

Tetrahydroprotoberberine N-oxides from *Chelidonium majus* and their inhibitory effects on NO production in RAW 264.7 cells

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ABSTRACT

Two new tetrahydroprotoberberine N-oxides, 7*R*,14*S*-*cis*-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide (**1**) and 7*R*,14*R*-*trans*-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide (**2**) along with fourteen known compounds (**3–16**) were isolated from the aerial parts of *Chelidonium majus*. Their structures were elucidated by spectroscopic and spectrometric methods, such as 1D and 2D-NMR (HSQC, HMBC, NOESY) and HRESIMS. The absolute configurations of **1** and **2** were established by comparison of their experimental and calculated ECD data. All isolates were evaluated for their inhibitory effects on the nitric oxide production in LPS-induced RAW 264.7 macrophages, and compounds **2**, **6–10**, **13**, and **15** showed significant inhibitory effects with the IC₅₀ values ranging from 1.1–31.9 μM.

1. Introduction

Chelidonium majus L., a perennial and herbaceous plant belongs to the family Papaveraceae, is distributed widely in the temperate region of Asia, Europe, and North Africa. It has been used traditionally in Korean folk medicine to treat liver diseases, gastric cancer, gastric ulcer, oral infection, tuberculosis, jaundice, and various skin disorders (Barnes et al., 2007; Gilca et al., 2010). Previous phytochemical studies of *C. majus* have revealed the presence of many types of alkaloids such as benzo[c]phenanthridine, protopine, and protoberberine (Colombo and Bosio, 1996; Gu et al., 2010). Some of these compounds have been found to exhibit anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, immunomodulatory, anti-cancer, and anti-oxidant activities (Lenfeld et al., 1981; Meng et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2014; Capistrano et al., 2015; Havelek et al., 2016). As a part of a program to search for the plant-derived anti-inflammatory compounds, a MeOH extract of the aerial parts of *C. majus* was examined for inhibitory effects on lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced nitric oxide (NO) production in RAW 264.7 macrophages (IC₅₀ value: 31.5 μg/mL). Chromatographic isolation yielded two new tetrahydroprotoberberine N-oxides, 7*R*,14*S*-*cis*-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide (**1**) and 7*R*,14*R*-*trans*-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide (**2**) and fourteen known compounds (**3–16**) (Fig. 1). Herein are described the isolation and structure determination of the new compounds and the inhibitory effects of compounds **1–16** on NO production

in LPS-induced RAW 264.7 cells.

2. Results and discussion

Compound **1** was obtained as a white amorphous powder. Its molecular formula was determined as C₁₉H₁₇NO₅ from the HRESIMS (*m/z* 340.1179 [M+H]⁺, calcd 340.1185) and ¹³C NMR data, indicating the presence of 12 degrees of unsaturation. The ¹H NMR data (Table 1) suggested the presence of two singlet aromatic protons at δ_H 6.73 (1H, s, H-1) and 6.72 (1H, s, H-4), two *ortho*-coupled aromatic protons at δ_H 6.79 (1H, d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, H-11) and 6.73 (1H, d, *J* = 8.1 Hz, H-12), two methylenedioxy groups at δ_H 5.92 (1H, d, *J* = 1.1 Hz, H-15a), 5.91 (1H, d, *J* = 1.1 Hz, H-15b), 5.96 (1H, d, *J* = 1.1 Hz, H-16a), and 6.01 (1H, d, *J* = 1.1 Hz, H-16b). Four mutually coupling protons at δ_H 3.04 (H-5β), 3.41 (H-6α), 3.44 (H-5α), and 3.83 (H-6β) in ring B, and three other mutually coupling protons at δ_H 3.13 (1H, dd, *J* = 18.0, 9.2 Hz, H-13β), 3.65 (1H, dd, *J* = 18.0, 5.8 Hz, H-13α), and 4.58 (1H, m, H-14) in ring C were also observed. The ¹³C NMR data in combination with HSQC spectrum revealed the presence of 19 carbon signals, corresponding to twelve aromatic carbons, two methylenedioxy carbons (δ_C 102.6 and 103.2), two *N*-methylene carbons (δ_C 59.1 and 64.7), two methylene carbons (δ_C 26.2 and 36.2), and a *N*-methine carbon (δ_C 72.5) (Table 1). The aforementioned evidence and information from the HRESIMS data suggested that **1** possesses a 2,3,9,10-oxygenated

