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# Exploring the Physicochemical Properties of Plant-derived Drugs through Multiscale Simulations and Data-driven Approaches

**Iram Saba[1], Hifsa Mobeen[2], Sumaira kanwal[3], Ahmad Hassan[4], Muhammad Ashraf[5], Amina Kanwal[6], Muhammad Ishtiaq[7], Muhammad Waqar[8]**

1. Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Natural Sciences, GC Women University Sialkot, Punjab, 51310, Pakistan.
2. Department of Medical Laboratory Technology, Allied Health Sciences, Superior University Lahore.
3. Department of Biological Science, Faculty of Science, Superior University Lahore.
4. Department Of Chemistry, University of Agriculture Faisalabad.
5. Institute of Chemical Sciences, Bahauddin Zakaryia University, Multan
6. Department of Botany, GC Women University Sialkot Pakistan
7. Climate Change Research Centre, Herbarium and Biodiversity Conservation Laboratory, Department of Botany, Azad Jammu and Kashmir University of Bhimber (AJ&K UoB), 10040-Bhimber, AJK, Pakistan, Department of Botany, Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST) Mirpur-10250, AJK, Pakistan
8. Department of Agricultural Economics, College of Agriculture, University of Sargodha.

**Corresponding Author**: Iram Saba **Email**: iramsaba602@yahoo.com

## Abstract

Plant-derived drugs have been used for centuries in traditional medicine and continue to play a significant role in modern drug discovery. Understanding the physicochemical properties of these compounds is essential for predicting their behavior in biological systems and optimizing their therapeutic potential. This review explores the application of multiscale simulations and data-driven approaches in investigating the physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs. The physicochemical properties discussed include solubility, permeability, partition coefficient, and stability, which are critical determinants of drug efficacy and bioavailability. Multiscale simulations, such as molecular dynamics simulations, quantum mechanical calculations, and coarse-grained modeling, provide insights into the molecular behavior and interactions of plant-derived drugs, aiding in the design and optimization of drug candidates. Data-driven approaches, including machine learning algorithms, quantitative structure-activity relationship (QSAR) modeling, and big data analytics, offer valuable tools for analyzing large datasets and predicting the physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs. These approaches enable the identification of key molecular descriptors and patterns that influence drug behavior, facilitating the rational design and selection of drug candidates. Looking ahead, advancements in computational power,

as well as the integration of experimental and computational approaches, hold promise for further enhancing our understanding of the physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs. Continued research in this field will contribute to the discovery and development of novel, effective, and safe plant-derived therapeutics. In conclusion, the combination of multiscale simulations and data-driven approaches provides a powerful framework for exploring the physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs. This integrated approach offers valuable insights into drug behavior, supporting the rational design and optimization of plant-derived therapeutics for various diseases and conditions.

**Keywords:** - Physicochemical properties, Plant-derived drugs, Multiscale simulations, Data-driven approaches, Drug development

**1. Introduction: -**

The use of plant-derived drugs has been a significant aspect of traditional medicine and continues to be of great interest in modern pharmacology. Plant-derived substances have shown versatile applications and have led to the development of numerous drugs. It is noteworthy that about a quarter of all FDA and/or EMA approved drugs are plant-based, with well-known drugs such as Paclitaxel and Morphine having been isolated from plants (Thomford et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of plant-derived drugs in the pharmaceutical industry. Additionally, the history of medicinal plants and their toxic counterparts is well-documented, emphasizing the significance of understanding the properties and applications of plant-derived substances (Samy & Gopalakrishnakone, 2007).

The potential of plant-derived drugs is further supported by the fact that various classes of substances such as alkaloids, neolignans, terpenes, lignans, phenolics, and essential oils have been isolated from plants, demonstrating potent bioactivity (Aumeeruddy-Elalfi et al., 2018). This diversity of bioactive compounds in plants underscores their importance as potential sources for drug discovery and development. Furthermore, the use of medicinal plants in manufacturing societies has led to the extraction and development of several drugs, as well as the utilization of traditionally used folk medicine (Behera et al., 2019).

