



DOCKING, SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION OF ANTIOXIDANT ACTIVITY OF 9-(PIPERAZIN-1-YL) ACRIDINE DERIVATIVES FROM 2-[(4-METHYL-2-NITROPHENYL) AMINO]BENZOIC ACID

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ABSTRACT

A series of nitrogen-containing heterocyclic compounds such as substituted 9-(piperazin-1-yl) acridine derivatives were synthesized by [(4-Methyl-2-nitrophenyl) amino] benzoic acid, phosphorus oxychloride, piperazine, dichloro methane evaluated for their antioxidant activity by DPPH method. Among the screened compounds, electron rich acridine exhibited significant antioxidant activities. The *in vitro*. Molecular docking results shows that the compound CP-05(2-methyl -4-nitro-9-[(4-benzyl) piperazin-1-yl] acridine) shows significant anti oxidant activity than compare with the standard compound α -Tocopherol. In all the synthesized compounds, CP-05 shows best binding energy and IC 50 value -9.27 Kcal/mol and 155.03 nano molar concentration respectively. The compound CP-05 shows molecular interactions like H-Bonds ASN10; ASN59; GLY60 and Pi-Bonds at ASP27; ASN59; PRO89; ALA92; PRO187. The ADME results of the compounds obeys Lipinski rule of five and the compounds shows the low Mutagenic and no toxicity shows on Tumerogenic, Effect on Reproductive system, Eye Irritant.

KEYWORDS: acridine derivatives, phosphorus oxychloride, anti oxidant activity, DPPH method, Molecular docking.

INTRODUCTION

The cytochrome P450 (CYP) enzymes are heme-thiolate enzymes involved in the metabolism of a large number of exogenous molecules (natural products, drugs, and environmental carcinogens) and endogenous compounds such as hormones. The human CYPs are encoded by 57 genes^[1] and are classified into four classes. The Class I and Class II CYPs (majority of the CYPs) are versatile monooxygenases catalyzing a large number of reactions such as conversion of alkenes to epoxides, alkanes to alcohols, arenes to phenols, and oxidation of sulfides. CYP enzymes belonging to the 1, 2 and 3 CYP families have been found in healthy and cancerous hepatic tissues.^[2,3] The metabolism of carcinogens, pro-carcinogens, and chemotherapeutics by CYPs gives them an indisputable role in the cancer prevention and treatment strategies. CYPs 1B1 and 2W1 are indeed expressed specifically in tumors.^[4-9] Numerous studies have implicated a role for CYPs in tumor formation and development.^[4,5,10-14] Inhibition of CYPs is a widely pursued area of research for the treatment and prevention of cancer.^[15,16] The CYP enzymes can be targeted by small molecules as delineated in three strategies: (1) inhibit the enzyme through competitive inhibitors; (2) inhibit the enzyme through mechanism-based inhibitors that result in the modification of the enzyme; and (3)

design prodrugs that are activated by the CYPs. Intense effort is ongoing by many research groups to find specific and potent CYP inhibitors for the individual members of the CYP superfamily. Understanding the key structural features of the inhibitors responsible for their inhibition potency has been essential for CYP inhibitor design and development. Computational methods such as docking studies, and quantitative structure activity studies (QSAR) have been extensively employed toward this end as outlined in various review articles.^[17-24]

Nitrogen containing heterocyclic compounds especially acridine compounds are indispensable structural subunit in many polycyclic natural products^[25] and various medicinal leads.^[26] Differently substituted acridine moieties are known to show antiedema, anti-inflammatory^[27], antibacterial^[28], analgesic^[29], anticancer^[30-31], activities and COX-2/LOX inhibitor. In the view of the facts mentioned above, free radical scavenged antioxidant activity of substituted imidazole is considered relevant. Highly reactive free radicals and oxygen species are present in biological systems from a wide variety of sources such the regular metabolism or external sources.^[32,33] The action of free radicals is counteracted by free radicals endogenous or exogenous or synthetic route. Reactive oxygen species (ROS) such

