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Biosynthetic origin of alkylated decaline-type polyketides and induction of a new metabolite by addition of benzoate in cultured mycobionts of *Pyrenula* sp.



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ARTICLE INFO	A B S T R A C T
Keywords: Pyrenula sp Lichen mycobionts Polyketides Biosynthesis Induction	The assembly pattern of acetate units and methyl groups in the biosynthesis of a polyketide, pyrenulic acid C (1), in cultured mycobionts of a Vietnamese <i>Pyrenula</i> sp. was verified by administration of sodium $[1-^{13}C]$ -acetate, sodium $[1,2-^{13}C_2]$ -acetate, and L-[methyl- ^{13}C]-methionine. The cultured mycobionts were induced to produce a new polyketide, pyrenulic acid I (2), by addition of sodium benzoate to malt-yeast extract medium supplemented with 5% sucrose. Its structure was determined by spectroscopic methods.

1. Introduction

Cultures of spore-derived lichen mycobionts were shown to be capable of producing certain lichen substances or novel metabolites in osmotically stressed conditions (Hamada and Ueno, 1990; Miyagawa et al., 1994; Tanahashi et al., 1997; Takenaka et al., 2004, 2010, 2011). In our previous study, pyrenulic acids A-H were isolated from cultured mycobionts of a Vietnamese lichen Pyrenula sp. (Le et al., 2014). These alkylated decaline-type polyketides are unusual as lichen substances and have never been detected in lichen thalli. However, these isolated metabolites are structurally related to cladobotric acids from the fermentation broth of a Cladobotryum fungus (Mitova et al., 2006). The DNA sequence of the ITS region of the mycobionts indicated 62% sequence similarity with *Cladobotryum* spp., impling that pyrenulic acids A-H could be biosynthesized in a similar manner to cladobotric acids (Le et al., 2014). To support this assumption, feeding experiments with ¹³C-labelled acetates and methionine were undertaken. During examination of the effect of additives, we detected an uncharacterized metabolite in the cultivated mycobionts on MY5 medium containing sodium benzoate, prompting us to further investigate this metabolite. In this paper, we report the results of feeding experiments with pyrenulic acid C and structural determination of the new metabolite.

2. Results and discussion

2.1. Biosynthetic origin of polyketide 1

The mycobionts of Vietnamese Pyrenula sp. cultured on conventional malt-yeast extract medium supplemented with 10% sucrose (MY10) produced pyrenulic acids A-H (Le et al., 2014). Pyrenulic acids are not typical lichen substances but are structurally related to fungal cladobotric acids, which were shown to be biosynthesized from a polyketide chain and S-adenosylmethionine (SAM) (Mitova et al., 2006). From our interest in the biosynthetic origin of pyrenulic acids such as pyrenulic acid C (1) (Fig. 1), administration experiments with ¹³C-labeled acetates and methionine were performed. For feeding experiments, the culture conditions were re-examined. The cultured mycobionts were found to produce higher amounts of the metabolites in MY medium supplemented with 5% sucrose (MY5) rather than in MY10, although the growth rate was lower. Thus, feeding experiments with cultured mycobionts were performed on MY5 medium. Feeding with [1-13C]-acetate and [1,2-13C2]-acetate resulted in moderate incorporation into pyrenulic acid C (1). The ¹³C NMR spectrum showed that the C-1 carbon of acetate was incorporated into the carbons at C-1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, and 21 in pyrenulic acid C (1). The 2D INADEQUATE (incredible natural abundance double quantum transfer experiment) spectrum of pyrenulic acid C isolated from the cultured mycobionts incubated with [1,2-13C2]-acetate showed eleven pairs of ¹³C-¹³C couplings, indicating that C-1/C-2, C-3/C-4, C-5/C-6, C-7/C-8, C-9/C-10, C-11/C-12, C-13/C-14, C-15/C-16, C-17/C-18, C-19/C-20,

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Fig. 1. Structures of pyrenulic acids C (1) and I (2).

and C-21/C-22 originated from intact acetate units through the acetatemalonate pathway.

In a feeding experiment with L-[methyl-¹³C]-methionine, C-23, 24, 25, and 26 of pyrenulic acid C (1) were extensively enriched. From these findings, pyrenulic acid B (3) was assumed to arise from ringclosure of the polyketide chain accompanied by *C*-methylations at C-23, 24, 25, and 26 by SAM in a similar manner to cladobotric acids (Mitova et al., 2006). Subsequent epoxidation of pyrenulic acid B (3) could yield a common key intermediate, pyrenulic acid A (4), which is hydroxylated to form cladobotric acid C (1) as well as pyrenulic acids D–H through several steps of oxidation, cleavage of the epoxide ring, and cyclization to the oxepane ring followed by pyran ring formation or dehydration in cultured mycobionts of *Pyrenula* sp. (Fig. 2).

