



A Study On Potential Drug Target For SARS-CoV-2-And Combinatorial Therapeutic Approach To Combat COVID-19

Debojyati Datta¹, Semanti Ghosh^{2*}

^{1,2*}Department of Biotechnology, School of Life Sciences, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore, West Bengal-700121

**Corresponding author: Semanti Ghosh*

**Department of Biotechnology, School of Life Sciences, Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore, West Bengal-700121. Email: semantig@svu.ac.in*

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic caused by (SARS-CoV-2) a threat, leading to numerous deaths and socioeconomic disruptions. Spurred intense research efforts effective treatment. Our study provides a brief overview COVID-19. Urgent need for effective treatments has prompted extensive research to identify potential drug targets against disease. Review shows most promising drug and their associated therapeutic approaches for combating COVID-19. Key targets include the spike protein, which facilitates viral entry into host cells, and proteases essential for viral replication. Additionally, RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) inhibitors have been explored to inhibit viral RNA replication, highlighting their mechanisms of action, potential therapeutic benefits, and challenges in drug development. Host factors, such as the ACE2 receptor and immune response modulators, are also targeted. Combination therapies and overcoming challenges in the drug development are crucial for successful COVID-19 treatment. In this review the molecular docking study is discussed here. The future perspective of drug targets for COVID-19 encompasses a range of innovative approaches aimed at combating the virus and preparing for future outbreaks. The review also discusses the challenges faced and future directions in the field of drug target research for COVID-19. This review will provide an overview of the anticipated advancements in drug target discovery and development for COVID-19, highlighting key areas of focus and potential strategies.

CC License
CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0

Keywords: COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, Drug targets, Molecular docking, Phytochemicals, Synthetic drugs, Therapeutic approaches

Introduction

A pandemic has been generated by SARS-CoV-2 or, COVID-19, a critical worldwide, driving to mortality, and financial disturbances. The SARS-CoV-2 shows a specific structure is appeared (Figure 1).

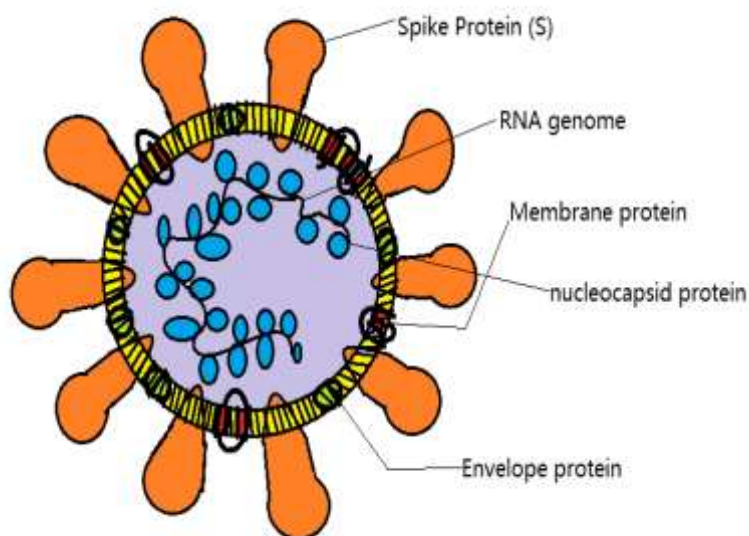


Fig. 1: Cross section of SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus

Recognizable proof and characterization of particular targets for drugs empower drugs advancement that can meddled with the viral lifecycle, viral replication can be repressed. (or, more straightforwardly) tweaked the safe framework reacts moderate the seriousness of the malady. The understanding of these sedate targets and their intuitive with the infection and have components contributed the improvement of successful treatment alternatives for COVID-19. The most medicate targets talked about in this survey incorporate the spike protein intervenes viral section significant for viral replication, e.g., proteins and enzymes. Moreover, the survey will look at the utilize of monoclonal antibodies and repurposed antiviral drugs in focusing on these particular components. It'll emphasize the significance of worldwide collaborations and continuous investigate endeavors in tending to these challenges and progressing the advancement of successful treatments against COVID-19.

