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CELL GROWTH AND CELL CYCLE INHIBITORY ACTIVITIES OF 20-EPIDIOSGENYL SAPONIN FROM *CALAMUS INSIGNIS*

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Abstract – A new 20 *epi*-diosgenyl saponin (**1**) was isolated from the stems of *Calamus insignis* (Palmae) by bioassay guided purification. The chemical structure of **1** was established on the basis of spectroscopic analysis and chemical means. Compound **1** showed cell growth inhibitory activity against HeLa cells (IC₅₀; 5.1 μM) and exhibited a cell cycle inhibitory effect at the G2/M stage at the concentration of 2.9 μM by flow cytometric analysis.

INTRODUCTION

During our search for bioactive natural products such as cell growth inhibitory and cell cycle inhibitory activity from tropical plants,^{1,2} we investigated the chemical constituents of stems of *Calamus insignis* collected in Thailand. In recent paper, we reported the steroidal saponins from this plant and their cell growth and cell cycle inhibitory activity.³ We further investigated constituents of this plant and here we report the isolation and structure determination of a new steroidal saponin, 20-epidiosgenin 3-*O*- α -L-rhamnopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)- β -D-glucopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)-[α -L-rhamnopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 2)]- β -D-glucopyranoside (**1**). This compound showed cell growth inhibitory activity against HeLa cells (IC₅₀; 5.1 μM). Effects of **1** on the cell cycle progression of HeLa cells were also examined to reveal that **1** arrested the cell cycle at the G2/M stage at the concentration of 2.9 μM.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We have previously isolated five steroidal saponins from the *n*-BuOH soluble fraction of the MeOH extract of *C. insignis* collected in September 2001. In this study, we investigated the same plant newly collected in June 2005. The MeOH extracts of newly collected materials showed the same characteristics on TLC as before. The extract was partitioned between ethyl acetate and water, and the aqueous phase was further extracted with *n*-BuOH. Further separation of *n*-BuOH-soluble fraction using ODS column chromatography, followed by purification with reversed-phase HPLC gave compound **1**.

Compound **1**, $[\alpha]_D^{24}$ -26.4 (*c* 0.4, pyridine), was obtained as a white amorphous solid, and its molecular formula was suggested to be $C_{51}H_{82}O_{21}$ by the HRFABMS data [m/z 1069.5052, $(M+K)^+$, Δ +6.7 mmu]. The 1H NMR spectrum of **1** (Table 1) showed characteristic proton signals due to one olefinic proton at δ_H 5.26 (1H, br d, $J=4.8$ Hz; H-6), two secondary methyl groups at δ_H 1.11 (3H, d, $J=7.8$ Hz; H₃-21) and 0.69 (3H, d, $J=6.0$ Hz; H₃-27) and two tertiary methyl groups at δ_H 1.04 (3H, s; H₃-19) and 0.95 (3H, s; H₃-18) of the steroidal nucleus, two methyl groups of 6-deoxyhexapyranose at δ_H 1.76 (d, $J=6.0$ Hz), 1.71 (d, $J=6.6$ Hz) and four anomeric protons at δ_H 6.20 (1H, s), 5.87 (1H, s), 5.06 (1H, d, $J=8.4$ Hz), and 4.92 (1H, overlapped). Also, the ^{13}C NMR spectrum of **1** showed 51 carbon signals including those of two olefinic carbons at δ_C 140.7 and 121.7 and four anomeric carbons at δ_C 104.9, 102.6, 101.6, and 99.9, suggesting **1** to be an olefinic steroidal glycoside having four sugar units. Upon the acid hydrolysis with 5% sulfuric acid, the monosaccharide units were determined as two D-glucose and two L-rhamnose on the basis of HPLC analysis by comparison with the authentic samples using a combination of the RI and optical rotation detectors and 1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra. The configurations of the anomeric positions of two D-glucoses were assigned as β by judging from their large coupling constants between H-1 and H-2 (Glc B, $J_{1,2}=8.4$ Hz) and the small one-bond coupling constants between C-1 and H-1 (Glc A, $^1J_{C1,H1}=160.9$ Hz; Glc B, $^1J_{C1,H1}=162.8$ Hz; literature values⁴: α -anomer, 169-171 Hz; β -anomer, 158-162 Hz). The anomeric configurations for the two L-rhamnoses were deduced as α from the large one-bond coupling constant between C-1 and H-1 (Rha A, $^1J_{C1,H1}=166.6$ Hz; Rha B, $^1J_{C1,H1}=170.4$ Hz).⁴ The ^{13}C NMR spectrum of aglycone moiety of **1** was very similar to those of Caulaloside I (**2**),³ a tetraglycoside isolated from *C. insignis* previously, except for the signals of the D- and E-ring parts of aglycone. In particular, C-21 (δ_C 11.4) of **1** shifted to up-field from that of **2** (δ_C 15.0),³ while C-20 (δ_C 46.6) of **1** shifted to downfield from that of **2** (δ_C 41.9).³ Similarly, H-20 (δ_H 2.68) of **1** shifted to downfield from that of **2** (δ_H 1.94)³ in the 1H NMR spectrum, suggesting that **2** had the opposite configuration at C-20 with 21 β -methyl group. This was confirmed by the ROESY correlations between H₃-21 (δ_H 1.11) and H₃-18 (δ_H 0.95), H-20 (δ_H 2.68) and H-17 (δ_H 1.98), H₃-21 (δ_H 1.11) and H-23 (δ_H 1.80). The linkages among aglycone and sugars moieties were determined on the basis of HMBC experiments. The HMBC

