



STIMULATION OF MELANOGENESIS BY POLYPHENOLIC COMPOUNDS FROM *CITHAREXYLLUM QUADRANGULARE* IN B16F1 MURINE MELANOMA CELLS

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Two polyphenolic compounds; 1,3,6-tri-O-galloyl- β -D-glucopyranose (TGG) (**1**) and methyl gallate (**2**) have been isolated from the aerial parts of *Citharexylum quadrangulare* Jacq. They were isolated for the first time from the genus *Citharexylum* and their structures have been established on the basis of spectroscopic methods in addition to comparison with literature data. The stimulatory activity of the isolated compounds was investigated on melanin synthesis where they stimulate the intracellular synthesis of melanin in murine melanoma B16F1 cells in cultured cell lines. The melanin content was dramatically increased by these compounds in a dose dependent manner and at nontoxic concentrations where IC_{50} of TGG was $20.4 \mu\text{M}$ and that of methyl gallate was $16.1 \mu\text{M}$. Moreover, the isolated compounds were tested for cytotoxic activity where IC_{50} of compounds (**1**) & (**2**) were 1.5 and $10.8 \mu\text{M}$, respectively. Also, they exhibited higher radical scavenging activity than ascorbic acid in DPPH assay system with IC_{50} of 1.5 and $10.8 \mu\text{M}$ for compounds (**1**) & (**2**) respectively. Dramatic stimulatory effect of the isolated compounds on melanogenesis might be applied to various conditions of hypopigmentation-related disorders like Vitiligo as an adjunctive therapy in addition to its safely use as an antioxidant. The obtained results indicated that these active compounds could be used safely in cosmetic purposes.

INTRODUCTION

Genus *Citharexylum* of family Verbenaceae includes about 115 species. *Citharexylum quadrangulare* Jacq. is cultivated in Egypt as a street tree and is a popular ornamental in many tropical and subtropical regions. The plant is usually branching from the base and attains up to 6-7 m in height. The stem is covered with a grayish bark and dotted with numerous lenticels; branch lets slightly quadrangular, brownish and glabrous. Leaves are simple and opposite. The racemes are drooping, simple or branched at the base and up to 30 cm long. The flower is functionally unisexual and the trees are dioecious. The flowering season is from March to May followed by the fruiting season to the end of May^{1&2}.

The plant has been used in folk medicine as diuretic, antipyretic, antiarthritic and in liver disorders². Also, it possesses a wide range of pharmacological actions such as the antibacterial activity against multidrug-resistant uropathogens and as diuretic³. Besides, it is used for the treatment of urinary tract infections. Moreover, it is useful in treatment of various diseases such as decoction of young twigs to treat thrush in babies and decoction of bark for treating colds^{4,6}. The leaves are used as a source of anthelmintic, antiallergic and antiarthritic drugs^{7&8}.

Biological screening of the 70% aqueous ethanolic extract of *C. quadrangulare* revealed significant antiulcer, antihypertensive and hepatoprotective effects⁹. The chloroformic extract of the plant was found to have potent nephroprotective and antioxidant properties in carbon tetrachloride (CCl_4 ; 20% in olive oil, 2

ml/kg body weight) treated Sprague-Dawley male rats¹⁰. However, the effects of *Citharexylum quadrangulare* Jacq. aerial parts constituents on melanogenesis and inflammation (which occur as a result of dermatological diseases) have not been studied at all and hence, the ability of the plant constituents to stimulate melanin synthesis in a murine melanoma cell line was investigated.

Recently, although most polyphenols including gallic acid have an inhibitory effect on melanogenesis in B16F1 cells¹¹, this study showed that TGG was effective as inducer of melanogenesis at non-toxic concentrations. In this study, the mechanism of galloyl compounds effect on melanogenesis was investigated at a cellular level using B16F1 murine melanoma cells.

