

## HYDROQUINONE: A novel growth inhibitor and apoptosis inducer in U-251 MG CELLS

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**Article Info:** Received 11 April 2019; Accepted 03 June. 2019

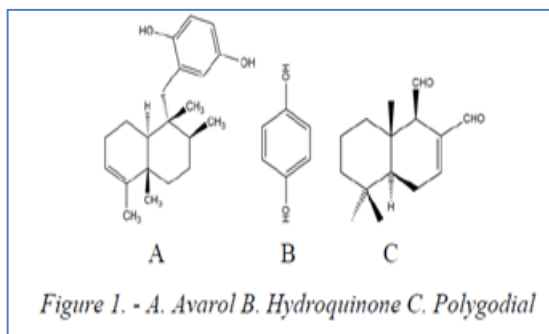
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.32553/ijmbs.v3i6.284>

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**Conflict of interest:** No conflict of interest.

### 1. Introduction

In design of new CNS drugs, profound and selective cytotoxicity, penetration through the blood brain barrier along with lack of neurotoxic effects coupled with no side effects in humans at a dose of 3 mg/kg administered actually make the avarol chemical scaffold (Figure 1) an ideal candidate [1]. This study aimed to screen in vitro structure-activity relationship (along with selectivity) using avarol (followed by its structural elements) and the human malignant glioma U-251 MG cells



### 2. Materials and methods

[1] Avarol, a sesquiterpenoid hydroquinone isolated from the marine sponge *Dysidea avara* using Özge DEMIR protocol. [2] while hydroquinone and polygodial (Figure 1), along with the cells used, were purchased from commercial producers. [3] Cytotoxicity and cell cycle analysis were determined using a colorimetric MTT assay and flow cytometry, respectively. [4] Furthermore, mutagenicity was evaluated by comet assay, while the presence of hydroxyl radicals ( $\bullet\text{OH}$ ) was detected by EPR/ESR spectroscopy.

### 3. Results and discussion

Unlike doxorubicin, avarol and hydroquinone exhibited both significant cytotoxicity and selectivity (Table 1). However, none of these compounds were found to be cytotoxic towards normal (fetal, human) astrocytes.

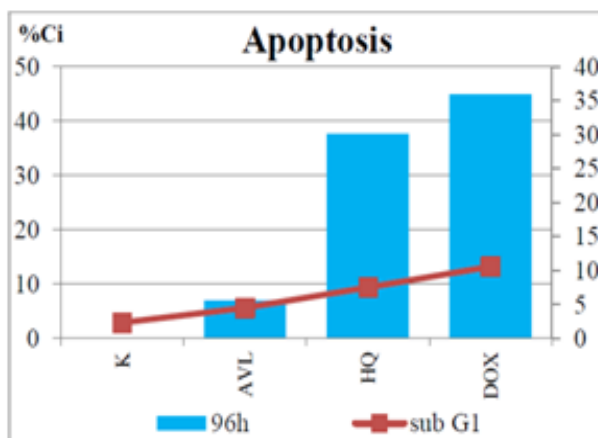
**Table 1. Cytotoxicity of avarol (AVL), hydroquinone (HQ), polygodial (PG), temozolomide (TMZ) and doxorubicin (DOX) towards selected cell lines**

IC <sub>50</sub> [μM]	AVL / HQ	PG	TMZ	DOX
U-251 MG, 96 h	1.22 ± 0.07 /	>100	>100	1.01 ± 0.05
U-87 MG, 96 h	0.94 ± 0.01 2.43 ± 0.12	>100	>100	1.08 ± 0.03
normal astrocytes, 96 h	1.87 ± 0.02 >100 /	>100	>100	0.23 ± 0.03
	>100			

Polygodial, tested due to its chemical similarity with the avarol terpenoid moiety, did not show a cytotoxic effect of relevance towards U-251 MG cells (Table 1). Such a result has confirmed the importance of the hydroquinone part of the avarol scaffold for the screened cytotoxic activities.

In addition to this, proapoptotic effects were observed for avarol and hydroquinone, naturally occurring compounds (sub G1 peak, 96 h, IC<sub>50</sub>, U-251 MG). More precisely, the percentage of specific apoptosis for hydroquinone was 5.38 fold higher, compared with avarol (Figure 2). On the other hand, the percentage of specific necrosis for hydroquinone (0.14 %) was almost 110 fold lower, compared with doxorubicin (15.38 %). No mutagenic effect was observed for both compounds. Finally, the

identification of •OH has revealed one of the mechanisms of U-251 MG cytotoxic activity – production of Reactive Oxygen Species (ROS).



**Figure 2: Proapoptotic effects of avarol (AVL), hydroquinone (HQ) and doxorubicin (DOX) towards U-251 MG cells**

#### 4. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated a profound potential of hydroquinone in the design of new and more effective chemotherapeutic agent(s) specifically targeting malignant gliomas. Last but not least, the use of hydroquinone instead of avarol would undoubtedly contribute to the protection of *D. avara*, the sponge species which has been target of the marine natural product chemists for more than 40 years.

#### References

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2. European Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research-article\_1519798795.pdf