1. Drug-able Targets of COVID-19: Spike Protein, RNA-Dependent RNA Polymerase (RdRp), Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme 2 (ACE2) Receptor, Proteases (Proteases are 3 types, for example: chymotrypsin-like protease, Papain-like protease, Main protease or, primary protease), Transmembrane protease, serine 2 (TMPRSS2) (Sánchez et al.; 2022).

2. Usable Drugs

A. Phytochemicals: Artemisinin (Uckun et al.; 2021), Kuwanon C (Kim et al.; 2022), Ellagic Acid (AbouAitah et al.; 2021), Quercetin (Imran et al.; 2022), Quercetin-3-O-Glucuronide (Kim et al.; 2021), Kaempferol-3-O-Glucuronide (Deng et al.; 2021), Kaempferol-3-O-Rutinoside (Wang et al.; 2015), Myricetin (Li et al.; 2021), Naringenin (Salehi et al.; 2019), Epigallocatechin Gallate (Wang et al.; 2022), Procyanidin B1 (Okamoto et al.; 2014), Δ -viniferin (Di Matteo et al.; 2020), Cnicin (Avula et al.; 2022), Silibinin (Speciale et al.; 2021), Amentoflavone (Hossain et al.; 2023), Limonin (Meeran et al.; 2021), Glycyrrhizic Acid (Li et al.; 2021), Mulberrofuran G (Kim et al.; 2022), Gallic Acid (Umar et al.; 2021), Caffeic Acid (Adem et al.; 2021), Ferulic Acid (Pasquereau et al.; 2022), Chlorogenic Acid (Abomughaid et al.; 2022), Catechin (Diniz et al.; 2021), Cyanidin-3-O-Glucoside (Semmarath et al.; 2022), Kaempferol (Hossain et al.; 2023), Rutin (Rizzuti et al.; 2021), Withanoside IV (Kuboyama et al.; 2006), Withanoside V (Dhanjal et al.; 2021).

