

STRUCTURE DETERMINATION OF A VIOLET-BLUE FLOWER FLAVONOID,  
QUERCETIN 3-GLUCOSYL(1 → 2)GENTIOBIOSIDE FROM PRIMULA POLYANTHA †

Norio Saito,\* Keiko Yoda,\*\* Hideyuki Haruyama,\*\* Harumitsu  
Kuwano,\*\* and Toshio Honda\*\*\*

\*Chemical Laboratory, Meiji-Gakuin University, Totsuka,  
Yokohama, Japan; \*\*Analytical and Metabolic Research Laboratories,  
Sankyo Co., Ltd. Shinagawa, Tokyo, Japan; \*\*\*Institute of  
Medicinal Chemistry, Hoshi University, Shinagawa, Tokyo, Japan

Abstract-----The chemical structure of quercetin 3-glucosyl-  
(1 → 2)gentiobioside, isolated from the violet blue flowers of  
Primura polyantha was determined to be quercetin 3-O-(β-D-  
glucopyranosyl(1 → 2)-O-β-D-glucopyranosyl(1 → 6))-β-D-  
glucopyranoside unambiguously based on the spectroscopic data.

During the course of our investigation on the blue flower colors due to anthocyanins, we found that the violet-blue pigment of Primura polyantha was mainly produced from hirustidin 3,5-diglucoside and quercetin 3-glucosyl(1 → 2)-gentiobioside (1), where the latter plays an important role in copigmentation with hirustidin 3,5-diglucoside in this plant.<sup>1</sup> Compound (1) was firstly isolated from fresh violet blue flowers of this plant and also from P. sinensis, and its structure was proposed to be quercetin 3-gentiotrioside by Harborne in 1967.<sup>2</sup> Recently, the same quercetin triglucoside was isolated from P. officinalis as a main flavonol glycoside, and its trisaccharide was deduced as one with 1 → 2 and 1 → 6 glycosyl linkages by employing the selective enzymatic hydrolysis of β-glycosyl bonds by Karl and co-workers in 1981.<sup>3</sup> However, its complete structure including the stereochemistry of the saccharides has not been elucidated yet. We here wish to report the unambiguous structure determination of (1) by modern 2D nmr techniques.<sup>4</sup> Compound (1) consists of one molecule of quercetin and three molecules of glucose, and its molecular weight was confirmed by FABMS exhibiting M<sup>+</sup> + 1 ion at m/z 789. Its <sup>1</sup>H-nmr spectrum (in DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) showed three characteristic anomeric protons at 5.32, 4.15 and 4.02 ppm, which gave well isolated cross

† Dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Tetsuji Kametani.

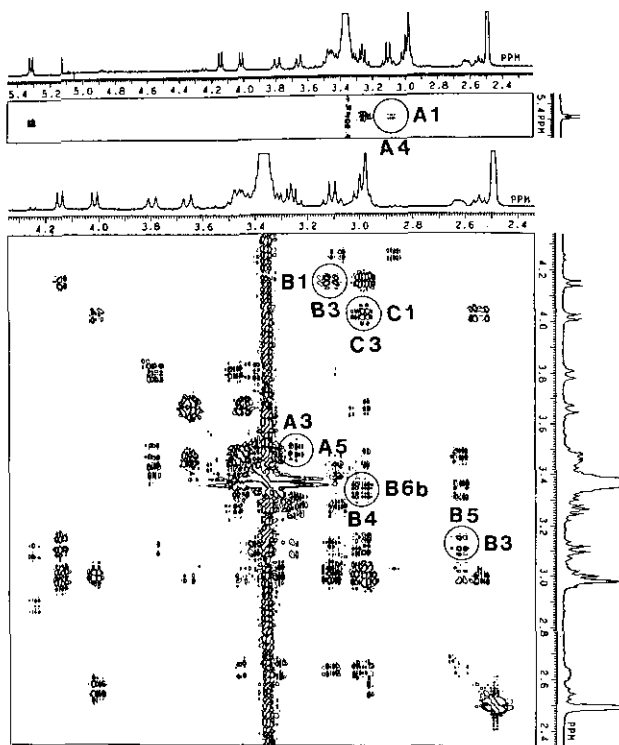


Fig. 1. 500.2 MHz relayed-COSY spectrum of 1 (in DMSO- $d_6$ ). The relay cross peaks are labeled using the following notation; the label Xn means the Hn proton of sugar X, e.g., the label B5 means H-5 of sugar B. The label above or below the circle, and the label at the side of the circle indicate the assignments along  $f_2$  (horizontal) and  $f_1$  (vertical) axes, respectively.