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tetrahydroprotoberberine skeleton with *N*-oxide and two methylenedioxy groups (Chen et al., 1999, 2001). The locations of two methylenedioxy groups were assigned at C-2/C-3 and C-9/C-10, respectively, based on the HMBC correlations observed from CH₂-15 (δ_{H} 5.92 and 5.91) to C-2 (δ_{C} 149.0) and C-3 (δ_{C} 148.0), as well as from CH₂-16 (δ_{H} 5.96 and 6.01) to C-9 (δ_{C} 145.2) and C-10 (δ_{C} 147.7) (Fig. 2). The relative configuration at the B/C ring junction was established by comparison of ¹³C NMR data of compound **1** with those of related compounds, *cis*- and *trans*-corydalmine *N*-oxide and *cis*- and *trans*-canadine *N*-oxide (Hussain et al., 1983; Chen et al., 1999, 2001). The chemical shifts at δ_{C} 59.1 (C-6), 36.2 (C-13), and 72.5 (C-14) observed for compound **1** were indicative of a *cis*-tetrahydrocoptisine-*N*-oxide configuration, whereas the chemical shifts for the *trans*-tetrahydrocoptisine-*N*-oxide as in compound **2** would be at δ_{C} 65.1 (C-6), 30.8 (C-13), and 69.6 (C-14). The relative configuration was established by the NOESY correlations between H-1/H-14/H₂-13, H-14/H-13 α /H-8 α , H-12/H₂-13, H-4/H₂-5, and H₂-6/H-8 β (Fig. 2). The absolute configuration at N-7 and C-14 was established by electronic circular dichroism (ECD) calculation analyses using time-dependent density functional theory (TDDFT), and the measured ECD spectrum for **7R**, **14S** matched well with the calculated ECD spectrum (Fig. 3). Therefore, the structure of **1** was determined to be (5*R*,12*bS*)-4,5,6,7,12*b*,13-hexahydro-[1,3]dioxolo[4',5':7,8]isoquinolino[3,2-*a*][1,3]dioxolo[4,5-*g*]isoquinoline 5-oxide and named **7R,14S-cis-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide**.

Compound **2** was isolated as a white amorphous powder having a molecular formula of C₁₉H₁₇NO₅, the same as **1**, based on the HRESIMS (*m/z* 340.1179 [M+H]⁺, calcd 340.1185) and ¹³C NMR data (Table 1). The ¹H- and ¹³C NMR data closely resembled those of **1**, with the only differences in the chemical shifts at C-6 (δ_{C} 65.1), C-13 (δ_{C} 30.8), and C-14 (δ_{C} 69.6), suggesting a *trans* configuration at the B/C ring junction. Comprehensive analysis of 2D-NMR (COSY, HSQC, and HMBC) data confirmed that the planar structure was the same as those of (-)-tetrahydrocoptisine *N*-oxide, which was recently isolated from the aerial part of *C. majus* without determination of the absolute configuration (Huang et al., 2019). Compound **2** showed NOESY correlations between H-1/H₂-13, H-14/H-5 β /H-6 β /H-8 β /H-13 β , H-12/H₂-13, H-4/H-5 α , and H-6 β /H-8 β , which proved the relative configuration (Fig. 2). The absolute configuration was further confirmed by ECD calculation, in which the experimental ECD spectrum matched well with that calculated for **7R**, **14R**. Therefore, the structure of **2** was determined to be (5*R*,12*bR*)-4,5,6,7,12*b*,13-hexahydro-[1,3]dioxolo[4',5':7,8]isoquinolino[3,2-*a*][1,3]dioxolo[4,5-*g*]isoquinoline 5-oxide and named **7R,14R-trans-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide**.

