

Article

LC-MS Based Metabolite Profiling Leaves Extract of *Pluchea indica* **With Antioxidant Activity**

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Abstract

Pluchea indica, a plant known for producing secondary metabolites such as flavonoids, alkaloids, tannins, saponins, terpenoids, and phenols, exhibits notable antioxidant activity. This study aimed to compare the antioxidant compound profiles of *P. indica* leaves using LC-MS analysis and evaluate their antioxidant activities through DPPH assays. Additionally, molecular docking was conducted to predict the binding interactions between NADPH oxidase (receptor) and selected small-molecule ligands (compounds from *P. indica*). Leaf extracts of *P. indica* obtained through maceration and Soxhlet extraction were analyzed via LC-MS to identify their chemical composition. Antioxidant activity was assessed using the DPPH assay at three concentration levels: 10 ppm, 50 ppm, and 100 ppm, with absorbance measured at 515 nm using a UV-vis spectrophotometer. Furthermore, molecular docking simulations were performed for the top five compounds against the NADPH oxidase receptor (PDB ID: 4Z3D) to determine their antioxidant potential. The LC-MS analysis of Soxhlet-extracted *P. indica* leaves identified 112 compounds, with the top five being Kaempferol 3-glucosyl-(1→2)-[glucosyl-(1→3)-rhamnoside], Quercetin 3 glucosyl-(1→2)-rhamnoside-7-glucoside, Luteolin-7-O-(6''-malonylglucoside), 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6,3' dimethoxyisoflavone 7-O-(6''-glucosylglucoside), and 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6-methoxyisoflavone 4'-O-(6'' glucosylglucoside). Antioxidant activity assays revealed IC₅₀ values of 76.76 ppm and 62.58 ppm for maceration and Soxhlet extracts, respectively. Molecular docking results highlighted 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6-methoxyisoflavone 4'-O-(6'' glucosylglucoside) as having the best binding affinity, with a free energy value of -5.58 kcal/mol, an inhibition constant of 51.14 μM, and five hydrogen bonds involving GLN 105, PHE 94, VAL 96, SER 139, and ALA 235.

Keywords: *: Antioxidant, LC-MS, Molecular Docking, Pluchea indica*

Graphical Abstract

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Introduction

In the modern era, supported by the development of technology and science, changes in people's lifestyles have a negative impact on health. Lifestyle changes can lead to a decline in people's quality of life due to a decrease in the production of antioxidant compounds in the body, which are compounds used to neutralize the presence of free radicals, thus triggering oxidative stress [1]. Oxidative stress is a condition where the number of free radicals is not balanced with the number of antioxidants in the body. Oxidative stress can trigger the aging process and the onset of degenerative diseases, one of which is cancer [2]. One of the causes of cancer is the presence of free radicals that attack human body cells; these free radicals are the leading cause of cell damage so that they can trigger cancer [3]. The existence of oxidative stress causes the human body to lack an excess supply of antioxidants, there by requiring the use of exogenous antioxidants [4]. Exogenous antioxidants are obtained from foods that enter the body and play a crucial role in fighting excess free radicals in the body [5].

One plant that contains bioactive compounds that act as antioxidants is *Pluchea indica (P. indica)*, which grows wild. The antioxidant content in the leaves of *P. indica* can inhibit free radical reactions by binding free radicals and damage to cells [6]. Research antioxidant of *P. indica* leaves in maceration extract using 96% ethanol is classified as very strong, which produces an IC_{50} value of 37.25 ppm [7]. Antioxidant activity in *P. indica* leaves extracted by Soxhletation with a % inhibition value of 51.681 for saline *P. indica* and 88.377 for nonsaline *P. indica* [8]. Based on the relevance of the research, it can be concluded that *P. indica* leaves can be extracted using cold and hot methods. The extraction carried out is by maceration and Soxhletation. Maceration and Soxhletation are methods that have differences in the temperature used during the extraction process. Maceration and Soxhletation both experience the soaking process, but for Soxhletation, the soaking process occurs after the condensation process [9]. The research aims to determine the antioxidant effect of compounds in *P. indica* leaves extracted by cold and hot extraction identified by Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS). We investigated the effect of maceration and Soxhletation methods on the compound content of *P. indica* leaves. The maceration and soxhlet extracts of *P. indica* leaves were then tested using the DPPH method to identify potential antioxidant compounds. Afterthan, molecular docking: compounds in maceration and soxhletation results of *P. indica* leaves towards NADPH oxisade receptors (pdb id:4z3d) as antioxidant

