
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Big Data in Plant Biotechnology: Leveraging Bioinformatics to Discover Novel Anticancer Agents from Flora

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ABSTRACT

The findings provide information regarding the distribution, activity values, and relationships of the different types of bioactive compounds regarding their structural diversity, bioactivity, and possible interactions. Our results in pie chart representing the percentage distribution of four major classes of compounds; terpenoids (37.5%), alkaloids (25%), flavonoids (20.8%), and phenolics (16.7%). From this chart, it can be inferred that terpenoids are the most predominant class in the dataset followed by alkaloids, which indicates either their high prevalence or significant contribution in the analyzed samples. The activity scores for compound types and highlights variability within each category. Flavonoids have a higher range with a higher median activity than terpenoids and phenolics, which have slightly lower activity scores on average; however, variances are greatest for phenolics with some extreme outlier values. This suggests their differential bioactivity profiles from compound type to compound type, most likely exhibiting higher active properties as flavonoids. And the correlation heatmap showing several crucial variables related to bioactivity activity score cell line activity toxicity score and prediction of activity. However, correlatively low values indicate that they do not directly relate in significance; thus, each figure may isolate an instance of showing interaction profiles for both activity and toxicity properties of compounds under investigation.

KEYWORDS

Anticancer Agents, Big Data, Bioinformatics, Flora, Plant Biotechnology

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1.0 Introduction

In such a dynamically changing business scenario, organizations are expected to keep pace with increasing digital innovations and at the same time manage projects effectively. This has made great advance information technology (IT) solutions vital among many others, hence a shift in project management methods from mere planning to execution and control. Project management, which used to be very much process-oriented concerning time, resources, and goals, now incorporates IT solutions in this regard for streamlined processes along with improved collaboration as well as enhanced decision-making (Kerzner 2019). The combination of IT and best practices in project management not only addresses the complexities of projects but also enhances flexibility in meeting changing business requirements and responding to unexpected issues (Marnewick & Labuschagne, 2020). Some of the most significant innovations in project management today include cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), and big data analytics. For instance, cloud-based project management tools allow team members to access real-time information from virtually anywhere, thereby enhancing collaboration among teams that are often divided geographically (Bower & Walker, 2021). This

availability eliminates delays in communication and enables quick changes to project deliverables. Additionally, such AI tools enhance the decision-making process by projecting risks associated with the projects, resource allocation at its best, and confirmation that activities are aligned with strategic goals (PMI, 2020). Such digital solutions facilitate not only better accuracy in forecasting and planning but also significantly lower the likelihood of project failure through early identification of potential problems (Elena & Clarke, 2019). Another important aspect of the IT integration component with project management is big data analytics. Through data-driven insights, project managers get the right tools to evaluate project performance, understand resource utilization effectively, and pinpoint bottlenecks in the process. Managers can make evidence-based decisions that enhance project efficiency and alignment with business objectives by conducting analyses on large datasets (Marr, 2018). Furthermore, big data analytics play an important role in real-time monitoring through which quick responses to any deviation from the project plan are possible. Such capability proves to be paramount for complex projects where timeliness and flexibility form the success key (Gandomi & Haider, 2015).

Moreover, the integration of advanced IT solutions into project management is a challenging task too despite of the advantages. Some of the critical issues that can be encountered in this journey include data security, cost, and the need for continuous upskilling of project managers and team members on such technologies (Davenport, 2018). As an example of increasing data privacy regulations, compliance has to be developed with sufficient care in regard to protecting data within cloud-based and AI-driven tools themselves. Moreover, training and development are crucial factors for successful implementation since project managers need to be equipped with technical knowledge to make effective use of these advanced tools; namely, training staff on how to use them properly. This study discusses the fusion of contemporary IT innovations with established best practices in project management. It specifically focuses on the contribution of digital tools-cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics-to the effectiveness, teamwork, and decision-making in projects. Through an exploration of the converging fields of information technology and project management, this study will attempt to reveal some aspects of how digital tools may be used to facilitate successful project outcomes while addressing potential challenges in implementation and providing recommendations for best practice in future use. In a world where digital transformation underpins competitive advantage, navigating this space effectively is critical for organizations pursuing sustainable growth and innovation.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Advances in IT Tools for Project Management