Several members of the Verbenaceae are known to contain flavonoids and essential oils. They also contain iridoids, anthocyanins, quinones and caffeic acid derivatives, while alkaloids appear to be rare¹². A survey of the current literatures revealed the isolation and identification of iridoid glycosides, phlomiol, 5-deoxy pulchelloside, durantoside and lamidoside from the plant of this study¹². Stigmasterol and oleanolic acid in addition to cirsimaritin and cirsilinol 4'-O- β -D-glucopyranoside and other flavone glycosides were also reported from the plant¹³.

The present study deals with the isolation and identification of two polyphenolic compounds 1,3,6-tri-*O*-galloyl- β -D-glucopyranose (TGG) (1) and methyl gallate (2) which were reported here for the first time in the genus *Citharexylum*. Furthermore, the stimulatory effect of the isolated compounds on melanogenesis in addition to cytotoxicity and antioxidant activities using the *in-vitro* bioassay were investigated.

EXPERIMENTAL

General experimental procedures

¹H-NMR (400 MHz) and ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz) spectra were measured on a JEOL GSX400 spectrometer in CD₃OD. Reversed-phase high-performance chromatography experiments were undertaken on ODS columns (particle size: 5 μ m, TOSO, 18 \times 250 mm) RP-23 (5 μ m, Waters). Diaion HP-20 (Mitsubishi, Tokyo, Japan), silica gel (63-210 μ m, Kanto

Kagaku) and ODS (63-212 μ m, Wako Pure Chemical, Tokyo, Japan) were used for open column chromatography. Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was carried out on silica gel (SiO₂, 60-100 mesh; Wako Pure Chemical) 60 F₂₅₄ and RP-18 F_{254S} (Merck). Structural assignments were based on spectra resulting from one or more of the NMR experiments; ¹H-, ¹³C-NMR, HMQC and HMBC. Fast Atom Bombardment spectrum was carried out on JEOL Mstation while Electron Impact mass spectrum was operated on JEOL JMS SX-102A mass spectrometer.

Plant material

Air-dried *Citharexylum quadrangulare* Jacq. (*Verbenaceae*) aerial parts were collected in May 2009 from Faculty of Agriculture Garden, Assiut University, Assiut City, Egypt. The plant was identified and authenticated by Prof. Dr. A. Fayed, Professor of Plant Taxonomy, Faculty of Science, Assiut University.

Extraction and isolation

Air-dried *Citharexylum quadrangulare* Jacq. aerial parts (4 Kg) was extracted thrice with MeOH (5 L of each) at room temperature. The extracts were combined and filtered through filter paper (Advantec MFS Incorporated). The extracts were removed under reduced pressure using rotary evaporator at 40°C to yield the methanol extract (550 mg) which was mixed with distilled water and partitioned between chloroform, ethyl acetate and *n*-butanol (5 L each) to give the chloroform fraction (192 g), ethyl acetate fraction (75 g), *n*-butanol fraction (85 g) and the rest aqueous fraction (190 g). The ethyl acetate fraction was in turn partitioned between (methanol-water 90%) and *n*-hexane to give 90% methanol fraction (52 g) and *n*-hexane fraction (19 g). All fractions were screened for the melanogenesis where noticed that the *n*-butanol fraction is the most active fraction and hence the *n*-butanol fraction (85 g) was sub-fractionated on Diaion HP-20 column using water and methanol (25%, 50%, 75% and 100%) (2 L of each).

The fraction of 50% methanol-eluted (34.4 g) was further separated by chromatography on ODS column (80 \times 200 mm) using mobile phase systems of methanol : H₂O (20, 40, 50, 60, 70

and 90% v/v; elution volume: 1.5 L of each) to give six corresponding fractions. The biologically active fraction eluted with 60% methanol (5.2 g) was further fractionated using silica gel column chromatography and eluted stepwise with Chloroform-Methanol (ratios of 9:1, 6:1, 4:1, 3:1 and 1:1, v/v fractions 200 mL of each) were collected and concentrated to give five corresponding fractions (I-V). 160 mg from the fraction II was further fractionated by preparative HPLC (ODS column: TOSO, 18 mm × 250 mm, particle size: 5 µm, flow rate: 3 mL/min) equipped with UV detector (210 nm), the mobile phase was 20% CH₃OH in H₂O which resulted in elution of compound (1). The preparative HPLC conditions were also used to separate components of fraction III giving compound (2) (Fig. 1).

