



## Original Article

A new glucosidic iridoid from *Isodon rubescens*
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## ABSTRACT

One new glucosidic iridoid, 6-*O*-veratroylbarlerin, was isolated from the chloroform/methanol extract of *Isodon rubescens* (Hemsl.) H.Hara, Lamiaceae aerial parts, along with the known compounds apigenin and caffeic acid. The structure of the new compound was elucidated on the basis of 1D and 2D NMR experiments and ESI-MS technique.

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## Introduction

*Isodon* (formerly named *Rabdosia*), an important genus of Lamiaceae family, comprised roughly 150 species worldwide, mainly distributed throughout the tropical and subtropical Asia and south-western China (Sun et al., 2006). Several species of the genus *Isodon* have been used in traditional Chinese medicine for the treatment of different diseases (Park, 2011). Among them, *Isodon rubescens* (Hemsl.) H.Hara, a perennial herb widely used in China against inflammation, bacterial infections, respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases and cancer (Ding et al., 2013), is the most popular species. Previous phytochemical investigations of this plant resulted in the isolation of several *ent*-kaurane and *ent*-abietane diterpenoids, that attracted considerable attention due to their diverse structures and interesting biological properties (Gao et al., 2011; Luo et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2017), together with alkaloids, diterpenes (Liu et al., 2015), and phenolic compounds (Du et al., 2010a). To the best of our knowledge, while there have been numerous reports focused on the presence of diterpenoids in the *Isodon* genus, there are no papers concerning iridoids. The present study reports for the first time the

isolation and the structure elucidation of a glucosidic iridoid (**1**) from *I. rubescens* aerial parts, along with three known compounds.

## Materials and methods

## General experimental procedure

Briefly, NMR experiments were recorded on a Bruker DRX-600 spectrometer (Bruker BioSpin, Rheinstetten, Germany) equipped with a Bruker 5 mm TCI CryoProbe, acquiring the spectra in methanol-*d*<sub>4</sub> (Milella et al., 2016). ESI-MS (positive mode) were obtained from a Finnigan LC-Q Advantage Termoquest spectrometer (ThermoFinnigan, USA). Thin Layer Chromatographies (TLC) were performed on precoated Kieselgel 60 F<sub>254</sub> plates (Merck, Darmstadt, Germany) and compounds were detected by cerium disulfate/sulfuric acid (Sigma-Aldrich, Milan, Italy). Column chromatographies were performed over Sephadex LH-20 (40–70 μm, Amersham Pharmacia Biotech AB, Uppsala, Sweden) and over silica gel 60 (Merck, Darmstadt, Germany), followed by reverse phase-high performance liquid chromatography (RP-HPLC) performed on Shimadzu LC-8A series pumping system with Shimadzu RID-10A refractive index detector, C<sub>18</sub> μ-Bondapak column (30 cm × 7.8 mm, 10 μm, Waters, Milford, MA, USA), using mixtures of methanol/water at flow 2.0 ml/min (Bisio et al., 2017). All solvents used for extraction and separation processes were purchased from Sigma-Aldrich (Milan, Italy).

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## Plant material

Dried aerial parts of *Isodon rubescens* (Hemsl.) H.Hara, Lamiaceae, were purchased in November 2008 from Yee Po International Company (Hong Kong) and authenticated by Dr. Fabiano Camangi (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, Pisa, Italy). A sample number was YP08-139.

## Extraction and isolation

Dried aerial parts (700 g) were extracted using increasing polarity solvent hexane, chloroform, chloroform/methanol (9:1, v/v) and methanol by extensive maceration (3 times  $\times$  2 l) (De Leo et al., 2017). The solvent was evaporated under vacuum system obtaining the following yields 8.10, 17.29, 5.67 and 27.73 g, respectively. Briefly, part of the chloroform/methanol (9:1) extract (2.8 g) was separated by Sephadex LH-20 with methanol as eluent. Fractions of 10 ml were collected, analyzed by TLC and grouped into seventeen fractions (A–Q) (Bisio et al., 2016). Fractions L and O were isolated as pure apigenin (39.5 mg) and caffeic acid (4 mg), respectively. Fractions C, D, E, and F (1548 mg) were regrouped and separated by silica gel CC eluting with chloroform followed by increasing concentrations of methanol (between 1% and 100%). Fractions of 5 ml were collected, analyzed by TLC and grouped into 21 fractions (A1–U1). Fraction J1 was isolated as pure oridonin (31.7 mg). Fraction H1 (100.1 mg) was subjected to RP-HPLC with methanol/water (35:65) as eluent and regrouped in fifteen fractions (A2–P2). Fractions C3 was isolated as a pure caffeic acid (1.5 mg,  $t_R$  6 min). Fraction N2 (70.5 mg) was separated by RP-HPLC with methanol/water (45:55) as eluent to give pure compound **1** (1 mg,  $t_R$  40 min).

