Three Isoflavonoid Glycosides from the Rhizomes of *Achyranthes bidentata* and their Protective Effects on H$_2$O$_2$ Induced H9c2 Cardiomyocytes Injury

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**Abstract:** A new isoflavonoid glycoside, achyrantheside C (1), along with two known compounds (2 and 3) were isolated from the rhizomes of *Achyranthes bidentata*. Compounds 1-2 were two rare natural isoflavonoid glycosides with C8 hydroxymethylene derivatization. Their structures were elucidated through comprehensive 1D and 2D NMR, UV, IR, and HRMS analyses. Bioassay results showed all the three compounds had obviously cell-protective effects against H$_2$O$_2$-induced H9c2 cardiomyocytes injury in a concentration-dependent manner.

**Keywords:** Achyranthes bidentata; isoflavonoid glycosides; antioxidant activity. © 2021 ACG Publications. All rights reserved.

1. **Introduction**

*Achyranthes bidentata* Blume is a perennial herbaceous plant of Amaranthaceae, which is widely planted in Henan province of China and commonly called as “Huai-Niu-Xi” [1]. Huai-Niu-Xi is also known as one of “Four Famous Huai Medicines” and has been widely used in the clinical...
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applications for thousands of years due to its medical value for tonifying liver and kidney, strengthening muscles and bones [2]. For the medicinal parts of *A. bidentata*, there are two main records in the ancient herbal literatures, including removing the rhizomes (Lutou) from the roots, and not removing the rhizomes [3]. The Chinese Pharmacopoeia defined the dried roots without rhizomes as the medicine part. However, the scientific basis for removing the rhizomes of *A. bidentata* is still unclear. Besides that, the removal of rhizomes is time-consuming and power-wasting, and wasteful of plant resources. Accordingly, the systematic study on the phytochemistry and pharmacological activities of both the rhizomes and roots of *A. bidentata* to explore whether to remove or not is necessary and urgent.

At present, there are large number of studies focusing on the roots of *A. bidentata*, which were revealed to have a variety of natural substances, including phytosteroids [4-5], triterpenoid saponins [6], flavonoids [7-8] and lignans [9], and show many activities including anti-inflammatory [8], antioxidant [10] and anti-tumor effects [11-13]. However, the research on the rhizomes of *A. bidentata* is much fewer. In this study, the phytochemical and pharmacological investigation of the rhizomes of *A. bidentata* was carried out firstly, which resulted in the isolation of one new isoflavonoid glycosides, namely achyrantheside C (1), and two known isoflavonoid glycosides (2 and 3) (Figure 1). The protective effect of 1-3 against hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) induced H9c2 cardiomyocyte injury were evaluated. The data showed they all had obviously cell-protective effects, and 25 and 50 μM of 1 and 2 displayed activity equivalent to or higher than positive control vitamin C.

![Chemical structures of compounds 1-3](image)

**Figure 1.** Chemical structures of compounds 1-3

### 2. Materials and Methods

#### 2.1. Apparatus and Reagents

UV spectrum was measured on a Shimadzu double-beam 210A spectrophotometer. IR spectrum was recorded on a Thermo Nicolet iS5 spectrometer. HRESIMS data was carried out on a Thermo UPLC-LTQ orbitrap XL Spectrometer. 1D and 2D NMR spectra were recorded on Bruker Avance III 500-NMR instruments with TMS as the internal standard. Silica gel (100–200 and 200–300 mesh, Qingdao Marine Chemical Inc., Qingdao, China), ODS-C₁₈ (50 μM, YMC, Kyoto, Japan), Waters e2695 series HPLC, semi-prep HPLC (QBH LC-52, Beijing Qingbohua Technology Co., Ltd., Beijing, China) with a YMC (250 mm × 10 mm, I.D. 5 μM) column were used for chromatographic separations.

