



## Chemical constituents and biological effects of Ganoderma mushroom

Neveen F. El-Sherif<sup>a</sup>, Safwat A. Ahmed<sup>b\*</sup>, Eman S. Habib<sup>b</sup>, Reda F. A. Abdelhameed<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Ministry of Health, <sup>b</sup> Pharmacognosy Department, Faculty of Pharmacy, Suez Canal University, Ismailia, Egypt.

### Abstract

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Correspondence Author:

Tel: +201092638387

E-mail address:

safwat\_aa@yahoo.com

*Ganoderma* is a medicinal mushroom that has been used for years for treatment of various diseases. *Ganoderma* mushroom was considered as "mushroom of immortality" in traditional Chinese medicine and was used to cure many diseases including cancer. Over the last 50 years, phytochemical studies led to isolation of more than 500 secondary metabolites from various *Ganoderma* species including lanostanes, triterpenes, meroterpenoids, sesquiterpenoids, hydroquinones, steroids, alkaloids and polysaccharides. In vitro and in vivo studies showed that *Ganoderma* mushrooms possess a wide range of biological activities, including anticancer, antihyperlipidemic, hypoglycemic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiplatelet aggregation, antiplasmodial, and antiviral activity. This review summarizes bioactive compounds isolated from different species of *Ganoderma*. The isolated compounds were tested for their anti-tumor in vitro activities in MCF-7 and MDA-MB-231 breast cancer cell lines. Ergosterol peroxide showed selective inhibition of MCF-7 (ER +ve) cell lines relative to MDA-MB-231 (ER -ve) cell lines with an IC<sub>50</sub> of 12.9 μM and 91 μM respectively.

**Keywords:** *Ganoderma*, triterpenes, steroids, meroterpenoids, anticancer.

### 1. Introduction

*Ganoderma* is a genus of polypore mushrooms that belongs to the kingdom of fungi, division of Basidiomycota, family Polyporaceae (Ganodermataceae). It includes about 80 species, many of them from tropical regions (*Richter et al., 2015*). *Ganoderma* can be differentiated from other polypores because they have a double-walled basidiospore. They are popularly referred to as shelf mushrooms or bracket fungi (*Kirk et al., 2008*). *Ganoderma* is a wood degrading mushroom with

hard fruiting body. It is not listed among edible mushrooms because its fruiting body is thick, corky and tough. *Ganoderma* is a medicinal mushroom that was used in Chinese traditional medicine for curing of chronic diseases like asthma, arthritis, bronchitis, nephritis, hypertension, insomnia, diabetes and cancer (*Mizushima et al., 1998; Wasser and Weis, 1999*).

Taxonomic studies of *Ganoderma* reported more than 300 species. Species of *Ganoderma* that were subjected to phytochemical investigation of their

secondary metabolites and biological activities include *Ganoderma lucidum*, *G. applanatum*, *G. colossum*, *G. sinense*, *G. cochlear*, *G. tsugae*, *G. amboinense*, *G. orbiforme*, *G. resinaceum*, *G. hainanense*, *G. concinna*, *G. pfeifferi*, *G. neo-japonicum*, *G. australe*, *G. fornicatum*, *G. lipsiense*, *G. boninense*, *G. capense* and *G. annulare*.

## 2. Chemical constituents of *Ganoderma* mushrooms:

The main classes of biologically active compounds in different *Ganoderma* species are triterpenes, steroids and polysaccharides (Boh et al., 2007). In addition to these, lectins, nucleosides, and cerebroside also play an important role as biologically active substances isolated from *Ganoderma* (Lu et al., 2004; Paterson, 2006).

### 2.1 Triterpenoids

Triterpenoids are the main secondary metabolites isolated from the methanol, ethanol and chloroform extracts of the spores, mycelia and fruiting bodies of *Ganoderma* mushroom (Lu et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2010). Triterpenes are composed of six isoprene units and they exist as acyclic, mono-, di-, tri-, tetra- or pentacyclic carbon skeletons.