These compounds were identified as 1,3,6-tri-*O*-galloyl-β-D-glucopyranose (TGG) (1) and 3,4,5-trihydroxy-benzoic acid methyl ester (2) which were reported here for the first time in the genus by comparison of their spectral data with those reported in literatures^{14&15} (Table 1).

Cell Culture and Melanin content measurement

B16F1 murine melanoma cells^{16&17} were cultured in DMEM (Dulbecco's Modified Eagle Medium) containing 10% fetal bovine serum, 0.1 mg/ml streptomycin, 0.5 mg/ml L-glutamate at 37°C in a humidified 95% air / 5% CO₂ atmosphere. Cells (5×10⁴ cells/mL) were seeded on 24-well plates and incubate for 24 hrs. After incubation, 50 µL of galloyl compounds were added (in 2% DMSO in medium) and 50 µL of α-MSH (melanin stimulating hormone) (100 ng/mL). The cells were incubated three days later and the melanin content was measured at 475 nm absorbance. The intracellular melanin content in cultured B16F1 melanoma cells was determined as described by (Hill *et al.*)¹⁸ where cells were passed once a week and used between passages N.O. 5 and 8.

Briefly, cultured B16F1 mouse melanoma cells were trypsinized (0.25% trypsin and 0.1% ethylenediamine tetra-acetic acid [EDTA] at 37°C for 5-10 min). Cells (2.5×10⁴ cells/well in 980 µL DMEM) were inoculated with a pipette into 24-well plates and incubated for 24 hrs at 37°C in a CO₂ incubator. After 24 hrs incubation, 20 µL of sample solution were

added to each well and the 24-well plate incubated for 2 days at 37°C in a CO₂ incubator. Each sample was tested in triplicate. Test samples (purity > 93%) and the theophylline was dissolved in DMSO/PBS and then diluted with DMEM to achieve the appropriate concentrations. The final concentration of DMSO was 0.03%. In the control group, DMSO/PBS (1:1, v/v) solution diluted with DMEM to 0.03% of the final DMSO concentration was used instead of the sample solution.

Kojic acid (100 µM) was used (purity 90%; Sigma-Aldrich) as the reference compound¹⁸ for inhibition of melanogenesis (as an indication for the positive results). After incubation, the effect of both compounds 1 and 2 on intracellular melanogenesis in cultured B16F1 cells was investigated.

The culture medium was removed with a pipette and assayed for extracellular melanin where the remaining melanoma cells were trypsinized (0.25% trypsin and 0.1% EDTA at 37°C for 5-10 min) and washed with 100 µL PBS. Cells were digested by the addition of 400 µL 1 N NaOH and left standing for 16 hrs at room temperature.

The optical density of the resulting solution was measured at 475 nm and the amount of intracellular melanin was calculated. The culture medium was centrifuged (600 rpm for 10 min at 4°C) and the aliquot of the supernatant (1 mL) was added to 1 mL of a mixture of 0.4 M 2-[4-(2-hydroxyethyl)-1-piperazinyl] ethane sulfonic acid (HEPES) buffer (pH 6.8) and ethanol (9:1, v/v) where the optical density of the resulting solution was measured at 475 nm.

Cytotoxicity (MTT) assay

This method is a colorimetric assay for assessing cell viability¹⁹. To determine the cytotoxic activity of the tested samples, THP-1 cells (180 µL) were seeded in 96-well plates at 1.0×10⁵ cells per well with tested samples (purity > 93%) (20 µL in DMSO/PBS) at various concentrations. After 48 hrs cultivation, the supernatants were removed, non-adherent cells (THP-1) incubated with the tetrazolium dye; 3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide (MTT), 10 µL, 5 mg/mL in PBS for 4 hrs and then solubilized with 10% (w/v) sodium dodecyl

sulfate (SDS; in 60% [v/v] dimethyl formamide) solution (100 μ L) for 18 hrs. The absorbance was measured at 570 nm using a microplate reader and the cytotoxicity calculated by comparing absorbance with that of the non-treated control culture. Cell growth curve was graphed using statistical analysis software (Kaleida Graph version 4.00; Synergy Software) and IC_{50} values calculated using simple linear regression.