The structures of the known compounds were identified as impatien **B** (**3**) (Li et al., 2013), spallidamine (**4**) (Ito et al., 1990; Sai et al., 2016), oxychelerythrine (**5**) (Le and Cho, 2006; Miao et al., 2011), dihydrosanguinarine (**6**) (Miao et al., 2011), *N*-demethyloxysanguinarine (**7**) (Chang et al., 2003), chelidonine (**8**) (Ito et al., 2011), isochelidonine (**9**) (De Rosa and Di Vincenzo, 1992), *trans*-coumaroyltyramine (**10**) (Song

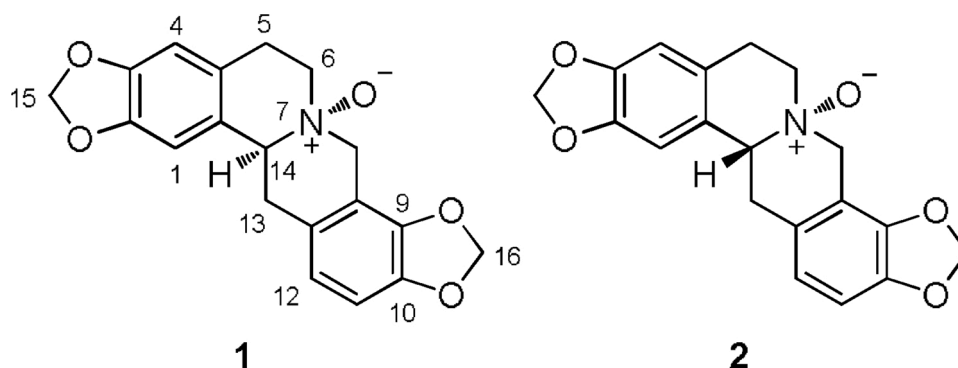
Table 1¹H and ¹³C NMR data of compounds **1** and **2**.^a

| Position | 1 | | | 2 | |
|-------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| | δ_{H} (J in Hz) ^b | δ_{C} ^b | δ_{C} ^c | δ_{H} (J in Hz) ^b | δ_{C} ^b |
| 1 | 6.73, s | 107.8 | 107.5 | 6.88, s | 106.8 |
| 1a | – | 128.1 | 128.6 | – | 127.3 |
| 2 | – | 149.0 | 147.1 | – | 148.7 |
| 3 | – | 148.0 | 146.3 | – | 147.3 |
| 4 | 6.72, s | 109.6 | 109.2 | 6.71, s | 109.2 |
| 4a | – | 125.0 | 125.3 | – | 126.8 |
| 5 α | 3.44, m | 26.2 | 26.1 | 2.83, dd, (16.8, 3.7) | 25.5 |
| 5 β | 3.04, dd, (15.1, 7.6) | – | – | 3.63, dd, (13.5, 5.7) | – |
| 6 α | 3.41, m | 59.1 | 59.1 | 3.76, m | 65.1 |
| 6 β | 3.83, m | – | – | 3.84, m | – |
| 8 α | 4.59, m | 64.7 | 63.6 | 4.48, d, (15.0) | 66.4 |
| 8 β | 4.64, d, (16.0) | – | – | 4.76, d, (15.0) | – |
| 8a | – | 112.4 | 113.0 | – | 112.3 |
| 9 | – | 145.2 | 143.9 | – | 145.7 |
| 10 | – | 147.7 | 146.1 | – | 148.6 |
| 11 | 6.79, d, (8.1) | 109.4 | 108.5 | 6.84, d, (8.0) | 108.8 |
| 12 | 6.73, d, (8.1) | 122.1 | 121.5 | 6.80, d, (8.0) | 122.3 |
| 12a | – | 124.7 | 124.9 | – | 126.2 |
| 13 α | 3.65, dd, (18.0, 5.8) | 36.2 | 34.5 | 3.60, dd, (16.6, 4.3) | 30.8 |
| 13 β | 3.13, dd, (18.0, 9.2) | – | – | 3.29, m | – |
| 14 | 4.58, m | 72.5 | 71.2 | 4.88, m | 69.6 |
| 15 | 5.92, d, (1.1) | 102.6 | 102.2 | 5.94, br s | 102.7 |
| | 5.91, d, (1.1) | – | – | 5.95, br s | – |
| 16 | 5.96, d, (1.1) | 103.2 | 101.6 | 5.96, br s | 103.0 |
| | 6.01, d, (1.1) | – | – | 6.01, br s | – |