as superoxide anions, hydrogen peroxide, hydroxyl, and nitric oxide radicals, play an important role in oxidative stress related to the pathogenesis of various important diseases. Antioxidants act as a major defense against radical mediated toxicity by trapping the free radicals. Free radical scavenging is one of the best known mechanisms and offer rapid techniques for screening the radical scavenging activity (RSA) of specific compounds. Antioxidant activity is governed by the following method such as DPPH, ORAC, ABTS, DMPD, FRAP, TRAP, TBA, superoxide radical scavenging, hydroxyl radical scavenging, nitric oxide radical scavenging, xanthine oxidase, cytochrome C, reducing power method, etc. The DPPH method is very common and proved as the best.^[34] It is revealed from the literature that a very little attention has been given to the antioxidant activity of hetero-aromatic imidazole compound. In view of this observation synthesis and evaluation of antioxidant activity of variously substituted imidazoles are considered relevant. The free radicals and reactive oxygen species cause an phenomena called oxidative stress and that plays a decisive role in the development of various diseases, chronicle and degenerative cancer^[35], atherosclerosis^[36], arthritis, viral infection stroke, myocardial infarction, pulmonary condition, inflammatory bowel disease, neurogenerative disease^[37] and others may be produced by reactive oxygen species, for example, hydrogen peroxide scavenging (H₂O₂); hypochlorous acid scavenging (HOCl); hydroxyl radical scavenging (HO radical); peroxy radical scavenging (ROO radical).

Experimental work

MATERIALS AND METHODS

2-[(4-Methyl-2-nitrophenyl)amino] benzoic acid, phosphorus oxychloride, piperazine, dichloro methane, hexane, ethylacetate, sodium hydroxide, potassium carbonate, ethanol.

Copper sulphate, sodium sulphate. All the reagents were purchased analytical grade. Melting points were determined on a capillary melting point apparatus and are uncorrected. ¹H NMR spectra were recorded in the indicated solvent on Bruker WM 400 MHz spectrometer with TMS as internal standard. Infrared spectra were recorded in KBr on Perkin-Elmer AC-1 spectrophotometer.

Chemistry

9-Chloro-2-methyl-4-nitroacridine 1 derivatives synthesized by cyclization of 2-[(4-Methyl-2-nitrophenyl) amino]benzoic acid with freshly distilled phosphorus oxychloride under nitrogen atmosphere (Scheme 1). Further, it was treated with piperazine to obtain 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-(piperazin-1-yl) acridine 2 . The compounds are reacted with substituted benzyl/benzoyl chloride to yield derivatives $3-7$. All chemicals used were of reagent grade and purified as per need of the reaction. Progress of the reaction was monitored by TLC using hexane:ethylacetate (7:3) as mobile phase. Column chromatography was performed on silica gel (Merck, 60-120 mesh).

Method of preparation^[4]