spectrum showed the ^1H - ^{13}C long-range correlations between H-1 of Glc A (δ_{H} 4.92) and C-3 of aglycone (δ_{C} 78.1), H-1 of Glc B (δ_{H} 5.06) and C-4 of Glc A (δ_{C} 81.8), H-1 of Rha A (δ_{H} 5.87) and C-4 of Glc B (δ_{C} 77.1), H-1 of Rha B (δ_{H} 6.20) and C-2 of Glc A (δ_{C} 77.1).

Consequently, the structure of **1** was concluded as 20-epidiosgenin 3-*O*- α -L-rhamnopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)- β -D-glucopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)-[α -L-rhamnopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 2)]- β -D-glucopyranoside.

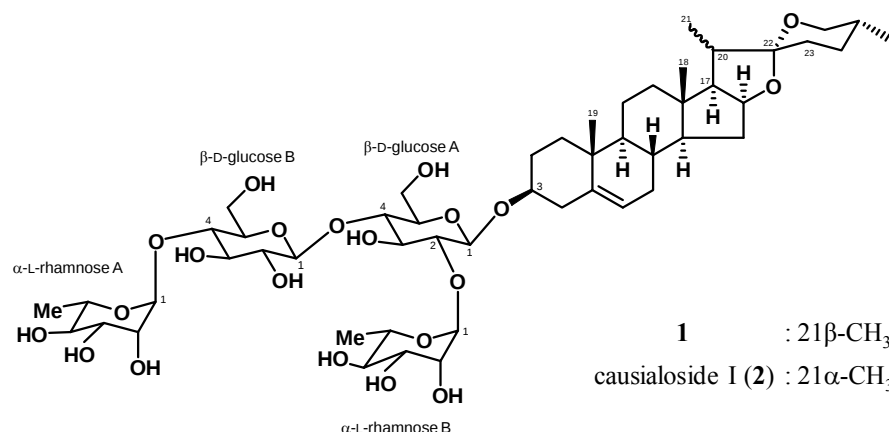


Fig.1 Structures of compounds **1** and **2**

Table 1. ^1H and ^{13}C NMR data for Compound **1** in pyridine- d_5

position	¹ H	¹³ C	position	¹ H	¹³ C	
1	0.96 m	37.5	Glc A	1	4.92 <i>ol.</i> *	99.9
2	1.73 m	30.1		2	4.19 m	77.1
	3			4.12 m	76.3	
	4			4.18 m	81.8	
5	3.85 m	78.1		5	3.81 m	76.1
6	2.69 m	38.9		6	4.07 m	60.8
7	5.26 br d (4.8)	121.7		4.20 m		
8	1.44 m	32.0	Glc B	1	5.06 d (8.4)	104.9
9	1.83 m	31.3		2	3.98 brt (8.4)	75.1
10	1.53 m	50.2		3	4.14 m	77.0
11	0.85 m	37.0		4	4.46 m	77.1
12	1.38 m	20.6		5	3.73 m	76.3
13	1.05 m	39.9		6	4.43 brd (10.0)	61.6
14	1.77 m	41.9		4.50 m		
15	0.89 m	57.5	Rha A	1	5.87 s	102.6
16	1.49 m	32.4		2	4.65 br s	72.5
17	2.03 m	81.2		3	4.51 dd (3.0, 9.0)	72.7
18	4.59 m	60.9		4	4.33 t (9.2)	73.9
19	1.98 dd (6.4, 9.0)	16.1		5	4.95 m	70.3
20	0.95 s	19.3		6	1.71 d (6.6)	18.4
21	1.04 s	46.6	Rha B	1	6.20 s	101.6
22	2.68 m	11.4		2	4.71 br s	72.4
23	1.11 d (7.8)	108.4		3	4.55 dd (3.0, 9.2)	72.7
24	1.80 m	30.8		4	4.33 t (9.2)	74.0
25	1.56 m	28.9		5	4.92 m	69.4
26	1.64 m	30.9		6	1.76 d (6.0)	18.6
27	3.60 dd (3.6, 10.5)	68.1				
	3.62 brd (10.5)					
	0.69 d (6.0)	17.3				