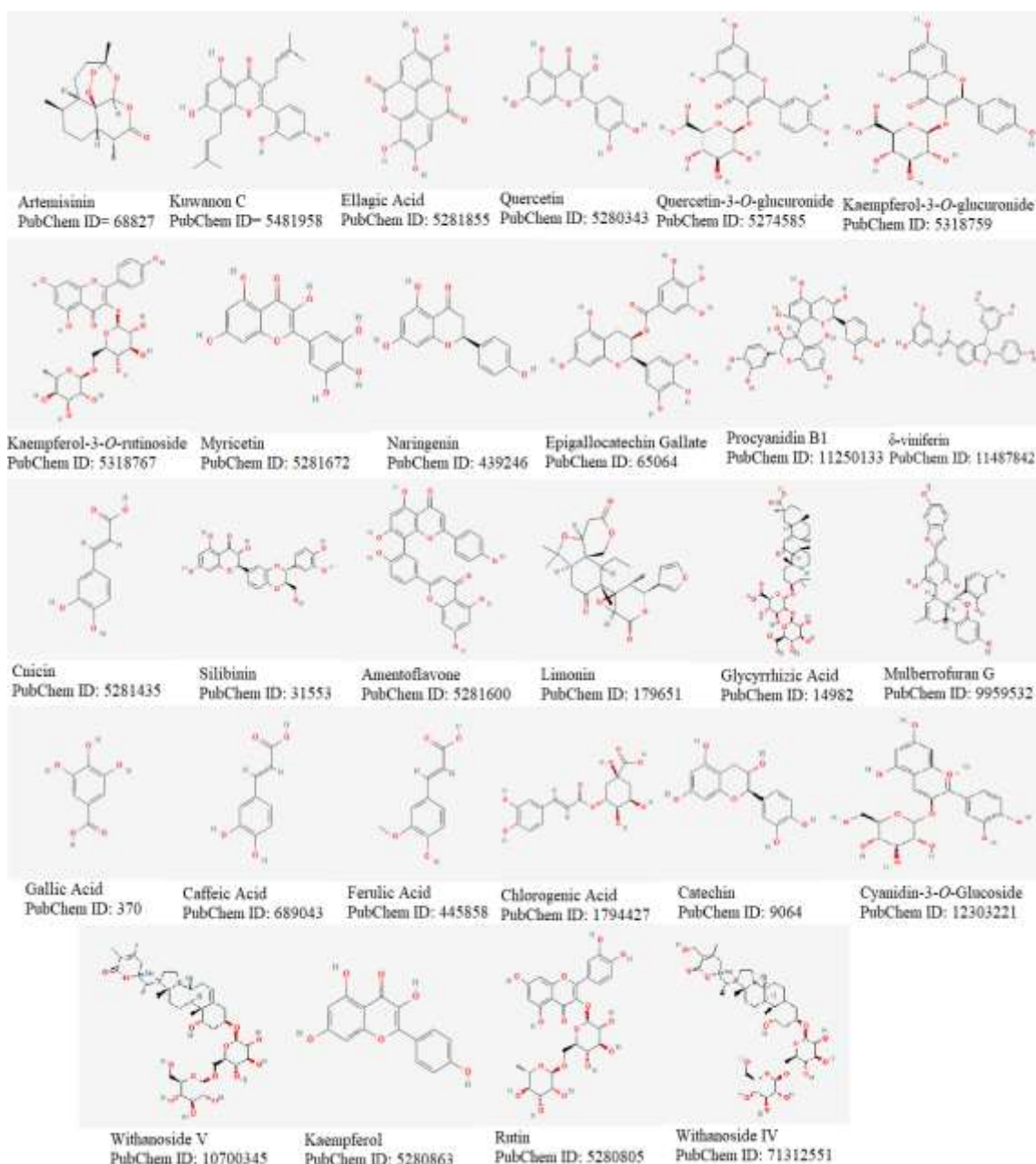


Fig. 2: Structures and PubChem IDs of phytochemicals (Figure was drawn by using MS Paint).

B. Synthetic Drugs: Remdesivir (Malin et al.; 2020), Chloroquine (Chang, Sun; 2020), Ciclesonide (Kimura et al.; 2020), Niclosamide (Singh et al.; 2022), Lopinavir (Maciorowski et al.; 2020).



Fig. 3: Structures and PubChem IDs of synthetic drugs (Figure was drawn by using MS Paint)

Table 1: Comparison of binding affinity of different phytochemicals and Synthetic Drugs and their target proteins.

Target Protein	Drug Molecules types	Names	Docking Score	Reference			
Spike Proteins	Phytochemicals	Artemisinin	-5.06	(Rafiq et al.; 2023)			
		Kuwanon C	-7.1				
RdRp	Phytochemicals	Ellagic acid	-7.6	(Souid et al.; 2022)			
		Quercetin	-7.2				
		Quercetin-3-O-Glucuronide	-8.0				
		Kaempferol-3-O-Glucuronide	-7.9				
		Kaempferol-3-O-Rutinoside	-9.2				
		Myricetin	-7.2				
		Naringenin	-5.7				
		Epigallocatechin Gallate	-5.7				
		Procyanidin B1	-9.8				
		Δ -viniferin	-8.3				
		Cnicin	-9.7		(Rafiq et al.; 2023)		
		Silibinin	-7.15				
		ACE2	Phytochemicals		Amentoflavone	-9.4	(Vardhan and Sahoo, 2022)
					Limonin	-8.2	
	-8.3						
	-8.3						
Glycyrrhizic Acid	-8.5						
	-8.7						
	-8.4						
	-7.4						
Synthetic Drugs				Mulberrofuran G	-5.62	(Zhang et al.; 2020)	
				Remdesivir	-4.2		
		Chloroquine	-5.53				
		Ciclesonide	-4.31				
		Niclosamide	-5.5				
		Lopinavir	-4.5				
Mpro	Phytochemicals	Gallic Acid	-5.7	(Souid et al.; 2022)			
		Caffeic Acid	-5.4				
		Ferulic Acid	-6.0				
		Chlorogenic Acid	-7.9				
		Catechin	-8.4				
		Cyanidin-3-O-Glucoside	-6.4		(Rafiq et al.; 2023)		
Kaempferol	-9.19						
Mpro/3CLpro	Phytochemicals	Rutin	-7.96				
		Withanoside V	-6.92				
TMPRSS2	Phytochemicals	Withanoside V	-7.96				
		Withanoside IV	-6.92				

