Antioxidant and Inhibitory Effects of Saponin Extracts from *Dianthus basuticus* Burtt Davy on Key Enzymes Implicated in Type 2 Diabetes *In vitro*

Mikhail Olugbemiro Nafiu, Anofi Omotayo Tom Ashafa

Department of Plant Sciences, Phytotherapy and Phytopharmacology Research Group, University of the Free State, Phuthaditjhaba 98866, South Africa

Submitted: 27-12-2016 Revised: 06-03-2017 Published: 13-11-2017

**ABSTRACT**

**Context:** *Dianthus basuticus* is a plant of South African origin with various acclaimed pharmaceutical potentials. **Aims:** This study explored the antioxidant and antidiabetic activities of saponin extract from *D. basuticus in vitro*. **Materials and Methods:** Antioxidant activity of saponin was evaluated by 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) and nitric oxide (*NO*)-free radical scavenging activity while antidiabetic potentials were measured by the α-amylase and α-glucosidase inhibitory activities of the saponin extract. **Results:** The results showed that the saponin extract, compared with quercetin, displayed better DPPH (*IC*<sub>50</sub> = 6.96 mg/ml) and NO (*IC*<sub>50</sub> = 3.31 mg/ml) radical scavenging capabilities. Similarly, the saponin extracts elicited stronger α-glucosidase (*IC*<sub>50</sub> = 3.80 mg/ml) and moderate α-amylase (*IC*<sub>50</sub> = 4.18 mg/ml) inhibitory activities as compared to acarbose. Saponin exhibited a competitive mode of inhibition on α-amylase with same maximum velocity (*V*<sub>max</sub>) of 0.0093 mM/min for saponin compared with control 0.0096 mM/min and different the Michaelis constant (*Km*) values of 2.6 × 10<sup>6</sup> mM and 2.1 × 10<sup>5</sup> mM, respectively, while for α-glucosidase, the inhibition was uncompetitive, *V*<sub>max</sub> of 0.027 mM/min compared with control 0.039 mM/min and *Km* values of 1.02 × 10<sup>6</sup> mM and 1.38 × 10<sup>6</sup> mM, respectively. The gas chromatography-mass spectrometry analysis revealed the presence of bioactive like β- and α-amyrin, 3-O-methyl-D-glucose, methyl commate, and oleane-12-en-3-beta-ol. **Conclusion:** Overall, the data suggested that the saponin extract from *D. basuticus* has potentials as natural antioxidants and antidiabetics.

**Key words:** Antidiabetics, antioxidants, *Dianthus basuticus*, saponin

**SUMMARY**

- Saponin extract from *Dianthus basuticus* displayed promising antidiabetic and antioxidant activity.
- Saponin competitively and uncompetitively inhibited α-amylase and α-glucosidase, respectively.
- The stronger inhibition of α-glucosidase and moderate inhibition of α-amylase by saponin extract from *D. basuticus* is promising good antidiabetes compared with existing drugs with associated side effects.

**Abbreviations used:** DPPH: 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl, Km: The Michaelis constant, *V*<sub>max</sub>: Maximum velocity, ROS: Reactive oxygen species, NIDDM: Non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, UFS: University of the Free State, GC-MS: Gas chromatography-mass spectrometric, MS: Mass spectrometry, NIST: National Institute of Standards and Technology, DNS: 3,5-dinitrosalicylic acid, NO: Nitric oxide, RNS: Reactive nitrogen species, PNPG: p-Nitrophenyl-β-D-glucopyranoside.

**Correspondence:**

Dr. Anofi Omotayo T. Ashafa, Department of Plant Sciences, Phytotherapy and Phytopharmacology Research Group, University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus, Private Bag x13, Phuthaditjhaba 98866, South Africa.

E-mail: ashafaao@ufs.ac.za

DOI: 10.4103/pm.pm_583_16

**INTRODUCTION**

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic endocrine disorder, characterized by high blood sugar due to total or partial insulin insufficiency,<sup>[1]</sup> with interruptions in carbohydrate, fat, and protein metabolism.<sup>[2]</sup> Diabetes is one of the largest global health crises of the 21st century. Some 415 million people worldwide or 8.8% of adults aged 20–79 years are projected to have diabetes. Estimated 14.2 (9.5–29.4) million adults aged 20–79 years experience diabetes in the Africa region, accounting for a regional incidence of 2.1%–6.7%. Some of Afica’s most populous nations have the uppermost occurrences of diabetes, including South Africa (2.3 million), Democratic Republic of the Congo (1.8 million), Nigeria (1.6 million), and Ethiopia (1.3 million), and by 2040, some 642 million people or one adult in ten will have diabetes.<sup>[3]</sup>

Diabetes is linked with high oxidative stress and decreased antioxidant conditions.<sup>[4]</sup> During diabetic states, reactive oxygen species (ROS) are generated largely during the glycation reaction,<sup>[5,6]</sup> which arises in different tissues<sup>[7]</sup> and may play important part in the development of problems in diabetes.<sup>[8]</sup> Latest findings showed that high blood sugar may possibly provoke nonenzymatic glycosylation of diverse macromolecules, production of free radicals, and change of endogenous antioxidants that may cause the manifestation of chronic complications in diabetes.<sup>[9,10]</sup>

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as the author is credited and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

