

SYNTHESIS, ANTIOXIDANT AND ANTIFUNGAL ACTIVITY OF CONJUGATED CHALCONES AND THEIR DERIVATIVES

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ABSTRACT

The paper reports synthesis of conjugated chalcones and their derivatives and evaluation of their antioxidant and antifungal activity. As speculated the synthesised compounds display moderate to good activity and in the structure-activity relationship (SAR) contemplated, the biological properties of these molecules were compared with a couple of theoretical parameters for instance, CLogP, PSA, ionization potential, sub-atomic weight, dissolvability, hydrogen bond acceptors (HBA) and hydrogen bond donors (HBD), drug-likeness, drug score using computational software.

Keywords: Chalcones, derivatives, antioxidant, antifungal, activity.

INTRODUCTION

Because of the fast improvement of bacterial protection from antifungal agents, it is vital to find a novel framework for the design and preparation of the new antifungal agents to help in the fight against pathogenic growths. As of now, the ideal properties looked for in another antifungal medication hopeful include: restraint of parasitic cell wall biosynthesis; intensity similar with that of amphotericin B; wellbeing comparable with that of fluconazole; and fungicidal action both in vitro and in vivo. [Vincent T A 1999] Easy access to chalcones from substituted acetophenones and cinnamaldehydes makes them an attractive drug scaffold. Chalcones are one of the huge classes of natural products with wide occurrence in fruits, vegetables, flavors, tea and soy-based foodstuff and have attracted great attention for their interesting pharmacological activities. [Zdzisława Nowakowska 2007] They are primary precursors for the biosynthesis of flavonoids and show different biological activities, for example, antifungal, [Prasad et al. 2008; Lahtchev et al. 2008] anti-cancer, [Dong et al. 2008; Bandgar et al. 2010] anti-inflammatory,

[Zdzisława et al. 2007; Iqbal et al. 2014] antibacterial, [Prasad et al. 2008] nitric-oxide regulation, anti-oxidant, [Rezk et al. 2002; Kim et al. 2008; Narshingani et al. 2013; Vasil'ev et al. 2010] hypoglycemic, [Patil et al. 2009] antimicrobial, [Talavara et al. 2016] antifungal [Vincent et al. 1999; Boeck et al. 2005; Richter et al. 2005; Batovska et al. 2007; Lahtchev et al. 2008] antileishmanial, [Patil et al. 2009] cytotoxic [Vogel et al. 2008]⁸ activity. Chalcones belong to open-chain flavanoids having a α,β -unsaturated carbonyl system, in which two benzene rings are joined by three carbon conjugated linker with a completely delocalized π -electron system involving both the benzene rings.

Chalcones have a prominent place in plant kingdom as obvious optional metabolites, that play key role in safeguarding the system from reactive oxygen species, averting molecular harm by microorganisms and creepy crawlies. They display antioxidant property by different mechanisms such as via singlet oxygen quenching, hydrogen donation, metal ion chelation⁷ etc. [Patil et al. 2009] which in turn depends upon the nature and position of substituents on the aromatic ring. Among

different substituents, hydroxyl group is most important as they easily get transformed to phenoxy radicals via the hydrogen transfer mechanism [Beom-Tae et al. 2008] which is well stabilized by conjugation in chalcones. This kind of delocalization is best displayed by ortho (i.e. catechol structure) and para-dihydroxylated benzene as compared to meta dihydroxylated benzene ring which is more prone to the formation of quinone type structure.

