Triterpenoids from the Stem Bark of *Avicennia officinalis*

Md. Enamul Haque, Hussain Uddin Shekhar, Akim Uddin Mohamad, Hafizur Rahman, AKM Mydul Islam and M. Sabir Hossain

Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh

**ABSTRACT:** The triterpenoids, betulinic acid, lupeol and betulinaldehyde, were isolated from the ethyl acetate extract of the stem bark of *Avicennia officinalis* (Avicenniaceae) by a combination of column and preparative thin-layer chromatography over silica gel. The structures of these compounds were determined by spectroscopic analysis (UV, IR, $^1$H NMR, $^{13}$C NMR and EIMS). This is the first report of a systematic phytochemical investigation and the presence of these triterpenoids from this plant.

**Key words:** Triterpenoid, Avicenniaceae, Betulinic acid, Lupeol and Betulinaldehyde

**INTRODUCTION**

*Avicennia officinalis* is a medium-sized tree growing in brackish water. The 15 species in the single genus of Avicenniaceae family are found on tropical coasts as constituents of mangrove vegetation. Previous Phytochemical investigations on the different species of *Avicennia* resulted in the isolation of essential oil and sugars like arabinose, glucose and ribose. Among other compounds alkaloids, flavonoids, steroids, terpenoids and iridoids are most considerable components. In Bangladesh, *Avicennia officinalis* is widely distributed in Sundarban and locally it is known as Baen. This plant is used for thrush in children. The heartwood is rubbed against a course stone. The tree oils of this plant exhibited cytotoxic activity. The earlier studies on this plants resulted in the isolation of C iridoid glucoside, 7-O-trans cinnamoyl-4-epilogenin, geniposidic acid, 2-cinnamoyl-mussaenoside. So far no detail phytochemical and biological studies have been carried out on this plant. Since this plant has good medicinal properties, the present work has been undertaken to isolate, purify and identify secondary metabolites. In this paper the isolation and structural elucidation of the betulinic acid (1), lupeol (2) betulinaldehyde (3) by using spectroscopic techniques like UV, IR, $^1$H NMR, $^{13}$CNMR and EIMS are being reported.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**General.** Melting points were determined on a kolfer hot-stage apparatus and are uncorrected. UV spectrum was taken in MeOH solution using a Perkin-Elmer lambda 9UV/Vis./NIR Spectrometer. IR spectra were recorded on CHCl$_3$ solutions on either a Perkin-Elmer 580 or Philips 9800 FTIR Spectrometer. $^1$H NMR and $^{13}$C NMR spectra were obtained on Bruker WP 200 SY and AM 200 SY instruments ($^1$H, 200, 132 MHz; $^{13}$C, 50.32 MHz) using TMS as internal standard and CDCl$_3$ as solvent. Electron impact mass spectra (EIMS) were recorded using a VG updated MS 12 Spectrometer and optical rotations were measured on an optical activity AA-
100 Polarimeter in CHCl₃ solutions at 20°C. Petroleum ether Specifically refers to the bp 40-60°C fractions.

**Plant materials.** The stem bark of *Avicennia officinalis* Gaertn was collected from Khulna district of Bangladesh. A voucher specimen has been deposited at the Herbarium of the University of Glasgow, Glasgow, U.K.

**Extraction and isolation.** The Sun-dried stem bark powder (500 g) of *A. officinalis* was extracted in a Soxhlet apparatus for three days with EtOAc. This extract was concentrated *in vacuo* and subjected to flash column chromatography over silica gel (Merck Glasgo, Glasgow, U.K. deposited at the Herbarium of the University of Bangladesh. A voucher specimen has been deposited at the Herbarium of the University of Glasgow, Glasgow, U.K.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The ethyl acetate extract of the stem bark of *A. officinalis* afforded three triterpenoids (1-3). The isolated compounds were identified by spectroscopic analysis as well as by comparison of their spectral data with previously reported values.
Betulinic acid (1) was isolated as white crystal (MeOH). IR spectrum exhibited hydroxyl [v<sub>max</sub>: 3610, 1020 cm<sup>-1</sup>] and exomethylene [v<sub>max</sub>: 3070, 1640, 887 cm<sup>-1</sup>] absorption. It mass spectrum displayed an [M<sup>+</sup>] peak at m/z 456 corresponding to C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>48</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, together with fragments at m/z 441 [M<sup>+</sup> -15] and 438 [M<sup>+</sup> -18] and a base peak at m/z 43 [C<sub>3</sub>H<sub>7</sub>].

The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum of (1) revealed signals for five tertiary methyl. [δ<sub>H</sub>: 0.65, 0.75, 0.90, 0.96, 0.98], a vinyl methyl [δ<sub>H</sub>: 1.97 (br d, J=0.5 Hz)], a secondary carbinol [δ<sub>H</sub>: 3.16 (dd, J=9.5 and 6.0 Hz)] and [δ<sub>H</sub>: 2.95 (ddd, J=9.0, 6.0 and 0.5 Hz)] an exomethylene group [δ<sub>H</sub>: 4.55 (1H, d, J=0.4 Hz)] and [δ<sub>H</sub>: 4.65 (1H, d, J=0.4 Hz)]. These data indicated a pentacyclic triterpenoid of betulinic acid and comparison with published data<sup>3</sup> confirmed the identity of (1) as betulinic acid.