For reprints contact: reprints@medknow.com

Cite this article as: Nafiu MO, Tom Ashafa AO. Antioxidant and inhibitory effects of saponin extracts from *Dianthus basuticus* Burtt Davy on key enzymes implicated in type 2 diabetes *In vitro*. Phcog Mag 2017;13:576-82.
One curative approach for treating diabetes is to reduce the postmeal rise in blood glucose in diabetic patients. This is achieved by impeding the uptake of sugar by inhibiting the gastrointestinal carbohydrate-degrading enzymes, α-glucosidase and α-amylase. Inhibitors of these enzymes interrupt carbohydrate breakdown and elongate overall carbohydrate pace of digestion, thereby slowing down the rate of glucose absorption and accordingly blunting the postprandial plasma glucose increase.[11] α-glucosidase has been identified as a therapeutic object for the maintenance of high blood sugar after meal, which is the initial metabolic irregularity that happens in noninsulin-dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM).[12] The main supply of blood glucose is dietary carbohydrates such as starch, which are broken down by α-glucosidas and pancreatic α-amylase, to facilitate absorption by the small intestine. Therefore, a successful treatment option for NIDDM is to restrain the activity of α-glucosidas and pancreatic α-amylase.[13] Incidentally, inhibitors can slowdown the absorption of dietary carbohydrates, stem postprandial hyperglycemia, and could be useful for the management of diabetes and/or obesity in patients.[14] Some α-glucosidase inhibitors such as acarbose, miglitol, and voglibose are identified to diminish postprandial rise in blood glucose mainly by impeding the activity of carbohydrate-digesting enzymes and holding up glucose absorption.[15] These inhibitors have been identified to cause several side effects, such as abdominal distention, flatulence, meteorism, and possibly diarrhea.[16] A large number of traditional medicinal plants and plant-derived components have been reported to possess α-glucosidase and α-amylase inhibitory activity.[17] Thus, natural products of great structural diversity are still a good source for searching for such inhibitors, thereby motivating to explore biologically active compounds from the highly diverse plants.[18]

Saponins have both water-soluble and lipid-soluble parts. They compose of a lipid-soluble nucleus, with either a steroid or a triterpenoid aglycone structure, with one or more side chains of water-soluble carbohydrates.[19] Due to the presence of a lipid-soluble aglycone and water-soluble sugar chain in their structure (ampiphilic nature), saponins are surface-active compounds with detergent, wetting, emulsifying, and foaming properties.[20] Information on pharmacological activities exhibited by some isolated saponins comprises hypocholesterolemic, anticarcinogenic, antioxidant, hypoglycemic, and antiprotozoans.[21] Saponins have been recognized with wide relevancies in beverages and confectionaries and in cosmetics.[22-24]

*Dianthus basuticus* are evergreen soft-wooded perennials with brilliant pink flowers and intensely fringed. It is found on Drakensberg Mountains in South Africa and also found in Lesotho, Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State, and Northern provinces (rocks and grassland).[25] It is commonly called Lesotho carnation and the decoction used for cleansing of blood flatulence and fertility in bulls.[26] The roots is masticated as magic to preserve a loved one’s affection.[27] Previously reported scientific investigations were based on antimicrobial and cytotoxic potentials of *D. basuticus*,[28] safety evaluation of in animal model,[29] and the in *vitro* antioxidant and antidiabetic potentials of whole-plant extracts.[30] The plant has also been reported to be rich in phytochemical constituents such as saponins, alkaloids, tannins, and cardiac glycosides.[31] The current investigation was carried out in *vitro* α-glucosidase and α-amylase inhibitory potentials of saponin extract from *D. basuticus* and its free radical scavenging activities.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Chemicals and reagents**

Acetone, chloroform, ethanol, petrol ether, and methanol are products of LASEC, South Africa. Rat intestinal α-glucosidase, porcine pancreatic α-amylase, p-nitrophenyl alpha-D-glucopyranoside, 1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl, quercetin, and acarbose were produced by Sigma-Aldrich Co., St. Louis, USA, while starch was obtained from J. T. Baker Inc., Phillipsburg, USA. Additional reagents were of analytical grades and prepared in glass-distilled water.

**Plant materials**

The plant material (whole plant, i.e., aerial parts and the roots) was gathered in January 2013 from a field around Qwaqwa inside the Golden Gate Mountains (28°28'111/S and 28°48'314/E; altitude 11950 m). The species’ great quantity was taken into consideration, and collections were done in such a way that the survival of the species was not in danger. Authentication was carried out at the Bews Herbarium of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus, by Dr. C. J. Potgieter. A reference sample with herbarium voucher number (LamMed/01/2013/Qhb) was previously dropped at the UFS-Qwaqwa campus herbarium.

**Saponin extraction procedure**

The extraction process was carried out with slight modification from previous method reported by Lakshmi et al.[30] It involved soaking 30 g of the dried plant sample in 200 ml of 95% ethanol overnight. Petroleum ether, ethyl acetate, chloroform, methanol, and acetone were used for the extraction. While petroleum ether was used for delipidization, chloroform was used for deproteinization of dried mixture. Methanol was used to mellow the developing mixture during the extraction of crude saponin, after which the concentrated solution was added drop wisely into acetone solution leading to precipitation. Thereafter, precipitate was dried in oven (37°C) leading to formation of whitish-brown crystals. Frothing test was carried out to confirm the saponin. Small quantity of the extract was dissolved in distilled water, and the test tube was agitated briskly for 30 s. It was left in upright position and watched for 30 min. Substantial constant froth was observed on the surface of the liquid showing the presence of saponin. The saponin extract was dissolved in distilled water to give stock solutions of 1.0 mg/ml and various concentrations (0.063, 0.125, 0.25, 0.50, and 1.0 mg/ml) of the saponin extract done using a serial dilution technique with distilled water. All extracts were thereafter stored at 4°C before analysis.