Synthesis of 9-Chloro-2-methyl-4-nitroacridine 1

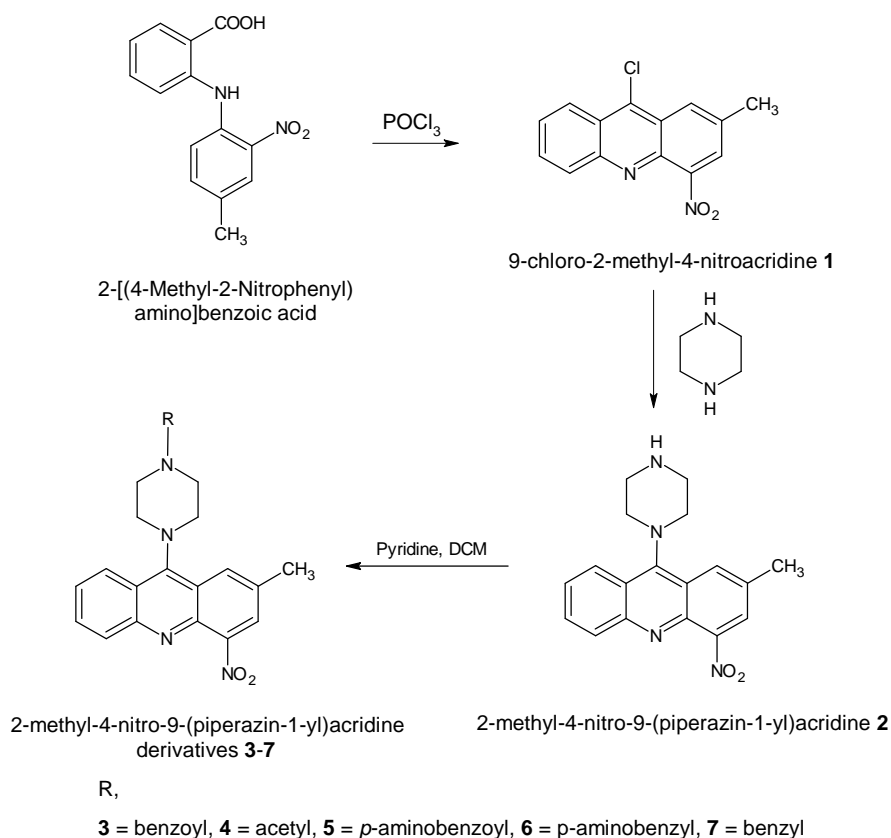
2-[(4-Methyl-2-nitrophenyl)amino]benzoic acid (1mmol) was suspended in phosphorous oxychloride (5 mmol) and heated at 100°C for 10 mins. The mixture was poured onto ice and neutralised dropwise to pH 7 at 0°C with cold 2M NaOH (6.5 ml). The white precipitate obtained was filtered, dried by suction and sublimed at 60°C^[38] *Caution:* The Procedure should be carried out in an efficient hood and exposure to POCl₃ should be avoided.

Synthesis of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-(piperazin-1-yl)acridine 2

In DMF - 1 mmol of 9-Chloro-2-methyl-4-nitroacridine 1 was suspended and was mixed by shaking, then 1.5 mmol K₂CO₃ and 1.2 mmol piperazine were added to the solution and kept for magnetic stirring for 10 hours at room temperature followed by refrigeration. The mixture was poured onto ice water and stirred well. The solution was filtered for the solid settles and then it was dried in an oven to get a fine powder.^[39] The product was recrystallized with ethanol.

Method of synthesis of compounds $3-7$

To a solution of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-(piperazin-1-yl)acridine 2 (1mmol) in 10ml of DCM taken in a round bottomed flask, pyridine-0.1ml and various benzyl/benzoyl chloride (1 mmol) were added and the reaction mixture was stirred for 1 hr at room temperature. Then the mixture was extracted with 10 ml of 1% CuSO₄ solution subsequently with ice cold water. The organic layer was separated and filtered through Na₂SO₄ and evaporated to get the product.



Scheme: 1 Synthesis of 9-piperziny acridine derivatives 3-7

Antioxidant activity by DPPH method

Antioxidant behaviour of these imidazole derivatives (1-16) is measured *in vitro* by the inhibition of generated stable 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) free radical. Methods vary greatly as to the generated radical, the reproducibility of the generation process, and the end point that is used for the determination. The DPPH solution was prepared by dissolving accurately weighed 22 mg of DPPH in 100 ml of ethanol. From this stock solution, 18 ml was diluted to 100 ml with ethanol to obtain 100 μ M DPPH solutions. The sample solution was prepared by accurately weighed 2.1 mg of each of the compounds and dissolved in 1 ml of freshly distilled DMSO separately to obtain solutions of 2.1 mg/ml concentration and the standard solution of was prepared by accurately weighed 10.5 mg of α -Tocopherol and dissolved in 1 ml of freshly distilled DMSO to get 10.5 mg/ml concentration.

A solution of test compound in ethanol (500 μ l) was added to the ethanolic solution of DPPH radical. The reaction mixture was vortexed thoroughly and left in the dark at room temperature for 30 min. The absorbance of the mixture was measured spectrophotometrically at 517 nm against the corresponding blank solution. The final concentration of the samples and standard α -Tocopherol solutions used is 100 μ g/ml. The percentage scavenging DPPH radical inhibitions were calculated by using the following formula:

$$\text{DPPH radical scavenging activity (\%)} = \frac{(\text{Abs control} - \text{Abs sample})}{\text{Abs control}} \times 100$$

Where, Abs control was the absorbance of DPPH radical and ethanol, Abs sample was the absorbance of DPPH radical and sample/standard.

