



Summary:

A large number of plants produce alkaloid as defence mechanism against the attack of insects and herbivorous animals. Most of these compounds do not have any structural similarity except for the presence of ring structures with a nitrogen molecule. More than 2000 such molecules are identified from the plant kingdom. These compound have effect on the central nervous system of animals hence, they work as pain killers. The usage of these compounds as pain killers, sleep inducers and hallucinating agents are from time immemorial. The classification of alkaloids are based on their structure, origin (plants which produce them) and their physiological action. The chapter also deals with the biological activity and their toxicity to humans.