IC_{50} values were calculated from dose response curves for a 48 hrs drug exposure. Data were obtained through independent measurements of cell density and cell viability by the MTT assays¹⁹.

A dose - response curve was plotted for each compound and the IC_{50} value was calculated as the concentration of the test compound resulting in 50% reduction of optical density compared with the control. The IC_{50} values of the tested samples were calculated using the same software. Differences were considered significant at $p < 0.005$.

DPPH radical scavenging activity

DPPH assay was performed by a method previously reported by (Kumar *et al.*)²⁰. 100 μ L of the tested samples at different concentrations in MeOH and 1.0×10^{-4} M DPPH (Wako) (Tokyo, Japan) in MeOH (300 μ L) were added to 96-well microtiter plate. The plate was shaken for 1 min on a plate shaker and incubated for 30 min at room temperature in the dark. After incubation, the absorbance was recorded at 517 nm. The tested samples at different concentrations without DPPH solution were used as a blank control to eliminate the influence of sample color. Ascorbic acid was used as a positive control²⁰ and DPPH solution in MeOH served as a negative control.

Data analysis

Ratio (percentage of control) of DPPH was determined as mean \pm SD. Statistical significance was determined by Dunnett's multiple test after one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with comparison to a control group using statistical analysis software (Kaleida Graph ver. 4.00). Differences were considered significant at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

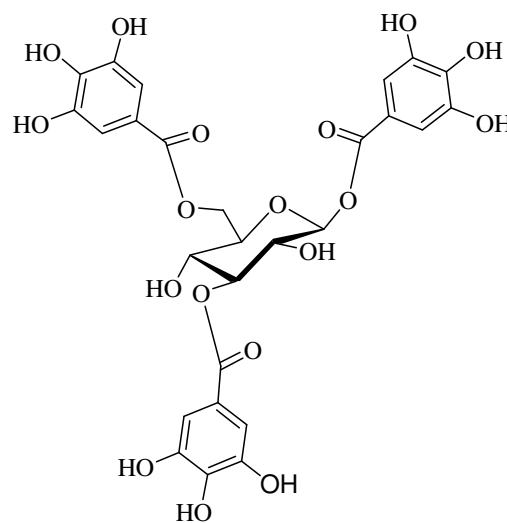
Results

Compound 1: Obtained as yellow amorphous powder (34 mg). ¹H-NMR (400, MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CD₃OD) (Table 1). FAB MS at m/z : 635 [M-H]⁻ (C₂₇H₂₄O₁₈).

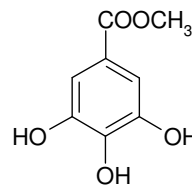
Compound 2: Obtained as yellow amorphous powder (13 mg). ¹H-NMR (400, MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C-NMR (100 MHz, CD₃OD) (Table 1). EI-MS at m/z : 184 (C₈H₈O₅).

Discussion

The aerial parts of *Citharexylum quadrangulare* Jacq. were extracted with methanol and then fractionated with CHCl₃, EtOAc, *n*-BuOH and H₂O. By using combined chromatographic separation of the *n*-BuOH fraction, two polyphenolic compounds (1) and (2) (Fig. 1) were isolated.



Compound 1



Compound 2

Fig. 1: Structure of compounds (1) and (2).

Table 1: ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR assignments for compounds **1**, **2** (CD₃OD, 400, 100 MHz).

