

Kertas Asli/Original Articles

Chemical Constituents and Biological Activities of *Mitrella Kentii* (Blume) Miq. Leaf Oil

(Komponen Kimia dan Aktiviti Biologi Minyak Daun *Mitrella Kentii* (Blume) Miq.)

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ABSTRACT

Chemical constituents and biological activities of the Mitrella kentii leaf oil were investigated in this study. Gas chromatography (GC) and gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) were used to determine the chemical constituents of the oil. The oil was evaluated for its ability to inhibit prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂) and thromboxane B₂ (TXB₂) productions in human whole blood using a radioimmunoassay technique. Its inhibitory effect on platelet-activating factor (PAF) receptor binding with rabbit platelets using ³H-PAF as a ligand and its free radical scavenging effect on DPPH were also investigated. Caryophyllene oxide (33.8%w/w), E,Z-farnesol (6.9%), benzyl benzoate (6.5%w/w) and viridiflorol (6.5%w/w) were among the major components of the oil. Even though weak inhibitory activities were observed in both PGE₂ and TXB₂ assays, significant results were obtained in both PAF receptor binding inhibition and 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) scavenging effect with IC₅₀ value of 6.6 µg/mL and 155.6 µg/mL respectively. These promising activities warrant the development of the oil as an anti-inflammatory agent.

Keywords: *Mitrella kentii*; platelet-activating factor (PAF); prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂); thromboxane B₂ (TXB₂); DPPH assay

ABSTRAK

Komponen kimia dan aktiviti biologi minyak daun Mitrella kentii dikaji. Kromatografi gas (GC) dan spektrometri jisim-kromatografi gas (GC-MS) digunakan untuk menentukan unsur-unsur kimia minyak. Minyak dinilai kerana keupayaannya untuk merencat penghasilan prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂) dan tromboksan B₂ (TXB₂) dalam darah manusia menggunakan teknik radioimunoasai. Kesan perencatan pada reseptor faktor pengaktif platelet (PAF) yang mengikat dengan platelet arnab menggunakan ³H-PAF sebagai ligan dan kesan pengaruhnya radikal bebas terhadap DPPH juga dikaji. Kariofilena oksida (33.8%), E, Z-farnesol (6.9%), benzil benzoat (6.5%) dan viridiflorol (6.5%) adalah di antara komponen utama minyak. Walaupun aktiviti perencatan yang lemah diperhatikan dalam ujian PGE₂ dan TXB₂, hasil yang signifikan diperolehi dalam kedua-dua perencatan pengikat PAF dan kesan hapus-sisa 2,2-difenil-1-pikrihidazil (DPPH) dengan nilai IC₅₀ 6.6 µg / mL dan 155.6 µg / mL masing-masing. Aktiviti yang menunjukkan bahawa minyak daun boleh dibangunkan sebagai agen anti-radang.

Kata kunci: *Mitrella kentii*; faktor pengaktif platelet (PAF); prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂); thromboxane B₂ (TXB₂); Asai DPPH

INTRODUCTION

Mitrella kentii (Blume) Miq. which synonyms are *Melodorum pisocarpum* and *M. Elegans* belongs to the Annonaceae (custard-apple) family. It is widely distributed in the tropics and has been used traditionally as a remedy for fever (Wiar 2006). Among the chemical constituents that have been isolated from this species are liriodenine, anonaine, asimilobine, aequaline (Ellis et al. 1972), neolinderatin, linderatin, 2',6'-dihydroxy-4' methoxydihydrochalcone and catechin (Benosman et al.