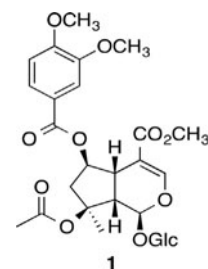
Compound **1**: brownish amorphous solid;  $[\alpha]_D^{25}$ :  $-7$  (c 0.1, MeOH);  $^1H$  and  $^{13}C$  NMR ( $CD_3OD$ , 600 MHz), see Table 1; ESIMS

$m/z$  613  $[M+H]^+$ , 451  $[M+H-162]^+$ ; HRESIMS  $m/z$  613.2120  $[M+H]^+$  (calcd 613.2132 for  $C_{28}H_{37}O_{15}$ ).

## Results and discussion

The phytochemical study of the chloroform/methanol (9:1) extract from *I. rubescens* aerial parts, by means of different chromatographic techniques, led to the isolation of four compounds, of which a new iridoid glucoside (**1**).

Compound **1** was isolated as brownish amorphous solid and was assigned the molecular formula  $C_{28}H_{36}O_{15}$  as deduced from the HRESIMS ( $m/z$  613.2120  $[M+H]^+$ ) and  $^{13}C$  NMR analyses. Spectral data indicated the presence of 11 degree of unsaturation. The ESIMS/MS fragmentation pattern showed an ion fragment at  $m/z$  451 due to the loss of a hexose unit  $[M+H-162]^+$ . Analysis of  $^1H$  NMR data (Table 1) evidenced the presence of a double bond at  $\delta$  7.56 (1H, s), characteristic for a 4-substituted enol-ether system, typical of iridoid skeleton. According to an iridoid structure, one acetal proton ( $\delta$  5.95, d,  $J=2.8$  Hz), one hydroxylated methine ( $\delta$  5.52, br d,  $J=5.0$  Hz), two methines ( $\delta$  3.45, m;  $\delta$  3.11, dd,  $J=3.5, 8.5$  Hz), one methylene ( $\delta$  2.26, dd,  $J=14.0, 5.0$  Hz);  $\delta$  2.50, br d,  $J=14.0$  Hz), and one methyl ( $\delta$  1.62, s) were observed. Furthermore, protons ascribable to a monosaccharide portion were present, with anomeric proton at  $\delta$  4.71 (1H, d,  $J=8.0$ ). In addition, the  $^1H$  NMR spectrum of **1** exhibited characteristic signals of the veratroyl group at  $\delta$  7.09 (1H, d,  $J=8.3$  Hz), 7.58 (1H, d,  $J=1.5$  Hz), and 7.70 (1H, dd,  $J=8.3, 1.5$  Hz). The  $^{13}C$  NMR spectrum confirmed  $^1H$ -NMR data, showing 28 signals (Table 1), of which ten attributable to an iridoidal aglycon moiety, while the remaining eighteen signals were ascribable to a hexose residue, a veratroyl group, and an acetyl function. Thus, the aglycon was identified as shanzhigenin methyl ester (Guo et al., 2001). The downfield shift of 10.0 ppm for C-8 ( $\delta$  89.0), compared with a hydroxy-substituted carbon, led to establish the location of the acetyl group at the same carbon (Damtoft et al., 1981). The location of the veratroyl substituent at C-6 was deduced from the downfield shift of 1.47 ppm for H-6 ( $\delta$  5.52) (Kato et al., 2012). The monosaccharide portion was established to be a glucose on the basis of literature data (Kato et al., 2012). HMBC correlations between H-1'–C-1 and H-1–C-1' confirmed the position at C-1 of the glucopyranosyl portion. The other substituent sites were derived from the HSQC and HMBC correlations which also allowed the assignments of all the resonances of  $^{13}C$  NMR spectrum. The correlations between H-3–C-1, H-3–C-4, H-3–C-5, and H-3–C-11 substantiated the location of the double bond. The presence of methoxy group at C-11 was confirmed by HMBC correlation between H-12–C-11, while the position of methyl group at C-10 was deduced by correlations between H-10–C-7, H-10–C-8, and H-10–C-9. Finally, correlations between H-7–C-5, H-7–C-6, H-7–C-8, H-7–C-9, and H-7–C-10 were consistent with the established aglycon structure. Thus, compound **1** was identified as 6-*O*-veratroylbarlerin.