^a Assignments were supported with HSQC, HMBC and NOESY experiments.^b Measured in CD₃OD at 700 MHz for ¹H NMR and at 175 MHz for ¹³C NMR.^c Measured in DMSO-*d*₆ at 100 MHz for ¹³C NMR.

et al., 2016), *cis*-coumaroyltyramine (**11**) (Kim et al., 2005), *trans*-*N*-feruloyltyramine (**12**) (Song et al., 2016), 4-[formyl-5-methoxymethyl-1*H*-pyrrol-1-yl] butanoate (**13**) (Chin et al., 2003), noroxyhydrastinine (**14**) (Cho et al., 2006), 3,4-dehydrotheaspirone (**15**) (Moujir et al., 2011), and lolilide (**16**) (Kimura and Maki, 2002) by comparison of their spectroscopic (UV, 1D and 2D NMR) and ESIMS data with those of published values.

All isolates (**1**–**16**) were tested for their inhibitory effects on the NO production in LPS-induced RAW 264.7 cells, with aminoguanidine as the positive control. None of the tested compounds showed any cytotoxicity at their effective concentration for the inhibition of NO production (data not shown). Of these, dihydrosanguinarine (**6**), a benzophenanthridine alkaloid mainly found in the family Papaveraceae, was found to exhibit significant inhibitory effect with an IC₅₀ value of 1.1 μ M. Three benzophenanthridine alkaloids, such as *N*-demethyloxysanguinarine (**7**), chelidonine (**8**), and isochelidonine (**9**) also showed inhibitory effects with IC₅₀ value of 11.6, 21.4, and 31.9 μ M, respectively. Compound **2** showed stronger inhibitory effect (IC₅₀ 26.3 μ M) on LPS-induced NO production than that of compound **1** (IC₅₀ >100 μ M) (Table 2). Interestingly, compounds **1** and **2** differ only in the configuration of the B/C