Compound 1			Compound 2		
No.	¹ H-NMR	¹³ C-NMR	No.	¹ H-NMR	¹³ C-NMR
Glc					
1	5.75 (1H, d, <i>J</i> = 8.2 Hz)	95.86	1	–	121.40
2	3.71 (1H, dd, <i>J</i> = 9.3, 8.2 Hz)	72.61	2,6	7.03 (2H, s)	110.00
3	5.2 (1H, t, <i>J</i> = 9.3 Hz)	78.89	3,5	–	146.47
4	3.72 (1H, t, <i>J</i> = 9.3 Hz)	69.69	4	–	139.74
5	3.79 (1H, ddd, <i>J</i> = 9.3, 4.8, 1.7 Hz)	77.61			
6	6a: 4.37 (1H, dd, <i>J</i> = 12.0, 4.8 Hz) 6b: 4.52 (1H, dd, <i>J</i> = 12.0, 1.7 Hz)	64.20			
1-Gall					
1	–	121.23	C=O	–	166.12
2,6	7.08 (2H, s)	110.36	OCH ₃	3.80 (3H, s)	52.27
3,5	–	146.49			
4	–	139.91			
C=O	–	168.10			
3-Gall					
1	–	121.58			
2,6	7.06 (2H, s)	110.55			
3,5	–	146.52			
4	–	140.48			
C=O	–	168.20			
6-Gall					
1	–	120.44			
2,6	7.02 (2H, s)	110.17			
3,5	–	146.42			
4	–	139.79			
C=O	–	168.81			

Investigation of ¹H-NMR spectrum of compound **1** (Table 1) concluded the presence of three galloyl moieties attached to one glucose unit which was obvious from the presence of three sets of proton singlet signals at δ_H 7.08, 7.06 and 7.02 (each 2H, s) and an anomeric proton signal at δ_H 5.75 (1H, d, *J*= 8.2 Hz). Moreover, the ¹³C-NMR spectrum (Table 1) confirmed the presence of three galloyl groups and one glucose moiety, from the consideration of the sugar carbon chemical shifts as detailed in the literature¹⁶. The configuration at the glucose C-1 position was concluded to be β on the basis of the *J*-value (8.2 Hz) of the anomeric proton signal at δ_H 5.75. The site of attachments of each galloyl moiety was confirmed to be at C-1, C-3 and C-6 of the glucose unit from the ¹H-, ¹³C-NMR downfield shifts at these sites in addition to the 2 DNMR correlations including both HMQC and HMBC experiments. On the basis of the previously mentioned data and by comparison

with literature data¹⁴, compound **1** was identified as 1,3,6-tri-*O*-galloyl-β-D-glucopyranose (TGG).

The ¹H-NMR spectrum of compound **2** (Table 1) exhibited the characteristic signals of methyl gallate by the appearance of a signal at δ_H 7.03 (2H, s, H-2,6) in addition to a signal at δ_H 3.80 (3H, s, OCH₃). The ¹³C-NMR spectrum (Table 1) revealed the presence of six carbon signals comprising C=O signal at δ_c 166.12 (s) indicating the presence of a carbonyl ester, one oxygenated aromatic signal at δ_c 139.74 (C-4), two symmetrical oxygenated aromatic carbon signals at δ_c 146.47 (C-3 and C-5), one quaternary aromatic carbon signal at δ_c 121.40 (C-1), two symmetrical aromatic methane carbon signals at δ_c 110.00 (C-2 and C-6) and one carbon signal at δ_c 52.27 (OCH₃). Thus, compound **2** was identified as methyl gallate by comparison of these data with those reported in the literature¹⁵.

Melanogenesis in B16F1 melanoma cells

In this study, different concentrations (0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 μM) from the two isolated compounds were added to B16F1 murine melanoma cells where they stimulate the melanogenesis in this cell line, and this activity may be due to its stimulation of tyrosinase activity (Fig. 2) as in melanogenesis, tyrosinase-related protein-2 and tyrosinase-related protein-1 catalyzes conversion of DOPAchrome to DHICA and oxidation of DHICA, respectively, to form melanin. In the presence of alpha-melanocyte stimulating hormone (α -MSH) and isobutylmethylxanthine (IBMX), B16 melanoma cells expressed great amount of tyrosinase and melanin synthesis. α -MSH binds to melanocortin receptor (MC1R), resulting in the activation of stimulatory GTP-binding protein (Gs), which in turn, stimulates adenylate cyclase to generate cAMP. cAMP increases melanin synthesis via activation of cAMP-dependent protein kinase (PKA) and microphthalmia-associated transcription factor (MITF), a melanocyte-specific transcription factor, leading to induction of tyrosinase expression. Hyperpigmentation and melasma are the result from the accumulation of tyrosinase and melanin in cells¹¹.