Values in parentheses indicate coupling constants (J in Hz). *, overlapped

Cell growth inhibitory activity of **1** was examined by fluorometric microculture cytotoxicity assay (FMCA).⁵ Compound **1** exhibited considerable inhibitory activity against HeLa cells with IC₅₀ value of 5.4 μ M. Although **1** was less active than **2** (IC₅₀; 1.5 μ M), it showed almost the same activity comparing to that of either dioscin, representative diosgenyl glycoside (IC₅₀; 4.5 μ M)⁶ or mitomycin C (IC₅₀; 5.1 μ M) as positive control.

The effects of **1** on the cell cycle distribution of HeLa cells were examined by flow cytometric analysis. As shown in Table 2, the cells treated with **1** induced an appreciable accumulation of cells of the G2/M phase at 2.9 μ M after 24 h of incubation (50 $\pm$ 5.1% against 12 $\pm$ 0.5% of the control). However, treatment with concentration of 4.9 μ M remarkably increased Sub-G1 and decreased G1 phase cells. We showed previously that treatment of HeLa cells with **2** for 24 h increased G2/M phase cell population as a result of expression of p21 and inhibition of dephosphorylation of cdc2. Since the structures of **1** and **2** are close, quantitative and qualitative changes of p21 and cdc2 might be concerned with the effect of G2/M phase arrest of **1** as that of **2**.

Table 2. Effect of compound **1** on the cell cycle distribution (%) of HeLa cells.

	Sub-G1	G1	S	G2/M
control	13 $\pm$ 0.5	64 $\pm$ 0.3	11 $\pm$ 0.4	12 $\pm$ 0.5
1.5 μ M	11 $\pm$ 1.2	60 $\pm$ 1.7	13 $\pm$ 0.9	15 $\pm$ 0.5*
2.9 μ M	15 $\pm$ 2.3	23 $\pm$ 0.6**	10 $\pm$ 1.1	50 $\pm$ 5.1**
4.9 μ M	38 $\pm$ 0.9**	15 $\pm$ 0.4**	15 $\pm$ 0.1**	33 $\pm$ 0.6**

Data are given as the percentage of the total number of cells.