Conclusion

Several drug targets have been investigated for COVID-19, and host immune response modulators. Targeting these components aims to inhibit viral entry, disrupt replication, modulate inflammation, and enhance the host immune response. Promising drug candidates have emerged, along with synthetic drugs. These drugs have shown efficacy in reducing viral load, suppressing inflammation, and improving clinical outcomes in certain patient populations. Combination therapies involving multiple drug targets are being explored to enhance treatment efficacy and overcome potential drug resistance. By Molecular Docking the result we found that, in antiviral medicines maximum phytochemicals are used because it is more non-toxic and herbal than synthetic drugs. In this case synthetic drugs are less used because of its side effects.

Reference

1. Abomughaid, M.; Nofal, M. S.; Ghaleb, K. I.; Seadawy, M. G.; Wahab, M. G. A.; Hegazy, A. S.; Ghareeb, D. A.; (2022); ZnO-chlorogenic acid nanostructured complex inhibits Covid-19 pathogenesis and increases hydroxychloroquine efficacy; Journal of King Saud University - Science; 34(8):102296; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksus.2022.102296>

2. AbouAitah, K.; Allayh, A. K.; Wojnarowicz, J.; Shaker, Y. M.; Sroda, A. S. and Lojkowski, W.; (2021); Nanof ormulation Composed of Ellagic Acid and Functionalized Zinc Oxide Nanoparticles Inactivates DNA and RNA Viruses; *Pharmaceutics*; 13(12); 2174; <https://doi.org/10.3390/pharmaceutics13122174>
3. Adem, Ş.; Eyupoglu, V.; Sarfraz, I.; Rasul, A.; Zahoor, A. F.; Ali, M.; Abdalla, M.; Ibrahim, I. M.; Elfiky, A. A.; (2021); Caffeic acid derivatives (CAFDs) as inhibitors of SARS-CoV-2: CAFDs-based functional foods as a potential alternative approach to combat COVID-19; *Phytomedicine*; 85:153310; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.phymed.2020.153310>
4. Avula, B.; Katragunta, K.; Wang, Y. H.; Ali, Z.; Khan, I. A.; (2022); Simultaneous determination and characterization of flavonoids, sesquiterpene lactone, and other phenolics from *Centaurea benedicta* and dietary supplements using UHPLC-PDA-MS and LC-DAD-QToF; *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Analysis*; 216:114806; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpba.2022.114806>
5. Chang, R.; Sun, W. Z.; (2020); Repositioning chloroquine as antiviral prophylaxis against COVID-19: potential and challenges; *Drug Discovery Today*; 25(10); 1786-1792; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drudis.2020.06.030>
6. Deng, Y.; Ma, J.; Weng, X.; Wang, Y.; Li, M.; Yang, T.; Dou, Z.; Yin, Z. and Shang, J.; (2021); Kaempferol-3-O-Glucuronide Ameliorates Non-Alcoholic Steatohepatitis in High-Cholesterol-Diet-Induced Larval Zebrafish and HepG2 Cell Models via Regulating Oxidation Stress; *Life*; 11(5); 445; <https://doi.org/10.3390/life11050445>
7. Dhanjal, J. K.; Kumar, V.; Garg, S.; Subramani, C.; Agarwal, S.; Wang, J.; Zhang, H.; Kaul, A.; Kalra, R. S.; Kaul, S. C.; Vrati, S.; Sundar, D. and Wadhwa, R.; (2021); Molecular mechanism of anti-SARS-CoV2 activity of Ashwagandha-derived withanolides; *Int J Biol Macromol.*; 184: 297–312; doi: 10.1016/j.ijbiomac.2021.06.015
