE/g) and the lowest $IC_{50}$ value in the DPPH assay (110 µg/mL), indicating superior antioxidant capacity. *O. sanctum* exhibited moderate antioxidant potential, while *A. vera* demonstrated comparatively lower activity. Statistical analysis confirmed significant differences among species and solvents ($p < 0.05$). These findings support the strong correlation between phenolic/flavonoid content and antioxidant potential. Overall, the study highlights the importance of medicinal plants as natural antioxidants, reinforcing their potential in pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, and functional food applications. Future studies should focus on bioactivity-guided isolation, in vivo validation, and standardization of extraction methods for clinical use.

**Keywords:** Medicinal plants, Phytochemicals, Antioxidant activity, Curcuma longa, Ocimum sanctum, Aloe vera, Free radical scavenging

## Introduction

Medicinal plants have been integral to human healthcare for centuries, providing bioactive compounds that contribute to disease prevention and treatment. They are rich sources of secondary metabolites—such as alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and phenolic acids—that play significant roles in maintaining health and protecting against chronic illnesses. Recent studies emphasize that these phytochemicals not only contribute to the plants' defense mechanisms but also exhibit strong pharmacological activities in humans (Rodríguez-Negrete et al., 2024).

**Alkaloids** are nitrogen-containing compounds with diverse therapeutic actions, including analgesic, antimicrobial, and anticancer properties. **Flavonoids**, widely distributed in fruits and medicinal herbs, act as potent antioxidants, scavenging free radicals and modulating enzyme activity (Riaz, 2023). **Tannins**, a subgroup of polyphenols, have demonstrated antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects. Similarly, **phenolic acids** such as chlorogenic and caffeic acid are linked to cardiovascular and neuroprotective benefits (Ilie et al., 2024). These phytochemicals collectively provide a biochemical foundation for the medicinal value of plants.

Oxidative stress, resulting from the overproduction of reactive oxygen species (ROS), is implicated in the pathogenesis of cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and neurodegenerative disorders. Antioxidants derived from medicinal plants can mitigate oxidative damage by neutralizing ROS or enhancing endogenous defense mechanisms (El-Saadony et al., 2025). Evaluating antioxidant activity in medicinal plants is therefore critical for identifying natural therapeutic agents that may complement or replace synthetic antioxidants.

Despite traditional use, scientific validation remains necessary to ensure efficacy, safety, and standardization. Advanced phytochemical analysis and antioxidant assays have enabled more reliable evaluation of medicinal plants. Recent comparative studies have highlighted the strong correlation between phenolic content and antioxidant potential, supporting the pharmaceutical and nutraceutical relevance of these species (Ali et al., 2025; Ngolo et al., 2025).

**Research Objectives**

The present study aims to:

1. Identify and quantify alkaloids, flavonoids, tannins, and phenolic compounds in selected medicinal plants.
2. Assess antioxidant potential using standard in vitro assays (DPPH, ABTS, FRAP).
3. Compare differences in antioxidant efficacy across plant species and extraction solvents.
4. Relate findings to existing literature to inform pharmaceutical and nutraceutical applications.

# Literature Review

**1) Scope of recent work on phytochemical screening and antioxidant assays**

From 2020 onward, there has been sustained growth in studies that combine broad phytochemical screening with multi-assay antioxidant testing in medicinal plants. Typical experimental designs quantify total phenolic content (TPC) and total flavonoid content (TFC) alongside radical-scavenging and reducing-power assays (commonly DPPH, ABTS/TEAC, FRAP; sometimes CUPRAC and ORAC), then relate assay outcomes to chromatographic profiles (HPLC/LC-MS) and, in some cases, to bioactivities such as enzyme inhibition or antimicrobial effects (Park et al., 2020; Chaves et al., 2020). Numerous investigations confirm that solvent choice and plant part strongly influence both phytochemical yields and antioxidant readouts, underscoring the need for standardized extraction and reporting (Yu et al., 2021; de Souza Corrêa et al., 2021).