The melanin content was dramatically increased by the two isolated compounds in a dose dependent manner and at nontoxic concentrations where IC_{50} of TGG was 20.4 μM and that of methyl gallate was 16.1 μM .

Methyl gallate showed nearly no or slight stimulant effect on melanogenesis in contrast to TGG which becomes hydrophilic through the three attached galloyl moieties to the hydrophilic core.

The dramatic stimulatory activity of TGG on melanogenesis against kojic acid as a control¹⁸ might be applied to various conditions of hypo-pigmentation-related disorders as an adjunctive therapy. It would also be possible to produce effective agents available for such purpose by modification of chemical structure of TGG.

Cytotoxicity (MTT) assay

The results of cell viability assay using MTT in B16F1 melanoma cells are shown in figure 3. There was no significant reduction of cell viability after incubation of pigmented B16F1 melanoma cells with both compounds **1** & **2** at different concentrations (0.5, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 μM) for compound **1** and (0.5, 1, 2, 3 and 4 μM) for compound **2** and with IC_{50} = 20.4 and 16.1 μM for both compounds, respectively. However, the number of viable cells was insignificantly reduced to 90% at compound **2** (Methyl gallate) concentration of 5 μM . On the other hand, even at very high dosages of both compounds, more than 90% of B16F1 melanoma cells were still viable.

DPPH radical scavenging activity

In the DPPH assay, the isolated compounds **1** & **2** at different concentrations (0.62, 1.25, 2.5, 5 and 10 μM) exhibited free radical scavenging activity with IC_{50} values of 1.5 and 10.8 μM for both compounds, respectively. The tested compounds showed strong activities comparing with that of the positive control ascorbic acid (12 μM) (Fig. 4).

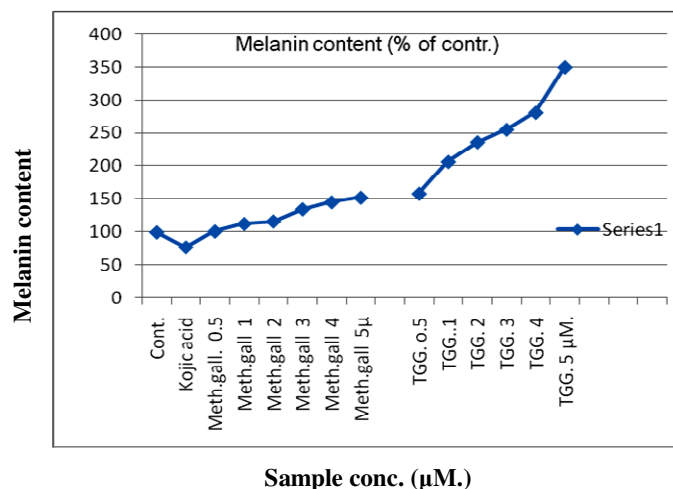


Fig. 2: Melanogenesis in B16F1 melanoma cells.