The scavenging activity was expressed in terms of IC₅₀, the concentration of the samples required to give a 50% reduction in the intensity of the signal of the DPPH radical. The results were done at least in triplicate.

Molecular docking studies of anti oxidant activity

Computational methods

Software and program

Schrodinger's maestro visualization program v9.6^[40] is utilized to visualize the receptors, ligand structures, hydrogen bonding network, to calculate length of the bonds and to render images. Chemscktech was used to draw the ligand compounds. Autodock 4.0^[41] is the primary docking program used in this work for the semi-flexible docking studies.

Preparation of the ligands and protein receptors in pdbqt file and determination of the grid box size were carried out using Auto-Dock Tools version 1.5.6. Molinspiration, Orissis property explorer program was used to study the ADMET properties of the compounds.

Preparation of protein receptor and Ligand

The crystal structure of the Cytochrome P450 (PDB ID: 1NOO) was obtained from the Protein Data Bank (PDB).^[42] The crystal structure contained many missing atoms which were supplemented by the repair commands module of AutoDock. Before docking, the protein crystal structure was cleaned by removing the water molecules. H-atoms were added to these target proteins for correct ionization and tautomeric states of amino acid residues. The modified structure so obtained was used for the semi-flexible dockings. The ligand molecules was drawn using chemsketch software. The energy of the ligand molecule and receptors were minimized in Steepest Descent and Conjugate Gradient methods using Accelrys Discovery Studio (Version 4.0, Accelrys Software Inc.).^[43] The minimization methods were carried out with CHARMM force field.^[44]

Semi-flexible docking

Autodock Version 4.0 is used to predict binding pose with associated energy along with the IC₅₀ value prediction of the compounds with drug target Cytochrome P450 domain. Protocol followed for carrying out the docking studies using Autodock version 4.0 in order to predict binding pose and IC₅₀ values along with associated binding energies is of default parameters similar to the protocol followed elsewhere.^[45-47] Briefly, the energy scoring grid box was set to 126, 126 and 126 Å (x, y, and z) centered at X = 0.041; Y = -0.068 and Z = 0.128 with 0.375 angstroms grid points spacing assigned with default atomic salvation parameters. The grid box was designed such that the active site of Cytochrome P450 domain was surrounded by the three dimensional grid box centered at its active ligand binding site location. Lamarckian Genetic Algorithm (LGA)^[48] was selected as docking engine, with all the docking parameters set to default. After each LGA run, Autodock reports the best docking solution along with IC₅₀ values for each docked complex, and the results are reported based on cluster analysis. Binding Gibbs free energy (ΔG) is calculated as a sum of six energy terms of dispersion/repulsion, electrostatic interactions, hydrogen bonding, deviation from covalent geometry, desolvation effects and internal ligand torsional constraints. From a total of 10 docking modes represented by LGA cluster analysis, the lowest energy docking mode with respective IC₅₀ prediction was selected from each docking simulation. Each compound was allowed with active rotatable bonds making them flexible.

Pharmacological properties of the compounds

Osiris Property Explorer (www.organicchemistry.org/prog/peo/)^[49] online server along with data warrior software^[50] was used to check the pharmaceutical fidelity of the drug candidates. Molecular descriptors, such as Log P, the number of hydrogen bond donors, the number of hydrogen bond acceptors, and the molecular mass of the compounds were analyzed. Osiris Property Explorer was also used in analyzing various attributes of the drugs, such as toxicity and drug score.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Synthesis of 9-Chloro-2-methyl-4-nitroacridine 1

Yield – 80%, R_f – 0.19, m.p. 186 °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3028, 1630, 1578, 1457, 1265, 1085, 1022, 809, 751. ¹H-NMR d (d_6 -DMSO, ppm) 8.42 (d, 1H, $J_{48.7}$ Hz), 8.23 (d, 1H, $J_{48.7}$ Hz), 7.82 (dd, 1H, $J_{47.3}$ Hz), 7.64 (dd, 1H, $J_{47.3}$ Hz), Anal. Found (Calc.%) for $\text{C}_{14}\text{H}_9\text{ClN}_2\text{O}_2$: C61.38 (61.66), H3.12 (3.33), Cl12.85 (13.00), N10.11 (10.27), O11.52 (11.73), M^+ :272.03 Da.

