Apigenin induces apoptosis and counteracts cisplatin-induced chemoresistance via Mcl-1 in ovarian cancer cells

YUYAN QI1, ZHAOXIA DING1, YUSHUANG YAO1, FEIFEI REN2, MIN YIN1, SONGBIN YANG1 and AIPING CHEN1

1Department of Gynecology, The Affiliated Hospital of Qingdao University, Qingdao, Shandong 266000; 2Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, The Affiliated Hospital of Taishan Medical University, Taian, Shandong 271000, P.R. China

Received March 15, 2019; Accepted February 25, 2020

DOI: 10.3892/etm.2020.8880

Abstract. Ovarian cancer (OC) is one of the prominent causes of mortality in female patients diagnosed with gynecologic malignancies. While it has previously been demonstrated that apigenin inhibits cell growth in colon and breast cancer cells, the effect of apigenin in OC cells is not fully understood. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of apigenin on cell death and resistance to cisplatin in OC cells. It was found that apigenin inhibited proliferation, hindered cell cycle progression and promoted SKOV3 cell apoptosis. Moreover, these effects were also observed in cisplatin-resistant SKOV3/DDP cells. Furthermore, apigenin reduced the mitochondrial transmembrane potential, and elevated the ratios of cleaved caspase-3/caspase-3 and Bax/Bcl-2 in the two cell types. Reverse transcription-quantitative PCR and western blotting results demonstrated that apigenin significantly downregulated Mcl‑1 at the transcriptional and translational levels in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells, which was responsible for its cytotoxic functions and chemosensitizing effects. Collectively, the present results identified the impact of apigenin on OC cell death and resistance to cisplatin, and the potential molecular mechanisms. However, additional studies are required to further elucidate the underlying mechanisms.

Introduction

Ovarian cancer (OC) is one of the most lethal gynecological malignancies, and is the 5th largest contributor to malignancy-related mortality in female patients worldwide (1). OC is characterized by an overall poor clinical outcome, with the 5-year survival rate being ≥35% (2). Currently, one of the most effective therapies for OC is cytoreductive surgery prior to platinum-based chemotherapy (3). While the majority of patients exhibit a response to primary chemotherapy, >75% present with recurrence and develop chemoresistance (4,5), which hinders OC treatment (6). Moreover, the underlying mechanisms involved in chemoresistance are not fully understood. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate and develop innovative treatment targets for OC therapy.

Apigenin is present in many kinds of food, such as fruit, seasonings and vegetables. Apigenin is a part of the average daily diet (7-9). It has been shown that apigenin can significantly suppress malignant cell growth in cultivated cells and in vivo malignant models (10-13). Apigenin can also inhibit malignant invasion and metastasis, while downregulating downstream mitogen-activated protein kinases and oncogenes (14). Moreover, previous studies have revealed that apigenin inhibits cell proliferation and vessel generation in multiple malignancies, such as breast (10), cervical (15), lung (16), colon (17), hematologic and prostate cancer types (18). In relation to the beneficial effects of apigenin on various cancer types and its decreased intrinsic toxicity, previous studies have focused on its potential use as a therapeutic and chemopreventive agent (19). However, the mechanisms via which apigenin attenuates chemoresistance in OC are poorly understood.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of apigenin on OC and identify the mechanisms during chemoresistance modulation.

Materials and methods

Cell culture. Human ovarian adenocarcinoma cells (SKOV3) and the corresponding cisplatin-resistant variant (SKOV3/DDP) were acquired from the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Cells were cultured in 1640 medium containing 10% FBS (Gibco; Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc.) at 37°C and 5% CO₂. SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells received 50 μM apigenin (Selleck Chemicals LLC; cat. no. S2262) for 24 h at 37°C.

