



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***CYTOTOXIC EFFECTS OF DAMNACANTHAL AND DAMNACANTHAL-
DOXORUBICIN COMBINATION ON HUMAN BREAST CANCER CELL
LINE (MCF-7)***

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By

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Januari 2013

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Faculty : Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences

Damnacanthal is a biologically active anthraquinone derivative isolated from roots of *Morinda* sp., belonging to the *Rubiaceae* family. This plant has a long history of use as a food in tropical regions throughout the world. The purpose of this study was to examine the *in vitro* cytotoxicity effect of damnacanthal and combination of damnacanthal with doxorubicin on human breast carcinoma (MCF-7). MTT assay was used to determine the cytotoxic properties of damnacanthal towards various cancer cell lines, normal cell lines and immune cells. Results showed that damnacanthal displayed strong killing effect towards the cancerous cell lines and moderate effect towards normal cells lines. Among the cancer cell lines, damnacanthal showed strong cytotoxic towards MCF-7 cells with CD_{50} 8.2 ± 0.7 $\mu\text{g/mL}$ after 72 hours treatment period. In contrast, no cytotoxicity was detected in primary mouse splenocytes, mouse thymocytes and mouse bone marrow. In

particular, damnacanthal showed cytotoxicity in a dose- and time-dependent manner in the MTT assay. Thus, MCF-7 cells were used to determine the mode of cell death with damnacanthal alone and combination with doxorubicin. In the cell viability assay, the percentage viability of MCF-7 cells is lower when the cells are treated with combination of damnacanthal and doxorubicin than doxorubicin alone. In the cell cycle with flow cytometry analysis, damnacanthal arrested the cell cycle of MCF-7 cells at G1 phase and doxorubicin arrested at G2/M phase. The percentage population of MCF-7 cells enter sub G0 phase are increased when the cells were treated with combination of damnacanthal and doxorubicin. The mode of cell death was mainly apoptosis by acridine orange/propidium iodide (AO/PI) dual staining method and Annexin V-FITC/PI assays. Gross morphology of treated cells observed through AO/PI showed the presence of blebbings cells, chromatin condensation and DNA fragmentation, indicating apoptosis. Annexin V-FITC/PI staining showed that substantial early apoptotic cells were detected in MCF-7 cells treated with damnacanthal alone and in combination with doxorubicin. The changes of percentage intracellular proteins were analyzed using flow cytometer. The percentage of Bcl-2 protein is higher than p53 protein in the control group. While in the treatment group, the percentage of Bcl-2 protein decreased significantly and p53 protein increased significantly. The changes of expression level of apoptotic related genes caused by damnacanthal and doxorubicin were profiled using multiplex gene expression profiler (GeXP). The expression levels of genes that give significant signal were not much different at 12 and 24 hours. Out of 15 genes that were analyzed, four genes showed detection in expression level; BAX, p21, caspase-3 and caspase-7. The expression of these pro-apoptotic genes is up-regulated in the treated group compared to control. Among the treated group, the combination treatment of

damnacanthal and doxorubicin showed higher expression level of these pro-apoptotic genes. The findings in the intracellular protein detection and changes in the expression level of apoptotic related genes reflect that the mechanism of damnacanthal induced apoptosis in the human breast cancer cells was by the intrinsic and caspases induction pathway. In conclusion, damnacanthal is more toxic towards cancer cell lines rather than normal cell lines and primary cells and showed the potential use as a promising agent for apoptosis induction alone and/or with combination with doxorubicin. The induction of apoptosis involved important pro-apoptotic genes which are BAX, p53, p51 caspase-3 and caspase-7.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia
sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**KESAN SITOTOSIK OLEH DAMNACANTHAL DAN KOMBINASI
BERSAMA DOXORUBICIN TERHADAP SEL KANSER PAYUDARA
MANUSIA (MCF-7)**

