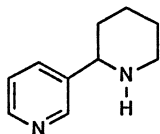


8.1 Introduction

Alangium chinense (Lour.) Harms. (Alangiaceae) is a medicinal herb found in China. Its leaves, stems, and roots, especially the fibrous roots, are used in folk medicine as an analgesic, antirheumatic, and muscle relaxant. *A. chinense* is not officially listed in the Chinese Pharmacopoeia. Some other *Alangium* species are also used in folk medicine for the same indications. They are *A. platanifolium*, *A. salviifolium*, *A. kurzii*, *A. handelii*, and *A. chinense* var. *paniciflorum*. Among them, *A. chinense* and *A. platanifolium* are the species most often used in folk medicine.

8.2 Chemical Constituents

A. chinense contains anabasine (8-1) as the major alkaloid component and active principle [1, 2].



Anabasine (8-1)

A study of the distribution and amount of total alkaloids and anabasine in different plant parts showed that the amount of anabasine was highest in the fibrous root, followed by the rootlet, thick root, and leaves. The total alkaloid content in fibrous root, rootlet, and thick root was 0.16%, 0.04%, and 0.016%, respectively [1]. Thus, the amount of anabasine in the root of *A. chinense* is influenced not only by geographic factors, but also by the diameter of the root [2].

From the branches of *A. salviifolium* four alkaloids were isolated and identified: venoterpine (8-2), ankorine (8-3), cephaeline (8-4), and psychotrine (8-5) [3]. Anabasine was also detected in the root of *A. salviifolium* [2]. In addition, anabasine was found in *A. kurzii* [4], *A. chinense* var. *paniciflorum* [2], *A. handelii*, and *A. platanifolium*, whereas ankorine was isolated from *A. kurzii* and venotropine from *A. chinense*, *A. handelii*, and *A. platanifolium* [4].