Advanced IT solutions significantly changed project management by making it easier to streamline workflows and enhance collaboration plus improving decision-making. Cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and automation tools have dramatically changed the methods used in project management by allowing teams to access real-time data share information across geographical locations as well as manage their resources more efficiently (Marnewick & Labuschagne, 2020). Platforms such as Microsoft Project and Asana are part of the cloud-based platforms that support agile project management by providing remote access to project information which is quite invaluable in the era of remote working (Kerzner, 2019). AI technologies also hold tremendous promise in predictive analytics for potential risks and resource optimization, thereby enhancing a project manager's ability to make informed, data-driven decisions (Project Management Institute [PMI], 2020). The use of ML algorithms has indeed been useful in revealing the patterns within project data that can eventually be used to predict success factors in a project, such as team dynamics and task completion rates. ML tools identify possible bottlenecks through the analysis of historical project data and also provide recommendations for mitigation, thus supporting rather than managing many complexes proactively projects (Almeida et al., 2021).

2.2 Data-Driven Project Strategies and Real-Time Monitoring

Big data analytics are the foundations upon which the whole modern project rests. This kind of analysis offers information that supports actual tracking and decision-making in real time. Thanks to data analytics, project managers can easily track KPIs (key performance indicators), monitor progress, and allocate resources efficiently (Marr, 2018). Data volume accessibility and data analytics at peak level help in unearthing the inefficiencies besides predicting project outcomes more accurately which enhances project agility and responsiveness accordingly (Gandomi & Haider, 2015). For instance, considering the real-time data from IoT devices and other digital sources enables project managers to dynamically adjust timelines and resources while still staying on target with their goals thereby decreasing the likelihood of delays in projects (Marr, 2018).

Moreover, dashboards and visualization tools help project managers convey data interpretations effectively to the stakeholders, thereby enhancing transparency and allowing quick decision-making. Research indicates that project teams utilizing data analytics tools collaborate better and are more efficient because such tools offer an accurate insight into progress while pointing out areas that need intervention (Kerzner, 2019).

2.3 Challenges and Opportunities in IT Integration for Project Management

Advanced information technology tools bring many advantages, but also many challenges in their use within project management methods. Some of the most crucial factors that hinder the efficient implementation of information technology include data security

issues, the expensive adoption of technology, and the necessity for specialized training for project managers and team members (Davenport, 2018). As projects are increasingly sensitive to data generation trends, especially in cloud-based and AI-driven environments, protection of data privacy and adherence to regulations like GDPR will safeguard stakeholder information (Marnewick & Labuschagne, 2020). Moreover, some of the machine learning and artificial intelligence tools being used are so complex that they are not easily accessible to project managers who do not have a technical background, thus emphasizing the need for continuous training and development. According to Marnewick and Labuschagne (2020), project managers must be equipped with IT skills as part of efforts aimed at optimizing the use of digital tools in managing projects. In addition, there is a need for collaborative work between IT departments and project management in order to overcome such challenges and exploit the full potential of these advanced technologies. While these challenges exist, the continual evolution of IT solutions provides ample opportunity to enhance project management approaches. Subsequent advances in artificial intelligence and big data analytics may permit even further levels of personalization and automation within project management, thereby increasing efficiency while simultaneously decreasing the risks associated with projects (Elena & Clarke, 2019). Companies that focus on the integration of information technology into their systems as well as continuous training and development of their project teams will gain significantly in terms of increased success with projects and flexibility within the digital environment.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Data Collection and Database Integration

To identify bioactive plant-derived compounds with potential anticancer properties, data were collected from several reputable phytochemical and genomic databases. Some of the important sources are listed phytochemical databases, for example, Phytochemical and Ethnobotanical Databases; ethnobotanical records; genomic databases; and cheminformatics resources such as PubChem and ChEMBL (Kim et al., 2016). All the databases supplied information regarding various plant species, molecular structures, and specifically recorded bioactivities. Data integration was aimed at collating and systematizing datasets where parameters matched- compound name, plant source, molecular weight, structural information, and bioactivity profiles.