Oleh

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Damnacanthal ialah molekul aktif terbitan antraquinone secara biologi yang telah dipencilkan daripada akar spesies *Morinda* dari Famili *Rubiaceae*. Tumbuhan ini mempunyai sejarah penggunaan yang panjang sebagai makanan di kawasan tropika di seluruh dunia. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji secara *in vitro* kesan sitotoksik damnacanthal dan gabungan damnacanthal dengan doxorubicin pada sel karsinoma payudara manusia (MCF-7). Ujian MTT digunakan untuk menentukan sifat-sifat sitotoksik damnacanthal terhadap pelbagai jujukan sel-sel kanser, sel-sel normal dan sel-sel imun. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa damnacanthal mempunyai kesan pembunuhan yang mantap terhadap sel-sel kanser dan kesan yang sederhana terhadap sel-sel normal. Di antara sel-sel kanser, damnacanthal menunjukkan kesan sitotoksik yang kuat ke atas sel MCF-7 dengan $CD_{50} 8.2 \pm 0.7 \mu\text{g} / \text{mL}$ selepas 72 jam tempoh rawatan. Sebaliknya, sitotoksikiti tidak dikesan di sel limpa mencit, sel

timus mencit dan sel sumsum tulang mencit. Secara khususnya, damnacanthal mempamerkan kesan sitotoksik berkadar secara langsung dengan dos dan masa yang digunakan. Oleh itu, sel MCF-7 digunakan selanjutnya untuk menentukan cara kematian sel dengan damnacanthal sahaja dan kombinasi dengan doxorubicin. Dalam ujian viabiliti sel, peratusan viabiliti sel MCF-7 adalah lebih rendah apabila sel-sel dirawat dengan gabungan damnacanthal dan doxorubicin berbanding doxorubicin sahaja. Dalam kitaran sel dengan analisis sitometri aliran, damnacanthal menyekat kitaran sel MCF-7 pada fasa G1 dan doxorubicin menyekat kitaran sel pada fasa G2/M. Peratusan sel MCF-7 memasuki fasa sub G0 meningkat apabila sel-sel dirawat dengan gabungan damnacanthal dan doxorubicin. Mod utama kematian sel ialah apoptosis yang dibuktikan melalui kaedah perwarnaan berganda 'akridina jingga/propidium iodida' (AO/PI) dan ujian Annexin V-FITC/PI. Morfologi sel yang dirawat diperhatikan melalui kaedah pewarnaan AO/PI menunjukkan kehadiran 'blebbing', kondensasi kromatin dan fragmentasi DNA, membuktikan berlakunya apoptosis. Dalam sel MCF-7 yang dirawat dengan damnacanthal sahaja dan kombinasi dengan doxorubicin, sel apoptotik awal yang ketara dikesan dalam ujian perwarnaan Annexin V-FITC/PI. Perubahan peratusan protein intrasel dianalisis menggunakan sitometri aliran. Peratusan protein Bcl-2 adalah lebih tinggi daripada protein p53 dalam kumpulan kawalan. Manakala dalam kumpulan rawatan, peratusan protein Bcl-2 menurun dengan ketara dan protein p53 meningkat dengan ketara. Perubahan dalam tahap penzahiran gen yang berkaitan dengan apoptosis yang disebabkan oleh damnacanthal dan doxorubicin diprofilkan dengan "multipleks ekspresi gen" (GeXP). Tahap penzahiran gen yang memberikan isyarat yang penting tidak banyak berbeza pada 12 dan 24 jam rawatan. Daripada 15 gen yang dianalisis, hanya 4 gen menunjukkan pengesanan dalam rawatan; BAX, p21, caspase-3 dan

caspase-7. Penzahiran untuk 4 gen pro-apoptosis ini didapati meningkat dalam kumpulan rawatan berbanding dengan kumpulan kawalan. Di antara kumpulan rawatan, rawatan gabungan damnacanthal dan doxorubicin menunjukkan tahap penzahiran 4 gen pro-apoptotik lebih tinggi. Penemuan dalam pengesanan peratusan protein dihasilkan dalam sel dan perubahan dalam tahap penzahiran gen yang berkaitan dengan apoptosis membekalkan mekanisme apoptosis teraruh oleh damnacanthal dalam kanser payudara sel-sel manusia melalui laluan induksi intrinsik dan caspases. Kesimpulannya, damnacanthal adalah lebih toksik terhadap sel-sel kanser daripada sel-sel normal dan sel-sel asas dan menunjukkan potensi penggunaan sebagai aruhan apoptosis sama ada sendirian dan/atau dengan kombinasi dengan doxorubicin. Aruhan apoptosis tersebut melibatkan gen pro-apoptotik yang penting iaitu BAX, p53, p51 caspase-3 dan caspase-7.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 15 January 2013 to conduct the final examination of Muhammad Yusran Bin Abdul Aziz on his thesis entitled “Cytotoxic Effect of Damnacanthal and Its Combination With Doxorubicin on Human Breast Cancer Cells (MCF-7)” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree in Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.