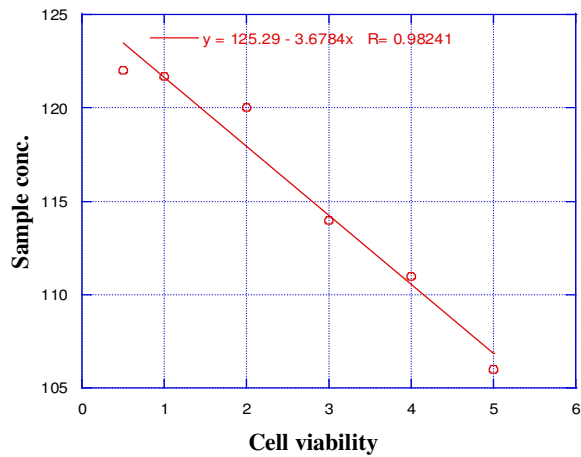
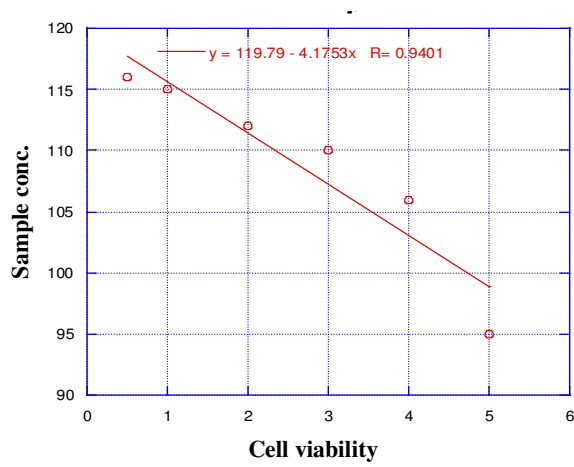
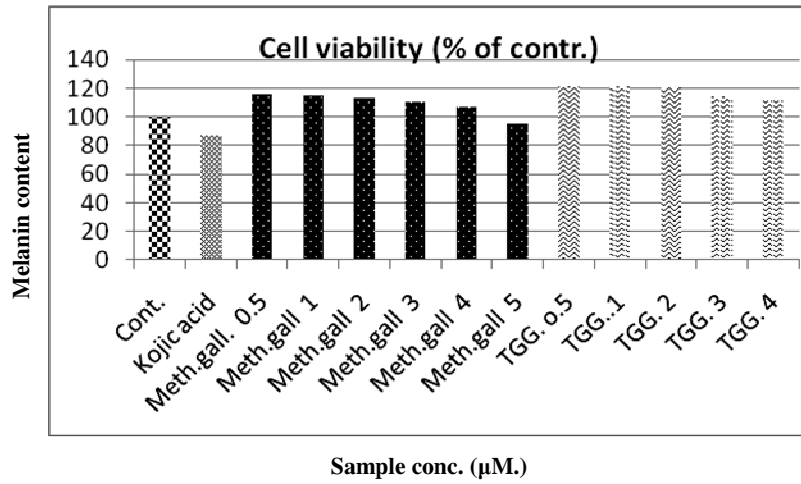


Fig. 3: Cell viability (MTT) assay.

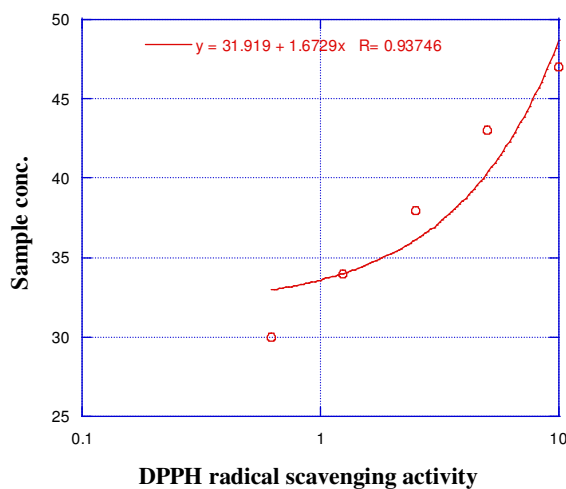
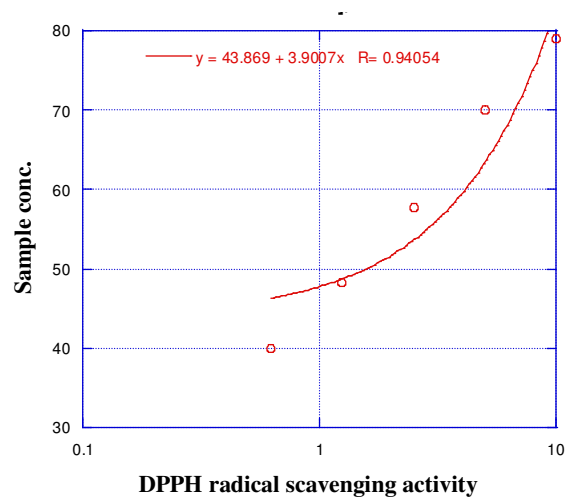
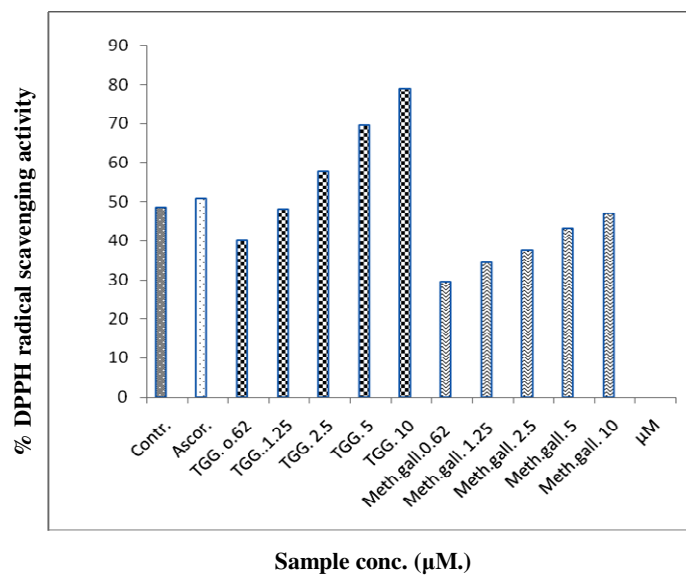