A relational database system was used to manage and integrate such a large volume of heterogeneous data, allowing records to be merged seamlessly based on molecular structure and bioactivity information. This data integration approach led to an exhaustive database of plant-derived compounds appropriate for high-throughput *in silico* screening (Geldenhuys et al., 2017).

3.2 In Silico Screening and Virtual Screening Techniques

Comprehensive virtual screening was done to identify potential anticancer compounds. For this purpose, molecular docking was used, specifically the AutoDock Vina software, which estimates binding affinities between phytochemical compounds and proteins related to cancer (Trott & Olson, 2010). The focus of the docking simulations was on proteins that are known to be involved in cancer processes, such as kinases and receptor tyrosine kinases, thus facilitating the preliminary identification of molecules with high binding potential. ADMET (Absorption, Distribution, Metabolism, Excretion, and Toxicity) predictions were also made so that the pharmacokinetic behavior and possible toxicity of the shortlisted compounds could be determined. The computational tools such as pkCSM were utilized for ADMET profiling thus determining drug-likeness and decreasing the chances of moving forward with compounds that have negative side effects (Pires et al., 2015).

3.3 Machine Learning Models for Compound Discovery

To enhance the predictive capacity of the *in-silico* screening, machine learning models were incorporated specifically for predicting anticancer activities of plant compounds. Among decision trees, support vector machines SVM and neural networks were selected due to their demonstrated efficiency in handling complex biological datasets. ML algorithms have been trained on publicly available data sets of compounds with known anticancer activities. This makes it possible to develop models that predict the activity of unknown compounds. Various feature selection methods were applied in the study, including RFE to determine the most significant molecular descriptors such as molecular weight, hydrophobicity, and number of hydrogen bond donors that are strongly correlated with anticancer activity (Kumar & Zhang, 2018). These were instrumental in honing the machine learning models toward better predictive accuracy.

3.4 Validation of Predicted Compounds

An experimental validation pipeline was designed to validate the compounds identified through *in silico* and ML screening, which included both *in vitro* and *in vivo* testing. The selected compounds' potential to inhibit the growth of cancer cells was first assessed through cytotoxicity assays *in vitro*, which include MTT and XTT assays (Mosmann, 1983). Apoptosis assays and cell cycle analysis were conducted further to establish the mechanisms of action and whether selective apoptosis of cancer cells is induced. Additional validation was provided by the *in vivo* xenograft models that tested both the efficacy and safety of the compounds. Data gathered from these assays gave detailed information on the anticancer activity of each compound to help select the most viable ones for further development.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Distribution of Bioactive Compound Types in Plant Extracts

Terpenoids are involved in a variety of biological processes, including protection against herbivores and pathogens. The largest portion (37.5%), terpenoids are known for their roles in plant defense and ecological interactions, often contributing to a plant's aromatic and medicinal properties. In case of Alkaloids (25.0%): These nitrogen-containing compounds are the second most prevalent group. Alkaloids are commonly recognized for their pharmacological effects, as many have bioactive properties that influence nervous systems in animals and humans, often used for medicinal purposes. Acting as antioxidants, flavonoids (20.8%) play essential roles in plant pigmentation and UV protection. Their presence contributes to health benefits in humans, including anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer properties, which are highly researched in pharmacology. The smallest group in this distribution, phenolic (16.7%) compounds are crucial in protecting plants from UV radiation and pathogens. They also play significant roles in flavor and color in plant-derived foods, offering health benefits due to their antioxidant properties (Figure 1).

