ABSTRACT

Thirty-three aqueous methanolic extracts obtained from thirty plant species, belonging to seventeen families were screened for cytotoxic activity against HeLa (human cervical carcinoma) cells. The ability of the extracts (10 µg/ml and 1 µg/ml) to inhibit proliferation of HeLa cells was determined using the 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyl-tetrazolium bromide (MTT) dye reduction assay. Extracts from roots of Agathisanthemum bojeri, Synaptolepis kirkii and Zanha africana and the leaf extract of Physalis peruviana at a concentration of 10 µg/ml inhibited cell proliferation by 58.3%, 68.1%, 75.7% and 91.8%, respectively. The remaining 29 extracts exhibited no pronounced cytotoxic activity at the tested concentrations. It is worth investigating the four extracts, which showed pronounced cytotoxic activity so as to isolate and identify the compounds responsible for cytotoxic activity.