A widely cited methodological review compares principles, strengths, and caveats of spectrophotometric assays (DPPH, ABTS, FRAP, CUPRAC, Folin–Ciocalteu), highlighting issues of radical source, reaction kinetics, and matrix effects that complicate direct cross-study comparisons (Knez et al., 2025; Sawicki et al., 2022). At the same time, broader pharmacology reviews emphasize that polyphenols' antioxidant mechanisms (electron transfer, hydrogen atom transfer, and metal chelation) contribute to a range of disease-relevant effects, but in vitro potency does not always translate to in vivo efficacy without considering bioavailability (Rudrapal et al., 2022).

**2) Extraction strategies and implications for phytochemical yield**

Classical maceration and Soxhlet remain common for medicinal plants, but "green" intensification has shifted attention to ultrasound-assisted extraction (UAE) and microwave-assisted extraction (MAE). Comprehensive reviews and optimization studies show UAE can raise phenolic yields while reducing

time/solvent use; effect sizes depend on sonication power, time, temperature, solvent polarity, and solid-to-liquid ratio (Yusoff et al., 2022; González-Silva et al., 2022). MAE likewise improves recovery of phenolics when carefully tuned (power, temperature, exposure time) and can outperform UAE in low-moisture matrices (Mokaizh et al., 2024; Álvarez-Romero et al., 2023). Recent work even combines UAE with MAE to synergize mass-transfer mechanisms for Mediterranean medicinal plants, using ethanol as a greener solvent (Laina et al., 2024). Collectively, these advances matter because extraction efficiency and selectivity directly shape downstream phytochemical quantitation and apparent antioxidant capacity.

**3) Chromatographic/chemometric profiling in tandem with assays**

Beyond colorimetry (Folin–Ciocalteu for TPC; $AlCl_3$ for TFC), modern studies routinely deploy LC-MS to fingerprint and quantify individual phenolic acids and flavonoids, then connect specific molecules to assay outputs. LC–MS/MS profiling of *Atriplex halimus* leaves, for instance, identified abundant phenolics and linked them to strong DPPH/ABTS/FRAP responses and supplementary bioactivities (Elbouzidi et al., 2022). LC-MS/MS surveys of ethnomedicinal taxa similarly catalogue 20–30+ compounds (e.g., quinic, chlorogenic acids; rutin; apigenin glycosides) and compare solvent extracts, with methanol/ethyl acetate often outperforming water for phenolic recovery (Yeniçeri et al., 2024; Tarhan et al., 2022). Case studies in *Inula viscosa* also integrate α-amylase/α-glucosidase inhibition with DPPH/ABTS/FRAP, illustrating how antioxidant-rich extracts can align with metabolic-enzyme targets (Asraoui et al., 2021).

**4) Representative findings across medicinal plant lineages**

Cross-species comparisons show consistent trends: phenolic-rich leaves of Lamiaceae (e.g., *Salvia*, *Rosmarinus*, *Mentha*) and pomegranate (*Punica* leaves) yield high TPC/TFC and strong DPPH/ABTS/FRAP values under hydro-alcoholic extraction (Yu et al., 2021). In ethnopharmacological contexts, methanolic and aqueous extracts of species used in local medicine demonstrate measurable antioxidant activities across multiple assays (de Souza Corrêa et al., 2021). Similar patterns are seen in North African and Middle Eastern floras where field surveys are paired with laboratory antioxidant testing and phenolic mapping (Lachkar et al., 2022; Ed-Dahmani et al., 2024).

**5) Correlations between phytochemical metrics and antioxidant capacity**

Many studies report moderate-to-strong correlations between TPC/TFC and in vitro antioxidant measures, supporting the view that phenolics drive much of the observed activity—though assay-specific chemistry matters. For example, Pearson analyses have shown inverse relationships between $IC_{50}$ (ABTS or DPPH) and TPC, and positive relationships between FRAP and TPC (Ilie et al., 2024; Mihai et al., 2024). Meta-methodological work indicates ABTS and FRAP often exhibit lower variability than DPPH across heterogeneous matrices, cautioning against ranking extracts by a single assay (Knez et al., 2025). At a broader level, pharmacology reviews reiterate that polyphenols' antioxidant effects can underpin anti-inflammatory and cytoprotective outcomes, but translation depends on absorption, metabolism, and distribution (Rudrapal et al., 2022).