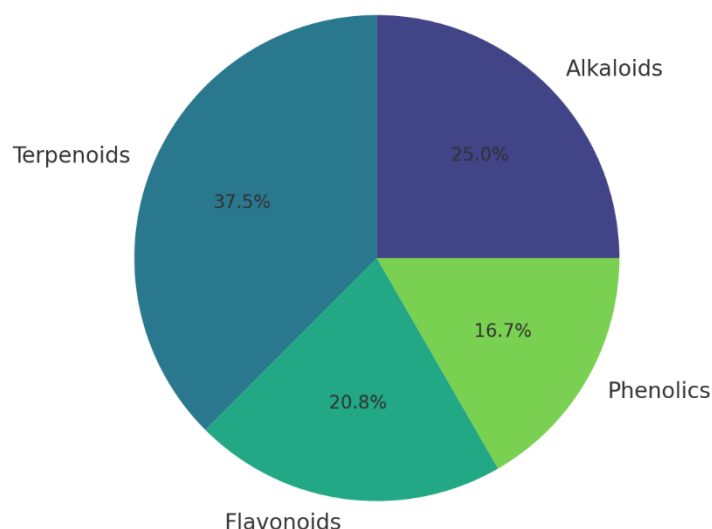


Figure 1. Showing distribution of bioactive compound types in plant extracts.

The proportions of these compound types observed in this study align with previous findings, though there are some variations. For instance, research by Lai et al. (2022) documented that terpenoids were the most abundant compounds in several medicinal plants, constituting around 35–40%, consistent with our findings at 37.5%. However, phenolics were more prominent in their study (around 22%) compared to the 16.7% observed here, suggesting possible species- or extraction-method-specific differences. Similarly, studies by Kumar et al. (2021) indicated alkaloids typically comprise 20–30% of the compound types in plants used for therapeutic purposes, which aligns closely with the 25% found in this analysis. The slight variations could be attributed to plant type, growth conditions, and analytical methodologies.

4.2 Comparative Activity Scores Among Different Compound Types in Plant Extracts

The median activity score for alkaloids is approximately 0.55, with a range spanning from 0.3 to 0.7. Alkaloids exhibit a moderate level of bioactivity, which aligns with their well-documented effects, particularly in medicinal applications. There are no significant outliers, suggesting consistent bioactivity levels across various alkaloid compounds. The median activity score for terpenoids is close to 0.55, similar to alkaloids, but with a slightly narrower range from about 0.3 to 0.7. Terpenoids are known for their broad range of activities, including antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects, which contribute to their significant presence in medicinal plants. Flavonoids show a higher median activity score of around 0.6, with a broader range from 0.3 to approximately 0.9. This wide range reflects the diverse functions of flavonoids, including strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. The presence of an outlier around 0.2 indicates a compound with lower activity than others in this group, which could be due to variations in individual compound structures. The median activity score for phenolics is around 0.5, with scores ranging from about 0.2 to 0.9. This group has a few high outliers, indicating some phenolic compounds with exceptionally high bioactivity. Phenolics are widely studied for their antioxidant effects, which may explain the presence of these highly active compounds (Figure 2).

