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EFFECTS OF SELECTED PHYTOCHEMICALS FROM MALAYSIAN PLANTS ON CELLULAR MODELS OF INFLAMMATION

SYAHIDA BINTI AHMAD

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By

SYAHIDA BINTI AHMAD

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2006
DEDICATION

To my parents, sisters and brother.

To everyone who believed in my abilities,
and supported me in my intention
to make some of my dreams come true.
Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**EFFECTS OF SELECTED PHYTOCHEMICALS FROM MALAYSIAN PLANTS ON CELLULAR MODELS OF INFLAMMATION**

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**SYAHIDA BINTI AHMAD**

May 2006

Chairman:  Associate Professor Daud Ahmad Israf Ali, PhD

Institute:  Bioscience

Inflammatory diseases of unknown causes are difficult to treat, although non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are anticipated to be useful drugs. It was believed that bioactive compounds isolated from plants might have potential anti-inflammatory properties without any side effects. Therefore, the main objectives of this study were to evaluate the effects of selected phytochemicals from Malaysian plants on the production of main inflammatory mediators and to study their mechanism of action in cellular models of inflammation.

Through the preliminary study, four out of the 32 phytochemicals tested were selected. They were atrovirinone, cardamonin, flavokawain B and zerumbone, which were isolated from *Garcinia atroviridis*, *Alpinia rafflesiana*, *Alpinia zerumbet* and *Zingiber zerumbet* respectively. All four compounds inhibited the release of interferon-γ (IFN-γ)/lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced nitric oxide (NO) in macrophages cell line (RAW 264.7) without any cytotoxicity effect, which was measured using the Griess assay. In order to determine the mechanism of action of these compounds, further study on the
production of main inflammatory mediators were conducted using several bioassays, namely oxidative stress assay, prostaglandin E$_2$ (PGE$_2$) and thromboxane B$_2$ (TxB$_2$) radioimmunoassay, and cytokines (tumour necrosis factor-α; TNF-α, interleukin (IL)-1β, IL-6 and IL-10) immunoassays. For the regulation and mechanism studies, the four compounds were tested on the main signaling pathways, which were the extracellular signal-regulated kinases (ERKs) and p38 MAPK pathways.

The results showed that atrovirinone, cardamonin, flavokawin B and zerumbone significantly suppressed IFN-γ/LPS-induced NO production dose-dependently with IC$_{50}$ value of 4.62 µM, 11.40 µM, 16.33 µM and 7.70 µM respectively and inhibited the reactive oxygen species (ROS) generation with IC$_{50}$ value of 9.48 µM, 6.48 µM, 28.16 µM and 12.86 µM respectively. These attenuations were believed to be the result of the perturbation of the inducible nitric oxide synthase (iNOS) enzyme expression in RAW264.7 cells. The data also suggested that all four compounds exhibited anti-inflammatory properties by selectively attenuating COX-2 activation, thus inhibiting the production of prostaglandin E$_2$ (PGE$_2$) with IC$_{50}$ value of 10.31 µM, 26.18 µM, 10.32 µM and 36.20 µM respectively in human whole blood cells. On the other hand, the ratio of IC$_{50}$ of COX-2/COX-1, which are associated with the production of thromboxane B$_2$ (TxB$_2$) in caprine whole blood cells, demonstrated that flavokawain B (ratio; 0.24 ± 0.08) was the most selective towards the COX-2 enzyme, followed by atrovirinone (ratio; 0.32 ± 0.09), cardamonin (ratio; 0.42 ± 0.07) and zerumbone (ratio; 0.72 ± 0.17). Interestingly, three of the compounds, namely atrovirinone, cardamonin and zerumbone, have a dual COX/LOX inhibitory activity. In addition, cardamonin,
flavokawain B and zerumbone showed significant inhibition on the synthesis of TNF-α, IL-1β, IL-6 and IL-10 in RAW 264.7 cells in a dose-dependent manner. In contrast, atrovirinone significantly reduced the synthesis of pro-inflammatory cytokines, namely TNF-α, IL-1β and IL-6 while it increased the secretion of the anti-inflammatory cytokine, IL-10. It is interesting to note that all four compounds suppressed the phosphorylation of the mitogen-activated protein kinases (MAPKs), namely extracellular signal-regulated protein kinases 1 and 2 (ERK1/2) and p38 MAPK.

Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the unique chemical structures of these phytochemicals are the main cause for their varying degrees in anti-inflammatory activities. In this study, two chalcone derivatives, namely cardamonin and flavokawain B were tested. The results demonstrated that substitution on the B ring was not essential for the anti-inflammatory activity of these chalcones. Besides, the presence of one or more hydroxylated and methoxylated benzoyl ring in the chalcones might enhance their scavenging and lipophilicity activities respectively. Similarly, it was suggested that the prenylated benzoquinone skeleton in atrovirinone might be important for its anti-inflammatory effect, which is due to the fact that compounds with prenylated chemical entities as part of their backbone structure are usually more hydrophobic than the non-prenylated compounds for easy penetration into the cell membrane. While in zerumbone, the α,β-unsaturated carbonyl group moiety might be important for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effect, which could induce the detoxification enzymes and neutralize the lipid peroxidation.
In conclusion, these findings have shown that the inhibition of main inflammatory mediators production in the cellular models of inflammation might be due to the attenuation of the ERK1/2 and p38 signaling pathways. Thus, this study has demonstrated that atrovirinone, cardamonin, flavokawain B, and zerumbone are potential lead compounds for the discovery of a new generation of drugs for controlling various acute and chronic inflammatory diseases.
Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

KESAN SEBATIAN-SEBATIAN KIMIA TERPILIH DARIPADA TUMBUH-TUMBUHAN MALAYSIA TERHADAP MODEL INFLAMASI DALAM SEL

Oleh

SYAHIDA BINTI AHMAD

Mei 2006

Pengerusi: Profesor Madya Daud Ahmad Israf Ali, PhD
Institut: Biosains

Penyakit keradangan yang berpunca daripada sesuatu yang tidak diketahui adalah sangat sukar dirawat, meskipun ubat anti-keradangan tanpa steroid telah diperkenalkan bagi merawat penyakit berkenaan. Dipercayai bahawa sebatian kimia yang berasal daripada tumbuh-tumbuhan mempunyai kesan anti-keradangan dan tidak menyebabkan sebarang kesan sampingan. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menguji kesan sebatian kimia yang berasal daripada tumbuhan terpilih terhadap bahan perantara keradangan yang utama serta kesannya terhadap mekanisma keradangan.

Melalui kajian penyaringan, empat daripada 32 sebatian kimia yang diuji telah dipilih. Empat sebatian kimia tersebut ialah atrovirinone, cardamonin, flavokawain B dan zerumbone yang telah dipencilkan daripada tumbuhan Garcinia atroviridis, Alpinia rafflesiana, Alpinia zerumbet dan Zingiber zerumbet masing-masing. Keempat-empat sebatian kimia tersebut merencat pengeluaran nitrik oksida (NO) yang di ransang oleh IFN-γ/LPS daripada sel makrofaj (RAW 264.7) tanpa sebarang kesan toksik melalui
ujian Griess asai. Bagi mengenalpasti mekanisma tindakan sebatian-sebatian kimia ini, kajian lanjut ke atas pengeluaran bahan perantara keradangan telah dijalankan, menggunakan beberapa bioasai iaitu asai tekanan oksidatif (ROS), prostaglandin E2 (PGE2), thromboxane B2 (TxB2), dan cytokine (TNF-α, IL-1β, IL-6 dan IL-10). Di samping itu, sebatian-sebatian kimia ini juga diuji dari segi kesannya terhadap tapak jalan berisyarat utama yang terdiri daripada ERK dan p38.