Over the no less than 50 years in which specific antifungal agents have been discovered, the clinical necessities for the agents have changed fundamentally and continuously and legitimate carefulness in the arms race among parasites and people implies that new targets and new inhibitors have to be explored for convincing antifungal treatment in future. With the objective to explore chalcone skeleton for new antioxidants and antifungal agents, we have synthesized extended chalcones and their derivatives. (Scheme 1) In the structure-activity relationship (SAR) contemplated, the biological properties of this molecule were compared with couple of theoretical parameters, for instance, CLogP, PSA, ionization potential, sub-atomic weight, dissolvability, hydrogen bond acceptors (HBA) and hydrogen bond donors (HBD), drug-likeness, drug score using computational software.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

General

IR spectra were recorded on FT-IR Shimadzu serial no. A213747 spectrophotometer in KBr pellet and ^1H NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker 300 MHz spectrometer in CDCl_3 using tetramethylsilane as internal standard and chemical shifts are reported in δ units and the coupling constants (J) are reported in hertz. Mass spectra were obtained with a Shimadzu LCMS-2010EV. TLC was performed on aluminium-backed silica plate with visualization by UV-light and column chromatography using silica gel purchased s. d. FineChem Ltd. (mesh size 100–200).

Procedure for the preparation of (2E,4E)-1,5-diphenylpenta-2,4-dien-1-one (3 a-m)

To an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide in ethanol (2 equivalent) kept in ice bath, substituted acetophenone (1 equivalent) was added followed by cinnamaldehyde (1 equivalent). The reaction mixture was stirred for 2 – 3 hours at 0°C , then the mixture was kept overnight in a refrigerator. The mixture was acidified with 1 N HCl and then cold water was added to it. The resulting precipitate was filtered and washed well with cold water and

dried. The product was recrystallised from ethanol (Step 1).

Procedure for preparation of (2E,4E)-1,5-diphenylpenta-2,4-dien-1-ol (4 a-m)

To the cooled solution of substituted (2E,4E)-1,5-diphenylpenta-2,4-dien-1-one(1 equivalent) in methanol, sodium borohydride (2.5 equivalents) was added portion wise. The reaction mixture was stirred for 1 – 2 hours at 0°C . The work up by addition of water followed by extraction with dichloromethane and concentration afforded the product. The product was recrystallised from ethanol (Step 2). The physical and spectral data of selective Chalcones are given below.

(2E,4E)-5-(4-methoxyphenyl)-1-(4-nitrophenyl)penta-2,4-dien-1-ol (4c)

Yield: 79.65 %, Nature: Solid, Color: Lemon yellow, mp: $88-89^\circ\text{C}$. IR (KBr): 3000 (C – H Str), 3269.34 (O – H Str), 2839.22 (C – O – CH_3 Str), 1600 (C = C Str), 1519.19 (C – NO_2 Str) cm^{-1} . ^1H NMR (CDCl_3): δ 2.166 (s, 1H), 3.81 (s, 3H), 5.409 – 5.396 (d, 1H, J = 5.2 Hz), 5.887 – 5.821 (dd, 1H, J = 7.4 Hz), 6.668 – 6.443 (m, 3H), 6.871 – 6.850 (d, 2H, J = 8.4 Hz), 7.342 – 7.322 (d, 2H, J = 8 Hz), 7.593 – 7.571 (d, 2H, J = 8.8 Hz), 8.232 – 8.210 (d, 2H, J = 8.8 Hz). MASS: 324.0 (M – H), 309.2 (M – CH_4), 294 (M – CH_3OH) m/z.

(2E,4E)-1-(4-nitrophenyl)-5-o-tolylpenta-2,4-dien-1-ol (4d)

Yield: 73.78 %, Nature: Solid, Color: Yellow, mp: $112-113^\circ\text{C}$. IR (KBr): 3508.52 (O – H Str), 2950 (C – H Ar Str), 1610 (C = C Str), 1520 (C – NO_2 Str) cm^{-1} . ^1H NMR (CDCl_3): δ 2.192 (s, 3H), 2.199 (s, 1H), 5.453 – 5.441 (d, 1H, J = 4.8 Hz), 5.882 – 5.825 (dd, 1H, J = 7.6 Hz, 15.2 Hz), 6.597 – 6.532 (m, 2H), 7.374 – 7.229 (m, 5H), 7.616 – 7.595 (d, 2H, J = 8.4 Hz), 8.232 – 8.210 (d, 2H, J = 8.8 Hz). MASS: 308.0 (M – H), 293.3 (M – CH_3), 276.3 (M – CH_3OH) m/z.