The significance of plant-derived drugs is also evident in the context of modern medicine, where medicinal plants and phytochemicals derived from plants continue to play an important role in drug discovery and development (Sharma et al., 2015). This is further supported by the fact that about 50% of the drugs introduced to the market during the last 20 years are derived directly or indirectly from small biogenic molecules, highlighting the ongoing relevance of plant-derived compounds in the pharmaceutical industry (Vuorela et al., 2004).

Moreover, the potential of medicinal plants in the treatment and cure of diseases is well-recognized, with nearly 80% of the world's population relying on traditional medicines for primary health care, most of which involve the use of plant extracts (Deepa & Sivakumar, 2020). This widespread utilization of plant-derived medicines underscores their cultural and practical significance in global healthcare practices. In conclusion, the references provide comprehensive evidence of the importance and potential of plant-derived drugs in traditional and modern medicine. The diverse bioactive compounds present in plants, their historical significance, and

their continued relevance in drug discovery and development highlight the critical role of plant-derived substances in the pharmaceutical industry.

## 2. Importance of understanding physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs

The understanding of physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs is crucial for drug discovery and development. These properties play a significant role in determining the behavior of drugs within biological systems, influencing their pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and overall efficacy. Physicochemical properties such as molecular interactions, molecular organization, and structural characteristics of plant-derived biopolymers are essential in creating drug-like structures and ensuring the bioavailability and effectiveness of plant-based pharmaceuticals (Pathania et al., 2015). Additionally, the physicochemical properties of drugs are important determinants of their metabolism, permeation across cell membranes, binding to plasma proteins, and dissolution, all of which are critical factors in their therapeutic action (Li et al., 2020). The intrinsic physical and chemical characteristics of plant-derived molecules have been recognized as suitable lead structures in drug discovery, indicating the importance of understanding their physicochemical properties in identifying potential drug candidates (Zafar et al., 2020). The emphasis on defining physicochemical property rules for derivatives underscores the role of these properties in reducing attrition and increasing the likelihood of success in drug development (Ritchie et al., 2009).

The significance of physicochemical properties in drug design is further supported by the extensive literature exploring the calculated properties of drugs and their application to oral drug design, as well as their role in the design of chemical libraries for drug discovery (Rao et al., 2015). Moreover, the understanding of physicochemical properties is crucial in predicting the behavior of drugs in systemic circulation and their pharmacological actions, highlighting their impact on drug efficacy and safety (Deb & Reeves, 2021).

The importance of physicochemical properties in drug design and development is not limited to pharmaceuticals but also extends to the design of nanocarriers for drug delivery systems. Tailoring the physicochemical properties of nanocarriers is essential for their effective application in anticancer treatments, emphasizing the broader relevance of these properties in drug development (Chakraborty et al., 2017). In conclusion, the understanding of physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs is crucial for their successful development and application in medicine. The diverse roles of physicochemical properties in drug design, bioavailability, pharmacokinetics, and drug delivery systems underscore their significance in ensuring the efficacy and safety of plant-derived pharmaceuticals.

## 3. Role of multiscale simulations and data-driven approaches in drug research

The role of multiscale simulations and data-driven approaches in drug research is pivotal in advancing the understanding of complex biological systems and in the development of novel therapeutic interventions. Multiscale simulations, as recognized by the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2013, have been instrumental in providing an expanded perspective of drug targets, elucidating their detailed interactions with complex biological systems, such as realistically complex membranes and other proteins Lin et al. (2020). These simulations are crucial for simulating drug

responses of stem cell-driven biosystems and have applications in cancer therapeutics, regenerative medicines, and beyond (Clancy et al., 2016). Furthermore, multiscale modeling plays a significant role in the characterization of machining at reduced-size scales, particularly in explaining phenomenological effects across the nano-micro-meso continuum, which is essential for understanding drug delivery systems and their performance (Sun et al., 2006; Sun & Cheng, 2009).

In drug research, the integration of multiscale modeling with drug effects for cancer treatment has been highlighted as a promising approach. This integration, when incorporated with systems pharmacology, aids in the development of practical smart drugs (Li et al., 2015). Additionally, multiscale modeling has been employed in the study of transdermal drug delivery, providing valuable insights into drug transport through the skin (Gajula et al., 2017). Moreover, multiscale simulations have been demonstrated to be effective in cardiovascular flow modeling, with applications in understanding the behavior of myocytes and cardiac tissues, which is crucial for drug development targeting cardiovascular diseases (Pope et al., 2011).