**Fig. 1.** Chemical structures of compounds **1** and **2**.

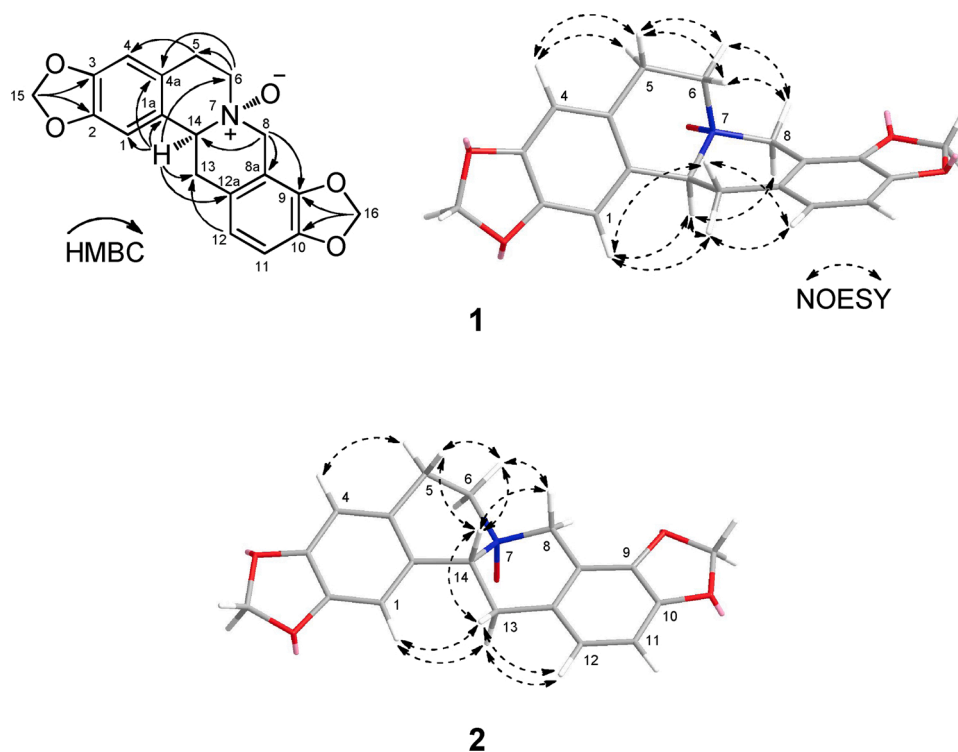


Fig. 2. Key HMBC and NOESY correlations of compounds 1 and 2.

ring junction, implying that the 3D conformation of these compounds could probably play an important role for the NO inhibition. *Trans*-coumaroyltyramine (**10**), 4-[formyl-5-methoxymethyl-1*H*-pyrrol-1-yl] butanoate (**13**), and 3,4-dehydrotheaspirone (**15**) also showed moderate inhibitory effects with IC_{50} value of 25.3, 21.1, and 23.4 μ M, respectively. Several isoquinoline alkaloids such as chelidone, norchelidone, and 8-hydroxydihydrosanguinarine from *C. majus* were found to have inhibitory effects on NO production (Park et al., 2011). Chelidonic acid inhibited the production of IL-6 and the expression of IL-6 mRNA by blocking NF- κ B (Shin et al., 2011). In addition, chelidone suppressed the production of LPS-induced NO and PGE_2 , as well as iNOS and COX-2 mRNA and protein expression, by inhibiting the TLR4/NF- κ B signaling pathway (Liao et al., 2018). Stylophine from *C. majus* also suppressed the production of NO, PGE_2 , TNF- α , IL-1 β , and IL-6, and the expression of iNOS and COX-2 in LPS-stimulated RAW 264.7 cells (Jang et al., 2004).

In conclusion, the present study supports the medicinal use of *C. majus* in the cure of inflammatory diseases, as well as the contribution of isoquinoline alkaloids to the anti-inflammatory activity of this plant. The aerial parts of *C. majus* may be useful for the treatment of inflammatory diseases caused by excessive production of NO.

3. Experimental

3.1. General experimental procedures

Gravity column chromatography was performed using a silica gel (Kieselgel 60, 70–230 mesh, Merck). TLC was performed using pre-coated silica gel 60 F₂₅₄ (0.25 mm, Merck), and spots were detected by a 10 % vanillin-H₂SO₄ in water spray reagent. MPLC was performed using a Biotage Isolera system with Lichroprep RP-18 (40–63 μ m, Merck). Semi-preparative HPLC was performed using a Waters HPLC system (two Waters 515 pumps with a 2996 photodiode-array detector) with a YMC J'sphere ODS-H80 (4 μ m, 150 \times 20 mm, i.d.). Optical rotations were measured with a JASCO DIP-1000 polarimeter. UV spectra were recorded on a JASCO UV-550 spectrophotometer. HRESIMS spectra were recorded on a maXis 4 G (Bruker, Germany) mass

spectrometer. IR spectra were acquired on a JASCO FT-IR 4100 spectrometer. 1D and 2D NMR spectra were obtained on Bruker AVANCE III 500 and 700 MHz NMR spectrometers using CDCl₃, DMSO-*d*₆, and CD₃OD as solvents. ESIMS and HRESIMS were obtained on LCQ Fleet and maXis 4 G mass spectrometers, respectively. ECD spectra were obtained on a JASCO J-715 spectrometer.

