

Phytoconstituents and biological activities of *Artemisia kopetdaghensis*

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ABSTRACT

Phytochemical investigation of the aerial parts of *Artemisia kopetdaghensis* led to isolation and characterization of 5 compounds including 9-Oxo-tournefortioid (1), 2,6,10-Trimethyl-2,5-epidioxy-7,10-epoxydodeca-3,11-dien-5-acetoxy (2), 6-Demethoxy-5,7-dihydroxy-4'-O-methylcapillarisin (3), Eupatilin (4) and 5, 7, 5'-trihydroxy-6, 2', 4'-trimethoxyflavone (5). The chemical structures of these compounds were identified by spectroscopic analysis. The antioxidant activities of the pure compounds were evaluated using 2, 2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) free radical scavenging assays and also the antimicrobial capacity were tested against gram positive and gram negative bacteria and fungi using minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) method.

Keywords: *Artemisia kopetdaghensis*; DPPH; MIC

INTRODUCTION

Plant secondary metabolites generally display remarkable biological activities such as antioxidant and antimicrobial properties which are useful for preserving foods from decay and contamination or preventing living tissues from

various diseases [1]. Due to the continuous emergence of antibiotic-resistant strains, there is a continuous demand for new antibiotics [2]. Many plants have shown considerable cytotoxic activities and also many antitumoural agents are derived from plant origin [3-5]. The genus

Artemisia was known as “teretkh” in Persian is well known aromatic perennial herb originated from northern regions. Among 500 species of this genus, grown in the world, thirty four species are distributed in Iranian flora [6]. *Artemisia* species are well known as medicinal plants because of their biological and pharmacological properties. In traditional medicine, *Artemisia* species have been used as folk remedies for some treatment purposes [7]. Previous phytochemical investigations have been shown the presence of various phytochemical constituents such as terpenoids [8-12], flavonoids [13,14] and coumarins [15] in the different *Artemisia* species. Cytotoxic, antihepatotoxic, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, insecticides and antimalarials effects [16-18] have been confirmed for some *Artemisia* species. *Artemisia kopetdaghensis*, aromatic shrubs belonging to the Asteraceae family, are traditionally used in Iran for anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antifungal and sedative activities [19]. Furthermore, in other studies, cytotoxic effects of the methanol and hydro-ethanol extracts of *A. kopetdaghensis* as well as its essential oil have been demonstrated [20,21].

There is already no report on phytochemical constituents and biological activity of the extract of *A. kopetdaghensis*. The present research reports the chemical structure characterization of the five compounds from the

(Et₂O/MeOH/Petrol) extract of plant by ¹H and ¹³C NMR and Mass spectroscopy. The antioxidant activities of the five compounds were evaluated using 2, 2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) free radical scavenging assays. Finally, antimicrobial effects of these compounds were evaluated against some pathogenic strains of bacteria and fungi.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Reagents, chemicals and microorganisms

Trolox (water soluble equivalent of vitamin E) was obtained from Acros Organics (Geel). Dimethyl sulphoxide, hexane, methanol, sodium acetate was purchased from Merck (Germany). 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH), and hydrochloric acid 32% were obtained from Sigma Aldrich (USA). The bacteria that were used in this study were *Bacillus pumilus* (PTCC 1319), *Escherichia coli* (PTCC 1533), *Kocuria varians* (PTCC 1484), *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (PTCC 1310), *Salmonella typhi* (PTCC 1609) and *Listeria monocytogenes* (PTCC 1298). The fungal strains that were used in this study were *Aspergillus niger* (PTCC 5154), *Aspergillus flavus* (PTCC 5006) and *Candida glabrata* (PTCC 5297). All microorganisms were obtained from the Persian type culture collection (PTCC) in Tehran.

Plant materials

The fresh *A. kopetdaghensis* was collected in september 2015, from the Bojnourd area in khorassan province. Voucher specimens (No. 0888) are deposited in the herbarium of the Research Institute of Forests and Rangelands (TARI), Tehran, Iran. The aerial parts of the plant were dried at room temperature in the shade for 5 days before the extraction.

