Antioxidant Activity of Red and Purple Rosella Flower Petals Extract (Hibiscus sabdariffa L.)

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors MZS and MYA conceived the study, concept, and design and conducted most of the laboratory experiments, analyzed and interpreted experiment results. Authors II, LS, AS and AHK contributed to the supervision of the study, drafting, and critical revision of the manuscript of the article. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/JPRI/2021/v33i46B32931
Editor(s):
(1) Dr. Debarshi Kar Mahapatra, Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, India.
Reviewers:
(1) Arpita Chatterjee, University of Nebraska Medical Center, USA.
(2) Nagham Mahmood Aljamali, Kufa University, Iraq.
Complete Peer review History: https://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/75276

Received 02 August 2021
Accepted 06 October 2021
Published 21 October 2021

ABSTRACT

Aims: This study aims to test the antioxidant activity of red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract and conduct qualitative phytochemical screening.

Study Design: Antioxidant potential of red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petal extract analyzed by spectrometric assays.

Place and Duration of Study: This study was carried out at School of Pharmacy Muhammadiyah Cirebon, Cirebon, West Java, Indonesia from the year of 2020 to 2021.

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Methodology: Red and purple H. sabdariffa petals extracted with 70% ethanol. The extract was then examined for its antioxidant activity using the DPPH (1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl) method, after the qualitative phytochemical screening.

Results: In this study, the concentration of red and purple H. sabdariffa petals extract dependently demonstrated the ability to scavenge DPPH. In the DPPH radical scavenging activity test, the red and purple H. sabdariffa petals extracts designating IC50 values of 63.77 and 37.19 µg/ml and fall into the category of strong and very strong antioxidant activity. Meanwhile, phytochemical screening tests showed the existence of flavonoids and polyphenols in the extract of red and purple H. sabdariffa petals.

Conclusion: This study shows that the red and purple H. sabdariffa petals extract has potential as a promising natural antioxidant agent for the treatment of oxidative stress.

Keywords: Hibiscus sabdariffa; antioxidant; DPPH (1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl); phytochemical screening; oxidative stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

The shift in people's lifestyles to become practical and instantaneous, especially in the fulfillment of needs such as food, has a negative impact on health. Instant or fast food processed by high heating or by burning can trigger the formation of free radical compounds [1]. Free radicals are defined as molecules whose electrons are lost causing the molecule becomes unstable and attempts to reclaim electrons from other molecules or cells [2]. In the body, free radicals are very reactive and will interact through destructive oxidation reactions with certain body parts and cells composed of proteins, fats, DNA, carbohydrates, and RNA, thereby prompting the development of chronic degenerative diseases such as cancer, aging, and coronary heart disease [1, 3]. Owing to the decreased performance of cellular antioxidant defense system, cell damage caused by these radicals can be more widespread. Antioxidant defense mechanisms exist in all biological systems to eliminate damaged molecules, however they can be inefficient. As a result, consuming antioxidant foods is critical for protecting cells from free radical damage [4]. Antioxidants are any substance that put off or prevent oxidative damage to a target molecule in a broad sense [5]. Antioxidants are best known for its capability to scavenge the free electrons directly or it enhances the expression and activity of free scavenging enzymes in the body. Antioxidant compounds including polyphenols, flavonoids, and phenolic acids can scavenge free radicals including hydroperoxides, peroxides, or lipid peroxyls, thereby inhibiting oxidative mechanisms that lead to degenerative diseases [6]. Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) and butylated hydroxianisole (BHA) are the most often utilized synthetic antioxidants in food (BHA). Both are powerful antioxidants, however their usage in food is discouraged due to their volatility and also because they are thought to act as promoters of carcinogenesis [7]. Therefore, research on antioxidants is needed that focuses on natural compounds from natural sources, one of which is herbal plants which have been considered the best antioxidants since ancient times [8]. One of the herbal plants that efficacious as a source of natural antioxidants are rosella flower petals (Hibiscus sabdariffa L.). This plant is often used as food and drink. H. sabdariffa has many pharmacological activities including antibacterial, anti fungal, antiparasitic, antipyretic, antiinflammatory, nephroprotective, diuretic, antinociceptic, antiinflammatory, hepatoprotective, anticholesterol, antiobesity, antidiabetic, antihypertensive and antianemia [9].

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the antioxidant activity of red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract using the DPPH scavenging assay.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Chemicals and Reagents

DPPH (1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl) (Sigma Chemical Co. (St. Louis, MO, USA) (Catalogue No. 300267-50MG), methanol absolute (CH3OH) (Catalogue No. 1070182511) (CH3OH), sulfuric acid (H2SO4) (Catalogue No. 4803641000), diethyl ether (C2H5)2O) (Catalogue No. 1009311000), Magnesium powder (Mg) (Catalogue No. 1058151000), Zinc powder (Zn) (Catalogue No. 1087890500), hydrogen chloride (HCl) (Catalogue No. 1090631000), ferric chloride (FeCl3) (Catalogue No. 1039430250), ethanol (C2H5OH) (Catalogue No. 1009831000), chloroform (CHCl3) (Catalogue No. 1087121000),...
2.2 Plant Materials

Each 5 kg of fresh red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petals were taken from Macanbang Village, Tulungagung Regency, East Java, Indonesia, and brought to the Pharmacognosy and Chemical Laboratory, School of Pharmacy Muhammadiyah Cirebon for cleaning, drying, grinding and extraction. The plant was identified as H. sabdariffa by Herbarium Jatinangor, Laboratory of Plant Taxonomy, Department of Biology, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Universitas Padjadjaran (No.677/HB/04/2018).