#### 2.2. Plant Material

*Achyranthes bidentata* was collected in September 2019 from Henan province of China. The species was identified by Professor Liping Dai of Henan University of Chinese Medicine. The voucher specimen (no. 2019-0916) was deposited in the Key Laboratory of Traditional Chinese Medicine Chemistry and Resources of Henan province.
2.3. Extraction and Isolation

The dried materials (40.0 kg) of *A. bidentata* rhizomes were cut into small pieces, and were refluxed with 70% EtOH (2 × 120 L × 2 h). The extract was evaporated under reduced pressure using a rotary evaporator. Non-alcoholic smell residue (2401 g) was dissolved in water and then partitioned with EtOAc (223.0 g) and n-butanol (639.0 g), successively. n-Butanol fraction was chromatographed on silica gel column (100–200 mesh), eluted with dichloromethane-methanol system (1:0~0:1) to afford six fractions (Fr. 1 ~ 6), monitored by TLC. Fr. 3 (19.0 g) was subjected to separation with an ODS column eluted with MeOH-H$_2$O (15% ~ 100%), to afford Fr. 3A~3D. Fr.3B (31.5 mg) was purified by semi-prep HPLC with 17% ACN-H$_2$O (3 mL/min) to afford compound 1 (4.8 mg) at 36 min. Fr. 3C (200.0 mg) was further submitted to semi-prep HPLC with 20% ACN-H$_2$O, and compounds 2 (8.0 mg), 3 (16.0 mg) were respectively obtained at 35 and 42 min.

2.4. Spectral Data

*Achyrantheside C* (1): Yellow amorphous powder; $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ $-$ 42.262 (c 0.02, CH$_3$OH); IR (KBr) $\lambda_{\text{max}}$: 3303, 1606, 1453, 1216, 1076 cm$^{-1}$; UV (MeOH) $\lambda_{\text{max}}$ (log $\varepsilon$): 203 (3.54), 246 (3.33) and 281 (2.99) nm; HR-ESI-MS at m/z 491.1555 [M+H]$^+$ (calcd for C$_{24}$H$_{27}$O$_{11}$, 491.1547); $^1$H and $^{13}$C NMR (500 MHz, methanol-$d_4$) data (Table 1).

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*Achyrantheside A* (2): Yellow amorphous powder; $^1$H NMR (500 MHz, methanol-$d_4$) $\delta_H$: 8.02 (1H, s, H-2), 7.40 (1H, td, $J=7.9$, 1.8 Hz, H-4'), 7.25 (1H, dd, $J=7.4$, 1.8 Hz, H-6'), 7.17 (1H, s, H-
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6), 7.07 (1H, d, J = 8.3 Hz, H-3'); 7.01 (1H, td, J = 7.5, 1.0 Hz, H-5'), 5.13 (1H, d, J = 7.5 Hz, H-1'''), 4.68 (2H, s, H-11), 3.94 (1H, dd, J = 12.2, 2.3 Hz, H-6''), 3.88 (3H, s, 5-OCH3), 3.79 (3H, s, 2'-OCH3), 3.73 (1H, dd, J = 12.1, 5.9 Hz, H-6''), 3.61–3.54 (2H, m, H-3'', 5''), 3.52 (1H, d, J = 9.1 Hz, H-2''), 3.44 (1H, d, J = 9.3 Hz, H-4''), 3.41 (3H, s, 11-OCH3). 13C NMR (125 MHz, methanol-d4) δc: 176.7 (C-4), 162.3 (C-7), 161.4 (C-5), 160.7 (C-9), 159.2 (C-2'), 154.3 (C-2), 132.5 (C-6'), 131.1 (C-4'), 125.6 (C-3), 122.3 (C-1'), 121.5 (C-5'), 120.2 (C-8), 114.6 (C-10), 112.2 (C-3'), 102.3 (C-1''), 101.0 (C-6), 78.6 (C-3''), 77.9 (C-5''), 74.8 (C-2''), 71.2 (C-4''), 64.0 (C-11), 63.6 (5-OCH3), 62.5 (C-6'), 58.4 (11-OCH3), 56.1 (2'-OCH3).