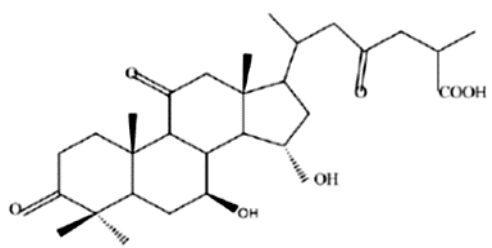
They occur in free form or as their ether, ester, or glycoside derivatives.

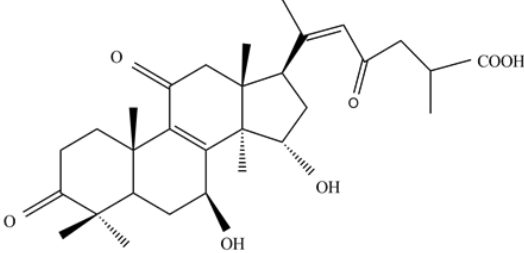
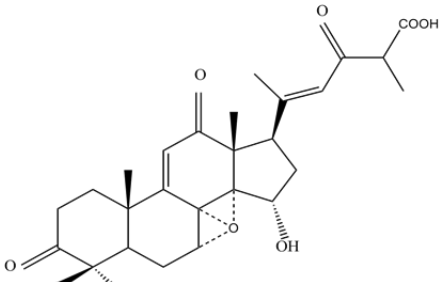
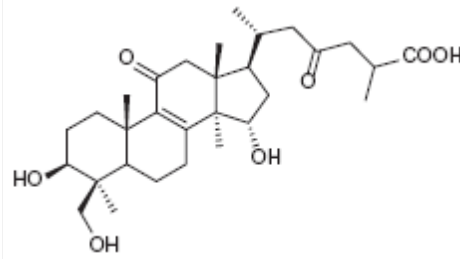
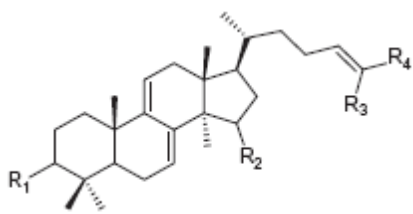
Free form triterpenoids include more than 200 compounds distributed in all species of *Ganoderma*. Ganoderic acids A-L were reported to be isolated from *G. lucidum*, *G. sinense* and *G. amboinense* (Nishitoba et al., 1987; Lin et al., 1993; El-Mekawy et al., 1998; Qiao et al., 2007; Yang et al., 2012).

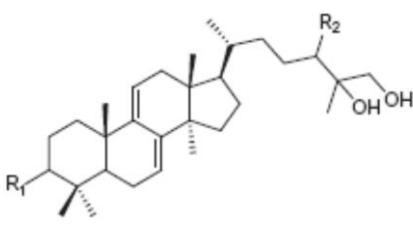
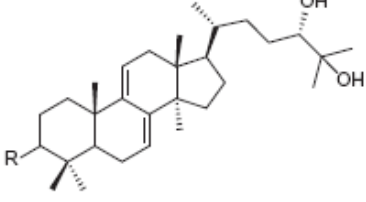
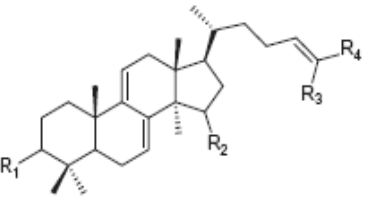
Applanoxidic acids A-H were isolated from different *Ganoderma* species; *G. applanatum*, *G. annulare*, *G. australe* (Chairul et al., 1991; León et al., 2003; Smania et al., 2003).

Triterpenoid derivatives include aldehyde derivatives such as lucialdehyde B, D, E that were isolated from *G. lucidum* (Ma et al., 2012). Alcoholic form triterpenes include mono-, di-, tri-, and tetra hydroxyl groups like ganoderiol A-J, ganodermanondiol, ganoderatriol, ganodermatetraol that were isolated from *G. concinna*, *G. lucidum*, *G. sinense* and *G. hainanense* (Arisawa et al., 1986; Gonzalez et al., 2002; Liu et al., 2012; Ma et al., 2013).