Extraction and Isolation

The separation process was carried out using several chromatographic methods. Ground aerial parts (800 g) were extracted with Et₂O/MeOH/Petrol (1:1:1) (2×6L) at room temperature for 48 h. Evaporation at reduced pressure of 36 g (4.5% yield) of crude extract, which was suspended in EtOH (600 ml), diluted with H₂O (500 ml) and extracted successively with hexane (3×650 ml) and CHCl₃ (3×450 ml). Evaporation of the CHCl₃ extract at reduced pressure of 14.5 g of residue, which was a column chromatographed over silica gel (340 mg, 70-230 mesh) using hexane and increasing amounts of EtOAc (0-100 %) and EtOAc/MeOH (9:1) to afford 32 fractions. These were classified according to their TLC profiles and monitored by FT-IR spectroscopy. Fractions 7 and 8 (240 mg) were reunited and rechromatographed on silica gel (230-400 mesh) to obtain 80 mg of compound 1. Fractions 10 to 13 (250 mg) were exhibited two spots on a TLC after repeated

chromatography purification, yielded 39 mg of the compound 2.

Fractions 16 to 20 (230 mg) showed a major spot on TLC was decolorized with charcoal in hexane-EtOAc. Filtration, evaporation and recrystallization from n-heptane-EtoAc (3:1) gave 90 mg of the pure compound 3. Fractions 26 to 32 (300 mg) were reunited and rechromatographed on silica gel (230–400 mesh) using hexane-EtOAc (7:1→ 3:1) to yield 50 mg of the compound 4 and 90 mg of the compound 5.

Biological activities

Assessment of antimicrobial activity by MIC agar dilution assay

The antimicrobial activity of natural samples was tested by determining the minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) using the agar dilution method [22]. The lowest concentration of the compounds that prevented visible growth was considered to be the MIC. In antifungal activity evaluation, appropriate amounts of the natural compounds of *A. kopetdaghensis* were added to sterile molted sabouraud dextrose agar (SDA) medium containing Tween 20 (0.5%, v/v) to produce the concentration range of 8–512 µg/ml. The resulting SDA agar solutions were immediately mixed and then poured into petri plates. The plates were spot which inoculated with 5 µl (10⁴ spores/ ml) of isolated fungus. At

the end of the incubation time, the plates were evaluated for the presence of growth. The antibacterial activity was carried out through the protocol. The only difference is 5 µl of suspension containing 10⁸ CFU/ml of bacteria instead of isolated fungus. The MIC was defined as the lowest concentration of the oil to inhibit the growth of microorganisms. Ampicillin, tetracycline and fluconazole were used for gram-positive, gram-negative bacteria and fungus, respectively.

Antioxidant activity measured by DPPH radical scavenging activity

The radical scavenging activity of natural samples against the stable free radical DPPH was measured as described previously [23]. Briefly, 4 different concentrations of the isolated compounds were dissolved in methanol and incubated with a methanolic solution of DPPH (100 µM) in 96-well microplates. Related concentrations were carefully chosen according to the activity of this plant to obtain an appropriate dose-response curve. Plant extract concentrations were used in this study arranged from 1.6 to 100 µg/ml. After 30 min incubation at room temperature in the dark, the absorbance was measured by a microplate reader (Bio-Tek,

model 680) at 517 nm. The inhibition (%I) for each concentration was calculated using the absorbance (A) values according to the following formula:

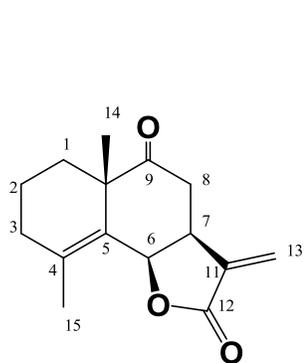
$$\%I = [(A_{DPPH} - A_{PS}) / A_{DPPH}] \times 100$$

Where A_{DPPH} and A_{PS} are the absorbance of the DPPH solutions containing methanol and plant samples, respectively. The dose-response curve was plotted using the software Sigma Plot for windows version 8.0 and then related IC₅₀ values of extract was calculated. These values were divided by the extraction yield (Y) to calculate the IC₅₀ value for the dry plant.