**Gas chromatography-mass spectrometric analysis of the saponin extract**

Saponin from *D. basuticus* subjected to gas chromatography-mass spectrometric (GC-MS) examination by an Agilent Technologies 6890 Series gas chromatograph together with (an Agilent) 5973 Mass Selective detector and determined by Agilent Chemstation software. An eHP-5MS capillary column was used (30 m x 0.25 mm internal diameter, 0.25 μm film thickness). The carrier gas was ultra-pure helium at a flow rate of 1.0 mL/min and a linear velocity of 37 cm/s. The injector temperature was set at 250°C. The initial oven temperature was at 60°C, which was programmed to move up to 280°C at the rate of 10°C/min with a hold time of 4 min at each increment. Injections of 2 μL were done in the splitless mode with a split ratio of 20:1. The mass spectrometer was derived in the electron ionization mode at 70 eV and electron multiplier voltage at 1859 V. Other MS operating parameters were as follows: ion source temperature 230°C, quadrupole temperature 150°C, solvent delay 4 min, and scan range 50–700 amu. The compounds were recognized by direct comparison of the retention times and mass spectral data and fragmentation prototype with those in the Wiley Library and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) library.
Antidiabetic assay

α-amylase inhibition assay

The assay was done as illustrated by Shu et al.[31] with some modifications. Briefly, 50 μL of saponin sample in 0.02 M phosphate buffer (pH 6.9, containing 0.006 M NaCl) was mixed with 25 μL of enzyme solution (0.5 mg/mL) and incubated at 25 ± 1°C for 10 min. Thereafter, 50 μL of starch solution (0.5% w/v), 0.02 M phosphate buffer, pH 6.9, containing 0.006 M NaCl was added and incubated for 10 min at 25 ± 1°C. Then, 100 μL 3,5-dinitrosalicylic acid (DNS) color reagent was added to stop the reaction (100 mg DNS dissolved in 3 mL distilled water) and immediately kept in water at 100°C in a water bath for 10 min. The absorbance of the resultant solution was taken at 540 nm. The uninhibited enzyme was taken as control. Suitable blank was used for all the samples. Acarbose was used as the standard inhibitor of the enzyme.

Mode of α-amylase inhibition

The mode of inhibition of α-amylase by the saponin was determined following the modified technique used Ali et al.[32]. In brief, 250 μL of the (1.00 mg/ml) saponin extract was initially incubated with 250 μL of α-amylase solution for 10 min at 25°C test tubes. In a new set of tubes, α-amylase was preincubated with 250 μL of phosphate buffer (pH 6.9). Two hundred and fifty microliter of starch solution at ascending concentrations (0.025–0.40 mg/mL) was added to start the reaction. The mixture was then incubated for 10 min at 25°C and then boiled for 5 min following addition of 500 μL of DNS to end the reaction. The amount of reducing sugars freed was established spectrophotometrically with maltose standard curve and changed to reaction velocities. Lineweaver–Burk graph (1/v vs. 1/[S]) where [S] indicates substrate concentration and V represents reaction velocity was plotted to establish the mode of inhibition.

α-glucosidase inhibitory assay

The slightly modified method of McCue and Shetty[33] was followed. In brief, in a 96-well microplate, 50 μL α-glucosidase (1.0 U/ml) in phosphate buffer (0.1 M, pH 6.8) for 10 min at 37°C was incubated with 50 μL of saponin of various concentrations (0.625–1.0 mg/mL). The reaction was prompted by addition of 50 μL of 5 mM, p-Nitrophenyl-α-D-glucopyranoside in a 0.1 M phosphate buffer at pH 6.8. P-nitrophenol’s release kinetics were read with a microplate spectrophotometric reader Multiskan MS™ (Labsystems, Minneapolis, USA) for 5 min at intervals of 30 s and absorbance was measured at 405 nm. Acarbose was taken as control. Suitable blank was used for all the samples. Acarbose was used as the standard inhibitor of the enzyme.

Mode of α-glucosidase inhibition

The mode of inhibition of α-glucosidase by the saponin was assessed with the procedure explained by Ali et al.[32]. In brief, 50 μL of the (0.063–1.00 mg/ml) saponin extract was initially incubated with 100 μL of α-glucosidase for 10 min at 25 °C in a set of tubes. α-glucosidase was preincubated with 50 μL of phosphate buffer (pH 6.9) in another set of tubes. Fifty microliter of p-Nitrophenyl-α-D-glucopyranoside at ascending concentrations (0.025–0.40 mg/ml) was added to initiate the process. The mixture was thereafter incubated for 10 min at 25°C, and 500 μL Na₂CO₃ was added to end the reaction. The quantity of reducing sugars released was estimated spectrophotometrically by a para-nitrophenol standard curve and changed to reaction velocities. A Lineweaver–Burk graph (1/v vs. 1/[S]) where [S] represents substrate concentration and v stands for reaction velocity was plotted to establish the type of inhibition.