**Table (1): Triterpenoid names, species (source) and literature listings from genus *Ganoderma***

Number	Compound name	Species	Reference
<b>C30 lanostanes</b>			
1	Ganoderic acid A 	<i>G. lucidum</i>  <i>G. sinense</i>	(El-Mekawy et al., 1998)  (Liu et al., 2012)

2	 <p>Ganoderenic acid A</p>	<p><i>G. applanatum</i> <i>G. lipsiense</i></p>	<p>(Ming et al., 2002) (Rosecke and König, 2000)</p>
3	<p>Applanoxidic acid A</p> 	<p><i>G. applanatum</i> <i>G. australe</i></p>	<p>(Chairul et al., 1991) (León et al., 2003)</p>
4	 <p>Ganolucidic acid C</p>	<p><i>G. lucidum</i></p>	<p>(Nishitoba et al., 1989)</p>
<b>C30 lanostanes (aldehydes, alcohols, esters, glycosides, lactones, ketones)</b>			
5	<p>Ganoderic aldehyde TR</p>  <p>R<sub>1</sub>=O, R<sub>2</sub>=<math>\alpha</math>-OH, R<sub>3</sub>=CHO, R<sub>4</sub>=Me</p>	<p><i>G. lucidum</i></p>	<p>(Adams et al., 2010)</p>

6	<p style="text-align: center;">Ganoderiol A</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><math>R_1 = \beta\text{-OH}, R_2 = \text{OH}</math></p>	<p><i>G. lucidum</i>, <i>G. concinna</i></p>	<p>(Sato et al., 1986) (Gonzalez et al., 2002)</p>
7	<p style="text-align: center;">Ganodermanondiol</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><math>R = \text{OH}</math></p>	<p><i>G. lucidum</i> <i>G. hainanense</i></p>	<p>(Fujita et al., 1986) (Ma et al., 2013)</p>
8	<p style="text-align: center;">Ganodermatriol</p>  <p style="text-align: center;"><math>R_1 = \beta\text{-OH},</math> <math>R_2 = \text{H}, R_3 \&amp; R_4 = \text{CH}_2\text{OH}</math></p>	<p><i>G. lucidum</i> <i>G. concinna</i></p>	<p>(Arisawa et al., 1986) (Gonzalez et al., 2002)</p>

## 2.2. Steroids

Several steroids and steroidal esters were isolated from *G. lucidum* and other *Ganoderma* species. Major steroidal metabolites isolated from *Ganoderma* include ergosterol, ergosta-7,22-dien-3 $\beta$ -ol, ergosterol peroxide, ergosta-7,22-diene-3-one and ergosta-7,22-dien-3 $\beta$ -yl palmitate (Lin et al., 1993; Rosecke and Konig, 2000)

## 2.3. Sesquiterpenoids

Fushimi et al. isolated echinolactone D from the culture broth of *G. applanatum* (Fushimi et al., 2010). Later, Jung et al. isolated ganodermycin from fermentation of the basidiomycete *G. applanatum* (Jung et al., 2011).

## 2.4. Meroterpenoids

Peng et al. isolated four pairs of new polycyclic -meroterpenoids enantiomers from *G. cochlear*, from *Ganoderma fornicatum* fruiting bodies. Niu et al. isolated fornicin A, fornicin B and fornicin C from ethyl acetate extract by using normal phase silica gel (Niu et al., 2006).

## 2.5. Alkaloids

Liu et al. isolated four new alkaloids from the ethyl acetate extract of *G. sinense* fruiting bodies; sinensine B- E and one known alkaloid, sinensine (Liu et al., 2011).

Table (2): Steroids names, species (source) and literature listings from genus *Ganoderma*