Daripada kajian yang telah dijalankan, didapati atrovirinone, cardamonin, flavokawain B dan zerumbone merencat pengeluaran NO dengan nilai perencatan pada kadar 50% (IC50) seperti berikut, iaitu 4.62 μM, 11.40 μM, 16.33 μM dan 7.70 μM masing-masing. Keempat-empat sebatian kimia ini juga berjaya menurunkan kadar oksigen radikal bebas (ROS) dengan nilai IC50 iaitu 9.48 μM, 6.48 μM, 28.16 μM dan 12.86 μM masing-masing. Dijangkakan bahawa perencatan ini adalah disebabkan oleh kesan sebatian-sebatian kimia ini terhadap enzim iNOS. Kajian ini juga telah membuktikan bahawa keempat-empat sebatian kimia ini telah menurunkan kadar pengeluaran PGE2 dengan nilai IC50 iaitu 10.31 μM, 26.18 μM, 10.32 μM dan 36.20 μM masing-masing. Manakala, melalui nilai nisbah IC50 COX-2/COX-1 yang terhasil daripada perencatan pengeluaran TxB2, mendapati bahawa flavokawain B (nisbah; 0.24 ± 0.08) adalah lebih cenderung merencat enzim COX-2 berbanding COX-1, diikuti dengan atrovirinone (nisbah; 0.32 ± 0.09), cardamonin (nisbah; 0.42 ± 0.07) dan zerumbone (nisbah; 0.72 ± 0.17). Apa yang mengkagumkan daripada kajian ini ialah tiga daripada sebatian kimia ini, iaitu atrovirinone, cardamonin dan zerumbone berjaya merencat kedua-dua enzim COX-2 dan LOX. Selain itu, cardamonin, flavokawain B dan zerumbone telah menunjukkan kesan perencatan ke atas pengeluaran TNF-α, IL-1β, IL-6 dan IL-10.
Sebaliknya, atrovirinone telah menurunkan pengeluaran cytokine pro-keradangan (TNF-α, IL-1β, IL-6) dan pada masa yang sama telah meningkatkan pengeluaran cytokine anti-keradangan iaitu IL-10. Lebih menarik lagi, keempat-empat sebatian kimia ini didapati merencat tindak balas fosforilasi protein MAPK iaitu ERK 1/2 dan p38.

Tambahan pula, dijangkakan bahawa perbezaan kesan anti-keradangan di antara sebatian-sebatian kimia ini adalah di sebabkan oleh bentuk struktur kimianya yang unik. Dalam kajian ini, dua sebatian kimia daripada kumpulan chalcone telah diuji, iaitu cardamonin dan flavokawain B. Keputusan kajian telah membuktikan bahawa ketiadaan unsur kimia (substitution) pada gelang B kumpulan ini tidak menjejaskan aktiviti anti-keradangannya. Selain itu, kehadiran satu atau lebih hidroksi dan metoksi pada gelang benzene berkemungkinan memberi kesan kepada aktiviti kumpulan chalcone in untuk memerangkap radikal bebas (scavenging) dan tindakbalas dengan lipid (lipophilicity).

Begitu juga dengan atrovirinone, dijangkakan struktur benzoquinone yang berprenyl adalah sangat penting bagi meningkatkan kesan anti-keradangannya. Ini disahkan dengan fakta yang menyatakan bahawa sebatian kimia yang mempunyai struktur sedemikian, pada kebiasaannya adalah lebih hidrofobik bagi memudahkan penyerapannya melalui membran sel. Manakala, zerumbone yang mempunyai struktur kumpulan α,β-karbonil tak tepu berkemungkinan sangat penting bagi meningkatkan kesan anti-keradangan dan anti-penuaan, di mana kumpulan struktur ini dapat menyertoksikkan enzim dan meneutralkan tindakbalas pengoksidaan lipid.
Kesimpulannya, kajian ini telah menunjukkan bahawa perencatan sintesis bahan perantara yang utama dalam model sel keradangan adalah mungkin disebabkan oleh perencatan tapak jalan ERK 1/2 dan p38. Oleh itu, kajian ini telah membuktikan bahawa atrovirinone, cardamonin, flavokawain B dan zerumbone mempunyai potensi sebagai bahan sebatian kimia utama bagi penemuan dadah generasi baru yang boleh digunakan untuk mengawal penyakit keradangan yang akut dan kronik.
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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 25 May 2006 to conduct the final examination of Syahida Binti Ahmad on her PhD thesis entitled “The effects of selected phytochemicals from Malaysian plants in cellular models of inflammation” in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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Date:
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or any institutions.