peaks at ( $\delta_{H-1}$ ,  $\delta_{H-2}$ ) in 2QF-COSY spectrum. For the clearness of the description, sugar units with cross peaks at ( $\delta_{H-1}$ ,  $\delta_{H-2}$ ) = (5.32, 3.27), (4.15, 2.98) and (4.02, 2.56) are tentatively assigned as sugar A, B and C, respectively. The location of H-3 (3.13 ppm) of sugar B could be identified in Relayed-COSY spectrum (Fig. 1). A spin system attributable to sugar B protons of H-6a (3.46 ppm), H-6b (3.33 ppm), H-5 (2.64 ppm) and H-4 (3.01 ppm) was readily correlated in 2QF-COSY spectrum. The presence of relayed cross peak between H-3 and H-5 completed the assignment of sugar B protons (Fig. 1). The assignments of protons coupled with  $^{13}\text{C}$  signals of sugar B were made straightforwardly by  $^{13}\text{C} - ^1\text{H}$  correlation spectrum. The correlation of H-6a (3.80 ppm) with H-6b (3.39 ppm) and H-5 (3.48 ppm) in sugar A could be extended to H-3 (3.26 ppm) through H-4 (3.10 ppm) in 2QF-COSY spectrum. However the higher order coupling hampered the correlation of H-3 of sugar A with H-2 of any sugar unit. The complete assignment of sugar A protons was derived from the observation of  $^{13}\text{C} - ^1\text{H}$  long range correlation by HMBC spectrum,<sup>5</sup> where H-2 (3.27 ppm) and H-3 (3.26 ppm) were mutually correlated with C-3 (ca. 76.0 ppm) and C-2 (73.93 ppm), respectively (Fig. 2). After the spectral assignment of sugar A and sugar B, in 2QF-COSY spectrum remained two separate spin systems, one consisting of H-6a (3.67 ppm), H-6b (3.45

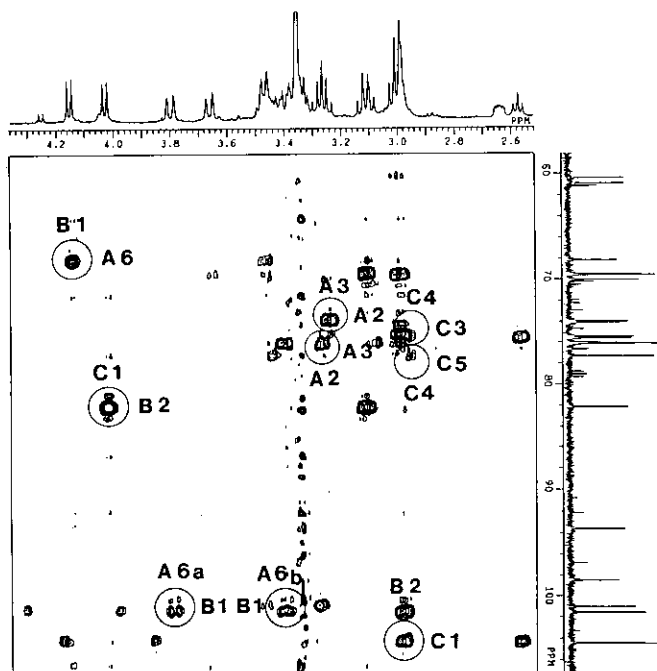


Fig. 2. Trigulcoside region of HMBC spectrum of 1 (in DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>). The cross peaks referred in the text are labeled using the same notation as Fig. 1.