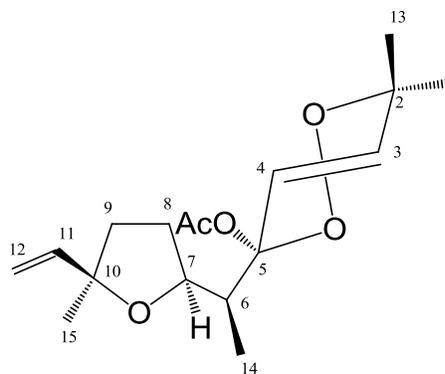
RESULTS

Spectral data of isolated compounds

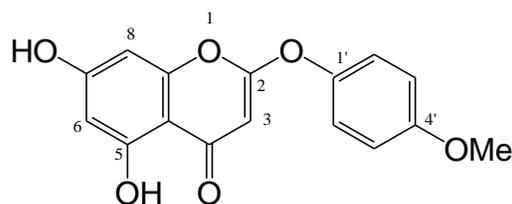
Purification processes on (Et₂O/MeOH/Petrol) extract obtained from aerial parts of *A. kopetdaghensis* by chromatography on silica gel columns as well as recrystallization for isolation and identification of the five compounds. Structure elucidation was accomplished by NMR and mass spectrometric (MS) analysis as well as comparisons with data reported in the literature [24-29]. The structures of all compounds isolated are shown in Figure 1.



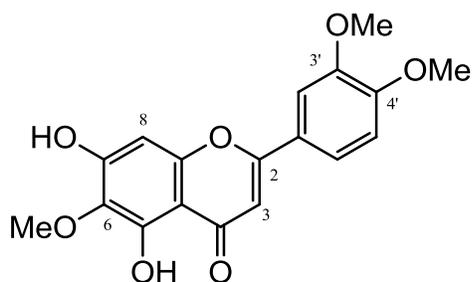
9-Oxo-tournefortioidide (1)



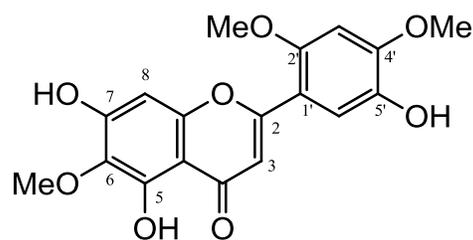
2,6,10-trimethyl-2,5-epidioxy-7,10-epoxydodeca-3,11-dien-5-acetoxy (2)



6-Demethoxy-4'-O-methylcapillarisin (3)



Eupatilin (4)



5,7,5'-trihydroxy-6,2',4'-trimethoxyflavone (5)

Fig. 1. Structures of compounds **1** to **5** obtained from *Artemisia kopetdaghensis*.

Compound 1 was isolated as colorless crystals. Its molecular formula was determined as $C_{15}H_{18}O_3$ by the MS (EI 70 eV, m/z, %): 246.126 $[M^+]$ (100) (calc. For $C_{15}H_{18}O_3$: 231 $[M-Me]^+$ (47), 203 $[231-CO]^+$ (78), 185 $[203-H_2O]^+$ (28), 157(26), 131(28), 91 (26); FT-IR (KBr, ν_{max} ,

Cm^{-1}): 1760 (γ -lactone), 1710 (C=O); 1H -NMR (300 MHz, $CDCl_3$, δ , ppm, J/Hz): 1.70 (1H, m, H-1 α), 1.54 (1H, m, H-1 β), 1.70 (2H, m, H-2), 2.12 (2H, dd, J=5, 8, H-3), 5.78 (1H, d, J=9, H-6), 3.65 (1H, m, H-7), 2.75 (1H, dd, J=7, 14, H-8 α), 2.42 (1H, dd, J=3, 14, H-8 β), 6.38 (1H, d, J=3, H-

