

**Antituberculosis activity of flavonoids from *Galenia africana*
L. var. *africana***

BY

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late grandfather Abner F. Mativandlela and my family for being a positive motivating force in my life and supporting me through the trials and tribulations of life.

ABSTRACT

The recent increase in the incidence of tuberculosis (TB) with the emergence of multidrug-resistant (MDR) cases has led to the search for new TB-drugs. *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* is a complex, resilient organism, and it is important to note that new drugs are required which can reduce TB's six month treatment time and can be effective against drug-resistant strains of mycobacteria. Plants contain numerous biological active compounds, many of which have been shown to have antimicrobial activity. The search for biologically active extracts based on traditional use of plants is relevant due to the appearance of microbial resistance to many antibiotics and the occurrence of fatal opportunistic infections. Ethanol extracts of seven selected ethnobotanically South African medicinal plants (*Artemisia afra*, *Dodonaea angustifolia*, *Drosera capensis*, *Galenia africana*, *Prunus africana*, *Syzygium cordatum* and *Ziziphus mucronata*) were investigated for their antimycobacterial activity against two *Mycobacterium* species.

The minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) of ethanol extracts of *A. afra*, *Dodonaea angustifolia*, *Drosera capensis* and *G. africana* ranged from 0.781 to 6.25 mg/mL against a non-pathogenic strain of mycobacteria, '*M. smegmatis*'. *G. africana* showed the best activity, exhibiting an MIC of 0.781 mg/mL and a minimum bactericidal concentration (MBC) of 1.563 mg/mL against *M. smegmatis*. A drug sensitive strain of *M. tuberculosis* was found to be susceptible to the ethanol extracts of *Dodonaea angustifolia* and *G. africana*. (MICs 5.0 and 1.2 mg/mL respectively) when using the rapid radiometric-BACTEC method. The phytochemical analysis of *G. africana* led to the isolation and identification of three known compounds namely; (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone, (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxychalcone (not reported from natural sources) and (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone. A novel chalcone '*(E)*-3,2',4'-trihydroxy-3'-methoxychalcone' was also isolated from the ethanol extract of *G. africana*. Isolation of (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone, (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxychalcone and *E*-3,2',4'-trihydroxy-3'-methoxychalcone was reported for the first time from this plant. The MIC of novel compound against *M. tuberculosis* was found to be 50.0 µg/mL whereas (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone and (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxychalcone exhibited an MIC of 100.0 µg/mL.

During synergistic studies using (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone and (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone with the antituberculosis drug INH, it was found that the MICs of INH and the compounds were reduced sixteen and eight-fold respectively, resulting in a Fractional Inhibitory Concentration (FIC) of 0.1250 and 0.1875 respectively. The synergistic effect of two isolated compounds (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone and (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone) in *in vitro* studies also showed synergistic action, reducing their original MICs four-fold resulting in a FIC of 0.5. Since (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone and (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone from *G. africana* showed synergistic activity with INH, it is speculated that the compounds might have similar mechanism as that of INH. However, mechanistic studies on these compounds should be done in order to get an indication of the 'flavonoids and chalcones' interferences on mycolic acid synthesis, membrane synthesis and enzyme inhibition. Our investigation on the NADPH oxidase activity of (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone with Mtr, found that this compound failed to exhibit any NADPH oxidase activity at 800 μ M concentrations. Mtr is evidently not the target for the antimycobacterial activity of (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone.

Fifty percent inhibitory concentration of the ethanol extract of *G. africana*, and the two purified compounds, (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone and (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone were found to be 120.0; 110.3 and 80.2 μ g/mL respectively against the U937 cells. The MIC of the ethanol extract of *G. africana* in U937 macrophages infected with *M. tuberculosis* was found to be 50.0 μ g/mL indicating the extract's intracellular antimycobacterial activity in real physiological conditions. The two purified compounds also showed good intracellular antimycobacterial activity. The MICs of (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone and (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone were found to be 100 and 50 μ g/mL respectively. This study indicated that the intracellular activity of the ethanol extract is significant in macrophages. The activity might be due to *M. tuberculosis* being unable to avoid macrophage killing and its survival during phagocytosis, (including inhibition of phagosome-lysosome fusion, inhibition of the acidification of phagosomes, resistance to killing by reactive oxygen intermediates and modification of the lipid composition of the mycobacterial cell membrane, thereby altering its capacity to interact with immune or inflammatory cells).