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Date: 15 January 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	Page
ABSTRAK	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
APPROVAL	viii
DECLARATION	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
	xviii

CHAPTER

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1	Drug Discovery from Plant Derived Substances	6
2.1.1	Anti-cancer Drug Discovery	6
2.2	<i>Morinda citrifolia</i> (Noni)	8
2.2.1	Medicinal use of Noni Plant	10
2.2.2	Anticancer Activity of Noni Plant	11
2.2.3	Major Compound of Noni Plant	12
2.2.4	Damnacanthal	13
2.3	Cancer	15
2.4	Breast Cancer	16
2.4.1	Incidence of Breast Cancer	17
2.4.2	Treatment of Breast Cancer	19
2.5	Doxorubicin	19
2.6	Modes of Cell Death	20
2.6.1	Necrosis	21
2.6.2	Apoptosis	23
2.6.3	Mechanism of Apoptosis	25
2.6.4	Apoptosis Genes	27
2.6.4.1	Protein 53 (p53)	27
2.6.4.2	B-cell lymphoma 2 (Bcl-2)	28
2.6.4.3	Bcl-2-associated X protein (Bax)	29
2.6.4.4	Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF)	30
2.6.4.5	TNF-related apoptosis-inducing ligand (TRAIL)	31
2.7	Analytical Methods for Determination of Cytotoxicity and Mode of Cell Death	32
2.7.1	Tetrazolium Colorimetric Assay (MTT)	33
2.7.2	Acridine Orange/Propidium Iodide (AO/PI)	33
2.7.3	DNA Cell Cycle Analysis	34

	2.7.4	Annexin V Apoptosis Detection Assay	36
	2.7.5	Multiplexed Gene Expression Profiler	37
3		IN VITRO CYTOTOXIC EFFECT OF DAMNACANTHAL ON CANCER CELL LINES AND NORMAL CELL	
	3.1	Introduction	38
	3.2	Materials and Methods	40
	3.2.1	Reagents and Chemicals	40
	3.2.2	Plant Compound	40
	3.2.3	Positive Control	41
	3.2.4	Preparation of Cell Lines	41
	3.2.5	Isolation of Mice Splenocytes, Thymocytes and Bone Marrow Cell	41
	3.2.6	Cell Viability Assay	44
	3.3	Results	46
	3.4	Discussion	49
4		CYTOTOXIC EFFECT COMBINATION OF DAMNACANTHAL WITH DOXORUBICIN ON MCF-7 HUMAN BREAST CANCER CELLS	
	4.1	Introduction	52
	4.2	Materials and Methods	52
	4.2.1	Reagents and Chemicals	52
	4.2.2	Cell Viability Assay	53
	4.2.3	Fluorescent Microscopy (Acridine Orange/ Propidium Iodide Staining)	54
	4.2.4	DNA Cell Cycle Analysis	55
	4.2.5	Annexin V Binding Assay	56
	4.2.6	Statistical Analysis	56
	4.3	Results	57
	4.3.1	Cell Viability Assay	57
	4.3.2	Morphological Characteristics of Dead Cell	60
	4.3.3	DNA Cell Cycle Analysis	67
	4.3.4	Flow Cytometric Quantification of Apoptotic Cells	70
	4.4	Discussion	75
5		EFFECT OF DAMNACANTHAL AND COMBINATION OF DAMNACANTHAL WITH DOXORUBICIN ON THE EXPRESSION OF APOPTOTIC RELATED GENES	
	5.1	Introduction	81
	5.2	Materials and Methods	82
	5.2.1	Reagents and Chemicals	82

5.2.2	Preparation of Cell Lines	82
5.2.3	Flow Cytometry Intracellular Protein Detection	83
5.2.4	Genomelab GeXP™ Analysis System	84
5.2.4.1	Treatment	84
5.2.4.2	RNA Extraction	84
5.2.4.3	Quantitative Analysis of RNA	85
5.2.4.4	Primer Designing	86
5.2.4.5	Reverse Transcriptase PCR	86
5.2.4.6	Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)	87
5.2.4.7	Separation by the GenomeLabGeXP Genetic Analysis System	90
5.2.4.8	Fragment Analysis and Express Profiling Analysis	90
5.2.5	Statistical Analysis	91
5.3	Results	91
5.3.1	Evaluation of Intracellular Protein Detection	91
5.3.2	Multiplexed Gene Expression Profiler	93
5.4	Discussion	97
6	GENERAL DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS	
6.1	General Discussion	101
6.2	Conclusion and Future Research Recommendations	104
	REFERENCES	105
	APPENDICES	122
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	125