

Inhibitory Phlorotannins from the Edible Brown Alga *Ecklonia stolonifera* on Total Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS) Generation

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Reactive oxygen species (ROS) play an important role in the pathogenesis of many human degenerative diseases such as cancer, aging, arteriosclerosis, and rheumatism. Much attention has been focused on the development of safe and effective antioxidants. To discover sources of antioxidative activity in marine algae, extracts from 17 kinds of seaweed were screened for their inhibitory effect on total ROS generation in kidney homogenate using 2',7'-dichlorofluorescein diacetate (DCFH-DA). ROS inhibition was seen in three species: *Ulva pertusa*, *Symphyclocladia latiuscula*, and *Ecklonia stolonifera*. At a final concentration of 25 µg/mL, *U. pertusa* inhibited 85.65±20.28% of total ROS generation, *S. latiuscula* caused 50.63±0.09% inhibitory, and the *Ecklonia* species was 44.30±7.33% inhibition. *E. stolonifera* OKAMURA (Laminariaceae), which belongs to the brown algae, has been further investigated because it is commonly used as a foodstuff in Korea. Five compounds, phloroglucinol (1), eckstolonol (2), eckol (3), phlorofucofuroeckol A (4), and dieckol (5), isolated from the ethyl acetate soluble fraction of the methanolic extract of *E. stolonifera* inhibited total ROS generation.

Key words: *Ecklonia stolonifera*, Phlorotannins, Total ROS, Antioxidant

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that reactive oxygen species (ROS) such as $\cdot\text{O}_2^-$ (superoxide anion), H_2O_2 (hydrogen peroxide), and $\cdot\text{OH}$ (hydroxyl radical) are closely involved in various human diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, aging, cancer, inflammation, rheumatoid arthritis, and atherosclerosis (Singh, 1989; Freeman, 1984; Squadrito and Pryor, 1998). For several years, many researchers have been searching for powerful but non-toxic antioxidants from natural sources, especially edible or medicinal plants. Such natural antioxidants could prevent the formation of the above reactive species-related disorders in human beings without the use of synthetic compounds, which may be carcinogenic and harmful to the lungs and liver (Brannen, 1975). From this viewpoint, marine algae have attracted special interest as a natural antioxidant source.

In the present study, the extracts of various algae were screened for their inhibitory activity on total ROS. Various fractions and isolated components from the active alga, *Ecklonia stolonifera*, were further tested for inhibitory activity on total ROS.

E. stolonifera OKAMURA is a perennial edible brown alga belonging to the Laminariaceae family. It grows at a water depth of 2-10 m around countries such as Korea and Japan, where it is commonly used as a foodstuff along with *Laminaria japonica* and *Undaria pinnatifida*. Phloroglucinol, phlorotannins (Taniguchi *et al.*, 1991), and ecklonialactones (Kurata *et al.*, 1989; 1993) have been isolated from *E. stolonifera*. Antioxidant activity (Choi *et al.*, 1993; Lee *et al.*, 1996a;), antimutagenic activity (Lee *et al.*, 1996b; 1998; Han *et al.*, 2000), feeding-deterrent effect (Taniguchi *et al.*, 1991), and tyrosinase inhibitory activity (Park *et al.*, 2000) have also been reported in this species.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Plant material

Leafy thalli of *E. stolonifera* and other seaweed species

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used in the present study were collected at Gi-jang-gun in Busan, Korea in February 2000 and identified by Prof. H. G. Kim of the Faculty of Marine Bioscience and Technology, Kangnung National University. A voucher specimen (no. 20000228) has been deposited in the author's laboratory (J. S. Choi).

General

Column chromatography was done on silica gel 60 (230-400 mesh, Merck, Germany), RP-18 Lichroprep (Merck, Germany), and Sephadex LH-20 columns (Sigma, St. Louis, MO, USA). TLC was carried out on precoated Merck Kieselgel 60 F₂₅₄ plates (0.25 mm) and spots were detected under UV light using 50% H₂SO₄ reagent. 2',7'-Dichlorodihydrofluorescein diacetate (DCFH-DA) were purchased from Molecular Probes (Eugene, Oregon, USA). Trolox (6-hydroxy-2,5,7,8-tetramethylchroman-2-carboxylic acid) was obtained from Sigma Chemical Co. (St. Louis, MO, USA). Solvents for column chromatography were of reagent grade.