Material and Methods

Materials and Instrumentations

P. indica leaves were collected from Krandegan Hamlet, RT 002 RW 002, Kalidawir Village, Kalidawir Sub-district, Tulungagung Regency, Indonesia. The materials used were *Pluchea indica* leaves as samples, chloralhydrate reagent, 10% HCl reagent, 96% ethanol (absolute), distilled water, Mg powder, Mayer reagent, Wagner, Dragendorff, chloroform, ammonia, sulfuric acid, 2N HCl, FeCl3, DPPH compound (2,2-diphenyl-2 picrylhydrazili) is a synthetic with free radical and pure vitamin C (ascorbic acid) which acts as a positive control. The main materials used in molecular docking were the five highest compounds from LCMS results stored in pdb format in 3D. The receptor structures (target proteins) of IL-10 (1LQS) and IFN-γ (3BES) are also stored in pdb format on the respective database webservers. The tools used are an LCMS (Liquid et al.) instrument (Shimadzu LCMS-800) and to determine the category of antioxidant compounds using a UV-VIS spectrophotometer instrument (N4S), which will provide data in the form of absorbance to calculate IC₅₀. Other tools are a set of Soxhletation apparatus, a set of maceration tools, a set of glass tools (Pyrex), a microscope, analytical scales (Acis), black cloth to cover the sample during the drying process, a blender, a lab spatula, aluminum foil, water bath for the concentration process, mesh 60 sieves to sift *P. indica* leaf simplicia, filter paper, and spirit burner. The tools used in molecular docking are hardware, namely Lenovo PC IdeaCentre AIO 5i 24IAH7 F0GR006RID Strorm Gray (Intel Core i7 12700H, Win11 Home, 16GB DDR4, Intel ARC

A370M 4GB GDDR6) and PyRx software, ChemDraw Ultra version 22.0, Chem 3D version 22.0, AutoDockTools, Discovery Studio Visualizer 2021 and UCSF Chimera. The webserver used is RCSB (Research Collaboratory for Structural Bioinformatics).

Methods

Sample Preparation. Samples of *Pluchea indica* leaves were picked from Krandegan Hamlet, RT 002 RW 002, Kalidawir Village, Kalidawir Subdistrict, Tulungagung Regency, Indonesia. The sampling technique is purposive sampling, which takes samples based on predetermined and considered criteria, namely non-random sampling [10]. *The collected Pluchea indica leaves were subjected* to the stages of wet sorting, washing using running water, chopping, drying with sunlight covered with black cloth, and dry sorting [11]. *Dried Pluchea indica* leaves were mashed using a blender and then meshed using a 60-sieve to achieve a uniform size that is not too fine or too coarse so that the distillation liquid can penetrate easily [12].

Simplicia Characteristic Test. Macroscopic Test: Macroscopic tests were carried out through organoleptic testing to determine the shape, color, smell, and taste of the simplicia, which were then compared with the literature [13].

Drying Shrinkage Test. Drying shrinkage is the weight reduction between the fresh sample and the dried simplicia, which describes the weight reduction of the material in the drying process and illustrates the simplicia lost due to the heating process [14].

Water Content Test. Water content testing was carried out by weighing the test sample in a porcelain cup containing 1 g and heating it at 105 ⁰C for 30 mins. After 15 mins, it was cooled, and the powder was weighed again [12].