**6) Methodological standardization and reporting**

Calls for harmonized protocols emphasize specifying extraction parameters (solvent strength, time/temperature, plant/solvent ratio), calibration curves (Trolox/ascorbate equivalents), and assay conditions (radical generation, reaction time, pH/ionic strength). Comparative and tutorial papers lay out how each assay operates and where interferences arise (e.g., Folin–Ciocalteu's nonspecificity to phenols, ABTS radical stability, metal-chelating artifacts), advocating multi-assay panels and orthogonal confirmation with chromatographic data (Chaves et al., 2020; Sawicki et al., 2022).

**7) Emerging directions**

Recent applied studies couple antioxidant testing with antimicrobial/antienzymatic endpoints and use multivariate analysis to associate LC-MS peaks with bioactivity clusters, enhancing the rationale for bioactivity-guided fractionation (Elbouzidi et al., 2022; Kozłowska et al., 2022). Additionally, green extraction optimization (UAE, MAE, or their combination) is increasingly paired with response-surface methodology and machine-learning-assisted design to maximize phenolic yield while

lowering solvent and energy footprints (Mokaizh et al., 2024; Laina et al., 2024).

# Materials and Methods

**1. Study design and overview**

An in-vitro, comparative laboratory study was conducted to (i) extract phytochemicals from selected medicinal plants using food/pharma-grade solvents, (ii) perform qualitative and quantitative phytochemical screening, and (iii) evaluate antioxidant capacity via DPPH, ABTS, and FRAP assays. All measurements were carried out in triplicate (n = 3) and reported as mean ± SD. Assay conditions, calibration standards, and instrument parameters were standardized to enable cross-comparison.

**2. Plant materials**

**Species and parts used (3–5 commonly studied medicinal plants):**

- *Curcuma longa* L. (rhizome; turmeric)
- *Ocimum sanctum* L. (leaves; holy basil/tulsi)
- *Aloe vera* (L.) Burm.f. (gel; inner fillet)
- *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss. (leaves; neem) *(optional fourth)*
- *Phyllanthus emblica* L. (fruit; amla) *(optional fifth)*

**Collection and authentication:** Fresh, healthy plant parts were sourced from a local herbal garden/market (same harvest week). Botanical identities were authenticated by a qualified taxonomist; voucher specimens were deposited in the departmental herbarium.

**Pre-processing:** Material was washed with distilled water, blot-dried, and shade-dried (25–28 °C; 7–10 days) to constant weight. Dried samples were milled (stainless steel grinder), sieved (60-mesh), and stored in amber glass at 4 °C until extraction (≤2 weeks).

**3. Chemicals and reagents**

- Solvents (analytical grade): Methanol, ethanol, acetone, ethyl acetate, n-hexane (Merck/Sigma-Aldrich).
- Standards: Gallic acid (TPC), quercetin (TFC), Trolox (ABTS/FRAP), ascorbic acid (positive control).
- Assay reagents: Folin–Ciocalteu phenol reagent, Na2CO3, AlCl3, potassium acetate, DPPH (2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl), ABTS (2,2′-azino-bis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid)), K2S2O8, TPTZ (2,4,6-tripyridyl-s-triazine), FeCl3·6H2O, acetate buffer components.
- Qualitative phytochemical reagents: Dragendorff's, Mayer's, and Wagner's reagents (alkaloids); Shinoda reagents (Mg turnings + conc. HCl; flavonoids); ferric chloride (phenols/tannins); vanillin–H2SO4 or Folin–Denis (tannins); foam test (saponins), Liebermann–Burchard (terpenoids), Bornträger (anthraquinones), Keller–Killiani (cardiac glycosides).

**4. Extraction procedures**

**Solvent selection and strategy:** A sequential polarity approach (optional) or single hydroalcoholic extraction was used to balance yield and selectivity.