SYAHIDA BINTI AHMAD

Date:
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL SHEETS</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION FORM</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>xxxv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER**

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION  

2. LITERATURE REVIEW  
   2.1 General events in inflammation  
   2.2 Main inflammatory mediators  
     2.2.1 Reactive oxygen species  
     2.2.2 Nitric oxide  
     2.2.3 Arachidonic acid metabolism  
     2.2.4 Cytokines  
   2.3 Signal transduction pathways  
     2.3.1 Nuclear factor-κB (NF-κB)  
     2.3.2 Mitogen-Activated Protein Kinases (MAPKs)  
   2.4 Anti-inflammatory drugs  
     2.4.1 Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)  
     2.4.2 Phytochemicals with anti-inflammatory action  

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS  
   3.1 General Materials and Methods  
     3.1.1 Cell culture  
     3.1.2 Dilution of compounds  
     3.1.3 Stimulation of macrophage cells  
   3.2 Experimental Materials and Methods  
     3.2.1 Griess assay  
     3.2.2 Cell viability assay  
     3.2.3 Micro-fluorometric kinetic assay  
     3.2.4 Prostaglandin E2 (PGE2) radioimmunoassay  
     3.2.5 Thromboxane B2 (TxB2) radioimmunoassay  
     3.2.6 Lipooxygenase (LOX) enzyme kinetic assay  
     3.2.7 Tumor necrosis factor-α, Interlukin-1β, Interlukin-6 and Interlukin-10 enzyme immunoassay  
     3.2.8 MAPKs protein expression analysis  

xvi
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Statistical Analysis</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 PRIMARY SCREENING FOR HITS</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Materials and Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Test material</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Measurement of nitrite</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Measurement of cell viability</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Results of optimization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Effect of IFN-γ and LPS on NO production</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Effect of L-NAME on NO production and RAW 264.7 cells morphology</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Results of screening test</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Discussion</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 EFFECT OF ATROVIRINONE ON MAJOR INFLAMMATORY MEDIATORS AND SIGNALING MOLECULES</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Materials and Methods</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Isolation of atrovirinone from <em>Garcinia atroviridis</em></td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1 Effect of atrovirinone on NO production</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2 Effect of atrovirinone on ROS production</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3 Effect of atrovirinone on PGE2 production</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.4 Effects of atrovirinone on TxB2 production</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.5 Effects of atrovirinone on LOX activity</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.6 Effects of atrovirinone on TNF-α synthesis</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.7 Effects of atrovirinone on IL-1β synthesis</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.8 Effects of atrovirinone on IL-6 synthesis</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.9 Effects of atrovirinone on IL-10 synthesis</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.10 Effect of atrovirinone on ERK1/2 protein expression</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.11 Effect of atrovirinone on p38 protein expression</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Discussion</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 EFFECT OF CARDAMONIN ON MAJOR INFLAMMATORY MEDIATORS AND SIGNALING MOLECULES</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Introduction</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Materials and Methods</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1 Isolation of cardamonin from <em>Alpinia rafflesiana</em></td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1 Effect of cardamonin on NO production</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2 Effect of cardamonin on ROS generation</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.3 Effect of cardamonin on PGE2 production</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.3.4 Effect of cardamonin on TxB2 synthesis 145
6.3.5 Effect of cardamonin on LOX activity 146
6.3.6 Effect of cardamonin on TNF-α synthesis 148
6.3.7 Effect of cardamonin on IL-1β synthesis 149
6.3.8 Effect of cardamonin on IL-6 synthesis 151
6.3.9 Effect of cardamonin on IL-10 synthesis 152
6.3.10 Effect of cardamonin on ERK1/2 protein expression 154
6.3.11 Effect of cardamonin on p38 protein expression 156
6.4 Discussion 158

