

Cereus

Species (Family)

Selenicereus grandiflorus (L.) Britt. & Rose (Cacta-

Synonym(s)

Cactus grandiflorus, *Cereus grandiflorus* Mill., Night Blooming Cereus

Part(s) Used

Stem

Pharmacopoeial and Other Monographs

PDR for Herbal Medicines 2nd edition^(G36)

Legal Category (Licensed Products)

Cereus is not included in the GSL.^(G37)

Constituents^(G22,G40,G64)

Alkaloids Isoquinoline-type. Unidentified alkaloids.⁽¹⁾

Amines Tyramine⁽²⁾, hordenine,⁽³⁾ previously referred to as cactine.

Flavonoids Rutin, kaempferitrin, hyperoside, isorhamnetin-3-β-(galactosyl)-rutinoside.

Other constituents Resin

Food Use

Cereus is not used in foods.

Herbal Use

Cereus is reputed to act as a cardiac stimulant and as a partial substitute for digitalis, although there is no proof of its therapeutic value. Cereus has been used in cases of dropsy and various cardiac affections.^(G10,G64)

Dosage

Liquid extract of cereus (BPC 1934) 0.06–0.6 mL.

Tincture of cereus (BPC 1934) 0.12–2.0 mL.

Pharmacological Actions

In vitro and animal studies

None documented for cereus. Cereus is reported to contain a cardiostimulant amine, tyramine, which has positive inotropic activity.

Side-effects, Toxicity

The fresh juice of cereus is irritant to the oral mucosa, causing a burning sensation, nausea and vomiting. Diarrhoea has also been reported following cereus consumption.^(G22)

Contra-indications, Warnings

In view of the documented tyramine content, excessive doses of cereus may interact with concurrent monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) treatment and may affect patients with an existing cardiac disorder.

Pregnancy and lactation The safety of cereus has not been established. In view of the limited information available on cereus, its use during pregnancy and lactation should be avoided.

Pharmaceutical Comment

Little phytochemical or pharmacological information has been documented for cereus, although the presence of tyramine, a cardiostimulant amine, may support the traditional use of cereus as a cardiac stimulant. Cardiac complaints are not considered to be suitable for self-medication.

References

See also General References G10, G22, G31, G36, G37, G40, G48 and G64.

- 1 Brown SD *et al.* Cactus alkaloids. *Phytochemistry* 1968; 7: 2031–2036.
- 2 Wagner H, Grevel J. Neue herzwirksame drogen II, nachweis und isolierung herzwirksamer amine durch ionenpaar-HPLC. *Planta Med* 1982; 44: 36–40.
- 3 Petershofer-Halbmayer H *et al.* Isolierung von

Hordenin (Cactin) aus *Selenicereus grandiflorus* (L.) Britt. & Rose und *Selenicereus pteranthus* (Link & Otto) Britt. & Rose. *Sci Pharm* 1982; 50: 29–34.