Synthesis of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-(piperazin-1-yl)acridine 2

Yield – 63%, R_f – 0.32, m.p. 136 °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3018, 1648, 1562, 1465, 1402, 1262, 1092, 1013, 812, 772. ¹H-NMR d (d_6 -DMSO, ppm) 8.42 (d, 2H aromatic), 8.22 (d, 2H aromatic), 7.80 (t, 2H, aromatic), 7.67 (m, 2H, aromatic). Anal. Found (Calc.%) for $\text{C}_{18}\text{H}_{18}\text{N}_4\text{O}_2$: C66.89 (67.07), H5.56 (5.63), N17.14 (17.38), O9.72 (9.93), M^+ :322.14 Da.

Synthesis of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-[(4-benzoyl)piperazin-1-yl]acridine 3 (CP-01)

Yield – 52%, R_f – 0.28, m.p. 140 °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3032, 1642, 1568, 1461, 1407, 1258, 1094, 1030, 818, Anal. Found (Calc.%) for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{22}\text{N}_4\text{O}_3$: C70.38 (70.41), H5.18(5.20), N13.08(13.14), O11.04 (11.25); M^+ :426.16 Da

Synthesis of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-[(4-acetyl)piperazin-1-yl]acridine 4 (CP-02)

Yield – 47%, R_f – 0.22, m.p. 128 °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3033, 1650, 1552, 1482, 1278, 1098, 1027, 768. Anal. Found (Calc.%) for $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{20}\text{N}_4\text{O}_3$: C65.78(65.92), H5.42(5.53), N15.12(15.38), O13.01 (13.17), M^+ :364.15 Da

Synthesis of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-[(4-(4-aminobenzoyl)piperazin-1-yl)acridine 5 (CP-03)

Yield – 68%, R_f – 0.37, m.p. 156 °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3017, 1669, 1568, 1482, 1402, 1258, 1076, 1018, 768. Anal. Found (Calc.%) for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{23}\text{N}_5\text{O}_3$: C67.88 (68.01), H5.09 (5.25), N15.52 (15.86), O10.55 (10.87), M^+ :441.17Da

Synthesis of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-[(4-(4-aminobenzyl)piperazin-1-yl)acridine 6 (CP-04)

Yield – 51%, R_f – 0.33, m.p. 164 °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3380, 3128, 1614, 1590, 1528, 1440, 1366, 1268, 1134, 1088, 958. Anal. Found (Calc.%) for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{25}\text{N}_5\text{O}_2$: C70.01 (70.24), H5.68 (5.89), N16.11 (16.38), O7.16 (7.49), M^+ :427.20 Da

Synthesis of 2-methyl-4-nitro-9-[(4-benzyl)piperazin-1-yl]acridine 7 (CP-05)

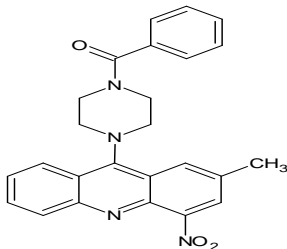
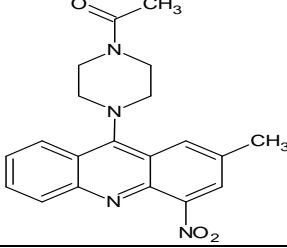
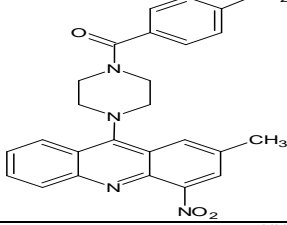
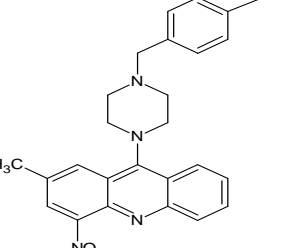
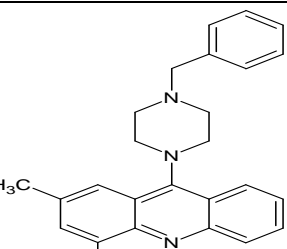
Yield – 48%, R_f – 0.41, m.p. 149 °C. IR (KBr, cm^{-1}) 3338, 3027, 2923, 2844, 1581, 1546, 1438, 1318, 1230, 1190, 1018, 984. Anal. Found (Calc.%) for $\text{C}_{25}\text{H}_{24}\text{N}_4\text{O}_2$: C72.59 (72.80), H5.51(5.86), N13.39 (13.58), O7.60 (7.76), M^+ :412.18 Da.