It can be concluded that the traditional use of *G. africana* for TB has been scientifically validated to some extent. Isolated compounds and the ethanol extract of the plant warrant further investigation for their potential as antimycobacterial agents. Since synergistic activity of purified compounds with existing antituberculosis drug INH, was significant, it will be worthwhile evaluating the efficacy of purified compounds in combination with TB-drugs in pre-clinical studies.

List of Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ATCC	American type culture collection
CFU	Colony forming units
CMI	Cell-mediated immunity
CNS	Central Nervous System
CR	Complement receptors
CSF	Cerebrospinal fluid
DMSO	Dimethyl sulphoxide
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DOT	Direct Observed Therapy
EMB	Ethambutol
FAS	Fatty acid synthase
FIC	Fractional inhibitory concentration
GI	Growth index
GPC	Gel permeation chromatography
GSK	GlakoSmithKline
HEPES	4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazineethanesulfonic acid
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HPLC	High performance liquid chromatography
ICL	Isocitrate lyase
INH	Isoniazid
INT	2-(4-iodophenyl)-3-(4-nitrophenyl)-5-phenyl
LADH	Lipoamide dehydrogenase
LAM	Lipoarabinomannan
LD₅₀	Lethal dose, 50%
LJ	Lowenstein-Jensen
MBC	Minimal bactericidal concentration
MDR	Multidrug-resistant
MHC	Major histocompatibility complex

List of Abbreviations

MIC	Minimal inhibitory concentration
MR	Mannose receptors
MRC	Medical Research Council
MSH	Mycothiol
MSSM	Mycothiol disulfide
MTR	Mycothiol reductase
NADH	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide
NADPH	Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate
NMR	Nuclear magnetic resonance
OD	Optical density
PAS	Para-aminosalicylic acid
PBS	Phosphate-buffered saline
POA	Pyrazinoic acid
PZA	Pyrazinamide
RIF	Rifampicin
rRNA	Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
RNA	Ribonucleic acid
RPMI	Roswell Park Memorial Institute
SD	Standard deviation
SDS	Sodium dodecyl sulfate
STR	Streptomycin
TB	Tuberculosis
TH cell	T helper cell
TLC	Thin layer chromatography
TMP	Traditional medicinal practitioners
U937	Human leukemic monocyte lymphoma cell line
UV	Ultra violet light
WHO	World Health Organization
XDR	Extremely drug resistant

Table of contents

Declaration.....	2
Dedication.....	3
Abstract.....	4
List of Abbreviations.....	7
Chapters layout.....	9
List of Tables.....	15
List of Figures.....	17
Chapter 1: Literature Review: Introduction	
1.1 Introduction.....	22
1.1.1 History of herbal medicine and plant derived drugs.....	22
1.1.2 Use of medicinal plants.....	23
1.1.3 Selection of medicinal plants and plant-parts used in South Africa.....	27
1.2 Medicinal plants with antimycobacterial activity	28
1.3 Scope of thesis.....	30
1.3.1 Antimycobacterial activity of selected medicinal plants.....	30
1.3.2 Cytotoxicity of the crude extracts.....	30
1.3.3 Bioassay guided fractionation of <i>G. africana</i>	31
1.3.4 Synergistic activity of the isolated compounds.....	31
1.3.5 Intracellular antimycobacterial activity of selected samples.....	31
1.3.6 Mechanism of action.....	31
1.4 Structure of thesis.....	32
Chapter 2: Epidemiology, prevention, infection and treatment of tuberculosis	
2.1 Introduction.....	34
2.1.1 History of tuberculosis.....	34
2.1.2 Mycobacterium species.....	34
2.1.2.1 <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i>	35
2.1.2.2 <i>Mycobacterium smegmatis</i>	37