1997), Despite the reported compounds of the extracts, very little is known about the oil of *M. kentii*. Nevertheless, essential oils of other Annonaceae species are well studied for instance Ylang-ylang oil (*Cananga odorata*) which has high content of linalool and benzyl acetate (Sacchetti et al. 2005), monoterpene hydrocarbons and sesquiterpene hydrocarbons in *Monodora myristica* (Onyenekwe et al. 1993), sesquiterpenes and cadinene derivatives in *Asimina triloba* (Farag 2009). Moreover, essential oil from *Dennettia tripetala* was reported to have analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties (Oyemitan et al. 2008) whereas

leaf oil of *Desmopsis bibracteata*, *Guatteria diospyroides*, *Guatteria oliviformis* and *Unonopsis costaricensis* possess an antibacterial activity (Palazzo et al. 2009). Antibacterial activity also was reported for the essential oil from *Miliusa tomentosa* (Badgujar et al. 2011).

Taking into consideration the anti-inflammatory activity reported for *Dennettia tripetala* (Oyemitan et al. 2008), it is worthwhile to investigate the action of *M. kentii* on inflammatory mediators such as prostaglandin E_2 (PGE_2), thromboxane A_2 (TXB_2) and platelet aggregating factor (PAF). PGE_2 is a metabolite of arachidonic acid (AA) through the cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2) pathway and TXB_2 is a metabolite from the cyclooxygenase-1 (COX-1) pathway. PGE_2 is a key mediator in the inflammatory process (Yu et al. 2007) whereas TXB_2 is a potent vasoconstrictor and it also stimulates platelet aggregation (Fitzgerald et al. 1983). Moreover, PAF is a potent glycerophospholipid inflammatory mediator which involve in several pathophysiological conditions such as inflammation (Braquet et al. 1987), allergy (Krauze-Baranowska et al. 2002), asthma (Vargaftig et al. 1987) and thrombosis (Kloprogge et al. 1984). Specific receptors for PAF (PAFr) have been reported in a variety of cell membranes including those from platelets (Hwang et al. 1983). Compounds which can inhibit the productions of PGE_2 and TXB_2 and prevent the specific binding of PAF to PAFr may be used as lead structures in the development of potent anti-inflammatory and cardiovascular agents. Furthermore, PAF antagonists have also been reported to have some correlation with the production of free radicals (Arribas-Gomez et al. 1995) and hence, compounds which interfere with the biosynthesis of inflammatory mediators are likely to inhibit the production of free radicals. Free radicals are involve in various pathological conditions including the development of degenerative diseases, diabetes, hepatotoxicity, nephrotoxicity, inflammation, cancer, cardiovascular disorders, neurological disorders, and the aging process (Marx 1987).

In this work, the chemical constituents of *M. kentii* leaf oil were analysed using gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC/MS). The inhibitory activities of the leaf oil on TXB_2 and PGE_2 productions were investigated using radioimmunoassay. The antagonistic effect of the leaf oil on PAFr and its free radical scavenging ability were also studied.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

MATERIAL

Hexane, ethyl acetate and methanol used were of analytical grades. Radiolabelled PGE_2 ($[^3H]$ - PGE_2 , 50 μ Ci/mmol)

and TXB_2 ($[^3H]$ - TXB_2 , 25 μ Ci/mmol) were purchased from Amersham (Buckinghamshire, UK). Unlabelled PGE_2 , unlabelled TXB_2 , anti- PGE_2 and anti- TXB_2 were obtained from Sigma Chemical Co. (St. Louis, MO, USA). Radiolabeled PAF (1-*O*-alkyl-2-acetyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine, 125 Ci/mmol) was purchased from Amersham. Unlabeled PAF and cedrol were obtained from Sigma Chemical Co. Bovine Serum Albumin (BSA) was purchased from Boehringer Mannheim Co. (Mannheim, West Germany). Other chemicals were purchased from Merck Co. (Darmstadt, Germany) and BDH Laboratory Supplies (Poole, UK). Ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid (EDTA) 2% was used as an anticoagulant. Lipopolysaccharide (LPS) 1 mg/mL was used to induce prostaglandin endoperoxide synthesis in whole blood. Phosphate buffer solutions (PBS) 0.01M, pH 7.4 was used as buffer for assays. Dextran charcoal (0.4% dextran, 2% charcoal) was used to separate the free and bound ligand. Scintillation cocktail was made up of 2,5-diphenyloxazole (PPO, 0.26%), 2,2'-*p*-phenylene-bis(5-phenyloxazole) (POPOP, 0.006%), toluene (500 mL) and Triton X (250 mL). Radioactivity was measured by a liquid scintillation counter (LSC) (Packard Tri-Carb, models 2100TR/2300TR, Hamburg, Germany).