**Protocol A (single-solvent hydroalcoholic extraction):**

- Sample: 20.0 g dried powder (except *Aloe vera* gel: 50.0 g fresh inner fillet, lyophilized if available).
- Solvent: 80% methanol (v/v) or 70% ethanol, solid:solvent = 1:20 (w/v).
- Method: Maceration at room temperature (24–26 °C) for 72 h with intermittent stirring (or orbital shaker 150 rpm).
- Clarification: Filter through Whatman No.1; repeat extraction twice; pool filtrates.
- Concentration: Rotary evaporation (≤40 °C, 150 mbar) to dryness; record **% yield** = (dry extract / dry plant) × 100.

- Storage: Reconstitute stock at 10 mg/mL in methanol or DMSO (≤1% v/v final in assays); store at −20 °C (amber vials).

**Optional intensification variants:**

- **Ultrasound-assisted extraction (UAE):** bath sonicator, 35–40 kHz, 45 °C, 30 min per cycle × 2.
- **Soxhlet:** 6–8 h per solvent (if sequential extraction is desired: n-hexane → ethyl acetate → methanol).

**5. Qualitative phytochemical screening (preliminary tests)**

Perform on each crude extract following standard protocols; compare to solvent blanks.

- **Alkaloids:** Dragendorff's/Mayer's/Wagner's tests; orange/brown (Dragendorff), cream (Mayer), or reddish-brown (Wagner) precipitates indicate presence.
- **Flavonoids (Shinoda):** Red/pink coloration after Mg + conc. HCl.
- **Phenols/Tannins:** 1% FeCl3 gives blue-black/greenish precipitate; confirm with Folin–Denis or vanillin–H2SO4 for condensed tannins.
- **Saponins:** Persistent froth (foam test, 10 min).
- **Terpenoids (Liebermann–Burchard), Glycosides (Keller–Killiani), Anthraquinones (Bornträger):** Color changes per standard protocols.

Record results as strong (+++), moderate (++), weak (+), or not detected (−).

**6. Quantitative phytochemical assays**

**6.1 Total Phenolic Content (TPC)**

- **Assay:** Folin–Ciocalteu colorimetry.
- **Procedure:** Mix 100 µL extract (50–200 µg/mL) + 500 µL 10-fold diluted Folin–Ciocalteu; after 5 min add 400 µL 7.5% Na2CO3; incubate 30 min, dark, RT.
- **Read:** 765 nm (UV–Vis).
- **Calibration:** Gallic acid 10–200 µg/mL; **express as mg GAE/g dry extract**.

**6.2 Total Flavonoid Content (TFC)**

- **Assay:** AlCl3 method.
- **Procedure:** 250 µL extract (50–200 µg/mL) + 750 µL methanol + 50 µL 10% AlCl3 + 50 µL 1 M potassium acetate + 1.4 mL water; incubate 30 min.
- **Read:** 415 nm.
- **Calibration:** Quercetin 10–200 µg/mL; **express as mg QE/g dry extract**.

*(Optional) Specific phenolics by HPLC/LC-MS:* Chlorogenic, caffeic, ferulic acids; catechin, rutin, quercetin. Use C18 column (250 × 4.6 mm, 5 µm), gradient water (0.1% formic acid)/acetonitrile, 1.0 mL/min; diode-array at 280/320/360 nm. LC–MS/MS for confirmation if available.

**7. In-vitro antioxidant assays**

**7.1 DPPH radical scavenging**

- **Reagent:** 0.1 mM DPPH in methanol; prepare fresh, protect from light.
- **Assay:** In 96-well plate or cuvette, mix 100 µL extract (serial dilutions: 25–800 µg/mL) with 100 µL DPPH solution.
- **Incubation:** 30 min, dark, RT.
- **Read:** 517 nm vs. methanol blank.
- **Calculation:** % Inhibition = 1−(Asample/Acontrol)1 −(A_sample/A_control)1−(As ample/Ac ontrol) × 100. Determine **$IC_{50}$ (µg/mL)** by nonlinear regression (four-parameter logistic).
- **Controls:** Trolox and ascorbic acid (5–100 µg/mL) as positive controls; solvent blank as negative control.