(2E,4E)-1-(3,4-dimethoxyphenyl)-5-(4-methoxyphenyl)penta-2,4-dien-1-ol (4f)

Yield: 83.24 %, Nature: Solid, Color: Faint yellow, mp: $83-84^\circ\text{C}$. IR (KBr): 3508.52 (O – H Str.), 3007.10 (C – H Ar. Str.), 2835.36 (C – O – CH_3 Str.), 1600.92 (C = C Str.), 1454 (C = C Ar. Str.) cm^{-1} . ^1H NMR (CDCl_3): δ 2.040 (s, 1H, J = 3.2 Hz), 3.808 (s, 3H), 3.900 (s, 3H), 5.272 – 5.249 (dd, 1H, J = 6.2 Hz, 3.0 Hz), 5.971 – 5.917 (dd, 1H, J = 6.6 Hz, 15 Hz), 6.699 – 6.408 (m, 3H), 6.951 – 6.917 (m, 5H), 7.340 – 7.318 (d, 2H, J = 8.8 Hz). Mass: 325.3 (M – H), 309.2 (M – CH_4) m/z.

Culture

Candida albicans ATCC 10231 were obtained from IMTECH Chandigarh, India. Culture was maintained on YPD agar slant at 4 °C .

Medium and culture conditions

Culture was propagated by inoculating a single colony from the YPD agar plates (yeast extracts 1 %, peptone 2 %, dextrose 2 % and agar 2 %) into 50 ml YPD broth in a 250 ml conical flask. Flasks were incubated at 30 °C at 100 rpm on orbital shaking incubator for 24 hours. Cells were harvested by centrifugation at 200 rpm and washed thrice with 0.1 M Phosphate buffered saline, pH 7.4. Cell density was determined by Hemocytometer count. Cells were suspended in phosphate buffered saline and used as inoculum.

Susceptibility of *Candida albicans* to Chalcones

The drug susceptibility study was carried out by using standard methodology M 27 A2 as per CLSI guidelines.[Richter et al. 2005] Briefly, various concentrations of chalcone derivatives (**3a-m** and **4a-m**) were prepared in RPMI 1640 Medium with 1% DMSO by double dilution in the 96-well plates. Each well contained 1×10^3 cell ml⁻¹ and final concentration of RPMI-1640 in each well was maintained 200 ul. Each concentration was in triplicate. The wells without addition of chalcones served as control. Microplates were incubated at 35 °C for 48 hours and read microscopically at 620 nm using microplate reader (model ThermoMultiscan-X by Thermo Elec. Corp. USA).

In vitro antioxidant activity (DPPH Method)

The compounds 3a-m and 4a-m were evaluated for their invitro free radical scavenging activity by the 2,2'diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) radical scavenging activity method described by Blois[Blois et al. 1958]. Stock solution of different compounds (10mM) were mixed with 0.3mM DPPH methanol solution (0.5mL,) in 3ml of total reaction mixture and allowed to react at room temperature. After 30min, absorbance was measured at 517nm and converted to percentage activity. Ascorbic acid was used as standard antioxidant. The percentage inhibition activity was calculated by using following formula.

$$\text{Percentage activity} = (1 - \frac{\text{Sample absorbance}}{\text{Control absorbance}}) \times 100$$

In silico Pharmacological Property Study

The pharmacological properties of the compounds such as molecular weight, ClogP,

solubility, hydrogen bond donor, hydrogen bond acceptor, molecular PSA, drug likeness and drug score were calculated using online Osiris property explorer.

RESULTS**Susceptibility of *Candida albicans* to Chalcones**

Anti-candida *albicans* activities of chalcones were studied at its planktonic forms. All chalcones were effective against *Candida albicans* growth (Table 1 and Table 2). Growth inhibition ranged from 40 to 76 %. Among the 26 chalcones derivatives, chalcones **3a**, **3c**, **3e**, **3f**, **3g**, **3i**, **3m** and **4f** were found to be more effective and showed maximum 76 % growth reduction at 5mg/ml concentration. While chalcones **3h**, **3k**, **4d**, **4e**, **4f**, **4g**, **4i**, **4l** and **4m** inhibited more than 50% growth at same concentration. Remaining chalcones were poor inhibitors of growth, showed less than 50% reduction in growth.