Antioxidant activity

2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl radical scavenging assay

The antioxidant activity of the saponin was determined by measuring its capacity of bleaching the purple-colored ethanolic solution of 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH), as described by Turkoglou et al.[34] In brief, 100 μL of different concentrations (0.625–1.0 μg/ml) of the saponin extract in methanol with 100 μL of 0.2 mmol/L DPPH in methanol. After 30 min incubation period at ambient temperature, the absorbance was measured at 516 nm. The rate of inhibition rate (I %) on the DPPH radical was evaluated with the expression:

\[ \text{Percentage Inhibition (I %)} = \left( \frac{A_{\text{control}} - A_{\text{extract}}}{A_{\text{control}}} \right) \times 100, \]

Where \( A_{\text{control}} \) is the absorbance of the control, \( A_{\text{extract}} \) is the absorbance of the extract.

Nitric oxide scavenging assay

Nitric oxide (NO) radical halting activity of the saponin was examined by the method of Garrat.[35] In brief, 100 μL of 10 M sodium nitroprusside in 0.5 mL phosphate-buffered saline (pH 7.4) was mixed with 50 μL of varying concentrations of saponin extract and incubated at 25°C for 2 h. Afterward 50 μL was withdrawn and poured into100 μL sulfuric acid reagent (33% in 20% glacial acetic acid) from the incubated mixtures and incubated further at room temperature for 5 min. After this, 1 mL N-(1-Naphthyl)ethylenediamine dihydrochloride (0.1% w/v) was added into the mixtures and the resultant solution incubated at room temperature for 30 min. The absorbance was read at 540 nm and the minimum inhibitory concentration (IC₅₀) was then extrapolated from the calibration curve after the evaluation of percentage NO radical scavenging capacity of CSE using the expression:

\[ \text{Percentage scavenging (S %)} = \left( \frac{A_{\text{control}} - A_{\text{extract}}}{A_{\text{control}}} \right) \times 100, \]

Where \( A_{\text{control}} \) is the absorbance of the control, \( A_{\text{extract}} \) is the absorbance of the extract.

RESULTS

The percentage yield of the saponin was 8.6%. The DPPH and NO radical scavenging activities of the saponin extract are presented in Figures 1 and 2. In both cases, the saponin produced higher DPPH and NO radical mopping up potential than quercetin. The IC₅₀ of DPPH (6.95 mg/ml) and NO (3.31 mg/ml) when compared with that of quercetin 14.69 mg/ml and 3.67 mg/ml, respectively, are clear indicators [Table 1].

Figures 3 and 4 represent the results of inhibition of α-amylase and α-glucosidase by the saponin extract of D. basuticus. Compared with
the acarbose, saponin displayed superior inhibition of \(\alpha\)-glucosidase and mild inhibition of \(\alpha\)-amylase. The inhibitory concentration (IC\(_{50}\)) of saponin extract [Table 2] obtained was 3.80 mg/ml (\(\alpha\)-glucosidase) and 4.18 mg/ml (\(\alpha\)-amylase) compared with acarbose 6.27 mg/ml and 2.34 mg/ml, respectively.

The mode of inhibition of the enzymes is as indicated in Figures 5 and 6. Saponin displayed a competitive mode of inhibition on \(\alpha\)-amylase with same maximum velocity (V\(_{\text{max}}\)) of 0.0093 mM/min for saponin compared with control 0.0095 mM/min and different the Michaelis constant (K\(_{\text{m}}\)) values of \(2.6 \times 10^{-6}\) mM and \(2.1 \times 10^{-5}\) mM,

respectively, while for \(\alpha\)-glucosidase, the inhibition was uncompetitive, both V\(_{\text{max}}\) and K\(_{\text{m}}\) were different, saponin V\(_{\text{max}}\) was 0.027 mM/min compared with control 0.039 mM/min and K\(_{\text{m}}\) values of \(1.02 \times 10^{-6}\) mM, \(1.38 \times 10^{-5}\) mM respectively.

GC-MS analysis of the saponin extract from \(D.\) basuticus [Figure 7, Table 3 and 4] revealed the presence of some potential antidiabetic and antioxidant constituents when compared with standard mass spectra in the Wiley Library and NIST library. Compounds such as mome inositol, 3-O-methyl-d-glucose, \(\beta\)- and \(\alpha\)-amyrin, urs-12-en-3-ol, and olean-12-en-3-beta-ol among others were identifiable constituents.

### DISCUSSION

Several reports have revealed that diabetes mellitus is linked to rise in the generation of ROS and reduced scavenging ability. Consequently, the normal cellular equilibrium in the production and mopping up capacity is compromised. This results to oxidative destruction of cellular constituents such as proteins, lipids, and nucleic acids due to increased oxidative stress. Increased oxidative stress in diabetes is due to various factors. Prominent of these factors is auto-oxidation of glucose resulting to formation of free radicals. In addition, it is lowered antioxidant defense and imbalances in cellular oxidation/reduction reactions. Furthermore, antioxidant mechanisms are reduced in diabetic patients who promote oxidative stress.

Traditional herbal medicines are naturally occurring plant-derived substances with minimal or no industrial processing that have been used to treat illness within local or regional healing practices. Plant phytochemical possesses antioxidant activities which are demonstrated by halting the formation of free radicals or by counteracting/scavenging...
free radicals generated in the body.\textsuperscript{[41]} DPPH radical scavenging technique is very significant and has been extensively used for assessing antioxidant potentials in many investigations.\textsuperscript{[42]} The principle of DPPH procedure depends on the lowering of DPPH in the presence of a proton-releasing antioxidant. A lot of naturally occurring antioxidants have been shown to exhibit major roles in stemming both free radicals and oxidative chain reactions within tissues and membranes.\textsuperscript{[43]} The results from this study demonstrated the ability of saponin from \textit{D. basuticus} to scavenge DPPH radicals. The IC\textsubscript{50} of the saponin (6.95 mg/ml) compared with quercetin (standard) (14.69 mg/ml) clearly suggested a superior scavenging power of saponin from \textit{D. basuticus}. The result of this study corroborates the earlier report of Kazeem and Ashafa\textsuperscript{[29]} on the DPPH scavenging activity of aqueous extract of \textit{D. basuticus} and is in conformity with the report of Akinpelu \textit{et al.}\textsuperscript{[44]} on the antioxidant activity of saponin fraction from \textit{Erythrophleum suaveolens}. This implies that saponin extract from \textit{D. basuticus} has the proton-donating capacity and could serve as inhibitor of free radical and probably as a primary antioxidant.