The values are mean $\pm$ s.e.m. (** p<0.01, * p<0.05 vs. Control, n=3)

EXPERIMENTAL

General Experimental Procedures. Optical rotations were measured with a JASCO P-1020 polarimeter. IR spectra were measured in JASCO FT-IR 230 spectrophotometer. NMR spectra were recorded on JEOL JNM ECA 800 and ECP600 spectrometers. High-resolution fast atom bombardment (HRFAB) mass spectra were obtained on a JMS HX-110 mass spectrometer.

Plant Material. Stems of *Calamus insignis* were collected in Khon Kaen, Thailand, in June 2005 and were identified by T.K. A voucher specimen (6-696) is maintained at Faculty of Agriculture, Khon Kaen University.

Extraction and Isolation. The air-dried stems (316 g) were extracted with MeOH. The MeOH extract (48 g) was partitioned between hexane (500 mL x 3) and 10% aqueous MeOH (500 mL), and the

aqueous phase was further extracted with EtOAc (500 mL x 3) and *n*-BuOH (500 mL x 3) to give four fractions (hexane phase, 581 mg; EtOAc phase, 1.6 g; *n*-BuOH phase, 19.4 g; aqueous phase, 29.4 g). A part of the *n*-BuOH-soluble fraction (13.8 g) was subjected to ODS column chromatography (40 x 350 mm) eluted with gradient mixtures of 50-100% MeOH in H₂O to give seven fractions: A (7.5 g), B (501 mg), C (5.3 g), D (108 mg), E (874 mg), F (284 mg), and G (290 mg). Fraction E eluted with 80% MeOH was purified by preparative HPLC (Develosil ODS HG-5, 10 x 250 mm; eluent, 85% MeOH; flow rate, 1.5 mL/min) to afford compound **1** (7.5 mg, *t_R* 36 min).

20-Epidiosgenin3-O- α -L-rhamnopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)- β -D-glucopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 4)-[α -L-rhamnopyranosyl-(1 $\rightarrow$ 2)]- β -D-glucopyranoside (1**):** white amorphous solid, $[\alpha]_D^{24}$ -26.4 (*c* 0.4, pyridine); IR $\nu_{\max}$ (film) 3367 and 1053 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR data in Table 1 and 2; FABMS *m/z* 1053 (M+Na)⁺ and *m/z* 1069 (M+K)⁺; HRFABMS *m/z* 1069.5052, calcd for C₅₁H₈₂O₂₁K, 1069.4985.

Acid Hydrolysis of Compound 1 and Determination of the Absolute Configuration of Sugars. Compound **1** (6.0 mg) in 1, 4-dioxane (4.5 mL) and 5% aqueous H₂SO₄ (3 mL) was heated at 95 °C for 2.5 h. After cooling to rt, water was added to the reaction mixture, and the mixture was partitioned with EtOAc. The aqueous layer containing the saccharide mixture was neutralized by passage through an Amberlite IRA-96SB column, then analyzed by HPLC (Capcell Pak NH₂ UG80, 4.6 x 250 mm; eluent, 85% MeCN; flow rate, 0.7 mL/min; column temperature, 40 °C; detection, RI and optical rotation (JASCO OR-1590)) according to the literature conditions⁷ to identify L-rhamnose (*t_R* 8.33 min, negative peak in optical rotation detector) and D-glucose (*t_R* 14.49 min, positive peak in optical rotation detector).

Cell Growth Inhibitory Activity. The procedure of assay was the same as previously described.³ Briefly, HeLa cells (6 x 10³ cells) were treated with different concentrations of each isolated compound for 24 h at 37 °C. After the medium containing the isolated compounds was removed, cell growth inhibitory activity was determined by the FMCA method⁵ using a fluorescence platereader.

Cell Cycle Analysis. Cell cycle analysis was measured the same as previously described.³ Briefly, HeLa cells (5 x 10⁵ cells) were treated with different concentrations of the samples at 37 °C for 24 h, were then fixed with 70% EtOH at 4 °C for 60 min, resuspended in 100 μ g/mL of RNAs and 100 μ g/mL propidium iodide to stain DNA and analyzed for DNA contents using a flow cytometer.

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