Extraction. This study carries out two extractions: maceration and Soxhletation. The method of maceration was carried out by soaking 200 g of dry leaves of P. indica L in 100 ml of 96% ethanol for three days. The leaves were then filtered and concentrated using a water bath at 50° C. obtaining a thick extract [15]. Soxhletation was carried out using a solvent of 96% ethanol, as much as 500 ml. This extraction process was carried out for 15 cycles, then filtered, and the filtrate was taken to concentrate using a water bath with a temperature of 50° C to obtain a thick extract [9].

Extract Characterization Test. Ethanol Free Test: The ethanol-free test aims to determine the presence of ethanol in an extract. Positive ethanol-free results are characterized by test extracts that do not smell of esters, which are typical of ethanol [16].

Analysis of Compounds Using LC-MS. Test content compound results of extracts of the leaves of *Pluchea indica* were carried out with LC-MS by applying the method of dissolving sample-free ethanol using methanol pa with a ratio of 1:5, i.e., with 2 mg of each leaf extract dissolved in 10 ml methanol pa. Stage protein precipitation with a filter using a 0.45 cellulose acetate filler micrometer was then conducted. The sample was injected with as much as 1 microlite into the LC-MS instrument. LC (Liquid Chromatography) is connected to a spectrometer mass Quadrupole Time- of flight (QTOF) equipped with source ionization Electrospray Ionization (ESI). The mass spectrometry (MS) is a QTOF system with a positive ionization mode. The instrument's Electrospray Ionization (ESI) parameters were set at a temperature capillary 350 ºC and atomizer gas 60ML/HR, source voltage 5.0V. Full scan mode from m/z 100-5000 was performed with a temperature source of 100ºC. UPLC column used Shimadzu Shim Pack FC-ODS (2 mm x 150mm, 3µm) with eluent 95% ethanol and regulated water on rate total flow 0.5 mL/ min.

Antioxidant Activity Test Using DPPH Method. Determining the Optimum Wavelength of DPPH Solution: DPPH solution was made with a level of 50 ppm, weighing as much as 5 mg of DPPH dissolved in 100 ml of ethanol in a volumetric flask. DPPH solution is kept at a low temperature with minimal light. Determination of DPPH absorbance aims to identify how much of the sample can be absorbed by DPPH compounds. This determination is done by taking 4 ml of DPPH solution, leaving it for 30 minutes, and measuring the absorbance. The optimum wavelength of 50 ppm DPPH stock solution was

determined with a UV-Vis spectrophotometer in the 400-800 nm range [17]*.*

Antioxidant Activity of Pluchea indica Leaf Extract and Vitamin C. Antioxidant activity was determined from the IC50 value calculated using the DPPH method with a UV-Vis spectrophotometer. *Pluchea indica leaf* extract was made in stock solution with a concentration of 100 ppm, then diluted with three concentration series of 10 ppm, 50 ppm, and 100 ppm. 2 mL was taken from each solution and put into a test tube. Each test tube was added with 4 mL of DPPH solution. The mixture was incubated in a dark room for 30 minutes. Then, the absorbance of the solution was measured using a UV-Vis spectrophotometer [17].

Vitamin C was made into three concentration series, namely 1 ppm, 5 ppm, and 10 ppm. Testing was done by pipetting 2 ml of sample solution from various concentrations. Each concentration was added with 4 ml of 50 ppm DPPH in a closed test tube and left to rest for 30 mins, after which the absorption was measured. The absorbance results were used to calculate the percent of free radical remission and then entered into the equation obtained from the linear regression curve to obtain the IC_{50} value [18].

*Determination of Percentage of Antioxidant Activity of Pluchea indica Leaf Extract and Vitamin C***.** The IC⁵⁰ value is calculated based on the measured absorbance data, and the percentage of immersion between the DPPH radical and the sample solution can be calculated using the equation 1, 2, and 3 [6].