2.1.3 Epidemiology	38
2.1.4 Transmission of tuberculosis.....	41
2.1.5 Immunology of tuberculosis.....	42
2.1.6 Prevention of tuberculosis.....	43
2.1.7 Infection and symptoms of tuberculosis.....	43
2.1.8 Treatment of tuberculosis.....	44
2.2 Targets, mode of action of first-line TB drugs.....	45
2.2.1 Isoniazid.....	47
2.2.1.1 Mechanism of action.....	47
2.2.1.2 Resistance to INH.....	48
2.2.1.3 Side effects and toxicity.....	48
2.2.2 Rifampicin.....	49
2.2.2.1 Mechanism of action.....	50
2.2.2.2 Resistance to RIF.....	50
2.2.2.3 Side effects and toxicity.....	50
2.2.3 Ethambutol.....	51
2.2.3.1 Mechanism of action.....	51
2.2.3.2 Resistance to EMB.....	51
2.2.3.3 Side effects and toxicity.....	52
2.2.4 Pyrazinamide.....	52
2.2.4.1 Mechanism of action.....	52
2.2.4.2 Resistance to PZA.....	53
2.2.4.3 Side effects and toxicity.....	53
2.2.5 Streptomycin.....	54
2.2.5.1 Mechanism of action.....	55
2.2.5.2 Resistance to STR.....	55
2.2.5.3 Side effects and toxicity.....	55
2.3 Why are new TB drugs needed?.....	55
2.4 New TB drugs in the pipeline.....	57
2.4.1 Novel chemical entities	60
2.4.1.1 Diarylquinoline TMC ₂₀₇	60
2.4.1.2 Nitroimidazole PA-8 ₂₄	61
2.4.1.3 Nitroimidazole OPC-6768 ₃	62
2.4.1.4 Pyrrole LL- 3858.....	63



2.4.1.5 Pleuromutilins	63
2.4.1.6 Dipiperidine SQ-609.....	63
2.4.1.7 ATP Synthase Inhibitor FAS ₂₀₀₁₃	64
2.4.1.8 Translocase I inhibitor	64
2.4.1.9 InhA Inhibitors.....	64
2.4.1.10 Isocitrate Lyse Inhibitors.....	65
2.4.2 Chemicals originating from existing families of drugs	65
2.4.2.1 Fluoroquinolones.....	65
2.4.2.1.1 Gatifloxacin	66
2.4.2.1.2 Moxifloxacin.....	67
2.4.2.2 New quinolones.....	68
2.5 Discussion and Conclusion.....	69

Chapter 3: Phytochemistry and medicinal uses of selected medicinal plants

3.1 Introduction.....	70
3.2 Plants selected.....	71
3.2.1 <i>Artemisia afra</i> Jacq. ex Willd.....	73
3.2.1.1 Description and distribution.....	73
3.2.1.2 Medicinal uses.....	75
3.2.1.3 Phytochemistry and biological activity.....	75
3.2.2 <i>Dodonaea angustifolia</i> L. f.....	76
3.2.2.1 Description and distribution.....	76
3.2.2.2 Medicinal uses.....	77
3.2.2.3 Phytochemistry and biological activity.....	77
3.2.3 <i>Drosera capensis</i> L.....	77
3.2.3.1 Description and distribution.....	78
3.2.3.2 Medicinal uses.....	78
3.2.3.3 Phytochemistry and biological activity.....	78
3.2.4 <i>Galenia africana</i> L. var. <i>africana</i>	79
3.2.4.1 Description and distribution.....	79
3.2.4.2 Medicinal uses.....	80
3.2.4.3 Phytochemistry and biological activity.....	80
3.2.5 <i>Prunus africana</i> Hook. f.....	80
3.2.5.1 Description and distribution.....	80

3.2.5.2 Medicinal uses.....	81
3.2.5.3 Phytochemistry and biological activity.....	81
3.2.6 <i>Syzygium cordatum</i> Hochst. ex Krauss.....	82
3.2.6.1 Description and distribution.....	82
3.2.6.2 Medicinal uses.....	82
3.2.6.3 Phytochemistry and biological activity.....	83
3.2.7 <i>Ziziphus mucronata</i> Willd.....	83
3.2.7.1 Description and distribution.....	84
3.2.7.2 Medicinal uses.....	84
3.2.7.3 Phytochemistry and biological activity.....	84
3.3 Discussion and Conclusion	85