13) 5.69 (1H, d, J=2.5, H-13'), 1.20 (3H, s, H-14), 1.89 (3H, s, H-15); ^{13}C - NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3 , δ , ppm); 34.5(C-1), 18.2(C-2), 32.8(C-3), 128.7(C-4), 138.2(C-5), 75.5(C-6), 37.8(C-7), 41.2 (C-8), 213.7 (C-9), 47.6(C-10), 140.4 (C-11), 169.9(C-12), 124.5(C-13), 20.0 (C-14), 25.1 (C-15).

Compound 2 was obtained as colorless oil, and its molecular formula was determined as $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{26}\text{O}_5$ by the MS (EI, 70 eV, m/z (%): 310 $[\text{M}]^+$ (21), 278 $[\text{M}-\text{O}_2]^+$ (6), 167 $[\text{M}-\text{O}_2-\text{C}_7\text{H}_{11}\text{O}]^+$ (26), 139 $[\text{M}-\text{O}_2-\text{C}_7\text{H}_{11}\text{O}-\text{C}_2\text{H}_4]^+$ (34), 111 $[\text{M}-\text{O}_2-\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{15}\text{O}_2]^+$ (100), 93 $[\text{M}-\text{O}_2-\text{C}_{10}\text{H}_{15}\text{O}_2-\text{H}_2\text{O}]^+$ (73); FT-IR (ν_{max} , cm^{-1}), 1740 (carbonyl groups), 1140, no band in the hydroxyl region; ^1H -NMR (300 MHz, CDCl_3 , δ , ppm, J/Hz); 1.28 (3H, s, H-1), 6.90 (1H, d, J=15.7, H-3), 6.40 (1H, d, J=15.7, H-4), 2.90 (1H, dq, J=7, 10, H-6), 4.20 (1H, dt, J=10.0, 10.0, 5.0, H-7), 1.69 (2H, m, H-8), 1.81 (2H, m, H-9), 5.86 (1H, dd, J=17.2, 10.5, H-11), 5.16 (1H, dd, J=17.2, 1.2, H-12 α), 4.96 (1H, dd, J=10.5, 1.2, H-12 β), 1.39 (6H, s, H-13 and H-15), 1.04 (3H, d, J=7, H-14), 2.18 (3H, s, OAc); ^{13}C - NMR (75 MHz, CDCl_3 , δ , ppm); 26.9(C-1), 71.3 (C-2), 144.9 (C-3), 125.6, (C-4), 89.1 (C-5), 50.2 (C-6), 80.8 (C-7), 29.7 (C-8), 37.9 (C-9), 83.3 (C-10), 152.9 (C-11), 111.8 (C-12), 27.4 (C-13), 13.4 (C-14), 29.6 (C-15), 170.1 (carbonyl OAc), 22.2 (Me).

Compound 3 was obtained as white-brownish crystals, and its molecular formula was established as $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6$ by the MS (EI 70 eV, m/z, %), 300 $[\text{M}]^+$ (100), 271 $[\text{M}-\text{CO}]^+$ (14), 148 (53), 92 (59), 77 (67), 69 (92), 63 (48); FT-IR (KBr, ν_{max} , cm^{-1}): 3420 (br, ν_{OH}), 1654 (C=O), 1614, 1565, 1502, 1460 (aromatic C=C bond), 1222, 1022 (C-O-C), 822 (p-substituent); ^1H -NMR (300 MHz, acetone- d_6 , δ , ppm, J/Hz); 12.89 (1H, s, OH), 9.85 (1H, s, OH), 7.30 (2H, dd, J=9.1, 2.1, H-3' and H-5'), 7.08 (2H, dd, J=9.1, 2.1, H-2' and H-6'), 6.39 (1H, d, J=2.0, H-8), 6.26 (1H, d, J=2.0, H-6), 5.08 (1H, s, H-3), 3.86 (3H, s, OMe-4'); ^{13}C - NMR (75 MHz, acetone- d_6 , δ , ppm); 183.9 (C-4), 168.7(C-2), 164.1 (C-7), 162.7 (C-5), 158.7 (C-4'), 155.8 (C-9), 145.2 (C-1'), 122.3 (C-2', 6'), 115.7 (C-3', 5'), 103.0 (C-10), 99.6 (C-3), 94.1 (C-6), 87.4 (C-8), 55.5 (OMe-4'). The crystallographic data at the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre (CCDC No. 837649) can be obtained.