3.2. Plant material

The dried aerial parts of *C. majus* were obtained from Kyungdong herbal market in Seoul, Korea, in March 2018. A voucher specimen (CBNU-2018-03-CM) was authenticated by B. Y. Hwang and deposited at the Herbarium of the College of Pharmacy, Chungbuk National University, Korea.

3.3. Extraction and isolation

The dried aerial parts of *C. majus* (3.0 kg) were powdered and extracted with MeOH (3 \times 10 L) at room temperature for 3 days. After solvent was removed under reduced pressure, the residue was suspended in water and then partitioned with *n*-hexane, CH₂Cl₂, and EtOAc respectively. The CH₂Cl₂-soluble fraction (21.5 g) was chromatographed on a silica gel column (7 \times 25 cm) using a stepwise gradient of CH₂Cl₂-EtOAc (1:0 to 0:1) to give eleven sub-fractions (CMC1 - CMC11). Fraction CMC5 was chromatographed further on a silica gel column (5 \times 40 cm) using a gradient solvent system of CH₂Cl₂-MeOH (50:1 to 0:1) to give eight sub-fractions (CMC5A - CMC5H). Fraction CMC5B was purified by MPLC on a Lichroprep RP-18 column (CH₃CN-H₂O, 10:90 to 80:20) to afford eleven sub-fractions (CMC5B1 - CMC5B11). Fraction CMC5B5 was further purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 20:80 to 60:40, 6 mL/min) to yield compounds **1** (t_R = 14.5 min, 3.0 mg), **2** (t_R = 17.6 min, 9.3 mg), **3** (t_R = 20.3 min, 1.9 mg), and **4** (t_R = 42.3 min, 2.7 mg). Fraction CMC6 was chromatographed on a silica gel column (4 \times 45 cm) using a gradient solvent system of CH₂Cl₂-MeOH (30:1 to 0:1) to give six sub-fractions (CMC6A - CMC6F). Fraction CMC6A was separated by MPLC on a Lichroprep RP-18 column (MeOH-

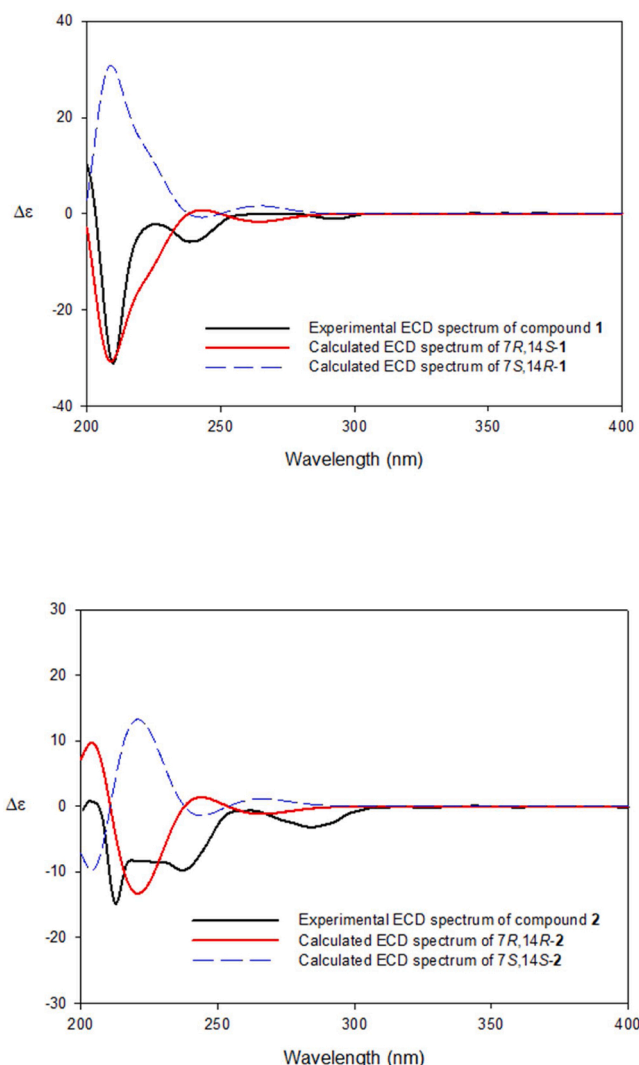


Fig. 3. Experimental and calculated ECD spectra of compounds 1 and 2.