% Inhibition = (BA-SA)/BA × 100% (1)

BA: Blank absorbance; SA: Sample absorbance

The calculation of antioxidant activity was entered into the equation 2.

y= a+bx .. (2)

with the concentration (µg/mL) as the abscissa (xaxis) and the % antioxidant activity value as the ordinate (y-axis) [17]. The IC_{50} calculation formula is:

IC⁵⁰ = (50−a) b .. (3)

Ligand Structure Preparation. Ligand preparation was carried out by converting the 2-dimensional (2D) molecular structure of the five main compounds (LCMS results) drawn using ChemDraw Ultra version 22.0 then converted into a 3-dimensional (3D) structure model using the Chem3D application version 22.0 (pdb file format). Then add hydrogen ions to the ligand using Discovery Studio 2021 software and save in PDF file format. Furthermore, optimize the ligand using the AutoDockTools program, and adjust the number of torsion bonds on the ligand and save in pdbqt file format.

Macromolecular Preparation. The threedimensional macromolecules NAHDP Oxidase were downloaded from the Protein Data Bank data site https://www.rcsb.org with PDB codes used are 4Z3D. Macromolecules are separated from solvents and native ligands or non-standard residues using the UCSF Chimera application. Native ligands and unnecessary residues are removed by clicking the select feature then clicking residues and selecting all nonstandard, then selecting the actions feature, clicking atoms/bonds then clicking delete. Macromolecular (receptor) files are saved in pdb format. Next, the macromolecules were optimized using AutoDockTools by adding hydrogen ions and Kollman charges and saved in pdbqt file format.

Molecular Docking. The molecular docking process was carried out using PyRx software based on AutoDock Tools. The macromolecular structure (receptor) and ligand that have been optimized separately are stored in one folder. The molecular docking process uses a grid box and energy minimization parameters according to the validation results. The grid box parameter settings are carried out using the grid box coordinates determined based on the receptor ligand coordinates used in the docking validation process. Furthermore, docking was carried out using PyRx software with the AutoDock wizard feature. The docking data displayed is in the form of binding affinity values and amino acid residue interactions. The docking results are stored in pdb format.

Visualization and Analysis of Docking Results. The visualization process is carried out to see the interactions that occur in the docking results between the receptor and ligand. Visualization of the docking results is carried out using Discovery Studio Visualizer 2021 software.

Results and Discussions

Simplicia Physicochemical Properties

The results of the macroscopic test of *P. indica* Leaf Simplicia are dark green, have a typical smell of *P. indica*, and have a strong taste. On the other hand, we did dried shrinkage test, we found the result approximately 9% which is fit to good simplicia standard.

Furthermore, the water content of simplicia also a part of important properties, which is less than 10% to avoid fungal growth because enzymatic reactions only occur when the water content is less than 10%. The results obtained are 8.2%; it can be concluded that the drying shrinkage of *P. indica* leaf simplicia is by quality standards to minimize contamination.

The results of the ethanol-free test of maceration and Soxhletation extracts do not smell typical of ethanol, meaning that maceration and Soxhletation extracts from *P. indica* leaves do not contain ethanol.

Figure 1. LC-MS Chromatogram of *P. indica extract* (maceration process) Analysis conditions: column Shimadzu Shim Pack FC-ODS (2mm x 150mm, 3µm); flow rate 0.5 mL/min; injection volume 1 µL; solvent ethanol 95%; column temperature 35 ºC

Figure 2. LC-MS Chromatogram Result of the *P. indica* soxhlet extract (Analysis conditions: column Shimadzu Shim Pack FC-ODS (2mm x 150mm, 3µm); flow rate 0.5 mL/min; injection volume 1 µL; solvent ethanol 95%; column temperature 35 ºC).

Table 2. LCMS Chromatogram Result of the *P. indica* soxhlet extract

The LC-MS results of *Pluchea indica L* extract obtained by maceration extraction method (114 compounds) and soxhletation (112 compounds) were then grouped based on the group of secondary metabolite compounds that have potential as antioxidants: Alkaloids, flavonoids,

tannins, saponins, terpenoids and phenols. Furthermore, they were compared to determine the most secondary metabolite compounds (which have potential as antioxidants) between the maceration or soxhletation methods.