Compound 4 was obtained as yellow solid, and its molecular formula was established as $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{16}\text{O}_7$ by the MS (EI 70 eV, m/z, %) 344 $[\text{M}]^+$ (14), 329 $[\text{M}-\text{Me}]^+$ (13), 279 (29), 167 (55), 149 (100), 69 (43), 57 (87); FT-IR (KBr ν_{max} , Cm^{-1}): 3430 (OH), 1659(C=O), 1590 (aromatic ring); ^1H - NMR (300 MHz, acetone- d_6 , δ , ppm, J/Hz); 3.81(3H, s, OMe-6), 3.99 (6H, s, OMe-3',4'), 6.76 (1H, s, H-8), 6.86 (1H, s, H-3), 7.01 (1H, d, J=8,

H-5'), 7.63 (2H, dd, J=8, 2 H-2' and H-6'), 12.98 (1H, s, OH); ^{13}C -NMR (75 MHz, acetone-d₆, δ , ppm); 60.0 (C₆-OMe), 56.2 (C₃'-OMe), 56.2 (C₄'-OMe), 91.4 (C-8), 103.6 (C-3), 105.9 (C-10), 110.0 (C-2'), 115.8 (C-5'), 120.8 (C-6'), 123.0 (C-1'), 132.9 (C-6), 148.3 (C-3'), 151.0 (C-4'), 153.4 (C-9), 153.5 (C-5), 159.5 (C-7), 164.7 (C-2), 183.0 (C-4).

Compound 5 was obtained as yellow amorphous solid, and its molecular formula was established as C₁₈H₁₆O₈ by the MS (EI, 70 eV, m/z %) 360 [M]⁺ (22), 344 [M-CH₄]⁺ (15), 316 [M-CH₄-CO]⁺ (11), 123(100), 105(93), 77(80); FT-IR (KBr ν_{max}): 2700-3200, 1660, 1620, 1585, 1565, 1520 cm⁻¹; ^1H - NMR (300 MHz DMSO-d₆, δ , ppm, J/Hz); 6.89 (1H, s, H-3), 6.57(1H, s, H-8), 7.15 (2H, s, H-3' and H-6'), 3.75 (6H, s, OMe-2',4'), 3.88 (3H, s, OMe-6), 9.64 (1H, s, OH), 12.96 (1H, s, OH); ^{13}C -NMR (75 MHz DMSO-d₆, δ , ppm); 164.1 (C-2), 103.0 (C-3), 183.0 (C-4), 153.6 (C-5), 132.2 (C-6), 158.3(C-7), 95.1 (C-8), 153.3 (C-9), (C-10) 108.5, 126.7 (C-1'), 154.4 (C-2'), 105.0 (C-3'), 151.7 (C-4'), 140.5 (C-5'), 108.5 (C-6'), 57.0 (OMe-6), 60.8 (OMe-2'), 60.9 (OMe-4').