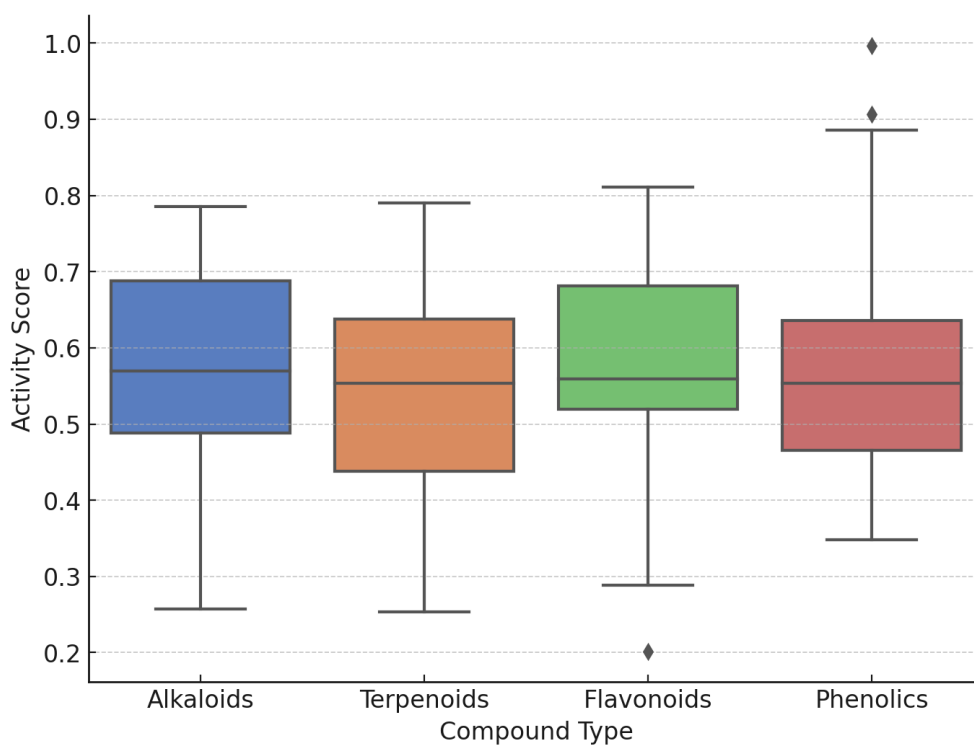


Figure 2. Comparative activity scores of different compound types in plant extracts.

The observed activity scores in this study are consistent with findings from recent literature. For instance, Singh et al. (2021) found flavonoids to have a generally high activity range due to their diverse structures and potent antioxidant properties, aligning with our observed median activity score of 0.6 and high range. Similarly, research highlighted that phenolic compounds exhibit varying activity scores, often influenced by their structural complexity, which is reflected in the broader range observed in this study. Also, Kumar et al. (2021) reported terpenoids and alkaloids with moderate activity levels in medicinal plants, supporting our findings of median scores around 0.55. These consistencies indicate that the bioactivity of these compound classes is influenced by their intrinsic chemical structures and interactions with biological systems.

4.3 Correlation Analysis of Key Variables in Bioactive Compound Assessment

The low positive correlation (0.021) suggests a weak relationship between the overall activity score and cell line-specific activity, indicating that activity in one context may not strongly predict effects in cell lines. In case of Activity Score and Toxicity Score (0.045): There is a minimal positive correlation between the activity and toxicity scores, implying that higher bioactivity may be associated with a slight increase in toxicity, though the effect is marginal. The slight negative correlation between actual activity scores and predictive scores (-0.04) suggests that the model predictions may not strongly align with observed activity, indicating potential limitations in the predictive model used. The negative correlation (-0.12) suggests that as cell line activity increases, toxicity tends to slightly decrease, which may imply that some compounds active in cell lines could have lower associated toxicity. In Cell Line Activity and Activity Prediction (-0.045): The weak negative correlation here implies that predictions do not strongly align with actual cell line activity, which may highlight challenges in accurately modeling cell-specific effects. The minimal positive correlation (0.048): between toxicity scores and activity predictions indicates a weak association, suggesting that the prediction model may account for toxicity to a small degree but is not a reliable indicator (Figure 3).