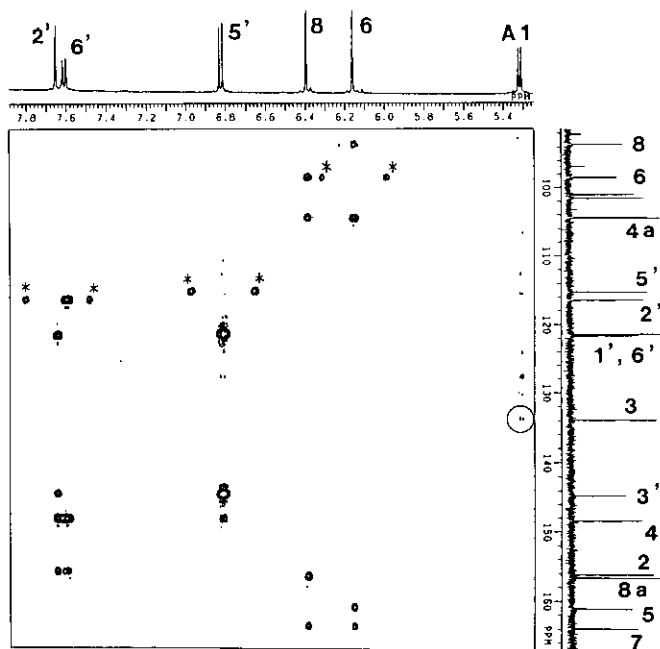


Fig. 3. Quercetin region of HMBC spectrum of 1 (in DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>). The direct cross peaks are distinguished by asterisks.

Table 1.  
<sup>1</sup>H-Nmr Spectral Data of  
 Quercetin 3-glucosyl (1→2)gentiobioside

(500.2 MHz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>, δ values = ppm)

Aglycone			
H-6	6.16	d	J = 2.1 (Hz)
H-8	6.39	d	J = 2.1
H-2'	7.66	d	J = 2.2
H-5'	6.82	d	J = 8.5
H-6'	7.61	d, d	J = 2.2, 8.5
Glucose-A			
H-1	5.32	d	J = 7.6
H-2*	3.27*	t*	
H-3*	3.26*	t*	
H-4	3.10	t	J = 8.8
H-5	3.48 <sup>2*</sup>	m	
H-6a	3.80	d	J = 11.4
H-6b	3.39 <sup>3*</sup>	d, d	J = 11.4, 4.4
Glucose-B			
H-1	4.15	d	J = 7.8
H-2	2.98 <sup>2*</sup>	m	
H-3	3.13	t	J = 8.6
H-4	3.01	t	J = ~9
H-5	2.64	d, d, d	J = 9.3, 5.4, 2.2
H-6a	3.46 <sup>2*</sup>	m	
H-6b	3.33 <sup>3*</sup>	d, d	J = 11.8, 5.4
Glucose-C			
H-1	4.02	d	J = 7.8
H-2	2.56	t	J = 8.2
H-3	2.99 <sup>2*</sup>	m	
H-4	2.96 <sup>4*</sup>	m	
H-5	2.98 <sup>2*</sup>	m	
H-6a	3.67	d	J = 10.7
H-6b	3.45 <sup>2*</sup>	m	

\*: Values could be exchangeable and assigned by <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H shift correlation.

2\*: Assigned by 2QF-COSY.

3\*: Assigned by WEFT.

4\*: Assigned by HMBC.

Table 2.  
<sup>13</sup>C-Nmr Spectral Data Quercetin  
 3-glucosyl (1→2)gentiobioside

(125.8 Mz, DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>, δ values = ppm)

Aglycone		
C-2	156.00	s
C-3	133.76	s
C-4	177.48	s
C-4a	104.37 or 104.29	s
C-5	160.91	s
C-6	98.42	d
C-7	163.74	s
C-8	93.57	d
C-8a	156.49	s
C-1'	121.51 or 121.29	s
C-2'	116.31	d
C-3'	144.55	s
C-4'	148.21	s
C-5'	115.10	d
C-6'	121.51 or 121.29	d
Glucose-A		
C-1	100.97	d
C-2*	73.92	d
C-3*	76.09 or 76.06	d
C-4	70.01	d
C-5	76.09 or 76.06	d
C-6	68.14	t
Glucose-B		
C-1	101.49	d
C-2	82.12	d
C-3	75.36	d
C-4	69.44	d
C-5	76.00	d
C-6	60.37	t
Glucose-C		
C-1	104.37 or 104.29	d
C-2	74.06	d
C-3	75.54	d
C-4	69.55	d
C-5	77.26	d
C-6	60.89	t