MTT assay. An MTT assay was used to determine the relative sensitivity of SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells to cisplatin, and to establish a model of chemoresistance to cisplatin.
in OC cells. The IC_{50} value of cisplatin (Selleck Chemicals LLC; cat. no. S1166) was 2 µM in SKOV3 cells and 10 µM in SKOV3/DDP cells in this experiment (data not shown). Cells were seeded in 96-well plates (10^4 cells/well) and cultured in a 5% CO_{2} humidified incubator at 37°C until 70% of the culture surface was occupied. Cisplatin at a concentration of 2 µM was added to the SKOV3 cells and at a concentration of 10 µM was added to SKOV3/DDP cells in triplicate and the cells incubated for a further 24 h at 37°C. The complete 1640 media was replaced with serum-free media containing 0.5 mg/ml MTT and the cells were incubated for another 4 h at 37°C. Once the plates had dried, 100 µl DMSO was added to each well and the OD readings were measured at 570 nm using the Microplate reader (Multiskan FC; Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc.). Using a concentration vs. percentage cellular growth inhibition graph, a regression equation was derived and the IC_{50} values of cisplatin were determined for SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells.

**Colony formation assay.** For the colony formation assay, a sample comprising 1,500 cells was plated into 6-well plates and incubated in 1640 media with 10% PBS at 37°C for 1 week. After 1 week, cells were fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde at 4°C overnight and stained with 0.1% crystal violet at room temperature for 10 min, and visible colonies were manually counted. Wells were measured in triplicate for each group.

**Evaluation of cell proliferation using 5-Ethynyl-2'-deoxyuridine (EdU) flow cytometry.** Cells were resuspended in complete 1640 medium (Qiagen GmbH), and a Click-iT® EdU cell proliferation assay (Qiagen GmbH) was performed. After 48 h of culture at 37°C, cells were incubated for 2 h with 10 µmol EdU at 37°C. Digestion was carried out using 0.05% trypsin and cells were washed with PBS. Next, cells were fixed for 15 min using 100 µl Click-iT fixative at 25°C and centrifuged at 37°C for 5 min at 1,000 x g, after which the cells were washed with PBS. Permeabilization was performed for 15 min using 100 µl permeabilization and washing agent (Qiagen GmbH; 0.2%) at room temperature. Cells were then incubated at room temperature for 30 min in the dark with 500 µl reaction solution, composed of 496 µl PBS, 4 µl buffer additive (component F; Qiagen GmbH), 1 mM CuSO_{4}, and 10 µM Alexa Fluor 488. Then, 3 ml permeabilization and washing agent was added, and cells were centrifuged at 37°C for 5 min at 1,000 x g before being washed with PBS. Permeabilization and washing agent (500 µl) was added to the resuspension, and cell proliferation was assessed using a Beckman Coulter FC 500 MCL/MPL flow cytometer with FlowJo software (version 7.6.1; FlowJo LLC).

**Annexin V- FITC/ PI flow cytometry.** Cell death triggered by apigenin in OC cells was investigated using an Annexin V and PI double staining apoptosis detection kit (cat. no. TA5354; BioLegend, Inc.) with FITC tags. After 24 h of 50 µmol apigenin treatment at 37°C, the cells were trypsinized and incubated for 15 min with 300 µl Annexin V/PI staining solution at room temperature. Cells were then evaluated using a flow cytometer to detect cell apoptosis.

**Mitochondrial membrane potential (ΔΨm) assessment.** Transmembrane ΔΨm was determined using the JC-1 assay, as previously described (17). Cells (1x10^4 cells/well) were seeded in a 96-well plate and incubated overnight at 37°C. Medium was removed and 5 µg/ml JC-1 dye (cat. no. C2006; Beyotime Institute of Biotechnology) was added for 20 min at room temperature. Cells were then washed and incubated in PBS for 10 min at room temperature. ΔΨm was measured using a fluorescence plate reader. In healthy mitochondria, JC-1 generated J-aggregates, which are manifested as red signals (20). In the case of mitochondria depolarization, JC-1 is present in the cytoplasm as monomers and is manifested as green signals (21). The transformation from red to green signals suggested ΔΨm depolarization.