**Table 3:** Some compounds identified in the gas chromatography-mass spectrometric analysis of saponin extract of \textit{Dianthus Basuticus}

| Retention time | Peak area (%) | Active compounds | Molecular compounds |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 19.410        | 36.65        | Mome inositol     | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O\textsubscript{6} |
|               |              | 3-O-methyl-D-glucose | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O\textsubscript{6} |
|               |              | α-d-mannopyranoside | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O\textsubscript{6} |
|               |              | Methyl-hexafuranoside | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O\textsubscript{6} |
| 26.746        | 12.31        | Norolean-12-ene    | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | α-amyrin, α-amyrenol, α-amyrine | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | Urs-12-en-3-ol     | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | Viminalol          | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | Octamethyl-1, 4-derivatives | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | Methyl commate     | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
| 33.283        | 45.14        | β-amyrin, β-amyrenol, β-amyrine | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | Olean-12-en-3-beta-ol, acetate | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | β-amyrinyl acetate, β-amyrin acetate | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |
|               |              | 3-keto-urs-12-ene  | C\textsubscript{7}H\textsubscript{14}O |

**Table 4:** Activities of some phytocomponents identified in the saponin extract of \textit{Dianthus Basuticus}

| Compound               | Type                        | Bioactivities                                                                 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mome inositol          | Polysaccharide              | Antiproliferative,\textsuperscript{[51]} anticirrhotic, lipotropic, antialopecic, antineuropathic, cholesterolytic, and a sweetener,\textsuperscript{[51,52]} |
| β- and α-amyrin        | Triterpenes                 | Analgesic, anti-inflammatory,\textsuperscript{[53]} Antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory and antiulcer\textsuperscript{[54]} |
| Methyl commate         | Triterpenes glycoside       | Antibacterial, antimicrobial, insecticides, nematicides, and are highly effective in wound healing activities\textsuperscript{[55]} |
| 3-O-methyl-D-glucose   | Polysaccharide derivative   | It is a nontoxic nonmetabolizable derivative of glucose, is effective in reducing the toxicity of SZ. It has been found to possess antitumor, oncogenic, and diabetogenic properties.\textsuperscript{[56]} It is quickly absorbed into cells,\textsuperscript{[56,58]} and it concentrates due to its not metabolizable. It has been applied as a cryoprotectant for the cryopreservation of liver cells\textsuperscript{[56]} and for enhancing desiccation tolerance of keratinocytes\textsuperscript{[60]} |
| Urs-12-en-3-ol, acetate, and 3-keto-urs-12-ene | Triterpenes | Antitumor, antiviral, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, gastroprotective, antimicrobial, antidiabetic, and hemolytic properties\textsuperscript{[61]} |
| Olean-12-en-3-beta-ol  | Triterpenes                 | Antioxidant, antiproliferative, attenuation of myocardial apoptosis, beneficial effects on oxidative stress, and inflammation, reduced blood cholesterol levels\textsuperscript{[61]} |

SZ: Streptozotocin
NO can permeate membranes freely or work on several cellular targets. It acts as modulator of various physiological activities such as vasorelaxation, macrophage activation, gene expression, and apoptosis and typically taken as a vasculoprotective molecule.\textsuperscript{[14]} However, one of its several properties is protein nitrosylation at the thiol groups as well as RNS generation like peroxynitrite (ONOO\textsuperscript{−}) as ‘NO easily reacts with O\textsuperscript{2−}. Thus, the number of O\textsuperscript{2−} determines if NO acts as a defensive or damaging molecule.\textsuperscript{[15,16]} NO supplies practical information on the reactivity of the compound production from sodium nitroprusside and measured by the Griess reaction. Scavengers of NO contend with oxygen ensuing lowered formation of NO.\textsuperscript{[17]} NO radicals were inhibited by saponin extract from the root of \textit{D. basuticus}. Saponin extract displayed a fairly better NO scavenging strength, IC\textsubscript{50} (3.31 mg/ml) compared with the standard (quercetin), IC\textsubscript{50} (3.67 mg/ml). This result also concurred with the studies of Alli-Smith and Adanlawa\textsuperscript{[18]} on the saponin extract from the root of \textit{Garcinia kola}