\*: Values could be exchangeable.

ppm) and H-5 (2.98 ppm), and the other consisting of H-1 (4.02 ppm), H-2 (2.56 ppm) and H-3 (2.99 ppm). These two spin systems could be combined to complete the assignment of sugar C by the long range correlation of C-3 and C-5 with the same proton resonated at 2.96 ppm, which should be assigned to H-4. The  $^1\text{H}$  and  $^{13}\text{C}$  nmr data are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. The stereochemistry of the sugars was confirmed to be  $\beta$ -D-glucopyranose from the typical vicinal coupling constants  $J_{\text{H-1, H-2}} = \text{ca. } 8 \text{ Hz}$  and  $J_{\text{H-3, H-4}} = \text{ca. } 9 \text{ Hz}$  (Table 1). The linkages between sugar and aglycon, and between sugars were determined based on the  $^{13}\text{C} - ^1\text{H}$  long range correlation to avoid the ambiguity inherent in NOE approach.<sup>6</sup> In HMBC spectrum, the anomeric proton of sugar A was long range coupled with C-3 of quercetin, which assignment was derived from  $^{13}\text{C} - ^1\text{H}$  long range correlations within the aglycon moiety (Fig. 3), and  $^{13}\text{C}$  nmr data for quercetin.<sup>7</sup> The 1  $\rightarrow$  6 link between sugar A and B was established based on the long range correlation of H-1 of sugar B with C-6 of sugar A, and the reverse correlations of H-6a and H-6b of sugar A with C-1 of sugar B. The observation of the long range correlation of H-2 of sugar B with C-1 of sugar C and its reverse correlation led to the 1  $\rightarrow$  2 link between sugar B and C. The down-field shifts of C-2 of sugar B and C-6 of sugar A are consistent with the established sugar linkages. Finally, the structure of 1 including the stereochemistry of sugars, was established to be 3-O-( $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl(1  $\rightarrow$  2)-O- $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl(1  $\rightarrow$  6)-O- $\beta$ -D-glucopyranosyl)-quercetin.

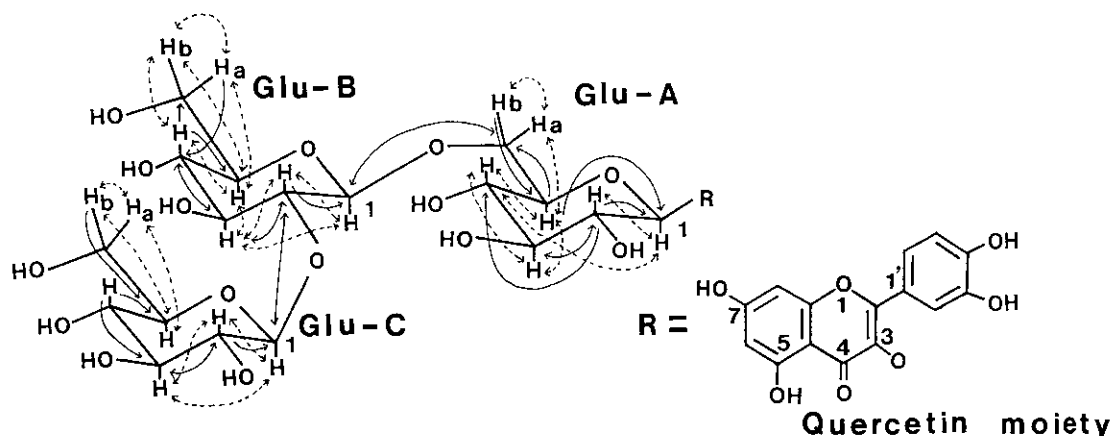


Fig. 4. A summary of  $^1\text{H} - ^1\text{H}$  correlations ( $\dashrightarrow$ ) by 2QF-COSY and relayed-COSY spectrum, and  $^{13}\text{C} - ^1\text{H}$  long range correlations by HMBC spectrum of 1. The arrow ( $\longrightarrow$ ) points from  $^1\text{H}$  to  $^{13}\text{C}$ . The double-headed arrow ( $\longleftrightarrow$ ) indicates the position, where the long range correlation was bidirectional.

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