**RNA isolation and reverse transcription-quantitative PCR (RT-qPCR).** TRizol® (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc.) was used to isolate total RNA as per the manufacturer’s instructions, and the isolated RNA was purified using a RNeasy Mini kit (cat. no. 74104; Qiagen GmbH). RT was performed to obtain cDNA using a Superscript III kit (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc.) for 42°C 30 min and 85°C for 5 min. The temperature protocol was 42°C for 2 min followed by 37°C for 15 min and 85°C for 5 sec before cooling to 4°C. qPCR was performed on the product using the SYBR-Green PCR Supermix kit (Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc.). Thermocycling conditions using the LightCycler® 96 (Roche Molecular Systems, Inc.) were as follows: 95°C for 30 sec followed by 40 cycles of 95°C for 5 sec and 60°C for 60 sec. Primers used were as follows: Myeloid cell leukemia-1 (Mcl-1) forward, 5'-TCTCTTGTGACCGCAATGGT-3' and reverse, 5'-GGTGACAGTCAAGGCTTT-3'; and GAPDH forward, 5'-CCACCCATGGCAAATTCCATGGC-3' and reverse, 5'-TCTAGACGGCGAGGGTCAGGTCACC-3'. All procedures were carried out in triplicate, with ≥3 independent runs. Expression was detected using RT StatMiner (Integromics, Inc.), and GAPDH served as an internal reference. Fold change was determined by relative quantification (2−ΔΔCq) (22).

**Western blot analysis.** Lysates were homogenized with a RIPA lysis buffer (cat. no. P0013K; Beyotime Institute of Biotechnology), and proteins were quantified using a Bradford assay (Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc.). Samples containing 25 µg of protein were subjected to SDS-PAGE on 8-15% Tris-HCl polyacrylamide gels (Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc.) for 42°C 30 min and 85°C for 5 min. The gel was transferred to PVDF membranes (EMD Millipore). The blots were incubated overnight with primary antibodies against Mcl-1 (1:1,000; cat. no. ab32087, Abcam), cyclin B1 (1:1,000; cat. no. ab32053; Abcam), Bcl-2 (1:1,000; cat. no. ab32124; Abcam), cleaved-caspase 3 (1:1,000; cat. no. ab13847; Abcam), cyclin D (1:1,000; cat. no. ab16663; Abcam), cyclin E (1:1,000; cat. no. ab71535; Abcam), Bax (1:1,000; cat. no. ab32503, Abcam) and β-actin (1:1,000; cat. no. ab7946; Abcam) in Tris-buffered saline/0.1% Tween 20 at 4°C. The membranes were then incubated with a secondary antibody (1:500; cat. no. ab6802; Abcam) conjugated with horseradish peroxidase at room temperature for 1.5 h. Enhanced chemiluminescence plus detection reagent (Pierce; Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc.; cat. no. 32109) was used to examine the immunoreactive bands. ImageJ software (v1.51; National Institutes of Health) was used for densitometry.
Statistical analysis. Data are presented as the mean ± SEM. Differences among various groups were assessed using ANOVA, followed by Tukey’s post hoc test. P<0.05 was considered to indicate a statistical significance difference.

Results

Apigenin inhibits proliferation of SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells. The impact of apigenin on cell growth was investigated in SKOV3 and cisplatin-resistant SKOV3/DDP cells. The cytotoxic effects of apigenin were identified via colony formation testing, and it was found that the addition of 50 µmol apigenin to these cells decreased both the number and size of the colonies compared with the control group (Fig. 1A-C). Moreover, apigenin inhibited the proliferation of SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells compared with the control group (Fig. 1D-F), and the combination of apigenin + cisplatin exerted a significantly greater inhibitory effect on cell proliferation.

Apigenin downregulates cyclin-dependent proteins in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells. Cyclin-dependent proteins, such as cyclin D, B1 and E, are crucial regulators of cell proliferation (23). Therefore, the present study investigated the impact of apigenin on the expression levels of cyclin-dependent proteins in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells. It was demonstrated that apigenin significantly downregulated cyclin D, B1 and E compared with the control group (Fig. 2A-H). Thus, the present results suggested apigenin inhibited SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP proliferation by suppressing cyclin-dependent translations.

Apigenin triggers SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP apoptosis. SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells were treated with apigenin for 24 h, and the apoptotic rate was examined by Annexin V-PI flow cytometry. The present results indicated that apigenin significantly promoted early apoptosis or necrosis and late apoptotic cell death in both cell types (Fig. 3A-D).