In patients with diabetes, high blood sugar is prominent following a meal due to the absorption of glucose from the digestive tract.\textsuperscript{[19]} Complex carbohydrates are broken down by intestinal \(\alpha\)-amylase to oligosaccharide which is thereafter hydrolyzed to glucose by intestinal \(\alpha\)-glucosidase previous to being absorbed into the intestinal epithelium and diffusing into blood circulation.\textsuperscript{[20]} Thus, inhibition of glucose formation and/or advancing glucose removal in the tissues may be helpful for those patients to control the hyperglycemia in the postprandial state.\textsuperscript{[21]} An effective way to prevent postmeal upsurge in the blood glucose is the inhibition of \(\alpha\)-glucosidase and \(\alpha\)-amylase activity. Our results displayed that saponin extract forms \textit{D. basuticus} having inhibitory potentials on these enzymes. \textit{D. basuticus} saponin extract strongly inhibited \(\alpha\)-glucosidase activity [Figure 4] and mild inhibition of \(\alpha\)-amylase activity [Figure 3]. The inhibitory activity elicited by saponin, IC\textsubscript{50} of 3.80 mg/ml on \(\alpha\)-glucosidase was stronger than that of the standard, acarbose, IC\textsubscript{50} of 6.27 mg/ml, while in the case of \(\alpha\)-amylase, acarbose, IC\textsubscript{50} of 2.34 mg/ml displayed a better inhibition than saponin extract, IC\textsubscript{50} of 4.18 mg/ml. These results are further consolidation of folkloric antidiabetic use of \textit{D. basuticus} and consistent with the earlier reported inhibitory potentials of the various fractions of the plants by Kazeem and Ashafa\textsuperscript{[22]} on the \(\alpha\)-glucosidase and \(\alpha\)-amylase activities \textit{in vitro}. Higher \(\alpha\)-glucosidase inhibitory activities of saponin extract from \textit{D. basuticus} over that of its corresponding \(\alpha\)-amylase have been reported to be of great pharmaceutical significance in addressing some of the side effects linked to acarbose and voglibose applied for the treatment of type 2 diabetes that are associated with excess inhibition of \(\alpha\)-amylase.\textsuperscript{[23]}

The competitive mode of inhibition displayed by the saponin extract on \(\alpha\)-amylase was an indication that the saponin competed with the substrate at the active site of the enzyme. The implication of this is that by increasing the concentration of the substrate, the inhibition can be reversed.\textsuperscript{[24]} Conversely, the uncompetitive inhibition of the saponin on \(\alpha\)-glucosidase indicates that saponin binds only to enzyme–substrate complex at locations aside the catalytic site. Thus, there is modification of the enzyme structure, rendering inhibitor–binding position accessible, and in this case, inhibition cannot be reversed by substrate.\textsuperscript{[25]} The mode of inhibition of saponin extract on both enzymes further confirmed the mild inhibition noted for \(\alpha\)-amylase and strong inhibition obtained for \(\alpha\)-glucosidase. This further consolidates saponin extract from \textit{D. basuticus} as having great pharmaceutical significance in tackling some of the problems related to known standard drugs.

**CONCLUSION**

As efforts to source for alternative antidiabetic are still ongoing, the result obtained from the current study is an indicator of possible success in the near future. The outcome of this study displayed promising potentials of saponin extract from \textit{D. basuticus} as a possible antidiabetic drug candidate source. More efforts are ongoing to purify, characterize, and evaluate the toxicity value of the saponin from this plant.

**Acknowledgement**

The authors appreciate University of the Free State for the fund provided for this research.

**Financial support and sponsorship**

Nil.

**Conflict of interest**

There are no conflicts of interest.

**REFERENCES**

1. WAADA. World Anti-Doping Program Diabetes Mellitus. TUE Physician Guidelines Medical Information to Support the Decisions of TUE Committees; 2015.

2. Uddin N, Hasan MR, Hossain MM, Sarker A, Hasan AH, Islam AF, et al. \(\alpha\)-amylase inhibitory activity and \textit{in vivo} hypoglycemic effect of methanol extract of \textit{Citrus macroptera} Montr. fruit. Asian Pac J Trop Biomed 2014;4:473-9.

3. IDF. Diabetes Atlas. 7th ed. Brussels, Belgium: IDF; 2015. Online Version of IDF Diabetes Atlas. Available from: http://www.diabetesatlas.org. [Last accessed on 2016 Aug 24].

4. Marica JB, Valjko B, Jadanka B, Zeilko R. Impact of glycemic control on antioxidant enzyme activity in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Diabetol Croat 2005;33:131-5.

5. Hunt JV, Smith CC, Wolff SP. Oxidative glycosylation and possible involvement of peroxides and free radicals in LDL modification by glucose. Diabetes 1990;39:1420-4.

6. Sakurai T, Tsuchiya S. Superoxide production from nonenzymatically glycated protein. FEBS Lett 1988;236:406-10.

7. Myint T, Hoshi S, Okawara T, Miyazawa N, Suzuki K, Taniguchi N. Immunological detection of glycated proteins in normal and streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats using anti hexitol-lysine IgG. Biochim Biophys Acta 1995;1272:73-9.

8. Baynes JW. Role of oxidative stress in development of complications in diabetes. Diabetes 1991;40:405-12.

9. Lebovitz HE. Effect of the postprandial state on nontraditional risk factors. Am J Cardiol 2001;88:20H-5H.

10. Martinez G, Al-Daim SM, Menendez S, Guillani A, Leon OS. Ozone treatment reduces blood oxidative stress and pancreas damage in a streptozotocin-induced diabetes model in rats. Acta Farm Bonaer 2005;24:491-7.

11. Rhabasa-Lloret R, Chiasson JL. Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors. In: Defronzo RA, Ferrannini E, Keen H, Zimmer P, editors. International Textbook of Diabetes Mellitus. 3rd ed, Vol. 1. UK: John Wiley; 2004.

12. Kim YM, Jeong YK, Wang MH, Lee WY, Rhee HI. Inhibitory effect of pine extract on alpha-glucosidase activity and postprandial hyperglycemia. Nutrition 2005;21:756-61.