8. Di Matteo, G.; Spano, M.; Grosso, M.; Salvo, A.; Ingallina, C.; Russo, M.; Ritieni, A. and Mannina, L.; (2020); Food and COVID-19: Preventive/Co-therapeutic Strategies Explored by Current Clinical Trials and in Silico Studies; *Foods*; 9(8); 1036; <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods9081036>
9. Diniz, L. R. L.; Elshabrawy, H. A.; Souza, M. T. S.; Duarte, A. B. S.; Datta, S. and de Sousa, D. P.; (2021); Catechins: Therapeutic Perspectives in COVID-19-Associated Acute Kidney Injury; *Molecules.*; 26(19):5951; doi: 10.3390/molecules26195951
10. Hossain, M. A.; Sohel, M.; Sultana, T.; Hasan, M. I.; Khan, M. S.; Kibria, K. M. K.; Mahmud, S. M. H.; Rahman, M. H.; (2023); Study of kaempferol in the treatment of COVID-19 combined with Chikungunya co-infection by network pharmacology and molecular docking technology; *Informatics in Medicine Unlocked*; 40:101289; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.imu.2023.101289>
11. Hossain, R.; Mahmud, S.; Khalipha, A. B. R.; Saikat, A. S. M.; Dey, D.; Khan, R. A.; Rauf, A.; Wadood, A.; Rafique, H.; Bawazeer, S.; Khalil, A. A.; Almarhoon, Z. M.; Mabkhot, Y. N.; Alzahrani, K. J.; Islam, M. T.; Alsharif, K. F.; Khan, H.; (2023); Amentoflavone derivatives against SARS-CoV-2 main protease (M^{PRO}): An in silico study; *Journal: Main Group Chemistry*; 22(2); 313-327; DOI: 10.3233/MGC-220077
12. Imran, M.; Thabet, H. K.; Alaqel, S. I.; Alzahrani, A. R.; Abida, A.; Alshammari, M. K.; Kamal, M.; Diwan, A.; Asdaq, S. M. B. and Alshehri, S.; (2022); The Therapeutic and Prophylactic Potential of Quercetin against COVID-19: An Outlook on the Clinical Studies, Inventive Compositions, and Patent Literature; *Antioxidants*; 11(5); 876; <https://doi.org/10.3390/antiox11050876>
13. Kim, S.; Hong, K. B.; Jo, K. and Suh, H. J.; (2021); Quercetin-3-O-glucuronide in the Ethanol Extract of Lotus Leaf (*Nelumbo nucifera*) Enhances Sleep Quantity and Quality in a Rodent Model via a GABAergic Mechanism; *Molecules*; 26(10); 3023; <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules26103023>
14. Kim, Y. S.; Kim, B.; Kwon, E. B.; Chung, H. S. and Choi, J. G.; (2022); Mulberrofuran G, a Mulberry Component, Prevents SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Blocking the Interaction between SARS-CoV-2 Spike Protein S1 Receptor-Binding Domain and Human Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme 2 Receptor; *Nutrients.*; 14(19):4170; doi: 10.3390/nu14194170
15. Kim, Y. S.; Kwon, E. B.; Kim, B.; Chung, H. S.; Choi, G.; Kim, Y. H. and Choi, J. G.; (2022); Mulberry Component Kuwanon C Exerts Potent Therapeutic Efficacy In Vitro against COVID-19 by Blocking the SARS-CoV-2 Spike S1 RBD:ACE2 Receptor Interaction; *Int. J. Mol.*; 23(20); 12516; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms232012516>
16. Kimura, H.; Kurusu, H.; Sada, M.; Kurai, D.; Murakami, K.; Kamitani, W.; Tomita, H.; Katayama, K.; Ryo, A.; (2020); Molecular pharmacology of ciclesonide against SARS-CoV-2; *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*; 146(2); <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaci.2020.05.029>