PLANT MATERIALS

Fresh leaves of *M. kentii* were collected from the Cameron Highlands mountain forest in Pahang, Malaysia in October 2006 and identified by Dr Kamarudin Mat Salleh, Faculty of Science and Technology, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). A voucher specimen (AZ 69) was deposited at the Herbarium of the Faculty of Science and Technology, UKM.

Plant leaves were air-dried, ground to mesh size 40-60 (1 kg) and extracted with hexane in triplicate (2.5 L, 24 hours each) using cold maceration technique (Wu et al. 2015) at room temperature (29°C). The solvent was then evaporated using a rotary evaporator to give 0.9 ± 0.3 %w/w of the leaf oil (dried sample).

ANALYSIS OF THE LEAF OIL

The GC/MS analyses (in triplicate) were carried out using the Hewlett Packard GC-MSD 7890A/5975C gas chromatographs equipped with a fused silica capillary column HP-5MS (5% phenylmethylsiloxane, 30 m x 0.25 mm, film thickness of 0.25 μ m) and the Shimadzu GC-2010 equipped with a flame ionizing detector (FID) and a CBP-5 (25 m x 0.22 mm, film thickness of 0.25 μ m) capillary column. Temperature of injector and detector was maintained at 230°C. The oven temperature

was raised from 60°C to 230°C at a heating rate of 3°C/min and then held at 230°C for 1 minute. Helium gas at a linear velocity of 50 cm/s was used as a carrier. The diluted leaf oil (1 µL) in ethyl acetate (1:5) was injected in a pulsed split mode (auto-injector Shimadzu AOC-20i).

Compositions of the leaf oil were determined by comparing their retention indices relative to C₉-C₂₂ alkanes (van Den Dool H & Kratz 1963) on the CBP-5 column with literature values (McFadden 1973) and their mass spectra with the Wiley and Adams libraries. The percentage compositions of the leaf oil were calculated based on the peak areas obtained from the FID without any corrections.

CELL VIABILITY

Cell viability was determined by the standard trypan blue exclusion method. The blood cells (1 × 10⁶/mL) were incubated with 1.25 and 10.0 µg/mL of extracts each in triplicate at room temperature (27°C) for 24 hours. The blue dye uptake was an indication of cell death. The percentage viability was calculated from the total cell counts.

RADIOIMMUNOASSAY FOR PGE₂ AND TXB₂

Radioimmunoassay was carried out to determine the levels of PGE₂ and TXB₂ productions by blood cells following incubation with compounds and coagulation according to the modified method of Patrignani et al. (1994). The use of human blood was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) (approval no. FF-168-2007). Radioimmunoassay procedures were carried out in triplicate for each compound.

PREPARATION OF STANDARDS

A series of PGE₂ and TXB₂ standards concentrations were prepared, ranging from 2.45–240 and 2.05–500 pg/0.1 mL, respectively. PGE₂ standard solution (100 µL) was added to 100 µL of anti-PGE₂ and 100 µL of ³H- PGE₂. Meanwhile, 100 µL of TXB₂ standard solution was added to 100 µL of anti-TXB₂ and 100 µL of ³H - TXB₂. The mixtures were incubated at 4°C for 18–24 hours. After incubation, the mixtures were added with 200 µL of dextran charcoal and were incubated again for 10 minutes. After centrifugation at 2000 × g for 15 minutes at 4°C, 3 mL of liquid scintillation cocktail was added to 300 µL of supernatant. The radioactivity was measured by a liquid scintillation counter.