13. Krentz AJ, Bailey CJ. Oral antidiabetic agents: Current role in type 2 diabetes mellitus. Drugs 2005;65:385-411.

14. Watanabe J, Kawabata J, Kunihara H, Niki R. Isolation and identification of alpha-glucosidase inhibitors from bochu-sha (Eucoma ulmoides). Biosci Biotechnol Biochem 1997;61:177-8.

15. Yoshikawa M, Murakami T, Tashiro K, Matsuda H, Katalanov, a potent alpha-glucosidase inhibitor with thiosugar sulphonium sulfate structure, from antidiabetic ayurvedic medicine Salacia reticulata. Chem Pharm Bull (Tokyo) 1998;46:1339-40.

16. Bischoff H. Pharmacology of alpha-glucosidase inhibition. Eur J Clin Invest 1994;24 Suppl 3:3-10.

17. El-Mekkawy S, Meselhy MR, Nkobole N, Lall N. Three new alpha-glucosidase inhibitors from tochu-cha (Commiphora wightii). Nat Prod Res 2013;27:146-54.

18. Kumar S, Narwal S, Kumar V, Prakash O. Alpha-glucosidase inhibitors from plants: A natural approach to treat diabetes. Pharmacogen Rev 2011;5:19-29.

19. Heng L, Vincen JP, Hoppe K, Koningsveld GA, Decroos K, Gruppen H, et al. Stability of pea DDMP saponin and the mechanism of its decomposition. Food Chem 2006;99:326-34.

20. Negi JS, Singh P, Joshi GP. Rawat MS, Bisht VK. Chemical constituents of Asparagus. Pharmacogn Rev 2010;4:215-20.

21. Hostettmann K, Marston A. Chemistry and pharmacology of natural products. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1995.
22. Price KR, Johnson IT, Fenwick GR. The chemistry and biological significance of saponins in foods and feedingstuffs. Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr 1987;26:27-135.

23. Petit PR, Sauvage YD, Hilleire-Buyts DM, Leconte V, Baisac YG, Posin G, et al. Steroid saponins from fenugreek seeds: Extraction, purification and pharmacological investigation on feeding behavior and plasma cholesterols of the puzzle. Angew Chem Int Ed 1985;44:3966-71.

24. Usematu Y, Hira K, Saito K, Kudo I. Spectrophotometric determination of saponin in Yucca extract used as food additive. J AQAC. Int 2000;83:1451-4.

25. Raimondo D, Von SL, Foden W, Victor JE, Helme NA, Turner RC, et al. Red list of South African plants. Strelitzia 2009;25:668.

26. Moteetee A, van Wyk BE. The medical ethnomedicine of Lesotho: A review. Bothalia 2011;41:209-28.

27. Lamula SQ, Asfaha AO. Antimicrobial and cytotoxic potential of Dianthus basuticus used in Basotho traditional practice. Bangladesh J Pharmacol 2014;3:105-11.

28. Ashafa AO, Kazeem MI. Toxicoprophylactic evaluation of hydroethanolic extract of Dianthus basuticus in Wistar rats. Evid Based Complement Alternat Med 2016;2015:348519.

29. Kazeem MI, Asfaha AO. In-vitro antioxidant and anti-diabetic potentials of Dianthus basuticus Burt Davy whole plant extracts. J Herb Med 2015;3:158-64.

30. Lakshmi V, Mahdi AA, Agarwal SK, Khanna AK. Steroidal saponin of Chlorophytum nivimoni (Grah) with lipid lowering and antioxidant activity. Chronic Young Sci 2012;3:227-32.

31. Shu XS, Lv JH, Tao J, Li GM, Li HD, Ma N. Antihyperglycemic effects of total flavonoids from Polysporangium odoratrum in STZ and alloxan-induced diabetic rats. J Ethnopharmacol 2009;124:539-43.

32. Ali H, Houghton PJ, Soumyanath A. Alpha-amylase inhibitory activity of some Malaysian plants used to treat diabetes; with particular reference to Phyllanthus amarus. J Ethnopharmacol 2006;107:449-55.

33. McCue PP, Shetty K. Inhibitory effects of rosmarinic acid extracts on porcine pancreatic amylase in vitro. Asia Pac J Clin Nutr 2004;13:101-6.

34. Turkoglu A, Duru ME, Mercan N, Kivrak I, Gezer K. Antioxidant and antimicrobial activities of Laetiporus sulphureus (Bull) Murrill. Food Chem 2007;101:267-73.

35. Garrat DC. The Quantitative analysis of Drugs. Vol. 3. Japan: Chapman and Hall Ltd.; 1964. p. 456-8.

36. Nazirouglu M, Butterworth PJ. Protective effects of moderate exercise with dietary Vitamin C and E on blood antioxidative defense mechanism in rats with streptozotocin-induced diabetes. Can J Appl Physiol 2005;30:172-85.

37. Rahimi R, Nikfar S, Larijani B, Abdollahi M. A review on the role of antioxidants in the management of diabetes and its complications. Biomed Pharmacother 2005;59:365-73.

38. Maritim AC, Sanders RA, Watkins JB 3rd. Diabetes, oxidative stress, and antioxidants: A review. J Biochem Mol Toxicol 2007;17:23-48.

39. Rains JL, Jan SK. Oxidative stress, insulin signaling, and diabetes. Free Radic Biol Med 2011;50:567-75.

40. Jan S, Dived J, Jain PK, Satpathy S, Petra A. Medicinal plants for treatment of cancer: A brief review. Pharmacogn J 2016;8:2.