Figure 1. Apigenin inhibits the proliferation of SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells. SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells were treated for 24 h with 50 µM Api, 2 µM cisplatin or 50 µM Api + 2 µM cisplatin. (A) Colonies were observed by crystal violet staining. Quantitative assessment of (B) SKOV3 and (C) SKOV3/DDP colonies. (D) Evaluation of cell proliferation by 5-Ethynyl-2’-deoxyuridine staining. Difference in proliferation between (E) SKOV3 and (F) SKOV3/DDP cells. Data are presented as the mean ± SEM. *P<0.05, **P<0.01 vs. Con. Api, apigenin; Con, control; EdU, 5-Ethynyl-2’-deoxyuridine.
Apigenin modulates the expression levels of apoptotic-associated proteins in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells. To investigate the involvement of apigenin on cell death, its effect on apoptotic-associated proteins was assessed in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells. It was found that apigenin downregulated the expression of the antiapoptotic protein Bcl-2 and upregulated the expression levels of the proapoptotic proteins Bax and cleaved caspase-3 (Fig. 4A-H). Therefore, the present results suggested that apigenin triggered SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP apoptosis by enhancing the expression of proapoptotic proteins, while suppressing that of antiapoptotic proteins.

Apigenin triggers the depolarization of ΔΨm in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells. Our previous study showed the influence of apigenin on mitochondria-modulated cell death (24). Therefore, the present study examined whether apigenin-induced mitochondrial malfunction was a dominant contributor to cell death using a JC-1 assay. It was identified that mitochondria in control cells exhibited red signals, thus suggesting complete ΔΨm. However, apigenin triggered ΔΨm depolarization, demonstrated by the presence of green signals and reduction in the ratio of J-aggregates/J-monomers (Fig. 5A-C). Collectively, the present results indicated that apigenin triggered mitochondrial malfunction to induce apoptosis.
study examined the changes in Mcl-1 expression in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells in order to understand the mechanisms underlying apigenin-induced apoptosis. It was found that Mcl-1 expression was significantly inhibited by apigenin compared with control cells (Fig. 6A and B). Moreover, Mcl-1 protein expression was downregulated by apigenin in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells (Fig. 6C-E). The combination of apigenin + cisplatin further promoted the inhibitory effect on both mRNA and protein expression levels of Mcl-1, thus indicating that the downregulation of Mcl-1 by apigenin may be involved in apoptosis and cell cycle arrest of SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells.

Discussion

OC is a leading contributor to gynecological malignancy-related mortality (26), and cisplatin-based chemotherapy is an important OC treatment method in addition to cytoreductive surgery (27). However, resistance to cisplatin remains a challenge to OC treatment (28). The present results suggested that apigenin inhibited the proliferation of SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells, interrupted cell cycle progression and triggered apoptosis. Moreover, it was found that apigenin inhibited the translation of cyclin-dependent proteins, downregulated the expression of the antiapoptotic protein Bcl-2, and
upregulated that of the proapoptotic proteins caspase-3 and Bax. Furthermore, apigenin downregulated Mcl-1, disturbed mitochondria activity and induced cell death, which may be the potential mechanism via which apigenin targets malignancies.

Mitochondria-modulated cell death contributes to OC and resistance to cisplatin (29). It is widely recognized that changes in Bax and Bcl-2 expression levels regulate matrix metalloproteinas (30,31). The present results indicated that elevation of the Bax/Bcl-2 ratio stimulated changes in mitochondrial permeability, and that OC cells treated by apigenin had an increase in the proportion of green signals, thus indicating that the mitochondrial membrane was depolarized in the cell population. Enhanced permeability results in the release of various apoptotic-stimulating agents from the space between the mitochondrial membrane into the cytoplasm, consequently propelling caspases to trigger apoptosis (32,33). In addition, it was demonstrated that apigenin increased caspase-3 function in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells, therefore suggesting that cell death was modulated by the mitochondria. Collectively, the present results indicated that apigenin triggered cell death and eliminated cisplatin-induced resistance in OC cells by reinforcing mitochondria-modulated cell death.