17. Kuboyama, T.; Tohda, C.; Komatsu, K.; (2006); Withanoside IV and its active metabolite, sominone, attenuate A β (25–35)-induced neurodegeneration; *European Journal of Neuroscience*; 23(6):1417-26; <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-9568.2006.04664.x>
18. Li, J.; Xiang, H.; Huang, C.; Lu, J.; (2021); Pharmacological Actions of Myricetin in the Nervous System: A Comprehensive Review of Preclinical Studies in Animals and Cell Models; *Front. Pharmacol.*; 12; <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2021.797298>
19. Li, J.; Xu, D.; Wang, L.; Zhang, M.; Zhang, G.; Li, E. and He, S.; (2021); Glycyrrhizic Acid Inhibits SARS-CoV-2 Infection by Blocking Spike Protein-Mediated Cell Attachment; *Molecules*; 26(20):6090; <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules26206090>
20. Maciorowski, D.; Idrissi, S. Z. E.; Gupta, Y.; Medernach, B. J.; Burns, M. B.; Becker, D. P.; Durvasula, R.; Kempaiah, P.; (2020); A Review of the Preclinical and Clinical Efficacy of Remdesivir, Hydroxychloroquine, and Lopinavir-Ritonavir Treatments against COVID-19; *SLAS Discovery*; 25(10); <https://doi.org/10.1177/2472555220958385>
21. Malin, J. J.; Suárez, I.; Priesner, V.; Fätkenheuer, G.; Rybniker, J.; (2020); Remdesivir against COVID-19 and Other Viral Diseases; *Clinical Microbiology Reviews*; 34(1); <https://doi.org/10.1128/cmr.00162-20>
22. Meeran, M. F. N.; Seenipandi, A.; Javed, H.; Sharma, C.; Hashiesh, H. M.; Goyal, S. N.; Jha, N. K.; Ojha, S.; (2021); Can limonene be a possible candidate for evaluation as an agent or adjuvant against infection, immunity, and inflammation in COVID-19?; *Heliyon*; 7(1):e05703; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05703>
23. Okamoto, S.; Ishihara, S.; Okamoto, T.; Doi, S.; Harui, K.; Higashino, Y.; Kawasaki, T.; Nakajima, N. and Saito, A.; (2014); Inhibitory Activity of Synthesized Acetylated Procyanidin B1 Analogs against HeLa S3 Cells Proliferation; *Molecules*; 19(2); 1775-1785; <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules19021775>
24. Pasquereau, S.; Galais, M.; Bellefroid, M.; Angona, I. P.; Bizot, S. M.; Ismaili, L.; Lint, C. V. & Herbein, G.; (2022); Ferulic acid derivatives block coronaviruses HCoV-229E and SARS-CoV-2 replication in vitro; *Sci Rep*; 12:20309; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-24682-9>
25. Rafiq, A.; Jabeen, T.; Aslam, S.; Ahmad, M.; Ashfaq, U. A.; Mohsin, N. A.; Zaki, M. E. A. and Al-Hussain, S. A.; (2023); A Comprehensive Update of Various Attempts by Medicinal Chemists to Combat COVID-19 through Natural Products; *Molecules*; 28(12); 4860; <https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules28124860>
26. Rizzuti, B.; Grande, F.; Conforti, F.; Alesanco, A. J.; Laita, L. C.; Alarcon, D. O.; Vega, S.; Reyburn, H. T.; Abian, O. and Campoy, A. V.; (2021); Rutin Is a Low Micromolar Inhibitor of SARS-CoV-2 Main Protease 3CLpro: Implications for Drug Design of Quercetin Analogs; *Biomedicines.*; 9(4):375; doi: 10.3390/biomedicines9040375
27. Salehi, B.; Fokou, P. V. T.; Rad, M. S.; Zucca, P.; Pezzani, R.; Martins, N. and Rad, J. S.; (2019); The Therapeutic Potential of Naringenin: A Review of Clinical Trials; *Pharmaceuticals (Basel).*; 12(1):11; doi: 10.3390/ph12010011
28. Sánchez, R. P.; Fragoso, J. M.; Muñoz, F. S.; Velasco, G. R.; Bello, J. R.; Reyes, A. L.; Gómez, L. E. M.; Fernández, C. S.; Reyna, T. R.; Zamarripa, N. E. R.; Martínez, G. R.; Ramos, J. Z. and Alarcón, G. V.; (2022); Association of the Transmembrane Serine Protease-2 (TMPRSS2) Polymorphisms with COVID-19; *Viruses*; 14(9); 1976; <https://doi.org/10.3390/v14091976>
29. Semmarath, W.; Mapoung, S.; Umsumarn, S.; Arjsri, P.; Srisawad, K.; Thippraphan, P.; Yodkeeree, S. and Dejkriengkraikul, P.; (2022); Cyanidin-3-O-glucoside and Peonidin-3-O-glucoside-Rich Fraction of Black Rice Germ and Bran Suppresses Inflammatory Responses from SARS-CoV-2 Spike Glycoprotein S1-Induction In Vitro in A549 Lung Cells and THP-1 Macrophages via Inhibition of the NLRP3 Inflammasome Pathway; *Nutrients*; 14(13):2738; <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14132738>
30. Singh, S.; Weiss, A.; Goodman, J.; Fisk, M.; Kulkarni, S.; Lu, I.; Gray, J.; Smith, R.; Sommer, M.; Cheriyan, J.; (2022); Niclosamide—A promising treatment for COVID-19; *British Journal of Pharmacology*; 179(13); 3250-3267; <https://doi.org/10.1111/bph.15843>
31. Souid, I.; Korchef, A.; Souid, S.; (2022); In silico evaluation of Vitis amurensis Rupr. Polyphenol compounds for their inhibition potency against COVID-19 main enzymes Mpro and RdRp; *Saudi Pharmaceutical Journal*; 30(5); 570-584; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsps.2022.02.014>
32. Speciale, A.; Muscarà, C.; Molonia, M. S.; Cimino, F.; Saija, A.; Giofrè, S. V.; (2021); Silibinin as potential tool against SARS-Cov-2: In silico spike receptor-binding domain and main protease molecular docking analysis, and in vitro endothelial protective effects; *Phytotherapy Research*; 35(8); 4616-4625; <https://doi.org/10.1002/ptr.7107>
33. Uckun, F. M.; Saund, S.; Windlass, H.; Trieu, V.; (2021); Repurposing Anti-Malaria Phytomedicine Artemisinin as a COVID-19 Drug; *Front. Pharmacol.*; 12:649532;