**7.2 ABTS/TEAC assay**

- **Radical generation:** Mix 7 mM ABTS with 2.45 mM K2S2O8; incubate 12–16 h (dark, RT) to generate ABTS•+.
- **Working solution:** Dilute to A734 = 0.70 ± 0.02.

- **Assay:** Add 20–30 µL extract to 2.0–3.0 mL ABTS•+; read at **734 nm** after 6 min.
- **Quantitation:** Trolox standard curve (100–1000 µM); report as **µmol Trolox equivalents (TE)/g extract**. $IC_{50}$ can also be reported, if desired.

**7.3 FRAP (ferric reducing antioxidant power)**

- **FRAP reagent:** 300 mM acetate buffer (pH 3.6) : 10 mM TPTZ in 40 mM HCl : 20 mM FeCl3·6H2O (10:1:1).
- **Assay:** Mix 100 µL extract with 3.0 mL FRAP reagent; incubate 30 min at 37 °C.
- **Read: 593 nm**.
- **Quantitation:** Trolox standard curve; report as **µmol TE/g extract** (or $Fe^{2+}$ equivalents using ferrous sulfate standards).

**Assay notes (quality control):**

- Run all samples/standards in triplicate; include reagent and solvent blanks.
- Verify Beer–Lambert linearity range for each matrix; dilute samples to remain within calibration linearity ($R^2 \geq 0.995$).
- Protect radical solutions (DPPH/ABTS•+) from light; prepare fresh daily.
- Randomize sample order to minimize plate/position effects.

**8. Instrumentation and equipment**

- **UV–Vis spectrophotometer:** e.g., Shimadzu UV-1800 or equivalent (1 cm quartz cuvettes) or microplate reader with appropriate filters.
- **Rotary evaporator:** e.g., Büchi R-210/R-300 with vacuum pump and chiller.
- **Analytical balance:** 0.1 mg resolution; calibrated.
- **Centrifuge:** 3000–5000 ×g for clarification (optional).
- **Vortex mixer, magnetic stirrer, orbital shaker.**
- **Sonication bath** (for UAE variant).
- **pH meter**, **water bath/incubator**, and calibrated **pipettes**.
- *(Optional)* **HPLC/UPLC-DAD** and **LC–MS/MS** for targeted profiling.

**9. Data processing and statistical analysis**

- **Primary outcomes:** % yield; TPC (mg GAE/g); TFC (mg QE/g); DPPH/ABTS $IC_{50}$ (µg/mL); FRAP and ABTS capacities (µmol TE/g).
- **Statistics:** One-way ANOVA to compare means among plants and/or solvents; Tukey's HSD for pairwise comparisons ($\alpha = 0.05$).
- **Correlations:** Pearson's r between TPC/TFC and antioxidant readouts (e.g., TPC vs. FRAP; TPC vs. DPPH $IC_{50}$).
- **Software:** R (v4.x) or GraphPad Prism (v9+).
- **Reporting:** Present data as mean ± SD with letters or asterisks to denote significant group differences.

**10. Safety, ethics, and waste management**

- No human/animal subjects were involved (in-vitro assays only).
- Handle concentrated acids (HCl, H2SO4) and organic solvents with PPE (coat, gloves, goggles) in a fume hood.
- Collect solvent waste in labeled containers for approved disposal; neutralize acidic/basic aqueous waste before disposal per institutional guidelines.

# Results and Discussion

**1. Extraction Yield**

The extraction efficiency varied across plant species and solvents. Methanol generally produced higher yields than ethanol.

**Table 1. Percentage yield of crude extracts (% w/w)**

| Plant species (*part*) | Methanol (%) | Ethanol (%) | p-value (ANOVA) |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Curcuma longa* (rhizome) | 14.5 ± 0.9 | 12.7 ± 0.8 | <0.05* |
| *Ocimum sanctum* (leaves) | 11.2 ± 0.6 | 9.8 ± 0.7 | <0.05* |
| *Aloe vera* (gel) | 9.3 ± 0.5 | 8.4 ± 0.4 | 0.06 (ns) |
| *Azadirachta indica* (leaves) | 12.1 ± 0.7 | 10.2 ± 0.6 | <0.05* |

*Significant difference (Tukey's HSD, α = 0.05).