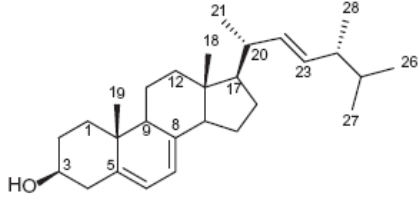
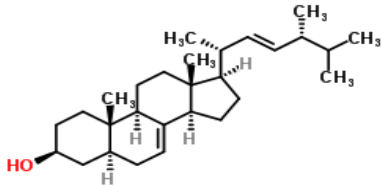
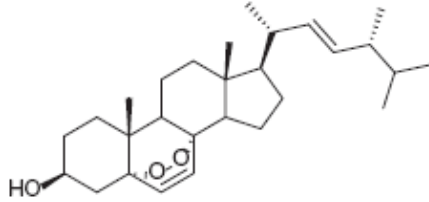
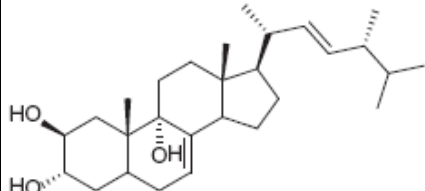
Number	Compound name	Species	Reference
1	 <p>Ergosterol</p>	<i>G. lipsiense</i>  <i>G. applanatum</i>	(Rosecke and Konig, 2000)  (Ming et al., 2002)
2	 <p>Ergosta-7,22-dien-3β-ol</p>	<i>G. amboinense</i> <i>G. annulare</i>	Lin et al., 1993 Smania et al., 2003
3	<p>Ergosterol peroxide</p> 	<i>G. lucidum</i> <i>G. concinna</i>	Mizushina et al., 1998 Gonzalez et al., 2002
4	<p>Ergosta-7,22-diene-2β,3α,9α-triol</p> 	<i>G. lucidum</i>	Lin et al., 1993

Table (3): Sesquiterpenoids names, species (source) and literature listings from genus *Ganoderma*

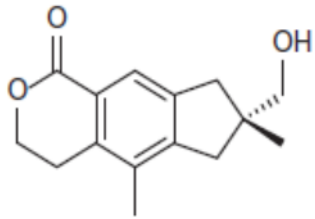
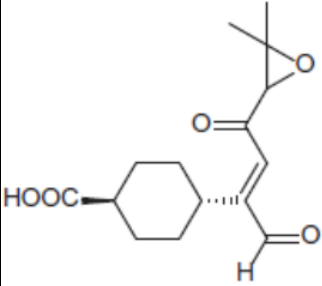
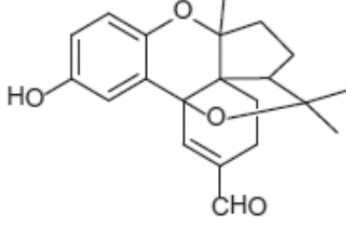
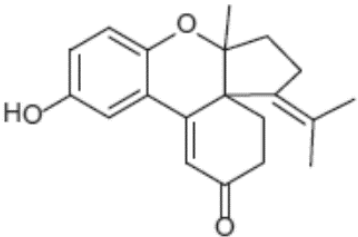
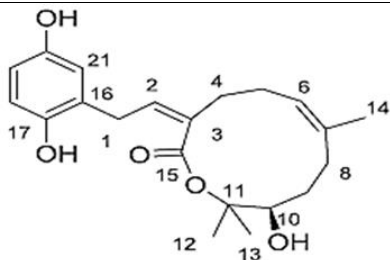
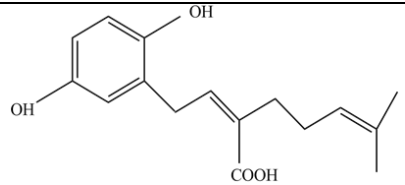
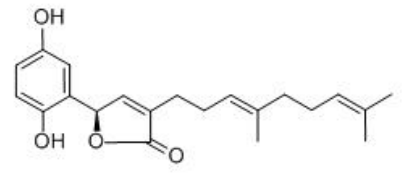
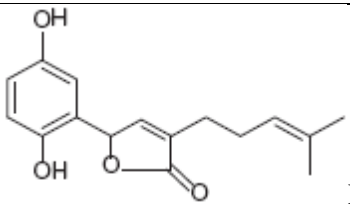
Number	Compound name	Species	Reference
1	Echinolactone D 	<i>G. applanatum</i>	(Fushimi et al., 2010)
2	Ganodermycin 	<i>G. applanatum</i>	(Jung et al., 2011)