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2021.649532>

34. Umar, H. I.; Siraj, B.; Ajayi, A.; Jimoh, T. O. and Chukwuemeka, P. O.; (2021); Molecular docking studies of some selected gallic acid derivatives against five non-structural proteins of novel coronavirus; *J Genet Eng Biotechnol.*; 19:16; doi: 10.1186/s43141-021-00120-7
35. Vardhan, S. and Sahoo, S. K.; (2022); Computational studies on the interaction of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron SGp RBD with human receptor ACE2, limonin and glycyrrhizic acid; *Computers in Biology and Medicine*; 144:105367; doi: 10.1016/j.combiomed.2022.105367
36. Wang, Y.; Tang, C.; Zhang, H.; (2015); Hepatoprotective effects of kaempferol 3-O-rutinoside and kaempferol 3-O-glucoside from *Carthamus tinctorius* L. on CCl₄-induced oxidative liver injury in mice; *Journal of Food and Drug Analysis*; 23(2); 310-317; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfda.2014.10.002>
37. Wang, Y.; Wu, S.; Li, Q.; Lang, W.; Li, W.; Jiang, X.; Wan, Z.; Chen, J.; Wang, H.; (2022); Epigallocatechin-3-gallate: A phytochemical as a promising drug candidate for the treatment of Parkinson's disease; *Front. Pharmacol.*; 13; <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphar.2022.977521>
38. Zhang, X. Y.; Huang, H. J.; Zhuang, D. L.; Nasser, M. I.; Yang, M. H.; Zhu, P. & Zhao, M. Y.; (2020); Biological, clinical and epidemiological features of COVID-19, SARS and MERS and AutoDock simulation of ACE2; *Infectious Diseases of Poverty*; 9(99); <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40249-020-00691-6>