In vitro antioxidant activity

Antioxidant activity of synthesized chalcones was evaluated by using DPPH free radical scavenging assay. All synthesized chalcones have shown 49-68% free radical scavenging activity compared with standard ascorbic acid (84%). This percentage RSA was shown at 10mM concentration. Out of 26 chalcones four chalcones 3b, 4b, 4d and 4m were found to be good radical scavengers while 15 chalcones, **4e**, **3c**, **3e**, **3f**, **4l**, **4a**, **4k**, **4h**, **4f**, **3d**, **3k**, **3m**, **4j**, **3j** and **4c** exhibited moderate activity and the others (**3g**, **4g**, **3i**, **4i**, **3a**, **3h** and **3l**) were found to be poor radical scavengers (Table 1 and Table 2).

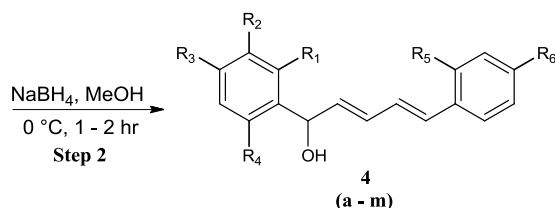
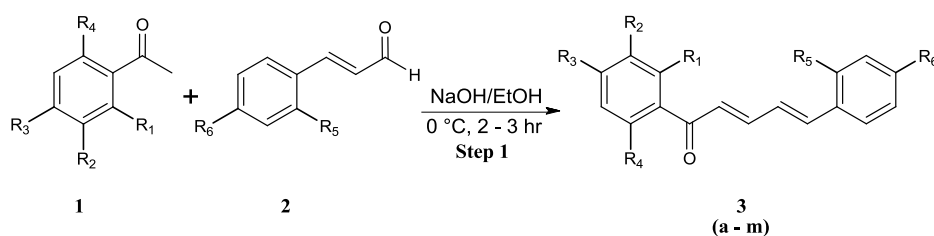
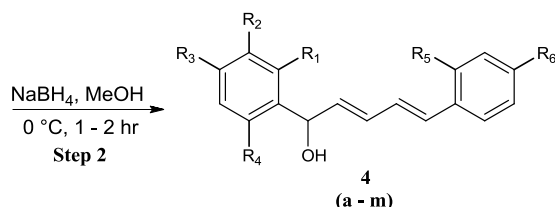
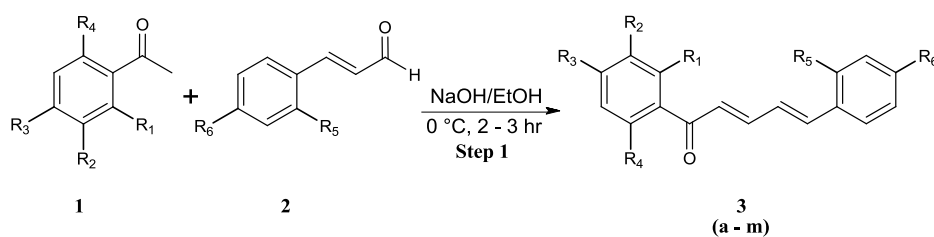
In silico pharmacological properties

Pharmacological properties like molecular weight, clogp, solubility, hydrogen bond donor, hydrogen bond acceptor, molecular PSA, drug likeness and drug score were evaluated for the 26 chalcones and the results are presented in Table 3. logp value represents the lipophilicity index, is logarithm of partition coefficient of octane/water. This physicochemical property determines the ability of a given compound to cross biological membrane[Sedykh et al. 2006] and almost all the evaluated compounds have logP value within the desired range (4.15-5.41) set by Lipinsky[Lipinski et al. 2000; Zhu et al. 2005] . Similarly, hydrogen bond acceptor and donor (HBD) for these compounds follow Lipinski's rule and are within the range of less than ten and five respectively.