PGE₂ RADIOIMMUNOASSAY

Briefly, venous blood was obtained in polypropylene tube containing 10% (v/v) of 2% EDTA by aseptic vein puncture from healthy human volunteers who fulfilled the following inclusion criteria: non-smoker, fasted overnight and did not take any medicine or supplements within the last two weeks. Blood (1 mL) was incubated at 37°C for 24 hours with 10 µL of LPS and 10 µL of serial dilutions of leaf oil in dimethyl sulphoxide (DMSO) and ethanol (1:1 ratio) (1.25–10 µg/mL) or control. DMSO and ethanol (1:1 ratio) was used as a negative control and indomethacin, a known cyclooxygenase inhibitor was used as a positive control. After incubation, the blood was centrifuged at 2,000 × g for 10 min at 4°C to separate the plasma. The reaction mixtures consisted of 100 µL of plasma, 100 µL of anti-PGE₂ and 100 µL of [³H]-PGE₂ were incubated at 4°C for 18–24 hours. After incubation, the mixtures were added with 200 µL of dextran charcoal and were incubated again for 10 minutes. The final concentrations of the samples in the mixture were 10.0, 5.0, 2.5 and 1.25 µg/mL. After centrifugation at 3,000 × g for 15 minutes at 4°C, 3 mL of liquid scintillation cocktail was added to 300 µL of supernatant. The radioactivity was measured by a liquid scintillation counter (Saadawi et al. 2012).

TXB₂ RADIOIMMUNOASSAY

Thromboxane B₂ assay was carried out similarly to the PGE₂ assay. In this assay, 1 mL of blood was mixed with 10 µL of serial dilutions of leaf oil in DMSO and ethanol (1:1 ratio) (1.25–10 µg/mL) or control was allowed to clot for 60 minutes at 37°C. DMSO and ethanol (1:1 ratio) was used as a negative control and indomethacin was used as a positive control. The blood was centrifuged at 2,000 × g for 10 minutes at 4°C to separate the serum as supernatant. The reaction mixtures consisted of 100 µL of serum, 100 µL of anti-TXB₂ and 100 µL of [³H]-TXB₂ were incubated at 4°C for 18–24 hours. After incubation, the mixtures were added with 200 µL of dextran charcoal and were incubated again for 10 minutes. The final concentrations of the sample in the mixture were 10.0, 5.0, 2.5 and 1.25 µg/mL. After centrifugation at 3,000 × g for 15 minutes at 4°C, 3 mL of liquid scintillation cocktail was added to 300 µL of supernatant. The radioactivity was measured by liquid scintillation counter (Saadawi et al. 2012).

CALCULATION OF PGE₂ AND TXB₂ CONCENTRATIONS

The readings obtained for each set of triplicate were averaged. The net counts for all standards and samples were

calculated by subtracting the value of the antibody binding to the antigen in the sample (Bx) with non specific binding (Nc). The normalized percentage bound (% B/Bo) for each standard and sample (Bx) were calculated as follows:

$$\% B/Bo = \frac{Bx - Nc}{Bo - Nc} \times 100 \% \quad (1)$$

The % B/Bo for each standard versus the corresponding concentration of PGE₂ and TXB₂ were plotted using semi-logarithmic graph. The concentrations of PGE₂ and TXB₂ in each sample were determined by interpolation from the standard curve. Percentage inhibition of samples was obtained as follows:

$$\% \text{ inhibition} = \left\{ 100 - \frac{[\text{PGE}_2 \text{ or TXB}_2 \text{ in sample}]}{[\text{PGE}_2 \text{ or TXB}_2 \text{ in control}]} \right\} \times 100 \quad (2)$$

PAF RECEPTOR BINDING INHIBITORY ASSAY (PAF ASSAY)