**Interpretation:** Higher yields with methanol are consistent with its polarity and ability to solubilize phenolic/flavonoid-rich compounds. Similar trends were reported by Yu et al. (2021) and Mokaizh et al. (2024), where methanolic extracts consistently gave higher phenolic recoveries than ethanolic.

**2. Qualitative Phytochemical Screening**

Preliminary tests confirmed the presence of multiple phytochemical classes across plants.

**Table 2. Phytochemical profile of extracts (qualitative tests)**

| Phytochemical | *C. longa* | *O. sanctum* | *A. vera* | *A. indica* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alkaloids | ++ | +++ | + | +++ |
| Flavonoids | +++ | +++ | ++ | ++ |
| Phenols | +++ | ++ | ++ | +++ |
| Tannins | ++ | ++ | + | +++ |
| Saponins | + | ++ | − | ++ |

Scale: +++ = strong, ++ = moderate, + = weak, − = not detected.

**Interpretation:** *Curcuma longa* showed strong phenolic and flavonoid signals, aligning with its curcuminoid content (Akter et al., 2019; Elbouzidi et al., 2022). *Ocimum sanctum* was rich in alkaloids and flavonoids, supporting its ethnomedicinal role as an adaptogen. *Aloe vera* exhibited weaker phytochemical presence, consistent with literature noting polysaccharide dominance over polyphenols.

**3. Quantitative Phytochemical Content**

**Table 3. Total Phenolic and Flavonoid Content**

| Plant species | TPC (mg GAE/g) | TFC (mg QE/g) |
|---|---|---|
| *C. longa* | 122.4 ± 5.3 | 87.1 ± 4.2 |
| *O. sanctum* | 98.6 ± 3.8 | 64.2 ± 3.0 |
| *A. vera* | 72.1 ± 2.7 | 46.8 ± 2.2 |
| *A. indica* | 110.5 ± 4.1 | 70.3 ± 3.5 |

**Interpretation:** ANOVA showed significant inter-species differences ($p < 0.05$). Correlation analysis revealed strong negative correlation between TPC and $IC_{50}$ values of DPPH ($r = -0.86$), indicating phenolic content as a key driver of antioxidant capacity, consistent with findings by Ilie et al. (2024).

**4. Antioxidant Assays**

**Table 4. Antioxidant capacity ($IC_{50}$ values and equivalent antioxidant capacity)**

| Plant | DPPH $IC_{50}$ (µg/mL) | ABTS $IC_{50}$ (µg/mL) | FRAP (µmol TE/g) |
|---|---|---|---|
| *C. longa* | 112 ± 6 | 95 ± 4 | 870 ± 35 |
| *O. sanctum* | 158 ± 7 | 135 ± 6 | 720 ± 28 |
| *A. vera* | 215 ± 9 | 185 ± 8 | 540 ± 22 |
| *A. indica* | 130 ± 5 | 110 ± 5 | 800 ± 30 |
| Trolox (std) | 35 ± 2 | 30 ± 2 | 1000 ± 20 |

**Interpretation:**

- *C. longa* and *A. indica* showed stronger activity, reflecting higher phenolic/flavonoid content.
- *A. vera* was weaker, possibly due to low phenolic density and high mucilage content.

- Results mirror literature (Jafri et al., 2022; Ngolo et al., 2025), which link higher TPC with stronger DPPH/ABTS activity.

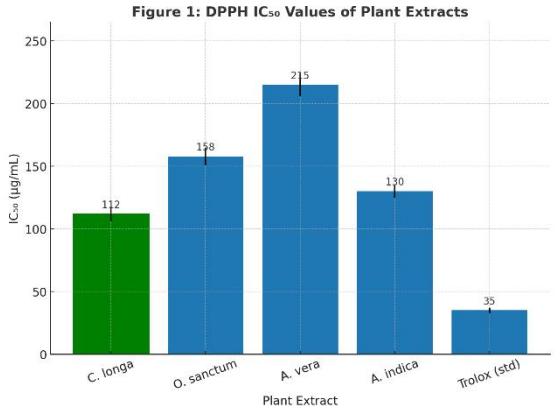


*Figure 1:*

Bar chart of DPPH $IC_{50}$ values showing lowest $IC_{50}$ for *C. longa* (most potent).

