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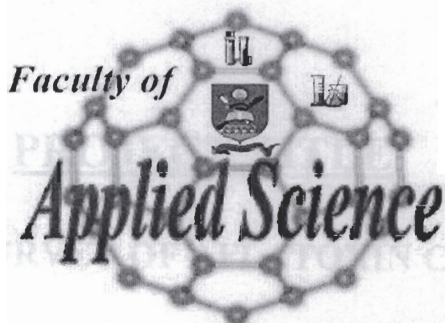
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A PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF AFLATOXIN CONTAMINATION IN TRADITIONAL HERBS USED FOR TREATING DIFFERENT AILMENTS

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Science (Honours)
Degree in Applied Biology and Biochemistry

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ABSTRACT

The use of traditional herbs for medicinal purposes is a common practice in most Asian and African countries. The use of these medicinal plant products have repeatedly come under attack because of their toxicological risks, emanating from contamination and adulteration by organic chemicals and biological compounds. In view of this, a survey of aflatoxin contamination in common traditional herbs used for treating different ailments was carried out in this research. Samples of traditional herbs stored for sale were purchased from different herbal markets in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. The herbs were analyzed for aflatoxin contamination using the standard TLC technique. Aflatoxin contamination was observed in one *Ptaeroxylon obliquum* sample ($AFB_1 = 6$ ppb) and in two *Boscia angustifolia* samples ($AFG_2 = 6$ ppb & 12 ppb). The results obtained showed that herbal remedies are relatively safe for human health. However, there is need for some form of quality control in the use of these remedies, in view of their occasional aflatoxin contamination.