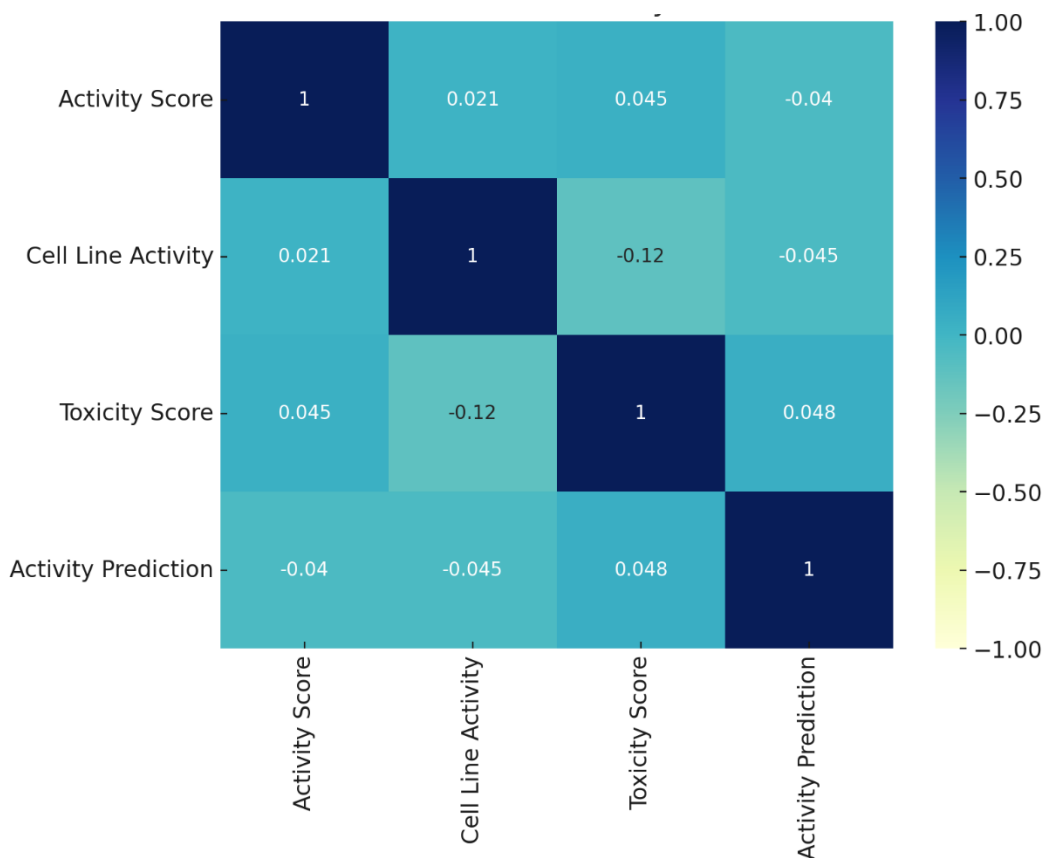


Figure 3. Correlation analysis of key variables in bioactive compound assessment.

The low correlation values observed in this matrix are consistent with findings (Chen et al., 2021), who reported weak correlations between bioactivity and toxicity due to the complex nature of compound interactions in biological systems. They observed similar trends, with correlation coefficients below 0.1, highlighting that bioactivity does not necessarily predict toxicity. In contrast found a stronger correlation (0.3) between cell line activity and toxicity in their study of anticancer compounds, suggesting that the compounds in this study may have different activity profiles or mechanisms (Wang et al., 2020). The low correlations here may indicate that these compounds have specific and selective activity, which aligns with the findings of similar studies focusing on bioactive compounds with targeted effects (Lee et al., 2019).