The assay was carried out according to the method described by Jantan et al. (2001). The procedure was approved by the Animal Ethics Committee of UKM (approval no. FSKB/2007/Juriyati/10-July/192). The reaction mixtures consisted of 200 µL of washed rabbit platelet suspension, 25 µL of ³H-PAF (2.0nM) with or without unlabeled 25 µL of PAF (2.0 µM) and 25 µL of leaf oil (200 µg/mL) or control solution. The final concentration of leaf oil in the reaction mixtures were 18.2, 9.1, 4.5, 2.3 µg/mL. Cedrol, a known PAF antagonist was used as a positive control and 0.1% DMSO in saline was used as a negative control. The final concentration of DMSO in the reaction mixture was fixed at 0.1% to avoid interference with the receptor binding studies. The reaction mixture was incubated at room temperature (29°C) for 1 hour. The free and bound ligands were separated by a filtration technique using Whatman GF/C glass fiber filters. The radioactivity was measured by a scintillation counter. The difference between total amounts of bound ³H-PAF in the absence and the presence of excess unlabeled PAF is defined as specific binding of the radiolabeled ligand. The IC₅₀ values of the extracts were obtained from at least three independent determinations. Percentage inhibition of the sample was obtained by the following equation:

$$\% \text{ Inhibition} = \frac{(Tc - Nc) - (Ts - Ns)}{Tc - Nc} \times 100 \quad (3)$$

Tc = Total binding of control

Ts = Total binding of sample

Nc = Nonspecific binding of control

Ns = Nonspecific binding of sample

1,1-DIPHENYL -2-PICRYLHYDRAZYL (DPPH) RADICAL SCAVENGING ASSAY

Radical scavenging activity of the leaf oil was determined as described (Moharam et al. 2010) where 2 mL of methanol oil (0.8 mg/mL of methanol) was mixed with 2 mL of DPPH (0.1 mM in methanol). The mixture was shaken vigorously and stored in darkness at 37°C for 30 minutes. Then, the absorbance was measured at 517 nm (Shimadzu 1601 UV-visible spectrophotometer). The reaction was carried out in triplicate. The percentage of radical scavenging activity was calculated by comparing the results of the test with those of the control (not treated with oil):

$$\text{Percentage inhibition} = \frac{(\text{Absorbance of control} - \text{Absorbance of test}) \times 100}{\text{Absorbance of control}} \quad (4)$$

The leaf oil was subsequently tested at serial concentrations (0.19-400 µg/mL) to determine the IC₅₀ values. The IC₅₀ values of the sample were obtained by the Probit computer program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EXTRACTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF COMPOUNDS

Maceration and solvent extraction (hexane) of *M. Kentii* leaves yielded 0.9 ± 0.3% of oil (w/w based on dry plant material weight). The ion chromatograms of the studied oil are shown on Figure 1. Thirteen compounds were identified in the leaf oil (Table 1).

Solvent extraction is among a common method used to isolate oils from natural products (Jantan et al. 2004, Taylor 1993). To the best of the authors' knowledge, total constituents of the oil have not been reported elsewhere. The oil is rich in sesquiterpenes (hydrocarbon and oxygenated) represented the highest percentage in the leaf oil. The major compounds are caryophyllene oxide (33.8%), (*E,Z*) farnesol (6.9%), viridiflorol and benzyl benzoate (6.5%) whereas cubenol (0.9%), (*E*)-phytol acetate (1.0%) whereas methyl linoleate (1.2%) is the least component of the leaves. Annonaceae species are known to contain monoterpene and sesquiterpene hydrocarbons (Onyenekwe et al. 1993). Caryophyllene on the other hand was found in the essential oil derived from *Annona cherimola* (Bowman et al. 1997), *Annona senegalensis*