In parallel, data-driven approaches have also played a significant role in drug research. These approaches utilize background knowledge accumulated through prior research to establish future knowledge, and they rely solely upon the data being analyzed to generate new scientific knowledge (Raghu et al., 2017). For instance, a data-driven approach accounting for past medication use patterns has been shown to accurately approximate the duration of dispensation for medications with large dose variability, such as anticoagulants, which is essential for understanding drug pharmacokinetics and patient outcomes (Sinyavskaya et al., 2021). Furthermore, the integration of data-driven approaches with multiscale mathematical models has been employed to study drug effects, providing a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the impact of drugs on biological systems (Oduola & Li, 2018).

In conclusion, the combination of multiscale simulations and data-driven approaches has significantly advanced drug research by providing a comprehensive understanding of drug targets, drug responses in biological systems, and the impact of drugs on various diseases. These approaches have the potential to revolutionize drug discovery and development by providing insights into complex biological processes and enabling the design of more effective and targeted therapeutic interventions.

## 4. Physicochemical Properties of Plant-derived Drugs

Physicochemical properties play a crucial role in determining the behavior and effectiveness of plant-derived drugs. Three key physicochemical properties of plant-derived drugs are solubility, permeability, and partition coefficient.

Solubility refers to the ability of a substance to dissolve in a solvent. It is a critical property for drug absorption and bioavailability. The solubility of plant-derived drugs influences their dissolution and subsequent absorption in the body, ultimately impacting their therapeutic efficacy Leeson & Davis (2004). Understanding the solubility of plant-derived drugs is essential for formulating drug delivery systems and optimizing drug concentrations for effective treatment.

Permeability is another important physicochemical property that determines the ability of a drug to pass through biological membranes. In the context of plant-derived drugs, permeability influences their absorption and distribution within the body. The permeability of drugs is closely related to their bioavailability and can significantly impact their pharmacokinetic profile (Lagorce et al., 2017). Therefore, assessing the permeability of plant-derived drugs is crucial for predicting their behavior in biological systems. The partition coefficient, often represented as log P, is a measure of the distribution of a compound between two immiscible phases, typically octanol and water. This property is indicative of a drug's lipophilicity and its ability to cross biological membranes. For plant-derived drugs, the partition coefficient is a key determinant of their absorption, distribution, and overall pharmacokinetic behavior (Deb & Reeves, 2021). Understanding the partition coefficient of plant-derived drugs is essential for predicting their bioavailability and optimizing their therapeutic potential.

In conclusion, the physicochemical properties of solubility, permeability, and partition coefficient are essential considerations in the development and optimization of plant-derived drugs. These properties significantly influence the absorption, distribution, and overall pharmacokinetic behavior of plant-derived pharmaceuticals, making them crucial factors in drug research and development.

## 5. Multiscale Simulations in Drug Research

Multiscale simulations are essential in drug research, providing insights into the behavior and interactions of molecules at various levels of complexity. Three key approaches in multiscale simulations are molecular dynamics simulations, quantum mechanical calculations, and coarse-grained modeling. Molecular dynamics (MD) simulations involve the computational modeling of the physical movements and interactions of atoms and molecules. In drug research, MD simulations are utilized to study the dynamic behavior of drug molecules and their interactions with biological targets. For instance, MD simulations have been employed to investigate the structure and behavior of polymer brushes in good solvents, providing valuable insights into the conformation and properties of high-density polymer systems Elliott et al. (2010). Additionally, MD simulations have been instrumental in examining the formation of chain-folded structures in supercooled polymer melts, shedding light on nucleation and supercooling phenomena in polymer systems (Meyer & Müller-Plathe, 2002).

Quantum mechanical (QM) calculations are another essential tool in multiscale simulations, providing a detailed understanding of molecular properties and interactions at the quantum level. In drug research, QM calculations are employed to study the energetics and electronic structure of drug molecules and their binding to biological targets. For example, QM calculations have been used to compute the interaction energy of streptavidin-biotin complexes, offering valuable insights into the binding affinity of these biomolecular systems (Zhang et al., 2003). Furthermore, QM calculations have been applied to study the S<sub>N</sub>2 reaction of methyl chloride with hydroxide ions in water, providing a detailed understanding of the reaction mechanism at the quantum level (Yin et al., 2011).