Isolation of phlorotannins

Lyophilized powders (3 kg) of *E. stolonifera* were refluxed with MeOH (3×9 L) for 3 h. The extract (700 g) was suspended in water and extracted successively with *n*-hexane (27.9 g), CH₂Cl₂ (25.6 g), EtOAc (25.0 g), and *n*-BuOH (99.6 g). The EtOAc fraction (25.0 g) was applied on a silica gel (Merck, 70~230 mesh, 800 g) column (4×80 cm). The column was eluted using mixtures of EtOAc/MeOH under gradient conditions (50:1-5:1) to yield 10 fractions (F1~F10). The first fraction, F1 (3.44 g, IC₅₀ = 20 µg/mL) was further separated on a 3×70 cm silica gel column (70~230 mesh, 250 g) with a solvent of *n*-hexane and EtOAc (1:1) to give 11 fractions (F1-1~F1-11). Compound **1** (98 mg) was obtained by RP-18 column chromatography (20% MeOH ~100% MeOH, gradient) of F1-4 (257 mg). Compounds **2** (60 mg) and **3** (135 mg) were yielded by RP-18 column chromatography (20% MeOH ~100% MeOH, gradient) of F1-5 (1.01 g). Compounds **4** (57 mg) and **5** (87 mg) were isolated from F1-6 (945 mg) by RP-18 column chromatography (20% MeOH ~100% MeOH, gradient) followed by purification with Sephadex LH-20 (MeOH).

Measurement of inhibition on total ROS generation (DCF Method)

The generation of ROS was assessed using the ROS-sensitive fluorescence indicator DCFH-DA (LeBel and Bondy, 1990). Rat kidney homogenates were prepared from the kidneys of freshly killed male Wistar rats weighing between 150-200 g. Ten µL of each test sample (final concentration, 0.5 mg/mL) was added to 190 µL of kidney postmitochondrial fraction in a 50 mM potassium phosphate

buffer. Then the mixture was loaded with 50 µL of DCFH-DA (12.5 mM) in a potassium phosphate buffer and shaken for 5 min. Fluorescence of 2',7'-dichlorofluorescein (DCF), the oxidation product from DCFH-DA was measured at an excitation wavelength of 485 nm and an emission wavelength of 530 nm for 30 min on a microplate fluorescence spectrophotometer FL 500 (Bio-Tek instruments, USA). Trolox was used as a positive control.

Statistical analysis

All results were expressed as mean values ± standard error of triplicate experiments.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reactive oxygen/nitrogen species may act as potent oxidizing and nitrating agents to damage several cellular components such as nucleic acids, proteins, and lipids (Beckman *et al.*, 1990; Pincemail, 1995). Compounds in this group include superoxide anion radical ($\cdot\text{O}_2^-$), hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂), hydroxyl radical ($\cdot\text{OH}$), singlet oxygen ($^1\text{O}_2$), nitric oxide (NO \cdot) and peroxyxynitrite (ONOO \cdot). Free radicals of lipids such as alkoxy radical (RO \cdot) and peroxy radical (ROO \cdot) can also cause cellular damage. Accumulated ROS/RNS cause further aggravation of inflammation, leading to the eventual loss of cellular homeostasis, i.e. aging (Chung *et al.*, 2000). Free or non-free radicals including reactive oxygen species cause a variety of diseases such as inflammation, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and atherosclerosis (Beckman and Koppenol, 1996; Podrez *et al.*, 1999). These diseases have been reported to be ameliorated by radical scavengers (Aruoma, 1999; Hermann *et al.*, 1999).

In this study, we investigated the inhibitory activity of 17 kinds of seaweed extracts on total ROS generation in kidney homogenates using the ROS-sensitive indicator 2',7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein diacetate (DCFH-DA). DCFH-DA is a nonfluorescent probe that diffuses into cells. Mitochondrial esterase hydrolyzes DCFH-DA to 2',7'-dichlorodihydrofluorescein (DCFH), a non-fluorescent compound that remains in the cell. ROS oxidize DCFH to the highly fluorescent dye, 2',7'-dichlorofluorescein (DCF).