Antimicrobial activity

The antimicrobial activity of the five compounds that isolated from *A. kopetdaghensis* was evaluated against a set of 9 microorganisms and their potency were assessed qualitatively and

quantitatively by minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC) values. The results are given in (Table 1) and indicate that the compound 2 and compound 1 remarkably inhibited the growth of all tested bacteria, while three compounds 3, 4 and 5 showed weak antimicrobial activity against these microorganisms. The compound 2 showed best antibacterial activities against *P. aeruginosa* with MIC of 16 $\mu\text{g/ml}$. This compound was active against *S. typhi*, *K. varians*, *E. coli* *L. monocytogenes* (MIC values of 32 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ and 64 $\mu\text{g/ml}$, respectively). Also compound 1 exhibited good anticandidal activity against all tested gram-negative bacteria and *Bacillus pumilus*, one of the gram-positive bacteria. Best inhabitation in this compound was observed against *E. coli* (MIC values of 32 $\mu\text{g/ml}$). This is particularly interesting from a medical point of view because this microbial agent is responsible for severe infections. Our results about the antimicrobial activity of terpene type compounds 2 and 1 are similar to other reports about the analogies of these compounds [30-32]. None of the isolated components showed significant activity against fungal microorganisms.

Table 1. Antimicrobial activity of the isolated compounds from *A. kopetdaghensis* by MIC method ($\mu\text{g/ml}$)

Microorganism	Sesquiterpene lactone 1	Peroxide sesquiterpene 2	2-Phenoxychromone 3	Flavonoide 4	Flavonoide 5	Antibiotics*
Gram-negative bacteria						
<i>Escherichia coli</i>	32	64	256	512	-	16
<i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	64	16	256	512	512	8
<i>Salmonella typhi</i>	64	32	512	256	512	32
Gram-positive bacteria						
<i>Bacillus pumilus</i>	64	128	256	256	256	64
<i>Kocuria varians</i>	128	64	128	512	512	16
<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	128	64	512	512	512	16
Fungi						
<i>Aspergillus flavus</i>	512	512	-	-	-	64
<i>Candida glabrata</i>	512	256	-	512	-	128
<i>Aspergillus niger</i>	512	512	-	-	-	64

*Ampicillin, Tetracycline and Fluconazole were used as references for Gram-positive, Gram-negative bacteria and fungus, respectively. (Range of concentration: 8–512 $\mu\text{g/ml}$)

Antioxidant activity

The isolated compounds were subjected to screening for their possible antioxidant activities using 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) assay methods (Table. 2). DPPH is a stable free radical which can readily experience reduction in the presence of an antioxidant. It shows a maximum ultraviolet and visible (UV-Vis)

absorbance at 517 nm. The reduction in the intensity of absorption at 517 nm of methanol solutions of DPPH radical in the presence of antioxidants is usually taken as a measure of their antioxidant activity. In this study, the ability of compounds to scavenge DPPH radical was determined based on their concentrations providing 50% inhibition (IC₅₀).

Table. 2. Antioxidant activity of the isolated compounds from *A. kopetdaghensis* and Trolox in DPPH free radical scavenging activity

Sample	DPPH IC ₅₀ (µg/ml)
Sesquiterpen lactone 1	33.21±2.40
Peroxide sesquiterpene 2	ND ^a
2-Phenoxychromone 3	92.21 ± 1.1
Flavonoide 4	71.66 ± 0.66
Flavonoide 5	89.50 ± 0.65
Trolox	19.72 ± 0.82

^aNo inhibition for compound 2 Observed for concentrations up to 2 mg/ml, ND (Not determined)

DISCUSSION

In our study, compound 1 was shown the best radical scavenging activity with IC₅₀ value of 33.21±2.40 µg/ml. Literature review shows that the compounds containing hydrogen atoms in the allylic or benzylic positions may show better activity because of relatively easy abstraction of a hydrogen atom from these functional groups by

peroxy radicals formed in the test circumstances [33]. The compounds with allylic or benzylic hydrogens such as terpenoids and steroids were reported [34-37]. As expected for all phenolic compounds, 2-phenoxychromone (compound 3) and two flavonoids (compounds 4 and 5) were shown higher antioxidant activities (IC₅₀=92. 21 ± 1.1; 71.66 ± 0.66 and 89.50 ± 0.65,

respectively) in comparison with the non-phenolic compound 2.

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