Anti oxidant activity by DPPH method

Table 1: Results of anti oxidant activity

S. No	CODE	Antioxidant activity (%inhibition)
1	CP01	64
2	CP02	81
3	CP03	72
4	CP04	60
5	CP05	51
6	α -Tocopherol	48

Table 2: Docking results of Compounds targeting Cytochrome P450 (PDB ID: 1NOO) for anti-oxidant activity:

S.No	Compound Name	Compound Structure	Binding energy (Kcal/mol)	Predicted IC50 value
1	CP01		-8.32	791.00 nM (nanomolar)
2	CP02		-7.47	3.33 μ M (micromolar)
3	CP03		-8.29	837.73 nM (nanomolar)
4	CP04		-8.53	558.41 nM (nanomolar)
5	CP05		-9.29	155.03 nM (nanomolar)

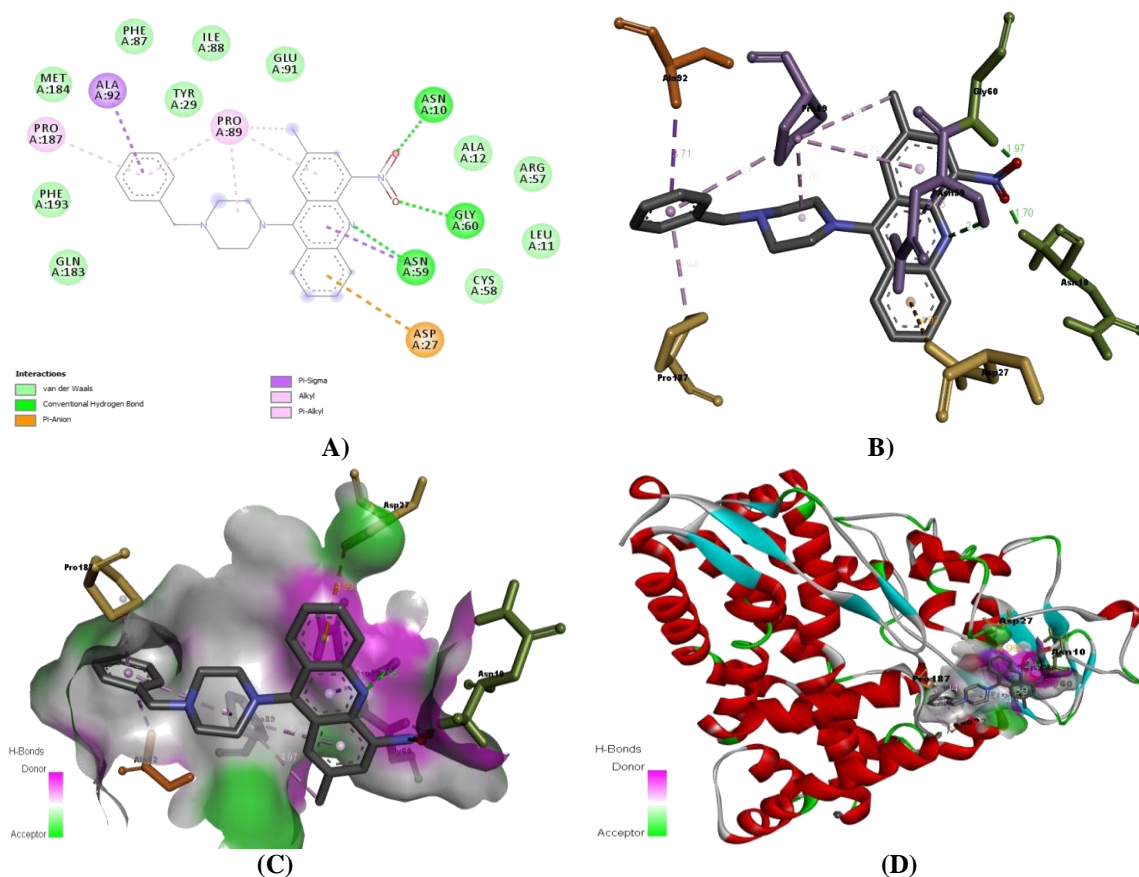


Figure 1: a) Represents 2D interactions of CP05, b) represents 3D interactions formed by the CP05, whereas c,d) represents surface area interactions of CP05 with Cytochrome P450.

Table 3: Molecular Interactions of CP05 compound with Cytochrom P450

S.No	Compound Name	Drug Target	Molecular Interactions	
			H-Bonds	Pi-Bonds
1	CP05	Cytochrome P450	ASN10; ASN59; GLY60	ASP27; ASN59; PRO89; ALA92; PRO187

Table 4: ADME parameters of the present studied compounds

S.No	Compound	Molecular Formula	Mol.wt.	Log P	H-bond donors	H-Bond acceptors	Rotatable bonds	TPSA	ADME pass/fail
1	CP01	C ₂₅ H ₂₂ N ₄ O ₃	426.47	3.6	0	7	3	84.18	PASS
2	CP02	C ₂₀ H ₂₀ N ₄ O ₃	364.40	2.2	0	7	2	84.18	PASS
3	CP03	C ₂₅ H ₂₃ N ₅ O ₃	441.49	2.9	1	8	3	110.2	PASS
4	CP04	C ₂₅ H ₂₅ N ₅ O ₂	427.50	2.9	1	7	4	93.13	PASS
5	CP05	C ₂₅ H ₂₄ N ₄ O ₂	412.49	3.5	0	6	4	67.11	PASS

Table 5 Toxicology profile for the present studied compounds

S.No	Compound Name	Mutagenic	Tumorigenic	Effect on Reproductive system	Eye Irritant
1	CP01	HIGH	LOW	NONE	NONE
2	CP02	HIGH	LOW	NONE	NONE
3	CP03	HIGH	LOW	NONE	NONE
4	CP04	HIGH	LOW	NONE	NONE
5	CP05	LOW	LOW	NONE	NONE

DISCUSSION

Based on the results, the evaluation of antioxidant activity by DPPH reagent method with CP-01 to CP-05 were done shows that the compound CP-05 (2-methyl-4-