Antiapoptotic proteins defend against permeabilization of the outer mitochondrial membrane, and resistance to cell death in OC is related to the significant upregulation of Bcl-2 (34,35). The integrated total concentration of Bcl-xL, Mcl-1 and Bcl-2 in the outer membrane regulates resistance to cell death (36-38). Furthermore, Mcl-1 plays a vital part in the abnormal viability of OC cells in comparison to other anti-apoptotic proteins (38). With the ability to resist apoptosis, Mcl-1 exerts its impact either by isolating Bak on the outer mitochondrial membrane or by heterodimerizing with stimulated Bcl-2 homology domain 3-only proteins, such as p53-upregulated modulator of apoptosis, Bim and tBid (39). Mcl-1 expression is found in various types of OC cells (40,41), and multiple triggers outside of the cells, such as interleukins, 12-o-tetradecanoyl-phorbol-13-acetate, growth factors and interferons, are able to upregulate Mcl-1 expression by stimulating several pathways (42). It has been previously reported that Mcl-1 downregulation by antisense oligonucleotides is sufficient to trigger apoptosis of OC cells and enhance sensitivity to tumor necrosis factor-related apoptosis-inducing ligand, thus indicating that Mcl-1 is a promising target to treat malignancies such as OC (43-45).

It has been previously shown that apigenin restrains colon cancer cell proliferation via targeted blocking of pyruvate kinase M2-dependent glycolysis (46). In addition, apigenin suppresses the senescence-associated secretory phenotype and paracrine effects on breast cancer cells (47). In the present study, it was found that apigenin inhibited the transcription and translation of Mcl-1 in SKOV3 and SKOV3/DDP cells, leading to the depolarization of the mitochondrial membrane and cell death, and consequently resulting in cytotoxic and chemosensitizing effects.

Collectively, the present results suggested that apigenin triggered apoptosis and counteracted cisplatin-triggered resistance in OC cells via Mcl-1. Moreover, the present results indicated that apigenin/Mcl-1 may serve as a potential treatment strategy against OC by enhancing sensitivity.

Acknowledgements
Not applicable.

Funding
No funding was received.

Availability of data and materials
Not applicable.
Authors’ contributions

YYQ and APC conceived the study and designed the experiments. XZD, YSY and FFR performed experiments and contributed toward data collection. MY and SBY analyzed the data and interpreted the results. YYQ wrote the manuscript. APC contributed to the critical revision of the article. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

References

1. Enroth S, Berggrund M, Lycke M, Lundberg M, Assarsson E, Olovsson M, Stålborg K, Sundfeldt K and Gyllensten U: A two-step strategy for identification of plasma protein biomarkers for endometrial and ovarian cancer. Clin Proteomics 15: 38, 2018.

2. Zhou L, Xu X, Liu H, Hu X, Zhang W, Ye M and Zhu X: Prognosis analysis of histone deacetylases mRNA expression in ovarian cancer patients. J Cancer 9: 4547-4555, 2018.

3. Park SJ, Kim J, Kim SN, Lee EJ, Oh S, Seol A, Lee N, Chang SJ and Kim HS: Practice patterns of surgery for advanced ovarian cancer: Analysis from international surveys. Jpn J Clin Oncol 49: 137-145, 2019.

4. Yousefi H, Momeny M, Ghaifari SH, Parsanejad N, Poursheikhani A,javakidossheh S, Zarrindar G, Esmaeili F, Alishahi Z, Sabourinejad Z, et al: IL 6/IL 6R pathway is a therapeutic target in chemoresistant ovarian cancer. Cancer 105: 84-91, 2019.

5. Momeny M, Eynavi H, Barghi F, Ghaifari SH, javakidossheh S, Hassanvand Jamadi R, Esmaeili F, Alishahi Z, Zaghal A, Bashash D, et al: Inhibition of bromodomains and extraterminal domain reduces growth and invasive characteristics of chemoresistant ovarian carcinoma cells. Anticancer Drugs 29: 1011-1020, 2018.

6. Ahmed N, Esalona R, Leung D, Chan E and Kannourakis G: Tumour microenvironment and metabolic plasticity in cancer and cancer stem cells: Perspectives on metabolic and immune regulatory signatures in chemoresistant ovarian cancer stem cells. Semin Cancer Biol 53: 265-281, 2018.

7. Ozbuye U, Attar R, Romero MA, Alhewairini SS, Asfhar B, Sabatiliyevich UY, Hanna-Wakim L, Ozcelik B and Fariouq AA: Apigenin as an effective anticancer natural product: Spotlight on TRAIL, WNTβ-catenin, JAK-STAT pathways, and microRNAs. J Cell Biochem: Oct 2, 2018 (Epub ahead of print).