As shown in Table I, three of these species, *Ulva pertusa* (Chlorophyta), *Symphyclocladia latiuscula* (Rhodophyta), and *Ecklonia stolonifera* (Phaeophyta), inhibited ROS production. At a final concentration of 25 µg/mL, *U. pertusa* caused 85.65 ± 20.28% inhibition, *S. latiuscula* was 50.63 ± 0.09% inhibitory, and 44.30 ± 7.33% of total ROS generation was inhibited by *E. stolonifera*. The brown algae *E. stolonifera* OKAMURA (Laminariaceae), has been further investigated, because it is commonly used as a foodstuff in Korea, along with *Laminaria japonica* and *Undaria*

Table I. Inhibitory effects of seaweed on total ROS generation

Seaweed species		Inhibition (%) ^a
Chlorophyta	<i>Enteromorpha crinita</i>	-37.55 ± 3.66 ^b
	<i>Ulva pertusa</i>	85.65 ± 20.28
Phaeophyta	<i>Ecklonia stolonifera</i>	44.30 ± 7.33
	<i>Sargassum cinereum</i>	-125.32 ± 10.09 ^b
	<i>Sargassum miyabei</i>	-15.61 ± 6.17 ^b
	<i>Sargassum thunbergii</i>	-124.89 ± 3.91 ^b
	<i>Acrosorium flabellatum</i>	-54.02 ± 19.83 ^b
Rhodophyta	<i>Chondrus crispus</i>	-49.37 ± 12.91 ^b
	<i>Chondrus ocellatus</i>	-88.61 ± 21.23 ^b
	<i>Galasaura fastigiata</i>	-113.50 ± 18.79 ^b
	<i>Gelidium amansii</i>	-54.85 ± 11.98 ^b
	<i>Gigartina tenella</i>	-110.97 ± 16.55 ^b
	<i>Grateloupia elliptica</i>	-97.47 ± 19.21 ^b
	<i>Gymnogongrus flabelliformis</i>	-78.90 ± 17.25 ^b
	<i>Lomentaria catenata</i>	-34.60 ± 7.39 ^b
	<i>Rhodymenia intricate</i>	-69.62 ± 10.17 ^b
	<i>Symphycloadia latiuscula</i>	50.63 ± 0.09

^aInhibitory activity was expressed as the mean±S.E. of inhibitory percentage of triplicate determines obtained at the final concentration of 25 µg/mL.

^bThese indicates total ROS generation under experimental conditions

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In our ongoing study to identify the active principles, we also evaluated the fractions soluble in the following solvents: *n*-hexane, CH₂Cl₂, EtOAc, and *n*-BuOH. The H₂O layer derived from *E. stolonifera* was also studied. As summarized in Fig. 1, CH₂Cl₂, EtOAc, and *n*-BuOH frac-

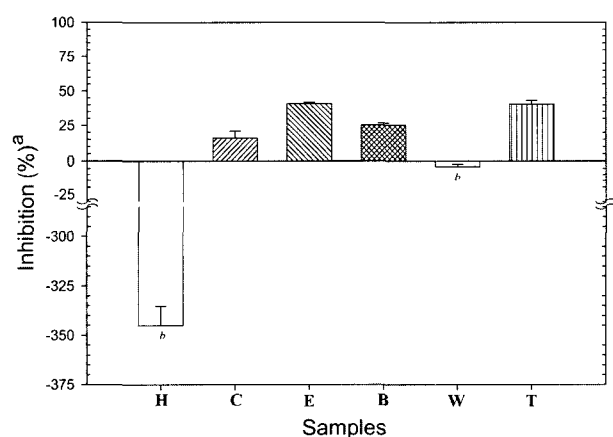


Fig. 1. Inhibitory effects of various fractions obtained from the methanolic extract of *E. stolonifera* on total ROS. Inhibitory activity was expressed as the mean±S.E. of inhibitory percentage of triplicate determines obtained with a final concentration of 25 µg/mL. ^bThese indicates total ROS generation under experimental conditions. H: *n*-Hexane fr.; C: CH₂Cl₂ fr.; E: EtOAc fr.; B: *n*-BuOH fr.; W: H₂O fr.; T: Trolox.

tions exhibited an inhibitory effect on total ROS. The EtOAc fraction exhibited a strong scavenging activity on total ROS of 40.81±0.34% at 25 µg/mL. CH₂Cl₂ fraction showed an activity of 16.02±5.07% and *n*-BuOH fraction showed 25.42±1.47% activity. In contrast, *n*-hexane (-345.13±9.91%) and H₂O (-3.82±1.77%) fractions generated ROS. Trolox, a positive control, showed an inhibitory activity of 40.36±2.82% on total ROS generation at the same concentration.