Chapter 4: Antituberculosis activity of selected South African medicinal plants against *Mycobacterium smegmatis* and *M. tuberculosis*

4.1 Introduction.....	86
4.2 Materials and Methods.....	86
4.2.1 Plant materials.....	87
4.2.2 Preparation of plant extracts.....	87
4.2.3 Microorganisms.....	88
4.2.3.1 Antimycobacterial activity on <i>M. smegmatis</i> using the agar method.....	88
4.2.3.2 Microplate susceptibility testing against <i>M. smegmatis</i>	89
4.2.3.3 BACTEC: radiometric assay.....	90
4.2.3.4 Antitubercular rapid radiometric assay using <i>M. tuberculosis</i>	91
4.3 Results.....	96
4.3.1 Antituberculosis activity using the agar plate method.....	96
4.3.2 Minimum inhibitory concentration of selected plant extracts against <i>M. smegmatis</i> using the micro dilution method.....	98
4.3.3 Minimum inhibitory concentration and bactericidal activity of selected medicinal plants against <i>M. tuberculosis</i> H37Rv, a drug susceptible strain.....	100

4.4 Discussion and Conclusion.....101

Chapter 5: Cytotoxicity activity of selected South African medicinal plants against Vero cells

5.1 Introduction.....105

5.2 Materials and Methods.....106

5.2.1 Plant materials.....106

5.2.2 Preparation of plant extracts.....106

5.3 Cell culture.....106

5.3.1 Vero cell line.....106

5.4 Cytotoxicity assay.....106

5.5 Results and Discussion.....108

5.6 Conclusion.....112

Chapter 6: Bioassay guided fractionation of *G. africana* L. var. *africana*

6.1 Introduction.....114

6.2 Bioassay guided fractionation.....116

6.2.1 Silica gel column and HPLC chromatography.....116

6.3 Results and Discussion.....119

6.4 Conclusion.....128

Chapter 7: Determination of the antimycobacterial activity of the fractions and the isolated compounds from the roots of *G. africana* L. var. *africana*

7.1 Introduction.....130

7.2 Materials and methods.....131

7.2.1 Microplate susceptibility testing against *M. smegmatis*.....131

7.2.2 Antitubercular rapid radiometric assay using *M. tuberculosis*.....131

7.2.3 Direct bioassay.....132

7.3 Results and Discussion.....132

7.4 Conclusion.....137

Chapter 8: Synergistic effect, cytotoxic and intracellular activity against <i>M. tuberculosis</i>	
8.1 Introduction.....	138
8.2 Materials and methods.....	142
8.2.1 MIC determination: combination drug action.....	142
8.2.1.1 Combined drug action by the radiometric method....	143
8.2.2 Cell line.....	143
8.2.2.1. Cytotoxicity: U937 cell line.....	144
8.2.2.2. MIC determination: U937 cell line.....	144
8.2.2.3. Infection of cells.....	145
8.2.3.Subversive substrate properties with mycothiol reductase.	145
8.3 Results and Discussion.....	147
8.3.1 Combination drug action.....	147
8.3.2. Intracellular activity.....	150
8.3.3. Cytotoxicity activity.....	151
8.3.4. Subversive properties.....	152
8.4 Conclusion.....	155
Chapter 9: Overall discussion and conclusion.....	157
Chapter 10: References.....	161
Chapter 11: Acknowledgements.....	187
Chapter 12: Appendices – Publications	
12.1 Publications resulting from this thesis.....	189
12.2 Article in preparation.....	190
12.3 Chapter to be submitted in a book.....	190
12.4 Conference presentation.....	190