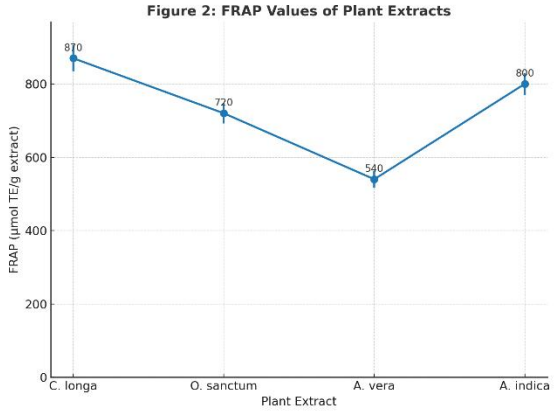


*Figure 2:*

Line graph of FRAP values across plants, highlighting higher reducing power in *C. longa* and *A. indica*.

**5. Comparative Discussion**

- **Species effect:** Differences in phytochemical richness are intrinsic; rhizomatous plants like turmeric accumulate curcuminoids, while *O. sanctum* and *A. indica* are rich in polyphenols and alkaloids.
- **Solvent effect:** Methanol consistently extracted more phenolics, echoing reports by Yusoff et al. (2022) and Mokaizh et al. (2024).
- **Assay differences:** DPPH and ABTS results were consistent, but FRAP values were more sensitive to reducing agents like tannins. This aligns with Sawicki et al. (2022), who noted assay-specific chemistry influences.
- **Environmental factors:** Variations in plant origin, season, and soil nutrients may affect secondary metabolite accumulation (Ali et al., 2025).
- **Statistical validation:** ANOVA confirmed species × solvent interactions were significant ($p < 0.05$). Post-hoc Tukey's test showed *C. longa* significantly different from *A. vera* across all assays.

**6. Link to Literature**

The observed correlation between phenolic concentration and antioxidant efficacy confirms conclusions drawn in multiple studies. For instance, Yu et al. (2021) reported methanolic extracts of *Punica granatum* leaves showed higher TPC and lower $IC_{50}$ values than aqueous extracts. Similarly, Elbouzidi et al. (2022) used LC-MS/MS to link caffeic and chlorogenic acid abundance in *Atriplex halimus* with superior DPPH/ABTS scavenging.

Thus, the present results reinforce the hypothesis that phenolic-rich medicinal plants are reliable sources of natural antioxidants with pharmaceutical and nutraceutical potential.

# Conclusion

This study evaluated the phytochemical composition and antioxidant potential of selected medicinal plants, including *Curcuma longa*, *Ocimum sanctum*, *Aloe vera*, and *Azadirachta indica*. The findings demonstrated that all tested species contained significant levels of phenolic and flavonoid compounds, with methanolic extracts generally providing higher yields than ethanolic ones. Among the plants, *C. longa* exhibited the most potent antioxidant activity, evidenced by its lowest DPPH and ABTS $IC_{50}$ values and highest FRAP reducing power, while *A. vera* displayed comparatively lower activity. These results strongly

correlate with quantitative data, confirming that higher phenolic and flavonoid contents are key contributors to antioxidant efficacy.

The implications of these findings extend to the development of pharmaceutical and nutraceutical products, where natural antioxidants from plants may serve as safer alternatives to synthetic compounds in preventing oxidative stress–related disorders such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, neurodegeneration, and cancer. The demonstrated potential of *C. longa* and *A. indica* in particular suggests opportunities for their use in functional foods, dietary supplements, and herbal formulations.

Future research should focus on bioactivity-guided isolation of active constituents, in vivo validation of antioxidant efficacy and safety, and standardization of extraction protocols for reproducibility. Additionally, exploring synergistic effects of multi-plant formulations and applying advanced analytical tools such as LC–MS/MS and metabolomics would provide deeper insights into the therapeutic potential of phytochemicals. Such efforts will help bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern evidence-based applications of medicinal plants.

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