

Identification of an Active Compound from *Wikstroemia indica* C.A. Mey that Induced Apoptosis and Differentiation in Human

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ABSTRACT

Wikstroemia indica C. A. Mey (Thymelaceae), widely planted in the hillside of Taiwan and China, has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for the treatment of tumor, arthritis, tuberculosis, syphilis, and pertussis. In this study, we extracted the active components from the stem of *W. indica*, and identified their chemical structure and test the anti-leukemic activity. The active fraction (AF) from *W. indica* showed 80% of inhibition rate on human myeloid leukemic U937 cells at the concentration of 31.3 ng/ml. However, daphnoretin, a dicomurin compound from *W. indica*, only showed insignificant effect. Flow cytometric assay revealed that the cell cycle of AF-treated U937 cells was arrested at G0/G1 phase. AF (31.3 ng/ml) induced U937 cells to differentiate into monocytes and macrophages, accompanied with 75% of NBT-positive cells. In phagocytosis assay, 70% AF-treated U937 cells have the ability to swallow yeasts. AF also induced U937 cells to express the surface antigen CD11b. In addition, AF induces apoptosis in U937 cells in a dose- and time-dependent increase, including apoptotic body by morphological observation and sub-G1 phase by flow cytometric assay. The anti-proliferation and differentiation-inducibility effect of AF was blocked by PD 98059, a MEK/ERK2 inhibitor, suggesting that the mechanisms by AF was through MAPK pathway. AF from *W. indica* may be a potential drug in anti-leukemia

Keywords : *Wikstroemia indica* C. A. Mey ; Leukemia ; Differentiation ; Apoptosis ; Mitogen-activated protein kinase

Table of Contents

封面內頁 簽名頁 授權書 iii 中文摘要 iv 英文摘要 vi 誌謝 vii 目錄 viii 圖目錄 xii 表目錄 xiv 附錄目錄 xvi 縮寫表 xvii 第一章緒論 1 第二章 文獻回顧 2 2.1 南嶺蕘花 (*Wikstroemia indica* C. A. Mey) 2 2.1.1 植株特徵 2 2.1.2 產地 2 2.1.3 採收加工 3 2.1.4 植物學分類 3 2.1.5 效用 3 2.1.6 毒性 3 2.1.7 已知成份 4 2.2 白血病 4 2.2.1 白血病之定義及分類 4 2.2.2 白血病之治療 5 2.2.3 關於誘導分化之研究 5 2.2.4 關於細胞凋亡之研究 9 2.3 MAPK之簡介 12 2.3.1 MAPK之簡介 12 2.3.2 ERK (extracellular signal-regulated kinase) 13 2.3.3 JNK (c-Jun NH₂-terminal kinase) 13 2.3.4 p38-MAPK 14 2.3.5 MAPK抑制劑 14 2.4 研究動機 15 第三章 材料與方法 16 3.1 儀器 16 3.2 化學藥劑及緩衝液 19 3.3 細胞 20 3.4 實驗方法 20 3.4.1 南嶺蕘花成份之分離及純化 20 3.4.2 細胞生長與分化之探討 24 3.4.3 細胞凋亡之探討 28 3.4.4 作用機制之探討 29 3.5 統計分析 30 第四章 結果 31 4.1 南嶺蕘花成份之分離純化 31 4.2 天然物活性成份AF與Daphnoretin誘導白血病細胞分化之細胞生物學研究 32 4.2.1 AF與Daphnoretin抑制人類白血病細胞株之生長 32 4.2.2 天然物AF對於U937細胞之細胞週期的影響 33 4.2.3 天然物AF誘導U937細胞之形態學變化 33 4.2.4 天然物AF誘導U937細胞分化後對NBT之還原能力 34 4.2.5 天然物AF誘導U937細胞分化後細胞吞噬能力之評估 34 4.2.6 天然物AF誘導U937細胞分化後表現單核球相關之表面抗原 34 4.2.7 天然物AF對於U937細胞之細胞週期的影響 35 4.2.8 天然物AF對於U937細胞產生Sub-G1期的評估 35 4.2.9 MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF作用U937細胞生長抑制的影響 36 4.2.10 MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF作用U937細胞之型態學變化 36 4.2.11 MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF作用U937細胞NBT還原能力的影響 37 第五章 討論 38 5.1 在抑制生長(anti-proliferation)方面 39 5.2 在誘導分化(differentiation induction)方面 39 5.3 在細胞凋亡(Apoptosis)方面 40 5.4 在MAPK訊息傳遞方面 40 第六章 結論 44 6.1 總結 44 6.2 未來展望 45 參考文獻 47 圖一. 南嶺蕘花之有機溶劑分離流程示意圖 58 圖二. 純化南嶺蕘花中具有抗白血病活性成分之流程示意圖 59 圖三. HPLC分析Daphnoretin 60 圖四. LC-MS分析Daphnoretin 61 圖五. ¹H NMR分析圖譜 62 圖六. Daphnoretin化學結構圖 63 圖七. TLC分析AF與Daphnoretin 64 圖八. HPLC分析AF與Daphnoretin 65 圖九. 天然物AF與Daphnoretin抑制人類白血病U937細胞株之生長作圖 66 圖十. 流式細胞儀分析U937細胞之細胞週期 67 圖十一. 天然物AF對於人類白血病U937細胞株細胞週期之影響(G0/G1期) 68 圖十二. 天然物AF對於人類白血病U937細胞株細胞週期之影響(S期) 69 圖十三. 天然物AF對於人類白血病U937細胞株細胞週期之影響(G2/M期) 70 圖十四. U937細胞於光學顯微鏡(1000X)下細胞型態之變化 71 圖十五. 天然物AF誘導人類白血病U937細胞株分化之形態變化 72 圖十六. U937細胞於光學顯微鏡(1000X)下NBT反應之變化 73 圖十七. 天然物AF誘導人類白血病U937細胞株分化後NBT反應之能力 74 圖十八. U937細胞於光學顯微鏡(1000X)下吞噬能力之影響 75 圖十九. 天然物AF誘導人類白血病U937細胞株分化後吞噬能力之影響 76 圖二十. 流式細胞儀分析U937細胞之細胞表面抗原表現 77 圖二十一. 天然物AF誘導人類白血病U937細胞分化後表面抗原表現之影響 78 圖二十二. 凋亡小體於光學顯微鏡(1000X)下之型態 79 圖二十三. 流式細胞儀分析U937細胞之Sub-G1期分布 80 圖二十四. 天然物AF促進人類白血病U937細胞株Sub-G1期之產生 81 圖二十五. MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF促