Five compounds (**1**–**5**, Fig. 2), isolated from EtOAc fraction, were identified as phloroglucinol (**1**), eckstolonol (**2**), eckol (**3**), phlorofucofuroeckol A (**4**), and dieckol (**5**) on the basis of chemical and physicochemical evidence, and compared with those of reported values in the literatures (Nakamura *et al.*, 1996; Fukuyama *et al.*, 1985; 1989a; 1990; Kang *et al.*, 2003). Compounds **1**–**5** inhibited total ROS generation with IC₅₀ values of 30.82±2.53, 12.17±0.73, 4.04±0.04, 3.80±0.09, and 12.68±0.34 µM, respectively (Table II). The activity of compounds **3** and **4** were comparable to that of Trolox (IC₅₀, 5.70±0.62 µM), a well-known ROS scavenger.

Phlorotannins are known to have various biological activities: anti-plasmin inhibitory activity (Fukuyama *et al.*, 1985, 1989a, 1989b, 1990; Nakayama *et al.*, 1989), algicidal effects (Nagayama *et al.*, 2003), bactericidal effects (Nagayama *et al.*, 2002), feeding deterrent effects on marine herbivores (Hay, 1988; Altena and Steinberg, 1992; Boettcher and Targett, 1993; Targett *et al.*, 1995), UV protection (Swanson and Druel, 2002), and chemopreventive effects against vascular risk factors (Kang *et al.*, 2003). Nakamura *et al.* (1996) reported that the phlorotannins

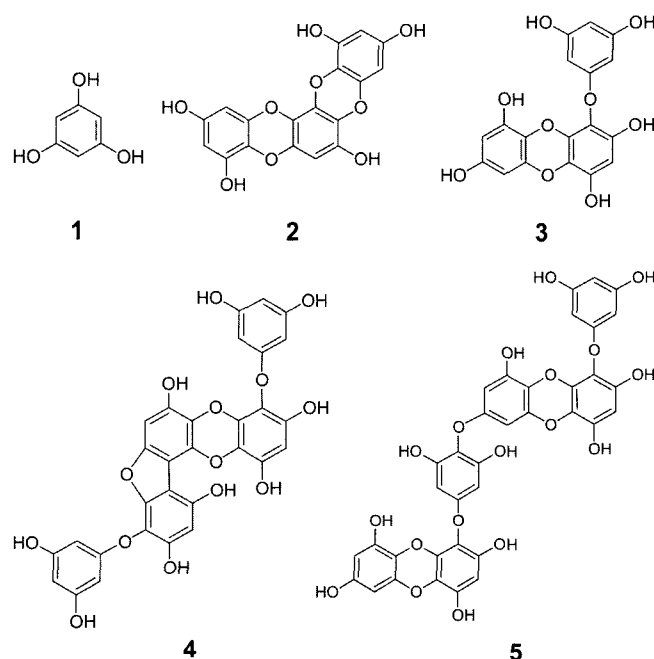


Fig. 2. Structures of the phlorotannins from *E. stolonifera*

Table II. Inhibitory effect of isolated compounds 1~5 from the EtOAc fraction of the MeOH extract of *E. stolonifera* on total ROS

Compounds	IC ₅₀ (μM) ^a
Phloroglucinol (1)	30.82 ± 2.53
Eckstolonol (2)	12.17 ± 0.73
Eckol (3)	4.04 ± 0.04
Phlorofucofuroeckol A (4)	3.80 ± 0.09
Dieckol (5)	12.68 ± 0.34
Trolox	5.70 ± 0.62

^aInhibitory activities were expressed as the mean±S.E. of 50% inhibitory concentrations of triplicate determinations obtained by interpolation of concentration-inhibition curve.

extended the induction time of autoxidation of methyl α -linolenate. However, no reports have appeared yet on inhibitory activity of phlorotannins on total ROS.

This work showed that the inhibitory abilities of phlorotannins, natural compounds found in edible brown algae on total ROS can be useful in the prevention and treatment of free radical-related disease. Investigations into further isolation of inhibitory principles on total ROS are now in progress.

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