Table 4. Examples of meroterpenoids isolated from genus *Ganoderma*

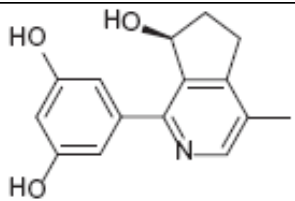
Number	Compound name	Species	Reference
1	 Ganocin A	<i>G. cochlear</i>	(Peng et al.,2014)
2	 Ganocin C	<i>G. cochlear</i>	(Peng et al.,2014)

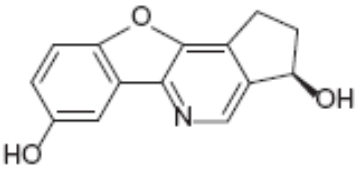
3	 <p style="text-align: center;">Ganoleucin A</p>	<i>G. leucocontextum</i>	(Wang et al., 2017)
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**Table 5. Hydroquinones names, species (source) and literature listings from genus *Ganoderma***

Number	Compound name	Species	Reference
1	 <p style="text-align: center;">Ganomycin B</p>	<i>G. colossum</i>	(El Dine et al., 2009)
2	 <p style="text-align: center;">Ganomycin I</p>	<i>G. colossum</i>	(El Dine et al., 2009)
3	 <p style="text-align: center;">Fornicin A</p>	<i>G. fornicatum</i>	(Niu et al., 2006)

**Table (6): Alkaloids names, species (source) and literature listings from genus *Ganoderma***

Number	Compound name	Species	Reference
1	 <p style="text-align: center;">Sinensine</p>	<i>G. sinense</i>	Liu et al., 2011

2	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sinensine D</i></p> 	<i>G. sinense</i>	Liu <i>et al.</i> , 2011
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Several ganocin A-C, possessing a spiro [4,5]-decane ring system, along with ganocin D with an eight- membered ring (Peng *et al.*, 2014).

In 2017, Wang et al. isolated new meroterpenoids (Ganoleucin A-C) from *G. leucocontexum*. Ethyl acetate extract was subjected to chromatographic separation using normal phase silica gel, sephadex LH20 and preparative HPLC (Wang *et al.*, 2017).

### 2.6. Hydroquinones

El Dine et al. isolated two hydroquinones from *Ganoderma colossum* mushroom. *Ganomycin B* and *Ganomycin I* are farnesyl hydroquinones isolated from the chloroform extract of the fruiting bodies of Vietnamese mushroom (El Dine *et al.*, 2009). *Ganomycin B* and *I* also fall into the group of meroterpenoids. New prenylated phenolic structures were isolated

### 2.7. Polysaccharides

Polysaccharides have been isolated from spores, mycelia and fruiting bodies of *Ganoderma* spp. More than 200 polysaccharides were isolated from various *Ganoderma* species (Huie and Di, 2004). The most frequent classes of polysaccharides isolated from *Ganoderma* spp. are glucans, glycoproteins, glycopeptides and water-soluble heteropolysaccharides with 1–3, 1–4, and 1–6  $\alpha$  or  $\beta$  bond between monomers (Lee *et al.*, 1999).

## 3. Biological activities of *Ganoderma*

### 3.1 Anticancer activity

Kao et al. suggested that the anti-cancer activity of *G. lucidum* was due to its triterpenes and polysaccharides content eliminate tumor through several mechanisms. Triterpenes have five major mechanisms including cell cycle arrest, cytotoxicity, inhibition of metastasis of tumor cells, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity (Kao *et al.*, 2013). Johnson and Lapadat reported that triterpenes were responsible for cell cycle arrest in human hepatocellular carcinoma HuH-7 with no effect in normal liver cell lines. Excessive release of

inflammatory cytokines chronically leads to carcinogenesis. On the other hand, polysaccharides improve immune system via stimulation of natural killer cells, cytotoxic T-lymphocytes and phagocytosis activity by macrophages and cytokines. *G. lucidum* also suppressed angiogenesis activity (Johnson and Lapadat, 2002).

#### 3.1.1 Breast cancer treatment

Jiang et al. investigated the activity of *G. lucidum* fruiting bodies in inhibition of breast cancer. Three mechanisms were responsible for the beneficial effect of the whole powder extract; inhibition of serine threonine kinase /nuclear factor- $\kappa$ B (*Akt/NF- $\kappa$ B*), cell cycle arrest at G0/G1 and suppression of transcription of Cyclin D1 and cyclin-dependent protein kinase (cdk4) (Jiang *et al.*, 2004).