8. Perez-Moral N, Saha P, Philo M, Hart DJ, Winterborne MS, Hollands WJ, Spurr M, Bows J, van der Velpen V, Kroon PA, Perez-Moral N, Saha S, Philo M, Hart DJ, Winterborne MS, Hollands WJ, Spurr M, Bows J, van der Velpen V, Kroon PA, et al: Comparative bio-accessibility, bioavailability and bioequivalence of quercetin, apigenin, glucoraphanin and carotenoids from freeze-dried vegetables incorporated into a baked snack versus minimally processed vegetables: Evidence from in vitro models and a human bioavailability study. J Funct Foods 28: 446-456, 2017.

9. Wang Y, Xu Z, Huang Y, Wen X, Wu Y, Zhao Y and Ni Y: Extraction, purification, and hydrolysis behavior of apigenin-7-O-glucoside from chrysanthemum morifolium tea. Molecules 23: 23, 2018.

10. Hong J, Fristiohady A, Nguyen CH, Milovanovic D, Huttary N, Krieger S, Hong J, Geleff S, Birner P, Jager W, et al: Apigenin and luteolin attenuate the breaching of MDA-MB231 breast cancer spheroids through the lymph endothelial barrier in vitro. Front Pharmacol 9: 220, 2018.

11. Maeda Y, Takahashi H, Nakai N, Yangita T, Ando N, Okubo T, Saito K, Shiga K, Hirokawa T, Hara M, et al: Apigenin induces apoptosis by suppressing Bcl-xL and Mcl-1 simultaneously via suppression of transcription 3 signaling in colon cancer. Int J Oncol 52: 1661-1673, 2018.

12. Vrbová Maduníc I, Maduníc J, Antunović M, Paradžík M, Garaj-Vrbová V, Breljak D, Marijanović I and Gajski G: Apigenin, a dietary flavonoid, induces apoptosis, DNA damage, and oxidative stress in human breast cancer MCF-7 and MDA MB-231 cells. Naunyn Schmiedebers Arch Pharmacol 391: 537-550, 2018.

13. Sun Q, Lu NN and Feng L: Apigenin inhibits gastric cancer progression through inducing apoptosis and regulating ROS-modulated STAT3/JAK2 pathway. Biochem Biophys Res Commun 498: 164-170, 2018.

14. Xia Y, Yuan M, Li S, Thuan UT, Nguyen TT, Kang TW, Liao W, Lian S and Jung YD: Apigenin suppresses the IL-1β-induced expression of the urokinase-type plasminogen activator receptor by inhibiting MAPK-mediated AP-1 and NF-κB signaling in human bladder cancer T24 Cells. J Agric Food Chem 66: 7663-7673, 2018.

15. Souza RP, Bonfini-Mendonça PS, Gimenes F, Ratti BA, Kaplum V, Bruschi ML, Nakamura CV, Silva SO, Maria-Engler SS and Consolaro ME: Oxidative stress triggered by apigenin induces apoptosis in a comprehensive panel of human cervical cancer-derived cell lines. Oxid Med Cell Longev 2017: 1512745, 2017.

16. Zhou Z, Tang M, Liu Y, Zhang Z, Lu R and Lu J: Apigenin inhibits cell proliferation, migration, and invasion by targeting Akt in the A549 human lung cancer cell line. Anticancer Agents Med Chem 28: 446-456, 2017.

17. Shao H, Jing K, Mahmoud E, Huang H, Fang X and Yu C: Apigenin sensitizes colon cancer cells to antitumor activity of ABT-263. Mol Cancer Ther 12: 2640-2650, 2013.

18. Shukla S, Kanwal R, Shankar E, Datt M, Chance MR, Fu P, MacLennan GT and Gupta S: Apigenin blocks IKKα activation and suppresses prostate cancer progression. Oncotarget 6: 31216-31232, 2015.

19. Yan X, Qi M, Li P, Zhan Y and Shao H: Apigenin in cancer therapy: Anti-cancer effects and mechanisms of action. Cell Biosci 7: 50, 2017.

20. Verma AK, Laha B, Pandey M, Pal U and Ghosh M: Cholesterol-lowering drug, in combination with chromium chloride, induces early apoptotic signals in intracellular L. donovani amastigotes, leading to death. J Biosci 42: 427–438, 2017.