Achyrantheside B (3): Yellow amorphous powder; 1H NMR (500 MHz, methanol-d4) δH: 8.00 (1H, s, H-2), 7.39 (1H, t, J = 8.0 Hz, H-4'), 7.24 (1H, dd, J = 7.4, 1.8 Hz, H-6'), 7.17 (1H, s, H-6), 7.07 (1H, d, J = 8.3 Hz, H-3'), 7.01 (1H, t, J = 7.5 Hz, H-5'), 5.15 (1H, d, J = 7.6 Hz, H-1'''), 3.93 (3H, s, 8-OCH3), 3.91 (3H, s, 5-OCH3), 3.79 (3H, s, 2'-OCH3), 3.73 (dd, J = 12.1, 5.8 Hz, 1H, H-6''), 3.56 (3H, dt, J = 22.0, 9.0 Hz, H-2'', 3'', 5''), 3.44 (1H, t, J = 9.3 Hz, H-4''). 13C NMR (125 MHz, methanol-d4) δc: 177.0 (C-4), 159.3 (C-2), 157.2 (C-9), 155.9 (C-7), 154.5 (C-2), 154.0 (C-5), 142.2 (C-8), 132.6 (C-6'), 131.0 (C-4'), 124.8 (C-3), 122.4 (C-1'), 121.5 (C-5'), 115.1 (C-10), 112.2 (C-3'), 101.9 (C-1''), 101.5 (C-6), 78.5 (C-3''), 78.1 (C-5''), 74.8 (C-2''), 71.22 (C-4''), 62.7 (5-OCH3), 62.45 (C-6''), 62.3 (8-OCH3), 56.07 (2'-OCH3).

2.5. Bioassay for Antioxidant Activity

2.5.1. H2c9 Cell Viability

H9c2 cells were seeded in 96-well plates (8 × 10^4 cells/well) and incubated in a humidified 5% CO2 atmosphere at 37°C. After 24 h, the cells were treated with 0, 6.25, 12.5, 25, 50, 100 μM of isolated compounds. After 24 h, cell viability was measured by CCK-8 method [14].

2.5.2. SOD Activity

To investigate the antioxidant effects of the isolated compounds on H2O2-treated H9c2 cells, SOD activity was measured. H9c2 cells were seeded in 6-well plates (8 × 10^4 cells/well) and incubated in 37°C, 5% CO2 incubator. After 24 h, the plates were treated with 12.5, 25, 50 μM of compounds 1-3 and then added H2O2 (200 μM) for 2 h. After modeling, cells were collected and broken. According to the SOD detection kit, the SOD activity was calculated.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Structure Elucidation

Achyranthesides C (1) was obtained as a yellow amorphous powder and its UV spectrum showed three absorption peaks at 203, 246 and 281 nm, indicating it might be an isoflavonoid derivative. Its molecular formula C28H34O11 was determined by positive HR-ESI-MS of the pseudomolecular ion peak at m/z 491.1555 [M+H]+ (calcd for C28H33O11, 491.1547). The IR spectrum revealed the presence of hydroxyl (3354 cm⁻¹) and carbonyl (1639 cm⁻¹) groups, and benzene ring (1606 cm⁻¹). The 1H-NMR spectral data (Table 1) compound I showed six aromatic protons appearing as two singlets and two overlapped multiplets. The typical downfield proton at δH 8.11 (1H, s) was readily diagnosed as H-2 in isoflavonoid [15]. The proton at δH 7.20 (1H, s, H-6) suggested the tri-substituted aromatic ring A. The aromatic resonances of δH 7.25 (1H, d, J = 8.4 Hz, H-4'), 7.23 (1H, m, H-6'), 6.92 (2H, d, J = 7.1 Hz, H-3', 5') were diagnosed with a 2-substituted aromatic ring B. The coupling constant (J = 7.5 Hz) of the anomic proton at δH 5.13 indicated that the glucopyranosyl moiety was in β configuration. Additionally, an isolated methylene group at δH 4.69 (2H, s) and two methoxy groups at δH 3.90 (3H, s), 3.42 (3H, s) were also observed in H1 NMR spectrum. The 13C-NMR and HSQC data of compound I revealed 24 resonances, attributed to one ester carbonyl at δC 177.4 (C-4'), seven double bond carbons at δC 162.3, 161.5, 160.7, 156.9, 155.1, 132.6, 130.8, 125.5, 120.7, 120.6,
120.3, 117.1, 114.6, 101.0, a glucosyl unit at δC 102.3 (C-1′′), 78.5, 77.9, 74.8, 71.2, 62.5, a methylene group at δC 64.1, and two methoxy groups at δC 63.6, 58.4.