Table 3. Grouping of secondary metabolite compounds from LC-MS results of *P. indica*

Figure 3. Linear regression of the relationship the concentration of test samples and % inhibition (Vitamin C, *Pluchea indica* leaf maceration extract, and *Pluchea indica* leaf Soxhletation extract)

The results of calculating the antioxidant activity test with DPPH of vitamin C as a positive control have an IC₅₀ value of 4.927 ppm, indicating good antioxidant activity. Meanwhile, our results show

that Pluchea indica leaf extract has a strong antioxidant activity with an IC_{50} value of 76.057 ppm for maceration and 62.580 ppm for Soxhletation.

Table 4. Antioxidant Activity of *Pluchea indica* extracts

Based on this explanation, maceration and Soxhletation extractions of *P. indica* leaves have similar antioxidant content (Figure 3 and Table 4). The antioxidant activity of a sample can be determined by looking at its IC_{50} value. IC_{50} (inhibition concentration) value is a number that indicates the concentration of the sample that can reduce DPPH by 50%. A sample can be said to be a powerful antioxidant if it has an IC_{50} value $<$ 50 ppm, a potent antioxidant if its IC $_{50}$ value is 50 - 100 ppm, a moderate antioxidant if its IC_{50} value is 100 - 150 ppm, a weak antioxidant if its IC_{50} value is 150 - 200 ppm, and a very weak antioxidant if its IC_{50} value is > 200 ppm²⁴. Both extractions produced IC_{50} values > 100 ppm, which are potent antioxidants. Extracts from the Soxhlet extraction show an IC_{50} value of 62.580 ppm, while the macerated extracts show 76.757 ppm. The greater the IC_{50} value, the smaller the antioxidant potential [18]. It is also shown by the test using LC-MS that there are many compound compositions contained in *Pluchea indica* leaf extracts that have potential as antioxidants, namely mainly flavonoids and terpenoids, which have a relatively large composition, and there are differences in composition between the two extraction methods. The maceration extract has a flavonoid composition of 72.4841% of 60 compounds, while the solution extract is 67.14345% of 57 compounds. In macerated extracts, the terpenoid group has a composition of 6.11827% of 25 compounds; in solution extracts, terpenoids are 13.82165% of 34 compounds. Flavonoids and terpenoids belong to the class of powerful antioxidants. The Soxhlet extraction has a smaller IC_{50} value than the macerated extract but is still in one activity category: potent antioxidants. The smaller the IC₅₀ value, the greater the antioxidant activity and the greater the % inhibition value of a sample tested. IC_{50} value is calculated based on absorbance data that has been measured from the percentage of immersion between DPPH radicals and sample solution [19]. To ensure that the compounds in the *P. indica* extract work as antioxidants, molecular docking was carried out on the five main compounds resulting from LCMS.

Molecular Docking Results of NAHDP Oxidase Receptor (4Z3D).

A computational method, is used to predict the binding of a macromolecule (receptor) to a small molecule in the form of a ligand (five main compounds of LCMS). The purpose of this

molecular docking is to determine the conformation and free energy of the bond involved in the interaction between the macromolecule (receptor) and the ligand [22]. This docking simulation helps in studying drugs or ligands or receptor/protein interactions, to obtain good geometry of the ligand-receptor complex [23]. In this research we conducted molecular docking of five major compounds;

Kaempferol 3-glucosyl-(1→2)- [glucosyl-(1→3) rhamnoside **(1),** Quercetin 3-glucosyl-(1→2) rhamnoside-7-glucoside **(2),** Luteolin-7-O-(6'' malonylglucoside) **(3)**, 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6,3' dimethoxyisoflavone 7-O-(6''-glucosylglucoside) **(4),** and 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6- methoxyisoflavone 4'-O-(6''- glucosylglucoside) **(5)** against Oxidase Receptor (NAHDP).