Table 2

Inhibitory effects of compounds 1–16 on LPS-induced NO production in RAW 264.7 cells.

| Compound | IC ₅₀ (μM) ^a | Compound | IC ₅₀ (μM) |
|----------|------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 1 | > 100 | 9 | 31.9 ± 6.98 |
| 2 | 26.3 ± 2.03 | 10 | 25.3 ± 0.34 |
| 3 | > 100 | 11 | > 100 |
| 4 | > 100 | 12 | 47.0 ± 0.66 |
| 5 | 70.1 ± 5.18 | 13 | 21.1 ± 3.18 |
| 6 | 1.1 ± 0.56 | 14 | > 100 |
| 7 | 11.6 ± 3.18 | 15 | 23.4 ± 2.29 |
| 8 | 21.4 ± 2.29 | 16 | 47.5 ± 7.81 |

^a Aminoguanidine was used as the positive control (IC₅₀: 15.9 μM).

^a Results are expressed as the mean ± SD in μM from three independent experiments.

H₂O, 10:90 to 90:10) to afford seven sub-fractions (CMC6A1 - CMC6A7). Fraction CMC6A3 was purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 20:80 to 60:40, 6 mL/min) to yield compounds 14 (*t_R* = 14.3 min, 5.0 mg) and 16 (*t_R* = 16.3 min, 8.5 mg). Fraction CMC3 was further purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 25:75 to 90:10, 6 mL/min) to yield compound 5 (*t_R* = 25.3 min, 2.0 mg). Fraction CMC9 was chromatographed on a silica gel column (4 × 45 cm) eluted with a step gradient of CH₂Cl₂ - EtOAc (1:0 to 0:1) to give six sub-fractions (CMC9A - CMC9F). Fraction CMC9A was purified by semi-preparative HPLC

(CH₃CN-H₂O, 45:55 to 65:35, 6 mL/min) to afford compound 6 (*t_R* = 28.7 min, 2.1 mg). Fraction CMC9C was separated by MPLC with a Lichroprep RP-18 column and a CH₃CN - H₂O gradient system (20:80 to 100:0) to give five sub-fractions (CMC9C1 - CMC9C5). Fraction CMC9C3 was purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 40:60 to 65:35, 6 mL/min) to afford compound 7 (*t_R* = 19.1 min, 3.0 mg). Fraction CMC10 was fractionated by MPLC on a Lichroprep RP-18 column eluted with CH₃CN-H₂O gradient (20:80 to 100:0) to give six sub-fractions (CMC10A–CMC10F). Fraction CMC10D was chromatographed on a silica gel (CH₂Cl₂-MeOH, 30:1 to 0:1) to afford compound 8 (212 mg). Fractions CMC10E was chromatographed on a silica gel column (CH₂Cl₂-EtOAc, 20:1 to 1:1) to afford compound 9 (8.0 mg). Fraction CMC11 was chromatographed on a silica gel column and eluted with CH₂Cl₂-MeOH gradient (50:1 to 1:1) to give six sub-fractions (CMC11A - CMC11F). Fraction CMC11C was purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 20:80 to 40:60, 6 mL/min) to afford compound 15 (*t_R* = 14.0 min, 1.0 mg). Fraction CMC11D was further purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 20:80 to 50:50, 6 mL/min) to give compound 12 (*t_R* = 17.9 min, 13.6 mg).