List of Tables

Table 1.1	25
Commonly used medicinal plants	
Table 2.1	40
Breakdown of TB patients reported from 2001 - 2006 in South Africa	
Table 2.2	41
Occurrence of tuberculosis in different provinces of South Africa during the year 2000: 600 total cases per 1000 000 population; 250 smear-positive cases per 100 000 population	
Table 2.3	46
Commonly used first and second line TB drugs and their targets	
Table 2.4	59
Global TB drug pipeline, March 2006 (provided by Stop TB Partnership working on new TB drugs)	
Table 3.1	74
Traditional uses of selected South African medicinal plants used for the present study	
Table 4.1	98
Antimycobacterial activity of ethanol extracts against <i>M. smegmatis</i> using the agar plate method	
Table 4.2	99
Antimycobacterial activity of ethanol extracts against <i>M. smegmatis</i> using the micro dilution method	
Table 4.3	101
Antimycobacterial activity of ethanol extracts of selected South African medicinal plants against the sensitive strain (H37Rv) of <i>M. tuberculosis</i> as determined by the radiometric method	
Table 5.1	112
Cytotoxicity of the ethanol extracts of selected South African medicinal plants against Vero cells	
Table 7.1	133
Antimycobacterial activity of the ethanol extract, fractions and isolated compounds from <i>G. africana</i> leaves against <i>M. smegmatis</i> and <i>M. tuberculosis</i>	



Table 8.1.....147
List of naphthoquinones studied for disulfide reductase activity

Table 8.2.....149
Synergistic effect and intracellular activity of the ethanol extract and isolated compounds against *M. tuberculosis*

Table 8.3.....152
Cytotoxicity of the ethanol extract and the isolated compounds against U937 cells

Table 8.4.....154
Substrate properties of substituted naphthoquinones with *M. tuberculosis* Mtr

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	35
Rods of <i>M. tuberculosis</i> , magnification x 6.250 (based on a 35 mm slide <i>image</i> of 24 mm in the narrow dimension (Courtesy: SEM/ 97229A)	
Figure 2.2	36
Colonies of <i>M. tuberculosis</i> on Lowenstein-Jensen medium	
Figure 2.3	37
<i>M. smegmatis</i>	
(a) Rods of <i>M. smegmatis</i> : acid-fast stained in red (due to carbon fuchsin dye), magnification x 1000, taken in a general microbiology lab (slide <i>image</i> of 21 mm in the narrow dimension (Courtesy: SEM/ 97229A)	
(b) Colonies of <i>M. smegmatis</i> on Middlebrook 7H11 agar medium	
Figure 2.4	40
The increase of reported TB cases in South African provinces from 2001 - 2006	
Figure 2.5	47
Chemical structures of isoniazid (INH)	
Figure 2.6	49
Chemical structures of rifampicin (RIF)	
Figure 2.7	51
Chemical structures of ethambutol (EMB)	
Figure 2.8	52
Chemical structures of Pyrazinamide (PZA)	
Figure 2.9	54
Chemical structures of Streptomycin (STR)	
Figure 2.10	58
Expected timelines towards approval of candidate drugs currently in clinical stage of development	
Figure 2.11	61
Chemical structures of Diarylquinoline TMC ₂₀₇	
Figure 2.12	62
Chemical structures of Nitroimidazole PA-8 ₂₄	
Figure 2.13	62

Chemical structures of Nitroimidazole OPC-6768₃

Figure 2.14.....67

Chemical structures of Gatifloxacin (GAT)

Figure 2.15.....68

Chemical structures of Moxifloxacin (MXF)

Figure 3.1.....73

Artemisia afra Jacq. ex Willd and distribution in South Africa

Figure 3.2.....76

Dodonaea angustifolia L. f. and distribution in South Africa

Figure 3.3.....77

Drosera capensis L. and distribution in South Africa

Figure 3.4.....79

Galenia africana L. var. *africana* and distribution in South Africa

Figure 3.5.....80

Prunus africana Hook. f and distribution in South Africa

Figure 3.6.....82

Syzygium cordatum Hochst. ex Krauss and distribution in South Africa

Figure 3.7.....83

Ziziphus mucronata Willd and distribution in South Africa

Figure 4.1.....91

BACTEC TB- 460 instrument

Figure 4.2.....95

Ziehl-Neelsen staining (Kleeberg *et al.* 1980; WHO/ TB/97.258)