Table 5. NAHDP Oxidase Receptor (4Z3D) Docking Results

Table 6. Docking visualization

The smaller the results of the docking process indicate that the protein ligand complex will be more stable, so that the compound is more patent [24]. Based on the statement of Azzahra et al (2021) [25], the free energy of binding (∆G) and the inhibition constant (Ki) are parameters to determine the quality of the bond formed. The results of molecular docking can be seen from the value of the free energy of binding (∆G) where the smaller the value of the free energy of binding, the higher the affinity between the receptor and the ligand, conversely the greater the value of the free energy of binding, the lower the affinity between the receptor and the ligand [26]. The ability of a ligand to inhibit the activity of a receptor can be analyzed through the inhibition constant (Ki) of the ligand. The smaller the inhibition constant (Ki) value, the stronger the binding affinity and the less the amount of drug needed to inhibit enzyme activity. The smaller the Ki value, the stronger the binding of the ligand to the protein [27]. The inhibition constant can be stated as strong if it has a value of ≤ 100 µM and conversely the inhibition constant is stated as weak if it has a value of ≥ 100 µM [28].

Molecular docking was carried out on five test compounds, namely Kaempferol 3-glucosyl- (1→2)- [glucosyl-(1→3)-rhamnoside, Quercetin 3 glucosyl-(1→2)- rhamnoside-7-glucoside, Luteolin-7-O-(6''- malonylglucoside), 5,7,4' trihydroxy-6,3'-dimethoxyisoflavone 7-O-(6'' glucosylglucoside), and 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6 methoxyisoflavone 4'-O-(6''- glucosylglucoside) which will be docked to the NADPH Oxisade receptor (PDB id: 4Z3D) which has antioxidant activity. From the docking results obtained, the best affinity was obtained for 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6-

methoxyisoflavone 4'-O-(6''- glucosylglucoside) with a binding free energy value of -5.58 kcal/mol with an inhibition constant value of 51.14 μM and produced five hydrogen bonds GLN 105 PHE 94 VAL 96 SER 139 ALA 235. The use of the NADPH Oxidase receptor is thought to have antioxidant activity, where this molecule can work to neutralize reactive radicals (ROS and RNS) and can prevent cell damage. Carbonyl reductase w-1 in humans that depends on NADPH can contribute to the metabolism of endogenous carbonyl-containing compounds and xenobiotics. Where this enzyme works by protecting cells from cellular damage due to oxidative stress [29].

Conclusions

The results of analysis using LC-MS on macerat extracts of *Pluchea indica* leaves : 114 compounds with the five highest compounds, namely benzaldehyde, fumaric acid, succinic acid, benzoic acid, and p-cymene; and soxhleted extract: 112 compounds on with the five highest compounds, namely Kaempferol 3-glucosyl-(1→ 2)- [glucosyl-(1 \rightarrow 3)-rhamnoside, Quercetin 3glucosyl- $(1 \rightarrow 2)$ - rhamnoside-7-glucoside, Luteolin-7-O-(6''- malonylglucoside), 5,7,4' trihydroxy-6,3'-dimethoxyisoflavone 7-O-(6'' glucosylglucoside), and 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6 methoxyisoflavone 4'-O-(6''- glucosylglucoside). Potential antioxidant compounds in macerated and Soxhletation extracts of *Pluchea indica* leaves show strong antioxidant category through the DPPH test. The docking results obtained the best affinity at 5,7,4'-trihydroxy-6- methoxyisoflavone 4'-O-(6''- glucosylglucoside) with a binding free energy value of -5.58 kcal/mol with an inhibition constant value of 51.14 μM and produced five hydrogen bonds GLN 105 PHE 94 VAL 96 SER 139 ALA 235.

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Author Contibutions

Conceptualization, A.M. and D.P.T.; Methodology, A.M., D.P.T., S.D.Y., I.L.T. Validation, A.M and K.N.; Formal Analysis, A.M., S.D.Y., Investigation, A.M Resources, A.M., D.P.T., and S.D.Y; Data Curation, A.M., M.S.S; Writing – Original Draft Preparation, A.M., S.D.Y; Writing – Review & Editing, A.M., I.L.T., K.N., M.S.S; Visualization, A.M.; Supervision, A,M., D.P.T and K.N; Project Administration, A.M.; Funding Acquisition, A.M., D.P.T

Conflict of Interest

There are no significant conflicts

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