nitro-9-[4-benzyl)piperazin-1-yl]acridine) shows better activity than compare with other synthesised compounds but less than the standard compound α -Tocopherol. The docking results shows that the binding energy values

were ranging from -7.47 Kcal/mol to -9.27 Kcal/mol and IC₅₀ values ranging from 3.3 micro molar to 155.03 nano molar respectively. In all the synthesized compounds, CP-05 shows best binding energy and IC₅₀ value -9.27 Kcal/mol and 155.03 nano molar concentration respectively. The compound shows molecular interactions like H-Bonds ASN10; ASN59; GLY60 and Pi-Bonds at ASP27; ASN59; PRO89; ALA92; PRO187. The ADME results of the compounds obeys Lipinski rule of five and the compounds shows the toxicity like Mutagenic and no toxicity shows on Tumerogenic, Effect on Reproductive system, Eye Irritant.

CONCLUSION

From the results of *in vitro* antioxidant activity, it is concluded that these molecules can be designed as potential drugs with a slight modification in the structure of the molecules. The DPPH radical scavenging activity was undertaken to evaluate the effect of substituent on the antioxidant activities of the all synthesized compounds and shows promising activity. Among all synthesized compounds, CP-05 exhibited good radical scavenging activities compared to α -Tocopherol, which are also, supported by docking studies with cytochrome P450 (CYP) proteins. The reason for higher antioxidant activity of compound CP-05, due to presence of piperizine group adjacent to acridine ring that can stabilize an unpaired electron in general boosts up the antioxidant capacity of the molecule. There for, these molecules could be developed for antioxidant agent.

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