The <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum of (3) showed six methyl group [δ<sub>C</sub>: 27.9 (C-23), 15.4 (C-24), 16.2 (C-25), 16.3 (C-26), 14.6 (C-27), 19.6 (C-30)] and exomethylene group [δ<sub>C</sub>: 150.0 (C-30), 108.8 (C-29)] and a secondary hydroxy bearing carbon [δ<sub>C</sub>: 79.0 (C-3) and an carboxyl group at δ<sub>C</sub>: 180.6 (C-28) in addition to ten methylene, five methine and five quaternary carbons. These data were identical to those reported betulinic acid.<sup>3</sup>

Lupeol (2) was isolated as white crystals from methanol and gave mp 210-212° [α]<sub>D</sub> +30.4° (C, 0.58 in CHCl<sub>3</sub>). Its IR spectrum exhibited hydroxyl [v<sub>max</sub>: 3610, 1020 cm<sup>-1</sup>] and exomethylene [v<sub>max</sub>: 3070, 1640, 887 cm<sup>-1</sup>] absorption. The mass spectrum displayed a molecular ion [M<sup>+</sup>] peak at m/z 426 corresponding to C<sub>30</sub>H<sub>50</sub>O together with fragments at m/z 411 [M<sup>+</sup> -15] and 408 [M<sup>+</sup> -18] which were due to the loss of methyl group and a molecule of water from the molecular ion peak. The mass spectrum also showed a base peak at m/z 41 [C<sub>3</sub>H<sub>5</sub>]<sup>+</sup> arising from the loss of the side chain of lupeol. The <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum exhibited six tertiary methyl singlets at [δ<sub>H</sub>: 0.75, 0.77, 0.80, 0.92, 0.94 and 1.02], a methine group at [δ<sub>H</sub>: 1.66 (br d, J=0.5 Hz)], a secondary carbinol group at [δ<sub>H</sub>: 3.20 (dd, J=9.6 and 6.2 Hz)] and an exomethylene group at [δ<sub>H</sub>: 4.58 (1H, d, J=0.4 Hz) and [δ<sub>H</sub>: 4.65 (1H, dq, J=0.4 and 0.5 Hz)] typical of pentacyclic triterpenoid<sup>4,5</sup> of the lupeol (1).

The structural assignment of (2) was further substantiated by its <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum which showed seven methyl groups at [δ<sub>C</sub>: 28.0 (C-23), 19.3 (C-30), 18.0 (C-28), 16.1 (C-25), 15.9 (C-26), 15.4...
(C-24), 14.5 (C-27)], an exomethylene group at \[\delta c: 150.8 \text{ (C-20)}, 109.3 \text{ (C-29)}\] and a secondary hydroxyl bearing carbon at \[\delta c: 78.9 \text{ (C-3)}\], in addition to ten methylene, five methine and five quaternary carbons. The shielding of C-23 methyl of (2) could be due to the influence of the adjacent C-3 hydroxyl group.\(^3,6\) These data were in close agreement with those reported for lupeol (2)\(^3,6\) and further confirmed the identity of (2) as lupeol.

Betulinaldehyde (3) was isolated as crystals (MeOH), mp188-190\(^{\circ}\). It IR spectrum displayed absorption at \(\nu_{\text{max}}: 3300, 2890, 1700, 1640, 885 \text{ cm}^{-1}\). It’s exhibited a \([M^+]\) peak at \(m/z\) 440 corresponding to \(\text{C}_{30}\text{H}_{48}\text{O}_2\) together with fragments at \(m/z\) 425, \([M^+-15]\) and \(410 \ [M^+-18]\) and a base peak at \(m/z\) 41 \([\text{C}_3\text{H}_3^+]\) corresponding to a lupeol type triterpinoid.

The \(^1\text{H}\) NMR spectrum of (3) revealed signals for five tertiary methyl. \([\delta_H: 0.70, 0.80, 0.85, 0.90, 1.20 \text{ and } 1.60]\) a vinyl methyl \([\delta_H: 1.67 \text{ (br d, } J=0.5 \text{ Hz)}\] a secondary carbinol \([\delta_H: 3.17 \text{ (dd, } J=9.5 \text{ and } 6.1 \text{ Hz)})\] and \([\delta_H: 2.95 \text{ (ddd, } J=9.5,6.0 \text{ and } 0.5 \text{ Hz)}\] an exomethylene group \([\delta_H: 4.55 \text{ (1H, } d, J=0.4 \text{ Hz)}\] and \([\delta_H: 4.65 \text{ (1H, } d, J=0.4 \text{ Hz)}\]. These data indicated a pentacyclic triterpinoid of lupeol type with an aldehyde group and comparison with published data\(^6\) confirmed the identity of (3) as betulinaldehyde.

The \(^{13}\text{C}\) NMR spectrum of (3) showed six methyl groups \([\delta c: 27.9 \text{ (C-23)}, 15.4 \text{ (C-24)}, 16.2 \text{ (C-25)}, 16.3 \text{ (C-26)}, 14.6 \text{ (C-27)}, 19.6 \text{ (C-30)}]\) and an
exomethylene group \([\delta_C: 150.0 \text{ (C-20)}, 108.8 \text{ (C-29)}]\) and a secondary hydroxyl bearing carbon \([\delta_C: 79.0 \text{ (C-3)}]\), and an aldehyde group at \([\delta_C: 180.0 \text{ (C-28)}]\), in addition to ten methylene, five methine and five quaternary carbons. These data were identical to those of betulinaldehyde. This is the first report of the isolation of these triterpinoids from *Avicennia Officinalis*. Further analysis may result in the isolation of more biologically active compounds.

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**REFERENCES**