2.3 H. sabdariffa Extraction

Red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petal powder 100g each were macerated thoroughly in 70% ethanol for 72 hours. The liquid extract was attained and concentrated using a rotary evaporator (Eyela OSB-2100) at a temperature of 50°C produces a concentrate of about 30.00% for red H. sabdariffa flower petals and 41.99% for the purple H. sabdariffa flower petals (fixed weight of extract divided by weight of simplicia multiplied by 100%).

2.4 Phytochemical Screening

Red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petal extract each was screened qualitatively to identify the presence of secondary metabolites which include alkaloids, flavonoids, phenolic compounds, saponins, and triterpenoids/steroids [10].

2.5 DPPH Radical Scavenging Assay

Determination of antioxidant activity carried out using DPPH [11]. Stock solution of 100 µg/ml DPPH was set by dissolving 10 mg of DPPH in 100 ml of methanol. Solution sample obtained by dissolving each 10 mg red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract with 100 ml of methanol, then solution diluted to 10, 20, 30, 40, and 50 µg/ml for red H. sabdariffa flower petals extract and 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 µg/ml for purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract. After that as much as 2 ml of each solution mixed with 2 ml of DPPH stock solution until homogeneous and incubated at temperature 30°C for 30 minutes.

Antioxidant activity examined using spectrophotometry UV-Vis (Shimadzu UV Mini-1240) on long wave 515.50 nm and repeated three times. The blank sample was 1 ml of DPPH solution in 10 ml of methanol measured at the same time and wavelength (Ab). Ascorbic acid was used as a comparison with various concentrations of 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 µg/ml. The following equation was used to calculate the percentage of DPPH radical scavenging activity:

\[ \text{Inhibition rate (\%)} = \frac{Ab - As}{Ab} \times 100 \]

Where Ab is the absorbance of blank sample and As is the absorbance of sample. % inhibition plotted against concentration and calculated from the IC\textsubscript{50} chart.

2.6 Statistical Analysis

Data were tabulated as mean±standard deviation (SD) of three replicates and statistical analysis was done using Graph Pad Prism software (Version 9).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Phytochemical Screening

Chemical components including alkaloids, flavonoids, polyphenols, saponins, and triterpenoids/steroids were found in phytochemical screening of red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract. Summary of red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract served on Table 1.

3.2 Antioxidant Activity

The DPPH method or known as IC\textsubscript{50} was used to quantify antioxidant activity as a concentration needed to inhibit 50% of DPPH free radicals [11]. Antioxidant activity of red and purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract carried out at different concentrations. We found that the higher the extract concentration, the higher the percentage of inhibition (Fig. 1).

Based on the results of the IC\textsubscript{50} value in Table 2, the antioxidant power of red H. sabdariffa flower petals extract is in the strong antioxidant range, compared with purple H. sabdariffa flower petals extract and ascorbic acid is in the very strong antioxidant range. Classification of antioxidants based on IC\textsubscript{50} value is presented in Table 3.
Table 1. Phytochemical screening of red and purple *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract

| Phytochemical screening | Reagents          | Observation                        | Red *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract | Purple *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Alkaloids               | Dragendorff       | (+) Light brown                    | -                                        | -                                           |
|                         | Bouchardat        | (+) Dark brown                     | -                                        | -                                           |
|                         | Mayer             | (+) Muddy and white sediment       | -                                        | -                                           |
| Flavonoids              | Zn + HCl (p)      | (+) Red                            | +                                        | +                                           |
|                         | Mg + HCl (p)      |                                   |                                          |                                              |
| Polyphenols             | 1% FeCl₃         | (+) Dark blue                      | +                                        | +                                           |
|                         | Hot water + HCl  | (-) Bubble                         | -                                        | -                                           |
| Saponins                | Liebermann-Burchard | (+) Purple                  | -                                        | -                                           |

(+) = Contained, (-) = Not Contained

Fig. 1. Antioxidant activity of red and purple *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract. The graph represents the % inhibition of (A) Ascorbic acid, (B) Red *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract, and (C) Purple *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract. X is sample concentration and Y is % inhibition. Data are presented as mean±SD of three replicates.
Table 2. IC₅₀ value of red and purple *H. sabdariffa* flower petal extract compared with ascorbic acid

| No | Sample                                      | IC₅₀ (µg/ml) | Antioxidant activity |
|----|---------------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 1  | Ascorbic acid                               | 5.03         | Very strong          |
| 2  | Red *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract    | 63.77        | Strong               |
| 3  | Purple *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract | 37.19        | Very strong          |

Table 3. Classification of antioxidants based on IC₅₀ value [12]

| IC₅₀ value (µg/ml) | Antioxidant activity |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| < 50              | Very strong          |
| 50-100            | Strong               |
| 101-250           | Moderate             |
| 250-500           | Weak                 |
| > 500             | Not active           |

In anthocyanins, the amount of free OH around the pyron ring and the higher number of OH groups scattered throughout the molecular structure determine their potential antioxidant activity. Meanwhile, the presence of the number of OH at positions C3′ and C4′ on ring B and C3 of ring C on the basic structure of flavonoids appears to be the main structural requirement for anthocyanins to inhibit endothelial cell oxidative injury and intracellular free radical activity [22].

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the red and purple *H. sabdariffa* flower petals extract has potential as a promising natural antioxidant agent for the treatment of oxidative stress. However, further in vivo testing will be required as this is a pre-clinical requirement before it can be consumed or used for humans.

DISCLAIMER

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

CONSENT

It is not applicable.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable.
COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here: https://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/75276