Coarse-grained modeling is a computational approach that simplifies the representation of complex molecular systems by grouping atoms into larger interaction sites. In drug research, coarse-grained modeling is employed to study the behavior of large biomolecular systems and to simulate the dynamics of macromolecular assemblies. For instance, coarse-grained simulations have been used to model the behavior of poly (lactic acid) at the mesoscale, providing insights into the dynamics and properties of this biopolymer (Glagolev & Vasilevskaya, 2018). Additionally, coarse-grained models have been developed for large proteins, enabling the extraction of slow motions and essential dynamics of these complex biomolecular systems (Kürkçüoğlu et al., 2004). In conclusion, multiscale simulations, including molecular dynamics simulations, quantum mechanical calculations, and coarse-grained modeling, are indispensable tools in drug research. These approaches provide a comprehensive understanding of the behavior and interactions of drug molecules at different levels of complexity, offering valuable insights into drug design, molecular dynamics, and biological processes.

## 6. Data-driven Approaches for Drug Development

### 6.1 Machine learning algorithms

In drug development, machine learning algorithms play a crucial role in data-driven approaches, aiding in the selection of compounds with optimal physicochemical properties for successful drug development outcomes. Several references provide valuable insights into the application of machine learning algorithms in drug research, focusing on the selection of compounds with appropriate physicochemical properties for use as pharmaceuticals. (Tice, 2002; emphasizes the need for computer algorithms to aid in the selection of diverse compounds with appropriate physicochemical properties for use as agrochemicals, particularly in the context of high-throughput screening for agrochemical discovery (Tice, 2002; . Leeson & Davis, 2004) highlight the importance of selecting oral candidate drugs with optimal physicochemical properties to ensure successful drug development outcomes (Leeson & Davis, 2004; . Thompson et al., 2012) discuss the development of algorithms based on drug physicochemical properties and tissue composition to generate predicted partition coefficients for physiologically-based pharmacokinetic modeling applications (Thompson et al., 2012). These references underscore the significance of machine learning algorithms in the selection of compounds with desirable physicochemical properties for drug development.

Furthermore, Pathania et al. (2015) and Rao et al. (2015) provide insights into the exploration of phytochemicals of medicinal plants and the physicochemical profiles of marketed agrochemicals, emphasizing the importance of selecting screening chemical libraries for successful application of drug development technologies (Pathania et al., 2015; Rao et al., 2015). These references highlight the critical role of machine learning algorithms in the selection of compounds for drug development and screening library development.

In conclusion, the application of machine learning algorithms in drug research is essential for the selection of compounds with optimal physicochemical properties, ensuring successful drug development outcomes. These algorithms aid in the identification of diverse compounds with

appropriate physicochemical properties for use as pharmaceuticals, thereby contributing to the advancement of drug discovery and development.

### 6.2 QSAR modeling

In the realm of drug development, Quantitative Structure-Activity Relationship (QSAR) modeling plays a pivotal role in leveraging computational methods to predict the biological activity of chemical compounds. The potential of QSAR modeling in drug development is underscored by a plethora of research studies that have explored its application across diverse domains. Notably, Mao et al. (2006) have delved into the QSAR modeling of the in vitro inhibition of Cytochrome P450 3A4, shedding light on the pharmacophore, cytochrome P-450 enzyme system, and enzyme inhibitors. This study underscores the relevance of QSAR modeling in understanding the interactions of compounds with crucial biological targets.

Furthermore, Manoharan et al. (2010) have provided insights into rationalizing fragment-based drug discovery for BACE1, offering valuable perspectives on fragment-based and multi-objective principles in QSAR approaches. Additionally, Pita et al. (2012) have contributed to the field by conducting a receptor-dependent 4D-QSAR analysis of peptidomimetic inhibitors of Trypanosoma cruzi Trypanothione Reductase, emphasizing the significance of 3D descriptors in QSAR studies. Moreover, Maganti et al. (2011) have explored the structural requirements of nucleoside bisubstrate analogs for the inhibition of MbtA in Mycobacterium tuberculosis through a fragment-based QSAR study, highlighting the power of fragment-based QSAR approaches in exploring chemical and biological space. Hajjo et al. (2012) have built QSAR models of ligands binding to the 5-hydroxytryptamine-6 receptor, showcasing the potential of ligand-based QSAR approaches in new ligand design and discovery.