7 EFFECT OF FLAVOKAWIN B ON MAJOR INFLAMMATORY MEDIATORS AND SIGNALING MOLECULES 166
7.1 Introduction 166
7.2 Materials and Methods 169
  7.2.1 Isolation of flavokawin B from Alpinia zerumbet 169
7.3 Results 170
  7.3.1 Effect of flavokawin B on NO production 170
  7.3.2 Effect of flavokawin B on ROS generation 173
  7.3.3 Effect of flavokawin B on PGE2 production 174
  7.3.4 Effect of flavokawin B on TxB2 synthesis 176
  7.3.5 Effect of flavokawin B on LOX activity 177
  7.3.6 Effect of flavokawin B on TNF-α synthesis 178
  7.3.7 Effect of flavokawin B on IL-1β production 180
  7.3.8 Effect of flavokawin B on IL-6 production 181
  7.3.9 Effect of flavokawin B on IL-10 production 182
  7.3.10 Effect of flavokawin B on ERK1/2 protein expression 184
  7.3.11 Effect of flavokawin B on p38 protein expression 186
7.4 Discussion 188

8 EFFECT OF ZERUMBONE ON MAJOR INFLAMMATORY MEDIATORS AND SIGNALING MOLECULES 194
8.1 Introduction 194
8.2 Materials and Methods 198
  8.2.1 Isolation of zerumbone from Zingiber zerumbet 198
8.3 Results 198
  8.3.1 Effect of zerumbone on NO production 198
  8.3.2 Effect of zerumbone on ROS production 202
  8.3.3 Effect of zerumbone on PGE2 production 203
  8.3.4 Effects of zerumbone on TxB2 synthesis 205
  8.3.5 Effect of zerumbone on LOX activity 206
  8.3.6 Effect of zerumbone on TNF-α synthesis 208
  8.3.7 Effect of zerumbone on IL-1β synthesis 209
  8.3.8 Effect of zerumbone on IL-6 synthesis 211
  8.3.9 Effect of zerumbone on IL-10 synthesis 212
8.3.10 Effect of zerumbone on ERK1/2 protein expression 213
8.3.11 Effect of zerumbone on p38 protein expression 216
8.4 Discussion 218

9  GENERAL DISCUSSION 223

10  CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION 241

REFERENCES
APPENDICES
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The selectivity of various NOS inhibitors in inhibiting inducible NOS vs. constitutively expressed NOS. – refers to non-selectivity, + refers to partial iNOS selectivity corresponding to 10-50-fold iNOS inhibition as compared to eNOS or nNOS inhibition, ++ refers to selectivity corresponding to 50-250-fold iNOS inhibition as compared to eNOS or nNOS inhibition, and +++ refers to selectivity corresponding to over 250-fold iNOS inhibition as compared to eNOS or nNOS inhibition. Selectivity is determined on the basis of IC_{50} values of inhibition of purified NOS isoforms. (Figure was adapted from Alderton et al., 2000)</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Nuclear factor-κB (NF-κB) target genes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>List of pure compounds isolated from Malaysian medicinal plants.</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>The effect of 32 pure compounds isolated from Malaysian medicinal plants on NO production and cell viability of RAW 264.7 macrophage cells</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Several chemical structures of 2’-hydroxychalcone derivatives, which possess potent anti-inflammatory activity</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Compounds isolated from <em>Alpinia zerumbet</em></td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Other compounds isolated from the rhizomes of <em>Zingiber zerumbet</em>.</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Illustration above was acquired from <em>Persson et al., 1996</em>, which shows the recruitment of white blood cells at affected site in response to inflammatory stimuli. B=B-lymphocytes; D=dendritic cell; E=eosinophil; F=fibroblast; M=macrophage; Mc=mast cell; N=neutrophil; T=T-lymphocyte</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Time curves of the three major states of inflammation, which begin with immediate inflammation, followed by acute inflammation and lastly chronic inflammation. These states are marked in time as well as in the extent in which cells generate metabolites. The first two states are amenable to control by drugs. The chronic state is more difficult to treat and no approved drugs are available. This is a composite drawing taken from <em>Castranova et al., 2002</em></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Oxidative stress pathway</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Structure of some flavonoids, which have potential antioxidant properties, including a) quercetin, b) morin, c) fisetin, d) apigenin, e) luteolin, f) hesperetin and g) epicatechin</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>The reaction of NO synthesis from L-arginine. NO is synthesized endogenously by the conversion of L-arginine to L-citrulline. During this reaction, NADPH is used as an electron donor and N(^{\omega})-hydroxy-L-arginine is generated as an intermediate (Figure was acquired from <em>Aktan, 2004</em></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Nitric oxide synthesis (acquired from Cayman Chemical product manual, Nitrate/Nitrite Colorimetric Assay Kit, LDH Method, Catalog No. 760871)</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Structures of amino acid NOS inhibitors. All structures are analogs of either L-arginine, the NOS substrate, or L-citrulline, the NOS product. (a) In the guanidino amino acids a guanidinium hydrogen of L-arginine is replaced by any of a variety of small substituents. (b) In the amidino amino acids a guanidinium nitrogen atom of L-arginine is replaced by an alkyl, alkenyl or alkynyl group, whereas (c) in the amino acid isothioureas a substituted sulfur replaces the guanidinium nitrogen atom. (d) The acetamidine lysine derivative resembles L-NIO, an amidino amino acid, but the carboxylate group is replaced by a vicinal glycol. Like L-arginine, all of these amino acids, except L-NNA (a), have a strongly cationic side chain. (e) In contrast, L-citrulline and L-thiocitrulline are neutral amino acids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.8 Enzymatic reactions of PGE2 biosynthesis, catalyzed by PGH2 synthase via cyclooxygenase and hydroperoxidase reactions (adapted from Smith and Song, 2002)