Together with the new iridoid glucoside, oridonin (Lu et al., 2006), caffeic acid (Chang et al., 2009), and apigenin (Alwahsh et al., 2015) were isolated and characterized by comparison of  $^1H$  and  $^{13}C$  NMR spectra and MS data with those reported in the literature. *I.*

**Table 1**  
 $^1H$ - and  $^{13}C$ -NMR data of compound **1** in  $CD_3OD$ ,  $\delta$  ppm,  $J$  (Hz).<sup>a</sup>

Position	<b>1</b>	
	$\delta_H$	$\delta_C$
1	5.95 d (2.8)	95.2
3	7.56 s	153.4
4		107.0
5	3.45 m	39.7
6	5.52 br d (5.0)	79.0
7a	2.26 dd (14.0, 5.0)	44.5
7b	2.50 br d (14.0)	
8		89.0
9	3.11 dd (3.5, 8.5)	50.2
10	1.62 s	21.4
11		168.0
12	3.69 s	51.6
Glc-1'	4.71 d (8.0)	100.1
2'	3.23 dd (8.0, 9.0)	74.2
3'	3.37 t (9.0)	78.0
4'	3.30 t (9.0)	71.3
5'	3.39 m	77.7
6'	3.70 o	62.8
	3.54 dd (12.0, 3.5)	
Vrt-7'		167.0
1''	7.58 d (1.5)	123.5
2''		113.3
3''	7.09 d (8.3)	149.9
4''	7.70 dd (8.3, 1.5)	154.6
5''	3.93 s	111.6
6''	3.91 s	124.9
OCH <sub>3</sub> -3''		56.2
OCH <sub>3</sub> -4''	1.91 s	56.0
OCOCH <sub>3</sub>		172.3
OCOCH <sub>3</sub>		21.2

<sup>a</sup> Data assignments were confirmed by DQF-COSY, HSQC and HMBC experiments. Glc, glucose; Vrt, veratroyl; o, overlapped.

**Table 2**  
Occurrence of caffeic acid and apigenin/apigenin derivatives in the *Isodon/Rabdosia* genera.

Plant species	Caffeic acid	Apigenin	Apigenin glycosides	References
<i>I. eriocalyx</i> var. <i>laxiflora</i>	+			Niu et al. (2003)
<i>I. japonicus</i>	+			Hong et al. (2009)
<i>I. lophanthoides</i>	+			Feng et al. (2013)
<i>I. lophanthoides</i> var. <i>gerardianus</i>	+		+	Tang et al. (2015); Feng et al. (2016)
<i>I. lophanthoides</i> var. <i>graciliflorus</i>	+		+	Zhou et al. (2014); Tang et al. (2015)
<i>I. nervosa</i>	+			Du et al. (2010b)
<i>I. oresbius</i>		+		Hao et al. (1996)
<i>I. rubescens</i>	+			Du et al. (2010a)
<i>I. sculponeata</i>	+			Jiang et al. (2002)
<i>I. serra</i>	+		+	Liu et al. (2010); Tang et al. (2015)
<i>I. sorra</i>	+		+	Chen et al. (2013); Tang et al. (2015)
<i>I. striatus</i>	+		+	Tang et al. (2015)
<i>I. ternifolius</i>		+		Na et al. (2002)
<i>I. xerophilus</i>	+			Hou et al. (2011)
<i>R. excisa</i>	+			Tang et al. (2014)
<i>R. japonica</i>		+		Shen et al. (2009); Liu et al. (2013)
<i>R. japonica</i> var. <i>glaucoalyx</i>	+	+	+	Zhang et al. (2006); Yao et al. (2013)
<i>R. lophanthoides</i>	+		+	Kuang et al. (2014); Lu (2015)
<i>R. lophanthoides</i> var. <i>gerardiana</i>	+			Lu et al. (2013)
<i>R. rubescens</i>	+			Tang et al. (2011); Guo et al. (2017)
<i>R. flexicaulis</i>	+			Li et al. (2015)
<i>R. serra</i>	+			Zhu et al. (2013)

*rubescens* is known as one of the best source of oridonin (Harris et al., 2012). The occurrence of caffeic acid and apigenin with its derivatives in *Isodon/Rabdosia* genera is illustrated in Table 2. In conclusion, this is the first report about the isolation of a glucosidic iridoid from *Isodon* genus.

#### Author's contribution

MD and NM planned the experiments. SB carried out the extraction and purification of compounds. NM performed the NMR experiments. SV and MDL contributed to the interpretation of results. MDL and MD wrote the first draft of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the critical revision of the manuscript.

#### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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