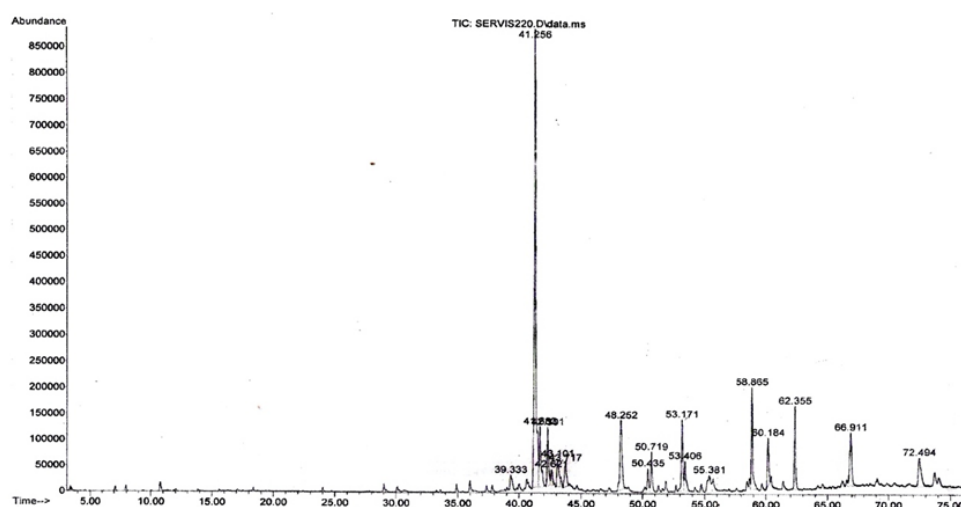


TABLE 1. Percentage composition of the *Mitrella kentii* leaf oil

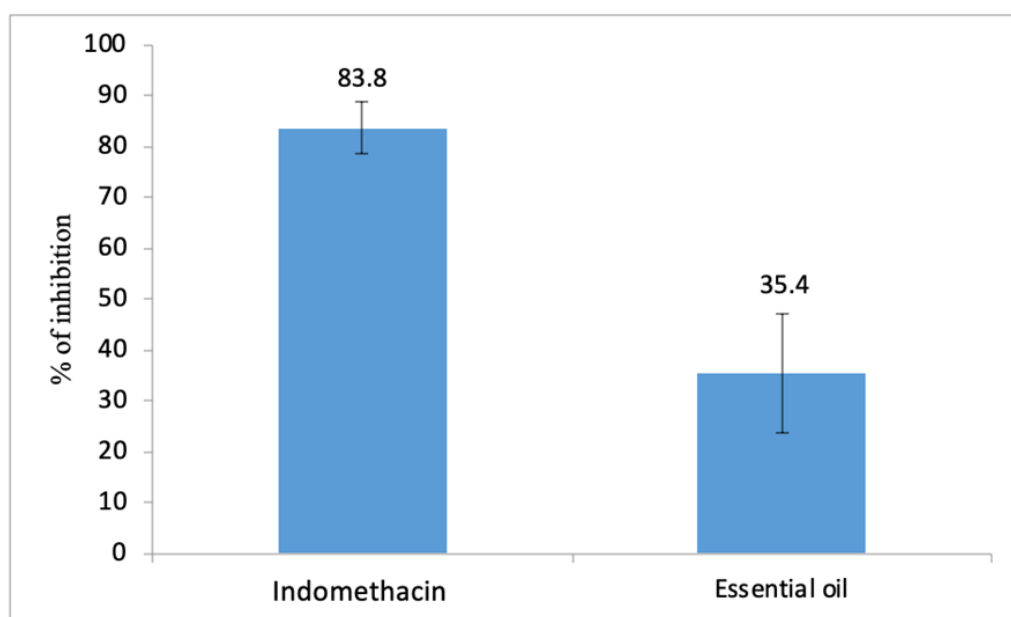


FIGURE 2. Percentage (%) inhibition of essential oil from leaves of *M. Kentii* at a concentration of 10 µg/mL on PGE₂ production in human blood plasma induced by LPS (10 µg/mL). *P > 0.05, mean + SD (n=3).