21. Ganta K, Mandal A and Chaubey B: Depolarization of mitochondrial membrane potential is the initial event in non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor efavirenz induced cytotoxicity. Cell Biol Toxicol 33: 69-82, 2017.

22. Livak KJ and Schmittgen TD: Analysis of relative gene expression data using real time quantitative PCR and the 2(Delta Delta C(T)) method. Methods 25: 402-408, 2001.

23. Wang J, Song C, Cao X, Li H, Cai H, Ma Y, Huang Y, Lan X, Lei C and Ma Y: miR 208b regulates cell cycle and promotes skeletal muscle cell proliferation by targeting CDKNA1. J Cell Physiol 234: 3720-3729, 2018.

24. Zhong Y, Jin C, Gan J, Wang X, Shi Z, Xia X and Peng X: Apigenin attenuates patulin induced apoptosis in HEK293 cells by modulating ROS mediated mitochondrial dysfunction and caspase signal pathway. Toxicon 137: 106-113, 2017.

25. Xiang W, Yang CY and Bai L: MCL 1 inhibition in cancer treatment. Onco Targets Ther 11: 7301-7314, 2018.

26. Singel KL, Grzankoowski KS, Khan A, Grimm MJ, D’Auria AC, Morrell K, Eng KH, Hylander B, Mayor PC, Emmons TR, et al: Mitochondrial DNA in the tumour microenvironment activates neutrophils and is associated with worse outcomes in patients with advanced epithelial ovarian cancer. Br J Cancer, 2018.

27. Liu N, Sheng X, Liu Y, Zhang X and Yu J: Increased CD70 expression is associated with clinical resistance to cisplatin-based chemotherapy and poor survival in advanced ovarian carcinomas. OncoTargets Ther 6: 615-619, 2013.

28. Pieterse Z, Amaya-Padilla MA, Singomat T, Binja M, Madjid BD, Yu Y and Kaur P: Ovarian cancer stem cells: Perspectives on metabolic and immune regulatory signatures in chemoresistant ovarian cancer stem cells. Semin Cancer Biol 53: 265-281, 2018.

29. Ozbuye U, Attar R, Romero MA, Alhewairini SS, Asfhar B, Sabatiliyevich UY, Hanna-Wakim L, Ozcelik B and Fariouq AA: Apigenin as an effective anticancer natural product: Spotlight on TRAIL, WNTβ-catenin, JAK-STAT pathways, and microRNAs. J Cell Biochem: Oct 2, 2018 (Epub ahead of print).

30. Wang Y, Xu Z, Huang Y, Wen X, Wu Y, Zhao Y and Ni Y: Extraction, purification, and hydrolysis behavior of apigenin-7-O-glucoside from chrysanthemum morifolium tea. Molecules 23: 23, 2018.

31. Hong J, Fristiohady A, Nguyen CH, Milovanovic D, Huttary N, Krieger S, Hong J, Geleff S, Birner P, Jager W, et al: Apigenin and luteolin attenuate the breaching of MDA-MB231 breast cancer spheroids through the lymph endothelial barrier in vitro. Front Pharmacol 9: 220, 2018.
30. Balusamy SR, Perumalsamy H, Huq MA and Balasubramanian B: Anti-proliferative activity of Origanum vulgare inhibited lipogenesis and induced mitochondrial mediated apoptosis in human stomach cancer cell lines. Biomed Pharmacother 108: 1835-1844, 2018.

31. Shah D, Das P, Alam MA, Mahajan N, Romero F, Shahid M, Singh H and Bhandari V: MicroRNA 34a promotes endothelial dysfunction and mitochondrial mediated apoptosis in murine models of acute lung injury. Am J Respir Cell Mol Biol 60: 465-477, 2019.

32. Dirks AJ and Leeuwenburgh C: Aging and lifelong calorie restriction result in adaptations of skeletal muscle apoptosis repressor, apoptosis-inducing factor, X-linked inhibitor of apoptosis, caspase-3, and caspase-12. Free Radic Biol Med 36: 27-39, 2004.