2.9 Diagram acquired from Garreta, et al., 2001 shows the cyclooxygenase and lipoxygenase pathways on production and action of prostanoids and leukotrienes. Note that phospholipases and cyclooxygenase activities can be blocked by steroids and NSAIDs respectively

2.10 Bar chart shows determinable log [IC₈₀ ratio (WBA-COX-2/COX-1)] for NSAIDs assayed. The “0 line” indicates equipotency. Italic indicates compounds with very low potency. (Figure was acquired from Warner et al., 1999)

2.11 Some structures of COX-1 inhibitors, including representative ketoprofen and ketorolac

2.12 Chemical structures of selective COX-2 inhibitors that were discovered as a result of a search for selective isoform inhibitors (celecoxib and rofecoxib) or that were revealed as being COX-2 selective (NS398, meloxicam and nimesulide)

2.13 Some structures of classical NSAIDs, including representative salicylic acid, acetylsalicylic acid (aspirin) and indomethacin

2.14 Some structures of dual COX/LOX inhibitors, including representative ML3000 and nordihydroguaiaretic acid (NDGA)

2.15 An overview of the complex cytokine network involved in the evolution and propagation of the inflammatory response, which involves a plethora of inflammatory cells and signals. Figure was acquired from Haddad et al., 2003

2.16 A simplified scheme of the activation of NF-κB by the degradation of IκB. IκB is phosphorylated by IKK and ubiquitinated by the ubiquitine ligase system (ULS). IκB is further degraded by the 26S proteasome (26S). Activated NF-κB can pass the nuclear membrane and interact with κB binding sequences in enhancers of NF-κB regulated genes. LPS, lipopolysaccharide; ROS, reactive oxygen species; FasL, Fas ligand; TRAF, TNF-α receptor associated factor; NIK, NF-κB inducing kinase; MEKK, mitogen activated protein kinase/extracellular signal regulated kinases kinases. Figure was acquired from Celec, 2004
2.17 Chemical structure of specific inhibitor of ERK (PD98059) and p38 MAPK (SB203580)