進U937細胞株分化之細胞型態變化(400X) 82 圖二十六. MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF抑制U937細胞株生長之影響 83 圖二十七. MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF促進U937細胞株分化之型態學變化 84 圖二十八. MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF促進U937細胞株NBT還原能力之影響 85 表一. ¹³C NMR分析Daphnoretin 86 表二. ¹H NMR分析Daphnoretin 87 表三. 天然物AF抑制人類白血病U937細胞株之生長 88 表四. 天然物AF對於人類白血病U937細胞株細胞週期(G₀/G₁期)之影響 89 表五. 天然物AF對於人類白血病U937細胞株細胞週期(S期)之影響 90 表六. 天然物AF對於人類白血病U937細胞株細胞週期(G₂/M期)之影響 91 表七. 天然物AF誘導人類白血病U937細胞株分化之形態變化 92 表八. 天然物AF誘導人類白血病U937細胞株分化後NBT反應及吞噬能力之評估 93 表九. 天然物AF誘導人類白血病U937細胞分化後表面抗原之表現能力 94 表十. 天然物AF促進人類白血病U937細胞株Sub-G₁期之產生 95 表十一. MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF抑制U937細胞株生長之影響 96 表十二. MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF誘導U937細胞分化之型態學變化 97 表十三. MAPK抑制劑對於天然物AF誘導U937細胞株NBT還原反應之影響 98 附錄一. 南嶺蕘花(*Wikstroemia indica* C.A. Mey.)之原植物形態圖 99 附錄二. 南嶺蕘花(*Wikstroemia indica* C.A. Mey.)中已發現之組成成分 100 附錄三. 南嶺蕘花(*Wikstroemia indica* C.A. Mey.)已發現之成份及其生物活性 101 附錄四. 急性白血病之分類 102 附錄五. 以型態學(FAB)分類之急性非淋巴球性白血病 103 附錄六. 細胞週期之示意圖 104 附錄七. MAPK signaling pathway 105 附錄八. MAPK signaling cascades . 106 附錄九. MAPK 抑制劑之結構 . 107 附錄十. MAPK抑制劑5-iodotubercidin及PD 98059於MAPK pathway中之抑制位置 . 108 附錄十一. MAPK抑制劑SB 203580於MAPK pathway中之抑制位置 109

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