41. Oboh G, Puntel RL, Rocha JB. Hot pepper (Capsicum annuum, Tepin and Capsicum Chinense, Habanero) prevents Fe2+ – Induced lipid peroxidation in brain- in vitro. Food Chem 2007;102:178-85.

42. Brand-Williams W, Cuvelier M, Berset C. Use of a free radical method to evaluate antioxidant activity. Lebensm Wiss Technol 1995;28:25-30.

43. Nsamba RK, Ikuzaki H, Konishi Y. Antioxidant activity of various extracts and fractions of Chenopodium quinoa and Amaranthus sp. seeds. Food Chem 2008;106:760-6.

44. Akinpelu BA, Igbenegbu OA, Arotunde AI, Iwalewa EO, Oyedapo OD. Antioxidant and antibacterial activities of saponin fraction from Erythrophleum suaveolens (Guill. and Perri.) stem bark extract. Sci Res Essays 2004;9:826-33.

45. McDonald LJ, Murad F. Nitric oxide and cGMP signaling. Adv Pharmacol 1995;34:263-75.

46. Johansen JS, Harris AK, Rychly DJ, Engel A. Oxidative stress and the use of antioxidants in diabetes: Linking basic science to clinical practice. Cardiovasc Diabetol 2005;4:5.

47. Ali-Smith YR, Adalawo IG. In vitro and in vivo antioxidant activity of saponin extracted from the root of Garcinia kola (bitter kola) on alloxan-induced diabetic rats. World J Pharm Sci 2014;3:8-26.

48. Thilagam E, Parimaladevi B, Kumarappan C, Mandal SC. α-Glucosidase and a-amylase inhibitory activity of Senna surattensis. J Acupunct Meridian Stud 2013;6:24-30.

49. Ademiluyi AO, Oboh G. Soybean phenolic-rich extracts inhibit key enzymes linked to type 2 diabetes α-amylase and α-glucosidase) and hypertension (angiotensin I converting enzyme) in vitro. Exp Toxicol Pathol 2013;65:305-9.

50. Adugna S, Alemu LA, Kelemu T, Tekola H, Kibret G, Genet S. Medical Biochemistry (Lecture Notes For Health Science Students) Gondar University, Jimma University, Debub University in Collaboration with the Ethiopia Public Health Training Initiative, The Carter Center, the Ethiopia Ministry of Health, and the Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2004. p. 13-9.

51. Neda G, Rabeta M, Oro M. Chemical composition and anti-proliferative properties of flowers of Citronia ternatea. Int Food Res J 2013;20:1229-4.

52. Kumar NR, Reddy JS, Gopikrishna G, Solomon KA. GC-MS determination of bioactive constituents of Cynca beddomei cones. Int J Pharm Bio Sci 2012;3;344-50.

53. Aragao GF, Cunha Pinheiro MC, Nogueira Bandera F, Gomes Lemos TL, de Barros Viana GS. Alkaloids and anti-inflammatory activities of the isomeric mixture of alpha- and beta-amyrin from Prochla heptapyllith (Aubl.) march. J Herb Pharmacother 2007;7:31-47.

54. Vázquez LH, Palazon J, Naveiro-Oraa A. The pentacyclic triterpenes α, β-amyrins: A review of sources and biological activities. In: Rao V, editor. Phytochemicals – A Global Perspective of Their Role in Nutrition and Health. InTech Europe University Campus StP Ri Slava: Kratuzeka, Croatia, 2012. Available from: http://www.intechopen.com/books/phytochemicals-a-global-perspective-of-their-role-in-nutrition-and-health/the-pentacyclic-triterpenes-amyrins-a-review-of-sources-and-biological-activities. [Last accessed on 2016 Aug 26]

55. Devika R. Wound healing medicinal plants – An overview. Int J Pharm Bio Sci 2015;6:1103-7.

56. Wick MM, Rossini A, Glynn D. Reduction of streptozotocin toxicity by 3-O-methyl-D-glucose with enhancement of antitumor activity in murine L1210 leukemia. Cancer Res 1977;37:3903-1.

57. Wohlhuter RM, Marz R, Graff JC, Plagemann PG. The application of rapid kinetic techniques to the transport of thymidine and 3-O-methylglucose into Mammalian cells in suspension culture. J Cell Physiol 1976;89:605-12.

58. Graff JC, Wohlhuter RM, Plagemann PG. Deoxyglucose and 3-O-methylglucose transport in untreated and ATP-depleted Novikoff rat hepatoma cells. Analysis by a rapid kinetic technique, relationship to phosphorylation and effects of inhibitors. J Cell Physiol 1978;96:171-88.

59. Sugimachi K, Roach KL, Rhoads DB, Tompkins RG, Toner M. Nonmetabolizable glucose compounds impart cytorentolence to primary rat hepatocytes. Tissue Eng 2006;12:579-88.

60. Noris MM, Aksan A, Sugimachi K, Toner M. 3-O-methyl-D-glucose improves desiccation tolerance of keratinocytes. Tissue Eng 2006;12:579-88.

61. Sun H, Fang W, Wang W, Hu C. Structure-activity relationships of oleane- and ursane-type triterpenoids. Bot Stud 2006;47:339-68.

62. Han N, Bakovic M. Biologically active triterpenoids and their cardioprotective and anti-inflammatory effects. J Bioanal Biomed 2015;5:12-5.