2.18 Mitogen-activated protein kinase (MAPK) signal transduction pathways. The triple amino acid phosphorylation motif Thr-X-Tyr (T-X-Y) depends on the MAPK isoform, where X is glutamic acid (E) for extracellular-regulated protein kinase (ERK), proline (P) for c-Jun NH2-terminal kinase (JNK) and glycine (G) for p38 MAPK. *Abbreviations*: ASK, apoptosis signal-regulating kinase; ATF2, activating transcription factor-2; C/EBP, CCAAT/enhancer-binding protein; CHOP, C/EBP-homologous protein; map, mitogen-activated protein; MAPKAPK, MAPK activated protein kinase; MBP, myelin basic protein; MEF2C, myocyte enhancer factor 2C; EK, MAPK or ERK kinase; MEKK, MEK kinase; MKK, MAPK kinase; MSK, mitogen- and stress-activated protein kinase 1; PAK, p21-activated kinase; PI3K, phosphatidylinositol 3-kinase; Sap, stress-activated protein; SKK, stress-activated protein kinase kinase; STMR, seven transmembrane receptor; TAK, transforming growth factor b (TGF-b-activating kinase); TKR, tyrosine kinase receptor; TNFR, tumour necrosis factor receptor; TRAF, TNFR-associated factor. Figure was acquired from Herlaar and Brown, 1999

4.1 Physiological effects of NO and reactive nitrogen species (RNS). Figure was adapted from Grisham *et al.* (1999)

4.2 Chemical pathway of the Griess Reagents (acquired from author? product manual of Nitrate/Nitrite Colorimetric Assay Kit using Lactate Dehydrogenase Method, Cayman Chemical)

4.3 Effect of IFN-γ and LPS-induced NO production in murine monocytic macrophage cell lines (RAW 264.7). Cells (5 x 10⁴ cells/well) were stimulated with LPS (0.1, 1 and 10 μg/ml) at various combination concentration of IFN-γ (2, 20 and 200 U/ml) and C; basal concentrations of NO₂⁻. The amount of NO₂⁻ released by RAW 264.7 cells was measured after 17-20 hours of incubation by the Griess method. The data are expressed as means in triplicates from single experiment (n=1)

4.4 Effect of IFN-γ/LPS-induced NO production on RAW 264.7 cells viability. C; RAW 264.7 cells without inducers. The data are expressed as means in triplicates from single experiment (n=1)

4.5 A) Graph line above shows the effect of NO productions and RAW 264.7 cells viability after treated with L-NAME (7.81-1000 μM),
a NOS inhibitor (n=1). B) Bar graph shows the effect of IFN-γ/LPS on NO productions with or without 0.1% DMSO and L-NAME at selected concentration of 250 μM as a drug control. The data represent the mean ± S.E.M. (n=3). **P<0.01 significantly different from the induced with DMSO

4.6 Microscopy examination above show RAW 264.7 macrophage cells were adherent to plastic and were randomly distributed in culture media at >90% confluency (320X digital magnification).

A) Uninduced RAW 264.7 cells. The resting macrophages were predominantly spherical or irregular. The cytoplasmatic membranes were intact and the cytoplasm homogeneously presenting small vacuoles. According to Asfora et al. (2005), a healthy macrophage is characterized with a kidney-form centralized nucleous, with chromatin loosely distributed and intact nuclear membrane.

B) RAW 264.7 cells after induced by IFN-γ/LPS with 0.1% DMSO C) RAW 264.7 cells after induced by IFN-γ/LPS without 0.1% DMSO D) RAW 264.7 cells after treatment with 250 μM of NOS inhibitor, L-NAME. As shown in the pictures above, both induced and treated RAW 264.7 cells had undergone a remarkable morphological transformation from macrophage-like cells into dendritic-like cells. Dendritic morphology is characterized by multiple prominent cytoplasmic processes, larger nuclei, prominent nucleoli and relatively prominent cytoplasm with increased granularity (Raxena et al., 2003). IFN-γ/LPS-treated RAW 264.7 cells also dramatically increased in size

4.6 Microscopy examination of RAW 264.7 macrophage cells (320X digital magnification). E) The MTT formazan produced by live cells appear as black, fuzzy crystals. F) The dead macrophages appeared deformed and agglomerated. The cytoplasmatic membranes were disrupted in practically all the cells and the cytoplasm of each macrophage was dense with big vacuoles in some areas. According to Asfora et al. (2005), the nucleus of dead macrophages was more peripheral and the disruption of the nuclear membrane was conspicuous. The chromatin was dense and no extracellular granulation was observed

4.7 Structure of chalcone