#### 3.1.2 Stomach and colon cancer treatment

Extracts of *G. lucidum* triggered the killing of human gastric carcinoma AGS cells through the activation of lanosteroids isolated from the fruiting bodies of *G. resinaceum* mushroom. In an in vitro model, ganoderesin, ganoderol B and lucidone A showed inhibitory effects against the increase of alanine aminotransferase (ALT) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST) levels in HepG2 cells induced by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> compared to a control group in the range of their maximum non-toxic concentration (MNTC) (Peng *et al.*, 2013).

the intrinsic apoptosis pathways by down-regulating the anti-apoptotic Bcl-2 protein and consequently elevating the Bax/Bcl-2 ratio. Moreover, *G. lucidum* extracts were shown to inactivate phosphatidylinositol-3 kinase (PI3K)/Akt of human gastric carcinoma AGS cells (Jang *et al.*, 2010).

Ganodermanontriol, a purified triterpene from *G. lucidum*, was shown to inhibit the proliferation of HCT-116 and HT-29 colon cancer cells. In addition, Jedinak et al. demonstrated suppressed tumor growth in a xenograft model of these cells implanted in nude mice without any side effects (Jedinak *et al.*, 2011).



### 3.1.3 Lung cancer treatment

Lee et al. showed that ergosta-7,22-diene-2 $\beta$ ,3 $\alpha$ ,9 $\alpha$ -triol (EGDT) extracted from the fruiting bodies of *G. lucidum* mushroom, can activate apoptosis by DNA fragmentation and caspase-3 activation. In vivo, EGDT significantly decreased the Lewis lung carcinoma (LLC) growth, indicating that this triterpene fraction is one of the apoptotic parts of *G. lucidum* mushroom (Lee et al.,2011).

### 3.2 Anti-human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

El Dine et al. investigated the activity of compounds isolated from *G. colossum* against HIV protease enzyme. *G. colossum* suppressed HIV-1 protease by a dual mechanism: inhibition of dimerization through interfacial region disruption by schisanlactone A triterpene and inhibition of active sites by ganomycin I and ganomycin B (El Dine et al., 2009).

### 3.3 Hepatoprotective activity

Peng et al. investigated the hepatoprotective effect of lanosteroids isolated from the fruiting bodies of *G. resinaceum* mushroom. In an in vitro model, ganoderesin, ganoderol B and lucidone A showed inhibitory effects against the increase of alanine aminotransferase (ALT) and aspartate aminotransferase (AST) levels in HepG2 cells induced by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> compared to a control group in the range of their maximum non-toxic concentration (MNTC) (Peng et al., 2013).

### 3.4 Antiplatelet aggregation

Jun and Ke-yan investigated the antiplatelet aggregation of the water extract of *G. lucidum*. In vitro, venous blood was drawn from 15 healthy volunteers to separate platelet poor plasma (PPP) then adding adenosine diphosphate (ADP) as platelet aggregation inducer with 3  $\mu$ mol resulting in significant inhibition of first and second phase of platelet aggregation. Oral administration of 1 gm of *G. lucidum* extract 3 times daily for two weeks to 33 patients with atherosclerotic diseases, reduced weight and length of extracorporeal thrombi from 30 mm to 20.04 mm and from 103.9 to 85.2 mm. Also, the platelet aggregation was inhibited after addition of ADP with 2  $\mu$ mol and 3  $\mu$ mol with 31.49% and 17.7 % (Jun and Ke-yan, 1990).

## Conclusion

Phytochemical studies led to the isolation of more than 500 active compounds from genus *Ganoderma*. The major compounds isolated were triterpenoids and steroids that showed in vitro and in-vivo anticancer activity towards different types of cancer especially hormonal dependent types such as breast cancer. Meroterpenoids and hydroquinones showed anti- HIV activity, hypoglycemic activity and anti-hyperlipidemic activity. *Ganoderma* mushrooms present a promising source of bioactive compound that deserve further investigation, especially the less investigated species.

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