DISCUSSION

Keeping in view the remarkable attributes of chalcone scaffold, the present study was undertaken to study the effect of extended double bond to the enone moiety and carbonyl functional group on antifungal and antioxidant activity, a wide variety of conjugated enones were prepared and further reduced to their respective alcohols. As is obvious from Table 1 and 2, the conjugated enones displayed better anticandida activity as compared to their reduced alcohols. The obtained results clearly indicate that reduction of carbonyl group to alcohol which reduces extent of delocalization via the conjugate linker between the aromatic rings is not favorable and leads to reduction in activity. Chalcones **3a**, **3c**, **3e**, **3f**, **3g**, **3l**, **3m**, **4e**, **4f**,

4g, **4h**, **4i**, and **4m** are potential candidates for inhibition of *Candida albicans* growth. It may be attributed to the presence of at least one electron donating group on the system and it is worth noting that systems having both donating and withdrawing groups display better activity (**3c**). Similarly, the enones displayed better antioxidant activity as compared to their reduction products (Table 2) and once again conjugation seems to play an important role in determining the activity. In conclusion, the conjugated enones display good to moderate anticandida and antioxidant activity while their reduction products are less effective in both the cases studied. The results amply demonstrate the significance of conjugate linker between the aromatic moieties.



Scheme. 1: Synthesis of chalcones and their derivatives

Table 1: Antioxidant and antifungal activity studies of conjugated chalcones

Comp. Code	1				2		Product	Antioxidant Activity	Anticandida Activity
	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	R ₄	R ₅	R ₆			
3a	- H	- H	- H	- H	- H	- H		52.53	67.02± 0.5
3b	- H	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- H		68.65	40.42± 0.6
3c	- H	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- OMe		56.29	74.36± 1.0
3d	- H	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- CH ₃	- H		62.03	42.07± 1.3
3e	- H	- OMe	- OMe	- H	- H	- H		56.29	72.00± 1.5
3f	- H	- OMe	- OMe	- H	- H	- OMe		56.73	76.25± 1.4
3g	- H	- H	- OMe	- H	- H	- H		49.22	69.51± 1.8
3h	- H	- H	- Br	- H	- H	- H		52.53	55.25± 2.0
3i	- H	- H	- Br	- H	- CH ₃	- H		50.33	48.08± 0.5
3j	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- H	- H		63.57	41.85± 0.8
3k	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- CH ₃	- H		62.47	51.26± 1.2
3l	- OH	- H	- H	- H	- H	- H		54.30	70.24± 1.3
3m	- OH	- H	- OH	- OH	- H	- H		62.25	69.54± 1.6

Table 2: Chalcones derivatives and their biological activities

Comp. Code	1				2		Product	Antioxidant Activity	Anticandida Activity
	R ₁	R ₂	R ₃	R ₄	R ₅	R ₆			
4a	- H	- H	- H	- H	- H	- H		59.62	40.93± 0.7
4b	- H	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- H		67.90	48.3± 1.9
4c	- H	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- OMe		64.38	42.27± 0.8
4d	- H	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- CH ₃	- H		68.53	54.49± 0.1
4e	- H	- OMe	- OMe	- H	- H	- H		55.90	65.21± 0.5
4f	- H	- OMe	- OMe	- H	- H	- OMe		61.90	67.22± 1.1
4g	- H	- H	- OMe	- H	- H	- H		50.31	65.89± 1.2
4h	- H	- H	- Br	- H	- H	- H		59.83	42.39± 1.7
4i	- H	- H	- Br	- H	- CH ₃	- H		50.51	48.98± 1.2
4j	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- H	- H		63.56	40.87± 1.6
4k	- H	- NO ₂	- H	- H	- CH ₃	- H		59.62	39.48± 2
4l	- OH	- H	- H	- H	- H	- H		58.38	59.42± 1.5
4m	- OH	- H	- OH	- OH	- H	- H		68.32	65.27± 0.5