2.2. Induction of new polyketide (2) production in cultured mycobionts supplemented with sodium benzoate

In the biosynthesis of polyketides, the choice of starter unit and extender units is governed by the substrate specificity of polyketide synthases. During the course of feeding experiments, the effects of additives such as sodium acetate, sodium propionate, and sodium benzoate on secondary metabolism were tested. As expected, propionate and benzoate could not be utilized as a starter unit, and pyrenulic acid C (1) was the major product. However, it was found that the productivity of pyrenulic acids was enhanced and the profile of metabolites was changed by the addition of benzoate to the medium. The metabolites of mycobionts cultivated on MY5 supplemented with sodium benzoate were fractionated to isolate a new compound 2 along with pyrenulic acid C (1).

Compound **2** was isolated as a colorless solid. The molecular formula of **2** was established as $C_{26}H_{36}O_7$ from HR-ESIMS. Its UV spectrum showed strong absorption at 255 nm, and its IR spectrum displayed absorption bands at 3340 (O–H) and 1713 (C=O) cm⁻¹. The ¹H NMR spectrum of **2** exhibited the signals of five olefinic protons at δ_H 5.41, 5.90, 6.35, 6.55, and 7.38, seven methine protons, including four oxygenated methines at δ_H 2.94, 3.54, 3.99, and 4.31, four pairs of methylene protons, and four methyl groups at δ_H 1.10, 1.33, 1.45, and 1.69. The ¹³C NMR, DEPT, and HSQC spectra of **2** showed the presence of a carboxyl carbon, five olefinic methines, and a quaternary olefinic carbon, as well as sixteen *sp*³ carbons, which were classified as four CH₃, four CH₂, four oxygenated CH, a non-oxygenated CH, and three oxygenated tertiary carbons. These spectral features were closely similar to those of pyrenulic acid C (**1**), except that **2** showed an oxygenated methine proton signal at δ_H 2.94 and oxygenated sp³ carbon

signals at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 64.7 and 66.1 instead of the olefinic proton signal and two sp^2 carbon signals ascribable to the 15,16-double bond in **1**. All proton and carbon signals were assigned by COSY, HSQC, and HMBC experiments. The signal for the methyl group at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 1.45, which was assignable to H₃-25 from the HMBC interaction with C-17, was further correlated with carbon signals at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 64.7 (C-15) and 66.1 (C-16). The methine proton singlet at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 2.94 showed an HSQC correlation with a carbon signal at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 64.7 (C-15) and HMBC correlations with a methyl at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 26.9 and two CH carbons at $\delta_{\rm C}$ 37.8 and 36.1 (C-9 and C-14). These findings, together with its molecular formula, suggested that the compound **2** was an oxygenated derivative of pyrenulic acid C (1), in which an epoxy ring was constructed between the double bond of C-15 and C-16.

The relative configuration of **2** was determined on the basis of the coupling constants and significant NOESY cross-peaks. The coupling constant $J_{6,7}$ (10.0 Hz) suggested that H-6 and H-7 were oriented in an anti-arrangement. Moreover, the coupling constant $J_{19,20}$ (6.0 Hz) and the NOESY correlations of H-6/H-10eq ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 2.28), H-7/H-17, H-7/H-19, 8-OH/H-14, H-17/H-19, H-9/H₃-24, H-22ax ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.65)/H₃-23, H-22ax/H₃-24, H-15/H₃-24, and H-15/H₃-25 indicated that H-7, H-17, and H-19 were oriented axially on the upward face. On the other hand, H-9, H-15, H₃-23, H₃-24, and H₃-25 were directed downward (Fig. 3). Accordingly, new compound **2** was determined as shown and designated as pyrenulic acid I.

In conclusion, the feeding experiments with ¹³C-labelled compounds defined that mycobionts of Pyrenula sp. had biosynthetic pathways similar to Cladobotryum fungus. Mycobionts of lichen species are genetically related to non-symbiotic fungi, and expected to harbor diverse metabolic genes as in fungi (Stocker-Wörgötter, 2008). However, lichen thalli generally produce no fungal metabolites but instead form characteristic lichen substances. We have already found that the metabolic pathways normally suppressed in lichenized conditions were expressed by isolation and cultivation of mycobionts from lichen thalli. Recent studies showed that chemical epigenetic manipulation techniques could promote the generation of a variety of new compounds from attenuated or silent biosynthetic pathways in fungi (Cichewicz, 2010). The present study showed that the treatment of cultivated mycobionts of Pyrenula sp. with benzoate could induce a silent metabolic ability to produce a new metabolite, although the function of benzoate was not clarified.

3. Experimental

3.1. General experimental procedures

UV spectrum was recorded on a Shimadzu	UV-240
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