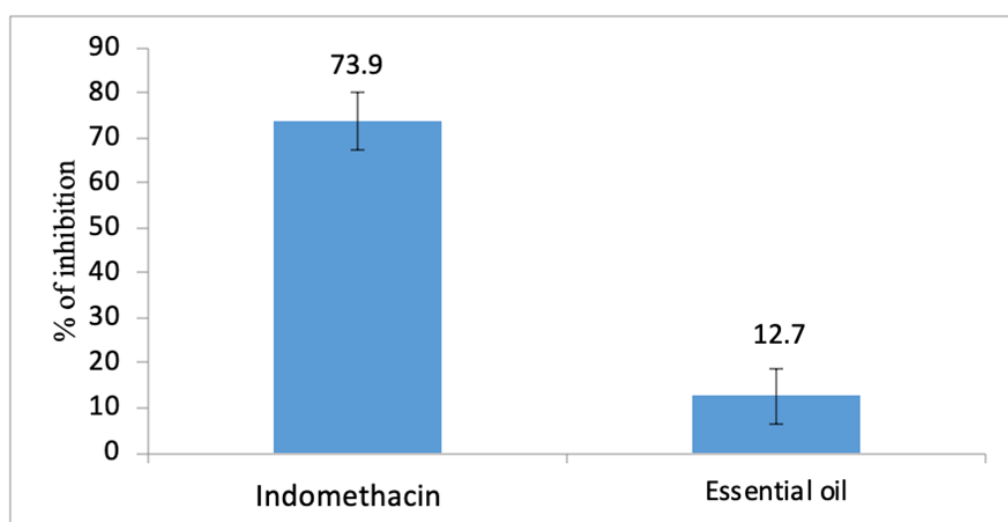


FIGURE 3. Percentage (%) inhibition of essential oil from leaves of *M. kentii* at a concentration of 10 µg/mL on TXB₂ production in human blood serum. *P > 0.05, mean + SD (n=3).

EFFECT OF THE LEAF OIL ON ³H-PAF RECEPTOR BINDING

The leaf oil showed significant inhibitory effects on the PAF receptor binding with percentages of inhibition of 73.1% which is comparable to that of the positive control, cedrol (76.3%) (Figure 4), a known PAF antagonist from natural sources (Jantan et al. 2004) at concentration of 18.2 µg/mL. The inhibitory effect of the leaf oil was then evaluated at various concentrations (1.8 -18.2 µg/mL) and the IC₅₀ values were determined by probit analysis as 6.6 µg/mL (Table 2).

The leaf oil showed relatively strong PAF antagonistic activity and its dose-dependent responses are shown in Figure 4. Caryophyllene oxide content of the leaf oil might contribute to this activity as similar activity was observed on the *Goniothalamus* species which contain the mentioned essential oil component (Moharam et al. 2010). The leaf oil inhibited the specific binding between PAF and receptors and thus can be investigated further in the development of therapeutic agents for a variety of inflammation, respiratory, immunological and cardiovascular disorders (Han et al. 2014).

RADICAL SCAVENGING ACTIVITY

Spectrophotometric measurement for color changes at 517 nm wavelength showed that the essential oil effect as DPPH scavenger is dose-dependent (Figure 5). At the concentration of 0.8 mg/mL, the essential oil has strong effect as DPPH scavenger (86.9% inhibition) when compared with the positive control vitamin C (91.3%

inhibition). Nonetheless, the IC_{50} value of the oil (155.6 ± 2.8) is higher than that of vitamin C (4.2 ± 1.3) (Table 3). The radical scavenging activity observed might be due to the benzyl esters content of the leaf oil. *Cananga odorata* which belongs to the family of Annonaceae and has high content of benzyl esters showed similar activity (Sacchetti et al. 2005).