Two spin–spin coupling systems of H-3′/H-4′/H-5′/H-6′ and H-1″/H-2″/H-3″/H-4″/H-5″/H-6″ in the 1H–1H COSY spectrum of compound 1 (Figure 2), together with the detailed analysis of HMBC correlations, allowed the assignments of chemical shifts of aromatic ring B and β-glucose group. The HMBC correlations (Figure 2) from H-2 (δH 8.11) to C-3 (δC 125.5), C-4 (δC 177.4), C-9 (δC 160.7), C-1′ (δC 120.6) confirmed the isoflavonoid skeleton of the compound. The key correlations from -OMe (δH 3.42) to C-11 (δC 64.1), and from H-11 (δH 4.69) to C-7 (δC 162.3), C-8 (δC 120.3) and C-9, together with correlations from H-6 (δH 7.20) to C-5 (δC 161.5), C-7, C-8, and C-10 (δC 114.6), and from -OMe (δH 3.90) to C-5 (δC 161.5), demonstrated that the isolated methylene of C-11 was located at C-8, as well as two methoxy groups were respectively linked to C-5 and C-11. The anomeric proton H-1″ (δH 5.14) showed obvious HMBC correlation to C-7 and revealed that the glucose was linked to C-7. Finally, a free hydroxyl group linked to C-2″ was identified by considering its molecular formula. Therefore, the structure of compound 1 was determined as illustrated in Figure 1, named achyranthosides C.

![Figure 2. Key 1H–1H COSY and HMBC correlations of compound 1](image)

Two known compounds 2 and 3 were identified as achyranthoside A and B by analyzing of their NMR data [8]. Structurally, compound 2 was determined as a methoxylated derivative of compound 1 that was supported by the remained methoxy signal at δH 3.41 (3H, s) and δC 58.4. Compound 3 was a common isoflavonoid glycoside, which was different from compound 2 in that one methoxy group was directly connected to C-8.

3.2. Antioxidant Activity

The in vitro cytotoxicity of isolated compounds (1-3) on rat cardiomyocytes (H9c2) were evaluated by CCK-8 assay. The results showed they all had no cytotoxicity and could protect H9c2 cells in a concentration-dependent manner at the concentration of 6.25-100 μM (Figure 3). Further, their antioxidant capacities were investigated in H9c2 cells submitted to hydrogen peroxide (H2O2). It was found that the activities of SOD in H9c2 cells pretreated with compounds 1-3 (12.5, 25, 50 μM) were all obviously decreased than control groups (P < 0.05) (Figure 4). SOD activities were improved in a concentration-dependent manner relative to the H2O2 group (P < 0.05), indicating that the isoflavonoid glycosides (1-3) could enhance the oxidation resistance in H9c2 cells. Significantly, 25 and 50 μM of compounds 1 and 2 displayed activity equivalent to or higher than positive control vitamin C.
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![Graph showing cell viabilities of H9c2 cells in the presence of compounds 1–3](image)

**Figure 3.** Cell viabilities of H9c2 cells in the presence of compounds 1–3

* *P < 0.05, **P < 0.001, #P < 0.05, compared with the control group

![Graph showing SOD activities in H9c2 cells treated with H2O2](image)

**Figure 4.** Effect of compounds 1–3 on SOD activities in H9c2 cells treated with H2O2. Vitamin C was used as a positive control (20 μg/L approximately equal to 0.11 μM)

* *P < 0.05, **P < 0.001, #P < 0.05, compared with the H2O2 group

4. Conclusion

This study reports the isolation, structural elucidation, and the antioxidant activity of three isoflavonoid glucosides from the rhizomes of A. bidentata. Compounds 1-2 are the rare type of C8-hydroxymethylated isoflavonoid glycosides in nature. Bioassay results indicated that all the three monomers had certain antioxidant activity, and 25 and 50 μM of compounds 1 and 2 displayed activity equivalent to or higher than positive control vitamin C. This study can provide effective information for further understanding of the rhizomes of A. bidentata.

Acknowledgments

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Supporting Information

Supporting information accompanies this paper on http://www.acgpubs.org/journal/records-of-natural-products

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References

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