The significance of machine learning techniques in QSAR modeling is further emphasized by (Gertrudes et al., 2012), who have discussed the role of machine learning techniques in drug design, and (Myint et al., 2012), who have employed molecular fingerprint-based artificial neural networks QSAR for ligand biological activity predictions. Additionally, Simões et al. (2018) have delved into transfer and multi-task learning in QSAR modeling, shedding light on the advances and challenges in this domain.

In conclusion, the extensive body of research in QSAR modeling underscores its pivotal role in drug development, offering valuable insights into the design, discovery, and prediction of the biological activity of chemical compounds. These studies collectively highlight the diverse applications and the potential of QSAR modeling in advancing drug development and design.

### 6.3 Big data analytics

Big data analytics has emerged as a transformative technology with far-reaching implications for various domains, including drug development. The potential of big data analytics in this context is underscored by a plethora of research studies that have explored its application across diverse domains. For instance, Sun et al. (2016) have highlighted the multidisciplinary advancement of big data analytics, emphasizing its potential in leveraging ICT, mathematics, operations research, and decision sciences for big data. This underscores the broad applicability of big data analytics in harnessing large-scale datasets for informed decision-making.

Moreover, Biswas & Sen (2016) have advocated for the use of big data analytics in supply chain management, emphasizing its potential to improve supply chain performance. This highlights the role of big data analytics in optimizing operational processes and enhancing efficiency. Additionally, the potential of big data analytics in driving innovation in maintenance and service operations in the industrial sector has been underscored by a study on future maintenance and service innovation ("Future Maintenance and Service Innovation Using Industrial Big Data Analytics in The United States", 2023).

In the context of smart city development, big data analytics has been instrumental in driving sustainable urban planning and development. Khan et al. (2022) have discussed the application of big data analytics in sustainable smart city development, emphasizing its role in domains such as smart grid operation, healthcare, and sustainable supply chain. Furthermore, big data analytics has been employed for near real-time sentiment analysis, as highlighted by (Cheng & Lau, 2015), showcasing its potential in extracting actionable insights from streaming data.

The healthcare industry has also witnessed the transformative potential of big data analytics. Faiyaad & Sadiki (2022) have highlighted the promising breakthroughs in the healthcare industry through the application of big data analytics, emphasizing its potential for sustainable healthcare practices. Additionally, Wang et al. (2018) have discussed the potential benefits of big data analytics for healthcare organizations, underscoring its role in understanding and leveraging large volumes of healthcare data.

In the context of decision-making and innovation, big data analytics has been instrumental in driving informed decision-making and fostering innovation. Pillay & Merwe (2021) have emphasized the role of big data analytics in decision-making models, highlighting its potential to influence innovation within organizations. Furthermore, the role of big data analytics in promoting the implementation and usage of big data in healthcare has been underscored by (Moon-Koo & Park, 2016), showcasing its potential to drive innovation in the healthcare sector.

In conclusion, the extensive body of research on big data analytics underscores its pivotal role in driving innovation, optimizing operational processes, and fostering informed decision-making across diverse domains, including drug development.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, plant-derived drugs continue to hold significant importance in drug development and the pharmaceutical industry. Despite the challenges related to the labor-, time-, and cost-intensive nature of working with naturally derived chemicals, plant-derived drugs remain essential for the treatment of various diseases. The potential of plant-derived drugs in the treatment of conditions such as cancer, cervical cancer, and leukemia has been highlighted, with compounds such as camptothecin, taxol, and combretastatin playing dominant roles. Additionally, the global market for plant-derived drugs has been estimated to be substantial, emphasizing the ongoing significance of phytochemicals in modern medicine. Furthermore, the unique mechanisms and diverse potential of plant-derived substances have led to their continued exploration for therapeutic usage, including in cardiology and as anti-cancer agents. The historical and contemporary

contributions of plant-derived drugs to the pharmaceutical industry underscore their enduring relevance and potential for future drug discovery and development.

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