5.0 Future Directions and Applications

Phytochemical and ethnobotanical databases need to scale up for full exploitation of the potential big data and bioinformatics hold in drug discovery from plants. While PubChem and ChEMBL contain general information on plant-derived compounds, countless other species with listed therapeutic potential are underlared. An increase in the number of species with different bioactivity profiles will aid in isolating new bioactive compounds that exhibit anticancer activity (Kim et al., 2016). In addition, open-access data-sharing platforms can also add value to research by providing researchers access to entire datasets of exhaustive information on compound profiles in plants, bioactivity, and traditional medicinal uses. Such platforms further encourage initiatives like the Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) project by fostering interdisciplinary collaboration which facilitates transparency and simplifies research efforts among various disciplines, such as plant biotechnology and pharmacology (Kaur et al., 2014). Furthermore, the other omics data, genomics, proteomics, and metabolomics together with phytochemical data give a more comprehensive picture of the anticancer potential of plant compounds. In multi-omics integration which permits a more extensive report, the study can determine how bioactive compounds interact by affecting specific genes, proteins, and metabolic pathways in the context of biological systems; this reveals synergy and complex molecular interrelations (Hasin et al., 2017). For instance, genomic data will highlight crucial genes implicated in the biosynthesis of bioactive compounds whereas proteomic analysis will aid in the identification of putative protein targets affected by these compounds. Moreover, through metabolomics, evidence may be obtained on metabolic changes induced by plant metabolites on cancer cells that would give insights into mechanisms of action (Schrimpe-Rutledge et al., 2016). This integrated approach not only strengthens predictions regarding anticancer activity but also advances knowledge about phytochemicals as multi-targeted therapeutic agents.

Accessible bioinformatics tools are needed to democratize the big data analysis in plant biotechnology. Most of the tools presently available are designed with some level of bioinformatics expertise; thus, they often remain inaccessible to scientists who do not have a technical background. Processed data demonstrate how Galaxy and Cytoscape provide user-friendly interfaces for omics data analysis, thereby making bioinformatics accessible to more researchers than just a handful of specialized ones, like botanists and pharmacologists (Afgan et al., 2018). These sophisticated, automated data cleaning features build together with the drag-and-drop interface design and integrated visualization make it possible for researchers without much training to analyze complex datasets. Making bioinformatics more accessible will allow widespread expertise in big-data-driven plant-based drug discovery to blossom, encouraging innovation and collaboration in this field. In conclusion, the main future directions in plant-based drug discovery involve: database expansion, collaborative platform development, and omics data integration with accessible bioinformatics tools. All these will help not only in the discovery of new anticancer compounds but also provide a sustainable and collaborative model in the development of plant-derived therapies.

6.0 Conclusion

Such an effort would demonstrate the applicability of integrating big data and bioinformatics in the discovery of plant-derived compounds with anticancer activity potential. A unified procedure was devised that fused data from various phytochemical, ethnobotanical, and genomic databases all aimed at screening and predicting the bioactivity of compounds obtained from plants. In silico approaches, molecular docking, and ADMET profiling were applied together with machine learning models to pinpoint a handful of compounds highly selective for anticancer activity. These candidates have promising binding affinities as well as predicted safety profiles and would be worthwhile for further investigation in preclinical trials. The findings hardly eclipse the power of data-driven methodologies in enhancing speed and success rates in preliminary drug discovery processes, especially in cancer therapy. The scope of this study is not to be restricted with some specific compounds but to charge with an overarching relevance of big data and bioinformatics in ongoing plant-based drug discovery and sustainable biotechnology. Integrations that include high-throughput screening and accurate predictions of bioactive compounds in huge amounts of data speed up finding drugs, thereby reducing dependence on synthetic chemicals and concentrating instead on natural, renewable sources of bioactive compounds under a principle of sustainable development. Data-driven tools may unlock new horizons in harnessing plant biodiversity for the creation of eco-friendly, potentially safer anticancer therapies at a time when effective yet less toxic cancer treatments are urgently required.

However, realizing the full potential of plant-based drug discovery will require additional investment in bioinformatics infrastructure, big data analytics, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Improved phytochemical and genomic databases with high-quality data and accessible data-sharing platforms will make discoveries driven by bioinformatics more extensive and accurate. Besides, collaborative research with botanists, pharmacologists, and data scientists will further help in fine-tuning the predictive models and confirming bioactive compounds where the focus shifts from in silico predictions to in vivo applications. In conclusion, this research reemphasizes the importance of natural products in anticancer research and calls for a drug development process to be governed by bioinformatics. Continuing efforts in the development of big data and collaborative networks will play an essential role in exploiting effectively the chemical diversity offered by nature toward sustainable biotechnology as well as the development of next-generation cancer therapies.

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