TABLE 2. IC_{50} of the *M. kentii* ($\mu\text{g/mL}$) leaf oil on PAF receptor binding to rabbit platelets

No	Compound	IC_{50} ($\mu\text{g/mL}$)
1	Essential oil	6.6 ± 0.7
2	Cedrol (positive control)	6.2 ± 0.3

Data are mean $\pm$ SD (n = 3).

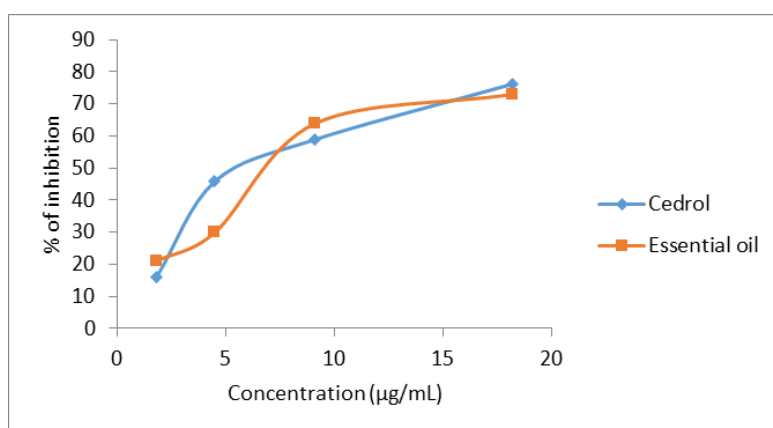


FIGURE 4. Percentage (%) inhibition of essential oil from the leaves of *M. kentii* on PAF receptor binding to rabbit platelets.

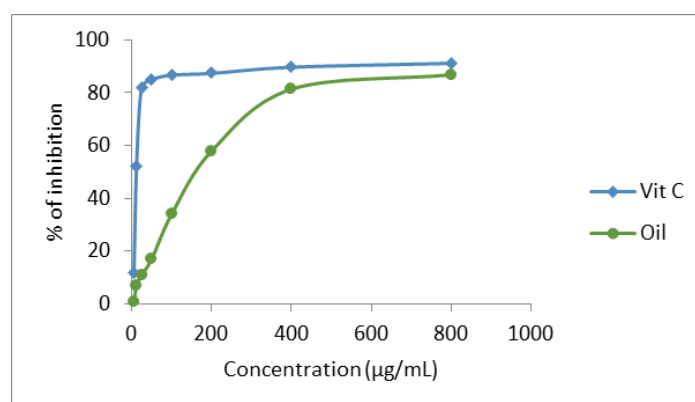


FIGURE 5. Percentage (%) of DPPH scavenging activity for essential oil from *M. kentii*.

TABLE 3. IC_{50} ($\mu\text{g/mL}$) for the *M. kentii* leaf oil (more than 50% inhibition) as a DPPH scavenger

No	Compound	IC_{50} ($\mu\text{g/mL}$)
1	Essential oil	155.6 ± 2.8
2	Vitamin C (positive control)	4.2 ± 1.3

Data are mean $\pm$ standard deviation (n = 3).

CONCLUSION

The leaf oil of *M. Kentii* was identified to contain thirteen compounds and some of the compounds are similar to those found in the Annonacea family. The leaf oil showed low inhibitory activities on PGE₂ production in human blood induced by LPS and TXB₂ production. Nonetheless, the promising PAF antagonistic effect of the leaf oil might be due to the presence of caryophyllene oxide. Furthermore, benzyl ester components of the leaf oil might contribute to the radical scavenging activity exhibited by the leaf oil. The leaf oil has potential to be developed further as an antiinflammatory and antioxidant agents. Detailed study on whether a single compound of the leaf oil is responsible for the activities mentioned or the compounds work synergistically can be undertaken.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to thank the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia for the financial support (Grants no.: 02-01-02-SF0016 and 02-01-02-SF0510) and Dr. Azmath Jaleel for his help in editing the manuscript.

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