33. Cummings BS and Schnellmann RG: Cisplatin-induced renal cell apoptosis: Caspase 3-dependent and -independent pathways. J Pharmacol Exp Ther 302: 8-17, 2002.

34. Xie Q, Su J, Jiao B, Shen L, Ma L, Qu X, Yu C, Jiang X, Xu Y and Sun L: ABT737 reverses cisplatin resistance by regulating ER-mitochondria Ca2+ signal transduction in human ovarian cancer cells. Int J Oncol 49: 2507-2519, 2016.

35. Xu Y, Gao W, Zhang Y, Wu S, Liu Y, Deng X, Xie L, Yang J, Yu H, Su J, et al: ABT737 reverses cisplatin resistance by targeting glucose metabolism in human ovarian cancer cells. Int J Oncol 53: 1055-1068, 2018.

36. Cardenas C, Montagna MK, Pitruzzello M, Lima E, Mor G and Alvero AB: Adipocyte microenvironment promotes Bclxl expression and confers chemoresistance in ovarian cancer cells. Apoptosis 22: 558-569, 2017.

37. Habata S, Iwasaki M, Sugio A, Suzuki M, Tamate M, Satohisa S, Tanaka R and Saito T: BAG3-mediated Mcl-1 stabilization contributes to drug resistance via interaction with USP9X in ovarian cancer. Int J Oncol 49: 402-410, 2016.

38. Matsuura K, Huang NJ, Cocce K, Zhang L and Kornbluth S: Downregulation of the proapoptotic protein MOAP-1 by the UBR5 ubiquitin ligase and its role in ovarian cancer resistance to cisplatin. Oncogene 36: 1698-1706, 2017.

39. Dai Y, Jin S, Li X and Wang D: The involvement of Bcl-2 family proteins in AKT-regulated cell survival in cisplatin resistant epithelial ovarian cancer. Oncotarget 8: 1354-1368, 2017.

40. O’Reilly E, Dhami SPS, Baev DV, Ortutay C, Halpin-McCormick A, Morrell R, Santocanale C, Samali A, Quinn J, O’Dwyer ME, et al: Repression of Mcl-1 expression by the CDC7/CDK9 inhibitor PHA-767491 overcomes bone marrow stroma-mediated drug resistance in AML. Sci Rep 8: 15752, 2018.

41. Tyson-Capper A and Gautrey H: Regulation of Mcl-1 alternative splicing by hnRNP F, H1 and K in breast cancer cells. RNA Biol 15: 1448-1457, 2018.

42. Sugio A, Iwasaki M, Habata S, Mariya T, Suzuki M, Osogami H, Tamate M, Tanaka R and Saito T: BAG3 upregulates Mcl-1 through downregulation of miR-29b to induce anticancer drug resistance in ovarian cancer. Gynecol Oncol 134: 615-623, 2014.

43. Gao X, Wang B, Wei X, Men K, Zheng F, Zhou Y, Zheng Y, Gou M, Huang M, Guo G, et al: Anticancer effect and mechanism of polymer micelle-encapsulated quercetin on ovarian cancer. Nanoscale 4: 7021-7030, 2012.

44. Goncharenko-Khaider N, Matte I, Lane D, Rancourt C and Piché A: Ovarian cancer ascites increases Mcl-1 expression in tumor cells through ERK1/2-Elk-1 signaling to attenuate TRAIL-induced apoptosis. Mol Cancer 11: 84, 2012.

45. Yuan Z, Cao K, Lin C, Li L, Liu HY, Zhao XY, Liu L, Deng HX, Li J, Nie CL, et al: The p53 upregulated modulator of apoptosis (PUMA) chemosensitizes intrinsically resistant ovarian cancer cells to cisplatin by lowering the threshold set by Bcl-xL and Mcl-1. Mol Med 17: 1262-1274, 2011.

46. Shan S, Shu J, Yang P, Jia B, Wu H, Zhang X and Li Z: Apigenin restrains colon cancer cell proliferation via targeted blocking of pyruvate kinase M2 dependent glycolysis. J Agric Food Chem 65: 8136-8144, 2017.

47. Ferrott KM, Wiley CD, Desprez PY and Campisi J: Apigenin suppresses the senescence-associated secretory phenotype and paracrine effects on breast cancer cells. Geronescience 39: 161-173, 2017.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) License.