Table 3: In Silico pharmacological parameters

Sr. No.	Comp. Code	Molecular formula	Molecular weight	mp (°C)	HBD	HBA	PSA	Solubility	ClogP	Drug Likeness	Drug Score
1.	3a	C ₁₇ H ₁₄ O	234.29	116 – 118	0	1	17.07	-4.15	4.08	-4.47	0.22
2.	3b	C ₁₇ H ₁₃ NO ₃	279.29	173 – 175	0	3	17.07	-3.97	4.36	-3.82	0.21
3.	3c	C ₁₈ H ₁₅ NO ₄	309.32	194 – 196	0	4	26.30	-3.99	4.2	1.39	0.37
4.	3d	C ₁₈ H ₁₅ NO ₃	293.32	182 – 184	0	3	17.07	nd	4.87	nd	nd
5.	3e	C ₁₉ H ₁₈ O ₃	294.34	164 – 166	0	3	35.53	-4.19	4.1	-1.81	0.24
6.	3f	C ₂₀ H ₂₀ O ₄	324.37	178 – 180	0	4	44.76	-4.21	3.94	3.38	0.42
7.	3g	C ₁₈ H ₁₆ O ₂	264.32	140 – 142	0	2	20.23	-4.17	4.26	-3.6	0.22
8.	3h	C ₁₇ H ₁₃ BrO	313.19	114 – 116	0	1	17.07	-4.99	5.19	-6.84	0.17
9.	3i	C ₁₈ H ₁₅ BrO	327.22	126 – 128	0	1	17.07	-5.33	5.7	-1.74	0.17
10.	3j	C ₁₇ H ₁₃ NO ₃	279.29	146 – 148	0	3	62.89	nd	4.36	nd	nd
11.	3k	C ₁₈ H ₁₅ NO ₃	293.32	158 – 160	0	3	62.89	nd	4.87	nd	nd
12.	3l	C ₁₇ H ₁₄ O ₂	250.29	134 – 136	1	2	37.36	-3.86	4.76	-4.26	0.39
13.	3m	C ₁₇ H ₁₄ O ₄	282.29	166 – 168	3	4	77.76	-3.26	4.81	-4.35	0.42
14.	4a	C ₁₇ H ₁₆ O	236.31	--	1	1	20.23	-3.42	4.13	-4.98	0.39
15.	4b	C ₁₇ H ₁₅ NO ₃	281.31	--	1	3	66.05	nd	4.07	nd	nd
16.	4c	C ₁₈ H ₁₇ NO ₄	311.33	88 – 89	1	4	75.28	nd	3.91	nd	nd
17.	4d	C ₁₈ H ₁₇ NO ₃	295.33	112 – 113	1	3	66.05	nd	4.58	nd	nd
18.	4e	C ₁₉ H ₂₀ O ₃	296.36	--	1	3	38.69	-3.46	3.81	-2.15	0.34
19.	4f	C ₂₀ H ₂₂ O ₄	326.39	83 – 84	1	4	47.92	-3.48	3.65	3.06	0.60
20.	4g	C ₁₈ H ₁₈ O ₂	266.33	--	1	2	29.46	-3.44	3.97	-4.1	0.32
21.	4h	C ₁₇ H ₁₅ BrO	315.2	109 – 110	1	1	20.23	-4.26	4.9	-6.01	0.32
22.	4i	C ₁₈ H ₁₇ BrO	329.23	138 – 139	1	1	20.23	-4.60	5.41	.09	0.36
23.	4j	C ₁₇ H ₁₅ NO ₃	281.31	--	1	1	66.05	nd	4.07	nd	nd
24.	4k	C ₁₈ H ₁₇ NO ₃	295.33	--	1	1	66.05	nd	4.58	nd	nd
25.	4l	C ₁₇ H ₁₆ O ₂	252.31	--	2	2	40.46	-3.13	3.82	-5.46	0.41
26.	4m	C ₁₇ H ₁₆ O ₄	284.31	149 – 150	4	4	80.92	-2.54	3.22	-5.35	0.44

HBD = Hydrogen Bond Donor, HBA = Hydrogen Bond Acceptor, PSA = Potential Surface Area, nd = not determined

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