The EtOAc-soluble fraction (2.8 g) was chromatographed on a silica gel column (5 × 45 cm) and eluted with CH₂Cl₂-MeOH gradient (100:1 to 0:1) to give seven sub-fractions (CME1 - CME7). Fraction CME5 was fractionated on a silica gel column with CH₂Cl₂-MeOH gradient (100:1 to 5:1) to give four sub-fractions (CME5A - CME5D). Fraction CME5B was purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 15:85 to 50:50, 6 mL/min) to give compounds 10 (*t_R* = 19.1 min, 5.2 mg) and 11 (*t_R* = 20.3 min, 3.5 mg). Fraction CME2 was separated by MPLC on a Lichroprep RP-18 column (CH₃CN-H₂O, 10:90 to 100:0) to give five sub-fractions (CME2A - CME2E). Fraction CME2D was further purified by semi-preparative HPLC (CH₃CN-H₂O, 35:65 to 80:20, 6 mL/min) to afford compound 13 (*t_R* = 15.6 min, 2.1 mg).

3.3.1. 7R,14S-cis-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide (1)

White amorphous powder; [α]_D²⁵ -29.2 (c 0.10, MeOH); UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε): 207 (4.65), 236 (3.75), 287 (3.68) nm; IR (KBr) ν_{max} (cm⁻¹): 1602, 1505, 1450; ECD (MeOH) λ_{max} (Δε) 213 (-33.6), 238 (-11.7) and 293 (-4.95) nm; ¹H (700 MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C (175 MHz, CD₃OD) NMR data, see Table 1; HRESIMS *m/z* 340.1179 [M+H]⁺

3.3.2. 7R,14R-trans-tetrahydrocoptisine N-oxide (2)

White amorphous powder; [α]_D²⁵ -28.1 (c 0.10, MeOH); UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε): 210 (4.57), 238 (3.69), 288 (3.58) nm; IR (KBr) ν_{max} (cm⁻¹): 1605, 1502, 1458; ECD (MeOH) λ_{max} (Δε) 213 (-18.0), 226 (-8.49), 238 (-8.84) and 285 (-5.18) nm; ¹H (700 MHz, CD₃OD) and ¹³C (175 MHz, CD₃OD) NMR data, see Table 1; HRESIMS *m/z* 340.1179 [M+H]⁺

3.4. Determination of LPS-induced NO production and cell viability

The nitrite concentration in the culture medium was measured as an indicator of NO production according to the Griess reaction. Briefly, RAW 264.7 cells were seeded into 96-well tissue culture plates at 2 × 10⁶ cells/mL, and stimulated with 1 μg/mL of LPS in the presence or absence of test compounds. After incubation at 37 °C for 24 h, 100 μL of cell-free supernatant were mixed with 100 μL of Griess reagent containing equal volumes of 2 % (w/v) sulfanilamide in 5 % (w/v) phosphoric acid and 0.2 % (w/v) of *N*-(1-naphthyl)ethylenediamine solution to determine nitrite production. Absorbance was measured at 550 nm against a calibration curve with sodium nitrite standards. Cell viability of the remaining cells was determined by MTT (Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO)-based colorimetric assay.

3.5. Computational method

The conformer distribution was conducted by an MMFF force field with Spartan'14 software (Wave-function, Inc., Irvine, CA, USA). The geometry optimization for selected conformers were performed at DFT

[B3LYP functional/6-31+G(d,p) basis set] level, and ECD calculations were accomplished at TDDFT (CAM-B3LYP/SVP basis set) level with a CPCM solvent model in Acetonitrile by Gaussian 09 software (Gaussian, Inc., Wallingford, CT, USA). The calculated ECD curves were simulated by SpecDis 1.64 software (University of Wuerzburg, Wuerzburg, Germany) with a half bandwidth of 0.3 eV. ECD curves of conformers were weighted using the Boltzmann distribution after UV correction (Kwon et al., 2016).

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary material related to this article can be found, in the online version, at doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.phytol.2020.10.014>.

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