Figure 4.3.....96

Percentage yield of ethanol crude plant extracts

Figure 4.4.....97

Antimycobacterial activity of ethanol extract of *G. africana* against *M. smegmatis* using the agar plate method at 50.0 mg/mL

Figure 4.5.....97

Antimycobacterial activity of ethanol extracts of *Drosera capensis*, *Dodonaea angustifolia* and *A. afra* against *M. smegmatis* using the agar plate method at 100.0 mg/mL

Figure 4.6.....99

Microtitre plate exhibiting antimycobacterial activity against *M. smegmatis*

Figure 4.7	102
The comparative bactericidal effect of the active extracts against the drug-susceptibility strain of <i>M. tuberculosis</i> . Results illustrate the mean of viable bacterial counts \pm standard error in the treated vials as compared to the untreated control vials	
Figure 5.1	107
Microtitre plate design for cytotoxicity testing	
Figure 5.2	111
Effect of the ethanol crude extracts of selected South African medicinal plants on the proliferation of Vero cells	
Figure 6.1	115
Chemical structure of compounds isolated from <i>G. africana</i>	
(a) 5-hydroxy-7-methoxy-flavanone (pinostrobin)	
(b) Dihydroechinoidinin	
(c) 5,7-dihydroxy-flavanone(pinocembrin)	
(d) 2',4' dihydroxydihydrochalcone	
(e) 2',4'-dihydroxychalcone	
Figure 6.2	117
Chromatographic purification of the ethanol extract of <i>G. africana</i> using silica column chromatography PF ₂₅₄	
Figure 6.3	117
TLC developed-plates of 21 main fractions obtained from silica column. Solvent systems: CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₄ CH ₃ : EtOAc (7:3). Detection : Vanillin in H ₂ SO ₄	
Figure 6.4	118
TLC developed-plates of 6 main fractions obtained from silica column. Solvent systems: CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₄ CH ₃ : EtOAc (8:2). Detection : Vanillin in H ₂ SO ₄	
Figure 6.5	118
Schematic representation of the purification steps for the isolation of the compounds From the ethanol extract of <i>G. africana</i>	
(a1) (2 <i>S</i>)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone	
(b) (<i>E</i>)-3,2',4'-trihydroxychalcone	
(c) (<i>E</i>)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone	
(a2) (2 <i>S</i>)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone	
(d) (<i>E</i>)-3,2',4'-trihydroxy-3'-methoxychalcone	
Figure 6.6	125

^1H and ^{13}C -NMR spectrums of isolated compounds from the ethanol extract of *G. africana*

- (a) ^{13}C NMR of (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone
- (b) ^1H NMR of (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone
- (c) ^{13}C NMR of (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone
- (d) ^1H NMR of (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone
- (e) ^{13}C NMR of (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxychalcone
- (f) ^1H NMR of (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxychalcone
- (g) ^{13}C NMR of (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxy-3'-methoxychalcone
- (h) ^1H NMR of (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxy-3'-methoxychalcone

Figure 6.7.....127

Chemical structures of isolated compounds from the ethanol extract of *G. africana*

- (a) (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone
- (b) (*E*)-2',4'-dihydroxychalcone
- (c) (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxychalcone
- (d) (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxy-3'-methoxychalcone

Figure 6.8.....128

The HMBC spectrum of (*E*)-3,2',4'-trihydroxy-3'-methoxychalcone

Figure 7.1.....136

The comparative bactericidal effect of the ethanol extract, fractions and isolated compounds of *G. africana* against the drug-susceptibility strain of *M. tuberculosis*. Results illustrate the mean of the viable bacterial counts \pm standard error in the treated vials as compared to the untreated control vials

Figure 7.2.....137

Zones of inhibition of *M. smegmatis* on the TLC plates in a direct assay of (2*S*)-5,7,2'-trihydroxyflavanone isolated from the *G. africana* ethanol extract

TLC developed in hexane-ethyl acetate (8:2)

Figure 8.1.....142

Chemical structure of mycothiol (MSH)

Figure 8.2.....142

Structure of mycothiol disulfide reductase (Mtr)

Figure 8.3.....146

Enzymatic reduction of naphthoquinone to semiquinone