Fig. 4: DPPH radical scavenging activity of the isolated compounds.

Conclusion

The melanin content was dramatically increased by the isolated compounds **1** and **2** in a dose dependent manner and at non-toxic concentrations where IC₅₀ of compound **1** (TGG) was 20.4 μM and that of compound **2** (methyl gallate) was 16.1 μM. Both compounds were tested for the cytotoxic activity in MTT assay where IC₅₀ of compounds **1** & **2** were 1.5 and 10.8 μM, respectively and for the antioxidant activity through scavenging effect in the 1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) assay where they exhibited higher radical scavenging activity than ascorbic acid in DPPH assay system with IC₅₀ of 1.5 and 10.8 μM, respectively. Dramatic stimulatory effect of the isolated compounds on melanogenesis might be applied to various conditions of hypo-pigmentation-related disorders like Vitiligo as an adjunctive therapy in addition to their use safely as an antioxidant. These results indicate that these active compounds could be used safely in cosmetic purposes.

Acknowledgment

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زيادة صبغة الميلانين في الخلايا السرطانية لجلد الفئران (ب ١٦ ف ١) بواسطة مركبات عديدة الفينول من الأجزاء الهوائية لنبات السندياروس

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تم في هذا البحث فصل مركبين من مركبات البولي فينول من الأجزاء الهوائية لنبات السندياروس التابع للعائلة الفيربينية وتم التعرف عليهما كالتالي: المركب الأول (١،٣،٦-ثلاثي-جالويل-بيتا-دي-جلوكوبيرانوز) ، والمركب الثاني (جالات الميثيل). وهذان المركبان يفصلا لأول مرة من جنس سيثاريكزليم. وقد وجد أن لهما تأثيراً كبيراً في زيادة صبغة الميلانين في الخلايا السرطانية لجلد الفئران (ب ١٦ ف ١) بنسبة كبيرة وبتراكيزات غير سامة حيث أن قيمة IC_{50} لهذين المركبين هما ٢٠،٤ و ١٦،١ ميكرومولر. وقد تم اختبار السمية الخلوية لهذين المركبين حيث وجد أن IC_{50} لهما هي ١،٥ و ١٠،٨ ميكرومولر ، وكذلك ثبت أن لهما نشاطاً مضاداً للأكسدة ويمكن استغلال هذا التأثير الكبير في علاج الحالات المرتبطة بنقص صبغة الميلانين مثل البهاق ، كما يمكن استخدامهما بأمان في الأغراض التجميلية الأخرى.